



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-176: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3607 Moss Side Avenue for the purpose of a single-family detached dwelling with a driveway within the front yard, upon certain terms and conditions. (3rd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: August 19, 2025

PETITIONER

Liz Arline and Brett Shaeffer

LOCATION

3607 Moss Side Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting to authorize the construction of a front yard driveway. The current zoning designation does not allow for front yard driveways when rear alley access is available. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is requested.

RECOMMENDATION

While this block of Moss Side Avenue has existing driveways in front-yards, staff finds that the proposal is not consistent with the Richmond 300 Master Plan. The Future Land Use of the subject property is designated as Residential. The Residential land use designation notes that "Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present" (p. 54). Furthermore, Richmond 300 Objective 4.4 states "Increase Richmond's walkability along all streets" (p. 104). Objective 8.1(c) states "Reduce the creation of driveways and car access curb cuts, especially if there is alley access to the parcel..." (p. 115).

Staff finds that the proposal will impact the availability of on-street parking by removing the on-street area that is directly impacted by the request curb cut, as well as approximately ten feet on each side of the curb cut to allow for proper sight lines, as required by City Code. Staff finds that the addition of a driveway in this area will also decrease safety.

The Department of Public Works Right-of-Way Division states "Driveways provide conflict points between motorists and pedestrians that should be avoided where alternate options exist, such as rear, alley loaded parking."

Staff finds that the requirements of the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are not met. Specifically, Staff finds that the proposed use would be detrimental to pedestrian safety, congestion in the streets, and the provision of public good in the form of street parking.

Therefore, Planning and Development Review staff recommend denial of the Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Ginter Park neighborhood on the eastern line of Moss Side Avenue, between Henrico Boulevard and Walton Avenue, in an R-2 Single-Family Residential zoning district. The property is 20,000 sq. ft. and .50-acre lot.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use is to allow two curb cuts in the city's right-of-way to complete the previously constructed semi-circle driveway in the front yard of a single-family detached home.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential, which is defined as a "Neighborhood consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature. Development Style: Houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street.

Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing buildings.

Mobility: Bicycle and pedestrian access are prioritized and accommodated. Low residential density means that it is not possible to provide frequent transit within these areas; however, frequent transit may be found at the edges of these areas within more intense future land use designations. **Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present.**

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft.

Residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space. Secondary Uses: Duplexes and small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets."

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-2 Single-Family Residential District. The following section of the zoning ordinance is not met:

Sec. 30-404.8,- Driveways from streets

No driveway intersecting a street shall be permitted on a lot devoted to a dwelling use when alley access is available to serve such lot. In the case of a corner lot, no such driveway shall be permitted intersecting a street which constitutes the principal street frontage of a lot when other street frontage or alley access is available to serve the lot. Permitted driveways within front yards of single-family and two-family dwellings shall not exceed nine feet in width.

If approved, this special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a single-family detached dwelling with a driveway within the front yard, substantially as shown on the Plans.

- All site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans

Surrounding Area

All adjacent and nearby properties are located within the same R-2 zone. The area is primarily single-family residential.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and The Ginter Park Residents Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. The applicants submitted letters of support with their application. Staff has not received any letters of opposition since introduction.

Staff Contact: Madison Wilson, Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-7436