



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-127 To authorize the special use of the property known as 7 North 18th Street for the purpose of a one-story building and a parking garage, upon certain terms and conditions. (7th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 17, 2025

PETITIONER

Jennifer Mullen

LOCATION

7 North 18th Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a parking garage in a B-5 Central Business District. The B-5 district requires that no portion of the parking garage along the principal street frontage be used for parking or circulation of vehicles. Additionally, the existing building on the subject property is a single-story structure, whereas the B-5 district mandates a minimum building height of two stories. A Special Use Permit is therefore necessary to proceed with this request.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the requested use is consistent with the City's Master Plan future land use designation of Destination Mixed-Use. Although parking lots and structures are not explicitly identified as primary or secondary uses within this designation, they are considered supportive elements that contribute to its multimodal transportation goals.

Staff finds that the proposal aligns with the City's Master Plan by utilizing the existing alley for vehicular access. The Destination Mixed-Use designation specifically recommends that driveway entrances be located off alleys whenever feasible.

Staff finds that the existing façade is being maintained, successfully screening the proposed parking garage. This approach aligns with the City's Master Plan, which emphasizes the importance of screening parking facilities to maintain visual compatibility with the surrounding area.

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special Use Permits. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Shockoe Bottom neighborhood on North 18th Street between East Main Street and East Franklin Street. The property is currently a 7,405 square foot (0.17 acre) parcel of land improved with a one-story building.

Proposed Use of the Property

Parking garage.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject area as Destination Mixed-Use which is defined as, "key gateways featuring prominent destinations, such as retail, sports venues, and large employers, as well as housing and open space. Located at the convergence of several modes of transportation, including Pulse BRT or other planned transit improvements." (p. 64)

Development Style: Higher density, transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than existing context, and, where relevant, should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. Developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

Ground Floor: Ground floor uses engage with, and enliven, the street. Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged. Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages. Surface parking is prohibited as a principal use; when surface parking is provided as an accessory use, it should be located to the rear of buildings and screened. Parking requirements are reduced to allow more market-based parking strategies, including shared parking.

Intensity: Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

Primary Uses: Retail/office/ personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Institutional and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is B-5 Central Business District. The following features of the proposed development do not comply with the current zoning regulations:

Sec. 30-442.1 – Permitted principal uses

-Parking garages are not a permitted use

The proposed use includes a parking garage.

Sec. 30-442.6 – Height

-The minimum height for buildings is two-stories

The proposed use includes a one-story building

This special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a one-story building and a parking garage, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than sixteen off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than twelve long-term bicycle parking spaces shall be provided on the Property.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed one story, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding land uses are primarily commercial and multifamily residential uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Shockoe Partnership Civic Association, area residents and property owners. Staff has received no letters to date regarding the proposal.

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