



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review

Staff Report

Ord. No. 2022-094: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1203 East Brookland Park Boulevard for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing up to 43 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 21, 2022

PETITIONER

Mark J. Kronenthal and Jennifer D. Mullen, Roth Jackson

LOCATION

1203 East Brookland Park Boulevard

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1203 East Brookland Park Boulevard for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing up to 43 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow for a mixed-use building within a UB2-PE8 Urban Business, Parking Exempt Zoning District. The proposed use does not meet specific feature requirements of sections 30-433.11, concerning location of permitted principal and accessory uses, 30-433.13(1)b, concerning front yards, and 30-433.16(1), concerning height, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020). A Special Use Permit is therefore required. A portion of the off-street parking that would serve the property would be approved via an amendment to the special use permit of the adjacent property at 1221 East Brookland Park Boulevard (Ord. No. 2022-160).

Staff finds that the development, while located within a Residential Land Use area, is generally consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan pertaining to the Six Points Neighborhood Node which envisions mixed-use buildings from 2 to 4 stories.

Moreover, the underlying zoning of the property permits mixed-use buildings at 3 to 4 stories in height, and a four-story development was approved via a 2018 special use permit across the street from the subject property at 1222 East Brookland Park Boulevard. While the proposed development on the subject property is four stories in height, the architectural design of the building is such that the upper story is minimized.

Staff finds that the proposed design achieves Objective 4.1o., which seeks to "Increase building permeability by requiring new buildings to have functioning entrances from the sidewalk and restricting blank walls at ground level." (p. 100)

Staff further finds that the proposed Special Use would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area as the proposed building includes 36 off-street, and 15 on-street, parking spaces, and is convenient to mass transit. The proposed development is also located on a GRTC Blue route. The Richmond 300 Objectives 15.1a and 15.1b, aim to “Increase the number of Richmonders living in a development pattern that encourages density and reduces dependency on single-occupancy vehicles” and “Increase use of mass and active transportation options”, respectively. (p. 159)

Staff further finds that the proposed development helps to achieve Objective 14.3 to “Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years.” The units proposed are intended to be affordable to households at 30% to 80% Area Median Income (AMI). (p. 152)

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed development 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 Green Park neighborhood at the corner of Brookland Park Boulevard and Woodcliff Avenue. The property is a 26,809 sq. ft. (.61 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The application is for a four story, mixed-use building with 43 apartments, 3,670 sq. ft. of commercial space, and 36 off street parking spaces. The density of the proposed development is approximately 70 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential. Residential areas are defined as “Neighborhood(s) consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature.” The development style includes 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. 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. (p. 54)

The property is located within a designated “Neighborhood Node” which are defined as “...local crossroads typically within or next to larger residential areas that offers goods and services to nearby residents, employees, and visitors.” The vision for the Six Points Neighborhood Node sees this area as “...centered on a unique six-way intersection that was recently improved with a roundabout and landscaping. Small-scale, neighborhood commercial uses are located at the intersection and extend up Meadowbridge Road. The expansive Highland Park residential neighborhood surrounds this commercial area. In the future, this area can be a more enlivened community center with more neighborhood services and residential uses, better connectivity to and around the area, and more placemaking and public art amenities that focus on the history and cultural assets of the area. Future development should be between 2 and 4 stories and be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhood which exists in close proximity. The Hotchkiss Community Center and associated recreational assets can be better linked and incorporated to the activity of this Node.” (C-23)

The property is also on a designated Major Residential Street which seeks to maintain and expand the following characteristics for this portion of Brookland Park Boulevard:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, as well as pedestrians and bicycles, through residential neighborhoods
- Prioritize for creating sidewalks and crosswalks
- Install street trees as a buffer between sidewalk and street
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Ensure low street speed by utilizing traffic calming measures

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is UB2-PE8 Urban Business, Parking Exempt, Zoning District. The City’s Zoning Administration reviewed the application and provided the following comments:

Zoning: The UB2/PE8 district permits dwelling units contained within the same building as other permitted principal uses.

Sec. 30-433.11(7) Permitted principal and accessory uses:

Dwelling units contained within the same building as other permitted principal uses, provided that such dwelling units shall be located above the ground floor of the building or to the rear of other permitted principal uses so as not to interrupt commercial frontage in the district, and provided further that a minimum of one-third or 1,000 square feet, whichever is greater, of the floor area of the ground floor of the building shall be devoted to other permitted principal uses, and such uses shall have a depth of not less than 20 feet along the entire length of a principal street frontage, except for ingress and egress.

(Zoning Issue: Building as proposed is 56,116 GSF, requiring 1/3 ground floor space or approximately 18,703 sf to be devoted to other principal uses, approximately 5,600 sf proposed.)

Sec. 30-433.16. Height limit:

regulations in the UB-2 district shall be as follows:

(1) Maximum height in general. No building shall exceed three stories in height, provided that where an existing building on the same lot or on an adjacent lot along the same street frontage is greater than three stories in height, no building shall exceed four stories in height. For purposes of this section 30-433.16, story height as defined in Article XII of this chapter shall be not less than ten feet and not greater than 14 feet, except that the ground floor of a building may be of greater height.

(Zoning Issue: Proposed building exceeds the three story maximum height.)

This special use permit is conditioned on the following special terms and conditions:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building containing up to 43 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans. The first floor shall contain amenity spaces, such as a community room and study room, and commercial space. Commercial space on the first floor shall only contain non-residential uses permitted by the underlying zoning district in which the Property is situated.

(b) No fewer than 36 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(c) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

(e) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed four stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(f) Long-term parking for a minimum of 15 bicycles and short-term parking for a minimum of four bicycles shall be provided on the Property.

4(c) Facilities for the collection of refuse shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works. Such facilities shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from adjacent properties and public streets.

4(e) The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including the installation of no fewer than nine new street trees, a new sidewalk and ramps, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent properties to the east and north are located within the same UB2-PE8 Zone as the subject property. Properties to the west and south are zoned R-5 Single-Family Residential.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$68,529 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$20,559 per year, or \$1,713 per month, or less to avoid a housing cost burden.* Based upon estimated pricing information provided by the applicant, the rental units for this application are estimated to be approximately 30% to 80% of the area median income affordability threshold.

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Green Park Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition for this application.

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