



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review

Staff Report

Ord. No. 2022-227: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2906 5th Avenue for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 52 dwelling units, with off-street parking, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: September 6, 2022

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

2906 5th Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 2906 5th Avenue for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 52 dwelling units, with off-street parking, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow for a multifamily building within an R-6 Single Family Attached Residential District. The proposed use is not permitted within Section 30-412.1 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, regarding Permitted principal uses. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposed use is generally consistent with the Richmond 300 Master Plan's Residential land use designation of the property, which includes small multifamily dwellings as a secondary use. While the building exceeds the recommended number of dwelling units, the building appears from the street to be a small multifamily dwelling due to its placement on the uniquely positioned parcel.

Staff finds that the development is generally consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan pertaining to the Six Points Neighborhood Node which states that "Future development should be between 2 and 4 stories and be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhood..." The proposed development is a residential use of 3 stories and due to the proposed balconies on all floors, the proposed building incorporates a larger area of street-front permeability than is currently seen in this area. The additional residential density will also support current and new commercial uses along Brookland Park Boulevard.

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." The proposed use includes individual entrances to dwellings from the sidewalk. (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 52 off-street, and 16 visitor bicycle spaces. The proposed is also located within walking distance to the high frequency red line of the Greater Richmond Transit Company bus service, which achieves Objective 15.1a and 15.1b., which 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 finds that the proposed units help achieve Objective 14.3 in the Richmond 300 Master Plan which is to “Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years.” The units are to be affordable to over half the households in the region.

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 amendment 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 Highland Park Southern Tip neighborhood at the intersection of Brookland Park Boulevard and Rady Street. It is currently an unimproved 44,562 sq. ft. (1.02 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The application is for a three story, multi-family building with off-street parking.

Master Plan

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential. This designation is defined as neighborhoods “...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.” (54)

The property is also within the Six Points Neighborhood Node. The vision for the node is: “The Six Points Node is 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.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-6 Single family attached residential. The following section of the City’s zoning ordinance is not being complied by the application:

Sec. 30-412.1. Permitted principal uses.

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

3(a) (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to 52 dwelling units, with off-street parking, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) No fewer than 52 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 three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(f) No fewer than 16 covered bicycle spaces shall be provided, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(g) Outdoor lighting shall be located, directed, or shielded so as not to shine directly on adjoining properties or to create a traffic hazard by means of glare or similarity to or confusion with traffic signals, warning lights, or lighting on emergency vehicles.

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.

Surrounding Area

Properties to the south are within the R-6 District. Properties to the west, along Brookland Park Boulevard, are within the UB – Urban Business District. Properties to the east and north are within the I – Institutional District. The surrounding land uses include primarily residential with some commercial and institutional uses present in the vicinity.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$71,223 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$21,367 per year, or \$1,781 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. Based upon the median household income for the Richmond region, and the estimated pricing provided by the applicant, the proposed rental units are projected to be affordable to households making between 72% to 89% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold* These units are projected to be affordable to more than half of Richmond households.

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Highland 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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