



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review ***Staff Report***

Ord. No. 2023-105: To authorize the special use of the property known as 6140 Hull Street Road for the purpose of up to 140 single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: April 17, 2023

PETITIONER

Preston Lloyd representing William Allen

LOCATION

6140 Hull Street Road

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 6140 Hull Street Road for the purpose of up to 140 single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow for 140 single-family attached dwellings with off-street parking within an R-3 Single-family Residential District. Single-family attached dwellings are not a permitted use within the R-3 District. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that based upon the City's adopted Richmond 300 Plan for this area, the proposed use aligns with the future land use of Neighborhood Mixed Use due to housing densities and site design elements such as a gridded street pattern with sidewalks, alleys, and rear garages.

Staff finds that the proposed development is located on a Major Residential Street, which is intended for higher densities and increased pedestrian and transit use. Major Residential Streets require higher volumes of residents to provide the densities needed for transit, walkability, and commercial uses. This portion of Hull Street currently invites high vehicular speeds that endanger pedestrians. Allowing more residential uses with improved pedestrian infrastructure will begin to create a more walkable environment for all residents in the area.

The proposed development is also located near the recently constructed River City Middle School. New residents within the proposed development will require safe passage along Hull Street to the school. The proposed plans include new pedestrian infrastructure, making this possible.

Staff further finds that the proposed use will not place an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking, as the proposed design includes a minimum of one parking space per dwelling unit through a combination of on- and off-street parking.

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 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 this special use permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Elkhardt neighborhood on Hull Street Road between Derwent and Elkhardt Roads. The property is currently a 696,350 square foot (16 acre) vacant parcel of land. The surrounding area is generally occupied by single-family residential uses, with some commercial and institutional uses present in the vicinity along Hull Street Road. The proposed density of the parcel is 140 units upon 16 acres, or 8.75 units per acre.

Proposed Use of the Property

The application is for up to 140 single-family attached dwellings with off-street parking.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use, which is defined as "Existing or new highly-walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses."

Development Style:

These areas feature a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Setbacks, plazas, and parks create a sense of place and community gathering areas. New developments on larger parcels continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods. In historic neighborhoods, small-scale commercial uses exist today or should be allowed to reestablish. In new neighborhoods, small scale commercial buildings should be introduced.

Ground Floor:

Regardless of use, buildings should engage the street with features such as street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. Appropriate setbacks, open space, front porches, elevated ground floors, and other features that provide a sense of privacy should be provided for residential uses.

Mobility:

Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveways are prohibited on Priority and Principal Street frontages. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys wherever possible. Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity:

Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets. Parcels are generally between 1,500 and 5,000 sq. ft.

Primary Uses:

Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space.

Secondary Uses:

Large multi-family buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

The property is on a designated Great Street with a street typology of “Major Residential Street”. These streets:

- 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 subject property is zoned R-3 Single-Family residential. Single-family attached dwellings are not a permitted use within the R-3. Additional conditions will be imposed by the amended ordinance, including:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to 140 single-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans. Residential amenity areas shall also be provided on the Property and may include, but shall not be limited to, a playground, sports court, pavilion, picnic area, or any combination thereof. At least one point of access to the Property from Hull Street shall be designed and constructed to allow full access (i.e., ingress and egress from and to northbound lanes of Hull Street).
- (b) No less than one parking space per dwelling shall be provided for the Special Use and may be provided through the use of driveways, rear garages, or on-street parking. Front-loaded townhouses shall only be single-car driveways or garages. Townhouses with two-car driveways or garages shall only be allowed on lots with alley access.
- (c) All building types, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping and street trees, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans. Brick, brick veneer, stone, stone veneer, masonry, vinyl, fiber cement, and engineered wood shall be permitted building siding materials. Vinyl siding shall have a minimum wall thickness of 0.044 inches, as evidenced by the manufacturer’s printed literature.
- (d) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (e) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- (f) Signs on the Property shall not be internally illuminated.
- (g) Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, the subdivision of a maximum of 140 lots, substantially as shown on the Plans, shall be accomplished by obtaining the necessary approvals from the City and recording the appropriate plats and deeds among the land records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond.

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. The applicant has informed staff that the pricing for the proposed units will be priced based on current market rates.

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)*

*** (Based upon VHDA fixed-rate, 30-year mortgage, with 20% down and 4% interest)*

Surrounding Area

The surrounding land uses include primarily residential with some institutional and commercial uses along Hull Street.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff informed area residents and property owners, and the Fawnbrook Civic Association of the application. To this date, staff has not received any correspondence from the Association or from individual residents.

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