



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-230: To authorize the special use of the property known as 901 Norton Street for the purpose of three single-family attached dwellings and one single-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: August 21, 2023

PETITIONER

Canvas Development LLC represented by Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

901 Norton Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 901 Norton Street for the purpose of three single-family attached dwellings and one single-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposed single-family detached and single-family attached dwellings are permitted uses in the R-8 Urban Residential District. However, the proposed plans do not meet certain lot feature requirements of the zoning district, including lot area and lot width. A Special Use Permit is, therefore, requested.

Staff finds that the proposed use is consistent with the historic pattern of the development in the area, which is primarily single-family detached and attached dwellings on individual lots.

Staff finds that the proposal is in conformance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan recommendation of Neighborhood Mixed-Use, which encourages highly-walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential.

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 the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Carver neighborhood on southeast corner of Norton and Catherine Streets. The property contains 4,752 sq. ft. (.109 acre) of land. The property is currently improved with a 1,571 square foot single-family dwelling, circa 1910. This structure will be removed.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed development calls for the construction of three single-family attached dwellings fronting Norton Street and one single-family detached dwelling fronting Catherine Street on the Property. The existing parcel would be divided into four separate parcels, three of which would front onto Norton Street and one fronting onto Catherine Street.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use."

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.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The Zoning Administration Division recommended approval of the proposal and included the following comments:

Zoning and Use: The Property is within an R-8 (Urban Residential) District. The proposed uses of single-family attached and detached dwellings are permitted by-right in the R-8 District.

R-8 Feature Requirements: Single-family detached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 3,000 square feet in area, with a lot width of not less than 25 feet. The proposed lot area for 1220 Catherine St is 1,384.02 SF and the lot width is 23.3'; neither requirement is met.

Single-family attached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 2,200 square feet in area. Lot width shall be not less than 16 feet, except that the width of any lot at the end of a series of attached units shall be not less than 19 feet. The proposed lot areas and lot widths are:

	<i>Lot Area</i>	<i>Lot Width</i>
<i>903 Catherine St</i>	<i>1,156.68</i>	<i>20.4'</i>
<i>901 ½ Catherine St</i>	<i>963.9 SF'</i>	<i>17'</i>
<i>901 Catherine St</i>	<i>1,247.4 SF</i>	<i>22'</i>

The lot areas are not met for any of the proposed single-family attached or detached lots.

The special use permit ordinance will impose development conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as three single-family attached dwellings and one single-family detached dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No off-street parking shall be required for the Special Use.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, 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 current zoning for this property is R-8 Urban Residential District. All adjacent properties are located within the same R-8 Urban Residential Zone. The area is primarily single-family residential, with some multi-family residential and small, neighborhood commercial uses present in the vicinity. The proposed density is 37 units per acre.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Carver Area Civic Improvement League. Staff has received no letters of opposition to date regarding the proposal.

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