

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Kinsey O'Shea, AICP, Development Administrator VO

Date: November 10, 2016

Subject: RZN16-0004 Request to Rezone Approximately 11.893 Acres from the RM-48 Medium Density Multiunit Residential Zoning District to the Planned Residential (PR) Zoning District at 911-1011 University City Boulevard (Sturbridge Square) (Tax Parcel 225-A-36) by Sturbridge Square, LLC

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Property Location: 1001 University City Boulevard

Tax Parcel Numbers: 225-A-36

Parcel Size: 11.893

Present Zoning District: RM-48 Medium-Density Multiunit Residential

Adjacent Zoning District: See attached Zoning Map

Present Use: Multiunit residential

Surrounding Uses: North: US 460 Bypass/University City Boulevard
(See also vicinity map) East: Single-family dwellings (across UCB)
South: United States Post Office
West: US-460 Bypass

Proposed Zoning District: Planned Residential

Proposed Density: 88.45 Bedrooms/acre; 37.08 Units/acre

Future Land Use: High Density Residential

Neighborhood Meeting: 7:30 pm, Wednesday, November 9, 2016

STURBRIDGE SQUARE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Sturbridge Square Apartments is currently a multiunit residential dwelling development on the west side of University City Boulevard between the US 460 Bypass and the single-family Longview Estates neighborhood on Broce Drive. The existing development, constructed in 1974, consists of 11 residential buildings, surface parking, residential amenities, and a Town sanitary sewer pump station. The

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development sits at the north end of the University City Boulevard commercial area, and is located with access to a Blacksburg Transit stop adjacent to the site. The existing buildings are a mix of 2- and 3-stories.

The original complex of 9 buildings/144 units/342 bedrooms was remodeled in 2013, and two additional buildings were constructed and completed for occupancy in 2015, which added an additional 96 bedrooms to the existing 342 bedrooms. The total density onsite today is 438 bedrooms, or approximately 36.8 bedrooms per acre. The new buildings were added by-right under the existing allowable density, in an effort to tap into the underutilized RM-48 density on the site. The site plan contained a provision, called a mass or alternate transportation plan, in place for additional parking, if it was needed. The mass or alternate transportation plan that provided physical space and engineered drawings for the additional parking has a 2-year time limit, during which the Town holds a bond for the value of construction of the parking lot. If it is demonstrated that the parking is not needed, the Town releases the bond to the developer. The two year period for this plan has expired, and so the applicant is not required to build the additional parking. With the news of Virginia Tech's upcoming and ongoing expansion, the owner saw the potential for further redevelopment beyond the two additional buildings.

The application states that the development currently has a mix of residents including undergraduate students, professionals and retirees. The developer intends to maintain this mix of residents through different unit types and sizes, and siting the buildings and amenities in such a way that minimizes lifestyle conflicts, while maintaining a cohesive development.

Proposed Development Overview

In order to accommodate the redevelopment, of the existing 438 bedrooms, the original 342 bedrooms will be removed. The original 9 of the 11 residential buildings will be demolished, and four new residential buildings will be constructed. These new buildings, together with the two newer existing buildings will bring the development up to 1,052 total bedrooms/441 total units, for a proposed density of 88.45 bedrooms per acre or 37.08 units per acre. The proposed development will include two new buildings serving more of the undergraduate market, and two new townhome buildings that will cater to older students, and more non-student residents. The most intense proposed outdoor recreation areas are found near the core of the residential development, which is also the closest part of the site to the commercial center at University City Boulevard. The development will include residential amenities such as a pet park, pool and outdoor deck areas, shuffleboard and other court sports, indoor services including fitness, lounge and study areas, and other amenities for the benefit of the residents of the development. Parking will be provided in surface and structured parking, with a total of 787 parking spaces proposed (0.75 spaces per bedroom). Of those spaces, 510 spaces would be in the deck, and the remaining 277 would be surface spaces. The application states that there will be onsite maintenance and management of the development. Additionally, the applicant has proffered that the building materials shall not include vinyl siding.

Growth in Town

Virginia Tech has indicated that the University is intentionally growing its undergraduate student population. Enrollment over the past several years has increased, and the University has indicated that an increase in enrollment of approximately 5,000 additional students is a goal with a total enrollment of 30,000 undergraduates by 2023, across all of Virginia Tech's local and distance campuses. With the increase in students will also come an increase in the number of faculty and staff and other support personnel, but no further information has been received from the University about this additional aspect of growth. Additionally, no information has been given on the mix of graduate/undergraduate/distance

students that the University intends or how many students are anticipated at each campus (Blacksburg; Roanoke; National Capital Region; Tidewater; and Piedmont areas). Different student groups tend to require different support services. For example, more support services for childcare and community integration may be needed for a population of graduate students and research staff than for undergraduate students. Different populations also create demand for different housing types.

In 2015 the Town accepted a downtown housing study entitled Downtown Blacksburg Housing Market Study by Development Strategies that looked at market demands for different housing types in the downtown area. One of the observations in the study was that a continuing market demands (vs. need) for new high-end student housing exists. New units have bed/bath parity, high end finishes and many upscale amenities. The Edge and The Retreat have met some of this demand. However, the estimated demand for 5,000 bedrooms of high end housing predated the announcement of undergraduate growth from the University.

Several development and redevelopment applications have been filed over the past several years to begin to address the incoming growth in undergraduate student population, and to update aging multifamily housing stock to be more in line with what the market demands. The 2013 redevelopment of the Draper’s Meadow/Oakbridge apartment community to The Edge Apartments signaled the beginning of student housing development and redevelopment in earnest. Prior to the construction of The Edge, the Smith’s Landing apartment community was the most recent example of purpose-built student housing development, and was completed in 2008. Since 2010, the Town has seen growth in the student housing redevelopment and infill development market. The chart below outlines all residential rezoning applications filed since 2010.

| Development Name | Status | Proposed Density |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Roper Energy Apartments PRD | approved, not constructed | 60 br/ac |
| Terrace View PRD | withdrawn | 43 br/ac |
| The Edge PRD | approved, completed | 62 br/ac |
| Copper Beech O and GC to RM-27 | withdrawn | 27 br/ac |
| Grissom Lane PRD | approved, completed | 7 units/acre |
| University City Center PRD | denied | 145 br/ac |
| Blacksburg Estates PRD | withdrawn | 7 units/acre mixed SF & MF |
| Progress St Townhomes PRD | withdrawn | 41 br/ac |
| Whipple South Townhomes PRD | approved, site plan review | 29 br/ac |
| Eheart & Main PRD | approved, site plan review | 64 br/ac |
| Warren Street PRD | pending, applicant requested delay | 154 br/ac |
| Fieldstone PRD | approved, under construction | 25 br/ac |
| The Retreat PRD | approved, completed | 20 br/ac |
| North Main Lofts PRD (Site 1 & 2) | pending, under review | 89 br/ac |
| Sturbridge Square | pending, under review | 89 br/ac |

To respond to the market demand for undergraduate housing, after the housing study, the Town reached out to the owners of existing student housing developments. The goal is to stimulate redevelopment of older housing stock in areas already containing student housing. These areas have existing infrastructure and services such as Blacksburg Transit. The proposed rezoning parcel is one of the developments that fit these criteria for redevelopment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Site conditions

Currently, the site consists of a single parcel, approximately 12 acres in size. The development includes 11 residential buildings, a pool & sport court area, two Blacksburg Transit bus stops, and large landscaped lawn areas between buildings. The buildings are a mix of 2- and 3-story buildings, with a mix of two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartments and townhouses.

Area neighborhood

The development is located at the north end of the University City Boulevard commercial area. The site is triangular in shape, bordered on the east and west sides by UCB and the US 460 Bypass, and the US Post Office to the south. Longview Estates single family neighborhood is across UCB from the development. There is no development north of the site, as UCB curves toward the bypass and runs parallel to the bypass before turning east toward Toms Creek Road and Chasewood Downs and Shawnee apartments. The development is approximately a 1.25-mile walk from the farthest existing building to the Drillfield on Virginia Tech's Campus, via UCB and Prices Fork Road. The development is within walking distance to a variety of commercial services: 0.3 miles to Kroger; 0.6 miles to University Crossroads; 1.3 miles to the roundabout at Prices Fork and North Main Street, which is the northern edge of Downtown. The site is served by Blacksburg Transit's Toms Creek (inbound) and University City Boulevard (outbound) routes with one stop along the frontage nearest the US Post Office, at the southeast corner of the site. The single-family homes along University City Boulevard do not face the street—they are oriented interior to the Longview Estates neighborhood streets. The back- and side-yards of these homes are oriented to the street. There is currently no residential development that directly faces the Sturbridge Square apartment complex.

The University City Boulevard commercial area is a vibrant commercial center in the north-central part of town. This center serves a large population of residents, and is convenient to many neighborhoods, as well as campus. The commercial area is a mix of restaurant and retail, including groceries, small boutique shops such as Chantilly Lace Bridal, Volume II Bookstore, and Bonomo's clothing boutique; as well as local and chain restaurants of varying sizes and types. Additionally, there are services such as the post office, pharmacies, gas stations, banks, a fitness center, beauty salons, and childcare, as well as a number of professional offices including New River Valley Community Services; University Development, and the Virginia Tech Foundation. At the intersection of Prices Fork and University City Boulevard, the University Crossroads development is under construction, and will provide commercial retail and restaurants, as well as two hotels.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

The neighborhood meeting was held at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, November 9, 2016. The meeting was well attended by citizens. Representatives from the Town staff and the applicant team were also present. The sign-in sheets and meeting notes from this meeting are attached.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The application is evaluated against the criteria listed below in accordance with the applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance. This review and specific criteria are found in the following section.

The Town Zoning Ordinance Section 1151 states that the Commission is to study all rezoning requests to determine:

- 1) *Whether the proposed amendment conforms to the general guidelines and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan.*
- 2) *The relationship of the proposed amendment to the purposes of the general planning program of the Town, with appropriate consideration as to whether the change will further the purposes of [the Zoning Ordinance] and the general welfare of the entire community.*
- 3) *The need and justification for the change.*
- 4) *When pertaining to a change in the district classification of the property, the effect of the change, if any, on the property, surrounding property, and on public services and facilities. In addition, the Commission shall consider the appropriateness of the property for the proposed change as related to the purposes set forth at the beginning of each district classification.*

Section 1162 of the Zoning Ordinance states that proposals for rezoning to a planned zoning district constitute an application for conditional zoning. Section 1160 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the owner of the land may proffer conditions, which may be accepted by the Town if they meet the following standards:

- 1) *The rezoning itself must give rise for the need for the conditions*
- 2) *The conditions shall have a reasonable relation to the rezoning*
- 3) *The conditions shall be in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan*
- 4) *The conditions must be clearly understood and enforceable*
- 5) *The conditions must not require or allow a design or standard that is less restrictive than the general provisions of this ordinance*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In evaluating whether the proposed use conforms to the general guidelines and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan, all applicable sections of the Plan should be included in the review of the application. The Comprehensive plan offers a wide range of guiding principles for the future of development with Town. There was a concerted effort in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan update to strengthen the need for maintaining neighborhood character, giving guidance on development form, encouraging an expansion of housing types to serve different segments of the housing market other than undergraduate students, and continuing to promote alternate means of transportation. Many of these principles, goals and objectives address non-student housing as a need in Town to appeal to a variety of market segments, demographics, and price ranges. This staff report calls out specific sections in the Plan as major points of analysis, but the merits of the application can be compared with many more sections of the Plan as well.

Comprehensive Plan/Map A-Future Land Use

The property is classified as High Density Residential on the Town's Future Land Use Map. The High Density Residential future land use designation calls for *"More than ten dwelling units per acre; or more than 20 bedrooms per acre."* There is no upper limit on density within the High Density Residential future land use category. It is anticipated that any new residential dwelling request exceeding 48 bedrooms per acre would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis through a rezoning to PR.

The property is located adjacent to the Mixed-Use Area B (which roughly equates to UDA-B described below). Mixed-Use Area B is located along University City Boulevard, between Prices Fork Road to just north of the Post Office property. The services in this area are intended to serve developments such as Sturbridge Square. The area covers the land between the bypass and the commercial-depth properties on the east side of UCB. This area also covers the existing Virginia Tech Anaerobe Lab area behind the University Mall/fronting on Prices Fork east of the bypass. The Comprehensive Plan states that: *"A mixed balance of commercial and residential development in this area should complement existing commercial development with roads, sidewalks, and greenways connecting to the Town. The close proximity to*

Virginia Tech should encourage a development designed for the University community, such as graduate student housing and services. Limited access on Prices Fork and additional landscaping to buffer the mixed-use development is recommended."

Comprehensive Plan/Map B-Urban Development Areas & Inter-Jurisdictional Map

This property is located adjacent to the designated Urban Development Area (UDA)-B. UDAs were designated in the Comprehensive Plan as a result of state legislation that required jurisdictions to identify locations in their boundaries that would be suitable for both commercial and residential growth at relatively high densities and intensities. Because the Town had already identified many of these growth areas with the Mixed Use Area designations, the boundaries of the UDAs generally correspond to the Mixed Use Areas. UDAs and Mixed-Use Areas are intended to serve as focal points for commercial and residential growth in town. However, the designation of UDA does not prevent developments outside a UDA, nor obligate the Town to approve rezoning or conditional use permit applications within a UDA. The designation of a UDA does not affect zoning, nor does it mandate a specific type of development.

Comprehensive Plan/Map C-Neighborhood, Employment, and Service Areas

All neighborhoods in Blacksburg are classified into different categories based on a number of key commonalities, characteristics, and factors including historical patterns of development, transportation network, neighborhood identity, density and type of development, and potential development opportunities. These general boundaries reflect the predominant land use form within each area. The subject property is designated as a Multi-Unit Residential Neighborhood, and is adjacent to the UCB Core Retail Area.

A 3. Multi-Unit Residential Neighborhood:

These neighborhoods are primarily apartment developments rented to students due to the proximity of the Virginia Tech campus. In these dense urban areas with a high concentration of students, there are fewer lifestyle conflicts than in other residential areas because the properties are larger rental developments where residents have a shared set of lifestyle expectations. The compact forms of development in these areas allow residents to rely less on automobiles as they have access to public transit, on- and off- road trail systems, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes.

With the exception of the Hethwood and Foxridge neighborhoods, these areas are located just beyond the urban/walkable neighborhoods, and all are located near the Town's major employment and commercial areas. These neighborhoods also have easy access to the US 460 Bypass, the main transportation route to I-81 and surrounding localities.

Key Issues for Multi-Unit Residential Neighborhoods include:

- *Transit service in these areas should continue to meet residents' needs.*
- *Enhancing sidewalk, trail, and bicycle opportunities that link these areas of high concentrations of people with Downtown and the University core campus will be beneficial.*
- *New developments should*
 - *Consider providing open areas and recreational opportunities within their developments*
 - *Provide landscaped multi-use trail systems for commuting opportunities to the Commercial and Employment areas while providing landscape buffers*
 - *Provide strong property management and maintenance*
- *Through education of residents, owners and property managers, as well as the Town's zoning enforcement property maintenance programs, seek to minimize lifestyle conflicts that may occur at the interface of these higher density developments with adjacent residential neighbors.*

- *New multi-family developments in these areas should de-emphasize parking areas, maximize the use of alternate transportation options, be walkable, connect to other developments, have a street presence, and use other principles as detailed in the Residential Infill Guidelines.*
- *If additional student housing is not provided on-campus, the University should consider providing additional student residences only on property that is currently designated on the Future Land Use map for this high density residential use.*

Comprehensive Plan/Map D-Paths to the Future

Transportation Objective and Policy #7 states that “as part of the development review process, when proposed developments include trails as shown on the Paths to the Future map, determine how the trail will be incorporated into the development design and how the trail will be connected to internal sidewalks and bike routes.” The Paths to the Future map shows an existing Public route adjacent to this site along University City Boulevard. There are no proposed trail corridors through or adjacent to the site.

Nevertheless, especially in areas of existing dense build-out, redevelopment is often the only time to improve upon public facilities. University City Boulevard has seen a number of roadway and sidewalk improvements over the last several years, including reworking vertical and horizontal curves just beyond the project site, and sidewalk and streetscape improvements through the commercial corridor. With the proposed addition of more than two-times the number of residents currently, additional pedestrian and bicycle facilities may be needed to accommodate the increase in users and traffic volume. The sidewalk that exists today does not have the required vegetative buffer strip between the curb and the sidewalk. When the roadway and pedestrian improvements were undertaken, as much improvement as possible was gained within the existing Town right-of-way. Further improvements to these facilities will require work on private property.

Comprehensive Plan/Community Character Principles and Other Policies

There are a number of attributes that contribute to a community’s character and uniqueness and that give it a “sense of place.” These factors collectively comprise the Town of Blacksburg’s quality of life. Community character affects how the Town is perceived and valued by anyone who lives, works, plays, or visits in Blacksburg. To guide the future of the Town as desired by its citizens, the Comprehensive Plan expresses these qualities as specific implementing principles. The Community Character Principles are an articulation of these enduring qualities. Each principle will be used by policymakers to guide community decision-making to protect the integrity of what makes Blacksburg “Blacksburg.” Several applicable Community Character Principles for this application include:

CCP 1. Well-designed pedestrian and bicycle friendly routes and facilities are essential to the Town’s identity as a walkable and bikeable community. Pedestrian circulation systems are required to be constructed in all new developments. Connections to the existing Paths to the Future routes should be made where possible through new development or Town programs.

The plan shows no changes to be made to the existing sidewalk along University City Boulevard, except where improvements are to be made to replace existing curb-cuts with sidewalk to match. The sidewalk is currently 5’ wide, with no vegetative buffer strip between the sidewalk and the back of the curb. This sidewalk section is what could be accommodated within the existing Town ROW when the sidewalk improvements were undertaken. There is currently a large volume of pedestrian traffic in this area, and the sidewalk along the frontage of the development is heavily traveled. There is one Blacksburg Transit bus stop at the southern end of the development. Increasing the density may warrant an additional bus stop will make the need for a wider sidewalk even greater to accommodate the volume of traffic expected to utilize the sidewalk and transit facilities. The applicant proffers that

the shelter will be improved with coordination from Blacksburg Transit. There is currently striped & signed bike lane (4' wide plus 2' gutter pan) adjacent to the site along University City Boulevard, but the lane ends at the bus stop near the southern end of the site. The site is close enough to commercial retail and services that pedestrian and bicycle facilities are paramount in this area if vehicle trips are to be reduced. With a grocery store, pharmacies, retail, restaurants, and the University within walking distance, the need for facilities to encourage alternate transportation and reduction of vehicle use is greatly increased. The plan also shows a number of internal sidewalk connections between buildings, parking areas, and amenities. Thoughtful internal connections can help to encourage sidewalk use by providing logical paths and routes to commonly-used sites. Due to the increase in density, it is reasonable to expect that a wider sidewalk is needed in order to accommodate the increase in usage. Additionally, to provide protection and separation for pedestrians, the sidewalk could be improved to include the required vegetative strip between the curb and sidewalk. This would require demolition and reconstruction of the sidewalk along the entire UCB frontage of the property. Additionally, the applicant proffers covered bike parking and a bike repair station within the parking deck to provide convenient and safe facilities for bicyclists.

The Corridor Committee reviewed this application and has indicated that improved site lighting for bicycle parking, and ensuring that sight lines are adequate at bike/ped/vehicular crossings within the development are important considerations.

CCP 2. Lifestyle conflicts are inherent in a college town, where neighborhoods may have a mix of students and non-students. Students moving into established neighborhoods may have different expectations than existing neighbors with regard to noise, upkeep, parking, and occupancy. Property management, education and code enforcement can mitigate some of these conflicts.

This proposal is for the redevelopment of an existing multi-family residential development. The existing development, according to the application, supports a mix of different residents including undergraduate students, upperclassmen, graduate students, professionals, and retirees. The development has no immediately-adjacent single-family residential neighbors. The homes across University City Boulevard are a mix of rental units and owner-occupied units, but they face the interior of the Longview Estates neighborhood, and do not face UCB. Onsite residential management can often help alleviate neighborhood conflicts. The application states that the development would be managed by the property's onsite property management agent.

CCP 13. Increasing the safety and efficiency of traffic flow on arterial and collector roads is important in maximizing the functionality of the transportation network. For commercial developments: minimize curb cuts and driveways, add internal connections between adjacent properties and optimize signal timing. For residential developments: design an internal connected street grid system as well as connections to the external street system, along with traffic calming measures.

There are seven individual entrances from Sturbridge Square onto University City Boulevard today. The proposed development would reduce the number of entrances onto UCB to two. However, the orientation of the new buildings will prohibit the main entrance from aligning with Broce Drive, across UCB, as it does today. The reduction of points of access onto UCB will reduce the potential vehicle conflicts, and also reduce the potential for conflicts with sidewalk and bike lane users. None of the intersections where the entrances meet UCB is signalized, and the development does not meet warrants for signalization. There are no medians, and no turn lanes or tapers on UCB. In this sort of configuration, there is always a risk for traffic delays behind cars queued to turn. Convenient access to transit and bike/ped facilities can help alleviate this by a reduction in overall vehicle trips.

CCP 15. Blacksburg is a responsible headwaters community for Southwest Virginia. Developments within the Town should minimize short and long term impacts on surface waters (streams and ponds), groundwater, karst features, and wetlands.

The property is located just east of US 460-Bypass and drains west into a tributary of Toms Creek. There is an area of creek valley overlay on the other side of the bypass from the development, behind Lakewood Drive and Village Way South. The Town stormwater engineer has reviewed the stormwater concept plan and has approved it as submitted.

Sustainable Community Objectives and Policies S.3 As part of the development review process, consider how well the proposed application supports the Town’s sustainability community commitment.

S.9 Educate and encourage residents and private businesses when constructing or renovating homes and buildings to be more energy efficient and meet EarthCraft or U.S. Green Building Council LEED building rating system standards.

The applicant is including a proffer to provide infrastructure to support two electric car charging stations in the parking deck, as well as a proffered commitment to EarthCraft certification for the residential buildings.

ZONING ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

In considering the application against the specific requirements and regulations in the Zoning Ordinance, and discussing the need and justification for the change, the following findings are provided:

Intent of Districts

There is a statement of purpose for each district in the Zoning Ordinance.

Planned Residential §3110

The purpose of this district is to provide for the development of planned residential communities that incorporate a variety of housing options as well as certain limited commercial and office uses designed to serve the inhabitants of the district. This district is intended to allow greater flexibility than is generally possible under conventional zoning district regulations by encouraging ingenuity, imagination and high quality design to create a superior living environment for the residents of the planned community. The PR district is particularly appropriate for parcels which contain a number of constraints to conventional development. In addition to an improved quality of design, the PR district creates an opportunity to reflect changes in the technology of land development, provide opportunities for new approaches to home ownership, and provide for an efficient use of land which can result in reduced development costs.

It is the burden of the applicant to prove that the design submitted meets the intent of the Planned Residential District. In some cases, a development application for a PR District provides the Town with a housing structure or type that is not found elsewhere in town, as was the case with the Shadowlake Village Co-Housing Community PR District. In other instances, the PR District allows an applicant to put forward housing for an underserved population and proffer limitations to ensure the need is met, as with the Grissom Lane Senior Housing development and the Fieldstone affordable development. In this case, the developer is proposing to redevelop an existing site in order to meet the growing housing needs of the community. According to the applicant, Sturbridge has historically experienced high rates of occupancy, due in large part to proximity to services and the university, and provides a housing community that is diverse in its makeup, meeting the needs of a wide variety of occupants.

In all instances, these applications are reviewed singularly by the Planning Commission and Town Council for their merits on a case-by-case basis. Any deviations from the binding master plan and application would require a public hearing.

Zoning District Standards (Uses, Lot Size, Height, Setbacks, Lot Coverage, Density and Occupancy)

District standards govern the development of a parcel in a particular district, for any use. These standards establish the lot dimensions, setbacks and coverage to ensure a consistent appearance across a particular district. The District Standards set forth in the non-planned districts can be accepted at face value as being appropriate for the district and the by-right uses allowed therein. The Planned Residential District allows the applicant to establish many of the typical district standards through the master plan and the application for the planned district. These standards, as proposed, should be evaluated against the surrounding neighborhood's character and the intent of the district, as well as the intent of the standard and its appropriateness. The development of the Planned Residential District should be in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood character. In exchange for design flexibility for the applicant to establish these standards based on the layout of the development, the applicant must then provide a binding plan and application for the development of the property. Any significant deviation from this plan requires the applicant to amend the district and go back through the public hearing process.

- *Permitted Uses:* The Planned Residential District Standards in the Zoning Ordinance section 3113 provides a list of potential permitted uses from which an applicant may choose for a specific district application. As this is a mixed commercial and residential development, the applicant's list of proposed permitted uses extends beyond residential uses and associated support uses. The applicant proposes the following permitted uses:
 - *Home occupation*
 - *Multi-family dwelling*
 - *Townhome*
 - *Community recreation*
 - *Utility services, minor*
 - *Accessory structures*

The application and plan show a multi-family residential development, utilizing the 2 existing buildings to remain, and the addition of four new buildings. Two of the new buildings have outdoor courtyards interior to the building where there will be outdoor amenity areas including features such as pool, shade and lounge areas, fire pit and grill area, putting green, and court/lawn games. These two buildings, which are the largest of the buildings on the site, will be located toward the southeastern portion of the site, toward the most intense commercial development. The two new smaller townhome-style buildings will be located more in the northern half of the development. There are, within the RM-48 zoning district, a number of civic uses which are allowed by right in the district, such as day care center, cultural services, and religious assembly. The PR district will limit the allowable uses (by-right, or by CUP) on this site to those that are listed above, if approved.

- *Setbacks:* The applicant proposes that setbacks along all property lines shall be 10'. This is more intense than the setback currently allowed in the RM-48 district. The RM-48 district requires 35' front setbacks; 10' side setbacks; and 25' rear setbacks. Allowing a smaller setback as specified by the applicant will encourage a denser, more urban form of development than what is on the ground today, but consideration should be given to ensure that the combined height and setback of the development does not negatively impact the pedestrian experience along UCB. Wider sidewalks and vegetative buffer strip can help contribute to a positive pedestrian experience in a

more urban-feeling development. The setback indicates the areas on the property that cannot be improved with structures. Other improvements may be allowed in setbacks, such as parking and drive aisles, sidewalks, trails, and recreation areas. However, area that is within setbacks cannot be counted toward required open space. Further discussion of open space is found below.

- **Height:** Building height and setback should be considered together to understand the look and feel of the development along UCB. A wide setback can make a tall building seem less looming over the sidewalk, whereas a shallow setback combined with a tall building can make the streetscape and sidewalk seem uncomfortably tight. The application states that the proposed height of the building will be 65'. For comparison, the Brownstone is 4-stories at the property line, with a 10' sidewalk; the buildings nearest Prices Fork Road at the Retreat are 3 stories tall, but sit 35' back from the property line. Height is calculated based on the elevation of the grade at the front entry, to the highest point of the roof. Antennae, chimneys, spires, and other appurtenances may project above the height of the roof in the RM-48 Zoning District, and in all other zoning districts. All rooftop mechanical units must be contained within the maximum height of the structure. The maximum height allowed in the neighboring General Commercial Zoning District to the south is 60' or 70' if an additional foot of setback is provided for every additional foot of height. The neighboring single-family R-4 zoning district across UCB has a maximum height of 35'. The street elevation of the buildings will be approximately 4-5 stories tall, depending on the grade. Please see the building elevations and floor plans in the application for more detail.
- **Lot Coverage:** The applicant proposes a maximum 80% of the project area may be covered in impervious surfaces. This is more intense than the current maximum of 60% in the RM-48 district. The current impervious lot coverage, as indicated in the application, is approximately 49%.
- **Residential Density:** The applicant proposes that the residential density shall be a maximum of 89 bedrooms per acre, or 37 units per acre. This represents an increase of approximately 85% above the maximum allowed by the RM-48 Zoning District, which allows up to 48 bedrooms per acre. This density is approximately 2.5-times the current existing density, but the existing density is less than the maximum allowed by the district. Conversations about increases in residential density have been occurring and there is an acknowledgment that for redevelopment significant increases in residential density will be needed make the redevelopment viable, and that appropriate density will be different in different locations.
- **Occupancy:** The applicant proposes an occupancy standard that is a family plus two unrelated persons; or no more than 4 unrelated persons. This occupancy standard is consistent with the RM-48 Zoning District.
- **Parking:** The PR district allows an applicant to propose an alternate ratio for parking within the district than what is specified in §5220. The applicant proposes a parking ratio of 0.75 spaces per bedroom, which is less than what the Town standard multifamily parking ratio prescribes of 1.1 spaces per bedroom. The applicant tracks existing parking utilization data for the development. Based on historical data from the existing Sturbridge residents, the applicant indicates that while there is currently a parking ratio of approximately 0.77 spaces per bedroom, the utilization of parking is closer to 0.65 spaces per bedroom. This indicates that not every resident has a vehicle at this development. The applicant indicates that this has been a trend in the development for years, due in large part to convenience to transit, the university and the commercial area at UCB. Furthermore, the applicant stated at the neighborhood meeting that even with the additional bedrooms added in 2015, the additional parking was never needed to be constructed. The site plan was approved with a mass or alternate transportation plan, which allows the developer to set aside space physical space on the site, and engineer the parking on the drawings, but if the need

for parking is not found, then the parking does not need to be constructed. The applicant indicates that there hasn't been shown a need for the additional parking to be built.

The application shows a total of 787 parking spaces, of which only 277 spaces will be surface spaces. The remaining spaces will be accommodated in a parking structure. The parking structure is proposed to be 4 levels, and located in the lower portion of the site, away from UCB. The parking deck will be largely shielded from view from UCB by the residential buildings. The ordinance allows up to 30% of the total number of spaces to be compact spaces. The applicant is choosing to provide approximately 20% of the total in compact parking spaces. Additionally, the application states that bicycle parking rates shall be a minimum of 25% of the total number of bedrooms. A large portion of these will be within the garage to offer covered parking, but there will be exterior racks throughout the development as well. The application also states that a bicycle repair station will be included in the parking deck.

- *Open Space:* A minimum of 20% of total project area shall be open space. A minimum of 5,000 square feet of the required open space shall be dedicated for active or passive recreation. The plan shows approximately 119,985 square feet (23%) of proposed open space, including the active recreation and residential amenity areas. The open space areas shown do not encompass all of the pervious space—there is a considerable amount of greenspace shown around the buildings that has not been included in the calculation. The application states that the active recreation/residential amenities will include a lounge & study area; café; and fitness center indoors; and pool & deck areas; grilling; fire pit; hammocks; putting green; lawn/court sports; pet park; half-basketball court; and picnic areas outdoors. These intense amenity areas are concentrated toward the core of the site, closest to the commercial area on UCB. As noted above in the discussion of setbacks, a new calculation will have to be provided that removes the setback areas from the required minimum open space, however, it is anticipated that the open space will continue to exceed the minimum required. The application sheets Z5.0 and Z5.1 show the open space extending all the way to the property lines. While the provided open space provided (119,985 square feet) exceeds the required minimum (103,703 square feet), a revised calculation will have to be provided that shows the open space only counted up to the setback lines.
- *Landscaping:* The application indicates that landscaping will be provided as specified in the Town of Blacksburg Zoning Ordinance. The application indicates that this landscaping will include “interior parking greenspace areas, any required buffering, and the overall site greenspace and landscaping requirements.” The application states that existing vegetation will be preserved where feasible. There is no buffer yard requirement for the site. Buffer yards may be required in one of two ways: as per the Buffer Yard requirements in section 5310(i) between districts of differing intensities (chart below); or as per the specific Use and Design Standards for the proposed uses. The chart below outlines the buffer yard requirements between districts. In the left column, the property zone is indicated as PR, and the abutted district is GC and R-4. No prescriptive buffer is required, because the evaluation of appropriate edges and buffers should be considered in the application and master plan as a whole.

Multifamily dwellings (or any other development) constructed by-right in the RM-48 Zoning District on this site would not require a buffer yard on any of the property boundaries due to the neighboring zoning. From the chart above, a buffer is not required on RM-48 when it abuts GC. Zoning Ordinance Section 5305 states that “if the public right-of-way is a local or collector street, a buffer yard with screening shall be provided on any side or rear of the higher intensity use which abuts the right-of-way...however the buffer yard shall not be required on the front of the higher intensity use where the front abuts the public right-of-way.

Similarly, the Use and Design Standards for Multifamily dwellings section 4216 do not specify a buffer yard requirement for developments within the PR district, as the buffering between uses of differing intensities across differing zoning districts should be evaluated as a whole through the rezoning process. There are no regulations or mechanisms in the ordinance today that call out buffer yard requirements between uses: for example, there are no regulations to require all multifamily dwelling uses to provide buffer yards adjacent to other lower-intensity residential uses, as even in the Use and Design Standards, the requirement still references a zoning district, rather than a use.

| Abutting District (Higher intensity; where buffer is to be located) | Abutted District (Lower intensity to be protected) | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----------|-----|
| | RR1, RR2, R-4, R-5, OTR, PR | RM-27, RM-48, PMH | O | DC, GC, PC, RD | I, PIN | MXD |
| RR1, RR2, R-4, R-5, OTR, PR | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| RM-27, RM-48, PMH | B | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| O | B | A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| DC, GC, PC, RD | C | B | N/A | N/A | N/A | C |
| I, PIN | D | C | C | C | N/A | D |
| MXD | C when abutting RR1, RR2, or R-4. B when abutting R-5, OTR or PR. | B | A | A when abutting RD | N/A | N/A |

There is no buffer yard proposed for this development. The plan sheet Z4.1 and Z4.2 show some site landscaping, but no street trees are shown along UCB as required. The full landscape plan will be reviewed at the site plan stage, if the rezoning is approved, to ensure that the development meets all requirements for street trees, parking lot landscaping, and overall site canopy coverage.

Given the adjacent uses, softening and buffering UCB is needed to reduce the impact of the development on the neighboring single-family neighborhood, and improve the pedestrian experience on UCB. The redevelopment gives an opportunity to improve the streetscape in this area more than what currently exists. The use is not anticipated to have any negative impact that needs to be mitigated by vegetation, on the neighboring commercial property or the bypass.

Multifamily Use & Design Standards (§4216)

The Zoning Ordinance includes regulations for different uses regardless of the zoning district. Some standards are district-specific, but there are standards that apply to the use in all districts. There are a number of Use and Design Standards that are also covered under the various district standards, and they have not been called out in this section for evaluation to prevent repetition. Pertinent standards have been called out for evaluation below. As no specific commercial uses or tenants have been identified for the commercial portion of the development, specific use standards cannot be evaluated. However, many of the same principles apply to most commercial uses, as well as to the multifamily residential uses. For example, office uses, retail uses, and restaurant uses all require that the street elevation of the building shall contain at least one street-oriented entrance, and contain principal windows of the building. This standard is also repeated for multifamily dwellings.

Building Orientation: The ordinance specifies that the street elevation of the residential buildings shall have at least one street-oriented entrance, and contain the principal windows of the units. The elevations provided in the application show that the street elevations of the buildings will have windows that face the street. The applicant indicated that some units may have window balconies, or Juliet balconies, but that there is a desire to respect the street and the neighbors, while still providing activation and liveliness at the street. The buildings are designed such that entrances are visible from UCB, and so the buildings will have a relationship with the street. Entrances to the buildings are placed at grade along UCB for access and activation from the sidewalk. Currently, the buildings are separated from the street by a wide lawn. Five of the six buildings along UCB not face the street, but rather face interior to the development such that the sides of the buildings face UCB. The proposed development shows that the buildings will have a more direct relationship to UCB.

Parking Behind the Front Building Line: The ordinance specifies that for most uses in any district, parking must be located behind the front building line. The front building line is determined by the outermost façade of a building as it relates to the street. In this case, the front building line is established by the closest façade with respect to UCB. All of the parking is located behind the front building line with respect to UCB. The majority of the parking is located in the lower, rear portion of the site, in the deck, and away from the street.

IMPACTS ON PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

In evaluating the potential effect that this rezoning would have on public services and facilities, other Town departments and organizations have reviewed the Master Plan and application, and the following comments are provided.

Traffic & Access

The Director of Engineering and GIS has reviewed the application and is still working with both the applicant and with Blacksburg Transit to determine an appropriate estimated trip generation, given certain assumptions about bicycle ridership/usage, as well as transit usage and the associated trip reductions that can be applied. The Engineering Director is working with the applicant on an analysis of turning movements to assess the impact on UCB and if any improvements are needed.

The application shows that the number of entrances onto UCB will be reduced from 7 to 2, which can benefit the flow of traffic on UCB. Currently, there is an entrance that aligns with Broce Drive, but the proposed condition is such that the entrances will not be aligned with those across UCB. There are no turn lanes or tapers on this section of UCB. The street section of University City Boulevard includes sidewalk, curb & gutter, 4' striped bike lanes in both directions, and one vehicle travel lane in each direction.

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1001 University City Boulevard
11/07/16 KJO

Stormwater

The stormwater concept plan has been reviewed and is approved at this time.

Water & Sewer

Public water and sewer are available to the site. The Town's Water Resources Engineer has indicated that additional hydrants may be needed, and that the waterline behind the garage needs to be upgraded to a larger line, and looped back into the system.

The Town's Sanitary Sewer Engineer has reviewed the plan and provides the following information:

The Town's historical pump station flow records indicate that the available capacity at the Sturbridge Square pump station is only 28,680 gpd (gallons per day), which is not adequate for the proposed additional 61,000 gallons per day average daily wastewater flows presented in the application. Plans for providing adequate capacity (e.g. upgrading the pump station) must be provided during site plan submission. A similar issue has arisen with consideration of other student housing proposals.

Additionally, the applicant may need to provide odor and pathogenic vector controls for the pump station due its proximity to proposed parking and amenities.

There are a number of other comments regarding technical engineering requirements that will have to be addressed at the site plan stage, if the rezoning is approved.

Transit

The site is currently served by Blacksburg Transit University City Boulevard and Patrick Henry bus routes, and has one bus stop adjacent to the property on the southern end, closest to the commercial area of UCB. There is currently a shelter at the bus stop. The applicant has proffered to install/construct "a suitable covered bus shelter at the location of the existing bus shelter on University City Boulevard along the southeast property line of Sturbridge Square upon final determination of need from Blacksburg Transit."

Further analysis regarding transit and traffic will be provided as more information is received from the applicant and the Engineering and Transit departments.

SUMMARY

The Planning Commission is asked to consider and make a recommendation of approval or denial of the proposed Rezoning request. If the request is approved, the property will be rezoned Planned Residential with any proffers offered by the applicant and accepted by Town Council. It is the Council's decision if the proffers offered are sufficient. If denied, the property will continue to be zoned as existing and any such subsequent development application will have to adhere to all the minimum standards found therein. The decision to grant or deny the rezoning request is a discretionary decision, and should be made according to the criteria outlined in §1151, and with the analysis provided.

Attachments:

Attachment A Series (red dot)

A1
A2
A3

Staff GIS Maps

Vicinity Map
Zoomed Vicinity Map, Buildings to Remain/Be Demolished
Future Land Use

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1001 University City Boulevard

11/07/16 KJO

| | |
|---|--|
| A4 | Urban Development Areas & Mixed Use Area |
| A5 | Zoning |
| A6 | |
| Attachment B Series (yellow dot) | Neighborhood Meeting |
| B1 | Neighborhood Meeting Sign-in Sheets |
| B2 | Neighborhood Meeting Notes |
| Attachment C Series (blue dot) | Proffer Statement |
| C1 | Proffer Statement |
| Application Packet | |

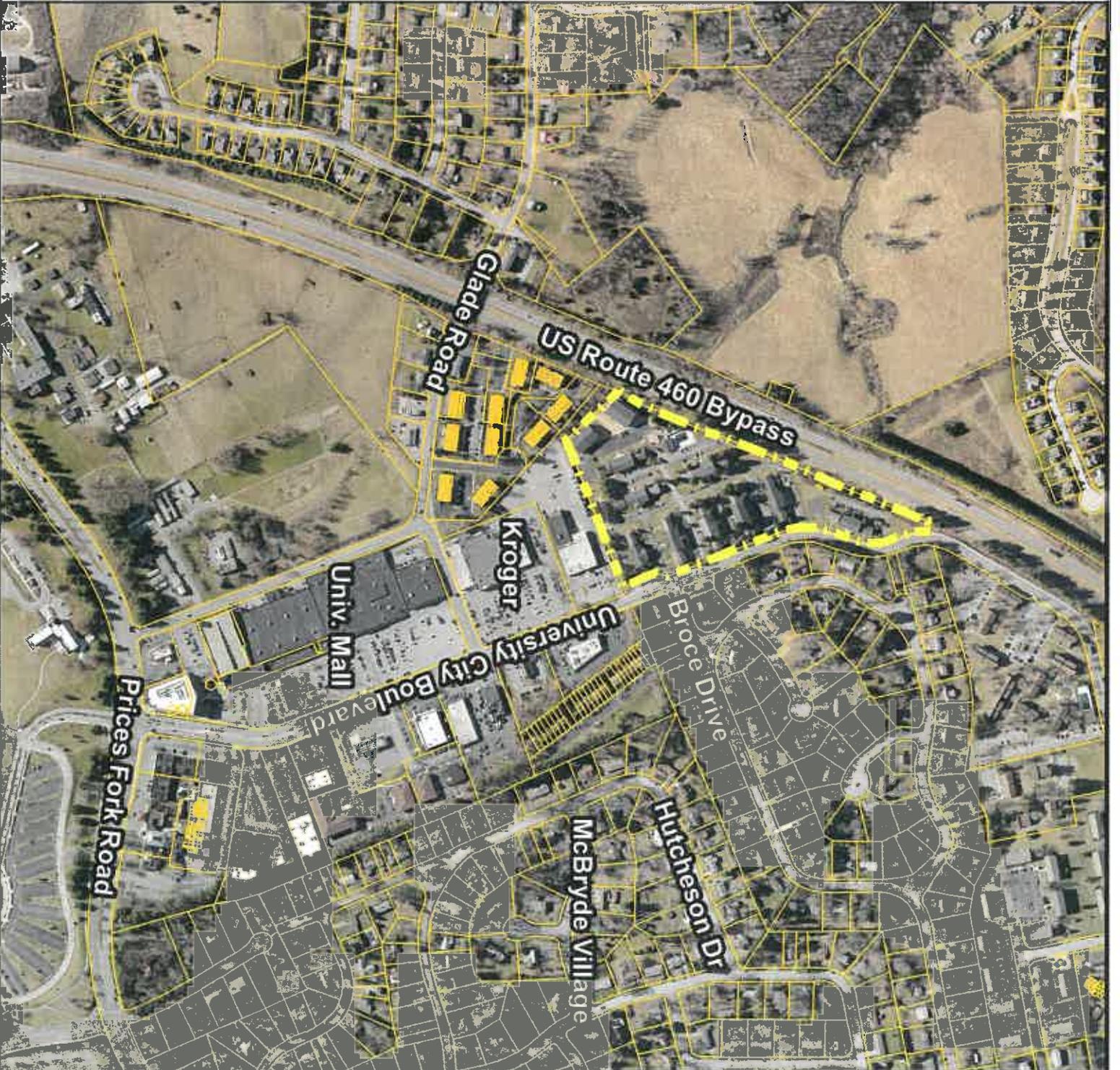
RZN16-0004 Sturbridge Square Redevelopment PRD

- Subject Parcel
- Parcels



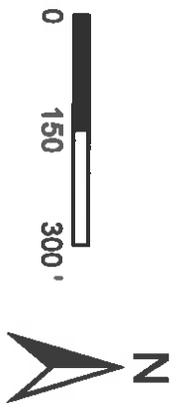
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2015 Aerials provided by Pictometry
Town of Blacksburg, P&B Dept. 11/03/16



RZN16-0004 Sturbridge Square Redevelopment PRD

- Subject Parcel
- Parcels
- Buildings to be Demolished
- Buildings to Remain



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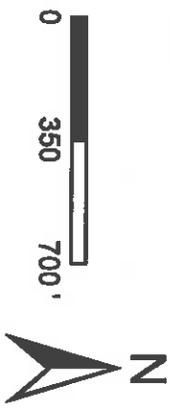
2015 Aerials provided by Pictometry/
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RZN16-0004 Sturbridge Square Redevelopment PRD

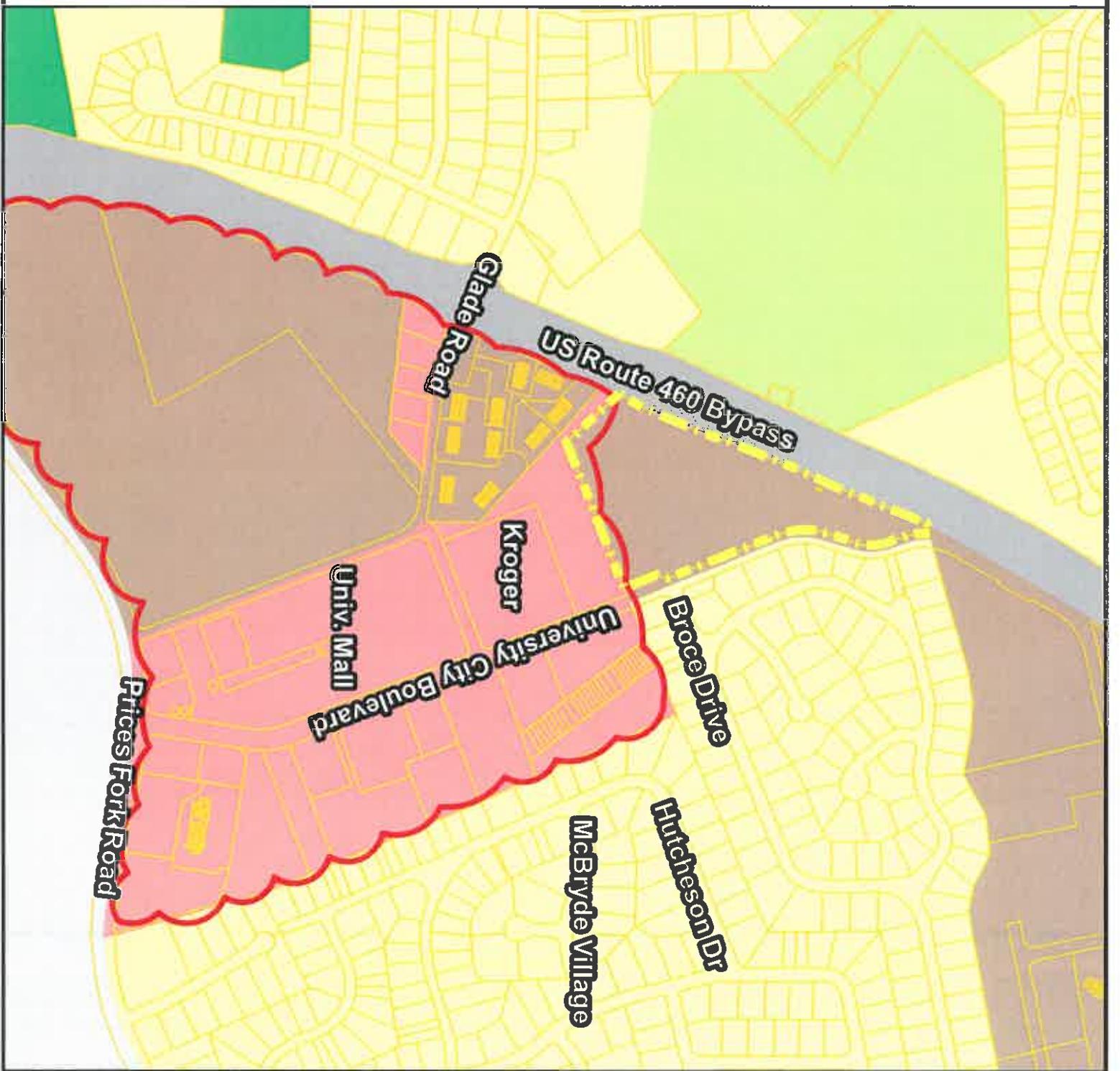
Future Land Use

-  Subject Parcel
-  Parcels
-  Mixed Use Area
-  Very Low Density Residential
-  Low Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Park Land / Open Space / Resource Protection
-  High Impact Commercial
-  University
-  US 460 Corridor



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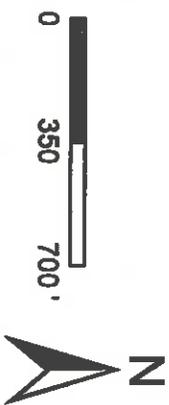
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RZN16-0004 Sturbridge Square Redevelopment PRD

Urban Development Areas

-  Subject Parcel
-  Parcels
-  Mixed Use Area
-  Urban Development Area



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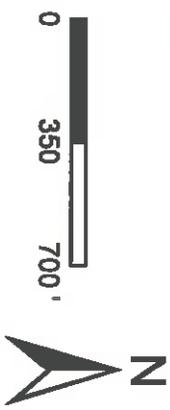
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RZN16-0004 Sturbridge Square Redevelopment PRD

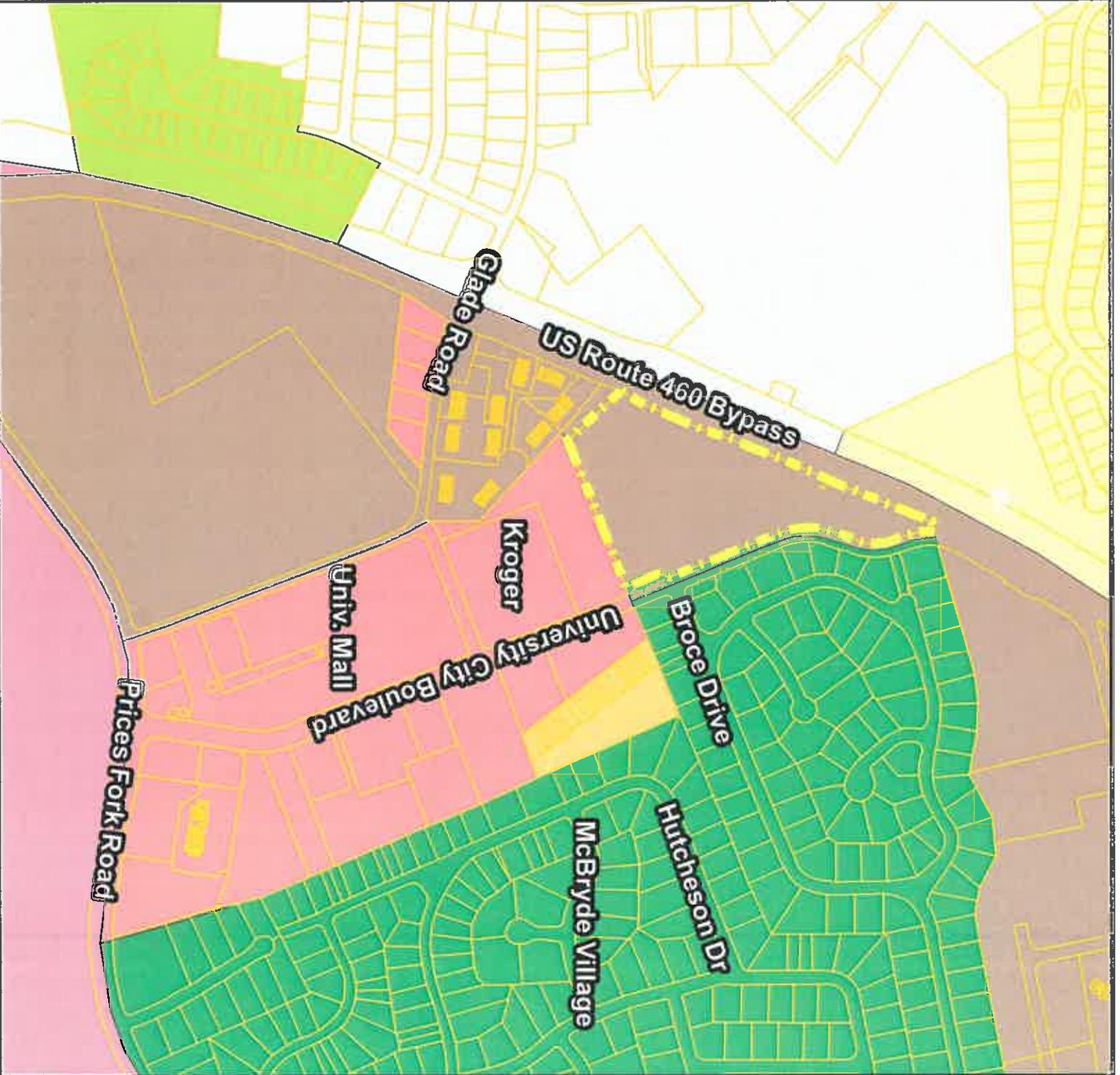
Zoning

-  Subject Parcel
-  Parcels
-  RR-1 Rural Residential 1
-  RR-2 Rural Residential 2
-  R-4 Low Density Residential
-  RM-27 Low Density Multifunit Residential
-  RM-48 Medium Density Multifunit Residential
-  GC General Commercial
-  PR Planned Residential
-  UNIV University



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Neighborhood Meeting DEN 16-0004 STURBRIDGE SQUARE PRD

Date 11-04-16

| Name | Address | Email | * |
|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| KINSEY O'SHEA | TOP | KOSHEA @ BLACKSBURG . GOV | |
| ANNE MCELUNG | TOP | AMCELUNG @ BLACKSBURG . GOV | |
| Scott Oberchain | 900 Broad Dr | Scott@blverbridgechurch.com | Send note * |
| Jake Fillman | 1011 University City Blvd | fillman@vt.edu | |
| Andrew Kulak | 1238 University City Blvd | akulak@vt.edu | |
| RANNY HUAPHERS | 430 PEPPERS FERRY | RANNY HUAPHERS @ REMAX.NET | |
| AP SLOAN | 1001 URB | ap.sloan@ychood.com | |
| Kirby Mink | 1501 URB | skirby@square@gmail.com | |
| Steve Somers | 448 Peppers Ferry | ssomers@vt.edu | |
| Kirk Johnson | 2309 Terra Bella St | kjohnson@grysfoneca.com | |
| Yu wei | 1440 Stroubles Creek Rd. | yue@vt.edu | |
| Christian Decker | 4700 Heather Dr Apt E/67 | Decker.Christn@gmail.com | |
| Fayuk Hesenjan | 1201 Progress St. Apt. 7500E | fh522@vt.edu | |
| Najla Movchuk | 903 Summit Dr | najlamk@vt.edu | |
| WALLACE LAGES | 803 Summit Dr | wallace.lages@gmail.com | SEND NOTE ! |
| Stephen Jones | 1103 Lora Lane | sdjones@virizin.net | Send note |
| | | | |
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Please Print Legibly

*PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THE STAFF REPORT EMAILED TO YOU

Public Input Meeting
RZN 16-0004 Sturbridge Square
November 9, 2016, 7:30 pm

A public input meeting was held to solicit input from citizens regarding the Sturbridge Square rezoning request located at 1001 University City Boulevard (RZN 16-0004). There were 16 citizen attendees plus 2 staff members. The summary notes provided below are representative of the meeting.

Planning staff member, Kinsey O'Shea gave a brief overview of the rezoning process and the meetings scheduled thus far, listed contact information and directed attendees to the information provided on the Town website.

Mr. Steve Semones, agent for the applicant, presented information on the proposed development including property history, proposed layout, amenities, and parking ratio.

The following is a summary of comments and questions from the citizens in attendance at the public input meeting.

- A citizen inquired about the parking requirement and what is proposed ratio.
- An attendee asked whether the Town is providing tax incentives or any other incentives and asked what the Town will receive.
- A citizen inquired about the visual impact of building façade facing University City Boulevard and whether those units would have balconies.
- A citizen asked if there would be operable windows adjacent to University City Boulevard and whether a noise barrier is proposed.
- An attendee inquired as to the density of other multifamily housing in Town and whether this proposal has the highest density.
- A citizen asked about the construction and completion timeline.
- A citizen inquired about the comparison between current conditions and proposed development regarding impervious surfaces. The citizen expressed concern with increasing impervious surfaces and noted issues of flooding in Town.
- An attendee asked how the traffic is analyzed.
- An attendee requested the details of bus ridership for the development.
- A citizen asked for explanation of the requested Right-Of-Way vacation.
- A citizen inquired about whether a traffic signal would be installed at Broce Drive.
- An attendee asked how the traffic impacts are determined and what current traffic counts on University City Boulevard are.
- A resident asked if the proposal reduces the number of entrances to the development.
- An attendee expressed concern with the height of the buildings being too close to the street.
- A citizen inquired as to whether discussions have occurred with Virginia Tech regarding the anticipated growth and impacts.

- An attendee asked if Virginia Tech is planning for additional on campus housing.
- A resident expressed concern regarding increasing density for student housing, particularly adjacent to single family housing.
- A citizen asked for information about the planned residential district.
- An attendee expressed concern about the amount of recreational space provided with relation to the proposed density.
- A resident inquired about a traffic study for the two proposed entrances.
- A citizen expressed concern regarding capacity on the existing bus route and asked if the buses could enter the proposed development.
- A resident expressed concern regarding the separation between the two entrances to the development.
- An attendee inquired about the proposed setbacks along University City Boulevard.
- A citizen asked if the existing sidewalks will remain.
- An attendee inquired about the proposed landscaping along University City Boulevard.
- A citizen asked if a copy of the presentation would be distributed.

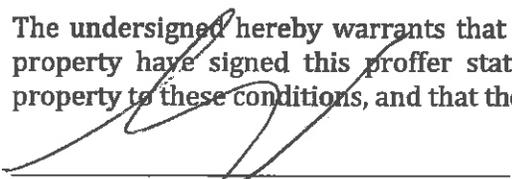
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Proffer Statement for the Application of Sturbridge Square, LLC dated October 3, 2016

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2298 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended, and Section 1160 of the Town of Blacksburg Zoning Ordinance, Town Code Appendix A, Sturbridge Square, LLC hereby voluntarily proffers that the property which is the subject of this Application (Tax Parcel #225-A 36) will be developed in accordance with the following conditions. The owner, its successors and assigns, voluntarily proffer for the property as follows:

- 1) The property shall be developed in substantial conformance with the submitted rezoning application entitled *REZONING APPLICATION FOR STURBRIDGE SQUARE PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT* (the "Application") dated October 3, 2016.
- 2) Exterior building materials shall not include vinyl siding.
- 3) Covered bicycle parking and bicycle repair areas will be provided within the structure of the parking deck.
- 4) Applicant will provide a suitable covered bus shelter at the location of the existing bus shelter on University City Boulevard along the southeast property line of Sturbridge Square upon final determination of need from Blacksburg Transit.
- 5) All multi-family buildings within the Project shall be designed and constructed so as to be rated "Certified" under the EarthCraft Multifamily 2014 Technical Guidelines. This certification will be performed by a certified inspector from EarthCraft itself within twenty-three months of the last certificate of occupancy issued for the development.
- 6) The development will include a private community center and outdoor amenity areas in the locations described within the application and shown on the masterplan. These areas will include the following amenities: swimming pool, grilling areas, 1/2 size basketball court, fitness center, community rooms and study areas.
- 7) Infrastructure will be installed to facilitate two (2) future electric car charging stations onsite.

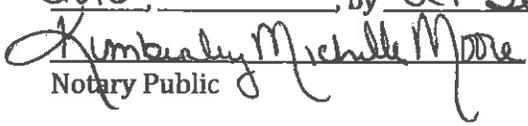
The undersigned hereby warrants that all of the owners of a legal interest in the subject property have signed this proffer statement, that they have full authority to bind the property to these conditions, and that the proffers are entered into voluntarily.



 A. P. Segar, President
 Sturbridge Square, LLC

Commonwealth of Virginia
County of Montgomery

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 29th day of September 2016, by A.P. Segar of Sturbridge Square LLC


 Kimberley Michelle Moore
 Notary Public

My commission expires: 12/31/20



