

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Anne McClung, Planning and Building Director 

Date: June 29, 2018

Subject: RZN 17-0006 – Request to rezone the Old Blacksburg Middle School property at 501 South Main Street from R-4 Low Density Residential to Downtown Commercial (DC) and Planned Residential zoning districts by Steve Semones (agent) or behalf of Midtown Development Partners LLC (applicant/owners).

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Property Location	501 South Main Street
Tax Parcel Numbers	#257-A-94, #257-A-94A, #257-25C, #257-A-217, #257-A-218
Parcel(s) Size	21+ acres
Present Zoning District	R-4 Low Density Residential
Current Use	Vacant
Adjacent Zoning Districts	<p>North: DC - Downtown Commercial, Office, R-5 Transitional Residential, RM-27 Low Density Multi Unit Residential</p> <p>East: R-5 Transitional Residential</p> <p>South: R-4 Low Density Residential, R-5 Transitional Residential, PR Planned Residential (across Eheart St.)</p> <p>West: DC (Clay Court) and R-5 across Main Street</p>
Adjacent Uses	<p>North: Verizon communication tower/building, vacant lot, single family, Spout Spring, Berryfield apartments</p> <p>East: Residential, Single and Multi-family</p> <p>South: Residential, Single and Multi-family</p> <p>West: Clay Court mixed use, small scale office (across South Main St.)</p>
Adopted Future Land Use	Civic, Mixed Use Area D
Proposed Zoning	Downtown Commercial 9.25 acres Planned Residential 11.89 acres
Proposed Uses	Office, hotel, restaurant, townhouses, multi-family residential, public safety building
Proposed Maximum Density	DC: 48 bedrooms/acre (444 bedrooms) or 24 units per acre (222 units) PR: 48 bedrooms/acre (570 bedrooms) or 24 units/acre (285 units)
Proposed Minimum Parking	Varies per parcel
Proposed Bike Parking	0.25 spaces per bedroom
Minimum Open Space	PR - 20% of total PR district area (31% provided) DC- none required, Public Space provided

EVALUATION OF APPLICATION

This staff report is divided into topical areas of evaluation. Many of the overarching principles in the Comprehensive Plan, the Residential Infill Guidelines, and the Zoning Ordinance overlap into key topical focus areas. To aid in review of the staff report each topic or focus area is covered only once. The analysis is contained in the staff report. The pertinent text sections from the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance can be found in Attachment D. Resolution 7-D-15 adopted by Town Council concerning development principles important to the Old Blacksburg Middle School (OBMS) site is included as Attachment C. The applicant's evaluation of Midtown in relation to Resolution 7-D-15 can be found on pages 28-31 of the application.

The staff report also includes a summary of key elements to provide guidance to Planning Commission for discussion at the work session.

List of Attachments:

- A. Maps
- B. Supporting regulations: Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Ordinance
- C. Resolution 7-D-15 (Resolution Reaffirming and Clarifying the Town's 2010 Old Blacksburg Middle School Property Development Principles)
- D. Staff Comments/Memo from Historic or Design Review Board
- E. Neighborhood Meeting Notes and Sign-In Sheets
- F. Correspondence received as of June 28, 2018

HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site has a long history of educational uses. In addition to its history as the "Old Blacksburg Middle School," (OBMS) the site was the location of an early African-American school. A public high school was built on the site in the 1950s. In the 1970s when a new high school was built on Patrick Henry Drive, the school on this site was converted to a middle school. With the opening of a new middle school on Prices Fork Road in 2002, the school use ceased but the school buildings on-site were used for a short period of time for school office and administrative uses. The property was declared surplus by the Montgomery County School Board in 2009 and transferred to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors in 2010 and offered for sale. The school buildings were demolished in 2012 and the site has remained vacant. The property has now been sold to Midtown Partners LLC.

PLANNING HISTORY

The OBMS site was the subject of a joint master planning effort by the Town of Blacksburg and Montgomery County in 2011. The final OBMS Master Plan was adopted by both entities in June 2011. This planning effort was designed to provide guidance for redevelopment on the site. Different proposed purchasers and a different project vision were in place at the time of the development of the OBMS Master Plan. Conditions have changed since then and some of the elements in the adopted Master Plan are no longer relevant. Other overarching principles such as creating walkable blocks, mixed uses, structured parking, Main Street orientation for more intense uses, and the importance of creating public spaces remain valid considerations.

After adoption of the Master Plan, a rezoning petition was filed in March of 2013 (RZN 13-0001). That rezoning application was withdrawn on June 14, 2013. In 2016, Montgomery County, the property owner at the time, filed a subdivision plat (SUB 16-0005) to split the present OBMS parcel into two parcels in order to facilitate the sale of the property. The current rezoning application was filed in October of 2017.

3 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

CURRENT REZONING APPLICATION

RZN 17-0006 is a request by Steve Semones (agent) for Midtown Development Partners, LLC (applicant/owners). The ownership interests listed for Midtown Partners in the application is Jeanne H. Stosser and James K. Cowan Jr. Midtown Partners owns three of the five parcels included in the rezoning. The Town of Blacksburg owns the remaining two parcels. The parcels owned by the Town are the two paved areas from the former school use located on Clay Street and Eheart St. All of the parcels are illustrated on Sheet #Z1 of the application.

Midtown Partners LLC filed RZN 17-0006 in October of 2017. After a neighborhood meeting and initial work session with the Planning Commission, the applicant requested the rezoning be placed on hold in order to revise the application and address concerns. Revised application materials were submitted on April 13, 2018. The rezoning filed in 2017 included the parcel located at 402 Clay Street. In February of 2018, the owner of the parcel at 402 Clay Street withdrew from this rezoning request and filed a separate rezoning (RZN 18-0004).

The applicant is proposing to rezone the front 9.25 acres to the Downtown Commercial (DC) zoning district and the rear 11.89 acres to the Planned Residential (PR) zoning district. The proposed zoning line is illustrated on Sheet #Z3 of the application. The application shows that the DC zoned area will be divided into six parcels and the Planned Residential zoned area will be split into six parcels as well. The parcel delineation is illustrated on Sheet #Z7 of the application.

The applicant has worked with Communita Design, a Seattle based design firm, to develop a Pattern Book for the Midtown project. The Pattern Book contains general text outlining the placemaking goals of the plan, overarching design principles and pictures representative of possible building types and public spaces in the project. Pages 7 and 9 of the Pattern Book show the "project vision." The Pattern Book itself is intended to be illustrative in nature and while explanatory and supportive, it is not considered a binding proffered element.

There are specific sections in the Pattern Book showing the development parameters for each of the parcels and typical sections for the streets proposed. The applicant has pulled portions of the Pattern Book into separate cut sheets and included the cut sheets in the proffer statement to indicate the elements that are proposed as binding conditions. Please refer to the Proffer statement in the rezoning application to understand what is proposed to be binding for this development from the Pattern Book. **If an item is not in in the proffer statement, while it may be included in the Pattern Book, the statement or standard is not binding.**

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS/ZONING

The subject parcel is approximately 21 ± acres in size with frontage on Main Street, Clay Street and Eheart Street. The parcel shape is a long rectangle. The Main Street frontage is approximately 445 feet. There is variation in the topography over the parcel. There are flat areas, such as the location of the former athletic field area, as well as significantly sloped areas. In general the site is raised along the South Main Street frontage and along Clay Street. The site is currently zoned R-4, Low Density Residential which would allow approximately 85 single family homes by-right on the 21 ± acre parcel, provided all other Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance standards are met.

PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

The Town and the applicant have been working on an agreement separate from the rezoning that can address key project considerations that cannot be included in rezoning proffers, that involve economic development issues unrelated to the rezoning or that involve land transfers. For example, there can be financial cost sharing proposals that are not appropriate in the land use decision of the rezoning but are

4 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

important to convey for the project to be successful. For example, the applicant proposes several parcels of land for public gathering areas to be dedicated to the Town. However, the applicant is not proposing to develop these areas. The Town and the applicant may together decide on the level of funding the Town will commit to developing these spaces. This type of mutually agreed upon arrangement would be the type of element included in a Performance Agreement. The Town Attorney has provided the following summary of the key provisions that may be addressed in the Performance Agreement.

- Provisions for a shared stormwater facility;
- Transfer of Town owned parcel (.94 acre) adjacent to Eheart Street to developers;
- Transfer to the Town of property along Clay needed for a new police station;
- Reimbursement to developer for the costs of improving the public gathering areas (Plaza and Old School Commons);
- Recommended use restrictions on the property, including provisions to limit student housing in Planned Residential areas; and
- Contribution for parking garage costs.

While the details of the agreement are still being negotiated (the draft is exempt from public disclosure under Virginia Code §2.2-3705.1(13)), the agreement requires approval by Town Council and will be available to the public for review and comment before it is approved

PPEA/PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

The Town of Blacksburg is planning for a new Police Department Headquarters to replace the existing facility on Clay St. The master plan for Midtown shows a Public Safety building on the Clay Street side of the property. The Town of Blacksburg received an unsolicited proposal under the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002 (PPEA) for the construction of a new Police Department Headquarters and Parking Garage in this location. The PPEA is an alternative method of public procurement that is based on public/private partnerships; it is intended to be a faster, cheaper method of producing public buildings. The project scope consists of building and parking garage construction, exclusive of site work.

The Town accepted the unsolicited PPEA for consideration. As part of the PPEA process the Town provides an opportunity for the submission of alternate proposals by other entities. The deadline for submission of other proposals is August 1, 2018. After that the Town will evaluate all submitted proposals and make decisions as to whether it wishes to proceed with requesting more detailed proposals.

Thus the consideration of development on Parcel DC#1 with the new Police Department Headquarters and parking garage is still in the preliminary stages of consideration and details are not available. For example, the rezoning application shows an orientation of the police station building internally and parking garage externally on Clay Street but that is likely to change through the design process. The exact size of the building and number of spaces in the parking garage have not been finalized.

The use on DC Parcel #1 in the rezoning is currently shown as "Public Safety" and "Parking Structure (for public safety building & general public." Staff is suggesting that the rezoning application be amended to show this use in a more generic fashion on the master plan since sufficient detail is not available at this time. The configuration on the plan can be construed as misleading as changes occur through the PPEA and site design process. The Town and applicant should consider a proffer to address how the design of the use will proceed and how the public will be involved. Concerns about this element of the project in the current configuration have been expressed in a memo from the Historic or Design Review Board and in a letter from the Clay Court HOA, both of which are attached.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Section 1151 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the Commission 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.*

In addition to the criteria in Section 1151 and all of the standards in the Zoning Ordinance, the application should be reviewed in comparison to the adopted development principles for the Old Blacksburg Middle School adopted by Town Council in Resolution 7-D-15 and found in Attachment C.

Intent of Districts

There are other pertinent evaluation criteria in the Zoning Ordinance including the purpose of each zoning district. There is a statement of purpose for each district in the Zoning Ordinance. The purpose statement is particularly important for the PR district. The purpose statement for the Planned Residential zoning district is as follows:

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 model or type that is not found elsewhere in town, such as 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. In all cases, these applications are reviewed by the Planning Commission and Town Council for their merits on a case-by-case basis.

The purpose statement for the Downtown Commercial zoning district is as follows:

Downtown Commercial §3140

The Downtown Commercial district is the heart of Town culturally, geographically, and historically. It lends the Town its small-Town architecture, scale, and feel. It is intended to be a predominantly pedestrian area, catering to bicycle and pedestrian traffic with shops and storefronts close to the

road, pedestrian scale, wide walkways, street trees and limited off-street parking, well screened. The history of the area is retained with preservation of historic structures and replication of style in additions and expansions. The core of the Downtown exudes the vitality of the interaction of people and activities. Commercial opportunities include a diversity of specialty, retail services, cultural, recreation, entertainment activities, and public functions.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive Plan Map Series Evaluation of Application

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. The following text identifies the designation of the proposed rezoning property on the maps in the Future Land Use map series.

Map A: Future Land Use Designation

In evaluating whether the proposed Planned Residential development conforms to the general guidelines and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use designation of the subject property shall be considered. The property is designated as "Civic" on the Future Land Use Map. Civic uses typically include schools, government offices and buildings, service organizations, and other institutional uses that can occur in any zoning district. The Civic designation reflects the historic use of the property for a public school.

The property is also designated as Mixed Use Area D on the Future Land Use Map. Mixed Use Areas are intended to be developments containing a mix of both residential and non-residential uses. These areas are located on major roads, served by public utilities and transit. Typical Implementing zoning districts for the Mixed Use Future Land Area classifications include: Mixed Use (MXD), Downtown Commercial (DC), General Commercial (GC), Planned Residential District (PR), and Planned Commercial District (PC).

The Comprehensive Plan states that all properties within a Mixed Use Area should complement adjacent properties with vehicular connections, coordinating pedestrian amenities, and complementary architecture and site design features and compatible uses. Mixed use areas are encouraged to have vertically mixed uses and include outdoor activities such as patio dining. On-site parking should be accommodated without dominating the streetscape. A strong bike and pedestrian system should be included within the project and connect to the Town's greenway system. Low impact design techniques should be considered. Historical and environmentally sensitive sites within a Mixed Use Area that are adequately protected

More specifically, Mixed Use Area D includes the Old Blacksburg Middle School property and extends down Main Street to the old Annie Kay's building (now Capone's Jewelry). The Comprehensive Plan indicates that redevelopment of Mixed Use Area D should have "uses that stimulate pedestrian activity on Main Street and have sensitive transitions to established neighborhoods within the Blacksburg Historic District."

The Town's Historic or Design Review Board (HDRB) has reviewed the application and its comments are included in Attachment D on pages D-8 to D-10.

Map B: Urban Development Areas

This property is within a designated Urban Development Area. UDAs and Mixed-Use Areas are intended to serve as focal points for commercial and residential growth in Town. These are target areas for growth and redevelopment. However, the designation of UDA does not prevent developments outside the, nor obligate the Town to approve rezoning or conditional use permit applications within the UDA. The

designation of an Urban Development Area does not affect existing zoning, nor does it mandate a specific type of development.

Map C: Neighborhood, Employment and Service Areas Map

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 front part of the OBMS site is located in a Commercial area which is the same designation along all of the Town’s commercial corridors such as Main Street, Prices Fork Road and University City Blvd. The back of the parcel is located within an “Urban Walkable Residential” area which reflects a variety of housing types within proximity to commercial areas and the University.

Key issues for these areas are noted in the support regulations found in Attachment B. Analysis of these issues is included in the topical areas of the staff report including lifestyle conflicts, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, transit, parking, landscaping/buffering, and open space.

PROPOSED ZONING

The applicant is proposing to rezone the front 9.25 acres to the Downtown Commercial (DC) zoning district and the rear 11.89 acres to the Planned Residential (PR) zoning district. The proposed zoning line is illustrated on the map on Sheet #Z3 of the application. The rezoning application describes the project as a mix of commercial, retail office and residential in the DC district and different residential products in the PR district.

Land Uses Proposed

The Midtown project proposes a variety of different uses. Proffer #7 outlines the uses by parcel as shown below. The location of the parcels is illustrated on Sheet #Z3 of the application. Assumptions on the maximum square footage of non-residential uses and the number of residential units were provided in the application and traffic study for the purpose of calculating water and sewer demand and projected traffic generation. These are not exact numbers but estimates of the maximum project impacts.

DC Parcel #1	1.32 acres	Civic or Multi-use Commercial (public safety building)
DC Parcel #2	1.22 acres	Multi-use Commercial (primary office tenant, Gateway building)
DC Parcel #3	1.47 acres	Community Open Space (Old School Commons)
DC Parcel #4A	.24 acre	Civic, Office or Multi-use Commercial
DC Parcel #4B	.91 acre	Civic, Office or Multi-use Commercial (possible library)
DC Parcel #4C	.40 acre	Parking and Open Space
DC #5	1.14 acres	Multi-use Commercial and Residential
DC#6	1.34 acres	Hotel and Multi-use Commercial
PR Parcel #1	.63 acre	Multi-family residential
PR Parcel #2	3.06 acres	Civic/Park Space (Central Park)
PR Parcel #3	.91 acre	Multi-family Residential and Community Recreation
PR Parcel #4	1.85 acres	Multi-family residential and Townhomes
PR Parcel #5	2.02 acres	Multi-family residential and Townhomes
PR Parcel #6	2.17 acres	Townhomes, duplex (two family dwelling) and Community Recreation.

8 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

Downtown Commercial Uses

The application indicates that, for the DC district, the permitted uses would be all those listed in the DC district except those noted below. Typical permitted uses in the DC district include retail commercial, restaurant, personal services and offices. Residential uses are allowed on upper floors of DC zoned parcels. The applicant proposes to voluntarily exclude the following permitted uses:

Consumer Repair Shop

Funeral Home

Pawn Shop

Tattoo Parlor

The applicant is also requesting the granting of several Conditional Use Permits (CUP) in the DC district as part of the rezoning including:

Hotel/Motel

General Office on the ground floor

Medical Office on the ground floor

The Downtown Commercial district does not allow office uses by-right on the ground floor. Offices are allowed by-right on all upper floors and in basement levels. It is important to create visual interest at street level and have uses that draw pedestrians in from the street for a vital and active downtown. Offices uses are intended to be part of the mix of uses in Downtown and there will be locations where office on the ground floor in the DC district is appropriate. Thus offices on the ground floor are allowed by Conditional Use Permit so the use can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Requests for both General and Medical office have been submitted with the rezoning. The tenant occupying most of the building on DC Parcel #2 is an office use. The applicant does propose the limitation that no more than 60% of the total DC ground floor area would be office uses. The 60% would be of General Office and Medical Office combined. The applicant has not provided an indicated of the total square footage of development proposed on ground floor spaces in order to give a finite number on the total office square footage.

Civic Uses

The Civic uses proposed include public gathering spaces on various parcels primarily in the DC zone district. A proposed public safety building is shown on DC Parcel #1 on Clay Street. The applicant has also shown a potential public library site on DC Parcel #4B on Eheart Street. The existing Montgomery Floyd Regional library facility in Blacksburg is located on Miller Street. The applicant has indicated the site will be held for a period of time to allow Montgomery County to decide if it wants to pursue the location for a new library site. If not used for a library, the applicant has indicated an office structure would be built on DC Parcel #4B.

Planned Residential Uses

Typical uses in the PR district include a variety of residential uses such as single family, multi-family, townhomes and duplexes (two family dwelling). In Proffer #6, the applicant proposes that no more than 75% of the total Planned Residential units will be multi-family units and not more that 50% of the units will be townhomes. While duplexes are listed as an option for PR Parcel #6 there is no indication of a maximum on that residential use type.

The application indicates that for the PR district, the permitted uses would be all those listed in the PR district with the following uses voluntarily excluded:

Gasoline station

Tattoo Parlor

9 RZN17-0006 OBMS
6-29-18 ALM

Section 3113 (c) of the Planned Residential district contains limitations on proposed non-residential components of a PR project. Non-residential uses are allowed to be proposed in a PR district. The applicant is proposing to have limitation #3 removed and may want to provide more information on this request since the project contains two separate zoning districts. Thus development on the DC Parcels is not contingent on the construction of residential units.

Planned Residential §3113

Maximum area for commercial and/or office uses: Ten (10) percent of the gross area of the PR district. In addition, the following standards shall apply:

(1) Commercial and office uses shall be expressly designed for the service and convenience of the PR district;

(2) Commercial and office uses shall be designed and located to protect the character of the district and surrounding residential districts. Such facilities shall be screened and landscaped so as to be compatible with adjoining residences;

~~(3) Construction of commercial and office uses shall not begin until twenty five (25) percent of the residential units or two hundred fifty (250) dwelling units, whichever is less, of the total PR district have been completed.~~

Community Recreation

Community Recreation is included as a use on PR Parcel #3 and PR Parcel #6 but no information has been given on the type of amenities that would be provided. Community recreation is typically developed as an amenity for the private use of the residents of a development and includes uses such as clubhouse, pool, sport court or picnic areas. The applicant has not indicated the types of recreational amenities proposed. The applicant may want to better identify the Community Recreation areas as private areas for residents that are not public areas such as the Old School Commons or Central Park.

Use and Design Standards

Use and Design standards govern the physical development for a particular use in any zoning district. Use and Design Standards are found in Article IV of the Zoning Ordinance and are categorized by type of use (Civic, Residential, Commercial, and Office). For example, for multi-family residential dwellings, parking must be located behind the front building line and the street frontage must contain an entrance and the principal windows for the units. Some of these standards are covered by the statements in the Pattern Book excerpts Exhibits A-K attached to the proffer statement. However, that does not address all of the possible Use and Design Standards. Since the application does not specifically address if/how all of the applicable Use and Design standards for each use will be met, a commitment to meeting those standards or specifying any exceptions to the standards requested should be part of the rezoning application.

Density & Occupancy, Lifestyle Conflicts

The density of the development is a factor in considering whether the proposed development is appropriate to the context of the surrounding neighborhood. The density for the Downtown Commercial portion of the site conforms to the development standard for the DC district. In the Planned Residential zoning district, applicants propose a density with a justification on why the density proposed is appropriate for the site.

The proposed density is 48 bedrooms per acre or 24 units per acre in both the DC and Planned Residential districts. The density is calculated over the entire acreage of each zoning district (9.25 and 11.89 acres) and not on a by parcel-by-parcel basis. It would be helpful to specify that the maximum density is the lesser of the two; bedrooms or units. The maximum number of bedrooms on the DC zoned portion of the

10 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

site would be 444 bedrooms or 222 units. The PR zoned portion of the site would have a maximum of 570 bedrooms or 285 units.

Allowed **occupancy** in the DC district is a family plus two unrelated individuals or no more than four unrelated individuals. Occupancy in the Planned Residential district varies by residential use type. For multifamily dwellings and townhouses, the maximum dwelling unit occupancy is a family, plus two (2) persons unrelated to the family; or no more than four (4) unrelated persons. For detached and attached single-family dwellings and two-family dwellings, the maximum dwelling unit occupancy shall be a family, plus two (2) persons unrelated to the family, or no more than three (3) unrelated persons. The proposed occupancy for all of the residential unit types in Midtown is a family plus two unrelated persons or no more than three unrelated persons. Thus the applicant is restricting the number of unrelated individual through the rezoning to no more than three.

Not only does the physical development of the property affect the neighborhood compatibility, but also the **lifestyle** of the target market for the project. There are a number of Town policies and goals that encourage the provision of housing for a variety of different citizens with different lifestyle needs. Blacksburg has been identified as both a great place to retire, as well as a great place to raise a family. The University is actively growing undergraduate enrollment which is impacting the Town's housing market.

The Town and the Blacksburg Baptist Church commissioned a study to look at the potential for housing in the Downtown area. The purpose of the study, completed in 2015, was to better understand what housing demand exists for Downtown and the types of products that must be offered to capture this demand with a focus on non-student housing. The study determined that there is demand for non-student oriented housing in Downtown, however, the ongoing demand for undergraduate student housing is influencing the market and impeding the development of non-student housing. The OBMS site was identified as a "Special Opportunity Site" and specific information from the study on the OBMS is included in Attachment C. The summary recommendations from the study are shown below.

"The Town of Blacksburg has immense potential to adapt and thrive in the growing knowledge economy. Downtown is the centerpiece; it can continue to evolve into a more vibrant, mixed-use environment with the kind of energy that a robust residential community can add, and that an innovation economy needs. Over the course of conducting this housing market strategy, a number of policies were identified that need to be addressed in order to make the development of non-student oriented housing a reality:

1. Target young professionals
2. Better align regulatory and policy framework with desired outcomes
3. Identify places for full-block development and downtown expansion
4. Continue to partner with Virginia Tech where interests align
5. Undertake a joint plan with Virginia Tech to accommodate future growth"

The rezoning application states in Section 3.2.5 that long term residency is desired and the project is not intended as student housing. Regarding leased units the applicant commits that no 4-bedroom, 4-bath units will be constructed and units will not be leased by the bedroom. In addition, 75% of the units offered for rent shall be required to verify an income of twice the monthly rent. This often eliminates undergraduate students.

For sale units have some limitations at the time of sale. Purchasers have to "represent to the seller at the time of purchase their intent, or that of an immediate family member, to occupy the unit" and that they are "not acquiring the property primarily for investment purposed or as rental property." There is no

11 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

restriction beyond the initial sale. The site design, unit mix and likely price points make the development less attractive to undergraduate students. However, it is possible that some units may be resold for student occupancy or as second homes and the limitations appear to be generally of limited effectiveness. There may be other options to limit these possibilities that can be considered as part of the Performance Agreement between the Town and the applicant.

Phasing of Development

The application does not include a specific phasing plan but phasing is discussed in Section 7.1 of the application. In general, the site will be developed from front to back with supporting infrastructure occurring with each phase. The applicant has indicated that the hotel (DC Parcel #6) and the office/commercial building along Main Street (DC Parcel #2) would be the first buildings constructed. Construction of new Church Street would also be included in Phase 1. The parking garage is needed to support the proposed office/commercial building. The new traffic light required at the intersection of South Main St. and Eheart St. will need to be constructed in the first phase of development and completed prior to any Certificates of Occupancy for the project. The applicant anticipates an 8-10 year buildout of the entire project. The timing will be guided by market demand and absorption of the residential units.

Development Standards/District Standards

District standards govern the physical development of a site in a particular zoning district regardless of use. Section 3142 of the Downtown Commercial zoning district has specific standards for building height and building design that will need to be met. There is no maximum lot coverage or FAR, and no setback requirement in the DC district.

In a Planned Residential Zoning District the applicant may propose most of the individual district/development standards. The layout and standards of the development, if approved, are binding. Since the applicant proposes the standards in the PRD, the evaluation of the proposed standards is different. The evaluation should be based on how well the proposed standards, when applied, fit into the existing character of the surrounding area. The Planning Commission and Town Council evaluate each Planned Residential development on its own merit. There is a great deal of flexibility in proposing the development's standards, but the standards should not be so out of scale or character, or different from the various surrounding districts as to create an incompatibility in use or site layout. In this instance, the front portion of the site abuts the mixed use Clay Court project and other non-residential uses across Main St. The remainder of the surrounding area contains single family and smaller scale multi-family development. A new more dense multi-family development, The Alexander, was approved at the corner of South Main St and Eheart St.

Building Design: Orientation, Style, Materials, Scale, Massing, and Height

The building orientation, style, materials, scale, massing, and height of a development are elements affecting how a proposed development fits into the surrounding area. The applicant has put forward a Pattern Book for Midtown, which has a very general level of architectural commitment. There are no specific elevations given for any of the buildings. Some suggested images and guiding elements are provided in the Pattern Book but these should not be taken as a commitment to architectural style or specific building materials. The Pattern Book and Proffers do include individual cut sheets with development standards and design features listed parcel-by-parcel. Please refer to Exhibits A-K of the Proffer statement. The topics covered in each Parcel cut sheet include:

- Allowed Uses (previously discussed)
- Height
- Setbacks
- Overhangs

12 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

- Parking
- Entries
- Landscape
- Architecture

These are key elements in how a building looks and how it functions in relation to the street as well as how the project components will work together. The Comprehensive Plan contains Residential Infill Guidelines designed to outline important elements that will integrate new development into the existing urban fabric. Excerpts from the Residential Infill Guidelines are included in Attachment B.

Overall, the building orientations are primarily internal to the site with the exception of the residential uses on Eheart St. and the building fronting on Main St. The project is oriented around the Old School Common and Midtown Way. The applicant is putting forward a more urban mixed-use community that is walkable with a trail and sidewalks as well as providing public gathering spaces. The development as a whole must be cohesive and must fit into the overall context of the area.

The office building on Main St. will have ground floor entries facing Main St. and also have entry to the Old School Common interior to the site. The applicant anticipates several restaurants will be located on Main St. with open air dining. The hotel use is located along Eheart St. and is internal oriented to the site. The HDRB has noted the internal orientation of the development does not create a sensitive transition to the adjacent historic Sixteen Squares.

In the residential development on Eheart St. front doors may face the street or the common open space and a covered porch or stoop is required to help orient units to the street. Private garages and parking lots will not be visible from Eheart Street. Any commercial uses may have visible parking from Eheart St. but would include vegetative screening.

The applicant has verbally indicated that preliminary design work is occurring on the office building to front Main Street. The hotel operator is also known and so design work could occur on this building as well. Staff would recommend that at a minimum more design information be made available on these two buildings which are anticipated in Phase 1 of the development. More details on these two buildings would give assurances as the quality of the buildings planned in Midtown and how the parameters in the Pattern Book are implemented.

The application states that the building materials will include cast materials, glass, metal and cement composite siding, smooth finished concrete or approved equivalents. A maximum of 25% of the façade can be stucco used as accent panels. Vinyl siding is prohibited. Staff has concerns about who would be approving any "equivalents" referenced above. It is assumed that the stucco product referenced is likely EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish System) as opposed to traditional stucco. The Historic or Design Review Board (HDRB) has expressed concerns that synthetic stone and EFIS are not durable building materials and should not be included in the project. Staff shares concerns about synthetic stone and would prefer a very limited use of the EFIS material.

Another comment from the HDRB is related to architectural variety. The applicant may want to consider a commitment to some level of architectural variety particularly with the residential products to show that all of the residential units will not look the same. This could be a commitment to architectural variation by parcel.

Section 8.2 of the application is entitled "Environmentally Responsible Design." The applicant proposes that all of the buildings in the Planned Residential zoning district "shall meet a minimum of EarthCraft

13 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

certification.” The proffer statement should explicitly state if the actual external EarthCraft Certification will be obtained. Regarding development in the DC zoning district, the application states that Earthcraft or LEED building certification is at the discretion of the purchaser or tenant.

The Planning Commission and Council are asked to determine if the level of detail in the Proffer statement with Attachments A-K are sufficient to govern the quality of design and neighborhood compatibility.

Review Committee

Page 39-41 of the Pattern Book outlines the creation of a Review Committee. “The Review Committee has responsibility to ensure that all proposed improvements within its district are in compliance with the requirements set forth in this Pattern Book. The committees have reasonable discretion in the application of the guidelines and standards in order to address site conditions, integration of adjoining use and design and to insure high-quality complimentary development of each site.” The review process for new construction would include a (1) Conceptual Design Review; (2) Final Design Review; and (3) Certificate of Approval. The Review Committee members would be appointed by the HOA of the DC and PR districts. There are concerns that with a wholly internally appointed Committee there is limited value to the Town. The applicant has verbally indicated that the purpose of the Committee was to serve as a first review to help ensure that the different site plans or building plans submitted to the Town were in compliance with the rezoning. The HDRB has also commented on the proposed Review Committee.

Building Height

Building height is measured from the grade at the front entrance of the building to the peak of the roof or tallest point of the building. This calculation is slightly different for corner lots where the entry heights on the two street sides are averaged to calculate a maximum height. The Downtown Commercial district allows a maximum of 60’ in building height. The application shows compliance with the maximum height of 60’ for Parcels DC#1, DC#2, DC#4A, DC#4B and DC#5. The buildings range from 4 or 5 stories over parking. Portions of the parking areas may be underground. For DC Parcel #6 the same 60’ maximum height is shown but does not reference the buildings as over parking.

For the Planned Residential district the applicant proposes the height standard for the development. In this case, the applicant is proposing a 60’ maximum height. The Pattern Book and the Exhibits in the proffer statement show the maximum height for each parcel. In general, there is a step down in building height along Eheart Street from 60’ to 40’ and four stories to two stories.

Setbacks

Setbacks or required yards provide areas on a property that are to remain free from structures. This allows for both landscaping and open space around buildings for light and air circulation, but it also generally provides areas where public utilities may be installed. In many cases, public utility easements are established around the interior of lot lines, within the setbacks to allow for both Town public utilities, but also for private utilities such as telecommunications, gas, and power. Consistent setbacks in a neighborhood can help maintain a sense of regular rhythm and uniformity while also allowing for landscaping and open space.

The Pattern Book and the Exhibits in the proffer statement show the minimum setback from the property line for each parcel. Along the public street frontage the following setbacks are proposed:

Main Street	20’
Eheart Street	15’
Clay Street	30’

14 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

The exterior project elements and how they related to the street and the surrounding development are the most important in this project. The internal setbacks proposed are appropriate to a more urban residential and non-residential mixed use project.

Buffering/Landscaping

There is no specific buffer yard requirement for the Planned Residential district as a whole because the nature of the proposed developments can vary so widely and the buffering proposed should be appropriate for the type and intensity and context of the development proposed. Each application is evaluated with regards to buffering to determine the appropriateness of the proposal as it relates to the surrounding uses and neighborhood, and whether the effects of proposed buffering mitigate any adverse impacts to the surrounding area.

Landscaping is shown parcel-by-parcel in Exhibits A-K of the Proffer statement.

In addition, the applicant will also have to show on site plans that the landscaping provided meets the Town ordinances for any surface parking lot landscaping, street trees and overall site canopy coverage:

- 5% of the entire surface parking area (excluding access drive) landscaped with trees and ground cover in parking lot islands (§5427(a))
- 1 tree per 10 parking spaces (§5427(b))
- Perimeter parking area of at least 10' wide where any parking is adjacent to public right-of-way (§5427(f))
- 1 street tree per 30' linear foot of frontage

The Downtown Commercial district has no requirement for canopy coverage. Street trees must be provided on public streets. Parking lots constructed within the DC district must meet the standards within the Zoning Ordinance.

Open Space

There is no specific open space requirement for the DC district. Public use space is proposed in the DC district in two areas (Midtown Plaza and Old School Commons) and the area totals 83,540 square feet.

Required open space is a component in most of the Town's residential zoning districts. The Planned Residential zoning district standards and the Use & Design Standards for Multifamily Dwellings, Townhomes and Two-family dwellings require a minimum of 20% open space for developments. It is important that the open space be meaningful in its size and function and geared toward the use of the residents in the development. A minimum of 5,000 square feet of the required open space shall be dedicated to a specific recreation area for residents. The application states that the requirement will be met. Sheet #Z7 shows the proposed private open space and public use spaces proposed. The open space plan (Sheet Z7) shows a total of approximately 160,335 square feet (31%) of the Planned Residential zoned area will be open space.

In addition to the open space required in the Planned Residential district and Use and Design Standards for multi-family dwellings, Section 3113(b) of the Zoning Ordinance also requires a specific recreational activity area or areas be developed and maintained for the residents of the development as part of this open space. Two parcels in the PR district are shown to include Community Recreation. No specific information has been given on the types of recreational amenities that will be included in the residential development.

Public Spaces

The Zoning Ordinance does not include a specific requirement for "public space." The application proposes several different areas on the site that would be public gathering spaces and is best illustrated on Sheet

15 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

#Z5 of the application. A plaza area, "Midtown Plaza" is proposed on the corner of South Main St. and Eheart St. The applicant indicates the dimensions as approximately 141' wide (along Eheart St.) and 132' deep (along South Main St.) The applicant proposes to dedicate this area to the Town. While illustrations are included of how the plaza could be designed and landscaped it should be noted that the design is only illustrative in nature. The applicant is not proposing to construct the plaza. The Town would be responsible for design and the cost of improvements in the plaza. The plaza illustrations in the application materials and videos also do not include the mast arm or signal equipment necessary for the traffic signal to be installed at South Main St. and Eheart St.

A second public space, "Old School Common" is proposed interior to the site and would be framed in U-shape by the proposed office building on S.Main St., the proposed public safety building/parking garage on Clay St. and a future office building/library site on Eheart St. The applicant envisions this space could be closed off and used for events. The Old School Commons space is approximately 247' wide by 133' deep. The combined size of Midtown Plaza and Old School Commons is 1.47 acres.

The third public space proposed is a 3.06 acre park area along Clay St. referred to as "Central Park" in the application. This area is elevated from Clay Street and would contain part of the trail system proposed in the development. This area would also be dedicated to the Town.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Many individual policies and regulations address streetscape, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements as being a high priority to encouraging walkability and contributing to a high quality of life in Town. Providing enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities will encourage alternate-transportation behavior and lead to less dependency on personal vehicle trips. These facilities may include wider sidewalks, separation between the street and the sidewalk with a vegetated buffer strip, on or off-street bicycle facilities, covered bicycle parking, and other elements to provide a pleasant and safe streetscape experience. Often, private development serves an important role in providing missing links in the sidewalk and trail network throughout Town, as there is not enough funding within the Town's budget to complete all the bicycle and pedestrian projects as the Town grows.

High quality bicycle and pedestrian ways are consistently identified by residents as a high value in the community. The Paths to the Future Map in the Comprehensive Plan outlines an overall goal for providing routes for bikes and pedestrians. As developments are proposed, staff reviews this map to determine what facilities should be considered. An excerpt from this map showing the OBMS parcel is included in Attachment A. The map shows a high level of bike and pedestrian connectivity expected on the OBMS parcel.

Bicycle Improvements

Providing enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities will encourage alternate-transportation behavior and lead to less dependency on personal vehicle trips especially in walkable and bikeable areas with transit service like the proposed development. These facilities may include on- or off-street facilities such as bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, trails, and cycle tracks, as well as bicycle parking. Often, private development serves an important role in providing missing links in the bicycle network throughout Town, as there is not enough funding within the Town's budget to complete all the bicycle projects as the Town grows. At this location in particular, the proposed application is within ¼ mile of the Huckleberry Trail and is within close proximity to the Virginia Tech campus and many downtown destinations.

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

The submitted conceptual master plan and application include the following proposed bicycle facilities:

- proposed eastbound bicycle lane on Eheart Street;

16 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

- bicycle pull off area on Eheart Street and crosswalk connecting to new Church Street; and
- multi-purpose trail from Willard Drive crossing the site towards Clay Street and running to new Church Street.

The application does not include any bicycle facilities on new Church Street, Midtown Way, or Belvedere Avenue. These proposed streets include sidewalks of varying widths and on-street parking on both sides. With no discernable bicycle routes, it is assumed that cyclists would utilize the travel lanes or sidewalks for these streets. With street parking facilitated on both sides of the roadway and sidewalks of 10' proposed, bicycle traffic will be mixed with vehicles or pedestrians. With proposed bicycle routes skirting the exterior of the site and no clear internal routes, prominent bicycle parking will be vital to ensuring cycling is a safe and viable option to access the site.

The proposed multi-purpose trail will provide a strong connection along Clay Street separated from the roadway and connecting across the site to Willard Drive close to the intersection with new Church Street and the proposed bicycle lane will allow for eastbound movements along Eheart Street. However, the proposed application does not address westbound bicycle travel on Eheart Street or a direct connection across the site near Church Street. Proposed sidewalks are too narrow on much of the site to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians. Town staff met with the applicant team to recommend more appropriate bicycle facilities for the project.

The applicant is working with staff to design two-way cycle tracks for both Eheart Street and new Church Street. A two-way cycle track is a physical separated area that allows bicycle movements in both directions on the same side of the roadway. A two-way cycle track may be configured as a protected cycle track with a barrier separating the track from the motor vehicle travel lanes or as a raised cycle track which provides vertical separation between the track and the motor vehicle lanes.

The recommended width for usable space for a two-way cycle track is 12 feet, with a minimum width of 8 feet in constrained conditions. Consideration should be given to street crossings and to side street and driveway intersections. The Town is working with the applicant to design two-way cycle tracks that meet the recommended standards in the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide and provide a safe, convenient route for bicyclists. To further connect the project area to the Huckleberry Trail, the Town should review the design of Eheart Street and consider changes to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Bicycle Parking

The application proposes meeting the minimum Town standard for bicycle parking with ratio of 0.25 spaces per bedroom for residential uses and meeting the minimum Town standards for all other uses. More information is needed from the applicant regarding the location of any exterior bicycle parking spaces. With the location adjacent to Downtown and the proximity to the Huckleberry trail, the applicant should consider providing bicycle parking at a ratio higher than the minimum in safe, accessible locations. It is likely that bicycle, pedestrian, and transit usage will be high in this location, and the facilities to accommodate these alternative modes of transportation should be given high priority. The location of bicycle parking should be convenient to support this alternative mode of transportation. Covered and secure bike parking is encouraged to accommodate the needs of residents or employees in the development.

Corridor Committee

The Corridor Committee reviews development applications and makes recommendations based on the Paths to the Future map in the Comprehensive Plan and comments on opportunities that may arise to enhance bicycle and pedestrian routes and facilities in Town.

17 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

The Committee recommended consideration be given to bicycle facilities on Eheart Street and Church Street. The Committee suggested that surface parking be reduced and accommodated in the garage, if needed, to incorporate improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Committee also noted the importance of visible, accessible bicycle parking.

Bicycle Master Plan

The vision of the Blacksburg Bicycle Master Plan ("the Plan") is to create a bicycle friendly community through infrastructure improvements and non-infrastructure recommendations. The Plan identifies a network of bicycle routes for focused infrastructure improvements including Clay Street and Eheart Street. The Master Plan did not contemplate facilities for streets that were not existing at the time of the Plan's creation; for example, new Church Street, Midtown Way, and Belvedere Avenue. For Clay Street from Main Street to Jefferson Street, the Plan recommends sharrows (shared lane markings) and bike route signage at a minimum. Eheart Street is identified as a network route but does not include specific recommendations. For the intersection of Clay Street with South Main Street, the Plan recommends signal detection and actuation, colored bike facilities (such as painted pavement), and bike route signage. Signal detection and actuation alerts the traffic signal controller of bicycle crossing demand for the intersection and can include push signals, in-pavement detection, and video detection methods. For the intersection of Eheart Street with South Main Street, the Plan recommends colored bike facilities and bike route signage. However, the Plan does not contemplate the signalization of this intersection. Additional attention should be given to bicycle infrastructure at this intersection, particularly with consideration of a two-way cycle track on Eheart Street. Bike route signage should be contemplated in coordination with a larger Town-wide wayfinding project for bicycle infrastructure.

Pedestrian Improvements

The Downtown Commercial district requires a minimum 10' sidewalk width on Main Street and an 8' sidewalk width along side streets. The 10' sidewalk width on Main St. is reflected in the application and the sidewalk would be brick consistent with the rest of the Downtown sidewalks and contain the same street amenities such as the light poles, street trees, benches and trash cans as found elsewhere in Downtown.

Attachment A contains a map showing existing sidewalks in the area. The maps shows that there are sidewalk gaps in this area. The Corridor Committee maintains a matrix of prioritized sidewalk projects to complete as funding becomes available through revenue-sharing, ongoing sidewalk project budgets or private development to complete or enhance the sidewalk network. This is particularly important in the very walkable areas of Town such as the location of the OBMS site.

The application proposes varying width sidewalks along Eheart Street from Willard Drive to Main Street. Along Eheart Street, the segment from Palmer Drive to Willard Drive has been identified as a priority in the Corridor Committee's sidewalk matrix.

There is a sidewalk on the south side of Clay Street that extends from Main Street along the edge of Clay Court to the end of the Clay Court property. On the north side of Clay Street there is sidewalk from Main Street to Church St. The vacant lot at the corner of Clay St. and Church St. is being developed as a parking lot and sidewalk will be constructed on both roadway frontages. The only other segment of sidewalk on the north side of Clay St. before intersection with Willard Drive is a small section in front of the church at 309 Clay Street. Looking at Clay Street as a whole, there are segments of sidewalk along Clay Street on either the north or south side of the street but there is no continuous sidewalk that runs the length of Clay Street. Clay Street is a narrow and hilly road with limited sight distance which makes the need for a safe pedestrian way all the more important. With further development anticipated on Clay Street to the north pedestrian and bike activity can be expected to continue to increase.

For the OBMS site, the application shows a multi-purpose trail separated from Clay Street but does not propose any sidewalks along the existing Clay Street frontage. Three segments of Clay Street were identified as high priority projects by the Corridor Committee within the sidewalk matrix: Church Street to Willard Drive, Willard Drive to Prospect Street, and Prospect Street to Jefferson Street. The segment from Prospect Street to Jefferson Street has since been completed leaving two segments as high priorities. From Willard Drive to Prospect Street, the final segment of missing sidewalk is approximately 115 feet. The remaining segment from Church Street to Willard Drive includes approximately 1,660 linear feet of street frontage without sidewalk. Of this frontage, approximately 1,230 linear feet (74%) of street frontage is adjacent to the proposed project area. This segment has long been considered the highest priority segment and consideration should be given to completion of the missing piece of the pedestrian network. It should be noted that the approved 2016 subdivision plat contained notes committing to sidewalk on Clay Street. There is a challenge with the grade change along Clay Street on the OBMS site and a sidewalk would likely require a significant retaining wall or significant cut grading. The applicant has shown a dedication of right-of-way for Clay Street and notes that the Town could use this area for sidewalk in the future. The issue of pedestrian pathway on Clay Street needs to be addressed not only as part of this rezoning but looking beyond to the Town limits. Staff will be working on a long term plan for the length of Clay Street to fill in missing gaps to provide a continuous sidewalk from Main Street to the Town limits.

Parking and Circulation

The Downtown Commercial district does not require parking. The exclusion of an off-street parking requirement did not necessarily anticipate additional land rezoning to the district, but rather was intended to reflect the existing pattern in Downtown where individual parcels did not historically have off-street parking where on-street public parking and public surface lots are available. Downtown Blacksburg is also accessible to many pedestrians and served by Blacksburg Transit. The standard ratio is 1.1 parking spaces per bedroom for multifamily residential uses. This standard was designed primarily to response to the parking demands associated with multifamily housing geared toward students.

In certain situations, a different ratio may be appropriate given the development's proximity to transit, the University, services, or the target market demographic. Providing the right amount of parking for a development is critical for the safety and convenience of the development's residents, but also for the safety and convenience of the surrounding neighborhood. Without adequate parking, residents and guests may overflow into the neighborhoods, where there may already be pressure for parking due to the rental tenants with a number vehicles, or small lot sizes that limit vehicular parking. The Town is also concerned about developments that may be over parked adding unnecessary impervious surfaces. The goal is "right-sizing" the parking for each development to accommodate residents and guests.

Parking proposed for Midtown is a combination of surface lot parking, structured parking garage, residential garage parking and on-street parking. The applicant has tried to reduce the amount of surface parking from previous submittals and locate surface parking more internally and with screening. The hotel use does have a dedicated surface lot and there is surface parking around the Old School Commons. All of the streets show on-street parking and the applicant has indicated that the on-street parking has not been included in parking calculations.

No overall parking ratio has been included in the application. Sheet Z4 of the application does show a number for parking spaces for the DC portion of the site excluding the parking garage. The application text discusses parking in Section 4.2 but primarily refers to the Pattern Book. The Pattern Book (and the Exhibits to the Proffer statement) list the parking ratios for some parcels but not others. For example, a parking ratio is provided for DC Parcel #1 (1 space per 300 sf) but no ratio is provided for DC Parcel #2.

The Pattern Book and Proffers do include useful information on how parking will be constructed such as not allowing front loaded garages on Midtown Way. The applicant has indicated general parking totals around the Old School Common of approximately 100 spaces and 100 spaces for the hotel. The number of spaces in the parking garage is not known at this time. The residential parcels will each be parked internally.

Staff understands that an exact computation of the number of parking spaces is not possible given that not all spaces have defined tenants at this time and the uses possible in the different buildings is flexible. Further information and refinement, however, would be helpful to have a better understanding of the total parking proposed compared to the total development proposed.

The application does indicate two electric charging stations will be provided. One to be located in the hotel parking lot and the other suggested in the parking garage. In addition, compact parking spaces will be included and in compliance with the 30% maximum allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

Signage

Signage helps people navigate and locate their destination. Unique and innovative signage can help set a development apart from others, and can provide a consistent appearance within the development. There is certainly an opportunity to use signage as a distinctive and cohesive element in the Midtown project.

Signage in the Downtown Commercial zoned area will be subject to the standards in the Zoning Ordinance found in Section 5533 and shown below.

Sec. 5533 - Downtown commercial zoning district.

- (a) A maximum of two signs plus three directional signs is permitted per lot in the Downtown Commercial Zoning District.
- (b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, a maximum of two signs is permitted per establishment in a multi-establishment building.
- (c) Of the maximum number of signs permitted in subparagraph (a) above, a maximum of one sign may be a freestanding monument sign, provided the lot contains a minimum of 100 feet of frontage on a public street.
- (d) The following shall apply in the Downtown Commercial Zoning District:

Type of Sign	Business	Directional	Identification (When Allowed)
Maximum Size of Signage in Square Feet	<p><i>Single-establishment building:</i> 0 to 50 foot frontage = 15 square feet; 50 to 75 ft. = 32 square feet; greater than 75 ft. = 50 square feet</p> <p><i>Multi-establishment building:</i> Maximum 15 square feet per establishment.</p> <p>Of the total square footage allowed, the following square feet may be freestanding monument sign: greater than 100 foot frontage = 32 square feet</p>	3 square feet	32 square feet (not deducted from business signage allowance)
Maximum Height of Freestanding Monument Signs	8 feet	4 feet	8 feet

The Planned Residential District allows applicants to propose a cohesive signage plan for the entire development as a part of the review of the application. Zoning Ordinance section 5532, shown below, covers signage in Residential Districts.

Sec. 5532 - Residential zoning districts.

- (a) A maximum of two (2) permanent signs and three (3) directional signs is permitted per lot in a residential zoning district.
- (b) Of the maximum number of signs permitted in subparagraph (a) above, a maximum of one (1) sign may be a freestanding monument sign, provided the lot contains a minimum of one hundred (100) feet of frontage on a public street.
- (c) One (1) freestanding identification sign is permitted at each principle entrance to a residential development within a residential zoning district, up to a maximum total of two (2) freestanding identification signs.
- (d) In areas of public recreation such as public parks, a governmental entity may erect up to three (3) freestanding monument signs with a combined area of sixty (60) square feet. No individual sign shall exceed thirty-five (35) square feet.
- (e) The following shall apply in the RR1, RR2, R-4, R-5, OTR, RM-27, and RM-48 Zoning Districts:

Type of Sign	Business	Directional	Identification (When Allowed)
Maximum size of Signage in Square Feet	12 square feet	3 square feet	50 square feet total .35 square feet per sign.
Maximum Height of Freestanding monument signs	4 feet	4 feet	8 feet

However, the residential zoning districts referenced above do not include the Planned Residential district. It is important that rezonings to the PR district include information on proposed signage. Through the review of a Planned Residential district, signage may be proposed that is greater in size or quantity, or of a different form, than what is ordinarily allowed in Town. Defining signage is more easily accomplished when the PR project is smaller in size than Midtown and is planned be constructed by a single entity in a single phase.

Signage for Midtown is addressed on pages 37-38 of the Pattern Book. It does not contain specifics on the location or number of signs. The Pattern Book includes general information to indicate that high quality signage is anticipated. For example, plastic, fiberglass or highly reflective material will not be allowed. Staff supports requiring high quality materials. The Pattern Book also references that off-site signage be allowed in the Downtown Commercial district which is in conflict with the Zoning Ordinance. The Pattern Book proposes a maximum of 8' in height for free standing signs which is consistent with the maximum height for monument signs allowed in the Zoning Ordinance. A maximum of 40 square feet in size is proposed but that does not include the frame or details on how measurement of the frame would compare to how a sign base is measured per the Zoning Ordinance.

There is a note in the Pattern Book that indicates a Special Signage District will be needed. Staff concurs that a Special Signage District would be a benefit to the entire Midtown development. In the interim, staff suggests the applicant provide more information on signage for the construction anticipated in Phase 1 of the project and include that information in the rezone application. The information should address both freestanding and wall signage.

21 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

Solid Waste and Recycling

Section 5.3 of the applicant discusses trash pickup. Specific locations of solid waste and recycling facilities have not been provided but the applicant states they will be screened as required by the Zoning Ordinance and conveniently located. A service alley is proposed on the western edge of the public safety building which would be used to access the building on DC Parcel #2. Townhomes on Eheart Street may use individual cart pick-up as opposed to common dumpsters. This is different than other rezoning proposals where more specificity is given at the time of rezoning. The applicant is seeking to have flexibility in final design and any site plans submitted would have to show dumpster locations and required screening. The applicant should confirm that the proposed facilities will be adequate to meet the trash and recycling service capacity as defined in Town Code and meet screening requirements.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In evaluating the potential effect on public services and facilities that this rezoning would have, the Town Engineering department has reviewed the application and the following comments are provided. Memos from engineering staff are included in Attachment D.

Stormwater

The stormwater concept plan has been reviewed by the Town Engineering Department and has been approved. A central stormwater facility is shown to serve all of the development on the site. The location of the private stormwater management facilities is shown on land proposed for dedication to the Town. The Engineering staff has provided information on issues that need to be worked out through the Performance Agreement such as clarity on the maintenance responsibilities for the facility since it will be on Town owned land (comment in Attachment D).

Water

Town water is available to the site. Public water is available in Main St., Clay St., and Eheart St. Engineering staff have commented that the rezoning application does not contain sufficient information to confirm the water line design will meet all of the Town standards. Additional water infrastructure may be required to meet Town Standards for fire hydrant spacing and to eliminate dead end lines and this information can be provided at the site plan stage of development.

Sanitary Sewer

At the flow rate given in the submittal (79,915 gpd) and at the original flow rate provided to the Town for use in the Draper Capacity Study (127,500 gpd), there are 1,211 LF of 12" pipe that do not have capacity for this development. The Town, however, has a fully funded capital improvement project to upgrade the sewer lines and address the capacity issues for development in this area. Again, more specifics are needed at the site plan stage regarding the design of the system.

Other Utilities

It should be noted that the application proposes that existing overhead utilities will be relocated and shall remain overhead unless they are in conflict with the construction. As part of redevelopment, both the Comprehensive Plan (CCP.19) and the Zoning Ordinance district standards require utilities to be placed underground. The applicant may want to provide more information on this proposal as to why undergrounding of all overhead lines is not proposed with the redevelopment of the parcel.

Traffic Study

The Town and the applicant participated in preparing a joint traffic study with the Town hiring the engineering consultant to prepare the study. The Town felt it was appropriate to participate in the traffic study since the traffic generated by this proposed development could potentially impact several intersections located in the Main Street transportation corridor including what is considered the Downtown Blacksburg area. Level of Service analyses were performed at the major signalized

22 RZN17-0006 OBMS
6-29-18 ALM

intersections within the corridor including the intersections of South Main Street and Washington Street, South Main Street and Clay Street, and South Main Street and Airport Road/Graves Avenue. In addition, the intersection of South Main Street and Eheart Street was analyzed as this is the intersection in closest proximity to the proposed development. The traffic study is posted on the Town website.

The traffic study results show that the proposed development warrants the installation of a new traffic signal at the intersection of Eheart Street / South Main Street. The final design and layout of the new signal has not been completed, however, some considerations should be made regarding how the signal is located on the corners of the intersection. Please refer to the Engineering comments in Attachment D for details.

Ongoing traffic monitoring should occur in the area and consideration of traffic calming measures in adjacent neighborhoods should be evaluated by the Town and any measures developed in coordination with local residents. Concerns about traffic increases on Main Street and increases in cut-through traffic in the adjoining neighborhoods were consistent topics at both neighborhood meetings.

Access and Circulation

The proposed development includes three access points to existing public streets. No access is proposed to South Main Street. An extension of existing Church Street through the site is proposed as a new public street with two way travel and parallel parking on each side of the street. The location of new Church St. is offset from the existing segment of Church Street on either side. The offset retains the historic T-intersection at Church St. and Clay St. and does not create an easy cut-through the site as would a direct alignment. Retention of the historic T-intersection has been identified by the HDRB in the memo. There are also T-intersections at Penn St. and Wharton St. The addition of a new roadway connection does help to break up the "superblock" that current exists and further the OBMS principles. New Church Street will serve as access for both the commercial/office and residential portions of the project.

Midtown Way is proposed at a 42' wide paved street with two way traffic and parallel parking on both sides. Midtown way is a dead end. While the hammerhead at the street terminus does provide a turnaround area and meet Town standards it is possible that traffic seeking open on-street spaces may back up if they find no place to park. A cul-de-sac configuration as opposed to the hammerhead configuration would be much better for traffic circulation. A connection from Midtown Way to Clay Street at the eastern end of the property is more desirable to increase circulation but the property at 402 Clay Street is not part of this rezoning request.

A second roadway access is shown on Eheart St. with the construction of Belvedere Avenue. This will connect to Midtown Way to Eheart St and serve as an access to the residential parcels. The application does not contain other details on Belvedere Avenue.

Pages 10-19 of the Pattern Book show typical sections for Eheart St., South Main St., Midtown Way and Church St. as well as details on how the buildings will relate to the street.

Roadway Standards

Sheet #29 in the application shows proposed right-of-way totaling 2.46 acres including new Church St., Midtown Way and Belvedere Avenue. It is staff's understanding that new Church Street will be a dedicated public street but that a final decision on if Midtown Way and Belvedere Avenue are proposed to be public streets has not been finalized.

23 RZN17-0006 OBMS

6-29-18 ALM

While the provision of right-of-way is typically associated with the Town's subdivision process it should be part of the consideration of a discretionary rezoning; particularly to a zoning district with a binding plan. It appears that the right-of-way on Eheart Street is sufficient to accommodate the improvement proposed.

No right-of-way is needed on Main Street. A consistent street edge is maintained with the curb line in the existing location. An initial review of right-of-way on Clay Street shows that while the roadway itself is narrow there is adequate right-of-way. A portion of the vegetation on the OBMS side of Clay Street is within existing Town right-of-way. Staff will confirm final right-way measurements to verify no additional right-of-way is needed for public streets abutting this project.

Transit

The Comprehensive Plan stated that transit should be considered "during the development review process, ensure that transit service and access to/from the transit stop and the development are provided." The site will be served by the existing routes on Main Street. It is unlikely that BT would operate fixed route service through the site, but the internal street system should be designed to accommodate smaller (Body-on-Chassis) vehicles, which are used for BT's ADA accessible service, with adequate locations to turn vehicles around. The roadway configuration as shown should accommodate these vehicles and this can be further confirmed at the site plan stage of development.

Blacksburg Transit has reviewed the rezoning and commented that the existing northbound stop (Main/Clay Nbnd, #1626) on the project site should remain; the existing southbound stop on the far side of the Main/Eheart (#1602) intersection also serves the project well. The existing crosswalk, and potential new traffic signal, provide a pedestrian crossing of Main Street; however, this expanded intersection will potentially require the southbound stop to be moved further south. BT normally places bus stops at least 100-150' past a signal-controlled intersection. There are southbound on-street parking spaces that may need to be removed to accommodate this relocated bus stop. The applicant is proposing an 8' X 16' covered bus shelter at the location of the existing bus stop near Clay Ct. and provision of the shelter is supported by BT. A map showing bus stops in the area is included in Attachment A.

BT has commented that there needs to be reasonably direct and accessible paths to and from bus stops from within the project site. As shown in the application the building that fronts on Main Street appears to create a barrier to access to the northbound stop. If there is a cut-through/breezeway in the building connecting directly to the Old School Common area, or if the area on the north side of the building is a pedestrian path, that would address the concern for the northbound stop. A ramp at the plaza, as noted on the application, would address the concern for the southbound stop. Reasonably direct pedestrian access to other bus stops that are not adjacent to the site should be accommodated with shared use paths and/or sidewalks, such as along Clay Street.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

Neighborhood/Public Input meetings were held on October 2017 and May 23, 2018 at 7:00 PM. The October meeting was based on the original rezone submittal and the May meeting on the revised proposal. Notes from both the meetings and the sign-in sheets are included as Attachment E of the staff report.

CITIZEN CORRESPONDENCE

Staff has received correspondence related to this proposal. Written correspondence is provided as Attachment F of the staff report. Staff has separated the correspondence received on the original October rezoning submittal and the revised April submittal.

PROFFER STATEMENT

The proffer statement submitted by the applicant is contained on pages 3-27 of the application. There are nine proffers and attached Exhibits A-M. Exhibits A-L are individual sheets that summarize the binding elements from the pattern book for each road frontage and parcel. **It is important to note that what is contained with the proffer statement is what is binding on the applicant. Other illustrations, pictures and statements if not tied to the proffer statement are not binding. For example, the illustration on the public plaza at the corner of South Main St. and Eheart is not a binding depiction of the design or element that would include in the plaza.**

SUMMARY

The Planning Commission is asked to consider and make a recommendation of approval or denial of the proposed Rezoning request. If approved, the property will be rezoned Downtown Commercial and Planned Residential with any proffers offered by the applicant and approved by the Town Council. It is the Council's decision if the proffers offered are sufficient. If denied, the property will continue to be zoned R-4 and any such subsequent development application will have to adhere to all the minimum standards found in the R-4 district. 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.

Key Elements for Discussion

- Relationship of rezone decision to other separate agreements
- Use of Pattern Book and relationship to Proffers
- Overall project design and relationship of project components
- Building elevations
- Signage
- Bike facilities
- Sidewalks
- Parking
- Traffic signal

Attachments:

Attachment A Maps:

- Aerial Map Context
- Aerial Map Parcel
- Future Land Use Map
- Existing Zoning Map
- Paths to the Future
- Existing Sidewalks Map
- Bus Stop Map

Attachment B Supporting regulations: Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Ordinance

Attachment C Resolution 7-D-15

Attachment D Staff comments/memo from Historic or Design Review Board

Attachment E Neighborhood Meeting Notes and Sign-in sheets

Attachment F Correspondence Received