

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Kinsey O’Shea, AICP; Town Planner for Current Development

Date: October 11, 2019

Subject: RZN19-0004/ORD 1904-Request to rezone a total of 6.59 acres from GC General Commercial and R-5 Transitional Residential to PR Planned Residential at 1310 North Main Street (Tax Map Nos. 196-A 21-23; 197-A-37; 196-A 22A; and a portion of 196-A 29) for a mixed use commercial/multi-unit residential development by Pat Bixler on behalf of CDE Properties, LLC (applicant/owner).

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Property Location	1310 North Main Street and 1013 Giles Road
Tax Parcel Numbers	196-A 21-23; 197-A-37; 196-A 22A; and a portion of 196-A-29
Parcel(s) Size	6.59 acres
Present Zoning District	GC General Commercial and R-5 Transitional Residential
Current Use	Multifamily dwellings; commercial (Henderson Roofing); vacant
Adjacent Zoning Districts	North: GC General Commercial GC General Commercial; R-5 Transitional Residential; R-4 Low East: Density Residential across Giles Road South: R-5 Transitional Residential West: General Commercial
Adjacent Uses	North: Multifamily dwellings; Office East: Town Community Center South: Two-family dwellings West: Commercial (Rocket Music); vacant
Adopted Future Land Use	High Impact Commercial; Medium-Density Residential
Proposed Uses	Multi-family residential; Mixed commercial uses (complete list in application)
Proposed District Standards	
Maximum Height	65’ (varies by building, see application and staff analysis on Building Height)
Minimum Setbacks	Front: 10’ Side: 10’ Rear: 10’
Maximum lot coverage	80% impervious
Maximum FAR	0.75
Proposed Maximum Density	389 bedrooms (59 br/ac); 130 units (20 units/ac)
Proposed Minimum Parking	0.85 sp/br multifamily; 0.89 sp/br townhome; plus 1 sp/275 sf commercial
Proposed Bike Parking	0.48 sp/bedroom (187 spaces); including 175 covered; plus 16 for commercial
Minimum Open Space	20% of the total district area

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 applicable sections of this staff report have been updated to provide an analysis of the revised application dated September 27, 2019. These changes will be indicated by bold-italicized text.***

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

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The rezoning area consists of five individual parcels plus a portion of a sixth parcel, two of which have frontage on North Main Street, one that has an access easement along Robinson Street, a private drive, onto North Main Street, and one that has frontage on Giles Road. One parcel along Main Street is improved with a single-family home and accessory structure converted into three units (“the red-roof house”). The parcel on Robinson Street is currently the location of the Henderson Roofing business. The property along Giles Road contains a multifamily dwelling. The rear portions of the Main Street parcels are wooded. The rear of the Giles Road parcel is mostly open lawn.

The Main Street parcels of this development request were previously subject to a rezoning request called The Lofts in 2016. The rezoning request for The Lofts consisted of two sites, including these two parcels, and a non-contiguous parcel to the south owned by the Virginia Tech Foundation. The Lofts proposal was for dense purpose-built student housing, and was withdrawn before action was taken.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The development proposal for this rezoning consists of the construction of three buildings on the Main Street side of the development, and ***four rows of townhome*** buildings on the Giles Road parcel. The Building A fronting along Main Street is proposed to have commercial uses on the ground floor with three stories of residential above. Building B on the Henderson Roofing parcel is proposed to be a 3/4 story split residential building. Building C, near the center of the property, is proposed to house the leasing and amenity areas on the ground floor facing Main Street, “tuck-under parking” along the rear ground floor (which is lower than the amenity level), and residential above. Building C is proposed to have 4 stories plus the rear tuck-under parking. ***Four townhome buildings are proposed on the parcel along Giles Road. One building will front on Giles Road, two will face an interior courtyard, and the last building will be situated along the rear property line adjacent to the Heartstrings property. The townhomes will be a mix of 2- and 3-bedroom units. Townhomes will be a mix of 2-story with drive-under garages, and 2-story units with a garage on the ground floor.*** The overall unit mix will contain 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units, with 4-bedroom units comprising ***39%*** of the total unit mix, and 3-bedroom units comprising ***29%*** of the total unit mix. All of the non-townhouse units will feature bed-bath parity, as is typical of student housing developments.

The application states that depending on market, some of the ground floor space in Building B and C may be converted to commercial space, though the total commercial space would not exceed the limit of 10% of the gross area of the district. The proposed commercial space in Building A is approximately 10,000 square feet as proposed. The applicant has not indicated whether there are any confirmed commercial tenants at this time.

The parking for the development is proposed to be entirely surface parking. There will be some parking proposed tucked under Building C, but will be open and visible at grade. ***The townhomes on the Giles Road***

parcel will all include driveways and garages. Additionally, the development proposal includes one main amenity area in the center of the site between Buildings B and C. The proposal also includes an outdoor plaza area in front of the commercial area of Building A along Main Street. The parking and circulation through the site includes interconnected parking lots, and a vehicle connection between Main Street and Giles Road. There will be one entrance on Main Street near the entrance of Robinson Street, and one entrance on Giles Road.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

There are a number of analysis points for evaluation of a request to rezone a property within Town. The policies and maps in the Comprehensive Plan lend guidance to the Town’s vision of growth in the future, while specific codes and requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and the Town Code ensure that the development meets all applicable regulations. Specifically, the Zoning Ordinance calls out the criteria for evaluation of a rezoning request, as found below:

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.*

Additionally, 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 gives guidance to the evaluation of proffers that may be proffered by the applicant.

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. Other relevant Comprehensive Plan text sections applicable to this request are included in the Staff Appendix.

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.

North Main Street Study

The Town is contracting with Development Strategies to prepare a North Main Street study. Development Strategies prepared the Downtown Housing Study and the recent Strategic Plan for Downtown Blacksburg. The study will encompass the area along North Main Street from the Prices Fork roundabout to the Food Lion Shopping Center across Patrick Henry Drive. The study commenced in September and completion is expected at

the end of the year or early in 2020. The continuing development pressures along North Main Street and the filing of individual projects demonstrate the need to have a more holistic approach to the future of this commercial corridor. The study can give guidance on desired future development proposals and address key issues such as making the corridor more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Future Land Use Designations

The property is split into two different Future Land Use designations. The larger portion fronting on Main Street is designated High Impact Commercial, while the smaller portion fronting on Giles Road is designated Medium Density Residential.

Commercial Designation

High Impact Commercial is defined as:

Small or large commercial developments with a need for high visibility and have a high impact on the surrounding environment, including but not limited to factors such as lighting, noise, parking, traffic, and hours of operation. Examples include large retail establishments, restaurants, hotels/motels, and auto-related uses. Typical implementing zoning districts: Downtown Commercial (DC), General Commercial (GC), Planned Commercial (PC), and Mixed Use (MXD).

Of the proposed **6.5-acre** development site, approximately **5.1 acres** is designated as High Impact Commercial. There is limited frontage for these parcels along Main Street, and significant topographical change on the site. Furthermore, the direct interface with single-family residential properties and significant grade change may hinder development of high-intensity commercial uses. The parcels are currently underutilized with respect to their current zoning and future land use designation.

Loss of Commercial Land

There is a limited amount of commercially-designated and zoned land within the Town of Blacksburg. These locations are generally along the arterial roadway corridors within Town, offering public utilities, robust transportation networks, and Blacksburg Transit bus service, in an effort to ensure that the future commercial needs of the Town can be accommodated. The Future Land Use designation of High Impact Commercial does not contemplate residential density, though the implementing districts do allow residential uses to provide for vertical mixed-use development. The purpose of both the implementing zoning districts and the future land use designation is for commercial development, not residential as a primary use. As proposed, the development is approximately 94% residential.

There have been a number of rezoning requests in recent years seeking to change commercial areas to residential areas, which results in the permanent loss of commercial capacity. The trend to use commercial land for residential uses is primarily driven by the current pressures of the student housing market. Examples of residential rezoning requests that have included rezoning land from commercial to residential include The Preston Row development, Cedar Run Overlook development, Uptown Phase III development, and the Standard PRD which is still pending. They are all planned residential developments that are located within High Impact Commercial designated areas. Preston Row on Progress Street is approximately one acre located off Main Street. Cedar Run Overlook is located off Main Street, at the end of Cedar Pointe Drive (formerly Dowdy Drive), a private road, and is approximately 6 acres. Uptown Phase III, approximately 1 acre, is a standalone residential building within a commercial development at the corner of Main Street and Giles Road. The request for the Standard PRD does include approximately 11,800 square feet of commercial development, though this represents only approximately 4.6% of the total project square footage.

The proposal for approximately 10,646 square feet of commercial represents approximately 5.5% of the project “gross floor area” according to the application. The PRD allows up to 10% of the gross area (total area rather than floor area) of the district to be used as commercial. For this development, approximately **28,000** square feet could be devoted to commercial uses. The 10,646 square feet represents less than 4% of the gross area of the district. Often in mixed use student housing projects, the residential component is the economic driver, and the commercial space may or may not be filled.

Planning Commission and Town Council should evaluate the loss of commercial land on a case-by-case basis. With a growing student and non-student population, the need for retail and commercial services will also continue to grow. Commercial and service uses for the population should occur in areas that are in a convenient location with infrastructure to support these uses, which is reflected in the Future Land Use designation. The Town’s commercial land use policy has specifically been to stimulate redevelopment of older commercial areas with new commercial development. This policy has been successful and addresses the fact that there are not many suitable areas for new greenfield commercial developments. The potential loss of this land to residential zoning will limit the available land for further commercial development. The Town’s Comprehensive Plan is designed to look at community needs in the long term. The evaluation should also include the impacts associated with the residential component of the project which come with the commercial redevelopment proposed.

Residential Designation

Medium Density Residential is defined as:

Up to and including ten dwelling units per acre; or up to 20 bedrooms per acre, whichever is less. Typical implementing zoning districts: Transitional Residential (R-5), Old Town Residential (OTR), Planned Residential (PR), and Planned Manufactured Home (PMH).

Of the **6.5-acre site**, approximately **1.4 acres** is designated as Medium-Density Residential. This acreage could support up to 28 bedrooms under the zoning and future land use designation, which both allow up to 20 bedrooms per acre. **A total of 51 bedrooms are proposed on the Medium-Density Residential/R-5 Zoning parcel.** Combining the acreage and allowable density for the General Commercial and R-5 parcels, up to **272 total bedrooms** could be developed under the existing zoning **and future land use designation**. The proposal for **389 bedrooms** over the entire site represents an increase of approximately **43%** above the allowable density overall. In looking at each portion separately, the density proposed on the General Commercial zoned parcels represents approximately a **38%** increase over the allowable density. The density proposed on the R-5 parcel represents an increase of approximately **82%** over the allowable density.

Map B: Urban Development Areas & Mixed Use Areas

The proposed development does not lie within any Urban Development Area or Mixed Use Area. These designations do not prohibit mixed-use developments outside these areas, nor do they require mixed use developments within the designated areas.

Map C: Neighborhood, Employment, and Service Areas Map

The rezoning area is split by two designations on the Neighborhood, Employment, and Service Areas Map. Most of the parcels fronting on Main Street are designated as Commercial Area; while the parcel on Giles Road is designated as a Suburban Residential Neighborhood. The designation does not follow the property lines, and so some of the suburban designation also falls along the rear of the Main Street parcels.

ZONING ORDINANCE EVALUATION OF APPLICATION

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 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 application does not provide specific justification or substantiation that the proposed development meets the intent of the zoning district, especially with regards to “ingenuity, imagination...superior living environment for the residents...new approaches to home ownership...efficient use of land...”

Development Standards

The characteristics of physical site development are regulated by the Zoning District standards. In a Planned Residential Zoning District the applicant may propose most of the individual standards for the development. The layout and standards of the development, if approved, are binding. Since the applicant determines many of the regulations in the PRD, the evaluation of the proposed development’s standards is different. The evaluation should be based on how well the development’s 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 designing 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. Additionally, the proposed standards should also be measured against the Town’s standards in both the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances. The regulations found in these ordinances are considered to be the Town’s standard for construction, layout, and development, and are generally accepted as the means and methods by which developments should occur.

Lot Configuration

The development includes the vacation of property lines of the parcels to create one single parcel. Currently, the Giles Road and Main Street parcels are not contiguous—there is a gap between the corners of the parcels. The Planned Residential Zoning District Standards require that applications for rezoning to PRD must be contiguous. ***The applicant has revised the application to include approximately 16,693 square feet (0.38 acres) to be purchased from the neighboring Heartstrings parcel. The property owners of Heartstrings have provided signatures to the application.***

The revision to the application and revised lot configuration provides adequate square footage to be considered a contiguous parcel with lot line configuration that would meet the Town’s subdivision ordinance standards for lot configuration. No additional easements are required from other property owners in order to make the improvements necessary for the development. The additional space provides adequate space for the vehicle connection between the parking lots, as well as additional space for the proposed townhomes. While the narrow parcel fronting North Main Street is oddly shaped, it is acceptable with respect to the Subdivision Ordinance since it is an undeveloped private alley and an existing lot of record.

The applicant should provide additional information with respect to the Heartstrings Kennel to ensure that all Use and Design Standards for a commercial kennel are met with the changes to the property. In particular, the applicant should provide dimensions to ensure that all facilities associated directly with the commercial kennel, whether indoors or outdoors, shall be set back a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any property line as required by §4531.

District Standards

The following table illustrates the proposed Planned Residential District standards for the proposed development:

PROPOSED DISTRICT STANDARDS	
MAXIMUM HEIGHT	65’ along the rear of Building ‘C’
MINIMUM SETBACKS	Front: 10’ Side: 10’ Rear: 10’
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE	80% impervious
MAXIMUM FAR	0.75
PROPOSED MAXIMUM DENSITY	389 bedrooms (59 br/ac); 130 units (20 units/ac)
PROPOSED MINIMUM PARKING	0.85 sp/br multifamily; 0.89 sp/br townhome; plus 1 space/275 sf commercial (39 spaces) Total 371 spaces
PROPOSED BIKE PARKING	0.48 spaces/bedroom (187 spaces); including 175 covered; plus 16 commercial (203 total)
PROPOSED MINIMUM OPEN SPACE	20% of the total district area

The applicant has provided a comparison of the proposed district standards to the General Commercial and R-5 district standards in the application text.

Evaluation of Proposed Uses

The application also includes a list of proposed uses for the planned residential district. Like many of the other standards, the applicant can choose which of the allowed uses in the zoning ordinance PRD district standards should be allowed in the specific PRD request. The applicant is proposing home occupations and multifamily dwellings as the two allowable residential uses. The full list of proposed uses is found in Section III, Site Development Regulations of the application. This analysis covers a few of the proposed uses which may not be appropriate given the nature of the development and surrounding neighborhood.

- Family Daycare Home: *This proposed use is technically a residential use type, and not a commercial use type. A family daycare home is a “single family dwelling in which more than five (5) but less than thirteen (13) individuals are received for care, protection and guidance during only part of a twenty-four (24) hour day. Individuals related by blood, legal adoption or marriage to the person who maintains the home shall not be counted toward this total. The care of five (5) or fewer individuals for portions of a*

day shall be considered as a home occupation.” The applicant should remove this use type, as it is expressly considered in a single-family home and not a multifamily use.

- *Life Care Facility: A life care facility is a civic use defined as “A residential facility primarily for the continuing care for the elderly, providing for transitional housing progressing from independent living in various dwelling units, with or without kitchen facilities, and culminating in nursing home type care where all related uses are located on the same lot. Such facility may include other services integral to the personal and therapeutic care of the residents. An Assisted Living Facility would be included in this definition.* The applicant may wish to reconsider the inclusion of this use in the application as such a facility may not be compatible with the other proposed uses and/or the neighborhood, unless the intent is to house such a facility on an entire floor or floors of the proposed buildings. Additional considerations for this use must be taken into account and would be further evaluated if the applicant wishes to allow this use.
- *Public Parks and Recreation Areas: These civic facilities are “publicly owned and operated parks, picnic areas, playgrounds, indoor/outdoor athletic or recreation facilities, indoor/outdoor shelters, amphitheaters, game preserves, open spaces, and other similar uses. This shall not include Public Recreation Assembly.* In speaking with the Director of Parks & Recreation, the Town would not support taking over any of the proposed amenities. The application does not include a public trail, which could be considered a Public Park and Recreation Area.
- *Public Recreation Assembly: These civic uses are “publicly-owned and operated community, civic, or recreation centers, year-round swimming facilities, or indoor performing arts/auditoriums.”* As with Public Parks and Recreation Areas, there is no amenity proposed that would qualify for this use designation, nor would the Town support such an amenity to be publicly-owned and maintained on this site.
- *Restaurant, Small: A small restaurant is defined as “an establishment engaged in the preparation of food and beverages containing no more than two thousand (2,000) gross square feet, and characterized primarily by table service to customers in non-disposable containers. Typical uses include cafes, coffee shops, and small restaurants.* While certainly not incompatible with the neighborhood, a small restaurant may be too limited in scope and not in keeping with the high-intensity expectation of the future land use designation.

The applicant has not made any changes to the list of proposed allowed uses. The staff analysis above is still relevant to the revised application request. The applicant will need to revise the list of proposed allowed uses in accordance with the staff analysis above.

Commercial Uses in the Planned Residential District

Section 3113 (c) of the Zoning Ordinance provides additional regulation within the Planned Residential District regarding commercial and/or office uses. The maximum area for commercial and/or office uses is 10% of the gross area of the PR district. The application proposes 10,646 square feet of commercial area which is approximately 5.5% of the gross building area, but only 3.9% of the gross area of the PR district. The proposed commercial square footage is less than the allowed 26,000 ± square feet of commercial that would constitute 10% of the gross area of the district. The Planned Residential district has been selected because it allows for consideration of the high density residential development desired by the applicant, and allows for some commercial development. The scale and amount of commercial development proposed is not what is envisioned in the General Commercial zoning district, or the High-Impact Commercial Future Land Use designation.

There is a limited menu of permitted commercial uses that an applicant can choose from in the zoning ordinance for Planned Residential Districts. This may be due in part to the intended residential nature of such

developments, and that these developments should be in locations that support residential uses rather than high intensity commercial uses. There may be missed opportunities for additional commercial uses such as personal improvement services (gyms, yoga studios, and art or hobby instruction), retail sales, or general restaurants (2,000+ sf) in Planned Residential Districts. However, the ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan do not contemplate the conversion of high-impact commercial land on arterial roadways into residential uses.

Townhouse Use

Use and Design Standards govern the physical appearance and layout of a site for a particular use, in any district. There are a number of standards for a Townhouse use; the proposed application meets some of these standards. However, additional information may be helpful to ensure that the application meets the standards of §4231 or the applicant should request exceptions for any standards not met. The application notes that the units will be sold which will require a subdivision plat showing the units on individual lots to ensure the application meets the standards of the Subdivision Ordinance.

More specifically, dimensions are needed to determine if the application meets the standard relating to variation in setbacks and additional elevation views are needed to determine the principal orientation of three of the townhouse buildings. The application also includes two rows of townhouses that include more than eight dwelling units in a contiguous series. Both of these buildings with 10 units are adjacent to the proposed sidewalk/trail (from Giles Road to North Main Street). The applicant may wish to reduce the number of units in these buildings to accommodate the standard trail width of 10' (rather than 6' as shown) and to provide for additional functional open space.

Several of the townhouse elevations do not read as single-family in nature as required by §4231(2). For example, it appears that as many as four units in the Type D townhouses share the same roofline. The applicant may wish to revise the elevations to ensure that the townhomes are more single-family residential in appearance, or request an exception to this standard. This may be accomplished in a number of ways, including more change in color and materials between neighboring units particularly in the rear elevations, more distinction between each unit in the rooflines, or other methods to ensure that each unit and the building as a whole maintains a more single-family residential character.

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 is proposing **7 buildings** of varying heights:

- Building 'A' 4-stories; not to exceed 60'
- Building 'B' 3/4 story split; not to exceed **55' on 4-story side and 45' on 3-story side**
- Building 'C' 4/5 story split including ground floor "tuck-under" parking; not to exceed 65' on 5-story side and **55' on 4-story side**
- **Two Townhome Type D buildings 3-story including ground-floor garage level; not to exceed 40' to roof ridge**
- **Two Townhome Type E buildings 2-story with garage on main level; not to exceed 30' to roof ridge**

The neighboring R-5 district allows buildings 35'-45' while the General Commercial district allows buildings 60'-70'. Most of the buildings in the area are significantly smaller than the proposed buildings. However, new construction has been occurring in this area that includes some larger buildings including the Main and Henry extended stay and the Re/Max building, both of which are 3-story buildings. It is anticipated that as this part of town grows, additional new construction may be of larger scale than the existing neighborhood context.

The applicant has responded to staff and planning commission concerns regarding the neighborhood context of the previously-proposed apartment building on Giles Road, and has revised the plan to show a townhome building fronting on Giles Road with 3 buildings behind. The townhome building fronting on Giles Road will be no greater than 40', though the façade elevation along Giles Road will be approximately 2-1/2 stories with unit entries facing the street. The full 3-story façade will be at the rear of the units where the garages enter from the drive aisle. The applicant has not indicated the impetus for revised maximum heights for Buildings B and C.

The proposed buildings are to be constructed with a mixture of cementitious siding of various types and colors, as well as masonry materials. These high-quality materials are durable, low-maintenance, and aesthetically pleasing. The specific architecture of the buildings is somewhat bland and nondescript. The application describes the architecture as based on “traditional and contemporary vernaculars found within many ‘Main Street’ areas”. There is nothing particularly distinctive about the proposed buildings that speak to the unique character of Blacksburg. The large building volumes appear very commercial in nature, especially with flat roofs.

The applicant is proffering that the structures will be EarthCraft certified or National Green Building Standard Certified.

Setbacks

Setbacks or required yards provide areas on a property that are to remain free from structures or other uses. 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 applicant is proposing **10' setbacks on all sides**. The General Commercial zoning district along Main Street requires a minimum 10' front yard setback, but no setbacks on rear or sides, except those facing a street on a corner lot. The GC district does require 25'-50' vegetated buffer yards to be developed along any property line that abuts a residential district.

The R-5 zoning district requires front yard setbacks of 35' or more; side setbacks of 10' or more; and rear setbacks of 25' or more. However, a **10' front yard setback** places the building along Giles Road closer to the road than the existing structures in the neighborhood, which tend to be approximately 27-30' or more away from the property lines. As an infill redevelopment in an established neighborhood, it is imperative that proposed structures and uses be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The front façade of the townhome building along Giles Road features front porches, and shared walks leading to the units from the Giles Road sidewalk. The building is roughly parallel to the street, and the face of the townhome buildings varies 14' – 17' from the building to the property line at the right-of-way; and approximately 23' from the building to the back of the sidewalk along Giles Road. This proposed setback is a shallower setback than what is required in the R-5 zoning district (a minimum of 35' or 25' when parking is provided in the rear of the building). Due to the configuration of the buildings on the site with drive aisles and the trail around the outside of the parcel, the buildings will generally be located farther away from the property lines than the minimum setback proposed. Along the rear, the building will be approximately 19' away from the rear property line that is shared with the Heartstrings business. The two internal buildings will be approximately 52' from the side property lines. At the corner of the property along Giles Road, the building

appears to be approximately 15' from the property line at the building corner, though this dimension is not specifically called out.

The rear yard of the townhome building to the rear of the Giles Road parcel may feel much more cramped than the 19' provided. Within this space, each unit has a sidewalk that leads to the trail running between the building and the rear property line. Along the rear property line, a privacy fence is proposed. The applicant may wish to consider revising this configuration to provide more space between the building and the rear property line, and to provide a more pleasant feel and view for these units.

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 proposed buffering mitigates any adverse impacts to the surrounding area.

The application includes a planting plan showing street trees, parking lot trees, and plantings along several property lines. Plan sheet Z4 calls out the rear property line of the Main Street parcel as an "evergreen buffer". This buffer yard will help to visually screen the retaining wall to the rear of the property, but will not shield the buildings beyond. The development on Main Street will be higher than the ground at the rear property line, and so depending on the trees selected, the buffer yard may or may not adequately screen the development from the viewpoint of The Heights development. The concept landscape plan sheet also shows trees along the north, east, and west property lines of the Main Street parcel, and along the west property line of the Giles Road parcel. The application also includes two lengths of privacy fence along the Argabright property line. The application Landscape and Screening section details the specific widths of all of these proposed planting areas.

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.

Sidewalks/Trail

There is existing sidewalk along Main Street, and Giles Road, however, neither are improved with a buffer strip between the sidewalk and the curb. This is often the case around town where the Town has constructed sidewalk within the existing limits of the right-of-way. The applicant will be replacing the existing sidewalk along the entire frontage of the Main Street parcels. More than half the sidewalk along the Giles Road frontage will also be replaced. ***The applicant should replace the entire length of sidewalk along the frontage of Giles Road in order to bring the existing turndown sidewalk up to Town Standards consisting of curbing and sidewalk. Development and redevelopment offers*** opportunities to provide sidewalks that meet Town standards or significantly improve the pedestrian environment. Wider sidewalks should be considered on Main Street as no bicycle facilities are proposed or existing. Staff recommends that the applicant provide a 4' vegetative buffer

and at least 5' sidewalk along both Main Street, and Giles Road. The applicant is not proposing more than a 5' sidewalk adjacent to the back of the curb **along Main Street, and turndown 5' sidewalk meeting the existing condition along Giles Road. The applicant has not made any changes to the sidewalks along Main Street or Giles Road. Staff will continue to recommend additional changes to improve the pedestrian experience and safety along the frontage of the development.**

The applicant has also shown sidewalks within the development that provide an ADA-accessible route across the development from Giles Road to Main Street. **An ADA-accessible route is required for multifamily developments to link buildings and parking, as well as residential amenities such as recreation and trash/recycling. Verification of accessibility will occur at the site plan stage, if the rezoning request is approved.**

The applicant has proposed a sidewalk/trail linking the Giles Road parcel to the North Main Street parcel along the eastern boundary of the site. However, this connection varies in width from 6' to 8'. As such, it will not function as a trail connection for bicycles; it is too narrow. There appears to be enough space to allow the connection to be 10' wide along its entire length.

Bicycle Facilities

This section of Giles Road has been designated as a sharrows lane for bicycles. There are no bike lanes, or off-road trails along either Giles Road or Main Street. As no specific trail has been shown through the site, it is assumed that residents from any of the buildings simply use the internal sidewalks, or the internal parking lots to traverse the site with a bicycle. **The sidewalk along the eastern boundary line provides a relatively direct connection between Main Street and Giles Road, but is 6-8' wide.** When cyclists are expected to utilize sidewalks, a minimum 10' width is required. **The applicant should revise the plan to show the connection as a standard trail of 10' in width.**

Bicycle Parking

The application text includes a bike parking ratio of 0.6 spaces per bedroom for the apartments, totaling 187 spaces, with approximately 175 of these spaces covered in the tuck-under parking area. The plan sheet Z3 indicates a different ratio for bicycle parking that should be clarified. The application indicates that townhouse units will use the garage or interior space for bicycle storage. However, staff notes that these spaces are often converted for other uses and create a challenge in zoning verification. Bicycle parking should be provided at a minimum ratio of 0.25 spaces per bedroom for the townhouse use. Overall, staff has calculated the bicycle parking ratio for the residential uses to be 0.48 spaces per bedroom. Additionally, space for **16 bicycles** will be provided to meet the requirements for the commercial uses. The application does not indicate that there will be other bicycle amenities such as workshop area or fix-it station.

Corridor Committee Review

The Corridor Committee reviews requests for rezoning to provide input on projects with regards to bicycle and pedestrian improvements and infrastructure. The Committee had several comments on the original application:

- The applicant should provide a more direct route (sidewalk or multi-use trail) through the site from Giles to Main Street.
- Minimize conflicts between bicycles/pedestrians and vehicles in the parking lots.
- Continuity in width of sidewalks is preferable. There are several locations where sidewalks change between 5' and 8'.
- Sight distance for cyclists at the Giles Road entrance is crucial for providing safety for those leaving the site to bike on Giles Road.

- Some of the on-street parking on Giles Road may need to be moved or eliminated to ensure proper sight distance.
- The sidewalk through the site goes through the outdoor amenity area. It is unclear if this route is restricted to residents or would be available for public use. It should be for public use. ***This route has been revised.***
- Ensure that the bike parking has adequate space for all types of racks, especially in providing space for 175 bikes in the “tuck-under parking”. This bike parking should be located toward the eastern end of the tuck-under parking area to be closer to the sidewalk.
- Consider bike parking for larger/utilitarian bicycles with racks. ***Commercial bike parking is proposed to be 10’ in length to accommodate larger bicycles.***
- There is a need for a crosswalk on all 4 legs of the Giles Road/Patrick Henry Drive intersection, especially with the new bus shelter proposed at this location with this development.

Parking and Circulation

Parking Ratio

The Planned Residential District allows applicants to choose a parking ratio that is different from the standards in the zoning ordinance with information to indicate why the proposed ratio is appropriate and will not have any negative effect on surrounding uses. The standard ratio is 1.1 parking spaces per bedroom for multifamily residential uses. This standard was designed primarily to respond to the parking demands associated with multifamily housing geared toward students.

However, 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 tenancy, or small lot size. 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.

The applicant has indicated that a parking ratio of ***0.85 multifamily*** parking spaces per bedroom ***and 0.89 townhome parking spaces per bedroom*** is sufficient, stating that many residents may not bring cars, and instead rely on transit and biking or walking. Staff notes that the bicycle and pedestrian experience along the Main Street and Giles Road corridors is not particularly friendly. ***Townhouse parking includes 1 space in a garage and 1 surface space per unit plus 9 additional spaces. This proposal essentially creates a parking configuration that would require drivers to move vehicles to access the garage spaces. This may be more problematic when units are occupied by unrelated individuals.*** The application states that 1 space per ***275 square feet*** of commercial space is also provided. The application states that future commercial uses may be added to Buildings ‘B’ and ‘C’, though it is not known if the conversion of residential space to commercial space would adversely impact either the residential or the commercial parking ratios. The applicant should provide information regarding potential parking scenarios and ratios if commercial space is developed instead of residential units. ***No further information regarding parking ratios or trip generation has been provided for different scenarios of residential and commercial spaces. If the applicant wishes to reserve the right to convert some residential space in Building B to commercial uses, then updated trip generation and parking ratio impacts must be provided.***

At the neighborhood meeting, a number of residents were concerned that the parking would be inadequate, noting that there is a parking problem in this neighborhood. Many of the neighborhoods along Giles Road have

experienced problems with overflow parking such as Highview Drive. See the full notes included with this staff report. Furthermore, the application does not specify how, or if the commercial parking will be delineated from the residential parking, and what measures will be taken to prohibit residential use of commercial parking spaces.

Entrance and Circulation

The plan shows one entrance onto Giles Road, and one entrance onto Main Street. All of the parking lots are interconnected—none terminate in dead-ends. There is a connector drive that provides access across the site for vehicles to access either Main Street or Giles Road from anywhere in the development. ***The Main Street entrance has been revised to eliminate the conflicts between the proposed entrance and Robinson Street. Robinson Street provides access for several structures. The revised plan shows the elimination of Robinson Street, with a private entrance off of the proposed shared entrance to access the existing structures.*** Additionally, a bus pull-off is proposed just before the entrance to the development and may cause conflicts between buses pulling into or out of the pull-off, and vehicles turning into or out of the development.

Density & Occupancy, Lifestyle Conflicts

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 good place to raise a family. The University is actively growing undergraduate enrollment which is impacting the Town's housing market. There have been a number of developments and redevelopments in the last several years that have sought to meet the demand for highly-amenitized off-campus student housing. There are almost 3,000 beds of off-campus student housing that have been approved in recent years that have yet to be constructed. Several of the large recently-approved projects include the Terrace View and Sturbridge redevelopments, Cedar Run Overlook, 1222 Patrick Henry Drive, 30-R at the CRC, and the development on the Frith property on Toms Creek Road. A chart containing the last 5-years' of rezoning applications is included in the staff appendix.

In response to the recent surge of requests for rezoning for off-campus student housing, the Town Council recently passed a resolution adopting a policy of considering limited opportunities for more undergraduate student housing, specifically those where lifestyle conflicts are less likely to occur, and have significant commercial and office uses, and are particularly sensitive to site context, and are constructed with quality building materials.

While the application does not specifically describe the development as student housing, the traffic study uses the trip generation land use code for "Off Campus Student Apartments" in order to provide assumptions and projections for traffic volume. Coupled with bed-bath parity apartments, it is reasonable to assume that this development is intended for undergraduate student residents. ***The layout of the townhome units will not feature bed-bath parity. Two bedroom townhomes contain 1.5 bathrooms. The three-bedroom units will feature 2.5 bathrooms. The townhomes will also include a single-car garage and parking in a driveway for each unit. The 75 bedrooms in the townhome portion of the development represent approximately 22% of the total number of bedrooms.***

The application states that the occupancy for the development shall be a family plus 2 persons unrelated to the family, or no more than 4 unrelated persons. ***The application states that occupancy for unrelated individuals shall be limited to 1 person per bedroom.*** No proffers have been provided that indicate this development is to be non-student-oriented.

The existing residences in the neighborhood are a mix of single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings. Immediately across Giles Road from the development is the rear and side portion of the Blacksburg Community Center. Many of the homes across Giles Road nearby are owner-occupied, as are the homes fronting along Patrick Henry Drive, and backing up to the Giles Road parcel. One of the homes in the neighboring Heights duplexes is owner-occupied.

Open Space

The provision of open space is another component of residential communities that it is included as a requirement for nearly every type of residential development. The Planned Residential Zoning District Standards and the Use & Design Standards for Multifamily Dwellings §4216(a) (6) 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. The Planned Residential district standards §3113 state that a “compact area of at least five thousand (5,000) square feet shall be provided for active or passive recreational activities.”

With many of the recent requests for planned residential developments, open space has increasingly become a topic of discussion. There have been a number of concerns related to the overall nature of open space, its usability and practicality, and the intent of open space and its use and design standards. Several applications have shown open space within setback areas, which is prohibited in the Open Space use and design standards, or providing zero setbacks so that open space may be calculated up to the property line. Neither of these methods meets the intent or standards for open space found in §4328:

(a) General Standards:

- 1) Composition of open space. Open space shall include the most sensitive resource areas of the site. All primary conservation areas located within the development shall be designated open space. In addition, the open space area should include locally significant features of the property. To the greatest extent practicable, all secondary conservation areas, up to at least the minimum required percentage of the remainder of the site, shall be designated open space. In addition, open space shall include areas of the site adjacent to designated open space on adjoining lots.
- 2) Configuration of open space. To the greatest extent practicable, open space land should be designated as a single block with logical straightforward boundaries. Fragmentation of open space land shall be minimized so that it is not divided into numerous small parcels located in various parts of the district. Long, thin strips of open space shall be avoided, unless necessary to connect other significant areas, or when they are designed to protect linear resources such as streams or trails.
- 3) Recreational use of open space. Open space intended for use as community or public recreation shall be integrated into the residential community in such a way as to maximize its accessibility to residents. It should have appropriate physical characteristics for recreational use.
- 5) Open space shall not include required yards, except for single-family detached.

In this particular request, the application shows that **20% open space is provided. The application shows both recreational open space, and non-recreational open space to meet the 20% minimum requirement. The plan also shows “other greenspace” mostly located in the setbacks and the areas closest to the buildings. There are several meaningful areas of recreational open space including an open lawn area between the interior townhome buildings, plaza and terraces surrounding the Building A along Main Street, and an amenity area between Building B and C. Additionally, the sidewalk/trail along the eastern property line has been indicated as recreational open space. An exception to the Use & Design Standard for Open Space §4328(a)(5) will be required for the sidewalk open space, as it is shown to extend to the property line for most of its length.**

Sheet **Z6** of the application also shows “non-recreational open space”, as well as “other greenspace”. Much of the “other greenspace” is simply the area that is encompassed by the setbacks and is required to remain free of structures or other uses. The “non-recreational open space” includes **some of** the leftover land that is not proposed to be built upon. This includes **some areas** adjacent to buildings, next to sidewalks, and other locations that clearly do not meet the standards for any kind of open space. **There are a number of areas indicated as “recreational open space” that should perhaps be designated as non-recreational open space, if they are to be designated as open space at all. The areas next to the sidewalk along the eastern property line are designated as “recreational open space” but really do not function for recreation.**

Staff still has concerns that the open space provided, while technically meeting the 20% minimum, does not meet the intent of open space as provided in the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed dog park is located in a parking lot island. Several oddly-shaped areas of land that are otherwise unbuilt have been designated as recreational open space, yet no information has been provided regarding their programming. Even as shown, the plan’s open space does not meet the Use & Design Standards for Open Space sections regarding Composition, and Configuration as shown above. It is reasonable to designate the plaza and terrace areas around Building A, the outdoor and indoor amenity areas near Building C, and the lawn between the townhome buildings as open space, though other areas throughout the site should not be designated open space based on the standards above. In addition, the setbacks have been revised from 15’ to 10’ and some of these areas has been included in the open space calculation.

Signage

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 states that a maximum of two permanent signs and three directional signs are permitted per lot in any residential zoning district. Additionally, one freestanding identification sign is permitted at each primary entrance to a residential development, up to a maximum of two. However, 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.

The applicant is proposing one monument sign at each entrance along Main Street and Giles Road for the development. Each monument sign is proposed to be approximately **3’ tall by 12’ wide**, with the signage area of the monument to be approximately **1.5’ x 12’ for a total of 18 square feet**. The application also shows commercial signage for tenants of approximately 2’-4” x 16’ totaling approximately 37 square feet above the tenant storefront bays. A canopy building identification sign is proposed for the main entrance to Building A and would be approximately 3’ x 26’. No details have been shown regarding whether the Giles Road façade of Building D will have signage, though there is signage on the interior-facing façade of Building D. Signage concept renderings are provided in the application. **The application indicates that Building C will include leasing office signage. Additional information is needed regarding sizing for this signage.**

For comparison, in the General Commercial zoning district, a monument sign may be up to 8’ tall and contain up to 50 square feet of total signage for multiple tenants, or up to 40 square feet for a single tenant. Building façade signage can be up to 8% of each building façade, up to a maximum of 120 square feet. The signage proposed is consistent with, and generally less intense than the allowable signage.

Solid Waste and Recycling

The plan shows several locations for trash and recycling facilities. **Two of the three** locations are very convenient to access by residents and are located on sidewalks near to the buildings. One facility is located in the southwest corner of the site, and is not directly accessible by a sidewalk. The applicant should consider if

this facility is necessary, or should provide more convenient access to this location. The application states that all locations will be accessible to both residential and commercial tenants. It may be desirable to have a dedicated facility for the commercial uses separate from the residential uses to ensure adequate capacity for each. ***With the new townhouse use, trash and recycling provision for these units should be specifically addressed. In particular, staff notes that not all units have public street frontage or sidewalks adjacent to their units, which may present challenges for disposal. The applicant should provide additional information to detail how the townhouse units will be serviced.***

EVALUATION OF IMPACTS

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

Stormwater Management

The Town Engineering Staff have reviewed the application with regard to the development's stormwater management plan. The concept plan is approved at this time. There are existing downstream flooding concerns, and the engineering staff notes that care will need to be taken at the site plan stage to ensure that the stormwater management facilities and improvements do not exacerbate the existing conditions.

Sanitary Sewer

The Town Engineering Staff have reviewed the application with regard to impacts to the Town's sanitary sewer system and provide the following comments ***which need to be addressed at the rezoning stage:***

- 1) The application states that "Future improvements to [sanitary sewer] lines may be necessary per discussion with staff." Staff notes that the Giles Road line **must** be upgraded if any sewer flows from the development go to the Giles Road sewer lines.
- 2) The leasing office/amenity area/pool sewer flows are not generally incorporated into the Town's downstream capacity analyses. If necessary, these flows must be justified.

This may be addressed in the form of a letter from the applicant acknowledging that no site plan can be approved until the identified upgrades are made.

Water

The Town Engineering Staff have reviewed the application with regard to impacts to the Town's water supply system and provide the following comments ***which may be addressed at the site plan stage:***

- 1) The proposed development at 1310 North Main Street has water availability. North Main Street has an existing 16" water main and Giles Road has an existing 8" water main. The application should reflect the correct waterline sizes.
- 2) The Town can provide the minimum required pressure (20 psi) at the water meter based on the water demand provided by the applicant (30,234 gpd). The applicant should investigate if fire pumps, etc. are required to meet Building and Fire Codes for multistory buildings.
- 3) The proposed development does not contain sufficient information to confirm that the waterline design will meet Town standards. Additional infrastructure may be required to meet the Town of Blacksburg Water Standards and Specifications, the Building Code, and the Fire Code. This may be addressed at the site plan stage, if approved.

Traffic & Transportation

The applicant submitted a revised traffic analysis dated September 27, 2019. After reviewing the updated traffic and transportation information, the Town has four recommendations regarding the analysis:

- ***Provide a LOS and Queuing analysis as part of the justification for excluding the warranted left turn lane on North Main Street.***
- ***Include the trip generation impact of the future commercial conversion in the traffic impact analysis.***
- ***Revise the master plan to include a left turn lane and 100-ft of storage on North Main Street.***
- ***Include the projected traffic volumes associated with the approved 520 Patrick Henry Drive (OBHS) rezoning in the traffic impact analysis.***

Furthermore, Town staff does not think that the layout and design of the development as proposed addresses the impacts of the development, specifically with regard to the warranted left turn lane on Main Street into the development. The attached Engineering memo outlines the reasons for the turn lane warrant, and the benefits that the mitigation measure provides.

Blacksburg Transit

Transit Improvements

The application shows in both the plan and proffer that two 4' x 8' bus shelters will be installed with the proposed development. One will be located at the existing bus stop on Giles Road at Patrick Henry Drive. The other will be located adjacent to Main Street at a proposed bus pull-off.

Blacksburg Transit staff has reviewed the applicant and have provided a memo with full comments attached to this report. In summary, it is unknown what the ridership of transit among the residents of this development will be. BT suggests approximately 25% ridership at 2 trips per day, which would equate to approximately 190 trips per day generated by the residents of this development. However, actual usage may vary and is unknown at this time.

With regard to the improvements proposed along North Main Street, BT notes that an existing bus stop south of the development will be relocated to the proposed bus pull-off and shelter at the development. BT notes that the location is adequate. BT states that the bus shelter will be required to have electrical service, and that a trash can at the location of the stop is recommended. With regard to the improvements to the existing stop on Giles Road, Transit notes that additional work may be required to determine the feasibility of this improvement. The memo states that there may be significant underground utilities in the area of the stop. Furthermore, the proposed shelter and landing will have to be ADA-compliant. ***The applicant should verify that the Giles Road bus stop improvements are feasible since improvements are part of the proffer statement.*** Transit also recommends the addition of a crosswalk across Giles Road at Patrick Henry Drive, as well as an additional sidewalk on the east side of the proposed Building D to provide a more direct connection to the bus stop, and for pedestrians heading toward Patrick Henry Drive.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

There was a neighborhood meeting held on Thursday, August 8, 2019. There were a number of citizen attendees. The comments and concerns largely focused on traffic and transportation, parking, stormwater, and buffering neighboring properties. Several attendees also encouraged the developer to investigate the large sycamore tree in the rear of the Main Street parcel, as there may be evidence that it is 250+ years old, and were concerned that the tree would have to be removed. Citizens also were concerned that none of the large trees on site may be able to be kept with the development as proposed.

KEY ELEMENTS:

The key elements listed below are in the order found in the staff report, and do not represent a prioritized list:

- **Loss of commercially-designated & zoned land to residential zoning for student housing**
- **Residential density and compatibility with the neighborhood**
- **Proposed uses and compatibility with the development and neighborhood**
- **Townhouse use including Use and Design Standards**
- **Building height, scale, and massing and neighborhood compatibility**
- **Setbacks along Giles Road and townhouse setbacks generally**
- **Buffering and Landscaping**
- **Inadequate Sidewalk/trail width**
- **Parking: overall ratio, commercial uses, delineation of commercial vs. residential, overflow parking**
- **Inadequate open space**
- **Solid Waste & Recycling**
- **Sanitary Sewer**
- **Traffic & Transportation**

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. Any changes to the master plan would be required to be reviewed through the public hearing process to amend this PR district. If denied, the property will continue to be zoned General Commercial and R-5 Transitional Residential 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.

PROFFER STATEMENT dated September 27, 2019 is found in the revised application.

APPENDICES

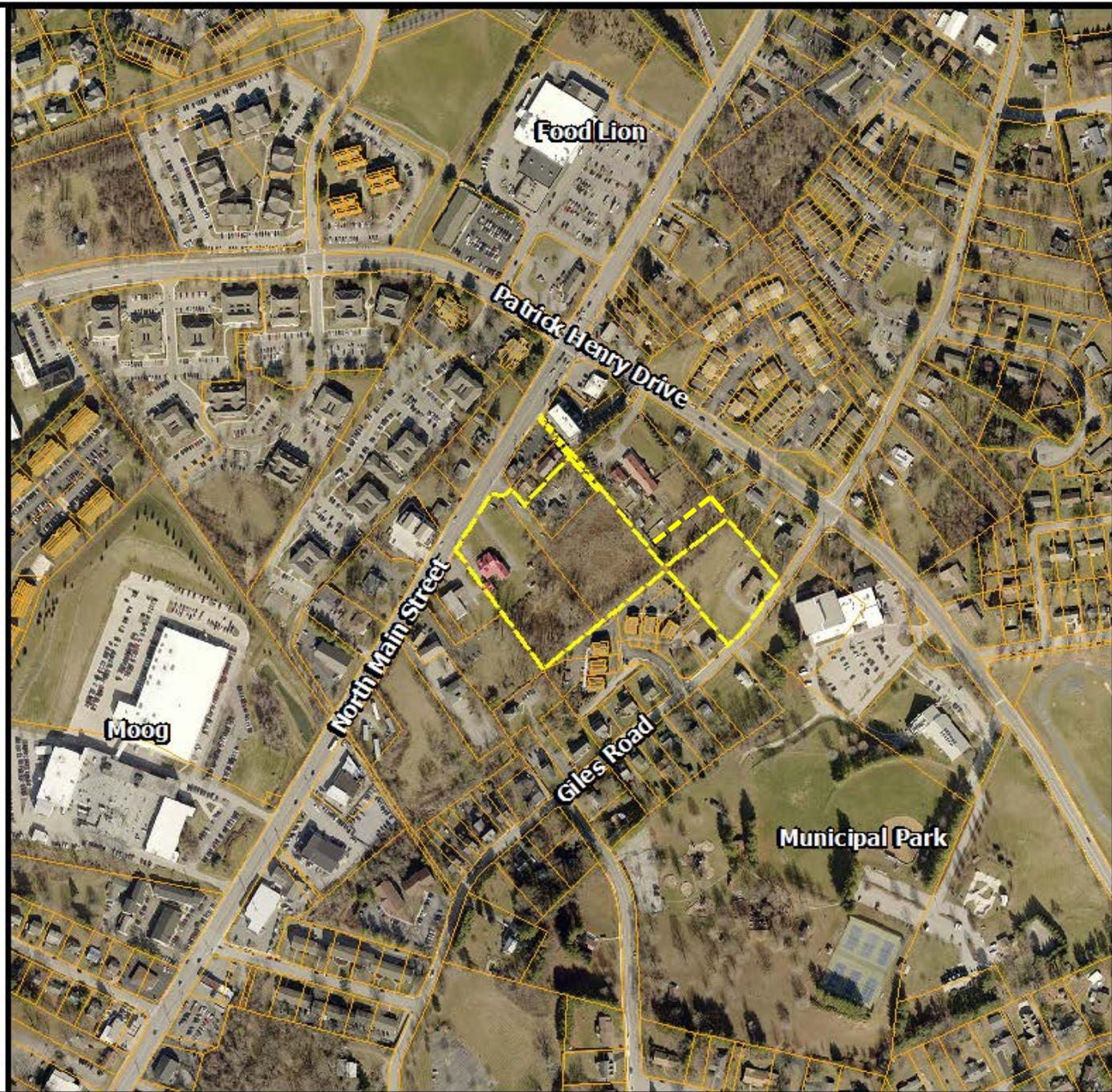
- **Updated Staff GIS maps**
- **Updated Staff Appendix dated October 11, 2019**
- **Updated Engineering Transportation Memo dated October 10, 2019**
- **BT Memo dated August 6, 2019**
- **Neighborhood Meeting Notes & Sign-in sheet**

**RZN19-0004
Mixed Use
PRD**

**1310 North
Main Street**

1013 Giles Rd

-  Subject Parcels
-  Parcels



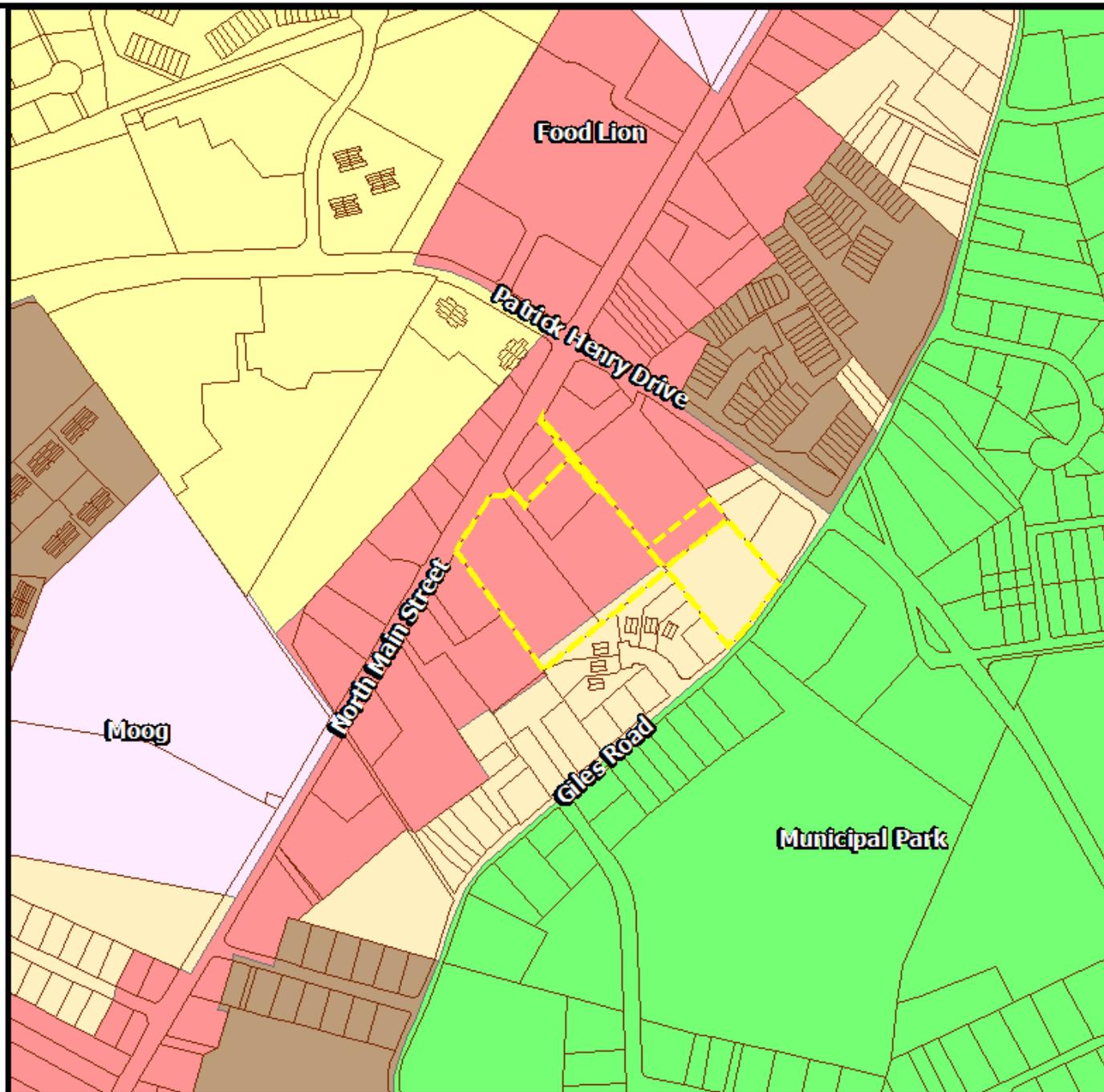
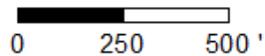
**RZN19-0004
Mixed Use
PRD**

**1310 N Main Street
1013 Giles Road**

Zoning

Legend

-  Rezoning Area
-  Parcels
-  R-4 Low Density Residential
-  R-5 Transitional Residential
-  RM-48 Medium Density Multiunit Residential
-  GC General Commercial
-  RD Research and Development
-  PR Planned Residential



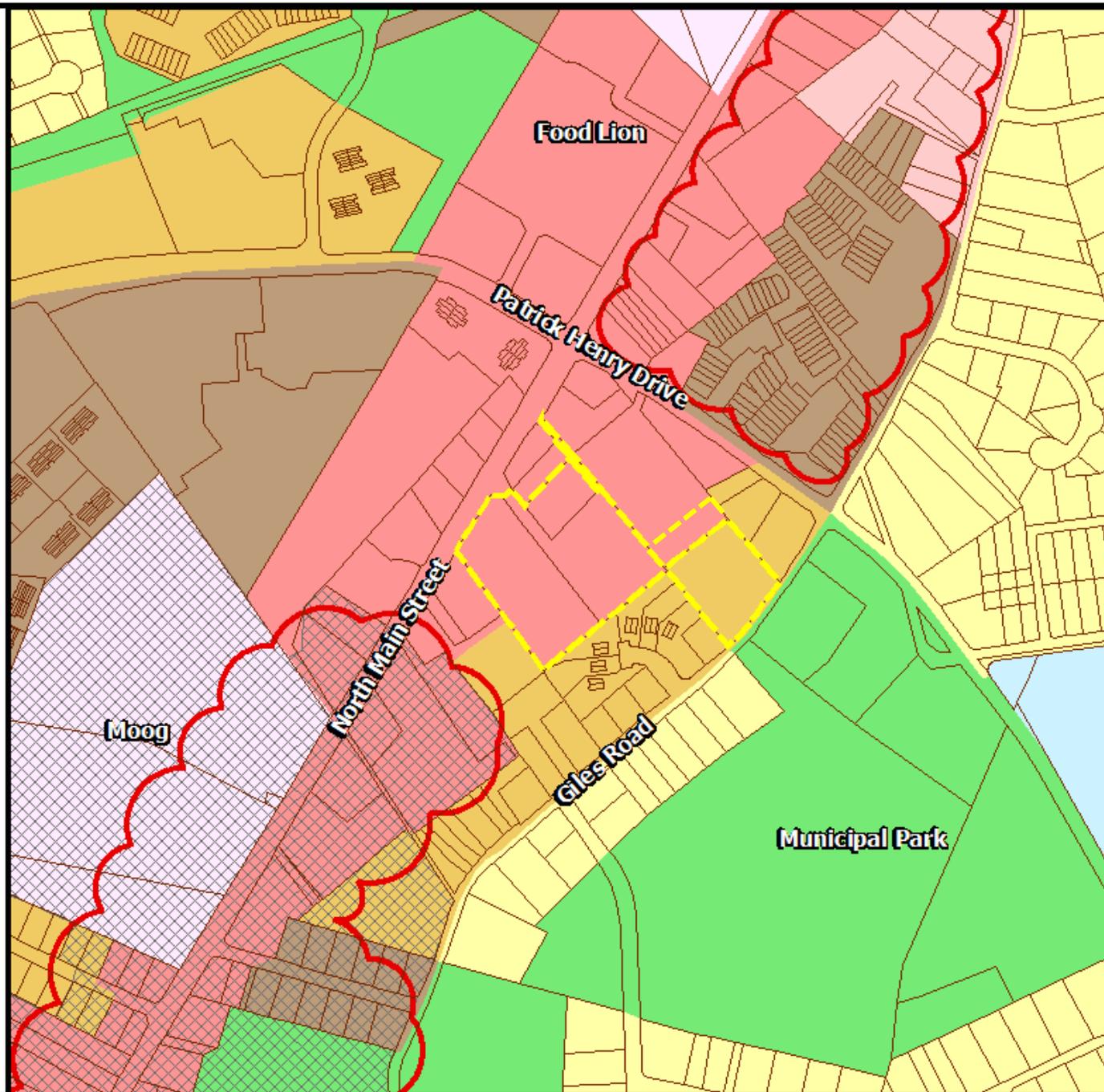
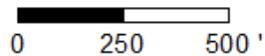
**RZN19-0004
Mixed Use
PRD**

**1310 N Main Street
1013 Giles Road**

Future Land Use

Legend

-  Rezoning Area
-  Parcels
-  Mixed Use Areas
-  Urban Development Areas
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Park Land / Open Space / Resource Protection
-  Civic
-  Low Impact Commercial
-  High Impact Commercial
-  Research / Development



RZN19-0004 1310 North Main Street PRD

Staff Appendix

This appendix is provided to give additional supporting information from the Comprehensive Plan, the Residential Infill Guidelines, and the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances in order to allow the staff report to focus on the analysis of the application.

Physical Site Development

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

- **Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policy LU.6:** Consider the compatibility of development with surrounding uses. Utilize strategies such as landscaping or other buffering techniques along with modification of site design to minimize impacts and facilitate compatibility.
- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.21:** The Town is concerned about the height, mass, and placement of buildings, cell towers, or other features of considerable height on viewsheds.
- **CCP 12:** To serve the needs of the community, support opportunities for commercial development and redevelopment in appropriate locations.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Best Practice #1:** Respect neighborhood context and enhance community character
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Best Practice #2:** Provide...transitions...of building scale, building design, form and color...Complementary architectural design, materials, scale, massing and the use of landscape, screening, and open space are strategies to achieve compatibility within the neighborhood and the Town.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Site Design & Parking:**
 - Buildings oriented toward streets are a key characteristic of Blacksburg's residential neighborhoods.
 - Locate the primary entrance towards the street
 - Clearly define the primary entrance of the structure by using a front porch or stoop, and other architectural details.
 - Retain space in front of the structure to relate to the street or sidewalk without intervening elements such as parking.
 - Entry porches and porticoes in two-story homes should be one story to minimize the appearance of bulk.
 - The scale and style of porch and portico elements should be consistent with the scale and style of the home, and should strive to respect the scale and style of porch and portico elements in the other homes on the block.
 - Buildings should be designed to fit within the context of the surrounding structures and provide visual interest to pedestrians.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Building Design:**
 - The mass and scale of new infill residential buildings should appear to be similar to the building seen traditionally in the neighborhood.
 - The width of a building face of an infill project should not exceed the width of a typical residential structure on adjacent lots.
 - Building roof forms that are similar to those seen traditionally in the neighborhood, such as gabled and hip roofs, should be used.
 - Buildings should be designed to fit within the context of the surrounding structures and provide visual interest to pedestrians.

- **Multifamily Dwelling Use & Design Standard for building orientation §4216 (a)(3):**
 - The street elevation of the residential buildings shall have at least one (1) street-oriented entrance and contain the principal windows of the front unit.
- **Townhouse Use & Design Standard for building design §4231:**
 - Except in the DC District a maximum of eight (8) dwelling units may be constructed in a contiguous series of townhouses. No more than two (2) contiguous series shall be constructed adjacent to each other.
 - Townhouse design, scale, and building materials shall be single-family residential in appearance.
 - The principal orientation of all townhouses shall be the street or parking area on which the lot has frontage. There shall be at least one entrance facing the street and the principal windows of the townhouse shall also face this street.
 - Front yard setbacks for adjacent units shall vary a minimum of 3' and a maximum of 8'.

Lot Configuration, Setbacks, Lot Coverage, Buffer Yards & Landscaping

- **Subdivision Ordinance §5-200 Lot Characteristics**
 - The lot arrangement, design, and shape shall be such that lots will provide appropriate sites for buildings and be properly related to topography so that each lot has an acceptable building site with direct access from an improved street. Lots shall not contain peculiarly shaped elongations solely to provide necessary square footage of area which would be unusable for normal purposes. Subdividers are encouraged to shape and orient lots to maximize solar access.
- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.15:** Blacksburg is a responsible headwaters community for Southwest Virginia
- **CCP.16:** Responsible site design and development practices will minimize environmental impacts within the town
- **Comprehensive Plan Environment Objective E.17:** As a part of the development review process, the Town will evaluate a proposed development's impact and proposed mitigation measures for the following:
 - Open Space
 - Urban forest canopy
 - Watershed
- **Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Objectives & Policy S.6:** Promote, protect and enhance the Town's urban forests through Town initiatives and in the development review process. Minimize site disturbance to protect existing tree canopy, native vegetation, and pervious surfaces to encourage open space.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Site Design and Parking:**
 - Streets [that] feature consistent front building setbacks...help define neighborhood character.
 - Provide a front yard consistent with those found on the block facing the street.
 - Front porches are encouraged and may extend into the required front yard setback.
 - In residential neighborhoods, multi-family housing should adopt the predominant setback, but should also vary the building façade to relieve the appearance of mass.
 - Setbacks should be proportional to the height and mass of a building
 - The "green edge [landscaped setbacks between the...buildings and sidewalks]" provides residential streets with a clearly identifiable character; [landscaping] and fences are

often used for transition between public and private space; provision of open space is critical for multifamily developments...

- Natural features and existing trees should be retained
- Parking lots should be generously landscaped to provide shade, reduce glare, and provide visual interest
- All site areas not covered by structures, walkways, driveways, or parking spaces should be landscaped
- Street trees and planting strips also help buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic.
- **Zoning Ordinance Landscaping Development Standards §5425: Tree Replacement**
Requirements: Any trees on the site which are a caliper of five inches or more at a height of one foot above the ground, or ornamental trees over twelve feet in height which are to be removed during site development shall be replaced up to the maximum canopy coverage required in §5426.
- **ZO §5426: Canopy Coverage Requirements:** Trees shall be provided within the limits of construction to the extent that at twenty years from the date of planting, tree canopies or covers will provide at least the following minimums: Planned Districts—Per [similar] Uses: RM-48 = 10%
- **ZO §5427: Parking Lot Landscaping:**
 - The following provisions are intended to require that 5% of the entire parking lot, excluding the access drive, is landscaped with trees and vegetative ground cover. The area of the parking lot is the square foot of the parking spaces and aisles and interior parking lot islands, excluding access drives that do not contain either parallel or perpendicular parking spaces.
 - Within the parking lot there shall be planted one tree per ten spaces, rounded down to the closest whole number.
 - Planter islands or peninsulas containing trees shall be located within the parking lot, such that each island or planter is surrounded on at least three sides by parking lot or an access road to the parking lot. Their size shall be eighteen feet square in area, or equal total area in irregular shapes such that adequate space is provided for adequate tree canopy maturation.
- **ZO §5428 Street Trees:** In addition to the requirements set out above [in this ordinance division], in every development requiring a site development plan, there shall be planted on or adjacent to the site an average of at least one tree for every thirty feet of public street frontage.
- **Commercial Kennel Use and Design Standards §4531**
 - Animal waste shall be disposed of in a manner acceptable to the Department of Health.
 - Crematoria or land burial of animals in association with a commercial kennel shall be prohibited.
 - The minimum area required for a commercial kennel shall be two (2) acres.
 - All facilities associated directly with the commercial kennel, whether indoors or outdoors, shall be set back a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any property line.
 - A commercial kennel adjoining a residential use type, shall have a type C buffer yard in accordance with Section 5310.
 - Additional standards in the GC zoning district: Parking shall be located behind the front line of the principal building. Town Council may grant a special exception to this requirement as authorized by Section 1112.

Streetscape, Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.1:** Well-designed pedestrian and bicycle friendly routes and facilities are essential to the Town's identity as a walkable and bikeable community.
- **CCP.14:** Transit connections and bus stop facilities are important components to support transit as a viable transportation option in town. These elements should be part of the design of new developments and be coordinated with Blacksburg Transit regarding service availability.
- **CCP.18:** Minimize light pollution, balancing dark skies with a safe pedestrian and vehicular experience at night
- **Comprehensive Plan Transportation Objective & Policy T.10:** Complete the construction of a connected sidewalk system
- **T.11:** Minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.
- **T.12:** Maintain and improve the aesthetic quality of the pedestrian environment by planting street trees and other landscaping, and installing street furniture where appropriate.
- **T.16:** Develop and implement a comprehensive bicycle parking program throughout the Town and in coordination with Blacksburg Transit to install covered bicycle racks at public sites and commercial and residential locations, as well as to coordinate with Montgomery County and the New River Valley Planning District Commission for bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the region.
- **T.17:** Investigate implementing a bike share program
- **T.20:** Monitor the public transportation provided to ensure effectiveness and efficiency while maintaining the priorities of safety, courtesy and scheduling.
- **T. 22:** Enhance transit accessibility and convenience; lower parking demand, energy use, and air pollution by reducing traffic on local roads; and educate the community on the positive environmental impact from using public transit in order to encourage its overall use throughout the Town.
- **T.27:** Increase the number of covered bus shelters and covered bike parking provided at transit stops where appropriate.
- **T.28:** During the development review process, ensure that transit service and access to/from the transit stop and the development are provided.
- **Comprehensive Plan Environment Objective EN.34:** Support citizens in establishing and reaching vehicle travel reduction goals to reduce air pollution.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Best Practice #3:** Create a pedestrian friendly streetscape
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Site Design & Parking:**
 - The design of the space between the edge of the curb and the front of a building is essential for encouraging pedestrian activity and promoting safety and security.
 - [Sidewalks] contribute to the character of the neighborhoods by providing safe places for people to travel and interact with one another.
 - Walkways should connect public sidewalks and parking areas to all main entrances on the site. For townhouses...fronting on the street, the sidewalk may be used to meet this standard
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Use & Design Standard for sidewalks §4216 (a)(2):**
 - Sidewalks shall connect each unit to the parking area serving that unit, to other units on-site, and to other buildings or uses on adjacent lots.
- **Townhouse Use & Design Standard for sidewalks §4231 (b)(4):**
 - Sidewalks shall connect each townhouse to the parking area serving that townhouse,

to other buildings within the site, and to other buildings or uses on adjacent lots.

- **Zoning Ordinance Site Development Plans Minimum Standards and Improvements Required §5120(d)(1):**
 - Sidewalks meeting the design standards of the Subdivision Ordinance shall be provide on public or private land along all parts of a site abutting a developed public street where such sidewalks do not exist as of the date of the application for site plan approval. The provision of these sidewalks will advance the goal of the Blacksburg comprehensive plan of development of “a network of walkways in the Town to increase the safety and convenience of pedestrian travel.” The Town Council finds that the need for such sidewalks in this Town is substantially generated by the development.
- **Subdivision Ordinance §5-401**
 - Except as otherwise provided by the Zoning Ordinance, sidewalks shall be constructed of concrete and shall be a minimum of five feet in width. A minimum four foot planting strip is required between the curb and sidewalk for pedestrian/vehicle separation and to provide for mailbox and utility service placement.

Parking and Circulation

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle 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.
- **CCP.14:** Transit connections and bus stop facilities are important components to support transit as a viable transportation option in Town. These elements should be part of the design of new development sand be coordinate with Blacksburg Transit regarding service availability.
- **Comprehensive Plan Transportation Objective & Policy T.50:** The development review process ensures:
 - Surface parking facilities are landscaped and appropriately lighted
 - Structured parking facilities are designed to minimize the visual impact of the bulk of the structure and the horizontal appearance of a parking deck
 - New parking lots minimize impacts on stormwater
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Dwelling Use & Design Standards §4216(a)(4):**
 - All parking spaces shall be located behind the front building line
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Dwelling Use & Design Standards §4216(a)(5):**
 - Entrances to the site should be minimized and placed in such a way as to maximize safety, maximize efficient traffic circulation, and minimize the impact on the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Density & Occupancy, Housing Variety, and Lifestyle Conflicts

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.2:** Lifestyle conflicts are inherent in a college town, where neighborhoods may have a mix of students and non-students.
- **Comprehensive Plan Land Use Objective & Policy LU.7:** Encourage developers to work with surrounding property owners and tenants to resolve community concerns prior to formalizing development plans.
- **Comprehensive Plan Jobs & Housing Objective & Policy J&H.48:** Plan for the housing demands of a changing and diversifying population
- **J&H. 51:** Promote varying types of housing types needed, including:
 - Rental or starter homes for purchase by graduate students and young families
 - Young professional housing and services in the Downtown area

- Workforce housing for those making 80% - 120% of AMI
- Affordable workforce housing options for LMI families making less than 80% of AMI
- Housing with universal design features to allow aging-in-place

PR development requests in Town past 5 years:

Year	Development Name	Status	Density	Parking Ratio
2014	Progress St Townhomes PRD	withdrawn	41 br/ac	
2014	Whipple South Townhomes PRD	approved, withdrawn	29 br/ac	
2014	Eheart & Main PRD	approved, site plan review	64 br/ac	
2014	Warren Street PRD	withdrawn	154 br/ac	
2014	Fieldstone PRD	approved, completed	25 br/ac	
2014	The Retreat PRD	approved, completed	20 br/ac	1.01 spaces/bedroom
2016	The Lofts on North Main	withdrawn	89 br/ac	0.95 spaces/bedroom
2016	Sturbridge Square	approved, site plan review	89 br/ac	0.85 spaces/bedroom
2017	Preston Row	approved, completed	55 br/ac	0.88 spaces/bedroom
2017	Whipple Duplexes (Uptown Village)	approved, completed	27 br/ac	0.95 spaces/bedroom
2017	Warren Street Stadium View	withdrawn	75 br/ac	0.82 spaces/bedroom
2017	Stonegate II	approved, site plan review	20 br/ac	1.09 spaces/bedroom
2017	Hearthstone Redevelopment PRD	approved, under construction	48 br/ac	0.78 spaces/bedroom
2018	Cedar Run Overlook	approved, under construction	35 br/ac	0.93 spaces/bedroom
2018	Uptown Commercial Phase III PRD	approved	48 br/ac	1.2 spaces/bedroom
2018	30-R at the CRC	approved, site plan review	58 br/ac	0.85 spaces/bedroom
2018	Frith/The View	approved	68 br/ac	0.88 spaces/bedroom
2018	Terrace View PRD 2018	approved, demolition	114 br/ac	0.77 spaces/bedroom
2018	1222 Patrick Henry	approved, under construction	66 br/ac	0.75 spaces/bedroom
2019	The Standard at Blacksburg	pending, under review	147 br/ac	0.8 sp/br + commercial

Loss of Commercial Land

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle 9:** With limited availability of commercial land, efficient use of the land is critical to provide services to a growing population. Redevelopment of aging commercial centers is the most significant opportunity to meet this need. Residential development should not encroach in these areas unless incorporated as part of a well-designed mixed use project.
- **CCP.12:** To serve the needs of the community, support opportunities for commercial development and redevelopment in appropriate locations.

Open Space

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.6:** Creation of public and private parks and recreation amenities is an important part of land use development decisions
- **CCP.17** The preservation of open spaces is an important part of community identity.
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Use & Design Standard for open space, recreation, and trails §4216(a)(6)**

- Except in the Downtown Commercial (DC) district and the Mixed Use (MXD) district, for any development of twenty (20) or more bedrooms, a minimum of twenty (20) percent of the gross land area shall be preserved as open space. A specific recreational activity area or areas shall be developed and maintained for the residents of the development as a part of this open space.
- **Townhome Use & Design Standard for open space, recreation, and trails §4231(b)(11)**
 - Except in the MXD and DC Districts, for any development of 5 or more townhouses a minimum of 20% of the gross land area shall be reserved as open space for community recreation use. A specific recreational activity area or areas shall be developed and maintained for the residents of the development as part of this open space, as follows:
 - The size, location, shape, slope, and condition of the land shall be suitable for a specific recreational activity
 - The amount of land devoted to recreation shall be a function of the population to be served. Consideration shall be given to the size of the development, number, and characteristics of expected residents, proximity to other available recreational facilities, topography, and natural features on the site.
 - Safety buffers shall be provided for users of recreational facilities and equipment using recognized engineering and recreation standards.
 - Indoor recreational areas may be used as a specific recreational activity area. The indoor recreational area shall count as a part of lot coverage, as regulated by the district standards.
- **Zoning Ordinance Use & Design Standards §4328 Open Space General Standards:**
 - Composition of open space. Open space shall include the most sensitive resource areas of the site. All primary conservation areas located within the development shall be designated open space. In addition, the open space area should include locally significant features of the property. To the greatest extent practicable, all secondary conservation areas, up to at least the minimum required percentage of the remainder of the site, shall be designated open space. In addition, open space shall include areas of the site adjacent to designated open space on adjoining lots.
 - Configuration of open space. To the greatest extent practicable, open space land should be designated as a single block with logical straightforward boundaries. Fragmentation of open space land shall be minimized so that it is not divided into numerous small parcels located in various parts of the district. Long, thin strips of open space shall be avoided, unless necessary to connect other significant areas, or when they are designed to protect linear resources such as streams or trails.
 - Recreational use of open space. Open space intended for use as community or public recreation shall be integrated into the residential community in such a way as to maximize its accessibility to residents. It should have appropriate physical characteristics for recreational use.
 - Open space shall not include required yards, except for single-family detached.

Comprehensive Plan Map C Excerpts:

A 1. Commercial and Employment Areas

There are five core commercial and employment areas in Town where needs of employees, customers and suppliers converge. These areas in the Town contain the majority of the jobs in Blacksburg but do not incorporate home-based businesses, which have minimal land use impacts. These areas include all but one of the Town's gateway entrances (the other primary gateway, North Main Street, is discussed under *A 4. Suburban Residential Neighborhood Areas* later in this chapter).

Commercial and Employment Area Issues for the Future

- The activity in these areas generates traffic and congestion. Mass transit, alternative transportation and other creative options, such as staggered working hours and telecommuting, can mitigate some of these negative impacts.
- Connectivity between the non-residential uses in these areas provides options for employees and customers alike to move between the uses without having to go out into the main road network. Connections should be safe for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles.
- There is an opportunity to upgrade technology infrastructure in these areas so they can become more economically competitive.
- Unique utility demands of new Research and Development, Light Industrial or Manufacturing businesses in these areas will need to be accommodated and incorporated into the Town's infrastructure.
- With a variety of commercial and employment areas throughout the Town, strengthening and expanding that economic vitality while adding to a high quality of life for residents is a primary focus.
- Creating a master plan for site redevelopment in these areas helps to assure that appropriate site design is achieved and fosters successful collaboration.
- Site design elements such as street orientation, preservation of historic landmarks, adequate open space, and effective and efficient use of land are important to these areas and can address the Town's goal of economic, environmental and social sustainability.
- Implement the pending 2012 Economic Development Strategies once adopted (*Refer to the Jobs & Housing Chapter*).
- There are a number of aging commercial properties in these areas. Stimulating redevelopment or the refurbishing of existing buildings in accordance with the various Commercial Infill Design principles discussed earlier in this chapter will help make these properties contribute more, both to the Town's economic tax base and the Community Character Principles of Blacksburg.

A.4 Suburban Residential Neighborhoods

Suburban residential neighborhoods are commonly made up of detached single-family homes on quarter acre or larger sized lots. Homes are typically owner-occupied and known for their good exterior maintenance and appearance. They are on tree-lined streets with houses nestled under a full and mature tree canopy. Homes are often rented to families who complement the already existing family-oriented neighborhood. Many of these neighborhoods are located near parks and recreational amenities. The low density neighborhoods are located on the edges of town, and many abut agricultural and open land. There is no transit service to single-family neighborhoods in these areas. These areas do not contain some of the urban/walkable amenities such as sidewalks and streetlights on all streets. The neighborhood street grid is not as well connected as older neighborhoods closer to Downtown. While commuting by biking and walking is possible, residents in these neighborhoods predominantly use their personal automobile to get to places. Suburban neighborhoods are primarily located at the edges of town, where urban development transitions to rural areas. The North Main Street gateway entrance to Blacksburg is in this area. These neighborhoods developed as demand increased for individuals and families looking for less urban lifestyles and more land while remaining close to employment and commercial areas.

Suburban Residential Neighborhood Issues for the Future

- Parks are an integral part of these neighborhoods. Maintaining the high quality of parks requires the cooperation and support of the neighborhood residents and the Town. New developments in these areas should be encouraged to provide pocket parks within their developments.
- Neighborhoods in these areas should increase connectivity to other neighborhoods, Town parks and other recreational facilities.
- Other means of transportation should be supported in these predominantly vehicular-oriented traffic neighborhoods.
 - Construct new sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and off-road trails where appropriate.
 - Provide creative transit options.
- The Town has classified streets as arterial and collector roads to carry support traffic with local traffic connecting to local streets. Planned road connections and improvements will complete the Town's interconnected grid system to efficiently move traffic. Any road improvements should honor the Town's arterial and collector road system while reflecting the character of the surrounding area.
- While cul-de-sacs are typical suburban development features, they are not always desired in Blacksburg. New developments should connect to the existing street system and existing neighborhoods where possible and as allowed by topography. This should include the provision of stub-outs as part of the development review process.
- Additional small-scale commercial services will be needed in some of these areas as residential communities grow. These uses will be considered in large planned residential developments and should be pedestrian-oriented and should not generate additional traffic from outside the area.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kinsey O'Shea, Development Administrator

FROM: Randy Formica, Director, Engineering and GIS
Joshua Middleton, Town Engineer

DATE: October 10, 2019

SUBJECT: 1310 North Main Street – Transportation Comments – Review 2

Analysis Revisions

Numerous revisions have been made, to the traffic impact analysis and master plan layout. Recommended revisions have been necessary to best represent the impacts of the proposed development. The following revisions have been made;

- The pass-by reduction has been removed from the trip generation data due to the largely unknown commercial components of the proposed development.
- Site traffic distribution has been revised to more accurately reflect the anticipated commercial trip generation and impacts on the adjacent road networks.
- Turn-Lane warrant analyses were revised per trip generation revisions.
- The master plan entrance design has been revised to eliminate the conflict with the Robinson Street intersection.

The following sections of this memorandum outline the impacts of the development as presented in the revised analysis. Much of the following appears similar to the original Transportation Comments Memorandum, dated August 15, 2019, with new data resultant from the requested revisions.

Overview

As indicated by the traffic impact analysis, the proposed development will add a moderate amount of vehicular traffic to the existing road network. Trip generation data indicates that the total number of vehicle trips generated by the site would be 2,651 trips per day, with AM Peak hour volumes of 94 trips and PM peak hour volumes of 212 trips. These trips would be distributed between North Main Street and Giles Road with the majority utilizing North Main Street. The existing traffic volumes, obtained as part of the analysis, indicate that North Main Street currently operates at approximately 15,000 ADT (average daily traffic) with AM peak hour volumes of 898 vehicles and PM peak hour volumes of 1239 vehicles, as measured at the intersection of North Main Street and Patrick Henry Drive. Based on the substantial trip distribution to North Main Street, the site would add 2,004 trips per day, with AM peak hour volumes of 67 trips and PM peak hour volumes of 160 trips. This represents a 7 – 13% increase in volumes. As expected, these increases will have varying degrees of impacts on the road network and intersections that have been summarized in the following sections.

Level of Service Analysis

The traffic impact analysis includes a Level of Service Analysis for the two (2) signalized intersections on N. Main St. at Progress Street and Patrick Henry Drive. The results of this analysis indicate that the signals will continue to operate at or near the existing acceptable levels and no signal timing modifications would be needed.

Future Commercial Conversion

The rezoning application indicates that the applicant may choose to convert a portion of the residential space to commercial use at a later date. In general, commercial uses generate much greater trip generation volumes than residential uses. Therefore, the conversion of residential space to commercial space would be expected to have a greater trip generation impact that is not accounted for in the traffic impact analysis. The impact of this potential future commercial conversion should be included as part of the traffic analysis as it will further increase site trip generation. This increase would further support the need for the warranted mitigation measures that are required to fully address the developments potential impacts.

Turn Lane Warrant Analysis

The revised traffic impact analysis includes revised turn lane warrant analysis for the proposed entrance on North Main Street. Turn lane warrants are triggered when the amount of turning vehicle volumes are significant enough to create notable safety and operational concerns for the adjacent street traffic. The implementation of a taper and/or turn lane represent the mitigation measure necessary to reduce the imposed safety and operational impacts of the development.

The proposed North Main Street entrance volumes continue to warrant both a right lane taper and a left turn lane which have not been included as part of the traffic analysis or master plan for the development. This is contrary to both Town Code Section 5-312 as well as the principles of Access Management. Justification for the exclusion of the warranted mitigation measures has been provided in the study, suggesting that maintaining consistency along the corridor and the limitations of the existing right-of-way make the turn lane unnecessary. Town Staff does not support this justification and recommends that these warranted mitigation measures be pursued as part of the master plan for the following reasons:

- Town Code Section 5-312 requires that turn lanes be provided on all adjacent street where warranted by the minimum requirements of VDOT – Access Management Design Standards.
- Without a dedicated lane for the left turning movement, vehicles would be required to stop and queue within the through lane. Stopped and queued vehicles, within the 35 MPH through lane, greatly increases the potential for rear-end collisions. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) suggests that a dedicated left turn lane reduces the probability of a rear-end collisions by 60 to 88 percent. The construction of the left turn lanes will mitigate the safety impacts by removing and providing queuing storage for left turning vehicles.
- The implementation of the left turn lanes will reduce the chance for head-on and angle crashes from both the northbound movement. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) suggests that a dedicated left turn lane reduces the probability of a crash by 18 to 77 percent (50 percent average).
- The implementation of the left turn lanes will lessen the chance of accidents due to traffic weaving between the through lanes to avoid the left turning vehicles.
- The implementation of the left turn lanes will help mitigate the proposed development traffic impacts, maintaining the current level of operations along the road network.

Additional Consideration

The Traffic Impact Analysis was prepared during the rezoning process for the 520 Patrick Henry Drive (OBHS) parcel. This rezoning has since been approved. As such, the traffic impact analysis should be updated to include the projected traffic volumes associated with this development.

Conclusions

The development will have a moderate to significant impact on the adjacent road network. Slight increases to LOS delay and queuing will occur at the existing North Main Street / Patrick Henry and North Main Street / Progress Street signals. However, the LOS impacts do meet the requirements of Section 5-307 of the Subdivision Ordinance. The greatest anticipated impact will occur at the proposed Site Entrance on North Main Street, which is expected to convey nearly 76% of all vehicle trips generated by the site. Town Staff continues to recommend that the warranted turn lane be included as part of the development master plan to provide the appropriate mitigation measures warranted by the proposed development traffic. These warranted mitigation measures would serve to reduce the development's impact on traffic safety and operations along North Main Street.

Recommendations

- Provide a LOS and Queuing analysis as part of the justification for excluding the warranted left turn lane on North Main Street.
- Include the trip generation impact of the future commercial conversion in the traffic impact analysis.
- Revise the master plan to include a left turn lane and 100-ft of storage on North Main Street.
- Include the projected traffic volumes associated with the approved 520 Patrick Henry Drive (OBHS) rezoning in the traffic impact analysis.

Project Number: RZN19-0004

Project Name: 1310 NORTH MAIN STREET MIXED USE PRD REZONING-NEW

Project Location/Address: 1310 North Main Street

Reviewed by: Erik Olsen/Blacksburg Transit (Transportation Planning)

Comments:

BT has included comments on the following five items including 1) routes, 2) stops, 3) increases in demand for transit, 4) transit ridership data, and 5) additional input and details re. proposed improvements.

1. Routes serving proposed development: The Main Street North (MSN) and the Patrick Henry (PHD), routes service this area.

2. Stops serving development (measured along sidewalks or proposed pedestrian pathways):

- Giles/Patrick Henry Nbnd #1406 (about 205 ft from the NE property edge)*
- Patrick Henry/Main Wbnd #1408 (about 500 ft from the NE property edge)
- Main/Patrick Henry Sbnd #1416 (about 580 ft from the NW property edge, assuming walking along Main St and using the Patrick Henry/Main St crosswalk)
- Main/Patrick/Henry Nbnd #1427 (about 410 ft from the NW property edge)
- 1200 North Main Nbnd #1426 (about 570 ft from the SW property edge)*
- 1200 North Main Sbnd #1417 (over 1600 ft from the NW property edge, assuming walking along Main St and using the Patrick Henry/Main St crosswalk)
- Giles/Heights Nbnd #1405 (about 540 ft from the SE property edge)

We ask that any nearby bus stops be labeled by name and number on future submissions. If any stops are to be moved, the current and future locations should be labeled (stops #1406, #1426).

3. The amount of additional transit ridership generated by this development is unknown. As a placeholder, BT might suggest using the 25% figure to estimate the number of transit trips that might be generated by a development that is likely to be student-centric. Typically, we assume 2 trips per rider per day; that would indicate 190 trips per day (95 passengers x 2 trips) would be generated by a development with 379 bedrooms. It is unknown which stops passengers would use but as both stops (#1406, #1426) currently have approximately the same number of boardings and alightings, it may be reasonable to assume the ridership would be split approximately equal among these two closest stops, assuming those living in buildings A and B use the stops on North Main Street, and those living in buildings C and D use the stop(s) along Giles Road. Actual use is likely to vary, but this seems a reasonable estimate.

**BT welcomes infrastructure improvements along Giles Road (shelter at stop #1406) and Main Street (bus pull off and shelter at a re-located stop #1426) to support additional ridership.*

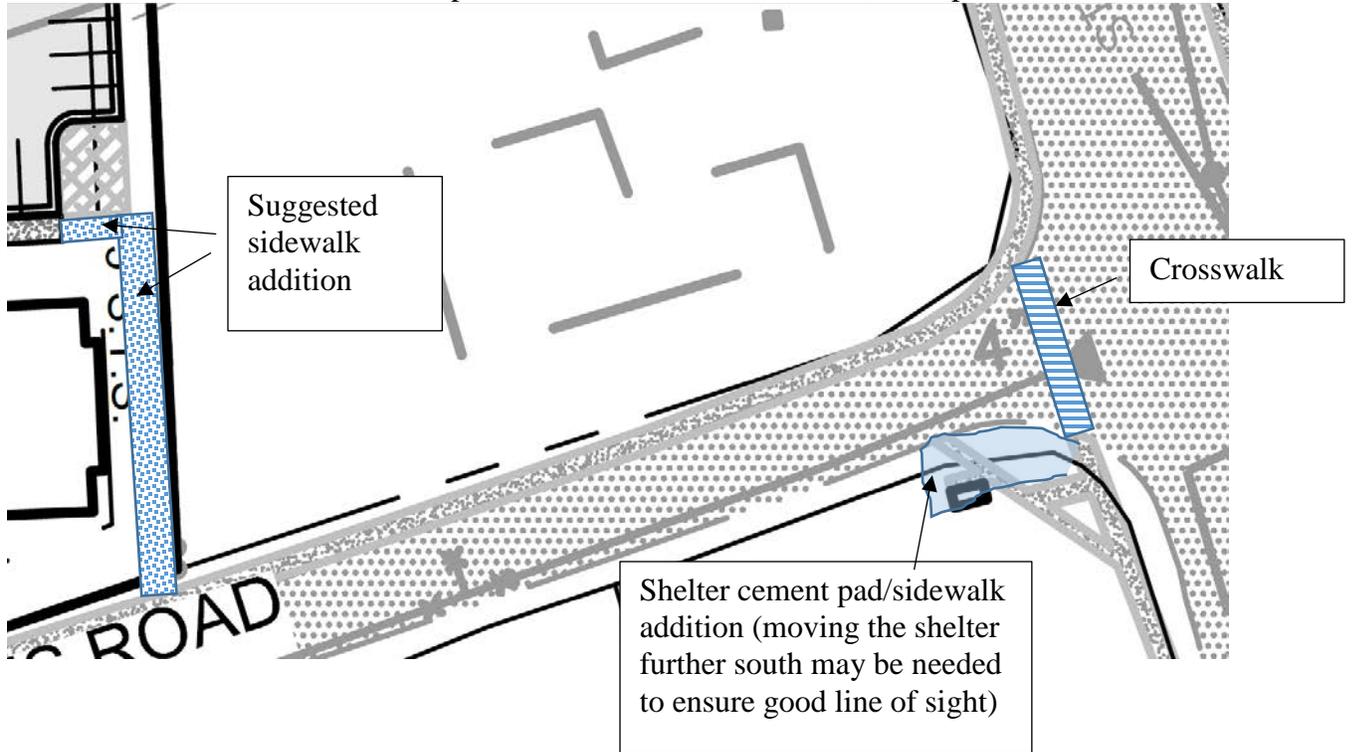
4. Transit Ridership Data (average daily for September 2018):

<u>Stop Name</u>	<u>Stop #</u>	<u>Boarding</u>	<u>Alighting</u>
Giles/Patrick Henry Nbnd	1406	11	29
Patrick Henry/Main Wbnd	1408	22	82
Main/Patrick Henry Sbnd	1416	76	12
Main/Patrick/Henry Nbnd	1427	14	68
1200 North Main Nbnd	1426	11	23
1200 North Main Sbnd	1417	17	2
Giles/Heights Nbnd	1405	14	20

5. Additional details re. proposed improvements, based on BT staff review/input:

- For the bus pull off and shelter on North Main Street (the 1200 North Main Nbnd #1426 stop is to be relocated north about 570 ft just south of a new proposed driveway that will go between Building A and Building B), this shows the location of the shelter is acceptable; it will provide good access to the bus stop for both the BT buses and customers.
 - Electrical power for an interior light inside the ceiling of the bus shelter is also strongly recommended, to maximize safety for patrons waiting for the bus, and to assist bus operators so they can see inside the shelter to see if someone is waiting.
 - The shelter (we use shelter provided by Tolar Manufacturing, Inc.) that is ordered needs to have an interior light, as is standard for BT.
 - A trash can at the bus stop is also recommended.
- For the shelter to be installed at Giles/Patrick Henry Nbnd #1406, the developer is strongly encouraged to investigate the area before proposing a final design. A substantial amount of underground utilities may exist along Giles Rd, near the Recreation Center.
 - A new bus pad for a 4' x 8' shelter is needed with minimum size 6'3" x 10'-6 5/16" in cement. If a trash can is considered another 4' in length is required.
 - If trash is to be considered, an agreement as to who is to service the trash can needs to be worked out in advance as well.
 - Electrical power for the interior ceiling shelter light is also needed.
 - The location of the shelter should be as far south from Patrick Henry so it is out of the line of sight of traffic heading north on Giles, looking east onto Patrick Henry.
 - Two options should be investigated including 1) near the current cement sidewalk and bench, and 2) further south, south of the existing utility pole.
 - In any case, integrating the existing sidewalk (and potential improvements to connect to it) will be needed.
 - A small portion of additional sidewalk(s) may be needed to the bus stop shelter pad on Giles Rd, to connect/integrate the sidewalk along Patrick Henry to the sidewalk/pad on Giles Rd at bus stop.
 - If sidewalk is added along Giles Rd to connect to existing sidewalk, the sidewalk should be designed so as to NOT restrict bus travel and turning movements.
 - A crosswalk is needed to cross Giles Road to the west sidewalk along Giles Rd, to provide a connection to the rear pedestrian entrances from Giles into the property.
 - A third on-property sidewalk should be considered along the north edge of Building D for those living there to better access the bus stop on Giles Road.

- The bus stop pad and shelter, and connections to it, need to be built to comply with ADA and BT standards. For example, ADA requires a clear 5' x 8' standing/landing area (measured from the curb or roadway edge back), clear of benches, signs, poles, accessible at the bus stop to allow an easy, clear pathway boarding/alighting onto/from the bus
- A marked up piece from the rezoning application (page Z4) is included to clarify some of these concepts. The Developer is encouraged to set up another meeting with Blacksburg Transit and to share refinements of the bus stop designs and connections to/from the site after reviewing this input.
- See also the email input with sketch from Phil Andes, BT Operations.



Project Plan Review
Input from Blacksburg Transit

Date: 8/6/19

From: Phil Andes <pandes@blacksburg.gov>
Sent: Friday, August 2, 2019 11:12 AM
To: Erik Olsen
Subject: RE: Proposed improvements for a bus shelter at Giles/Patrick Henry

I believe the bus stop area needs to be rebuilt to comply with ADA and our current bus-stop standards.

It's has a sidewalk that connects to nothing. And the angle protrudes in a way that will damage a bus tire if you happen to get against it.

If you can connect a crosswalk to existing sidewalk on the other side of the street and get a "normalized" pad on the corner.

There is no space or reason for a sidewalk on the east side of Giles. That would just further restrict bus travel and turning movements.

Travel path and pad as indicated in my little sketch. Something like this:



Thanks.

Phil Andes
Operations Supervisor
Blacksburg Transit

Neighborhood Meeting
RZN19-0004 1310 N. Main Street PRD
Thursday, August 8, 2019
5:30 pm

Town staff in attendance are Kinsey O'Shea and Maeve Gould
Representing the applicant is Steve Semones
Applicants in attendance are Justin and Jason Boyle

The meeting began at 5:35pm

Eight people were in attendance.

Kinsey O'Shea gave an overview of the rezoning process and meeting schedule.

Steve Semones gave an overview of the project request and the history of the site.

- An attendee asked about stormwater coming off of Patrick Henry south toward Giles.
- An attendee commented that an area on Ronald and Victoria Green's property becomes like a river/has significant drainage issues during rain events.
- An attendee commented that the stormwater pond built across the street does not work.
- A citizen asked if there will be any changes to Giles Road since it is already narrow and there is on-street parking.
- An attendee commented that the sidewalk does not connect to the crosswalk at the Giles and Patrick Henry intersection.
- An attendee expressed concern about increased traffic in the area, with other proposed developments nearby and continued increase in Virginia Tech student population.
- A citizen asked about existing and planned sidewalk along Giles.
- An attendee asked about saving mature trees on the property.
- An attendee asked if the old Sycamore tree in southeast corner of property near where a barn currently exists and where a recycling facility is shown could be saved. The attendee commented that it could be as old as 200-250 years old and they would like to see some of the history of Blacksburg preserved.
- An attendee asked whether the entrances would be full access and whether there is adequate Blacksburg Transit service in this location.

- A citizen asked if there a plan for a crosswalk across North Main Street. The citizen commented that residents are unlikely to walk to the light/intersection at Patrick Henry to cross the street, and that they are going to do what takes the least time.

- An attendee asked about site distances coming over the hill on North Main Street and exiting/entering this property.

- An attendee asked if there are any planned improvements for North Main Street in this location.

- An attendee asked about how parking will work. They expressed a concern about how the proposal does not provide parking for all residents, and residents may park wherever they can find space, not on this property.

- An attendee asked if there is sewer capacity for this project in this location, especially with other proposed developments in the area (OBHS).

- Kinsey O'Shea, Development Administrator, then explained that it isn't until bigger developments like this that sewer studies are required and it can be discovered that there are things that might need to be fixed/replaced.

- An attendee asked what does the Town's Comprehensive Plan say about sewer in the long run with increased development and increased student population.

- An attendee asked what commercial entity the applicant envisions going into the space.

- A citizen asked whether there is any requirement for the commercial to residential ratio. They commented that It seems that 10% is a small percentage of commercial compared to residential to request/require with this PRD.

- Staff then explained that this is something Council will have to evaluate. They will have to ask themselves whether it is acceptable that this property will be primarily residential for the next 75-100 years.

- An attendee asked why this proposal qualifies for a PRD. What is the innovative/special thing that is proposed to make this a PRD?

- An attendee asked whether there are there ADA facilities and apartments with the proposal.

- An attendee asked if there is any chance for a barrier/wall/fence between this property and the property toward Patrick Henry, to prevent people from cutting through on their way to 7-11.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

