

COMMUNITY OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON HISTORIC SAINT GEORGE AVE.

The Catholic Mission of Crozet has confirmed plans to build a church on St. George Ave., which is currently zoned Neighborhood Density and is part of Crozet's Registered Historic District. The proposal has been described verbally to include purchase of 5888 St. George Avenue (Anderson Funeral Home) and adjoining lots, creation of a paved cut-through from on Railroad Ave., and paving an additional lot to create 284 parking spaces. For perspective, this is more than twice the number of spaces provided by both existing lots at Crozet Baptist Church.



The Catholic Mission is seeking a space to accommodate growth of its congregation and subsequent footprint in the neighborhood, to serve upwards of 1000 people per week. This would create significant likelihood of demolition of historic properties at 5874, 5880, 5888, and 5903 St. George Avenue, as well as purchase of additional surrounding properties. The map above shows areas in red, which church officials state they have a potential agreement to purchase. Areas in yellow have received a letter of interest from the mission.

WHY ARE NEIGHBORS CONCERNED ABOUT THIS?

Residents of St. George Ave. and the surrounding neighborhood have developed a petition with over 340 signatures, including 57 immediate neighbors. The petition expresses concern that this proposal would do the following:

- Forever change & destroy the character of the Crozet's most historic residential neighborhood. Church officials confirm that the plan would require growth and further demolition of additional historic homes to accommodate a projected 1500 attendees at weekly Mass in 20 years.
- Increase vehicle traffic on St. George Avenue and Railroad Avenue by adding traffic from planned 284 parking spaces multiple times per week, creating risk to pedestrians and cyclists, with plans for significant growth of church traffic in coming years.
- Increase stormwater runoff from proposed paved lot and cut-through from higher elevation, impacting residences and properties in the area that already experience flooding/standing groundwater due to natural terrain characteristics.

WHAT IS STATUS OF THE PROPOSAL?

Because St. George Ave. is zoned residential, and because the proposed church would be so large, development would require a Special Use Permit, approved by the Albemarle County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The Catholic Mission has not yet submitted a permit request, but has confirmed their intention to submit such a request. The Crozet Master Plan states that as each special use permit is reviewed for approval in the Crozet Growth Area, the recommendations in the Master Plan will be applied.

WHAT'S THE CROZET MASTER PLAN & HOW'S IT RELATE TO THIS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL?

The Crozet Master Plan establishes policy to help guide public and private activities as they relate to land use and resource utilization within Crozet. The plan directs where and how new residential and nonresidential uses should develop. A plan for of a large church development that would destroy historic property on Saint George Avenue and stands in stark contrast to multiple Master Plan Guiding Principles:

- *Existing neighborhoods and the Downtown area will be preserved; new or infill development will be appropriate in scale and type to these existing growth patterns.*
- *The housing stock in Crozet should continue to provide choices in affordability and building types*
- *Crozet will continue to encourage a sense of community through its history...*

The land use implementation section states that, historic resources in and near Crozet are assets to the County and should be protected and preserved.

HAVE OTHER SITES BEEN CONSIDERED?

While concerned residents of St. George Avenue support the Catholic Mission's need to find a suitable location for their place of worship, it is clear that the proposed St. George Avenue site is not an appropriate location. The scale of the proposed church would create significant safety risks and disruption of a historic, residential community. Church officials have confirmed that they have considered at least one other site. A review of current real estate listings shows other sites that have access to water and sewage, and that would not disrupt a residential neighborhood and require a special use permit.

To sign the petition to preserve historic St. George Avenue, see <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/preserve-st-george-avenue-and-historic-crozet>.