



ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING

STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: 2020 Crozet Master Plan Update Future Land Use	Staff: Andrew Knuppel, Senior Planner Rachel Falkenstein, Principal Planner
Planning Commission Work Session: September 1, 2020	Board of Supervisors Work Session: N/A
Owner: Multiple	Applicant: N/A (County-initiated)
TMP: Multiple Acreage: ~2,914 acres	Comprehensive Plan Amendment: Update of the Crozet Master Plan
Magisterial District: White Hall	Future Land Use: Multiple
School Districts: Brownsville & Crozet – Elementary; Henley – Middle; Western Albemarle – High	
DA (Development Area): Community of Crozet	Topics for discussion: Phase 2 Character and Land Use feedback; draft Future Land Use Plan.
Proposal: Consider feedback related to land use from Phase 2 of the public participation process and provide guidance on proposed changes to the Future Land Use Plan.	
<p>Discussion/Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Commission review the attached background information, feedback summaries, and draft land use information and provide direction to staff on the questions below.</p> <p>Q1 Do you agree with staff's recommendation to create a Middle Density Residential land use category to support the stated goals within Crozet?</p> <p>Q2 Do you see applicability for this category in similar contexts in other areas of the County (to be considered with future Master Plan updates)?</p> <p>Q3 Do you have any feedback on the recommended density, housing types, or form guidance within the land use table?</p> <p>Q4 Do you agree with staff's recommendation to create a Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay to support the stated goals within this area of Crozet?</p> <p>Q5 Do you have any feedback on the recommended criteria for increased density, housing types, or form guidance within the land use table?</p>	

STAFF CONTACTS:

Andrew Knuppel, Senior Planner
Rachel Falkenstein, Principal Planner
September 1, 2020 (Work Session)

PLANNING COMMISSION:

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The Crozet Master Plan was first adopted on December 1, 2004 and last updated on October 13, 2010. The Master Plan establishes expectations for development that is sensitive to Crozet's "small town feel" and supports Crozet's status as a designated Development Area. Site-specific recommendations for future land uses, transportation networks, parks and green systems, and implementation projects are detailed in the Plan and support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan's policies. The Crozet community has seen substantial growth since the last revisions to the Plan in 2010.

The Board of Supervisors directed staff to begin work on the Crozet Master Plan update on September 4, 2019. The Crozet Master Plan update was identified in the 2019-2022 Community Development Work Program as a project to begin during the fourth quarter of 2019 and completed via the public hearing and review process during the fourth quarter of 2020.

Staff conducted two work sessions with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in November and December 2019 at the conclusion of "Phase 1" of the project. Phase 1 focused on community visioning and updating the guiding principles from the 2010 Master Plan.

Staff planned to conduct "Phase 2" of the project by hosting in-person monthly workshops and focus groups supported by online and digital engagement. The goal of Phase 2 is to develop recommendations for each chapter of the Master Plan. Before the governor's stay-at-home order went into effect, staff completed two of five planned workshops for "Phase 2". After the County began observing restrictions on public events due to the coronavirus, staff revised the engagement methods to allow the project to proceed while still ensuring adequate opportunities for community members to share feedback.

The revised Work & Engagement Plan (Attachment 1) provides opportunities for remote engagement through virtual meetings with the Crozet Community Advisory Committee (CCAC), which are open to members of the public, and online questionnaires to replace the in-person workshops. These online "workshops" are hosted through the Imagine Crozet community engagement hub and guide participants through a series of focused questions and mapping exercises on the topics of character/land use, connectivity, and conservation. Due to the delay in work caused by the coronavirus, staff's revised work plan anticipates completion of the project in March 2021.

PURPOSE OF THE WORK SESSION:

The purpose of this work session is to provide the Planning Commission with an update about public feedback related to land use and receive guidance on revised land use categories. The Commission's guidance will be used to draft the land use recommendations for this Chapter of the Master Plan. Staff will bring a final draft land use map and site specific recommendations for the Planning Commission's review in October.

PHASE 2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS & FEEDBACK: CHARACTER & LAND USE

A summary of Phase 2's engagement opportunities and discussions related to land use is provided below. Additional digital engagement opportunities have been ongoing to cover topics of Connectivity and Conservation (to replace the in-person workshops). Engagement summaries for those topics will be discussed at a future work session with the Planning Commission.

- **Character Workshop #1: Centers and Edges** (January 13, 2020)
 - Topics covered included potential Center and District designations in activity centers and mixed-use areas, as well as the Route 250 edge area.
 - Feedback from this workshop was used to inform Center and District designations as well as revisions to the Mixed Use designation from the 2010 Master Plan.
 - A summary of feedback from this event is available in Attachment 2.

- **Character Workshop #2: Neighborhoods and Housing** (February 6, 2020)
 - Topics covered included density and form as regulatory concepts in land use and housing planning; housing priorities and individual parcel designations in four smaller subareas (“Northern”, “Western”, “Eastern”, and “Southern” Crozet).
 - A summary of feedback from this event is available in Attachment 3.

- **Housing Focused Discussion** (February 21, 2020)
 - Topics covered included housing and demographics, neighborhood change, planning and zoning policy, tools for housing commitments, and local tax and fiscal implications.
 - A summary of feedback from this event is available in Attachment 3.

- **Architecture & Preservation Focused Discussion** (Online)
 - Topics covered included priority design concepts and characteristics, infill housing, and potential regulatory schemes for three smaller subareas (“Downtown Crozet”, “Historic District Neighborhoods”, and “Adjoining Neighborhoods”).
 - A summary of feedback from this event is available in Attachment 4.

- **CCAC Work Session** (May 13, 2020)
 - This check-in with the CCAC was held via Zoom and was the CAC’s first virtual meeting following the COVID-19 outbreak. It took the place of a planned special meeting in late March that was cancelled due to COVID-19.
 - Committee members provided feedback on the revised engagement strategy and the draft Guiding Principle and Goals for the Master Plan’s Character chapter.
 - Staff will revise the Guiding Principle and Goals and draft detailed plan recommendations while completing the draft Character chapter.

- **CCAC Work Session** (June 10, 2020)
 - This meeting with the CCAC was held via Zoom.
 - Committee members reviewed input from the Architecture & Preservation online feedback opportunity.
 - Committee members provided feedback on an initial draft of a proposed “Historic Overlay” (now “Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay”) future land use designation. Themes and questions included:
 - How will density be addressed with regards to infrastructure and population impacts?
 - How affordability would be measured and maintained long-term?
 - How will design guidelines be implemented?

- **CCAC Work Session** (July 8, 2020)
 - This meeting with the CCAC was held via Zoom.
 - Committee members reviewed potential changes to individual parcels and area land use designations. These changes are detailed in “Land Use Revisions To Date” later in this report.

- Committee members provided feedback on a potential change to the land use designation of the White Gate Farm property (TMP 56-91A). Themes and questions included:
 - There was generally more support for smaller housing sizes and forms such as bungalow courts, but not townhouses or apartments.
 - Feedback regarding residential density was mixed. While some Committee members supported a split Urban Density Residential (6-12 dwellings/acre) / Neighborhood Density Residential (3-6 dwellings/acre) designation, others felt that a density at the low end of the Neighborhood Density Residential designation would be more appropriate.
 - Though there may be an opportunity to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to neighborhoods such as Wickham Pond and Highlands, other infrastructure needs remain a concern.
- Committee members provided feedback on a potential re-designation of parcels within the Brownsville Road area from Greenspace to a Neighborhood Density Residential-Low/Parks & Green Systems designation. Themes and questions included:
 - How does the development potential of Neighborhood Density Residential-Low relate to existing zoning and the 2010 Master Plan?
 - There is a desire to maintain the existing status of this area.
 - How would a change in the designation impact ability to obtain bicycle/pedestrian improvements through rezoning?
- Committee members provided feedback on the current usage of the Urban Density Residential land use designation within the Crozet area and issues with alignment across County master plans. Themes and questions included:
 - Members expressed interest in a new designation to support “missing middle housing” and potentially higher densities for smaller housing units, provided it was consistent with the housing forms permitted in the Neighborhood Density Residential land use designation.
 - There was concern about increasing the upper level of density permitted in Crozet, citing population capacity and a lack of alignment with a “small town feel” principle
 - There are ongoing concerns about outstanding infrastructure needs and the County’s ability to support new development.

Except for the Workshops 1 & 2 and the Housing Focused Discussion, all events were online. Workshops 1 & 2 were also supplemented with online feedback opportunities for those who were unable to attend.

STAFF QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMISSION:

Staff is proposing two new land use tools for Crozet: 1) a Middle Density Residential land use category and 2) a Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay land use category (described below). While we are currently examining these tools in the context of Crozet, these designations may also have applicability within the County’s other Development Areas. This will be evaluated during the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update and future Master Plan updates. Staff is seeking the Commission’s feedback on the purpose, recommended uses, densities, and form guidance within each land use tool. A future work session discussion will focus on their application to specific properties within Crozet.

Middle Density Residential

The “Middle Density Residential” land use category is intended to support several goals staff has heard prioritized by community members, including to provide increased housing choice and affordability and to encourage smaller-scaled development patterns that are more consistent with existing neighborhoods and supportive of Crozet’s small-town identity.

A common concern shared by a variety of Crozet residents throughout the Master Plan engagement process is the general lack of housing affordability and housing choice in Crozet. While most are supportive of more affordable housing, some community members and CCAC members also expressed a desire to not see housing forms such as large apartment buildings within Crozet. Crozetians were most supportive of “Missing Middle” housing types that have smaller footprints such as bungalow courts, multiplexes (including single family conversions), accessory dwellings, and live work units (see Attachment 7 for examples of housing types).

At the June and July land use discussions with the CCAC, committee members deliberated about the appropriateness of the Urban Density Residential land use category in specific areas of Crozet. Some felt that while the density recommendations may be appropriate to allow for smaller unit types on smaller lots, they felt that the scales of development that are allowable within the Urban Density Residential category were not appropriate or desirable. Some members of the group wondered if there could be a new land use category to allow the Missing Middle housing types at the appropriate density and exclude large multi-family apartment buildings.

In response to this feedback, staff has drafted a new land use designation for Middle Density Residential. The land use table summarizes the purpose and intent of this land use category to allow “low to mid-density residential and small-scale non-residential uses such as commercial and institutional uses”. It is “intended to encourage a variety of housing types, encourage smaller housing units that are naturally more affordable, and to promote housing choice and affordability.” Recommended housing types for this land use category are duplexes, fourplexes, multiplexes, bungalow courts, townhouses, accessory dwellings, and other similarly scaled residential developments. Single family detached units are an allowable form, though smaller unit types on smaller lots are encouraged to increase affordability. Multi-family apartment buildings that are smaller scale and less than 5,000 square feet could be considered as well (see Attachment 6 for Land Use Table).

The recommended density range for Middle Density Residential is 6-24 dwelling units per acre. Staff arrived at this density range by considering common densities for these types of housing generally, by considering density ranges in our existing categories (Neighborhood Density Residential at 3-6 units/acre and Urban Density Residential at 6-34 units/acre typically and 6-12 units/acre in Crozet), and by looking at examples of densities within existing developments in Crozet and other areas of the County (some examples are provided in Attachment 7).

It is important to note that while the CCAC was generally supportive of the possibility of a land use category for these “Missing Middle” housing types, there were also some members who felt that additional residential units should not be added within the land use plan until the issues of school capacity, roadways and traffic, and other infrastructure needs within Crozet are sufficiently addressed.

Staff’s intent is to identify the infrastructure needs to support any areas of added density within the Implementation Chapter of the Master Plan. Our planning process has been sequenced to first identify what the community’s vision is for Crozet and then based on that vision, we will work with the community to define what infrastructure projects are needed to support the vision. Implementation projects, inclusive of capital and infrastructure projects, will be our next topic for community engagement after we complete engagement and visioning for Character/Land Use, Connectivity, and Conservation topics.

The discussion for this work session is meant to focus on the appropriateness of the Middle Density Residential category as a land use tool. If the Commission supports the concept of a new Middle Density land use category, staff will work to revise the land use map to apply the land use designation within Crozet. For this reason, the attached draft land use map (Attachment 5) does not show any areas with the Middle Density designation. A future work session will focus on the updated land use map, after staff has an opportunity to revise the map and solicit community feedback. Staff is seeking the Commission’s feedback on the questions provided below.

Q1 Do you agree with staff's recommendation to create a Middle Density Residential land use category to support the stated goals within Crozet?

Q2 Do you see applicability for this category in similar contexts in other areas of the County (to be considered with future Master Plan updates)?

Q3 Do you have any feedback on the recommended density, housing types, or form guidance within the land use table?

Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay

Staff is also recommending a new “Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay” as a tool to provide some additional land use guidance in residential areas around Downtown Crozet. We heard from residents, including residents living in these neighborhoods, that there is concern about the possibility of developers tearing down existing homes to construct larger and more expensive homes. The stated intent of the Overlay is to incentivize the maintenance and preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing, to protect historic neighborhoods, and to support the production of new housing units that have a similar scales and forms as existing homes to help increase housing choice and affordability

In alignment with this intent, the Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay would provide additional form, density, and design guidance within and around the established neighborhoods near downtown. (see Attachment 6 for Land Use table descriptions). Staff is considering the Overlay for areas currently designated as Neighborhood Density Residential near downtown, which recommend a density of 3-6 units/acre (see Attachment 5 for map showing proposed Overlay locations). The Overlay suggests some criteria for which densities higher than 6 units/acre may be allowable. These criteria include:

- the conversion of an existing structure to multiple units;
- the addition of an accessory dwelling on a lot;
- and/or infill development that preserves existing housing stock;
- is in keeping with the prevailing development pattern of the surrounding street; and
- provides additional affordable or workforce housing.

Recommended housing types include single family, duplex, multiplex, bungalow courts, live work units, or accessory dwellings.

While the housing types recommended in the Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay overlap with housing types in the proposed Middle Density Residential land use category, the Overlay contains more emphasis on preservation of existing housing to address the concerns we heard from community members about these specific neighborhoods. Residential areas around Downtown Crozet include several structures that are within the Crozet National Register Historic District.

More work is needed to identify how the Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay would be implemented. Based on Planning Commission feedback at this work session, staff will work to identify these steps within the Implementation Chapter of the Master Plan. Possible methods for implementing this district include the development of design guidelines to guide future development or a new historic overlay zoning district. It is important to note that while some residents were supportive of these measures, additional outreach will be needed to residents of these neighborhoods before we proceed with any implementation steps. To date, we have only received 17 responses on the online questionnaire about this topic.

Staff may solicit the Commission’s feedback on implementation steps at a later work session. During this land use-focused work session, staff is seeking the Commission’s feedback on the following questions.

Q4 Do you agree with staff's recommendation to create a Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay to support the stated goals within this area of Crozet?

Q5 Do you have any feedback on the recommended criteria for increased density, housing types, or form guidance within the land use table?

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review and discuss the above background information and attached summaries and provide direction to staff on the questions above. Staff will be working to develop a draft of the Character chapter in the coming weeks and welcomes additional suggestions from the Planning Commission.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – [Revised 2020 Work & Engagement Plan \(4/21/2020\)](#)

Attachment 2 – [Character Workshop #1: Centers and Edges Feedback Summary](#)

Attachment 3 – [February Engagement Feedback Summary \(Character Workshop #2: Neighborhoods and Housing, Housing Focused Discussion\)](#)

Attachment 4 – [Architecture & Preservation Planning Feedback Summary](#)

Attachment 5 – [Proposed Land Use Map \(7/1/2020\)](#)

Attachment 6 – [Revised Land Use Table \(8/20/2020\)](#)

Attachment 7 – [Downtown Neighborhoods Overlay and Middle Density Visualizations \(8/20/2020\)](#)