



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Planning Commission
From: Department of Community Development
Date: June 14, 2023 (Regular Meeting)
Re: 15.2-2232 Review – Proposed Homeless Services Center

Summary:

Project Name	Homeless Services Center
Address/Location	1111 North Main Street
Tax Map Parcels	41-E-2
Total Land Area	+/- 3.68-acres
Property Owner	City of Harrisonburg
Owner's Representative	N/A
Present Zoning	B-2, General Business District and M-1, General Industrial District
Staff Recommendation	Approval
Planning Commission	June 14, 2023 (Public Hearing)
Presentation of Planning Commission findings to City Council	Anticipated July 11, 2023

Background:

The City of Harrisonburg owns 1111 North Main Street, which is a +/- 3.68-acre property with an existing 6,730 square-foot two story building, with plans to use the property to create a permanent space for a low-barrier emergency shelter and to use the building as a centralized hub for service providers who assist individuals experiencing homelessness.

City Code Section 10-1-6 stipulates that “if a public facility subject to Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia is not already shown on the comprehensive plan, the planning commission shall determine whether the location, character and extent of such public facility is in substantial accord with the comprehensive plan as provided by Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia and the terms and conditions set forth therein, and may be amended from time to time.” A copy of Section 15.2-2232 is attached.

The Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2232 states, among other things, that when a locality has adopted a comprehensive plan, “it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan.” Public buildings or public structures, among others, are listed by the Code as features that unless are already shown on the plan “shall not be constructed, established, or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent thereof has been

submitted to and approved by the commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof.”

On February 14, 2023, City Council approved a request for a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-91 (16) and 10-3-97 (15) to allow public uses which deviate from the requirements for Title 10, Chapter 3 (Zoning Ordinance) within the B-2 and M-1 districts.

Information about the project is available on the City website at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/homeless-services-center>.

The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

- Site: Public use, zoned B-2 and M-1
- North: Data center, zoned M-1
- East: Commercial use, zoned B-2; and across Tyco Street, vacant parcels zoned B-2 and M-1
- South: Across North Main Street, residential uses, zoned R-2
- West: Single family residential and commercial uses, zoned B-2 and M-1

Key Issues:

The Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Mixed Use and states:

“The Mixed Use category includes both existing and proposed areas for mixed use. Mixed Use areas shown on the Land Use Guide map are intended to combine residential and non-residential uses in neighborhoods, where the different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. Mixed Use can take the form of a single building, a single parcel, a city block, or entire neighborhoods. Quality architectural design features and strategic placement of green spaces for large scale developments will ensure development compatibility of a mixed use neighborhood with the surrounding area. These areas are prime candidates for “live-work” and traditional neighborhood developments (TND). Live-work developments combine residential and commercial uses allowing people to both live and work in the same area. The scale and massing of buildings is an important consideration when developing in Mixed Use areas. Commercial uses would be expected to have an intensity equivalent to a Floor Area Ratio of at least 0.4, although the City does not measure commercial intensity in that way.

Downtown is an existing area that exhibits and is planned to continue to contain a mix of land uses. The downtown Mixed Use area often has no maximum residential density, however, development should take into consideration the services and resources that are available (such as off-street parking) and plan accordingly. Residential density in Mixed Use areas outside of downtown should be around 24 dwelling units per acre, and all types of residential units are permitted: single-family detached, single-family attached (duplexes and townhomes), and multi-family buildings. Large scale developments, which include multi-family buildings are encouraged to include single-family detached and/or attached dwellings.”

All the sites adjacent to this property along North Main Street are zoned B-2, General Business District or M-1, General Industrial District. The B-2 district allows a mixture of commercial and service activities, including transient accommodations, which include homeless shelters. To the north, adjacent properties are zoned M-1, General Industrial District.

Given the site’s location along North Main Street providing a homeless shelter in this area creates the opportunity for transportation related Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) principles to be implemented with using connected sidewalks and public transportation.

Finally, staff believes that providing a homeless shelter is another tool to work toward achieving Objective 6.3 within the Comprehensive Plan, which states:

“To support programs that prevent and address homelessness in the City.”

Recommendation

Staff finds the proposed homeless services center’s general location, character, and extent thereof is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan and recommends the Commission communicate the same findings to City Council.

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Communicate findings that the proposed homeless services center is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan; or
- (b) Communicate findings that the proposed homeless services center is not in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Engagement:

The request was published in the local newspaper twice advertising for Planning Commission’s public hearing. The advertisement was published as shown below:

15.2-2232 Review – Proposed Homeless Services Center

Public hearing to consider, per City Code Section 10-1-6 whether the proposed Homeless Services Center public facility site is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan as provided by the Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2232. The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Mixed Use. Mixed Use areas are intended to combine residential and non-residential uses in neighborhoods, where the different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. The downtown Mixed Use area often has no maximum residential density, however, development should take into consideration the services and resources that are available (such as off-street parking) and plan accordingly. Residential density in Mixed Use areas outside of downtown should be around 24 dwelling units per acre, and all types of residential units are permitted. Large scale developments, which include multi-family buildings are encouraged to include single-family detached and/or attached dwellings. The +/- 3.68-acre property is zoned B-2, General Business District and M-1, General Business District, is addressed as 1111 North Main Street, and is identified as tax map parcel 41-E-2.

In addition, adjoining property owners were notified of the public hearing; the property was posted with signage advertising the request; and a notice was provided on the City's website at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/public-hearings>.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends alternative (a) to communicate findings that the proposed homeless services center is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan.

Attachments:

1. Site maps
2. Site Plan for Homeless Services Center
3. Code of Virginia 15.2-2232. Legal Status of Plan

Review:

N/A