



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

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To: Ande Banks, City Manager
From: Adam Fletcher, Director, Department of Community Development and Harrisonburg Planning Commission
Date: August 22, 2023 (Regular Meeting)
Re: Preliminary Plat –Peoples Drive Extension Dedication – 45 & 55 Baxter Drive, 3091 & 3155 South Main Street

Summary:

Project name	Peoples Drive Extension Dedication
Address/Location	55 Baxter Drive
Tax Map Parcels	104-E-2
Total Land Area	+/- 7.2-acres
Property Owner(s)	Harrisonburg Ford Property LC
Owner's Representative	Keith Carter
Subdivision Ordinance Variances	10-2-41 (a) and 10-2-61 (a)
Staff Recommendation	Approval
Planning Commission Recommendation	July 20, 2023 Approval (5-0)
City Council	August 22, 2023

Background:

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

Site: Constructed street and vacant land, zoned B-2

North: Across Baxter Drive, Commercial businesses, zoned B-2

East: Commercial uses, zoned B-2

South: Across West Kaylor Park Drive, commercial uses and vacant land, zoned B-2

West: Vacant land, zoned commercial and in Rockingham County, vacant land, zoned A-2, General Agriculture District

The South Main Street “Pipeline” study, which can be found at <https://vapipeline.org/studies/staunton/st01-11-south-main-street.asp>, recommended parallel routes to South Main Street for trips that are more local in nature. During the development of the Tractor Supply, City staff and the Tractor Supply developers discussed the need for a street within this area. While the Tractor Supply developers and Harrisonburg Ford Property LC (the previous property owners of the Tractor Supply property) were under no obligation to construct a street or to dedicate it for public

use, the developers of Tractor Supply agreed to construct a new street connection, which is essentially an extension of Peoples Drive between West Kaylor Park Drive and Baxter Drive, and to dedicate it to the City. Once the street connection was constructed, an access easement was created in 2022 over the private lane. After a couple of allowable subdivisions and property ownership exchanges, the street is presently located on the remnant parcel owned by Harrisonburg Ford LC identified as tax map parcel 104-E-2.

Key Issues:

The applicant, Harrisonburg Ford Property LC, is requesting to preliminarily subdivide a parcel totaling +/- 7.2-acres and identified as 55 Baxter Drive and tax map 104-E-2 by preliminarily dedicating a public street extension of Peoples Drive to the City. Peoples Drive already exists from Covenant Drive to West Kaylor Park Drive. The proposed dedication would extend the public street from West Kaylor Park Drive to Baxter Drive. The request includes variance requests from the Subdivision Ordinance and from the Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM). Specifically, the variances are to not construct sidewalks on both sides of all new public streets, to allow for a reduction in required street width, to allow for a reduction in public street right-of-way width, and to deviate from street horizontal curve standards.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this area as commercial and is described as:

Commercial uses include retail, office, professional service functions, restaurants, and lodging uses. Commercial areas should offer connecting streets, biking and walking facilities, and public transit services. Interparcel access and connections are essential to maintaining traffic safety and flow along arterials. Parking should be located to the sides or rear of buildings.

Transportation, Traffic, and Variance Requests

The applicant requests the following variances to the Subdivision Ordinance:

- Section 10-2-41(a) - Proposed streets shall conform to the standards and specifications outlined in the Design and Construction Standards Manual except that variances to the standards for streets, alleys, blocks, easements, sidewalks, and all such related features may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the city.
- Section 10-2-61 (a) - The subdivider is required to make all such improvements to streets, including grading, subgrade, surface, and curbs and gutters, in accord with the requirements of the city's DCSM.

Regarding the Subdivision Ordinance sections 10-2-41 (a) and 10-2-61 (a), the applicant seeks the following variances to the DCSM:

- 1) Right of Way – DCSM Section 3.1.4 requires right-of-way widths as shown in Appendix F (Typical Street Cross Sections), which states that for a local street a right-of-way width of 50 feet is required. The applicant is requesting to deviate from the requirement by providing 44 feet of right-of-way width.

- 2) Street Width – DCSM Section 3.6.4.1 requires street widths as shown in Appendix F (Typical Street Cross Sections), which states that for a local street a street width of 34 feet measured from face of curb to face of curb is required. The applicant is requesting to deviate from this requirement by providing 26 feet measured from face of curb to face of curb.
- 3) Sidewalk – DCSM Section 3.3.3.1 requires sidewalks on both sides of all new public streets. The applicant is requesting to deviate from this requirement by only providing a seven-foot grass shoulder on both sides of the new public street.
- 4) Street Horizontal Curves:
 - a) DCSM Section 3.6.2.1 requires horizontal curves to have a minimum 100-foot tangent segment between non-superelevated curves. The applicant is requesting to deviate from this requirement by providing no tangent segment between non-superelevated horizontal curves.
 - b) DCSM Section 3.6.3 requires the maximum horizontal curve to be 23-degrees for a local street. The applicant is requesting to deviate from this requirement by providing a 37.5-degree horizontal curve.

City staff supports the variance requests for the following reasons:

- Regarding Right-of-Way, Street Width, and Street Horizontal Curves – As provided, each of the three design elements meet the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) minimum standards and thus will allow the City to include this street into our public street inventory.
- Regarding Sidewalk – The proposed public street dedication will provide sufficient right-of-way and physical space for a future sidewalk to be constructed.

Staff hopes that the City is able to have most of the missing sidewalk constructed by future developers when the adjacent properties develop, leaving only small gaps for the City to complete.

Recommendation

Aside from the variances requested herein and the two minor issues noted above, the plat meets all other requirements of the Subdivision Ordinance. Staff recommends approval of the preliminary plat and variance requests.

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Approve the preliminary plat and variances as requested;
- (b) Approve the preliminary plat and variances with conditions; or

(c) Deny the request.

Community Engagement:

As required by the Subdivision Ordinance, a sign was posted giving public notice to the request for a variance to the standards of the Subdivision Ordinance.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends alternative (a) approval of the preliminary plat and variances as requested.

Attachments:

1. Extract from Planning Commission
2. Site maps
3. Application and supporting documents
4. Updated preliminary plat (submitted on July 20, 2023, for PC meeting)

Review:

Planning Commission recommend approval (5-0) of the preliminary plat and variances. (Vice Mayor Dent and Commissioner Armstrong were absent.)