



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

August 4, 2025

**TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

SUBJECT: *Consider a request to rezone 320 South Main Street*

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: July 09, 2025**

Chair Baugh read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Rupkey said the applicant is requesting to rezone a +/- 11,146-square foot property from B-2, General Business District to B-1C, Central Business District Conditional. If the request is approved, the applicant plans to continue operating as an office and commercial building.

The existing structure is approximately 4,670 square feet and has space for twelve tenants. The existing tenants include a variety of office uses. In 1960, the property had a building permit approved for a one-story addition. A note on the permit described that the building could not be used for commercial uses until 20 parking spaces were provided. Under the current Zoning Ordinance, there are different parking requirements for professional offices and for retail. Professional offices require one space per 300 square feet of gross floor area (GFA) while retail establishments under 10,000 square feet of GFA require one space per 200 square feet of GFA. For any combination of office and retail space, the 4,670 square foot structure would require a minimum of 16 to 24 parking spaces. The B-1 Central Business District has no minimum off-street parking requirements; therefore, rezoning the property would allow additional flexibility for other uses, such as more retail, on the property without requiring additional off-street parking.

The site currently includes a one-way, angled parking lot with 22 delineated parking spaces (which do not meet the Design and Construction Standards Manual's (DCSM) dimensional sizing requirements). The one-way design does not have an appropriate outlet because the parking lot does not provide a turnaround, and thus, unless there are unused parking spaces, requires people to back out of the parking lot into public street right-of-way. If the site were to be redeveloped, any parking provided would need to meet the current DCSM requirements. While not eliminating all of the issues, the applicant plans to remove the closest parking spaces off of Federal Street on each side of the parking lot to eliminate the ability for people to directly back into Federal Street. If they choose to do this, it would reduce the number of parking spaces to 20.

Proffers

The applicant has offered the following proffers (written verbatim):

1. Drive-through facilities are prohibited.
2. No parking lot (including travel lanes and drive aisles) shall be located between any building and South Main Street.
3. All traffic generating uses shall be limited to a combined total of 100 vehicle trips in either the AM or PM peak hour as calculated using the latest edition of the Institute of Transportation Engineer's Trip Generation Manual unless the property owner first, at their cost: (1) completes a Traffic Impact Analysis approved by the City Department of Public Works and (2) implements all identified mitigation measures or improvements. The City Department of Public Works may, in its sole discretion, waive, in whole or in part, completion of a Traffic Impact Analysis or any identified mitigation measures or improvements.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site 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.

As noted above, the property is designated as Mixed Use in the Comprehensive Plan, which, among other things, is a designation that promotes “live-work” environments and traditional neighborhood development (TND). The Mixed Use designation description refers to TND, which is explained further in the Comprehensive Plan on page 6-9, and includes promoting walking, biking, and taking public transit. Proffers #1 and #2 promote pedestrian friendly design by prohibiting drive-throughs and restricting vehicle parking areas and drive isles from being located between buildings and South Main Street.

Transportation and Traffic

The Determination of Need for a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) form (“TIA determination form”) for the proposed rezoning is attached. The TIA determination form indicated that the planned uses would not generate 100 or more new peak hour trips, which is the threshold for staff to require a TIA. Therefore, a TIA was not required for the rezoning request.

While the applicant is not planning to redevelop the site and is not anticipating a significant change in the use of the property,, it could redevelop in the future. Proffer #3 requires that any use shall not produce 100 or more new trips in the peak hours and if a proposed use were to generate more than 100 new trips, the applicant would need to complete a TIA and may need to construct street improvements.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

Staff has no concerns with the requested rezoning regarding water and sewer matters.

Conclusion

Staff believes that rezoning the property to B-1C with the submitted proffers generally conforms with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and recommends approval of the rezoning.

Chair Baugh asked if there any questions for staff.

Councilmember Dent asked did you say that removing the two closest parking spaces closest to Federal Street was not proffered but they are considering it?

Ms. Rupkey said they are not proffering it. It is something that I have talked with them about, and they are planning on doing. They are doing some work with their parking spaces as it is now.

Chair Baugh asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he invited the applicant or applicant’s representative to speak to their request.

Marshall Price and Ed Price, the applicants, came forward to speak to the request.

Mr. Marshall Price said we have owned the building since 1980. In fact, we bought it from my father who designed the building back in the 60s. I will start off by saying that those parking spaces, we will mark those off. We did not realize that. We left them empty to have them available to turn around. We will put X’s on there for no parking. We are trying to make the building, and we have had it now as mostly professionals. We did have a retail in there just recently and they moved out. Our goal is not to have retail in the building. We have counselors, financial planners,

and attorneys. That is the goal we have for that building. We do have a company in there that has vintage clothing online and people will come in to pick up their items from them, but it is not like having it as a storefront and having a lot of traffic. They have been in there for about six months, and we have only seen a couple people per week in the building. We are in the process, too, of doing some remodeling to try and make it more appealing. Again, we have been kind of going along and then all of a sudden when we had the retail and they were getting a permit and all of a sudden it is like, oh my gosh, we are not going to have enough parking spaces for that. They have now moved out, so we are going to make sure who we are renting to in the future.

Chair Baugh asked if there were any questions for the applicants. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing and invited anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Vice Chair Finnegan said I would support this request. It is in conformance with the properties around it, and I do not think that we should be limiting future uses by saying they have to have X number of parking spaces. It gives more flexibility to property owners to adapt it as needed if it needs to become housing at some point or if it needs to become a different kind of business. Generally speaking, I would be in favor of this request.

Councilmember Dent said I agree. I like that we have this Central Business District where there are not parking minimums because presumably there are other parking spaces, of course they can be hard to find. Alleviating some of the pressure on the buildings to provide their own parking, it helps to distribute it.

Commissioner Nardi said I guess I concur with what has been said and the flexibility to attract tenants differently perhaps. Nothing that is going to cause more traffic along Main Street based on proffers etcetera. I lean to support.

Commissioner Porter said in proffer three where it talks about all traffic generating uses should be limited to a combined total of 100 vehicles trips in either the AM or PM peak hour as calculated by the Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual. How do we follow up with that or understand that is exactly going to be the case?

Ms. Rupkey said a couple opportunities come up when this would come to our attention. If there is an Engineered Comprehensive Site Plan [Review] they would have to do a Traffic Impact Analysis Determination where they would put in the proposed uses compared to what the existing uses are. Public Works has engineers that help get those numbers from the Institute of Transportation and Engineers Trip Generation Manual and that is how we would get that number for site plans.

Ms. Dang said during building permit review, our Zoning staff would also be reviewing proffers for the property for any permit they are going to be looking at. They will evaluate that and coordinate with Public Works to determine what the new uses in the building are going to be or the combination of uses, and request that they calculate using the ITE [Trip Generation Manual] and then tell us if that triggers the need for us to then enforce this proffer.

Chair Baugh said I guess it presumably can be generated by a complaint. If somebody was making the on the ground observation that they thought traffic had gotten heavy because of the use, that would trigger it as well. That is not have to but it is hard in the sense of chapter and verse, but it is hard to imagine that staff would not follow up on that as you routinely do.

Ms. Dang said we would.

Mr. Fletcher said, yes, but we would rely on the ITE. If you had a very successful restaurant or something, and they had a lot more traffic than a restaurant that did not have so much traffic, we actually would not be able to hold them to a TIA because it is based upon the ITE. It is the calculation that is in the ITE manual. A complaint about a use having too much traffic may not trigger anything.

Ms. Dang said the ITE is based on studies and averages in different places across the country.

Mr. Fletcher said back to Mr. Porter's question, every time in any building, say you have a professional office complex, and somebody wants to do a small café in one section or retail in another section, it is called a "change of use". The Building Official will then determine whether the occupancy is still the correct occupancy for that building. It comes to our office, goes into our system and then our first immediate stop is to Zoning to question, "what is the use? Are there parking issues?" That is when we trigger the thought of wait a minute, this square footage might trigger this, and then we communicate like Ms. Dang said to Public Works.

Councilmember Dent said it seems like in this case it seems unlikely, given that they have had retail there and they are downscaling from that, it sounds like going more to professional offices. It would only be if they upscaled.

Mr. Fletcher said if they decided to sell the property in the future and someone wanted to turn it into a restaurant, like the Joshua Wilton House, or anything like that. Those are sort of the problems. We just do not know. This helps catch that.

Vice Chair Finnegan said speaking broadly about traffic impact analyses like the process is flawed in that there is an underlying assumption that people are going to be driving a car everywhere they go. If you are looking for an example of where, to Mr. Fletcher's point, you can find holes in it. McDonald's and Chick-Fil-A are both fast food restaurants. One of those creates a lot of traffic problems. I think that needs revision from the Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual.

Ms. Dang said that last sentence there is the Department of Public Works could waive... there are other considerations. The first step is, does it trigger over 100 vehicles in the peak hour? Yes. Okay, let us think about that a little bit more about this particular context and scenario.

Mr. Fletcher said even in the TIA scoping meetings, we take into consideration where the property is located. Will there be walking traffic? Will there be other kinds of traffic? What is the pass-by traffic?

Chair Baugh said I think we, and certainly the public, misunderstand what TIAs really do anyway. If you are looking at this as a hard and fast mechanism to cap it at that number, that is not really how that works because in many respects the TIA is... People do not think that all the time. They think, oh, it is going to trigger this, and that is a reason not to allow something. Actually, it is an initial reason for the City to be thinking about infrastructure improvements.

Vice Chair Finnegan said if there is nothing else, I will move to approve the request as submitted by the applicant.

Commissioner Alsindi seconded the motion.

Chair Baugh called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Nardi	Aye
Vice Chair Finnegan	Aye
Councilmember Dent	Aye
Commissioner Alsindi	Aye
Commissioner Porter	Aye
Chair Baugh	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the rezoning request passed (6-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on August 12, 2025.