



January 14, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting

Title

Consider a request to rezone a portion of 2600 & 2580 South Main Street — Nyrma Soffel, Community Development

Summary

Project name	N/A
Address/Location	Portion of 2600 & 2580 South Main Street
Tax Map Parcel	2-B-5
Total Land Area	+/- 3.0-acre portion of a +/- 13.14-acre parcel
Property Owner	Todd B. Stone
Owner's Representative	N/A
Present Zoning	M-1, General Industrial District
Proposed Zoning	R-3C, Medium Density Residential District Conditional
Planning Commission	January 14, 2026 (Public Hearing)
City Council	Anticipated February 10, 2026 (First Reading/Public Hearing)
	Anticipated February 24, 2026 (Second Reading)

Recommendation

Option 1. Recommend approval of the rezoning request.

Context & Analysis

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

- Site: Non-conforming single-family detached dwellings, zoned M-1
- North: Industrial uses, zoned M-1
- East: Self-storage, zoned M-1
- South: Undeveloped land and Rocktown High School, zoned M-1 and B-2
- West: Industrial and commercial uses, zoned M-1 and B-2

The applicant is requesting to rezone a +/- 3-acre portion of a +/- 13.14-acre parcel zoned M-1, General Industrial District to R-3C, Medium Density Residential District Conditional. The property is addressed as 2580 and 2600 South Main Street and is identified as tax map parcel 2-B-5. Today, the property has two non-conforming single-family detached dwellings. If the rezoning is approved, the applicant plans to construct an addition to the larger residential structure. The applicant does not intend to subdivide the parcel; therefore, it will be a split-zoned parcel.

Proffers

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

1. There shall be no more than three dwelling units.
2. The following uses shall be prohibited:
 - a. College and university buildings and functions, which are either owned or leased by such institutions, and which may include fraternities and sororities.
 - b. Cemeteries.
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.

The conceptual site layout is not proffered.

Existing Structures

The larger residential structure, the "house," was originally constructed around 1805. An addition was constructed in the early 1900s. The area containing the house was annexed from Rockingham County in 1962, while the remainder of the property was annexed in 1983. The house has been owned by the Stone family since 1976, and the applicant has provided evidence that it has been continuously used as a single-family residence. On December 3, 2024, the City issued a letter of nonconformance stating:

Zoning staff has determined that a continuance of nonconformity (Article E. Section 10-3-20) has occurred and the use of the principal structure as a single-family dwelling has been maintained. This use will, therefore, be allowed to continue pursuant to Article E. Nonconforming Structures and Uses.

On April 30, 2025, a building alteration permit was issued for the smaller residential structure, known as "the cottage." The permit included the addition of a full kitchen, effectively making the cottage a dwelling unit. The permit was issued in error and granted a vested right. The cottage is now a nonconforming single-family detached dwelling.

If the rezoning is approved, the two nonconforming residential structures would become conforming uses.

A third structure on the property, the barn, is an accessory structure. The applicant has stated interest in possibly adding a kitchen to the barn in the future. Depending on how the barn would be used, it could become a third dwelling unit or another use, which is why the applicant has chosen to proffer no more than three dwelling units (Proffer #1).

The applicant included information regarding the history of the house. The Comprehensive Plan speaks to historical assets in the City, and while the house is not on the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register of the Historic Places, there is documentation relating to the ownership history of the house, and thus there is some relevancy to this property's historical context in the City. While there is no proffer to maintain historic features of the house, staff believes that rezoning the property can help promote maintaining the structure and thus works toward Goal 10 in Chapter 9, Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources of the Comprehensive Plan, which states:

To recognize and promote the value of the City's diverse historic resources and the many benefits that come from protecting irreplaceable assets that embody Harrisonburg's history.

Nonconformances and Setbacks

As stated above, the house and the cottage are nonconforming uses in the M-1, General Industrial District. If the rezoning is approved, up to three dwelling units would be allowed on the property and the two residential units would be conforming uses.

Zoning Ordinance (ZO) Sec. 10-3-48.6(c) allows for more than one principal building to be constructed on a parcel in the R-3 district, but the "open space between each building as measured at the closest point between building walls shall not be less than twenty (20) feet." The cottage is located approximately 12 feet from the house measured at the closest point between the walls. If approved, the separation distance between the house and the cottage will be nonconforming. In addition, a survey would be needed to determine if the cottage meets setbacks.

If the rezoning is approved, it will have an impact on the adjacent M-1 zoned property addressed as 211 East Mosby Road and identified as tax map parcel 2-B-4, which is owned by the applicant and his family. ZO Sec. 10-3-98 requires M-1 zoned properties to have a minimum 30-foot setback when abutting a residentially zoned property. The self-storage buildings at 211 East Mosby Road are located within 30 feet from the property line; thus, if the rezoning is approved, the setbacks of the self-storage buildings will become nonconforming.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Commercial and states:

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.

While it may appear that a rezoning to a residential district at this location would not necessarily conform to the Land Use Guide (LUG) designation, the R-3, Medium Density Residential District, allows by-right uses that conform to the office and professional service functions outlined in the Commercial Land Use Guide description. The R-3 district allows for assisted living facilities, institutional care facilities, medical clinics, professional offices, charitable or benevolent

institutions, child day cares, and adult daycares. Furthermore, personal service establishments such as barber shops and day spas are allowed by special use permit. Thus, rezoning to R-3 would be moving in the direction of the uses that would align with the surrounding area better than industrial uses. It is also worth mentioning that while the Land Use Guide designates the property Commercial, the shape, size, and location of the parcel may make commercial development difficult. The parcel is accessed via a 50-foot-wide, +/- 570-foot-long driveway and thus the parcel is not easily visible from 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 applicant has proffered to restrict the traffic generating uses to be limited to 100 vehicle trips during the peak hours or to perform a TIA if proposed future uses exceed 100 vehicle trips (Proffer #3). Therefore, a TIA was not required for the rezoning request.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

While staff has no concerns with the requested rezoning regarding water and sanitary sewer matters, the applicant has been advised that, if subdivided, each parcel must have access to water and sanitary sewer mains.

Housing Study

The City’s Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study (Housing Study) places the subject site within Market Type B, which has “neighborhoods [that] are characterized by high income earning households, large volumes of housing sales and lower population growth.” The Housing Study further notes that houses in these markets are quick to sell and that “[p]riorities and policies that are appropriate to Market Type B areas include the preservation of existing affordable housing while at the same time working to increase access to amenities.”

Public Schools

The City contracted with the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service to complete a report titled "Population and School Enrollment Projects for the City of Harrisonburg" (April 2025). The report can be found at the following link: https://harrisonburgva.gov/sites/default/files/city-manager/HarrisonburgSchoolEnrollment_2025-04-30_Final.pdf. This report provides overall student enrollment projections through 2034 as well as estimated student generation by housing type for each elementary school attendance zone.

Based on the Weldon Cooper Center report’s calculation, this development’s proffered maximum of three residential units are estimated to generate one K-12 student at full build-out. According to the School Board’s current attendance boundaries, Bluestone Elementary School, Thomas Harrison Middle School, and Harrisonburg High School would serve the students residing in this development.

Conclusion

The rezoning request has both advantages and disadvantages. Rezoning to R-3 would make the residential use conforming but creates a nonconformance to the distance between principal

buildings. While rezoning to R-3 does not conform to the Commercial LUG designation, it creates the opportunity for some commercial uses while removing the ability for intense M-1 uses that would be in opposition to the Commercial LUG designation.

Staff believes that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of this request and recommends approval of the rezoning request.

Options

1. Recommend approval of the rezoning request.
2. Recommend denial of the rezoning request.

Attachments

- Site maps
- Application and supporting documents