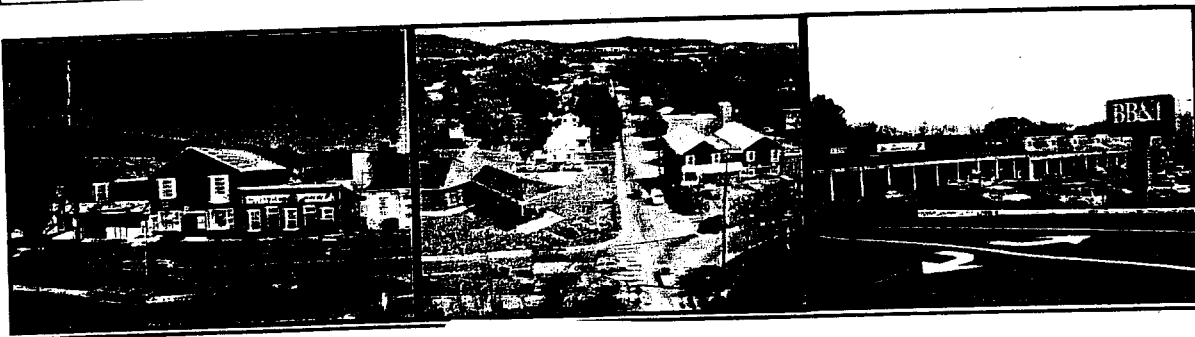




**ALBEMARLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Proposal:</b> Crozet Station	<b>Staff:</b> Rebecca Ragsdale
<b>Planning Commission Work Session:</b> May 30, 2006	<b>Recommendation:</b> Provide direction to staff and applicant on conformity with the Crozet Master Plan and other discussion topics outlined.
<b>Owners:</b> Old Towne Shops LLC; Crozet Shopping Center LLC; Virginia Telephone & Telegraph Co. (Sandy Everton)	<b>Applicant:</b> Bill Atwood, Atwood Architects
<b>Acreage:</b> Approximately 8 acres	<b>Pre-Application Submittal</b>
<b>TMP:</b> Tax Map 56A1, Section 1, Parcel 65; Tax Map 056A2, Section 1, Parcels 27, 28, 28A, 28B, 28C, 29	<b>Proffers:</b> No
<b>By-right use:</b> C-1 Commercial (retail sales and service uses; and residential use by special use permit (15 units/ acre)	<b>Magisterial District:</b> White Hall
<b>Request:</b> 72 residential units & Approximately 42,000 square feet of commercial use	<b>DA X</b> <b>RA</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> New multifamily apartment buildings and residential over commercial; redevelopment of the site to include new commercial and retail buildings.	<b>Comp. Plan Designation:</b> Community of Crozet: Downtown, CT 6- Urban Core
<b>Character of Property:</b> Developed with mixed commercial uses and historic resources; the site slopes down to a stream in rear of the properties.	<b>Use of Surrounding Properties:</b> Commercial, residential, library, emergency/rescue station, and railroad tracks.



**Attachment C**

**STAFF PERSON:  
PLANNING COMMISSION:**

**Rebecca Ragsdale  
May 30, 2006**

**Pre-application Work Session -Crozet Station**

**Specifics of Proposal:**

The applicant approached staff several months ago for some preliminary feedback regarding possible redevelopment of properties in Downtown Crozet. Staff advised that a pre-application work session early on would be beneficial to review the Crozet Master Plan recommendations for Downtown with the Commission and to get the public involved in providing input on redevelopment of the site.

The proposal is very conceptual at this point. The applicant has provided a sketch plan and two architectural renderings. (Attachment F ) The sketch plan illustrates a layout that divides the property into three sections from the intersection at Crozet Avenue eastward. The concept includes a series of connected buildings fronting along Route 240 from the intersection, with a break, then a smaller building. A larger building is proposed perpendicular to Route 240 at the western edge of the shopping center property. Commercial square footage totals approximately 42,000 with this concept and some residential units would potentially be located over the commercial space, including retail but not entire defined at this point. Along the rear of the properties, four residential buildings are proposed with approximately 72 residential units considered. Buildings are proposed to be 3-story would be 3-stories. Surface parking is shown on the sketch plan and total about 280 parking spaces.

**By-right Use of the Property**

The property is zoned C1 Commercial which allows retail and service establishments and administrative/professional office uses. Architectural Review Board and site plan approval would be required prior to developing under the C1 Zoning. Residential uses in keeping with R15 Zoning are permitted by special use permit. The Commercial zoning district requires front setbacks of 30 feet from the right-of-way with no side or rear setbacks except where the property abuts residential. There are no requirements for the applicant to retain the existing historic buildings on the property and they could be removed with a demolition permit.

**Character of the Area and Adjoining properties:**

The proposal involves a substantial portion of Downtown Crozet that includes more than half the Downtown businesses and an area that contributes to the current character of Downtown Crozet. The buildings located on the site vary in age and architecture with some buildings in somewhat dilapidated condition.

West of the site across Route 810 is the Dairy Queen/gas station, which is a site that was redeveloped in 2000 by the applicant for Crozet Station. Across Rt. 240 from the Crozet Station project area is the Crozet Library. The railroad tracks separate this portion of Downtown from the Square and Barnes Lumber. The site to the east is currently wooded, but there is a site plan and special use permit under review for construction of a one three-story office building totaling 19,500 square feet and a one-story bank of 3,090 square feet. Behind the Crozet Station properties is a creek and wooded area that separates the site from the residents in the Wayland Park subdivision. Also located adjacent to the site is the Western Albemarle Rescue Squad.

**Crozet Master Plan:**

Crozet Station is located in Downtown Crozet and one of the major themes of the Master Plan is the importance of Downtown. Downtown is a distinct place-type in Crozet and is intended to exhibit greater density and formal design than a Neighborhood/Village or Hamlet. It is the commercial "hub" for Crozet. Downtown historically has been Crozet's "district-wide" focal point for cultural and commercial activities. It is the largest place-type in Crozet (approximately equal in area to three neighborhoods). Its core, where the neighborhood centers coalesce, exhibits the greatest degree of mixing, density, and intensity of development in Crozet. Downtown is the largest and most important place-type in Crozet, and the Master Plan indicates that implementation efforts should focus on the redevelopment of this area.

The Crozet Station properties are designated CT 6 Urban Core. The range of land uses recommended for CT 6 is very open, but expected to be primarily commercial in character. Residential building types may include apartment buildings, row houses, townhouses, accessory units, live work units and apartments over non-residential uses. Suggested net densities are up to 18 units an acre and up to 36 units an acre if in a mixed use setting. A range of non-residential uses are intended for Downtown, including office, all retail services, and civic support. Table 1 and Table 2 from the Crozet Master Plan are included to provide the full range of design guidelines and land uses for Downtown Crozet.

For purposes of the Master Plan, the Community of Crozet is considered as three geographic sectors in which future development and redevelopment projects are focused. They are the Downtown, the area west of Crozet Avenue and the area east of Crozet Avenue. Applicable statements from the Crozet Master Plan for the Downtown Crozet are below.

The Master Plan recommends initial development in the Downtown area should emphasize the completion of the sidewalk system (per the recommendations of the Anhold Crozet Downtown Sidewalk and Parking Study of 2001), placement of the new library on Crozet Avenue, and creation of the first two blocks of Main Street. Current County initiatives underway include the library project, sidewalk improvements, purchase of a property for Main Street, and exploring solutions to stormwater management and parking in Downtown, and discussing pedestrian crossings with the railroad.

A guiding principle of the Crozet Master Plan is that Crozet values the contributions of locally grown business in providing both jobs and enhanced quality of life for residents. The Crozet Station site currently contains a substantial number of local businesses. Any development proposal on the property should be structured in a manner that does not displace those businesses during construction and allows them to remain viable following any new construction. The Business Development Facilitator has been working with the applicant on how this may be addressed in future development plans for the properties and has noted that a residential component to the program may help keep costs lower for existing businesses, with any new construction projects.

Specific recommendations and tasks identified in the Master Plan for Downtown include the following:

- o Allow mixed-use, infill development in support of downtown.
- o Implement sidewalk plan (per Downtown Sidewalk and Parking Study)
- o Construct the new library on the west side of Crozet Avenue near Mountainside.
- o Convert current library (depot) to civic center function, perhaps as a museum.

- o Construct Main Street by building the first segment from Crozet Avenue to the Barnes Lumber property. (This will take trucks off "the Square.")
- o Develop guidelines for renovating historic structures and for new buildings (scale, materials, setbacks), and initiate establishment of a Historic District.
- o Encourage development in blocks adjacent to downtown core.
- o Create bike lanes to and in downtown.
- o Create downtown community green at "the Square."
- o Develop signage for greenway trails.
- o Create a pedestrian railroad crossing in downtown core (below or above grade).
- o Explore alternatives to current underpass at Crozet Avenue.
- o As opportunities arise for redevelopment of the lumber yard, focus on a mixed-use form that emphasizes employment.

**Green Infrastructure Map:** The Green Infrastructure Map identifies a proposed greenway running behind the Crozet Station properties along Parrot Branch.

**Principles of the Neighborhood Model** -- Conformity with the Neighborhood Model is assessed below. The proposal is still very conceptual at this stage of development so an evaluation of some principles cannot be made at this time. With such an important piece of Crozet that would be redeveloped and expectations that it be the most formal in urban design, any rezoning submitted should pay special attention to these principles of the Neighborhood Model and exceed them.

<b>Pedestrian Orientation</b>	The concept plan does not provide these details. Site development would be expected to include sidewalks along the adjacent road ways as well as an internal system of pedestrian connections to parking and buildings.
<b>Neighborhood Friendly Streets and Paths</b>	Street sections have not been determined but would be expected to provide street trees and provisions for pedestrian safety. In addition, streetscape furniture and enhancements would be expected such as bike racks, benches, and trash receptacles as identified in the Anhold Study.
<b>Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks</b>	The project has not shown an interconnection to the adjoining property to the east and that should be provided. The layout shows entrances into the property from Rt. 810 and Rt. 240. The internal travelway system must be improved to provide better connections in parking areas.
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	Suggested parks and open space include the Greenway (terminus), commons, square where commercial character is on the ground floor, greens, and plazas. There is also a required 100-foot stream buffer along the rear property lines and opportunities to provide greenway connections both parallel to Parrot Creek or across to connect the neighborhoods north of Downtown.
<b>Neighborhood Centers</b>	This property is located in Downtown Crozet, intended to be a center for several neighborhoods and a central place in Crozet.
<b>Buildings and Spaces of Human</b>	Architectural elevations submitted by the applicant are provided and show three story buildings. The Master Plan recommends 2-4 stories

<b>Scale</b>	from main level and up to 5 stories by exception for Downtown Crozet.
<b>Relegated Parking</b>	Parking is relegated in some portions of the site on the concept plan but not for the shopping center parcel where the largest parking area is located up to Route 240. The information demonstrates that this principle is not fully met. The applicant should also work to determine if on-street parking may be possible.
<b>Mixture of Uses</b>	This project is proposing a mix of both residential and commercial uses and appears to meet this principle.
<b>Mixture of Housing Types and Affordability</b>	The applicant proposes only apartments/multifamily. The proposal would be expected to meet the affordable housing policy goals.
<b>Redevelopment</b>	All buildings on the property would be demolished with this proposal. The applicant has not indicated what the intended phasing of redevelopment might be for the properties but ideally it would be phased to allow business retention.
<b>Site Planning that Respects Terrain</b>	The site is sloping in some locations and there is opportunity to work with the existing grades. This would be evaluated on future plans.
<b>Clear Boundaries with the Rural Areas</b>	The project is located entirely within the Community of Crozet and the nearest boundary with the Rural Area is north of Downtown at the Crozet Elementary School northern property boundary.

### Impacts

If a rezoning is submitted for the Crozet Station properties, they would be expected to mitigate impacts associated with the proposed development. The County's Community Facilities Plan, in conjunction with the Capital Improvements Program identifies the need for libraries, schools, park, public safety and transportation improvements in Crozet. A list of projects for Crozet was identified in the Master Plan based on whether projects would be public (CIP) or privately funded. The CIP items below are at various stages of funding or programming.

#### **CIP items recommended by the Crozet Master Plan:**

- New library
- Henley Middle School renovation
- Additional High School capacity
- New Crozet Elementary School
- St. George's Avenue sidewalk
- Downtown sidewalk/streetscape
- Railroad Avenue sidewalk
- Design of road projects related to various Neighborhood Master Plans
- Street lamp Program
- Road Construction Revenue Sharing for traffic calming measures

#### **Items in the Crozet Master Plan recommended for private sector funding/ public/private collaboration:**

- Downtown Park (Main Street)
- Greenway development
- Main Street at Crozet Avenue
- Bike/pedestrian improvements in developing neighborhoods

**Environmental-** A 100-foot stream buffer from Parrot Branch, which is located along the rear of the property, must be kept free of encroachment by the proposed development.

**Cultural, and Historic** –The Master Plan includes a summary of Crozet’s history: “The community of Crozet began as a whistle stop on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in 1876 that was established at the request of the Miller Manual Labor School (the Miller School), which had been founded a year earlier. It was named for Colonel B. Claudius Crozet (1789-1864), a French born civil engineer and artillery officer under Napoleon who is best remembered as the chief engineer for the seventeen mile long railroad tunnel through the Blue Ridge Mountains. Since its inception, it has functioned as a distinct settlement with a unique history of agriculture, small business enterprises, and a dynamic civic spirit. Crozet in particular was known for its fruit industry, and in the 1930’s it lead the state in the production of Albemarle Pippin and Winesap apples. It also was known as the Peach Capital of Virginia. With the arrival of Acme Visible Records and Morton Foods (ConAgra) in the 1950’s, year-round employment was available to balance the area’s seasonal economy. The Master Plan draws on these unique traits in the creation of a place that is distinctly ‘Crozet’.”

Historic resources that relate to this history of Crozet are included within the project area for Crozet Station. The Design Planner has consulted with the Department of Historic resources and offers the following table that lists the properties included in the Crozet Station proposal, together with some Department of Historic Resources information on the properties relative to a potential historic district in Crozet.

TMP (Street #)	Name	DHR Survey #	Evaluation
56A1-1-0-65 (5798)	Crozet Cooperage	2086	Contributing
56A1-1-0-65 (5794)	Crozet Pizza	2095	Contributing
56A1-1-0-65 (5792)	Olive Tree/ Hairdresser	2085	Contributing
(5790)	Jarman’s Gap Restaurant	Not surveyed	n/a
56A1-1-0-65 56A2-1-0-27 (5786, 5784)	Fruit Growers Coop and Minda’s Clothing	2084	Contributing
56A2-1-0-28B (5782)		Not surveyed	n/a
56A2-1-0-28 (5778)		Not surveyed	n/a
56A2-1-0-28 (5774)		Not surveyed	n/a
56A2-1-0-29	IGA Shopping Center	Not surveyed	n/a

**Streets** –During the Crozet Master Plan, traffic was analyzed and forecasts under two scenarios were modeled: The trend under by-right build out and the road network fully in place as recommended by the Master Plan. VDOT has commented preliminarily and has indicated the following:

- o A traffic study should be conducted to determine the full impacts of the proposed development;
- o Full frontage improvements would be required to include widening of Route 240, installing curb and gutter and sidewalks, and consolidation of entrances;
- o Full frontage improvements would be required providing a left turn lane on Route 810, installing curb and gutter and sidewalks, and consolidation of entrances

This is not an impact that can be evaluated at the schematic level, as this concept is at this stage. Staff would recommend that additional traffic study would be needed to include current traffic data and to account for roads that have not yet been built such as Main Street. The scope would be determined with a rezoning. Excessive widening of Route 240 is not recommended.

**Schools** – The development is expected to generate approximately 14 students broken down as follows: 9 elementary school students, 3 middle school students, and 2 high school students. These students would attend Crozet Elementary School, which is above capacity based on summer 2005 estimates; Henley Middle School, which was below capacity based on the summer 2005 estimates; and Western Albemarle High School, which was at capacity based on estimates.

**Fire, Rescue, Police** –The Crozet Volunteer Fire Station and the Western Albemarle Rescue Station provide fire and rescue services to the area. The planned Ivy Area Station will also augment services provide by the existing fire and rescue stations in Crozet. Albemarle County 5<sup>th</sup> Street Office Building houses the County’s Police Department, although the police patrol all areas of the County. Current policy of police services recommends an average response time of 10 minutes for all Development Areas. To this end, police satellite offices are recommended within a service sector to help achieve these desired response times to all police emergency calls. The possibility of an additional fire/rescue/police station is under consideration for the area in 2012.

**Utilities** – Albemarle County Service Authority indicates that water and sewer service is available to serve the site. Water lines were recently upgraded in Crozet and no service issues have been identified with this conceptual redevelopment proposal.

***PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION TOPICS:***

**Historic Preservation**

***Should contributing structures to possible future historic district be demolished for new development?***

Staff believes that the intent during the Crozet Master Plan was to retain historic buildings that contribute to a potential historic district and give Crozet its character. However, the applicant has indicated that the buildings are in poor condition and it is not feasible to incorporate them into a redevelopment project for the site. There is nothing to prohibit property owners from demolishing buildings if they choose to do so. This will be a reoccurring issue as projects come forward in Downtown Crozet. The historic district recommendations should be considered in the context with other goals of the plan to revitalize Downtown Crozet.

The Design Planner has offered the following comments with regard to historic resources and architecture:

The loss of the "contributing" commercial buildings listed above could eliminate the possibility of establishing a historic district in Crozet. These commercial buildings stand at the physical core of the town and they represent some of the most important history of Crozet. The demolition of these structures will result in a tangible loss.

If the proposal is approved and the buildings are demolished, even if the historic district is lost, the scale and character of the replacement buildings will have a strong impact on the downtown. Based on the sketches provided, it appears that the scale of the new development will be significantly larger than that of the existing buildings. The proposed scale is not in keeping with the existing character.

The site is located in on an Entrance Corridor so the ARB would review approve the architectural details of the proposal.

Staff asks the Commission to advise whether demolition of historic structures in the Downtown would be appropriate for this proposal.

**Mix of Uses & Residential Density**

***Is the mix of residential and commercial/retail uses appropriate?***

Since the Crozet Master Plan is so open with regard to uses and level of density in the Downtown, staff is not concerned with the uses proposed or the residential densities. The parameters established during the build-out analysis completed by staff for Crozet are a helpful tool in evaluating the appropriate level of residential development in Downtown. The 72 units proposed with this project do exceed the number of units in the Downtown using the same mathematical approach used in the build-out analysis. Staff is not concerned with the number of units exceeding this limit but more concerned about how they compare with the mix of uses for the project. The residential component of the project equates to about 108,000 square feet (1,500 x 72) which is over twice the area devoted to retail/commercial uses. Staff believes that, without a more substantial ratio of commercial to residential use, the vitality of Downtown as a center will be compromised.

Crozet Station			CMP Unit Ranges Suggested		Crozet Station		
Crozet Transect Density	Acres	Net Acres*	CT6 acres**	Min	Max	Units	Net Density
	8	6.40	1.60	29	58	72	11.25
<b>Total</b>							

\*Net acreage used is 80% of gross acreage. \*\*CT 6 areas were expected to have more non-residential than residential so only 25% of net acreage is used to calculate expected residential units.

Staff is concerned that, as proposed with approximately 42,000 square feet of non-residential square footage, the project does not bring any additional commercial or employment opportunities to Downtown Crozet. It includes even less commercial square footage than what currently exists, which is approximately 49,000.

**Design and Layout**

***What features of the design and layout does the Planning Commission find appropriate?  
What would the Planning Commission suggest to improve the layout and design?***

The Crozet Master Plan does not suggest any specific design or layout for redevelopment of this property. Illustrations prepared as part of the Master Plan process showed infill along Route 240 in front of the Great Value Shopping Center. This is consistent with the recommendation of a Downtown Historic District, retaining buildings that are contributing to the potential district. The Anhold Downtown Parking and Sidewalk study showed the property up to the shopping center divided into two blocks with a central urban greenspace and parking behind four new buildings along Three Notched Road. (Attachment E) The Anhold study is not an adopted plan but represents a design scenario consistent with the Master Plan.

The east/west organization of downtown Crozet that exists in conjunction with the early railroad alignment and the position of Route 240 along a ridge line, as described in the Master Plan, along with the shape of the property are factors relevant to the layout proposed by the applicant. Staff believes that several modifications to the design and layout are desirable and offers the following comments for the Planning Commission's discussion:

- The arrangement of the two groups of commercial buildings with orientation to Route 240 is desirable.
- The residential buildings toward the rear lack a relationship to one another. The placement of these buildings along the edge may be appropriate, but a more coordinated approach to how they relate to one another is needed. Additionally, the topography would allow for parking to be provided on the lower level of these buildings. Staff is concerned that residential uses without designated parking areas associated with the residential buildings would not be a viable approach to residential development. An effort to provide parking in the lower level of these buildings should be pursued.
- The larger commercial building (supermarket building) should be reoriented to better address Three Notched Road and relegate parking. Further, the supermarket building in this location dissects the site, creating a barrier between the two areas.
- The internal circulation network lacks a hierarchy. The Crozet Master plan suggests that this area may redevelop further and utilize parking structures. The network of travelways needs to not only provide access to parking, but reflect an ability for future redevelopment to occur. Staff recommends looking at the area and providing a street/travelway network that is more linear. For instance, the travelway connection between the supermarket building and the residential building shown along the edge should be more centralized. As shown, this is the only connection from the eastern half to the western half. It is aligned toward the northern edge of the property. Please consider how motorists and pedestrians will move between the eastern half and western half of the site.
- On-street parking should be evaluated for use along Three Notched Road. On-street parking should be utilized in front of retail.
- The distribution of surface parking seems to be skewed to the eastern half of the site, though a greater concentration of development is illustrated on the western half.
- In order to integrate this development with the rest of downtown Crozet, an at-grade or elevating crosswalk should be evaluated to provide pedestrian access across the railway.
- A connection through the "Green Area" to connect into the neighborhoods to the north should be studied. This connection would lead to an ability to access these neighborhoods and Crozet Elementary, thereby creating an alternative to Crozet Avenue.

- This site and its constraints may be a good candidate for innovative stormwater management practices. The applicant has not indicated yet indicated how stormwater will be addressed.
- If such an extensive use of cupolas is desired, they should be functional. Added stories should include usable space.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Commission review the conceptual proposal with a focus on what was intended in the Crozet Master Plan for this portion of Downtown, along with public input, and provide the applicant and staff guidance on the direction this redevelopment proposal should take based on discussion topics that preceded. A "finer-grained" approach to pedestrian facilities and circulation, access, parking, how residential buildings meet the street and how their vehicular access is provided will be necessary as this review moves forward.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Crozet Master Plan-*Place-Type and Built Infrastructure Map*
- B. Crozet Master Plan-*Table 1 Place Types and Design Guidelines*
- C. Crozet Master Plan-*Table 2 Land Use & Place Types*
- D. Crozet Station Location Map-*Aerial Photo*
- E. Crozet Station Location Map-*Zoning*
- F. Crozet Station Concept Plan & Sketches
- G. Anhold Study schematics for the Crozet Station properties