CITY OF HARRISONBURG

May 14, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Title
Consider Rezoning at 302 West Bruce Street — Meg Rupkey, Community Development

Summary

Project name	N/A
Address/Location	302 West Bruce Street
Tax Map Parcels	25-A-1
Total Land Area	+/- 5,397 square feet
Property Owner	Paul C. Riner
Owner's Representative	Tucker Wood
Present Zoning	R-2, Residential District
Proposed Zoning	R-8C, Small Lot Residential District Conditional
Planning Commission	May 14, 2025 (Public Hearing)
City Council	Anticipated June 10, 2025 (First Reading/Public Hearing) Anticipated June 24, 2025 (Second Reading)

Recommendation
Option 1. Recommend approval of the rezoning request.

Fiscal Impact
N/A

Context & Analysis
The applicant is requesting to rezone a +/- 5,397-square foot property from R-2, Residential District to R-8C, Small Lot Residential District Conditional. The property is addressed as 302 West Bruce Street and is identified as tax map parcels 25-A-1. The applicant's letter states that the existing unit is unoccupied and has received building permits for internal renovations to include an additional bedroom and bathroom. The applicant is unsure if they would like to sell or rent the home in the future.

The applicant's letter also explains that they would like to rezone the property to conform to zoning lot size regulations. Under the R-2 district regulations, a single-family detached dwelling is required to have a minimum of 7,000 square feet of lot area. In the R-8 district, the lot area requirement for a single family detached dwelling is a minimum of 2,800 square feet per unit. If rezoned, the property would become conforming to lot size requirements. *Background*
The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

Site: Single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

North: Single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

East: Across Academy Street, single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-3

South: Across West Bruce Street, single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

West: Single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

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

1. Upon request and upon the completion of necessary plats and deeds by the City, the property owner will dedicate a variable width public sidewalk easement along Academy Street for future sidewalk construction by the City. The easement will extend 7.5 feet from the existing back of curb into the property. The property owner has the option to dedicate public right-of-way in lieu of the public sidewalk easement. In addition, a variable width temporary grading easement up to 5 feet beyond the 7.5 feet public sidewalk easement will be provided to the City for sidewalk installation.

2. Upon request and upon the completion of necessary plats and deeds by the City, the property owner will dedicate a variable width public sidewalk easement along West Bruce Street for future sidewalk construction by the City. The easement will extend 5.5 feet from the existing back of curb into the property. The property owner has the option to dedicate public right-of-way in lieu of the public sidewalk easement. In addition, a variable width temporary grading easement up to 3 feet beyond the public sidewalk easement will be provided to the City for sidewalk installation.

3. Permanent structures, landscaping features, fences, and walls are prohibited in the areas proffered for public sidewalk easement (or public right-of-way).

4. If the property is subdivided by the property owner before the City completes the necessary plats and deeds, then the property owner will be responsible for completing the necessary plats and deeds to dedicate public sidewalk easements (or public right-of-way) and temporary grading easements described above.

Along with proffer #4, which requires the property owner to dedicate the easement or right-of-way if they subdivide the property, the property owner/applicant has been made aware that future subdivision would require them to construct sidewalk along Academy Street in accordance with Subdivision Ordinance Section 10-2-61 (c) because sidewalk already extends along West Bruce Street to its intersection with Academy Street.

Land Use
The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Neighborhood Residential and states:

> These areas are typically older residential neighborhoods, which contain a mixture of densities and a mixture of housing types, but should have more single-family detached homes than other types of housing. This type of land use highlights those neighborhoods in which existing conditions dictate the need for careful consideration of the types and densities of future residential development. Infill development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the desired character of the neighborhood.

Considering the size of the existing parcel and the alignment with R-8 district regulations, staff finds no significant adverse effects on surrounding properties and believes the request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Guide. The R-8 district is intended for medium- to high-density residential development including, single-family detached and duplex dwellings, and, in special circumstances, townhouse units by special use permit. Staff believes the flexibility offered by the R-8 district's minimum area and dimensional requirements can work well within areas designated as Neighborhood Residential.

If the rezoning is approved, it appears that the parcel could contain a subdivided duplex structure if the existing single family detached dwelling was removed. The existing single family detached dwelling could not be converted to a duplex because the R-8 district requires all units to be positioned on their own lot.

Transportation and Traffic
A traffic impact analysis (TIA) was not required for the rezoning request.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer
Staff has no concerns with the requested rezoning regarding water and sewer matters.

Housing Study
The City's Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study (Housing Study) places the subject property within Market Type D, which notes that "[m]arket type D has lower market activity as well as lower access to amenities. This could be because the areas are stable residential neighborhoods or because the area is less developed and therefore has fewer sales and fewer amenities. Strategies that would be appropriate in the latter case include concurrent development of the housing and economic opportunities through mixed-use developments to build commerce and housing centers across the City.

Public Schools
If the rezoning is approved, no additional dwelling units would be added to the property; therefore, the student generation is zero. Based on the School Board's current adopted attendance boundaries, Keister Elementary School, Thomas Harrison Middle School, and Harrisonburg High School would serve the students residing on this property.

For total student population projections, the City of Harrisonburg and HCPS both use the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service's projections. These projections are updated annually and are available at: https://www.coopercenter.org/virginia-school-data.

Options

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

Attachments

- Site maps
- Application and supporting documents