



CITY OF BUENA VISTA PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

4/14/2026 | 7:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

ADG #1: CALL TO ORDER

ADG #2: PUBLIC HEARING

1. Conditional Use Permit – Campground at Rockbridge Creative Institute (RCI), 801 Meridian Parkway

ADG #2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

ADG #3: REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES

ADG #4: OLD BUSINESS

1. Conditional Use Permit – Campground at Rockbridge Creative Institute (RCI), 801 Meridian Parkway

ADG #5: NEW BUSINESS

1. None

ADG #8: REPORT OF SECRETARY

1. Rezoning of bed & breakfast to hotel was denied.
2. Staff changes: Public Works Director will be Michael Loudermilk, and Parks & Rec Director will be Ryan Groah.
3. Joe Whetstone is seeking to move forward his townhouse development at 31st St & Catalpa Ave. There was an expiration provision in the alley abandonment related to road construction, so he is going back to Council in May for re-approval of the abandonment based on the same designs.
4. The SVU student group recently made more improvements to the 34th St Playground, including naming it Miracle Park. They are also paying for a new commercial swing set there.

ADJOURNMENT

Members and Term Expirations

Dennis Hawes, Chairman, 7/31/2028

Harold Kidd, 6/30/2026

Kathryn Janiczek, 8/31/2029

Marolyn Cash, 6/30/2028

Sarah Henson, 9/30/2027

Melvin Henson, 9/30/2027

Bryson Adams, 12/31/2028

Timothy Petrie, 12/31/2028

Jason Tyree, Ex Officio member

Staff

Tom Roberts, Director of Community Development

City Hall, 2039 Sycamore Avenue, Buena Vista VA 24416

(540) 261-8607 | troberts@bvcity.org | buenvistava.org/planning

Meetings

Members of the Buena Vista Planning Commission meet in Council Chambers, 2039 Sycamore Avenue, at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise announced. Meetings may be held and business conducted without a quorum, but no votes may be taken unless a quorum is present. A majority of members constitutes a quorum. A motion passes with a majority vote; a tie constitutes defeat of the motion.



CITY OF BUENA VISTA PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

3/10/2026 | 7:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

Members Present

Thomas Roberts, Staff Secretary

Dennis Hawes, Chair

Bryson Adams

Marolyn Cash

Melvin Henson

Timothy Petrie

Sarah Henson

Kathy Janiczek

Harold Kidd

Members Absent

Jason Tyree, City Manager ex officio

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

For minutes of 2/10/2026 meeting:

Corrections: Mr. Petrie requested clearer wording about a question he asked about how staff would know if a given addition was an ADU or not.

Motion to approve: Mr. Hawes motioned, all voted yes

Abstentions: Mrs. Henson, Mr. Kidd

PUBLIC HEARING

Zoning Text Amendment – Accessory Dwelling Units

Mr. Hawes complimented Mr. Roberts and the intern, Elliott Cox, in their work compiling comments and discussion into the draft text. Mr. Hawes asked about the General Assembly bill and Mr. Roberts confirmed that the text in the packet is what is going to the governor's desk, and he pointed out the two provisions where the Commission's desires differed from what the state law would allow.

Mr. Hawes brought up the other General Assembly bill pertaining to parking space requirements, and asked about what would happen if construction of an ADU displaced a parking space. Mr. Roberts acknowledged that there could be a situation where the space inside a garage was counted as an off-street parking space and it would be lost if the garage were converted, in which case the owner would need to provide one or two additional spaces to replace it.

Mrs. Cash motioned to bring the draft text to public hearing, Mrs. Henson seconded, and all voted yes.

While on the topic of the General Assembly updates, Mr. Hawes also asked about the “designated area” term used in the bill about parking regulations. Mr. Roberts explained the definition and how most all of Buena Vista would be considered a designated area for several reasons. One criterion for a designated area is that the zone would permit a floor area ratio of greater than 1.0 by special exception, special use, or conditional use permit. Buena Vista as a clear CUP process for increasing permitted density in its residential zones, so they would all be considered designated areas. Another criterion is a radius from public transit, and the Maury Express qualifies as fixed-route public transit.

NEW BUSINESS

Conditional Use Permit – Campground at 801 Meridian Parkway, Rockbridge Creative Institute

Mr. Hawes clarified that the Commission is reviewing whether it is a good use of the property or not to allow a campground, and there is not a site plan. Mr. Roberts said that yes, there is a basic layout that is presented, but the PC’s role is to approve the use. Mr. Hawes opined that this is a good location for this use and it is non-invasive and could be reversed in the future. Mr. Petrie asked about sightlines and the visibility of the campground from the rest of the City. Mr. Adams stated that he has gone around and does not think the site will be visible from the City. Although the house is visible, this ridge is lower down and not as visible. Mr. Roberts agreed with this assessment.

Mr. Hawes also relayed that he had spoken with Councilman Ron Cash, and Mr. Cash does not have any concerns with the campground. There was clarification on where Meridian Parkway is (private loop road on the property, accessed from 32nd St).

Mr. Petrie motioned to recommend approval, Mr. Kidd seconded, Mr. Adams abstained, and all voted yes. *[Note: this motion is not valid because no notices were sent to adjacent property owners prior to this meeting.]*

Secretary’s Report

Mr. Hawes dove into discussing the General Assembly bill allowing manufactured housing throughout residential zones. He clarified the definition of manufactured vs. modular. Mr.

Hawes asked about whether permanent foundations were required, and Mr. Roberts responded that he wasn't sure about permanent foundations, but that the manufactured homes must be converted to real estate. Mr. Hawes then explained from his real estate experience that for FHA and VA loans, it would be required to have a permanent foundation, tongue removed, axles removed, and strapped down. He noted that mortgage lenders would usually not lend on older manufactured homes either. Mr. Roberts then pointed out that the new bill would only apply to homes less than 5 years old. Finally, Mr. Hawes stated that he did not like the new bill. There was some discussion of costs and quality issues with manufactured homes.

After briefly noting the potential limit on what off-street parking the City could require, which was discussed earlier, Mr. Roberts moved on to updated population estimates. The Weldon Cooper Center estimates that the 2025 population was 6,751 people.

Next, Mr. Roberts noted that the rezoning for 2056/2068 Chestnut Ave was going to City Council. Because the motion at the January 2026 Planning Commission meeting was somewhat confusing, Mr. Hawes wanted to provide a more definitive recommendation. There was some clarification on what was proposed, and some mention of the concerns with the project. Mrs. Cash motioned recommend denial of the rezoning request from R3 to MU with 16 guest rooms. Mr. Henson seconded and all voted yes except Mrs. Henson.

There was some discussion of Council's recent approval of the home occupation text update, what they discussed before approving, and how bed & breakfasts were different from home occupations.

Leroy Wheeler is the new member of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Hawes asked if the middle school addition to the high school will involve the Planning Commission. Mr. Roberts responded that he was not certain.

Mr. Hawes stated that he is very pleased with Modine's purchase and renovation of the former REA Wire building on 10th Street.

Mr. Hawes stated that he had received a complaint about new water & sewer tap fees, and he thinks that \$6500 is rather steep. He also thinks that the new curb & gutter fee is very high also. There was some discussion of the fees and where they stack up against other localities and actual costs of materials. Mr. Roberts confirmed that they did raise the fees substantially and that it was a conscious decision to place some additional cost burden on the builders rather than on ratepayers. He recognizes it is a balance. Mr. Adams pointed out that the City has not kept up with inflation and when they did it was a big jump up. Mr. Hawes also thinks that requiring curb and gutter is good. Mr. Roberts agrees that \$72/linear foot is high also, but that is the actual cost for Public Works. The City does not require that public works do the work; private contractors may do the installation if they can do it cheaper.

Mr. Roberts also noted that he is pushing forward a tiered water & sewer tap fee schedule, like surrounding localities, that will assess higher fees for larger water tap sizes. He explained that the fees are not intended only to cover the cost of physically connecting, but to cover the expansion and maintenance of the whole system.

Mr. Hawes asked the members if they wanted to move the meeting time to 6:00 PM. No one wanted to do that so the time will remain 7:00 PM.

Mr. Roberts explained that the City will soon be interviewing candidates for Public Works director and Parks & Recreation Director.

Mr. Roberts updated the Commission on the 21st St Streetscape project. They will likely end up trenching across the intersection at Magnolia Ave & 21st St, which was not in the original plans. The signal poles will be up later in April.

Adjournment

8:06 PM

Approval by Chairman:

Signature

Date



STAFF REPORT

TYPE: Conditional Use Permit
PROJECT: Campground at Rockbridge Creative Institute, 801 Meridian Parkway
DATE: 3/23/2026

SITE INFORMATION

Address/Tax Map:	801 Meridian Parkway, Tax Map 8-1---1
Zoning:	INST Institutional
Existing land use:	Vacant
Proposed land use:	Campground
Size:	Approx. 15-20 acre portion of Rockbridge Creative Institute property
Staff Recommendation:	Approve

Overview

Austin Rehl/Rockbridge Creative Institute (RCI) proposes a 20-site campground to be used by students, faculty, and visitors to the RCI and to Meridian Farmstead, the associated event venue.

Approval Required

In the INST zone, campgrounds require a conditional use permit (CUP). Staff will also review the site plan. In Virginia, any campground with more than two campsites must follow an extensive set of regulations from the Virginia Department of Health, and it must be inspected. The applicant has gone over this project with VDH and, to staff’s best understanding, the design of this campground meets VDH regulations.

Analysis

1. Layout
 - a. The campsites will be arranged on either side of an existing (private) access road that runs between Meridian Parkway (also private) and the water tower and cell phone tower at 3405 Woodbine Ave (City-owned). The water supply for the entire property runs along this access road and connects to the water tower.
 - b. Campsites will be rustic and the majority will be elevated wooden platforms for tents. Three spots will be designed for recreational vehicles (RVs) or campers. Sites will be built in phases, and construction of the sites and the platforms will be student/apprentice projects.
 - c. A bathroom and shower structure will be located centrally on the west side of the access road. This will be designed to meet VDH standards, which include a maximum distance of 500’ to any campsite. It will be built at the beginning of the project.
2. Vehicular Circulation and Parking
 - a. The access road will have a gravel surface. Parking for most sites will be parallel spots at the edge of the road. The road will not connect through to the water tower/cell tower access road down 34th Street; the only access to the site will be via Meridian Pkwy. This will be for safety and access control. At the end of the campground access road there

will be a cul de sac turnaround that can accommodate emergency vehicles turning around.

3. Trash Collection will be provided at a dumpster on 32nd Street.
4. Utilities
 - a. A water spigot will be provided at the bathroom facility, tapping into the existing water line.
 - b. The bathroom facility will include lavatories, toilets, showers, and a slop sink. The toilets will be a pre-packaged composting design, and the remainder will drain to a holding tank that will be pumped as needed, in accordance with VDH regulations of holding tanks. Although there is public sewer to the large house on the property, running sewer to the location of the campground would be prohibitively expensive for the nature of the development, and is not required per VDH. Sewage disposal for RVs and campers will not be provided on site, but guests will be directed to Glen Maury Park if necessary. There is currently a \$10 fee for non-residents to use the dump station at GMP, which would apply to these guests.
 - c. Electric service will be added to select sites but not all. A new private electric line will be trenched along the access road.
5. Storm Water Management – the new land disturbance for this project will be minimal because the access road is existing and the sites will have small footprints.

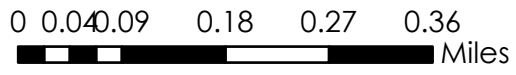
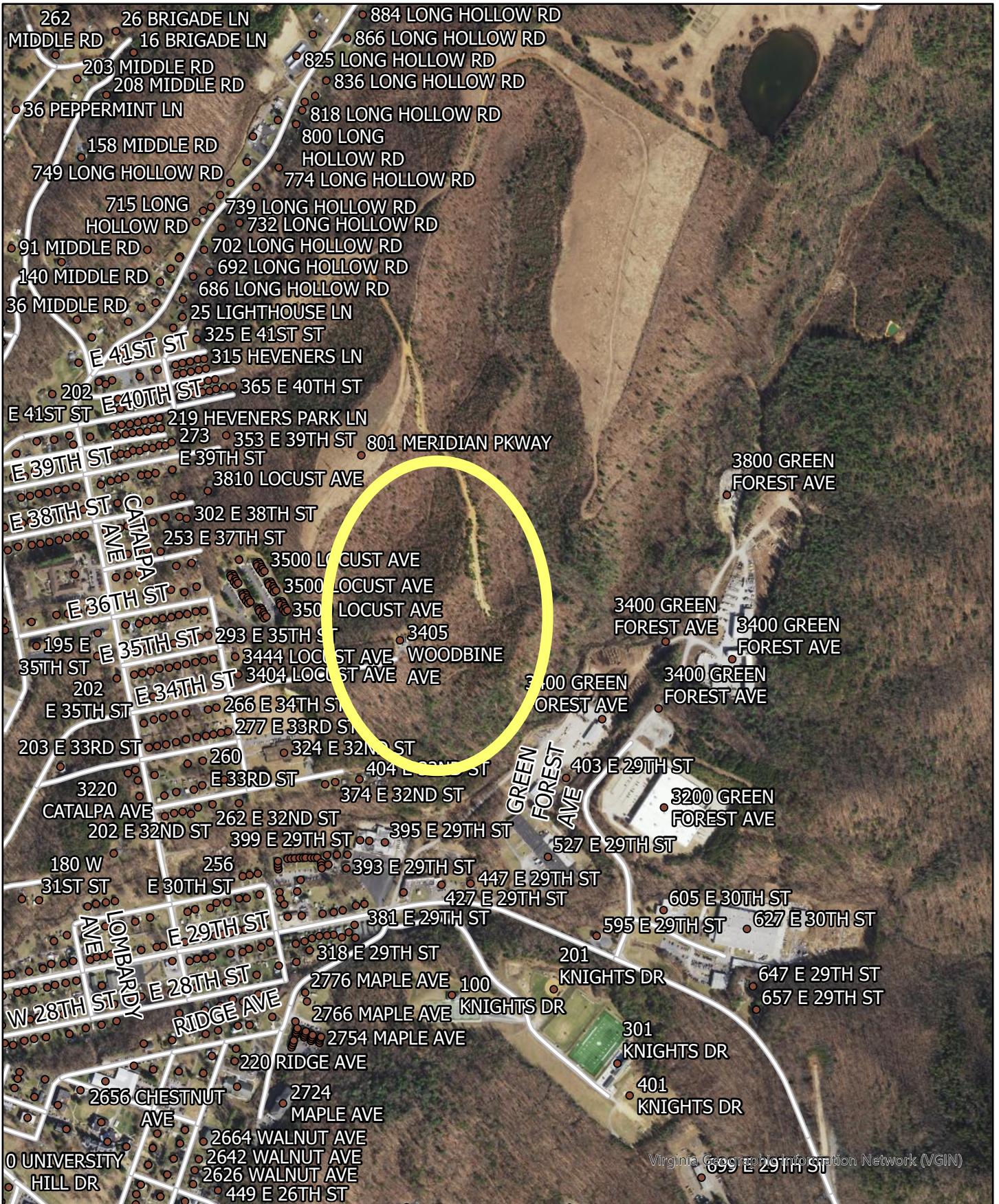
Analysis and Recommendation

The campground is intended to provide short-term on-site accommodations for students and faculty at RCI workshops or events. Additionally, the campground will provide short-term accommodations for guests renting out the house as an event venue, which provides revenue to support the school and continued development. Construction of the platforms and bathroom building is expected to be done fully or in part by students as part of their training. The campground is not intended to be marketed generally to the public or to compete with Glen Maury Park.

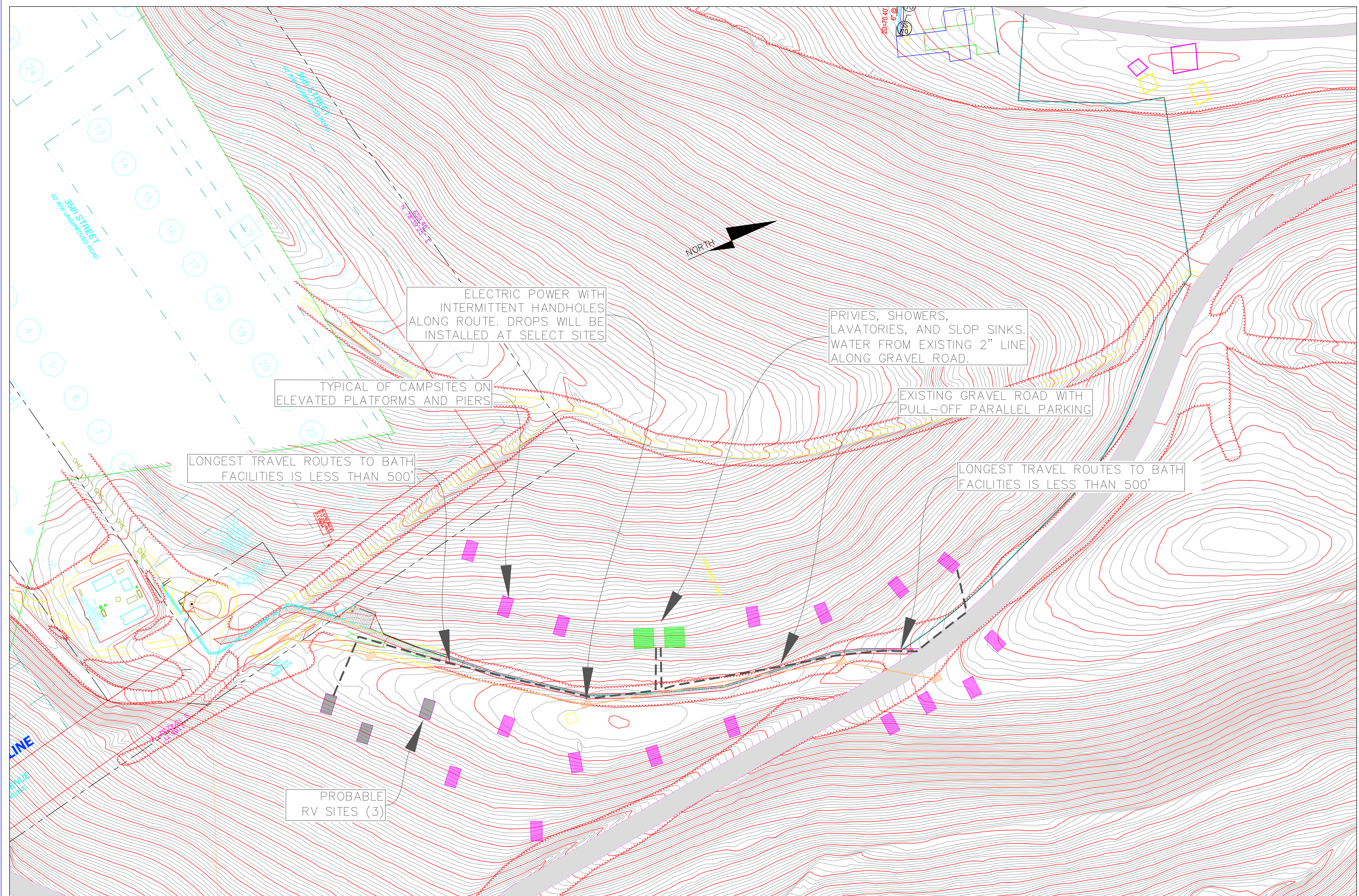
The site will be private and well screen. It is about 700 feet from the nearest residence, Treemont Apartments, and that distance is spanned by a hill and thick woods. Impact on surrounding properties will be very minimal.

Staff believe that this use will not be disruptive to other properties, will not create safety or environmental hazards, and will facilitate the use and growth of the RCI.

A Planning Commission public hearing for this CUP was advertised in the newspaper for the March 10 2026 meeting. However, staff forgot to mail out notification letters for that meeting, but did not realize this until later. Because the item was on the agenda, Planning Commission took a vote to recommend approval. This vote is not valid because the notification was not complete. As a result, the item has returned to the agenda for public hearing. Notification letters were sent out this time.



Campground - Project Location



1228 RCI TOWERHILL CAMPSITES

Civil Consulting Group, P.C.
 ENGINEERING DESIGN & ANALYSIS
 3688 Country Club Road 24175
 Troutville, VA 24175
 Voice 540-992-2242
 Fax 540-992-3463

Issued	FEBRUARY 2026
Designed	HAY
Drawn	HAY

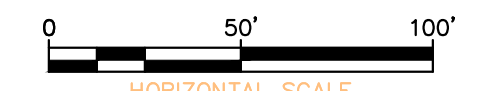
Revisions	Date	Drawn	By

ROCKBRIDGE CREATIVE INSTITUTE
 TOWER HILL CAMPSITES
 TOWER HILL CAMPSITES
 CONCEPT
 BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA

Horizontal Scale
 AS SHOWN
 Vertical Scale
 AS SHOWN
 Commission Number
 1228A

Sheet Number
 TH-1

THIS SHEET IS FOR CONCEPTUAL CAMPSITES ONLY





Meridian Pkwy at left, new campground access road at right, looking south



Campsite area, looking north



Access road, looking north