



CITY OF BUENA VISTA PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

5/12/2026 | 7:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

ADG #1: **CALL TO ORDER**

ADG #2: **PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Zoning Map Amendment – 100 block Hazel Avenue

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. Zoning Map Amendment – 100 block Hazel Avenue

ADG #8: **REPORT OF SECRETARY**

1. Short term rental tax update – Finance dept provided year-to-date lodging tax figures. For July 2025-March 2026, the City collected approximately \$27,000 of lodging tax from STRs. This represents over \$400,000 of gross revenue. Interestingly, lodging tax revenue from the one traditional hotel is a fraction of STRs, likely reflecting long-term occupancy of some of the rooms.

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

4/14/2026 | 7:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

Members Present

Thomas Roberts, Staff Secretary

Dennis Hawes, Chair

Marolyn Cash

Melvin Henson

Timothy Petrie

Sarah Henson

Kathy Janiczek

Members Absent

Wayne Handley, City Manager ex officio

Bryson Adams

Harold Kidd

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC HEARING

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

Mr. Roberts began by apologizing for a mixup on the hearing scheduling between this item and the ADU text amendment. Tonight's meeting, however, is the properly-advertised public hearing for the campground CUP. He then reviewed the basics of the proposal. Members of the public then spoke.

David Truslow

- Concerned work on the campground is already taking place
- Feels like Mr. Rehl's plans keep changing for what he is going to do with the property
- Concerned about the amount of traffic on Meridian Pkway that is coming onto 32nd St, and that 32nd St is in poor condition and not able to handle the traffic
- People speed on Meridian Pkwy and generate dust next to his home

Alandra Tomlin Reese

- Owns property on 32nd Street

- Says that if you give Mr. Rehl an inch he will take a mile, and that he is not developing what he said he would, doesn't tell the whole story to neighbors
- Says that Mr. Rehl is organizing hunting for a fee on the property, and that people are already camping on the property

Ron Cash

- Agrees that 32nd St is in poor condition, but thinks that is mainly because of truck traffic to Sayre, not Rockbridge Creative Institute traffic.
- Thinks the city should meet Mr. Rehl halfway and do some work on 32nd St
- The ESC/SWM work for RCI has not been finished, but Mr. Rehl says that he has spoken with Leslie Construction the grading contractor.

David Truslow

- Heavy equipment for the road construction tore up the end of 32nd St worse than it was
- Agrees that the drainage work has not been completed, including the drainage ditch to the creek
- He and his neighbors experienced bad flooding as a result of the construction work on the road – problem has been fixed now, and Mr. Rehl repaired the damage, but Mr. Truslow had to stay on him to get it done.
- People speed on Meridian Pkwy and kick up dust

Alandra Reese

- Says that Mr. Rehl said he did not want to compete with GMP, why does he now want to put in the park?
- Asked if there had been other Planning Commission meetings about development on the RCI campus

Brent Styler

- He received notice of the public hearing because he has some adjacent property

Mr. Hawes closed the public hearing and noted that zoning is about land use, not the ownership of the property. He said it sounds like the road is in worse condition than he thought it. He was surprised about the hunting, because he thought that discharging a firearm was prohibited. He suggested that some speed bumps could be put in Meridian Parkway, and that the stormwater work needs to be completed. He asked that Mr. Roberts and the building official take a look at the site and how the issues raised can be resolved.

Regarding the hunting, Mr. Roberts first noted that discharging a firearm for hunting is allowed in the City on parcels 9 acres or larger with permission from the City Manager. He would check

into whether permission had been granted. Second he asked what the Commission's thoughts were on hunting, and they responded that it was not part of the original plan for a trade school etc. that had been presented. They asked if hunting was allowed in the institutional zone, and Mr. Roberts responded that he would have to look into this. There was discussion of whether paying to hunt on a property constituted a hunt club or not, and what an appropriate buffer from residential areas was.

Mr. Henson commented that he was concerned that the access road to the campsites was not wide enough for emergency vehicles to go both ways.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

For minutes of 3/10/2026 meeting:

Corrections: None

Motion to approve: Mr. Petrie 1st, Mrs. Henson 2nd, all voted yes

Abstentions: Mrs. Henson

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Hawes began by commenting that he was disappointed by the coverage in the newspaper of the zoning map amendment denial for the Blue Ridge Abbey. He noted that it did not mention Planning Commission's re-vote. Mr. Roberts said that he was not sure that the re-vote was in order or allowed, but Mr. Hawes stated that under Roberts Rules of Order it was allowed and should have been communicated more clearly to City Council. Mr. Roberts replied that he did not feel it was that important since the same message was conveyed by both votes – that Planning Commission did not support the proposed rezoning for 16 rooms. However, he noted that Daniel Desouza had asked Mr. Roberts about whether Council could reverse its vote, and there is a City code section which allows this, so it may happen at a future meeting.

The Commission asked Mr. Roberts why the project did not come back to Planning Commission after Mr. Desouza eliminated the cottages from the plan. Mr. Roberts responded that since the original Commission motion and vote had been on only the zoning map amendment for 16 rooms, and had excluded the cottages, he did not need to bring it back to the Commission when Mr. Desouza formally removed the cottages from the plan. It was asked if he could have built the cottages anyway after the rezoning, to which Mr. Roberts replied no, the ZMA would only be on the sites where the existing buildings are and was limited to the 16 rooms. Additionally, the ZMA had a proffer that it could only be used for hotel or single family residential, so he could not put a 7-Eleven or something else there.

Mr. Hawes asked if Mr. Roberts knew how much tax revenue was coming in from short term rentals, and Mr. Roberts said he would look into it.

Next Mr. Roberts reported that the new public works director will be Michael Loudermilk, and the new parks & recreation director will be Ryan Groah.

Adjournment

8:00 PM

Approval by Chairman:

Signature

Date



STAFF REPORT

TYPE: Zoning Map Amendment

PROJECT: 100 block S Hazel Ave single family homes

DATE: 5/5/2026

SYNOPSIS

Applicant proposes rezoning, alley abandonment, and lot line adjustment to allow construction of new private street to access five single-family home lots.

SITE INFORMATION

Address/Tax Map:	100 block of South Hazel Ave, portions of TMID 58-2--57-2 (lots 4-7 and 16-18)
Existing Zoning:	R2 Residential
Existing land use:	Vacant/forested
Proposed Zoning:	R3 Residential Limited
Proposed land use:	Single-family dwellings
Size:	46,000 sf (1.06 acres)
Staff Recommendation:	Approve

Overview

This project would create a new five-home cul-de-sac off South Hazel Avenue. The necessary approvals are

- 1) Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) – Planning Commission/City Council - the applicant proposes slightly smaller lot sizes than are permitted by the current R2 zoning.
- 2) ROW Abandonment – Planning Commission/City Council - the alley will be abandoned to allow development of the rear (western) portion of the property, which otherwise does not have street frontage.
- 3) Site plan – Staff - Any development involving a private street requires site plan approval.
- 4) Erosion & Sediment Control – Staff and our 3rd party engineer - This project will require ESC review because of the amount and type of land disturbance.

Analysis

1. Overall Layout and Design
 - a. Proposed new lots will generally conform to existing platted lots except that lots 16 & 17 (fronting on S Hazel Ave) will be merged to accommodate a new private street entrance, and alley will be abandoned and incorporated into the lots. The purpose of the new private street is to provide access and frontage for the lots on the rear of the property.
 - b. House designs have not been finalized but conceptual designs are included. The concept is a one-story, 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, 1200 sq ft home.
 - c. The plat shows setback lines based on the R3 zoning.
2. Vehicular Circulation and Parking
 - a. The new private street will extend from S Hazel Ave and wrap around behind the houses on lots 17 and 18 to serve the lots on the back (west) side of the property. The private

street will be surfaced in gravel and will meet VDOT GS-4 standards for rural ditch & shoulder geometric design. The termination of the road will be either a rounded bulb cul-de-sac or a T to allow turnaround of emergency vehicles, per the standards, and the travel way will be sufficient to allow two-way traffic.

- b. All construction and maintenance of the street will be the responsibility of the developer and subsequently a homeowner's association or other legally-binding, recorded shared maintenance obligation. The City will not provide gravel or maintain the street. The only scenario in which the City would accept maintenance responsibility is if the developer or property owners paid to upgrade it to VDOT standards for public streets (including paving) and deeded it to the City, but this is not anticipated.

3. Water and Sewer

- a. The previous owner (David Hickman) has worked with the City to install sanitary sewer in the ROW of Evergreen Ave to the west of the property. This is in progress. Water will be tapped from S Hazel Ave. The capacity of both is sufficient to serve the planned houses.

4. Storm Water Management

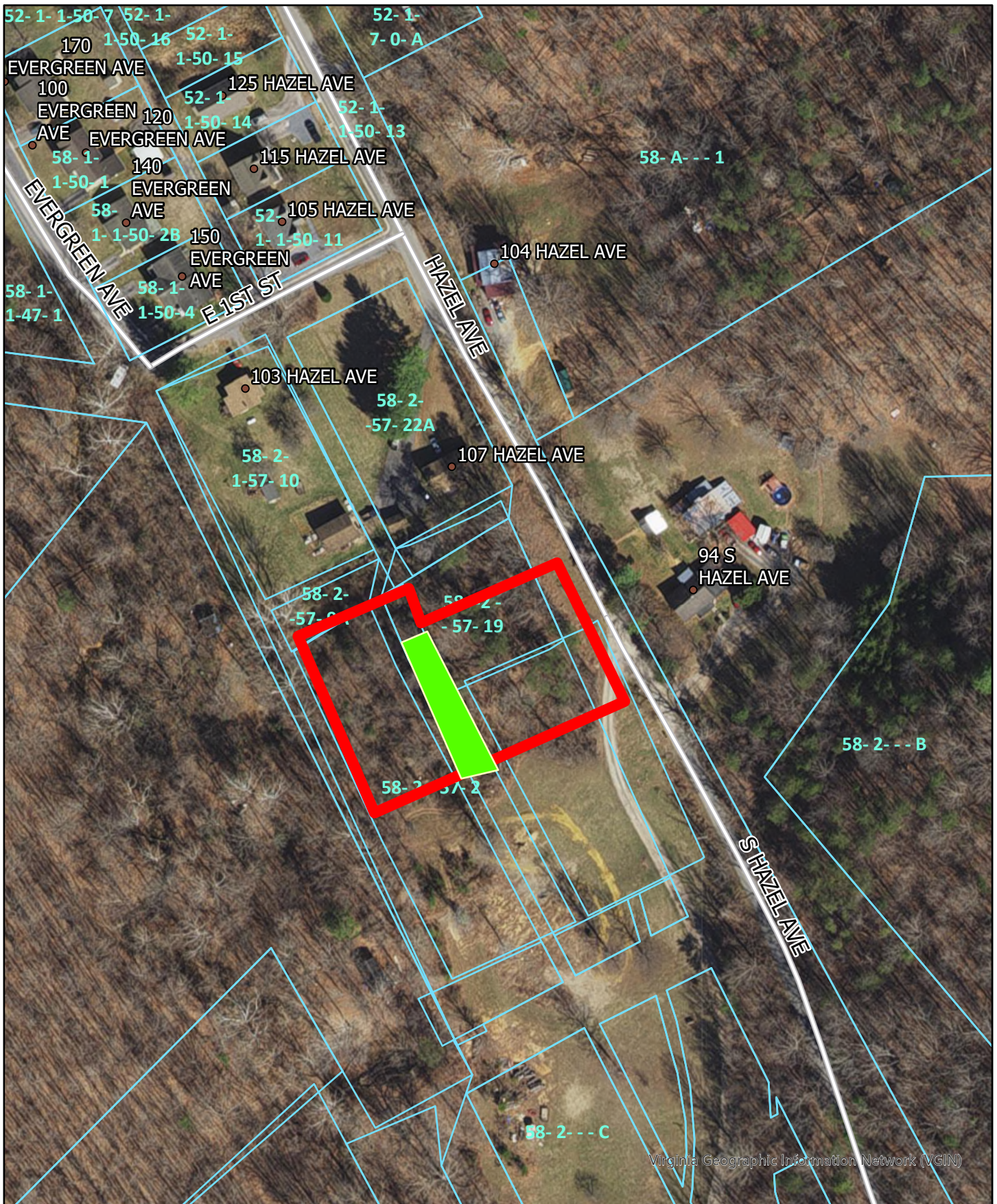
- a. The project will be subject to the Erosion & Sediment Control regulations. The site and ESC design has not been completed yet, but the new private street and the yards of the homes will be required to manage storm flows. This will likely involve a new ditch or pipe to Pedlar Gap Run nearby to the west.

5. Zoning and Comprehensive Plan

- a. This block is currently zoned R2 Residential. The Future Land Use map of the Comprehensive Plan designates this for Medium Density Residential, which is described as 4.65-11.15 dwelling units per acre and as the "residential pattern that characterizes most neighborhoods in Buena Vista. Residences are composed of single-family and two-to four-family homes." This Medium Density Residential designation is used for neighborhoods zoned both R2 and R3 Residential Limited.

While this block and the next block going south of South Hazel Ave are zoned R2, the three blocks going north on Hazel Ave are zoned R3 Residential Limited. Additionally, there is a small portion (four lots) at the corner of Hazel Ave & 1st St that is zoned R4 Medium Density Residential. Based on old files, it appears that this property was rezoned from R3 to R4 in anticipation of apartments or townhouses that were never built. Instead, three single-family homes in the same pattern and spacing of R3 were built. The neighborhoods zoned R2 to the west of the project site are largely disconnected from the site by Pedlar Gap Run, especially the Savernake neighborhood on South Woodland Ave.

- b. R3 zoning is suitable for this site for the following reasons:
 - i. Proximity of existing R3 zoning
 - ii. The typical setbacks and lot sizes within that existing R3 zoning on Hazel Ave north of the site
 - iii. The disconnection from areas zoned R2 that are characterized by larger lot sizes and larger homes (especially Savernake)
 - iv. Consistency with the Medium Density Residential Future Land Use designation

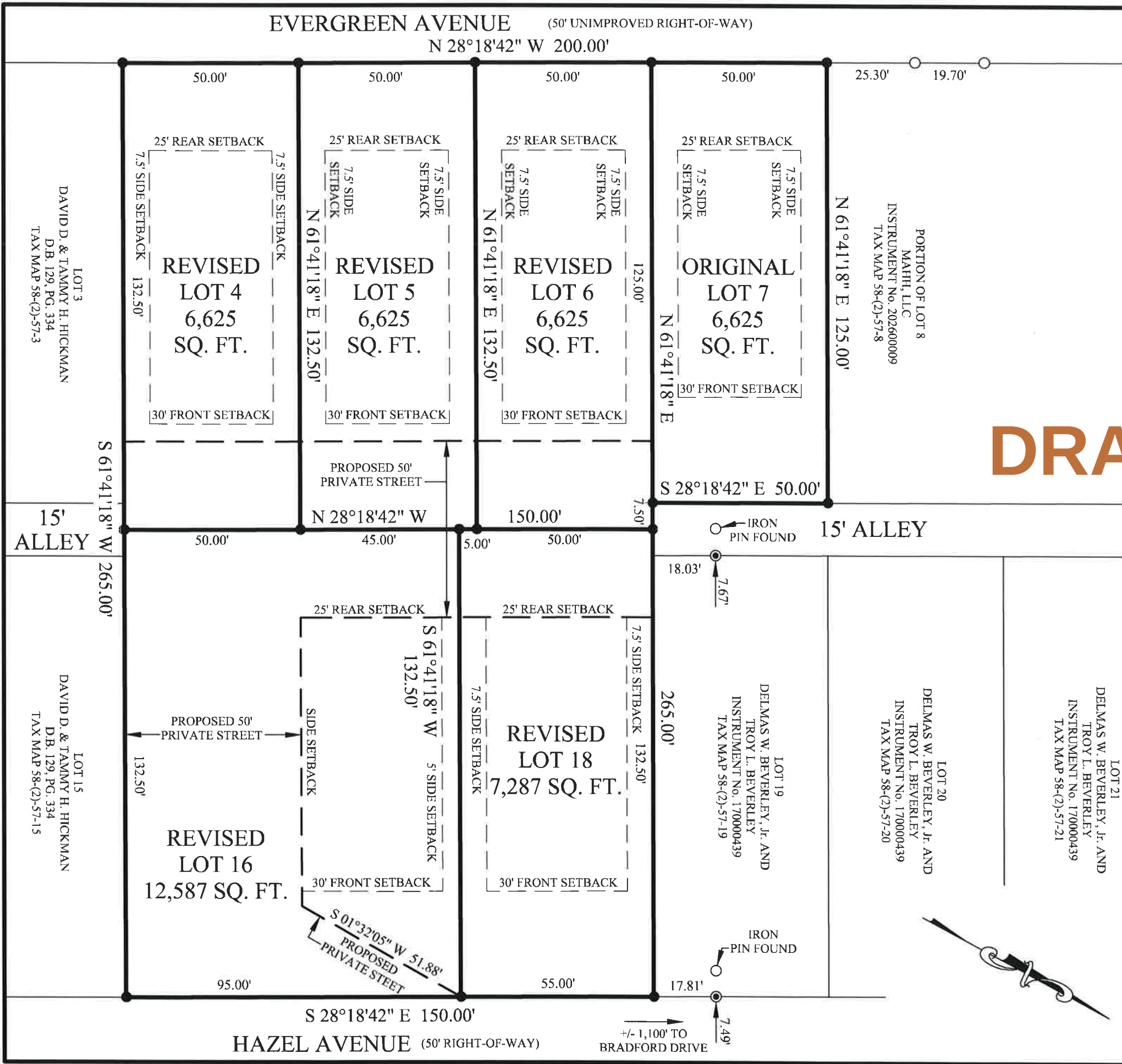


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Miles

100 bl S Hazel Ave ZMA & ROW Abandonment

Note: GIS parcel boundaries are particularly inaccurate in this part of the City.

2026



PROPOSED LOT LAYOUT AND
BUILDING SETBACK LINES

- LEGEND
- IRON PIN SET
 - IRON PIN FOUND
 - ⊙ POINT

SEE NOTES ON SHEET 3

DRAFT

PLAT SHOWING
A REDIVISION OF LOT 4, LOT 5,
LOT 6, LOT 16, LOT 17, LOT 18,
BLOCK 57, SECTION 1, BUENA VISTA
PRESENTLY IN THE NAME OF
MAHH, LLC
CITY OF BUENA VISTA,
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY,
VIRGINIA
SCALE 1" = 30'
APRIL 3, 2026
REVISED: APRIL 17, 2026



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21 Cambridge Drive * P.O. Box 1167
Stuarts Draft, Virginia 24477
Phone (540) 337-0012 Fax (540) 337-1455



STAFF REPORT

TYPE: Conditional Use Permit

PROJECT: Campground at Rockbridge Creative Institute, 801 Meridian Parkway

DATE: 5/8/2026

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.

Site Plan

1. Layout

- 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.
- 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.
- 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

- 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 trench 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

Purpose and Use

The campground is intended to provide short-term on-site accommodations for students and faculty at RCI workshops or events—not accommodations to casual visitors to the area. The sites may sometimes be used by guests renting out the house as an event venue. There is no plan to market the campground to the general public at all, and it serves a different purpose than the GMP campground. Since campsite accommodations will be provided in conjunction with other activities on the site, this activity is not in competition with GMP. Additionally, most of the sites will be raised platforms for tents, some of which will be seasonal canvas tents, a different type of accommodation than GMP offers. Only three of the sites will accommodate RVs.

Construction of the campground, platforms, and bathroom buildings is part of the RCI program. RCI has already enrolled 3 paid interns for this summer, assisted by a state workforce development grant. The campsites will then in turn provide housing options for future students and interns. 2026 courses and workshops will include timber framing, stone wall construction, CAD/Sketchup, and blacksmithing. On-site housing is a logical and cost-effective means to house visiting students and faculty.

ESC/SWM Measures and Meridian Parkway

One of the main topics of discussion at the 4/14/2026 Planning Commission meeting was not the campground use itself, but access to the site and the progress on completing the required stormwater management measures related to the site.

Mr. Rehl will put up 10 MPH speed limit signs on Meridian Parkway in an effort to slow down traffic. He also acknowledged the dust and is also looking into dust-reducing treatments for the road. Because the campground is not generally open to the public but for RCI participants, and there are fewer than ten interns/staff anticipated for this summer program described above, the increase in traffic related to the campground use should be minimal.

I have inspected the site more carefully and reviewed the ESC/SWM plans. Importantly, the City still hold a bond on the ESC/SWM work so if problems arise in the completion the City can ensure it is done. However, Mr. Rehl's contractor is continuing work on the site. He has regraded and seeded & strawed a borrow pit on the site just up Meridian Parkway in the last month, and is moving on to the remaining work at the bottom of the hill on 32nd St. The ditch to Chalk Mine Run has not been constructed yet, as mentioned at the meeting. Currently the water is draining to the woods with some silt fencing to slow it down. Fortunately, there is no apparent erosion damage to the wooded slope down to the creek from the current discharge location; however, this ditch will be constructed in the next few months.

Additionally, per the plans, the developer will repave the very end of 32nd Street where the most damage has occurred to the pavement surface, and will pave the cut for the drain pipe. The plans do not call for any widening of the travel way, nor do they call for repaving any other portions of 32nd St, but staff is talking with Public Works to try to coordinate some improvements.

Screening and Impact on Surrounding Properties

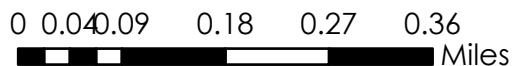
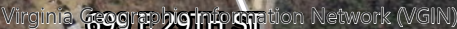
The site will be private and well screen. It is about 700 feet from the nearest residence, Treemont Apartments, and that distance is spanned by a hill and thick woods. Impact on surrounding properties will be very minimal. Staff believe that this use will not be disruptive to other properties, will not create safety or environmental hazards, and will facilitate the use and growth of the RCI.

Hunting

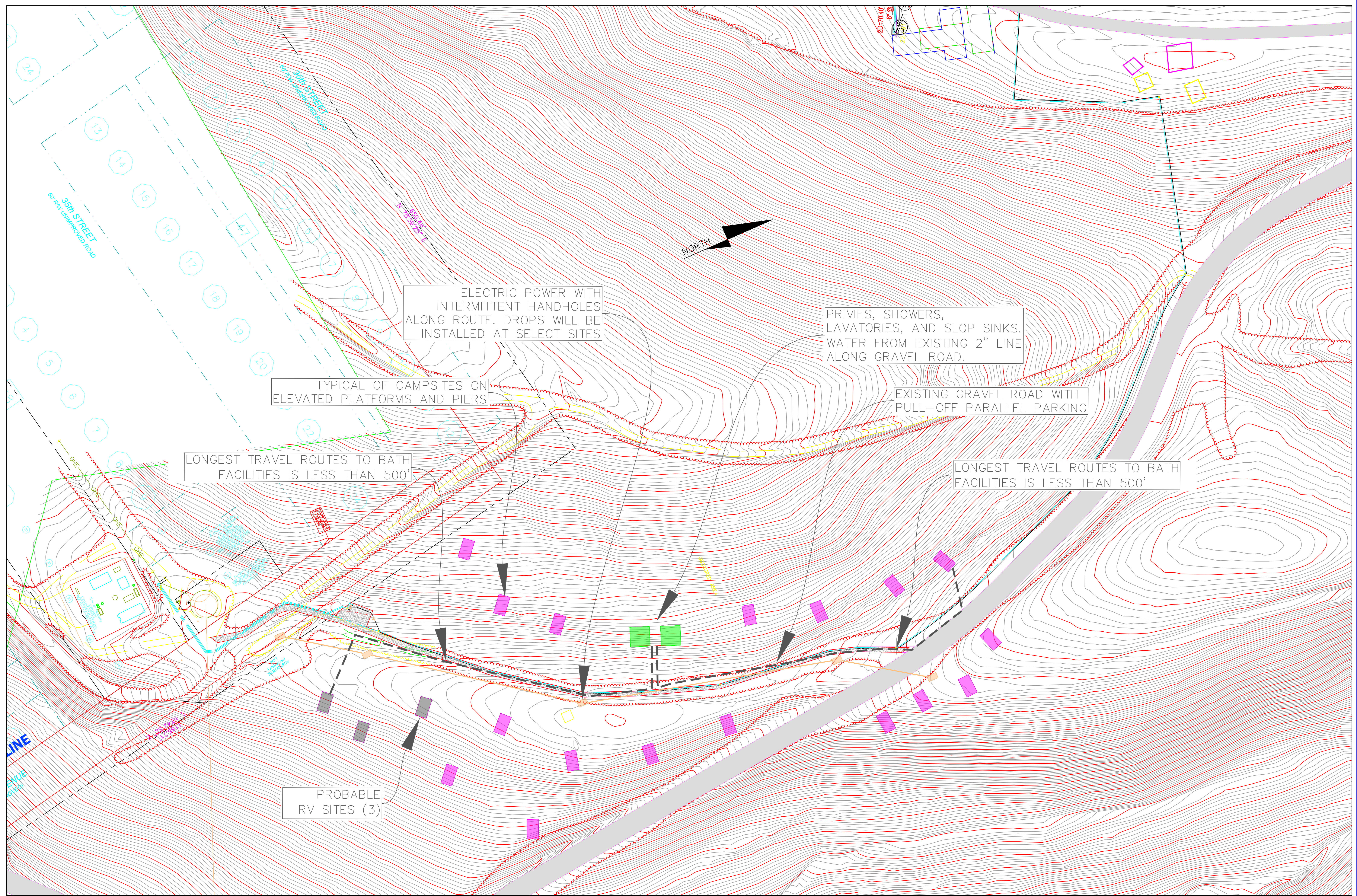
A member of the public brought up hunting on the site, which staff investigated. Mr. Rehl obtained in 2023 from Jason Tyree, City Manager, written permission to hunt on the property, subject to the 250' buffer from residential property. There is online an old, expired posting where Mr. Rehl briefly offered hunting for a fee on the property, but this has not been offered for several years. I reviewed our zoning ordinance, and my interpretation is that hunting itself is a customary accessory use of a property (where it is permitted by other applicable regulations), and thus is allowed on Mr. Rehl's property from a zoning perspective. However, operating a *business* offering hunting outings for a fee would be a different matter, and would require it to be a permitted or conditional use in the correct zone. Per my conversations with Mr. Rehl that type of use is not occurring.

Recommendation

Recognizing the valid concerns of the neighbors about 32nd Street condition, incomplete stormwater management work, and traffic and dust on Meridian Parkway, staff will work with Mr. Rehl to complete this required work in the next few months, and monitor the dust and traffic situation. Staff will also work with Public Works to try to secure additional asphalt paving on 32nd St. Since these separate items will be addressed, staff recommend approval of the campground use as presented. It is a key element to establishing the RCI and facilitating classes on site.



Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN)



THIS SHEET IS FOR CONCEPTUAL CAMPSITES ONLY

