



## **Round Hill Charrette Summary Notes**

**Charette Date: Friday, November 13, 2015**

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**Loudoun County Department of Economic Development**

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# Introduction

## ROLE OF THE DESIGN CABINET

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The Loudoun County Design Cabinet fills an important niche in supporting the planning and development activity occurring in Loudoun, with members volunteering time and energy to projects having a substantial public benefit. The work of the Design Cabinet aims to help reinforce Loudoun's sense of place, identity, and community, as well as encourage the highest quality physical environment through urban, architectural, landscape, and ecological design. To assist the Department of Economic Development, the Cabinet provides a forum for discussion and advice on design related issues, projects, and opportunities from its volunteer group of design professionals.

## CHARRETTE ATTENDEES

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**Design Cabinet members attending:** Al Hansen, Al Gooden, Kevin Rudisueli, Mark Thomas, Martha Semmes, Milt Herd, Rick Conrath, and John Martin.

**Town of Round Hill:** Melissa Hynes

**Loudoun County Staff:** Ricky Barker, Miguel Salinas, Alex Gonski and Amy Mugford

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The 12-acre parcel that is the focus of this charrette is the one vacant parcel of its size where Round Hill zoning allows for commercial use. The Town of Round Hill requested assistance from the Loudoun County Design Cabinet in Fall of 2015 to hold a charrette to assist the Town with envisioning ways the parcel could be developed in line with preferences expressed by the public and that would attract the kind of commercial development best suited to the location.

Round Hill is a town with around 250 houses and a population of around 600 within the town boundary, with another 1,300 homes and a population of around 3,000 more people in the area surrounding the town. The houses in town and many of those near the town boundary live within easy walking distance of the 12 acre parcel, although additional sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure would be needed to make the site accessible by walking. Most of the homes outside of town limits came from a rezoning that occurred in 1990 and there are about 400 more homes in the development pipeline from other residential projects approved in the area.

A 1990 mixed use rezoning permitted 275 townhouses, 825 single-family houses and 13 acres of commercial, of which the parcel that is the subject of the charrette is 12 acres. The other 1 acre is located across the street and is where the oldest building in Round Hill is located, which is known as the Potts Farmhouse or the Stone House. Almost all of the homes permitted by the 1990 rezoning have been built; only the 12-acre parcel zoned commercial remains undeveloped.

The Eckles family owns the 12-acre parcel that is the focus of the charrette. A prospective developer has shown interest in the parcel but has not submitted a formal application. The prospective developer wants to rezone the parcel to "mixed use" and has shown the Town a concept plan where there would be 84 townhomes on 8 acres and 30,000 to 45,000 square feet of commercial on 4 acres, consisting of retail and a gas station.

This 12-acre parcel is the only large vacant piece of land in Round Hill, and it's located in a place where development on it could act as a gateway into town. This is the best and probably only opportunity for the Town to plan a distinctive destination for people to shop, work, eat, and play within the Town of Round Hill. The public is concerned about the kind of development that goes on this land. The Town held a public input meeting in September 2015 with 70 people in attendance, and an additional 40 people attended the October 2015 public input meeting. At both meetings, people expressed concerns about strip shopping centers on the parcel.

The Town's current Zoning Ordinance, 1990 Proffers, 2005 Streetscape Plan and 2008 Comprehensive Plan only allow for commercial activity and no residential buildings. In order to put any residential use on the parcel, the Town would have to amend the zoning, proffers, and comprehensive plan. Town officials expressed concern that any amendments to the zoning that allow some residential use on the site would open the door to additional residential land uses coming at the expense of the future commercial potential of the site and the Town's general vision. The public input meetings and the public surveys also showed that Round Hill residents are willing to wait a long time for the site to develop, and when it does, they want the buildings, uses and amenities to be true to a vision in line with what was communicated at the public meetings.

Demand from residents in Round Hill and the surrounding area may be too small to support chain stores. However,

approximately 25,000 vehicles travel along Route 7 on a typical day. Thousands of people come to or pass through Round Hill and the surrounding area each weekend to visit farms, vineyards, the Appalachian Trail, or Harpers Ferry. The charrette proceeded along the line of thinking that development on the site be more of a “destination to visit” for the Town of Round Hill than standard chain stores and services. The idea of including some kind of farmer’s market on the site was put forward at the public input meetings.

Another aspect of the vision would be something that fits with the idea of “Gateway to the Blue Ridge,” where people would stop for dinner on their way to or from the mountains, and also to stop by a shop with outdoor rec supplies and related services. The public was in widespread agreement with that vision, and that being a “healthy mountain town” would be a good way to brand the community. The Town of Round Hill will be applying to be recognized as an Appalachian Trail Community next year.

## DESIGN CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall recommendation for the site that came out of the Design Cabinet charrette is for the site to adopt a “village design” approach that grows organically, one distinct building at a time. The first floor of most buildings should be restaurant or retail use, while upper floor use is left undefined and would likely be office, two story retail, or used for other activities attracted to the site that fit with the “Gateway to the Blue Ridge” concept. Located at the edge of town and within walking distance of most residents, the site needs to contain something that is a strong draw for the community, which is a foundational element for each of the three plans. All plans also call for some kind of function overlooking a pond at the southwest corner of the site, where elevation is lowest and a pond or other stormwater management feature would likely be needed.





## Group One: The Eckles Farmstead Plan

Drawing by Group One:



The “Eckles Farmstead” Plan developed by Group One proposes a “farmette village” with a farmer’s market pavilion as a key destination attracting people to the site. That pavilion is next to a community garden and rec center. The architecture of the farmer’s market pavilion and the rec center was conceived as having the form of two large barns with potentially some shared use of space.

The Farmstead Plan also drew on a historical tie between the Eckles and Heurich families. The Heurich family was known for the Heurich Brewing Company, and the plan proposes a brewpub for the site as another use that will draw in the community. The plan proposes the brewpub have a deck overlooking a pond at the southwest corner of the site and making use of the topography to create an amphitheater for outdoor seating. This would be a working brewery, and there would be hops grown next to it and stainless steel vats exposed where people could see and celebrate the process of brewing beer.

Placement of the buildings and streets in this plan conforms to curves in the topography, which is consistent with what one would expect for buildings on a farm or farm village. The phasing of development in the plan goes out concentrically from the farmer’s market pavilion, which is near the center. The plan seeks to cultivate a sense of community and taking care of all generations; it contains a daycare center and a senior center at the on top of the hill that would have porches with rocking chairs and an architectural form like a Victorian house. Overall, the plan includes about 100,000 square feet of development.



## Group Two: Terraced Plan with Civic Pavilion and Sports Center

Drawing by Group Two:



Group Two's concept for a central activity space is a two story civic pavilion, which could potentially provide space for activities like indoor soccer or a skating rink. The civic pavilion is proposed for the southern portion of the site and includes a terrace overlooking a pond.

The street configuration of this plan and its context with existing streets dictates that cars exit from the northwest corner or into the neighborhood to the north, which influences how people to move through the site. Group Two's plan proposes a series of terraces starting with the two story civic pavilion, with five buildings surrounding three terraced parking lots. The placement of several smaller buildings in the center of the plan and larger buildings closer to the edges of the parcel makes that central area friendly to pedestrians. Overall, the plan calls for about 80,000 square feet of development.



## Group Three: Market Village with Central Square

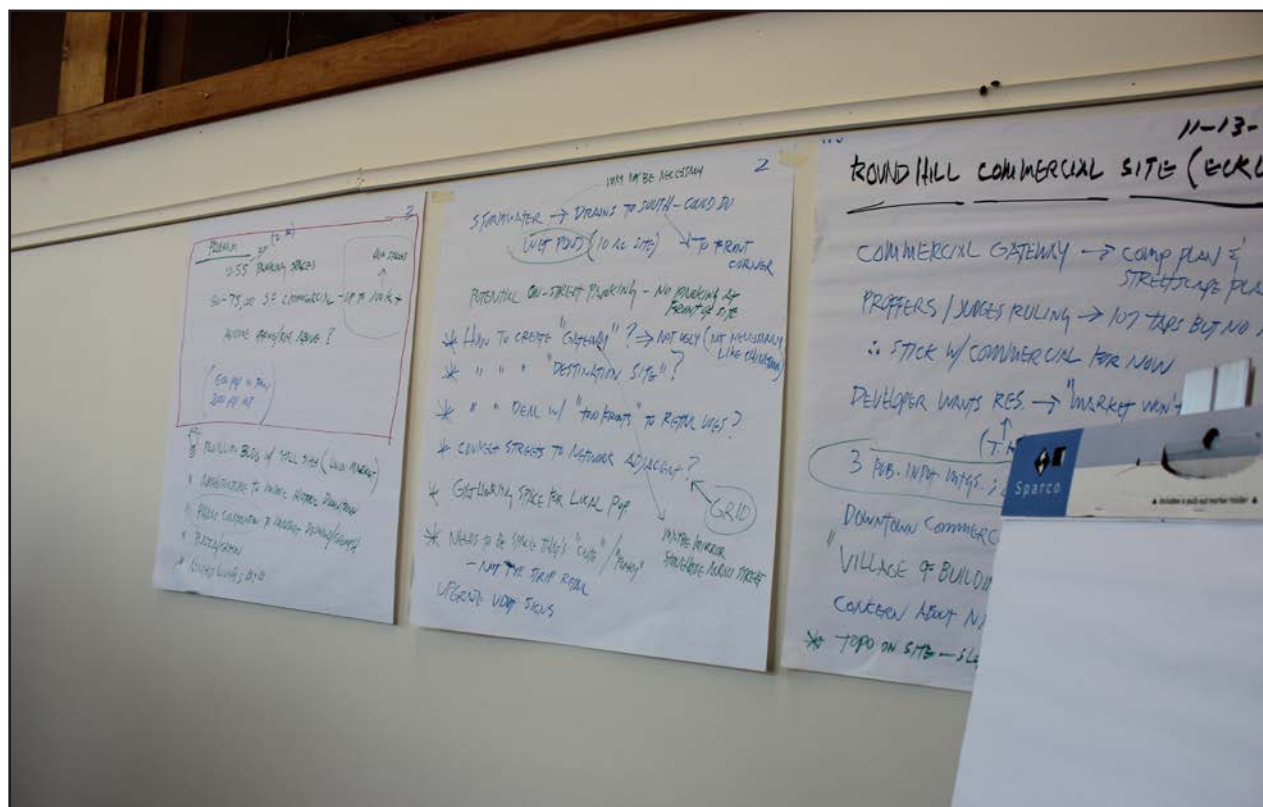
Drawing by Group Three:



Like Group One, the plan by Group Three also calls for a farmer's market or general public market and a brewery overlooking a pond as main draws, along with a central amphitheater that could be used for all kinds of community activities. This plan places its central gathering space far enough in from the road that people feel like they are in village, which is a much different sense of space than one perceives when pulling into a shopping center oriented to the road. This village feel adds to sense of place and supports the intention of the site being a destination for the local community and visitors coming from farther away.

While the layout of the plan by Group One is driven more by the topography of the hill on the site, this plan is more geometrical and has some steeper slopes than the plans by Group One and Group Two. Group Three was thinking about walkable streets and a central square as key to their village concept and are what drives the spatial form of their plan, and the slopes are not excessively steep. The plan has about 100,000 square feet of retail and restaurant use, with about 400 parking spaces (350 in surface lots and 50 on street).

### NOTES TAKEN AT THE CHARRETTE:





# ROUND HILL COMMERCIAL SITE (ECKLES) 11-13-15

COMMERCIAL GATEWAY → comp plan & STREETSCAPE PLAN

PROFFERS / JUDGES RULING → 107 TRPS BUT NO RES.

∴ STICK W/ COMMERCIAL FOR NOW

DEVELOPER WANTS RES. → "MARKET WON'T SUPPORT COMM"  
↑  
(T.H.)

3 PUB. INPUT INTGS. ; 2 SURVEYS → "NO BIG BOX; NO STRIP MALL"

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL IS NON-CONFORMING

"VILLAGE OF BUILDINGS" → FOCUS ON BUILDING FORMS

CONCERN ABOUT NATIONAL CHAIN STORES

TOPO ON SITE — SLOPE

W/MY NOT BE NECESSARY

2

STORMWATER → DRAINS TO SOUTH - COULD DO

WET POND (10 AC SITE) → TO FRONT CORNER

POTENTIAL ON-STREET PARKING - NO PARKING AT FRONT OF SITE

\* HOW TO CREATE "GATEWAY"? ⇒ NOT UGLY (NOT NECESSARILY LIKE CHINA TOWN)

\* " " " " DESTINATION SITE? "

\* " " DEAL W/ "TWO FRONTS" TO RETAIL USES?

\* CONNECT STREETS TO NETWORK ADJACENT?

\* GATHERING SPACE FOR LOCAL POP

\* NEEDS TO BE SPACE THAT'S "CUTE" / "FUNKY"  
- NOT TYP. STRIP RETAIL

UPGRADE VIDEO SIGNS

GRID

MAYBE MIRROR  
STATIONHOUSE ACROSS STREET

PROGRAM

255 - 300 (2.4) PARKING SPACES

60-75,000 S.F. COMMERCIAL - UP TO 100K +

ASSUME OFFICE/RES. ABOVE?

400 SPACES



(600 pop in pm  
3,000 pop out)



PERILLION BLDG W/ STALL SITES (UNION MARKET)

11 ARCHITECTURE TO MIMIC HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

11 PHASE CONSTRUCTION TO MARKET DEMAND/GROWTH

11 PLAZA/GREEN

11 ASSISTED LIVING; B, E, B











GROUP THREE DRAWING:





ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE EVENT:





