



Ferrum Property Master Plan

Franklin County's Vision for the Ferrum Property

Executive Summary

In 2022, Franklin County received funding from Housing Virginia to conduct a Master Planning process for two County-owned properties (totaling over 80 acres) in the Ferrum Village, home to Ferrum College. This recent process was part of a larger effort dating back to the 1990s when the County first attempted to develop this land. Years ago, the County had constructed West Franklin Drive, hoping to establish an industrial park, but to no avail. In 2019, the County created a Ferrum Village Area Plan, which incorporated goals for the community and residential development concepts for the 80+ acres. A year later, the County hired consultants to create a Housing Needs Assessment for the Ferrum Area - documenting housing needs and what types of new development would be feasible.

For the Master Planning process, there are two separate but related documents. The following represents the full report, including records on the planning process, site assessments, research, public and stakeholder engagement, and initial development concepts. The second deliverable is the Master Plan, which targets potential development partners and sets a clear vision for the County's 80+ acres. The latter is the primary deliverable, whereas the following is a technical reference.

With funding from Housing Virginia, Franklin County secured consultants through the West Piedmont Planning District Commission's on-call consultant program. EPR, P.C. was the planning firm that assembled these reports with local staff. Dozens of local stakeholders made this process possible with their time and coordination.



Franklin County



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Ferrum Property Master Plan

This document serves as a Master Property for Franklin County's two properties that total 84.17 acres, located on the west side of the Ferrum Village. In 2022, Franklin County partnered with Housing Virginia, who funded this effort to create a vision for developing these properties and addressing Franklin County's documented housing needs. The following offers a general vision, including three alternatives to share with potential developers of the property. For additional information on the Master Plan process, refer to the Site Assessment and Process Documentation report, in the appendix.

The Ferrum Property

This Master Plan applies to 84.17 acres of County-owned land, located directly west of Ferrum College. This plan involves two parcels: a 1.5-acre lot (parcel number 0800101900) along West Franklin Street and a larger 82.67-acre property (parcel number 0800006500).

Background

There were three precursor efforts to the Master Plan process that should be reference materials for potential developers of the property. In 2019, Franklin County secured a grant to hire consultants to develop the Ferrum Village Area Plan, which set a vision for Ferrum and laid the groundwork for envisioning these two parcels. In 2020, Bowen National Research completed a Housing Needs Assessment for Ferrum. This report presented data on the housing market and what would be feasible for new home construction. The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission also conducted a Regional Housing Market Study, but for Ferrum it mostly summarized the 2020 Housing Assessment. In 2023, the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) began working through another regional housing study that may update regional figures and provide more recent figures in the future.

The Plan Framework

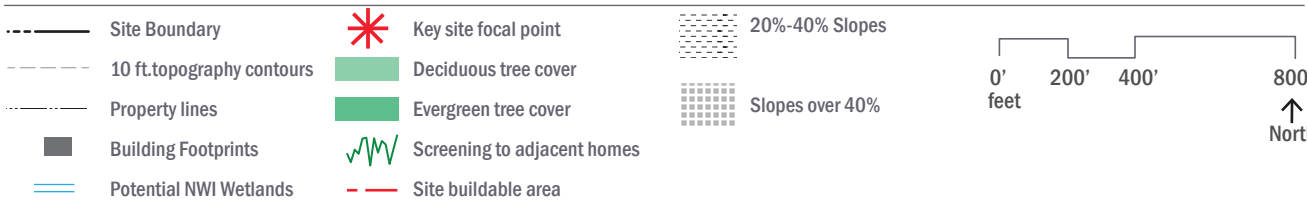
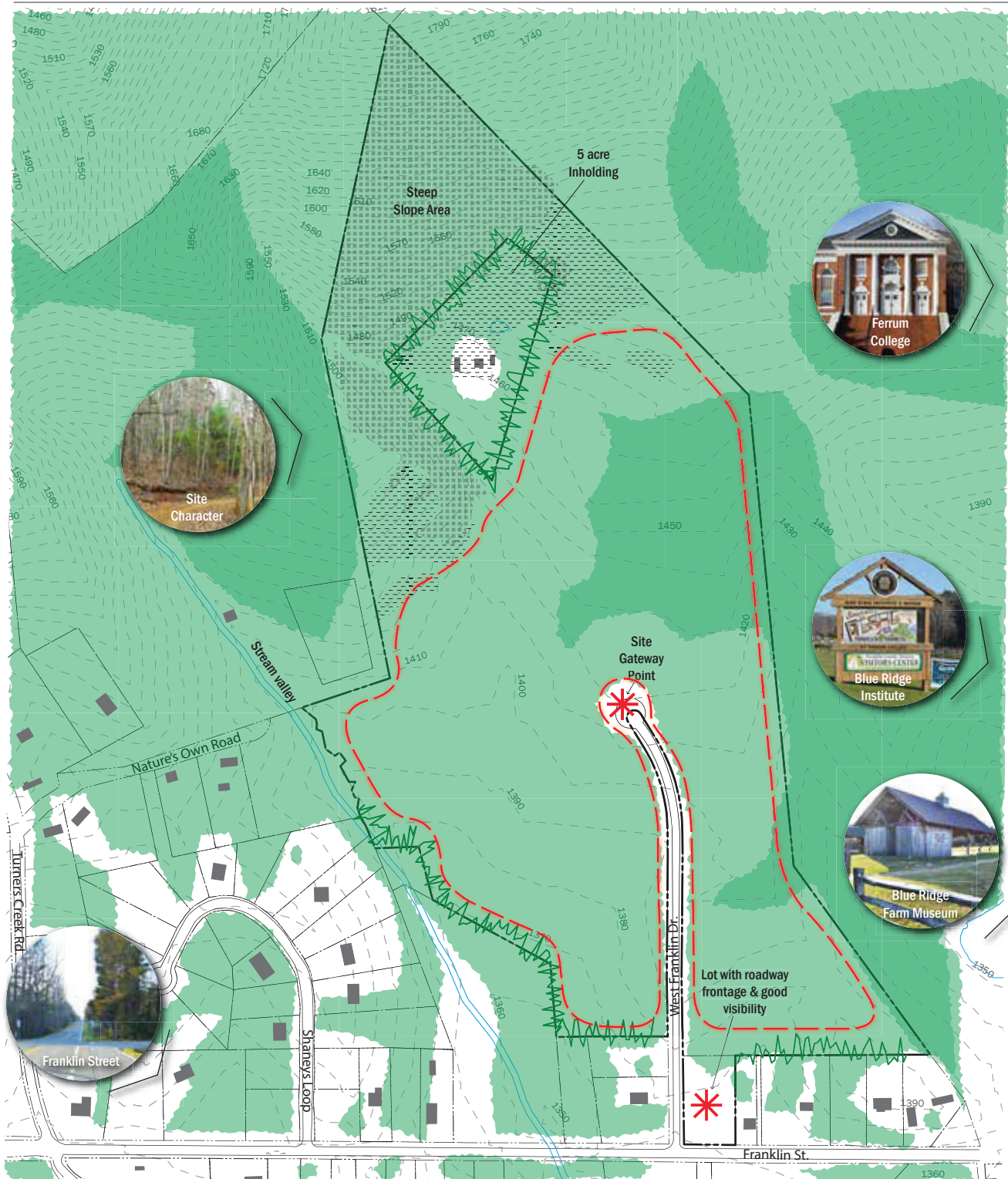
The Master Planning effort consisted of various inputs that produced this final vision and its development alternatives. Consultants conducted a property analysis, considering topography, land cover, available utilities, transportation needs, and other information that determined site development potential. The process also involved a robust public and stakeholder engagement effort that included interviews and community engagement events. Previous reports and studies, such as the Housing Needs Assessment and Ferrum Village Area Plan, also shaped the Master Plan vision. Refer to the Site Assessment and Process Documentation (appendix) report for additional material on these efforts.

Ferrum Property Site Assessment

Franklin County and their consultants worked together to develop a Property Site Assessment that served as a framework for this Master Plan. It established a buildable area, key site focal points for new development, screening, and other elements of the Master Plan. This analysis determined that approximately 60 acres would be buildable, whereas 20 acres should remain wooded due to topographical conditions. Refer to Figure 1.

Figure 1: Next Page - The Ferrum Property Site Analysis depicted buildable area and major site features.

Ferrum Property Site Analysis



Land Bays

With the Framework in place, the Master Plan envisioned six land bays for the site that created an opportunity for logical phasing and delineations between land uses. Franklin County imagines a long-term vision for developing the Master Plan area and these six sub-areas. The main components of this plan are in Figure 2.

The six proposed land bays can incorporate different phases and land use concepts, depicted under three development alternatives. Generally, the bays are larger on the site's northern end. Acreages range from about one acre (for the lot facing Franklin Street) to 16 acres. Ideally, initial development phases would begin with the southern bays and advance incrementally north. Actual timing may differ, as the Master Plan presents a desired vision and guidelines to help encourage and shape future development.

Trails:

The Master Plan envisions trails throughout the site, especially through the 20-acre natural area and along buffered corridors around the land bays. These would connect to Ferrum College's nature trails, on the eastern border of the study area. The land bay map also depicts a potential trail head and parking area for hikers.

Secondary Emergency Access:

Especially with larger development alternatives, the Master Plan envisions secondary emergency access to the site. This connection would consist of a gravel drive with removable bollards, to prevent public traffic. The Master Plan depicts three options for establishing one emergency access.

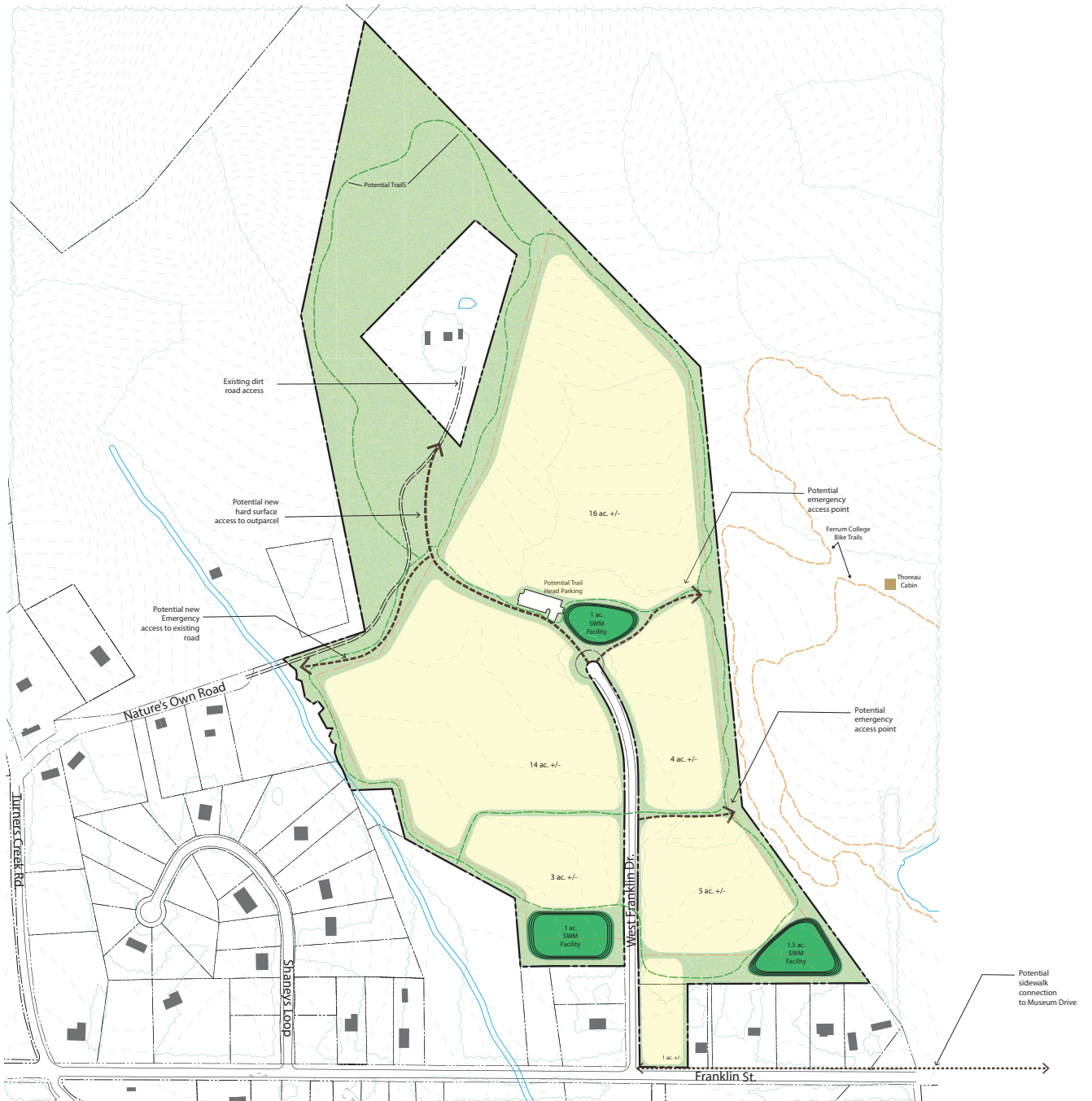
- **Western Connection:** There could be a connection to the gravel drive at the end of Nature's Own Road.
- **Eastern Connections:** There could be a connection to the Ferrum Property, with either a northern or southern alignment between land bays. The gravel emergency drive could function as a trail facility, as it would not carry vehicular traffic.

Stormwater Management Facilities:

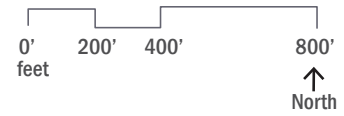
This base map depicts three stormwater management areas that would support different development phases. The actual size and configuration of these features would depend on stormwater requirements and other details. However, these areas can serve as open space.

Figure 2: The Ferrum Property Concept Alternatives depict the proposed land bays and site layout.

Ferrum Property Concept Alternatives



- Site Boundary
- 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands



The Development Alternatives

The Master Plan envisions making these two Ferrum Parcels into productive uses that will function as a cohesive community, **focused on generating workforce housing**. The Master Plan is flexible, offering various alternatives for site development. Those options, depicted in the following examples, aim to guide potential developers on desired approaches. The following offers different recommended approaches to improving the site and building a new community in Ferrum.

Alternative A

The first development alternative is the lowest density option, yielding between 141 to 169 dwelling units across five residential land bays. In this scenario, there would be higher density housing on the southern and eastern portions of the site. This distribution would provide a transition from Franklin Street and Ferrum College to lower densities and natural areas to the north. The larger lot home sites would likely involve the highest home values and sale prices. Residential products would include:

- Townhomes
- Small Lot Single Family
- Medium Lot Single Family
- Large Lot Single Family

The layout also includes approximately one acre of civic or commercial space, with road-frontage on Franklin Street. For this area, Franklin County envisions a smaller commercial use or an emergency response building. A robust engagement process showed a general consensus on the community's desires for this front lot. Hence, all alternatives depict this southern area the same way.

Alternative B

Alternative B follows the same general concept, with higher densities in the southern and eastern land bays and transitions to natural areas to the north. However, this option consists of higher overall densities, ranging from 237 to 294 dwelling units. The multifamily land bays may include two to three story walk ups or assisted living options for seniors. Acceptable land uses would include:

- Multifamily
- Townhomes
- Small Lot Single Family
- Medium Lot Single Family

As with Alternative A, this scenario depicts one acre for commercial or civic uses.

Alternative C

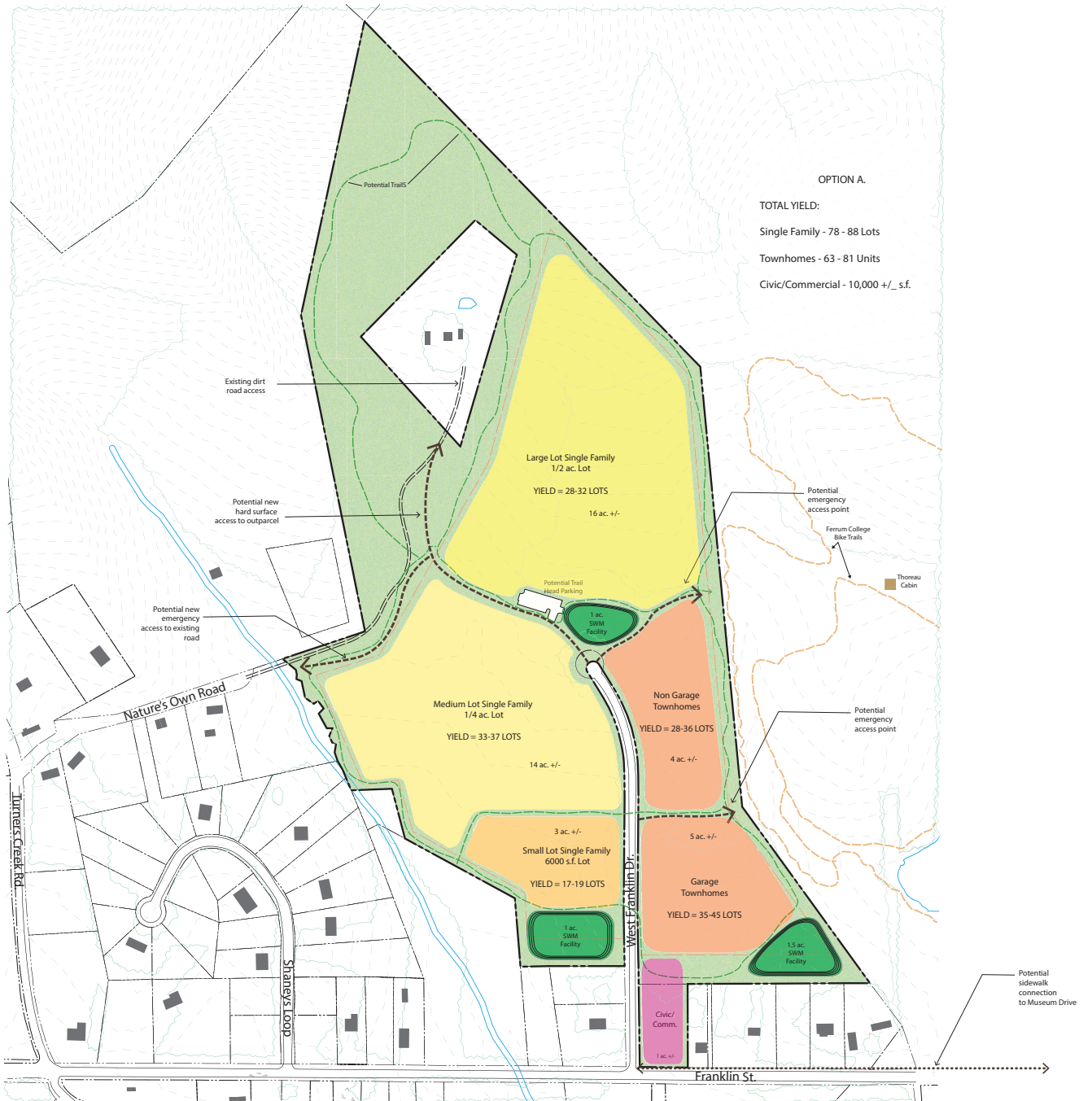
The third approved approach would be the most intensive, allowing for between 390 and 453 dwelling units. This alternative introduces a different philosophy, by scaling density up from south to north. This option would buffer higher density uses from the rest of the Ferrum Village with multifamily tucked behind the land bays that are visible from the public right-of-way. Residential products would include:

- Multifamily
- Townhomes
- Small Lot Single Family

As with the other alternatives, the southernmost land bay would serve commercial or civic uses. For additional details on the designated land uses and design guidelines, refer to the following sections.

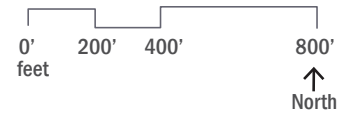
Figures 3, 4, and 5: Development Alternatives for the Ferrum Property.

Development Alternative A

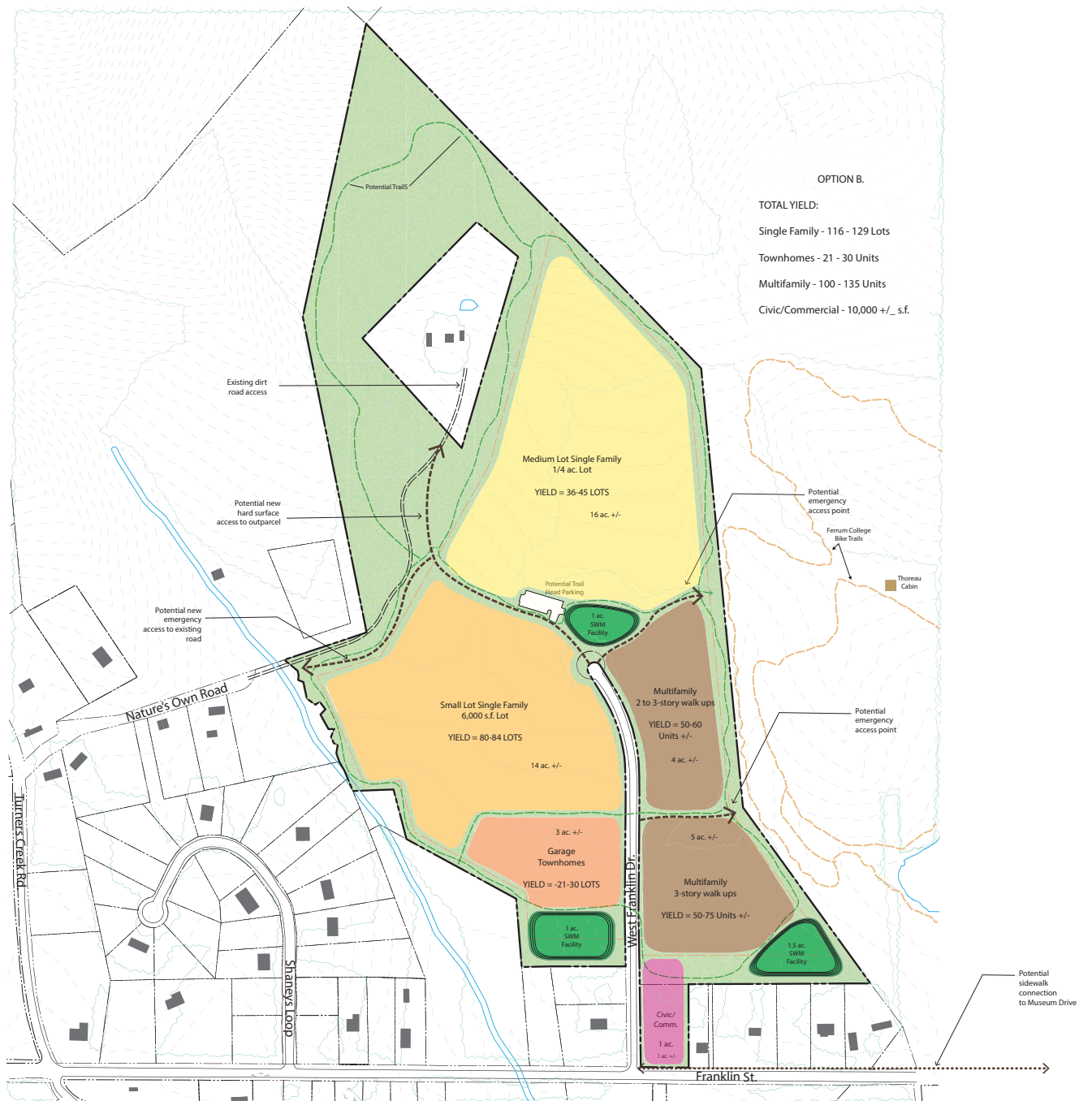


OPTION A.
TOTAL YIELD:
 Single Family - 78 - 88 Lots
 Townhomes - 63 - 81 Units
 Civic/Commercial - 10,000 +/-_s.f.

- Site Boundary
- 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands



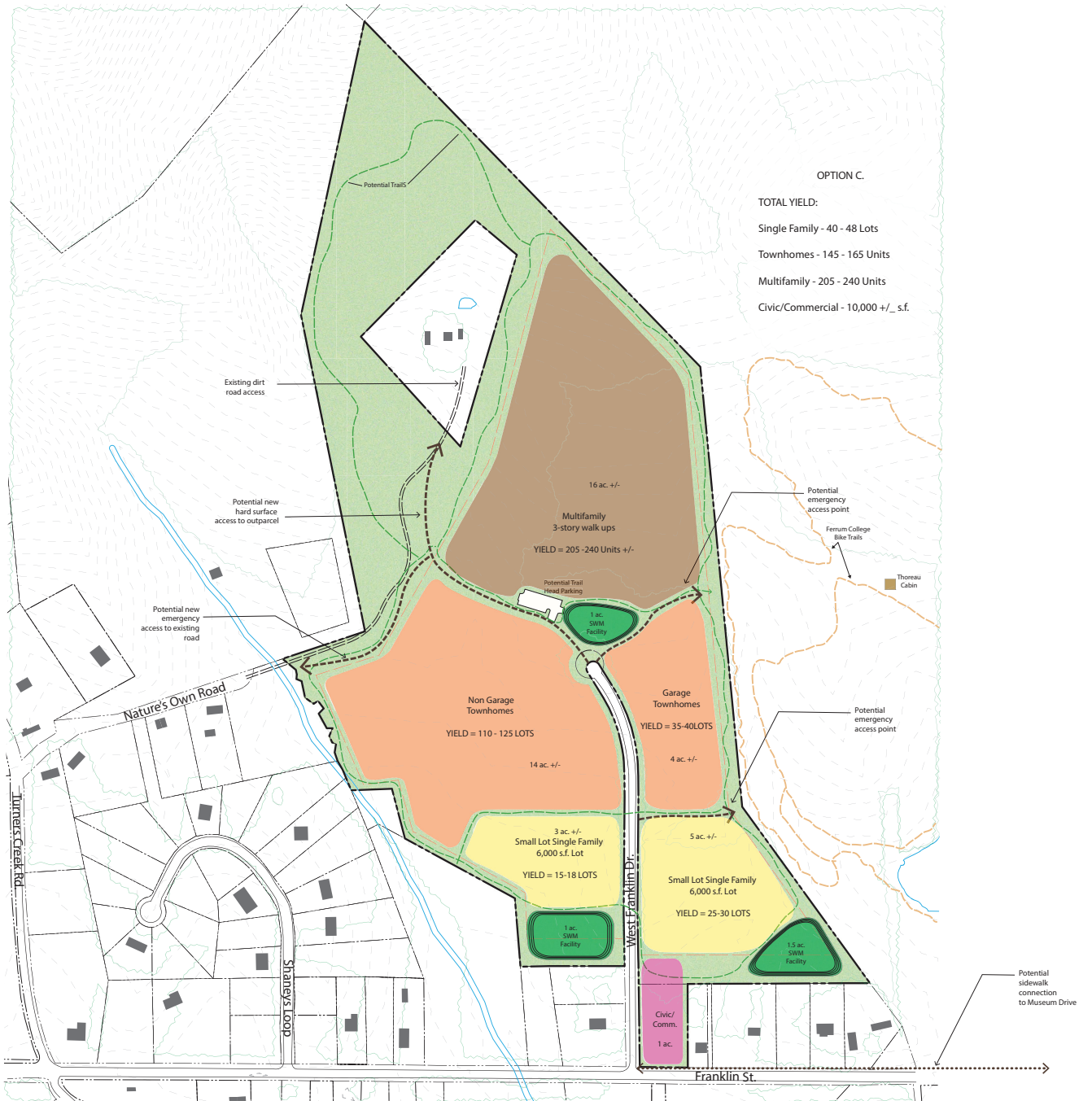
Development Alternative B



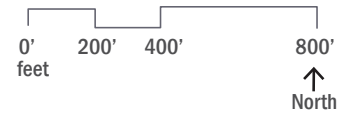
- Site Boundary
- - - 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands



Development Alternative C



- Site Boundary
- - - 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands



Land Use Details

The Ferrum Parcel Master Plan references six residential land uses, from large lot single family homes to multifamily. The following section details those designated land uses and provides examples, including local products.

Larger Lot Single Family

This lowest-density use consists of a single detached dwelling on a half-acre lot. These would be the largest homes on site, with typical sizes being 2,500 square feet. Building heights can vary, from one to three stories. Lots would allow for wider setbacks, greater than 35 feet from the front property line. The Master Plan envisions these as owner-occupied homes.

While sidewalks are desirable, they are not typically provided for this lot size and subdivision streets would likely include a rural cross section with ditches. There should be ample vegetated buffers around the land bay's perimeter to help with screening.

Medium Lot Single Family

This residential designation encourages single family detached homes on quarter acre lots. There would be one dwelling unit per lot, with an average of two to four dwellings per acre. Average home sizes are typically smaller than the Large Lot designation but may average 2,000 square feet. Building setbacks should be approximately 25 feet. These units would ideally offer owner-occupied homes with attached garages. Streets in these land bays should have sidewalks.

Small Lot Single Family

This designation consists of the smallest single family lots and homes sizes. Lot sizes should average between 5,000 to 8,000 square feet, yielding a gross density of four to six dwelling units per acre. Housing products would include patio homes and may cater to senior living needs. These products may include rentals and single family attached homes. The street layout should include sidewalks and alleys with rear-loaded garages if topography allows.

Garage Townhomes

There are two townhome designations, which have slight distinctions. The townhomes with garages are generally larger, averaging between 1,200 to 2,000 square feet. Typical gross density would be between seven to nine units per acre and may include single family attached products. Street layout should include sidewalks, a roughly grid pattern, and alleys with rear-loaded garages if topography allows.

Non-Garage Townhomes

Townhomes without garages would allow for smaller housing units, averaging between 1,000 to 1,800 square feet. These land bays would include surface parking lots to serve the homes. This use may also accommodate more intensive options for senior housing or assisted living. Streets would include sidewalks with limited building setbacks.

Multifamily

This final land use designation is the most intensive, averaging between 20 to 30 dwelling units per acre. Building heights may vary between three to five stories. However, lower structures may be more appropriate for the village context. These land bays could include more intensive assisting living operations or a nursing facility for elderly housing. Surface parking would serve the units. Screening would be an essential element to shield the views of parking areas and development from

surrounding rights-of-way and properties. The screening would include vegetation and help to preserve the area’s rural character.

Civic/Commercial

For all three development alternatives, there is a one-acre land bay dedicated to commercial or civic use. Given the allowable space, this area would accommodate either one or the other. Commercial spaces could be food-related, such as a market. Civic uses would retain County ownership potentially for a police or rescue facility.

Affordability

For the residential uses, Franklin County remains focused on meeting the housing needs of County’s residents. The 2020 Housing Study (Housing Needs Assessment for Ferrum) details housing types and price ranges. During the Master Planning process, stakeholders emphasized that the Ferrum Property should address workforce housing and the “missing middle” income ranges. The 2020 Housing Study also recommends that the site accommodates various household incomes and targets what is affordable for County residents. Refer to **Appendix A** for a summary of that report.

Figure 6: The Ferrum Property Concept Alternatives is a quick reference for the housing types depicted in the three alternatives. This graphic depicts the details described under the “Land Use Details” section.

Ferrum Property Concept Alternatives

<p>Large Lot Single Family</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>1/2 - 1 ac. 1-2 units/ac. 2,500 s.f. + 1-3 stories Wide setbacks, no sidewalks, ample screening</p>	
<p>Medium Lot Single Family</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>8,000 - 12,000 s.f. 2-4 units/ac. 2,000 - 2,500 s.f. 1-3 stories Moderate setbacks, sidewalks, attached garages</p>	
<p>Small Lot Single Family</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>5,000 - 8,000 s.f. 4-6 units/ac. 1,500 - 2,000 s.f. 1-2 stories Small setbacks, sidewalks, alley-loaded garages</p>	
<p>Garage Townhomes</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>1,200 - 2,000 s.f. 7-9 units/ac. 1,000 - 1,800 s.f. 2-3 stories Alley loaded driveways - 1 car garages</p>	
<p>Non Garage Townhomes</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>1,000 - 1,800 s.f. 6-8 units/ac. 1,000 - 1,500 s.f. 1-3 stories Parking lots in front of units</p>	
<p>Multifamily</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>Varies 20-30 units/ac. 700-1,100 s.f. + 3-5 stories Served by parking courts - may be elderly housing</p>	

Design Guidelines

Development of the Ferrum Parcel should build on the principles called for in the Ferrum Village Plan of 2019. That plan envisioned a development that would create a stronger sense of place, support economic development, and enhance community well-being. The following Development Guidelines are intended to ensure that any new development on the Parcel meets these broad goals of the community by respecting the local character and providing well designed and quality development, including buffers, preservation of natural resources, trails, and community amenities.

Neighborhood Layout and Character

There should be consistency between land bays, creating a cohesive community. While there may be differing layouts and characteristics, developers should generally apply these standards.

Street and Block Layout

New development should consist of blocks of public and/or private streets (including sidewalks). Block faces should have a length generally not exceeding 660 feet. These concepts especially apply to higher density land bays that have a denser street network.



Open Space – Natural Areas

Open space should be woven throughout new development. Existing natural features, such as tree stands and riparian buffers, should be preserved as much as possible. Each land bay should integrate natural features into new development as much as possible.



Open Space – Recreation

Open space for passive and active recreation amenities should be sited as close to residences as possible. Land bays should include common spaces with features like clubhouses, recreational courts or fields, playground equipment, or gathering spaces.

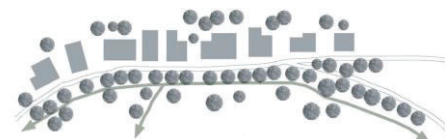


Streets and Trails

Within the land bays, street layout will be a prominent feature for any development. There should be consistency and cohesion between phases. However, the Large Lot Single Family area would consist of a more rural cross section. All land bays should include trail connections to the overall site, adjacent nature area, and Ferrum College's natural paths.

Street Layouts

Street layouts should respond to local conditions such as topography, watercourses and other natural features. Street layouts should preserve the natural drainage features on the landscape as much as possible. Plan for drainage connections to on-site stormwater management facilities.



Off-Road Trails

Open space and buffer areas should accommodate off-road trails for bicyclists and pedestrians as shown on the Master Plan. These paths should be a minimum of 8' wide with mulch or mowed surfaces and be regularly maintained



Emergency Access

Anticipate future connections to adjacent parcels to provide for future opportunities and include adequate emergency vehicle access. Emergency access would involve a gravel road with bollard, to prevent regular traffic. The road could function as a recreational trail, given that normal traffic is prohibited by the bollard.

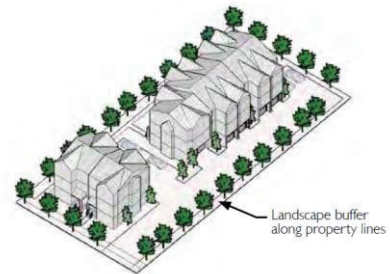


Landscaping, Screening and Buffering

Each land bay should also incorporate landscaping and buffers, where feasible. These strategies should serve aesthetic and environmental purposes. When possible, the developer should preserve existing vegetation and use native plant species.

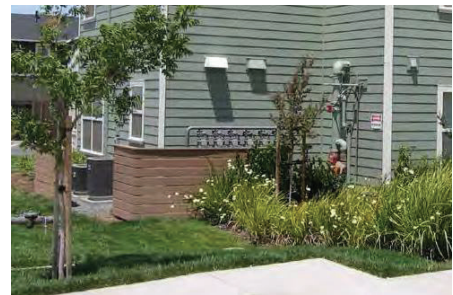
Vegetative Buffers

Landscaped buffers and/or preserved existing tree buffers should be provided along all property lines which abut an existing residential use. These buffers should be located as shown on the Master Plan with a minimum width of 100 feet adjacent to existing residential uses and 30 feet from all other property boundaries.



Screening

Utilities such as electrical, telephone, cable, and other utilities should be placed underground. Utility locations should not interfere with the viability of tree maturity or with stormwater treatment devices. Minimize visibility of above-ground transformers, meters, and other utilities through screening.



Trees

Provide trees and landscape for front and rear yards, adjacent to garages and along property lines, especially when visible from streets. New tree plantings should be native species. However, developers should preserve as much existing tree canopy as possible.



Building Design and Character

New construction should generally follow consistent standards across all land bays and phases. While there should be a cohesive design aesthetic, each housing unit should be distinctive, when possible.

Distinctive Units

Distinguish building units and unit types by alternating roof types and color schemes to add variety and unit individuality.



Variations in Design

Avoid repetition and apply subtle variations to building setbacks, planes and rooflines and use architectural features such as awnings, light fixtures and single-story eave details to add variety and visual interest.



High-Quality Materials

Use high-quality, durable materials (such as brick or well detailed vinyl or fiber cement siding) and details on front, side and rear façades which do not appear to be tacked on to the building.



Garage Treatments

Ideally, garage doors should not directly face onto streets. For lots without access to an alley, garages should be located to the rear of the lot and behind the façade of the building to ensure the public streetscape emphasizes pedestrian scaled elements like porches, stoops, front doors, and landscaping.



Accessibility Features

The majority of residential units should have accessibility features that are suitable for elderly or handicapped accommodation. This includes accessible ground floor entries, ground floor bedrooms and handicap accessible bathrooms in single family units and in the ground floors of multifamily buildings.



Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes may be included in some areas of the plan but they should be high quality new units (2 years old or newer) with architectural styles that mirror stick-built homes in the vicinity and should include elements such as porches and garages made from additional segments. Foundations should be of durable materials such as brick, stone or siding to match the house.



Development Program

The Ferrum Parcel Master Plan is a long-term vision for the County's 84.17 acres. Franklin County's 2020 Housing Needs Assessment for Ferrum recommended phased development. While there are housing needs, the 2020 study for the property suggested that the current market would only support development in phases, as opposed to the entire vision depicted in this plan at once. New housing would also need to involve various product types and income ranges to be feasible with the current and anticipated market conditions. With that in mind, the Master Plan is flexible, as the County hopes to create a close, productive partnership with one or more builders. The 2020 Housing Needs Assessment recommended that multiple partners be involved, developing different phases for variety, and allowing each to specialize in their areas of expertise.

Phasing

The Master Plan envisions development beginning on the southern land bays, closest to Franklin Street. Subsequent phases should continue from south to north. Each land bay may include multiple phases. Total buildout would likely take twenty years or more because of market conditions, depending on the proposed developments.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Site Assessment and Process Documentation
- Appendix B: Site Photos
- Appendix C: Open House Questionnaire Responses

Appendix A. Site Assessment and Process Documentation

This report is a site assessment of Franklin County’s two properties, that total 84.17 acres, located on the west side of the Ferrum Village. In 2022, the County partnered with Housing Virginia, which funded this effort to create a Master Plan for developing this property and addressing housing needs in the area. This report documents the Master Planning process and provides additional detail to the **Ferrum Property Master Plan**. The following sections record existing site conditions and provide general considerations for roadway improvements, grading, utilities, and stormwater management. Note that this report is a general assessment based on professional opinion rather than a full engineering assessment.

Site Information

This site assessment examines the existing conditions of 84.17 acres of County-owned land, located directly west of Ferrum College. The study area includes two parcels: a 1.5-acre lot (parcel number 0800101900) along West Franklin Street and a larger 82.67-acre property (parcel number 0800006500).

Property Setting

The subject site is north of State Route 40 (West Franklin Street), and the larger property has road access through State Route 1058 (Franklin Drive). Route 40 is the primary state highway in the southern part of Virginia. The larger parcel is approximately 300 feet back from the Franklin Street intersection with West Franklin Drive, which is about 1.2 miles from the Ferrum Village center. It is also about 10 miles southwest of the incorporated Town of Rocky Mount and 35 miles south of Roanoke, Virginia.

The Master Plan location is within a primarily forested and residential area in the western portion of Ferrum. The immediate neighborhood predominately consists of heavily forested lands to the north, south, and west. Wooded land extends north, up to and beyond the Ferrum Village. Outside the forest to the west of the site are single-family dwellings, an auto repair shop, and the Timberland Mulch and Tree Farm. To the east is the Ferrum College: single-family dwellings and an elementary school border the site to the south, along Franklin Street.



Figure 2: The Master Plan Site, highlighted in yellow, is in the western end of the Ferrum Village



Figure 3: Ferrum College is directly adjacent to the site, on the eastern property line.

Surrounding Businesses and Services

Within a two-mile radius, there are various businesses and amenities, such as the Dollar General, Ferrum Minute Market, Truist Bank, a Dairy Queen, Seventy-Seven Restaurant, a US Postal Service, the Ferrum College Campus Police, Ferrum Rescue Squad, Ferrum Elementary School, the Blue Ridge Institute, Starbucks, Subway, Carter Bank and Trust, Franklin County Convenience Center, and Titmus Agricultural Center. The Blue Ridge Institute & Museum and the Blue Ridge Farm Museum are also near the site. These destinations are home to annual festivals that draw thousands of visitors.

Other community services are either in Rocky Mount or in Roanoke. Ferrum residents can use a shuttle bus, called the Ferrum Express, as a free alternative mode of travel to employment and shopping opportunities in Rocky Mount and Roanoke.

Healthcare Services

Ferrum's leading healthcare provider is the Tri-Area Community Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). It is less than one mile from the study area on Ferrum Mountain Road. Their medical and behavioral health providers are qualified to manage most medical problems that might arise, both acute and chronic, in patients of all ages. This care extends from pediatrics to adults and geriatric patients and includes minor surgeries, x-ray capabilities, routine laboratory testing, and family planning. The nearest full-service hospital with emergency services is Carilion.

Franklin Memorial Hospital is a department of Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. It is in Rocky Mount, approximately 11 miles from the study area. The Southern Area Agency on Aging provides in-home services to older adults across Franklin County. Additionally, the Department of Aging Services provides seniors transportation to medical care facilities, shopping destinations, and other needed services. Safety services, such as the Police and Fire non-emergency departments, are within 1.6 miles of the Master Plan site.

Educational Services

Ferrum College, listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, is adjacent to the site and is open to the public. It offers walking trails, a YMCA, a Starbucks, community events, access to the cafeteria, and other amenities to the public. Ferrum College also operates the Ferrum Express service.



Figure 4: The Blue Ridge Institute and Museum is home to the Blue Grass Festival that draws thousands of visitors.

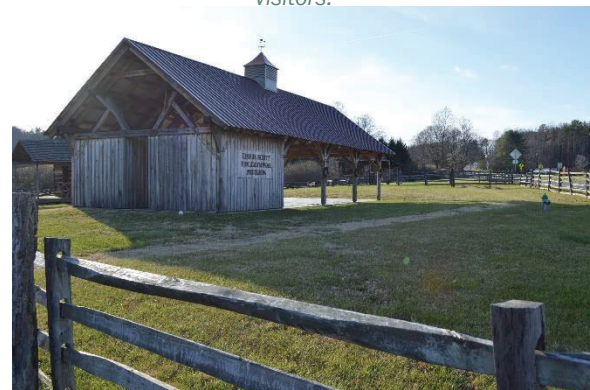


Figure 5: The Blue Ridge Farm Museum is another cultural asset in the area.



Figure 6: The Tri-Area Health Center is the primary health services in the area.

Franklin County Public Schools serves the area. Ferrum Elementary School is across West Franklin Street from the Master Plan site and has ample capacity for additional students. All applicable schools are within 14.0 miles of Ferrum.

Outdoor and Recreation Assets

Franklin County is in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains at the southern end of the Roanoke Valley. It is known as a haven for fishermen, hunters, campers, hikers, cyclists, and boaters. Numerous rivers, Smith Mountain Lake, and the Philpott Reservoir are vital recreational assets. Interstate 81 and Route 40 allow Franklin County residents to access all major mid-Atlantic markets within a day’s drive. Parks in the Rocky Mount area include Waid Recreation Park (11.0 miles northeast), Lynch and Gilly’s parks (each within 13.0 miles), Antioch Community Park (15.0 miles north), Franklin County Recreation Park (14.0 miles east), and Grassy Hill Natural Area Preserve (12.0 miles northeast). To the west, there is easy access to the Blue Ridge Parkway, about 13 miles away on Turners Creek Road (Route 748).

Appraised Value

In 2021, Miller, Long & Associates conducted an appraisal of the two properties. The estimated market value of the 1.5-acre property was \$25,000. The appraisers estimated the larger parcel at \$235,000. Refer to this 94-page report for additional information on the appraisal and assets.

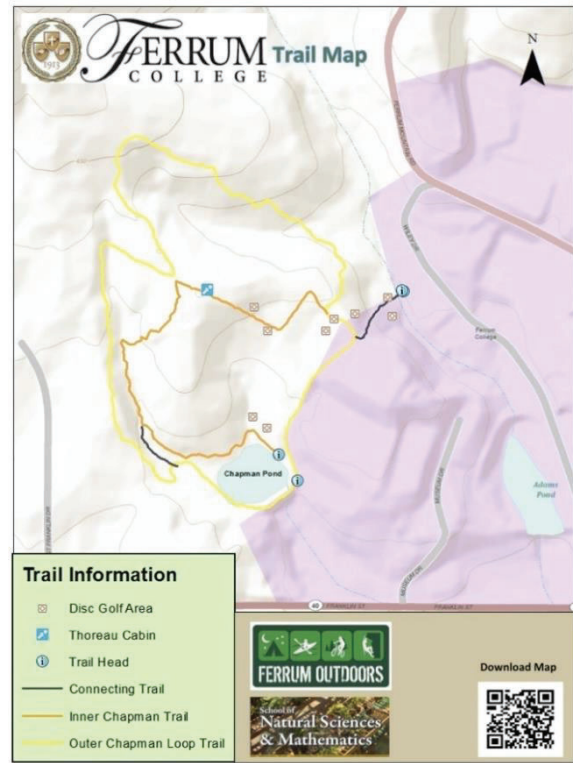
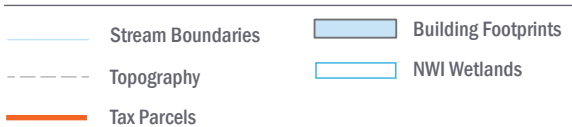
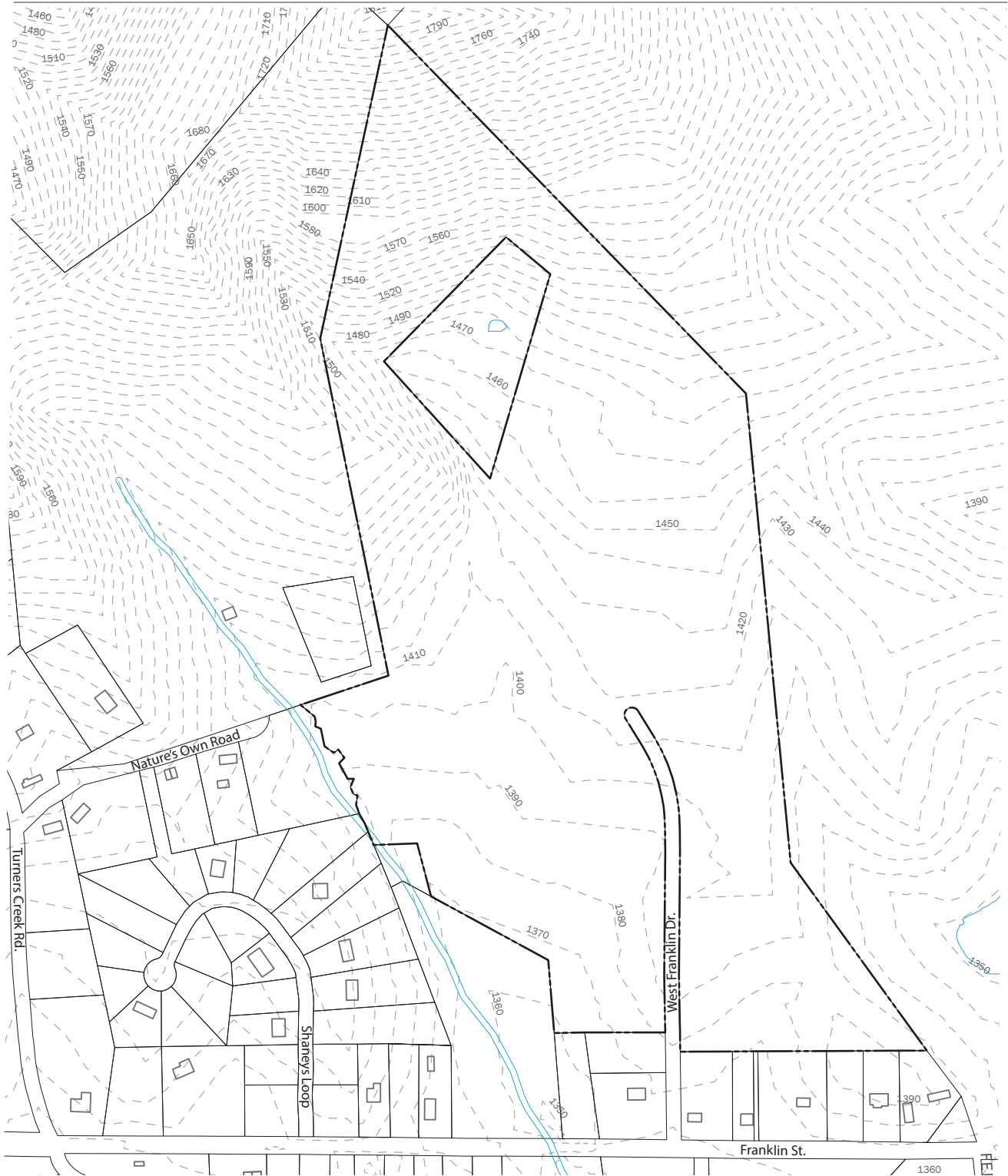


Figure 7: Ferrum College's trails are adjacent to the site, on its eastern boundary. West Franklin Drive is on the left side of the map, showing this proximity.

Figure 7: On the next page, refer to a base map that depicts the site and its topography.

Ferrum Property Master Plan



Site Conditions

The County-owned properties are densely wooded with varying topography. There are nonperennial streams along the western edge of the larger parcel and only a sliver of potential wetlands from the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) on its western property line, adjoining Shanley Estates.

Slope

The front of the site, towards Franklin Street and West Franklin Drive, has relatively flat terrain that slopes upwards towards the property's northern end. The rear portion of the main parcel peaks into a tall hill, about 420 feet above West Franklin Drive. Steep slopes in the north part of the site make development infeasible.

Ground Cover

The site is undeveloped and densely forested with streams. There are wooded areas surrounding the County's property that would limit visibility from nearly all directions. Depending on the exact location of future development, new construction could be visible or shielded from view.

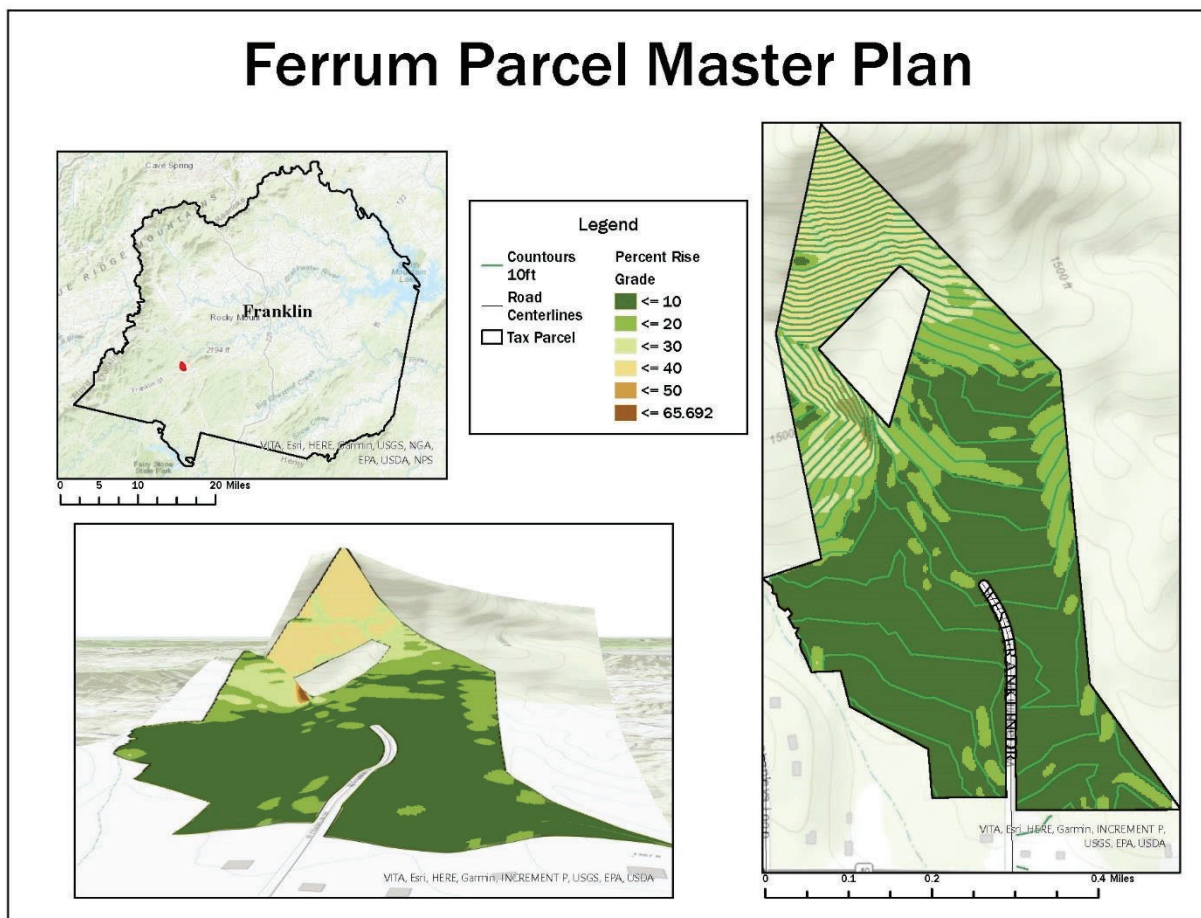


Figure 8: The slope map shows the percent slope on the site and offers a 3-D view of the northern hilltop. “Percent of slope is determined by dividing the amount of elevation change by the amount of horizontal distance covered, and then multiplying the result by 100” (USGS). The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code has regulations for areas with slopes over 33%. The code requires structures to maintain minimum setbacks from both the bottom and top of slopes in excess of 33.3%.

Internal Property

There is a 5-acre privately held inholding within the northern portion of the larger Master Plan parcel. Franklin County has no plans to disturb this property, and topography would prevent developing in its direct vicinity, except for the area directly south.

Utilities

Currently, there is excess public water and sewer capacity available for the site. The Master Plan process included interviewing the Ferrum Water and Sewer Authority (FWSA) and researching available internet services.

Water and Sewer Service

The FWSA services this area of Franklin County and indicated that both properties currently have physical access to the water and sewer system. FWSA maintains a T-valve near West Franklin Street that is ready for a connection. There are manholes on the site, indicating existing access to the sewer system.

FWSA indicated excess capacity in the system, including 100,000 gallons per day (GPD) for water and 200,000 GPD for sewer service. The authority assumes a maximum of 200 GPD per housing unit. A conservative estimate would be 300 GPD per household. The system could accommodate 325 new housing units with that more conservative average. However, most homes do not exceed the 200 GPD average, equating to more dwellings. If senior housing were on the site, the average usage per unit would be lower.

If developed, FWSA would own and operate water and sewer facilities on the Master Plan site. The developer or homeowner would own and maintain lines from the meter into the home. There are no connection fees. A \$1,500 water and \$2,500 sewer availability fee are paid once the house connects and begins utilizing water and sewer.

Main conclusions are:

- The new development would be helpful to the water system, by moving water through the pipes,
- There is excess capacity in the water system that would accommodate any feasibility densities on site, and
- There is excess sewer capacity that will accommodate any possible level of development.

During a Master Plan public meeting (described in the public engagement section), an attendee mentioned issues with water service at Ferrum College. Consultants spoke with FWSA about these comments but had no documented cases.



Figure 9: A gravel road on the site provides access to the forested areas.



Figure 10: There are small streams on the western edge of the site and changing topographies.

Internet Service Providers Available

Internet service includes Mid-Atlantic Broadband, with fiber connections in the immediate area. CenturyLink has up to 20 Mbps with unlimited data, and Shentel offers 50Mbps to 1 Gbps plans.

Stormwater

Depending on the development, there may be a need for stormwater retention or detention areas on the site. New construction may include BMP measures with each development phase or by "land bay." Refer to **Chapter 7 of the Franklin County Code**. Also, maintaining riparian buffers along streams and property boundaries could help manage stormwater run-off.

Erosion and Sediment Control regulations would apply during construction. Ferrum is within the Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District ((SWCD), which may be involved with stormwater issues. Franklin County's Code also includes stormwater regulations under Chapter 7 (Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management). Sec. 7-52 (Stormwater Management) states, "Except as otherwise provided in this article, no SWM permit for land disturbing activity shall be issued without an approved SWM plan."

Traffic and Roadway

State Route 40 (Franklin Street) is a lightly traveled two-lane arterial with about 2,000 average annual trips per day (AADT). The regional Rural Long Range Transportation Plan indicates that this corridor is underutilized at 30% capacity in the Ferrum Mountain Road intersection. Traffic fluctuates seasonally due to the site's proximity to Ferrum College and Ferrum Elementary School. However, those fluctuations would not be significant. There is limited bicycle or pedestrian traffic in either direction due to the lack of sidewalks.

There are two notable features of the current road access. First, the County built a VDOT-maintained road, West Franklin Drive, on the site. This internal road is about one-third of a mile and has a cul-de-sac on the northern end. Second, a turn lane (approximately 1,500 feet) on the westbound side of Franklin Street allows for more convenient ingress.

Concept Recommendations

Due to the relatively low traffic counts on Franklin Street, no anticipated off-site roadway improvements are needed to accommodate expected development, unless VDOT deems necessary. However, the Master Plan recommends a second access road for emergency vehicles. From a bike and pedestrian perspective, the Master Plan should include sidewalk connections on Franklin Street, linking to Ferrum College and the rest of the Village. The plan should also highlight trail connections to the College.



Figure 11: Franklin County built West Franklin Road to help prepare the site for private investment.



Figure 12: Franklin Street is a two-lane road with relatively low average daily trips.

Ferrum Property Site Analysis

Information from the site analysis fed into an initial rendering for the Master Plan area, seen on page 12, and served as a primary starting point for the proposed land bays and development alternatives. Refer to the **Development Alternatives Section** and the **Ferrum Property Master Plan** document.

Buildable Area

The Ferrum Property Site Analysis demarcates a buildable area with a dashed red line. This general designation does not imply that the entire space would be developed or disturbed. The final Master Plan prioritizes development on the southern end of the site. The total buildable area is about 62 acres. New construction should preserve as much tree cover as possible and minimize impervious surfaces. Areas outside of the dashed red line should be maintained and left undisturbed. Note that some parts of the site may accommodate hiking and mountain biking trails.

Screening to Adjacent Homes

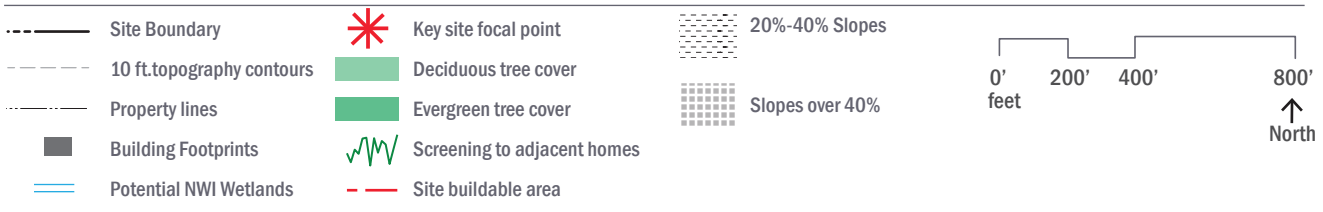
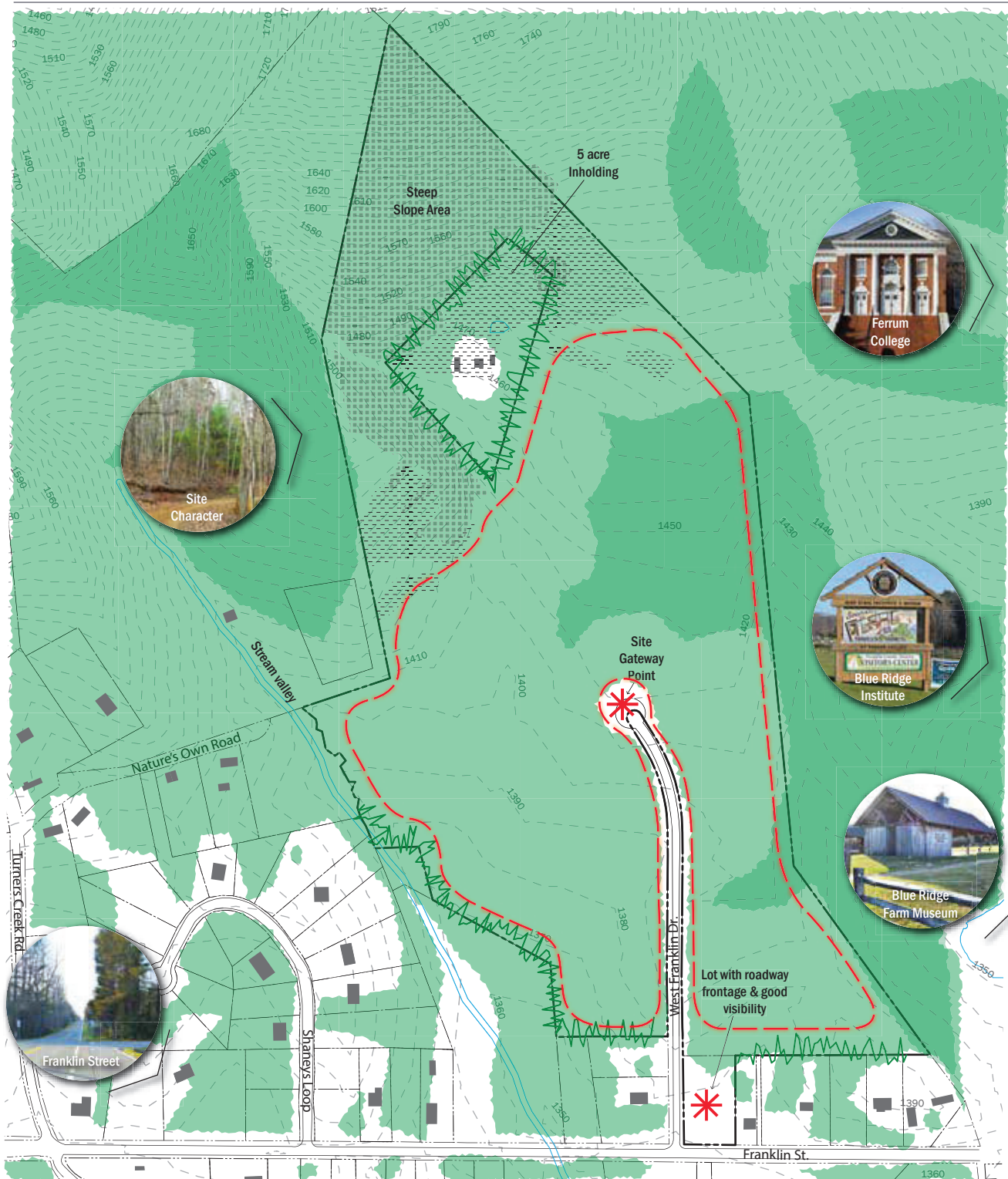
New construction should allow screening around the site perimeter adjacent to existing residential areas. There is a five-acre residential property within the site. New construction should ensure screening around this parcel and accommodate a buffer around those property lines. As previously stated, the buildable area does not imply land disturbance. The Master Plan should preserve as much of the northern areas as possible.

Key Site Focal Points

Two key focal points on the site will be essential to the Master Plan. First is the end of West Franklin Drive, which would be a gateway into any new community. The second focal point is the smaller property with direct access to Franklin Street (Route 40). This location has road frontage and good visibility, making it ideal for non-residential uses.

Figure 13: The Ferrum Property Site Analysis depicts buildable area and serves as a starting point for the Master Plan Plan renders for Phase II.

Ferrum Property Site Analysis



Public and stakeholder Engagement: Round 1

Franklin County and its consultants held two rounds of public and stakeholder engagement. In phase one, the project team coordinated with a community group (Ferrum Forward), conducted calls with key participants, and hosted a public workshop. The second round included a follow-up meeting with Ferrum Forward, additional stakeholder calls, and a community open house event. The following sections record the process and main takeaways.

Ferrum Forward

Ferrum Forward is a community organization founded in 2019 that arose from the Ferrum Village Area Plan. Its mission statement is “To enhance the quality of life and the sense of community throughout the Village of Ferrum.” They conduct regular meetings on the second Tuesday of each month and were an integral part of the Master Planning process.

Early in the process, County staff and its consultants spoke with Ferrum Forward on Wednesday, November 9, to discuss the upcoming public meeting and the Master Plan process. Seven members were present, and the consultants joined via Zoom. The group reaffirmed that they would host the Master Plan workshop at their regular meeting on December 13, 2022. For the community meeting, members requested a presentation, followed by breakout group discussions and meeting boards depicting housing development examples. Objectives for that event would be to:

- Inform the community about the Master Planning Process,
- Share concepts of general approaches for the site that would feed into alternatives for development, and
- Gain feedback on different housing types.

Other takeaways from this first Ferrum Forward discussion were:

- Meet with the local media to help inform the community about this effort.
- Coordinate with health providers to identify capacity to meet needs with the site’s development.
- Consider an event or community space (like a pavilion) for the site.
- Identify ways to mix different housing types and uses.
- Coordinate with Ferrum College, as they have events and amenities open to the community.

Stakeholder Interviews

Before the December public meeting, the process included virtual and phone interviews with over twenty stakeholders. The calls occurred in a focus group format, with participants representing various organizations, such as Ferrum Forward, Ferrum College, local County officials, prospective development partners, and service providers. Stakeholder feedback guided the public meeting approach and informed consultants on how to best engage residents. These interviews also offered direct feedback on the site, its potential, general support, and desired outcomes. The following is a summary of the interview results.

Ferrum College

County staff and their consultants spoke with representatives from Ferrum College on December 8, 2022. The school is a central stakeholder in the community and essential to the Master Plan effort, given its location adjacent to the site. During the December discussion, College representatives expressed a need for additional lodging, especially with traveling sports teams and other events. They reported difficulties with recruiting faculty and staff because of a lack of housing options.

However, nearly all students live on campus, and there is ample supply for them. However, some graduate students may live off campus.

A 2020 Ferrum housing study reported that a lack of amenities would hinder development potential for the County’s site. However, College representatives pointed out that the school offers numerous amenities to the community. The cafeteria is open to the public and provides special meals, like the Friday fish fry. There are trails, disc golf, a driving range, community classes, the YMCA, a Starbucks, events, and other resident benefits. Ferrum College emphasized wanting to be part of the community and be seen as an asset.

Local County Officials

Project Consultants held a stakeholder call with County staff on December 6, 2022. Staff indicated that the Master Plan should build on the 2019 Ferrum Village Area Plan rather than replace it. This discussion included a brief history of the site and the need for housing. The County had the lowest Multiple Listing Service (MLS) in recent history, showing a lack of supply. Staff believed the housing supply issue is still a symptom of the 2008 recession and the slowdown in new construction over a decade ago. There were discussions about a possible park or recreational space on the Master Plan site. Staff indicated that there was capacity in the adjacent elementary school and the need to address workforce housing, also called the “missing middle.”

The project team also interviewed this voting district's elected official and planning commissioner. They communicated a need to get the property into productive use. There is a need for senior housing and starter homes. They also emphasized workforce housing and the abundant amenities that Ferrum College offers. The group discussed the possibility of a community gathering space on the site and an EMS facility on the front parcel. A new fire or rescue building could partner with Ferrum College as a training resource. Other comments included options for patio homes, aging in place, and an internal loop road to minimize driveways.



Figure 14: Local officials kicked off a well-attended public meeting on December 13.



Figure 15: Consultants from EPR, P.C. provided an overview of the process.



Figure 16: Meeting participants recorded comments on meeting board and maps, using post-it notes.

Prospective Partners

County staff and their consultants spoke with multiple prospective partners with varying degrees of interest in the site. These calls also helped inform the stakeholders of the Master Planning process and served as a primer for further discussions. All potential partners discussed site assets that would be conducive to development.

Local Media

The project team met with local media and discussed the effort before the December community meeting. A front-page story in the local newspaper helped attract dozens of participants to the December 13 public meeting and informed County residents about the next steps. Other outreach efforts helped to draw participants to the event. Those outreach efforts included:

- Asking stakeholders to reach out to their social networks about the process and meeting,
- Ferrum Forward's social media (Facebook) page, and
- A locally distributed flyer.

Public Meeting

Ferrum Forward hosted the first community meeting on December 13, 2022, at a local church within the Village. Approximately 50 people attended, not counting staff or Ferrum Forward representatives. County officials started the meeting and introduced the consultants, who provided a 15-minute presentation introducing the Master Plan effort. Participants then broke into four groups to review meeting boards that depicted examples of housing types and possible amenities. The following are general takeaways.

Group A Conclusions: A Need for Housing

One group focused their discussion on the need for new housing products. The site should include various housing options, including single-family detached homes, patio homes, small-scale condos, and other approaches that can respect Ferrum's rural character. The plan should include affordable products with smaller lots incorporated. Participants wanted to see more families with children and internet access that would allow residents to work from home. This group discussed desired amenities like gardens, trails, a community center, or a pool. A Homeowners Association could help put additional controls on development and offer private maintenance of the amenities. Attendees could identify several College faculty members currently looking for housing options. This group also mentioned the need for an affordable restaurant.

Group B Conclusions: Concerns but Support for Small-Scaled Housing Options

A second group initially expressed concerns about the Master Plan and thought it would bring subsidized housing that would further burden the community's limited resources. However, participants also worried that expensive homes would increase property taxes for current property owners in the area. Despite those issues, the group supported senior housing, small-family homes, and patio homes. This group wanted to avoid corporate stores and felt there were already vacant homes in the area.

Group C Conclusions: Balance Development and Preservation

A third group communicated similar concerns about Section 8 housing and the strained resources of the existing community. However, participants supported one-level homes for seniors and workforce households. They recommended various housing types, like one-level patio homes and small-scale condos. These participants discussed amenities like a park, picnic shelter, daycare, and community center. They discussed preserving the back portion of the site as woodland with recreational uses, like mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding. Overall, they wanted housing that blends into a wooded environment, so the site retains its character. Other comments included:

- Consider partnerships with a church for senior housing and support.
- Avoid short-term rentals.
- Consider traffic from other uses on site.
- Offer opportunities for medical care and other services.

Group D Conclusions: Balance Senior Development and Preservation

These participants had similar conclusions to Group C. They expressed concerns about Section 8 housing, limited services to meet new demand, police coverage, and preservation of the wooded areas. Several people from this group wanted to keep the site as it is, especially for environmental purposes. However, they came to a compromise after a thorough discussion. The group was willing to accept a vision that preserved the back portion of the site as wooded. Residential development should be small-scale and focused on senior living. These attendees disagreed with the boards, saying they failed to represent Ferrum or Franklin County. Any construction should respect the local character. However, participants still needed to define what that character entails.

Public and stakeholder Engagement: Round 2

With round one feedback, County staff worked with their consultants to develop a proposed site layout with land bays and three development alternatives (refer to the Development Alternatives Section). As a second round of engagement, consultants facilitated follow-up discussions with Ferrum Forward members, stakeholders, and potential development partners. Overall, these groups supported the general layout and alternatives.

Second Round of Stakeholder Discussion

Stakeholders from the first engagement round reviewed draft materials and offered additional feedback. Two Ferrum Forward members convened with staff on March 16, 2023, and provided feedback on various elements. They recommended a general and flexible Master Plan, and expressed caution about higher densities, which consultants tweaked after this discussion. The Ferrum Forward members present favored less intensive development, closer to Alternative A. Local officials and staff met on March 24, 2023. These stakeholders emphasized returning this property to productive use and supported the draft materials. There was some discussion about more space for civic or non-residential uses. Ferrum College spoke with County staff and consultants later that afternoon, on March 24. They supported the development concepts but favored more commercial space, especially for a restaurant or market. While the College had no immediate housing needs, they imagined there could be future housing demand if the school expanded. The College also asked staff to rework the secondary emergency access road to show a western option.

Development Partners

This second round of engagement included discussions with potential development partners. These individuals also supported the proposed layout and alternatives. Staff identified multiple people with growing interest in the site and working with the County.

Board of Supervisors Work Session

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors held a work session on April 18, 2023, to review concepts.

Public Open House

Franklin County hosted an open house event at Ferrum College on May 18, 2023. Meeting posters depicted the development alternatives and examples of housing options. While fewer people attended this second event, staff collected 31 questionnaire responses. This form presented six questions and space for additional comments. Refer to [Appendix C](#) for complete records of those responses.

Past Efforts

Three efforts were precursors to the Master Plan process. In 2019, Franklin County secured consultants to develop the Ferrum Village Area Plan, which set a vision for Ferrum and laid the groundwork for envisioning the County’s two parcels. In 2020, Bowen National Research completed a Housing Needs Assessment for the Village. This report presented data on the housing market and what would be feasible for new home construction. The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Region also conducted a Regional Housing Market Study, but for Ferrum, it mainly summarized the 2020 Housing Assessment. During the December 13, 2023, public meeting, participants questioned whether the 2020 housing data was still relevant, given the pandemic. In 2023, the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) is working through another regional housing study that may update regional figures and provide more recent statistics.

Ferrum Village Area Plan (2019)

Franklin County secured consultants to develop this small area plan of the Ferrum Village, which included initial concepts for the Master Plan site. Overall, this process produced three primary goals for the Village and resulted in Ferrum Forward’s establishment, an active community group involved in the most recent planning process. The Village Plan aimed to:

- Create a stronger sense of place,
- Support economic development and “Village Center” vitality, and
- Enhance community wellbeing, health, and safety.



Figure 17: The 2019 study laid the groundwork for the Master Plan effort.

Initial Concepts

The Master Plan site is an element of this 2019 document. During community meetings, the study team presented various potential uses illustrated through photographs of other communities to help workshop participants imagine what a revitalized “Village Center” could include. The images also reflected the key policy goals of creating walkable places, preserving open spaces and natural areas, promoting a mixture of uses and housing types, and promoting compact and efficient development.

Proposed Uses from the 2019 Plan

The Ferrum Village Area Plan detailed desired uses for the Master Plan site based on public feedback from community workshops. Participants identified the following (taken directly from the 2019 Plan).

- **Senior Housing.** Community members cited an unmet need for senior housing that would allow residents to downsize and still ‘age in place’ in Ferrum. Senior housing located adjacent to colleges can also create some positive synergies in terms of engaging seniors in lifelong learning, sharing oral histories and other community engaging activities. Finally, the proximity of senior housing to campus would provide seniors with close access to the YMCA, walking trails, and the Tri-Area Community Health Center.
- **Destination Restaurant/Brewery.** This parcel is situated in a location with great views and access to the main roadways through town. The creation of a destination restaurant or brewery at this location could build off the existing eco-tourism attractions of the area. To maximize the synergy with other cultural assets of the area, the restaurant could feature local farm to table options and celebrate recipes and offerings related to the rich Blue Ridge and West Piedmont cultures.

- **Conference Center and Lodging.** Conference centers and associated lodging can be a positive complementary use for colleges and often work well in rural settings. The attraction of these types of facilities is to provide a space for people to get away from the day to day for a retreat for business or pleasure.
- **Recreational Area, Community Gardens and Multi-Use Trails.** Given the lure of the region for recreational activities, this parcel could be repurposed as a major county recreational area with off-road biking, multi-use trails, and community agriculture. A partnership with the Blue Ridge Institute’s Living Farm could help focus the cultivation efforts. These agricultural assets could in turn be used to support a Ferrum farmer’s market and/or farm to table restaurants.

COUNTY OWNED LAND - WHICH CONCEPTS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Place green dots on the IMAGES below that you think are most important for County owned land

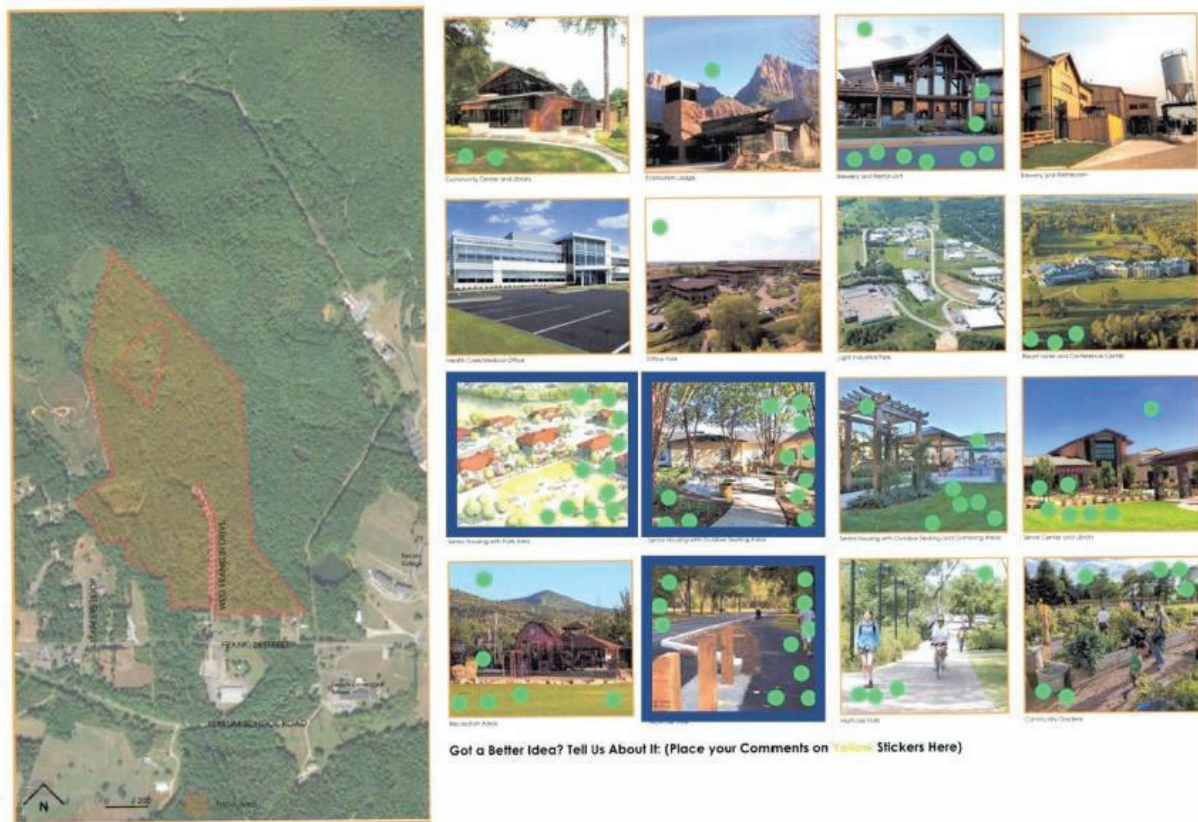


Figure 18: The Village Plan offered various options for the Master Plan site, to begin developing a vision.

Strategies from the 2019 Plan

The Village Area Plan included two strategies directly or indirectly related to the Master Plan site. Strategy 2.3 called for a “Market Position Analysis” of the property. Residents and business owners saw opportunities to develop the 80+ acres but recognized challenges with spurring investment. The process sought to properly position the property in a manner that supports the Ferrum Village Center. Franklin County can create incentives for future development by co-locating public uses on the site, providing infrastructure, and gifting the land to a development partner. However, a market study would help the County understand its leverage with the private sector. In 2020, the Housing Needs Assessment would provide data to support further steps.

Strategy 3.2 described an “aging in place” initiative that identifies opportunities for senior housing and local senior activities. While the Franklin County Council on Aging is active in the area, the plan states

that there are opportunities to do more. Specifically, community initiatives could add more housing, especially for seniors. The Master Plan site could be a central piece to that additional supply.

Stakeholders

The Ferrum Village Area Plan engaged various stakeholders representing groups like the Franklin County Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia Department of Transportation, West Piedmont Planning District Commission, Ferrum College, and Ferrum residents. The Master Plan effort refers to many of the same stakeholders, along with new partners and groups.

Housing Needs Assessment for Ferrum (2020)

Following the Village Area Plan, Franklin County worked with Bowen National Research to conduct a Housing Needs Assessment for the Village. Completed in July 2020, the report summarizes key priorities to address the housing needs of Ferrum and recommends possible residential product types that could occur on the County's two properties.

Housing Needs

Bowen National Research identified housing needs for Franklin County that should guide future residential initiatives. Their findings, based on housing market conditions, showed the following.

- **Spectrum of Affordability.** Future efforts to encourage residential development should aim to develop a range of housing types that meet varying cost options. Efforts should address housing needs at various price points and rent levels. This includes low-, moderate- and high-income households.
- **New Housing Supply.** Bowen National Research found limited availability in the existing housing inventory, including rental and for-sale supply. This limited supply applies to all affordability levels. Needed housing products range from multi-family apartments, condominiums, and single-family homes.

Housing Gap Analysis

The Housing Assessment involved a gap analysis that calculated the overall five-year housing gap in Ferrum. According to that assessment, Ferrum's gap is 85 rental units and 75 for-sale units. (After the 2020 study, the College converted one building to apartments, which would address part of the rental needs.) However, these estimates assume a variety of price points and product types. It is unlikely that a single developer could develop a project that would address this entire spectrum of affordability and product types. Additionally, many factors, such as design, value, and location, ultimately drive the level of demand. As such, the Housing Assessment states that the housing gap estimates should serve as a guide instead of absolute figures.

Most of the rental and for-sale housing needs in Ferrum appear to be for households earning up to 80% of average medium household incomes (AMHI) or \$54,000 a year, as of 2020. While an individual product could serve a broader income segment than those used in this analysis, any single project developed in Ferrum could likely not exceed 40 units due to limited demand. However, there could be some exceptions. Consequently, the Master Plan recommends phasing, consistent with the Housing Needs Assessment. This housing study also concludes that the senior household base is growing and would be a target demographic.

Housing Gap Analysis Components	
Renter Housing	Owner Housing
• Renter Household Growth	• Owner Household Growth
• Units Required for a Balanced Market	• Units Required for a Balanced Market
• Replacement of Substandard Housing	• Replacement of Substandard Housing
• Commuter/External Market Support	• Commuter/External Market Support
• Step-Down Support	• Step-Down Support

Figure 19: The Housing Needs Assessment looked at housing gap components of renter and owner housing.

Housing Recommendations

The Housing Needs Assessment laid out multiple recommendations for addressing current housing needs and attracting new residents to help support future housing developments. The study states that the County should aim to achieve the following.

- **Attract Outside Commuters.** Franklin should focus on attracting commuters from outside the County borders to Ferrum. According to the Housing Needs Assessment, approximately 6,803 people commute into Franklin County daily. In-migration would likely include housing for young professionals, college faculty and staff, recent college graduates, and working families. Target households could also include empty nesters and retirees seeking to downsize from their current housing.
- **Encourage Residential Development of Vacant Land.** The study highlighted the Master Plan site as an ideal location for new residential development, given its location adjacent to the College. New products should serve various price points and offer multiple housing products.
- **Focus on Senior Housing.** Demographic trends suggest a growing proportion of seniors in the Ferrum area for the foreseeable future. Considering the County’s lack of senior-specific housing products, the market’s deficiency of senior housing stock is expected to become more pronounced in the coming years.
- **Incorporate Rental Options.** The Housing Needs Assessment states that Ferrum would benefit from additional rental housing. Existing programs, such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and various HUD programs, could support such developments. However, participants in the first Master Plan meeting communicated their concerns about subsidized housing.

Site Limitations

The 2020 report documented the limitations of the County’s Ferrum property and suggested tactics for overcoming those obstacles. The biggest drawback to new development is the lack of community services in the immediate area. Although some prospective residents will desire the Village’s rural nature, the Housing Assessment concludes that a notable portion of the market will be deterred from living at the site due to the lack of specific amenities, such as a large grocer, restaurants, and other commercial uses. However, the County could also take actions to encourage mixed-use private investment around Ferrum that would help to address this obstacle. Simultaneously, new rooftops would make commercial development more likely.

A housing gap analysis indicates that no individual housing segment, by affordability and tenure (renter vs. owner), can support more than 34 units in Ferrum. Consequently, the County should consider several approaches to developing the entire Master Plan site, given the market limitations. The property could offer several small projects, each serving a specific market segment, enabling the overall site to do a broad range of household types. Therefore, the County could split up the overall parcel, partnering with different developers or a single developer in multiple phases. A phased or segmented approach could introduce different product types, eventually creating a multigenerational, mixed-income, and mixed-product development. The initial phase or project on the site could serve as the foundation for future steps, with a long-term buildout.

Development Approach

The Housing Assessment recommends that Franklin County seek a private-sector partner to develop the site. Site development may include non-profit groups, supporting service organizations, larger employers, and Ferrum College. Such groups could develop individual projects, share in infrastructure costs, and distribute risks. The Housing Assessment suggests that broadening the project participants would increase the likelihood of success.

The report also recommends incentives to help foster residential development. While there is a housing need, some developers may hesitate to invest due to the rural landscape, the limited community services, or the lack of more modern products developed in the area. Franklin County should consider incentive tactics, such as selling the land at a discounted rate, donating the property to developers, assisting in pre-development costs with loans or grants, waiving or discounting government fees associated with development, or helping to finance infrastructure. Incentives that help keep development costs down will increase the likelihood of affordable options.

The Housing Assessment recommended that some portions of the site accommodate outdoor recreational space. These amenities may include a large common area, walking and biking trails, a nature preserve, an outdoor performance venue, or a public park. Such uses would add to the appeal of both Ferrum and the site.

Rental Housing Gap Estimates – Ferrum, VA			
Demand Component	Household Income (Rent)		
	<\$34,000 (<\$849)	\$34,000-\$54,000 (\$850-\$1,350)	\$54,001+ (\$1,351+)
New Households (2020-2025)	-148	-17	102
Units Required for Balanced Market	96	29	31
Replacement of Substandard Housing	159	32	22
Commuter/External Market Support	34	13	19
Net Step-Down Support	29	115	-87
Less Pipeline Product	0	0	0
Total County Gap	170	172	87
Times Ferrum Capture Rate	20%	20%	20%
Total Ferrum Housing Gap	34	34	17

For-Sale Housing Gap Estimates – Ferrum, VA			
Demand Component	Household Income (Sales Price)		
	<\$34,000 (<\$127,500)	\$34,000-\$54,000 (\$127,501-\$202,500)	\$54,001+ (\$202,501+)
New Households (2020-2025)	141	-8	417
Units Required for Balanced Market	74	28	-44
Replacement of Substandard Housing	29	10	11
Commuter/External Market Support	28	19	62
Net Step-Down Support	37	298	-335
Less Pipeline Product	0	0	0
Total County Gap	309	329	111
Times Ferrum Capture Rate	10%	10%	10%
Total Ferrum Housing Gap	31	33	11

Figure 20: These tables from the Housing Needs Assessment document rental and for-sale gaps from the 2020 report.

Master Plan Guidelines

Considering past studies and recent engagement results, County staff and their consultants developed guidelines and the final Master Plan, incorporating the following vision and other findings. These conclusions guided the drafting of the proposed land bays and three development alternatives. Refer to the **Ferrum Property Master Plan** document for the final product and details on site design.

Goals and Objectives

Franklin County emphasized that the Master Plan should build on the Ferrum Village Plan rather than replace it. That 2019 effort envisioned a Village that would create a stronger sense of place, support economic development, and enhance community wellbeing. The latest effort would aim to accomplish those same goals through additional objectives:

- **Address housing gaps:** As stated in the Housing Needs Assessment, the area has housing gaps, and various obstacles limit new home construction that would help address those needs. Hence, this Master Plan aims to incentivize investments providing housing options and supply.
- **Return the land to productive use.** The existing properties produce no revenue and continue to fall under County ownership. The Master Plan effort will envision ways to return the land to private hands.
- **Respect the local character.** The Master Plan should help achieve the Village Area Plan goals while retaining the local character. This vision would include buffers, preservation of natural resources, and new community amenities.

Other Findings

Other findings guided the Master Plan renderings. The following arose from the stakeholder interviews, the public meeting and open house, past studies, the site visit, and professional judgement.

Land Uses

- **Housing Options.** Provide various housing options at different price points and tenures (owner versus renter). The main focus will be patio homes and options that cater to senior living.
- **Phased Development.** Develop the site in phases, consisting of 30 to 40 units each. Each stage may involve different development partners.
- **Public Uses.** Consider public amenities like bike and pedestrian trails, a gathering venue, garden space, and general open space.
- **Public Services.** Consider a community services building, such as an updated emergency services building, on the smaller parcel facing Franklin Street.
- **Commercial.** Consider space for a market or small business.

Environmental Considerations

- **Preserved Slopes.** Preserve the northern portions of the larger parcel to maintain steep slopes and the forested areas in those locations.
- **Riparian and Visual Buffers.** Preserve buffers along streams and tree cover around the site perimeter to help maintain aesthetics consistent with Ferrum.
- **Tree Preservation.** The existing forested areas of the site are assets that should be preserved wherever possible.

Transportation Connections

- **Trail Connections.** Establish trail connections with Ferrum College.
- **Pedestrian Connections.** Show pedestrian improvements that would connect to Franklin Street and link to future sidewalk construction along the corridor.

- **Internal Roads.** Develop an internal road network that avoids dead ends and minimizes driveways. Include stubs that mark the beginning and end of phases.

Site Design

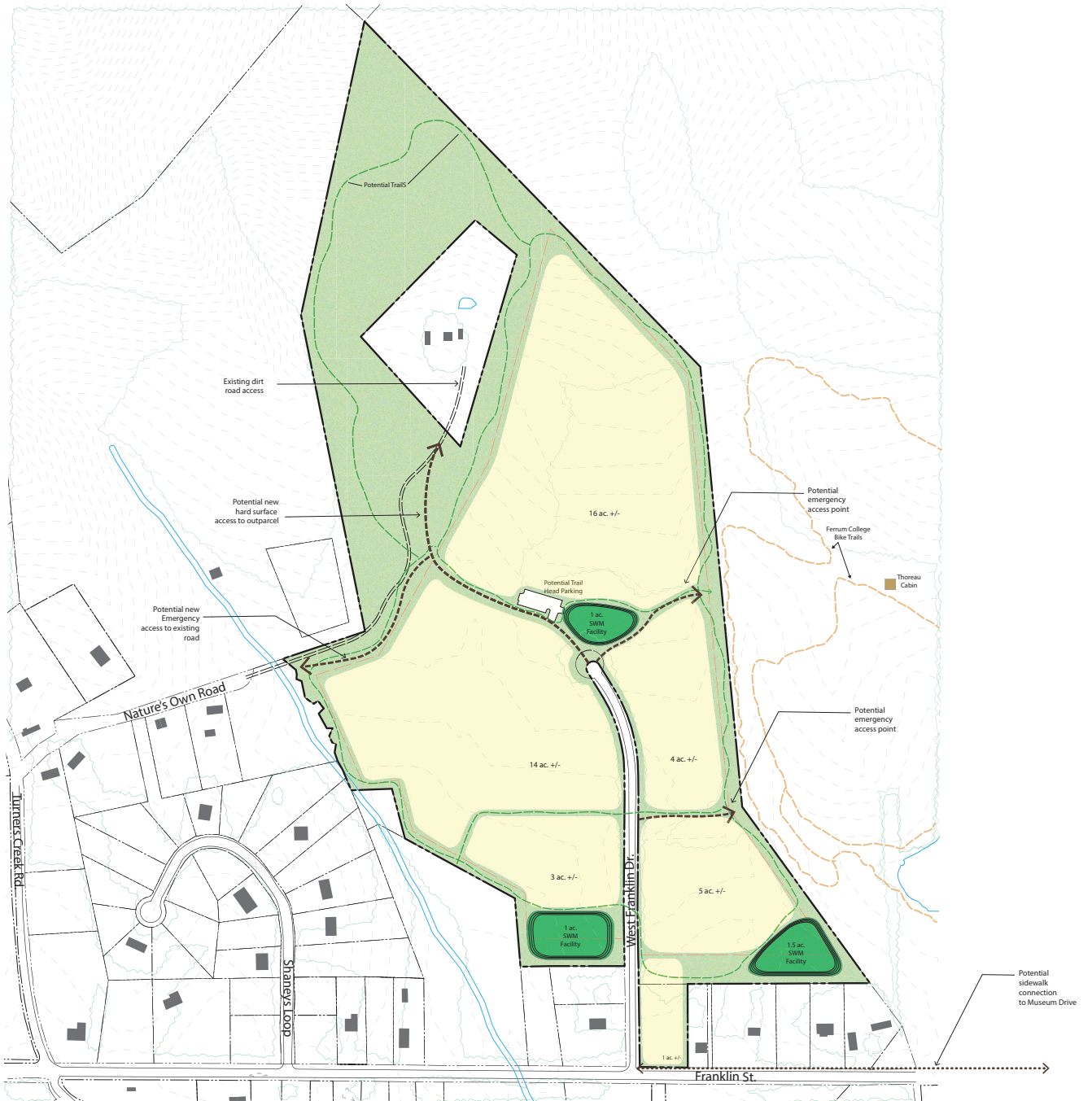
- **Southside Focus.** Focus development towards the southern portion of the site and preserve northern areas as much as possible. Phase one should be the southernmost portion of the site, with subsequent phases extending off that.
- **Clustered Layout.** Minimize internal road costs by clustering initial phases of development closer to West Franklin Drive.

Development Alternatives

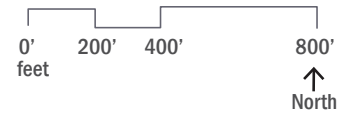
The following maps depict the site layout of proposed land bays and three possible development alternatives. The Ferrum Property Master Plan details these options in greater detail. These exhibits include:

- A Map of Proposed Land Bays
- Development Alternative A
- Development Alternative B
- Development Alternative C
- Overview of Proposed Land Uses

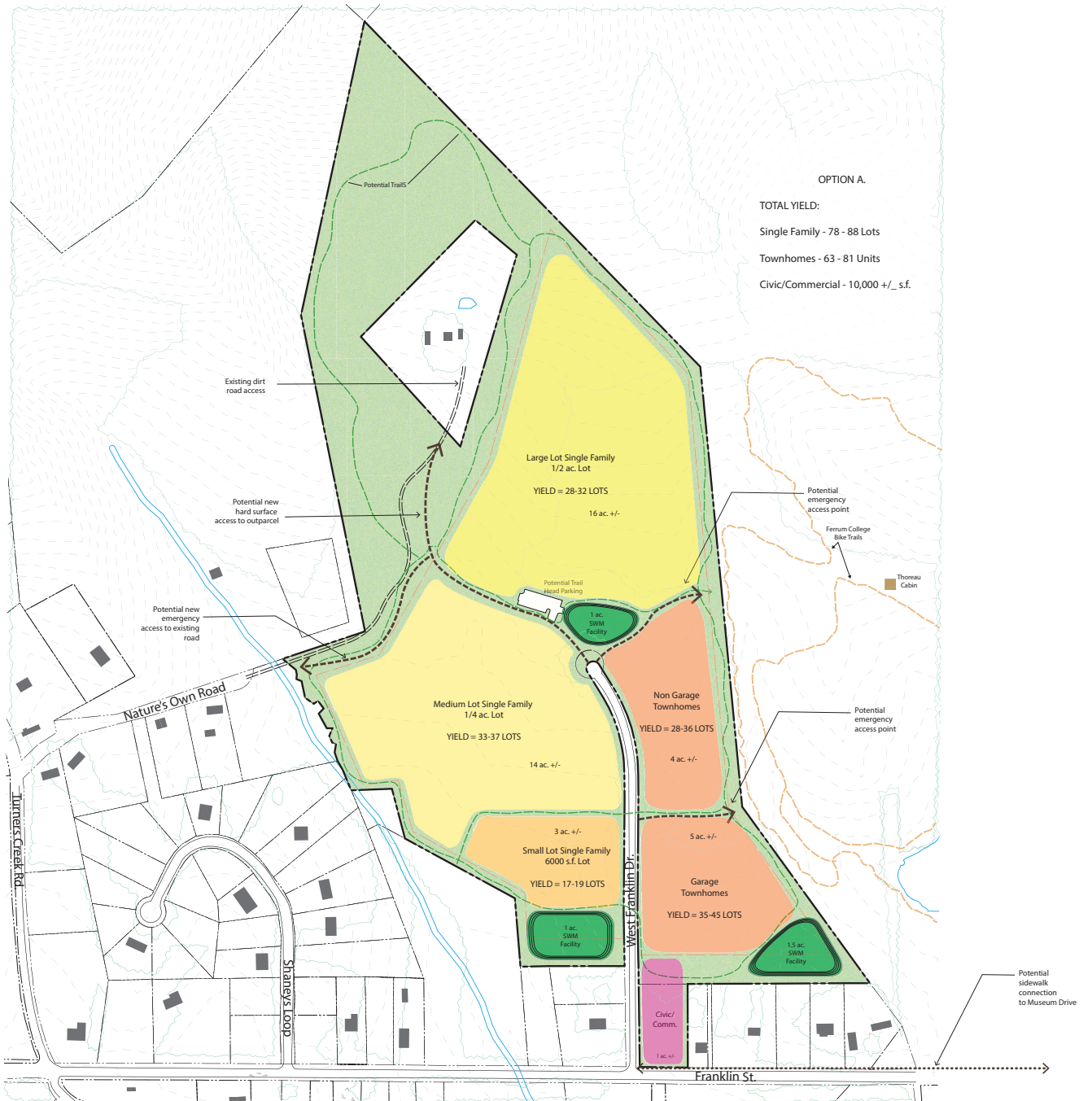
Ferrum Property Concept Alternatives



- Site Boundary
- - - 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands

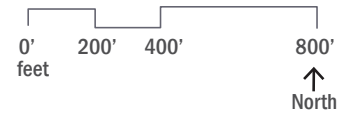


Development Alternative A

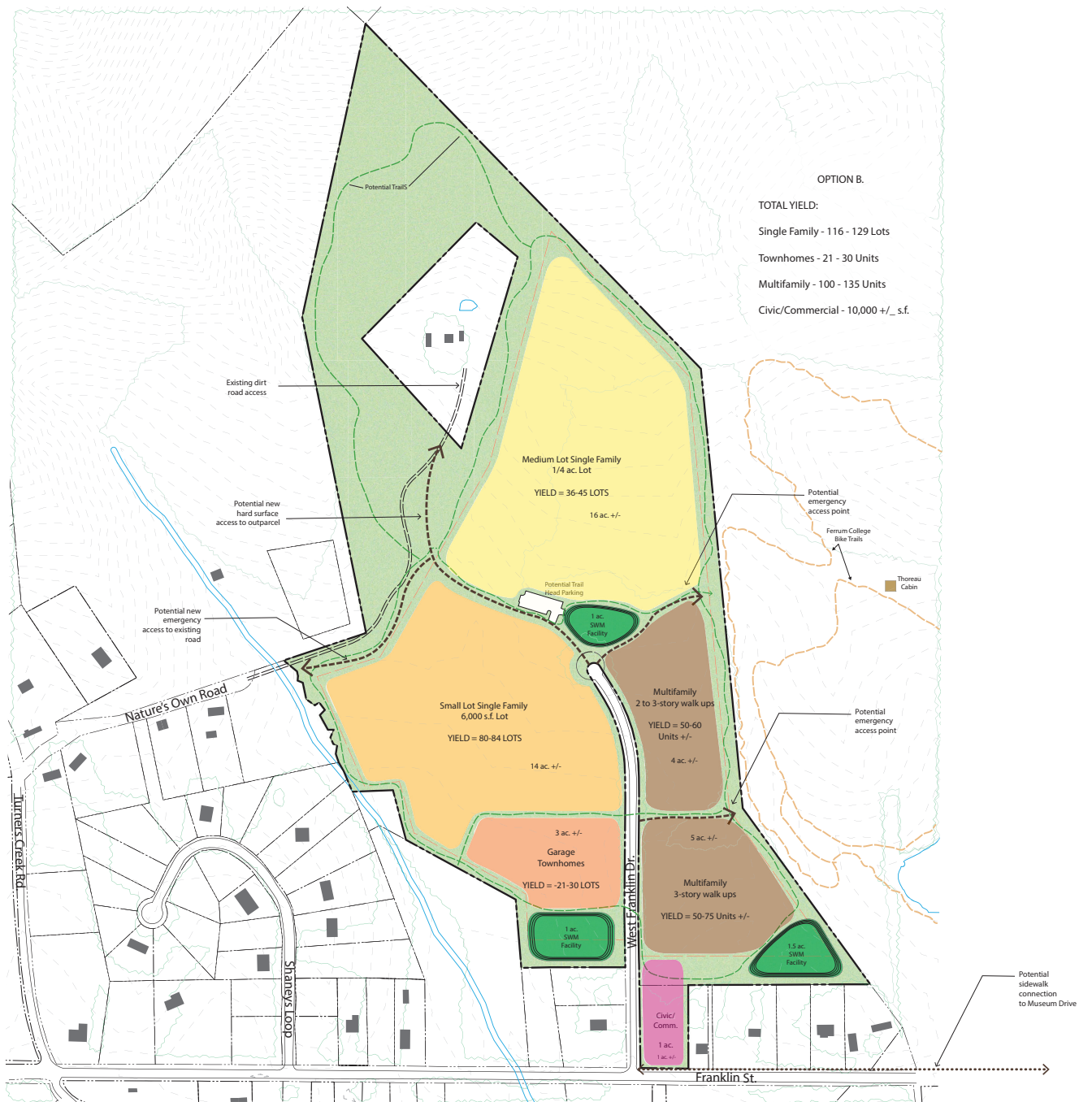


OPTION A.
TOTAL YIELD:
 Single Family - 78 - 88 Lots
 Townhomes - 63 - 81 Units
 Civic/Commercial - 10,000 +/-_s.f.

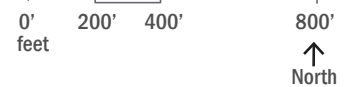
- Site Boundary
- 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands



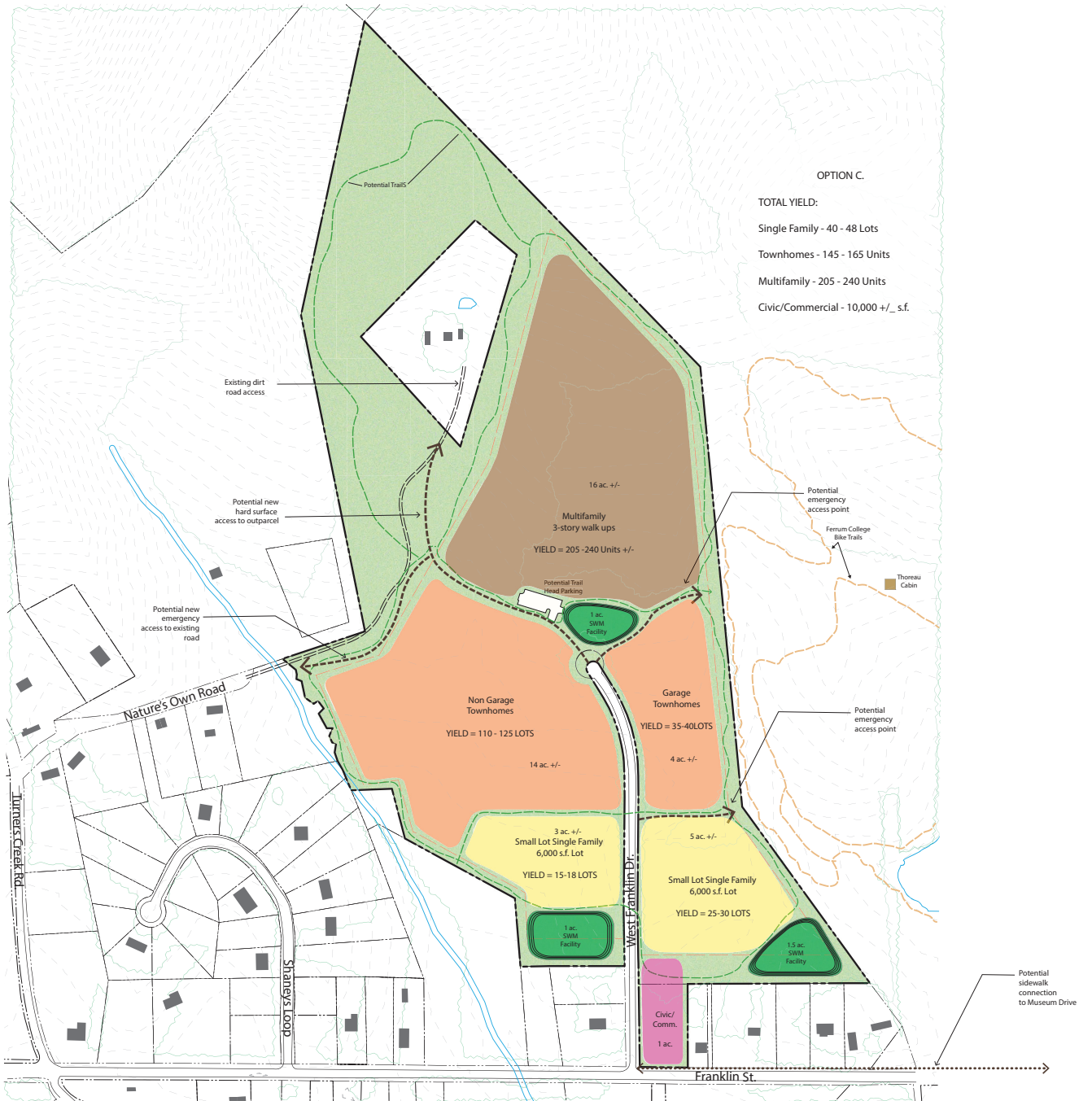
Development Alternative B



- Site Boundary
- - - 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands

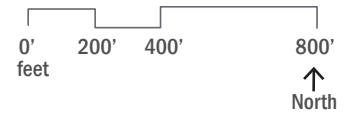


Development Alternative C



OPTION C.
TOTAL YIELD:
 Single Family - 40 - 48 Lots
 Townhomes - 145 - 165 Units
 Multifamily - 205 - 240 Units
 Civic/Commercial - 10,000 +/-_s.f.

- Site Boundary
- 10 ft. topography contours
- Property lines
- Building Footprints
- Potential NWI Wetlands



Ferrum Property Concept Alternatives

<p>Large Lot Single Family</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>1/2 - 1 ac. 1-2 units/ac. 2,500 s.f. + 1-3 stories Wide setbacks, no sidewalks, ample screening</p>	
<p>Medium Lot Single Family</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>8,000 - 12,000 s.f. 2-4 units/ac. 2,000 - 2,500 s.f. 1-3 stories Moderate setbacks, sidewalks, attached garages</p>	
<p>Small Lot Single Family</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>5,000 - 8,000 s.f. 4-6 units/ac. 1,500 - 2,000 s.f. 1-2 stories Small setbacks, sidewalks, alley-loaded garages</p>	
<p>Garage Townhomes</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>1,200 - 2,000 s.f. 7-9 units/ac. 1,000 - 1,800 s.f. 2-3 stories Alley loaded driveways - 1 car garages</p>	
<p>Non Garage Townhomes</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>1,000 - 1,800 s.f. 6-8 units/ac. 1,000 - 1,500 s.f. 1-3 stories Parking lots in front of units</p>	
<p>Multifamily</p> 	<p>Typical Lot Size Typical Density Typical Unit Size Typical Bldg. Height Typical Features</p>	<p>Varies 20-30 units/ac. 700-1,100 s.f. + 3-5 stories Served by parking courts - may be elderly housing</p>	

Appendix B. Site Photos



Photo 1: The existing access road from Nature's Way Road to the 5-acre parcel within the County's property



Photo 2: Image of the Master Plan site, which is mostly wooded



Photo 3: Image depicts topographic changes near the property's northern end



Photo 4: The cul-de-sac of West Franklin Drive, the main access to the County property



Photo 5: A view of the West Franklin Drive access from Franklin Street



Photo 6: An image of Ferrum College and the adjacent pond



Photo 7: An image of Ferrum College, which wants to serve as a community partner and asset



Photo 8: A status on the Ferrum College campus



Photo 9: Additional image of Ferrum College



Photo 10: Additional image of Ferrum College



Photo 11: Tri-Area Community Health Center is the lead medical provider in Ferrum



Photo 12: Tri-Area Community Health Center is the lead medical provider in Ferrum



Photo 13: The Mercantile building is under redevelopment



Photo 14: The Blue Ridge Institute and Museum is home to the annual Blue Grass Festival



Photo 15: Image of the Leo H. Scott Educational Pavilion



Photo 16: Image of the Leo H. Scott Educational Pavilion



Photo 17: Board of Supervisors member welcoming the public at the December 13 meeting



Photo 18: Consultant presenting at the December 13 public meeting

Appendix C. Open House Questionnaire Responses

Ferrum Master Plan Community Feedback May 18, 2023

Development Alternatives	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Strongly Support
Alternative A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternative B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternative C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you oppose any of the alternatives above, please explain your concerns.

If you have a preferred development alternative(s), how would you improve upon it?

What type(s) of housing is most needed in this area? (check all that apply)

- Single Family Detached Homes
- Patio Homes – One-level living
- Apartments/Condos
- Single Family Attached/Duplexes
- Townhouses
- Other

What density (how many units) of housing do you think is appropriate for this property?

- 50 or less
- 50-100
- 100-200
- 200-300
- 300-400
- 400+

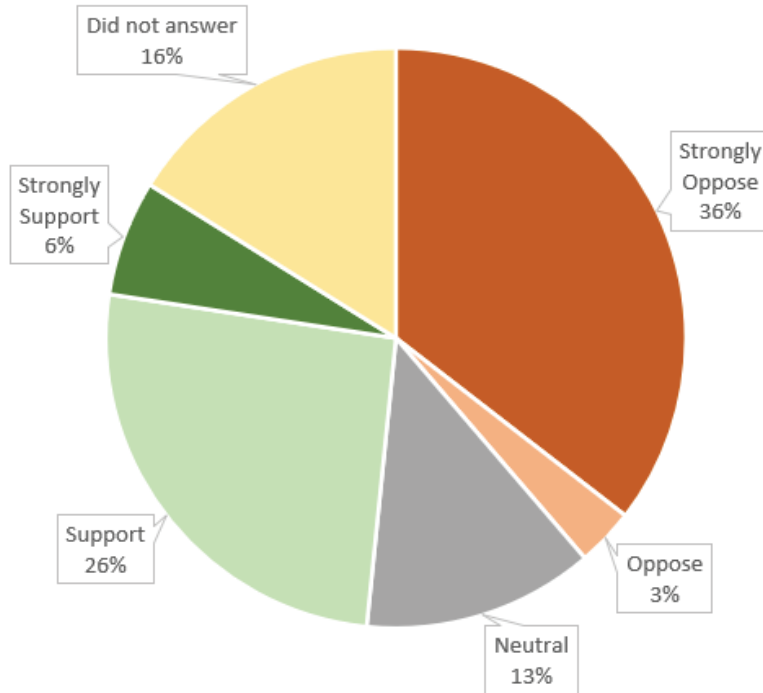
What community or public amenities would you like to see as part of this development? (check all that apply)

- Trails
- Community Center
- Commercial/Retail
- Park
- Public Music Venue
- Farmer's Market
- Other

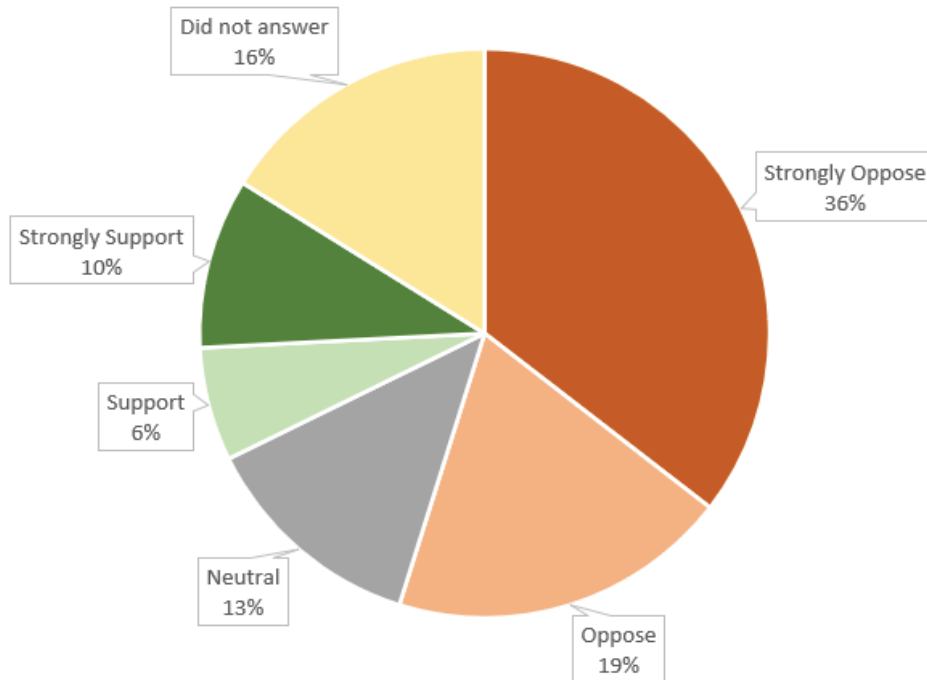
Additional Comments:

Question		Percentage	TALLY	TOTAL
Please indicate your level of support for each development alternative presented on the boards:				
Alternative A				
	<i>Strongly Oppose</i>	35.5%	11	31
	<i>Oppose</i>	3.2%	1	
	<i>Neutral</i>	12.9%	4	
	<i>Support</i>	25.8%	8	
	<i>Strongly Support</i>	6.5%	2	
	<i>Did not answer</i>	16.1%	5	
Alternative B				
	<i>Strongly Oppose</i>	35.5%	11	31
	<i>Oppose</i>	19.4%	6	
	<i>Neutral</i>	12.9%	4	
	<i>Support</i>	6.5%	2	
	<i>Strongly Support</i>	9.7%	3	
	<i>Did not answer</i>	16.1%	5	
Alternative C				
	<i>Strongly Oppose</i>	35.5%	11	31
	<i>Oppose</i>	12.9%	4	
	<i>Neutral</i>	19.4%	6	
	<i>Support</i>	6.5%	2	
	<i>Strongly Support</i>	6.5%	2	
	<i>Did not answer</i>	19.4%	6	

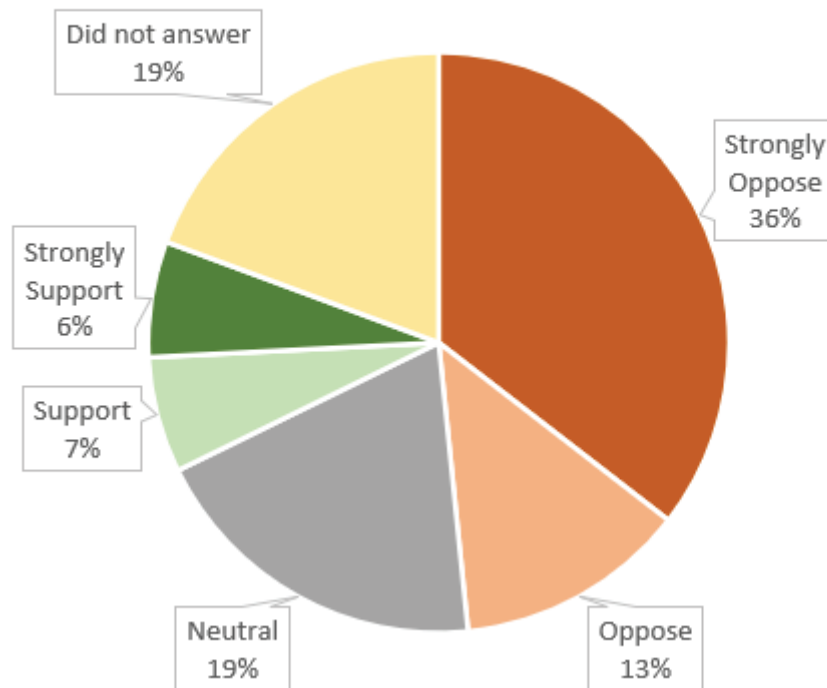
Alternative A



Alternative B



Alternative C



If you oppose any of the alternatives above, please explain your concerns.

- In my opinion, the single family dwelling would most likely be well-maintained; ownership makes a difference.
- Alternatives B and C have too many townhomes with multiple floors - not friendly to seniors. Multifamily homes are too large. Would stay a single family homes as much as possible.
- No 3-story homes/townhomes.
- After road construction, water and sewer, will facilities be affordable to seniors?
- No 3-5 story townhomes.
- No concerns.
- Do not think jobs and income would support any of the above. Once you get off highway 40, roads are not good or safe for amount of traffic 787 (ferrum mtn road).
- Keep to lower levels of residential development and make the upper level of housing into a park/performance area.
- I support the least dense option A that will serve middle income families and low maintenance homes for elderly community members. The Shanlee (?) development has lots it cannot sell.
- Too many units, do not need 3-story buildings.
- Cut 16 acre tract in half - park - public space the top of entire tract.
- I support higher density housing (small or shared yards) in limited areas with most of the area in a community park and trails. Some wetland area and steeply sloped forested area put into conservation easement.
- Need a county (local facility) pavilion, park, trails, possible farmer's market, etc. We don't need high density development.
- It does not fit the area of Ferrum.

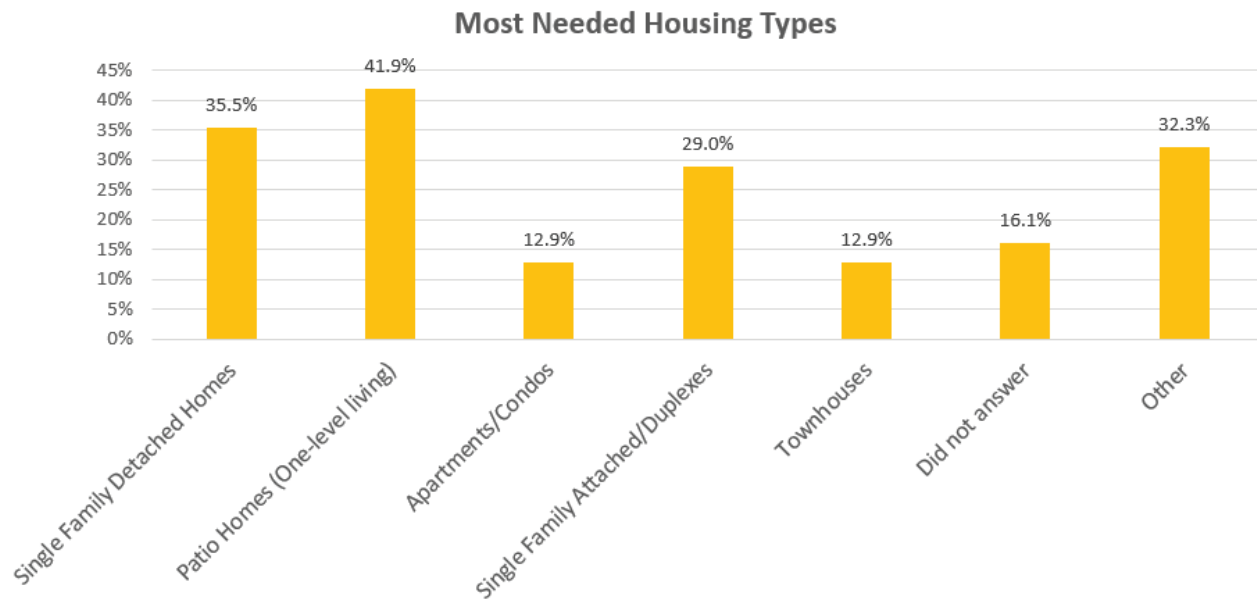
- The reason stated for additional housing will require additional resources such as healthcare, transportation, grocery stores, school, etc. that are not being considered. All of these things will require additional taxes to the community in order to support. This is not affordable!
- This is a poor area option for housing development, especially in regards to elderly and low income communities due to lack of infrastructure and services. These communities would be best served in a location near Rocky Mount or Roanoke.
- Too many unaffordable options. No limits for age or size to keep it affordable.
- "A - too many large lots - many large lots already exist in the county.
- B - No park. Apartments need to be no more than 2 stories.
- C - Still no park. "
- I moved to a rural area for a reason. Ferrum should remain small. Many residents strongly oppose extra housing.
- Too many lots, too small. They will not sell. Stormwater management areas too small. This is not a flat area like the examples listed.
- "30-40 lots total. Trails and public space.
- A - 169 lots or units
- B - 274 lots or units
- C - 353 lots or units"
- Impact to the environment - wishes to see something more focused on community use. Don't feel the County considered what Ferrum wants.
- Would like to see a wildlife refuge.
- Too many houses on project and to get water and sewage to that many that is projected is too costly for the county.
- I would like to see a park for Ferrum.

If you have a preferred development alternative(s), how would you improve upon it?

- Seniors will more than likely want a garage apartment or a single family home. These areas close to emergency and community facilities would be nice.
- Mixed income levels; need some garage townhomes; like townhomes level for seniors.
- Include community center/space for existing residents and new residents.
- New firehouse - include 4 bays - second floor meeting room and emergency shelter - full on site generator.
- All looks good.
- Small business office space for small business owners who live in Ferrum but don't have options for having our business here.
- Do think a good grocery store would work in area.
- I don't know who will fund this development. The wetlands need to remain untouched. The primary goal should be to serve the aging population - that is the "growing" population.
- Include some senior housing with potential for assisted living.
- I like the mixed-use idea - please consider energy efficiency in design and building.
- Park land. Elder housing. Community Center.
- Mixed income community focused on affordable housing that fits well into the natural environment.
- More single family housing on larger lots - 5 acres each. Allowing homeowners to be more farming - this would fit into the community of Ferrum. Bring more farming.
- No development, leave the land in its natural state. Walking trails that do not interrupt the natural resource of the land. Park-like setting that does not destroy the trees and natural surroundings.

- Maintain natural setting. This could be used as a park since the Blue Ridge District is lacking in parks and recreation facilities. Ideally a public swimming pool could be built. Other considerations: high school/middle school.
- A park.
- Have we consulted a denomination such as the United Methodist Church or the United Church of Christ about a senior housing complex?
- 10 acre tops used for housing, affordable housing under \$140,000.
- I would like to see a park combined with cost-effective housing.

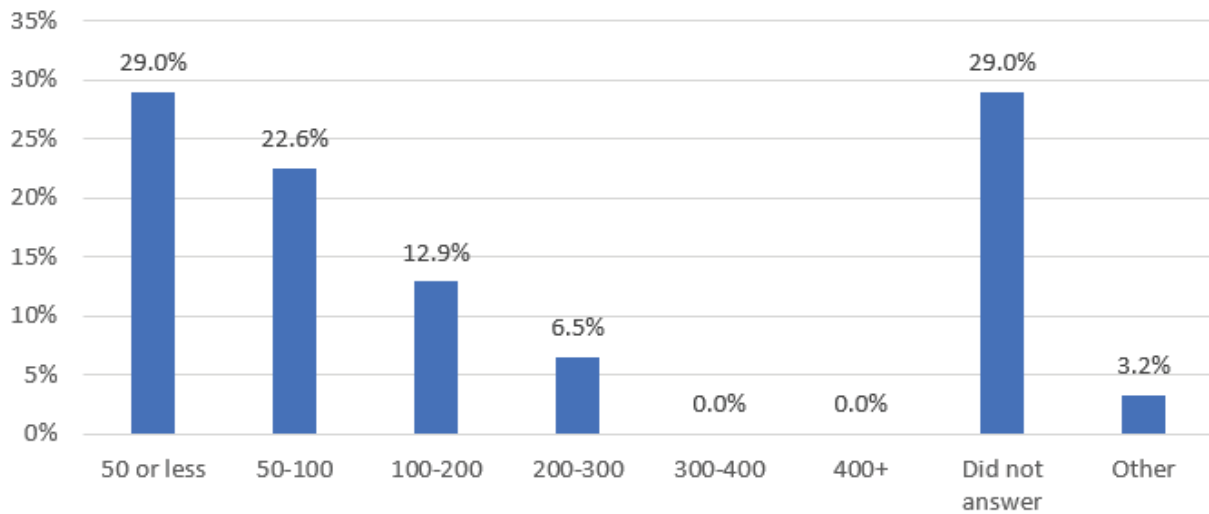
Question		Percentage	TALLY	TOTAL
What type(s) of housing is most needed in this area?				
Single Family Detached Homes		35.5%	11	
Patio Homes (One-level living)		41.9%	13	
Apartments/Condos		12.9%	4	
Single Family Attached/Duplexes		29.0%	9	31
Townhouses		12.9%	4	
Did not answer		16.1%	5	
Other		32.3%	10	



Question		Percentage
What density (how many units) of housing do you think is appropriate for this property?		
50 or less	29.0%	
50-100	22.6%	
100-200	12.9%	
200-300	6.5%	
300-400	0.0%	
400+	0.0%	
Did not answer	29.0%	
Other	3.2%	

TALLY	TOTAL
9	
7	
4	
2	
0	31
0	
9	
1	

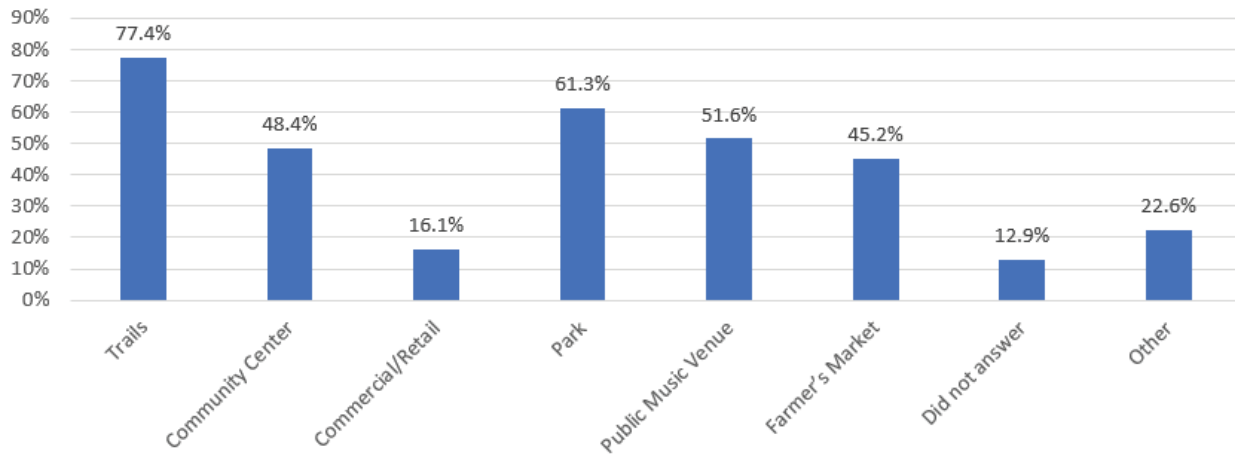
Appropriate Density (units) for Area



Question		Percentage
What community or public amenities would you like to see as part of this development?		
Trails	77.4%	
Community Center	48.4%	
Commercial/Retail	16.1%	
Park	61.3%	
Public Music Venue	51.6%	
Farmer's Market	45.2%	
Did not answer	12.9%	
Other	22.6%	

TALLY	TOTAL
24	
15	
5	
19	
16	31
14	
4	
7	

Desired Amenities



Other Comments

- Happy to see trails and natural areas at top of maps.
- With all the housing - A, B, and C - how would fire, police, public safety, schools handle 1,000 plus people to the area? What about the farmers already established - with additional people added to our community, would the smell of cows, horses, chickens upset these new tenants? The mom and pop stores could never accommodate 1,000 plus people. Next there be talks of a food chain store going in. What about the endangered species of wildlife? Is there plans on the effects on wildlife? Water runoff - how will that be handled? Roadways would need improvement - more traffic - next there will be a traffic light.
- I am fully opposed to developing this land for housing. A developer will come and destroy the natural setting of this property. Many animals, plants, water flow, and etc. will be impacted "destroyed." Additionally, it makes no sense to build senior housing with no transportation, hospital, or other amenities. Also, this is not a good location for commuters. The 2-lane road will not support the residential expansion. Next the Board of Supervisors will be recommending and pushing a 4-lane highway through Ferrum. Simply, I say no.
- There should be a meeting with local residents with County officials to discuss options for the property. To date, this seems to have been missed and instead the County is grandstanding towards development.
- I'm incredibly disappointed that the County is presenting these options with no intent to do any of this. No requirements of the developers, no funds for parks. You're lying to people.
- Leave as many trees as possible - no clear cutting. Definitely include a park. We need senior housing with lawn maintenance - affordable. No buildings over 2 stories. No Wal-Mart. Will there be another entrance and exit? If not, traffic could be problematic, especially so close to the elementary school.
- Use existing building for local communities activities. Plenty of abandoned buildings for small, local business. Many abandoned homes in Franklin County - fix them up and resell for low cost. Elderly housing will require more amenities and disrupt our community. Any large increase in housing will ruin this community. Build in the city.
- I am not opposed to single level unit of no more homes than our current water and sewage system will support. Don't feel the County has listened to the wishes of our community. We live rural because we like rural.

- I agree the fire department is a must. No to any type of housing and other development for many environmental, just keeping it country, scenic, and much more reasons. I live here for the mountains, serenity, community as it always has. I'm liking Ed Saunders idea. I have some more info I like to know but it is much better park idea. With venue maybe if we all get input in it.