



Ashton Village Center

SECTOR PLAN

Montgomery Planning

Division or project name

11/19/2020

Agenda item 06

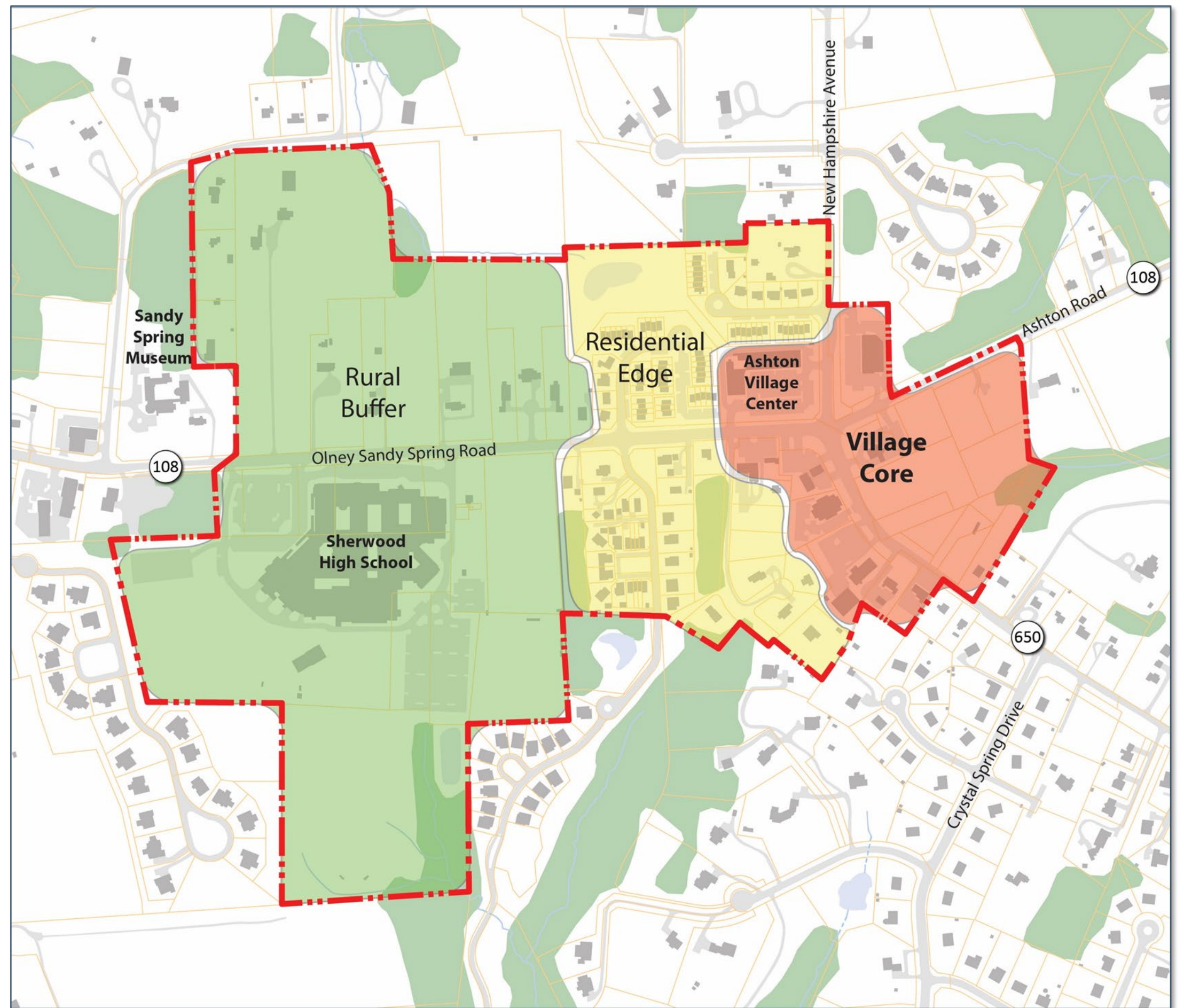
Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Work Session #2



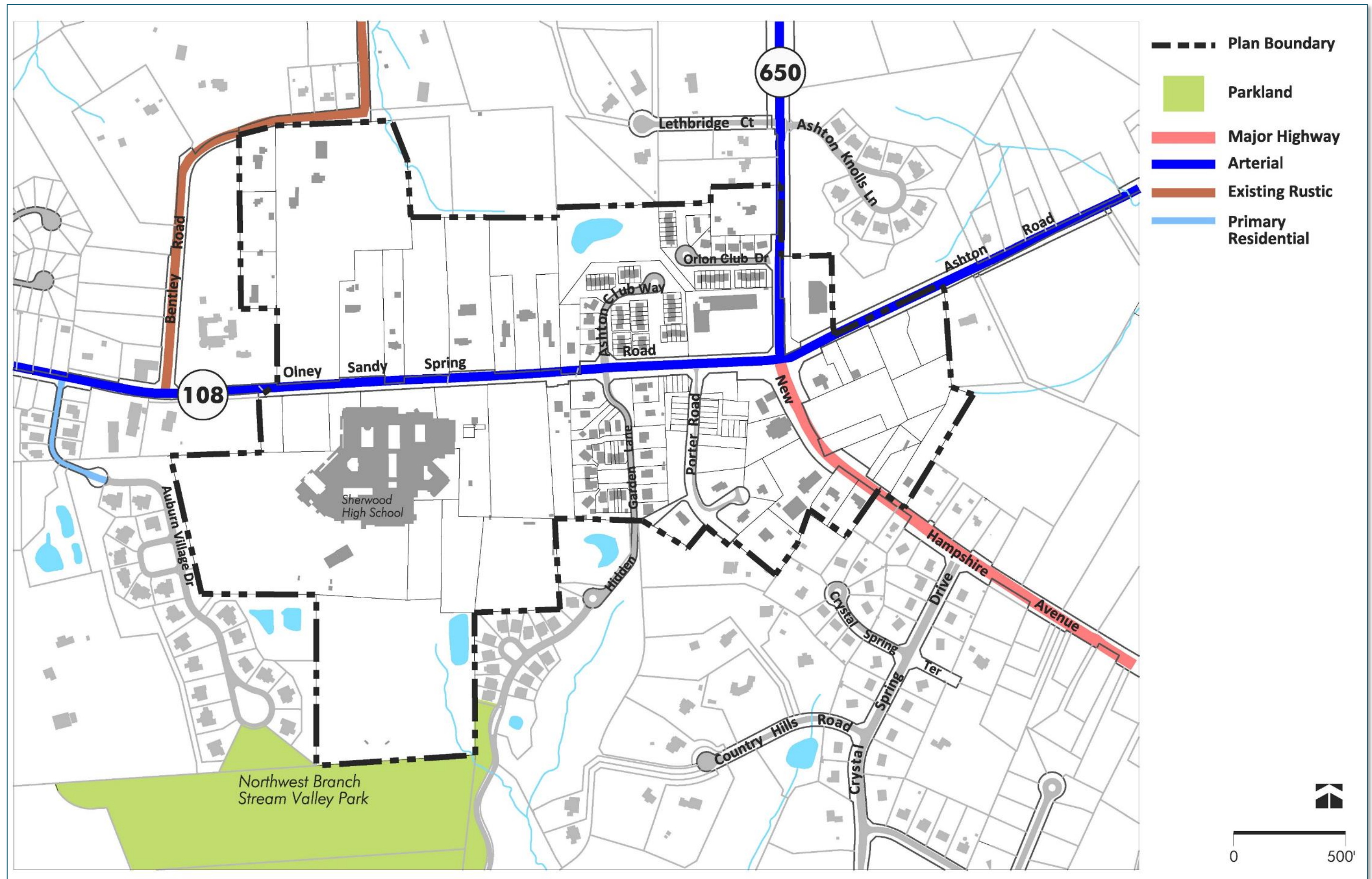
Topics

- Worksession #1 (October 29th)
 - Community Facilities, Open Space and Trails
 - Environment
 - Historic Preservation
 - Land Use and Zoning
- **Worksession #2 (Today)**
 - Connectivity, Transportation and Circulation
 - Community Design and Design Guidelines
 - Implementation and Implementation Advisory Committee



Roadways

- Reconfirm two-lane road policy
- Maintain pavement width except for safety improvements
- Prioritize signal timing and lane reconfiguration



Roadways

Comments:

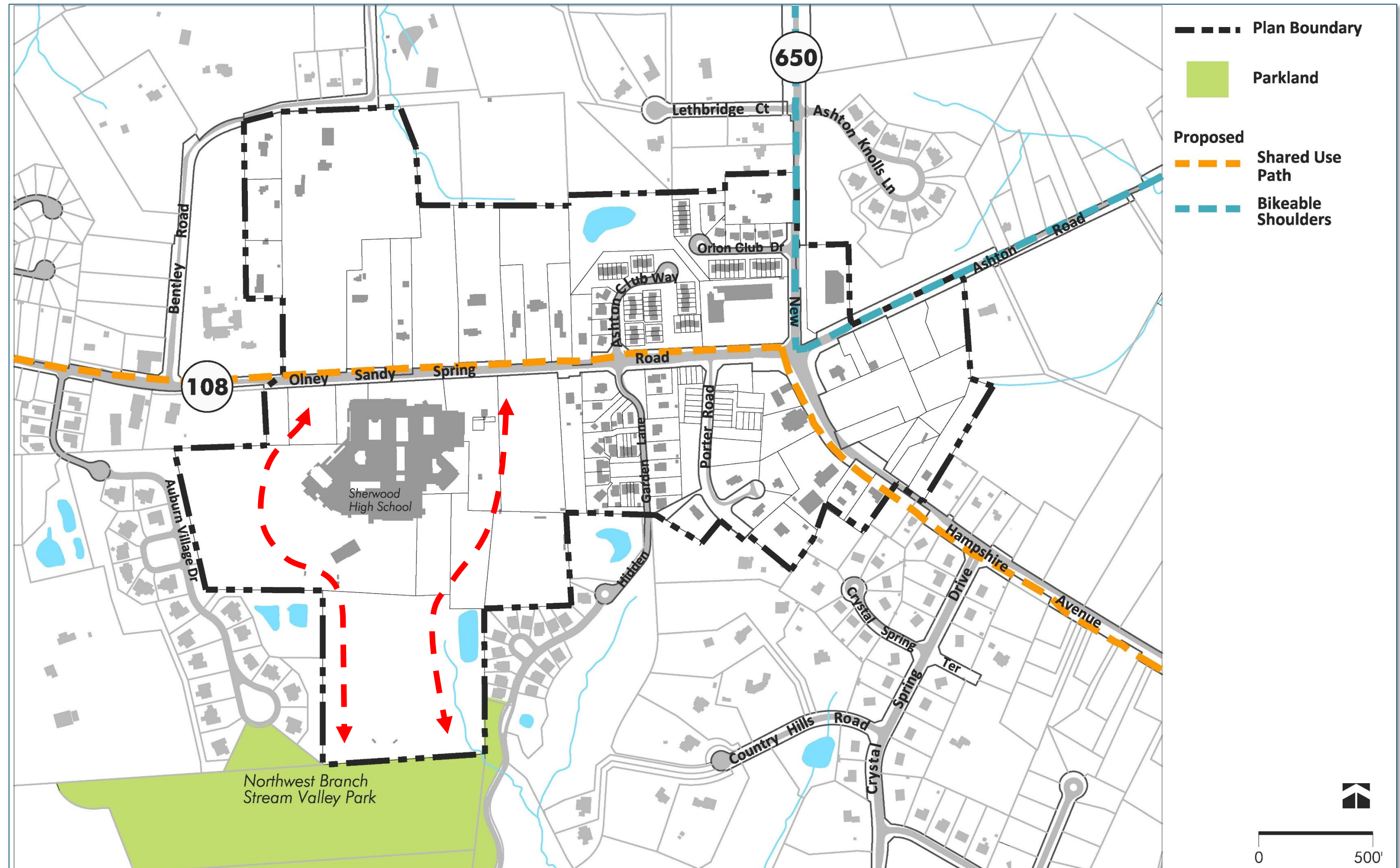
- Concerns about traffic in Ashton (three rush hours)
- Long wait times at MD 108/650 intersection
- New development will worsen traffic

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendation to maintain the current pavement width except for improvements that increase safety

Bikeways

- Shared-use paths
- Bikeable shoulders



Pedestrian Improvements

- Crossing Signals
- ADA Ramps
- Sidewalks
- Shared-use paths
- Crosswalks
- Lighting



Pedestrian Improvements

- Revised traffic signal and crosswalk



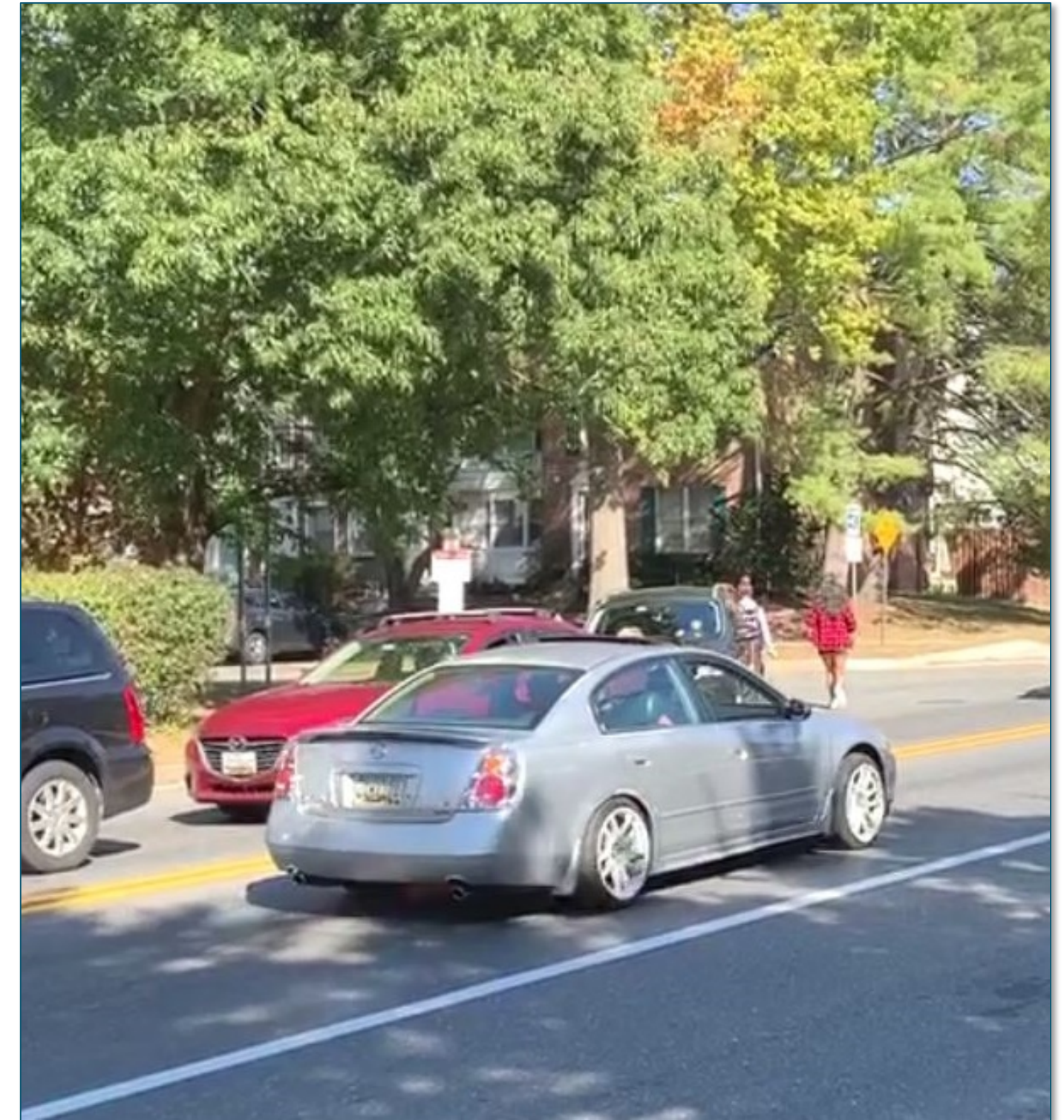
Bikeways and Pedestrian Network

Comments:

- Widely supported
- Lack of funding
- Skepticism that students would use crosswalk

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian improvements



Public Transportation

Comments:

- Residents were skeptical about the Plan's recommendations to provide expanded bus service
- WMATA recently tried to eliminate the one limited-service bus route through Ashton
- New residents will be dependent on cars

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendation. Increasing transit access is a high priority for the County and in this Plan area



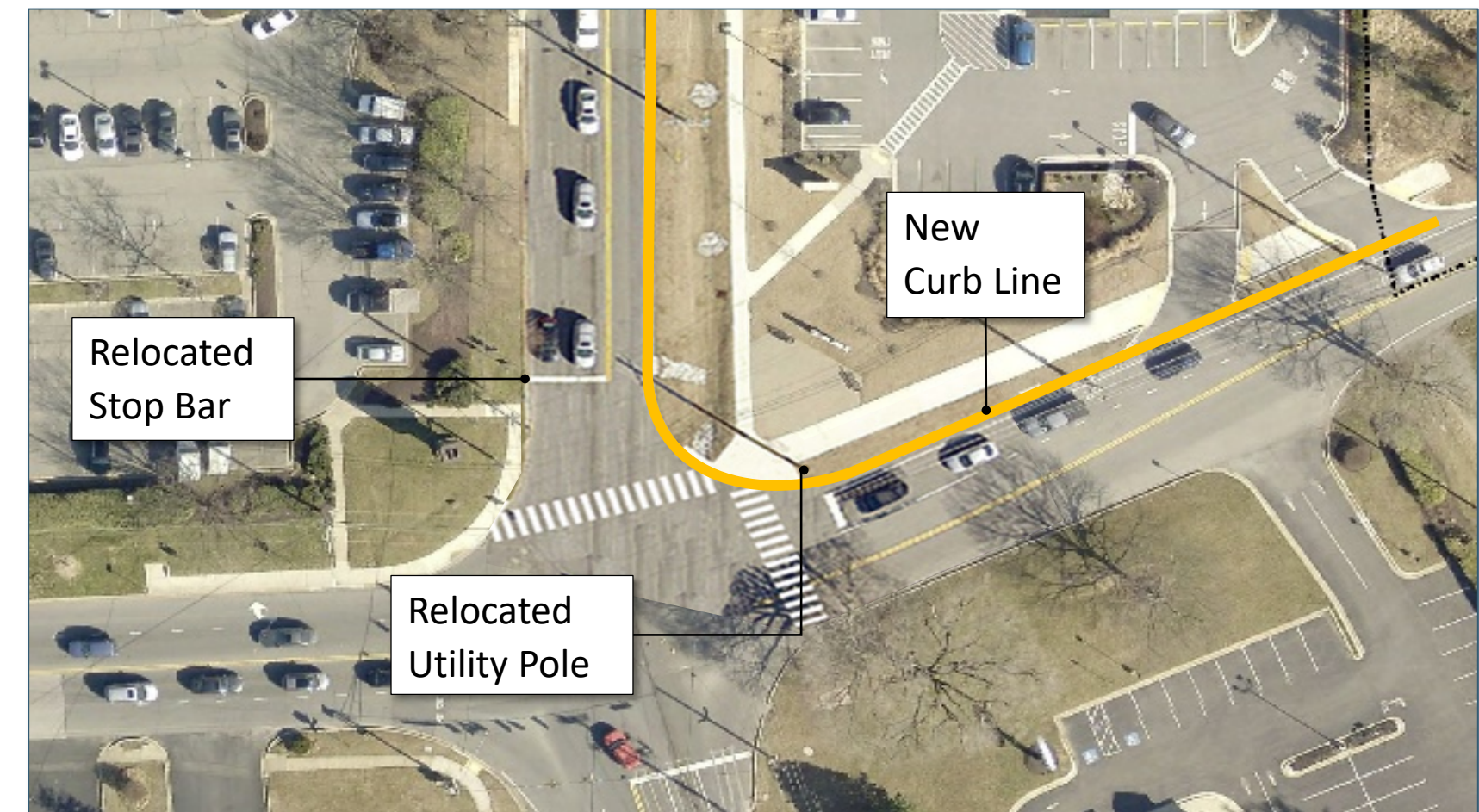
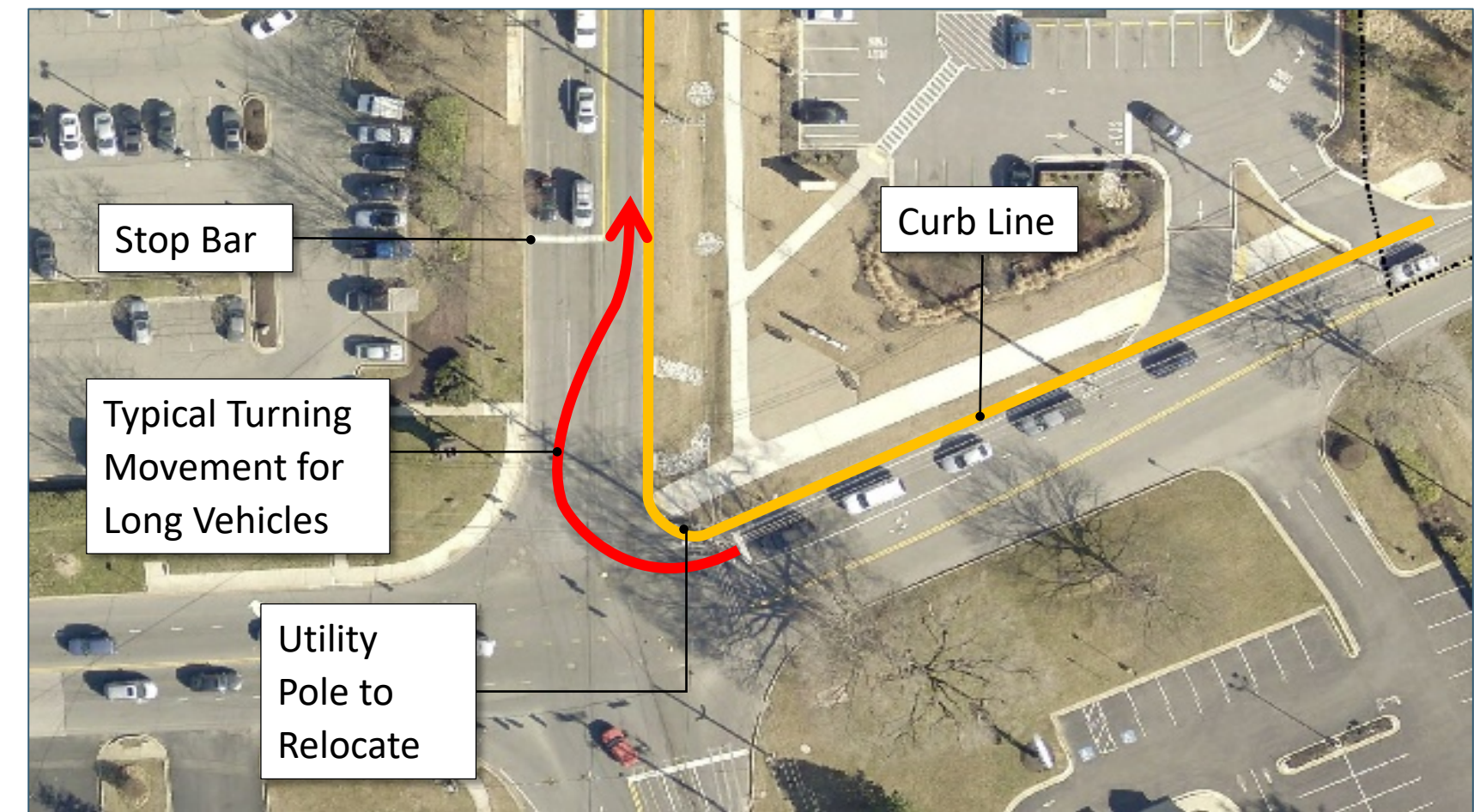
Northeast Quadrant

Comments:

- Widely supported

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendation



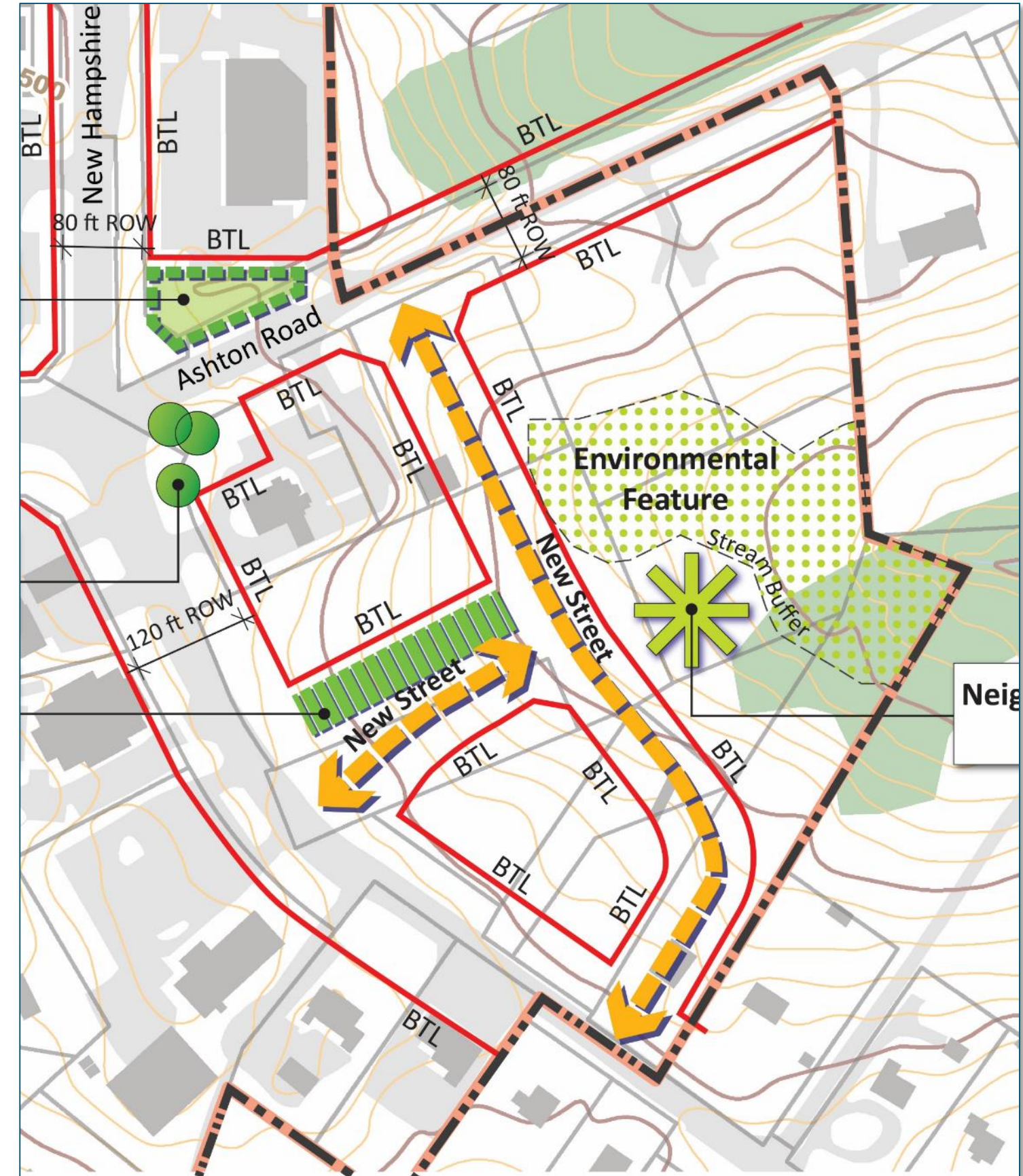
Southeast Quadrant

Comments:

- Concerns with more intersections along MD 108 and MD 650
- Change “shall” to “should” regarding designing circulation to discourage cut-through traffic

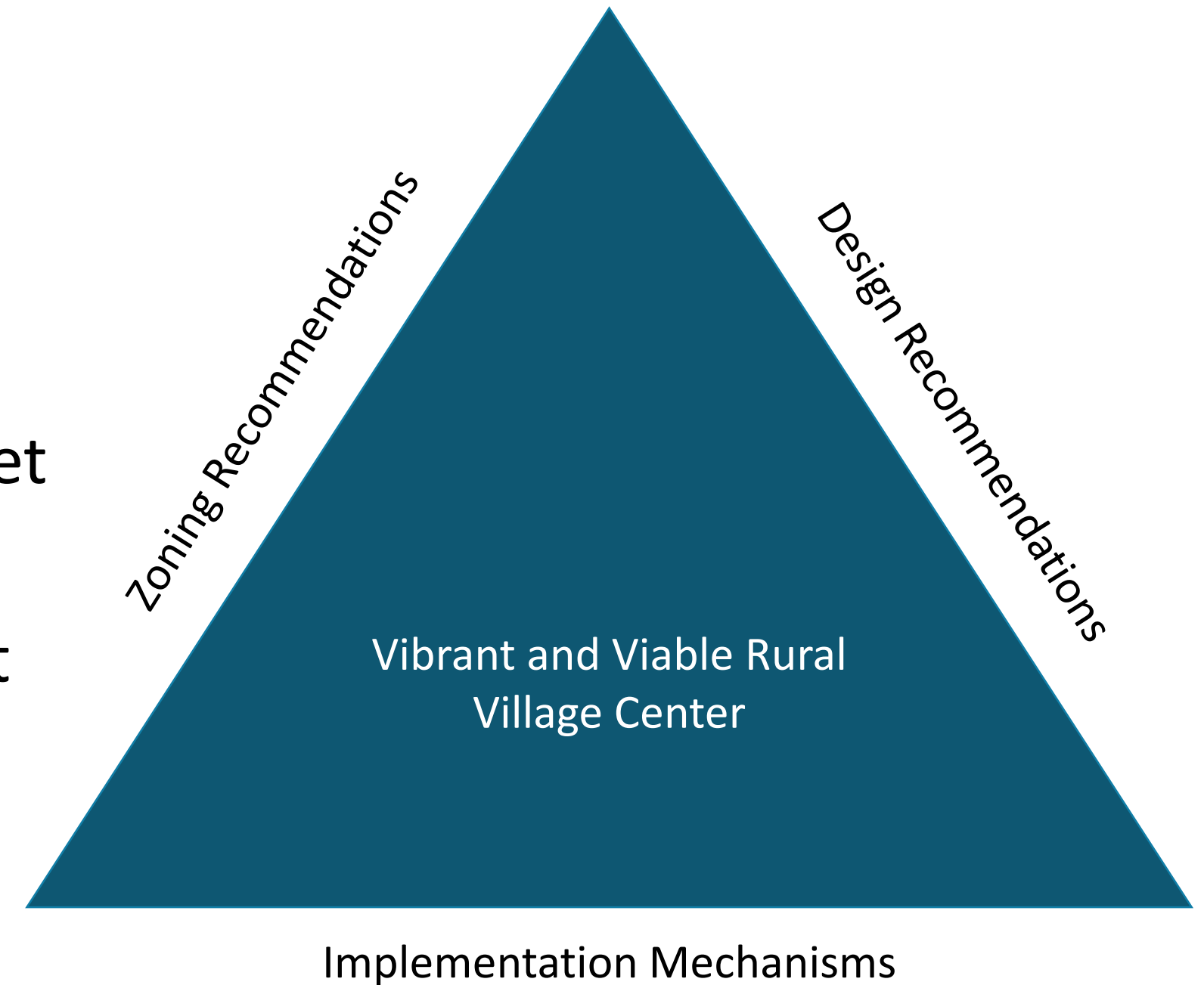
Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan’s recommendations



Community Design

- Refines uses, forms, and placement of structures
- Buildings spaced farther apart at village edges
- Varying setbacks
- Buildings pulled closer together and closer to street at village center
- Buildings are sometimes set back for an important purpose



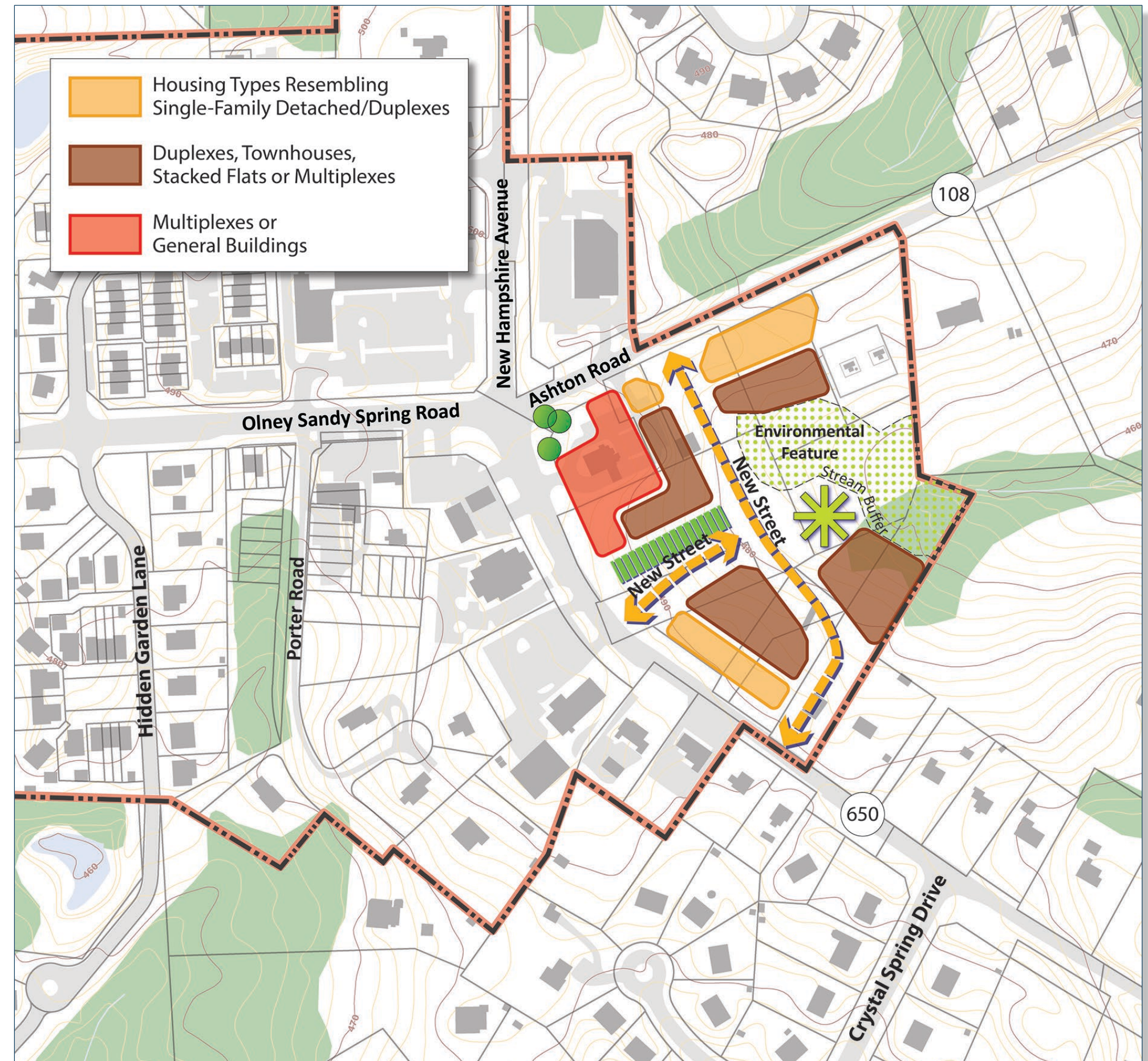
Community Design

- Recommended CRN zone covers basic design elements
 - Building placement
 - Orientation
 - Height
- Design recommendations
 - Visual interest and architectural details
 - Engaging public realm
 - Enhance rather than detract from the village



Southeast Quadrant Building Transition

- Various housing types resembling single-family detached houses or duplexes line the state roads from the southern and eastern edges of the Plan boundary
- Mixed uses are located adjacent to the intersection
- Denser residential buildings interior to site



Building Height

Comments:

- Concerns that a uniform allowed height of 40 feet would not provide an adequate transition
- Property owner's concern: it would be difficult to reach viable density with varied rooflines if the height of the zone is not increased to 45 feet

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendation to use building height and massing to transition between Village Core and low-scale adjacent farms and housing



Thomas Village Townhouses

Vary Building Heights of Adjacent Buildings

Comments:

- Community concerns that *all* buildings would be 40 feet high
- Property owner's concerns:
 - It would be difficult to reach viable density with varied rooflines if the height of the zone is not increased to 45 feet
 - Change Plan's recommendation to specify a majority of *residential* buildings should contain pitched roofs, not all buildings
 - If flat roofs are used *in residential, mixed-use, or commercial buildings*, they should include a cornice.

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendations varying building heights between adjacent buildings to prevent a monolithic look in the village center

Low-Scale Building Form Along State Roads

Comments:

- Property owner's concerns:
 - Finds this to be a significant restriction
 - Undercuts the ability to create a community with a variety of building types and architectural details
 - Would depress achievable density
 - Makes it difficult to locate a multi-family building along the main roads or create the desired building transition

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendation for building width, massing, and façade treatment fronting state roads to suggest a single-family detached or duplex building form

Architecture & Building Materials

Comments:

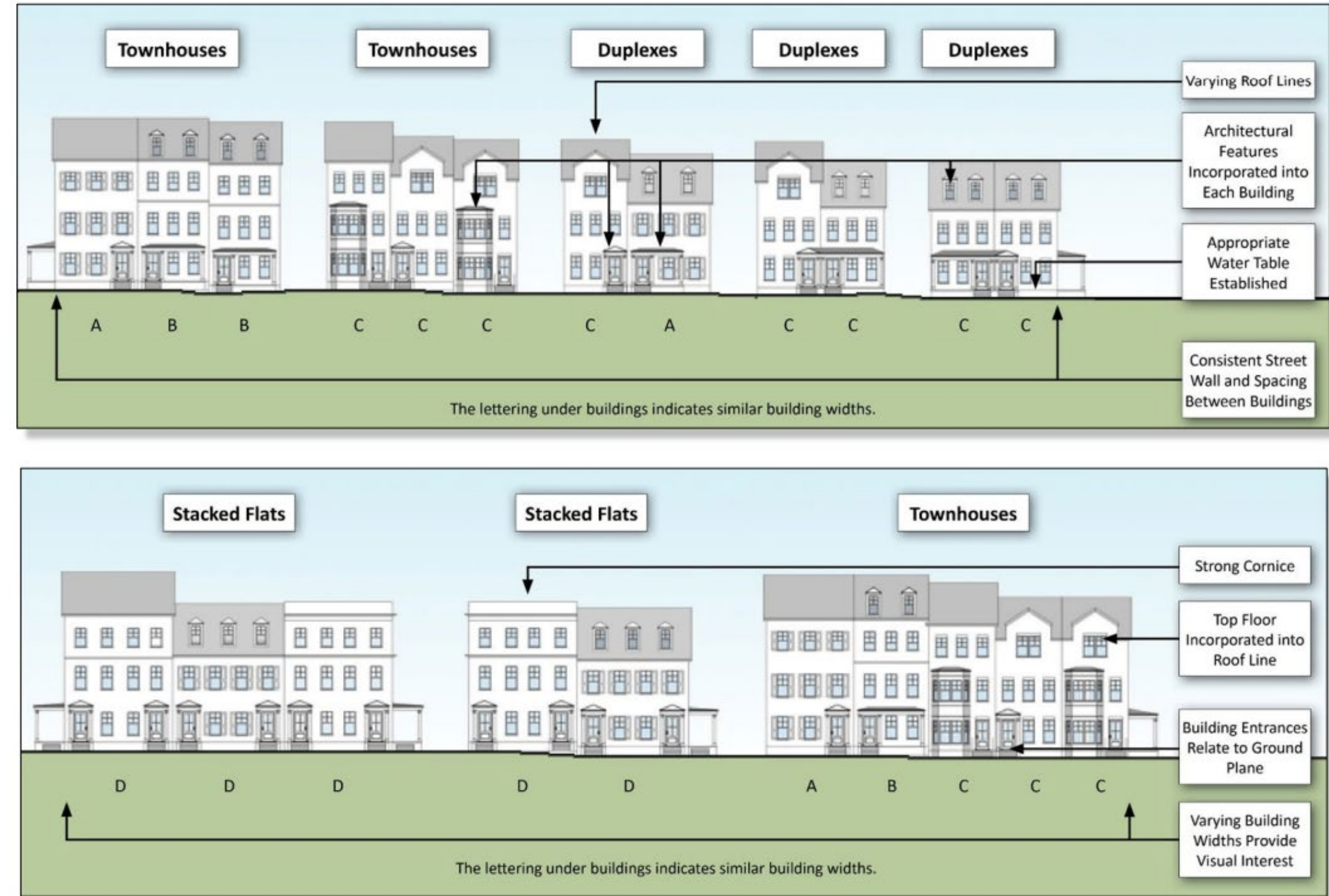
- General support for recommendations
- Property owner: Add cement fiber siding imitating wood cladding

Staff Recommendation:

- Revise the Plan language to include cement fiber siding imitating wood cladding

Design Guidelines

- Deeper approach than community design recommendations
- Define desired outcomes
- Provide context



Building Types in Design Guidelines and Plan Recommendations

Comments:

- No apartment buildings
- Some apartments are fine, but not “massive” apartment buildings
- Support for residential units above commercial space near intersection

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan’s recommendations that allow for small apartment buildings in some quadrants, up to 12 units, or residential units above commercial space

Building Lengths

Comments:

- Property owner: Increase allowed building lengths:
 - From 80 to 90 feet for residential buildings along the main road
 - From “slightly longer” than 80 feet to 120 feet for other building types along the main road
 - From 120 to 150 feet on non-state roads
 - Provision to allow Planning Board to approve longer buildings if it would better serve the Plan objectives and the public interest
- Several people disagree with increasing building lengths

Staff recommendation:

- Revise the Plan text and add corresponding Plan recommendations regarding building widths:
 - Residential only buildings should not exceed 80 feet in width along the main roads
 - At no point should a building exceed 120 feet in width, no Board approval of alternative design

Precedent Images

Comments:

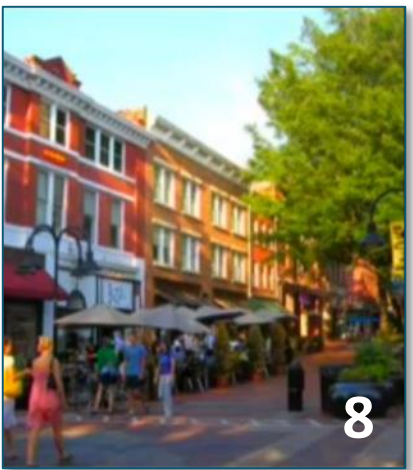
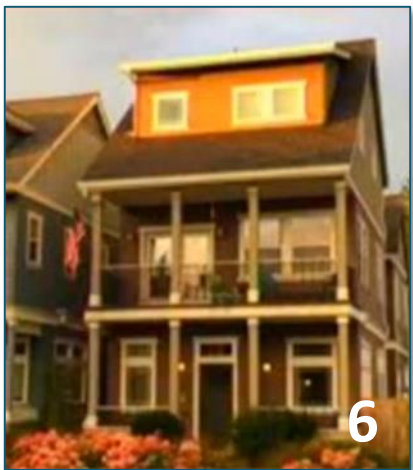
- Property owner: Some of the precedent images in the Plan would not be allowed

Staff recommendation:

- Retain the images in the Plan to show examples of the guidelines consistent with a rural village



Precedent Images from the Public Hearing Draft



Proposed Nichols Precedent Images



Building Materials

Comments:

- Property owner: Add text “of each individual building” after “all façades” in the Plan’s recommendation for building materials

Staff recommendation:

- Revise the plan text to add the requested language

Plan recommendation: “Façades should be composed of durable materials that are indicative of a rural village such as brick, stone, wood or cement fiber, and should be clad in a way that clearly convey a particular architectural style. All façades **of each individual building** should be composed of the same building materials.”

Open Spaces

Comments:

- Property owner:
 - Requested text changes to make it clear that private open spaces are also possible
 - Allow these private open spaces to be fenced
 - Add the word “public” to the recommendation regarding how open spaces should be designed

Staff recommendation:

- Revise the Plan text to clarify that private open spaces would also be allowed

Plan recommendation: “New open spaces shall be well-designed, appropriately scaled and, **where practical, publicly accessible to all. Small private open spaces are allowed but may not be fenced if doing so would prevent access to or make access to public open spaces more difficult.**”

Plan recommendation: “**Public** open spaces need to have an appropriate location and adequate size so that they are perceived as public, inviting and visually accessible to the immediate residents and the surrounding community.”

Parking

Comment:

- Property owner:
 - Include “driveways” as another place where parking can be accommodated off-street
 - Indicate that alleys can also be used for parking

Staff recommendation:

- Revise the Plan language to insert driveways, but retain the Plan language in reference to alleys:
- Plan Recommendation: “Any parking not in garages, **driveways** or parking pads off alleys should be accommodated on-street, unless excess space in the alley allows for a small separate parking area with shade trees.”
- Owner’s proposed recommendation (**not supported by staff**): “Alleys are used for service purposes, such as **parking**, access to garages[,] **and** parking pads and trash pickup. Alleys do not need to be oversized and compete with streets, which are a primary organizing element in neighborhoods. The width of alleys should be narrow enough to be safe for service vehicles. Additional residential parking should occur on streets in the form of parallel parking.”

Other Design Guideline Comments

Comments:

- Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium (SSARPC): Support for the design guidelines and several included elements, such as:
 - Townhouses with small front yards
 - Varying and limited heights in a variety of architectures
 - Staggered façades
 - A variety of colors
 - Stacked flats that resemble duplexes of single-family homes with porches, small front yards and broad stairways
- Lights should be full cutoff

Staff recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendations

Design Guidelines: Plan Chapter or Standalone Document

Comments:

- Property owner: Requests that the design guidelines be extracted from the Sector Plan as a standalone document
 - Would allow Planning Board to review and approve
 - Wouldn't require a Plan amendment to change
 - Would avoid elevating extremely specific provisions to master plan recommendations
 - Would allow flexibility in their implementation

Staff Recommendation:

- Staff intends the guidelines be strong to ensure that rural village character is maintained. Retain the design guidelines in the Sector Plan

Implementation Advisory Committee

Comments:

- Provides a formal channel of communication
- Provides oversight of development activity and capital improvement projects to ensure the Plan's vision is maintained
- Requested veto power over plans that threaten rural character
- Property owner:
 - Requested we eliminate the committee:
 - Only one main developer
 - The site plan process already provides opportunities for community input
 - Would only increase delays and costs
 - If implemented, provided several suggestions for make-up and functioning of the IAC

Implementation Advisory Committee

Staff Recommendation:

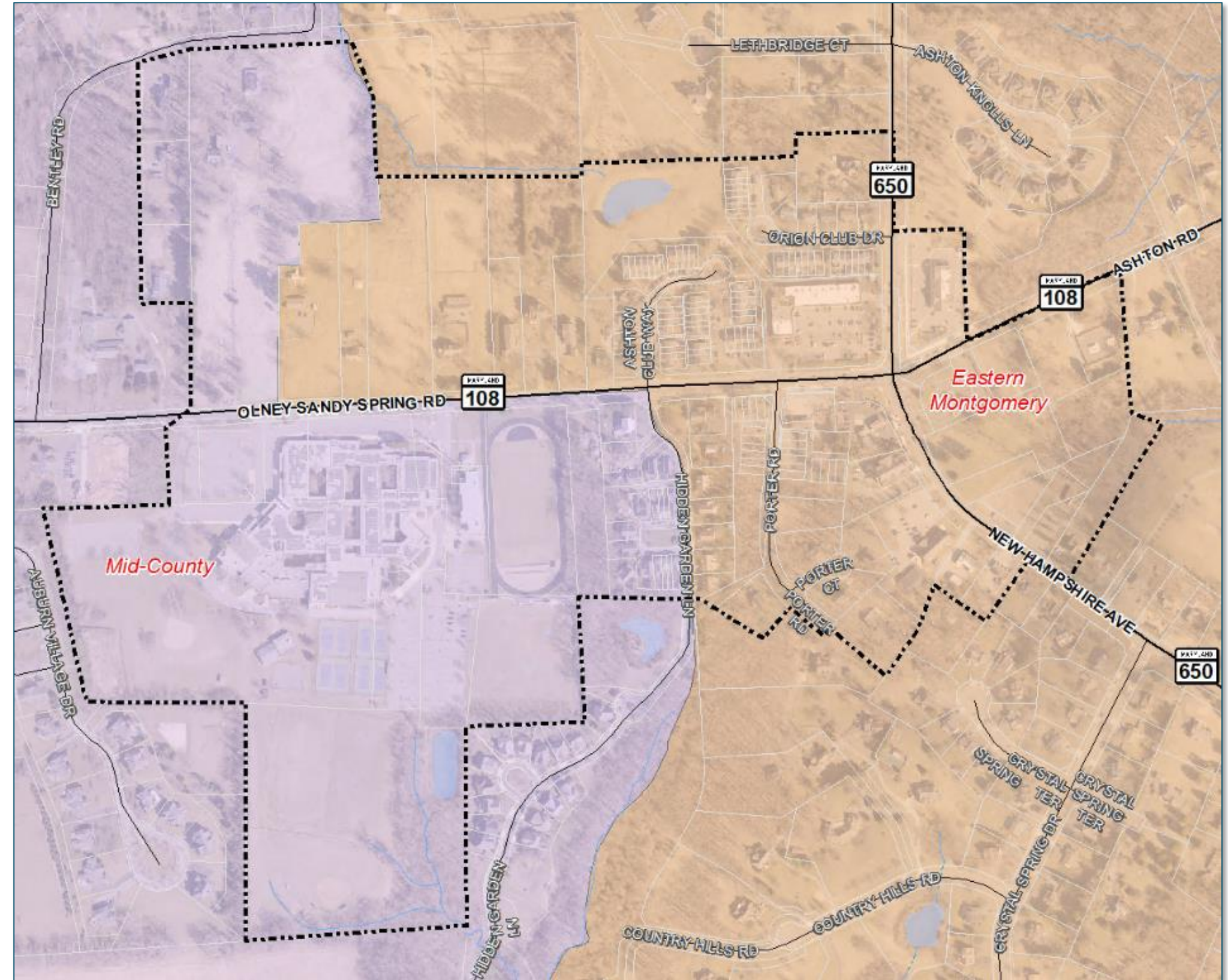
- Retain the Plan's recommendation
 - Details to be determined after the Plan is adopted but would likely include:
 - Any development project would go to the IAC
 - IAC would comment on all development review aspects
 - IAC would address non-development concerns, such as capital improvement projects
 - Should not cause unreasonable costs or delays
 - Applies to the entire Plan area
 - Do not support giving the IAC veto power

Regional Services Center

Mid-County versus Eastern Montgomery

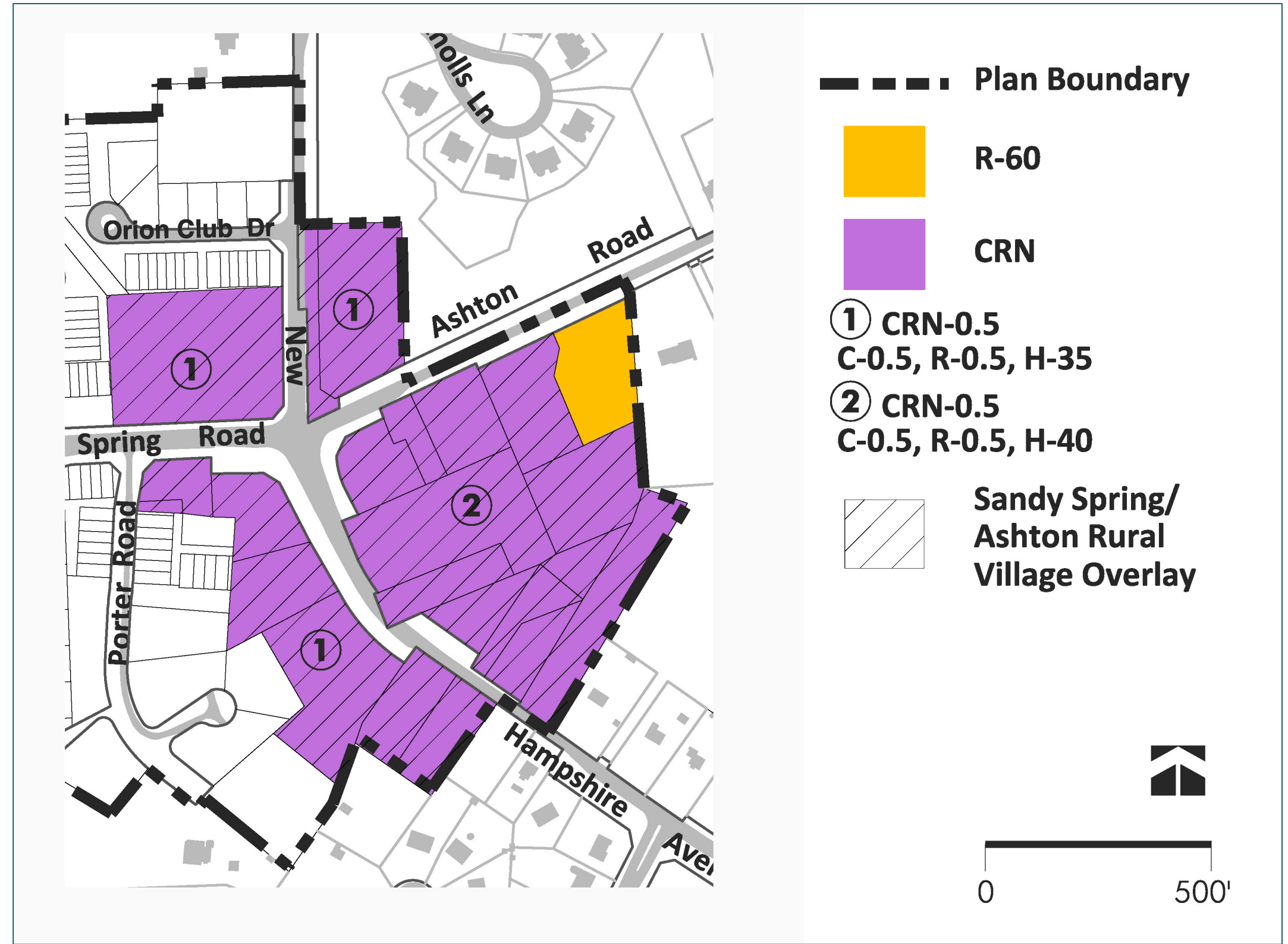
Staff Recommendation:

- Revise Plan to recommend working with the RSC that covers the project area
- Add recommendation to study process for changing RSC boundaries



Work Session #1 Revisited

- Southwest Quadrant: Ashton Market building
- Southeast Quadrant



Southwest Quadrant Zoning Revisited

Comments:

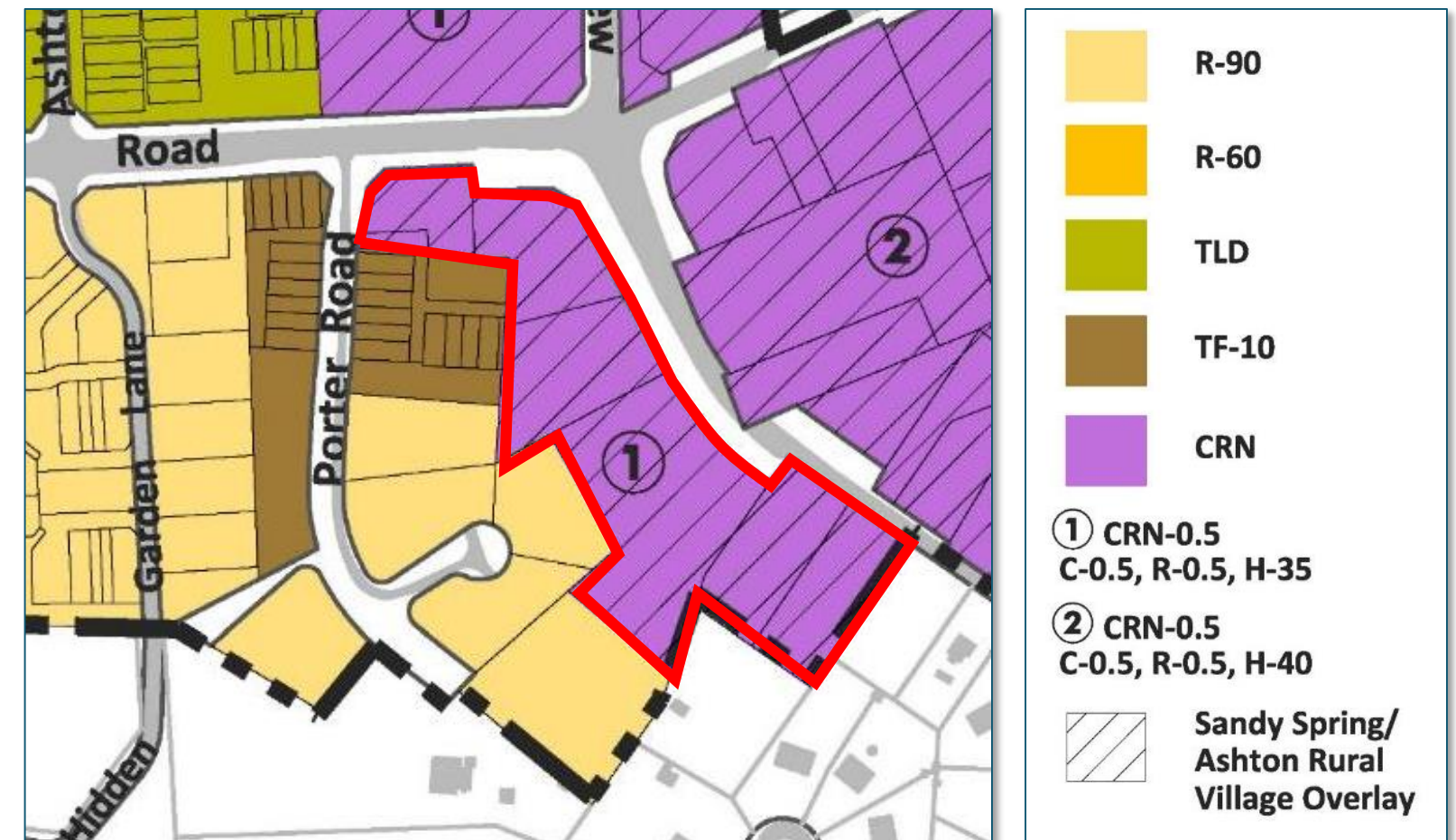
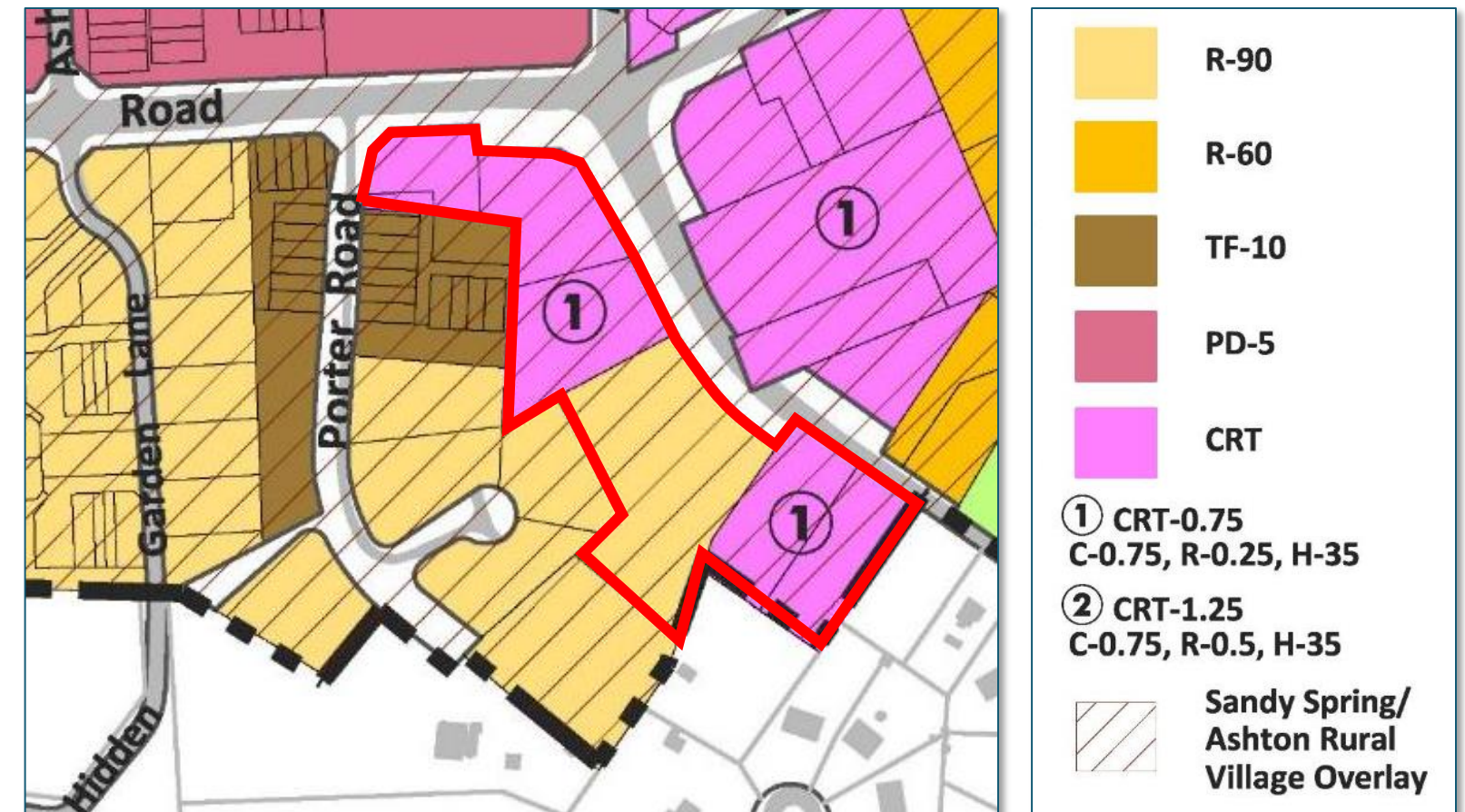
- CRN-0.75 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35
(written testimony) or
- CRN-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35
(public hearing testimony)



Southwest Quadrant Zoning Revisited

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan's recommendation (CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35)
 - Current approved densities: overall 0.34 FAR (C-0.23 R-0.11)
- Density of 0.75 FAR typically requires structured off-street parking or additional building heights which is not consistent with a rural village



Southeast Quadrant

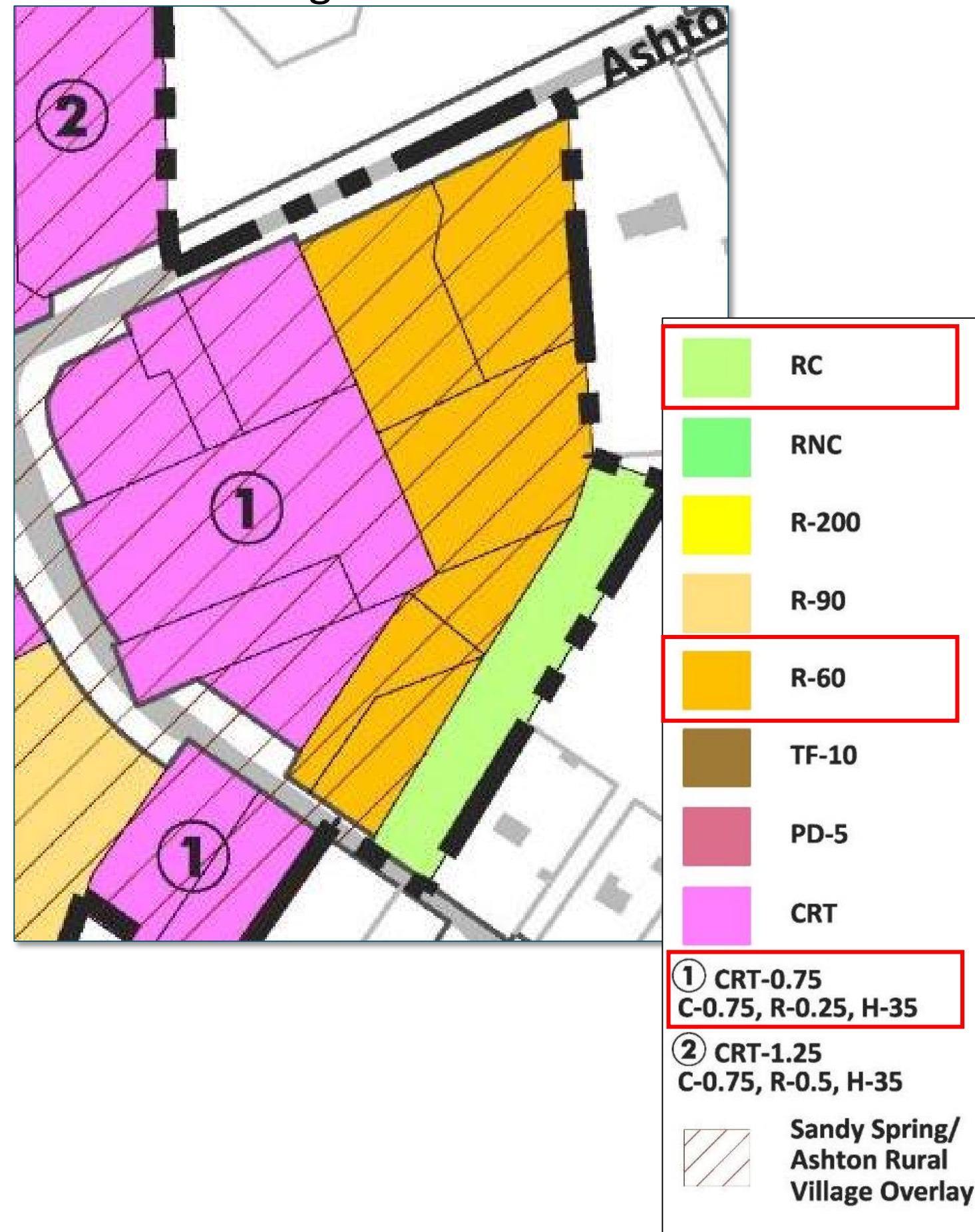
Comments:

- Much feedback: too dense and too high
- Property owner: Increase density and height:
CRN-0.75 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-45

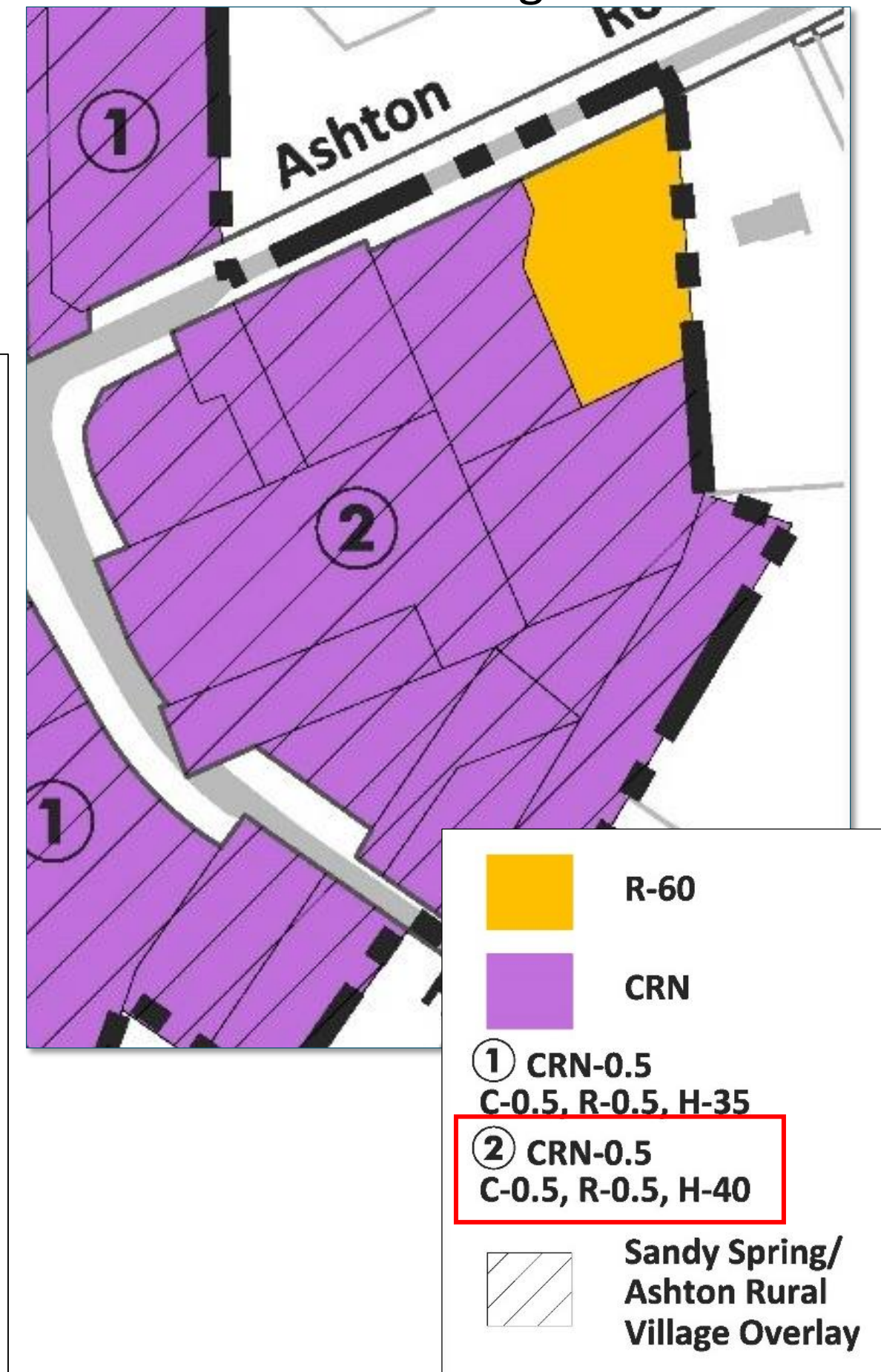
Work Session #1 Discussion:

- Housing needed in this area
- Property owner's request is marginal
- 0.75 FAR needed to achieve 0.55 or 0.6 FAR because assigned in .25 increments

Current Zoning



Recommended Zoning



Southeast Quadrant Zoning Revisited

Southeast Quadrant (CRN-0.5 proposed)	
Site Size	9.35 acres 407,095 SF
Total Development Allowed at 0.5 FAR	203,548 SF
Number of TH Units@2,375 SF	85
Environmental Buffer	68,000 SF
Site Size without Environmental Buffer	339,095 SF 7.78 acres
Effective Density on Developable Portion of Site	0.60 FAR



Southeast Quadrant

Staff Conceptual Scenario 1







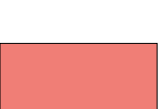
<div></div>	21-foot wide SFA	35 DU
<div></div>	24-foot SFA (Liner Townhouse)	14 DU
<div></div>	Apartments	18 DU
<div></div>	Commercial	9,750 sf
	FAR	0.44

Notes:
 Apartment units are assumed to be 1,250 sf/DU.
 Single-Family Attached are assumed to be 2,650 sf/DU.



Southeast Quadrant

Staff Conceptual Scenario 2

	Duplexes	4 DU
	18-foot wide SFA	10 DU
	21-foot wide SFA	7 DU
	24-foot SFA (Liner Townhouse)	12 DU
	Stacked Flats	36 DU
	Apartments	32 DU
	Commercial	12,000 sf
FAR		0.50

Notes:

Apartment units are assumed to be 1,250 sf/DU.







Single-Family Attached are assumed to range from 1,700 sf to 2,650 sf/DU.

Stacked Flats are assumed to be 1,000 sf/DU.



Southeast Quadrant

Staff Conceptual Scenario 3

	Duplexes	18 DU
	16-foot wide SFA	12 DU
	18-foot wide SFA	4 DU
	21-foot wide SFA	4 DU
	Stacked Flats	51 DU
	Multi Use (Residential)	21 DU
	Multi Use (Commercial)	13,600 sf
	FAR	0.43

Notes:

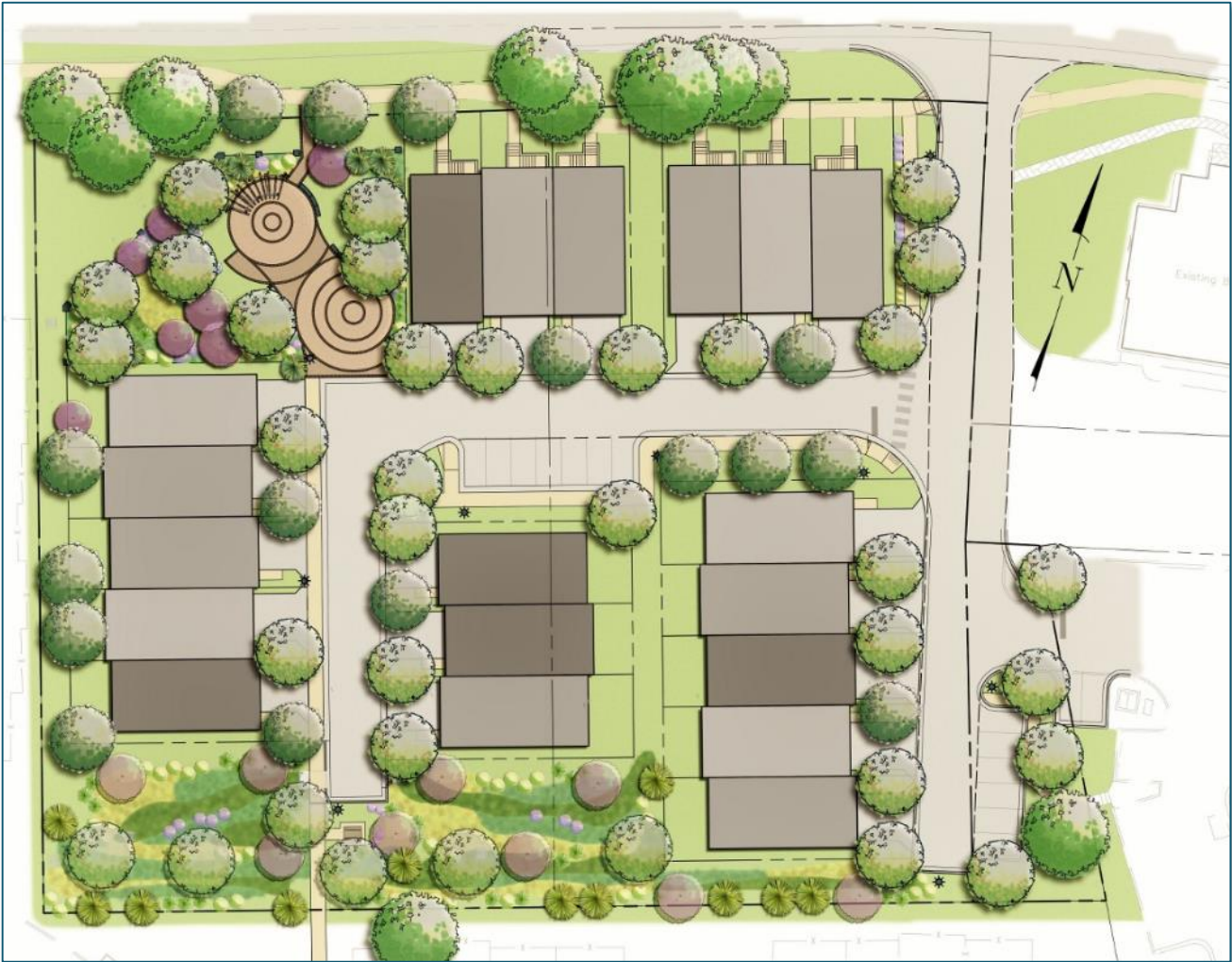
Apartment units are assumed to be 1,250 sf/DU.

Single-Family Attached are assumed to range from 1,600 sf to 2,100 sf/DU.

Stacked Flats are assumed to be 1,000 sf/DU.



Thomas Village (Sandy Spring)



Site Size	2.313 acres
Units	19
Gross Floor Area	45,120 SF
FAR	0.45
Common Open Space	22,140 SF (0.51 acres) - 25%
Building Height	45 feet (allowed) / 38 & 45 ft (approved)

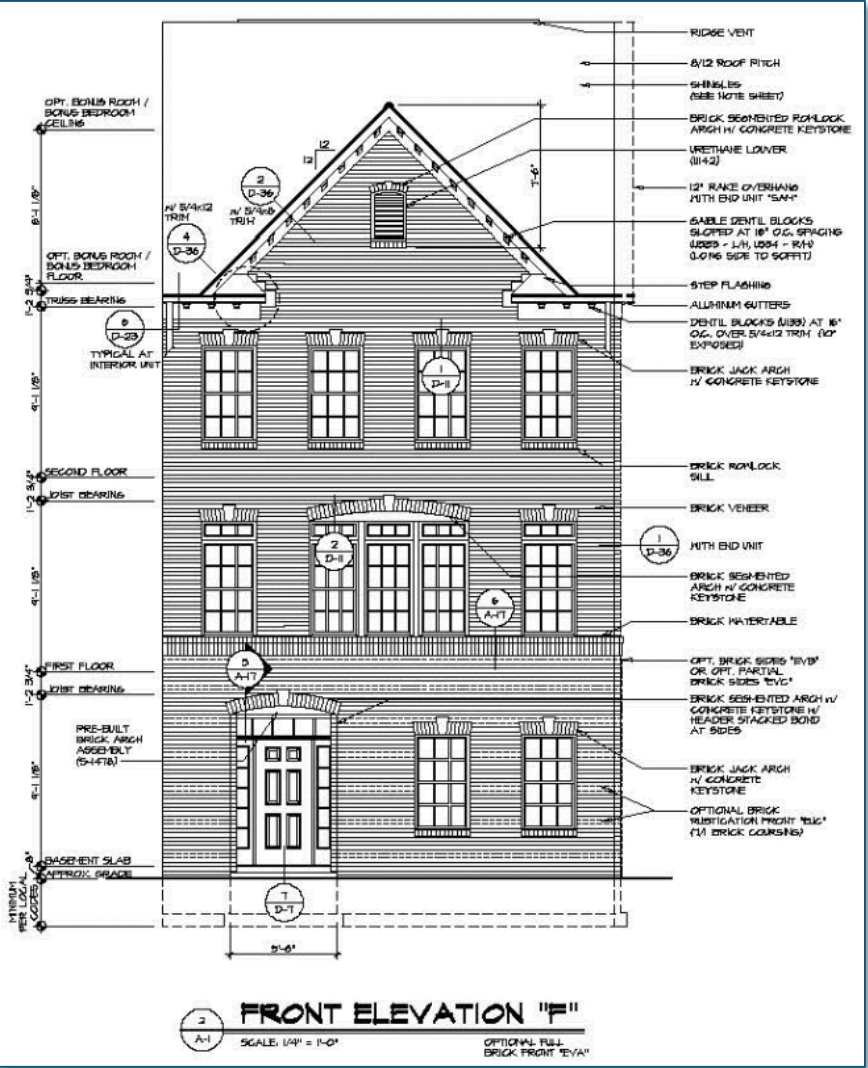
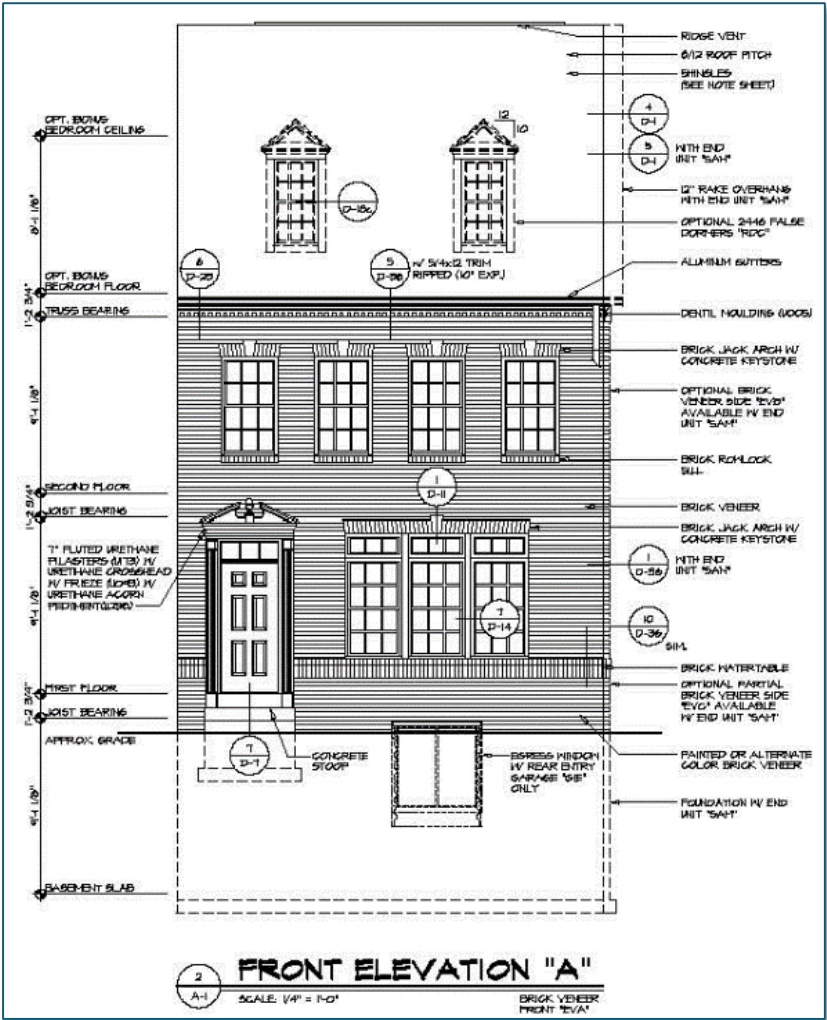
Ashton Market



FAR without 0.51-acre conservation easement: 0.51

FAR of townhouse section only: 0.47

Site Size	3.241 acres
Units	20 TH & 3 MF & 6,800 SF retail
Gross Floor Area	47,495 (est.) SF + 9,900 SF = 57,395 SF
FAR	0.41 (if calculated as if all CRN)
Open Space	2,000 + 10,500 SF = 12,500 SF (10.3%)
Building Height	30 & 40 feet (allowed) / 30, 35 & 40 ft (approved)



Rock Spring Park



Site Size	10.62 acres
Units	168
Gross Floor Area	268,461 SF
FAR	0.58
Open Space	28,750 SF (0.66 acres) - 6.2%
Building Height	60 feet (allowed) / ~43 ft (approved)



Google Street View image of completed townhouses along Rock Spring Drive

Southeast Quadrant Zoning Revisited

Summary of Why 0.5 FAR in Ashton:

- 1.5-acre environmental buffer creates a 'net' density of 0.6 FAR on the developable area
- Staff scenarios were all at or under 0.5
- Existing recent local development at or under 0.5
- Would need to revise design guidelines
 - Taller buildings
 - Larger/longer buildings
 - Structured parking

Southeast Quadrant Zoning Revisited

Zoning Scenario	Overall FAR	Commercial FAR	Residential FAR	Height
Retain existing zoning	0.75 (CRT) R-60 and RC	0.75	0.25	35
Apply recommended zoning (<i>staff</i>)	0.5	0.5	0.5	40
Reduce residential and height (<i>community support</i>)	0.5	0.5	0.25	35
“Split-zone” the quadrant (<i>community support</i>)	0.5	0.5	0.5	40
	0.5	0.5	0.25	35
Increase density and height (<i>property owner request</i>)	0.75	0.5	0.5	45

Staff Recommendation:

- Retain the Plan’s recommendation

Next Steps

- Return in December with all changes to be approved as the Planning Board Draft