

Attachment A - Staff Analysis

STAFF PERSON:	Rebecca Ragsdale, Principal Planner
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:	November 3, 2021
PROJECT:	SE202100032 The Square LLC Homestay
PROPERTY OWNERS:	The Square LLC c/o Ross and Amy Stevens
LOCATION:	1234 Carter Street
TAX MAP/PARCEL:	056A1-01-00-041A0
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT:	White Hall

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

This proposed homestay would add to the lodging offered by Stay in Crozet, a vacation rental business company under the same ownership as The Square LLC. Stay in Crozet currently manages several other lodging properties, zoned Downtown Crozet District. The property at 1234 Carter Street is zoned residential and must comply with homestay regulations. The applicant is seeking two special exceptions for this proposed homestay (Attachment B):

1. **Increase the Number of Guest Rooms-** The first special exception request is to increase the number of permitted guest rooms to three (3). County Code §18-5.1.48(j)(1)(iii) otherwise limits homestays on parcels zoned residential to two (2) guest rooms.
2. **Owner-occupancy** – The second special exception request is to waive the owner occupancy requirement of County Code § 18-5.1.48(j)(1)(v) to instead allow occupancy by a tenant resident manager, as authorized by County Code § 18-5.1.48(i)(1)(iv).

CHARACTER OF THE PROPERTY AND AREA:

The property is located on Carter Street, near its intersection with McComb Street, and consists of 0.5 acres. There is an existing house set back approximately 168 feet from Carter Street. Existing parking is located in front and to the left side of the house. The property immediately to the south and west is also owned by the Square LLC. The property to the south is undeveloped. Residential uses are located to the west and north. The property across Carter Street to the east is zoned Downtown Crozet District and developed commercially with the Crozet Post Office, a bank, and Mountainside Senior Living. Existing vegetation along the northern property line provides screening to the closest residential uses, which are over 100 feet away. (Attachments D and E)

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY OF PROPERTY AND AREA:

There are no zoning compliance or taxation/licensing compliance issues with the property. The existing single-family dwelling was constructed in 2001.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: The property is designated Mixed Use in the Crozet Master Plan (CMP) and is located within the Downtown Crozet Geographic Sector as defined by the CMP.

Mixed Use -This designation represents areas with a mixture of residential, commercial, and office uses. Residential density does not exceed 18 dwelling units per acre, mostly as apartments or townhouses. This designation is used inside mixed use centers -- such as Old Trail

and Clover Lawn and as transition areas around Downtown. In centers, it includes a balanced mix of retail, housing, commercial, employment, and office uses along with some institutional uses. The types of retail and services, as well as dwelling unit types, vary depending upon the nature of the center. Specific recommendations for the Mixed Use (Transition) areas surrounding Downtown are provided in the Mixed Use Areas near Downtown section of this chapter starting on Page 24.

Mixed Use Areas Near Downtown -The area west of Carter Street is designated Mixed Use. This area provides a transition between Downtown and existing residential neighborhoods near Downtown. The role of this mixed use area is to support Downtown and provide opportunities for less intensive commercial and residential uses. Redevelopment of existing viable structures is encouraged.

Economic Development-Strategy 1c: Promoting tourism helps preserve scenic, historic, and natural resources.

CROZET TOURISM ZONE

The property is located within the Crozet Development Area and tourism zone. The Board adopted a tourism zone ordinance on October 2, 2013, which included a tourism zone map encompassing the entire Crozet Development Area. The tourism zone was established in Crozet because an analysis of tourism assets and deficiencies revealed a critical lack of sufficient options for lodging in the western area of the County, where there are significant tourism assets, including Monticello Artisan Trail sites, wineries, breweries, County parks, the Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway, orchards, and other agritourism attractions.

ABUTTING PROPERTY OWNER COMMENTS:

Notice to abutting property owners was mailed on September 30, 2021. Staff has received no objections to date and a letter of support was received stating:

I fully and enthusiastically support the granting of this special exception. We desperately need additional short-term accommodations in the Crozet area to support our tourism industry. The location of this use is within walking distance of the shops and restaurants of downtown Crozet.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST:

Special exceptions are subject to County Code § 18-33.5, under which the Board may either approve or deny an application, defer action to allow for changes prior to final action, or refer the application to the Planning Commission.

Though the Board is not required to make specific findings in support of its action, County Code §18-5.1.48(i)(2) identifies the following factors for consideration:

- (i) *There is no detriment to any abutting lot; and*
- (ii) *There is no harm to the public health, safety, or welfare.*

1. **Increase the number of guest rooms** – Homestay regulations limit the number of guest rooms on a residentially zoned property to two. However, a homestay may request to increase the number of guest rooms up to five. Staff does not believe that increasing the number of guest rooms to three would cause detriment to abutting properties. Homestays are an accessory use to a single-family residence and are not expected to generate more traffic than a residential use. In addition, screening of the proposed homestay is adequate. The property is also located across from the DCD and in a location designated Mixed Use in the Crozet Master Plan. Uses supportive of Downtown Crozet and tourism are encouraged.
2. **Owner-occupancy** – Homestay regulations require that the owner must reside on and be present at the subject parcel during the homestay use. However, an owner may apply for a special exception for tenant resident occupancy instead of owner occupancy. The owner occupancy requirement is intended to address concerns that widespread purchase of homestays by business entities could (a) negatively impact surrounding residential neighborhoods and/or (b) reduce housing stock for residential use. Staff believes this proposed homestay does not raise either concern for the following reasons:
 - The property is located in a transition area designated Mixed Use between the Downtown Crozet commercial area and nearby residential neighborhoods.
 - The Crozet Master Plan encourages small-scale commercial uses compatible with residential uses.
 - Across the street are commercial uses and nearby shops/restaurants in Downtown Crozet.
 - Screening is provided along the property line with the closest residences to the north. The house and parking are oriented to Carter Street towards the commercial uses. The adjacent properties to the south (56A1-01-41A) and west (56A1-01-41) are owned by the applicant.
 - The owner's office is close to this homestay, along with the other commercial zoned lodging options offered by Stay in Crozet.
 - The proposed homestay would be located in the existing dwelling, where the tenant resident manager would also reside, and would still be used as a residence and provide a unit towards Crozet housing stock.

Based on these circumstances, staff believes that these special exceptions would not cause either (i) detriment to abutting lots or (ii) harm to the public, health, safety, or welfare.

The application will meet all other requirements of the County Code, including safety inspections/building code, neighbor notification of emergency contact, and addressing. These requirements, along with conditions of approval, are verified through the zoning clearance process, which would follow special exception approval.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached resolution (Attachment F) to approve the requested homestay special exceptions subject to the following conditions:

1. Parking for homestay guests is limited to the existing parking areas, as depicted on the Parking and House Location Exhibit, dated October 5, 2021.

2. Homestay use is limited to a total of three (3) guest rooms, all of which must be within the existing dwelling, as depicted on the Parking and House Location Exhibit dated October 5, 2021.
3. The existing buffer and screening located along the northern property line, as depicted on the Parking and House Location Exhibit dated October 5, 2021, must be maintained, or equivalent screening that meets the minimum requirements of County Code § 18-32.7.9.7(b)-(e) must be established and maintained.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Staff Analysis
- B. Applicant's Proposed Homestay
- C. County Code § 18-5.1.48 Homestay Zoning Regulations
- D. Location Map
- E. Parking and House Location Exhibit, dated
- F. Resolution