

# Crozet Fellowship Church

## Special Use Permit Narrative

↑  
Old Trail &  
Downtown Crozet

Interstate 64 W



SITE

250 / Rockfish Gap Turnpike

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# Project Narrative

## Overview of Request

The Crozet Fellowship Church is currently located in Crozet, VA just outside of the County's development area, near the interstate 65 interchange with US. Route 250. The church operates out of an existing sanctuary building located at the end of Twinkling Springs Road, a private road with access off of Route 250.

The Sanctuary building is located on tax map parcel #55-19F. There are two adjacent parcels, also owned by the church, that each contain 1 single family home per parcel. Those tax map parcels are identified as 55-19G and 55-19E.

The Crozet Fellowship Church is outgrowing its current space and would like to utilize all 3 parcels to construct a new sanctuary building and expanded parking in order to accommodate growing membership. The County's zoning ordinance permits religious assembly as a by-right use up to 200 seats. This Special Use Permit application is requesting an increase up to a maximum of 400 seats and to construct a new sanctuary building up to 10,000 sq. ft. Additionally, the current parking area would be expanded and improved to accommodate the increase in membership.

### Hours of Operation:

The primary hours of operation for the Crozet Fellowship Church are Sunday mornings. In addition, there may be additional activities, services, or gatherings at other times during the week with smaller groups. These events, gatherings, and services may include special worship services, fellowship gatherings, bible studies, or special events for the church. The majority of these secondary events occur during the evening or weekends, outside of normal working day hours.

### Proposed Facility:

The new proposed sanctuary building shall not exceed 10,000 sq. ft. under this special use permit. The requested size has been calculated to accommodate up to 400 seats as the church grows its fellowship over time. The existing sanctuary building will be repurposed for supporting uses such as gathering spaces, Sunday school classrooms, administrative offices, multi-purpose rooms, fellowship hall, and/or other spaces to support the primary religious assembly use. A playground, patio seating areas, and other outdoor amenities may be included to support the facility over time. The proposed expansion would result in one of the existing single-family homes being demolished in order to accommodate the new building while also minimizing additional disturbance to the site. The remaining single-family home would remain on the property. It is currently rented as a residential unit but may be converted to supporting uses for the church if additional space is needed in time.

#### Parking and Site Access:

The existing parking lot, containing approximately 50 parking spaces, will be expanded and improved to accommodate additional vehicles as well as sidewalks for visitors accessing the church's facilities. The current conceptual plan includes an estimated 140 spaces, centrally located on the property with buildings around the perimeter of the parking. During the site plan stage, the plan will be refined with a goal of providing between 120-150 parking spaces. New sidewalks connecting the parking lot and building entrances are also proposed to improve circulation around the property.

The existing 50 parking spaces have adequately served the church with their limited 200 maximum seats. In order to accommodate the increase in seats up to 400 persons, the parking will be more than doubled, providing a minimum of 120 spaces, with the potential to provide additional spaces based on the final configuration of the site plan. The concept plan, includes an estimated 140 spaces, providing nearly 3 times the amount of parking. Based on an analysis of parking needs for the current 200 seats, it is anticipated that the proposed parking lot expansion will accommodate the additional users.

#### Existing Conditions, Vegetation, and Buffers:

The majority of improvements will occur in areas that have already been cleared for existing parking and/or buildings, helping to preserve existing tree cover where possible. A 50' Undisturbed Buffer, in addition to the existing 100' WPO Buffer, has been added to the Conceptual Plan. Wooded areas within these buffers will be preserved with the exception of stormwater management infrastructure needed to comply with adopted regulations. There are existing forested areas surrounding the perimeter of the site, providing a buffer to adjacent neighbors and Interstate 64. A 20' undisturbed and/or replanted buffer is also provided along the western property line to provide additional screening.

#### Utilities:

This property is outside of the service area and will be served by well water and an alternative sanitary system that was recently installed for the current sanctuary building, but sized for the proposed additional structure. The single family homes utilize a separate septic system.

#### Buildings:

The proposed sanctuary building will be a 1 story structure no taller than 35' in height. The height requirement shall not apply to any steeples, crosses, or other similar architectural details of the Church.

#### Site Access:

The properties are currently accessed off of a private road, Twinkling Springs Road. This road has been serving the church and other properties along the route for many years. There is an existing right turn taper on Rt. 250 into Twinkling Springs Rd. to help reduce impacts to traffic.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The property is designated as rural area in the Future Land Use Map for Albemarle County. The existing church as well as its potential expansion within the current location aligns with the goals of the rural area designation, placing an emphasis on community centered uses. The church is an active member of the surrounding community and will continue to provide community centered events as membership grows. The close proximity to the interstate 64 and route 250 interchange is adjacent to the Crozet development area, which has grown significantly in recent years. The proposed expansion of the Crozet Fellowship Church will provide an opportunity to meet the needs of Crozet’s growing population.

Additionally, the proposed improvements to the site for the expansion take advantage of existing areas currently occupied by parking and buildings. Efforts have been taken to reduce impacts outside of currently developed areas on the property, with a focus on preserving existing canopy and protecting the riparian corridor associated with the stream on the property.

The proposed sanctuary building will be limited to 1 story, preserving the rural character of surrounding buildings.

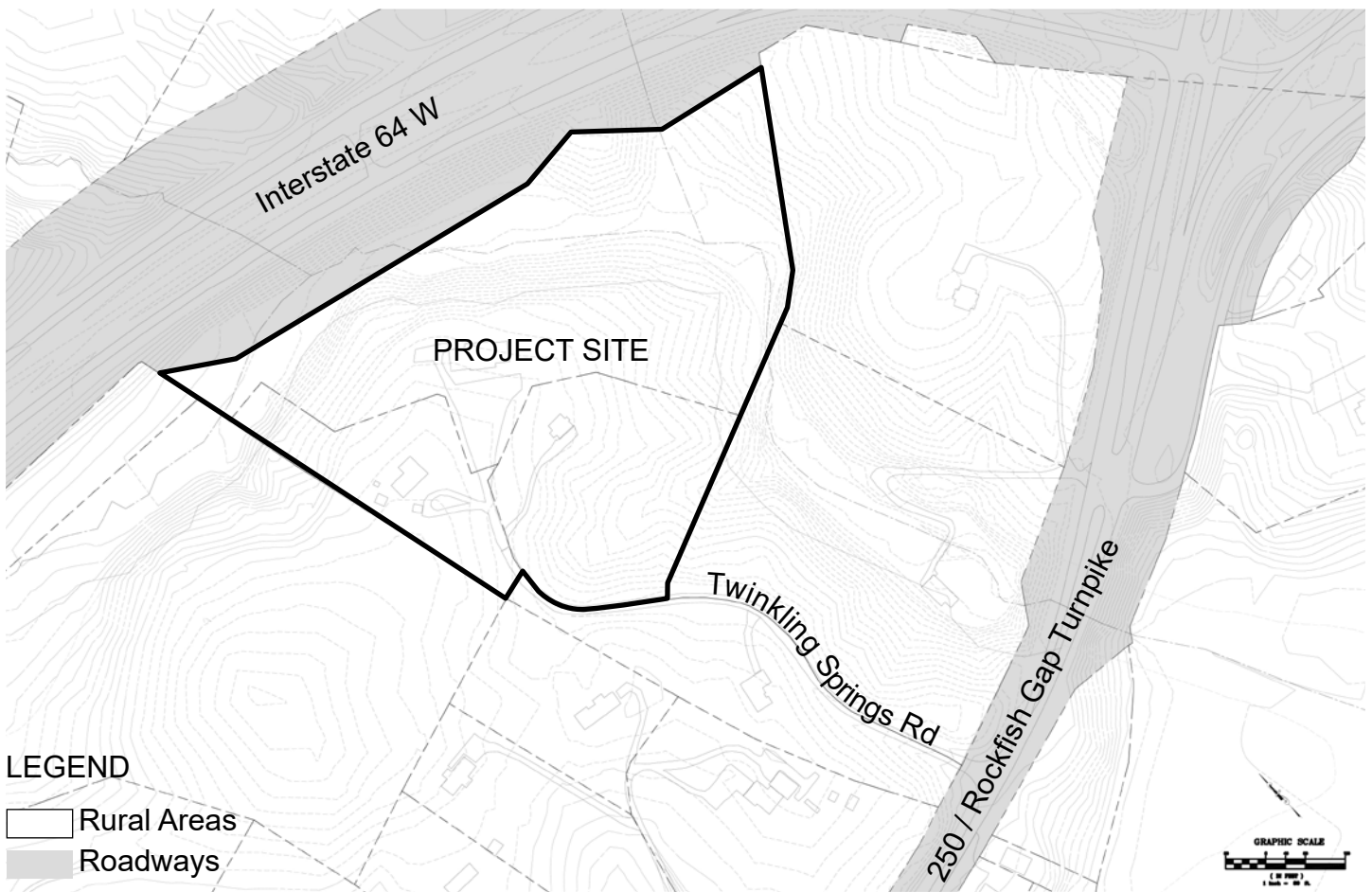


Figure 1 – Future Land Use Map

## Existing Zoning

The current zoning ordinance permits religious assembly in the rural areas as a by right use up to 200 seats. Religious assembly over 200 seats is permitted through a special use permit.

The proposed use does not intend to have amplified outdoor music. In the case of a special event on the property, any outdoor amplified music would comply the section 5.1.64 of the zoning ordinance.

The concept plan for the property adheres to the 125' setback for any parking areas, which are proposed internally to the site. Additional setbacks and requirements per the zoning ordinance include:

- 25' front yard from private road frontage
- 25' side yard minimum
- 35' rear yard minimum
- Maximum building height of 35'
- Maintaining a 20' landscape buffer adjacent to residential lots

The concept plan incorporates the required 20' undisturbed and/or planted landscape buffer and the 125' parking setback.

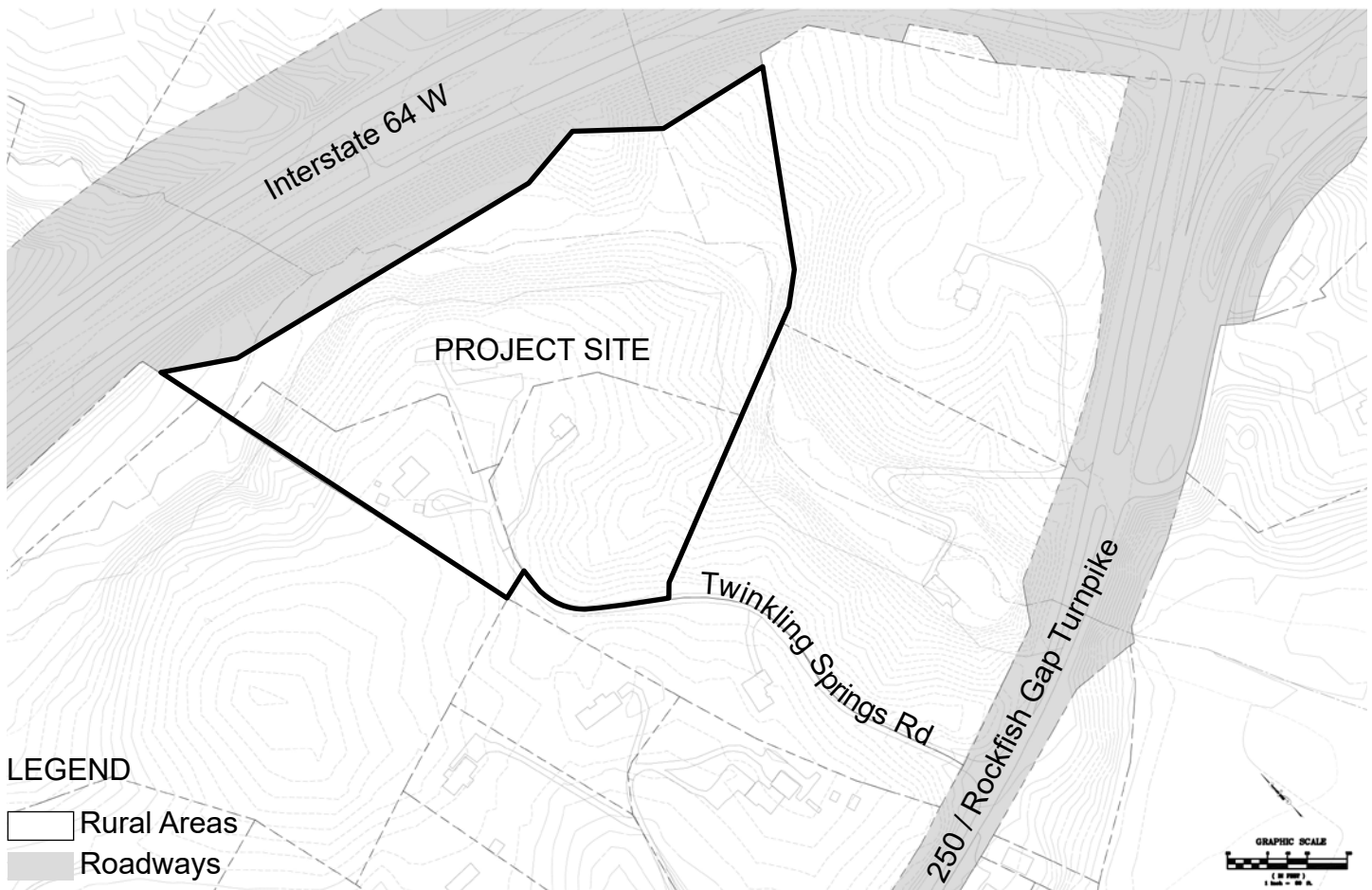


Figure 2 – Existing Zoning Map

## Existing Conditions

The property currently includes 2 single family residential houses and 1 sanctuary used by the Crozet Fellowship Church. The central area between the 3 structures is currently used for parking associated with the church. The properties are accessed via Twinkling Springs Road, a private road, off of Route 250. The entrance includes a right turn taper on Rt. 250.

The perimeter of the site is wooded, with denser forested areas providing a buffer from Interstate 64.

An existing stream runs along the northern edge of the property in the wooded area adjacent to the interstate.

The topography in the center of the property is relatively flat, with slopes increasing towards the edges. This provides an opportunity to utilize the central portion of the site for improvements, while preserving the steeper slopes on the perimeter.

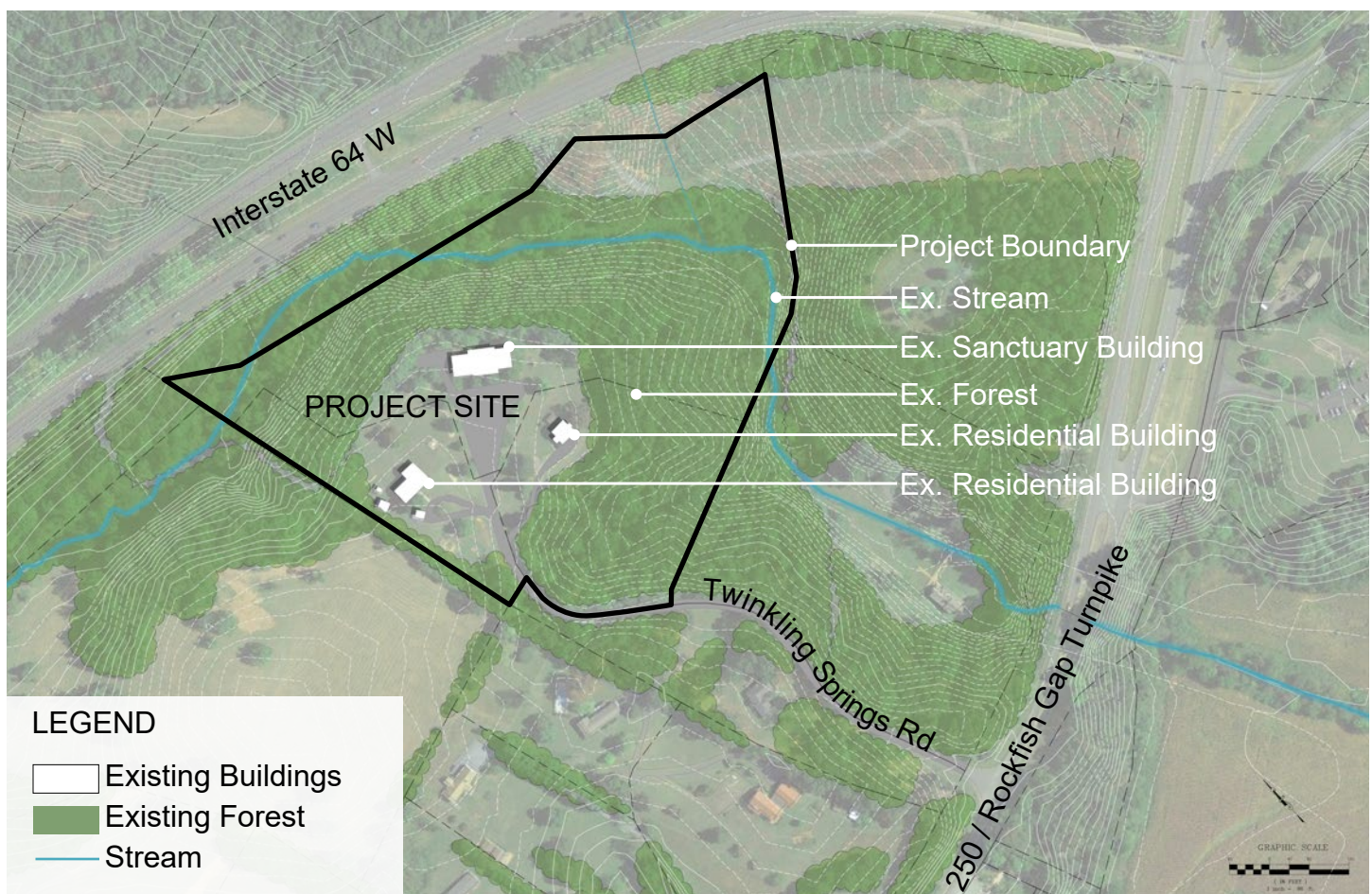


Figure 3 – Existing Conditions Map

## Development Impacts

This property is located outside of the Crozet development area and will need to be served by private well water. The church recently installed a new sewage treatment and discharge system in 2020 with the capacity to handle the existing sanctuary building and the anticipated new sanctuary. The single family home that will remain on the property is served by a separate septic system and well.

The property is currently served by the Crozet Volunteer Fire Department. No additional fire/rescue services are anticipated with this proposal.

There are no new residential units proposed with this special use permit application, and one existing single family home will be replaced by the new sanctuary building. No impacts to Albemarle County Public Schools are expected as a result of the proposal.

The church property is access via a private road, Twinkling Springs Road, from Rt 250. An existing right turn taper currently existing to accommodate traffic, seen below.



Figure 4 – Existing Right Turn Lane

## Environmental Impacts

The concept plan consolidates proposed improvements and the new building to the center of the site where structures and parking areas already exist. This approach will help to reduce disturbance to the environmental features of the site, which include critical slopes and a stream buffer. The map below identifies the location of the existing stream, the WPO buffer, and the critical slopes on the site.

The existing forested areas, particularly those which make up the riparian buffer along the stream, will remain undisturbed as much as possible. Minimizing disturbance in these areas will also protect the critical slopes that have been identified.

The proposed improvements will adhere to the County's stormwater management requirements during the site plan process, addressing water quantity and quality associated with any developed areas. The treatment of water quality and controlled release in terms of water quantity in accordance with WPO requirements will reduce and/or eliminate any potential impacts related to the sensitive riparian ecosystem on the property.

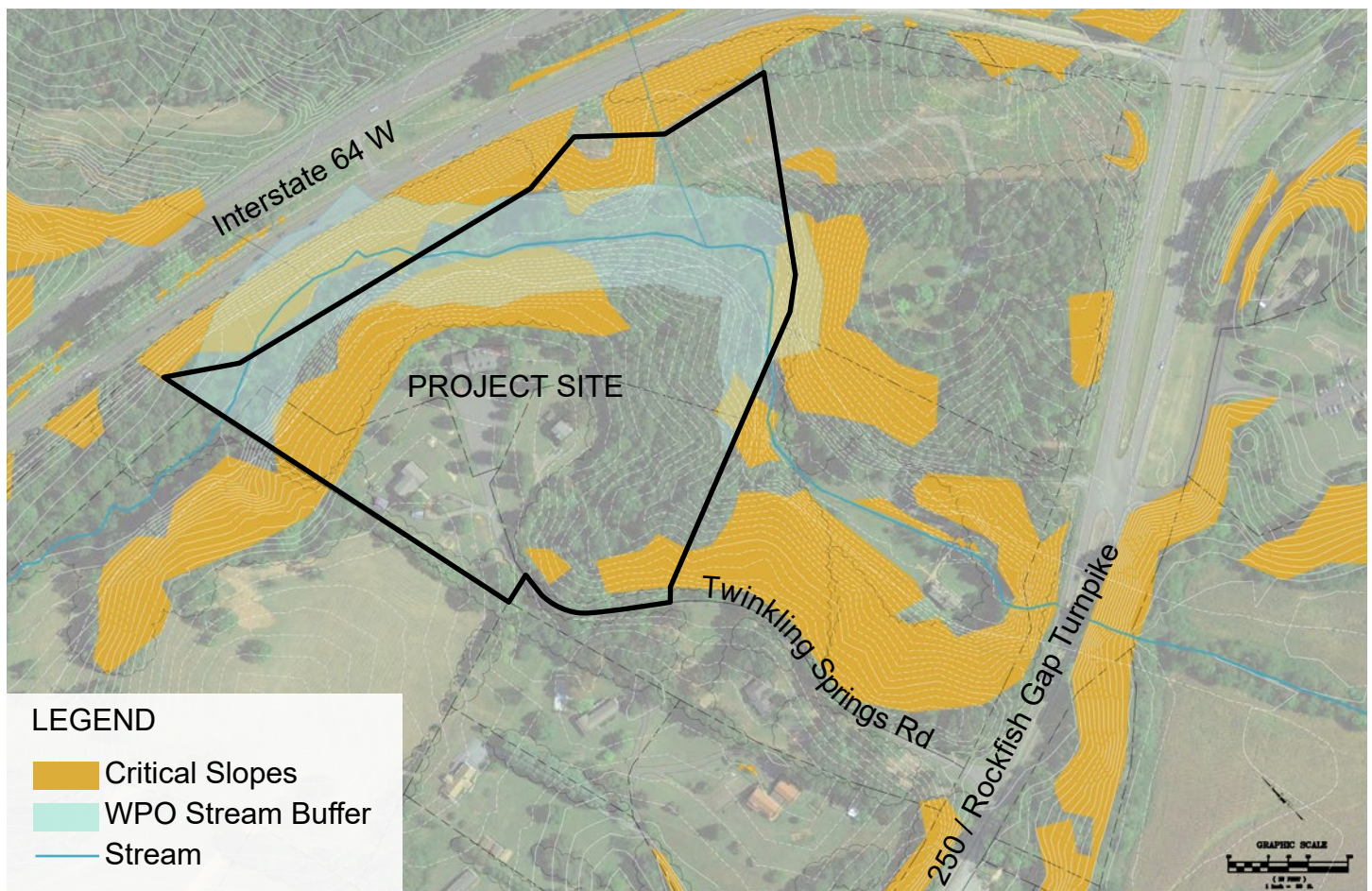


Figure 5 – Environmental Features Map

# Conceptual Plan and Design

## Site Design

The conceptual site design takes advantage of the existing development on the properties.

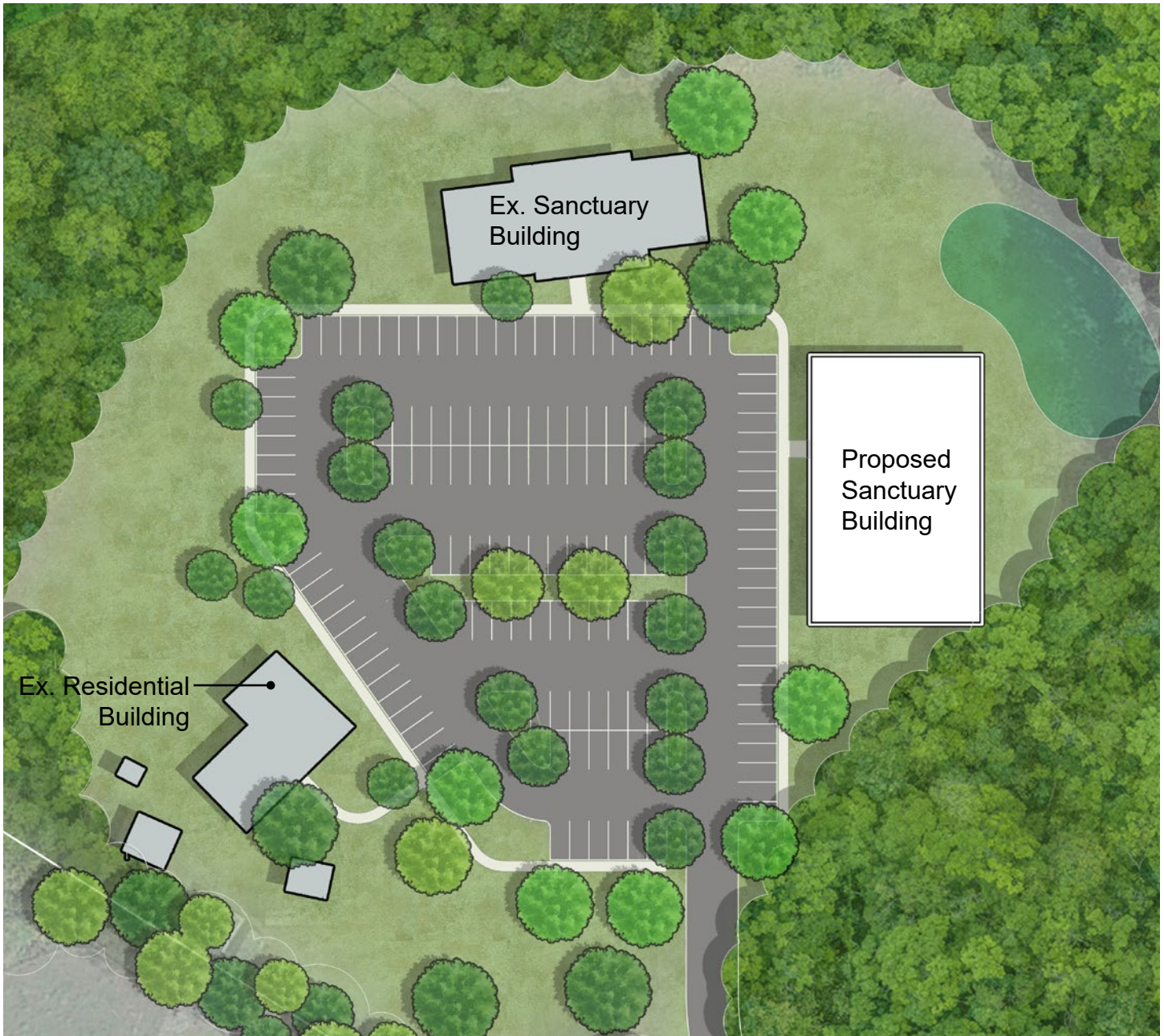


Figure 6 – Conceptual Plan Enlargement of Central Area Showing Buildings and Parking

The proposed new sanctuary building is situated in a similar location as one of the existing houses that will be removed, utilizing land that is well suited for a building based on existing terrain. The expanded parking is located in the location of existing parking, centrally located between the existing and proposed buildings on the site. New sidewalks are proposed to provide safe pedestrian connectivity throughout the facility.

## Traffic and Transportation Improvements

The property is accessed via a private drive, Twinkling Springs Road, located off of Rt. 250. There is an existing right turn taper to accommodate vehicles turning onto the roadway and reduce any potential impacts the Rt. 250. Twinkling Springs Road will continue to serve the property and the existing alignment will be utilized to the extent possible. As Twinkling Springs Road is located just outside of the Crozet Development Area, the majority of vehicles accessing the property will be travelling westbound on Rt. 250, utilizing the existing right turn taper to access the private roadway.

### *Background Information*

Rt. 250 is a two-lane, undivided highway road with a posted speed limit of 45 mph. According to 2024 VDOT count data, Rt. 250 services 7,500 vehicles per day between Bluebird Lane and I-64 near Yancey Mills.

### *Existing Traffic Volumes*

Available traffic data from the 2024 VDOT Count Book (most recent) indicates that 7,500 vehicles per day are present on the adjacent segment of Rt. 250. The roadway segment has a K-factor of 0.106 and directional factor 0.6804, according to the VDOT count book.

Based on the aforementioned information, it is assumed that:

- During the PM peak hour, which is the highest peak for the day, approximately 541 vehicles headed westbound (away from I-64) and 254 vehicles headed eastbound (toward I-64).
  - PM Peak Hour Eastbound Trips =  $7,500 \times 0.106 \times 0.6804 = 541$  vehicles
  - PM Peak Hour Westbound Trips =  $7,500 \times 0.106 \times 0.3196 = 254$  vehicles

### *Impact on Peak Traffic*

This is an existing use with no proposed increase to staffing or events during weekday peak travel times. The proposed increase in allowed seats and new sanctuary building will be utilized for Sunday worship services and related activities during off peak travel times. As a result, this increase should not have an impact on weekday traffic.

## Water Usage

The new proposed sanctuary building will be served with water from a new well on site. Replacing an existing single family residence with the new sanctuary building is not anticipated to have any significant increase in water usage. In accordance with Albemarle code, a tier 3 groundwater assessment will be completed prior to the initial site plan approval.

## Building Design

The proposed new sanctuary will incorporate articulated designs to break up large massing and support the principle for buildings of human scale. The sanctuary will be a 1-story building restricted to a maximum 35' in height.

## Landscape and Buffers

All landscaping shall conform to the landscaping standards as specified in the Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance Section 32.7.9. Screening and interior landscaping shall be installed as required by the ordinance for the proposed use.

The application plan provides a 20' undisturbed and/or planted buffer on shared property lines with adjacent parcels. This buffer will provide additional screening from the proposed parking and buildings on the property.

### Grading

Grading of the site for the proposed improvements will adhere to the existing topography on the property. The new building, parking areas, and travel ways shall be designed to work with the existing terrain of the property and limit grading operations on the site, preserving as much canopy as possible.

### Stormwater Management

The proposed design and engineering for the development of the property shall adhere to the State Stormwater Management regulations and Albemarle County Water Protection Ordinance. The site will accommodate stormwater management with a combination of bio-retention facilities, water quality swales, grass retention areas, land preservation, and/or other stormwater management features to treat water quality and quantity from the runoff. The final stormwater management design will be part of the site plan and water protection ordinance plan for the development. Landscape plantings will also be incorporated into the stormwater management facility.

Protective measures for erosion and sediment control shall be installed to limit any sediment run-off from reaching the existing stream and adjacent properties. Additional measures may include, but not be limited to, installation of silt fence with wiring backing, providing additional wet and dry storage area in basins below the disturbed areas, or installation of erosion control matting for all slopes with the use of tackifiers in seeding and soil stabilization applications.

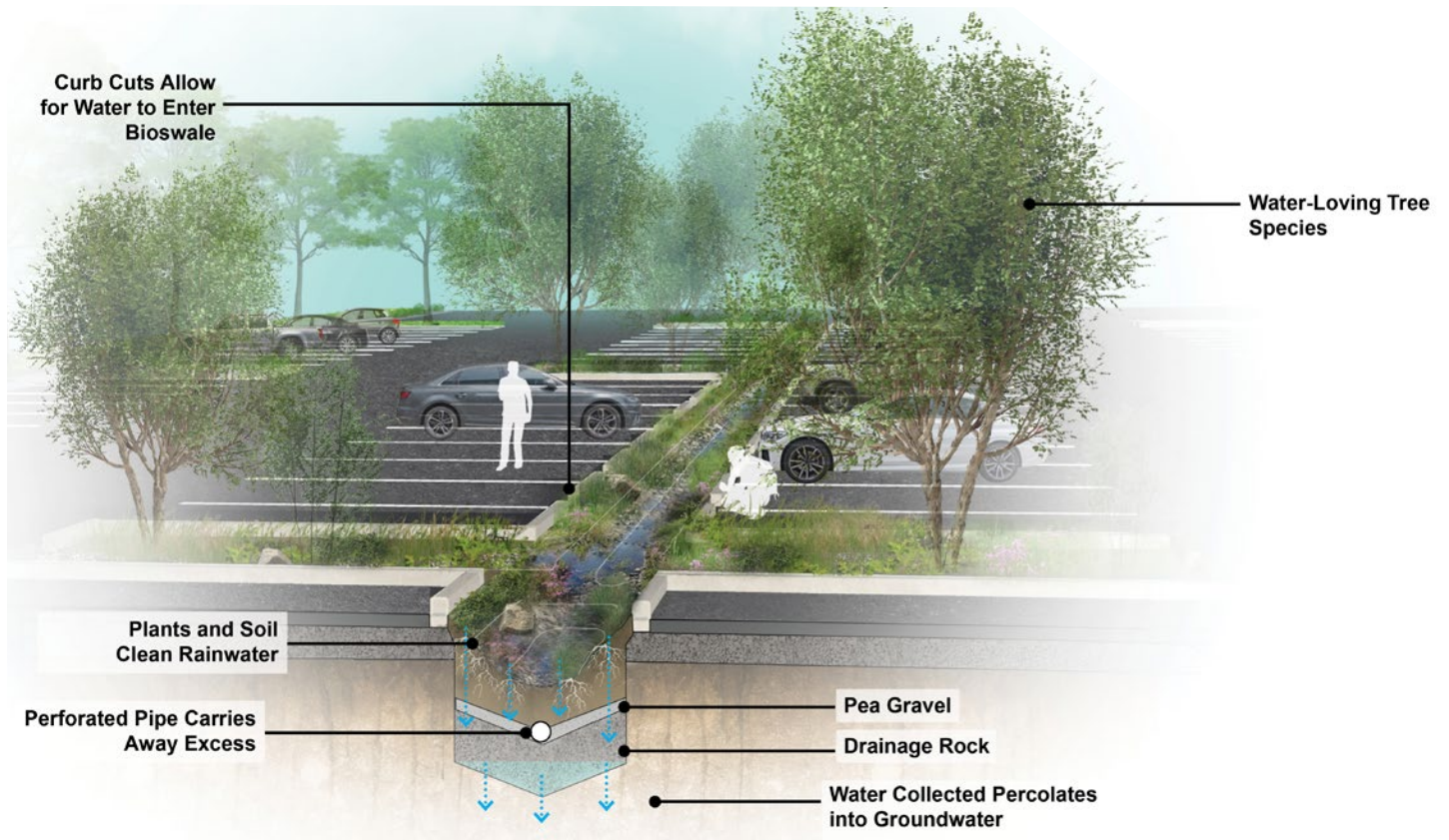


Figure 7 – Conceptual Example of Stormwater Management

## Summary

The approval of a special use permit for the expanded religious assembly use on the property for the Crozet Fellowship Church meets the factors and requirements as outlined in section 33.8 of the Albemarle Code.

There will be no substantial detriment to the surrounding properties as a result of the proposed religious assembly use expansion on this property. This is an existing church that has been a member of the local community for several years.

The character of the nearby areas will remain unchanged as a result of the proposed use expansion. The new sanctuary building will replace an existing single family home and be designed at a compatible scale. Parking is relegated to the center of the site, buffered by buildings, existing vegetation, and supplemental vegetation.

The proposed use expansion will be in harmony with the permitted uses in the district. Religious assembly is a by-right use in the rural area for up to 200 seats, with additional seats permitted by special use permit. This is an existing use that has been located on the property for many years. The proposed expansion will utilize existing infrastructure and make any necessary improvements to accommodate the expansion as identified during the site plan process.

Last, the proposed religious assembly use expansion is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed new building will be designed to a human scale and the parking will be relegated to the center of the property. Environmental features of the site will be preserved and stormwater management will be implemented in accordance with current regulations.

The Crozet Fellowship Church looks forward to continuing on this property and supporting the local community in Crozet.