

Indian Head Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
GoToMeeting
September 16, 2026

Chair Gordon called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:30pm. Members in attendance:

Chair, Thomas Gordon
Anita Sampson
Brian Israel
Anthony McFarland (*joined at 6:11pm*)

Staff in attendance:
Mark Harman, Zoning Administrator
Andrea Brady, Town Clerk
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Approval of Minutes – Chair Gordon made a motion to approve the August 19, 2026, minutes as presented. Ms. Sampson seconds the motion. All in favor. The minutes were approved as presented.

Robinson Terminal Preliminary Plan –Mr. Harman gave a brief overview of the project up to this point. There have been a couple of changes relative to the Critical Area Commission. The Critical Area Commission has had some updates to their plan regulations which required some modifications to the site. This reduced the lot of the area they have to work with. The changes reduced the overall footprint. Mr. Harman turned it over to Mike Burlbaugh to provide a presentation on the project.

Mr. Burlbaugh briefly reviewed the history of the project, the changes that were made, and the plan as it is today. (*See the attached presentation*)

There was a previous growth allocation that was approved for about 9 acres. Mr. Burlbaugh went over the necessary corrections that were made to the mapping of the property. With the corrections less than an acre of IDA was needed for the growth allocation.

The current concept is for 143 townhouses. This will be a mixture of 20ft rear loaded homes and 22ft front-loaded town houses. What that means is the garage is located in the back of the home for a rear loaded town home off of an alleyway. The front-loaded home has the garage in the front of the residence as well as a driveway. This allows each residence to have a two-car garage as well as a two-car driveway.

Mr. Burlbaugh provided an overview of the evolution of the plan. The previous plan was 147 townhouses and they were larger, with a smaller buffer. While going through the process with the Town and the Critical Area Commission, they have increased the critical area buffer, putting the entire stream bed in permanent preservation. The entry road off of Indian Head Highway

includes a pocket of wetlands. They located the road along the area of uplands to minimize the impact on the wetlands. They are proposing a 20ft wide road width which is slightly smaller but still safe, with sidewalks on one side and smaller retaining walls, which will have a 70% reduction in wetland impacts.

Mr. Burlbaugh reviewed open space and active recreation areas. The active areas will include amenities for the community. They are proposing a small parking area and a trail down to the water for a kayak pier. An additional benefit would be public access to the water, and the opportunity to connect into the Boardwalk when the Town extends it.

Mr. Burlbaugh reviewed the parking calculations. The Town's code requires 2.75 spaces for a townhouse with the option for the Commission to limit it to 2.5. Every home will have a 2-car garage and 2 car driveway. They are also planning on street parking. This will allow for guest parking. There will be over 600 parking spaces in total which exceeds the parking requirement.

Chair Gordon asked for additional information on the parallel parking and if it would be on the main road coming off of the Highway. Mr. Burlbaugh reviewed the map with the Commission to show that the parallel parking will be throughout the neighborhood, with 41 spaces in total. They try to equally distribute them to reduce the distance you have to walk to the homes.

Zoning Admin, Mark Harman reviewed the requested waivers (see attached). He explained that the changes to the plan have really been a product of reducing size and reducing footprint. Tonight what the Board will be looking at is making a recommendation of approval for the preliminary plan as well as the waivers. The Commission will see this project again in its final stage. This will also be contingent on Critical Area project approval.

Mr. Harman gave examples of what type of circumstances would allow consideration of a waiver. What the Board will look at, at this point will be the requirement versus the request based on the reasons for each request.

Mr. Harman and the Commission discussed right of way width and purpose.

There are unusual conditions on this property including steep slopes and tidal wetlands.

Mr. Harman explained that the Town Manager was okay with the changes as long as all streets, sidewalks, etc. remain private. That would be snow plowing, road repair, and sidewalk repair would have to be done under the HOA, the Town would not take any responsibility for road maintenance in the neighborhood.

Mr. Burlbaugh explained that when townhomes are built in many jurisdictions, private roads are a common requirement that is done all the time and is very manageable for an HOA.

Based on additional questions from the Commission, Mr. Burlbaugh explained that typically a public access easement will be put in with the beneficiary of that being the town. That while the roadways will be privately maintained, this easement would grant the public access to the pathway to water access.

The Commission discussed the width requirement is for emergency equipment. Mr. Burlbaugh stated that 24ft wide is what they need for emergency access on roads. They are proposing the main roads be 28ft which meets NFPA requirements.

There was additional review of the preliminary plan including an unimproved right of way that will be behind some of the homes.

Mr. Burlbaugh reviewed the stormwater requirements which are part of the growth allocation. The property will have 24 individual storm water devices. He stated they will be over managing stormwater, but they are required to have a 10% nutrient reduction. Every drop of rain will be treated before being discharged.

Chair Gordon, Motion to approve the preliminary plan contingent on Critical Area final approval. Anita Sampson seconds the motion. All in favor. *(This motion was previously to recommend approval to the Town Council. Following discussion later in the meeting where Ms. Greer asked for clarification on the Commission's roll since the Town's Code lists the Commission as the approval authority on the preliminary plans. Following a brief discussion on this with the Zoning Administrator and the Town Clerk, Chairman Gordon and the Commission requested the correction of the previous motion on the preliminary plan to change the wording to state approval, not approval to recommend.)*

Mr. Harman reviewed each of the five waiver requests with the Commission individually to allow their consideration and vote, one at a time.

1. Entry Road, right of way with. Code Standard, § 387-13(A)(3): 50 ft (local street). The applicant is proposing 30 ft due to unusual physical conditions. Chair Gordon made a motion to approve the first waiver. Ms. Sampson seconds the motion. All in favor.
2. Entry Road, paved width. § 387-13(B)(3): 32 ft (local street). The applicant is proposing 24 ft due to unusual physical conditions. Chair Gordon made a motion to approve the second waiver. Ms. Sampson seconds the motion. All in favor.
3. Entry Road, sidewalk. § 387-13(G): both sides, unless waived. The applicant is proposing one side only with the basis of a Planning Commission waiver, § 387-13(G). Chair Gordon asked where the entrance road stops being an entrance road, and if there will be sidewalks on both sides of the neighborhood roads. Mr. Harman explained that the moment the entry road connects with the existing roadway that is where the entrance road stops. Mr. Burlbaugh reviewed the map to show that there will be sidewalks on both sides of the neighborhood streets. Chair Gordon made a motion to approve the third waiver. Ms. Sampson seconds the motion. All in favor.
4. Main Community Roads, right of way width. § 387-13(A)(3): 50 ft (local street). The applicant is proposing 40 ft due to unusual physical conditions. Chair Gordon asked the size of the main road into the River Watch neighborhood for reference. Mr. Burlbaugh shared his screen to show the roadway being discussed in River Watch which is 20ft wide. Chair Gordon explained that he referenced that neighborhood because he feels the

roadway is too small. The proposed roadway in the Robinson Terminal development will be significantly wider than that road. Chair Gordon made a motion to approve the fourth waiver. Ms. Sampson seconds the motion. All in favor.

5. Main Community Roads, paved width. § 387-13(B)(3): 32 ft (local street). The applicant is proposing 28 ft due to unusual physical conditions. Chair Gordon made a motion to approve the fifth waiver. Ms. Sampson seconds the motion. All in favor.

Sustainable Communities Discussion – Before this evening’s meeting, the Commission was given a memo from Mr. Harman as it relates to the Sustainable Communities program in the state of Maryland. Mr. Harman gave an overview of what the Sustainable Communities Program is and how municipalities participate in the program.

The Town has been involved in the program since 2016 and is currently going through the process of renewing program status. As part of the process the Town needs to appoint a work group. The intent of the group is to discuss the accomplishments and challenges associated with the Town’s Sustainable Community Action Plan implementation. The Town is in the process of developing a Community Action Plan and that plan will be distributed to the work group once it is complete. At this time the Town intends for the group to meet annually during the last quarter of each year. Mr. Harman asked the Commission members if they would be willing to be part of the work group. With the Planning Commission ultimately guiding planning in the community, that is why we are seeking their involvement. Mr. Harman asked anyone willing to participate in the work group to please email Town Clerk Brady by no later than December 1, 2026.

Chair Gordon and Ms. Sampson expressed their willingness to be part of the work group.

Once the work group is put together, Mr. Harman will put together a synopsis that will be provided to the group and will work on scheduling a meeting to review those projects.

Chair Gordon opened the floor to public comment. There being none, he made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sampson seconds the motion.

Chair Gordon adjourned the meeting at 6:35pm

Submitted by:

Andrea Brady
Town Clerk

Robinson Terminal

Preliminary Plan

Town of Indian Head, Charles County, Maryland

Planning Commission 9-16-26

Introduction & Purpose

Preliminary Plan Approval – Robinson Terminal Property

- Community Location
- Review of Growth Allocation approved by Town of Indian Head
- Review of Proposed Preliminary Plan
- Questions

Robinson Terminal

Community Location Map



Town Boardwalk

- Boardwalk
- Nature Trail

Robinson Terminal Property

Indian Head Rails to Trails

- Paved shared use path
- 13 Miles

Robinson Terminal

Review of Growth Allocation Approved by Town of Indian Head

IDA/LDA Reclassifications

Mapped LDA to Remain LDA
4.05 Acres

Mapped LDA to be
Reclassified to IDA
6.33 Acres

Mapped IDA to Remain IDA
3.33 Acres

Mapped IDA to be
Reclassified to LDA
2.51 Acres

	MORRIS & RITCHIE ASSOCIATES ENGINEERS, PLANNERS, SURVEYORS AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS 14080 PARK CENTER DRIVE LAUREL, MD 20707 (410) 770-0900 (410) 770-0900 FAX (410) 770-0900 MORRIS&RITCHIE.COM
	Copyright 2018 Morris & Ritchie Associates, Inc. ROBINSON TERMINAL SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED SUBDIVISION
	CRITICAL AREA EXHIBIT LDA & IDA CONVERSION AREAS
	ROBINSON TERMINAL, MARYLAND 300000 TOTAL AREA: 11.00 ACRES, 100% COVERED, 100% COVERED, 100% COVERED, 100% COVERED DATE: 10/1/2018

[illegible]

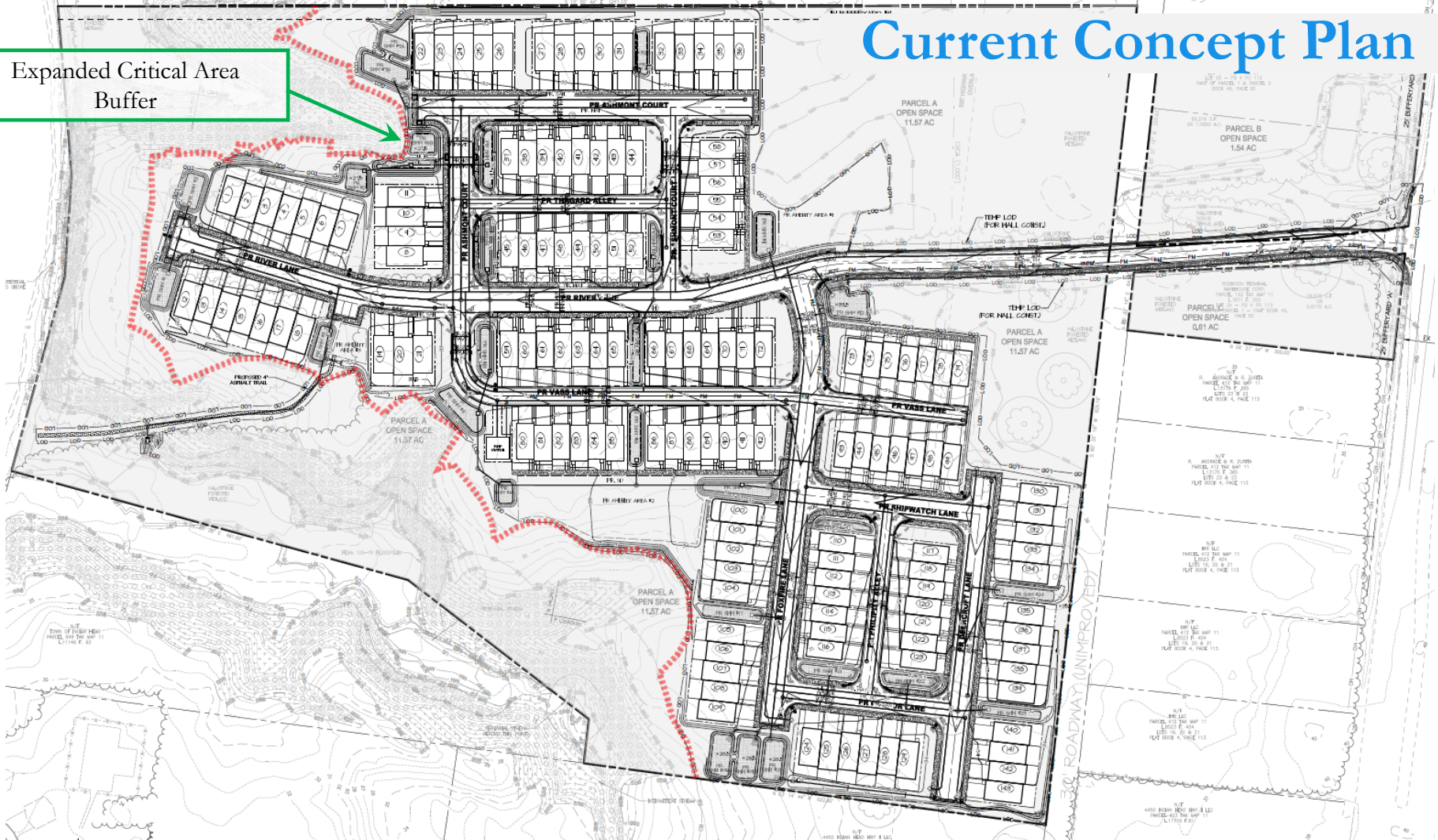
LDA After All
Reclassifications
6.56 Acres

Robinson Terminal

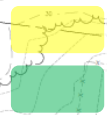
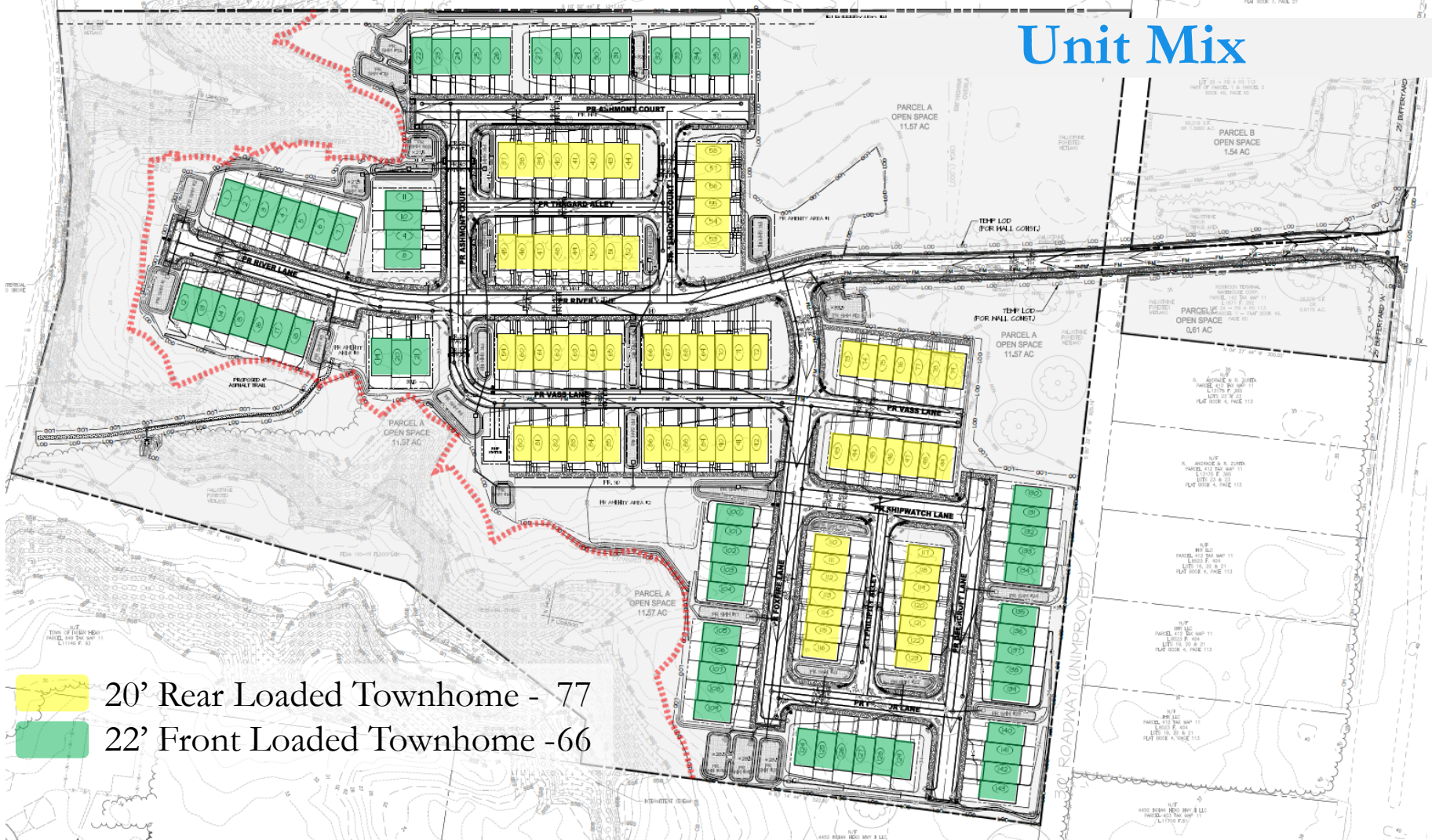
Proposed Preliminary Plan

Current Concept Plan

Expanded Critical Area
Buffer



Unit Mix



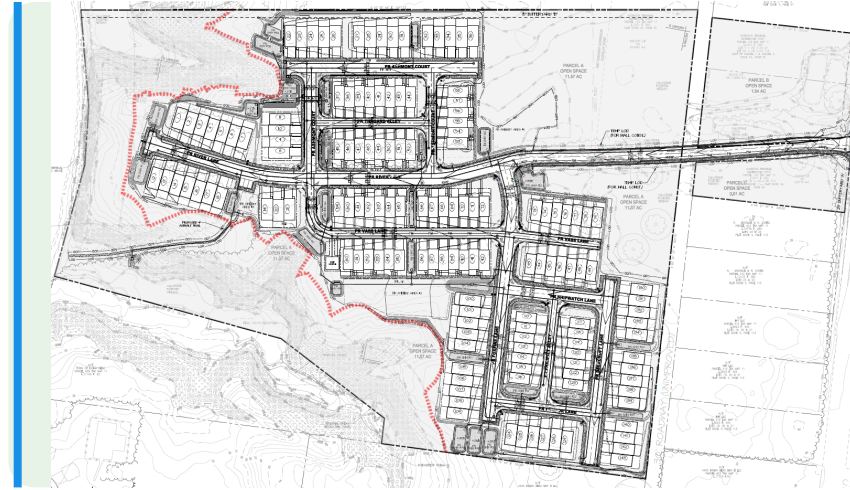
20' Rear Loaded Townhome - 77
22' Front Loaded Townhome - 66

Plan Evolution: August 2025 vs. Current

August 2025



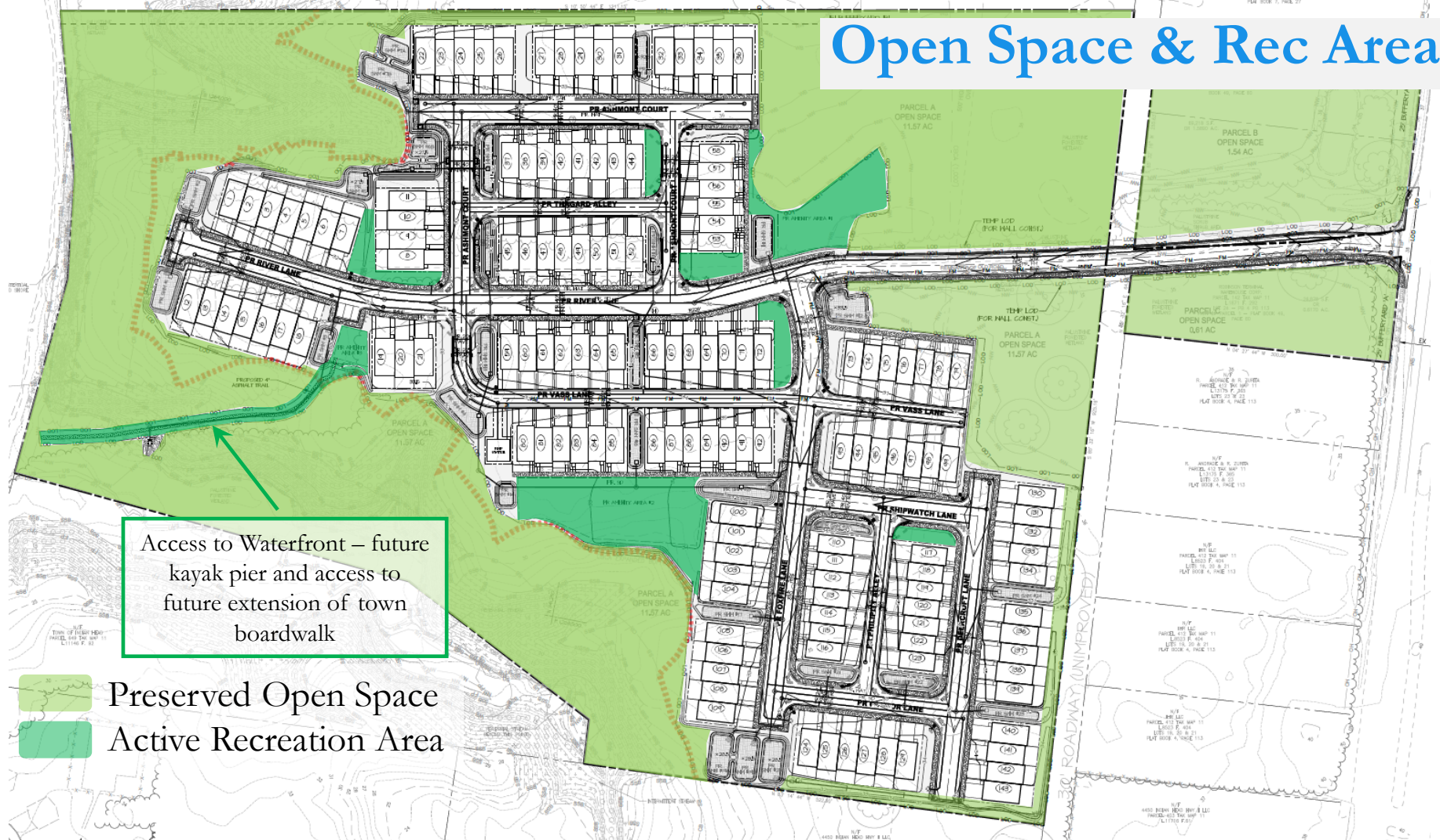
Current



Dwelling Units	147
Critical Area Buffer	2.45 Acres
Forest Clearing	9.59 Acres
Impervious Area in Critical Area	6.8 Acres
Permanent Wetlands Impacts	16,691 SF
Open Space + Active Rec	11.7 Acres

Dwelling Units	143
Critical Area Buffer	4.84 Acres
Forest Clearing	8.51 Acres
Impervious Area in Critical Area	5.88 Acres
Permanent Wetlands Impacts	4,885 SF
Open Space + Active Rec	13.7 Acres

Open Space & Rec Area



Access to Waterfront – future
kayak pier and access to
future extension of town
boardwalk

Preserved Open Space

Active Recreation Area

[illegible]

Garage Parking	286
Driveway Parking	286
On Street Parking (Head In)	3
<u>On Street Parking (Parallel)</u>	<u>41</u>
Total	616

286

286

3

41

616

Parking



Functional Example
Similar Community in Anne Arundel County

Robinson Terminal

Questions

MEMORANDUM

Request for Subdivision Design Waivers — Robinson Terminal

To: Town of Indian Head Planning Commission

From: Robinson Terminal, LC

Date: September 2, 2026

Re: Requested waiver from Chapter 387 (Subdivision of Land) street design standards under § 387-22(A) and § 387-13(G)

1. Purpose

This memorandum requests that the Planning Commission approve three waivers from the street design standards set forth in Article IV of Chapter 387 (Subdivision of Land) of the Code of the Town of Indian Head, in connection with the Robinson Terminal residential development (the "Project"). Each requested waiver is grounded in the "unusual physical conditions" standard of § 387-22(A), and one additionally relies on the Planning Commission's express waiver authority for sidewalks under § 387-13(G). The waivers are summarized below and justified in detail in Sections 3 through 5.

2. Summary of Requested Waivers

Element	Code Standard	Proposed	Basis
Entry Road — ROW width	§ 387-13(A)(3): 50 ft (local street)	30 ft	Unusual physical conditions — § 387-22(A)
Entry Road — Paved width	§ 387-13(B)(3): 32 ft (local street)	24 ft	Unusual physical conditions — § 387-22(A)
Entry Road — Sidewalk	§ 387-13(G): both sides, unless waived	One side only	PC waiver — § 387-13(G)
Main Community Roads — ROW width	§ 387-13(A)(3): 50 ft (local street)	40 ft	Unusual physical conditions — § 387-22(A)
Main Community Roads — Paved width	§ 387-13(B)(3): 32 ft (local street)	28 ft	Unusual physical conditions — § 387-22(A)

3. Legal Basis for the Requested Waiver

Section 387-22(A) of the Code authorizes the Planning Commission to vary "the general principles and standards of subdivision design stipulated herein" in the case of a planned development consistent with the Town Comprehensive Plan, or "in the case of unusual physical conditions," provided that no modification granted conflicts with the Comprehensive Plan or with the intent and purpose of the subdivision regulations.

The Project's site is constrained by a substantial pocket of jurisdictional nontidal wetlands, an expanded Critical Area buffer associated with streams on the property, and areas of steep slopes — each of which independently qualifies as an "unusual physical condition" within the meaning of § 387-22(A), and which together significantly limit the buildable and constructible envelope of the site.

In addition, § 387-13(G) separately and expressly authorizes the Planning Commission to waive the requirement that concrete sidewalks be provided along both sides of a proposed street, without reference to the § 387-22(A) "unusual physical conditions" standard. Request No. 2 below is made under this independent waiver authority.

None of the requested waivers conflicts with the Town Comprehensive Plan or with the stated intent and purpose of Chapter 387 — to preserve and promote public health, safety, and welfare, and to encourage orderly growth (§ 387-1(B)). To the contrary, as detailed below, each waiver reduces environmental impact, reduces total site disturbance, and — for the entry road — is calibrated specifically to preserve safe emergency vehicle access, which serves the same public-safety purpose the standard street width requirement is designed to protect.

Lastly, all of the roadway, curb, and sidewalk will be privately owned by the HOA.

4. Requested Waiver No. 1 & No. 2: Entry Road — Reduced ROW/Paving Width and One-Sided Sidewalk

Standard requirement: § 387-13(A)(3) sets a minimum right-of-way width of 50 feet for a local street; § 387-13(B)(3) sets a minimum paved roadway width of 32 feet; and § 387-13(G) requires sidewalks along both sides of all proposed streets unless waived by the Planning Commission.

Requested waiver: A 30-foot right-of-way with 24 feet of paving for the Project's entry road, and a sidewalk on one side only.

Justification:

- The entry road alignment is constrained by a large pocket of jurisdictional nontidal wetlands that occupies the majority of the site frontage. The proposed alignment follows the only narrow band of upland soils available to connect the development to the public road system. Even along this alignment, some wetland impact is unavoidable to provide site access; the alignment was selected specifically because it minimizes that impact relative to any other feasible connection to the public road system.
- Widening the entry road to the standard 50-foot ROW / 32-foot paved section would increase the footprint of disturbance across this same wetland-constrained corridor, correspondingly increasing wetland impacts beyond what is necessary to provide safe access, and beyond what is anticipated under the nontidal wetlands permit currently being processed through MDE (acting on delegated federal authority under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). Minimizing wetland impact to the maximum extent practicable is itself a Town and State policy objective, and the reduced entry road cross-section is the design response that keeps unavoidable wetland disturbance to the minimum necessary to provide access, consistent with wetland permitting requirements.
- The entry road serves an access/egress function only — it is not a parking street and does not front residential lots. There is no operational need for on-street parking capacity or a two-sided pedestrian network along this segment, distinguishing it from the Project's interior residential streets.

- A 24-foot paved width is sufficient for two-way travel and provides clear passage for emergency apparatus (fire apparatus and ambulance), preserving the public-safety function that the standard cross-section is intended to protect, notwithstanding the reduced width.
- A sidewalk on one side of the entry road preserves pedestrian connectivity between the development and the public street system while avoiding the additional wetland and upland disturbance a second, parallel sidewalk would require within the same constrained corridor.
- All of the roadway, curb, and sidewalk will be privately owned by the HOA.

These conditions — a large wetland complex bisecting the only feasible access corridor, and a narrow band of upland soil dictating the roadway alignment — constitute "unusual physical conditions" under § 387-22(A). The one-sided sidewalk is separately supportable as a Planning Commission waiver under § 387-13(G).

5. Requested Waiver No. 3: Main Community Roads — Reduced ROW and Paving Width

Standard requirement: § 387-13(A)(3) sets a minimum right-of-way width of 50 feet for a local street; § 387-13(B)(3) sets a minimum paved roadway width of 32 feet.

Requested waiver: A 40-foot right-of-way with 28 feet of paving for the Project's main community roads.

Justification:

- The Project's development envelope has been intentionally pulled back from the perimeter of the site to respect environmental features, including an expanded Critical Area buffer associated with on-site streams and areas of steep slopes. This contraction of the buildable envelope — undertaken to avoid environmentally sensitive areas rather than to maximize yield — reduces the width of the corridor available for the interior street network.
- A 28-foot paved section is a common, typical road section used elsewhere in the Town, and is sufficient to accommodate two travel lanes plus parking on one side, preserving normal residential street function, guest parking, and emergency and service vehicle access.
- The proposed 28-foot section still accommodates sidewalks on both sides of the main community roads, preserving full pedestrian connectivity throughout the interior of the development — unlike the entry road condition described above.
- Reducing the ROW and paved width in turn reduces the total area of clearing and impervious surface required across the site, which is directly responsive to and consistent with the Project's overall strategy of minimizing environmental disturbance and complements the stormwater and forest conservation objectives applicable to the site.
- All of the roadway, curb, and sidewalk will be privately owned by the HOA.

The combination of an environmentally-driven, narrowed development envelope and the resulting constraint on available street corridor width constitutes an "unusual physical condition" under § 387-22(A) supporting this waiver.

6. Design Manual Consistency

Section 387-13 incorporates cross-section, curb, gutter, and sidewalk construction standards from the Town of Indian Head Design Manual by reference. The applicant's engineering team will coordinate directly with the Town to confirm that the proposed 24-foot and 28-foot typical sections, and the associated curb, gutter, and

sidewalk details, are prepared consistent with the Design Manual's construction standards, and will submit typical cross-section drawings for each proposed roadway condition as part of the improvement plans required under § 387-9(B).

7. Findings Requested

The applicant respectfully requests that the Planning Commission find, for each of the three waivers described above, that:

- Unusual physical conditions exist on the site — specifically, jurisdictional nontidal wetlands constraining the entry road corridor, and an expanded Critical Area buffer and steep slopes constraining the developable envelope for the interior road network — within the meaning of § 387-22(A);
- The requested waivers do not conflict with the Town Comprehensive Plan or with the intent and purpose of Chapter 387;
- The one-sided sidewalk on the entry road is approved as a waiver under § 387-13(G); and
- The requested ROW widths, paved widths, and sidewalk configuration described in Section 2 above are approved for the Project.
- All of the roadway, curb, and sidewalk will be privately owned by the HOA.

The applicant and its engineering and environmental consultants are available to provide additional plans, cross-sections, or technical documentation as the Planning Commission may require to support its review of this request.