



COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE

PLANNING STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: ZMA202000007 RST Residences	Staff: Andy Reitelbach, Senior Planner
Planning Commission Public Hearing: June 15, 2021	Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: TBD
Owner: Seminole Trail LLC, c/o RST Development LLC	Applicant: RST Development, LLC
Acreage: 19.51 acres	Rezone from: R-1 Residential to PRD, Planned Residential Development
TMPs: 04600000010800; 04600000010900	Location: 2883 and 2885 Seminole Trail; and 1374 Ridgewood Circle
School Districts: Albemarle High, Sutherland Middle, Hollymead Elementary	By-right use: 19 residential units
Magisterial Districts: Rivanna	Proffers: No
Proposal: Rezone a total of approximately 19.51 acres from the R1 Zoning District, which allows residential uses at densities up to 1 unit/acre, to Planned Residential Development (PRD), which allows residential (maximum of 35 units/acre) with limited commercial uses. An associated request for a Special Exception (SE202000003) to waive the setback requirements for the proposed buildings, under §18-4.19.5.	Requested # of Dwelling Units: A maximum of 332 units is proposed, with 254 multifamily apartments and 78 townhouse units proposed, at a net density of 17.85 units/acre, and a gross density of 17.02 units/acre.
DA (Development Area) – Community of Hollymead in the Places29 Master Plan area	Comp. Plan Designation: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01 – 34 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office, and service uses; and Privately-Owned Open Space – privately owned recreational amenities and open space; floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands, and other environmental features.
Character of Property: The property consists of two parcels. A motel is located on one of the parcels. The Ridgewood mobile home community is located on the other parcel.	Use of Surrounding Properties: Forest Lakes and Ashland neighborhoods to the east and southeast, with a mix of single-family attached and detached dwellings; Brookhill development to the south across Ashwood Blvd.; forested properties to the west across U.S. Route 29 and to the north.

<p>Affordable Housing: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>AMI (Area Median Income): Between 30 and 80% of AMI, with an average income of 60% of AMI, as determined by U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development.</p>
<p>Factors Favorable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The request is consistent with the uses and density recommended by the Places29 Master Plan. 2. Affordable housing is being provided with this development at an amount that is greater than both the existing and the proposed housing policies of the County. 3. The request proposes to provide additional pedestrian connections in the area, including parallel to Ashwood Boulevard, connecting to the existing multi-use path along Route 29, as well as several potential locations for future transit service to the area. 4. The plan proposes to provide a greater amount of open and recreational space than the requested zoning district requires. 5. All of the Neighborhood Model principles are being met or mostly met. 	<p>Factors Unfavorable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed development would result in additional student enrollment at area schools, including Albemarle High, which is already over-capacity. 2. The proposed height of five stories of the two central apartment buildings is higher than the four stories recommended in the Places29 Master Plan; however, a stepback is proposed for the fifth story of these buildings to reduce their intensity of scale.
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of ZMA202000007, RST Residences.</p> <p>In addition, staff recommends approval of SE202000003, a special exception request to modify the stepback requirements for buildings in the development, with conditions.</p>	

**STAFF PERSON:
PLANNING COMMISSION:
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**Andy Reitelbach, Senior Planner
June 15, 2021
TBD**

ZMA 20200007 RST Residences

PETITION

PROJECT: ZMA20200007 RST Residences

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rivanna

TAX MAP/PARCEL(S): 04600000010800; 04600000010900

LOCATION: 2883 and 2885 Seminole Trail; and 1374 Ridgewood Circle

PROPOSAL: Rezone two parcels to allow a maximum of 340 residential units.

PETITION: Request to rezone a total of approximately 19.51 acres from the R1 Zoning District, which allows residential uses at densities up to 1 unit/acre, to Planned Residential Development (PRD), which allows residential (maximum of 35 units/acre) with limited commercial uses. A maximum of 340 dwelling units is proposed, with 254 multifamily apartments and 86 townhouse units proposed, at a net density of 18.28 units/acre, and a gross density of 17.43 units/acre. An associated request for a Special Exception (SE202000003) to waive the setback requirements for the proposed buildings, under §18-4.19.5.

ZONING: R-1 Residential – 1 unit/acre

OVERLAY DISTRICT(S): AIA – Airport Impact Area, EC – Entrance Corridor, Steep Slopes – Managed, and Steep Slopes – Preserved

PROFFERS: No

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01 – 34 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office, and service uses; and Privately-Owned Open Space – privately owned recreational amenities and open space; floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands, and other environmental features; in the Community of Hollymead in the Places29 Master Plan area.

BACKGROUND

On March 2, 2021, the Planning Commission heard the applicant's request for approval of ZMA2020-00007 and deferred taking action at the applicant's request. The deferral was to allow the applicant time to address such issues as identified below:

1. Concern about the harmonious transition of development from the RST property to the existing Ashland Townhomes and Forest Lakes neighborhoods to the east, including:
 - a. the number of units provided in the development;
 - b. the height of buildings in the development; and
 - c. the provision of buffer areas near Ashland Townhomes and along Ashwood Blvd.
2. Need for more clarity and information on the proposed provision of affordable housing in the development.
3. Need for more information on the open space and recreational facilities to be provided.
4. Lack of multi-modal transportation opportunities, including transit access.

SPECIFICS OF THE REVISED APPLICATION PLAN, DATED JUNE 1, 2021

PLEASE REFER TO THE STAFF REPORT FOR MARCH 2, 2021 [Attachment I] FOR INFORMATION ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, AN OVERVIEW OF THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL, PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY, CONFORMITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AND GENERAL IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING ZONING ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS.

Since the Commission's meeting in March 2021, the applicant has worked to revise the proposal to address the comments and questions raised at the meeting. The applicant has met with staff several times to discuss the application and potential ways for the applicant to satisfactorily address the Commission's concerns.

In addition, the applicant returned to the Places29-North Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on May 13, 2021, to present the revised plans to the CAC and community members. A compilation of written comments received from community members since the March 2nd staff report was published is included as Attachment IX. (Previous written comments from community members are included with the original staff report in Attachment I.10)

The applicant has made the following changes in order to address the Commission's concerns. A revised project narrative (Attachment II) with a full description of the changes that have been made and a revised application plan (Attachment III) depicting these changes have been provided by the applicant.

1. Concern about the harmonious transition of development from the RST property to the existing Ashland Townhomes and Forest Lakes neighborhoods to the east, including:

a. the number of units provided in the development;

The overall number of units in the development has been reduced from the originally proposed maximum of 370 to a maximum of 332. 254 multi-family units are still proposed. The number of townhouse units has been reduced, however, with the elimination of two full rows of townhouses. There are now six rows of townhouses proposed along the southeastern side of the property, instead of the original eight rows.

b. the height of buildings in the development; and

The southeastern-most townhouse unit in each of the six rows has been reduced from four stories to three stories, providing more of a transition in height to the existing homes in the Ashland Townhomes community to the southeast. The rest of the townhouse units in each row remain at four stories.

In addition, the two central 5-story apartment buildings now have a stepback proposed for the fifth story, reducing the scale of those buildings. The heights of the other three apartment buildings have increased from three stories to four stories. A revised Special Exception request has been provided (see Attachment V) by the applicant to reflect these changes, including requesting to waive the stepback requirement for the fourth story of each of these three other apartment buildings. However, the applicant is also no longer requesting to waive the stepback for the fifth story of the central two apartment buildings, as it is now proposed that the fifth stories will be stepped back. For staff's revised analysis of this Special Exception request, see Attachment VI.

The building heights and densities are now more concentrated in the west and central portions of the site, closer to Route 29, stepping down in height and density from the middle of the site toward the southeastern portion of the property closest to the existing neighborhoods.

c. the provision of buffer areas near Ashland Townhomes and along Ashwood Blvd.

The applicant has increased the proposed buffer area on the east/southeast side of the property (adjacent to the Ashland Townhomes community) from 20 feet to 40 feet. The applicant has also identified a berm to remain along Ashwood Blvd., to provide additional screening of the development from the street right-of-way. An expanded recreational area is also proposed at the southern entrance to the site, adjacent to Ashwood Blvd. (See also Attachment VII for an Illustrative Concept Plan provided by the applicant showing potential landscaping in the development.)

2. Need for more clarity and information on the proposed provision of affordable housing in the development.

The applicant has clarified the proposed affordable housing provisions and included more detail about the conditions of the affordable housing rates. The applicant has proposed significantly more affordable housing, with 75% of the 254 multi-family units to be offered as affordable rental housing for 30 years for those earning between 30% and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), with an average income of 60% of the AMI. This proposal would provide 191 affordable units, out of 332 units proposed overall.

The County's Principal Planner for Housing has also reviewed this revised affordable housing proposal and has noted that this amount of affordable housing is greater than both the current and the proposed affordable housing policies of the County. The current housing policy recommends 15% of units be designated as affordable, and the proposed housing policy recommends 20% of units be designated as affordable.

3. Need for more information on the open space and recreational facilities to be provided.

The applicant has provided additional open space and recreational facilities throughout the site, including a larger area at the south entrance to the site, by Ashwood Blvd., and a courtyard-like area in the center of the townhouse portion of the development. The amenity space in the southeast corner of the site along Ashwood also increases the setback of the first row of townhouses from the Ashwood right-of-way from what was originally proposed. The townhouse courtyard area is across the street (Private Road C) from the amenity area with the proposed pool (adjacent to the apartment buildings), providing a more cohesive and defined set of recreational areas near the center of the development. See Attachment VIII for a Substitution Request provided by the applicant identifying the proposed recreational facilities and amenities to be provided.

4. Lack of multi-modal transportation opportunities, including transit access.

Although transit service does not currently exist in the vicinity of the proposed RST development, the applicant has identified on the application plan three potential locations throughout the site to accommodate bus stops for future transit service in this area. The final location would be determined in consultation with the provider of the transit service, such as CAT or JAUNT.

A revised analysis by staff of this application's consistency with the neighborhood model principles, based on the changes made to the plan since the March 2nd Planning Commission meeting, is included as Attachment IV.

In addition to the concerns identified above, there were also concerns raised about potential impacts of this development on traffic and the transportation network and on capacities of the local schools.

In the original review of this application, both VDOT and the County’s Transportation Planning team expressed no objections to the proposed development based on its expected impacts on the transportation system in the surrounding area. This review was based on a submitted Traffic Impact Analysis, or TIA (see Attachment I.9). A right-in/right-out only entrance is proposed for Route 29 to prevent a wide range of turning movements. A turn lane will be also constructed for this entrance. On Route 29 southbound, the TIA recommended lengthening the left-turn lane onto Ashwood Boulevard to accommodate the increased traffic. The applicant is proposing to install this expanded turn lane, as depicted on the application plan.

This review, and the TIA, were based on the originally proposed maximum of 370 dwelling units. Because the applicant has now decreased the requested maximum number of residential units to 332, there continue to be no objections, as it is expected that traffic generation will be less than what was originally reviewed because of the reduction in unit count.

It was also discussed that the Commonwealth of Virginia owns property between Ashwood Blvd. and the subject parcels, so that the site does not have direct frontage on Ashwood at this time. The applicant will have to follow all appropriate VDOT processes at the site planning/subdivision stage to ensure that this entrance via Ashwood can be constructed. (See Attachment I.8 for more information and the processes outlined by VDOT that would have to be done at site planning to allow this entrance to be constructed.) There is no concern from staff at this time regarding this issue, as it will have to be addressed with VDOT at the site planning/subdivision stage if this rezoning request is approved.

School capacity concerns have also been raised. The Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) system has recently revised its projected enrollment and school capacity conflict numbers for the next 10 years. Because of these new numbers, and the applicant’s proposed reduction in the number of residential units to be constructed, staff updated the expected student generation numbers calculations. Using the calculator provided by ACPS, staff revised the expected student generation numbers based on the proposed reduction in residential units to 332. See the table below.

Official Calculator

Dwelling Type	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
Townhomes (78 units)	0.15 (11.7)	0.06 (4.68)	0.08 (6.24)	0.29 (22.62)
Multifamily (254 units)	0.12 (30.48)	0.03 (7.62)	0.05 (12.7)	0.21 (53.34)
Total at Each Level	42.18	12.3	18.94	73.42

Source of Calculator: Albemarle County Public Schools

With the reduction in the number of proposed units to 332, it is expected that approximately 11 fewer students overall will be generated. (The total number of students expected to be generated was originally 84.6.) Based on the new enrollment projections and capacity conflict numbers provided by ACPS, Hollymead Elementary and Sutherland Middle both currently have capacity levels that this proposed development would not exceed. However, Sutherland would have a slight capacity deficit near the end of the 10-year period. Albemarle High School currently has a capacity deficit, and that deficit is expected to grow over the 10-year period. In addition to the three traditional high schools, there are also high school “Centers” operated by ACPS. It is important to note that the high school enrollment figures are not adjusted for students attending these Centers, which does add some capacity for high school students.

SUMMARY FOR REZONING REQUEST

Staff has identified the following factors which are favorable to this rezoning request:

1. The request is consistent with the uses and density recommended by the Places29 Master Plan.
2. Affordable housing is being provided with this development at an amount that is greater than both the existing and the proposed housing policies of the County.
3. The request proposes to provide additional pedestrian connections in the area, including parallel to Ashwood Boulevard, connecting to the existing multi-use path along Route 29, as well as several potential locations for future transit service to the area.
4. The plan proposes to provide a greater amount of open and recreational space than the requested zoning district requires.
5. All of the Neighborhood Model principles are being met or mostly met.

Staff has identified the following factors which are unfavorable to this request:

1. The proposed development would result in additional student enrollment at area schools, including Albemarle High, which is already over-capacity.
2. The proposed height of five stories of the two central apartment buildings is higher than the four stories recommended in the Places29 Master Plan; however, a stepback is proposed for the fifth story of these two buildings to reduce their intensity of scale.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of ZMA202000007, RST Residences.

In addition, staff recommends approval of SE202000003, a special exception request to modify the stepback requirements for buildings in the development, with conditions. (See Attachment VI for staff's full analysis of this request and the list of proposed conditions.)

ATTACHMENTS

- I: [Staff Report and Attachments from March 2, 2021](#)
- II: [Revised Project Narrative, last revised June 1, 2021](#)
- III: [Revised Application Plan, last revised June 1, 2021](#)
- IV: [Revised Staff Analysis of ZMA2020-00007 Consistency with Neighborhood Model Principles](#)
- V: [Revised Special Exception Narrative, last revised June 1, 2021](#)
- VI: [Revised Staff Analysis of Special Exception Request](#)
- VII: [Illustrative Concept Plan, dated June 1, 2021](#)
- VIII: [Substitution Request, last revised June 1, 2021](#)
- IX: [Additional Community Correspondence Received](#)