September 20, 2021
Revised: December 6, 2021
Revised: February 21, 2022
Revised: June 6, 2022

The Heritage on Rio

Rezoning Application Narrative
ZMA 2021-00011

Project Description

GW Real Estate Partners, LLC (the "Applicant") is a family owned real estate development and property management company based in Charlottesville. The Applicant proposes a multifamily apartment project to be referred to as "The Heritage on Rio" on five parcels of land adjacent to Rio Road West in the Rio Magisterial District (the "Project"). The subject parcels and their size, and owners are as follows (collectively, the "Property"):

Tax Map Parcel	Acreage per Assessor's Records	Acreage per Recent Survey	Owner
04500-00-00-026A2	4.71 ac.	4.696	Charlottesville Rio Road Apartments, LLC
04500-00-00-026B5	0.67 ac.	0.697	Charlottesville Rio Road Apartments, LLC
04500-00-00-026B4	0.80 ac.	0.822	Charlottesville Rio Road Apartments, LLC
04500-00-00-026B3	0.92 ac.	0.942	J. Wendell and Billie Jean Howell
04500-00-00-026B2	1.05 ac.	1.075	Abdul W., Habib, and Shaid Rahim
5 parcels total	8.15 ac. Total	8.23 ac Total	

The Applicant is the contract purchaser of each of the parcels that comprise the Property. All of the parcels are zoned R-6 Residential, and are designated on the Comprehensive Plan and the Places29 Master Plan for Urban Density Residential use. An area comprising approximately one acre of parcel 45-26A2 is designated for Neighborhood Service Center on the Places29 Master Plan.

The Applicant proposes to rezone the Property from R-6 Residential to Planned Residential Development ("PRD"), to allow for the development of an apartment community on the Property. The community would consist of multifamily apartment buildings to serve the County's need for housing in the Route 29/Rio Road area. The need for housing is reflected in the Comprehensive Plan's designation of the Property for the future land uses of Urban Density Residential, and in the recently adopted Rio29 Small Area Plan.

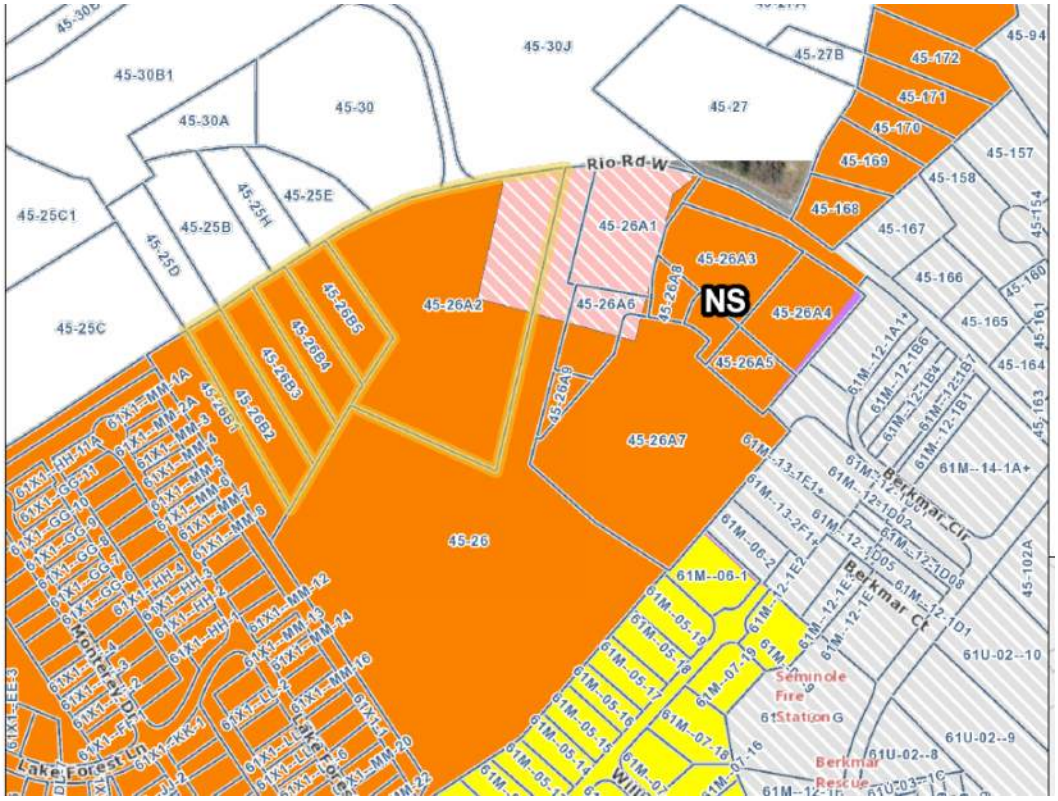
Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is comprised of a large variety of residential, office, institutional, and commercial uses. The Four Seasons Residential Subdivision and a single family residence are located to the west of the Property, the Garden Spot Garden Center is located to the immediate east, and the Charlottesville Health and Rehabilitation Center is to the immediate south. The Blake at Charlottesville Assisted Living Facility is located to the southeast of the Property. The Blake is located within the Oakleigh Development, which is approved for residential, office, and commercial uses. At just over half a mile from the Route 29/Rio Road intersection, the proposed community would be within walking distance to many conveniences, including the numerous retail shops and offices in the Berkmar Crossing commercial area, several grocery stores, the Northside Library, and the large number of destinations surrounding the Rio/29 Intersection, including CVS Drugstore, Fashion Square Mall, Rio Hill Shopping Center, and Albemarle Square Shopping Center, among many others. Further to the west of the Property beyond the Four Seasons residential neighborhood is West Park Plaza, a small neighborhood convenience center containing a variety of professional offices, service establishments such as a hair and nail salon, and medical offices. The proposed community would offer needed housing options for County residents and employees of nearby business and employment centers, and would significantly contribute to the urban redevelopment of the surrounding area envisioned by the Rio29 Small Area Plan, including by adding more residents who will support the implementation of the Rio29 Small Area Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

The Places29 Master Plan's Future Land Use Map designates most of the Property for Urban Density Residential. Approximately one acre of the Property is designated for Urban Mixed Use, as part of a Neighborhood Service Center.

The Property is outlined in yellow on the image below of the Places29 Land Use Map. For reference, the parcels shown to the east of the Property with grey and white stripes are those located within the boundary of the Rio29 Small Area Plan.



Application Plan

A proposed Application Plan prepared by Collins Engineering dated September 20, 2021, (the "Application Plan"), revised June 6, 2022, is enclosed with this Application. The Project proposes a maximum of 250 dwelling units, for a gross density of 31.28 DUA across the entire 8.23 acres, less the 0.24 acres to be dedicated to the public along Rio Road West. The Application Plan identifies building envelopes for seven residential buildings, four of which are located fronting on Rio Road West, and with the three remaining buildings located behind. A clubhouse building will likely be included in the area shown for Recreational Amenity Space in the middle of the Project, which would be an eighth building, but would not contain any dwelling units.Travelway/parking envelopes are also shown, along with recreational/amenity areas and open space. Included within the open space area are landscape buffers on all sides of the Project area. A 10-foot wide asphalt multi-use pathway is proposed to be constructed along the entire frontage of the parcel, and would replace the existing narrower concrete sidewalk. The Applicant would also provide a "Separation Zone," or a grass utility strip between the curb and the asphalt path that will have a minimum width of six feet, as shown on the Application Plan.

The existing driveway that provides access to the Charlottesville Health and Rehabilitation Center would become the Project's secondary entrance. Parcel 45-26A2 is subject to a recorded access easement for the existing driveway that benefits the Health and Rehabilitation Center. That driveway has been in use for decades, and was likely constructed in 1987 at the time that the CHRC was constructed (according to County Assessor records). It was clearly constructed between 1980 and 1990 according to historical aerial photographs. The existing driveway meets VDOT sight distance and access management standards. A new primary point of access to the community from Rio Road is located the west and is shown on the plans. This will be a full-access entrance (not a right-in/right-out only), and will also meet VDOT sight distance and access management standards.

The Project proposes seven residential buildings, and envisions a mix of three and four-story buildings. Each of the four buildings fronting on Rio Road West will be limited to three stories with basements, and the taller buildings would be located further to the rear of the Property.The proposed club house/amenity area will be either one or two stories.

For the four-story buildings with basements, the Applicant has requested a special exception to modify or waive the requirement under the PRD district regulations that the fourth floor include a 15-foot stepback. The proposed plans support a modification or waiver of this requirement. For example, any potential "canyon effect" is mitigated by the distance between Rio Road West and the four-story building facades, the location of the three-story buildings in between, and by the way the natural property grade gently slopes down and away from Rio Road. As such, the four-story buildings, which will be located to the rear of the Property, will not appear to be as tall relative to the elevation of the roadbed and the pedestrian/bike path. In addition, the Places29 Master Plan provides that landscaped strips will separate sidewalks from Rio Road West, and the Project includes a planting strip consistent with that recommendation, which further mitigates the crowding of buildings that can produce a canyon effect. Likewise, the proposed street trees, sidewalks, and landscaping within the proposed community will minimize the need for a 15-foot stepback on the fourth floor of the proposed buildings. More information about this request is contained in the Special Exception Narrative that is enclosed with the application materials.

The proposed community is located within the Albemarle County Service Authority jurisdictional service area and would thus be served by public water and sewer, and a conceptual layout of water and sewer lines is shown on the PRD plan set. Conceptual stormwater management facilities are also shown on the PRD plan set.

Travelways and parking areas will be privately owned and maintained, as is typical with all multi-family communities under single ownership. As shown on the Application Plan, all existing internal parcel lines would be eliminated, and the project would be developed as a single parcel under common ownership

Because Rio Road West is a designated Entrance Corridor, the building design and materials, and other elements of the Project such as plantings and signage will be subject to the jurisdiction of the Architectural Review Board. In addition, the Application Plan contains a statement that the buildings will include a variety of architectural materials and elements that will create a cohesive appearance, and provide articulated features and details to add visual interest and eliminate blank walls.

Affordable Housing:
The Project Application Plan includes a statement that a minimum of 15% of the units constructed will be affordable to households making up to 80% of the Area Median Income for a period of ten years. While the applicant is providing 15% for all units, it should be noted that under the current R-6 zoning a maximum of 49 units could be built without providing affordable units.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The proposed community is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's designation of Urban Density Residential and Urban Mixed Use (Neighborhood Service Center). Urban Density Residential contemplates an average density of 6.01-34 dwelling units per acre ("DUA"). At 250 units across the entire 8.23 acres, and after dedication of approximately 0.24 acres, the Project density is 31.28 DUA, within the recommended range of the Comprehensive Plan. This density is appropriate for this location adjacent to Rio Road West, which is a five-lane Minor Arterial road, and in close proximity to U.S. Route 29/Seminole Trail and a large variety and number of shops, offices, institutional uses (such as the Northside Library and public schools), among many other nearby destinations and convenience areas.

Existing R-6 zoning would permit approximately 50 dwelling units (not including any bonus density), whereas the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map calls for over 6 DUA, up to 34 DUA. Less than 5% of housing in the County is multi-family now or zoned for multi-family. Objective 5 of the Development Areas chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to "promote density within the Development Areas to help create new compact urban places." Strategy 5b toward that Objective is, "On greenfield sites, encourage developers to build at the higher end of the density range, provided that development will be in keeping with design recommendations in the Neighborhood Model." A detailed description of how The Heritage on Rio is consistent with the Neighborhood Model principles is contained at the end of this narrative.

The Urban Density Residential designation is used in areas where multifamily housing with a gross density range of 6.01 to 34 per acre is desired. The project's net density is 31.28 DUA. Therefore, it will further the goals of the Future Land Use Plan of the Comprehensive Plan by providing 250 dwelling units (including affordable units) close to employment areas and on bike/pedestrian trail and an existing transit line.

Table LU-1 of the Places29 Master Plan shows residential uses among the recommended uses in Neighborhood Service Centers. The Applicant's proposed use of the Property will contribute to the mix of uses in this Neighborhood Service Center specifically, and more broadly to the urban redevelopment of the surrounding Rio29 area and to areas to the west of the Property on Rio Road West.

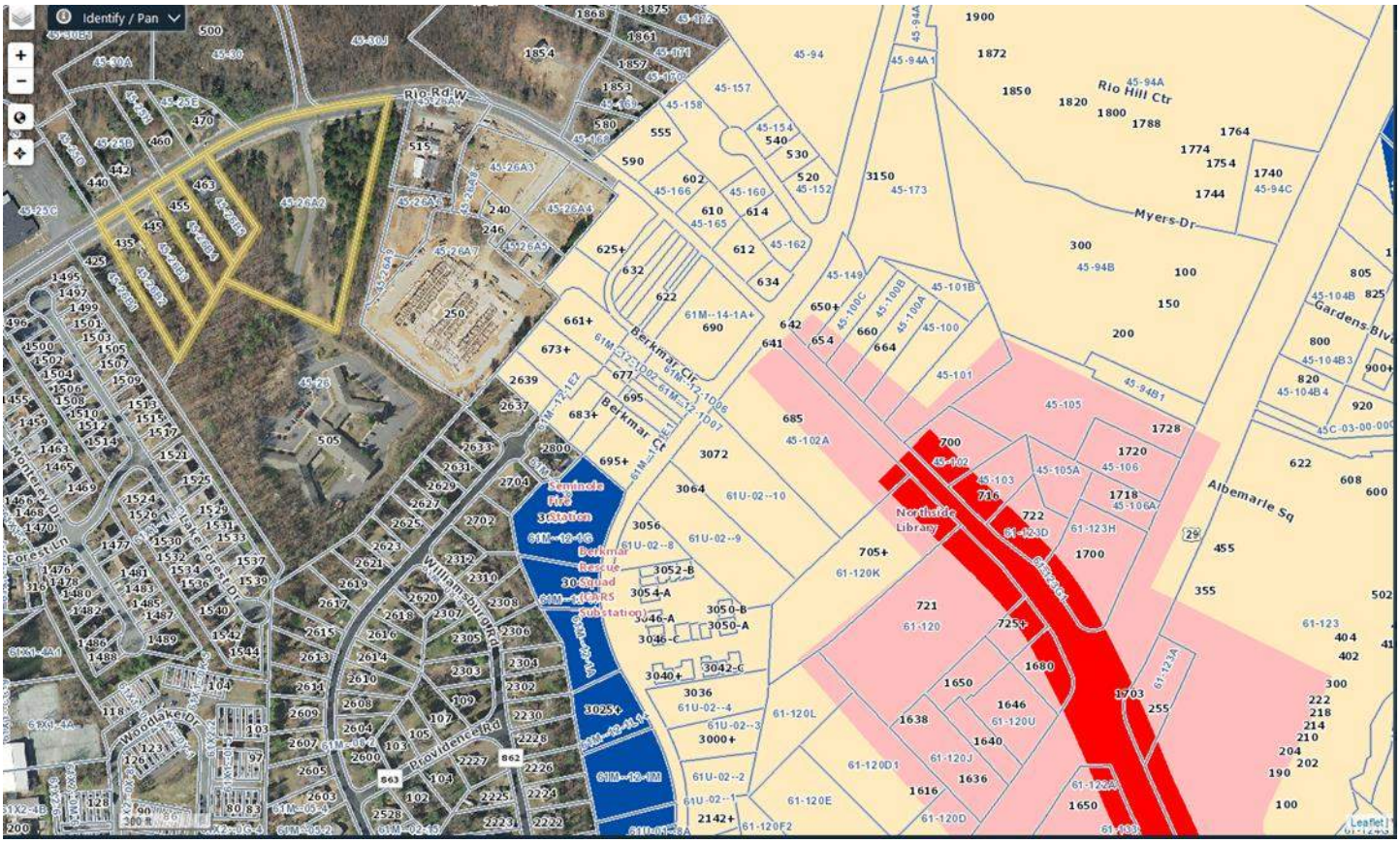
Table LU-2 of the Places29 Master Plan shows residential uses as a primary use in Urban Density Residential areas around Centers. The Master Plan recommends a maximum density of 34 DUA and a maximum building height of 4 stories. The Master Plans also states a preference for "two or more housing types" in each development within the Urban Density Residential area. While the Applicant proposes a single type of housing (apartments), there are already a variety of residential housing types surrounding this Center. For example, there are single family detached residences to the immediate west of the Property, including in the Four Seasons community, and to the south of the Property along Commonwealth Drive. Additional single family detached homes are located on the north side of Rio Road West immediately across from the Property. The Applicant's proposal will help balance other residential developments around the Center that feature a single type of housing,

and contribute to the mixture of housing types in the general area. In addition, given the relatively small size of the Project, it is economically challenging to provide more than one housing type. When considered in the context of the larger surrounding area around the Project, which already includes a variety of housing types, the Project is consistent with that goal, given that the proposed community significantly contributes to the urban redevelopment of the surrounding area envisioned by the Rio29 Small Area Plan, including by adding more residents who will support the implementation of the Rio29 Small Area Plan.

Open space is a recommended secondary use in both Neighborhood Service Centers and in Urban Density Residential areas around Centers. As required by the PRD district regulations, at least 25% of the project area will be set aside as open space, to include amenity areas. While the precise amenities have not yet been determined, they will likely include a clubhouse and swimming pool, a tot lot, and a pocket park. This approved secondary use will therefore be an important feature the Project.

The Places29 Master Plan recommendations for the "Neighborhood Service Center" recommends 3-20 dwelling units per acre and a maximum building height of three stories. As shown on the Application Plan, the small area of the Property located within this area includes residential uses, and the residential density of that area will not exceed the recommended range. The Garden Spot Garden Center is also within the Neighborhood Service Center, and that commercial use complements the residential use at the Project.

The Property is located in close proximity to the Rio29 Small Area Plan area, as shown in the image below. The colored areas in the image represent the areas within the Rio29 Small Area plan, which are just a 10-15 minute walk from the Project. As noted previously, the proposed community would offer needed housing options for County residents and employees of nearby business and employment centers, and would significantly contribute to the urban redevelopment of the surrounding area envisioned by the Rio29 Small Area Plan, including by adding more residents who will support the implementation of the Rio29 Small Area Plan.



Other elements of the Comprehensive Plan that The Heritage on Rio Supports:

From the Development Areas Section of the Comprehensive Plan:

Objective 4: Use Development Area land efficiently to prevent premature expansion of the Development areas

Objective 5: Promote density within the Development Areas to help create new compact urban places

Strategy 5b: Encourage developers to build at the higher end of the density range, on greenfield sites, provided that development will be in keeping with design recommendations in the Neighborhood Model

Strategy 5c: Encourage developers to build within the density range recommended in the Master Plans on infill sites

Objective 6: Promote infill and redevelopment that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and uses

From the Implementation Section of the Comprehensive Plan:

Development Areas - Indicators of Progress

5. Increase in residential proximity to public transit, schools, parks, libraries, and grocery stores.

Impact on Public Facilities and Infrastructure:

Public Transportation Facilities:
Included with this Application is a Traffic Impact Analysis prepared by Ramey Kemp Associates that is based on a scoping meeting attended by Carl Hultgren of Ramey Kemp Associates, Kevin McDermott from Community Development, and VDOT representatives on July 8, 2021 (the "Traffic Study"). Traffic counts were conducted on August 3, 2021. Because public schools and UVA were not in session during that time, and further given the COVID-19 pandemic, the turning movement volumes were increased by 20% to account for those factors. Note that the Traffic Study was based on a maximum of 254 dwelling units, but that the application is for a maximum of 250 units.

The Traffic Study is subject to review and comment by both Mr. McDermott and VDOT, and full details are included in the Traffic Study, but a summary of its key conclusions are as follows:

- No turn lanes or taper lanes are warranted along Rio Road West
- No other off-site improvements are recommended or warranted
- Based on the traffic capacity analysis, all of the study intersections will operate at an acceptable level-of-service at build-out of the proposed multifamily community with the following roadway improvements:
    - Construct the proposed Rio Road West at West Site Driveway with one ingress lane and one egress lane
    - Construct a northbound right-turn lane on the Health and Rehab Center Driveway with 50 feet of storage

Other Public Transportation and Multi-modal Infrastructure:

The Project proposes to replace the existing standard concrete sidewalk along the frontage of the Property with a 10-foot wide multi-use asphalt path that will improve the existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. A bike lane already exists on both sides of Rio Road West, but the proposed path will provide an additional option for those who prefer to ride on a path instead of on the road in a bike lane. This new path will be further supported by a grass strip of land between the curb and the new path with a minimum width of 6 feet, which will provide for an improved pedestrian and bicycling experience over the existing narrow concrete sidewalk immediately adjacent to the curb (without a grass strip in between). In addition, bike racks are provided throughout the development to allow for safe storage of the residents bikes.

An existing Charlottesville Area Transit stop is located just west of the existing driveway into the Property, as shown in the image below from Google Street View. The Project proposes to shift the location of the stop to the west, in the area shown on the Application Plan, and to improve the comfort and convenience of the relocated stop with the addition of a bus shelter and bench. These enhancements will further improve the existing transportation infrastructure.



The Project also includes an opportunity for a future interparcel connection adjacent to tax map parcels 45-26B1 to the west and 45-26 to the east in the event those parcels are ever redeveloped. An existing interparcel connection to the south for the Rehabilitation Facility on parcel 45-26 will remain. These interparcel connections will help create an interconnected street network that further supports the existing and enhanced multi-modal transportation opportunities and distributes impacts on the transportation network.

Schools:
The Heritage on Rio will provide new housing options and inventory in the designated Development Area to families who already live in the County and whose children already attend the County public schools. The Project also increases the existing inventory of residences in close proximity to existing transportation networks, places of employment, educational facilities, and nearby services, all as consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, including expressly, the Places29 Master Plan and the newly adopted Rio29 Small Area Plan. Most importantly, by providing residential units in the designated Development Area at a density that is within the range recommended by the Comprehensive Plan for the Property, the Project helps to reduce pressure to subdivide Rural Area land for by-right lots, the latter which is in direct conflict with the fundamental tenants of the Comprehensive Plan and the County's Growth Management Policy, which is shown below:



GOAL: Albemarle County's Development Areas will be attractive, vibrant, areas for residents and businesses, supported by services, facilities, and infrastructure. Growth will be directed to the Development Areas and the County's Rural Area with its agricultural, forestal, historic, cultural, scenic, and natural resources will be preserved for future generations.

Growth Management

Objective 1: Continue to consistently use the Growth Management Policy as the basis on which to guide decisions on land use, capital expenditures, and service provision.

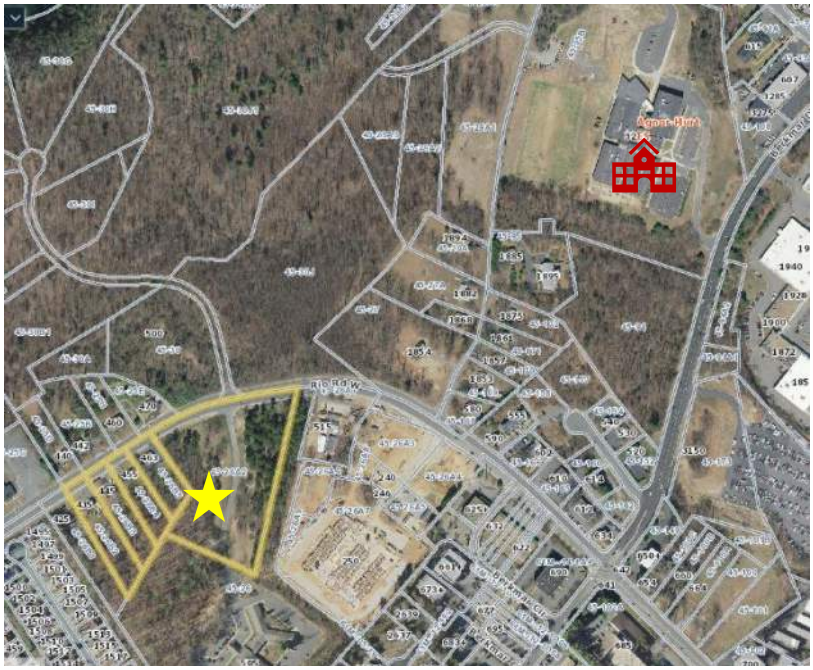
Strategy 1a: Continue to encourage approval of new development proposals in the Development Areas as the designated location for new residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development. Only approve new development proposals in the Rural Area that are supported by Rural Area goals, objectives, and strategies.

Strategy 1b: To help promote the Development Areas as the most desirable place for growth, continue to fund capital improvements and infrastructure and provide a higher level of service to the Development Areas.

Strategy 1c: Continue to recognize the shared responsibility between the County and new development to pay for infrastructure and improvements to the Development Areas to address the impacts of new development

And as noted previously, it is critical to evaluate this issue in consideration of the fact that the Property is already zoned R-6 Residential, which would permit 49 units by-right.

School-aged children living at the Project will attend Agnor-Hurt Elementary, Burley Middle School, and Albemarle High School. Agnor-Hurt Elementary School is in close proximity to the Project, as shown in the image below, and Albemarle High School is also close by.



The Albemarle County Public Schools Long Range Planning Advisory Committee ("LRPC") Recommendations, July 11, 2019 (the "2019 Report") states that the middle schools have combined adequate capacity, and a comprehensive planning study will evaluate needs and options to consider new facilities, additions and renovations, boundary changes, grade level configurations, and other solutions to meet schools' needs.

More recently, the LRPAC's 2021 Recommendations dated September 9, 2021 (the "2021 Report")[1] contains updated information about the capacity of all schools in the District at Appendix F of the 2021 Report. The 2021 Report projects that both Agnor-Hurt Elementary School and Burley Middle School will have sufficient capacity through the 2030/2031 school year. There is a recommendation for a new elementary school in the northern feeder pattern, however, this is needed particularly for Baker-Butler which currently has large capacity issues and is anticipated to increase. The new elementary school will help alleviate issues across the northern feeder pattern, including Agnor-Hurt. A study for middle schools is recommended as well, however, again, Burley Middle will have capacity in the coming years according to the information in the study. While Albemarle High School is currently above planned capacity, the County school division "has embarked upon a 'center' based strategy to address capacity issues at its three comprehensive high schools, in particular Albemarle High School. The LRPAC's recommendations included the following statements regarding capacity related to the High School Center model: "The Division has embarked upon a "center" based strategy to address capacity issues at its three comprehensive high schools, in particular at Albemarle High School" and "This solution is not only a solution capacity, but it also supports a new instructional model that looks toward the future of learning spaces." The two "centers" that have been approved by the County will serve 650 students. Center I, which opened in 2018 and is located approximately three and a half miles from the Project, will serve up to 250 students. Center II will serve up to 400 students and the County budget that was approved by the Board of Supervisors in May 2022, included funding for the construction of the High School Center II.

Below are the yield rates for the proposal using the schools provided "Subdivision Yield Analysis" dated August 23, 2021.

[1] https://www.k12albemarle.org/fs/resource-manager/view/be0af1ae-107d-42ff-93eb-ee61c7b1c813

	Apartment/Multi-Family
Agnor-Hurt Elementary (0.08 Yield Rate)	20
Burley Middle (0.03 Yield Rate)	8
Albemarle High (0.06 Yield Rate)	15
Total Units:	250
Total Potential Students:	43

Fire/Rescue/Safety:
This project will be served by the nearby Seminole Trail Volunteer Fire Station on Berkmar Drive which provides fire and rescue services to this area. The proposal includes two entrances, which provides the required second point of access by Fire/Rescue.

Public Parks:
The Project will include a variety of recreational amenity areas on site, which will likely include a club house and swimming pool, a tot lot, and a pocket park, and perhaps additional passive recreation areas. Given this variety of on-site amenities, we do not expect there to be a material or significant detrimental impact on public parks.

Impacts on Environmental Features
As proposed, the Project does not create any detrimental impacts to any environmental features. There are not any preserved slopes on site. While there are two areas of managed steep slopes, both are man-made, and disturbance of those areas will be subject to the regulations in the site plan regulation. There is an existing small stream on site that is a result of stormwater drainage from Rio Road. The Project will be controlling existing drainage through stormwater improvements and working with the Army Corps of Engineers to impact the current drainage area.

In addition, by proposing a dense, walkable multifamily community in the heart of the County's designated development area, in walking and easy biking distance of a large and growing number of shops, services, and employment areas, coupled with a transit stop on-site that will be improved with a bench and shelter, the proposed upgrade to a 10-foot wide multi-use asphalt path with a six-foot wide grass strip, the Project will make it easier for residents to minimize or avoid the use of an automobile, which can reduce traffic congestion and improve regional air quality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has studied this issue and issued a report entitled "Measuring the Air Quality and Transportation Impacts of Infill Development, available at the link below.[2] The Executive Summary of the report includes the following statements:

> *Many regions are struggling to balance transportation needs with community revitalization and environmental protection. The potential for infill development to support all three goals is what sets it apart as a unique strategy. While the positive impact of redevelopment projects may be readily apparent at the community level, their regional transportation and air quality benefits can be harder to quantify.*
>
> *Fundamentally, well designed neighborhoods in more accessible places make walking, biking and transit more convenient options. Therefore, policies that increase the amount of urban and suburban infill development can help more people meet their everyday needs with less driving. In turn, this can reduce traffic and contribute to better regional air quality. Fundamentally, well designed neighborhoods in more accessible places make walking, biking and transit more*

[2] https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/measuring-air-quality-and-transportation-impacts-infill-development

convenient options. Therefore, policies that increase the amount of urban and suburban infill development can help more people meet their everyday needs with less driving. In turn, this can reduce traffic and contribute to better regional air quality.

Historic Resources:
There are no known historic resources on the Property.

Consistency with the Neighborhood Model Principles

Pedestrian Orientation. A concrete sidewalk already exists along the entire frontage of the Property adjacent to the Entrance Corridor. The proposed multi-use path that would replace the existing concrete sidewalk along the frontage of the Property will enhance the pedestrian orientation of the Project by widening it and providing a grass strip at least six feet wide, between the path and the curb. The current concrete sidewalk is directly adjacent to the curb, without a grass stip. Sidewalks will be located throughout the interior of the site as well, along travelways and driveways, and sidewalk connections are provided from the site to the multi-use path in multiple areas. Enhancing the existing pedestrian network will provide residents with enhanced pedestrian access to the nearby schools, library, and amenities at Berkmar Center, Rio Hill Shopping Center, and many other areas in and around the Rio29 area. Sidewalk connections between buildings, amenities, and the relocated bus stop will also support a pedestrian orientation.

Mixture of Uses. While the Project will be used entirely for residential uses, it is in very close proximity to other mixed-use properties such as the Westpark Plaza to the west, and the Garden Spot, Northside Library, Berkmar Crossing and Rio Hill Shopping Center to the east, among many other nearby mixed-use properties. As shown by the future land use map in the Places29 Master Plan, the Property is designated for urban density residential use to support an overall mixture of uses in and around the area. When considered in the broader context of the Project's proximity to these other mixed-use areas, the Heritage on Rio satisfies this principle.

Neighborhood Center. The Heritage on Rio is part of a larger neighborhood oriented toward and complementary to the nearest Neighborhood Centers as described above. Both the Berkmar Crossing and Rio Hill Shopping Centers are near the Project and provide a large variety of services, and the Westpark Plaza center provides a smaller, and complementary type of services. Immediately adjacent to the Project is the Garden Spot garden center, and the future office and retail uses at Oakleigh, immediately to the west of the Garden Spot, as well as Northside Library within walking distance of the development. Oakleigh already includes The Blake Assisted Living facility and a small park honoring military Veterans. Immediately to the south is the existing Charlottesville Health & Rehabilitation Center. Residents would be afforded many benefits by this proximity to these Neighborhood Centers, some of which are immediately adjacent, and others which are located approximately a half mile and a mile from the Property. In particular, the educational, employment, dining, and shopping amenities that are located within those Centers are within comfortable walking or biking distance from the Project. The Heritage on Rio would provide an extraordinarily convenient location for employees of the Blake, the Charlottesville Health & Rehabilitation Center, and the Garden Spot, among many other nearby employers. Similarly, residents of The Heritage on Rio will have extremely convenient access to services at these employers, or to relatives who may be living at The Blake.

Transit is already located right in front of the proposed community, which the Applicant will enhance with the addition of a bus shelter. The half-mile (or less) distance from The Heritage on Rio to these other Neighborhood Centers is consistent with the Neighborhood Center principle expressed in Strategy 2f (providing that ½ mile is an appropriate distance between homes and a Neighborhood Center when connected by transit).

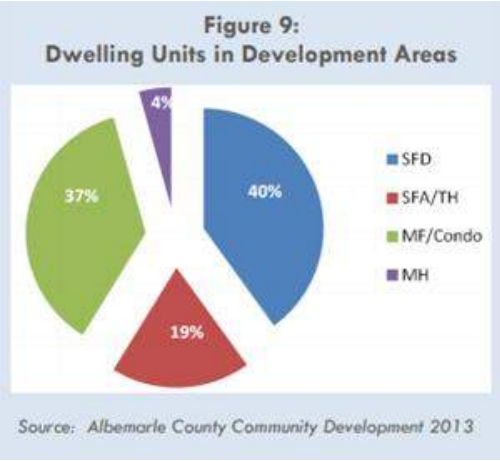
While the Heritage on Rio is not required to function as a Neighborhood Center under these guidelines, the Project does include many on-site amenities that create a sense of place. Many of the common amenities will

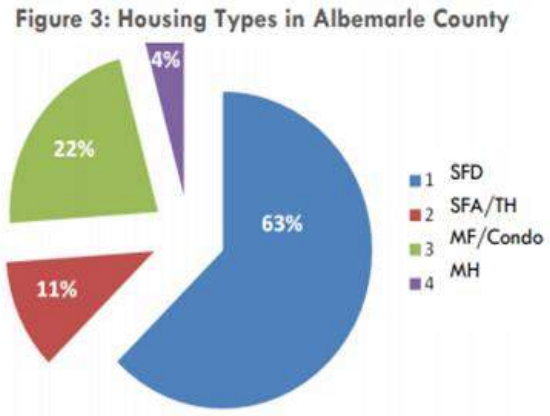
be centrally located within the Project. For example, the central amenity area will include an outdoor gathering area with a swimming pool for social events. Further away from the central amenity area, residents may enjoy other outdoor amenities which may include a tot lot and a dog park.

Even though the Project is not treated as a standalone Neighborhood Center, the location of the proposed amenities reflects with the general recommendation of the Neighborhood Centers principle that "focal points or places in a neighborhood or area where people congregate…. are very important in creating the identity of an area." Strategy 2f. The Project's on-site amenities contribute to a sense of place and provide a central gathering place for residents. All roads and sidewalks in the community lead to the visually prominent central amenity area, accessible to all residents, which will serve as the hub of social and community activities for residents. In light of the variety of on-site and adjacent or nearby amenities at existing Neighborhood Centers, this principle is fully satisfied.

Mixture of Housing Types and Affordability. Portions of the Property have been vacant for many years, and others have contained single-family residences that were constructed in the late 1950s. Therefore, the Project introduces a housing type in the form of apartments where such variety does not exist today. In addition, the Project contains an affordable housing component, as discussed elsewhere in this narrative. When considered in the context for the large number of single family residences nearby in Four Seasons and other nearby neighborhoods, as well as the Assisted Living units at The Blake at Oakleigh, the broad purpose of this principle is met.

Furthermore, the Comprehensive Plan posits a strategy of ensuring that Development Areas provide a variety of housing types, stating that "*a full range of housing types creates choices for residents*." A primary impetus for housing type choice is housing affordability, which apartments are uniquely suited to satisfy. The Comprehensive Plan also notes that "*a mixture of housing types may not be necessary for infill development, depending on the context and location*." As the pie charts accompanying Strategy 2g in the Development Areas chapter and Strategy 4a in the Housing chapter illustrates, the County has a very low stock of multifamily housing overall and within the Development Areas specifically, being only four percent (4%) in both calculations:





The Comprehensive Regional Housing Study and Needs Assessment published by The Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission reports that only three percent (3%) of the land in Albemarle County is zoned for multifamily housing, while ninety-five percent (95%) is zoned for single-family housing (Table 14. Residential Zoning by Jurisdiction, 2018). The report goes on to explain that *"(u)nder the goal of protecting single-family neighborhoods, such zoning restricts the opportunities for multi-family housing and increases multi-family land prices"* (Id., p. 61).

The areas surrounding The Heritage on Rio are mostly developed with single-family detached homes, townhomes, and senior Assisted Living Facility units. As such, it is appropriate to consider the proposed housing type withing the Project in the context of this surrounding development. The Objective 2, Strategy 2g of Urban Development Areas provides that ***"(u)less a mixture of housing types already exists in an area****, new development proposals should offer a variety of housing types for different income levels"* (emphasis added).

Further, the Applicant is proposing that 15% of the units constructed will be affordable for ten years which will ensure a mix of housing affordability on site, which is the primary goal of this strategy of the Neighborhood Model Principle. Multifamily housing often provides the best affordable option in high-cost areas such as Albemarle County close to urban development where people work.

Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks. The Project proposes travelways and parking areas in the areas shown on the Application Plan, which will support a system of interconnected travelways and connections to allow vehicles to access nearby locations with two convenient points of ingress and egress to Rio Road West. Pedestrians and cyclists will have more options when the Project is completed with its 10-foot multi-use asphalt path and grass strip that will replace the existing narrow concrete sidewalk next to the curb. The Application Plan also shows an area for a future connection on the west side of the Property, which will facilitate a vehicular and pedestrian interconnection should that property be redeveloped in the future.

Multi-Modal Transportation Opportunities. The application continues existing multi-model transportation opportunities that would allow residents of The Heritage on Rio to access the Property by vehicle, on foot, by bicycle, or by public transit with the existing transit stop immediately in front of the community. As noted, the Applicant will enhance the existing transit stop with the addition of a bus shelter and bench. This stop is also located less than ¼ mile from the designated Neighborhood Service Center. The Applicant's proposal to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the immediate vicinity by replacing the existing narrow sidewalk with a 10-foot wide asphalt multi-use path along the Project's frontage and providing bicycle facilities within the development, this will further enhance multi-modal transportation opportunities and connections between The Heritage on Rio and the numerous nearby neighborhood centers, public schools, and employment areas.

Parks, Recreational Amenities and Open Space. The Project proposes common recreational areas and other amenities for residents, that will likely include an outdoor swimming pool, a fitness center, and possibly other amenities such as a tot lot and a dog park. The Applicant's proposed amenities will satisfy the requirements of the PRD zoning district. The Project is proposed to be surrounded by buffers on all sides.

Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale. The Project proposes buildings that will include architectural features and detailing to add visual interest and eliminate blank walls, which will support the principle of buildings of human scale. The height of the proposed buildings is consistent with the recommendations of the Places29 Master Plan, which recommends that buildings on land designed for Urban Density Residential uses be no taller than four stories. All buildings within the Heritage on Rio will be limited to four stories, and the residential buildings adjacent to Rio Road will be limited to three stories, per the Places29 Master Plan recommendation. In addition, the way the natural property grade gently slopes down and away from Rio Road will further support the principle of buildings and spaces of human scale, in that the two taller four-story buildings located to the rear of the Property will appear less tall relative to the elevation of the roadbed and the pedestrian/bike path.

Relegated Parking. The Project Application Plan shows all parking areas relegated either behind the buildings or with very small parking areas to the side of buildings which will be buffered from Rio Road with landscaping. Parallel parking provided along the travelway promotes an efficient use of paved areas and contributes to an urban, walkable environment. Buffer areas and future required landscaping will help screen the view of the small parking areas to the side of the buildings that are adjacent to the Entrance Corridor.

Redevelopment. This application involves a redevelopment of approximately half of the Property – those parcels that are currently developed with single family detached units – with a type of dense residential housing that is expressly recommend by the Places29 Master Plan, at levels of Urban Density Residential.

Respecting Terrain and Careful Grading and Re-grading. Some grading will need to occur on the Property during construction. The Application Plan accounts for managed slopes on the Property, and no preserved slopes are located within the Property. The Applicant will obtain all required permits and approvals that may be needed to conduct grading on the Property.

Clear Boundaries with the Rural Area. Directly across Rio Road West from the Property is the Rural Area. By containing all development within the Property boundaries, and maintaining the clear boundary with that Rural Area, the Project satisfies this principle.

Climate Action Plan

In October 2020, the County adopted the Climate Action Plan that recommends a number of strategies and actions for renewable energy and other initiatives. The Project will specifically contribute to the following strategies and actions:

Strategy: Increase opportunities for bicycling, walking, and other alternative forms of personal transportation for daily travel.

Actions:

- *Increase the extent of sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use paths in the County's Development Areas, focusing on strategic, high-impact connections and filling gaps in existing networks.*
- *Improve the quality of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the Development Areas to make it safer and more comfortable for users.*

Strategy: Through land use planning, provide an urban land-use pattern more conductive to sustainable local and regional travel, and to protecting carbon sequestration in the Rural Area.

Actions:

- *Incentivize denser and more mixed-use development patterns within the Development Areas, including infill development within existing low-density areas and redevelopment of existing underutilized commercial sites.*
- *Increase affordable housing options in areas served by a variety of transportation options.*