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Design Focused Engineering

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County of Albemarle
Department of Community Development
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902

RE: SDP2020-63 – HTC Area C, Block II (TMP 32-41J)
Request for Waiver from Section 14-422(B)
Block II, Road "A" and "B2" Sidewalks

To Whom It May Concern,

Pursuant to Section 14-422(E), the Albemarle County Planning Commission may vary or except the requirements of sections 14-422 of the Subdivision Ordinance. The developer for HTC Area C, Block II (TMP 32-41J) requests a waiver from the requirements of Section 14-422(A) which requires that the internal new streets in Block II include sidewalks on both sides of the new streets.

The site plan for HTC Block II proposes 56 townhome units. A portion of units with access off of Private Road A and Private Road B1 are externally oriented with frontage on the existing street network surrounding the block; these units feature rear-loaded garages and a rolltop curb. Where townhomes are oriented with internal street frontage, sidewalks are provided. Private Road A and B1 are 20' urban section streets that are primarily designed to provide internal vehicular circulation throughout the site. Primary pedestrian access is intentionally designed to be outward facing to engage the existing street network, to provide convenient pedestrian access between blocks, and to support the mixed-use streetscape vision put forth by the approved ZMA201700005 for Hollymead Town Center, Area C.

Proposed Road	Location of Sidewalk Waiver Request	Location of Sidewalk Waiver Request
Private Road A (Orchid Bend)	West side of Orchid Bend	Lots 1-10
Private Road A (Orchid Bend)	North side of Orchid Bend	Lots 11-26
Private Road B1 (Purple Flora Bend)	East side of Purple Flora Bend	Lots 27-33

With regard to the sidewalk waiver request, please consider the following analysis from Section 14-422(E)(2):

(i) A variation or exception to allow a rural cross-section has not been granted. Curb and gutter or a rolltop curb is provided within the street section.
(ii) A surface other than concrete is not proposed; this request is for a waiver from requirements to provide sidewalks on both sides of Private Road A and B1.
(iii) Environmental constraints are not a factor in this waiver request as there are no environmentally sensitive features on the site.

(iv) The sidewalks shown provide reasonable access within the development and reasonable access to adjoining neighborhoods and streets. Please refer to the attached Exhibit A for existing and proposed pedestrian networks. Block II is zoned PDMC, which encourages urban design that is pedestrian-oriented and interconnected. The Code of Development approved with ZMA201700005 (HTC Area C) envisions a lively mixed-use area, where building and street design orients the community towards the streetscape and amenity areas around HTC. The proposed development of Block II seeks to align with these guidelines. Lots 1-33 face the existing street network and enhance the overall streetscape of Hollymead Town Center by establishing a design where front doors face the existing street network, parking is relegated in the rear, and amenity spaces are provided between Lots 10 & 11 and Lots 33 & 34, adjacent to existing public streets. Proposed sidewalks connect to existing walkways to support the primary streetscape activity on these main streets that run through Hollymead Town Center. Sidewalks are omitted from the rear of lots 1-33. Because these homes feature rear-loaded garages, the private streets for lots 1-33 effectively function as alleys for these units. Residents of lots 1-33 would be guided towards the public streetscape, or could easily access the sidewalks across the internal private street. Lots 34-56 propose front-loaded garages, with front doors on private streets A and B1. These lots that obtain frontage from the private streets propose sidewalks along their streetside, to provide adequate pedestrian infrastructure within Block II, to external HTC sidewalk connections, and towards each proposed amenity area.

(v) Residents of Block II and Area C overall would be better served by sidewalks that are on the primary access roads of Area C, to provide the proposed streetscape activity that supports a mixed-use urban area. Sidewalks to the rear of lots 1-33 would not necessarily contribute to public benefit as these roads are proposed to be private. For residents of lots 1-33, sidewalks are proposed along their public street frontages, easily accessible from their front doors, or could utilize the internal sidewalk across the street. A sidewalk along the rear of lots 1-33 would not provide a necessary pedestrian connection that is not met elsewhere.

(vi) Because the internal roads of Block II would only serve the residents of Block II, it is unnecessary to provide for sidewalks on both sides of Road A and B1, along the rear of the structures, when they are proposed externally along the frontage of these structures and through shared amenity spaces located within the Block. Internal roads have posted 15 mph speed limits, which will result in low-speed vehicular travel through the internal roads, allowing for pedestrians to safely travel to recreation areas within the block, or to the externally-oriented sidewalks.

(vii) The proposed sidewalks would be privately maintained along Private Road A (Orchid Bend) and Private Road B (Purple Flora Bend). The proposed sidewalks within the right-of-way dedication along public streets Berkmar Drive and Timberwood Boulevard would be publicly maintained.

(viii) The waiver promotes the goals of the comprehensive plan, as Urban Mixed Use (in Centers). Hollymead Town Center is recognized by the comprehensive plan as a Community Center. Centers, generally, are anchors of the community. Centers should have strong multimodal connectivity, building and street design of human scale, and accessible open space, while providing housing, employment, and services. Block II is immediately adjacent to a major commercial shopping center in Albemarle County. By providing sidewalks on the perimeter

of the block, pedestrians are invited towards the streetscape and encouraged to walk to the commercial services and amenities nearby. This is particularly significant as Community Centers should "include multiple connections to the surrounding area" (Comprehensive Plan 5-10) and sidewalks on both sides of the road within the block would not necessarily further such goals, when internal connections are proposed through and around shared amenity areas. Sidewalks within the block would only serve residents of Block II, whereas destinations in Hollymead Town Center are external to this residential area. The proposed pedestrian connections through and around the internal amenity areas provide adequate and convenient access for residents of Block II; sidewalks along both sides of the internal streets would not provide increased pedestrian connectivity that would enhance the pedestrian experience for residents of Block II or provide a public benefit that would far exceed the proposed pedestrian connections through and around the shared amenity areas.

(ix) Waiving the requirement would enable different principles of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved. For example, granting of this waiver would allow for pedestrians to be directed towards the streetscape, promoting walkability and interconnectedness throughout this Center. The proposed design of Block II intends to achieve buildings and spaces of human scale and interconnected sidewalks on the perimeter of the block to further contribute to a comprehensive neighborhood model.

Please grant this request to allow the waiver of the requirement for sidewalks along both sides of Private Road A and a portion of Private Road B1, so as to enhance the overall connectivity of Hollymead Town Center, as well as supporting the comprehensive plan's goals in achieving an active streetscape within a mixed-use center. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this request.

Regards,

Keane Rucker