SHIMP ENGINEERING, P.C.
Design Focused Engineering

County of Albemarle
Department of Community Development
401 McIntire Road, North Wing
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

RE: ZMA2020000012 Montclair
Request for Waiver from Section 14-422(D)
Block 1, Private Road "A" & "B," Block 3, Private Road "D" & "E" – Planting Strips

To Whom It May Concern,

Pursuant to Section 14-422(F), the Albemarle County Planning Commission may vary or except the requirements of sections 14-422(D) of the Subdivision Ordinance. The applicant for Montclair (TMP 56-91A & TMP 56E-2) requests a waiver from the requirement that the planting strip must be located between the curb and the sidewalk and requires large shade street trees.

The application for Montclair proposes a rezoning from Light Industry and Rural Areas to a Neighborhood Model District, for a maximum of 157 units. Block 1 (Private Road "A" and "B") feature rear-loaded garages with no sidewalks, whereas Block 3 (Private Road "D" and "E") feature front-loaded garages with sidewalks on one side. We request to an exception for the planting strip requirement along Private Roads "A" and "B" and a modification to the planting strip requirement along Private Roads "D" and "E."

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

Block 1

(i) A request for exception of curb on one side is included with this request.
(ii) A sidewalk exception request for Block 1 is included with this request.
(iii) Elimination of the planting strip within Block 1 does not contradict goals of the comprehensive plan, the neighborhood model, or the Crozet master plan. The intent of the landscape strip is to achieve a more urban streetscape and to provide pedestrian comfort along sidewalks and walkways. As a sidewalk exception request has been submitted with this waiver, sidewalks are not proposed along either side of Private Roads "A" and "B." Private Roads "A" and "B" serve as vehicular alleyways to access rear-loaded garages. While the request seeks to waive the requirement of the planting strip, an approximately 4' planting strip area would be present in between the driveways. Waiving of the requirement would allow for alternative plantings that would be able to thrive within a 4' planting strip area, such as small or ornamental trees and shrubs; if the planting strip were only modified, due to the presence of the driveways, large shade trees would be required in the narrow 4' planting strip, and could suffer due to competing site constraints. Allowing this waiver of the planting strip along Private Roads "A" and "B" would not detract from such goals of connectivity and street presence, as pedestrian connectivity is oriented along front doors, public streets, and shared amenity areas. Private Roads "A" and "B" effectively function as alleys, providing

driveway and garage access to the rear of the units. Tree canopy and small plantings would still be provided along Private Roads "A" and "B," and waiving of the requirement would allow for appropriate landscaping in the small pockets of greenspace along these private streets that would be able to thrive between driveways.

(iv) Waiving the requirement would enable different principles of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved. As the property seeks a rezoning to a Neighborhood Model District, private streets "A" and "B" are intentionally designed without sidewalks and planting strips, to facilitate active transportation to areas of common space. Planting strips located beside pedestrian walkways provide a more inviting streetscape, through providing pedestrian comfort and safety and adding greenery to impervious surroundings. The intent behind the planting strip requirement of the subdivision ordinance is to encourage pedestrian use and to create a more urban street section. However, an exception for the sidewalks along Private Road "A" and "B" is requested as they do not necessarily contribute to the overall goals of connectivity, as these roads provide vehicular access to the rear-loaded garages rather than contribute multimodal connections within Montclair. Planting areas are still to be provided in between driveways and waiving of the planting strip allows for alternative planting schemes, rather than planting large shade trees within a 4' planting strip.

Block 3

(i) A variation or exception to allow a rural cross-section has not been granted. Curbs are proposed where planting strips are modified.

(ii) A sidewalk waiver request for one side of Private Road D and one side of Private Road E is included in this request.

(iii) A modification of the planting strip within Block 3 does not contradict goals of the comprehensive plan, the neighborhood model, or the Crozet master plan. The intent of the landscape strip is to achieve a more urban streetscape and to provide pedestrian comfort along sidewalks and walkways. Planting strips along Private Roads "D" and "E" will be provided, however, units along Private Roads "D" and "E" are proposed to be front-loaded garages. To allow for driveway access and pedestrian connectivity, the planting strip cannot be a continuous strip.

Allowing this waiver for the modified planting strip location along Private Roads "D" and "E" would strengthen pedestrian connectivity and active streetscape within the proposed NMD, as larger planting areas enhance pedestrian comfort and access to amenity spaces while allowing for adequate vehicular circulation.

(iv) Waiving the requirement would enable different principles of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved. The residential units of Montclair are designed around shared common spaces to provide areas for community gathering and to promote active transportation throughout the neighborhood. The intent behind the planting strip requirement of the subdivision ordinance is to encourage pedestrian use and to create a more urban street section. Allowing for the planting strip to be relocated behind the sidewalk in this instance allows for larger planting area, which in turn, would further the intent behind the planting strip requirement of the subdivision ordinance of providing pedestrian comfort. Additional safety that landscape strips are intended to provide in typical urban settings would not

necessary, as vehicles pulling into their driveways would be moving at very low speeds with plenty of visibility. These sidewalks are likely to experience high levels of pedestrian traffic, as they provide connections to Block 3's common area, as well as Public Road C and the rest of the neighborhood.