SHIMP ENGINEERING, P.C.
Design Focused Engineering

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

RE: ZMA202200006 999 Rio Road
Request for Waiver from Section 14-422(D)
Private Street – 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 the rezoning of tax map parcel 06100-00-00-154B0 requests a waiver from the requirement that the planting strip must be located between the curb and the sidewalk.

The application for 999 Rio Road seeks an amendment to an approved ZMA that originally rezoned the property as a Neighborhood Model District. If approved, the amended application plan and code of development would allow the property could develop a maximum of 38 units, for a density of 20 DUA. One private street is proposed to serve the development's primary vehicular circulation and parking area.

We request to a waiver for the planting strip requirement along the requested private street, to allow for efficient build-out of a property that is less than 2-acres in size. Allowing for a private street, without a planting strip requirement, would provide for a mixture of housing types and affordability, complete pedestrian circulation, and ample greenspace and amenity area for the residents of 999 Rio Road.

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

(i) A request for variation or exception to allow for a rural section has not been granted nor requested.

(ii) A sidewalk waiver request is not provided with this planting strip request.

(iii) Elimination of the planting strip would help promote goals of the comprehensive plan, the neighborhood model, and the Places29 master plan. The Places29 master plan identifies the property as Urban Density Residential and Privately Owned Greenspace. As Urban Density Residential designations should seek to develop 6-34 DUA of residential uses, eliminating the planting strip would allow for additional area to be utilized by the proposed units and supporting greenspace. While the intent of the landscape strip is to achieve a more urban streetscape and to provide pedestrian comfort along sidewalks and walkways, sidewalks within 999 Rio would primarily serve as connection for residents from their homes to communal amenity areas. Additionally, removing the landscape strip would allow for relief between the residential units and the parking area, where additional landscaping may be added around the units, as opposed to a limited planting strip area.

(iv) Waiving the requirement would enable different principles of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved. Permitting the removal of the planting strip would provide the required

area for the development of up to 38 units, within the identified setbacks. As the County has determined that, “from 2016 to 2021, the total residential density approved through rezonings was approximately 58 percent of the maximum recommended density per future land use designations,” additional density through rezonings may be needed to meet the projected growth of Albemarle County. Requiring the installation of a planting strip along the private street would require a redesign of the site, and the loss of potential housing units to accommodate a planting strip that does not necessarily create a more welcoming pedestrian streetscape. Regardless of the presence of the planting strip, residents would utilize the sidewalks to reach their homes and communal greenspace areas, and as a connection to the multiuse path along Rio Road and Belvedere Boulevard. Allowing a planting strip waiver would allow for a mixture of housing types and affordability and robust amenity spaces to be more fully achieved.