SHIMP ENGINEERING, P.C.
Design Focused Engineering

Project Narrative For: **ZMA2022-00010 Riverside Village – Block 1 Amendment**

Parcel Description: **078G0-00-01-000A0**

Initial Submittal: **October 17, 2022**

Revised: **February 15, 2023**

Pre-App Meeting Date: **September 12, 2022**

	ACREAGE	EXISTING ZONING	PROPOSED ZONING	COMP PLAN DESIGNATION
TMP 78G-00-1-A	**2.41**	**Neighborhood Model District**	**Neighborhood Model District**	**Urban Density Residential**

Additional Zoning Considerations:

Entrance Corridor, Scenic Byways, Steep Slopes – Managed, Dam Inundation Zone

Location:

The property is located within the Riverside Village development. Riverside Village is located on Route 20 Stony Point Road, approximately 0.3-miles north of the Route 20/Route 250 intersection.

Project Proposal:

Shops at Riverside LLC is the owner (the "owner") of tax parcel 078G0-00-01-000A0 (the "property") in Albemarle County. The property is part of the Riverside Village Neighborhood Model District, an 18.65-acre mixed use development in the Pantops Development Area. At this time, construction at Riverside Village has been completed and the community has been built out per the NMD plan. Riverside Village features a variety of housing types and neighborhood-scale commercial shops, creating a mix of affordability and activity in the community. Nearly half of the NMD was designated as an open space area and has since been dedicated to Albemarle County; the trails and dedicated open space provides a greenway connection into nearby Darden Towe Park. Since the initial zoning map amendment in 2012, Riverside Village has been subject to additional land use applications and site development plans to realize its current built form. A summary of the applicable applications are as follows, in chronological order:

- ZMA2012-00002 Riverside Village
  - Original zoning map amendment to rezone TMP 78-58, an 18.65-acre property, from R-1 Residential to Neighborhood Model District
  - Allowed for the development of a maximum of 69 dwelling units (3.7 dwelling units/acre) and up to 46,000 sq. ft. of commercial uses
- SP2013-00001 Riverside Village
  - In conjunction with ZMA2012-00002, to permit fill in the flood hazard overlay district
- SDP2014-00043 Riverside Village
  - Approved final site plan for 45 units in Blocks 2, 3, and 4
    - 17 single-family attached units
    - 12 multifamily units (includes 6 affordable units)
    - 16 single-family detached units

- ZMA2015-00003 Riverside Village
    - Revisions to Code of Development and proffers to allow affordable units in Block 5 and allow accessory apartments as affordable rental housing
- SDP2015-00060 Riverside Village – Block 5
    - Approved final site plan for 24 multifamily units
    - One associated letter of revision, which revised the multifamily footprint to be 21" closer to Trailside Court
- ZMA2016-00019 Riverside Village – Amendment [Block 1]
    - Revisions to Code of Development, included but were not limited to:
        - Increase the maximum number of dwelling units within the NMD from 69 to 105 dwelling units
            - Maximum number of dwelling units in Block 1 increased from 16 units to 36 units
        - Decrease the minimum commercial square footage from 16,000 sq. ft. to 8,000 sq. ft.
- SDP2016-00071 Riverside Village – Block 5 – Minor Site Plan Amendment
    - Minor site plan amendment to SDP2015-00060 for the addition of a solar canopy in the parking area
    - Additional site changes include, but are not limited to, replacement of dumpster with trash toters, addition of and rearrangement of parking spaces, stormwater management adjustments, lighting and landscaping plan revisions, etc.
- SDP2017-00062 Riverside Village – Block 1
    - Approved final site plan for 24 multifamily units and 13,284 sq. ft. of commercial area
    - Included improvements to Route 20 Stony Point Road

The Code of Development in its current form requires a minimum of 8,000 sq. ft. of commercial use within Block 1. Currently, there is one commercial tenant, Grit Coffee, within the Shops at Riverside Village. The area of this user is 1,600 sq. ft. Per the commercial square footage proposed with SDP2017-00062, there is 11,600 sq. ft. of additional constructed commercial area which remains vacant. Under the Code of Development, Riverside Village as a whole may develop a maximum of 105 units and Block 1 may develop a maximum of 36 units. Currently there are 24 units in Block 1 and the owner requests to reduce the minimum commercial area from 8,000 sq. ft. to 1,600 sq. ft., with the intent of repurposing the unleased commercial area as dwelling units. No additional residential units within the development, beyond the approved maximum 36 units for Block 1, are requested with this amendment request.

Justification of Request

Since the completion of the project, there has consistently been 30% vacancy in the commercial tenant spaces. The recent closure of a business within the commercial tenant space has increased the current vacancy rate to more than 80%, which is unsustainable for the project. Grit Coffee is expected to remain in the Shops at Riverside however, securing additional tenants has largely been unsuccessful throughout the duration of the project.

The residential component of the mixed-use structures has been successful and there are currently no vacant apartments. Given the strong demand for housing in Albemarle County that is well documented in the Housing Albemarle Plan, adopted July 7, 2021 and resources published with the on-going AC44 Comprehensive Plan update, the repurposing of space that is currently outfitted for commercial users to

residential space is justified. This repurposing of space will contribute to the ongoing viability of this project and to growing the housing stock in Albemarle County.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

The Comprehensive Plan and 2019 Pantops Master Plan designates Riverside Village as Urban Density Residential (Block 1), Neighborhood Density Residential, and Parks and Green Systems. Block 1, as Urban Density Residential, should provide medium to high-density residential development with secondary commercial/retail or office uses. Currently, there are 24 multifamily units and approximately 1,600 sq. ft. of occupied commercial space in Block 1. Due to the unleased commercial area, the owner seeks to reduce the commercial minimum to allow for the conversion of unoccupied commercial area for residential uses. While the minimum commercial area is proposed to be reduced, the existing commercial user is intended to remain and continue to serve the surrounding community. Reducing the minimum commercial area requirement would allow for flexibility in responding to ever-changing market demands. In 2019, Riverbirch Restaurant, Grit Coffee, and AKT Dance Fitness Studio opened within the Shops at Riverside Village. In total, the three tenants occupied approximately 7,600 sq. ft. The minimum 8,000 sq. ft. was not met at the commercial opening of the development, and since then, AKT Dance Fitness Studio and Riverbirch Restaurant have closed and without further commercial interest at this time, the owner requests to adapt the remaining commercial area to residential uses. With the strained housing supply in the County, providing up to 12 additional multifamily units within a Neighborhood Service Center supports the goals of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the goals of Pantops Master Plan and Housing Albemarle. Riverside Village exemplifies the Neighborhood Model District, in creating a compact, mixed-use community with a variety of housing types, housing affordability, and ample access to public amenity space and creating up to 12 new units in this location would be highly desirable, as opposed to the existing unutilized commercial area. Housing Albemarle recommends to "increase the supply of housing to meet the diverse housing needs of current and future Albemarle County residents," which should be met through a variety of housing types, affordability, and density. Up to 12 multifamily units would further contribute to the County's housing supply and provide additional housing options within a County Development Area and near the City Downtown core. With the original Riverside Village ZMA, a significant portion of the NMD was dedicated as a public park, Riverside Village Park, which features a greenway connection to the adjacent Darden Towe Park. A maximum of 12 new households could have convenient access to major transportation corridors, neighborhood commercial services, and robust public park space and access to the Rivanna River. Pedestrian access onto the Free Bridge trail provides a direct connection from the development into the City limits and VDOT is anticipated to complete the sidewalk network from the property to the Route 20/Route 250 intersection with anticipated improvements provided via Smart Scale.

Surrounding Uses:

The property is adjacent to the Elks Lodge and Darden Towe Park, with the rear of the property backing up to the Free Bridge Trail and the Rivanna River. Across Route 20, there is one single family detached home, Wilton Farm Apartments, and Avemore Apartments.

Impacts on Public Facilities & Public Infrastructure:

A maximum of 105 units proposed on the property was assessed with the approved ZMA2016-00019. No additional units are being requested. Removing the commercial minimum would not create any impacts to public facilities and public infrastructure.

Impacts on Schools:

A maximum of 105 units proposed on the property was assessed with the approved ZMA2016-00019. No additional units are being requested. Removing the commercial minimum would not create any impacts to the public school system.

Impacts on Environmental Features:

A maximum of 105 units proposed on the property was assessed with the approved ZMA2016-00019. No additional units are being requested. Removing the commercial minimum would not create any impacts to the environmental features.

Parking & Loading Needs Study:

According to SDP2017-00062, a total of 113 spaces are present on Block 1, which includes five ADA spaces. The existing parking and loading needs of Block 1 are as follows:

2 spaces per 2-bedroom unit, 24 2-bedroom units = 48 spaces

CLE2019-00104 Grit Coffee Shop = 7 parking spaces

In total, 55 parking spaces are utilized by the existing uses in Block 1 and 58 parking spaces are remaining. If the maximum number of units would be added to Block 1, there could be 12 residential units. Although the number of bedrooms per unit is not determined at this time, allocating 2 spaces per unit would require 24 spaces out of the remaining 58 spaces.