

**COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY**

Project Name: SP201600015 Springhill/Towneplace Suites SP201600016 Springhill/Towneplace Suites Parking Structure	Staff: J.T. Newberry, Senior Planner
Planning Commission Public Hearing: August 23, 2016	Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: TBA
Owner: SSQ LLC	Applicant: Daly Seven, Inc.
Acreage: 3.70 acres	Special Use Permit: Section 22.2.2(7) – Hotels, motels and inns; Section 22.2.2(9) – Stand-alone parking and parking structures
TMP: 061Z0-03-00-00200 Location: 1305 Seminole Trail (approximately 900 feet north of the intersection of Greenbrier Drive and Route 29)	Existing Zoning and By-right use: (C-1) Commercial – retail sales and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre)
Magisterial District: Rio	Conditions: Yes
School District: Albemarle HS, Burley MS, Agnor-Hurt ES	Requested # of Dwelling Units: N/A
Proposal: Establish a 192 room, five-story hotel with associated two-level structured parking.	Comprehensive Plan Designation: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01 – 34 units/ acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses; Urban Mixed Use (in Centers) – retail, residential, commercial, employment, office, institutional, and open space in Neighborhood 2 of Places29.
Character of Property: The subject property contains a mixture of commercial uses, including a restaurant and glass and mirror company.	Use of Surrounding Properties: The property is surrounded by a mix of commercial and office uses.
Factors Favorable SP201600015: Springhill/Towneplace Hotel 1. The hotel supports and complements the existing mixture of uses in a Community Center. 2. Redevelopment of the site will result in stormwater controls where none currently exist. 3. Redevelopment of the site will transform an underutilized commercial property. 4. The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. SP201600016: Springhill/Towneplace Parking Structure 1. The parking structure is not anticipated to be visible from the Route 29 and majority of visual impacts to Hillsdale Drive will be buffered by existing mature vegetation held in a permanent detention and drainage easement held by the County. 2. The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.	Factors Unfavorable SP201600015: Springhill/Towneplace Hotel 1. No direct pedestrian connection to the parcel to the north is provided. 2. Some landscaping used to mitigate visual impacts from the development are not located on the subject parcel's property. SP201600016: Springhill/Towneplace Parking Structure 1. Some landscaping used to mitigate visual impacts from the development are not located on the subject parcel's property.
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of SP201600015 and SP201600016 with conditions.	

STAFF PERSON:
PLANNING COMMISSION:
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

J.T. Newberry
August 23, 2016
TBA

PETITIONS:

PROJECT: SP201600015 Springhill/Towneplace Suites

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rio

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 061Z0-03-00-00200

LOCATION: 1305 Seminole Trail (approximately 900 feet north of the intersection of Greenbrier Drive and Route 29)

PROPOSAL: Establish a 192 room, five story hotel with associated structured parking (see SP201600016 for structured parking information)

PETITION: Hotel, motels and inns under Section 22.2.2(7) of the Zoning Ordinance.

ZONING: C-1 Commercial – retail sales and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre)

OVERLAYS: Entrance Corridor, Managed Steep Slopes, Airport Impact Area

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01 – 34 units/ acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses; Urban Mixed Use (in Centers) – retail, residential, commercial, employment, office, institutional, and open space in Neighborhood 2 of Places29

PROJECT: SP201600016 Springhill/Towneplace Suites Parking Structure

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rio

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 061Z0-03-00-00200

LOCATION: 1305 Seminole Trail (approximately 900 feet north of the intersection of Greenbrier Drive and Route 29)

PROPOSAL: Establish structured parking associated with a 192 room, five story hotel (see SP201600015 for hotel information)

PETITION: Stand-alone parking and parking structures under Section 22.2.2(9) of the Zoning Ordinance.

ZONING: C-1 Commercial – retail sales and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre)

OVERLAYS: Entrance Corridor, Managed Steep Slopes, Airport Impact Area

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01 – 34 units/ acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses; Urban Mixed Use (in Centers) – retail, residential, commercial, employment, office, institutional, and open space in Neighborhood 2 of Places29

CHARACTER OF THE AREA:

The property is located along Seminole Trail (Route 29 – North) approximately 0.2 mile north of its intersection with Greenbrier Drive (State Route 866). It is surrounded by a variety of existing uses, including retail, offices and restaurants, as well as hotels and motels.

The parcel itself is relatively deep and has a mixed-use character. It is improved with three buildings: the front building contains a restaurant and the two buildings behind it have light industrial uses. The rear of the site contains both paved and gravel parking areas that are used for the storage of work vehicles and materials. The majority of the site is screened from adjacent parcels by mature vegetation (see Attachment A – Aerial Map).

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY:

- SP197200168 – Approved with conditions – Special use permit to construct 8,000 square foot distribution facility at the rear of the site. Property was zoned B-1 Business.
- SP198500014 – Approved with conditions – Special use permit to establish truck and trailer rental service in a commercial zoning district. Property zoned C-1 Commercial.
- SP198900029 - Approved with conditions – Amendment to SP198500014 to allow motor vehicle rental and minor modifications to the existing parking area. Property zoned C-1 Commercial.

DETAILS OF THE APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The applicant is requesting to redevelop this site with a 192 room, five-story hotel and an associated two-story parking structure. The existing buildings will be demolished. The main entrance to the hotel building will be located in the middle of the structure which will allow for two different Marriott hotel brands to operate on-site; Springhill Suites would occupy the half of the building closest to Route 29 and Towneplace Suites would occupy the half located closer to the rear of the property. The parking structure would be located behind the Towneplace Suites portion of the hotel, immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the property. An outparcel of approximately 0.75 acres adjacent to Route 29 would be reserved for future development (see Attachment B – Concept Plan and Attachment C – Application Narrative).

The C-1 zoning district allows for hotels and structured parking by special use permit. In addition to the two special use permits, the applicant has also requested a special exception from the minimum 15 foot setback requirement for structures over three stories. This exception is requested so that the applicant can have a five story building without having to step back stories four and five.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY MEETING:

The community meeting was held in conjunction with the Places29–Hydraulic Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on the evening of June 20th, 2016 and was attended by approximately 35 people including CAC members and nearby residents. A summary of that meeting is provided as Attachment D. The applicant's engineer provided an overview of the proposal and answered questions raised after the presentation. The presentation included a visual depiction of the proposal that superimposed images of the future buildings on the existing landscape. This exhibit demonstrated the projected visibility from several different vantage points.

A major concern of citizens at the meeting (and also during staff review of the project) related to treatment of stormwater. The drainage area for this site has consistently raised concerns for adjacent property owners, including residents of the Branchlands community across Hillsdale Drive. In addition, citizens asked about visibility of the proposed parking structure from Hillsdale Drive. There were also questions about ingress/egress to the site and pedestrian movement. All of these issues are discussed later in the report.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUESTS:

Section 33.8 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors shall reasonably consider the following factors when reviewing and acting upon an application for a special use permit:

Hotel Use

No substantial detriment. The proposed special use will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent lots.

The adjoining properties contain a variety of office buildings, a truck rental company, a retail hobby and dive shop, the Fairfield Inn (another Marriott property) and a grocery store. A stormwater detention facility owned by the County and an office building owned by the Charlottesville Area Association of Realtors (CAAR) are located behind the parcel along Hillcrest Drive.

With regards to stormwater management, the existing site is predominantly impervious and offers no stormwater controls. The applicant will be providing underground detention at the rear of the site to bring the site into compliance with current stormwater requirements. It is anticipated that the addition of the underground facility will decrease stormwater runoff and provide treatment that is not currently being provided. It's also important to note that the size of the proposed underground stormwater detention facility at the back of the site also accounts for any necessary treatment of future development on the undeveloped parcel at the front of the site.

Regarding visibility of the development from Hillsdale Drive, mature landscaping of various depth surrounds the subject parcel. However, it is expected that most if not all trees and vegetation at the rear of the property will be removed for construction. Any development of this property under by-right zoning might have a similar visual impact because no buffer is required by the County between commercial uses in a commercial zoning district. The applicant believes the existing landscaping on the CAAR site, the County's detention facility easement and the rear of the grocery store's site will appropriately mitigate any visual impacts. In addition, the applicant will be obtaining an off-site landscape easement between the Fairfield Inn site and the subject parcel and planting 65 evergreen trees to ensure the visual impact of the hotel is buffered from Route 29 as much as possible.

If the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors wanted to ensure screening between the properties that back up to Hillsdale Drive and this property, the applicant could be asked to obtain a landscape easement from those property owners and supplement vegetation there. However, staff believes that such an expectation would be excessive because of the by-right potential to remove all vegetation at the rear of the site. Because of the by-right potential, staff does not believe there will be any significant difference in impact to adjacent lots between the existing uses and the proposed special use.

Character of district unchanged. The character of the district will not be changed by the proposed special use.

Although the scale of the proposed development is larger than the existing development, it is not expected to change the character of the district because of the location of the property along Route 29. There are many other hotel and motel uses near the subject parcel, including the Super 8, Red Carpet Inn and Royal Inn Motel, as well as other hotels with larger footprints such as the Fairfield Inn and Courtyard by Marriott. A by-right use could have a similar footprint as that proposed for this use.

Harmony. The proposed special use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter, with the uses permitted by right in the district.

The C-1 zoning district and commercial districts generally are intended to provide locations for commerce: retail and wholesale, sales and service, and public use establishments oriented

towards business. Their purpose is to provide places of employment while also strengthening the local economic base. The C-1 zoning district does not allow for as extensive commercial uses as the Highway Commercial (HC) zoning district, but, at this location, the use appears to be in harmony with other uses along the Route 29 corridor.

...with the regulations provided in section 5 as applicable,

Section 5 contains no regulations applicable to this request.

...and with the public health, safety and general welfare.

No impacts to public health, safety, or the general welfare of the community are anticipated with this use. However, as with previous special use permits on this site, traffic impacts are a major consideration. At present, there are two points of ingress/egress across the 165 foot frontage on Route 29 and VDOT typically prefers to limit access to a single of ingress/egress. The applicant has been challenged at this location because the Fire Code requires two points of access to the site.

Initially, the applicant proposed an emergency-only access aisle at the southernmost edge of the parcel. VDOT requested the applicant explore other alternative emergency accesses because unfamiliar drivers turning off Route 29 may confuse it for an entrance aisle and not have time to correct their movement. Topographical challenges to the site eliminated other possible locations for the second access, so the applicant has been working with VDOT and Fire Rescue to more clearly differentiate the emergency-only access aisle. The plan now shows a sidewalk across the entrance and grass-crete at the edges of the entrance to further conceal it. Signs signaling “Do Not Enter” were also added. Overall, these changes should improve the safety of the site.

Structured Parking Use

No substantial detriment. The proposed special use will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent lots.

The rear of the grocery store, a stormwater detention facility owned by the County and an office building owned by CAAR are adjacent to the proposed parking structure. The height and massing of the two-story parking structure is minimal relative to the proposed hotel. The exact height difference has not yet been determined, but the hotel may be up to 65 feet higher than the top floor of the parking structure (see elevations in Attachment E). Staff believes the existing and proposed landscaping will appropriately mitigate impacts from the parking structure. No substantial detriment is anticipated.

Character of district unchanged. The character of the district will not be changed by the proposed special use.

The parking structure is not anticipated to be visible from Route 29 and have limited visibility from Hillsdale Drive. The character of the district will not be changed.

Harmony. The proposed special use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter, with the uses permitted by right in the district,

As a redevelopment project on an underutilized commercial site, the proposed parking structure is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter.

...with the regulations provided in section 5 as applicable,

Section 5 only requires that a site plan be provided for structured parking.

...and with the public health, safety and general welfare.

The location of the structure is not adjacent to existing or proposed residential uses. It is not expected to negatively impact public health, safety or welfare.

For Both Uses

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The use will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Places29 Master Plan

The subject parcel has a split land use designation in the Places29 Master Plan: the front portion is designated as Urban Mixed Use (in Centers) and the back portion is Urban Density Residential (see Attachment F). The Urban Mixed Use (in Centers) designation supports this use, but the majority of the proposed use lies within the Urban Density Residential designation, which considers hotel and parking structures as a secondary uses. Regarding secondary uses, page 4-5 of the Places29 Master Plan states:

Retail, commercial, office, and institutional uses are encouraged to locate in Centers so they are accessible to residents throughout the surrounding area, and so they benefit from co-location with other neighborhood-serving businesses. However, they may be located by exception in areas around Centers designated Urban Density Residential provided they are compatible with surrounding uses.

Staff believes that while a multi-family residential use could be appropriate at this location, the proposed hotel and parking structure use are equally acceptable due to the location on Route 29.

NEIGHBORHOOD MODEL ANALYSIS:

Staff's analysis below indicates how the proposal meets the 12 principals of the Neighborhood Model.

Pedestrian Orientation	The proposed plan shows sidewalks across the frontage and along the driveway into the site. Uses that are likely to be attractive to hotel customers like restaurants and a grocery store are adjacent to the site. Numerous retail opportunities are also within walking or biking distance. This principle is met.
Mixture of Uses	This area in the Route 29 corridor contains a mixture of uses and this change of use would not affect the current mixture of uses. This principle is met.
Neighborhood Centers	This site lies on the edge of a Community Center. This principle is met.
Mixture of Housing Types and Affordability	This proposal is for a hotel and parking structure only. This principle is not applicable.
Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks	An access management concept adopted as part of the Places29 Master Plan shows a

	possible parallel accessway through the center of the site to connect a number of properties that front on Route 29 (see Attachment G). This accessway appears to be infeasible due to topography to the north and a proposed retaining wall to the south. However, future access through the new outparcel would provide a desired vehicular interconnection to the parcel to the south. Provision of an additional pedestrian connection north of the site by stairs or other means was suggested at the community meeting. There is no existing sidewalk network to connect employees and guests of the hotel to the grocery store, restaurants and other uses north of the site. A stairway or other pedestrian connection from the site to the parcels north would provide for more realistic interconnectivity and better support the Community Center, especially with respect to the undeveloped outparcel. This principle is met, but this opportunity should be explored further.
Multi-modal Transportation Opportunities	Bus stops located along Greenbrier Drive and Hillsdale Drive connect transit riders to the existing and proposed sidewalk network in this area and the subject parcel. This principle is met.
Parks, Recreational Amenities and Open Space	The Master Plan does not identify this area for a public space or park use. This principle is not applicable.
Buildings and Space of Human Scale	The relationship of buildings to the street and the scale of the building in relation to pedestrian contributes in large part to the human scale aspect desired for the Development Areas. In addition, the new setback requirements are also intended to ensure that tall buildings include a setback at the fourth story of buildings over three stories so that the pedestrian is not overwhelmed when walking down the street. The Architectural Review Board has reviewed the project for scale and massing and have no objection to the special exception request. Because the building is set back 240 feet from the street and primary access to the site is vehicular, staff believes that this principle is not as

	applicable as it would be if the outparcel were being developed.
Relegated Parking	For this development, the majority of the parking is located to the side and rear of the site. However, meeting this principle will be more important for development of outparcel in front of the site. This principle is met for the hotel and parking structure.
Redevelopment	Redevelopment will occur with the project. This principle is met.
Respecting Terrain and Careful Grading and Re-grading of Terrain	The topography provides challenges for redevelopment of the property in some ways (interconnection, second point of access), but the site layout does minimize the scale of the project by building with the terrain. The height of the proposed retaining walls will allow any disturbance of the managed steep slopes to meet to the County's performance standards. This principle is met.
Clear Boundaries with the Rural Areas	This parcel is located wholly within the Development Areas. This principle does not apply.

Economic Development

Chapter 6 of the Comprehensive Plan provides strategies to help improve the County's economy. Three applicable strategies are provided below:

Strategy 1a: Promote new employment activities in the Development Areas and encourage developers of commercial and industrial projects to incorporate the Neighborhood Model principles.

While it is not a target industry, the hotel will provide employment opportunities. The applicant has incorporated almost all Neighborhood Model principles.

Strategy 1c: Promote tourism that helps preserve scenic, historic, and natural resources.

Provision of lodging helps to promote tourism. According to the applicant, the ideal customer for both the Springhill Suites and Towneplace Suites product are people planning extended stays in the area. These people would include vacationers and business travelers on extended assignment as the most likely guests, especially extended assignment employees related to the University, Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital, and Piedmont Community College. People attending events at the University of Virginia and the John Paul Jones arena may also find the hotel advantageous to their stay in the area.

Strategy 4c: Explore opportunities to assist with redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial zoned properties.

This project will result in removal of dated buildings and new construction to complement existing development in the area and take advantage of existing investment in the

Development Areas. It will add to and support existing employment in the area. Staff has worked diligently with the applicant to help the project remain on schedule through the legislative review process.

Additionally, according to the Economic Development Director, the value of the existing site improvements (per GIS) have dramatically declined over the years, particularly from 2013 to today (\$350,000+ to \$29,000), although the land value has remained fairly constant. As such, the associated real estate tax revenues are well below where they could be if the property were being used for a higher and better use, as will be the case with the proposed hotel alone. Furthermore, structured parking facilities are extremely costly to build and this additional investment will further enhance both the property value and associated revenue streams for the County. In addition, the average age of commercial properties along the Route 29 corridor is approximately 30 years old, so having some newer buildings in the area can offer some visual enhancements to the area.

Special Exception

The applicant has requested a special exception from Section 4.20 of the zoning ordinance requiring a minimum 15 foot setback for structures over three stories.

The setback requirement was included in the new setback ordinance adopted last year. The goal of this requirement is to mitigate the massing of new structures adjacent to the right-of-way. The exhibit shown on Sheet 6 of the Concept Plan shows the closest point of the proposed hotel is 240 feet from the right-of-way of Route 29 (see Attachment B). With a distance of this size, there is no concern about the impact of the proposed building's massing to the street.

A Planning Commission recommendation is only required for a special exception when the staff is not recommending approval. Staff is recommending approval of this special exception request for the reasons listed above. If the Commission disagrees, however, it may affect their recommendation on the hotel use. If the Commission agrees with the recommendation, no additional action is needed.

SUMMARY AND ACTION:

Staff has identified factors which are favorable to the **hotel** request. Factors favorable include:

1. The hotel supports and complements the existing mixture of uses in a Community Center.
2. Redevelopment of the site will result in stormwater controls where none currently exist.
3. Redevelopment of the site will transform an underutilized commercial property.
4. The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Unfavorable factors to this request include:

1. No direct pedestrian connection to the parcel to the north is provided.
2. Some landscaping used to mitigate visual impacts from the development are not located on the subject parcel's property.

Staff has identified factors which are favorable to the **parking structure**. Factors favorable include:

1. The parking structure is not anticipated to be visible from the Route 29 and majority of visual impacts to Hillsdale Drive will be buffered by existing mature vegetation held in a permanent detention and drainage easement held by the County.
2. The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Unfavorable factors to this request include:

1. Some landscaping used to mitigate visual impacts from the development are not located on the subject parcel's property.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of SP201600015 Springhill/Towneplace Suites and SP201600016 Springhill/Towneplace Suites Parking Structure based upon the analysis provided herein, subject to the following conditions. These conditions have not yet been reviewed by the County Attorney's office and may need to be revised:

1. Use of site shall be in general accord with the concept plan "Concept Plan for Springhill/Towneplace Suites" dated 06/02/2016, as determined by the Director of Planning and the Zoning Administrator. To be in general accord with this plan, development and use of the site shall reflect the general size, arrangement and location of the proposed hotel, associated parking areas (including the parking structure) and interparcel connections. Minor modifications to the plan which do not conflict with the elements above may be made to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance;
2. No parking shall be permitted between the right-of-way and the primary structure located on the Future Development Parcel, as identified on the Concept Plan.
3. The landscape plan shall be subject to approval by the Architectural Review Board.
4. A pedestrian connection through the northern property line shall be provided if an access easement is granted by the owner of an adjacent property to the north.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION:

A. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend approval** of the special use permit for the **hotel**:

Move to recommend approval of SP201600015 Springhill/Towneplace Suites with conditions outlined in this staff report.

B. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend denial of SP201600015 Springhill/Towneplace Suites. *Should a commissioner motion to recommend denial, he or she should state the reason(s) for recommending denial.*

C. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend approval** of the special use permit for the associated **parking structure**:

Move to recommend approval of SP201600016 Springhill/Towneplace Suites Parking Structure with conditions outlined in this staff report.

D. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend denial of SP201600016 Springhill/Towneplace Suites Parking Structure. *Should a commissioner motion to recommend denial, he or she should state the reason(s) for recommending denial.*

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – [Aerial Map](#)

Attachment B – [Concept Plan](#)

Attachment C – [Application Narrative](#)

Attachment D – [Community Meeting Notes](#)

Attachment E – [Elevation showing Proposed Hotel and Parking Structure](#)

Attachment F – [Comprehensive Plan Map](#)

Attachment G – [Places29 Access Management Plan](#)