COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
PLANNING STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: SE-2025-00010 Granger Sidewalk and Planting Strip Waiver	**Staff:** Jered Tate, Senior Planner I
Planning Commission meeting: May 13, 2025	**Board of Supervisors meeting:** N/A
Owner: Stribling Holdings, LLC	**Applicant**: Scott Collins, Collins Engineering
TMP(s): 07600-00-00-02400	**Acreage**: 68.96 acres
Location: Intersection of Sunset Avenue Extended and Jefferson Ridge Drive	**Zoning/By-right Use:** Planned Residential Development (PRD)
Magisterial District: Jack Jouett and Samuel Miller	**School Districts:** Murray Elementary, Henley Middle, Western Albemarle High
Development Area: Yes-Southern and Western Neighborhoods (Neighborhood 5)	**Comp. Plan Designation:** Neighborhood Density Residential – residential (3 – 6 units/ acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses.
Proposal: Request for an exception in accordance with Section 14-422(E), 14-422(F), and 14-203.1(B) to modify the sidewalk and planting strip requirements along two private roads.	
Requested # of Dwelling Units/Lots: 200 (169 Lots)	**Conditions: Yes**
Character of Property: Wooded undeveloped land adjacent to Sunset Avenue.	**Use of Surrounding Properties:** The property is surrounded by a mix of multi-family residential, institutional, and undeveloped land. To the north, across a set of railroad tracks, is the Virginia Department of Forestry HQ. To the east is the mostly-undeveloped Nob Hill Neighborhood. To the south is Eagle's Landing Apartments and to the west is I-64.
Positive Aspects: 1. The proposed private streets will provide the necessary frontage for the proposed lots as required by the Subdivision Ordinance. 2. The proposed private streets, sidewalks, and planting strips will meet all other design requirements and allow pedestrians and traffic to move throughout the proposed development safely. 3. Relocating the planting strips and sidewalks to the entry-side of the proposed units supports multiple principles of the Neighborhood Model.	**Concerns:** 1. Pedestrian facilities are not provided for five parking spaces proposed on Fleming Street. A condition of approval is recommended to require this along the edge of Lot 20.
Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the exception to modify the sidewalk and planting strip design requirements [14-422(D)] with the condition identified in the staff report.	

STAFF CONTACT: **Jered Tate**
PLANNING COMMISSION: **May 13, 2025**
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: **Not applicable**

SE-2025-00010 Granger Sidewalk and Planting Strip Special Exception

PROPOSAL

The Applicant is requesting an exception in accordance with Section 14-422(E), 14-422(F), and 14-203.1(B) to modify the sidewalk and planting strip requirements along two proposed private streets. Section 14-422(B) provides the sidewalk design guidelines and Section 14-422(D) provides the planting strip design guidelines.

> *14-422(B) Each sidewalk proposed to be accepted for maintenance by the Virginia Department of Transportation shall be designed and constructed according to Virginia Department of Transportation standards or to the standards in the design standards manual, whichever is greater. Each sidewalk proposed to be privately maintained shall be constructed using concrete, designed so that no concentrated water flow runs over them, and otherwise satisfy the standards in the design standards manual. The agent may allow privately maintained sidewalks to be a ten-foot multi-use asphalt path in unique circumstances such as a path leading to a school or major employment center. The asphalt path generally shall run parallel to the street and shall be constructed to a standard deemed adequate by the county engineer to be equivalent to or greater than the applicable standard in the design standards manual, so as to adequately protect the public health, safety or welfare.*
>
> *14-422(D) Each planting strip shall be a minimum of six feet in width except that the minimum width may be less in areas of transition between rural cross-section and urban cross-section streets. On an urban cross-section street, the planting strip shall be located between the curb and the sidewalk. The planting strip shall be located between the paved travelway and the sidewalk.*

The Applicant has provided a detailed Application Narrative (Attachment 1) that provides the justification for the request.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan designates this property as Neighborhood Density Residential, with residential at 3 – 6 units per acre and supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and services uses in Neighborhood 5 of the Southern and Western Neighborhoods master plan.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY

ZMA202300010 Granger Development – Approved 8/07/2024
Rezoning for 68.96 acres from R-1 Residential to Planned Residential Development. Proposal was for 203 units, a mixture of single family detached and single family attached housing units, at a net density of 5.98 units per acre or a gross density of 2.94 dwelling units per acre. Proposal included over 50% of the site as green space with public and private recreational amenities.

SDP202400068 Granger Initial Site Plan – Approved 3/05/2025
Initial site plan proposal showing the development of the 200 residential units, public and private streets, and proposed stormwater management facilities.

SUB202400160 Granger Preliminary Plat – Under Review
The preliminary subdivision plat was resubmitted on 03/03/2025. The sidewalk and planting strip waivers proposed with this Special Exception are part of the applicant's revised proposal to address the issue of frontage for 13 proposed units (Lots 13-19 and Lots 60-65) that will be amenity-oriented and served by a private street.

WPO-2025-00027 Granger VESMP – Under Review
WPO approval is required prior to road plan approval and final site plan approval.

REASON FOR PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW
Sections 14-422(E) and 14-422(F) of the Subdivision Ordinance authorizes the Planning Commission to vary or except planting strip requirements as provided under Section 14-203.1(B).

ANALYSIS OF 14-422(E) VARIATION OF OR EXCEPTION OF SIDEWALK REQUIREMENTS
Per Section 14-422(E)(2), in reviewing a request to vary the requirement for sidewalks, the commission shall consider whether (ordinance language presented in ***bold italics*** followed by staff comment):

(i) a variation or exception to allow a rural cross-section has been granted;
Not applicable. This proposal is not requesting a variation to allow a rural cross-section.

(ii) a surface other than concrete is more appropriate for the subdivision because of the character of the proposed subdivision and the surrounding neighborhood;
Not applicable. This proposal is not requesting a variation to required surface materials. The proposed sidewalk will be asphaltic concrete.

(iii) sidewalks on one side of the street are appropriate due to environmental constraints such as streams, stream buffers, steep slopes, floodplain, or wetlands, or because lots are provided on only one side of the street;
Environmental constraints do not limit the placement of sidewalks along either proposed private street. However, lots are provided along only one side of each proposed private street. The proposed units have their garages served by the private streets with their entries facing on to proposed open spaces.

(iv) the sidewalks reasonably can connect into an existing or future pedestrian system in the area;
The sidewalks located at the entry-side of the townhouse units, as proposed, will connect directly to sidewalks along proposed public streets within the development. Pedestrian connectivity will not be negatively impacted.

(v) the length of the street is so short and the density of the development is so

low that it is unlikely that the sidewalk would be used to an extent that it would provide a public benefit;
As Chauncy Road serves 6 lots and Fleming Street serves 7 lots expected pedestrian volumes from the units served will be low. All of the proposed units will still have direct access to sidewalks from their entries.

(vi) an alternate pedestrian system including an alternative pavement could provide more appropriate access throughout the subdivision and to adjoining lands, based on a proposed alternative profile submitted by the subdivider;
Locating the sidewalks at the entry-side of the proposed townhouse units and within the proposed open space will provide more appropriate access throughout the site by providing direct pedestrian access to the front entrances of the proposed units.

(vii) the sidewalks would be publicly or privately maintained;
The sidewalks and planting strips will be privately maintained by the proposed subdivision's HOA.

(viii) the waiver promotes the goals of the comprehensive plan, the neighborhood model, and the applicable neighborhood master plan;
The exception will allow 13 additional units to be constructed within the proposed development which promotes additional density in the development areas. Locating the sidewalks and planting strips in the open space at the entry-side of the proposed units will provide adequate pedestrian facilities and walkability for the proposed units. The exception will also allow 13 proposed units to face onto proposed open space, creating a physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles. This design has often been referred to as "amenity-oriented" lots and is common in the Development Area.

(ix) waiving the requirement would enable a different principle of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved.
Excepting the requirement for sidewalks and planting strips along the private streets will allow for the 13 lots to meet the necessary frontage requirement of the Subdivision Ordinance adding density to the Development Areas. Specifically, this promotes the Neighborhood Model Principles of Pedestrian Orientation, Interconnected Streets, Multi-modal Transportation Opportunities, Recreational Amenities, and Open Space, and Relegated Parking.

ANALYSIS OF 14-422(F) VARIATION OF OR EXCEPTION OF PLANTING STRIP REQUIREMENTS

Per Section 14-422(F)(2), in reviewing a request to vary the requirement for planting strips, the commission shall consider whether (ordinance language presented in ***bold italics*** followed by staff comment):

(i) a variation or exception to allow a rural cross-section has been granted;
Not applicable. This proposal is not requesting a variation to allow a rural cross-section.

(ii) a sidewalk variation or exception has been granted;
The sidewalks that are proposed along the relocated planting strips will be required

to meet all county standards. The conceptual plan shows these as being 5' wide sidewalks that meets our design requirements.

(iii) reducing the size of or eliminating the planting strip promotes the goals of the comprehensive plan, the neighborhood model, and the applicable neighborhood master plan;
As discussed in the Applicant's narrative, the special exception will allow the sidewalks and planting strips to be located at the entry-side of the proposed units, adjacent to proposed open space. Staff agrees with the Applicant's justification provided in their narrative, and that the exception promotes the goals of the comprehensive plan, the neighborhood model, and the Southern and Western Master Plan by providing compact infill development housing in the development areas.

(iv) Waiving the requirement would enable a different principle of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved.
The proposal does not seek to waive the requirement, but to relocate the required planting strips. The planting strips will still be 6' in width. Staff believes that this requested exception still achieves neighborhood model principles.

SUMMARY

The opinion of staff is that granting the requested exception will allow the proposed lots to meet the necessary frontage requirement of the Subdivision Ordinance while still providing adequate sidewalk and pedestrian facilities. Staff does not anticipate any adverse impacts from the exception of the sidewalk and planting strip design requirements and recommends approval of this request.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Positive aspects:

1. The proposed private streets will provide the necessary frontage for the proposed lots as required by the Subdivision Ordinance.
2. The proposed private streets, sidewalks, and planting strips will meet all other design requirements and allow pedestrians and traffic to move throughout the proposed development safely.
3. Relocating the planting strips and sidewalks to the entry-side of the proposed units supports multiple principles of the Neighborhood Model.

Concern:

1. Pedestrian facilities are not provided for five parking spaces proposed on Fleming Street. A condition of approval is recommended to require this along the edge of Lot 20.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the special exception application to vary the planting strip [14-422(F)] requirements on one side of the proposed private street with the condition listed below:

1. The exception to the sidewalk and planting strip requirements apply to the proposed

private streets as depicted on the Preliminary Plat revised on March 3, 2025, prepared by Collins Engineering.

2. No exception is granted to street tree requirements. Street trees must still be provided within the relocated planting strips as required by Section 32.7.9.5 of the Zoning Ordinance.
3. A sidewalk and planting strip meeting the requirements of Section 14-422 of the Subdivision Ordinance must still be provided on Fleming Street along the northern edge of Lot 20.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach 1 – SE2025-10 Granger Sidewalk and Planting Strip Waiver – Application Narrative
Attach 2 – SE2025-10 Granger Sidewalk and Planting Strip Waiver – Exhibit Preliminary Plat Pages 5-7
Attach 3 – SE2025-10 Granger Sidewalk and Planting Strip Waiver – Resolution to Approve Sidewalk Exception
Attach 4 – SE2025-10 Granger Sidewalk and Planting Strip Waiver – Resolution to Approve Planting Strip Exception