ZMA202000011
PREMIER CIRCLE
405 Premier Circle

September 21, 2020
Resubmitted November 20, 2020

Special Exception Application Narrative

On behalf of Piedmont Housing Authority ("PHA" or the "Applicant") and Virginia Supportive Housing ("VSH"), the developer, we respectfully request a Special Exception from the requirement that each Neighborhood Model Development (NMD) have at least two housing types. The provisions of this requirement, which is set out in Zoning Ordinance Section 20A.8(a), allow the Board of Supervisors to waive this requirement if the proposed NMD is an infill project or at least two housing types are already present within one-quarter mile of the proposed district. Among the different housing types listed in this Section 20A.8(a) are single family attached, multifamily dwellings, and special needs housing such as assisted living facilities, group homes, and skilled nursing facilities.

An "infill project" is defined as "a project in which a parcel is developed or redeveloped, where abutting or nearby parcels are already developed, and the project area is relatively small compared to the developed abutting or nearby parcels." The Property, described and defined below, is an infill redevelopment project.

The single-family detached community, Berkeley, located on Commonwealth Drive and Commonwealth Circle, abuts the Property to the north, and these residences are within one-quarter mile of the Project.

This Application is submitted in connection with a Zoning Map Amendment application that proposes to rezone County Tax Map parcel 061M0-00-00-00600 (the "Property"), from C-1 Commercial to NMD, to allow for the development of multi-family housing and non-residential uses (the "Project"). As described in more detail in the Code of Development and as shown on the Concept Plan, dated September 21, 2020, prepared by Timmons Group and BRW Architects, the Project will comprise three buildings on the 3.75 acre parcel. Block One, with frontage on U. S. Route 29N, will contain a non-residential or mixed-use building, which could include second floor apartments. Block Two will include up to 140 multi-family dwelling units in separate VSH and PHA buildings.

All units in Block Two will be affordable housing. The 80 studio apartments in the VSH building will house formerly homeless residents, who are single with no children, and will be rented at rates affordable to those earning 50% AMI or less. The PHA building may be designed to house families and is currently planned to include approximately 80% two-bedroom units, 20% one-bedroom and a maximum of five percent (5%) three-bedroom units. The exact rental level of the PHA building is dependent on the final financing structure but will be within the range of affordability to those earning 30% to 80% AMI. All residential units in the Project will be affordable for a minimum of fifteen (15) years and are intended to address special housing needs.

The Applicant believes that VSH's permanent supportive housing may qualify as special needs housing based on the high level of services provided to the residents and the special needs that the VSH development fulfills. On-site support services include case management to assist tenants in obtaining needed community services; housing stabilization and support; counseling and independent living skills training; community engagement and social support; employment, education, and vocational support; and transition planning to other housing types.

Further, during the early phases of the Project, the Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition for the Homeless (TJACH), will use the existing hotel rooms for its clients. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, TJACH has been following CDC recommendations to shelter individuals experiencing homelessness who are also at increased risk of developing serious illness from COVID-19 in private rooms as opposed to congregate shelter settings. These hotel units will be considered "emergency shelter" units and will be made available to clients experiencing homelessness who are at increased risk from COVID-19 on a temporary basis. Prior to rezoning, the TJACH will use these rooms as transient lodging. Upon rezoning approval, during construction of the permanent residential buildings, TJACH clients could live in existing hotel buildings as multifamily units. Supportive services, including options for moving into permanent housing, will be offered to these clients.

In summary, though all residential units within the Project may be technically described as multifamily, their various purposes comply with the spirit of the Ordinance to provide housing for many different needs. All units, whether managed by TJACH, VSH, or PHA, would be affordable units.

If the Community Development Department concludes that the Project does not meet the two-housing types requirements, the Applicant requests a Special Exception for such requirement and submits that providing the Special Exception to such requirement would not frustrate the purposes of Section 20A.8(a), the Places29 Master Plan, or the Neighborhood Model Principles.

<u>The Proposed Special Exception Supports the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan</u>

Waiving the multiple housing types requirement is consistent with the recommended future land use of the Property under the Comprehensive Plan. The Project is located in the Development Area and, by reference to other zoning districts in the development area, is designated for a maximum of 34 dwelling units per acre (DUA). Multifamily is the most efficient means of providing the maximum number of affordable units, a goal of the County's Comprehensive Plan. In order to maximize the efficiency of the development and further the County's goal of increasing the availability of affordable housing, the Applicant is requesting 37 DUA.

Because multifamily is suitable and appropriate for the Property location, single-family detached is well within one quarter mile from the Project, and the Project is an infill redevelopment that will provide up to 140 units of affordable housing to the County, the Applicant requests a Special Exception to Zoning Ordinance Section 20A.8(a). We submit that granting the requested Special Exception will further the goals of the Comprehensive Plan without creating significant detriments to County residents.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.