

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2024-76: Granger Initial Site Plan
Review Type	Initial Site Plan
Parcel Identification	07600-00-00-02400
Location	400 Stribling Ave Ext. (Fig. 1)
Zoned	Planned Residential Development (PRD) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Stribling Holdings LLC / Collins Engineering (Scott Collins)
Magisterial District	Samuel Miller
Proposal	To construct 145 attached townhomes as part of a larger development including 24 detached residences and associated site improvements on approximately 68.96 acres.
Context	The site is situated east/northeast of I-64, south of the Norfolk Southern Railroad, and north of Sunset Avenue Extended. There are single-family residential developments to the east and across I-64 to the west, and apartment buildings are located to the south.
Visibility	The proposed townhome lots that are closest to the EC are approximately 175’ from the westbound lanes, and 232’ from the eastbound lanes, of I-64. Visibility of the site is expected to be limited by a berm and vegetation in the I-64 right-of-way. At full build-out, townhomes on Lots 1-5, 25-31, and 32-36 will have the greatest visibility from the EC, with the level of visibility possibly reduced when the buffer landscaping matures. However, the timing and sequence of construction could make other units visible for some time.
ARB Meeting Date	February 3, 2025
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB reviewed ARB-2002-128, an advisory review for a ZMA and a preliminary review of a conceptual site development plan. This ZMA application was withdrawn prior to approval by the Board of Supervisors. Design staff comments on potential impacts to the EC were provided during the review of another rezoning proposal (ZMA-2023-10) which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 7, 2024. Entrance Corridor requirements apply to the townhome portion of this development and the public roads within this development.

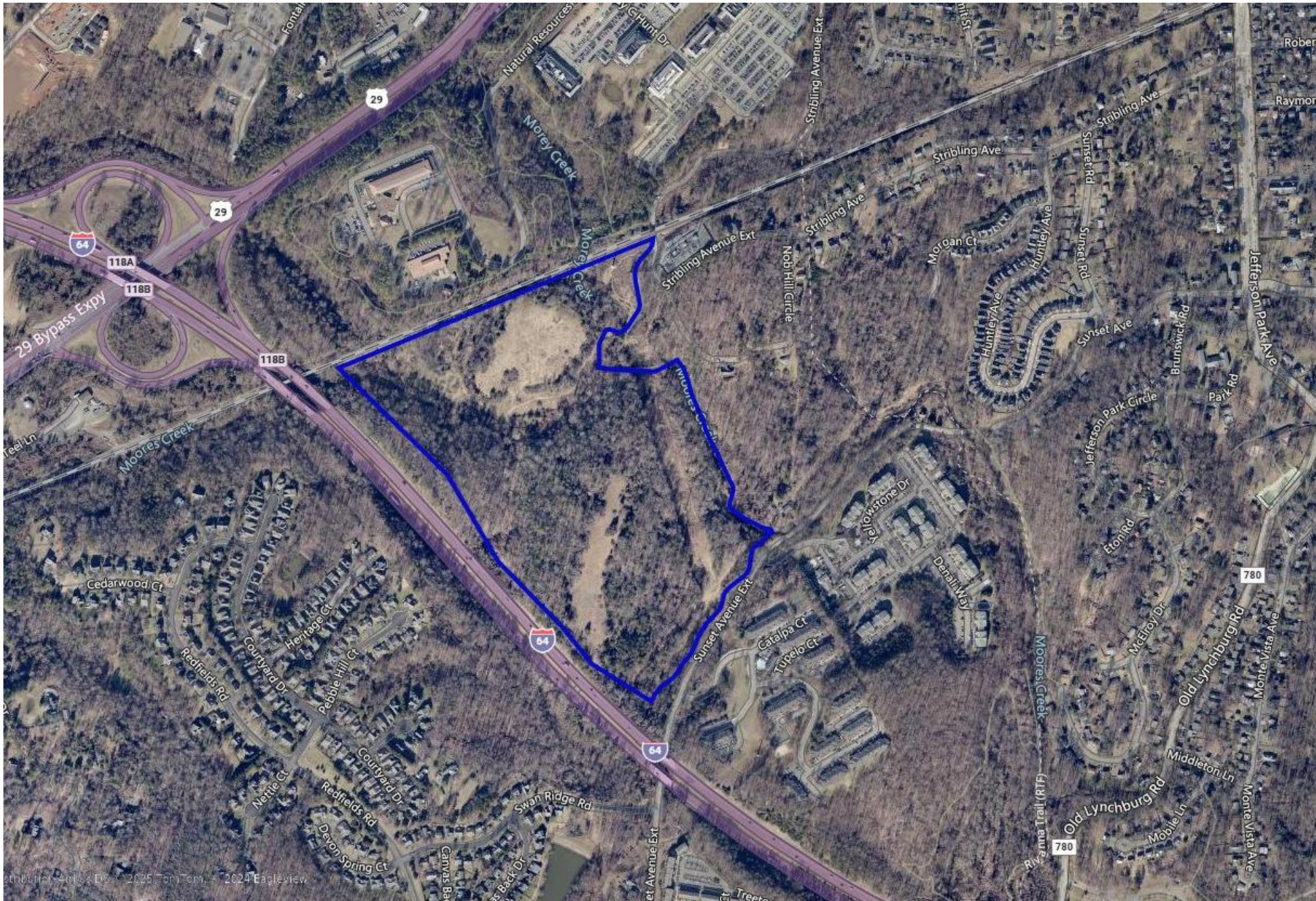


Figure 1: Project location

ANALYSIS

Gray highlight = means the guideline can't be reviewed at initial site plan stage, but recommendations can be provided for final
Yellow highlight = means the guideline can only be reviewed for location/configuration at the initial plan stage, and location/configuration can be made a condition of initial plan approval, and can be the basis for denial
Regular text = means the guideline can be reviewed at initial plan stage, can be made a condition of initial plan approval, and can be the basis for denial

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	<i>Purpose; Compatibility with significant historic sites: Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor; Compatibility with significant historic sites; Structure design</i>		
1	The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to ensure that new development within the corridors reflects the traditional architecture of the area. Therefore, it is the purpose of ARB review and of these Guidelines, that proposed development within the designated Entrance Corridors reflect elements of design characteristic of the significant historical landmarks, buildings, and structures of the Charlottesville and Albemarle area, and to promote orderly and attractive development within these corridors. Applicants should note that replication of historic structures is neither required nor desired.	The application plan provided with the rezoning (sheet 3) shows that the northern portion of the project area contains a cemetery, a home site, and a bridge crossing. However, these site features have not been called out on the existing conditions plan. Based on the notes provided with the application plan, decorative fencing will be installed around the cemetery, plaques will be installed at both the cemetery and home site, and primitive trails will be constructed to provide access. The bridge is proposed to be repaired and incorporated into a trailway.	Provide site sections and perspectives of the development as viewed from I-64 EC, both with and without the proposed buffer plantings and the vegetation in the I-64 right-of-way. These will be reviewed during a work session to determine the extent of additional ARB review required.
2	Visitors to the significant historical sites in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area experience these sites as ensembles of buildings, land, and vegetation. In order to accomplish the integration of buildings, land, and vegetation characteristic of these sites, the Guidelines require attention to four primary factors: compatibility with significant historic sites in the area; the character of the Entrance Corridor; site development and layout; and landscaping.		
3-5, 9-15	New structures and substantial additions to existing structures should respect the traditions of the architecture of historically significant buildings in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area. Photographs of historic buildings in the area, as well as drawings of architectural features, which provide important examples of this tradition are contained in Appendix A.	The southern portion of the site contains the proposed residential development. The berm and existing vegetation in the I-64 right-of-way in addition to the proposed buffer are likely to limit visibility of the site. However, increased visibility is anticipated during the fall and winter months when there is less foliage on the trees and the vegetation in the right-of-way should not be relied on to reduce visual impacts on the EC. Due to distance and building scale, the anticipated visual impact on the EC is expected to be limited to building colors which could increase the noticeability of the development as viewed from the EC. Site sections and perspectives that help clarify the visibility of the development as viewed from the EC would be appropriate.	Revise the existing conditions plan to show the cemetery, home site, and bridge crossing.
16	Window glass in the Entrance Corridors should not be highly tinted or highly reflective. Window glass in the Entrance Corridors should meet the following criteria: <i>Visible light transmittance (VLT) shall not drop below 40%. Visible light reflectance (VLR) shall not exceed 30%. Specifications on the proposed window glass should be submitted with the application for final review.</i>	Information on window glass was not provided. Given the distance from the EC and existing features between I-64 and the site, the type of glass is not expected to have a significant visual impact on the EC street.	None.
	Accessory structures and equipment		

17	Accessory structures and equipment should be integrated into the overall plan of development and shall, to the extent possible, be compatible with the building designs used on the site.	No accessory structures are proposed in this development. The location(s) of mechanical equipment is not labeled on the plan. Low-level ground-mounted mechanical equipment is not expected to be visible from the EC. A note on sheet 2 of the site plan indicates that building-mounted mechanical equipment is being proposed and will be located behind a parapet/wall or other solid enclosure.	Show the location of mechanical equipment (building- and ground-mounted) on the site plan and show how it will be screened from the EC.
18	The following should be located to eliminate visibility from the Entrance Corridor street. If, after appropriate siting, these features will still have a negative visual impact on the Entrance Corridor street, screening should be provided to eliminate visibility. a. Loading areas, b. Service areas, c. Refuse areas, d. Storage areas, e. Mechanical equipment, f. Above-ground utilities, and g. Chain link fence, barbed wire, razor wire, and similar security fencing devices.	The site plan does not show any fencing. All lots within the proposed development have areas where fencing is possible, but the fencing is not expected to be visible from the EC.	None.
19	Screening devices should be compatible with the design of the buildings and surrounding natural vegetation and may consist of: a. Walls, b. Plantings, and c. Fencing.		
21	The following note should be added to the site plan and the architectural plan: “Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.”	The site plan includes a version of the mechanical equipment note on sheet 2.	Revise the site plan to include the standard mechanical equipment note.
22-28	Lighting	A note on the cover page states no lighting is proposed and the standard lighting note has not been included in the site plan.	Revise the note on the cover sheet to indicate that building-mounted lighting is proposed.
30-31	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>		Revise the site plan to include the standard lighting note.
29	The following note should be included on the lighting plan: “Each outdoor luminaire equipped with a lamp that emits 3,000 or more initial lumens shall be a full cutoff luminaire and shall be arranged or shielded to reflect light away from adjoining residential districts and away from adjacent roads. The spillover of lighting from luminaires onto public roads and property in residential or rural areas zoning districts shall not exceed one half footcandle.”		
	Landscaping		
7	The requirements of the Guidelines regarding landscaping are intended to reflect the landscaping characteristic of many of the area’s significant historic sites which is characterized by large shade trees and lawns. Landscaping should promote visual order within the Entrance Corridor and help to integrate buildings into the existing environment of the corridor.	Given the wooded context of I-64, the standard EC frontage landscaping would not promote visual order. Between the site and I-64, a 30’ landscape buffer is proposed. A note on the plan states that the buffer will consist of either existing vegetation or be planted with a mixture of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs. Some sections will require new landscaping based on the grading, which extends into the buffer area. Additionally,	Provide a complete landscape plan with the next submittal. Ensure the proposed species are on the approved plant list.
8	Continuity within the Entrance Corridor should be obtained by planting different types of plant materials that share similar characteristics. Such common elements allow for more flexibility in the design of structures because common landscape features will help to harmonize the appearance of development as seen from the street upon which the Corridor is centered.		Show how the plantings within the buffer will avoid conflicts with proposed utilities.
32	Landscaping along the frontage of Entrance Corridor streets should include the following:		

	a. Large shade trees should be planted parallel to the Entrance Corridor Street. Such trees should be at least 3½ inches caliper (measured 6 inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 35 feet on center. b. Flowering ornamental trees of a species common to the area should be interspersed among the trees required by the preceding paragraph. The ornamental trees need not alternate one for one with the large shade trees. They may be planted among the large shade trees in a less regular spacing pattern. c. In situations where appropriate, a three or four-board fence or low stone wall, typical of the area, should align the frontage of the Entrance Corridor street. d. An area of sufficient width to accommodate the foregoing plantings and fencing should be reserved parallel to the Entrance Corridor street, and exclusive of road right-of-way and utility easements.	existing and proposed utilities within the buffer will likely impact the ability to plant in the buffer.	
37	Plant species: a. Plant species required should be as approved by the Staff based upon but not limited to the <i>Generic Landscape Plan Recommended Species List</i> and <i>Native Plants for Virginia Landscapes (Appendix D)</i> .		
33	Landscaping along interior roads: a. Large trees should be planted parallel to all interior roads. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 40 feet on center.	A landscape plan has not been provided in this submittal. Based on the proposed utility layout, there may be conflicts between the interior road trees and the utilities.	Provide a complete landscape plan with the next submittal. Ensure that there are no conflicts between the interior road trees and utilities.
34	Landscaping along interior pedestrian ways: a. Medium trees should be planted parallel to all interior pedestrian ways. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 25 feet on center.	Sidewalks are provided along all public roadways within the site. The interior street trees provided along these roadways will also act as interior pedestrian way trees.	
35	Landscaping of parking areas: a. Large trees should align the perimeter of parking areas, located 40 feet on center. Trees should be planted in the interior of parking areas at the rate of one tree for every 10 parking spaces provided and should be evenly distributed throughout the interior of the parking area. b. Trees required by the preceding paragraph should measure 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground); should be evenly spaced; and should be of a species common to the area. Such trees should be planted in planters or medians sufficiently large to maintain the health of the tree and shall be protected by curbing. c. Shrubs should be provided as necessary to minimize the parking area's impact on Entrance Corridor streets. Shrubs should measure 24 inches in height.	Rows of parking spaces are proposed north and east of Lots 20-24, along a portion of Palou Court, between Lots 152 and 153, and between Lots 118 and 119. They are not expected to be visible from the Entrance Corridor.	None.
36	Landscaping of buildings and other structures: a. Trees or other vegetation should be planted along the front of long buildings as necessary to soften the appearance of exterior walls. The spacing, size, and type of such trees or vegetation should be determined by the length, height, and blankness of such walls. b. Shrubs should be used to integrate the site, buildings, and other structures; dumpsters, accessory buildings and structures; "drive-thru" windows; service areas; and signs. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.	Although the lengths of the townhome blocks are not particularly long, varying the wall colors from one unit to the next could help further reduce the mass of the blocks.	Consider varying the wall colors of the townhome blocks.

38	Plant health: The following note should be added to the landscape plan: “All site plantings of trees and shrubs shall be allowed to reach, and be maintained at, mature height; the topping of trees is prohibited. Shrubs and trees shall be pruned minimally and only to support the overall health of the plant.”	The standard landscape note does not appear on the plan.	Revise the site plan to include the standard landscape note.
	Site Development and layout		
	Development pattern		
6	Site development should be sensitive to the existing natural landscape and should contribute to the creation of an organized development plan. This may be accomplished, to the extent practical, by preserving the trees and rolling terrain typical of the area; planting new trees along streets and pedestrian ways and choosing species that reflect native forest elements; ensuring that any grading will blend into the surrounding topography thereby creating a continuous landscape; preserving, to the extent practical, existing significant river and stream valleys which may be located on the site and integrating these features into the design of surrounding development; and limiting the building mass and height to a scale that does not overpower the natural settings of the site, or the Entrance Corridor.	The site is accessed from Sunset Avenue Ext. The travelways and parking areas have an organized pattern. A trail is proposed through the western portion of the site connecting to the interior pedestrian way along Balbou Court. The townhome blocks are not close to the EC. Those that will be most visible are oriented at an angle to the EC. However, this arrangement is found elsewhere along this corridor and is not expected to have a significant visual impact due to the distance between I-64 and the site. The existing site consists of open spaces with mature trees. The open spaces and mature trees in the western portion of the site will be retained with a trail provided to access the area. Most of the open spaces in the eastern portion of the site will be removed to accommodate the proposed development. Views around the site are not expected to be negatively impacted.	None.
39	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows: a. An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site. b. In general, buildings fronting the Entrance Corridor street should be parallel to the street. Building groupings should be arranged to parallel the Entrance Corridor street. c. Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems. d. Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor. e. If significant natural features exist on the site (including creek valleys, steep slopes, significant trees or rock outcroppings), to the extent practical, then such natural features should be reflected in the site layout. If the provisions of Section 32.5.2.n of the <i>Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance</i> apply, then improvements required by that section should be located so as to maximize the use of existing features in screening such improvements from Entrance Corridor streets. f. The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.		
	Site Grading		
40	Site grading should maintain the basic relationship of the site to surrounding conditions by limiting the use of retaining walls and by shaping the terrain through the use of smooth, rounded landforms that blend with the existing terrain. Steep-cut or fill sections are generally unacceptable. Proposed contours on the grading plan shall be rounded with a ten-foot minimum radius where they meet the adjacent condition. Final grading should achieve a natural, rather than engineered, appearance. Retaining walls 6 feet in height and taller, when necessary, shall be terraced and planted to blend with the landscape.	The site plan shows two retaining walls west of Lots 32-36. The upper wall height is noted at 10’ on the plan but the wall faces inward towards the development and will not be visible from the EC.	None.

41	No grading, trenching, or tunneling should occur within the dripline of any trees or other existing features designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness. Adequate tree protection fencing should be shown on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping and erosion and sediment control plans.	Existing trees along the parcel boundary with the I-64 right-of-way are expected to remain, but no tree protection fencing is shown.	Revise the site plan to show protection fencing along all features that are designated to remain.
42	Areas designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness should be clearly delineated and protected on the site prior to any grading activity on the site. This protection should remain in place until completion of the development of the site.		
43	Preservation areas should be protected from storage or movement of heavy equipment within this area.		
20	Surface runoff structures and detention ponds should be designed to fit into the natural topography to avoid the need for screening. When visible from the Entrance Corridor street, these features must be fully integrated into the landscape. They should not have the appearance of engineered features.	The proposed above-ground stormwater facility is not expected to be visible from the EC.	None.
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

- 1. The anticipated visibility of the townhome blocks and level of future review required.
- 2. Landscaping: interior road/sidewalk trees.

Staff recommends that the ARB forward the following recommendations to the Agent for the Site Review Committee:

- Regarding requirements to satisfy the design guidelines as per § 18-30.6.4c(2), (3) and (5) and recommended conditions of initial plan approval:
 - Prior to Initial Plan approval the following items shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the ARB: None. The ARB recommends approval of the Initial Plan without conditions.
- Regarding recommendations on the plan as it relates to the guidelines: None.
- Regarding conditions to be satisfied prior to issuance of a grading permit:
 - 1. Maintain grading outside the driplines of trees to remain. Show tree protection fencing on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans.
- Regarding the final site plan submittal:

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required prior to final site plan approval. The following items and all items on the ARB Final Site Plan Checklist must be addressed:

 - 1. Provide site sections and perspectives of the development as viewed from I-64 EC, both with and without the proposed buffer plantings and the vegetation in the I-64 right-of-way. These will be reviewed during a work session to determine the extent of additional ARB review required.
 - 2. Revise the existing conditions plan to show the cemetery, home site, and bridge crossing.
 - 3. Show the location of mechanical equipment (building- and ground-mounted) on the site plan and show how it will be screened from the EC.
 - 4. Revise the site plan to include the standard mechanical equipment note: Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.
 - 5. Revise the note on the cover sheet to indicate that building-mounted lighting is proposed.

6. Revise the site plan to include the standard lighting note: Each outdoor luminaire equipped with a lamp that emits 3,000 or more initial lumens shall be a full cutoff luminaire and shall be arranged or shielded to reflect light away from adjoining residential districts and away from adjacent roads. The spillover of lighting from luminaires onto public roads and property in residential or rural areas zoning districts shall not exceed one-half footcandle.
7. Provide a complete landscape plan with the next submittal. Ensure the proposed species are on the approved plant list.
8. Show how the plantings within the buffer will avoid conflicts with proposed utilities.
9. Provide a complete landscape plan with the next submittal. Ensure that there are no conflicts between the interior road trees and utilities.
10. Consider varying the wall colors of the townhome blocks.
11. Revise the site plan to include the standard landscape note: All site plantings of trees and shrubs shall be allowed to reach, and be maintained at, mature height; the topping of trees is prohibited. Shrubs and trees shall be pruned minimally and only to support the overall health of the plant.
12. Revise the site plan to show protection fencing along all features that are designated to remain.

ATTACHMENTS

- **Attach. 1:** [ARB 2024-76: Granger Initial Site Plan](#)