

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2026-13: Rivanna Village Townhomes Block I
Review Type	Building Permit
Parcel Identification	093A1-2B-0I-049I0, -050I0, -051I0, -052I0, -053I0 (Lots 49-53); 093A1-2B-0I-054I0, -055I0, -056I0, -057I0, -058I0 (Lots 54-58); 093A1-2B-0I-059I0, 060I0, -061I0, -062I0, -063I0 (Lots 59-63)
Location	South side of Rt. 250 East, west of Cumbria Lane (Fig. 1)
Zoned	Neighborhood Model Development (NMD)/Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Rivanna Investment Holdings LLC/Pete Rooney (Ryan Homes)
Magisterial District	Scottsville
Proposal	To construct five out of the fifteen townhouse units approved along Terrapin Trace (Lots 49-53), along with the necessary site improvements.
Context	The general area is characterized by single-family detached residences along Rt. 250, the Glenmore development, and the East Rivanna Volunteer Fire Station.
Visibility	The site has been cleared and graded. A berm runs east-west along the EC, stretching the length of the townhouses. There are clusters of vegetation to the east and west of the berm, and the approved landscape plan includes a 30-foot buffer with additional plantings, which have not yet been planted. Due to the proximity of the townhouses to the EC (approximately 150 feet) and current landscaping gaps, visibility from Rt. 250 is expected, particularly for Lots 49-53 during initial buildout (Figs. 1a-d). Once all 15 townhouse units are built, the visibility of the east side of the townhouse on Lot 53 will decrease. After that, only the rears of the townhouses and the west side of Lot 49 and the east side of Lot 63 are expected to be visible from the EC. This visibility will decrease even more once the landscaping in the buffer is planted and matures (Fig. 2).
ARB Meeting Date	July 13, 2026
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

The Rivanna Village at Glenmore rezoning (ZMA-2001-08) was first submitted to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) in 2002 (ARB-2002-118). However, due to subsequent work sessions with the Planning Commission and alterations to the proposal, the ARB did not conduct an advisory review of this rezoning until 2007. At that time, the ARB expressed no objections to the proposal and provided comments regarding visibility and the specifications for a landscape buffer between Rt. 250 and the development site. This rezoning was approved in 2007. In 2013, there was a request for an amendment (ZMA-2013-12) to the rezoning, and comments from Design Planning staff were provided. The applicant revised the proposal to address all comments.

The review of the final site plan for this area (SDP-2018-31) was limited due to an arterial status issue that impacted this segment of Rt. 250. The review focused on providing guidance related to the proffers concerning the buffer zone along Rt. 250 and the landscape treatment design for Butterfield Lane. This amendment was approved in August 2022. The arterial issue with Rt. 250 was also resolved in 2022,

reclassifying this segment as an EC, which reinstated the requirement for ARB review of the townhouses along Terrapin Trace. In June 2026, the applicant submitted building permits for townhouses on Lots 49 to 53. The applicant confirmed that all visible elevations from the EC for the remaining townhouse units (Lots 54-63) will look similar. Therefore, this staff report addresses units 49-63.



Figure 1: Pictometry image highlighting the subject parcels situated within the Rivanna Village development along the Entrance Corridor. The arrows indicate the locations of the photographs below.



Figure 1a: View looking southeast into the site from the Rt. 250 Entrance Corridor.



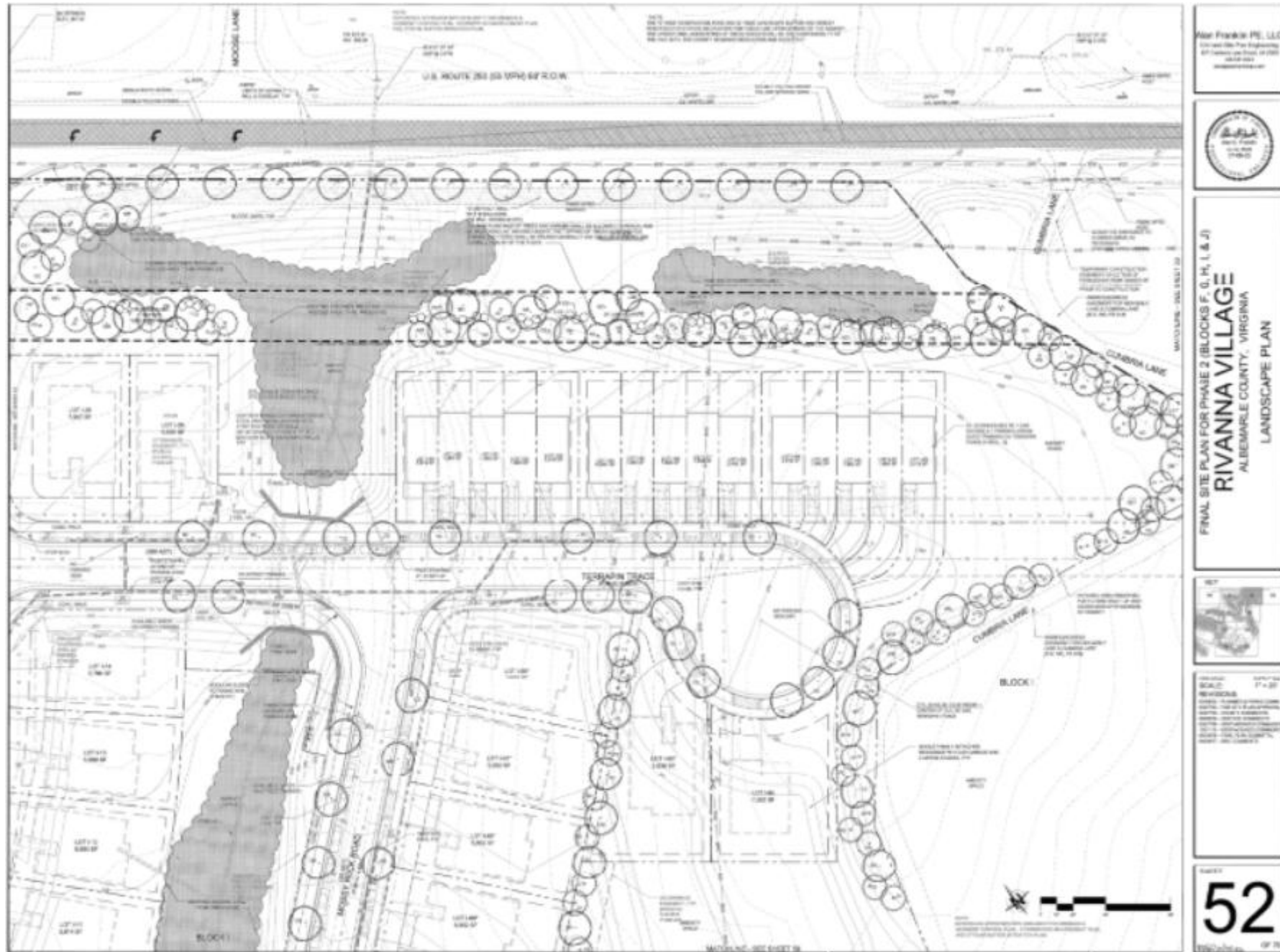
Figure 1b: View looking southeast into the site from the Rt. 250 Entrance Corridor.



Figure 1c: View looking southward into the site from the Rt. 250 Entrance Corridor.



Figure 1d: View looking southwest into the site from the Rt. 250 Entrance Corridor.



ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	Purpose, Compatibility with significant historic sites, Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor		
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 overall building design of the townhouses is contemporary in style but uses gabled roof forms and building materials (stone, asphalt shingles, and board and batten and horizontal siding) that are reflective of those used historically within the County. The use of gable roof forms and the proposed materials provides a minimal connection to both the local historic architecture and the surrounding context of nearby residential developments.	See the recommendations listed below on the architectural designs.
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	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.		
4	The examples contained in Appendix A should be used as a guide for building design: the standard of compatibility with the area’s historic structures is not intended to impose a rigid design solution for new development. Replication of the design of the important historic sites in the area is neither intended nor desired. The Guideline’s standard of compatibility can be met through building scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture which is contemporary as well as traditional. The Guidelines allow individuality in design to accommodate varying tastes as well as special functional requirements.		
5	It is also an important objective of the Guidelines to establish a pattern of compatible architectural characteristics throughout the Entrance Corridor in order to achieve unity and coherence. Building designs should demonstrate sensitivity to other nearby structures within the Entrance Corridor. Where a designated corridor is substantially developed, these Guidelines require striking a careful balance between harmonizing		

	new development with the existing character of the corridor and achieving compatibility with the significant historic sites in the area.		
	SPECIFIC GUIDELINES		
	Compatibility with significant historic sites		
	Structure design		
9	Building forms and features, including roofs, windows, doors, materials, colors and textures should be compatible with the forms and features of the significant historic buildings in the area, exemplified by (but not limited to) the buildings described in Appendix A [of the design guidelines]. The standard of compatibility can be met through scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture which is contemporary as well as traditional. The replication of important historic sites in Albemarle County is not the objective of these guidelines.	The townhouses are shown on Lots 49-63 in three groups of five units. The façade of the townhouses, which is oriented away from the Rt. 250 EC, is characterized by a stone base, with board and batten and horizontal siding above. The arrangement of these materials varies within each respective block. The incorporation of doors, windows, roof forms, and architectural details effectively mitigates the perceived mass and scale of the townhouses.	Revise the west elevation of Lot 49 and the east elevation of Lot 63 to incorporate additional detailing that will reduce blankness, enhance visual interest, and provide human scale. This may include material and color changes at the base and top of the elevations, additional windows, or a combination of these elements.
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	The rear elevations facing Rt. 250 exhibit much less detail and material variation, resulting in a more uniform, back-of-building appearance. To reduce this uniformity, the design uses windows, doors, and decks, along with variations in depth and siding color to introduce visual interest and mitigate the building's length. However, the second-floor door has an awkward appearance as it does not align with the door below or the neighboring windows. Adjusting its alignment to coordinate with the neighboring windows and the door below would enhance the design's overall cohesiveness. In contrast, the end elevations of the 5-unit townhouses lack fenestration, detailing, or variation in color and materials. This results in predominantly blank elevations that lack a sense of human scale. Given the configuration of the townhouse blocks, only the west side of Lot 49 and the east side of Lot 63 are anticipated to be visible from the EC once the blocks are fully constructed. Revising these end elevations to incorporate material and color variations at both the base and apex, along with additional windows, would significantly reduce blankness, enhance the human scale, and add visual interest.	Adjust the second-story doorway on the rear elevation to better align with the adjacent windows and the door below.
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.		
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.		
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.	The material specified in the architectural drawings that will be visible from the EC is horizontal Hardie siding and asphalt shingles. The color palette includes earth tones, grays, blues, black, and white. The earth tones, grays, blues, and black are expected to have an appropriate appearance. However, the ARB has previously required that the white specified (Arctic White) be used only for trim and decorative elements in similar projects. In the current design for the proposed townhouses, Lots 56 and 60 use Arctic White as the siding color. Given the back-of-	Revise the design of the townhouses to limit Arctic White to trim and decorative features only.

		building appearance of the elevations facing the EC and the surrounding context, the use of bright white will draw attention to the townhouses and highlight their orientation towards the EC. To better integrate the townhouses into the surrounding area, it would be appropriate to revise the design to limit the use of white to trim and decorative features.	
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	The site layout was approved under SDP-2018-31. The layout and design of the townhouse blocks are not conducive to connecting devices.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The townhouse designs are the same as or similar to other Ryan Homes products built throughout the region.	None.
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: 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.	No specifications on the proposed window glass have been provided with this submittal.	Provide window glass specs confirming that VLT is not below 40% and VLR does not exceed 30%.
	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.	Loading, service, refuse and storage areas are not in the area under review. Equipment typical of residential backyards is anticipated. When planted and mature, the screening plants in the 30' landscape buffer should sufficiently mitigate the view of these features.	None.
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.		
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."		
22-31	Lighting	Information on building- and post-mounted lighting has been provided. The proposed lantern style fixtures are not all full cut off but they have limited intensity and are expected to have an appropriate appearance as viewed from the EC.	None.
	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.	Site landscaping was approved under SDP-2018-31. A mix of deciduous and evergreen trees in a mix of sizes was approved for the landscaping between Rt. 250 and the backs of the townhouses (Fig. 2). This landscaping, when planted and mature, is expected to screen the building backs and backyards from the EC and integrate the overall development into the landscape.	None.

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.		
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.		
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.	The buffer planting, when planted and mature, will soften the appearance of the rear elevations.	See recommendations above.
33-38	Landscaping	The location, size, and spacing of site landscaping were approved under SDP-2018-31.	None.
	<i>Site Development and layout</i>		
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; insuring 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	The development and layout of the site were approved under SDP-2018-31.	None.

	limiting the building mass and height to a scale that does not overpower the natural settings of the site, or the Entrance Corridor.		
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 32.5.6.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 land forms 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 grading of the site received approval under SDP-2018-31, and the site has been cleared and graded accordingly.	None.
41	No grading, trenching, or tunneling should occur within the drip line 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.		
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.		
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. Visibility of the rear and sides of the townhouses.
- 2. The “back of building” appearance of the rear and sides of the townhouses.
- 3. The use of “Arctic White” for the siding.

Staff recommends approval of the building permit with the following revisions:

- 1. Revise the west elevation of Lot 49 and the east elevation of Lot 63 to incorporate additional detailing that will reduce blankness, enhance visual interest, and provide human scale. This may include material and color changes at the base and top of the elevations, additional windows, or a combination of these elements.
- 2. Adjust the second-story doorway on the rear elevation to better align with the adjacent windows and the door below.
- 3. Revise the design of the townhouses to limit Arctic White to trim and decorative features only.
- 4. Provide window glass specs confirming that VLT is not below 40% and VLR does not exceed 30%.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach. 1: [ARB2026-13: Rivanna Village Townhouses Lots 49-53 Permit Plan](#)
- Attach. 2: [ARB2026-13: Rivanna Village Townhouses Lots 49-63 Elevations and Lighting Information](#)
- Attach. 3: [ARB2026-13: Rivanna Village Townhouses Interior Floorplan Lot 49](#)
- Attach. 4: [ARB2026-13: Rivanna Village Townhouses Interior Floorplan Lot 53](#)