ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	**SDP-2026-96: North Pointe Northwest Residential Area**
Review Type	Review of an Initial Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	032000000022K0
Location	Located on the east side of Rt. 29 North, across from Lewis and Clark Drive
Zoned	Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Neighborhood Investments – NP LLC/Collins Engineering (Chuck Rapp)
Magisterial District	Rivanna
Proposal	To construct 300 single-family attached residential units with associated site improvements including roads, parking lots, landscaping, and retaining walls on a portion of approximately 39.99 acres.
Context	The Northwest Residential Area is situated at the north end of the North Pointe development. The site is to be accessed by an extension of Steep Rock Drive (Fig. 1). A 20' wide emergency access road is proposed from the development to Rt. 29, generally aligned with Lewis and Clark Drive on the opposite side of the road. A mix of residential development lies to the east. A mix of commercial, industrial, and residential development extends north and south along Rt. 29. The North Pointe stormwater facilities previously reviewed by the ARB in 2011 are shown at the north and south ends of this phase of development.
Visibility	The clearing and grading associated with the proposed emergency access road will create views from the EC into portions of the development. Due to the site's topography, the upper parts of some townhouses are expected to be visible above units located at lower elevations. Existing vegetation to remain, along with the landscaping proposed throughout the development, will reduce some visibility.
ARB Meeting Date	November 30, 2026
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

DATE	APPLICATION	RESULT
4-1-2026	ZMA-2023-07	The Board of Supervisors approved a rezoning of approximately 152.5 acres of Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC) to amend proffer statements and the application plan, allowing for an increase in residential units and a decrease in commercial space; the special use permit (SP202300009) for R15 uses was also amended. In the current proposal, the access from Rt. 29 has changed from a site entrance to an emergency access road.
5-24-2019	ARB-2018-136	Certificate of Appropriateness issued, with conditions, for the Northwest Residential Area development.
4-2-2018	ARB-2018-30	The ARB reviewed an Initial Site Plan showing a revised layout for the Northwest Residential Area development.
8-1-2017	ARB-2017-39	Certificate of Appropriateness issued, with conditions, for the Northwest Residential Area development.
2-6-2017	ARB-2016-160	The ARB completed a preliminary review and provided a number of comments on the proposed Northwest Residential Area development.
4-18-2011	ARB-2011-27	The ARB completed a preliminary review of a proposal to construct 2-3 story townhouses in 27 blocks of 3 – 8 units.
3-7-2011	ARB-2011-10	A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for stormwater facilities within the development. As part of that approval, chain-link fencing was prohibited within 500’ of the EC, while decorative black chain-link fencing was approved at the tops of the three retaining walls associated with the stormwater facility north of Dillon Court.
2-14-2007	SP-2006-34	The SP for the stream crossing was approved with landscaping conditions.
12-18-2006	ARB-2006-129	The ARB provided advisory comments on the SP application for the stream crossing.
4-19-2004	ARB-2004-26	The ARB completed an advisory review for the North Pointe rezoning.

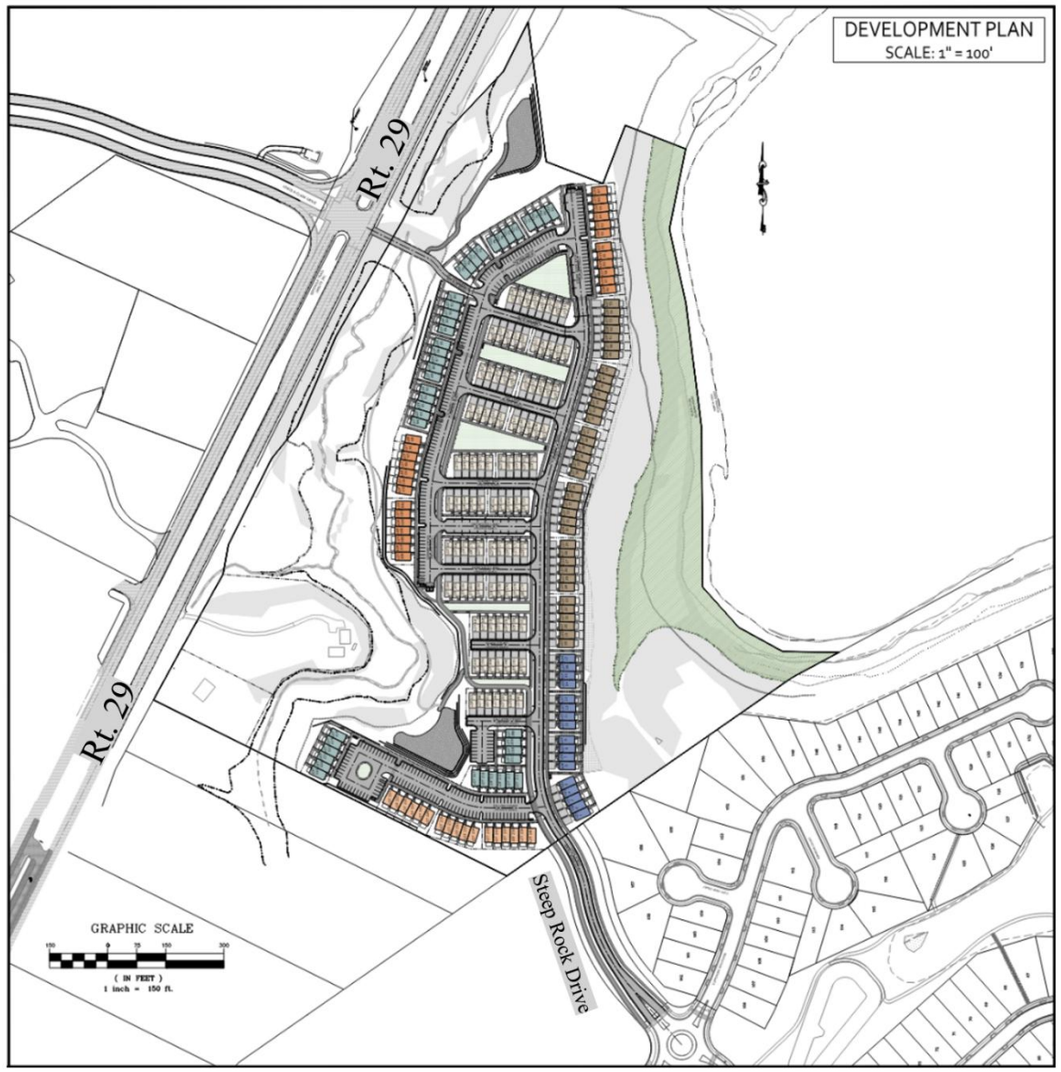

Figure 1: North Pointe NW Residential Overall Development Plan illustrating the extension of Steep Rock Drive and the site's relationship to the Rt. 29 EC.

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
	Purpose, Structure Design		
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.	Architectural elevations were not submitted with the initial site plan. The development is arranged into townhouse blocks ranging from 4 to 7 townhouse units, with the closest units being approximately 250' from the EC. Within each block, the townhouse units are staggered, which is expected to help break up their mass. Based on the site plan and the overall development plan, it appears that front, rear, and side elevations will face the EC. While distance and the existing wooded area between the EC and the development will help reduce the visual impact of these views, elevations visible from the EC should incorporate sufficient architectural detailing and variation to achieve an appropriate appearance. Earth-tone building materials and colors and variation in materials and cladding colors between units could help integrate the development into the site's wooded context, further break down the perceived massing, and reduce visual repetition within townhouse blocks.	Submit architectural designs for review with the final site plan. Provide information on proposed materials and colors in the drawings. Ensure that all elevations visible from the EC incorporate sufficient architectural detailing and material variation to avoid the appearance of rear elevations or blankness. The use of earth-tone materials and colors, together with variation in façade materials and cladding colors between individual townhouse units, could further help reduce perceived massing and achieve an appropriate appearance within the EC.
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.		
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.		
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.		

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.		
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.		
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.	Given the distance from the EC street and the wooded area between the street and the development, the tint and reflectivity of the window glass is not expected to have a significant impact on the EC.	None.
	Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor		
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.	The existing wooded area to remain along the EC frontage is expected to help filter views of the development from the EC street. This effect will be strengthened over time as the trees throughout the development mature. If the townhouse design is similar to others approved in other locations along the ECs, the development will not appear unlike other existing residential developments along the corridor, but without a strong connection to the county's historic architecture.	See architectural recommendations above.
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.		
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.		
	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.	The townhouses along Girard Drive have their backs oriented towards the EC. It is anticipated that residential-scale mechanical equipment and trash containers will be located in the backyards. These items are expected to be relatively small, and visibility will be limited by distance, wooded area, and proposed plantings. Safety railing is proposed on the retaining walls, but no fence detail was included in the submittal. In 2011, the ARB reviewed the stormwater facilities proposed for this site and required that chain-link fencing within 500' of the EC be eliminated.	Provide a fence detail in the site plan set. Ensure that the security fence design is consistent with the ARB-approved design criteria for safety fencing. Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the architectural drawings.
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."		

		The standard mechanical equipment note has been provided on the site plan. This note will need to be included on the architectural drawings.	
22-31	**Lighting**	These guidelines will be reviewed when a complete lighting plan is submitted with the final site.	None at this time.
	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.	The frontage between the EC and the development consists of a stream and associated stream buffer, floodplain, open space, and wooded areas. The location of these features is expected to preserve most of the existing wooded area along the frontage. The landscape plan includes trees and shrubs along and around the emergency access road connecting to Rt. 29. However, the proposed plantings are not expected to provide a sufficient transition between the disturbed area associated with the access road and the existing wooded area to remain. Additional landscaping that better integrates the disturbed area with the surrounding context would help create a more cohesive and visually integrated appearance along the EC.	Revise the landscape plan to show landscaping around the access road that provides a more gradual transition to the wooded area and softens the engineered appearance of the grading.
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.		
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.	The layout of the development includes roads with parking on one or both sides as well as areas that function as parking lots. The trees provided along Brewster Lane, Dillon Court, Girard Drive, and Steep Rock Drive serve as road, pedestrian, and parking area landscaping. The proposed landscape plan does not consistently meet the guideline's requirement for street trees along interior roads, with gaps in planting occurring throughout the development and tree spacing exceeding 40' in several locations. Although these deficiencies are unlikely to be readily visible from the EC due to distance, existing wooded areas, and the site's internal layout, a more	Consider revising the landscape plan to provide interior trees at more consistent spacing.
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.		
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.	consistent planting pattern would strengthen the streetscape, increase pedestrian comfort, and, as the trees mature, further soften views of the development from the EC.	
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.	Architectural designs have not yet been submitted for review. While the townhouse blocks are not overly long, the townhouses closest to the EC face away from it. Existing wooded areas and proposed landscaping are expected to limit visibility; however, variation in architectural detailing, materials, and colors could help add visual interest and reduce the perceived length and repetition of the townhouse rows.	See architectural recommendations above.
37	Plant species: a. Plant species required should be as approved by the Staff based upon but not limited to the Generic Landscape Plan Recommended Species List and Native Plants for Virginia Landscapes (Appendix D).	This guideline will be reviewed when a complete landscape plan and planting schedule are submitted with the final site plan.	None at this time.
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 note appears on the plan.	None.
	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.	A stream and associated stream buffer, floodplain, open space, and wooded areas occupy the area between the development and the EC. The lots closest to the EC along Girard Drive are not oriented parallel to the EC but the distance from the road helps mitigate this orientation. Elevations visible from the EC will need to include sufficient architectural features and detailing to achieve an appropriate appearance as viewed from the EC. Distant views are currently unavailable across this property due to the site's wooded character. However, since a significant amount of wooded area will be removed for development, filtered distant views along the corridor may become available.	None at this time.
39	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows: 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. 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 Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance 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.		
	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.	Significant grading will be needed to construct this development. While the floodplain and some of the wooded area adjacent to the EC will remain, grading associated with the emergency access road creates a regular, engineered appearance that contrasts with the adjacent wooded area. Additional landscaping that softens the grading and creates a more gradual transition to the existing wooded area would help better integrate the access road and grading into the surrounding context. The general design of the stormwater facilities does not appear to have changed since the previous review with three tiered 6'-tall retaining walls still proposed at each. However, no landscaping has been proposed for either facility. Landscaping that integrates these features into the development would be appropriate. No details have been provided regarding the proposed appearance of retaining wall blocks.	Revise the landscape plan to show landscaping around the access road that provides a more gradual transition to the wooded area and softens the engineered appearance of the grading. Provide a mix of trees and shrubs to integrate the stormwater facilities into the development. Revise the site plan to provide details on the proposed retaining wall block.
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.		
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.	Existing wooded area to remain and tree protection fencing will need to be shown clearly throughout the site plan.	Revise the plan to clearly show the existing wooded area to remain and tree protection fencing throughout the site plan.
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.		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The anticipated visibility of the development:
   - Side and rear townhouse elevations facing the EC.
   - Stormwater facilities
   - Retaining walls
2. Landscaping:
   - Landscaping along and near the emergency access road.
   - Landscaping along interior roads.

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:
  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. Submit architectural designs for review with the final site plan. Provide information on proposed materials and colors in the drawings.
  2. Ensure that all elevations visible from the EC incorporate sufficient architectural detailing and material variation to avoid the appearance of rear elevations or blankness. The use of earth-tone materials and colors, together with variation in façade materials and cladding colors between individual townhouse units, could further help reduce perceived massing and achieve an appropriate appearance within the EC.
  3. Provide a fence detail in the site plan set. Ensure that the security fence design is consistent with the ARB-approved design criteria for safety fencing.
  4. Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the architectural drawings.
  5. Revise the landscape plan to show landscaping around the access road that provides a more gradual transition to the wooded area and softens the engineered appearance of the grading.
  6. Revise the landscape plan to provide interior trees at more consistent spacing.
  7. Provide a mix of trees and shrubs to integrate the stormwater facilities into the development.
  8. Revise the site plan to provide details on the proposed retaining wall block.
  9. Revise the plan to clearly show the existing wooded area to remain and tree protection fencing throughout the site plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: SDP2026-00096 North Pointe Northwest Residential - Initial Site Plan
Attach. 2: SDP2026-00096 North Pointe Northwest Residential - Perspectives