

## Department of Growth Management



<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	February 11, 2025
<b>PROJECT:</b>	Consideration of Approval of an Initial Master Plan for the Property Referred to as New Riverside Parcel 5A South (Phase 3) within the New Riverside PUD for a Residential Development Consisting of a Maximum of 76 Single-Family Lots on Approximately 63 Acres Located on the West Side of New Riverside Road South of Existing Alston Park Phase 2.
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

**REQUEST:** A request for approval of the Initial Master Plan Application submitted by Witmer, Jones, Keefer, Ltd., on behalf of VILLAGE PARK Communities, LLC, for an Initial Master Plan for Parcel 5A South in the New Riverside Concept Plan.

**INTRODUCTION:** The Applicant is requesting approval of an Initial Master Plan for Parcel 5A South. Parcel 5A South is located on the west side of New Riverside Road south of existing Alston Park Phase 2 within the New Riverside Planned Unit Development (Attachments 2 and 3).



*Proposed Master Plan*

**BACKGROUND:** The Town of Bluffton approved the Concept Plan and a Development Agreement for the New Riverside tract in June 2004 (Attachment 4). The Concept Plan defines the allowed land use in the various areas of the New Riverside Planning Area. The documents also define the development standards which govern all development activities within the Concept Plan, including Alston Park Phase 3.

The proposed development consists of single-family dwelling units, an amenity area and related infrastructure with a maximum density of 76 residential lots. The Applicant provided an updated submittal booklet on December 9, 2024. This updated booklet includes the project introduction and overview, exhibits, traffic impact analysis, Holly Hill Lane Plat as recorded November 22, 2024, and Holly Hill Lane Road Section (Attachment 5).

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The proposed development will be constructed on Parcel 5A of the New Riverside Planning Area, located on the west side of New Riverside Road, south of the existing Alston Park Phase 2 and north of The Haven development. Tree cover is predominantly comprised of upland pine plantation, pine flatwoods and mixed hardwoods. The preserved wetland areas are predominantly mixed hardwoods, maple, and sweet bays. The property drains south south-west, towards the existing wetlands and north towards Holly Hill Lane. The boundary, tree and topographic survey included in Attachment 5 provides detailed information regarding the existing conditions of the property.

**SITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:** Architectural guidelines and restrictive covenants, developed by VILLAGE PARK Communities, will set standards for design and construction materials, and will meet or exceed the Town of Bluffton Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance (ZDSO) approved with the New Riverside Planning Area. Applicable site design standards shall be as set forth under the Concept Plan and Development Agreement. The applicant intends to responsibly exercise the design functions entrusted to the applicant as the private developer under the Concept Plan and Development Agreement.

Site development within the New Riverside Planning Area is governed by the Development Standards included as part of the original Concept Plan approval. Village Park Communities will control internal site standards using architectural guidelines and restrictive covenants. As stated in the Concept Plan, setbacks and buffers for the Master Plan Area apply to the New Riverside Planning Area boundary only. The project shall demonstrate that open space requirements per Concept Plan Section 2.D.15 will be met. Lots will conform to the standards set forth in the Concept Plan and Development Agreement.

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT:** The Stormwater Master Plan is shown in Attachment 5, Exhibit G. Stormwater runoff will be routed through rain gardens, bioswales, lagoon systems or equivalent Best Management Practice (BMP) prior to being released to area surface waters or wetlands. Littoral shelves may be incorporated in the lagoon construction. Where practical, infiltration techniques will be investigated at the time of development permit. Final stormwater design will be submitted along with other final engineering calculations at the time of Development Permit Applications.

**UTILITY SERVICES:** Potable Water will be provided by Beaufort–Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA). An existing water main along New Riverside Road will serve Alston Park Phase 3. This water main will provide adequate flow to support this project

Wastewater Collection will be provided by a combination of gravity sewers, pumping stations, and force mains located within the development area. The wastewater will be collected and pumped to an existing wastewater facility owned and operated by BJWSA.

The electrical service will be provided by Dominion. Service will be extended as development progresses.

**TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT:** The New Riverside Master Developer commissioned a traffic study for the New Riverside development. Residential units allotted to Alston Park Phase 3 were included in the original traffic report. An updated traffic impact analysis by Kimley Horn is included with this IMP submittal (Attachment 5). The stated purpose of this technical memorandum is to document a turn lane warrant analysis conducted for the proposed Alston Park Phase 3 development. Based on the trip generation potential of the development, a southbound right-turn lane into the proposed Alston Park Phase 3 at the intersection of New Riverside Road at Holly Hill Lane is not warranted.

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:** The Town of Bluffton’s Planning Commission voted at the February 22, 2023, meeting to recommend to Town Council to approve the Alston Park Phase 3 Initial Master Plan subject to the following conditions:

1. The first phase of development shall be the construction of Holly Hill Lane from New Riverside Road to the development’s entrance at Benton Circle, to include connectivity to the Alston Park development to the north. Construction of the road will initially consist of a sub-base and binder course, with the topcoat to be added prior to Final Certificate of Construction Compliance.
2. Holly Hill Lane shall serve as the only construction road for the development.
3. The Applicant shall update the master plan to show an asphalt pathway 8 feet in width within the Holly Hill Lane buffer.
4. The master plan is conceptual in nature, allowing for the Applicant to work with Town Staff to save as many trees as practicable at time of development plan submittal.
5. Provide an 8-foot wide asphalt path along the south side of Holly Hill Lane from the existing path on New Riverside Drive to Benton Circle.
6. Consider providing a fenced buffer along the north side of Holly Hill Lane adjacent to the residential homes that back up to Holly Hill Lane from New Riverside Drive to Benton Circle.

The Applicant acknowledges that construction of Holly Hill Lane shall be included in the first phase of development, and that the road shall serve as the only construction road for the development (Planning Commission Conditions 1 and 2). The Applicant has also provided an asphalt pathway along the south side of Holly Hill Lane (Planning Commission Conditions 3 and 5).

The Applicant and Property Owner held a Community Meeting at the Palmetto Electric Community Room on May 14, 2024. Approximately 30 residents from adjacent developments (Alston Park Phases 1 and 2 and The Haven) attended the meeting. Residents asked about the proposed gating of the new development, why the traffic impact analysis did not require a dedicated right turn onto Holly Hill Lane, and how an amenity package for the new community would work.

The primary reason for the delay in resubmitting after the February 22, 2023, Planning Commission meeting is due to resolving a Holly Hill Lane right-of-way boundary discrepancy. The Holly Hill Plat was re-recorded to correct the discrepancy on November 22, 2024, and is included in Attachment 5, Complete Submittal Booklet.

**REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS:** Town Council is required to consider the criteria set forth in Section 3.9.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance in assessing an application for a Master Plan. These criteria are provided below followed by a Staff Finding(s).

**1. Section 3.9.3.B. Promotion of and consistency with the land use goals, environmental objectives and overall intent of the policies within the Comprehensive Plan.**

*Finding. The application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

The Master Plan for Alston Park Phase 3 is part of the New Riverside Concept Plan and is consistent with the land use goals in the comprehensive plan by offering housing options for a higher quality of life through controlled growth and development.

**2. Section 3.9.3.C. Consistency with the intent of the Planned Unit Development Zoning District as prescribed in this Ordinance.**

*Finding. The application is consistent with the Town of Bluffton Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance that applies to the New Riverside Concept Plan.*

The New Riverside Concept Plan was designed to be a mixed-use development, which includes residential and commercial uses. The Alston Park Phase 3 Master Plan is being developed as a part of the residential component of the overall Concept Plan. The use category of residential is consistent with the development of this project.

**3. Section 3.9.3.D. As applicable, consistency with the provisions of the associated Development Agreement and/or PUD Concept Plan.**

*Finding. The application is consistent with the provisions of the New Riverside Development Agreement.*

The development proposes a maximum of 76 dwelling units. The Development Agreement states the Owner is required to notify the Town when Development Rights are transferred to a Developer, including the name and address of such Developer, the location and number of

acres transferred, the residential density transferred, the commercial acreage transferred, and other relevant information.

**4. Section 3.9.3.E. Compatibility of proposed land uses, densities, traffic circulation and design with adjacent land uses and environmental features, as well as the character of the surrounding area.**

*Finding. The application is compatible with the surrounding area.*

The project will be developed in accordance with the New Riverside Concept Plan, dated June 9, 2004. Access points, wetlands, archaeology, and stormwater methods have been coordinated with the Master Developer. The final location of roads, lagoons, open spaces, buildings, parking, recreational amenities, and other elements may vary at the time of Development Permit Applications. The final layout will vary based on market conditions and environmental constraints.

The New Riverside Master Developer commissioned a traffic study for the New Riverside development. An updated traffic assessment by Kimley Horn is included with the IMP submittal. Primary access to the property will be from Holly Hill Lane/New Riverside Road and a secondary access will connect from Benton Road, thru Alston Park phase one. The 2 access points may be gated or non-gated as determined by the developer.

**5. Section 3.9.3.F. Ability to be served by adequate public services, including, but not limited to, water, sanitary sewer, roads, police, fire, and school services. For developments that have the potential for significant impact on infrastructure and services the applicant shall be required to provide an analysis and mitigation of the impact on transportation, utilities, and community services.**

*Finding. The property can be served by adequate public services and has previously provided analysis and mitigation measures on the impact on transportation, utilities, and community services with the New Riverside Development Agreement and Concept Plan.*

The proposed Master Plan is in an existing PUD where much of the infrastructure including roadways, sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, electricity, telephone, and cable, have been contemplated during the creation of the PUD. The Applicant has requested letters of approval from applicable agencies. The letters of approval will be required prior to final development plan approval.

**6. Section 3.9.3.G. Demonstration of innovative site planning techniques that improve upon the standards in other allowable Town of Bluffton zoning districts with the purpose of enhancing the Town of Bluffton's health, safety and welfare.**

*Finding. The Master Plan includes innovative site planning techniques that enhance the Town's health, safety, and welfare.*

The site is being developed using the best practices in design guidelines and stormwater management. Architectural guidelines and restrictive covenants, developed by VILLAGE PARK Communities, will set standards for design and construction materials, and will meet

or exceed the Town of Bluffton Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance (D.S.O.) approved with the New Riverside Planning Area. In addition, the development proposes sidewalks and recreational trails that provide internal pedestrian and bicycle circulation, as well as access to the New Riverside Trail system and off-site amenities.

**7. Section 3.9.3.H. Ability of the site to sufficiently accommodate the densities and land use intensities of the proposed development.**

*Finding. The property can sufficiently accommodate the proposed development.*

The site is consistent with the approved Development Agreement and the New Riverside Concept Plan.

**8. Section 3.9.3.I. Conformance with adopted or accepted plans, policies, and practices of the Town of Bluffton.**

*Finding. The requested initial master plan is in conformance with adopted or accepted plans, policies, and practices of the Town.*

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the systematic growth of Bluffton within the New Riverside Planned Unit Development. By establishing a maximum allowed number of residential units, the New Riverside Concept Plan is controlling growth in an orderly design.

**TOWN COUNCIL ACTION:** Town Council has the authority to take the following action:

- Approve the application as submitted by the Applicant;
- Approve the application with conditions; or
- Deny the application as submitted by the Applicant

**NEXT STEPS:** Town Council consideration of the request by majority vote.

Master Plan Procedure	Step Completed	Date Completed
Step 1. Pre-Application Meeting	✓	March, 2022
Step 2. Application Check-In Meeting	✓	April 6, 2022
Step 3. Review by DRC	✓	May 11, 2022
Step 4. Planning Commission Recommendation	✓	February 22, 2023
Step 5. Town Council Consideration of Initial Master Plan	✓	February 11, 2025

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Town Council Presentation
2. Application
3. Location Map
4. New Riverside Concept Master Plan
5. Complete Submittal Booklet