

PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT Department of Growth Management



MEETING DATE:	February 22, 2023
PROJECT:	Consideration of approval of an Initial Master Plan for the property referred to as New Riverside Parcel 5A South 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.
PROJECT MANAGER:	Dan Frazier, AICP Principal Planner Department 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 (Attachment 1).



BACKGROUND:

The Town of Bluffton approved the Concept Plan and a Development Agreement for the New Riverside tract in June 2004. The Concept Plan defines the allowed land uses in the various areas of the New Riverside Planning Area. The documents also define the development standards, which govern all development activity 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 (Attachment 2).

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 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 provide detailed information regarding the existing conditions of the property (Attachment 3).

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 (D.S.O.) 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 through the use of architectural guidelines and restrictive covenants. The covenants and restrictions will be submitted to the Town of Bluffton during the Development Permit process.

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.

Based on current market conditions, the master plan indicates +/- 70' x 120' lot sizes with 15' front, 10' rear and 5' side setbacks on each typical lot. Garages will have a minimum 20' setback to accommodate driveway parking without encroaching into the right-of-way. Variances from these typical guidelines must be reviewed and approved by the VILLAGE PARK Communities Architectural Review Board for this development. Lots will conform to the standards set forth in the Concept Plan and Development Agreement.

Building setbacks and heights will be reviewed by the VILLAGE PARK Communities Architectural Review Board and conform to life safety regulations.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Stormwater Master Plan is shown in Attachment 2, 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**1. Potable Water Distribution**

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 (Attachment 2, Exhibit E). This water main will provide adequate flow to support this project.

2. Wastewater Collection

Wastewater Collection will be provided by a combination of gravity sewers, pumping stations, and force mains located ^[17]_{SEPP} within the development area (Attachment 2, Exhibit F). The wastewater will be collected and pumped to an existing wastewater facility owned and operated by BJWSA.

3. Power Supply and Service

In accordance with franchise agreements approved by Town Council, Alston Park Phase 3 is in the Dominion service district. The electrical service will be provided by Dominion. Service will be extended as development progresses. PUD Master Plan approval does not amend any rights provided to a landowner by the Public Service Commission or South Carolina.

4. Telecommunication Service

VILLAGE PARK Communities is coordinating its plans with licensed and franchised telecommunications service providers in the Master Plan area. The telecommunications infrastructure will include voice, data, and video facilities. Service will be extended and activated as development progresses. Master Plan approval does not amend any rights provided to a landowner or telecommunications provider as granted by the Public Service Commission.

5. Fire Protection

The community is in the Bluffton Township Fire District (BTFD) jurisdiction. The water supply system will be designed to provide flow and pressure for fire protection.

PROPOSED STREETS

The proposed internal street layout is shown on the Initial Master Plan (Attachment 2, Exhibit B). A typical right-of-way cross-section is shown in Attachment 2, Exhibit D and demonstrates a typical streetscape section. The Applicant proposes that for lots 54, and 59-61, the road right-of-way would be wider to allow for the increased green space. Roads and Right of Ways in Alston Park Phase 3 may be privately owned and maintained by the Property Owner's Association, or other entity assigned with the legal responsibility. Roadways that are not gated, upon mutual agreement between the Town of Bluffton and the Owner, Property Owners Association, or other entity assigned with

the legal responsibility, may be transferred to the Town of Bluffton upon completion. Acceptance of these roads will be based on Town of Bluffton requirements.

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 4). 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.

REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS

The Planning Commission 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. This request will be 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 will be 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. The 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 is able to be served by adequate public services and has previously provided an 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 is able to 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 application 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 STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Town Staff finds that the requirements of Section 3.9.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance can be met with the following conditions and recommends that the Planning Commission provide a recommendation of approval to Town Council for the Alston Park Phase 3 Initial Master Plan.

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. Beaufort County shall be responsible for the installation of the pathway.
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.

NEXT STEPS: Forward recommendation to Town Council:

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 for Approval of Majority Vote		TBD

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Application
2. Initial Master Plan submittal (including Exhibits)
3. Boundary, Tree, and Topographic Survey
4. Traffic Impact Analysis