

PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management



MEETING DATE:	April 22, 2026
PROJECT:	Consideration of approval of an Initial Master Plan for the property referred to as Parcel 8A within the New Riverside PUD for a residential development consisting of 104 single-family lots on approximately 100.69 acres located on the southwest corner of the intersection of New Riverside Road and Myrtle Ford Road.
PROJECT MANAGER:	Dan Frazier, AICP Planning Manager Department of Growth Management

REQUEST: A request for approval of an Initial Master Plan application for New Riverside Parcel 8A within the New Riverside Planned Unit Development (PUD) (Attachments 1 and 2).

INTRODUCTION: The Applicant, Rob Marek of Pulte Home Company, LLC., and John Paul Moore of Thomas and Hutton on behalf of Property Owner, Pioneer Land & Timber, LLC is requesting approval for an Initial Master Plan for New Riverside Parcel 8A.

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 activities within the Concept Plan. The project site is identified as Parcel 8A "Residential" within the New Riverside Land Use Master Plan (Attachment 3).

The proposed New Riverside Parcel 8A Initial Master Plan (IMP) totals 100.69 acres that will consist of 104 total single-family detached dwelling units. In addition to single-family dwellings, the applicant has proposed several amenities including lagoons, recreational areas, a park, and network of sidewalks (Attachment 4).

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The proposed development will be constructed on Parcel 8A of the New Riverside Planning Area, located on the west side of New Riverside Road opposite the Lakes at New Riverside residential development. The existing tree cover appears to be a mix of hardwoods and pines. The applicant has attempted to dedicate areas of open space to be used to preserve existing trees and will work with staff to save trees through the development permit process. A Tree Save Master Plan identifies the overall intent of the tree saves for the development, however actual tree saves and tree mitigation requirements will be based on review and approval of individual development plan applications (Attachment 5).

In addition to identified tree saves, the Applicant has proposed one street tree per lot based on the submitted Typical Street Cross Section (Attachment 6). Town Staff have experienced that required overstory street trees planted on smaller residential lots often result in future homeowners requesting the tree to be removed. The concern from homeowners often has to do with adjacent utilities or sidewalks being impacted by the root system as the tree matures. The Applicant should provide additional information detailing the process that will ensure the longevity of the proposed treescapes.

SITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS: Architectural guidelines and restrictive covenants, developed by Pulte Home Company, LLC., will set standards for design and construction materials, and will meet or exceed the standards 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. 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 buffer for the Master Plan Area apply to the New Riverside Planning Area boundary only. The required 50' PUD buffer is provided along the southern property line and is included in the 150' vegetative buffer along the northern and eastern property lines.

The single-family detached lots that will vary in width and depth based on their location within the development. The lots may range in width from +/- 45 feet to 90 feet and in depth from 110 feet to 140 feet. The typical setbacks for each single-family lot will meet or exceed the requirements as set forth in the New Riverside Concept Plan. These setbacks may vary depending on constraints. Any deviation from these typical setbacks must be reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Board for this development.

Roads and Right of Ways in Parcel 8A may be privately owned and maintained by the Property Owner's Association, or other entities assigned with legal responsibility. The road rights-of-way shall be 60 feet minimum. The Applicant has provided a Typical Street Cross Section (Attachment 6).

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT: A Stormwater Drainage Master Plan has been included in the submittal. The stormwater will be filtered through the lagoon system, infiltration basin, bioretention areas, spring boxes, or other equivalent Best Management Practice (BMP) prior to being released to any surface waters or wetlands. The stormwater treatment will meet or exceed the requirements set forth by the current stormwater ordinance as approved by the Town of Bluffton at the time each phase or subsequent subphase is submitted (Attachment 7).

Traffic Impact Analysis: An updated Traffic Impact Study was also provided with this submittal (Attachment 8). The study recommends the following off-site transportation improvements:

Site Access #1 (New Riverside Road at Mainland Lakes Drive)

- Construct the site access point as a full-movement access under minor-street stop-control with one ingress lane and one egress lane.
- Replace the existing striped hatching on the westbound approach with an exclusive westbound left-turn lane with 200 feet of full-width storage and an appropriate taper.

Site Access #2 (New Riverside Road approximately 500 feet west of Myrtle Ford Road)

- Construct the site access point as a right-in/right-out access under minor-street stop-control with one ingress lane and one egress lane.

Town Staff will require the recommended transportation improvements be included at time of development plan submittal.

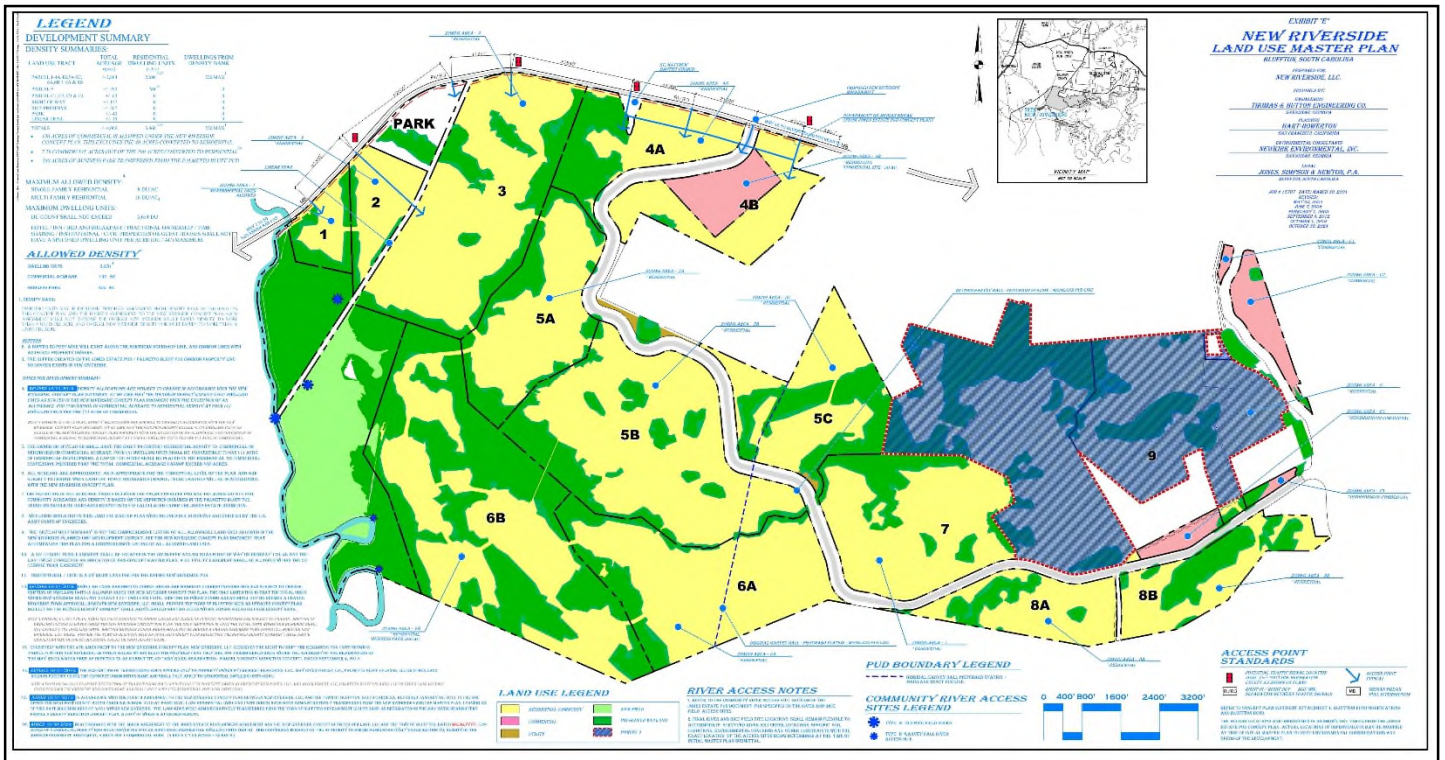
Additional Submittal Items: In addition to the submittal items previously referenced, the Applicant's complete submittal booklet also includes the following (Attachment 9):

- a) Connectivity Master Plan
- b) Water Master Plan
- c) Wastewater Master Plan
- d) Stormwater Master Plan
- e) Existing Conditions & Topography
- f) Property Plat
- g) Conceptual Park Plan
- h) Agency Letters (BJWSA, Dominion Gas and Power Supply, Sparklight, Bluffton Fire District, and Beaufort County School District)

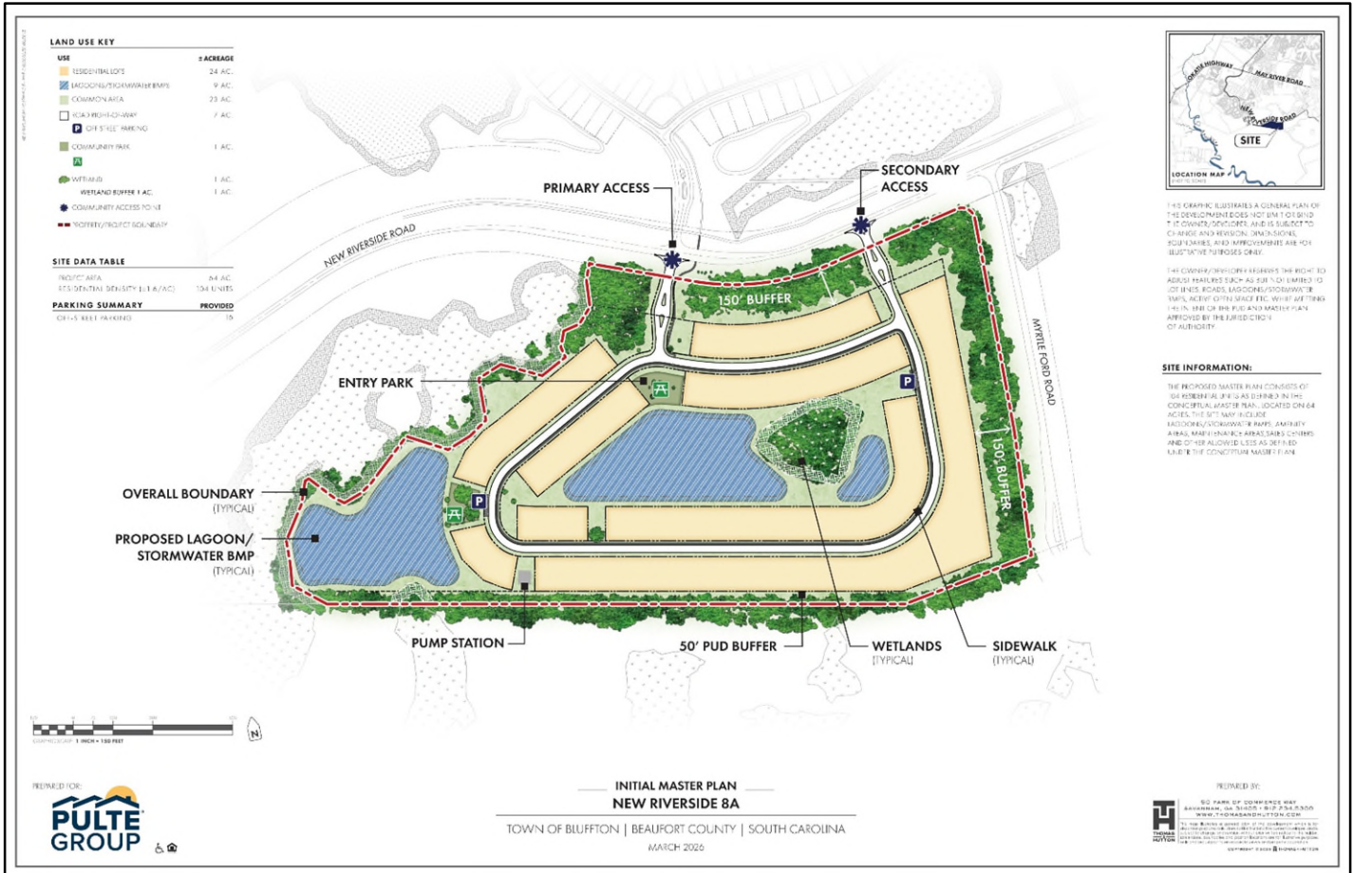
The following submittal documents are not included in the Planning Commission Packet:

- a) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Freshwater Wetland Permit
- b) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Impact Permit (2004-1G-025) and Permit Drawings
- c) Modified Permit 2004-1G-025.
- d) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Impact Permit (2004-1G-025) – Permit Extension Correspondence

Development Review Committee: Comments on the Initial Master Plan application were reviewed at the February 18, 2026, meeting of the Development Review Committee. A Comments Response Letter was provided included in March 30, 2026, resubmittal (Attachment 10).



New Riverside PUD Land Use Master Plan



Proposed Initial Master Plan

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 Land Use Element within the Comprehensive Plan provides a vision that suggests a balance of land uses to ensure a high quality of life, business opportunity, environmentally protected areas, and proper placement of commercial uses. The Master Plan for New Riverside Parcel 8A is consistent with this vision 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 Buckwalter PUD Concept Plan.

The PUD district is intended to achieve the objectives of the Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan and to allow flexibility in development that could not otherwise be achieved through strict application of this Ordinance and that will result in improved design, character and quality of walkable mixed-use developments and preserve natural and scenic features of open spaces. The Master Plan Narrative proposes single family residential development that achieves the PUD District objectives through architectural guidelines, covenants and restrictions, that will meet or exceed the Town of Bluffton Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance (DSO) approved with the Buckwalter PUD.

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 PUD Concept Plan.

The New Riverside Concept Plan was designed to be a mixed-use development, which includes residential and commercial uses. The New Riverside Parcel 8A 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.

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 proposed development is compatible with the surrounding area.

The project will be developed in accordance with the New Riverside Concept Plan, dated June 9, 2004. The application contains sufficient detail to assess the compatibility of proposed land uses, densities, traffic circulation and design with adjacent land uses and environmental features.

An updated traffic impact analysis prepared by Kimley Horn is included with the IMP submittal. There are two proposed access points from New Riverside Road to the property. The primary access point will have one ingress lane and one egress lane with full access and will be aligned with the existing intersection of Mainland Lakes Drive. The secondary access point is to be constructed with one ingress and one egress lane under right-in/right-out movement restrictions.

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 provided updated letters of approval from applicable agencies.

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 Narrative describes innovative site planning techniques that enhance the Town's health, safety, and welfare.

The Master Plan Narrative proposes architectural guidelines, covenants and restrictions, that will meet or exceed the Town of Bluffton Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance (DSO) approved with the New Riverside PUD. The narrative also states that Site Design and Development Standards set forth in the New Riverside PUD will be adhered to, and building setbacks and heights will be reviewed by the applicant's Architectural Review Board and conform to life safety regulations and will further conform to the standards set forth in the Concept Plan and Development Agreement. All environmental standards,

including Best Management Practices regarding stormwater runoff, will be demonstrated at the time of final design and Development Permit Application.

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 application is in conformance with adopted or accepted plans, policies, and practices of the Town.

The Town of Bluffton 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 condition and recommends that the Planning Commission provide a recommendation of conditional approval to Town Council for the New Riverside Parcel 8A Initial Master Plan.

1. Provide additional information detailing the process that will ensure the longevity of the proposed treescapes.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS: The Planning Commission has the authority to take the following actions with respect to the recommendation of the application to Town Council:

1. Recommend approval to Town Council of the application as submitted by the Applicant;
2. Recommend approval to Town Council of the application with conditions; or
3. Recommend denial to Town Council of the application as submitted by the Applicant.

NEXT STEPS: Forward recommendation to Town Council:

Master Plan Procedure	Step Completed	Date Completed
Step 1. Pre-Application Meeting	✓	December 11, 2025
Step 2. Application Check-In Meeting	✓	January 20, 2026
Step 3. Review by DRC	✓	February 18, 2026
Step 4. Planning Commission Recommendation	✓	April 22, 2026
Step 5. Town Council Consideration for Approval of Majority Vote	✓	TBD

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Application and Narrative
2. Location Map
3. New Riverside Land Use Master Plan
4. Proposed Initial Master Plan
5. Tree Save Master Plan
6. Typical Street Cross Section
7. Stormwater Drainage Master Plan
8. Traffic Impact Analysis (Modeling Omitted) 03 03 26
9. Additional Submittal Documents
10. DRC Comments and Applicant’s Response