

PLANNING COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	January 24, 2024
PROJECT:	Car Village: Certificate of Appropriateness - Highway Corridor Overlay (COFA-HCO)
PROJECT MANAGER:	Katie Peterson, AICP, Senior Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, Dan Keefer, on behalf of the owner, Charlie and Brown LLC, requests the Planning Commission approve the following application:

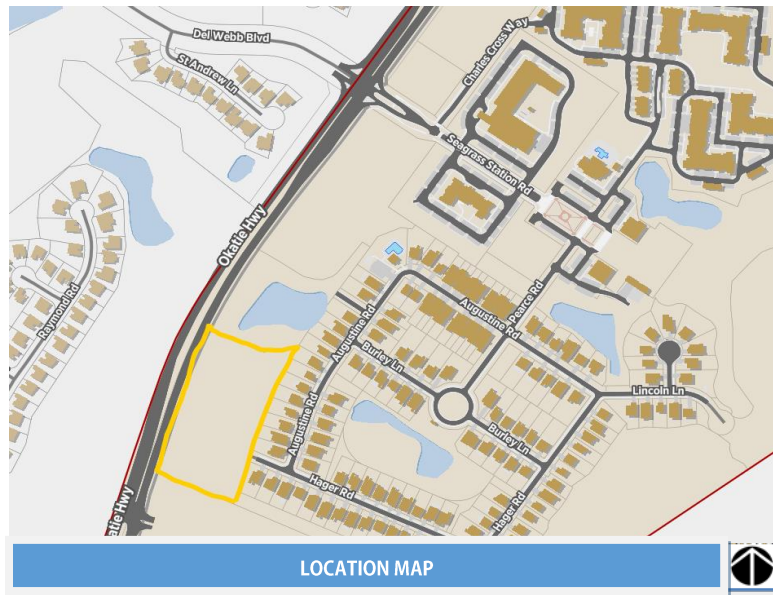
COFA-08-23-018440. A Certificate of Appropriateness – HCO for 20,000 SF of clubhouse space and 5 buildings divided into garage condominium units totally approximately 80,000SF and associated infrastructure. The property is zoned Village at Verdier PUD and consists of approximately 5.00 acres, identified by tax map number R610-021-000-0808-0000, located on Highway 170 approximately 1,200 feet south of Seagrass Station Road and falls within the Town of Bluffton Highway Corridor Overlay District.

INTRODUCTION: The property was annexed into the Town of Bluffton and Initial Master Plan for the Village at Verdier PUD was approved by Bluffton Town Council October 9, 2002. The Master Plan was last revised May 9, 2023. As approved, the plan organized the 125-acre tract into planning areas to provide for the regulation and arrangement of land uses as well as the allotment of densities. The subject parcel is approximately 5 acres and is identified for Mixed Use within the Village at Verdier Master Plan.

A Conceptual COFA-HCO Application was reviewed by the Development Review Committee at their October 4, 2023 meeting where comments were provided to the Applicant (Attachment 6). Revisions were made and the Applicant now requests approval of a Final COFA-HCO application which is subject to review by the Planning Commission for the architectural, landscaping, and lighting design.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS: As granted by the powers and duties set forth in Section 2.2.6.C.6. of the Unified Development Ordinance, the Planning Commission has the authority to take the following actions with respect to this application:

1. Approve the application as submitted by the Applicant;
2. Approve the application with conditions; or
3. Deny the application as submitted by the Applicant.



REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS: Town Staff and the Planning Commission are required to consider the criteria set forth in Section 3.17.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance in assessing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness- HCO. These criteria are provided below followed by a Staff Finding based upon review of the application submittals to date.

1. Section 3.17.3.A. The proposed development must be in conformance with applicable landscaping, lighting, and architectural provisions provided in Article 5, Design Standards.

Finding. The project is located in the Village at Verdier PUD. There are specific design standards, established by the PUD which refer to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). As a result, the property is subject to the Town of Bluffton Highway Corridor Overlay District (HCO) and the design standards of the UDO which contains architectural, landscaping, and lighting design standards for properties located in the HCO.

- a) UDO Section 5.3.7.B.3.g. Landscaping Minimum Height. The minimum height of new shrubs used to create the buffer shall be at least 36 inches in height at the time of installation. Increase the height of the Encore Azalea, Wintergreen Boxwood, Vintage Jade Distylium, Yellow Anise, Ever Red Fringe Flower, and Sandankwa Viburnum to be no less than 36 inches in height at time of planting.
- b) UDO Section 5.4.3.A.1. General Principals. Architectural styles should be reflective of or compatible with architectural styles that exemplify the unique character of the Lowcountry region. The following items should be addressed to be more reflective of Lowcountry vernacular:
 - i. Roof mechanicals are shown on the A half of Building AB, however, no additional information has been provided regarding the roof mounted equipment to ensure it will not be visible above

- the parapet. Provide additional information or relocate to a service yard area.
- ii. The parapet on the right elevation is 3-feet lower than the left elevation. Revise side elevations to match in height.
 - iii. Wall mounted mechanical units are shown on the floor plans for Building AB on the front elevation, facing SC HWY 170. They are not visible on the elevations as drawn, but must be moved to a rear or side elevation.
- c) UDO Section 5.12.3.A.7. General Standards. A combination of pole, building, ground, and sign mounted lighting, including accent lighting, can be used to meet the lighting requirements. There are wall mounted lights on each of the building which do not appear to be incorporated into the illumination plan. Provide additional information to ensure the overall illumination levels remain within the permitted levels.
 - d) UDO Section 5.12.3.B.5. Light Fixtures. Lighting poles may not exceed a height of 20 feet. The Large Autobahn and Double Large Autobahn lights are proposed on 25-foot fiberglass poles. The pole height must be reduced to no more than 20 feet.
 - e) UDO Section 5.12.3.D. Illumination Levels. Commercial Parking Areas shall have a minimum level of 0.6 footcandles, average of 2.40 footcandles and maximum level of 10.0 footcandles. The proposed lighting plan indicates the maximum to be 9.6, which meets the requirement, however, the minimum of 0.0 footcandles and average level of 0.96 footcandles are both lower than required. A determination by the Planning Commission on the appropriateness of the deviation from the illumination level standards in Section 5.12.3.D.1 is requested.
 - f) UDO Section 5.14.3.B. Exterior materials and architectural elements. A material and color board has been provided for Building AB only, provide additional information for Buildings C,D,E and the Clubhouse, or revise existing to indicate it will apply to all buildings within the development.
 - g) UDO Section 5.14.3.B.3. Colors. Predominant color design shall be compatible with Lowcountry or coastal vernacular palette which include pale primary and secondary colors with less than 50 percent color value. The Light Reflectance Value for Sherwin Williams SW0068 Copen Blue is 60.37 percent, which exceeds that permitted for a primary color. Revise Copen Blue to a permitted color.
 - h) Site Design standards are found in Article 5 of the UDO. These standards are subject to review by the Town of Bluffton, and any modification to those standards after an approval for a Development Plan or Certificate of Appropriateness must be brought back for review. The following notes on the Landscape Plan indicate field changes and must be revised to indicate no changes to the approved plans may be made in the field without first receiving approval from the Town of Bluffton:

- i. Layout Note #8 relating to layout adjustments.
 - ii. Construction Note #7 relating to in field modifications.
 - iii. Planting Note #7 relating to the planting schedule.
 - iv. Fountain Note #1 relating to design.
2. Section 3.17.3.B. The proposed development shall be in conformance with any approved Development Agreement, PUD Concept Plan, PUD Master Plan, Subdivision Plan, or any other agreements or plans that are applicable.

Finding. The site is located within the Village at Verdier PUD Development Agreement and Concept Plan Area, the Village at Verdier Plantation Master Plan, and Car Village Development Plan (DP-08-22-017076).

- a) Village at Verdier PUD/PUD Concept Plan:
The Village at Verdier PUD refers to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) for development standards. See section one above for conformance with the design standards of the UDO.
- b) PUD Master Plan:
The proposed use is in accordance with the master plan, which identifies the site for Mixed Use Development.
- c) Development Plan:
The proposed project requires Development Plan approval from the Town of Bluffton. The Final Development Plan was brought before the Development Review Committee (DRC) on December 20, 2023, and comments were provided to the applicant. Town Staff is currently awaiting the submission resubmittal documents addressing DRC Conditions. All comments provided by the DRC must be addressed and the Final Development Plan approved prior to the issuance of this Certificate of Appropriateness - HCO. Should modifications to the Landscaping, Lighting or Architectural take place as a result of the Development Plan review, it may impact the COFA approval process.
- d) Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions:
The project is subject to the covenants, conditions, and restrictions for the Village at Verdier Plantation attached to the PUD documents. The covenants contain constraints on land uses, utilities, building restrictions, right of repurchase, and general provisions.

A letter indicating approval from the Seagrass Station Master Property Owners Association Inc has been provided as part of this submittal, however, there is an additional sentence which indicates an app to view the status of the architectural request. Should the POA have additional requirements, it is up to the Applicant to address those. Any changes would need to be resubmitted for review and approval by the Town of Bluffton.

3. Section 3.17.3.C. The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Application Manual.

a) *Finding.* The application has been reviewed by Town Staff and has been determined to be complete.

TOWN STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Town Staff finds that with the conditions noted below, the requirements of Section 3.17.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance will be met and recommends that the Planning Commission approve the application with the following conditions:

1. Per UDO Section 5.3.7.B.3.g., increase the height of the Encore Azalea, Wintergreen Boxwood, Vintage Jade Distylium, Yellow Anise, Ever Red Fringe Flower, and Sandankwa Viburnum to be no less than 36 inches in height at time of planting.
2. Per UDO Section 5.14.3.A., address the items to be more reflective of Lowcounty vernacular:
 - i. Relocate to a service yard or provide additional information regarding the roof mounted equipment on Building AB to ensure it will not be visible above the parapet.
 - ii. Revise the parapet on the side elevations of Building E to match in height.
 - iii. Relocate the wall mounted mechanical units shown on the floor plans for Building AB to the rear or side elevations and include them on the on the elevation drawings.
3. Per UDO Section 5.12.3.A.7., provide additional information regarding the wall mounted lights on each of the building to ensure the overall illumination levels remain within the permitted levels.
4. Per UDO Section 5.12.3.B.5., reduce the height of the Large Autobahn and Double Large Autobahn lights to no more than 20 feet.
5. A determination by the Planning Commission on the appropriateness of the deviation from the illumination level standards in Section 5.12.3.D.1 is requested.
6. Per UDO Section 5.14.3.B., provide a material and color board for Buildings C,D,E and the Clubhouse, or revise existing to indicate it will apply to all buildings within the development.
7. Per UDO Section 5.14.3.B.3., revise Copen Blue to a permitted color.
8. All comments provided by the DRC for the Final Development Plans must be addressed and approved prior to the issuance of the COA-HCOD approval.
9. Should the POA have additional requirements for the site, any modifications would need to be reviewed and approved by the Town of Bluffton prior to implementation.
10. Update the following notes on the Landscape Plan to indicate no changes to the approved plans may be made in the field without first receiving approval from the Town of Bluffton:
 - i. Layout Note #8 relating to layout adjustments.
 - ii. Construction Note #7 relating to in field modifications.
 - iii. Planting Note #7 relating to the planting schedule.
 - iv. Fountain Note #1 relating to design.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Application and Narrative
2. Landscape Plan
3. Lighting Plan
4. Architectural Plans
5. POA Letter
6. DRC Comments for Conceptual Submittal 10/4/2023