

TOWN COUNCIL



STAFF REPORT

Growth Management Department

MEETING DATE:	April 7, 2026
PROJECT:	Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the Town of Bluffton's Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23, Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), Article 4 - Zoning Districts and Article 5 – Design Standards to Establish a Planned Unit Development District for Village at Verdier (aka Seagrass Station) and Related Standards, and to Add Appendix B to Include any Standards from the Soon-to-Expire Village at Verdier Development Agreement
PROJECT MANAGER:	Kevin Icard, AICP Director of Growth Management

REQUEST: To provide direction on the process to expire the Village at Verdier Development Agreement and incorporate the Planned Unit Development (PUD) into the UDO. The Village at Verdier Development Agreement will expire on December 17, 2026.

BACKGROUND: The General Assembly adopted the South Carolina Local Government Development Agreement Act in 1993 S.C. Code Title 6, Chapter 31, § 6-31-10, et seq. The Act authorizes binding agreements between local governments and developers for the long-term development of large tracts of land. A development agreement gives a developer a vested right for the term of the agreement to process according to land use regulations in existence on the execution date of the agreement.

The original Village at Verdier Development Agreement was approved by Town Council on December 18, 2002, and first amended on April 12, 2011, and then again for a second amendment on January 10, 2017.

Original Agreement: The Agreement (2002) established a mixed-use development with 510 residential dwelling units and 200,000 square feet of commercial space for 10 years.

First Amendment: The first amendment to the Agreement (2011) altered the entitlements and dedications to the following.

- 404 residential dwelling units (RDUs).

- 404,000 square feet of commercial space.
- 30,000 square feet of civic use.
- Allocate five percent (5%) of the RDUs for affordable/workforce housing.
- Development standards governed by the UDO.
- Granted a Second Renewal Term for an additional five (5) years.

Second Amendment: The second amendment to the Agreement in 2017 amended the PUD Text and Master Plan to incorporate Health/Human Care as a Planning Area.

Tolling: In 2010 & 2013, SC State Acts 297 & 112 (respectively) provided an additional nine (9) years of tolling. With additional years, the Village at Verdier Development Agreement has been extended to December 17, 2026.

Development Rights: The Development Rights outlined in the agreement (first amendment) permitted 404 RDUs, 404,000 square feet of non-residential use, and 30,000 square feet of civic use. In 2018 (approximate), the Security Bank of Kansas City converted 108,000 SF of non-residential square footage to 54 RDUs. These RDUs were sold to ESA P Portfolio, LLC and were used for the construction of the Extended Stay America hotel, in conjunction with the 6 RDUs to create the 120-room hotel.

As the Development Agreement nears expiration, the remaining development rights include 9 RDUs to be dedicated to the workforce housing obligation and 30,582 SF of non-residential use will be transferred to the Town of Bluffton's Density Bank (See Attachment 1).

Town Staff are proposing to file a Notice of Expiration of the Development Agreement and incorporate language in the UDO to include the Village at Verdier PUD description and allowed densities per lot.

CONSIDERATIONS: Items for Town Council consideration include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Does Town Council want to move forward with amending the UDO to include provisions to incorporate the Village at Verdier PUD?

If so, Staff will move forward with preparing documentation to file a Notice of Expiration of the Development Agreement and incorporate the PUD into the UDO. Below is a tentative timeline:

- Town Council Workshop – 04/07/2026

- Planning Commission Workshop – 06/24/2026*
- Community Meetings (2) – TBD*
- Planning Commission Public Hearing & Recommendation – 08/26/2026*
- Town Council 1st Reading – 11/10/2026*
- Town Council 2nd Reading – 12/08/2026*

*Tentative dates subject to change

Attachments:

1. *Verdier Development Rights Calculations 2-23-2026*