

Brookhill

Special Exception Application Narrative SE 2023-_____

In connection with the approved zoning map amendment ZMA 201800020 (the “ZMA Application”), submitted by Riverbend Development (the “Applicant”), this Application for a Special Exception respectfully requests a waiver of the setback requirements of Section 4.19 of the Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance and the Brookhill Code of Development section 2.3.2.1, Lot Regulations and Setbacks for the Neighborhood Service Center, that would otherwise apply to certain four-story buildings proposed in the neighborhood service center sections of the development.

If approved, the Application would permit the parcel(s) subject to the Application (the “Property”), currently being developed as a mixed-use community known as “Brookhill” (the “Project”) a waiver of setback requirements for certain buildings within the neighborhood service center area. The Project proposes a maximum of 1550 residential units and up to 130,000 square feet of nonresidential with certain exemptions allowed. This request includes an exhibit showing the applicable building footprints, applicable setbacks and stepbacks, as well as some illustrative renderings of buildings within the neighborhood service center.

Several of the mixed-use buildings within the Project are proposed as four-story structures that include roof deck terraces and private amenity areas. Accordingly, each of the four-story buildings is subject to the County’s front setback requirement, which provides that for each story beginning above 40 feet in height, or for each story above the third story, whichever is less, the minimum setback shall be 15 feet unless reduced by special exception, Zoning Ordinance § 4.19.5.

The mixed-use buildings in the neighborhood service center are proposed to be built fronting on wide sidewalks, ranging from 11 to 19 feet in width, and the primary road frontages, with a right-of-way width of 109 feet. The 19-foot-wide sidewalk creates an already ample setbacks from the street, thus ensuring a pleasant experience for pedestrians, cyclists and visitors to the space. The buildings, as proposed, create an inviting pedestrian environment.

For each of the mixed use buildings that are proposed to be four stories, the Applicant requests a special exception to waive the front setback requirement that would otherwise apply to each of the buildings. The requested special exception will not result in the undesired “canyon” effect along public roads that Section 4.19 is designed to prevent.¹ The four-story buildings are set back at a generous distance from the road with ample sidewalk width and generous street front plantings, for a boulevard type experience. This proposal will provide a significant enhancement to the pedestrian experience along the Project frontage, which further reduces the need for the setback to be enforced on the buildings in the back of the Property.

In addition, if it were enforced, the front setback requirement would unnecessarily limit the residential and commercial square footage of the upper level of the building. In particular, it is

¹ The purpose of the setback rules was discussed during the public hearing at which the Board of Supervisors added Section 4.19 to the Zoning Ordinance. County Staff noted that Section 4.19 “avoids a ‘canyon’ effect.” Statement of Ron Higgins, Deputy Zoning Administrator, Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Hearing, June 3, 2015, at page 99.

important to have interior alignment of building systems when floors are stacked. The requested special exception therefore preserves living space square footage which is necessary to achieve a variety of unit sizes and bedroom counts within the Project. More spacious interior layouts benefit residents in denser urban areas. Given that strict enforcement of the setback requirement would inhibit residential and commercial layout options and that the applicant is only requesting 4 story buildings, it is appropriate to waive the requirement in light of the far greater public benefit that the Project would provide in the form of needed housing options at a high-density level in a strategic location in close proximity to the employment and retail areas.

Taken as a whole, the Project's design implements the Neighborhood Model Principle that recommends Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale. The building design will incorporate different materials, textures, and features to prevent massing that are inconsistent with a pleasant pedestrian perception of these places and spaces that activate the heart of the Brookhill community. In addition, the buildings will be subject to the review of the Architectural Review Board since the Project is located along an Entrance Corridor. The proposed design is also meant to foster a walkable and interactive commercial environment to support a strong sense of community among residents and visitors.

The Proposed Special Exceptions Supports the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan

Modifying the front setback requirement is consistent with the recommended future land use of the Property under the Comprehensive Plan. The Project is located in the Hollymead Places²⁹ Development Area and the area that is subject to this waiver is designated Urban Mixed Use. The Places²⁹ Master Plan supports buildings up to four stories. When placed in the context of the existing development in the surrounding area, the Project's proposal of four-story buildings is appropriate, designed, and at a density within the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, would efficiently use this Urban Mixed-Use land in a manner consistent with the Master Plan's guidelines.

The Applicant estimates that strict application of a 15-foot setback is unnecessary when one considers the width of the proposed sidewalk (11-19 feet) and the generous width of the right-of-way (109 feet) for this particular street frontage. An additional setback is also contrary to the design of the unit type anticipated for this site and would likely result in fewer overall units on this site and less consistency and efficiency for internal building systems. As a reduction in the number of residential units is contrary to the Comprehensive Plan's recommendation for the Property, a special exception from the setback is warranted. If the number of units were reduced as a result of the setback requirement, the Project would be far less effective in meeting the County's density and affordable housing goals. It would also impact the financial viability to construct the Project.

For these reasons, the Applicant requests a special exception from Section 4.19 as applied to the fronts from the proposed four-story residential buildings. The proposed height is consistent with the Master Plan's guidelines for this area of the County. Granting the requested special exception will further the goals of the Comprehensive Plan without creating any adverse impacts.



REVISIONS

DATE	REVISION DESCRIPTION
3/13/23	INITIAL SUBMITTAL

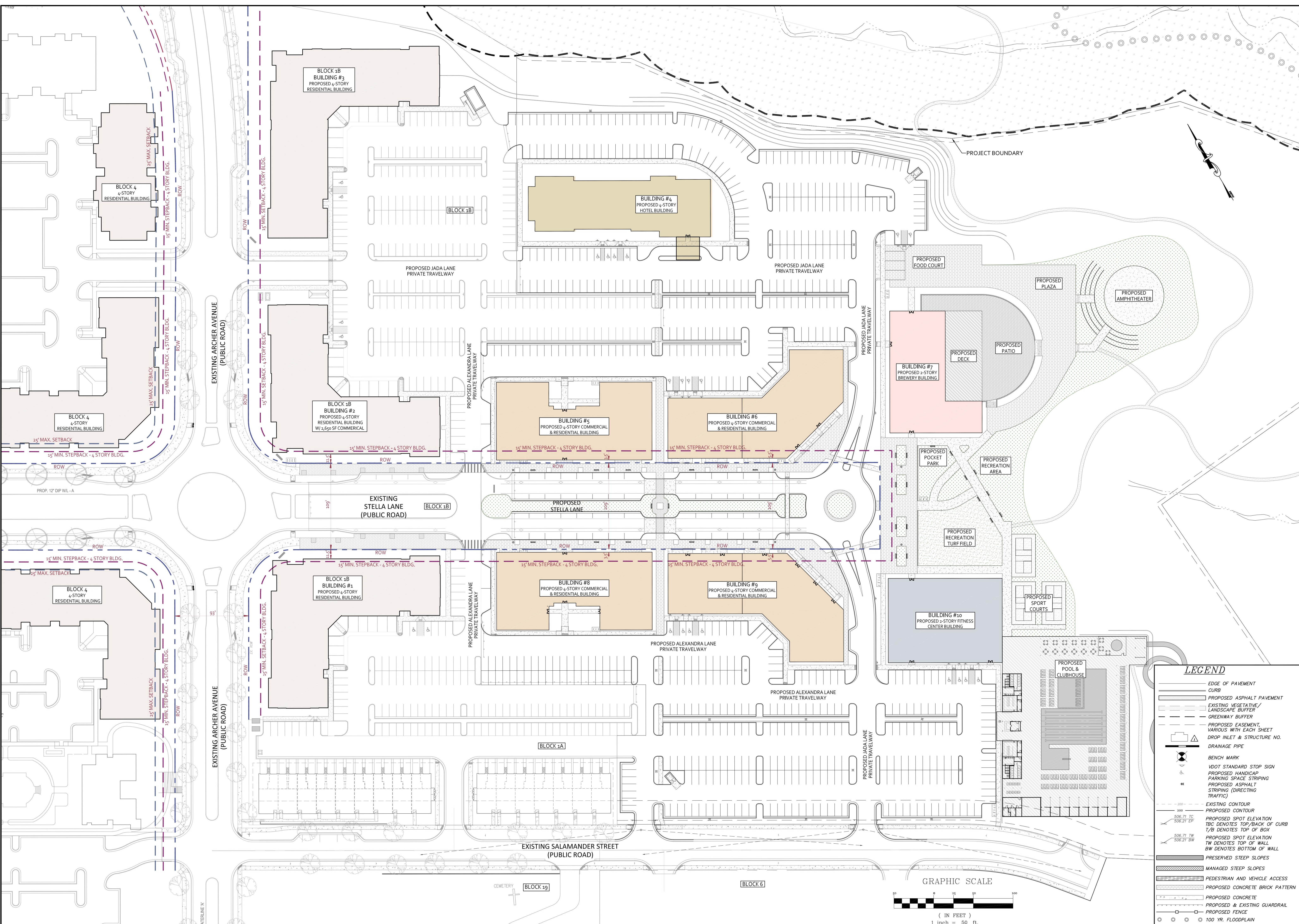
COLLINS ENGINEERING

200 GARRETT STREET, SUITE K-CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22902 -434.293.3719

BROOKHILL BLOCK 1D - FINAL SITE PLAN

OVERALL VILLAGE CENTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN - STEPBACK EXCEPTION EXHIBIT

PROJECT	SHEET
JOB NO. <i>182150</i>	
SCALE <i>1" = 50'</i>	
SHEET NO. <i>1 OF 1</i>	





FROM TRAFFIC CIRCLE

TWO STREET
STUDIO

BROOKHILL VILLAGE CENTER

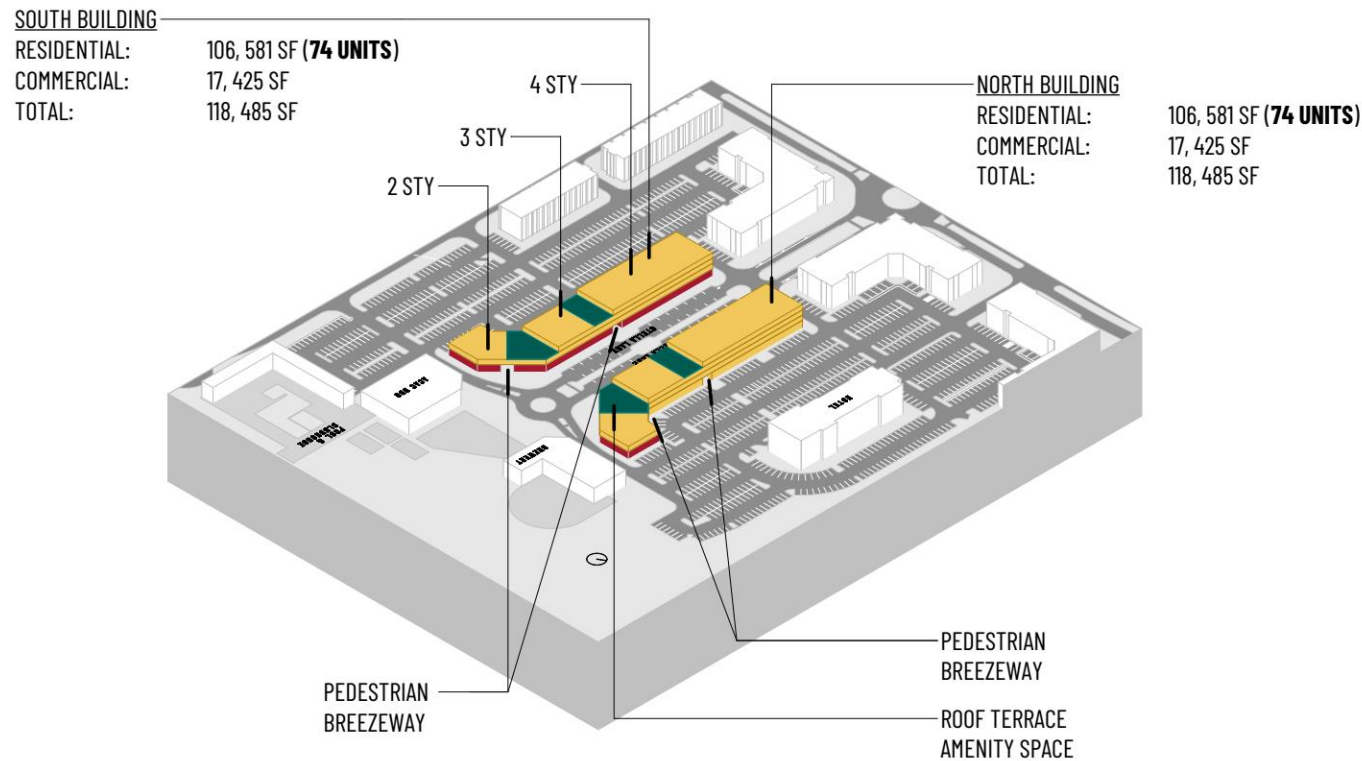
ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VA

RIVERBEND DEVELOPMENT, INC.

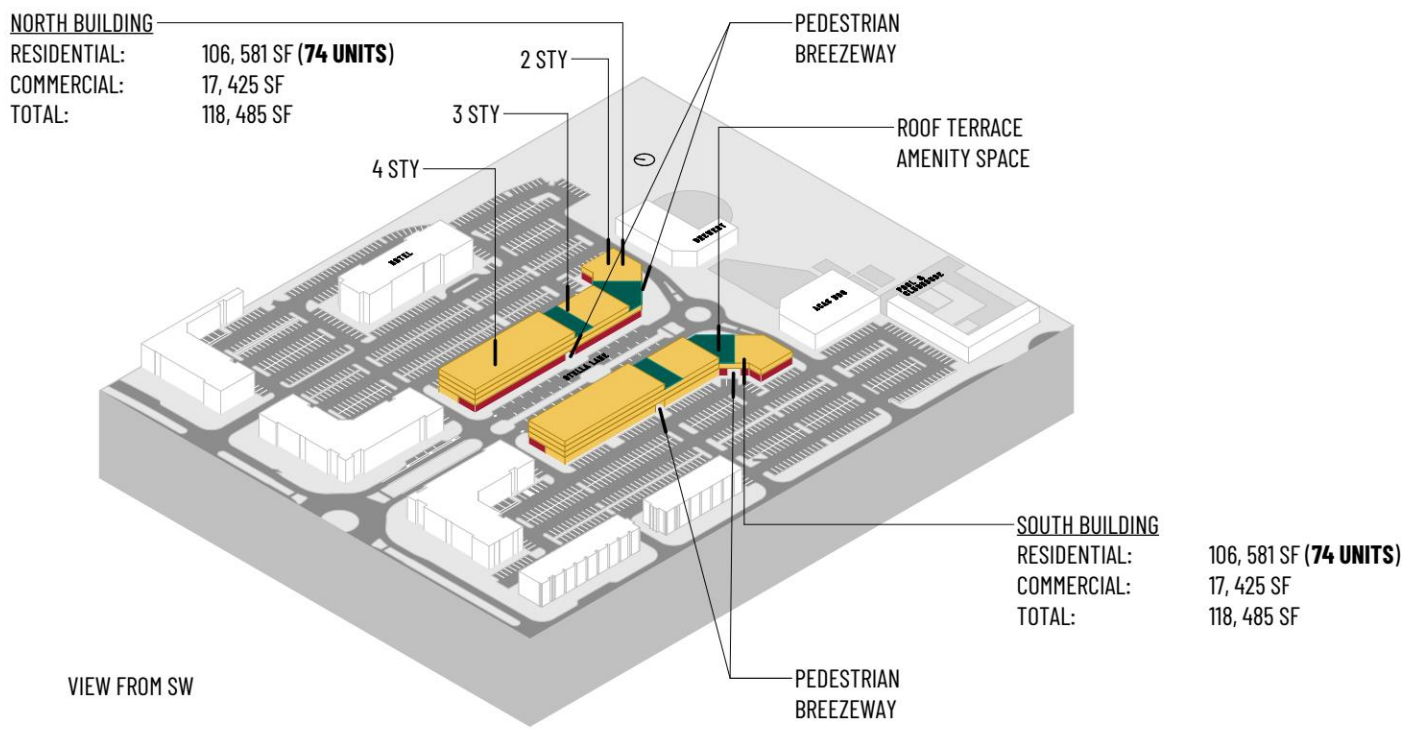
FEASIBILITY STUDY

22 MARCH 2023

BROOKHILL VILLAGE CENTER | MASSING



VIEW FROM NE



VIEW FROM SW

PARCEL INFORMATION

Address: Brookhill Village Center, Albemarle County, VA
Zoned: Neighbourhood Model Development District

NARRATIVE

Two Type VA buildings, each with a stepped up building form from 2 stories to 4 stories. First floor commercial and residential, upper floors residential. First floor has two 22'-wide breezeways in each building to enhance pedestrian connectivity to parking lots.

Residential amenity spaces located on the ground floor and on roof terraces on levels 3 & 4.

DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

Assumptions

Floor-to-floor Heights:	
L1	14'
L2-L4:	10'
Construction Type:	Type VA
All Stories Fully Sprinklered	

Building Area Break Down

Residential:	213, 162 SF (148 Units)
North Building:	106, 581 SF (74 Units)
South Building:	106, 581 SF (74 Units)

Commercial:	34, 850 SF
North Building:	17, 425 SF
South Building:	17, 425 SF

Parking Required:	460 Spaces
North Building:	230 Spaces
South Building:	230 Spaces

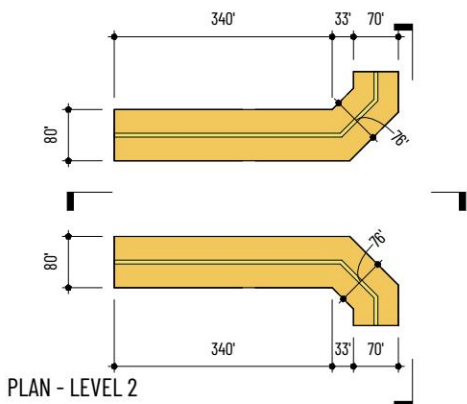
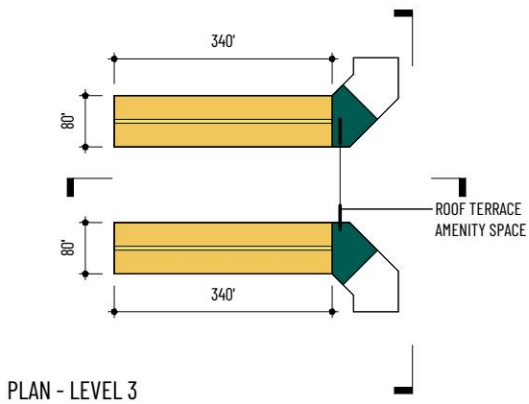
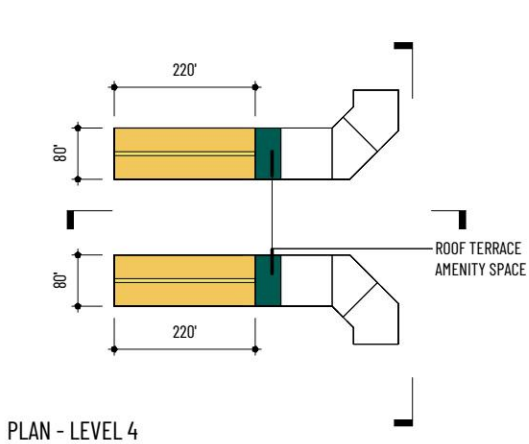
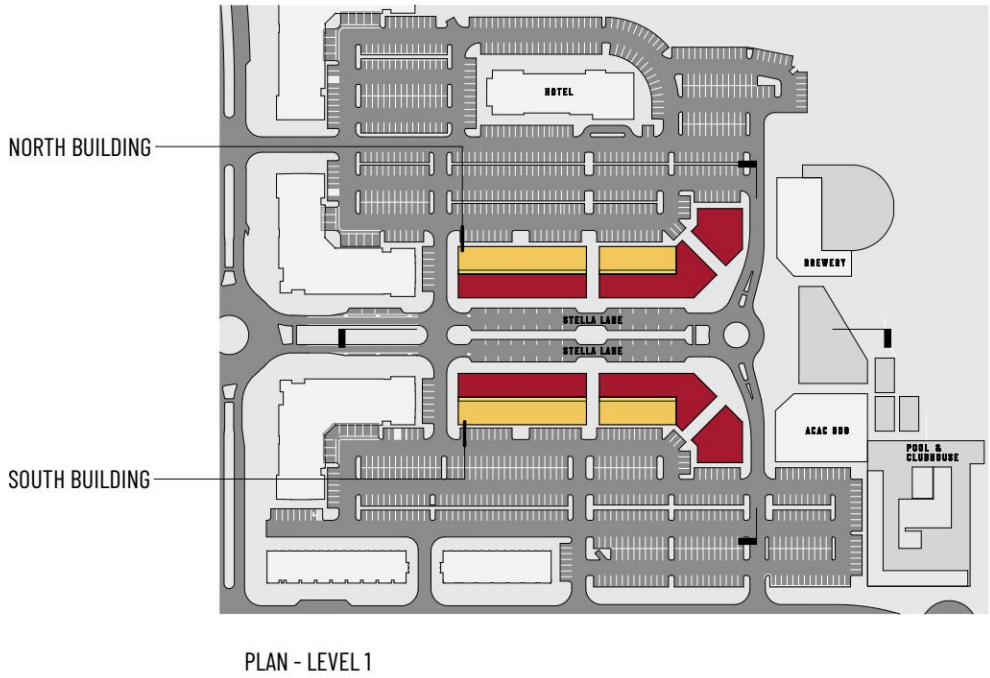
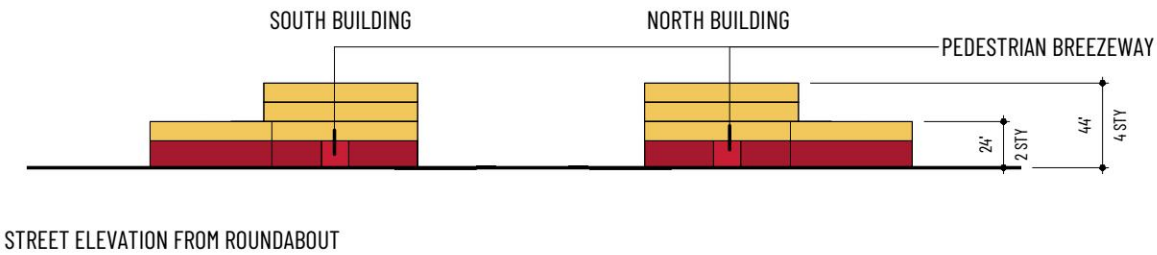
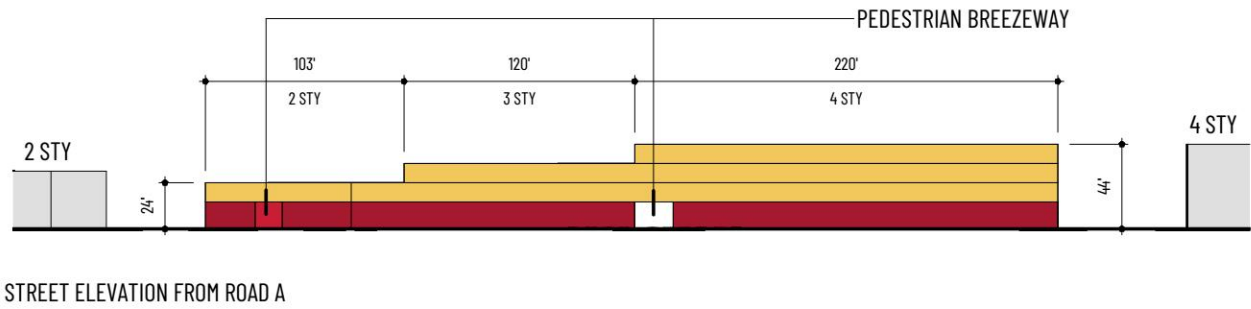
Totals

Total Building Area:	248, 081 SF
North Building:	124, 005 SF
South Building:	124, 005 SF
Building Height:	Stepped upwards from 2 Stories (24') to 4 Stories (44')

LEGEND

---	LOT LINE		PARKING
	RESIDENTIAL		OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE
	RESIDENTIAL - CORRIDOR		PARKING ENTRANCE/ EXIT
	COMMERCIAL		

BROOKHILL VILLAGE CENTER | MASSING



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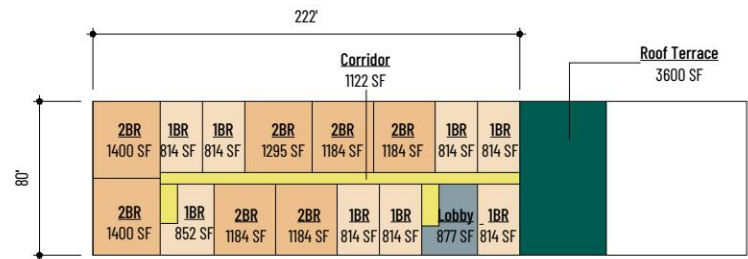
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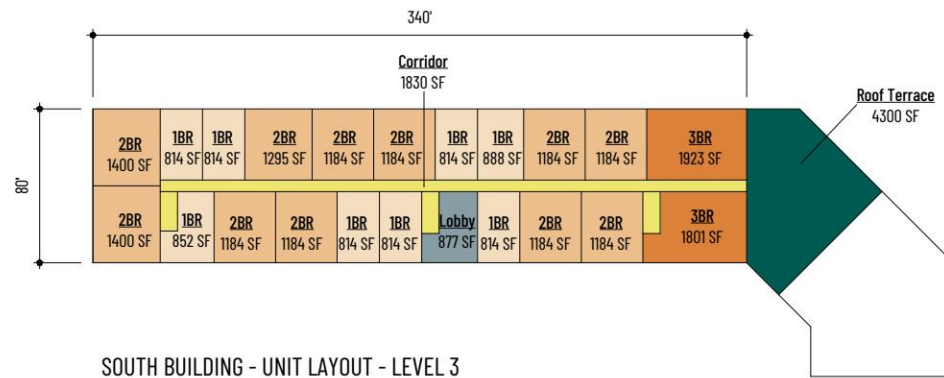
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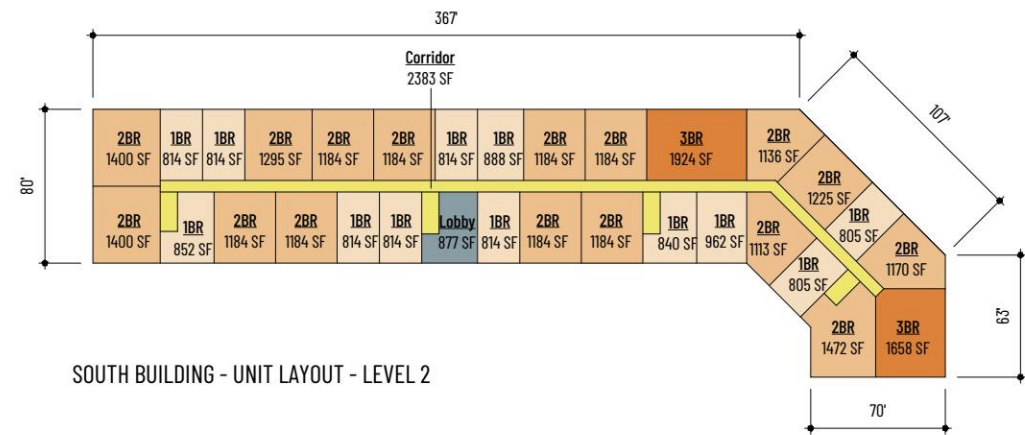
BROOKHILL VILLAGE CENTER | TYP. BUILDING UNIT LAYOUT



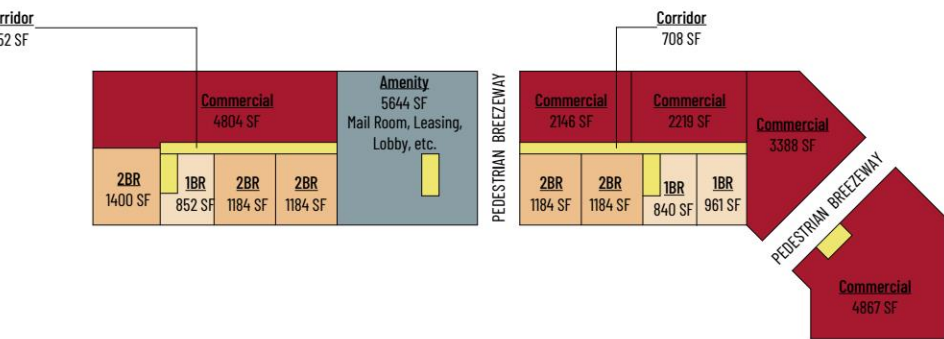
SOUTH BUILDING - UNIT LAYOUT - LEVEL 4



SOUTH BUILDING - UNIT LAYOUT - LEVEL 3



SOUTH BUILDING - UNIT LAYOUT - LEVEL 2



SOUTH BUILDING - UNIT LAYOUT - LEVEL 1

UNIT LAYOUT LEGEND

- 1BR
- 2BR
- Corridor
- Lobby
- Roof Terrace
- Stairs

UNIT LAYOUT LEGEND

- 1BR
- 2BR
- 3BR
- Corridor
- Lobby
- Roof Terrace
- Stairs

UNIT LAYOUT LEGEND

- 1BR
- 2BR
- 3BR
- Corridor
- Lobby
- Stairs

UNIT LAYOUT LEGEND

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- 2BR
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SOUTH BUILDING - UNIT AREA MATRIX					
Unit Breakdown				Parking Requirements	
Unit Type	Area (Min - Max)	Count	%	Parking Spaces/ Unit	Parking Spaces Required
1BR	805 SF ... 962 SF	31	41.89%	1.5	46.5
2BR	1113 SF ... 1472 SF	39	52.70%	2	78
3BR	1658 SF ... 1924 SF	4	5.41%	2	10
Total:		74	100.00%		134.5

SOUTH BUILDING - BUILDING AREA SUMMARY		
Use Type	Area	Parking Spaces Required
Commercial	17,425 SF	94.7
Residential	106,581 SF	134.5
Total:	124,005 SF	229.2

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