



County of Albemarle
Department of Community Development

To: Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
From: Cameron Langille
Date: December 15, 2021
Item: ZMA201900008 Rio Point (formerly Parkway Place)

BACKGROUND:

This rezoning application was first submitted on June 17, 2019. The applicant held an official community meeting with the Places29-Rio Community Advisory Committee on July 18, 2019. The Planning Commission first considered this application at a public hearing on March 10, 2020. A Board of Supervisors public hearing followed on June 3, 2020. During its public hearing, the Board voted to defer final action on the application at the request of the applicant.

The applicant has since revised the application to address concerns and comments from these public hearings. As revised, this application is now returning to the Board of Supervisors.

DISCUSSION:

This staff report focuses on the proposed changes to the application since the previous public hearing while also providing a brief summary of previous actions and related information.

The main concerns discussed at the Board of Supervisors' prior public hearing included impacts to transportation at several key intersections near the proposed project, especially John Warner Parkway/Rio Road E., Dunlora Drive/Rio Road E., and Dunlora Forest Drive/Rio Road E. The original proposal included two Green-T intersection improvements along Rio Road E. at the entrances to the development, in order to alleviate traffic congestion and enhance safety of vehicular travel.

At the time of the public hearing, several major improvements were under consideration at primary intersections along the corridor, as a response to the increased traffic congestion. One of the proposed improvements was a roundabout at the John Warner Parkway and Rio Road intersection, immediately adjacent to this proposed development. In order to determine the most appropriate solutions to improve traffic along Rio Road, a comprehensive corridor study was recommended. Funding for the proposed roundabout has now been approved through the state's smart scale application system and the corridor study is underway.

The current applicant for the project has revised the Application Plan and Proffers to address earlier concerns of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The following is a summary of changes made since the prior public hearing. The proposed changes are further discussed in the applicant's narrative in Attachment E2:

Proffers:

1. Property owner names have been updated on the first page of the proffer statement.
2. Reference to the Green-T intersection improvements have been removed from proffer 1a. The Green-T intersection improvements along Rio Road E. are no longer proposed.
3. Proffer 1a has been revised to update the acreage of land being dedicated along Rio Road E. from 1.0 acres to 0.82 acres.

4. Proffer 1b has been updated to state that the developer would provide a \$750,000 cash contribution to go toward funding the construction of a roundabout located at the intersection of John Warner Parkway/Rio Road E. Proffer 1b also states that the cash contribution would be provided no later than five years following the approval of ZMA201900008.
5. Proffer 1c has been added to identify the transportation improvements, such as turn lanes, that would be provided into the development along Rio Road E.
6. Proffer 2a has been updated to specify a minimum number of parking spaces and other features required within the 1.1-acre public park at the corner of John Warner Parkway/Rio Road E.
7. Proffer 2b has been updated to specify a timing trigger for dedication of the 1.1-acre public park at the corner of John Warner Parkway/Rio Road E.
8. Proffer 3b has been updated to specify a timing trigger for providing a cash contribution in lieu of providing the transit stop.

Application Plan:

1. Application Plan notes (Sheet 2) have been revised to remove redundant notes for site plan and subdivision requirements.
2. The total amount of open space provided has increased from 12.99 acres to 15.6 acres. Additional common open space within the development would be provided, and 0.12 acres would now be dedicated to public use to become part of the John Warner Parkway greenway.
3. The total number of building envelopes within the development has been reduced from ten to nine. Four interior building envelopes were shown on original application plan and those envelopes have been reoriented so that there are now only three internal building envelopes.
4. Internal open space areas for active recreation and the pool/clubhouse have been brought closer together.
5. Internal vehicular travel ways and parking areas have been reconfigured to follow the new interior building layout.
6. The frontage improvements sheet has been updated so that the Green-T intersections are no longer shown along Rio Road E.
7. A northbound left-turn lane into the southern entrance to the development along Rio Road E. has been added to the transportation improvements sheet (Sheet 4).
8. Two southbound right-turn lanes along Rio Road E. at the entrances to the development have been added to the transportation improvements sheet (Sheet 4).
9. The conceptual location of the roundabout at the intersection of John Warner Parkway and Rio Road E. is now shown.
10. Recreational space requirement calculations have been added to Sheet 2.
11. The grading plan has been updated to show revised grading within the site.

STAFF ANALYSIS OF RIO POINT APPLICATION

The major elements of the Rio Point application remain unchanged from the original Parkway Place proposal. The Rio Point application maintains the same number of dwelling units, density, and general layout as the original proposal. These items were, and remain, consistent with the land use goals of the Places29 Master Plan and the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Rio Point application maintains consistency with the County's affordable housing policy, as well as recommendations related to parks and green systems.

The revisions made to the Rio Point application pertain primarily to streets and transportation improvements. Transportation concerns were the primary reason for the initial staff recommendation to deny the original Parkway Place proposal. Albemarle County has since

engaged a traffic engineering consultant to conduct Phase 1 of the Rio Road Corridor Transportation Study, which is a substantial change in circumstance from when the application first went before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors in 2020. The transportation issues that resulted in staff's initial recommendation of denial have been evaluated extensively by the County, the County's consultant, and VDOT over the past year.

The corridor study has confirmed that a roundabout at the intersection of John Warner Parkway/Rio Road E. would be the most suitable solution for addressing existing traffic congestion and delays for vehicular turn movements on streets surrounding the Rio Point project. Furthermore, even after factoring in the additional vehicle trips that would be generated by Rio Point and surrounding developments, the transportation study indicated that the roundabout would be fully capable of handling this increased traffic volume. The traffic study also concluded that the Green-T intersections proposed by the original Parkway Place proposal would be unnecessary.

Most importantly, the roundabout application through VDOT's Smart Scale has been awarded funding with an anticipated start date for the P&E phase in 2023. The revised Rio Point application offers a \$750,000 proffer to help finance completion of the roundabout.

In summary, the County has been able to evaluate the larger transportation network in the vicinity of this project over the past year. Solutions have been identified and significant progress has been made toward implementing transportation improvements that would alleviate traffic issues. These issues had been the major unfavorable factors that had resulted in staff's initial recommendation to deny the original proposal. Resolutions to these issues are underway.

Staff believes that the two remaining unfavorable factors are relatively minor, and neither warrants a recommendation to deny the current application. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the revised Rio Point application.

UPDATED FACTORS:

The earlier factors favorable and unfavorable have been updated below. New or revised factors are shown in *italics*, and factors now addressed are shown in ~~strike through~~.

Factors Favorable:

1. The rezoning request is consistent with most of the future land use recommendations within the Places29 Master Plan, including recommended residential density. The proposed roadway improvements are consistent with the Rio Road E. recommended future cross section in the Places29 Master Plan. This will expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure at a major intersection in the Rio Magisterial District.
2. The request is consistent with the majority of the Neighborhood Model principles.
3. The proposed development will provide a new public park trailhead with parking and outdoor amenities that will benefit all members of the community and expand access to the John Warner Parkway greenway system.
4. The proposed development will provide 15% affordable housing units as recommended by the County's Housing Policy.
5. The proposal includes proffers to enhance access to transit services.
6. *Additional turn lanes and road widening along Rio Road E. would expand the street infrastructure beyond its current capacity and would provide increased traffic flow and safety for all drivers traveling through the corridor.*
7. *The Rio Road Corridor Study has been initiated and is nearing completion. The study has concluded that a roundabout is the most suitable solution for managing transportation movements at the intersection of John Warner Parkway/Rio Road E. The developer is offering a \$750,000 cash contribution toward its construction. This roundabout has also been selected for funding through the state's smart scale system.*

Factors Unfavorable:

1. The request does not provide a complete mix of uses that meets the definition of a Neighborhood Service Center as recommended by the Places29 Master Plan.
- ~~2. Delay times at some nearby intersections will be increased even with the proposed road improvements.~~
- ~~3. Board and Planning Commission requested Corridor Study of Rio Road has not yet been funded or initiated.~~
- ~~4. Final improvement concepts, design and funding are not currently in place for problematic intersections in relatively close proximity to this development, including John Warner Parkway/Rio Road E., Belvedere Blvd/Rio Road E., Pen Park Rd./Rio Road E, and Pen Park Ln/Rio Road E.~~
5. The project is located outside of a Priority Area for development and infrastructure development as identified in the Comprehensive Plan/Places29 Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve ZMA201900008.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attach. E2 – Rio Point Project Narrative (*dated June 17, 2019, last revised June 7, 2021*)
2. Attach. E3 – Rio Point Application Plan (*dated April 2, 2021, last revised June 4, 2021*)
3. Attach. E4 – Rio Point Proffer Statement (*dated August 3, 2021*)

LINKS TO PREVIOUS PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTIONS:

Planning Commission Public Hearing Staff Report and Board of Supervisors Transmittal Summary: [June 3, 2020](#)

Planning Commission: [Action Memo](#) from March 10, 2020

Planning Commission: [Minutes](#) from March 10, 2020

Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: [Video](#) from June 3, 2020

Board of Supervisors: [Action Memo](#) from June 3, 2020