



August 20, 2018 (Resubmission 11/19/2018)

### **Ecovillage Charlottesville – Special Use Permit Application**

This request is for a special use permit in an R-4 zoning district to allow for disturbance of preserved slopes for a private accessway in accordance with Section 18-30.7(4)(b)(2).

#### **Project Overview:**

**Parcel:** TMP 61-210

**Existing Zoning:** R-4 Residential

**Steep Slopes:** Steep Slopes – Managed, Steep Slopes - Preserved

**Total Acreage:** 6.518 AC

**Comp Plan Designation:** Neighborhood Density Residential (3-6 DUA)

**Requested Zoning:** Special Use Permit per Sec. 30.7.4(2) to allow for disturbance of preserved slopes for a private accessway

#### **Project Proposal**

*'We envision humanity living in a peaceful, healthy, joyful, sustainable, just, compassionate and very alive world. We envision people living intentional, passionate, and compassionate lives that nurture themselves, others, and the earth.'*  
– Ecovillage Charlottesville Vision Statement

Ecovillage is a unique and innovative subdivision development, that is looking to promote appropriate density, pedestrian friendly access, and community oriented housing within the development areas of Albemarle County. The proposal is for 36 units on a 6.518 AC parcel. A special use permit to allow disturbance of steep slopes (preserved) is requested to allow for a new entrance to be located at a safe distance along Rio Road East. The layout of the development provides for pedestrian oriented streetscape frontage for the homes by locating all vehicular traffic and parking areas along the outer rim of the development. A network of pedestrian paths weave through the development, promoting connectivity and walkability across the site's 70 FT elevation change. Granting of this request will allow Ecovillage to develop in a manner that is appropriately scaled, cognizant of the safety of residents and guests when accessing the site, and primarily pedestrian where vehicles are secondary to the internal pedestrian connections.

The property has 18,609 SF of managed steep slopes and 56,871 SF of preserved slopes. To develop this property at a density that is appropriate, efficient for the development areas, and provide a safe point of access, the preserved slopes are projected to be disturbed.

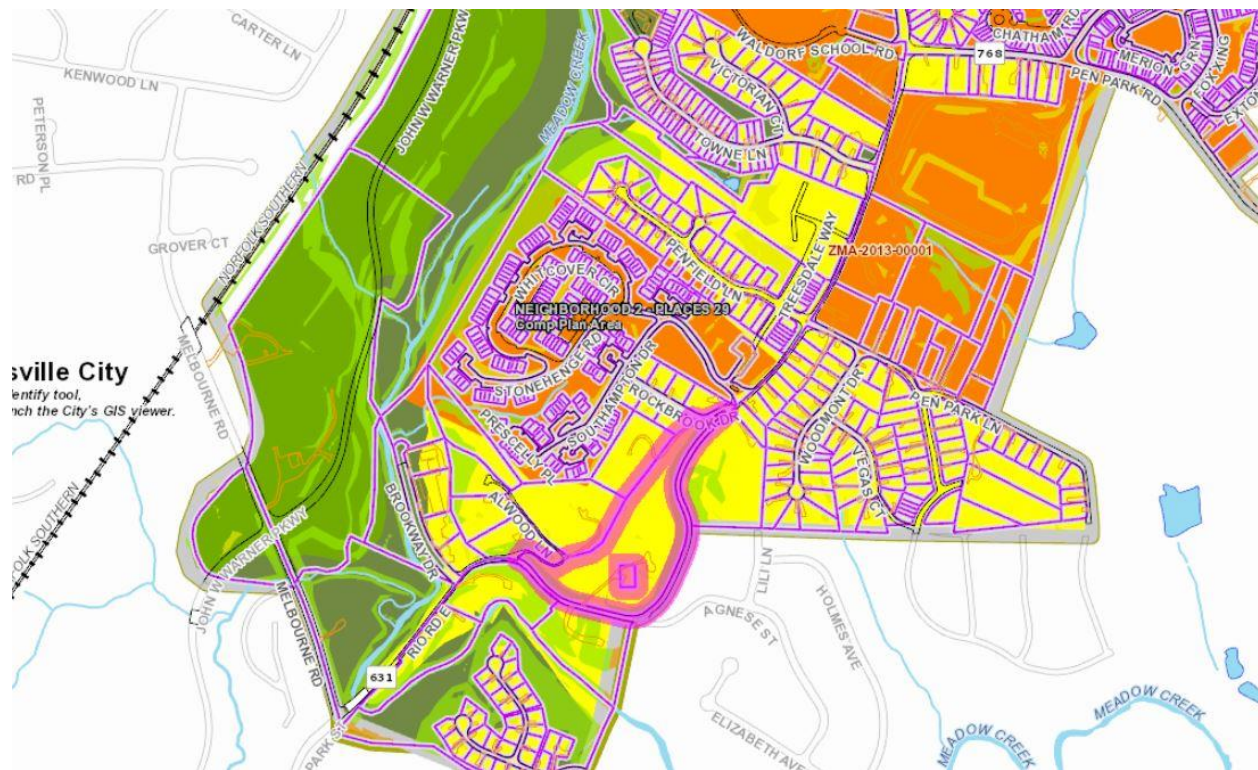
#### **Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan**

Ecovillage development will comply with the Comprehensive Plan in a number ways including:

- The site is located in the Places 29 development area and designated as “Neighborhood Density Residential” in the Comprehensive Plan. Places 29 envisions density for the area at 3-6 units per acre, consisting of single-family homes and townhomes.
  - Ecovillage fits into the “Neighborhood Density Residential” vision by providing approximately 5.5 dwelling units per acre, through a mixture of single-family homes and townhomes.
  - Ecovillage will contribute to a variety of housing types in the development areas by having both attached townhomes, affordable units, and detached single-family residences.
  - Ecovillage explicitly contributes to the expectations that the Development Areas will “[promote] density to help create new compact urban neighborhoods” and will have “preserved natural systems” (Alb Co. Comprehensive Plan 8.3).
  - By reaching a density of approximately 5.5 units per acre, Ecovillage will be utilizing the land efficiently as to not prevent expansion of the Development Area in accordance with Objective 4 and 5 of the Development Area goals.
  
- Ecovillage excels at meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Objective of the Development Areas, by carefully considering the site and design to promote a healthy lifestyle.
  - Ecovillage is organized in two community clusters, an outcome of terracing the site in response to topographic considerations.
  - The homes are spaced at a width of approximately 40’-50’ between building facades to provide a more human scale to the streets.
  - The proposed pedestrian streets provides sense of safety and community connectivity throughout the neighborhood. The pedestrian pathways also serve as fire access.
  - The parking has been located at the periphery of the site, to highlight pedestrian connectivity within and between the homes.
  - The arrangement of the homes mix all housing types to promote a mixed and diverse community, rather than grouping all townhomes or single-family dwellings in isolated areas.
  - At the heart of Ecovillage is a community center and open space area. The community center acts socially as a hub for community activity, and physically as a bridge between the two residential areas, inviting connectivity/mingling across the development.

By providing the density the Comprehensive Plan calls for, integrated pedestrian connections, and considerate site design Ecovillage is going beyond meeting a public need and providing a new model for housing in Albemarle. All the elements of Ecovillage work to add up to promote a model for healthy, sustainable, and compassionate lifestyle.

## Description of Surrounding Properties



The Site is located adjacent to Rio Road E and the surrounding context is primarily single-family (Rockbrook Dr) and townhomes (Southampton Dr) residential. The site is in close proximity to the Meadow Creek greenway, and the character of this development will serve to compliment both the natural systems and connectivity of the greenway and the existing residential areas by developing in a manner that is respectful of existing topography and environmental resources and by developing at an appropriate density for the development areas.

### Impacts on Public Facilities & Public Infrastructure

Ecovillage will add considerably less impervious area after construction than traditional Single family dwelling development, and will take steps to use/reuse and retain water on site. Stormwater detention pipes are located under the proposed parking to best use the topographic challenges and provide required parking quantity and slopes.

Walkways through the development allow for pedestrian passage across an otherwise dangerous sidewalk condition along Rio Road East. Connectivity is central to the Ecovillage development, with serpentine paths winding through pedestrian streets and connector walkways across the sites. The pedestrian streets will be designed to meet fire access requirements.

### Impacts on Environmental Features

The preserved slopes associated with the Ecovillage site were previously bisected by Rio Road East, cutting through the steep slopes between Meadow Creek and the Ecovillage site. The existing condition of Rio Road East having disturbed the continuity of the slopes may call into question if the nature of the existing slopes on the Ecovillage site meet the purpose and intent of 30.7.1 of the County ordinance. As the preserved slopes on the Ecovillage site are part of an earlier disturbance.

Ecovillage will impact environmental features, but has taken care with the design and consideration of the context to design an appropriate entrance and avoid detrimental effects (30.7.1). The 6.518 AC site presents topographic challenges including preserved slopes bordering the site, as well as a 70 FT grade change. In total the project proposes to disturb approximately 9,777 SF of preserved slope of approximately 56,872 SF existing on site. The disturbed slopes will accommodate a new entrance, parking, and adequate travelway widths along an existing structure. Through thoughtful design and onsite stormwater facilities the development looks to be respectful of adjacent parcels during and after disturbance of slopes as to not cause any detrimental effects.

- The proposed entrance from Rio Road East is inadequate to meet VDOT standards, considering the additional traffic from the development, the current speed limit, and the required site distances.
  - In order to meet current standards, the entrance will be moved west along Rio Road East.
  - In order to appropriately locate the entrance a left and right-turn warrant analysis for Ecovillage has been performed off of Rio Road East between NCL Charlottesville and Pen Park Road (please see attached documentation Exhibit B).
- A historic house on the property is proposed to remain, which will provide tourist lodging. In order to fit the travelway, ROW, and required setbacks between the existing structure and the preserved slopes we propose to narrowly infringe on the top of the slopes. The additional space will allow for required spacing, but primarily allow the vehicular road to remain on the periphery of the site and allow the preservation of the existing house.
- The parking areas for the residents only impacts minor areas of preserved slopes, approximately 766 SF.

Ecovillage seeks to adhere conditions outlined in Sec 15.4.1 "Environmental Standards," by preserving ten (10) to nineteen (19) percent of the existing wooded area of the site. Existing woodland on the western and northern corners will be preserved, as well as all wooded areas on undisturbed slopes. Total undisturbed woodland/area is 49,237 SF or 17% of the site.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via e-mail at [Peter@shimp-engineering.com](mailto:Peter@shimp-engineering.com) or Justin Shimp at [Justin@shimp-engineering.com](mailto:Justin@shimp-engineering.com) or by telephone at 434-227-5140.

Sincerely,

Peter Russell  
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