

ZMA202000057
PREMIER APARTMENTS
405 Premier Circle
September 21, 2020

Special Exception Application Narrative

On behalf of Piedmont Housing Authority (“PHA” or the “Applicant”) and Virginia Supportive Housing (“VSH”), the developer, we respectfully request a special exception from the requirement that each Neighborhood Model Development (NMD) have at least two housing types. This requirement, which is set out in Zoning Ordinance Section 20A.8(a), allows the Board of Supervisors to waive this requirement if the proposed NMD is an infill project or at least two housing types are already present within one-quarter mile of the proposed district. Among the different housing types listed in this Section 20A.8(a) are single family attached, multifamily dwellings, and special needs housing such as assisted living facilities, group homes, and skilled nursing facilities. An “infill project” is defined as “a project in which a parcel is developed or redeveloped, where abutting or nearby parcels are already developed, and the project area is relatively small compared to the developed abutting or nearby parcels.” The Property, described and defined below, is an infill redevelopment project.

This Application is submitted in connection with a Zoning Map Amendment application that proposes to rezone County Tax Map parcel 061M0-00-00-00600 (the “Property”), from C-1 Commercial to NMD, to allow for the development of multi-family supportive housing and office uses (the “Project”). The Project proposes a maximum of 140 residential apartment units and 20,000 non-residential. As described in more detail in the Code of Development and as shown on the Concept Plan, dated September 21, 2020, prepared by Timmons Group and BRW Architects, the Project will comprise three buildings on the 3.75 acre parcel. Block One will contain a two-story non-residential building, which could include second floor apartments. Block Two will include the four-story VSH building containing approximately 80 studio apartments and the 3- and 4-story PHA building containing approximately 60 apartments, to be a mix of one-, two-, and potentially 3-bedroom apartments.

All units in Block Two will be affordable housing. The studio apartments in the VSH building will house formerly homeless residents, who are single with no children, and will be rented at rates affordable to those earning 50% AMI or less. The PHA building may be designed to house families and is currently planned to include approximately 80% two-bedroom units, 20% one-bedroom and a maximum of five percent (5%) three-bedroom units. The exact rental level of the PHA building is dependent on the final financing structure but will be within the range of affordability to those earning 30% to 80% AMI. Both buildings, therefore, will be 100% affordable rental units and are properly classified as multifamily, though both are intended to address special housing needs. In particular, the VSH building may be properly classified as a “special needs housing” since VSH does offer services to its residents.

The single-family detached community, Berkeley, located on Commonwealth Drive and Commonwealth Circle, abuts the Property to the north, and these residences are within one-quarter mile of the Project.

Though, initially, the Project envisions the front building on Route 29 to be a commercial building for office use, the Code of Development, in compliance with the Places29 Land Use Designation Table for areas around centers, permits residential uses on the upper floor as long as maximum dwelling units per acre are maintained within the Project.

If the Community Development Department concludes that the Project does not meet the two-housing types requirements, the Applicant requests a special exemption for such requirement and submits that providing the special exemption to such requirement would not frustrate the purposes of Section 20A.8(a), the Places29 Master Plan, or the Neighborhood Model Principles.

The Project will be phased to allow formerly homeless to reside in the existing Red Roof Inn during development and construction of the VSH building in Phase One and, possibly, during a portion of the development and construction of the PHA building in Phase Two. Prior to rezoning, the Project will contain another housing type, transient lodging, managed by the Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition for the Homeless (TJACH). Upon rezoning approval, the Project would host these residents for stays longer than 30 days in the existing hotel buildings as multifamily units. Many or all of these residents will move into the VSH building upon its completion.

In summary, though all residential units within the Project may be technically described as multifamily, their various purposes comply with the spirit of the Ordinance to provide housing for many different needs. All units, whether managed by TJACH, VSH, or PHA, would be affordable units.

The Proposed Special Exception Supports the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan

Waiving the multiple housing types requirement is consistent with the recommended future land use of the Property under the Comprehensive Plan. The Project is located in the Development Area and, by reference to other zoning districts in the development area, is designated for a maximum of 34 dwelling units per acre (DUA). Multifamily is the most efficient means of providing the maximum number of affordable units, a goal of the County's Comprehensive Plan. In order to maximize the efficiency of the development and further the County's goal of increasing the availability of affordable housing, the Applicant is requesting 37 DUA.

Because multifamily is suitable and appropriate for the Property location, single-family detached is well within one quarter mile from the Project, and the Project is an infill redevelopment that will provide up to 140 units of affordable housing to the County, the Applicant requests a special exception Zoning Ordinance Section 20A.8(a). We submit that granting the requested special exception will further the goals of the Comprehensive Plan without creating significant detriments to County residents.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.