



## **Hickory Ridge Village Center Community Plan Statement of Justification**

### **Vison for Hickory Ridge:**

In keeping with the original intent for the design and purpose of Columbia village centers, the Hickory Ridge Village Center (“Village Center”) will be a place for public enjoyment, social gathering and daily retail needs. The redeveloped Village Center is envisioned to be the heart of the entire Hickory Ridge Village (“Village”) and welcoming to all its residents and guests. Central to this purpose and role as a civic place, the Village Center will feature a new Village Green defined by buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets and comfortable sidewalks. The addition of a new residential component adds to the diversity of lifestyle choices and vitality to the Village in general and to the Village Center specifically. The architecture expresses a forward-thinking design yet complementary to the existing Village Center buildings. The landscape approach, like the architecture borrows from the notion of “village” expressed in the form and materials. The renewed Village Center will serve the needs of the Village and those of future residents to come.

### **Description of the Redevelopment Proposal:**

The proposed Village Center design will have the following program elements:

- The Giant grocery store along with the integral in-line retail will remain. However, the roof-line will be replaced and the color changed to a neutral earth tone. In addition, the surface parking will be re-oriented so that it is closer to the front door of the Giant and provides better visibility and access.
- A new 230-unit apartment building with ground floor retail and wrapped structured parking.
- Three new multi-tenant retail buildings that will have both better visibility and closer access to parking.
- The total retail area including the Giant building is 105,100 square feet.
- A freestanding bank building with drive through. This is a consolidation of an existing remote drive-through and an existing bank user within the Giant building and helps separate a vehicular-oriented service from the pedestrian core of the Village Center.
- A small retail addition proposed at the northeast corner of the Giant building.
- A reconfigured Village Green and addition of a pedestrian connection through the retail buildings for enhanced connectivity, visibility, and ease of access.
- Enhanced pedestrian-oriented streetscape along two important drives with on-street parking.
- Buffer landscape plantings.

### **Conformance with the Community Plan:**

The guidance in the *Hickory Ridge Village Center Community Plan* (Plan) is intended to establish a framework to evaluate redevelopment proposals for the Village Center. The proposed Village Center redevelopment is in substantial conformance with the guidance. The recommendations in the Plan are organized into four sections as follows:

#### **1. Village Center Boundaries and Existing Conditions**

The Plan delineates a boundary proposed for the Village Center area. The Plan refers to the Village Center proper as the retail core or Area A.

- *The proposed redevelopment is within the boundaries identified in the Plan.*

## **2. Goals, Planning Concepts and Land Use Recommendations**

The general overall recommendation includes the protection and enhancement of the retail core and recognizes that this core is the center of the Village. The Plan recommends the setbacks along Cedar Lane may be minimal for buildings to front and frame Cedar Lane. The Plan recommends additional legible signage along Cedar Lane to identify the retail core. The Plan further recommends a maximum building height of three stories (36 feet) and freestanding communication towers should not be permitted.

- *The proposed Village Center design maintains the retail core and provide for building edges on Cedar Lane to frame the street.*
- *The proposed residential building height will be a maximum of four stories with the majority at 45 feet and a portion above the ground floor retail at 55 feet. The proposed height is compatible with the perceived height of the Sunrise Senior Living building and appropriate with the scale of buildings along a major thoroughfare.*
- *No freestanding communication towers are proposed.*

The Plan has specific land use recommendations for Area A. Residential uses in a mixed-use scenario are permitted as a secondary use to the retail. The Plan does not permit single-family (attached or detached) residential within Area A. Pad sites are discouraged since they distract from the retail core. Shared parking and enhancements to the pedestrian network are encouraged.

- *The proposed Village Center maintains the retail components as the primary use. The new residential building is part of a mixed-use building with ground floor retail. No single family residential is proposed.*
- *A small freestanding bank building is proposed in the northeast part of the main parking field. The bank use with a drive-through will not detract from the core retail uses found near the Village Green. This new bank space is a consolidation of the existing bank and drive-through use within the Village Center and helps separate a vehicular-oriented use from the pedestrian experience.*
- *Enhanced streetscape is proposed within the new Village Center as well as on-site improvements to the existing pedestrian network to increase connectivity both within the Village Center and to the greater Village community.*

## **3. Design Concepts**

The Plan identifies several signature elements within the existing Village Center including the “Avenue”, the light-colored brick facades, the green metal roof, the yellow awnings, the diamond motif and the sunken stage area. The Plan suggests that any redevelopment proposed should be compatible with the existing architecture. However, the Plan was amended in 2016 to include language recognizing the consideration of “a more updated design scheme” providing they are remain compatible with the other buildings (Sunrise Senior Living and the Goddard School).

- *The proposed architectural design reinterprets the more distinctive elements of the existing buildings and metaphorically borrows from Howard County’s rich agrarian past. The new retail buildings will retain a simple form and utilize a similar material palette to blend the new with the existing.*
- *The alee of trees found along the Avenue has been extended to form an edge of a new Village Green. This public open space is an important space for social gathering in the Village Center and will allow flexible space for special events programming as well as daily use for Village Center visitors and Village residents alike.*
- *The standing-seam metal roof on the existing Giant building will be replaced with a new roof with a more neutral earth tone. The roof type and form will remain largely the same*

*with the exception of a squaring off to better flow with the overall design of the Village Center and create a more cohesive look.*

The Plan recommends additional identification signage located on Cedar Lane to announce the retail core. The Plan recommends that a proposal should demonstrate a safe pedestrian strategy and connectivity to the community. The Plan recognizes the need for adequate and attractive surface parking and identifies the need for efficient structured parking. The Plan also stresses the need for an attractive streetscape able “to withstand the test of time”.

- *The new Village Center will add improved signs identifying the retail core. New pedestrian-oriented streets will be incorporated to enhance the experience. Surface parking has been mostly consolidated into a main field with logical improved pedestrian access to other Village Center destinations.*
- *The new residential building has structured parking concealed internal to the block by residential and is not visible.*
- *The proposed Village Center will have enhanced pedestrian amenities such as differentiation of paving materials, landscape features, seating options, trash receptacles and lighting.*

#### **4. Implementation**

The Plan outlines an Implementation Plan matrix with action items and responsible parties.

Three of these items apply to this submission.

- a. Install more visible signage at the commercial area as well as more off-site directional signs.
  - *New signage is proposed for the Village Center and addressed in the Design Guidelines. This will provide better visibility for the retailers and help patrons locate them.*
- b. Reconfigure the slip ramp entrance (currently right-in only) at Cedar Lane and reduce the berm that blocks views of the commercial center from Cedar Lane.
  - *The Applicant is proposing an additional right-out movement to the existing access on Cedar Lane. The berms will be removed with the construction of the new residential building. The Cedar Lane frontage is recommended to be framed by buildings. Clear signage will direct retail patrons into the retail core.*
- c. Develop a streetscape plan for the area within the Village Center boundary.
  - *The new Village Center introduces a new street typology for the retail and portions of the residential. The new street type has a wide sidewalk, with street trees and furniture. The width is ample enough to accommodate café seating. On-street angled parking provides a safe buffer between pedestrians and the travel lanes.*