



## **Hickory Ridge Village Center Redevelopment Preliminary Development Plan Statement of Justification**

Kimco Realty, the owner of the majority of the Hickory Ridge Village Center (“Village Center”), is proposing a major redevelopment of the Village Center. Built in 1992, the Village Center is an integral part of the community strategically located in the southeast corner of the intersection of Cedar Lane and Freetown Road with secondary frontage on Quarterstaff Road. The Village Center is anchored by a Giant grocery store and also provides a variety of retailers including service retail and restaurants. In total, there are approximately 97,321 square feet of retail in two one-story buildings with many shops fronting on the Avenue, an inwardly focused pedestrian walkway. There are two large surface parking lots on either end of the Avenue. Many of the retail storefronts lack good visibility to sustain and support their businesses. Visibility is reduced due to the inward orientation of storefronts away from parking spaces, as well as the dense landscaping and the low and deep building arcade which further obscures storefronts. In addition, the Village Center includes a Sunoco gas station along Freetown Road, Sunrise Senior Living apartments, and the Goddard School. Kimco owns the gas station property, but it is excluded from this redevelopment. Kimco does not own Sunrise or Goddard and they are also excluded from this redevelopment. Unlike many of the other village centers, Hickory Ridge lacks a cultural or civic-oriented facility, such as Columbia Association recreational facilities or non-denominational inter-faith centers. Adjacent to the Village Center is an undeveloped forested three-acre parcel owed by Columbia Association.

Recently, the success of the village centers throughout Columbia has been challenged by significant retail development including many high-quality grocers along the nearby Route 175 corridor. In keeping with the original intent for the design and purpose of village centers, the Village Center should be a place for public enjoyment, socializing, and meeting daily retail needs. The new Village Center is envisioned to be the heart of the 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 contained by buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets. The addition of a new residential component adds to the diversity of lifestyle choices and vitality to the village and Village Center. The architecture expresses a forward-thinking design, while the scale and form honors the timeless and neighborly qualities of village life. The landscape reinforces the essence and identity of community by providing public spaces. The sense of place is further enhanced by the common language of materials and elements shared between buildings and site.

The redevelopment of the Village Center will improve visibility of the retailers, create a more approachable and flexible open space, and offer residential living to support a more sustainable and walkable Village Center. At the heart of the master plan vision for the redevelopment are a central Village Green framed by new and existing retail and a new multifamily residential. The plan also includes pedestrian-oriented retail streets with access to central and convenient retail parking and improves the pedestrian access between the Village Green, the Columbia Association parcel, and to the surrounding neighborhoods. The plan also preserves the Giant grocery store and the retail flanking the Giant building, continue to utilize existing vehicular and pedestrian access points, and protect, where possible, key landscape features to foster a sense of timelessness. The proposed residential building is in keeping with the scale of the Village Center and designed to benefit from proximity to the Village Center’s retail and

future Columbia Association parcel. The new residents will enhance foot traffic to the Village Center fostering a more vital and sustainable place. In addition, the new residential building adds a complementary use in an already developed parcel thereby making it a smart growth development for the area.

The Village Center Redevelopment Application meets the following Preliminary Development Plan criteria:

- a.) *The Village Center Redevelopment will foster orderly growth and promote the purposes of the Village Center in accordance with the planned character of the NT District.*

The redevelopment of the HRVC is necessary in order to permit the HRVC to satisfy the goals of the New Town (NT) District. As set forth in the zoning regulation, a New Town village is intended to be “designated and planned as an economically and culturally self-sufficient community”. The proposed redevelopment of this Village Center will position it for the future while maintaining the character of the existing village. The existing Giant supermarket will remain within the existing building, the retail structure on the opposite side of the Avenue will be reconfigured and a multifamily residential building will be added. In sum, the redevelopment proposes to enhance the existing retail and restaurant uses, provide a significantly improved open space village green, and provide a residential anchor, all in accordance with the NT District requirements and restrictions.

- b.) *The amount of commercial business floor area contained in the Village Center Redevelopment is appropriate to provide retail and commercial service to the Village as a location for convenient, diverse commercial business uses which serve the local neighborhoods of the village and surrounding local community.*

The existing Village Center has approximately 97,321 sf of retail floor area. The redevelopment proposes adding approximately 8,000 sf of net additional retail floor area, along with a residential building containing approximately 230 units. Thus, the redevelopment is consistent with the existing Village Center with regards to the amount of commercial floor area. The redevelopment will promote a diversity of new tenants to the Village Center while maintaining many of the existing tenants, and this will allow the Village Center to continue serving the community.

- c.) *The Village Center Redevelopment will foster the purpose of a Village Center as a community focal point providing good opportunities for community interaction and communication.*

The redevelopment will include the creation of a Village Green with lighting, landscaping, seating, and additional amenities. Pedestrian walkways are proposed throughout the site to promote the pedestrian linkage. There are also several outdoor seating areas proposed throughout the center.

- d.) *The location and the relative proportions of the permitted uses for commercial businesses, dwellings, and open space uses, and the project design will enhance the existing development surrounding the Village Center Redevelopment.*

The redevelopment will expand and increase visibility of the retailers as well as the Village Green. These improvements will help existing tenants by increasing pedestrian traffic and vehicular visibility of the Village Green. The expansion will allow for additional seating and conversation areas and provide a place for the greater Hickory Ridge community to congregate, shop, and dine.

- e.) *The Village Center Redevelopment provides accessible useable landscaped areas such as courtyards, plazas or squares.*

The creation of a Village Green will include extensive landscaping with pedestrian sidewalks and

outdoor seating areas. The space will provide a flexible area for programming events for special occasions and for daily use as a place to congregate and/or enjoy the space as an individual.

- f.) *The Village Center Redevelopment is compliant with all applicable environmental policies and requirements, and provides new environmental improvements to the redevelopment area through the use of methods such as, but not limited to, green building standards, water conservation, natural drainage systems, the planting of native vegetation, the removal of existing invasive plants, the improvement of stormwater deficiencies, and following low impact development practices.*

The redevelopment will meet the latest MDE stormwater management guidelines. A micro-bio-retention swale is proposed on the site along with pervious pavers in a portion of the parking spaces. All proposed landscaping will utilize only native species. In addition, the Village Center has been registered as a LEED for Homes and LEED Campus project.

- g.) *The Village Center Redevelopment fosters pedestrian and bicycle access.*

Wide sidewalks, both covered and uncovered, are proposed. The sidewalks permit pedestrian access to the various buildings and allow for internal access to the various users from anywhere within the Village Center or the perimeter of the center. In addition, bicycle racks are proposed throughout the site.

- h.) *Public transit opportunities are appropriately incorporated into the Village Center Redevelopment.*

The existing bus stops (there are two) will remain within the Village Center Redevelopment. The locations of these transit opportunities have been carefully evaluated so as to ensure ease of use and successful traffic flow.

- i.) *The Village Center Redevelopment is compatible with the surrounding community.*

The existing Village Center is dated and retail tenants have poor visibility to the consumer. The center has seen increased pressure from significant retail development in Columbia, specifically along the Route 175 Corridor. The Village Center needs redevelopment to position itself for the future, and to permit it to better serve the community. The proposed residential units will anchor the center and the retail. Restaurants and commercial users will have an opportunity to thrive with increased visibility, better vehicular and pedestrian access, and an improved signage package. The proposed buildings will enhance the existing structures which are remaining around the Village Green. The Village Green will have landscaping and lighting amenities to serve the community.

- j.) *The Village Center will continue to meet the definition of a New Town Village Center.*

The redevelopment of the Village Center will bring vibrancy and sustainability to a dated village center. Since the Village Center was constructed, it has been out-positioned by new retail, including big box power centers and the mall expansion. The redevelopment will position the Village Center for both the immediate and long-term future of the community. This will benefit and better serve both the surrounding properties and the community of Hickory Ridge which is the purpose of a village center in the New Town district.