PARAMOUNTE
ENGINEERING, INC.

Date 14 July 2016

Sparrows Bend Narrative:

The proposed development on Pender County parcel #3293-01-5693-0000 is a site with distinguishing natural features located directly behind and north of the Hwy. 17 main commercial corridor through Hampstead. Specifically, the site access from Hwy 17 is located adjacent to the Bailey Shoppes and Hampstead United Methodist Church. The site also has access to Hoover Road, but is otherwise bordered by wetlands and deep ditches. The property is currently zoned RP (Residential Performance), and this proposed conditional rezoning requests a RM-CD (Residential Mixed Conditional). The proposed rezoning designation allows for a mix of lot sizes and multi-family uses as indicated on the attached site plan.

The County's Land Use Plan shows this parcel in a "Suburban Growth" designation, as is described in the following paragraph. This designation supports the type of development we propose with the RM-CD request. The site is capable of the medium to high density growth ascribed by this designation because the site has access to public water and sewer and is located immediately adjacent to an economic hub along the Hwy 17 corridor. Initial land suitability analysis information also supports this density and type of proposed development.

The following is the County's Land Use Plan definition of "Suburban Growth" further outlines the type of development already envisioned for this area of the County. The designation description reads as follows:

> *"The Suburban Growth land use classification identifies those areas of Pender County where significant residential growth is expected to occur within the planning horizon. Areas designated as Suburban Growth are located primarily adjacent to municipal planning jurisdictions and within or near high growth, unincorporated areas of the County, i.e., Hampstead/Scotts Hill, Rocky Point, and portions of US 421 South. Suburban Growth designates areas where public water and public sewer are available or are planned in the near future." The plan goes on to state, "Uses that would typically be allowed in Suburban Growth areas include medium-high density residential…and limited non-residential areas."*

DRC Hampstead, LLC proposes development of this parcel as indicated on the Conditional Rezoning Site Plan and in keeping with the intended growth pattern of Pender County's suburban growth area designation. The project is being designed to integrate the site's existing natural beauty to further the developer's goal in achieving an exceptionally designed project with a medium-density single family neighborhood in the back of the parcel, adjacent to the existing single family homes and include a higher density section of apartments located behind the commercial corridor of Hwy. 17. The proposed development plans to integrate the site's dramatic topography and interesting natural features into the design by highlighting many of the specimen, large live oaks and other mature trees that are located along a ridge running parallel to Hwy. 17. In addition, other specimen oaks throughout the proposed single family neighborhood will guide the design of the layout to ensure the

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natural features of the land are preserved. Great care will be taken to grade around these trees and impact them as little as possible. The vegetated ridge on which many of the trees sit will act as a natural buffer between the the lower density, 135 lot single family neighborhood and higher density apartment site.

The proposed 264 apartments are located in an existing, new growth pine flat just behind the commercial businesses that front Hwy 17. This site is well suited for higher density growth as is proposed because of the flatter topography, lower quality vegetation, and proximity to a primary commercial corridor. These apartments will conform to existing height limitations set by Pender County and will be no more than 3 stories tall. Apartment buildings will be well buffered from view by use of the site's natural ridge as well as existing and augmented landscape around the edges of the apartment site.

The proposed apartments do push the overall density for the tract in excess of Pender County's 5 unit/acre cap. However, in talking with planning staff and reading the comprehensive plan, we understand that a higher density, such as the 8 units/acre that we propose, has been considered in approved planning documents, but not updated in the UDO at this time. This higher density is recommended for consideration in the areas of the County that can support the growth, specifically those sites with sewer and water availability. This site does now have both water and sewer availability and is located in the growing Hwy 17 corridor of the County. Our understanding is that the UDO had not really considered apartments when it was adopted due to the fact that water and sewer was not readily available to support such density. Because this site is well suited in an area of the County and by supporting utilities, we respectfully request that the reviewing staff and boards consider this higher density for this conditional rezoning.

The site has access to Hwy. 17 between the Hampstead United Methodist Church and the Bailey Shoppes. The parcel also has access to Hoover Road through the proposed single family neighborhood. The County's collector street plan indicates that there is a need to connect Hwy 17 to Hoover Rd. Other recommended collector streets behind the commercial businesses are not practical due to topography, existing stormwater collection systems, and expansive tract of wetlands adjacent to the site and the commercial businesses.

Single family lot sizes range from approximately 6,000 sf to 12,000 sf. The current zoning for the site is RP and only allows lot sizes 12,000 sf and up as long as public water and sewer are available on the property. The proposed RM conditional zoning for the development allows the use of smaller lots. The proposed RM conditional zoning also allows greater flexibility in individual lot setbacks. Both the smaller lots and flexibility in setbacks help the applicant construct a development that largely leaves the wetlands and very nice old-growth live oaks in place.

To further describe the intended exceptional design practices for use in preserving much of the site's natural beauty, the developer will examine and employ site suitable low impact development practices (LID), such as swales, rain gardens, and infiltration basins, when possible, to handle the site's stormwater runoff on site. The majestic 108" live oak near the proposed single family amenity is one of the major natural features of this site that will be protected as part of the LID measures. Soils near the apartment site do not seem to support an infiltration basin, but the single family side of the project may support this stormwater treatment. The amenity areas will be further examined for the use of other LID practices such as pervious paving and rain barrels. In addition, approximately 30% or 24 acres of the site will be left undisturbed or as passive/active recreation areas. These areas will exceed the County's designated open space requirements and will further act as a vegetated buffer that mitigates impacts of the development on this site and surrounding land. At this time, soils suitability has not been studied for the site, but it is believed that the sandy site is a good candidate for implementation of the aforementioned LID practices, and therefore, a good site to integrate medium to high density development with these low impact development practices.

There is not a traffic analysis for the project at this time, but the study of traffic around the site and on Hoover Rd. and Hwy 17 is in process. Necessary traffic recommendations will be reviewed and implemented as necessary at completion of the traffic impact analysis. The scoping meeting to assess traffic near the project took place on May 18, 2016, and traffic counts were taken prior to the end of the 2015-16 school year.

When assessed for development, this site appears to have a healthy balance of being able to sustain the proposed development while still allowing the developer to protect many of the natural features. The location is well suited for access and density due to its proximity to Hwy 17 and Hoover Rd. and due to suitable utilities availability to the site. This land not only exhibits the physical capacity to handle the layout and density of the proposed plan, but the proposed design also fits well with the County's long range planning documents, and the site specific land planning as shown on the site plan.