

Hampstead Commons Project Narrative June 12, 2020

The Hampstead Commons Master Development Plan (MDP) submitted on June 12, 2020 replaces the previous MDP approved July 6, 2016 which has expired. Ownership of the land for this new MDP has changed since 2016 and is currently owned by LGI Homes – NC, LLC. The 2016 MDP also included a non-residential component located on the property adjacent to and east of the property that is no longer a part of the Hampstead Commons project.

The current MDP submittal proposes a mix of residential uses (single family and townhomes), open space areas featuring a large central open space area for active recreational uses, sidewalks throughout the community, and the extension of a paved multi-use path along the community's frontage on Transfer Station Road. Additionally, a public street connector is proposed that will provide a desired link between the recently approved Carolina Creek Extension project to the south and Transfer Station Road through the planned Hampstead Commons development. Coordination with the property owners to the east and south of Hampstead Commons is ongoing to ensure this vital roadway connection is designed and constructed to improve accessibility options for all projects that will utilize this connector road.

Conformance with the UDO provisions for Planned Development District Master Plans

Along with the Master Development Plan (prepared in accordance with the MDP Mixed Use Specific requirements as listed on the project application), the applicant offers the following information to support their request for MDP approval in regards to lot sizes and lot configuration, land uses, density, and overall project design:

From Section 4.8.1D of the UDO

A. Purpose of the PD District

1) *To allow for greater freedom in providing a mix of uses within one development, including a mix of housing types, housing prices, lot sizes, densities, and non-residential uses;*

Response: Two residential uses are proposed: Single family homes and townhome units.

2) *To promote quality urban design and environmentally sensitive development by incorporating walkable, compact, pedestrian and transit friendly development and by allowing development to take advantage of special site characteristics, locations, and land uses;*

Response: The street layout and lot design are compact and walkable with sidewalks located along all internal streets to foster walking throughout the community.

Additionally, the applicant is providing the continuation of an adjacent multi-use path along the community's frontage along Transfer Station road, to provide future pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to points off-site such as the Mountains to the Sea Trail and future mixed-use development along the US 17 corridor. The compact nature

of the community's design allows for the creation of highly useable central open spaces within a reasonable walk from every lot in the neighborhood.

3) To promote quality urban design and environmentally sensitive development by preserving critical environmental resources, providing above-average open space amenities, incorporating creativity in the layout of buildings, open space and circulation systems, assuring compatibility with surrounding land uses and neighborhood character, and providing efficiency in the layout and provision of roads, utilities, and other infrastructure;

Response: Quality urban design is evident on the MDP as the streets and lots are designed to be compact and walkable while providing above average open space amenities. The required amount of open space per the UDO is 2.43 acres and approximately 4.8 acres of open space is proposed by the applicant – more than double the minimum requirement. In addition, a majority of the open space areas shown on the MDP will be programmed to be active with such features as a tot lot/playground and walking trails planned.

The development site is devoid of significant environmental features such as wetlands and streams – an existing pond on the northeastern portion of the parcel has been permitted as a stormwater control measure for this project and an adjoining parcel. Modifications to the existing permit may be needed after MDP approval.

The single-family homes proposed will abut other planned areas of single family residential to the south (Carolina Creek extension) and the proposed townhomes are located along Transfer Station Road closer to existing and planned non-residential uses which is consistent with sound land planning practices. The project's land uses therefore will be compatible with the character of existing and future neighborhoods. The street layout is highly efficient with only a few areas not utilized by the planned lots. Furthermore, as stated above a critical connector road (Street D) is planned to provide access to adjacent planned developments to promote interconnectivity

4) To create contiguous green space within and across the boundaries of development site(s) and promote interconnected greenways and corridors throughout the County;

Response: Green spaces are provided within a reasonable walk from all homesites within the development. The large contiguous areas of usable green spaces are approximately double the UDO requirements. The planned multi-use path along Transfer Station Road and the internal network of sidewalks and roadway connections to the planned developments to the east and south, will promote the use of these interconnected pedestrian facilities.

5) To reduce the amount of infrastructure necessary for development, including paved surfaces and utility easements, by permitting clustering of houses and structures;

Response: The compact nature of this MDP with regard to lot layout and road network design results in the clustering of homes and the provision for larger areas of contiguous- useable open space. This clustering reduces the amount of paved surfaces and infrastructure needed to serve the developed portion of the project – as opposed to developing the entire site as traditional lots.

11) To achieve any other goals as stated within adopted County land use and transportation plans, and/or any other adopted County plans.

Pender 2.0 Land Use Plan

Response: The Pender 2.0 Land Use Plan (LUP) designates this and other surrounding areas as low density residential with a density limit of 2 units per acre (Map 5.1.4: Topsail Planning Area). This designation should be re-visited as properties such as Hampstead Commons which are located adjacent or in close proximity to existing and planned Regional Mixed Use Areas (as shown on the LUP Map 5.1.4 adjacent to the north and along the US 17 corridor) should be developed with higher density ranges to support and better interact with these planned and existing activity centers. The provision for higher residential densities in and around Mixed-Use areas follows sound land planning principles. The transition in density from higher to lower as parcels are further removed from such activity nodes provides a gradual transition between these land use concepts.

Higher residential density areas are generally located near existing and planned regional transportation facilities such as the planned Hampstead Bypass. Hampstead Commons' close proximity to both US 17 and the planned access point of the Hampstead Bypass furthers the case for additional density above the 2 units per acre prescribed by Pender 2.0 LUP. Recent MDP approvals by the County for the Carolina Creek extension project (at a density of 3.02 units per acre) support the planning concepts mentioned above of a transition towards higher density for parcels near activity centers.

2016 Pender County Collector Street Plan

Connectivity/VMT Reduction Collector streets, while providing access to neighborhoods and facilitating access to the arterial network, also serve another important function, reducing need to access major corridors. Collector streets should provide numerous points of access to the surrounding collector and arterial system. With the provision of additional access points to neighborhoods, commercial centers, and schools, travelers will have additional options to access their local destinations. By allowing back access between land uses, people can reach their destinations without having to drive on major roadways. Connectivity requires that private entities coordinate across different properties to anticipate future, connections between adjacent properties. Providing connectivity to nearby amenities and to the arterial system is important to avoid congestion across the transportation system.

Response: Hampstead Commons provides a much needed connector street from Transfer Station Road to properties to the south and east providing an alternative connection point to access US 17 and the future Hampstead Bypass. Three landowners are working in concert to assure the alignment of the connector road meets the connectivity goals of each owner/community.

C. Number of Dwelling Units (Density)

2) In effort to encourage quality urban design and environmentally sensitive development, an increase in density may be allowed by the Planning Board when such an increase can be justified by superior design or the provision of additional amenities.

Response: The quality urban design illustrated on the MDP results in an efficient use of the property for both residential and open space areas while avoiding impacts to environmentally sensitive areas. The following urban design principles are employed on this MDP and should serve to justify an increase in density (from the Pender 2.0 LUP density designation for this site).

- The provision of an interconnected street network with internal sidewalks along all streets;
- A public road connector from Transfer Station Road to adjoining planned developments fostering interconnectivity among numerous parcels – a sound planning practice and a hallmark of a well-designed neighborhood;
- The provision of ample open space areas that will be designed to be useable by the residents for active and passive activities including play equipment and walking trails;
- The provision for a public multi-use path along Transfer Station Road to provide for future pedestrian and bike connections to points off-site;
- The provision of street trees planned along all internal roadways and along Transfer Station Road;
- This project will be designed to meet both NCDEQ and Pender County stormwater requirements. The stormwater control measure (SCM) will be designed to treat runoff for this project and the parcel to the southeast shown as “Tract B” on the Master Development Plan. The SCM will be sized to meet Pender County requirements of releasing the runoff from the development at a rate less than the pre development runoff flows for the 1, 10, and 25-year storm event. The pond will also be designed for the 100-year storm event so that at least 1 foot of freeboard will be incorporated into the design, therefore exceeding the County’s minimum requirements.

Of course, the proposed density is still under the 5 units per acre allowed by right in the UDO for PD Districts. The density increase requested relates to the provision of 2 units per acre so designated on Pender 2.0 LUP.

Note: The previous version of Hampstead Commons approved by the County in July 2016 contained a net density of 4.02 units per acre with single family only as the

residential component. The MPD for the Carolina Creek Extension adjacent to the south (located further from the planned Regional Mixed-Use area) was approved earlier this year at 3.02 units per acre.

D. Development Standards - Development in a PD District shall be subject to all applicable regulations unless otherwise waived or modified by the County in the terms of the approved master land use plan. In no case shall the decision-making body waive or modify the following standards for a proposed PD development:

- 1) Stream buffers required by the State of NC*
- 2) Ownership requirements for any open space, buffers, or streetscapes unless otherwise permitted within this Ordinance;*
- 3) Preservation of existing vegetation in streetscapes, floodplains, and/or buffers;*
- 4) Minimum distance between structures, minimum lot width, and minimum yard requirements are established in the Master Development Plan and may be modified by the Planning Board;*
- 5) Street connectivity requirements;*
- 6) Sidewalk and greenway requirements;*
- 7) Stormwater control or LID requirements;*

Response: All of these development standards are illustrated on the MDP and the community will be in compliance with all such standards.

E. Transportation and Circulation System

The Master Development Plan shall demonstrate a safe and adequate on-site transportation system that addresses vehicular, bicycle, transit and pedestrian circulation. The on-site transportation system shall be integrated with the off-site transportation circulation system of the County. The road network within Planned Developments shall be designed to ensure that adjacent residential areas, internal and external to the project, have direct access to any non-residential portions of the planned development in lieu of entering and exiting through thoroughfares and/or collector streets. Planned developments shall provide or contribute to a pedestrian and road network that connects non-residential and existing residential developments.

- 1) Creative design of circulation routes and traffic ways is encouraged. A base characteristic of a PD is that the internal circulation routes or streets do not follow fixed linear geometric lines. Instead, circulation routes are curvilinear and of meandering character, to preserve tree and landscape features. Slower-paced traffic movements are encouraged with the use of private restrictions for extremely low speed limits.*

Response: It is rare to have a development site with few natural or environmental features that require curvilinear street solutions to avoid these features. This site features a more traditional linear block-style street system that meets many of the goals of this section with regard to the pedestrian experience and high quality urban design (often not associated with curvilinear street networks). The interconnected

nature of the internal streets will provide for low speed traffic movements with frequent stops at intersections. The curvilinear nature of Street D (the Transfer Station Road connector) results from the need to provide access to multiple adjoining properties as well as the need for traffic calming for future users of this critical connector road.

2) Pedestrian-oriented communities are encouraged to maximize opportunity for pedestrian activity and improve the quality of the pedestrian experience. Planned subdivisions must adhere to the design standards for drainage and paving in this Ordinance.

Response: The design of this neighborhood will promote pedestrian activity. Sidewalks are provided along all streets and streets connect to adjoining planned communities and developments. Off-street walking paths and open spaces are also planned – all highly useable and within a reasonable walking distance of all homes within this compact walkable community.

4) Adequately constructed and maintained bike and/or hiking trails shall be counted toward the open space requirement. Bicycle lanes and multi-use pathways that extend the minimum right-of-way width shall be designed in accordance with the North Carolina Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Guidelines Manual.

Response: The MDP provides for a public multi-use path along Transfer Station Road connecting to an existing trail to the east and providing future connectivity to points outside the development.