Memorandum

TO: Kinsey O'Shea, Town Planner for Current Development

From: Meredith Jones, P.E. V.P., Eden & Associates

Date: November 15, 2022

RE: Variances/Exceptions for Glade Spring Rezoning Application

Dear Kinsey,

Please accept this memorandum with variances and exceptions requested by the applicant, Glade Spring Crossing, for the rezoning application. While many of these have been discussed over the last 6 months, please advise if further information is needed for understanding. Thank you.

- 1. Variance to Sec. 5-313. Street design. Street grades: Requirement is for 10% or less.
 - a. Applicant requests for a variance to this section for up to 15% slope on Road A which adheres to VDOT and AASHTO standards.
 - b. Reason: It has been requested by Town Planning a connection be made to Village Way South (VWS). This is a fixed point and is steep descent to the property line at Glade Spring Crossing. Not enough right-of-way exists to provide wider fill slopes that would be required for 10% slopes. In addition, the steeper slopes are necessary to drop from VWS into the site off a landing included for safety. No driveways are located in the portion of roadway that is at 15% and therefore those conflicts will not be present. SEE THE ATTACHED PROFILES
 - c. As a comparison, Walnut Drive where it ties into Primrose Drive is approximately 14% slope, very similar to ours. Highland Circle between Eckel and Cupp is similar in slope though portions of the road closer to Cupp exceed 16%. Our section of road at 15% does not contain driveways and is less than that section of Highland Circle.
- 2. <u>Variance to Sect. 5-313- Street design</u> Street intersections shall provide landings of not more than 5% grade for a distance of not less than 100 feet.
 - a. Applicant requests a variance to allow a landing of not more than 5% grade for a distance of not less than 50 feet at the intersection of Street A with Village Way South.
 - b. Reason: It has been requested by Town Planning a connection be made to Village Way South through existing 50' right-of-way. Connection to VWS, which is a fixed point, is steep. A full landing of 100' would push Street A higher out of the ground, necessitating much wider fill slopes that will not fit within the existing right-of-way, affecting existing residents on either side of the connection. Residents adjacent to this area were approached regarding easements but were hesitant to commit to anything. It is possible that during design, easement can be obtained, which would increase the length of the landing variance. However, at this time, this is unknown.

Trip generation models indicate that peaks of 94 and 64 vehicles will be exiting the entire development during the AM and PM peak hours respectively. The traffic consultant applied a factor of 15% to estimate the amount of traffic exiting via the

Street A/Village Way South intersection. This means that a total of 14 and 9 vehicles will be utilizing the landing during the AM and PM peak hours. This is not a lot of traffic spread over the hour and it's unlikely that there will be stacking or queueing of traffic beyond the landing waiting to turn.

Landings are typically provided in case there are icy conditions and the 100' is to provide for queueing of stopped traffic before turning. The traffic trip generation supports that the volume of traffic is minimal during the peak hour, meaning that queues utilizing the full length of the landing are unlikely. As such, a reduced landing length is justified. In case of poor weather resulting in the landing feeling unsafe to a driver, alternative more direct routes exist. Most drivers will be aware of this condition as the travelers of these roads will be those living in the vicinity. SEE THE ATTACHED PROFILES

- c. As a comparison, Walnut Drive, the entrance to the new Givens Farm, is at a 15% slope within the first 50 and 100 feet of its connection to existing Primrose Dr., well outside any landing requirement. This road is similar to our Road A connection to Village Way South in that it is a new development tying into an existing road. However, our variance will still leave a safer situation than this intersection because it provides more of a landing that this road doesn't have.
- 3. Variance for type of Curb & Gutter (Sec. 5-313. Street design). All streets shall be designed and constructed with VDOT standard CG-6 curb and gutter and be a minimum of 30 feet in width or greater as required by VDOT subdivision street standards, based upon projected traffic generated by the development, except in the Rural Residential I, and Rural Residential II zoning districts or as expressly approved by Town Council as part of a planned residential or planned commercial zoning.
 - a. Applicant requests express approval through rezoning for no curb and gutter in the North Area (portions of Street A and all of Street E) where ditch section will be used for conveyance and infiltration of stormwater.
 - b. Reason: In order to maintain affordable housing in the development, only critical infrastructure can be included. Curb and gutter along these areas, with an estimated cost of approximately \$160,000, is unneeded from an engineering standpoint to convey water safely and effectively. While it is a luxury many homeowners expect because they don't want to see water traversing their lot, it is not always required from an engineering standpoint. The underlying zoning RR-1 does not require curb and gutter for more rural area uses. This is because larger lots do not necessarily need it for proper engineering conveyance of stormwater. It is a sustainable benefit to the development to allow stormwater to flow over lawns as opposed to immediately capturing it in a curb/gutter and storm drain. The proposed development on Streets A (North side) and E is similar in density and character as the existing adjacent development on Village Way South, which does not utilize curb and gutter. Street drainage running perpendicular to lots can be diverted across lots as overland flow or diverted between lots in gradual swales, encouraging some infiltration. Flow running parallel to the fronts of lots can be contained in ditch sections with 15" culverts under driveways where needed. Storm inlets can be provided to divert flow across the street where needed for engineering. Elimination of curb/gutter will also allow for guest parking in a reinforced grass shoulder off the side of the road, allowing for more room to pass vehicles in the street.

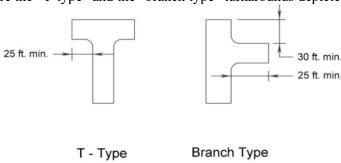
- c. Applicant requests the use of continuous rolled curb and gutter throughout the remainder of the development without entrances.
- d. Reason: In order to maintain affordable housing in the development, only critical infrastructure can be included and rolled curb achieves the same intent as CG-6 but for a lot less cost given the processes the Town requires for certificate of occupancy. The proposed development South area is extremely dense and driveway entrances will comprise over 50% of the street frontage. Since the Town requires curb and gutter to be completely installed prior to issuing building permits, 50% of the curb and gutter will be removed to replace it with entrances. This is the reason for selection of Rolled curb, it does not practically require an entrance. It is mountable. Brookfield Village contains this type of curbing and a majority of affordable development communities in Christiansburg use them. Because it can be installed and left alone, this eliminates costly removal of brand-new curb and gutter and replacement of entrances once a building is constructed. Concrete entrances cost approximately \$270,000 for 134 entrances (approx. \$2000 each) using current concrete prices. Rolled curb costs approximately \$5 more per foot resulting in an increase of \$31,200 for 6240 LF in the development. So the increased cost of using CG-6 and ripping it out to install entrances vs. using a rolled curb with no entrances is \$270,000-\$31,200 for a total of \$238,800. (Note that pulling out CG-6 curb and gutter across 18' wide entrances for 134 lots on the South area would equal approximately 2412 LF at \$35/LF for a total of \$84,420 of money spent wasted) SEE THE ATTACHED TYPICAL SECTIONS SHOWING ROLLED CURB.

4. <u>Variance for sidewalk on portions of Street A (North and South areas), all of Street D and all of Street E (Sec. 5-401 Sidewalks required.</u>; Sec. 5-403 Sidewalk variance).

- a. Applicant requests a variance to sidewalk on Streets A, D, and E and to construct trail in lieu of sidewalk in select locations throughout the subdivision.
- b. Reason: Since the developer has to evaluate the cost effectiveness of each infrastructure item to maintain affordability in the overall development, it was determined that sidewalks on the North Area were not critical to the pedestrian circulation to be cost-effective to install. Residents along Street A have direct access to the public paved greenway trail behind their homes, and residents along Street E have a connection to the North/South connector public paved trail at the end of their cul-de-sac. This North area was modeled from the Village at Tom's Creek adjacent development area which does not include sidewalks on Village Way South. Therefore, there is no "expected" external sidewalk "connection" on the north end of the development. Pedestrians passing through the development may choose to use the North/South connector greenway trail to reach Glade Road, which connects to the Village at the end of Poplar Ridge Dr. Alternatively, they may use the grass trail a short distance from the Glade Spring Crossing property boundary on Street A to access the Tom's Creek Greenway Trail through the site. Ditch section for stormwater management makes sidewalk challenging on Street E and curb/gutter was eliminated as it is not needed from an engineering standpoint in this area of the development. In order to connect Street A to Village Way South within the existing right-of-way, the typical road section has to be narrow, and sidewalk simply doesn't fit. It is estimated sidewalk through Street A and E would cost in excess of \$120,000. It should be noted that this does not include the additional cost for grading or

widening of the road section which increases the cut/fill required for Street A and Street E and steepens the resulting lots. SEE THE ATTACHED TYPICAL SECTION

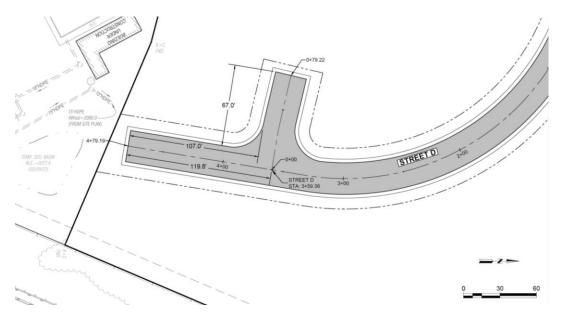
- 5. <u>Variance for sidewalk on portions of Street A, B, C, D (Section 5-401 b.)</u> 4' grass strip is required between sidewalk and road.
 - a. Applicant requests 3' grass strip
 - b. Since street trees are not being installed in the grass strip, this would allow for more space behind the sidewalk to plant a street tree. Grass strips do not generally serve a purpose other than to separate pedestrians from the street, and 3' is adequate to do that. SEE THE ATTACHED TYPICAL SECTIONS FOR ROAD A,E
- 6. Variance for Cul-de-sac (Sec. 5-310). Sec. 5310 Cul-de-sacs states that the agent or Planning Commission may permit a "T" or a "Y" cul-de-sac. VDOT Appendix B(1) Section 4G addresses the permissible cul-de-sac and turnaround designs for new subdivision streets. This section of Appendix B(1) specifically describes the permissible types of "alternative turnarounds" permitted. The two alternatives are the "T-type" and the "branch type" turnarounds depicted below.



Alternative Turnaround

FIGURE B(1)-12 CULS-DE-SAC AND TURNAROUND DETAILS

The engineer aims to apply the minimum dimensions described in Sec. 5-310(b) to the "branch type" turnaround to meet the requirements of Sec. 5-310(a). The engineer notes that the Town of Blacksburg Subdivision Ordinance does not specify a maximum length of the turnaround legs. Appendix B(1) Section 4G(d) states the following regarding stub streets: "A turnaround should be provided for any temporary or stub street longer than 150' from the point of intersection to the end of pavement." As such, the maximum length of any leg of a T or branch type turnaround is 150' from the point of intersection. As shown in the exhibit below, the proposed turnaround meets the minimum requirements of Sec. 5-310(b) and Figure B(1)-12, while not exceeding the maximum stub length of Section 4G(d). Furthermore, by exceeding the minimum leg lengths, the branch facilitates turnaround movements by the design vehicle, the single unit truck (e.g., a garbage/recycling pickup truck), or larger vehicles such as a school bus.



Beyond the design requirements for a branch turnaround, the design is needed in this location to maintain development density, and thus affordability, in the development. The existing trail constructed as part of "The Farm at Blacksburg" development terminates at the shared property line near this location. Given the configuration of "The Farm" site and the existing topography, minimal modification to the existing trail can occur while extending the trail into the proposed Glade Spring Crossing development. All proposed trails in the Town of Blacksburg have a maximum slope of 8% while streets have a maximum slope of 10%. These two maximum slopes restrict the ability of the engineer to either: a) raise the proposed features to meet the trail or b) rapidly descend from the existing trail into the development. The proposed branch turnaround enables Street D to: a) extend to the maximum possible elevation thus flattening the trail entering the site and b) maximize grading flexibility and buildable areas. Other turnaround designs, such as the T or bulb would required a shorter length of street to be constructed and thus less available frontage for proposed dwelling units. A minimum of 2 or 3 units would be lost by utilizing a traditional bulb. In design of that scenario its likely the trail would have to be located to the east of Street D causing the lots to incur more fill and units to be pushed closer to 460 limited access right-of-way. This would be more costly and create less desirable lots.

- 7. Variance for blocks (Sec 5-317). (1) Length: The length of blocks shall be determined by public safety, traffic flow, and natural topography considerations. Where streets are approximately parallel, connecting streets shall be provided between the parallel streets at reasonable intervals as established by application of the criteria in the preceding sentence. In general, residential blocks should be between five hundred fee (500') and twelve hundred feet (1200') in length.
 - a. Applicant request a variance to forgo a connection between the following streets: Shadow Lake Road-Street B, Street B-Street C, and Street A-Street E.
 - b. Reason:
 - i. Shadow Lake Road-Street B: Inadequate right-of-way width and challenging topography restricts the ability of the developer to provide a street connection between the two streets. Community feedback from surrounding neighbors indicated opposition to the connection.
 - ii. Street B-Street C: The Street B cul-de-sac bulb is approximately 50' in elevation above the Street C bulb. Existing topography slopes between the two

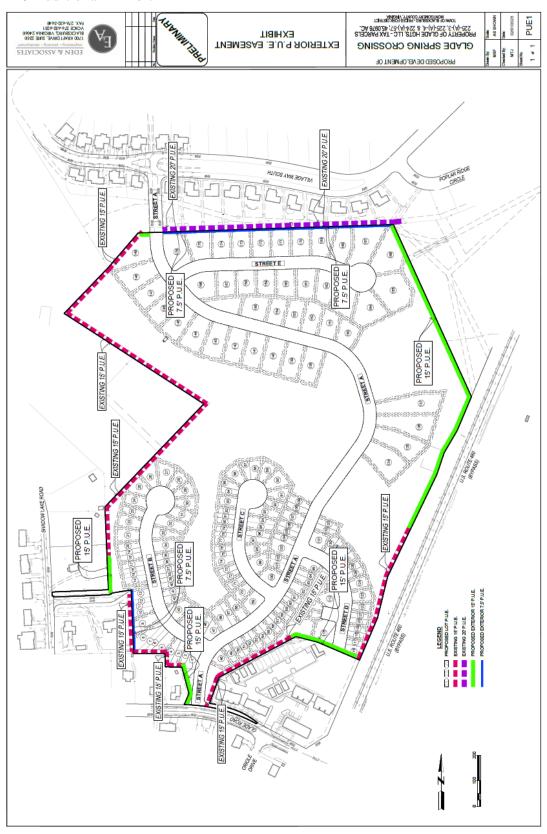
- streets ranges from 20%-25%. Given these factors, a connection is impractical.
- iii. Street A-Street E: The existing topography falls from north (near Street E) to south (near Street A). The Street E bulb is approximately 17' in elevation above the nearest point on Street A. Existing topography prevents the construction of a street connection with an adequate landing and slope.
- c. Applicant requests a variance to the minimum block length to 200'.
- d. Reason: Site topography restricts the plausible street locations.
- 8. <u>Variance for Driveways and Yards (Sec. 5-318. Driveways. Sec. 5790 Yards. Sec. 5204 Driveways.</u>) The requirement is for a driveway to be no closer than 3' to a property line.
 - a. Applicant requests a variance to all of these sections for a reduction of the minimum distance to a side property line of zero (0) feet.
 - b. Reason: Attached units are 18' wide and the driveway will need to reach to the side property lines to allow 2 parking spaces per unit.
- 9. <u>Variance for Sec. 5-318. Driveways.</u> (d)On local and collector streets, driveways shall be no closer than fifty (50) feet to an intersection with a public street measured according to diagram.
 - a. Applicant requests a variance to this requirement for a minimum of 20 feet for select lots.
 - b. Reason: Where smaller units abut an intersection, the lot width is only 27 feet (18' unit with 8.5' side setback). In order to achieve higher densities, driveways will have to be closer to the intersection than this requirement allows. This neighborhood is requesting 15mph speed limits which will help with potential turning conflicts. Of course these will try to be minimized in design, but inevitably a 50 foot requirement will cause loss of multiple units that are critical for development mass and the affordability. SEE THE ATTACHED SKETCH BELOW
- 10. <u>Variance for Sec. 5-901. Public utility easements</u>. Requirement asks for 15' PUE's shared on interior lot lines and 15' interior to all lots bordering exterior property boundaries.
 - a. Applicant Request to reduce the minimum easement width interior to some perimeter lot lines to 7.5 feet where easements already exist on the exterior perimeter. (removed the request for front property line)
 - b. Reason: Easements already exist along some perimeter lot lines interior and exterior to the property. Where easements do not currently exist on either side of the perimeter, the applicant will dedicate 15'. However, where easements already exist on the outside of the perimeter, applicant requests 7.5' interior. The resulting easement for the P.U.E's on the perimeter would be a total minimum of 15' and in some cases 22.5' or 27.5'. The density of the lots required does create lots that are limited in length from front to back. Setbacks on the south area are 10' so a 15' interior lot line P.U.E. on some of these lots would necessitate pushing the units forward. This has an impact on road location, fill required, and potentially could make lots unable to conform, thus losing some lots as a result. Again, this is only proposed in locations where an existing 15' easement already exists and a total of 22.5' wide P.U.E. will result and should be more than adequate for utilities. A minimum of 15' will be provided interior to exterior lot lines where no easements already exist on the other side. See the exhibit below.

- 11. <u>Special exception to 4231(b)(6)</u> requires all parking for townhomes to be located behind the front building line.
 - a. Applicant requests parking to be allowed in front of the building line.
 - b. Reason: These townhomes will function as fee simple lots with street frontage on public roads rather than use of parking lots on a common parcel. Therefore it is important that all units, but especially middle units that have attached side walls, be permitted parking in the front. The shape of the lots, given steep topography and the density needed, will not allow for drive-aisles to the rear or side, and space for parking in these areas. While some townhome lots will allow for side parking, there will still be parking in front of the building line in that driveway. The desire is for these townhomes to function as single-family homes with their own driveways. This is important for seamlessness in equity between affordable, workforce, and market rate units must exist. Furthermore, parking in the rear would simply add more impervious area increasing stormwater concerns, decrease open space, and reduce the density of the development which is critical to the success of the development.
 - c. Additional concessions: To allow some break in the front yard pavement, the applicant has created additional site development regulations that minimize the number of contiguous 18' wide driveways to two. This provides for breaks in driveway entrances and increases green space in front of the townhouse units for landscaping. An exhibit is included to demonstrate the results.
- 12. Special Exception to 4231 (b)(14) requiring building facades to contain varying setbacks.
 - a. Applicants requests permission to allow the facades of the townhomes to be flush with each other.
 - b. Reason: The shapes of the lots and steep topography does not lend itself to 3-8'of change in the building facades. This would require more cut/fill on already tight lots to achieve the density.
 - c. Additional concessions: The applicant proposes that no two adjacent and attached townhome units shall be identical. In order to meet this requirement, variation may be provided through a selection of exterior color palettes, exterior materials, fenestration, architectural details, and/or porch details.
- 13. <u>Special Exception to 4241 (a)(2)</u> requiring parking for all two-family dwellings to be located behind the front building line.
 - a. Applicant requests parking to be allowed in front of the building line.
 - b. Reason: The two-family dwellings will function as fee simple lots with street frontage on public roads rather than use of parking lots on a common parcel. Therefore it is important that all units, be permitted to have parking in the front. The shape of the lots, given steep topography and the density needed, will not allow for drive-aisles to the rear or side, and space for parking in these areas. While some two-family dwelling lots may accommodate side parking, there will still be parking in front of the building line in that driveway. The desire is for these to function similar to single-family homes with their own driveways. This is important for seamlessness in equity between affordable, workforce, and market rate units must exist. Furthermore, parking in the rear would simply add more impervious area increasing stormwater concerns, decrease open space, and reduce the density of the development which is critical to the success of the development.

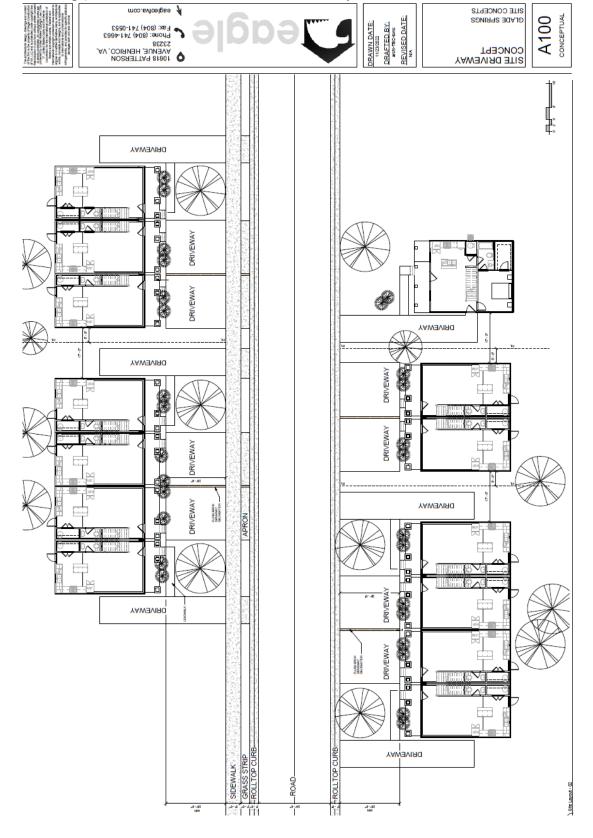
- 14. <u>Special Exception to 5202 (c)</u> all parking spaces shall be located such that maneuvering in or backing into a public street shall not be permitted. Single-unit dwellings and two-family dwellings on a local street are exempt, but not townhouses.
 - a. Applicant requests that driveways to townhomes that contain parking spaces be permitted to back out into the public street.
 - b. There does not exist room on the site to accommodate "turn-arounds" or separate driveaisles in order to meet the ordinance requirements. The applicant evaluated examples and those are included in the exhibits below. The result of this analysis shows that additional cut and fill areas are prohibitive with the lot geometries shown on the plan. Furthermore, in comparing the preferred alternative (separation of driveways so that no more than two contiguous driveways exist from #11), with the drive aisle alternative, there is little difference in pedestrian conflict areas. Both provide adequate breaks for the pedestrian and for the view of the driver backing out. Driveway entrances still exist in either scenario; though certainly the driver is facing forward on a drive aisle scenario. The preferred scenario preserves less impervious surface, less cost, and accommodates the current lot configurations better. As is seen on the exhibit, lot depths significantly increase in a driveaisle scenario and would restrict which lots could accommodate townhomes in an already restrictive elevation setting. A cross section example is shown on the low side of the road, which makes it apparent how much more grading would be needed, adding cost, but also reducing usable backyard space deepening lots, and reducing open space. Furthermore, the goal of the development is to create affordable units and that requires keeping homeowner's association fees low. A drive aisle would have to be contained in a privately maintained easement, across private lots, whereby the HOA would have to maintain these areas separately from the unit owners. This is not a preferred option for the HOA, and to expect private owners to maintain their portion of the drive aisle is an unrealistic expectation as well as expensive.
- 15. <u>Modification of 5428 (a) Street trees</u> planted on average of at least one tree for every 30' of frontage.
 - a. Applicant requests street tree planting requirements on average of at least one tree for every 100' on the South area and one tree for every 80' on the North area.
 - b. Reason: The single-family density required for the development necessitates less frontage than conventional lots. Space for driveways, sidewalks, and utilities leaves little room for street trees along the street. Additionally, the Town no longer desires street trees planted in the grass strip, so the street trees are being planted within 5-10' from the sidewalk edge further pushing trees into the lot. This naturally impedes on the space available for private utilities and walkways, etc. The result is an increased street tree spacing.
 - c. Additional Concessions: Each lot is required to plant at least one canopy tree. If the lot does not contain a street tree, it will have to plant a tree somewhere else on the lot. In effect, on the south area, this will require more trees than the requirement and more resulting canopy coverage. However, the trees will be located further from the street and sometimes in back yards.
- 16. <u>5-402 (c) Access to private common open space shall be paved with gravel, limestone dust or asphalt</u>
 - a. Applicant requests the use of grass trails for additional connections to open space beyond those already shown in asphalt.

b. Reason: Adequate access to open space already exists in the plan using asphalt trails; however the applicant is providing additional connections for each cul-de-sac and wants to keep it low maintenance, affordable, and mimic a nature trail as opposed to an ADA accessible area. At the connection locations shown to cul-de-sacs it is intentional that grass trails are chosen over any other material. Elevations in the bulbs are too steep to maintain an ADA accessibility, and while the Town may not require accessibility, users of asphalt come to expect that. If a trail were paved in these locations they would be steep, and misleading because they would empty users into a natural trail area once they reached the open space. We intend to set the expectation from the cul-de-sac that this is a natural experience, similar to the trails as they are laid out at Pandapas pond. Some are gravel, some are natural, but the user knows from the outset the expectations and experience they will have on that trail by the material. Signage will accompany these grass trails to make sure that is the expectation. Grass is the easiest to maintain for an HOA, is the least expensive, and resists erosion better than dust or gravel once stabilized. Both limestone dust and gravel were used at the Village at Tom's Creek along Village Way South and have failed miserably for several reasons: first, rainfall caused the gravel and limetone to erode linearly and wash into the grass adjacent; second the mowers struggled with projectile gravel when they tried to mow the grass that had been mixed with gravel. Kids play in the gravel; it becomes a nuisance and maintenance issue. After many iterations by the HOA and developer, they've landed on mulch which still erodes and requires routine maintenance. After having to install and reinstall this for the developer, the development team on this project will not make that same mistake. A grass trail not only warns the pedestrian user of the type of experience they about to enter into (natural), but it much easily maintained with a lawn mower. All of the grass trails within the development will be maintained by the HOA with mowing, as we've suggested in the narrative for the areas adjacent to the Managed Successional. As these trails are located adjacent to neighbor's grass yards, the consistency in maintenance will be much appreciated by both the HOA and private homeowner. Additional weed eating, pulling, and edging would accompany asphalt, gravel, or limetone dust trails and can create a safety issue with adjacent homeowners with lawn mowers at the interface. These areas would be considered impervious areas by DEQ, which we are trying to reduce. While we feel we meet the code requirement for access to our open space areas through the trail at B, D, and Road A, our intent is to provide additional walking trails and access to open space through natural hiking areas.

#10 Additional Exhibit



#11 and #13 Exhibits: Driveways in front of building line (Townhouses and Two-family dwellings): no more than two consecutive driveways of 18'



A101

GLADE SPRINGS SITE CONCEPTS

DRIVEWAY CONCEPT -VISUALS



































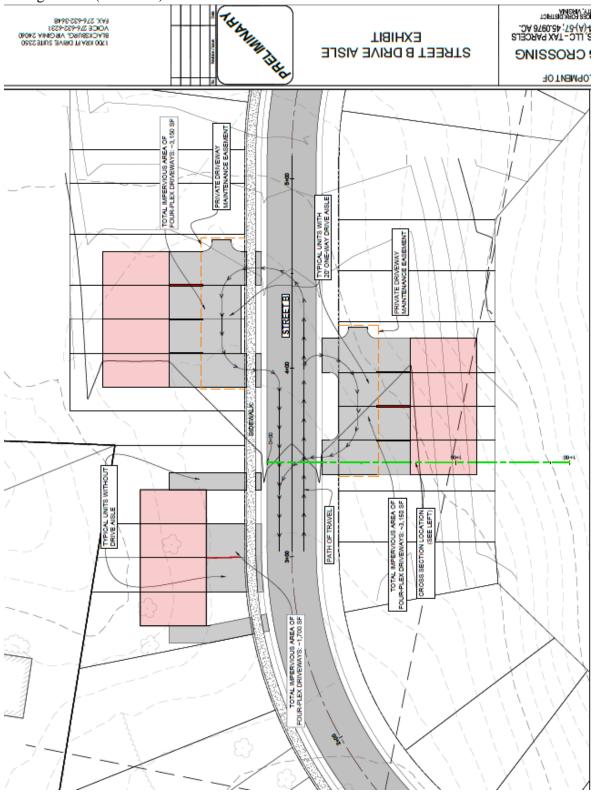




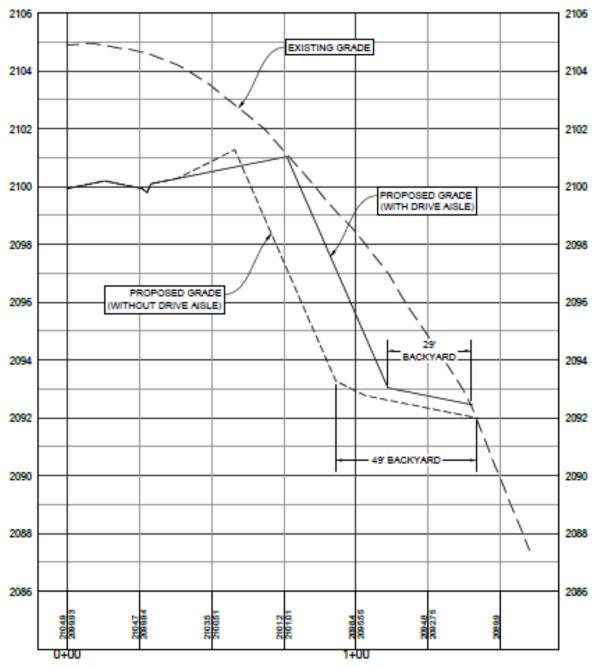




#14 Backing out of Townhouses: Exhibit looking at drive aisles and individual driveway configuration (from #11)



#14 continued:



STREET B CROSS SECTION
SCALE: 1"=20' HORIZ.; 1"=2' VERT.