Staff Report for Town Council

Meeting Date: July 18, 2019

19-REZ-05 Searstone Phase II PDD Amendment
Purpose: Conduct public hearing on proposed rezoning request

Prepared by: Debra Grannan, Planning and Development Services

Speaker: Debra Grannan, Planning and Development Services

Executive Summary: The applicant has requested that the Town consider an amendment to a portion of the previously approved Searstone Planned Development District (PDD) located at 17001 Searstone Drive and consisting of approximately 30.01 acres (map attached). The applicant, Samaritan Housing Foundation, Inc, is requesting to amend Phase II of the PDD. If approved, this amendment would realign a portion of the road network and reconfigure building locations and building footprints on a portion of the PDD. The proposal also removes the requirement to provide a conservatory building and adds three community gathering spaces. No increase to the previously approved maximum number of units or building heights or reductions to the existing perimeter buffers are proposed.

Recommendation: That Council conduct a public hearing on the proposed rezoning request and forward to the Planning and Zoning Board. Staff will provide a recommendation on the rezoning request when the case is brought back to Council for action.

Planning and Zoning Board Determination: A written determination of the Planning and Zoning Board regarding consistency with the Imagine Cary Community Plan will be provided to Town Council following the P&Z Board meeting.

NOTE: The purpose of the rezoning is to determine whether the land uses and densities allowed in the proposed zoning district are appropriate for the site. Technical design standards of the Land Development Ordinance are addressed during review of the site or subdivision plan.
Click on the map to see surrounding development activity.

### SUBJECT PARCELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Owner</th>
<th>County Parcel Numbers (10-digit) (PIN)</th>
<th>Real Estate IDs (REID)</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
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### HISTORY OF THE SEARSTONE PDD

The Searstone Planned Development District (PDD) is a 77-acre site that was originally approved as Sears Farm on March 14, 2002. The Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) portion of the PDD consists of 59 acres divided into three phases. The CCRC provides a combination of housing types, assisted living and health care. The remaining 16.3 acres is designated as “Village,” where allowed uses are limited to office, retail, and hotel. The overall PDD was modified in 2004 and 2008 to make minor adjustments to
building setbacks and building sizes and to change the name of the development to Searstone. Phase III of the CCRC was amended in 2015 to permit low multi-family residential units in addition to the duplex-style “cottages.” No development plan has been submitted for the multi-family portion of Phase III.

The currently proposed amendment applies to Phase II of the PDD, which is shown in and adjacent to the areas shaded in green below.

**Phasing Map**

| Location of Subject Properties | 17001 Searstone Drive |
### SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The applicant, Samaritan Housing Foundation, Inc, is requesting to amend Phase II of the Searstone Planned Development District (PDD) to realign a portion of the road network and reconfigure portions of the building locations and building footprints. The proposal also removes the previous requirement for the construction of a two-story 20,000 to 30,000 square foot conservatory and replaces that amenity feature with three additional community gathering spaces with a total area of 40,000 square feet. No increase to the previously approved maximum number of dwelling units or building heights are proposed, and no reductions to existing perimeter buffers are proposed.

The currently approved layout identified individual multi-family residential buildings. Residents would be required to walk outside to gain access to the recreation and dining facilities in the clubhouse building. There was also a two-lane median divide road that bisected the residential portion of the development. The applicant is proposing a new design intended to better serve...
the needs of the residents.

The applicant submitted a Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) (attached) to illustrate (in light grey) the proposed building layout and circulation plan and to indicate the location of the community gathering space. Principal elements of the plan are show below.

**Plan Details**

- Rather than bisecting the center of the residential community, Searstone Drive now terminates in a “motor court” area in front of the newly proposed residential building.

- The newly designed residential building also includes zoning conditions to require:
  - An auditorium with a minimum of 6,500 square feet
  - A dining room with a minimum of 3,300 square feet
  - A café with a minimum of 2,500 square feet

- Community Gathering Space 1 would provide at least three of the following:
  - Walking paths
  - Gazebo
  - Benches
  - Art
Community Gathering Spaces 2 and 3 would provide at least two of the following:
- Walking path
- Benches or seating
- Stormwater overlook
- Outdoor living space

**SUMMARY OF PROCESS AND ACTIONS TO DATE**

**Notification**
Notice of the public hearing on the proposed rezoning was mailed to property owners within 800 feet of the subject property, published on the Town’s website and posted on the subject property. Required mailed notification distances are noted in the table below; the Town exceeds the minimum mandated by state law and the Land Development Ordinance (LDO).

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Notification Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina General Statute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Cary Land Development Ordinance</td>
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<td>Town of Cary Practice</td>
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**Neighborhood Meeting**
A neighborhood meeting for the proposed rezoning was facilitated by Planning staff at Cary Town Hall on April 3, 2019. According to the information submitted by the applicant, four nearby property owners attended the meeting. Questions shared at the meeting were related to the general rezoning and development process. The residents voiced strong support for the proposed amendments. Comments are summarized in the attached meeting minutes submitted by the applicant.

A second community meeting was hosted by the applicant at the Searstone Winston Clubhouse on June 13, 2019. Five adjacent property owners and three residents attended that meeting. Two of the adjacent property owners expressed concerns about the development not meeting many of the aesthetic promises they expected and that the retail uses were not what they anticipated. One of the residents of Searstone stated that the residents did not want the traffic that might be associated with a large conservatory on the site.

Attached are the applicant’s responses to the justification questions contained in the application form. Please note that these statements are that of the applicant and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Town of Cary.

**SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT**
CARY COMMUNITY PLAN CONFORMANCE AND ANALYSIS

Attached is a complete list of each policy statement in the 2040 Imagine Cary Community Plan. Based on staff review and analysis of the descriptions and detailed intent of all the Plan’s policies, staff identified specific policies applicable to this case and has provided an analysis of the extent to which the proposed rezoning conforms to these policies and recommendations.

LIVE Policies

The Town’s LIVE policies respond to the housing challenges and opportunities facing Cary by:

- Providing a variety of housing choices
- Meeting new household needs
- Maintaining high quality established neighborhoods

Applicable Policies:

- Maintain Neighborhood Character (Policy 1)
- Provide More Housing Choices for All Residents (Policy 2)
- Provide for More Housing Options in New Neighborhoods (Policy 3)
- Provide the Greatest Variety of Housing Options in Mixed Use Centers (Policy 4)
- Support Residential Development on Infill and Redevelopment Sites (Policy 5)

Staff Observations: The proposed amendment modifies the design of the original PDD to achieve higher functionality with the multi-family residential building by allowing residents to more easily move between buildings without needing to go outdoors. The plan also provides new dining and entertainment options within one of the proposed residential buildings. The
new layout of the buildings and associated open space recognizes the character and the quality of the existing neighborhood, and the preservation of existing buffer requirements limits impacts to adjacent property owners.

**WORK Policies**

*The Town’s WORK policies respond to economic challenges and opportunities facing Cary by:*

- Maintaining a strong and diverse local economy
- Providing a variety of employment options

**Applicable policies:**

*Retain and Grow Existing Cary Businesses (Policy 3)*

**Staff Observations:** Searstone provides both housing and employment opportunities for the community. As a Continuing Care Retirement Community, the development is staffed with healthcare providers, administrative staff, housekeepers, kitchen staff, wait staff and maintenance workers. Expansion of the dining facilities in the new residential building add employment opportunities to the site.

**ENGAGE Policies**

**Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources Master Plan Goals**

Maintain a diverse and balanced park and open space system as the Town of Cary grows. (Goal 1)

Provide Cary citizens with a highly functional, safe, well-maintained greenway network that provides recreation, transportation, and education opportunities and wildlife benefits. (Goal 2)

Incorporate best management and planning practices to ensure quality services and efficient use of resources. (Goal 9)

The proposed amendment does not impact the greenway trail proposed along the eastern edge of the site, adjacent to Walker Stone Drive. The streetside trail will be required with the remaining High House Road improvements when Phase III of the PDD is developed.

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Master Plan does not identify any other greenway corridors or future parks within the subject site.

In considering Goal 9, staff considered the loss of the conservatory amenity feature. Beyond describing a minimum 20,000 square foot and a maximum 30,000 square foot size, the existing PDD document does not describe how this feature was intended to operate and who it was to serve. The current proposal of Community Gathering Features, with a requirement for walking trails, benches or other amenities provides an opportunity for passive outdoor recreation. The amendment also includes a requirement for a minimum 6,500 square foot auditorium, which creates indoor educational or entertainment options for residents.
SHAPE Policies

The Town’s SHAPE policies guide future growth by:

- Supporting the Town’s economic development efforts
- Efficiently using existing and planned infrastructure
- Ensuring the Town’s fiscal health
- Maintaining the high quality of development found today

Applicable policies:
Provide Appropriate Transitions Between Land Uses (Policy 6)

The Future Growth Framework Map designates the subject site with the “Commercial Center Mixed Use” development category.

Staff Observations: No change is proposed to the existing 50-foot wide Type-A buffer along the southern edge of the Searstone development. A 100-foot wide stream buffer is located between the subject property and the Preston Forest neighborhood to the east. In addition to this regulated buffer area, the PDD provides a landscape buffer with a variable width between 20 and 27 feet. These features and buffers provide appropriate transitions between the CCRC development and the adjacent single-family neighborhoods.
Cary’s MOVE policies are designed to respond to transportation challenges and opportunities:

- Provide an efficient, functional, and well-designed transportation system
- Allow mobility choices

Ensure Safety for All Users and Modes (Policy 1)
Apply Multimodal Street Designs (Policy 2)
Design Transportation Infrastructure to Address Land Use Context (Policy 3)
Ensure a Well-Maintained System (Policy 8)

Cary’s transportation requirements for development reflect the Move Chapter policies. Planned improvements illustrated on the adopted Move chapter maps were developed to ensure the safety and accommodation of all users and modes, reflect land use considerations, provide additional system connections, close gaps, and minimize thoroughfare widths wherever possible.

**High House Rd**

**Existing Cross Section:** 4-lane divided roadway with street-side trail to the north and sidewalk to the south of the road. The right-of-way varies along the property’s frontage between 110 and 120 ft. East of Lilly Ridge Rd, the street-side trail crosses to the south of the street before narrowing to a sidewalk.

**Future Cross Section:** The travel lanes are built to the ultimate cross-section as provided in the Town’s Planned Roadway Widths map. To be consistent with the PRCR Master Plan, the
street-side trail on the south side of the road will be required when Phase III of the PDD is developed.

**Davis Drive**

**Existing Cross Section:** 4-lane divided roadway with street-side trail on the west and sidewalk on the east side of the road. The right-of-way varies along the property’s frontage between 90 and 110 ft, widening when turn lanes are needed at intersections.

**Future Cross Section:** Davis Dr is built to its ultimate cross-section as provided in the Town’s Planned Roadway Widths map.

**Notes:**
1) Streets in Cary are typically constructed or widened in increments, with developers completing the half-width section along their frontage when the property is developed.
2) Construction of other off-site improvements may be voluntarily offered as zoning conditions by applicants for rezoning cases.
3) NCDOT may require additional off-site improvements.

**Transit:** GoCary Route 4 serves High House Rd. approximately 1,500 feet north of the subject property.

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**KEY REQUIREMENTS FROM THE LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

**LANDSCAPE BUFFERS AND STREETSCAPES**
The existing PDD requires a 50-foot wide Type-A buffer along the southern property line, a 30-foot wide Type A Streetscape adjacent to Davis Drive and a variable width (between 20.6 feet and 27.2 feet) Type A buffer adjacent to a 100-foot wide stream buffer along the eastern property line. No reductions to these streetscapes or buffers are proposed with this amendment.

**TRAFFIC**
The proposed amendment does not increase the number of dwelling units analyzed in the traffic study (07-TAR-236A) that was completed with the original rezoning or change the intensity of any of the existing uses; therefore, no traffic study was required.

**STORMWATER**
The Town has specific stormwater and floodplain management requirements for new development that must be addressed during the development plan review process to satisfy Cary’s Land Development Ordinance. These new development requirements are established to mitigate potential flooding impacts and to enhance water quality of our streams while protecting current and future residents of Cary. These protections are provided comprehensively as follows:

- During development plan review, address improving stormwater and floodplain management by addressing the potential for replacing aging and inadequate infrastructure, as allowed and applicable.
During construction, provide sedimentation and erosion control measures to prevent transport of sediment from the construction site.

In perpetuity, limit the stormwater runoff from new development to pre-development site conditions with approved stormwater control measures (SCM’s) that restrict stormwater flow leaving the site to engineered limits.

Upon completion of the post-construction SCM’s and prior to final acceptance of the new development, require independent certification that they will function as designed and require provisions for the ongoing maintenance of the SCM’s to protect quantity and enhance the quality of stormwater leaving the site in perpetuity.

**No change is proposed the existing PDD condition that states:**
Stormwater discharge from this site shall not exceed the predevelopment discharge for the 50-year storm.

**NEXT STEPS**

Council may forward the case to the Planning and Zoning Board for their review and recommendation. After making a recommendation, the Planning and Zoning Board will forward the case back to Council for final action.

**DRAFT ORDINANCE FOR CONSIDERATION**

**REZONING ORDINANCE**

19-REZ-05 Searstone Phase II Planned Development District Amendment

An Ordinance to amend Phase II of the previously approved Searstone Planned Development District (PDD) located at 17001 Searstone to realign a portion of the road network, to reconfigure residential building locations and design, to remove the requirement for a conservatory building and to provide additional community gathering space.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CARY:

**Section 1:** The Official Zoning Map is hereby amended by rezoning the area described as follows:

**PARCEL & OWNER INFORMATION**

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Section 2:

That this Property is rezoned, subject to the individualized development conditions set forth in the “Searstone Planned Development District” document originally approved by the Town Council on February 19, 2008, including all amendments thereto, and on file in the Planning and Development Services Department, as amended by the “Searstone PDD Phase II Amendment” document approved by the Town Council as of this date and to be filed in the Planning and Development Services Department, and subject to all the requirements of the Cary Land Development Ordinance (LDO) and other applicable laws, standards, policies and guidelines, all of which shall constitute the zoning regulations for the approved district and are binding on the Property.

Section 3:

The conditions proposed by the applicant to address conformance of the development and use of the Property to ordinances and officially adopted plans, to address impacts reasonably expected to be generated by the rezoning, and to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, and accepted and approved by the Town are set forth in the “Searstone Planned Development District document originally approved by the Town Council on February 19, 2008 including all amendments thereto, and on file in the Planning and Development Services Department, as amended by the “Searstone PDD Phase II Amendment” document approved by the Town Council as of this date and to be filed in the Planning and Development Services Department.

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