

ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: SP2024-25: 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales	Staff: Khris Taggart, Senior Planner I Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager
Planning Commission (PC) Hearing: April 08, 2025	Board of Supervisors (BOS) Hearing: TBD
Owner: Charlottesville Rio Rd LLC	Applicant: Valerie Long, Williams Mullen
Acreage: Approximately 8.524 acres	Special Use Permit for: Outdoor storage, display and sales serving or associated with a permitted use in accordance with Section 30.6.3.a.2(b) of the Zoning Ordinance on approximately 8.524 acres. No dwelling units proposed.
Tax Map Parcel (TMP): 4500-00-00-025C0, 04500-00-00-025C1	Zoning/by-right use: Light Industrial – industrial, office, and limited commercial uses (no residential use)
Magisterial District: Rio	Location: 400 Rio Road W
School Districts: Agnor-Hurt – Elementary, Burnley – Middle, and Albemarle – High	Conditions: Yes
Development Area: Neighborhood 1 – Places 29	Requested # of Dwelling Units/Lots: N/A
Proposal(s): Establish outdoor storage, display, and sales of plumbing materials and equipment	Comp. Plan Designation: Rural Area – Preserve and protect agricultural, forestal, open space, and natural, historic and scenic resources; residential (0.5 unit/ acre in development lots)
Character of Property: Both parcels are mostly paved, and a chain link fence surrounds much of the paved area. The property features two structures: a brick-faced office building located on the front parcel close to Rio Rd. and a large metal shed on the rear parcel.	Use of Surrounding Properties: Residential uses predominate in the surrounding area along Rio Rd. An additional Light Industrial parcel is adjacent to the west.
Factors Favorable: 1. The proposed outdoor storage, display and sales use is consistent with the Entrance Corridor (EC) Design Guidelines if the ARB's recommended conditions are upheld.	Factors Unfavorable: 1. None.
Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of SP202400025 with conditions.	

STAFF CONTACT:

Khris Taggart, Senior Planner I;
Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager
April 08, 2025
TBD

PLANNING COMMISSION:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

PETITION:

PROJECT: SP202400025 400 Rio Rd. W Outdoor Storage and Display

TAX MAP PARCEL: 4500-00-00-025C0, 04500-00-00-025C1

LOCATION: 400 Rio Road W

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rio

PROJECT INFORMATION: Special use permit request to establish outdoor storage, display, and sales of plumbing materials and equipment visible from the Entrance Corridor Overlay District

CHARACTER OF THE AREA:

This parcel is located on the north side of Rio Rd., approximately 1349' east of Earlysville Road (see Attachment 1). The property features two structures: a brick-faced office building located on the front parcel close to Rio Rd. and a large metal shed on the rear parcel. Residential uses predominate in the general vicinity.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY:

A portion of the property was rezoned from R-3 to M-1 in 1970. The approved site development plan, SDP 1986-00047, allowed the existing site improvements. The rezoning action letter and the approved site plan are included in the applicant's narrative (Attachment 2). On January 21, 2025, the ARB reviewed the Special Use Permit request for outdoor storage. During that meeting, the ARB requested revisions to the concept plan, to be reviewed by the ARB prior to Planning Commission review. On March 3, 2025, the ARB reviewed the revised concept plan and voted unanimously to recommend no objection to the request, with recommended conditions. The action letters from the ARB meetings are included as Attachments 5 and 7 to this report. After the ARB action, the concept plan was updated to clarify where materials and equipment taller than the fence height can be stored.

COMMUNITY MEETING

The applicants conducted the required community meeting on February 10, 2025, as part of the Places29-Hydraulic Community Advisory Committee meeting. There were questions about the general development of the property but no comments about the special use permit.

DETAILS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT PROPOSAL:

The applicant proposes to establish outdoor storage, display, and sales (storage) of plumbing materials and equipment associated with a wholesale plumbing business (Ferguson Enterprises). The storage area, encompassing approximately 99,540 sf, is shown to the north and west of the existing brick-faced building. The materials to be stored include pipes, valves, fittings, drainage solutions, and safety equipment. A more detailed list of materials can be found in the applicant's narrative (Attachment 2). The proposal includes three primary site changes along the Rio side of the storage area to mitigate the visual impacts of the proposed use: a berm, landscaping, and a metal picket fence. New landscaping is also proposed at the employee parking lot and the southwest corner of the site to further limit visibility, and between the main building and the street to screen existing equipment and generally coordinate and improve appearances. (See Attachment 3 for the proposed concept plan.)

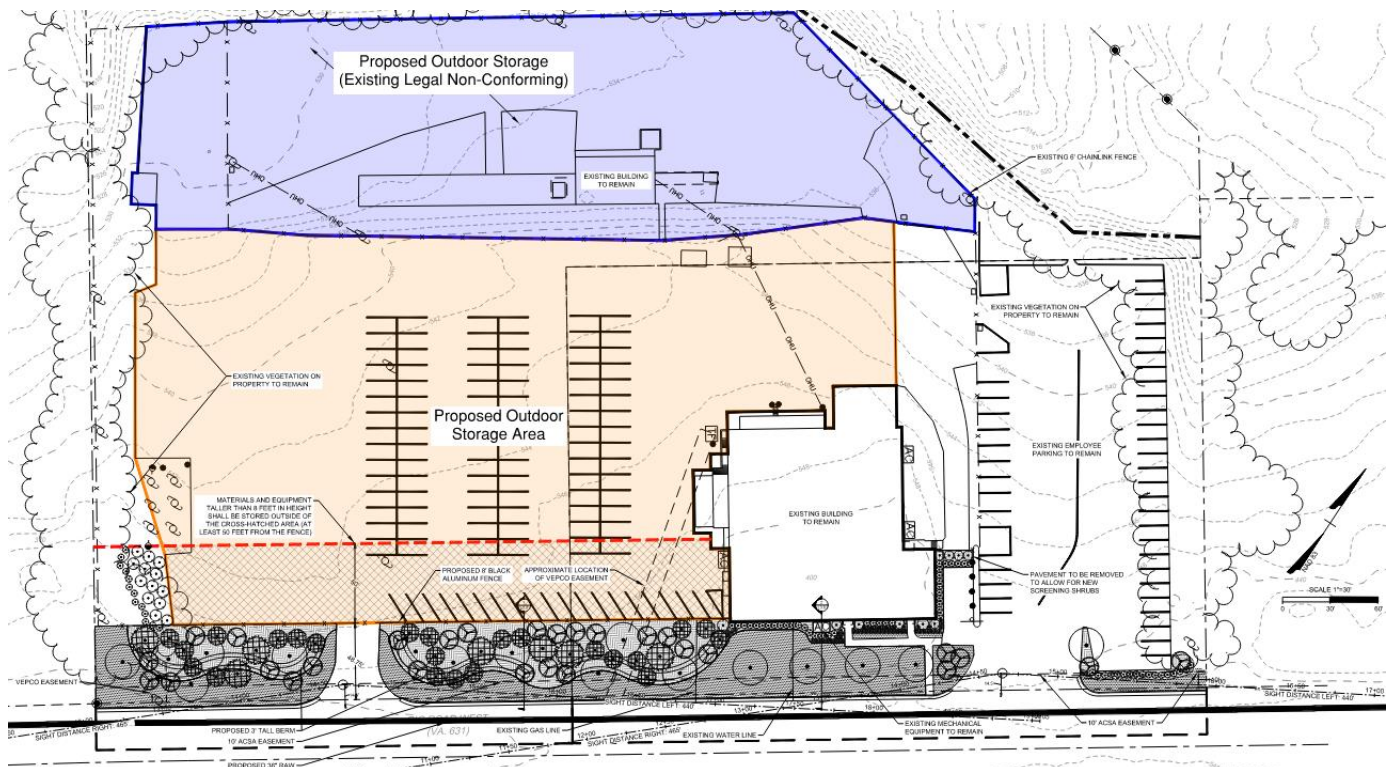


Fig. 1: Proposed concept plan with the outdoor storage area shaded in orange. (See attachment 3 for a higher resolution image.)

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST

Special Use Permits (SP) for outdoor storage, display and/or sales are reviewed under Sec. 30.6.3.a.2.b of the Zoning Ordinance and factors to be considered are limited to “determining whether the outdoor storage, display and/or sales is consistent with the applicable design guidelines”.

The applicable design guidelines are the EC Design Guidelines (the Guidelines). The Architectural Review Board (ARB) applies those Guidelines in its review of development proposals within the County's ECs and applied the Guidelines in its review of this request on January 21, 2025. The ARB found the concept plan inconsistent with the guideline related to the screening of storage areas from the view of the EC and requested revisions to the plan. The applicant revised the concept plan to address ARB and site review committee concerns by showing that the existing vegetation along the eastern and western perimeters of the site will remain and adding screening shrubs in three locations: along a portion of the

western perimeter of the site, directly east of the building, and in the planting area along the frontage east of the entrance to the employee parking lot. (Conceptual renderings of the site and the view from the EC can be found in the ARB staff report and memo, Attachments 4 and 6.) Concerns were further addressed by limiting where materials and equipment taller than the 8' fence along Rio Rd. can be stored. These changes better satisfy the EC requirements by reducing the visibility of the storage area from the street.

After reviewing the revisions to the concept plan presented at the March 3rd meeting, the ARB voted unanimously to recommend no objection to the request, with recommended conditions. The conditions are listed in the ARB action letter (Attachment 7) and included in those listed below. (The second condition has been revised since the March 3rd action letter to align with the updated concept plan.)

SUMMARY:

After revisions to the plan to more closely align the proposal with the EC Guidelines regarding screening of storage areas, the ARB recommended no objection to the proposal. Consequently, staff have identified the following factors of this proposal which are favorable and unfavorable:

Factors favorable to this request include:

1. The proposed outdoor storage, display and sales use is consistent with the EC Design Guidelines if the ARB's recommended conditions are upheld.

Factors unfavorable to this request include:

1. None.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Special Use Permit

Based on the findings described in this report and factors identified as favorable, **staff recommends approval of special use permit application SP20240025 with the following conditions.**

1. Use of this site must be in general accord with the 400 Rio Rd. W Conceptual Layout Plan by Timmons Group dated March 07, 2025. To be in general accord:
 - a. Materials and equipment must be stored only in areas indicated for storage on the Concept Plan; and
 - b. The security fence must be a metal picket style and is subject to ARB approval with the final site plan.
2. Materials and equipment taller than the fence height must be stored outside of the cross-hatched area as shown on the Concept Plan.
3. Site plan approval is subject to ARB approval of the landscape plan (submitted with the site plan). Landscaping shown on the plan may be required to exceed the minimum requirements of the ARB guidelines and/or the Zoning Ordinance to mitigate the visual impacts of the proposed use.
4. Any new lighting is subject to ARB approval. Maximum light levels must not exceed 20 footcandles. The maximum height of pole lights must not exceed 20'. All fixtures must have lamps whose color temperature is between 2000 and 3000 Kelvin. All site- and building-mounted fixtures must be full cutoff.

POSSIBLE PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS – SP202400025: 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales

- A. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend approval** of this special use permit:
I move to recommend approval of SP202400025: 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales with the conditions outlined in the staff report.
- B. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend approval** of this special use permit with revised conditions:
I move to recommend approval of SP202400025: 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales with the conditions outlined in the staff report, amended as follows (state amendments).
- C. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:
I move to recommend denial of SP202400025: 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales for (state reasons for denial).

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attach 1 – [SP2024-25 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales - Location Map](#)
- Attach 2 – [SP2024-25 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales - Application Materials: Special Use Permit Project Narrative](#)
- Attach 3 – [SP2024-25 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales - Application Materials: Conceptual Layout Plan](#)
- Attach 4 – [SP2024-25 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales - ARB Staff Report January 21, 2025](#)
- Attach 5 – [SP2024-25 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales - ARB Action Letter January 28, 2025](#)
- Attach 6 – [SP2024-25 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales - ARB Memo March 3, 2025](#)
- Attach 7 – [SP2024-25 400 Rio Rd. W Storage, Display, and Sales - ARB Action Letter March 3, 2025](#)