

STAFF ANALYSIS

STAFF PERSON: J.T. Newberry, Senior Planner II
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: July 15, 2026
PROJECT: SE-2026-00013 RWSA Pump Station Modification
TAX MAP PARCEL: 03200-00-00-041A2

PROPOSAL

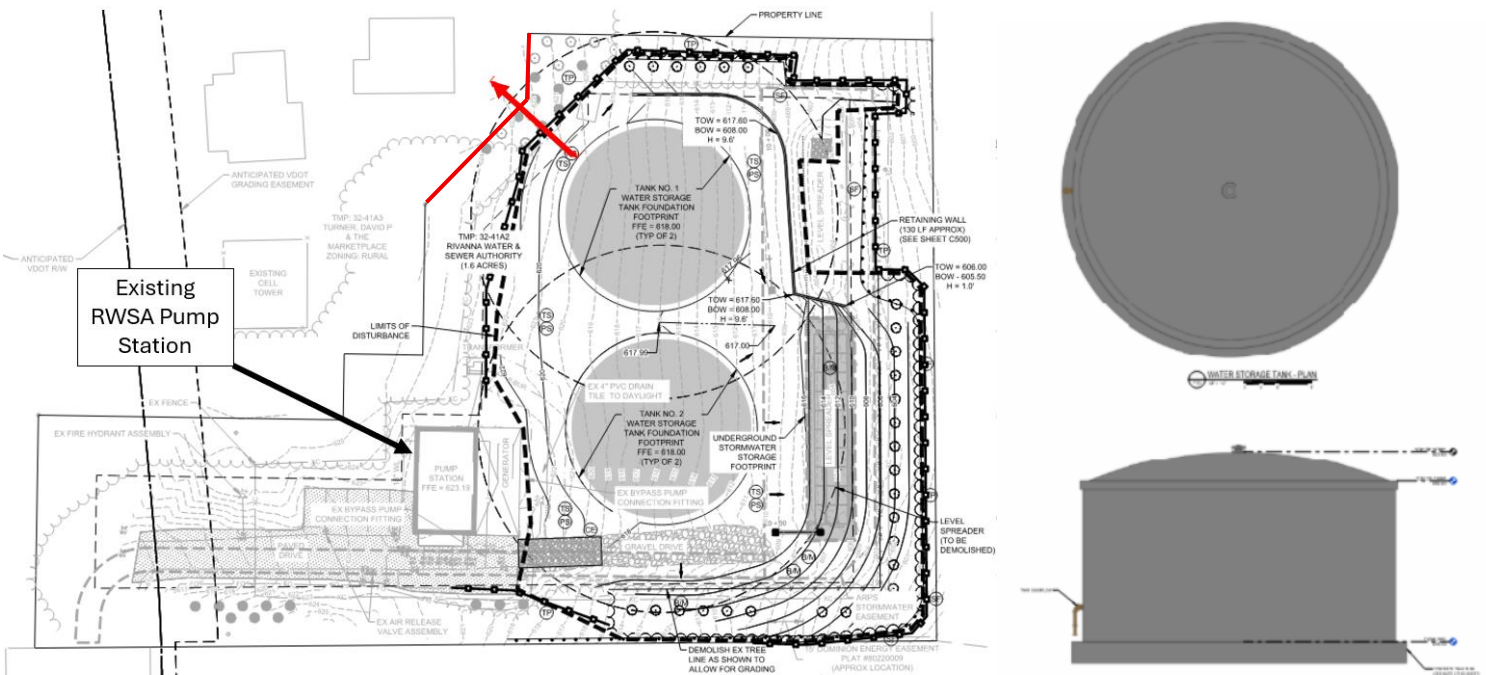
Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) is proposing to install two one-million-gallon ground water tanks behind the existing RWSA pump station at 4384 Berkmar Drive. The tanks are approximately 75 feet in diameter and their side walls are approximately 40 feet tall. The tank design includes a domed roof and roof vent, which yields a total structure height of 49 feet.

The property is zoned RA Rural Areas and County Code §18-10.4 limits structures to 35' in height. Certain types of structures are exempt from the height limitation set forth in the County Code, including water tanks. However, County Code §18-4.10.3.1(b)(1) prohibits these structures from being "located closer in distance to any lot line than the height of the structure" itself. As a result, these structures have a setback that is equal to their height to all property lines. The setbacks of the RA district do not apply in this circumstance.

The applicant requests a modification from the required structure setback in County Code §18-4.10.3.1(b)(1), which prohibits certain types of structures from being "located closer in distance to any lot line than the height of the structure." In this case, a 49-foot setback is applicable to the proposed water tanks, and the north water tank encroaches on the setback from a side lot line by approximately 17 feet at its maximum point.

The applicant requests a modification to reduce the required setback for the north water tank by 17 feet. The proposed modification would establish a setback of 32 feet for the north water tank instead of 49 feet.

The images below show the locations and elevations of the proposed water tanks. The red arrow highlights the estimated encroachment of the north water tank on the side lot line.



CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The existing RWSA pump station is located at the end of Berkmar Drive, and south of Airport Road on a 1.6-acre property. There is a mix of vacant and developed properties in the area. MicroAire is located northwest of the subject property. Hollymead Town Center (Area C) is located to the west and south of the subject property. This section of Hollymead Town Center includes developed residential blocks along Laurel Park Lane and Timberwood Blvd, as well as the Staybridge Suites hotel. There are also vacant blocks, Blocks 7 and 9, which are immediately south of the subject property. The property to the north contains one single-family residence and an approximately 148' tall lattice cell phone tower. An existing self-service storage facility is located behind the existing pump station to the east.

Currently, there is a site plan (SDP-2026-00042) under review for the proposed improvements, along with an Architectural Review Board application (ARB-2026-00009) as the property is visible from an Entrance Corridor of Airport Road.

ANALYSIS OF VARIATION REQUEST

Under County Code § 18-33.9(A), factors, standards, criteria, and findings, however denominated, in the applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance, are to be considered in special exception applications.

Under County Code §18-4.10.3.1(c), the Board of Supervisors may modify or waive the setback requirement in an individual case if it determines that the public health, safety or welfare would be equally or better served by the modification or waiver. No additional factors, standards, criteria, or findings for the proposed special exceptions are required.

The required determination listed in §18-4.10.3.1(c) is analyzed below:

(1) Whether the public health, safety or welfare would be equally or better served by the modification or waiver;

Staff does not believe that a reduction of setback from 49 feet to 32 feet for a 49 foot tall structure would pose any public health, safety, or welfare issues. The setback reduction is limited to one property corner. The RA Zoning district requires structures to be setback from side property lines 25 feet and rear property lines 35 feet. The reduction to 32 feet, compared to RA setbacks is minimal. The proposed site plan includes adequate buffering and landscaping to side property lines and tanks will be designed to meet all applicable building code safety regulations.

In addition, the proposed modification enables a project to proceed that is directly supportive of Objectives CF1 and CF2 of the Community Facilities and Infrastructure chapter of AC44.

Objective CF1 seeks to "Provide public facilities... to serve existing and future community needs." and Objective CF2 seeks to "Provide access to public water and sewer in the Development Areas and county consistent with the Growth Management Policy."

A substantial portion of the County's future public and private development will occur within the service area served by the proposed water tanks, including projects such as but not limited to Hollymead Town Center, Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport (CHO), North Fork, and Rivanna Futures.

The applicant's justification for the modification, notes "recent commercial development plans for the northern service have accelerated the need for these improvements and it is anticipated that tanks are needed to be online by Q4 2027 to continue to supply adequate level of service to the customers in the northern service area." RWSA also indicates the tanks "will ensure residents of the northern service area have uninterrupted

access to safe, reliable drinking water as the area continues to develop and require additional water supply. Access to clean drinking water is necessary to protect the public health and welfare.”

Staff finds the public health, safety or welfare would be equally or better served by the modification or waiver.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment E) to grant the proposed special exception to County Code §18-4.10.3.1(b)(1).