



**COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
PLANNING STAFF REPORT SUMMARY**

Project Name: ZMA202300008 – High School Center II at Albemarle High School	Staff: Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager
Planning Commission Public Hearing: November 28, 2023	Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: January 17, 2024
Owner: County of Albemarle School Board	Applicant: Building Services, Albemarle County Public Schools
Acreage: 216.7 acres	Rezone from: RA Rural Areas to R10 Residential
TMPs: 06000-00-00-078A0 Location: 2775 Hydraulic Road	By-right use: RA Rural Area - agricultural, forestal, and fishery uses; residential density (0.5 unit/acre in development lots)
Magisterial Districts: Jack Jouett	Proffers: Yes, potentially
Proposal: Rezone a 9.9-acre portion of the 216.7-acre Lambs Lane Campus, along the Hydraulic Road frontage, from RA to R-10 for the construction of a new High School Center II. Public uses, like schools are allowed in all zoning districts. The rezoning is to allow reduced setbacks and flexibility in building height.	Requested # of Dwelling Units: No dwelling units are requested.
DA (Development Area) – Property is in the Rural Area, adjacent to the Places 29 Development Area	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) in Rural Area 1 of the Comprehensive Plan
Character of Property: The area subject to the proposed rezoning includes existing parking areas and Building Services buildings. The parcel is the campus of Greer Elementary School, Journey Middle School, and Albemarle High School, with associated athletic fields, and parking areas. It also includes bus and vehicle maintenance facilities and the recently constructed Boys & Girls Club.	Use of Surrounding Properties: Surrounding properties to the north, west, and south are zoned for Rural Area uses and are primarily undeveloped. Abutting properties to the southeast are developed as single-family attached residences, known as Georgetown Green, which are zoned R6 Residential. The eastern boundary of the property borders Hydraulic Road, and parcels on the east side of Hydraulic Road consist of a mixture of commercial and residential uses.
Positive Aspects: 1. The proposed rezoning will not create substantial detriment to adjacent properties. 2. The proposed rezoning will allow development consistent with the character of the nearby area. 3. The proposed use is consistent with many recommendations from Community Facilities chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.	Concerns: 1. Typically, rezonings to more intensive zoning districts are not encouraged in the Rural Area. However, this rezoning will allow more efficient use of an already developed public school facility.
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the rezoning request.	

STAFF PERSON:
PLANNING COMMISSION:
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Rebecca Ragsdale
November 28, 2023
January 17, 2024

ZMA202300008 – High School Center II at Albemarle High School

PETITION

PROJECT: ZMA202300008 High School Center II at Albemarle High School

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Jack Jouett

TAX MAP/PARCELS: 06000-00-00-078A0

LOCATION: 2775 Hydraulic Road, between Lambs Road and Georgetown Green

PROPOSAL: Rezone 9.9 acres from RA Rural Area - agricultural, forestal, and fishery uses; residential density (0.5 unit/acre in development lots) to R-10 Residential - 10 units/acre

PETITION: Rezone a 9.9 acre portion of the 216.7 acre Lambs Lane Campus, along the Hydraulic Road frontage, from RA to R-10 for the construction of a new High School Center. Public uses, like schools are allowed in all zoning districts. The rezoning is to allow reduced setbacks and flexibility in building height and residential uses are not proposed.

OVERLAY DISTRICTS: Entrance Corridor, Airport Impact Area

PROFFERS: Yes

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 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 THE AREA

The school property is approximately 216.69 acres, located in a developed area of the county, adjacent to the Development Area. The property fronts on Hydraulic Road, which acts as the boundary of the Development Area of Neighborhood 1 - Places 29 to the east and the Rural Areas to the west. Generally, Hydraulic Road runs on a ridge with property to the west (including this property) draining to the reservoir and property to the east draining away from the reservoir. The area subject to the proposed rezoning includes existing parking areas and Building Services buildings. The parcel is the campus of Greer Elementary School, Journey Middle School, and Albemarle High School, with associated athletic fields, and parking areas. It also includes bus and vehicle maintenance facilities and the recently constructed Boys & Girls Club. Other portions of the site are wooded, and there are areas of critical slopes and stream buffer. (Attachment 1-Location Map, Attachment 2-Zoning Map, Attachment 3-Comprehensvie Plan Map)

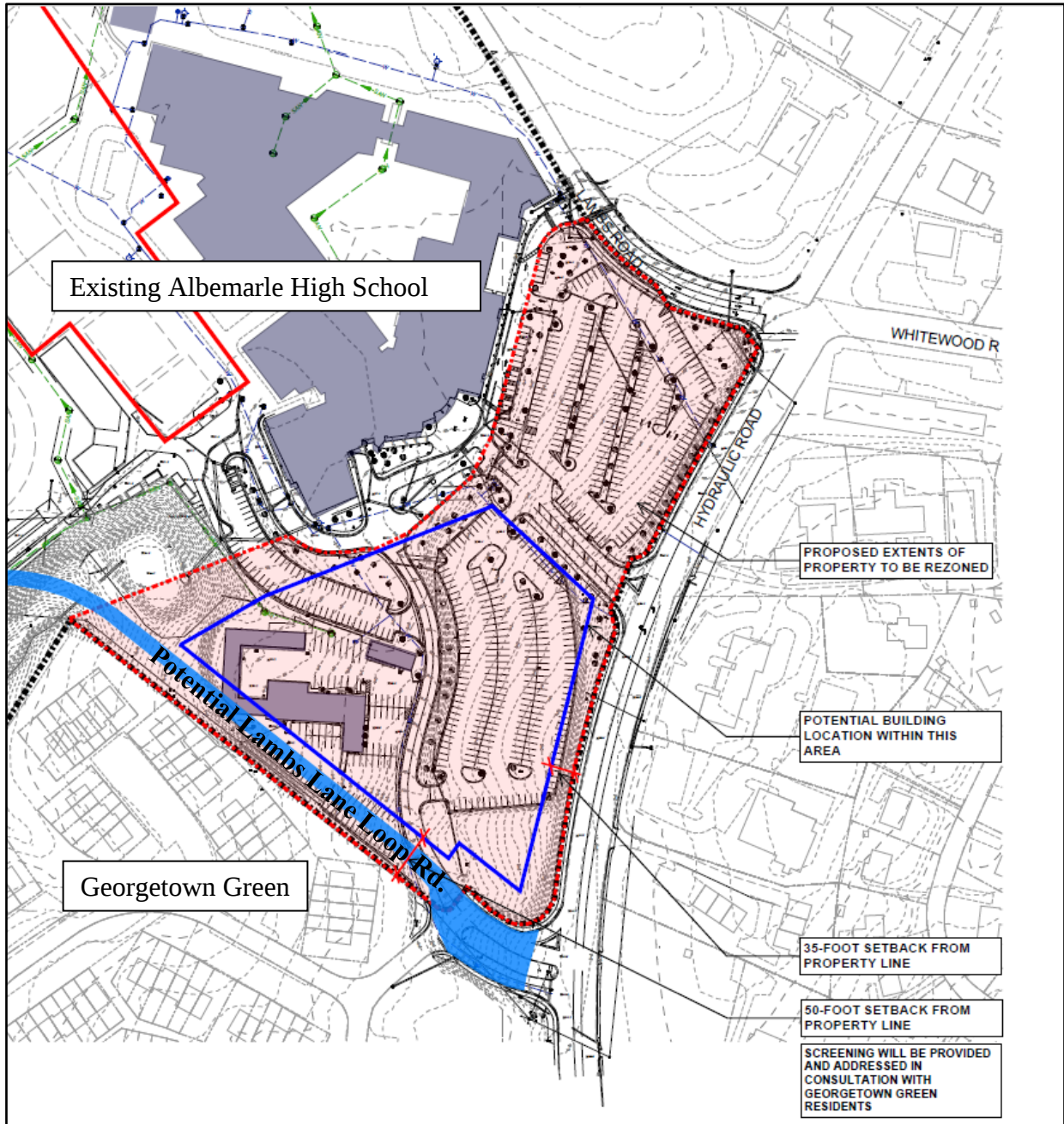
Directly across from the school, east of Hydraulic Road, is developed with a mix of high density institutional, residential, and commercial uses on small lots, under an acre in size. North of the school is developed with single family homes on heavily wooded lots ranging from 2 acres to 12 acres in size. West of the school development is comprised of larger rural lots ranging from 12 acres to 156 acres, some vacant and heavily wooded, others developed with single family homes, and others remain as farmland. South of the school is fully developed with a mix of attached multifamily units and single family detached homes on lots ranging from 0. 53 acres to 6 acres in size. Adjacent to the monopole site, along the southern border of the property is Georgetown Green Subdivision which consists of 110 multifamily attached units on small lots less than half an acre.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY

Albemarle High School was constructed on the parcel in 1953. Greer Elementary was constructed in 1977 and Journey in 1977. More recently, the Boys and Girls Club was constructed in 2023.

SPECIFICS OF THE PROPOSAL

A narrative (Attachment 4) and concept plan (Attachment 5) have been provided with this request. Proffers are mentioned in the narrative, but a proffer statement has not yet been provided to limit uses on the site and provide a commitment to setbacks and building height. The proposed area to be rezoned is outlined in red below and the building envelope for High School Center II is below.



The rezoning is requested to allow flexibility in building design for the proposed High School Center II. The proposed center would host up to 400 students with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math specialties in a range of flexible lab and studio spaces. Detailed information is provided in the project narrative.

The RA Rural Areas district requires a 75' maximum setback from Hydraulic Road. There are no special exception provisions in the RA district for setbacks. The R10 district allows a 5' minimum front setback and a 25' maximum setback. A 35' minimum setback is proposed from Hydraulic Road. A special exception (SE202300039) must be approved to allow a greater setback than 25'. The concept plan does not indicate a greater setback from Lambs Road. A minimum of 50' setback is proposed to the property line shared with Georgetown Green along with proposed buffer/screening to the neighborhood. The RA Zoning District has a maximum height limit of 35'. The R10 Zoning District allows a building height of up to 65'. However, a maximum building height of 40' is proposed. Additional parking is proposed where tennis courts are currently located and will be replaced on-site. Planning is still underway for the Lambs Lane Loop Road but the concept plan for High School Center II reflects the preferred alignment and there would be no conflicts with the new building.

COMMUNITY MEETING and COMMUNITY MEMBER INPUT

An in-person community meeting was held for this proposal on September 11, 2023, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Places 29 Hydraulic Advisory Committee (CAC). At the meeting, questions were asked of the applicant by both CAC members and community members. Questions were asked about potential traffic impacts, the future Lambs Lane Loop Rd., generator noise, concerns were from Georgetown Green residents regarding students parking and loitering in their neighborhood.

Since the initial community meeting, Schools has held a meeting with Georgetown Green residents in person at Albemarle High School on November 6, 2023, as well as attending the Georgetown Green HOA meeting held via Zoom on November 16, 2023. Those meetings were another opportunity to provide further updates on the High School Center II project and Loop Road planning, along with how Schools plans to address neighbor concerns.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan ([Chapter 7](#)) designates this parcel Rural Area, which encourages agricultural, forestry, and conservation uses. New schools are encouraged to be in the Development Area. However, this is an already developed parcel with a great percentage of wooded areas remaining. Proposed development is within the existing developed areas of the campus.

The Community Facilities Chapter ([Chapter 12](#)) focuses on the importance of planning and providing necessary public facilities in Albemarle County. Objective 3 stresses the importance of providing physical facilities that enable Albemarle County Public Schools system to provide high quality educational system for Albemarle County students. There are several relevant objectives and strategies listed in Chapter 12. Those most applicable to the rezoning are listed below. As stated, the rezoning is to facilitate the location and form of the new school building, but the use is already allowed.

Objective 1: Continue to provide public facilities and services in a fiscally responsible and equitable manner.

Strategy 1b: Give priority to the maintenance and expansion of existing facilities to meet service needs. Maintaining existing facilities is of primary importance. No benefit is gained if new facilities are provided while existing facilities deteriorate and become substandard. Also, in meeting new service needs, consideration should be given to whether the existing facilities can be modified to provide an adequate level of service.

Strategy 1c: Continue to design all buildings, structures and other facilities to permit expansion as necessary. Sites should be able to accommodate existing and future service needs.

Strategy 3f: Give preference to locating schools on individual sites rather than having multiple schools on one site. Locating schools together on a single site can be less expensive for land purchase, construction, maintenance, and shared facilities such as parking lots. However, smaller school sites for individual schools can provide for ease of walking to, from, and on the school site and create multimodal. Albemarle Comprehensive Plan transportation options for teachers and students to get to schools. Single-school sites allow for more community and neighborhood-based connections. Multi-school sites may be considered where co-location will reduce individual school land area demands.

ZONING ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

Relationship between the application and the intent and purposes of the requested zoning district:

The intent of the R10 Zoning District is indicated below:

R10 districts are hereby created and may hereafter be established by amendment to the zoning map to provide a plan implementation zone that:

- Provides for compact, medium-density residential development; (Amended 9-9-92)
- Permits a variety of housing types; and
- Provides incentives for clustering of development and provision of locational, environmental and developmental amenities.

R-10 districts may be permitted within the community and urban area locations designated on the comprehensive plan. (Amended 9-9-92)

While the intent is primarily for residential uses, public uses are permitted use and schools are anticipated in residential areas.

Anticipated impact on public facilities and services:

Streets:

There are currently several access points to the subject area of the campus, including Hydraulic and the shared entrance with Georgetown Green, along with an exit onto Lambs Road. It is assumed 45% of students attending HSCII will be from AHS due to the location and programs planned to be offered at the center. Transportation estimates that approximately 140 students would drive to HSCII based on current driving numbers that exist at Center one and the other high schools. It is expected there would be approximately 77 student drivers at HSCII from other schools. Trips will be offset with the relocation of Building Services from the campus to an off-site leased facility.

The Lambs Lane Loop Road Alternatives Analysis – Traffic Impact Analysis, dated July 2023, by Timmons Group, is currently under review. The project is progressing with a study for the potential alignment for this roadway, alternate intersection concepts along Hydraulic Road, and supporting data pertaining to these changes. Roadway alignment is being coordinated with potential locations for the High School Center II facility. Pedestrian and multi-modal improvements will be part of the project.

Fire & Rescue:

ACFR has reviewed this proposal and has no objections at this time. Emergency vehicle access and unobstructed travelways are a focus and would be confirmed at the time of site plan review. For any building, an adequate water supply would be confirmed at site plan review.

Utilities:

The property is in the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) water and sewer service jurisdictional area. ACSA has no objections.

Anticipated impact on nearby and surrounding properties:

Given that this is an existing schools facility, and the new center will be in already developed building or parking envelopes, increased impacts to nearby properties are not anticipated. Traffic impacts are discussed above. A minimum setback of 50', along with buffer and screening, is proposed between the center and the nearest residential property line with Georgetown Green.

Anticipated impact on environmental, cultural and historic resources:

The property is in Rural Area. The boundaries of the RA are based on the water supply watershed protection areas, with the RA/Development Area boundary based on Hydraulic Road in this area of the County. With proposed improvements to the site, stormwater and other measures will be enhanced and tree canopy and landscape requirements met at the time of site plan. The facility will be LEAD certified. The site is located on an Entrance Corridor and architecture and landscaping will be reviewed by the Architectural Review Board.

Public need and justification for the change:

The applicant narrative provides detailed background on the reasons for locating High School Center II at the Lambs Lane campus, including:

The Lambs Lane Campus (Site of ACPS Building and Transportation Services, Albemarle HS, Journey MS, Greer ES, Boys and Girls Club and Ivy Creek School) has been identified as the ideal site for Center II through the Lambs Lane Campus Master Plan Study. The Study was undertaken in 2022 in collaboration with DLR Group and focuses on the potential for the property to serve as a central campus that serves Albemarle County students and the community in the most efficient way possible. Locating Center II on the campus addresses issues of logistics and student equity because of the property's central location, adjacent to the County's most densely populated neighborhoods, as well as the greatest numbers of low-income residents. Other elements of the Master Plan include: vehicle circulation improvements such as a loop road through the campus, improvements to the campus entrances, moving Building and Transportation services off-campus, and improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on campus. A key piece of the planning for Center II is the need for replacing the parking spaces that will be displaced by the new building. The first phase of the project will include construction of new parking on the north-west side of Albemarle High School, adjacent to the Transportation Services facility and the AHS sports fields. This location will allow the parking to serve other areas of the campus and include improved pedestrian infrastructure. The additional parking will be completed prior to the start of the Center II construction, so that there is no net parking loss during the course of the project.

SUMMARY

Staff has identified the following positive aspects of this request:

1. The proposed rezoning will not create substantial detriment to adjacent properties.
2. The proposed rezoning will allow development consistent with the character of the nearby area.
3. The proposed use is consistent with many recommendations from Community Facilities chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff has identified the following concerns with this request:

1. Typically, rezonings to more intensive zoning districts are not encouraged in the Rural Area. However, this rezoning will allow more efficient use of an already developed public school facility.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the rezoning request for ZMA202300008 – High School Center II at Albemarle High School.

PLANNING COMMISSION POTENTIAL MOTIONS

For a recommendation of approval:

*I move to recommend **approval** of ZMA202300008 – High School Center II at Albemarle High School for the reasons stated in the staff report.*

For a recommendation of denial:

*I move to recommend **denial** of ZMA202300008 – High School Center II at Albemarle High School.
[State reasons for denial]*

SE202300039 Special Exception

The Planning Commission is not required to make a recommendation on Special Exceptions. However, if the Planning Commission chooses to provide comments on the special exception, staff will include those in the Transmittal Summary to the Board of Supervisors.

ATTACHMENTS

- [Attach 1 – ZMA2023-08 High School Center II Location Map](#)
- [Attach 2 – ZMA2023-08 High School Center II Zoning Map](#)
- [Attach 3 – ZMA2023-08 High School Center II Comprehensive Plan Map](#)
- [Attach 4 – ZMA2023-08 High School Center II](#)
- [Attach 5 – ZMA2023-08 High School Center II Concept Plan](#)