Application for Comprehensive Plan Compliance

PROJECT NAME: (how should we refer to this application?): Northen Albemarle Convenience Center

PROPOSAL (use separate sheet, if needed): Refer to attached Proposal

_____
_____
_____
_____

COMPREHENSIVE COMP PLAN LAND USE/DENSITY: Area: Rural Area 1. Land Use: Rural Area

LOCATION: Undeveloped, unaddressed parcel

TAX MAP PARCEL(s): 04600-00-00-018B0

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rio

Contact Person (Who should we call/write concerning this project?): Jeff Dumars, County of Albemarle

Address 401 McIntire Road City Charlottesville State Virginia Zip 22901

Daytime Phone (434) 296-5816 Fax # (434) 296-0294 E-mail JDUMARS@ALBEMARLE.ORG

Owner of Record County of Albemarle

Address 401 McIntire Road City Charlottesville State Virginia Zip 22901

Daytime Phone (434) 296-5816 Fax # (434) 296-0294 E-mail JDUMARS@ALBEMARLE.ORG

Applicant (Who is the Contact person representing?): County of Albemarle

Address 401 McIntire Road City Charlottesville State Virginia Zip 22901

Daytime Phone (434) 296-5816 Fax # (434) 296-0294 E-mail JDUMARS@ALBEMARLE.ORG

Does the owner of this property own (or have any ownership interest in) any abutting property? If yes, please list those tax map and parcel numbers

Not Applicable

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

☐ Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan (CCP) _____

☐ Special Use Permits: _____

☐ Variances:_____

Concurrent review of Site Development Plan?

CCP# _____

History:

☐ ZMA's & Proffers: _____

☐ Letter of Authorization

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comprehensive Plan Compliance Application
Applicant: County of Albemarle
Project Name: Northern Convenience Center
Location: 04600-00-00-018B0, Unimproved, Unaddressed Parcel

Preface

If authorized to proceed, this project will advance central elements of the Comprehensive Plan and the Board of Supervisors' stated intentions to equitably provide essential services to the residents of our community. This application will provide a background and description of the project. It will strive to highlight the ways in which the project will specifically align with the Comprehensive Plan, while acknowledging conflicting goals with that guiding document. It will highlight the balance between the operation of the proposed facility and the community benefits that will be achieved.

Project Background/Description

For many years, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors has recognized the need for expanded solid waste management services in rural areas of Albemarle County. As detailed in a 2015 report of the Long-Range Solid Waste Solutions Advisory Committee, Albemarle historically lagged behind its neighbors in the provision of collection sites for residential trash and recyclables (convenience centers).

In partnership with the Rivanna Solid Waste Authority (RSWA), the County has in recent years funded major capital projects to meet this challenge, constructing a modern solid waste transfer station and a convenience center at the Ivy Materials Utilization Center (Ivy MUC) and the Southern Convenience Center in Keene. The subject facility is located in northeastern Albemarle County. It is envisioned that additional convenience centers be placed in strategic locations throughout the County, to ensure equitable service provision. This strategy is consistent with Albemarle County's Climate Action Plan and elements of its Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed Northen Convenience Center, managed by the Rivanna Solid Waste Authority, would provide services to County residents in the same manner as those provided at the Ivy Convenience Center and Southern Convenience Center.

- Service Days: Open 6-days per week in coordination with other convenience centers to minimize days with no centers open.
- Service Hours: 8am to 5pm.
- Recyclable material collection of types consistent with the Ivy and Southern Convenience Centers, which may vary based on market conditions (currently consists of cardboard, mixed paper, plastic films, #1 and #2 plastic containers, office paper, newsprint, glass, mixed metals, and aluminum beverage containers).
- Compostable food waste
- Used Cooking Oil
- Tag-A-Bag household waste – bags of household trash, less than 32 gallons, fee of $2.00/bag – stickers sold off site – removed from site daily. (Large items or large volumes are still expected to be taken to the transfer station at the Ivy MUC).
- Annual special waste collection days (e.g. household hazardous waste amnesty days, electronics)
- Staffing:

- one attendant at all times during operating hours
- equipment operator to haul containers

- Other amenities
  - Port-a-john for attendant use
  - Attendant station (1)
  - Municipal solid waste compactors (2) and cardboard compactor (1)
  - Roll-off containers for recyclable materials (8)

The proposed convenience center is not subject to inspection or permitting by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality or the Virginia Department of Health – Blue Ridge Health District.

History of County Ownership, Site Selection Considerations

This parcel was proffered to the County of Albemarle in 2024.

Due diligence engineering studies of sites and public discussions during this period suggest several desirable aspects for siting of a convenience center, as well some minimum requirements.

- Location –
  - major arterial road, or optimally an intersection of such roads
  - unimproved property or redeveloped commercial property
  - centralized location to conveniently serve the most citizens possible
- Size –
  - minimum of 1 square acre of contiguous buildable land
  - additional acreage sufficient to provide visual screening from neighboring properties

The property selected meets these criteria optimally. The land is located on Rio Mills Road adjacent to Berkmar Drive.

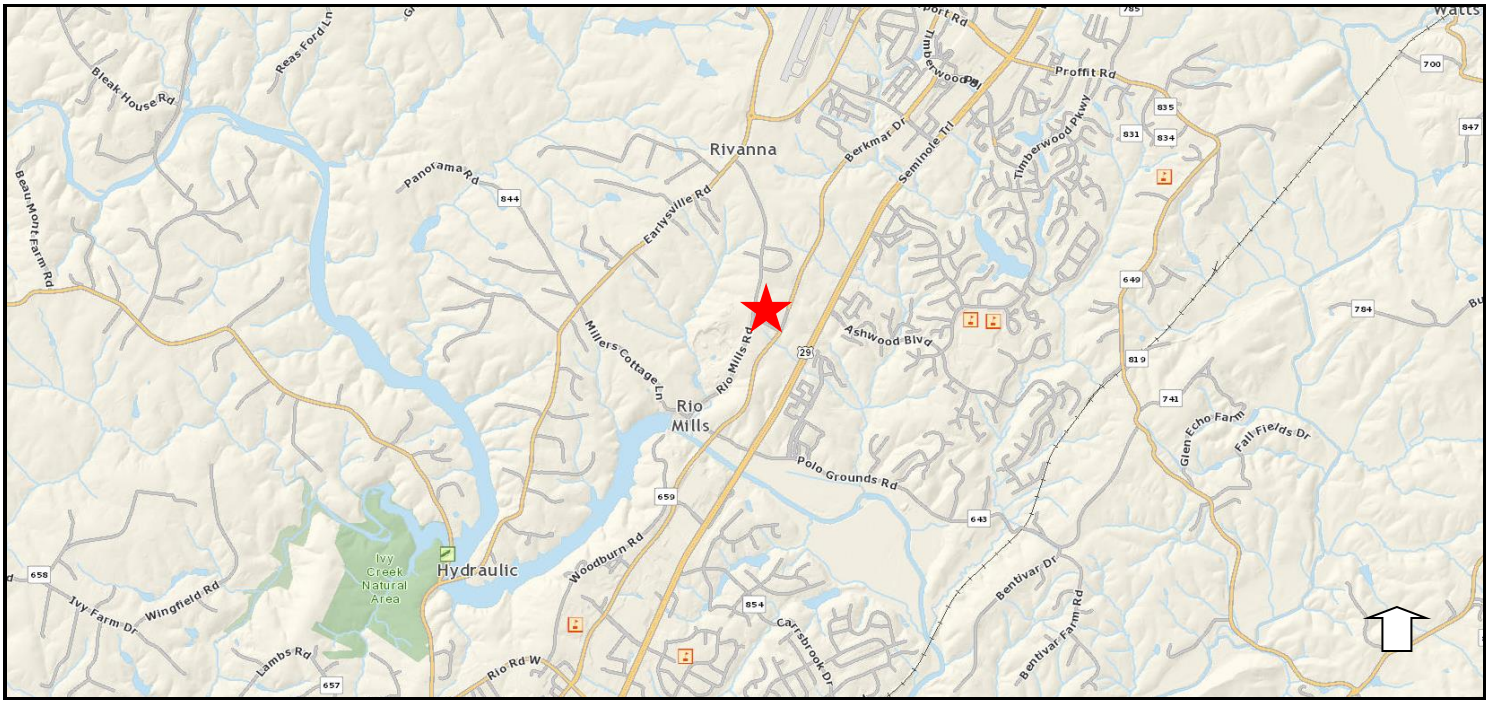


Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

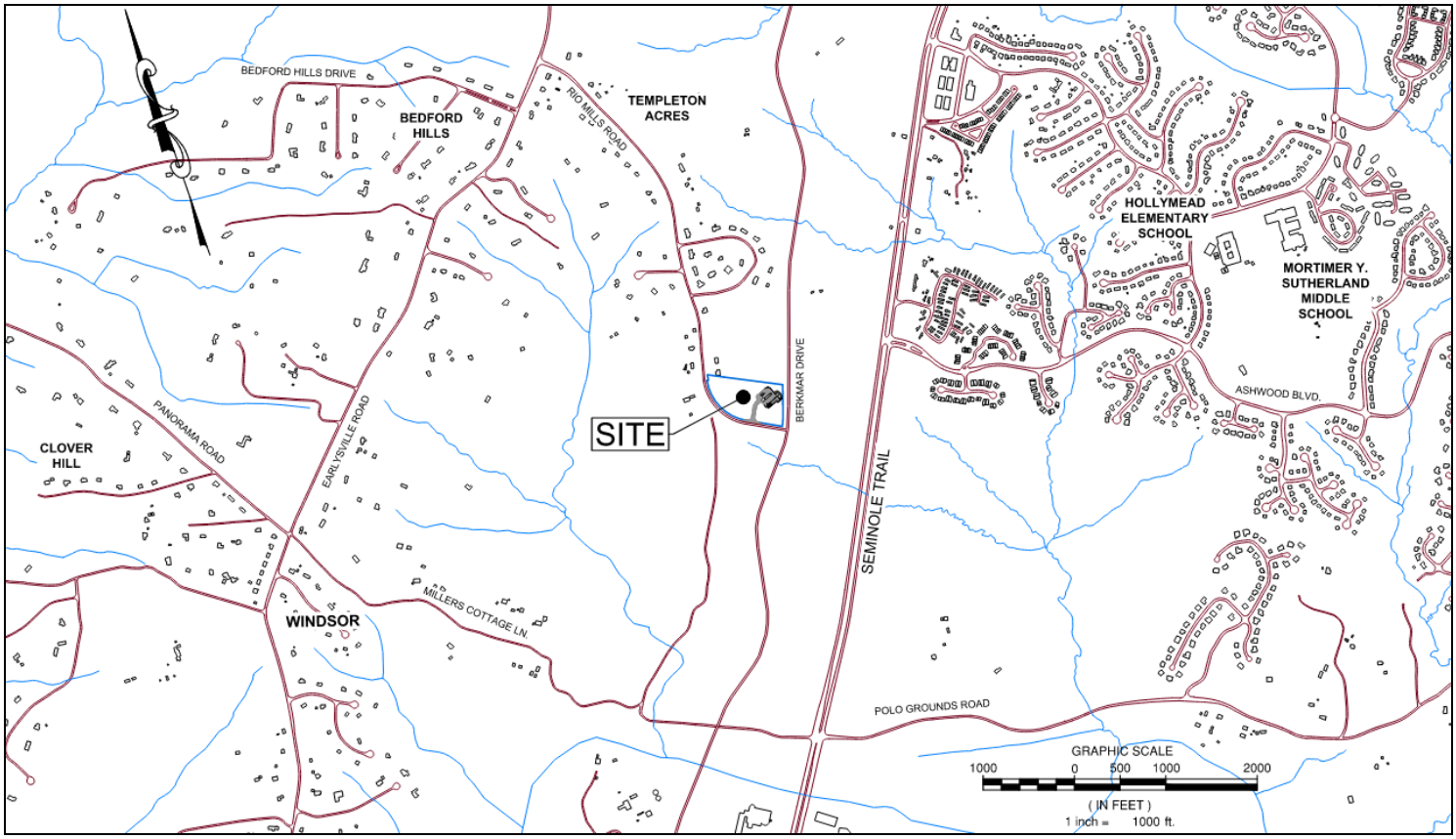


Figure 2 – Location Map

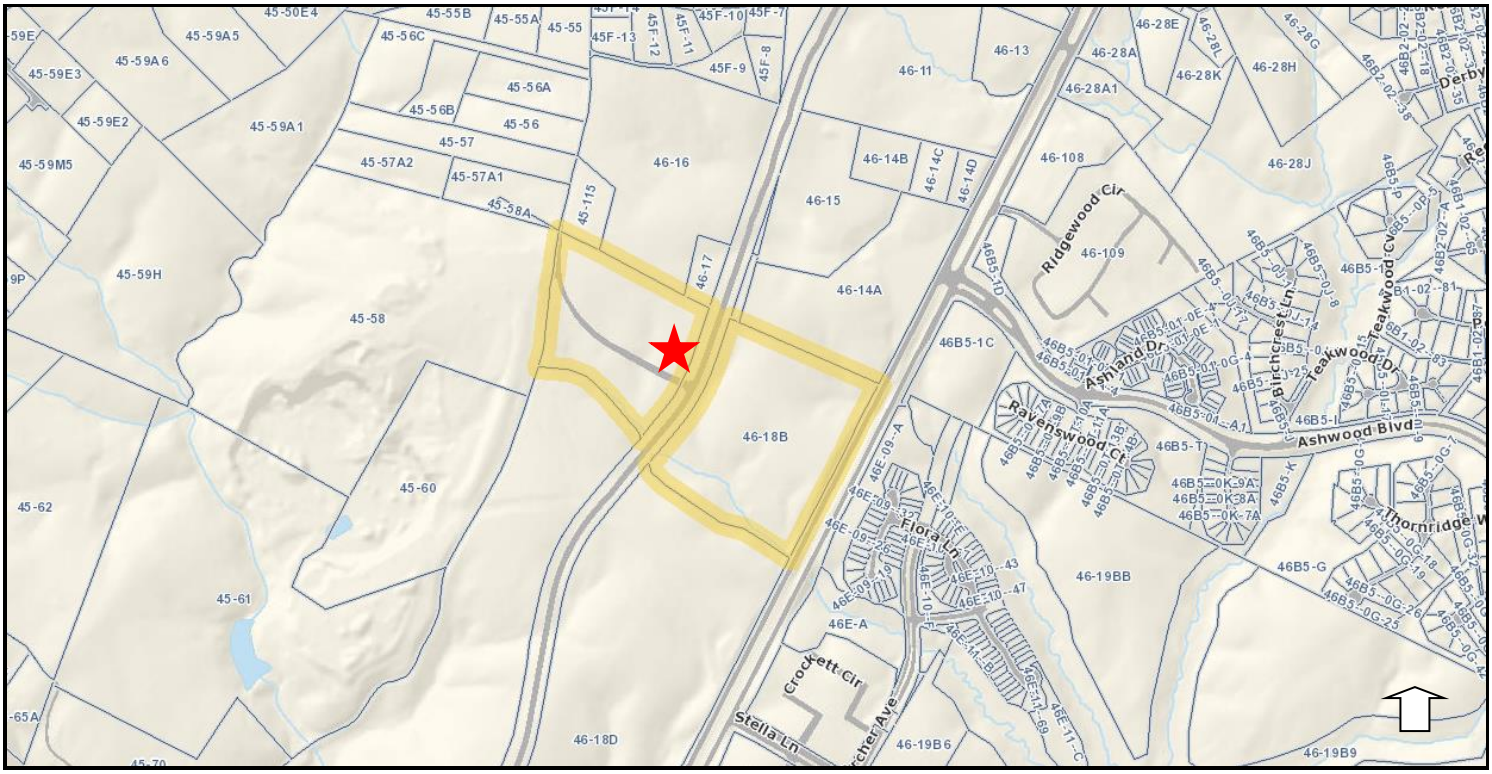


Figure 3 – Parcel Map

The benefits of the proposed site's location are enhanced by its geographic position to serve the residents in this northeastern portion of Albemarle County. The image below indicates the anticipated service area by frequency of use in coordination with the Ivy Materials Utilization Center (Ivy MUC) and the Southern Convenience Center (SACC).

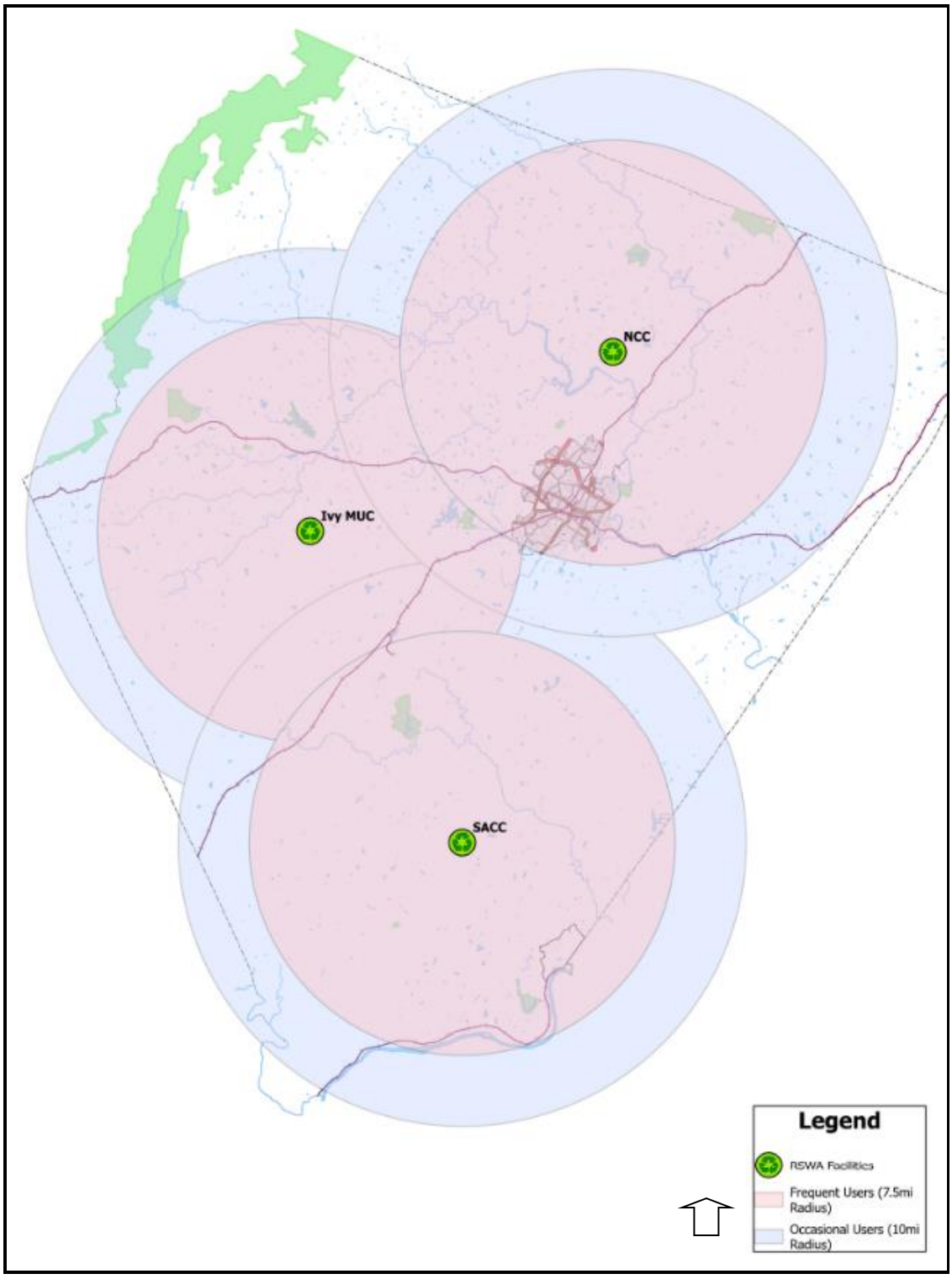


Figure 4 – County Convenience Center Locations and Service Areas

Comprehensive Plan (2015)

The following sections of the Community Facilities chapter are relevant to the determination of compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 1 addresses the location of new public facilities and services as follows:

- *The location of new public facilities should be within the County's Development Areas per County land use policies.*
- *Residents in the Rural Area should not anticipate levels of service delivery equal to those provided in the Development Area.*
- *Development Areas serve as service center locations for the Rural Area.*
- ***Public facilities are allowed in the Rural Area only in cases where it is not possible in the Development Areas due to physical constraints, the nature of the facility, and/or the service(s) provided**.*

Although the proposed convenience center will be located within the County's Rural Area, distributed locations allow County residents to participate in enhanced residential trash collection and recycling in a manner that is not feasible if those services are only provided in the County's Development Areas. Recycling services are not provided to all residents in the area of Northern Albemarle through private means. Locating this facility is not attempting to allow residents to "anticipate levels of service delivery equal to those provided in the Development Area." Rather it is attempting to allow these residents to reasonably participate in waste recycling at all.

Objective 7 of that chapter addresses, "*solid waste disposal and sustainable materials management to reduce waste, conserve resources, protect human and environmental health, and decrease greenhouse emissions*." That objective stresses that, due to the unlikelihood of the permitting of another landfill within Albemarle County, "***this plan recognizes that the County will need to be responsive to evolving waste management strategies, changes in the waste stream over time, and a changing regulatory environment*.**"

As solid waste management has evolved from backyard burn barrels to discussions of sustainable materials management, County governments, including Albemarle County, have struggled to balance maintaining the character of their communities and rural areas with acknowledging their responsibilities to prioritize environmental considerations with greater emphasis than may have occurred previously. This proposed convenience center provides an accessible means of providing current and near-future solid waste management services to residents with limited impacts (visual or otherwise) to the rural nature of the community. Without this center, residents cannot reasonably be expected to drive into Charlottesville or to Ivy to avail themselves of the opportunity to properly dispose of recyclable materials. They are relegated to putting it in their trash for landfilling.

Strategy 7d: *Continue to identify best practices for the management of solid waste in order to provide guidance for the County.*
The Albemarle County Long Range Solid Waste Solutions Advisory Committee was formed by the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors to study solid waste management as a public policy issue and to identify best practices for the management of solid waste in the County now and in the future, *including the possibility of regional cooperation.* ***Any recommended implementation strategies should be consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan*** *and the organizational vision of Albemarle County.*

The committee referenced in Strategy 7d completed its work and generated a final report in 2015 (https://www.albemarle.org/home/showdocument?id=7699), which was accepted by the Board of Supervisors. It has served as a guidance document for staff as a de facto Comprehensive Plan amendment. The report provided several prioritized Implementation Strategies related to the development of additional convenience centers.

- ***Increase Recycling Options and Activities in Albemarle County***
- ***Plan and Construct Ivy MUC Upgrades***
  - ***Create a model recycling center (completed 2020)***
  - *Upgrade transfer station (completed 2018)*
- ***Launch a Public Discussion on Creating Additional Recycling Centers***
- ***Foster Rural and Special Services***
  - ***Carefully plan and establish rural recycling centers***

In the body of the report, it further states:

> *Such recycling centers would be staffed and would prioritize source-separated recycling, but they could also provide MSW collection and perhaps some specialty services such as a reuse/swap area or donation boxes, e-waste collection, or collection of tires or paint, depending upon the community's needs.* ***Determining the best location and service level will be an important collaboration between county residents, the SMM Advisory Committee*** (later formed as the Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee) ***and County staff in the coming years****.*

In keeping with the guidance from the Long-Range Solid Waste Solutions Advisory Committee this convenience center represents the continued implementation of a long-range plan to increase recycling and landfill diversion options for all residents of the County. Further, completion of this new facility will provide the County with a great deal of real-world data on the demand for further convenience centers elsewhere in the rural areas of the County.

Transportation Impacts

When planning for any new public service infrastructure, it is important to consider the impacts of increased vehicular traffic on public roads. Traffic impact projections for solid waste convenience centers are not comparable to standard businesses, such as a "convenience store". The number of daily visitors will vary by the type of services offered, the number of residents served and other options for those services in the area. For this reason, the only directly comparable facilities to utilize as a baseline is the Ivy Convenience Center and the Southern Convenience Center. The Ivy Convenience Center averages 96 visitors per open business day. Saturdays are the busiest days at Ivy, where the daily visits can be expected to be approximately 190 residents. The Southern Convenience Center averages 38 visitors per open business day and approximately 46 visitors on Saturdays.

The 2021 VDOT AADT for Berkmar Drive was 9,400 trips/day and for Rio Mills Road was 850 trips/day. For Rio Mills Road, assuming the trips are equally divided for each direction and substantially take place over eight hours, this would equate to approximately 53 trips/hour in each direction.

The anticipated maximum trips to the proposed facility are 67-96 trips/day for weekdays and 118-190 trips/day on Saturday (based on average to high traffic counts at the Ivy Convenience Center). Assuming Saturday as a maximum, and equal trips over eight hours of operation, this would equate to an estimated maximum of 15-24 vehicles per hour on Rio Mills Road. Equally divided for each direction equates to approximately 8-12 vehicles per hour per direction as a one-day-per-week maximum.

Community Engagement

County staff sought community input during the project development process, to inform the design of the site and the services to be provided. This engagement included efforts to educate residents regarding the benefits of these services in terms of environmental protection. Presentations were made to Community Advisory Committees (CAC): the Places29-North CAC on June 13th and the Places29-Rio CAC on June 27th.

The project received broad support firm the majority of CAC members at both meetings. As many as 20 residents that live near the proposed project participated in one of the CAC meets. These neighbors provided a majority of the questions or statements of concern. Major concerns received about the project included an increase in traffic and noise, and the potential for unsightly views of the facility from adjacent properties and streets.

As a result of the CAC meeting input the project team re-evaluated the expected traffic increases and confirmed the estimated on-day-per-week maximum increase of 15-24 vehicles per hour on Rio Mills Road. This maximum increase would only be expected to possibly occur on Saturdays, with weekdays expecting significantly less visitors to the facility. As part of final design of the project, the facility will still be required to coordinate with VDOT and gain appropriate approvals and permits to connect to Rio Mills Road.

Noise concerns were also re-evaluated as a result of the CAC meeting input received. As a public facility and public use, the proposed facility would be exempt from the Albemarle County noise ordinance. However, siting of the proposed facility provides more than 400' of forested buffer to the nearest neighboring parcel with a residential structure. This buffer will support attenuation of sounds generated from facility operations. Based on similar buffers being provided at the Southern Convenience Center and noise testing completed during construction in 2023, it is anticipated the facility will generally comply with the County noise ordinance even though the facility will be exempt.

The project includes decorative fencing and regenerative forest plantings along Rio Mills Road and Berkmar Drive. Visual simulations were completed to evaluate views to the facility from neighboring parcels and adjacent roads. It is not anticipated that the proposed facility will be viewable from any adjacent neighboring parcel. Based on the visual simulations, at the completion of construction, views into the proposed facility from Berkmar Drive will be completely buffered and obstructed by the proposed decorative fencing. As trees mature, views on the fencing will also be almost completely buffered by new plant material. From Rio Mills Road, there will be a view into the facility via the entrance drive and 30-foot entrance gate when the facility is open. However, the views of the remainder of the proposed facility will be buffered and obstructed by the decorative fencing, and views of the fencing will also be almost completely buffered by plant material as trees mature.

Additional community engagement is planned as follows:

- Planning Commission public hearing anticipated to be required by the Comprehensive Plan compliance review

County staff believe that these opportunities for input will honor the Comprehensive Plan's intent for a collaborative community process.

SITE PLAN AND GRAPHIC

The graphic below has been developed for the purposes of submission for Site Plan approval, illustrating:

- The type and number of containers and compactors that will be provided
- Parking spaces
- VDOT-compliant entrance to the site from Rio Mills Road
- Traffic flow on the site
- Stormwater management features
- Security fencing
- Visual screening features
- Areas of preserved open space

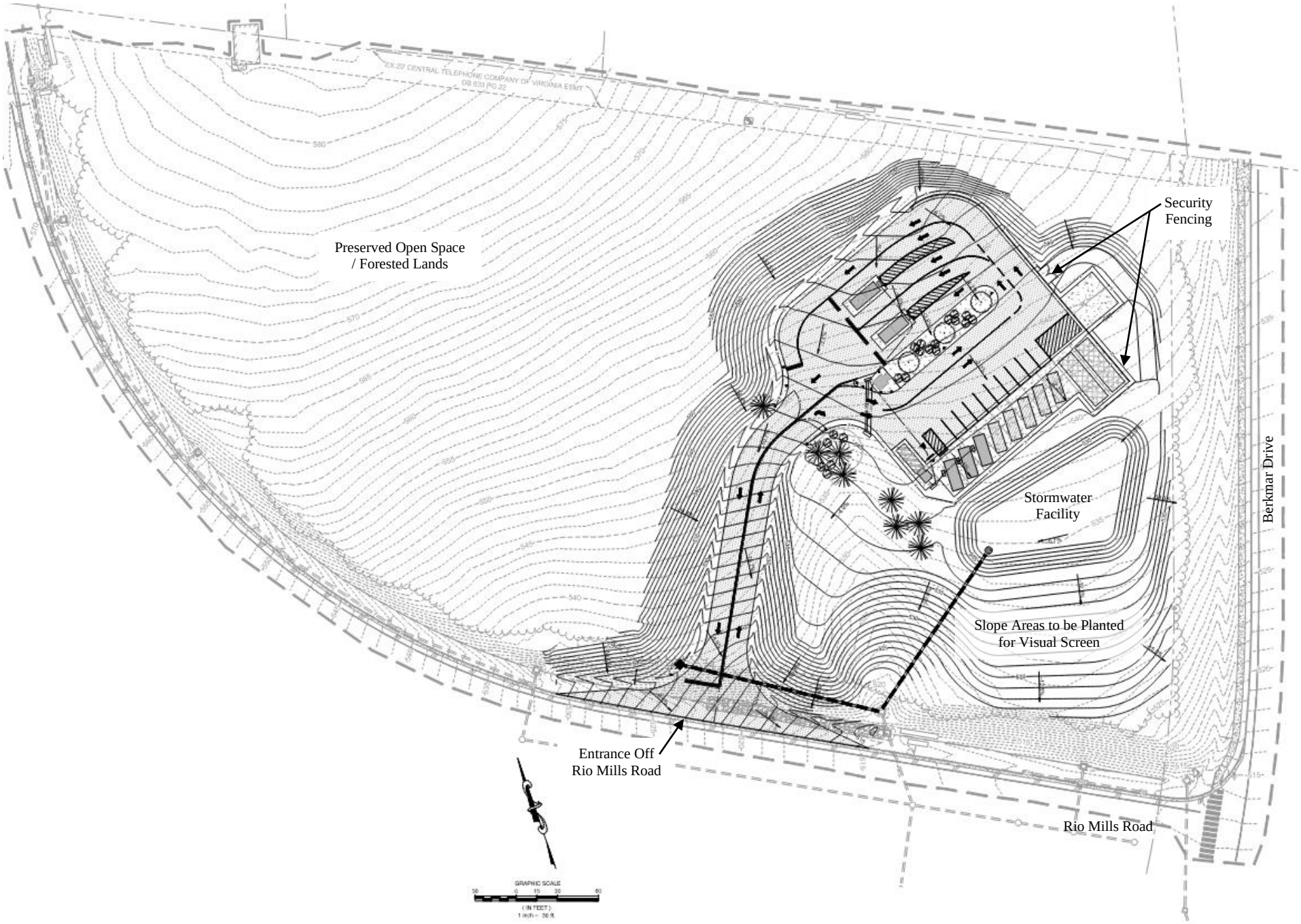


Figure 5 – Northern Convenience Center Site Plan