

# WILLIAMS MULLEN

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Albemarle County Community Development Staff

FROM: Lori Schweller, Williams Mullen  
Valerie Long, Williams Mullen

DATE: April 15, 2019

RE: **Virginia Institute of Autism Special Use Permit Application Narrative**

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### PROJECT DETAILS:

Applicant: Virginia Institute of Autism (VIA)  
Contact for Applicant: Lori Schweller and Valerie Long, Williams Mullen  
Name of Project: Virginia Institute of Autism Adult Service Center  
Short Description: SUP for Virginia Institute of Autism Adult Service Center  
Proposed Site: 491 Hillsdale Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901

### PROPERTY DETAILS:

Parcel ID Number: 061W0-02-00-002A1  
Total Acres: 1.71  
Owner: Senior Center, Incorporated  
Property Address: 491 Hillsdale Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901  
Current Use: Community Center for seniors ("The Center")  
Magisterial District: Rio  
Zoning: Commercial C-1  
Proffered: No  
ZMA's Related to Proffers: N/A  
Entrance Corridor: No  
Comprehensive Plan Area: Neighborhood 2- Places 29 Hydraulic  
Comprehensive Plan Use: Institutional  
Land Use: Commercial  
Surrounding uses: The Laurels of Charlottesville across Hillsdale Drive to the west;  
Office building to the south; RoseWood Village Assisted Living  
across Greenbrier Drive and Hillsdale Drive to the north;  
Branchlands across Greenbrier Drive to the northeast; and  
Meadow Creek and vacant land to the east

## **SITE PICTURES:**



Side View of Building from Hillsdale Drive



Front of Building

Site Vicinity and Parking Lot

## **A. PROPOSAL:**

VIA's Adult Service Center Program will be a year-round, day program designed to provide adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) ongoing, practical education and support throughout adulthood. This unique program will offer comprehensive day programming services designed to promote the skills necessary for adults with ASD to lead productive and enjoyable lives. The Adult Service Center will be staffed by a highly trained team of clinicians and educators who will develop and deliver programs that provide the support needed for all program participants to better integrate into the Charlottesville community. From vocational training to social support and clinical services, the Adult Service Center will equip program participants with the tools they need to enhance and maintain autonomy.

The Adult Service Center will offer a variety of classes and activities to enhance vocational skills, independent living skills, and enable program participants to participate in a variety of cultural and recreational activities offered both at the Adult Service Center and in the Charlottesville community. The facility will be designed to specifically enhance these opportunities. For example, there will be a "mock" one-bedroom apartment that will enable program participants to practice skills needed to live more independently (e.g., cook, clean, develop social and hygiene skills, budget, and complete chores independently or as part of a group). In addition, there will be spaces specifically designed to teach vocational skills needed to obtain gainful employment. These spaces will enable specific instruction to promote the development of employable skills including domestics, crafts, gardening, assembly and office-

related activities. Finally, there will be spaces designated to facilitate recreation and social interaction. This will enable on-site music classes, cultural events, art activities and visits to parks, coffee shops, shopping centers, concerts, and sporting events in the local community.

Finally, we envision the Adult Service Center also serving as VIA's headquarters. The senior leadership team, human resources department, finance department, and advancement department will have their offices and workspaces in the building.

In the **first 3-5 years of occupancy**, VIA envisions the Adult Service Center serving participants ages 18 years and older. After 5 years, it is anticipated that the Adult Service Center will only serve participants ages 22 and older. (The Applicant is planning a capital campaign that will enable it to move the 18-22-year old students to another facility.)

The anticipated facility hours of operation to be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

Counts of Adult Service Center participants and staff:

- 52 Adult participants (non-drivers)
- 69 Adult Service Center staff members (including 13 VIA administration members)

Parking needs:

- Currently there are 106 parking spaces on-site
- VIA anticipates needing a total of 80 parking spaces (69 staff, 11 open) to serve all uses in the building.
- [NOTE: As to the 25% of the building to be used for office space, calculation pursuant to Code Sec. 4.12.6 would be as follows: 21,788 gross square feet x .80 = 17,430 net square feet /4 = 4,358 square feet / 200 = 22 spaces.]

Participant arrival/departure schedules:

- VIA anticipates Adult Service Center participants arriving via public transportation, Jaunt Inc. buses, cabs, and being dropped off and picked up via family vehicles (no participants in the Adult Service Center drive independently).
- For those participants who are between 18-22 years of age, we anticipate four full-size school buses dropping off at approximately 8:45 a.m. and picking up at 2:45 p.m. Note that the buses will not be full, even though full-size.
- Adult Service Center staff stagger-arrive beginning at 7:30 a.m. and stagger-depart through 6:00 p.m., with the majority arriving by 8:00 a.m. and departing by 4:30 p.m.

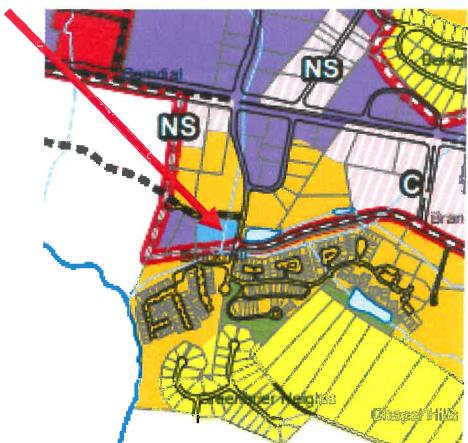
Many of the uses and day-to-day activities that VIA proposes for the 491 Hillsdale Drive property are similar to those uses currently carried out at the property by The Center (formerly the Senior Center). VIA does not propose to change the existing building footprint. Further, VIA expects to have significantly fewer parking needs and requirements, and to generate fewer trips per day. As shown on the Conceptual Plan and on the Aerial Plan, VIA plans to convert a portion of the parking lot into a fenced green area for passive recreational use. The green area may be grass or artificial turf and may include an asphalt path encircling the area.

#### **Additional Information on VIA:**

The Virginia Institute of Autism (VIA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1996 and headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia. VIA's mission is to help people overcome the challenges of autism through innovative, evidence-based programs in education, outreach and

adult services. In response to a diagnosis that is associated with isolation, VIA builds community bridges. To do this, VIA uses its expertise to translate science into service. VIA employs state-of-the-art, evidence-based approaches that are tailored for each individual and their family. Through collaborative partnerships with the University of Virginia and others, it develops services that result in meaningful and profound changes in the lives of the people it serves. With its James C. Hormel School, Outpatient Services, and Adult Services, VIA addresses the unique needs of people with autism throughout their lifespan. The organization provides clinical and educational services regardless of the individual's race, national or ethnic origin, cultural heritage, religion or political beliefs.

## **B. CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



The primary designated use of the Property on the Places 29 Master Plan for the Northern Development Areas is Institutional. County Community Development Department staff has determined that the proposed use is consistent with this designation.

## **C. IMPACTS ON PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC FACILITIES, PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES**

The proposed project will not have any negative impacts on public safety, public facilities, public infrastructure or environmental features. The Property is currently used as community center hosting events and educational programming for seniors. The proposed use will be very similar in impact except that none of the clients of VIA will drive vehicles to the site. Therefore, traffic and parking needs are expected to be reduced. The conversion of a portion of the parking lot to natural or artificial grass to be used as a passive recreational space will disturb only 4,100 square feet and will not involve any changes to ground elevation or tree removal.

### **SUMMARY:**

The proposed special use will not be a detriment to adjacent lots or change the character of the zoning district as the use will be very similar to the current use by Senior Center, Incorporated and the Applicant does not propose any changes to the Property other than to add fencing and convert a portion of the parking lot to green space. Impact to the neighborhood may be lessened in that the clients of VIA will not drive and park onsite. Office use is permitted by right in the C-1 district. The educational uses will have similar impact to the current community center and educational uses of the Senior Center.