

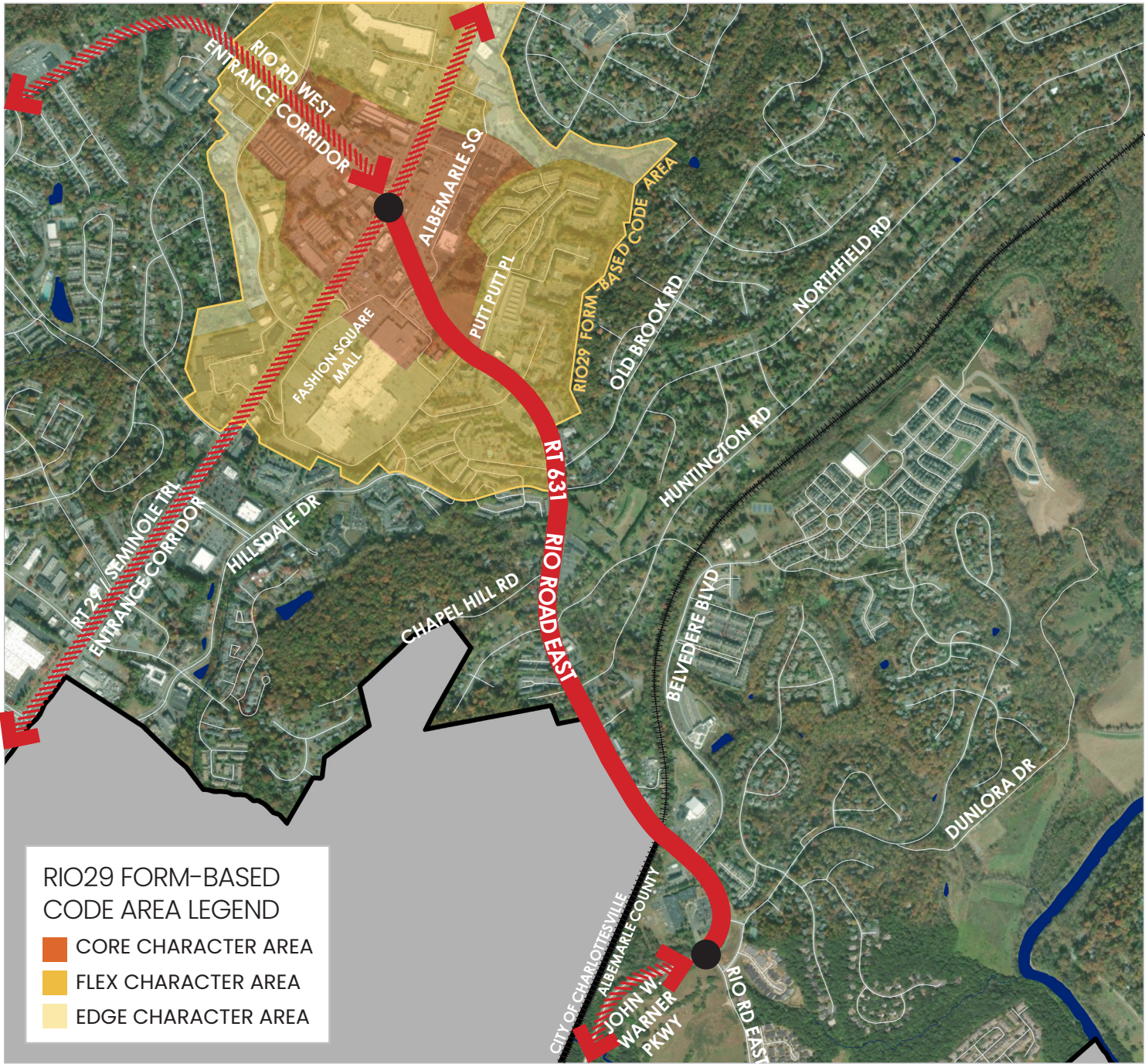
Entrance Corridor // Route 631 (Rio Rd. East)

From John W. Warner Parkway at the east to Rt. 29 at the west

DRAFT



Last updated: 07.28.2023



LENGTH: 1.6 MILES

HISTORY

The 1937 aerial map of Albemarle County clearly shows the route of today's Rio Road East from Rt. 29 to the vicinity of today's John W. Warner Parkway. The surrounding area at that time was generally a mix of wooded and cleared parcels, with some farmland. Earlier nineteenth century maps include place names that remain familiar today, including Dunlora, Meadowbrook, Branchland, Rio, the Meadows, Stonehenge, Cochran's Mill, and Meadow Creek. Residential development began in the area in the late 1950s, with portions of the Greenbrier and Northfields developments in place by the mid-1960s. Development expanded considerably along the Rio corridor in the 1970s with the construction of CATEC (1973), Albemarle Square shopping center (1976), the Abbington Crossing and Greenbrier neighborhoods (1970s and '80s), and Fashion Square Mall (1980). The western end of Rio East was widened by 1974, presumably in preparation for these projects. Gas stations, other small commercial buildings and some office buildings interspersed along the corridor were constructed beginning in the mid-1970s through the '80s. Residential development increased significantly in the 1990s with the Dunlora neighborhood (named for the mansion that was built in the area in 1828). Religious institutions have had a strong presence on the corridor beginning in the early 20th century with the Church of our Savior. Six additional churches have been built on the corridor, with additions completed at multiple sites through the early 21st century.

Rio Road East was designated an Entrance Corridor from Rt. 29 to the Norfolk Southern railway tracks in 2005. The designation was extended to the northern terminus of John W. Warner Parkway in 2018.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRESSION

The eastern end of the Rio Road East corridor is located at the northern terminus of the John W. Warner Parkway. The lawns of the properties

at the Rio/Parkway intersection create a brief transition from the wooded character of the Parkway to the denser development along Rio, including residential developments oriented away from the corridor and large institutional developments with deep setbacks and large parking lots. (These developments predate the establishment of the ECs.) West of the bridge over the train tracks, development is located closer to the street. Overhead utility lines are present, but some trees and shrubs provide a minimal vegetated buffer. The corridor includes several religious properties exhibiting a range of styles and construction dates. These include the historic Church of Our Savior built in the Gothic Revival style east of Huntington Rd., the Neo-Classical style City Church across from Belvedere Blvd., and the contemporary Northside Baptist Church, east of Northfield Rd. Development becomes progressively denser moving westward, with a mix of institutional, office, and commercial buildings in addition to higher density residential developments. Approaching Mall Dr., the view opens, and a distant view of mountains is available to the south. The western end of Rio Road East, near the intersection of Rt. 29, is dominated by shopping centers and their parking lots.

ZONING & LAND USE

Land along the Rio Road East corridor is zoned in a wide variety of residential, commercial, and planned development zoning districts. R4 Residential predominates at the eastern end of the corridor with some commercial and institutional development located around Gasoline Alley and the bridge that spans the railroad tracks. Opposite this commercial strip is the Greenbrier single-family residential development in the City of Charlottesville. Moving west along the corridor, residential densities decrease in the older, established neighborhoods of Wakefield, Northfields and Chapel Hills, then increase sharply in the vicinity of Hillsdale Dr. Large commercial and shopping center properties dominate the western end of the corridor. The

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range of zoning districts and frequent shifting among them results in a variable built form along the length of the corridor.

This western portion of the corridor is expected to redevelop over the next few decades in alignment with the Rio29 Small Area Plan and under the Rio29 Form-Based Code, as identified on the map. Future development within the Core Character Area is anticipated to be more dense and urban in form, creating the “heart” of the Rio29 planning area. East of the Core to Hillsdale Rd. on the south and approximately Old Brook Rd. on the north, development is expected to be more flexible in form with strong bike and pedestrian connections.

STRUCTURES – PREDOMINANT FEATURES

- Form: Simple rectangles and compound forms; roofs are a mix of flat and pitched; pitched roofs are predominantly gabled and cross-gabled
- Scale: Small to medium; 1-4 stories
- Materials: Brick and stucco walls; metal and shingle roofs; oldest structures include stonework
- Colors: Red, white/off-white, and green

LANDSCAPE – PREDOMINANT FEATURES / ELEMENTS OF ORDERLY AND ATTRACTIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Trees, including street trees and wooded buffers, some dense, line the corridor
- Residential developments have wooded and landscaped buffers
- Shrubs contribute to screening parking areas

CHARACTERISTICS TO AVOID

- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of street-lining trees or vegetated buffer
- Parking lots with no landscape relief (i.e. “sea of parking”)
- Visible mechanical equipment

PRECEDENT IMAGES



1010 Rio Rd. East, City Church

This church building displays a simplicity of form, detailing, and materials that is reminiscent of historic examples in the County.



The west side of Rio Rd. East, South of Northfield Rd.

Trees buffer the view of a residential neighborhood that is oriented away from the corridor.



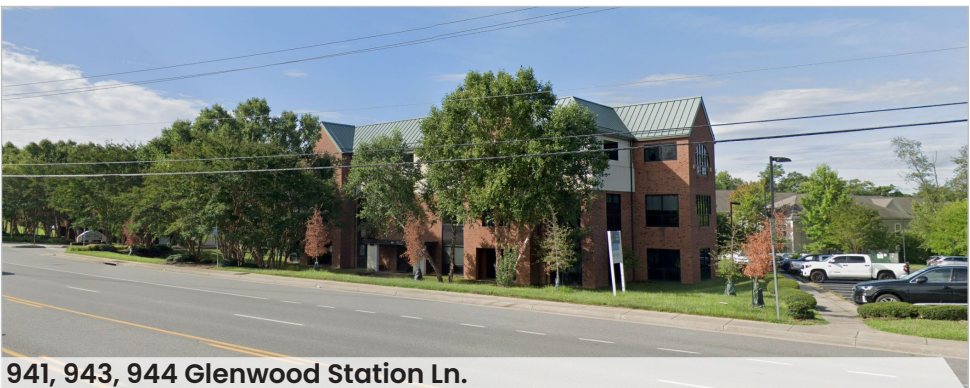
1147 and 1151 Rio Rd. East

The Rio Schoolhouse (left) was constructed prior to 1905. It was the meeting place of the Church of Our Savior congregation prior to the ca. 1905-06 construction of the Gothic Revival style church (right). The fieldstone material, crenellated tower, and pointed-arch windows of the church are characteristic of the style.



1648 Rio Rd. East

Although the layout of this site does not provide for relegated parking, massing, materials, and detailing of the building result in a comfortable, human scale.



941, 943, 944 Glenwood Station Ln.

The layout of the Glenwood Station office building development is consistent with the goals of the ECs with relegated parking, articulated building facades, and landscaping along the street.