

October 16, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Syd Shoaf, Senior Planner
County of Albemarle, Virginia

From: Mr. Eric Woolley, PE
Woolley Engineering

Regarding: **PREAPP202300090 Charlottesville Climbing Gym (TM 60 P 46C)**
Amendment to SP201200001
2200 Old Ivy Road
Special Use Permit Amendment Narrative

Introduction:

The proposed climbing gym will provide a safe, clean, and modern facility, focused on providing the benefits of the sport of rock climbing to the community. A focus of the gym will be on introducing the sport rock climbing to children, young adults and at-risk youth. The benefits of rock climbing include physical fitness, mental strength, stress reduction, improved confidence, fun and enjoyment, social interaction, and outdoor adventure. It's written in our Mission Statement that our goal is to create a thriving community where climbers of all levels feel included, inspired, and supported.

In addition to offering rock climbing, the gym will have a yoga studio, strength and conditioning space, a small group meeting space for birthday parties and a dedicated kids climbing zone with 30 foot tall walls to develop the previously listed benefits of rock climbing.

The nearest climbing gym that offers these amenities is located over an hour away in Richmond



property is Commercial Office (CO) which allows for indoor athletic facilities by Special Use Permit.

The intended use for the proposed new building addition would include: climbing, bouldering, a strength and fitness area, yoga space, kids zone, retail space, locker rooms, storage and a group fitness room. The gym's hours of operation would be from 6am – 9pm daily. The gym will offer drop-in opportunities, memberships and youth programs.

The subject parcel is located within the Entrance Corridor (EC) overlay district. Due to the change in elevation across the site and split floor building entrances, there are two existing parking lots each with their own drive entrances onto Old Ivy Road. The parcel abuts the CSX Buckingham Branch Railroad line to the south. Access to the western portion of the property is possible through an access easement with the adjacent parcel to the west. No other improvements are located on the abutting western property. Office buildings and the Old Ivy Inn Restaurant are located a little further to the west. A small portion of the northern property line is located across from Ivy Garden Apartment complex. The majority of the northern property boundary is across the road from University of Virginia facilities and athletic fields.

Existing vegetation and wooded areas are currently present along most of the property boundaries. A thick planting of bamboo is located along the western and southern boundaries. A few mature trees and ornamental trees are located along the northern boundary. There are shrubs between the northern parking lot and Old Ivy Road. There is an existing 10' easement dedicated to "VA Telephone and Telegraph Co." running along the entire northern boundary of the property. Additional trees are proposed outside of this easement as shown on the concept plan. Shrubs are proposed on the concept plan to screen the reoriented southern parking lot from Old Ivy Road.

A building remodel of the existing structure is intended with this concept plan. The proposed improvements will raise a portion of the existing building to a three-story structure. The two existing parking lots on the subject parcel are proposed to remain. The total existing parking for the property is 49 parking spaces. An underground stormwater detention facility is proposed underneath the parking lot to meet State stormwater quantity management requirements. Nutrient credits are proposed to be purchased to meet State stormwater quality requirements.



The Comprehensive Plan area for the subject parcel is development area Neighborhood 7. The Comprehensive Plan land use designation for the parcel is Community Mixed Use. The primary use for this designation is for retail and service uses and office uses serving the community. Other recommended uses in this district are townhouses, apartments, and attached housing units, places of worship, public and private schools, early childhood education centers (day care centers and pre-schools), public uses and institutional uses. A maximum single-building footprint of no greater than 60,000 sf is recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and the existing building footprint is proposed to remain.

The Comprehensive Plan land use recommendation for this parcel allows for a mix of retail and service uses serving the community. The proposed use of the property offers an additional indoor athletic facility option for nearby residents and office users. The proximity of the surrounding community to the subject parcel allows for patrons living nearby the option of an easy commute or walkability to the facility.



Figure 2: Comprehensive Plan Designation Map

Source: Albemarle County GIS Web Mapping

Impacts on Public Facilities & Public Infrastructure:

Minor traffic increases are anticipated during the most active gym days. Previous traffic volumes experienced with the existing use suggest that the existing parking illustrated on the attached concept plan would likely not be exceeded. Improvements are proposed to the existing bicycle parking facilities.

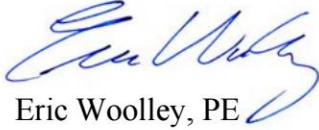
Impacts on Environmental Features:

Existing site vegetation is proposed to remain as much as possible. Tree protection measures will be used during construction to preserve existing vegetation as much as possible. The developer intends to purchase offsite nutrient credits to fulfill State stormwater quality requirements related to the site improvements. Screening buffers are proposed to be maintained and enhanced between the subject property and the existing roadway. The landscape to the north shall consist of double staggered rows of select vegetation and screening vegetation. Landscape screening to the east will consist of preserved existing vegetation and trees. The landscape screening material will be chosen to maintain the character of the surrounding area.



We look forward to working with you and County staff to bring this plan to realization.

Sincerely,



Eric Woolley, PE

Attached: (1) Special Use Permit Application Checklist
 (1) Indoor Athletic Facility Concept Layout Plan
 (1) Architectural Building Section

Cc: Mike Kinnick, Developer
 Robert Nichols, Formworks Architecture