



County of Albemarle
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kurt Keesecker, BRW Architects
FROM: Margaret Maliszewski, Albemarle County Planning
RE: **Staff review comments, Barnes Lumber Countywide CofA proposal July 1, 2024**
DATE: September 11, 2024

Staff comments on the July 1, 2024, Barnes Lumber Countywide CofA proposal are provided below. If you have questions once you've reviewed these comments, let's get together to discuss. I'm hoping that the proposal will be ready for ARB review following revisions addressing these comments.

1. While maintaining a degree of flexibility is important, the main goal of creating the Countywide criteria is to establish a level of certainty so that applicants can submit a proposal with relative surety of approval, so that staff can easily review for consistency with the criteria, and so that the ARB and the public can have a reasonable expectation of the outcome. The current proposal relies too heavily on an "it depends" approach ("...dependent on development characteristics..." or "as appropriate for the specific property visibility, site development, and building design conditions at time of application"). More specific criteria are needed.
2. View Corridors
 - a. The previous version of the proposal relied heavily on the block pattern and view corridor concepts as organizing principles to establish a layout and appearance that would be appropriate for the EC. Although the block pattern remains, the view corridor concept has been significantly weakened by reducing the proposal to a single view corridor. A single view corridor is not an organizing principle. More is needed.
 - b. Page 15 references a future/implied block pattern by series of red dots. Even if the streets will not extend along these areas, view corridors could still be established with rows of trees. Even if the ground near the tracks in the area labeled C is below the tracks, large shade trees would eventually be visible from the EC street and could establish the view corridor.
3. Many references are made to the fact that development not visible from the street is not subject to ARB review. This has always been true of EC review, and this would not change with this development. On page 23, note 2 references building lots that lack visibility. Note that it is not visibility of a vacant lot that determines level of review – it is the anticipated visibility of the proposed development on that lot. Also, the document suggests that buildings built near the tracks in the area labeled C would not be visible. Presumably, these buildings would be taller than 2 stories and would be visible from the EC street, so the upper portions would require review. It may be possible to simplify the document by making a single reference to the "lack of

visibility/no review needed” concept and focusing page 23 on identifying areas where buildings are only expected to be visible above the 2nd story.

4. Food trucks are not currently reviewed by the ARB. Please be sure the section of the document referring to food trucks is consistent with County policy. Please eliminate references to “site plan review” and focus only on EC review. Note the following:
 - a. An amended site plan would be required for a permanent outdoor dining area associated with a food truck(s) that is proposed for a site that already has an approved site plan. I do not recommend exempting this from EC review/approval.
 - b. Tents of 900 sf or more, to be installed for less than 180 days, require permits from Fire/Rescue.
 - c. Building code would apply egress regulations to outdoor dining areas with 50 or more seats. Sanitation requirements (porta-johns) would also apply.
 - d. The building code defines temporary as up to 180 days. Temporary structures still need to meet building code requirements.
 - e. I recommend revising the 2nd paragraph on page 26 to simply list the items that would not require a CofA; for example, seasonal shade devices (umbrellas, tents).
 - f. What sort of structures without permanent footings are you wanting to make allowances for? Is that the train cars? Something else?
 - g. Could alternate photos better illustrate the intent of the second paragraph on page 26?
5. Train cars and shipping containers adapted to new uses need building permits and likely an architect or structural engineer’s report on structural integrity. I don’t recommend exemption of these from EC review/approval. I do recommend that the Barnes Lumber criteria should clarify that such structures can be used in the development.
6. Murals
 - a. It seems like the 20% mural rule may get complicated to track. Does the 20% apply to each individual building (20% of an elevation) or to the overall development (20% of buildings) or both? It sounds like you want to exempt facades with murals from review. Does that mean that the 80% of the façade that is not mural does not require review? If so, all facades facing the EC could have murals and no review. Is that the intent?
 - b. In the last ARB review, the ARB did not want to completely eliminate the possibility of murals, but thought blankness was better addressed through architectural design.
 - c. If staff are required to track the 20%, the murals would have to be submitted for tracking purposes.
 - d. Are you proposing that a mural could be added to an ARB (staff)-approved façade without the mural being approved?
7. Page 11, 32c, suggests that a fence will be provided for every building adjacent to the railroad. That conflicts with the diagrams on page 15. Please clarify.
8. Page 11, #32
 - a. This section says that trees will be planted parallel to the tracks when parking areas are adjacent to the tracks. This conflicts with the diagram on page 15 which shows no trees - only shrubs.
 - b. Does “edges adjacent to the tracks” mean that the other perimeters will have no trees?
 - c. No trees parallel to the EC is too big a divergence from the EC guidelines.

9. Page 12, #39b: Does “generally” parallel mean some buildings will be parallel, and some won’t? Or some angled orientations are acceptable?
10. Page 16, first paragraph and 4th bullet: The references to “on either side” can be interpreted to mean “parallel to the view corridor” not parallel to the EC, east and west of the view corridor. Please clarify.
11. Page 17: the planting species note is confusing.
12. Page 20: façade articulation options: the text isn’t clear about how many of the bulleted items are required to be used to meet the requirements. The use of multiple methods is recommended; one of each of the three, at least, is preferred. Language like, “a minimum of x# of articulation methods is required” is recommended.
13. The terms “façade” and “elevation” are both used on page 21. Is that meant to distinguish designed from un-designed?
14. The material exclusions text on page 21 could be simplified by providing a list of excluded materials and limited materials, for example:
 - a. Excluded materials are: vinyl siding, large-flat format metal panels, 30” or greater in any one direction; T1-11
 - b. Materials limited to no more than 10% are: unpainted concrete masonry units
15. There is an extraneous “buffer” note on sheet 18.
16. Note that we are trying to transition to a single list of approved tree species. It can be referred to as the “Albemarle County Plant List”.
17. For efficient review, staff convert approved Countywide criteria to a table format. The table becomes a review checklist. [Examples](#) of these tables can be found at the County’s website. It may help to keep this in mind as revisions are made to the proposal. This is not to suggest that the Barnes Lumber document format must be converted. Instead, it is meant to emphasize the need for specificity/clarity. Below is an incomplete, “very draft” version of a criteria table based on the information in the revised Barnes Lumber document. I would expect to be able to fill in much more detail than this draft shows and am sharing it now just FYI.

DESIGN CRITERIA		Page reference / Notes
BLOCK PATTERN	Development must follow block pattern as illustrated on page 15	#2 page 9; page 15
VIEW CORRIDOR	View corridors will be established in locations illustrated on page 15 with trees planted as illustrated in diagram on page 17.	#2 page 9; pages 15, 17
LANDSCAPING		
	Trees are required parallel to the tracks when parking areas are adjacent to the tracks	32 a page 11

		Diagram page 15 only shows shrubs Large shade trees? Planting size?
	Tree planting along building edges ...	???
	Interspersed flowering ornamental trees	What is “as appropriate....”
	Landscaping of parking lots	What is “as appropriate....”
FENCING		
	Required at new buildings provided along northern boundary; fence design compliant with ECDG	32c page 11
	Required parallel to the railroad tracks where parking lots are adjacent to the tracks; fence design compliant with ECDG	
	Required with planting for mechanical equipment; fence design compliant with ECDG	
BUILDING ORIENTATION		
	Building footprints will be oriented parallel to the EC street; primary fronts can face away	
BUILDING MATERIALS		
	Excluded materials are: vinyl siding, large-flat format metal panels, 30” or greater in any one direction; T1-11	
	Materials limited to no more than 10% are: unpainted concrete masonry units	
TRANSPARENCY		
	Elevations facing the EC will have 30% minimum ground story transparency, with transparency measured between 2’ and 12’ above grade.	See exemptions
	Elevations facing the EC will have 20% minimum upper story transparency, measured floor to floor	See exemptions
	ECDG glazing requirements apply	
BUILDING ARTICULATION		
	Façade segment lengths must be broken by a physical break or visual break through articulation on an interval of 2x building height at minimum. Articulation includes: physical breaks in the plane of the wall, such as recesses, of 16” minimum; visual breaks in the plan of the façade including material change;	At least 3 types of articulation required

	other changes in roof line, parapet breaks, arcades, awnings/canopies.	
LIGHTING	For buildings in northern lots, wall mounted light fixtures visible from the EC must be fixtures mounted on arms extending from the building	
SIGNS	No backlit signs, no box or cabinet style signs, no internally illuminated signs, no channel letter signs visible from the EC	
EXEMPT FROM REVIEW	Seasonal tents and umbrellas and other similar shading devices	
	Structures without permanent footings erected for less than 180 days	
	Train cars converted to new uses if the elevation that faces the corridor is non-active and predominantly non-altered	
	Murals occupying up to 20% of walls visible from the EC	