

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2026-06: Car Lovers Major Amendment
Review Type	Major Site Plan Amendment
Parcel Identification	06100-00-00-147A0
Location	1083 Rio Road East
Zoned	Highway Commercial (HC) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	WCB Fifth Enterprises LLC / Shimp Engineering (Julia Moore)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	The proposed plan entails the removal of the existing vacuum islands and their associated travelway configuration situated between the current car wash facility and the Rio Road Entrance Corridor. This will be replaced with a layout that includes seven parking spaces and seven vacuum stations arranged along the southern side of the building. No changes to the exterior of the existing building have been noted.
Context	The subject parcel contains an existing car wash facility along with associated travelways and equipment. To the immediate east and west of the site are fuel stations, while single-family detached residences are located across Rio Road to the south. An auto repair shop is located to the north of the parcel.
Visibility	The subject parcel is directly adjacent to the Rio Road EC, and the site improvements are expected to be readily visible from the EC.
ARB Meeting Date	May 26, 2026
Staff Contact	Khrist Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

The site and building were developed prior to the establishment of the Entrance Corridor. On November 3, 2025, a pre-application meeting was held to discuss the proposed changes to the site. During the meeting, Design staff recommended a minimalistic approach to the design of the vacuum stations, specifically noting that vacuum equipment with mounted illumination would be inappropriate for the EC. Staff also requested the incorporation of additional landscaping within the planting area located between Rio Road and the proposed improvements to mitigate the visual impact on the Entrance Corridor.

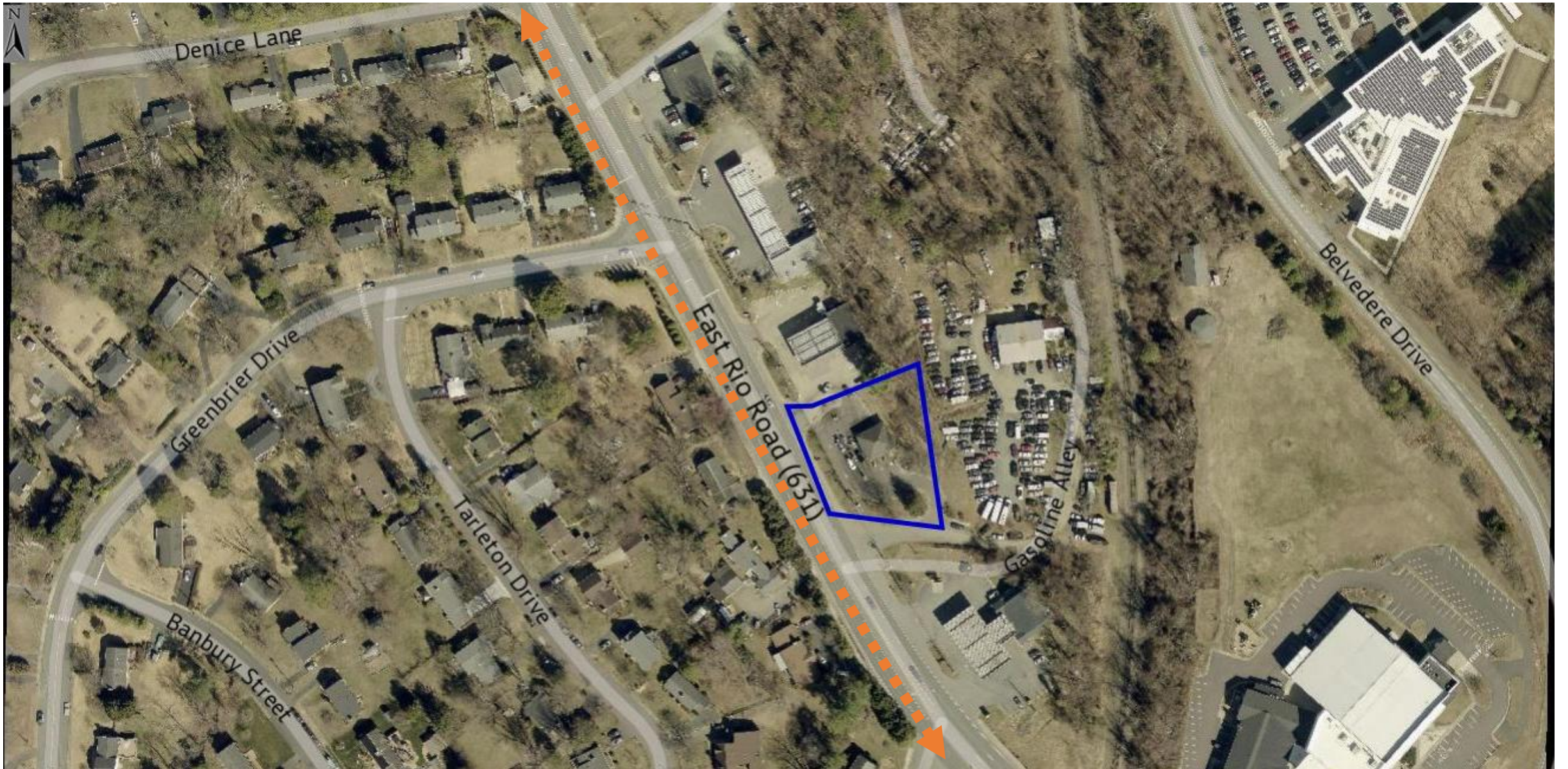


Figure 1: Location of the existing carwash along the Rio Rd East Entrance Corridor (shown in orange).

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	Purpose, <i>Compatibility with significant historic sites, Compatibility with the Character of the Entrance Corridor, Structure Design</i>		
1-5, 9-16	The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to ensure that new development within the corridors reflects the traditional architecture of the area. Therefore, it is the purpose of ARB review and of these Guidelines, that proposed development within the designated Entrance Corridors reflect elements of design characteristic of the significant historical landmarks, buildings, and structures of the Charlottesville and Albemarle area, and to promote orderly and attractive development within these corridors. Applicants should note that replication of historic structures is neither required nor desired.	The site plan shows vacuums under the existing hipped-roof canopy and near the car wash amenity equipment located along the south side of the building. The proposed equipment, based on its height and proposed location, appears to conflict with the canopy and the existing equipment. However, no changes to the existing building or equipment have been noted.	Revise the site plan to show the locations of the existing equipment along the south side of the building. Revise the submittal to show how the proposed vacuum equipment relates to the existing canopy along the south elevation.
	Accessory structures and equipment		
17	Accessory structures and equipment should be integrated into the overall plan of development and shall, to the extent possible, be compatible with the building designs used on the site.	The development is already established, and the proposed changes are limited to the vacuum stations and the existing travelways between the building and the Rio Road EC. This makes positioning the vacuums and equipment in a manner that eliminates their visibility from the EC not feasible. Along the EC, there are existing ornamental trees, and the site plan shows both deciduous and evergreen shrubs to be added, intermixed among the existing trees. However, a single row of shrubs is not expected to screen the proposed equipment, and some of the shrubs labeled as existing in the southeast corner of the site appear to have been removed, which will allow views of the equipment from the EC. Revising the site plan to provide a double staggered row of evergreen shrubs and extending that row along the perimeter of the paved area in the southeast corner would help reduce the visibility of the proposed vacuums and equipment. Sheet 8 of the ARB application package provides reference images of the proposed vacuums and related equipment. The images show vacuum stations with gray arch arms, stanchions, and bases, while blue is used for the vacuum top, hose, canopy, and trash receptacle. The gray color helps mitigate the visibility of the equipment, but the blue color will stand out in the surrounding context. At other carwashes within the Entrance Corridor Overlay District, similar vacuum equipment has used a single neutral color scheme. Another option for reducing visual impacts is to choose vacuums without canopies. As illustrated on the manufacturer’s website, these models have narrower profiles and a simpler form. Using a single neutral color and	Revise the site plan to show a double staggered row of evergreen shrubs in the frontage planting area.
18	The following should be located to eliminate visibility from the Entrance Corridor street. If, after appropriate siting, these features will still have a negative visual impact on the Entrance Corridor street, screening should be provided to eliminate visibility. A. Loading areas, b. Service areas, c. Refuse areas, d. Storage areas, e. Mechanical equipment, f. Above-ground utilities, and g. Chain link fence, barbed wire, razor wire, and similar security fencing devices.		Revise the site plan to include a double staggered row of evergreen shrubs along the perimeter of the diagonally striped paved area near the southeast corner of the site.
19	Screening devices should be compatible with the design of the buildings and surrounding natural vegetation and may consist of: a. Walls, b. Plantings, and c. Fencing.		Revise the plans to show that the vacuums and related equipment will use a single neutral color. Identify the color on the plan. Provide a sample with the next submittal. Revise the plan set to add “Demolition” to the title of sheet C1. Revise the site plan to include a vacuum pole detail for vacuums without canopies.

		selecting vacuums without canopies would help to reduce the visibility of site features that should not be seen from the Entrance Corridor.  <i>Figure 2: Example of proposed vacuum equipment provided by the applicant.</i>	
21	The following note should be added to the site plan and the architectural plan: “Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.”	The standard mechanical equipment note is not on the plan; however, it is anticipated that equipment will be partially visible from the EC.	Revise the site plan to indicate that equipment is only approved in the locations specified on the plan. Any new equipment will require review and approval.
	Lighting		
	<i>General Guidelines</i>		
22	Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;	A lighting plan has been provided with this submittal. The plan shows tube lighting mounted inside the vacuum arms. This type of illumination highlights the proposed equipment, focusing attention on site features that should not be visible from the Entrance Corridor. This type of lighting has been deemed inappropriate for similar developments within the Entrance Corridor Overlay District. Revising the lighting plan to remove this lighting and replace it with pole or building-mounted lighting that meets the Guidelines would reduce visual impacts.	Revise the lighting plan to remove the tube lighting from the vacuum equipment.
23	Light should be shielded, recessed or flush-mounted to eliminate glare. All fixtures with lamps emitting 3000 lumens or more must be full cutoff fixtures.		If pole or building-mounted lighting is proposed, it must meet Guideline requirements: Lighting levels not exceeding 20 fc.
24	Light levels exceeding 30 footcandles are not appropriate for display lots in the Entrance Corridors. Lower light levels will apply to most other uses in the Entrance Corridors.		
25	Light should have the appearance of white light with a warm soft glow; however, a consistent appearance throughout a site or development is required.		

	Consequently, if existing lamps that emit non-white light are to remain, new lamps may be required to match them.	The plans show existing pole-mounted lighting to be retained; however, the pole lights have not been noted in the lighting schedule and their illumination values are not provided in the photometrics. The approved site plan shows illumination levels near 20 fc in some places. The amended lighting plan will need to show that the added fixtures do not result in illumination that exceeds 20 fc.  <i>Figure 3: Example found on the web of vacuum equipment with tube LED lighting similar to the Car Lover's proposal.</i>	b. Spillover not exceeding .5 fc. c. Full cut off fixtures. d. Freestanding pole heights not exceeding 20' including the base. e. Wall and freestanding fixture finishes that are either dark brown, dark bronze, or black. f. Lighting with a color temperature of warm white (2000K-3000K) Revise the lighting plan to identify existing pole-mounted fixtures in the lighting schedule. Update the photometrics to include their illumination levels.
26	Dark brown, dark bronze, or black are appropriate colors for free-standing pole-mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors.		
27	The height and scale of freestanding, pole-mounted light fixtures should be compatible with the height and scale of the buildings and the sites they are illuminating, and with the use of the site. Typically, the height of freestanding pole-mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors should not exceed 20 feet, including the base. Fixtures that exceed 20 feet in height will typically require additional screening to achieve an appropriate appearance from the Entrance Corridor.		
28	In determining the appropriateness of lighting fixtures for the Entrance Corridors, the individual context of the site will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis.		
29	The following note should be included on the lighting plan: "Each outdoor luminaire equipped with a lamp that emits 3,000 or more initial lumens shall be a full cutoff luminaire and shall be arranged or shielded to reflect light away from adjoining residential districts and away from adjacent roads. The spillover of lighting from luminaires onto public roads and property in residential or rural areas zoning districts shall not exceed one-half footcandle."	The standard lighting note has been included in the lighting plan.	None.
	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>		
30	Light used for decorative effect shall: a. be compatible with the character of the Entrance Corridor. Compatibility of exterior lighting and lighting fixtures is assessed in terms of design, use, size, scale, color, and brightness. b. impact only the immediate site. The effect of the illumination should not be discernible from distances along the Entrance Corridor.	No decorative landscape lighting is proposed with this proposal.	None.
31	Where used for decorative effect, outdoor light fixtures shall: a. be equipped with automatic timing devices and shall be extinguished between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and dawn. b. be shielded and focused to eliminate glare. Glare control shall be achieved primarily through the use of such means as cutoff fixtures, shields and baffles,		

	and appropriate application of mounting height, wattage, aiming angle, fixture placement, etc. c. be cutoff luminaires, aimed so as not to project their output beyond the objects intended to be illuminated; or non-cutoff luminaires, equipped with glare shields, visors, barn doors, and/or other similar shielding accessories as required to meet the following criteria: Light distribution from all lighting installations shall be cut-off at all angles beyond those required to restrict direct illumination to within the perimeter of the landscape feature being illuminated. d. never exceeds 3,000 lumens. Further restrictions on lumens may be imposed by the ARB. e. not be modified to reflect seasonal colors. f. be of a number that is compatible with the scale of the object and the development to be illuminated, such that the light emitted will not over-illuminate or overpower the site, as determined by the ARB.		
	Landscaping		
7	The requirements of the Guidelines regarding landscaping are intended to reflect the landscaping characteristic of many of the area’s significant historic sites which is characterized by large shade trees and lawns. Landscaping should promote visual order within the Entrance Corridor and help to integrate buildings into the existing environment of the corridor.	A site layout plan with landscaping has been submitted for review. In the frontage planting area between Rio Rd. and the proposed vacuum equipment is a row of existing ornamental trees and proposed shrubs between those trees. The applicant has clarified that the sizes in the landscape schedule specify the mature height of the shrubs rather than their height at the time of planting. Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines specify that shrubs must be at least 24 inches tall when planted. However, taller planting heights may be warranted in this case. Based on the height (11 feet), quantity, general character, and anticipated visibility of the proposed vacuum equipment, a coordinated landscape design, including evergreen screening, should be established along Rio Rd. and Gasoline Alley. Removing any existing shrubs that impede a coordinated design and planting shrubs taller than the minimum planting size would be appropriate.	Revise the landscape schedule to specify the planting height not the mature height.
8	Continuity within the Entrance Corridor should be obtained by planting different types of plant materials that share similar characteristics. Such common elements allow for more flexibility in the design of structures because common landscape features will help to harmonize the appearance of development as seen from the street upon which the Corridor is centered.		Revise the existing conditions and site layout sheets to show all landscaping that exists within the site.
32	Landscaping along the frontage of Entrance Corridor streets should include the following: a. Large shade trees should be planted parallel to the Entrance Corridor Street. Such trees should be at least 3½ inches caliper (measured 6 inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 35 feet on center. b. Flowering ornamental trees of a species common to the area should be interspersed among the trees required by the preceding paragraph. The ornamental trees need not alternate one for one with the large shade trees. They may be planted among the large shade trees in a less regular spacing pattern. c. In situations where appropriate, a three or four-board fence or low stone wall, typical of the area, should align the frontage of the Entrance Corridor street. d. An area of sufficient width to accommodate the foregoing plantings and fencing should be reserved parallel to the Entrance Corridor street, and exclusive of road right-of-way and utility easements.		Revise the proposal to include a coordinated landscape design, including evergreen screening, along Rio Rd. and Gasoline Alley. Note that some existing shrubs may need to be removed to accomplish a coordinated design.
		The existing conditions sheet does not show the existing landscaping and the landscaping that exists on the site differs from what is shown in the approved site plan (SDP-2001-123). Revising the Existing Conditions sheet to show all landscaping that exists within the site would be appropriate.	

	of a species common to the area. Such trees should be planted in planters or medians sufficiently large to maintain the health of the tree and shall be protected by curbing. c. Shrubs should be provided as necessary to minimize the parking area’s impact on Entrance Corridor streets. Shrubs should measure 24 inches in height.		
36	Landscaping of buildings and other structures: a. Trees or other vegetation should be planted along the front of long buildings as necessary to soften the appearance of exterior walls. The spacing, size, and type of such trees or vegetation should be determined by the length, height, and blankness of such walls. b. Shrubs should be used to integrate the site, buildings, and other structures; dumpsters, accessory buildings and structures; “drive-thru” windows; service areas; and signs. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.	The existing building is relatively short, and no changes to it are proposed.	None.
37	Plant species: a. Plant species required should be as approved by the Staff based upon but not limited to the <i>Generic Landscape Plan Recommended Species List</i> and <i>Native Plants for Virginia Landscapes (Appendix D)</i> .	The plants are found on the various lists.	Revise the site plan to include the standard plant health note.
38	Plant health: The following note should be added to the landscape plan: “All site plantings of trees and shrubs shall be allowed to reach, and be maintained at, mature height; the topping of trees is prohibited. Shrubs and trees shall be pruned minimally and only to support the overall health of the plant.”	The standard plant health note has not been provided in the landscape plan.	
	Site Development and layout		
	Development pattern		
6	Site development should be sensitive to the existing natural landscape and should contribute to the creation of an organized development plan. This may be accomplished, to the extent practical, by preserving the trees and rolling terrain typical of the area; planting new trees along streets and pedestrian ways and choosing species that reflect native forest elements; ensuring that any grading will blend into the surrounding topography thereby creating a continuous landscape; preserving, to the extent practical, existing significant river and stream valleys which may be located on the site and integrating these features into the design of surrounding development; and limiting the building mass and height to a scale that does not overpower the natural settings of the site, or the Entrance Corridor.	The site has already been cleared, and no new grading is planned for the proposed improvements. While the redesign will move the vacuums and equipment about sixteen feet away from Rio Rd. and arrange them in a more organized manner, they will still remain visible from the EC. To reduce this visibility, it would be appropriate to revise the site plan to include a double staggered row of evergreen shrubs along the perimeter of the parking area adjacent to Rio Rd and Gasoline Alley.	See the recommendations provided with the accessory structures and equipment Guidelines.
39	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows: a. An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site. b. In general, buildings fronting the Entrance Corridor street should be parallel to the street. Building groupings should be arranged to parallel the Entrance Corridor street.		

	c. Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems. d. Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor. e. If significant natural features exist on the site (including creek valleys, steep slopes, significant trees or rock outcroppings), to the extent practical, then such natural features should be reflected in the site layout. If the provisions of Section 32.5.2.n of the <i>Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance</i> apply, then improvements required by that section should be located so as to maximize the use of existing features in screening such improvements from Entrance Corridor streets. f. The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.		
	Site Grading		
40	Site grading should maintain the basic relationship of the site to surrounding conditions by limiting the use of retaining walls and by shaping the terrain through the use of smooth, rounded landforms that blend with the existing terrain. Steep-cut or fill sections are generally unacceptable. Proposed contours on the grading plan shall be rounded with a ten-foot minimum radius where they meet the adjacent condition. Final grading should achieve a natural, rather than engineered, appearance. Retaining walls 6 feet in height and taller, when necessary, shall be terraced and planted to blend with the landscape.	The site has been cleared, and no new grading is proposed for the improvements.	None.
41	No grading, trenching, or tunneling should occur within the drip line of any trees or other existing features designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness. Adequate tree protection fencing should be shown on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping and erosion and sediment control plans.		
42	Areas designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness should be clearly delineated and protected on the site prior to any grading activity on the site. This protection should remain in place until completion of the development of the site.		
43	Preservation areas should be protected from storage or movement of heavy equipment within this area.		
20	Surface runoff structures and detention ponds should be designed to fit into the natural topography to avoid the need for screening. When visible from the Entrance Corridor street, these features must be fully integrated into the landscape. They should not have the appearance of engineered features.	An existing stormwater management facility is shown behind the building along the northern parcel boundary. No changes are proposed to this facility.	None.
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Visibility of the proposed equipment from the Rio Rd. Entrance Corridor.
2. The appearance of the proposed equipment.
3. The proposed arrangement of landscaping within the planting areas along the Rio Rd. and Gasoline Alley.

Staff recommends approval of the major amendment with the following revisions:

1. Revise the site plan to show the locations of the existing equipment along the south side of the building.
2. Revise the submittal to show how the proposed vacuum equipment relates to the existing canopy along the south elevation.
3. Revise the site plan to show a double staggered row of evergreen shrubs in the frontage planting area.
4. Revise the site plan to include a double staggered row of evergreen shrubs along the perimeter of the diagonally striped paved area near the southeast corner of the site.
5. Revise the plans to show that the vacuums and related equipment will use a single neutral color. Identify the color on the plan. Provide a sample with the next submittal.
6. Revise the plan set to add “Demolition” to the title of sheet C1.
7. Revise the site plan to include a vacuum pole detail for vacuums without canopies.
8. Revise the site plan to indicate that equipment is only approved in the locations specified on the plan. Any new equipment will require review and approval.
9. Revise the lighting plan to remove the tube lighting from the vacuum equipment.
10. If pole or building-mounted lighting is proposed, it must meet Guideline requirements:
 - a. Lighting levels not exceeding 20 fc.
 - b. Spillover not exceeding .5 fc.
 - c. Full cut off fixtures.
 - d. Freestanding pole heights not exceeding 20’ including the base.
 - e. Wall and freestanding fixture finishes that are either dark brown, dark bronze, or black.
 - f. Lighting with a color temperature of warm white (2000K-3000K)
11. Revise the lighting plan to identify existing pole-mounted fixtures in the lighting schedule. Update the photometrics to include their illumination levels.
12. Revise the landscape schedule to specify the planting height not the mature height.
13. Revise the existing conditions and site layout sheets to show all landscaping that exists within the site.
14. Revise the proposal to include a coordinated landscape design, including evergreen screening, along Rio Rd. and Gasoline Alley. Note that some existing shrubs may need to be removed to accomplish a coordinated design.
15. Revise the site plan to provide two trees along the southeast corner of the site.
16. Revise the site plan to include the standard plant health note.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB-2026-00006: Car Lovers Major Amendment Site Plan](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB-2026-00006: Car Lovers Major Amendment Architectural Package](#)