



ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: SP202300016 Charlottesville Climbing Gym	Staff: Syd Shoaf, Senior Planner
Planning Commission Hearing: March 12, 2024	Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: To be scheduled
Owner: Ivy Forum LLC & FD Brentwood LLC	Applicant: Mike Kinnick and Eric Woolley, Woolley Engineering
Acreage: 0.94 acres	Special Use Permit: Section 18-23.2.2 (14) for an indoor athletic facility.
TMP: 06000-00-00-046C0 Location: 2200 Old Ivy Road	By-right use: Commercial Office (CO). Allows offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre)
Magisterial District: Jack Jouett	Conditions: No EC: Yes
Proposal: Request for expansion of an existing special use permit (SP201200001) for an indoor athletic facility from 2,000 square feet to 6,125 square feet for climbing, bouldering, strength and fitness, yoga space, kids' zone, retail space, locker rooms, storage, a group fitness room, and a small office associated with the gym use.	Comp. Plan Designation: Community Mixed Use – residential (up to 34 units/acre), community scale retail, service and office uses, places of worship, schools, public and institutional uses. In Neighborhood 7 of the Southern and Western Neighborhoods Master Plan.
DA (Development Area): Yes	Requested # of Dwelling Units: 0
Character of Property: The site contains an existing 13,378 gross square foot building that is mixed use with office space, retail and a portion of the building is used for an indoor athletic facility. The site has two driveways onto Old Ivy Road and two parking lots for a total of 49 existing parking spaces.	Use of Surrounding Properties: Surrounding properties are other office uses, a restaurant, apartment complex and some University of Virginia buildings and athletic facilities.
Factors Favorable: 1. Consistent with the review criteria for special use permits contained in the Zoning Ordinance. 2. The use is consistent with the Land Use Plan. 3. Provides an additional athletic facility option for people who live and work in the area.	Factors Unfavorable: 1. None

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of SP202300016 Charlottesville Climbing Gym with conditions.

STAFF PERSON: Syd Shoaf, Senior Planner
PLANNING COMMISSION: March 12, 2024
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: To be scheduled

PETITION:

PROJECT: SP202300016 Charlottesville Climbing Gym

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Jack Jouett

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 06000-00-00-046C0

LOCATION: 2200 Old Ivy Road

PROPOSAL: Request to amend an existing special use permit (SP201200001) for an indoor climbing gym. The proposal includes an expansion of the existing special use permit for an indoor athletic facility from 2,000 square feet to 6,125 square feet for climbing, bouldering, strength and fitness, yoga space, kids zone, retail space, locker rooms, storage, a group fitness room, and a small office associated with the gym use.

PETITION: A special use permit request under Section 18-23.2.2 (14) for an indoor athletic facility.

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR: Yes

ZONING: CO Commercial Office – offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre)

OVERLAY DISTRICT: AIA – Airport Impact Area; EC – Entrance Corridor Overlay District; and Steep Slopes – Managed

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Community Mixed Use – residential (up to 34 units/acre), community scale retail, service and office uses, places of worship, schools, public and institutional uses. In Neighborhood 7 of the Southern and Western Neighborhoods Master Plan.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The subject property is located at 2200 Old Ivy Road, just west of the City of Charlottesville city limits. The site is developed and contains an approximately 13,378 gross square foot area building that is mixed use with office space, retail, and an indoor athletic facility. The indoor athletic facility is allowed by an approved special use permit (SP201200001) and allows up to 2,000 square feet of the building for this use. Additionally, due to the site's elevation, it contains two driveways onto Old Ivy Road and two parking lots for a total of 49 existing parking spaces. The northwestern driveway is a shared driveway with the adjacent undeveloped parcel to the northwest. Lastly, the site is bordered by the CSX Buckingham Branch Railroad line along its southern boundary line and there is an underpass at the site's southeastern border (Attachment 1 – Existing Conditions Map).

The surrounding properties are zoned a mixture of uses. The properties to the west are zoned C1 Commercial. One of the properties is undeveloped and the other property contains the Ivy Inn restaurant. Across Old Ivy Road to the north, one property is zoned Planned Residential Development and contains the Old Ivy Apartment complex. The other property to the north is zoned R1 Residential and it is owned by the Rectors & Visitors of the University of Virginia c/o Office of Space & Re MGMT. It contains a portion of the University of Virginia baseball field. To the east of the site is the City of Charlottesville city limits and a railroad underpass. To the south is the Buckingham Branch railroad and Ivy Road, also known as, Route 250 where the sites along it are zoned Highway Commercial.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY

The building was built in 1975, and the property was zoned Commercial Office (CO) prior to 1980. Over the last 35 to 40 years a variety of zoning clearances and an ARB submittal for façade

renovations have been reviewed. In 2012, a special use permit (SP201200001) was approved to allow an indoor athletic facility for up to 2,000 square feet. Since its approval, Pure Barre has occupied the space for indoor workout classes.

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

The applicant has requested to amend the existing special use permit (SP201200001) for an indoor athletic facility to increase the use from 2,000 square feet to 6,125 square feet for an indoor climbing gym. The proposal would include an area for climbing, bouldering, strength and fitness, yoga space, kids' zone, retail space, locker rooms, storage, a group fitness room, and a small office associated with the gym use. The proposed operating hours would be from 6 am to 9 pm daily. The concept plan proposes for the existing footprint of the building to remain the same, however, the applicant is proposing to raise the existing two story building of 16'-1" to three stories for a new total height of 32'-4". The applicant has provided a detailed project narrative and conceptual plan (Attachment 3 – Applicant Materials and Attachment 4 – Concept Plan).

COMMUNITY MEETING

The required community meeting for the proposal was held at the Places29 Hydraulic Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting at Greer Elementary on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 5:30 pm. The applicant shared details and answered questions regarding the proposal to members of the CAC and members of the public who were present. There were minimal concerns and questions, and feedback was supportive of this application.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST:

Special Use Permits are evaluated under reasonable standards, based on zoning principles which include the proposal's compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Any impacts caused by the proposal may be addressed through conditions which must be reasonably related and roughly proportional to the impacts.

Section 33.8(A) states that the Commission, in making its recommendation, shall consider the following factors:

1. No substantial detriment. Whether the proposed special use will be a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels.

The indoor climbing gym is not expected to be a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels. The existing special use permit on this site already allows an indoor recreation area for up to 2,000 square feet. For this proposal the applicant is requesting to increase the indoor athletic recreation area to 6,125 square feet. Additionally, the existing building is two stories at a height of 16'-1". The applicant has proposed to add an additional story to the building for a proposed total height of 32'-4".

The location of the building is a corner lot bound with a railroad line and bridge, a vacant property and restaurant, as well as an apartment complex and University of Virginia sport facilities. Additionally, the existing 49 parking spaces on the site meet the parking requirements for the 6,125 square feet of useable recreation area.

The existing allowed indoor athletic use, the existing parking spaces, location, and minimal building and site impacts are not expected to result in a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels.

2. Character of the nearby area is unchanged. Whether the character of the adjacent parcels and the nearby area will be changed by the proposed special use.

The applicant has proposed to increase the building height from 16'-1" to 32'-4", which is consistent in keeping the character of the area. Although Old Ivy Road is not in the Entrance Corridor, the Albemarle County Architectural Review Board (ARB) reviewed this site due to its potential impacts to Ivy Road which is an Entrance Corridor. The ARB had no objection to this project's proposal.

In Attachment 3 – Applicant Materials and Attachment 4 – Concept Plan, the applicant has provided renderings for what the proposed building expansion would look like. Additionally, the applicant is not proposing to remove any of the existing landscaping and are proposing to add additional trees to the site.

Staff believes that the proposed uses will not change the character of adjacent parcels or the nearby area.

3. *Harmony. Whether the proposed special use will be harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter,*

The CO zoning district is intended for development of administrative, business and professional offices and supporting accessory uses and facilities. This district is intended as a transition between residential districts and other more intensive commercial and industrial districts. Indoor Athletic Facilities are allowed by special use permit in this district depending on the location. The proposed indoor athletic facility is expected to be in harmony with the area.

with the uses permitted by right in the district,

The proposed indoor athletic facility is a supporting accessory use for several of the existing uses in the surrounding area. The proposed indoor athletic facility would not affect the by-right uses in the district on this property or adjacent properties.

with the regulations provided in Section 5 as applicable,

This section is not applicable to this proposal.

and with the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The public health, safety, and general welfare of the community are protected throughout the special use permit process, which assures that the proposed use is appropriate in the location requested. Zoning, Engineering, Building Inspections, the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Transportation Planning, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Albemarle County Fire Rescue, Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) and Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) have all reviewed this application and have provided no objections.

If the special use permit is approved, the use cannot commence without the appropriate site development plans, building permits, and zoning clearances. These processes will ensure that all State and County regulations, special use permit conditions, and all necessary building and fire inspections have been approved.

4. *Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Whether the proposed special use will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

The Southern and Western Neighborhoods Master Plan designates the subject property for this proposal as Community Mixed Use and is located in Neighborhood 7 of the Comprehensive Plan. The intent of the Community Mixed Use designation is a mixture of residential and retail

uses and services that serve the community. Primary uses include townhouses, apartments, attached housing units, places of worship, public, and private schools, early childhood education centers, public uses, and institutional uses. Additionally, retail, service, and office building footprints are not allowed to have a single-building footprint greater than 60,000 square feet. Lastly, the allowed building height for this building designation is 1-4 stories, however, a minimum of 2-3 stories is preferred.

The proposed indoor athletic facility on this site supports the intent of the Community Mixed Use designation. The site is an existing commercial site and where there is not a mix of residential/non-residential on-site, there is in the immediate neighborhood. The proposed use would allow a new indoor athletic option for nearby residents. Additionally, the proposed building additions would be compliant with the Comprehensive Plan since it would be 3 stories and less than 60,000 square feet.

Overall, the applicant's proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

SUMMARY

Staff has identified the following factor favorable to this request:

1. Consistent with the review criteria for special use permits contained in the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The use is consistent with the Land Use Plan.
3. Provides an additional athletic facility option for people who live and work in the area.

Staff has identified the following factor which is unfavorable to this request:

1. None

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings contained in this staff report, staff recommends approval of the special use permit applications with the condition consistent drafted below:

1. The indoor athletic facility use shall not exceed 6,125 square feet.

POSSIBLE PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS:

A. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend approval** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend approval of SP202300016 Charlottesville Climbing Gym with the condition stated in the staff report.

B. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend denial of SP202300016 Charlottesville Climbing Gym. *Should a commissioner motion to recommend denial, he or she should state the reason(s) for recommending denial.*

ATTACHMENTS:

Attach 1 - [SP2023-16 Charlottesville Climbing Gym – Existing Conditions Map](#)

Attach 2 - [SP2023-16 Charlottesville Climbing Gym – Zoning Map](#)

Attach 3 - [SP2023-16 Charlottesville Climbing Gym – Applicant Narrative](#)

Attach 4 - [SP2023-16 Charlottesville Climbing Gym – Conceptual Plan](#)

Attach 5 - [SP2023-16 Charlottesville Climbing Gym – Public Comments received via Email](#)