

Narrative to Support Adding a Modular Building at Community Christian Academy

PROJECT PROPOSAL

In 1986, Alliance Bible Church (currently known as CrossLife Community Church) built their church at 1410 Old Brook Road in a manner to house a vibrant preschool called Merridale. Because the school closed many years later, Community Christian Academy requested and was granted a special use permit to house a Pre-K through 12th grade school at that location for 85 students in 2012 (SP 201200004). We had incremental growth for multiple years, but when the pandemic shut down the public schools for in-person education, we suddenly filled up all our classes. To accommodate a growing population, we secured a special-use permit from Albemarle County to move our middle-school students to RiverStone Church in 2022 (SP 202200005) and increased our maximum student number from 85 to 150 at CrossLife Community Church (SP 202300002) in 2023.

One of the challenges that we have had as a school is securing inexpensive, stable facilities for our school. As a school that focuses primarily on the working class, we have a very small budget for facilities and rely on the generosity of landlords to allow us to use their facilities for a minimal cost. In the case of RiverStone Church, that church does not own their building. In the eighteen months our school has been in their building, RiverStone has had a last-minute lease extension from expiring in December 2023 to expiring in June 2024. Despite trying to communicate with the owners, the church still does not have a lease past June 2024, and the owners of the building seem to be in no hurry to agree to a long-term rental agreement or a sale of the building to RiverStone. To grow and establish Community Christian Academy, we need to have the facilities secured where we know from year to year where we will be. A partnership with CrossLife Community Church could provide those expanded, secure facilities, so that Community Christian Academy can have a long-term location for all of its grades.

CrossLife Community Church and Community Christian Academy need additional facilities for growth, and working together on a long-term solution makes sense to both of us. This request to add modulares is the first phase of a multi-phase project. In this first phase, we would like to have up to three (3) three-thousand square-foot modulares set behind the current building. (See the concept map for phase one.) This would provide the school with 9,000 square feet for growth. As we secure funding, we would replace those modulares with a permanent three or four-story addition on the back of the current building, which could have up to 400-500 students and an expanded sanctuary on the front. (See Exhibit A.) We understand that we will have to submit a rezoning application for this expansion.

Because of the unstable rental situation at RiverStone Church, it is necessary that we secure another location for our middle-school students as soon as possible. Also, because the permit approval process is so lengthy, we needed to submit our application right away. At our pre-application meeting on April 1, 2024, we found out that we needed a traffic study to increase our number of students, but that is a three-month process. Because we could not complete the required traffic study by the April application deadline, we are not requesting an increase to the 150 students at this time. We will

submit a rezoning application and another special-use application for the entire project once the traffic study is complete.

CrossLife is well-positioned to have a great deal of activity without disruption to the neighbors. Facing the church, the lot to the left contains a multi-business complex, and the manager of that complex has a child in our school. There are trees between that property and the church, and there are woods behind the church separating it from residential properties behind it. To the right of the church, there is Old Brook Road and only a few properties within eyesight of the church. The closest properties already have tall bushes, trees, or fences blocking the views into the properties. Rio Road is in front of the church, and because the church is on the corner, parents coming to the school are not traveling through the neighborhood along Old Brook Road.

CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CrossLife Community Church is on property that is zoned Neighborhood Density Residential within Neighborhood 2 of the Places 29 Master Plan. Within this designation, the primary use is for single-family residential units, but there are additional secondary uses that support neighborhoods that can be approved such as commercial, institutional, and retail sites. A school is a use that supports members living within the neighborhood. Since we have students in the neighborhood where CrossLife is located, it is clear that the school supports the needs of people living in the neighborhood.

CrossLife's property is in the Places 29 Rio Community. According to the County's Places 29 Master Plan, it is considered a benefit for a neighborhood-serving business to be located where multiple neighborhoods can easily access it and where it shares a location with other community-serving businesses. CrossLife Community Church is within walking distance of multiple neighborhoods including but not limited to Raintree, Abbingdon Crossing, and Fieldbrook. It is also located next to a business center that includes various businesses such as Split Endz Hair and Beauty Salon, Robbins Staffing Solution, Farm Credit, and Mark Cloth Orthodontics.

Because we already have a special use permit for a school and have been operating a school at CrossLife Community Church for twelve years, we are already in compliance with the applicable regulations in Section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance. We are also in compliance with various local and state requirements for a school, as well as requirements through our accreditation organization. These requirements frequently serve to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the children in our school.

IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

In this phase, we are not requesting an increase in the number of students. That means that until we return to request a rezoning and an amended special-use permit for more students, we will not make any changes to the current property except for the addition of the modulars. Adding parking, moving the playground, and demolishing the parsonage will not happen in this phase of development.

As an attachment, I have included multiple pictures I took while walking on the sidewalk along the entire property line that borders Rio Road. As you can see, the property behind the building is not visible from Rio Road except in the far left corner (facing the building), where a small piece of the back can be seen. It is highly unlikely that anyone traveling Rio Road would notice the modulars

unless they were specifically looking for them; then they might be able to see a small piece of a modular. The reason it is nearly impossible to see what is behind the building from Rio Road is that the top floor of the building sits on top of hill, and the parking lot and grass area between the parking lot and Rio Road gently slopes down. The bottom floor of the building (basement) is built into the hill on the back side, so what is behind the building is below the hill.

IMPACTS ON PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

When the church was built in 1986, it was designed to support a preschool. It is on public water and sewer, and when we first sought a special use permit twelve years ago, the building inspector confirmed that the building was appropriate for the needs of a school. Engineers have already walked the property and confirmed that we could use existing utilities with modulars or the building additions. The school has its own playground, so there will be no impact on public parks, and when we have a gym in the new addition, we will not need to go anywhere for some of our athletic offerings. Most parents drive their children to school, so there will be no impact on public transportation. Our numbers are not large enough to significantly impact public schools.

Application #SP202400016, Revised 6/6/2024

Sample building:



Pictures from the sidewalk next to Rio Road and walking along the width of the property:







