

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2020-135: Rio Hill Redevelopment
Review Type	Preliminary Plan
Parcel Identification	04500-00-00-094A0
Location	West of Rt. 29, East of Berkmar Drive, south of Woodbrook Drive
Zoned	Planned Development Shopping Center (PDSC), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	SCT Rio Hill LLC C/O Rosenthal Properties/ BRW Architects (David Timmerman)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	To renovate a majority of the existing Rio Hill Shopping Center (excluding the Kroger store and the southeast corner of the center), removing portions of the existing canopies and store entries to update the current façade.
Context	The subject property is an existing strip shopping center. The shopping center is surrounded primarily by commercial development. Some residential development is located to the west and beyond Rt. 29 to the east. (Fig. 1.)
Visibility	The portion of the parcel that is adjacent to the Rt. 29 Entrance Corridor is occupied by a stormwater facility. The shopping center building begins approximately 219' from the EC street and is located as far as approximately 1113' from the street. Despite this distance, the shopping center building has some visibility from Rt. 29, with the increased height of building elements marking major tenants being more visible from the street. Site lighting and illuminated signage are visible and make the shopping center more noticeable at night.
ARB Meeting Date	February 1, 2021
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

The development was built prior to the establishment of the Entrance Corridor overlay district. A Comprehensive Sign Plan was approved for the shopping center in 1999. The ARB reviewed and provided comments on the conceptual plan for this renovation during the October 19, 2020 ARB meeting. The applicant has requested that the renovation design for the tenant spaces for TJ Maxx and Sierra be separated out from the overall renovation proposal and they report that leasing these spaces is dependent on the approval of the sign designs as proposed.

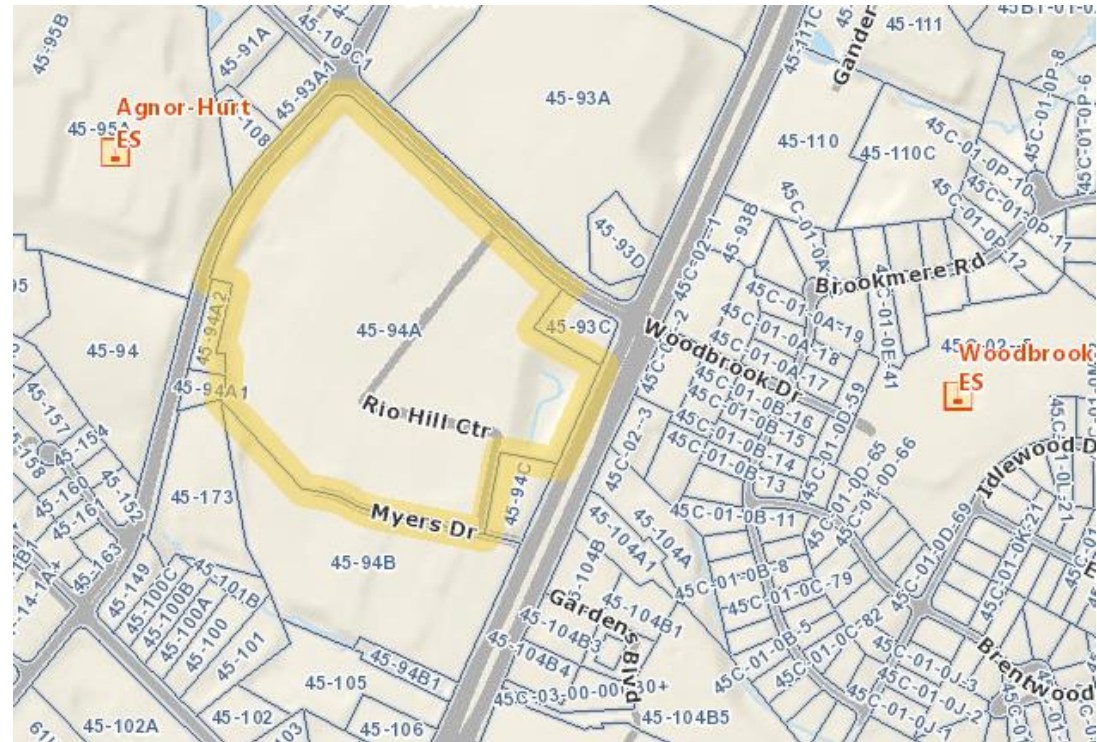


Figure 1: Pictometry Image (left) showing project area along the Entrance Corridor and County GIS map (right) highlighting subject property.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	COMMENTS 10/19/20	ISSUE 2/1/21	RECOMMENDATIONS 2/1/21
GENERAL GUIDELINES				
<i>Purpose, Compatibility with significant historic sites, Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor</i>				
1	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.	Provide line drawing elevations and plans to show in more detail what is proposed. Incorporate warmer-toned materials and colors into the design.	The shopping center predates the establishment of the Entrance Corridors and does not reflect the historic architecture of the area. The proposed renovation does not change this condition but offers an opportunity to improve scale and the pedestrian experience. Plans and elevations have been provided. The elevations include more identification of materials than was previously shown. The plans clarify the extent of canopy removal; two sections of canopy are proposed to remain, in part. While there have been some minor tweaks to the forms of the conceptual design, the design concept remains largely the same.	Provide samples for all materials and colors that confirm the use of warm tones. If the architectural designs proposed for TJ Maxx and Sierra receive approval prior to the design of the overall shopping center, coordinate the overall design with TJ Maxx and Sierra.
2	Visitors to the significant historical sites in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area experience these sites as ensembles of buildings, land, and vegetation. In order to accomplish the integration of buildings, land, and vegetation characteristic of these sites, the Guidelines require attention to four primary factors: compatibility with significant historic sites in the area; the character of the Entrance Corridor; site development and layout; and landscaping.		The shopping center is visible from the EC, but the distance from the street does not allow for sustained views of building details. Consequently, architectural details are not expected to be detectable from the EC, but forms and colors are. The major tenant spaces are marked by broad entrance elements with increased height. These elements are more prominent in the design and will be visible. While the heights of some of the added architectural elements have been lowered in the current design, the scale of these forms remains monumental.	
3	New structures and substantial additions to existing structures should respect the traditions of the architecture of historically significant buildings in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area. Photographs of historic buildings in the area, as well as drawings of architectural features, which provide important examples of this tradition are contained in Appendix A.		The overall scale of the shopping center is broken down to more human proportions by the inclusion of canopies, decorative metal paneling/green screens, and alternating materials and forms. The proposed materials (brick, metal panels, stucco, and phenolic architectural panels) help to add texture and visual breaks along the elevations. The renderings show a range of neutral colors. Samples will be needed to confirm that they are warm in tone.	
4	The examples contained in Appendix A should be used as a guide for building design: the standard of compatibility with the area’s historic structures is not intended to impose a rigid design solution for new development. Replication of the design of the important historic sites in the area is neither intended nor desired. The Guideline’s standard of compatibility can be met through building scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture which is contemporary as well as traditional. The Guidelines allow individuality in design to accommodate varying tastes as well as special functional requirements.			

5	It is also an important objective of the Guidelines to establish a pattern of compatible architectural characteristics throughout the Entrance Corridor in order to achieve unity and coherence. Building designs should demonstrate sensitivity to other nearby structures within the Entrance Corridor. Where a designated corridor is substantially developed, these Guidelines require striking a careful balance between harmonizing new development with the existing character of the corridor and achieving compatibility with the significant historic sites in the area.		If the architectural designs proposed for TJ Maxx and Sierra receive approval prior to the design of the overall shopping center, the overall design will need to coordinate with TJ Maxx and Sierra.	
9	Building forms and features, including roofs, windows, doors, materials, colors and textures should be compatible with the forms and features of the significant historic buildings in the area, exemplified by (but not limited to) the buildings described in Appendix A [of the design guidelines]. The standard of compatibility can be met through scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture which is contemporary as well as traditional. The replication of important historic sites in Albemarle County is not the objective of these guidelines.		The height of the TJ Maxx and Sierra entrance features has been reduced from the conceptual design and the scale of the overall TJ Maxx form has been reduced. The addition of the canopies, metal paneling/green screens, and variation in materials helps to break up the length of this portion of the façade and creates a greater sense of human scale. The TJ Maxx and Sierra façades are illustrated in shades of gray (French Grey, Light Grey) and white (China White, Arcadia White). Samples will be needed to confirm that they are warm in tone.	
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.			
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	Consider alternate materials, additional architectural details, and additional canopies/canopies with greater depth to improve human scale and the pedestrian experience.		
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	Consider alternate materials and/or additional architectural detail to reduce the scale of expansive wall areas.		
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.	None.	The preliminary plan shows a design that uses forms and materials to create cohesion and coordination within the development.	None.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	Consider design revisions that	The design has been revised to show additional canopies, architectural detailing that projects past the façade	None.

		improve the pedestrian experience.	functioning as weather protection, and the use of portions of two existing colonnades for individual tenant spaces. While these elements are not continuous along the entire façade, combined with the proposed planters and pathway lighting, they help to enhance the scale and the overall pedestrian experience.	
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	None.	The proposed design does not appear to reflect a trademark building design.	None.
16	Window glass in the Entrance Corridors should not be highly tinted or highly reflective. Window glass in the Entrance Corridors should meet the following criteria: <i>Visible light transmittance (VLT) shall not drop below 40%. Visible light reflectance (VLR) shall not exceed 30%. Specifications on the proposed window glass should be submitted with the application for final review.</i>	None.	Details on window glass have not been provided with the preliminary plan. Although clear, non-tinted, non-mirrored glass would support the pedestrian experience, the distance from the street suggests that the glass type will not have a significant impact on the EC.	None.
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.	Indicate if any new accessory structures or mechanical equipment will be included in the renovation. If so, show how they will be screened from view from the EC.	The applicant has indicated that only the TJ Maxx space may require new mechanical equipment. Currently, portions of the existing mechanical equipment located near the façade of the proposed tenant space for TJ Maxx are visible from the EC. Any new equipment will need to be lower in height to eliminate visibility from the EC.	If any new mechanical equipment is proposed, show how it will be screened from view from the EC.
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.			
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.			
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.	None.	No new surface runoff structures or detention ponds are proposed.	None.
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.”	Provide the standard mechanical equipment note on the site and architectural drawings.	The standard mechanical equipment note has been provided on the site plan. The note is not present on the architectural drawings.	Provide the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural drawings.

22-29	Lighting	Provide a lighting plan for review.	The applicant states that the intent of the architectural lighting would be “to increase the pedestrian experience, provide a well-lit and inviting atmosphere, and subtly accent elements of the architecture.” Some lighting details (pathway fixtures and fixtures mounted to the building soffit) have been provided on C2.1 of the site plan. The color renderings suggest additional wall mounted lights. However, a lighting plan will be necessary for review to ensure that the proposed lighting meets the EC requirements.	Provide a lighting plan for review. Over-illumination of the building is not appropriate for the EC.
30-31	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>	Over-illumination of the building is not appropriate for the EC.		
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.	The owner is responsible for ensuring that the site matches the approved site plan. Missing landscaping must be installed.	The scope of work is limited to the façade renovation. The applicant has indicated that site changes will be addressed in a later phase.	None.
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.	Alternatively, the owner may submit a site plan amendment that proposes alternate landscaping.		
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.			
33	Landscaping along interior roads: a. Large trees should be planted parallel to all interior roads. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 40 feet on center.			
35	Landscaping of parking areas: a. Large trees should align the perimeter of parking areas, located 40 feet on center. Trees should be planted in the interior of parking areas at the rate of one tree for every 10 parking spaces provided and should be evenly distributed throughout the interior of the parking area. b. Trees required by the preceding paragraph should measure 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground); should be evenly spaced; and should be 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.			
34	Landscaping along interior pedestrian ways: a. Medium trees should be planted parallel to all interior pedestrian ways. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 25 feet on center.	None.	Other than the pedestrian walkway along the building frontage, there are no interior pedestrian ways in the existing development. Along portions of that walkway, the plans show the addition of planters and green screens along the elevations. The preliminary plan also shows potential landscaped open spaces where the existing clocktower is located and near the JoAnn store, but landscaping in these open spaces is not expected to be visible from the EC.	Identify the species proposed for the green screens on the site plan.
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.	Consider adding landscaping close to the building to further break up its length and to improve the pedestrian experience. The owner is responsible for	The plant species proposed for the green screens along the building elevations have not been identified.	
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> .	ensuring that the site matches the approved site plan. Missing landscaping must be installed.		
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.”	Alternatively, the owner may submit a site plan amendment that proposes alternate landscaping.		
<i>Site Development and layout</i>				
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; insuring 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.	None.	The existing site layout is to remain. Portions of the building are not parallel to the EC and the building is set back from the frontage; however, no major site changes are proposed. An existing sidewalk runs along Rt. 29 and is to remain. Views are not expected to be negatively impacted.	None.
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.			

	<p>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.</p> <p>f. The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.</p>			
	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.	None.	The existing site grading is not being altered.	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.			
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.	None.	The site is already developed. Drainage patterns are not changing.	None.
	SIGNS	Provide with the next review a proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan for the renovated building.	A Comprehensive Sign Plan has been submitted.	See comments on the Comprehensive Sign Plan below.

1	Create a consistent and unified design approach along the Entrance Corridors. The <i>placement, size, illumination</i> and <i>colors</i> of signs can create unity along the corridor, or they can create a disjointed, visually competitive environment. Consistent and unified sign design allows the businesses located along the Corridor to have equal standing in visibility. It also provides a pattern of sign placement that makes the business locations and entrances more easily recognizable to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.	This Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) proposes to achieve consistency through limiting the number of colors and maintaining simplicity.	See recommendations below.
2	Establish simplicity and reserve as preferred characteristics for sign design in these areas. This reflects the historic character of the area and enhances the aesthetic qualities of the Corridor. To this end, the overall design of a sign will be evaluated concurrently with that of the building on which it will be installed. The design of a building's walls, window locations, parapets and other architectural features will influence the Board's evaluation of appropriate signage. Likewise, a freestanding sign is evaluated in the context of the overall development in which it will be placed. Because each site is composed of a variety of elements that work together to create a unique character and appearance, ARB review of each sign proposal is guided by these sign guidelines within the context of the specific site for which the proposal is made.		
3	Encourage creative design. The County encourages imaginative and innovative signs consistent with the purposes expressed above and in conformance with the regulations of the Albemarle County Code.		
2, 4 8	Freestanding Signs	The freestanding sign shown in the Comprehensive Sign Plan is consistent with the existing ARB approved sign (ARB-2018-127) for the site.	None.
4, 9	Wall Signs		
4a	Placement: The design of a building's walls, window locations, parapets and other architectural features shall influence the Board's evaluation of appropriate signage. Wall signs can help establish rhythm, scale and proportion across the façade of a building.	The proposed CSP identifies the areas on the buildings where signs can be installed. As with the existing CSP, these areas vary in size. Some resemble traditional sign bands with heights that are relatively short compared to the length. Others are simply sizeable wall areas in an entrance feature established for major tenants. Many CSPs place an additional limit on sign locations by specifically requiring a central location within the sign band. This CSP does not propose that specific limitation, at least one sign is shown in a non-central location (Five Below), and at least one sign obscures architectural details (Rack Room Shoes, an existing condition). This does not support a coordinated appearance throughout the shopping center. However, this level of coordination may not be necessary due to the distance from the street and the limited visibility of portions of the southern wing of the shopping center. Eliminating the centering	None.
9a	Wall signs shall be integrated with the architecture of the building and the placement of such signs should not obscure architectural features or details, including but not limited to cornices, windows, columns, pilasters and paneling.		
9d	The size of a wall sign shall be coordinated with the size of the architectural element on which it is placed. The sign should not overcrowd the architectural element, the wall, or the sign area. Buildings and building elements should not be used as a billboard. For example, an appropriate height for channel letters in a 30" high sign band is 18". This allows 6" of unoccupied space above and below the letters. Generally, 4" of clear space above, below, and to the sides of a channel letter sign is considered a minimum, with larger clearances required for larger sign bands. The ARB will consider the degree of visibility, the distance from the Entrance Corridor, and the		

	architectural design of the building and the sign area in its determination of appropriate sizes and placement.	requirement could also allow for greater flexibility for changing tenants. The signs proposed for TJ Maxx and Sierra both fall under the maximum square footage allowed by Zoning. They meet guidelines requirements for clear space around the sign and are similar in size to other existing approved signs in the shopping center, though they generally appear quite large	
4d	Lettering and Typeface: Lettering should be in proportion to the sign and the building for visual clarity and overall balance. Proportion of lettering includes font (size) and typeface (style). The use of three typefaces or fewer is more appropriate for signs in the Entrance Corridor. Additional typefaces may be approved only if they contribute to a balanced, legible, unified sign design.	It is anticipated that most of the existing signs will be reinstalled. There is a great variety of typefaces already in use and given the distance from the street, this does not have a negative visual impact.	None.
4e	Color: Colors must be harmonious with each other. Colors must not clash with other elements on the site, both when viewed in daylight and at night, whether the signs are externally or internally lit. Overly intense color, such as but not limited to dayglo or fluorescent colors, are prohibited. The use of three colors or fewer is more appropriate for signs in the Entrance Corridor. Black and white are counted as colors. Additional colors may be approved if they contribute to a balanced and unified sign design.	The sign proposal specifies that individual letters may incorporate only one color and proposes seven colors (blue, white red, green, orange, black, and yellow) as appropriate text colors. The colors are consistent with those proposed in the previously approved CSP and coordinate with each other and the overall site.	Revise the CSP to include the following detail regarding graphic colors: “no limit to graphic colors as long as the total is limited to three, plus black and white.”
9c	For raceway-mounted channel letters, the raceway shall match the wall color.	Regarding the channel logos, no limit to colors has been proposed in the CSP. In some previously approved CSPs, graphics colors have been limited a total of three per graphic, plus black and white, when channel letter faces were consistent in color Given the distance from the street, a similar allowance for graphics colors would be appropriate here. The renovation would result in a variety of wall colors and the CSP appropriately states that the raceway color will match the wall to which it is attached. The applicant should note that all raceways will need to be painted or replaced to meet this condition. Regarding the proposed colors for the signs, the red (acrylic #2973, Pantone 187C) proposed for TJ Maxx is one that has been approved as appropriate for the EC. The orange (#3630-74, Pantone 1375C) proposed for Sierra is slightly outside of the standard range of recommended colors for the EC, but the recommended range moves into shades of brown.	Note that all raceways will need to be painted or replaced so that the raceway color matches the color of the wall to which it is attached.

4f	Trademarks, corporate logos and graphics: The ARB may require that the color and scale of standard templates for trademarks, service marks, corporate logos and graphics be modified. When used, trademarks, service marks, corporate logos and/or graphics should be incorporated as an integral part of the overall sign.	With the exception of the proposed graphic for Sierra no trademarks, service marks, corporate logos, or graphics are shown in this sign proposal. The orange (#3630-74, Pantone 1375C) proposed for the Sierra graphic, like the typeface, is slightly outside of the standard range of recommended colors for the EC, but the recommended range moves into shades of brown. Any future trademarks, service marks, corporate logos, or graphics will be reviewed with individual sign permit applications.	None.
9b	Channel lettering (mounted on a raceway or individual letters) is preferred to cabinet signs because cabinet signs tend to appear less integrated with the building. Channel letters overlay the wall material and allow the structure of the building to “read through” with less interruption. This results in a more coordinated overall appearance.	Channel letters and channel logos are proposed.	None.
5, 9	Lighting		
5	Lighting: The purpose of ARB review is to ensure that new development in the Entrance Corridors is compatible with the historic architecture of the County and to promote orderly and attractive development. There is no historical precedent for internally illuminated signs. However, the ARB recognizes the need to identify businesses to help the traveling public find their destination and exit the highway safely.	The sign proposal limits the sign illumination to a single type – internal face-lit.	None.
5a	When illumination is required, the preferred solution is to externally illuminate the sign – in other words, to shine a light on the sign. External illumination is preferred because it allows consistency with the daytime image of the sign. External lighting appears to the viewer as reflected light and allows the focus of the sign to be the original overall shape, color and complete design of the sign. Internal lighting produces a fragmented, rather than unified, sign image at night compared to external lighting and may project light that is distracting to the viewer. Similarly, exposed light sources that form the body of a sign (such as, but not limited to, exposed or bare neon) are not appropriate for the Entrance Corridors. They can produce glare and, generally, do not achieve the subtle character and compatibility that is the goal for the Entrance Corridors.		
5b	Since external illumination does not fit every case, individual channel letters – a type of internally illuminated sign that has less visual clutter impact on the Entrance Corridors – may also be approved. Channel letters are generally the preferred type of internally illuminated wall sign because they project the total sign and are identifiable with the daytime image of the sign. When channel letters cannot be adequately accommodated, internally illuminated cabinet signs may be considered. If cabinet signs are utilized, the backgrounds of such signs must be made opaque (zero light transmission).		
5c	External illumination is also preferred for approved graphics/logos; internal illumination may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. The Board will evaluate the specific design for		

	size (adjusted in proportion to the accompanying lettering), balance, complexity, and distance from and relationship to the Entrance Corridor. These factors will determine the extent of internal illumination that can be approved.		
5d	These solutions are intended to reduce glare, visual clutter and distraction along the streetscape, to provide for coordinated appearances along the Entrance Corridors, to increase visual continuity, to achieve a balance of business identification with order and continuity, and to limit negative impacts along the County's Entrance Corridors.		
5e	External Illumination: Lighting should be shielded and not create glare. Lighting should be aimed so as not to project illumination beyond the sign. All external light sources shall be white.		
5f	Internal Illumination: Any internal illumination is considered to contribute to visual clutter and will be limited.		
5g	All Illumination shall be non-blinking.	There is no blinking illumination proposed.	None.
5h	Exposed Light Sources: An exposed light source that forms the body of a sign, such as but not limited to signs formed of exposed neon, as opposed to a light shining on a sign, shall not be used in the Entrance Corridors.	There are no exposed light sources proposed.	None.
	<i>ii.</i> External illumination: Lighting directed toward a sign should be designed and shielded so that it illuminates the face of the sign and does not shine beyond the edge of the sign.	The sign proposal limits the sign illumination to a single type (face-lit) channel letters, which typically do not allow light to spill from the top, bottom, sides or back.	None.
	<i>iii.</i> Internal illumination: Channel letters with translucent faces shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back. Faces and returns of channel letters shall be opaque when back-lit (halo-lit).		
	<i>iv.</i> Cabinet signs shall have a non-illuminated background, or an opaque (zero light transmission) background. Cabinet signs shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back. If outlines of letters are proposed, the width of the outline must be in proportion to the width of the letter. An outline width of 1/8" has been found to be an appropriate dimension for signs in the Entrance Corridors.		
10	Wall Signs for Multiple Business Centers		
10a	A complete sign package shall be provided as part of the submittal materials for the review of any new multiple business center. The proposal should address how compatibility among signs will be achieved, and how new signs will be coordinated with the architecture of the building(s); the first approved sign installed in a multiple business center will establish the standard for all future signs for that center. The future review of proposals for new signs in existing multiple business centers will take into consideration the character and appearance of the existing building(s) and with existing sign(s).	The proposed sign plan does not require signs to be centered within sign bands or aligned with neighboring signs. This could contribute to an un-unified appearance. Due to the distance from the EC street, this is not anticipated to have a negative visual impact on the EC.	None.
10b	Multiple business centers shall use a single sign type for all wall signs.		
10c	Compatibility among signs must be maintained through color or font and typeface selection.		
10d	Signs must be placed on the building in a manner that establishes a unified appearance.		
9e, 10e	<i>i.</i> External illumination is preferred for signs in multiple business centers.	The sign proposal limits the sign illumination to a single type – internal face-lit.	None.

	<i>ii.</i> Lighting should be aimed so as not to project illumination beyond the sign.		
	<i>iii.</i> Channel letters with translucent faces shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back. Faces and returns of channel letters shall be opaque when back-lit (halo-lit).		
	<i>iv.</i> Cabinet signs shall have a non - illuminated background, or an opaque (zero light transmission) background. Cabinet signs shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back. If outlines of letters are proposed, the width of the outline must be in proportion to the width of the letter. An outline width of 1/8" has been found to be an appropriate dimension for signs in the Entrance Corridors.		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The building forms including the large wall area at the major tenant spaces.
2. The building materials and colors shown in the preliminary plans.
3. The CSP and the proposed sign locations.
4. The sizes of the TJ Maxx and Sierra signs.
5. The shade of orange in the Sierra sign.

Staff offers the following recommendations on the proposal:

Regarding the site plan and architectural design for TJ Maxx and Sierra.

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. Provide samples for all materials and colors that confirm the use of warm tones.
2. If any new mechanical equipment is proposed, show how it will be screened from view from the EC.
3. Provide the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural drawings.
4. Provide a lighting plan for review. Over-illumination of the building is not appropriate for the EC.
5. Identify the species proposed for the green screens on the site plan.

Regarding the site plan and the overall architectural design.

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. Provide samples for all materials and colors that confirm the use of warm tones.
2. If any new mechanical equipment is proposed, show how it will be screened from view from the EC.
3. Provide the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural drawings.
4. Provide a lighting plan for review. Over-illumination of the building is not appropriate for the EC.
5. Identify the species proposed for the green screens on the site plan.
6. If the architectural designs proposed for TJ Maxx and Sierra receive approval prior to the design of the overall shopping center, coordinate the overall design with TJ Maxx and Sierra.

Regarding the CSP and the signs for TJ Maxx and Sierra.

Staff recommends approval of the CSP with the following condition:

1. Revise the CSP to include the following detail regarding graphic colors: “no limit to graphic colors as long as the total is limited to three, plus black and white.”
2. All raceways must be painted or replaced so that the raceway color matches the color of the wall to which it is attached.

Staff recommends approval of the signs for TJ Maxx and Sierra as proposed.

TABLE A

This report is based on the following submittal items:

Sheet #	Drawing Name	Drawing Date/Revision Date
Architectural Drawings		
1	Cover Page	12/21/2020
2	Site Plan/Narrative	
3	Existing Site Conditions/Project Narrative	
4	Reponses to County Comments	
5	Overall Proposal	
6	South Elevation – Phase 1 (or current project)	
7	South Elevation – Phase 2	
8	New – South Elevation Perspective	
9	New – South Elevation Perspective	
10	Southwest Elevation	
11	Existing South Elevation Perspective / New – South Elevation Perspective	
12	West Elevations	
13	Existing South Elevation Perspective / New – South Elevation Perspective	
14	Material Palette / Preliminary Studies for Exterior Pedestrian Space	
Site Plan		
C0.0	Title Sheet	12/21/2020
C0.1	General Notes	
C0.2	General Notes	
C0.3	Existing Conditions and Key Map	
C1.0	Demolition Plan – South	
C1.1	Demolition Plan – Southwest	
C1.2	Demolition Plan – North	
C2.0	Site Plan – South	
C2.1	Site Plan – Southwest	
C2.2	Site Plan – North	

X0.0	Survey	
X0.1	Survey	
X0.2	Survey	
X0.3	Survey	
X0.4	Survey	
Rio Hill Comprehensive Sign Plan		
1	Cover Sheet	12/22/2020
2	General Notes / Scope of Plan / Overall Site Plan	
3	Rio Hill Shopping Center Wall Signs	
4	Rio Hill Shopping Center – Multi-tenant Monument Sign	
5	Rio Hill Shopping Center – Under Canopy Sign	
6	New South Elevation	
7	New Southwest Elevation	
8	New West Elevation	
TJ Maxx Sign Proposal		
1	Cover Sheet	12/18/2020
2	Wall Sign Proposal	
Sierra Sign Proposal		
1	Cover Sheet	12/18/2020
2	Wall Sign Proposal	

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach A ARB2020-135 [Rio Hill Preliminary Plan](#)
- Attach B ARB2020-135 [Rio Hill Minor Site Plan Amendment](#)
- Attach C ARB2020-135 [Rio Hill Comprehensive Sign Plan](#)
- Attach D ARB2020-135 [Rio Hill TJ Maxx Sign Renderings](#)
- Attach E ARB2020-135 [Rio Hill Sierra Sign Renderings](#)
- Attach F ARB2020-135 [Rio Hill Redevelopment Comparisons Existing, Conceptual, and Preliminary \(Staff created Document\)](#)