
Dudley Mountain Road Concerned Citizens

— Preserve Our Community —

Background Information

- The road spans approximately 3.77 miles between Red Hill Road and Old Lynchburg Road.
- **Dudley Mountain Road lies outside of Albemarle County's designated Development Area - or Growth Area - by approximately 1 mile.**
- 118 property owners
- 300+ individuals*
- \$640,000 property taxes paid in 2025**

* Estimated using 2.5 people per household (national avg)

** Calculated using 2025 tax rate of \$0.85 per \$100 of assessed value

Project Opposition

Community Opposition:

- 581 people signed the petition against the development ([Change.org](https://www.change.org).)
- 87 Yellow 'No School on DMR' Opposition Signs along Dudley Mountain Road, Old Lynchburg Road, and Red Hill Road.



Staff & Regulatory Feedback/Concerns:

- 2 of 5 Planning Commission Staff (Clayborne & Murray) **recommended denial** of special use permit citing significant concerns about road safety.
- Albemarle County Staff **recommended denial** of permit
- VDOT raised **significant concerns** on traffic safety and infrastructure impact

Road Suitability

VDOT Road Design Manual 400 - 2,000 ADT	Planning Commission Report DMR Conditions
Minimum pavement width of 20' .	The width of DMR varies from 15' to 18' .
Stopping sight distance of 305'.	The sharp curvature of the road, especially in the first mile from Old Lynchburg, has < 100' stopping distance.
Minimum width of graded shoulder of 3' .	DMR has a substandard shoulder width or no shoulder at all. Eroded edges due to vehicles shifting to outside to pass, with immediate stormwater culverts beyond



Traffic: Impact

- According to the applicant's projections, the proposed school would add **589 trips per day**. That's on top of the existing **130 vehicles per day** recorded by VDOT in 2018.
- Total traffic would jump to **719 vehicles per day** - a **5.5 fold increase** in daily traffic on a rural road that was never designed to handle that volume.
- Represents a **fundamental transformation of the character and capacity of Dudley Mountain Road**.

Combined with VDOT's documented concerns about safety and infrastructure strain, this data makes clear: **The road cannot safely or sustainably absorb the level of use this project would generate.**



Traffic Impact: Confirmed and Growing


- **New Count Confirms Major Increase**



Tuesday, July 1 - manual traffic count by community members from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM:



591 vehicles recorded in a single 15-hour period *(Note: This occurred during **summer break**, when school-related traffic is minimal)*

-  **Over 4.5x Increase** from VDOT's last count
VDOT 2018 Count: 130 vehicles per day
July 2025 Count: 591 vehicles in one day

-  **Proposed School Impact: 589 daily trips**

Applicant has failed to conduct adequate traffic study or alleviate traffic concerns of community



Projected New Total:



1,181 vehicles per day

Safety Consequences

Higher Risk of Collisions

- A dramatic increase in traffic volume isn't just an **inconvenience** - **it's a public safety threat.**
- More vehicles = higher risk of severe accidents, including fatalities and life-altering injuries. The potential for tragic outcomes grows significantly.
- If the County approves this permit without mitigating and addressing the known risks it could bear not only public accountability, but legal and ethical responsibility for preventable harm.
- More congestion & driver frustration
- Greater exposure for vulnerable road users (cyclists)



accident near OLR – DMR intersection
(attributed to road condition by police)



hazardous road condition in July, 2025

NO PLAN. NO FUNDING. NO ROAD IMPROVEMENTS.

- Albemarle County has no authority to require applicant or VDOT to upgrade Dudley Mountain Road.
- No funding has been allocated by either the County or VDOT to improve this road - even as traffic volumes climb drastically.
- Without infrastructure investment, conditions will worsen - impacting safety, access, and emergency response time.
- There is **NO CURRENT PLAN OR FUNDING** to bring Dudley Mountain Road up to VDOT standards - despite the proposed project **nearly doubling** daily vehicle trips.

Approving this project without infrastructure commitments will knowingly push a failing rural road beyond its limits, putting public safety at risk.

Planning Concerns: Conflicts with Comprehensive Plan

Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan: Criteria for Approval

1. Scale & Character

“reflect a size and scale that complements the character of the area in which they will be located”

2. Resource Protection

“be compatible with, and have a negligible impact, on natural, cultural, and historic resources”

3. Minimal Public Safety Demand

“generate little demand for fire and rescue and police service”

4. Road Suitability

“be suitable for existing rural roads and result in little discernible difference in traffic patterns”

Flawed Narrative of the Site Plan

The proposal highlights that the Forest School will “*limit all development of the 156-acre parcel to a small 15-acre tract*” and “*puts the land into a conservation easement, with only a small portion being used for development.*”

However, most of the 156-acre parcel is not suitable for development.



Mountain Protection Areas



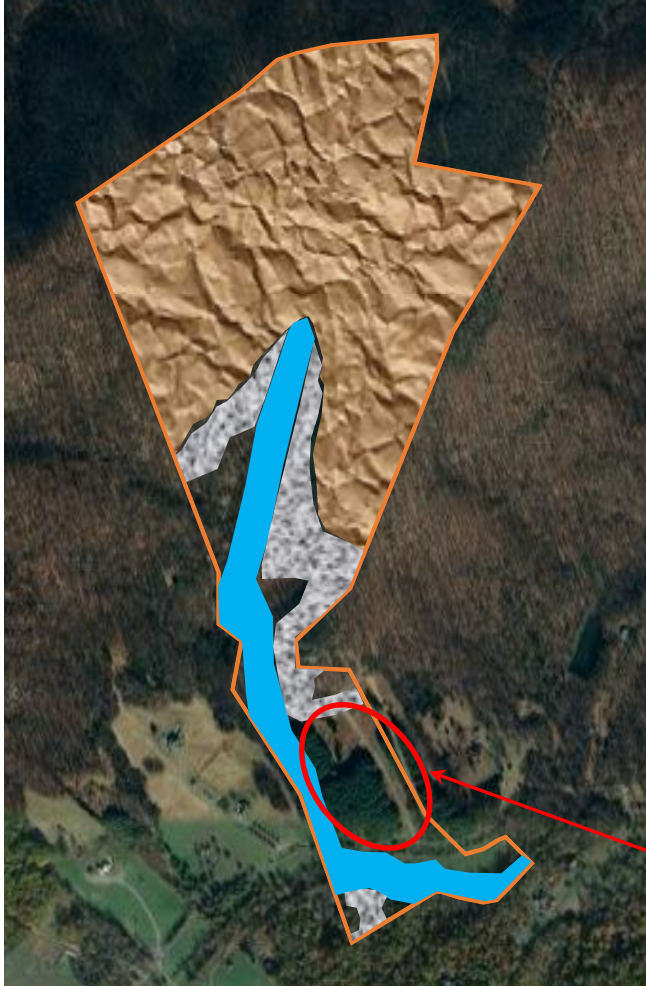
Water Protection Ordinance Buffers



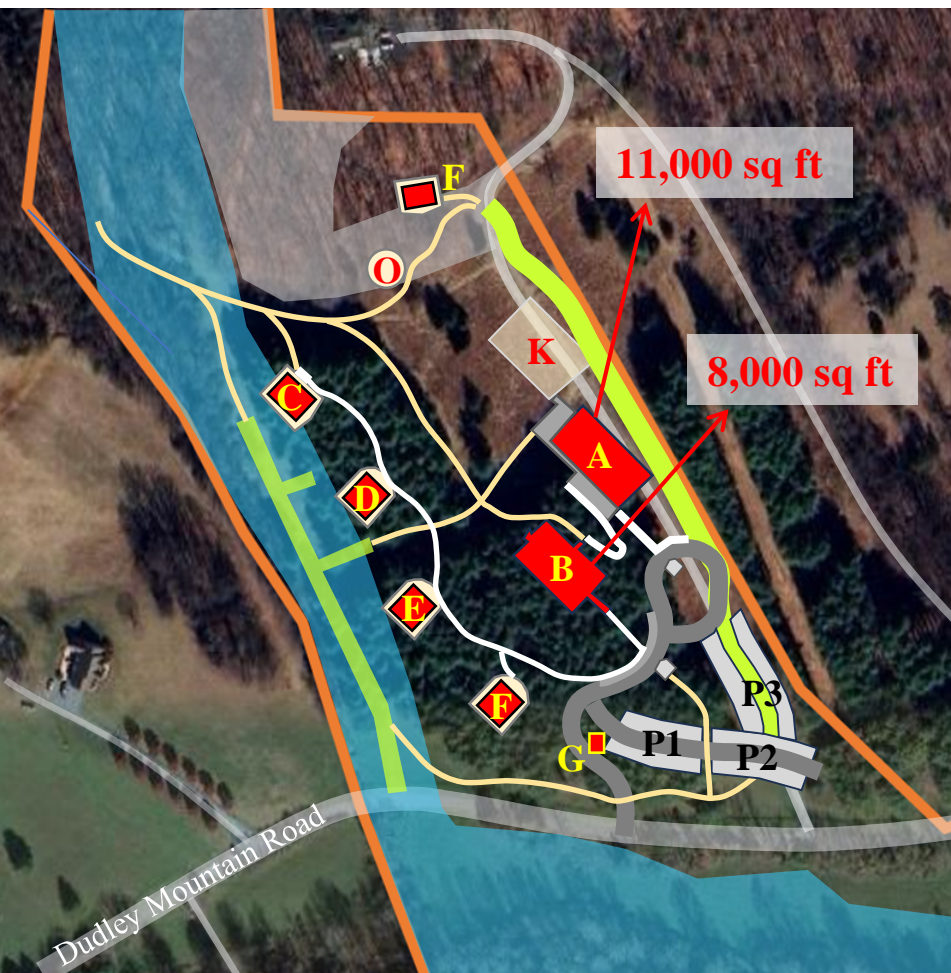
Critical Slopes

* The regions of water/mountain protection and critical slopes are shown based on Att. 1 (Existing Conditions Map).

The 15-acre part of the parcel is actually the only part that is suitable for **any** development.



City-style density of the proposed development – not consistent with the rural character of the area



The proposal highlights that “*within these 15 acres, the proposed development is intentional in its minimal impact on the natural environment.*”

However, the development is rather extensive:

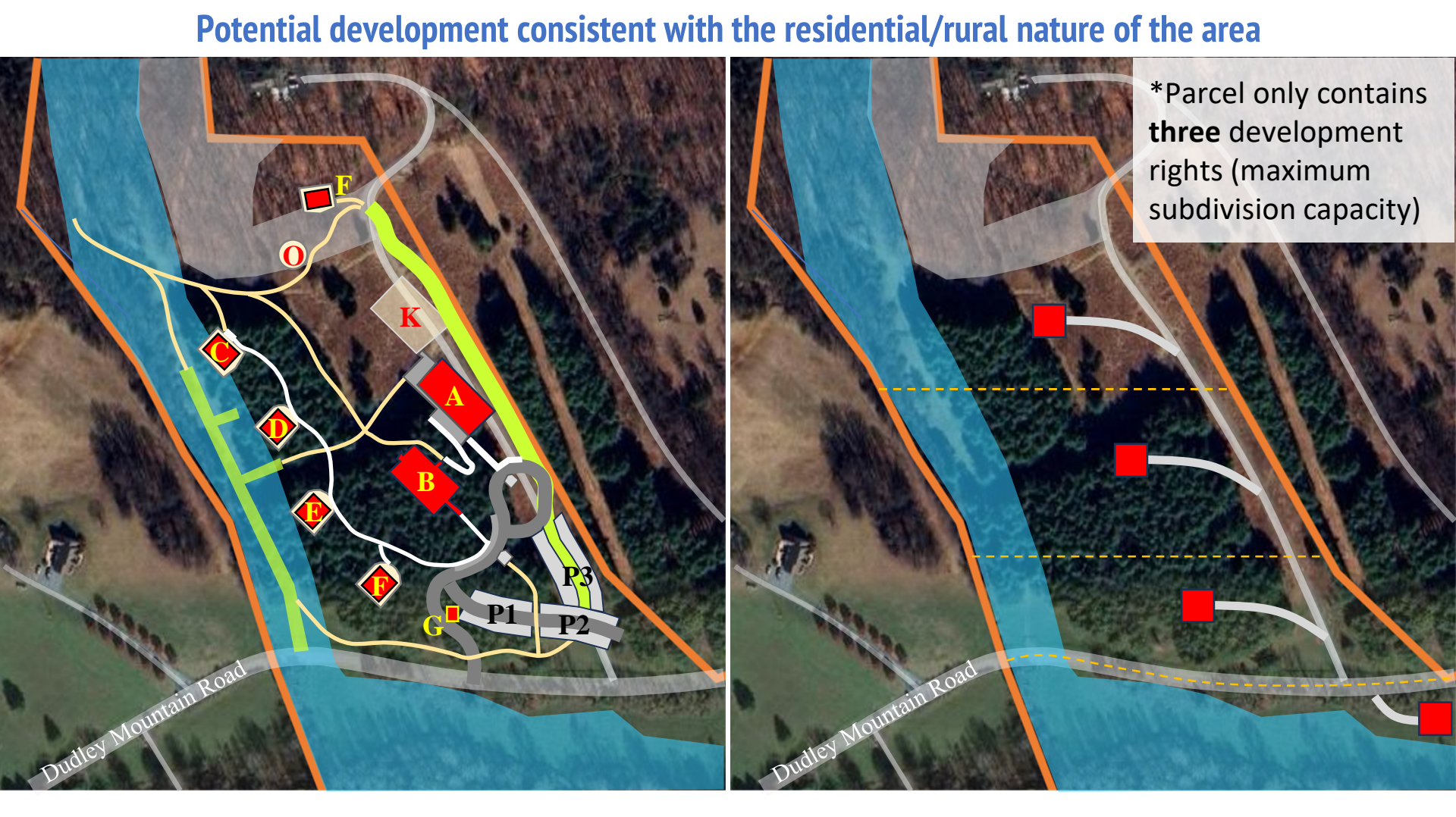
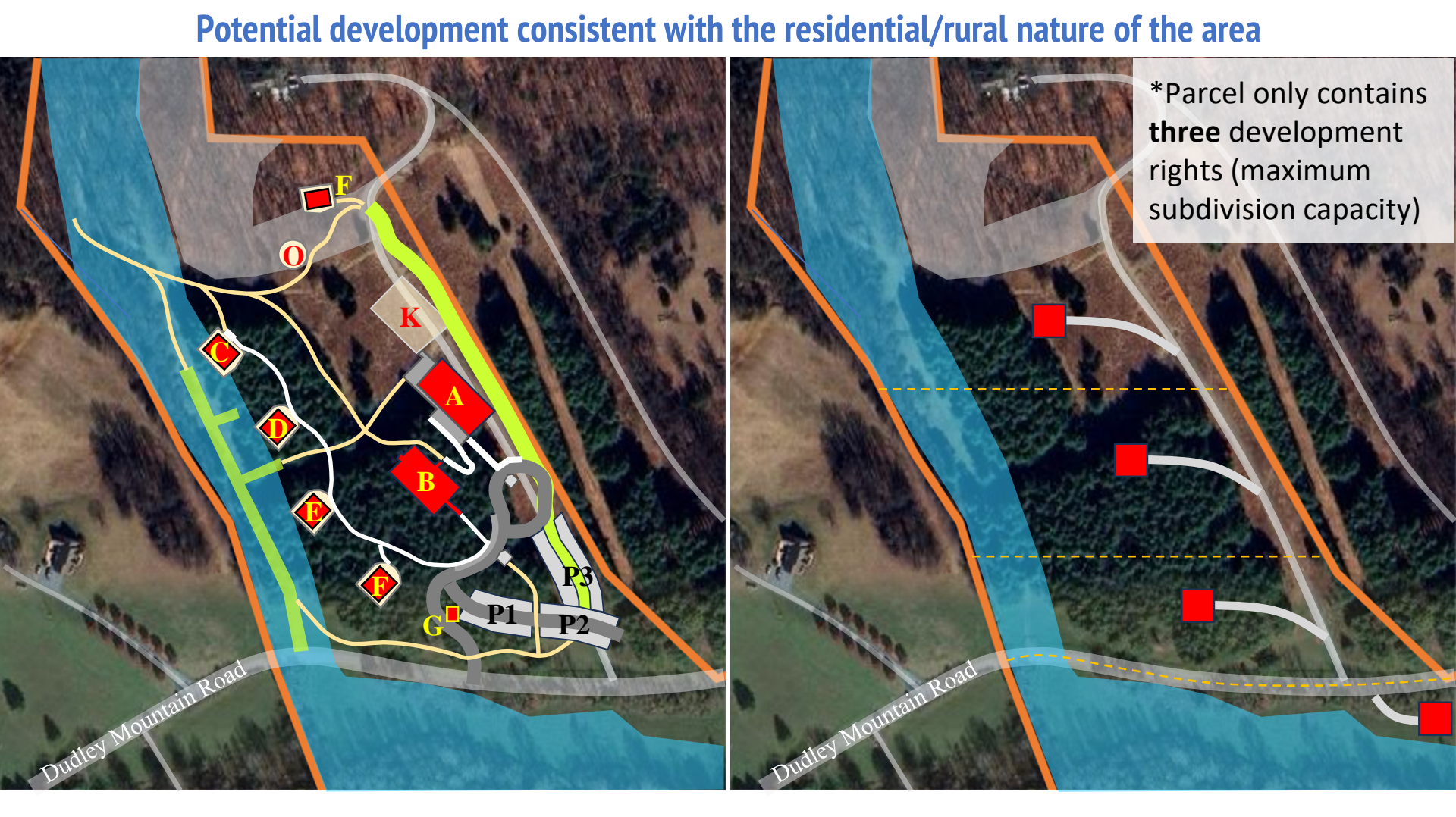
- | | | | |
|-----------|---|----------------------------|-------------------|
| A | Religious Assembly Hall for 200 persons | C-F | Classrooms |
| B | Admin/Base Camp | O | Outdoor classroom |
| K | Gathering lawn | G | Security building |
| | | | Fire access |
| P1 | Main/daily parking (31 spaces) | } Adequate for 200 people? | |
| P2 | Overflow parking (25 spaces) | | |
| P3 | Overflow parking (20 spaces) | | |

* Based on Att. 3 (Applicant Narrative)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| | Water Protection Ordinance Buffers |
| | Critical Slopes |

Potential development consistent with the residential/rural nature of the area

*Parcel only contains **three** development rights (maximum subdivision capacity)



Development alternatives: False narrative - “It Could Be Worse”

- The suggestion that **other by-right uses** - such as a **brewery, winery, religious assembly, or subdivision** could be developed instead is **intentionally misleading and irrelevant**.
- This application is for:
 - A **large private school** - not a public amenity or public service.
 - A **private event facility** - added to support the school financially further intensifying traffic and disruption.
 - First residential or agricultural use in this community
- Other by-right options are not being proposed... but a **school AND private event center** is.

Bottom Line: Equating this school and event center with hypothetical by-right uses is disingenuous.

The proposed project: **Far exceeds what is appropriate** for this rural area, does **not align** with the Comprehensive Plan, & would **permanently alter** the character & safety of the community

Conflicts with Comprehensive Plan & Zoning

Comprehensive Plan emphasizes “*preserving rural character, protecting agricultural land forestal lands, and directing growth to designated Development Areas*”.

The proposed development

- **Violates Rural Area Goals:** is incompatible with preserving rural character and protecting land.
- **Undermines Low-Density & Conservation:** Introduces an institutional use in a Rural Area, which is fundamentally incompatible with long-established planning goals and undermines years of community-led zoning decisions.
- **Outside of Growth Boundaries**
- **Erodes Zoning Integrity:** Sets precedent that threatens and weakens land use protection for surrounding property owners.

Planning Concerns: Events

Transparency and purposeful misguidance to County of the project scope

What is included in the submitted plan:

- Event center with capacity for **up to 200 attendees**
 - Intended for use **outside of regular school hours** - directly **contradicting previous claims** that the site would be inactive during those times.
- Event center is **not presented as a religious assembly** and therefore **does not qualify as a by-right use**.
- Must be subject to applicable County special event venue regulations, including Albemarle County Code Sec. 5.1.43, and event-specific zoning, parking, and public safety requirements.
- The site lacks parking, traffic controls, and infrastructure to safely & legally support graduation, field days, parent teacher conferences, community gatherings, etc.
- These events will **inevitably occur** before the construction of the proposed “community building” - yet **no plans exist** to manage their impact.

Planning Concerns: Land Use Protection

- **First non-agricultural use on DMR:** Breaks precedent; opens the door to further incompatible development.
- **“Forest” branding of school is irrelevant:** It is a **school** and **future event center** with typical impacts: traffic, noise & infrastructure strain on neighboring properties.
- **County Staff acknowledges conflict:** Albemarle Conservation Program Manager review comments 10/31 “...the creation of a school use in the Rural Area is not directly supportive of the Rural Area goals established in the 2015 plan”, “proposed conservation easement raises several practice issues.”
- **Conflicts with existing uses:** “Not conflict with nearby agricultural or forestal uses” - hunting, biking on road, preservation.
- **Promotes sprawl:** This private amenity will encourage more incompatible development (institutional and suburban encroachment).
- **Violates land use objective:** Clearly conflicts with County’s land use objective to “Provide distinct boundaries between the Rural Area and Development Areas”

Planning Concerns: Conservation

- **No existing conservation easement and no progress towards one**
 - No documented progress towards conservation easement; County cannot compel or condition approval to a conservation easement.
- **“Conceptual easement” is ineffective**
 - ‘Conceptual’ conservation easement would cover areas already protected due to critical slopes and riparian areas.
- **Environmental impact still significant**
 - Human activity, construction, parking, water use, light, vehicular traffic, etc. are all part of the submitted plan.
 - Noise pollution: Communication with CBI School representatives clarified that the School intends to conduct live concerts, play recorded music, use sound amplifying equipment (speakers and portable microphones).
 - All will have a negative effect on parcel and surrounding area environment.

Recommendation Action: Special Use Permit

Deny the Special Use Permit

- Fundamentally conflicts with Rural Area land use goals and zoning precedent.

Or Postpone Approval Until:

- **VDOT Traffic Analysis & Site-Distance Analysis** is complete
- **Road infrastructure plan** is finalized
 - Includes funding commitments (CBI, County, VDOT)

Or Approve With Strict Conditions:

- **Limit enrollment to 50 children maximum**
- **Eliminate multi-purpose/religious assembly building** (200-person capacity)
 - Combined use would exceed VDOT minimum threshold for required improvements.