

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	SP-2024-20: Carter Machinery Outdoor Storage, Display, and Sales
Review Type	Advisory Review for a Special Use Permit
Parcel Identification	06100-00-00-12000
Location	721 Rio Road W
Zoned	Highway Commercial (HC) / Entrance Corridor (EC) / Airport Impact Area (AIA)
Owner/Applicant	Mount Sinai Properties-Charlottesville, LLC / Gentry Locke (Conor O'Donnell)
Magisterial District	Rio
Context	The property contains a warehouse consisting of multiple structures at the front of the parcel with paving surrounding it. To the north is Rio Rd. W and commercial development, to the east are several commercial properties, and to the west is the Northside Library. (Fig. 1.)
ARB Meeting Date	October 21, 2024
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROPOSAL
To establish outdoor storage, display, and sales (storage) of construction equipment and machinery in association with the development of an equipment rental facility, and associated site improvements, on approximately 4.37 acres. A special use permit (SP) is required for the outdoor storage use. This staff report is limited to an analysis of the proposal for that use, including appearance, treatment, and screening. The ARB’s recommendation on the SP will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

The concept plan shows minimal changes to the site, including portions of the existing warehouse being demolished, the establishment of an outdoor storage area to the southeast and southwest of the remaining building, security fencing enclosing the storage area, interior planting islands along the front of the building and storage area, and additional parking spaces.

VISIBILITY
The storage area (about 86’ to 559’ from the EC) is indicated southeast and southwest of the remaining structure. The topography within the area slopes downward from north (front) to south (rear), and the project narrative suggests that taller equipment will be located towards the rear and shorter equipment closer to the EC. The narrative contains an example of the picket security fencing intended for fencing visible from the EC. The applicant has verified that the planned fence height will be 6 feet. The individual heights of equipment have not been specified. However, the applicant has confirmed that the maximum height of the equipment stored within this area will be 12’. The EC Guidelines stipulate that storage areas should be situated in a location that eliminates visibility. If, after appropriate siting, the area still has a negative visual impact on the EC, screening should be provided. Based on the current concept plan layout, the equipment and storage area are expected to be visible from Rio Rd. through and above the proposed security fencing and evergreen screening. From Rt. 29, filtered views of the equipment and storage area are expected through site entrances and breaks in the intervening development and off-site vegetation along the eastern parcel boundary.

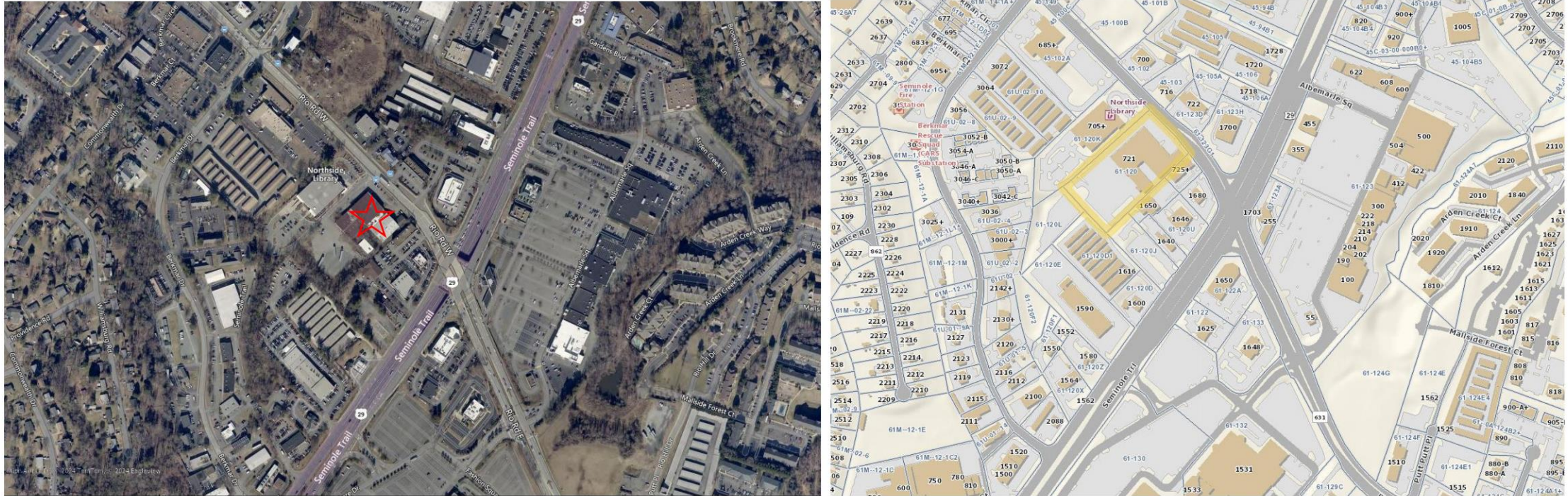


Figure 1: Pictometry image (left) showing project area along the Entrance Corridor and County GIS map (right) highlighting subject property.




CARTER MACHINERY

RIO RD, CHARLOTTESVILLE

Figure 2: Proposed concept plan showing the building, travelways, equipment storage, and parking.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
1-5, 9-16	Purpose, Compatibility with significant historic sites, Compatibility with the Character of the Entrance Corridor, Structure Design	Portions of the existing building will be demolished to accommodate the proposed outdoor storage area. No new buildings or changes to the structure that is to remain are proposed.	See lighting and landscaping recommendations, below.
	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 applicant’s narrative states that no accessory structures are proposed. No details have been provided with the concept plan regarding mechanical equipment but the applicant’s narrative states that the visibility of mechanical equipment from the EC will be eliminated.	Provide the proposed locations of mechanical equipment with the site plan. Show how the equipment will be screened from the EC.
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.”		Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the site plan.
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.	The storage area is proposed south and east of the building. In these locations, the storage area and equipment will be situated close to the EC. In an attempt to screen this area from the EC, fencing and evergreen screening (American arborvitae trees) have been proposed. However, security (safety) - not screening - fencing (Attach. 3) has been proposed and the evergreen screening will take time to mature, allowing clear visibility of the equipment and storage area beyond. Revising the concept plan to a double, staggered row of evergreens along the fence east of the building would provide layered landscaping and more effectively minimize the negative visual impact of the storage area on the EC when use commences. Existing vegetation is along the southern and portions of the eastern parcel boundary, and near the parcel’s western boundary is an L-shaped planting island. However, the vegetation along the site’s east side is offsite and sparse in some locations, and the trees in the L-shaped planting island have been removed to accommodate the temporary office, fencing, and parking. Revising the concept plan to provide evergreen landscaping along the parcel’s eastern boundary and in the L-shaped planting island along the western boundary would help to mitigate the negative visual impact of the equipment and storage area on the Rio Rd. and Rt. 29 ECs. The project narrative provides an example of the security fencing intended for fencing visible from the EC (Fig. 3). The fencing shown conforms with the ARB’s security fence design criteria. However, the concept plan does not distinguish between new security fencing, existing chain link fencing, and	Revise the concept plan to show the current landscape conditions within the L-shaped planting island along the western parcel boundary. Revise the concept plan to provide evergreen screening in the L-shaped planting island and along the parcel’s eastern boundary.
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 concept plan to eliminate the 11-space parking row southeast of the building and replace it with a row of evergreens. Revise the concept plan to more clearly show the full extent of the proposed storage area. Provide the proposed locations of loading, service, and refuse areas with the site plan. Show how these locations will be screened from the EC.

		<p>new chain link fencing. Revising the plan to delineate the locations of the proposed types of fencing is needed to determine visual impacts.</p>  <p><i>Security Fencing Style for Areas Visible from EC Street</i></p> <p>Fig. 3: Image of security fencing provided in the applicant’s narrative.</p> <p>The concept plan shows equipment stored in two areas of the site. The plan notes that equipment could be stored beyond those areas, but the drawing could more clearly demonstrate the full extent of storage proposed.</p> <p>The applicant’s narrative notes that loading, service, and refuse areas will be located at the rear of the property within the enclosed storage area. However, no details regarding these areas have been provided in the concept plan.</p>	
	Lighting		
22	Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;	<p>The concept plan does not include a lighting plan, but the project narrative states that the lighting will adhere to all EC Guidelines. The ARB has consistently imposed conditions to minimize the visual impact of lighting. These conditions include limiting ground illumination to 30 footcandles for display lots and 20 footcandles for other uses, as well as restricting pole light height to a maximum of 20 feet. Additionally, color temperatures for lighting have been restricted to a range between 2000K and 3000K, and finishes for pole fixtures limited to dark brown, dark bronze, or black.</p>	Provide a lighting plan with the site plan submittal. Limit all fixtures to full cutoff styles to minimize visual impacts of the development on the EC street.
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.		
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.		Maximum light levels must not exceed 20 footcandles.
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.		

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.		All fixtures must have lamps whose color temperature is between 2000 and 3000 Kelvin.
26	Dark brown, dark bronze, or black are appropriate colors for free-standing pole-mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors.		The finish for freestanding poles must be either dark brown, dark bronze, or black.
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.		Pole-mounted fixtures must not exceed 20' in height maximum.
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."		Include the standard lighting note on the lighting plan.
30-31	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>	A lighting plan has not been provided with the concept plan; however, the applicant's narrative specifies that no decorative lighting is being proposed for this site.	Provide a lighting plan with the site plan.
	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 site has approximately 294' of frontage along the EC with overhead utilities and an associated easement in place along the frontage. There is currently a small planting strip with no frontage landscaping, and the concept plan does not propose to add any. Frontage landscaping could be accommodated by reducing the amount of parking provided. The ordinance requires seven parking spaces for the 650 SF retail sales area shown (1 space per 100 SF retail sales area). The concept plan currently shows 39 parking spaces. By eliminating the parking and paving adjacent to Rio Rd., an expanded area for frontage landscaping, similar to the adjacent library parcel, could be created. The overhead lines and easement may limit the landscaping that can be planted. However, establishing landscaping that better meets the EC guidelines would provide an additional layer of landscaping helping to screen the equipment and storage area from the EC and increase continuity along the EC.	Revise the concept plan to eliminate paving and parking adjacent to Rio Rd., increase the depth of the planting area, and show landscaping that better satisfies the EC frontage landscaping requirements.
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.		Coordinate all landscaping with utilities and easements.
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		

	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		
33	<p>Landscaping along interior roads:</p> <p>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.</p>	There are no interior roads within this site.	None.
35	<p>Landscaping of parking areas:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The area adjacent to Rio Rd. serves as both the perimeter of the parking lot and the street frontage. Modifying the concept plan to replace the parking and paving along Rio Rd. with landscaping would help offset the visual impacts of the proposed storage and align more closely with frontage and perimeter parking area landscaping requirements.</p> <p>The proposal does not meet the requirement for interior parking trees. Four large shade trees are required based on the number of parking spaces (39) shown in the concept plan but only two have been provided. Any reduction in parking could reduce the number of interior parking trees required.</p>	Show one interior parking lot tree for every ten parking spaces.
34	<p>Landscaping along interior pedestrian ways:</p> <p>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.</p>	The concept plan shows that the existing sidewalk along the front of the building will remain. No other interior sidewalks are shown.	None.
36	<p>Landscaping of buildings and other structures:</p> <p>a. Trees or other vegetation should be planted along the front of long buildings as necessary to soften the appearance of exterior walls. The</p>	No changes are proposed to the building that is proposed to remain.	None.

	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.		
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> .	A landscape plan has not been provided with the concept plan. This guideline will be reviewed when a landscape plan is submitted.	Provide a complete landscape plan with the site plan.
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 does not appear on the plan.	Include the standard plant health note on the landscape plan.
	Development pattern		
	Site development and layout		
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.	Minimal changes are proposed to the site layout. The concept plan shows portions of the existing building being demolished, fencing enclosing the storage area, two interior planting islands in the parking lot along the front of the building, a planting bed with evergreens between the storage area and the parking lot, and an 11-space parking row southeast of the building that is to remain. Historically, landscaping beyond the minimum requirements has been one effective method of offsetting impacts from the storage/display/sales use. The current plan does not meet minimum landscape requirements and does not offer opportunities for establishing other mitigation measures in the areas of the site closest to the EC. For these reasons, staff cannot recommend approval of the concept plan.	See the recommendations provided with the Guidelines on accessory structures and equipment and frontage landscaping. Conditions of approval for the outdoor storage area are recommended: Equipment must be stored only in areas indicated for storage on the Concept Plan. Equipment must be stored in the retracted/stowed position.
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.	In addition to landscaping, there are a few standard practices related to the display of vehicles that would be appropriate to apply to the proposed outdoor storage area to help reduce visual impacts. Over the years, the ARB has developed a standard recommended condition of approval that requires vehicles not be elevated anywhere on site. This helps maintain an appropriate, organized, and orderly appearance on site. Although traditional elevation methods such as ramps or turntables may not be applicable in this case, leaving equipment in an extended position within the storage area could increase visibility. A condition of approval requiring that equipment be stored in the retracted position would be appropriate.	

	<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>	The ARB has also required that storage/display/sales spaces must be striped like standard parking spaces. This requirement is more typically applied to vehicle display lots allowing for distribution and orientation that is more like standard parking lots. In this case, the layout of equipment stored behind fencing and additional landscaping is not expected to have a negative visual impact.	
	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.	No grading is proposed.	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.	Along the parcel's southern boundary is existing onsite vegetation. However, the vegetation has not been designated to remain on the plan.	Revise the concept plan to show that vegetation near the parcel's southern boundary will remain.
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.		
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.	There are no existing stormwater facilities, and none are proposed in the concept plan.	None.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Primary points of discussion:

1. The extent to which proposed landscaping mitigates the visual impacts of the outdoor storage area.
2. Landscaping along the frontage.
3. Landscaping along the northern, eastern, and western perimeters of the storage area.
4. Requiring the storage spaces to be striped like a standard parking lot.

Recommended revisions to the Concept Plan prior to Planning Commission review:

1. Revise the concept plan to show the current landscape conditions within the I-shaped planting island along the western parcel boundary.
2. Revise the concept plan to provide evergreen trees in the I-shaped planting island and along the parcel's eastern boundary.
3. Revise the concept plan to eliminate the 11-space parking row southeast of the building and replace it with a row of evergreens.
4. Revise the concept plan to show the full extent of the proposed storage area.
5. Revise the concept plan to eliminate paving and parking adjacent to Rio Rd., increase the depth of the planting area, and show landscaping that better satisfies the EC frontage landscaping requirements.
6. Revise the concept plan to show that vegetation near the parcel's southern boundary will remain.

Recommendation on the Special Use Permit:

With the changes listed above, staff recommends no objection to the proposed outdoor storage, display, and sales with the following conditions:

1. Equipment must be stored only in areas indicated for storage on the Concept Plan.
2. Equipment must be kept in the retracted/stowed position.
3. Site plan approval is subject to ARB approval of the landscape plan (submitted with the site plan). Landscaping shown on the plan may be required to be in excess of the minimum requirements of the ARB guidelines and/or the Zoning Ordinance to mitigate the visual impacts of the proposed use.
4. Site plan approval is subject to ARB approval of the lighting plan (submitted with the site plan). Maximum light levels must not exceed 20 footcandles. The maximum height of pole lights must not exceed 20'. All fixtures must have lamps whose color temperature is between 2000 and 3000 Kelvin. All site- and building-mounted fixtures must be full cutoff.

Recommendations for the Site Plan

1. Provide the proposed locations of mechanical equipment with the site plan. Show how the equipment will be screened from the EC.
2. Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the site plan: Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.
3. Provide the proposed locations of loading, service, and refuse areas with the site plan. Show how these locations will be screened from the EC.
4. Provide a lighting plan with the site plan. Limit all fixtures to full cutoff styles to minimize visual impacts of the development on the EC street.
5. The finish for freestanding poles must be either dark brown, dark bronze, or black.
6. Include the standard lighting note 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.
7. Provide a lighting plan with the site plan.
8. Coordinate all landscaping with utilities and easements.
9. Provide a complete landscaping plan with the site plan.
10. Include the standard plant health note on 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.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach. 1: [SP2024-20: Carter Machinery - Narrative](#)
- Attach. 2: [SP2024-20: Carter Machinery - Concept Plan](#)
- Attach. 3: [SP2024-20: Carter Machinery - Entrance Corridor Safety and Screening Fencing Design Criteria](#)