

MECHUM'S TRESTLE LLC

4300 Three Notch'd Road • Charlottesville, VA 22901

September 15, 2023

Board of Supervisors
Albemarle County
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Supervisors,

The purpose of this letter is to request a Special Exception to the Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, Mechum's Trestle LLC is seeking to add 640 square feet Gross Floor Area to provide outdoor seating space for their restaurant tenant.

This site was formerly leased by Ivy Road House, a restaurant that opened December 30, 2020, and subsequently closed on September 15, 2022. On May 31, 2023, a lease was signed by a local (Crozet) restaurant, Enigma Jalisco.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Based on Albemarle County code, Section 4.12.6 and a Gross Floor Area of 3,922 square feet, this site provides 51 parking spaces, exactly sufficient to support its approved restaurant use.

Mechum's Trestle is seeking to increase its Gross Floor Area by 640 square feet to provide its customers with an option to dine outside, a critical element in the success of restaurants in the post-COVID era.

While this results in an increased need for 8 parking spaces per the County code, this condition cannot be met due to space constraints. This request for Special Exception provides a robust sampling of county parking ordinances across central Virginia, supporting a waiver for the increased parking requirement in this application.

SITE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:

Site Plan 2015-08 was approved on April 12, 2016, for the development of a full-service restaurant in western Albemarle County at the intersection of Routes 250 (Ivy Road) and 240 (Three Notch' d Road), a site zoned C-1 Commercial.

Parking:

As stated in the Zoning Ordinance, the minimum parking requirement for a restaurant use is stated as follows:

Sec. 4.12.6 - Minimum number of required parking spaces for scheduled uses

Restaurant: 13 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area including areas for accessory dancing. (Added 2-5-03; Amended 3-2-16)

In accordance with the site plan (and the relevant Zoning Ordinance), the Mechum's Trestle lot provides 51 parking spaces. Due to space constraints on the property, this is also the **maximum** number of spaces that can be established in support of the restaurant.

OFF-STREET PARKING ORDINANCES – CENTRAL VIRGINIA COUNTIES

Attachment 1 shows a sampling of counties across Central Virginia with regards to *minimum parking off-street parking requirements in support of a restaurant use.*

It should be noted that the sampling:

- does not include incorporated cities, where the relative importance of off-street parking is lessened due to the presence of other parking options (i.e., street parking, pay parking, and access to common area parking, where available);
- does include rural counties where on-street parking is often non-existent, and where site-specific public transportation is limited; and
- does include counties that include suburban populations, suggesting higher population density, and potentially greater demand for restaurant services (and off-street parking resources).

As shown in Attachment 1, using the Mechum's Trestle existing plus proposed Gross Floor Area as a sample test case, the following observations can be made:

- more rural counties (e.g., Culpeper and Madison) have parking requirements almost 50% less restrictive than that of Albemarle County;
- less rural counties (e.g., Henrico and Chesterfield) have parking requirements over 20% less restrictive than that of Albemarle County;
- the requested waiver for Mechum's Trestle seeks a reduction in the parking requirement of only 14%.

SUMMARY:

The sampling data suggests that in the case of Albemarle County's off-street parking requirement for restaurants, other counties in Central Virginia are significantly less restrictive.

In the specific case of Mechum's Trestle, the requested waiver is for 8 spaces, resulting in a parking capacity that significantly exceeds that of the sampled counties.

We thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Bill McKechnie
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