COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
Department of Community Development
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Chris Perez; Senior Planner

FROM: Kevin McDermott, Principal Planner - Transportation

DATE: 11/23/2016

RE: SP-2016-25 Regents School of Charlottesville; Transportation Planning Review

Following are comments and questions regarding the above referenced Special Use Permit application related to the review of the submitted traffic study and application information. Enrollment at the school is 108 students and sixteen staff members at the time this traffic study was conducted.

The number of AM and PM peak hour trips and PM peak fifteen minute trips have increased since the 2014 traffic study (only 45 minutes are provided for comparison in the PM). However, with the installation of the forced turn island at the entrance of the school, egress queues have been reduced to an acceptable number. The observed activity showed no more than two vehicles queued up at any time during the peak hours. There have been no crashes at the entrance to the site related to school traffic since the installation of the forced turn island. Turn lane queues on US 250 are also reasonable according to the updated traffic study. With the current queue conditions staff has no concerns related to unsafe movements occurring as a result of long wait times to exit or enter the property.

Overall, traffic in the US 250 Corridor continues to increase resulting in worsening congestion conditions especially during peak hours. The morning peak period for the corridor coincides with the peak period for school traffic, however, the afternoon peaks do not coincide.

Crashes within the US 250 West Corridor overall also continue to increase from 57 crashes in 2011 to 72 crashes in 2015 (Route 240/Three Notched Road to Route 29). Crashes are prevalent throughout the corridor including in the area of Broomley Road and the school entrance, however, it does not appear that the school has contributed to the high number of crashes in any discernable manner. There are no identified crash hotspots in the vicinity to the west of the school entrance where school traffic could be making left turns in order to return to the Charlottesville area after leaving the school. Staff pulled crash data for the All Saints Anglican Church where the school has an agreement to accommodate a traffic turn around and there was no apparent crash increase in the area that could be attributable to the school. One angle crash did occur in the past year that could possibly have been related to the school turn around traffic although there is no way to identify it as such other than the type of crash and date and time.

Staff sees no reason to deny the application based on the traffic data available. However, I would recommend a sunset clause be instituted in order to allow additional review of traffic over a longer period with the current school traffic levels and access management occurring on site. The current two-year period for which data is available is not really sufficient to determine potential problems. Additionally, I would encourage the school to continue operation of the shuttle van and if possible expand the program. The remote location on a busy highway and fact that the school draws most students from more than a mile away makes bicycle and pedestrian options unavailable. Therefore, improving van or bus service provides the best option for reducing the vehicular traffic.

General Notes/Comments on Traffic Report

- Text references one left turn exiting site but this is not shown in the table.
- Confirm that the table is showing all traffic exiting site during the peak period not just apparent school related traffic.
- Additional information on the van ridership would be informative to present.
- Under the morning site review notes was the traffic queueing on 250 EB past the school turn lane? Was this from the signal at the UVA health center site?
- In the afternoon Total Vehicle Traffic table why is one EB thru movement shown?

Cc: