



**County of Spotsylvania**  
**Department of Planning**  
**Staff Report**

Special Use Permit # SUP18-0005  
(Berkeley Voting District)

**Board of Supervisors**  
**August 14, 2018**

Planning Commission  
Recommendation: Approval of the Special Use Permit with conditions

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Special Use Permit with conditions

Project: SUP18-0005 – Fredericksburg Christian Educational Services, Inc.

Owner/Applicant: Fredericksburg Christian Educational Services, Inc.

Request: An amendment to special use permit, SUP05-06, to allow for the relocation and expansion of a school building addition and ball fields.

Tax Map Parcel: 37-A-47 and 37-A-47A

Location: The property is located at 9400 Thornton Rolling Road which is on the west side of Thornton Rolling Road (Route 609) approximately one-half mile south of the Thornton Rolling Road (Route 609) and Mills Drive (Route 17) intersection

Zoning Overlay: Airport Protection Overlay District

Future Land Use  
Designation: Mixed Use

Historic Resources: None known

Date Application Deemed  
Complete: 3/28/2018

Community Meeting: 6/29/2017



## I. Analysis

The Fredericksburg Christian School is located at 9400 Thornton Rolling Road which is on the west side of Thornton Rolling Road approximately one-half mile south Mills Drive (Route 17) and totals approximately 75 acres comprised of two separate tax parcels. The property is currently zoned Rural (RU) and operates as a private school with a special use permit (SUP05-06). The property is bounded on the north side by vacant Rural zoned property and on the west side by vacant Industrial zoned property. Adjacent residential properties to the south are large subdivision lots accessed by Patriot Lane.

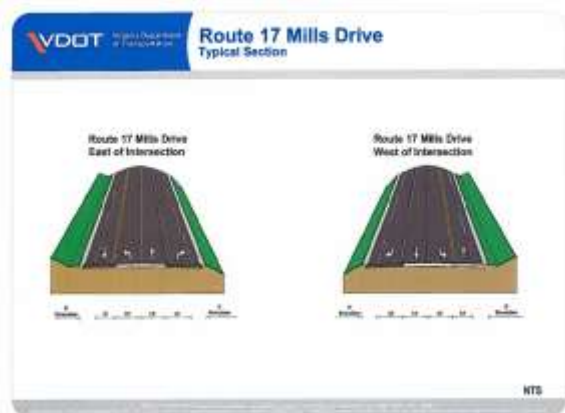
The applicant, Fredericksburg Christian Educational Service, Inc., is requesting an amendment to the existing special use permit (SUP05-06) to allow for the addition of a new elementary school building and ballfields to be added to the school campus. Currently the elementary school, grades Pre-K to fifth grade, is located in the City of Fredericksburg. The school currently operates as a private educational facility serving grades 6-12 within a one-story, 81,936 square foot building, known as the Upper School. The existing school campus includes a baseball field located to north of the school building and a multi-purpose field and softball field located west of the school building with parking areas along the frontage. The entire site is buffered by a 50-foot landscaped area along the property lines, which was a condition of the original special use permit. Access to the site is provided by two entrances on Thornton Rolling Road including a continuous right turn lane. The proposal is to add a one-story, 48,400 square foot elementary school building, north of the existing upper school building in the location of the existing baseball field. The applicant has provided an architectural rendering of the proposed school building which will be constructed of split face CMU, brick and metal paneling in a buff/sand color with green trim. The proposed architectural are consistent with the existing school building.



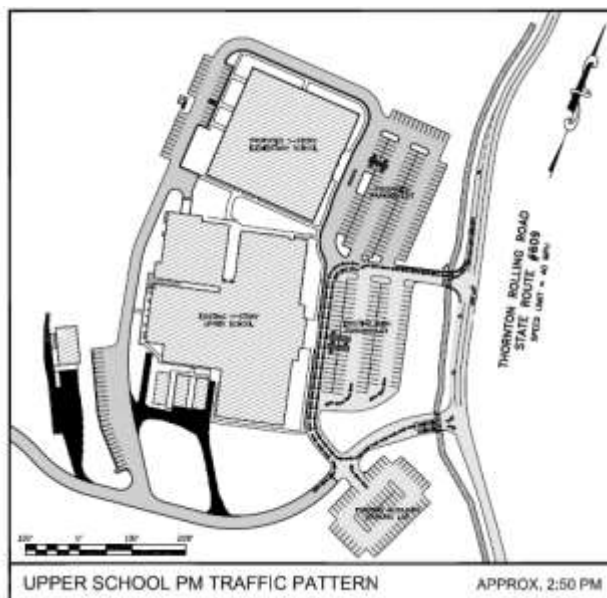
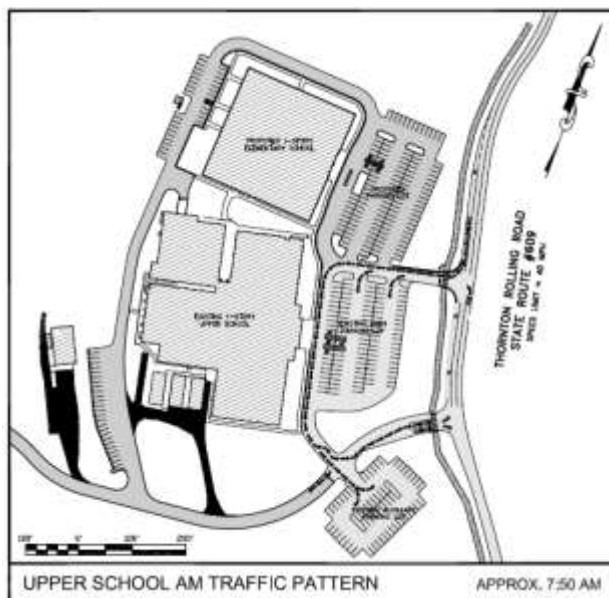
New ballfields, including two baseball fields, two practice fields and one game field, are proposed on the rear portion of the property along with a new parking area. The property is currently served by public water and sewer and potential stormwater management areas are identified on the Generalized Development Plan (GDP).

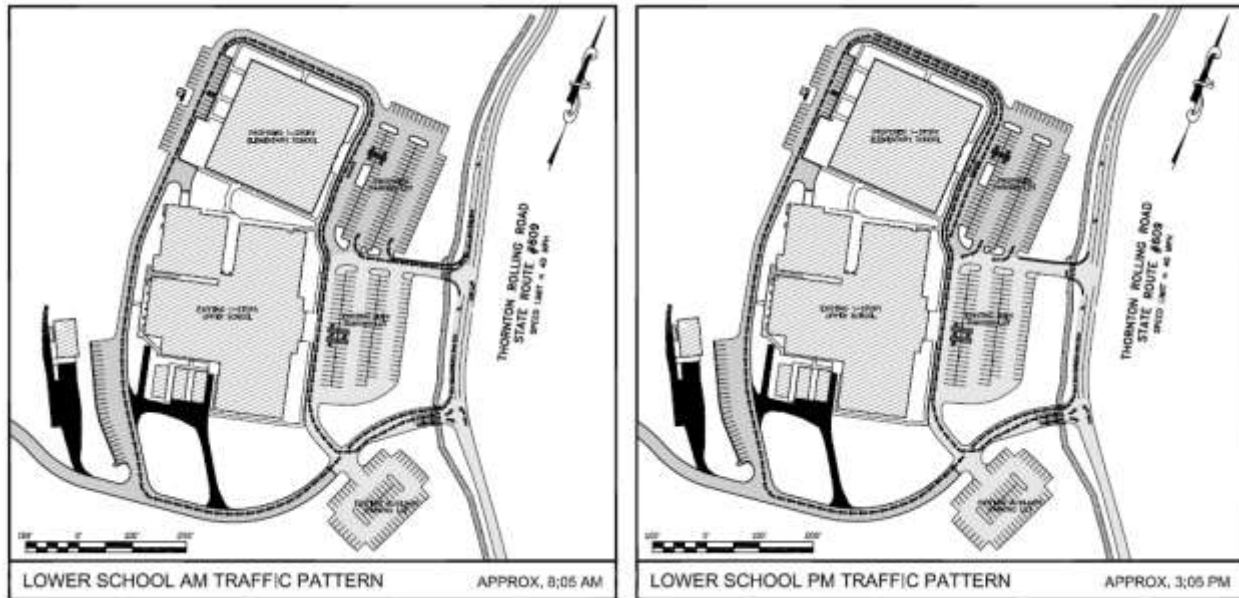
Thornton Rolling Road is a two-lane rural road and currently a prescriptive right of way which carries approximately 3,000 vehicle trips per day (2017 traffic count). The Rt. 17/Thornton Rolling Road/Jim Morris Road intersection is a high crash location with the existing level of service in the AM peak period a LoS F from the south approach (Thornton Rolling Road). During the PM peak period the level of service improves from that approach, at a LoS C. This intersection is currently undergoing intersection improvements including the addition of turn lanes and a traffic signal which should be completed by August 2018. The additional turn lanes and traffic signal will improve the level of service at the intersection during the AM peak period

and reduce the more serious right angle crashes. Please see below images of intersection improvements.



The proposed school building addition along with the existing school traffic will generate approximately 1,757 vehicles per day. This estimate is considered a “worst case scenario” as it does not account for the bus system the school has in place which transports students from surrounding counties or for families with multiple students and carpooling. The two existing entrances along with existing right turn lanes and tapers are adequate to accommodate the existing school and proposed school and addition. Further, the applicant has adopted an internal traffic pattern utilizing the new perimeter road around the buildings to allow all traffic to get on-site and out of the turn lanes for afternoon pick-ups. The upper school and elementary school also stagger arrival and dismissal times in order to further reduce traffic issues. Please see below and sheet 7 of the GDP to view the internal traffic pattern.





While the traffic conditions will be improved with the impending intersection improvements, the physical condition of Thornton Rolling Road is rather poor including pothole patches and cracking. The additional trips generated by the proposed use will create additional wear and tear on the road; therefore, the applicant proposes to install an overlay and pave in place. This improvement will include a 1.5" overlay of asphalt from the edge of the southernmost taper of Patriot Lane (subdivision road just south of the proposal) to the connection of the proposed intersection improvements at Rt. 17. Within this segment of Thornton Rolling Road where a road shoulder the shoulder exists, it too will be paved. A complete detail of the road improvements is provided on sheet 5 of the GDP. Additionally, the applicant will provide right of way dedication along the property's frontage as identified on the GDP.

Consistent with Code requirements, the County's Trailways Master Plan, the applicant is providing a 10-foot asphalt trail along the property's frontage on Thornton Rolling Road. Installation of the trail will provide a ¼ mile trail segment as part of the East Coast Greenway (ECG) corridor. The East Coast Greenway Alliances provided a letter of support for the County's consideration as part of this request (please see attached). With the installation of the trail and the amount of right of way needed to accommodate the trail, some of the trees within the 50' buffer along the frontage will be removed. However, the applicant is maintaining as much of the buffer as possible creating a variable width buffer along the frontage between 25' to 35'. All other previously conditioned 50' buffers will remain as identified on the GDP.

On June 29, 2017, the applicant hosted a community meeting attended by approximately 10 citizens. Concerns raised at the meeting primarily related to traffic safety. The applicant has attempted to address those concerns with the "pave in place" improvements on Thornton Rolling Road and the internal traffic patterns which keep school vehicles from stacking off-site. Undeniably, the traffic conditions at the Rt.17 intersection are poor but will drastically improve once the turn lanes and traffic signal are installed.

## II. Standards of Review for Special Use Approval

The Planning Commission shall not recommend, nor shall the Board of Supervisors approve, the proposed special use unless it satisfies the following standards:

STANDARDS OF REVIEW FOR SPECIAL USE APPROVAL	
STANDARD	STAFF COMMENT
1. Proposed use is in accord with the comprehensive plan and other official plans adopted by the county.	The proposal is located within the Primary Development Boundary in an area designated as Mixed use and Institutional land use. The proposed special use permit application would result in the expansion of a private school located onsite and complements the intent of the Institutional Land Use designation. Surrounding land uses include mixed use, employment center, open space, and rural residential. This proposal is generally harmonious with the surroundings given the precedent set by the existing school footprint onsite as well as higher intensity development prospects for the area especially to the north and west. Please see Appendix A for complete Comprehensive Plan Analysis.
2. Proposed use or development of the land will be in harmony with the scale, bulk, coverage, density, and character of the area.	The proposed use is an expansion of the current use on a developed site which is harmonious with the area. The existing landscaping that will be maintained along the frontage provides an adequate buffer to Thornton Rolling Road and the 50' landscaped buffer surrounding the property will remain unchanged. The buildings will be one-story in height and with the size of the property (75 acres), the improvements do not intrude on the surrounding area.
3. Proposed use will not hinder or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and buildings or impair the value thereof.	Approval of the special use for the additional school building will not discourage development or use of adjacent land. The applicant's proposed "pave in place" to Thornton Rolling Road will provide a significant improvement to the condition of this portion of Thornton Rolling Road.
4. Proposed use will not adversely affect	No adverse impacts to the health or safety

the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood.	of persons residing in the neighborhood have been identified.
5. Proposed use will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements within the neighborhood.	The proposed use is not expected to be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements within the neighborhood.
6. Proposed use is appropriately located with respect to transportation facilities, water supply, wastewater treatment, fire and police protection, waste disposal, and similar facilities.	The proposal is located within the service area for Fire Station 11, which is located approximately 1.5 miles from the site. Dumpsters are provided on site for solid waste collection and will be hauled away by a private refuse company. The property is currently served by public water and sewer services. With the installation of a trail along the frontage, the applicant is providing a key segment to the East Coast Greenways Trail Plan which will provide safe pedestrian and biker access to a heavily traveled road within the network.
7. Proposed use will not cause undue traffic congestion or create a traffic hazard.	The proposed additional will generate a net increase of 774 vehicles per day. The two existing entrances, right turn lanes and tapers will accommodate the total amount of traffic generated by the site. The applicant has adopted an internal traffic control plan which removes the risk of dismissal pick up traffic from stacking on Thornton Rolling Road by stacking the vehicles along the internal perimeter road (see sheet 7 of the GDP). Additionally, the applicant is proposing a “pave in place” improvement to Thornton Rolling Road which will provide a 1.5” coat of asphalt from south of the site to the Rt. 17 improvements. The “pave in place” will significantly improve the condition of the road which would not otherwise be done without this proposal. The existing levels of service at the Rt. 17 intersection are poor; however with the intersection improvements that are underway, the levels of service will be significantly improved.
8. Proposed use will have no unduly adverse impact on environmental or	Wetlands and RPA exist on-site; however impacts will be limited to a crossing by

natural resources.	the proposed access road which extends to the rear of the property to the proposed ballfields. All appropriate permitting will be required via the site plan review process. No other adverse impacts to natural resources have been identified.
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### **III. Findings**

#### **In Favor:**

- A. The proposal is consistent and compatible with the development district and land use designation as per the Comprehensive Plan and brings additional investment and educational options to the County that are currently operating in another jurisdiction.
- B. The applicant is providing right of way along Thornton Rolling Road and an integral segment of trail consistent with the County's Master Trailways Plan and the route of the East Coast Greenway.
- C. The proposal provides an overlay and "pave in place" improvement to Thornton Rolling Road which will significantly improve the condition of the road and mitigate the physical impacts of the additional traffic on the road.

#### **Against:**

- A. The proposed addition will generate a net increase in traffic by 774 vehicle trips per day on Thornton Rolling Road which is a rural two-lane road.

### **IV. Conclusions & Recommended Conditions**

While the proposed addition will generate additional traffic, the existing entrances, right turn lane and tape are adequate. The trips will be distributed with the staggered arrival and dismissal times for the upper school and elementary school, and the applicant has adopted an internal traffic pattern in order to eliminate the risk of cars stacking in the turn lanes on Thornton Rolling Road. While the existing levels of service at the Rt. 17/Thornton Rolling Road/Jim Morris Road intersection are poor, the installation of the traffic signal and turn lanes are expected to be complete by August of 2018 which will significantly improve traffic conditions. Based on these points and the findings in favor noted above, staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the Special Use Permit amendment to allow the school building additional and ballfields on Rural (RU) zoned property:

- 1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the Generalized Development Plan (GDP) titled, "Generalized Development Plan Fredericksburg Christian School Campus Expansion" dated March 8, 2018<sup>7</sup> and last revised June 25, 2018.

2. All landscaping buffers shall be maintained as identified on the GDP.
3. The applicant shall complete the improvements to Thornton Rolling Road as identified on the GDP, sheet 5, as part of the site plan process for the school building addition.
4. The applicant shall dedicate right of way along Thornton Rolling Road as identified on the GDP.
5. The elementary school building shall be constructed in conformance with the architectural rendering titled, "Fredericksburg Christian School" and dated May 15, 2018.

*Planning Commission Update:*

*The Planning Commission held a public hearing on July 18, 2018. One citizen raised concerns with the current condition of Thornton Rolling Road based on the narrow and curvy alignment of the road. On a motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Newhouse, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval with conditions with a 4 – 1 vote.*

*The Planning Commission also recommends the Board of Supervisors consider identifying Thornton Rolling Road as a high priority transportation issue in order to be studied and considered for safety improvements.*

Spotsylvania County Government

# Appendix A

Comprehensive Plan Analysis

## **SUP18-0005: FREDERICKSBURG CHRISTIAN SCHOOL EXPANSION**

The Spotsylvania County Comprehensive Plan presents a long range land use vision for the County. The Comprehensive Plan sets forth principles, goals, policies, and implementation techniques that will guide the development activity within the County and promote, preserve, and protect the health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens. Specifically, the Plan provides data and analysis on land use, transportation, housing, natural and historic resources, and public facilities and utilities. The purpose of this document is not to regulate, but rather guide land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions. This guidance seeks to ensure continued economic and community vitality while ensuring necessary policies and infrastructure are in place to provide for the continuation of quality services to Spotsylvania's residents and businesses.

The Fredericksburg Christian School Expansion proposal is located within the Primary Development Boundary in an area designated as Institutional Land Use as depicted on the Future Land Use Map. Land within the Primary Development Boundary is intended to develop with higher residential densities and more intensive non-residential uses than outside of the boundary. As per the 2013 (last updated May 22, 2018) Comprehensive Plan Future land Use element, the Institutional land use category includes County facilities, private and public schools, active recreation parks, and large public service uses such as hospitals. The proposed special use permit application would result in the expansion of a private school located onsite and complements the intent of the Institutional Land Use designation. Surrounding land uses include mixed use, employment center, open space, and rural residential. This proposal is generally harmonious with the surroundings given the precedent set by the existing school footprint onsite as well as higher intensity development prospects for the area especially to the north and west.

It is good to note as per County Code Section 23-4.5.1, Special uses are considered generally compatible with other land uses permitted in a zoning district but which, because of their unique characteristics or potential impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and the County as a whole, require individual consideration of their design, configuration, and/or operation at the particular location proposed.

This project complements the Introduction and Vision Guiding Principles and Policies C.4. Ensure that Spotsylvania County continues to provide excellent educational and recreational, and cultural opportunities.

This project is also considerate of the Spotsylvania County Trailways Master Plan and the route of the East Coast Greenway (ECG); developing multi-use trail extending from Maine to Florida. Development of this trail system helps reduce total level of service deficits identified for recreational trails within the County. The applicant recognizes the importance of this resource and agreed to construct a trailway in lieu of sidewalk (option provided for in the County Design Standards Manual) consistent with planning efforts and a number of Comprehensive Plan goals including but not limited to Transportation Policy 2, Strategy 5 that states the County should support alternative onsite transportation alternatives and recreational options such as transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are able to, or will, connect to neighboring properties. Additionally Transportation Policy 3, Strategy 2 promotes design and construction or appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities meant to enhance safety and avoid conflicts

with motorized vehicles. In the long term this is a positive development for Thorton Rolling Road to provide a separated multi-use path corridor from the vehicle travelway.

On balance, the proposal and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.