

STAFF ANALYSIS

STAFF PERSON: Ben Loppacker, Planner I
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: June 17, 2026
PROJECT: SE-2026-00012 1652 State Farm Boulevard
PARCEL IDs: 07800-00-00-06100

Special Exception request to allow a Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing use with a gross floor area exceeding 4,000 square feet

PROPOSAL

The applicant has requested a special exception to allow a Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing use on TMP 07800-00-00-06100 with a gross floor area of 4,895 square feet, which exceeds the by-right maximum of 4,000 square feet for the use. The proposed use is a lab where medical instruments would be sterilized. The applicant has also applied for a site plan to (SDP-2026-00037) remove the existing drive through and increase the size of the existing building to 4,895 square feet. No other site changes are proposed.

The Zoning Administrator has verified that the proposed use is classified as a "Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing" use as defined by County Code §18-3.1:

Laboratories/research and development/experimental testing" means scientific research, testing, investigation or experimentation, the development of prototype products, and/or the assembly or manufacture of prototype products and including, but not limited to, bioscience and medical devices research, development and manufacturing, and information technology and defense security research, development and manufacturing; scientific or technical instruction.

County Code §18-25A.2.1(1) PD-MC allows all uses that are permitted by right in the C1, CO, and HC Commercial districts. Labs are permitted by-right in C1 (§18-22.2.1(17)): and HC (§18-24.2.1(47)):

Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing; gross floor area of the establishment does not exceed 4,000 square feet per site; provided that the gross floor area of the establishment may exceed 4,000 square feet per site by special exception approved by the board of supervisors.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The property is 0.968 acres and is zoned Planned Development-Mixed Commercial (PD-MC), currently developed with a 3,376 square foot bank building and drive through (1652 State Farm Blvd.). The property fronts on State Farm Blvd. with access from both State Farm Blvd. and Abbey Rd. Surrounding properties to the south, east, west, and north are zoned Planned Development-Mixed Commercial, and are occupied by a variety of commercial and office uses.



Figure 1. 1652 State Farm Blvd. Location Map

ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST

Requests for special exceptions must be reviewed in accordance with County Code § 18-33.5. Each application for a special exception must be made as provided by the applicable section of this chapter authorizing the waiver, modification, variation or substitution, and must include both the information required by that section and any studies that the Agent may require identifying the nature and extent of potential impacts resulting from the proposed special exception. However, no sections of the Zoning Ordinance specify any factors, standards, criteria, or findings to consider for expanded Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing uses in PD-MC districts. Therefore, staff has analyzed the request considering the purpose and intent of the PD-MC district, Comprehensive Plan, and with regard to any impacts on adjacent properties.

According to the Albemarle County Code Section 25A.1, *“PD-MC districts are hereby created and may hereafter be established by amendment of the zoning map to permit development of large-scale commercial areas with a broad range of commercial uses under a unified planned approach.”*

The proposed sterile processing center is consistent with the intent of the PD-MC zoning district, which encourages a diversity of large-scale commercial uses. The proposed use is consistent with the scale and character of nearby commercial uses, with minimal site changes to accommodate the use. In addition, the parcel is conveniently situated with convenient access to State Farm Boulevard, Richmond Road, and Peter Jefferson Parkway near the I-64 interchange.

The Comprehensive Plan (AC44) recommends future land use for this parcel as “Community Mixed Use.” The proposed use as a Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing use is recommended as a secondary use in the “Community Mixed Use” land use designation in the AC44 Comprehensive Plan.

Staff believes that the size and scale of the proposed use is appropriate in that land use designation as a secondary use and contributes to the mix of commercial uses in the nearby area, including healthcare.

AC44 identifies healthcare as the second-largest employment sector in the County. Objective 4 of the Thriving Economy section states: *“Strengthen business retention, expansion, and attraction, prioritizing industries consistent with AC44 and the EDSP.”* The subject property is strategically located in close proximity to major regional medical hubs, including UVA Hospital and Martha Jefferson Hospital. The proposed sterile processing center would provide essential services to these facilities by supplying sterilized surgical instrument kits, thereby enhancing efficiency and reliability in medical procedures. In doing so, the use not only aligns with but actively advances the County’s stated economic development objectives by strengthening and supporting the existing healthcare infrastructure.

Based on the information above, staff’s opinion is that the request would be consistent with the PD-MC zoning district and AC44. The proposed use would also be fully contained within the proposed expanded structure and would not impact surrounding commercial and office structures.

SUMMARY

Staff has no concerns with the request and believes it is consistent with the purpose and intent of the PD-MC district, Comprehensive Plan, and will not impact adjacent properties. use requested is consistent with by-right uses permitted in the PD-MC Zoning District.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment C) to approve the special exception of a Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing use greater than 4,000 square feet with the following condition:

1. The gross floor area of the Laboratories/Research and Development/Experimental Testing use is limited to 4,900 square feet.