

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST
1709 Russell Road
Alexandria, VA 22301

June 20, 2019

TO: Mr. Nate Macek
 Planning Commission Chairman
 City of Alexandria, Virginia

RE: Development Site Plan #2019-0010

Dear Mr. Macek,

I Chair my church's Parking Lot Committee. This letter summarizes the 5-car parking lot we plan to build, why we need it, and addresses concerns from our neighbors.

The parking lot we plan to build. Having purchased two lots in 1950 specifically for the purpose of constructing a parking lot, we went through multiple designs in the past 70 years for large and mid-size parking lots before deciding on the small 5-car lot in the referenced Development Site Plan and Figures 1 and 2 below. This small lot will help attendees who are unable to walk long distances to get to our church; the majority of our attendees will continue to walk 2-4 blocks to get to our church.

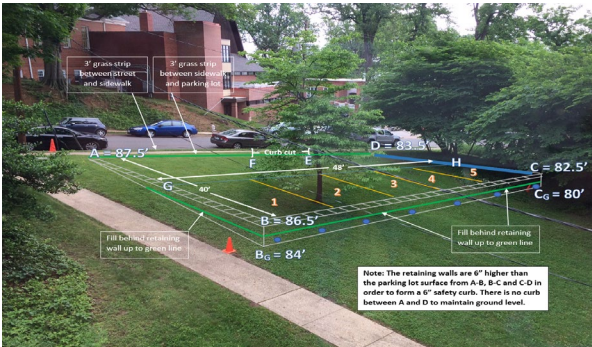


Figure 1. General location of 5-car lot showing the sloping terrain

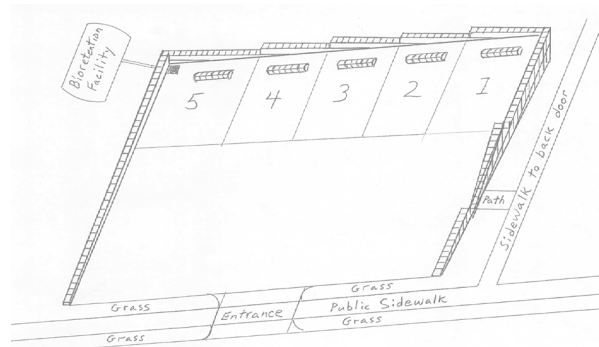


Figure 2. Segmental block stair-stepped retaining walls with paver stone bricks to match our church building



Figure 3. Our attendees in first car arrive at 9:30 for our 11:00 a.m. service to ensure parking near by



Figure 4. Our nearest handicap parking space is always taken an hour before our church service at 11:00.

Why we need the parking lot. Figures 3 and 4 show that Russell Road and Belleaire Road are both parked full, over an hour before our church service begins. Most attendees walk 2-4 blocks to get to our church. Our members have had two near-fatal accidents in recent years as they try to exit their cars on the west side of Russell Road, then run to the other side of the road to get to our church without getting hit by speeding cars that quickly emerge over Russell Road's curved and rising surface.

Neighbor concerns. In the summer of 2018, I met with our two nearest neighbors (Ellen Dunbar Jenkins at 112 Belleaire Road, and Catherine Theisen at 1705 Russell Road). Both signed the Application for New Curb Cut form (Attachment A) and expressed their strong support for a parking lot in this location. All agreed that we needed to provide a safe off-street alternative that would then free up on-street parking in our neighborhood at a very crowded time of the week. Their signatures encouraged us to proceed with fund raising. I have subsequently had three additional meetings with Ms. Jenkins. During all four meetings, she was fully supportive of the church's proposed parking lot, though stating she thought we needed more than 5 parking spaces. Together, we walked the lot for me to show her the construction stakes at the four corners of the lot and the approximate location of the bioretention facility (rain garden). She, and the Erber family at 110 Belleaire Road, has recently raised objections, some of which I consider legitimate, while disagreeing with others.

Both neighbors are concerned about the loss of three on-street parking spaces 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to gain five off-street parking spaces used only during church services. Sheet 4 of the DSP shows no parking signs 58' apart that would remove three spaces of on-street parking. The 12'-wide entrance has 3' "wings" on either side, causing a span of 18'. Believing 58' (red icons) to be excessive, the church raised this issue earlier with the City, stating that we felt 22' of no parking would be safe and sufficient (blue icons). The City replied that it would reduce to a minimum of 10' on either side of the span, causing the loss of 38' of on-street parking (green icons) instead of 58'. Thus, there would be a loss of two on-street parking spaces to gain five off-street parking spaces during church services only. The church plans to use signs with left/right arrows that state: "No Parking, Sunday Mornings and Wednesday Evenings" so that current on-street parking would be available during the week when the Lutheran School uses the on-street parking next to our property.

Both neighbors state that there are countless families (many with small children) walking up and down the sidewalk, and that cars entering and exiting our parking lot will create a safety risk for those pedestrians. Both churches disagree with this argument because our services are so staggered that Lutherans are already in church an hour before Christian Scientist's cars arrive to enter the parking lot, and most Lutherans leave their church service before our cars exit the parking lot. They head east from their exit, heading downhill for their parking lot whereas our cars would exit further uphill and head west. On June 16th, during our 2-hour traffic survey, not a single person walked on the sidewalk on the side of the street where our lot will be located.

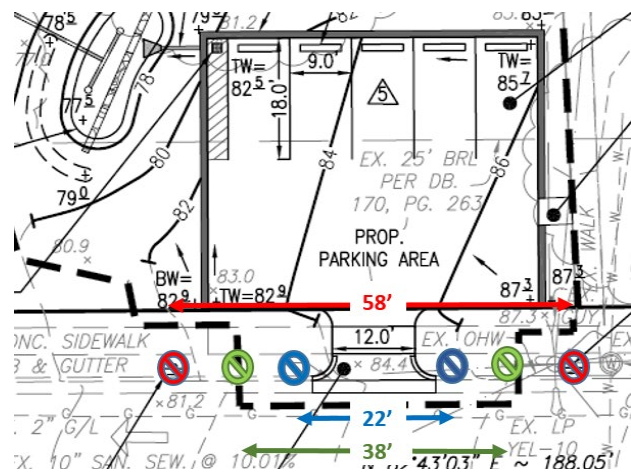


Figure 5. When the church indicated we felt a 22' no parking gap would be safe (blue icons), the City has reduced the gaps from 58' (red icons) to 38' (green icons). No parking will apply only to Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.

These neighbors state that cars will have to back out (unsafely) onto Belleaire with cars parked on both sides of the street and would be an accident waiting to happen. R.C. Fields' turning movement study (Attachment B) shows that cars will exit front first. Furthermore, most cars of Lutheran congregants would already be gone by the time Christian Scientists leave their service, so there would be few cars remaining on the street to compete with, as shown at Figure 6.



Figure 6. 12:05 p.m., 6/16/19. This shows that most of the Lutheran's cars are already gone when our attendees leave.

They state that the parking lot will cause cars to play "chicken" to get safely up and down Belleaire Road. The two church services are so timed that cars of Christian Scientists will enter and exit the parking lot at times when there is no traffic from Lutheran church attendees.

One of the main reasons for building the parking lot is to alleviate the continuous game of "chicken" on Russell Road for pedestrians trying to cross the street when parked on the west side of Russell Road.

These neighbors state that replacing the church's large green space with a hard-scape lot will create an eye sore and adversely impact surrounding properties. Our church also wants to preserve as much green space as possible, and we have designed a beautiful lot and rain garden with professional landscaping. In response to our request to preserve more trees from demolition, the City replied that we will not need to remove any trees that we feel can be preserved outside our parking lot and bioretention facility.

Our church purchased Lots 7 and 8 nearly 70 years ago for the purpose of building a parking lot. If we are not allowed to build this lot, after having spent considerable funds to design and plan for the lot partly based on neighbor approvals from 2018, we would probably sell both lots. Construction of additional homes, with driveways, would cause the permanent loss of on-street parking compared with our proposed loss of on-street parking only on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings while gaining five safe parking spaces.

If our church were being built today, we'd be required to have a lot with 42 parking spaces, based on Alexandria's church occupancy standards,

As we see it, we are acting as concerned and responsible citizens wanting to do our part in providing safe off-street parking that will then free up comparable on-street parking in our neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted,

David F. Maune, PhD, SP, RLD
Chair, Parking Lot Committee

Attachment A – Nearest Neighbor Curb Cut Approvals in 2018

APPLICATION FOR NEW CURB CUT
OR TO WIDEN EXISTING CURB CUT 4 FEET OR MORE

Curb Cut Street Name: Belleaire Road

Adjacent property owners have five (5) calendar days from receipt of this notification to express an objection to the proposed curb cut, either on this form or in writing, to the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services.

PROPERTY OWNERS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Objection: Yes

No

Property Owner Name (Please Print): Ellen Jenkins Address: 112 Belleaire Rd.

Mailing Address (if different from adjacent property where curb cut is requested): _____

Property Owner Signature: Ellen Jenkins Date: 5/24/18

If objecting, give reason: _____

Objection: Yes

No

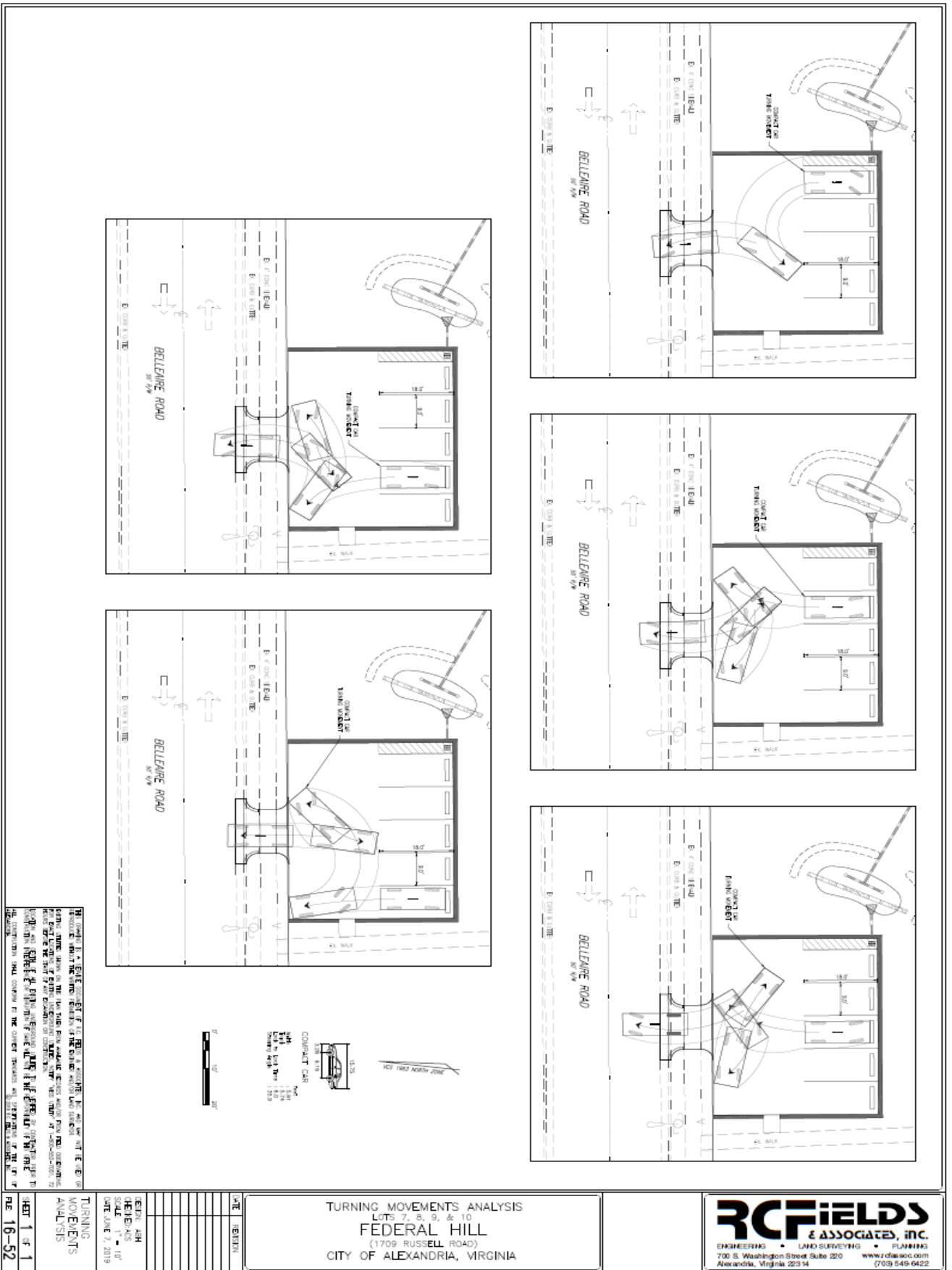
Property Owner Name (Please Print): Catherine Theisen Address: 1705 Russell Rd

Mailing Address (if different from adjacent property where curb cut is requested): _____

Property Owner Signature: Catze Date: 6.6.18

If objecting, give reason: _____

Attachment B – R.C. Fields Turning Movement Study



THIS DOCUMENT IS A PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION. THE USER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR VERIFYING THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED HEREIN. THE USER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE APPROPRIATE AGENCIES. THE USER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE APPROPRIATE AGENCIES. THE USER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE APPROPRIATE AGENCIES.

TURNING MOVEMENTS ANALYSIS
 SHEET NO. 10
 DATE: JUNE 7, 2019
 SHEET 1 OF 1
 FILE 16-52

DATE	REVISION

TURNING MOVEMENTS ANALYSIS
 LOTS 7, 8, 9, & 10
 FEDERAL HILL
 (1709 RUSSELL ROAD)
 CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

RC FIELDS & ASSOCIATES, INC.
 ENGINEERING • LAND SURVEYING • PLANNING
 700 S. Washington Street Suite 220
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
 www.rcfi.com
 (703) 549-6422