



Joint Meeting of the Board and the Environmental Quality Advisory Council

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Department of Planning and Development
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Land Use is a Balancing Act

A component of that is balancing growth and economic development with environmental policies



Policy Considerations

The Comprehensive Plan contains policy goals related to:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Affordable Housing
- Environment
- Economic Development
- Heritage Resources
- Public Facilities
- Human Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Revitalization
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Chesapeake Bay

Targeted Plan Guidance

The Plan also contains more fine grained targeted guidance, ranging from guidance at an area-wide level, to a development level, to a parcel specific level

This guidance typically relates to:

- Land Use – what should the use(s) be
- Level of Intensity – how much of the use should there be
- Heights and Transitions – how high should buildings be and where is it important to transition to other uses, particularly adjacent lower density residential uses



Targeted Plan Guidance

- Transportation Improvements, including Multi-Modal Connectivity – what roads/intersections should be improved, should there be bike lanes, where should pedestrian connections be provided
- Environmental Issues – protection of environmental resources including Environmental Quality Corridors (EQCs) and stands of trees, stream restoration, noise impacts, stormwater management
- Public Facilities – schools, police and fire stations
- Streetscapes, Parks and Public Amenities – how wide should sidewalks be and how should frontages be landscaped, how far buildings should be set back from the street



Application Specific Considerations

Every application is different and presents a unique set of circumstances, opportunities and challenges that must be balanced

The technical area staff review the application, analyze it in terms of all of the items listed previously (and more) and propose potential methods in which issues related to impacts and conformance with the Plan can be addressed

However, the issues and resolutions do not exist in isolation; it is most often the case that issues intersect with one another – for example, the desired location of a new road may impact tree preservation

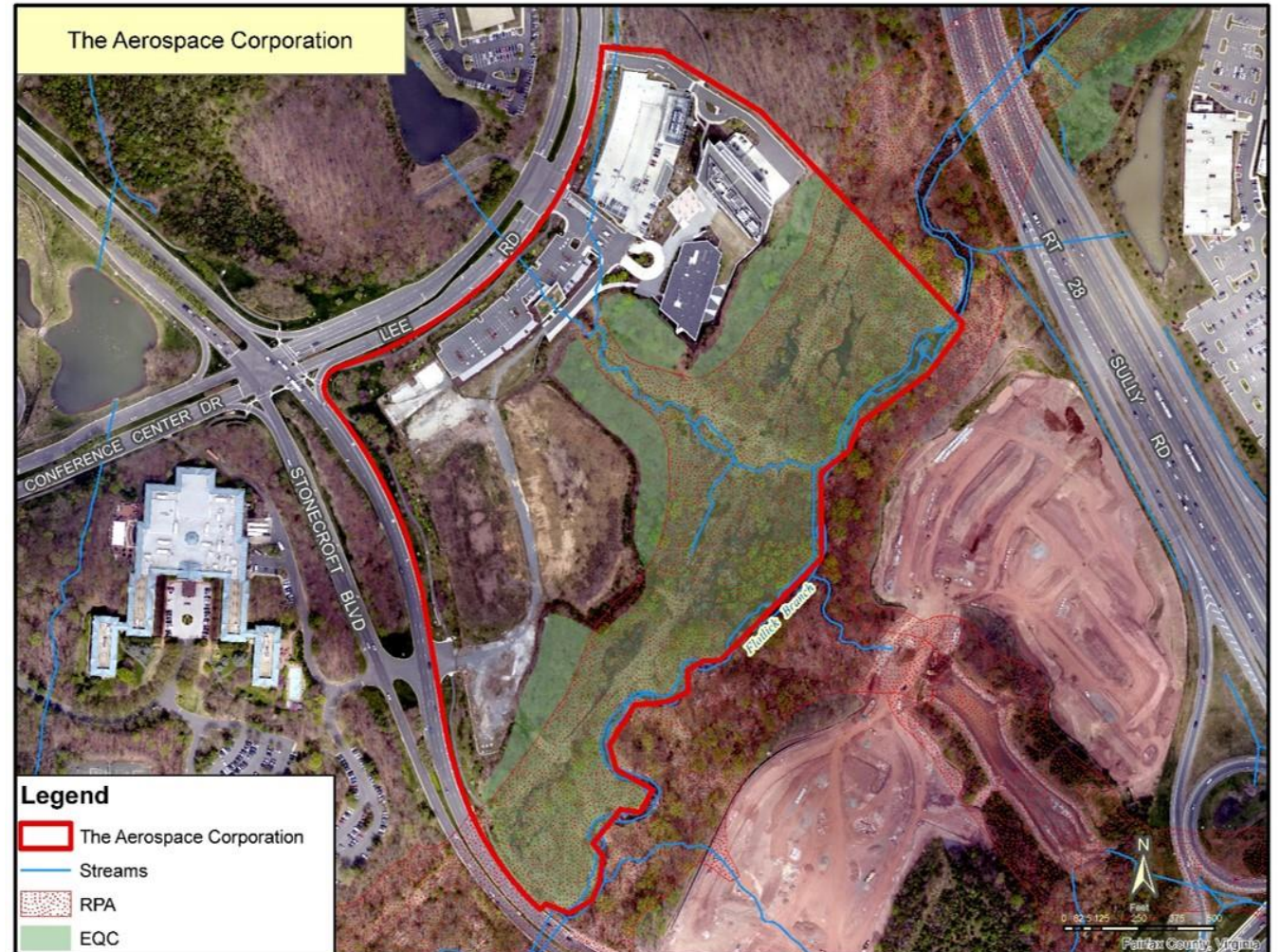
Additional Considerations that Factor into the Balance

In addition to technical issues, most applications have issues that are important to the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors and the community that need to be addressed



Achieving the Balance – Case Study The Aerospace Corporation (Westfields)

- Proposal
 - Secure office campus
- Environmental Site Features
 - Flatlick Branch; perpendicular to two smaller stream channels that converged through middle of site.
 - EQC; floodplain; steep slopes
 - EQC encroachment for entry, security checkpoint, campus connections, & related facilities



Achieving the Balance – Case Study

The Aerospace Corporation (Westfields)

- Environmental Issue
 - EQC encroachment for entry, security checkpoint, campus connections, & related facilities
- Resolution
 - Comprehensive restoration of stream valley
 - Multi-year maintenance, monitoring, & reporting requirements
- Follow-Up Action: Evaluation of EQC policies
 - Clarification of the purposes of EQCs
 - Demonstration of the net environmental benefit related to each defined purpose
 - Consideration of a compensatory approach



Achieving the Balance – Case Study

Fairfax County Water Authority (Vulcan Quarry)

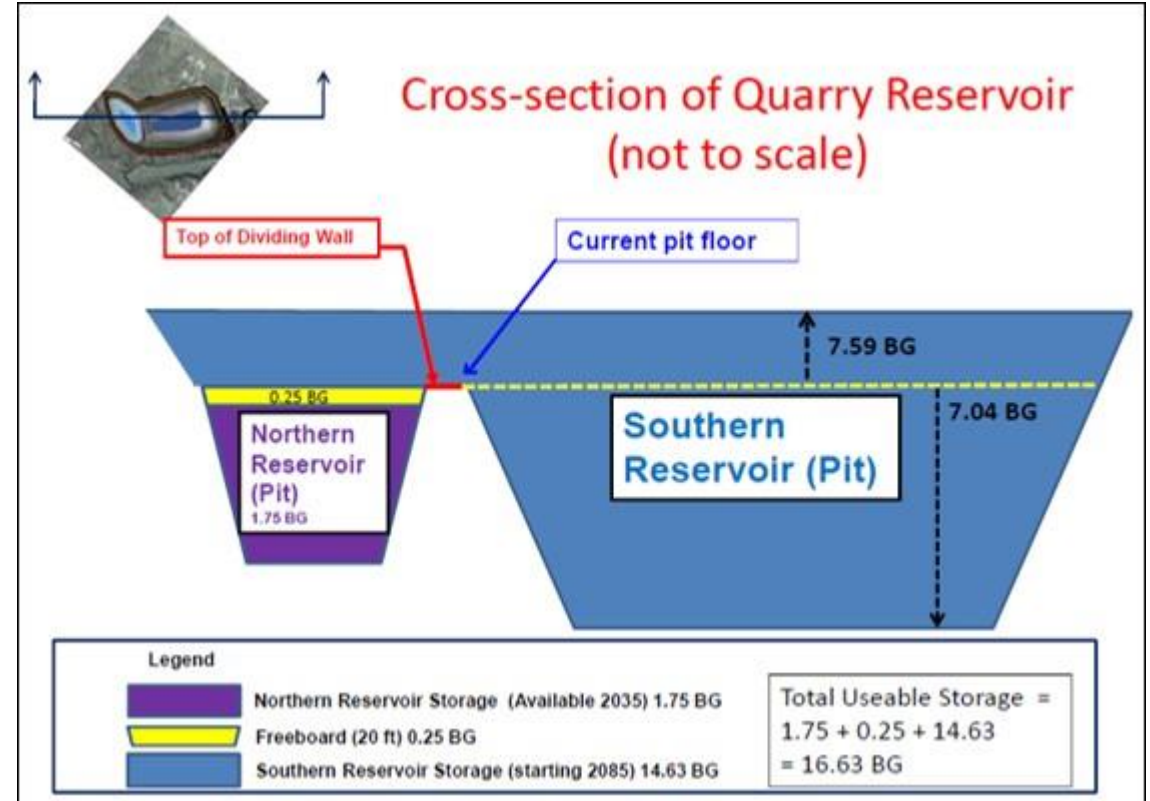
- Proposal
 - Expansion of quarry located adjacent to Griffith Water Treatment Plant
 - Fill excavated pits with water for regional water supply
- Environmental Site Features
 - EQC and Little Occoquan Run (LOR) (fragmented stream)
- Environmental Issue
 - Possible diversion of LOR water into Elkhorn Run (intact stream), which was rejected



Achieving the Balance – Case Study

Fairfax County Water Authority (Vulcan Quarry)

- Regional Water Supply Alternatives
 - Enlarge existing reservoir/raise existing Occoquan Dam
 - Augment existing West Virginia facility
 - Build Potomac River estuary intake system
- Rationale to reject alternatives:
 - Disproportionate costs
 - Environmental impacts
 - Inability to meet projected demands
- Resolution
 - Reforestation & demonstrated habitat benefit
 - Vegetated diversion channel
 - EQC compensation plan
- Follow-Up Action
 - Semi-Annual review



Proposal

Achieving the Balance – Case Study

Embark – Richmond Highway (Ecological Spines)

- Proposal
 - Replan the Corridor to create walkable pedestrian oriented mixed-use development nodes to support Bus Rapid Transit System
 - Restore & create riparian corridors that support the ecological and social well-being of the community
- Environmental Site Features
 - Culverted and piped streams exist in the corridor today
 - Limited park spaces – Huntley Meadows is notable exception
 - Development that predates current stormwater management standards and practices



Achieving the Balance – Case Study

Embark – Richmond Highway (Ecological Spines)

- Resolution
 - Ecological Spines that are functional, resilient, ecologically sound and unique placemaking elements
 - Community spaces that incorporate rainwater management and enhance the environmental health of the area
 - Linear park spaces that incorporate play, exercise and small-scale sport facilities along trails
 - Educational signage to explain the ecological benefits of the space and public art that celebrates water
 - Places that allow people to immerse themselves in the corridor and move throughout the community
 - Experientially rich and dynamic landscape



Conclusions

- Support economically advantageous projects that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Approach projects with flexibility to achieve appropriate balance for environmental and other benefits
- Leverage environmental resources for community benefit, including opportunities to correct past deficiencies and the achieve higher levels of restoration





Questions?