



**A Publication of the County of Fairfax, Virginia  
Department of Planning & Zoning**

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## **STAFF REPORT**

### **2008-2009 NORTH COUNTY AREA PLANS REVIEW**

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S):** DRANESVILLE      **APR ITEM(S):** APR# 08-III-16UP; 08-III-17UP;  
08-III-18UP; 08-III-19UP

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**NOMINATOR(S):** APR# 08-III-16UP, 08-III-17UP & 08-III-18UP: Eleanor Weck;  
APR# 08-III-19UP: Eleanor Anderson

**ACREAGE:** n/a

**TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS:** n/a

**GENERAL LOCATION:** APR# 08-III-16UP: Area generally bounded by the Potomac River, Difficult Run, Georgetown Pike, River Bend Road, Beach Mill Road, Seneca Road and Loudoun County.  
APR# 08-III-17UP: Area generally bounded by Seneca Road, Beach Mill Road, River Bend Road, Georgetown Pike, Leesburg Pike and Loudoun County.  
APR# 08-III-18UP: Area generally bounded by Georgetown Pike, Old Dominion Drive, Towlston Road, Leesburg Pike Difficult Run, Dulles Toll Road, Hunter Mill Road, Leesburg Pike and Loudoun County.  
APR# 08-III-19UP: Area generally bounded by Potomac River, Difficult Run, Georgetown Pike, Old Dominion Drive, Towlston Road, Leesburg Pike, Difficult Run, Dulles Toll Road, Hunter Mill Road, Leesburg Pike and Loudoun County.

**PLANNING AREA(S):** Area III

**District(s):** Upper Potomac

**Sector(s):** APR# 08-III-16UP: Riverfront (UP1)

APR# 08-III-17UP: Springvale (UP2)

APR# 08-III-18UP: Hickory (UP3)

APR# 08-III-19UP: Riverfront (UP1), Springvale (UP2), Hickory (UP3)

**Special Area(s):** N/A

**ADOPTED PLAN MAP:** Low Density Residential, Retail & Other, Public Parks, Private Recreation, Private Open Space, Public Facilities

**ADOPTED PLAN TEXT:** Generally planned for low density residential with some private recreation, private open space, public park and retail and public facilities.

For Policy Plan, Environment section see

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/environment.pdf>

For Policy Plan, Public Facilities section see

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/pubfacilities.pdf>

For Policy Plan, Transportation section see

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/transportation.pdf>

**PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:**

APR# 08-III-16UP; 08-III-17UP and 08-III-18UP: Proposes to add Plan text indicating that permeable surface trails are preferred in this area except within one mile of elementary schools and commercial areas. APR# 08-III-19UP: Add Plan text to encourage the use of pervious and semi-pervious materials for paved areas.

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**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**X** Approve Nomination as submitted (APR 08-III-19UP) \*

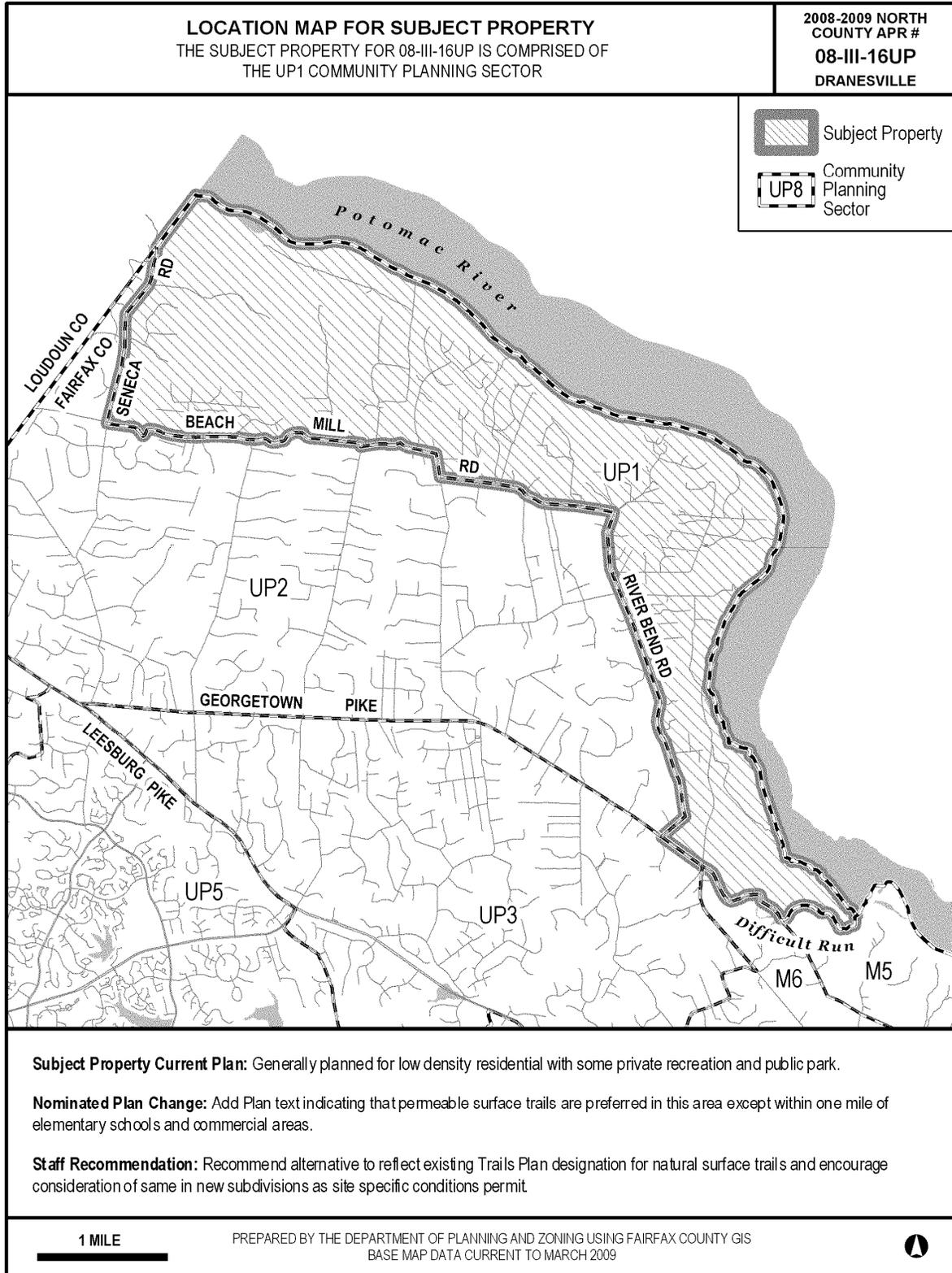
\*With minor correction

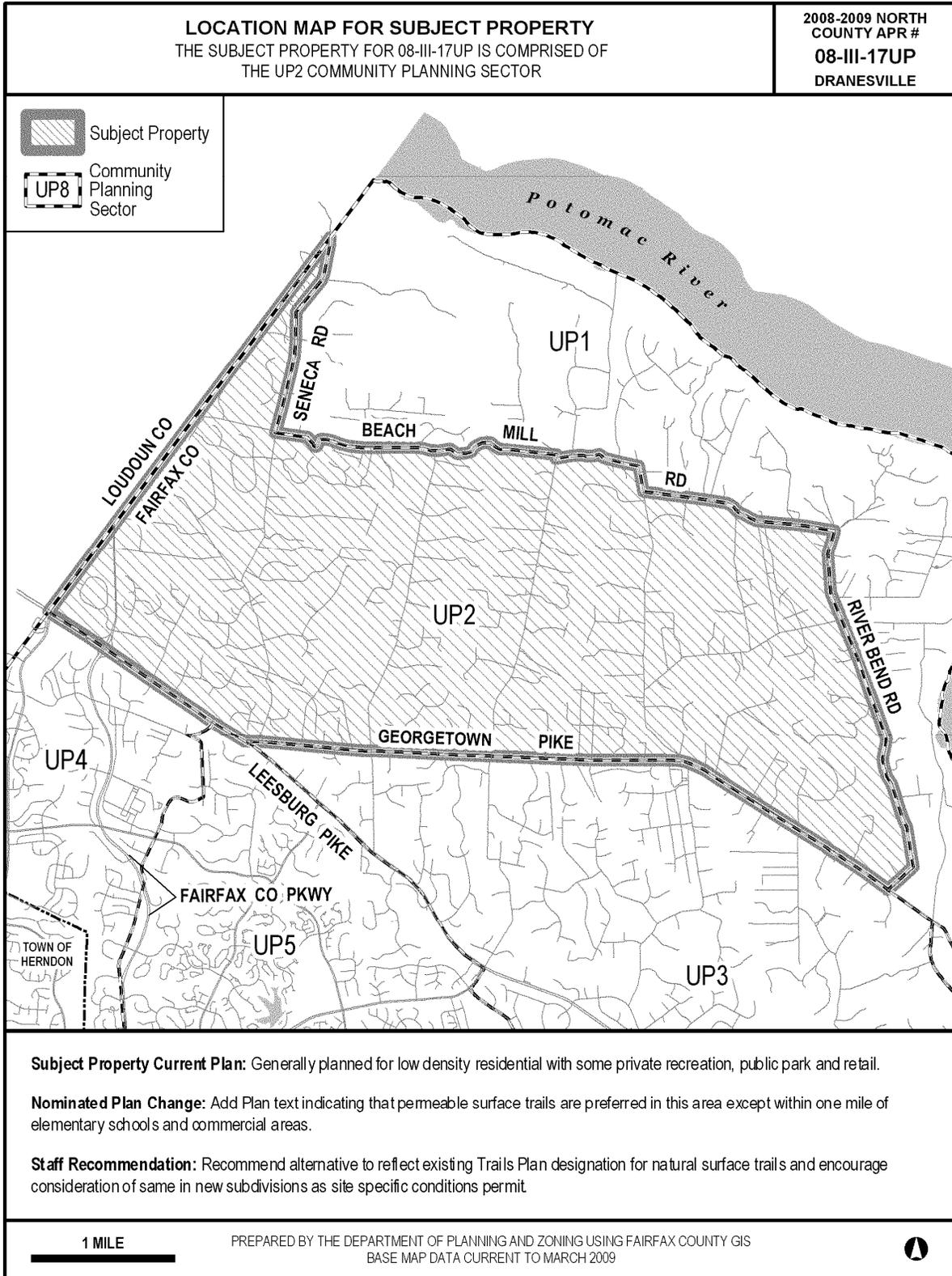
**X** Approve Staff Alternative (APR 08-III-16UP, 08-III-17UP, 08-III-18UP)

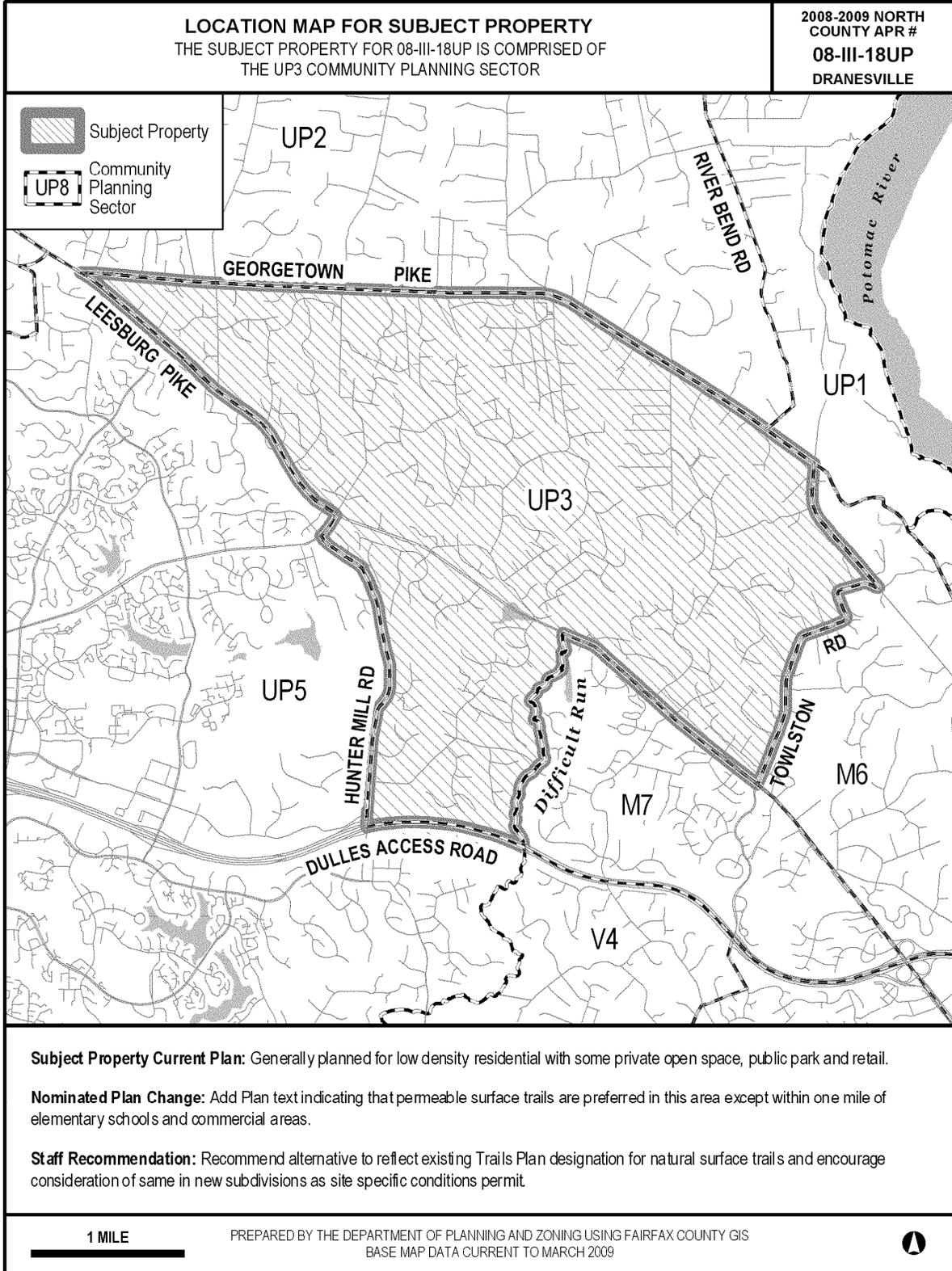
Retain Adopted Plan

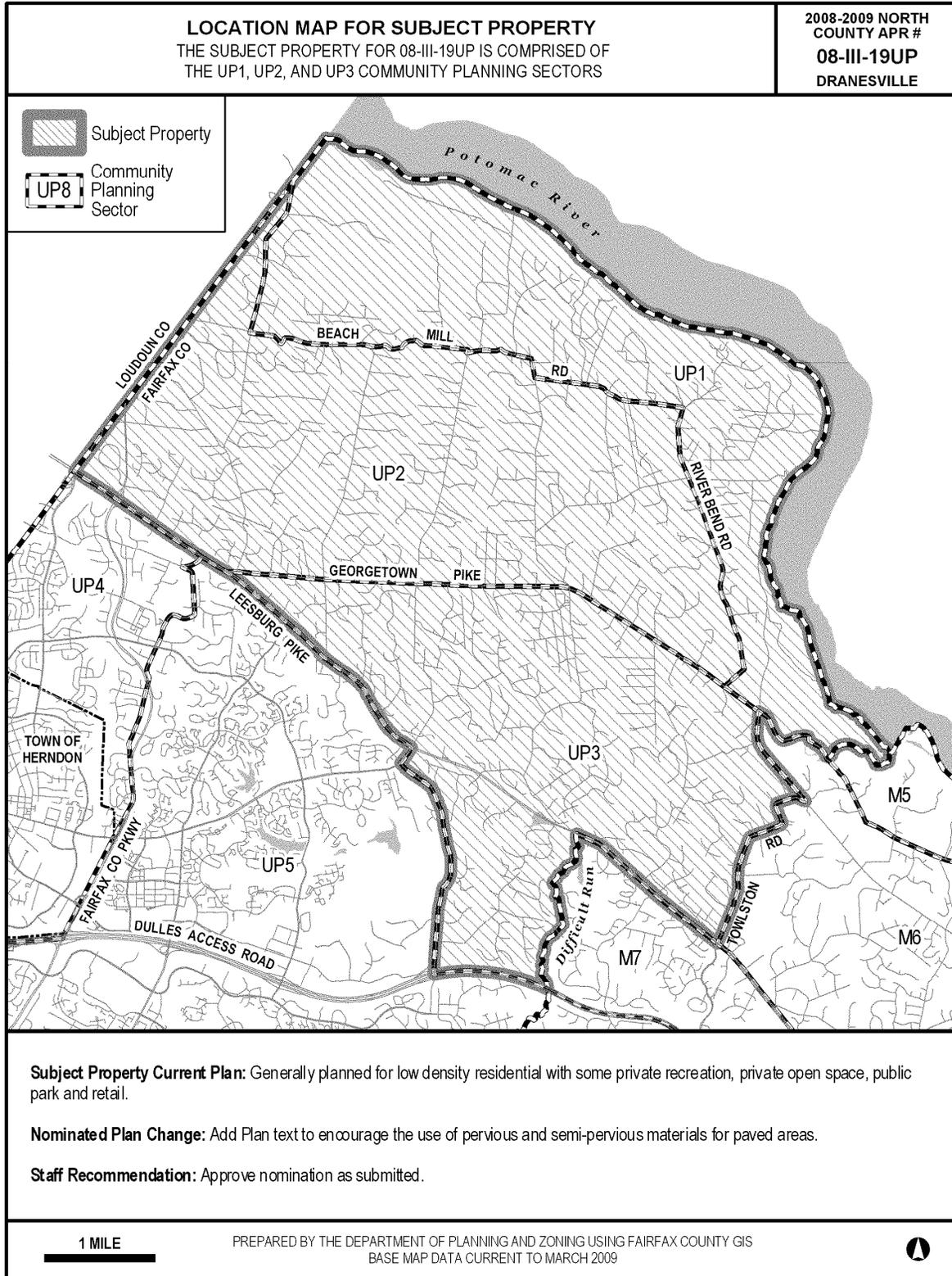
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Staff recommends supporting the nomination for APR 08-III-19UP which encourages the use of pervious surfaces for typically paved areas such as parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios. Staff recommends an alternative for APR 08-III-16UP, 08-III-17UP and 08-III-18UP that acknowledges that the adopted Trails Plan designates most of the Great Falls area for natural surface trails. The staff alternative further encourages the consideration of site specific circumstances in new subdivisions to determine the appropriate trail surface which may include natural surface trails.









## **CONTEXT**

### **General Location:**

The subject property includes the Upper Potomac Planning Sectors UP1, UP2, and UP3 and consists of the area generally bounded by Loudoun County to the west, Leesburg Pike, Hunter Mill Road and the Dulles Toll Road to the south, Towlston Road and Old Dominion Drive to the east and Potomac River to the north.

### **Existing and Planned Land Use and Zoning:**

**Subject Property:** The subject property is generally planned for and developed with low density residential with some private recreation, private open space, public park and retail. Some small office buildings are located in the area.

### **Adjacent Area:**

**North:** To the north of the subject property is the Potomac River.

**East:** The area to east is generally planned for and developed with low density residential uses.

**South:** The area to the south includes the northern Reston area and lower density residential uses along Difficult Run.

**West:** The area to west is in Loudoun County and is generally planned for residential use up to 4 dwelling units per acre with neighborhood support retail, office and civic uses.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

This area has long been predominately planned as a low density residential area. The Planning Horizons effort and the Concept for Future Development reinforced the low density residential character and the planned densities of 1 du/ac and less.

## **ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT**

The adopted Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan encourages new development or redevelopment to minimize the amount of impervious surfaces. Further, the current Trails Plan encourages natural surface trails for most future planned trails in the Great Falls area. The Public Facilities section of the Policy Plan includes an objective which applies to the planned trails network and reflects the need to balance construction and maintenance with fiscal impacts.

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Policy Plan as amended through 2-25-08; Environment, Water Quality Section, pages 7-8:

**Objective 2: Prevent and reduce pollution of surface and groundwater resources.  
Protect and restore the ecological integrity of streams in Fairfax County.**

Policy k. For new development and redevelopment, apply better site design and low impact development (LID) techniques such as those described below, and pursue commitments to reduce stormwater runoff volumes and peak flows, to increase groundwater recharge, and to increase preservation of undisturbed areas. In order to minimize the impacts that new development and redevelopment projects may have on the County's streams, some or all of the following practices should be considered where not in conflict with land use compatibility objectives:

- Minimize the amount of impervious surface created.
- Site buildings to minimize impervious cover associated with driveways and parking areas and to encourage tree preservation.
- Where feasible, convey drainage from impervious areas into pervious areas.
- Encourage cluster development when designed to maximize protection of ecologically valuable land.
- Encourage the preservation of wooded areas and steep slopes adjacent to stream valley EQC areas.
- Encourage fulfillment of tree cover requirements through tree preservation instead of replanting where existing tree cover permits. Commit to tree preservation thresholds that exceed the minimum Zoning Ordinance requirements.
- Where appropriate, use protective easements in areas outside of private residential lots as a mechanism to protect wooded areas and steep slopes.
- Encourage the use of open ditch road sections and minimize subdivision street lengths, widths, use of curb and gutter sections, and overall impervious cover within cul-de-sacs, consistent with County and State requirements.
- Encourage the use of innovative BMPs and infiltration techniques of stormwater management where site conditions are appropriate, if consistent with County requirements.
- Apply nonstructural best management practices and bioengineering practices where site conditions are appropriate, if consistent with County requirements.
- Encourage shared parking between adjacent land uses where permitted.
- Where feasible and appropriate, encourage the use of pervious parking surfaces in low-use parking areas.
- Maximize the use of infiltration landscaping within streetscapes consistent with County and State requirements.

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Policy Plan as amended through 1-10-05;  
Public Facilities, Countywide Objective and Policies, page 3:

“Objective 2: Construct and maintain facilities in accord with expected levels of service objectives and fiscal limitations.

Policy c. Ensure adequate maintenance of existing facilities.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Policy Plan as amended through 3-9-09;  
Transportation, Countywide Objective and Policies, page 6:

**Objective 4: Provide a comprehensive network of sidewalks, trails and bicycle routes as an integral element of the overall transportation network.**

The adopted Comprehensive Plan Map shows this area planned for residential use at .1-.2 du/ac, .2-.5 du/ac, .5-1 du/ac, 1-2 du/ac, retail and other, private open space, private recreation, public park and public facilities, governmental and institutional uses.

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Policy Plan as amended through 3-9-09;  
Transportation, page 6:

**“Objective 4: Provide a comprehensive network of sidewalks, trails and bicycle routes as an integral element of the overall transportation network.**

Policy a. Plan for pedestrian, bicycle, and trail system components in conjunction with the Countywide Trails Plan.”

## **NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT**

APR Nominations 08-III-16UP, 08-III-17UP, and 08-III-18UP propose modifying the Trails section of the Upper Potomac Planning Sectors: Riverfront Planning Sector (UP1), Springvale Planning Sector (UP2) and Hickory Planning Sector (UP3).

### **APR 08-III-16UP: Nominated Change to Trails Section of UP1 Planning Sector:**

#### “Trails

Trails planned for this sector are delineated on Figure 17 and on the 1”=4,000’ Countywide Trails Plan Map which is referenced as Figure 2 in the Transportation element of the Policy Plan and is available at the Maps and Publications Sales Desk.

Trails in this sector are an integral part of the overall County system as well as an important local transportation option. While some of the segments have already been constructed, the Countywide Trails Plan Map portrays the ultimate system for the sector and the County at large. In addition, the map specifies a classification for each segment, which represents the desired ultimate function and surface type of the trail. ~~Specific construction requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual.~~ Permeable surface trails (e.g. natural surface or stonedust) are preferred including in new subdivisions in this sector (except for within 1 mile of an elementary school and in commercial areas).”

**APR 08-III-17UP: Nominated Change to Trails Section of UP2 Planning Sector**

“Trails

Trails planned for this sector are delineated on Figure 22 and on the 1”:4,000’ Countywide Trails Plan Map which is referenced as Figure 2 in the Transportation element of the Policy Plan and is available at the Maps and Publications Sales Desk. Trails in this sector are an integral part of the overall County system as well as an important local transportation option. While some of the segments have already been constructed, the Countywide Trails Plan Map portrays the ultimate system for the sector and the County at large. In addition, the map specifies a classification for each segment, which represents the desired ultimate function and surface type of the trail. ~~Specific construction requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual.~~ Permeable surface trails (e.g. natural surface or stonedust) are preferred including in new subdivisions in this sector (except for within 1 mile of an elementary school and in commercial areas).”

**APR 08-III-18UP: Nominated Change to Trails Section of UP3 Planning Sector**

“Trails

Trails planned for this sector are delineated on Figure 16 and on the 1”:4,000’ Countywide Trails Plan Map which is referenced as Figure 2 in the Transportation element of the Policy Plan and is available at the Maps and Publications Sales Desk. Trails in this sector are an integral part of the overall County system as well as an important local transportation option. While some of the segments have already been constructed, the Countywide Trails Plan Map portrays the ultimate system for the sector and the County at large. In addition, the map specifies a classification for each segment, which represents the desired ultimate function and surface type of the trail. ~~Specific construction requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual.~~ In the

area north and east of Leesburg Pike (Route 7) permeable surface trails (e.g. natural surface or stonedust) are preferred including in new subdivisions in this part of the sector (except for within 1 mile of an elementary school and in commercial areas)."

APR Nomination 08-III-19UP proposes to add a new bullet point to the Environment Section of the Upper Potomac Planning District and to add a new land use recommendation for Upper Potomac Planning Sectors: Riverfront Planning Sector (UP1), Springvale Planning Sector (UP2) and Hickory Planning Sector (UP3).

**New Bullet Point for Environment Section of Upper Potomac Planning District**

- "In Upper Potomac Planning Districts 1,2 and 3, encourage the use of pervious and semi-pervious materials for paved areas (e.g. parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios); and"

**New Land Use Recommendation for UP1, UP2 and UP3 Planning Sectors:**

"Encourage the use of pervious and semi-pervious materials for paved areas (e.g. parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios)."

**ANALYSIS**

**Storm Water Drainage:** The Environment section of the Policy Plan encourages new development or redevelopment to minimize the amount of impervious surface to advance the objective of preventing and reducing pollution of surface and groundwater resources. In some instances, pervious surfaces, such as stone dust, may be detrimental to the environment in the floodplain as they can be eroded quickly. Eroded materials can be washed into streams causing siltation and degrading water quality. The best choice of surface material should be determined based on the circumstances of the site and considering the various environmental policies found in the Policy Plan volume of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Trails Maintenance:** The Policy Plan contains the objective to "Provide a comprehensive network of sidewalks, trails and bicycle routes as an integral element of the overall transportation network". The ability of Fairfax County to build and maintain the network of trails is an important aspect of achieving this objective. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will not maintain any permeable trails within their Rights-of-Way, as permeable surface trails require more maintenance than asphalt and generally have a shorter life expectancy. In some instance, requiring new development to provide permeable surface trails may lead to greater expense for trail maintenance within the Great Falls area and increased trail maintenance responsibility to the Park Authority and/or the County of Fairfax. Although pervious surfaces are generally encouraged, the best choice of surface material should be determined based on the circumstances of the site and considering the

various countywide policies found in the Environment section of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Paved Trails near Schools and Commercial Use:** The Fairfax County Public Facilities Manual includes the requirement to provide paved sidewalks or trails within 1 mile of elementary schools and 1.5 miles of intermediate and high schools. The current Trails Plan generally encourages natural surface trails in the Great Falls area. The nominations proposal to provide paved trails within 1 mile of schools and commercial areas may contradict the current trails Plan and the Public Facilities Manual. For all cases, specific construction requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual.

**Conclusion:** The Comprehensive Plan already includes countywide guidance to encourage more pervious surface where appropriate to protect surface and groundwater resources. Further, the current Trails Plan encourages natural surface trails for most future planned trails in the Great Falls area. When considering new development or redevelopment, implementation of all Policy Plan goals and objectives should be considered based on the specific circumstance of a site. During the site plan review process, consideration of pervious surface trails may be given based on the type of trail and use, safety, site conditions, maintenance requirements and type and design of adjacent development.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff supports the intent of the nominations to reiterate the importance of encouraging pervious surfaces as a means to protect surface and groundwater resources. Staff recommends an alternative for APR 08-III-16UP, 08-III-17UP, and 08-III-18UP which acknowledges that the adopted Trails Plan designates most of the Great Falls area for natural surface trails. The staff alternative further encourages the consideration of site specific circumstances in new subdivisions to determine the appropriate trail surface. Staff supports nomination 08-III-19UP which encourages the use of pervious surfaces for typically paved areas and the staff recommendation corrects the references to Planning Sectors UP1, UP2 and UP3.

### **APR 08-III-16UP**

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District as amended through 1-26-09; Riverfront Community Planning Sector, Trails, page 82:

#### “Trails

Trails planned for this sector are delineated on Figure 17 and on the 1”:4,000’ Countywide Trails Plan Map which is referenced as Figure 2 in the Transportation element of the Policy Plan and is available at the Maps and Publications Sales Desk. Trails in this sector are an integral part of the overall County system as well as an

important local transportation option. While some of the segments have already been constructed, the Countywide Trails Plan Map portrays the ultimate system for the sector and the County at large. In addition, the map specifies a classification for each segment, which represents the desired ultimate function and surface type of the trail. Specific construction requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual. In this sector, many of the trails on the Countywide Trails Plan map, are shown as natural surface or stone dust. For trails not designated on the Countywide Trails Plan map such as within new subdivisions, consideration may be given to the installation of natural surface or stone dust trails during the site plan review process based upon the type of trail and use, safety, site conditions, maintenance requirements, and type and design of adjacent development.”

#### **APR 08-III-17UP**

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District as amended through 1-26-09; Springvale Community Planning Sector, Trails, page 93:

##### “Trails

Trails planned for this sector are delineated on Figure 22 and on the 1”:4,000’ Countywide Trails Plan Map which is referenced as Figure 2 in the Transportation element of the Policy Plan and is available at the Maps and Publications Sales Desk. Trails in this sector are an integral part of the overall County system as well as an important local transportation option. While some of the segments have already been constructed, the Countywide Trails Plan Map portrays the ultimate system for the sector and the County at large. In addition, the map specifies a classification for each segment, which represents the desired ultimate function and surface type of the trail. Specific construction requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual. In this sector, many of the trails on the Countywide Trails Plan map, are shown as natural surface or stone dust. For trails not designated on the Countywide Trails Plan map such as within new subdivisions, consideration may be given to the installation of natural surface or stone dust trails during the site plan review process based upon the type of trail and use, safety, site conditions, maintenance requirements, and type and design of adjacent development.”

**APR 08-III-18UP**

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District as amended through 1-26-09; Hickory Community Planning Sector, Trails, page 103:

“Trails

Trails planned for this sector are delineated on Figure 16 and on the 1”:4,000’ Countywide Trails Plan Map which is referenced as Figure 2 in the Transportation element of the Policy Plan and is available at the Maps and Publications Sales Desk. Trails in this sector are an integral part of the overall County system as well as an important local transportation option. While some of the segments have already been constructed, the Countywide Trails Plan Map portrays the ultimate system for the sector and the County at large. In addition, the map specifies a classification for each segment, which represents the desired ultimate function and surface type of the trail. Specific construction requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual. In this sector, many of the trails on the Countywide Trails Plan map, are shown as natural surface or stone dust. In the area north and east of Leesburg Pike, trails not designated on the Countywide Trails Plan map such as within new subdivisions, consideration may be given to the installation of natural surface or stone dust trails during the site plan review process based upon the type of trail and use, safety, site conditions, maintenance requirements, and type and design of adjacent development.”

APR Nomination 08-III-19UP proposes to add a new bullet point to the Environment Section of the Upper Potomac Planning District and to add a new land use recommendation for Upper Potomac Planning Sectors: Riverfront Planning Sector (UP1), Springvale Planning Sector (UP2) and Hickory Planning Sector (UP3).

**APR 08-III-19UP**

**ADD:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District as amended through 1-26-09; Overview, Environment, add new bullet point, page 11:

- “Construct the regional stormwater management ponds according to the Regional Stormwater Management Plan. Discourage the use of on-site stormwater management techniques in lieu of a regional alternative. In headwaters areas with suitable soils, infiltration techniques may be appropriate; ~~and~~
- Encourage and maintain planned low densities in the stream valley headwaters; and

- In Upper Potomac Planning Sectors UP1, UP2 and UP3, encourage the use of pervious and semi-pervious materials for paved areas (e.g. parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios)."

**ADD:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District as amended through 1-26-09; Riverfront Community Planning Sector, Land Use, page 80:

"4. Encourage the use of pervious and semi-pervious materials for paved areas (e.g. parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios)."

**ADD:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District as amended through 1-26-09; Springvale Community Planning Sector, Land Use, page 88:

"11. Encourage the use of pervious and semi-pervious materials for paved areas (e.g. parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios)."

**ADD:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District as amended through 1-26-09; Hickory Community Planning Sector, Land Use, page 98:

"13. Encourage the use of pervious and semi-pervious materials for paved areas (e.g. parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios)."

**PLAN MAP:** The Comprehensive Plan map will not change.