

**PRELIMINARY  
STAFF REPORT  
2008-2009 NORTH COUNTY AREA PLANS REVIEW**

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT:** DRANESVILLE

**BRAC APR ITEM(S):** 08-III-13UP

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**NOMINATOR:** Eric Knudsen

**ACREAGE:** N/A

**TAX MAP I.D.:** Portions of Tax map 6-4, 7-3, 11-2, 12-1, 12-2, 13-1 and 13-4 traversed by Georgetown Pike

**GENERAL LOCATION:** Entire segment of Georgetown Pike with the Upper Potomac Planning District.

**PLANNING AREA:** III

**District:** Upper Potomac

**Sector:** Riverfront (UP1), Springvale (UP2) and Hickory (UP3).

**Special Areas:** N/A

**ADOPTED PLAN MAP:** N/A

**POLICY PLAN TEXT:**

The Policy Plan of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan recommends the following:

- “Heritage Resources: Page 4, Objective 3: **“Protect significant heritage resources from degradation, or damage and destruction by public or private action.** Policy b) Plan and undertake appropriate actions to retain and enhance significant heritage resources to be affected by public or private land use or development.”

**AREA PLAN TEXT:**

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District, UP1-Riverfront Community Planning Sector, Pages 71, 73.

1. “Limit land uses to parkland, open space and large lot residential development. Residential development no greater than one unit per five acres is planned in this sector....”
3. “No commercial or retail uses are planned for this sector due to its very low density. Uses requiring special permit and special exception approval should be rigorously reviewed and permitted only when the use is of a size and scale that will not adversely impact adjacent land uses and overall low density residential character of this area.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District, UP2-Springvale Community Planning Sector Pages 78, 80, 81.

1. "Land use in this sector should continue to reflect and support the established low density residential character. Public parkland and low density residential uses at .1-.2 dwelling units per acre and .2-.5 dwelling units per acre are planned for the area as shown on the Plan map. Several older residential areas along Georgetown Pike are planned at a density of 1-2 dwelling units per acre as a reflection of the typical densities that exist in these areas."
4. "...A small portion of this area at Seneca and Georgetown Pike is commercially zoned. Commercial development of these parcels should be limited to low intensity office and neighborhood retail uses, not to exceed .25 FAR, under the following conditions: Provision of substantial landscaped and/or naturally vegetated buffer to protect surrounding residential uses and provide a clear line of demarcation....."
5. "Future development and improvements to commercial establishments in the Village of Great Falls should encourage uniformity of architecture, screening, fencing and signage and encourage the completion of trails in the village."
6. "In this planning sector, uses requiring special permits and special exception approval should be rigorously reviewed and permitted only when the use is of a size and scale that will not adversely affect adjacent land uses and the overall low density residential character of the area."

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District, UP3-Hickory Community Planning Sector, Page 87.

1. "Most land should be developed for residential use at .2-.5 dwelling units per acre in order to preserve the existing character and support the concept of low density residential development in the Reston environs."

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District, Pages 4, 73, 81, 84, 90 and 93.

"Georgetown Pike should be maintained within its existing right-of-way. Center turn lanes and deceleration and acceleration lanes should be discouraged and curb cuts should not be allowed unless no other alternative exists. Georgetown Pike is commonly acknowledged to contain some traffic hazards. However, it is generally acceptable in its present condition to local residents. It has been designated a Virginia Byway. Major changes in alignment or widening the road would damage the scenic and historic character and the historic integrity of the Byway and have been strongly opposed by residents of adjacent areas. Planning efforts should focus on other means of dealing with traffic volume in order to maintain this Byway. Scenic and conservation easements should be sought along Georgetown Pike wherever practical for the preservation of the historic and scenic significance and beauty of the corridor."

#### **PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:**

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area III, Upper Potomac Planning District, Pages 4, 73, 81, 84, 90 and 93.

Replace the current Plan text, which is the same on pages 4, 73, 81, 84, 90 and 93 with the following new text (new text is underlined, text to be deleted is in strikethrough format, existing text to remain is in normal type):

Georgetown Pike, which has been designated a Virginia Byway and determined eligible for listing on

the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places, should be maintained within its existing right-of-way. Center turn lanes and deceleration and acceleration lanes should be discouraged and curb cuts should not be allowed unless no other alternative exists. Georgetown Pike is commonly acknowledged to contain some traffic hazards. However it is generally acceptable in its present condition to local residents. It has been designated a Virginia Byway. Major changes in alignment or widening the road would damage the scenic and historic character and historic integrity of the Byway and have been strongly opposed by residents of adjacent areas. Planning efforts should focus on other means of dealing with traffic volume in order to maintain this Byway. Scenic and conservation easements should be sought along Georgetown Pike wherever practical for the preservation of the historic and scenic significance and beauty of the corridor. In order to protect the aesthetic character of Georgetown Pike, Fairfax County should limit densities on the land abutting the Pike running in a band on both sides to a depth of 100 to 150 feet beyond the VDOT right-of-way.

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## **SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Nomination as submitted

Approve Staff Alternative

Retain Adopted Plan

Staff supports the editorial change to reflect the continued designation of Georgetown Pike as a Virginia Byway and inclusion of its eligibility for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

With respect to limiting density, the Comprehensive Plan currently recommends that UP1, 2 and 3 community planning sectors remain as low density areas. Research reveals that adding additional language to limit density within a 100-150 foot band along the roadway, which would reflect existing text in the McLean Planning District, may not provide expected results. For example, the text has not been implemented in the McLean Planning District because development is already at the maximum planned density. Similarly, along Georgetown Pike there are few sites, totaling less than 12 acres where the Comprehensive Plan recommends development greater than what exists today.

Voluntary easements or overlay zoning districts appear to be the only tools available to implement the proposed text. Tax benefits provide incentives for dedicating conservation easements to non-profit groups, but Comprehensive Plan guidance does not impact the acceptance of easements. An overlay district, such as an historic district, would require all property abutting Georgetown Pike to meet criteria that pertain to historic structures and archeological resources and would require unanimous or nearly total community support

Additionally, the nomination is vague and does not give clear definition as to the meaning of limited density. Therefore staff recommends that the proposed text regarding density limits not be added to the adopted Plan.

## **CRITICAL ISSUES**

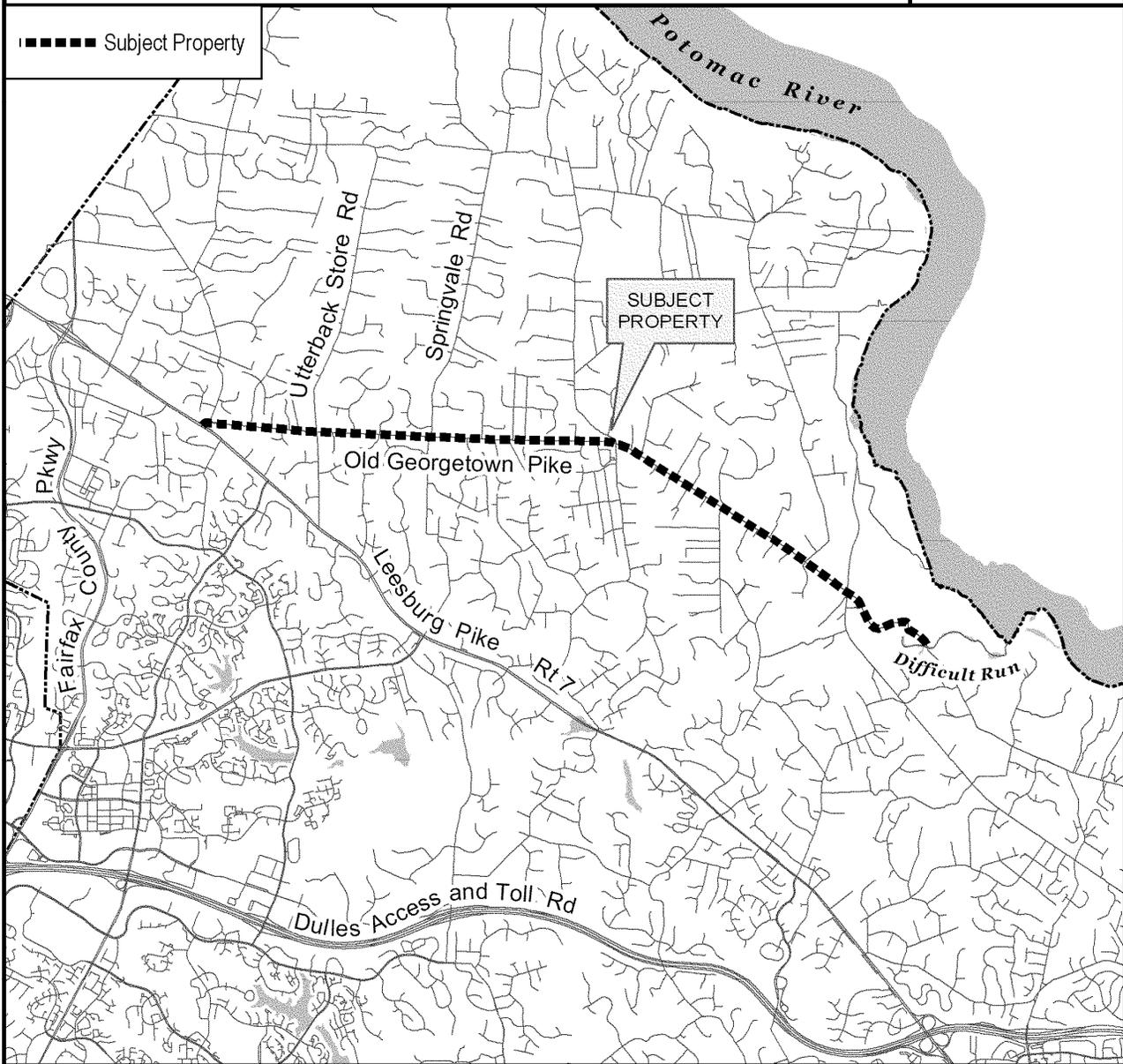
### **Implementation**

The proposed new Plan text in the subject nomination is taken from another part of the Comprehensive Plan where it appears in the McLean Planning District Overview, under the Environment subheading. This is where the second section of underlined text above appears that refers to the county limiting densities in a band running along Georgetown Pike for a depth of 100 to 150 feet. Research has revealed that this language was added to the Plan either in the late 1980's or as part of the 1991 Horizons Planning process, but it appears that the county has never implemented the guidance because there have been no zoning actions in this segment of Georgetown Pike. A review of the nominated segment suggests a similar outcome.

**LOCATION MAP FOR SUBJECT PROPERTY**  
 THE SUBJECT PROPERTY FOR 08-III-13UP IS GEORGETOWN  
 PIKE BETWEEN ROUTE 7 AND DIFFICULT RUN

2008-2009 NORTH  
 COUNTY APR #  
**08-III-13UP**  
 DRANESVILLE

■■■■■ Subject Property



**Subject Property Current Plan:** G'town Pike ROW should be maintained in it current configuration. Virginia Byway designation. Road widening opposed by residents due to scenic and historic character. Other traffic mitigation methods should be utilized. Recommended that conservation easements should be sought to preserve scöenic and historic character

**Nominated Plan Change:** In addition to above text, add the following: Determined that G'town Pike eligible for listing on Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places. In order to protect the aesthetic character of G'town Pike, Fairfax County should limit densities on the land abutting the Pike running in a band on both sides to a depth of 100 to 150 feet beyond the VDOT ROW.

**Staff Recommendation:** Retain Adopted Plan.

6000 FEET

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING USING FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS  
 BASE MAP DATA CURRENT TO SEPTEMBER 2008

