

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

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: PROVIDENCE

APR ITEM: 08-I-3MS

NOMINATOR(S): David R. Gill, Esquire

ACREAGE: 38.36 Acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 49-2 ((1)) 37, 39, 40, 48, 53

GENERAL LOCATION: Southwest of Interstate-66 and Interstate-495 interchange; east of Gallows Road; North of Providence Forest Drive

PLANNING AREA(S): I
District(s): Jefferson
Sector: Merrifield (J6)
Special Area(s): Merrifield Suburban Center (Land Unit B2)

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Residential use at a density of 16-20 dwelling units per acre (du/ac)

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Residential use at a density of 16-20 du/ac with option for residential use at a density of 30-40 du/ac with retail, service uses and other conditions

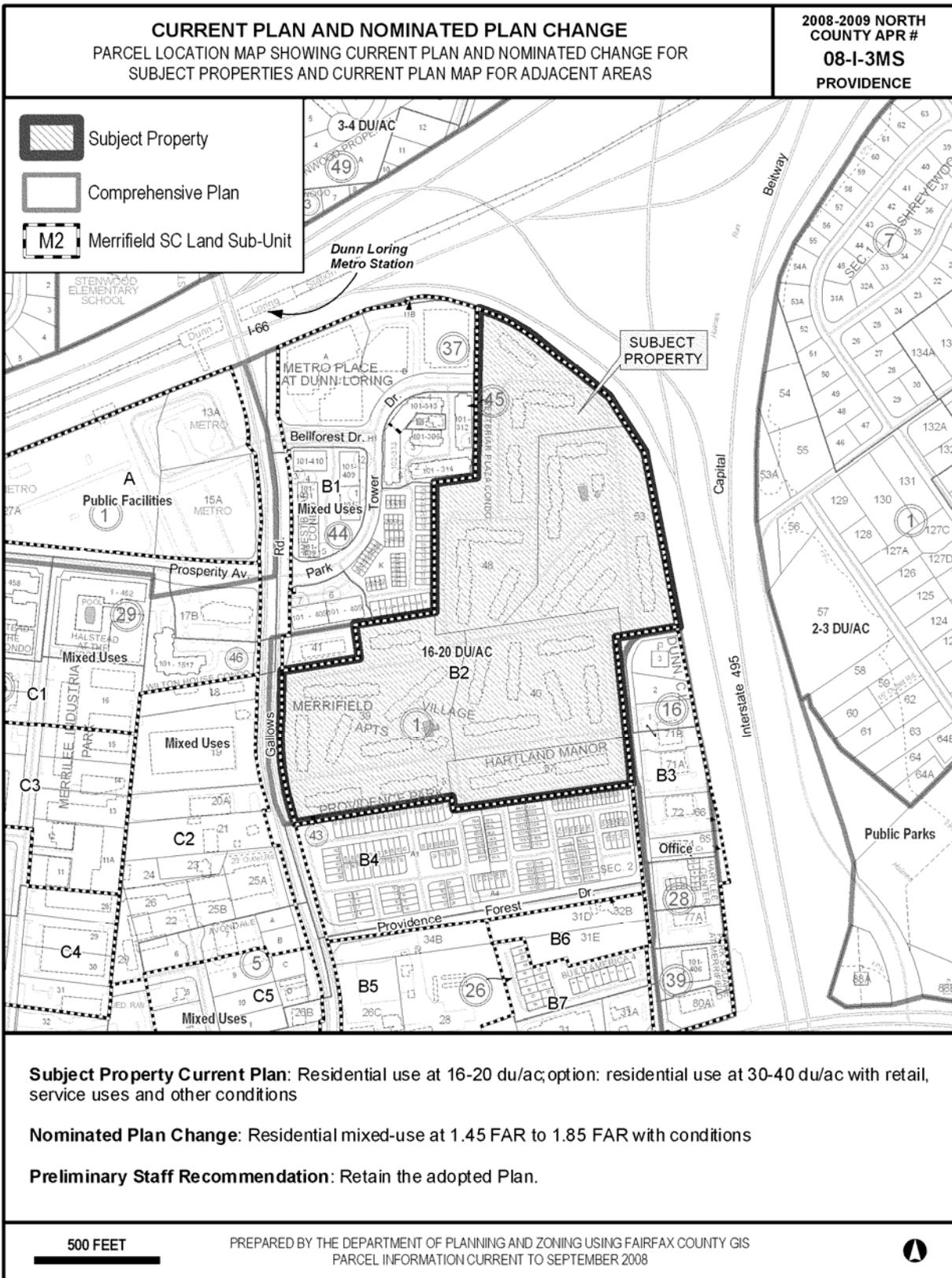
For complete Plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/planareas.htm>

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Residential mixed-use at an intensity up to 1.45 floor-area ratio (FAR) and 1.85 FAR with conditions

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Approve Nomination as submitted
- Approve Staff Alternative
- Retain Adopted Plan

The nomination proposes to locate more jobs and households close to the Dunn Loring Metro station. However, the current Plan has unused development potential for similar uses in nearby areas, located at the same distance to Metro. The nomination therefore could create pressure to support redevelopment of similarly situated properties. While the western edge of the subject area is on the boundary of the core areas, the current Plan recommendation already provides sufficient additional density to redevelop and maintains an appropriate transition to areas outside the core. Finally, the nomination would adversely affect the road, school, and sewer systems in the area. The current Plan provides an option for redevelopment at a higher density that would double the density on the subject area. Staff recommends that this recommendation be retained.



PLAN HISTORY

The subject property was part of a proposed APR nomination during the 2004-2005 North County APR review cycle, APR 04-I-2MS. The nomination proposed a residential, retail, office mixed-use development at an intensity up to 2.0 FAR. The nomination was withdrawn prior to the Planning Commission public hearing.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use:

- This nomination covers approximately 36-acres and includes the entire Sub-Unit B-2 of the Merrifield Suburban Center. A portion of the site falls within a quarter-mile of the Dunn Loring-Merrifield Metro Station platform with the remainder of the site within a half-mile. The subject property is developed with 765 garden apartment units in the Merrifield at Dunn Loring and the Hartland Manor apartment complexes.
- The sub-unit is planned for residential use at 16-20 du/ac with an option to redevelop with mid and high-rise residential use at 30-40 du/ac with limited, supporting retail, office, and service uses, and other conditions. All applicable Area-Wide guidelines must be addressed for the density bonus.
- The nomination proposes residential mixed-used at 1.45 FAR to 1.85 FAR depending upon provisions met. The proposed maximum density would result in a total approximately 316,000 square feet of office, 63,000 square feet of retail, 253,000 square feet of hotel use, 2,330 residential units and 63,000 square feet of public use. In an email dated November 4, 2008, the nominator suggested that the public use may include facilities offices, meeting space, changing rooms, associated with a potential public pool or other recreational facilities. The purpose of this space has not been fully defined.
- The subject property is envisioned in the current Plan option as a high density residential area. The nomination proposes to include non-residential uses that would be greater than what is currently planned. The proposed level of non-residential use would compete with the unused development potential of non-residential use that is currently planned west of Gallows Road. This area is envisioned as the mixed-use area near the Dunn Loring Metro Station, not the subject property.
- The current Plan option for residential use at a density of 30-40 du/ac provides an effective land use transition.
- The current Plan option doubles the amount of residential units possible on the property, which provides an incentive for redevelopment. The existing use consists of 765 units, while the current Plan would allow up to approximately 1,540 units.
- The proposed nomination would be considered an expansion of the core area. The majority of the subject area is outside the core area boundary, which runs along the north and west of the subject property. The area to the west, Sub-unit B-1, is planned and developed within the core area as Metro Place at Dunn Loring with a mix of office and

multi-family residential uses at an intensity up to 1.4 FAR. The proposed intensities of 1.45 and 1.85 FAR would increase the planned intensity, greater than the areas closer to the Metro station.

Transportation:

- The proposed nomination would generate significantly higher traffic on the subject property that could adversely impact the surrounding roadway network. Both options of the nomination would increase trips on an average daily basis and in and out of the site during peak hours, when assessed against the current Plan. The proposed nomination would increase vehicular trips, generated from the site, by approximately 60% at the 1.45 FAR and 105% at the 1.85 FAR on an average daily basis, as compared to the maximum Plan option of residential use at a density up to 40 du/ac.
- Road improvements that directly affect the nominated site, which are shown in the Transportation Plan are as follows:
 - Gallows Road to be a six-lane improved arterial.
 - The extension of Hartland Road to connect to Park Tower Drive to complete the Merrifield loop road and allow for ease of movement and inter-parcel access, which is currently deficient. This connection would be a new/improved four-lane collector.
 - The Trails Plan shows on-road bike lanes and major paved trails along Gallows Road.
- The Comprehensive Plan states that Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies are needed for redevelopment in this area. The Plan requires a minimum 20% non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) mode split for parcels located within one half to one quarter of a mile from the Metro station in the Merrifield area. This nomination is located approximately 1,550 feet, as measured from the middle of the site, from the Dunn Loring-Merrifield Metro station. Certain portions of this property are located within 1,000 feet of the Metro station. (See Attachment 1)
- Significant opportunity for TDM strategies could be possible on this site, due to its close proximity to the Metro station. Merrifield Village was studied in a Ridership Survey conducted by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in 2005. It indicated that only 53% of all trips for this residential site were taken by automobile. Thirty-seven percent of respondents used Metrorail and 9% walked or used other means of transportation. Furthermore, the inclusion of office would provide an opportunity for reverse commuting using capacity on the Orange Line from New Carrollton to Vienna.
- The Code of Virginia (Chapter 527 §15.2-2222.1) requires localities to submit Comprehensive Plans and amendments to Comprehensive Plans that will substantially affect transportation on state-controlled roads to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Any amendment to the Comprehensive Plan that would generate 5,000 additional vehicle trips per day, assuming the highest density permissible, would trigger a review by VDOT. This review is also commonly referred to as “VDOT 527” or

“Chapter 527”. The proposed nomination would require a VDOT 527 review, based on a review of the highest density currently allowed under the Comprehensive Plan and both options of the proposed amendment.

Environment

- The proposed nomination is located at the intersection of Interstate-66 and Interstate-495. Given the proximity to these interstates, the proposed residential development, a noise-sensitive use, at this location likely would be subjected to noise levels, which may exceed 75 dBA DNL (Decibel Digital Noise Level). These noise levels would be difficult or impossible to mitigate. Office development in those areas closest to these two roadways would be preferred as it may be used to provide screening for the residential development. However, both office and residential uses are shown on the concept plans in the nomination, along Interstate-495. Additional noise mitigation measures may be required to account for interior noise impacts to the residential development and hotel uses.

Sanitary Sewer:

- The proposed intensities of 1.45 FAR and 1.85 FAR, the pipe system would be overloaded in some areas by 50% and 60%, respectively, and would require resizing.

Affordable Housing

- Sub-Unit B2 contains the Merrifield Village and Hartland Manor Apartments, both of which are considered affordable work force housing. Any consideration for redevelopment of this land unit should not result in a net loss in the number of affordable housing units.
- In addition to replacing these affordable units, the developer should provide at least 12% of new units as affordable housing in conformance with the County policy. Due to the proximity of this property to the Dunn Loring Metro, strong consideration should be given to the provision of more than 12% affordable housing at this location. The Policy Plan defines affordable housing as both workforce housing and affordable dwelling units.
- The nomination does not address the need to retain the affordable housing.

Public Schools:

- The proposed nomination is located within the Shreveewood Elementary School, Kilmer Middle School, and Marshall High School boundaries. Shreveewood Elementary and Kilmer Middle Schools are projected to be over-capacity in the 2009-2010 School Year, while Marshall High School will be under-capacity. Shreveewood, Kilmer, and Marshall Schools are projected to be over-capacity in School Year 2013-2014 by 170, 180, and 13 students, respectively. Planning funds have been approved for renovation at Marshall

High School, but construction remains unfunded. Redevelopment of the Devonshire administrative center, as part of the relocation of Graham Road Elementary School, could provide some relief to Shreveewood Elementary School.

- The nomination would exacerbate the over-capacity in the affected schools as the nomination would generate an increase in students over the current Comprehensive Plan recommendation of residential use at a density of 30-40 du/ac. The 1.45 FAR scenario would generate 39 additional students, and the 1.85 FAR scenario would generate 86 additional students. Shreveewood, Kilmer, and Marshall Schools would remain over-capacity.

Parks and Recreation:

- Existing public park and recreation facilities are limited in the Merrifield Suburban Center, as identified in the adopted Comprehensive Plan. The nomination would potentially increase the population within the Merrifield Suburban Center by 3,371 new residents, in addition to hotel guest and employees. The nomination would need to provide on-site public park facilities for the new residents and hotel guests and off-site park facilities for the new residents and employees. Merrilee Park is located within Sub-Unit B3 and may be a suitable location to direct pocket park and other urban park amenities.
- Current Plan text recommends the provision of a two to three acre neighborhood park within sub-units B2 or a contribution toward the purchase of land in Sub-unit B6. The nomination proposes that approximately 2 acres of open space and urban parks would be provided, but these areas would not be contiguous as the Plan recommends.

Distance to Transit Platform Map

