

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

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: PROVIDENCE

APR ITEM: 08-II-3V

NOMINATOR(S): David R. Gill on behalf of UDR, Inc.

ACREAGE: 16.06

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 48-3((1))53, 48-4((1))3,3B,3B1,3A1

GENERAL LOCATION: This property is located southeast of the Lee Highway and Blake Lane intersection.

PLANNING AREA: II
District: Vienna
Sector: Lee (V1)
Special Areas: N/A

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: 8-12 du/ac

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT:

No specific plan text. Infill development in this planning sector should be of a compatible use, type and intensity in accordance with the guidance provided by the Policy Plan under Land Use Objectives 8 and 14.

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

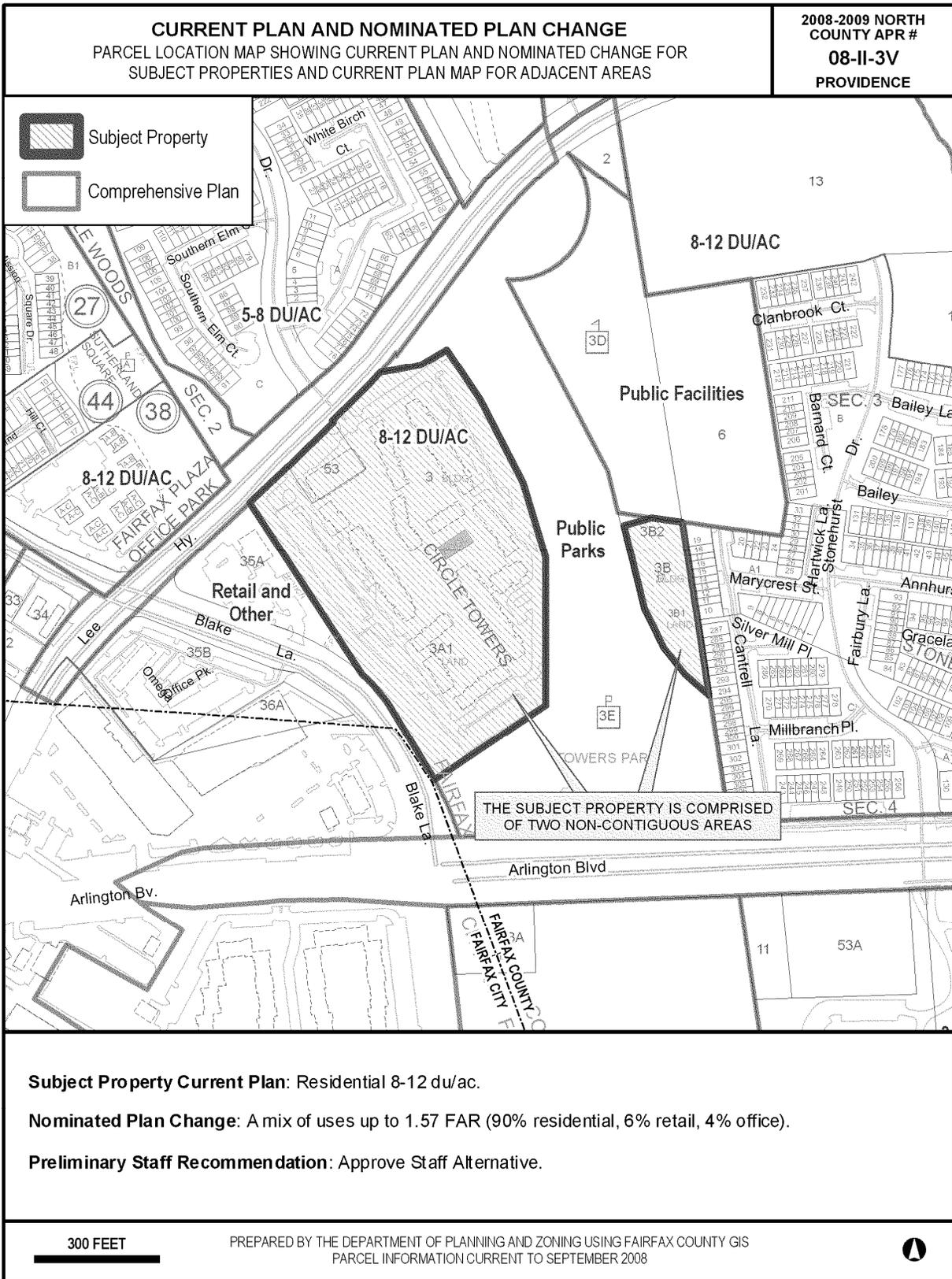
PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:

A mix of uses up to a 1.57 FAR (90% residential, 6% retail, 4% office).

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

The nomination proposes to increase the development intensity on the subject property by nearly 30 percent. Increased density and residential use on the subject site would exacerbate existing deficiencies in schools and park resources. Likewise, the present pattern of development suggests that Lee Highway is a natural demarcation line between higher-density development related to Metro and lower-density uses south of Lee Highway. With respect to transportation, the increased presence of retail uses would add to average daily automobile trips by over 80 percent. The mitigation of the adverse impacts to the surrounding roadway network would likely need to occur through road improvements, as the distance to the Metro station limits the ability to reduce trips through transit



use. Staff does not support the nomination because it would result in an intensity best suited to be within ¼ mile of transit. In addition, the need to limit building heights to 5 or 6 stories in order to be compatible with the surrounding area could result in a sprawling design that would reduce available open space on the subject property. However, staff recognizes the need to reflect density credit resulting from the dedication of the 34 acres to Fairfax County during the rezoning process. Pending additional research regarding the original rezoning, staff supports the addition of Plan text that will reflect this situation by adding: “As shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map, Tax Map Parcels 48-3((1))53, 48-4((1))3, and 48-4((1))3A1 are planned for residential use at 8-12 du/ac and Tax Map Parcels 48-4((1))3B and 3B1 are planned for public parks. Density credit is appropriate for any land dedicated to Fairfax County as provided for in the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance.”

CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use

- The Circle Towers property was rezoned to a PDH classification under application B-993 in 1970. At that time, approximately 34 acres of the original 50-acre tract was dedicated to the county for public use, as it was a component of the planned Northern Virginia Expressway. The highway was never constructed, and the dedicated land is now planned for public park use and owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority. The density that would have been permitted throughout the entire 50-acre property was concentrated on the remaining 16.06 acres in the rezoning, resulting in an effective intensity of 38 du/ac with 62,000 square feet of office and retail use. As a result, the existing on-site development, as opposed to the Comprehensive Plan recommendation of 8-12 du/ac, has been used when calculating the impacts of the proposed nomination.
- The subject property is currently developed with 554 high-rise residential apartments in three 12-story buildings, with an additional 52 townhomes throughout the site for a total 606 residential units. Additionally, there is a three-story, 44,000-square-foot office building and 18,000 square feet of retail facing an interior courtyard.
- The nomination proposes to add a 40,000-square-foot retail space as a part of a mid-rise mixed-use building that would contain multi-family residential uses on the upper floors. Additionally, the nomination proposes the construction of a separate mid-rise multifamily residential building, with the two buildings combined consisting of 252 residential units. This would replace the existing 52 townhome units, resulting in a net gain of 200 residential units for an overall total of 806 residential units on the subject property. Along with the other uses that will remain, this nomination would result in an overall density of 1.57 FAR.
- PDH zoning allows some commercial development of a local serving nature with intensity and scale compatible with the surrounding residential uses. The addition of a 40,000-square-foot community destination retailer would triple the amount of retail located on the subject property, likely serving customers outside of immediately local areas.

Transportation

- Guideline 1 “Transit Proximity and Station Area Boundaries”, under the *Guidelines for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)* in the Policy Plan section of the Comprehensive Plan, as amended through September 22, 2008, states that the TOD boundary, the area

where the highest density should be focused near the rail transit station, is generally considered as a ¼ mile radius from the station platform, with density tapering within a ½ mile radius from the station platform. This distance generally defines a 5-10 minute walk, which is assumed to be the distance and time associated with optimized transit usage. The nominated property is located approximately 3,700 feet (measured from the middle of the site) from the Vienna Metro station, and is beyond the area considered appropriate for transit-oriented development. (See Attachment 1) Given this distance, trip reductions for transit use may not be warranted when analyzing the traffic impact of this site on the surrounding road network.

- The intensity and type of land uses proposed by the nomination would adversely impact the surrounding roadway network. The proposal would increase trips in and out of the site during peak hours and on an average daily basis, resulting in a net gain of 3,397 daily trips when assessed against current development, an increase of over 80 percent.
- The Transportation Plan shows that Lee Highway (US Route 29) and Arlington Boulevard (US Route 50) are both planned to be six-lane improved arterials in the vicinity of the nominated property. Additionally, a full interchange improvement is shown at the intersection of Blake Lane and Lee Highway. Currently, neither Lee Highway nor Arlington Boulevard is constructed as shown on the plan. Because the improvements are scaled to support the current Comprehensive Plan recommendations, additional roadway improvements may be needed to accommodate the additional trips.
- 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”. Although the nomination does not trigger VDOT Chapter 527 review since less than 5,000 additional daily trips are generated, additional traffic impact analyses study may be required due to the size of the net increase in average daily trips as a result of the proposed amendment.

Parks and Recreation

- The Vienna Planning District is underserved in both local and district parkland and associated resources. This proposal would allow for a potential increase of approximately 460 residents, adding population within an area already deficient in recreational facilities. The creation of an urban park area within the existing interior courtyard will assist in providing on-site recreation opportunities.

Schools

- The subject property is served by Mosby Woods Elementary School, Jackson Middle School, and Oakton High School.
- Using the County-wide student yield ratio, a total of 62 students are projected from the existing Circle Towers development. Of this total, 19 students can be attributed to the 52 townhomes currently existing. The replacement of 52 townhouse units with 252 mid-rise multifamily units would result in approximately 20 students: 11 elementary, 3 middle school, and 6 high school students, resulting in a net overall increase of 1 student from current projections. However, the actual number of students residing at Circle Towers

attending these schools in 2008 is 127, approximately double the projected student yield. It has been observed that as some neighborhoods age, the number of school age children increases, possibly due to the type of housing, age, and location. The resultant effect may be that the net overall increase in students is greater than current projections show.

- In school year 2009-2010, all of the schools affected by the nomination will not be experiencing a deficiency in capacity. However, there is projected to be a capacity deficit at Jackson Middle School and Oakton High School for the 2013-2014 school year. The APR nomination, along with the approved Metro West and Merrifield Mixed Use rezoning applications (RZ 2003-PR-022 and RZ 2005-PR-041) that have not yet been built, are anticipated to increase the capacity deficit at the receiving schools.

Environment

- Care must be taken to avoid construction in the 2.78 acres of Resource Protection Area (RPA) and any potential Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) along the western edge of the property. Attention to design and construction should prevent potential impacts to these areas.

ATTACHMENT 1
DISTANCE FROM TRANSIT PLATFORM MAP

