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Department of Planning & Zoning**

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STAFF REPORT 2009-2010 SOUTH COUNTY AREA PLANS REVIEW

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: MOUNT VERNON

APR ITEM: 09-IV-13MV

NOMINATOR: Patrick Rea

ACREAGE: 73.3 acres

TAX MAP I.D.: 102-1 ((1)) 1C, 2A, 4, ((7)) (7) 17B, 18A, ((35)) 100-408, ((36)) 1A, 2A ((38)) 201-219, ((39)) 301-319, 401-419, 501-515

GENERAL LOCATION: West of Schellhorn Road and north of Sherwood Hall Lane (part), west of Friars Court and Bayberry Drive, north of Apple Hill Road and east of Holland Road.

PLANNING AREA: IV
District: Mount Vernon
Sector: MV5 Groveton and MV6 Fort Hunt Community Planning Sectors
Special Areas: N/A

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Office, public facilities, governmental uses, institutional uses and public parks

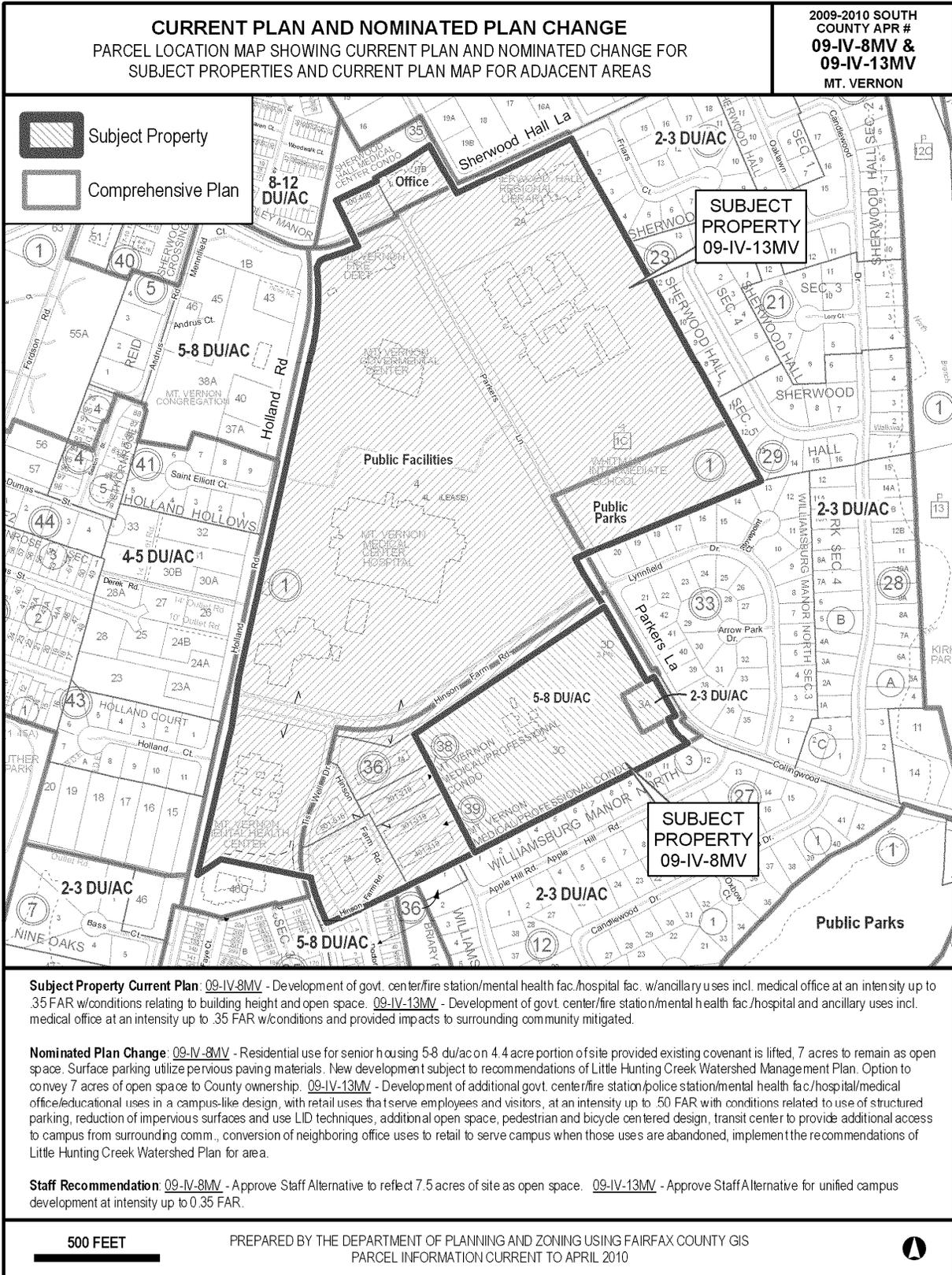
ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: "Mount Vernon Hospital is co-located on a site with the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, the Mount Vernon Fire Station and the Mount Vernon Center mental health facility. Expansion of the hospital and related medical uses is appropriate to meet the healthcare needs of the community. Development is planned with an FAR up to .35, subject to specific conditions." Complete adopted Plan text is shown in the Adopted Comprehensive Plan Text section.

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Retain existing language referring to the expansion of the hospital and related medical uses; include the Sherwood Hall Library, Walt Whitman Middle School and commercial uses on the north side of Sherwood Hall Lane in a unified campus that would be planned for an intensity up to 0.5 FAR. Add text for unified campus development with pedestrian, bicycle connections, and transit accessibility and additional open space. The nominated Plan text is shown in the Nominated Plan Amendment section.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve Nomination As Submitted
 Approve Staff Alternative
 Retain Adopted Plan
-

Staff proposes to incorporate the nominator's suggestions for redesign of the subject area as a unified campus that includes greater internal pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, new pedestrian and bicycle connections to the larger community, and increases access to public transit. Redevelopment of the site is recommended to preserve existing open space and allow for additional open space to be created by removing some of the existing surface parking areas, and installing structured parking on the site. Staff does not support the proposed intensity of .50 FAR because the resulting 16,000 additional daily vehicle trips would make the subject area less walkable, less bicycle friendly, and less pedestrian friendly. Recognizing that substantial unused development potential exists under the current Plan, staff recommends an alternative that maintains the current Plan intensity of .35 FAR.



CONTEXT

General Location:

The nomination concerns the MV5 Groveton and MV6 Fort Hunt Community Planning Sectors within the Mount Vernon Planning District. The subject area is generally located west of Schellhorn Road and north of Sherwood Hall Lane (part), west of Friars Court and Bayberry Drive, north of Apple Hill Road and east of Holland Road.

Existing and Planned Land Use and Zoning:

Subject Property: The subject area is developed with medical offices, a bank and service station north of Sherwood Hall Lane, and this portion of the subject area is planned for office uses on the Plan Map, and zoned C-2 and C-5. Parcels 102-1 ((1)) 1C and 2A contain the Sherwood Hall Library and Whitman Middle School and are planned for public facilities, governmental and institutional uses and public parks. These parcels are zoned R-3. Parcel 102-1((1)) 4 contains the Mount Vernon Fire Station, Mount Vernon Police Station, Mount Vernon Government Center, INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital, Sunrise Assisted Living Facility and Mount Vernon Mental Health Center. This parcel is planned for public facilities, governmental and institutional uses and zoned C-3. The remainder of the subject area contains medical and dental offices, and the Mount Vernon Nursing Center. This portion of the subject area is planned for residential use at a density of 5-8 du/ac and zoned PDH-5.

Adjacent Area:

North: The area to the north contains single-family detached homes, planned for residential use at 2-3 du/ac and zoned R-2.

Northwest: The area to the northwest contains single-family attached homes planned for residential use at 8-12 du/ac and zoned R-12.

West: The area to the west within the Gum Springs Community contains a mix of single-family attached and detached homes and a church and is planned for residential use at 4-5 du/ac, 5-8 du/ac, and 8-12 du/ac and public facilities and is zoned R-3 and R-5.

South: The area to the south contains single-family detached homes and single-family attached homes and is planned for residential use at 2-3 du/ac, and 5-8 du/ac and zoned R-3 and PDH-5.

East: The area to the east contains single-family homes and is planned for residential use at a density of 2-3 du/ac and 5-8 du/ac and zoned R-3 and PDH-5.

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

The MV6 Fort Hunt Community Planning Sector Land Use section includes the following text that applies to the majority of the subject area:

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, amended through 3-9-2010, MV6 Fort Hunt Community Planning Sector, Land Use, pages 151-153:

- “5. Mount Vernon Hospital is co-located on a site with the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, the Mount Vernon Fire Station and the Mount Vernon Center mental health facility. The governmental center/fire station and hospital

portion of the complex is bounded by Holland Road, Sherwood Hall Lane, Parker's Lane, and Hinson Farm Road. The mental health facility portion of the complex is located south of Hinson Farm Road between Holland Road and Tis Well Drive.

Expansion of the hospital and related ancillary medical service uses and the mental health care facilities is appropriate to meet the health care needs of the community if certain conditions are met as described below. Such facilities for the hospital portion of the complex (located between the governmental center/fire station portion of the site and Hinson Farm Road) will be limited to hospital and related ancillary medical service uses, a helistop for medical emergency transport, medical offices, employee child care facilities and skilled nursing care facilities. Any skilled nursing care facility shall be added as additional floor(s) to the existing hospital or may be freestanding so long as there is no reduction in the total open space on the hospital campus portion of the complex.

Development of governmental center/fire station use, mental health facilities and hospital facilities with related ancillary uses, including medical offices, may be appropriate if the impacts on the surrounding community are mitigated. Development is planned with an FAR up to .35 if the following conditions are met;

- Limit the height of buildings on the periphery of the site to minimize visual impacts on the community.
- Provide for substantial, usable open space. The entire complex should be visually screened by evergreen landscaping from the residentially planned and developed land fronting on Holland Road. However, landscaping along Holland Road should not be designed or located in a manner that interferes with the safe operation of the existing helistop.”

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

The nomination proposes to modify the current Plan text for the nominated area. Text to be added is shown as underlined, and text to be deleted is shown as ~~struckthrough~~.

MODIFY: Mount Vernon Planning District, Area IV, amended through 3-9-2010, MV6 Fort Hunt Community Planning Sector, Land Use, pages 151-153:

5. Mount Vernon Hospital is co-located on a site with the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, the Mount Vernon Fire Station and the Mount Vernon Center mental health facility. The governmental center/fire station and hospital portion of the complex is bounded by Holland Road, Sherwood Hall Lane, Parker's Lane, and Hinson Farm Road. The mental health facility portion of the complex is located south of Hinson Farm Road between Holland Road and Tis Well Drive.

Expansion of the INOVA Mount Vernon hHospital, the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, the Mount Vernon Fire Station, the

Sherwood Hall Regional Library, and the Walt Whitman Middle School and related ancillary medical service uses and the mental health care facilities is appropriate to meet the health care, civic, and educational needs of the community provided the expansion and development is done in a manner that integrates these institutions into a campus-like environment, to be called the "Mount Vernon District Campus", that preserves the existing open green space and mitigates the impact on the surrounding community, particularly the impact of vehicular traffic that may result from additional employees and increased public use of the facilities and services. Development is planned with an FAR up to .50 if certain the following conditions are met; as described below. Such facilities for the hospital portion of the complex (located between the governmental center/fire station portion of the site and Hinson Farm Road) will be limited to hospital and related ancillary medical service uses, a helistop for medical emergency transport, medical offices, employee child care facilities and skilled nursing care facilities. Any skilled nursing care facility shall be added as additional floor(s) to the existing hospital or may be freestanding so long as there is no reduction in the total open space on the hospital-campus portion of the complex.

~~Development of governmental center/fire station use, mental health facilities and hospital facilities with related ancillary uses, including medical offices, may be appropriate if the impacts on the surrounding community are mitigated. Development is planned with an FAR up to .35 if the following conditions are met;~~

- Limit the height of buildings on the periphery of the site to minimize visual impacts on the community.
- Provide for substantial, usable open space. The entire complex should be visually screened by evergreen landscaping from the residentially planned and developed land fronting on Holland Road. However, landscaping along Holland Road should not be designed or located in a manner that interferes with the safe operation of the existing helistop.
- To preserve existing open space and add more, while still providing for expected, additional hospital outpatients/visitors, reduce the existing surface parking area and replace it with structured parking which should be available also to visitors to the governmental center/police station. Subsequently, approximately 33% of total acreage must be reserved as useable open space.

Development should include consideration for both the lease of commercial space for medical-related offices that encourage the

concentration of services, and the inclusion of retail concessions that are appropriate to serve the local workforce and public that use the health, civic, and educational facilities of the campus. Special consideration should be given to development that improves accessibility and integrates the hospital facilities, civic and public safety institutions, and commercial concessions throughout the campus using pedestrian walkways, both covered and uncovered, and bicycle paths that limit the need for vehicular transport. Walkways and paths should create a common cityscape throughout the campus.

Special consideration should be given to establishing a transportation center centrally within the campus in order to better provide community access to the hospital and other institutions and services as well as reduce the need for private vehicular traffic.

Special consideration should be given to increase the FAR of the Mount Vernon Government Center to accommodate the placement of a Traffic Court and to the Hospital for added floors.

Parcels on the north side of Sherwood Hall Lane, between 2600 and 2616 Sherwood Hall Lane, are planned for office use. The existing neighborhood-serving businesses on lots 102-1 ((35)) 17B and 18A should be allowed to continue. Should they give up their business, however, the area should be retained for commercial use in support of the Campus. Alternatively, a table service restaurant supporting the proposed Mount Vernon District Campus is not inappropriate in this area. Any commercial or retail establishment within this area should not exceed .35 FAR.

Because of the environmental sensitivity of the site's location in the vicinity of Little Hunting Creek, development or redevelopment of any of the included sites should require strong stormwater controls, reductions in impervious surfaces, and LID practices that effectively mitigate adverse environmental impacts. Recommendations in the Little Hunting Creek Watershed Management Plan pertaining to this area should be implemented.

Redevelopment or expansion of the nursing home [102-1 ((36)) 2A] or the medical condominiums [102-1 ((36)) 401-419], both of which border on the RPA, should be allowed only after pertinent recommendations of the Little Hunting Creek Watershed Management Plan and the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance are satisfied.

ANALYSIS

Land Use

Staff supports the intent of the proposed nomination to create a unified campus-like development that increases pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and that allows residents and visitors to the Mount Vernon Governmental Center and the INOVA Mount Vernon hospital and other related medical uses and medical office uses in the area to access these facilities by public transit. The provision of substantial useable public open space with any redevelopment of the subject properties is also desirable.

The nomination proposes to amend the Comprehensive Plan to allow a higher development intensity for the parcels located south of Sherwood Hall Lane, up to .50 FAR compared to the current Plan recommendation for .35 FAR (see table on page 10). The stated purpose for proposing an increase in intensity on these parcels is to achieve the goals stated above through redevelopment of the area as a unified development that would include greater pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and centralized access to transit, and for approximately one third of the site to be set aside as open space. However, the proposed intensity would generate approximately 16,200 new vehicle trips per day compared to the current Plan intensity. This represents a dramatic increase in traffic volume for the area, and would have a negative effect on pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and transit accessibility, which is counter to the intent of the nomination.

Currently, the proportion of the subject property devoted to public open space is approximately 20 percent. The largest of these spaces are the park associated with the Whitman Middle School, and the two large green areas associated with INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital, located on Parker's Lane. Although some additional open space could be created on the subject property if some of the surface parking were removed, achieving the one-third total that is called for in the nomination may not be feasible given that the footprints of the hospital, library, school and government center are unlikely to change. Moreover, if redevelopment of these institutional uses was to occur, increased building height could conflict with long-standing Plan guidance that states that large non-residential buildings should taper down to provide a compatible transition to surrounding residential neighborhoods. However, the existing green spaces could be modified to include features that would create a focal point or points for communal gathering places, such as plazas, gardens and walkways and paths which would increase the use of these spaces by residents of the surrounding community.

The current Plan intensity provides additional development potential that could result in a redevelopment of approximately 143,000 square feet over the existing level of development on the subject property as shown in the above table.

This additional development potential could be used to accommodate future expansions of any of the uses that currently exist. Redeveloping the site according to the current Plan intensity while incorporating the nominator's suggestions regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities, access to transit and provision of open space could also achieve the redesign of the site as a unified campus that provides the amenities desired by the nominator. Developing the site at the current Plan intensity would also avoid the increase in vehicle trips generated from the subject property that the proposed plan would have, and would actually make redeveloping the area as a pedestrian and bicycle friendly design, more achievable.

Parcel	Acres	Existing Uses	Existing SF	Existing FAR	Current Zoning	As Zoned FAR	Current Plan SF	Current Plan FAR	Alternative	Alternative SF	Alternative Plan FAR
102-1 ((1)) 1C	20	Whitman Middle School	154,334	0.17	154,334, R-3	0.17	154,334	0.35	Public facilities, governmental, institutional.	154,334	0.35
102-1 ((1)) 2A	4.2	Sherwood Hall Library	37,680	0.20	37,680, R3	0.20	37,680	0.35	"	37,680	0.35
102-1 ((1)) 4	39	Mount Vernon Hospital, Mount Vernon Mental Health Center, Mount Vernon Government Center, Police Station, Fire Station, Sunrise Assisted Living Facility.	468,800	0.29	468,800*, C-3	0.29	594,594	0.35	"	594,594	0.35
102-1 ((1)) 4			0		0		0		Retail	2,873	
102-1 ((7)) 17B	0.4	Sherwood Hall Service Center	1,202	0.07	1,202*, C-5	0.07	1,202	0.07	Retail	6,098	0.35
102-1 ((7)) 18A	0.3	Burke & Herbert Bank	3,378	0.24	3,378*, C-5	0.24	3,378	0.24	Retail	4,573	0.35
102-1 ((35)) 100-408	2.5	Sherwood Hall Ln. Medical Offices	34,162	0.31	34,162*, C-2	0.31	34,162	0.31	Office	38,115	0.35
102-1 ((36)) 1A	1.3	Hinson Rd. Medical/Dental Offices	18,365	0.33	18,365*, PDH-5	0.33	18,365	0.35	Office	19,819	0.35
102-1 ((36)) 1A			0		0		0		Retail	2,873	
102-1 ((36)) 2A	2.3	Mount Vernon Nursing Center	45,654	0.45	45,654, C-3	0.45	45,654	0.45	Public facilities, governmental, institutional.	45,654	0.45
102-1 ((38)) 201-219											
102-1 ((39)) 301-319		Hinson Road Medical Offices									
102-1 ((39)) 401-419		Hinson Road Medical Offices									
102-1 ((39)) 501-515	3.3	Hinson Road Medical Offices	91,752	0.62	91,752, PDH-5	0.62	91,752	0.62		91,752	0.62
Total	73.3		855,327		855,327		981,121			998,365	

Transportation

Scenario	Daily	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		In	Out	In	Out
Current Comp Plan					
Middle School	2,127	369	302	96	88
Library	2,119	28	11	132	143
Hospital	8,331	333	232	242	334
Mental Health Ctr.	1,346	68	18	32	86
Govt. Office	1,152	81	10	37	81
Fire Station	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gas Station	500	24	18	44	43
Bank	1,302	41	40	54	53
Medical Office	1,234	62	17	30	80
Medical Office	664	33	9	17	47
Nursing Center	346	18	7	18	16
Total	22,436	1,224	708	773	1,162
Proposed Plan					
Middle School	3,987	692	567	179	165
Library	3,969	52	21	247	268
Hospital	12,347	494	344	358	495
Mental Hlth Ctr.	1,995	100	27	45	122
Govt. Office	1,707	120	15	54	120
Fire Station	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Retail	1,664	7	4	73	76
Gas Station	1,953	61	61	81	80
Bank	677	31	25	59	59
Medical Office	1,377	70	18	33	88
Medical Office	3,322	167	44	71	191
Retail	1,664	7	4	73	76
Nursing Center	648	33	14	33	30
Total	38,625	2,001	1,188	1,377	1,961
Net Impact of Proposed Plan Amendment Above Comp Plan	16,189	777	480	604	799

As shown in the table above, the proposed change to the land use intensities for the nominated parcels would result in a major increase in trip generation of up to 16,189 daily trips above the number of daily trips for the current Comprehensive Plan. The increase represents a substantial impact to, and could potentially create adversities within, the proximate transportation network. The Fairfax County Transportation Plan shows no planned improvements in the immediate area. A Chapter 527 Traffic Impact Study is required, if this level of intensity is pursued. Given the proposed increase in intensity, some surface parking may be needed for new structures, when parking requirements increase. Parking structures should be considered.

Currently, Fairfax Connector Routes 151, 152, 161 and 162 serve the area. Development of this site should accommodate efficient transit operations within the vicinity. Enhanced transit service should be considered to better serve the expanded campus.

The Fairfax Countywide Trails Plan shows minor paved trails along Parkers Lane and Sherwood Hall Lane. Efforts should be made to connect internal bicycle/pedestrian facilities with existing and planned County facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

The nominator's proposal to redevelop the Mount Vernon Hospital area into a more pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly unified campus design with more useable open space to create a focal point for communal gathering places would have substantial benefits for the surrounding community. Staff agrees that redevelopment and expansion of existing uses is the vehicle for achieving the desired redesign of the site, however, staff believes that the current Plan intensity of .35 FAR affords sufficient additional development potential to reach this goal since this provides an additional 143,000 square feet of development potential. The proposed intensity of .50 FAR would generate a much greater level of vehicle trips than the current Plan intensity, and could make the area less walkable, less bicycle friendly, due to the increased traffic congestion that would be created in the area, and could create issues of compatibility due to the taller buildings that would result in order to meet open space recommendations. Therefore, staff recommends the following alterative:

REPLACE: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, amended through 3-9-2010, MV6 Fort Hunt Community Planning Sector, Land Use, Pages 151-153:

5. The Mount Vernon District Campus is generally located along both sides of Parkers Lane, west of Holland Road. The campus generally includes health care, civic, and educational uses. Within the campus, along the north side of Sherwood Hall Lane are medical offices, a bank and service station. South of Sherwood Hall Road is the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, and Fire and Police Stations, Sherwood Hall Regional Library and Walt Whitman Middle School. The Mount Vernon Hospital and Sunrise assisted living facility are located north of Hinson Farm Road.

The Mount Vernon Campus is envisioned to be transformed into an accessible and interconnected space that provides services to residents, employees and visitors in a setting that is easily walked or biked. Access to transit will enhance this vision, as will a connected, well-lit system of trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike paths, plazas, and passive open space with mature trees and vegetation. The overarching goal for the campus is to develop a pedestrian realm, preserve the existing green space and reduce the extent of impervious surface where possible. In addition, by encouraging walking, cycling and transit use the transportation impact of new development can be reduced.

Facilities for the hospital portion of the complex (located between the governmental center/fire station portion of the site and Hinson Farm Road) should be limited to hospital and related ancillary medical service uses, a helistop for medical emergency transport, medical offices, employee child care facilities and skilled nursing care facilities. Any skilled nursing care facility shall be added as additional floor(s) to the existing hospital or may be freestanding so long as there is no reduction in the total open space on the hospital campus portion of the complex.

Development of governmental center/fire station use, mental health facilities and hospital facilities with related ancillary medical service uses, including medical offices, employee child care facilities and skilled nursing care facilities, and the Sunrise assisted living facility, may be appropriate if the impacts on the surrounding community are mitigated. Development is planned at an intensity up to .35 FAR. The existing low-intensity commercial uses on Sherwood Hall Lane (parcels ((7)) (7) 17B, 18A and ((35)) 100-408) are planned to be retained, except that the addition of a table service restaurant is encouraged. The existing medical office condominiums located south of Hinson Farm Road (parcels ((38)) 201-219 and ((39)) 301-319, 401-419 and 501-515) are planned to be retained.

Any development within the campus area should meet the following conditions:

- Limit the height of buildings on the periphery of the site to minimize visual impacts on the community;
- Provide for substantial, usable open space. The entire complex should be visually screened by evergreen landscaping from the residentially planned and developed land fronting on Holland Road. However, landscaping along Holland Road should not be designed or located in a manner that interferes with the safe operation of the existing helistop;
- Existing open spaces should be preserved and retrofitted to include features such as plazas, gazebos, gardens, and pedestrian walkways and paths in order to create focal points for community gathering places. Additional open space should be added on areas of the site currently devoted to surface parking, and converting these areas for new open spaces should be explored;
- To the extent possible, in order to accommodate future parking needs due to expansion of current uses on the site, surface parking should be replaced with structured parking;
- Development design that encourages the concentration of services and the inclusion of retail concessions to serve the local workforce and public is appropriate. Development that improves accessibility and integrates the hospital facilities, civic and public safety institutions, and commercial uses throughout the campus using pedestrian walkways, both covered and uncovered, and bicycle paths that limit the need for vehicular transport should be utilized. A common streetscape theme throughout the campus should be created.
- A transit center should be established on the campus to provide community access to the hospital and other institutions and services as well as reduce the need for private vehicular traffic.