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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-18MV

NOMINATOR: Patrick Rea, Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations

ACREAGE: 11.72

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 101-4 ((1)) 5A; 101-4 ((7)) 1; 101-4 ((8))(O) 1A,1B

GENERAL LOCATION: East corner of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Lane.

PLANNING AREA: IV
District: Mount Vernon
Sector: Mount Vernon (MV7)
Special Area: South County Center CBC (Sub-unit B-2)

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Public facilities

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Public facilities and institutional.

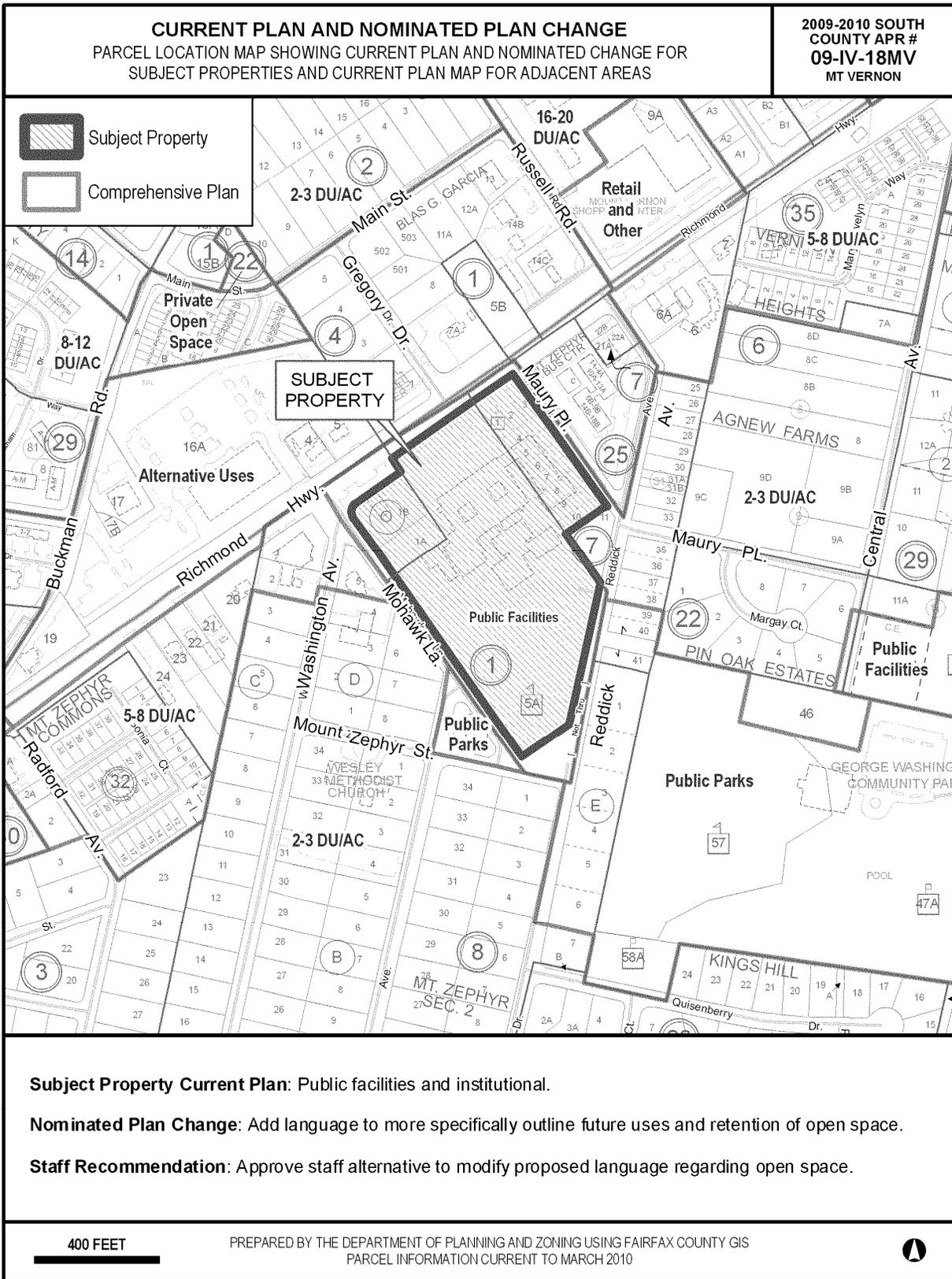
For complete plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area4/mtvernon1.pdf>

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Add language to more specifically outline future uses and retention of open space.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

Staff supports the nomination, but proposes an alternative that would modify language about existing open space and state that it be retained subject to the Board of Supervisors' approval.



CONTEXT

General Location

The nomination is located on the east corner of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Lane.

Existing and Planned Land Use and Zoning

Subject Property: The Comprehensive Plan guidance for the 11.72-acre subject property is located in Land Unit B-2 of the South County Center CBC. The Old Mount Vernon High School site in Land Unit B-2 is planned for public facilities use, and the two parcels at the northeast corner of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Lane are planned for institutional use. The subject property currently contains the Islamic Saudi Academy, recreational fields, and a 2,628-square-foot restaurant. Land fronting Richmond Highway is zoned C-8, and the remainder of the subject property is zoned R-2.

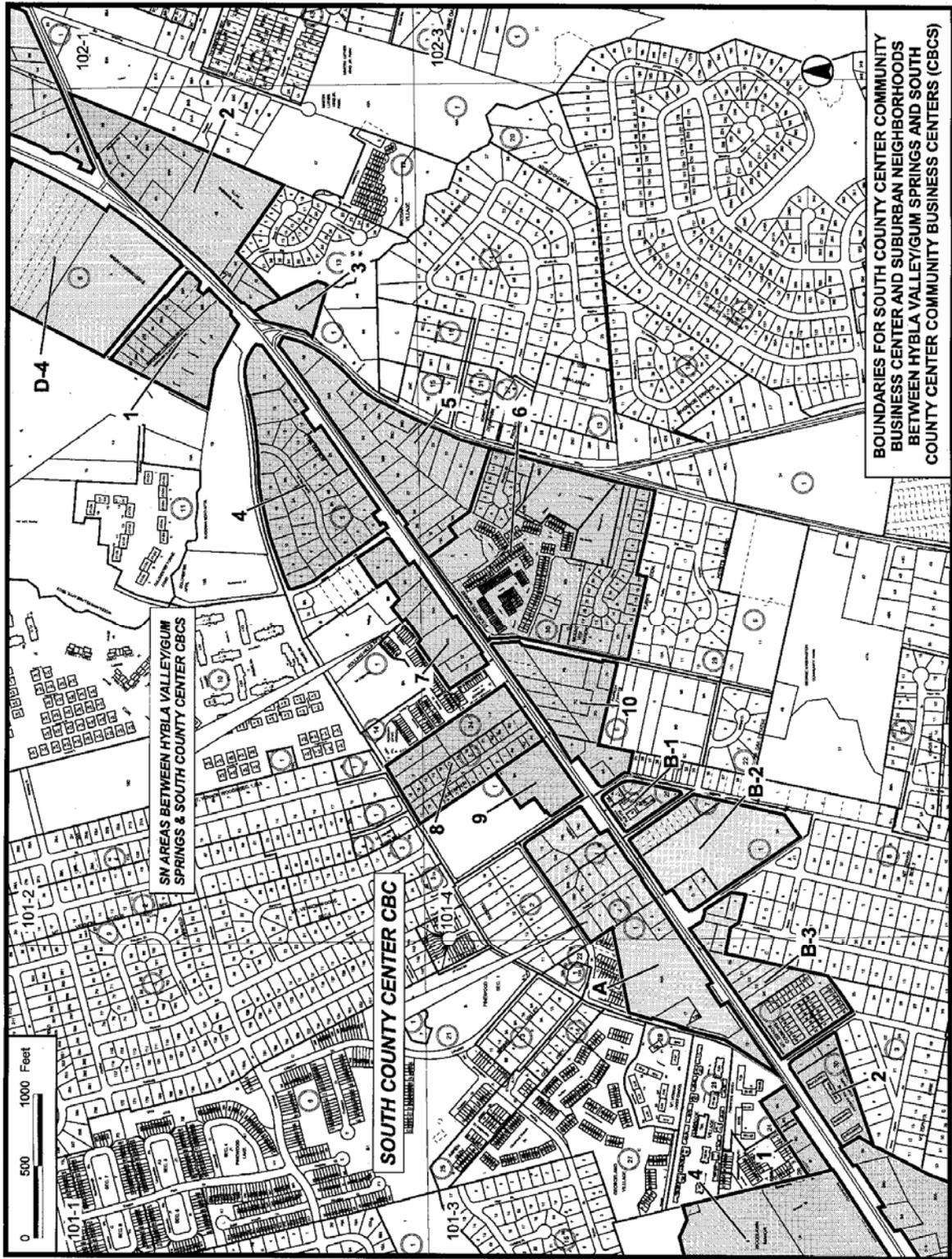
Adjacent Area:

North and West: Retail uses and a county office to the northwest across Richmond Highway in Land Unit A of the South County Center CBC are planned for office and/or retail and/or mixed uses at an intensity of .70 FAR. Retail and residential uses are located to the west of the subject property, across Mohawk Lane. The parcels proximate to Richmond Highway are within Land Unit B-3 of the South County Center CBC, and are planned for residential use at a density up to 5-8 du/ac. As an option, the parcels immediately west of the subject property are planned for retail and/or office use at an intensity up to .35 FAR. These parcels are zoned C-8. Remaining land to the west of the subject property is planned for residential use at a density up to 2-3 du/ac and public parks use, and is zoned R-2.

South and East: Athletic fields to the south of the subject property are planned for public parks use. The Mount Zephyr Business Center across Maury Place to the east is located within Land Unit B-1 of the South County Center CBC and is planned for office and/or retail use at an intensity up to .35 FAR with 40-foot maximum building heights. These areas are zoned R-2 and C-8.

PLANNING HISTORY

The subject property was the subject of APR nomination 02-IV-26MV during the 2002 South County Area Plans Review. This nomination, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors in November 2002, created the South County Center Community Business Center (CBC). The subject property was relabeled as Sub-unit B-2 in the CBC; however, there was no change in the land use or intensity recommendations.



ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, as amended through 3-9-2010, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, Land Unit B-2, page 57:

“Sub-unit B-2

The Old Mount Vernon High School located on the east side of Richmond Highway between Maury Place and Mohawk Lane is planned for public facilities use. The school should be retained in County ownership and preserved as a local historic site. The two parcels located at the northeast corner of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Street adjacent to the Old Mount Vernon High School are planned for institutional use. Any design and development plan should be compatible with the historic nature of the Old Mount Vernon High School. Uses of this site may include a community recreation center and a performing and visual arts center. These uses are consistent with the Richmond Highway revitalization goals and present an opportunity for a community activity center and adaptive reuse of the site.”

The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the subject property as planned for public facilities.

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

The nomination proposes to add language that would emphasize educational use for the Old Mount Vernon High School. Buildings on the property are described in further detail, and text is added stating that peripheral buildings would be appropriate for non-profit use. Additionally, the nominated text proposes to retain the existing ball fields and open space currently on the subject property. The complete nomination is shown as Attachment I.

ANALYSIS**Land Use**

The Old Mount Vernon High School was completed in 1939 and is on Fairfax County’s Inventory of Historic Sites. In accordance with the Policy Plan and Mount Vernon District-wide recommendations, efforts should be made to preserve recorded heritage resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The proposed nomination seeks to preserve the character of the site by clarifying uses that are appropriate for the subject property.

Tax Map Number 101-4 ((1)) 5A is owned by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Currently, the southern 2.32 acres of the property is leased to the Fairfax County Park Authority through December 31, 2012, with an automatic option to extend the agreement for an additional 25 years. This agreement permits the property to be used for park and recreational purposes only and requires the Park Authority to provide all necessary maintenance and repair. Additionally, the Board of Supervisors has a lease agreement with the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that is valid through June 30, 2011. The lease agreement permits usage of the outdoor athletic and recreation areas within specific hours and requires the tenant to provide full

maintenance. Since the property is owned by the Board of Supervisors, the Board has the final authority on the use of the site.

Transportation

The proposed change in plan text would have no effect on trip generation from the site. The site is already constructed at an intensity of 0.33 FAR, and there is no proposed change in allowable land use, just clarifying language. Therefore, there would be no traffic impact, nor any resulting adversities on the proximate transportation network.

Richmond Highway, designated as a Principal Arterial, is shown on the Fairfax County Transportation Plan Map as a six-lane improved arterial. The roadway is currently four lanes in width, with right-of-way (ROW) ranging from 85 to 150 feet, approximately. Richmond Highway is shown as an Enhanced Public Transportation Corridor (EPTC) on the Plan, with a range of transit options to be studied in the future. The existing cross section and ROW width do not meet the standard established in the Fairfax County Transportation Policy Plan. A 176-foot typical cross-section was established for Richmond Highway as a result of a collaborative effort to account for vehicular, bicycle/pedestrian and future transit needs within the corridor. Further review and analysis may indicate a need for additional right-of-way dedication along the frontage of the nominated parcels. Any development of this site should accommodate these improvements to Richmond Highway.

Efficient internal circulation and parking should be developed for the site. Connectivity within the proposed site, as well as to and from external streets and neighboring developments should be provided to ease the impact to Richmond Highway. Site access should limit driveways, curb cuts and median breaks, while minimizing conflicts with traffic. Access should be provided via Mohawk Lane and Maury Place with full access on Richmond Highway prohibited. Further review and analysis is required to determine if the existing right-in, right-out access on Richmond Highway should remain.

Currently, this portion of Richmond Highway is served by the Richmond Highway Express (REX) and Fairfax Connector Route 171. The Draft Fairfax County Transit Development Plan dated September 2009 recommends enhancing REX service, restructuring Route 171 and adding a new Route 371. Redevelopment of this site should accommodate efficient transit operations within the vicinity and provide access to its occupants.

The Fairfax County Countywide Trails Plan shows a major paved trail along Richmond Highway and minor paved trails along Maury Place, Mount Zephyr Street, Reddick Avenue, and Central Avenue. Development of this site should accommodate the planned trail improvements and efforts should be made to connect internal bicycle/pedestrian facilities with existing and planned County facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

The nomination proposes to clarify that non-profit uses would be appropriate in accessory buildings of the Old Mount Vernon School. Additionally, this nomination would add language

to retain the existing ball fields and open space on the south side of the subject property. These proposed text changes provide further guidance for the future reuse of the Old Mount Vernon School and the subject property. Staff recommends approval of a staff alternative that modifies proposed language regarding the retention of open space, adding that this should be subject to the Board of Supervisors' approval.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Staff recommends the Comprehensive Plan be modified as shown below. Text proposed to be added is shown as underlined and text proposed to be deleted is shown with a ~~strikethrough~~.

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, as amended through 3-9-2010, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, Land Unit B-2, page 57:

“Sub-unit B-2

The Old Mount Vernon High School is located on the east side of Richmond Highway between Maury Place and Mohawk Lane ~~is planned for public facilities use~~. The school should be retained in County ownership and preserved as a local historic site. The building is planned for public facilities use, primarily for educational use. The campus includes a main building that is surrounded by, and attached to, smaller structures. Ancillary institutional uses to support non-profit services may be appropriate in the peripheral buildings. Existing county-owned open space at the rear of the property should be retained as publicly accessible park space, subject to Board of Supervisors' approval.

Tax Map Parcels 101-4 ((8))(O) 1A and 1B, which are ~~The two parcels~~ located at the northeast corner of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Street adjacent to the Old Mount Vernon High School are planned for institutional use. ~~Any design and development plan should be compatible with the historic nature of the Old Mount Vernon High School.~~ Uses of this site may include a community recreation center and a performing and visual arts center. ~~These uses are consistent with the Richmond Highway revitalization goals and present an opportunity for a community activity center and adaptive reuse of the site.~~

Any design and development plan should be compatible with the historic nature of the Old Mount Vernon High School. These uses are consistent with the Richmond Highway revitalization goals and present an opportunity for a community activity center and adaptive reuse of the site.”

NOTE: The Comprehensive Plan Map would not change.

ATTACHMENT I**NOMINATED PLAN TEXT**

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, as amended through 3-9-2010, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, Land Unit B-2, page 57:

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The Old Mount Vernon High School located on the east side of Richmond Highway between Maury Place and Mohawk Lane ~~is planned for public facilities use~~. The school should be retained in County ownership and preserved as a local historic site. The building is planned for public facilities use, primarily for educational use. The campus includes a main building that is surrounded by, and attached to, smaller structures. Ancillary institutional uses to support non-profit services may be appropriate in the peripheral buildings. The ball fields at the rear of the property and existing open space should be retained.

Tax Map Parcels 101-4 ((8))(O) 1A and 1B, which are The two parcels located at the northeast corner of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Street adjacent to the Old Mount Vernon High School are planned for institutional use. Any design and development plan should be compatible with the historic nature of the Old Mount Vernon High School. Uses of this site may include a community recreation center and a performing and visual arts center. ~~These uses are consistent with the Richmond Highway revitalization goals and present an opportunity for a community activity center and adaptive reuse of the site.~~

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