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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-19MV

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

ACREAGE: 26.4

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 101-3((1))28,29B,29C,30,30B,30C,31B,31C,32,33; 101-3((9))(1) All; 101-3((9))(2)B

GENERAL LOCATION: Southeast side of Richmond Highway generally near Forest Place intersection.

PLANNING AREA: IV
District: Mount Vernon
Sector: Mount Vernon (MV7)
Special Areas: Richmond Highway Corridor, Suburban Neighborhood Area between South County Center and Woodlawn CBCs, Recommendations 3 and 6

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Residential 5-8 dwelling units per acre (du/ac), Residential 2-3 du/ac

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Residential use at a density up to 5-8 du/ac. Option for residential use at a density up to 8-12 du/ac (75% of land area), retail and office at an intensity up to .35 FAR (25% of land area) with conditions in Area 6. Option for non-residential mixed use up to an intensity to .50 FAR with full consolidation in Areas 3 and 6.

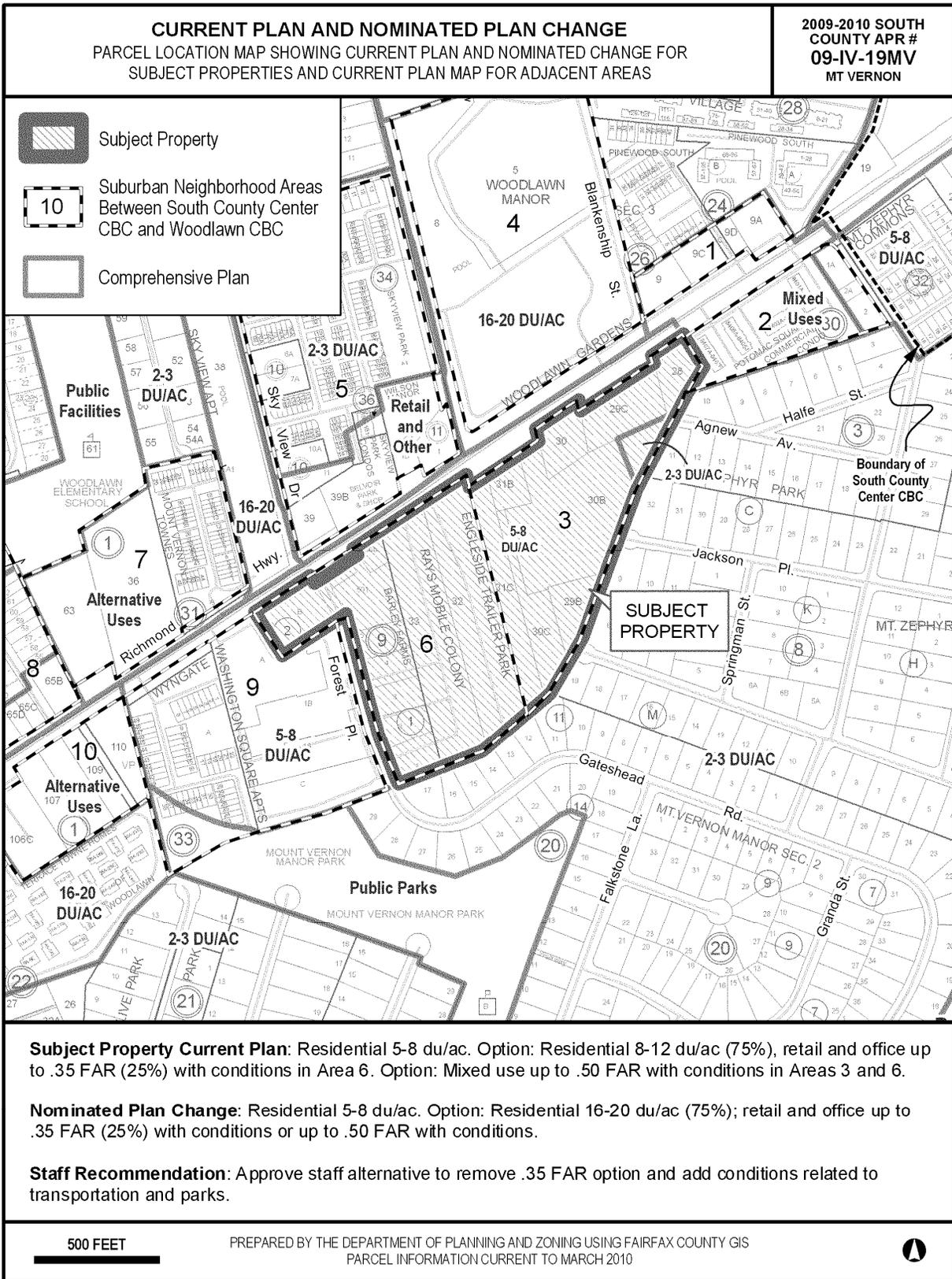
For complete plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area4/mtvernon1.pdf>

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Option for residential use at a density up to 16-20 du/ac (75% of land area); retail and office at an intensity up to .35 FAR (25% of land area) with conditions or at an intensity up to .50 FAR with conditions.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Approve Nomination as submitted
 Approve Staff Alternative
 Retain Adopted Plan

Staff supports an alternative to the nomination that would accept the option for intensity up to .50 FAR but adds conditions related to parks and transportation impacts. Areas 3 and 6 would be combined into one recommendation.



CONTEXT

General Location

The nomination is located on the southeast side of Richmond Highway, generally near the Forest Place intersection.

Existing and Planned Land Use and Zoning

Subject Property:

The Comprehensive Plan guidance for the 26.4-acre subject properties is found in Areas 3 and 6 of the Suburban Neighborhood Areas between the South County Center CBC and the Woodlawn CBC. The text states both Areas 3 and 6 are planned for residential use at a density of 5-8 du/ac. As an option, Area 6 is planned for residential use at a density up to 8-12 du/ac on 75% of the land area, and retail and office use at an intensity up to .35 FAR on 25% of the land area. An additional option for Areas 3 and 6 allows retail and office use at an intensity up to .50 FAR with full consolidation. The subject property currently contains a variety of uses, including 120 mobile home residential units, a church, a garden center, a preschool, restaurants, and the former Smitty's Building Supply store. A majority of the subject property is zoned C-8, and could be developed with approximately 542,600 square feet of retail use or approximately 271,300 square feet of office use and 271,300 square feet of retail use. Approximately two acres of the subject property is zoned R-2.

Adjacent Area:

North and West: Properties to the northwest, across Richmond Highway, are part of Areas 4 and 5 of the Suburban Neighborhood Areas between the South County Center CBC and the Woodlawn CBC. Area 4 is planned for residential use at a density of 16-20 du/ac, with an option for primarily residential mixed use up to .50 FAR. This area is currently developed with the Woodlawn Gardens Apartments, and is zoned C-8. The portion of Area 5 across from the subject property is planned for community-serving retail at an intensity up to .35 FAR, and along the Richmond Highway frontage, is developed with low-intensity retail uses. These parcels are zoned C-8 and PDH-16. Properties to the west of the nominated area are part of Area 9 of the Suburban Neighborhood Areas between the South County Center CBC and the Woodlawn CBC, which is planned for residential use at 5-8 du/ac, with an option for retail and/or office use at an intensity up to .35 FAR. This area is currently developed with the Washington Square Apartments, and is zoned C-8.

South and East: The Mount Zephyr and Mount Vernon Manor subdivisions to the south and southeast of the subject property are planned for residential use at a density of 2-3 du/ac. The Potomac Square Office park to the northeast of the nominated area is in Area 2 of the Suburban Neighborhood Areas between the South County Center CBC and the Woodlawn CBC, and is planned for townhouse-style office and/or retail use up to an intensity up to .35 FAR with building heights up to 40 feet. The subdivisions are zoned R-2, and the office park is zoned C-5.

PLANNING HISTORY

The subject property was included in the Richmond Highway Corridor Special Study, an Out-of-Turn Plan Amendment that was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 7, 1999. This Plan amendment established the current Plan for the area. Subsequently, APR nominations 02-IV-15MV and 02-IV-17MV were denied by the Planning Commission during the 2002 South County Area Plans Review. These nominations proposed options for office, retail, hotel, and/or mixed use up to .70 for Areas 3 and 6. Additionally, these nominations proposed options for mixed-use including retail, office, and/or hotel at an intensity up to 1.0 FAR with consolidation of Areas 3 and 6. Retention of the adopted Plan was recommended due to the intensity proposed, which was incompatible with the vision of the Suburban Neighborhood Area. Three nominations affecting the subject property were received in the 2005 South County Area Plans Review; however, all were withdrawn.

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, pages 58-60:

**“SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS
BETWEEN SOUTH COUNTY CENTER CBC AND WOODLAWN CBC
(Refer to Figure 12 for recommendations 1-10)**

...

3. The area located on the east side of Richmond Highway south of Potomac Square Center to Parcel 101-3((1))31C north of the Engleside Trailer Park is planned for residential use at 5-8 dwelling units per acre. Residential uses should be designed to provide for a transition to the adjacent single-family residential neighborhood by providing the required buffering and screening to adjacent neighborhoods. No access should be provided to any proposed development from existing streets in the Mount Zephyr community. See recommendation #6 for additional recommendations.

...

6. This area includes the Engleside Trailer Park and Ray's Mobile Colony north of the intersection of Forest Place and Richmond Highway and commercial uses fronting on Richmond Highway. This area is planned for residential use at 5-8 dwelling units per acre. If full consolidation is achieved, this area may be appropriate for a mixed-use development with residential, office and retail uses. At least seventy-five percent of the total development should be developed as residential at 8-12 dwelling units per acre with a component of up to 25 percent of the total site area developed with retail and office uses at an intensity of .35 FAR. Any redevelopment of this area is encouraged to comply with the County's voluntary relocation guidelines. If Areas 3 and 6 are fully consolidated, an option for mixed use including retail and office uses at an intensity up to .50 FAR may be appropriate.”

The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the subject property as planned for residential use at 2-3 du/ac and residential use at 5-8 du/ac.

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

The nomination proposes to modify existing options for the subject property. Currently, the subject property consists of Area 3 and Area 6 of the Suburban Neighborhood Area between South County Center CBC and Woodlawn CBC. An urban/town center concept is proposed with substantial parcel consolidation in these areas. Seventy-five percent of the land area would be developed as residential at 16-20 du/ac, resulting in up to 396 low-rise multifamily residential units. The remaining land area would be developed with retail and office uses at an intensity up to .35 FAR, with approximately 40,000 square feet (40%) office use and 60,000 square feet (60%) percent retail use. As an option, retail and office uses at an intensity up to .50 FAR on the remaining land area would be permitted, resulting in approximately 57,500 square feet of retail use and 86,000 square feet of office use. The nomination, however, does not indicate additional conditions or requirements needed to increase the option for non-residential use to an intensity of .50 FAR from .35 FAR.

ANALYSIS

Land Use

Suburban Neighborhoods are defined in the Concept for Future Development as the county's stable residential neighborhoods, which are to be protected and enhanced by assuring compatible relationships between uses. These areas may contain a wide range of housing types, as well as supporting neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Currently, the maximum Plan option for the subject property is for office and retail mixed use. The proposed nomination would reduce the overall commercial development on the subject property, and add a residential component.

Comprehensive Plan policies address the importance of protecting stable residential neighborhoods and ensuring appropriate transitions between neighboring land uses. The proposed Plan option includes a significant residential component, resulting in a land use that may blend more appropriately with the residential neighborhoods to the south and east. In order to provide an appropriate transition between higher intensity mixed-use development on the subject property and single family residential neighborhoods to the south and east, techniques such as building tapering and vegetative screening should be utilized. Likewise, care should be taken to ensure that other impacts, such as lighting and noise, are minimized. Conditions in the proposed nomination speak to these issues, promoting appropriate transitions between the subject properties and surrounding neighborhoods.

Transportation

Access

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 approximately 80 to 180 feet. Richmond Highway is also shown on the Plan as an Enhanced Public Transportation Corridor (EPTC), with a range of rail and bus rapid transit options to be studied in the future. The existing Richmond Highway cross section and ROW width do not meet the standards 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 and communities should be provided to ease the impact to Richmond Highway. Curb cuts should be minimized and the location of entrances and median breaks arranged to minimize conflicts with traffic on the adjacent arterial roadways. Site access to and from Richmond Highway should be limited, with existing driveways eliminated, where feasible. Further review and analysis is required to determine the appropriate number and locations of access points and whether turn lanes or other mitigation may be required.

Appropriate bicycle/pedestrian facilities should be provided along the site's Richmond Highway frontage, as well as internal to the site. The Fairfax County Countywide Trails Plan shows a major paved trail along Richmond Highway. Further review and analysis is needed to determine appropriate bicycle/pedestrian facilities to be provided along the site's Richmond Highway frontage, as well as internal to the site. Efforts should be made to connect internal bicycle/pedestrian facilities with existing and planned County facilities. Pedestrian access to the surrounding neighborhoods should also be provided.

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 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.

Trip Generation

The nomination is estimated to generate approximately 93 additional average daily trips over the current Comprehensive Plan, as described in the table below. Due to the additional residential and retail use and the reduction in office use, the a.m. peak hour outbound and p.m. peak hour inbound trip generation also increases. Conversely, the a.m. peak hour inbound and p.m. peak hour outbound trip generation decreases. Traffic impacts and adversities from this proposed amendment would likely be minimal, but should be monitored at the rezoning and site plan phases of development review.

Trip Generation Values for Nomination 09-IV-19MV

Scenario	Daily	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		In	Out	In	Out
<u>Current Comp Plan (0.5 FAR Opt)</u>					
Shopping Center (820); 55.749 KSF	4,739	35	22	215	224
General Office (710); 517.493 KSF	4,730	615	84	112	546
Total	9,469	650	106	327	770
<u>Proposed Amendment (0.5 FAR Opt)</u>					
Apartments (220); 396 DU	2,523	40	158	153	82
Shopping Center (820); 86.249 KSF	6,168	52	34	282	294
General Office (710); 57.499 KSF	871	106	14	24	119
Total	9,562	198	206	459	495
Net Impact of Proposed Amendment Above Comp Plan	93	(452)	100	132	(275)

Trip Generation derived from the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE), Trip Generation, 8th Edition (2008). Trip Generation estimates are provided for general order-of-magnitude comparisons, only, and do not account for pass-by, internal capture, or traffic reductions as a result of proximity to transit stations.

The nomination proposes to add language requiring occupancy to be phased to transportation improvements so that an approach level of service D is maintained at relevant intersections. Objective 3, policy b of the Policy Plan Transportation element states that a minimum level of service D should be provided throughout the County’s street network. Since this standard already applies to intersections related to the subject property, a generalized statement regarding mitigation of impacts so that there is no degradation to the surrounding transportation network would be more appropriate.

Parks and Recreation

This proposal would allow for a potential increase in residents within the Mount Vernon Planning District by about 259 individuals. Residents will need access to park and recreation facilities on site or nearby. Existing nearby parks, including Woodlawn, Dogue Creek Stream Valley, and Mount Vernon Manor, meet only a portion of the demand for parkland generated by residential development in the service area of the nomination. In addition to parkland, the recreational facilities in greatest need in the Mount Vernon Planning District include multi-purpose courts, playgrounds, rectangle fields, and trails. In addition to the residential development impact on recreational services and facilities, there will also be impacts from the proposed commercial development. Employees have a need to access recreational amenities at lunchtime or after work. Retail customers benefit from combining shopping trips with recreational activities.

Better integrating parks with surrounding land uses and increasing park-to-park connections within the system will allow for greater access and enjoyment. Redevelopment of this site will be an opportunity to increase pedestrian connections with existing neighborhoods to Richmond Highway. Additional trails and connections will allow for existing residents to utilize the town center benefits and will also give the town center residents a connection to Mount Vernon Manor Park located within walking distance south of the site. Development of urban parks such as pocket parks, plazas, common greens and recreation-focused urban parks should be encouraged. Integration of publicly accessible urban parks in the overall development design is critical to

providing on-site recreation resources within the nomination area and will enhance the desirability of the project, contribute to redevelopment efforts and contribute to a sense of place.

Due to the existing development patterns within Mount Vernon, there are few opportunities to purchase land suitable for park facilities. The most likely source of new public open space to address the service level deficiencies will come from parkland dedications from development and provision of public-accessible park facilities to offset growth impacts.

Schools

The subject property is served by Woodley Hills Elementary School, Whitman Middle School, and Mount Vernon High School. The proposed Plan option would yield approximately 93 students: 54 elementary, 13 middle school, and 26 high school students. This totals more students than the existing Plan option, but fewer students than the current base plan. Additionally, the estimated number of students is less than the number of students currently residing on the subject property.

Currently, Woodley Hills Elementary School is over capacity. Woodley Hills and Whitman Middle Schools both are projected to be over capacity for the 2014-15 school year. Funding for capacity enhancement at both schools was approved in the 2009 Bond Referendum. The capacity enhancement is expected to be completed for the 2011-12 school year and is anticipated to relieve the overcrowding.

Environment

Transportation Generated Noise

Residential use and other sensitive uses, such as outdoor recreation spaces, backyards, etc., are not permitted in areas affected by noise exceeding 75 decibel Day-Night Loudness (dBA DNL), and the noise must be mitigated in areas experiencing noise between 65 and 75 dBA DNL.

Transportation generated noise exceeding 75 dBA DNL may impact this site from Richmond Highway. It is possible that this issue could be avoided based on the location of any residential development. If residential development is either shielded by other structures, located an adequate distance from the noise source(s) or by topography, then this may be a non-factor.

While noise levels exceeding 75 dBA DNL have been encountered with recent developments along some portions of Richmond Highway, this level of noise is generally located fairly close to the right-of-way and direct impacts to residential and other noise sensitive uses can be avoided or mitigated through appropriate site design.

Soils

While hydric soils are noted for a portion of this site they are not likely to indicate the presence of wetlands in this instance as the overwhelming majority of this area has already been developed in the past and does not appear to have any direct connection to surface waters. The presence of hydric soils is not likely to result in any direct impacts to the potential development or redevelopment of this land area.

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed nomination would allow for a better mix of uses, including residential use, in these Suburban Neighborhood Areas, while maintaining a similar level of intensity as is currently recommended by the maximum Comprehensive Plan option for the subject property. As a result of this mix of uses, the average daily trips generated would be approximately the same as the Plan maximum option. Staff supports the nomination with some changes that are outlined in the recommended alternative. This alternative would eliminate the proposed .35 FAR option, as there are no additional requirements recommended to achieve the .50 FAR option. In the nominated text, staff recommends clarifying the percentage of nonresidential to residential uses to reflect a maximum of 25% non-residential uses. This percentage is consistent with staff's understanding of the nomination as reflected in the transportation analysis. Due to the joint nature of the recommendations for Areas 3 and 6, the staff alternative would combine these areas into one recommendation, Area 3. Recommendations regarding parks and recreation were added so as to ensure adequate on-site park facilities and connectivity to nearby parks. A recommendation regarding transportation impacts was modified to clarify that proposed redevelopment should not degrade the transportation network in the vicinity of the site. The proposed condition regarding LEED Silver certification for office buildings was modified to include residential buildings as well. Additionally, the condition regarding access to the Mount Zephyr Community was modified to specify vehicular access, so as to not preclude pedestrian access from being provided from the subject property.

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, pages 58-60:

Note: Areas 3 and 6 will be combined to create a new Area 3. Area 6 will be deleted.

**“SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS
BETWEEN SOUTH COUNTY CENTER CBC AND WOODLAWN CBC
(Refer to Figure 12 for recommendations 1-409)**

...

3. ~~The area located on the east side of Richmond Highway south of Potomac Square Center to Parcel 101-3((1))31C north of the Engleside Trailer Park is planned for residential use at 5-8 dwelling units per acre. This area includes the Engleside Trailer Park and Ray's Mobile Colony north of the intersection of Forest Place and Richmond Highway and commercial uses fronting on Richmond Highway. This area is planned for residential use at 5-8 dwelling units per acre. Residential uses should be designed to provide for a transition to the adjacent single-family residential neighborhood by providing the required buffering and screening to adjacent neighborhoods. Any redevelopment of this area is encouraged to comply with the County's voluntary relocation guidelines. No vehicular access should be~~

provided to any proposed development from existing streets in the Mount Zephyr community.—See recommendation #6 for additional recommendations.

If substantial consolidation is achieved, this area may be appropriate for a mixed-use development using an urban/town center design concept with residential, office and retail uses. Approximately seventy-five percent of the total development should be developed as residential at 16-20 dwelling units per acre with a component of up to 25 percent of the total site area developed with retail and office uses at an intensity of .50 FAR. In addition, the following conditions should be met:

- The proposed “urban/town center” concept’s site design should enable the creation of a cohesive and walkable environment.
- High-quality architecture should be provided.
- Buildings should be oriented to internal/external streets and sidewalks, and sufficient open space should be interspersed with retail, residential, and office uses to provide usable public gathering areas.
- Building tapering, vegetative buffering and screening should be provided as needed on the periphery to create a transition to the surrounding areas. Lighting and sound from any development should be designed so that it is not intrusive to adjacent residential development.
- Any freestanding office or residential building is encouraged to meet at least U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standards or other comparable programs with third party certification. Retail users are encouraged to meet applicable LEED standards, or other comparable programs, in design and construction to promote sustainable development. The impervious nature of hard surfaces should be offset through approaches such as providing vegetated planting strips in surface parking lots.
- Multi-story office buildings should include ground-floor retail use and other services where possible. To the extent possible, the new retail uses should be located in places that would encourage public usage, activate the town center, and reduce vehicular traffic. Such new retail uses should also be distributed throughout the site in the ground floors of the residential buildings and at prominent entrance points to the town center.
- The residential units should be distributed in buildings across the site in a manner that is well-integrated into the town center. The residential uses also should have convenient access to open space, community-serving retail uses, and other services. Affordable and workforce housing should be provided through compliance with the Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance and other County policies.
- Usable open spaces such as pocket parks, plazas, common greens and recreation-focused urban parks should be integrated into the development with supporting pedestrian connectivity.
- Internal roadways, trails, sidewalks, and street crossings should connect buildings and open spaces. Trails and sidewalks should link the site to adjoining communities. It is especially desirable to develop a strong pedestrian link from the site to Mount Vernon Manor Park to allow the future town center residents access to the park. Streetscape treatments should include trees, landscaping, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, street furniture, and various paving textures, to the extent possible.
- The impact on parks and recreation levels of service should be offset per Objective 6 of the Parks and Recreation Section of the Policy Plan through the provision of on-site urban park amenities, parkland dedication, provision of active recreation facilities and/or improvements to existing nearby parks.

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- Transportation improvements should be provided that ensure that the impact of the proposed development is mitigated so that there is no overall degradation of the transportation network in the vicinity of the site.
 - Bus transit stops and accompanying shelters should be provided along Richmond Highway.
 - No vehicular access from this community should be provided into the Mount Zephyr Community.

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~~6. This area includes the Engleside Trailer Park and Ray's Mobile Colony north of the intersection of Forest Place and Richmond Highway and commercial uses fronting on Richmond Highway. This area is planned for residential use at 5-8 dwelling units per acre. If full consolidation is achieved, this area may be appropriate for a mixed-use development with residential, office and retail uses. At least seventy five percent of the total development should be developed as residential at 8-12 dwelling units per acre with a component of up to 25 percent of the total site area developed with retail and office uses at an intensity of .35 FAR. Any redevelopment of this area is encouraged to comply with the County's voluntary relocation guidelines. If Areas 3 and 6 are fully consolidated, an option for mixed use including retail and office uses at an intensity up to .50 FAR may be appropriate."~~

(Subsequent conditions in Plan text will be renumbered accordingly, and Figure 11 revised to show the new recommendation numbers)

NOTE: The Comprehensive Plan Map would be changed to show the density of a small section of parcel 30B as planned for a density of 5-8 du/ac. It is currently shown as planned for a density of 2-3 du/ac.