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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-3MV

NOMINATOR: Keith C. Martin

ACREAGE: 8.5 acres

TAX MAP I.D.: 83-3 ((1)) 76

GENERAL LOCATION: Southwest corner of Richmond Highway and Huntington Avenue.

PLANNING AREA: IV
District: Mount Vernon
Sector: Huntington Community Planning Sector
Special Areas: Huntington Transit Station Area, Land Unit R

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: 20+ dwelling units per acre (du/ac)

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Residential development at 40 du/ac provided specific conditions are met. Density of up to 50 du/ac may be considered if Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway can be proven to operate at levels of service acceptable to VDOT and the County.

For complete Plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area4/mtvernon2.pdf>

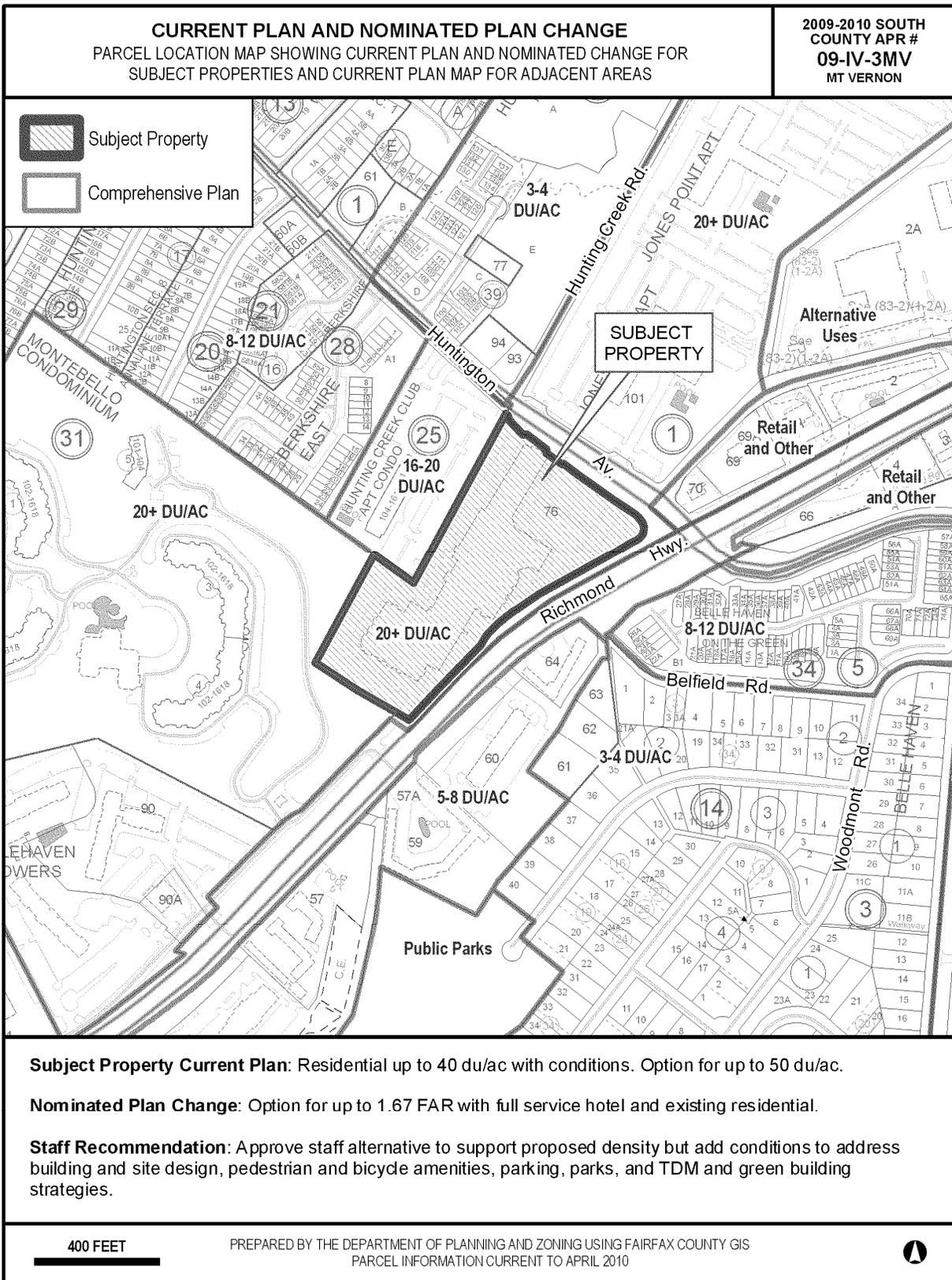
PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Mixed-use development retaining existing multi-family units at 52 du/ac and new hotel use up to 200,000 square feet.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/apr/2009southcounty/nominations/3mv.pdf>

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve Nomination as Submitted
 Approve Staff Alternative
 Retain Adopted Plan

Staff feels that item 3MV could result in substantial benefits in terms of quality hotel space added to the Huntington Transit Station Area in the future, without generating a significant amount of additional traffic. However additional considerations should be addressed in the proposed Plan text to ensure infill development is compatible with the surrounding residential developments and meets other expectations.



CONTEXT:**General Location:**

The subject property is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Richmond Highway and Huntington Avenue, approximately ½ mile south of the Capital Beltway and ¾ mile east of the Huntington Metro Station.

Existing and Planned Land Use and Zoning:

Subject Property: The subject property is occupied by the high-rise buildings of the Huntington Gateway Apartments (443 units), as well as 39,000 square feet of office and retail space in low-rise buildings. The parcel is planned for residential use at a density of 40 du/ac subject to meeting specific conditions, and up to 50 du/ac if it can be proven that both Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway can operate at levels of service acceptable to VDOT and the County.

Adjacent Area:

North: North of the subject property is the Riverside Apartment complex, which contains 1,222 units in high-rise buildings and is zoned R-30. The area falls within Land Unit A-3 of the North Gateway Community Business Center (CBC) and is planned for residential use at a density of 35 du/ac. The Plan text recommends that this use be retained.

East: To the east are single family attached residential uses across Richmond Highway, planned for residential use at 8-12 du/ac and zoned R-12. To the southeast across Richmond Highway are retail uses and motels zoned C-8, planned for residential use at 5-8 du/ac.

South: To the southwest are the Montebello high-rise condominiums, planned for residential use at 35-40 du/ac and zoned R-30.

West: The Hunting Creek condominiums are adjacent to the subject property on the west and also fall within Land Unit R. Developed at approximately 48 du/ac, the area is planned for residential use at 16-20 du/ac and zoned R-30.

PLANNING HISTORY

The subject property was nominated for a Comprehensive Plan amendment in the 2005-2006 South County Area Plans Review process, but was deferred by the Planning Commission for consideration in the special 2008 BRAC APR process. That nomination proposed mixed-use development with office, hotel, residential and retail use up to 2.95 FAR. Staff recommended the Plan be retained due to concerns that the intensity proposed was not appropriate for a location more than ½ mile from the transit station and that the amount of traffic that would be added would adversely affect the road network.

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, Amended through 8-3-2009, MV1 - Huntington Community Planning Sector, Land Units Q, R, S and U (North Gateway Area), Page 103-104:

“Near the intersection of Richmond Highway and Huntington Avenue, one portion of Land Unit R has been developed with the Hunting Creek condominiums at the planned density of 16-20 dwelling units per acre. The other portion of this land unit, approximately 9 acres, is approved for a mixed-use project of 443 dwelling units and 39,200 gross square feet of commercial space. This site (Tax Map 83-3((1))76) is planned for residential development at 40 dwelling units per acre in the event that the following conditions are met. Coordinated development should take place so that:

- Project design and layout provides a high quality development in keeping with the character of residential development in the area;
- Development is screened and set back from Richmond Highway to avoid excessive building bulk in proximity to Richmond Highway and to provide an adequate transition toward the lower residential densities existing and planned south of Richmond Highway and west of Fort Hunt Road;
- Mixed-use is encouraged provided that the traffic impact is thoroughly analyzed and mitigated so that Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway adjacent to the site will operate at levels of service acceptable to the Virginia Department of Transportation and the County;
- There is an internal circulation system to allow connection with adjacent parcels;
- Vehicular access points are limited to locations as far from the Richmond Highway/Huntington Avenue intersection as possible;
- The site access points will operate at levels of service acceptable to the Virginia Department of Transportation and the County; and
- Adequate right-of-way is provided for the improvement of that intersection if necessary.

A density of up to 50 dwelling units per acre may be considered in the event that Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway adjacent to the site can be proven to operate at levels of service acceptable to the Virginia Department of Transportation and the County.”

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

The nomination proposes mixed use development retaining the existing 443 multifamily residential units and replacing the existing office and retail uses on the site with up to 200,000 square feet of hotel use, resulting in an intensity of approximately 1.65 FAR.

ANALYSIS

Land Use

Item 3MV is currently developed with a community of 443 high-rise residential units, as well as approximately 40,000 square feet of office and retail uses. The proposed 200,000 square foot hotel would replace the existing office and retail use, while keeping the existing residential development intact. The proposed hotel use in 3MV could fulfill a need for higher-quality hotel space within proximity of the Huntington TSA. Removal of the existing commercial uses would impact the customers who currently rely on the goods and services provided. Some of the available commercial space is currently vacant.

The new hotel building would be an infill development, and should be carefully designed and sited to limit the impact on the surrounding area. The building footprint should be minimized in order to be able to provide open space on the site. As discussed in the transportation section below, the site may be impacted by the need to provide right of way (ROW) for the planned interchange improvement at Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway.

Parks

Residents and hotel guests will need leisure opportunities. The integration of urban parks in the overall development design could enhance the aesthetics of the project, contribute to revitalization efforts and activate the area. The provision of indoor recreation facilities for employees and hotel guests is also appropriate.

If the nominations are recommended for approval, the following conditions should be applied:

- The impact on parks and recreation should be mitigated per County policies contained in Objective 6 of the Parks and Recreation section of the Policy Plan;
- Assure inclusion of Comprehensive Plan language supporting pedestrian connectivity and creation of usable open spaces such as pocket parks, plazas, common greens and recreation-focused urban parks; and
- Include plan language supporting the provision of all year active recreation facilities for the workforce and hotel guests.

Transportation

Due to its location just south of the interchange of Richmond Highway with the Capital Beltway, this area experiences high levels of traffic. Intersections in the area currently operate at poor levels of service in the AM and PM peak hours of travel.

The subject property is located approximately ¾ to 1 mile east of the Huntington Metro Station entrance along Huntington Avenue. This is beyond the area considered by the Comprehensive Plan to be optimum for Transit-Oriented Development which is a maximum of ½ mile. Further, the Plan recommends that the highest intensity development be focused within areas not more than ¼ mile from the Metro Transit Station, and development intensities and heights should taper down within areas located between ¼ mile and ½ mile from the Metro Transit Station. The nomination does not meet the criteria for it to be considered a transit-oriented development.

Trip Generation Estimates for APR #09-IV-3MV

Scenario	Daily	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		In	Out	In	Out
<u>Current Comp Plan (52 du/ac Option)</u>					
Multifamily Apartmt (220); 443 DU	2,808	44	177	170	91
General Office (710); 29.2 KSF	517	62	8	19	93
Shopping Center (820); 10.0 KSF	1,520	6	4	67	69
Total	4,845	112	189	256	253
<u>Proposed Amendmt (1.67 FAR Opt)</u>					
Multifamily Apartmt (220); 443 DU	2,808	44	177	170	91
Hotel (310); 286 RM ⁽¹⁾	2,337	92	58	90	79
Total	5,145	136	235	260	170
Net Impact of Proposed Amendment Above Comp Plan	300	24	46	4	(163)

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. (1) Number of rooms for Hotel based on 200,000 total square feet, 700 square feet per room

Nomination 3MV is estimated to generate 300 additional daily trips over the current Comprehensive Plan. On a peak hour basis, the proposed plan would generate 70 additional AM peak hour trips, and decrease the number of PM peak hour trips by 159. The fewer number of trips is attributable to the change in use from office/retail to hotel.

Should this nomination be recommended for approval, the following provisions should be recognized in the Plan guidance:

- The Comprehensive Plan calls for a grade separated interchange at the intersection of Richmond Highway with Huntington Avenue. Further study is required to establish preliminary concepts for this improvement and to determine how much additional right-of-way along Richmond Highway may be needed for the interchange.
- Richmond Highway is designated as a Principal Arterial and currently six lanes in width. While currently built to its planned number of lanes, the existing cross section does not meet the standard established in the Fairfax County Transportation Policy Plan. A 176-foot typical cross-section, established in the Policy Plan for Richmond Highway, is the 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.
- Huntington Avenue is a four-lane Urban Minor Arterial, approximately 100 feet in width, and not currently slated for improvement per the Fairfax County Transportation Plan Map. Current APRs 09-IV-1MV, 2MV, 15MV and 27MV and recently approved BRAC APRs 08-IV-3MV and 9MV would all impact traffic on Huntington Avenue between Richmond Highway and Telegraph Road. Depending on the outcome of the proposed nominations, the cumulative impact may result in a need for six lanes on Huntington Avenue. Should widening of Huntington Avenue be necessary, additional right-of-way dedication along the frontage of the nominated parcel may be needed.
- Efficient internal circulation should be developed with curb cuts minimized and locations of entrances and median breaks arranged to minimize conflicts with traffic on the adjacent arterial roadways.

Currently, this area is served by four (4) bus routes: Metrobus Route 9A; Richmond Highway Express (REX); and Fairfax Connector Routes 101 and 171. The Huntington Metrorail Station is located approximately 1 mile to the west, on Huntington Avenue. In addition, Richmond Highway is shown as an Enhanced Public Transportation Corridor (EPTC) on the Fairfax County Transportation Plan Map, with future “Metrorail/Monorail/LRT/BRT” service along the corridor. Development of this site should accommodate efficient transit operations within the corridor and vicinity.

The Fairfax County Countywide Trails Plan shows a major paved trail running along the Cameron Run waterway, a major paved trail along Richmond Highway, a minor paved trail and on-road bicycle path along Huntington Avenue, and a minor paved trail along Fort Hunt Road. Pedestrian circulation is important in this area. Any development of this site, therefore, should accommodate the planned trail improvements. Efforts should be made to connect internal bicycle/pedestrian facilities with existing and planned County facilities.

Given its proximity to numerous existing and planned bicycle/pedestrian facilities and transit services, efforts should be made to reach certain travel demand management goals by shifting single occupant automobile users that will visit, live or shop at this site to non-automobile modes.

Tree Cover

Limited tree cover exists on the subject parcel. Any new development should incorporate landscaping to improve water quality and provide shade and screening for the proposed future use of this area.

Water Quality

Stormwater management and water quality controls and practices should be optimized for any redevelopment of the property per the Policy Plan. The sites should redevelop based on the laws governing new development which include a 40 percent phosphorus removal requirement for water quality and enhanced stormwater management measures. Landscaping, removal of unnecessary impervious surface and re-vegetation of the site will visually enhance new development and improve water and air quality.

Stormwater Management

In general, construction of new and renovation of existing buildings should avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts to Resource Protection Areas, floodplains, and wetlands. Low Impact Development and other design methods for road corridors, parking areas and buildings to offset the losses and minimize the long-term impacts of the development should be implemented. Reductions in the amount of impervious surfaces on the site would help to control stormwater runoff.

Noise

Transportation generated noise from Richmond Highway affects all of the parcels that front on this highway. Noise studies would be required for any noise sensitive uses (residential, hotel, etc.) which might be proposed for this land area to determine the extent of impacts and any proposed mitigation measures which might be applied. Any new residential and hotel development would be required to mitigate interior and exterior noise impacts.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff feels that the hotel proposed for Item 3MV would provide benefits to the area without creating significant negative impacts. A hotel use could benefit from the high visibility of the site from both Richmond Highway and I-495. Hotels typically generate less traffic than other commercial uses and there is a need for high-quality hotel use in the area. In fact, replacing the retail and office uses with the proposed hotel is expected to generate a relatively low 300 trips per day over the current planned uses and could actually decrease the number of trips in the PM peak hours. It is noted that right-of-way may be needed for the planned grade separated interchange or other improvements at the intersection of Richmond Highway with Huntington Avenue.

Staff supports nomination 3MV with some additional conditions, including updating the number of dwelling units per acre to reflect existing development. These are as shown in the suggested Plan text below. To identify changes from the previously adopted Plan, new text is shown with underline and deleted text shown with ~~strikethrough~~.

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, Amended through 8-3-2009, MV1 - Huntington Community Planning Sector, Land Units Q, R, S and U (North Gateway Area), Page 103-104:

“Near the intersection of Richmond Highway and Huntington Avenue, one portion of Land Unit R has been developed with the Hunting Creek condominiums at the planned density of 16-20 dwelling units per acre. The other portion of this land unit, approximately 9 acres, is ~~approved for~~ developed with a mixed-use project of 443 dwelling units and 39,200 gross square feet of commercial space. This site (Tax Map 83-3((1))76) is planned for residential development at ~~40~~ 52 dwelling units per acre, plus a full service hotel up to 200,000 square feet to replace the existing commercial uses, in the event that the following conditions are met. ~~Coordinated development should take place so that:~~

- Project design, building materials, and layout provides a high quality development and pedestrian focused site design which should include street-oriented building forms; in keeping with the character of residential development in the area;
- Buildings should be designed in a way that unifies the site and minimizes negative impacts on the adjacent uses;
- Buildings should be designed to accommodate telecommunications antennas and equipment cabinets in a way that is compatible with the building’s architecture and conceals the antennas and equipment from surrounding properties and roadways;
- Underground structured parking is provided to serve the development;
- Implementation of an effective transportation demand management (TDM) program to reduce auto travel in the area, which could include coordinated shuttle service to Huntington Metro Station for both residents and hotel users;
- Provision of integrated pedestrian and bicycle systems with features such as covered and secure bicycle storage facilities, walkways, trails and sidewalks, amenities such as street trees, benches, bus shelters and adequate lighting;
- Creation of usable open spaces such as pocket parks, plazas, common greens and recreation-focused urban parks on the site;
- Provision of environmental elements into the design, including buildings designed to meet the criteria for LEED Silver green building certification;
- The impact on parks and recreation should be mitigated per County policies contained in Objective 6 of the Parks and Recreation section of the Policy Plan;
- ~~Development is screened and set back from Richmond Highway to avoid excessive building bulk in proximity to Richmond Highway and~~ to provide an adequate transition toward the lower residential densities existing and planned south of Richmond Highway and west of Fort Hunt Road;
- Mixed-use is encouraged provided that the traffic impact is thoroughly analyzed and mitigated so that Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway adjacent to the site will operate at levels of service acceptable to the Virginia Department of Transportation and the County;
- There is an internal circulation system to allow connection with adjacent parcels;

- Vehicular access points are limited to locations as far from the Richmond Highway/Huntington Avenue intersection as possible;
- The site access points will operate at levels of service acceptable to the Virginia Department of Transportation and the County; and
- Adequate right-of-way is provided for the improvement of ~~that~~ the intersection of Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway as planned, or other improvements found to be necessary if necessary.

~~A density of up to 50 dwelling units per acre may be considered in the event that Huntington Avenue and Richmond Highway adjacent to the site can be proven to operate at levels of service acceptable to the Virginia Department of Transportation and the County.”~~

NOTE: The Comprehensive Plan Map would be changed to show parcel 83-3 ((1)) 76 planned for Mixed Use.