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Department of Planning & Zoning**

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STAFF REPORT 2009-2010 SOUTH COUNTY AREA PLANS REVIEW

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: LEE

APR ITEM: 09-IV-4FS

NOMINATOR(S): Springfield Industrial Park Partnership c/o Zumot Real Estate Management, Inc.

ACREAGE: 4.14 acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 90-4 ((1)) 11A

GENERAL LOCATION: Southeast of Springfield Center Drive and northwest of Chessie Seaboard Multiplier (CSX) Railroad tracks

PLANNING AREA(S): IV
District(s): Springfield
Sector: Springfield East (S7)
Special Area: Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area (Land Unit P)

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Industrial use

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Light industrial use up to an intensity of 0.35 floor-area ratio (FAR) with an option for biotech/research and development uses up to an intensity of 0.50 FAR to complement the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC)/Inova medical center

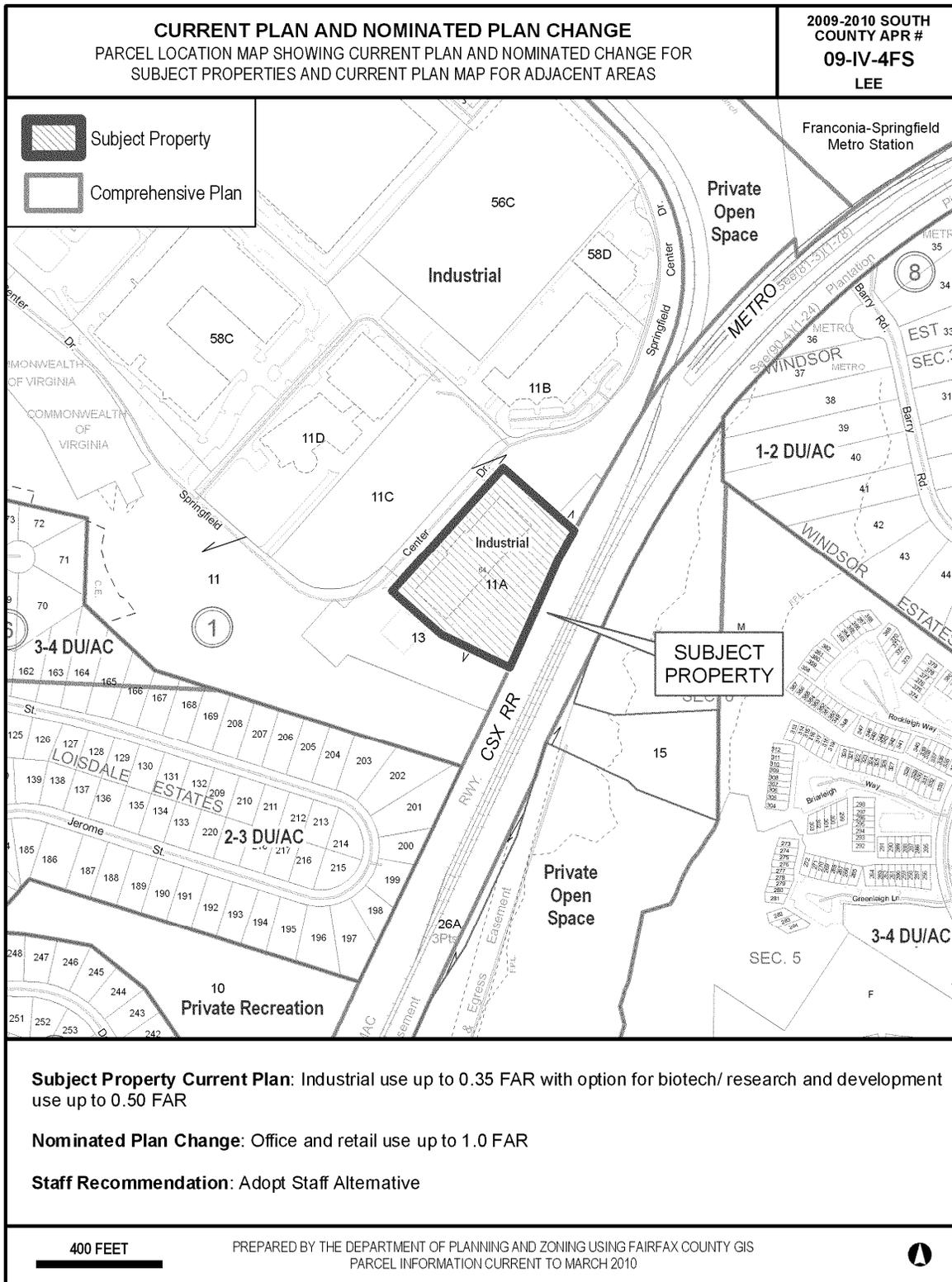
Complete Plan text: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area4/franconiaspring.pdf>,
Page 53

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Office use up to 1.0 FAR with support retail use

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Approve Nomination as submitted
 Approve Staff Alternative
 Retain Adopted Plan

Staff recommends that the subject property be replanned to include office use up to an intensity of 0.50 FAR, in addition to the current Plan for biotech/ research and development use. The addition of the office use recommendation would be appropriate as the Plan would reflect permitted uses under the existing zoning. Office use would benefit from the property's location within the ½ mile radius from the Metrorail station platform and walking distance from the platform, once the extension of Frontier Drive is implemented. The nominated intensity is not appropriate as it involves piecemeal replanning of a single parcel at twice the intensity of other parcels in Land



Unit P. The intensity also could have an adverse visual impact on the nearby low density Loisdale Estates neighborhood, particularly if underground parking cannot be provided. The intensity also would exacerbate roadway capacity and access problems without the Frontier Drive extension. Additional intensity related to the transit orientation could be considered for the entire land unit in the future, dependant on the implementation of the Frontier Drive extension.

CONTEXT:

General Location: The subject property is located southeast of Springfield Center Drive, southeast of the General Services Area Parr Warehouse, generally north of Loisdale Estates community, and southwest of the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail station.

Existing and Planned Land Use and Zoning:***Subject Property:***

The subject property encompasses one parcel and contains a 50,000 square foot (SF) warehouse. The property is located within Land Unit P of the Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area within the Franconia-Springfield Area, which is planned for light industrial use up to 0.35 floor-area ratio (FAR). The land unit also has an option for biotech/research and development uses an intensity up to 0.50 FAR to complement the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC)/ Inova medical center. The current Plan would result in approximately 63,000 SF of industrial use or approximately 90,000 SF of biotech/ research and development use. The property is zoned I-4.

Adjacent Areas:

North and West: Land Unit P extends north and west of the subject property and is planned with the same recommendation as the subject property. The NVCC Medical Campus and a vacant property owned by Inova Health Systems are located to the northwest and west of the property in Land Unit P. These properties are also zoned I-4. Two additional parcels north of the subject property, comprising 6-acres, were involved in the 2006 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Area Plans Review (APR) process. BRAC APR 08-IV-2FS, adopted on August 3, 2009, replanned this 6-acre area with an option for office use up to an intensity of 2.0 FAR due to its location south of the Joe Alexander Transportation Center and the proposed coordination with the adjacent office use in Land Unit O. The Joe Alexander Transportation Center is located to the northeast of the subject property in Land Unit N. Land Unit N is planned for public facilities and zoned I-4. The Transportation Center contains the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station, the regional Virginia Railway Express station, a 5,000-vehicle commuter parking facility, and local and regional bus services.

East: The CSX Railroad tracks and a significant wetland area associated with Long Branch stream are located to the east of the subject property, outside of the Transit Station Area. The wetlands are planned for private open space and zoned R-1 and R-5.

South: Directly to the south of the subject property is vacant land that is either undeveloped or used for storage and parking. This area also is planned within Land Unit P and zoned I-4. The

Loisdale Estates neighborhood is located further south, approximately 400-500 feet from the subject property. This community is planned for residential use at densities of 2-3 and 3-4 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and zoned R-3 and R-4.

PLANNING HISTORY

The nominated area of APR 09-IV-4FS consists of a portion of the subject area for BRAC APR 08-IV-3FS (3FS), which was withdrawn in July 2008. BRAC APR 08-IV-3FS proposed office or mixed use with office and retail at base of 1.5 FAR with an option up to 2.0 FAR. The preliminary staff report for 3FS expresses concern with the proposed intensity and recommends that office use could be appropriate, in addition to the current Plan recommendation for biotech/research and development use, at a lesser intensity than proposed, up to a 0.50 FAR.

The subject area also was involved in the Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Franconia-Springfield Area adopted on January 12, 2010. Plan Amendment (PA) S09-CW-3CP, amended the Plan text for the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) and Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area (TSA). The amendment primarily focused on new areawide guidance pertaining to urban design, streetscape and placemaking. Portions of the CBC, north and south of Old Keene Mill Road were recommended for redevelopment as an urban village and commuter parking facility, respectively. New transportation recommendations to support improved connectivity were added, such as a bus circulator service and an extension of Frontier Drive from the Joe Alexander Transportation Center to the land unit in which the subject area is located. The amendment also reorganized the structure of the Plan text for the Franconia-Springfield Area, moving the Engineer Proving Ground recommendations to follow the Franconia-Springfield Area text. As part of the reorganization of the area, the land unit in which the subject area is located was renamed from Land Unit D-2 to Land Unit P. There were no changes to the planned land use or the intensity of the subject area in the amendment.

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area, Land Unit P, as amended through 1-12-2010, page 53:

“Land Unit P

Land Unit P is located south of the GSA-Parr Warehouse and north of the Loisdale Estates subdivision. It is about 57 acres in size and contains the site of the Northern Virginia Community College and Springfield Center Industrial Park.

Land Unit P is planned for light industrial use up to .35 FAR. As an option, biotech/research and development uses up to .50 FAR may be appropriate to complement the VNCC/INOVA medical center. For parcels 90-2((1))57E, 57F, 57G, and 57H, office use up to .50 FAR may also be considered. Any development under this option must demonstrate that it will generate less peak hour

traffic than the planned baseline use to minimize traffic generation in an area with limited transportation capacity. Development should provide a landscaped buffer of at least 75 feet in width along the Loisdale Estates subdivision boundary...”

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

APR nomination 09-IV-4FS proposes to add an option for redevelopment as one office building with an intensity of 1.0 FAR, support retail use, and structured parking below the building. The proposed Plan would result in 176,400 SF of office use (95%) and 3,600 SF of retail use (5%).

ANALYSIS

Land Use: APR nomination 4FS has three main issues related to land use: the proposed office use, the proposed intensity, and the relationship of the proposed development to the surrounding uses. First, amending the Plan to include an option for office use on the subject property, as proposed, would complement the nearby planned office use to the north of the subject property in Land Unit O and P. The replanning would support the county goal of locating similar uses adjacent to one another. However, the proposed intensity creates concern. The subject property is a single, 4-acre parcel within the 61-acre land unit. The nomination would double the planned intensity of a single parcel within the land unit. The nomination does not propose consolidation or coordination among other development plans. The Plan vision for the intensity on site should not be incrementally adjusted through piecemeal replanning of individual parcels to more intense uses. Further, the subject property is located approximately 500 feet from the nearest house in Loisdale Estates, and the proposed intensity could create adverse, visual impacts on the nearby neighborhood related to building height. The 0.50 FAR should be retained, resulting in a building size of up to approximately 90,000 SF. This would be consistent with the Plan for other parcels Land Unit P.

The nominator states on page 21 of the nomination form that the amendment is justified due to “development in progress, state college building on other side of street. Zoning of I-4 is outdated and inefficient for the current times.” However, neither the “development in progress” nor the state college building” would support the replanning of the subject property at the proposed intensity. Staff interprets the “development in progress” as the recently adopted Plan amendment (BRAC APR 09-IV-2FS) for the parcel to the north and the existing Plan recommendation for additional office to the northwest of the subject property. Although BRAC APR 2FS is located within Land Unit P, the nomination was proposed as coordinated development with Land Unit O, and both properties are located approximately ½ mile from the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail station via the existing shuttle road and slightly greater than ¼ mile from the Metrorail station via the conceptual plan for the proposed extension of Frontier Drive. The properties are also served by a private shuttle to the rail station.

County policy for transit-oriented development defines transit-oriented development as ¼-mile radius from the station platform with density and intensity tapering to within a ½-mile radius from

the station platform, or a 5-10 minute walk, subject to site-specific conditions. The “development in progress” would be considered transit-oriented development. However, the proposed nomination is located over ¾-mile walking distance from the Metrorail station platform, via the existing shuttle bus road, and approximately ½-mile walking distance from the platform, via the proposed Frontier Drive extension. With the extension of the Frontier Drive, the subject property would be considered transit-oriented development, but it would be on the edge of where the tapering would need to occur. See map on page 9.

Staff understands the “state college building,” addressed in the Justification, as the Northern Virginia Community College facility to the west of the subject property. This property is planned within the same land unit, Land Unit O, as the subject property and is developed at an intensity of 0.50 FAR, under the current Plan. The building consists of approximately 130,000 SF of development on a 257,000 SF parcel. The NVCC facility was implemented under current Plan optional recommendation for the land unit, and its intensity would not be considered justification to amend the Plan for the subject property.

Other portions of the land unit also are located within the ½ mile radius of the station platform and within a 5-10 minute walking distance, as shown on the map on page 9 of this staff report. In order to support the county’s goal of coordinating development, which is expressly stated throughout the Plan text for Land Units O and P, a future amendment of the land unit should be considered that can cumulatively assess the impacts of transit-oriented development on land use and transportation in this area. With the implementation of the Frontier Drive extension, additional intensity may be appropriate if the tallest buildings or structures are located closest to the transit station and oriented away from the Loisdale Estates neighborhood. This design would need to be demonstrated during the rezoning process.

Transportation: The proposed nomination would generate higher daily, AM and PM peak hours trips than the land uses allowed under both the current Comprehensive Plan base and option recommendation, as shown on the table on the next page. Vehicular access to the subject property is from Springfield Center Drive. The recently adopted Springfield Connectivity Plan Amendment S09-CW-3CP amended the Plan to extend Frontier Drive along Springfield Center Drive as a 4-lane divided section to Loisdale Road. Right-of-way and construction of a portion of the Frontier Drive improvement along the frontage of the subject property, as well as a contribution to an areawide transportation fund, should be provided as a condition for redevelopment.

The subject property is located within the ½-mile radius of the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail station, but on the edge of the ½-mile walk. The property has the potential for some redevelopment as a transit-oriented development, subject to provision of direct pedestrian access to the station that would substantially reduce the vehicular trips generated. Access and safety issues, particularly related to pedestrians, are of primary concern. The transportation issues associated with any development of the subject area, particularly related to access, will need to be addressed during the rezoning process, if this Plan amendment is adopted. The development plan

should address vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, turning movements, signalization, safety issues, and transit amenities. Additional dedication of right-of-way for sidewalk, roadway improvements/ widening, transit, and associated easements may be required.

Based on the comparison of the average daily trips generated by the plan options, the nomination would not require a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Chapter 527 review. 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 VDOT. Any amendment to the Comprehensive Plan that generates 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”. The nomination would not generate 5,000 additional vehicle trips per day, as compared to the highest density recommended under the current Comprehensive Plan.

Trip Generation estimates for APR 09-IV-4FS

Current Plan		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		Average
Development Type	Quantities	In	Out	In	Out	Daily
Light Industrial (110)	63,000	45	6	7	48	391
Total		45	6	7	48	391

Current Plan option		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		Average
Development Type		In	Out	In	Out	Daily
Office (710)	90,000 Sf	109	15	20	99	882
Total		109	15	20	99	882

Proposed Plan		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		Average
Development Type		In	Out	In	Out	Daily
Office (710)	180,000 Sf	219	30	41	198	1,764
Total		219	30	41	198	1,764

Net impact of Option above Comp Plan		173	24	34	150	1,373
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1) Trip rates and formulas used are from the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE), Trip Generation, 8th Edition, 2008.

2) Trip generation estimates account for reductions due to proximity to transit.

Environment: An unnamed tributary associated with Long Branch traverses in a westerly direction south of the subject property and it affects the southeastern corner of the subject property. This feature is considered Resource Protection Area (RPA), Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC), and 100 year floodplain, which consists of environmentally-sensitive wet areas. See attached map on page 10 of this staff report for map. The nomination may incur an obstacle with underground parking because of the shallow depth of ground water surrounded on the south and the east by the wet areas. Water may pose an obstacle to underground parking. If these areas necessitated above-ground parking, then the building would result in an increased height, which could visually loom over the nearby community.

Water: Water service in the subject area is served by Fairfax Water which is a non-profit Water Utility that serves Northern Virginia. Providing service to a more intense development would likely require additional infrastructure to meet fire flow requirements and increase reliability. Individual developers would be responsible for extending lines to their development and would make these commitments during the rezoning and development process.

RECOMMENDATION

As an alternative to the nominations, staff recommends that the Comprehensive Plan be modified as shown below. Text proposed to be added is shown as underlined.

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area, Land Unit P, as amended through 1-12-2010, page 53:

“Land Unit P

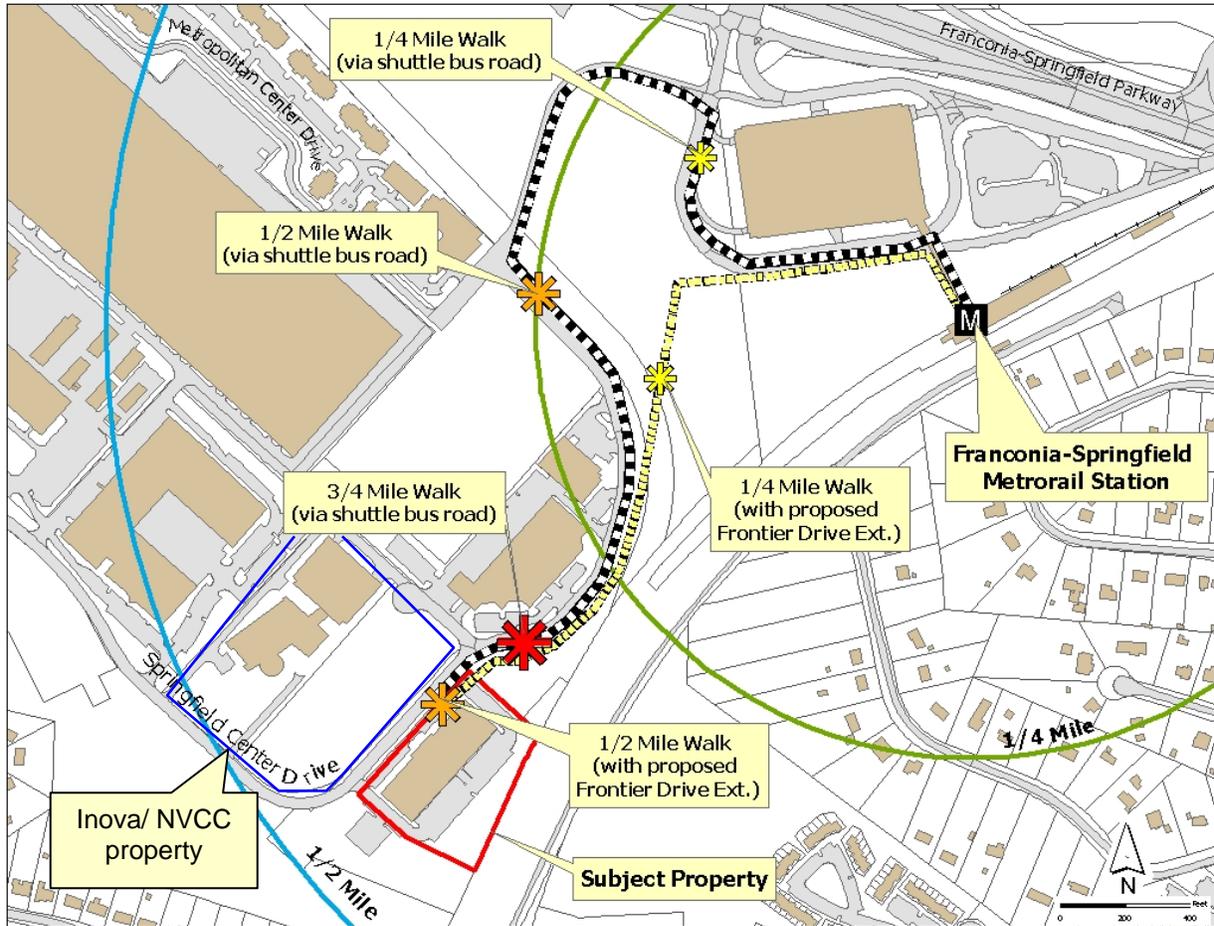
Land Unit P is located south of the GSA-Parr Warehouse and north of the Loisdale Estates Subdivision. It is about 57 acres in size and contains the site of the Northern Virginia Community College and Springfield Center Industrial Park.

Land Unit P is planned for light industrial use up to .35 FAR. As an option, biotech/research and development uses up to .50 FAR may be appropriate to complement the VNCC/INOVA medical center. For parcels 90-2((1)) 57E, 57F, 57G, and 57H, and 90-4 ((1)) 11A, office use up to .50 FAR may also be considered. Any development under this option must demonstrate that it will generate less peak hour traffic than the planned baseline use to minimize traffic generation in an area with limited transportation capacity. Development should provide a landscaped buffer of at least 75 feet in width along the Loisdale Estates subdivision boundary. Redevelopment of Parcel 90-4 ((1)) 11A should provide for the dedication of right-of-way for the extension of Frontier Drive as well as provide for a contribution to the areawide transportation fund.”

NOTE: The Comprehensive Plan Map would not change.

Walking Distance Map:

Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station Platform to Subject Property



Environmental Map: APR 09-IV-4FS

