

**PRELIMINARY  
STAFF REPORT  
2009-2010 SOUTH COUNTY AREA PLANS REVIEW**

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT:** MOUNT VERNON

**APR ITEM:** 09-IV-11MV

**NOMINATOR(S):** Patrick Rea, Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations

**ACREAGE:** N/A

**TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS:** N/A

**GENERAL LOCATION:** Area generally surrounding Richmond Highway from the City of Alexandria boundary to the Woodlawn Plantation.

**PLANNING AREA:** IV

**District:** Mount Vernon

**Sector:** Huntington (MV1), Hybla Valley (MV2), Greater Belle Haven (MV3), Groveton (MV5), Fort Hunt (MV6), Mount Vernon (MV7), and Woodlawn (MV8)

**Special Areas:** North Gateway, Penn Daw, Beacon Groveton, Hybla Valley/Gum Springs, South County Center, and Woodlawn Community Business Centers (CBCs)

**ADOPTED PLAN MAP:** N/A

**ADOPTED PLAN TEXT:** The Richmond Highway Corridor Area plan seeks to promote revitalization and redevelopment while maintaining an acceptable land use and transportation balance.

For complete plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/planareas.htm>

**PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:**

Strengthen recommendations to reduce stormwater runoff and be consistent with county watershed plans. Add specific text encouraging development incentives and reducing roadway width to achieve these goals (Attachment I).

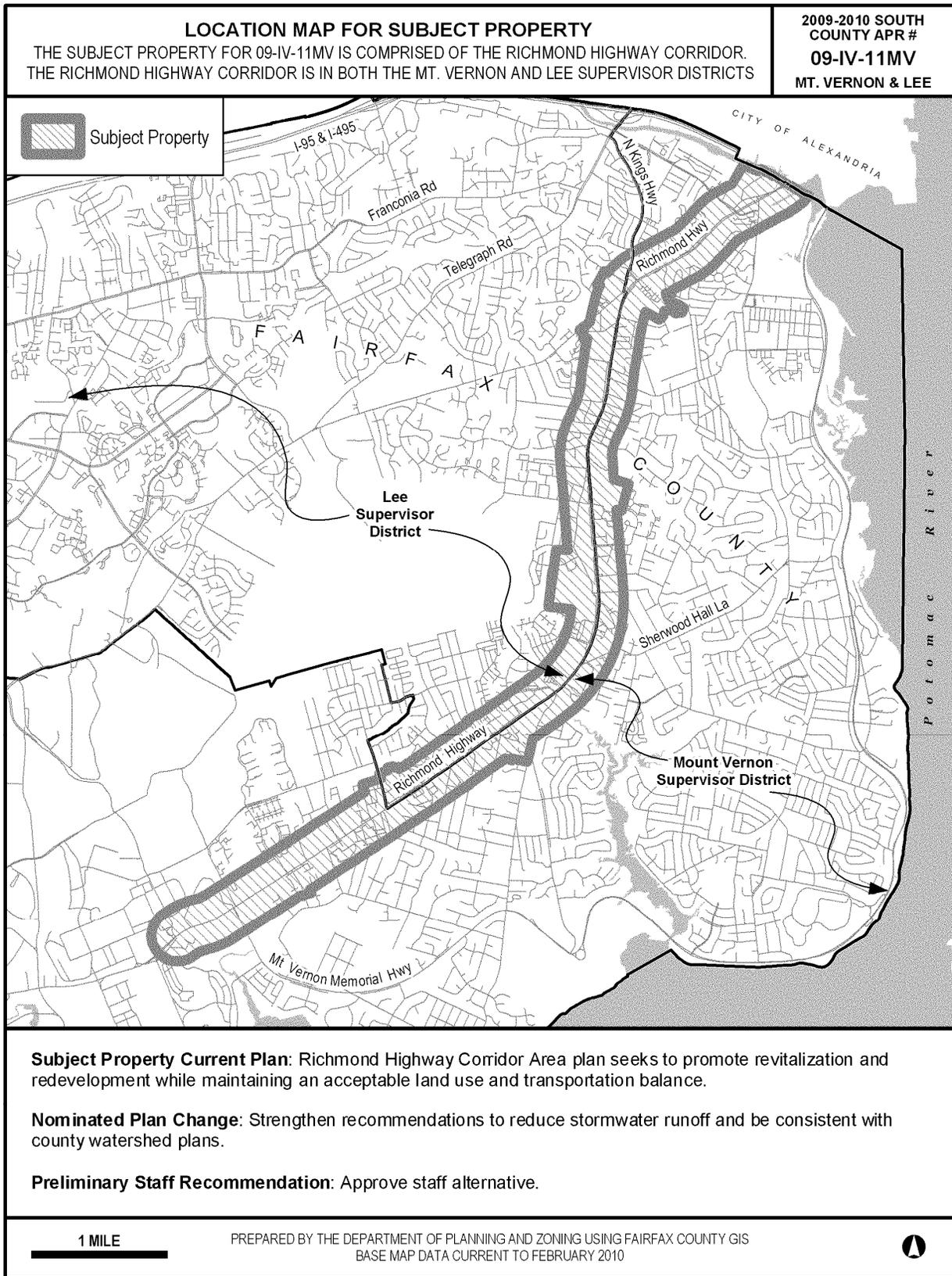
**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Nomination as submitted

Approve Staff Alternative

Retain Adopted Plan

The proposed nomination contains language that seeks to achieve better control over stormwater runoff in the Richmond Highway Corridor. Staff recommends approval of a staff alternative to better reflect the role of the Comprehensive Plan in promoting stormwater management (Attachment II). The language proposed in the staff alternative removes that which is not enforceable through the



Comprehensive Plan, replacing it with more general guidance that promotes better control of stormwater runoff in the Richmond Highway Corridor. Language stating that incentives to reduce imperviousness should be provided to developers is replaced with less prescriptive language, reflecting the Comprehensive Plan's role as a guiding document. Proposed transportation recommendations regarding service drives have been removed, since language addressing low impact development practices for the entire corridor is proposed. Existing Plan language does not preclude the removal and conversion of unneeded service drives to pervious surface. In addition, service drives are intended to improve traffic flow and access to private property. The proposed text seems to suggest that the service drives should be removed without consideration of this purpose. Likewise, proposed recommendations regarding road widening projects have been removed, since the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) undertakes these projects in accordance with their own policies and regulations.

### **CRITICAL ISSUES**

- The subject area includes the general area surrounding a seven and one-half mile stretch of the Richmond Highway Corridor, extending from the City of Alexandria boundary to the Woodlawn Plantation. The area primarily contains commercial uses, such as local-serving retail uses, which are located in a number of community and neighborhood shopping centers, and free-standing and strip commercial uses. The majority of these commercial uses are uncoordinated and characterized by large setbacks from the roadway that contain surface parking. The Corridor also contains townhouse-style and some mid-rise offices and hotels. A wide variety of residential uses are located along the corridor as well from mobile home parks to high-rise residential uses near the Alexandria border.
- Fairfax County is currently in the process of creating watershed plans for each watershed in its boundaries. The Little Hunting Creek Watershed Management Plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 5, 2005 and the Cameron Run Watershed Management Plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 6, 2007. These plans, which cover part of the Richmond Highway Corridor, outline a number of actions to be taken that would improve the quality of the Little Hunting Creek and Cameron Run watersheds. The county has not yet moved to the implementation phase of the Watershed Plans, pending the completion of plans for other watersheds. Additional watersheds in the Richmond Highway Corridor include the Dogue Creek and Belle Haven Watersheds.
- This nomination would add language to the Land Use and Transportation sections of the Richmond Highway Corridor plan to reduce water runoff, consistent with County watershed plans. To the Character section of the Plan, the nomination would add language stating that development in the corridor has degraded the area's watersheds. A land use recommendation to provide incentives to reduce stormwater runoff and imperviousness would be added with this nomination. Additionally, transportation recommendations are proposed that involve removing some service drives and recommending that road widening projects better control runoff from existing paved areas.

## ATTACHMENT I

## NOMINATED PLAN TEXT – 09-IV-11MV

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District as amended through 8-3-2009, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, page 25:

Additions are shown underlined and deletions are shown with a ~~striketrough~~.

## “CHARACTER

...The northern part of Richmond Highway is located in the Belle Haven and Little Hunting Creek watersheds, while the southern segment is in the Dogue Creek watershed and is affected by the floodplains and stream valleys of Dogue Creek. The entire corridor is located in the Coastal Plain geologic province and thus lies in a zone of extensive slippage-prone swelling clays and sensitive aquifer recharge. Development in the Richmond Highway Corridor has degraded all three of these watersheds by increasing stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces and decreasing aquifer recharge.”

**ADD:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District as amended through 8-3-2009, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, page 27:

- “Offer incentives for development and redevelopment projects to reduce imperviousness and achieve better control over stormwater runoff in the Richmond Highway Corridor.”

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District as amended through 8-3-2009, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, page 27:

## “Transportation

The following objectives are intended to guide general transportation decisions in the Richmond Highway Corridor.

- Provide improved traffic circulation and traffic safety during both peak and non-peak hours;
- Maximize the efficiency of existing highway facilities to move people and goods;
- Promote the increased use of ridesharing and public transportation to reduce reliance on automobiles; and
- Minimize the impact of highway widenings, new roadway alignments, and new development projects on adjacent residential communities and the ~~ecology~~ water quality of the district.

Service drive construction should not generally be required where interparcel access can be provided between adjacent development areas. ~~Existing service drives should be replaced wherever possible.~~ In order to achieve improved stormwater controls, existing service drives or portions that are no longer needed should be removed to reduce the impervious footprint. Consideration should be given to converting them to bioretention or vegetated and treed swales that could serve as landscaping features, and that would control

and treat stormwater. Highway right-of-way dedication or the “reservation” of right-of-way will be required where necessary.

Road widening projects should better control the runoff from existing paved areas that lack stormwater management controls. Such projects should reduce the existing peak runoff rate, as permitted by Virginia regulations upon request of the DCR in areas that have adopted a watershed management plan. Improvements in the control of stormwater runoff from the Richmond Highway should be achieved using LID techniques and installing structural BMPs along the proposed corridor.”

## ATTACHMENT II

## PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION – 09-IV-11MV

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District as amended through 8-3-2009, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, page 25:

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## “CHARACTER

...The northern part of Richmond Highway is located in the Belle Haven and Little Hunting Creek watersheds, while the southern segment is in the Dogue Creek watershed and is affected by the floodplains and stream valleys of Dogue Creek. The entire corridor is located in the Coastal Plain geologic province and thus lies in a zone of extensive slippage-prone swelling clays and sensitive aquifer recharge. Development in the Richmond Highway Corridor has degraded all three of these watersheds by increasing stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces and decreasing groundwater recharge.”

**ADD:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District as amended through 8-3-2009, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, page 27:

- “Encourage development approaches that serve to reduce imperviousness and achieve better control over stormwater runoff in the Richmond Highway Corridor. Encourage the application of low impact development practices of stormwater management (e.g., bioretention facilities; vegetated swales) toward this end. Consideration should be given to reducing the impervious footprints of redevelopment sites and to integrating LID practices within landscaping strategies.”

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District as amended through 8-3-2009, Richmond Highway Corridor Area, page 27:

“Transportation

The following objectives are intended to guide general transportation decisions in the Richmond Highway Corridor.

- Provide improved traffic circulation and traffic safety during both peak and non-peak hours;
- Maximize the efficiency of existing highway facilities to move people and goods;
- Promote the increased use of ridesharing and public transportation to reduce reliance on automobiles; and
- Minimize the impact of highway widenings, new roadway alignments, and new development projects on adjacent residential communities and the ~~ecology~~ of water quality and ecological conditions of streams within the district.

Service drive construction should not generally be required where interparcel access can be provided between adjacent development areas. Existing service drives should be replaced wherever possible. Highway right-of-way dedication or the “reservation” of right-of-way will be required where necessary.”