

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

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: LEE, MOUNT VERNON

APR ITEM: 09-IV-1FS

NOMINATOR(S): Kimberly Rybold, Fairfax County Department of Planning & Zoning

ACREAGE: 803

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 90-3 ((1)) 32

GENERAL LOCATION: West of Backlick Road, east of Rolling Road, north of Fairfax County Parkway (under construction).

PLANNING AREA: IV
District: Springfield
Sector: Belvoir (S5)
Special Areas: Engineer Proving Ground

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Public Facilities, Government and Institutional Uses

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Public facilities, government and institutional, and public parks; option for mixed-use at an overall intensity of .17 FAR with conditions.

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

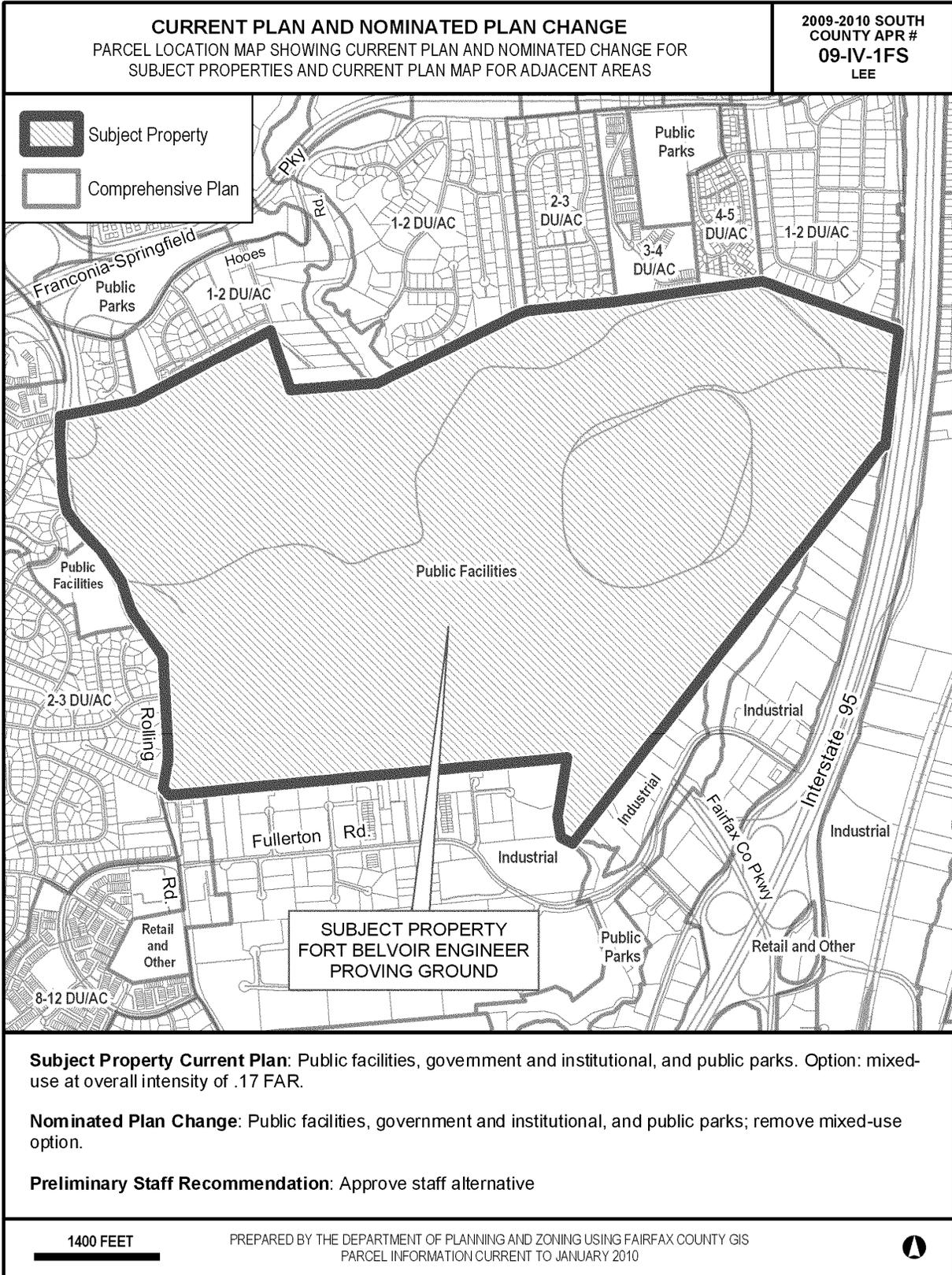
PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:

Remove the mixed-use option from the Plan text and reflect the 2.4-million-square-foot government facility under construction on the subject property.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

This nomination proposes removing the mixed-use option from the Engineer Proving Ground, reflecting the secure government facility currently under construction on the subject property. Public park recommendations for the Accotink Creek stream valley and land to the west, as well as select transportation and environment recommendations, will be retained in the Plan text. The baseline recommendation for public facilities, government and institutional uses will remain on the subject property. This will result in a more accurate depiction of future land use for the subject property, while simultaneously retaining those recommendations from the mixed-use



option that are of value to the subject property and the surrounding area. A staff alternative to the original nomination is presented as a result of feedback and comments received from other agencies during nomination review (Attachment I). Language to describe the location of park and transportation facilities has been added, and a reference to Biodiversity Conservation Area practices has been removed since it is out-of date.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use

- The Engineer Proving Ground section of the Comprehensive Plan was added as a result of Out-of-Turn Plan Amendment S93-CW-1CP, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 28, 1994. In November 1989, Congress passed Public Law 101-189, Section 2821, permitting the Department of the Army to sell, trade, or lease federal land at the Engineer Proving Ground to a private developer in exchange for construction of office space for the Department of the Army. As a result, a mixed-use option was added to the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate this planned public-private partnership. Development under this 15-20 year plan had been estimated to begin in 1996; however, this mixed-use option was never exercised. Subsequently, the Engineer Proving Ground was identified as the location for a new, consolidated National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) under the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005. This 2.4-million-square-foot facility is currently under construction, and is scheduled to be completed by September 2011.
- The 803-acre subject property is located west of Backlick Road, north of the Fairfax County Parkway (under construction), and east of Rolling Road. The subject property is planned for public facilities, government and institutional, and public park uses. As an option, the site may be considered for mixed-use development up to an overall intensity of .17 FAR. This would consist of 1,500 multifamily and 85 patio-style single family dwelling units, 3.6 million square feet of office use, 300,000 square feet of convenience and accessory retail use, and 600,000 square feet of hotel/conference center uses. Currently, a 2.4-million-square-foot facility for the NGA is under construction on the eastern portion of the site. Remaining portions of the subject property are vacant.
- The nomination proposes to remove the mixed-use option for the Engineer Proving Ground from the Comprehensive Plan. The subject property would retain its baseline recommendation of public facilities, government and institutional, and public park uses. Additionally, some recommendations pertaining to environmental analysis, public lands dedication, transportation, the environment, parks and recreation, and trails would remain in the Comprehensive Plan. Plan text describing the character of the Engineer Proving Ground is proposed to be modified to include a statement recognizing the current construction of the new NGA 2,400,000-square-foot facility.

Dedication of Public Lands

- Of the seven land dedications currently listed, it is proposed that five remain in the Plan. Since the mixed-use option is being removed from the Plan, it will no longer be necessary for a 20-acre school site and a 5-acre school site to be dedicated to the county. Other land dedications mostly located opposite the Accotink Stream Valley from the NGA site, such as parkland, Environmental Quality Corridors, and transportation facilities, would

benefit the surrounding area in addition to the subject property, and are proposed to remain.

Transportation

- The adopted County Transportation Plan contains six roadway and public transportation improvements in the vicinity of the Engineer Proving Ground. These improvements will be retained in the Engineer Proving Ground section of the Plan, as they will aid in accommodating BRAC-related job growth in the vicinity of Fort Belvoir and the Engineer Proving Ground.

Parks and Recreation

- The retention of the public parks recommendation in the Engineer Proving Ground will help ensure that adequate parks and recreation services will be provided in this area. The transfer of this land to Fairfax County for park use as called for in the 2003 Defense Authorization Act would mitigate the adverse impacts of BRAC Actions on recreation service levels and environmental quality. Additionally, the Accotink Creek Stream Valley is a major greenway corridor through the Springfield area of Fairfax County and the Engineer Proving Ground portion is a missing link in the County's protected stream valley system.

ATTACHMENT I

PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION

REPLACE: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Area, Fort Belvoir Engineer Proving Ground (EPG), as amended through 1-12-2010, replace pages 3-32:

Note: Text shown in ~~strike through~~ is a deletion from the original nomination; text shown in underline is an addition from the original nomination.

“FORT BELVOIR ENGINEER PROVING GROUND (EPG)

CHARACTER

The Fort Belvoir Engineer Proving Ground (EPG) is an approximately 805-acre site located between Rolling Road and Interstate 95, south of the Springfield Community Business Center. It is located approximately 10 miles northwest of Fort Belvoir Main Post. (See Figure 1) The EPG was formerly used by the Army Corps of Engineers as a research and testing site. Much of the site is largely vacant with only a few, relatively small, existing structures. However, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency will occupy a new 2,400,000 square-foot facility on the eastern portion of the EPG property.

The EPG is on high ground, generally between 200 and 300 feet above sea level. The Accotink Creek stream valley bisects the EPG from north to south, dividing it into two nearly equal parts. Broad level terraces are present on each half of the site. The majority of steep slopes are found along both sides of Accotink Creek. Other steep slopes are formed by secondary streams and swales that feed into Accotink Creek.

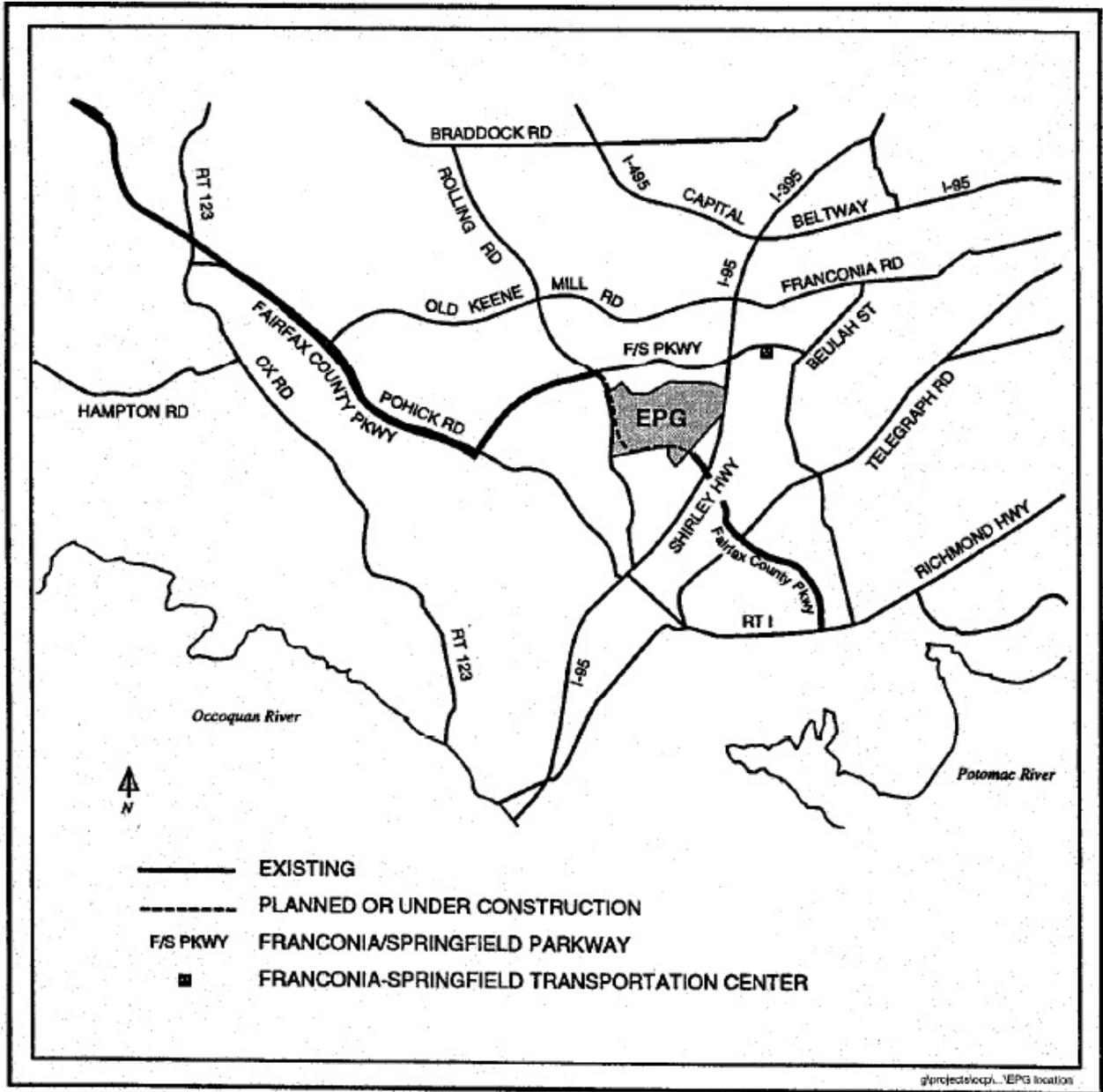
The EPG is bordered by low-density residential uses to the north and west and industrial development to the south and east. The residential development in the immediate area is predominantly single family detached in nature. Typical residential densities range from 3-4 dwelling units per acre. The industrial development to the south and east of the EPG is mostly warehousing and distribution.

The EPG is located west of I-95 (Shirley Highway) and south of the Franconia-Springfield Parkway, but does not have direct access from either of these facilities. Principal access to the existing military reservation is from Backlick Road. The planned Fairfax County Parkway will traverse the site along its western and southern boundaries, and provide future direct access into the property from a planned interchange of Rolling Road with the Fairfax County Parkway.

LAND USE

In addition to the following recommendations, please refer to the recommendations provided in the Springfield District section of the Plan.

The Engineer Proving Ground is planned for public facilities, government and institutional, and public park uses. Any development or redevelopment plans by the Federal government under this



ENGINEER PROVING GROUND LOCATION **FIGURE 1**

baseline recommendation should be coordinated with Fairfax County and appropriate officials of the Commonwealth of Virginia and should be consistent with adopted County goals and the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan.

The Plan calls for the creation of a large active and passive public park to include the Accotink EQC and most of the land west of the EQC. To implement this recommendation, the entire Accotink Stream Valley Environmental Quality Corridor and all land west of the Accotink Stream Valley Environmental Quality Corridor that is not identified for other uses is planned to be dedicated to Fairfax County Park Authority. The park will provide a sylvan retreat and active recreation activities. Specific recommendations are located in the "Parks and Recreation" section.

Environmental Analysis/Clean-up

Because the Engineer Proving Ground was previously used for research and testing by the military, the Army will be responsible for any environmental analysis and/or clean-up of any toxic or hazardous waste or other environmental hazard existing on the land prior to conveyance to the County.

The exact acreage and legal description of real property to be conveyed shall be determined by surveys satisfactory to the Secretary of the Army and Fairfax County. Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Safe Water Drinking Act (SDWA) and any and all other pertinent environmental statutes and regulations, the Secretary shall retain liability for the environmental hazards on the site as of the date of transfer. At least ninety (90) days prior to any land disturbing activities, the Army should provide written notice to the County of proposed activities and the Army should all conduct or permit to be conducted a cultural resource survey and a natural resources survey. Sensitive cultural areas should be identified and protected in accordance with the recommendations of the County Archaeologist. Natural resource areas should be surveyed, identified, and protected in accordance with the recommendations of the Park Authority.

Dedication of Public Lands

The Plan recommends the dedication of land as described in the following paragraphs. Access to dedicated lands other than by trails of like means may not be available until either development occurs or the County provides access.

The dedication of the following lands is required:

1. All right-of-way for transportation facilities needed for full development, including dedication for the Fairfax County Parkway, recognizing that additional right-of-way may be identified during the monitoring and evaluation process required for subsequent phases of development and that such rights-of-way will be dedicated as needed;

2. The Accotink Stream Valley Environmental Quality Corridor to the Fairfax County Park Authority;

3. Up to 8 acres southeast of the Rolling Road and the Fairfax County Parkway interchange for a commuter parking lot;

4. The remaining portion of the land west of the Accotink Stream Valley Environmental Quality Corridor to the Fairfax County Park Authority for park purposes.

5. A transit facility site of at least 5 acres east of the Accotink Stream Valley Environmental Quality Corridor.

TRANSPORTATION

The adopted County Transportation Plan identified the following roadway and public transportation improvements in the vicinity of the EPG (See Figure 2):

- Construct the Franconia-Springfield Parkway to an 8 lane section, including HOV lanes and interchanges at Rolling Road, Neuman Street, and I-95;
- Construct the Fairfax County Parkway to a 6 lane section, including interchanges with the Franconia-Springfield Parkway, Rolling Road, and I-95 (Newington Interchange);
- Widen Fullerton Road to 4 lanes between Backlick Road and the Fairfax County Parkway;
- Widen I-95 (Shirley Highway) to 11 lanes, including HOT lanes, HOT designation, and the extension of the existing HOV lanes south to Prince William County;
- Dedicate a site of at least 5 acres for a Transit Facility within the ~~high intensity core~~ eastern portion of the EPG site; and
- Transportation issues associated with the possible extension of the Metro rapid rail transit line from the Joe Alexander Transportation Center (Franconia-Springfield Metro Station) to the Engineering Proving Ground (EPG) should be studied. The area subject to the Metro rail extension should be designated as an “Enhanced Public Transportation Corridor.” The extension of the Metro rail should be such that there is no impact upon the existing Loisdale residential subdivision.

ENVIRONMENT

The principal environmental feature of the Engineer Proving Ground is the Accotink Stream Valley Environmental Quality Corridor. The EQC traverses the site from north to south and includes some wetlands located outside the stream valley. These areas should be preserved and protected from development. Protection and support should include ~~the development of Biodiversity Conservation Area practices~~, monitoring of water quality, stabilization of stream valley erosion, reduction of watershed siltation, removal of invasive species, and mitigation of site contaminants. Protection and enhancement of the watershed should include interpretation and public education about such efforts and their results. The EQC should be made publicly accessible through dedication.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The following recommendations are intended to ensure that adequate parks and recreation services will be available to offset the need created by development and help address unmet demand

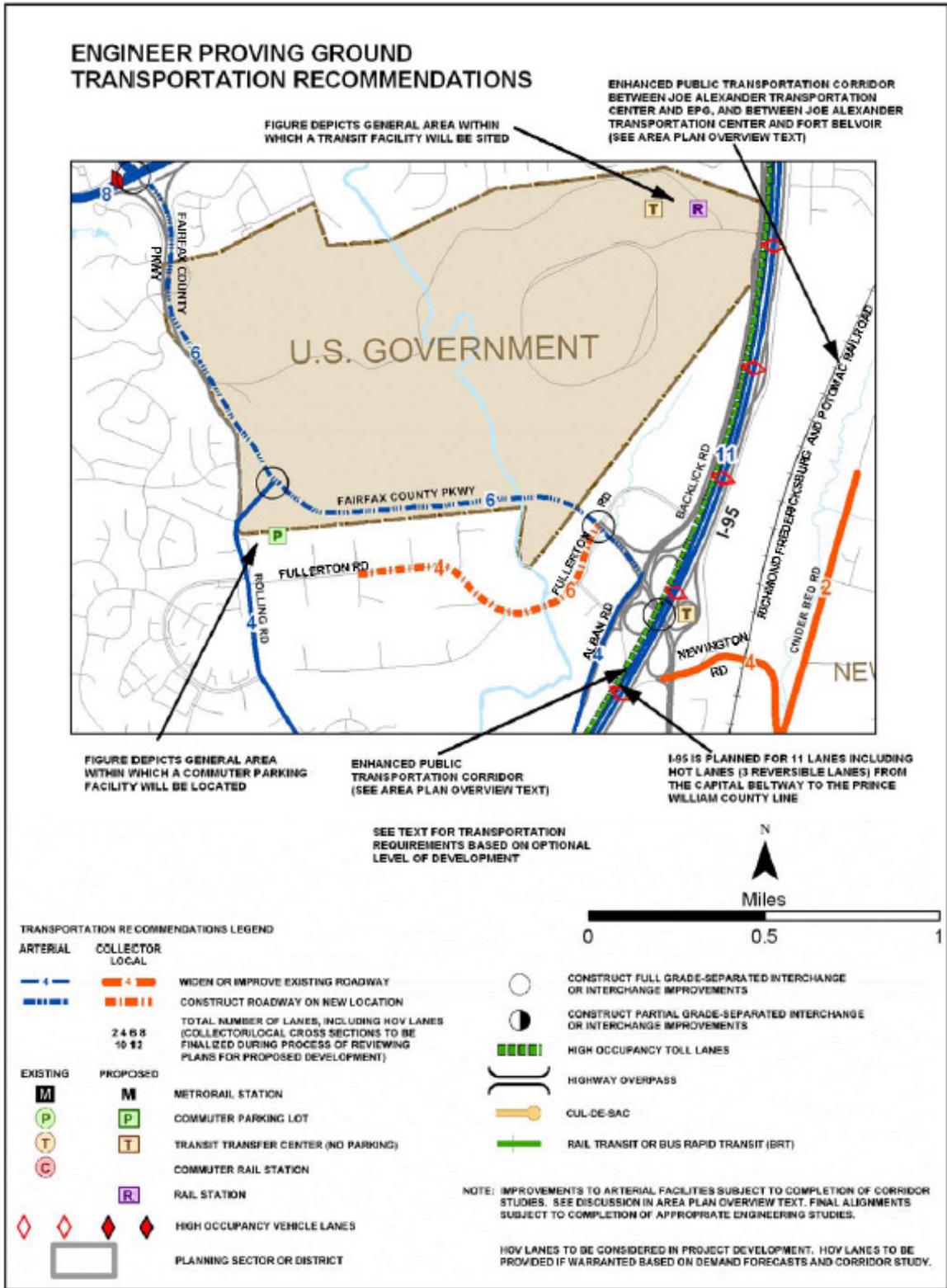


FIGURE 2

in surrounding communities. The location and type of park and recreational uses should be identified through the Parks Master Planning process so that adequate park and recreation services will be available for residents, employees of and visitors to the Engineer Proving Ground and the surrounding area. The approximately 225-acre Accotink Steam Valley EQC is planned as a "Stream Valley/Greenway Park." Most of the approximately 245 acres west of the EQC will be considered a "Countywide" park and will be planned in subunits that will have different classifications. Other units, as shown on Figure 5, are planned as "Multiple Resource" and "Special Purpose" Parks. If parks are developed within the mixed-use area, it is anticipated that these would function as "Neighborhood Urban" parks. The following recommendations should be considered for the Park Master Planning process:

- A 60-acre portion of the park site in the northwest portion of the property to be developed as a complex of lighted active recreation fields for use as a sports complex to support community and regional sports interests.
- A 25-acre portion of the park in the southwest portion of the property to be developed as a multi-use activity center that should include indoor/outdoor facilities for cultural and seasonal events including performing arts entertainment. Such a facility could be an urban park with improvements such as an amphitheater, a market area, restrooms, concessions and similar support improvements.

Additional Parks and Recreation recommendations for the Engineer Proving Ground are provided on Figure 29 in the Belvoir Community Planning Sector (S5).

TRAILS

Trails planned for the Engineer Proving Ground are delineated on Figure 30 in the Belvoir Community Planning Sector (S5) as part of the Countywide Trails Plan. It is anticipated that pedestrian and bicycle travel will be important modes of transportation at the EPG. A comprehensive network of trails and sidewalks is essential to providing access to employment, residences, and community uses at EPG. An extensive network of trails and pathways for non-motorized transportation should be developed to connect all public features. The network should also connect to adjacent parkland at the EPG perimeter including such as the Accotink Stream Valley and Hoes Road parks. The trail system should also provide connections to planned or existing trails serving area neighborhoods, the Joseph Alexander Transportation Center, the Springfield Business District on Backlick Road and the Springfield Mall. These connections will be extension provide connections to existing and planned regional trails such as the Franconia- Springfield Parkway trail, the Fairfax County Parkway trail, the Cross County trail via the Accotink Stream Valley, the Lorton/Laurel Hill trails, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and the Route #1 National Bicycle Trail.