

PRELIMINARY STAFF REPORT

2009-2010 SOUTH COUNTY AREA PLANS REVIEW

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: LEE

APR ITEM: 09-IV-22MV & 09-IV-24MV

NOMINATOR(S): 09-IV-22MV: Marianne Lowenthal, c/o Combined Properties Incorporated
09-IV-24MV: Patrick Rea, c/o Mount Vernon Council of Civic Association

ACREAGE: 10.78 acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 83-3 ((1)) 6 and 7

GENERAL LOCATION: West of North Kings Highway and south of Poag Street

PLANNING AREA(S): IV
District(s): Mount Vernon
Sector: Huntington (MV1)
Special Area(s): Penn Daw Community Business Center (CBC) Land Unit H.

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Retail and Other

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Retail use up to an intensity of 0.35 floor-area ratio (FAR)
For complete Plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area4/mtvernon1.pdf>,
page 37

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:

09-IV-22MV: Residential, retail, and office uses up to an intensity of 1.55 FAR
09-IV-24MV: Residential, retail, and office uses up to an intensity of 1.5 FAR

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

The nominations propose opportunities for mixed-use redevelopment that should be examined through a concurrent Comprehensive Plan amendment and rezoning. The nominations are located outside of the core area of the Penn Daw CBC and propose intensities 50% greater than the established core area of the CBC. The proposed intensities also are greater than four times the current Plan recommendations for the site. In effect, the proposals would shift the core area of the CBC to the subject property and change the long-standing plan for the area. Although potential benefit may result from the proposed nominations, a number of issues, particularly related to site design and scale of development, arise from the nominations. These issues require a level of detail typically associated with a zoning application in order to resolve them. In Community Revitalization Districts, such as the Richmond Highway Corridor, county policy allows for concurrent processing of Comprehensive Plan amendment and zoning applications in order to facilitate the review of development proposals. A concurrent process would allow for an expeditious review of the development proposal as well as address these concerns.

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S): MOUNT VERNON

APR ITEM(S): APR 09-IV-22MV
APR 09-IV-24MV

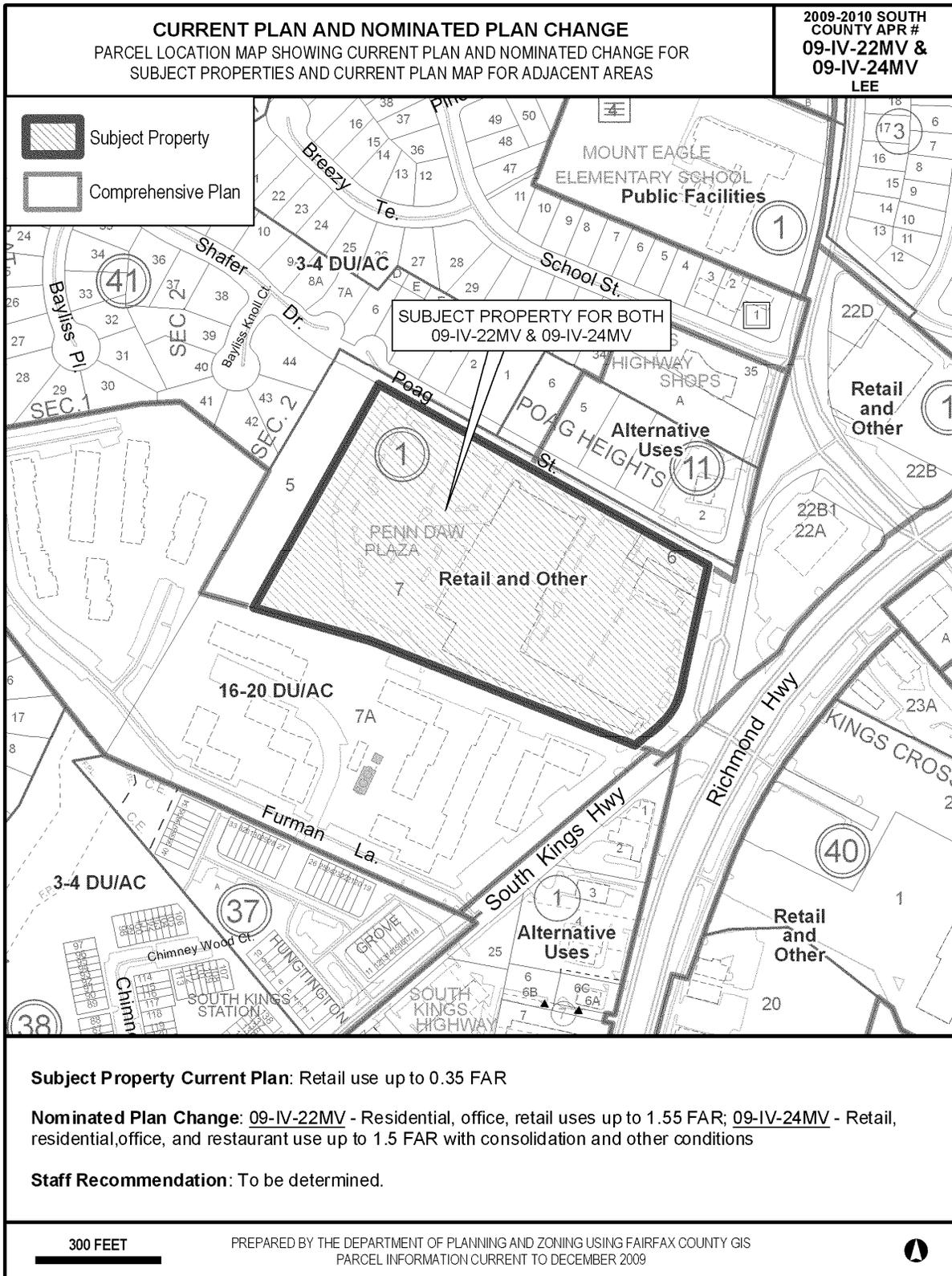
As an alternative to the nominations, staff recommends the following text be added to guidance for

ADD: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, Richmond Highway Corridor, Penn Daw Community Business Center, as amended through 8-3-2009, page 37:

“Land Unit H:

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This land unit may be appropriate for redevelopment. The mix of use and intensity should be examined through a concurrent Comprehensive Plan amendment and zoning application. This approach is consistent with county policy that permits concurrent processing of Comprehensive Plan amendment and zoning applications in order to facilitate the review of development proposals in Commercial Revitalization Areas.”



CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use:

- APR nominations APR 09-IV-22MV (22MV) and APR 09-IV-24MV (24MV) involve a 10.78 acres subject area, located west of North Kings Highway and south of Poag Street in the Mount Vernon District and consist of two parcels. The subject area is part of Land Unit H within the Penn Daw Community Business Center (CBC) within the Richmond Highway Corridor. The Springfield Plaza Shopping Center is located on the subject area, which is a low-intensity, surface-parked retail center of approximately 135,000 SF. The area consists of the southern portion of Land Unit H in the Penn Daw CBC. The Plan recommends retail use up to an intensity of 0.35 floor-area ratio (FAR) or up to 164,000 square feet (SF) and discourages free-standing uses to preserve the opportunity for connections to a proposed gateway park, east of the subject property in the triangle of land between Kings Highway and Richmond Highway, Land Unit F-2 of the CBC. The Plan also encourages additional landscaping and berming. The area is currently zoned C-8 and R-4 and comprises part of the Richmond Highway Commercial Revitalization District.
- APR nomination 22MV proposes to replan the area from a 0.35 FAR to a 1.55 FAR for residential mixed-use, which would equate to a maximum of approximately (app.) 730,000 SF. Two options for land use mix have been submitted for evaluation purposes. Option 1 proposes a mix of 90% residential use (up to 596 mid-rise, 5-8 stories, residential units), 7% retail use (app. 52,000 SF), and 3% office use (app. 21,000 SF). Option 2 eliminates the office use to include 93% residential use (up to 615 mid-rise, 5-8 stories, residential units) and 7% office use (app. 52,000 SF). This nomination would concentrate the residential uses to the rear portion of the subject area with retail and office, if included, near North Kings Highway. Parking would be surface and structured, and the design would include clustered retail uses along pedestrian pathways and a landscape plan.
- APR nomination 24MV proposes to replan the area from a 0.35 FAR to a 1.5 FAR for residential, office, and retail mixed-use. The residential use would consist of a minimum of a third of the total land use. The retail use would include a table-service restaurant. The redevelopment would be conditioned on the provision of consolidation, high-quality urban design, traffic mitigation, dedication of right-of-way for transportation improvements, a pedestrian circulation system, reduction of cut-through traffic, and the discouragement of free-standing and drive-up/ thru facilities. The nomination would equate to approximately (app.) 704,000 SF and, for the purposes of the evaluation, submitted a land use mixture of 65% residential use (app. 458,000 SF), 25% retail use (app. 176,000 SF), and 10% office use (app. 70,000 SF). The residential use would include 334 mid-rise, multi-family units (5-8 stories) and 50 townhouse units.

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- The nominations provide for urban, mixed-use infill development that would be consistent with the county's goal of providing this type of growth in the designated activity centers, such as the Penn Daw CBC in the Richmond Highway Corridor.
 - However, the proposed nominations would have an impact on the broader plan for the Penn Daw CBC. The current Plan recommends that the activity center of this CBC to be located on the opposite side of Richmond Highway from the subject area in Land Units E and/or G. As a center, Land Unit E and/or G should receive the majority of the redevelopment in the CBC and should act as a catalyst for urban, mixed-use redevelopment in this area. The redevelopment in these land units is planned for an intensity up to a 1.0 FAR. The proposed intensities for nominations 22MV and 24MV of the 1.55 FAR and the 1.5 FAR are greater than four times the planned intensity on the site and are more intense than the planned development center across the street. The proposed nomination would work against the current Plan's incentive for redevelopment in this CBC, and would reduce the likelihood of redevelopment in Land Units E and/or G.
 - No rezoning applications have been submitted that would provide information about the building heights or site design; however, the proposed densities, particularly Nomination 22MV may result in building heights at the high end of the mid-rise building range (7-8 stories). These building heights may not be able to provide appropriate tapering of building height and transitions to the adjacent low-density community. The surrounding neighborhoods to the north and west contain low density, single-family detached residences at a density of 3-4 du/ac. Low-rise apartments are located to the south of the property. Nomination 22MV proposes two options with maximum unit counts of 596 and 615 units. Without including the office and retail components, the resulting density of this nomination would be 55 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and 57 du/ac. This intensity would most likely result in urban-style buildings with heights that are on the high end of the range for mid-rise buildings, especially since the design would also need to accommodate open space, roadways, and parking. The residential building heights would increase when the additional uses of office and retail uses are added into the development and land or space within buildings is needed for these additional components.
 - Nomination 24MV proposes a less dense residential component than 24MV and provides townhouse units that could achieve an appropriate tapering to the low density, residential neighborhoods to the north, west, and south, if they are located near these boundaries. However, the mid-rise units potentially may experience a building height on the higher end of the range for mid-rise buildings, similar to 24MV. The density, approximately 36 du/ac on average, would be divided into mid-rise and townhouse units, so the effective intensities would vary on site. The mid-rise building heights may be out of character with the surrounding area.

- Nomination 22MV also proposes office and retail components in addition to residential use. These non-residential uses could work with the residential use and create a walkable and convenient work-live-shop environment. However, the proposed retail component of 52,000 square feet would not be enough square footage to provide a comparable community-serving retail component on-site, particularly with a grocery store. The existing shopping center provides an accessible grocery store and other community-serving uses to the surrounding neighborhoods. The nearest grocery store and shopping center of this size, type, and scale is located at the Beacon Mall. Beacon Mall is over one mile away from the subject property and not within a convenient and accessible walking distance to the community around the Penn Daw Plaza of the surrounding neighborhoods. It is recognized that a Target and smaller, more specialized grocery stores are proximate to the Penn Daw Plaza and the surrounding community, and a Wal-Mart is proposed for the land across Richmond Highway, but community-serving shopping plazas and grocery stores of this scale and function are currently planned and distributed along Richmond Highway in the CBCs to provide convenience and accessibility for the neighborhoods. Neither nomination addresses the grocery store in their proposals.
- Recognizing that these nominations provide an opportunity for mixed-use development, the impact of the nominations on the character of the area and the adjacent community is uncertain. In order to resolve these issues, a level of detail typically associated with a zoning application is required. A concurrent Plan amendment and rezoning process would address these concerns and allow for an expeditious review of the development proposal. In Community Revitalization Districts, such as the Richmond Highway Corridor, county policy permits concurrent processing of Comprehensive Plan amendment and zoning applications in order to facilitate the review of development proposals.

Transportation

- The two options for Nomination 22MV would generate fewer daily and PM peak hour trips than the land use currently allowed under the Comprehensive Plan. However, during the AM peak hour of travel, trips would increase slightly due to the addition of the proposed office and residential uses.
- Nomination APR 24MV would generate substantially higher daily, AM and PM peak hour traffic than the current Comprehensive Plan, due to its higher percentage of non-residential uses. The current Plan of a 0.35 FAR would result in app. 5,300 average daily trips, while the proposed nomination would generate app. 8,600 average daily trips, a 62% increase over the current Plan.
- Internal circulation and access issues as well as safety issues (particularly pedestrian related), are of primary concern in these nominations. The transportation issues associated with any development of the subject parcels, particularly those associated with access would need to be adequately addressed during the course of the normal rezoning

review process. This process should address concerns to overall circulation patterns, turning movements, signalization, parcel consolidation, pedestrian circulation, safety issues, and transit amenities. Dedication of right-of-way for sidewalk, roadway improvements/ widening, transit, and associated easements may be required as part of this process.

- Based on the comparison of the average daily trips generated by the plan options, APR nominations 22 MV and 24 MV 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

Parking

- Neither nomination speaks to the allowance for a 20% parking reduction in the county’s designated CRDs. The reduction could work towards a safer and more comfortable pedestrian environment.

Environment

- *Environmental Quality Corridors* –An area of Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) appears to be located at the western boundary of the site, comprised of stream channel, steep slopes and some wetland areas. See page 10 for a map of this area. This area should be eliminated from consideration as part of the possible development and could be used as a natural buffer between the redevelopment and the adjacent apartments. In this case, the density would transfer to developable parts of the site and increase the effective intensity above the proposed 1.5 FAR and 1.55 FAR. This increase in intensity may create additional concern about the proposed intensity and the potential impact to the adjacent community.
- *Transportation Generated Noise* – The subject area of the nominations is located along North Kings Highway and near Richmond Highway, which may create potentially significant 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. Both 22MV and 24MV include residential use, which is a noise-sensitive use. The proposed non-sensitive uses to noise, such as the office and residential components, could be located close to Richmond Highway and shield the residential use from noise impacts, depending on the

site layout and the building heights. Otherwise, the buildings may need to be setback further from the right-of-way to avoid noise impacts. Similar to the EQC concern, if a setback is needed, then the effective intensity on the developable area may increase. This increase intensity could exacerbate staff's original concern about intensity.

- *Green Building Standards* – The subject area would need to achieve green building standards as part of county policy for activity centers, such as the Richmond Highway Corridor.
- *Natural Resource Impact* - Redevelopment of the subject property would offer an opportunity to improve the nature of the stormwater treatment onsite consistent with Watershed Plan priorities and existing Plan language that recommends urban design treatments and specifies landscaping to increase the aesthetic appeal of this area. New development should extend stormwater detention and low impact development (LID) features, such as green roof features.

Parks & Recreation

- Existing nearby parks (Mount Vernon District, Lee District, Mount Eagle, Belle Haven, Bucknell Manor and Groveton Heights Parks) meet only a portion of the demand for parkland generated by residential development in the service area of the nomination.
- The recreational facilities in greatest need in the Mount Vernon Planning District include rectangle fields, adult softball fields, multi-use courts, playgrounds, a neighborhood skate park and trails. Many of the smaller local parks in the Mount Vernon Planning District do not include athletic fields as a result of the early suburban residential development, and many parks have not developed with recreation facilities. There are a number of tennis courts, multi-use courts and playgrounds that have been master planned at parks in the district, but have not been constructed.
- The nominations would result in a potential increase in residents within the Mount Vernon Planning District by about 800 (24MV) to 1,260 (22MV) individuals. Residents will need access to park and recreation facilities onsite or nearby.
- The proposed redevelopment should contribute to constructing the master planned park facilities and replacing aging park facilities at nearby parks within the district. In addition, onsite 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 onsite 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.

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, mixed-use 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.

Public Schools

- The APR nominations are within the Mount Eagle Elementary School, Twain Middle School, and Edison High School boundaries. If development occurs within the next five years, the receiving schools appear to have sufficient capacity to accommodate new student yields. Beyond the five year projection horizon, enrollment projections are not available. The impact of redevelopment would need to be addressed during the rezoning and development process.

