

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

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT:** MOUNT VERNON

**APR ITEM(S):** 09-III-2P

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**NOMINATOR:** Brian Winterhalter

**ACREAGE:** 7.2 acres

**TAX MAP I.D.:** 89-3 ((1)) 39, 42.

**GENERAL LOCATION:** The east side of Gambrill Road, generally south of Hoes Road.

**PLANNING AREA:** III

**District:** Pohick

**Sector:** P Main Branch Community Planning Sector

**Special Areas:** N/A

**ADOPTED PLAN MAP:** Residential uses at 2-3 dwelling units per acre.

**POLICY PLAN TEXT:**

- Land Use: Pages 5-6, **Objective 8: Fairfax County should encourage a land use pattern that protects, enhances and/or maintains stability in established residential neighborhoods.**
  - Policy a) Protect and enhance existing neighborhoods by ensuring that infill development is of compatible use, and density/intensity, and that adverse impacts on public facility and transportation systems, the environment and the surrounding community will not occur.
- Land Use: Page 9-10, **Objective14: Fairfax County should seek to achieve a harmonious and attractive development pattern which minimizes undesirable visual, auditory, environmental and other impacts created by potentially incompatible uses.**

For complete Plan text see:

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/)

**AREA PLAN TEXT:**

General Plan text that covers the P2 Main Branch Community Planning Sector that states further infill development in the vicinity of the Pohick Creek tributaries should be compatible with adjacent residential development as well as provide a balance between the built and natural environments.

**PROPOSED PLAN**

**AMENDMENT:**

Single-family attached residential use at a density of 12-16 du/ac.

**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Nomination as submitted

Approve Staff Alternative

Retain Adopted Plan

Staff recommends that the adopted plan be retained. The proposed nomination would increase the site's development potential from 14 residential units (the low end of the adopted plan range) to a possible maximum of 115 units. Approximately two thirds of the subject property is covered by sensitive environmental resources that should be preserved, including a resource protection area (RPA) and steep slopes in excess of 15% grade. These conditions would significantly reduce the amount of developable land on the site, and would result in a development with a much higher effective density than that proposed by the nomination, which would be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. The surrounding area has developed at a density of 2-3 du/ac, in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The West Water Point townhouses to the east is zoned R-5 but developed at a density of 3 du/ac. This townhouse development demonstrates the effect that the environmental features (also present on the subject property) have on development and the need to transfer density from non-developable areas.

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**CRITICAL ISSUES****Land Use**

The site is developed with three single family homes. Most of the surrounding neighborhood contains single-family detached homes planned at a density of 2-3 du/ac. Although the West Water Point Townhomes are located east of the subject property, they are developed at a density of 3 du/ac. The Gambrill Road Park and Ride lot abuts the subject property on the northwest, and there is a 30 foot buffer between the two properties that is heavily vegetated. There is a service station located across Gambrill Road from the Park and Ride lot at the southwest corner of Hooes Road and Gambrill Road and is not adjacent to or oriented to the subject property. Aside from the service station and Park and Ride lot, the low density, single-family detached residential character of the Gambrill Road area has been maintained. In addition, there are sensitive environmental resources that cover approximately two thirds of the eastern portion of the site including a resource protection area (RPA) and steep slopes in excess of 15% grade that would likely require development to be situated on the western third of the subject area abutting Gambrill Road. A density of 12-16 du/ac is incompatible with the character of the Gambrill Road area. The lack of developable area would also result in an effective development density that is much higher than that proposed and could result in multi-family units or be unachievable.

The nominator has made the case that the character of the surrounding area has changed from a low density residential area to a higher density area that is accessible to an important public transportation node, and that developing the area at the current Plan density of 2-3 du/ac would fail to maximize the use of public transportation by residents in this part of the County. The nominator also cites the presence of the West Water Point Townhome development to the east as justification for the

location of townhome style development on the subject property, and that this type of development would be a logical transition between the single-family detached uses to the south, and the Park and Ride lot.

Staff disagrees with this analysis. As stated above, the majority of the surrounding land uses in the area are low density single-family detached uses developed at a density of 2-3 du/ac, and the West Water Point Townhomes to the east are the only townhouse development in the surrounding area, and are developed at a density of 3 du/ac. The development density proposed by the nomination (12-16 du/ac) would be more appropriate in or close to an activity center such as one of the County’s community business centers. These areas are designed to accommodate higher density residential uses that are within walking distance to retail, personal service, office uses and employment centers, and that are located along major transportation corridors and/ or close to Metro Rail stations. The area in the vicinity of the proposed nomination is a low density single family residential neighborhood with no retail or office uses nearby except for the service station located at the corner of Hooes Road and Gambrill Road. Also, the proposed density may result in residential development with a character that resembles multi-family residential, rather than townhomes, due to the small amount of developable land that would be available because of the environmental constraints present on the site. Therefore, the development potential that the current Plan allows is more appropriate for the subject property from the perspective of ensuring infill development that is compatible with the surrounding area.

**Transportation**

**Trip Generation Estimates for APR # 09-III-2P**

Scenario	Daily	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		In	Out	In	Out
<u>Current Comprehensive Plan</u> Single Family (210); 22 DU	258	6	19	17	10
<u>Proposed Amendment</u> Residential Condominium/ Townhouse (230); 115 DU	726	10	48	45	22
<b>Net Impact of Proposed Above Comp Plan</b>	468	4	29	28	12

As shown in the above table, the proposed change in land use would result in an increase in trip generation. Access to Gambrill Road should be controlled with a limited number of site access points. Further review and analysis of traffic conditions, topography and sight lines will later determine if there is a need for turn lanes at the site access. A minor paved trail along Gambrill Road is shown on the Countywide Trails Plan. Any development of the site should accommodate the trail.

**Environmental**

The eastern one-fourth to one-third of parcel 39 is within a resource protection area (RPA). It appears that there is an existing home and other structures within the RPA. Any redevelopment of the parcel should include a provision requiring the restoration of this area to a natural state. This could occur under the existing plan.

In addition, there appears to be a large area of environmental quality corridor (EQC) covering most of parcel 39 and a small portion of parcel 42. The primary EQC is associated with the steep slopes

adjoining the RPA and stream valley near the eastern boundary of parcel 29. There is a second EQC area of steep slopes and a smaller stream channel which runs along the southern boundary of parcel 39 and parcel 42 with associated steep slopes.

Given the extent of EQC area on the two parcels development at 12-16 du/ac with as many as 115 single-family attached residential units would be unworkable.

**Schools**

<b>APR 09-III-2P</b>									
Existing Use			Current Plan @ 1-2 du/ac				Proposed Plan @ 3-4 du/ac		
School level	SFD ratio	Existing units	Student yield	SFD ratio	Units permitted	Student yield	SFA ratio	Units proposed	Student yield
Elementary	0.266	2	1	0.266	22	6	0.204	115	23
Middle	0.084	2	0	0.084	22	2	0.057	115	7
High	0.181	2	0	0.181	22	4	0.118	115	14
			1 total			12 total			44 total

Based on the current County-wide student yield ratios, the APR nomination is anticipated to yield 32 (44-12=32) additional students over what would be anticipated from the current Plan maximum. Currently, Irving MS and West Springfield HS are over capacity and projected to remain over capacity in the 2014-15 school year.

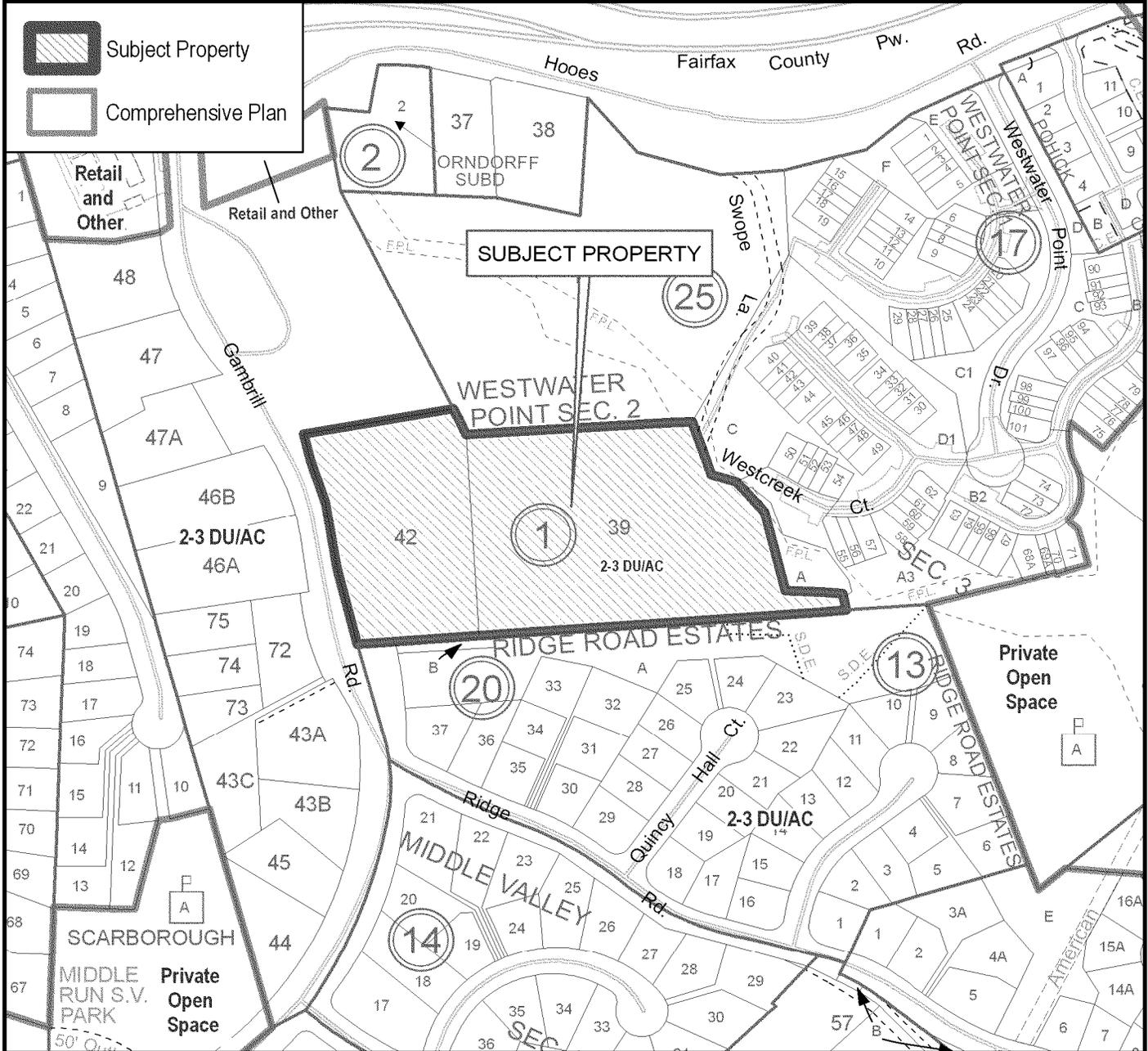
If a rezoning application is submitted, FCPS would recommend a proffer contribution to offset the impact of the development on surrounding schools. Under the current formula, a per student contribution of \$9,378 would be anticipated. This amount is subject to change based on proffer formula updates.

**Conclusion**

The subject property lies within an area of low-density, stable residential neighborhoods. The developable area of the site is highly constrained by the presence of sensitive environmental resources including a resource protection area (RPA), environmental quality corridor (EQC) and areas of steep slopes in excess of 15% grade. In order to preserve these sensitive environmental features, and to ensure that any redevelopment of the site is compatible with the surrounding area, staff recommends that any new development on the subject property occur at the current plan density of 2-3 dwelling units per acre.



<b>CURRENT PLAN AND NOMINATED PLAN CHANGE</b> PARCEL LOCATION MAP SHOWING CURRENT PLAN AND NOMINATED CHANGE FOR SUBJECT PROPERTIES AND CURRENT PLAN MAP FOR ADJACENT AREAS	2009-2010 SOUTH COUNTY APR # <b>09-III-2P</b> MT VERNON
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**Subject Property Current Plan:** No specific plan text, nominated area is generally planned as a suburban neighborhood with residential uses 2-3 du/acre and with neighborhood-serving retail uses.

**Nominated Plan Change:** Tax Map Parcels 89-3 ((1)) 39 and 42 are planned for single-family attached residential use at 12-16 du/ac. To reach the upper end of the density range, Parcels 39 and 42 should be consolidated and access to the site should be from Gambrill Road. A buffer along the southern boundary of the site should be provided to mitigate potential impacts on the residential area located on the north side of Ridge Road.

**Staff Recommendation:** To be determined.