

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

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT:** MOUNT VERNON

**APR ITEM(S):** 09-III-3P

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**NOMINATOR:** Brian Winterhalter

**ACREAGE:** 2.65 acres

**TAX MAP I.D.:** 89-3 ((1)) 37, 38; 89-3 ((2)) 2.

**GENERAL LOCATION:** Generally located on the East side of Gambrill Road, south of Hooes Road.

**PLANNING AREA:** III  
**District:** Pohick  
**Sector:** P2 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.
  - Policy b) Discourage commercial development within residential communities unless the commercial uses are of a local serving nature and the intensity and scale is compatible with surrounding residential 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 for 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:** Neighborhood serving retail use up to .35 FAR with possible drive through uses.

**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ Approve Nomination as submitted

\_\_\_\_\_ Approve Staff Alternative

X  Retain Adopted Plan

Staff recommends that the adopted plan be retained. The service station located west of Gambrill Road is currently the only retail use along the Fairfax County Parkway between the Pohick Shopping Center and the Springfield area. An area adjoining the subject property planned for retail use is part of the Gambrill Road Park and Ride and will not be developed for retail use. The nomination, if approved, would proliferate retail uses in a firmly established residential area. Approximately half of the subject property is covered by sensitive environmental resources that should be preserved, including steep slopes in excess of 15% grade. These conditions would make development of a retail structure and associated parking lot extremely difficult, and commercial development at this location would be incompatible with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

**CRITICAL ISSUES**

**Land Use**

With the exception of the service station located on the west side of Gambrill Road and the Park and Ride facility located south of the subject property, most of the surrounding neighborhood contains single-family detached homes. Steep slopes in excess of 15% grade cover the middle and rear portions of all three of the subject parcels and contain a steep down-slope to the rear of the properties to a stream valley. This leaves only a small amount of land that fronts on Hooes Road that would be available for development and creates a shallow development envelope that may not be practical for developing a retail structure and associated parking. In addition, the east side of Gambrill Road at this location would allow commercial development to encroach into the stable residential neighborhoods that surround the site. Residential uses at this location are appropriate given the character of the surrounding area.

**Transportation**

Scenario	Daily	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		In	Out	In	Out
Current Comprehensive Plan Single Family (210); 8 DU	102	4	11	7	4
Proposed Amendment Shopping Center (820); 40,412 SF	3,769	55	35	170	177
<b>Net Impact of Proposed Amendment Above Comp Plan</b>	3,667	51	24	163	173

As shown in the above table, the proposed change in land use would result in a significant increase in trip generation from 102 daily trips to more than 3,600 daily trips. This increase would occur on Hooes Road, which effectively functions as a service road for the Fairfax County Parkway and a residential access road between Gambrill Road and Stream Bluff Way where it dead-ends. It is not designed for the volume of traffic which would be generated by this amount of retail use. Hooes Road is not slated for improvement per the Fairfax County Transportation Plan, but the roadway may need safety improvements at some point in the future. It does not appear that adequate right-of-way is available for safety improvements, should they be programmed. Adequate internal parking and circulation would need to be developed to serve the retail use. A major paved trail along the Fairfax County Parkway and Hooes Road is shown on the Fairfax Countywide Trails Plan. Any development of the site should accommodate the trail.

### **Environmental**

This property is just upstream from Pohick Valley Park, and contains a portion of the resource protection area that is continuous through the parkland. The subject property has high connectivity to flood plain environmental quality corridors, increasing the likelihood for unusual species presence. The proposed intensity would result in a significant decrease in the value of the natural resources of the downstream property. However, if the proposed intensity is approved, clustering the development, extended stormwater detention, low impact development and a design that limits internal roads and impervious surfaces is recommended.

### **Parks**

There is a moderate to high potential that Native American sites are present on the subject property. Also, structures appear on the 1937 aerial photo that may or may not be the same as the buildings on the current aerial photo. The Park Authority would recommend that a Phase I archaeological survey be conducted, and if resources are found, a Phase III data recovery survey be performed.

### **Conclusion**

The subject property lies within an area of low-density, stable residential neighborhoods. The developable area of the site is also highly constrained by the presence of sensitive environmental resources including areas of steep slopes in excess of 15% grade that cover approximately half of the subject property, and that leave very little land left for developing a retail structure with associated parking. 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 the current Comprehensive Plan be retained.

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