

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

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: MOUNT VERNON

APR ITEM(S): 09-IV-8LP

NOMINATOR: Linwood Gorham on behalf of the South County Federation (SCF)

ACREAGE: 2.16 acres

TAX MAP I.D.: 107-4 ((1)) 44, 54A

GENERAL LOCATION: East of Groom Cottage Drive, south of Lorton Station Shopping Center, north of Thomas Baxter Place

PLANNING AREA: IV

District: Lower Potomac

Sector: LP2 – Lorton-South Route 1 Community Planning Sector

Special Areas: Sub-unit E8

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Mixed Use

AREA PLAN TEXT:

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Lower Potomac Planning District, Amended through 5-4-2009, LP2 – Lorton-South Route 1 Community Planning Sector, Page 89:

“Sub-unit E8

Sub-unit E8 is located east of the CSX Railroad tracks, south of Lorton Road, as shown on Figure 33. Sub-unit E8 is planned for a mix of uses such as office, open space, retail, cultural center, hotel/motel and recreational uses. Development of a mixed-use project should be contingent upon satisfactory achievement of the following conditions:

- Substantial and logical parcel consolidation should be provided so that the area is developed as one unified project to provide for high quality design and an integration of uses;
- A thorough heritage resources survey should precede development and the recovery of significant heritage resources should be undertaken in conjunction with development;
- The overall floor area ratio is appropriate up to .25 FAR;
- Substantial contribution towards transportation improvements should be provided;
- Uses and intensities should generally be arranged so that new uses situated next to existing residential uses are compatible in height, scale and intensity. Generous buffering and screening should be employed between non-residential and residential land uses;
- Good design principles should be employed including the provision of pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems within and to the sub-unit with special attention given to the linkages to the commuter rail station;

- Landscaping and trees should be used in parking lots, plazas, and streetside areas and medians along major roads to create boulevard-like effects;
- Architectural design features such as variations of window materials, as well as public space furniture or entry accents are encouraged. When appropriate, arcades, awnings or other building features to distinguish ground floor retail are desirable;
- Comprehensive sign systems that establish a distinctive theme and identity and eliminate visual clutter are desirable. Building mounted and ground mounted shopping center signs incorporated within a planting strip are encouraged. Pole mounted signs are discouraged; and
- Safe pedestrian access to the commuter rail station from adjacent recreational areas and from across Lorton Road, Pohick Road and the CSX Railroad should be provided.

Figure 33 is shown as Attachment I.

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:

Add text that stating efforts should be made to maintain the subject parcels as open space. If the parcels are developed, the development should not have a negative impact on the adjacent residential community.

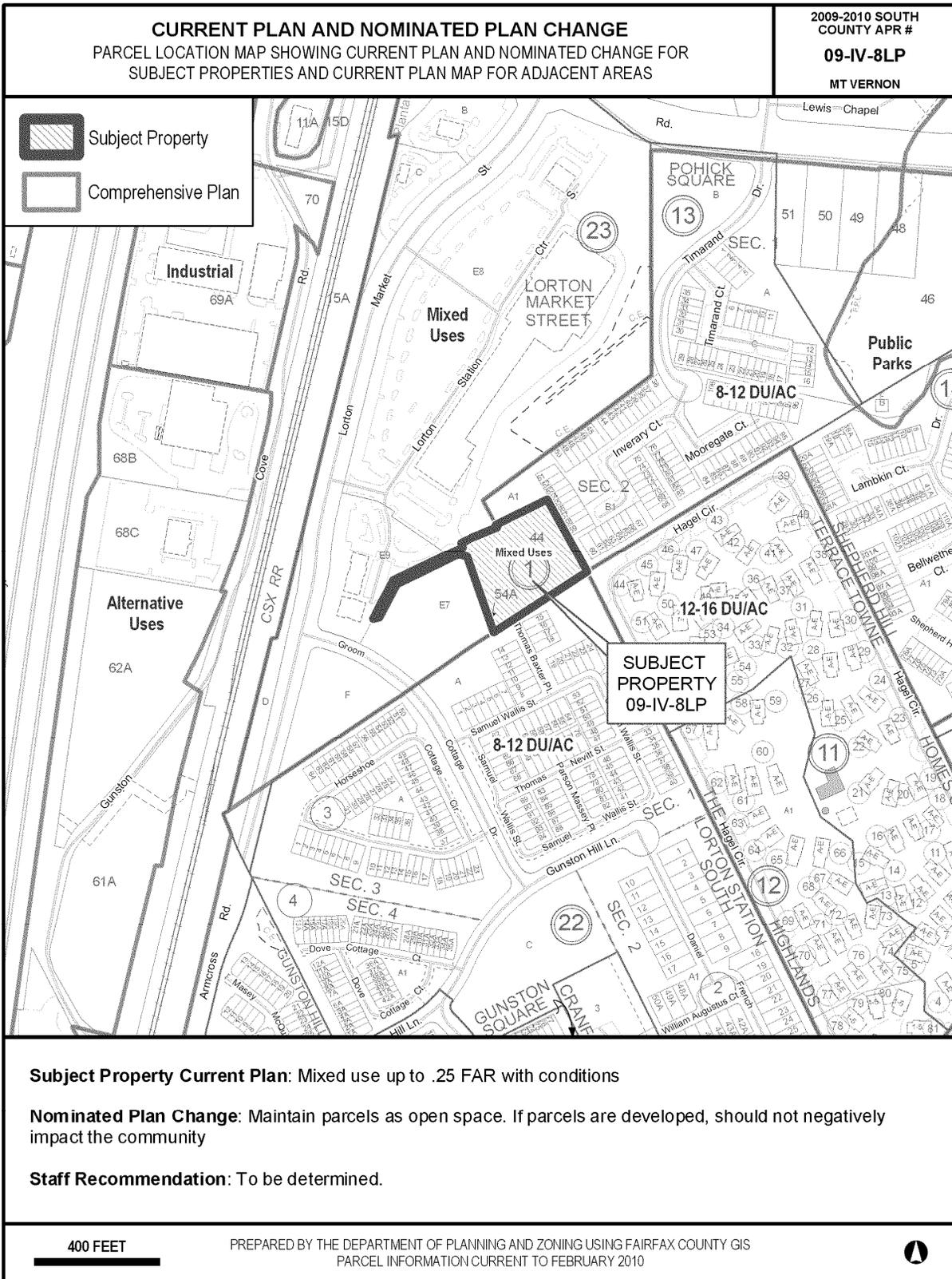
SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve Nomination as submitted

Approve Staff Alternative

Retain Adopted Plan

This Plan amendment was proposed to address concerns regarding development that can occur under the existing I-5 industrial zoning designation of the subject property. The proposal seeks to maintain the parcels as open space, or in the alternative, ensure that development does not adversely affect the abutting residential neighborhood. However, uses permitted by-right are not subject to Comprehensive Plan review. If a zoning action were sought, the Comprehensive Plan would be consulted. The existing Comprehensive Plan notes the need for compatibility in height, scale, and intensity with existing residential uses. Similarly, if non-residential uses are developed, substantial buffering and screening is strongly encouraged. It should be noted that in the case of by-right I-5 development, screening and buffering between industrial and residential uses would be required. The Plan guidance discussing architectural design features and landscaping provides the opportunity for a visually attractive development.



HISTORY

On April 24, 2000, the Board of Supervisors approved RZ-1999-MV-025 to rezone the majority of sub-unit E8 from the I-3, I-6, and PDH-5 Districts to the C-6 District to permit the development of a commercial project. While the nominated parcel was not included in this application, the proffers dated March 8, 2000 note the Applicant shall dedicate a 30-foot wide public ingress/egress easement to achieve interparcel access from parcel 107-4 ((1)) 44 to the public Spine Road or the Residential Access Road if a site plan is submitted for any portion of the property adjacent to parcel 107-4 ((1)) 44 (see Attachment I). After RZ-1999-MV-025 was approved, both the Spine Road (Lorton Market Street) and the Residential Access Road (Groom Cottage Drive) were built. As reflected by the proffers, site access is feasible via Lorton Market Street through the parking lot of the Lorton Station Shopping Center, or from Thomas Baxter Place connecting to Groom Cottage Drive.

The Generalized Development Plan (GDP) that was part of the approved application indicates a stormwater management dry pond on parcels 107-4 ((23)) E7 and 107-4 ((23)) F, adjacent to the nominated area to the west in order to serve the Lorton Station Shopping Center to the north and residential development located southwest of the nominated parcels. At this time, there is a dry pond that is under bond, or under the control of the developer. This will become a stormwater pond once it is approved by the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

CRITICAL ISSUES:**Land Use**

The subject parcels are surrounded by an area that has been developed in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. To the west is the Lorton Station Shopping Center, and townhouses and single family houses abut the remaining sides. The nominated parcels are zoned I-5 and were not consolidated with the larger area. As noted in the staff recommendation, conditions for development of the parcel already exist in the Comprehensive Plan, including that new uses situated next to existing residential uses be compatible in height, scale, and intensity. If non-residential uses are developed, substantial buffering and screening should be utilized. It is important to note that re-planning the subject area would not preclude development allowable by-right under the current I-5 zoning designation.

The intent of this nomination was to ensure that any development is compatible with the surrounding area even if developed by-right under existing zoning. The I-5 zoning designation permits uses that could conflict with the character of the surrounding area. The proposed text would not achieve the goal of the nomination because the Comprehensive Plan is not consulted in the review process for by-right development.

Although outside the scope of the APR process, an alternative for future consideration may be to re-plan the property for a specific use that takes into account the pattern of surrounding development. For instance, residential use could be explored. Adding clarity to the land use recommendations may provide an incentive for redevelopment that would better assure compatibility.

Transportation

Should the site be developed, site access should limit driveways, curb cuts and median breaks arranged to minimize conflicts with traffic. Further review and analysis is required to determine the most appropriate access points, whether along Groom Cottage Drive, or solely through the abutting shopping plaza.

Currently, this area is served only by Fairfax Connector Routes 171 (to/from Richmond Highway Corridor and Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station) and Route 307. Development of this site should accommodate efficient transit operations within the vicinity.

The Fairfax County Countywide Trails Plan shows a major regional trail and major paved trail running along Gunston Cove Road. The Plan also shows major regional, and major and minor paved trails along Lorton Road. Efforts should be made to connect internal bicycle/pedestrian facilities with existing and planned County facilities.

ATTACHMENT I

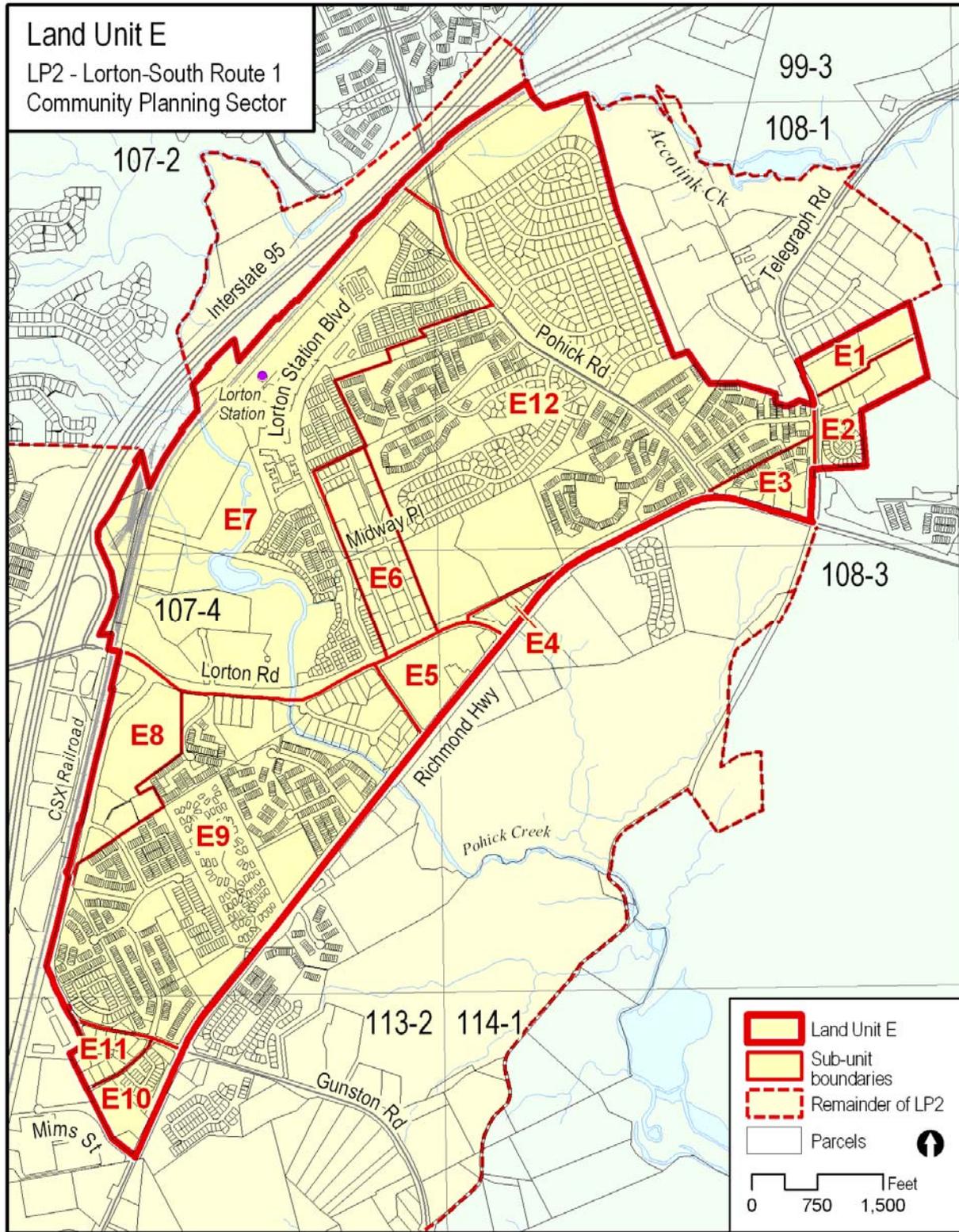


FIGURE 33

ATTACHMENT II

Proffers
Elmwood, LLC
RZ 1999-MV-025
March 8, 2000

Pursuant to Section 15.1-2303 (A), Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the undersigned applicants and property owners for themselves and for their successors and assigns (hereinafter “Applicant”), filed for a rezoning to the C-6 District on property identified as tax map reference 107-4 ((1)), Parcels 52, 53, 55, 56, 57 and pt 17A1 (hereinafter referred to as “Application Property”) hereby agree to the following proffers, provided the “Board of Supervisors” (hereinafter referred to as “Board”) approves the rezoning of the Application Property. IF the Board accepts these proffers, then all previously adopted proffers shall become null and void.

2. TRANSPORTATION**c. Interparcel access**

- i. At time of site plan submission for any portion of the Application Property adjacent to Tax Map Parcel 107-4((1)) 44, the Applicant shall submit a plat for subsequent DPWES approval showing dedication of a 30-foot wide public ingress/egress easement on site from Tax Map 107-4 ((1)) 44 to the public Spine Road or to the Residential Access road either directly or through the center’s parking lot.
- ii. Applicant shall record the easement among the land records of Fairfax County, Virginia prior to site plan approval.
- iii. Applicant shall provide written evidence of Applicant’s coordinate with the land owner of Tax Map Parcel 107-4 ((1)) 44 on the location of this easement, subject to the approval of DPWES.