



**A Publication of the County of Fairfax, Virginia  
Department of Planning & Zoning**

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## **STAFF REPORT 2008 AREA PLANS REVIEW**

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S):** LEE

**APR ITEM(S):** BRAC# 08-IV-11FS

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**NOMINATOR(S):** John E. Cowles c/o Marianne Gardner, DPZ

**ACREAGE:** 12.42 Acres

**TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS:** 80-3 ((1)) 3, 7; 80-4 ((4)) (3)7

**GENERAL LOCATION:** West of Commerce Street, North of Old Keene Mill Road

**PLANNING AREA(S):** IV

**District(s):** Springfield

**Sector:** NA

**Special Area(s):** Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) (Land Unit B)

**ADOPTED PLAN MAP:** 20+ dwelling units per acre (du/ac)

**ADOPTED PLAN TEXT:** Residential use at a density up to 30 du/ac

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

**PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:** Residential use at density up to 40-50 du/ac with ground-floor retail use up to 10,000 square feet

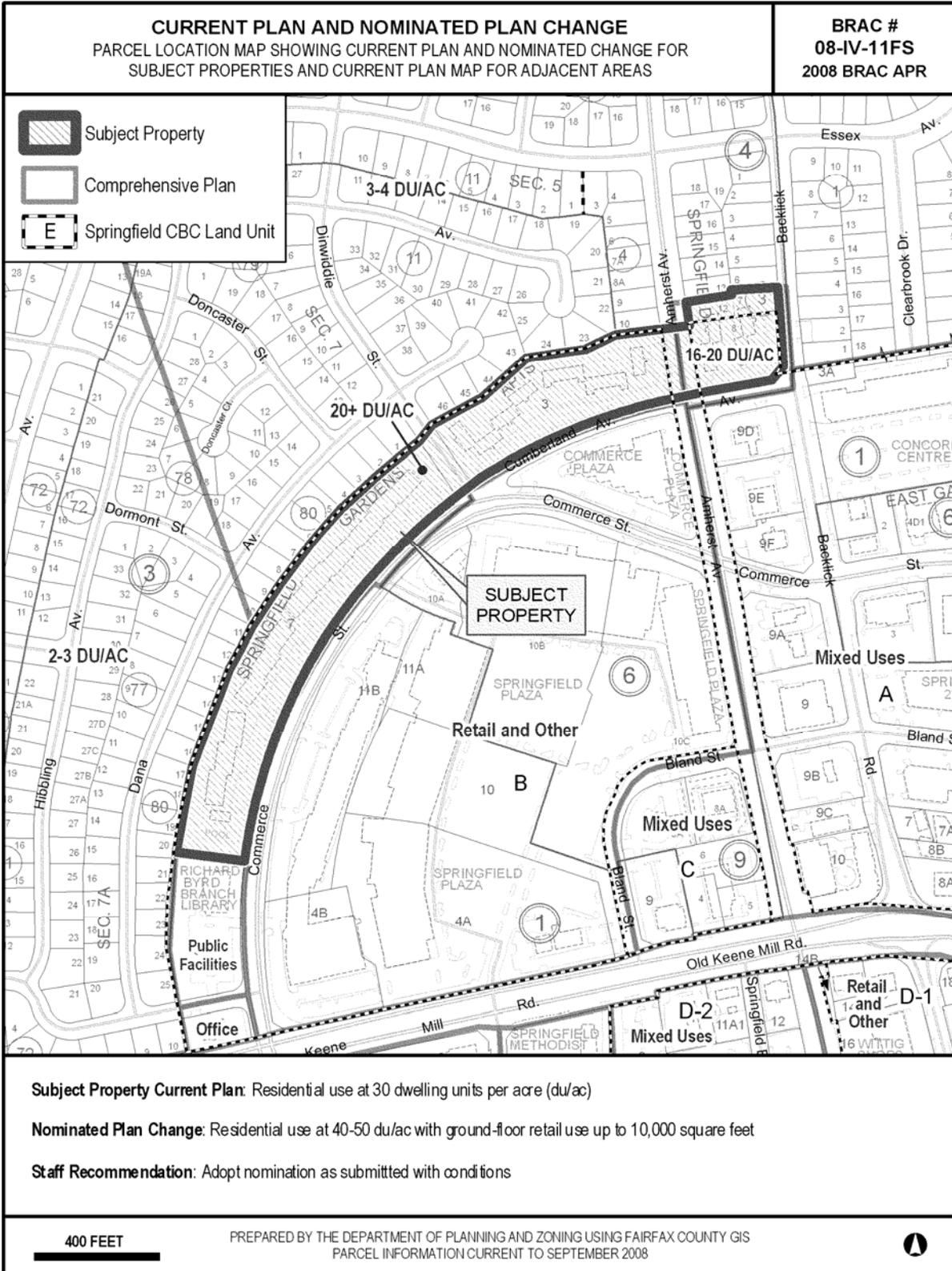
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### **SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Nomination as submitted

Approve Staff Alternative

Retain Adopted Plan



## CONTEXT

### *General Location*

The 12.4-acre subject area is located on the north-side of Commerce Street, between Old Keene Mill Road and Backlick Road.

*Subject Property:* The Springfield Garden Apartments, twenty-three, three-story apartment buildings, are located on the subject property. The apartment buildings contain 220 mid-rise, residential units. The subject property is located along the northwest boundary of the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) (Land Unit B). It is planned for multi-family residential use at a density up to 30 dwelling units per acre (du/ac), which would result in 372 units. Elderly housing at a density up to 30 du/ac is encouraged for the area between Dinwiddie Street, Commerce Street, and Amherst Avenue.

### *Adjacent Areas*

*North and West:* A single-family residential area, consisting of the Monticello Forest and Springfield subdivisions are located to the north of the subject property. This area is outside of the Springfield CBC. These subdivisions are addressed by Plan recommendations for the Crestwood Community Planning Sector within the Springfield Planning District and are planned and developed at residential use at a density of 2-3 du/ac and 3-4 du/ac. They are zoned R-3 and R-4.

*South and East:* The Springfield Plaza and the Commerce Plaza shopping centers, which are low-scale, auto-oriented retail shopping centers, are located to the south and east of the subject property. As shown in the Springfield CBC portion of the Comprehensive Plan, the shopping centers are planned for community-serving retail use at an intensity up to 0.50 floor-area-ratio (FAR). The properties are zoned C-6. Directly south of the Springfield Gardens Apartments, along the west-side of Commerce Road, is the Richard Byrd Library, which is planned and developed for public facilities.

## PLANNING HISTORY

No Comprehensive Plan changes have been proposed on the subject property since 1995.

## ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Area, Springfield Community Business Center, as amended through 8-6-2008, Land Unit C, page 62:

“The area located to the west and north of Commerce Street is planned for multifamily residential use at a density up to 30 dwelling units per acre with the exception of the Richard Byrd Library, which is planned for public facilities uses and Tax Map 80-3 ((1)) 3D, which is planned for office use up to .35 FAR. Elderly housing at a density up to 30 dwelling units per acre is encouraged for the area between Dinwiddie Street, Commerce Street, and Amherst Avenue. The vacation of

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Cumberland Avenue as a part of this option should be explored in order to create a larger development site...”

The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the subject property as planned for residential use at 16-20 du/ac.

### **NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT**

The nomination proposes residential use at a density of 40-50 du/ac or 600 units with ground-floor retail use up to 10,000 square feet (sq.ft.) and a building height limitation of 75-feet. The nomination would result in approximately 228 residential units greater than the planned use and 380 units greater than the existing use. The following staff report analyzes the original nomination, up to 600 units, but Staff recognizes that the nominator limited the development to 550 units with a building height of 65-feet at a BRAC Task Force meeting on July 28, 2008.

### **ANALYSIS**

**Land Use:** The nomination proposes an increase in residential use from a density up to 30 du/ac to 40-50 du/ac. The proposed increase in residential density would be consistent with the August 2008 recommendations of the Springfield Connectivity Study, a special study that examined possible opportunities for multi-modal transportation improvements and incentives for revitalization in the Springfield area. The Connectivity Study proposed an increase in intensity up to 2.0 FAR with predominantly residential use on a consolidated Land Unit B and C, a portion of which is the subject property of this nomination. The additional housing in the CBC would improve the balance between jobs and housing in the CBC, which currently contains predominantly commercial use.

The nomination also proposes 10,000 square feet of ancillary retail uses that would not be incorporated into the ground floors of the buildings, rather than free-standing. Ancillary retail uses, located on the ground-floor of buildings, would serve the immediate community and would reduce vehicular trips. These commercial uses within and adjacent to the subject area would provide the residents with immediate access and convenience to everyday services, such as dry cleaners, pharmacies, delis, cafés, or small grocery stores. This convenience would support the County’s objective of encouraging growth, especially mixed-use development, in designated activity centers.

**Revitalization:** The proposed nomination would meet the overall Fairfax County Revitalization Goal of rejuvenating older residential areas, such as the Springfield Garden Apartments. In the Springfield CBC, maintaining the use as residential and adding additional residential units, as proposed, would support the County’s objective of encouraging redevelopment in revitalization areas.

**BRAC:** The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) proceedings will relocate at least 6,500 new jobs on the Engineering Providing Grounds and additional other jobs at the Fort Belvoir main post. The Springfield CBC would be an appropriate location for additional housing for new employees proximate to their jobs. Furthermore, locating additional housing in the CBC would assist in the regional goals of locating growth in designated activity centers, preventing urban sprawl, and

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averting the encroachment of new development into stable, low-density residential areas. The nomination, located within the CBC, would support these goals.

**Edge Condition and Transitional Use**

*Density & Land Use:* The subject property is located on the edge of the CBC between low density, residential use and more intense, commercial uses. As a result, the proposed density would need to be designed to provide an effective transition between these two uses. The Plan currently recommends more residential use than currently exists. The current Plan recommends up to 372 units, which is an approximately 70% increase compared to the existing 220 units, as an incentive for redevelopment. The proposal of 600 units would result in a 172% increase over the existing use and 38% increase over the current Plan. The proposed mid-rise, residential use would be an appropriate transitional use between the CBC and surrounding residential neighborhood, and the proposed density would provide additional incentive to promote redevelopment, whereas the current recommendation has not been implemented.

*Building height and design:* The manner in which the building height and design transition to the adjacent, low density residential neighborhood is important due to the subject property's location on the edge of the CBC. The current mid-rise apartment buildings provide an effective transition between the CBC and the adjacent, low density areas. Limiting the height of the new buildings to 65 feet would help to maintain this transition. Further reductions in building height through design elements, such as "stair-stepping" the building's façade, could be considered as other means to achieve an appropriate transition.

**Transportation:**

*Intersection LOS:* The subject property fronts on Commerce Street and Cumberland Avenue. Intersections at both ends of the subject property are operating at poor levels of service (LOS) and would require both pedestrian and vehicular accessibility improvements to raise the LOS to acceptable levels. Access improvements would be needed to mitigate the impact on the LOS at intersections, such as spot improvements and reconfigurations. Redevelopment should contribute to the improvements.

*Access:* Vehicular access to the subject property should be oriented to Commerce Street, with no direct access to neighborhood streets outside of the Springfield CBC.

*Trip generation:* The nomination is estimated to generate approximately 973 additional daily trips over the current Comprehensive Plan, as described in the table below. These trips would be loaded onto Commerce Street and Cumberland Avenue. On a peak hour basis, the nomination would generate approximately 150 additional trips in each of the AM and PM peak hours. Based on these estimations, roadways in the immediate area would not require improvements above the current Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

Scenario	Daily	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		In	Out	In	Out
<u>Existing Development</u> Res MR Apts. 220 DU's	1,478	20	45	50	36
Total	1,478	20	45	50	36
<u>Current Plan</u> Res MR Apts 372 DU's	2,500	34	77	84	61
Total	2,500	34	77	84	61
<u>Proposed Plan (2.0 FAR)</u> Res HR Apts. 600 DU's Retail 10,000 SF	2,500 953	45 45	135 41	128 50	82 31
Total	3,473	90	176	178	113
Proposed Plan comparison to Current Plan (additional trips)	+ 973	+ 56	+ 99	+ 94	+ 52

NOTE: Trip generation estimates are based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2003 rates. Trip reductions were calculated for retail pass-by for the Proposed Plan as part of the trip generation estimation process.

*Pedestrian connectivity:* A pedestrian system linking the proposed development to the other activities within the CBC should be included in any development.

**Parks and Recreation:**

*Park Deficiencies:* The Springfield Planning District has 18 neighborhood and community parks and one countywide park, as shown on the table below. The Park Authority owns and maintains a total of 963 acres of parkland in Springfield. The recreation facilities in these parks do not meet standards established by the Park Authority through the Needs Assessment study. By 2015, the projected deficiency in the Springfield Planning District will include: 715 acres of district and countywide parks; 7 rectangular fields; 1 adult softball field; 21 basketball courts; and 3 playgrounds.

Estimates for Park Deficiencies Related to BRAC APR #08-IV-11FS

Park Facility	2004 Deficiency	2015 Projected Deficiency
District and Countywide Parks	647 acres	715 acres
Rectangle Fields	5	7
Adult Softball	1	1
Basketball Courts	19	21
Playgrounds	1	3

The proposed nomination would contribute to this deficiency. Residents in the proposed development would need leisure and recreational opportunities. The integration of the residential area with the Springfield CBC enhances the desirability of the proposed nomination. The impact on parks and recreation should be mitigated per County policies contained in the Objectives of the Parks and Recreation Section of the Policy Plan and Springfield Planning District. For example, objectives within the Parks and Recreation section of the Policy Plan recommend that more dense, residential development proposals should provide parkland, connective trails, and, particularly in mixed-use areas, publicly accessible urban parks, park amenities, and active recreation facilities to off-set the impacts of increased density. The nomination does not detail these types of improvements, but these should be addressed in the rezoning process.

**Parking:** Parking would need to be designed to avoid diminishing potential open space and buffering to the adjacent community. The majority of the parking would need to be below grade, preferably, or structured. Any structured parking along the street or paths should involve façade treatments that would support pedestrian safety, promote pedestrian usage, and improve aesthetic value of the streetscape.

**Public Schools:** The proposed nomination is within the Crestwood and Lynbrook Elementary Schools, Key Middle School, and Lee High School boundaries. Currently, the Crestwood and Lynbrook Elementary Schools are over-capacity and are expected to remain over-capacity into the 2012-2013 school year. The chart below is intended to show the existing school capacity, enrollment, and projected enrollment in five years.

School	Capacity*	Enrollment (9/07)	2008-2009 Projected Enrollment**	Capacity/Enrollment Difference 2008-2009	2012-2013 Projected Enrollment	Capacity/Enrollment Difference 2012-2013
Crestwood ES	549	525	583	-34	554	-5
Lynbrook ES	412	412	474	-62	471	-59
Key MS	860	820	828	32	750	110
Lee HS	2,111	1,875	1,801	310	1,745	366

\*Capacity is based on FCPS Design and Construction updates

\*\*2008-2009 Enrollment projection based on Spring Projections Updates, Facilities Planning Services

Currently, 220 mid-rise apartments exist on the subject area with 91 total students enrolled in these local schools. The nomination proposes to increase the amount of residential units by 228 multi-family units from what is currently planned. This increase would yield 31 additional students from what would be anticipated under the current Comprehensive Plan recommendation. There is sufficient capacity at the middle and high school levels to accommodate the proposed Plan amendment. However, a capacity deficit is projected at the elementary schools through the 2012-2013 school year. It is anticipated that the capacity deficit will be further exacerbated by this nomination. This concern would need to be addressed at the time of rezoning.

**Environment:**

**RPA:** No Resource Protection Area, Environmental Quality Corridor, or floodplain exists on the site.

**Noise:** Transportation generated noise may impact residential development on the subject property. The property may be impacted by noise levels exceeding 65 dBA DNL from Old Keene Mill Road and other roadways in the area, as recommended within the Environmental Section of the Policy Plan. A noise study would need to be completed during the time of rezoning to determine the full extent of impacts.

**Water quality:** New development should be designed in a manner which incorporated runoff detention and water quality improvement measures, such as LID techniques

**LEED certification:** LEED or an equivalent third party certification would also be required as part of the Environmental Section of the Policy Plan.

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## RECOMMENDATION

The nomination proposes additional residential and ancillary retail uses on the subject property. The nomination would contribute to the county goals of revitalization and would add needed residential units in the Springfield CBC, an area identified for focused growth in the county. With the location of the subject area along the edge of the CBC, a building height of 65-feet and other design guidance a development that effectively transitions to the adjacent, low density, residential area could be created. Therefore, staff recommends that the nominated intensity be approved with conditions related to design, orientation, buffering, and parking. As an editorial update, the Plan recommendations for the Springfield Gardens Apartments in S2 Crestwood Planning District for 16-20 du/ac will be removed, as it was superseded by Plan amendment S98-CW-1CP (B), adopted in May 20, 2002, and should have been deleted.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Staff recommends the Comprehensive Plan be modified as shown below. Text proposed to be added is shown as underlined and text proposed to be deleted is shown with a ~~strikethrough~~.

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Area, Springfield Community Business Center, as amended through 8-6-2008, Land Unit C, page 62:

“The area located to the west and north of Commerce Street is planned for multifamily residential use at a density ~~up to 30~~ of 40-50 dwelling units per acre with the exception of the Richard Byrd Library, which is planned for public facilities uses and Tax Map 80-3 ((1)) 3D, which is planned for office use up to .35 FAR. Any redevelopment of the multi-family residential use should utilize the guidance described in the Springfield Connectivity Study recommendations (August 2008). In particular, redevelopment should provide for or contribute to the following conditions:

- An effective transition to the areas outside of the CBC through buffering, limiting building height to 65-feet, orienting buildings to Commerce Street, and other design considerations, such as ‘stair-stepping’;
- Publicly accessible urban park space and amenities, including passive and active recreational facilities, on-site and off-site;
- Below grade parking, preferably, or structured parking. Structured parking along the street or paths should utilize façade treatments that promote pedestrian safety and usage and improve the aesthetic value of the streetscape. Structured parking behind the residential buildings should avoid visually impacting the neighboring residential areas to the extent possible including vertical landscaping on the garage façade;
- Orientation of vehicular access to Commerce Street with no direct access to neighborhood streets outside of the Springfield CBC;
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access improvements to promote multi-modal connectivity, including intersection improvements; and,

- Community-serving, ground-floor retail use up to 10,000 square feet.

Elderly housing at a density ~~up to 30~~ of 40-50 dwelling units per acre is encouraged for the area between Dinwiddie Street, Commerce Street, and Amherst Avenue. The vacation of Cumberland Avenue as a part of this option should be explored in order to create a larger development site. Any northern or westward expansion of non-residential uses along Backlick Road and beyond Commerce Street is discouraged.”

**DELETE:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Springfield Planning District, S2-Crestwood Community Planning Sector, as amended through 7-21-2008, page 35:

~~“4. The Springfield Garden Apartments, located along Cumberland Avenue and Commerce Street, are planned for residential use at 16-20 dwelling units per acre and should be preserved as a transitional use between the single-family residential area and the Springfield CBC.”~~

Subsequent recommendations within the Crestwood Planning Sector Plan text should be renumbered and Figure 14, page 34, should be updated to reflect the deleted number.

The Comprehensive Plan Map should be amended to reflect the recommendation for residential use at a density of 20+ du/ac.