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Department of Planning & Zoning**

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STAFF REPORT 2008 AREA PLANS REVIEW

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: LEE

APR ITEM: 08-IV-8FS

NOMINATOR(S): Francis A. McDermott

ACREAGE: 4.34 Acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 80-4((1))5C1,5C2

GENERAL LOCATION: West of I-95, East of Brandon Ave., North of Commerce St.

PLANNING AREA(S): IV
District(s): Springfield
Sector: CRESTWOOD (S2)
Special Area(s): Springfield CBC (A)

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: MIXED USE

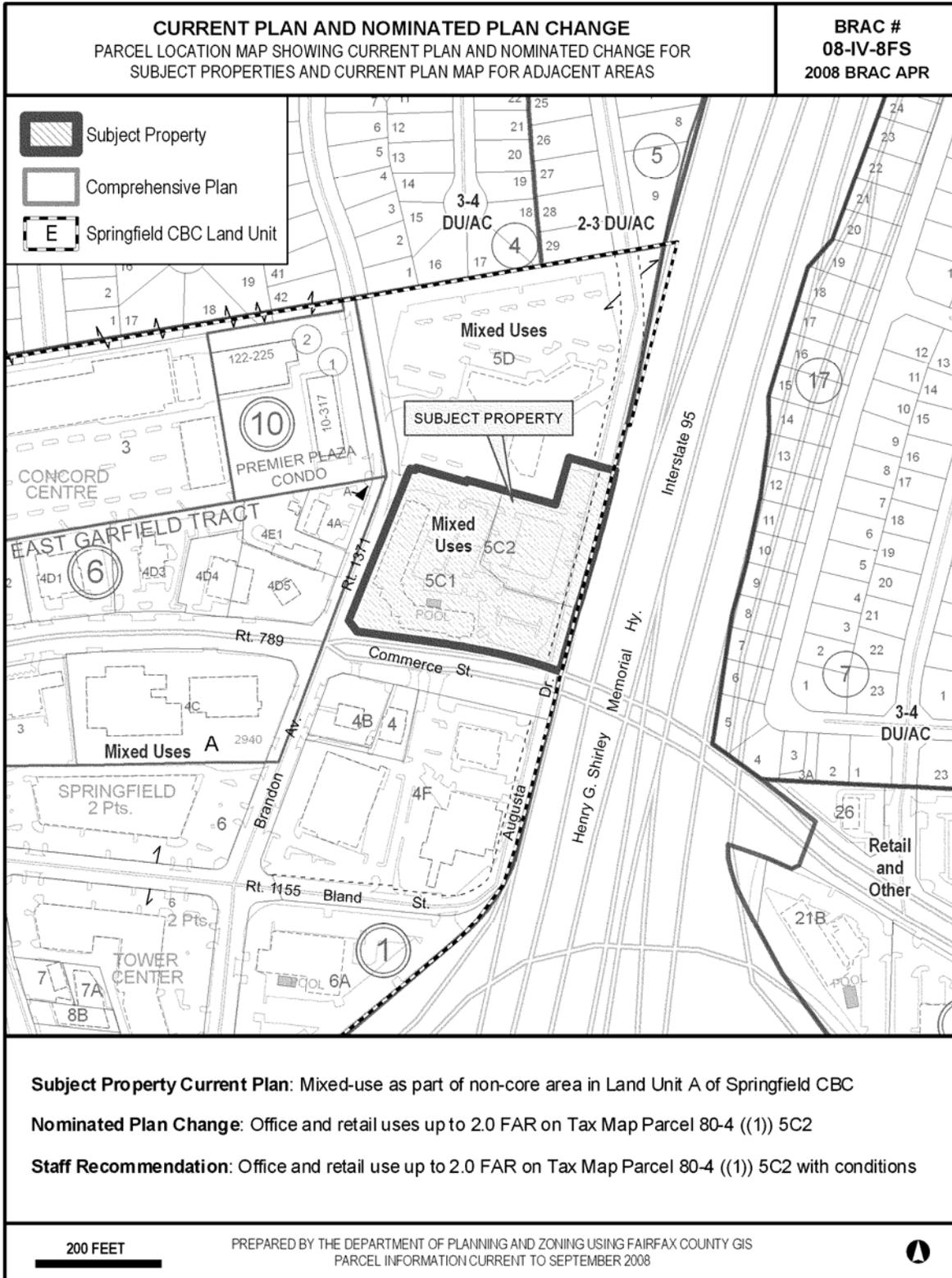
ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Portion of Non-core area within Land Unit A, which is planned overall for mixed use up to 1.1 FAR with additional recommendations regarding mix of uses, location of uses, and design

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

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Office mixed-use on Tax Map Parcel 80-4 ((1)) 5C2 up to 2.0 FAR (As amended August 11, 2008)

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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



CONTEXT:*General Location*

The 4.34-acre subject area consists of two parcels. The parcels are located, north of Commerce Street, east of Backlick Road, west of Augusta Drive, and south of the Springfield Corporate Center building.

Subject Property: The subject area contains the Marriott Towne Place hotel, which is approximately 88,000 sq.ft. with 148 rooms, and vacant land, northeast of the hotel, which is approved for a 7,000 sq.ft. free-standing restaurant. The Plan recommendations for the subject area are found within Land Unit A of the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC). (See Attachment I for Land Unit map.) The subject area is a portion of the 56-acre Land Unit A, which is planned for an overall intensity up to 1.1 FAR. Land Unit A, in total, is planned for 800 dwelling units and 2.0 million sq.ft. of commercial uses, to include 805,000 square feet (sq.ft.) of office use; 710,000 sq.ft. of retail use; and 445,000 sq.ft. of hotel use. The Plan recommends that this overall intensity be focused within the “core area,” or “main street” area, south of Commerce Street. The subject property is located in the non-core area. The non-core area is generally recommended for uses that would transition effectively towards the areas outside the core area.

Adjacent Areas

- North:* Directly to the north of the subject area is the CSCI Headquarters, a 145,000 sq.ft. office building. This office use is located within the non-core area of Land Unit A of the Springfield CBC and zoned C-6. The Yates Village subdivision is located north of the office building. Yates Village is planned and developed with single-family residential use at a density of 3-4 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and zoned R-3 and R-4.
- West:* The non-core area of Land Unit A of the Springfield CBC extends to the west of the subject area. This area currently contains a low-scale, community-serving strip shopping center and free-standing retail establishments and restaurants and is zoned C-6 and C-8. This area is predominantly auto-oriented with large parking lots surrounding and in front of the buildings with minimal landscaping.
- South:* South of the subject property, across Commerce Street, is similar to the west with low-scale commercial development, dominated by surface parking, except for a high-rise office building at the intersection of Bland Street and Augusta Drive. This area is planned within the core area of Land Unit A and is planned for intense, “main-street” redevelopment and zoned C-6 and C-8.
- East:* East of the subject property is Interstate-95, a 20-lane interstate roadway.

PLANNING HISTORY

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

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Area, Springfield Community Business Center, as amended through 8-6-2008, Land Unit A, page 58-61, recommends the subject area as part of the non-core area of Land Unit A. Land Unit A is planned for a total of two million sq.ft. of office, retail, and hotel mixed-use and 800 dwelling units, based on achievement of conditions related to consolidation, integration of uses, urban design, coordination of development, and access. See Attachment II for complete text.

The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the subject property as planned for mixed-use.

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

The original nomination proposed the subject area be replanned to allow a multi-story office building with accessory retail uses and the expansion of the existing hotel use at up to an intensity of 2.0 FAR or a total of approximately 387,000 sq.ft. on a site of 4.34 acres. The intensity was allocated as follows: approximately 251,000 sq.ft. of office use; 107,000 sq.ft. of hotel use with 270 rooms; and 20,000 sq.ft. of retail use. In a letter, dated August 11, 2008, the nominator amended the nomination to exclude the existing hotel site and reduce the amount of office use to 125,000 sq.ft., with a building height limit of 160-feet (six-stories of office use and four-stories of above-grade parking). The new site would encompass only Tax Map Parcel 80-4 ((1)) 5C2, a vacant parcel of 62, 174 sq.ft. (1.4-acres).

ANALYSIS

The nomination was evaluated according to several critical issues, including the proposed intensities and land uses, impacts to transportation and parks and recreation, and consistency with revitalization goals and the recommendations of the Springfield Connectivity Study, dated August 2008. The Board of Supervisors authorized the Springfield Connectivity Study, which included the subject property within the study area, to address several challenges and opportunities facing the Springfield area, including the recommendations offered by a May 2006 Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel and the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions. The goal of the Study is intended to promote the revitalization of the Springfield area as a walkable, vibrant, active, mixed-use community and to expand the area's multimodal accessibility. The following analysis details these issues.

Land Use: The revised nomination 08-IV-8FS, dated August 11, 2008, proposes to replan parcel 5C2 for office use at an intensity of up to 2.0 FAR. The proposed office use would be consistent

with the current Plan recommendations for office, retail, hotel, and residential mixed-use within Land Unit A. The addition of ancillary retail use, located on the ground-floor, would encourage pedestrian activity on the street and serve the office workers and nearby community.

Core versus Non-core Area: The current Plan does not explicitly support intensity above 1.1 FAR outside the core area. As a result, the intensity of 2.0 FAR, which would equate to 125,000 sq.ft. would be inconsistent with the current Comprehensive Plan guidance. To support the nomination, the core area would need to be expanded. Even though the Springfield Connectivity Study recommendations, dated August 2008, do not specifically recommend the expansion of the planned core area, the recommendations suggest that Commerce Street should act a “Pedestrian Priority Corridor.” The designation as “Pedestrian Priority Corridor” would involve urban design and streetscape improvements on both sides of the street to promote pedestrian movement and presence. The land use and intensity on either side of Commerce Street should encourage the safe movement of pedestrians along roadways that would connect the areas across the Interstate and around the study area. As such, the proposed nomination should support this goal.

“Gateway” Status and Building Height: The nomination proposes that the 160-foot building height would act as a “gateway” feature for the area. This “gateway” status would be appropriate as the parcel is located at an important entry point into the Springfield CBC from the Commerce Street bridge. A gateway feature should announce the area as an important place and destination with significant features, such as tall office buildings and dynamic, multi-modal streetscapes. The nomination would work towards this goal, which is more fully expressed for the entire Springfield area through a coordinated concept plan in the Connectivity Study recommendations.

At the same time, the building height may cause concern due to the visual impact on the nearby Yates Village community. The current Plan recommends that the building heights within Land Unit A taper towards Yates Village to maintain an effective transition between the more intense uses of the CBC and the adjacent, low-density residential neighborhood. Existing Comprehensive Plan recommendations, which support the transition, include year round screening through a vegetated buffer, landscaped parking, brick walls, and lighting requirements. To complement this transition, the building height of the proposed nomination should be limited to the proposed 160-feet, if the visual impact on the adjacent neighborhoods is minimized.

Consolidation: The current Plan recommends that any redevelopment within Land Unit A, greater than 0.35 FAR should consolidate at least 2-acres. Staff realizes that the portion of the subject area with the proposed development, the approximately 1.4-acre vacant parcel, is located between two, relatively stable developments, which may not redevelop in the near-term. For example, the Marriott Hotel was constructed in 2003 and is currently undergoing significant renovations. With that consideration in mind, staff recognizes that the achievement of the Plan guidance regarding site area may not be possible.

Vehicular Trip Generation: Commerce Street, Brandon Avenue, and Augusta Drive, roadways on which the subject area fronts, are facilities that carry high volumes of traffic during AM and PM peak hours. The original nomination is estimated to generate approximately 3,500 additional daily trips over the current Comprehensive Plan. On a peak hour basis, the nomination would generate more than 300 additional trips in each of the AM and PM peak hours above the Comprehensive Plan, with the primary direction of flow inbound in the AM peak hour and outbound in the PM peak hour, due to the addition of office use on the subject area. The amended nomination would further reduce these numbers. At these levels, roadways in the immediate area would not require improvements above the current Plan recommendations.

The trip generation estimates factor in reductions in trips due to retail pass-by, such as attraction of trips from the passing traffic stream, and internal trip-making in a mixed-use development area. The retail portion of the proposed plan is generated in this analysis at a shopping center rate. However, trip generation from retail uses can vary tremendously. For example, sit-down or fast food restaurants could generate a greater amount of retail traffic than estimated here. To discourage high trip-generating retail uses, provisions should be made in the Plan text to limit the type and amount of retail use in the development, and discourage direct access to it.

Access: The amended subject area, Tax Map Parcel 80-4 ((1)) 5C2 has frontage on Augusta Drive and vehicular and pedestrian access to Augusta Drive and Brandon Avenue. These access points should be maintained. Other improvements should be completed to enhance pedestrian and vehicular access and to maintain acceptable levels-of-service at intersections within the area. These improvements should include both intersection improvements and other commitments to reduce traffic congestion in the area. The redevelopment also should seek to mitigate traffic generated by contributing to transit services that serve the area.

Revitalization: The nomination is located within the Springfield Commercial Revitalization District. The office development would contribute to the overall Fairfax County Revitalization goals, if planned with a strong emphasis on urban design, pedestrian accessibility, and placemaking. The proposed redevelopment would contribute to the rejuvenation of the Springfield CBC and would create a more attractive, commercially viable, functionally efficient business center and community focal point. The proposed development also would support the creation of more identifiable places through private investment.

BRAC: The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) proceedings will relocate at least 8,500 new Department of Defense (DOD) jobs on the Engineering Providing Grounds and may create other non-DOD jobs near the Springfield CBC. The Springfield CBC would be an appropriate location for additional growth to accommodate supportive contractor services, due to its proximity to the EPG and its location within an activity center. Locating new development in the Springfield CBC would contribute to the regional goals of locating growth in designated areas, preventing urban sprawl, and averting the encroachment of new development into stable,

low-density residential areas. The nomination, located within the CBC, would support these goals.

Parks and Recreation: The Springfield Planning District has 18 neighborhood and community parks and one countywide park, and the Park Authority owns and maintains a total of 963 acres of parkland in Springfield. The recreational facilities in these parks, however, do not meet standards established by the Park Authority through the Needs Assessment Study, and the nomination would contribute to the deficiency. By 2015, the Park facilities in Springfield will be deficient by 715 acres of district and countywide parks, 7 rectangular fields, one adult softball field, 21 basketball courts, and 3 playgrounds. The new employees, resulting from the nomination, will need leisure and recreation opportunities.

The impact on parks and recreation should be mitigated per County policies contained in Objective 6 of the Parks and Recreation Section of the Policy Plan. Urban park amenities should be integrated into the design of the development to enhance the desirability of the development and serve the office workers. A pedestrian system linking the proposed development to the other activities within the CBC also should be included with the development.

Environment: No Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) or Environmental Quality Corridors (EQCs) exist in Land Unit A. However, significant transportation-generated noise from Interstate-95 could affect the subject property. A noise study would need to be completed to determine the full extent of impacts during any rezoning request. Further, any new development should be designed in a manner, which incorporates runoff detention and water quality improvements measures, such as low-impact development (LID) techniques. Any development also would need to be LEED certified or an equivalent third party certification, as per County policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the approval of the amended BRAC APR nomination 08-IV-8FS, dated August 11, 2008, with additional conditions related to building height, access, and amenities. The proposed building size and intensity of office use should be reduced from the original nomination to 125,000 sq.ft. and located on Tax Map Parcel 80-4 ((1)) 5C2. Any development should be designed as a “gateway” feature, should not have a substantial impact on the roadways, and should contribute to the revitalization of the Springfield area. The development should add pedestrian activity to the north-side of Commerce Street and should implement the recommendations of the Connectivity Study for this street as a “pedestrian priority corridor.” The core area and the conditions related to enhanced streetscape should be expanded to include Tax Map Parcels 80-4 ((1)) 5C1 and 5C2. Finally, any Parks and Recreation and Environmental concerns should be addressed at the rezoning stage.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Area, Springfield Community Business Center, as amended through 8-6-2008, Land Unit A, page 58-61:

“Land Unit Recommendations**Land Unit A**

Land Unit A is approximately 56 acres in size, and is bounded by Amherst Avenue, I-95, and Old Keene Mill Road. It is located in the northeastern portion of the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC). The Comprehensive Plan recommendations encourage the creation of an urban, pedestrian-oriented area comprised of a mix of medium to high intensity office, retail, hotel, civic, arts, and residential uses.

...

A "main street area" treatment is planned ~~along all streets in Land Unit A for areas south of Commerce Street and Tax Map Parcels 80-4 ((1)) 5C1 and 5C2, except the area to the north of Commerce Street.~~ Figure 17 shows the location of the core, or "main street" area within Land Unit A, which is approximately ~~27~~ 31 acres. Like all areas in the CBC, the main street should incorporate the streetscape design features recommended by the Springfield Streetscape Conceptual Design. Street level retail uses are an integral aspect of the main street approach and are intended to help create an urban, people-oriented place that provides convenient retail services and encourages pedestrian movement.

...

Along Commerce Street, consolidation of parcels 80-4 ((6)) 3 and 4C, is encouraged. The area is envisioned to be high rise office, residential or hotel use or a mix of these uses. Facades and entrances should be oriented to the streets with parking located toward the center of the block and to the rear of buildings.

Buildings should step down to a lower height towards Yates Village to maintain a transition to the adjacent residential neighborhood, to the extent possible. Building design should include varying rooflines for visual interest. Office use up to 125,000 sq.ft. may be appropriate on Tax Map Parcel 80-4 ((1)) 5C2, recognizing its location as a “gateway” feature for the Springfield area. Ground-floor, ancillary retail uses and an urban park or other recreational facilities should be provided to serve the employees with this development. Vehicular and pedestrian access to Brandon Avenue and Augusta Drive should be maintained and enhanced. Management tools to reduce vehicular trips to and from the office use should be utilized. The building height, including parking levels, of any development on Tax Map Parcel 80-4((1)) 5C2, should be allowed up to 160-feet, if it can be demonstrated that the visual impact to Yates Village is minimized.

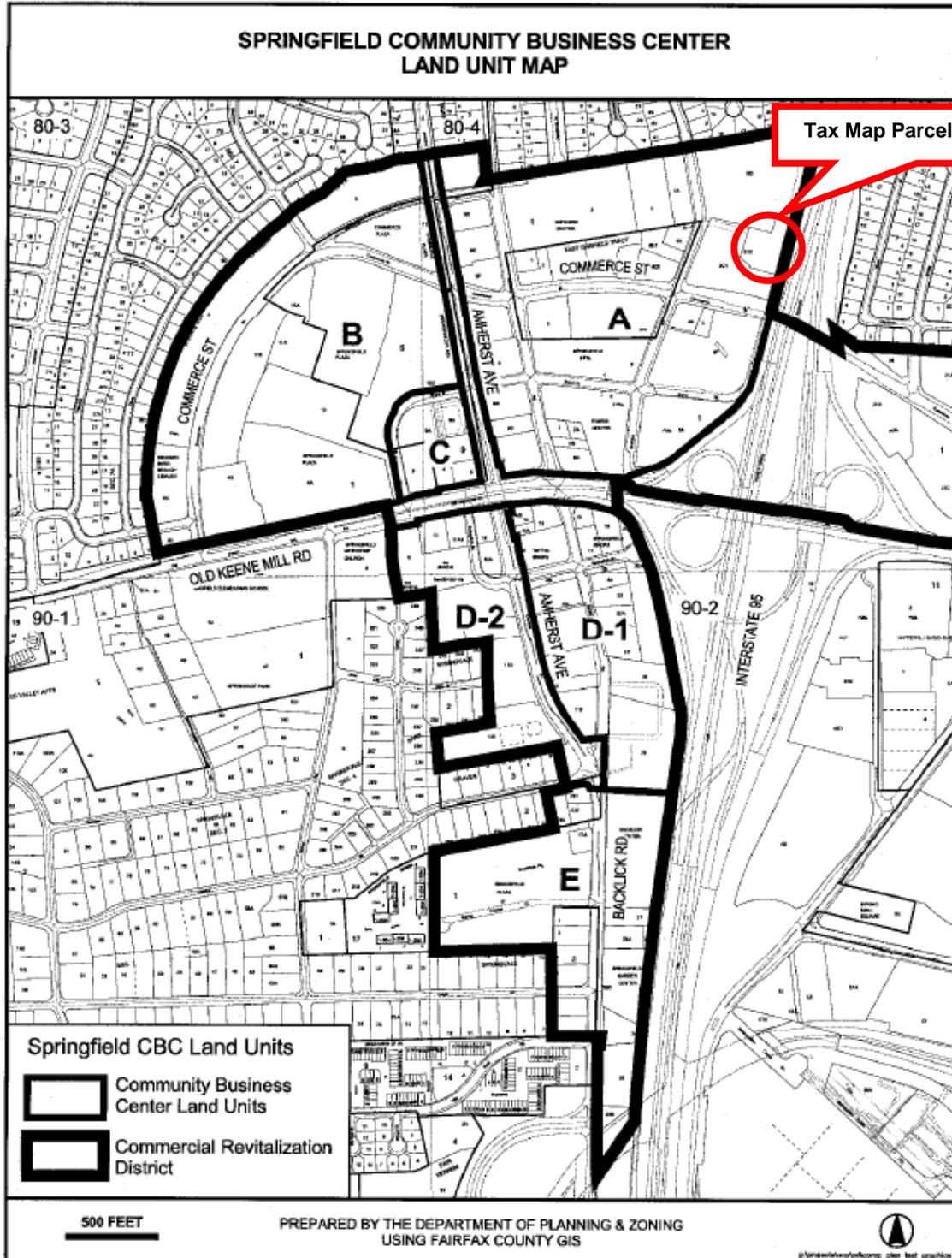
Year round screening should be provided by vegetated buffer located along the northern boundary of Land Unit A in 80-3((1)) 1, 1A, 3 and 5D...”

PLAN FIGURES: Plan Figure 17 (page 59) will change to reflect the expanded core area.

THE PLAN MAP: The Comprehensive Plan Map will not change.

Attachment I

Springfield Community Business Center Land Unit Map



Attachment II**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 A, page 58-61:

“Land Unit Recommendations**Land Unit A**

Land Unit A is approximately 56 acres in size, and is bounded by Amherst Avenue, I-95, and Old Keene Mill Road. It is located in the northeastern portion of the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC). The Comprehensive Plan recommendations encourage the creation of an urban, pedestrian-oriented area comprised of a mix of medium to high intensity office, retail, hotel, civic, arts, and residential uses.

Currently Land Unit A is developed with approximately 360,000 square feet of retail use, 205,000 square feet of office use and 165,000 square feet of hotel use. The Comprehensive Plan assumes redevelopment of much of this space and the addition of approximately 600,000 square feet of office, 350,000 square feet of retail and 280,000 square feet of hotel uses for a total of approximately 2.0 million square feet of non-residential uses and 800 dwelling units. In total, this amount of development equates to an overall intensity of approximately 1.1 FAR.

A "main street area" treatment is planned along all streets in Land Unit A, except the area to the north of Commerce Street. Figure 17 shows the location of the core, or "main street" area within Land Unit A, which is approximately 27 acres. Like all areas in the CBC, the main street should incorporate the streetscape design features recommended by the Springfield Streetscape Conceptual Design. Street level retail uses are an integral aspect of the main street approach and are intended to help create an urban, people-oriented place that provides convenient retail services and encourages pedestrian movement.

Building facades and entrances should be oriented to the streets with parking located toward the rear of buildings, or below ground. The main street area should have wide sidewalks fronting retail shopping and restaurants on the lower floors of the office and/or residential buildings. Streetscape design should include corner plaza entry features at the intersections of Commerce Street/Backlick Road, Commerce Street/Brandon Avenue, Backlick Road/Bland Street and Bland Street/Brandon Avenue. Plazas at these locations will create an aesthetically pleasing streetscape environment and encourage pedestrian activity.

The main street area will function as the core area of the Community Business Center and will be characterized by multi-story buildings with a mix of street level-retail, hotel, civic, arts, residential, and/or office uses developed with a common design or architectural

Attachment II

theme. The portion of a building above three stories should be stepped back from the street-side façade to avoid creating a canyon-like streetscape.

To implement this vision, a unified development plan demonstrating logical and substantial redevelopment of the core area is required with the initial rezoning, including a site for a public building or space for public use to house cultural, performing and visual arts, community and/or governmental use.

Along Commerce Street, consolidation of parcels 80-4 ((6)) 3 and 4C, is encouraged. The area is envisioned to be high rise office, residential or hotel use or a mix of these uses. Facades and entrances should be oriented to the streets with parking located toward the center of the block and to the rear of buildings.

Buildings should step down to a lower height towards Yates Village to maintain a transition to the adjacent residential neighborhood. Building design should include varying rooflines for visual interest. Year round screening should be provided by vegetated buffer located along the northern boundary of Land Unit A in 80-3((1)) 1, 1A, 3 and 5D. This buffer may be utilized for surface parking provided that:

- Parking areas are landscaped with planting beds and trees in excess of that prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance;
- A minimum of 40 feet wide fully vegetated buffer is placed along the residential neighborhood with an eight foot high brick or architectural wall constructed along the parking edge;
- Buildings are located a minimum of 120 feet from the residential neighborhood. Appropriately landscaped surface parking may be located in this area;
- Office use should be compatible in design with the residential neighborhood; and
- Lighting from any development should be designed so that it is not intrusive to the adjacent residential development.

Freestanding single-use retail or office uses may be appropriate along Old Keene Mill Road and close to I-95. Under the option for redevelopment of the core area, freestanding single-use retail, hotel or office uses are only appropriate along Old Keene Mill Road and close to I-95. As part of the redevelopment of the core area, hotel use up to 110,000 square feet may be appropriate on the northwest corner of Old Keene Mill Road and Backlick Road, Tax Map 80-4((1))10. The site should be considered for this intensity only if enhanced streetscape amenities that create a focal point and gateway to the CBC are provided in addition to meeting the development criteria for Land Unit A. Additionally, to offset the effects of impervious surfaces the installation of rooftop vegetation and/or rain gardens is encouraged.

As discussed in the Transportation section and depicted on Figure 18, a commuter parking facility is planned in the area adjacent to Amherst Avenue and Old Keene Mill Road.

Attachment II

The facility will complement a commuter staging area for car pool formation and bus/van service located on the south side Old Keene Mill Road.

A major objective of the redevelopment of Land Unit A is the creation of a visually and functionally cohesive community. In addition to the implementation of urban design and architectural guidelines, land consolidation is necessary to physically unify freestanding buildings and for parking to be located to the rear of buildings or in the center of blocks. Where development intensity greater than .35 FAR is proposed, consolidation of at least 2 contiguous acres is encouraged, except as otherwise specifically recommended. When a consolidation is less than two acres, development should provide for vehicular and pedestrian access with abutting properties. As an alternative, coordinated development plans and concurrent processing of the development applications with a combined land area of at least 2 acres may be appropriate. In any instance, it must be demonstrated that any unconsolidated parcels are able to develop in conformance with the Plan.

All such development proposals in Land Unit A should also meet the following criteria:

- Multi-story buildings should have retail and service uses primarily located on the ground level. Retail and service uses are intended to serve both the needs of the office workers and residents;
- To the extent possible, parking facilities should be located in the center of the block, behind buildings or otherwise screened from view;
- Development should be transit-friendly: i.e. buildings should be located close to the street and streetscape amenities such as benches and bus shelters should be provided;
- As consistent with County Policy, a detailed traffic impact analysis should be prepared to determine any additional improvements required to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on the street network in the vicinity of the development. Development under this option should mitigate the incremental traffic impact of the proposed development. Examples of mitigation may include but not be limited to making contributions to alternative traffic mitigation projects that benefit the greater Springfield area;
- Buildings and ground floor retail uses should have street level public access. Display windows oriented towards the street should be provided;
- Pedestrian circulation and the use of public transit should be encouraged through site design and connections to sidewalk and trails;
- Building design should reduce the effect of building height and bulk;
- Shared parking is encouraged;
- Curb cuts should be minimized; and
- Urban design elements such as the pedestrian plaza, pedestrian amenities, and landscaping should be provided.”