

**PRELIMINARY
STAFF REPORT
2008 AREA PLANS REVIEW**

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S): LEE

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

NOMINATOR(S): John E. Crowles 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: Crestwood (S2)

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

BACKGROUND

The 12.4-acre subject area consists of the three parcels, which currently make up the Springfield Garden Apartments, on the north-side of Commerce Street, between Old Keene Mill Road and Backlick Road. These three-story apartment buildings contain of 220 mid-rise, residential units.

The subject area is located along the northwest boundary of the Springfield CBC and adjacent to a single-family residential neighborhood, which is outside of the CBC and planned for residential use at a density of 3-4 du/ac. It is planned for residential use at a density up to 30 du/ac, which would equate to 372 dwelling units.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use

The nomination proposes an increase in residential use from 30 du/ac to 40-50 du/ac. The proposed use would be consistent with the Connectivity Study, which proposed increase in density up to 2.0 FAR with additional residential use on Land Unit B and C. The nomination also proposes 10,000 square feet of ancillary retail uses that would not be free-standing. Ancillary retail uses that would be located on the ground-floor of buildings and would serve the immediate community would be consistent with the county goals of creating mixed-use communities and would create convenient access to everyday services, such as dry cleaners, pharmacies, delis, cafés, or small grocery stores.

Revitalization

The proposed nomination would meet the overall Fairfax County Revitalization Goal of rejuvenating an older residential area. In the Springfield CBC, maintaining the use as residential and adding additional residential units, as proposed, would support the county's overall need to focus growth in activity centers. With commercial uses adjacent to the subject area, the residents of this development would have immediate access and convenience to the larger, shopping areas. This convenience would support the County's objective of encouraging mixed-use development in revitalization areas and would reduce vehicular trips.

Density

The main concern of the nomination is related to the proposed density and associated design. More specifically, because of the area's location on the edge, the use and design of the proposed development on the subject area would need to create an effective transitional between the low density, residential neighborhood and the commercial areas to the east. Mid-rise, residential use, similar to the proposed use, generally would be considered an appropriate transitional use between these two areas. Further, the narrow shape of the subject area and its location on the edge of the CBC would necessitate the proposed development to demonstrate that its layout, orientation, building

height, and buffering would minimize impact on the adjacent properties, outside of the CBC, and would establish an effective transition between the CBC and the low density, residential uses.

This concern becomes important because the current Plan already provides an incentive for redevelopment with increased residential use, greater than the existing uses. The current Plan would allow up to 372 units, which is an approximately 70% increase compared to the existing 220 units. The nomination proposes that the subject area be replanned for an increase in residential density, from 30 du/ac to 40-50 du/ac. The proposed number of units would result in a density of 48 dwelling units per acre. The nomination proposes a 172% increase over that which is existing currently and 38% increase over the current Plan.

The effect of the proposed density on the resulting design also is a cause for concern. The nomination proposes up to 600 units at 1,000 square feet per unit with 10,000 square feet of retail use, for a total of 610,000 square feet. The nomination proposes that the design will consist of 11, five to six story buildings, each with a building footprint of 175-feet by 70-feet and a building height of 75-feet. With these dimensions in mind, the estimated building size would be up to 673,750 square feet at 5 stories and 808,500 square feet at six-stories. These dimensions would exceed the 610,000 square feet proposed.

A less dense or smaller building design could relate better to the adjacent, low-density neighborhood and provide a more effective transition. This alternative would provide an incentive for redevelopment. This less dense design, based on 610,000 square feet, is consistent with the nomination.

Building height & design

As stated previously, the manner in which the land use and building height transition to the adjacent, low density residential neighborhood is important due to the subject property's location on the edge of the CBC. A recommended plan for effective transitions in a nearby area is to limit building height based on a 14-degree line of sight, as measured from the front property line of the adjacent property to the maximum height of the proposed development. Taking into consideration the proposed building height of 75-feet and the potential building depths of 70-feet or 175-feet, the resulting angles would be 26-degrees and 59-degrees, respectively. The proposed building height would exceed the standard angle accepted for an effective transition.

Reducing the building height would allow the angle to become more consistent with the standards in this area. For example, if the buildings aligned with Commerce Street, oriented with the long-side (175-feet) of the building paralleling the road, and had a building height of 55-feet, then there would be a 150' buffer between the building and the rear edge, and the line of site angle would be reduced to 20-degrees. Further reductions in building height or "stair-stepping" the building could be considered other means to achieve the 14-degree line of site angle.

This alternative design with a building height up to 55-feet could accommodate five story buildings,

70-feet in depth, and the 610,000 square feet of development, as proposed. Furthermore, alignment with Commerce Street would also be consistent with the design outlined in the current Comprehensive Plan recommendation for landscape and streetscape treatment in the Springfield CBC and provide the opportunity for buffering and open space against the neighboring community.

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, which 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.

Pedestrian connectivity: The nomination does not address how or whether pedestrian or bicycle connectivity would be improved. 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. 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.

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 propose these types of improvements.

Parking

Parking would need to be designed to not usurp 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.

Publics 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/Enroll. Difference 2008-2009	2012-2013 Projected Enrollment	Capacity/Enroll. 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. A noise study would need to be completed 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.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

The nomination proposes residential and ancillary retail uses on the subject property. The nomination would contribute to the county goals of revitalization in the Springfield area. It would also add needed residential units in the Springfield CBC, which has been identified as an area for focused growth in the county. At the same time, with the location of the subject area along the edge of the CBC, the nomination proposes a building height of 55-feet and design that would not be considered an effective transition to the adjacent, low density, residential area. Therefore, staff recommends that the nominated intensity be approved with a reduced building height and specific conditions related to design, building orientation, buffering to the adjacent, low density community, and parking. As an editorially 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.