

**PRELIMINARY
STAFF REPORT
2008 BRAC AREA PLANS REVIEW**

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S): MOUNT VERNON **APR ITEM(S) :** 08-IV-1LP

NOMINATOR(S): William C. Thomas, Jr.

ACREAGE: 5.76 Acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 109-1((1))29-32; 35-42 incl.

GENERAL LOCATION: NE of Backlick Rd/Richmond Hwy. intersection, both sides Shepherd Ln.

PLANNING AREA(S): IV

District(s): Lower Potomac
Sector: FORT BELVOIR (LP4)
Special Area(s): N/A

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Parcels 29-30: 2-3 DU/AC; Parcel 31:16-20 DU/AC; Parcels 32 & 40: Retail and other; Parcels 35-38: 5-8 DU/AC; Parcels 41-42: 12-16 DU/AC

POLICY PLAN TEXT: The Policy Plan of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan recommends the following:

- Page 9, Objective 14, Policy b.) “encourage infill development in established areas that is compatible with the existing and/or planned land use and that is at a compatible scale with the surrounding area and that can be supported by adequate public facilities and transportation systems.”
- Page 9, Objective 14, Policy c.) “achieve compatible transitions between adjoining land uses through the control of height and the use of appropriate buffering and screening.”

For complete plan text see:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/landuse.pdf>

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Neighborhood serving commercial along Route 1, no expansion; residential use at 2-3 du/ac generally along Backlick Road; residential use at 5-8 du/ac east of Shepherd Lane; residential use at 12-16 du/ac on parcels 41 and 42; affordable housing at 16-20 du/ac on parcel 31.

For complete Plan text see:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area4/lowerpotomac.pdf>

Page 117, Recommendation #5.

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Option for mixed use at 1.2 FAR (300,000 square feet) in six-story structures comprised of:

Alternative 1: 30,000 sf office (10%); 60,000 sf retail (20%); 210,000 sf hotel (70%)

Alternative 2: 240,000 sf office (80%); 60,000 sf retail (20%)

BACKGROUND:

The 5.74 acre subject property is located in the Village of Accotink, an area with a variety of residential and commercial uses. This area is surrounded by the Fort Belvoir Military Reservation and is located at the intersection of Backlick Road and Richmond Highway (Route 1).

The Village dates back to at least the mid-eighteenth century, when lumber and flour mills were located there. Until the twentieth century, Accotink Bay was a wide tidal estuary, deep enough for ships to load lumber and flour where Route One now crosses the creek. By 1846, the Village was the town center for a Quaker community. The war disrupted the Quakers' influence in the community and semi-isolated religious way of life, which never fully recovered. In 1917 during the First World War the National Government purchased the former Belvoir estate and established Camp A. A. Humphrey. In 1938 Fort Belvoir was established and all the land surrounding the town of Accotink was acquired for the expansion of the base that had been Camp Humphrey. (Lyons)

Today, the Village of Accotink contains a wide variety of land uses including single and multi-family homes, commercial, and institutional uses. The subject property plus parcel 109-1((1)) 28 was nominated during the South County 2005 Area Plans review for office use up to 250,000 square feet of office use with ancillary, ground floor retail. Consideration of the nomination was deferred to allow the extent of BRAC activities at Fort Belvoir to be assessed in conjunction with the proposed land use change.

CRITICAL ISSUES:

- The subject property includes the area located north of Richmond Highway, between Belvoir Court and Backlick Road. It contains a market, cell phone tower, vacant land, and several restaurants. An application to expand a previously approved special exception for the cell tower use located on lot 38, onto lots 39 and 41 was submitted on June 11, 2008. The presence of additional cell towers brings into question the ability to fully consolidate all of the parcels that are part of the nomination.
- The subject area is planned for community-serving retail use along Richmond Highway and residential use at 2-3 du/ac, 5-8 du/ac and 12-16 du/ac, and 16-20 du/ac. The current Plan recommendations would yield a maximum of 8,000 square feet of retail use (no expansion of the existing commercial uses is recommended) and approximately 50 dwelling units.
- The properties are zoned C-8 and R-3, and could yield approximately 102,000 square feet if fully developed. Two lots totaling .5 acre are zoned R-3.

- The nomination proposes up to a six-story hotel or office structure with retail on the ground level. In terms of size, the proposed 300,000 square feet is more than three times existing zoning, and four times the current Plan.
- The proposed intensity will result in multi-story buildings served by garage parking. The relatively small subject area will preclude the ability to taper or vary building height. High quality site design and open space maybe difficult to achieve. In addition, compatibility with the surrounding lower density uses is an issue.
- The proposed building height and massing may adversely impact current or future planned operations at Fort Belvoir. Fort Belvoir representatives should be provided with the opportunity to comment on potential impacts of the proposed nomination.
- The intersection of Backlick Road and Richmond Highway functions at Level of Service (LOS) C in the morning peak hour and LOS F in the evening peak hour. To improve the evening peak hour condition and support the current Comprehensive Plan land use recommendations, Richmond Highway is recommended to be a six-lane cross section at the point of the proposed nomination, in addition to two dedicated transit lanes/transit ROW. However, the widening of Richmond Highway is not funded and is not identified in the VDOT Six Year Plan for construction.
- The Comprehensive Plan calls for a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Richmond Highway and the Fairfax County Parkway. Should the nomination be adopted, supplementary improvements to mitigate the impact of this proposal may require additional right-of-way to the south/southwest of the subject properties. Like the improvements mentioned above, the construction of a grade separated-interchange is not funded and is not identified in the VDOT Six Year Plan for construction.
- The Comprehensive Plan does not identify improvements to Backlick Road north of Richmond Highway. However, such improvements may be needed based on further analysis.
- The proposed nomination is estimated to generate 5,000 or more additional vehicle trips per day over current Comprehensive Plan designations and must be submitted to the Virginia Department of Transportation for Traffic Impact Analysis (Chapter 527) review and comment. Potential estimated impacts include 5,100 to 5,252 additional vehicular trips, depending on site development. The current uses generate approximately 1,700 trips per day. By contrast, full implementation of the current Comprehensive Plan would not significantly increase the number of trips.
- The Comprehensive Plan contains guidance for a non-site specific “Transit Transfer Center” across Richmond Highway from the subject nomination to take advantage of future rail or other transit services established between Fort Belvoir and the Franconia-Springfield transit station over an existing military railroad facility. The site is proposed at a minimum of three acres. If developed, the transit center could serve the proposed use, possibly reducing the number of automobile trips. The Transit Center is not included in the Six Year Plan for construction.

- Level of service for the Backlick/Richmond Highway and Richmond Highway/Fairfax County Parkway intersections will continue to deteriorate if redevelopment occurs at the proposed intensity.
 - Given the history of the village, the presence of historic/archeological sites should be investigated, especially in undeveloped parts of the nomination property.
 - The proximity to the post offers the potential for convenient hotel, contractor office space and retail use.
-

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Nomination as submitted

Approve Staff Alternative

Retain Adopted Plan

The proximity of the site to Fort Belvoir and the opportunity for convenient access is recognized, as is the need to encourage the revitalization of deteriorated properties, however the subject property contains only a portion of the larger Accotink Village area and the intensity of the proposed nomination would not be compatible with the surrounding low density residential uses to the north and to the west across Backlick Road. Moreover, the ability to achieve substantial consolidation is an issue because of the proposed expansion of the previously approved special exception to expand the cell tower use. In addition, the impacts to the transportation network in the vicinity of the Richmond Highway/Fairfax County Parkway and Backlick Road/Richmond Highway intersections (the Richmond Highway/Fairfax County Parkway intersection currently operates at LOS F in the evening peak hour) would cause the operation of these facilities to further deteriorate if the proposed plan is implemented.

As an alternative, staff recommends a lower intensity of .5 FAR with the following mix of uses:

Hotel (88,200 s.f. – 70%), Retail (25,200 s.f. – 20%), Office (12,600 s.f. – 10%), total of 126,000 s.f. of development with substantial consolidation.

This alternative would generate approximately 2,300 daily vehicle trips. The volume of traffic generated by the staff alternative would have less impact on the area's roads than the nomination, and still provide for convenient hotel and office space for contractors and visitors coming to Fort Belvoir as a result of the BRAC process.

In the future, if road improvements are funded and if there is additional and substantial consolidation of the larger Accotink Village area, higher intensity uses may be appropriate for consideration.





