

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

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: MOUNT VERNON

BRAC APR ITEMS: 08-IV-3LP
08-IV-4LP

NOMINATORS: 08-IV-3LP & 4LP: Lynne J. Strobel

ACREAGE: **08-IV-3LP:** 49.23 Acres
 08-IV-4LP: 12.6 Acres

TAX MAP ID: **3LP:** 113-2 ((1)) 62A, 62B, 65, 66A, 67, 113-4 ((1)) 1
 4LP: 113-2 ((3)) B1, C1, D1, E5, E6, F1, a portion of 68 and G1

GENERAL LOCATION: **3LP:** Located East of I-95 and West of Richmond Highway
 4LP: Located East of I-95 and Richmond Highway

PLANNING AREA: IV
 District: **3LP, 4LP:** Lower Potomac
 Sector: **3LP, 4LP:** Lorton-South Route 1 (LP2)
 Special Areas: **3LP:** Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center, Land Unit F
 4LP: Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center, Land Unit F2

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: **3LP, 4LP:** Alternative Uses

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

- Land Use: Page 8, Objective 12: Policy a. Concentrate the highest level of development intensity in areas of transportation advantage, i.e. the Tysons Corner Urban Center, cores of Suburban Centers, and Transit Station Areas. Policy b. Limit development intensity to that which can be accommodated at acceptable levels of service with consideration of the cumulative, long-term impacts of development on the adequacy of public facilities and transportation systems. Policy d. Locate development intensity in a manner which assists in achieving appropriate community character.

- Land Use: Page 9, Objective 13: The pace of development in the County should be in general accord with the Comprehensive Plan and sustainable by the provision of transportation and public facilities.
Policy a. Influence the timing of development to coincide with the provision of transportation and other necessary public improvements.
Policy d. Require the proportionate participation of all development in fully mitigating impacts to public facility and transportation capacity.

- Land Use: Pages 9-10, Objective 14: Fairfax County should seek to achieve a harmonious and attractive development pattern which minimizes undesirable visual, auditory, environmental and other impacts created by potentially incompatible uses. Policy i. Minimize the potential adverse impacts of the development of frontage parcels on major arterials through the control of land use, circulation and access.

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: **3LP:** Industrial Uses up to .35 FAR
4LP: Industrial Uses up to .35 FAR with an option for industrial/flex uses up to .25 FAR

For complete Plan text see Attachment 1.

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: **3LP, 4LP:** Mixed Use development up to 2.5 FAR

BACKGROUND:

The nominations are within the Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center, northeast of Fairfax County's border with Prince William County. The Plan for Lorton-South Route 1 recognizes two areas appropriate for industrial uses, the first being in the north central portion of the sector near Lockport Place and the second, which includes the nomination areas, is adjacent to the CSX Railroad tracks to the west and continues south of Mims Street to Hassett Street, incorporating properties fronting on both sides of Route 1. The general area contains outdoor storage yards, warehouse activities, a concrete batching plant, and a metals recycling center. A portion of the area remains undeveloped and provides an opportunity for future industrial uses. Infill, redevelopment and new development in this area should be industrial flex/office and related commercial uses which are compatible with the overall land use objectives of the Lorton Plan.

3LP: This nomination in two unconnected pieces totaling 49.2 acres includes an active auto salvage/auto parts center and two construction/excavation yards. While current tax records indicate the property being vacant, with the exception of one dilapidated structure, it appears that one of the construction yard sites generates a significant amount of truck traffic. The area is currently planned for industrial/flex space uses up to .35 FAR for a total of 750,616 square feet. The current zoning is C-8 and I-6. This would allow for 929,851 square feet of industrial or office use and 142,458 square feet of retail, together totaling over 1 million square feet. The nomination proposes to amend the Plan to allow a mixed use development which would include 1,072 multifamily residential units, 3,753,081 square feet of office/hotel use and 536,154 square feet of retail at a 2.5 FAR, for a total of 5,361,545 square feet.

4LP: This 12.6 acre site contains office, motor vehicle sales and warehouse uses. It is currently planned for 192,100 square feet of light industrial use up to .35 FAR with an option for industrial/flex uses up to .25 FAR. The current zoning is I-5 & I-6 and has a zoning potential of 274,428 square feet. The nomination proposes to amend the Plan to allow office/mixed use up to 2.5 FAR, which would allow a total of 1,371,076 square feet comprised of 959,753 square feet of office, 137,107 square feet of retail, and 274 multifamily residential units.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use

3LP, 4LP: The nominations propose creating mixed use developments along Richmond Highway to the south of the Lorton Town Center. The nominations propose intensities of 2.5 FAR on three disconnected areas of approximately 12, 37 and 13 acres. The Lorton Town Center comprises 225 contiguous acres planned and developed at overall intensity of .30 FAR on about 20 percent of the land, with a residential component averaging 5 du/ac on the balance. The unified Lorton Town Center development provides supporting infrastructure such as schools, libraries, open space and a commuter rail station. The nominated areas, in comparison, would create disjointed high density developments nearly seven times that currently planned, with no relationship to similar infrastructure or rail.

Introducing pockets of mixed use development will likely adversely affect the ability of existing adjacent industrial uses to be retained both from an economic and compatibility perspectives. For example, the disjointed configuration of 3LP with two unconnected land areas would create an industrially planned island along Richmond Highway. Similarly, for 4LP, an island of industrial use would remain between the proposed mixed use development and the low density residential area located along Colchester Road.

A last major issue is that the environmentally sensitive and undevelopable nature of the portion of the southern segment of the 3LP site will raise the effective density to 4.7 FAR. As also noted later in this report, a significant portion of the soils may be unstable, which may further reduce the developable areas in both 3LP and 4LP. The uncertainty regarding the amount of buildable land combined with extreme intensities may adversely affect the ability to taper development toward and buffer and protect sensitive environmental areas.

Transportation

Richmond Highway is recommended by the Comprehensive Plan as a six lane facility in the vicinity of the subject nominations. The intensity proposed would require the addition of at least two, and possibly more lanes. Additionally, improvements to Richmond Highway near the I-95 interchange-including widening the roadway under the railroad bridge, as well as bridge reconstruction, to accommodate the wider road section would be necessary.

The nominator justifies the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan as needed to accommodate BRAC expansions in Fairfax County, however only limited access to and from I-95 exists, raising a question of site suitability. All three major BRAC-expansion sites, Fort Belvoir, the EPG site, and the future Department of Defense Washington Headquarters Service (BRAC 133) proposed sites are north of the subject parcels. At present, no access ramps exist to carry southbound US-1 traffic to northbound I-95 or to carry southbound I-95 traffic to northbound US-1. This would shift all future trips bound for I-95 north on to US-1 and most likely through the Lorton Road/I-95 interchange. As noted in the Fort Belvoir BRAC FEIS, both I-95 and Richmond Highway near the subject sites are identified as having no available capacity for additional travel.

Roadway improvements alone would not fully mitigate the proposed intensity. Therefore, major unplanned and unfunded transit improvements such as an additional VRE Station would be needed. Finally, local roads such as Hassett and Giles Run would be severely impacted.

Individually, each of the proposed nominations generate more than 5,000 additional vehicle trips per day over the current Comprehensive Plan designations, requiring the proposed plan amendments be submitted to the Virginia Department of Transportation for Traffic Impact Analysis (Chapter 527) review and comment. Based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation, 7th Edition, 2003 rates, the proposed nomination 3LP could generate up to 65,000 additional daily trips in comparison to the current Comprehensive Plan. Nomination 4LP could generate up to 16,650 additional daily trips in comparison to the current Comprehensive Plan. The study should determine the impacts to the I-95/US-1 interchange and I-95 and Richmond Highway corridor operations. Additional trips added to the system at the magnitude estimated for these nominations will have significant negative impacts on the surrounding road network and level of service operation. For example, both I-95 and Richmond Highway near the subject sites are identified as having no available capacity (“Available Capacity = 0”) for additional travel.¹

Schools

The proposed nomination areas are within the Gunston Elementary School and South County Secondary School boundaries.

While there is sufficient capacity at the middle school level, with 46 projected new students for 3LP and 12 students projected for 4LP there is currently a deficiency at the high school level. Also, with the projected increased number of students at the elementary school level within the next five years, the timing of development may put the school over capacity.

It is noted that at present South County Secondary School contains both the middle and high school levels. The school was originally designed as a high school. On June 19, 2008, the School Board approved a decision to construct a new middle school in the South County area.

Parks

3LP, 4LP: The Lower Potomac Planning District has 11 neighborhood and community parks owned and maintained by the Park Authority with a total of 1,483 acres. Nearly 1,200 acres of this County-owned parkland is in the Laurel Hill Park in the northern part of the district. The facilities in these parks do not currently meet service level standards established by the Park Authority through the Needs Assessment study. Future development at Laurel Hill will address some of the need, but Lower Potomac will continue to be recreation facility deficient as the population grows, particularly in athletic fields, courts and playgrounds.

To ensure the provision of adequate parklands and adequate recreational facilities to meet the needs of the area workforce and residents, contributions to the provision of recreation facilities in

¹ Final Environmental Impact Statement for Implementation of 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Recommendations and Related Army Actions at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 2007, Pages 4-50-4-53.

conjunction with both office and residential development should be included if either or both proposals are supported.

Resource Protection Areas (RPA) and Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC)

3LP: The nomination area is located in the Mill Branch watershed situated west of Richmond Highway. Giles Run traverses the subject nomination in a northwest to southeast direction through the southern portion of the site. A forested RPA/EQC encompasses approximately 11.36 acres of the southern 37 acre site. A majority of the RPA is also considered a major floodplain. The property may be subject to a floodplain study and a RPA re-delineation. No development should take place within the area designated as RPA/EQC. Restoration of any existing impervious surface located in environmentally sensitive areas should occur as part of redevelopment. It is important to preserve these areas in order to maintain the water quality and wildlife corridor within the district.

Cultural Resources

3LP, 4LP: The undisturbed portions of the sites have moderate to high potential for Native American or historic sites. If the nominations are accepted as proposed, Phase I archaeology studies should be performed in the undisturbed areas of the application areas.

Soils

3LP: According to the Fairfax County soil maps, 8.49 acres in the southern portion of the subject property is characterized by hydric soils, mostly located with the area designated as RPA/EQC and a major floodplain. These soils may indicate the presence of non-tidal wetlands.

The eastern half of Parcel 62B and the northern portion of Parcel 66A (the northern segment of the subject property) are comprised of marine clay soil. Marine Clay soils are listed as a problem class "A" soil, which are prone to slippage under certain conditions. Development on these soils requires a geotechnical study to determine foundation support and slope stability as well as any engineering measures which might be required to minimize the potential for slippage.

A significant portion of the central part of the northern half of Parcel 66A (southern segment) is comprised of Lunt soils which is found on hilltops and sideslopes in sands, silts and clays of the Coastal Plain. Soil materials vary from sands to clays. Where clay subsoils are present, a perched seasonal water table may be present above the clay. Depth of the hard bedrock is typically greater than 75 feet. The soils are stable when underlain with sands. However, Lunt soils in close proximity to areas of the Marine Clays should be analyzed for foundation support and slope stability. Permeability of the subsoil varies depending upon the soil material. Foundation drains, grading, and waterproofing are necessary to prevent wet basements and crawl spaces where clays are present. Suitability for septic drainfields and infiltration trenches is good in the sandy subsoil and poor in the clayey subsoil.

The site is characterized by soils which pose constraints to development which may require geotechnical analysis to determine foundation support and slope stability as well as any engineering measures which might be required to minimize the potential for slippage. It should be noted that the findings of the geotechnical study could result in a reduction of the total unit count or FAR for development on these soils.

4LP: According to the dated Fairfax County soil maps, most of Parcel 68 and the northwestern portion of Parcel G1 are comprised of marine clay soil. Marine Clay soils are listed as a problem class “A” soil, which are prone to slippage under certain conditions. Development on these soils requires a geotechnical study to determine foundation support and slope stability as well as any engineering measures which might be required to minimize the potential for slippage. A geotechnical study would be needed to determine if development can occur. It should be noted that the findings of the geotechnical study could result in a reduction of the total unit count or FAR for development on these soils.

Most of Parcel F1 and the central part of Parcel G1 are comprised of Silty and Clayey Sediments. These soils occur primarily along steep hillsides and adjacent to drainage ways in the Coastal Plain. It consists predominantly of silty and clayey strata, but may contain thin layers and lenses of sand, gravel and Marine Clays. Soil properties are variable within this unit and low bearing strata and perched seasonal high water tables may be present. This unit may contain deposits of Marine Clay and should be analyzed for potential shrink-swell and slope stability problems. Suitability for septic drainfields and infiltration trenches is poor because of slow permeability and potential plastic clay and slope instability problems.

Noise

3LP, 4LP: Transportation generated noise from Richmond Highway affects the subject property. If the nominated land uses are supported, noise studies would be required for any noise sensitive uses which might be proposed for this land area to determine the extent of impacts and any proposed mitigation, measures which might be applied. Any hotel uses in 3LP and any new residential development in 3LP & 4 LP would be required to mitigate interior and exterior noise impacts subject to the Fairfax County’s Policy Plan.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

3LP, 4LP: The BRAC APR process offers an opportunity view proposals for development at a global level to determine how to best to match the potential influx of person and jobs created by the BRAC relocation with goals to minimize transportation impacts, create jobs and housing, provide adequate facilities, and sustain and revitalize Fairfax County’s existing Community Business Centers (CBC) and Transit Station Areas (TSA).

The nominations seek to add high intensity uses that would exceed even most development planned within ¼ mile of rail transit. The proposed mixed use clusters are in an area that is surrounded by industrial uses and has no supporting public facilities or convenient rail transit. Therefore, the proposed centers would depend on vehicular rather than pedestrian or transit linkages.

The Lorton Town Center to the north provides a useful comparison because it is developed at a lower density, in a larger area, and provides a mixed use, transit oriented, and walkable environment with supporting public facilities. These components are not replicable in the nominated areas, which by virtue of their fragmentation, could not function as a cohesive center. When considered individually, environmental and physical constraints suggest that the subject areas are not appropriate for mixed use development. As mentioned previously, 3LP consists of

unconnected land areas with limited development potential. Nomination 4LP, due to the sewer service area limits, is less than 300 feet in depth, but extends approximately 2000 feet along Richmond Highway, creating a strip not conducive to creating a walkable mixed use development. Both nomination 3 and 4LP may create compatibility issues with remaining industrial uses. Finally, based on the extent of the additional estimated traffic and the limitations of the surrounding transportation network, the nominations will have significant negative impacts to the transportation system, which may not be feasible to mitigate. For these reasons, staff recommends the existing Plan recommendation be retained.

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

CURRENT PLAN TEXT:**“Land Unit F**

Land Unit F includes established and developing industrial uses adjacent to the CSX Railroad tracks and continues south of Mims Street to Hassett Street, incorporating properties fronting on both sides of Route 1 (see Figure 33). Existing uses include storage yards, warehouse/wholesale activities, a concrete batching plant and a metals recycling facility.

Future industrial development should complement the goals and objectives of the Lorton Plan, especially those with respect to upgrading the image of Lorton. Uses envisioned for this area include industrial/flex space uses, retail and other related business and employment uses. Industrial development should be of a type appropriate to specific sites in the areas; i.e., rail-using industries adjacent to rail siding tracks, vehicular-oriented industrial parks proximate to Route 1. Industrial uses adjacent to residential and other non-industrial uses should be enclosed, effectively buffered and set back to minimize use conflicts. Maximum FARs should not exceed .35. Intensities and uses should generally transition down from the railroad tracks to Route 1. Further expansion of industrial uses beyond the planned designation should not be allowed.

The area on the west side of Route 1 south of Mims Street is planned as a mixed industrial/office park developed as a single architectural whole to avoid the appearance of strip development. The total area should be consolidated and access to Route 1 should be limited by use of a service drive to a signalized intersection at Giles Run Road.

Strip development, free-standing retail uses, and/or automobile-oriented uses should not be allowed.

Sub-unit F2

Sub-unit F2 is located on the east side of Route 1 and south of Gunston Road. The area is generally planned for industrial uses. General recommendations identified for Land Unit F apply to this sub-unit.

As an option, industrial/flex space uses should be considered up to .25 FAR. Uses may include warehousing, wholesaling and offices, provided that the combined area of all office, both as a principal use and as an accessory use, does not exceed 35 percent of the total gross floor area. The development should be well-designed, set back and extensively buffered from adjacent residential uses in order to be compatible with the adjacent low density, existing and planned residential uses.”





