



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

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**STAFF REPORT  
2005-2006 AREA PLANS REVIEW**

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S):** Springfield **APR ITEM(S):** 05-III-2BR

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**NOMINATOR(S):** J. Peter Winfield

**ACREAGE:** 5 Acres

**TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS:** 55-4 ((1)) 24H

**GENERAL LOCATION:** W of FFX County Pkwy, S of Caisson Rd, NE of Willow Springs ES

**PLANNING AREA(S):** III  
**District(s):** Bull Run  
**Sector:** Braddock (BR7)  
**Special Area(s):** N/A

**ADOPTED PLAN MAP:** Residential use at .1-.2 dwelling units per acre (du/ac)

**ADOPTED PLAN TEXT:** The land generally located south of the Route 29 Corridor and north of Braddock Road in the Popes Head Creek watershed...is planned for residential use at .1-.2 du/ac to conform with the findings of the Occoquan Basin Study.

For complete Plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/planareas.htm>  
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area3/overview.pdf>  
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area3/bullrun.pdf> p. 84

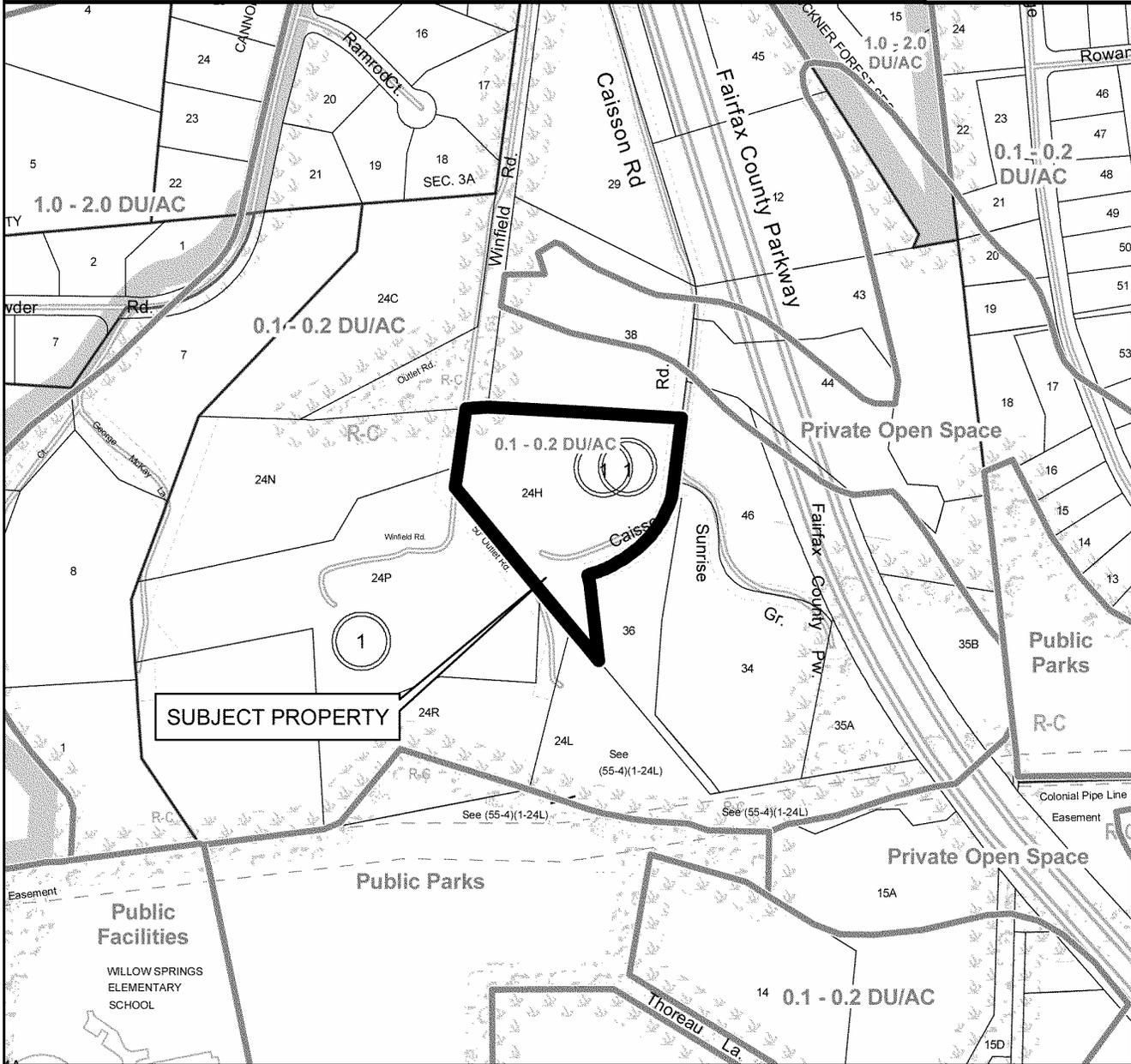
**PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT:** Mixed use (Residential, Office and Retail) at an intensity up to .60 Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

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**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

- Approve Nomination as submitted  
 Approve Staff Alternative  
 Retain Adopted Plan
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<b>CURRENT PLAN AND NOMINATED PLAN CHANGE</b> PARCEL LOCATION MAP SHOWING CURRENT PLAN AND NOMINATED CHANGE FOR SUBJECT PROPERTIES AND CURRENT PLAN MAP FOR ADJACENT AREAS	<b>APR #</b> <b>05-III-2BR</b> <b>SPRINGFIELD</b>
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**Subject Property Current Plan:** The land generally located south of the Route 29 Corridor and north of Braddock Road in the Popes Head Creek watershed, as shown on the Plan map, is planned for residential use at .1-.2 du/ac to conform with the findings of the Occoquan Basin Study.

**Nominated Plan Change:** Mixed use (residential, office and retail) up to .60 FAR.

**Staff Recommendation:** Retain the Comprehensive Plan.

**400 FEET**

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING USING FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS  
 PARCEL INFORMATION CURRENT TO JANUARY 2006



## CONTEXT

**General Location:** The subject property is located west of the Fairfax County Parkway, south of Caisson Road, and northeast of Willow Springs Elementary School.

### *Planned and Existing Land Use and Zoning*

**Subject Property:** The subject property consists of one 5-acre parcel. The property is planned for residential use at .1-.2 du/ac, is zoned R-C, and is currently vacant.

**Adjacent Area:** The nominated parcel is surrounded by lots that are planned for residential uses at .1-.2 du/ac (5-10 acre lots) and zoned R-C (5 acre lots). To the north there is an area planned for private open space, and further south of the nominated parcel is the Lincoln-Lewis-Vannoy parcel which is planned for public parks and developed with baseball fields. To the southwest of the nominated parcel is Willow Springs Elementary School.

## PLANNING HISTORY

No Comprehensive Plan changes have been proposed for this area since 1994.

## ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, as amended through February 10, 2003, Area Plan Overview, Introduction, Summary: Land Classification System, page 6:

“Low Density Residential Areas:

- Include ecologically significant areas;
- Will achieve environmental protection primarily by restricting growth to large lot residential development;
- Have allowable residential densities of 0.1 to 0.2 DU/AC or 0.2 to 0.5 DU/AC depending upon location;
- Have maximum allowable non-residential intensities of 0.05 FAR to 0.10 FAR, depending on location; Special Exception and Special Permit uses may be appropriate at higher intensities provided that such intensities are determined to be compatible with the surrounding area.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, as amended through February 10, 2003, Area Plan Overview, Introduction, Protection of the Occoquan Basin and the Public Water Supply, page 16:

“The Occoquan Reservoir is an 8.5 billion gallon impoundment that forms the southern boundary of Fairfax County . . . . It is owned by the Fairfax County Water Authority and is a

principal source of the drinking water supply for 1.2 million Northern Virginians. In 1982, in recognition of the impacts of non-point source pollution on the Occoquan Reservoir, the Board of Supervisors implemented the recommendations of the Occoquan Basin Study in order to protect the public water supply. A water quality goal of no further increase in non-point source pollution from the Fairfax County portion of the Occoquan Watershed was adopted. To meet this goal and to ensure compatible infill development in the watershed area, 40,000 acres of land south and southwest of Fairfax City and west of Cub Run were planned and zoned to allow residential densities not to exceed an average of one dwelling unit per five acres. In addition, the entire watershed area was placed in an overlay zoning district (the Water Supply Protection Overlay District) which requires that new development reduce projected runoff by one-half compared to the runoff levels that would be expected without any mitigation. This requirement was implemented through an amendment to the Public Facilities Manual which established stormwater management Best Management practice (BMP) design standards for development within the overlay district. The use of BMPs in areas planned for urban and suburban intensities and low density residential development in the remainder of the watershed remain primary ways to achieve the water quality goal established by the Board.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Bull Run Planning District Overview, as amended through June 20, 2005, page 1:

“The entire District is located within the Occoquan Reservoir watershed. Protection of water quality has had a significant impact on land use in this area. A major reevaluation of land use in the district occurred as a result of the Occoquan Basin Study in 1982. The reservoir is a major source of drinking water for the County and other jurisdictions and recreation resource for the public.

Preservation of water quality in the reservoir is of significant value to the public health and welfare. The Comprehensive Plan for the Occoquan watershed provides for a rural character by maintaining a very low density development pattern. This very low density pattern provides reasonable use of the property and serves as a land use best management practice (BMP) to manage, in conjunction with stormwater management facilities (structural BMPs), the quality of the water that ultimately enters the Occoquan Reservoir, thereby positively contributing to the quality of the water in the reservoir. In addition to water quality benefits, very low density residential development (.1-.2 dwelling unit per acre), when applied to the general Occoquan area, preserves large lot development opportunities and assures compatibility with the character of the existing residential development. More importantly, it allows the County to concentrate limited public resources for public facilities, transportation and public utilities in those areas of the County planned for higher intensity development. Public revenue may be more economically and efficiently used by targeting these resources to planned centers which are expected to provide employment and affordable housing opportunities in accordance with the Policy Plan and Concept for Future Development.

The County has adopted a sewer service area map which defines areas where public sewer service is planned to be permitted. The Bull Run Planning District, the Upper Cub Run (BR2), Stone Bridge (BR5), and Braddock (BR7) Sectors have either part or all of their land area outside the approved sewer service area. These lands are planned for uses which do not require public sewer service and may be developed in residential densities or in non-residential uses which do not require public sewer service.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Bull Run Planning District Overview, as amended through June 20, 2005, Concept for Future Development, page 3:

“...The Low Density Residential Area follows the recommendations of the Occoquan Basin Study. Protection of the Occoquan watershed remains an important County goal. The low density designation recognizes the special, sensitive nature of the watershed area and seeks to protect it into the future.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Bull Run Planning District Overview, as amended through June 20, 2005, Major Objectives, page 3:

“Planning objectives in the Bull Run Planning District include the following:

- Protect the Occoquan Reservoir watershed...”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Bull Run Planning District Overview, as amended through June 20, 2005, Environment, page 9:

“Land use controls have been used throughout this district to maintain high water quality standards. Low densities, limited expansion of public facilities, and development designs that encourage preservation of water features and other sensitive lands will contribute to water quality protection. A land use approach to maintaining water quality should be continued and broadened throughout the district. The following guidelines are suggested to achieve this objective:

- Maintain very low density development in the portions of the District that drain into the Occoquan Reservoir and are outside of designated growth centers...”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, as amended through June 20, 2005, Bull Run Planning District, BR7-Braddock Community Planning Sector, page 84:

“1. The land generally located south of the Route 29 Corridor and north of Braddock Road in the Popes Head Creek watershed, as shown on the Plan map, is planned for residential use at .1-.2 dwelling unit per acre to conform with the findings of the Occoquan Basin Study.”

## NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

The nomination proposes a change from the current Plan recommendation for residential use at .1-.2 du/ac to a mixed-use designation to allow for the development of retail, office and residential uses. A single, 10-12 story building is proposed, to include approximately 100 dwelling units with approximately 25,000 SF of non-residential uses, for a total FAR of approximately .60 on the 5-acre parcel.

## ANALYSIS

### Approved Sewer Service Area and Water Quality

The issue central to this nomination is that the subject property is located outside of the Fairfax County Approved Sewer Service Area (ASSA) and does not have public sewer service. Expansion of the ASSA to serve the property at the requested density is not supportable since the property is within the Occoquan Watershed and within a broad area planned for low-density residential uses at .1-.2 du/ac to conform to the findings of the Occoquan Basin Study.

In 1980, out of concern about the impacts of non-point source pollution on the quality of a major source of drinking water for Fairfax County, the Board of Supervisors directed county staff to initiate a study of the relationship between land use within the Occoquan watershed and water quality within the Occoquan Reservoir. One of the goals of this study was to determine a combination of land use modifications and best management practices (BMPs) that would protect water quality and help the county achieve its land use objectives. A citizen's task force comprised of representatives of each supervisor district in the county and representatives of various interest groups was established by the Board to work with county staff during the development of the study.

In March 1982, the Office of Comprehensive Planning (now the Department of Planning and Zoning) published the Occoquan Basin Study. The study recommended a goal on nondegradation of water quality of the Reservoir beyond the level projected for existing and committed development at that time, and tested several combinations of land use and structural BMPs effectiveness in meeting the water quality goal. Based on the results of these efforts, the Occoquan Basin Study recommended, among other things, an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to recognize a "non-urban" land use density (maximum density of .2 du/ac) for approximately two-thirds of the Occoquan Watershed (with an "urban envelope" of more intense development in the remaining one-third of the watershed within which structural BMPs would be applied).

In June 1982, the Board of Supervisors adopted several amendments to the Comprehensive Plan incorporating recommendations of the Occoquan Basin Study, including the land use recommendations noted above. The subject property is within an area that was, through this action, planned for residential development at .1-.2 du/ac.

In July 1982, the Board of Supervisors rezoned approximately 41,000 acres of land within the Occoquan watershed to the R-C district (one dwelling unit per five acres) in accordance with the recommendations of the Occoquan Basin Study and the Comprehensive Plan. The Board also created the Water Supply Protection Overlay District (WSPOD), which established within the Zoning Ordinance a BMP requirement for any development within the Occoquan watershed requiring a site plan or subdivision plan.

The legality of the rezoning of 41,000 acres to the R-C District was upheld by the Fairfax County Circuit Court in January 1985. In supporting the County's planning and rezoning, the Circuit Court judge concluded: "... The Defendants' evidence also shows that large lot zoning is considered to be a method to controlling non-point pollution along with the use of structural methods. The Board's position, and one borne out by the evidence, is that there were two paths which could have been followed, and the Board chose the alternative of large lot zoning in conjunction with structural BMP's (sic) on more densely developed areas. When confronted with more than one reasonable alternative, the legislature may choose among them..."

The proposed nomination for mixed use (residential, office and retail) for this area would result in a significant loss of natural infiltration due to substantial amount of new impervious surface area for buildings as well as parking required for these uses. The nomination does not include general conceptual plans at this point, and therefore does not make a recommendation for stormwater management/best management practice (SWM/BMP) facilities to handle increased runoff from a mixed use development at this site. The subject property's location within WSPOD would require water quality measures or best management practices to reduce projected phosphorous runoff pollution by fifty percent over pre-development conditions. The proposed mixed use development would likely require structural SWM/BMP facilities and result in limited open space. Water quality protection in this area of the Occoquan watershed is primarily achieved through the use of low-density residential development and 50% perpetually undisturbed open space for sites developed with special permit and special exception uses (such as churches and institutional uses) in the R-C District.

The density/intensity of the proposed nomination is in conflict with comprehensive actions taken by the county and upheld by the Circuit Court to protect one of the county's major supplies of drinking water and to protect the more rural character of certain areas.

### **Environment**

The subject property is wooded, primarily with hardwoods with some conifers mixed in, with some cleared paths/trails traversing the property in all directions. The quality of existing tree cover would have to be determined with any development proposal which might arise from this process. Tree save areas would likely be based on that assessment in combination with information submitted by the applicant(s) and findings from the Urban Forestry Division. Adjacent lots to the north and east are similarly wooded.

Transportation generated noise from the Fairfax County Parkway affects the subject property. While the lot is not adjacent to the Parkway, portions are within 200-400 feet. Noise studies may 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.

**Parks**

The Bull Run Planning District is currently served by 15 Local Parks, 6 District Parks, and 7 Resource-Based Parks, totaling 3,747 acres. The total land area for Local and District Parks in this Planning District is 2,324 acres. Facilities within these parks do not meet standards established by the Park Authority through the Needs Assessment study. The proposed increase in local population increases the public need for parks and park facilities. Opportunities to mitigate these impacts may be found at existing parks in the Planning District or through the provision of usable parkland dedication. Mitigation measures should be guided by the policies in Objective 6 of the Parks and Recreation section of the Policy Plan.

The site is located in the Popes Head Creek Watershed (as well as the Occoquan Watershed), which is rated as having poor habitat quality. The Fairfax County Physical Stream Assessment found a total of 153 'inventory points' (deficient buffers, crossing, ditches and pipes, erosion, head cuts, obstructions and utilities) in this watershed. This reach of Piney Branch is already in poor condition and any upstream development should take extra care to in no way further deteriorate the water quality.

The property contains one recorded historic archeological site and is adjacent to the Winfield Farm archeological and architectural site. The relatively undeveloped portions of this property, including yards, have a moderate to high potential for archeological resources. This property and any adjoining property should be surveyed, using a scope of services approved by the County, prior to any redevelopment. Should any significant resources be found then those resources should be conserved or the adverse impact of any redevelopment mitigated.

**Land Use**

The Comprehensive Plan guidance for the subject property is for low-density residential development to conform to the findings of the Occoquan Basin Study. The Plan recommends 5-10 acre lots, and the R-C Zoning District requires a minimum lot size of 5 acres per home. The surrounding area has developed according to this long-standing Plan guidance. The subject property is located near the boundary of a Suburban Neighborhood and Low-Density Residential Area as identified in the Concept for Future Development. Although located near this boundary, specific Plan guidance in the Braddock Community Planning Sector identifies this area as planned for .1-.2 du/ac. The Concept for Future Development identifies low-density residential areas as planned for residential densities between .1 and .5 du/ac, and the Plan recommendation for the subject property is within this range.

The proposed development intensity of .60 FAR for the site is well above the recommended intensity for non-residential uses in low-density residential areas. In addition, the proposed 100 multi-family dwelling units on the subject property represent a 100-fold increase in the planned residential density

for the property. The mixed-use development is proposed to include retail and office uses, which would need to meet requirements with regard to access and parking. These issues would be difficult to address in light of the low-density character of the area. Mixed-use developments should be located near transit and/or roadways with sufficient capacity and access. The site does not have direct access to the Fairfax County Parkway and is not located near transit.

The proposed mixed-use development is out of character with the surrounding stable residential neighborhood and is contrary to long-standing Plan guidance for the R-C District and the Occoquan watershed.

**Transportation**

Access to the subject property is limited to surrounding local streets, which are not adequate to serve the proposed mixed-use development. Although the Fairfax County Parkway (VA Route 7100) is located to the east of the subject property, there is no direct access provided to the subject parcel from the Parkway. The traffic impact of the proposed development in this low-density residential neighborhood would be extensive.

**Schools**

The subject property is within the Fairfax High School pyramid. The site is assigned to Willow Springs Elementary School and Lanier Middle School. The proposed increase in density (assuming 100 units) would result in up to a total of 10-23 new school students, depending on the unit type (multi-family or high-rise residential units) as illustrated below.

**School Impacts under Proposed Plan Amendment**

SCHOOL LEVEL	UNIT TYPE / MULTI-FAMILY RATIO	MAX. NUMBER OF UNITS	MAXIMUM STUDENT YIELD
ELEMENTARY	0.137	100	14
MIDDLE	0.03	100	3
HIGH	0.06	100	6
LEVEL	HIGH RISE RATIO		
ELEMENTARY	0.063	100	6
MIDDLE	0.011	100	1
HIGH	0.028	100	3

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the adopted Plan recommendation for residential use at .1-.2 du/ac be retained for this site based on the history of the Occoquan Basin Study and the water quality protection for the Occoquan watershed that is supported by the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed nomination is not compatible with the surrounding area, which is planned, zoned, and developed with low-density residential uses. In addition, the property is located outside of the Approved Sewer Service Area and public sewer service is not available to serve the proposed mixed-use development.