PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

ITEM: PA 2016-CW-2CP
October 19, 2016

GENERAL LOCATION: Countywide

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: All

PLANNING AREA: All

PLANNING DISTRICT: All

SUB-DISTRICT DESIGNATION: All

PARCEL LOCATION: All

Planned Industrial Uses Plan Amendment
For additional information about this amendment call (703) 324-1380.

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING:
Wednesday, November 2, 2016 @ 8:15 PM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PUBLIC HEARING:
Tuesday, December 6, 2016 @ 4:00 PM

PLANNING STAFF DOES RECOMMEND THIS ITEM FOR PLAN AMENDMENT

Reasonable accommodation is available upon 48 hours notice. For additional information about accommodation call the Planning Commission office at (703) 324-2865, or the Board of Supervisors office at (703) 324-3151.

MAP NOT APPLICABLE

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STAFF REPORT FOR POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT PA 2016-CW-2CP

BACKGROUND

On July 26, 2016, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized Plan Amendment (PA) PA 2016-CW-2CP to consider approaches to support higher intensities for uses such as data centers and self-storage facilities located in areas planned for industrial uses, if certain performance-based criteria are met. Due to the changing nature of technology, market demands and land availability, data centers and self-storage facilities often require a higher intensity than is recommended in specific Plan guidance for areas planned for industrial uses. Based on present interest and current and past applications, staff anticipates this trend continuing into the future. The following initial criteria were identified in the Board motion for consideration. The uses should:

- Generate less traffic than the base Plan recommendation;
- Avoid creating undesirable noise, environmental and other impacts on surrounding non-industrial areas;
- Provide improvements to circulation or access, parking, landscaping, storm water management, site or building design.

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

The Comprehensive Plan contains several recommendations that pertain to areas planned for industrial uses. The Plan text is cited below.

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Area I, Area Plan Overview, as amended through October 20, 2015, Concept for Future Development, Summary: Land Classification System, page 7:

…

> **"Industrial Areas:**
> *The types of uses intended for industrial areas are generally regulated more strictly due to their anticipated impacts to adjacent areas. This category is not appropriate for residential uses and limits future office uses to those which are ancillary to industrial use.*
> - Industrial Areas should be located near major transportation corridors such as interstate highways, railways and airports which are capable of transporting a high volume of goods and contribute to overall regional accessibility. The direct accessibility to major transportation corridors will help ensure that industrial traffic will not be routed through neighborhoods.
> - Development of non-industrial uses should be discouraged. Office use generally should be limited to those parcels which are specifically designated for office use in the Area Plans.
> - Development near the edges of industrial areas should include effective buffering from surrounding uses. Substantial setbacks and/or berms may be necessary in addition to vegetative screening, particularly where these areas abut residential uses. Uses that generate a minimum level of noise, glare, odors or truck traffic are preferable in transition areas and edges."

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Policy Plan, as amended through March 4, 2014, Preface and Introduction, Goals for Fairfax County, page 7:

> **"Revitalization -** Fairfax County should encourage and facilitate the revitalization of older commercial and residential areas of the county where present conditions warrant. Revitalization initiatives should encourage business development, promote public and private investment and reinvestment, and seek to prevent or eliminate the negative effects of deteriorating commercial and industrial areas. Revitalization efforts should work in concert with other community programs and infrastructure improvements and strive to foster a sense of place unique to each area, thereby contributing to the social and economic well-being of the community and the county."

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

If a property owner seeks to locate a data center or self-storage facility in an area planned for industrial use and proposes to build at an intensity greater than recommended by current Plan guidance, an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan (Plan) may be needed. After approval of a Plan amendment by the Board, the subsequent or concurrent zoning application is reviewed. This proposed amendment to the Policy Plan would streamline the consideration of these types of development proposals by eliminating the need for a site-specific Plan amendment for these higher intensity uses, as long as the proposal meets the performance criteria outlined in the proposed Policy Plan Guidelines. This will create a more efficient process for county staff, the Board and property owners, while continuing to ensure that proposed higher intensity uses are consistent with guidance within the Plan. This improvement to process supports Goal 3.1 of the Board of Supervisors' Economic Success Plan, which states:

> "Streamline the process for amending the Comprehensive Plan. This would allow for greater agility and flexibility to respond to specific business opportunities and could reduce the overall time to market."

Additionally, by encouraging these uses within industrial areas, the amendment furthers Goal 2.9 of the Economic Success Plan by supporting the location of these uses in industrial areas. This goal states:

> "Preserve existing designated Industrial Areas as valuable locations for needed light manufacturing, warehousing, service, and distribution uses that support county residents and businesses."

The proposed amendment will not eliminate the need for required zoning approvals per the Zoning Ordinance. This amendment would also not allow for consideration of intensities above what the Zoning Ordinance allows.

The proposed amendment would add new guidance to the Land Use section of the Policy Plan as a new appendix entitled, "Guidelines for Higher Intensity within Areas Planned for Industrial Use." The new appendix would provide guidance for considering intensity above the baseline recommendation provided in the Plan guidance for the industrial area. These guidelines would

only apply in areas planned for industrial uses as shown on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map. They would not apply to areas with a baseline Plan recommendation for industrial use, but that also have a redevelopment option allowing for other uses such as office, retail, residential or mixed use. The guidelines would also not supersede site-specific Plan guidance pertaining to non-intensity related conditions.

Despite their higher intensities, uses such as data center and self-storage facilities are often compatible with overall Plan policies for industrial areas. These uses typically generate a minimal transportation impact and are in concert with transportation goals within the Policy Plan. These uses also have the potential to renew industrial areas by fostering redevelopment or rehabilitation of existing older buildings, improving landscaping and pedestrian circulation, which is consistent with the Board of Supervisors' Policy Plan goal for revitalization as outlined in the Policy Plan.

The following is a summary of Plan guidance proposed for the new appendix:

Performance Criteria:

1. Transportation:

The first performance criterion addresses traffic generated by proposed uses under this option. Proposals for a higher intensity are recommended to provide a traffic impact analysis demonstrating that the use and intensity proposed would result in a lesser peak-hour traffic impact than if the site were developed at the maximum allowable intensity for the baseline Plan recommendation. This criterion is similar to the performance standard for peak-hour traffic found in Plan guidance for optional uses within the Dulles Suburban Center. Uses such as data centers and self-storage facilities would typically generate fewer peak hour trips than a standard industrial use, and this criterion would ensure that higher intensity uses proposed under this Plan option would not generate more peak-hour traffic than the baseline Plan recommendation.

Below are trip generation numbers from the *Institute of Transportation Engineers, Trip Generation, 9th Ed. (2012)* for self-storage/mini-warehouses, data centers and industrial parks that demonstrate that these types of uses generate fewer trips than a general industrial use.

TRIPS GENERATED PER 100,000 SQUARE FEET

Land Use	Daily	AM Peak	PM Peak
Mini-Warehouse	250	14 (8 enter, 6 exit)	26 (13 enter, 13exit)
Data Center	99	9 (5 enter, 4 exit)	9 (2 enter, 7 exit)
Industrial Park	683	82 (67 enter, 15 exit)	85 (18 enter, 67 exit)

2. Noise and Other Impacts:

The second performance criterion proposes Plan guidance to address noise, light and environmental impacts. The Plan's Concept for Future Development (Concept) includes a category for industrial areas. The Concept addresses the need for buffering, substantial setbacks

and/or berms for development near the edges of industrial areas and the preference for uses that generate minimal levels of noise, odor or truck traffic in these areas. Similar Plan guidance is proposed to reinforce the need to address impacts on surrounding uses through such measures as substantial setbacks, landscape buffers, berms, architecturally solid walls and fences, pedestrian-scaled light poles and directing light away from existing development.

3. Building Design:

Data centers and mini-warehouse buildings have the potential to be large buildings with little or no building fenestration due to their internal function. The third performance criterion establishes guidance to minimize the visual impacts on surrounding properties and supports high quality building design and materials. This includes recommendations for the design of building facades to avoid the use of undifferentiated surfaces by incorporating variation in building height, building step-backs, fenestration, variation in building materials, patterns, textures, colors and use of accent materials. Guidance is also provided to address screening of loading facilities.

4. Lot Size and Parcel Consolidation:

The fourth performance criterion addresses lot size and parcel consolidation to allow for site circulation, buffers and the ability to reduce visual impacts. Higher intensity creates the potential to have larger buildings, making it essential to have adequate lot size to provide site features to reduce the potential impacts of a larger building. Site features, such as buffers, can screen parking, loading and dumpster areas as well as soften larger building facades. Suitable setbacks along with vegetative buffers can minimize the visual and noise impacts on adjacent properties. Guidance is included to encourage parcel consolidation, which is a goal encouraged throughout the Plan. Parcel consolidation offers the ability to develop a larger, more efficiently planned site, but should not preclude the development of adjacent properties in a manner that is consistent with the Plan.

5. Site Design:

The last performance criterion addresses site design and includes guidance for improvements to circulation and access, parking, landscaping and storm water management. This criterion addresses general improvements to a site. Proper site circulation and access can help reduce traffic impacts on roadways and adjacent uses and will provide improved traffic flow on site and for ingress and egress. Landscaping improves the general appearance of a site and provides a buffer for adjacent uses. This criterion also provides an opportunity to address improvements to storm water management. Data centers and mini-warehouse facilities generally require minimal parking. With redevelopment of a site, consideration should be given to converting excess parking areas to open space, which can allow for employee use and improve stormwater management. The proposed amendment includes language to address this scenario.

CONCLUSION

The proposed amendment supports existing goals found in both the Comprehensive Plan and the Board of Supervisors' *Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County*. The proposed text creates a balance between allowing for flexibility for uses such as data centers and self-storage facilities in areas planned for industrial uses, while ensuring compatibility of these uses with the county's transportation infrastructure and surrounding uses.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Land Use section of the *Policy Plan* be modified as shown below. Text proposed to be added is shown as underlined.

ADD: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Policy Plan, as amended through April 29, 2014, Land Use - Appendix, a new Appendix as follows:

"APPENDIX 12

GUIDELINES FOR HIGHER INTENSITY WITHIN AREAS
PLANNED FOR INDUSTRIAL USES

As technology and market demands change, there may be a need to provide more flexibility to allow certain uses, such as data centers and self-storage facilities (mini-warehouse uses) to be built at higher intensities within areas planned for industrial uses as shown on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map. The following performance-based strategy is intended to be used to review certain proposals for higher intensity than otherwise recommended in the Plan. This guidance provides an option for higher intensity, while ensuring proposals are compatible with surrounding uses and can be supported by existing infrastructure. This option for additional intensity is not meant to supersede any site-specific Plan guidance not related to intensity and does not apply to areas with a baseline Plan recommendation for industrial use, but that also have a redevelopment option allowing for non-industrial uses such as office, retail, residential, or mixed use.

Uses such as data centers and self-storage facilities within areas planned for industrial use as shown on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map may be appropriate for development at intensities above the baseline recommendation stated in the Plan text for the site if the following performance criteria are met:

1. Transportation: Proposed higher intensity development should provide a traffic impact analysis that demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, that the use and intensity proposed will result in lesser peak-hour traffic impacts than would be generated if the site were to develop at the maximum allowable

intensity for the planned baseline recommendation for industrial use. If no intensity is specified in the Plan, an intensity of .35 FAR should be assumed for this analysis.

2. Mitigation of Noise and Other Impacts: Noise, light and other environmental impacts should be examined to ensure that surrounding uses are not negatively impacted by this higher intensity. Measures such as substantial setbacks, landscape buffers, berms, architecturally solid walls and fences, pedestrian - scaled light poles, and the directing of light away from existing development should be considered to mitigate any identified impacts.

3. Building Design: High quality design and materials should be used, and the design and materials should complement the architecture of surrounding uses. Loading functions should be screened with attractive gates or fencing depending on their orientation to public roadways and non-industrial uses. To minimize visual impacts on surrounding properties, building facades should avoid the use of undifferentiated surfaces by including the following design elements as appropriate: variation in building height, building step-backs or recesses, fenestration, variation in building materials, patterns, textures, colors, and use of accent materials.

4. Lot size and parcel consolidation: The lot size should accommodate the proposed intensity while allowing for adequate space for site circulation, buffers, and the ability to minimize visual impacts on adjacent properties related to height and building mass. Parcel consolidation is also encouraged to achieve these goals, so as not to preclude the development of unconsolidated parcels in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

5. Site Design: Improvements to circulation or access, parking, landscaping and stormwater management should be provided. If there is a reduced need for parking as a result of redevelopment, consideration should be given to converting existing surface parking to new usable open space and/or permeable areas that improve stormwater runoff."

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Policy Plan, Contents, page iii:

"Land Use
APPENDICES
1. Guidelines for Multifamily Residential Development
2. Locational Guidelines for Shopping Centers
3. Locational Guidelines for Child Care Facilities
4. Guidelines for Cluster Development
5. Guidelines for Drive-thru Windows and Other Drive-thru Facilities
6. Guidelines for Interim Improvements of Commercial Establishments
7. Guidelines for Clustering of Automobile-Oriented Commercial Uses

8. Guidelines for Neighborhood Redevelopment
9. Residential Development Criteria, Non-residential Development Criteria
10. Guidelines for Mobile Home Retention
11. Guidelines for Transit-Oriented Development
12. Guidelines for Higher Intensity within Areas Planned for Industrial Uses"

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN MAP:

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map will not change.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP:

The Countywide Transportation Plan Map will not change.