

Fairfax Center Area Study

Phase I

Community Outreach Report

Providence District

April 2014

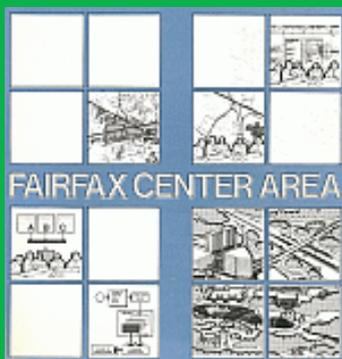
Purpose

The following report contains a summary of feedback from public outreach efforts, which should assist staff and the working group in finalizing the scope of work for the initial phase of the Fairfax Center Area (FCA) study. This phase is examining the Comprehensive Plan recommendations for the transition areas (the low density and suburban neighborhood areas, peripheral to the suburban center) in the FCA. The second phase of the study will focus on Comprehensive Plan recommendations for the suburban center portion of the FCA, as well as areawide policy guidance. The first section of the report describes the background of the study and details public outreach efforts that have taken place to date. The second section of the report documents community input received during the public outreach efforts and preliminary staff recommendations on how these ideas should be considered within the study.

Background

In 1982, the Board of Supervisors adopted a new Comprehensive Plan for the Fairfax Center Area that established a vision for the area to be a central node of development activity within Fairfax County. Since then, most of the area has been developed according to the Plan; however, Plan guidance for this area as a whole has not been reviewed since the Plan's initial adoption. The Fairfax Center Area study will provide an opportunity to review Plan guidance, ensuring that it remains accurate and relevant. To serve as a baseline of knowledge for the study area, an Existing Conditions Report was published in September 2013. This report provides background information on a variety of topics including areawide policies, land uses, and public facilities, identifying considerations for the study. As a starting point, the report identified the following tasks to be undertaken by staff to update existing Plan guidance:

- » Review Tax Map parcel number references, updating where necessary to reflect existing conditions in the study area;
- » Review language regarding policy guidance to ensure that it remains consistent with current county wide guidance;
- » Review recommendations to update those that have been implemented, such as the construction of public facilities or development of residential neighborhoods;
- » Consider showing baseline land use recommendations for the Fairfax Center Area on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map;
- » Evaluate the applicability of the Fairfax Center Area implementation tools, such as the incentive-based land use guidance and the development elements, within the transition areas; and
- » Determine if Plan recommendations for the transition areas should be moved to the underlying community planning sectors.



Cover of the 1982 Fairfax Center Area Comprehensive Plan

Additional Plan changes will be considered based upon the public input, as summarized in the Public Outreach Matrix, Appendices A and B.

Public Outreach

Following the publication of the [Existing Conditions Report](#) in September 2013, a series of live and virtual public outreach meetings were held. Announcements for these meetings were made through the [Fairfax County Land Use Planning Facebook page](#), the study-specific listserv, the [study webpage](#), and district supervisors' newsletters and email lists. The meetings were critical opportunities to gather public feedback on the issues identified in the Existing Conditions Report and input on other potential community issues to be considered in the study.

Fairfax Center Area Study Kick-Off Open House

A study kick-off open house was held on October 7, 2013, during which staff introduced the preliminary study parameters and process and presented the existing conditions for the area. Attendees were also asked to answer two questions about the Fairfax Center Area now and in the future:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses you presently see in the Fairfax Center Area, and
2. What are the opportunities or challenges you see for the Fairfax Center Area in the next 20 years?

A [virtual meeting web site](#) was created for community members who did not attend the open house to view the presentation and answer the questions. In summary, feedback from the Open House and the virtual meeting site addressed several topics, including land uses, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections, schools, parks and recreation, and the environment. The specifics of these comments and their applicability to the study, particularly in Phase I, are highlighted in the Public Outreach Matrix, Appendix A.

Providence District Virtual Meeting

Subsequently, a [virtual meeting website](#) was created for the Providence District community in February 2014 to gain additional community input. The online presentation outlined the preliminary parameters of the study, study process, and policies pertaining to the Providence District portion of the transition area, generally located north of Interstate 66 and Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway, east of West Ox Road. The Providence District portion of this area is shown in the map on page four.



Attendees at the Fairfax Center Area Study Kick-Off Open House

Study Kick-Off Open House:

When?

Monday, October 7, 2013
7:00 PM

Where?

Fairfax County Government
Center Board Auditorium and
Forum

Providence Virtual Open House:

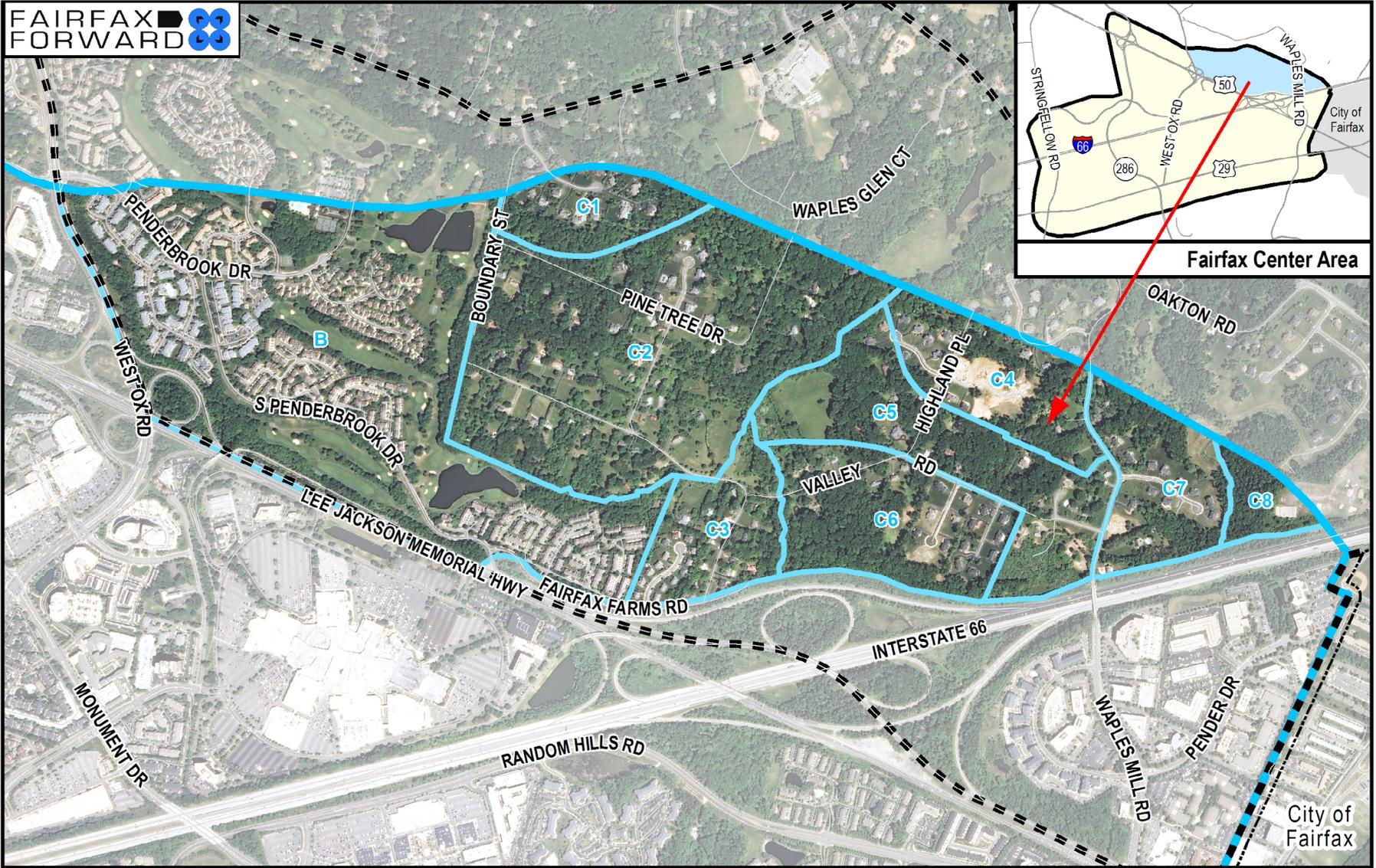
When?
February/March 2014

Where?
Fairfax Center Area Study Website

The presentation also summarized the feedback from the October 2013 open house, and participants were invited to comment on additional issues specific to the transition area within the Providence District by answering two questions:

1. Several themes emerged from feedback received at the October Study Kick-Off Open House and the Virtual Open House. Some strengths include the area's close proximity to major transportation routes, its variety of housing options, and the less-dense nature of the area south of Lee Highway. Some suggested improvements include the need for better signage for existing parks, more active recreation opportunities, more schools, improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and an expansion of multi-modal transportation options.
 - a. Is there anything else to add?
 - b. How do these ideas apply to this part of the Fairfax Center Area?
2. This portion of the Fairfax Center Area consists of portions of the Fairfax Farms and Penderbrook subdivisions. This area is developed with and planned for residential uses, including single-family homes, townhouses, and low-rise multifamily residential units. Do you think that the planned land uses in this portion of the Fairfax Center Area align with your future vision?
 - a. If yes, why do you think the current recommendations are appropriate?
 - b. If no, what alternatives would you suggest?

The specifics of the comments received from the meeting and the website, along with their applicability to the study, particularly in Phase I, are highlighted in the Public Outreach Matrix, Appendix B.

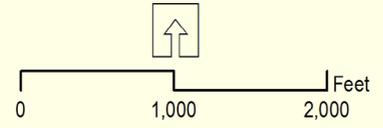


Transition Area - Providence District

Fairfax Center Area Study - Phase 1

Key

-  Providence District Boundary
-  Fairfax Center Area Boundary



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The following matrix lists specific ideas shared by attendees of the Fairfax Center Area Study Kick-off Open House and Virtual Open House. Ideas in the matrix are organized by topic. Preliminary staff recommendations on how these ideas should be considered within the study are organized as follows:

Examine in Phase I - this idea should be considered during the first phase of the Fairfax Center Area study

Examine in Phase II - this idea should be considered during the second phase of the Fairfax Center Area study

Examine in Phases I and II - aspects of this idea should be considered during both phases of the Fairfax Center Area study

Comment(s) noted - idea does not need to be addressed within the Fairfax Center Area study for the reasons noted

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Land Use		
Land uses	Desire a larger commercial office presence	Examine in Phase II - Higher density commercial office is planned within the suburban center portion of the Fairfax Center Area.
	Encourage boutique retail in area	Comment noted - The Comprehensive Plan does not specify specific retail tenant types, but supports a variety retail forms including ground floor retail and neighborhood-serving retail uses. No action needed.
	Good mix and proximity of uses, both retail and residential	Comments noted - In accordance with the current Comprehensive Plan recommendations, there are a mix of uses within the Fairfax Center Area. These include a variety of residential, retail, and office uses. No action needed.
	The area is well-contained; you can get everything you need here	
	Variety of retail	
	Good variety of food options, both inexpensive and health food	
	Many convenient health facilities, such as dental and surgery (more than there used to be 15-20 years ago) - important to aging in place	
	Close to the Government Center	
	Good variety of housing types and price points	

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Transportation		
Transportation facilities and impacts	Traffic is an issue in this area	Comments noted - Transportation policies in the Comprehensive Plan support the provision of adequate access and capacity within the roadway system. These policies also require the mitigation of adverse impacts upon the transportation system by new development. No action needed unless land use changes are considered within the study.
	Infrastructure needs to keep pace with growth (roads) and utilization	
	Well-located for split commutes (access to both Loudoun County and DC)	Comment noted - The foundation of the initial Fairfax Center Area plan was based upon the area's access to major transportation arteries, including I-66 and US Route 50. No action needed.
	Good place for commuters since there is good access to major roads	
Implementation of existing Comprehensive Plan recommendations	Implement Comprehensive Plan recommendation for walkway over I-66 from Fair Oaks Mall to Fairfax Corner	Comments noted - Improvements recommended in the Comprehensive Plan are generally implemented through the rezoning process. Proffers and road fund contributions received through this process fund the eventual construction of these projects. No action needed.
	County does not seem to put in sidewalks and bike paths without getting money from proffers - citizens are not paying enough taxes for these improvements	
Public transit	Expand public transit to areas along Route 29	Examine in Phase II - Look at in context of larger areawide transportation recommendations.
	Add BRT on I-66 between Vienna to Stringfellow/Centreville	Comments noted - The Comprehensive Plan supports an Enhanced Public Transit Corridor along I-66. A study, led by the Virginia Office of Transportation Public-Private Partnerships, is underway to examine future improvements to the I-66 corridor, including transit enhancements. Funding sources for the studied improvements will be identified at a later time. No action needed.
	Expansion of Metro to Centreville - how will this be funded?	

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Bike and pedestrian connectivity	Better bike and pedestrian connectivity is needed so people are not just reliant on the public transit schedule	Examine in Phase I - consider adding Plan language to foster connections to suburban center portion of the Fairfax Center Area; Examine in Phase II - Look at pedestrian and bicycle facilities in context of larger areawide pedestrian and bicycle connections, incorporating recommendations from the Bicycle Master Plan into the Comprehensive plan for this area.
	Need to have a way to get around without cars - right now it is hard to bike to BJs or Giant	
	Enhance multi-modal transit options and access, to include walking and bicycling	
Parks		
Parks and open space	Open space available	Comments noted - In accordance with the current Comprehensive Plan, efforts were made to preserve stream valleys as open space corridors throughout the Fairfax Center Area. No action needed unless land use changes are considered within the study.
	Parks are not abundant but they are present	
	Like having access to streams and creeks nearby, a best-kept secret of the area	
	Need more active recreation opportunities including those for senior citizens and a diverse population	Examine in Phases I and II - Coordinate with the Fairfax County Park Authority to further evaluate these ideas.
	Better wayfinding to parks	
	Need more parks and better identification of those that are here already	
RECenters	Add a RECenter within the Fairfax Center Area	Examine in Phases I and II - Coordinate with the Fairfax County Park Authority to assess future needs and obtain information on FCPS's future planning efforts.
Trails	Need a complete trail map, integrating parks and transportation data	Examine in Phase II - Look at within the context of areawide transportation and trails recommendations to develop a unified map for the Fairfax Center Area.
Schools		
School facilities	Overcrowding in schools at all levels - opportunity to add schools to this area	Examine in Phases I and II - Coordinate with the Fairfax County Public Schools to assess future needs and obtain information on FCPS's future planning efforts.

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Libraries		
Library facilities	Add a library within the Fairfax Center Area	Examine in Phases I and II - Coordinate with the Fairfax County Public Library to assess future needs and obtain information on FCPL's future planning efforts.
Environment		
Noise	Noise control - plane noise from Dulles Airport and helicopter noise from the Helipad	Comment noted - The Comprehensive Plan currently contains policies related to noise levels at Dulles Airport and development. These guidelines are delineated by noise contours, measured in decibels, proximate to the Dulles Airport. The Fairfax Center Area is not within these noise contours. No action needed.
Stormwater	Impact of stormwater runoff concentration on Resource Protection Areas	Examine in Phase II - The Comprehensive Plan currently contains policies that encourage the reduction of stormwater runoff and support the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas such as stream channels and wetlands. An update of these policies within the context of areawide environmental recommendations is appropriate to ensure that the recommendations remain current, particularly in light of updated statewide stormwater management regulations.
	Don't pave paradise especially when runoff is a problem	
	Do not want to see large stormwater ponds in lieu of onsite detention/retention	
Water Quality	Good Occoquan Watershed protection policy	Comment noted - Comprehensive Plan environmental guidance related to the Occoquan Watershed has guided the protection of water resources in this part of the county for over 30 years. No action needed.

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Character		
Low-density areas	Area does not have a city-feel; has low-density areas that are like a small town with trees	Comments noted - In accordance with the current Comprehensive Plan recommendations, portions of the Fairfax Center area are recommended to be developed as suburban neighborhoods and low-density residential areas. No action needed.
	Like the pastoral nature of the areas south of Route 29	
	Like that there are parts of the area without streetlights and sidewalks	
Public Safety		
Public Health and Safety	Clean	Comments noted - Comprehensive Plan policies support the location of police and fire and rescue facilities to ensure efficient and effective coverage to serve the county's population. No action needed unless land use changes are considered within the study.
	Perception of safety	
	Good emergency response capacity	
Miscellaneous		
Miscellaneous	Great supplier of tax base for the county	Comment noted. No action needed.
	Reduce polling place lines	Comment noted - Will be forwarded to the Fairfax County Office of Elections. Polling place procedures are not a comprehensive planning issue.
	Get younger people involved in planning to "make the room less gray"	Comment noted - The Planning Division, through Fairfax Forward, is seeking to expand public participation through a wider range of outreach methods. Included among these are a greater web presence for planning studies, to include options for online participation, as well the use of social media such as Facebook to provide study updates and announce public meetings. No action needed.

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The following matrix lists specific ideas shared by participants in the Fairfax Center Area Study Providence District Phase I Virtual Meeting. Ideas in the matrix are organized by topic. Preliminary staff recommendations on how these ideas should be considered within the study are organized as follows:

Examine in Phase I - this idea should be considered during the first phase of the Fairfax Center Area study

Examine in Phase II - this idea should be considered during the second phase of the Fairfax Center Area study

Examine in Phases I and II - aspects of this idea should be considered during both phases of the Fairfax Center Area study

Comment(s) noted - idea does not need to be addressed within the Fairfax Center Area study for the reasons noted

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Land Use		
Planned use and density	This area should remain low density residential	Comments noted - In accordance with the current Comprehensive Plan recommendations, the Fairfax Farms area is generally planned for low density residential uses. The Penderbrook area is planned for a mix of residential densities, including townhouses and low-rise multifamily development. No action needed.
	The low-density Fairfax Farms neighborhood supports the ecosystem. Significant development in Fairfax Farms would destroy buffers and also exacerbate the environmental problems of Difficult Run.	
	Multiple housing options is a plus	
	Keep multifamily residential units low rise	
	Consider higher-density residential use in parts of Fairfax Farms	

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Existing and infill development	Need to update and clearly define the vision for Fairfax Center based on development since 1982.	Examine in Phases I and II - A vision for the development of the Fairfax Center Area was established in 1982 with the adoption of the Fairfax Center Area Plan. Update Plan guidance based on implemented development to reflect existing conditions.
	Infill development should be compatible with existing development	Comments noted - Current Plan guidance recommends that within existing stable neighborhoods, infill development should be of a compatible use, type, and intensity. No action needed.
	Any development of vacant lots in Fairfax Farms should remain consistent with current development	
Neighborhoods partially within the Fairfax Center Area	Evaluate why the Providence portion of the Fairfax Center Area is included since the boundary cuts through subdivisions	Examine in Phase I - Consider moving Comprehensive Plan recommendations for the transition area sub-units to underlying community planning sectors. Complete an impact analysis to assess the impacts of such a move.
	Need to redefine the study area boundary based on the vision for the Fairfax Center Area. Need to define the buffer zones and transition area.	
	The Providence District portion of the Transition Area should be removed from the Fairfax Center Area and be associated with similar low density residential housing	
Transportation		
Roadway capacity	Pine Tree Road and Valley Road should be opened to permit better ingress/egress routes, especially for emergency vehicles	Examine in Phase I - Look at vehicular circulation to determine if road connections would be appropriate.
	Roads need to be resurfaced, regraded, and widened to provide safe passage of cars, school buses, and walkers	Examine in Phase I - Determine if roadway improvements are needed within this area. Consider adding policies to enhance pedestrian connectivity within the area.

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Roadway capacity	Traffic through Penderbrook to Fairfax Farms needs to be considered for any future development	Comment noted - The transportation analysis for proposed changes to land use recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan considers overall trip generation, peak hour trip generation, and takes into account planned transportation improvements. Coordination will continue to occur with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation on the testing of land use alternatives, based on current transportation policies, such as those recommending that any new development mitigate adverse transportation impacts to an acceptable level of service. No action needed unless land use changes are considered within the study.
	There is considerable congestion on Waples Mill Road and Oakton Road in the morning and evening; cut-through traffic through subdivisions makes it worse	
Bike and pedestrian connectivity	Complete the bike path that currently runs from the intersection of Waples Mill Road and Oakton Road - connect it to Penderbrook	Comments noted - The location of these paths fall outside of the Fairfax Center Area, and are not within the scope of Plan review for this study. These paths can be addressed within the Plan at the time that the Fairfax Planning District is reviewed. Examine in Phase II - Look at pedestrian and bicycle facilities in context of larger areawide pedestrian and bicycle connections, incorporating recommendations from the Bicycle Master Plan into the Comprehensive plan for this area.
	Construct a bicycle path/sidewalk connecting Penderbrook to Waples Mill Elementary School	
	Good accessibility to shopping areas by walking, biking, and public transportation is a strong plus that is valued by both younger and older families	
	Construct a pedestrian bridge across Route 50 to Fair Oaks Mall	
Environment		
Green Building	Develop energy efficiency and conservation standards in townhouse and condominium communities to enhance the marketability of properties	Comments noted - The Environment element of the Policy Plan encourages the application of energy conservation, water conservation, and other green building standards in new development and redevelopment projects. No action needed.

Topic	Specific Ideas	Recommendation
Difficult Run	The Difficult Run Watershed should continue to be preserved for the protection of wildlife, undeveloped spaces, and water quality	Comments noted - Areas around the Difficult Run headwaters are shown on the Concept for Future Development as low density residential areas. The Plan also recommends that an extended Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) system be created to provide protection to these areas. Environmental guidance will be reviewed during Phases I and II to ensure that the policies within the Fairfax Center Area plan remain consistent with countywide policies.
	There is considerable development near the Difficult Run headwaters and along its tributaries, some of which is not environmentally acceptable today	
Parks		
Parks and open space	Oak Marr Park and Difficult Run Stream Valley Park should be expanded	Examine in Phases I and II - Coordinate with the Fairfax County Park Authority to assess future needs and obtain information on FCPA's future planning efforts. The property along I-66 is presently planned for residential use at .1-.2 dwelling units per acre.
	Construct a community garden in the study area. A good location would be the property along I-66 with abandoned buildings that are falling down and covered with graffiti	
	Provide more open space parks and trails	
Stormwater and Utilities		
Stormwater	Maps showing Boundary Street should be updated to reflect the actual existing use as a county-approved outfall channel to provide storm drainage	Examine in Phase I - Maps and figures within this portion of the Fairfax Center Area Plan will be updated to reflect existing conditions.
Water	Public water is needed for fire hydrants	Comment Noted - Portions of the Fairfax Farms neighborhood are not served by water lines. In these instances, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department utilizes tankers, which are positioned at fire stations throughout the county, for emergencies in areas without fire hydrants. No action needed.

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A Fairfax County,
Virginia publication



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