



Shops at Fairfax Corner.

10. Conclusions

As shown throughout this report, the Fairfax Center Area has evolved over the past 30 years from a relatively undeveloped greenfield to a center of housing, employment, and county government. The 1982 Plan for the Fairfax Center Area and the subsequent amendments create a blueprint for development that guides the construction of roads and public facilities and preserves numerous stream valleys and historic features. Going forward, this Plan will continue to serve future development within the Fairfax Center Area; however, consideration should be given to updating some aspects of the adopted Plan to ensure its continued relevance.

The following sections highlight observations and recommendations for portions of the Fairfax Center Area Plan, based upon the information in this report. These recommendations are not intended to encompass all potential future modifications to the Plan and should be considered as a starting point for Plan review efforts in this area.

Area-wide Policies

The adopted Plan for the Fairfax Center Area contains several areawide recommendations that form the basis for the development elements. As highlighted throughout this report, these recommendations have helped to shape the Fairfax Center Area into the place that it is today. Given the time that has passed since the initial adoption of the Plan for this area, these recommendations should be examined to be sure that they remain up-to-date and consistent with the adopted Policy Plan. Specific examples of areas to be examined are cited in the following sections.

Transportation

Transportation recommendations in the adopted Plan for the Fairfax Center Area focus in large part on roadway improvements that were necessary to facilitate development of this area. As outlined in this report, many of these improvements have been implemented. Recent countywide planning efforts have focused on transit services and multi-modal connectivity, including pedestrian and bicycle systems. Transportation recommendations within the Plan should be examined to reflect constructed roadways and

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Veterans placing a commemorative wreath at the Ox Hill Battlefield Park.

commuter parking facilities, and to ensure that the planned system meets the future needs of the Fairfax Center Area. Once complete, recommendations from current studies, such as the Countywide Bicycle Master Plan and the Countywide Transit Network Study, should be incorporated into areawide guidance.

Housing

Plan recommendations for housing in the Fairfax Center Area outline a variety of assisted housing programs used to provide affordable housing within the area. This report highlights additional policies, such as the workforce housing program, that are now adopted as a part of the Policy Plan. As such, housing recommendations should be updated to reflect these policies.

Environment

The Fairfax Center Area features a variety of environmental features and constraints, including several stream valleys, the Occoquan Reservoir watershed, and areas of problems soils, which are highlighted in the adopted Plan text. Despite the presence of several stream valleys, the environmental guidance within the Plan does not include a discussion of RPAs. A discussion of stream assessments and stream protection strategies could be incorporated into this section as a means of updating perspectives on the health of streams in this area and concepts for improved protection, enhancement and restoration of these sensitive waterways. Likewise, the land use guidance and use-specific criteria provide extensive recommendations on energy efficient design and planning. Many of these elements are now covered by Policy Plan guidance on green building practices. A survey of environmental recommendations in the Plan guidance for the Fairfax Center Area should be conducted to ensure that these recommendations are consistent with current Policy Plan guidance.

Heritage Resources

Sites located on the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites are listed within the Comprehensive Plan. An annual review process has been established to review and update these lists; however, accompanying recommendations regarding heritage resources are not a component of this review process. These recommendations should

be examined to be sure that they remain up-to-date and consistent with the adopted Policy Plan.

Implementation Tools

As described in this report, both the development elements and the use-specific performance criteria have been key components in the implementation of the Plan in the Fairfax Center Area. The development elements have helped to facilitate construction of necessary infrastructure, such as roadway construction and public facilities, within the Fairfax Center Area. Since a large majority of the planned improvements have been constructed, it is likely that some of these elements may no longer be applicable. Additionally, recent updates to other Plan policies, such as those related to green building practices and workforce housing, have not been incorporated into the development elements.

The use-specific performance criteria have served as a set of guidelines for site planning, architectural design, and landscape design specific to various types of uses within the Fairfax Center Area. Similar to the development elements, the use-specific performance criteria have not taken into account recent updates to other Plan policies. For example, there is no provision for mixed-use development on a single site.

To ensure that these tools remain a useful, relevant means to implement the Fairfax Center Area Plan recommendations, both the development elements and the use-specific performance criteria should be evaluated to ensure that their content and application remain consistent with the county's Plan policies.

Existing Conditions

Since the initial Plan adoption in 1982, the Fairfax Center Area has evolved into a thriving Suburban Center. While the Plan has not been implemented to its maximum extent in all areas, many parcels throughout the Fairfax Center Area can generally be considered as built-out. To more accurately depict this development, land use recommendations within the Fairfax Center Area Plan should be examined and updated where needed to account for this circumstance.

“The development elements have helped facilitate construction of necessary infrastructure, such as roadway construction and public facilities...”

“...consideration should be given as to whether or not the recommendations for these areas [Transition Areas] should remain within the Fairfax Center Area or...be relocated to adjacent community planning sectors.”

Initial sub-unit boundaries in the Fairfax Center Area and their associated recommendations were based upon parcel lines and proposed road alignments that existed at the time of the sub-unit boundaries' creation. As the Fairfax Center Area has grown, individual developments and roads have not exactly followed the boundaries of the sub-units as originally drawn. To organize the recommendations for Fairfax Center in a logical way, a comparison of implemented recommendations and the sub-unit boundaries should be conducted to rectify any inconsistencies that may exist.

Transition Areas

As illustrated in this report, differences exist in both the amount and type of development present in the transition areas of the Fairfax Center Area, as opposed to the Suburban Center portion. The transition areas, which are largely developed with residential uses and are classified by the Concept for Future Development as either Suburban Neighborhoods and Low Density Residential Areas, are more characteristic from a land use perspective of the adjacent planning sectors than the Suburban Center. The countywide Concept for Future Development Map should be examined to insure consistency with how these transition areas are classified in the adopted Fairfax Center Area Plan. As these areas are reviewed, consideration should be given as to whether or not the recommendations for these areas should remain within the Fairfax Center Area or if the recommendations should be relocated to adjacent community planning sectors. Impacts on the development elements and the road fund resulting from this potential relocation should be evaluated.



Directional sign in the Fairfax Center Area.