



Submission Form for Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan or Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program

To use this form, type responses or print in ink. Attachments may be used as necessary. This form is also available on the Web at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/fairfaxforward/submissionformproposedchangescompplan2.pdf>

1. Subject Property Information (Not required for countywide proposal.) For help visit the Planning & Zoning Viewer

Identify general location, street address, or Tax Map parcels, if available.

Countywide

a) General Location: East side of Gallows Road near Dunn Loring Metro Station

b) Street Address: 2743 Gallows Road

c) Tax Map Parcel Numbers: 0492(1)-39, 40, 48, 53

For help visit the Department of Tax Administration website or the Digital Map Viewer

d) Identify total aggregate size of all subject parcels in acres or square feet:

35.2366 acres

For help visit the Department of Tax Administration website

2. Proposed Amendment to Comprehensive Plan recommendations

a) Describe the character and type of proposed development, if a land use change is proposed. The potential development could be described in terms of land use floor area ratio (FAR) or dwelling units per acre. Building height or size may also be used to convey scale.

See attached justification.

b) If a policy change is proposed, describe why the proposal should be addressed at a countywide level.

c) Provide justification for the proposed amendment. Describe how the proposal meets any of the following criteria and why the proposal should be included in the work program. Check all that apply.

- Address emerging community concerns or changes in circumstance;
- Respond to actions by others, such as Federal, State, or adjacent jurisdictions;
- Advance major policy objectives, such as promoting environmental protection, fostering revitalization of designated areas, supporting economic development, preserving open space, providing affordable housing, or balancing transportation infrastructure and public facilities services with growth and development;
- Better implement the Concept for Future Development;
- Reflect implementation of Comprehensive Plan guidance through zoning approvals; and,
- Respond to or incorporate research derived from technical planning or transportation studies.

continued on reverse side

Explanation for (c). (Additional sheets may be attached.) _____
See attached

3. Contact Information (Name and daytime phone required.* Provide street address and/or email address.)

a) Name: * David Gill

b) Daytime Phone: * 703.712.5039

c) Street Address: McGuireWoods LLP, 1750 Tysons Blvd. Suite 1800, Tysons, VA 22102

d) Email Address: dgill@mcguirewoods.com

4. Would you like to speak with staff about this submission?

Select: Yes or No

Yes No

4a. If yes, how should we contact you? e-mail phone

**** Staff review of all submissions is anticipated to begin February 2016****

Submit the completed form or direct questions to:

Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning

The Herrity Building

12055 Government Center Parkway

Suite 730

Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5500

703-324-1380, TTY 711 (Virginia Relay)

DPZmail@fairfaxcounty.gov



PART 6: JUSTIFICATION (Merrifield at Dunn Loring Station)

Introduction

Fairfax Merrifield Associates, LLC, Merrifield Apartments Company LLC, and their successor entities (the "Owner") purchased the apartment complex known as Merrifield at Dunn Loring Station (formerly the Merrifield Village Apartments) in 1969, just a few years after the buildings were originally completed. The Owner is an affiliate of W & M Properties LLC ("W&M") who currently manages the complex. Merrifield has changed considerably in the subsequent four decades. Perhaps the most significant change during this time was the opening of the Dunn Loring Metro Station in 1986. This critical transportation asset is a 5-10-minute walk from the entire nomination area and has become the engine that is transforming the neighborhood surrounding the 35 acres of the nomination area that W&M controls (the "Property"). The Property does not make best use of this vital public transportation asset, and is not developed as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). W&M is now considering long-term plans to redevelop the Property and to create a true TOD that benefits the community services and makes best use of important transportation links.

Nomination Overview

This nomination is intended to concentrate future development on the most important remaining redevelopment site close to the Dunn Loring Metro Station. The nomination balances the public policy objective of maximizing development close to Metro while retaining "traffic neutrality" compared to the traffic analysis conducted for the 2001 Merrifield Plan. W&M proposes a residential/mixed-use community that will provide key amenities for the entire neighborhood. The design will be pedestrian-friendly and based on principles of environmental sustainability that will complete the long-term vision of a revitalized Merrifield. The base FAR is proposed at 1.45, with an option to increase to 1.85 FAR (less than FAR for a similar project directly across Gallows Road) with the appropriate TDM measures, green building and "work-force" housing commitments, and potential public/civic amenities.

Site Context

The Property today consists of 706 units over a 35.3 acre tract, developed entirely as 1960s era, cinder-block, garden apartments. The site is the largest single tract in Merrifield. 18% of the site is less than 1/4 mile from the Dunn Loring Metro station, and the balance is within just 1/2 mile of the Metro station. The Property is less than a 5-minute walk from the Metro station. This proximity to Metro, coupled with W&M's commitment to maintaining the complex, has translated into a very-high occupancy rate for the units and rents that have consistently exceeded the average for Merrifield.

As is common with development from this era, this site was developed as an insular, limited access complex with no amenities or services available to the public or larger community. For example, there are no restaurants or retail services on-site and no publicly-available green spaces. The site was also not subject to modern stormwater requirements or environmental regulation related to the preservation of the Chesapeake Bay. Also, as can be expected of buildings of this vintage, they have poor energy-efficiency.

Thus, this nomination also represents an opportunity to realign the current and inappropriate Area Plan language with the County's emerging policies in support of Chesapeake Bay Preservation, TOD, modern stormwater regulation, "green" building principles, and to enhance active recreational and amenity opportunities for the community.

Planning Context

This nomination is a long-term vision for the Property that has been endorsed by the surrounding community. Before W&M put pen to paper, they embarked on a 6-month "listening" exercise to understand the needs and concerns of the adjacent community. Utilizing these community ideas as a framework, W&M, with the help of RTKL, one of the leading urban design firms in the country, developed the vision for the Property expressed in this nomination. In the last month, this concept and planning approach has been presented to and endorsed by the adjacent community, including Providence Park, Westbriar Condominiums, Westbriar Plaza, and Vienna Crossing HOAs, as well as the Metro Place Association (the office buildings across Gallows from the Metro Station).

W&M's community-based approach to this nomination yielded a concept that retained many significant plan elements from the existing plan guidance, but also enhanced it in ways that better reflect many of the broader County policies which have been adopted since the 2001 Merrifield Plan. As background, in 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Merrifield Plan, which was the culmination of an exhaustive three year community planning effort. One of the core principles of the 2001 Merrifield Plan was that density had to be limited by the capacity of the existing transportation network. Thus, a traffic study was conducted by the County which resulted in the densities endorsed in the 2001 Merrifield Plan.

Most importantly, for this Property, the 2001 Merrifield Plan transportation study only assumed a 20% reduction in vehicle trips due to Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, partially because it was perceived as being on the "wrong" side of Gallows from the Metro station. However, this assumption has proven to be incorrect and been eclipsed by reality. In 2005 WMATA conducted a survey of the existing complex and found Metro ridership of 47 %. Further W&M's own annual surveys of their tenants reveal similar levels of Metro ridership. This nomination will allow

the site to capitalize on its proximity to Metro, and with the mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly concept being proposed, W&M is confident of achieving a TDM reduction of at least 45% and possibly over 50%.

Thus, because of this commitment to significant TDM reductions, the residential development proposed by this nomination will actually generate fewer trips than that assumed by the 2001 Merrifield Plan at a 1.65 FAR. In fact, on a per unit basis, the proposed nomination will only generate 3.0 trips per unit versus the 4.6 trips per unit assumed in the 2001 Merrifield Plan. In addition, at the base level of proposed development (1.45 FAR), the entire development, not just the residential portion, will actually generate fewer trips than that assumed by the 2001 Merrifield Plan.

Other recently approved developments (such as the Metro project and Halstead III) have proffered TDM reductions significantly above the 20% assumed by the 2001 Merrifield Plan, reinforcing that trip generation for the larger area is less than that analyzed by the 2001 Merrifield Plan. Therefore, this nomination is consistent with the transportation analysis contained in the 2001 Merrifield Plan and does not undermine the balance between transportation and land use that was the basis of the 2001 Merrifield Plan.

Design Considerations

Community input, the existing planning context and the site context drove the design presented on the attached exhibits. For example, one of the key community concerns was ensuring height was located in the appropriate areas. Thus, the proposed design concentrates height along I-495 and Gallows Road, furthest from the adjacent existing, lower scale communities. The proposed heights are also consistent with the height limitations in the existing Comprehensive Plan and provide the added benefit of shielding many of the existing communities from increased traffic noise on I-495 due to the HOT lanes, which furthers Plan Policy, Environmental Objective 4.

Another key element in the creation of this plan was an underlying commitment to sustainability. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Policy, Environmental Objective 13, Policy A, the nominator is prepared and committed to use a variety of sustainable practices and techniques to minimize the environmental footprint of the redevelopment. In fact, the site will likely meet the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Engineering and Environmental Design (LEED) standard for sustainable neighborhood design (LEED-ND) at the Gold or maybe even Platinum level, the highest levels achievable under the LEED-ND program.

This sustainable commitment is also reflected in the commitment to retain the existing tree buffer (as shown on the attached exhibit), with the existing communities to the north of the site. Not only does this further the Environmental Objective 1, Policy C in terms of tree preservation but preservation of this buffer was also one of the key desires of the local community.

The sustainable focus of the proposed design results in a pedestrian/bike-friendly design. One of the advantages of the site are the high levels of Metro ridership. The applicant's commitment to creating a pedestrian/bike-friendly experience is key to enhancing Metro ridership even further. This commitment manifests itself in the network of sidewalks and trails shown on the attached plans, which also includes a bike lane linking Hartland Manor and Park Tower Drive.

As important as the pedestrian connections are, the street connections are also critical. Therefore the nominator is proposing an internal street grid with multiple connections in and out of the site, including providing the long-planned connection between Hartland Manor and Park Tower Drive. This connection will complete a critical link between the Metro and Route 29 while avoiding the Route 29 and Gallows Road interchange. By keeping the streets private, the nominator will be able to control traffic to ensure this connection does not become a cut-through. For example, the nominator is proposing a traffic-circle at the Hartland Manor entrance to the site in order to slow traffic down and create a street amenity.

The mixed-use nature of the proposal is also a key element to creating both a sustainable development and a true TOD. Consistent with TOD Policy 4, Mix of Uses, the additional uses will provide more opportunities for people to live, work and shop without having to get into their cars. The proposed office and hotel uses will balance the activity within the site and spread the peak hours over a longer period of time. The retail services are critical to providing services within walking distance for most of the community.

Conclusion

In summary form, this nomination will provide the proper planning incentive to justify reinvesting in an outdated and inefficient complex, in furtherance of the community's vision for the area and the County's broader land use policies. At the same time, the nomination also reconciles with the underlying transportation analysis conducted as part of the 2001 Merrifield Plan to approach "trip neutrality" for the site. This nomination is a unique opportunity to complete the vision of a revitalized Merrifield, in a manner that the community has embraced and in furtherance of the County's sustainability and TOD goals.