

**PRELIMINARY
STAFF REPORT
2004 AREA PLANS REVIEW**

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S): PROVIDENCE

APR ITEM(S): 04-I-1MS

NOMINATOR(S): Fairview Property Investments, agent: Martin D. Walsh, Elizabeth Baker

ACREAGE: 75.21 Acres (includes the portion of 74B which is located in Sub-Unit I2)

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 49-4((1))73, 74A, and a portion of 74B

GENERAL LOCATION: N of Rt. 50, E of I-495, S of Rt. 29

PLANNING AREA(S): I

District(s): JEFFERSON

Sector: PINE SPRING (J7)

Special Area(s): MERRIFIELD SUBURBAN CENTER (Land Unit I, Sub Unit I1)

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: OFFICE

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Office and retail, with office limited to 1.7 million sq. ft. and retail and accessory uses limited to 50,000 sq. ft.

For complete Plan text see: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area1/merrifield1.pdf>
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area1/merrifield2.pdf>, Page 90

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Add option: for parcels 49-4((1))73, 74A and 74B to permit mixed use up to 1,417,500 sq. ft. , with office and hotel (65% +), residential (25% -), retail and other accessory use such as day care (10% -)

CRITICAL ISSUES:

Transportation:

- The proposed plan change raises no significant transportation planning issues which should be addressed in the context of revised Plan text or maps. The proposed plan change would add an option to permit mixed-use development which, when measured against the current plan guidance, may either result in overall lower trip generation when measured against the current plan guidance.

Schools: Schools Affected: Elementary - Pine Spring; Middle – Jackson; High - Falls Church

• **Current Conditions:**

- Enrollment at Pine Spring Elementary is about 100 students below capacity and is projected to remain at approximately that level through the 2008-09 school year.

- Enrollment at Jackson Middle School currently exceeds capacity by about 150 students and is expected to remain over capacity by approximately the same amount through the 2008-09 school year.
- Falls Church High School is currently operating with an enrollment that is several hundred students below capacity; enrollment is expected to remain below capacity through the 2008-09 school year.
- **APR Impact:** This plan amendment would allow construction of approximately 295 additional garden apartment units. These units could generate an additional 40 elementary, 9 middle school and 18 high school students.
- **Considerations:**
 - Pine Spring Elementary School is currently using five temporary classrooms to help support numerous resource programs and community outreach efforts.
 - Funding was approved in the 2003 School Bond Referendum to add 10 classrooms (approx. 250 student spaces) to Jackson Middle School, this addition should be completed in the 2006-07 school year.

Parks Impact: The nomination proposes to alter Plan language in order to permit mixed-use development which will have the following impacts:

- **Level of Service Impacts:** The subject site is not within the service area of any Neighborhood or Community Parks, but is located within the service area of Jefferson District Park. Jefferson District Park is the only large park in this area and has become heavily used as residential growth has continued to rise. Based on the current neighborhood and community park service level standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents an additional 643 residents would result in the need for approximately 3 acres of park land with appropriate facilities such as playgrounds, urban park features, and athletic facilities (basketball, tennis, and rectangle fields).
- **FPCA Environmental and Cultural Resource Impacts:** Approximately one-third of FCPA's land holdings are in stream valley parks, including lands along Cameron Run. A Countywide stream valley policy promotes dedication of specific stream valley lands to FCPA for protection and connection to existing stream valley parks.

This development may impact archeological resources that have been identified in this area and have been partially excavated to Phase II and III levels. Identifying and protecting significant cultural resources is part of the FCPA mission.

- **Recommendations:** If the nomination is considered favorably by the APR Task Force and staff, mitigation measures should be included in the amendment as follows:

Level of Service

1. Park service level impacts should be addressed as recommended in the Merrifield Suburban Center Area-wide Parks and Recreation recommendations.
2. Opportunities to provide urban park features should be pursued. The Open Space and Pedestrian System Guidelines should be retained and strictly implemented.

Cultural Resources

3. Any proposed developments should emphasize cultural resource preservation in place or conservation and Phase III excavation work should be conducted if these sites are to be disturbed or destroyed.

Storm Water Management

4. Storm water management recommendations already exist within the Merrifield Suburban Center Area-wide recommendations (p.47). This Plan language should be retained and strictly implemented.

Environmental: The following is a listing of environmental issues of concern with regard to the proposed plan amendment, such as:

- RPAs/EQCs – a large section of the Holmes Run RPA runs through the subject property. This area is clearly defined on both the orthophoto and the environmental assessment map. This area includes Fairview Lake. There are existing intrusions into the RPA which apparently occurred prior to the effective date of that Ordinance. Much of the western portion of this area is currently undeveloped and there are some areas of RPA which are noted in this area. Future development should avoid encroachment into the RPAs. It appears that any area noted as RPA would also be considered EQC. There do not appear to be any features such as hydric soils or steep slopes which extend beyond the current RPA limits. The presence of these features would likely result in an EQC which would be broader than the RPA.
- Tree Cover – It appears that there is extensive tree cover on the western portion of this land area. It appears to be a mixture of conifers and hardwoods. 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.
- Traffic Noise – transportation generated noise may affect the subject property from I-495. Noise studies would 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.

Land Use:

- The total square footage permitted under RZ-80-P-073 for Fairview Park (North) is 1,750,000 square feet. The Plan text, as found under Sub-Unit II, reflects the approved rezoning. Since that zoning took place, two office buildings have been constructed, according to County's records, the Verizon building is approximately 356,270 square feet and Building F is approximately 350,180 square feet, leaving approximately 1,043,940 square feet remaining. The nomination requests that 1,417,500 square feet be replanned for mixed use to include approximately 295 residential units, 141,750 square feet of retail and the remaining 921,375 square feet as office and hotel, although the justification states that the recommendation seeks only to convert not expand a portion of the approved office use to residential, hotel and retail use.
- Since the subject property is bounded by Route 29, I-495 and Route 50, and the approved buildings range from 8 to 15 stories in height, it is very accessible and highly visible, making it an ideal location for office development. There is also a major VEPCO easement running through the property. Both the noise from the major highways and the utility easement are not an issue for office development, they would be an issue for residential development.

-
- Since the number of residential units proposed is approximately 295 units, it was assumed that these would be developed as gardens or towns or in buildings typically 4 to 5 stories as has been typical of recent projects in Merrifield.
 - When comparing the Environmental Assessment Map and the approved rezoning plat, it appears that several of the buildings that were approved under that rezoning are in areas that are now considered as RPA. Therefore the areas closest to the lake that now have approved building sites appear to be impacted by RPA, which suggests that residential development would be adjacent to the Route 50/I-495 interchange, which would be impacted by noise.
 - This area is designated in the Merrifield Plan as a non-core area. The intent of the non-core areas is have a more suburban appearance and to act as a transition from the more “urban” areas located at the cores to the surrounding single-family neighborhoods. The vision of the Fairview Park rezoning was to have hi-rise office with structured parking, designed in a manner to conserve open space.
-

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve Nomination as Submitted
- Approve Staff Alternative
- Retain Adopted Plan

The subject property was planned and zoned for office due to accessibility and visibility from Route 29, I-495 and Route 50. The intent was to have a well designed office park with open space surrounding it. To compliment the office park residential development was planned and built to the north and east (Land Unit I2) at a density of 8 – 12 du/ac.

The Merrifield study, adopted by the BOS in 2001, endeavored to balance land use in terms of use and intensity, transportation and other public facilities. The Merrifield plan took into account the approved office for this site in the attempt to balance both residential and non-residential potential for Merrifield.