

**PRELIMINARY
STAFF REPORT
2004 AREA PLANS REVIEW**

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S): SULLY

APR ITEM(S): 04-III-6FC

NOMINATOR(S): Robert A. Lawrence

ACREAGE: 6.94 Acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 46-3((1)) 14C

GENERAL LOCATION: On Fair Ridge Dr. N of Rt. 50; W of a public park; S of Ox Hill Rd.

PLANNING AREA(S): III

District(s): UPPER POTOMAC

Sector: LEE-JACKSON (UP8)

Special Area(s): FAIRFAX CENTER SUBURBAN CENTER (Sub-unit A-6)

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: FAIRFAX CENTER AREA

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Baseline: residential 2 du/ac; Intermediate: office .15 FAR;
Overlay: Office .25 FAR

For complete Plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/planareas.htm>
Fairfax Center Area, Sub-unit A-6, pages 48-50

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Option at the intermediate level for residential use at 8 du/ac

CRITICAL ISSUES:Clarification of Nomination:

The nomination was originally for townhouse development, but the nominator has clarified the intent is to build approximately 25 townhouses, 10 duplex units and 14 single-family detached units.

Land Use:

The planned use for Sub-unit A-6 at the baseline is residential use at 2 du/ac; at the intermediate level, office use at .15 FAR; and at the overlay level, office use at .25 FAR. Residential use at the baseline reflects the Comprehensive Plan that existed prior to the Fairfax Center Area Study conducted between 1980 and 1982. Today, the overlay level is the preferred future development and very little occurs at the baseline in the Fairfax Center Area. The nomination proposes an option at the intermediate level for residential use at 8 du/ac in the northwest quadrant of the sub-unit. According to the nomination, this use is justified at the intermediate level because it is less intensive than the planned office use. Development at the intermediate level does not have to meet the same criteria on the Fairfax Center Area checklist as the overlay level requires. Planning this at the intermediate level only makes sense if the sub-unit is planned for residential at the overlay level as well. In other sub-units in the Fairfax Center Area, residential use is an option at the overlay level to ensure that it meets the highest level of design, site planning and infrastructure provision. Making residential use an option at the overlay level *instead* of at the intermediate level could be considered by the Task Force, if it chooses to support residential use on this site.

The Fair Ridge office park (Sub-units A-6, A-7 and A-8) is predominantly developed with low-intensity office use, two hotels, a gas station and the Fair Oaks Fire and Rescue Station. The gas station is a community-oriented retail use that is limited by the Plan to its existing gross floor area. A mini-mart and/or car wash could be included, as long as the gross floor area is not exceeded.

This nomination would add residential use to an office park. The issue with this proposal is whether residential use could be compatible infill in this location. The site is physically isolated from the adjacent residential community to the north and would not be a part of that neighborhood. Therefore, it is questionable whether this development could constitute a viable community. The proposed residential use does not demonstrate how it could be integrated, perhaps as a mixed use project, to achieve some level of compatibility with adjacent non-residential uses.

To make a stand-alone residential use successful here would require a well designed community that was could demonstrate compatibility with its surroundings and buffer its residents from the adjacent non-residential uses and the electrical substation. If it is feasible, access and orientation to the residential community to the north might help address some of these issues.

Replacing Office with Residential Use

The nomination states that there is a surplus of office space in the Fair Oaks area and throughout Fairfax County. The office market fluctuates and cyclical office space surpluses do occur. However, the Plan is a long-term vision, not intended to reflect short-

term market conditions. The fact that there may be low demand for office or any other use today is not sufficient justification to change the Plan. Employment uses are critical to the economic development and tax base of the county.

The nomination contends that the requested option for residential development could help address the “acute shortage of housing in close proximity to employment, shopping and transportation corridors.” It is true that there is a housing shortage on the regional level. However, the Fairfax Center Area Plan was designed to provide housing near employment in an effort to balance housing and jobs. The Fairfax Center Area is characterized by a mix of townhouses, garden apartments and single-family detached neighborhoods integrated with the office and retail uses. In recent years, several Plan amendments have resulted in the conversion of planned office use to residential use, but most of this conversion has occurred in areas planned for mixed use, resulting in a higher ratio of residential to office uses. If the subject property is planned for and developed with residential use, it would result in the loss of employment potential.

Transportation

If the subject property were developed with residential use instead of office, overall daily trips and total peak hour trips would decrease. Both AM Out and PM In peak hour trips would increase marginally.

Environment

No flood plain, RPA or EQC appear to be located on this property, although a more detailed analysis would be required at time of rezoning. It appears that an intermittent stream traverses the southern portion of the site. The levels of lighting permitted for the existing non-residential uses, such as the hotel across the street, may have an impact on residential use. Buffering the residential use from the adjacent electrical substation would be an issue.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

Staff recommends retaining the adopted Plan because the proposed residential use would result in isolated infill residential development in an office park that is not planned for any residential use. In addition, the proposal would facilitate the conversion of planned office use to residential use, resulting in a loss of employment use in the Fairfax Center Area. The decrease in trip generation does not constitute enough benefit to justify the trade-off from office to residential in this location.