

Changes to the Policy Plan Draft Text

On December 6, 2022, the Board of Supervisors authorized Plan amendment (PA) [2022-CW-2CP](#) with the goal of a complete update to the Countywide Comprehensive Plan Policy Plan (Policy Plan). The Plan amendment was divided into two phases with Phase 1 focusing on updates to the Preface/Introduction, Land Use, Transportation, Environment, Parks and Recreation, and Human Services elements, as well as proposing the addition of policies addressing community health and equity. The elements included in the first phase are those most often used during the development review and long-range planning process.

Draft Plan text was initially released in Spring of 2025 and is located under Outreach Materials, Outreach Phase III on the project webpage, and has been revised based on additional community feedback, including discussions with the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission. In order to easily identify the changes to the draft text since the Spring 2025 publication, the changes have been highlighted in yellow and are located on the project webpage under Outreach Materials, Outreach Phase IV. Clean versions of the draft Plan text are available as Attachments 1A through 1G, along with staff's analysis of the draft Plan text, in the [Staff Report](#).

The Fairfax County Planning Commission and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will hold public hearings on the proposed Plan amendment in the Board Auditorium, Ground Level, Government Center Building, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia as follows:

Planning Commission Public Hearing: October 15, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.
Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: November 18, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW

CONTEXTUAL LAND USE PLANNING NARRATIVE

Today, Fairfax County is a one of the most dynamic and populous jurisdictions in the Washington metropolitan region (Figure 1). At nearly 400 square miles, it is in size and home to over one million people, as of the (2020 census). Fairfax County is well known for its quality public schools, high median income, low unemployment rate, public safety, high concentration of both corporate headquarters and higher education institutions and other key measures of economic success. It boasts an assemblage of residential communities that are home to an ethnically and culturally diverse population. The density, intensity, and land use types are varied throughout the county to include: dense concentrations of urban land containing a mix of uses located along transportation corridors; large areas of suburban development including single family housing; and rural areas on large acres of land; all of which offer a variety of living options.

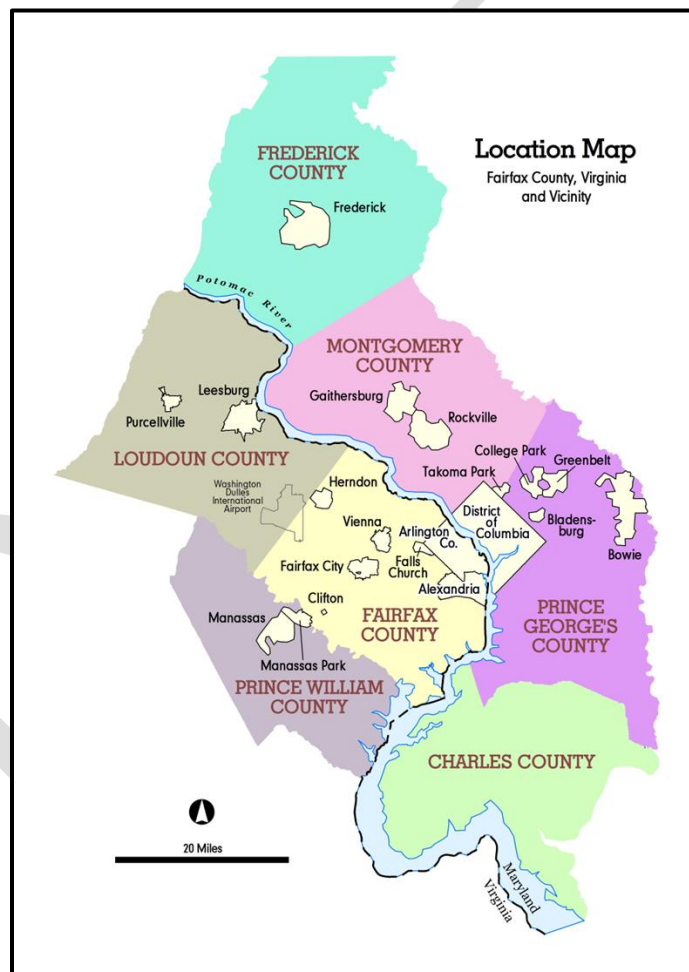


Figure 1: Location Map

For over 10,000 years, people have inhabited what is now Fairfax County. Human habitation in this region dates back over 10,000 years. Several groups of Indigenous Peoples trace their lineages to this region, including the Dogue who once comprised the

largest concentration of Native Americans in the area. ~~Between 1650 and 1720,~~ ~~By the mid 18th century,~~ the first permanent European settlements were established in what became Fairfax County. Plantations, ~~which relied~~ ~~relying~~ on enslaved labor, dominated the local economy and landscape in the 18th and 19th centuries, producing primarily tobacco, and eventually wheat and dairy products. The county maintained its agricultural character through the Civil War and into the 20th century.

Transportation networks were crucial to migration patterns and population increases in Fairfax County, beginning with settlements along the Potomac and Occoquan Rivers, ~~to~~ early toll roads and turnpikes in the 18th and 19th centuries, ~~followed by~~ railroads and trolley lines in the 19th and early 20th century, and eventually state highways and federal interstates. Growth of nearby Washington D.C., and the increase in defense-related jobs after World War II, spurred the county's transformation from predominantly agricultural to a residential and commercial suburb beginning in the mid-20th century.

~~While The~~ suburbanization of vacant land was the key development pattern of the 20th century, ~~while~~ the county's 21st century evolution is the result of urbanization ~~and~~ redevelopment, ~~and revitalization primarily~~ within the county's Mixed-Use Centers. The Comprehensive Plan's (Plan) Concept for Future Development encourages new employment growth to occur within designated Mixed-Use Centers and Industrial areas and guides the review of the Area Plans. ~~With the exception of~~ ~~Except for~~ the Industrial Areas, the Plan also encourages mixed-use residential development within these areas. Encouraging a dynamic mix of uses within these centers provides an efficient land use pattern that ~~can take advantage of~~ ~~utilizes~~ existing and planned infrastructure and preserves natural and cultural resources. Many Mixed-Use Centers in the county, including Tysons, Fairfax Center, Reston, and Merrifield, ~~have achieved~~ ~~reflect~~ concentrations of higher intensity mixed-use development, and function as regional and local hubs that in the past were found in the downtowns of central cities. As a result of this evolution, the county is home to a culturally and economically diverse business and residential community. As the county anticipates demand for new residential and employment growth, it remains a critical strategy to promote the redevelopment of these activity centers into dynamic, vibrant places with greater concentrations of urban growth.

As new housing, businesses, and infrastructure ~~have~~ emerged, some communities faced increased traffic congestion, displacement of people and businesses, and strain on public services. Some areas of the county remain disconnected, lacking pedestrian-friendly design, access to essential services, and limited mobility options which ~~have~~ contributed to car dependency. In some locations ~~where~~ ~~of~~ rapid development ~~has occurred,~~ particularly residential development, ~~the types of land use amenities and services~~ ~~public realm amenities~~ that improve quality of life, such as access to parks and open space and/or high-quality pedestrian infrastructure, ~~has~~ have not kept up with demand. These issues ~~have implications for~~ impact the provision of and access to affordable housing, public facilities, parks, recreation facilities, healthy communities, and the conservation of industrial uses, the natural environment, and heritage resources. ~~Through s~~ ~~Strategic~~ and

coordinated planning ~~are means by which~~ the county can prioritize needs and create more sustainable, livable, and well-connected communities that support long-term growth. As ~~is the case~~ in other large, urbanizing counties throughout the United States, housing affordability in Fairfax County ~~has been is~~ a long-standing challenge. Fairfax County is ~~significantly~~ less affordable than the national average, with higher home prices and rental costs. ~~Ultimately, the~~ price of for-sale and rental housing is ~~largely~~ a function of the housing supply provided by the market and ~~the~~ demand for housing by community members, ~~as well as other factors such as interest rate and location~~. Key to providing an adequate supply of housing is ensuring that land use ~~planning plans~~ and zoning ~~ordinances~~ are sufficient for the delivery of a variety of unit types that encourage all who want to live in Fairfax to be able to do so. ~~Providing~~ A full spectrum of housing ~~provided~~ in appropriate locations ~~that can be~~ served by public infrastructure ~~can helps to~~ build and enhance communities. ~~By 2050, as identified in the most recent update to the Housing Element, the county is forecasted to add more than 80,000 units. The county is forecasted to add more than 80,000 units by 2050. While~~ The Comprehensive Plan ~~has the potential to~~ can potentially accommodate this increased supply. The distribution of planned units has predominately been focused within the Tysons Urban Center and other activity centers where density is supported by existing ~~and planned~~ infrastructure. ~~Frequent requests to amend the Plan's land use recommendations for individual properties, including within activity centers, indicates that the planned distribution of potential units, as well as recommended forms and densities, are often not in sync with the market.~~ In addition, modern construction methods, such as higher density townhouses, stacked townhouses, and wood-over-podium multifamily, often require greater densities to achieve an economically viable product than are recommended under the current Plan. ~~This imbalance suggests that the Plan's density recommendations should be carefully considered to implement the Board's long-standing objectives of maintaining a supply of land to meet the need for housing and encouraging a diverse housing stock.~~ ~~Plan Area density recommendations and the Concept for Future Development should be reviewed and updated to implement the Board's long-standing objectives of maintaining a supply of land to meet the need for housing and encouraging a diverse housing stock, as well as respond to evolving conditions.~~

The county's economic sustainability faces challenges from an evolving office and retail market. As demand shifts toward high-quality, transit-accessible office spaces, older, car-dependent buildings ~~have~~ struggled with high vacancy rates, ~~that~~ reducing their economic viability and revenue. Without reinvestment or adaptive reuse, these buildings risk becoming long-term liabilities. Similarly, the retail market ~~has shifted from what was~~ once dominated by brick and mortar buildings ~~to~~, now faces robust competition from online delivery for consumer goods and foods ~~which impacts land development~~. At the same time, a housing shortage across all income ~~and ability~~ levels makes it difficult for businesses to attract and retain workers. Many employees must seek housing farther from their jobs, leading to longer commutes, increased congestion, and declining productivity. This ~~instability volatility~~ further ~~can~~ hinders business growth, limits commercial tax revenue, and threatens the county's long-term economic stability. Recognizing that market conditions ~~may change~~ fluctuate, the county will need to be flexible and adaptable to ensure economic resiliency and sustainability.

As the county grows, transportation plays a critical role in shaping land use patterns, mobility choices, and the overall connectivity of the county. Rapid growth can lead to increased congestion, strained infrastructure, and gaps in accessibility that disproportionately affect certain populations. In response, transportation policies and recommendations focus on expanding multimodal opportunities that allow community members, neighborhoods, businesses, shopping districts, and essential services to remain well-connected and adaptable to changing demands. As new development and redevelopment emerge, the county seeks to foster equitable growth by assessing the impacts on all community members—public realm users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, mobility impaired individuals, transit users, and motorists. Recognizing that existing infrastructure may not always support safe and efficient travel within all modes of transportation, therefore, strategic improvements are needed that enhance walkability, biking facilities, transit accessibility, and traffic flow—are needed. Addressing these challenges requires prioritizing safety, equity, and sustainability while centering the diverse needs and voices of the community. Through continued planning, coordination, and investment, the county aims to implement innovative transportation solutions that mitigate congestion, reduce environmental impacts, improve transportation access, and promote an inclusive, well-connected community and a sustainable environment which serves the diverse needs of its residents.

Rapid development over the years has led to environmental pressures, including decreased open space, vegetation, and pervious surface and the need for enhanced stormwater management. In response, As planned development and infrastructure is planned, the county will continue to prioritize environmental sustainability and resiliency. In addition, the county is already seeing the effects of climate change, including more severe storms, increased flooding, and extreme heat. These climate hazards can pose threats to community members, businesses, infrastructure, assets, public services, and natural resources. Encouraging sustainable development in the county provides an opportunity to reduce climate related risks while also enhancing the local economy and quality of life, strengthening our infrastructure, protecting our natural environment, and addressing disproportionate vulnerabilities.

Growth and continued investments in the region have brought prosperity, opportunity and a high quality of life to members of the community—many, but these benefits have not been equitably realized by all not all members of the community. Data shows that across the county there is uneven access to Certain populations may not have access to education, jobs, real-estate investments and the services and cultural amenities that a prospering urbanizing area offers. Inequitable practices that have limited or restricted the property rights of minorities, especially African Americans, is part of the land use history of Fairfax County. This/These includes previous federal programs that allowed mortgage brokers to deny loans to people based on their skin color or ethnicity and privately created racial covenants that prevented the sale of homes to individuals or families based on their ethnicity. These practices were widespread throughout Fairfax County throughout the Jim Crow era with lasting effects on the affected population today. Equitable development concepts and policies should—must be considered during the development review process

and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Historically, many land use decisions were made with ~~the an~~ intention to promote quality of life, but without considering the practical elements of what makes a community healthy. As Fairfax County continues to grow, communities need purposeful planning that supports active living, healthy eating, social connections, climate health, and access to healthcare. Such planning should take into account the needs of a more diverse population to provide access to these types of services to all people.

This Plan addresses the opportunities associated with the next stages of Fairfax County's growth and ~~providessets~~ goals to achieve equitable development in the county by striving to promote land use decisions that will provide investment and resources to all communities. The broad implications of growth and the guidance of the Countywide Strategic Plan serve as the foundation for the following land use vision and goals and objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

LAND USE VISION AND GOALS FOR FAIRFAX COUNTY

Vision Statement

The county will plan for growth by providing diverse housing options, ample employment and business opportunities, essential services, and preservation of the natural environment for future generations. Communities will be designed to be safe, walkable, and well-connected by multimodal transportation with cultural, recreational, and healthy spaces that foster a sense of place and ensure access to a high quality of life for all people.

Strategy and Goals to Achieve the Land Use Vision

The following goals provide a strategic focus for the land use objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. These goals align with the Ten Community Outcome Areas in the Countywide Strategic Plan, which represent the issues of greatest importance to the Fairfax County community, and are tailored to support the long-range, land use planning vision for the natural and built environment. Although each goal corresponds with one or more Community Outcome Areas, together they reflect countywide land use goals. The goals will be achieved through specific objectives and policies, which align with, supplement, and elaborate on the Strategic Plan's identified Strategies to achieve the Ten Community Outcome Areas.

- **Promote a dynamic, strategic, efficient, and ordered pattern of land uses.** The county will have a dynamic, strategic, efficient, and ordered pattern of land uses, served by adequate public facilities and utilities, that ensures a high quality of life for community members by accommodating anticipated urban growth, promoting a vibrant mix of uses, **promoting the revitalization of older commercial districts and areas,** providing access to multimodal transportation, enhancing and revitalizing community assets, preserving environmental and cultural resources, promoting the county's economic base, and appropriately responding to market changes. The county's Concept for Future Development Map and the Land Classification System describe the general location and character of future land uses in the county. The Concept for Future Development Map and Land Classification System will be reviewed to ensure the county's land use vision, goals, and objectives are reflected in the Area Plans.
- **Advance equitable development in land use planning.** Fairfax County is a place where all people live in communities of opportunity with the ability to engage fully in decisions that affect their lives and neighborhoods. Community members will thrive regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socioeconomic status, neighborhood, or other socioeconomic characteristics. Fairfax County's future land use and growth will be oriented towards building and connecting the community to opportunities and supporting equitable development by focusing on the specific needs of vulnerable communities. The county will actively engage and collaborate with communities and individuals in the land use planning process and seek to establish and maintain long term trust with stakeholders.
- **Prioritize access to affordable housing.** The county will have affordable housing options that are well connected by multimodal transportation and include safe, and walkable neighborhoods that have access to facilities and amenities that benefit the community. The

county will have flexible comprehensive plan policies to facilitate the development of diverse housing options and expand opportunities to increase housing supply throughout the county. This includes supporting individuals and households that are temporarily or chronically unhoused by providing short-term emergency shelter and long-term housing solutions.

- **Promote health through land use planning.** The county's land uses will contain the health infrastructure and resources necessary for community members to achieve their full potential and make healthy choices. Determinants of healthy communities, such as the location, proximity and access to healthcare and other essential services, active recreation and transportation opportunities, and sources of healthy food, will be optimized to support and empower community members and promote well-being.
- **Provide access to arts, culture, recreation, and lifelong learning.** The county will have enriching places focused on arts, culture, recreation, and lifelong learning to foster social connectivity. The county's historic sites will be identified, honored, and preserved to promote the county's cultural heritage for community members and visitors, make tangible connections to history, create a sense of continuity, foster a sense of belonging, and generate a commitment to a shared history and a pride of place. Such places and amenities will serve as key elements of community placemaking.
- **Plan for environmental sustainability.** The county's natural and built environment will be shaped by land use policies and regulations that promote environmental stewardship, conservation, restoration, and sustainable development. The county will be a leader in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and promote a more resilient future.

The county will promote ecologically sustainable environments and healthy communities by protecting and preserving natural resources, including air, water, trees, and soil. The county will prioritize energy efficiency through renewable and conservation of energy sources across all economic sectors, including public, commercial, residential, and industrial to reduce environmental impact and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Fairfax County values the diversity of its natural ecosystems, from stream corridors to urban tree canopies. Appreciating the environmental, social, and economic benefits provided by these areas, the county aims to create and preserve viable ecosystems, regardless of scale, along with connections for wildlife resources, recreational uses, and/or urban areas.

Recognizing the urgent need to address climate change, Fairfax County will take proactive measures to enhance the resilience of natural resources and community infrastructure. By preserving natural resources, investing in infrastructure improvements, implementing resiliency measures, and adopting strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the county aims to minimize the adverse effects of climate change and create a more sustainable future.

- **Plan for economic opportunity and resiliency.** Fairfax County will continue to prioritize

economic growth through policies that accommodate future employment growth directed to the county's Activity Centers and revitalization areas. The county will support anchor institutions, startups and businesses of all sizes with necessary public infrastructure, investing strategically in underserved communities, and maintaining a regulatory environment that is conducive to a thriving business sector. By leveraging public/private partnerships, strategic investments, and place assets, the county will bolster its competitive edge in regional, national, and international economic development. The county will encourage and facilitate the revitalization of older commercial areas through public and private investment and reinvestment. Prioritizing the full participation of all populations and areas within the county is essential for sustainable growth. Special attention will be paid to supporting small and minority-owned businesses, ensuring that they have equitable access to opportunities and resources.

Investing in the current and future workforce is critical for a sustainable economy. This means providing opportunities to educate and train future employees as well as meeting workforce housing needs and quality of life demands. More flexible land use policies may be necessary to provide housing options, multimodal transportation, services, and amenities where people live and/or work.

Regional cooperation is vital for addressing common issues and maximizing resources. By actively participating in regional activities and leadership roles, Fairfax County can contribute to the physical, economic, and social well-being of Northern Virginia and the wider Washington metropolitan area.

- **Promote safe, welcoming, and walkable, and community-focused urban design.** Development, particularly in the county's Activity Centers, will ~~have an~~ **utilize** urban design ~~that is~~ **principles to create and maintain** safe, welcoming, and walkable **communities**. Enhancements to the condition and capacity of the public realm and transportation network, in coordination with private development, will facilitate this goal. **Through the utilization of a complete streets approach for roadway design, the county will create safe streets for all, balancing the needs of all people and creating places that are inviting, safe, and pleasant.** ~~Urban design will recognize the diversity of building form, scale, and density/intensity across the county, and prioritize context sensitive solutions. This includes encouraging transit-oriented developments and other higher density/intensity mixed-use centers that are less automobile-dependent and promote healthier, more connected communities, and prioritizing active transportation options such as pedestrian access and bike-friendly facilities that integrate with bus, bus rapid transit, and rail transit.~~

~~The county will create safe streets for all, utilizing complete streets techniques to advance safe designs for pedestrians and bicyclists while ensuring that roadways are designed, constructed, or modified to adopted roadway design standards.~~

Context-sensitive urban design will reflect the diversity of building form, scale, and density/intensity across the county, building on existing community assets. This includes encouraging transit-oriented developments and other higher density/intensity Mixed-Use Centers that are less automobile-dependent and promote healthier, more connected communities, and prioritizing active transportation options such as pedestrian access and

bike-friendly facilities that integrate with bus, bus rapid transit, and rail transit.

LEGAL AUTHORITY, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE

Legal Authority

The legal basis for this Plan is well established in the law of the commonwealth. The Code of Virginia in Section 15.2-2223 states that "the local commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction." The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to achieve "a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants."

According to the Code, the Comprehensive Plan is "general in nature" and may include, but is not limited to, the designation of land use, transportation systems, public services and facilities, historic areas, etc. The Comprehensive Plan "shall show the commission's long range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. . ." The law also identifies methods of implementation such as a zoning ordinance or zoning district map, a subdivision ordinance and a capital improvements plan.

Purpose

The Policy Plan is the first volume of the Comprehensive Plan, followed by the four Area Plans, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, the Countywide Transportation Plan Map and the Countywide Trails Plan Map. The Policy Plan applies countywide and its purpose is to provide a concise statement of objectives, policies, and guidelines for implementing the county's goals about the future development pattern of the built environment and the preservation of the natural and cultural resources in Fairfax County. Both the countywide policy embodied here and the more specific guidelines in the Concept for Future Development and Land Classification System, as shown in Figure 2, are to be used together to give direction to the Area Planning process. The Area Plans give more site-specific guidance, from the Planning District down to the Community Planning Sector level.

The entire Comprehensive Plan, made up of the Policy Plan and Area Plan volumes, is used during the development review process. The Plan serves as a general guide for the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals, county staff, and the community members of Fairfax County with respect to development and redevelopment in the county and it is not to be applied inflexibly. The timeframe for the Plan encompasses the anticipated changes to the county over at least twenty years.

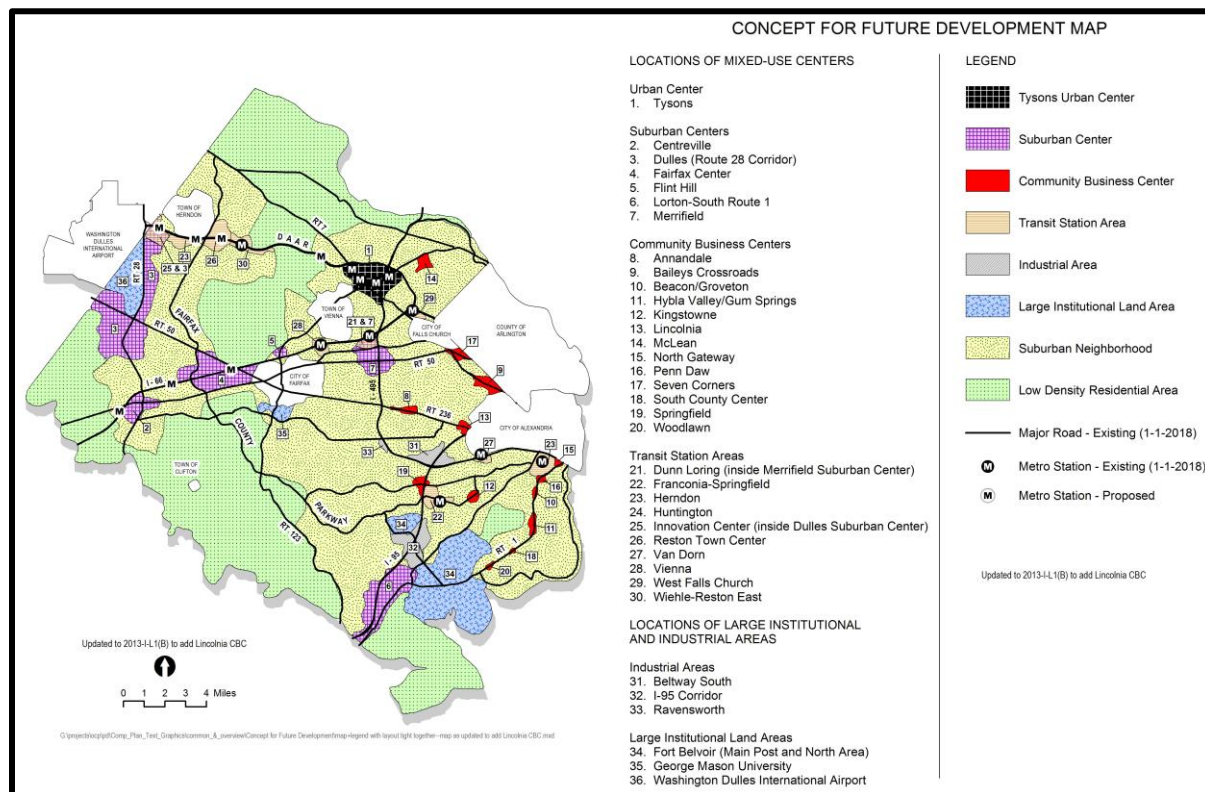


Figure 2: Concept for Future Development Map

Scope

The following elements of the Policy Plan contain the countywide planning objectives and policies for ~~twelve~~ eleven functional areas.

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Environment
- **Healthy Communities**
- Economic Development
- Heritage Resources
- Public Facilities
- **Human Services**
- Parks and Recreation
- Revitalization
- **Visual and Performing Arts** - Chesapeake Bay Supplement

Each functional element expands upon the goals within the Comprehensive Plan, through objectives, policies, and guidelines to help guide decisions that affect the built and natural

environment for the county as a whole and for specific parcels of land. Objectives are statements that provide further direction for achieving an aspect of a goal. Policies are approaches for pursuing a given objective, providing guidance which, when pursued, will assist in implementing the objective. Guidelines provide more explicit guidance for achieving policies consistent with the Policy Plan.

DRAFT

IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan

The Zoning Ordinance – This ordinance and its accompanying zoning map regulate land use in the county. It is intended to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public and to implement the Comprehensive Plan for the orderly and controlled development of the county. All property in the county is mapped to a certain zoning district, and the ordinance includes standards for the development of land according to the zoning district as well as general and use-specific standards. Rezoning to a different zoning district on the map must conform with the Comprehensive Plan; rezonings may include proffers where the property owner voluntarily commits to conditions which supplement and can be enforced as part of the Zoning Ordinance.

Subdivision Regulations: This is the basic tool for controlling the subdivision of land. It contains the regulations for dividing parcels of land into lots of any size less than five acres and for the provision of public facilities, if required, to serve the subdivided lots. Lots to be developed must conform to applicable zoning regulations.

Public Facilities Manual: This document sets forth the guidelines which govern the design of all facilities which must be constructed to serve new development. Both the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance make specific reference to the requirements of this manual. The sections of the Policy Plan concerning the environment and public facilities provide guidance to implement the Public Facilities Manual requirements.

Capital Improvement Program: This document is intended to implement the public facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan, serving as a guide toward the efficient and effective provision of public facilities. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is published annually and plans for the development, modernization or replacement of physical public projects over a multiyear period. By looking beyond year-to-year budgeting to project what, where, when, and how capital investments should be made, the CIP enables public officials to maintain an effective level of service for present and future generations, better use the county's limited financial resources, and assist in the coordination of public and private development.

Review of the Comprehensive Plan

The implementation of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan is monitored regularly to ensure the county is achieving its goals. The Plan is reviewed more frequently than required by state law, which is at least once every five years, through the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program and a periodic review of the status of the Plan referred to as the 'State of the Plan'. More information on the planning history of the Comprehensive Plan be found in Appendix 1.

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program, adopted by the Board of Supervisors, following a recommendation from the Planning Commission, authorizes current and future planning studies and amendments. The work program consists of activity center and neighborhood planning studies, site-specific (to include Board-authorized and community-initiated amendments) and countywide policy amendments. This process strives to identify the

latest planning trends, engage the community in planning efforts, and ensure that plan guidance is up to date and relevant to decision makers.

Plan amendments added to the work program should be selected using the following criteria based on Comprehensive Plan policy and the experience of past planning efforts. Plan amendments should:

- Address emerging community concerns or changes in circumstance, such as significant changes to market conditions that are discovered through studies or planning reports;
- Address identified inconsistencies and/or land use related inequities;
- Advance objectives of the county's Policy Plan, Area Plans, and/or Concept for Future Development, and not contradict adopted Comprehensive Plan policy;
- Align with the goals of the county's Strategic Plan, One Fairfax Policy, Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan, Economic Success Plan, or other Board adopted policies;
- Constitute a logical planning area;
- And/or address other guidance provided by the Board of Supervisors.

For Plan amendments added to the work program, staff conducts a review of the proposed amendment to include coordination with internal and external county stakeholders and solicits community feedback. This informs a final staff recommendation on the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission subsequently ~~holds~~ **convenes** a public hearing and ~~makes its recommendation to the board~~ **assesses staff's recommendation before making its recommendation to the Board**. The Board of Supervisors ~~holds~~ **convenes** a public hearing and determines if the amendment should be adopted.

Community Participation in the Planning Process

Fairfax County prioritizes community engagement in the planning process to ensure all voices are represented. It is critical for the county to hear how proposed policies may affect the community in which people live and work. The county strives to improve public participation and engagement opportunities to ensure all facets of the community are represented and have the physical, technological, and language access necessary to engage and participate in community discussions and decisions.

Community Participation

Fairfax County is committed to inclusive community engagement to ensure that the Plan is being implemented as intended and that the Plan reflects current needs through periodic review. The county invites participation through a variety of means – from formal public hearings and appointed boards to informal community conversations. A variety of opportunities exist for a member of the community to become active in the planning process, including the following:

- The Plan Amendment Process: Community members, both as individuals and as members of task forces or other land use interest groups, can review proposed amendments, make recommendations of their own, and testify at public hearings. The

county typically holds several community engagement meetings for each Plan amendment throughout the process to ensure community feedback is collected on a regular basis. These meetings are advertised and are open to the public.

- **Magisterial District Land Use Committees:** Local planning groups monitor planning and zoning activity for their district. These groups often are involved in review of proposed Plan amendments, rezoning cases, and proposals for siting of public facilities.
- **Community Task Forces:** When the county undertakes a special planning study of a small area, the Board of Supervisors may appoint a special task force to participate in this project. Such a task force is composed of a cross section of the community, in order to reflect a broad spectrum of views. Public meetings conducted by the Task Force may be held to involve the community.
- **Board Appointed Committees and Commissions:** The Board appoints community members to be members of standing committees and commissions to advise them on a wide range of issues, including many that are related to countywide planning. These include the Wetlands Board, the Environmental Quality Advisory Council, and the History Commission to name just a few. The Board also periodically appoints a commission to address a specific task in a finite period of time.
- **County Authorities:** The Board of Supervisors, with state mandate, appoints quasigovernmental authorities such as the Park Authority, Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and Economic Development Authority. Appointees from the community serve as members of these bodies. The general public can participate in their public meetings and hearings.
- **Technology:** The county enhances public participation in the planning process through the use of online and mobile social media. These communication tools can increase access to planning information and provide opportunities for dialogue among users.
- **The county budget process and the Capital Improvement Program:** Public hearings are held during the review of the proposed county budget and also for the Capital Improvements Program. These hearings offer an important opportunity for the community to be involved in the funding of Plan implementation.
- **The list above describes the highlights of the opportunities available to the community to become involved in the planning process. The county and community can work together, jointly to promote inclusive, equitable and authentic community engagement across Fairfax County. Even if a community member is not a member of an organized group, they can:**
 - Follow local issues in the press, social media, county websites and county staff reports;
 - Attend public hearings to voice opinions on rezoning cases or Plan

amendments;

- Vote on bond issues;
- Attend meetings of the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and other board, authorities and commissions;
- Propose a Plan amendment through the appropriate process; and
- Be active in a neighborhood association to monitor local planning and zoning activity.

All of these aspects of public participation strengthen the planning process by tapping the community's most important resource, those who have a stake in enhancing the community's quality of life.

ADD: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Introduction, as amended through x, x, a new Appendix as follows:

APPENDIX 1 – HISTORY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The history of planning in Fairfax County goes back to the mid-1950s with the adoption of the first zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan. The decade of the 1970s was marked by increasing concern among citizens and public officials regarding the problems associated with rapid and generally uncontrolled growth. In February 1973, the county created the Planning Land Use System (PLUS), a major planning effort that resulted in the 1975 Comprehensive Plan. Thirteen years later, in 1988, the county undertook a major review of the 1975 Plan, during the Planning Horizons process. This process resulted in the adoption of the Policy Plan in 1990 and the adoption of the four Area Plans in July 1991. Many of the key components of the 1975 Plan remain in the current Comprehensive Plan, such as the emphasis on focusing growth in centers; decreasing automobile dependency; and protecting environmentally sensitive areas and established stable neighborhoods. What has changed are some of the means to achieve these ends. The following discussion highlights the evolution of the Plan from the 1970s to the present.

PLUS PROGRAM (1973-1988)

PLUS Components

In the fall of 1973, efforts began toward simultaneous preparation of updated countywide and area plans, components of the Comprehensive Plan. After analyses of existing conditions and countywide issues was completed, the Countywide Plan Alternatives document was published in September 1974. This reaffirmed the "interim development and redevelopment policies," later to be known as the "Board of Supervisors Policies" in the 1975 adopted Plan. These evolved into the "Goals for Fairfax County," adopted in October 1988.

The Plan updating process was structured by grouping the 14 planning districts into four planning areas. Ultimately the Comprehensive Plan for Fairfax County, Virginia was adopted in five parts. These were Area I (adopted June 16, 1975); Area II (adopted August 25, 1975); Area III (adopted June 30, 1975); Area IV (adopted July 28, 1975); and Countywide (adopted September 8, 1975).

PLUS Principles

The Countywide Plan Alternatives document defined a specific approach to land use planning, the most important of which was the use of "planned development centers" as the focal point for future growth. Recommended as an alternative to sprawl, this development concept was designed to achieve the following:

- To increase local employment (in a period when Fairfax County was still primarily a bedroom suburb on the fringe of the urban core);
- To decrease reliance on the private automobile by reducing the length of work trips and making mass transit facilities more easily accessible;
- To reduce pressure for development in environmentally sensitive areas;
- To preserve stable neighborhoods; and
- To lower costs by more efficient provision of public services.

FAIRFAX PLANNING HORIZONS (1988-2013)

Following its adoption in 1975, the Plan underwent some revision through the Annual Plan Review process and several small-area studies. However by the late 1980s, the Board of Supervisors decided that it was time to reassess the county's direction, and they appointed the Goals Advisory Commission in February 1987 to review the county's goals and progress. In addition, the Board restructured the Annual Plan Review Process to create the 1988 Policy Review Year. This decision was based on a Planning Commission recommendation that a Policy Review Year would provide a needed opportunity to closely examine the countywide policy volume that was guiding decision-making about site-specific issues. The Planning Commission asked the Office of Comprehensive Planning, known today as the Department of Planning and Zoning, to conduct the Plan review and to coordinate the effort with other county agencies. The effort was divided into Phase I, the review of the countywide policy volume, and Phase II, review of the other four volumes containing the Area Plans.

The process included examination of alternative concepts for future growth in population and employment. Six different land use concepts and three road networks were developed and tested for their potential impacts on the transportation system, the environment, water quality, sanitary sewer capacity, and fiscal implications.

The process of community participation for Planning Horizons was open to anyone wishing to participate. An extensive series of night meetings and Saturday workshops took place, as well as public meetings before the Planning Commission, a Planning Commission round table seminar, and formal public hearings. This process had widespread publicity, in order to keep the community informed. Eighteen working papers were distributed widely for community review.

The major product of Phase I of the Planning Horizons process was the Policy Plan. Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 6, 1990, the Policy Plan contains a hierarchy of goals, objectives and policies for each functional area, such as land use, transportation, the environment and public facilities. These recommendations guide planning and development review considerations to implement county goals. The goals address the future development pattern of Fairfax County and the protection of natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Another, separate document was the Concept for Future Development, containing

both text and maps, which highlighted a generalized land use pattern to guide future development for the county. Particularly distinctive was the new Land Classification System, an element of the Concept for Future Development which identified those areas that were expected to share similar characteristics by the year 2010. The Concept and the Land Classification System were accepted by the Board of Supervisors on August 6, 1990, to be used as a guide for the update of the Area Plans during Phase II of the Planning Horizons process. The Concept for Future Development was revised in 2012 to update the character descriptions and the map.

The Concept for Future Development comprises two elements: the Concept Map which shows the general location and character of future land uses and the Land Classification System which divides the county into eight broad categories that describe the desired future character for each area.

The Concept Map shows the general character of the county with respect to the location of each area type, metro stations and major roads. The Land Classification System, when graphically illustrated by the Concept Map, presents a future policy direction for Fairfax County.

The Concept for Future Development's policy direction is that almost all employment growth should occur within designated Mixed-Use Centers and Industrial Areas. When combined, these centers and Industrial Areas encompass about 10% of the county's land area. With the exception of the Industrial Areas, some degree of mixed-use development is encouraged for activity centers. This emphasis on mixed-use development is designed to introduce a residential component into employment areas. Mixed-use development is generally defined as two or more uses designed to be functionally, economically and aesthetically integrated. The boundaries shown for these nonresidential/mixed use areas coincide with the current boundaries of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use areas as generally defined by existing nonresidential zoning and/or the nonresidential/mixed-use boundaries traditionally identified in the Area Plans.

Within some of these employment and mixed-use oriented centers and areas, limited areas have been planned as "core" or "transit development" areas. Medium to high density development intensities within these core and transit development areas are planned to take advantage of transportation and other functional opportunities and are often centered around a transit station or planned town center. Lower intensities are encouraged outside the "core" and "transit development" areas in the remaining portions of these employment and mixed-use centers. Transitions are planned between core and non-core areas. These transitions are created through the tapering down of development intensity and building heights, changes in use, and through landscaping, screening and buffering treatments.

The remainder of the county is composed of Suburban Neighborhoods and Low Density Residential Areas. In general, nonresidential development is not encouraged within the Low Density Residential Areas; when appropriate, neighborhood-serving commercial services and institutional uses are encouraged within the Suburban Neighborhoods if compatibly scaled with surrounding neighborhoods.

In summary, the Concept for Future Development is a vision and direction for guiding Fairfax County's future growth and development. The Concept for Future Development generally

describes the types of land uses that are appropriate throughout the county and the character envisioned for them. It is used in conjunction with the countywide objectives and policies contained in the adopted Policy Plan and provides a foundation and framework for the Area Planning process.

Phase II of Planning Horizons included the adoption of the four Area Plans by the Board of Supervisors in 1991. These volumes of the Comprehensive Plan contain detailed recommendations for land use, transportation, housing, the environment, heritage resources, public facilities and parks and recreation. These recommendations refine the guidance provided in the Policy Plan and were developed within the framework of the Concept for Future Development.

Each Area Plan is subdivided into Planning Districts, which, in turn, are subdivided into Community Planning Sectors, the smallest geographical components of the Plan. The Community Planning Sector text provides details on existing development and planned land use. For purposes of development review and other land-use related decisions it is emphasized that the planning guidance for each Planning District is contained in the Area Plan text; on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map; in the Policy Plan; and in the land use guidelines contained in the Concept for Future Development and Land Classification System.

The primary planning objectives in all Area Plans are to:

- Realize the objectives and policies of the Policy Plan in planning and development decisions;
- Utilize the Concept for Future Development as a guide to land use planning decisions when Plan amendments are considered; and
- Employ site-specific guidance to review and formulate recommendations for development requests in furtherance of the public health, safety and welfare as provided in the Code of Virginia.

The Policy Plan Action Agenda and Planning Commission ‘Super-Priorities’

The December 1989 draft version of the Policy Plan contained an ‘Action Agenda’ with over 350 items thought worthy of consideration. Given the large number of suggested actions contained in the Action Agenda, the Board of Supervisors requested that the Planning Commission consider and prioritize the Action Agenda. The Planning Commission working through its Major Plan Review Committee formed four subcommittees to examine the areas of 1) Land Use; 2) Transportation; 3) Public Facilities, Housing, Human Services and Fiscal; and 4) Environment, Parks, and Heritage Resources. County agencies provided support to the work of these committees. Six major countywide organizations concerned with the Comprehensive Plan were invited to attend and participate in the deliberations. A public workshop was held and public comments were solicited as part of the deliberations. In March of 1992, the Planning Commission presented to the Board of Supervisors a list of ten ‘super-priorities’ that included about 45 of the ‘agenda’ items. The commission felt the identified actions were important for advancing Fairfax County’s adopted Goals.

Monitoring and Review

In 1993, the Board of Supervisors initiated a four-year Comprehensive Plan review process. The review process supported the goal of regular review, assessment, and revision of the Comprehensive Plan. The inaugural cycle included the 1995 Plan Monitoring Year, the 1996 Policy Plan Review Year, and the 1997-1998 Area Plans Review (APR) Years. As part of the 1995 Plan Monitoring Year, a series of reports were published to describe the existing conditions and trends in the county. The reports covered socio-economic characteristics, land use/housing, transportation, the environment, public facilities, heritage resources, and parks and recreation. The final product of the Policy Review Year was the 1996 State of the Plan report, which presented the results of the evaluation and suggested potential new actions that warranted consideration. The 1996 Policy Plan Review Year involved evaluating the county's progress on the Planning Commission's "super priorities" and key objectives in the Policy Plan. The APR years followed the Policy Plan Review Year, evaluating proposed Plan amendments at the planning district, community planning sector, and site-specific levels. In addition to major planning studies, the APR cycles evolved to be the focus of work over the next decade.

Fairfax Forward

Following the 2008-2009 North County and 2009-2010 South County APR cycle, a retrospective of the APR process that included extensive public outreach indicated minor changes to the APR process would not address recurring issues, related to timeliness and the fragmented nature of amending the Plan. The effort concluded with a recognition that a more substantial change to the Plan review process was necessary. In early 2012 at the direction of the Planning Commission, the Department of Planning and Zoning began Fairfax Forward, an effort to develop a new means to review the Comprehensive Plan. In order to develop a strategy for the future, staff evaluated recent Plan activity, the strengths and weaknesses of the current APR process, and best practices for Plan review at a local and national level. During the same period, Plan amendments between 2002 and 2010, themes resulting from the amendments, and changes to planned development potential between 2000 and 2010, were assessed. In 2012, a State of the Plan was published to summarize the results of the county's efforts to implement planning policies over the previous ten years. In addition, the Concept for Future Development and Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map were updated to reflect Area Plan recommendations. Portions of the Policy Plan and the Area Plans were also revised to reflect current land uses.

The research efforts contributed to recommendations for a major shift in the county's planning process. The proposal that emerged expanded upon the successful aspects of current planning studies, namely related to review and evaluation, and modified areas that needed improvement, including public participation and the organization of the Plan review. Extensive public outreach was conducted to confirm the recommendations. Fairfax Forward culminated in the adoption of a new Plan amendment review process and the implementation of the Pilot Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program in July 2013.

THE FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS (2013-Present)

Countywide Strategic Plan and Countywide Policy

Several overarching policies were adopted by the Board of Supervisors during this period. These include the Countywide Strategic Plan, the One Fairfax Policy, the Economic Success Plan, the Countywide Housing Strategic Plan, and environmental policies such as the Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan, Resilient Fairfax, and the Tree Action Plan. **In many cases, these policies have overlapping goals and objectives in many cases with regard to issues such as racial and social equity; creating a sense of place through communities where people want to be with a sense of place that encourages and designed with multimodal transportation features, parks, and cultural facilities that enable a diverse economy; an adequate supply of housing affordable to persons of all incomes, ages and abilities; and environmental goals that respond to changing climate conditions. These overarching policies have influenced the policies and priorities of the Comprehensive Plan and are incorporated into how planning studies and development review are conducted.**

Plan Amendments

Between 2013 and the present, the focus on encouraging growth to occur within the county's mixed-use centers has continued. The Concept for Future Development provides **thea** roadmap for **the** majority of development intensity to occur within activity centers. There have been a number of site-specific Plan amendments adopted within the county's Transit Station Areas (TSAs), especially in the Tysons Urban Center, the Reston TSAs, the West Falls Church TSA, Springfield and Huntington TSAs. In addition, **t**he Embark Richmond Highway Areawide Study **that** included recommendations for a future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along Richmond Highway from the City of Alexandria line to Fort Belvoir and transit-oriented development around the future BRT stations was completed. Finally, the Silver Line of the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) was completed during this period and sparked the aforementioned Transit Oriented Development (TOD) within the Tysons and Reston areas, and this trend has continued. **This development reflects the need and community desire to increase housing availability; balance the jobs/housing ratio in commercial areas; promote the use of transit; and create vibrant, walkable, urban neighborhoods.**

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program is the most recent approach to the planning process that emphasizes greater community engagement. Current planning processes and practices are monitored to ensure that the objectives of increased public participation and cohesive planning areas are met. Plan amendments are monitored, and updates are provided to the Board through the State of the Plan Report which is developed every 10-years. The State of the Plan report examines the comprehensive planning activities of the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development. The evaluation identifies major themes in the types, locations, and outcomes of changes to the Comprehensive Plan and quantifies the net change in development potential over time.

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program is implemented through several types of planning studies, such as Minor or Site-Specific amendments, Areawide Studies or Activity Center

amendments, or Countywide and Policy amendments. The majority of projects on the work program **is are** the result of Plan amendments added to the work program through the Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) process. In addition to SSPA, larger Areawide studies have occurred such as Innovation Center TSA, Lincolnia, Bailey's Crossroads, Seven Corners CBC, McLean CBC, Embark Richmond Highway, West Falls Church TSA, Merrifield, Huntington, Fairfax Center, Hollin Hills, Tysons, Dulles, and Reston. Countywide Policy amendments over this period of time include Heritage Resources, Office Building Repurposing, Workforce Housing, Green Building, Airport Noise, Affordable Housing Preservation, and the Public Facilities Element.

Site Specific Nomination Process

After the 2015-2016 Fairfax Forward Evaluation was completed, a new process entitled the "Site Specific Plan Amendment" process was created to balance the review of areawide/countywide and Policy Plan studies with site-specific nominations to change the land use recommendations in the Area Plan volumes of the Comprehensive Plan. The new SSPA process had similarities with the Area Plans Review process. These similarities included a regular four-year review cycle, dividing the cycle into two parts, a North county cycle and a South county cycle. Each review cycle included a Nomination phase, a Screening phase and an Implementation phase. The Implementation phase was divided into Expedited and Standard Tracks, depending on the level of analysis required by each Plan amendment. Citizen task forces would participate in both the Screening and Implementation phases. The SSPA process retained several features of APR, including eligibility criteria (however, for the first cycle of SSPA only non-residential nominations would be allowed in the areas of the county subject to the 2016 Proffer Reform legislation) and statements of justification for nominations; no restrictions on who could nominate a property for a land use change; and the limitation of one nomination per site per nominator. The SSPA process was designed to increase community participation at all levels of the process and alleviate the need for a multitude of individual Board-authorized amendments to better anticipate workforce needs and distribute planning resources more equitably across the County.

The 2017-2018 North County SSPA Screening phase included 10 nominations in the Dranesville, Sully and Providence Supervisor districts. The 2019 Work Program and Plan Monitoring resulted in a change to the eligibility criteria to allow residential and non-residential nominations in all SSPA eligible areas. The 2019-2021 South County SSPA Screening phase included 23 nominations submitted in the Mason, Lee and Mount Vernon Supervisor districts.

The 2021 SSPA Retrospective resulted in several changes to SSPA process. Instead of 4-year, North and South County cycle, a 2-year Countywide cycle was introduced. The Nomination period was reduced from 3 months to 1 month, and therefore the Eligibility Criteria was adjusted so that no areas could be nominated if there were land use changes adopted within the previous 2 years, instead of the previous 4 years. The Justification Criteria were also modified so that nominators had to explain how their nomination aligns with broader Board adopted policies such as the Countywide Strategic Plan, One Fairfax Policy, and the Countywide Housing Strategic Plan, and if a nomination was being re-submitted from a previous SSPA cycle and was not adopted, what change in circumstances warrants an additional review. A further change was to prioritize the review of Plan amendments once they were added to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program to efficiently utilize staff resources. Amendments would be given a higher priority if they

aligned more closely with county goals, community concerns, changes in circumstances or addressed a strategic importance or near-term development timeline. Finally, community participation strategies were adjusted to be oriented more towards neighborhoods in the surrounding vicinity of nomination sites rather than district-wide task forces.

Plan Forward

In 2022, the Planning Division initiated Plan Forward, which is a comprehensive ~~initiative~~ initiative to update the 1990 Policy Plan. The goals of Plan Forward are: review, update, and streamline existing Policy Plan elements; add new policy elements as needed, such as equity and healthy communities; and ensure the Policy Plan is aligned with other ~~These updates will incorporate~~ countywide policies ~~into the revised Policy Elements~~ such as One Fairfax and the Countywide Strategic Plan. The Plan Forward effort was divided into two phases to address the updates needed. Phase 1 includes the Preface/Introduction, Land Use, Transportation, Environment, Human Services, Parks and Recreation, and Visual and Performing Arts elements, the addition of a Healthy Communities element, incorporation of equity policies throughout, and necessary updates to the Glossary. Phase 2 includes the Housing, Heritage Resources, Economic Development, and Revitalization elements, and further updates to the Glossary. Updated elements will include revisions to the Introduction, Environment, Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Land Use, Human Services, Housing, Revitalization, Visual and Preforming Arts, and the inclusion of the concepts of equity and healthy communities as well.

~~These updates will include examining industry trends and changing market conditions through the development of amendments to the Policy Plan. These amendments are designed to provide additional flexibility and alleviate the need to pursue changes to the Area Plan guidance for certain types of land use proposals able to meet specific performance criteria. Notable amendments to the Land Use Element of the Policy Plan include Guidelines for Higher Intensity Within Areas Planned for Industrial Uses, Guidelines for Commercial Building Repurposing, and Continuing Care Facility Guidelines. Amendments to the Housing element include the Workforce Dwelling Unit Policy and Affordable Housing Preservation Policy. Amendments to the Environment element include Green Building, Natural Landscaping at County Facilities, Coastal Resource Management, and Airport Noise. Amendments to the Public Facilities element include the Mobile and Land Based Telecommunication Services Policy and Public Schools. Finally, amendments to the Transportation element include the Bicycle Master Plan, Embark Richmond Highway, and other related amendments.~~

ADD: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land Use Element, as amended through x, x, a new Appendix as follows:

APPENDIX 2 XX – PROFFER LEGISLATION EXEMPT MIXED-USE SMALL AREAS

On July 1, 2016, Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2303.4 became law. This statute applies to certain applications for rezoning and proffered condition amendments related to new residential development and uses, including those that are part of mixed-use development. Although there are recommendations and guidance for residential development and uses throughout the Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Plan does not—and should not be read to—suggest, request, or require any proffered condition for any particular site, development, or use.

Section 15.2-2303.4 exempts new residential development or use when it occurs within a small area plan, approved as part of the Comprehensive Plan that meets certain criteria set out in the statute. The following areas meet those criteria and are exempt (See Figure 1):

1. Tysons Urban Center
2. Reston (includes the Herndon Transit Station Area, Reston Town Center Transit Station Area, and Wiehle-Reston East Transit Station Area)
3. Merrifield Suburban Center (includes the Dunn Loring Transit Station Area)
4. Franconia-Springfield Area (includes the Springfield Community Business Center and Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area)
5. Dulles Suburban Center (includes the Innovation Center Transit Station Area)
6. Huntington Transit Station Area
7. Vienna Transit Station Area
8. Van Dorn Transit Station Area
9. West Falls Church Transit Station Area
10. Fairfax Center Area (includes Fairfax Center Suburban Center)
11. Annandale Community Business Center
12. Baileys Crossroads Community Business Center
13. Seven Corners Community Business Center
14. Richmond Highway Corridor Area (includes the Community Business Centers of North Gateway, Penn Daw, Beacon/Groveton, Hybla Valley/Gum Springs, South County Center, and Woodlawn, and adjacent Suburban Neighborhoods)
15. McLean Community Business Center