



PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

ITEM: PA 2020-00030
June 30, 2021

GENERAL LOCATION: 8708 Silverbrook Road, east of the intersection of Silverbrook Road and Southrun Road

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: Mount Vernon

PLANNING AREA: Area III

PLANNING DISTRICT: Pohick

SPECIAL PLANNING AREA: Burke Lake (P7) Community Planning Sector

PARCEL LOCATION: 98-3 ((1)) 3

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 @ 7:30 PM

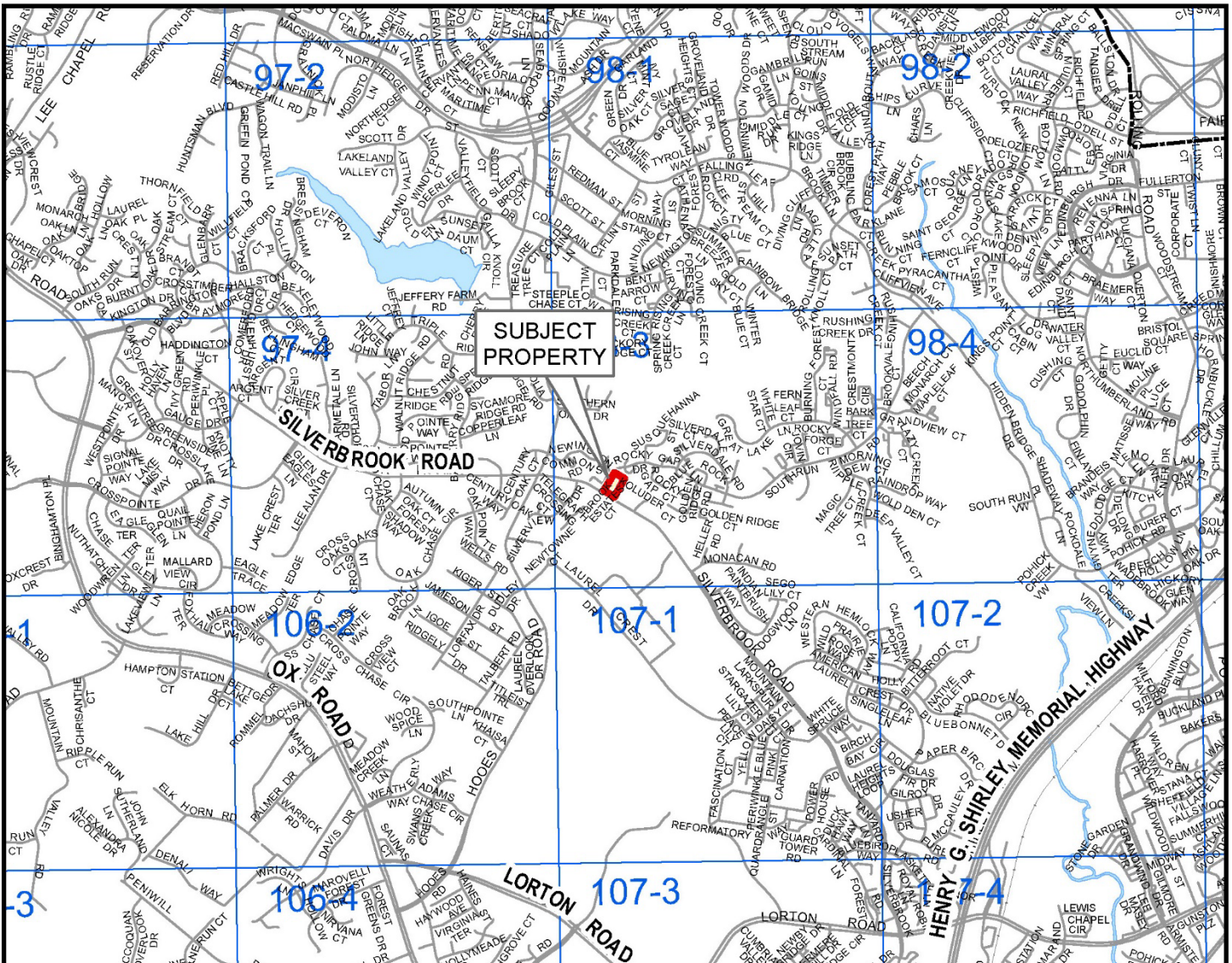
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PUBLIC HEARING: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 @ 4:00 PM

PLANNING STAFF DOES RECOMMEND THIS ITEM FOR PLAN AMENDMENT



Reasonable accommodation is available upon 48 hours notice. For additional information about accommodation call the Planning Commission office at (703) 324-2865, or the Board of Supervisors office at (703) 324-3151.

For additional information about this amendment call (703) 324-1380.



3000 FEET

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT USING FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS
8708 Silverbrook Road





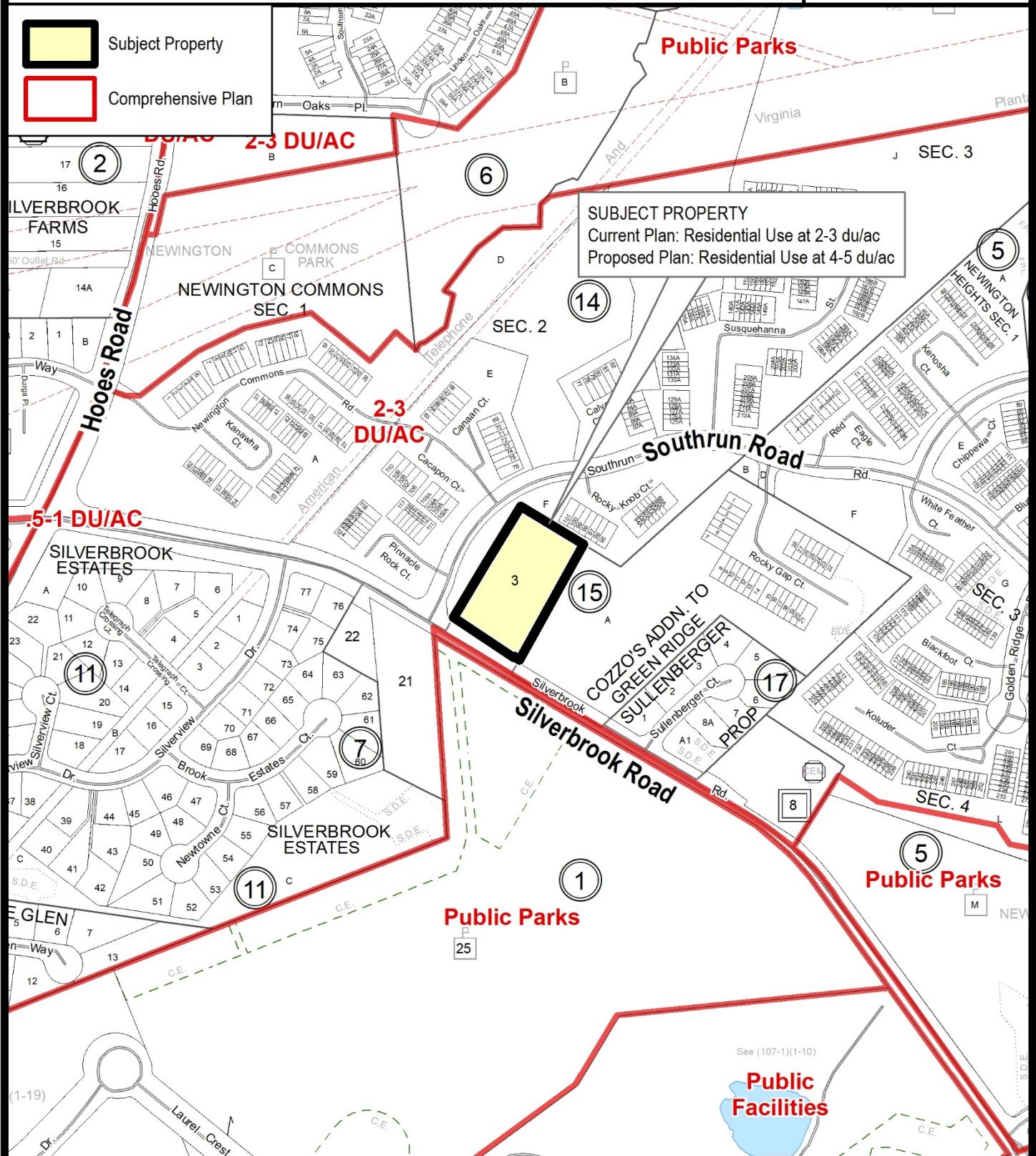
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CURRENT PLAN AND PROPOSED CHANGE

PARCEL LOCATION MAP SHOWING CURRENT PLAN AND PROPOSED CHANGE FOR SUBJECT PROPERTIES AND CURRENT PLAN MAP FOR ADJACENT AREAS

**ITEM:
PA 2020-00030**

-  Subject Property
-  Comprehensive Plan



400 FEET

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT USING FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS
PARCEL INFORMATION CURRENT TO MARCH 2021



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STAFF REPORT FOR PLAN AMENDMENT 2020-00030

BACKGROUND

On September 29, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized Plan Amendment (PA) 2020-00030 for Tax Map Parcel 98-3 ((1)) 3, located east of the intersection of Silverbrook Road and Southrun Road, in the Pohick Planning District, Burke Lake (P7) Community Planning Sector, Mount Vernon District. The proposed Plan amendment considers adding an option to the current plan recommendation of 2-3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) that supports residential use at 4-5 du/ac, subject to conditions related to integration with the neighboring development (Newington Commons) and other considerations.

The review of the Plan amendment is concurrent with the review of rezoning application [RZ/FDP 2020-MV-17](#), submitted to the county by the property owner, requesting to rezone the property from R-2 to PDH-5 Zoning District to permit the development of eight single-family attached dwelling units at a density of 4.2 du/ac (per the latest submission dated June 2, 2021).

CHARACTER OF THE SITE

The 1.9-acre subject property is currently vacant and is entirely forested. The topography of the site slopes gently down from its high point along the western property line in all directions, with the lowest point in the northwest corner of the site. The property features 230 feet of frontage along Silverbrook Road, to the south, while it is separated from Southrun Road, to the west, by a 30 to 70-foot-wide portion of forested open space associated with the neighboring Newington Commons development and owned by the Newington Commons Homeowner's Association (HOA). This strip of off-site open space currently prevents direct access to Southrun Road by the subject property.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The adjoining properties along the north side of Silverbrook Road have been previously developed as part of the 85-acre Newington Commons planned development, which adjoins the property on the north and west. Newington Commons was developed at a planned density of 2-3 du/ac in the PDH-3 Zoning District, with townhomes arranged in clusters to preserve 80 percent of the overall site in large tracts of forested common space and recreational areas. A forested open space portion of the 9-acre Cozzo's Addition to Green Ridge development adjoins the property to the east. That property was developed similarly to Newington Commons, utilizing the PDH-3 Zoning District to cluster townhomes and preserve approximately 70 percent of the site as open space. A short distance south along Silverbrook Road is a 3-acre conventional development in the R-3 Zoning District that includes 8 single-family detached homes arranged along a cul-de-sac with access from Silverbrook Road. Across Silverbrook Road, to the south, is a large expanse of open space owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority which forms a portion of Laurel Hill Park.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY

The Board rezoned the subject property in 1995 ([RZ 94-V-032](#)) from R-1 to R-2 without proffers after denying the developer's original proposal to rezone to PDH-3, which was at the high end of the Plan's 2-3 du/ac density recommendation for the area. The site was never developed under the approved R-2 Zoning District.

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map depicts the base plan for the subject property and surrounding area as Residential Use at 2-3 du/ac.

The following countywide and area-specific Plan text also applies to the subject property:

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Area III, Pohick Planning District, as amended through November 20, 2018, P7-Burke Lake Community Planning Sector, Land Use, Recommendations, pages 76-78:

“The Burke Lake Sector consists largely of stable residential neighborhoods. Infill development in these neighborhoods should be of a compatible use, type and intensity in accordance with the guidance provided by the Policy Plan under Land Use Objectives 8 and 14.

...

The following specific recommendations indicate planned density ranges and development restrictions that will enable the county to realize environmental protection and density transition objectives in the South Run watershed.

1. Segment between Hooes Road, Pohick Road, and the District of Columbia Department of Corrections Facility. This segment is dominated by the over 700-acre Newington Forest development. The majority of this area is planned for residential use at 2-3 dwelling units per acre. The Chapel Acres subdivision is planned for 1-2 dwelling units per acre. Development coordination and consolidation of parcels where appropriate to allow preservation of environmental features and good internal traffic circulation is a condition for approval of densities above the low-end of the Plan density range as shown on the Plan map.”

The following Policy Plan guidance also applies to the subject property:

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land Use, as amended through December 04, 2018, Countywide Objectives and Policies, Land Use Pattern, page 5:

“Objective 8: Fairfax County should encourage a land use pattern that protects, enhances and/or maintains stability in established residential neighborhoods.

Policy a. Protect and enhance existing neighborhoods by ensuring that infill development is of compatible use, and density/intensity, and that adverse impacts on public facility and transportation systems, the environment and the surrounding community will not occur.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land Use, as amended through December 04, 2018, Countywide Objectives and Policies, Land Use Intensity, page 8:

“Objective 12: The location and level of development intensity should be utilized as a means of achieving a broad range of county goals.

...

Policy g: Locate and limit development intensity in a manner which will not adversely impact sensitive environmental areas.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land Use, as amended through December 04, 2018, Countywide Objectives and Policies, Land Use Compatibility, page 10:

“Objective 14: Fairfax County should seek to achieve a harmonious and attractive development pattern which minimizes undesirable visual, auditory, environmental and other impacts created by potentially incompatible uses.

Policy b. Encourage infill development in established areas that is compatible with existing and/or planned land use and that is at a compatible scale with the surrounding area and that can be supported by adequate public facilities and transportation systems.

Policy c. Achieve compatible transitions between adjoining land uses through the control of height and the use of appropriate buffering and screening.

Policy j. Use cluster development as one means to enhance environmental preservation when the smaller lot sizes permitted would complement surrounding development.”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Parks and Recreation, as amended through March 04, 2014, Board of Supervisor Goals, page 3:

“Objective 1: Identify and serve current and future park and recreation needs through an integrated park system that provides open space, recreational services and facilities, and stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

Policy c: Ensure the provision of parklands and the efficient use of facilities throughout the county is based on user needs and consistent with population distribution and growth patterns.

...

Policy h: Encourage private landowners to preserve open space and protect ecological and cultural resources through the use of conservation easements, land use valuation, and other land use options, incentives and programs.”

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT

The Board directed staff to evaluate a Comprehensive Plan amendment that considers residential use at 4-5 du/ac with consideration for elements that would integrate the new development into the neighboring community (Newington Commons). An associated rezoning application ([RZ 2020-MV-17](#)), which proposes the development of eight single-family attached homes on the property at a density of 4.2 du/ac, is being reviewed concurrently with this Plan amendment. Any recommendation for this Plan amendment should not be construed as a favorable recommendation by the Board, the Planning Commission, or staff on the proposed zoning applications and does not relieve the applicant from compliance with the provisions of all applicable ordinances, regulations, and adopted standards.

ANALYSIS

Land Use Pattern

This Plan amendment considers the subject property in the context of the surrounding development and the Plan’s areawide planning recommendations. This segment of the Burke Lake Planning Sector was planned and developed in the mid-1970s as the consolidated 700+ acre Newington Forest planned development and now consists of stable residential neighborhoods. To protect, enhance and/or maintain stability in such areas, the Plan recommends infill development be of a compatible use, type, intensity and scale, and that adverse impact to neighboring uses, the environment, and the transportation system do not occur.

Density and Compatibility

The Policy Plan encourages infill development in established areas that is compatible with surrounding land uses and that is at a compatible scale and density. The Plan also stresses the importance of ensuring compatible transitions between adjoining land uses through use of appropriate buffering and screening, and promotes clustering as a means to enhance environmental preservation and complement adjacent areas.

The Plan recommendation for residential development in the 2-3 du/ac range for the overall area was implemented using a clustering approach which consolidated residential units and associated infrastructure such that only limited portions of the site were developed - minimizing land disturbance, allowing the preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas, ensuring buffering between developed areas, reducing stormwater runoff from development, retaining the scenic character of an area, and providing outdoor recreational opportunities.

The approach resulted in the development of townhomes that preserves the abundant natural resources of the area, including the South Run and Rocky Branch stream valleys, rather than a larger-lot, single-family detached development style. The Newington Commons subdivision, which represents an 85-acre portion of the larger Newington Forest development, was developed at an overall density of 2.5 du/ac; however, due to the clustered approach, the individual townhome clusters effectively appear as being developed at higher densities than the density of the overall development and are surrounded by substantial buffers of forested open space. Those open space areas include ample buffers of trees that surround each cluster and provide separation between clusters and to adjacent roadways, defining the character of that development. In the portions of the development nearest the subject site, an estimated 50-60 percent of the land area has been preserved as open space, whereas the minimum Zoning Ordinance requirement for open space in a PDH-3 Zoning District is 35 percent of the overall site.

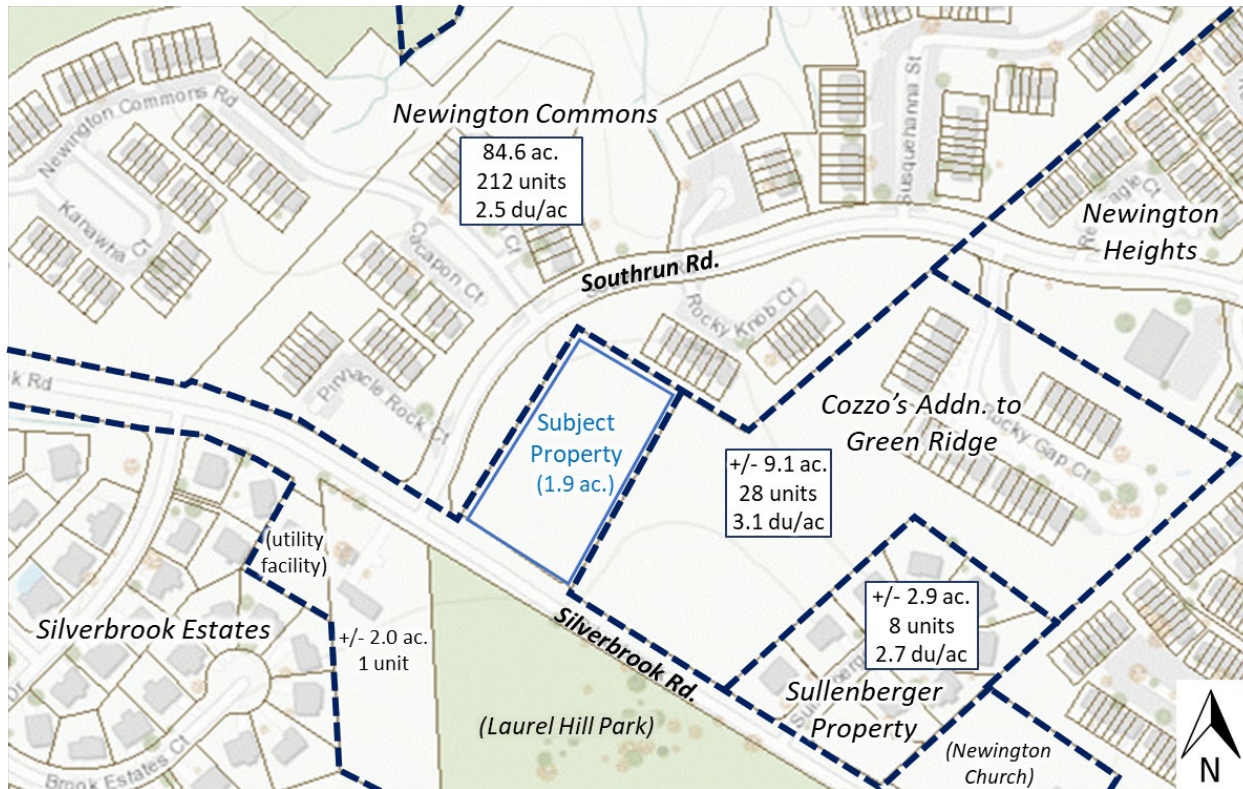


Figure 1: Average development densities in surrounding area.

Other nearby cluster developments, including Newington Heights and Cozzo's Addition to Green Ridge, developed east of Newington Commons in the subsequent decade. As shown on Figure 1, these developments feature a similar unit type, neighborhood character, and preservation of tree buffers surrounding the residential units. A small number of other properties along Silverbrook Road were not included in the planned developments, including the property containing the Silverbrook Church and the subject property. These properties remained as large lot single-family residential parcels. One of those parcels (the Sullenberger Property) later developed as a conventionally-zoned development of single-family detached homes situated along a public cul-de-sac street, with direct access to Silverbrook Road.

The Cozzo's Addition to Green Ridge and the Sullenberger Property developments, both located directly east of the subject property, demonstrate two methods of development available under the current Plan recommendation of 2-3 du/ac in the area: 1) conventional development of single-family detached homes in the R-3 Zoning District, consisting of eight houses on 2.9 acres (a density of 2.7 du/ac), situated along a public cul-de-sac street; and 2) cluster development of townhomes in a planned zoning district (PDH-3), consisting of 28 units on 9.1 acres (a density of 3 du/ac). The townhome development illustrates development in a manner that is consistent in form with the surrounding Newington Commons neighborhoods and that features a similar unit type and neighborhood character, while preserving a tree buffer that surrounds the residential cluster. In that case, approximately 70 percent of the overall site was conserved as dedicated open space, including the portion of the development located directly east of the subject property which remains forested and undeveloped. This development pattern differs from that of the Sullenberger Property, which is developed conventionally with no dedicated common open space.

Proposed Density

The proposed Plan amendment considers an increase in the recommended density for the 1.9-acre subject site from 2-3 du/ac, which could result in up to five residential units, to 4-5 du/ac, which could result in up to nine residential units – a potential increase of up to four residential units. The clustered approach to most of the neighboring development that resulted in residential clusters appearing higher density than the current Plan recommendation of 2-3 du/ac and allowed the developments to exceed the minimum amount of open space required by the Zoning Ordinance demonstrates that there is the potential for development of the subject property at the proposed higher planned density – if it would follow a consistent built form to surrounding residential clusters, include coordinated access, and provide a comparable level of open space and tree buffering on the site. This approach would be preferable to a conventional development of single-family detached homesites, which would be less compatible with surrounding development.

The subject property is currently undeveloped and forested, with no topographical challenges limiting development, and is of a regular shape. There appear to be no physical constraints that would prohibit development that would appear as an integrated residential cluster within the larger development area, maintaining compatibility and a consistent neighborhood character, and would provide a buffer of trees around its perimeter.

Transportation

Site Access

The current site access directly onto Silverbrook Road is problematic due to the traffic volume and arterial nature of the roadway, which is planned to be widened from two to four lanes in this location and includes an additional right-turn lane to Southrun Road along the subject property frontage. As mentioned previously, the site is separated from Southrun Road by land owned by the Newington Commons Homeowners Association (HOA), preventing direct access to that roadway from the subject property. This was an issue in the previous proposal to rezone the site to PDH-3 ([RZ 94-V-032](#)), which did not include direct access to Southrun Road and relied on access directly onto Silverbrook Road.

Any proposed redevelopment of the site to a higher density should obtain direct access to Southrun Road, either by obtaining the necessary property or by reaching an agreement with the neighboring HOA for access rights across its property. This would avoid the potential safety issues of site access directly onto Silverbrook Road. The access point would ideally align with the current intersection of Southrun and Newington Commons Roads to provide access to the subject property that is consistent with that of other residential clusters located along Southrun Road.

Multi-Modal Transportation

The site is served by Fairfax Connector Bus Route 305 (Newington Forest – Silverbrook Road), which operates on weekdays as a rush hour service only, and access to other bus routes is available approximately one mile south on Silverbrook Road. The area currently has existing bicycle facilities that include a shared-use path (SUP) along the northern side of Silverbrook Road, and on-street bicycle lanes in both directions along Southrun Road. There are sidewalks along both sides of Southrun Road and a SUP exists along the northern side of Silverbrook Road.

Transportation Impacts

The proposed increase in planned density from 2-3 du/ac to 4-5 du/ac would result in the potential for four additional residential units on the site. The potential transportation impact of that increase was estimated by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) to be 19 additional daily vehicular trips to/from the site, which would have a negligible effect on traffic volumes in the area.

Tree Canopy and Preservation

Maintaining a canopy of trees on the subject property is essential to the achievement of many of the Plan objectives expected with the development of the site, as outlined in the Environment Section of the Policy Plan. A healthy tree canopy improves air quality, reduces stormwater runoff, protects valuable watershed resources, preserves scenic value, and provides screening and buffering.

As mentioned previously in this report, the surrounding development is characterized by clustered residential development with significant buffers of trees providing separation and maintaining a natural character to the landscape. The subject property, being completely forested, is ideally suited for similar clustered development that includes a significant forested open-space buffer and maintains the established character of the area. The Newington Common residential clusters, developed at 2.5 du/ac, preserve an estimated 55 to 60 percent of the immediate land area as open space and have mature tree canopy covering an estimated 35 to 40 percent, whereas the neighboring Cozzo’s at Green Ridge development, developed at 3 du/ac, consists of over 70 percent open space – the majority of that containing mature tree canopy.

The Zoning Ordinance requires developments to include a minimum percentage of post-development tree canopy. A percentage of that tree canopy requirement must be met through tree preservation, based on the amount of pre-development tree canopy existing on the site. The minimum required tree canopy percentage generally decreases as development density increases, as shown in Figure 3.

Zoning District	Maximum Residential Density	Minimum Tree Canopy Requirement	Minimum Open Space Requirement
R-2	2 du/ac	30%	25%
PDH-3	3 du/ac	25%	20%
PDH-5	5 du/ac	20%	35%

Figure 3: Minimum Zoning Ordinance requirements for 10-year tree canopy and open space at different residential densities.

Development of the subject property under its current zoning (R-2) would require post-development tree canopy coverage of 30 percent of the site, whereas development at the proposed density level, utilizing a PDH-5 District, would only have a 20 percent tree canopy requirement. Since the subject property is currently nearly completely forested, most of the tree canopy requirement would be expected to consist of preserved trees in either scenario. As previously mentioned, at least 35 percent of the land area of neighboring residential clusters appears to consist of tree canopy; as such, the minimum Ordinance requirement will not be sufficient to ensure a level of tree canopy coverage that is consistent with the character of surrounding development and that is consistent with the environmental and land use objectives of the Plan.

In order to satisfy the previously described Plan objectives, development of the subject property should provide for tree canopy coverage and open space that are approaching that of the established development pattern in the area (at least 50 percent open space and 30 percent post-development tree canopy). In addition, at least a 30-foot treed buffer should be maintained along the Silverbrook Road frontage to maintain a forested appearance from the roadway, consistent with that of the neighboring properties. Due to the abundance of invasive vegetation on the site and marginal quality of some of the existing trees, the percentage of tree preservation may not be expected to exceed minimum Ordinance requirements. A field survey of the site revealed that the

northwestern three-fourths of the site contains a significant amount of invasive vegetation, while the southeastern quarter of the site contains higher-quality forest resources and should be the area of primary focus for tree preservation. In remaining open space areas, non-native vegetation should be removed and replanted with native vegetation per established reforestation guidelines.

Parks and Recreation

Policy objectives address mitigating impacts of development, including those on parks and recreational facilities. The Pohick Planning District is currently deficient in parkland and recreational facilities and existing nearby parks (Lake Mercer, South Run Stream Valley, Newington Commons, Newington Heights, and Laurel Hill Park) only meet a portion of the current demand for parkland generated by existing residential development. The addition of new residents resulting from development of the site would also increase the need for areawide public parks and recreational facilities in excess of existing capacity, which would be addressed during the rezoning review process. There may be the opportunity to provide improvements to off-site recreational amenities in the nearby area for the benefit of both new residents and those of surrounding neighborhoods.

Green Buildings

Per Objective 13 of the Environment Section of the Policy Plan, all residential developments in the county are encouraged to incorporate green building practices that use energy and water resources efficiently and minimize short-and-long-term negative impacts on the environment and building occupants. The Plan encourages residential development to implement such measures sufficient to attain certification for new homes through an established green building rating system, and to exceed base requirements when seeking development at the higher end of the Plan density range for the area.

Water Quality and Stormwater Management

One of the Plan's primary objectives for the Pohick Planning District, and the Burke Lake Planning Sector specifically, is protection of the watersheds and tributaries by controlling stormwater runoff and water quality. General countywide requirements/expectations for onsite stormwater management have increased since many of the surrounding neighborhoods were developed, and development of the single subject parcel would require stormwater management be accommodated within the limited acreage of the parcel itself, rather than via a larger regional system as may have been employed in those larger cluster developments. Any rezoning proposal will need to provide the stormwater facilities without interfering with expectations for the tree canopy and buffering.

Schools

The schools serving the subject site are Silverbrook Elementary School, South County Middle School, and South County High School, all of which are expected to have sufficient capacity for future growth. Fairfax County Public Schools estimates that proposed Plan amendment has the potential to result in an additional two students entering the local school system, which would

have no significant impact. Any rezoning proposal for the site would be expected to offset its projected impact to the surrounding schools as a condition of approval.

CONCLUSION

The current planned density range provides for development which could either result in conventional development of single-family detached homes with no common open space, or planned development which clusters residential units in higher-density groups that maintain significant buffers of forested open space. At that density, a planned townhome development on the subject property, which includes a similar level of open space, tree canopy, and coordinated access from Southrun Road, would be generally consistent with the established development pattern of neighboring properties. There is the potential for similar development at the proposed increased density level to also remain consistent with that of surrounding residential communities, if that level of development could be accommodated while still meeting those Plan expectations. Exceeding the base Plan expectations by satisfying higher targets for the provision of open space, tree canopy, and buffering would provide the necessary justification for an increase in planned density above the base Plan density for the area. Such an option would avoid the potential for a conventional development of single-family detached homes that is less compatible with the established character of the area.

RECOMMENDATION

Given these considerations, staff recommends that the current base Plan recommendation for residential development at 2-3 du/ac be maintained for the site, and that an option for increased density up to 5 du/ac be adopted, conditioned upon development remaining consistent in character, appearance, and functionality with the surrounding established residential neighborhoods and exceeding the expectations for the provision of open space, tree canopy, and buffering that would be expected at the base Plan level. Any development of the subject property in excess of that permitted by its current zoning designation should be conditioned upon obtaining an appropriate access point along Southrun Road.

Staff recommends the Comprehensive Plan be modified as shown below. Text proposed to be added is shown as underlined and text proposed to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough. Text shown to be replaced is noted as such.

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Area III, Pohick Planning District, as amended through November 20, 2018, P7-Burke Lake Community Planning Sector, Land Use, Recommendations, page 77:

- "1. Segment between Hooes Road, Pohick Road, and the District of Columbia Department of Corrections Facility. This segment is dominated by the over 700-acre Newington Forest development. The majority of this area is planned for residential use at 2-3 dwelling units per acre. The Chapel Acres subdivision is planned for 1-2 dwelling units per acre. Development coordination and consolidation of parcels where appropriate to allow preservation of environmental features and good internal

traffic circulation is a condition for approval of densities above the low-end of the Plan density range as shown on the Plan map.

As an option on Tax Map Parcel 98-3 ((1)) 3, residential development up to a density of 5 dwelling-units-per-acre may be appropriate if it maintains the established character of the surrounding community by satisfying the following conditions:

- Residential units should consist of townhomes arranged in similar configuration as that of the surrounding development;
- Development should achieve a 10-year post-development tree canopy percentage of at least 30 percent, which should include a minimum 30-foot wide forested buffer along the Silverbrook Road frontage which includes overstory and understory trees and shrubs sufficient to provide year-round screening of the residential units from the roadway and maintain the established wooded character;
- Development should maintain a minimum open space percentage of 50 percent of the site;
- Vehicular access for the development should be from Southrun Road.”

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN MAP:

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map will not change.

COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP:

The Countywide Transportation Plan Map will not change.