



# PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

ITEM: PA 2018-II-F2  
April 3, 2019

**GENERAL LOCATION:** Northwest quadrant of intersection of University Drive and Route 123, across from the George Mason University field-house.

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT:** Braddock

**PLANNING AREA:** Area II

**PLANNING DISTRICT:** Fairfax Planning District

**SPECIAL PLANNING AREA:**

F7 George Mason Community Planning Sector

**PARCEL LOCATION:** 57-3 ((1)) 11A & 11B, 57-4 ((1)) 2B

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

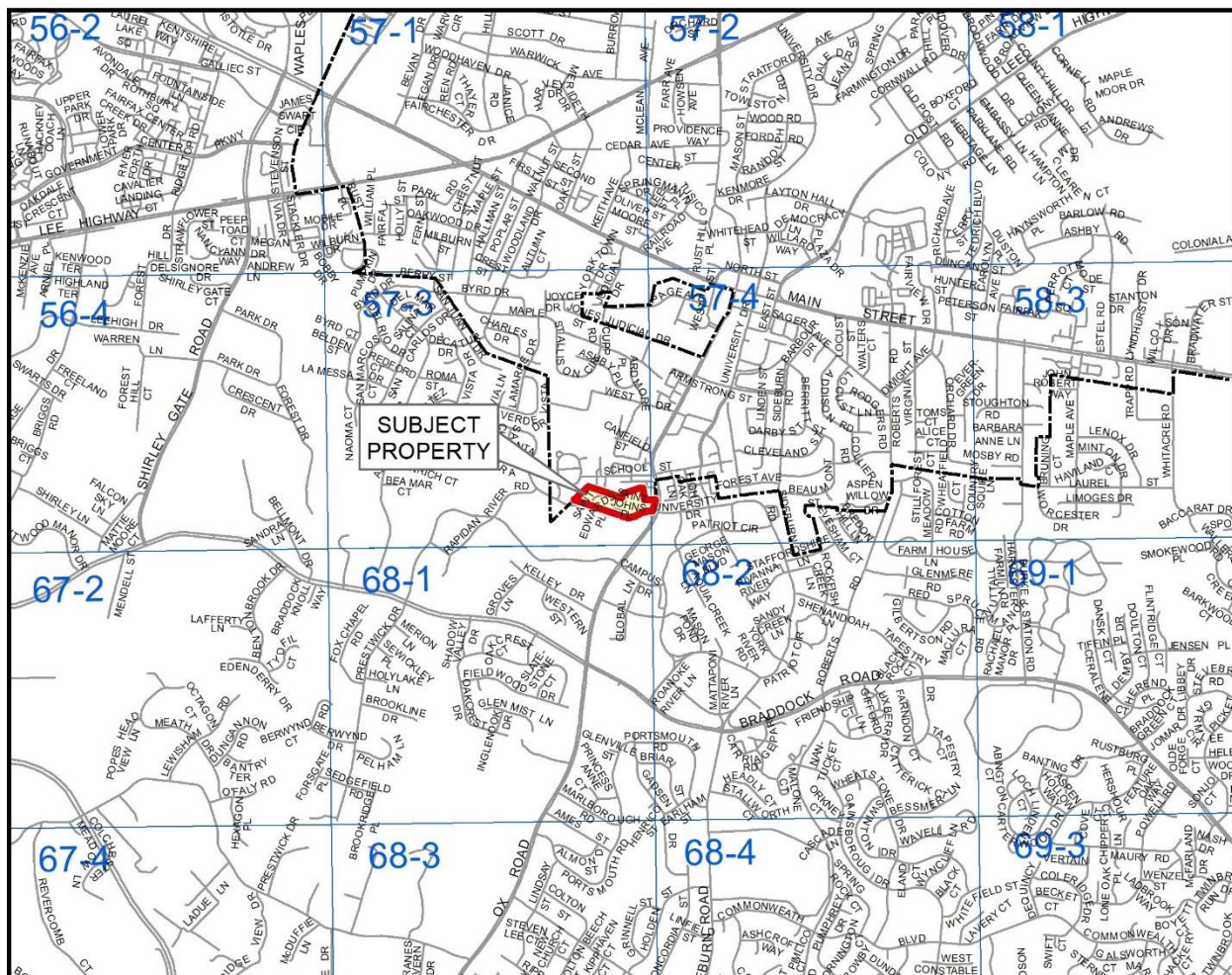
**PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING:**  
Wednesday, April 24, 2019 @ 7:30 PM

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PUBLIC HEARING:**  
Tuesday, May 21, 2019 @ 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.



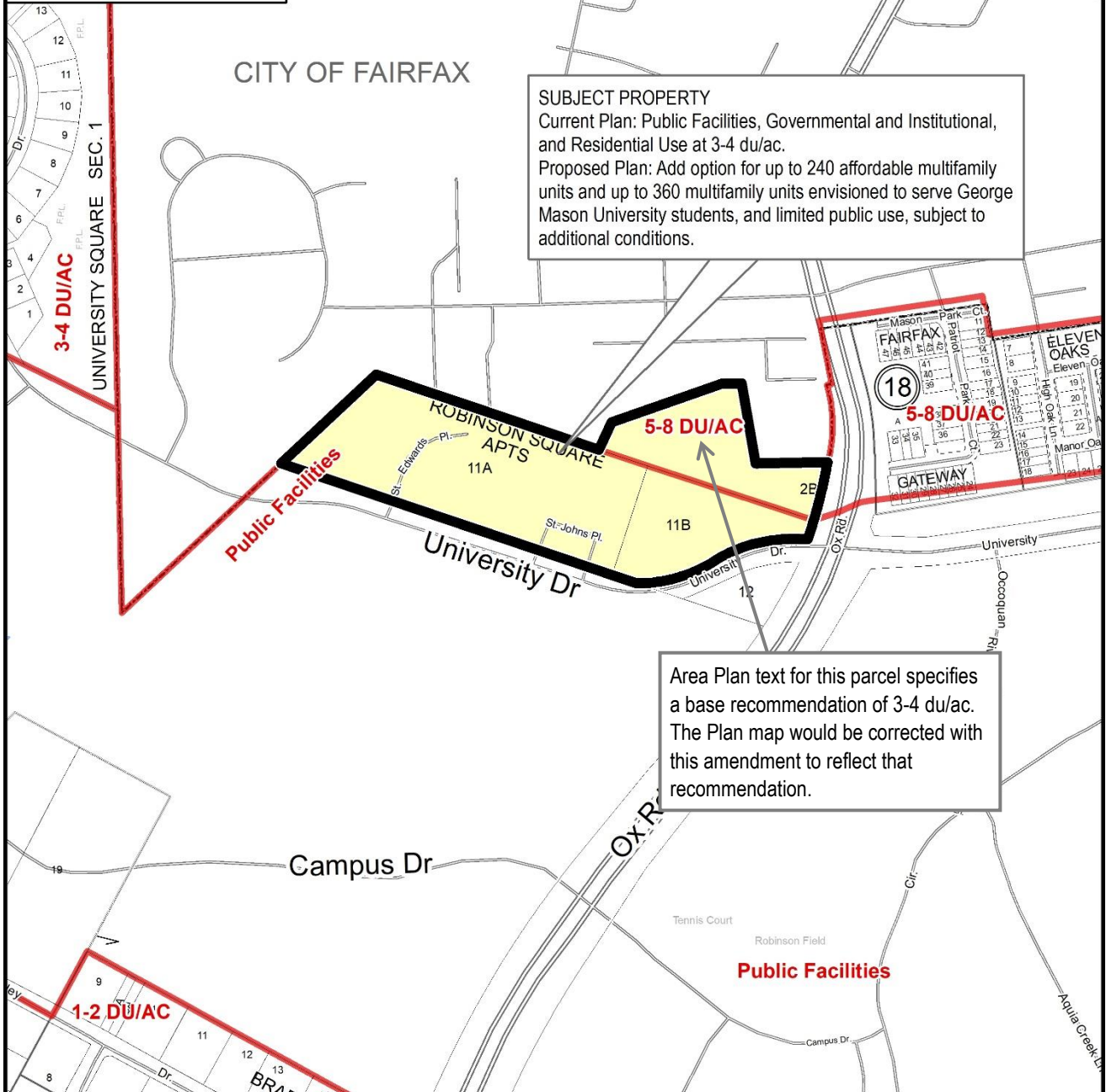
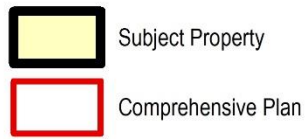
PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING USING FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS  
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# CURRENT PLAN AND PROPOSED CHANGE

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

ITEM:  
PA 2018-II-F2



## SUBJECT PROPERTY

Current Plan: Public Facilities, Governmental and Institutional, and Residential Use at 3-4 du/ac.  
Proposed Plan: Add option for up to 240 affordable multifamily units and up to 360 multifamily units envisioned to serve George Mason University students, and limited public use, subject to additional conditions.

Area Plan text for this parcel specifies a base recommendation of 3-4 du/ac. The Plan map would be corrected with this amendment to reflect that recommendation.

400 FEET

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING USING FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS  
PARCEL INFORMATION CURRENT TO MARCH 2019

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## **STAFF REPORT FOR PLAN AMENDMENT 2018-II-F2**

### **BACKGROUND**

On July 31, 2018, the Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized the consideration of Plan Amendment (PA) 2018-II-F2 for 4348 Ox Road, 4400 Saint Edwards Place, and 4500 University Drive (Tax Map Parcels 57-3 ((1)) 11A & B and 57-4 ((1)) 2B) in the Fairfax Planning District, George Mason Community Planning Sector. The subject area currently is owned by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA), and is located in the Braddock Supervisor District.

In July of 2017, Fairfax County, on behalf of the FCRHA, received and accepted an unsolicited proposal under the provisions of the Public-Private Education and Infrastructure Act of 2002 (PPEA) to develop affordable housing and student housing on the site. In accordance with the procedures adopted by Fairfax County and the provisions of the PPEA, Fairfax County advertised for competing development proposals, indicating the desire to also include an affordable senior housing component, as well as accommodation for the existing FCRHA office use on the site. The County ultimately selected one proposal to move forward for the potential redevelopment of the site, subject to an interim agreement authorizing the developers to pursue both the Comprehensive Plan amendment and the zoning necessary to permit the proposal.

To facilitate the potential development, the Board authorized staff to consider an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the subject area that would support up to 240 affordable housing and 360 student housing units, as well as limited community space/use as may be appropriate. Review of the Plan amendment is concurrent with review of an associated Rezoning/Final Development Plan application (RZ/FDP 2018-BR-025), which the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) accepted for review on November 16, 2018. RZ/FDP 2018-BR-025 is subject to the provisions of Va. Code § 15.2--2303.4<sup>1</sup>, which imposed new restrictions on proffers for residential rezonings in certain areas.

The recommendation for this Plan amendment should not be construed as a favorable recommendation by the Board, the Planning Commission, or staff on the pending zoning application and does not relieve the applicant from compliance with the provisions of all applicable ordinances, regulations, and adopted standards.

### **CHARACTER OF THE SITE**

The 10.8-acre site consists of three parcels that are located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of University Drive and Route 123. Parcels 11A & 11B are developed with Robinson Square, which consists of 46 affordable townhomes and 14,208 square feet (sf) of FCRHA office space developed in the 1980s. The parcels were developed under a Plan recommendation for 3-4 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map

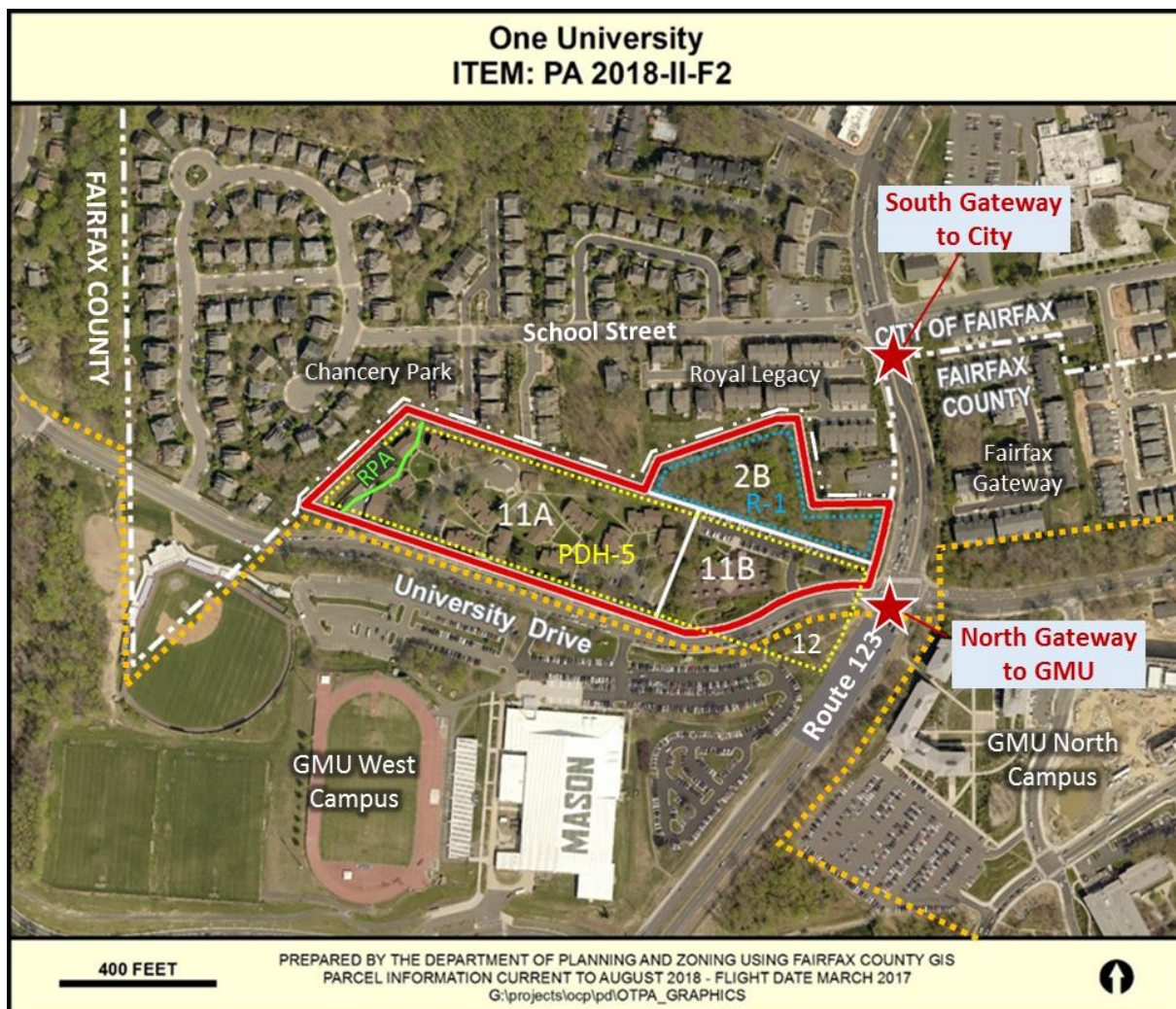
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<sup>1</sup> <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title15.2/chapter22/section15.2-2303.4/>



(Plan Map) was subsequently changed to Public Facilities, Institutional and Governmental Use, to reflect the FCRHA use of the site. Access to these parcels is from University Drive, which forms their southern boundary. Parcel 2B lies directly north of Parcel 11B and is a former single-family home site that accessed directly from Route 123. The parcel is now vacant and forested with mature tree cover. It is zoned R-1, but is planned for residential use at 3-4 du/ac.

The subject area slopes significantly from its eastern edge at Route 123, along its 1400-foot length to its western edge, which lies 60 feet lower in elevation. The western boundary of the site is also the location of a tributary stream to Pope's Head Creek, and an associated environmentally-sensitive area consisting of 100-year floodplain, Resource Protection Area (RPA) (per the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance), and Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) (per the Comprehensive Plan). Portions of the area have been cleared of trees and are occupied by a FCRHA maintenance yard and structures. There is a continuous length of tree cover along the northern boundary of the site and stands of mature trees throughout the site, including nearly all of Parcel 2B, as shown on Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Detail of site and surrounding area.**

## CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The property borders the City of Fairfax to the north and the George Mason University (GMU) campus directly to the south, across University Drive.

**North:** Properties north of the subject property, within the City of Fairfax, are mostly developed as planned communities in the 3 to 8 du/ac range, including the Royal Legacy development and portions of Chancery Park. Those developments include a combination of single-family attached and detached homes, as well as areas of conserved tree cover and open space. Northeast of these developments, the intersection of Route 123 and School Street marks a southern “gateway” to the City of Fairfax, as shown on Figure 1, and a transition from a suburban character within the county to a more urban character within the city. Directly northeast of the subject area, along Route 123, is a single parcel zoned for low-density residential use but occupied by a house of worship. That parcel is also located within the City of Fairfax and is designated on their Comprehensive Plan to remain an institutional use.

**East:** Across Route 123 to the east is the Fairfax Gateway townhome community, which is located south of the City of Fairfax boundary and within the jurisdiction of Fairfax County. That community was developed in 2005 at 8 du/ac, and marked the City of Fairfax gateway by incorporating a plaza area at the intersection of School Street, from which Route 123 transitions to a buffered streetscape to the south, directly across from the subject area.

**South:** Across University Drive, to the south of the subject property, is GMU’s West Campus, which contains the university’s athletic field house and other athletic facilities, as well as areas of surface student parking. Street parking is also available on both sides of University Drive, which is often parked at capacity. Portions of GMU’s frontage on University Drive contain mature trees but other portions of the frontage remain unvegetated.

In 2017, GMU undertook a visioning process to explore a conceptual long-term vision for development of the West Campus into a more intensive research and innovation district; however, no specific plans for such development have been adopted and current campus plans anticipate the field house and athletic facilities remaining in this area, with limited improvements.

**West:** The RPA/EQC/floodplain area at the west edge of the site is wooded, with conservation areas dedicated along the western side of the stream with the neighboring Chancery Park development. Directly across the stream, along University Drive, is a sewage pump station operated by the City of Fairfax, which serves the subject property and other development to the west.

## PLANNING HISTORY

Parcels 11A and 11B were developed in conformance with a Plan recommendation for residential development at 3-4 du/ac, under a common PDH-5 rezoning that also included the

vacant, triangular area located south of University Drive, now identified as Tax Parcel 57-3 ((1)) 12 and containing mature tree cover (as shown on Figure 1). That parcel is owned by GMU and is not included in the Plan amendment subject area. The approved density was 4.7 du/ac, which represented the high end of the planned density (4 du/ac), plus bonus density of 0.7 du/ac in return for the provision of affordable units. The FCRHA office building was treated as a secondary use, and its floor area was not incorporated into the density calculations. Development plans were approved for the office portion of the development (FDP C-058) in 1979, and the residential portion (FDP C-058-2) in 1980.

The Plan includes a site-specific recommendation for an area including Parcel 2B, which specifies the base recommendation as residential use at 3-4 du/ac, with an option for residential development up to 6 du/ac, if several surrounding parcels were consolidated. Since the Plan recommendation was adopted, most of the other parcels have been included in other developments, rendering the Plan option up to 6 du/ac obsolete. The Plan Map incorrectly depicts the base recommendation for Parcel 2B as Residential Use at 5-8 du/ac, which is proposed to be corrected by this amendment to reflect the 3-4 du/ac base recommendation of the site-specific text.

## **ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT**

**Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Area II, Fairfax Planning District as amended through 11-20-2018; F7-George Mason Community Planning Sector, pages 67-68:**

### **“CONCEPT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The Concept for Future Development recommends that a sizable portion of this sector be identified as a Large Institutional Land Area. The remaining portion of the sector is recommended as part of a Low-Density Residential Area and as part of a Suburban Neighborhood.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Land Use**

The George Mason sector has a few stable residential neighborhoods. Infill development in these neighborhoods should be compatible with existing development in the vicinity in terms of use, type and intensity, in accordance with the guidance provided by the Policy Plan in Land Use Objectives 8 and 14.”

There is no site-specific Plan text for Tax Map Parcels 57-3 ((1)) 11A & 11B. For Tax Map Parcel 57-4 ((1)) 2B, the Plan includes the following site-specific recommendation:

**Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Area II, Fairfax Planning District as amended through 11-20-2018; F7-George Mason Community Planning Sector, page 68:**

2. The area south of the School Street neighborhood in Fairfax City and west of Route 123 (Tax Map 57-4((1))2, 2A and 2B), about three acres in size, is appropriate for residential



development at a density of 3-4 dwelling units per acre. For development at this density, access should not be via Route 123, and land, preferably to include the existing church, should be consolidated. An option for up to 6 dwelling units per acre could be considered with full consolidation of all parcels in the county along with additional land in Fairfax City and no access via Route 123. This optional density should be compatible with density planned for adjacent land in Fairfax City along School Street. Excellence of design and provision of amenities, such as screening along Route 123, would also be conditions for achieving development at this higher density.”

**Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land Use, amended through 12-04-2018; pages 5-10:**

**“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.

(...)

**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 f. Utilize urban design principles to increase compatibility among adjoining uses.

Policy h. Utilize landscaping and open space along rights-of-way to minimize the impacts of incompatible land uses separated by roadways.

Policy i. Minimize the potential adverse impacts of the development of frontage parcels on major arterials through the control of land use, circulation and access.

(...)”

Appendix 1 of the Land Use element of the Policy Plan also contains specific guidance in reference to guidelines for multifamily residential development, and for multifamily residential

development for the elderly, as provided in Attachment I of this report. The guidelines recommend that multifamily developments are located near retail, services, and other amenities; have adequate access to major roadways and public facilities and services; and can achieve environmental goals. The guidelines for multifamily development for the elderly address transportation and topography needs and safety.

**Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Housing, amended through 3-14-2017, pages 2-7:**

**“BOARD OF SUPERVISORS GOAL**

**Affordable Housing** - Opportunities should be available to all who live or work in Fairfax County to purchase or rent safe, decent, affordable housing within their means. Affordable housing should be located as close as possible to employment opportunities without adversely affecting quality of life standards. It should be a vital element in high density and mixed-use development projects, should be encouraged in revitalization areas, and encouraged through more flexible zoning wherever possible.

(...)

**COUNTYWIDE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**Objective 1: The county should increase the supply of affordable housing units each year by an amount that is equal to at least 12 percent of the total housing production in the County for the previous year. These units should serve the full range of incomes of households needing affordable housing and should include units for the disabled and handicapped.**

(...)

Policy f. Encourage affordable housing as a development option for infill sites, particularly in commercial areas and near employment concentrations.

Policy g. Give priority for the use of county and other government-owned buildings and land as sites for the provision of affordable housing.

(...)

Policy i. Support the efforts of the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority in producing a portion of these affordable housing units through the provision of county resources and the approval of suitable housing sites.

(...)

**Objective 5: The county should increase the supply of housing available to special populations, including the physically and mentally disabled, the homeless, and the low-income elderly.**

(...)

Policy d. Promote multifamily housing for the elderly and the handicapped that is conveniently located to public transportation and community services.”

## **PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT**

The Board requested that staff consider a recommendation for approximately 240 affordable multifamily units and approximately 360 student housing units on the site, as well as limited community space/use as may be appropriate (to potentially accommodate existing FCRHA site uses). The Board indicated the potential for the proposal to be further adjusted based on community input.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Housing**

#### Affordable Housing

The availability of affordable housing<sup>2</sup> in the county is one of the primary goals of the Board (per the adopted Goals for Fairfax County). Such housing opportunities should be available to all residents, and located as close as possible to employment opportunities and other services. One element of the Policy Plan is devoted exclusively to Housing objectives, and affordable housing policies are further integrated into other aspects of the Plan, including land-use objectives.

Objective 1 of the Housing element of the Policy Plan encourages affordable housing as a development option for infill sites near employment concentrations (such as GMU) (policy f), and recommends that priority be given for the use of county-owned buildings and land as sites for the provision of affordable housing (policy g). It is also recommended that the county support the FCRHA in producing a portion of these affordable units through the provision of county resources and the approval of suitable housing sites (policy i). Furthermore, the objective recognizes that higher densities can help to support affordability, and determining acceptable locations for higher density residential development will be necessary as part of a strategy to provide more affordable units. Objective 5 directs that the county should increase the supply of affordable housing available to special populations, including the low-income elderly.

Implementation of the proposed Plan amendment would result in the elimination of 46 existing affordable townhome units, but would replace them with approximately 240 affordable multifamily units, available to households earning 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less. The result would be a net gain of 194 affordable units. While the Board authorization did not specifically include senior housing, the initial FCRHA solicitation indicated that affordable senior housing should be included in any proposal, and the associated rezoning application

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<sup>2</sup> The Policy Plan volume of the Comprehensive Plan defines affordable housing as housing that is available to households with incomes up to 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

includes senior units as a portion of the proposed affordable housing. Therefore, staff recognizes the potential benefits of the proposed Plan amendment to addressing county affordable housing goals.

### Student Housing

The other major element of the Board authorization is the consideration of multifamily housing units intended to serve as additional off-campus housing for the GMU student population. While there are no county policies specifically addressing the provision of student housing, locating housing intended to serve university students in close proximity to GMU supports general policy objectives related to locating housing close to places of employment and other services.

Such housing would be most beneficial to GMU itself, which has indicated a deficit in on-campus student housing compared to the demand for such housing<sup>3</sup>. There are County policies that encourage general cooperation and support with GMU, and Objective 13 of the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan directs the County to encourage the state to achieve GMU's plans for additional educational facilities and services, but only in a manner consistent with the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan, within the capacity of the county's road and facility systems, and with respect to adjacent planned and developed land uses.

### **Land Use**

While addressing the availability of affordable housing is a major Board goal, and planning and zoning flexibility is encouraged where necessary to further that goal, it is clearly stated that it should not compromise other goals and objectives of the Plan, nor the quality of life of other residents. The Land Use element of the Policy Plan contains specific policies and objectives meant to ensure such negative impacts are avoided and a balanced and harmonious community is maintained.

### Land Use Pattern

The Concept for Future Development in the Comprehensive Plan designates the subject area as a Suburban Neighborhood area, which includes the majority of the F7 George Mason Community Planning Sector. These areas are intended to be preserved as stable residential neighborhoods, typically with little or no change envisioned. The Plan recognizes that these areas contain a mixture of residential densities, and recommends that higher-density residential uses in these areas be designed to prevent adverse transportation and other impacts to nearby lower-density residential uses, and to provide opportunities for usage of transit and pedestrian-accessible amenities.

The Plan amendment under consideration represents a residential density of approximately 56 du/ac, which is significantly greater than the residential densities planned and developed to the

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<sup>3</sup> Per an April 2018 Mason and Community Forum presentation: <https://relations.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/George-Mason.pdf>



north; however, the subject property is located adjacent to a large institutional use, with no direct connectivity to these residential developments. Staff recognizes the potential for the site to serve as a transitional property between the institutional use and other surrounding neighborhoods, if such a transitional use can prevent adverse impacts to surrounding properties, and satisfy other land-use policies and objectives of the Plan.

#### Land Use Compatibility

Objective 14 of the Land Use element specifically directs that new development or redevelopment be harmonious with surrounding uses and minimize undesirable visual, auditory, environmental and other potential impacts. Infill development should be at a scale that can be compatible with the surrounding area and that can be supported by adequate public facilities and transportation systems (policy b). Compatible transitions between differing uses is encouraged through control of building mass and height (policy c), and the use of appropriate buffering, screening, landscaping and open space is encouraged, especially along rights-of-way (policy h), to minimize impacts of potentially incompatible land uses.

The proposed Plan amendment to support the development of 600 multifamily units and limited public/community use would likely require the construction of up to five-to-seven-story multifamily buildings and the use of structured parking directly adjacent to communities of single-family attached and detached homes. Such structures may have significant visual and auditory impacts due to size, mass, lighting, site traffic, and other factors, if not sited and designed to minimize these impacts. In order to effectively accommodate a higher-density use on the subject property, appropriate transitions in location and height, and the maintenance and enhancement of substantial tree buffers between the proposed use and existing, lower-density residential neighborhoods would be essential. The retention of existing mature trees on-site, some of which reach heights of 70 to 80 feet, would be important to effectively screen the types of buildings that would be required to accommodate the proposed level of development. Supplementation of existing trees with evergreen and understory vegetation would provide additional year-round screening and buffering to mitigate the potential for visual, auditory, and other impacts of the proposed uses.

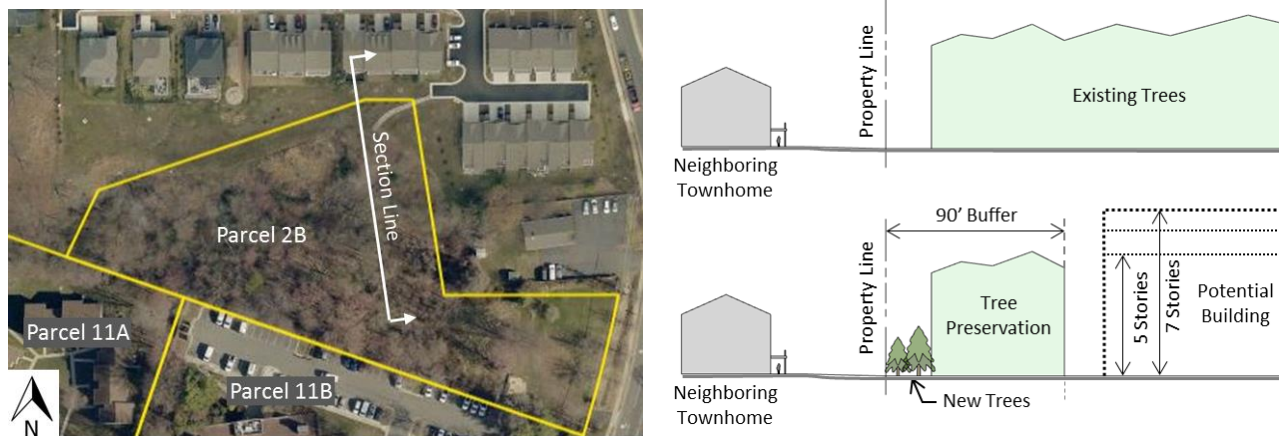
#### Neighborhood Character

The Plan seeks to address land uses in such a way as to emphasize and enhance community identity and preserve neighborhood character. East of Route 123, University Drive and a continuous 90-foot-wide treed buffer lining its north frontage work together to form the northern boundary of the GMU Campus. They provide an effective separation between the Northeast Campus and neighboring residential developments, as well as a clear visual indication of the campus boundary. The buffer between the campus and surrounding neighborhoods west of Route 123 is less defined, though the vegetation and mature tree cover existing on the subject area helps maintain buffering to surrounding residential communities in this area, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Existing tree buffers in the vicinity of the subject property.**

Maintaining and enhancing, as necessary, a continuous treed buffer along the north boundary of the subject area, similar to the buffer found along University Drive east of Route 123, would be an effective strategy to screen the higher-density transitional use and clearly demarcate the boundary between low-density residential uses and the transition to higher-density and institutional uses. Parcel 2B is a portion of the subject area in which screening is especially important, due to the proximity of neighboring homes and the lack of offsite vegetation, but is also an area of the site that contains a significant portion of area's existing mature tree cover. Along the northern boundary of Parcel 2B, a substantial buffer similar to the 90-foot buffer east of Route 123 would ensure preservation of a sufficient number of mature screening trees that, when supplemented with additional evergreen plantings, would be capable of screening the more intensive development from the neighboring homes, as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Existing site cross-section versus potential development w/tree buffer (northern Parcel 2B).**

Farther west on the subject property, along the northern boundary of Parcel 11A, existing vegetation does not extend as far into the site as compared to the tree cover in Parcel 2B, and a 50-foot-wide buffer area would be sufficient to ensure the preservation of the majority of the existing mature trees. When supplemented with additional plantings, the resulting buffer could provide effective screening to neighboring properties, as shown in Figure 4.



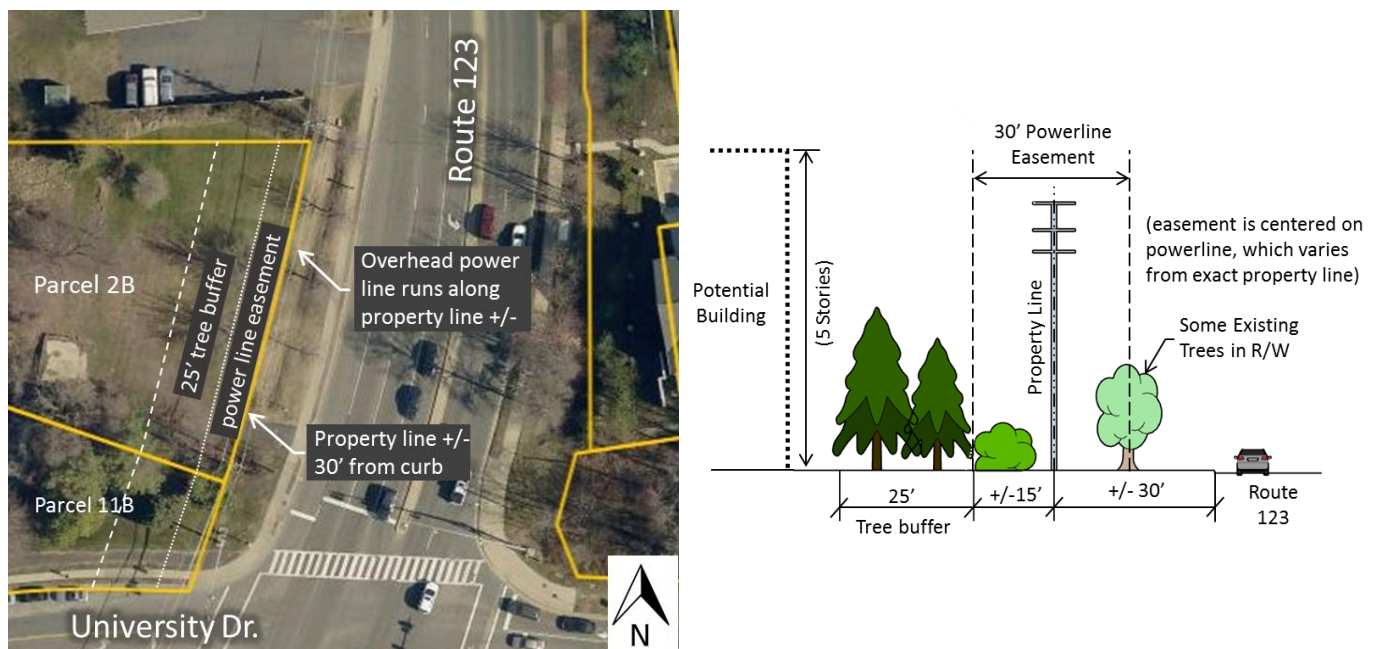
**Figure 4: Existing site cross-section versus potential development w/tree buffer (Parcel 11A).**

### Route 123 Character

The character of the Route 123 corridor consists of a village-scale urban fabric within the City of Fairfax, transitioning at its southern gateway at School Street to a more suburban streetscape southward on Route 123 in the county. The area of the GMU campus located south of University Drive and east of Route 123 contains the higher-intensity “core” of the campus; however, the character of Route 123 remains relatively suburban due to the continued use of vegetative buffering along the roadway and significant building setbacks along this frontage.



As mentioned previously, directly across Route 123 from the subject area, the Fairfax Gateway development established a continuous 25-foot vegetated buffer, as well as areas of additional tree preservation, along the site frontage. Farther south along Route 123 on the GMU north campus, the more intensive university buildings are also set back significantly from the roadway and buffered by 25 to 30 feet of vegetation. Maintaining a building setback and continuous vegetative buffer at least 25 feet in width along the Route 123 frontage of the subject property would reinforce the established character of the roadway in this area and would mitigate the visual effect of more intensive development on the site. On the subject property, an easement associated with existing overhead power lines restricts planting within approximately 15 feet of the Route 123 right-of-way, necessitating that the 25-foot vegetative buffer width be calculated from the edge of the easement, as shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Cross-section of site at Route 123 with potential tree buffer.**

Guidelines for Multifamily Residential Development (See Attachment I for complete citation)

The Land Use element of the Policy Plan volume of the Comprehensive Plan also contains recommended guidelines specific to various development types. In the case of multifamily residential development, the Plan recommends that such development contain sufficient area to accommodate necessary onsite amenities, have access to a roadway of adequate capacity to serve the development, and be located in areas within convenient walking distance to public transportation opportunities and community services. The guidelines also recommend that environmentally-sensitive areas, such as EQCs be avoided. Additional guidelines specifically for multifamily housing for the elderly emphasize safety and accessibility of necessary services.

The subject area, at 10.8 acres, is generally of sufficient size to accommodate multifamily residential development with a variety of onsite amenities, such as open spaces, sidewalks, and



trails, as well as the preservation of the existing environmental resources. Any proposed development should be designed and scaled to prioritize those objectives.

The proximity of the site to George Mason University provides convenient pedestrian access to its facilities and services, which would serve many of the needs of students living on the site, but also includes open space and cultural amenities that are available to the general public. GMU also offers programs targeted at older adults, through its Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, as well as tuition discounts or waivers for other GMU programs. A hospital (with emergency facilities) is located within ½ mile of the site, and several religious institutions are within a similar distance. There are a limited amount of retail and restaurant uses within ¼ mile of the eastern end of the site (at the intersections of Route 123 and School/Canfield Streets). Old-Town Fairfax and University Mall Shopping Center also offer these types of amenities approximately one mile from the site (+/- 20-minute walk); however, this may be a challenging walk for older adults or families with small children.

One aspect of the site that may make walking to nearby services challenging for some residents, especially from western portions of the site, is the steep grade along University Drive (5% to 7% for several hundred feet). Accommodating a limited amount of community space onsite may help mitigate this concern and help to offset the need to travel to other areas to reach similar spaces

## **Transportation**

### *Existing Conditions*

Parcels 11A and 11B front on University Drive, which is a two-lane local road, generally providing east-west connectivity. Parcel 2B fronts on Route 123, is undeveloped and does not currently have formal access to the road. Route 123 is a four-lane arterial road and intersects University Drive at the southeast corner of the subject area at a four-way signalized intersection. The road generally provides north-south connectivity, intersecting Braddock Road, a four-lane minor arterial road, approximately one-half mile to the south.

The subject area currently has five driveway access points onto University Drive, via private roads St. Edwards Place, St. Johns Place, University Plaza, and driveways to both the FCRHA office building and maintenance facilities. The private roads do not provide inter-parcel access or connect to any roads other than University Drive.

### *Pedestrian Facilities*

Both a concrete sidewalk and a discontinuous asphalt paved trail exist along the site's University Drive frontage and a concrete sidewalk exists along Route 123. All four legs of the Route 123/University Drive intersection are signalized for pedestrians; however, pedestrian crossings on the south side of University Drive are most common. An asphalt paved trail exists along the east side of Route 123 south of University Drive (per the Fairfax County Countywide Trails Plan), but no facility exists on the west side.

*Public Transportation*

The site is well-served by local and regional bus service, with regular Metrobus service to Annandale, Lincolnia, the King Street Metrorail Station, and the Pentagon; Fairfax Connector service to Burke, North Springfield, Lincolnia and the Pentagon; and CUE bus service to downtown Fairfax and the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metrorail Station. Various transportation plans recommend additional service enhancements and improvements near the site.

*Operational Analysis*

In conjunction with an associated rezoning application, a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) of the proposed Plan amendment was submitted. The study includes a summary of existing conditions at seven intersections near the subject area. Most of these intersections are shown to operate at Level of Service (LOS) “D,” or better, during the AM and PM peak hours, which is the minimum standard in this area per the Transportation element of the Policy Plan. Staff notes, however, that the University Drive and Route 123 intersection is shown to currently operate at LOS “E” during the PM peak hour and the Braddock Road and Route 123 intersection operates at LOS “E” during the AM and PM peak hours. Also, some individual intersection movements are shown to operate at LOS “F,” some with delay exceeding 100 seconds.

*Current Transportation Plan*

There are no improvements currently planned for the intersection of Route 123 and University Drive. South and west of the subject area and the GMU campus, the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Plan Map includes three recommendations that would increase vehicular capacity:

- to build a full interchange at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123, pending further study;
- to widen Braddock Road from four to six lanes west of its intersection with Route 123, pending further study; and
- to widen Route 123 from four to six lanes south of its intersection with Braddock Road.

*Potential Trip Generation*

The analysis estimated the number of additional vehicular trips that would be generated on the site by development of the proposed 600 multifamily residential units (making no distinction between student, affordable, and senior affordable units, for purposes of the calculations). With complete build-out of the Plan amendment, redevelopment of the site would generate an estimated 3,264 additional trips, an increase of 2,684 from the current plan potential, which would generate 580 trips, as shown in Figure 7.

	Development	Daily Trips	AM Peak			PM Peak		
			In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Existing Development	46 du, 14k SF office	467	34	23	57	45	87	132
Current Plan Potential	55 du, 14k SF office	580	36	30	66	52	91	143
Proposed Plan Option	600 du	3,264	49	133	182	136	90	226
<b>Net (Proposed vs Current Plan)</b>		<b>2,684</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>83</b>

**Figure 7: Projected land use trip generation** (*Trip generation estimates are derived from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition (2018). Trip Generation estimates are provided for general, order-of-magnitude comparisons only, and do not account for pass-by, internal capture, or mode-share traffic reductions*)

A limited amount of community-oriented meeting space is typical in multifamily residential buildings and is accounted for in multifamily trip generation estimates. FCRHA use of the site for similar purposes would not be anticipated to have significant additional traffic impacts, but any specific proposal will be evaluated with the associated rezoning.

#### *Impact on Facilities*

Without mitigation or improvements, the increase in average daily trips would degrade the LOS at some nearby intersections during the AM and PM peak hours, most notably the intersections of Route 123/University Drive and Braddock Road/Route 123. The interchange currently recommended by the Comprehensive Plan at the intersection of Braddock Road/Route 123 should accommodate the estimated additional traffic and operate at an acceptable LOS. Operational impacts to the intersection of Route 123/University Drive could reasonably be mitigated by improvements targeted to address particular critical intersection movements. Any specific proposal for such improvements, as well as other improvements necessary to mitigate transportation impacts and ensure adequate site access and multimodal opportunities, would be reviewed and assessed in association with any specific zoning application in the subject area.

#### **Schools**

The schools serving the application area are Woodson High School (HS), Frost Middle School (MS) and Fairfax Villa Elementary School (ES). The following projections contained within Figure 8 were published in 2019 by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and do not reflect the increase in the numbers of students resulting from this proposed Plan amendment.

School	Program Capacity SY 2018-19 / SY 2023-24	Membership (9/30/18)	Program Capacity Utilization SY 2018-19	Projected Membership SY 2023-24	Capacity Utilization SY 2023-24
Woodson HS	2,327	2,384	102%	2,536	109%
Frost MS	1,182 / 1,400	1,237	105%	1,310	94%
Fairfax Villa ES	692	621	90%	543	78%

**Figure 8: Capacities and Projected Membership based on adopted FY 2020-24 Capital Improvement Program (January 2019).** *Note: Numbers in italics are future design capacity and projected capacity utilization percentages after a renovation or capacity enhancement.*

Figure 8 shows a snapshot in time (as of January 2019) for student membership and school capacity balances. The five-year student membership projections and individual school capacity evaluations are updated annually by FCPS. At this time, Woodson HS is considered to have a slight capacity deficit, Frost MS is considered to have a moderate capacity deficit, and Fairfax Villa ES is considered to have sufficient capacity for current programs and future growth. If development occurs under the existing plan or zoning, Woodson HS would be considered to have a moderate capacity deficit, Frost MS would be considered to have sufficient capacity for current programs and future growth (due to projected renovation or capacity enhancement), and Fairfax Villa ES would be considered to have a capacity surplus by SY 2023-24. Beyond the five-year projection horizon, membership projections are not available.

### Impact

Based on the number of housing units proposed in the Plan amendment and calculated by using the current countywide student yield ratios, two scenarios have been considered to estimate the net change in the number of students by school level. The net is based on the difference between the estimated number of students from the adopted plan potential to the proposed plan. Figure 9 shows the estimated net change in students if all of the proposed housing units are low-rise<sup>4</sup> multi-family units, whereas Figure 10 considers all the proposed housing units to be high-rise<sup>4</sup> multi-family units. These estimates were calculated using student yield ratios for typical multifamily residential units and may not be representative of actual student yields.

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<sup>4</sup> Student yield ratios classify multi-family buildings of 4 stories or less low-rise, and over 4 stories mid/high-rise.



<b>Figure 9: Net change in estimated number of students* Assuming Proposed Units as Low-Rise Multifamily Units</b>			
<b>School Level</b>	<b>Proposed Number of Housing Units</b>	<b>Current Potential Housing Units</b>	<b>Net Potential Student Yield</b>
High	600	55	48
Middle	600	55	24
Elementary	600	55	99
<b>Total Student Count</b>			<b>171</b>

<b>Figure 10: Net change in estimated number of students* Assuming Proposed Units as High-Rise Multifamily Units</b>			
<b>School Level</b>	<b>Proposed Number of Housing Units</b>	<b>Current Potential Housing Units</b>	<b>Net Potential Student Yield</b>
High	600	55	11
Middle	600	55	7
Elementary	600	55	23
<b>Total Student Count</b>			<b>41</b>

\* Represents difference in estimated number of students between proposed Plan and existing Plan potential (using 2015 Countywide student yield ratios)

With the proposed increase in residential density, the membership at these schools could increase. Further analysis of any associated rezoning application should be performed to determine the estimated future impacts of the specific development proposal on school capacities, taking into consideration the types of residential units proposed.

### **Parks and Recreation**

In addition to generating the need for on-site recreational facilities, the additional residential density represented by the Plan amendment under consideration would have an impact on existing Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) parks and recreation resources in the area. FCPA utilizes population-based standards contained in the Parks and Recreation element of the Policy Plan to estimate the potential impacts to parks and recreation facilities of any proposed Plan amendment to increase residential density on a site. Such impacts and any proposed mitigation can be evaluated in conjunction with any specific zoning application.

### **Environment**

The western boundary of the site contains a tributary stream to Pope's Head Creek, and an associated area classified as RPA (per the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance), containing 100-year floodplain (per FEMA regulations), and identified as an EQC (per the Policy Plan). Objective 9 of the Environment element of the Policy Plan describes the nature and benefits of EQC areas

and includes recommendations encouraging such areas to be restored and replanted, where necessary, and for disturbance of those areas only be considered in extraordinary circumstances. Objective 12 of the Land Use element of the Policy Plan also directs that development intensity should be limited to a level that does not adversely impact sensitive environmental areas.

Any redevelopment of the subject area would be expected to restore previously-disturbed portions of the RPA/EQC area, including removal of existing structures and the FCRHA maintenance facility, and avoid any new impacts to such areas, in order to satisfy County environmental policy. In accordance with Objective 4 of the Environment element, potential transportation-generated noise impacts from Route 123 should also be evaluated and mitigated with any development proposal on the property.

## **CONCLUSION**

The provision of affordable housing opportunities is a primary goal of the Board; however, that goal also specifically cautions that such development should be accomplished “without adversely affecting quality of life standards”. The balance between furthering affordable housing goals and ensuring the continued quality of life of existing residential neighborhoods describes the primary challenge of this Plan amendment.

While the level of density under consideration is higher than the surrounding densities of the neighborhood to the north, staff recognizes the potential of the subject property to serve as a transitional property between existing neighborhoods and the GMU campus. For such a scenario to be successful, however, would require mitigating potential negative impacts, to ensure: compatibility with neighboring residential properties, preservation of neighborhood character, minimal transportation impacts and protection of the environment. To ensure such objectives are satisfied, staff has included in its recommendation several conditions to development at the proposed density.

Preliminary site concepts provided to staff by the prospective developers of the site indicate that it may not be feasible to develop all 600 dwelling units included in the initial PPEA proposal and Plan amendment authorization and remain in conformance with the conditions being recommended. Specifically, it appears that the number of units envisioned to serve GMU students, which are proposed to be located on the eastern portion of the subject area (including Parcel 2B), may need to be reduced in order to provide adequate buffering to the north property boundary and the Route 123 frontage (see Attachment 2 for concept dated March 7, 2019). Therefore, staff recommends reducing the maximum number of such units from 360 to 340 to reflect a realistic level of density on the site. The resulting total of 580 dwelling units on the 10.8-acre site would result in a density of approximately 53 du/ac, rather than the maximum of 56 du/ac authorized for consideration. Vehicular trip generation, potential student yield and other impacts may also be reduced from the levels estimated in this report, which were based on development of the maximum 600 dwelling units.

## RECOMMENDATION

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.

**DELETE:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Area II, Fairfax Planning District, as amended through November 20, 2018, F7-George Mason Community Planning Sector, Recommendations, Land Use, page 68:

~~“2. The area south of the School Street neighborhood in Fairfax City and west of Route 123 (Tax Map 57-4((1))2, 2A and 2B), about three acres in size, is appropriate for residential development at a density of 3-4 dwelling units per acre. For development at this density, access should not be via Route 123, and land, preferably to include the existing church, should be consolidated. An option for up to 6 dwelling units per acre could be considered with full consolidation of all parcels in the county along with additional land in Fairfax City and no access via Route 123. This optional density should be compatible with density planned for adjacent land in Fairfax City along School Street. Excellence of design and provision of amenities, such as screening along Route 123, would also be conditions for achieving development at this higher density.”~~

And **REPLACE** with the following text:

“2. The area north of University Drive and west of Route 123 (Tax Map 57-3((1))11A, 11B and 57-4((1)) 2B), about 10.8 acres in size, is planned for public facility, governmental or institutional uses and residential development at a density of 3-4 dwelling units per acre. With full consolidation, a redevelopment option may be appropriate for higher-density residential development of these parcels as a transitional use between the George Mason University (GMU) campus and the lower-density residential uses to the north. The option may include up to 240 multifamily housing units, affordable to households earning 60 percent or less of the Area Median Income (AMI), and up to 340 multifamily units envisioned to serve the GMU student population, to the extent practical and in conformance with all applicable local, State and Federal laws, particularly Fair Housing regulations. No additional bonus density for the provision of affordable units is appropriate. A limited amount of public meeting space also would be appropriate to accommodate continued utilization of the site by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Redevelopment under the option should demonstrate compatibility with neighboring residential uses and the character of the Route 123 corridor through the satisfaction of the following conditions:

- A continuous landscaped buffer area should be provided along the northern boundary of the site. A 90-foot-wide buffer along the northern boundary of Parcel 2B, adjacent

- to Royal Legacy Estates, and a minimum 50-foot-wide buffer along the remaining northern boundary of Parcel 11A is desirable.
- A minimum of a 25-foot-wide landscaped buffer should be maintained along the Route 123 frontage, consistent with the character established by the Fairfax Gateway development located across Route 123 from the site. The buffer should be measured from the edge of the existing powerline easement that extends approximately 15 feet into the site and should continue around the building, tapering along University Drive.
  - Existing healthy mature trees located within all buffer areas should be preserved, to the extent feasible, and supplemented with appropriate evergreen and understory vegetation to provide year-round level of visual protection to adjacent residences. Clearing and grading should be minimized in buffer areas to preserve existing healthy mature trees, and vegetation should be maintained to ensure adequate screening throughout each phase of development.
  - High-quality architecture should be provided that is residential in character and includes architectural treatment of all building facades in a manner that is compatible with and complements other uses in the area. Facade treatments should extend onto any exposed parking levels along University Drive and internal roadways, to the extent practical. Vegetated screening and/or berms also may be utilized to ensure a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
  - Automobile trips generated by the development should be reduced by providing safe, attractive and secure pedestrian and bicycle facilities that improve access to GMU, bus stops, and other local services. Streetscape areas along Route 123 and University Drive should be designed to create a high-quality pedestrian environment, to include features such as street trees, landscaped areas, wide sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and other amenities and high-quality crossings to the university, as is appropriate.
  - The Resource Protection Area and Environmental Quality Corridor along the western boundary of the site should be identified and protected, consistent with Objective 9 of the Environment section of the Policy Plan. Previously-developed portions of those areas should be restored and revegetated, including removal of existing structures and the FCRHA maintenance facility, and there should be no new development within those areas. Utilities should also be located to minimize disturbance and encumbrance of such areas.”

**COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN MAP:**

The baseline designation appearing on the Plan Map for Tax Parcel 57-4 ((1)) 2B should be corrected to Residential Use at 3-4 du/ac, rather than Residential Use at 5-8 du/ac.

**COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP:**

The Countywide Transportation Plan Map will not change.



**Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land Use – Appendix 1, amended through 12-04-2018; beginning on page 13:**

**“GUIDELINES FOR MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The following guidelines are desirable characteristics for sites to be considered for multifamily development. Although the guidelines outline desired characteristics, certain circumstances might warrant multifamily development on a site even when these guidelines are not entirely met.

Guidelines for Suburban Neighborhoods:

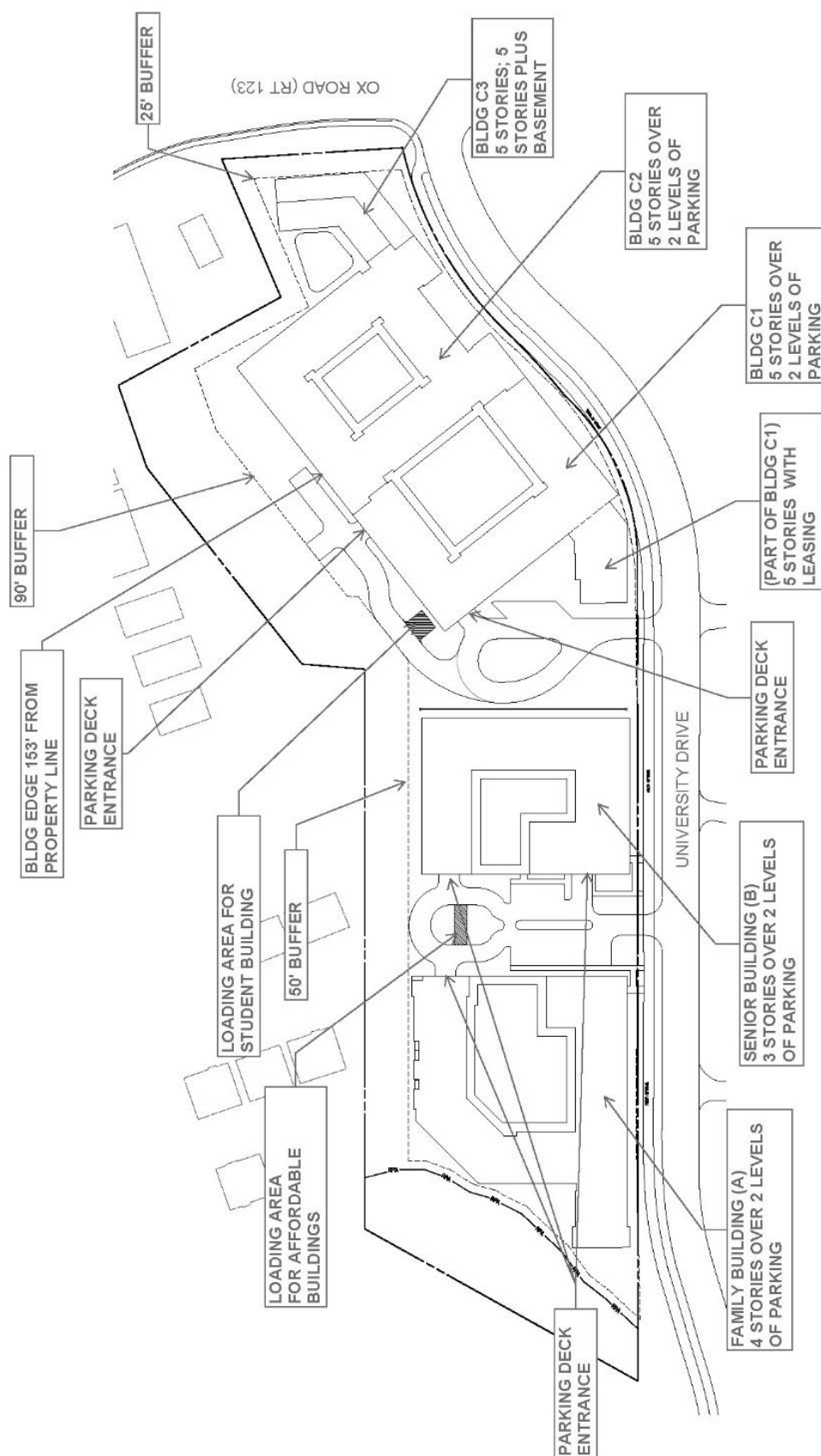
1. Multifamily sites in designated Suburban Neighborhood areas should be in close proximity to community-serving retail. In addition, multifamily sites should be centrally located with respect to community services such as libraries, houses of worship, park/recreational facilities, and schools.
2. To accommodate traffic flow, the site should have adequate access to an arterial or to a collector street. An appropriate transportation analysis should be performed in conjunction with proposed multifamily development, with approval made contingent on the satisfactory resolution of identified transportation issues.
3. Sites for multifamily residential development should be located where it is county policy to provide public water and sewer service.
4. The required site size for multifamily development in Suburban Neighborhoods is dependent upon density, setback requirements, open space, parking, social and recreational amenities to be provided, and building height. These factors will tend to determine minimum site size. Generally, in areas of the county which have a reasonable supply of vacant or underutilized land, sites should be above the size necessary to meet Zoning Ordinance requirements (a minimum of 200 units). This enhances the ability to support a package of private amenities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, a clubhouse, etc. If proposed multifamily projects contain more than 600 units, diversity in architectural style, layout and transition should be encouraged.
5. Environmental concerns should be considered in site selection. Multifamily development is not appropriate in areas designated as Low Density Residential Areas. Environmental Quality Corridors and areas subject to airport noise greater than DNL 60 dBA generally should be avoided.

Guidelines for Multifamily Residential Development for the Elderly:

Locational guidelines for housing for the elderly should recognize the needs of the elderly as well as site characteristics. With regard to residents for whom health and mobility have become a concern, guidelines for the location of multifamily residential development should be modified as described below. With regard to residential facilities such as congregate

housing and nursing homes, which are designed to serve the elderly population in need of continuous medical/nursing care, these developments are less location sensitive than other elderly residential developments.

1. Public transportation and community services should be located within a reasonable walking distance and should be accessible via paved walkways that are lighted, secure, and well maintained. Crosswalks should be delineated, and adequate provisions should be made for crossing heavy traffic (e.g., pedestrian crossing signals). If neither public transportation nor community services are located within a short walking distance (i.e., a 5-7 minute walk), the elderly housing development should provide shuttle bus service which can offer residents comparable access to community services.
2. The topography of the site, and that between the site and nearby destinations, should be taken into consideration when siting residential development for the elderly. Pedestrian facilities should not be located on slopes greater than 5-8%, and such maximum slopes should not be continuous for more than 75 feet.
3. Safety and security are of particular concern to the elderly. To the extent possible, the architecture and site design for multifamily residential development for the elderly should incorporate features which reduce the potential for crime and enhance the security of residents.”



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