

South County Site Specific Plan Amendment Process (SSPA):

*Lee District Public Comments – Received by July, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

1) Dear Task Force Members,

We are writing to voice our opposition to the two nominations to change the Fairfax County comprehensive plan for the area along Oakwood Avenue.

We have been down this road before. Each time the developer recommends changes, the members of the community voice their concerns, and each time it seems as if the developer comes back with a proposal that is worse than the one before. This proposal is the worst one yet — by far.

These proposed changes will have many negative effects to our community, including:

1. High density, large apartment buildings will back up established homes and loom over the neighborhood.
2. There will be bright lights from the new apartment buildings casting light over the neighborhood.
3. Almost certainly, there will be new streets cut through the existing neighborhoods so that residents from the apartment complexes will have easier access to Franconia, Van Dorn, and Bush Hill Elementary school.
4. The sheer size of the residential units proposed will almost certainly result in additional overcrowding at Bush Hill Elementary school, which is already overcrowded.
5. There will be more noise coming from a dense development on the edge of a currently quiet community of single-family homes.
6. Commuter traffic on Van Dorn is already bad, but this development will make it much, much worse.
7. Because the plan calls for the development to be built immediately instead of phased in, the county will have no opportunity to assess the impact as the development grows.
8. Once the full impact of the traffic congestion is realized, there will be enormous pressure to modify existing neighborhoods to make way for new roads and more traffic.

We believe the developers are trying to pull a fast one on the residence of Brookland-Bush Hill by proposing changes during the pandemic shut down. We have no opportunity to meet in person to discuss the many disadvantages to this truly awful plan.

We and our neighbors plan to attend the meeting on Monday, July 20 to strongly voice our opposition to this plan.

Thank you for taking the time to read just some of our many concerns about this proposed change. We look forward to having further input in this process.

Mike and Carrie Lorenger

2) Greetings from Beautiful Brookland.

As homeowners in the Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association (BBHCA) area, we love our neighborhood. We moved here because it is peaceful, full of kind neighbors, has a large, old-growth tree canopy, and is full of wildlife.

We recently discovered that there is plan for destruction and construction of the *Oakwood*. There are numerous issues for BBHCA homeowners (i.e., part of your tax base) with this plan.

Issues include, but are not limited to the following:

- Residential development of the *Oakwood* would result in enormous pressure to cut streets from Oakwood Road into the existing Brookland-Bush Hill neighborhood, particularly for parents wanting to directly access Bush Hill Elementary. This would create heavy flows of commuter traffic cutting through our neighborhood for those wanting to avoid the Franconia at Van Dorn intersection.
- Increased light pollution would occur due to the bright lights from parking lots and apartment buildings shining into the neighborhood.
- Van Dorn traffic is heavy any time of day or night. Increased commuter traffic volume on Van Dorn, moving in the same direction and times, would greatly impact the BBHCA neighborhood's quality of life (including reduced air quality and noise) and the remaining wildlife would be decimated by the increase in traffic.
- Around the clock increase in noise pollution would come from a dense residential development immediately adjacent to BBHCA homes.
- The *Oakwood* is a natural stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP). Without it as our bottom-of-the-hill outlet for runoff and absorption, homes would be at greater risk of flooding and water quality may be reduced.
- Large apartment buildings backing-up to BBHCA homes and looming over the neighborhood would be most unpleasant.
- Our local Metro Station, Van Dorn, will be overwhelmed with the massive increase in ridership (post-pandemic).
- There is already a plan to move forward on the unsolicited proposal to destroy and construct 150 affordable senior housing units on what is currently a 6.2 acre green space at the corner of Oakwood and Van Dorn. This will be a massive blow to our quality of life for all residents (humans, wildlife, and old-growth woods).

This parcel of land would be put to better use by remaining a buffer to noise, air pollution, stormwater BMP, and wildlife habitat.

Why not re-furbish some of the existing, over-abundance of office spaces in Fairfax County, turning them in to housing? The cost to refurb would be lower than new construction and one of the last wild spaces in the BBHCA area will be saved.

Regards.

M. & L. Gérardin

3) Hello Task Force,

I am a resident of the La Vista Drive. I do not approve the nominations.

- Don't see a compelling need to change the Comprehensive Plan
- Disagree with increasing the FAR for residential
- Disagree with removing phasing. The plan is for mixed use, so should start as mixed use from the get go.
- Increasing residential density creates traffic problems at S. Van Dorn and Oakwood. Traffic will be backed up past Franconia in the morning and in the afternoon, it will back up traffic on 495 also.
- Increasing residential density puts pressure on already loaded school. Bush Hill just implemented Level IV advanced academics and is still increasing that enrollment over the next 2 years. Students have limited sidewalks and narrow roads to access Bush Hill, so there is already pedestrian overflow traffic into the streets.
- You change the comprehensive plan if you're going to improve things, but these nominations will degrade conditions – eg traffic, school capacity
- Self storage units are inconsistent with the current vision of “pedestrian-oriented development”
- Residential units are already allowed (with mixed use). Don't need to change the Comprehensive Plan to build residential.
- 006 and 009 together both increase the residential component. So considering them together means a stronger deviation from the Comprehensive Plan.
- Nominations don't give enough security to the Resource Protection Areas.
- The nominations don't meet any of the criteria for justification. These nominations are unrelated to the Concept for Future Development or the Comprehensive Plan guidance. They just want to build residences.

**Mike Krikorian** | Financial Advisor

4) To whom it may concern:

I was alerted to proposed changes for sections PC19-LE-006 and PC19-LE-009. The changes are not in the best interest of my community; therefore, I disagree with your updated proposal.

First, this proposal will exacerbate the traffic challenges on Van Dorn Street. I go through this area almost daily and it can be a nightmare. I've been backed up onto Franconia due to the congestion making my four-mile trip up to an hour long.

Second, our schools are already stressed, adding more students will just degrade an already overloaded education system. Plus, this will again add to the traffic challenges with buses and parents taking their children to school. Bush Hill has limited sidewalks and narrow roads. Parents are lined up along these already narrow roads to pick up their children making it difficult for residents to navigate through the community during drop off and pick up times.

Third, by removing the phasing, a developer could change the mixed-use concept and shoehorn in more residential units instead of a more pedestrian-friendly community as originally envisioned.

The original "Comprehensive Plan" for these properties was challenging enough for the community, the proposed changes have no value added and should be denied for implementation.

Regards,

Sandra Wood

5) Hello,

Please do not approve. This will ruin my beautiful and peaceful neighborhood. Thank you.

Vanessa Vohden

6) Good afternoon,

I am a resident on La Vista Drive in Gunnell Estates. I am very concerned about the proposed changes that may be affecting our community. Please do not approve the nominations for PC19-LE-006 and PC19-LE-009. The owners of the lots listed and their neighboring property have remained unmaintained. The owners have not created

reasonable barriers to lessen the impact of foot traffic, debris and overgrowth in and bordering our homes. The excessive overgrowth has been an invitation to coyotes, foxes and snakes into our family community. Their interest to modify their zoning to include more foot traffic, lighting, and members of the public to use our property as an easement or cut-through from Van Dorn is not welcomed.

Please hold this owner accountable to properly maintain their lots, separate their lack of care from our community and do not change their zoning to increase more people, especially from the public, to impact our safe and peaceful community.

I look forward to attending the meeting on Monday, July 20.

Thank you,  
Rhonda Dickens

7) To the Lee District SSPA Task Force:

I am writing in reference to the Nominations to Change the Comprehensive Plan for Oakwood Road. I absolutely DO NOT APPROVE of the nominations relative to Brookland and Bush Hill Developments; specifically PC19-LE-006 and PC19-LE-009. There are various strong reasons for this, some of which I have listed below:

1. I don't see ANY compelling need to change the Comprehensive Plan or any valid explanation to deviate from the current Plan.
2. The PC19-LE-006 and PC19-LE-009 nominations will degrade current conditions; for example increased traffic and school capacity. Increasing residential property puts huge pressure on already overloaded schools and our traffic conditions cannot handle significant increase in residential density.
3. I disagree with removing phasing. The current plan is for mix-use and that is where it should start.
4. Self storage units are inconsistent with the current vision of a pedestrian-oriented development
5. I am worried about the security to the Resource Protection Areas
6. Large apartment buildings backing up to Brookland & Bush Hill homes and looming over the neighborhood will significantly reduce property values and quality of life.
7. Bright lights from parking lots and apartment buildings shining into the neighborhood is very distracting and unattractive - I see no purpose.
8. Residential development on Oakwood would result in enormous pressure to cut streets from Oakwood into the existing Brookland-Bush Hill neighborhood, particularly for parents wanting to directly access Bush Hill Elementary School. This would create heavy flows of commuter traffic cutting through the neighborhood to avoid the Franconia/Van Dorn intersection. It will be a congestion nightmare and a safety issue for pedestrians, especially children

9. Nighttime noise coming from a dense residential development immediately adjacent to Brookland and Bush Hill homes is also problematic.

These are just a few issues to why I am strongly OPPOSED to the Nominations to Change the Comprehensive Plan. Please take these issues into consideration as the Task Force reviews the nominations and associated comments.

Thank you.

David Asiello

8) Greetings,

I am a resident in Gunnell Estates, and I would like to submit the following comments regarding nominations PC19-LE-006 and PC19-LE-009.

I view the main purpose of the Comprehensive Plan as balancing interests. That includes balancing the interests of different residents and property owners, as well as balancing interests between the present and the future. The current nominations for Oakwood would skew that balance. In particular, proceeding without phasing has the strong potential of increasing traffic congestion for existing and future residents all around the Rose Hill area, including future residents of Oakwood, because of the centrality of Van Dorn St.

Traffic on Van Dorn St. is already quite bad. We need to plan with foresight. Is the Van Dorn – Oakwood intersection already at Traffic level of service E? Do we know how close we are to F? If these are valid questions then we shouldn't remove the phasing requirement. Both nominations repeatedly highlight the benefits of mixed-use, but nevertheless ask to remove the phasing requirement. But in fact, those very benefits they highlight are arguments to keep the phasing requirements, not remove them, to ensure mixed use development.

Without concurrent phasing, these nominations are not consistent with the Guidelines for Transit-Oriented Development or with the Concept for Future Development of the Van Dorn TSA, both of which emphasize mixed used development. Mixed-use development is really best ensured with concurrent phasing. In particular, note that the Guidelines for Transit-Oriented Development include #4, "Promote a mix of uses...", and #16, "Ensure that projects are phased in such a way as to include an appropriate mix..." Also note that the Concept for Future Development states "The overall goal in the Van Dorn Transit Station Area is to provide opportunities for appropriate transit-oriented development given access and environmental constraints..." Nomination -009 claims it will address a growing housing shortage in Fairfax County. However, that is not the overall goal for the Van Dorn TSA. A focus on housing to the detriment of transportation would be counter to the Concept for Future Development.

One reason given in the -006 nomination for removing the phasing requirement is to “better respond to a site that has not been able to develop for the past quarter century as envisioned.” – It is debatable that phasing is the reason for that failure to develop, and here’s why: A key reason for concurrent phasing in the Van Dorn TSA is to manage traffic. It is the traffic dilemma that hinders development, not the Comprehensive Plan. Concurrent phasing is an effort to address exactly that dilemma that has held up development.

Both nominations indicate that initial residential development will encourage non-residential investment. In fact those claims are arguments for keeping the phasing requirement because they indicate a lack of interest in non-residential development. In other words, without concurrent phasing, we have no assurance that mixed use will result. Economies go in cycles. If the current economy is weak on demand for non-residential development, that does not mean that Van Dorn St is not congested. Nor does it mean the Comprehensive Plan is bad. This is still the right plan. Van Dorn Street is congested and we must not make it worse.

I urge the task force to stick with the Comprehensive Plan as it is. It’s a good plan for a lot of reasons. I’ve pointed out the relationship between phasing and traffic. I know that previously others have thoughtfully negotiated other balanced aspects as well. I request the Task Force not accept these nominations. Keep the Comprehensive Plan balanced.

Respectfully,

Anne Blas

9) Fairfax County Task Force:

Hello,

I am a Fairfax County Resident, and have lived here my whole life. I have seen many changes over the last 50+ years. Some changes have been great! Other changes have been concerning.

I am very concerned about the Nominations for the Comprehensive Plan for Oakwood Road.(PC19-LE-006 & PC19-LE-009) Please Do Not Approve these Nominations.

I am all for improving the County, but these changes would make living in this area unbearable. The traffic in this area is already too heavy. Growing up in this area, I used to take a drive to relax, drive for fun. Now, it is very stressful to drive, anywhere. My

daughter waited until she was 18 years old before getting her drivers license, due to overcrowded roads!

I take Van Dorn Street to & from work. I take a lot of “back roads” already, to try to avoid traffic. There are a few different routes that I could take to work, but they are all already heavily traveled.

I can't imagine Van Dorn getting more traffic than it already has!

I am also concerned with the overcrowding of area schools.

These Nominations are unrelated to the Concept for Future Development or the Comprehensive Plan guidance.

We don't need more residences, more traffic, pollution or noise.

We need to keep the trees, wildlife, that we have, or soon there won't be any left!

The bottom line is, we don't need more overcrowding!

Thank you for your time!

Please Vote NO!

~Diane

#### 10) Dear Task Force Members,

It is hard for me to believe that it has been 7 years since we purchased our home on La Vista Drive. As a family comprised of retired and active duty military parents— and now with a daughter who is serving after graduating from Edison HS while I was deployed for her entire senior year so she did not have to uproot— I am worried that the very reason we bought and stayed at our home on La Vista drive will be negatively impacted by expanding the Comprehensive Plan for more residential options for the Oakwood parcel.

Before you make a decision to grow more residential space— please consider the impact on our SCHOOLS. As I have come and gone from deployments and assignments away from the area, I return with great alarm at the growth of the number of students— and not resources or space— in our community schools. How will this be mitigated with more residential structure? Pre-COVID, the quality of education of the Fairfax county system was already degraded and degrading because of unmatched overcrowding in our area— military members who once begged for opportunities for assignments for FCPS now seek other options, largely because of the over-crowding. An increase in residential areas without planning for more schools will only hollow out the



downward trend of our schools— what is the plan to support an increase in residential options?

TRAFFIC. As a mother who watched two children learn how to drive around the deadly intersection in front of the Edison HS, there must be some plan to deal with any additional stress on an already perilous traffic situation. Please consider how dangerous adding more congestion will be for that area and intersection— both for 495 and “mixing bowl” traffic, as well as the connection between Alexandria’s Pickett and the Kingstowne corridors. Without a well-thought out plan, you are risking the safety of the HS kids, the character of the neighborhoods, and the very limited options for expansion in to neighborhoods for traffic. We bought our house because of the cul de sac that would better protect our children from traffic. I hope the county will consider the impact— now and in the future— on traffic before making any changes to a plan that could result in exponential increases in residential options. (I am aware that the current plan already has residential options— I am concerned about the increase without proper consideration of schools, traffic, and healthcare...)

HEALTH CARE. Though a temporal aspect of life in our area, imagine how different the character and density of our neighborhood would be with exponentially more apartments. Do we have the right level of health care facilities to take care of our community if we make it more dense and trending toward urban? The current COVID environment, and the use of zip codes to determine hot spots should give us all pause. We should ensure we have the community resources to consider all kinds of environmental factors before forging ahead to increase our capacity for more people in such an already densely populated area.

Please study the impact on schools, traffic, and essential services before expanding the current CP for more residential options for the Oakwood parcels.

I am happy to expand on or listen to feedback about my concerns. Please contact me at 434-249-0525 if you have questions or follow up.

Sincerely, Laura Calese