



AN AMENDMENT TO  
**THE POLICY PLAN  
FOR FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
2017 EDITION**

**GENERAL LOCATION:** Countywide

**PARCEL LOCATION:** All

**PLANNING AREA AND DISTRICT:** All

**SUPERVISOR DISTRICT:** All

**ADOPTED:** October 30, 2018

**ITEM NO.** 2017-CW-6CP

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL (703) 324-1380

**MAP NOT APPLICABLE**

[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]

## AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2017 EDITION)

The following changes to the Comprehensive Plan have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors. To identify changes from the previously-adopted Plan, text which has been added is shown as underlined and text which has been deleted is shown with a ~~striketrough~~.

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land-Use – Appendix, Amended through 5-1-2018, Page 41:

### “APPENDIX 13

#### GUIDELINES FOR ~~OFFICE~~COMMERCIAL BUILDING REPURPOSING

~~High office vacancy rates are caused in part by the evolving needs and preferences of office tenants.~~ Many older commercial office, retail, or service buildings can no longer compete with newer ~~office~~ buildings built in transit-accessible, mixed-use activity centers. ~~Often the vacant buildings, or cannot readily be leased, due to spatial configurations that have become obsolete.~~ This results in the need to consider improving and marketing the buildings for a different use. OfficeCommercial building repurposing encourages the development of a wide range of alternative uses that support the county’s planning objectives for the county’s activity centers and helps to reduce office vacancy and improve the County’s economy by reducing commercial vacancy. The repurposing of ~~office~~commercial buildings can be an important element in the county’s strategy to revitalize communities, provide needed housing, and accommodate emerging development trends and uses. Emerging uses, such as food incubators, urban agriculture or flexible live/work units, have been shown to promote economic development and the diversity and vitality that characterize successful communities.

The Guidelines for ~~Office~~Commercial Building Repurposing are intended to facilitate the conversion of vacant, partially vacant, and underutilized commercial office, retail and service buildings to alternative land uses not envisioned under the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

OfficeCommercial buildings that are proposed to be repurposed per these guidelines may be deemed to be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Flexibility is anticipated when applying Plan guidance in the review of zoning applications. OfficeCommercial building repurposing should not preclude future redevelopment nor critical logical consolidation, roadway improvements, parks, and/or other public facilities. Moreover, a repurposed ~~office~~commercial building should not result in land use conflicts that will compromise the use and/or operations of properties nearby.

#### **Office Building Repurposing**

The following types or mixture of types of office building repurposing may be appropriate in the Tysons Urban Center, Community Business Centers (CBCs), Transit

Station Areas (TSAs), Suburban Centers, Industrial Areas, Suburban Neighborhoods and Low Density Residential Areas:

- Office to Light Industrial or Urban Agriculture. This can include industrial/flex, light manufacturing uses such as makerspaces and 3-D printing; and/or
- Office to Institutional and/or Public Facilities uses.

The following types or mixture of types of office building repurposing may be appropriate in the Tysons Urban Center, CBCs, TSAs, Suburban Centers, Suburban Neighborhoods and Low Density Residential Areas:

- Office to Retail and other Commercial uses;
- Office to Indoor Recreational uses;
- Office to Residential use;
- Office to Live/Work use; and/or
- Office to Hotel use.

### **Retail Building Repurposing**

Alternative commercial, service, office, light industrial, governmental or institutional uses may also be appropriate for the repurposing of spaces planned and developed for retail use, Retail or Other Commercial Uses, or as a retail component of a mixed-use Plan recommendation. Examples of such uses may include entertainment uses, indoor recreation, professional offices, health care providers, theater/performing arts centers, libraries, or emergent commercial/industrial uses such as craft breweries, makerspaces, or small-scale production facilities, among others.

### **Performance Standards for Commercial Building Repurposing**

The following performance-based strategy is intended to be used to review proposals for repurposing existing officecommercial buildings for alternative uses. This guidance sets forth criteria to ensure proposals are compatible with surrounding uses and can be supported by existing infrastructure. Because the repurposing of officecommercial buildings presents unique challenges and opportunities, flexibility in achieving certain objectives may be afforded, particularly when the conversion will not significantly change the building form and footprint.

Although there are recommendations and guidance for residential development and uses throughout the Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Plan does not and should not be read to suggest, request, or require any proffered condition for any particular site, development or use.

#### **1. Compatibility:**

OfficeCommercial building repurposing should occur in a manner that is compatible with the existing and planned surrounding development. A complementary relationship is expected with adjoining properties and surrounding neighborhoods, especially in cases of proximity to lower density residential uses. OfficeCommercial building repurposing in areas within or adjacent to Suburban Neighborhood Areas or

Low Density Residential Areas should be rigorously reviewed and should be considered only when the use will not adversely impact adjacent land uses and the overall character of the neighborhood. Landscaped buffers and screening should be utilized where necessary to achieve visual separation to minimize potential adverse impacts.

Consideration of the location of office to residential conversions should ensure that the new use is not isolated from other residential uses and is located in areas where services and amenities that support residential uses, such as schools, shopping, parks, and other recreational opportunities are provided.

**2. Transportation:**

Opportunities to improve site access, internal circulation, frontage, and off-site connections and reduce excess parking should be assessed and provided for all transportation modes. Incorporating multimodal frontage improvements should enhance the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit user's experience. An evaluation of the transportation impacts should be provided. A proposed development that is equal to or generates less vehicle trips than an occupied ~~office~~ building and/or has the ability to implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to lessen the vehicle impacts from the proposed use is encouraged. If the proposed use generates additional traffic, then appropriate mitigations, including a TDM program, should be provided.

**3. Site Design:**

The repurposing of existing ~~office~~commercial buildings should include consideration of streetscape, landscaping and stormwater management improvements. High quality site design is encouraged. The streetscape should be designed to promote a pleasant pedestrian experience. This includes well-landscaped public spaces such as squares and plazas; urban parks; courtyards; an integrated pedestrian system; and measures to mitigate the visual impact and presence of parking. Additional landscaping may improve the general appearance of a site and provide a buffer between uses as appropriate to create effective transitions as needed. Repurposing may afford opportunities to replace excess surface parking with stormwater management facilities, open space, or other site amenities. Flexibility in applying these objectives is appropriate when considering ~~office~~commercial buildings with unique site characteristics or constraints.

**4. Schools, Parks, And Other Public Facilities:**

Proposals to repurpose from office to residential use should demonstrate that impacts to schools, parks, and other public facilities caused by any change ~~to residential~~in use will be addressed proportionally to the number and type of units, using the standards typically used to evaluate rezoning applications. The Urban Parks Framework should be applied as appropriate to ensure that ~~offices~~such building repurposing results in quality, on-site public park space and recreational amenities to serve new residents,

employees, and visitors. Opportunities for providing community meeting rooms should be evaluated with repurposing proposals.

**5. Environment:**

The repurposing of commercial buildings may provide opportunities for improvements in energy efficiency and other green building practices. Such opportunities should be identified and considered for incorporation into building and/or site design. Similarly, noise mitigation should be provided where needed and feasible. Stormwater objectives should be met; however, in cases where site constraints render achieving stormwater management objectives impractical, other opportunities to reduce impervious surfaces and implement quality and quantity controls should be identified. The repurposing of buildings should be pursued in a manner that will support the protection and restoration of tree canopy. Efforts should be pursued to protect high quality vegetation and provide additional tree cover within landscaping concepts, consistent with site design needs.

**6. Affordable Aand Workforce Dwelling Units:**

For office to residential conversions, affordable housing should be provided in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance and the Workforce Housing policy. However, some flexibility may be appropriate when applying the policy to live/work conversions.

**7. Historic Preservation:**

Buildings subject to conversion should first undergo appropriate historic preservation review, including coordination with county staff, to foster preservation and minimize potential impacts to structures that may have historic significance.”

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Land Use, Amended through 5-1-2018, Countywide Objectives and Policies, Pages 5-6:

“Preservation and Revitalization of Neighborhood and Community Serving Uses

The quality and character of many older neighborhoods and commercial areas should be improved. For these older areas, revitalization and community improvement and preservation efforts may include renovations, repurposing of existing structures, marketing and promotional activities, changes in transportation modes, and urban design measures of beautification, buffering, lighting and traffic improvements. Publicly funded capital programs should be discrete, finite and prioritized. Incentive-based strategies which facilitate comprehensive community reinvestment should be encouraged.

**Objective 7: Fairfax County should reserve and/or conserve areas which provide primarily community-serving retail and service uses.**

...

Policy c. Encourage redevelopment or repurposing projects in commercial areas that would preserve or increase desirable community services.

...

Redevelopment or Repurposing

The county's system of public facilities, services and infrastructure is based on accommodating demand generated by existing and planned land uses. Unanticipated redevelopment can pose a substantial potential problem for the continued provision of these public necessities if land uses of a higher intensity than envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan are developed. Consequently, it is critical that redevelopment or repurposing be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan to assist the county in maintaining its high level of commitment to providing public facilities, services and infrastructure.

**Objective 9: Nonresidential redevelopment or repurposing should be in accord with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.**

...

Policy c. Ensure that the redevelopment or repurposing of existing uses is consistent with the provision of adequate transportation and public facilities.

...

Policy f. Ensure that the repurposing of existing structures is in accordance with the “Guidelines for Commercial Building Repurposing” in the Land Use Appendix.

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Revitalization, Amended through 3-4-2014, Countywide Objectives and Policies, Pages 2-3:

**“Objective 3: Fairfax County’s revitalization program should recognize market conditions and emphasize the use of private sector resources and capital investment, complemented by county and other public investment in services, programs, and infrastructure.**

...

Policy c. Establish a process for the concurrent review of a Comprehensive Plan amendment and a zoning application if needed to facilitate revitalization, ~~or~~ redemption, or repurposing projects within designated Commercial Revitalization Districts and Commercial Revitalization Areas.”

**MODIFY:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Glossary, Amended through 3-20-2018, Pages 12-14:

~~“OFFICE BUILDING REPURPOSING:~~ A change in use in all or part of an existing ~~office~~ building, such as a conversion from office to residential, live/work, institutional, public facilities, retail, or light manufacturing uses.

...

**REVITALIZATION:** The renewal and improvement of older commercial and residential areas through any of a series of actions or programs that encourage and facilitate private and public investment. This community investment can include (but is not limited to) activities and programs designed to improve neighborhoods; strengthen existing businesses; attract new businesses; encourage quality renovation and new construction; encourage repurposing of existing structures; enhance public spaces and pedestrian amenities; ensure safe, efficient and convenient traffic flow; and contribute to the social and economic vitality of the area.”

**ADD:** Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Glossary, Amended through 3-20-2018, Page 14:

“REPURPOSING: See Building Repurposing.”

**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.