

**County of Fairfax, Virginia
Planning Commission Meeting
November 16, 2022
Planning Commission Action**

SSPA 2021-IV-3MV – HUNTINGTON METRO STATION
(Mount Vernon District)

(Decision Only) (Planning Commission hearing on this application was held on October 19, 2022)

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:

On November 16, 2022, the Planning Commission voted 12-0 to recommend to the Board of Supervisors adoption of the staff recommendation for Plan Amendment 2021-IV-3MV, with modifications shown on the Planning Commission handout dated November 16, 2022.

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS:

Planning Commission handout dated November 16, 2022.

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MOTION
November 16, 2022

Commissioner Walter Clarke, Mount Vernon District
Planning Commission Public Hearing and Decision

Plan Amendment 2021-IV-3MV (Huntington Metro Station)

Introductory Remarks:

(as you see fit)

As staff presented at the public hearing on October 19, the proposed amendment would revise the adopted plan option for subject area, which includes the Huntington Metro Station property and an adjacent parcel, providing additional residential and non-residential development potential up to approximately 1.5 Floor Area Ratio in line with County policies for Transit-Oriented Development. The plan provides guidance related to the mix of land uses, phasing and coordination of development, urban design and placemaking, parks, multimodal circulation, open space, and affordable housing. The proposed amendment was developed by staff and the task force in coordination with the WMATA team over a series of a dozen public meetings, with only a couple minor differences between the staff and the task force recommendations. At the public hearing, there were several substantive concerns raised about the proposed building heights, environmental issues, and placemaking, as well as a few clarification questions.

Since the public hearing, the planning commission hosted a site visit, which was open to the public last Thursday, November 10, during which I, a number of my fellow commissioners, staff, WMATA representatives, and neighbors walked the site and discussed the issues raised at the hearing.

After careful consideration, I would like to move forward to the Board the staff recommended language with several modifications that would address comments from the public hearing, as well as the site visit.

The first modification would reconcile the difference between the task force and staff recommendations on the maintenance responsibility of the proposed civic plaza in the southern portion of the site. I propose to add a reference to the Urban Parks Framework in the Policy Plan, recognizing that the topic is addressed in this existing countywide policy and a reference would allow flexibility for further discussions when a development application is submitted.

The second modification would address concerns about the building height for the Huntington community, east of the site. The modification would revise the proposed Huntington Transit Development Area Height Map to reduce the maximum building height in an area west of the landscape buffer between the middle garage and the nearby homes on Biscayne Drive. An updated map depicting the proposed Height Limits is included with this motion and shows a reduction from 200 feet to 85 feet, which will provide an appropriate transition.

The third modification would revise the recommendation for urban design, emphasizing the importance of placemaking in achieving the envisioned mixed-use environment that can serve transit customers, future residents and employees, patrons and customers, and the public at large.

The fourth modification would revise the recommendation for the proposed southern interparcel connection to note the benefits of such a connection in providing improved access to nature, the assurance that the design of this connection would minimize disturbance, and that the connection's location and practicality area would be determined at the time of rezoning.

The fifth modification would revise the recommendation for Green Building, Environment, and Landscape Buffers to note that stormwater measures should be substantially more extensive than minimum requirements with the goal of reducing the total runoff volume. This change would align the site's recommendations with other land units in the Huntington Transit Station Area. A recommendation for consolidation of the Metro-owned property with Parcel 83-1 ((7)) 1A is also proposed to be added to reduce encroachment into the conservation easement and achieve a consistent urban development block pattern with buildings aligned with North Kings Highway. Finally, additional language is proposed to address the potential for light pollution and glare, especially for taller buildings with the potential to cast light on nearby residential properties.

The sixth and final modification would clarify that affordable housing should be provided consistent with the 15% commitment level for the Huntington area at income tiers proportional to the countywide tiers.

Motion:

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors the adoption of the staff recommendation for Plan Amendment 2021-IV-3MV, with modifications as shown on tonight's Planning Commission handout dated November 16, 2022.

End of Motion

PLANNING COMMISSION HANDOUT
Plan Amendment 2021-IV-3MV
November 16, 2022

The following text is excerpted from the Staff Report for Plan Amendment 2021-IV-3MV, dated September 29, 2022, Recommendation section, showing the proposed Planning Commission modifications to the staff recommendation. Staff recommended modifications to the Comprehensive Plan are shown as underlined for text to be added (text proposed to be added that would be underlined is shown as double underlined). Additional Planning Commission modifications are shown in **bold, and yellow highlighted font with underline** for proposed additions and ~~double strike throughs~~ for proposed deletions.

Planning Commission Modification #1

PA 2021-IV-3MV Staff Report dated September 29, 2022 (Page 64):

“Urban Design Framework

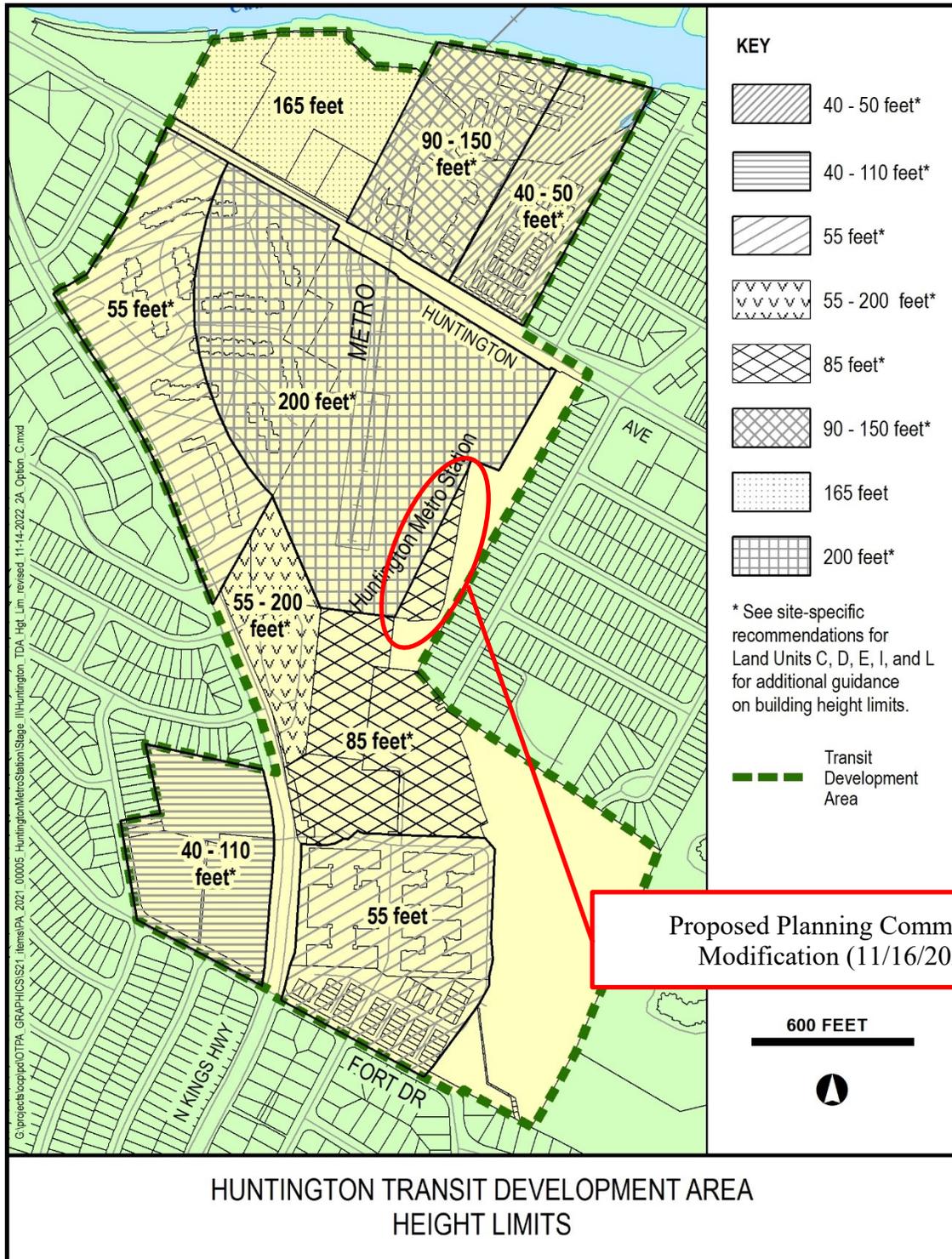
In the southern portion, a large, publicly accessible civic plaza above the BRT station adjacent to the Metrorail station entrance should be provided **consistent with the Urban Parks Framework** and serve as a central organizing feature.

...”

Planning Commission Modification #2

PA 2021-IV-3MV Staff Report dated September 29, 2022 (Page 59):

Figure 12, Huntington Transit Development Area Height Limits (Draft Plan Text)



PA 2021-IV-3MV Staff Report dated September 29, 2022 (Page 65):

“**Placemaking, Building Forms, and Activating Street Frontages**

The civic plazas and major walkways envisioned under the transit-oriented redevelopment option provide significant placemaking opportunities that can support public gatherings, ground floor commercial activity, and provide urban streetscape amenities to welcome people into the site. Volume I: Urban Design Guidelines for Fairfax County Commercial Revitalization Districts and Areas should be consulted for design guidance on streetscapes and building design. Buildings and streetscapes should be designed in an urban form to create a lively, pleasant pedestrian experience that recognizes the site as the focal point of the TDA, and seeks to connect the site physically and architecturally to surrounding existing and planned redevelopment. Retail and other service uses should be provided within multifamily and nonresidential buildings along major walkways in both the northern and southern portions to activate the pedestrian realm along the street. Streetscapes along major pedestrian walkways should support an active, public realm with landscape panels including street trees, benches, wide sidewalks, and/or space for outdoor seating or browsing areas, pedestrian scale lighting, special paving, and other elements to frame the building zone. Buildings should align with the adjacent street, providing building zones (space between the back of the sidewalk and face of the building) that are generally less than 12 feet in width except where outdoor dining, parks, or amenity spaces are provided.

Building articulation, or changes in the façade, should be used to visually reduce the scale of a building and avoid monotonous building elevations. Buildings should include design features that create activated street frontages such as display windows, arcades, awnings, and high visibility entrances and ground floors with significant transparency. Long expanses of blank walls without windows or entrances detract from the pedestrian experience and are discouraged. If blank façades cannot be avoided, strategies should be used to mitigate their impact on the public realm, including wall murals. Service streets and entrances should be interior to the site and clearly defined to ensure they do not conflict with goals for the active frontages. **Refer to the Richmond Highway District Design Guidelines for design guidance on streetscapes and building design.**

Ground-floor uses should meet the daily needs of commuters, residents, employees, and visitors in the area, including uses such as restaurants, salons, convenience stores, dentists, physical therapists, childcare, entertainment uses, educational services, or fitness or life-style studios. Commercial and restaurant uses should be clustered and strategically located to provide a critical mass of activity, take advantage of pedestrian, bicyclist, and commuter traffic, and provide a shopping and dining destination for the area, including along the central civic plaza.
Ground-floor uses should meet the daily needs of commuters, residents, employees, and visitors in the area, including uses such as restaurants, salons, convenience stores, dentists, physical therapists, childcare, entertainment uses, educational services, or fitness or life-style studios. Commercial and restaurant uses should be clustered and strategically located to provide a critical mass of activity, take advantage of pedestrian, bicyclist, and commuter traffic, and provide a shopping and dining destination for the area, including along the central civic plaza.

Flexible interim uses, including live/work and pop-up uses, may be located on the ground floor provided ground floor ceiling heights, building entrances, plumbing, and other critical commercial use components enable the spaces to be converted to the intended active uses in the future. Should an interim use be proposed, plans should demonstrate how the space would be converted with any redevelopment application. Moreover, the interim uses should achieve an active street presence.

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Planning Commission Modification #4

PA 2021-IV-3MV Staff Report dated September 29, 2022 (Page 67):

“Multimodal Circulation

Interparcel walkways to Land Unit I **in the northern and southern portions of the subject area** should provide accessible, direct connections to the Metrorail entrances and, in the southern portion, to the central civic plaza to promote active mobility, health and well-being ~~within this area through improved access to nature. An interparcel walkway in the southern portion, as shown generally on Figure 11, should be efficiently designed with the nearby buildings, and routed to lessen disturbance to the natural area, minimize the loss of mature trees, and emphasize safety and security. The walkway’s location, design, and practicality, including in interim and final conditions, should be determined at the time of rezoning.~~ Due to the grade change between potential landing points along the interparcel walkway connection to Land Unit I in the southern portion, accessible landings should be incorporated at frequent intervals ~~along the trail to provide opportunities for respite and recreation for to promote usage by all ages and abilities. The interparcel walkway in the southern portion should be designed and routed to be lessen disturbance to the natural area, and the location and feasibility, including in interim and final conditions, should be determined at the time of rezoning.~~

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Planning Commission Modification #5

PA 2021-IV-3MV Staff Report dated September 29, 2022 (Page 68):

“Green Building, Environment, and Landscape Buffers

Stormwater quantity and quality control measures that are substantially more extensive than minimum requirements should be provided, with the goal of reducing the total runoff volume. The development is expected to meet, at least, the criteria for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Green Building certification or an equivalent third-party program. Stormwater quality and quantity controls should be provided on-site to reduce runoff volume and nonpoint source pollution. The emphasis should be on innovative, low impact development (LID) techniques and best management practices (BMPs) that evapotranspire water, filter water through vegetation and/or soil, and return water into the ground or reuse it and should include such features as rooftop landscaping. Stormwater management measures that are sufficient to attain the stormwater-related credit(s) of the most current version of LEED for New Construction (LEED®-NC) or LEED for Core and Shell (LEED®-CS) rating system (or third party equivalent of these credits) should be provided.

A conservation easement for stormwater purposes exists in a wooded, western portion of the site. Any development in this easement area should offset tree canopy on-site to the extent feasible with new tree plantings and by preserving and restoring existing tree canopy elsewhere on the site in order to meet tree preservation targets. **Consolidation of TMPs 83-1 ((1)) 17E and 88D1 # with Parcel 83-1 ((7)) 1A is strongly encouraged to reduce overall encroachment into the areas with mature trees and steep slopes in the easement by aligning buildings with North Kings Highway.**

The vegetated landscape buffer area on the eastern boundary, as noted on Figure 13, should be maintained and enhanced, and should remain undeveloped.

Light pollution and glare should be minimized in accordance with Objective 5 of the Environment element of the Policy Plan, especially for taller buildings with the potential to cast light on nearby residential properties.

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Planning Commission Modification #6

PA 2021-IV-3MV Staff Report dated September 29, 2022 (Page 68):

“Affordable Housing

Given the Board of Supervisors’ desire to make affordable housing a priority throughout the County and especially near transit, and the County’s One Fairfax policy, emphasis is given to affordable and workforce housing. Consistent with the TDA guidance, a minimum of 15% of new residential units should be affordable and provided in the form of Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) and/or Workforce Dwelling Units (WDUs) at AMIs as provided by the Zoning Ordinance and the Guidelines for Provision of Workforce Dwelling Units in the Housing section of the Policy Plan (WDU Policy). **Affordable units should be provided consistent with the minimum 15 percent commitment level and at income tiers proportionate to the countywide tiers.** The size of the committed Workforce Dwelling Units should be proportional to the size of market-rate units, consistent with the WDU Policy.

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