

**PRELIMINARY
STAFF REPORT
2008 BRAC AREA PLANS REVIEW**

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: LEE

BRAC APR ITEMS: 08-IV-1FS
08-IV-2FS
08-IV-3FS

NOMINATORS: 1FS: Lynne J. Strobel
2FS: Lynne J. Strobel
3FS: Rajami Zumot

ACREAGE: 1FS: 6.05 acres
2FS: 5.94 acres
3FS: 25.57 acres

TAX MAP I.D.: 1FS: 90-2 ((1)) 57E, 57F, 57G, 57H
2FS: 90-2 ((1)) 58D and 90-4 (91)) 11B
3FS: 90-4 ((1)) 11, 11A, and 13

GENERAL LOCATION: South and east of the General Services Administration (GSA) Parr Warehouse along Springfield Center Drive, east of Loisdale Road.

PLANNING AREA: IV
District: Springfield
Special Areas: Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area, Land Unit D-2

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: INDUSTRIAL

POLICY PLAN TEXT: The Policy Plan of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan recommends the following:

- Land Use: Page 4, Objective 2, Policy b) Encourage, within the Tysons Corner Urban Center, cores of Suburban Centers, cores of Community Business Centers, and **Transit Station Areas**, and other areas within these Centers that would benefit from revitalization and redevelopment, the development of mixed-use projects.
- Land Use: Page 5, Objective 6, Policy b) Concentrate most future development in mixed-use Centers and Transit Station Areas to a degree which enhances opportunities for employees to live close to their workplace.
- Land Use: Page 8, Objective 12, Policy a) Concentrate the highest level of development intensity in areas of transportation advantage, i.e., the Tysons Corner Urban Center, cores of Suburban Centers and Transit Station Areas.
Policy c) Assign development intensity in the Tysons Corner Urban Center, cores and areas of redevelopment within Suburban Centers and Transit Station Areas based upon the ability

to offset impact on public facilities and transportation systems and the long-term capacity of these systems.

Policy d) Locate development intensity in a manner which assists in achieving appropriate community character.

- Parks and Recreation, Objective 1, Policy i) Acquire those Environmental Quality Corridors (EQC) segments needed to connect and complete the public stream valley network and trail systems.
- Parks and Recreation, Objective 2, Policy e) Protect, monitor and manage park water resources and stream valleys.
- Parks and Recreation, Objective 6, Policy d) Ensure that Comprehensive Plan land use amendment proposals for higher densities include recommendations for the provision of parkland and trails to offset the impacts of increased density.
- Transportation, Objective 6, Policy a) Give priority to the programming of transportation improvements that assist in accomplishing the County's land use goals and objectives, particularly the encouragement of transit-oriented development at Transit Station Areas, Commercial Revitalization Areas, and in the cores of the Urban and Suburban Centers.

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT:

“Sub-unit D-2 is planned for light industrial use up to .35 FAR. As an option, biotech/research and development uses up to .50 FAR may be appropriate to complement the VNCC/INOVA medical center. Any development under this option must demonstrate that it will generate less peak hour traffic than the planned baseline use to minimize traffic generation in an area with limited transportation capacity. Development should provide a landscaped buffer of at least 75 feet in width along the Loisdale Estates subdivision boundary.”

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENTS:

- 1FS: Industrial uses in accordance with the existing zoning with an option for commercial development comprised of office and retail up to 1.6 FAR.
- 2FS: Industrial uses in accordance with existing zoning with an option for commercial development comprised of office and support services up to 2.0 FAR.
- 3FS: Office or mixed use with office and retail at base of 1.5 FAR with an option up to 2.0 FAR.

BACKGROUND:

The Concept for Future Development designates the Franconia-Springfield TSA for mixed-use, transit-oriented development, with specific focus around the Joe Alexander Transportation Center and the area around the Springfield Mall. Comprehensive Plan guidance for the Springfield Mall area north of Franconia-Springfield Parkway is currently being reviewed for a possible Plan Amendment. The proposal is to increase the intensity from .50 to 1.86 FAR to provide additional retail space along with a mix of other uses, including residential, office, and hotel, for a total development potential of 6,369,000 square feet.

Also within the TSA to the north and west of the nominated areas, the GSA site is being evaluated as a possible location for 6,200 Washington Headquarters Services (WHS) employees as part of the 2005 BRAC actions. A decision on whether they will be sited there or at another location in Alexandria is expected in late summer 2008.

At the direction of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Department of Transportation initiated the Springfield Connectivity Study to address several challenges and opportunities facing Springfield, Virginia. The Study examines both the recommendations offered by a May 2006 Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel report and the challenges associated with the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure actions for Fort Belvoir, which will affect the Springfield area. The primary goal of the Connectivity Study is to propose recommendations for the Springfield area that will improve the area's multimodal accessibility and mobility and revitalize its urban form into a walkable, vibrant, and active community. The study area includes the land area surrounding the interchange of Interstate 95 and Franconia Road, generally south of Interstate 495 along Interstate 95, encompassing the area in proximity to the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station.

In order to achieve this vision for Springfield, staff worked with a consultant team to test a series of land use and transportation alternatives. The impacts of each alternative were measured by assessing elements, such as potential needed roadway improvements, levels of public transit ridership, and the ability to improve vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle functions. Currently, staff is working on finalizing the report, which will include the results and the urban design guidance. Staff presented the draft recommendations to the Lee District Land Use Committee on February 11, 2008. The draft urban design section of the report (April 2008) is published on the County's web site. The transportation section and supporting documentation will be published shortly.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use

Further development in proximity to the Franconia-Springfield Transit Station area would support objectives of encouraging a greater mixture of uses, and creating activity centers focusing on transit stations. The subject properties are situated in relative proximity to the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. A shuttle bus and pedestrian bridge to connect the area to the metro station is under construction. However, the connection route is not direct to the platform so the properties will not have convenient pedestrian access to the metro platform. Together, the nominations would create the potential for 3,166,994 square feet of non-residential development, or approximately 10,500 jobs. Current Plan options would allow up to 818,057 square feet of biotech/research and development uses (2,300 jobs).

With the changes likely coming to the GSA site, as well as the Springfield Town Center (Mall) redevelopment now under consideration, this area could become attractive for a variety of uses besides industrial. The location of nomination 2FS in close proximity to the Franconia-Springfield Transit Station is particularly attractive. However, the need to extend Frontier Drive and to improve overall traffic circulation must be addressed in conjunction with the nominations.

Given the County goals to encourage investment and revitalization of specific areas of the County, such as central Springfield, staff is concerned whether there will be sufficient market demand to develop the Springfield Commercial Revitalization District as well as this area, or if additional development potential at this location will adversely impact achieving revitalization goals.

The site of nomination 1FS is over $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the metro station, which is considered outside the radius for viable transit-oriented development. In addition, the GSA property acts as a barrier between the site and the metro station, preventing direct pedestrian access for the shortest route.

A particular issue involves the subject area for nomination 3FS, which is 25.57 acres, including the road area of Springfield Center Drive. Existing development on the site is 50,250 square feet, which could be increased 10-fold under the current Comprehensive Plan option to 556,915 square feet. However, because of environmental constraints and the shape of the site, the developable area is not much more than is currently developed. Additional development would almost have to be accommodated by building up rather than increasing the footprint of the site. This raises a question of compatibility with the Loisdale Estates neighborhood as well as whether this level of increased intensity is a realistic scenario.

Environment

1FS and 2FS are both nearly entirely impervious sites with development covering them. Redevelopment of impervious areas should accommodate good site design principles. If the nominations were to be supported, low impact development techniques and good site design principles are encouraged. Landscaping and re-vegetation of the sites would provide visual enhancement for new development as well as improve water and air quality.

Item 3FS contains significant forested EQC and RPA areas associated with a tributary of Long Branch. These areas are important to preserve in order to maintain the water quality and wildlife corridor within this district. Located on the periphery of existing intensely developed industrial and commercial use, this environmentally sensitive area plays a key role in controlling the quantity and quality of the water running off the impervious surfaces into the stream valley. Seven acres of the site are considered Resource Protection Area (RPA) and Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) which pose significant constraints to development. Hydric soils associated with Long Branch affect 9.5 acres of the site on the east and south. The undeveloped stream valley portion of the site is densely vegetated and should be preserved to the maximum extent possible. No development should occur in the RPA/EQC.

Highway noise from I-95 will affect 1FS which is situated immediately west of the highway. Noise from the railroad tracks situated immediately east of 3FS will affect that site. These issues would require additional review.

Parks

The Springfield Planning District has 18 neighborhood and community parks and one countywide park. The Park Authority owns and maintains a total of 963 acres of parkland in Springfield. The recreation facilities in these parks do not meet standards established by the Park Authority through the Needs Assessment study. The following table details the park and recreation deficiencies in the Springfield Planning District:

Park Facility	2004 Deficiency	2015 Projected Deficiency
District and Countywide Parks	647 acres	715 acres
Rectangle Fields	5	7
Adult Softball	1	1
Basketball Courts	19	21
Playgrounds	1	3

Employees will need leisure and recreation opportunities. The integration of urban parks in the overall development design would enhance the desirability of the project. The provision of indoor recreation facilities for employees is also appropriate.

If the nomination is accepted as proposed the following recommendations apply;

- The impact on parks and recreation should be mitigated per County policies contained in Objective 6 of the Parks and Recreation Section of the Policy Plan and Springfield Planning District,
- Language supporting the provision of active recreation facilities for employees should be included,
- Urban Park features, such as pedestrian accessible plazas and seating areas should be constructed in conjunction with the proposed development,
- A pedestrian system linking the proposed development to the transit station should be included with the development.

Cultural Resources

The undisturbed portions of the site have moderate to high potential for Native American or historic sites. If the nomination is accepted as proposed, Phase I archaeology studies should be performed in the undisturbed areas of the application area.

Transportation

Metrorail Blue Line and VRE stations and platforms are between ¼ and ¾ mile away from the subject properties. Items 1FS and 3FS particularly are not within a walking distance that would yield significant reductions in trips for rail transit service. Therefore significant road improvements would be necessary to support the developments as nominated.

A southerly extension of Frontier Drive from the Franconia-Springfield Parkway interchange has been recommended as a means of providing additional access to this area and improving pedestrian and vehicular access to the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. This improvement would be constructed as a four lane divided arterial roadway, with a southern terminus in the vicinity of Loisdale Road north of Newington. Location and final design studies for this improvement have not been completed. A plan amendment for the subject property should address the need for provision of right-of-way and access for this facility.

The subject areas are currently accessed by Loisdale Road, which is not identified for future improvements in the Comprehensive Plan. Vehicle trips generated by future developments would use Loisdale Road for access. No direct access to I-95 is provided from Loisdale Road. Future improvements to Loisdale Road are constrained by locations at which the road ends – the Franconia Road bridge and Springfield Mall commercial area to the north and the I-95/Fairfax County Parkway interchange to the south at Newington. All Loisdale Road traffic must travel through either the Springfield Mall commercial or Newington areas – areas already congested during peak travel periods. If future improvements are made to Loisdale, there will still be significant challenges in moving vehicles to and from Loisdale at either end. No connection exists or is planned between Loisdale Road and the Franconia-Springfield Parkway.

Even after accounting for transit use, major off-site transportation improvements will be necessary. These include^{1,2}:

- Improvements to the Loisdale/GSA site (existing) access intersection;
- Improvements at Loisdale and Metropolitan Center Drive;
- Improvements to the Loisdale/Spring Mall Drive intersection [current level of service (LOS) identified as “C” in the AM peak; “D” in the PM peak];
- Improvements to the Spring Mall Drive/Frontier intersection;
- Improvements to the I-95 HOV access ramp intersection with the Franconia-Springfield Parkway (VA-7900) [current level of service (LOS) identified as “D” in the AM peak; “F” in the PM peak];
- Improvements to Loisdale Road itself;
- Improvements at Loisdale Road and the I-95/Fairfax County Parkway (VA-7100) interchange.

It is noted that future improvements to Loisdale Road, south of the subject sites, and a future extension of Frontier Drive could impact the residential Loisdale Estates neighborhood.

The Comprehensive Plan guidance for redevelopment of this area calls for a four lane collector roadway to be constructed on the approximate alignments of Springfield Center Drive and Metropolitan Center Drive, interconnected to form a loop road and providing a connection to Loisdale Road at two points. Construction of a segment of the collector roadway and appropriate access to it would be a requirement for development of the subject properties.

The nominator of 3FS notes “approximately seventeen (17) Fairfax Connector and Metrobus routes serve the Subject Property and its vicinity,” and “...transportation impacts will be accommodated using the existing public transportation networks...” The only transit service provided within a reasonable distance of the subject property is Fairfax Connector bus route 331/332, a clock-wise/counter-clockwise loop service serving locations to the south, east, and west (including Ft. Belvoir north post). Service is provided at no greater than half-hour headways (buses arrive approximately every 30 minutes). We do not feel that significant trip

¹ Noted improvements, with the exception of the Loisdale/I-95/VA-7100 improvement, were identified by FCDOT, within the Ft. Belvoir-BRAC Final EIS, or within the draft Springfield Connectivity Study report.

² Levels of Service (LOS) identified in the “2008 BRAC-Related Area Plans Review Existing Conditions Report,” Figure 10.2.

reductions or use of 30 minute headway bus transit service would reduce vehicle trips to and from the site other than to a negligible extent.

Nomination 1FS is estimated to generate about 4,179 daily trips, or about 3,100 additional trips compared to the current Comprehensive Plan.

Nomination 2FS is estimated to generate about 5,700 daily vehicle trips, or 4,650 additional trips compared to the current Comprehensive Plan.

Nomination 3FS is estimated to generate from 19,454 to almost 22,000 additional daily trips, depending on the alternative, in comparison to the current Comprehensive Plan. This exceeds the 5,000 additional daily trips threshold established by Chapter 527 regulations and must therefore be submitted to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for Traffic Impact Analysis review and comment.

Cumulatively, the three nominations would result in nearly 30,000 additional daily vehicle trips if all were approved and developed. Additional vehicle trips at this magnitude could compromise the operation of the surrounding road network and require significant investment to allow for even a minimum operating standard or level of service.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

☐ Approve Nomination as submitted
☒ Approve Staff Alternative
☐ Retain Adopted Plan

The on-going Springfield Connectivity study has evaluated at the number of employees the GSA site could accommodate given the planned transportation improvements and build-out under the current Comprehensive Plan for the surrounding land units. At 9,000 employees, additional improvements were warranted, including the extension of Frontier Drive. If 6,200 WHS employees are to be relocated to the GSA site, that would leave an additional 2,800 employees that could be accommodated in the surrounding area if those improvements were made. Assuming an average of 300 square feet per employee for office use, a maximum of 840,000 square feet of additional development could be accommodated by the transportation improvements identified in the Springfield Connectivity Study while maintaining an acceptable level of service.

Measured as the crow flies, items 2FS and 3FS are ¼ and ½ mile from the Springfield Metro Station platform, respectively. However, the shuttle bus road and pedestrian bridge being constructed will not provide a direct route to the station platform. The presence of extensive RPA between the sites and the metro station hinders the feasibility of constructing pedestrian access of the shortest possible distance. Therefore both sites would be of greater walking distance.

Item 2FS, as the closest site, has the greatest possibility taking advantage of the opportunity for transit oriented development. This site also does not have adjacent residential uses that would be impacted by higher intensity development. Therefore, staff supports the nominated intensity of 2.0 FAR for nomination 08-IV-2FS, which would add about 388,000 square feet of development over the current Plan. To achieve this level of development, the following conditions should be met:

- Accommodation of the extension of Frontier Drive and contributions to offsite improvements to Loisdale Road;
- Pedestrian amenities should be provided to encourage the use of transit;
- Provision of recreational opportunities for employees on the site;
- The impact on parks and recreation should be mitigated per County policies contained in Objective 6 of the Parks and Recreation section of the Policy Plan;
- Development should be consistent with the adopted Transit Oriented Development guidelines contained in Appendix 11 of the Land Use section of the Policy Plan; and
- Integration of open space and urban park amenities.

Item 3FS has significant environmental constraints on the property, which will limit the developable area of the site. Those constraints do create a viable forested buffer between the area currently developed and the Loisdale Estates subdivision to the south, which could help limit the impacts of a higher-intensity redevelopment of the site. Development at 2.0 FAR is not appropriate on this site due to both the effective intensity of development and the impacts it would have on the transportation network. At 2.0 FAR, if as much as 11 acres of the site is developable, the effective density would be 4.7 FAR. Given the significant constraints of the site, staff recommends amending the Plan to include an option for office use in addition to the biotech/research and development uses currently permitted, at an intensity up to .50 FAR.

Nomination 1FS is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the Metro station, as the crow flies, which is not considered walking distance from the station. If the GSA site is re-developed for a high-security user such as a military agency, or the government warehouse use is maintained, it is unlikely that cut-through pedestrian or vehicle access will be available to surrounding sites such as this one. The property is situated close to the intersection of Loisdale Road and Springfield Center Drive, which creates a constraint in providing access to the site at the proper distance from the intersection. Finally, the site is located directly across the street from a single family residential neighborhood (Loisdale Estates) and there is very little buffer between them. Since the land area is already nearly fully covered by development at under .50 FAR, additional square footage (and structured parking garages) would necessitate taller buildings. The increase in building heights would have a direct impact on the residents who have back yards abutting Springfield Center Drive. All of these factors lead staff to recommend retaining the current maximum intensity for 1FS at .50 FAR. However, staff does support amending the Plan to include an option for office use in addition to the biotech/research and development uses currently permitted.



