



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 24, 2018
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Marianne Gardner, Director *Marianne Gardner*
Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)
SUBJECT: Plan Amendment 2017-CW-3CP

BACKGROUND

On June 20, 2017, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved modifications to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process, which included the formation of the Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) process. The approval also included a follow-on motion that directed staff to develop guidance that would incorporate criteria for economic success to aid Board members when considering authorizing changes to the Comprehensive Plan. The motion also directed staff to engage appropriate representatives from the development community in the development of this guidance. The Fairfax County Strategic Plan for Economic Success was adopted by the Board in 2015 (see Attachment II to review Goal 2). The plan describes a vision centered around people, places, employment, and governance, and a series of strategies to facilitate the implementation of the vision. A meeting to discuss the Plan amendment that responds to this follow-on motion is scheduled for January 30, 2018 with the Board's Development Process Committee.

PLAN AMENDMENT TIMELINE

January 30, 2018	Review parameters of amendment with Board's Development Process Committee
February 2018	Continued public outreach with industry professionals
March 1, 2018	Planning Commission's Public Hearing
April 10, 2018	Board of Supervisors' Public Hearing

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT

The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan's Policy Plan volume introduces the Comprehensive Plan, outlines the plan's purpose, provides a history of the plan's evolution, as well as lists mechanisms to review the plan. PA 2017-CW-3CP proposes to (see Attachment I):

- Amend the "Mechanisms to Review the Comprehensive Plan" section of the Policy Plan preface to provide additional guidance for the Board to consider when authorizing Plan amendments; and,
- Amend the "History of Comprehensive Planning in Fairfax County" section to reflect the modifications to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program review, including the SSPA process.

Attachment 1: Plan Amendment 2017-CW-3CP (Economic Success)

RECOMMENDATION

Text proposed to be added is shown as underlined, and text proposed to be deleted is shown with a ~~strikethrough~~.

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, History of Comprehensive Planning, as amended through October 24, 2017, Pages 13-14:

~~“Fairfax Forward~~ [Underlined in the original text]

Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program [Underline in proposed text]

Following the 2008-2009 North County and 2009-2010 South County APR cycle, a retrospective of the APR process that included extensive public outreach indicated minor changes to the APR process would not address recurring issues, related to timeliness and the fragmented nature of amending the Plan. The effort concluded with a recognition that a more substantial change to the Plan review process was necessary. In early 2012 at the direction of the Planning Commission, the Department of Planning and Zoning began Fairfax Forward, an effort to develop a new means to review the Comprehensive Plan. To develop a strategy for the future, staff evaluated recent Plan activity, the strengths and weaknesses of the current APR process, and best practices for Plan review at a local and national level. During the same period, Plan amendments between 2002 and 2010, themes resulting from the amendments, and changes to planned development potential between 2000 and 2010, were assessed. In 2012, a State of the Plan was published to summarize the results of the county’s efforts to implement planning policies over the previous ten years. In addition, the Concept for Future Development and Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map were updated to reflect Area Plan recommendations. Portions of the Policy Plan and the Area Plans were also revised to reflect current land uses.

The research efforts contributed to recommendations for a major shift in the county’s planning process. The proposal that emerged expanded upon the successful aspects of current planning studies, namely related to review and evaluation, and modified areas that needed improvement, including public participation and the organization of the Plan review. Extensive public outreach was conducted to confirm the recommendations. Fairfax Forward culminated in the adoption of a new Plan amendment review process and the implementation of the Pilot Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program in July 2013.

As part of the adoption, the Planning Commission directed staff to evaluate Fairfax Forward and the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program. The evaluation resulted in modifications to the planning process to improve community participation, increase participants’ understanding of the planning process, and reduce the reliance on Board-authorized Plan amendments. A nomination-based review cycle, known as the Site-Specific Plan Amendment

Process (SSPA) was initiated in June 2017, which combine aspects of Fairfax Forward with the APR process, to regularly provide an opportunity to update the Comprehensive Plan.

THE FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS (2013-2017-Present)

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program is the new approach to the planning process that emphasizes greater community engagement. The current planning processes and practices should be monitored to ensure that the objectives of increased public participation and more cohesive planning are met. The recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan should continue to be assessed to gauge correlation with the county's goals and objectives. This activity is also necessary to project trends for the future and will aid the community in understanding the evolution of the county and the growth and development issues that confront it."

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Policy Plan, Implementation/Plan Monitoring/Citizen Participation, as amended through October 24, 2017, Pages 16-17:

“MECHANISMS TO REVIEW THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The implementation of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan is monitored regularly and rigorously to ensure the county is achieving its goals. The primary mechanism for reviewing the Plan is through the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program. The Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program schedules planning studies ~~for a three-year period~~ through areawide, neighborhood, and countywide studies. The schedule and order of studies on the work program will be reviewed annually ~~approximately every two years~~ in order to keep the schedule responsive to community needs, changes in circumstance, and other priorities. The schedule ensures that all elements of the Plan are up-to-date and relevant based on current and future needs.

New planning studies on the work program should be selected using the following criteria based on Comprehensive Plan policy and the experience of past planning efforts:

- Reflect previous authorizations by the Board of Supervisors ~~or deferred Area Plans Review nominations;~~
- Address emerging community concerns or changes in circumstance;
- Respond to actions by others, such as federal, state, or adjacent jurisdictions;
- Advance major policy objectives, such as promoting environmental protection, fostering revitalization of designated areas, supporting economic development, preserving open space, providing affordable housing, or balancing transportation infrastructure and public facilities services with growth and development;

- Better implement the Concept for Future Development and sound land use planning principles;
- Reflect implementation of Comprehensive Plan guidance through zoning approvals; and/or
- Respond to or incorporate research derived from technical planning or transportation studies.

Between work program reviews, the Board of Supervisors may authorize the consideration of Plan amendments, if ~~circumstances~~ the urgency of an amendment would not allow for a deferral until the next work program review year. The Board of Supervisors may utilize sound land use planning principles as well as the strategies set forth in the Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 3, 2015, as a guide when considering the authorization of Plan amendments. The Strategic Plan envisions an economically strong and sustainable county, focusing on four fundamental themes of People, Places, Employment, and Governance, and recommends strategies to achieve this goal. Emergency situations that support the health, safety, and welfare also may warrant considerations of Plan amendments. ~~warrant such exceptions. In order to identify those situations when an amendment may be considered, the Board adopted a screening criterion on December 8, 1986. It states that consideration of Board authorized Plan amendments:~~

~~“...will be limited in any year to those that result from emergency situations in which the public health, safety, and welfare or sound land use planning will be harmed if action were deferred until the next appropriate Plan Review Year. Issues of sound land use planning will be evaluated in terms of oversights, inconsistencies, or land use related inequities.”~~

A request to initiate a Board authorized amendment must be made directly to a member of the Board of Supervisors to sponsor a motion to consider the amendment. If the member agrees to sponsor the motion, the Board must vote to direct staff to evaluate and make a recommendation on the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission subsequently holds a public hearing and makes its recommendation to the Board. The Board of Supervisors holds a public hearing and determines if the amendment should be adopted.”

Attachment 2: Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County (as adopted in 2015)

“Goal 2: Create Places Where People Want to Be

The County’s efforts need to be responsive to changing demographics and lifestyles preferences as Fairfax County transitions to a 21st Century community. Increasingly, a broad spectrum of age groups, from millennials to baby boomers, seek freedom from daily dependence on the automobile and prefer to live in vibrant, pedestrian-friendly spaces with an array of work and leisure close at hand. Furthermore, companies want to be in locations that are attractive to younger workers, and are increasingly becoming “consumers of place” in their search for suitable locations.

- 2.1: Continue to focus planning and development activities around the creation of mixed use communities. These should be primarily in identified activity centers served by multi-modal transportation options, which contain employment opportunities, a mix of housing types and price points, as well as vibrant retail and entertainment options.
- 2.2 Expand creation of livable, walkable communities that are aligned with transportation infrastructure. Support a mix of housing types to accommodate a range of ages, household sizes, incomes, and uses for long term appeal, integration, and sustainability.
 - A Explore creation of 20 Minute Neighborhoods where a variety of housing options and jobs are linked by high capacity transit to support clusters of opportunity and innovation.
 - B Initiate joint FCDOT/VDOT/ Metro/VRE actions to link housing to jobs, including new transit networks, and expanded bike-pedestrian networks.
 - C Continue to provide bonus density and other development incentives as a way to promote the development of housing choice for a range of ages, household sizes, and incomes in mixed use centers.
 - D Coordinate with towns and cities within Fairfax County to ensure connectivity for livable, walkable communities.
- 2.3 Support higher density mixed use development in the designated revitalization areas, as a way to attract new businesses and residential growth.
 - A Explore a range of transit options to best serve the designated revitalization areas.
 - B Include the concept of expanded Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in future planning efforts by increasing the radius distance recommended for higher densities from ¼ mile to at least ½ mile around mass transit stations, such as Metrorail, light/heavy rail, or other rapid transit stations.
- 2.4 Continue to support high quality office parks as business locations for those employers seeking this type of location, particularly those that need a high level of building or campus security.
- 2.5 Support efforts by businesses and community organizations to enliven places by the creation of unique and energized public spaces in activity centers.
 - A Support activities and events such as street festivals, pop-up concerts, and food markets throughout the County and in towns and cities.
 - B Support the inclusion of public art in future planning and development (i.e. artist-designed street furniture, independent sculpture and installations, integrated building elements).
 - C Support the creation of one or more arts districts as determined by each community’s needs and resources (such as pop-up, temporary spaces for arts and artists; live/work art spaces and residential units; small business zoning incentives, etc.).

- D Support the creation of a premier performing and other arts facilities in Tysons or possibly other activity centers, as both a community amenity and economic generator.
- 2.6 Continue to improve the overall quality of life to sustain Fairfax County's reputation as a great place to live, work, play, and learn by protecting established neighborhoods and maintaining our superior public schools, parks, libraries, and public safety services.
- 2.7 Expand activities to market and brand unique, culturally diverse communities, (such as Merrifield's live, shop, and play appeal, or Annandale as a foodie hub) in a manner similar to marketing efforts on behalf of other urban neighborhoods and places (such as NoMa, Clarendon, or Del Ray).
- 2.8 Study and implement ways to repurpose empty or obsolete commercial space for residential uses; urban schools or other public facilities; art and cultural purposes; live/work/manufacture uses; and/ or start-up companies. Engage stakeholders in research and recommendations.
 - A Consider implementation tools such as land use and regulatory changes, innovative tax policies, and the use of public seed money or equity participation to spur or support redevelopment and infill, revitalization, and partnership opportunities for repurposing.
- 2.9 Preserve existing designated Industrial Areas as valuable locations for needed light manufacturing, warehousing, service, and distribution uses that support county residents and businesses.
- 2.10 Continue to develop complete street guidelines for all activity centers in the county. In partnership with VDOT and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DPRT), better utilize public rights of way for improved accessibility, safety, and connectivity by all modes:
 - A Implement pedestrian, bike and roadway improvements around Phase II Silver Line stations.
 - B Continue to fund and implement infrastructure improvements that include additional bicycle and pedestrian improvements on overpasses or tunnels and acquire easements for new trails and park greenways where appropriate.
 - C Continue implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan recommendations.
 - D Promote bike lanes in areas where they have been identified in the Bicycle Master Plan.
 - E Implement urban design standards to support street amenities such as street furniture in projects to encourage pedestrian activity.
 - F Continue implementation of connected pedestrian facilities, particularly in activity centers.
 - G Address the need for additional roadway capacity in activity centers through context sensitive improvement projects and development of an enhanced street grid.
- 2.11 Support the implementation of a comprehensive "Health in All Policies" plan that integrates concepts that promote healthy living with a renewed focus on placemaking. Projects included in the plan should focus on increasing physical activity, better nutrition, and expanding access to health care, parkland, and recreation centers.
 - A Increase focus of the Transportation Advisory Commission and the Trails Committee on projects related to pedestrian and bicycle transportation and transit."