



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 6, 2017

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Marianne Gardner, Director
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. 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 December 7, 2017 with the Planning Commission Land Use Process Review Committee.

PLAN AMENDMENT TIMELINE

December 2017	Review parameters of amendment with Planning Commission Land Use Process Review Committee
January 2018	Publish staff report; outreach to community, development industry, and Board's Development Process Committee (tentative)
February 2018	Continued public outreach and Planning Commission Public Hearing
March 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:

- 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.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

The following preliminary recommendations propose changes to the Plan to reflect the Strategic Plan for Economic Success as a guiding document for the Board when considering Plan amendment authorizations. These recommendations may be subject to change following discussions with the Planning Commission, the Board, and public outreach. The proposed changes to reflect the adoption of the SSPA process will be included in the final staff report.

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, Implementation/Plan Monitoring/Citizen Participation, as amended through October 24, 2017, Pages 16-17:

“**MECHANISMS TO REVIEW THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** [Bolted in the original text]

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 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 not contrary to long-standing county policies;
- 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 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.’

In addition, the Board of Supervisors adopted The Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County on March 3, 2015. The 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. The Board of Supervisors may utilize the strategies set forth in this document as a guide when considering the authorization of Plan amendments.

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.”

CC: Fred Selden, DPZ
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