

Plan Amendment 2016-CW-4CP *Office Building Repurposing*

Background

On October 18, 2016, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized Plan Amendment (PA) 2016-CW-4CP to facilitate the repurposing of vacant and/or underutilized office buildings for alternative uses such as residential or institutional uses. As of mid-2016, the inventory of vacant office space exceeds 19 million square feet, the largest number in county history. The repurposing of existing buildings is frequently more sustainable than the demolition and replacement of structures and can shorten the time of the building to market. Repurposing vacant structures to accommodate new uses supports Goals 2.8 and 3.1 of county's Economic Success Plan.

Project Description

The proposed amendment would add new guidance to the Land Use section of the Policy Plan as a new appendix entitled, "Guidelines for Building Repurposing." The new appendix would provide guidance for considering uses other than those envisioned by the current Comprehensive Plan for vacant office buildings in certain mixed-use centers such as Tysons Urban Center and the Merrifield Suburban Area, as well as industrial areas. By adding this policy, repurposing proposals that meet the guidelines set forth in the new appendix could be considered without the need to amend the Comprehensive Plan on a site-by-site basis. The amendment would not preclude the Board's ability to authorize a concurrent plan amendment and rezoning review process, as per county policy.

Timing

Planning Commission: Anticipated September 2017
Board of Supervisors: Anticipated November 2017

Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County

Goal 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.

Goal 3.1: Streamline the process for amending the Comprehensive Plan. This would allow for greater agility and flexibility to respond to specific business opportunities and could reduce the overall time to market.



Bailey's Upper Elementary School, an example of repurposing a vacant office building to an institutional use, opened for the 2014-15 school year.

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To request this information in an alternate format, contact the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning at 703-324-1334, TTY 711.

