

# City of Fairfax, Virginia

## City Council Work Session



Agenda Item # WS2

City Council Meeting 9/6/2016

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TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Robert Sisson, City Manager *RS*

SUBJECT: Joint discussion with the Planning Commission regarding a request of IDI, Inc. to discuss the potential application for the redevelopment of the Paul VI site.

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**ISSUE(S):** Informational Work Session of City Council to discuss initial concepts for the proposed redevelopment of the Paul VI High School site. Although a formal application has not yet been submitted, the applicant has prepared two design concepts for discussion. Initial feedback is sought by City Council regarding preferences between aspects of the two concepts, as well a general feedback on the proposed program and site layout.

**SUMMARY:** The applicant proposes to replace the existing school with a combination of multifamily apartments, multifamily condominiums, senior housing and townhomes, along with some commercial/community space and open space. The exact number of units of each type proposed varies between the two concepts provided. The guiding principle between the two concepts is that the original portion of the existing school building school is preserved in one concept and not the other. Further detail is provided within this staff report. The proposed development is dependent on a Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment, Rezoning and potentially Special Use Permit and Special Exceptions requests.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** A fiscal impact analysis has not been conducted at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Discussion and guidance on the overall site layout and program, as well as preferences for various elements of the two schemes.

**ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION:** City Council may choose to postpone discussion to a future date.

**RESPONSIBLE STAFF/POC:** Paul Nabti, Senior Planner  
Jason Sutphin, Community Development Division Chief  
Brooke Hardin, Director, Community Development & Planning

**COORDINATION:** Community Development & Planning, City Attorney, Public Works, Historic Resources

**ATTACHMENTS:** Submitted site plan concepts.

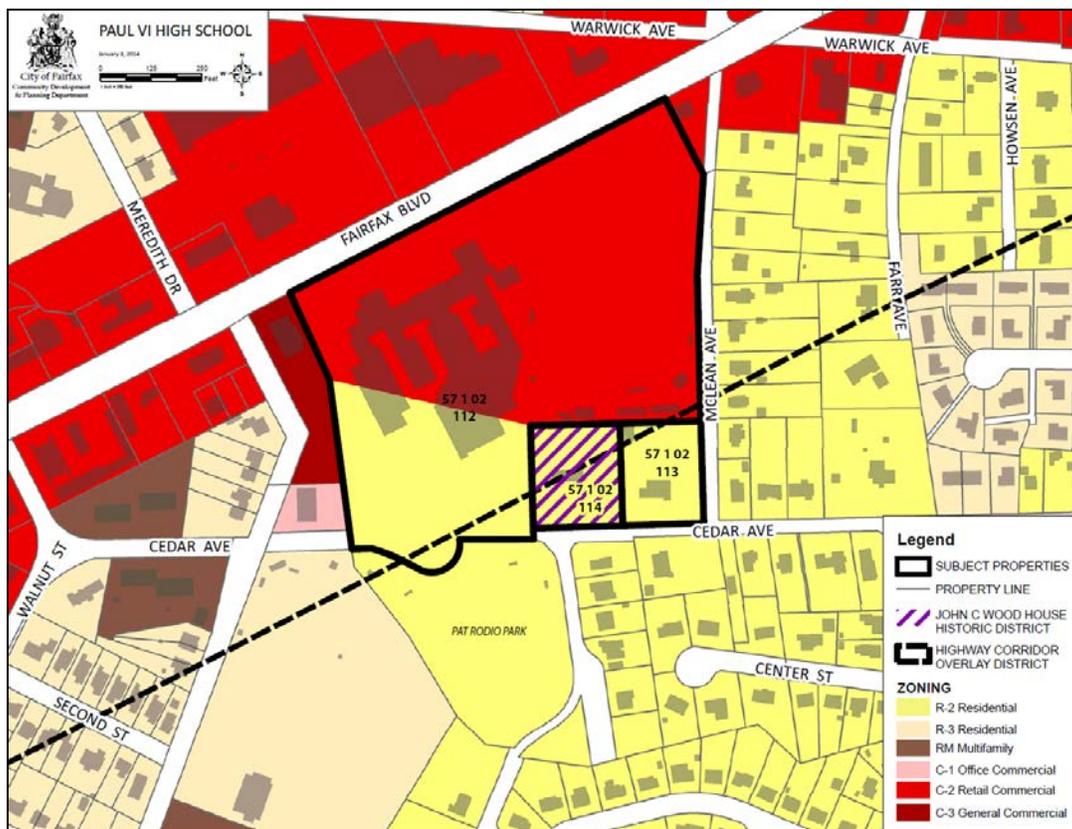
**Background**

The subject site is located within the block bounded by Fairfax Boulevard, Oak Street, Cedar Avenue and McLean Avenue. It is a consolidation of three parcels for a total of 18.50 acres as summarized in Table 1.

Address	Description	Area	Current Zoning
10675 Fairfax Blvd.	Paul VI	16.10 acres	C-2 Commercial/R-2 Residential/HCOD
10606 Cedar Avenue	John C. Wood House	1.25 acres	R-2 Residential/John C. Wood House Historic Overlay District
10600 Cedar Avenue	Single Family Home	1.15 acres	R-2 Residential
<b>Total Area:</b>		<b>18.50 acres</b>	

**Table 1: Parcel Summary**

The parcels that are included within the consolidation for this application, along with their current zoning designations, are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Existing Zoning**

The current Paul VI property is split zoned with a commercial designation along Fairfax Boulevard and McLean Avenue, encompassing approximately 12.19 acres or 76% of the parcel, and a residential designation closer to Pat Rodio Park, encompassing the remaining 3.91 acres. In total, 65.9% of the site is designated as C-2 Commercial, with the remaining 34.1% designated as R-2 Residential.

The majority of the site is also impacted by the Highway Corridor Overlay District (HCOD), which covers all land that is within 750 of the centerline of Fairfax Boulevard (as indicated by the dashed line in Figure 1). In

the current zoning ordinance, the HCOD provides some additional flexibility, such as allowing multifamily uses in commercial districts with a Special Use Permit, as well as restrictions, such as requirements for Special Use Permits for any use that is anticipated to generate over 700 vehicle trips per day, or any commercial use with direct access onto a neighborhood street with residential uses. The HCOD is removed from the adopted zoning ordinance to be effective on October 1, 2016, although multifamily uses could still be permitted with a Special Use Permit on the commercial portion of the site. Despite this, it is anticipated that this application would proceed as a rezoning to a Planned Development, in which case it would not be dependent on the additional flexibility of the HCOD anyway.

The parcel at 10606 Cedar Avenue is overlaid by the John C. Wood House Historic Overlay District, which provides additional restrictions, including the requirement for a Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Board of Architectural Review or City Council for any demolition, relocation or alteration of the existing structure on that parcel.

The character of surrounding properties transition from primarily commercial along Fairfax Boulevard to primarily single-family residential within the Historic Triangle Neighborhood to the south. Table 2 provides a summary of surrounding land uses.

	<b>Existing Zoning</b>	<b>Existing Land Use</b>	<b>Existing Description</b>	<b>Future Land Use</b>
Site	C-2 Retail Commercial, R-2 Residential, HCOD, JCWHOD	Institutional - General, Residential – Single Detached	Paul VI Catholic High School, John C. Wood House, Single Family Residence	Institutional, Residential Low
North	C-2 Retail Commercial, HCOD	Commercial/Retail	The Shops at Fairfax/Boulevard	Business - Commercial
South	R-2 Residential	Open Space – Recreation & Historic, Residential – Single Detached	Pat Rodio Park, Historic Triangle Neighborhood	Open Space – Recreation, Residential - Low
East	C-2 Retail Commercial, R-2 Residential, HCOD	Commercial/Retail, Residential – Single Detached	Various Commercial, Fairfax Triangle Neighborhood	Residential – Low, Business - Commercial
West	C-2 Retail Commercial, C-1 Office Commercial, HCOD	Commercial/Office	Fast Food, Child Care	Business-Commercial, Transitional

**Table 2: Surrounding Property Descriptions**

The site is located along the “West Connector” (generally encompassing the area between Kamp Washington and Northfax) as identified in the Fairfax Boulevard Masterplan Vision and Summary appendix of the Comprehensive Plan and shown in Figure 6.

**Proposal History**

In October 2015, it was announced that the Diocese of Arlington had selected the IDI Group Companies (IDI) as the master developer for the Diocese-owned Paul VI High School (Paul VI) site. The Diocese had previously announced its intention to relocate the high school to a property in Loudoun County. IDI was tasked by the Diocese with creating a development plan for the existing site and obtaining the necessary

zoning approvals. IDI began meeting with stakeholders and held community meetings in February and March 2016. The first meeting was intended to gather initial feedback from the community regarding key issues with the site and the second was to confirm with the community that the development team identified as those key issues from the first meeting. Although no plan concepts were presented at either meeting, the development team did present the site context that would guide them in the development of a concept plan.

In August, 2016 the applicant team submitted two design concepts for review by city staff, and presentation to City Council and the general public. Those two concepts are the subject of the September 6 City Council work session. The applicant team intends to present these at a separate meeting with the general public.

Once the applicant team ascertains that they have received adequate feedback, they have indicated they will prepare and submit the appropriate land use application based on a single site plan concept. It should be noted that the City’s new zoning ordinance will be effective on October 1, 2016. If the application is received after that date, then it will be required to comply with the regulations of the new zoning ordinance rather than the existing zoning ordinance.

**Proposal Summary**

The applicant proposes to replace the existing school, two single family homes and all associated structures currently located on the site with a mixture of townhomes, multifamily apartments, multifamily condominiums and some commercial space/community space. As mentioned above, the applicant has submitted two site plan schemes for consideration. The conceptual layout for both of these schemes is generally consistent with a series of guiding factors presented by the applicant at a community meeting held on March 8, 2016. Among others, these factors included a potential street and pedestrian access network, and prescribed land use intensities. The primary difference between the two schemes is that the original portion of the existing school building (approximately 24,000 square feet) is preserved in its current location in Scheme B. In Scheme A, the building is completely demolished and commemorated through a replica structure located elsewhere on the site. In both schemes, the use for the school building is proposed as what is labeled as senior housing. Table 3 provides a program breakdown for each of the two schemes as currently submitted.

	<b>Scheme A</b>	<b>Scheme B</b>
Description	Rebuild original school building	Preserve original school building
Townhomes	110	108
Multifamily Apartment Units	242	214
Multifamily Condo Units	260	219
Senior Housing	34	34
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>575</b>
Commercial/Community Space	20,000 sf	20,000 sf

**Table 3: Program Summary**

Conceptual site plans for the two schemes are provided in Figure 2-A and 2-B for reference. Labeled site plans, along with site diagrams and renderings as provided by the applicant are included in Attachment 1.

**Proposal Review**

The purpose of the applicant’s request for this work session is to gain initial feedback from City Council on the proposed development. Staff has conducted an initial review of the development proposal. In relation to guidance from the Comprehensive Plan and other current City goals and policy. A summary of this review is provided below, organized into the following general categories: historic preservation, land use, scale, circulation, natural resources and parks and open space.



**Figure 2-A: Scheme A Conceptual Site Plan**



**Figure 2-B: Scheme B Conceptual Site Plan**

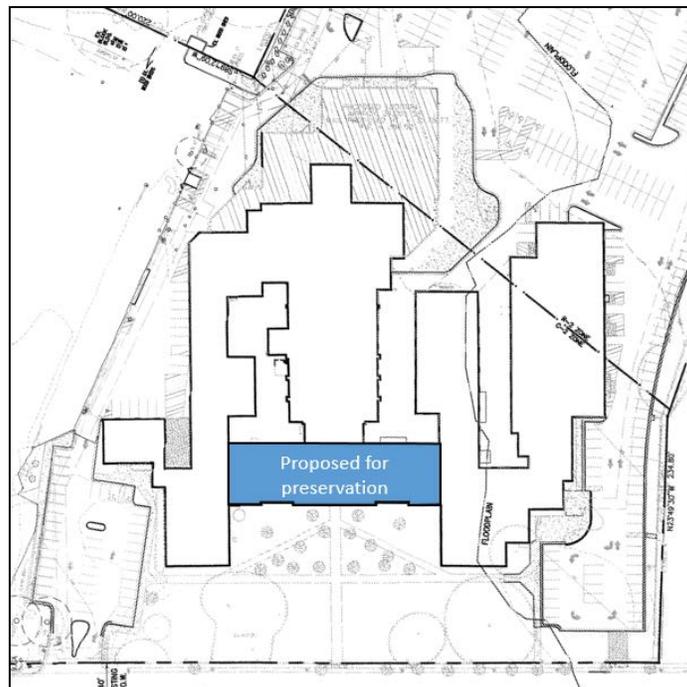
## **Historic Resources**

Although there are no structures on the site that are included on the National Register of Historic Places, it does include Paul VI High School (formerly Fairfax High School), which is not included within a historic overlay district as defined by the zoning ordinance, and the John C. Wood House which is located within the John C. Wood House Historic Overlay District. The original portion of Paul VI High School was constructed in 1935 and contains exemplary architectural elements of that time period. The Comprehensive Plan seeks further protection of these types of buildings through the following Historic Resources Strategy:

### **HR-1.8 Seek National Register nomination of additional historic resources, as appropriate.**

The City should support individual property owners in seeking National Register designation for their properties. In addition, the City should initiate designation for publicly held properties, as appropriate. Examples of sites that may now or soon meet the designation criteria include Paul VI High School (formerly Fairfax High School), the Farr property, the Sisson House (currently used for School Board and Voter Registrar offices) on the City Hall grounds, and a potential residential historic district in the Fairfax Triangle area. [Comprehensive Plan page 114]

Since construction of the original portion of the Fairfax High School building, multiple additions have occurred. If the applicant proceeds with Scheme B, which has a preservation and adaptive reuse component as described above, then restorative work and modifications would be required to the structure. An adaptive reuse study and historic structures report on the building by a qualified architect specializing in historic architecture would be expected prior to a public hearing to ensure that the building could be modified without substantial alteration to the exterior integrity.



**Figure 3: Building area proposed for preservation**

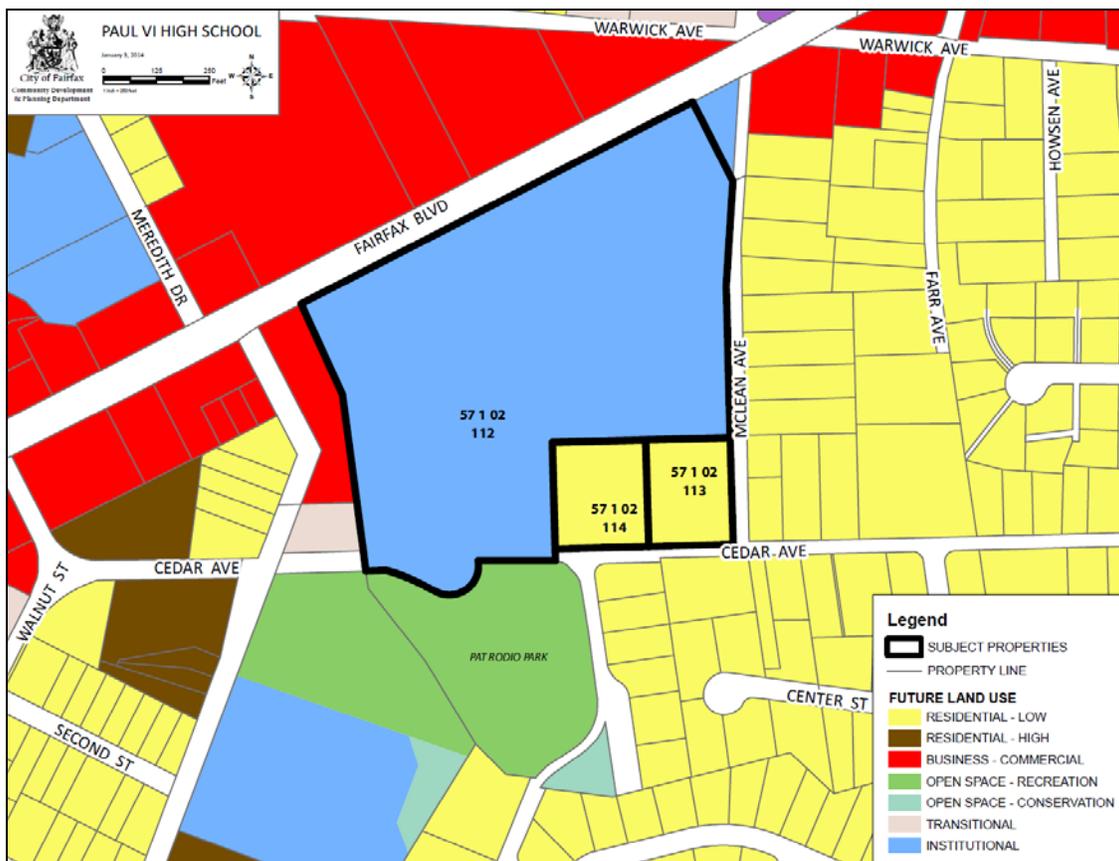
The John C. Wood House Historic Overlay District was established by City Council in 2010 on the site of the former home of John C. Wood, the first Mayor of The City of Fairfax based on the following criteria:

1. The age of the building and its ties to the Cedar Avenue neighborhood, which is the oldest residential subdivision in the City;
2. The association with the honorable John C. Wood, a prominent local figure.

Staff is not aware of any additional studies of the house that have been conducted since the overlay district was established in 2010. The overlay district places local protection on the property, which requires approval by the Board of Architectural Review or City Council for alteration or demolition of the building. Neither of the proposed development schemes proposes preservation of the John C. Wood House. The Comprehensive Plan does not provide guidance on the deletion of Historic Overlay Districts.

**Land Use**

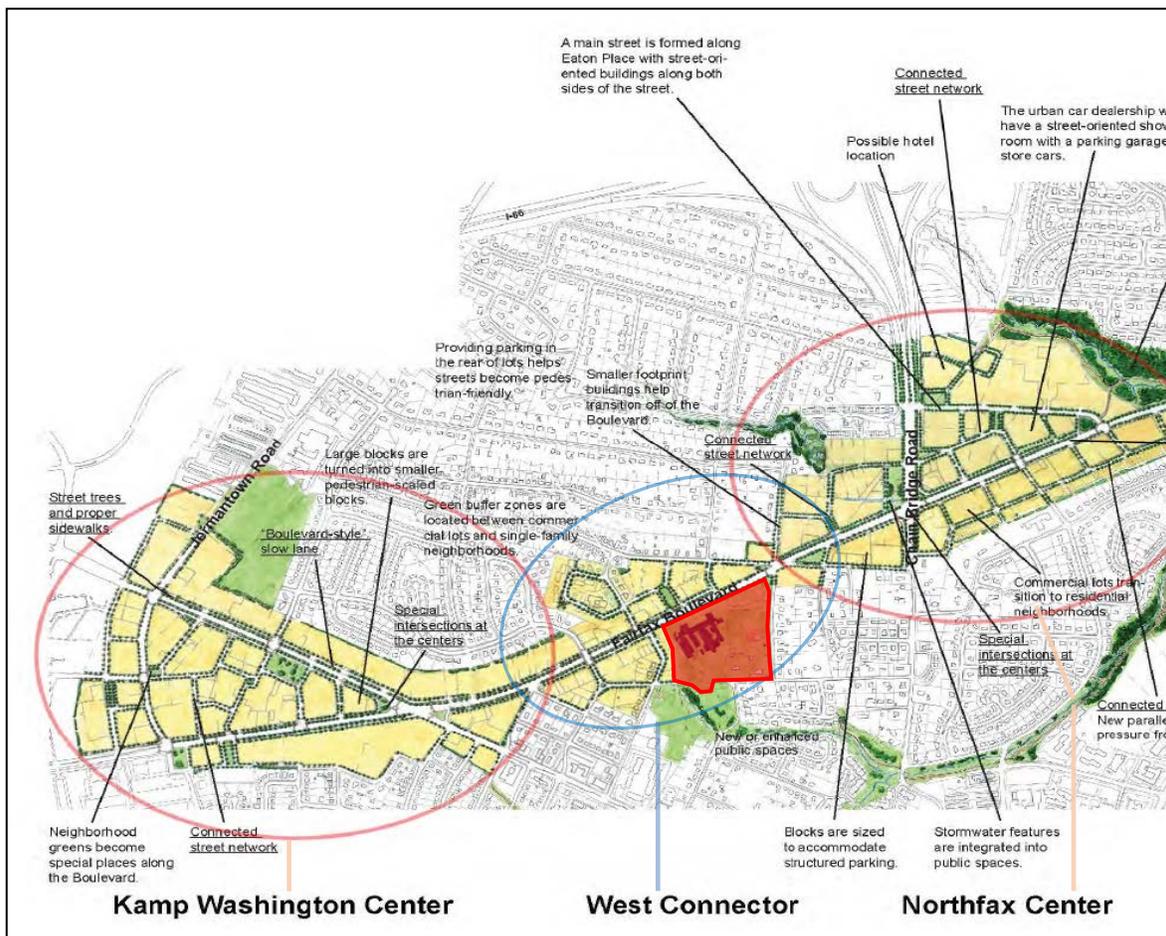
The existing school property is designated as Institutional on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map and the two single family parcels are designated as Residential – Low as indicated in Figure 4. The relocation of the existing school was not anticipated at the time that the current Comprehensive Plan was adopted. An amendment to the future land use map would have to be requested by the applicant in order to allow for an application to proceed.



**Figure 4: Future Land Use**

With a location directly fronting onto Fairfax Boulevard, guidance for the site is further provided through the Fairfax Boulevard section of the land use chapter and by the Fairfax Boulevard Vision Summary as provided in Appendix D of the Comprehensive Plan. All areas along the Fairfax Boulevard corridor are either defined as “Centers” or “Connectors” with Centers being targeted for relatively higher intensity, pedestrian oriented development and Connectors targeted for more moderate intensity development with appropriate transitions

to adjacent neighborhoods. This site is located in the West Connector generally encompassing the area between Kamp Washington and Chain Bridge Road, as shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5: Site location along the Fairfax Boulevard corridor**

General guidance for Connectors as provided in the Comprehensive Plan is stated below:

Connectors: Connectors should take the form of a linear, aesthetically enhanced boulevard. Most of these areas do not have the proper depth or potential for unified, coordinated development. Their focus would be on lower scale buildings (predominantly 1 to 3 stories) with emphasis on accessibility, improvements in architectural and site design, and appropriate “interface” between the commercial boulevard and existing neighborhoods, such as appropriate land use transitions and green space buffers. [Comprehensive Plan page 169]

Future development along Fairfax Boulevard is primarily envisioned as commercial in the Comprehensive Plan as stated below:

Appropriate land uses along the corridor are primarily commercial, with opportunities for substantial levels of development in key areas. The mix and design of future development and redevelopment along the Fairfax Boulevard corridor should support the City’s vision for its economic future and reflect the importance of this centrally located area within the region. [Comprehensive Plan page 169]

Despite this, residential uses may be considered under certain circumstances as stated below:

**Component of Unified Mixed Use Project:** The Future Land Use map identifies the three locations along the Boulevard where Mixed Use is identified as being appropriate. Those locations, or Centers (Fairfax Circle, Northfax, and Kamp Washington), are envisioned as being coordinated developments containing a mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses. Often in such mixed use projects, a residential component is desirable in order to realize the full benefits of the commercial component. In such cases where a unified development is planned for one of the mixed use Centers shown on the Future Land Use map, a residential component may be considered as part of the development, and would be in concert with the tenets of the Fairfax Boulevard Master Plan Vision and Summary.

**Replacement of an Undesirable Use:** Certain current land uses within the City are considered undesirable due to an unattractive appearance or other negative externalities. In cases where the elimination of an undesirable use can be considered of primary importance, consideration should be given to supporting residential as the primary land use. However, extreme care must be taken to ensure that residential uses complement the general commercial nature of the Fairfax Boulevard corridor [Compressive Plan pages 169-170].

The site is not located in an area designated as a Center in the Comprehensive Plan and the existing school would not likely be considered an undesirable use as defined above. Despite this, the size of the site is unique among properties located within the Connectors along Fairfax Boulevard and the proposal as presented could be considered a “unified mixed use project” which may justify incorporation of residential uses.

**Scale**

Density: Although the Comprehensive Plan does not specifically recommended densities for the various types of potential uses along the Fairfax Boulevard Corridor, it is generally anticipated that the highest intensity uses would occur within the three “Centers” and more moderate intensities would occur within the “Connectors”. Since the incorporation of the Fairfax Boulevard Vision and Summary into the Comprehensive Plan, there have been two land use approvals for mixed-use/multifamily developments within “Centers”. Although applications have been received for mixed use/multifamily developments within the Connectors, no such developments have been approved to date. For the purpose of comparison, the overall residential densities for the two approved applications in the Centers as compared to the subject proposal are provided in Table 4:

Project	Site Area	Number of Units	Residential Density/Acre	Commercial Area	Fairfax Boulevard Area Designation
Fairfax Circle Plaza	8.32 acres	400	43.57	88,000	Center
Novus Fairfax Gateway	9.18 acres	403	48.44	29,000	Center
Paul VI Scheme A	18.50 acres	645	34.86	20,000	Connector
Paul VI Scheme B	18.50 acres	575	31.08	20,000	Connector

**Table 4: Comparison of Fairfax Boulevard development proposals**

Height: The submitted concept plans for both schemes indicate building heights of four to five stories for the two multifamily buildings at the core of the site, three stories for the townhomes primarily located closer to McLean Avenue and Cedar Avenue and two stories for the preserved or rebuilt portion of the school. The proposed height of 4 to 5 stories conflicts with the Comprehensive Plan language cited on Page 8 of this memo that recommends 1 to 3 stories along Fairfax Boulevard “Connectors”. It should be noted that this height recommendation is based on typical commercial lot sizes along Fairfax Boulevard, which are somewhat smaller than the subject site. The zoning ordinance, however, permits a height of 5 stories or 60 feet in the C-2 Retail Commercial district (to be reclassified as CR Commercial Retail under the approved zoning

ordinance), which is the predominant zoning classification for properties along the length of Fairfax Boulevard.

### **Circulation**

**Vehicular Network:** In both of the proposed schemes, vehicular access is provided to the site through an existing access point from Oak Street and multiple access points along Fairfax Boulevard. No vehicular connections are proposed between the site and McLean Avenue, Cedar Avenue or Keith Avenue. Along Fairfax Boulevard, access is provided to the existing signalized intersection across from Boulevard Shopping Center (Petco) in both schemes. In the option to preserve a portion of the school building, the design of the existing signalized intersection would need to be studied further due to an offset between curb cuts on the north and south sides of Fairfax Boulevard, which creates a wide offset intersection.

Both proposals also include a Boulevard style slow-lane along the length of the Fairfax Boulevard frontage. The Comprehensive Plan suggests that slow lanes should be considered along Fairfax Boulevard in certain circumstances as stated below:

Slow lanes (with on-street parking), separated from the main travel lanes by landscaped medians, while not intended to be a consistent feature throughout the corridor, they should be considered within or adjacent to portions of the Centers if the nature of adjacent redevelopment activity is such that those features would be appropriate [Comprehensive Plan, page 126].

Although the site is not located within an area designated as a Center, the size of the site and the nature of the development proposal lend themselves to inclusion of slow lanes. The benefit of slow lanes in this situation is that they allow for on-street parking that improves access to retail and provide a buffer between the streetscape, including open spaces on the site and traffic along Fairfax Boulevard. The exact profile, movement restrictions and intersection designs of the slow lanes will be analyzed as the project design matures.

**Pedestrian Network:** With internal streets designed with narrow cross sections, on street parking, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities the proposed pedestrian network largely duplicates the vehicular network. In addition, internal open spaces and mid-block pedestrian accessways provide additional connections for pedestrians, including direct connections to the street network east of the site. A shared use path is proposed along McLean Avenue as supported in the Comprehensive Plan trails map (page 89). The overall pedestrian network supports additional linkages between adjacent neighborhoods, open spaces and commercial areas as supported in Comprehensive Plan strategy T-7.2.1 cited below:

#### **T-7.2.1 Examine roadway segments near schools, churches, parks, shopping areas, and neighborhoods to provide safe pedestrian routes.**

At appropriate locations along the City's streets, the provision of sidewalks, trails, pedestrian signals and crosswalks will help facilitate the safe travel of pedestrians. It is especially critical to connect residential areas with one another and with public facilities, businesses and services that residents need.

In general, pedestrian accessible accessways within the site create block faces that range from 200 feet to 500 feet in length. These dimension are consistent with existing block lengths in Old Town Fairfax and at recently approved mixed-use developments at Fairfax Circle Plaza and Novus Fairfax Gateway and are considered appropriate for pedestrian oriented environments.

Parking: Parking is provided through of combination of parking structures, on-street parallel parking, individual garages and in some cases, small surface lots. Although the distribution of parking spaces differs between the two schemes, the overall proposed parking ratios are the same as indicated in the table below:

Use Type	Ratio Qualifier
Multifamily Apartment	1.6/unit
Multifamily Condominium	1.6/unit
Senior Housing	0.25/bed
Townhomes	2.0/unit
Retail/Community Space	1/200 sf (required.)

**Table 5: Parking Ratios**

The newly adopted zoning ordinance bases required parking on the number of bedrooms provided in each unit, rather than a simple flat requirement per unit. The specific number of parking spaces required for the proposed multifamily uses is not clear because the number of bedrooms per unit has not yet been submitted for the multifamily buildings, so the parking requirement cannot be determined at this time. The ratio of 1.6 spaces per unit is consistent with recent approvals however.

Parking for the senior housing is proposed at 0.25 spaces per unit, which is generally consistent with the requirement for assisted living facilities at one space for every four beds. The type of senior housing proposed, however, has not yet been indicated.

Commercial parking is required at one space for every 200 square feet of commercial space. The applicant is exploring options for accommodating the commercial requirement through on-street parking, within parking garages and other means. The applicant is also considering utilizing shared parking arrangements between multiple uses on the site, a mechanism which is permitted under certain guidelines and through a specified review process in the new zoning ordinance.

**Natural Resources:**

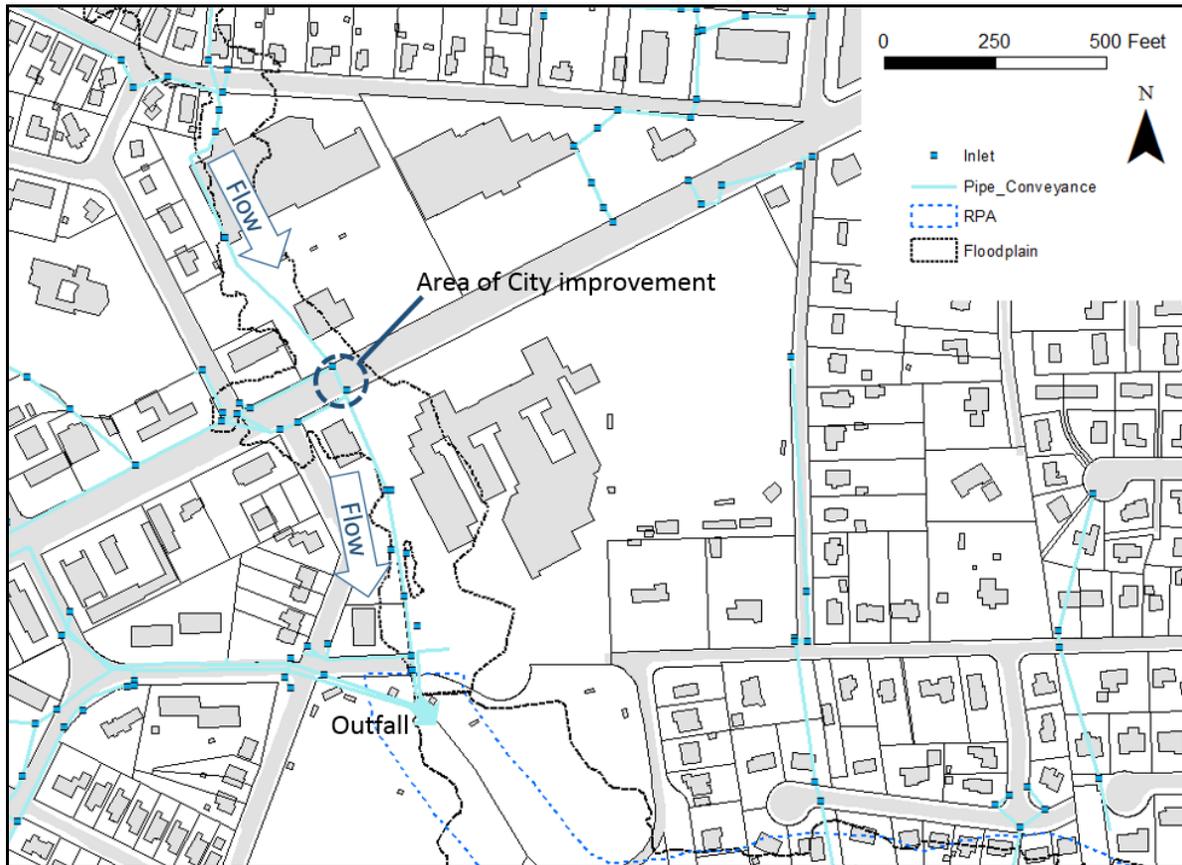
Stormwater: Much of the western portion of the site is currently located in the floodplain as shown in Figure 6. The City is currently in the design phase of a stormwater improvement project to alleviate flooding at the intersection of Fairfax Boulevard and Oak Street, located upstream but would have a minimal impact on the site. The applicant would be required to make further improvements for the length of the stormwater pipe that runs along the western property line in order to remove or reduce the floodplain on the site. In order to receive a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) from FEMA to officially modify the boundaries of the floodplain based on stormwater improvement on the site, the applicant would be required to submit a study identifying potential upstream and downstream impact. The following two environmental strategies from the Comprehensive Plan should be considered as the site design for this proposal is refined:

**ENV-1.1 Continue to enforce and refine the City’s regulations that require new development to preserve existing natural features to the extent practical.**

Special protection is provided for trees, floodplains, and watersheds through zoning regulations. Although it is not possible to develop wooded property without removing trees, significant stands of trees should receive considerable attention in the development review process to ensure that all practical and reasonable attempts at preservation have been made. Through the review of development plans and in the process of negotiated rezoning, special use permit and special exception requests, the City can ensure that natural resources are protected.

**ENV-1.2 Encourage planned development that maximizes the retention of natural features.**

Conventional development often results in the destruction of a site’s natural features. Sites are often completely denuded of tree cover, the topography is leveled, and streams are piped and covered. Planned developments, however, can be used to encourage buildings, roads and utilities to be arranged in clusters, resulting in the preservation of significant natural features. [Comprehensive Plan, page 33]



**Figure 6: Existing Floodplain Conditions**

Tree Preservation: The majority of the school site has been disturbed with buildings, parking and athletic fields, though there may be some significant trees along the periphery of the site. Additional significant trees may be located on the two single family lots along Cedar Avenue that are included within the site. A tree survey of the site has not yet been submitted to the City.

**Parks and Open Space:**

On-Site Open Space: Both of the proposed development schemes provide a mixture of publicly accessible open spaces, private open spaces and linear open spaces along accessways and rights of way. The Comprehensive Plan particularly encourages the inclusion of “pocket parks” in proposals such as the Paul VI redevelopment, as stated in the following Parks, Recreation and Open Space strategy:

**PRO-2.2 Facilitate the creation of vest pocket parks in areas of high pedestrian traffic or visual interest.**

One manner of enhancing the City’s mixed-use areas, particularly Old Town and the three major centers along the Fairfax Boulevard corridor, is to create vest-pocket parks. These parks can serve two major functions: adding green space to relieve the congesting effects of intensive development and providing places for people to relax or visit near areas of employment or shopping. When possible, the City should encourage the inclusion of vest pocket parks during the processes of reviewing plans involving the redevelopment of focal areas within the City. [Comprehensive Plan, page 93]

The amount of open space as well as the type of open space required for this proposal is dependent on the zoning mechanism used when an application is ultimately submitted. For any of the general zoning districts, the zoning ordinance only establishes requirements for building coverage and pervious coverage. For planned districts, the zoning ordinance only considers “usable open space” which is defined based on certain parameters. The amount of open space included in the two schemes has not yet been calculated.

Parking Agreement: The subject site sits adjacent to Pat Rodio Park and Chilcott Field (owned by the American Legion). The existing Paul VI High School has informal agreements with both of these facilities that allow their users to park on the Paul VI property in exchange for allowing use of the facilities by the school. The applicant is considering measures to ensure that adequate parking is available for those facilities once the school vacates and new development occurs on the site. Potential measures include providing dedicated parking for those facilities on the project site, allowing use of on-street parking and agreements with other adjacent land owners with alternate peak parking demand hours.

Community Center Considerations: The Paul VI high school site was included in the Green Acres Feasibility Study, received by City Council in June 2016, which recommends relocation of the programs and services currently provided at Green Acres and considers alternate locations throughout the City. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Strategic Masterplan, completed in 2014, recommends consideration of the Paul VI site for such uses as stated below:

Strategy 1.4.6: Monitor and evaluate the feasibility and opportunity that any change of use or ownership of the Paul VI property may provide for a central location for active indoor recreation space, gymnasium, senior activities, a theater, field space, and ensure parking for Pat Rodio Park. [Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, page 38]

Comp Plan reference to PRO 3.4; EC 1.3 Strategy

The Paul VI site was included as one of six finalist sites for a new community center in the Green Acres study however it was not included as one of three recommended sites because of the relatively long-term timeframe for the vacation of the existing school, and the general uncertainties of the development process that could impact the timeframe in which a community center could be accommodated.