

## STAFF REPORT

**Agenda Item:** Resolution 24-G-23 to consider Comprehensive Plan Amendment, CPA #23-01, pursuant to Section 15.2-2229 of the Code of Virginia, an amendment to the Town of Herndon 2030 Comprehensive Plan, adopted August 12, 2008, as amended through May 24, 2022 (Transit-Related Growth Area)

**Meeting Date:** April 23, 2024

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### **Summary Information:**

Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA #23-01) was initiated by the Town Council (TC) on December 12, 2023, through Resolution (23-G-77). Subsequently, the amendment was referred to the Planning Commission (PC) for review and recommendation. The PC evaluated the amendment and the draft TRG Small Area Plan during its scheduled work sessions and regular meetings in January, February, and March 2024, including an additional work session in February. The Planning Commission, in accordance with Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia, unanimously recommended by resolution approval of the CPA. As the governing body, the Town Council shall act within 90 days of the Planning Commission's recommendation, as stipulated in Section 15.2-2229 of the code of Virginia.

The TRG Small Area Plan (SAP) is the main component of this amendment, aiming to adopt and incorporate it by reference into the town's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. If approved, the SAP will guide the development of 94 acres, consisting of 25 privately owned properties comprising the Town of Herndon Transit-Related Growth area, located at the southeastern corner of the town, near, but not adjacent to, the Herndon Metrorail Station.

### **Background:**

The Town of Herndon initiated the TRG planning project in early 2022, involving comprehensive data collection, analysis, constraint and opportunity assessment, market study, infrastructure analysis, and traffic study and modeling. From these efforts, three alternative concepts emerged, each representing different visions for the future development of the area. Following robust public engagement and guidance from the Town Council, Planning Commission, and TRG Advisory Committee (AC), a preferred alternative was selected and refined into the draft small area plan. Since then, the project has undergone three drafts with the third and final draft (dated February 12, 2024) recommended by the PC to the Town Council for consideration.

The TRG initiative embodies a thorough participatory planning endeavor that actively engages diverse stakeholder groups. Characterized by its collaborative approach, diverse perspectives, and integrated planning process, the initiative has involved a series of stakeholder engagements and meetings. These include multiple project specific public meetings, various joint meetings between the Planning Commission, Town Council, and Architectural Review Board, specific stakeholder meetings with TRG property owners and adjacent neighborhoods, regular meetings of the TRG Advisory Committee and regular meetings of the TRG Technical Committee, and several work sessions and public hearings with the Planning Commission. These numerous engagements underscore the depth of collaboration and the robustness of both the process and its anticipated outcomes. Through these collaborative efforts open and frequent dialogue and feedback was facilitated. This inclusive approach, extending from the initial stages of the planning process, ensured that diverse perspectives were considered and integrated into the plan.

The TRG Small Area Plan, comprised of nine sections, outlines initial aspirations, the development process, formation of the plan vision and principles, and how public input has influenced the plan's development process and design frameworks. Chapters five to eight delve into the core of the plan, detailing the urban design framework, including land use and density, design character, recreation spaces, and the transportation network, along with related strategies.

The TRG redevelopment vision is anchored on open space, recognizing the role of active spaces in fostering community engagement, promoting health and well-being, and enhancing overall quality of life. Proposed open spaces in the TRG are envisioned as vibrant hubs of activity, social interaction, recreation, and relaxation. By prioritizing pedestrian mobility connected through a linear spine, the plan aims to create a seamless network of parks and greenery that not only enriches the urban fabric of the TRG but also extends its influence beyond its boundaries. This interconnected system of open spaces holds the potential to establish vital connections to neighboring amenities, and nearby regional trails, fostering a sense of continuity and accessibility throughout the broader community.

The urban design framework of the TRG proposes a conceptual development plan based on market feasibility, infrastructure and utility constraints, public and stakeholder feedback, and direction from the town's governing bodies. It aims to create a vibrant place in the Town of Herndon, attracting people, businesses, and activity while fostering economic development through a balanced mix of land uses, densities, and urban form.

The land use element of the plan reflects the mixed-use future of the TRG, ensuring a broad and balanced variety of land uses to maintain activity levels and economic stability. The future TRG, with its infusion of residential, still retains a broad spectrum of employment opportunities including retail, restaurant, and hotel services, and transitions from class B office to mid-size class A office and creative spaces. A variety of housing options is proposed to meet the needs of a growing and diverse community with

consideration to market trends. Multifamily buildings are proposed along Herndon Parkway and attached and stacked single-family units in the transitional blocks closest to the existing single family detached house neighborhoods abutting the TRG. The SAP preserves the option for low impact light industrial and neighborhood commercial in the northwest portion of the TRG. In addition, per community preference, redevelopment is not encouraged for Sunset Business Park, but rather a refresh of the existing development is encouraged.

The Redevelopment Framework Plan is centered around the objective of creating a multimodal street grid as the framework for development, integrating development blocks with a network of open spaces. The space between the blocks is the public realm, consisting of streets and open space.

The transportation analysis provides a summary of traffic impacts, considering existing conditions, the no-build condition, and a Preferred TRG Development Scenario. It further addresses transportation mitigation impacts, suggesting alternatives such as an alternate road to Herndon Parkway and intersection improvements.

The SAP encapsulates the collective vision and aspirations of the community, serving as a long-term guide for the future redevelopment of 94 privately owned acres into a well-designed, viable mixed-use district. It emphasizes encouraging redevelopment, establishing buffers to abutting neighborhoods, creating a distinctive sense of place integral to Herndon's identity, contributing to a multi-modal transportation network, and establishes expectations for architectural and urban design excellence.

#### **Staff Analysis:**

The current draft SAP has undergone thorough review by the TRG Advisory Committee and the TRG Technical Committee, alongside rigorous scrutiny by PC during the past three months. The AC formulated a consensus-based recommendation to the PC during their last meeting on January 10, 2024.

This Errata/Refinement Sheet thoroughly documents the proposed edits to the draft SAP, incorporating input from the PC, AC, the technical committee, in addition to the feedback received from the TRG property owners and the public. The refinements primarily focus on enhancing clarity and consistency throughout the plan, with additional guiding language included to complement existing information and enrich the explanation of various aspects of the TRG Small Area Plan. Staff will continue to maintain the errata sheet and list of refinements throughout the TC review process to document any potential comments. Once the draft plan is approved, it will be promptly updated to incorporate these corrections and refinements into a final record copy of the SAP.

Furthermore, the Errata/Refinement Sheet serves as a comprehensive record of the proposed changes to the draft plan, playing a critical role as a legal component of the CPA #23-01 process. Attached as part of the Planning Commission's resolution, it

provides a transparent and legally binding outline for the finalization of the small area plan. Upon approval, the SAP will serve as the primary guidance for the development of 94 acres of 25 privately owned properties within the Town of Herndon Transit-Related Growth area, establishing the general framework for future zoning language.

### **Planning Commission Comments**

During their deliberation of this item, members of the Planning Commission comprehensively discussed several aspects of the draft TRG Small Area Plan and the proposed Errata / Refinement sheet. Enhancements suggested by the commission, including improvements to flexibility and design guidelines, have been incorporated into the Errata/Refinement Sheet.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

The TRG plan anticipates a 25-year horizon for the development of the concepts it envisions. A Fiscal Impact Analysis was conducted and estimated that the plan will allow land use development, yielding net positive revenues for the town. The primary source of increased revenue comes from an increase in real estate values but also an increase in revenues from business licenses, transient lodging taxes, meals taxes.

This analysis also looked at operational and maintenance public expenditures which amount to roughly a quarter of the expected revenues, however that assessment does not consider the expenditures from public capital improvements, which will likely require contributions from both the town and county and also the private developers within the TRG.

### **Town Council Alternatives:**

The following alternatives are available to the Town Council for its decision on CPA #23-01:

1. Certification and recommendation for approval,
2. Certification and recommendation for approval with amendments,
3. Recommendation for disapproval, or
4. Continuance of the CPA to the May 14, 2024, regular meeting.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approval of the CPA #23-01 and adoption of the TRG Small Area Plan with amendments specified in the Errata and Refinement Sheet as incorporated into the resolution in accordance provided and as required by Section 15.2-2229 of the Code of Virginia.