NOMINATION. Richmond Highway Corridor

ATTACHMENT A. Revise and strengthen land use and transportation recommendations of the Plan for Richmond Highway Corridor to reduce stormwater runoff, be consistent with county watershed plans, and support the Policy Plan's environmental objective 2, policy k.

1. Revise and update the description of the Richmond Highway Corridor Area to reflect current knowledge about environmental impacts, esp. on water quality. To the following existing paragraph (p. 25),

   > The northern part of Richmond Highway is located in the Belle Haven and Little Hunting Creek watersheds, while the southern segment is in the Dogue Creek watershed and is affected by the floodplains and stream valleys of Dogue Creek. The entire corridor is located in the Coastal Plain geologic province and thus lies in a zone of extensive slippage-prone swelling clays and sensitive aquifer recharge.

   add

   > <u>Development in the Richmond Corridor has degraded all three of these watersheds by increasing stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces and decreasing aquifer recharge</u>.

2. Add a land use recommendation to p. 27:
   - <u>Offer incentives for development and redevelopment projects to reduce imperviousness and achieve better control over stormwater runoff in the Richmond Highway Corridor.</u>

   Possible incentives to be created were recommended by the Little Hunting Creek Watershed Plan and are described in Attachment B. It is recommended that an overlay district, as suggested by the watershed plan, be created to implement these changes in the Richmond Highway Corridor as soon as possible, without waiting for county-wide changes in policy. The urgency is due to the inadequacy of stormwater controls in the Richmond Highway Corridor and consequent damage to three watersheds, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay.

3. Revise and expand transportation recommendations for Richmond Highway Corridor to achieve better control over stormwater runoff from highways and roads. Recommended changes to existing text on p. 27 are shown below:

   • Minimize the impact of highway widenings, new roadway alignments, and new development projects on adjacent residential communities and the ~~ecology~~ <u>water quality</u> of the district.

   - <u></u>Service drive construction should not generally be required where interparcel access can be provided between adjacent development areas. ~~Existing service drives should be replaced wherever possible.~~ <u>In order to achieve improved stormwater controls, existing service drives or portions that are no longer needed should be removed to reduce the impervious footprint. Consideration should be given to converting them to bioretention or vegetated and treed swales that could serve as landscaping features, and that would control and treat stormwater.</u> Highway right-of-way dedication or the "reservation" of right-of-way will be required where necessary.

- Road widening projects should better control the runoff from existing paved areas that lack stormwater management controls. Such projects should reduce the existing peak runoff rate, as permitted by Virginia regulations upon request of the DCR in areas that have adopted a watershed management plan. Improvements in the control of stormwater runoff from the Richmond Highway should be achieved using LID techniques and installing structural BMPs along the proposed corridor.

ATTACHMENT B. Possible incentives for developers to reduce imperviousness and better control stormwater runoff through e.g., implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) practices in development and redevelopment projects. Incentives for reductions in stormwater runoff were recommended by the Little Hunting Creek Watershed Management Plan (see Chapter 5) and should be adopted soon, possibly by creating an overlay district for the Richmond Highway Corridor.

- Incentives that should be considered include:
    - Expedited review for developers who include a minimum percentage of conservation design techniques, low-impact development features, or green technologies in their site plans.
    - Incentives for developers who exceed the minimum runoff reduction standard, e.g.
        - Zero setbacks on one side of a building
        - Reduce parking requirement minimums for commercial developments.
        - Provide for an additional story on buildings by way of FAR and bulk plane provisions.
        - If a stormwater user fee is initiated, provide reduced rates to LID sites.
        - Density bonuses to allow increase in FAR for commercial construction, without increasing the building footprint .
- Additional measures to achieve better control of stormwater runoff from redeveloped sites:
    - Add a parking maximum so that parking is not overbuilt.
    - Reduce post-development runoff rate and volume a targeted percentage below the pre-development runoff rate and volume. The Little Hunting Creek watershed plan adopted 10% as the targeted net reduction in stormwater runoff because it is (1) achievable with minimum expense yet (2) sufficient to provide a significant benefit to downstream areas. Over time, as a commercial property is repeatedly re-developed, its "stormwater footprint" will continue to shrink.
- When rezoning from residential to commercial, the developer should be expected to achieve a peak runoff after development no higher than would be experienced from the same site if it were in "good forested" condition.

ATTACHMENT C. Justification

The Richmond Highway Corridor recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan need to be updated to reflect the county's adoption of the Little Hunting Creek and Cameron Run watershed management plans, to stop the harmful effects of stormwater runoff in three watersheds, and to support the Policy Plan's environmental objective 2, policy k.

Because most of the Richmond Highway Corridor was developed before Fairfax County had adopted stormwater controls, and because it has a high degree of imperviousness, the Richmond Highway Corridor has very damaging effects on the three watersheds that drain it. Currently, redevelopers are not required to reduce runoff below levels of previous development, so past inadequate controls are perpetuated. The condition of two of the three watersheds is the worst of any in the county; according to the 2005 Stream Physical Assessment, Little Hunting Creek and Belle Haven are the only two watersheds in the county with a habitat rating of poor. Habitat in the other 28 watersheds is rated fair or better. (Dogue Creek watershed is rated fair.) Stormwater controls and reductions in imperviousness are needed to halt and reverse the damage to Little Hunting Creek, Cameron Run, and Dogue Creek, and their tributaries.

This nomination should be adopted for Richmond Highway Corridor as soon as possible, rather than waiting for all 30 watershed plans to be completed and evaluated and county-wide policy changes to be adopted. Quick adoption might be accomplished by creating an overlay district for Richmond Highway Corridor . This would allow Fairfax County to begin to achieve improvements in water quality in its most damaged streams more quickly and help meet its Chesapeake Bay commitments sooner by taking advantage of opportunities afforded by redevelopment projects in this highly developed part of the county. The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation conservatively estimates that approximately 25% of the commercial properties in the corridor may be redeveloped in the next 25 years.

The proposed changes would better achieve environmental objective 2, policy k of the Policy Plan, ("For new development and redevelopment, apply better site design and low impact development (LID) techniques…and pursue commitments to reduce stormwater runoff volumes and peak flows…") than what is in the current Plan. Improvements in control of stormwater are essential to enable Fairfax County to meet its obligations and commitments to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay.