STAFF REPORT

Comprehensive Plan Amendment #PLN2013-00089, Purcell Road and Purcell Road (East) (Coles Magisterial District)

Planning Commission Public Hearing Date: December 5, 2012
Staff Recommendation: Adoption

I. **Background** is as follows:

A. **Request** – This is a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to re-evaluate the planned number of lanes, designation, and function of Purcell Road and Purcell Road East. Purcell Road is an existing two-lane road connecting Dumfries Road (Rt. 234) with Hoadly Road. Purcell Road East is a planned roadway not yet constructed that connects Purcell Road with the Prince William Parkway (Rt. 294). A segment of Purcell Road (East) right-of-way has been dedicated and is improved with a two-lane road identified as Peaks Mill Road. See maps in Attachment A for the road locations. The Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes a Thoroughfare Plan that lists Prince William County’s major roadways and provides information concerning their layout, right-of-way requirements, lane requirements, termini points, and functional classifications.

B. **Purcell Road/Dumfries Road Intersection Construction Project** – VDOT is pursuing a project that would make improvements to the intersection of Purcell Road and Dumfries Road (Route 234), including widening a portion of Purcell Road consistent with the planned width of four lanes. The conceptual improvements are shown in Attachment B. During public hearings for the intersection improvements, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the County received numerous comments expressing concern about the widening of Purcell Road to four lanes. In response to citizen concerns, the Board of County Supervisors placed the construction project on hold and asked staff and the Planning Commission to review the issue.

C. **Town Hall Meeting** – On February 6, 2012, the Coles District Supervisor held a Town Hall meeting to discuss the construction project and the planned design of Purcell Road and Purcell Road East. Most citizens in attendance were opposed to the idea of widening Purcell Road from two to four lanes.
D. Planning Commission Review and Recommendation

1. Work Session – The Planning Commission held a work session on February 15, 2012 to discuss Purcell Road. There was a general agreement that the County should study alternatives to the planned widening of Purcell Road and construction of Purcell Road East.

2. Public Meeting on March 7, 2012 – At a public meeting on March 7, 2012 the Planning Commission recommended the Board to initiate a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) to review the designation and function of Purcell Road and Purcell Road East. See Planning Commission Resolution in Attachment C.

E. Board of County Supervisors Initiation – On May 1, 2012, the Board of County Supervisors initiated a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to study and identify possible alternatives to widening Purcell Road and constructing Purcell Road East. See BOCS Initiating Resolution in Attachment D.

II. Current Situation is as follows:

A. Transportation Analysis – Alternative designs for Purcell Road and Purcell Road (East) were evaluated using the County’s transportation model. The results were presented to the Planning Commission at a work session on November 7, 2012 and are provided in Attachment B.

B. Staff Recommendation – Staff recommends reducing Purcell Road and Purcell Road (East) from four lanes to two lanes and that the trail class be changed from Class I, Shared Use Path to Class III, Extra Wide Lane for the following reasons:

- The reduced road right-of-way requirements will maintain the existing character of the road consistent with the existing planned land use while maintaining the connectivity envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

- The Purcell Road (East) provides important connectivity for the neighborhoods in the area, improves fire and rescue service delivery, facilitates school bus service and provides alternate access if a portion of Purcell Road were to be in an emergency.

- As a designated Comprehensive Plan road, funding for safety improvements could still be targeted to Purcell Road.

- The reduced designation does not reduce levels of service on parallel facilitates (Route 234, Hoadly Road, and Prince William Parkway) below level of service (LOS) “D”. 
The change from four lanes to two lanes necessitates a change to the trail planned for Purcell Road, but, by keeping the road in the trail plan, a Class III trail (extra wide lanes) can be planned to continue to provide access to a bicycle facility in the area.

C. Planning Commission Public Hearing – A public hearing has been advertised for December 5, 2012, before the Planning Commission.

III. Issues are as follows:

A. Policy – Are the proposed amendments consistent with the applicable goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the surrounding land uses?

B. Community Input – Have comments been received from the community on this issue?

C. Legal – What are the pertinent legal issues associated with the proposal?

D. Timing – Is there a time frame for the PC to take action on this proposal?

IV. Alternatives, beginning with the staff recommendations are as follows:

A. Recommend Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Purcell Road and Purcell Road East.

1. Policy – Relevant policy guidance may be found in the Long-Range Land Use Plan, Transportation Plan and Trails Plan.

   a) Long-Range Land Use – Purcell Road and Purcell Road (East) serve the Semi-Rural Area in mid-county which should be developed at a density of 1 dwelling per 2.5 acres. The roads are classified as major collectors and are intended to provide intra neighborhood linkage and carry traffic to arterials with minimal direct access to parcels. Typically, major collectors are four lanes; however, in the Rural Area of the County major collectors are designated as two-lane facilities (e.g., Aden Road) and Davis Ford Road, which functions as a major collector for the northern portion of the mid-county Semi-Rural Area, is a two-lane facility with no plans for widening to four lanes. The Long-Range Land Use Plan encourages public infrastructure investments be designed to be compatible with existing and planned land uses and recommends focusing infrastructure improvements to areas where the County is undertaking economic development or redevelopment initiatives.
Given these goals and the low density of the area served by Purcell Road and Purcell Road (East), a two-lane section is more compatible with the planned long-range land use of Semi-Rural Residential.

b) Transportation – Although the goal of a minimum level of service (LOS) D will not be achieved, by remaining in the Plan as a two-lane facility Purcell Road would still be planned for improvement of existing substandard conditions and safety enhancements. Purcell Road (East) will remain to provide connectivity to the transportation network and allow an additional access to the Purcell Road area, which is important for emergency services, school bus routing and providing an alternative route in case of a closure on Purcell Road. Of particular relevance, Policy 2, Action Strategy RD2.4 states, “promote the connectivity of roadways throughout the transportation network – where it does not adversely affect adjacent communities.” Concerns expressed by the community would suggest that they are adversely affected by the four lane proposal and that a two lane proposal would be better. The recommended alternative promotes connectivity while minimizing adverse impacts on the adjacent communities.

c) Trails – Purcell Road and Purcell Road (East) are both planned to have Class I, Shared Use Path trails. With the change from four lanes to two lanes, a Class I trail is not a viable option. At a minimum a Class III, Extra Wide Lane trail should be planned along both roads to maintain the planned connectivity of the trail system and improve bicycle safety.

2. **Community Input** – Comments were received during the public hearings for the Purcell Road/Dumfries Road intersection construction project, citizens provided comment during the Coles District Supervisor’s Town Hall Meeting on February 6, 2012, and staff received comments via email. The comments were overwhelmingly opposed to widening Purcell Road and in favor of amending the Comprehensive Plan.

3. **Legal** – After the Planning Commission has made a recommendation, the amendment will be forwarded to the Virginia Department of Transportation for review and comment in accordance with § 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia. Other legal issues will be addressed by the County Attorney’s office.

4. **Timing** – The BOCS did not specify a timeframe for Planning Commission action on the CPA.
Do Not Recommend Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Purcell Road and Purcell Road East.

1. **Policy** – The level of service provided by Purcell Road would be closer to the Transportation Plan goal to achieve a minimal level of service D.

2. **Community Input** – Comments were received during the public hearings for the Purcell Road/Dumfries Road intersection construction project, citizens provided comment during the Coles District Supervisor’s Town Hall Meeting on February 6, 2012, and staff received comments via email. The comments were overwhelmingly opposed to widening Purcell Road and in favor of amending the Comprehensive Plan.

3. **Legal** – Legal issues will be addressed by the County Attorney’s office.

4. **Timing** – The BOCS did not specify a timeframe for Planning Commission action on the CPA.

V. **Recommendation** is that the Planning Commission concur with Alternative A and recommend adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment #PLN2013-00089, Purcell Road and Purcell Road (East).

**Staff:** David McGettigan, AICP (703) 792-7189

**Attachments:**
- A. Existing and Proposed Maps
- B. Transportation Analysis
- C. Planning Commission Resolution
- D. BOCS Initiating Resolution
Attachment A
Existing Thoroughfare Plan Map
Alternative – Existing Conditions

Coles Magisterial District

Attachment B
Transportation Analysis
Attachment B
Transportation Analysis

Alternative 1 – No Build

CPA #PLN2013-00089, Purcell Road and Purcell Road East
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## Summary of Findings

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Coles Magisterial District
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION

MOTION: Gonzales
SECOND: Burgess
March 7, 2012
Regular Meeting
Res. No. 12-023

RE: PURCELL ROAD AND PURCELL ROAD EAST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION, COLES MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT

ACTION: RECOMMEND INITIATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT TO REVIEW THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION AND FUNCTION OF PURCELL ROAD AND PURCELL ROAD EAST

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Comprehensive Plan lists Purcell Road and Purcell Road East in the Thoroughfare Plan; and

WHEREAS, Purcell Road and Purcell Road East are considered Major Collectors and are planned to be 4-lane roadways with Class I trails; and

WHEREAS, design plans were underway for the construction of intersection improvements at Purcell Road and Dumfries Road (Route 234); and

WHEREAS, during public hearings for the Purcell Road intersection improvements, VDOT and the County received numerous comments expressing concern about the widening of Purcell Road to four lanes; and

WHEREAS, Prince William County has received numerous additional comments expressing concern with the future widening of Purcell Road; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors placed the Route 234/Purcell Road intersection improvement project on hold and requested the Planning Commission to examine Purcell Road within the context of the Thoroughfare Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Planning Commission held a work session on March 7, 2012 to discuss the facts regarding Purcell Road and Purcell Road East and to review citizen comments that had been received.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Prince William County Planning Commission does hereby recommend that a comprehensive plan amendment be initiated to review the designation and function of Purcell Road and Purcell Road East which may result in the downgrade of Purcell Road to a two-lane minor collector, and/or the removal of Purcell Road East from the Comprehensive Plan, and/or result in the revocation of the VDOT intersection improvements at Purcell Road and Dumfries Road (Route 234).

Votes:
Ayes: Arnold, Bryant, Burgess, Fry, Gonzales, Haynes, Hosen
Nays: Holley
Absent from Vote: None
Absent from Meeting: None

MOTION CARRIED

Clerk to the Commission: ____________________________
MOTION: NOHE
SECOND: CADDIGAN
RE: INITIATE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT FOR PURCELL ROAD AND PURCELL ROAD EAST
ACTION: APPROVED

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Comprehensive Plan lists Purcell Road and Purcell Road East in the Thoroughfare Plan; and

WHEREAS, Purcell Road and Purcell Road East are considered Major Collectors and are planned to be four-lane roadways with Class I trails; and

WHEREAS, design plans were underway for the construction of intersection improvements at Purcell Road and Dumfries Road (Route 234); and

WHEREAS, during public hearings for the Purcell Road and Dumfries Road intersection improvements, VDOT and the County received numerous comments expressing concern about the widening of Purcell Road to four lanes; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors placed the Purcell Road and Dumfries Road intersection improvement project on hold and requested the Planning Commission to examine Purcell Road within the context of the Thoroughfare Plan; and

WHEREAS, Prince William County has received numerous additional comments expressing concern with the future widening of Purcell Road; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Planning Commission held a work session on March 7, 2012 to discuss the facts regarding Purcell Road and Purcell Road East and to review citizen comments that had been received;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors does hereby initiate a comprehensive plan amendment to study and identify possible alternatives to widening Purcell Road and constructing Purcell Road East.
May 1, 2012
Regular Meeting
Res. No. 12-486
Page Two

Votes:
Ayes: Caddigan, Candland, Covington, Jenkins, May, Nohe, Principi, Stewart
Nays: None
Absent from Vote: None
Absent from Meeting: None

For Information:
Planning Director
Transportation Director

Attachment D
BOCS Initiating Resolution

ATTEST: [Signature]
Clerk to the Board