



October 11, 2022

TO: Board of County Supervisors

FROM: Rebecca Horner AICP, CZA, Acting Planning Director

THRU: Elijah Johnson, Acting County Executive

RE: Request to answer outstanding questions related to Prince William Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA)

In response to a request from the Chair of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, Planning Office staff has prepared responses to four questions that have been frequently raised by the public in relation to the Prince William Digital Gateway CPA.

1. Who is the applicant of the PW Digital Gateway CPA?

The PW Digital Gateway CPA, like all CPAs, is the Board's prerogative. The private parties who requested the PW Digital Gateway CPA are not the applicants. Because the Comprehensive Plan is the Board's adopted land use policy/guide, the Board is the moving party on all CPAs, including requests by other parties. Requests that the Board initiate a CPA may come from County staff, property owners, or the Planning Commission. No matter who initially requests a CPA, the Board is the only one authorized to initiate CPA. In addition to directing County staff to prepare a CPA, the Board may direct the Planning Commission to prepare a CPA; however, in either case it is the Board's decision, and the Board continues to control the CPA.

On July 20, 2021, through [Res. No. 21-445](#), the Prince William Board of County Supervisors initiated an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for PW Digital Gateway to change the Long-Range Land Use from AE, Agricultural or Estate, and ER, Environmental Resource, to Technology/Flex (T/F) with a T-3 Transect to include related impacts on supporting infrastructure and consider alternative comparable land use designation options that meet the needs of the Applicant who requested that the Board initiate the CPA and the priorities of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. Additionally, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors also approved a friendly amendment to enhance the study area to include the entire corridor between Route 29 and Sudley Road to review in a holistic manner (traffic, land use, and environmental concerns), look carefully at the areas directly abutting Conway Robinson Memorial State Forest and the Manassas National Battlefield Park, and coordinate the review with the open space corridor concepts of the rural area (native plant buffering and sustainability) to preserve as much of the area as possible.

2. How is a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) different than a Rezoning?

A Comprehensive Plan guides the growth and development of a community. It articulates the goals and policies that help guide the Board of County Supervisors in making informed land use development decisions (ex. rezonings and special use permits) and investments in public infrastructure (ex. schools,

roads, and parks and recreational facilities). It also presents a blueprint for creating a great quality of place, quality of community, and quality of life based on the Board's vision for the County's future. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) is an amendment initiated by the Board of County Supervisors to consider a change to the Comprehensive Plan (either text or map). Only the Board of County Supervisors can initiate a CPA.

The Comprehensive Plan is an important policy document. However, the Comprehensive Plan is a guide and advisory, it is not legally binding. The Zoning Ordinance is a regulatory instrument and legally binding.

Zoning is a power, granted by the state, that allows Prince William County to regulate, among other things, land use; the size and coverage of lots; the height, bulk, and siting of buildings; and the density of development. *See generally* Virginia Code § 15.2-2280. The Prince William County Zoning Ordinance is for the general purpose of promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the public; providing for development of new community centers with adequate highway, utility, health, educational and recreational facilities; recognizing and providing for the needs of agriculture, industry and business; providing that the growth of the community be consonant with the efficient and economical use of public funds; and implementing the intent, goals, policies and action strategies of the adopted Comprehensive Plan. *See generally* Virginia Code § 15.2-2283 and County Code Sec. 32-200.01. In general, the zoning of land is intended to complement and implement its Comprehensive Plan Long-Range Land Use designation.

The Zoning Ordinance governs and regulates the uses that are allowed on the property and the standards of development of the property. A rezoning (or zoning map amendment) application is a request to change the zoning on a specific property. A property owner has a legal right to petition for a rezoning on their property.

A property owner does not have a legal right to request a change to the Comprehensive Plan Long-Range Land Use designation of their property. The County has established a process which allows a property owner to request that the Board initiate a CPA.

3. What properties are included in the PW Digital Gateway CPA and has the CPA boundary expanded?

Comprehensive Plan #CPA2021-00004, PW Digital Gateway, began as a request for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to change the Long-Range Land Use designation for approximately ±801.59 acres from AE, Agricultural or Estate, and ER, Environmental Resource, to Technology/Flex (TF) with a T-3 Transect. On July 20, 2021, the Board of County Supervisors in Res. No. 21-445 initiated the PW Digital Gateway CPA with an expanded Study Area to include the Pageland Lane Corridor between Route 29 and Sudley Road. The Planning Office published the expanded Study Area for the PW Digital Gateway CPA in October of 2021 which currently consists of ±2,139 acres. The established Study Area boundary has not changed since that time. The PW Digital Gateway CPA has undergone multiple internal reviews and community engagements with the current boundary.

On April 4, 2022, property owners in Catharpin Valley Estates requested to be included in the PW Digital Gateway CPA. The Planning Office responded to the neighborhood indicating that staff was not going to expand the PW Digital Gateway CPA to include Catharpin Valley Estates and if the neighborhood

wanted to be considered for a CPA, the property owners would need to file a separate CPA request for a change in the Long-Range Land Use designation of their property(s) for consideration by the Board.

4. What has been the timeline for the PW Digital Gateway CPA?

On July 20, 2021, through Res. No. 21-445, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors initiated an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for PW Digital Gateway.

- Planning Staff Established an Expanded Study Area Boundary: August 2021
- Planning Office Created and Published a CPA Website in October 2021 to Share Public Information and Updates about the Project Status (www.pwcva.gov/pwdigitalgateway)
- CPA Document Submissions and Staff and Agency Review: December 2021-September 2022
- Community Meetings on January 27 and February 3, 2022
- Development of the Staff-Created Draft Plan: March 2022- July 2022
- McHarg Analysis Complete on May 19, 2022
- 1st Draft Plan Published on July 7, 2022
- Planning Commission Work Session on July 20, 2022
- 2nd Draft Plan Published on August 15, 2022
- Planning Commission Public Hearing: September 14, 2022
- Board Of County Supervisors Public Hearing: Scheduled November 1, 2022

For additional information about the CPA, please visit www.pwcva.gov/pwdigitalgateway

Comment can also be provided by using the Planning Office's [Public Comment Form](#)