

**Bull Run Civil War Round Table (BRCWRT) Preservation Corner  
September 23, 2022**

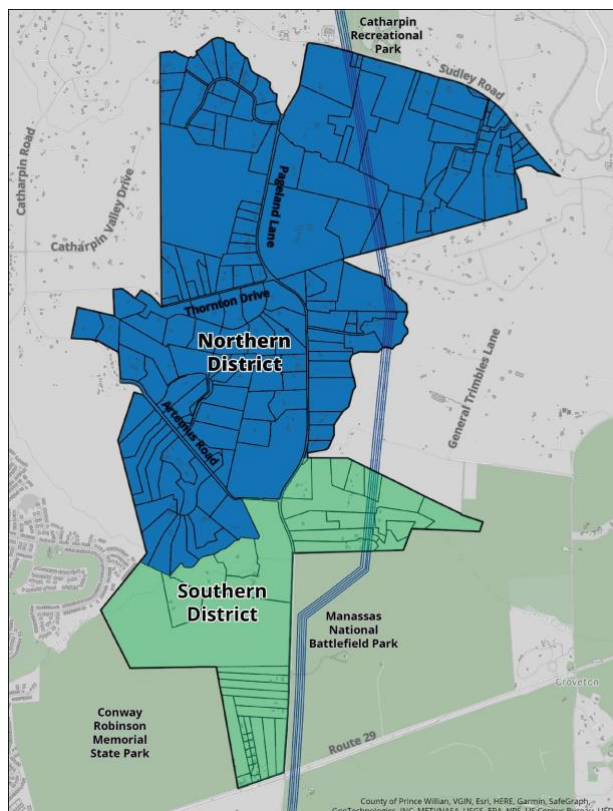


Greetings BRCWRT Members and Friends - This edition of *Preservation Corner* provides an update on the Prince William (PW) Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) and its attendant threat to Manassas National Battlefield Park and other historic lands, and a reminder of the Oct 7, 2022 Dedication Ceremony for the CW Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads at GMU's Fairfax Campus, Parking Lot K.

**Prince William (PW) Digital Gateway (Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2021-00004)**

After a marathon Public Hearing conducted September 14, 2022 that lasted well into the morning hours of September 15, the PW County Planning Commission voted 4-3 (with one abstention) to recommend approval of the PW Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA). Commissioners Qwendolyn Brown (Neabsco), Patty Kuntz (At-Large), Juan McPhail (Potomac), and Cynthia Moses-Nedd (Woodbridge) voted in favor of the motion to recommend approval. Commissioners Richard Berry (Gainesville), Joseph Fontanella Jr. (Coles) and Tom Gordy (Brentsville) voted in opposition to the motion, and Commissioner Robert Perry (Occoquan) abstained. The CPA with the Planning Commission's recommendation now moves to the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) for their consideration and decision, currently scheduled for the BOCS meeting on October 11, 2022.

The CPA's Study Area consists of 194 land parcels and 2,139 acres between Route 234 and Route 29. The Study Area is divided into two districts to better target policy recommendations to identify and address existing conditions.



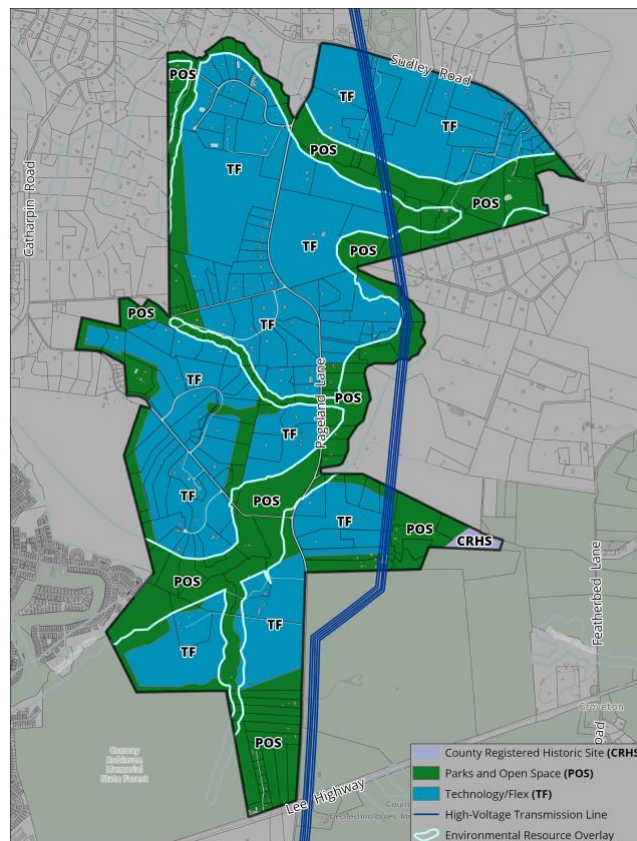
*PW Digital Gateway Study Area and Subdistrict Map*

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The CPA includes recommended policies and action strategies in eight functional areas (land use, community design, cultural resources, economic development, green infrastructure, mobility, water and sewer, sustainability, and level of service) for incorporating the digital gateway into the Comprehensive Plan should the Board of Supervisors approve the CPA. While the CPA addresses many concerns initially raised by PWC residents and historic preservation organizations, it is being considered for approval without an assessment of the environmental impacts on the Occoquan and Bull Run watershed and on the Occoquan Reservoir, the traffic and transportation impacts, and the impacts of a significant increase in the demand for electrical power within the corridor. The CPA does not eliminate the development threat to historic land within and adjacent to the corridor. These historic lands include Manassas National Battlefield Park (MNBFP) as well as 107 acres of land in the Southern District that is within the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) designated Manassas Battlefield Core Area - land which is eligible for incorporation into MNBFP, and where American soldiers camped, fought and died during the August 1862 Battle of 2<sup>nd</sup> Manassas (Bull Run).

The CPA does include measures intended to mitigate the adverse impacts of the proposed data centers on MNBFP, including land use designation as Parks and Open Space (see figure below) for some of the most threatening parcels.



*PW Digital Gateway Land Use Plan*

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The challenge would likely be in implementation, as there is negligible incentive for landowners or data center developers to develop parks or open space areas on these land tracts and to effectively maintain them. Many of the other mitigation measures contained in the CPA (setbacks, buffer areas, tree screens and afforestation, building and lighting restrictions, etc.) have, in practice, proven inadequate in effectively mitigating the adverse impacts they are intended to address. What may look and 'sound' good on paper does not necessarily achieve the desired result. It is typically not one adverse impact, but rather a combination of impacts, including visual and noise factors, associated with an industrial site that renders such mitigation measures ineffective.

The CPA includes a strategy to widen Pageland Lane to four lanes, divided by a landscaped median and with shared use (bike and pedestrian) paths on each side of the roadway - an undertaking that would certainly intensify and magnify the adverse impacts of adjacent data centers on MNBP's historic sites and viewsheds. The CPA does not address power needs or requirements for the proposed data centers, and even though these data centers would be proximate to an existing Dominion Energy transmission line, that transmission line is "near or at capacity". Any data centers built in the Study Area north of U.S. Route 29 will require new power substations and/or transmission lines to provide the requisite electric power - a situation that would significantly increase the electrical power infrastructure in this corridor, with the attendant adverse impacts on MNBP and its historic sites and viewsheds, and on other historic lands in the corridor.

The threat is real - once lost, the historic viewsheds and settings of these lands cannot be re-created. Readers of this column, and particularly those who are Prince William County residents, are encouraged to let your voices and concerns be heard. Now is the time (before October 11, 2022) to contact the PW Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) and/or your respective PWC District Supervisor and let them know your concerns with the proposed PW Digital Gateway and the negative impacts on historic sites and cultural resources that would result from approving the CPA.

PW Board of County Supervisors:

Chair (At Large): Ann B. Wheeler - [chair@pwcgov.org](mailto:chair@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4640

Neabsco District Supervisor: Victor S. Angry - [vsangry@pwcgov.org](mailto:vsangry@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4667

Brentsville District Supervisor: Jeanine M. Lawson - [jlawson@pwcgov.org](mailto:jlawson@pwcgov.org); 703-792-6190

Coles District Supervisor: Yesli Vega - [yvega@pwcgov.org](mailto:yvega@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4620

Gainesville District Supervisor: Pete K. Candland - [gainesville@pwcgov.org](mailto:gainesville@pwcgov.org); 703-792-6195

Occoquan District Supervisor: Kenny A. Boddye - [kboddye@pwcgov.org](mailto:kboddye@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4643

Potomac District Supervisor: Andrea O. Bailey, Vice Chair - [abailey@pwcgov.org](mailto:abailey@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4563

Woodbridge District Supervisor: Margaret Angela Franklin, Chair Pro-Tem - [mfranklin@pwcgov.org](mailto:mfranklin@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4646

You may also speak, in person or remotely, during the Public Comment segment of the BOCS meetings scheduled for October 11, 2022 at 2:00 pm and at 7:30 pm. Though limited to 3 minutes for comments,



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this is sufficient time to speak to your concerns and recommendations. The schedule and agendas for the BOCS meetings can be viewed at <https://www.pwcva.gov/> .

***Civil War Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads (GMU Fairfax Campus - Parking Lot K)***

The long-delayed dedication ceremony for the preserved and interpreted Civil War Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads historic site on George Mason University's (GMU) Fairfax Campus is finally happening - on Friday, October 7, 2022 at 10:00 AM. Celebrating the six-year effort by BRCWRT and GMU to preserve and interpret this site, the ceremony will highlight the process and project developed and implemented by this terrific partnership team and will recognize many of the key people from GMU and BRCWRT, who made it all happen. Notable attendees will be Virginia Senator Chap Petersen, City of Fairfax Mayor David Meyer, GMU Vice President of Facilities Frank Strike, and a number of period-dressed military and civilian living history personnel. Period civil war band music will be provided by GMU's own 8<sup>th</sup> Green Machine Regiment Band.



Civil War Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads

The ceremony will be followed by a site tour for those who wish to learn more about the redoubt and the site's history. Join us and help celebrate and enjoy what promises to be a fun and enlightening event. Come early to enjoy viewing the displays and interact with ceremony participants and other attendees.

You can read the full story of the preservation and interpretation of the site in the June/July 2021 edition of the Stone Wall newsletter ([http://bullruncwrt.org/BRCWRT/Newsletters21/Stone\\_Wall-June-July%202021-issue\\_5.pdf](http://bullruncwrt.org/BRCWRT/Newsletters21/Stone_Wall-June-July%202021-issue_5.pdf))

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, BRCWRT's preservation actions and activities.

Blake Myers, BRCWRT Preservation Chair