

The Honorable Walter Alcorn
Supervisor, Hunter Mill District
1801 Cameron Glen Drive
Reston, VA 20190
huntermill@faifaxcounty.gov

Dear Supervisor Alcorn,

On behalf of the Board of Reston Citizens Association (RCA), I am writing to you in reference to the "Parking Reimagined" Zoning Amendment scheduled to be discussed at the Board of Supervisors Meeting on March 21. RCA believes this proposal is not well conceived nor developed and has too many unanswered questions and obvious shortcomings to be advanced at this time. We strongly urge the proposal be returned to staff for further analysis, integration with other County related work and above all outreach to the County's citizens most directly affected by any revision of parking regulations.

Gary Maupin, Hunter Mill District representative on the Parking Reimagined Work Group, briefed you regarding this last Friday. Sally Horn from Drainesville, another member of that group, has talked to you and written to you about concerns with the changes to primarily Parking minimums and loading requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, Mr. Maupin gave you an issue paper of concerns. An updated version of that issue paper is attached so that you have a list of the major concerns. You will see from your Board Package that this proposal is very complicated. Planning Commissioner, John Carter and Mr. Maupin have asked for a simple chart of the differences between the current and future ordinance of Zoning Areas such as TOD, TSA, Revitalization Areas etc., and have not received a response to that request. Further, we believe this proposal should not have been organized by zoning areas. There are numerous unique places and situations across the County that are not addressed by this simplistic, broad-brushed approach used by the County staff.

Of interest is a lengthy defense of this change regarding the One Fairfax Policy in your Board Package for Tuesday. We believe that this proposal laid out by the County staff is actually in opposition to One Fairfax. Low-income and minority residents need and want cars due to their unique work situations requiring the resident to BE on the job and do it at odd hours and in odd places. Additionally, this proposal adversely affects the elderly. Granted, the number of designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities would not be reduced; however, history has shown that reductions in standard spaces lead to abled persons AND delivery vehicles parking in those designated spaces. These are several examples of issues raised with County staff several times without a response.

Now, our main concern is with the Board of Supervisors getting the updated Reston Comprehensive Plan (RCP) approved by the Board of Supervisors. RCA knows this is on the top of your list so it is very difficult for you to wade into the middle of this issue. We know your focus on approval of the RCP must be paramount. Also, from what we understand, there is very little supervisory support for stopping or slowing this proposal down despite what we see as a substantial County-wide citizen concern. This timing makes this proposal extremely difficult to challenge at this early stage . . . forcing it to be challenged in the Public Hearing Stage. A probable reality but that will create increased animosity with County staff with whom we

respect and with whom we have a good working relationship. It also has a negative effect on the Board of Supervisors when County staff indicates the residents' inputs are the outliers which they are not. Also, importantly, a delay would not make a significant difference. A delay means that additional work would need to be done by developers, County staff, the Planning Commission and the Board along with citizens to address how requests below the minimum would be handled separately as is done today.

With all due respect, this proposal is 'not ready for prime time' and a delay would, we believe, help to address the numerous concerns and craft a proposal in collaboration with citizen groups that addresses the outstanding issues.

Thank you for the time we know you spend on so many important issues and we thank you for considering this one.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Mulston

President, Reston Citizens Association

ISSUES WITH PARKING REIMAGINED

Fairfax County is proposing a parking amendment to Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance that will reduce **Minimum Parking Requirements (MPRs)** both in residential and commercial areas. There are some benefits to the concept of reducing MPRs and residents support reductions that are reasonable and add a net benefit to the environment. The currently proposed parking amendment does not attain these goals.

Residents have raised many issues associated with the proposed parking amendment during the last year, both in the County Parking Reimagined Work Group and in many virtual Town Halls. Some of these issues have been addressed, but many still exist. Key issues of major concern about Parking Reimagined include the following:

- The amendment benefits developers and the County staff, but it does not improve the quality of life for residents and does not do enough for the environment. Environmental groups are concerned that saved space will not be replaced by green and also believe there needs to be more integration with another County staff group that is separately looking at Place Making in Parking lots. Integration with Road Placemaking is also an issue as is the connection with the road work itself. More study and analysis are needed and work between these related groups in the County.
- While many think that minimum parking requirements should be reduced near metro transit stations, many have concerns about reducing MPRs in areas not near metro stations. The claim of County staff that MPRs can be reduced in areas where there is currently bus service instead of metro service is imprudent. Bus service in Fairfax County has been cut in the past for various reasons and could easily be cut in the future, leaving residents in these areas without necessary transportation. There is also extensive overflow parking in all County Supervisory jurisdictions and this exacerbates that problem.
- In regard to reducing MPRs in areas near metro transit stations, many think that this reduction should be done in relation to distance from the metro station. Many surrounding jurisdictions choose to reduce MPRs within one-half of a mile of a metro station. This is far more reasonable than reducing MPRs in the entire zoning designation, which is what Fairfax County is proposing. But even then, Metro stations have different issues affecting parking and even they need to be looked at separately in many cases.
- The County must identify the specific challenges of each area before changing parking requirements. Applying percentage reductions to areas based on their zoning designation is not sufficient. In fact, there are so many unique areas across the County that these will need to be treated differently even beyond using distance from transit rather than zoning area as the
- Many residents have voiced extreme concern that the proposed parking rates for multifamily dwelling units are not sufficient to support the residents living in these multifamily buildings. Residents have not found meaningful analysis for these proposed parking rates in the material posted on the Parking Reimagined website and do not think that they have received reasonable answers to their questions at the various virtual Town Halls hosted by the County.
- Reductions in MPRs need to take into consideration that we are now seeing extended families living in townhouses and multifamily dwellings. Also, reductions in MPRs should be integrated with other aspects of parking, such as enforcement procedures that ensure overflow parking into adjacent communities is prevented which along with other points here is crucial.
- Reductions in MPRs must provide adequate loading spaces for numerous daily deliveries and strict enforcement to ensure handicapped spaces remain accessible for handicapped use only. There needs to be

a careful case by case review if a developer wants a reduction or waiver of loading spaces. Keep a public hearing requirement with notice and an opportunity to be heard is a matter of dignity and respect for the handicapped population in Fairfax County.

- Residents are concerned that the amendment gives the Director of Land Development Services (LDS) the ability to issue reductions in MPRs through administrative action, for up to 50% of the required parking. Residents do not think that MPRs should be further reduced without information indicating the availability of other accessible parking. In these cases, residents think that a public hearing concerning the further reduction in MPRs should be held.
- Residents do not think that the proposed parking amendment does enough to benefit the environment as a result of the reduction in required parking. In many jurisdictions here in the U.S. and other places across the world using reductions in MPRs to increase green spaces to assist with climate issues, stormwater management, mitigation of heat islands and other environmental benefits. The proposed parking amendment does not require any additional green space as a result of reductions in MPRs. County staff has stated that developers are free to add green space if they wish, but that the County wants to keep the amendment “flexible”.
- These changes are likely to have a greater impact on lower-income, minorities and the elderly who all have a greater need for vehicles than others due to their work environment and hours. This policy runs in opposition to the One Fairfax Policy.
- County staff has stated that the parking amendment does not increase the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of a proposed development. However, it does allow the developer to build out to the enlarged footprint resulting from the decrease in parking area. Therefore, the County could be increasing the buildings associated with a development, and hence the impervious surfaces, without an increase in FAR. It is conceivable that as a result of this amendment, Fairfax County could end up with more impervious surfaces than it currently possesses.
- There is a generally pretty strong feeling that residents are not being listened to and there is significant opposition. That has not been reported to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission.

There can be potential benefits to reducing MPRs in certain areas throughout Fairfax County, but many other areas that will be harmed. Further analysis is needed. Further integration with roads and placemaking is needed. Further outreach is needed even though much was done. More listening is needed by County staff although the County assigned excellent staff to this project. It seems they were told to reduce parking and get it done by a given date and nothing will stand in their way. A delay would not make a difference since all it means is more work by developers, County staff, the Planning Commission and the Board along with citizens do address requests below the minimum would be handled separately as is done today.