



## Reston Citizens Association

February 7, 2014

Dear Honorable Members of the Board,

I am writing to follow-up on the broad-based concerns of Reston residents you heard about from the Reston community at the draft Reston Master Plan public hearing two weeks ago concerning traffic congestion with the prospective urbanization of the Dulles Corridor. RCA has expressed serious reservations about this issue for months as the draft plan has wended its way from the task force through the Planning Commission and on for your consideration. And Reston 2020 laid out its concerns and potential solutions in [a major working group paper four years ago](#). As RCA's representative to the task force, I would like to reiterate a few suggestions for amendments to the draft plan that may help ameliorate this concern.

RCA (as well as the Reston 2020 Committee) has been outspoken on the need to constrain parking in the transit station areas as a highly effective and inexpensive TDM means to reduce congestion growth. In the first draft of the Reston plan that included DOT's transportation text (Parking Management, pp. 63-64, Version 5, July 29, 2013), the County Transportation staff included straightforward text and a table showing proposed parking constraints (target minimums, not maximums) by type of development and distance from station (see attachment). We believe that the Transportation staff included that text and table in the draft plan because, in their professional opinion, they saw it as an essential ingredient in meeting the Vehicle Trip Reduction and Level of Service goals they sought to achieve in the Reston plan.

Nonetheless, after robust opposition by the highly vocal majority developers on the task force and despite the opposition of both the Transportation staff and community representatives, this text was substantially modified and the table dropped in the Parking Management.

The staff included a constraint only on parking for office development only and qualified that standard further as follows:

. . . The use of higher parking rates in the first phases of a development followed by lower parking rates in subsequent phases can be considered *for reasons such as existing leases requiring higher parking rates*. Parking agreements with neighboring sites can be considered on an interim basis. Residential uses should take into account the number of bedrooms per unit when establishing the amount of parking to supply. All non-residential uses should reduce their parking supply below the Countywide minimum.

For office space, a maximum parking rate should be:

- 2.1 spaces per 1,000 square feet within the Transit Station Mixed Use area
- 2.4 spaces per 1,000 square feet Residential Mixed Use

In instances where a higher office parking rate exists or is desired, a parking study, *or other an appropriate justification*, can be submitted in order to consider a different rate for office use. (*Italicized text marks amendments by the Planning Commission.*)

At the Planning Commission hearing, Boston Properties Vice President and Reston Task Force member Pete Otteni expressed his concern that even this weak language would inhibit commercial development. He noted that he had a letter signed by several other station area developers limiting the parking restrictions to 2.4 spaces per 1,000 square feet throughout the entirety of each station area—well above the standards espoused in the draft plan even as amended.

The soft new language offering several “outs” to meeting the parking guidelines essentially means there will be no improvements parking conditions and continued growth in congestion, especially on the Dulles Corridor’s principal arteries in the station areas. The Planning Commission’s amendments further soften the parking constraint by:

- Specifying an “existing lease” requirement for more spaces. It begs the question of when that lease is “existing”—now or a lease amended a month or so before a new redevelopment zoning request that increases the parking requirement, e.g.—from 3 spaces to 5 spaces per 1,000SF of office space? What lessee wouldn’t want a commitment to more parking? Why would the County commit now to buying into the terms of unknown and amendable commercial leases?
- It also lowers the requirement to exceeding the draft office development parking standard by permitting any kind of “appropriate justification,” not a more demanding parking study, to exceed the maximum parking space requirement.

We believe these modifications of the draft plan make it almost useless in assuring a transition in Reston’s office development from an office park environment (like Crystal City) that is largely to blame for congestion throughout the County to a transit-oriented development environment that emphasizes moving away from auto use to transit, biking, and walking.

**We strongly recommend that the Board amend the Parking Management section of the draft plan to re-incorporate the language and table provided by the Transportation staff originally included in Version 5 of draft plan. Otherwise, we believe it will be impossible to achieve even the limited traffic growth reduction goals laid out in the plan.**

That said, we also believe the overall traffic goal laid out in the plan—“An overall Level of Service (LOS) ‘E’ is the goal for the intersections within the street network . . . (p. 59)” —is undefined and too nebulous to be meaningful. Both RCA and RA have repeatedly asked for a definition of “overall” LOS, but the County staff has steadfastly refused to provide a definition, much less include that definition in the draft plan.

- Does this goal reflect an AADT, AAWT, peak period, peak hour, “peak of the peak”, or some other timeframe?

- Is it somehow traffic-weighted so that the “gateway” intersections carry a far greater effect on the “overall” LOS than fringe grid intersections (such as the intersection of Isaac Newton Square North and West—where few cars pass in a day)?

Without definition, this goal is meaningless.

**As we have recommended before, we propose two changes:**

- **That the definition of “overall” LOS be stated completely and precisely in the plan. We believe a definition that states that a LOS “E” goal for all intersections is based on (a) a traffic-weighted average of (b) peak weekday hour (morning or evening) traffic would be appropriate.**
- **That the following text (italicized) be added to that goal statement:**

***“An overall Level of Service (LOS) ‘E’ is the goal for the intersections within the street network Reston TSAs (sic), and specifically for each gateway intersection in these station areas.”  
(Note: The gateway intersections include the intersections of Sunrise Valley and Sunset Hills drives with Wiehle Drive, Reston Parkway, and Fairfax County Parkway.)***

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these simple, effective, and important, amendments to the draft Reston plan for assuaging one of the principal concerns of most Restonians about the expected impassibility of the Dulles Corridor.

Sincerely,

Terry Maynard  
Reston Citizens Association Board of Directors  
RCA Representative to the Reston Master Plan  
Special Study Task Force

CC:

Fairfax County Planning Commission  
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**Parking Management**

To facilitate achievement of TDM goals and encourage transit use, shared parking for uses which have different peak demand periods, instituting paid parking, or other parking reduction strategies are encouraged. These parking strategies can serve to reduce trips and more efficiently organize and utilize the area. For development within ½ mile of the Metrorail station, a parking plan should be submitted along with a development application that shows that the amount of parking that is provided is sized to support the development. Provisions for parking reductions and other lower parking incentives should be utilized if it is supported by the parking plan. Table T3 has target parking rates for areas within ½ mile of a Metro Station.

**Table T3  
Target Parking Rates for Areas within One Half Mile of Stations**

Use	Fairfax County Parking Requirement (as of 2013)	< ½ Mile From Metro	Optional 10% Reduction < ¼ Mile from Metro
		Target Parking Rate <sup>1</sup>	Target Parking Rate <sup>1</sup>
Residential or Lodging Unit			
Townhouses	2.7	2.0	1.8
Multifamily 0-1 Bedroom	1.6	1.3	1.2
Multifamily 2 Bedroom	1.6	1.5	1.4
Multifamily 3+ Bedroom	1.6	2.0	1.8
Hotel	1.08	1.08	1.0
Commercial Spaces/1,000 sq ft			
>125,000 sq ft	2.6	2.2	2.0
<125,000 sq ft	3.6	2.3	2.1
Retail	4.0-4.8	3.2-3.8 <sup>2</sup>	No minimum <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Target Parking Rate is a parking minimum.

<sup>2</sup>For uses not specifically listed above, the minimum parking space requirement set forth in sections 11-103, 11-104, 11-105 and 11-106 shall apply as follows: In TOD districts, the first 5,000 square feet of gross floor area located on the ground or street level for the following uses shall not be included in the calculation of required parking: personal/business services, fast food restaurant, quick service food store and/or eating establishment. Beyond 5,000 square feet, the minimum number of parking spaces required shall be based on 80% of the specified rates set forth in such Sections.