



**Statement of Terry Maynard  
RCA Representative to the Reston Task Force on  
Behalf of the RCA Board of Directors re  
Draft Version 5 of the Reston Comprehensive Plan  
Reston Master Plan Task Force Meeting  
August 13, 2013**

The Reston Citizens Association has been an active and enthusiastic participant in the Reston master planning process since its inception nearly four years ago. We have been strong advocates of transit-oriented development around Reston's coming Metrorail stations, constraining that advocacy only by calling for the development to be of the right type at the right density in the right place. With the help of more than five dozen volunteers in its Reston 2020 Committee, we have provided the Reston Task Force with more than one dozen well-researched and presented papers on virtually every facet of TOD planning for Reston and have been at this table at every meeting since the task force began.

In general, we support the densities, mixes, and locations for that important development as outlined in Scenario G months ago although we would amend it further to meet the needs of Restonians based on the impact analyses we have reviewed. We believe it is fair to say that the extent of our dissatisfaction with that scenario mirrors much of the development community's dissatisfaction with modestly constrained densities and greater emphasis on residential development. Under Scenario G, no one would get all they want, but we would all garner many of the goals for a transit-oriented urban community we each want to achieve. In a task force setting, that is called compromise and probably means that the Scenario G densities, mixes, and sitings are the best we can accomplish.

Unfortunately, as Scenario G has been written up by County staff in draft Comprehensive Plan language, the goals and constraints in that scenario have been utterly destroyed. Each draft has been less satisfactory than its predecessor as a planning document. At this point the draft language has no spine or muscle to achieve the goals and limits it professes.

- The latest draft, even more than its predecessors, includes numerous weasel words and phrases that undermine achievement of the planning goals of Scenario G, such as extending the TOD walking distance by five minutes in direct contradiction of County TOD policy.
- It omits or minimizes vital details for critical planning elements, such as phasing, implementation, financing, and incorporating parks and recreation to serve future residents and employees in the transit station areas.

- It overlooks opportunities that would serve the longer term development of the station areas, including moving now to acquire air rights along the Dulles corridor and calling for a recreation center in one of the station areas.
- It generally calls upon the current Reston community, and specifically Reston Association, to provide space and financing for amenities that serve station area residents and workers without any commitment that the new residents would become members of RA.

There are two critical ramifications of this amorphous, incomplete, and ultimately dysfunctional draft Plan language. The first is that it gives developers virtually unfettered opportunity to build what they want in the density they wish at places of their choosing. The stretching of boundaries and softening of planned mixes means almost anything can be built anywhere. The easy opportunities for developers to increase densities and alter mixes through proffers and bonuses means, among other things, that we risk development far exceeding even the traffic clogging levels identified in Scenario G.

On the other hand, the draft Plan language essentially calls upon current Restonians to absorb all the burdens created by adding up to 50,000 jobs and 40,000 residents in the station areas. Despite the fact that the County Parks Authority has identified a need for more than 100 acres of parks and recreation facilities to serve those people, the draft plan does not identify space in the station areas to accommodate that need. In fact, it calls upon the current residents of Reston to share their space—which they pay for annually—so that developers can build more and make greater profits. At the same time, the draft plan does not recommend—much less require—that the new station area residents (who are not part of RTCA) become members of RA. This is a double whammy for Restonians.

The community's apprehension and dissatisfaction with the plan is aggravated further by the draft plan's failure to address meaningfully key implementation, phasing, and financing issues. This shortcoming is highlighted by the reality that virtually none of the infrastructure upgrades recommended by RMAG nearly five years ago in connection with the arrival of the Silver Line at Wiehle Avenue has been planned or funded, much less completed, before the arrival of Metrorail. With the exception of work by Comstock, only a few County sidewalk improvements are likely to be completed before rail arrives. The most important improvement, the Soapstone Connector, is still in the feasibility stage and that process began just six months ago. Only \$5 million of the estimated \$105 million needed to complete the recommended infrastructure has been approved. From Reston's perspective, the County lacks credibility in delivering even the most basic infrastructure needs—streets, transit, schools, recreational facilities, etc.—much less amenities, such as a performing arts center as they are laid out in this draft plan.

In short, this draft plan states that what the developers and County have is theirs; what Reston has is negotiable if not outright takable.

If this draft Plan or something like it is approved by the Board of Supervisors, it means that the Reston community is being used as the primary financial and space resource so that station area developers can increase their profits and the County can increase its tax revenues. Meanwhile, Restonians face likely cuts in library services under a new Board initiative. They could also face paying tolls on the Fairfax County Parkway under another Board initiative which would also divert more traffic to Reston Parkway. And they confront the prospect of having to pay for the construction and operation of a local recreation center itself while every other County recreation center is paid for through county-wide revenues.

We get it. We know that the County is in significant long-term financial jeopardy and that it hopes that it can increase tax revenues through additional development in Tysons and along the Dulles Corridor. To do this, it feels compelled to give developers what they want. At the same time, it is clearly unwilling to make even the most necessary investments in Reston. Nonetheless, we reject the notion that Reston should be a cash cow for the County and give up its visionary well-planned community to serve the profitability of the private sector or redress bad financial decisions by the Board of Supervisors.

It is extremely unlikely that RCA will be able to support this draft Plan if it is finalized with the many massive flaws we have identified in our multiple submissions to County staff. We will encourage the community to express its objections in the most vociferous means possible to the task force, the County staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors. We are also working with other community organizations to protect Reston against the many grievous shortcomings in this draft plan. We will not be easily rolled over by County and developer agendas in our effort to preserve Reston's values and planning principles as well our personal wellbeing.