



Statement of
Gerald R. Volloy, President
Alliance of Reston Clusters and Homeowners
The Fairfax County Planning Commission
Re: Reston Master Plan Special Study, Phase 1 – Reston Transit Station Areas
ST09-III-UP01(A)
13 November 2013

Chairman Murphy, Commissioner De La Fe, and Commission Members. Good evening. My name is Jerry Volloy, and I am the President of the Alliance of Reston Clusters and Homeowners. It is with great pride, but yet with mixed emotions that I stand before you this evening.

As a Member of the Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force, I am so very proud of the Vision that the Task Force has put forward for your consideration. The Task Force, with the outstanding and dedicated support of Fairfax County's Planning and Zoning Department, especially that of Mrs. Heidi Merkel, has—if achieved- created what I believe should prove to be an exciting, welcoming, and accommodating environment for the Reston corridor, for Reston's future growth and development: a place where businesses and residents alike will be proud to locate and call home. If achieved and if implemented, the vision will continue to support many of Bob Simon's original goals and dreams for Reston, and where the tenets of "Live, Work, Play, and Get Involved" will continue to be viable realities in Reston's future.

With mixed emotions, however, because I believe we leave such an important aspect of our work yet before us. At the very beginning of this process, each of us, who represent major community organizations, within Reston, all took a position in support of metrorail to Dulles and the attendant growth and development the advent of metrorail would bring to our community, as long as the infrastructure and public facilities to support and accommodate that growth and development were provided.

As a community planner, as a commander of two of the largest installations in the Air Force, one with responsibilities for community planning that encompassed an area as large as the state of New Jersey, as a prior CEO of the Reston Association, and a corporate executive in two of the largest corporations in the world, the very next and essential step in the process of planning for future growth and development or of a strategic plan would be the development of an implementation or operational plan that defined how the vision would be achieved; defined projections of when certain aspects of the plan would be achieved, who would be assigned responsibility for achieving what, defined what the priorities for accomplishment are, the sources of funding, and what resources—financial and otherwise—would be required to make the vision become a reality. A couple of paragraphs about ways implementation might be achieved, at the end of the end of our comp plan, seem to me to be disconcerting substitutes.

ARCH has stated its endorsement of the Comp Plan's Planning Principle that the Task Force has adopted stating that "development will be phased with infrastructure." In a 2010 ARCH Issues Bulletin to the Task Force and our District Supervisor, ARCH emphasized that infrastructure "identified as necessary improvements to support specific phases of (re)development be put in place before or concurrently with that (re)development." Those improvements include aspects such as community amenities, and larger open spaces that would not be triggered by any one single development. These raise different considerations than community assets/needs that are specific to a particular site, that might be secured via proffer with individual developers or as essential prerequisites to granting higher FARs. Our concern arises with how common infrastructure needs will be secured in a time of scarce public resources given that no one developer is likely to be responsible for these types of improvements, and how the essential balance between land use and infrastructure will be established and maintained.

ARCH and others- early in this process- suggested that there be established an Infrastructure Committee such as that established by the Tysons Corner group to address these needs and to ensure continued community input, oversight and control. However, County Staff reminded the Task Force that Reston isn't like Tysons corner, and did not support such an initiative. County staff could not have been more correct. Tysons Corner is a dysfunctional community, taking action now to make it a functional one. Reston is a very functional community attempting to plan to protect it from becoming dysfunctional. Without an implementation plan and concomitant processes, maintaining that functionality will, in ARCH's opinion, be much more difficult to ensure.

But is that concern really founded? Let me point to just a couple of realities. In 2007 and 2008, Fairfax County and Reston residents and businesses participated in the Reston Metrorail Access Group (RMAG) study, to develop a vision and plan for what infrastructure and resources would be necessary to support Metrorail to Wiehle Avenue. The RMAG study recommended \$105M of improvements to support that reality. The final report highlighted "34 projects that should be completed by the start of Phase 1 Metrorail service. These projects account for a total of \$58M, more than 60% of the total capital costs for the recommended program." One of those projects was the extension of Soapstone Ave. As of yesterday, and except for some sidewalks and bike lanes, less than \$5M dollars of those defined, and critical infrastructure requirements have been built.

One might interject that, "well that was only 5 years ago, and we are working toward making that happen, and the Soapstone extension is a high priority." But let's go back even further to remind the Commission that the RMAG study was not the first exercise to suggest the critical Soapstone extension. In 2002, more than a decade ago, Supervisor Hudgins, with the assistance of Fairfax County conducted the Reston/Wiehle Ave Charette to again develop a vision for infrastructure and development to support Metrorail to Wiehle Ave. While parts of the vision immediately surrounding the Transit Station Area have been built as a result of the Comstock development, much of the vision, infrastructure and amenities recommended by the Charette to include the Soapstone extension remain unimplemented more than a decade later.

The RMAG study recommended \$105M of improvements. During the Task Force, many, many more orange, green, and blue, lines representing required infrastructure, green splotches on a map representing parks and open space, and numerous community and public facilities have again been suggested and planned. Those requirements, within our current recommended Comp Plan, most likely represent probably many, many, more hundreds of millions of dollars.

Without an operational or implementation plan and the processes needed to make this plan a reality, I suggest that our work, your work and the County's work is incomplete: that the vision defined, within the plan to support rail to Dulles, to maintain Reston's sense of community, to maintain the delicate and important balance between infrastructure and development, to ensure that development will be phased with infrastructure, and that infrastructure will be put in place before or concurrently with development, that Reston's values, property values, and high standards of design will be maintained, that traffic congestion will be mitigated, and that the incredible character of this wonderful experiment called Reston may well be based only on hopes and visions but not reality. I suggest there is yet much work to be done to support the incredible vision delineated within this Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. ARCH stands ready to continue to assist this Commission and Fairfax County, as appropriate, support its important work.

Respectfully,

GERALD R. VOLLOY, President

Alliance of Reston Clusters and Homeowners