

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING**

**NOVEMBER 13, 2013**

**8:15 p.m.**

**RESTON ASSOCIATION REMARKS**

I am Cate Fulkerson, Chief Executive Officer for the Reston Association. Our offices are located at 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, in Reston, VA 20191 I am speaking on behalf of Andy Sigle, Reston Association representative on the Master Plan Special Study Task Force.

- Reston Association is a somewhat unique homeowners association.
- We have a membership base of 21,346 residential units, serving a community of about 60,000 including both property owners **and** renters;
- we are the largest community association in the Commonwealth of Virginia

As the community's steward, Reston Association is responsible for maintaining the quality of life in Reston, chiefly by caring for and administering the community's most precious asset -- its real property.

- We provide parks, trails and recreation facilities and other amenities like those of a city or town. The association maintains and operates a vast array of recreational facilities, including 15 pools, 49 tennis courts, 55 miles of paved pathways, ballfields, playgrounds, multipurpose courts, picnic areas, garden plots and a variety of rental facilities for public meetings and gatherings. In addition, we provide a wide variety of educational and recreational programs.
- We seek to protect Reston's natural beauty and environment. The association maintains and nurtures over 1,300 acres of open space, including 4 lakes, 3 ponds, streams, wetlands, forests, and meadows, as well as a 72-acre nature education center.

- On a day-to-day basis, RA is managed by me and supported by a staff of 80 full-time employees who bring a wide variety of knowledge and skills to jobs as varied as environmental biology, auto mechanics, and public administration. In the summer months, our full-time staff is augmented by over 300 seasonal employees who maintain outdoor facilities, provide services and conduct programs.
- Our a current annual operating budget is \$13.2 million dollars
- Since 1966, we have been a close-knit community providing the opportunity for all who come to Reston, a place to live-work-play and get involved.
- Similar to other established communities throughout the County, Reston is trying to keep its identity, its character, and its close-knit community, as the development pattern changes to a much more urban, mixed-use area. More simply, we are trying to keep the best of "Reston," while accommodating the growth and changing demographics associated with the Silver Line.

The Reston Association supports the proposed Comprehensive Plan Text that is before you for consideration. In fact, our Taskforce representative, Andy Sigle voted on October 29<sup>th</sup>, to support the Task Force endorsed Comprehensive Plan text. While RA does not agree with or support all of the text, on balance, we support it because it is a plan that strives to keep the existing identity, character and close-knit community of Reston intact.

- However, let me make it clear that RA does not support any Plan language that would allow significant variation or increase from the level of development and land use mix envisioned in the Preferred Development Scenario. Any such variation or increase will cause the land use to be out of balance with the transportation, schools, public safety, open space and recreation infrastructure.

- For example, RA is very concerned that the 0.5 FAR bonus development intensity, on pages 26-27 of the Plan, is too easy to obtain, and can spread throughout the TOD areas. Satisfying a minimum of three rather than two "additional development objectives" should be the threshold to be granted the full FAR bonus intensity. This bonus development should be allowed only within one-quarter of a mile of a Metro station platform, and not one-half mile away. Unless the draft text on pages 26-27 is changed, the Preferred Development Scenario will surely be exceeded, resulting in an imbalance between land use and the public infrastructure needed to support it.
- Reston is one integrated community that includes the land within the transit station areas. Reston is not two communities separated by the Dulles Toll Road corridor transit station areas. In order to integrate new residents within the corridor into the fabric of Reston, all new development should provide for membership into either the Reston Association or the Reston Town Center Association. Don't split Reston into two halves!
- Open space = The task Force endorsed plan recognizes that "high quality" open space is just as important to our quality of life as the total acreage of open space.
- Our position on parks and ballfields is this..... Reston Association generally supports the Park Authority's analysis of the total number of ballfields and other recreation areas required to serve the level of development contained in the Plan text. RA supports official county parks and recreation standards. It is our understanding that the Park Authority will propose a new standard metric for determining the number of ballfields in urban areas, at the completion of its "needs study" next year. At that time, the county should amend the county-wide parks and recreation policy plan to include this new urban standard.
- While Reston Association strongly encourages the location of ballfields and recreational facilities within the transit station areas as a first preference, it recognizes that adding

capacity at other nearby locations may provide the most cost-effective option on a case-by-case basis.

- The infrastructure needed to support the increased level of development in this Plan must be completed concurrently with development. It should be paid for, on a fair, pro rata basis by those who will profit from such development, in order to sustain Reston's livability and high quality of life. This principle should be kept in the forefront of all discussions regarding any changes to the recommended Plan text.
- The county's transportation study points out that Metro will only accommodate less than ten percent of all commuting trips! This means that the people of Reston must have convenient, reasonable driving, biking and walking alternatives, especially during peak weekend periods, both within and near the transit station areas. Road, bicycle, pedestrian and bus transit service improvements are crucial to providing multi-modal mobility within Reston. Multi-modal mobility is the key to a sustainable Reston community.

In summary, RA recognizes and appreciates the efforts and contributions of many community leaders, volunteers, organizations and other stakeholders. We look forward to the successful implementation of the comprehensive plan as Reston steps into its second half-century.