

Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force
c/o Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, Planning Division
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 730
Fairfax, VA 22035-5505

March 11, 2011

D-R-A-F-T

Mr. Charles Snelling
Chairman of the Board
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
1 The Aviation Cir.
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Snelling:

The Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force reviewed the reports on the feasibility of air rights development over the Dulles Airport Access Highway (DAAH) provided to the Dulles Corridor Committee of the Board of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (Airports Authority) and discussed this information at its February 22 meeting. We thank you for undertaking this study.

The Reston community has long supported air rights development at its rail stations. The Task Force Vision Statement for the future of Reston supports air rights development and the construction of the foundations as part of Phase 2 of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project.

The Task Force urges the Board to approve the construction of the original concept design of foundations for an air rights framing system of 60 feet over the Metrorail right of way as part of Phase 2 at a projected cost estimate of \$34 million.

Reston is celebrating its 40th anniversary as the country's preeminent new town, known for the excellence of its planning around the world. As we plan for the future of Reston for the next 40 years, we want to capture the opportunity that Metrorail brings to create a bold vision for the future of Reston Town Center using air rights to create an innovative mixed-use, multi-modal regional activity center, a model for the future for centers at transit stations as Reston has been for planned communities.

The Airports Authority Board can help us achieve this vision and at the same

time create a legacy for itself of support for a new kind of urbanism that will enhance access to Washington Dulles International Airport, encourage transit use, and generate significant revenues for the Airports Authority and Fairfax County, as well as the transit system – revenues that could offset the investment in foundations today. This action would be similar to the farsighted planning that we benefit from today – the reservation of the median of the DAAH for rail and the construction of foundations for piers for the Dulles rail extension in the vicinity of the West Falls Church station.

While regional market and business conditions may not support air rights at this time, these could improve sooner than expected with increasing gas prices and demographic trends that favor living and working in mixed- use TOD environments.

The projected future costs of the deck framing system with 150 –foot spans are likely to rise above the \$60 million estimate and make it more difficult to construct air rights at the Town Center in the future. We note, though, that this system does open up the possibility of air rights at additional stations including Wiehle Avenue and Herndon Monroe in Reston in the future.

The Task Force requests that the Airports Authority begin the necessary work to address the legal issues related to airport purposes in the Airports Authority’s authorizing federal statute and lease with the Federal Aviation Administration to make air rights and joint development possible.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Patricia Nicoson
Chairman

cc: Lynn Hampton, President and CEO, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
Quince Brinkley, Secretary to the MWAA Board
Sharon Bulova, Chairman, and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District Supervisor