
From: Grant, Michael
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2015 12:32 AM
To: RestonMasterPlanSpecialStudy
Subject: Comments on Reston Master Plan Working draft - Version 2

Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to comment on the Reston Master Plan via e-mail. Below are a few comments for consideration:

- Page 45, "Schools" says: "Reston is currently served by a total of 10 public schools. These include 6 elementary schools: Coates, Dogwood, Lake Anne, McNair, Sunrise Valley and Terraset." It seems to me that Forest Edge Elementary school has inadvertently been left off this list.
- Page 47, "Library" says – "As an alternative to renovation and expansion, a new library can be incorporated into a mixed use development within the Reston Town Center North Area or one of the TSA." It seems to me that this section should encourage incorporation of a new or expanded library into redevelopment of the Reston Town Center North Area to create more of a pedestrian connection to surrounding areas. Other suburban areas, such as Rockville, have incorporated public library facilities effectively into a more urbanized design, connecting the library to nearby shops, cafes, and businesses. This should be encouraged, along with sufficient convenient garage and/or short-term surface parking.
- Pages 54-55, "Village Centers" –
 - o This says: "The mix of uses may also include accessory office and community uses. Community uses should include public meeting spaces." What is meant by public meeting spaces? Is this outdoor plazas, or does this refer to buildings like churches or places of worship? It seems unlikely that each Village Center could support a public meeting facility like a community center or library and it is not clear that religious facilities are appropriate for all the village centers; also, there is a separate bullet point referring to "plazas or other types of public gathering spaces" so this bullet on "public meeting spaces" is unclear. I suggest that the wording "should include" be changed to say "may include".
 - o The text also says "Residential users should provide for a variety of housing types..." but it is unclear whether the village centers could or should actually support a variety of different housing types (e.g., multi-family, townhouse, single-family). I would suggest deleting this portion of the sentence or reword this.
 - o The text says: "Lake Anne and Hunters Woods Village Centers developed according to this model. However, over time retail trends changed and later village centers were designed in a more typical suburban fashion, with an emphasis on retail uses and restaurants, without community uses and the stores surrounding a large surface parking lot. This form reduced the ability of the later village centers to function as the community gathering places they were intended to be. In the future, the village centers should be encouraged to transform to include a central gathering space, preferably a plaza, a horizontal mix of uses, anchored by civic uses and ground floor retail..." While I strongly support the concept of including a central gathering space, such as a plaza, into each village center, I suggest deleting the phrase "anchored by civic uses." There are only so many community centers and library facilities that can be supported in Reston, so it seems unreasonable to suggest that every village center redevelopment be "anchored" by civic uses. While Lake Anne and Hunters Woods Village Centers do include community center space, neither seems like an ideal "model" for the type of vibrant village

center that the Master Plan should envision, and I would suggest removing the sentence on the newer village centers that says: “This form reduced the ability of the later village centers to function as the community gathering places they were intended to be.” Frankly, I’ve seen neighbors and residents conversing in the outdoor seating area near Giant or at Sweet Frog in North Point Village Center, and when I’ve gone to Hunters Woods have not seen much of any difference in community gathering. The exception is the interior of the Reston Community Center; however, a Community Center cannot be built in every Village Center. Overall, this section seems somewhat unrealistic in suggesting that every village center should include a community center space or some sort of civic use. I think it would be better to encourage good design and mix of tenants (restaurants, services, grocery stores) and also recognize that a gas station and surface parking can continue to be part of the vision for some of these centers. Lake Anne is a unique case with tremendous potential for a more urbanized environment, and Tall Oaks may be as well, given its location not far from metro – but not all of the village centers are the same.

- Section on “Parking” says: “Use the parking area, either surface parking lots or parking structures, as a multi-use space for public events, recreation, and gathering through the inclusion of green roofs, temporary, creative paving materials, pavement markings and access control strategies.” This is unclear and could use clarification. Other parts of the text refer to a central plaza in each village center, so it is unclear why parking lots or structures would be used for public events or recreation. Is the idea that the parking lots would be used for a farmers market or festival? It may be best to focus those activities on Lake Anne Village Center or Reston Town Center. Also, the phrasing of this sentence is odd. While a green roof could function as an outdoor patio, it is unclear what is meant by “temporary, creative paving materials” (does this mean gravel?) and how this would help to support public events and recreation.
- Page 56 – says “Use of public transportation should be enhanced if/when Village Centers redevelop in order to maximize accessibility. Examples of such measures include:
 - 1. Private subsidization of internal circulating transit services, which may also connect to transit service outside of the Village Center;” Given the small size of the Village Centers, it seems very unlikely there would be a need for an internal circulating transit service within a Village Center.
 - Throughout, in regard to public transportation: I would strongly encourage the plan to create a vision for more visible, convenient, and accessible bus services through better signage at bus stops. For instance, bus stops in Arlington County typically show the bus route(s) serving the stop and times, while in Reston, the Fairfax Connector bus stops do not provide any information on routes, service frequency, or hours of operation. At Village Centers or high capacity stops, real-time “next bus” signage could also be provided. Finally, throughout Reston, buses could be made much more efficient through transit signal priority treatments at intersections. For instance, 552 buses serving North Reston leaving the Wiehle Ave-Reston East station typically have to wait at a light to turn left onto Wiehle Avenue, then wait again at a light at Sunset Hills Road, then wait again at the light at North Shore Drive to turn left. It seems to take too long time to go a short distance due to these long traffic lights, and there are technologies to improve bus travel times.

Thanks for your consideration.

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