

Comments on Draft Reston
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Polo Fields

page 6, 1st and 2nd paragraphs - please define terms at intervals throughout the document or provide a glossary. The general public won't remember them. DAAR was defined on page 1, so that's probably ok, but LEED is not defined here.

page 7, Pedestrian Connections - safety should be addressed here and throughout the document. Trails, bike paths, and sidewalks must be properly marked and lighted, and assessments, especially of after-dark conditions, must be conducted to ensure safety for those using the connections. Consideration should be given to emergency contact stations in areas where trails are concealed by trees and/or vegetation. There is no mention of disabled/handicapped individuals.

page 10, paragraph 3 - text starts by saying "Development will be phased with infrastructure...." Later sentence says "...should occur with development." Reston has a large number of the worst intersections in the county, many of them in close proximity to the Metro stations. We cannot allow developers to build without corresponding infrastructure improvements coincident with the development. And we must stop asserting that infrastructure projects are "in the plan" when there is no corresponding budget line item to pay for them.

page 11, paragraph 5 at top - text addresses the Herndon station emphasis on the wetlands, yet to my knowledge these wetlands are still owned by a private company and Reston Association has no jurisdiction in decisions made affecting the maintenance (or lack thereof) of the property.

page 15 - terms on the Land Use Map are not defined (e.g., Low-density single family, du/ac). The text explaining the terms does not appear until page 18. At a minimum, reference pp. 18-20 on the Map.

page 18, RESIDENTIAL - define du/ac in the first bullet. Definition does not appear until the last bullet. High density, single family appears on the Map, but is not defined here. Medium-density, single family appears in the 2nd bullet, but is not listed on the Map. Countywide Comprehensive Land Use categories are listed as the final bullet under Residential, but the Map shows them separate from Residential.

Suggest reordering/restructuring pp. 18-20 to be consistent with the Map:

Land Use Designations - first four paragraphs as written, then

Countywide Land Use Categories - text from final bullet on top of page 19, then

Reston Land Use Categories - appropriate text from pp. 18 - 20 (see comments above for p. 18), then

Transit Station Land Use Categories - appropriate text (on the Map, but which appear to be missing from the text. May be some overlap with other categories, but I would repeat them as appropriate here for completeness)

page 19, RESIDENTIAL, 5th bullet - "nine or more stories" Is there a limit to high rise structures in Reston? If not, why not? Our infrastructure can't support the density we have today (come to the intersection of Sunrise Valley and FFC Parkway at rush hour). Why would we leave it wide open?

page 19, Office - are there types of businesses we don't want in Reston? Are there currently any guidelines or rules or definitions for office space? Could someone propose a noisy manufacturing facility that included the company's HQ offices? The Urban Design Principles do not appear to address this at all.

page 20, top of page - add bullets for tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts

page 20, URBAN DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING, 1st paragraph, last sentence - "is recommended" is too weak. Leaves too much room for interpretation.

page 20, URBAN DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence - reword to say "Developers must submit their plans for review to [insert actual names of "existing entities and design review bodies"] to allow local community input. Review process must occur in accordance with established milestones to ensure groundbreaking and construction do not begin before the design review process is complete. The words "should submit" create an excuse for disaster at worst or misunderstanding at best. Under what circumstances would we fail to require public review and comment?

pp. 20 - 23, Urban Design Principles - it seems unconscionable that disabled/handicapped individuals do not appear in these "principles" until housing (p. 24) is addressed. Public spaces MUST afford these individuals all the ease of access and safety features that the rest of us take for granted. Suggest a new bullet and/or sub-bullets under existing bullets as appropriate.

pp. 21+ I'm not an urban design principle expert, but it would seem that words like "respect", "should be", "minimize", "advance", "encourage", and so on, leave too much room for interpretation. Not sure what the purpose of these principles are for, but they're surely not measurable, and are certainly open to wide interpretation.

page 21, Conserving Land, 1st bullet - what does "prioritize shared public space over private lawns" imply? There are still people who want a reasonable space in which to live. Suggest striking those words entirely.

pp. 21+ and 25+ format HOUSING and TRANSPORTATION to be consistent with the previous sections.

page 22 Housing Diversity, 2nd line - change "county" to "country"

page 23, Housing Affordability, 2nd paragraph - include the referenced Figure 3 of the Potomac Planning District Overview or delete the reference. Readers should not have to seek external documents. Makes reading difficult at best.

page 23, last bullet - where are the TSA Areawide Recommendations listed. Same as previous comment.

page 24, last bullet - "market rate or affordable". Why not a mix of both? Current wording could be interpreted as either or, but not both.

page 25 TRANSPORTATION, 1st paragraph, 3rd sentence - reword to say "...the improvements must..."

General comment for the entire document - there are at least 294 uses of the word "should" in this document. Suggest changing them all to "must" or equivalent words. We can always debate if must is appropriate on a case by case basis, but using "should" means developers and perhaps decision makers will be able to opt for ignoring the intent of this document from the perspective of those who live here. We're trying to preserve some semblance of the Reston we believed we were moving here to enjoy.

page 25, 2nd paragraph, last line - Fig 9 missing. When available, should be moved up closer to the reference to it.

page 26, 1st paragraph - HMSAMS (Herndon Metrorail Station Access Management Study) has been briefed to the BOS Transportation Committee. Study addressed pedestrian and bicycle access and should be referenced here.

page 27 and elsewhere - put referenced figures adjacent to the text in which they are referenced.

page 28, Public Transportation, 1st paragraph - reference to Figure 11. Need to clean up figure references - renumber here and elsewhere.

page 28, Road Transportation Improvements, 1st bullet - reword, perhaps as follows : "Construct a grid of streets connecting the TSAs to improve access."

page 28, all bullets - I believe most, if not all, of these improvements are not funded. In order to have any hope of trying to mitigate traffic problems, these can't just be planned, they must be funded. The LOS at more than 10 intersections near the stations is critical. This document lacks credibility if the infrastructure isn't there.

page 33, Figure 11 - minor point, but Hattontown doesn't really exist anymore. It was never incorporated. It's confusing to keep it on maps.

page 34, Minor Arterials, Type A (and B) - call them what you like (minor arterials with MAJOR problems), but if the criteria for these intersections, many of which are already horrible, don't include LOS improvements, this document is worthless. This is a quality of life issue.

General comment - while it is highly desirable to be consistent with UP5, the Reston Transit Station Area Plan, etc., there must be a well-defined process to ensure when one document changes, the other is revised simultaneously.

page 40, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP and page 42 - reference earlier comment on the wetlands. How can we protect the Sunrise Valley Wetlands if they're in private hands? Last time I went over there, the wetlands were overgrown, covered by vegetation, depriving wildlife, especially birds, of a habitat

page 41, 1st full paragraph - "Any development proposals in the TSAs should be reviewed...." By whom? Throughout this document there are similar statements - they need to be accompanied by inclusion of the name(s) of the reviewing entities.

page 43 - LEED Silver (higher levels of certification encouraged) - what incentives exist to achieve higher standards?

page 45, Schools - the over 700 students at Aldrin Elementary might object to their exclusion!!

page 63+ LOS discussed in terms of Village Centers, and specific improvements listed for Lake Anne, but not for other centers

Finally, the most glaring omission throughout the document is the very few references to disabled/handicapped individuals. I am also concerned about traffic in the areas in close proximity of the stations. Polo Fields has school buses operating on streets (Colts Brook and Thunder Chase) that are already unsafe because of non-residents cutting through our neighborhood and exceeding posted speed limits.

I appreciated the opportunity to review this document and look forward to seeing the final product.

Rick Hamilton