



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March **X**, 2023

TO: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Larry J. Zaragoza, DEnv, Chair
Environmental Quality Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Environmental Quality Action Council (EQAC) Response to Information Recently Provided by County Staff on Parking Reimagined

Following our January 13th memorandum, county staff met with EQAC to brief EQAC on environmental benefits of the proposed changes and is making changes to the draft Parking Reimagined package. EQAC appreciates the engagement of managers and staff on the Parking Reimagined draft ordinance review, the decision to seek additional comment on the Parking Reimagined proposal, and the changes in response to comment. EQAC believes that the additional information and changes that have been made to the draft ordinance and associated documents have improved the proposal. While EQAC appreciates the improvements, we still have the following recommendations that should be addressed.

A Holistic Approach Would be Helpful

We recognize there are multiple efforts that are intended to fit together from Parking Reimagined to the landscaping and transportation requirements. However, it would be helpful for the county to outline a greater vision that improves the quality of life for county residents.

While we agree that parking should be reduced near transit stations, we are concerned that the proposed parking space to unit ratios are insufficient to support the people living in multifamily buildings. Inadequate parking may be a frustration that causes residents of multifamily buildings to move out to the suburbs, which increases traffic and vehicle miles traveled. Attracting and retaining residents to transit areas where they can bike, walk, and take the Metro to work and other destinations will reduce traffic. We think the goal should be reducing vehicle use, not minimizing parking. The attachment to this memorandum provides some specific examples that may be helpful.

Whenever parking is being reduced in the absence of Metro, we think it is important to look at the relationship between reduced parking and bus service. History has shown that bus service in Fairfax has been cut at times and could again be impacted by budgetary or possibly other considerations. Should parking be limited when we cannot guarantee the bus services that have been assumed in making decisions on parking?

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We also do not think that minimum requirements should be compromised. In the absence of extenuating information, such as the availability of other parking that will continue to be made available, minimum parking and landscaping targets should not be waved.

Expanding EV Charging and Solar Panel Siting

One of the barriers to the establishment of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations is the availability of sufficient electricity as buildings have been constructed without the wiring to support EV charging to meet the expected demand. We are unclear if requiring that building construction provide for the capability to service EV vehicles or if legislation would be required.

Finally, in considering the targets for renewable energy and need for solar panels, we will have a choice between placing solar energy on buildings and parking lots versus forests, meadows, and agricultural lands. We believe that there should be a strong preference for placement of solar on parking lots, especially new lots. While the draft ordinance does remove some barriers from placing solar on parking lots, the need to prioritize solar in the establishment of parking requirements is not reflected in the ordinance.

Again, we appreciate your attention to this matter and the changes that you have undertaken in response to comments. We welcome any questions on our comments and look forward to hearing from you.

cc: Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
Bill Hicks, Director, Land Development Services (LDS)
Matthew Hansen, Director, Site Development and Inspections Division, LDS
Michael Davis, Parking Program Manager, LDS
Tracy Strunk, Director, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
Austin Gastrell, Planner, DPD
John Morrill, Acting Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination
EQAC

Attachment

Attachment

Parking Ratios: It is hard to find clear support for the ratios proposed in the documents posted on the Reimagining Parking website, especially for the low end of the ratios. If the goal is to provide sufficient parking to meet the need, experience with multiple buildings shows that ratios near 1 are insufficient even for buildings close to Metro, trails, and shopping. When parking is constrained, residents may park blocks away or perhaps illegally and be discouraged from living in reduced parking areas. A few examples where limited parking has caused parking issues in reduced parking areas:

- Residents of the Arden, a new apartment complex near the Huntington Metro, are asking for the ability to park in the nearby neighborhood, which has parking restrictions. We have been told that parking to accommodate medically directed assistance, especially for residents of assisted units, and others is a problem. We were also told that the ratio of parking spaces to units is 1. This issue was recently raised to Supervisor Storck's office.
- Residents of a condominium near the Courthouse Metro in Arlington, which has a parking space to unit ratio of 1.1, have experienced multiple issues:
 - Residents requested the ability to park in the adjacent neighborhood where parking was reserved for neighborhood residents. The request was denied.
 - The size of spaces has also been an issue that had in one case been taken to Court because standard parking spaces are often tight when people have larger cars.
 - At least one unit owner with a large vehicle purchased and used 2 spaces for a single large vehicle.
 - There were many violations of parking rules that resulted in notices, fines, and towing.
 - The adjacent garden units had problems with patrons of a local beer hall as the beer hall patrons would park in the residential area and they would often trespass as they returned to their vehicles, and some would urinate on the garden units on their way to their cars. The issue was caused by the failure of the beer hall to provide parking for their patrons even though nearby office parking lots were empty in the evening.