



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

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To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

August 28, 2017

Reston Association  
Board of Directors  
C/O Cate Fulkerson  
Chief Executive Officer  
12001 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, Virginia 20191

Re: Reston PRC District Residential Density Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Dear Ms. Fulkerson:

This letter is in response to the May 25, 2017, Reston Association Board of Directors Resolution on the proposed PRC Zoning Ordinance Amendment. The Resolution requests additional information related to the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment so that the Association is able to make an informed decision regarding whether or not to support the proposed amendment. In addition, the Resolution requests an additional community meeting be scheduled at least one month prior to any authorization to advertise the proposed amendment. The requested community meeting has been scheduled for Monday, September 25, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the cafeteria of Lake Anne Elementary School.

It is our intention to continue to engage the community in planning for future growth in Reston. As you are aware, Phase I of the Reston Master Plan Special Study initiated in 2009 resulted in the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment in 2014 that focused future mixed use development potential proximate to the three Metro station areas along the Dulles Toll Road. Phase II of the Reston Master Plan Special Study adopted in 2015 contained a new Land Use Plan Map that maintains established residential neighborhoods and added text that discourages the consolidation of neighborhoods for redevelopment that is not in keeping with the Land Use Map. The stable residential neighborhoods and clusters within Reston are envisioned to remain at their existing scale as recommended by the Reston Plan. The new plan identifies several opportunities for limited additional residential development outside of the Reston Transit Station Areas. These areas are primarily within and proximate to the Village Centers of Reston as depicted on the [attached map](#).

While not a central focus during the Reston Master Plan Special Study process, the need for an amendment to the residential density provisions of the Reston Planned Residential Community (PRC) District was identified as early as 2007 to accommodate long term planned residential growth in Reston, particularly near the Metro stations. In fact, the PRC District residential

density amendment has appeared on the Zoning Ordinance Amendment Work Program as a Priority 1 item since 2010. The delay in proceeding with the amendment has been largely in recognition of an over 5-year community planning process to identify the areas where future growth should occur as part of the update of the Reston Master Plan.

The PRC District is distinguished from other zoning districts in that, since its inception in 1962, the zoning district uses “persons per acre” to regulate residential density rather than the measure of “dwelling units per acre” more commonly used in modern zoning regulations. Regulating and tracking the number of people as a zoning tool presents inherent enforcement difficulties. An added complexity is that the calculation of persons per acre is based upon a formula contained in the zoning ordinance (household size for each housing type multiplied by the number of housing units) which is not directly related to population counts or population estimates reported by the U.S. Census. While the household size factors by housing unit type were reviewed and updated in a Zoning Ordinance Amendment approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2007 to reflect more current data, the use of this zoning ordinance formula to determine Reston’s population for PRC district density purposes continues to create misunderstanding and confusion because it is not a true representation of the current population of Reston. For example, using Census Data for zip codes 20190, 20191 and 20194, the 2016 estimated population of Reston is 62,996. These three zip codes include all of Reston as well as some areas on the periphery and therefore, represents a population for a geographic area that is slightly larger than Reston. Using the zoning ordinance formula for those areas of Reston zoned to the PRC District results in an estimated population of 65,538.

The Zoning Ordinance currently limits the overall residential density in the PRC District of Reston to 13 persons per acre or a maximum population of 81,195, (6,245.8 acres x 13 persons). Currently, the residential density of Reston is approximately 11.9 persons per acre. This number is based on the number of residential units that are existing, as well as those approved (received PRC Plan approval) but are not yet built. As noted in the attached Table entitled “[2017 Reston Zoning Ordinance Population Calculation](#)”, the existing and approved units multiplied by the applicable population factor results in a population of 74,192. This results in a remaining capacity of approximately 7,003 persons (81,195 – 74,192) which is the equivalent of 3,335 multi-family units remaining under the 13 person per acre overall residential density maximum (7,003 divided by a population factor of 2.1 for multi-family units).

Staff began the review and community engagement on this Priority 1 Zoning Ordinance amendment because the total residential development potential estimated to occur over the next 30-to 40 years in the PRC District under the newly adopted Reston Master Plan will exceed the current 13 persons per acre residential density cap. The land use recommendations in the new Reston Master Plan result in approximately 10,768 multi-family residential dwelling units above the 3,335 multifamily residential dwelling units remaining with the overall 13 persons per acre cap referenced in the current Zoning Ordinance. The [attached map](#) and the [corresponding chart](#)

identify the estimated amount of additional residential growth recommended by the Comprehensive Plan for each location within the PRC District of Reston.

The methodology used to estimate future residential growth varies by location. Within Transit Station Areas, residential growth was calculated based upon the planned floor area ratios (FAR) and the recommended mix of uses. In areas where a range of FARs is recommended, the residential potential was calculated using the mid-point of the FAR range. In those instances where recent development applications have been approved in Reston's Transit Station Areas, we used the maximum number of residential units approved rather than rely on estimates.

The additional residential development potential for Lake Anne Village Center and Tall Oaks Village Center was calculated using the zoning approvals and Plan guidance. The additional residential potential for the remaining village centers (North Point, South Lakes and Hunters Woods) was calculated using the assumption of complete redevelopment at 50 dwelling units per acre across the entire site area, including areas currently developed with residential use. The additional residential development potential for growth areas outside the Transit Station Areas and outside of Village Centers was calculated from zoning approvals or Plan guidance.

Staff projects that to achieve 12,257 additional multifamily units or 85% of the estimated 14,103 total residential units recommended by the Reston Master Plan for development within the PRC District of Reston (3,335 multifamily residential units remaining under existing cap + 10,768 additional planned multifamily residential units) an increase of the overall Reston PRC District residential density cap to 16 persons per acre would be required. While this is the basis for staff's recommendation that the residential density in the Reston PRC be increased to 16 persons per acre, staff will advertise a numerical density range from 13 persons per acre up to 16 persons per acre to provide the Board of Supervisors maximum flexibility to consider the various alternatives to be evaluated in the staff report for the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

The Zoning Ordinance provides the regulatory framework that allows for implementation of the Reston Master Plan. Changing the residential density maximum to 16 persons per acre or other alternative does not result in automatic approval of an additional 12,257 units within the Reston PRC District. Any development proposal is subject to approval of a Development Plan and PRC Plan and each proposal will be subject to staff and community review and will be evaluated based on conformance with the Comprehensive Plan recommendations including an evaluation of transportation and other public facility impacts.

In addition to the overall density cap of 13 persons per acres, the PRC district limits the density in any one area designated as high density to a maximum of 50 dwelling units per acre. Such a limitation in a transit station area can be a barrier to development of high rise residential structures. Originally, the proposed zoning ordinance amendment proposed the removal of the 50 dwelling units per acre limitation in the PRC District Reston Transit Station area in those

instances where a higher density is in conformance with the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. Based on feedback received from the community meetings, staff is also planning to propose an option that would increase the high density dwelling unit per acre maximum to 75 dwelling units per acre in Reston PRC District Transit Station Areas where the density is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Similarly, a range of options will be advertised to allow consideration of alternatives by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Community engagement on this Zoning Ordinance Amendment began in May 2017 and has included several outreach sessions and use of a website devoted to this amendment that includes background information, an amendment schedule, a question submission area, a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section and other relevant material. The website can be accessed by using the following link: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/zoningordinance/prc-zo-amendment/>

Staff will post this letter and attachments to the website. In response to community concerns and desire for more time, the authorization to advertise the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment for public hearings tentatively scheduled for July was postponed and is now tentatively scheduled for consideration by the Board of Supervisors in late November.

Please feel free to contact me or Cathy Belgin at 703-324-1314, if you have any questions on this proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

Sincerely,



Leslie B. Johnson  
Zoning Administrator

cc: Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District Supervisor  
Frank De La Fe, Planning Commissioner Hunter Mill District  
James R. Hart, At-Large Planning Commissioner  
Fred Selden, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning  
Jill Cooper, Executive Director, Planning Commission  
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