



County of Fairfax, Virginia

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

December 4, 2006

Mr. Mike Corrigan
President
Reston Citizens Association
P.O. Box 2851
Reston, Virginia 20195

Dear Mr. Corrigan:

Supervisor Catherine Hudgins requested that I respond to your letters dated October 2nd and October 28, 2006. I would note that answers to most of your questions have been provided in the Issue Paper dated September 8, 2006 on the PRC District or during subsequent community meetings held on October 4th and October 24th. This observation is also noted in your October 28th letter. I understand that you have concerns with some aspects of the staff's recommended approach, and this response may or may not be useful in resolving all differing points of view. However, I will try to provide a brief response to the points raised in each of your letters as outlined below. We have tried to organize our response based on the specific topics set forth in your letters/email.

Scope and Pace of the Process and Urgency of Action on the Cap Limitation: You have expressed concern that the scope and pace of the recommendations outlined in the issue paper are more narrowly focused on changes to the persons per dwelling unit factors versus engaging in a full scale planning process that would evaluate each neighborhood's suitability for additional development or redevelopment, followed by possible changes to the density cap. As outlined in the issue paper and discussed at the meeting, consideration has been given to amending the Comprehensive Plan text and Reston Master Plan maps and staff believes that there is already guidance in these Plans that recognizes stable residential neighborhoods and the need for infill development or redevelopment to be compatible with these existing neighborhoods. Therefore, staff is not recommending changes to the Comprehensive Plan at this time. However, as has been noted previously, staff recognizes that there is a need to update the Reston Master Plan Maps to reflect existing conditions. This is an exercise that could be undertaken during the next Annual Plan Review (APR) cycle or through a special study to be scheduled within a two to three year period following the adoption of the currently recommended modifications. During this time frame we will assess the effectiveness of the changes that we are now proposing as well as the pace of residential development. If it is

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determined that additional modifications to the ordinance or the Plan would be useful, then the staff could again work with the Community to address issues of concern. Further, staff is not recommending a change to the density cap of 13 persons/acre at this time. Prior to changing the cap, sufficient analysis will need to occur so that the implications of doing so are fully understood.

Housing Mix: This issue was raised in both your October 2nd and October 28th letters. The affordable dwelling units and market rate units referenced in Par. 5 of Sect. 6-308 that are not subject to the 13 persons/acre cap are only those units that are required to be provided pursuant to the Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance which was initially adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1990 and is contained in Part 8 of Article 2 of the Zoning Ordinance. In exchange for providing ADUs, developers are permitted a certain percentage of bonus units which can exceed the maximum density provisions for a specified zoning district, including the PRC District. While there may be other types of affordable dwelling units available in Reston, only those bonus units which may comprise ADUs and market rate units which are required under the ADU ordinance are exempt from the density cap of 13 persons/acre.

Meeting Format, Excellence and Innovation, Openness and Zoning Approval Oversight: I believe that the points raised in your letter on this topic were addressed at the October 4th meeting and again at the October 24th meeting and do not need further discussion.

Specific Questions on Staff Report: You have requested additional background information on the source of the number of acres zoned to the PRC District. The 6,224 acres was obtained by using the County's Geographic Information System to identify all properties within Reston zoned to the PRC District and tabulating the acreage of each parcel. Your second question relates to whether the current available density of 8,212 persons includes currently planned and zoned development. The monitoring of the 13 persons/acre density cap occurs at site plan approval. As such the 8,212 persons calculation was based on currently planned and zoned development that had obtained site plan approval by the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES). The pending PRC zoning applications listed in Slide 22 of the power point presentation have not yet received PRC plan approval or the subsequent site plan approval.

Population Factor Revisions: In both your October 2nd and October 28th letter you raise questions concerning staff's justification for recommending changes to the persons per dwelling unit factors. By way of background, in 1975, with the adoption of Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) #251, the person per dwelling unit factor for single family detached units was changed from 3.8 to the current 3.5 persons, the persons per dwelling unit factor for townhouse units remained unchanged at 3.0 persons, the garden apartment persons per dwelling unit factor changed from 3.0 to 2.5 persons and the high rise/elevator apartments persons per dwelling unit factor changed from 1.5 persons to the current 2.0 persons. The

amendment in 1975 also added the language that the factors should be reviewed every three years. The staff comment for this amendment indicated that the changes were being recommended to more closely approximate the planned population within the PRC Districts. In 1977, with the adoption of ZOA #324, the current language stating that the factors shall become fixed for the purpose of calculating the permitted number of dwelling units was added. This provision was to give a developer some assurance that the factors would remain stable for the duration that a particular development was under construction. This language was never intended to freeze or forever fix the factors. The current population factors do not reflect a major decline in household size that has occurred nationally as well as in Fairfax County since the 1970's. In 1975, the overall average household size was 3.14 persons per household while current estimates place the average household size in the County at just over 2.72 persons per household (data obtained from the 2004 Demographic Reports prepared by the Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services). This decline in overall average household size is reflected in a similar decline over the years in the average household size associated with various dwelling unit types. Based on the 2000 Census Data the average household size in Fairfax County for single family detached dwellings is 3.05 persons per household, 2.58 persons per household for townhouse units and 2.16 persons per household for multiple family units. Given that the Zoning Ordinance intended that the persons per dwelling unit factors be reviewed on a periodic basis, staff deems it appropriate and prudent to update the population factors to reflect the decline in average household size that has occurred since the 1970s. You also raised concern about combining the factors for garden and elevator units into one multi-family factor, especially given the heavy weighting of garden apartments to elevator units in Reston. As noted in the issue paper, the most recent statistical data does not break out multiple family dwellings into the garden and elevator categories as currently specified in the Zoning Ordinance, therefore in order to be consistent with the most current statistical data, staff is recommending that these categories be combined into a single multiple family category.

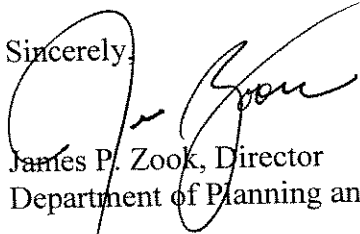
In your October 28th letter you ask why a developer would not just ask for another 4,000 plus elevator units to be added once the new population limit (utilizing the revised factors) was reached. It is staff's position that once the 13 persons per acre cap is reached, no additional residential density could be achieved absent a change to the Zoning Ordinance. No other areas within the county, except for the three PRC communities of Burke, Cardinal Forest and Reston, are governed by a persons per acre or persons per dwelling unit type principle; all other Zoning Districts regulate development density in terms of dwelling units/acre. Because of this unique characteristic of the PRC District, modifying or deleting the 13 persons per acre cap will require a significant planning analysis to determine the implications for either retaining or modifying the cap. Modifying the factors to represent current average household sizes and changing the PRC Plan approval process in the near term, will, as mentioned by a member of the community at the meeting on October 24th, provide the time necessary to allow for an in-depth analysis and community review to address issues regarding the population density cap.

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Finally, you raise concerns regarding the impact revising the population factors and the resultant increase in the number of dwelling units will have on the existing infrastructure (roads, parking, schools, libraries, watershed drainage areas) within the Reston PRC. It should be noted that when the Reston Master Plan was developed, which includes a land use, transportation and community facilities component, the Plan anticipated a population ranging from 69,000 to 87,00 persons. The 2000 Census data estimates the population of the Census Designated Place (CDP) of Reston is approximately 56,407 persons. It should be noted that the CDP contains land area that is not subject to PRC zoning and staff estimated that approximately 6,000 persons reside outside the Reston PRC. Therefore, both the estimated population within the PRC District based on the Census data and the maximum population of 64,227 persons based on the revised population factors are below the population envisioned when the current infrastructure was planned for Reston. Staff believes that the overall infrastructure within the Reston PRC is adequate. Further, with the proposal to change the approval process for PRC plans from an administrative review to a legislative approval before the Board, staff will evaluate each development proposal in terms of impacts on roads, schools and other public facilities and make recommendations to the Board for commitments to mitigate these impacts, when appropriate.

I hope that this response addresses most if not all of your issues and concerns. Based upon the more detailed explanation provided herein with respect to the legislative history of the zoning ordinance language associated with reviewing the population factors, you may wish to consider re-evaluating your position on this issue, remembering the context within which I have suggested it would be prudent to modify the factors. I look forward to continued dialogue on these issues during the public hearing process on the proposed amendments to the PRC District regulations.

Sincerely,



James P. Zook, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning

JPZ/LBJ

cc: Catherine M. Hudgins, Supervisor, Hunter Mill District
Frank De La Fe, Planning Commissioner, Hunter Mill District