

McLean Citizens Association



The Voice of McLean for Over 100 Years

August 16, 2023

Mr. Philip Niedzielski-Eichner
Chairman
Fairfax County Planning Commission
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552
Fairfax, VA 22035

via email

Dear Chairman Niedzielski-Eichner and Distinguished Planning Commissioners,

The McLean Citizens Association (MCA) very much appreciated the opportunity to outline our views on Parking Reimagined at the July 26, 2023 Public Hearing. Hearing the wide range of perspectives that were offered by others not only helped us to consider how we might sharpen some of the recommendations we presented, but also helped crystallize ideas regarding additional steps to support the goals of the Parking Reimagined effort. The document attached to this letter includes not only the recommendations that we made in our July 5, 2023 Resolution on the Fairfax County Parking Reimagined Initiative and July 26 testimony, but also updates.

While many of our recommendations are quite detailed, they fall into a very limited number of baskets:

1. **Accept Most Recommended Minimum Off-Street Parking Rates:** The vast majority of the Advertised Text recommended off-street parking rates are acceptable to MCA.
2. **Request More Modest Reductions in Minimum Parking Rates for Multifamily Buildings in Tiered Framework Areas Now and a Relook at the Issue After More Up-to-Date Data Has Been Collected.** For the reasons cited in the MCA Resolution, MCA believes that the recommended rates for multifamily buildings in Tiered Framework areas are too low and would disadvantage the residents of those buildings and potentially create overflow parking problems for adjacent areas. Hence, MCA has proposed that the County implement more modest reductions from current rates now, and conduct a follow-on study in 5 years to ascertain whether the transportation and service infrastructures have improved sufficiently to support lower minimums.
3. **Request Modifications and Clarifications to Adjustment Authorities.** The adjustment authorities in the Advertised Text for the Director of Land Development Services are problematic in that they cede too much power to the Director without requiring consideration of the impacts on the site and citizens and without a mechanism that ensures public notice and opportunities for public comment to the Director. MCA also has offered some minor, clarifying changes to the Board of Supervisors' authorities.
4. **Request That Standard Rounding Methodologies Be Used.** Standard rounding methodologies should be used for the calculation of off-street parking requirements, so that fractions at or over 0.5 are rounded up to the next full integer. Further, ensure that all structures subject to off-street loading space requirements that are over 10,000 square feet have at least one loading space to minimize the chances of handicapped spaces being blocked.

The attached document lists MCA's specific recommendations in support of baskets 2-5. We hope these specific recommendations will be useful to you as you consider your recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,

Linda Walsh
MCA
President

Attachment: Separate pdf file

cc: John Foust, Darnesville District Supervisor
Dalia Palchik, Providence District Supervisor
John Ulfelder, Dranesville Planning Commissioner
William Hicks, Land Use Services Director
Tracy Strunk, Director of Development and Planning
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Clerk of the Planning Commission
Michael Wing, Providence District Senior Legislative Aide
Ben Wiles, Dranesville District Supervisor's Staff
Michael Davis, Parking Program Manager

**SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS TO
THE ADVERTISED TEXT’S RECOMMENDED OPTIONS
RECOMMENDED BY MCLEAN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**

To Minimum Off-Street Parking Rates for Multifamily Buildings in Tiered Framework Areas Recommended in the Advertised Text

1. For multifamily buildings in Suburban Centers: A rate above 1.3 spaces per unit (MCA’s recommended rate for Revitalization Areas), with additional spaces or fractions of spaces per unit for units with two or more bedrooms.
2. For multifamily buildings in Revitalization Areas: At least 1.3 spaces per unit, with additional spaces or fractions of spaces per unit for units with two or more bedrooms.
3. For multifamily buildings in Transit Station Areas, Transit Oriented Areas, and those portions of the Planned Tysons Corner Urban District (PTC) that lack frequent and reliable public transit options and are adjacent to residential neighborhoods outside of Tysons:
 - a. A minimum rate of 1.0 spaces per unit with additional spaces or fractions of spaces per unit for units with two or more bedrooms
 - b. Calculations to be done on a per unit basis rather than a per bedroom basis

To Adjustment Authorities and Provisions Recommended in the Advertised Text

1. Eliminate the authority of the Director of Land Development Services to approve adjustments. If not eliminated, limit the percentage by which the Director can reduce minimum off-street parking requirements – e.g., to no more than 10% beyond what is provided in the updated Ordinance since the vast majority of cases the Director currently hears involve adjustments of 30% or less, and the likely reduction in rates under the updated Ordinance would obviate the need for any adjustment of up to 30-50%.
2. Add language to the text of Section 6 that clarifies that only the Board of Supervisors may decide whether to grant requests for adjustments to off-street parking for buildings that exclusively provide affordable or workplace housing and that this limitation is without regard to the location of the Affordable Housing – i.e., that it applies in Shared Parking, Transit-Related, and all other areas.
3. Add a requirement that, in the case of adjustments to Off-Street Parking, the applicant must increase open space, tree canopies, and/or landscaping in an amount that is proportionate to any increases in building footprints that the applicant plans to make if granted the adjustment.

4. If the authority of the Director of Land Development Service to approve adjustments in Off-Street Parking or Off-Street Loading minimum parking requirements is retained, in addition to reducing significantly the percentage by which the Director may reduce minimum off-street parking requirements as proposed above, require the following modifications and additions to the provisions outlined in the Advertised Text:
 - a. Add a requirement that any applicant for an adjustment must demonstrate to the LDS Director's satisfaction that (a) fewer spaces than those otherwise required would adequately serve the use and (b) that the requested reduction would not adversely affect the site or the adjacent area. (Note: these requirements are stipulated in Subsection 6100.6.A.1 and Subsection 6101.2.B with regard to applications considered by the Board of Supervisors. They should apply in Subsection 6100.6.A.2 for applications for Off-Street Parking adjustments and in Subsection 6101.3.C for applications for Off-Street Loading Adjustments that may be considered by the Director of Land Development Services.)
 - b. Add a requirement that prior to exercising any adjustment authority, the LDS Director must provide public notice of the requested reductions and opportunities for the public to comment on the requested reduction before the Director makes a decision.
 - c. In the case of the provisions regarding Transit-Related Adjustments, modify the stated criteria in Subsection 6.C.1 as follows:
 - i. Substitute the language in the current Ordinance that requires that transit services already exist or are programmed for completion within the same time frame as the completion of a subject development for the Advertised Text language that would only require that any rail station or transit facility that does not currently exist in these areas be constructed or implemented within 10 years after approval of the adjustment.
 - ii. Include the provision in the current Ordinance that states: "For the purposes of this provision [determination of when a reduction in off-street parking rates for transit-related areas may be approved], a determination regarding the completion time frame for a mass transit station or transportation facility must include an assessment of the funding status for the transportation project."
 - d. Delete Subsection 6.C.2 regarding the Director's authority to make Transit-Related Adjustments above 10% in its entirety. When asked in writing, the Director's staff was unable to demonstrate how the Director would use the stipulated factors in his/her calculations to reach a judgement on whether and to what extent to approve an adjustment above 10%.

- e. In the case of adjustments to Off-Street Loading requirements in Section 6101.3.C, require that the applicant must demonstrate that the requested reduction would not adversely affect the availability of adequate handicapped parking. (This requirement also should be added to Section 6101.3.B relating to the criteria for BOS adjustments to Off-Street Loading.)

To Rounding Calculations:

1. Revise Section 6100.3 so that in all cases where the calculation of the minimum number of required off-street parking or off-street loading spaces results in fractional units, the minimum number of required spaces will be rounded up when the calculated number of spaces is equal to or greater than 0.5
2. Revise Section 6101.L to ensure that for all structures over 10,000 square feet, there will be at least one loading space.

Follow-on Motions That MCA Requests:

1. A Follow-on Motion Related to Minimum Off-Street Residential Parking Requirements in the Tiered Framework areas: Conduct a review and assessment of the County’s initial experience with the new, lower minimum off-street residential parking requirements for Suburban Areas, Revitalization Areas, Transit Station Areas, Transit-Oriented Districts, and the Planned Tysons Corner Urban District (PTC), to be commenced within five years after adoption of an updated Section 6 of the Zoning Ordinance. The purposes would be to assess the extent to which: (1) the adopted minimum off-street parking rates have not created adverse off-site impacts to public health and safety or adversely affected the existing site and adjacent neighborhoods and therefore, should continue to be maintained; and (2) the transportation and service infrastructure improvements are sufficient to reduce off-street minimum parking rates further. Further, to the extent that the transportation infrastructure has been demonstrated to be insufficient to permit additional reductions in the minimum off-street parking rates, the study should identify those Tiered Framework categories or geographic locations within a Tier where the transportation infrastructure is insufficient to permit further reductions in minimum off-street parking rates, the upgrades to the infrastructure necessary to facilitate reduced dependence on personal vehicles for those areas, and the potential funding streams and timelines for achieving those upgrades. For the purpose of the study, “transportation infrastructure” includes transportation projects, programs and services, including but not limited to those that provide frequent and reliable public transit options, walkable streets, safe bike lanes, and TDM programs.

2. A Follow-on Motion Related to Parking Utilization Studies: Conduct a study now to identify possible measures for adoption and implementation to satisfy the on-site parking needs of properties subject to a Utilization Study, with a particular focus on measures to meet the parking needs of residents of multifamily buildings who are affected. The study should include examination of measures that would prioritize meeting pre-adjustment residential parking requirements in shared parking and transit-related areas, and utilization of other measures (including but not limited to off-site or valet parking options) for non-residential uses at the site.