

MCA NEWS

McLean Citizens Association | Voice of McLean for Over 100 Years

MCA Adapts in Response to Health Conditions

In view of Covid conditions, MCA Board meetings and Committee meetings are currently being conducted largely by videoconferencing, although some Committee meetings are now take place using a hybrid format. To participate in MCA virtual meetings, check the MCA webpage for Zoom links or send an e-mail to the Committee Chairs identified on page 3.

To view the MCA Board meetings, either in real-time or after the fact, please go to the MCA webpage and click the link for the MCA Facebook page where a link to view the Board meetings is available.

Please note that you do not need a Facebook account to view the live streamed event.

West Falls Church - the MCA Resolves, the Supervisors Approve, and WMATA Moves Forward

At its meeting of June 2, 2021, the MCA Board considered and approved a resolution, prepared by the Planning and Zoning Committee, on a draft Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for the West Falls Church Transit Station Area (TSA).



Image Courtesy of WMATA

The WMATA parking lot property adjacent to the Metrorail station had been nominated by WMATA in the spring of 2018 for Comprehensive Plan review. In July 2018, the Board of Supervisors approved this nomination for inclusion in the CPA work program. At Virginia Tech's initiative, the adjoining Virginia Tech property on Haycock Road was subsequently added to the Plan Amendment study.

WMATA proposes diversification of allowable uses, by adding office to residential, and an increase in density, as

How do you get up to date information regarding COVID-19?

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Chairman McKay and our Fairfax County Supervisors have sent frequent email notices with information about COVID-19.

Subscribe to the newsletters and the information conveniently arrives in your email inbox. Click on the links below to sign up:

Chairman, At Large:
[Jeffrey McKay Newsletter](#)

Dranesville District:
[Supervisor John Foust Newsletter](#)

Providence District:
[Supervisor Dalia Palchik](#)

Useful Links:

Fairfax County COVID-19 website:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/

Sign up for text message alerts from Fairfax County Health Department alerts: text FFXCOVID to 888777

Visit [MCA COVID-19 Webpage](#) for additional COVID-19 local resources

Fairfax County Health Department

Email:
ffxcovid@fairfaxcounty.gov
(monitored M-F, 8am-6pm)
Phone: 703-267-3511
(M-F, 9am-7pm, S/S 9:30am-5pm)

measured by FAR (the ratio of building floorspace to the area of the property) from 0.70 in the existing plan to 0.96 in the CPA. The maximum building height would be 120 feet, on the portion of the property closest to the station entrance and Interstate 66, but tapering down toward Haycock Road.

Virginia Tech proposes an approximate tripling of allowable density, as measured by FAR, from 0.84 to 2.5. The building height on the VT property would be mostly 145 feet, but with one area, closest to an established community, where the building height would be 85 feet.

Planning for the WMATA and VT parcels has been coordinated with an adjoining project to develop 10 acres, owned by the City of Falls Church and within the City of Falls Church, at the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Route 7 and Haycock Road. In particular, a new public street parallel to Haycock Road will extend from Route 7 through the City and VT properties into the WMATA property. The CPA encourages development that would increase Metrorail utilization, while managing impacts in such a way as to preserve nearby stable neighborhoods.

The County Staff's effort in preparing the CPA was advised by a task force, consisting of representatives of several community organizations, appointed by Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust. During the task force process, issues such as traffic, pedestrian access, density, building height and related school impacts had been raised, which the CPA seeks to address. A majority of the task force voted to endorse the CPA, while a minority was opposed, and there was one abstention.

The resolution conveyed MCA support for the CPA, subject to the following: (a) ensure that the planned West Falls Church Active Transportation Plan (for pedestrians and cyclists) is prioritized and funded; (b) address traffic concerns by implementing road improvements, public transit improvements, and Transportation Demand Management programs; (c) reduce the maximum building height on the VT property to 120 feet, and reduce the allowable FAR on that property to less than 2.5; (d) request a review of students per dwelling unit assumptions, in view of public

Committees are the Heart of the MCA

The MCA's Committees, identified below, study issues affecting residents of the McLean Area; develop resolutions and letters on issues of public significance; and organize public citizen information sessions where local elected officials, Fairfax County representatives and others address specific areas of interest.

Budget & Taxation

Chair: Louise Epstein.

b-t_committee@mcleancitizens.org

Planning & Zoning

Chair: Robert Perito

p-z_committee@mcleancitizens.org

Transportation

Chair: David Wuehrmann,

david.wuehrmann@gmail.com

Education & Youth

Chair: Jim Beggs,

jimbeggs@icloud.com

Environment, Parks & Recreation

Chair: Barbara Ryan,

barbara.ryan@verizon.net

Tysons

Chair: Sally Horn,

s-horn@msn.com

Public Safety

Liaison: Patrick Smaldore,

patricksmaldore@rocketmail.com

Membership

Chair: Linda Walsh,

membership@mcleancitizens.org

Community Governance

Chair: Will Henneberg,

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school impacts. The MCA Resolution can be found here: [Planning & Zoning West Falls Church Metro Station Comp Plan Amendment](#).

At their meeting of July 13, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the CPA as proposed by Staff. They did not change building heights or density from what had been proposed by applicants and Staff. They also passed a follow-on motion (moved by Supervisors Foust and Palchik) directing County Staff to develop an Active Transportation Plan for the TSA and the surrounding area.

On August 12, 2021, WMATA issued a press release informing the public that it had signed an agreement with private sector partners for development of the property. The press release may be viewed here: <https://www.wmata.com/about/news/West-Falls-Church-Joint-Development.cfm>. A rezoning application with detailed plans will be submitted in due course.

Planning for new buildings on the VT property is less advanced. However, VT has indicated that it will enable the new public street through its property which will connect the WMATA and City of Falls Church properties.

McLean Central Park - MCA Issues Resolution on Revised Development Concept

All larger parks in Fairfax County are guided by a Master Plan. The existing Master Plan for McLean Central Park dates from 2013. The MCA had issued a resolution on it in May 2013, which expressed conditional support for a "low impact multi-use amphitheater", while opposing parking proposed in the Master Plan.

The new facilities described in the Master Plan of 2013 have not yet been constructed, due to lack of funding. On election day in November 2020, a bond referendum was passed which includes funding for

upgrades at several Fairfax County local parks, including McLean Central Park. Taking into consideration that funding is now available but eight years have passed, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) has issued, for public feedback, an updated "Development Concept" document that would guide the design of new facilities to be constructed within the next couple of years. The document may be viewed at this link: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sites/parks/files/assets/documents/plandev/mclean-central-park-development-concept-presentation-052421.pdf>

On this subject, at its meeting of July 7, 2021, the MCA Board passed a resolution, prepared by the Environment, Parks, and Recreation Committee. The resolution argues



Image Courtesy of FCPA

that local circumstances have changed during the past eight years. The growth in Tysons has contributed to increased traffic in McLean, and increased use of parks in McLean by Tysons residents. The recent McLean Community Business Center (CBC) Plan Amendment will enable greater population density in downtown McLean. There is now increased awareness and concern for the ecological sensitivity of McLean's natural areas. These changed circumstances should be taken into consideration in planning for the park.

An overall assessment is that the FCPA proposal is imbalanced between built environment and natural green space. More specifically, the Resolve clauses:

- Urge extension of the comment period;
- Call for greater outreach by FCPA to obtain community input;
- Calls for need and impact analyses for proposed new amenities;
- Express opposition to the amphitheater unless need (taking into consideration other nearby performance spaces) can be demonstrated;
- Call for ADA-compliant pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with other “civic campus” properties along Ingleside Drive, and across Route 123 to the CBC;
- Removal of invasive species and use of native planting in the park; and
- Improved maintenance of the park.

The MCA resolution can be found here: [Environment, Parks & Rec Resolution on McLean Central Park Development Concept](#)

Plans for Traffic Relief Move Forward

Maryland and Virginia have been collaborating toward the objective of a regional network of highway express lanes.

Maryland’s plans experienced a temporary scare during the past summer. In order to be eligible to for federal funds, a major transportation project within the Washington metropolitan area must have the endorsement of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. At its meeting of June 16, 2021 the TPB narrowly approved a motion, put forward by a Montgomery County representative, to remove the Maryland Express Toll Lanes project (which includes a new American Legion Bridge) from the TPB’s Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP).

Subsequently, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) disseminated information on the adverse financial implications of the June 16 action, and promised more funds for express bus services. At its next meeting on July 27, a majority of the TPB voted to reinstate the Maryland Express Toll Lanes project back into the CLRP, thereby reversing the decision of June 16.

In June 2021, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) received a “Finding of No Significant Impact” from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on the environmental assessment for its I-495 Northern extension (495 NEXT) project, enabling this project to move forward. VDOT will hold a virtual Public Information Meeting on **September 29, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.** to present the latest information on the 495 NEXT project. MDOT will participate in this meeting to provide an update on their plans for associated express lanes, including the American Legion Bridge. Persons wishing to attend the virtual meeting should visit the project website, 495NorthernExtension.org, for the meeting link and details on how to participate.

MCA Supports Plans for Extension of “The Boro”

The existing “The Boro” mixed-use development is located on the southeast side of Westpark Drive between Route 7 and Greensboro Drive, a short distance from the Greensboro Metrorail station. The Boro’s developer, the Meridian Group, has recently proposed to redevelop adjoining acreage on the northwest side of Westpark Drive between Route 7 and Greensboro Drive



Image Courtesy of The Meridian Group

In order to facilitate redevelopment (The Boro Extension) of that acreage, three related land-use applications have been submitted and are under consideration by Fairfax County:

- A rezoning for the Westpark Corporate Center building (where Ernst and Young is located) at the corner of Route 7 and Westpark Drive would rezone this property to PDC (Planned Development - Commercial), and detach it from the existing area site plan, but without any land-disturbing activities;
- Meridian has applied to rezone 9.4 acres at the western quadrant of Westpark Drive and Greensboro Drive (where the National Automobile Dealers Association building is being demolished) to the PTC (Planned Tysons Corner Urban) zoning district. This property would be organized into new blocks I, J, K, and L;
- Silverstone Tysons, LP has requested approval of a Final Development Plan (FDP) to enable construction of a Continuing Care Facility (CCF) for seniors on the new Block J.

A draft resolution, prepared by the Planning and Zoning Committee, assessing the three applications and expressing support for them was considered by the MCA Board at its meeting of September 1, 2021.

Points made in the resolution included the following:

- The new buildings would be largely residential, with some ground-level retail. Block L, to be developed later, might be a Health Club, or else triplex multifamily residential units, depending on market conditions;
- Two new public streets, Broad Street and Clover Street, would be provided, in coordination with adjoining developments, thereby contributing to the planned grid of streets;
- The County's urban park requirement would be met, including by 5 on-site parks;
- A monetary contribution would be made to the Fairfax County Park Authority toward costs of an athletic field;
- A monetary contribution of \$12,262 per expected student would be made toward capital costs of the Fairfax County Public Schools;
- 20% of residential units would be workforce housing;
- The proposals are in conformity with the Tysons Comprehensive Plan.

Committee Chair Bob Perito remarked that the applicants had been responsive to concerns (such as the height of retaining walls, needed to manage slope) expressed by the Committee and by residents of the nearby Rotonda condominium.

Topics discussed by Board members included student yields from developments of this type, and the need for the County to spend accrued proffer funds by actually purchasing land within Tysons for athletic fields. After discussion was concluded, the Board approved the resolution, which may be found here: [Planning & Zoning Boro Extension Resolution](#)

The applications are scheduled for public hearing before the Planning Commission on October 6, and public hearing before the Board of Supervisors on October 19.

MCA Urges Public Notice of Infill Grading Plans and of Proposed Deviations from Tree Requirements

The Fairfax County Tree Conservation Ordinance (Chapter 122 of the County Code) provides for conservation of trees during the land development process.

A provision of the Code of Virginia relating to tree conservation enables localities, if they wish, to notify the public that an infill lot grading plan has been submitted and is pending for review by the locality, thereby enabling public comment. A proposal in 2017 for such notification in Fairfax County failed, in a tie vote, to obtain approval by the Board of Supervisors.

In the four years since the failed tie vote, public awareness of climate change, and the need for mitigation measures, has increased. In Fairfax County, this has included adoption by the Board of Supervisors of an Environmental Vision, and a Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan.

Accordingly, a resolution prepared by Environment, Parks, and Recreation Committee, and approved by the MCA Board at its meeting of July 7, 2021, urges the Supervisors to revisit such notification. Specifically, the resolution recommends that the Board of Supervisors now require Public Notice, by email from Fairfax County Land Development Services (LDS), to nearby neighbors and Community Associations who have requested notice of grading plans, thereby facilitating comment on issues such as tree conservation. Relatedly, the resolution recommends that persons seeking “deviations” from tree-related requirements be required to: (a) post a sign on the property regarding the grading plan at the time the deviation is requested; (b) give notice electronically and by regular mail to nearby property owners, and to individuals Community Associations who have requested such notification from LDS.

During the discussion, a Board member remarked that, based on neighborhood experience, the infill grading plans are important from the stormwater management perspective in addition to the tree conservation perspective. Redevelopment of a nearby lot had led to problems of flooding on an adjoining property, requiring subsequent remedial measures.

The MCA Resolution may be viewed here: [MCA Resolution on Public Notice re Tree Preservation](#)

Upcoming Meetings

October 6: Board of Directors meeting. Mr. David Singh, the new (effective May 2021) Executive Director of the McLean Community Center, will be a guest speaker. He will share his ideas for future programming at the MCC. This meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

October 19: Get Yourself Filled In About Infill. On the evening of October 19, at 7 p.m., the MCA will convene a virtual public forum on “Changing Neighborhoods: Understanding Infill Development and Tree Canopy Loss”. A panel of experts will discuss the balance between and challenges of infill development and tree preservation, related County and State ordinances and regulations, and how the community can participate in the infill development process and assist with protection of trees in their neighborhoods. Registration is required to attend via Zoom (enabling participation). Register by clicking on Events on the MCA Calendar or use this link - [Forum Registration](#) . Registered persons will receive a confirmation and Zoom log-in instructions.

November 17: Public Safety Forum. This event, to start at 7 p.m., and to be held in the McLean Community Center, will be an opportunity to meet and hear from Chief John S. Butler of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, and Chief Kevin Davis of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. There will be a question and answer period.

Any of the above events may be viewed livestreamed on MCA's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/mcleancitizens. It is not necessary to have a Facebook account to view MCA events via the MCA Facebook page.

JOIN MCA

The McLean Citizens Association (MCA) is a volunteer, non-governmental organization that has served as an unofficial town council for McLean area residents since 1914. If you would like to join or renew your membership select "Member Signup" on our web page www.mcleancitizens.org.