



**McLean Citizens Association Resolution
Comprehensive Plan Amendment
West Falls Church Transit Station Area
June 2, 2021**

Whereas, the Comprehensive Plan for the McLean Planning District includes the West Falls Church Transit Station Area (the “TSA”); and

Whereas, on July 18, 2018 the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (“BOS”) authorized County Staff (“Staff”) to consider an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the TSA to reflect the proposed development of certain property within the TSA owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (the “WMATA property”); and

Whereas, on September 25, 2018 the BOS authorized Staff to expand its consideration of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment (“CPA”) to include the potential development of adjacent properties noted as owned or leased by Virginia Polytechnic Institute (“Virginia Tech”) and the University of Virginia (collectively, the “University properties”), but controlled by Virginia Tech; and

Whereas, in 2018 the Dranesville District Supervisor (“Supervisor”) created and appointed a West Falls Church Transit Station Area Task Force (the “Task Force”) to consider the development of the WMATA and University properties and to consult with and offer recommendations to Staff regarding the proposed CPA; and

Whereas, the Task Force consisted of representatives of several community organizations, including the McLean Citizens Association (“MCA”); and

Whereas, adjacent to the WMATA and University properties is a 10.3-acre site owned by the City of Falls Church that was until recently the site of George Mason High School (the “Falls Church property”); and

Whereas, the City of Falls Church has approved a West Falls Church Development Project (the “City Project”) on the Falls Church property, that would include 1.3 million sq. ft., and a floor to area ratio (“FAR”) of 3.5, including 325,000 sq. ft of Class A commercial office space, up to 952 residential units (including up to 250 senior housing units), 123,000 square feet of retail, a hotel of approximately 146 rooms, 14,000 square feet occupied by a performing arts/education studio or school use, and civic/entertainment uses, plus a large central open space; and

Whereas, because the Falls Church property is located outside of the area to which the land use laws of Fairfax County apply, the City Project was considered to be outside the scope of the Task Force; and

Whereas, although the WMATA and University properties were considered jointly by the Task Force, they were evaluated independently as to building height, density, uses, and transition to surrounding communities; and

Whereas, while the draft CPA encourages development in the TSA that would increase the use of rail transit, it also shows concern for the impact on surrounding communities by emphasizing the preservation of stable neighborhoods, maintenance of affordable housing, compatibility with existing land uses near the TSA, and the enhancement of a sense of community; and

Whereas, after almost three years of working with Staff, the Task Force concluded its work on April 20, 2021 and voted to approve a draft CPA that will be submitted to the Fairfax County Planning Commission; and

Whereas, the draft CPA approved by the Task Force seeks to address concerns raised by several community organizations and nearby residents regarding density, building height, traffic and safety, schools, community protection services and potential impact to communities surrounding the TSA; and

Whereas, the WMATA property currently has a multi-story parking structure (height of 65 ft.), which would remain for public use by commuters and two large surface parking lots that would be developed; and

Whereas, the draft CPA provides that adequate structured parking be maintained to serve park-and-ride Metrorail users, but the draft CPA does not preclude future redevelopment of the WMATA commuter parking garage; and

Whereas, the draft CPA recommends that the WMATA property be developed from its by right FAR of .70 to a maximum intensity of 0.96 FAR (including bonus intensity) by construction of a mixed-use community having 105,000 – 120,000 sq. ft. of office space; 10,000 – 30,000 sq. ft. of ground floor space to be used for community-serving retail or other “active ground floor” uses, with a maximum building height of 120 feet; and a maximum of 900 new dwelling units consisting of both multi-family buildings and about 80 townhomes (inclusive of ADUs, WDUs, and bonus units). These new units transition in height from 95 feet, to 60 feet to 45 feet to be more compatible with the existing 35 feet height of surrounding residential buildings.

Whereas, the draft CPA recommends that the University properties, with current, by right intensity of .84 FAR, may be developed for mixed use up to a maximum intensity of 2.5 FAR, building heights of 145 feet and 85 feet, with a maximum of 440 multifamily residential units (inclusive of ADUs, WDUs, and bonus units), about 18,000 sq. ft. of retail use, up to 181,000 sq. ft. of office use, and up to 160,000 sq. ft. of institutional use; and

Whereas, the draft CPA recommends that all planned development should be sequenced such that infrastructure and public amenities, such as roads and parks, are provided with the first phase; and

Whereas, the draft CPA recommends that the County develop a traffic and safety plan for the area surrounding the TSA (the “West Falls Church Active Transportation Plan”), to recommend improvements to the active transportation infrastructure that would increase connectivity, fill in missing or inadequate facility segments, and promote programs for all modes of active transportation to be safe, accessible, comfortable, and intuitive, including all forms of non-motorized travel and walking within, and surrounding, the TSA; and

Whereas, the draft CPA emphasizes urban design elements and compatibility with the existing and surrounding community; and

Whereas, the draft CPA references results of a preliminary Traffic Impact Analysis (the “Traffic Study”) conducted by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (“FCDOT”) and recommends that traffic congestion around the TSA, including the City Project, could be addressed by a new road, parallel to Haycock Road, through the City Project, University and WMATA properties, and connecting with the Metro station, as well as turn lanes on Route 7, and timed traffic signals; and

Whereas, residents of some of the neighborhoods in and near the TSA raised concerns to the County, despite any mitigations included in the draft CPA, that traffic generated by development described in the draft CPA, in conjunction with expected traffic from the far more densely developed City Project, will overwhelm local streets, resulting in traffic backups, cut-through traffic, and pedestrian safety issues; and

Whereas, the draft CPA proposes stormwater management requirements for the TSA using the County’s Best Management Practices; and

Whereas, the Task Force and community, have questioned (1) whether, in addition to the traffic impact analysis proposed with the West Falls Church Active Transportation Plan, the density projected by Staff may exceed the capacity of other public facilities in surrounding communities, especially Fairfax County Public Schools that may be affected, particularly Haycock Elementary, Longfellow Middle School, and McLean High School, and (2) whether any mechanism exists to reduce the allowed density under the draft CPA if such excesses are found; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the MCA supports the draft CPA, provided that the County further study and consider changes to the draft CPA to address potential consequences of density and traffic, safety and congestion in the TSA and surrounding communities, including the following:

1. Ensure that the West Falls Church Active Transportation Plan is funded, prioritized and actively seeks relevant, current data on traffic, motorized and non-motorized access to and from the TSA, including, but not limited to, at least one-half mile in each direction from the intersection of Great Falls Street and Haycock Road, as well as potential ‘cut-

through' roads, such as Highland Avenue, prior to, and/or in concert with, such zoning applications as may be filed for the TSA.

2. Address community concerns regarding additional TSA traffic by implementing recommendations from the West Falls Church Active Transportation Plan, as well as by implementing the draft CPA's recommendations for road improvements, public transit improvements and Transportation Demand Management programs ("TDMs") per the County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Policy Element and County TDM Guidelines to reduce traffic, including peak hour vehicle trips.
3. Reduce the maximum building height of 145 feet on the University properties to be less dense and more compatible with existing, nearby residential communities as described in the draft CPA and be no taller than the tallest building on the WMATA property, currently projected to be 120 feet high, and maintain the second building on the properties at 85 feet, thereby reducing FAR to less than 2.5, which would help meet the draft CPA's stated objectives of providing scale compatible with adjacent development and the surrounding communities to maintain and enhance the stability of existing neighborhoods.
4. Request a review by Fairfax County Public Schools ("FCPS") of the assumptions used to determine students/dwelling unit in the TSA, given the possibility that more families with school-age children may be attracted to the TSA development by its proximity to both public transit and FCPS schools, particularly Haycock Elementary, Longfellow Middle School and McLean High School.

Approved by the MCA Board of Directors

Date: June 2, 2021

McLean Citizens Association, P.O. Box 273, McLean, VA 22101

Cc: John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor
John Ulfelder, Dranesville Planning Commissioner
Clerk to the Board of Supervisors
Clerk to the Planning Commission
Ben Wiles, Dranesville Supervisor's Staff
Director, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development