



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

Via email

Plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov

October 30, 2019

Planning Commissioners
Fairfax County Planning Commission
12000 Government Center Pkwy
Fairfax, VA 22035

Re: Proposed Zoning Amendment for Mall Parking Requirements

Dear Commissioners:

The McLean Citizens Association (“MCA”) objects to the proposed zoning amendment that would reduce parking requirements for the county’s four major malls.

We have reviewed the county staff report that recommended adoption of a minimum parking requirement of 2.5 to 3.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area (“gfa”) for shopping centers of 800,000 of gfa. The staff based the recommendation on a parking study conducted by Nelson/Nygaard, which concluded that less than 65 percent of the available parking spaces at the Fair Oaks Mall and Springfield Mall were occupied during peak occupancy.

The Nelson/Nygaard study did not analyze parking at either the Tysons Center Mall (“Tysons I”) or the Tysons Galleria Mall (“Tysons II”). Without a study specifically addressing parking at those two malls, the MCA believes it is inappropriate to reduce the parking requirements at those locations.

Based on the experience of many of our members, it seems that it is frequently difficult to find a vacant space at the two Tysons malls even during normal weekends throughout the year. During holidays, the parking demand appears to often exceed capacity.

With regard to Tysons I, there is an electronic system that determines how many spaces are filled, and an electronic board stating the number available in each lot.

From observation, these signs sometimes show there are few, if any, spaces available.

If the lots at Tysons I and II malls are currently filling to capacity during peak periods as appears to be the case, but the county nevertheless desires to reduce the parking requirements for reasons not supported by the parking study, this would constitute a major policy change that needs careful consideration and debate before amending the zoning code. That discussion has not occurred, and the community has not had an opportunity to consider the ramifications of such a decision, including the potential adverse impact upon their ability to patronize the malls.

By relying on a parking survey of other malls as justification for reducing parking at Tysons I and II, it appears that the county is avoiding important policy and planning issues that need to be reviewed.

In conclusion, we request that the proposed amendment to mall parking lot requirements be revised so as not to apply to the Tysons I and II malls. In addition, we request that before taking any future action to reduce the parking at these two malls, the county conduct a parking study specific to these malls, and invite review and comment by the community before deciding to reduce the parking requirements.

Sincerely,

Dale Stein, President

cc:

Clerk, Fairfax County Planning Commission
Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence Planning Commissioner
John Ulfelder, Dranesville Planning Commissioner
John Carter, Hunter Mill Planning Commissioner
Linda Smyth, Providence District Supervisor
John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor
Cathy Hudgins, Hunter Mill District Supervisor
Director, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning
Director, Fairfax County Park Authority
Fairfax County Planning Staff