

**FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT TO THE
FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
(with Federation Resolution)
September 9, 2002**

Residential Development Criteria

Good evening, Madam Chairman and members of the Board. I am Art Wells, President of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations, and it is my pleasure to appear before you tonight to address the proposed revision of the Residential Development Criteria, which are included in Appendix 9 of the Policy Plan.

First, we commend the Development Criteria Review Committee of the Planning Commission and staff for their many months of work to revise the Development Criteria, a priority recommendation of the Infill and Residential Development Study report of July 2000. We applaud the open public participation process whereby anyone with an interest in this issue had the opportunity to express opinions and suggestions.

Second, we appreciate the receptiveness of the Commission's committee that labored over the proposed revision, reworking it several times before the Commission approved its recommendation to you, the Board. We also appreciate that most of the Federation's suggestions were included in the Commission's final draft.

The criterion that has received the most attention by the public is public facilities - and schools in particular because the need for new and renovated facilities is so great. At its meeting on June 20, the Federation membership voted (see attached resolution) to support a Public Facilities criterion calling for supporting the identification, evaluation and addressing of all impacts on public facilities (i.e., schools, parks, libraries, police, fire and rescue, stormwater management and other publicly owned community facilities) and ensuring that all rezoning applications for residential development are expected to offset their impacts. Further, the membership decided that the criterion should include the provision for cash proffers for schools restricted for use in the district or adjoining districts. The draft before you states, "on a case-by-case basis, public facility needs will be evaluated so that local concerns may be addressed." It also calls for rezoning applications to "first address public facility needs in the vicinity of the proposed development." On balance, our position and the recommended language are generally consistent.

The Federation appreciates very much the extensive effort devoted to preparation of the revised Development Criteria, which are aimed at balancing new residential development with supporting infrastructure.

**FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
RESOLUTION**

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

(Approved by the Federation's General Membership 6/20/02)

Background: In July 2000, County staff published “The Infill and Residential Development Study” that included recommendations on how the County could better address issues associated with the impacts of new residential development. A priority recommendation was that the County revise the Residential Development Criteria portion of the County’s Comprehensive Plan, a tool used to evaluate residential rezoning applications. County staff and the Planning Commission Development Criteria Committee have developed a proposed revision, which was discussed at the workshop on April 16.

The revised criteria address the following eight issues: site design, neighborhood context, environment, tree preservation and restoration, transportation, public facilities, affordable housing, and heritage resources. The previous criterion on phasing of development has been deleted, and the criterion on land assembly and integration has been included under site design.

The proposed revision is available on the County web site (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/ocp/zed/>) Residential Development Criteria - Final Report. The proposed criteria are more detailed and, in a sense, stricter.

Resolution:

WHEREAS, Fairfax County proposes to revise and reorganize the Residential Development Criteria portion of the Comprehensive Plan, which will apply to all residential rezoning applications rather than only those requesting density above the low end of the Plan range;

WHEREAS, the proposed revision includes eight criteria instead of ten, with Parcel Consolidation and Open Space included in the Site Design category and Phasing of development deleted. Tree Preservation and Restoration would be a new criterion. The Parkland criterion would be included under public facilities;

WHEREAS, the current criteria require fulfillment of at least half of the applicable criteria for density granted above the low end of the Plan range and fulfillment of at least three-quarters of the applicable criteria for density at or above the high end of the Plan range. The proposed revision would expect fulfillment of all applicable criteria, which might not be equally weighted, with a single criterion determined to be overriding in a particular case;

WHEREAS, the proposal presents three potential alternatives for the Public Facilities criterion: (1) continuing the current practice; (2) continuing the current practice for public facilities other than schools with a separate criterion for school facility needs; and (3) a cash proffer guideline or equivalency approach, with specific amounts for each public facility category (schools, parks, libraries, fire/EMS, and police) according to type of residential dwelling.

WHEREAS, the current criterion on phasing of development has been deleted, ostensibly because it is addressed in other places in the Policy Plan, not as a criterion to be considered when reviewing rezoning applications but as general policy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (the Federation) offers the following comments on the proposed revision of the Residential Development Criteria:

- a. The Federation supports in general the proposal, which the County staff and Planning Commission committee have been carefully preparing for more than a year to recognize the infill nature of most residential development today and in the future.
- b. The Federation supports the proposed evaluation process to consider all development related issues rather than grant density based on the percentage of criteria fulfilled.
- c. While infill development is occurring throughout the developed areas of the County, there are still many large tracts to be developed, such as in the Lorton area. We note the deletion of criteria addressing the Phasing of development and Parkland dedication or provision of recreation areas and/or facilities. While these criteria may not apply in cases of infill development, they could apply to larger subdivisions. We recommend their reinstatement into the criteria.
- d. Support the identification, evaluation and addressing of all impacts on public facilities (i.e., schools, parks, libraries, police, fire and rescue, stormwater management and other publicly owned community facilities) and ensuring that all rezoning applications for residential development are expected to offset their impacts, including the provision for cash proffers for schools restricted for use in the district or adjoining districts and without allowing for substitution of library or other public facilities to offset proffers for schools.
- e. The current criterion on the phasing of development to coincide with provision of planned and programmed public facilities to mitigate or offset the impacts of the development has not been used as a factor during the rezoning application review process. Perhaps this is one reason why some aspects of the public facility infrastructure are woefully inadequate. It therefore should be reinstated as a criterion and used seriously.

