



February 2, 2023

Michael Davis, Parking Program Manager
Fairfax County Land Development Services
12055 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035

Re: Fairfax County's Parking Reimagined Draft Recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Article 6

Dear Mr. Davis,

I am writing on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and its more than 7,000 members across Northern Virginia and the Washington metropolitan area to provide written comments on Fairfax County's latest draft recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Article 6, part of the County's Parking Reimagined project.

For fifty years, WABA has worked to transform the capital region by improving the conditions for people who bike. Our work to advocate for dedicated bike infrastructure, pass laws that promote safe roadway behavior, and provide education programming for all road-users has resulted in a drastically different cultural and political approach to biking for transportation. Biking can and should be an equitable, safe, low-cost, time-saving, and sustainable way to navigate our communities. Critical to that is a supply of safe, accessible, and free bicycle parking that accommodates both current and future needs. If there is no place to park a bicycle, people will not bike there.

WABA greatly appreciates the work being done to include bicycle parking requirements in the November 2022 draft version of Section 6102 of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. While the proposed requirements are a good start, we are greatly concerned that the minimum requirements for bicycling parking are insufficient.

The draft ordinance proposes to set the number of bicycle parking spaces based on either 5%, 10%, or 15% of the required number of vehicle parking spaces based on land use intensity. As the density increases, so does the number of required bicycle parking spaces. For most of the land use classifications in the county, only 5% of the vehicle parking spaces will be required. As an example, in a 36-unit condo development, 47 vehicle parking spaces (1.3 x 36), and only 3 bicycle parking spaces (5% of 48) will be required. People in most households have at least one bicycle. Requiring only three spaces for this development is grossly inadequate. While the bike parking requirements are more extensive in Commercial Revitalization Districts (10%, 5 spaces in the example above) and in Transit Station Areas (15%, 8 spaces in the example), those numbers are still insufficient. If this condo development were in nearby Washington, DC, a minimum of 12 bicycle parking spaces would

be required (1 long-term space for every 3 units). If located in Portland, Oregon, 54 bike parking spaces would be required (1.5 bike parking spaces per unit).

WABA makes the following recommendations:

1. Substantially increase the minimum requirements for all land-use categories. The current minimums are simply too low to meet both current and projected future needs. In particular, additional and ample bicycle parking is needed at specific locations such as schools, recreation centers, libraries, and other critical community destinations if Fairfax County wants to encourage bicycling to these locations. As the demand for limited space increases, so too does the cost of copious surface parking. Bicycle parking is a far more cost-effective use of space at these locations and an important means of incentivizing non-car trips.

2. Decouple bicycle parking from car parking requirements. Tying bike parking to a metric – surface parking spots – that the County is overall trying to encourage a reduction in appears counterproductive, even with the bike parking minimum increases in CRDs and TSAs. The future viability of non-auto transportation should not be hampered by needed reforms to car parking minimums in the County.

3. Set different targets for long-term and short-term bicycle parking. Not all bike parking is the same; a development that meets minimum requirements for bike parking via in-building bike lockers could then feature no publicly-accessible bike parking under the current formulation and would thus fail to meet a critical community need. Additionally, the revised ordinance should require that a bike parking tabulation, the location of the various bicycle parking options, and directional signage be included in all site plans.

We would point to alternative, straight-forward formulations in nearby [Montgomery County, MD](#) and in [Washington, DC](#) as excellent examples to strive for. Parking Reimagined is an opportunity to best position the County for the future of transportation. If we are to reach the County's goals regarding reduced carbon emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT), that future will have to include more bicycles and thus more bicycle parking. We hope that Fairfax County will continue iterating on this project and we look forward to seeing the next version of the draft bicycle parking ordinance.

Respectfully,

Kevin O'Brien

Virginia Organizer | Washington Area Bicyclist Association