



**McLean Citizens Association Resolution
Zoning Ordinance Amendment
Residential Studio Units
November 6, 2013**

Whereas, Fairfax County has proposed a Zoning Ordinance Amendment (Amendment) to create a Residential Studio multi-family use for the provision of affordable rental housing stock to combat homelessness and also provide a rental housing option for other low income households, including the elderly, the disabled and wage-earners; and

Whereas, Residential Studios (Studio) would be defined as zero bedroom, efficiency apartments of less than 500 square feet for rent by households earning less than 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI), or \$45,000; and

Whereas, not less than 80% of the Studio units would be dedicated as affordable units subject to rental price controls with lease terms of 12 months or less; and

Whereas, Studios would be permitted in Planned Districts by development plan amendment; and

Whereas, Studios would require a Special Exception permit in Residential Districts R-E and higher, and all Commercial and Industrial Districts; and

Whereas, the establishment of Studios developments would be limited to lots with frontage on arterial and collector roads; and

Whereas, many collector roads traverse low to mid-density residential neighborhoods; and

Whereas, Studios would be a multi-family use with the sole restriction on occupancy being a household income level of less than 60% AMI; and

Whereas, the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance currently limits multi-family uses in Residential Districts to R-12 and higher; and

Whereas, the number of Studio units on any given parcel would be limited to a maximum of 75 units; and

Whereas, elsewhere in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the number of Studio units on any given parcel is limited to a maximum of 60 units; and

Whereas, the number of Studio units and the floor/area ratio (FAR) of any Studio development would not be subject to the density and FAR limits of the associated zoning district; and

Whereas, the Fairfax County parking requirement for multi-family apartments is 1.6 spaces per unit; and

Whereas, the parking requirement for Studios would be 1.0 spaces per unit, with the option for a reduction in parking spaces if the developer could demonstrate a reduced need for parking; and

Whereas, certain conditions that might justify a reduced requirement for parking when the Special Exception application is submitted could change over time; and

Whereas, the provision of fewer than 1.6 parking spaces/unit would severely limit any future use of the multi-family development; and

Whereas, low-income residents who do not own automobiles would be reliant on public transportation; and

Whereas, the Amendment does not require that Studios be located proximate to an active transit stops (bus or metro) with high quality, all day service nor does it require that studios be located proximate to the types of retail, medical, recreational and other services necessary to support the residents; and

Whereas, private bus shuttles do not meet such high quality standards for bus service; and

Whereas, the maximum occupancy of a Studio unit greater than 320 square feet would be 3 persons, related or unrelated; and

Whereas, similar developments in other Virginia localities limit occupancy of affordable efficiency apartments to 1 person and, while the Amendment staff report suggests Studios are primarily single-occupancy, there is no language in the Amendment that would mandate this; and

Whereas, each Studio development would be managed by a 24-hour on-site manager, or, as an alternative, the developer could demonstrate sufficient off-site management capability; and

Whereas, this Amendment represents a very significant change in Fairfax County Zoning; and

Whereas, on September 24, 2013, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to support the creation of a Planning Commission Residential Studios Committee for the purpose of providing opportunities for detailed consideration of the Amendment by Commissioners, citizens and other stakeholders; and

Whereas, the Residential Studios Committee is scheduled to meet five times between October 28, 2013 and January 22, 2014 with the goal of addressing and resolving questions and concerns associated with the Amendment; and

Whereas, the McLean Citizens Association supports the concept of low-income housing and the drive to reduce homelessness in Fairfax County;

Now, therefore be it resolved that the McLean Citizens Association opposes the Residential Studios Zoning Ordinance Amendment as drafted unless all of the following changes are adopted:

1. A Studio use be permitted only by Special Exception in any Planned, Commercial, Industrial or Residential District in which such a use would be permitted, and
2. Studio uses in Residential Districts be limited to R-20 and higher densities, and
3. Studio developments be managed by a 24-hour, on-site manager, and
4. The multi-family parking requirement of 1.6 spaces/unit be imposed on a Studio use, and
5. The conversion of single-family dwelling to a Studio use be prohibited, and
6. Studio developments be limited to a maximum of 60 units, and
7. The locations of Studio developments be limited to arterials as defined in the Virginia Department of Transportation's 2013 Statewide Functional Classification Update, when adopted, and
8. Occupancy of Studio units by the disabled and elderly be limited by development condition, and the additional standards for the Studio Special Exception use provide for and mitigate the additional intensity associated with providing services to the disabled and elderly, and
9. Studios be located proximate to retail, medical, recreational and other uses necessary to support the residents, and
10. Studio be situated within one-fourth (1/4) mile walking distance to an active transit stop with high quality, all day service, and
11. Studio developments rely on public transportation for bus service and the RSU standards prohibit development conditions that require private bus shuttle service in perpetuity to provide for the transportation needs of the residents.

*Approved by the MCA Board of Directors
Date 11/6/2013*

McLean Citizens Association, P.O. Box 273, McLean, Virginia 22102

cc: John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor
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Fairfax County Planning Commission
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