

Testimony to County Board for October 13, 2007

Item 41 - Request to advertise the Master Transportation Plan (MTP)

Members of the Board Good (Morning or Afternoon – as appropriate) thank you for the opportunity to testify on this item.

I am Larry Mayer, President of the Arlington County Civic Federation. The Arlington County Civic Federation, for reasons I will explain, requests a deferral in this advertisement, most importantly, the Transportation Plan Map, dated July 2007 – which as stated in the Board report, is to be revised prior to further hearings. I am testifying with the concurrence of the Transportation, Planning and Zoning, AND Executive Committees. However, given the timing, our position has not yet been endorsed by the general membership – although it is consistent with many past resolutions specifying full disclosure and review, as well as our February 6, 2007 adopted resolution on the Arlington County Master Transportation Plan Draft.

On October 9, 2007 we copied you on a "Memorandum" entitled "Land use inconsistencies in MTP map" giving eight examples of inconsistencies between street designations and General Land Use Plan (GLUP) designations.

We are concerned that any such "inconsistencies" that remain as of the date of advertisement will, depending on legal counsel advice, necessitate a re-advertisement causing delays beyond a deferral at this point until corrections are made.

Furthermore as we stated in the Memorandum – *"we are also concerned that a **final (revised)** proposed map for advertising is still not available for public review on the County's web site"*.

Sometime between 9:55 AM and 11:15 AM Friday morning, supporting material was finally "posted" under this agenda item on the Arlington County Web site – less than 24 hours prior to the start of this meeting! **More importantly**, the Map we referenced in our Memorandum, which had not been updated since July of 2007, AND which has the inconsistencies listed in our Memorandum, is what is being advertised. We were neither the only, nor the first, to point out such problems. Believe it or not, inconsistencies were pointed out to staff, many months ago, and prior to the end of plenary group meetings. It is strange therefore that only the July 2007 map is being advertised. Of course, the Board report states "the revised map will be available for public review prior to scheduled hearings on the MTP by the Planning Commission (of October 29th) and County Board meeting (of November 13th)". Does that mean the Public Presentation on October 23rd will use a map with inconsistencies as well? How long must we wait for corrected material?

Given problems with MTP materials, we now **strongly** suggest that as stated in our Memorandum the **"Board delay advertising a map and text until staff is convinced that it has a fully accurate document"** – AND would now add - that the Public has had **adequate** time to review corrected materials for any concerns. Face it, two weeks is not adequate for such review. We also stated in the Memorandum other reasons, given the implications and importance of this material, why such a deferral might be in the County's best interests.

Finally, aside from this particular advertisement, as an avid "electronic internet user", I might **personally again** suggest that the Board consider parameters or rules where "unavailability" of material, at least on the Web site, subsequent to a minimum of say 48 hours (or any other number of defined hours) before the Board meeting will result in automatic deferral. Such rules could be consistent with the County's "legislative wish list" item to be considered next month of *"Allowing public notices of government meetings to be valid if they are placed on a government Internet site."*

Thank you very much for your time.