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LWC's Statement at the Planning Commission October 3 Public Hearing on the Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments in the Dulles South and Upper Foley Planning Areas

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is very concerned about the destruction of natural areas and the resultant loss of wildlife that will occur if this massive development is approved.

This area is supposed to be the transition zone between the suburban east and the rural west. The Revised Comprehensive Plan calls for 4,500 houses in this area. The proposed changes would allow 28,000 houses in the areas under consideration. We oppose these amendments as proposed.

The habitat destruction and resultant loss of wildlife from all this development is unconscionable. While, on the surface we will see the societal impacts of traffic grid-lock and higher taxes, we will pay even more dearly in the long term as we destroy our natural resources. We will lose forests, fields and wetlands. The riparian buffers which border the area's streams will be degraded if they don't disappear altogether. These habitats are critical to people in that they filter pollution, give us a place of refuge, and let us touch our own humanity. But they are critical in their own right too in that they are homes to countless diverse wildlife species.

The Revised Comprehensive Plan originally protected these valuable natural areas. These protections and Conservation Design have disappeared in the past two years. While the Planning Commission ponders this destruction of habitat, nothing has been done to re-implement ordinances to protect our natural areas and critical habitats. This means that whatever the development numbers are, it will be a free-for-all: development will occur without any consideration to the impact on our natural resources. True environmental protections need to be implemented before any decisions on further development are considered!