

Proposed Planning Principles for Reston Master Plan Special Study

The Reston 2020 Committee of the Reston Citizens Association respectfully submits this set of planning principles to the Reston Master Plan Special Study for discussion and review by the Task Force. Our goal in presenting these ideas is to preserve the essential, special, and unique characteristics of the community of Reston as it grows and develops. Our vision of the future of Reston is embodied in the five characteristics listed below which we feel have made Reston the pre-eminent community it is, offering high quality-of-life and attractive work/life balance to its diverse population, and an advantageous business environment to the local, national and international companies located in northern Fairfax County.

- (a) Accommodation of a diverse population, including people of all ages, abilities, family stages, and income levels;
- (b) Diverse, safe, sustainable, and attractive neighborhoods;
- (c) Proximity to all types of public, professional, and commercial services, and cultural / recreational opportunities;
- (d) Proximity to diverse employment opportunities;
- (e) Extensive open space and natural areas.

To achieve this vision of the future of Reston, good planning will be necessary. We suggest that this planning be guided by the following nine principles.

1. Comprehensive Planning – **Planning for future residential and commercial growth must consider the Reston community as a whole, that is, as a comprehensive unit.** Individual re-development projects must be viewed and evaluated in terms of their total impact on the community, rather than as individual, self-contained, projects. Private and public development and re-development must be phased to ensure that that planning objectives are achieved as the community grows. There should be close coordination between changes in the comprehensive plan and changes in the zoning ordinance. The cumulative impact of development and re-development must be continually assessed and evaluated at the county and the Reston community level.
2. Excellence in Planning, Design, and Architecture – **Reston must continue to be held to the highest standards of excellence and innovation in future development.** The quality of the development and re-development in Reston must be of the highest caliber, in terms of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, architectural design, compatibility with the natural environment, livability and usability. This includes an orderly and creative arrangement of all land uses with respect to each other and to the entire community. In particular, development in the RCIG and Town Center must be an exemplar of innovative, architecturally significant, high quality and enduring community development.
3. Infrastructure and Transportation – **The required expansion and/or modification of all modes of transportation and infrastructure must be planned and funded in concert with approved development projects, and must be completed concurrently with that development.** This must be based on an integrated comprehensive plan for transportation

and other infrastructure, including—but not limited to—public safety and emergency services; educational, cultural, and recreational facilities; and water and sewerage. Special attention must be paid to mitigating increased vehicular traffic, the provision of safe, attractive, inexpensive, and frequent public transportation, and separation of pedestrian and bicycle traffic from roads.

4. **Density – Higher densities for residential and commercial development than currently contained in the Comprehensive Plan should be confined to the RCIG, Town Center, and the various Village Centers.** While maintaining the overall population density at current planned levels, from an urban planning perspective higher than planned density in close proximity to mass transit facilities and commercial centers may be desirable. This will provide the demographics needed to support mass transit and local commerce while minimizing the impact to existing residential neighborhoods. In areas where higher densities are allowed, substantial parcel consolidation should be encouraged, as already stated in the Comprehensive Plan. Within consolidated parcels, transfers of allowed densities among development projects should be allowed, even encouraged, so long as the overall planned density restrictions for the sub land units are not violated.
5. **Reston Urban Core – The Reston Urban Core (RUC) must be developed into an integrated, dynamic and vibrant urban center for northern Fairfax County.** The RUC is defined to include the RCIG and Town Center. It must comply with the planning principles of mixed use and transit oriented development as defined in the Comprehensive Plan. It must be developed to be a continually active element in the Reston community and surrounding region, and a destination unto itself. Special attention must be paid to adequate public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle access, parking, and traffic management to ensure the efficient movement of people and vehicles within the RUC and across the community.
6. **Existing Residential Neighborhoods Outside the RUC –Residential neighborhoods of all types, serving all income levels, must be protected. Any re-development of existing residential neighborhoods must maintain the essential character of the neighborhood as defined by the current residents.** Community input, particularly that of the neighborhood and nearby residents, must be systematically solicited and considered in a meaningful way before redevelopment projects are approved. .
7. **All Ages / All Families – Reston, including the RCIG, must continue to accommodate people of all ages, physical abilities, economic circumstances, and families of all sizes and at all stages of family life.** This includes affordable and physically accessible housing, cultural and recreational facilities, educational facilities, medical and health care facilities, and multi-mode local and regional transportation capabilities.
8. **Open Space – Ample open space is an important determinant in creating Reston’s high quality-of-life. To sustain and nurture this valued asset, at least 25% of all future developed and re-developed land must be reserved for open space.** Open space includes areas such as parks, plazas, outdoor recreational facilities, and maintained trails to which the public has access, but does not include areas such as paved parking lots, road surfaces, and

median strips. It is particularly important that future development in the Reston Urban Core includes at least 25 percent open space within each sub land unit. Redevelopment projects should preserve both private and public open space at the greater of 25% or current levels.

9. Natural Areas – **The natural areas in Reston must not be developed, and should be extended to the extent possible.** The natural areas, part of open space, such as the common lands of the Reston Association, are part of Reston’s identity. These areas include woodlands, meadows, lakes, ponds, streams, wildlife habitat, environmentally sensitive areas, and drainage and runoff catchment areas, which are maintained in their natural state. These areas, along with the privately owned natural areas in clusters and detached houses, are crucial in protecting the natural environment in Reston. The development plans for the RCIG should include areas set aside for open space that can evolve into natural areas.