RESTON EAST (WIEHLE) VISION, MIX OF USES, AND 2:1 IDEA

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Reston Master Plan Special Study

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Legend

I-3 Reston-Herndon Suburban Center Land Units and Sub-units

General Location Transit Station Platforms

Circles denote 1/4 and 1/2 mile distances from center of proposed station platform

Scale

0 600 1,200 2,400 3,600 4,800 Feet

Map prepared April 2010 by Fairfax County Department of Planning & Zoning
Aerial flight date: March 2009

FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

= ¼ mile from Station platform = ½ mile from Station platform

Transit Oriented Design Area

WIEHLE AVENUE

Starting Point

i. **Reston East Station will open in 3 years**
ii. **Existing conditions:**
    a. Wiehle Study Area is now zoned for 0 residential & over 10,000,000 SF of nonresidential
    b. In TOD ½ mile, 5.4 MMSF nonresidential of which 85% is office
    c. 26,500 employees with half (or more) in the ½ mile TOD area
    d. Many mid-rise properties and some office condominiums in suburban, office park settings
    e. Practical boundaries (toll road, golf courses, and established neighborhoods) limit potential development, particularly residential development.
    f. Grid of streets, sidewalks and paths grid must be built on private roads and parking lots.

GMU 2050 Midcase Forecasts

- Population of residents/workers
  - Residents =16,900
  - Jobs = 50,400, including 39,800 office workers.
- GFA
  - Residential = 12,075,000
  - Nonresidential = 19,040,000, including

    11,938,000 office

Wiehle Subcommittee

- Six months review of community and builder input; existing conditions, GMU, etc.
- The Committee goals:
  - Create a viable, vibrant TOD area that will be attractive to developers, residents, employers, workers, visitors, transit users and people from throughout Reston;
  - Maximize walking, biking and transit usage;
  - Concentrate development within ½ mile of Metro;
  - Encourage timely development.

Wiehle Subcommittee

If implemented, recommendations would produce

- Potential for more residents than GMU's 2050 forecast
  - 27% more residential GFA than office GFA (56:44) within ½ mile despite 0 residential now
  - 60%-75% residential v. office from ¼ - ½ mile
  - no limit on higher residential or certain nonresidential if markets and designs support
  - still more residential at Fannie Mae and Plaza America
- TOD development to replace suburban office parks
  - a network of streets, sidewalks, paths
  - significant open spaces, including plazas and parks
  - traffic mitigation measures
- Employment, educational and cultural venues, restaurants, retail, appealing streetscapes and other attractors

RG 2:1 Proposal for Wiehle

In a December paper, RG argues that Wiehle area should exist to "feed" Tysons and TC "downtowns", not to develop balanced TOD. To achieve this vision, he proposes

- 2:1 residential:nonresidential rule in TOD area—including existing nonresidential
- 8MMsf (or 6 MM) cap on nonresidential in TOD area (plus 1.5 MMsf for retail and educational)
- 16MMsf of residential in TOD area (22,400 residents at 1500 SF/DU or 28,000 at 1200SF/DU)
- 9.5MMsf of nonresidential <u>outside</u> ½ mile TOD area in G-7, I-3.

Comments on Vision

- The TF should reject a “vision” that *divides* Reston into a “downtown” fed by bedroom communities.
- The downtown/suburb model violates
  - Reston’s core values of a diverse community with widely dispersed attractions
  - Rational and timely TOD
  - Effective use of a $6 billion transit investment
  - Existing facts and experience.

The Downtown/Suburb Model is Antithesis of Reston

- Reston is built on a premise of diverse, well-dispersed attractions and opportunities to live, work, and play.
- Restonians want choices of places to work and play close to home and more than just TC.
- Employers want diversity of options.
- Redeveloping Reston Urban Core (RCIG and TC) should produce linear town with balanced, mixed-use nodes at each station.

Downtown/Suburb Model is Anti-TOD

- Wiehle Committee recommendations
  - closely follow Fairfax TOD guidelines and GMU forecasts
  - reflects on-the-ground realities
  - designed to maximize walking to work, play and transit.
- Wiehle is more than 1.1 mile from TC without pleasant streetscapes in between.
- Trying to put thousands of residents in Wiehle without incentives for builders and attractors for residents and jobs would delay redevelopment and cause more vehicle usage.
- Locating half of nonresidential outside ½ mile is anti-TOD.
- Downtown/suburb model is outmoded: Not even cities (e.g., DC) have unitary downtowns today. Mixed-use nodes of commercial/ office/residential especially at transit stations.

“2:1” Formula Is Unrealistic

- 0 residential & 5.4MMSF nonresidential now in ½ mile.
- 8MMsf cap and 16MMsf of residential would mean a 6:1 ratio of new residential:nonresidential construction.
- If achieved, would produce 1/3 – 2/3 more residents than foreseen by GMU.
- How build and fill 16MMsf residential given constraints (existing offices, toll road, Sunrise Valley limit, lack of retail, lack of infrastructure, etc) , particularly without nonresidential incentives?
- How achieve urban form, streets, etc. with infill building?
- Serious departure from GMU forecasts: much more residential and much less nonresidential
- Why encourage 9.5MMsf nonresidential outside ½ mile?

Arlington analogies

- Arlington's R-B corridor is different from Reston's transit corridor: stations are ½ mile apart with pre-existing sidewalks and streets; had more readily replaced buildings; had pre-existing, dispersed retail.
- Ballston is good TOD but not a "downtown."
- Virginia Square and Clarendon –
  - 2 of 3 least used transit stations on Orange Line and in all of Arlington County
  - Over 20 years after station opened before any significant residential development occurred
  - Virginia Square remains underdeveloped , has little retail and few prospects
  - Clarendon required Market Commons commercial development after 2000 to trigger significant DU building.

Tysons Analogy

- Tysons plan does not support a downtown/suburb model for Reston.
  - Its plan is premised on diverse, commercially driven, mixed-use redevelopment around each of the transit stations.
  - 75% of development within ½ mile of stations.
  - If all Tysons stations make a “downtown,” why not a similarly broad conception in Reston Urban Core?

Conclusion

- A downtown/suburb vision would be bad for Reston and for transit oriented development.
  - Reston does not need a “downtown” that must be “fed” or subsidized by distorting the rest of Reston.
  - People of Reston want dispersed amenities that offer citizens and businesses alternatives to TC.
- Delaying TOD redevelopment with unrealistic demands at Reston’s first transit station would waste opportunities of 1st Metro phase.
- “Downtown” vision in RG’s plan would hugely increase driving between Wiehle and TC.
- 2-3 times as many people could live at Wiehle than live in TC now. They should not have to drive for work and play.

Conclusion

- Adopt Wiehle Committee recommendations for balanced, TOD development at Wiehle with particular efforts to attract educational and cultural facilities and businesses that can benefit from them. Potential for more residential than GMU forecasts.
- Make entire Reston Urban Core attractive: a linear town with successful TOD communities at each transit location would benefit all of Reston, including TC.
- The greatest densities and the tallest buildings belong at TC, but either delete “downtown” from TF documents or extend it to all RUC.
- If TC has too much commercial which needs to be fed by more residents, then increase residential within TC area or reduce TC densities.