

RESTON INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ESCROW FUND

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Create a private / public **Reston Core Infrastructure Escrow Fund** into which all new development must contribute via proffers. The proffered funds would be added to community-wide tax district funds, matched to the extent possible by other designated public funds. Some form of tax increment financing that would draw upon the overall growth in assessed value throughout Reston must also contribute to this fund. Fairfax County and other governmental entities must also contribute a set amount into this fund annually.

Reston Core Infrastructure Improvement Escrow Fund:

This type of special funding treatment is fully justifiable in Reston because Reston has since its founding in 1964 consistently generated far more in revenues for the county than it demands in facilities and services. This is true for three basic reasons:

- (1) It is one of Virginia's and Fairfax County's preeminent business and employment centers generating substantial revenue surpluses for both Fairfax County and Commonwealth of Virginia coffers.
- (2) Reston, through its Reston Association, Reston Community Center and other similar entities, has taken upon itself the burden of providing certain facilities, resources and services that would otherwise have to be provided by Fairfax County.
- (3) The coming of Dulles Rail to serve Reston and beyond is being paid for in large measure by special add-on taxes imposed upon non-residential real estate within Reston's Dulles Corridor, and by tolls collected from Reston residents and Reston employees with origins or destinations within the Dulles Corridor. While surplus conventional tax revenues generated from the Dulles Corridor area are consistently redistributed elsewhere in the County, proportionately very little County-wide general fund revenue is reinvested in the Dulles Corridor.

This has been, and will continue to be, an accepted fact of life in Reston. The result, nevertheless, has been a community we respect and appreciate. However, in order to sustain this cash cow, it needs to be fed occasionally. It is therefore altogether appropriate for Fairfax County to contribute a set portion of its annual budget back into a **Reston Infrastructure Improvement Escrow Fund** into which private developers and all Reston real property owners must also contribute.

Revenues for this fund would be derived from a variety of potential sources:

1. All new development would continue to be subject to proffered conditions from which a fair and equitable pro rata payment would be derived to help offset that project's share of any additional infrastructure improvements that will be needed to accommodate the impact it creates. Rather than be subsumed into general county proffer accounts, these funds would be earmarked for the **Reston Infrastructure Improvement Escrow Fund**.
2. Non-residential development would continue to pay the add-on tax increment it is assessed to help finance Countywide transportation improvements. A fair percentage of this overall Countywide revenue, however, would be designated for meeting Reston transportation improvement projects.
3. A portion of the distinctly Reston-generated revenues from Small District 5, or its equivalent, would be designated for the Reston Infrastructure Fund. Thus all Reston taxpayers would be expected to contribute equitably to infrastructure improvements from which they would directly benefit.
4. As the result of the construction of Dulles Rail property values throughout Reston will be enhanced. It is appropriate that a set percentage of the overall tax and fee revenue increase resulting from new Reston infrastructure improvements such as Dulles Rail, be reinvested back into the **Reston Infrastructure Improvement Escrow Fund** via some form of tax increment financing.
5. Surplus revenues derived by assessing parking fees throughout the Reston Core during peak hours could be directed into this fund, or they could be used instead to offset the operating cost of the greatly enhanced Reston internal bus system.

In this manner, each Reston property owner, resident and employee will provide revenues to be re-invested back into the fund that will sustain and enhance the value of his property, and the transportation and infrastructure services he receives, and will do so in direct proportion to the value of the benefits these improvements will provide.

With this funding mechanism in place, a carefully managed capital improvements program (CIP).will provide planning for important infrastructure projects based upon a carefully established priority list of projects. Priority must be assigned, first, with respect to the cost-benefit effectiveness of the project, and, second, with consideration to the time sensitivity of the specific project. With established priority, projects can be programmed for construction as sufficient funding accrues as part of a systematic capital improvements program

This fund should be administered by a Community Development Authority. Reston businesses, landowners, and residents, under the direction the county government, should have a key role in developing and administering the authority. Their primary objective would be to ensure the financing of phased implementation of transportation and other public infrastructure along with the phased land use plan objectives.

(This may seem to be a revolutionary idea for Fairfax County, but this concept is totally appropriate, fair and implementable utilizing sufficient political courage. Without it, we are condemned to continue as we have been with inadequate infrastructure and public services continuing in perpetuity always behind the power curve.)

Implementation Entity

In addition to administering the Reston infrastructure capital improvements plan, a **Community Development Authority**, as the “Keeper of the Vision”, must have urban design and architectural review authority. This entity must be established by the Board of Supervisors to work with county agencies and Reston stakeholders, and exercise the responsibility of ensuring that the new Comprehensive Plan, and its associated regulations and planning principles are effectively maintained.

In Reston, there are currently several boards and committees that review projects and changes of land use or structures. All currently have severe limitations to their authority and effectiveness:

- Within PRC-zoned areas subject to Reston Association (RA) jurisdiction, through their Design Review Board (DRB) and Covenants Committee, RA has the broad responsibility to “foster and preserve an aesthetic balance among the variety of residential, public use, commercial and recreational properties in the community.” The DRB is composed of volunteer members of the community, some of whom have professional planning, engineering and design credentials, and is supported by RA staff. It also has the legal authority to place liens upon properties that violate RA Covenants. In actual application, however, the DRB tends to look at the details of individual properties rather than at the broader context of larger complex land units. Given the limitations of volunteers’ time and experience, and the RA budget, the DRB is currently unable to consider effectively the very large residential or commercial development projects now being proposed within Reston. At this point in time its authority is only within areas subject to RA covenants and thus does not extend to the Town Center or the RCIG.
- The Reston Planning and Zoning Committee (P and Z), although roughly associated with RA, reviews proposed development projects throughout all parts of Reston. The P and Z has no official legislated or legal authority, but makes general recommendations on behalf of the Reston community to the Reston members of the Planning Commission and to the Board of Supervisor. The influence of its recommendations is dependent upon the effectiveness of its individual members, all of whom are volunteers from the community. Some of these members have professional design, planning or

engineering credentials. At times the P&Z influence has been substantial but it is not consistent without the backing of official or legal authority

- Within the Town Center there is a Design Review Board (TCDRB) that reviews and gives recommendations about projects within the larger Town Center area. The TCDRB is an entity of the Town Center Association (TCA) and through that Association has a considerable legal power to enforce its covenants. The TCA, however, is dominated by the non-residential property owners of the Town Center, and the TCDRB thus focuses heavily upon the urban core and commercial properties rather than upon the residential areas. There is limited resident representation on the Town Center Association Board or its Design Review Board.
- The RCIG has, at the moment, an Architectural Review Board based on covenants placed upon land parcels in that area under the current “industrial” zoning. This entity has been administered by Reston Association. The landowners have recently voted to vacate these covenants, and thus they will not be in effect after January 1, 2011. After that date, there will be no architectural review process in this area.
- Ideally, the entire area covered by the Reston Master Plan would have one overall review entity that oversees the implementation of the Plan, including reviewing the architectural and urban design appropriateness of individual projects within the broader setting. Ideally, it would replace all three current review and planning bodies that now exercise some degree of control over parts of the Plan area. Possibly it will always be necessary to continue a covenants enforcement and design review entity to administer all the general Reston properties zoned PRC, as specified in the Reston deed of trust. Nevertheless, it should be possible to sustain both of these entities cooperatively in some manner.

The broader design review entity must work closely with, or be a part of, the Community Development Authority. Although its primary focus would be on implementing the larger vision and the specifics of the Plan, the implementation entity would work with the Boards of the Reston Association, the Town Center Association, and the RCIG to enforce their future covenants. It should be composed of residential and non-residential property-owner representatives appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and have a small professional staff paid for by the Reston Infrastructure Fund.

- The plan implementation entity should have the responsibility and authority to enforce compliance with the various covenants, as the design review boards do today, but just as importantly, review development in larger terms to ensure consistency with the Plan. Such an entity would review and recommend phasing of planned development. The plan implementation entity would work closely with property owners to cooperatively fulfill the broader objectives of the Plan while allowing them to accomplish their individual projects. Similarly, the implementation authority would work with public agencies to ensure that essential infrastructure projects are planned, financed and designed for completion concurrent with the development project that would depend upon this infrastructure.

Such a proposal would significantly change the current balance of responsibilities and powers that guide and implement development within the Reston area. However, if we are to take seriously the comprehensive planning of the Reston area, there must be comprehensive implementation of that plan.