

August 12, 2010

**TO:** Heidi Merkel and Sandi Smith  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
Fairfax County

**FROM:** Vision Sub-committee

**SUBJECT:** Recommended Planning Principles  
Reston Master Plan Special Study

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The Vision Sub-committee unanimously approved the following Planning Principles for the Reston Master Plan Special Study at a regularly scheduled meeting on August 11, 2010. The Sub-Committee recommends that the principles be transmitted to the members of the full Task Force and each of the Sub-committees for final review.

## **Vision and Planning Principles for the Reston Master Plan Special Study (Final Draft - August 11, 2010)**

### **Vision**

The foundation for the original development of Reston includes seven goals set forth by the community's founder, Robert E. Simon, Jr. These goals have shaped Reston's development over the last five decades and will continue to mold the community's future.

Reston is a community where, at each stage of life, individuals and families can live, work and play in an attractive setting. The primary planning goal is to preserve the essential and unique characteristics of Reston, building upon experience gained over the years. The vision reflects characteristics that have made Reston a pre-eminent community that offers a high quality-of-life, an attractive environment, a healthy balance of work and personal life opportunities, and an advantageous business environment. The characteristics of the vision include:

- Being a welcoming community with a diverse population, including people of all ages, ethnicities, abilities, family stages and income levels.
- Having a safe, sustainable and well-designed community with a town center, village centers, neighborhoods, businesses, and natural areas, as well as three rail transit stations surrounded by high-quality, mixed-use development which should be integrated with the entire Reston community.
- Being a community that provides extensive open space and natural areas and is recognized for preserving and protecting the environmentally sensitive resources of the area and for incorporating the highest standards of green technology into the planning and design of neighborhoods, buildings, and amenities.
- Having proximity to all types of public, professional and commercial services and diverse employment opportunities, as well as multiple cultural, religious and recreational resources.
- Having transportation patterns that facilitate interconnectivity throughout the community based on non-motorized and public transportation.
- Having an expanded public realm of streets, open spaces including natural areas, and buildings that serve as a framework for the community, linking schools, public facilities, village centers, and the Town Center, as well as cultural and recreational facilities.
- Fostering an economic environment that encourages the success of small, medium and large business organizations and encourages them to participate in and support the activities of the community.

### **Planning Principles**

Planning for future residential and commercial development and redevelopment will consider Reston as a comprehensive unit. Projects will be evaluated based upon their ability to apply the planning principles, as well as the specific impacts of individual projects on the surrounding neighborhoods. The following principles provide guidance for development of Reston in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **1. Strive for excellence in planning, urban design, and architecture**

Endeavor to ensure that development and redevelopment will be of the highest caliber in terms of planning, design, compatibility, and livability. Design redevelopment areas as integral parts of the larger community rather than as stand-alone projects. Integrate public art into new development and redevelopment projects. Provide an appropriate balance of jobs and housing.

**2. Plan for environmental sustainability and green technology**

Protect the integrity of natural resources by making conservation and restoration essential and unique features of community building. Require high standards for green neighborhoods and building practices for all public and private development, incorporating green technology into their design. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas as a central planning principle.

Enhance and preserve public and private open space areas including woodlands, meadows, lakes, ponds, streams, wildlife habitat, drainage and catchment areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas. Provide corridors for movement and habitats of wildlife in natural open space areas. Apply planning and design practices that provide for the best storm water management practices, eliminate invasive plants, preserve mature trees, reduce imperviousness, provide significant tree canopy, and encourage energy conservation.

**3. Balance land use with infrastructure**

Phase and fund the expansion and modification of all modes of transportation and other infrastructure such as the proposed street right-of-way, schools and public facilities concurrently with development. Convenient interconnectivity must be assured within the transit corridor as well as between it and the rest of Reston and across major roads, including the Dulles Toll Road. Public and non-motorized transportation should be encouraged.

**4. Concentrate development near transit**

Locate the highest densities for residential and commercial development in the three rail transit station areas. The densities should step down from the three transit station areas to the village centers. Incorporate transit oriented development strategies to reduce dependence on the automobile. Support the opportunity for future air rights development to provide additional crossings of the Dulles Toll Road, to enhance access to the rail stations, and to link north and south Reston.

**5. Maintain the Reston Town Center as an active central place**

Continue to develop the Town Center as an integrated and vibrant urban center for Reston and the region. Provide mixed-use development.

**6. Transform the rail-transit corridor**

Transform the rail-transit corridor from the existing industrial and office area into a linear neighborhood within Reston. Link the three transit station areas by rail, the Dulles Toll Road, Sunrise Valley Drive and Sunset Hills Road, a grid of streets, circulator buses, shuttle buses, sidewalks, and bikeways and trails. Each of the transit station areas should have a distinct role. The linear transit corridor should include plazas and mixed-use centers at each rail station. There should be a mix of retail, advanced education, government services, diverse housing opportunities, employment options, and cultural and recreation attractions. Incorporate active and passive open space into the corridor.

**7. Create, Augment and Enhance the Village Centers**

The village centers will serve as important building blocks of the Reston community, and they should be a focus of each neighborhood. They should include a mix of retail, housing, community buildings, central gathering places, and provide a limited amount of employment. Redevelopment and new development should be pedestrian-oriented and provide adequate transition to the surrounding neighborhoods. Pedestrian and bicycle trails and convenient public transportation options, such as regular shuttle buses, should link the village centers to each other, to the Town Center, and to the transit stations.

**8. Maintain the character of the existing residential neighborhoods**

Maintain the existing residential neighborhoods, which include a variety of housing types and serve all income levels. Provide adequate transitions between new development and adjacent existing neighborhoods to maintain the essential character of the neighborhoods. Provide traffic calming measures, residential parking permit programs and street lighting to preserve the traditional character and safety of residential neighborhoods.

**9. Provide diverse housing opportunities**

Continue to accommodate people of all ages, ethnicities, physical abilities, and economic circumstances, as well as families of all sizes and stages.

**10. Connect the Reston community**

Enhance the intra-community accessibility by providing and augmenting a wide range of high quality transportation options and facilities including roads, bridges, sidewalks, bikeways, trails, and transit services that link activity centers, open spaces, parks, schools and recreational facilities. Provide frequent and visible transportation connections to the new rail stations and strengthen the local feeder/circulator bus system including linear Town Center service. Use transportation management strategies to reduce the reliance on the automobile.

**11. Provide high quality, active public open space**

Expand and enhance the quality of publicly accessible and active open space through development and redevelopment. Active public open space in the transit corridor should include public plazas, outdoor recreational facilities, bikeways and trails. Active public open space does not include paved areas for vehicles or private spaces closed to the public. The Town Center, transit station areas and village centers should include a variety of active public spaces such as plazas for entertainment and spaces for small playgrounds. All such areas should be designed and managed to attract residents, office workers and visitors by offering a variety of activities in an attractive setting. Recreation areas outside the transit corridor, such as ball fields and golf courses, should be preserved and enhanced.

**12. Emphasize transit oriented development**

Enhance the character of the streets, open spaces and buildings - the public realm - by providing buildings with active fronts on streets and avoiding the use of parking structures and surface parking lots in the front of buildings facing streets. The public realm should be designed to encourage pedestrian travel and safety. Incorporate and adhere to the Transit Oriented Development principles adopted by Fairfax County.

**13. Address economic needs**

Provide sufficient incentives to encourage property owners to pursue appropriate redevelopment opportunities, including making proffers that benefit the community in order to create the transit and pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use environment desired for Town Center, the rail station areas, and the village centers. Timely completion of infrastructure by State and County authorities and private developers with development is critical to promoting development and to protecting residents from adverse impacts from development.

**14. Encourage public participation**

The cumulative impact of development and staging redevelopment should be assessed and evaluated by the community and Fairfax County. Meaningful community review of new projects will be a hallmark of the public participation.