

Guiding Principles for Reston
Vision Sub-Committee
(July 14, 2010)

Planning for future residential and commercial development will consider Reston as a comprehensive unit. Development projects will be evaluated in terms of their ability to meet the planning objectives, as well as the specific impacts of individual projects on the surrounding neighborhoods. The following principles provide guidance for development of Reston in the 21st century.

1. Ensure excellence in planning, urban design, and architecture

Ensure that development and re-development will be of the highest caliber in terms of town planning, architectural design, compatibility, and livability. Redeveloped areas should be designed as integral parts of the larger Reston community instead of stand-alone developments. Require high standards for green neighborhood and building practices for all public and private development. Integrate public art into development.

2. Balance land use with infrastructure

Phase and fund the expansion and modification of all modes of transportation and other infrastructure such as schools and public facilities in concert with development. Convenient interconnectivity must be assured within the transit corridor, between it and the rest of Reston, and across major roads, including the Dulles Toll Road. Public and non-motorized transportation should be encouraged. Infrastructure should be completed concurrently with development. There should be an appropriate balance of jobs and housing in Reston as a whole.

3. Concentrate development near transit

Locate the highest densities for residential and commercial development in the three Metrorail station areas, and the Town Center. The densities should step down from the Town Center and Town Center station area, to the Wiehle Avenue and Monroe station areas, and finally 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.

4. Maintain the Reston Town Center as an active central place

Continue to develop the Reston Town Center as an integrated and vibrant urban center for Reston and the region. Encourage mixed-use development between the Town Center and the Reston Parkway Metro Station. Comply with the planning principles of transit-oriented development as defined in the Comprehensive Plan. Concentrate the highest densities, transportation facilities and a mix of uses in the Town Center.

5. Transform the rail-transit corridor

Transform the rail-transit corridor from the existing single use, industrial and office corridor into a linear town within Reston. The linear town should be linked by Metro rail, the Dulles Toll Road, Sunrise Valley Drive and Sunset Hills Drive, a grid of streets, circulator buses, and bikeways and trails. Each of the three transit station areas should have distinct roles. The linear transit corridor should include mixed-use centers at each Metro station. The corridor should include a mix of retail, advanced education, government, housing, and employment options, and cultural and recreational attractions. Active and passive open space should be incorporated into the corridor.

6. Augment and Enhance the Village Centers

The village centers serve as important building blocks of the Reston community and a focus of each neighborhood. They should include a mix of retail, housing and a limited amount of employment. Redevelopment 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 the transit stations.

7. 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 neighborhood. Provide traffic calming measures, residential parking permit programs and street lighting as appropriate to preserve the traditional character and safety of residential neighborhoods.

8. Provide housing for all ages and incomes

Continue to accommodate people of all ages, physical abilities, economic circumstances, and families of all sizes and stages of family life. This includes affordable and physically accessible housing.

9. Connect the Reston community and emphasize transit-oriented development

Enhance the public realm by providing a range of transportation facilities including roads, bridges, sidewalks, bikeways, and trails that link activity centers and nodes, as well as open spaces, parks, schools and recreational facilities. Encourage the connections to the new Metrorail stations and strengthen the local feeder/circulator bus system. Augment and enhance the pedestrian sidewalks, trails and bikeways. Provide additional non-motorized transportation options and use transportation management to reduce the reliance on the single use automobile. Enhance the design character of the streets, open space and buildings - the public realm.

10. 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 areas such as 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, Metrorail station areas and the village centers should include a variety of active public spaces such as plazas for entertainment, and spaces for small playgrounds. Public open spaces should be designed and managed to attract residents, office workers and visitors by offering a variety of activities and resting places in a visually attractive setting. Provide direct access to a range of recreation spaces in the high-density areas and the village centers. Recreation areas outside the transit corridor, such as ball fields and golf courses, should be preserved and enhanced.

11. Plan for environmental sustainability and green technology

Incorporate green planning technology into the design of neighborhoods and buildings, and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas as a central planning principle. Reduce the impact of development on the environment. As an essential and unique feature of community building, protect the integrity of natural resources by conservation, and restoration. Public and private natural, open space areas including woodlands, meadows, lakes, ponds, streams, wildlife habitat, drainage and catchment areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas should be enhanced and preserved. Natural, open space areas should provide corridors for movement of wildlife. Planning and design practices for public and private development should provide for best storm water management practices, eliminate invasive and exotic plants, preserve mature trees, reduce imperviousness, provide significant tree canopy, and encourage energy conservation.

12. 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 Metrorail station areas, and the village centers. Timely development by State and County authorities of needed infrastructure is critical both to promoting development and to protecting residents from adverse impacts from that development.