

Guidelines for Development: Reston Transit Station Areas

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Fairfax County Office of Community Revitalization



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Suite 1048
Fairfax, VA 22035
www.fcrevit.org

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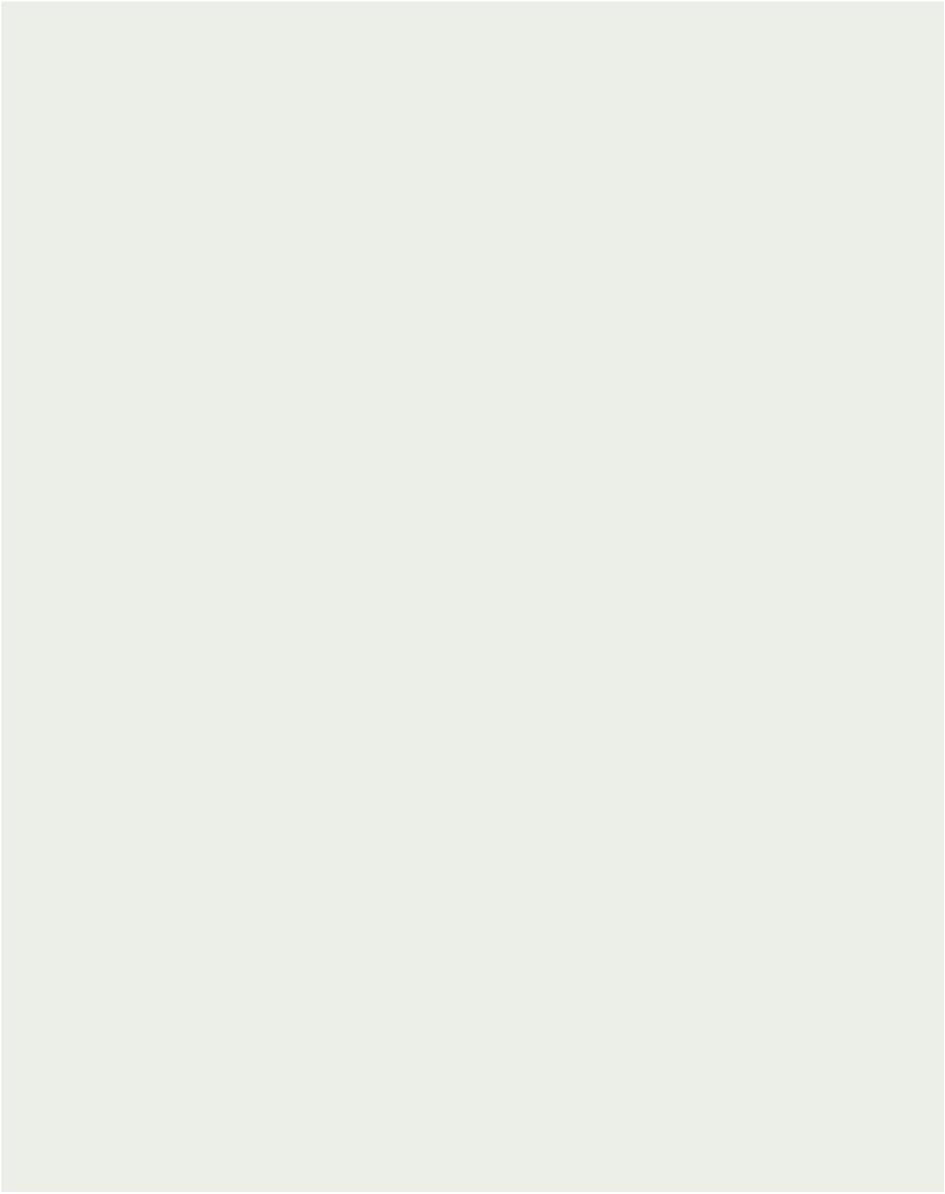
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1A Purpose of this Document

1B Organization of this Document

**1C Urban Design Principles for the
Reston TSAs**

1D The Development Review Process

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In February of 2014, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (the Board) adopted an amendment to the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) establishing the Reston Transit Station Areas (TSAs). The plan amendment represented a nearly four year planning effort led by a 45-member, Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force (Task Force) in partnership with county staff. The Plan focuses on future growth around three new Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Silver Line Metrorail stations: Wiehle-Reston East, Reston Town Center, and Herndon stations along the Dulles Airport Access Road in Reston. The new Plan builds upon the foundation established for Reston by its founder, Robert E. Simon, in the 1960s. It capitalizes on the framework originally envisioned for the new town by creating a transit-oriented development (TOD) strategy that allows for Reston's continued economic and physical growth, while maintaining its legacy of walkability, sustainability, innovation, and inclusiveness.

The community of Reston was originally developed under a set of core principles that ensured integrated land uses and focused on helping residents conveniently meet the needs of everyday life. These principles established a development pattern embracing the ideals of a diverse, vibrant, walkable community. Unlike suburban subdivisions developed during the same time period, Reston was not solely a bedroom community. Reston was envisioned as a new node of concentrated mixed-use growth located on the route between Dulles Airport and Washington, D.C. The new town was planned as a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses, with an integrated



Lake Anne | Reston, VA

1



Reston Town Center Metrorail Station under construction | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Fairfax County



Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station | Reston, VA | Image Credit: David Madison Photography

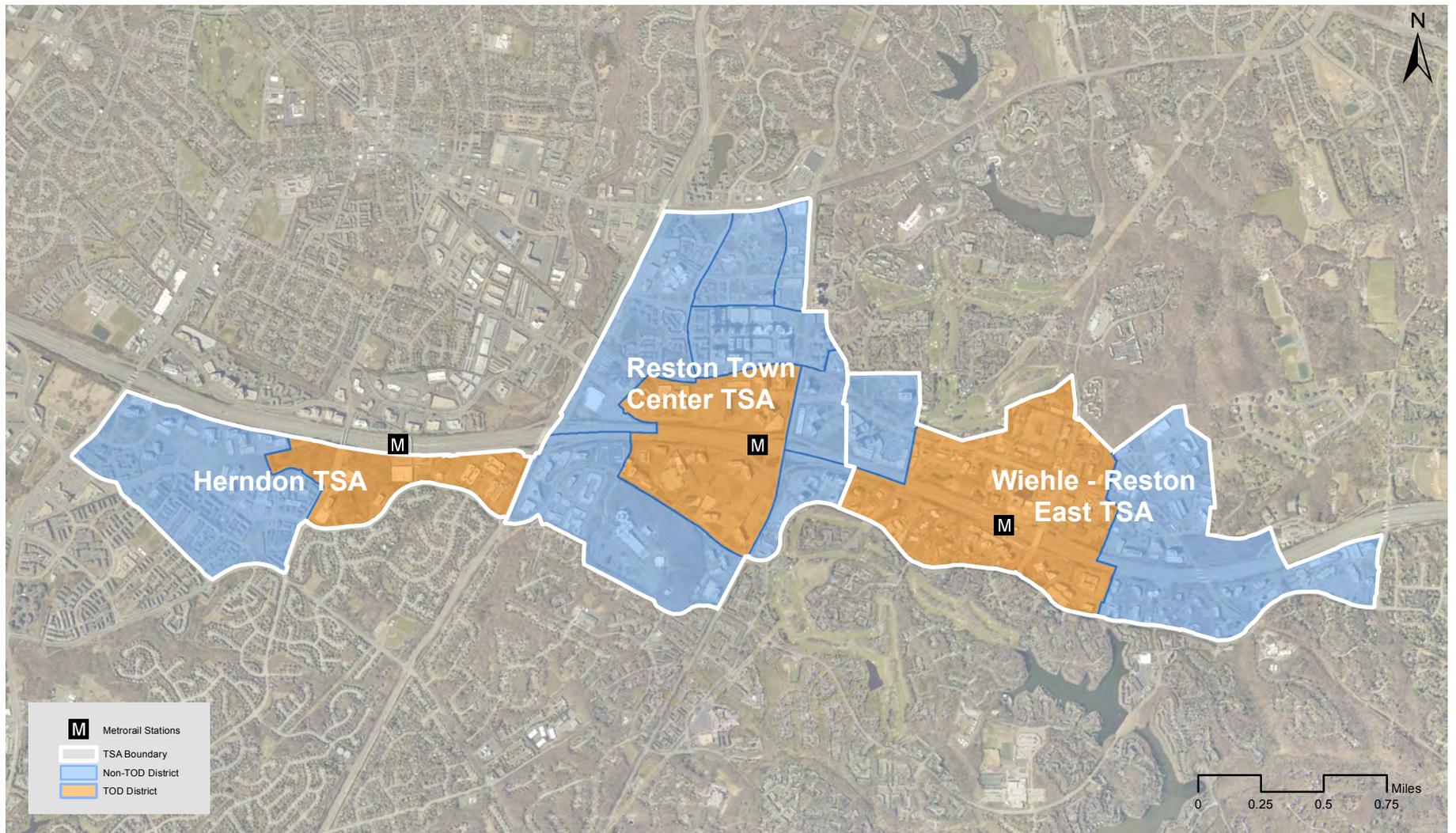
and robust open space network. Clustered residential neighborhoods were sensitively placed in the landscape and connected to higher density, mixed-use village centers by an extensive trail network, preserving open space for shared use. Individual residential lawns were de-emphasized, while community space and a balance between the natural and built environments were prioritized. Reston was designed to protect natural areas, maintain and establish new areas for wildlife, and retain existing trees as the community grew.

Reston's neighborhoods, including the Town Center, possess a mix of land uses and a large employment base, allowing residents to work, worship and play close to home. The planning for the TSAs (refer to map on page 1-3) furthers this ideal by envisioning the transformation of existing large, suburban business parks along the corridor into walkable, mixed use communities anchored by transit. The three Reston Metrorail stations include designated "TOD Districts" in the core area surrounding each station. In addition, "Non-TOD Districts" are located adjacent to the core areas and are planned for less intense development. Underdeveloped land in the corridor is planned to be redeveloped and used in a more walkable and sustainable manner.

The vision for the TSAs calls for dynamic, multimodal environments where open space, landscape elements, and buildings are used as organizational elements to create beautiful spaces. The TSA environment will foster bicycling, pedestrian movement and an enhanced connection between people and nature. The desired character will be created through the integration of buildings, sidewalks, plazas, and public art with natural elements such as tree canopies, open space and water features.

Individual projects will be connected by roads, sidewalks and trails to Metrorail stations and to one another, allowing efficient movement throughout Reston. The goal is to achieve increased building densities and heights and integrated existing uses while encouraging a variety of land uses, parks, open spaces and art on sites proximate to the Metrorail stations. This will require thoughtful site design, the use of natural or landscaped open space, careful building placement, architectural definition, and the activation of the public realm - a network of streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, and other open spaces that are communally shared by the public.

RESTON TRANSIT STATION AREAS



1A Purpose of this Document



Town Square Park | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Fairfax County



Reston Town Center | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Greg Hess

The Guidelines for Development in the Reston Transit Station Areas (Guidelines) is intended to assist in implementing the Comprehensive Plan's Transit Station Area recommendations. It assists by providing ideas and strategies for meeting best practices in planning, site design and development.

The Guidelines were written collaboratively with input from property owners, residents, interest groups, and public agencies. Endorsed by the Board of Supervisors, the Guidelines are used by County staff and the Reston Community for both framing the discussion with developers and in evaluating proposed development applications. They will be revised and updated as necessary.

The Comprehensive Plan includes Urban Design Principles that provide recommendations for development in the Reston TSAs. The Guidelines build upon the Plan's Urban Design Principles, with strategies for implementation; they are intended to provide direction for applicants and designers who are developing proposals in the Reston TSAs, and guidance for those reviewing such proposals.

The Guidelines do not regulate or dictate a particular architectural style for Reston. Rather, it articulates Intent Statements and describes a series of desired objectives referred to as Strategies for each design element while allowing for flexibility in the means to achieve those objectives. This flexibility allows for a distinct character in each district and neighborhood.

The Guidelines are intended to provide flexibility in their implementation. Alternative, but comparable, design strategies may be considered in light of the unique circumstances of a particular site. The Guidelines support flexibility, so long as the outcome furthers the implementation of the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

1B Organization of this Document

This document provides detailed guidance to implement the urban design elements discussed in the Plan including streetscape layout, hardscape elements, planting strategies, building placement, building mass and architectural form and is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Development Framework and Vision
- Chapter 3: TSA Character
- Chapter 4: Site Design
- Chapter 5: Building Design
- Chapter 6: Streetscape

Chapter 2 focuses on the basic elements of development proposals in the Reston TSAs, and highlights how the unique character of Reston should be reflected.

Chapter 3 focuses on specific characteristics and recommendations for the individual TSAs.

Chapters 4-6 each begin with a description of the major elements presented in the chapter and a summary of the key urban design principles recommended to establish a unique character in the Reston TSAs. Each chapter is then divided into specific strategies for various sub-categories of focus.

Each sub-category provides the following:

- **Intent Statements** establish design objectives. Intent statements are broad in scope and provide a foundation for decision making in the design creation and design review processes. The intent statements are the primary focus of this document; all proposals should work to achieve these stated objectives.
- **Design Strategies** provide suggested approaches to achieve the objectives set forth in the Intent Statements. Design Strategies are presented as methods to meet the Intent Statements, however they are not definitive or all-inclusive and applicants are encouraged to explore alternative strategies beyond those listed to address their individual circumstances while still fulfilling the Intent Statements.

Chapter 6 includes street and streetscape sections for the roads in the Reston TSAs, adopted by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) using the guidance of the Multimodal Street Standards developed by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT).

The photos and graphics provided throughout are illustrative of the suggested intent statements and design strategies.



Pedestrian Connection over W&OD Trail | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Fairfax County



Reston Festival | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Fairfax County

1C Urban Design Principles for the Reston TSAs



Establish a Sense of Place and Respect Surrounding Neighborhoods | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Greg Hess



Enhance Local and Regional Identity | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Fionnuala Quinn

New development around the three Metrorail stations can create opportunities to establish sustainable neighborhoods that meet the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, green infrastructure, and sustainable building design, while maintaining the unique character of the Reston Community as envisioned by its founder, Robert E. Simon. Reston Association, the homeowner's association for the majority of Reston, adopted the Essential Elements of Reston, which identifies the key planning and design elements for development in Reston to maintain this character. These include Environmental Stewardship, Commitments to the Arts, Accessibility, Planning & Design Excellence, Recreational Amenities, and Housing Opportunities.

The Guidelines reflect these elements as integral to the principles of sustainable neighborhood design and development of the TSAs. Sustainable neighborhood design is a comprehensive approach to addressing factors such as land use mix, connectivity, energy conservation, and environmental conservation. The focus on urban design, sustainability, the character of the built environment, and the integration of public art elements will contribute to a unique sense of place in the Reston TSAs, built upon the concepts that have historically characterized Reston.

The Comprehensive Plan Task Force developed a vision and a series of planning principles for the TSAs that complement the original vision and principles established for Reston at its inception more than 50 years ago. The Plan uses these tenets to frame its recommendations, including a series of Urban Design Principles intended to guide site design, building form and design of the public realm within the TSAs. These Urban Design Principles are:

Enhance Local and Regional Identity

- Advance Reston as Fairfax County's premier planned community. Key Reston characteristics include the provision of community gathering spaces to provide opportunities for social interaction; integrating nature and public art into the built environment; providing residents attractive and useful home and community connections.
- Continue the evolution of Reston's core into several highly desirable, walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use urban environments centered on the transit stations.
- Maintain high standards for architecture and design to create a unique identity for each TOD district that supports the character of Reston as a whole.

Establish a Sense of Place

- Create unique and walkable TOD neighborhoods adjacent to the Metrorail stations and within the larger Reston community that build upon the success of the Reston Town Center.
- Encourage design elements that promote a distinct character for each TOD neighborhood, as well as common elements that contribute to a cohesive urban environment and are complementary to the larger Reston community.
- Encourage each TOD neighborhood to include tree-lined streets, a variety of urban parks, and public gathering spaces.

Improve Connectivity

- Increase the efficiency of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian movements within the TSAs through a well-designed multimodal network.
- Create pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environments and connections that are safe, pleasant, and convenient.
- Maximize the benefits of transit in Reston by improving connectivity within and between the TSAs and with the surrounding community.

Design Sustainable Environments

- Encourage sustainable neighborhoods, buildings and infrastructure to meet community needs, preserve Reston's essential character, and meet future needs.
- Incorporate innovative and environmentally sensitive stormwater design into all new development and redevelopment.
- Restore and stabilize existing streams.

Respect Surrounding Neighborhoods

- Maintain the character and livability of residential neighborhoods adjacent to the TSAs.
- Concentrate the tallest buildings and highest land use intensities closest to Metrorail stations.
- Transition building heights to be compatible with lower density neighborhoods in the surrounding community.

Incorporate the Arts

- Incorporate public art in a variety of spaces throughout the TSAs.
- Encourage developers to work with artists and arts organizations early in the project design process to successfully integrate the arts into their developments.
- Promote the provision of public art in the TSAs by establishing a dedicated funding source.
- Support opportunities to incorporate performing arts in addition to public artworks.



Design Sustainable Environments | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Fionnuala Quinn

1D The Development Review Process



Community engagement through Advisory Group meetings | Reston, VA | Image Credit: Fairfax County



Review of Reston applications is a collaborative process with the community, the county, and applicants | Reston, VA | Image Credit: 1801 Old Reston Avenue, Parker Rodriguez

Development applications in the Reston TSA are subject to a multi-agency review process and a community review process, before being decided on by the Board of Supervisors. Successful proposals will ensure that the basics of each stage, as outlined on page 1-9, are aligned with the vision and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Development applications in the Reston TSAs will require considerable coordination among neighboring property owners, County staff, and the community.

In addition to the County process, a number of community organizations review and comment on development plans within Reston, including the TSAs. The Reston Association’s Design Review Board (DRB) has jurisdiction over certain properties (those zoned to the PRC zoning district) within the TSA’s under the RA covenants. The DRB also provides comments on other development projects outside of the covenanted area. The Reston Planning & Zoning Committee (P&Z) makes recommendations on development projects prior to the Planning Commission’s public hearing on them. The Reston Town Center Design Review Board reviews cases in the Town Center. The Public Art Reston’s Public Art Committee comments on artist selection and design concept selection in Reston.

1D

Stage	Resources and Engagement
<p>Pre-Application Phase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Plan, Reston (Area III) • Guidelines for Development: Reston Transit Station Areas Chapter 2 ‘Development Framework and Vision’ Section of Checklist (Appendix A) • Pre-application meetings with staff to discuss general intensity and use, basic layout of the proposed networks, additional analyses that may be needed, and process requirements. • Community engagement and initial discussions
<p>Application Preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Development Framework & Vision and Proposed Networks (developed in the Pre-Application Phase) • Comprehensive Plan • Guidelines for Development: Reston Transit Station Areas Chapters 3-6, and Checklist (Appendix A) • Meetings with staff to review major concepts in proposal and to identify supporting materials for submission with the application • Community engagement is typically initiated by the applicant’s submittal to Reston P&Z Committee for an informational session which introduces the project to the community
<p>Application Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Plan • Guidelines for Development: Reston Transit Station Areas • County staff review process (coordinated by the Department of Planning and Zoning, Zoning Evaluation Division; may include review by other county boards such as the Architectural Review Board) • Community review process which may include, but is not limited to: the Reston Association Design Review Board, Reston Town Center Association Design Review Board, Public Art Reston’s Public Art Committee, and/or the Reston Planning & Zoning Committee. These agencies may have additional guidelines and process requirements. • Planning Commission recommendation and Board of Supervisors action

A checklist of materials to submit during the application process is included in Appendix A. The resources and reference materials for different stages of the development review process are generally laid out in the chart above.