

## RESTON TOWN CENTER NORTH DESIGN GUIDELINE

September 14, 2015

### SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Reston Town Center North (“RTCN”) is a combination of parcels totaling approximately 50 acres located north of Reston Town Center. It is bounded by Baron Cameron Avenue on the north, Fountain Drive on the east, Library Park on the south and Town Center Parkway on the west. RTCN is identified in the adopted Comprehensive Plan as the Town Center North Mixed Use area of the Town Center North District.

#### Purpose of the Guidelines

As RTCN is redeveloped over a period of years, it will transform from a suburban form into a vibrant urban, mixed-use development. This goal requires guidelines to promote a harmonious, unified, urban mixed-use development with diverse users, owners, building types and uses, to maintain compatible, high quality architectural design and to provide a redevelopment that complements Reston Town Center.

#### Guideline Overview

This Guideline is a descriptive document intended to allow consistent street frontages while maintaining flexibility in the design of each building within the overall development of each block.

The basic intent of this guideline is to:

- Establish a basis for design & site planning for each block of RTCN.
- Provide parameters for urban form defined by street frontage.
- Incorporate open space and streetscape design standards.
- Promote a harmonious, unified, urban mixed-use development.

### SECTION II: MASTER PLAN PRINCIPLES

RTCN is envisioned as a northern extension of Reston Town Center. The featured element of the RTCN master plan is the Central Green, which is a large open space amenity that runs through the center of the development on a north-south axis.

#### Height & Massing

In general, building heights and density should taper from the highest, at the south side of RTCN, closest to Reston Town Center, downward to the north toward Baron Cameron Avenue.

There should also be a taper on the east-west axis from the highest, at the east side of RTCN, adjacent to Fountain Drive and the Spectrum redevelopment, downward to the west toward Town Center Parkway.

#### Streets

An urban street grid is planned for RTCN. The grid divides RTCN into 9 blocks. East-west streets align with adjacent site driveways or future planned streets. North-south streets are located near the center of the overall development with a one-way ring road that defines the Central Green.

It is anticipated that RTCN street and sidewalk sections will generally follow those recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

RTCN streets are classified by Types, which define their character. (See attached Street Frontage Type Diagram below).

#### Pedestrian Realm

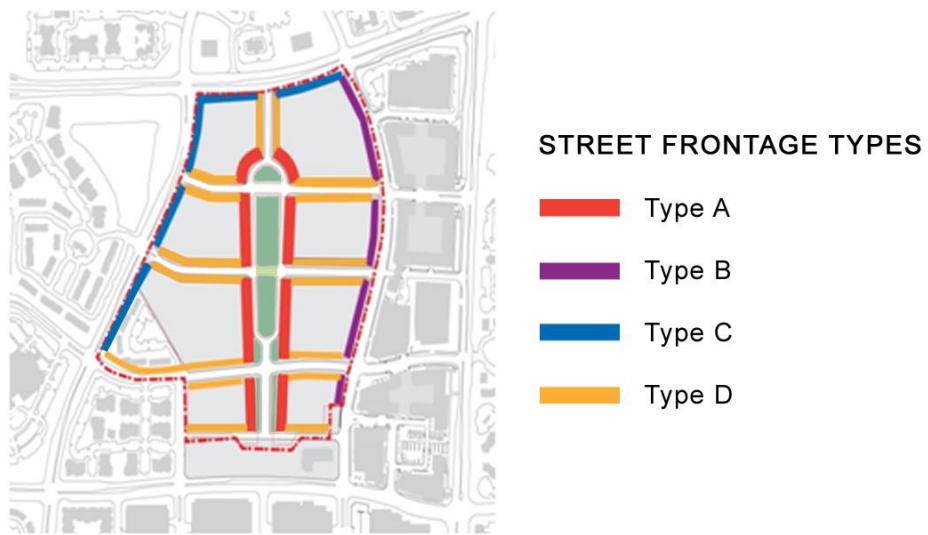
A network of pedestrian sidewalks and trails will provide a high level of connectivity within RTCN, and connect RTCN to surrounding developments, including Spectrum to the east, Reston Town Center to the south and the Silver Line Metro Station beyond.

Traffic calming measures such as narrow streets with modified intersections (to reduce pedestrian crossing distances), bike lanes, on-street parking, wide sidewalks, and planting strips will create a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrian circulation.

At grade, building facades will address the human scale and engage the pedestrian. Facade design will be varied to foster a vibrant public realm. Buildings on large blocks should vary their façade lines at the street level to create articulations while still defining a strong urban edge.

#### Street Frontage Types

- *Type A – one way ring road around the Central Green, plus the southern extension of the ring road*
- *Type B – Fountain Drive*
- *Type C – Baron Cameron Avenue and Town Center Parkway.*
- *Type D – access streets*



Street Frontage Type Diagram

#### SECTION III: URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

RTCN is planned for a mix of public and private uses including, but not limited to, residential, office, medical, institutional, hotel, and retail, as well as civic, cultural and recreational amenities, integrated open space features,

and community-focused opportunities. The retention and redevelopment of county facilities (library, shelter, public safety, housing, or other municipal services) will also foster a significant civic presence in the area.

The Central Green is the defining feature of RTCN. The centrally located open space will unify all the blocks in RTCN and will ultimately be the major pedestrian tie to Reston Town Center and the future Silver Line Metro Station. Programming is envisioned to be based on a series of zones that will promote a variety of outdoor uses from active recreation to intimate quiet areas. It will be designed to accommodate both large public events and small family gatherings. It will serve not only RTCN, but will become a destination for the greater Reston area.

It is the intent of the Guidelines that the design elements of the Central Green will set the streetscape standards (paving materials, signage, street lights, trash cans, public benches, tree wells, bike racks, etc.) that will be utilized throughout RTCN.

### **Building Character**

The design character of an individual building should reflect its principal use, whether it be residential, civic, hotel, office, etc.

Buildings must locate active uses at the ground level along street frontage Type A and should endeavor to wrap the active uses around corners on to the other street frontage types. Where feasible, active uses should be located at ground level along street frontage Types B, C and D.

Retail and restaurant uses on the 1<sup>st</sup> floors should be evident with signage, awnings, display windows and other mechanisms. Entries into retail spaces should be from the street whenever possible, as opposed to interior lobbies or atriums.

Residential buildings should address the street with building entrances, and individual dwelling unit entrances are encouraged.

Large, monotonous expanses of building facades facing streets are prohibited. Such areas can be made more attractive by incorporating architectural elements such as breaking the building massing vertically or horizontally, through the incorporation of balconies, alcoves, seating areas, arcades and other architectural treatments. Building facades facing interior courts or alleys do not have to meet this requirement, although façade treatments from public streets should wrap around alley frontages at least 10 feet.

Strong horizontal architectural features or building setbacks should be used to establish a human scale. Buildings should have a base defined by a step-back or by a pronounced cornice, up to but not exceeding 35 feet.

At the street level, the addition of bay window projections, arcades, canopies or awnings to create a more inviting human scale and to reinforce the pedestrian experience is encouraged.

Above-grade structured parking decks should not be visible along street frontage Type A. When parking decks extend vertically above the ground level uses, they will either be set back, and other uses, such as retail, office or residential uses, shall be constructed in front of the parking deck to shield it from view, or the parking deck façade shall be similar to that of the primary building it serves. On other street frontage types, an appropriate architectural treatment should be designed so that the parking structure's façade impact is minimized. Structured parking facades fronting alleys and private courtyards do not have to meet this requirement.

Buildings are required to utilize Class-A exterior building cladding materials such as glass, metal, natural stone, architectural precast, masonry, etc.

All building mechanical equipment must be screened from the street and a horizontal line-of-sight.

## **IV: GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPALS**

### **Street Frontages**

#### **Type A – Central Green**

The Central Green is the major central open space for RTCN. Development around the Central Green should promote an active street life in order to encourage active use of the open space. Of particular importance are the uses at-grade and the architectural design of the lower stories of all buildings fronting the Central Green.

##### **Character**

The Central Green will be the lively and vibrant core of RTCN and provide a variety of passive leisure and active recreational activities.

##### **Massing & Building Facades**

Buildings should maintain a dense, urban edge to frame and provide structure to the Central Green. Unnecessary gaps and setbacks should be avoided in order to enforce a strong street edge and active street life. Structured parking decks should not be visible along street frontage Type A, facing the Central Green.

##### **First Floor Uses**

Retail, restaurant, civic and community service uses should be located where appropriate and are strongly encouraged on buildings facing the Central Green. Where retail, restaurant civic and community service uses are not viable, other common functions such as lobbies, lounges, fitness centers, professional service offices, etc. should be considered.

Entries into retail shops or restaurants & cafes should occur frequently and building façades at street level should be at least 50% transparent. Outdoor café seating is encouraged.

##### **Building Services**

Access drives to parking structures and off-street loading areas, dumpsters, auto drop-off courts, visible parking structures and building utility rooms are not allowed on Type A street frontages. Temporary surface parking may front on a Type A street frontage if adequate screening is provided.

#### **Type B - Fountain Drive**

Fountain Drive lies along the eastern edge of RTCN, adjacent to Spectrum, which is approved for redevelopment into an urban, mixed-use project.

##### **Building Frontage**

Buildings should maintain a dense, urban edge to frame the street and should endeavor at grade to be located tight to the build-to-line, to create a strong urban edge. Unnecessary gaps and setbacks should be avoided in order to enforce a strong street edge and active street life.

### **Type C - Baron Cameron Avenue & Town Center Parkway**

These street frontages will serve as a transitional zone between the urban character of the RTCN development and the proposed and/or existing uses to the north and west.

#### **Streetscape & Building Frontage**

Buildings should be set back to allow for pedestrian access and a landscaped buffer.

### **Type D – Access Streets**

Access streets provide the important street grid connectivity within RTCN and from the adjoining Reston neighborhoods to the Central Green.

#### **Building Frontage**

Although these frontages will accommodate service functions, including but not limited to; mechanical equipment and service/loading facilities, such functions should be screened and facades should be articulated in the same manner as the building they serve. Expansive areas of blank, flat walls should be avoided.

The two southernmost blocks fronting Bowman Towne Center Drive should be designed as gateway buildings to the RTCN development. Building facades on these blocks, though they do not front on the Central Green, should align with the facades on northern blocks that do front the Central Green.

#### **Character**

The character of these streets will differ between areas but they should all strive to create a pedestrian friendly environment.

While service streets primarily serve “back-of-building” operations, they should still be attractive and safe for pedestrians.

#### **First Floor Uses**

Access streets provide parking deck entries, loading docks, building utility rooms, and other building services; however, they are also an entry to the Central Green from the surrounding Reston community. First floor uses should help activate the street where possible, while recognizing that service functions will be located on these streets.

### **Special Elements**

#### **Building**

##### **Storefronts**

Storefronts at street level enhance the pedestrian experience and add interest to the building. They should be incorporated where appropriate on all street frontages.

### **Entrances**

Entrances to building lobbies and other ground floor uses can provide visual interest. The incorporation of arcades, canopies & awnings can add interest while serving as a way finding guide.

### **Balconies**

Balconies are encouraged to define residential buildings. They are design elements that add character to buildings. They create depth and shadows and bring human scale to large residential buildings.

### **Canopies & Awnings**

Canopies & awnings provide visual interest for pedestrians and allow owners to individualize their store. They can be utilized as retail signs. A variety of canopy designs is encouraged to define individual stores and to create visual excitement and vitality.

### **Arcades**

Arcades may be used as a design element to differentiate a building. They can be used for a variety of purposes such as a providing a covered restaurant seating area or for residential porches or to provide a covered pedestrian walk between buildings.

### **Cornices**

Cornices create human-scaled architecture by breaking up expansive façades along street edges. Their size, dimensions and proportions should be appropriate in character and scale with the other building façade elements

### **Lighting**

Accent lighting for architectural elements is permissible but shall not be obtrusive to residents.

### **Signage**

Signage should complement both the neighborhood and the architectural style of the project. Conformance with the RTCN Comprehensive Sign Plan is required.

### **Way Finding**

The way finding design/system will be established with the RTCN Comprehensive Sign Plan.

### **Secondary Signs**

Private directional and informational signage shall be kept to a minimum and located at or near service entrances or access points. Such signs should match the design of the RTCN way finding signage.

## **Site & Landscape**

### **Outdoor Restaurant & Café Seating**

Outdoor restaurant and café seating areas are encouraged. If located on sidewalks, they should not disrupt the pedestrian flow. A minimum 6-foot clear path for pedestrians within the sidewalk is required at any outdoor restaurant or café seating areas.

### **Street Furniture**

All public furniture in the streetscape will follow the design of the Central Green.

### **Trees**

Street trees should be planted in rows and equally spaced. The use of low maintenance trees is encouraged.

#### **Shrubs & Groundcover**

Shrubs should be planted within planting strips but should not be placed in areas that will hinder access to street parking or café seating.

#### **Low Impact Development**

Low impact & sustainable landscape design must be utilized throughout RTCN.

#### **Curb and Sidewalk Paving**

The palette and design of all public paving on Type A frontage streets will be established by the design of the Central Green. The design of all other streets will be set to one standard.

#### **Drop offs & Auto Courts**

Parallel street parking will be provided on Type A & D streets. Reserved areas on those streets may be provided to allow for dedicated drop-offs, restaurant valet service or taxi stands. Lay-bys and auto-courts are prohibited on Type A frontage streets.

#### **Parking & Service Entries**

Curb cuts for alleys, driveways and loading docks should be limited to avoid conflicts with pedestrians.

#### **Alleys**

Alleys are not planned but may be incorporated in large blocks to provide life-safety vehicle access, loading and parking deck access, internal circulation, etc. Alleys, if provided, should have minimal sidewalks to allow for safe pedestrian access.

#### **Interim Surface Parking Lots**

Undeveloped blocks may be utilized for interim surface parking prior to final development. Interim surface parking lots should be screened by an appropriate perimeter landscape buffer or temporary signage/banners.