POINT 4: A MOVE TO RESTON WILL STIMULATE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HELPING TO SHIFT THE TAX BURDEN FROM THE RESIDENTIAL SECTOR.

Less than two years ago, the Committee to Study the Means of Encouraging Industrial Development in Fairfax County, chaired by Norman Cole, pointed to an emerging economic problem which, if not corrected, will seriously impact residential taxpayers:

"In 1972, the share of the total assessable base represented by commercial and industrial development peaked at 16.8 percent. In 1976, the share is expected to be 14.8 percent. This drop of two percentage points over five years in an overall assessable base of nearly $4 billion represents a tremendous shift in tax burden to the residential sector. If this trend is not abated and, in fact, if the trend is not completely reversed, residents of Fairfax County can expect to shoulder an increasingly heavy tax burden." 6

Cole's Committee also pointed out that just as significant as holding down real estate taxes is the importance of stimulating job growth for county citizens, especially young people.

Bringing the County Government to Reston can go far toward improving the balance between the commercial-industrial tax base and the residential tax base.* Local job opportunities could be improved as well.

If located in Reston:

1. the Government Center can become a true county seat, which will be a major generator of commercial development, tax base and jobs;

* A study by Booz, Allen and Hamilton, completed five years ago, revealed that revenues generated in 1972 by the Reston community exceeded expenditures for services received from the Fairfax County Government by an estimated $1.5 million.
2. the Government Center will stimulate much more rapid industrial-commercial development in the Dulles corridor;

3. the Government Center can help stem the outflow of commercial-industrial development to Loudoun County.

The Economic Potential of a True County Seat. Every well-established county seat has its "lawyer's row," as well as its collection of offices for engineers, surveyors, realtors, appraisers, insurance agents, financial institutions, suppliers, service business and many more -- all directly dependent on the presence of county government.

These primary businesses themselves become economic generators, attracting support business and service activities: retail stores, restaurants, personal service establishments, entertainment facilities, etc. In time, all of these activities grow and expand, in part because of the growth of county government, but also because they become a magnet in their own right.

Finally, if located in an economically growing region, a county seat becomes an especially desirable location for small industries, academic institutions and other major employers.

In specific terms, if the move to Reston were conceived and executed as a means of stimulating the development of a balanced public-private county seat, the following private development potentials would be realistic within five years of the move:
At least 500,000 square feet of new private office space -- of which approximately 200,000 square feet would be specifically related to county government (lawyers, etc.). Such space would in part be accounted for by professionals and businesses moving from Fairfax City, and in part by new growth of such activities related to county government growth. The remaining 300,000 square feet would be a part of normal development of a town center in Reston -- but would be greatly stimulated and accelerated by the presence of county government.

One million or more square feet of retail space, organized as a shopping center. The principal market support for such space would be the residential population of Reston's trade area. But the presence of a large number of county employees, and numerous private employees in county-related activities, would dramatically strengthen the private market support for such a regional shopping center. This would accelerate the time of its development, add to its size and boost the feasibility of restaurants, entertainment and other commercial activities.

A conceptual plan for the Town Center has already been prepared. Basic utilities and street access are already in place. Market studies show that Reston's Town Center will be capable of attracting major regional retail development and service establishments.

Stimulating Commercial/Industrial Development in the Dulles Corridor

Reston is located in the heart of the County's largest office/industrial land reserve. The accompanying map indicates the importance of the Dulles corridor/Dulles airport Growth Center in relation to other portions of the county. Adopted in the County Comprehensive Plan, this area has 46% of the zoned, available industrial land in the County. The Dulles area percentage of planned industrial land is even larger.

However, to realize its full potential, the Dulles Corridor Economic Growth Center will need continual stimulus by both private and public sectors and a resolution of existing transportation deficiencies. The decision to relocate provides an unusual and attractive opportunity to stimulate the Dulles Corridor Economic Growth Center.
Location of zoned available Industrial Land in Fairfax County by acres and percentage of total.

The industrial land reserve in the Dulles corridor is an under-utilized asset of major proportions -- a potential generator of tax revenues, jobs and high quality commercial light industrial development. County Government has a stake in bringing this asset to its fullest potential as quickly as possible.

If, for example, the development of commercial/industrial land in the corridor could be accelerated by just ten acres per year, county tax receipts would be increased by more than one million dollars during an initial five year period. 10

The presence of County Government here would dramatically testify to the advantages of the corridor for commercial and light industrial development. (County government is itself an "industry" -- typical of the office-related activities and light industries most appropriate to the Dulles corridor). It would demonstrate the government's commitment to desirable, planned economic growth in this area. And it would serve as an imageable magnet for other businesses and associations moving to the Washington area or seeking to relocate within the area. Reston is the location at which the greatest economic and development leverage can be exerted.

Improving the region's transportation network is perhaps the single greatest prerequisite to a better growth rate of economic development in the Dulles corridor. Location of the Fairfax County Government Center in Reston, with its related commercial development, could provide a key to earlier implementation of much needed transportation improvements --including the Dulles highway parallel lanes, a link between Routes 7 and 50 and, ultimately, the extension of Metro rail from Tyson's Corner to Dulles Airport on the Dulles Access Road's median strip.

Stemming the Outflow of Tax Base and Jobs

Locating the Government Center in the Dulles corridor area will help stem the potentially major outflow of desirable commercial/industrial development and
tax ratables to Loudoun County. With Reston's existing commercial competition now established at Tysons and the proposed "50/66" mall, the battle lines for the remaining regional commercial development are now drawn between Loudoun County (Windmill or another Rt. 7 location near Sterling) and Fairfax County (Reston's Town Center). Making Reston the county seat could tip the balance in Fairfax County's favor.
MAKING THE BEST INVESTMENT DECISION

It appears that there are three different alternatives available to the county with respect to the government center:

1. **MAINTAIN GOVERNMENT CENTER IN FAIRFAX CITY**
   - **Costs**
     - Land acquisition or leasing arrangements are required to meet space needs through the year 2020
     - As the county complex grows, it may be choked by an inadequate pattern of road access
     - Fairfax City gets the benefit of "spin-off" office/commercial development and resulting tax revenues
     - Staying put does nothing to stimulate growth of economic development in the county
   - **Benefits**
     - An investment has been made at the existing location in buildings and facilities
     - It is centrally located geographically

2. **RELOCATE GOVERNMENT CENTER TO A LOCATION OTHER THAN RESTON**
   - **Costs**
     - New facilities must be budgeted and built
     - Possible large land acquisition costs
     - Possible infrastructure costs for making site developable (roads, utilities, etc.)
     - Possible loss of substantial potential tax revenues if a "prime" site is selected
     - Possible negative impact on established neighborhoods
   - **Benefits**
     - Possible "spin-off" tax benefits to Fairfax County depending on the selected location (minimal "spin-off" benefits in built up areas)
     - Fairfax County has the opportunity to create a governmental center which may function better than the city of Fairfax from the standpoint of access and inter-department relations

3. **MOVE GOVERNMENT CENTER TO RESTON**
   - **Costs**
     - New facilities must be budgeted and built
     - Extra 5 minutes driving time (average) for projected county residents
   - **Benefits**
     - No land acquisition costs
     - Minimal infrastructure improvements required
     - Fairfax County has the ability to create a governmental center which can be planned to fit within a truly exciting urban environment ... one that can demonstrate the viability of the Planned Development Center concept
     - Fairfax County gets maximum possible tax benefits from "spin-off" commercial/office development
     - Fairfax County will be stimulating development of its largest economic growth center
     - The move to Reston is being encouraged by local residents
By the very nature of its considering relocation of the governmental center, Fairfax County obviously recognizes the disadvantages with Alternative 1. The incentives to the county ... both long term and short term ... both economics and quality of life ... all make a strong case for considering Reston as the next Fairfax County seat.
THE COUNTY SEAT: Historical Perspective

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 3,046 "pure" county jurisdictions in this Country. When one adds the maverick cities that call themselves counties (like Fairfax City), that number climbs to 3,104. All but three of those additional "mavericks" are right here in the State of Virginia.

With three exceptions (Wyoming, Alaska and Hawaii - states formed in this century) all County seats were established before 1900. And, according to the National Association of County Administrators (Washington, D.C.) not one of the 3,046 pure county jurisdictions in America has ever set out to look for a new home.

This means that if Fairfax County does decide to relocate, a national precedent would be set.

This move, historically, would not be too dissimilar from the creation of a Canberra, or, the relocation of Alaska's State Capital.

The fact is that a County seat was founded either in the largest town in the county (thus providing the widest access), or, was carved out of the wilderness in a spot no more than a half day's wagon ride from the farthest part of the county. County boundaries were established by wagon-ride distances. Before the turn of the Century, all county business was conducted in person. And, because a day away from the farm was costly, county seat centrality was crucial.

APPENDIX 1
But those days of personal contact with the county seat are now largely a memory.

Only a small percentage of Fairfax County residents have ever been inside the Massey Building. According to County Public Information Office statistics, of the 106,698 calls for assistance in fiscal year 1977, less than 25% were walk-ins; the rest handled their business on the phone, or through the mails.

According to County Accounting statistics, for 1977 auto tags, out of a total 283,956 tags issued, only 42,098 (14.8%) were Massey Building walk-ins. Significantly, 76,289 tags (26.9%) were issued at 17 widely-spread Fairfax County fire stations.

What the County Board of Supervisors has set in motion is crucial, timely and visionary. The county seat in the year 2000 will have a far different function than its counterpart 100 - or even 50 years ago.

At stake is the long-range planning, and accommodation, for this County's orderly growth. The opportunities, and risks, are enormous! What is eventually decided affects the next half century, and, could set in motion a national trend.

As The Reston Times stated in a January 5, 1978 editorial:

"...master planning an ecologically sensitive, energy conservative, human-scaled government center would certainly add credence to Fairfax County's oft-expressed concern with those issues. Such a government complex could be living testimony to the County's commitment to excellence in land development and could reaffirm the County's confidence in Reston-like development as the most logical, economical and efficient way to deal with the inevitability of growth."
So. The vision of a new county seat goes far beyond the narrow objective of finding an efficient location for a collection of county buildings.

Together with the financial considerations, the investment decisions, and the cost benefit analysis must go the urgent demands of the final quarter of the twentieth century: energy conservation; protection of the natural environment; arresting costly sprawl; reducing noise and air pollution; planning for the human-scale; and, raising the quality of life.
Year 1977

Driving time from Massey Bldg. and population served per existing conditions:

- 5 min. 16,200 3%
- 10 min. 177,600 34%
- 15 min. 202,400 70%
- 20 min. 116,300 90%
- 25 min. 54,287 100%
- 30 min. 700 (less than 1%)

*percentages are cumulative

APPENDIX 2
Year 2020

Driving time from Reston and population served per recommended county plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 min.</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*percentages are cumulative*
Available parcels in Reston planned for industrial/office use and large enough to accommodate the Fairfax County Government Center.
Mr. Michael S. Horwatt  
Chairman  
Citizen Advisory Committee on Relocation of  
County Government Center  
11800 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, Virginia 22091

Dear Mike:

In connection with your committee's study of alternative locations for the seat of the County government, the Reston Community Association is most happy that a site within Reston has been offered and is being considered. From Reston's standpoint, we believe that location of the County government's headquarters in our community would be highly advantageous. Completion of the business and industrial area of Reston would be hastened, achievement of the total concept of the New Town accelerated, and the quality of the whole probably improved.

We also believe that a Reston location would offer many advantages to the County: a significant contribution from the developer, the economic benefits of an already existing infrastructure, the opportunity to create a unique and attractive mixed-use setting for our County government, and the stimulation of industrial and commercial growth in the northwest area which would in turn result in increased tax benefits to the County.

Obviously, the idea of removing the County government from the City of Fairfax raises many questions. Similarly, the specific proposal to move the seat of government to Reston raises additional questions. Because of our strong support of Reston as the site of the County government headquarters, we would like to do everything that we can to answer any questions that may be raised about the Reston location and to remove any problems that appear to lie in the way. For this reason, the Reston Community Association, as the civic association representing the citizens of Reston, would be most happy to explore these questions with you, with members of your committee, or with members of the County staff working with you, if you believe that it would be fruitful to do so.

Sincerely,

Joanne Brownsworth  
President

cc: Mr. Leonard Whorton  
Mr. Pat McDonald  
Ms. Martha Pennino  
Mr. Fran Steinbauer

APPENDIX 4
Fairfax County would do well to consider Gulf Reston's offer of 150 acres for a county government complex seriously.

On the surface, there is the argument that Reston is remote from the rest of the county, and the citizenry would have difficulty communicating with a seat of government perceived as far removed.

There is no arguing with the fact that Reston is not located in the geographic center of the county. Nonetheless, the availability of government services and the geographic location of the provider of services are not necessarily related points.

Fairfax County has already initiated the laudable practice of establishing subgovernment centers throughout the county. These are offices at which citizens can ask about a variety of county services, pay taxes to the Office of Assessments and complete numerous other county-citizen business transactions.

With a series of subcenters dispensing county services in various parts of the county, the location of the government center becomes somewhat of a moot point.

And, the smaller service centers must be praised on two counts: first, they bring government close to the people serviced and second, they reduce the bureaucracy to "human scale." That is, the citizen doesn't have to confront the sheer bulk of the Massay Building's bureaucracy, but can deal with his county government more on a person-to-person level.

There are several powerful arguments for the county to choose the Reston area as the location of the government center, not the least of which would be the boost such a center could give to Reston-Herndon-Dulles commercial and industrial development. This would have the effect of increasing the tax base with other than expensive-to-service residential development.

The value of Gulf Reston's offer is not to be overlooked, either. One-hundred-fifty acres of Reston land is no small potatoes, and master planning an ecologically sensitive, energy conservative, human-scaled government center would certainly add credence to Fairfax County's oft-expressed concern with those issues. Such a government complex could be living testimony to the county's commitment to excellence in land development and could reaffirm the county's confidence in Reston-like development as the most logical, economical and efficient way to deal with the inevitability of growth.

The issue of remoteness needs some attention, too. The presence of the Fairfax County government center in Reston, and related industrial and commercial development could have a favorable effect on the muddled transportation system which presently afflicts the area.

The extension of Metrorail from Tysons Corner to Dulles Airport out the Dulles Access Road's median strip with intermediate stops at Reston, Herndon and Wolf Trap would automatically take on more importance.

The second major pressure the move of the county government complex to Reston could create is for major highway link between Routes 7 and 50, a development which would at once make Dulles Airport and industrial lands more accessible from the southern end of the county. Such a highway link could, in the long term future, permit access to Dulles Airport from the upper reaches of Montgomery County and lower Frederick County, not to mention other nearby counties of Maryland.

There is no question that the move of the county government complex to Reston would give substantial momentum to industrial development within Reston, development which is necessary to maintain the concept of balance.

There are other considerations, certainly, that need airing, but there are some good, solid reasons to give Reston serious consideration as the new site of the county government.

APPENDIX 4
December 5, 1977

Micheal S. Horwatt, Esq.
Chairman
Citizens Advisory Committee on Relocation
of County Government Center
Suite 1100
11800 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091

Dear Mr. Horwatt:

Reston's 1500 acre Center for Government, Business and Industry has been planned to allow for the orderly development of non-residential land use. This area has been planned in a manner that can be tailored to the long term needs of the user. A business or government organization is not forced to compromise its construction needs as is so often the case in unplanned areas of Fairfax County. This 1500 acre area is at the heart of the Reston Master Plan, allowing business and government organizations fast access to the major roads in and out of Reston to Washington, D.C., Dulles Airport and other parts of Fairfax County. This area is now only one-third developed, permitting a wide range of choices for the location of new firms.

Reston should be considered seriously for a relocated Fairfax County Government Center. In order to encourage such consideration, the management of Gulf Reston is willing to recommend to our Board of Directors that we donate up to 150 acres of land to Fairfax County as the new location for county government headquarters. Land would be transferred at no cost to the County. The specific site could be any mutually agreed upon location in our Center for Government, Business and Industry. Fairfax County could move its present offices and plan for the orderly growth of its future needs with no land acquisition cost.

APPENDIX 5
Since the initial capital cost of a move is one of your considerations, we would also be willing to recommend to our Board of Directors a construction program similar to the one accomplished for the United States Geological Survey headquarters. In that particular case we arranged for the construction and financing of the U.S.G.S. headquarters in a manner that required limited front-end capital costs by the federal government. The facilities were constructed on a sale-leaseback basis, financed by revenue bonds secured by the lease with the federal government. At the end of the 20 year lease period the bonds will be fully retired and the facilities will be the property of the federal government.

I would like to have the opportunity to discuss this proposal with several members of your committee. Your choice of a location in Reston would allow Fairfax County to accommodate its current needs for a governmental center as well as provide for orderly expansion in the future. There would be no land acquisition cost and a sale-leaseback arrangement also could be structured to further reduce initial costs, if desired by Fairfax County.

I have enclosed a copy of the Reston Master Plan showing the 1500 acre Center for Government, Business and Industry outlined in purple. The red lines show the main roads providing access to the Center.

Sincerely,

James W. Todd

JWT/gk
SOURCES

1. Board endorsed site criteria, Fairfax County Newsletter, December 1, 1977, page 2

2. Fairfax County Plan, printed 1975, pages I-PF7 and 8

3. Board endorsed site criteria, Fairfax County Newsletter, December 1, 1977, page 2

4. Fairfax County Plan, printed 1975 page II-A-1

5. Board endorsed site criteria, Fairfax County Newsletter, December 1, 1977, page 2

6. Report of the Committee to Study the Means of Encouraging Industrial Development in Fairfax County, June 1976, page 1

7. Gordon Kennedy, Jr., Gladstone Associates


10. Gordon Kennedy, Jr., Gladstone Associates