

**SOCIAL
PLANNING
AND
PROGRAMS
FOR
RESTON
VIRGINIA**

The Reston Virginia Foundation for Community Programs, Inc.

SOCIAL PLANNING AND PROGRAMS

for Reston, Virginia

The Reston Virginia Foundation
for Community Programs, Inc.

March 1967

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| The Reston Experiment..... | 4 |
| The Master Plan..... | 6 |
| The Pilot Project..... | 12 |
| Organization of the Community..... | 19 |

PROJECT PROPOSALS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Pre-School Education..... | 37 |
| Higher Education..... | 43 |
| School Enrichment Program..... | 50 |
| Reston Children's Center..... | 54 |
| Nature Center..... | 61 |
| Health Care..... | 67 |
| The Reston Park..... | 74 |
| Reston International Center..... | 80 |
| Sculpture, Fountains and Murals..... | 87 |
| Cultural Enrichment..... | 91 |
| Community Facilities..... | 98 |

CONCLUSION

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Reston and the Urban Dilemma..... | 101 |
|-----------------------------------|-----|

I N T R O D U C T I O N

"Planning, as we see it, is becoming less and less a matter of precise propositions committed to paper, and more and more a matter of ideas and policies loosely assembled, under constant review, within which, every now and then, some project is seen to be as ready for execution as human judgment can pronounce. Once executed the project is then 'fed' into the process as an influence on all future decisions."

-- Colin Buchanan and Associates
in South Hampshire Study



THE RESTON EXPERIMENT

John Kenneth Galbraith once described the condition of urban America succinctly as public squalor in the midst of private opulence. There are now signs that we as a nation are ready to face this fact and work to close the gap between our present grim urban condition and the quality environment our society is surely capable of creating.

But do we know what constitutes a quality environment? If, by some miracle, all the other necessary conditions for the rehabilitation of the American cityscape were suddenly to come to pass -- the money, the legislation, the political structure, the will to do the job -- would we know exactly what to do?

The New Town of Reston, Virginia, is an attempt to discover exactly what we should do. It is the first serious experiment in urban planning ever undertaken in this country on a city-wide scale.

For each major big city and suburban problem - from the individual's use of free time to the community's lack of useful open space; from the strangulation of our highways by traffic to the pollution of our air by industries; from the abundance of ugly billboards, TV antennas and garbage-strewn alleys to the individual's lack of community identity - Reston is seeking a solution.

Whether or not these proposed solutions work is important not only to Reston, but to every city and suburb in the United States. For if the ideas that are being tried in Reston are proven successful, they can be adapted by other urban communities, old and new. And if these ideas -- the product of some of the best minds and most sophisticated planning in the country -- fail, other communities will at least learn what not to do, and other planners will be called on for other solutions to our urban dilemmas.

Reston, in short, will provide a ready, tested fund of experience and information to be drawn on as the day of the full-scale American urban renaissance dawns. It should also serve as a catalyst for hastening that day.

THE MASTER PLAN

The land for Reston, 7,395 acres 18 miles from Washington, D.C., was purchased in 1961. The city plan, worked out by Whittlesey, Conklin and Rossant with the active cooperation of the appropriate boards and commissions of Fairfax County and the help of a variety of consultants, was approved in 1962 when the County Board of Supervisors enacted a completely new zoning category consonant with Reston's Master Plan. Known as the Residential Planned Community Amendment (RPC), this uncommon approach to landuse, based primarily on population density, permitted a great deal of flexibility in over-all planning. The new zoning category did away with many of the artificial tools - set-backs, functional separation, mixed use, et. al. - which formerly governed the land that is now Reston, and still govern suburban development over much of the United States.

Reston's location within the metropolitan area of one of the country's fastest growing communities related to the central city of Washington in exact accordance

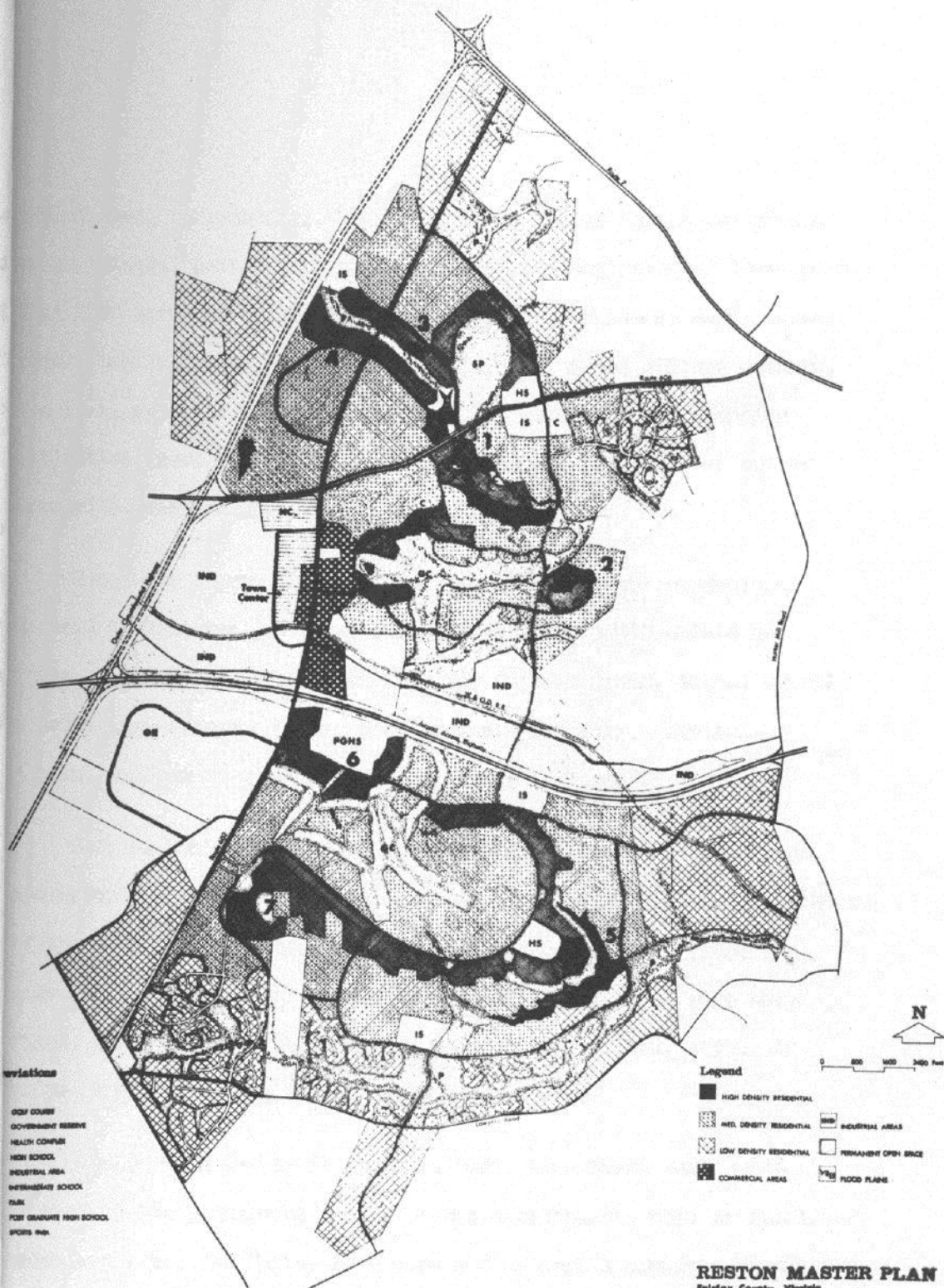
with a regional plan for the area (The Year 2000 Plan, promulgated by the National Capital Planning Commission and endorsed by President Kennedy). The unanimous consent of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to RPC zoning provided the perfect setting for carrying out the project.

The Master Plan assumes that Reston should have its own economic base. It provides for approximately 1,000 acres of industrial space capable, together with commerce and service industries, of providing employment for 35,000 people by the 1980's. The commercial and industrial areas are related to the residential and recreational areas in such a way as to eliminate the need for commuting.

The Master Plan also reflects the developer's philosophy that Reston should provide housing of all types for all types of people. There are three basic densities in the Plan: High (60 residents per acre), Medium (14 per acre), and Low (3.8 per acre). High density "sinews" weave through the plan, relating housing to open space. Forty-two percent of the land is set aside for functional public use.

Residential areas are connected by walkways to village centers and recreational areas. Thus, no large area is more valuable than another, and there is no separation of area by cost.

The Reston plan recognized that diverse cultural, religious,



educational, recreational, commercial, and social facilities should be an integral part of the community from the beginning of development. Thus 1500 acres of open space were set aside for lakes, golf courses, riding trails, parks, nature center, et. al. Seven village centers, the focal point of neighborhood cultural, community and shopping activities, were provided for. A Town Center, to serve the entire community, was included in the Plan.

Sites for thirty-five churches (worked out with the National Council of Churches), sixteen elementary, three intermediate and three high schools (worked out with the Fairfax County School Board), a community college or other post-graduate facility, hospital, hotels, conference centers and so on, were included in the Plan.

But, Reston's Master Plan is highly flexible, as it should be, and affords the opportunity to use what is learned from the experience of the early years in the later stages of development. Thus, the size and exact location of village community facilities were not fixed, nor a precise determination made of the mixture, style, or price range of housing in any given density area.

Considerable leeway is given to test, experiment, and learn. In view of the pioneering nature of the development, this is absolutely necessary - so, the Master Plan does not present a complete format for the construction of Reston. It does, however, reflect Reston's basic

social and philosophical objectives. They are:

1. To build a community where people who live and work, or both, have the widest possible opportunities to realize their full potential. To make this possible, children's centers and nursery schools, hospitals and mental health clinics, swimming lessons and nature studies, social services and artists-in-residence, workshops and retreats, libraries and ball fields, theaters and parks, lakes and art galleries, churches and riding centers are all necessary.

2. To build a community which offers opportunities to live and work to all people, removing the barriers sometimes created by race, income, geography, education, sex and age.

The fullest possible range of housing types and prices is necessary so that Reston can include homes and apartments for the janitor and the scientist, the elderly widow and the young bachelor, the wealthy and the poor, the black and the white. Reston intends to offer decent housing in such a way, of such a variety and mixture and of such consistently good quality and beauty that there are no second-class areas and no second-class citizens.

3. To make it possible for people to become rooted in their community, to identify with and feel a part of it.

One way to do this is by providing housing for different

needs and incomes, so that those who want to can find the kind of housing they need when they are 20, 40, or 65 without leaving their neighborhood.

4. To include facilities and programs close-at-hand for the recreational and educational use of free time. The technological revolution, the increasing amounts of free time available, the rising affluence of many Americans and the rising expectations of others, the cultural and educational explosions all point to the need for having accessible - at the earliest possible moment - those ingredients of a community not usually provided by a developer at all, not usually provided by the government until the population growth warrants it, nor by commercial enterprise until a profit is likely.

5. To enhance the dignity of the individual - to make the human being, not space or topography, or FHA regulations or planning concepts - the planning module. Pleasing patterns on a drawing board, the broad strokes of a Master Plan, a concern for grand design must all be rooted, finally, in the individual - in his home, his family, his scale, his way of life, his aspirations. Thus, Reston provides for variety in housing, in recreation, in cultural activities. In variety, there is free choice and the possibility of identity - this contributes to individual dignity.

6. The creation of a beautiful environment. Beauty is an elusive goal but an important one. Urban beauty brings with it a sense of place, of identity, of personality. "There is no there there," Gertrude Stein said of a California suburb. That may very well be, above all else, what is missing, and what we must put there as we go about the business of rebuilding urban America.

These, then were the goals the planners of Reston set for themselves before the first construction began in 1963.

THE PILOT PROJECT

The pilot project for Reston was designed to determine the validity of the Master Plan and the possibilities for its achievement. What was learned from carrying out the pilot project would then influence the future direction of Reston's development.

The developer's goals for an integrated community were to be tested by a policy of open occupancy and by offering a wide span of price ranges within a single grouping of townhouses. Planning concepts to be proven were evidenced by the striking urbanity of the first structures to rise in the rolling Virginia countryside, by the mixture of housing types, and by the combination in the Village Center of commercial, residential and community uses. This combination gives morning through night use and vitality to the heart of the community.

Finally, the importance attached to the attractiveness of the environment required the employment of architects of integrity who would naturally, and quite rightly, use contemporary design. All this had to be done successfully; i.e., in a manner that would attract people to rent and to buy, in an area not noted for its

ability to fly in the face of convention or indulge in experimental ways of living.

The reaction to these plans by the financial community can easily be imagined. The skepticism which could be expected to greet any one of Reston's innovations was solidly reinforced by the inclusion of all these untried ideas at the same time. It was decided, therefore, to accompany the unconventional pilot project in the first of the villages to be developed, Lake Anne Village, with a more conventional residential approach in another village, Hunters Woods. There, on the low-density fringes of Reston, the more traditional suburban development of single-family detached homes on well-laid-out cul-de-sacs was constructed.

In order for Lake Anne Village to serve as a prototype for the later development, and to illustrate at the outset the primary planning principles of the New Town, community and commercial facilities included in the pilot project were begun immediately. A man-made lake was constructed to serve as the usable open space adjacent to the medium and high-density areas of the first village. The 7,000 yard golf course was constructed nearby. A riding center was built and miles of trails developed in Hunters Woods.

While the pioneers, the First Families of Reston, as they like to



call themselves, moved into Lake Anne Village somewhat earlier, the pilot project was not completed until the end of 1965. Lake Anne Village Center opened that December with a Salute to the Arts. Here is what had been constructed:

227 townhouses in three clusters by three different architectural firms

113 apartments in three groupings; a 15-story tower (the highest building in the County); garden walk-ups; walk-ups over stores

The Village Center, with shops, offices, a Community Hall, library, rathskeller for young people, nursery-kindergarten

The lake, golf course, swimming pools, tennis courts, playgrounds, ballfield, walkway system connecting all clusters and the Village Center, fountains, sculpture and street furniture

The development of the industrial area was begun at the same time as the residential area, and what had to be learned was simply whether industry and government would be sufficiently attracted by the New Town to locate there and provide the economic and employment base which the plan envisions and the goals necessitate.

The planning of The Reston Center for Industry and Government was done with its relationship to the entire community in mind. Careful attention was paid in the overall layout to good planning principles, architecture, landscaping and site selection. The needs of contemporary industry and government were, of course, considered in the decision to make sites available with as much diversity and flexibility as possible - from space rented by the square foot in a Group Facilities complex,

through the long-term leasing of buildings constructed for particular clients, to the purchase of land in parcels from one acre to one-hundred acres. Parking, access to transit, maintenance, servicing underground utilities and the like were all taken into account in creating a modern industrial park. And the entire area was protected by a Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions from such potential nuisances as smoke, smog, obnoxious odors and noise.

The industrial area is within walking distance of the first 18-hole golf course and will border on a village center in one area, and the Town Center in another. This will make it possible for many people to walk, or perhaps to bicycle, to work.

Reston's first industrial tenant was Air Survey Corporation, which moved into space in the Group Facilities Complex in November, 1964 - just about the time the first townhouses were being completed. It was shortly followed by HRB-Singer, Inc., a subsidiary of the Singer Company; Communications and Electronics, Inc., a branch of Motorola; and, the Life Sciences Division and the Industrial Development Company, both branches of Hazleton Laboratories. (Hazleton has twice expanded since locating in Reston.) Transportation Consultants, Inc., Human Sciences Research, Inc., Hunter Associates Laboratory, Inc., General Technologies, Inc., SCOPE, Inc., General Kinetics, Inc., and the Headquarters of the Fairfax Education Association will all be Industrial

Center residents soon.

To date, the most important commitment to locate in the Reston Industrial Center, however, has come from the Federal Government. In May, Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall, announced that the new Headquarters of the U.S. Geological Survey - a \$30 million complex of buildings on 85 acres, employing 2,400 people - would be located in Reston.

In making his announcement, Secretary Udall explained that Reston was selected as the site because it is a New Town, because it is a place, "that would make possible new efficiencies in construction, land development and municipal services; that it would offer a variety of homes to a wide range of incomes; that it would provide an environment harmonious to man's needs; that it would offer attractive community buildings and open spaces free from pollution; that it would retain much of the natural beauty of the landscape."

It was thus possible by 1966 to see, upon the completion of the pilot project phase of Reston's development, the microcosm of a New Town:

Industry and stores were operating and employing about 750 people.

More than 200 townhouses and 100 single-family detached houses were sold.

All commercial space had been leased.

All the apartments were rented.

More than 1,000 people were in residence.

The Lake Anne Community Hall was in full swing - clubs, concerts, films, lectures, a full range of community interests and activities under way.

An art gallery was opened.

The Lake Anne Nursery-Kindergarten had nearly 70 students, six teachers.

The first elementary school was under construction.
(it opened in January 1967)

The Carter Glass Branch of the Fairfax County Library was open.

Two ministers were in residence and the first church was under construction (it is now open).

There was a doctor in residence and two dentists in practice.

A newspaper was publishing, the Reston Players, Inc., and a cultural group calling itself Serendipity had been formed - all by residents, all having no connection with the developer. There were chapters of the League of Women Voters, the Virginia Fine Arts Museum and many other groups.

It seems fair to say that the pilot project was a success, that there was an encouraging public response to this new conception of what a community can and should be. The architecture was praised by most critics. The press was enthusiastic. The County, State, and Federal governments were cooperative. But at bottom, it was the plan, the new approach, a planned community, that made the pilot project a success. What the residents, the retailers and the industrialists

care most about, and responded most enthusiastically to, was the New Town concept - the alternative to non-planning a good many people appear to be waiting for.