

APPENDIX I
THE GENESIS OF RESTON

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In March 1961 Lefcourt Realty Corporation sold 6,750 acres of Virginia countryside to a corporation headed by Robert E. Simon, Jr. I would like to give you some background about the date, the property, the customer and the times in which he found himself.

A fledgling historian named Spencer Potter has written a history of the property based largely on A. Smith Bowman's History of the Farm. Evidently, the history of the land dates back to 1649 when King Charles the Second of England granted one fifth of the present Commonwealth of Virginia to a group of noblemen. The land was passed from father to son, the ninth John Cameron inheriting 40,000 acres. He, in turn, deeded to his fourth son, Reginald, 8,035 acres which includes all of what is now Reston plus more.

Reginald departed from tradition and decided to sell to a man named Thornton who bought the property for \$5 an

acre. Further transactions were interrupted by the Civil War. Potter recounts how General Lee and his Army travelled the old Ox Road and Ridge Road, now known as Route 602, on their way to Antietam. In May 1886 trouble forced Thornton to resell and this time the buyers were two gentlemen by the name of Weihle and Dunn. They bought 6,449 acres for \$20,000. The partnership was soon dissolved and the land was split into two portions. Weihle, the son of a German Reform minister who retired successfully from the practice of medicine at the age of 35 (today at that age doctors are only beginning to put out their shingles), bought a house in Washington and, in 1888, built a frame house at Thornton's Mill. The house, an example of the gingerbread architecture of the period, had a covered porch, servants' quarters, stables and a Victorian summer house, actually a gazebo, which still stands. The middle lake was then spanned by a wooden bridge on Ridge Road. There was a thirty foot square ice house which became the center of activity once a year at the annual ice cutting event to which the family always came from Washington. This building housed the first offices of a distillery built in 1935 and now contains the offices of the Internal Revenue men assigned to the distillery.

Weihle was not content with just building houses. He had a dream of Utopia, so he brought in a planner and proceeded to draw up a master plan for a city. (A copy of the original is now in our offices in Reston.) The plan was made up of beautiful geometric patterns, completely ignoring topography -- a style of planning which Weihle did not invent and which, unfortunately, continues to find its way into many a master plan today. It also had streets named for various states and foreign countries. Weihle's next project was to build a hotel -- the Lafayette Hotel -- which became the favorite resort for gay young blades in Washington who wanted to get off with a fair companion without the knowledge of their neighbors. Besides the hotel, the resort included a rangling 85 foot building -- all towers, gables and porches -- which sported a bowling alley and tennis courts, swimming and fishing in the lake, bridle paths and good hunting. The chef had once worked for J. P. Morgan and the cuisine and excellent spring water were known for miles around. The rates were \$30 a month.

Despite all this luxury or perhaps because of it, the hotel went into debt. Thereafter the property changed hands many times until 1927 when A. Smith Bowman bought 4,000 acres on the north side of the tract and the Weihle home.

He was the man who in 1934 -- after the repeal of prohibition -- built the now famous distillery known for "Virginia Gentleman" and "Fairfax County" bourbon. In the early 1940's the Bowman also bought the southern portion of the land, more than 3,000 acres, for \$45 an acre. Less than 20 years later, in 1960, they sold the farm and the distillery to Lefcourt Realty for approximately \$1,600 an acre. The final transaction of this history occurred a year later, 1961, and that was the beginning of Reston as a place on the map.

Who was the customer for these 6,000 odd acres of land? I am the type of man who wants to do a great many things but who doesn't do anything particularly well. But I would rather play my own brand of tennis than watch almost any tennis tournament I can think of, except perhaps the one we are having here this summer. I played piano as a little boy and at six years composed an Indian war dance. My mother was sure she had something fantastic on her hands. But it didn't turn out that way.

Swimming, boating, skiing, golf, horseback riding, gardening, even planting trees: I was interested in all of these, and in amateur dramatics until my sister told me frankly that I should be a spectator of dramatics. And, of course, I always did a certain amount of reading.

I was brought up in New York and loved the countryside. As soon as my first wife, who died, and I had a child and one on the way, we decided to move to the country. We found the perfect set-up, five acres of woodland with a little field. One next door neighbor had one hundred acres; others had a couple of acres each; the next nearest neighbor owned 1,050 acres. It was, beyond doubt, the American Dream. The only trouble was that it turned my wife into the proverbial chauffeur and it was quite difficult for the children to get together with their friends. Furthermore, it was almost 4 years before I was able to swim and play tennis and ice skate and boat. I had to find out where the clubs were and who belonged to them and all that. Finally, I had to get elected. At that point, only one minor difficulty remained: the swimming was over 15 miles away from the tennis.

As you can imagine, we used to go out driving quite a bit. Often we would drive through Levittown and remark, as everyone is always remarking, "Isn't this horrible! Isn't this awful!" But after a while we began to notice that children were swarming all over the place and that our children would look out of the car window with a longing glance. Soon we began to feel that perhaps in many respects

this was better than our American dream. So we moved to Syosset, L. I.

Syosset is a place where couples come, have children and leave as soon as the children have grown. Because the entire working population commuted, social life was restricted to the weekends. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I would get home at 7 or 8 o'clock, worn out and tired. On the weekends, however, all hell broke loose because of the cocktail parties and dinners. This wasn't so marvelous, either. As for commuting, we were lucky because we were only 4 minutes from the railroad station. It took me only an hour and five minutes each way.

When I was 21 my father died and I went into his office. One of my jobs was to run Carnegie Hall. My father and a group of friends had bought it in 1925, expecting that the new concert hall would be built any day and the old one torn down. I got more experience than I bargained for because the new hall wasn't built until 1960. One thing I learned from this project was that 75 percent of the people who had studios in Carnegie Hall also lived near there. This was quite a contrast to my one hour-five minute commuting time.

I next became interested in regional shopping centers. As a solution to the problem of providing convenient, efficient shopping facilities, they soon proved disillusioning. They are not as convenient as they are supposed to be. You have to walk a mile, or even two miles, on an average shopping trip. And a regional shopping center makes a poor neighbor in any residential area because of the parking space required.

I learned one other important thing during those years. I was involved in a housing project for less fortunate people at a time when most students and thinkers thought that good housing was the answer to society's social ills. If people were brought out of the slums and given a good place, everything would change. Although there is a lot wrong with Jane Jacobs' book -- The Death and Life of American Cities -- which anyone can point out by reading the first few pages -- I do think the conclusion is correct: that housing does not in and of itself accomplish very much, that shelter is not in and of itself a panacea.

I have taken a brief look at the property and the customer. What about the times in which the transaction took place and in which we are living?

The most important point is that this is an age of ever-increasing leisure. We are able to produce the necessities of life in shorter and shorter work-weeks. The transit workers in New York City seem to be trying to break all records, but the fact is that the 60-70 hour week has given way to 50 hours, which gave way to 35 hours and some industries now even boast a 30 hour week. A segment of the population is experiencing something my wife calls "the new years" in a book she is writing: the years after the children have grown up and left home when parents can retire but have no intention of looking at obituaries every day and thinking, "When do I go?"; when, instead, they have full expectations of a long period on this mortal soil and are wondering what to do about it. It was interesting to see the context of the three most recent articles on Reston -- the future of our country. So many time-saving devices are being forecast, but there is not a single mention of what we are going to do with the time saved. The future will be an age of leisure, but it must also be an age of planning what we want to do with our newly won time.

That brings me to 1961. A representative of the firm of Shannon & Luchs was given the assignment to sell this Virginia property. He spoke to Jim Lannegan in New York

hoping to interest Roger Stevens, but instead Jim called a friend of his, Henry Wrightson. "Henry, do you know anybody that is interested in 6,000 odd acres in Virginia?" Henry replied, "Maybe, if you come on up and see me." The person he had in mind, of course, was one Bob Simon, Jr.

The project was really out of my experience, but it seemed such a marvelous opportunity. The location was fantastic. The foundations were just being laid for the magnificent Dulles Airport terminal building and construction crews were scratching away at the runways. An airport like that in what seems like a desert will cause the desert to flower. And Dulles Airport was being put into Fairfax County, then the single fastest growing county in the United States. The property was 18 miles -- if you want to argue we'll say 19 or 20 depending on how you argue -- 20 miles from the nation's capital and fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States. And to top it all off, the property was beautiful. It was an irresistible challenge.

What should be done with the land? With a property this size, the only conceivable single use was a bedroom community; that was a repulsive idea. We began to think about a New Town. Of the many definitions of a "New Town," I prefer the one given by Ada Louise Huxtable in the New

York Times: a New Town is a large scale development which has in it residential, commercial, industrial, cultural and civic functions. In other words, it is a well-rounded community.

New Towns are not new although we haven't seen much of them in the United States. As I mentioned at one of the Cluster Association meetings, the earliest new town espouser that I know of was Leonardo da Vinci. When the Duke of Milan complained about the congestion in Milan, da Vinci suggested that he ring the city with eight satellite cities each with a maximum population of 30,000. Several centuries later, in the late 19th century, Ebenezer Howard argued for garden cities of 30,00 population to relieve the overcrowding of London. Radburn, New Jersey was started in 1929 but was never finished because of the depression. Although it was and is very small, it stands as a beacon in planning literature. I have always wondered why the idea wasn't picked up sooner. It was an adventuresome and wonderful scheme. Many features of Reston, such as separation of walkways and roadways, and functional use of open space, first appeared in Radburn. The next significant New Town development occurred in England after the war when the profound need for industrial reconstruction and new housing gave the impetus for the

British New Towns Movement as an official government program. Planning in England is done at the national level in London -- and there is no kidding about it. Although the government could not order industry to settle in the New Towns, they could and did make such relocation attractive and easy.

We can learn a lot from the British experience. There are two things in particular which I noticed. Because the British standard of living is lower than ours, it is impossible for them to achieve the kind of quality that we hope to have here.

Secondly, for some reason, social planning has not been part of the picture until recently. There was no money for anything but housing, industry, utilities and roads. Because of this lack, the original settlers of the first New Town were very unhappy (statistics show that the suicide rate was higher than in any other place in England). They had no clubs, no dance halls, no restaurants. This is slowly being remedied and some funds are now available for what we call amenities. They still seem relatively scarce, however. The manager of one of the New Towns told me that he had felt desperately the need of a community center and only after years of scrounging had money been found to build a small one.

In the post-war period, Scandinavia, Russia, Israel and other countries have begun building New Towns. I've seen a couple in Israel which are very exciting. They are built by unskilled immigrants being trained right on the job.

Once the decision was made to attempt a New Town, the question was how to proceed. First I needed to get the assistance of various types of people. We decided that it would be a mistake to try to build an inhouse staff to handle all aspects of the project and that, instead, we would work with consultants. We needed a diversity of skills and talents and hoped for a higher level of ability than we could afford on a full-time basis. At last count, we have, at one time or another, used more than 50 different consulting firms. In addition to the firm staffs and our own staff, we have had magnificent support from the vast majority of people working for and in Fairfax County.

A New Town can develop in many different directions. It is the responsibility of the developer to accept a set of goals which make the direction explicit and, at the same time, function as a guide for its realization. From these goals comes a program; from the program, the plans; and from the plans, the buildings, landscaping, etc. What, then, were some of these goals?

First, we would provide things for people to do. We feel that if facilities are available for people to use conveniently, they will use them to a much greater extent than if they have to surmount obstacles and charge around the countryside to get at them. I had an argument with a well-known sociologist on this point. He believed that people will do what they want anyway and that accessibility is not significant. It is too early to resolve this question one way or the other, but there are some straws in the wind which I'll mention later. In order to have things to do -- stimulating things, exciting things, interesting things, fun things -- the planner must build facilities initially, not after there is a demonstrated need, and people are frustrated for lack of something to do.

Second, we would try to plan with the individual constantly in mind. This isn't as easy as it sounds because the planning profession loves to deal in large space concepts. As soon as I see a planner move his hand with a broad sweep, I begin to get worried. Such thinking does not relate to the individual. Gertrude Stein commented on suburbia, "There is no there there." I think she was talking about what I am talking about.

Third -- and this is a controversial one -- we would make it possible for a family to stay in one neighborhood in Reston for as long as it liked. This means the planner cannot divide the community into a \$30,000 section, a \$20,000 section and a \$50,000 section, or a three bedroom section, a two-and-one-half bedroom section and a two bedroom section. It all has to be mixed together. In Reston now the houses for sale and apartments for rent have varying prices. We've started off with prices ranging from \$23,000 to \$47,000 within one neighborhood unit. Nobody, so far, seems to find this objectionable. And for people who want to live in Reston and can't afford these town houses, we will soon build lower priced ones and will also have rental units partially financed by government subsidy.

A family with young children will move to Reston. The children will grow up and move out of their parents' town-house into a bachelor apartment or an apartment shared with a friend. Soon they will get married and begin a family of their own. In the meantime, the parents will decide to get out of the four or five bedroom house and move to an apartment building. And the whole family will remain within the same neighborhood units.

Finally, of course, we would like to make Reston beautiful. The most controversial aspect of this goal is the Architectural Review Board. We've had many, many hours of discussion about what the Architectural Review Board is and what it should do. Although one would expect the Board to spend most of its time ruling against plans submitted by the builders, our builders won the architectural review. And at the last builders' meeting, some builders actually stated that they wanted more rather than less control. This question of control is a difficult one. It is easy to lay down principles in broad, general terms, but working on an individual design problem is another matter. Basically, there is a philosophic question involved. If we wanted to, should we have every builder construct a house exactly the way we would build it? I continue to insist that the answer is no. Our approach has not been entirely successful, but we haven't given up trying to find a basis for doing better.

You are going to hear a lot about the planning to achieve these goals, especially about the land plan. An essential characteristic of this plan is the provision of useful open space instead of useless green belts. This doesn't mean that every inch of land is a playground. Usefulness doesn't preclude just sitting and looking, but we

insist on open space that is useful. The land planning was done by Whittlesey & Conklin. Arthur D. Little was responsible for the economic plan-getting into the market here, creating employment opportunities in Reston and developing a positive role for Reston as a contributor to County taxes, There is a legal plan, a community plan, an organization plan and a financial plan. All of this was the first phase of our project.

Now, we have just about finished the second phase, the pilot project. Because so many people were skeptical about apartments over stores and high-rise buildings and town-houses in the country, we have hedged our bets. We have started in two places simultaneously: a more conventional approach in Hunter's Woods and a trial balloon on our new ideas in Lake Anne Village.

The gradual development of Reston has been a continual process of learning. We have learned from you, the pioneer residents; we have learned from the mistakes which you tell us about. We apologize for those mistakes and I hope that as times goes on we make fewer and fewer (although we can never stop making them altogether. Organizationally, our morale is high. And there seem to be straws in the wind indicating that we are on the right track.

For example, 20 percent of the people who bought town-houses in Reston are single. We didn't expect this to happen at all. It means that right from the outset people are thinking of Reston as a city rather than as a suburb where the typical family which moves in is made up of a husband 29 years old, a wife 26 years old, two and one half children and a parakeet.

Next item: some of you are walking. You tell me that this is an unusual thing to be doing. Somehow Reston is more conducive to walking than the automobile-oriented world that most of you are used to.

The next example I have involves my last trip to the barbershop in the village center. As I sat down, I told the barber who I was. He said, "You know, I couldn't figure out if you had come in here. I'm glad you do come. I took a cut in salary in order to work in Reston." He was really touched by the friendliness of the community. He was pleased that Art Strong had put his head in the door earlier that day just to say hello.

Some of my friends were rather concerned about the cluster meeting which was held a few weeks ago. One rather sensitive friend felt that I shouldn't go at all because it was like Bastille Day and he wasn't sure whether I would be

able to take it. As it turned out, the fears had no basis. It was a friendly, constructive meeting at which certain ground rules were established and frameworks laid out. Everyone was able to control himself about the water faucet that wasn't working properly. In general, the group seemed to value what we were trying to do. This attitude seemed a significant straw in the wind.

Another example: the industrial program has gone much better than we thought it would. The first industrial customers came to us before there were roads, sewers, or water lines, when Reston still looked like Virginia countryside. Now we have a strong demand for industrial space. Albert Mayer, who was connected with Radburn, wrote me a letter saying, "Congratulations. You are the first New Town to get industry at its inception." This pleased us very much. Also, the stores that rented the premises in Lake Anne Village are good stores as you probably read in the Reston Times, a free-thinking, swinging and independent periodical.

My last straw in the wind is rather touching. Mrs. Bearman who runs the nursery school asked the children to draw a picture of what Reston was to them. To Mrs. Bearman's surprise, many of the pictures had daddies in them.

Her interpretation is that, for some reason or other, the facilities, the atmosphere, the walks, mean that Reston children are getting a better shake on Daddy's time.

So, straws in the wind look as though we are on the right track. And we are going to go on behaving as if we were.