Reston 101
Reston’s Founding Principles: Yesterday and Today

Compiled by members of the 2016 Community Engagement Advisory Committee for Reston Association
Reston’s Founding Principles: Yesterday and Today

When Robert E. Simon, Jr. founded Reston, he wasn’t just creating new homes; he was creating a new and different type of community. Bob planned Reston as an innovative “New Town.” From its innovative planning—a place where people could live, work, play and get involved, organized around village centers—to its status as Virginia’s first open and diverse community, Reston wasn’t a typical D.C. suburb. It was—and is—a unique and special place.

Shortly after Bob created Reston, he also organized a homeowners association (a predecessor to today’s Reston Association) to ensure that the residents of Reston could be actively involved in the planning and guidance of their community. As Reston has grown and evolved over the years, so too has the role of RA in the community. Through it all, however, RA has maintained its tradition of supporting and maintaining a high quality of life for community members. As part of that tradition, RA has helped to sustain and promote Bob Simon’s vision for the Reston community, to ensure that Reston remains a terrific place to live, work, play and get involved.

In 1962, Bob Simon spelled out his Seven Goals for the community of Reston. Below, you can see Bob’s principles, along with the ways in which RA preserves and embodies those principles today.

1. That the widest choice of opportunities be made available for the full use of leisure time. This means that the New Town should provide a wide range of cultural and recreational facilities as well as an environment for privacy.

RA is the primary steward of outdoor recreational facilities in Reston. Today, RA maintains more than 55 miles of pathways and trails, 15 swimming pools and 52 community tennis courts, as well as ball fields, playgrounds, picnic facilities, community buildings and the 72-acre Walker Nature Center. RA’s Parks and Recreation Department also offers a variety of programs and events including camps, after school programs, nature programs, festivals, and trips and tours for 55+ residents. Bob would be proud of the many leisure-time opportunities RA has to offer!

2. That it be possible for anyone to remain in a single neighborhood throughout his life.

Just as Bob envisioned, Reston offers a tremendous varieties of housing styles, options and price points. RA serves each and every one of those residents, whether they live in a multifamily apartment or a million-dollar mansion. Did you know that everyone who lives or owns property within RA’s boundaries, even apartment dwellers and renters, is a member of RA? It’s true! RA’s website has a wealth of information and resources for property owners and cluster officers.

3. That the importance and dignity of each individual be the focal point for all planning, and take precedence for large-scale concepts.

RA’s leadership in the community affects everyone in Reston, whether they’re residents, business owners, workers or all of the above. RA works to ensure that Restonians have a seat at the table when it comes to planning our community’s future growth and development, which helps ensure that Reston will remain a great place to live and work for decades to come.
RA offers plenty of opportunities for individual community members to get involved in Reston. To live in Reston means to get involved. Community involvement is an important part of staying active, keeping current and making a difference in the lives of those around you. RA’s volunteer opportunities range from one-time participation at community cleanup events and shifts at special events and community festivals to service on one of RA’s advisory committees and work groups all the way to service on the board of directors, the all-volunteer group that guides and oversees RA operations. If you want to be active in your community, RA is the place to do it! To learn more about volunteer opportunities, [click here](#).

4. **That the people be able to live and work in the same community.**

   Reston is a strong hub of economic activity in the Washington, D.C. region and one of Fairfax County’s largest employment centers. Reston has the second-largest office market in Fairfax County with 19.8 million square feet of office space, 466,000 square feet of industrial or flexible space and 1.7 million square feet of retail development.

   RA’s community leadership and amenities are essential to making Reston a great place to live, work or both!

5. **That commercial, cultural and recreational facilities be made available to the residents from the outset of the development – not years later.**

   Many of RA’s recreational facilities date back to Reston’s earliest years. Ever since its beginning, RA has provided Restonians with plenty of opportunities to enjoy their leisure time within the community.

6. **That beauty – structural and natural – is a necessity of the good life and should be fostered.**

   RA’s primary task is to maintain both the structural and natural beauty of Reston. RA’s Design Review Board ensures that residential, commercial, and recreational properties in Reston adhere to the community’s design standards, ensuring that Reston remains aesthetically consistent and attractive. RA’s Covenants Department ensures helps ensure the integrity of the Reston community and property values in accordance with the protective property covenants.

   RA is committed to protecting Reston’s natural beauty as well. RA maintains over 1,350 acres of open space, and we’re committed to ensuring that it remains clean and beautiful. From scheduling community cleanup events to rooting out invasive species, RA helps protect Reston’s environmental resources. The Environmental Advisory Committee advises RA on ecologically sound management of its waters, natural areas and wildlife, working with RA staff and volunteers to ensure that Reston remains an environmental treasure.

7. **Since Reston is being developed from private enterprise, in order to be completed as conceived it must also, of course, be a financial success.**

   Although RA is not responsible for the overall financial success of Reston, it manages a multimillion-dollar annual budget. The board of directors, the CEO and chief financial officer, and the Fiscal Committee work together to develop RA’s budget, set assessment rates, and ensure that RA remains on a sound financial footing.
RA is proud to carry on Bob’s vision and ensure that Reston remains a great place to live, work, play and get involved. If you’d like to learn more about Bob, his vision and the history of Reston, visit the Reston Museum online (http://www.restonmuseum.org/) or in person at Lake Anne Plaza, the historical heart of Reston. If you’d like to get involved in ensuring that Bob’s vision continues to live on in Reston’s present and its future, volunteer with RA! Learn more by going to RA’s website (http://www.reston.org/), and click on “About Reston Association,” then “Volunteer Opportunities.”

Local News
The best way to stay in the know about the community is by reading Reston’s variety of print and online media sources that provide news daily, weekly or seasonally, such as: RA News, Reston Magazine, RestonNow, Reston Patch, Reston Connection, Fairfax County Times, Modern Reston, Around Reston, Reston Lifestyle, Viva Reston and …

Reston Association News
“Join Our Mailing List” on the home page of Reston.org to subscribe to the weekly RA News that is delivered to thousands of email addresses every Friday. Reston Association also publishes Reston Magazine, which includes articles about the community and the latest information on programs, recreation and facilities, delivered to every RA household each quarter. Learn more about these and other special interest publications at Reston.org, or enquire at Member Services at the headquarters of Reston Association, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20191.

Want to Know More?
Subscribe to weekly RA News, see the Local Organizations page on Reston.org, and visit these websites that provide local information:

- FairfaxCounty.gov: Public works and services
- LINKinfo.org: Public transportation information for Reston
- RestonChamber.org: Business community membership
- Reston Citizens Association: Est. 1967 to promote and protect Reston’s planning ideals
- Reston.org: Reston Association property owners and tenants
- RestonCommunityCenter.com: County-operated indoor recreation and programming
- RestonMuseum.org: Reston’s history
- RestonTC.org: Urban core property management
- RestonTownCenter.com: Urban core shopping, dining, events
- VirginiaDOT.org: Reston’s public roads