

The Shape of the Future

E M Risse



Shaping a Functional and Sustainable Future in Greater Warrenton-Fauquier

This workshop was originally presented to the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors on 10 April 2008. Based on feedback from attendees, EMR expanded the notes as presented here. The presentation was well received by the Supervisors, however for the reasons spelled out in Strategy III, the implementation of the recommended actions will not be given high profile billing.

Introduction

The "future" will not be an extension of the past.

Traditional ("Business-As-Usual") strategies are not working now and will not work in the future.

We are living in an era of "Punctuated Equilibrium."

A "Punctuated Equilibrium" is a common occurrence in natural / organic systems. An example is water reaching the boiling point and turning from liquid to gas.

It is foolhardy to assume: "Hey, there have been six recessions since WWII, and this is just another one..."

.....

Thanks to Terry Nyhous for your invitation to address this work session.

Terry's stated goal is to "open a dialogue about critical issues facing Fauquier County " and thus Greater Warrenton-Fauquier. Our presentation is intended to contribute to that dialogue.

Also, thanks to Don del Rosso of the *Fauquier Times Democrat* ("Out with the old, in with New, Risse pushes mindset fix," 9 April 2008). His interview questions helped us understand:

How much has changed since we moved to Greater Warrenton-Fauquier six years ago.

How much our understanding of the Countryside and the urban enclaves in the Countryside has changed.

How much is the same and not getting any better.

Based on these understandings, we refined the outline distributed to the Board prior to the presentation and expanded the number of strategies to make our objectives more clear.

It may be useful to review END NOTE ON VOCABULARY before reading further.

Three Little Words

“No Cheap Energy” – especially portable, concentrated sources of energy necessary to efficiently power Large, Private Vehicles.

The problem is NOT just rising gasoline and diesel prices and falling house values due to this Community’s growing isolation from jobs in the Core of the National Capital Subregion

Rising energy costs are driving up the price of food, shelter, communications, lighting, heating and cooling and all aspects of Mobility and Access

In fact, the entire contemporary economic, social and physical Ziggurat of Community, Subregional, Regional, Continental and First World civilization has become dependent on cheap energy

Three Axioms

Do it with your friends – any action to secure functional settlement patterns by Fauquier County must be done with the Towns in the County as well as the surrounding jurisdictions. No Town, Service District or County is an organic component of human settlement due to the economic, social and physical transformations that have taken place since Fauquier County was formed.

Do NOT do it in Cars, aka Large, Private Vehicles or Automobiles

There are NO Villains. Everyone is doing what they believe in the best interest of their Agency, Enterprise, Institution or Household (See important [End Note Concerning Vocabulary](#) with respect to the capitalization and definitions of these terms.)

Three Realities

Humans have burned through natural capital – not just forests, soil, ground water, surface water and marine resources but **petroleum** which has been described as the “most precious, versatile resource on the planet”

"Growth" is not equal to Safety, Happiness OR Prosperity, and for sure, not all three

Most of what is advertised as "green" is just a new excuse for more Mass OverConsumption. It was called "Green Greed" in a recent *WaPo* story. For many examples, look at the latest issue of *Virginia Business* or the ads for Home Depot. Last week we received a "Green" Bank of America Visa credit card application that allows us to earn "Earth Smart Points" while we continue to buy more and more stuff.

Some Incredibly Bad Advice

WaPo 7 April 2008, "Economic Woes Render Growth Debate Moot."

A Loudoun County Supervisor is quoted: "Prior Boards have focused on land use, and in my opinion, it's time to focus on finance and budgets."

If you believe that,

(1) You will not be prepared for the next "growth cycle" if it occurs. That is what has happened after the last four "Oil/Auto and Real Estate Recessions:"

1973-1975 (Oil, REIT Mortgages, Land Speculation)

1980-1982 (Oil, Savings & Loans Collapse, Land Speculation)

1990-1991 (Jobs, Housing)

2001-2003 (Dot Coms, Housing)

After each recession, human settlement pattern has become more dysfunctional.

Plus...

(2) If the next "growth cycle" NEVER comes, Greater Warrenton-Fauquier will sink into chaos with all the other Beta Communities because citizens, and their Organizations (Agencies, Enterprises and Institutions) did not take intelligent actions necessary to facilitate "growth" within a sustainable context. (See the important [End Note on Vocabulary.](#))

To create Balance and sustainability there is an absolute necessity for Fundamental Change – Fundamental Transformation – not just "growth."

To its credit the above *WaPo* story updates and confirms aspects of "The Next Slum" from March 2008 *Atlantic* . See the predictions by Prof. Art Nelson from VA Tech / Alexandria Campus.

Context of the Following 11 Fauquier County Strategies

PART FOUR – SIX OVERARCHING STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING THE HUMAN SETTLEMENT PATTERN of ***The Shape of the Future*** establishes the context for the following eleven strategies. These eleven strategies outline what Fauquier County (and Greater Warrenton-Fauquier) must do now to address the Mobility and Access Crisis, the Affordable and Accessible Housing Crisis and the Helter Skelter Crisis.

The Strategies

I. Conceptual Framework Strategy

Embrace Regional reality – This is not 1910 or 1950 or 1973 or even 1990

- County policy must focus on Regional and Subregional reality. See the Radius Analysis of the foreclosure rates in the 7 April 2008 Bacon's Rebellion column "Two Spheres of Fraud" concerning shelter.
- Current municipal and state borders confuse most critical issues facing citizens.
- There is an organic structure of human settlement patterns and the governance structure must evolve to reflect this reality.

[Resource, most S/P writings, Key Words: "New Urban Region" and "Helter Skelter"]

Note: Each of the 11 strategies is followed by a list of resources that provide further information. These resources – columns, reports, backgrounders – can be accessed at www.baconsrebellion.com using the title or Key Word provided.

II. Robust and Understandable Vocabulary

First step: Stop using confusing words such as:

"rural"

Even in Fauquier County , less than 10 % of the Households rely on nonurban activities for

their livelihood.

95% of the Households who moved here over the last decade rely on urban income, even if the "out go" supports some nonurban activities.

Perpetuating the myth of "rural" is a cause of economic, social and physical dysfunction. How about "Countryside?" Come up with own word or phrase, but do not use words which mean different things to different people such as:

"sprawl"
"local"
"city"

[Resource, most S/P writings, Key Word: "Vocabulary." Also see GLOSSARY at www.baconsrebellion.com and important End Note on Vocabulary]

III. Citizen Information Strategy

The Fauquier Board of Supervisors could not now implement any of the following eight Strategies because citizens do not yet understand the problems; that there are alternatives; or the ramifications of continuing "Business-As-Usual." For these reasons, citizens would not now support most of the needed actions by the Board or by other Agencies, Enterprises or Institutions.

Citizens want "answers" to the Mobility and Access Crisis, the Affordable and Accessible Housing Crisis and the Helter-Skelter Crisis, but:

- Citizens are not yet willing to consider rational answers because they have been led to believe there is a quick fix:

"Vote for me, and I will solve your problems with no pain. (If that did not happen the last time you voted for me, it was the other parties fault..."

"Buy this product and you will be carefree..."

"All the problems are someone else's fault, and if they would just change..."

- Citizens have no reliable source of information with which to make decisions *in the voting booth or in the marketplace*.

For proof see most "letters to the editor" or listen to most comments at "public hearings"

on topics related to human settlement patterns.

The "Fourth Estate" first identified in 1837 is history. MainStream Media are now profit-advertising-consumption-driven Enterprises.

- MainStream Media has no choice because they are Enterprises and live on ad revenue and entertainment, they are not rewarded for providing the information citizens need
- It is not MainStream Media's fault, it is the fault of citizens for not evolving new sources of information over the past 50 years. Given all the tools now available, citizen ignorance and Geographic Illiteracy are self-inflicted wounds.

The future of democracies with market economies depends on informed citizens. (We were pleased to hear that there was a proposal for an Agency information officer at the County level. This was a first step, however, the proposal was withdrawn after opposition from citizens. See note above re citizens support of needed actions.)

[Resource, THE ESTATES MATRIX]

IV. Mobility and Access Strategy

Limit the use of and reliance on Large, Private Vehicles aka, Automobiles for Mobility and access.

Celebrate the opening of a Zip Car Outlet on Main Street, not another Large, Private Automobile dealership.
Encourage a Balance of Jobs and Housing.

Do not encourage "commuting." The only thing that will help commuters is to help them become "former" commuters.
Among the multi-jurisdictional efforts Fauquier County can support are:

- Raise the gas tax.
- Implement broad based usage fees on the basis of vehicle-miles-driven, especially single-occupant-vehicle- miles-driven. Fees must relate the cost of all driving to the costs of driving on that street, roadway or expressway at that time.
- Relate all fees and taxes used for

transport to the miles driven and the contribution to congestion.

- Move away from general sales and property taxes to support transport.
- Re-lower the speed limit.
- Building more roads without Fundament Change in human settlement patterns is a waste of resources.
- Impose an Abuser Fee on officers-of-the-law that do not enforce laws including those on speeding and violation of HOV regulations.
- Hybrids are hooey; Smart Cars and Segways are a first step. Single-occupant Hybrids running with the traffic flow in the HOV lanes -- 78 to 82 MPH on I-66 unless drivers are riding brakes -- are saving little or no gasoline. (They are not saving any gas per capita by any measure and some industry studies suggest at those speeds they are no more efficient than other cars of a similar size due to wind resistance and power train design.)

The key question is: Do we have the time to phase in Mobility and Access alternatives?

[Resource, THE PROBLEM WITH CARS]

V. Affordable and Assessable Housing Strategy

It is an absolute necessity that the Greater Warrenton-Fauquier Community achieve a Jobs / Housing (J / H) Balance. However, that is only the first step on the road to optimizing the Jobs / Housing / Services / Recreation / Amenity (J / H / S / R / A) Balance for every organic component of the Community

Habitat for Humanity can only do so much. Right now 60 to 70 percent of the citizens cannot afford the current housing options on the market. Moreover, those citizens and the work they do are essential to achieving J / H / S / R / A Balance in the Community.

If house prices continue to drop and more can

afford the existing dwellings, the current housing stock still will consist of "the wrong size house in the wrong location" vis a vis J / S / R / A Balance.

The fact is that Single Household Detached (SHD) housing cannot be made "Affordable," for the majority of those in the market for housing IF it is also Accessible to Jobs / Services / Recreation / Amenity.

This is a matter of physics, geometry, the economics of housing construction and the housing market. There are three alternatives:

- Wealth transfer to subsidize construction, maintenance and accessibility of dwelling Units that have greater inter-Unit separation than the occupants could otherwise afford
- Significantly raise the wages of those in the lower half of the economic food chain and provide cheap energy to fuel Mobility and Access necessary to overcome the cumulative impact of inter-Unit separation. (See "Three Little Words" above)
- Accept the fact that Multi-Household Dwellings and Single Household Attached Dwellings will make up the majority of the housing stock in any Neighborhood, Village and Community

It turns out that well-designed dwellings in multiple-Unit-type configurations, when accompanied with Services, Recreation and Amenity, have the highest market value per square foot. That includes the value of the Single Household Detached Dwellings in the Neighborhoods, and Villages that make up an Alpha Community.

[Resources, 7 April 2008 column "Two Spheres of Fraud," S/P writing Keyword "Affordable and Accessible" and "How to Build a Village."

VI. Strategy to Evolve Beyond Helter-Skelter

There is a Helter-Skelter Crisis because the Helter-Skelter human settlement pattern is the sum total result of current Agency programs, policies, projects and regulations as well as the actions of Enterprises, Institutions and Households.

In spite of great intentions and many good efforts, Greater Warrenton-Fauquier is heading for a 50 / 50 mish-mash of urban and nonurban land uses.

- There must be a Clear Edge between the Urbanside and the Countryside. That means a Clear Edge around each of the urban enclaves in Greater Warrenton-Fauquier.
- The County must rethink the plans for all the Service Districts to optimize the Balance of J / H / S / R / A at all scales beyond the Dooryard.
- Demonstrate how those who want to support the evolution of a functional and sustainable Greater Warrenton-Fauquier can invest in new buildings as well as new and renewed infrastructure – both green infrastructure and the built environment.
- There must be one or more detailed Concept Plans for the use of every parcel inside every Clear Edge – in Fauquier County that means every parcel in every Service District. At the present time economic and functional plans for the area within Service Districts would yield far more development than there is a market.
- The “Next Larger Component” Plan Process should be applied to all development proposals.
- Touting “mixed use” and “traditional neighborhoods” is FRAUD unless the project contributes to Balance at Neighborhood, Village and Community scales.
- One option would be to lay out Alpha Neighborhood scale “Lewenz Villages” in one or more of the Service Districts.

[Resources “The Role of Municipal Planning in Creating Dysfunctional Human Settlement Patterns,” 22 Jan 2002, and most S/P writings.
Key Words: “Helter Skelter”]

VII. Economic Development Strategy

Market what is unique and special about Greater Warrenton-Fauquier, now and in the future.

- The Town of Warrenton’s aggressive recycling program and Mayor Fitch’s waste product energy generation and Urbanside energy conservation efforts are a good start.

- Programs to support food production within the Community and expand farmers markets is an important effort.
- Access to a green Countryside is a positive but there needs to be 95% nonurban and 5% urban Balance in Fauquier County, not 50 / 50 Mish-Mash that is now evolving.
- Provide access to Countryside points of interest via shared-vehicles and via bike, foot, Segway and horse, not by Large, Private Automobiles.
- The overarching theme needs to be Live / Work / Invest in a REAL alternative to Fairfax / Loudoun / Prince William.
- As with Strategy VI, demonstrate how those who want to support the evolution of a functional and sustainable Greater Warrenton-Fauquier can invest in new buildings as well as new and renewed infrastructure – both green infrastructure and the built environment.
- Start an “Each-one-recruit-one” program to encourage investment. As noted in Strategy VI., an Alpha Neighborhood scale “Lewenz” Village in one Service District would be an intelligent next step.
- Pursue Community scale “import replacement” / “Go local” but go far beyond “Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age” by Shuman.
- Above all strive to achieve Balance at Neighborhood, Village and the Greater Warrenton-Fauquier Community scales.

[Resources, “Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age” by Shuman and most S/P writings, Key Word: “Balance”]

VIII. Comprehensive Parcel Consolidation Strategy

Since 1607, Virginians have been subdividing land. A new strategy must include:

- Subdivision recycling
- A new “sliding scale” to move urban uses inside Clear Edges
- Transfer of Property Rights

[Resource, THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF

LAND Forthcoming]

IX. Fair Allocation of Location-Variable Costs Strategy

This is perhaps the most important strategy, and this strategy relates directly to the Fauquier County budget and tax rates:

- Rely on “fee-for-use / service / benefit” whenever possible. Flat fees and general taxes do not reflect the locational difference in the cost of service delivery.
- Urban uses inside the Clear Edge are different than Urban uses outside the Clear Edge, say “hello” to Henry George.

[Resource, most S/P writings. Key Word: Location-Variable Costs]

X. Evolve Fundamental Change in Governance Strategy

Governance structure must evolve to match Organic Structure of human settlement patterns.

New governance structure must include new staff structure.

New governance structure must include new staff expertise.

[Resource, most S/P writings. Key Word: “Governance Structure”]

XI. Sustainable Population Strategy

The prior 10 strategies are of no value unless there is a sustainable Balance between resources and demand. The most important element in this equation is population.

Greater Warrenton-Fauquier has no obligation to “accept” or “accommodate” relocation from the Core of the National Capital Subregion. In fact, to achieve functional and sustainable patterns and densities of land use, the area inside the Clear Edge around the Core of the Subregion (inside Radius = 22 to 26 Miles) requires substantial increases / relocation of population.

[Resource “The Beltway to Easter Island,” 5 May column and most S/P writings. Key Word “Population.” Also ASAP and Albemarle County are now conducting an important study of the optimum population for Greater Charlottesville-Albemarle.

Where to from Here?

Your first response may be **well yes, but...**

"Would not these strategies put us 10 years ahead of ourselves? After all, not 5 percent of the population in this Region is willing to consider alternatives to Business-As- Usual."
OK!

Back to Strategy I, 5% of Region's Population is 500,000 people. That many people would fill up Fed Ex Field six times and is eight times the current Greater-Warrenton Fauquier population.

How many friends do we need? Not that many, see Strategy XI.

Is this "Realistic?" Will it Happen? Can it Happen?

What is "real?" The "conservative" approach to the future is to shrink the ecological footprint.

Will it Happen? Missed Opportunities / I told you so / Overhills 1973 / Katrina 1975

2002: 18-Point Program
2003: Subregional Certificate Program
2004: Town Implementation of Strategy VI at no cost
2004-2005: Property Dynamics

Can it Happen? Greater Warrenton-Fauquier is one of the few places where there is any chance for Fundamental Transformation, Success in the future depends on citizens, and their leaders.

Jared Diamond's Bottom Line in Collapse

The societies that Collapse:

Fail to create intelligent, realistic plans for the future, and

Fail to reconsider traditional values when conditions change.

Readings

Items Distributed:

"The Next Slum" by Chris Leinberger from
March 2008 Atlantic.

"The Problem With Cars" PART I at Bacon's
Rebellion.com.

**Further Readings Recommended at [www.
baconsrebellion.com](http://www.baconsrebellion.com):**

"Burned Out," 10 July 2006.

"THE ESTATES MATRIX" PARTs I, II, III &
IV, 26 Nov 2007 thru 21 Jan 2008

"THE PROBLEM WITH CARS" PARTs II, III,
IV & V, 11 Feb thru 7 April 2008

Short List of Key Books:

Jared Diamond, **"Guns Germs and Steel,"**
provides a Conceptual Framework to help
understand human settlement patterns.

Jared Diamond, **"Collapse."** What happens to
societies that run out of resources and do not
change traditional strategies.

Robert Reich, **"Supercapitalism,"** a very
good description of the current crisis in
democracy and the wealth gap.

Jane Jacobs, **"The Coming Dark Age."** You
know her earlier book *Death and Life of Great
American Cities* but the more she wrote, the
better she got.

Michael Shuman, **"Going Local: Creating
Self-Reliant Communities in a Global
Age."** Shuman's new book is "Small-Mart" and
well worth reading too.

Claude Lewenz, **"How to Build a Village."**
*Blueprint for a small-scale, non-Automobile
dependent place to live and work.*

-- June 23, 2008

End Note on Vocabulary

The use of a robust and consistent Vocabulary is essential to creating an understanding of human settlement patterns and the strategies required evolve functional and sustainable patterns and densities of land use. ***The Shape of the Future*** published in 2000 includes a Lexicon and a list of "Core Confusing Words" that should be avoided when considering human settlement patterns. (See Strategy II Above.)

This effort was expanded and refined during the preparation of ***TRILO-G***.
A GLOSSARY exists on line at (www.baconsrebellion.blogspot.com) and

will be on the CD-ROM containing *TRILO-G* (forthcoming).

The GLOSSARY contains the current definitions of words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to first-time readers. Typeface and Capitalization are used to identify words and phrases with specific meanings in the work of SYNERGY/Planning. If the reader sees a capitalized word that is “normally” not capitalized, check the GLOSSARY. For example “Agency” is used in a number of places in this document. The GLOSSARY defines “Agency” as follows:

Agency

Agency is one of three forms of **Organization** beyond the scale of the **Household**. The other two are **Enterprise** and Institution. An **Agency** is an **Organization** created to carry out a governance function at any level or scale: multi-national, nation-state, state / province, region, subregion, municipal or sub-municipal. An **Enterprise** is an **Organization** created to generate profit, a monetary return on investment of time, effort and resources. **Institution** is an **Organization** created to achieve some purpose other than governance or profit. The phrase ‘**Enterprise, Institution and Agency**’ is intended to encompass all human Organizations beyond the scale of the **Household**. A **Household** is composed of the occupants of a single dwelling Unit.