CITY OF FAIRFAX

FAIRFAX CIRCLE 2024

DRAFT July 11, 2024

Small Area Plans are neighborhood-level visions intended to provide the City with guidance on each of its five Activity Centers defined in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

While the Comprehensive Plan advises each Activity Center's development at a high level, Small Area Plans provide more specific guidance for each Activity Center, including desired mix of uses, recommended height and density, building typologies, street locations, multi-modal connections, infrastructure improvements, parking, environmental features, and open space.

While the recommendations in this plan are more specific than that of the Comprehensive Plan, they are conceptual in nature and should be interpreted with some flexibility as individual public and private projects proceed.

A major retail and residential hub of the City of Fairfax adjacent to the County, Fairfax Circle is gateway from the city to the Metro, regional trail system, and region. The plan was developed through extensive stakeholder meetings, community charrettes and town halls, consultations with city staff, property owners, nearby residents, and other stakeholders. The result is a vision for Fairfax Circle that aims to foster a new community village to anchor this part of the city.

Fairfax Circle is a mixed use district bringing visitors from nearby city neighborhoods and Fairfax County as well as residents for retail and jobs. As it evolves over time, Fairfax Circle has the opportunity to evolve into a more sustainable mixed use village - welcoming people not just to shop but also live, work, and thrive in a green environmentally sensitive center. The vision uses infrastructure challenges as a launching point for a new vision: Accotink Creek revitalization, flooding and stormwater management, and the redevelopment of Fairfax Circle itself. These infrastructure changes occur in concert with new pedestrian dominated streets and a more sensible vehicular network to allow new mix uses of retail, residential, and other uses to thrive.

The document is structured around four big ideas and supporting urban elements including - (1) a sustainable neighborhood linked to the Accotink Creek (2) A reinvented safe and memorable Fairfax Circle (3) a vibrant mixed use village to live, work, and play, that is (4) easy to access by car, by bus, by bike, or on foot.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY COUNCIL

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THE PLAN

APPENDICES

VISION GOALS + PLAN

VISION STATEMENT

FAIRFAX CIRCLE IS AN **ECONOMICALLY VIBRANT MIXED-USE VILLAGE** IN THE CITY.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER IS DEFINED BY THE **GREEN AND LUSH ENVIRONMENT** OF LEAFY TRAILS AND NATURAL PARKS **CONNECTED TO ACCOTINK CREEK.**

THE CIRCLE IS REDEFINED AS A NEW GATEWAY **INTERSECTION** BOUND BY ART AND ICONIC SIGNAGE, IN A UNIQUE LANDSCAPE.

A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD MAIN STREET AT SPRING STREET ANCHORED BY A MIX OF USES THAT GIVE PEOPLE A PLACE TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY.

A COMFORTABLE NETWORK OF **PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE FRIENDLY STREETS** HELPS GUIDE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS FROM AROUND THE REGION TO THIS UNIQUE CORNER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA.

GOAL 1

A SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOOD LINKED TO THE ACCOTINK CREEK

GOAL 2

A REINVENTED SAFE AND MEMORABLE FAIRFAX CIRCLE

GOAL 3

AN ECONOMICALLY VIBRANT MIXED USE VILLAGE TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY

GOAL 4

EASY ACCESS BY CAR, BUS, BIKE, OR ON FOOT.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

New Buildings

Existing buildings footprints that generally support the vision of this plan. While adaptations or redevelopment of these sites can be supported, it should demonstrate that new construction is more supportive to the vision of this plan than existing buildings

Spring Street “Main Street”

Other Neighborhood Streets

Potential Foxcroft Access Realignment

Existing or proposed pavilions, public facilities, or small retail kiosks

Existing or proposed greenspaces

Accotink Creek and/or major flood plain area

Resource Protection Area (RPA) Boundary

Potential New Trail Connections

GOAL 1

A SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOOD LINKED TO THE ACCOTINK CREEK

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

1 THE ACCOTINK CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

2 THE GREEN FINGERS

3 ACCOTINK PLAZA

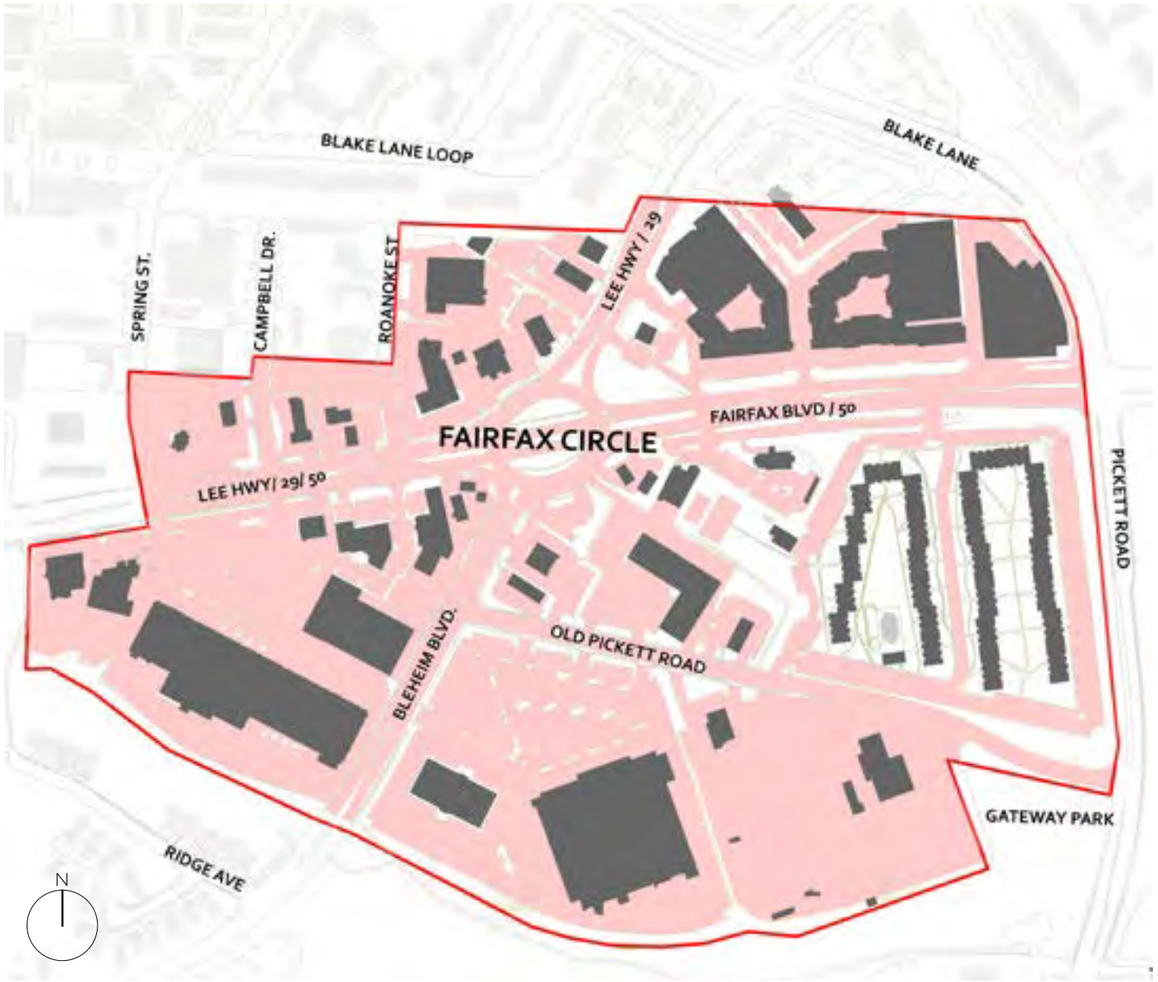
4 GATEWAY REGIONAL PARK

5 STORM SEWER/ STORMWATER NETWORK

6 OTHER STORMWATER DESIGN STRATEGIES

7 GREEN BOULEVARDS

EXISTING CONDITIONS + CONCERNS

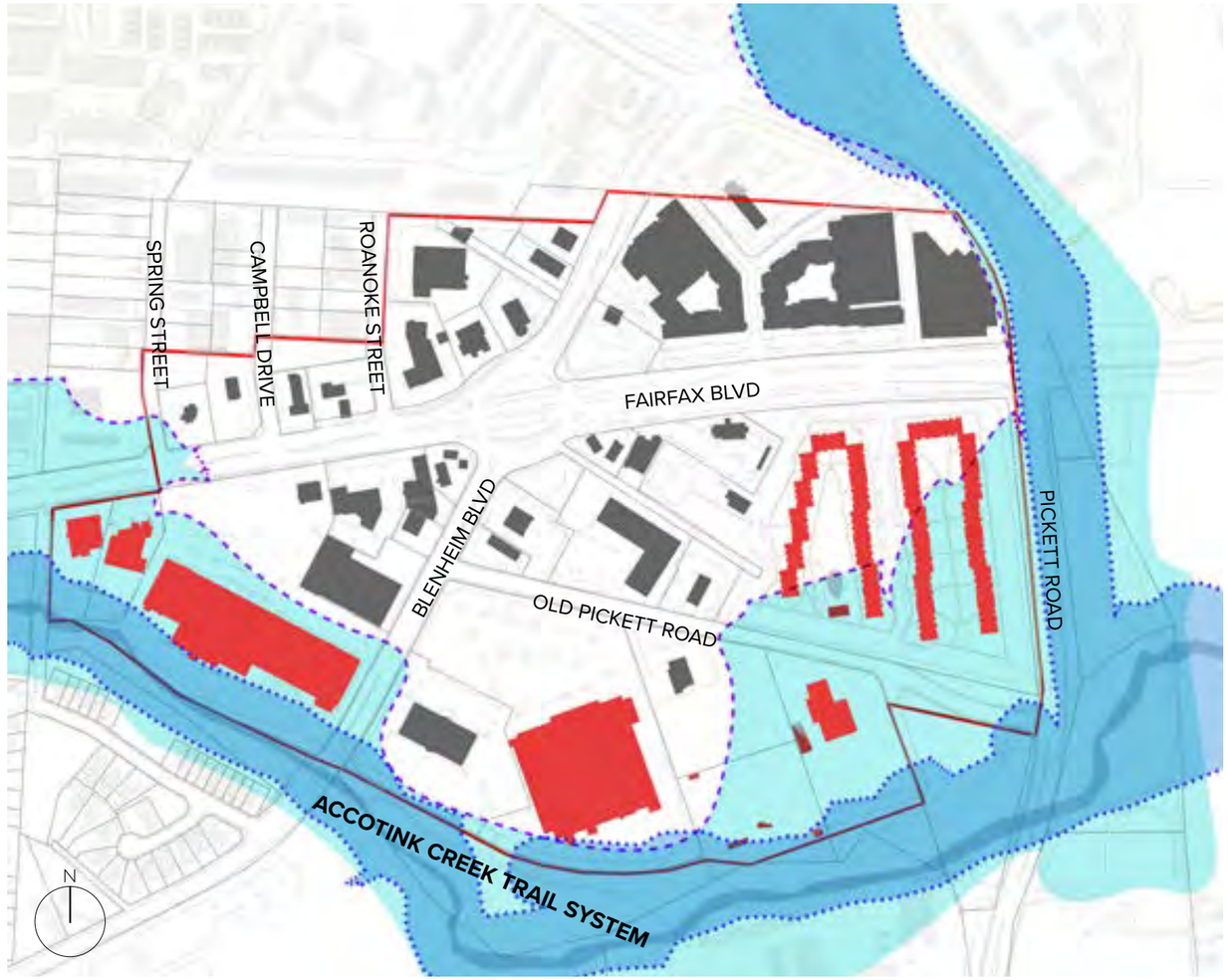


Impervious Surfaces

Existing Buildings

A NEIGHBORHOOD DEFINED BY IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

The existing Fairfax Circle study area is approximately 77% impervious surfaces. These impervious surfaces include buildings but are dominated by large surface parking lots. Impervious surfaces contribute to the flooding and bring polluted water into the watershed. They also define the current landscape of the study area as a mixed use part of Fairfax dominated visually by parking lots that create a prevailing urban heat island effect across the study area . This has the result of increasing pollution to the Accotink watershed through runoff, increased stress on the stormwater control system, and a place visually defined by pavement and asphalt. A core goal of the small area plan is to identify ways to address the high amount of impervious surfaces.



Existing Buildings at Risk

Existing Buildings

Flood Plain

Resource Protection Area

A NEIGHBORHOOD AT RISK OF FLOOD

The Fairfax Circle study area has a number of buildings and properties at risk of flooding. In part, this risk of flooding is due to Fairfax Circle geographically being a topographic low point. It is also due to the intensive development in the region which has strained regional stormwater infrastructure. This puts at risk many of the buildings and properties in the Fairfax Circle area. This is worsened due to the fact that many of the uses are also currently industrial or automotive uses which are potential point sources of pollution to the Accotink watershed network. While resolving flooding is largely outside of the scope of this plan, it is clear that there are opportunities to invest in infrastructure within the study area that can address this challenge.

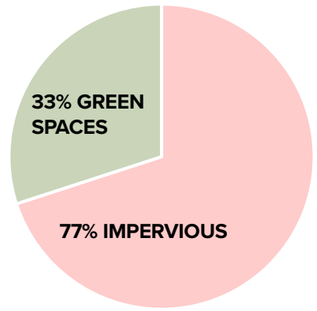
OPEN SPACE + SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The proposed vision reimagines many of these surface parking lots becoming robust green landscapes to help absorb stormwater, enhance beautification, and bring new habitats for native plants and wildlife. The new greenspaces- big and small- start to be a character defining aspect of this district. By reducing surface parking lots in favor of greenspaces, the plan anticipates a reduction of the urban heat island effect. Fairfax Circle with this open space and sustainability plan becomes a “green” village nested within the city of Fairfax.

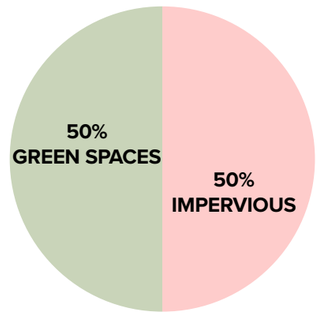
WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and well-being. Placemaking can incorporate art, recreation, retail experiences, unique architecture, and historical preservation to bring people together and foster memorable spaces for the community.

EXISTING LANDSCAPE



PROPOSED LANDSCAPE



DESIGN ELEMENT

THE ACCOTINK CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

REIMAGINING THE CREEK INTO A STORMWATER AND PLACEMAKING ASSET

WAYFINDING AND LIGHTING ELEMENTS

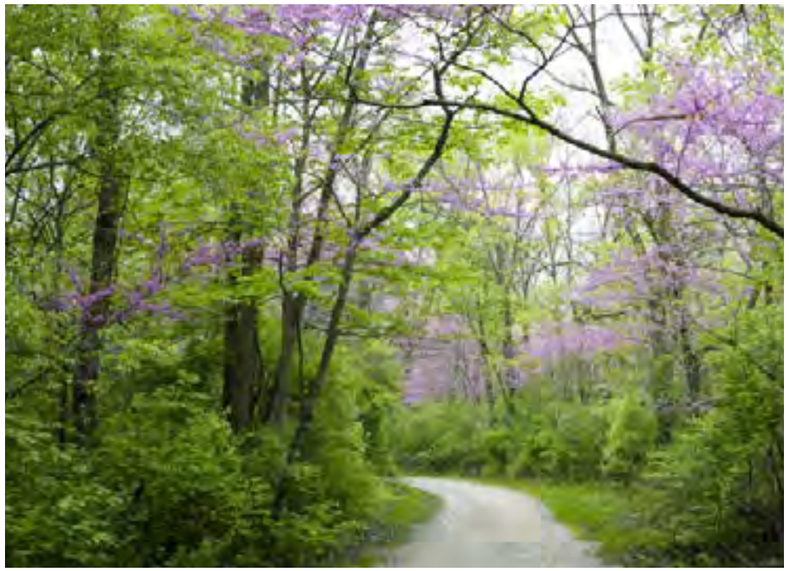
Providing wayfinding orients visitors to Fairfax Circle businesses and attractions while helping residents travel to the metro and beyond. Signage also offers opportunities to provide functional artistic elements in these spaces. Lighting should be dark sky compliant and avoid ecologically sensitive areas whenever possible.

Image: Merje Wayfinding sign
https://merjedesign.com/projects/cotati-ca/trail-wayfinding-sign-cotati-2/

CYCLING AND RECREATION

Enhancing the trail system along Accotink Creek could serve as a key place for recreation for people in Fairfax Circle and citywide as well as provide a relaxed link to the Vienna Metro and the entire northern Virginia region and beyond.

Image: Trail system in Abingdon, Washington County, Virginia



NATIVE SPECIES + FOREST RESTORATION

The trail system along Accotink creek is filled with invasive species. Native species play a critical role in maintaining the biodiversity of the ecosystem and can help in erosion prevention. The plan proposes restoration of Accotink Creek and the landscape by removing invasive species and increasing planting of native species to make these green spaces more resilient and better support stormwater and civic infrastructure.

Image: Sag Valley Trail System, Cook County, Illinois

TRAIL ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

An enhanced trail system attracting cyclists and pedestrians can be a unique community destination. Retail along the trail system can link to the Accotink trail system directly or the green finger open space network to invite nature and customers in.

Image: Caboose Brewing Company and Tavern along the Washington and Old Dominion Trail filled with cyclist.

DESIGN ELEMENT

THE ACCOTINK CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

The plan proposes improvements and new development for the Accotink Creek trail system to support its role as a stormwater and placemaking asset. While the exact trail location may change, the general intent is for it to interact with the building and park uses in the study area. This is particularly true for new developments along the proposed Spring Street and Accotink Plaza.

- Development of new trails is encouraged in close proximity to new residential and retail frontages facing Accotink Creek.
- Extensions off of new trails will fall along Green Fingers that will connect the rest of the study area to the to the Accotink Trail System
- Note that the current small area plan does not show the final design for Gateway Park. The final Gateway Park design is currently under redesign at the time of small area plan authorship.
- Trails outside of the study area will remain and be improved as needed
- Solar powered and dark sky lighting systems along the trail are encouraged to meet accessibilty and safety concern
- Recommended shared parking strategies. The diagram above shows shared surface parking. Precedents incorporating green designs are shown later in the document.
- Removal of invasive species and encouragement of native plantings is encouraged throughout the trail system.

1 Shared Parking Lot

2 Green finger trail connections

3 Art and lighting activation under bridge

4 Retail, public bathrooms, and/or park pavillion structures

----- Resource Protection Area (RPA) Boundary

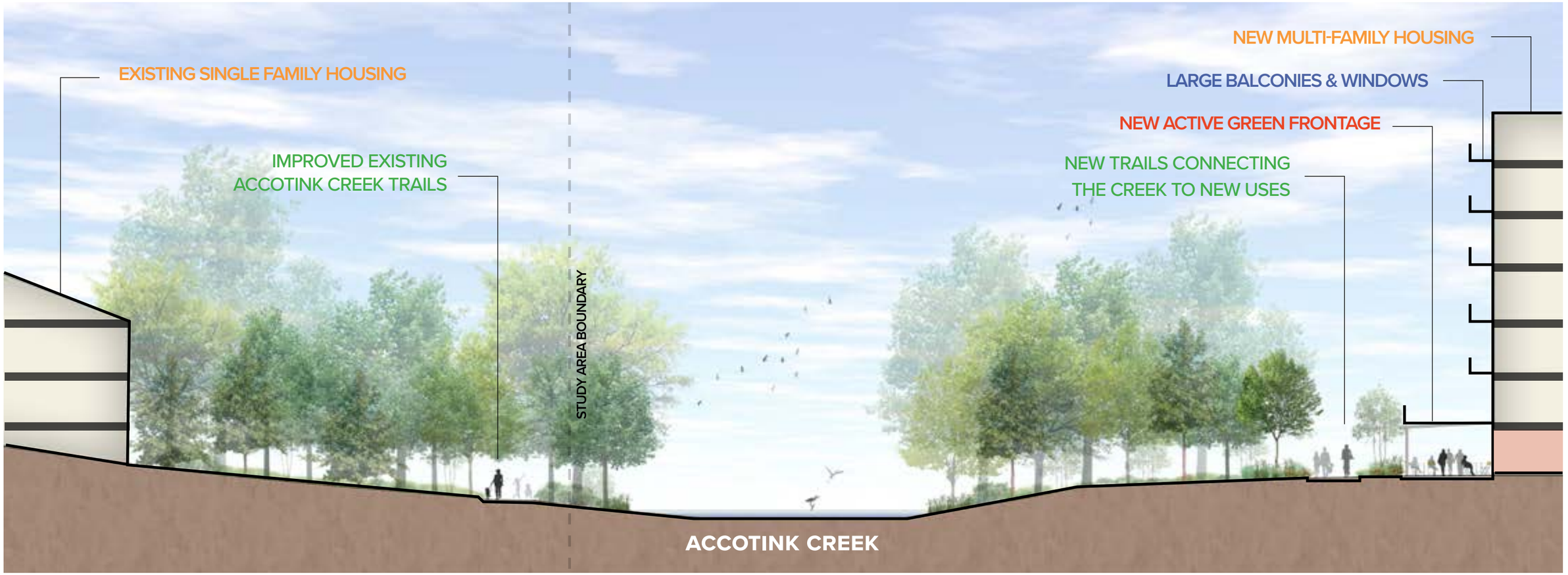
New Accotink Creek Trails

Improved Existing Accotink Creek Trails

DESIGN ELEMENT

THE ACCOTINK CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

REIMAGINING THE CREEK INTO A STORMWATER AND PLACEMAKING ASSET



DESIGN ELEMENT

THE GREEN FINGERS

AN OPEN SPACE NATURAL NETWORK BRINGING THE ACCOTINK TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Rainwater Garden or Bioswale: https://www.freepik.com/premium-ai-image/rainwater-gardens-rain-garden-bioswale-designed-capture-treat-stormwater-runoff_55634340.htm

Coppenhagen Business School Campus: https://mariannelevinsen.dk/2021/05/11/cbs-campusplan/

Fairfax Circle Green fingers Diagram: Oculus Landscape Architects

Existing Challenges

The Accotink Creek is central to the future identity of the study area but only runs along the south and east of the study area. The entire study area faces issues of huge expanses of pavement, flooding risk, and high level of invasives, threatening existing natives/natural forested areas. The result is a part of Fairfax visually defined by parking lots facing increasing ecological risks.

What Are The Green Fingers?

The green fingers are a proposed open space network of native vegetation with carefully designed shaded paths, bioswales, rain gardens, and pocket parks. They should have expanded growth space compared to typical landscape strips. These areas of intense vegetation that weave throughout the study area ultimately terminate at the Accotink Trail system to the south or east.

Placemaking

The green fingers are intended as a character defining element of the future Fairfax Circle. The exact size and shape may vary depending on constraints of sites. Sometimes they can serve as shaded paths, pocket parks, or places for residential or retail uses enlivened by adjacent residential and retail uses. Other times they might be more passive green space that brings color and life to an area formerly defined by pavement.

Performance

The green fingers are also important ecological and stormwater catchment areas. With native species, bioswales, erosion resilient plantings, or large tree canopies, they can begin to address problems of flooding, provide a habitat for native plants or animal species, and provide much needed cooling. While this intervention may not solve all the challenges faced by the study area, the goal is to bring more resiliency to the landscape.

Size and Shape

There are not one size fits all characteristics of the green fingers network. Adjacent to businesses, they might be a native species paths or rain gardens connected to outdoor patios. They may grow to connect to a pocket park, or provide a bioswale buffer to a major road. The following pages articulate possible ways to design these spaces.

DESIGN ELEMENT

THE GREEN FINGERS

A OPEN SPACE NATURAL NETWORK BRINGING THE ACCOTINK TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

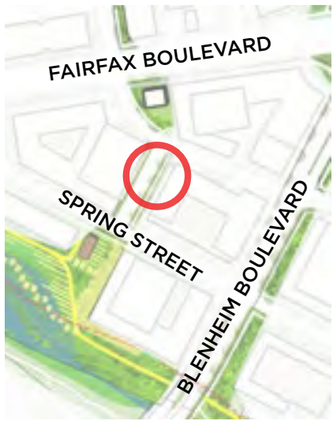
BIOSWALE INSIDE SIDEWALK*

BIOSWALE OUTSIDE SIDEWALK*

VEGETATION ONLY “FINGER”

This is an example of a bioswale occurring between the sidewalk and the property line. At this location, the green fingers connecting to a small pocket park including a more robust rain garden or bioswale system. A pedestrian oriented path or sidewalk along the roadway is buffered by lushly planted vegetation. See Goal 4 for recommended sidewalk widths and landscape zone.

This is an example of a bioswale occurring between a sidewalk and a road. Pickett Road is a major active roadway. Pedestrians or cyclists will use the sidewalk or the trail system nearby. Given the volume of traffic, a bioswale buffer would provide an enhanced and safe green buffer to the road while also addressing runoff. See Goal 4 for recommended sidewalk widths and tree box sizes.



In many areas this open space network meets pedestrian oriented districts or businesses. In those locations it may not be possible to provide a robust bioswale system and instead will focus on native plantings and tree canopy for a short segment. These narrower greenspaces link stormwater catchment systems with native vegetation to create a continuous green link filtering stormwater as it makes its way to Accotink Creek. The example locations indicated anticipate retail businesses or tighter conditions adjacent to buildings where bioswales or more robust landscape wouldn’t be possible. See Goal 4 for recommended sidewalk widths and tree box sizes.

* Note: All dimensions shown are minimums and the actual required dimensions will vary based on functional requirements and tree soil volume.

DESIGN ELEMENT

THE GREEN FINGERS

A OPEN SPACE NATURAL NETWORK BRINGING THE ACCOTINK TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The green fingers also offer the opportunity for activated outdoor retail tied to public gathering spaces and the trail system. While not all spaces will have activated retail, where possible, the expanded vegetated areas at these locations offer an enhanced dining, shopping, and gathering experience. As foot traffic increases, this also offers the opportunity for cyclists and pedestrians traveling along the multi-modal paths connecting to the Accotink Creek to access businesses.

DESIGN ELEMENT

ACCOTINK CREEK PLAZA

THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING SPACE

Community Needs The southwest quadrant has a unique opportunity for a confluence of retail, new residential buildings, and stormwater capture. Every neighborhood needs a core civic space for community members to gather and for special events and activities. These civic spaces help provide a strong sense of place. Accotink Creek Plaza is a proposed multi-functional park space that will provide a unique gathering space connecting residents to Accotink Creek.

Design The plan proposes making these 'yet to be designed' stormwater capture elements both performative and beautiful. Whether it is a retention basin, a wetland, or water absorbing landscape- the space should be a visual and accessible greenspace for residents and visitors that connects to the vision of a green district. An example of this is Tanner Springs Park in Portland, Oregon (See photo below).

The plan also anticipates a new walkable main street at Spring Street complete with retail and new residential buildings. The "town square" of this new hub is anticipated to be Accotink Creek Plaza. The plan encourages buildings to engage with this space and the creek with retail frontages, patios, porches, balconies, and/or moments of outdoor seating. The plan also encourages routing the new Accotink trail paths along the sides of the buildings providing a direct connection to Spring Street through the plaza. The aesthetics and design should consider:

- Naturalistic landscape design that connects to the history of Accotink Creek
- Dark sky compliant lighting that welcomes visitors while respecting the environment
- Space that connects directly with adjacent buildings, and the Accotink Creek trail system
- Stepped or sloping elements that take advantage of the topographic changes in this area
- A variety of types of seating and interactive elements to allow places for water-focused leisure or play

Left | Proposed Illustrative Rendering of Accotink Creek Plaza

Stepped elements, retail, and residential fronting water
Lake Anne, Reston Virginia

A naturalistic landscape
First Avenue Water Plaza New York, NY by Scape Design

A site plan that incorporates stormwater capture
Tanner Springs Park Portland, Oregon by Greenworks

Enlarged plan of southwest quadrant

DESIGN ELEMENT

A REIMAGINED GATEWAY REGIONAL PARK

GATEWAY TO THE ACCOTINK TRAIL SYSTEM

Benjakitti Forest Park / Arsomslip Community and Environmental Architect. © Srirath Somsawat

Odette Winery by Surface Design

1 GATEWAY REGIONAL PARK

Gateway Regional Park is slated to be redeveloped outside the scope of the plan. Early engagement at the time of the small area plan encouraged designs that celebrate the wetland/water catchment elements and Gateway Regional Park's unique location at the intersection of multiple trail systems. The small area plan welcomes this and encourages the study to explore ways to link to residential and retail uses in Fairfax Circle.

2 GATEWAY PARK EXPANSION

In the long term, the plan envisions Gateway Regional Park expanding into a potentially larger resource protection area and areas of flood risk currently occupied by parking lot and asphalt plant. This new landscape would be a major interactive stormwater capture area, new civic gathering space, and start to remediate polluting uses. The small area plan encourages the design to be interactive and explore use of natural materials and boardwalk elements to bring visitors to interact directly with wetland elements. The plan also suggests future coordintation with the property yard that lies just south of Gateway Regional Park outside of the study area, on the idea of improvements and expansion of the park and potential future changes for that site.

See precedent image #2: Benjakitti Forest Park / Arsomslip Community and Environmental Architect. © Srirath Somsawat

3 PAVILION

It is anticipated a built structure will be provided as a part of a new Gateway Regional Park. This may be a gathering space, public restroom, orientation center, and/or even small retail pavilion to be developed in future studies. While the exact use and programming of the structure will be fully developed later, the small area plan encourages this structure to engage with the buildings to the north, link to the trail system, and provide a visual focal point for visitors from the study area to the Accotink Trail System.

4 ECO "PARK"-ING LOT

Given the sensitive proximity to the park system and unique needs for future remediation, if surface parking is provided, the small area plan encourages a parking lot design that blends seamlessly with the green landscape. Design elements might include permeable pavement alternatives, gravel, lush native plantings, and linking the future PDR (Production, Distribution, and Repair) , retail, and/or multifamily uses to the trail system. The plan also recommends working with the property owners to use a shared parking strategy at this location to maximize off-peak use.

See precedent image #3: Odette Winery by Surface Design

DESIGN ELEMENT

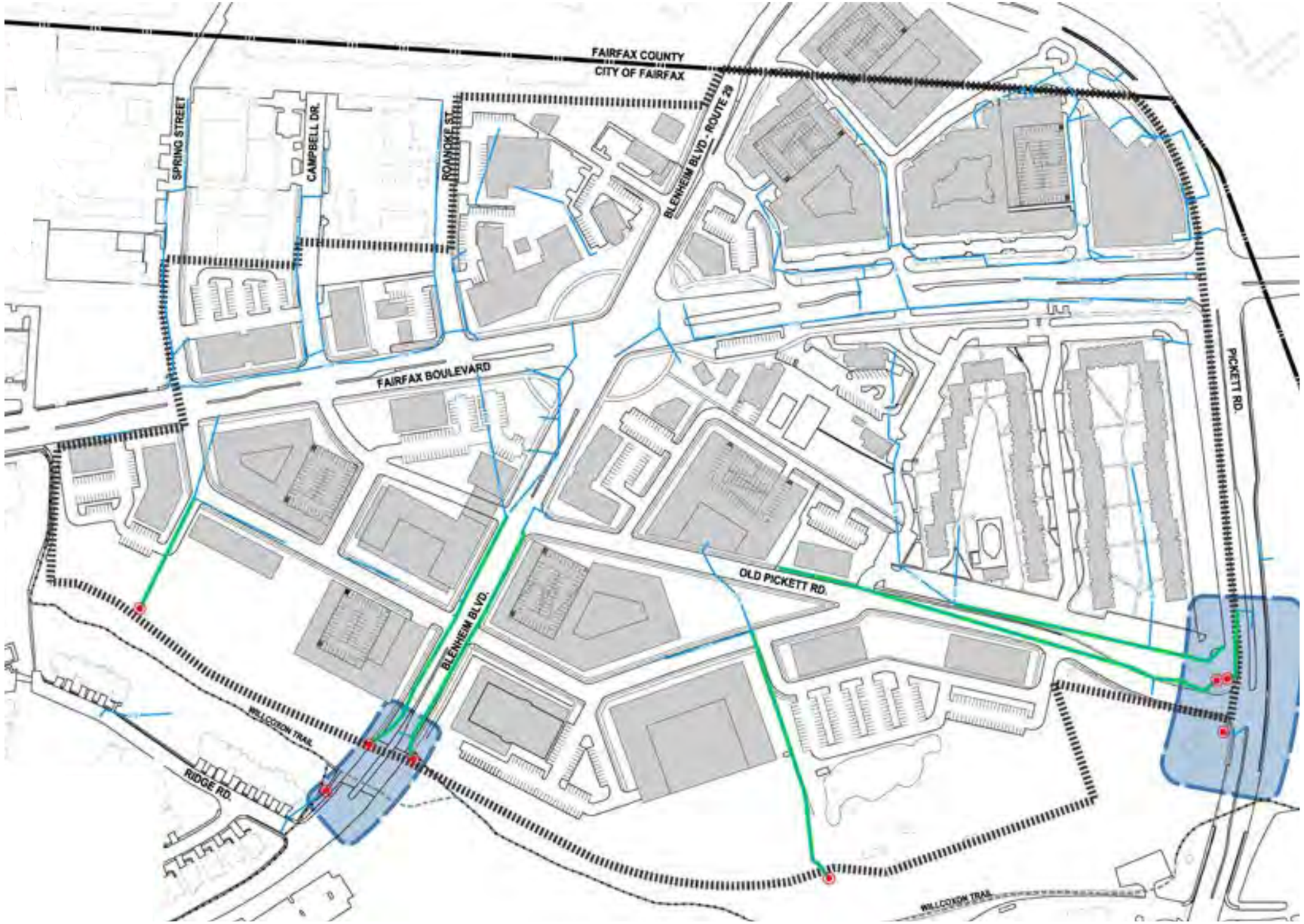
STORM SEWER NETWORK

ANALYSIS AND POTENTIAL UPGRADES

The plan explores the capacity of existing storm sewer and stormwater management system potential upgrades that may be needed to keep the study area and surrounding neighborhoods resilient against climate change.

As individual parcels redevelop or are adaptively reused, the improved design of buildings and green infrastructure is expected to reduce existing stormwater runoff. Most new or redeveloped sites are expected to improve stormwater management in some capacity. In many scenarios, reducing impervious surfaces, encouraging green roofs, and adding stormwater infrastructure such as rain gardens will reduce the need for capacity upgrades.

However, as climate change complicates projections and development outside the study area affects stormwater management, the plan recommends monitoring locations of closed conduit storm sewer as identified on the map for variations because they are most likely to be under capacity and are located in downstream areas where flooding and surcharge from Accotink Creek have been observed.



LIMITS OF SMALL AREA PLAN

BUILDINGS

STORM SEWER

OUTFALL POINTS TO ACCOTINK CREEK

AREAS WHERE ROADWAY UNDERPASSES RESTRICT FLOWS OF ACCOTINK CREEK

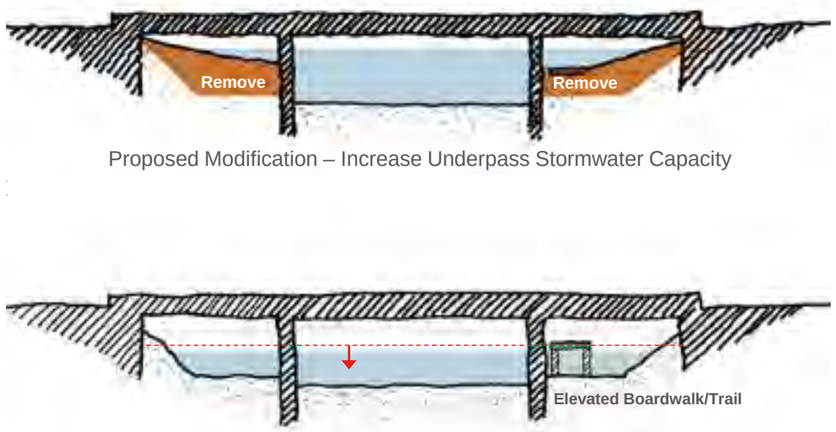
STORM SEWER AREAS THAT MAY REQUIRE CAPACITY STUDIES AND ARE PRONE TO SUPERCHARGES DURING DOWN STREAM FLOODING EVENTS

200’ 0’ 100’ 200’ 400’ 800’

DESIGN ELEMENT

OTHER STORMWATER + GREEN STRATEGIES

GATEWAY TO THE ACCOTINK TRAIL SYSTEM



Proposed Modification – Increase Underpass Stormwater Capacity

Flood / High Water Level with Underpass Channel Modifications

STREAM RESTORATION + INCREASING CREEK CAPACITY

One of the main findings of the small area plan study was the high amount of erosion and silt build up along the Accotink Creek. This high build up is particularly acute at the existing bridges causing increased flooding of nearby properties. While additional studies are needed to understand the down stream effects, one proposed tactic to mitigate flood risk is to remove silt build up particularly under the bridges. This would help increase stormwater capacity, facilitate and ease the trail construction under the bridges, and perhaps reduce flooding risk of nearby properties.

Permeable Pavers: https://seagrant.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Green-Stormwater-Infrastructure-Fact-Sheets.pdf

PERMEABLE PAVING

As noted earlier in the exploration of the future properties adjacent to Gateway Park, pavement including parking lots and sidewalks can be designed as functional permeable landscapes that both beautify and bring added resiliency. Given the existing and projected uses, surface parking will be a requirement for many of the future uses in the study area. Where possible, but particularly along the Accotink Creek corridor, the plan suggests permeable paved or landscaped parking lots to help mitigate the effects of flooding and address stormwater. Design elements might include permeable pavers, gravel, lush native plantings, and low-impact development.

Flood wall | Calgary, Canada: https://globalnews.ca/news/9946528/calgary-marks-completion-downtown-flood-barrier/

FLOOD WALLS + LEVEES

Flood walls and levees are another tactic to mitigate the effects of flooding. A previous study conducted in the area recommended a flood wall near the Foxcroft Condominiums to help mitigate the effects of flooding on that property. This may still be needed in the future. While this requires additional study, the plan recommends that if flood walls or levees are used, they be explored both as functional elements as well as placemaking tactics. As shown in the precedent above, sensitively designed flood walls and levees can serve as visual sculptural forms that beautiful the landscape incorporating unique materials or art and integrated with native plantings.

DESIGN ELEMENT

DESIGN FOR MAJOR BOULEVARDS

BLENHEIM AND FAIRFAX BOULEVARDS INTO GREEN BOULEVARDS

As part of a broader effort to incorporate more trees and plants into the Fairfax Circle landscape, transforming Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard into “green boulevards” is essential. This green boulevard concept ties directly and may at times overlap with the green fingers concept previously discussed. The proposed design includes three key changes that will transform their character and enhance the pedestrian experience: undergrounding of overhead utilities that will allow for unimpeded street tree planting, installation of Shared Use Paths that are separated from the roadway providing more green space, and (where possible) green fingers integrating more intensive plantings and stormwater management. Some general concepts that should be encouraged include:

- Require that street trees be composed of a wide variety of native trees (mono-culture planting is discouraged); use large shade trees where possible.
- Encourage planting of the ground plane with shrubs, groundcovers, and ornamental grasses. This will help pedestrians feel more protected from road traffic and will soften the streetscape visual character, reduce the urban heat island effect, and increase flood resiliency through native plantings or bioswales/rain gardens.
- Avoid planting street trees that will conflict with overhead utilities. Prior to undergrounding of utilities or if overhead utilities remain after redevelopment, street tree planting along these edges must be restricted to under-story tree species to avoid conflicts with overhead lines where they may occur.
- Encourage replanting of medians located in Fairfax Boulevard to be expanded where possible to support trees. Existing medians are largely either concrete with no plantings or are planted with small under-story trees and lawn. This offers minimal tree canopy benefits to the broad streetscape of Fairfax Boulevard. Since these existing medians are free of overhead utilities, replace the under-story trees with large native shade trees that provide broad canopies at maturity. Consider removing lawns at medians and replace with ground plane plantings of shrubs, groundcovers, and ornamental grasses to help further create a sense of identity for the study area. Lastly, it is important to ensure trees in medians meet clear VDOT clear zone requirements based on design speed of the roads and do not obstruct intersection site lines when they are adjacent to or located in the median.
- The plan acknowledges that the maintenance of these types of installations will need to be considered.


1


2


3

4

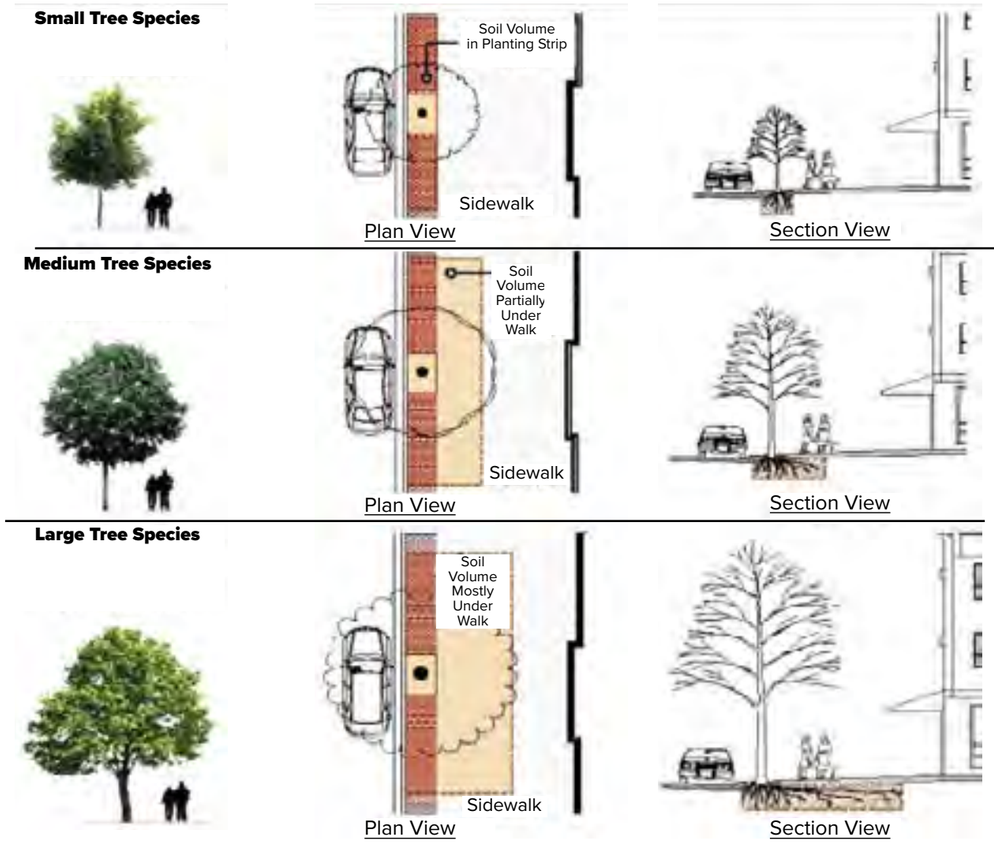

5

1) Large Trees in Medians - University of Washington https://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm_SafeStreets.html
2) Bolton Avenue Streetscapel Alexandria, LA: https://www.carbo-la.com/bolton-avenue-streetscape-1
3) Bioswale outside University Science and Engineering Hall | GW Universtiy, D.C.
4) Native California Poppies in median , Larchmont, CA https://larchmontbuzz.com/larchmont-village-news/april-is-earth-month-and-national-native-plant-month/
5) Stack House | Seattle, WA: https://www.bergerpartnership.com/work/stack-house/

DESIGN ELEMENT

PLANNING FOR NATIVE VEGETATION

ROBUST VEGETATION THAT ENCOURAGES LOCAL ECOLOGY AND STORMWATER CAPTURE



Soil Volume: MWCOG / DDOT

SOIL VOLUME AND GROWTH SPACE

The plan encourages a substantial increase in plantings, particularly trees along streets and medians to help reduce urban heat island effect, stormwater runoff, and support a health ecosystem.

Soil volume and growth space for new native plantings should be anticipated early in initial planning efforts to promote the health and longevity of plantings and reduce risk of uprooting and infrastructure damage. The diagram above describes a general approach to soil volume and how it relates to tree species. While minimum guidelines for streetscape plantings are provided in Goal 4 of the document, the soil volume and depth will vary based on the fuctional requirements and will change the exact size, shape, and design of tree boxes or medians in the study area.

Native Platings: Audobon Society Northern Virgnia

Native Platings: Fairfax Master Naturalists

Native Pollinator Plants: Plant Virginia Natives

NATIVE PLANTINGS

Vegetative areas can be a tool to support a healthy ecosystem, encourage biodiversity, and create visual depth and character. The plan advises preserving existing native plantings and encourages continued planting of native species throughout all landscapes. Native plantings help tie a unique sense of place to urban spaces and attract local wildlife like birds and pollinators. Additionally, many native plants also help reduce erosion and improve stormwater management and they are a key component in addressing flooding and the degradation of the Accotink Creek watershed. Moreover, native species, once established, are often lower maintenance and can thrive without the need of fertilizers, daily watering, or as much attention as non-native varietals

GOAL 2

REINVENTING FAIRFAX CIRCLE

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

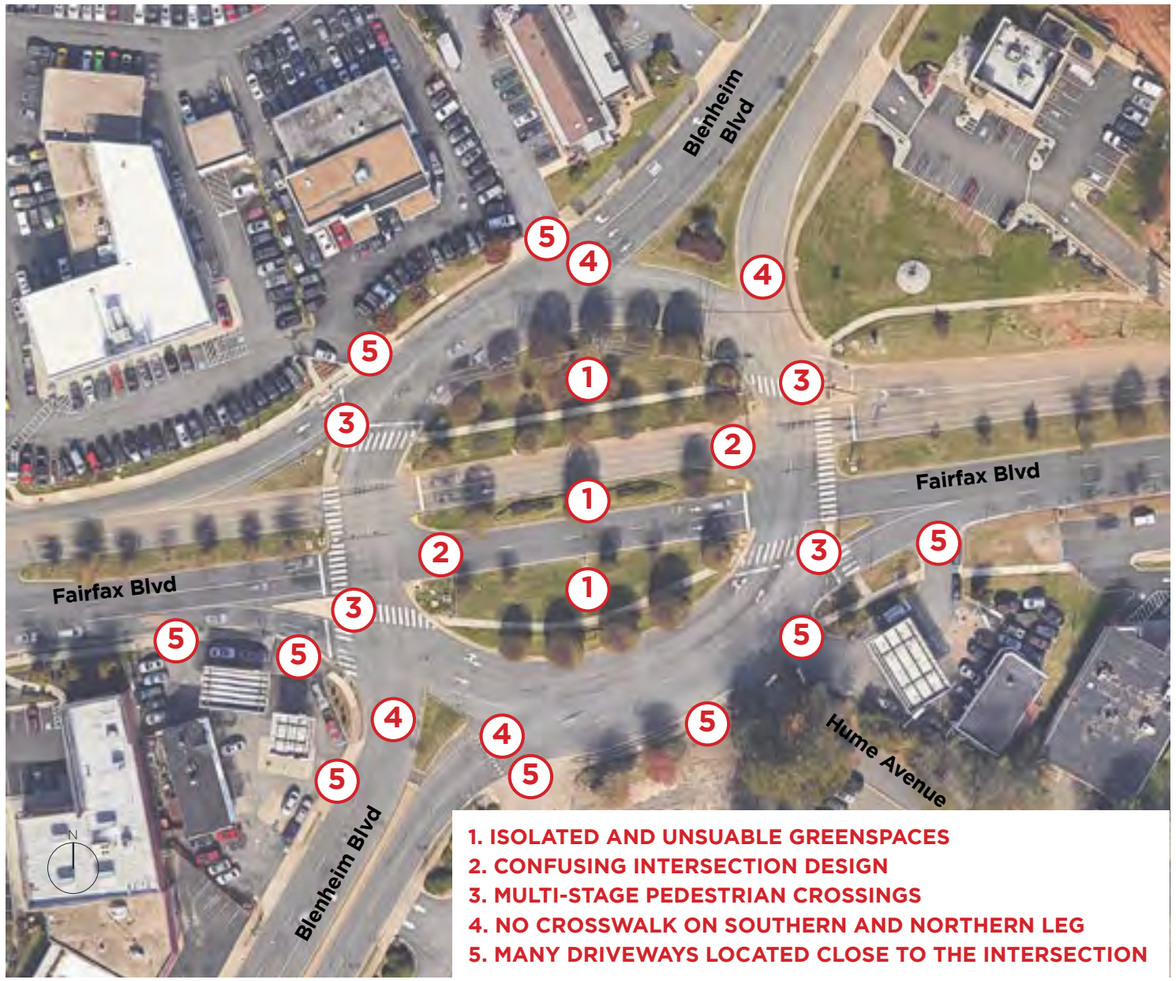
1 INTERSECTION DESIGN

2 IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST INFRASTRUCTURE

3 LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

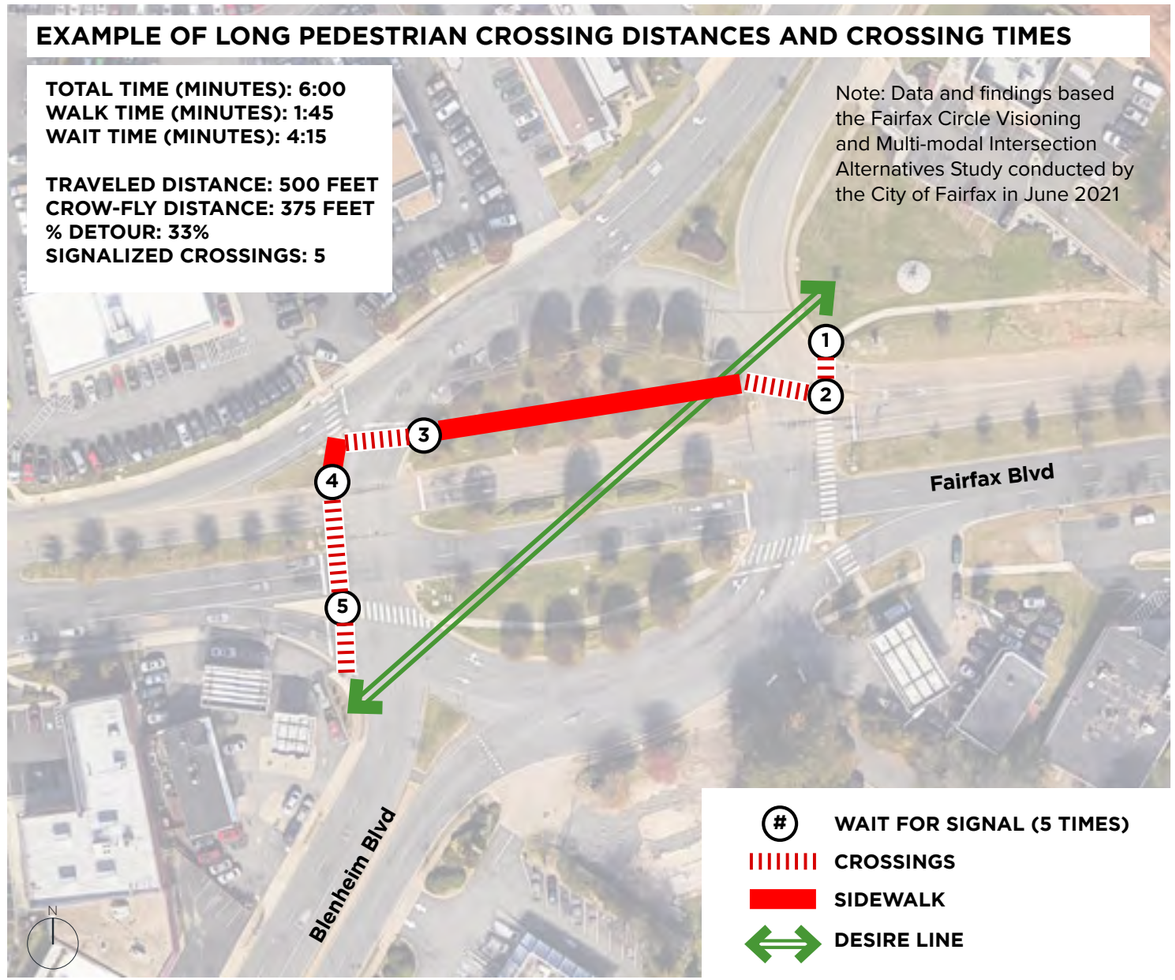
4 OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS

EXISTING CONDITIONS + CONCERNS



1. ISOLATED AND UNSUABLE GREENSPACES
2. CONFUSING INTERSECTION DESIGN
3. MULTI-STAGE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS
4. NO CROSSWALK ON SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN LEG
5. MANY DRIVEWAYS LOCATED CLOSE TO THE INTERSECTION

EXAMPLE OF LONG PEDESTRIAN CROSSING DISTANCES AND CROSSING TIMES



The Fairfax Circle intersection is one of the major focus areas of this Small Area Plan. The Fairfax Circle Activity Center gets its name from the circular geometry of this major intersection. Historically this intersection was a circular rotary, but was retrofitted over the decades into a non-traditional “hamburger” circular intersection to accommodate increasing traffic and widened roads. The Fairfax Circle intersection today is sprawling, confusing to navigate, and intimidating for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers.

Automobile Driver Challenges:

- Unusual non-intuitive configuration leads to driver confusion, distraction, abrupt lane changes and other conflict points such as frequent commercial driveways.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Challenges:

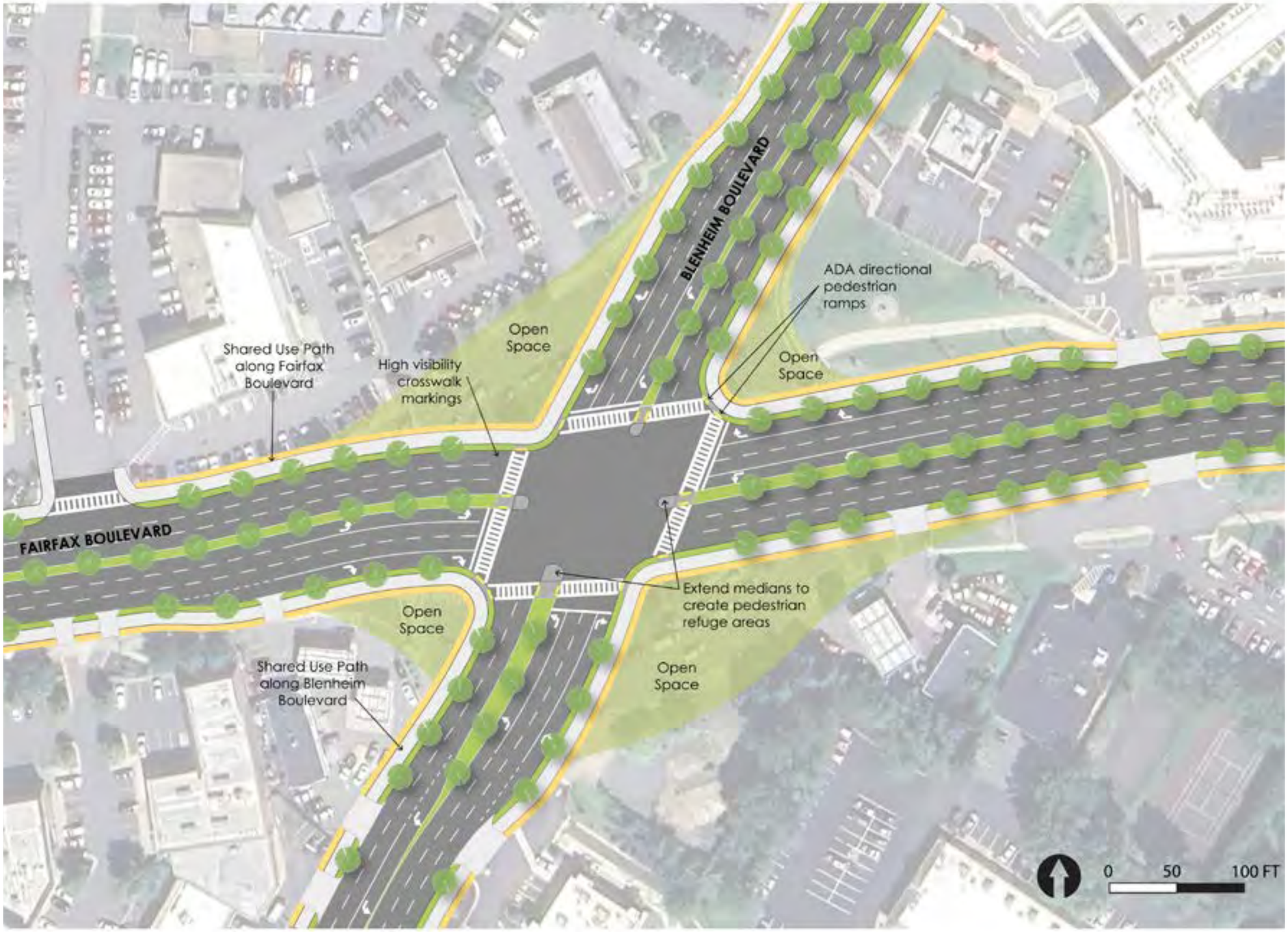
- Crossing the intersection is challenging and time-consuming due to long crossing distances, limited sight lines to destinations, and multi-stage crossings with long wait times for walk signals.
- Right turn slip lanes on each exit creates additional crossings increasing pedestrian exposure to vehicular traffic that substantially increase crossing and waiting time.
- A lack of crosswalks on the north and south legs of the intersection forces pedestrians to follow a circuitous route.
- There are no dedicated bicycle facilities through Fairfax Circle and bicyclists have to share narrow sidewalks with pedestrians or avoid the circle completely.

Safety Challenges:

- Fairfax Circle has one of the highest crash incidences of any intersection in the City, with 114 reported crashes over the three-year period between 2017 and 2019.
- Analysis of crash reports suggests that the primary contributing factors include driver confusion over lane assignment, conflicts with turns into and out of driveways, and red-light running.
- There are 25 commercial driveways located within 300 feet of the intersection increasing potential conflict points.

Fairfax Circle Activity Center’s transformation into a vibrant, mixed-use walkable district and a welcoming gateway to the city hinges on reconfiguring the Fairfax Circle intersection to accommodate all modes more safely and comfortably, including walking and biking.

REDESIGNED FAIRFAX CIRCLE INTERSECTION



The redesign of the Fairfax Circle intersection addresses the multi-modal transportation and safety challenges identified as part of the existing conditions analysis. The big idea for the redesign is to transform the circular geometry of this intersection into a traditional four-legged intersection. This transformation will simplify all movement patterns and create an environment that induces more predictable behavior by all travel modes.

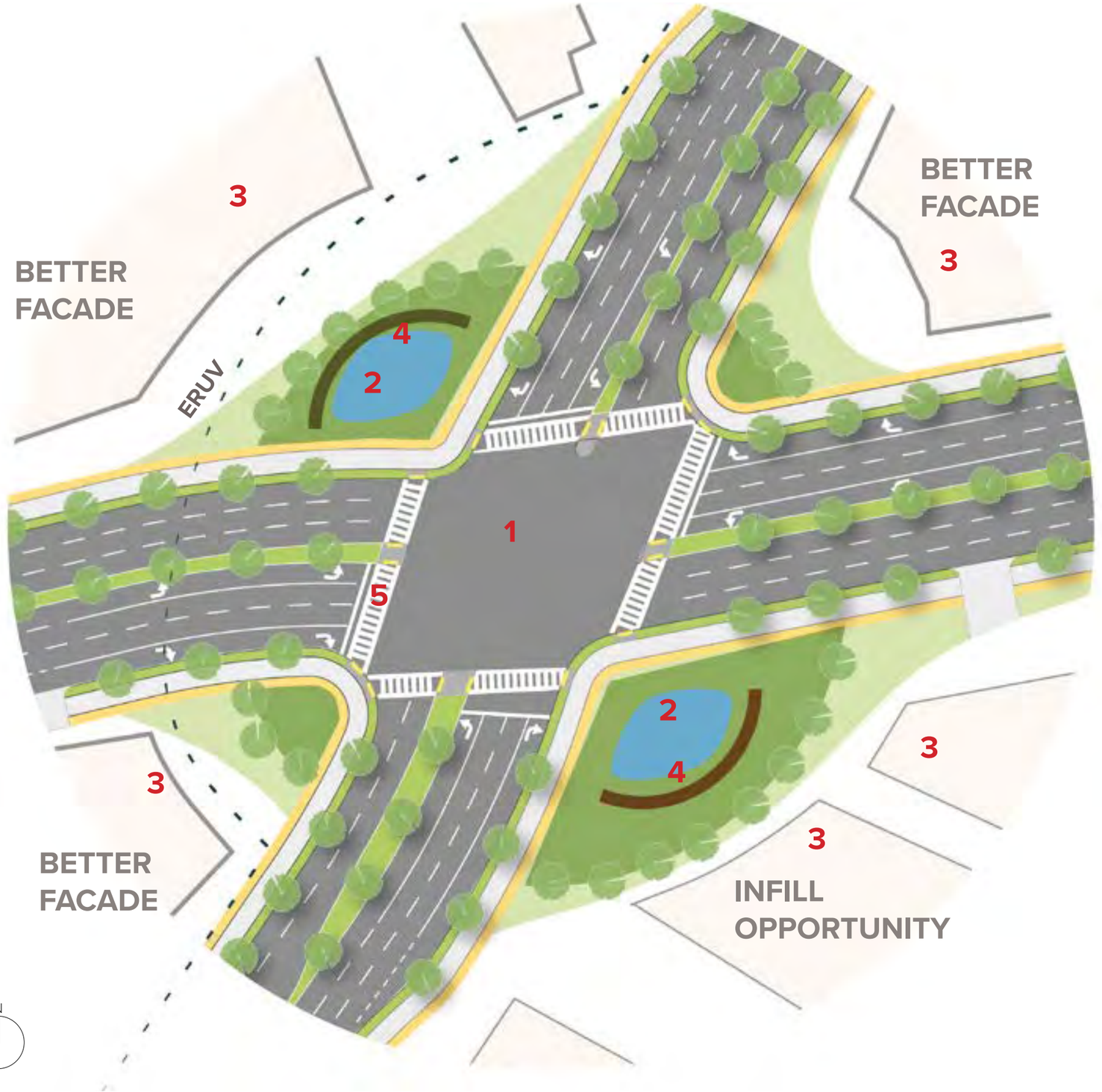
Compared to the current configuration, this redesign concept is smaller, tighter, and more appropriate for urban and suburban contexts. The redesign concept results in extra space at the corners within the existing intersection Right-of-Way. This extra space can be designed with new green infrastructure landscaping and place-making elements in a way that reinforces the former circular Right-of-Way geometry. This redesign of open space in a circular geometry can allow the Activity Center area to continue to be identified as Fairfax Circle.

The redesign concept for the Fairfax Circle includes the following design treatments:

- Tighter turning radii to slow turning vehicular traffic.
- Elimination of right turn slip lanes on all corners while maintaining right turn lanes.
- Shorter and more direct high visibility crosswalk markings across all legs.
- ADA-compliant directional pedestrian ramps on all corners.
- Landscaped medians that extend across crosswalks as pedestrian refuge islands.
- 10’ wide shared-use paths for bi-directional pedestrian and bicycle use on both sides of Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard.
- Landscape buffers separating travel lanes and shared-use paths.
- Introduction of left-turn lanes on all four approaches.
- Elimination or consolidation of driveways that are too close to the main intersection while maintaining access to properties near the intersection.
- New open space on all four corners designed to reinforce the former circle identity.

This concept is developed based on high-level planning analysis to help inform the Small Area Plan. A final design will be determined based on access constraints, detailed traffic and safety analysis, and engineering studies at a later date.

REDESIGNED FAIRFAX CIRCLE INTERSECTION



1 NEW INTERSECTION DESIGN REPLACING THE CIRCLE

2 STORMWATER REINFORCES CIRCLE IDENTITY

3 IMPROVED FACADES, WITH CURVED IN FORMS

4 SIGNAGE OPPORTUNITY

5 IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING CROSSINGS AND SIDEWALKS

DESIGN ELEMENT

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS

The following are key design elements that will help facilitate pedestrian, cyclist, and multi-modal infrastructure at this key intersection. All elements should coordinate with landscape and placemaking elements on the following page to help reinforce a circular geometry at the corners.

Key components of the transportation design include:

High Visibility Crosswalks with pedestrian refuge areas in landscape medians are critical infrastructure to help provide the opportunity for local residents and visitors to easily travel across the study area.

Shared use paths of bi-directional pedestrian and bicycle circulation. These would link to existing and future shared use paths along Blenheim and Fairfax Boulevards. These new paths should connect to the existing shared use paths at Scout and provide an easy and safe passage for residents and visitors by bike, walking, or micro transit.

Boulevards: Tree lined medians and shared-use paths together have the opportunity to transform major roads into boulevards. Working in concert with the undergrounding of power lines, these trees should be species that are tall and robust native species rather than shorter under-story varieties.

Source: Kittelson & Associates

Source: Seattle Department of Transportation

Source: Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association

DESIGN ELEMENT

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

With the redesign of the intersection, the former right of way can be recaptured for stormwater, public space, shared use paths, and green space as elements that will protect and reinforce the circle's identity moving forward.

Green Design: A key idea of the plan is to both reference the old circle's shape as well as use lush native landscaping and water elements to reinforce the new identity of the neighborhood as rooted in the identity with the Accotink Creek. The design of the landscape elements, stormwater features, and wayfinding signage should reference the circle. The curved forms could follow loosely the old shape of the intersection and should prioritize a welcoming, lush entry into the city.

Wayfinding: The former intersection provides a perfect opportunity to welcome visitors to the study area at either the northeast or southwest corners which will now have larger right of ways and open space improvements. The idea of a unique artistic welcome sign was a strong idea expressed in community engagement. To compliment the new green nature of the neighborhood, the small area plan encourages using natural elements and lush landscaping.

Curved Layout of Vegetation: Using landscape elements such as plantings, stormwater capture, and paths to reinforce the circular geometry of the old circle is a core idea that can help preserve the memory of the circle.

Easton Park, Austin TX
https://www.chloechiang.com/neighborhood/easton-park

Columbus Circle | New York, NY
https://integraldesignfactory.net/urban-infrastructure-social-spaces/

Sunnylands Center & Gardens | Rancho Mirage, CA
https://www.asla-sandiego.org/portfolio-items/sunnylands-center-gardens-in-rancho-mirage-ca/

Acer Stormwater Control Measures
https://acerlandscapeservices.com/stormwater-control-measures/

Acer Stormwater Control Measures
https://acerlandscapeservices.com/stormwater-control-measures/

DESIGN ELEMENT

OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS

Circle Elements: At the former intersection as well as throughout the study area, circular elements should be encouraged and emphasized to link to the Fairfax Circle identity. Whether it is street furnishings, signage, art, pavement, or building design- circles should be a key design aesthetic element to remind visitors of the identity of the place.

Building Facades and Designs: At the new Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard intersection, the plan encourages future adjacent building facades to engage with the identity of the circle. Concepts range from dramatically convex curved facades, to curved canopies or facade elements to reference the old circular form.

Practically, many of the properties at the circle face many challenges to redevelopment including fractured ownership, site access, and underground gas tanks. Where site challenges are present, landscape approaches or smaller canopy elements may also be appropriate. Examples range from patios arranged in a curved pattern, like at Washington Harbor in Georgetown, or to cull building redesign in cases like the Oxford Circus intersection in London. Depending on the finalized design, the plan offers opportunities for land swaps with nearby property owners to facilitate economic development as well as encourage private owners to incorporate placemaking and design goals. Providing more land or access in the right of way to accommodate the curved frontages is an appropriate approach.

The goal is to have buildings and landscape work together along the former circle so they can serve as landmark and gateway element and provide a consistent pedestrian navigable experience. New shared use paths and a lush landscape will help safely link the residents at the Scout development through shared use paths ultimately connecting to Blenheim Boulevard and Spring Street.

Curved Shade Structure: https://www.hdesignsource.com/sturdesign

The Oxford Circus: Google Earth

Circular Seating at The Queen's Walk | Golden Jubilee Bridges, London, EN https://www.keblog.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/panchine-creative-bizzarre-arte-urbana-mondo-14.jpg

LSX Solar Panel Canopies | https://lumossolar.com/lumos-solar-powered-ev-charging-station/neocity_super-stunner/

Curved Dining Patio Cover at Washington Harbor | Washington, D.C.

Round Retail Signage: https://www.bizbuysell.com/Business-Opportunity/established-sign-banner-and-display-manufacturer/2116077/

Circular Brick Paving: https://stock.adobe.com/images/circular-brick-paving/96837252

GOAL 3

ECONOMICALLY VIBRANT MIXED USE VILLAGE TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

1 SPRING STREET AS A MIXED USE MAIN STREET

2 BRING MORE EYES TO THE STREET

3 BUILDING FRONTAGES

4 TRANSITIONAL RETAIL AND ADAPTIVE REUSE CASE STUDIES

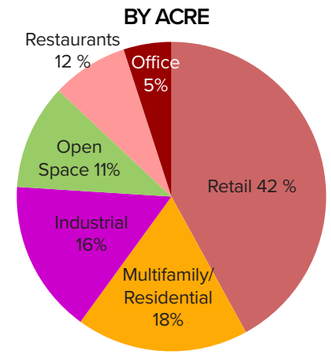
EXISTING CONDITIONS + OPPORTUNITIES

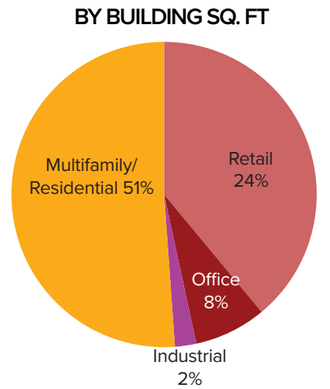
Scout Apartments | Fairfax Circle, VA: https://scoutonthecircle.com/gallery/

Mama Changs | Fairfax Circle, VA: https://dc.eater.com/2019/2/27/18243222/mama-chang-eater-inside-fairfax

Source: JLL Research

EXISTING USES AT FAIRFAX CIRCLE





Post-Pandemic Trends Towards Mix Use

One of the key economic shifts after the pandemic is the success of mixed use neighborhoods over single use districts. Before the pandemic, there was a general market shift away from single use residential, retail, or office districts. This shift has accelerated and since the pandemic, mixed use districts have largely recovered or even grown. Meanwhile, single use districts- whether fully office or fully retail- have struggled to recover. Given this reality, a core recommendation of the small area plan is to encourage a stronger mix of uses for Fairfax Circle.

Existing Mix Use at Fairfax Circle

Fairfax Circle at the time of publishing the small area plan is a mixed use node within the City of Fairfax. The Scout, Foxcroft Colony Condominiums, and the Wesley Housing project provide a critical residential anchor to the study area. The retail is anchored by neighborhood destinations like Home Depot, The Fairfax Circle Shopping Center, or the Giant supermarket, destination restaurants like Mama Changs and Artie's, and more niche smaller destination retail uses like the Alpine ski shop. Office uses at the Fairfax Circle Shopping Center and 3251 Blenheim office building provide mostly neighborhood serving uses. Unique from the other activity centers, Fairfax Circle has considerable industrial or production, distribution, and repair uses contributing to this mix.

Threats and Concerns

Overall, vehicular oriented retail, office, and restaurant uses dominate the study area accounting for nearly 60% of the study area. The retail uses are under threat from infrastructure challenges like flooding and difficulty navigating the current Fairfax Circle. The office uses, while mainly catering to local users, are competing with increasingly discounted high quality office offerings in other areas of the region with the transition to remote work. The industrial uses, while stable, face similar threats due to stormwater and flooding. Community feedback by residents and business owners brought to light concerns about crime and stewardship which effects the economic vibrancy of the whole area.

Opportunities

Hand in hand with addressing the green infrastructure and redesigning the circle, is the opportunity for infusing a more balanced mix of uses. Currently, retail and industrial play a disproportionate land use (in acreage) compared to use. The success of the Scout provides an example of a future towards a more residential anchored mix of uses that encourages walkability and increased retail productivity that doesn't use a mass amount of land for parking. Likewise, business and resident stakeholders revealed in community meetings with the design team concerns of crime and stewardship. Using the possible collective power of better stewardship and organizing could help promote the neighborhood to the wider region.

Mosaic District, VA: https://regionalopportunityinc.org/src-content/uploads/2021/02/20200811_marketing-master-plan-rev-low-rez-1.pdf

Mosaic District, VA: https://www.perkinseastman.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PerkinsEastman_Planning-Urban-Design.pdf

Mosaic District, VA: https://regionalopportunityinc.org/src-content/uploads/2021/02/20200811_marketing-master-plan-rev-low-rez-1.pdf

TOWARDS MIXED USE VIBRANCY

Fairfax Circle is currently the closest activity center to denser mixed use at the Mosaic District and the Vienna Metro. While the study area has multifamily housing, industrial uses, and unique retail and offices uses, the mix of uses could be strengthened and better linked together.

The following pages propose a new Spring Street as a pedestrian focused east/west connector providing a mixed use ‘Main Street’ to help foster a sense of place in this emerging mixed use hub.
As buildings and infrastructure improve fostering a sense of safety in the public space by bringing eyes to the street, new stewardship structures could focus on creating a business improvement district or merchants group.

As these mixed use buildings are incorporated into the study area, special attention must be paid to the frontages to allow better walkability, bike-ability, and pedestrian connections. The following pages explore strategies and locations for entrances to buildings.

Finally, this chapter highlghts case studies that reveal tactics to promote building designs that help foster a better sense of place and pedestrian life given the diverse programmatic uses of buildings in the study area - from automotive and industrial to multifamily and drive through retail.

NEAR TERM DEVELOPMENT

0 TO 10 YEARS

The following proposed near term estimates should be used as benchmarks to measure the successful implementation of the Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan. It is suggested that the city will analyze the impacts of the model proposed and revisit the plan to consider modifications as needed.

RETAIL

The two major near term redevelopments are the 3226 & 3250 Blenheim Boulevard (Circle Gateway) and the future redevelopment of Fairfax Center Shopping Center from single use retail models to mixed use residential projects. The plan anticipates maximizing ground floor retail with the redevelopment with a continuous retail experience along Spring Street. The plan encourages a minimum 1:1 replacement of existing retail- particularly at the Fairfax Center Shopping Center. The plan also recommends reducing visibility of parking garages along Spring Street for forthcoming uses like Circle Gateway to help support retail vitality or even increasing retail on the ground floor.

Elsewhere, smaller and unusually shaped parcels as well as a strong market demand for auto-convenient pad sites post-pandemic will make large scale consolidation and redevelopment unlikely in the near term. Given this economic reality, the plan prioritizes large infrastructure redevelopments like the redevelopment of Fairfax Circle and the stormwater management proposals- to make these smaller retail parcels more walkable, green, and efficient with parking and pickup. Facilitating ease of access by foot across these parcels will help cross shopping by foot from the new residential anchored development as well as help accommodate market demand for delivery and drive-throughs post-pandemic.

INDUSTRIAL AND PUD USES

The near term anticipates existing industrial and automotive uses to be retained. With infrastructure improvements at the creek and throughout the study area, the plan encourages opportunities for allowing these uses to be better neighbors.

KEY INFRASTRUCTURAL CATALYSTS

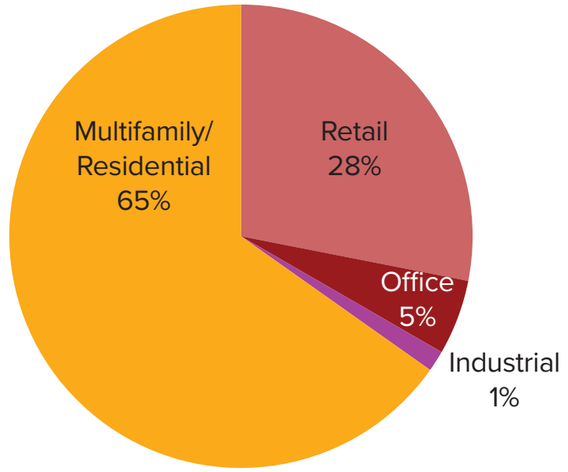
Underpinning all economic changes in the study area are critical public infrastructural improvements and investments. As outlined in Goal 1, flooding poses a major near and long term risk to existing retail and residential uses in the study area. As outlined in Goal 2, the problematic automotive and pedestrian transportation challenges at Fairfax Circle itself area pose critical challenges to viability of retail and mixed use. Addressing these two goals along with stewardship outlined later in this chapter underpin the near and long term economic vitality of the study area. Each of these infrastructural improvements not only will help preserve existing economic vitality but also serve as crucial economic catalysts to help drive improved public and private revenue study area wide.

RESIDENTIAL

Multifamily anchored mixed-use projects are the main anticipated future residential use in the study area as well as a focus on stabilizing stormwater to retain existing residential. The plan recognizes the relative adjacency to the Vienna Metro and relative success of the Scout as a potential draw for new mixed use development compared to other areas in Fairfax City. While fully leased and thriving lower density retail at locations like Fairfax Circle Shopping Center may be unlikely to redevelop quickly, the near term plan still anticipates this and other developments to add approximately 950 units to the study area. This calculation includes the Wesley residential housing currently under construction and the Fairfax Circle Gateway under review.

OFFICE

The study area currently offers a stable base for more value-oriented and service related office type uses. Enhancing the mixed use amenities in the study area is anticipated to help stabilize existing office at 3251 Blenheim Boulevard and perhaps offer some new office spaces with new redevelopment. There is no substantial increase in office uses anticipated. As infrastructure improvements at the creek system occur and new walkable mixed use arrives adjacent to this offic building, the plan envisions a more attractive and stable office environment.



NEAR TERM USES (BY SQ. FT)

USE TYPE	EXISTING (SF)		NEAR TERM (SF)	
Retail (including Automotive)	551,000	39%	616,000	28%
Office	108,000	8%	115,000	5%
Industrial	32,000	2%	32,000	1%
Residential *	723,000	51%	1,430,000	65%
TOTALS	1,414,000	100%	2,200,000	100%

** Near Term residential is anticipated to add approximately 950 units*

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT

10+ YEARS

COMMERCIAL

For the long-term, the plan encourages an increase in commercial development, primarily in the form of ground floor retail. The plan imagines that this growth in commercial uses will mainly occur along the proposed Spring Street through the Southwest Quadrant, which will serve as a new activated “main street” for retail and mixed use development, with ground retail frontages along the street and Accotink Creek.

RESIDENTIAL

The plan proposes that in that long term residential development should take form in mixed use models to maximize residential density while supporting increased commercial uses. The plan encourages that in the long term this increase in density respond to other small area plans and be centered primarily along the proposed Spring Street.

INDUSTRIAL AND PUD USES

In the long term, the plan acknowledges that much of the industrial and PUD uses will be retained with some decrease to accommodate for additonal residential and retail uses.

DESIGN ELEMENT

SPRING STREET AS A NEW MAIN STREET

THE FAIRFAX CIRCLE NEIGHBORHOOD HUB

DESIGN ELEMENT

SPRING STREET AS A NEW MAIN STREET

THE FAIRFAX CIRCLE NEIGHBORHOOD HUB

The plan imagines extending Spring Street through the Southwest Quadrant, fostering a new mixed use “main street” connecting the more industrial and automotive uses to the north, to retail and residential uses in the southwest, to a broader mix of uses in the southeast. This new pedestrian and automotive connector allows local residents, workers, and visitors to easily traverse the boulevard while also providing a character defining street that gives the future Fairfax Circle Shopping Center/ Home Depot area a new sense of identity.

This new main street crosses multiple property owners and may change in exact alignment depending on site constraints including providing required stormwater control and difficult to develop properties. Key overarching goals include:

- Extend Spring Street south and southeast across the study area connecting Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Old Pickett Road to offer a secondary transportation loop
- Prioritize developments that are pedestrian-oriented retail with density focused along the new Spring Street around the plaza and the creek.
- Encourage pedestian-oriented design such as parallel parking and wide sidewalks along residential and retail uses.
- Limit blank walls and encourage active storefronts, entrances, and engaging facades
- Encourage upper floors to engage with the life of the street through balconies, large windows, or upper floor courtyards.
- Celebrate connections to major green destinations like Accotink Park, Gateway Regional Park, or infrastructure like the green fingers with unique placemaking moments
- Encourage programmed uses such as festivals or special street closures to celebrate the identity of Fairfax Circle.

1 Balconies and large windows engaging with stream & trail system

2 Retail activation along green fingers and creek

3 “Green” Parking lots that seamlessly transition to parks and Accotink Creek system

4 Existing or proposed pavilions, public facilities, or small retail kiosks

5 Bus, multi-modal transit hub

DESIGN ELEMENT

SPRING STREET AS A NEW MAIN STREET

THE FAIRFAX CIRCLE NEIGHBORHOOD HUB

1 Balconies and/or large windows to engage upper stories to the street

2 Robust tree canopy

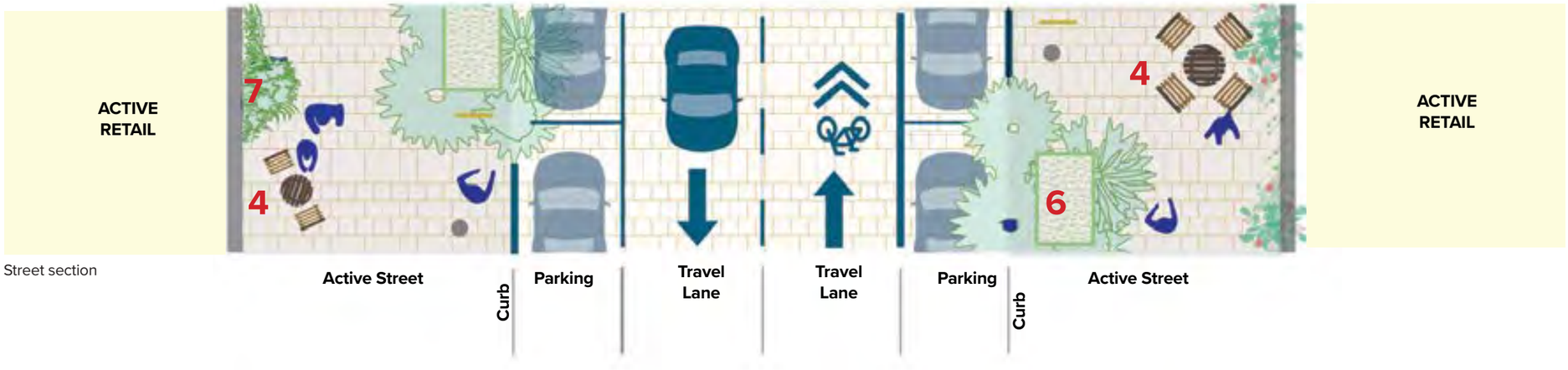
3 Bike racks, signage, and other elements referencing circular forms

4 Outdoor patios and retail uses

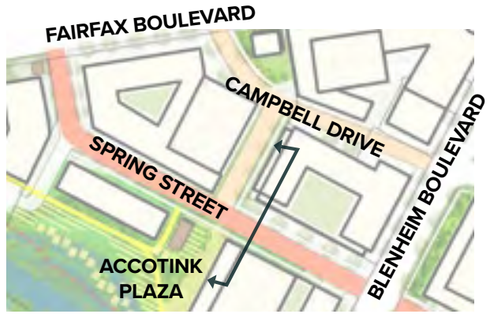
5 Engaging ground floor facades

6 Permeable pavement rain gardens, and native plantings

Reference active cross section for more detail and dimensions.



Street section

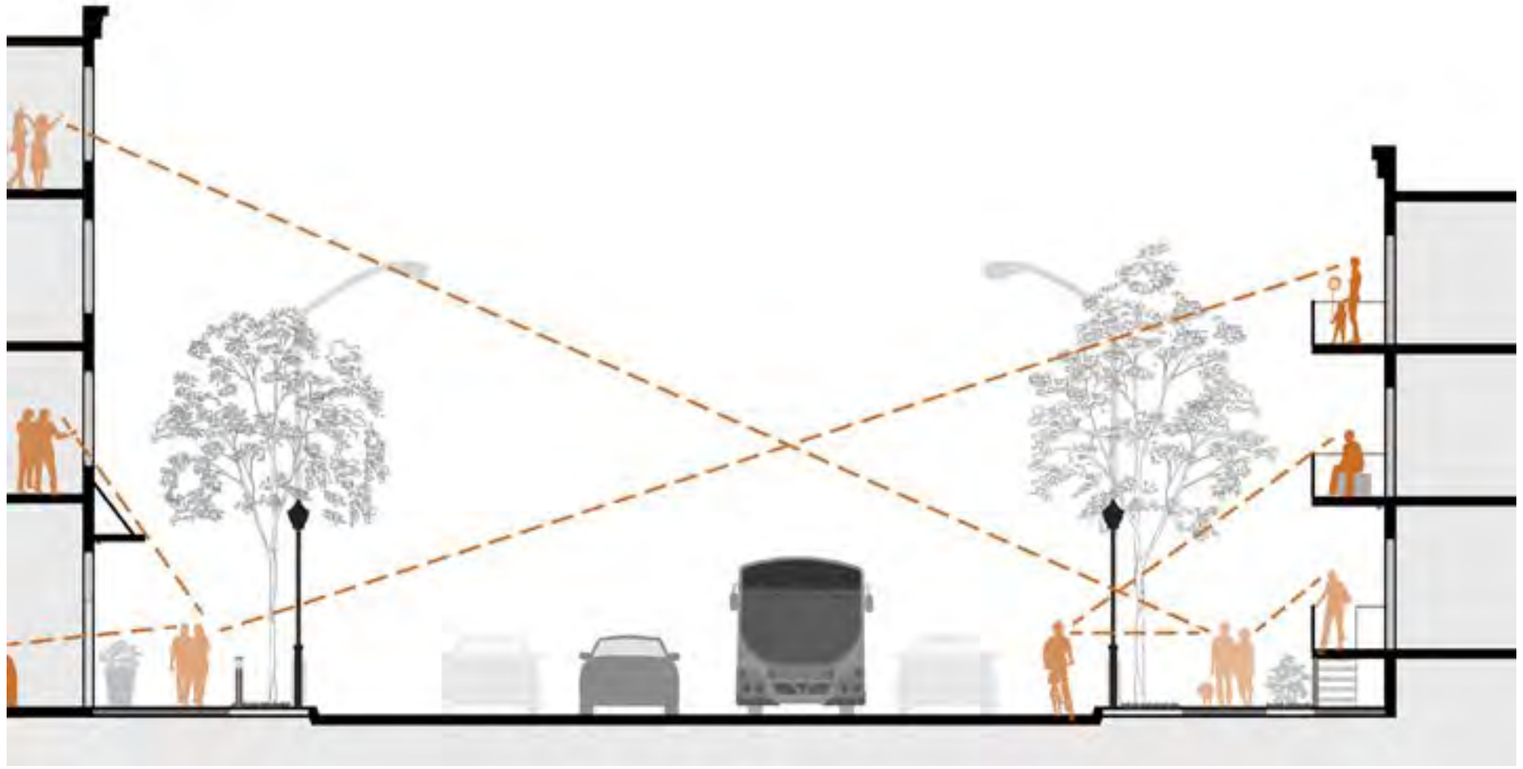


Street section

DESIGN ELEMENT

BRING EYES TO THE STREET

BRING EYES TO THE STREET CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN



The diagram above shows how pedestrian activity can activate public safety.
Source: Minneapolis 2040 Plan. https://minneapolis2040.com/policies/public-safety-through-environmental-design/

A brightly colored mural fills a blank wall creating a sense of maintenance or interest by the community along with a sense of place.

WHAT IS CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)?

CPTED is a best practice series of tactics used by architects, property owners, cities, and others to design the built environment to help deter crime or the perception of crime. Tactics can be based on landscape, urban design, public policy, or property management. This multidisciplinary approach generally has a goal of bringing a sense of “eyes to the street”. Tactics range from planting trees and clarifying lighting design to encouraging pedestrian and cyclist traffic on streets.

URBAN DESIGN APPROACHES

A core idea of brining a sense of safety to neighborhoods is to bring a sense of being watched while in public space or “eyes on the street”. Urban design tactics are often harmonious with traditional pedestrian oriented neighborhoods by bringing more life to the street by foot rather than by car. Urban design tactics suitable for Fairfax Circle include but are not limited to:

- Building entrances and windows at street and sidewalk
- Building designs that interact and bring eyes to street
    - Balconies, decks, and porches
    - Large windows on main corridors, parking lots, and public spaces
    - Interactive, inviting public parks
    - Walkable pedestrian streets
    - Low and see through fencing (ie. pickets, wrought iron)
- Avoiding large expanses of blank walls
- Better lighting and elimination of dark corners
- Establishing public restrooms and neighborhood oriented services
- Encouraging mix of uses at different times of day to keep spaces active, lively, and visible
- Well maintained appearance with clear designed purposes
- Avoid too bright security lighting that creates blinding glare or deep shadows
- Creating single clearly identifiable points of entry for businesses and residences
- Working with city partners and private businesses to foster scheduled outdoor uses

DESIGN ELEMENT

BRING EYES TO THE STREET

BRING EYES TO THE STREET CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Klyde Warren Park | Dallas, TX: https://www.tripstodiscover.com/11-best-things-to-do-in-dallas-texas/

Mason on Mariposa | San Francisco, CA | David Baker Architects

LANDSCAPE APPROACHES

Bringing eyes to the street is also a core idea in landscapes. Landscape tactics suitable for Fairfax Circle include but are not limited to:

- Stewardship (Private property owner, BID, Park Employee, etc.) to keep spaces cleaned and maintained
- Clear site lines on major paths or roads
- Plantings should be arranged to avoid creation of ‘blind corners’ and hiding places along public walkways and trails
- Tree and shrub species selection and pruning to provide proper clearance and visibility to public areas
- Integrating landscape lighting that is dark sky compliant with low-glare
- Fostering interactive, inviting public parks that connect to nearby mixed uses
- Use of open fencing (i.e. wrought iron or pickets) that are eliminate hiding places
- Consider use of unobtrusive landscape elements like thorny bushes to prevent access while maintaining a welcome appearance (i.e. below a low window)

STEWARDSHIP FRAMEWORKS

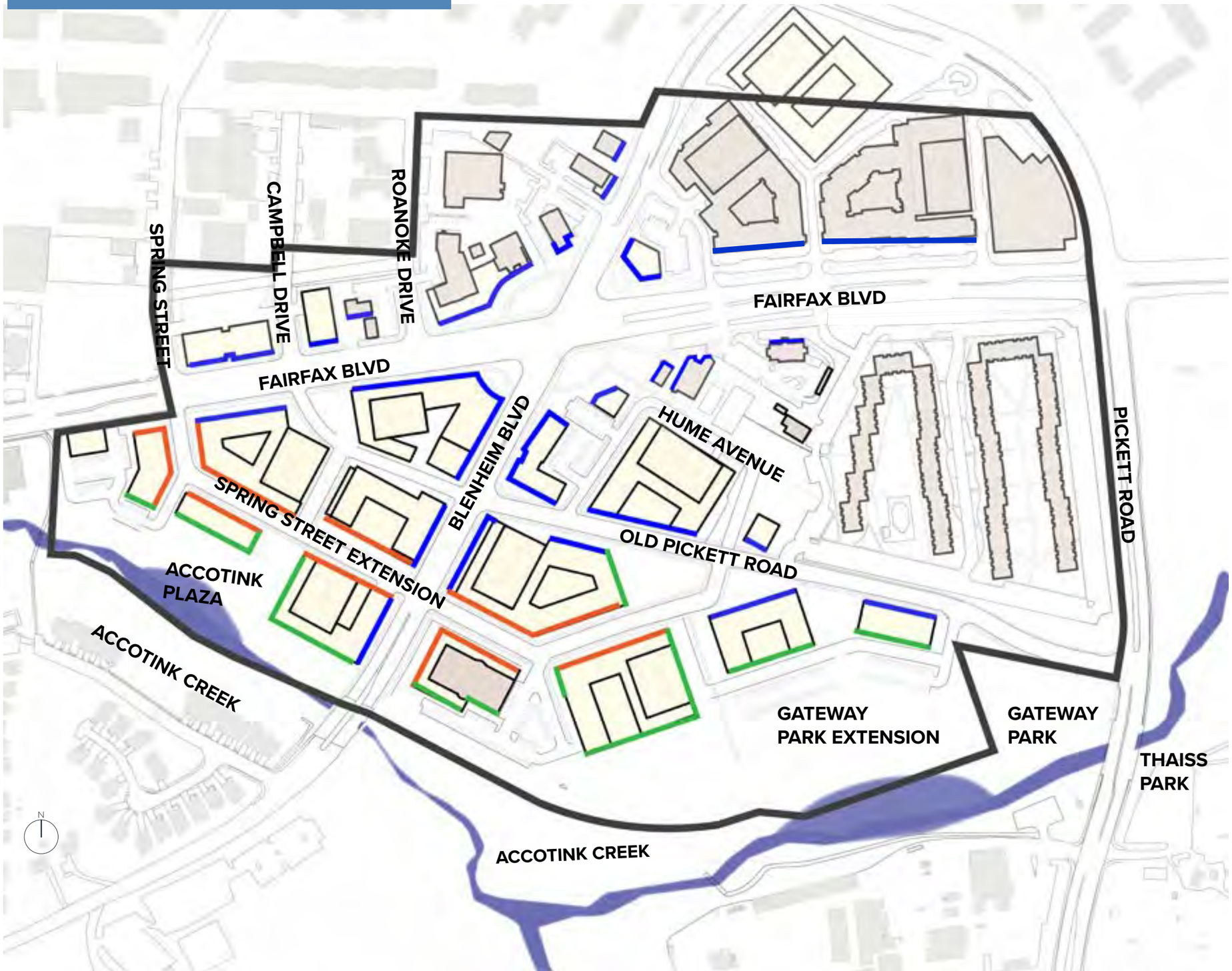
In addition to facilitating the landscape and urban design approaches to CPTED, is fostering a sense of stewardship in a community. This can be achieved through a variety of policy changes or neighborhood organization. Private businesses and residences can work to foster stewardship but sometimes larger area wide tactics are needed to promote stewardship. Some of these frameworks include:

- Establishing a Merchant Group or Business Improvement District (BID) to bring continued stewardship, recommendations, and funding for improvements
- Enhanced community focused security or community services center with designated law enforcement or social workers assigned to a community
- Regular maintenance, landscape management, sanitation, and trash clean up organized with community meetups or designated municipal funding
- Enhancing branding, event planning, and coordination across property owners and community stakeholders to foster ongoing use of public spaces

DESIGN ELEMENT

BUILDING FRONTAGES

DISTRICT WIDE PLAN



See the following pages for more details on frontages as well as summary below.

ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Pedestrian Prioritized Frontages: In broad terms, these frontages respond to more pedestrian oriented retail and mixed use environments including active walkable streets and green spaces. These frontages are intended to foster a walkable environment typical for small towns, walkable retail main streets, and cities. While they may have limited ground floor lobbies or other commercial uses, the primary function of these frontages is intended to foster a continuous active retail experience for visitors on foot. These frontages are limited in location around the Spring Street extension in the current plan.

FLEXIBLE COMMERCIAL FRONTAGES

Flexible Commercial Frontages: Flexible commercial frontages respond to the high vehicular traffic along the commercial mains of Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Old Pickett Road. These frontages are intended to enhance the walkable environment but also allow flexibility for vehicular parking on rear or side surface lots with limited direct access curb cuts as well as patio landscapes interacting with green fingers. They may have a variety of uses from retail and office to institutional and industrial.

GREEN FRONTAGES

Prioritized balconies, patios, retail boardwalks, secondary entrances, or retail frontages to take advantage of the Accotink Creek system or Green Finger natural network.

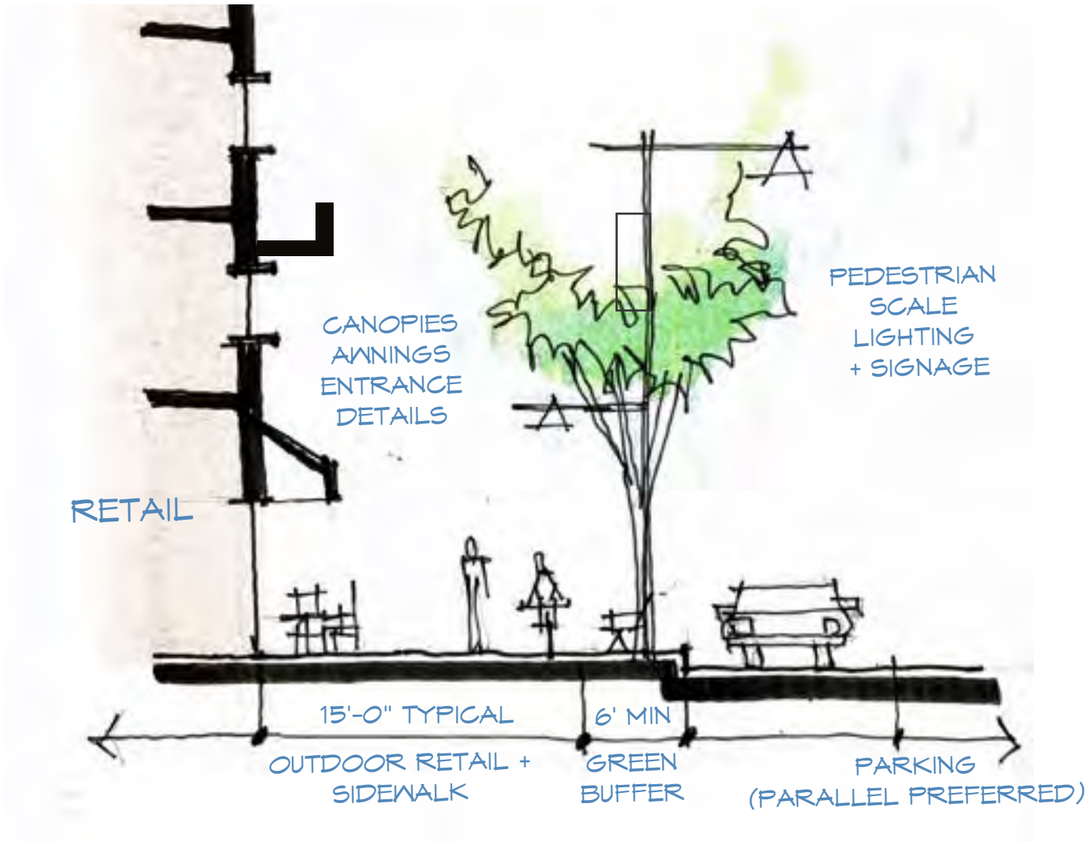
Other Frontages

Other frontages not indicated in the diagram have more permissive frontages and may include ground floor residential or commercial uses. These could include elements from the active frontages, flexible frontages, or green frontages but also may be more back of house uses. These are areas where loading may occur, have primary access to parking garages or lots, be multifamily residential walk-up or commercial outdoor patio conditions, or have service elements. In general, setbacks may vary on use but are encouraged to engage streets or alleys. Similarly, large blank walls are discouraged but allowed along alleys or rear-facing areas where functionally required.

DESIGN ELEMENT

BUILDING FRONTAGES

ACTIVE FRONTAGES



Location: Fronts of buildings with retail emphasized portions of active streets, outdoor seating, and destination public spaces.

Uses: Active ground floor retail, lobbies restricted to mid-block only, publicly accessible nonprofit or arts use allowed.

Design Elements: Pedestrian engaging lower floors with canopies, awnings, high quality materials, murals; large windows, or other architectural details.

Streetscape: Pedestrian scale wayfinding, signage and lighting; potential outdoor retail or seating areas; string lighting, public art, shade trees. Curb cuts are limited as much as possible. Green buffers are to have a more urban character and may have tree pits, permeable paving, or (as required) urban-oriented landscaped stormwater infrastructure. Green buffer width will be determined on a case by case basis based on soil planting volume requirements.

Setbacks: 20’ typical; 15’-0” minimum in locations constrained by stormwater management; No setback required directly along greenspace, pedestrian connector, pocket park, or public plaza. Setback no greater than 40’ unless demonstrated as activated by outdoor retail or other activity and well designed as a major gathering space.

Active building fronages

DESIGN ELEMENT

BUILDING FRONTAGES

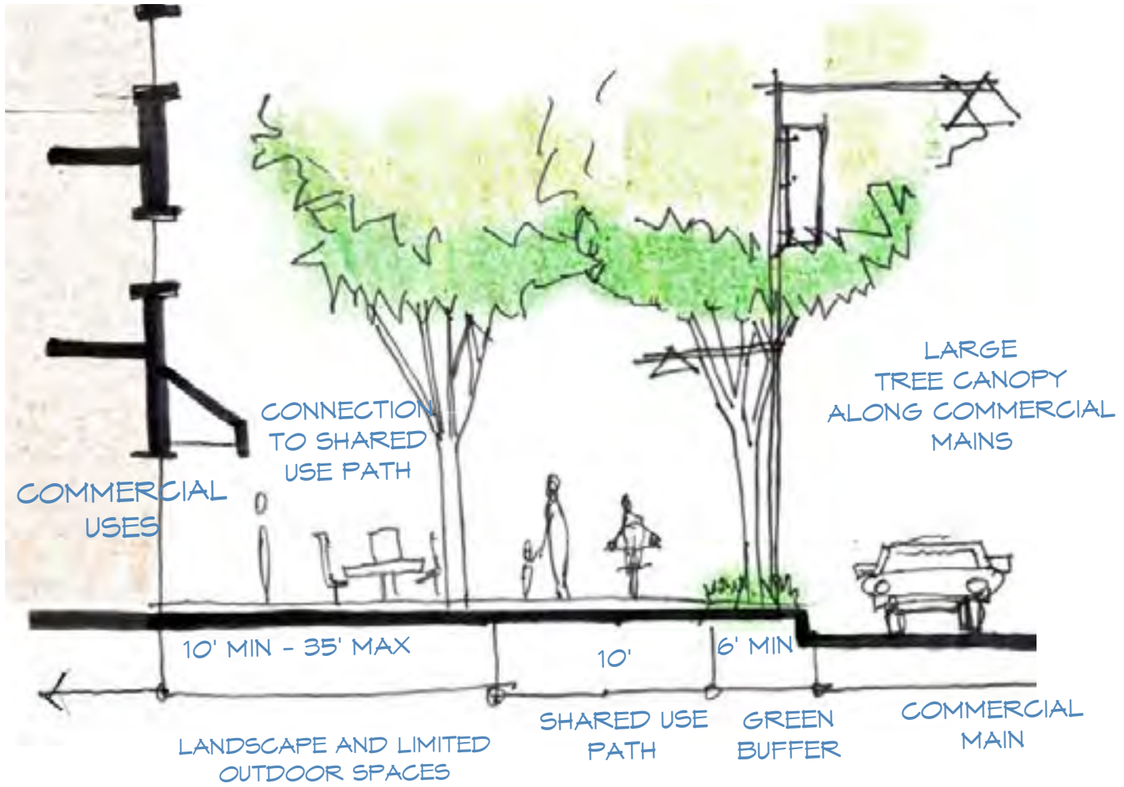
FLEXIBLE FRONTAGES


SHARED USE PATH


QUALITY TREE CANOPY
OUTDOOR SEATING

Flexible frontages are intended to support a range of land use types from 1-2 story retail (top and middle right images) to denser mixed use or big box retailers (bottom right image) to automotive uses.

The emphasis is on fostering a pedestrian-oriented street life, while acknowledging vehicular demands, connection to shared use paths, and integrating a robust tree canopy with native vegetation (particularly along pedestrian paths and commercial mains).



Location: Fronts of buildings along main boulevards

Uses: All commercial, retail, and PDR supported uses, parking lots provided they are oriented to the side or back of associated buildings.

Design Elements: Ground floor pedestrian details with canopies, awnings, high quality materials, murals; large windows, or other architectural details. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings is encouraged to enhance pedestrian oriented design elements and entrances and reduce front parking along boulevards and relocate to rear or side as feasible.

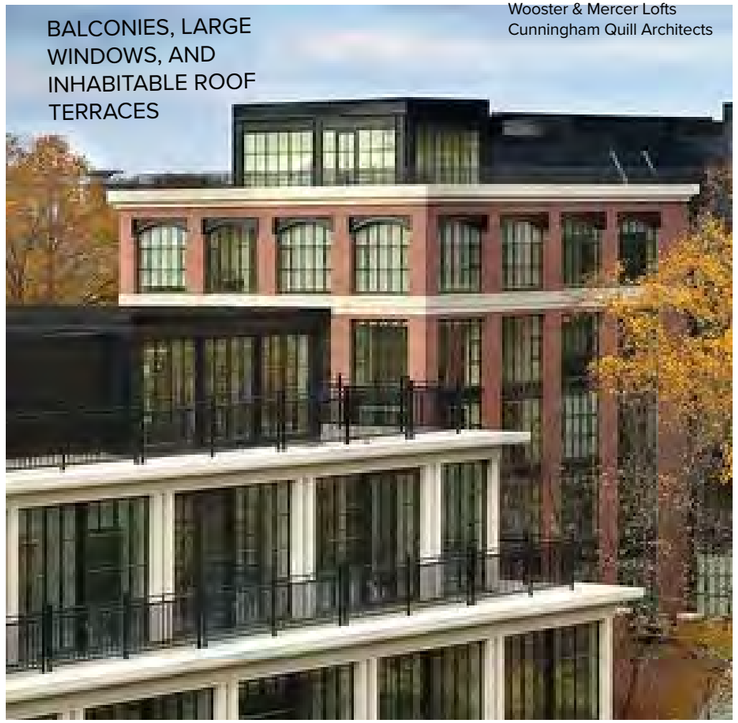
Streetscape: Robust tree canopy and vegetated landscape strip fostering an urban boulevard, shared use paths, entrances and outdoor gathering spaces linked to shared use paths; high quality medium-scale signage that is visible to pedestrians walking or cars driving by, outdoor retail and seating areas, stormwater or rainwater capture as applicable. At parking lots, provide a min. 6' green buffer between parking and shared use path. Green buffer width will be determined on a case by case basis based on soil planting volume requirements. Tall fences, direct building loading, and street parking are not allowed on flexible frontages.

Setbacks: Setbacks vary as there is a high degree of diversity of property lines and existing setbacks from the existing commercial main. From the curb of commercial main, 26' minimum to 50' maximum is allowed. Setbacks that are closer to 50' must include highly activated outdoor spaces, arts uses, publicly accessible pocket parks, enhanced stormwater capture, larger green buffers, or foster large outdoor retail uses. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings with parking along commercial mains is encouraged to add trees and vegetation along shared use path and, as possible, relocate parking to rear or side to minimize visibility.

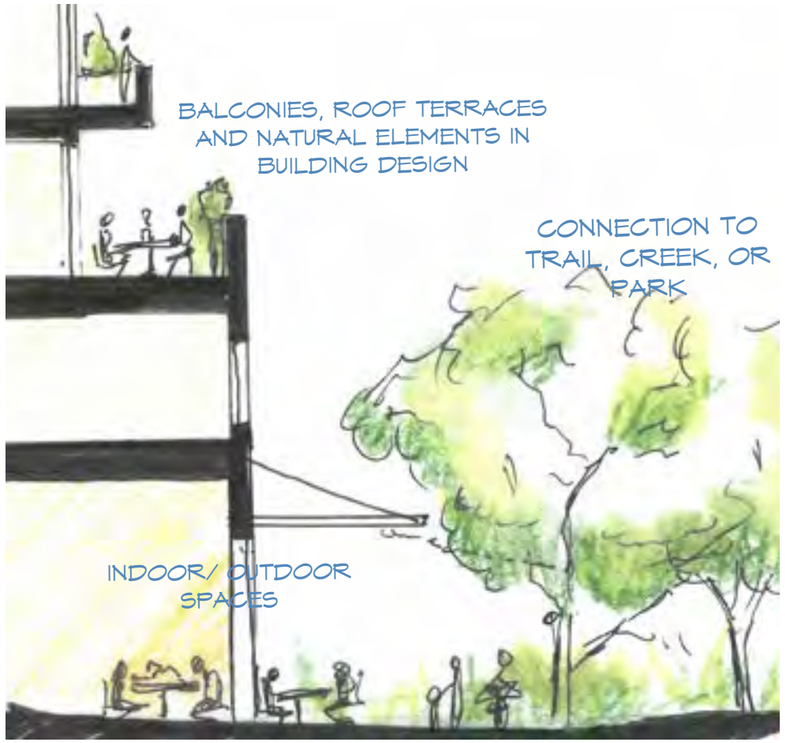
DESIGN ELEMENT

BUILDING FRONTAGES

GREEN FRONTAGES



Wooster & Mercer Lofts
Cunningham Quill Architects



Creator: Jonathan Cooper
Copyright: © 2023, Jonathan Cooper

Goodyear House Charlotte
Urban Design Partners

Location: Required along Accotink Creek, Accotink Plaza and larger pocket parks - see map for required locations. Design elements encouraged along all green fingers or park spaces though not required.

Uses: Any commercial or residential use allowed. Indoor/outdoor uses encouraged

Design Elements:
Ground Floors: Patios, decks, and indoor/outdoor spaces encouraged. Where larger blank walls are functionally unavoidable- green walls, murals, art, or interactive elements required. Large windows or glassy openings are also encouraged.
Upper Floors: Large windows, balconies, roof terraces, or other elements that both maximize views and ability for building users to connect to the landscape.
Natural elements: Hanging planters and green roofs or landscaped balconies are encouraged to be contemplated in building design aesthetics. See goal 1 for more examples and details.

Streetscape: Streets are generally not expected along these locations. See Goal 1 for details of trail systems, parks, and other green elements.

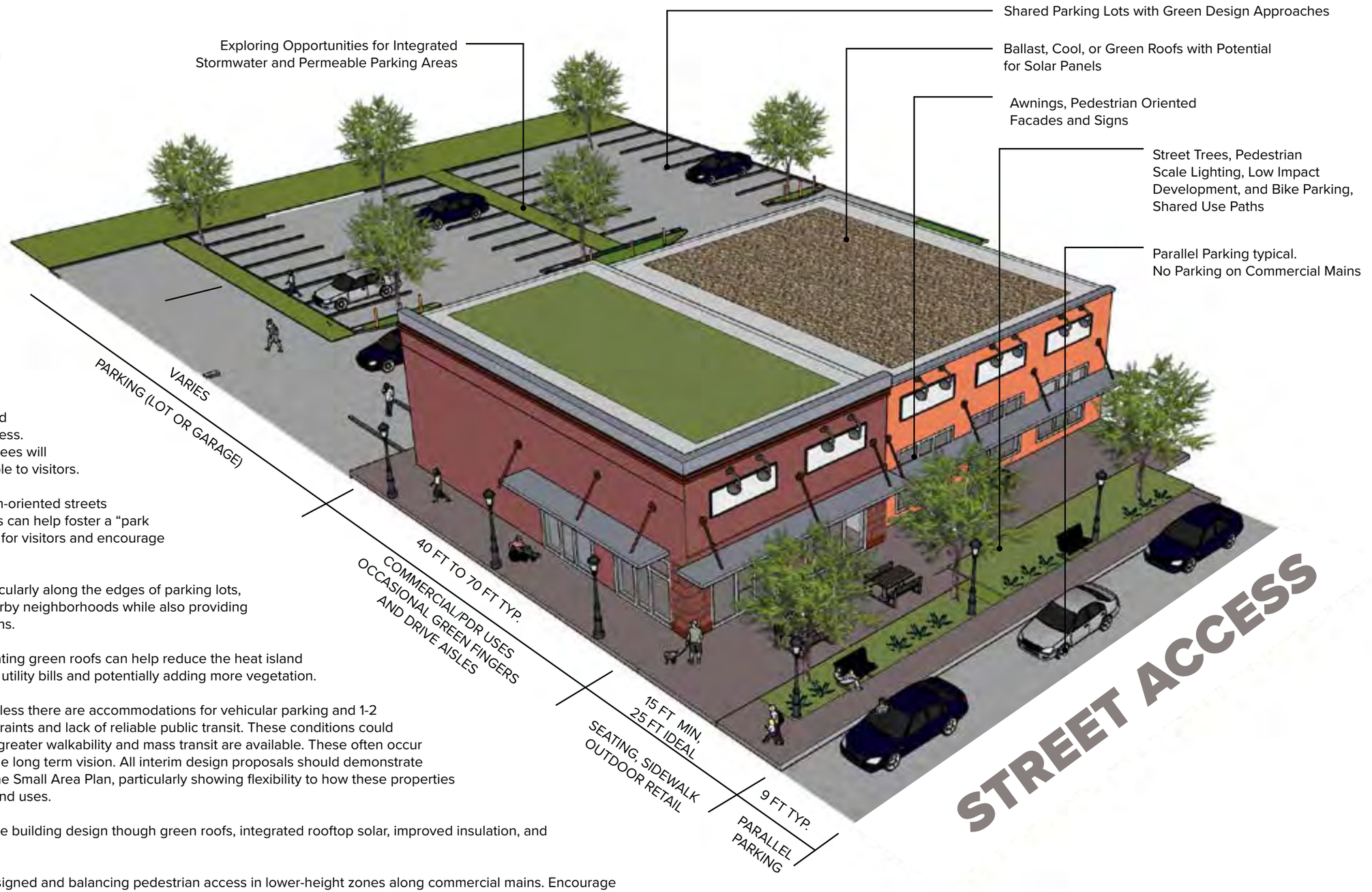
DESIGN ELEMENT

TRANSITIONAL RETAIL + ADAPTIVE REUSE

DESIGNS THAT BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN AND CAR AT FLEXIBLE FRONTAGES

Commercial uses in Fairfax Circle in the near term will need to accommodate vehicular drivers. Designs like this can thrive in both active frontages and flexible frontages offering a more resilient land use model for retail as it is challenged by a variety of market demands. Encouraging designs that can transition to a more pedestrian-oriented environment bring more vegetation to hardscapes, can help to reduce car trips through walkability, and help meet important goals including:

- Fostering active frontages with on-street parking (parallel preferred), outdoor patios, and pedestrian scale architectural details like canopies and specialty lighting can help provide a more small town or community face along main streets that distinguishes it from typical suburban sprawl
- Frontages also propose a need for covered bike racks and bike and scooter share access. Shared parking lots and nearby to street trees will include bike parking that is easily accessible to visitors.
- Orienting front facades towards pedestrian-oriented streets while still accommodating vehicular drivers can help foster a “park once” strategy to neighborhood shopping for visitors and encourage walking or biking by residents.
- Integrating stormwater management, particularly along the edges of parking lots, can help capture and reduce runoff to nearby neighborhoods while also providing needed shade and greenery for pedestrians.
- As buildings are renovated or built, integrating green roofs can help reduce the heat island effect in the neighborhood while reducing utility bills and potentially adding more vegetation.
- Some owners are unlikely to redevelop unless there are accommodations for vehicular parking and 1-2 story retail is acceptable due to land constraints and lack of reliable public transit. These conditions could shift over time and be an interim use until greater walkability and mass transit are available. These often occur where denser uses are demonstrated in the long term vision. All interim design proposals should demonstrate compatibility with the long-term goals of the Small Area Plan, particularly showing flexibility to how these properties could be developed into more intensive land uses.
- Opportunities to integrate more sustainable building design though green roofs, integrated rooftop solar, improved insulation, and more.
- Allow drive-through uses, but carefully designed and balancing pedestrian access in lower-height zones along commercial mains. Encourage drive through designs that are secondary to architecture that prioritize the pedestrian experience.



DESIGN ELEMENT

TRANSITIONAL RETAIL + ADAPTIVE REUSE

FAST FOOD RETAIL

SIGNAGE SIGHT LINES VISIBLE TO VEHICLES OR PEDESTRIANS

STREET WITH PARALLEL OR DIAGONAL PARKING WHERE POSSIBLE

ACTIVATED OUTDOOR ART, SEATING AND/OR LANDSCAPE

MULTI-MODAL OR PEDESTRIAN PATH

HIDDEN DRIVE-THROUGH AND/OR STRUCTURED OR SURFACE PARKING AT REAR OR SIDE LOTS

Conventional suburban sprawl commercial uses prioritize supersized car-oriented signage, large setbacks from the street with ample parking, and limits sidewalks and outdoor retail. A modified suburban retail can support both vehicular traffic and cyclist or pedestrian visitors.

- Implementing easily accessible rear and side parking lots with some parallel and diagonal parking along active or secondary streets for easy retail teaser, delivery, or quick trip parking. In general, parallel parking is preferred for on street parking.
- Activating front facades for signage, outdoor retail, lighting, and vegetation that is pedestrian scale and encourages walkability between businesses
- Where possible, implement a “park once” strategy. Park once strategies develop wayfinding and shared parking strategy between ownership so visitors can easily cross shop on foot from one parking spot without re-parking for nearby trips.
- Buildings oriented towards the street with larger landscaped setbacks or engagement with wide tree-lined shared use paths to soften the presence along busy commercial boulevards
- Drive-through uses hidden or concealed on rear or side lots with prominent face of building focuses on pedestrian engagement of street and shared use path. Drive-through uses are prohibited in core seven-story height zone and adjacent to public parks, plazas, or greenspaces like Fern Street Plaza, the Transit Hub or Kutner Park.

These lessons are most applicable to flexible frontages throughout the study area as well as adaptive reuse of existing buildings. This is the recommended retail approach particularly along commercial mains where parking is proposed to be in existing parking garages or rear and side surface lots.

DESIGN ELEMENT

TRANSITIONAL RETAIL + ADAPTIVE REUSE

BIG BOX RETAILERS

Fairfax Circle is currently home to highly visible and economically vibrant big box retailers including Home Depot, several car dealerships, and more. The standard architectural format that allows these businesses to thrive is typically car-oriented and often antithetical to a walkable community village. However, these building type designs are evolving nationwide as more mixed-use neighborhoods are adapting big box retail into their fabric. These 21st century big box retailers are adapted to suburban village formats where they still accommodate vehicular traffic and emphasize their architectural branding and identity critical to their economic model, but present a more pedestrian friendly architectural face towards streets and provide visually improved parking garages or lots. Examples like this Target in Lakewood, Colorado or the Home Depot in Chicago, Illinois shown below provide a more neighborhood sensitive character to people on foot or bike while also allowing shoppers to park in either garages or vegetated surface parking areas.

Architectural lessons from Lakewood should be applied to the many existing car retail spaces, big-box oriented retail sites, and strip centers that could adapt over time in Fairfax Circle. Facade and site upgrades to the existing Home Depot for example could enhance the pedestrian walkability and community feel of the study area. Alternatively, new construction in the study area could accommodate big box retailers by incorporating similar strategies on the ground floor while allowing residential mixed-use above, undergrounding parking or putting garages underneath the building or at the rear of the site, and engaging with main streets and shared use avenues. In both cases, big box retailers as they develop or evolve must respond to a pedestrian oriented street network. These lessons are most likely to be applied at flexible frontages throughout the study area and adaptive reuse of existing big box, strip malls, or car retailers. It could be applied along active frontages; in those cases, parking should be focused at rear surface lots, nearby garages, or underground so the street frontage along the active street is continuous. Lush landscaping is encouraged where possible and preserves usability for vehicle exit.

WHERE LARGE BLANK WALLS ARE NECESSARY, THEY ARE TURNED AWAY FROM MAIN COMMUNITY STREET TOWARDS REAR OR SIDE.

SIGNAGE AT A VARIETY OF SCALES VISIBLE TO PEDESTRIANS AND VEHICLES

Image: Target, Belmar Shopping District, Lakewood, Colardao

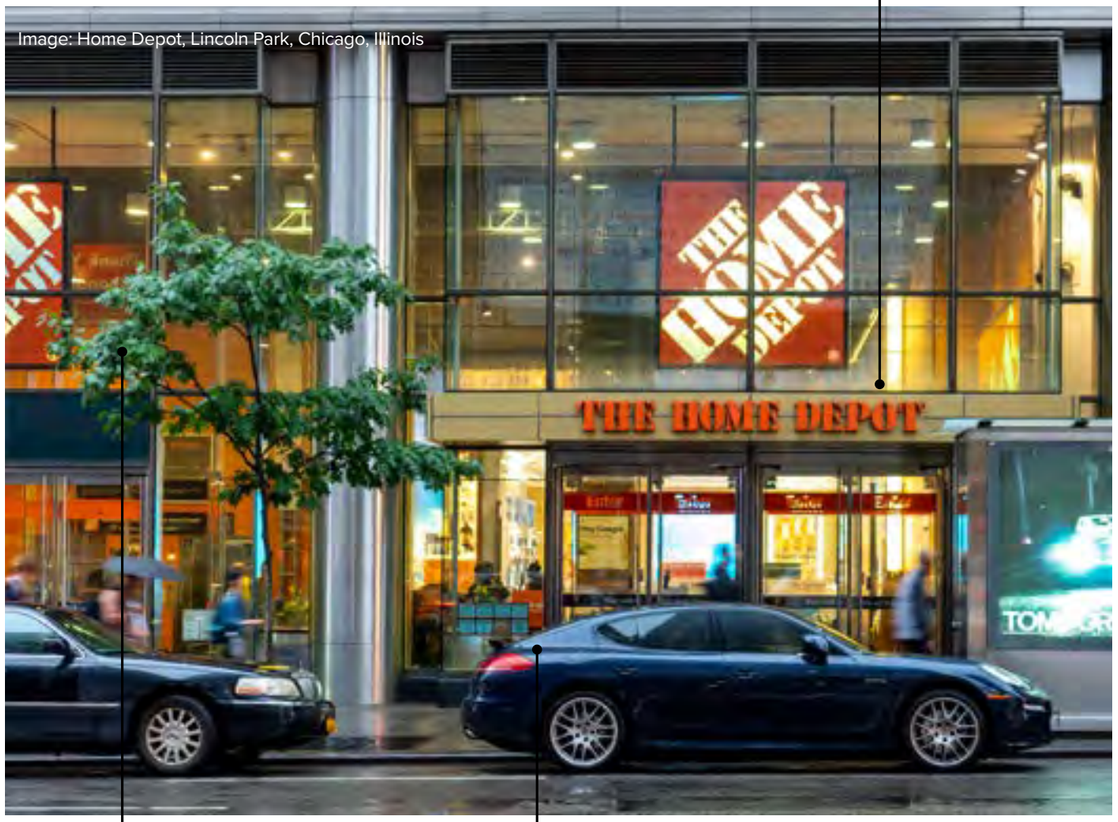
WELCOMING LANDSCAPING W/ PARKING AT SIDE AND BACK

SAFE, WIDE, AND ACCESSIBLE SIDEWALKS THROUGHOUT

PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED SIDEWALKS + SIGNAGE

WINDOWS, ARCHITECTURALLY ACTIVE FACADE INSTEAD OF BLANK WALLS

Image: Home Depot, Lincoln Park, Chicago, Illinois



SHADE TREES AND WELCOMING VEGETATION ALONG MAIN ROAD

PARALLEL PARKING

DESIGN ELEMENT

TRANSITIONAL RETAIL + ADAPTIVE REUSE

GAS STATIONS

Top Left | Eight Flint Row - Houston, Texas
Middle Left | Service Station Green Roof
by Occulus - Washington, DC
Bottom Left | Example of Urban Agriculture
Top Right | Above the Dirt Garden Shop - Louisville, KY
Middle Right | Denver Beer Company- Denver CO

COMMON DESIGN TACTICS

1. Activating parking lots to be engaging outdoor spaces and providing shared parking strategies with other businesses
2. Providing buffers and separation to busy roads and parking
3. Bold and unique adaptive reuse of canopies and signage
4. Taking advantage of large openings for indoor outdoor experiences

Small Area Plan Goals There are three gas stations in the study area with two on the circle. Given the goal of reducing curb cuts to help navigability at the circle as well as fostering a welcoming gateway at the future Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard intersection, the two gas stations at the circle are incompatible with the long term plan. Exacerbating this, the anticipated transition to electric vehicles will have an unpredictable effect on the number and design of future gas stations.

Challenges: Underground tanks, environmental contamination, unconsolidated ownership with nearby properties, and locations along commercial mains are just a few of the unique financial and practical challenges to redevelopment of gas stations.

Opportunities: Gas stations also offer unique assets and opportunities: high visibility and potentially access to new right of ways leftover after the redesign of Fairfax Circle, large outdoor spaces, and high visibility at major intersections. Gas stations at the former circle could consider using a curved canopy mimicking Fairfax Circle and a green roof. The images above serve as examples of how these isolated parcels might transform and evolve into creative adaptive reuse models of mixed use and specialty retail.

DESIGN ELEMENT

TRANSITIONAL RETAIL + ADAPTIVE REUSE

INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE: PRODUCTIVE, REPAIR, DISTRIBUTION (PDR)

Small Area Plan Goals: The existing Fairfax Circle small area is unique among the activity areas due to its high concentration of automotive businesses, repair shops, and industrial uses. These uses provide important jobs and contribute to the mix of uses but also are often visually unsightly and incompatible with the goals of a more pedestrian oriented neighborhood, an improved aesthetic at Fairfax Circle, and engagement with the Accotink Creek.

Yates Corner: Yates Corner is a mixed use series of buildings in Alexandria, Virginia located on a busy portion of East Braddock Road. In the early 2010s, a new facility was made incorporating office, retail, and an automotive repair shop. The new facility provided upgraded building materials like brick and pedestrian oriented outdoor retail while also allowing for the continued use and functionality of an automotive repair shop.

Opportunities: A similar precedent could be used for tactical facade renovations of existing production, repair, or distribution uses along Fairfax Boulevard and Fairfax Circle where a more pedestrian oriented and visually appealing infrastructure is desired. These new buildings and uses can stay in the study area with an improved design that is more responsive to the small area plan.

COMMON DESIGN TACTICS

1. Automotive or repair spaces at rear
2. Office, retail, or customer oriented uses along front paths with high quality building materials and landscaping at entrance
3. Blending parking garages, loading or trash, double height spaces and other functional uses in the overall design

Left Top, Left Bottom, Right Top: Yates Corner- a mix of automotive, office, and retail located in a suburban corridor of Alexandria, Virginia

Bottom Center, Bottom Right: Photos of Yates corner before the redesign in the early 2010s. The original suburban, car oriented use is maintained with the current design but now balanced for pedestrians and enhanced aesthetically.

GOAL 4

EASY ACCESS BY CAR, BUS, BIKE OR ON FOOT

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

1 LONG TERM TRANSPORTATION VISION

2 PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST NETWORK

3 DESIGN FOR MAJOR ROADS

4 DESIGN FOR ACTIVE STREETS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTORS

5 TRANSIT NETWORK AND MOBILITY HUB

6 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

7 PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CONCERNS

TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

Today, transportation connectivity is limited in the Fairfax Circle Activity Center to a few wide, high speed, and high traffic volume roadways including Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Pickett Road. The absence of a well-connected street network in the study area hampers multi-modal connectivity. Due to the limited network, people living, working, or visiting the Fairfax Circle study area must travel through a few large and complex intersections even for local trips, placing an even greater traffic demand burden on arterial roads. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders also have limited options to travel through the area and must use existing pedestrian facilities along the high-speed, high-volume arterial roads.

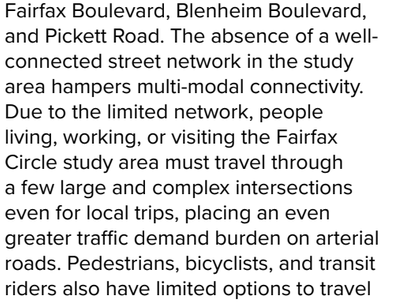
It is almost impossible to travel from surrounding neighborhoods to the retail destinations within the Fairfax Circle Activity Center without being required to travel along one of these three wide roadways. It is critical to provide additional connections and access opportunities from within the Fairfax Circle Activity Center to surrounding neighborhoods, trails, parks, and other everyday destinations as new mixed-use and residential developments such as the Scout are built.

All three major roads in the study area - Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Pickett Road- are arterial roadways that carry significant regional vehicular traffic. While these roadways are designed to accommodate regional traffic, local connectivity, especially for people walking and biking, is close to non-existent.

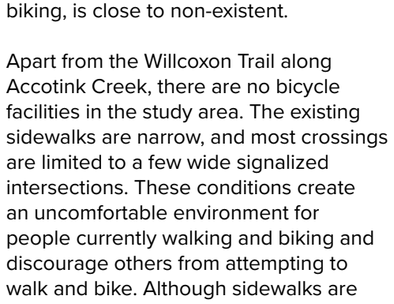
Apart from the Willcoxon Trail along Accotink Creek, there are no bicycle facilities in the study area. The existing sidewalks are narrow, and most crossings are limited to a few wide signalized intersections. These conditions create an uncomfortable environment for people currently walking and biking and discourage others from attempting to walk and bike. Although sidewalks are present along most of the frontages of the main roadways in Fairfax Circle, the sidewalk widths throughout the area are narrow and have little to no landscape buffer separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

A sidewalk gap exists along the north side of Old Pickett Road fronting Foxcroft Colony. Several sidewalk gaps also exist along Spring Street, Campbell Drive, and Roanoke Street in the industrial northwest part of the study area. Although many sidewalks are four to five feet in width and comply with ADA requirements, existing sidewalks do not feel safe and comfortable. The existing sidewalk may not feel comfortable for pedestrians due to a lack of wide landscape buffers separating pedestrians from multi-lane high-speed vehicular travel lanes, as well as the fact that many sidewalks are adjacent to surface parking or other vehicular uses and lack of shade and other amenities. Many pedestrian ramps at intersections are not ADA-compliant. The lack of connectivity and comfortable facilities for people who walk, bike, or ride transit and the lack of public spaces and amenities such as parks and plazas limit the area's appeal to anyone but those arriving by car. People arriving by car are also discouraged from walking between destinations within the area, which may encourage additional vehicle traffic.

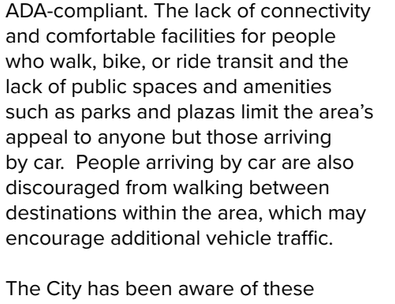
The City has been aware of these challenges and conducted a study specific to Fairfax Circle in 2021. Several other projects to enhance overall multi-modal connectivity have been identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan and the City's bicycle master plan. The transportation recommendations developed as part of this Small Area Plan advance the recommendations from these previous plans and identify new ones to further enhance connectivity and access in the Fairfax Circle Activity Center. Existing streets and new streets can be redesigned to create a close-knit block and street network that enhances walkability. This network can include comfortable bicycle facilities, wider sidewalks with street trees, landscaping, and other amenities such as sidewalk cafes, benches, street lighting, and space for convenient pick-ups/drop-offs, bicycles, scooters, and on-street parking.



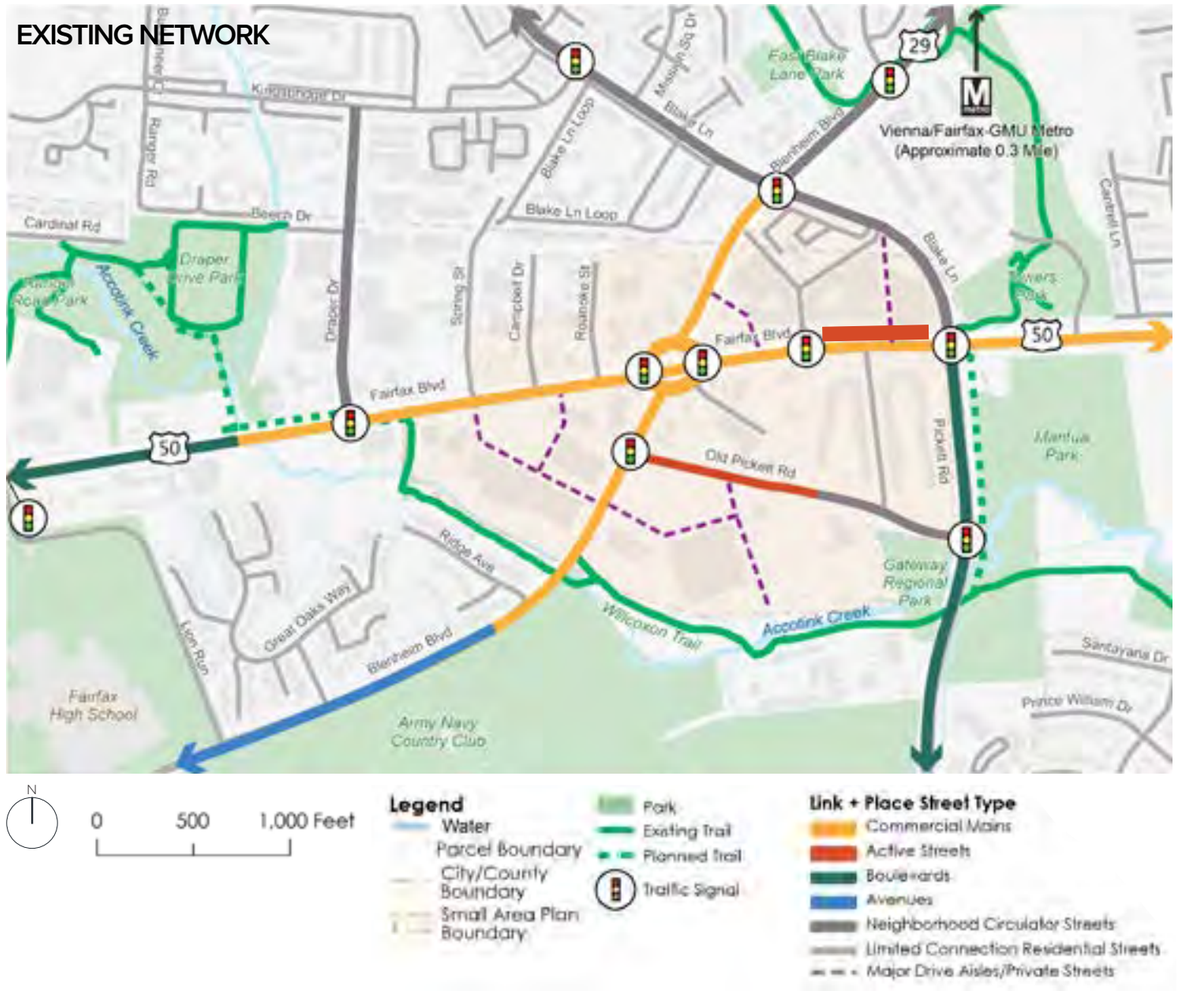
Few wide intersections



Narrow sidewalks next to wide roads



Willcoxon Trail along the Accotink Creek



LONG TERM TRANSPORTATION VISION

FOSTERING A WELL CONNECTED NETWORK

A primary community-driven goal of the Small Area Plan is to enhance the Activity Center's internal and external connectivity and provide multi-modal transportation options that reduce risks to pedestrians and cyclists. Under the long-term network, existing major roads identified as Commercial Mains, Boulevards, and Avenues in the City's Comprehensive Plan, such as Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Pickett Road, would balance the need to move vehicular traffic while making them urban boulevards with wide shared-use paths and frequent signalized crossings for safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Internal Active Streets would reduce the need to travel along Commercial Mains and provide an option for travel within the study area through a network of connected streets. New Active Streets are proposed to have less vehicular traffic to support a pedestrian-friendly public realm. Neighborhood Circulator streets and trail connectors will further add to the pedestrian and bicycle network connecting the Activity Center with nearby neighborhoods, open space, and regional trails. Shorter and more direct trips will give residents a choice to walk, bike, or scoot rather than drive along Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Pickett Road. Finally, a number of potential alleys, driveways, and private streets are shown to provide additional connectivity and vehicular access to future development. The overarching result is an easily navigable grid of streets within the study area, reducing existing curb cuts in favor of greater multi-modal access overall.

Long Term Network

The following map shows the long-term vision for the overall network in the Fairfax Circle study area. Red lines indicate Active Streets. These streets are preferred to be public but may also be private. The ultimate goal is to enhance the overall circulation within the Activity Center. Dashed purple lines indicate secondary streets. Secondary streets can be public or private streets. These can be treated as narrow access streets, alleys, or driveways. The exact location and nature of secondary streets can change as per specific future development proposals, and some may not be necessary at all, depending on development configurations.

Although the exact location and alignment of these Active Streets and Secondary Streets could vary depending on future development applications, the City should advance the following principles and recommendations:

- Develop a network of new internal Active Streets and well-designed intersections and crossings of major streets so that all areas within the Fairfax Circle Activity Center can be accessed through internal streets without a need to travel along Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Pickett Road.

- Develop a network of new internal secondary streets to create a fine-grain small block structure and street network to enhance access, connectivity, and walkability.

- Develop new pedestrian and bicycle connections to connect existing neighborhoods, trails, and parks to the Activity Center.

The following projects advance the principles listed above:

- Create a new east-west Active Street along Spring Street alignment along the existing drive aisle in Fairfax Circle Shopping Center between Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard. Extend this new Active Street across Blenheim Boulevard and connect to Old Pickett Road by formalizing the existing drive aisle in front of Home Depot.

- Create another new east-west Active Street connecting Campbell Drive and Old Pickett Road alignment between Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard.

- Formalize existing drive aisles as Secondary Streets or create new Secondary Streets along property lines as alleys/access roads along property lines as part of redevelopment projects throughout the study area to allow access to adjacent properties.

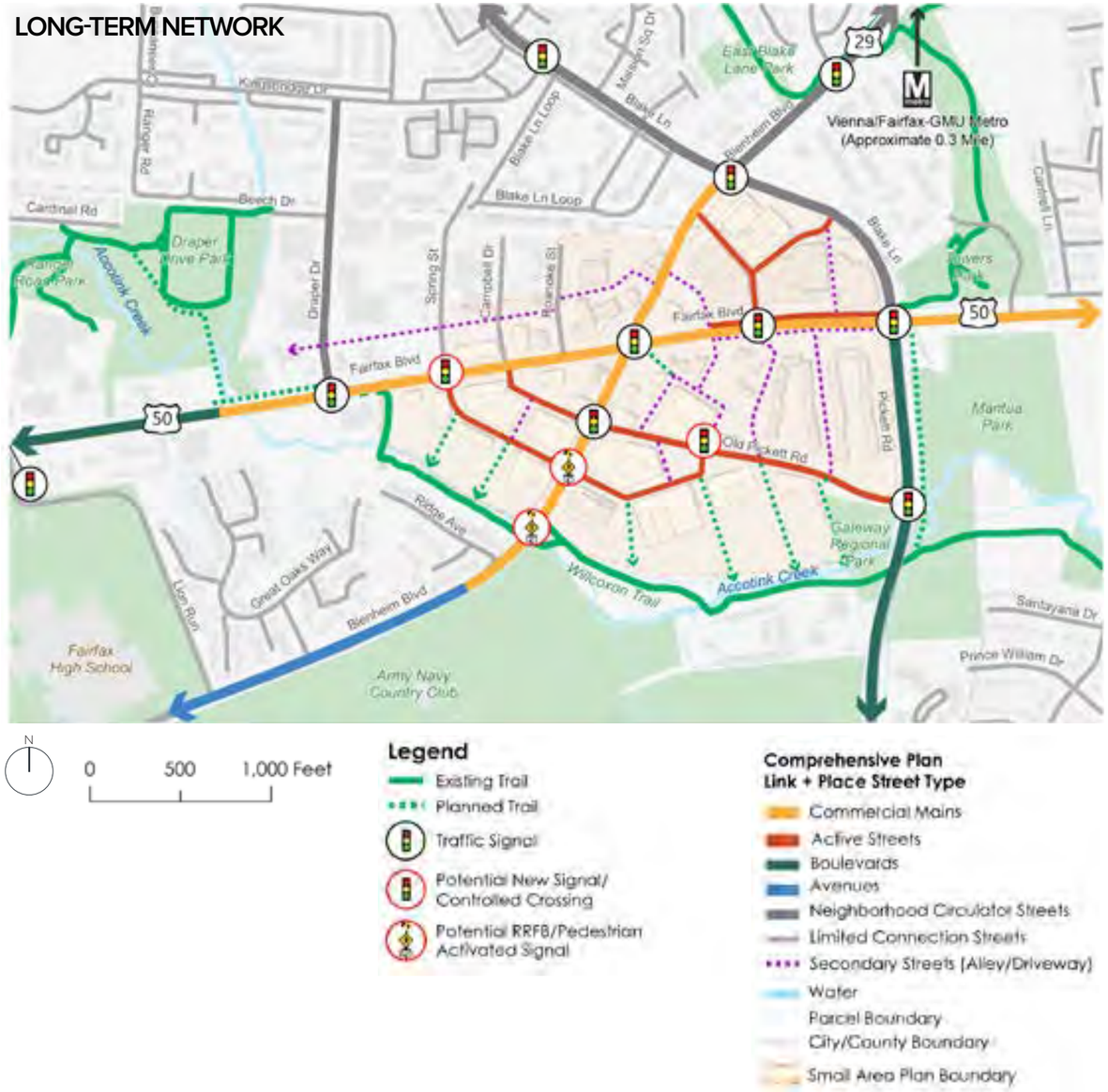
- Create pedestrian and bicycle trail connectors between buildings connecting new Active Streets to the Willcoxon Trail along Accotink Creek.

- Complete the new north-south trail or a shared-use path on the east side of Pickett Road between the Willcoxon Trail and Fairfax Boulevard.

- Add a new traffic signal with marked crosswalks across all legs and install new ADA-compliant directional pedestrian ramps at the intersection of Spring Street and Fairfax Boulevard to decrease signal spacing and provide additional pedestrian and bicycle crossing opportunities across Fairfax Boulevard (Dependent on results of signal warrant analysis).

- Add a new traffic signal with marked crosswalks across all legs and install new ADA-compliant directional pedestrian ramps at the intersection of Old Pickett Road and the eastern entrance to Spring Street Extension to decrease signal spacing and provide additional pedestrian and bicycle crossing opportunities across Old Pickett Road (Dependent on results of signal warrant analysis).

- Add a new pedestrian activated traffic signal or a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon with marked mid-block crosswalk and new ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps at the intersection of Willcoxon Trail and Blenheim Boulevard (Dependent on results of signal warrant analysis).



- Add a new pedestrian-activated traffic signal or a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon with a marked crosswalk and install new ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps at the intersection of Old Pickett Road and the new Active Street along the Spring Street extension alignment (Dependent on results of signal warrant analysis).

The City should conduct a detailed follow-up multi-modal transportation and traffic study to vet and refine the roadway and signal recommendations identified in this Small Area Plan.

DESIGN ELEMENT

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE NETWORK

ENHANCING ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Existing pedestrian infrastructure is not inviting within the Fairfax Circle Activity Center. Although all major roads have sidewalks, they are narrow and not well-separated from fast-moving vehicular traffic. This plan also recommends filling in sidewalk gaps along Old Pickett Road, Spring Street, Campbell Drive, and Roanoke Street.

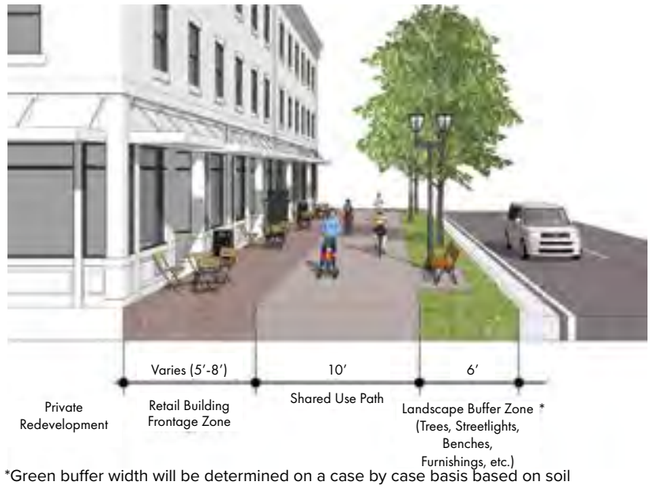
As part of the overall Small Area Plan, 10' wide shared-use paths and a 6' wide tree-lined landscape buffer are recommended along both sides of Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard. A wider shared-use path or separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be considered where feasible. The existing Zoning Ordinance requires a combined 10' of landscape strip and recommendations of this plan may require changes to the Zoning Ordinance. The typical shared-use path diagrams illustrate how the design of the building frontage zone will differ for fronting ground floor uses such as retail or restaurants and for non-fronting ground floor uses such as residential/office. Shared use paths are recommended in the City's 2035 Comprehensive Plan and the City's bicycle master plan.

The shared-use paths within the Activity Center will connect to existing and planned bicycle facilities in the city. A shared-use path along Blenheim Boulevard will connect to the two-way separated bicycle lanes/cycle track being designed on the western side of Blenheim Boulevard, south of Willcoxon Trail. Shared-use paths along Fairfax Boulevard will connect to the planned extension of George Snyder Trail along Accotink Creek through Cardinal Park and Draper Drive Park. Conventional striped bicycle lanes are planned along Draper Drive and Old Pickett Road. The City is also planning to design a trail or a shared-use path along the western side of Pickett Road.

The internal Active Streets and secondary streets are also envisioned to have sidewalks and bicycle facilities. Most of the internal streets will be narrow, traffic-calmed two-lane streets with on-street parking. Shared lanes for bicycle facilities are appropriate for such streets.

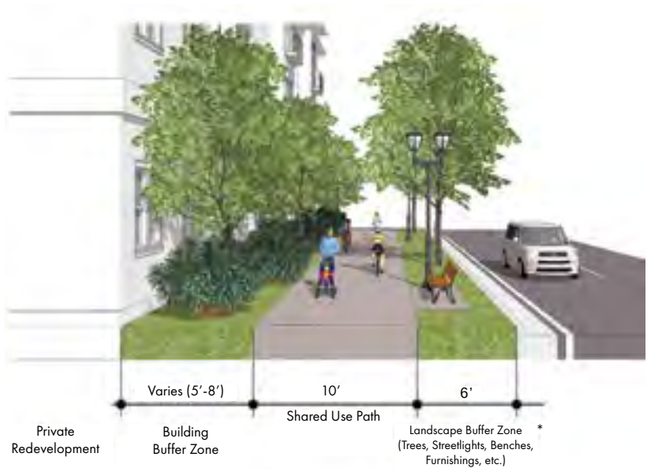
The City should also coordinate with Fairfax County to extend the shared-use path recommendation along Blenheim Boulevard and Route 29 to Vaden Drive. Existing shared use path exists along the western side of Vaden Drive till the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metrorail station.

TYPICAL SHARED-USE PATH DESIGN
RETAIL FRONTAGE



*Green buffer width will be determined on a case by case basis based on soil planting volume requirements.

TYPICAL SHARED-USE PATH DESIGN
RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE FRONTAGE



*Green buffer width will be determined on a case by case basis based on soil planting volume requirements.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE NETWORK

DESIGN ELEMENT

DESIGN FOR MAJOR ROADS

FAIRFAX BOULEVARD AND BLENHEIM BOULEVARD

The two major roads – Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard - are arterial roadways that carry significant regional traffic. The proposed designs for these roads do not reduce the number of lanes, turn lanes, and location of the curb and gutter along major roads. The proposed shared-use paths are planned to be implemented behind existing curbs utilizing existing ROW and requiring additional ROW/easements from private properties as and when the properties are redeveloped.

FAIRFAX BOULEVARD

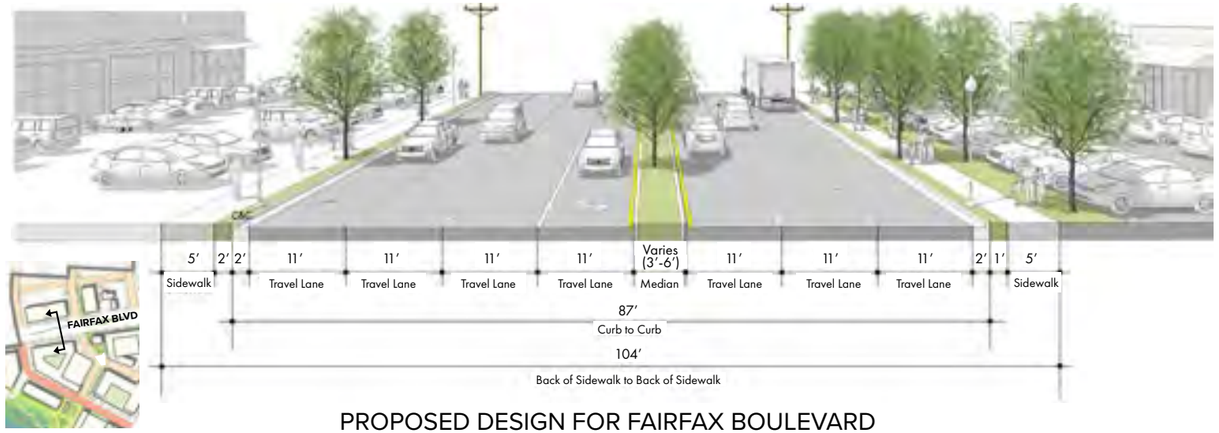
Along Fairfax Boulevard, it is anticipated that at least a 9' easement or additional ROW will be required on either side to implement the typical shared-use path section. This 9' space will fit a 6' wide tree-lined landscape buffer, determined by soil planting volume, and a 10' wide shared-use path. A wider shared use path or separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be considered where feasible. The easement or additional ROW does not include any building frontage zone. An additional setback will be required depending on the width of the building frontage zone to accommodate sidewalk cafes, outdoor dining, seating, etc. The exact width of easements or dedications will be determined based on individual property surveys before finalizing any development plans or public projects.

BLENHEIM BOULEVARD

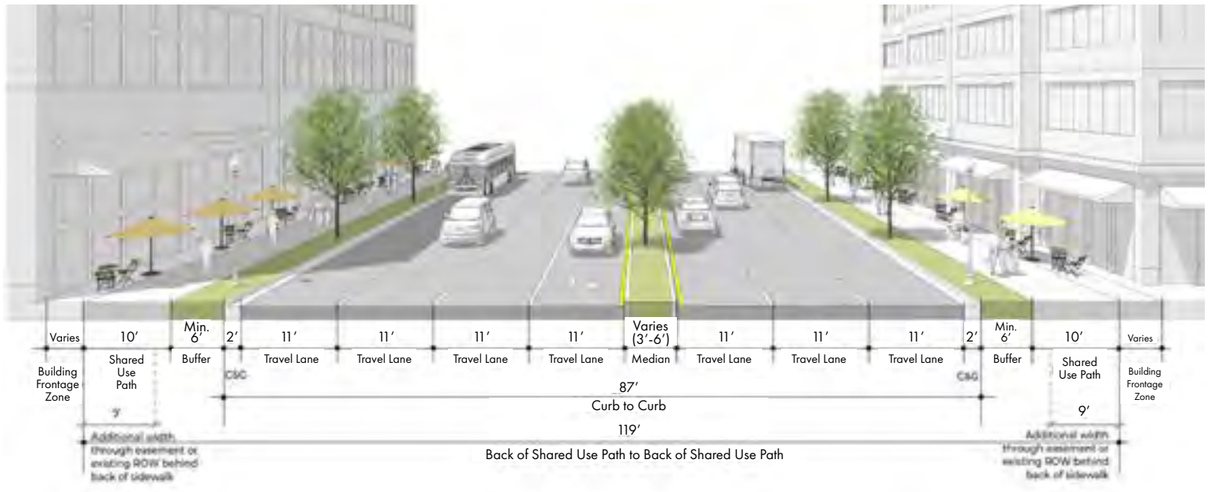
Along Blenheim Boulevard, it is anticipated that at least a 9' easement or additional ROW will be required on either side to implement the typical shared-use path section. This additional space will fit a 6' wide tree-lined landscape buffer, determined by soil planting volume, and a 10' wide shared-use path. A wider shared use path or separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be considered where feasible. The easement or additional ROW does not include any building frontage zone. An additional setback will be required depending on the width of the building frontage zone to accommodate sidewalk cafes, outdoor dining, seating, etc. The exact width of easements or dedications will be determined based on individual property surveys before finalizing any development plans or public projects.

Shared-use path along Constitution Avenue, Canberra Australia
Source: John Gollings, Landezine.com

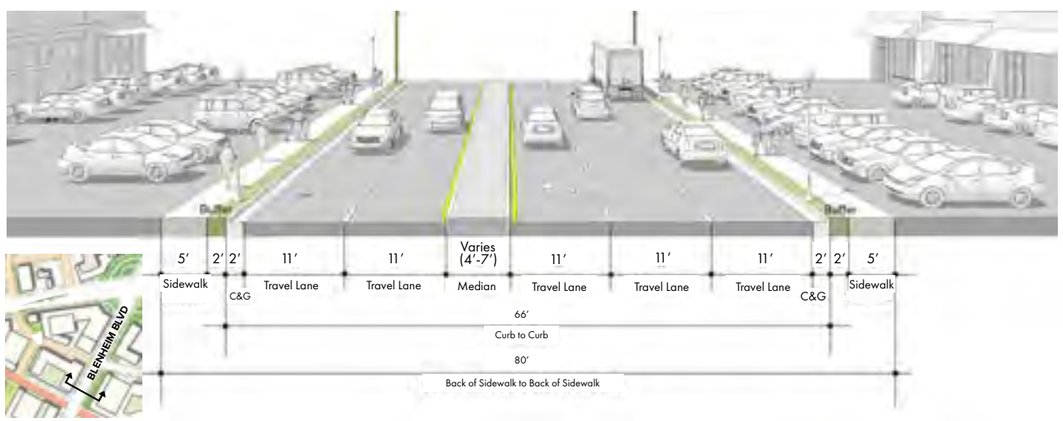
EXISTING DESIGN FOR FAIRFAX BOULEVARD



PROPOSED DESIGN FOR FAIRFAX BOULEVARD



EXISTING DESIGN FOR BLENHEIM BOULEVARD



PROPOSED DESIGN FOR BLENHEIM BOULEVARD

DESIGN ELEMENT

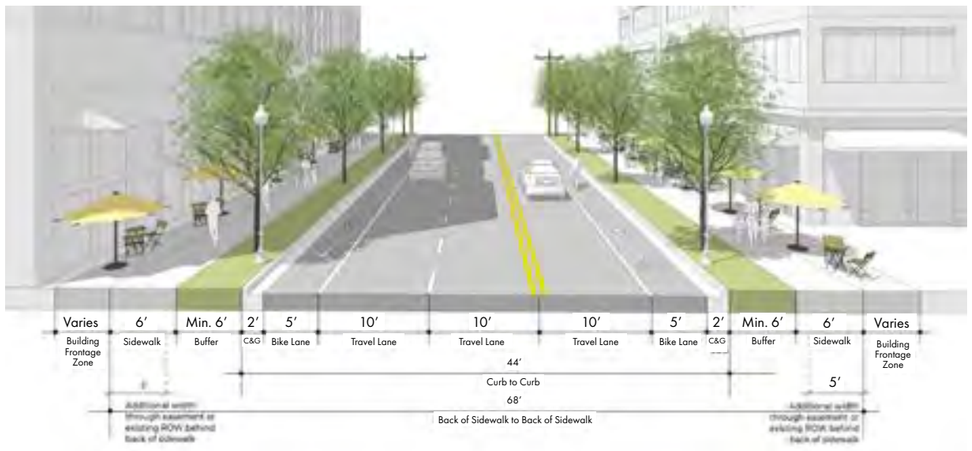
DESIGN FOR ACTIVE STREETS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTORS

OLD PICKETT ROAD

Old Pickett Road is currently a two-lane road with additional turn lanes near intersections. Even for a three-lane road, the existing 44’ wide curb to curb width is too wide and can induce high vehicular speeds which may result in unsafe conditions for all modes. Conventional 5’ wide striped bike lanes can be added by re-striping of existing road and narrowing each existing travel lanes to 10’ wide- which may need further evaluation with the curve in the road and the volume of large trucks (unless/ until industrial uses go away) .

In addition, as properties fronting Old Pickett Road are redeveloped, it is anticipated that at least a 6’ easement or additional ROW will be required on either side to implement the typical sidewalk and pedestrian realm section. This 6’ space will fit a 6’ wide tree-lined landscape buffer and a 6’ wide sidewalk. The width of this buffer is determined by soil planting volume, as is recommended for other green buffers throughout the study area. The easement or additional ROW does not include any building frontage zone. An additional setback will be required depending on the width of the building frontage zone to accommodate sidewalk cafes, outdoor dining, seating, etc. The exact width of easements or dedications will be determined based on individual property surveys before finalizing any development plans or public projects.

EXISTING & PROPOSED DESIGN FOR OLD PICKETT ROAD



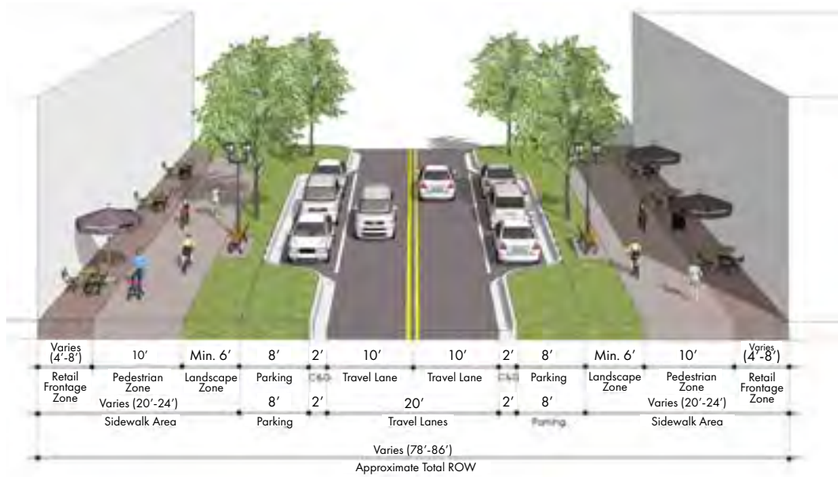
TYPICAL ACTIVE STREETS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTOR

The following typical street sections were developed as guidelines for the design of future internal streets. The City and developers can refer to these street design sections as guidelines for the design of future public and private internal streets within Fairfax Circle Activity Center.

The City can follow the following principles when selecting and evaluating street designs:

- One-way streets should not be used for Active Streets/ public streets unless specifically designated and should be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Diagonal parking should be generally discouraged along Active Streets and should be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Pedestrian bicycle connectors should not be used in place of Active Streets or replace secondary streets/ alleys that provide primary vehicular access to properties, but may be used in place of secondary streets/alleys where vehicular access isn’t needed.
- All green buffer widths should be determined by soil planting volume

TWO-WAY WITH PARALLEL PARKING



DESIGN ELEMENT

TRANSIT NETWORK AND MOBILITY HUB

INTEGRATING TRANSIT, MICRO-MOBILITY AND PLACE-MAKING

The Fairfax Circle area has multiple bus transit routes serving the Activity Center. The City operates the CUE bus system with two circulator routes. CUE Gold route runs along Blenheim Boulevard, Fairfax Boulevard, Old Pickett Road, and Draper Drive. CUE Green route runs along Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, and Old Pickett Road. WMATA Metrobus 29N runs along Fairfax Boulevard.

The City's 2035 Comprehensive Plan identified two areas within the Fairfax Circle Activity Center as bus transfer improvement areas. One location is at the intersection of Blenheim Boulevard and Old Pickett Road where CUE Gold and Green routes intersect. Another location is at the intersection of Draper Drive and Fairfax Boulevard where CUE Gold, Green, and WMATA 1C routes intersect. Another potential bus transfer improvement area could be designed at the intersection of Spring Street and Fairfax Boulevard. The Spring Street location is ideally suited to create a new gateway into the Fairfax Circle Activity Center based on the recommendations of this Small Area Plan.

These bus transfer improvement areas are ideally suited to develop a mobility hub. The mobility hubs can seamlessly integrate bus transfer activity with large iconic bus shelters and other supporting amenities such as seating, lighting, and real-time bus activity information. Taxi/Uber/Lyft pick-up/drop-off zones can also be designed as part of these mobility hubs. New mobility options such as bike-share and scooter-share can also be integrated as part of these mobility hubs, further enhancing the first-mile and last-mile connectivity to the Fairfax Circle Activity Center and surrounding neighborhoods. These mobility hubs are envisioned to be gateways with place-making elements such as landscaping, small parks, plazas, sculptures, and outdoor seating areas.

As part of a future study, the City should develop detailed designs for mobility hubs. The goal of this design should be to seamlessly integrate the mobility hub with landscape and streetscape design while allocating sufficient space for multi-modal integration. The mobility hub designs must balance curb-side space needs between fixed-route transit bus bays, transportation network companies (i.e. Uber), pick-up and drop-off, and potential future autonomous shuttle stops. As part of the mobility hub, additional space beyond curb-side space will likely be required to be dedicated for bike-share, scooter-share, and other future micro-mobility modes. The mobility hub should also include short-term bicycle parking and long-term bicycle lockers where possible.

TRANSIT NETWORK

Example of an iconic bus stop shelter design as part of mobility hub
Source: https://media1.fdncms.com/styleweekly/imager/u/original/9976374/feat27_pulse_station_desing.jpg

Example rendering of a mobility hub
Source: newcivilengineer.com

Example rendering of a mobility hub
Source: Gensler

DESIGN ELEMENT

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Fairfax Circle Activity Center is currently characterized by large superblocks containing automobile-oriented land uses and separated by wide arterial streets. Its proximity to I-66 and the presence of regional thoroughfares (Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, Pickett Road) results in large amounts of vehicular traffic passing through the area, especially during the morning and afternoon peak hours. Transportation improvements, including roadway projects, are unlikely to completely eliminate traffic congestion in the area. Instead, this plan aims to manage the traffic impacts of redevelopment by providing an array of multi-modal transportation options and land use strategies while enhancing the overarching goals of making Fairfax Circle an attractive, walkable, mixed-use Activity Center.

The following strategies describe the approach to managing traffic:

- Leverage a mix of land uses to increase internal trips and reduce peak traffic
- Create a street network
- Connect to surrounding trails, open space, and neighborhoods
- Establish a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program

Leverage a mix of uses to increase internal trips

Mixed-use redevelopment built as walkable districts invites more local travel and produces higher "internal capture" rates than single-use automobile-dependent developments. Internal trips are defined as trips that start and end within the district. For example, with the right balance of housing, retail, and office uses, more employees could choose to live close to where they work, restricting their commute within the district. Similarly, trips to retail uses such as restaurants, pharmacies, dry cleaners, daycare facilities for children, etc. can become internal trips if these uses are designed near housing and offices within the district. These internal trips are often shorter than external trips and can be made on foot or a bike. The redevelopment plan proposed as part of this Small Area Plan creates a better balance and mix of land uses to increase the potential for travel to and within the area and surrounding neighborhoods. More detailed traffic analysis will be required in the future as specific development is proposed to identify particular traffic impacts and offer appropriate mitigation options.

Another benefit of mixed-use development is that different land uses have different traffic-related peak periods within a day. In the morning, residents leave their houses before employees arrive at offices. Similarly, in the evening period, employees leave before residents arrive home, and vehicular trips associated with retail uses and restaurants tend to be in late evenings. Existing roadways are generally designed with the capacity to process vehicular traffic in peak periods. With a mix of land uses and its associated staggering peak periods, current roadway capacity can be utilized more efficiently over a more extended period throughout the day.

Create a street network

This plan proposes new street connections to create more walkable blocks with a grid of connected streets. Not only is pedestrian connectivity enhanced by the creation of smaller blocks and higher intersection density, but a well-connected network allows choice for travelers to filter through a grid of streets and potentially shorten travel distances. With these new connections, people traveling to destinations within the Activity Center will have choices other than traveling on Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard, or Pickett Road, particularly those living nearby. The street grid will result in providing options for people to use alternative streets and may reduce additional traffic at the Fairfax Circle intersection than otherwise would be added in the absence of a new network.

Connect to surrounding trails, open space, and neighborhoods

New trail connections are proposed to the surrounding regional trails such as Willcoxon Trail, Cross County Trail, and planned George Snyder Trail along the Accotink Creek. These trails also provide better access to open spaces and nearby destinations such as Draper Drive Park, Cardinal Park, Gateway Regional Park, Thaiss Park, Mantua Park, and Towers Park. The trail and shared-use paths recommended in this plan also provide better pedestrian and bicycle access to the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metrorail station. In addition new street connections also enhance access and connectivity to nearby residential neighborhoods. These new connections will help provide a more direct option for current residents to walk and bike much shorter distances to get to new destinations like grocery stores or restaurants. Currently, the neighborhood street network does not have direct connections to the Activity Center. This lack of connectivity results in much longer travel distances that end up being car trips.

Establish a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program

Transportation Demand Management (TDM), particularly with many new and emerging travel options, is influencing people's behavior to use the existing and planned infrastructure in more efficient ways. TDM strategies provide information and incentives, to encourage people to use all available options rather than only depending on single-occupancy vehicle travel. TDM encourages people to use existing excess capacity before adding additional capacity. Excess capacity often exists in transit vehicles, sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes. Parking is often oversupplied, located in areas not best suited to efficiently leverage demand and the value of the land it occupies. A comprehensive and dynamic TDM program should be developed for the City with a focus on redeveloping areas like Fairfax Circle. The TDM program should provide data-informed insights that engage businesses and developers and tailor strategies to changing needs and opportunities.

Some of the common TDM strategies relevant to the Fairfax Circle Activity Center include the following:

Encouraging active modes of transportation:

• Provide comfortable sidewalks and street crossings throughout the Activity Center.

• Develop a complete network of safe and comfortable bicycle facilities linked to destinations beyond the Activity Center.

• Expand bike-share and scooter-share programs.

• Enhance transit facilities and provide coordination for frequent bus service and stops with shelters, benches, and real-time arrival information.

Collaborating with employers:

• Establish employee transit benefits and subsidies.

• Provide showers, changing rooms, and secure bike parking to help employees bike to work.

• Organize van-pools and carpools.

• Provide priority parking for carpools.

• Eliminate or reduce free parking.

• Allow flexible work schedules and encourage telework.

Collaborating with developers:

• Allow developers to offer transit passes, a bike-share membership and/or shuttles in lieu of meeting parking requirements.

• Allow developers to fund public parking or other forms of access infrastructure in lieu of meeting parking requirements.

• Require developers to provide bike parking or bike storage as part of the design review or the entitlements process.

• Require developers to provide or contribute to new street or trail connections to the surrounding neighborhoods to enhance overall connectivity as part of the design review or the entitlements process.

• Allow developers a more streamlined review process if the proposed development fits within the proposed land uses. This includes minimizing TIA requirements and allowing developers to contribute to a fund providing transportation improvements to the entire Fairfax Circle area rather than specific to the proposed development.

DESIGN ELEMENT

PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Parking Management

Parking supply and how it is managed affects congestion, pollution, and pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Parking design and placement can also influence the feel of a place and business activity. It is a critical driver of how people choose to get around. The cost and perceived availability of parking must be carefully balanced to the demands of new uses and the building of an attractive, walkable Activity Center. Parking management for the Activity Center relies on the following five strategies:

- Create a park-once and walk district
- Encourage shared parking
- Establish district-wide parking regulations for the Activity Center area
- Encourage the use of on-demand mobile parking apps
- Manage curbside space

Create a park-once and walk district

Fairfax Circle is a major mixed-use destination that will invariably attract visitors who do not live within walking or biking distance. Most of these visitors are likely to drive to Fairfax Circle and require parking. The key to managing this parking need while maintaining an attractive and walkable district is to design Fairfax Circle as a park-once and walk district. With multiple uses within the Activity Center, visitors may need to visit more than one destination, resulting in more trips. With a park-once district environment, the additional trips can be made on foot along walkable streets while the car is parked in a centralized parking location.

In a park-once environment, people are encouraged to park their car in one centralized place and then make stops on foot rather than driving from one destination to another within the district, unlike in a car-oriented single-use area. Creating the type of environment where it is easy for people to walk between destinations involves both good urban design and parking policies. If each destination is required to provide its own off-street parking, and each building is required to provide parking on all sides, dead zones of surface parking lots are created between destinations that make walking distances longer and the walking experiences less pleasant, thereby incentivizing people to get back in the car to drive to other nearby destinations.

As part of the Small Area Plan, shared parking should be encouraged between property owners to accommodate needs at the district level. This consolidation of parking enables the creation of a walkable, internal street network that will result in a park-once district

Encourage shared parking

Shared parking is a strategy that optimizes parking capacity by allowing complementary land uses to share parking spaces rather than developing separate spaces for separate uses. This strategy leverages synergies between adjacent land uses that require parking at different times within a 24-hour period. Mixed-use walkable districts can leverage this difference by sharing parking spots and reducing overall parking inventory.

Parking demands operate on a peak and off-peak schedule dependent on the related land use. Distinct but complementary patterns, such as “office parking,” which is generally empty in the evenings and on weekends, and “residential parking,” which is usually fuller in the evenings, offer an opportunity to better meet parking requirements without increasing supply.

Research has shown that deploying shared parking strategies could reduce the need for parking spaces by up to 31% to 38% as compared to providing separate parking for each individual property or land use type. The graphic below shows the reduced number of parking spaces required in a shared parking model versus an unshared model, where each site needs to provide its own parking.

The City should consider creating a parking management district for Fairfax Circle to encourage shared parking and maximize parking resources while minimizing excess parking supply.

Establish district-wide parking regulations

Most of the time, developers have to provide minimum parking spaces stipulated in the City’s development code resulting in a site-by-site parking supply that typically exceeds demand, cannot be shared, and takes considerable space for the utility of storing cars. Fairfax City’s Zoning Ordinance recognizes this effect and has set parking maximums for commercial and industrial uses, as well as encourages shared parking. However, the City has several requirements that may limit the use and location of shared parking strategies.

In mixed-use activity centers, parking should be considered a shared resource, and regulations should allow sharing of centrally located parking in lieu of on-site parking requirements, especially for commercial and retail land uses. The City should develop a comprehensive district-wide parking regulation for the Activity Center area to provide clarity and predictability of parking requirements throughout Fairfax Circle. These regulations can include a methodology to calculate shared parking ratios by land use type and an implementation framework that can allow developers to pay into a fund to build centrally located shared parking garages in lieu of on-site parking requirements.

Encourage the use of on-demand mobile parking apps

Advances in technology have also enabled more efficient use of existing parking inventory. Mobile apps such as Spot Hero, and ParkMobile, among others, allow users to reserve a parking spot on demand and in advance at a specific location.

These mobile apps open up publicly and privately owned parking spaces to be shared as public parking spaces, increasing the available supply without any additional cost to the City. The distributed nature of the parking supply that is made possible by the use of such technologies also mitigates the traffic congestion that can be caused by a single large parking lot or garage.

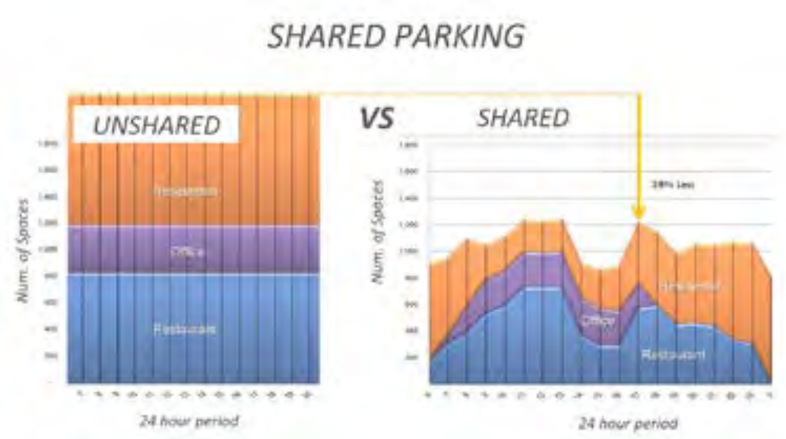
As part of the overall TDM program, the City should consider organizing educational or marketing campaigns to make residents, employees, and visitors aware of these additional parking options.

Manage curbside space

The City’s curbside space is one of its most valuable resources, especially in the Activity Centers. Proper management of this resource results in greater access, increasing the efficiency and functionality of the space for residents, visitors, and business owners alike. This, in turn, produces economic and quality of life benefits for everyone. The City’s curbside environment is utilized by a diverse range of users in cars, bikes, scooters, buses, and commercial vehicles. The boom in online shopping and ride-hail services has contributed to an uptick in commercial and individual demand for pick-up/drop-off zones and curbside loading zones. Along with ride-hail applications, new transportation options like shared scooters and other micro-mobility modes are simultaneously expanding access to the City’s Activity Centers and surrounding neighborhoods resulting in increasing demand for already limited curbside space.

Often, these competing demands outstrip the amount of available space, requiring proactive management. Competing demands need to be balanced by analyzing trade-offs and looking closely at the local context. A solution that works in Old Town may not be appropriate for Fairfax Circle or any other Activity Centers.

The City should develop a specific curbside management plan for each Activity Center, clearly identifying pick-up/drop-off spaces, loading areas, bike-share and scooter-share parking, and on-street parking with various regulations by streets and block faces.



Source: Town of Windsor, CA

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

1 PEOPLE SCALED BLOCK SIZES AND QUALITY

2 STREET CHARACTER

3 BUILDING HEIGHTS

4 OVERHEAD LINES AND ERUV

5 SANITARY MANAGEMENT

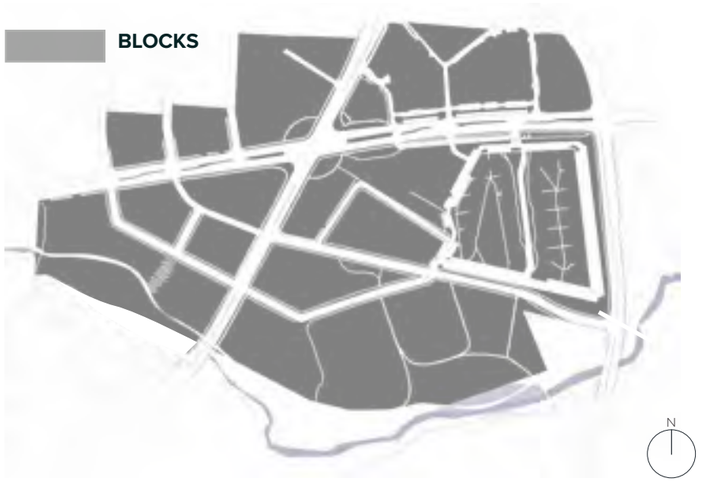
6 LAND USE + MARKET DYNAMICS

DESIGN ELEMENT

PEOPLE-CENTERED BLOCK SIZES AND QUALITY

SMALLER NAVIGABLE BLOCKS WITH EXPANDED GREEN SPACES

Main Downtown Intersection | Fairfax, VA



The proposed plan supports breaking up the large superblocks in Fairfax Circle to help support both a more walkable experience and easier navigation by car.

The block sizes shown are smaller in scale - typically 300 to 700 feet. Where streets are not possible to break up the block trails are anticipated to break up the network and connect the neighborhood to the Accotink Creek system.

Helping further break up the superblocks are the green fingers and new parks. These new spaces will foster new pedestrian and cyclist paths - helping to increase navigability of the study area and wider city by foot.

BLOCK SIZES HELP MAKE PLACES FEEL LIKE A NEIGHBORHOOD

Mosaic District or Old Town Fairfax are both different urban spaces. One modern and one historic. Both share an intimate block size that helps create a more pedestrian navigable district. These smaller blocks create both a sense of intimacy which can help businesses, quality of life for residents, and a sense of place for a neighborhood.

DESIGN ELEMENT

STREET CHARACTER

ACTIVATION ALONG MAJOR + MINOR STREETS

A major community driven goal of the Small Area Plan is to alleviate traffic and reduce risks to pedestrians and cyclists. A key solution is to create streets that are low stress to pedestrians and cyclists. Under the urban design framework shown to the right, commercial mains would help traffic move through the city to destination sites, while connecting cyclists and pedestrians through shared use paths. Refer to the transportation chapter for more details on the street section, vehicular, and multi-modal network.

COMMERCIAL MAINS

Commercial mains are understood to be the major boulevards that serve both local and regional vehicular traffic. The main goal is to move from prioritizing automobiles to facilitating all types of transportation through shared use paths. These main roads are currently treated architecturally as highway arterials with drive-through or car oriented retail. The plan encourages rethinking these main streets as tree-lined boulevards as they gradually transition to more pedestrian-oriented frontages and uses.

SPRING STREET

Spring Street is intended to extend across the southern edge of the study area and be the future neighborhood main street for the study area. The street, while allowing vehicular traffic- is intended to support more robust village oriented pedestrian life. This street will serve as the main retail and mixed use artery through the study area. Quality architecture with ground floor pedestrian-oriented frontages are prioritized. The street also runs parallel to the Accotink Creek system and will serve as a complementary corridor for access to that system, criss-crossed with green fingers and trail connection points. Emphasizing this green connection- the street is anchored on each end by the Accotink Plaza and Gateway Park with vegetation and streetscape improvements that accommodate walkability. Vehicular traffic is calmer than along the main corridors but still forms a key connection. Easy public on-street parallel parking and rear or smaller side parking lots as well as garages provide easily accesible parking. New, calmer walking connections are welcomed to facilitate cross-shopping by visitors on foot between businesses.

NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

Neighborhood Streets are existing or proposed street connections that will be slower moving local streets serving local commercial uses and residents while also providing a robust street grid to alleviate traffic at the commercial mains. Vehicular traffic is envisioned to be calmer than commercial mains with parallel, on street parking preferred. Sidewalks with street trees or green fingers are required on both sides of the street. The roads and sidewalk infrastructure allow for comfortable use for both pedestrians and cyclists.

POTENTIAL CONNECTOR

Potential Connector: Currently, a private street runs through Foxcroft connecting Fairfax Boulevard to Old Pickett Road. While no changes are anticipated in the near term, the plan suggests this road be re-aligned to improve movement to the retail at the Scout and the new mixed use activity at Spring Street as well as connecting to Hume Avenue. This general intent would require future study for a collaborative design with input from the Foxcroft condominiums. Ideally, the road would be a publicly accessed street with parallel parking, a continuous sidewalk, and have no loss in resident parking and amenities. The road would offer opportunities for more stormwater capture and could serve as part of the green-finger open space.

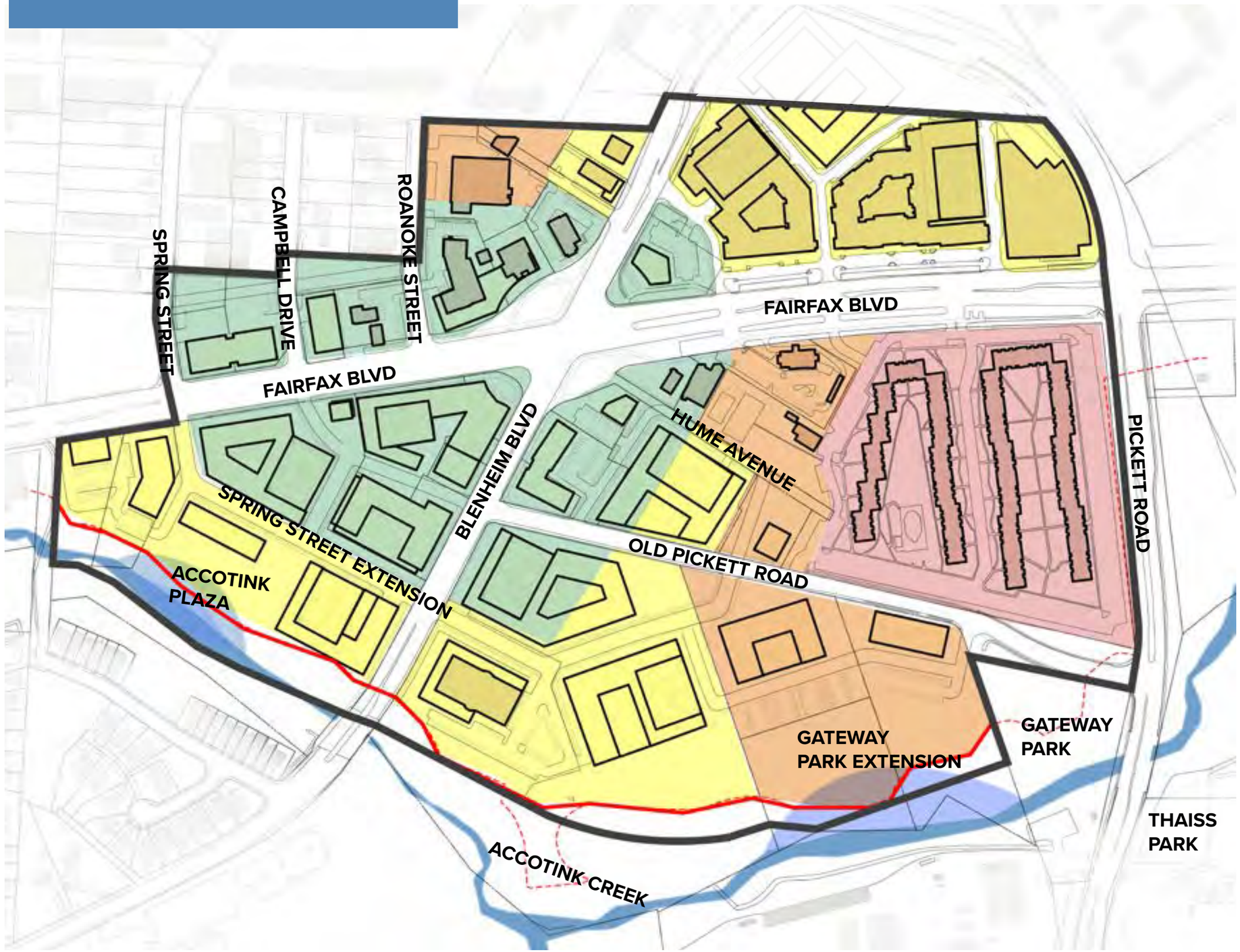
TRAIL CONNECTORS

Trail Connectors are main pedestrian/cyclist connections to the Accotink creek. Where these trails interact with buildings, balconies, patios, and seating that connects to the nearby retail or mix of uses should be considered. These may connect or layer with the design goals of the green fingers or shared use paths discussed elsewhere.

DESIGN ELEMENT

BUILDING HEIGHTS

A TAILORED APPROACH



The Small Area Plan is also tasked with making recommendations that modify and complement existing zoning regulations, including land use, massing and height, to allow for long-term development outcomes in the City's best interests.

As articulated in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan and other market research, quality mixed-use developments that are appropriate for Activity Centers require a critical mass of height, density and public amenities in order to be feasible. Based on development patterns within the region, it is generally expected that not all sites within the study area will redevelop using building typologies that exceed current lower scale building height. Parcel size and consolidation, ownership interest, the success of existing retail, and other factors will likely continue to support lower height, retail dominated uses for many parts of the study area.

DESIGN ELEMENT

BUILDING HEIGHTS

TOPOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Fairfax Circle has a few unique characteristics to consider for building heights within the City of Fairfax.
Fairfax Circle is at a topographic low point, the closest small area plan to a Metro station, and bordered by very tall and dense apartments just across the line in Fairfax County. It also has a natural green setback at Accotink Creek from the nearby residential areas to the south. Lastly, with the unique challenges to accommodate stormwater runoff, additional density may help facilitate future development. These unique characteristics affect issues of stormwater and transportation but also offer the opportunity to provide taller buildings that still fit compatibility within the City of Fairfax.

Below is a diagram representing how these building heights interact with the topographic characteristics and green setback of Fairfax Circle. The general design intent is to allow greater density around the existing Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard intersection while tapering to tower building heights adjacent to lower height residential areas.

DESIGN ELEMENT

BUILDING HEIGHTS

HEIGHT, LAND USE, CHARACTER

NEIGHBORING RESIDENTIAL USES

Typical land use:
- Single family residential

Height limits: 3 Story

Setback: Green setback at Accotink Creek

Character
- Suburban, variety of styles and sizes of housing
- Heights vary, 1 story to 3 stories, many basements, porches, detached garages

FOXCROFT CONDOMINIUMS

Current and Expected Uses
- Low scale 4 story multifamily

Height limit: 4 Stories or Less

Character
- Low scale multifamily with porches, pitched roofs, and balconies
- Small private green and amenity spaces
- Surface parking, with future parallel encouraged at connector streets.

TRANSITIONAL ZONE

Expected Land Uses
- Multifamily residential
- Mixed-use Commercial
- Production, Distribution, and Repair

Height limits
- 5 Story Maximum

Character
- Medium scale mixed-use transition
- Architecturally sensitive step-downs, setbacks, or aesthetics to Foxcroft Condominiums and Fairfax Circle Villas
- Side or rear surface parking, parking garages, and/or underground parking
- Pedestrian-oriented ground floor along primary street or shared use path
- No drive-throughs on Spring Street

NEIGHBORHOOD ZONE

Expected Land Uses
- Multifamily residential
- Mixed-use Commercial
- Production, Distribution, and Repair

Height limits
- 7 Story Maximum

Character
- Medium scale mixed-use transition
- Expected parking garages, underground parking, and limited surface parking at rear of buildings
- Pedestrian-oriented ground floor along primary street or shared use path
- No drive-throughs on Spring Street

CORE CIRCLE

Expected Land Uses
- Multifamily residential
- Mixed-use Commercial
- Production, Distribution, and Repair

Height limits
- 9 story maximum

Character
- Medium scale mixed-use transition
- Expected parking garages, underground parking, and limited surface parking at rear of buildings
- Prioritized pedestrian-oriented ground floor activating primary street.
- Retail oriented Spring Street where applicable
- Expected mix of heights and uses
- No drive-throughs on Spring Street

BUILDING HEIGHTS AND LAND USE

TRANSITIONING FROM ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS TO MIXED-USE CORE

The diagram above illustrates the goals of the Small Area Plan for Building Heights and the suggested character. The approach to the heights and land use is to allow space for density to help activate a more urban character along the former circle instersection and Spring Street while respecting existing context of Foxcroft. To achieve this, the existing allowable four story zoning at Foxcroft condominiums are intended to have a transitional complementary 5 story max height adjacent. As one moves towards the “core circle”, the heights grow in size to 9 stories maximum. While it is unlikely 9 stories in height will be consistent throughout this zone, the long term intent is to allow this area which is closer to the Metro, at a low topographic point in the city, to evolve to signal a new gateway to the neighborhood and respond to higher densities to the north.

DESIGN ELEMENT

OVERHEAD LINES AND ERUV

RECOMMENDATIONS

The plan recommends that future developments be encouraged to move existing overhead utilities underground to improve resiliency against climate as well as provide the ability to create a more robust tree canopy along major boulevards. Resiliency of electrical service during major storm events is enhanced when power lines are moved underground. With expected increase in major weather events, risk to overhead lines will increase.

Priority for undergrounding overhead lines should be prioritized along major boulevards like Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard to encourage larger tree canopies and an enhanced aesthetic impact.

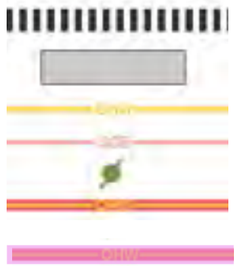
This could be accomplished through adherence to existing zoning ordinance provisions, municipal investments, and incremental improvements as new developments occur.

ERUV:

An urban area enclosed by a wire boundary which symbolically extends the private domain of Jewish households into public areas, permitting activities within it that are normally forbidden in public on the Sabbath.

In the case of urban spaces, the Eruv may look like a wire, be the facade of a building, a grouping of street lights, or overhead power lines.

A critical Eruv boundary currently passes through the center of Fairfax Circle and is threatened with the potential of undergrounding of power lines. This plan requires keeping the Eruv by replacing the current power line boundary with a placemaking element like lighting across the intersection, permanent banners, or wiring.



LIMITS OF SMALL AREA PLAN

BUILDINGS

EXISTING OVERHEAD LINE

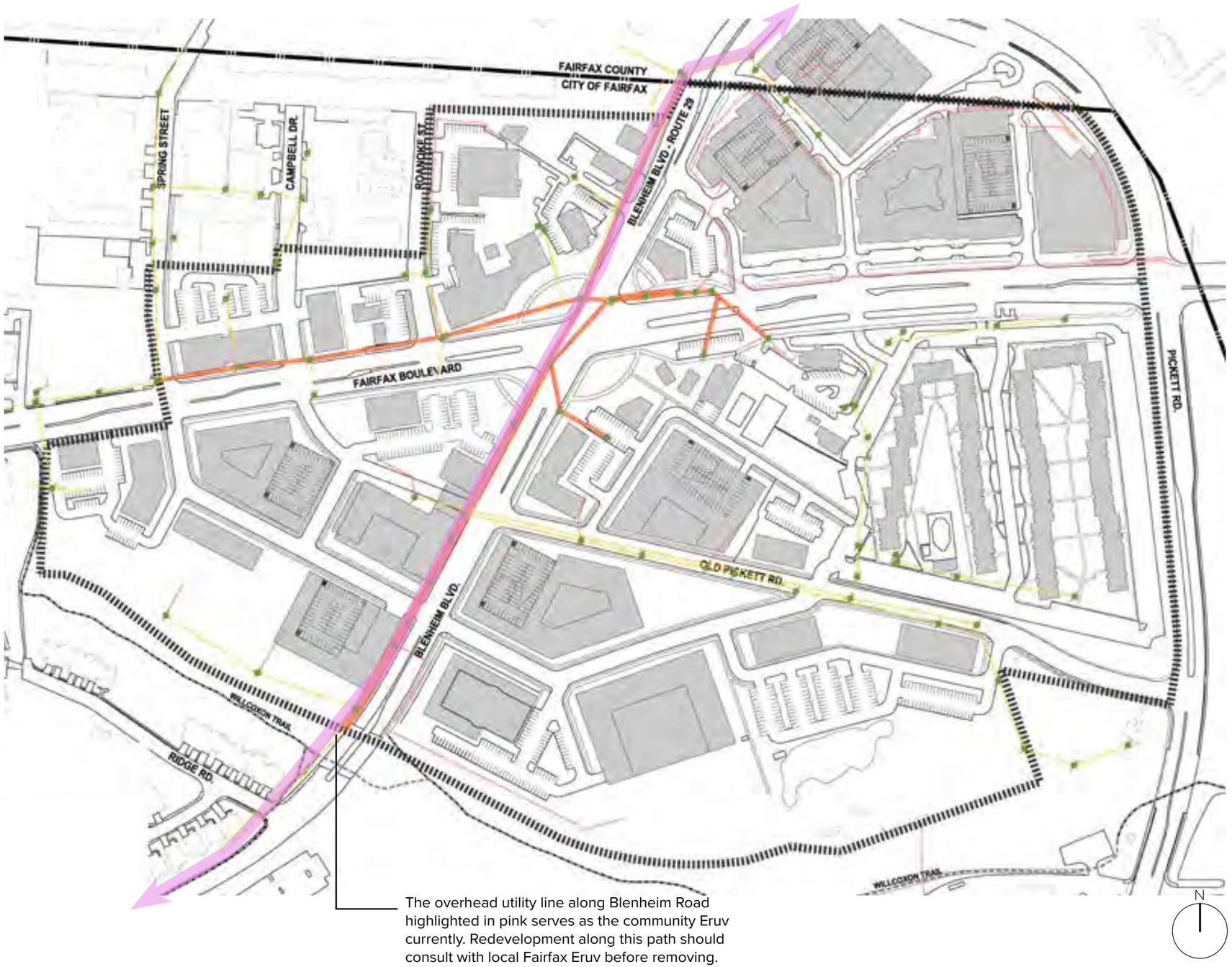
EXISTING DEV UNDERGROUND LINE

EXISTING DEV POLE

PRIORITY EXISTING OVERHEAD UTILITY

ERUV

200’ 0’ 100’ 200’ 400’ 800’



The overhead utility line along Blenheim Road highlighted in pink serves as the community Eruv currently. Redevelopment along this path should consult with local Fairfax Eruv before removing.

DESIGN ELEMENT

The plan explores the capacity of existing sanitary sewer systems to accommodate projected future development. An initial assessment of the system shows a few portions of the study area where the sanitary sewer system may require capacity upgrades to accommodate future growth along Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard.

The plan recommends to monitor these areas and plan for upgrades accordingly. The City's sanitary sewer trunk network runs through, and in close proximity to, the southern portion of the study area, with an outfall point toward Fairfax County to the east. The areas identified on the map should be monitored and the City's policy of sanitary sewer capacity analysis with new development will help to ensure that problem areas within the City's network are identified and addressed as this area evolves.

SANITARY MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITS OF SMALL AREA PLAN

BUILDINGS

SANITARY SEWER

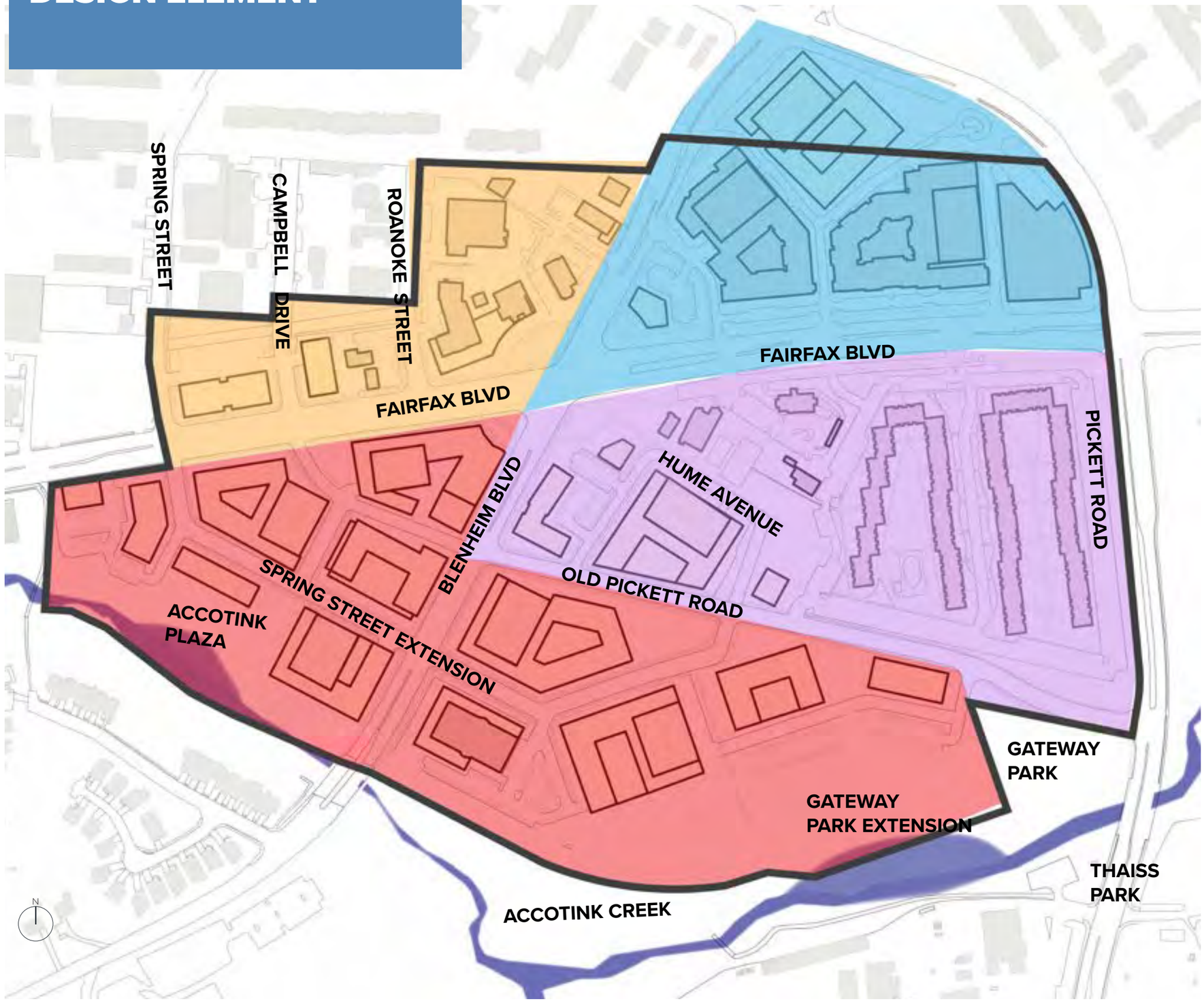
SANITARY SEWER AREAS THAT MAY REQUIRE CAPACITY UPGRADES DUE TO INCREASES IN UPSTREAM

200' 0' 100' 200' 400' 800'

N

DESIGN ELEMENT

CHARACTER AREAS AND LAND USES



THE CREEK AND SPRING STREET

The southern area of the activity center is intended to evolve to be anchored along the Creek system and the new Spring Street "main street", The plan imagines retaining office uses and encouraging remaining production, repair, and distribution (PDR) uses to move out of the flood plain and be made more compatible with pedestrian oriented residential and retail uses. Where properties front the Creek system- balconies, patios, boardwalks, and secondary entrances and building frontages are encouraged. Smaller pad sites are intended to transition to more flexible frontages with entrances along Spring Street, Pickett and Blenheim and parking at the rear or side.

FOXCROFT COLONY AND HUME AVENUE

The center-east part of the activity center anticipates retaining the Foxcroft Colony Condominium uses and strengthening pedestrian oriented uses and green uses so that the condominiums are better linked to the study area. Smaller parcel sizes and divided ownership make consolidation to larger mixed use buildings limited but where possible, the plan encourages infusing more residential mixed use and pedestrian frontages The character area's evolution will be defined by an improved Fairfax Boulevard / Blenheim Boulevard intersection and an improved pedestrian and vehicular road network that connects to Hume Avenue. A new pedestrian or vehicular street runs north to Fairfax Boulevard to Old Pickett Road. Finally, as elsewhere, new green fingers brining greater stormwater management and green spaces.

THE SCOUT AND NORTHEAST

At the northeast quadrant of the activity center, it is expected the Scout on the Circle will continue to anchor the mixed use retail and residential for this area. Overtime, the Omega Office park, straddling the County/city border, is expected to redevelop. The plan encourages residential anchored mixed use due to proximity to the metro to the north and existing amenities provided at the Scout. The plan also encourages a more pedestrian oriented pad site (see flexible frontages) at the current Dunkin Donuts perhaps in the medium to long term to fit into the increasingly pedestrian oriented nature of this area.

THE PRODUCTION AND REPAIR DISTRICT

The northwest area of the activity center is expected to largely retain production, distribution, and repair (PDR) uses including automotive repair shops, gas stations, and dealerships. This is to fit seamlessly with similar uses just outside the study area. While PDR uses are expected, this plan does not forbid thoughtful new retail or residential uses like the recent development of Wesley housing. With the redevelopment of Fairfax Circle and addition of shared use paths along Fairfax Boulevard and Campbell Drive, the plan encourages better facades and pedestrian frontages and encourages redevelopment that puts parking and repair uses at the back of properties with entrances and other uses along the commercial mains. The plan also encourages a vehicular connection between Roanoke, Campbell, and Spring Street (See Goal 4).

VISION PLAN

NEAR-TERM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (1-10 YEARS)

In the near term, the small area plan anticipates new residential and mixed use at the southwest quadrant of the study area anchored on a new Spring Street; the change from Fairfax Circle to a more infrastructure-focused design, and increasing resilient green landscapes throughout the study area. This map is intended to help guide City priorities - not to limit where near-term private development can occur.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- Fairfax Circle Redesign - Enhanced Green + Stormwater Infrastructure
- Spring Street
- Revitalized Gateway Park
- New Accotink Plaza
- Increased Shared Use Paths at Blenheim and Fairfax Boulevards
- Improved Trail System
- Connecting Hume Avenue to Old Pickett Road
- New green fingers extending lush landscape into the study area

RESIDENTIAL

- Mixed use infill mostly focused on the southwest quadrant.
- Improving bicycle and pedestrian connections from existing uses at Scout and Foxcroft to trail system and metro.

RETAIL/OFFICE

- Transition from vehicular only retail uses to more balanced pedestrian focused retail.
- Adaptive reuse or revitalization of existing retail to better respond to shared use paths, the new Fairfax Circle intersection, and infrastructure changes.
- Stabilization and retention of existing office

AUTOMOTIVE AND PDR USES

- Integrating existing and new PDR uses with pedestrian focused enhancements and/or mixed-use models.
- Facade and landscape enhancements at former Fairfax Circle.

New Buildings

Existing buildings footprints. These buildings are either unlikely to change or are predicted to remain in the near term with some adaptive reuse.

Spring Street “Main Street”

Other Neighborhood Streets

Existing or proposed pavilions, public facilities, or small retail kiosks

Existing or proposed greenspaces

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In the long term, the small area plan focuses on extending the Spring Street mixed use into the southeast quadrant and continued enhancement of green spaces throughout the study area. The plan also imagines smaller parcels that do not consolidate as pedestrian focused uses that balance the need for automobile study area wide.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- Expansion of Gateway Park
- Continued improvement of Accotink Creek
- Green fingers extending lush landscape into the study area

RESIDENTIAL

- New mixed use infill mostly focused on the southeast quadrant.

RETAIL/OFFICE

- Continued transition to mixed use models for retail and office.
- Where retail/office are single use pad sites, now fully accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and cars study area wide.

AUTOMOTIVE AND PDR USES

- Expansion of flood management area and reduction of impervious surfaces in the flood plain and near Accotink Creek
- Long term retention of uses with better facades along Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim, and Old Picket Road.

New Buildings

Existing buildings footprints. These buildings are either unlikely to change or are predicted to remain in the near term with some adaptive reuse.

Spring Street “Main Street”

Other Neighborhood Streets

Existing or proposed pavilions, public facilities, or small retail kiosks

Existing or proposed greenspaces

URBAN DESIGN FEATURES - SOUTHWEST

1 IMPROVED MULTI-MODAL LINKS

- Reduce the number of curb cuts into consolidated shared streets, drive aisles, and alleys.
- Encourage shared parking between uses to foster better pedestrian-oriented cross shopping and reduce traffic. Encourage parking along private and public streets rather than directly from commercial mains.
- Establish a shared use path along both sides of Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard to promote pedestrian and cyclist circulation.

2 TRANSPORTATION HUB FOR BIKE/BUS

- Create a new community transportation hub for buses and micro-transit activated by an activated Spring Street.

3 ACCOMMODATE MIXED USE IN A VARIETY OF FORMS

- Promote adaptive reuse that supports building frontages with pedestrian-oriented activity such as improved commercial fronts along main roads, better vegetation, flexible retail design, or sustainability improvements.
- Support redevelopment of structures into new buildings as part of a large mixed-use development in consultation with Fairfax County for properties that are within both jurisdictions.

4 IMPROVED ACCOTINK CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

- Restore Accotink Creek through planting of local native and pollinator species, removal of invasive plants, stream restoration, improvements to existing trail path conditions, etc.
- Improve trail systems including paths, wayfinding, and (where appropriate) dark sky compliant lighting. Clarify in wayfinding connections to nearby attractions in the City of Fairfax and beyond.
- Encourage nearby uses to engage with trail oriented development tactics.
- Coordinate with nearby properties to improve stormwater capture.

5 NEW ACCOTINK CREEK PLAZA- OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACE

- Foster a new private/public civic space that brings retail uses, residential uses, and green Accotink creek system together in one celebratory neighborhood park space.
- Support designs that demonstrate stormwater capture, use of native species, public art, and interactive park spaces.

6 MIXED-USE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL, COMMERCIAL WITH ACTIVATION ALONG SPRING STREET

- Encourage undergrounding of overhead power lines with redevelopment.
- Require mixed-use development and/or pedestrian-oriented frontages along Spring Street
- Require designs that connect residents and retail users to Accotink Creek trail system and green fingers with balconies, patios, entrances and other interactive designs.
- Encourage ground floor commercial and active uses.
- Encourage underground parking, parking garages, or rear lot parking to keep a continuous streetscape experience.
- Encourage use of permeable paving and lush vegetation where parking lots are adjacent to the creek system.

URBAN DESIGN FEATURES - SOUTHEAST

1 IMPROVED MULTI-MODAL LINKS

- Reduce the number of curb cuts into consolidated shared streets, drive aisles, and alleys.
- Encourage shared parking between uses to foster better pedestrian-oriented cross shopping and reduce traffic. Encourage parking along private and public streets rather than directly from commercial mains.
- Establish a shared use path along both sides of Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard to promote pedestrian and cyclist circulation.

2 ESTABLISHING A STREET GRID

- Work with Foxcroft Condominiums to establish a north/south neighborhood street
- Work with business owners and Foxcroft Condominiums to establish pedestrian and vehicular connections to Hume Avenue.
- Foster better crosswalk and pedestrian infrastructure throughout grid network including sidewalks, street trees, and hawk or timed signals as appropriate.

3 EXPAND GREEN FINGERS INTO STUDY AREA

- Implement green fingers and enhance stormwater management through development projects.
- Encourage native species and trail links into the study area.
- Identify locations for pocket parks or stormwater catchment with redevelopment.

4 EXPANDED GATEWAY PARK AND IMPROVE TRAIL SYSTEM

- Expand Gateway Park with designs that address stormwater and flooding challenges.
- Encourage where parking along creek is installed, a lush permeable design.
- Replace impervious surface with open space in the resource protection area and floodplain.
- Consider uses and building designs that are compatible with mix of uses and residential.

5 MIXED-USE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL, OFFICE

- Encourage undergrounding of overhead power lines with redevelopment.
- Require mixed-use development and/or pedestrian-oriented retail frontages along Spring Street.
- Require designs that connect residents and retail users to Accotink Creek trail system and green fingers with balconies, patios, entrances and other interactive designs.
- Encourage ground floor commercial and active uses.
- Encourage underground parking, parking garages, or rear lot parking to keep a continuous streetscape experience.
- Encourage use of permeable paving and lush vegetation where parking lots are adjacent to the creek system.

6 ACCOMMODATE MIXED USE IN A VARIETY OF FORMS

- Allow for adaptive reuse that supports building frontages with pedestrian-oriented activity such as improved commercial fronts along main roads, better vegetation, flexible retail design, or sustainability improvements.
- Support redevelopment of structures into new buildings as part of a large mixed-use development in consultation with Fairfax County for properties that are within both jurisdictions.

URBAN DESIGN FEATURES - NORTHWEST

1 SHARED USE PATHS AND CONNECTIVITY

- Collaborate with Fairfax County to establish a continuous pedestrian/cyclist connection to Metro.
- Establish a shared use path and associated streetscape concept along Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard.

2 NEW EAST/WEST CONNECTION

- Encourage a new east/west vehicular connection to connect Spring Street, Campbell Drive, and Roanoke Street at location indicated or north of study area.
- Preference is for a complete neighborhood street but a secondary street connection that allows ease of vehicular access.

3 REINVENTED FAIRFAX CIRCLE

- Establish an intersection to replace Fairfax Circle.
- Establish new greenspaces and placemaking elements at right of ways.
- Encourage nearby business to improve facades and engage with greenspaces.
- Require better sidewalk and shared use connections.
- Consider land swaps or sales to nearby properties to facilitate goals.
- Reduce curb cuts at or adjacent to Fairfax Circle.

4 FACADE ENHANCEMENTS AND ADAPTIVE REUSE

- Encourage consolidation of smaller parcels with nearby properties.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of properties that are difficult to develop like gas stations to placemaking retail uses.
- Encourage automotive uses to provide facade enhancements, landscaping, or unique canopy designs adjacent to the circle.
- Encouraged curved canopies, landscape elements, and/or facade faces at the Circle to referenced the older circular form.

5 ACCOMMODATE MIXED USE IN A VARIETY OF FORMS

- Allow for adaptive reuse that supports building frontages with pedestrian-oriented activity such as improved commercial fronts along main roads, better vegetation, flexible retail design, or sustainability improvements.
- Support redevelopment of structures into new buildings as part of a large mixed-use development in consultation with Fairfax County for properties that are within both jurisdictions.

URBAN DESIGN FEATURES - NORTHEAST

1 SHARED USE PATHS AND CONNECTIVITY

- Collaborate with Fairfax County to establish a continuous pedestrian/cyclist connection to Metro.
- Establish a shared use path and associated streetscape concept along Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard.

2 MIXED-USE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL, OFFICE

- Collaborate with County and property owner on any future redevelopment to ensure compatibility with Scout and the Activity Center as a whole.
- Encourage undergrounding of overhead power lines with redevelopment.
- Encourage coordinated mixed-use development and/or opedestrian-oriented connections from parcel shared by the Conty and City to the Scout at the south.
- Encourage underground parking, parking garages, or rear lot parking to keep a continuous streetscape experience.
- Encourage creation of a street network connecting to grid established by Scout.

3 ACCOMMODATE MIXED USE IN A VARIETY OF FORMS

- Allow for adaptive reuse that supports building frontages with pedestrian-oriented activity such as improved commercial fronts along main roads, better vegetation, flexible retail design, or sustainability improvements.
- Support redevelopment of structures into new buildings as part of a large mixed-use development in consultation with Fairfax County for properties that are within both jurisdictions.

4 BETTER PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

- Improve pedestrian connections and crossings across major commercial boulevards including signal timing, markings, and visibility.
- Encourage better connections and wayfinding to nearby trail systems and parks

5 STREET INFRASTRUCTURE

- With future redevelopment, encourage sidewalks, lighting, street trees, and other pedestrian oriented infrastructure on both sides of the street