Upper Potomac West
TASK FORCE REPORT

The Department of Planning & Zoning
City of Alexandria
June 26, 2001

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THE TASK FORCE

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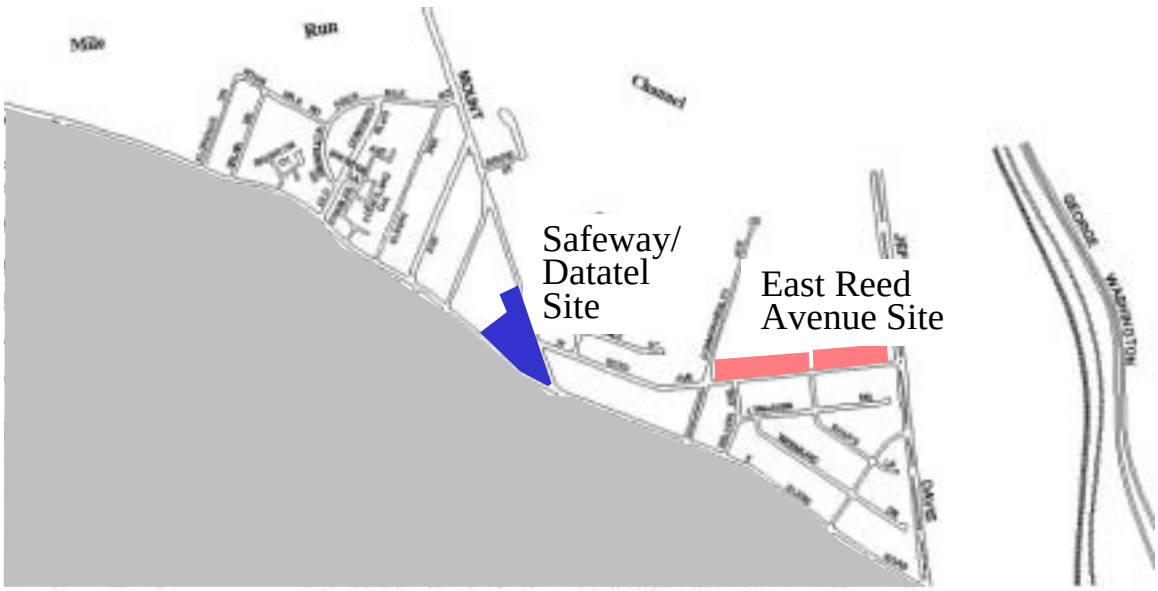
Upper Potomac West

THE TASK FORCE

THE UPPER POTOMAC WEST TASK FORCE

The Upper Potomac West Task Force was created by City Council in June 2000 to assist in the planning for the redevelopment of key sites in the Potomac West area north of Glebe Road. The Task Force identified a vision for the overall area and created work groups to focus on two key redevelopment sites, the Safeway Datatel site and the East Reed Avenue site.



The members of the Task Force are:

Conrado Aguilar	Christopher Hamilton	Perry Reith
Judith Bliss	William Hendrickson	Brenda Smith
Rosa Byrd	Marlin G. Lord	Philip Sunderland
Alethea Camp	Lloyd Martin, II	Maria Wasowski
Patrick Gaffney, Chair	Beth Offenbacker	Stephen Weinstock

Others who have participated on an ad hoc basis include:

Harold Brooks	John Liss	Carl Sanders
Richard Eubanks	Pat Miller	Jim VanZee
Christopher Hart (St.Rita's)	Bob Munson	Shade White

THE TASK FORCE VISION

The Task Force began its work with a visioning session and discussed its hopes for the area of the City north of Glebe Road - both in terms of physical development and community character. A series of vision statements were identified as part of that session which were summarized as the following eleven principles to guide the work of the Task Force:

- The neighborhood is unique and desirable because of its economic and cultural diversity.
- The pedestrian deserves an elevated position to preserve the neighborhoods.
- Any new development should be economically viable.
- Traffic should be managed for a safe environment.
- Housing needs to be affordable for all citizens.
- Infrastructure is a shared responsibility of both public and private interests.
- Uses should be mixed, in order to create a day and night environment.
- Any redevelopment should build on the existing strengths of the area.
- Open space and recreation are very important ingredients in any new development.
- Existing neighborhoods should be maintained and stabilized.
- The Upper Potomac West area should have an identity of its own.

THE WORK GROUPS

The Task Force also discussed and listed the following as key geographical points within the area, each of which could be the subject of a work group:

- Safeway/Datatel
- Arlandria
- Golden Triangle
- East Reed Avenue
- An improved parks and open space system
- West side of Route 1 (Glebe to Reed)
- Virginia Power property on West Glebe
- North end of Mount Vernon/Gateway
- Edison Street as relates to park and as a neighborhood area
- Presidential Greens
- Glebe Park

In order to prioritize its work, and to proceed with a manageable goal, the Task Force chose its two highest priority redevelopment sites and created two work groups to address the issues for each one:

- **Safeway/Datatel Work Group**
- **East Reed Avenue Work Group**

Each work group was asked to discuss the above topics in depth, to determine whether redevelopment was appropriate and, if so, to create a plan, with property owners and developers, for redevelopment of the area. The work groups then proceeded with an aggressive meeting schedule in order to accomplish their goals.

This report provides the City with the results of the efforts as to redevelopment potential of each site, and establishes guidelines and opportunities to guide and shape redevelopment at each site.

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

Members of the Task Force have identified and discussed additional issues pertaining to the Upper Potomac West area – beyond the Safeway/Datatel and East Reed Avenue sites – that they recommend the City address and study in the future, in order to continue the work of the Task Force and to proactively enhance desirable redevelopment in the area. Some of the issues, such as affordable housing, open space enhancement and improving the development review process, may already be addressed in other City efforts. Other issues, such as enhancing the role of neighborhood institutions, may be appropriately considered by neighborhood and civic associations. The following were identified as future planning issues:

---

1. ***Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation -*** The Task Force believes that the area should include better, easier, and more direct means for residents to access shopping, service and park areas, connecting activities within the area with walkways and bike paths, eliminating barriers and making intersections more pedestrian friendly. In addition, there are concerns about existing parking issues, especially in the Hume Springs area, and about future parking issues if Mount Vernon Avenue shops attract more retail customers. For example, parking meters may be desirable on Mount Vernon Avenue. Finally, the Task Force suggested that transit and shuttle services should be enhanced for the neighborhood.
2. ***Implementation and Incentives -*** The group stressed the importance generally of providing incentives and strategies for any redevelopment within the area. Individual members suggested that the area be rezoned to allow larger development if the redevelopment met the requirements and guidelines expressed by the Task Force. See appendix.

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES (continued)

3. ***Diversity -*** A continuing theme of concern by the Task Force is the need to retain the diversity of the area's residents and businesses. The Task Force repeatedly expressed the fact that the cultural, economic and social diversity of the area is one of its strengths, and that any redevelopment must strive to retain those elements of diversity. Redevelopment should attempt to include ethnic representation, such as with ethnic restaurants, and retain existing businesses in any redevelopment and market efforts.

4. ***Neighborhood Institutions -*** After working for several months with representatives of St. Rita's Church as to the potential redevelopment of the Safeway site, the Task Force confirmed the importance of institutions to the overall neighborhood. St. Rita's, Cora Kelly, and other institutions provide stability, focus and continuity and any planning efforts in Upper Potomac West should include representatives of those institutions.

5. ***Affordable housing -*** There were repeated discussions within the Task Force regarding the fact that the area now contains a variety of affordable housing options, and that any new development should respect the importance of existing residential neighborhoods. Concerns were also expressed about the high market rates for new housing in the area, including if housing is developed on the Safeway site, and whether residential developers should include affordable units on site.

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES (continued)

6. ***Identity -*** The Task Force raised several times, without resolution, the issue of how best to create an identity and a name for the Upper Potomac West Area. While the "Upper Potomac West Area" may have been awkward a year ago, that name has gained currency as the work of the Task Force continued. The group seeks to distinguish itself from the area south of Glebe Road on Mount Vernon Avenue and in Del Ray. Both are important components of the Potomac West area, and share some similar planning issues. If the Safeway/Datatel site redevelops, it will serve as an entrance to the Upper Potomac West neighborhood.

7. ***Green Space -*** A consistent theme for the Task Force has been the need to enhance the open space areas of the Upper Potomac West neighborhood. Although Four Mile Run Park is one of the biggest City parks, it is cut off from much of the area, with limited access and parking. The Park should connect to other areas within the Upper Potomac West area, and any new development should include green space and plazas for both the occupants of the new development as well as the neighborhood as a whole.

8. ***Public safety -*** Concern was expressed regarding crime and public safety efforts in the area, especially to attract new residents and businesses.

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES (continued)

9. ***Permitting Process -*** As a general matter, the issue of streamlining, simplifying and speeding up the permitting and building and site plan approval processes was discussed. In addition, some members of the Task Force suggested that the City create a system to expedite regulatory processes for Upper Potomac West revitalization projects.

In addition to the above specific issues for further study, there will be additional planning discussions about the redevelopment of the Safeway/Datatel site and the East Reed Avenue site. Members of the Task Force will be invited to participate in future workshops and hearings to implement those redevelopment concept plans.

Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

THE PLANNING PROCESS

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Initial Planning Phase

The mission of the Safeway/Datatel Work Group was to identify through a community based process a physically sound and economically viable development concept for the Safeway/Datatel site that meets the goals and objectives of the community.

The planning involved residents, businesses and property owners. The following were the members of the Work Group:

Alethea Camp, Chair	Marlin G. Lord
Judith Bliss	Brenda Smith
Patrick Gaffney	Perry Reith
Chris Hamilton	Maria Wasowski
Bill Hendrickson	Steve Weinstock

The planning focused on the site of over four acres that contains eight separate parcels including the six-story Datatel building that has been vacant for more than ten years and the vacant Safeway store. While one ultimate goal of the community is the revitalization of the larger upper Mt. Vernon Avenue commercial district, this planning effort focused on the Safeway/Datatel site as a potential spark for the development of the balance of upper Mt. Vernon Avenue.

The planning was organized into two phases. The first phase focused on identifying the physical parameters of the site that control its ultimate use and form, identifying the community's preferred uses for the site and identifying the community's vision for the the ultimate development of the site and the neighborhood.

As the Work Group began its planning, the Safeway site was purchased by a potential developer, the Weissberg Corp., which was invited to join the planning effort. Nina Weissberg, the company's representative, has been a frequent participant and a helpful addition to the planning process.

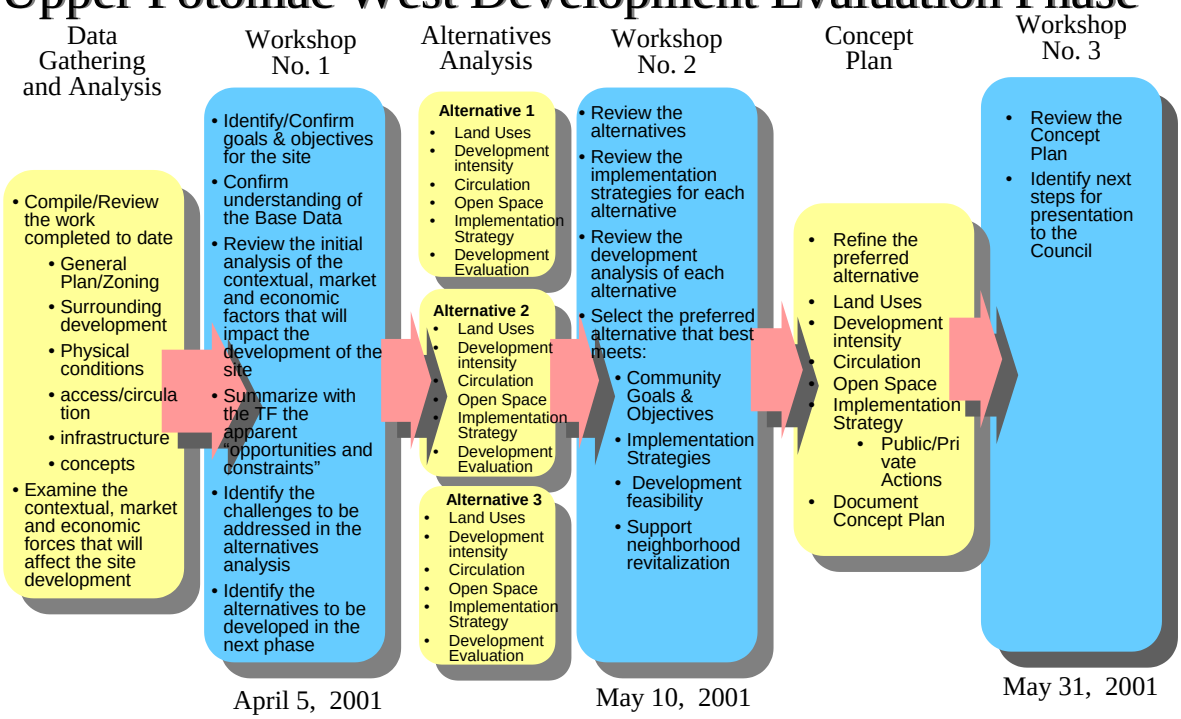
THE PLANNING PROCESS (continued)

Development Evaluation Phase

The second phase, the Development Evaluation Phase, included the involvement of planning and economic consultants to assist the City and the community in understanding the market forces in the area and to prepare a physically and economically viable development concept with appropriate design guidelines and controls to ensure compliance with the goals and objectives of the community. As part of the second phase, an Illustrative Plan was prepared to provide a physical vision of how the site might appear if it was developed according to the plan. Lastly, a three-stage Implementation Strategy was prepared to outline a tiered approach to City actions designed to provide incentives to the private sector to develop the site according to the community's vision.

The work flow diagram below documents the three sub-phases of the Development Evaluation Phase. Each sub-phase culminated in a Workshop with the Safeway/Datatel Work Group to review the work products and to provide input for the next phase of the work.

Upper Potomac West Development Evaluation Phase



Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

COMMUNITY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOALS & OBJECTIVES for the COMMUNITY

The following are the Goals and Objectives that were established by the Work Group for the broader community.

- *Create a neighborhood focus and Identity for the site*
  - *a unique place*
  - *a pedestrian environment*
  - *a complex that provides a focus for the surrounding areas*
- *Revitalize the neighborhood*
- *Promote economically viable new development for the site to support the retail neighborhood*
- *Maintain the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods*
  - *Maintain the affordable housing stock*
- *Enhance the infrastructure and manage the traffic flow*
- *Maintain to the greatest extent possible the existing businesses as the neighborhood revitalizes.*
  - *consider strategies, including subsidies by the developer and/or public subsidy programs similar to those that provide affordable housing*

GOALS & OBJECTIVES for the SITE

The following are the Goals and Objectives that were established by the Work Group for the Safeway/Datatel site.

- *Create a hip, urban, diverse, funky, pedestrian friendly development*
- *Create comfortable pedestrian access to/ through the site*
- *Incorporate with the development community elements*
  - *"table" - place to gather*
  - *"mass" - spiritual sense of community*
  - *"muse" - arts, sculpture, performance*
- *Minimize the visual/physical impact of parking on the neighborhood*
- *Create public or quasi public outdoor spaces for: farmer's market, flea market, ethnic food carts, art display & shows*
- *Emphasize outdoor rather than indoor by creating traditional street/plaza oriented retail and commercial*
- *Emphasize Mt. Vernon as the retail street*
- *Respect the visual and physical importance of the church in the neighborhood*

DESIREABLE ELEMENTS OF REDEVELOPMENT

The following are the Desirable Elements of Redevelopment that were established by the Work Group for the Safeway/Datatel site during the workshop process.

- *A tall architectural feature or portion of a building at the corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road to provide a memorable node and visually anchor the site*
- *Wide sidewalks to accommodate outdoor activities such as outdoor cafes or sidewalk markets, including street furniture and amenities such as benches, street trees and pedestrian lighting*
- *A mix of uses, including office, retail and residential to balance parking needs and provide retail patrons*
- *On-street parking on Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road to preserve the traditional commercial neighborhood character*
- *A visual focal point at the termination of East Reed Avenue to identify the importance of the axis*
- *Structured Parking, either in below grade garages or in structures screened from the streets to minimize the visual impact*
- *Human scaled buildings adjacent to the sidewalks and church property to maintain the small scale of the neighborhood. Taller buildings would be acceptable at the corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road, as well as in the interior of the site if stepped back from the street*
- *Significant safe, inviting open public space to provide for gathering and community events*
- *Pedestrian ways through the site to provide ease of access from Glebe Road to Mt. Vernon Avenue*
- *An architectural character that is reflective of the unique Art Deco character of Mt. Vernon Avenue, rather than colonial architecture*
- *A building mass that is articulated to reduce the scale of the total development*

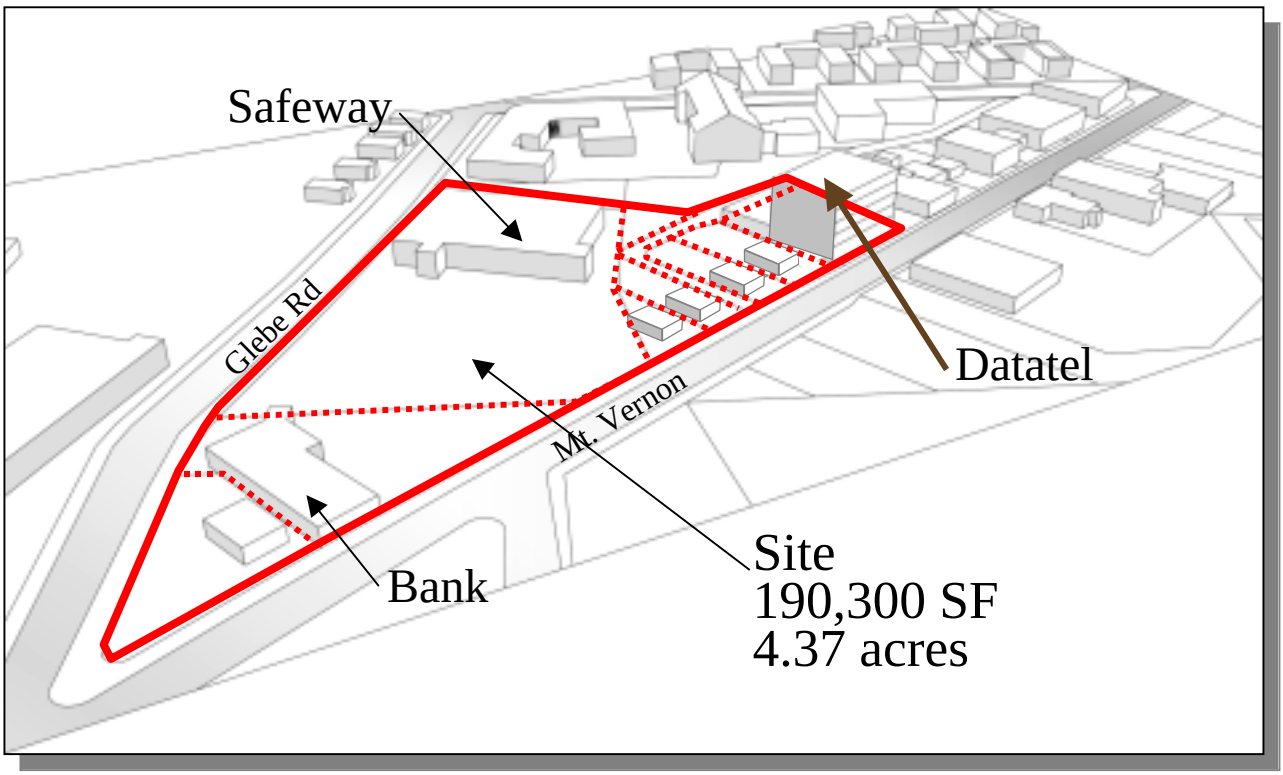
Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

THE SITE

The property identified in the study as the Safeway/Datatel site (the site) is composed of eight separate parcels totaling some 190,300 SF or 4.27 acres. The site is located at the intersection of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue and includes a number of buildings including the vacant one-story Safeway building and the vacant six-story Datatel building. The site generally slopes from the west to the east with Glebe Road being at one point approximately sixteen feet (16') higher than Mt. Vernon Avenue. A complex of buildings housing the facilities of St. Rita's Catholic Church and school abuts the northwest property line of the site. On the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue facing the site are a series of automobile oriented retail facilities, including the Birchmere, and a complex of four-story residential buildings. To the west on the opposite side of Glebe Road are automobile oriented retail uses including a grocery store and a shoe store.

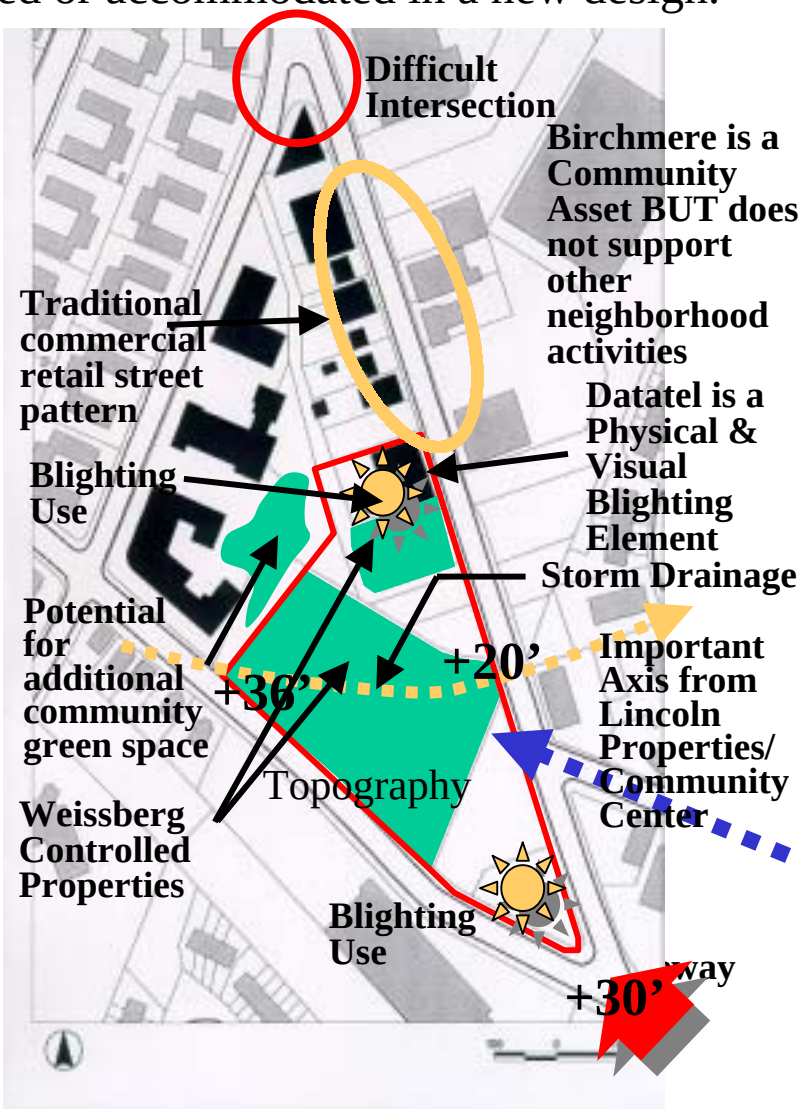


The Safeway/Datatel site as viewed from the Southeast

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

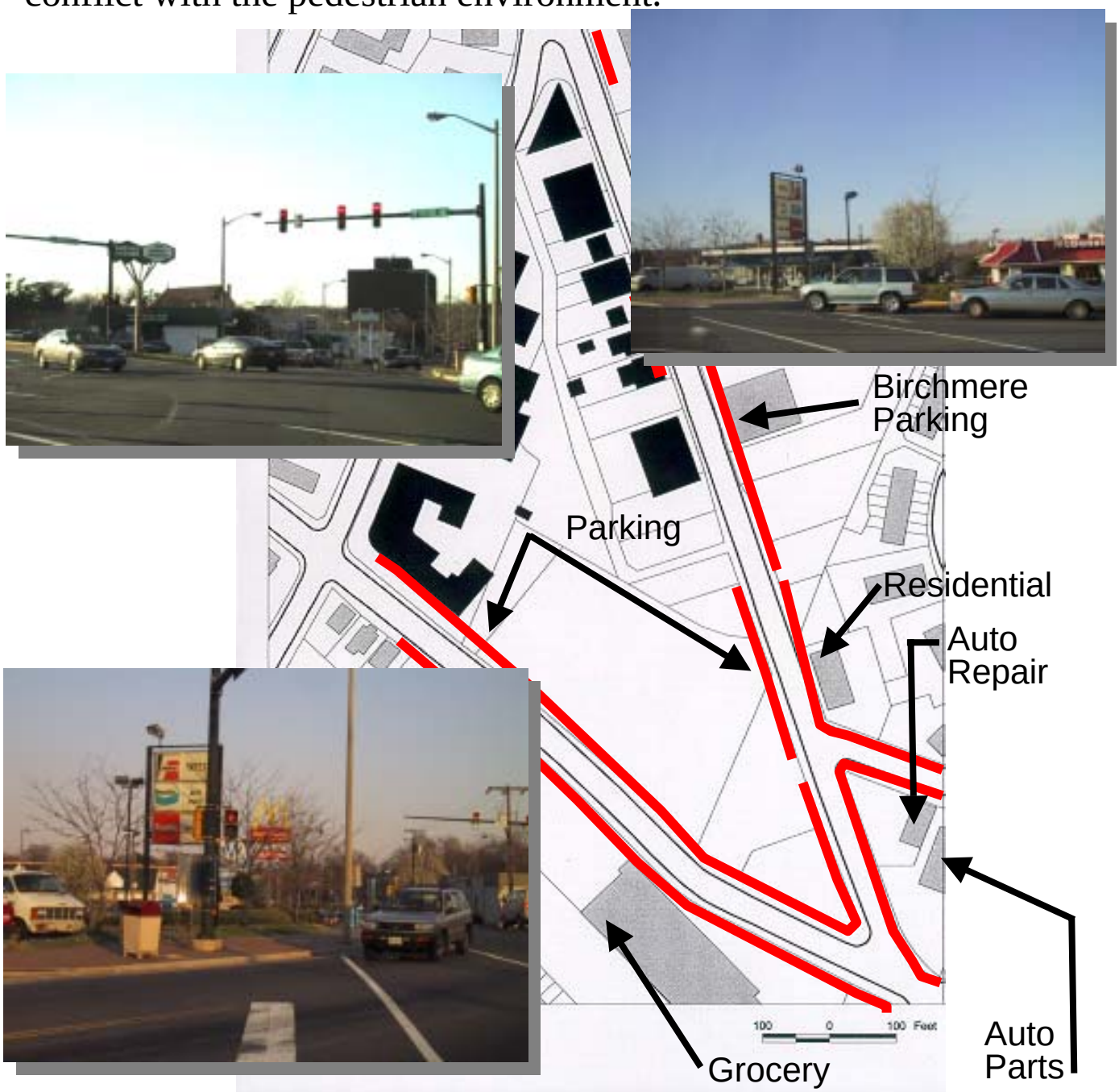
The following diagram outlines the apparent opportunities for development and constraints upon development relating to the Safeway/Datatel site. The Datatel building is a major blighting influence on the neighborhood and visually cuts the site from the traditional neighborhood commercial/retail area to the north of the site on Mt. Vernon Avenue. The intersections of Russell Road with Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road with Mt. Vernon Avenue are difficult and should be revised to provide for more convenient vehicle and pedestrian movements. The site has a major storm drainage facility that traverses the site. This storm drain either must be relocated or accommodated in a new design.

The interface between the site and St. Rita's church is important and should be addressed in the design of the new facilities. The site slopes downward from Glebe Road to Mt. Vernon Avenue. The slope provides advantages in the building design by providing natural ramping for parking and pedestrian access. The existing check cashing facility is a visually blighting use at the gateway to the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue community.



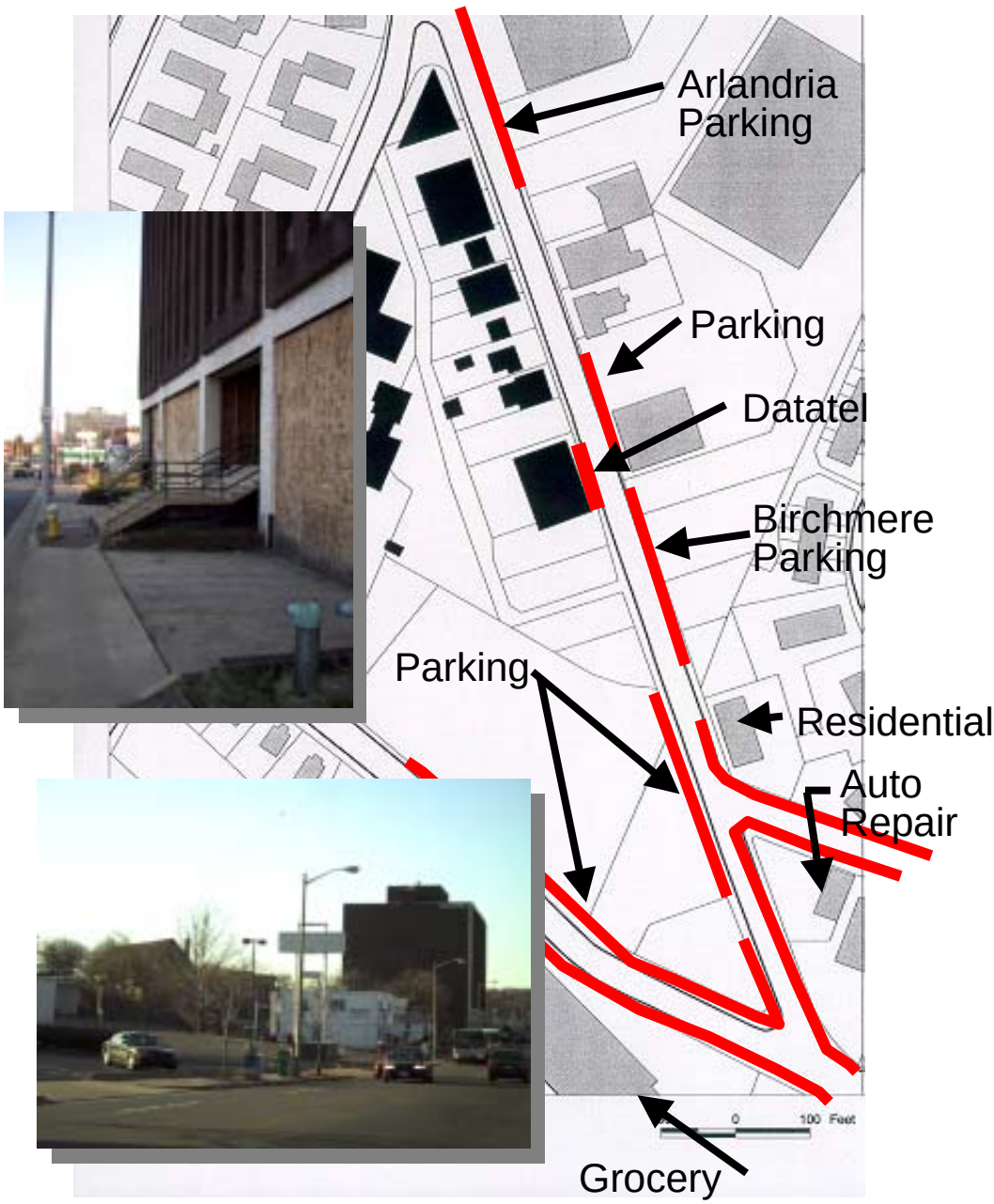
PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT CONSTRAINTS

While the community identified a primary goal of creating a pedestrian retail environment to support the surrounding neighborhood, one of the major constraints is the predominance of the auto-oriented retail which is characterized by on-grade parking between the store and the sidewalk and by multiple curb cuts that conflict with the pedestrian environment.



PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT CONSTRAINTS

Pedestrian access to the Upper Potomac West neighborhood is currently very difficult from the residential neighborhoods to the south and southwest. There are limited Glebe Road crossings and the intersection of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue is awkward. The street network intersects at acute angles around large, angular land parcels. Currently, one result is that both pedestrians and automobiles cut through the Safeway site from Glebe Road to Mt. Vernon Avenue and vice versa.



FRAMEWORK PLAN

The focus of the Safeway/Datatel planning process is on the near term development of the site as a stimulus for the development of the larger upper Mt. Vernon Avenue commercial neighborhood. A Framework Plan was prepared to identify the future potential for upper Mt. Vernon Avenue. The Framework Plan envisions a traditional pedestrian commercial neighborhood anchored on the south by a major development on the Safeway/Datatel site and, in the future, a similar development on the Arlandria Center site to the north. The two developments would provide the key anchors for a three block long traditional retail neighborhood retail street.

Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

ECONOMIC/MARKET CONDITIONS

DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

The following is a overview of the current development status of the Safeway/Datatel site and the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue neighborhood

---

- The Safeway/Datatel site is located in an older, under performing neighborhood. The economic condition is exacerbated by:
  - The blighting influence of the Datatel building that has been abandoned for 10 years
  - The empty Safeway store
  - The competition from the newly opened Potomac Yard shopping complex
  - The dominance of automobile related regional serving retail
  - The traffic generated by the convergence of major arterial streets
- The market analysis indicates a positive economic potential for the neighborhood. The new residential being constructed in Alexandria by Lincoln Properties and in Arna Valley will provide new economic stimulus and retail support.
- The demographics indicate that the economic characteristics of the neighborhood are improving.
- The Safeway/Datatel property has the potential to provide a very strong retail anchor for the revitalization of Mt Vernon Avenue as a pedestrian oriented retail street northward to the Arlandria shopping center.

DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND (continued)

- A redesigned Arlandria center has the potential to create another strong anchor at the northern end of a three block retail street.
- The community through a year long planning process has identified a series of goals and objectives for the Safeway/ Datatel site.
- To achieve the community's goals and objectives requires a more expensive building type with underground or structured parking and construction materials and methods and life/safety provisions that are more consistent with the cost of multi-story construction than the typical one-story retail construction of the area with its on-grade parking.
- The development of the Safeway/Datatel site in accordance with the goals and objectives is at a competitive disadvantage to the surrounding auto oriented development.
- To develop the site in the near term in accordance with the community's goals and objectives and in a manner that will stimulate the development of the balance of the neighborhood will require some form of intervention or economic stimulus on the part of the City.
- The current zoning does not accommodate the community's vision for the site and must be modified.
- As is true in many other cities, the key economic issue is the need to provide adequate parking in structures to support the proposed density in a manner that does not detract from, but rather enhances the visual qualities of the neighborhood.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC FACTORS

The following is an overview of the factors that affect the market and economic conditions for the region.

- The national economy has slowed down; compared with the strength of the economy over the last 8 years the slow down may feel like a recession.
- However, the Washington Metro Area is stabilized by the amount of the federal government employment.
- In the period 2001 - 2005, the Metro-Washington area has a positive annual projected employment growth:
  - 56,000 new jobs projected between 2001 - 2005
- In-fill growth pressures will continue within the Beltway in response to central job locations.
- Reagan Airport, Potomac Yard and other regional developments provide positive pressures on UPW.
- There are uncertainties in regional office market driven by:
  - decline of dot.com
  - higher vacancies rates
  - concern about untested locations
- Commercial revitalization and in-fill will continue throughout the region:
  - Bethesda - Bethesda Row
  - Washington, DC
  - Arlington - Clarendon, Shirlington
  - Alexandria

LOCAL ECONOMIC FACTORS

The following is an overview of the factors that affect the market and economic conditions for the local neighborhood area

- The neighborhood has an increasingly affluent local residential population and a diverse mix of local residents that could support a variety of stores/restaurants.
- Major new residential projects are being developed in the vicinity of the site:
  - Lincoln Properties Apartments - 588 units
  - Arna Valley- by Avalon Bay - 950+ units
- The average individual living in the Lincoln Properties apartments or in Arna Valley could support 10-20 SF of retail; therefore, this new development alone could support 60,000 SF +/- of new retail in the neighborhood.
- The City of Alexandria market is typically “under-served” in terms of retail stores *(national average $600/SF, some stores in Alexandria doing $1200/SF)*
- There is developer interest in the local area as reflected in recent projects
  - Dwoskin Project, Weinstock (Arlandria Center)
- The neighborhood has been constrained over time by a series of physical and economic factors:
  - Floodplain which was not corrected until the 1970s
  - Route 1 and the Potomac Yard development
  - Access to Potomac Yard is limited by traffic diversions and a limit on the capacity of Route 1
- The neighborhood is in its initial phase of emergence from physical and economic constraints with some pioneers such as Lincoln Properties and Dwoskin.

LOCAL ECONOMIC FACTORS (continued)

- Potomac Yard serves a broad regional market
  - The facility has become over-crowded; therefore, lacking in convenience for the local neighborhood
  - The facility is sterile, and therefore, does not offer the character, interest and personal service that a local serving retail complex could offer
- Within a half mile radius of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue there are only three sites that have the site area to accommodate a 60,000 SF neighborhood retail complex: Safeway/Datatel, Arlandria Center and the Virginia Power site on Glebe Road.
- Safeway/Datatel offers superior access to the other sites with its access from both Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue.
- Average household income within 1/4 mile of the site appears to be $70,000/year and $80,000/year within 1 mile as compared to the national average of $60,000/year. There are 25,000 people within 1 mile of the site with average household incomes of $80,000/year.
- There are only 2,000 people within 1/4 of a mile which rules out an exclusively walk-to retail center.
- The neighborhood has the potential to draw from other areas; examples are the Birchmere and RT's restaurant.

LAND USE MARKET REVIEW

A market investigation was undertaken to assess the support for various primary land uses on the site. The following is a summary of the market investigation for the three primary uses identified for the site during the community planning process. The three land uses explored were residential, retail and office

---

RESIDENTIAL MARKET REVIEW

- Strong regional market driven by population growth and rising incomes
- Proximity to major employment centers/Reagan Airport makes location attractive
- Local amenities include Four Mile Run Park, regional shopping, Alexandria waterfront

Conclusion

- There is a strong market potential for a variety of housing types, both rental and for-sale

LAND USE MARKET REVIEW (continued)

RETAIL/ENTERTAINMENT MARKET REVIEW

- Residential growth - Lincoln Properties/Arna Valley - will add to the demand for retail
- Site has excellent local street access and visibility
- Location is convenient for surrounding neighborhoods

Conclusion

- Site can support a neighborhood shopping complex offering a major food store and other neighborhood retail and service uses, including restaurants and entertainment

OFFICE MARKET REVIEW

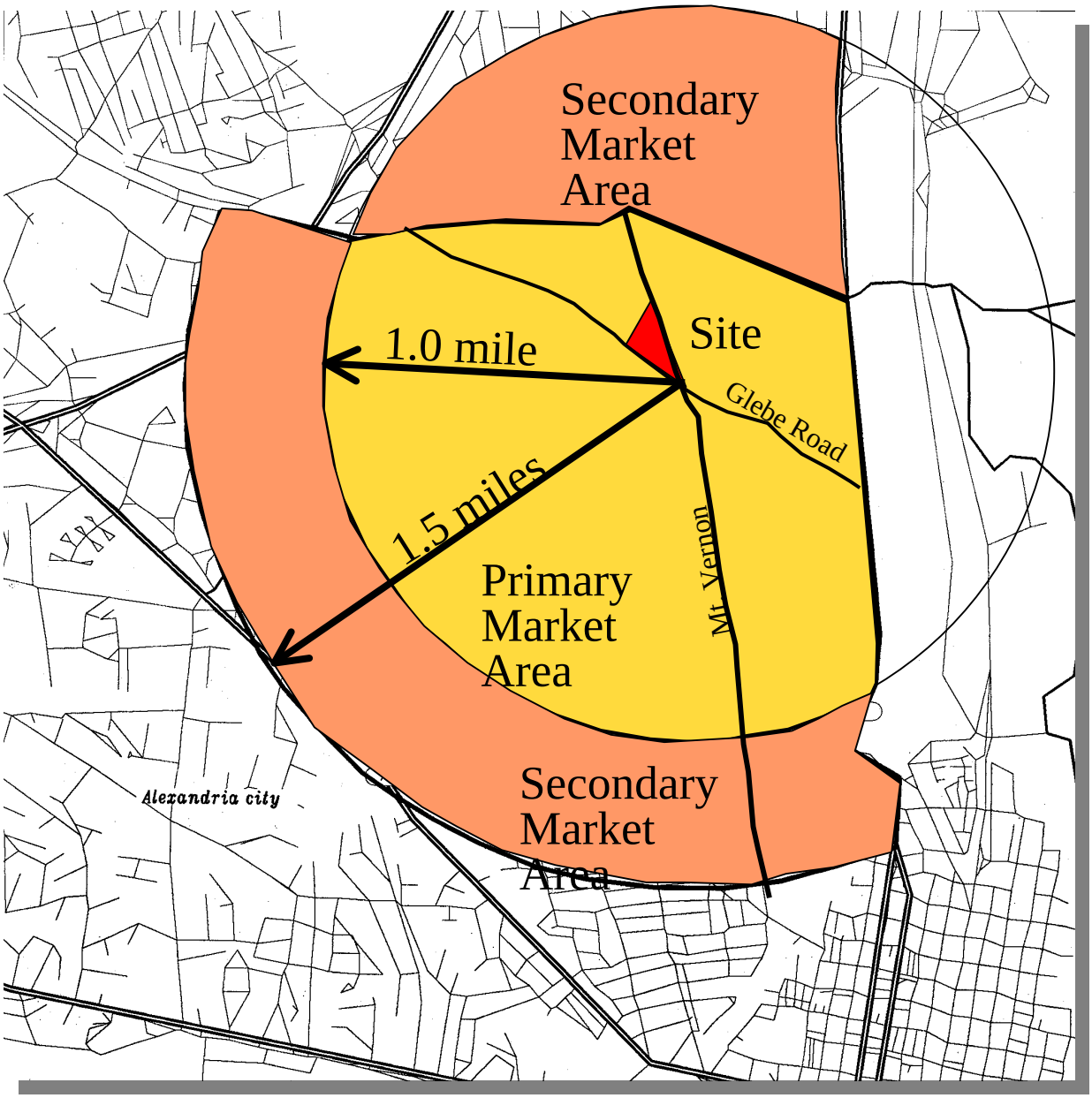
- Site is a secondary location for office, lacking proximity to major office "generators" such as: transit stations, courts, government offices
- Office market vacancy rates are increasing as firms downsize in response to changing market conditions
- Pre-leasing would be a requirement for financing

Conclusion

- There may be a limited potential for small, locally-oriented professionals, service firms and associations.

MARKET AREAS

The Primary Market Area is defined as a one mile radius from the site, except that areas east of Route 1 and north of Four-Mile Run are not included in the Primary Market area. The Secondary Market Area includes households within a one and a half mile radius of the site and areas within a one-mile radius that are north of Four Mile Run. Areas east of Route 1 and more than one mile from the site north of Four Mile Run are not included in the Secondary Market Area.



SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

The following table provides a summary of population, number of households and average household incomes for the Primary Market Area, the Secondary Market Area and the Combined Market Area. Statistics are provided for the year 2000 and the projections to the year 2005

	Combined Market Areas	Primary Market Areas	Secondary Market Areas
Population			
2000	36,183	20,775	15,408
2005	38,650	21,650	17,000
Number of Households			
2000	15,402	8,196	7,206
2005	16,900	8,800	8,100
Average Income per Household			
Per Capita, 2000	$36,906	$32, 182	$43,276
Household 2000	$86, 575	$81, 895	$92,534
Per Capita 2005	$38,952	$32,182	$43,276
Household 2005	$91,432	$86,072	$97,254

MARKET SUPPORT FOR A CONVENIENCE SHOPPING CENTER - 2005

The following table provides a summary of the market potential for a neighborhood convenience center. The process starts with a calculation of the total income of the combined market areas. From nationwide statistics nine percent (9%) of the Market Area Income can reasonably be expected to be spent on convenience goods. The Potential Convenience Goods Sales is then divided by an average annual sales per square foot factor to determine the total square footage of convenience retail that could be supported by the neighborhood. Lastly, the amount of retail that can be expected to be "captured" or supported at the site is calculated as a percentage of the Total Supported Square Feet of commercial area.

	Combined Market Areas	Primary Market Areas	Secondary Market Areas
Market Area Income (in Millions)	$1,505.5	$732.3	$773.2
Percent of Income Allocable for Convenience Goods	9.00 %	9.00 %	9.00%
Potential Convenience Goods Sales (in Millions)	$135.5	$65.9	$69.6
Total Supportable Square Feet @ $600 sales/SF	225,825	109,842	115,983
Capture at Site In Square Feet	50,657	27,461	23,197

Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A major objective of the Safeway/Datatel planning process is to stimulate the development of the site in the near term. To achieve this end implementation objectives were identified to guide the preparation of an implementation strategy to ensure that the planning process outlines a physical plan that is economically and politically feasible.

Implementation Objectives

- Create a neighborhood complex that will “anchor” the revitalization of the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue neighborhood
- Stimulate/motivate the private sector to initiate the development of an expanded Safeway/Datatel site in the near term
- Promote/stimulate economically viable new development on the balance of the commercial land on upper Mt. Vernon Avenue

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Interim Uses

- If the site is used for interim uses pending full redevelopment, automobile uses such as fast food or drive-throughs, automobile sales lots, etc, should be discouraged in favor of utilizing the existing store on an interim basis for interior uses such as food, garden supplies, hardware, sit-down restaurant or other neighborhood serving retail.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (continued)

The following is an outline of a three level program that the planning process outlined for proposal to the City. The levels range from documentation of ideas relating to the development of the neighborhood to the implementation of proactive actions.

- **Level One - *IDEAS***
  - Articulate /document a community VISION
  - Articulate/document community goals and objectives
- **Level Two - *POLICIES***
  - Based upon the Level One strategy prepare and adopt a community developed and supported Safeway/Datatel Plan (Plan)
  - Identify as part of the Plan document specific changes to zoning and other City ordinances that would be required to implement the Plan
- **Level Three - *ACTIONS***
  - Encourage the property owner(s) to prepare development application(s) which are consistent with the Plan.
  - Consider proactive public actions to encourage/stimulate early development. Actions could include:
    - Land exchanges
    - Assisting with land assembly
    - Creating public parking
    - Infrastructure improvements

Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

COMMUNITY DESIGN

LAND USE CONCEPT

The following is a summary of the preferred land use for the Safeway/Datatel site

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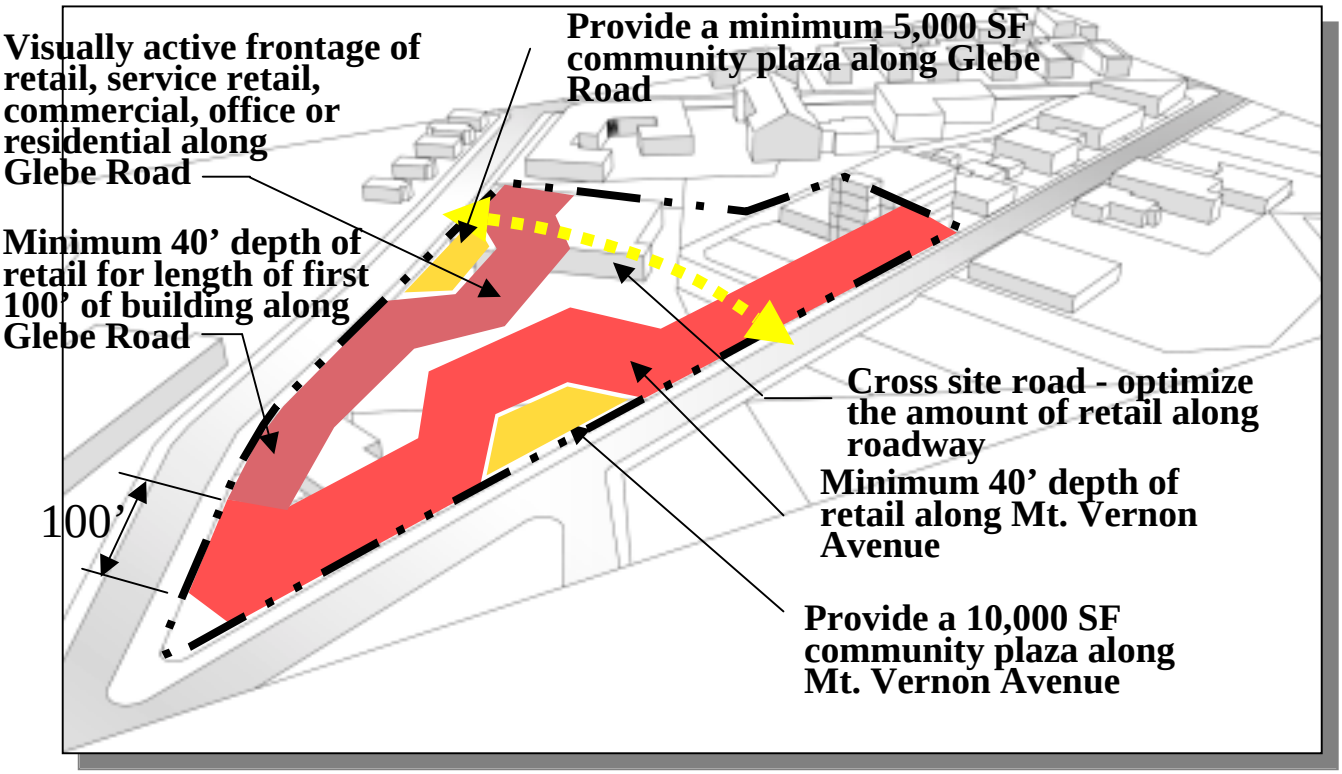
Preferred Land Use Concept

- The preferred land use concept creates a mixed-use, neighborhood center that will provide a retail anchor or magnet on the Safeway/Datatel site at the southern end of the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue commercial neighborhood.
- The commercial neighborhood center should include an anchor store, ideally a grocery/food store, of at least 40,000 SF, which would be supported by an additional 30,000 SF of convenience retail. A grocery and convenience retail would attract nearby neighbors to Mt. Vernon Avenue several times each week, and thus energize the street and stimulate the revitalization of a traditional neighborhood retail street north of the Safeway/Datatel site to the Arlandria Center. The Arlandria Center has the land area and the potential to provide an additional retail anchor to the north.
- The general neighborhood and the neighborhood center should be supported by office, residential or live/work units on the upper levels of the Safeway/Datatel site.

LAND USE CONCEPT



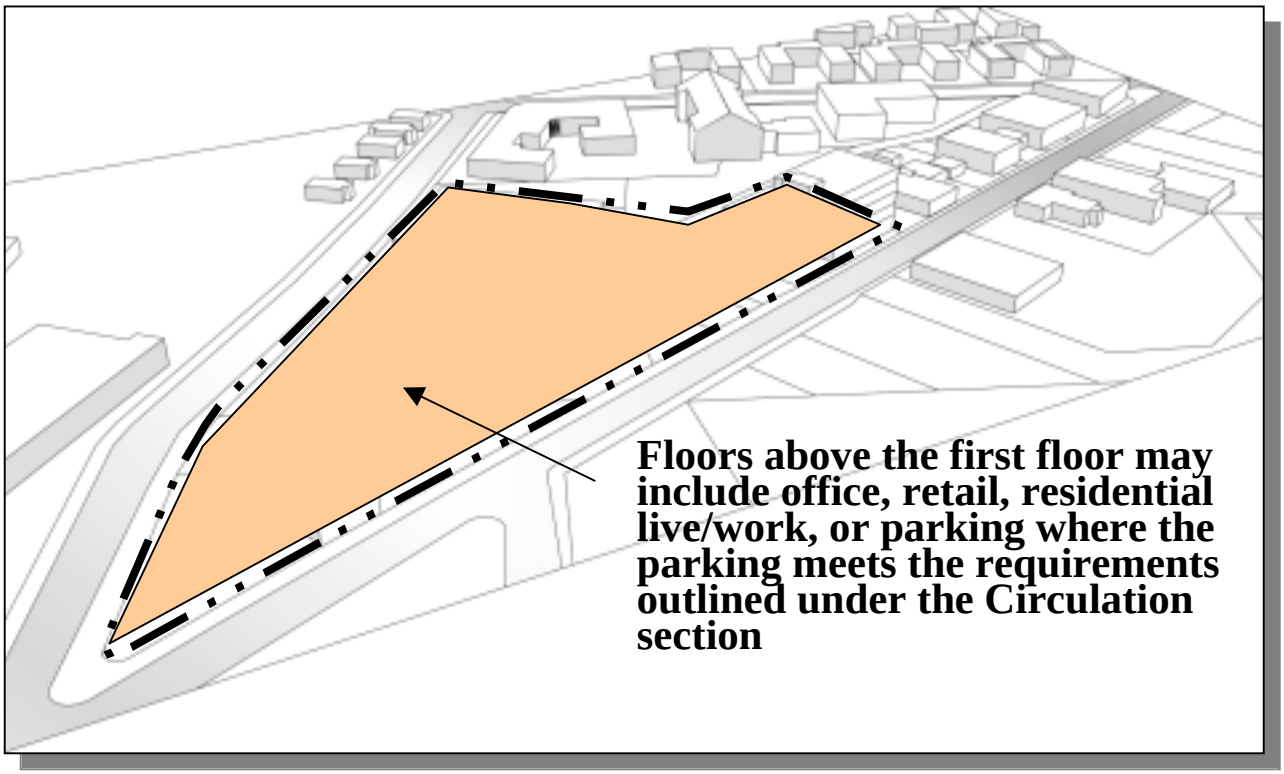
Ground Floor Land Use

- The land use concept recognizes that the site slopes approximately one-story between Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue; therefore, the identified ground floor land uses are intended to be the allowable uses at the level of the adjacent sidewalk or roadway. The "ground floor" may be at two different levels of the building complex.
- The intent is to allow active retail, as opposed to service related retail or office, on the Mt. Vernon Avenue ground floor, and for a minimum of 100' from the building corner on Glebe Road.
- A minimum 10, 000 SF public plaza capable of hosting community events, farmer's markets, art shows, etc. should be provided on Mt. Vernon Avenue and a 5,000 SF plaza provided on Glebe Road.

LAND USE CONCEPT

Ground Floor Land Use (continued)

- The balance of the ground floor may be used for parking or retail use.



Upper Floors Land Use

- The upper floors may include general office, retail, service commercial, residential or live/work to create daytime and/or nighttime support for the ground level retail and the general neighborhood.
- The upper floors may include parking decks where the parking meets the requirements outlined for parking in the Circulation section of this document.

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY/BUILDING MASS

The following is a summary of the design controls intended to limit the intensity of development on the site with the focus on the building mass. Three recommendations are offered for controlling the building mass. The City may want to consider alternative methodologies for the calculation of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) that would more accurately control the visual mass of the building complex.

Development Intensity/Building Mass

- The development intensity of the site is limited by the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) as measured by the total square footage divided by the total land area.
- Alexandria typically bases its floor area on the net floor area and does not include parking where the ceiling height of the garage is less than 7’-6”.

- Recommended FAR based upon Alexandria Standards:

  FAR = 1.65

- Recommended FAR based upon the gross floor area rather than the net floor area and excluding parking:

  FAR = 1.90

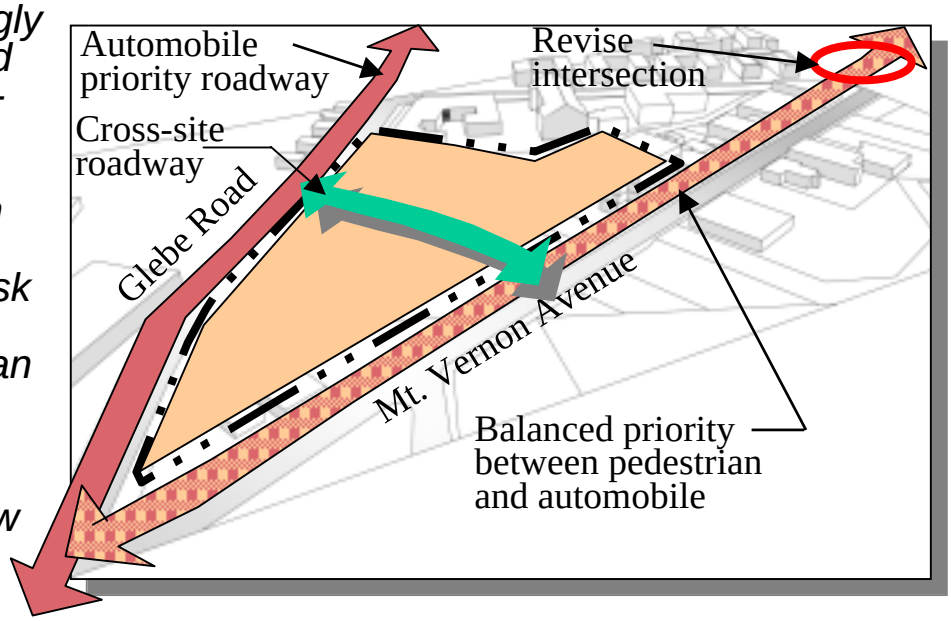
- Recommended FAR based upon the gross floor area above grade and including above grade parking

  FAR = 2.5

CIRCULATION

Road System

- Glebe Road is intended to play a major role in the automobile circulation for the neighborhood. Glebe Road should continue to provide major access between Route 1, Potomac Yard and I-395. While pedestrian crossings are provided at the intersections of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Russell Road with Glebe Road to connect the Mt. Vernon Avenue retail street to the residential neighborhoods to the west, the Glebe Road priority should be biased toward the automobile. (*The Task Force has a different view on this issue from the staff. Staff strongly supports Glebe Road as a necessary automobile route and would not support any interference with the road's ability to carry traffic. The Task Force expressed the desire for a pedestrian crosswalk on Glebe Road between Mt. Vernon Avenue and Russell Road to allow more convenient access from the south side of Glebe Road to the Safeway site, especially if there is a cross site road for pedestrians included in the redevelopment of the site.)*

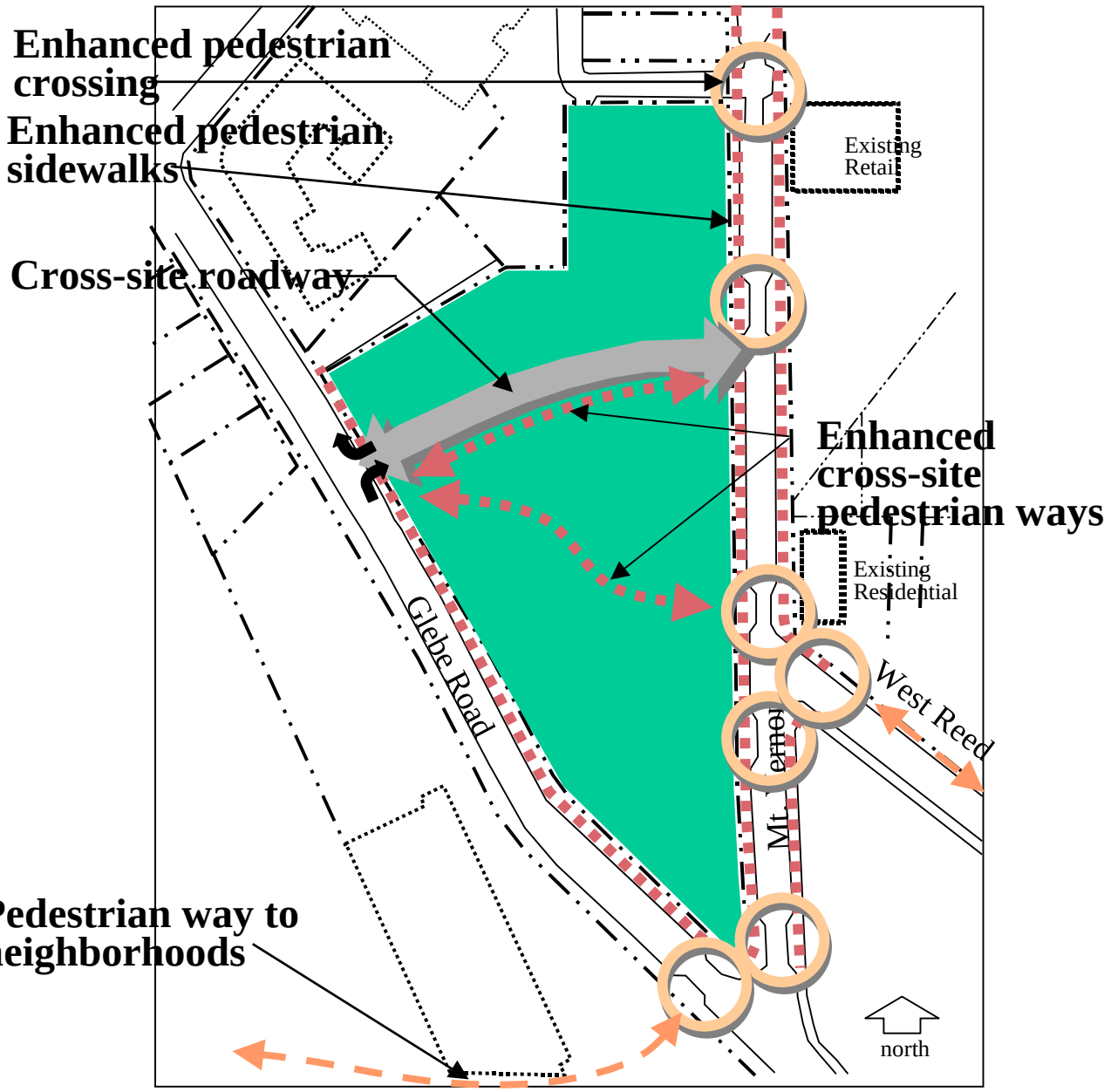


- Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue is intended to provide a pedestrian friendly environment for a traditional neighborhood retail street, while assuring the through movement of the automobile from the south through to Arlington.
- A cross-site roadway should be provided to access parking and to provide service access. Traffic restriction devices should be used to inhibit use of the roadway for through traffic.

CIRCULATION

Pedestrian System

- Provide enhanced pedestrian sidewalks - 14' on Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Provide enhanced pedestrian crossings with widened sidewalks to reduce the distance across the auto travel way

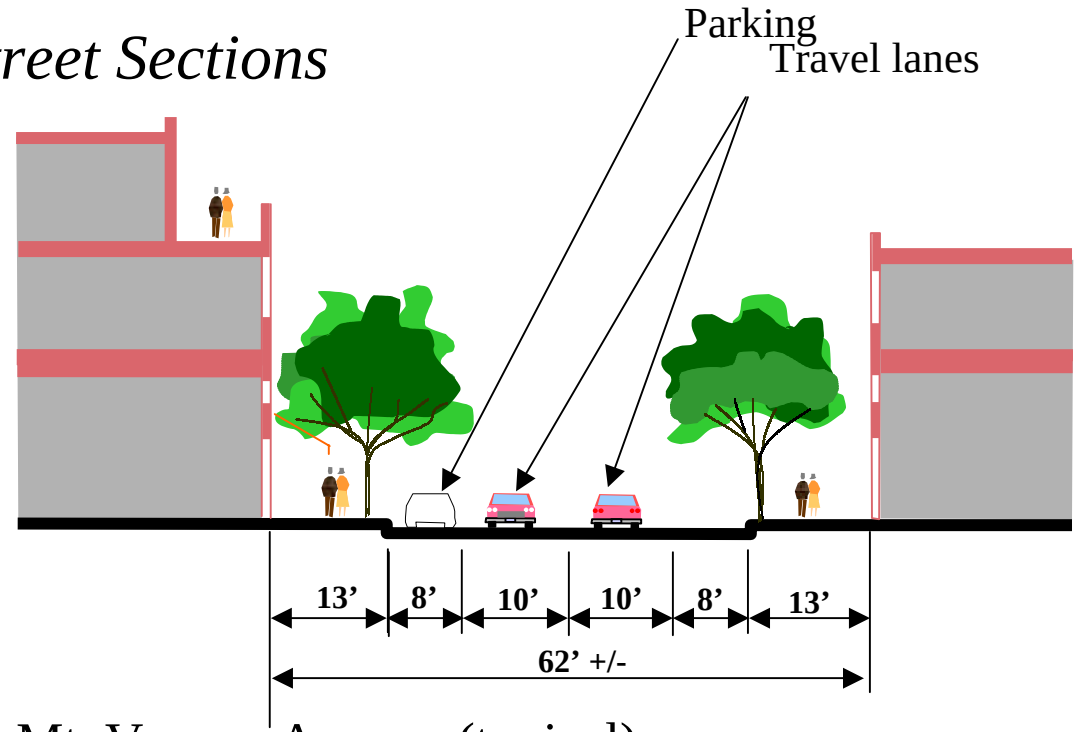


CIRCULATION

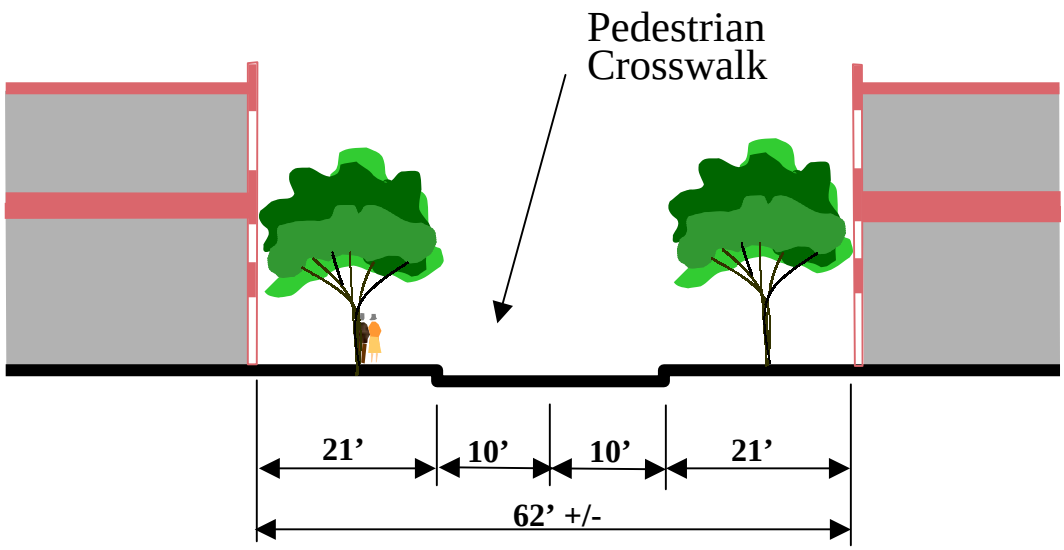
Pedestrian System (continued)

- Provide cross-site pedestrian ways to link the pedestrian plazas on Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon

Street Sections



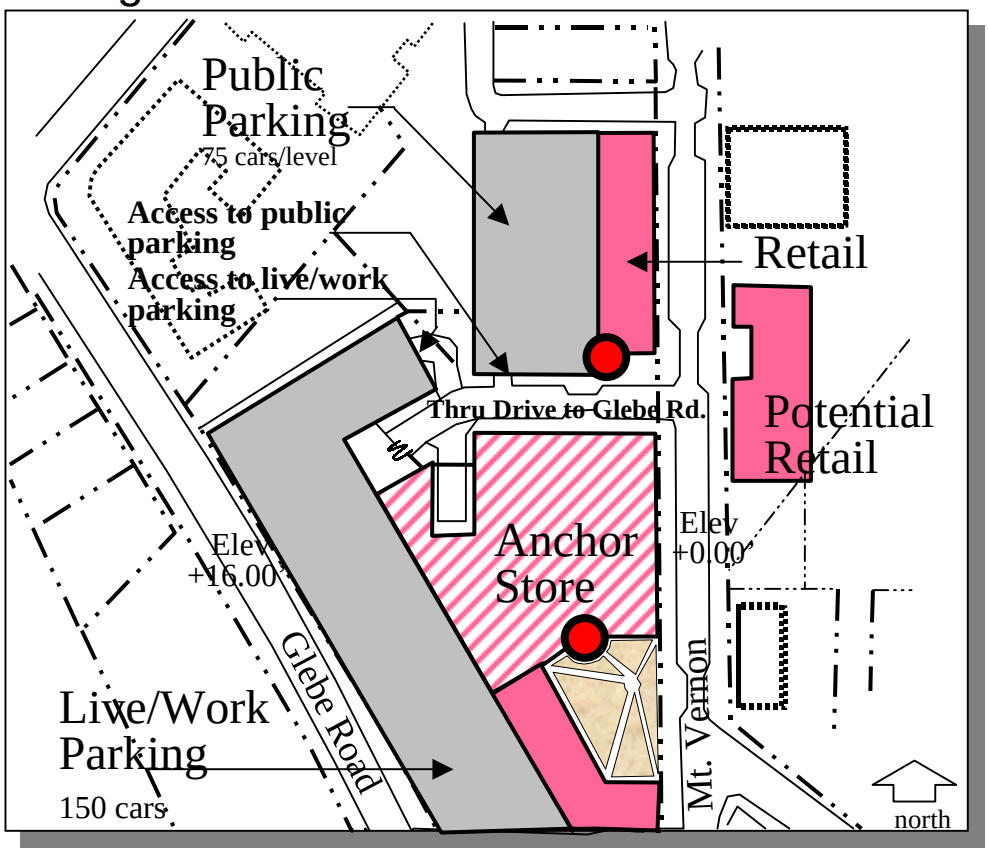
Mt. Vernon Avenue (typical)



Mt. Vernon Avenue (pedestrian crosswalk)

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARKING

- The plan outlines a concept for public parking to serve the anchor store, office and retail associated with the Safeway/Datatel site while providing a parking reservoir for the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood. Further, a public parking garage would provide for nighttime parking for the Birchmere and other restaurants, and weekend and night parking for church services and events.

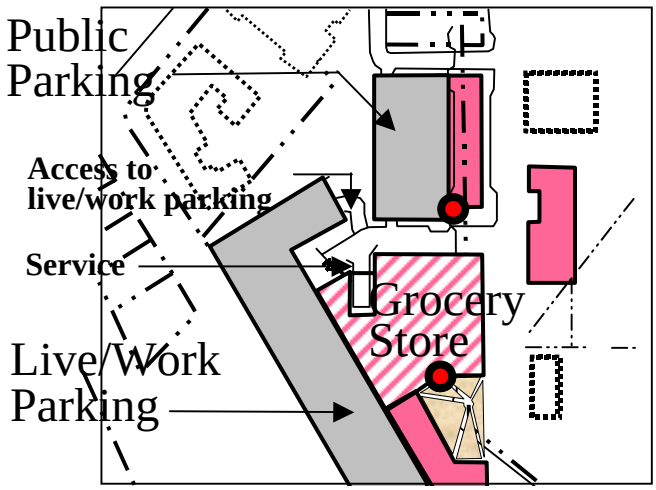


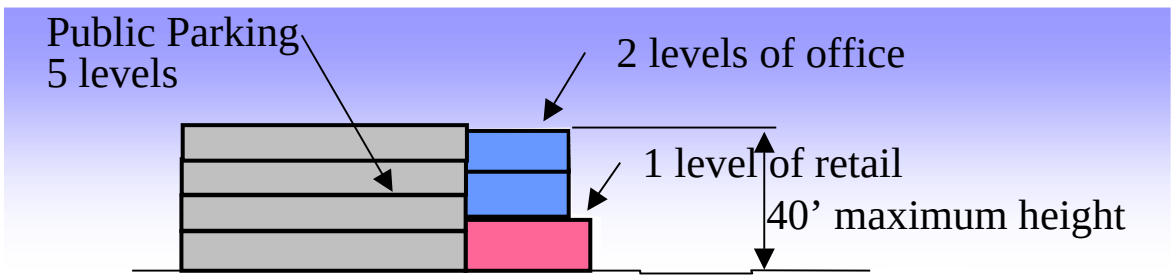
- The public parking is located at the north end of the parcel. The site would require the acquisition and demolition of the Datatel Building, the acquisition of two other properties currently owned by the Weissberg Corp. and a very small corner of the St. Rita's property. Access to the garage would be from the cross-site road and from the existing alley to the north with access to Mt. Vernon Avenue through the church property.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARKING (continued)

- The private parking for the upper floor uses is constructed underground. Depending on the extent of upper floor development the parking would be contained on one or two levels. The private parking would also be accessed from the cross-site road and would take advantage of the slope of the land to minimize the amount of ramp required.

- The maximum height of the public parking garage is 40'.





East/West section through the garage

- The public parking would be faced with a minimum of 30' of office and retail use to screen the parking from Mt. Vernon Avenue. The other faces of the building would be designed with materials and scale to match the surrounding buildings. The side facing the church would be landscaped with large trees, and landscaping would be integrated into the architecture to screen cars parked in the garage from the ground level church view.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARKING (continued)

The following is an example of a garage with facing retail and office as developed by the City of Boulder, CO.

Buildings facing six story City garage - Boulder, CO

Six story City garage - Boulder, CO

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARKING (continued)

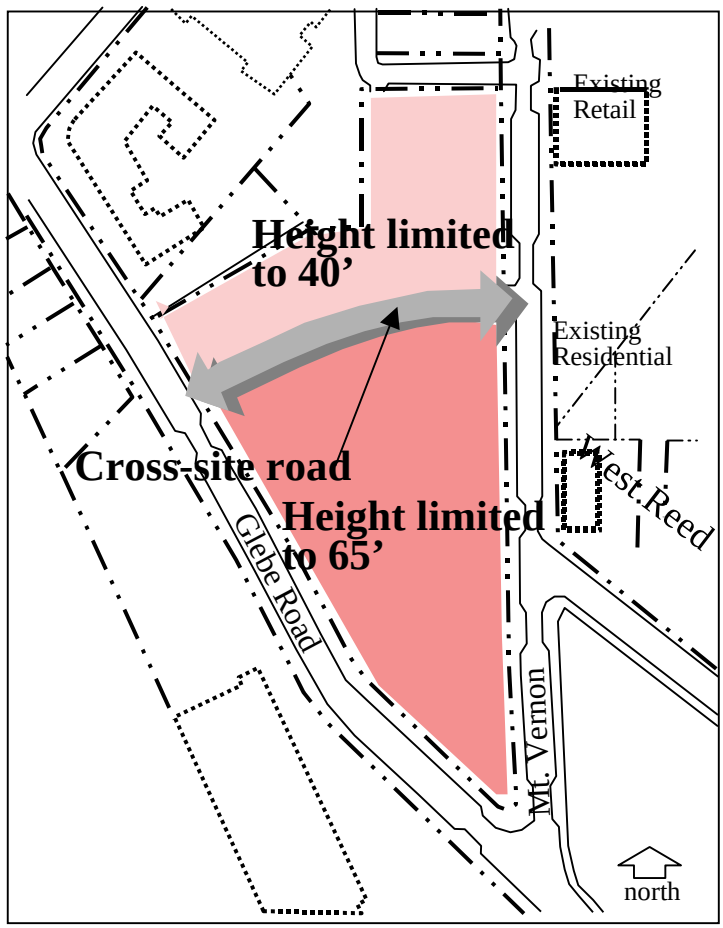
The following is an example of a garage with facing retail and office as developed in the City of Boulder, CO.

Buildings on the face of six story City garage - Boulder, CO

BUILDING HEIGHT

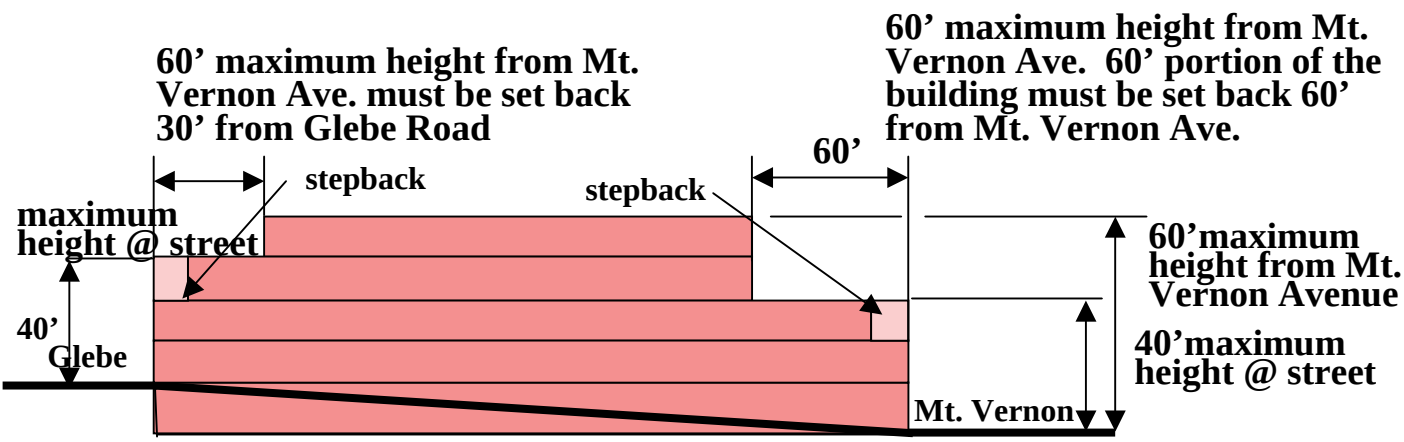
The following design standards control the height of the buildings

- The overall height of buildings south of the cross-site road would be limited to 65' (five levels) in height as measured from Mt. Vernon Avenue. Portions of the building over 40' must be set back from Mt. Vernon Avenue a minimum of 60' and a minimum of 30' from Glebe Road.
- The overall height of buildings north of the cross-site road shall be limited to 40' (three levels of allowable use or four floors of parking) in height as measured from Mt. Vernon Avenue and/or Glebe Road. The frontage along Glebe Road adjacent to the church property is limited to a height of two stories or 24' for a depth of 30' from Glebe Road as measured from the Glebe Road property line.
- Architectural features at focal points of the building such as towers, turrets, and cupolas that contribute to the overall character of the building may exceed the height limits if approved by the Director of Planning and Zoning. The special architectural features shall not add to the occupied space of the building.

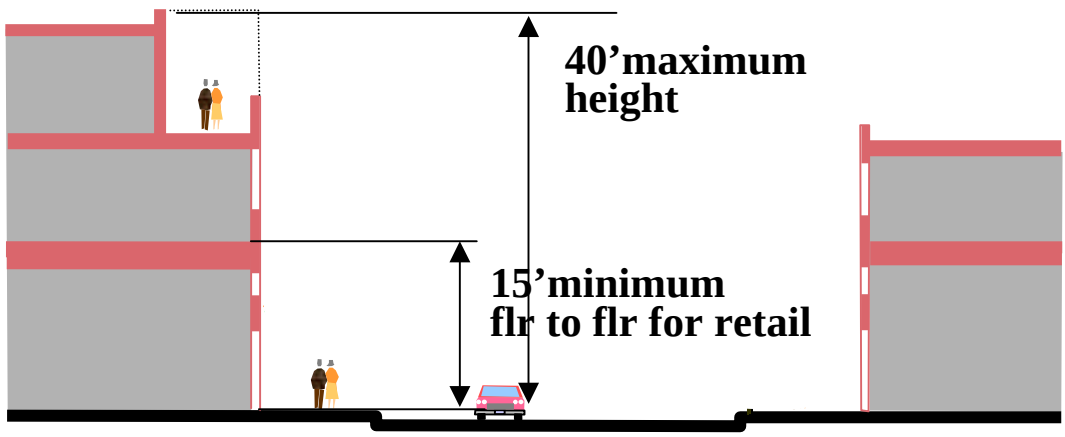


BUILDING HEIGHT (continued)

- Maximum height of the building at the street is 40' (three levels), except if the building includes a major retail space of more than 35,000 SF, then that portion of the building housing the retail space may be 45' in height at the street
- The minimum floor to floor height of the ground floor shall be fifteen feet (15') to accommodate ground floor retail space



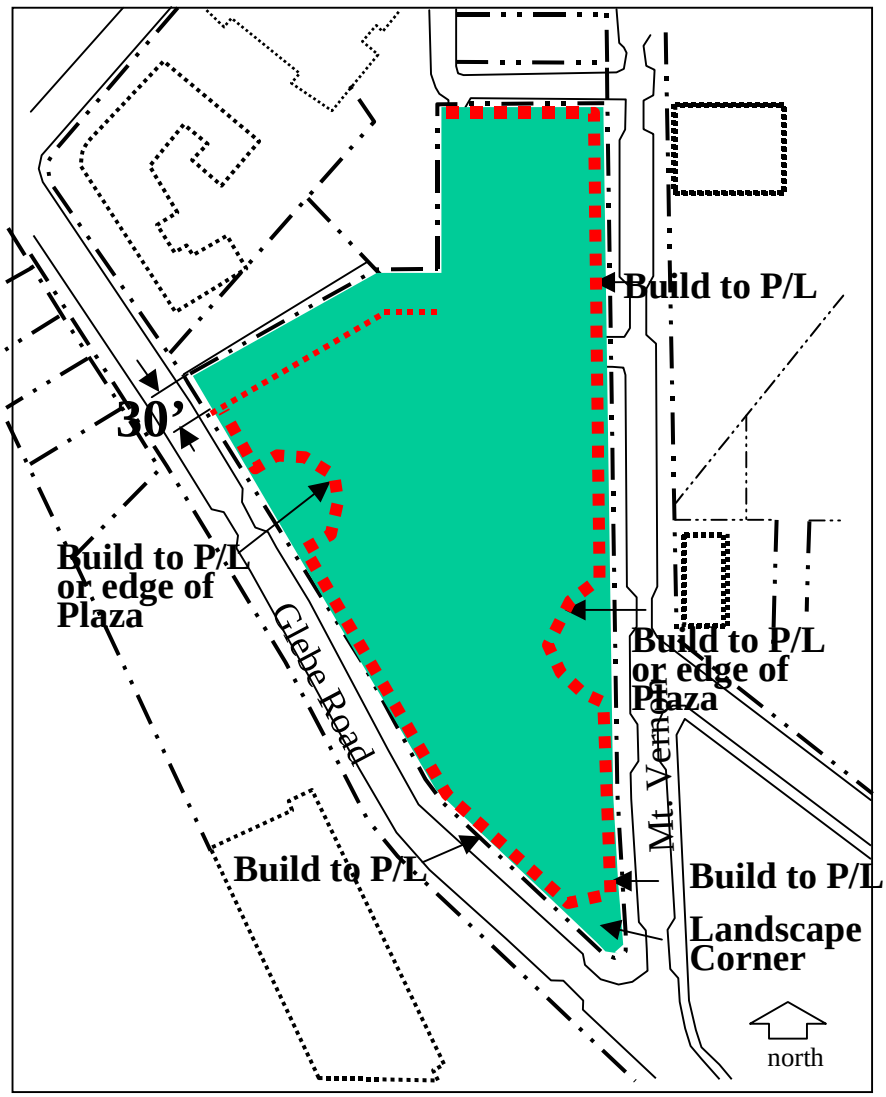
Cross Section Through Site



Cross Section at Street

BUILDING SETBACKS

- The building setbacks shall be as indicated in the plan below. Buildings on Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road shall be generally built to the property line to create an active urban streetscape.
- Buildings along the north property line facing the church shall be setback a minimum of 30’ from the property line.
- Buildings may be set back from the inter-section of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road to create a landscaped entry to the neighborhood.



BUILDING FACADES

- While not intending to mimic or replicate an architectural style, the building design and its facades should conform to the general historical art deco architectural style of the historic buildings of the greater neighborhood.

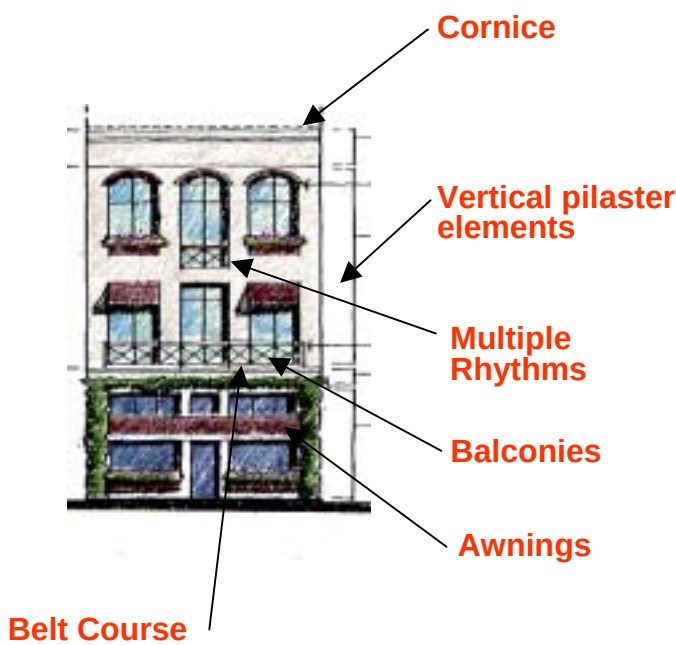
- Cornices and Belt Courses - The building design should incorporate decorative architectural belt-courses, cornices and eaves that project from the building to define the building elements (base,middle & top) and create three dimensional interest in the façade.

- Façade Rhythms - The building facades should incorporate multiple rhythms or cadences (rather than a single repetitive rhythm) that is reflective of the pattern found in the historic and traditional buildings of the area.

- The intent is to incorporate sufficient offsets and other devices that will create a façade that is in scale with the traditional pattern of small buildings found along Mt. Vernon Avenue.
- The buildings must contribute to the creation of a streetscape with varying architectural treatments or building segments at intervals of no more than fifty to sixty feet in length along the street.

BUILDING FACADES (continued)

- Elements that make up the rhythmic variation may include:
  - Recessed windows
  - Projecting windows
  - Bay windows
  - Structural elements
  - Textures, patterns and colors
  - Trim elements
  - Balconies
  - Belt-courses
  - Cornices
  - Awnings and shutters
  - Landscape elements



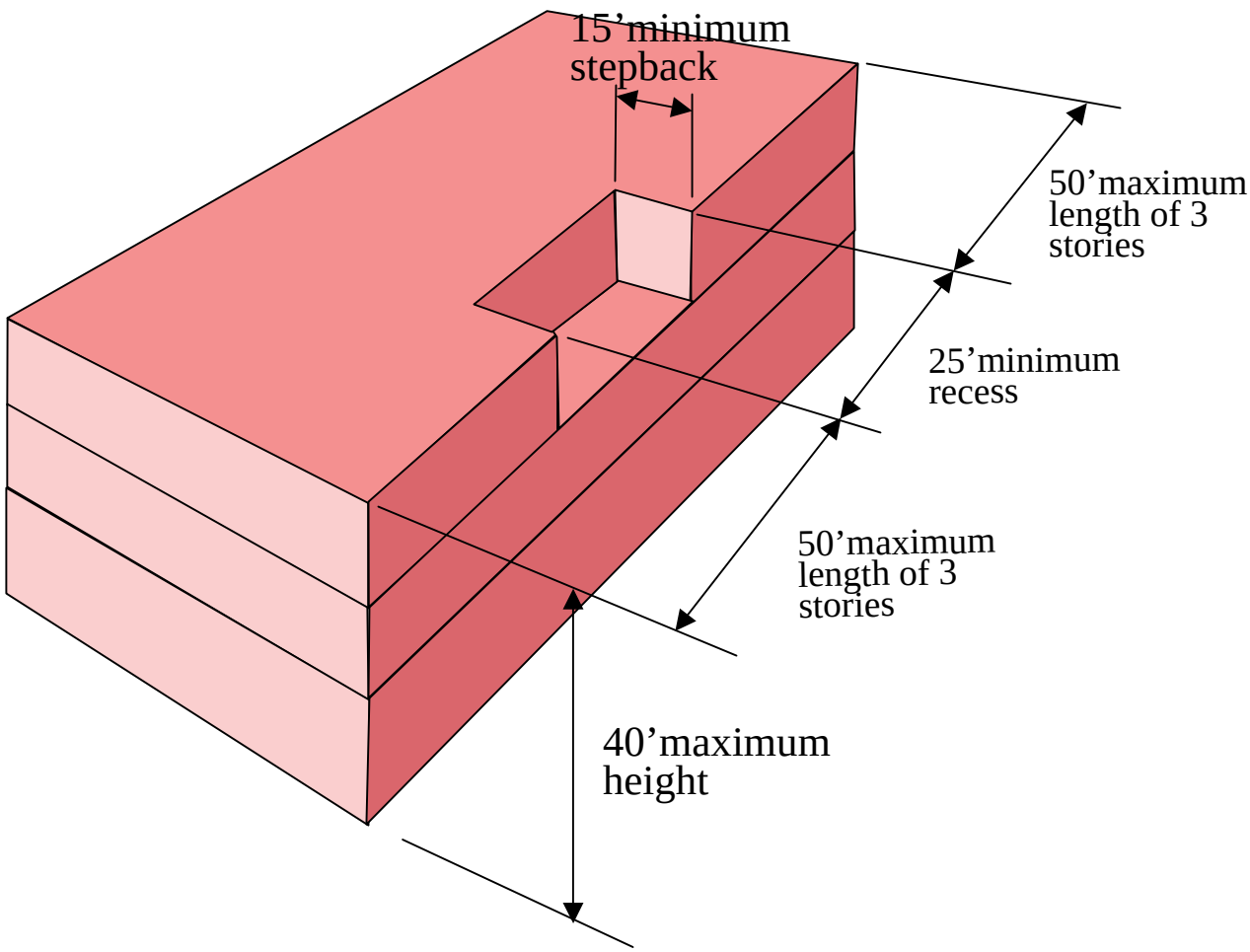
- Require building walls that are punctured by well-proportioned window openings that provide three dimensional relief, detail, interest and rhythmic variation in the wall.

BUILDING FACADES (continued)

- Require windows to be recessed a minimum of 6” from the face of the wall to emphasize the thickness of the wall consistent with the historical and traditional buildings on Mt Vernon Avenue; or project windows from the wall (6” maximum into the public ROW - 3’ into the public ROW for bay windows).
  - Require high-quality operable windows whose elements and detail emulate the size of the windows in the traditional and historical buildings of the neighborhood.
- Require warm (color temperature equal to incandescent), low-level lighting as an integral part of the façade design to add to the nighttime ambient light level in the neighborhood and to add nighttime interest to the buildings.

BUILDING STEPBACKS

- To emphasize the 50’ to 60’ façade elements and emulate the scale of the typical parcel width in the neighborhood, limit the three-story, forty foot (40’) height limit to a maximum of fifty feet (50’) in length along the street.
- Require breaks in the façade at the third level of at least twenty five feet (25’) in length with a minimum stepback from the street wall of fifteen (15’) feet.

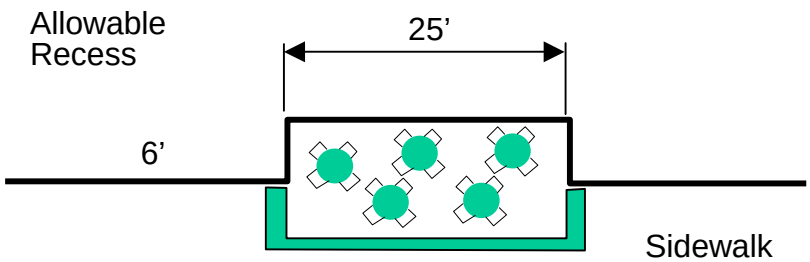


STOREFRONT DESIGN

- All stores with frontage on Mt. Vernon Avenue or Glebe Road shall have their primary entrance on one of the two streets or on a plaza.
- No buildings with frontage on Mt. Vernon Avenue or Glebe Road shall have blank walls exceeding 10’ in length.
- Encourage storefronts to incorporate the following design concepts into the storefront designs.
  - *Provide bay windows up to 12’ in length that may project up to 12” into the public ROW - where the bay window has glazing on all projecting faces.*
  - *Provide porticos around the entry door that may project up to 12” into the public ROW*
  - *Provide awnings that may overhang the sidewalk (awnings to be below 14’ in height, not less than 8’ above the side walk and project a maximum of 6’ into the public ROW)*
  - *Provide permanent marquee structures or canopies that project from the building at entries (maximum 10’ in length, minimum height 8’ above the sidewalk and maximum projection of 4’ into the ROW)*
  - *Provide decorative signs that project into the ROW (Minimum height of 8’ and maximum projection of 4’)*

STOREFRONT DESIGN (continued)

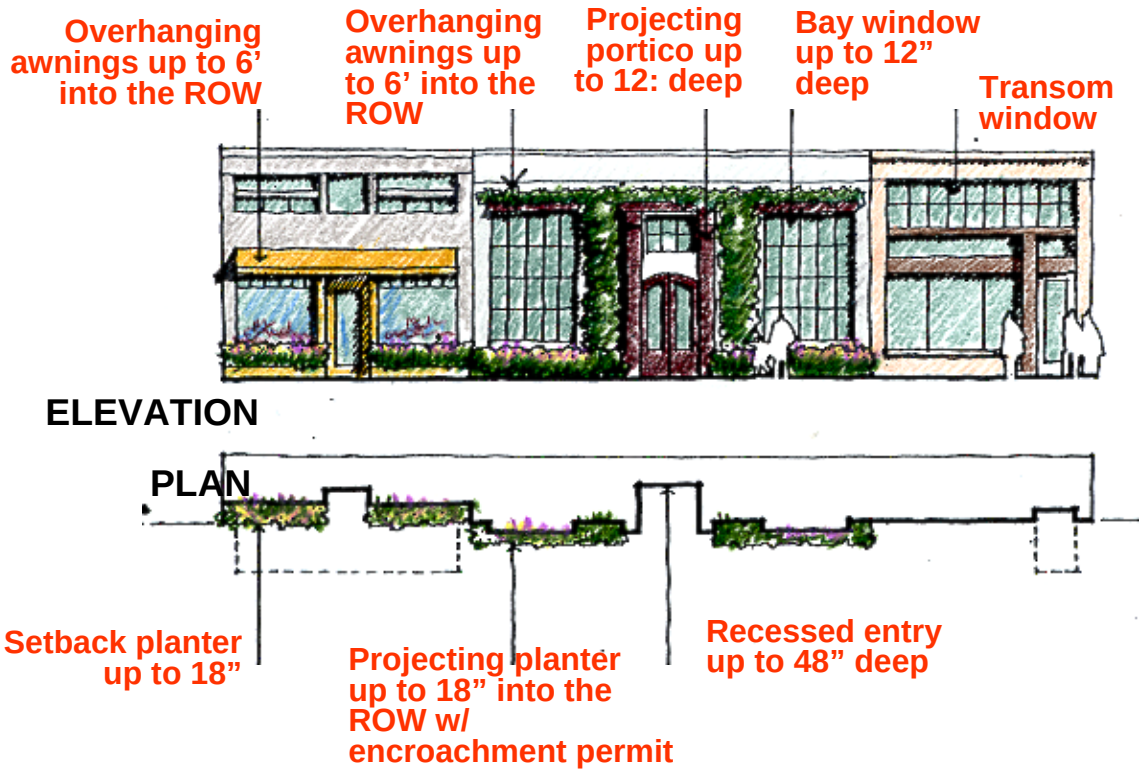
- Allow set-backs up to 6’ in depth and 25’ in length for outdoor uses where they are an integral part of the primary retail use.
- Allow encroachments into the sidewalk area for outdoor café seating.



- Require storefronts to include a pattern of transom windows, horizontal elements and mullions that provide a unique rhythm of glass and trim elements in the storefront

STOREFRONT DESIGN (continued)

- Require store front windows to be a minimum of 75% transparent (ability to see into the store). The balance of the store front windows to be a minimum of 24” deep show window display.
- Require bulkhead below show windows not to exceed 30” in height
- Require store fronts to incorporate variety along the length of the street. Changes in treatment, in compliance with the guidelines and standards, should occur at intervals of 50’ to maintain the historic scale of the neighborhood.



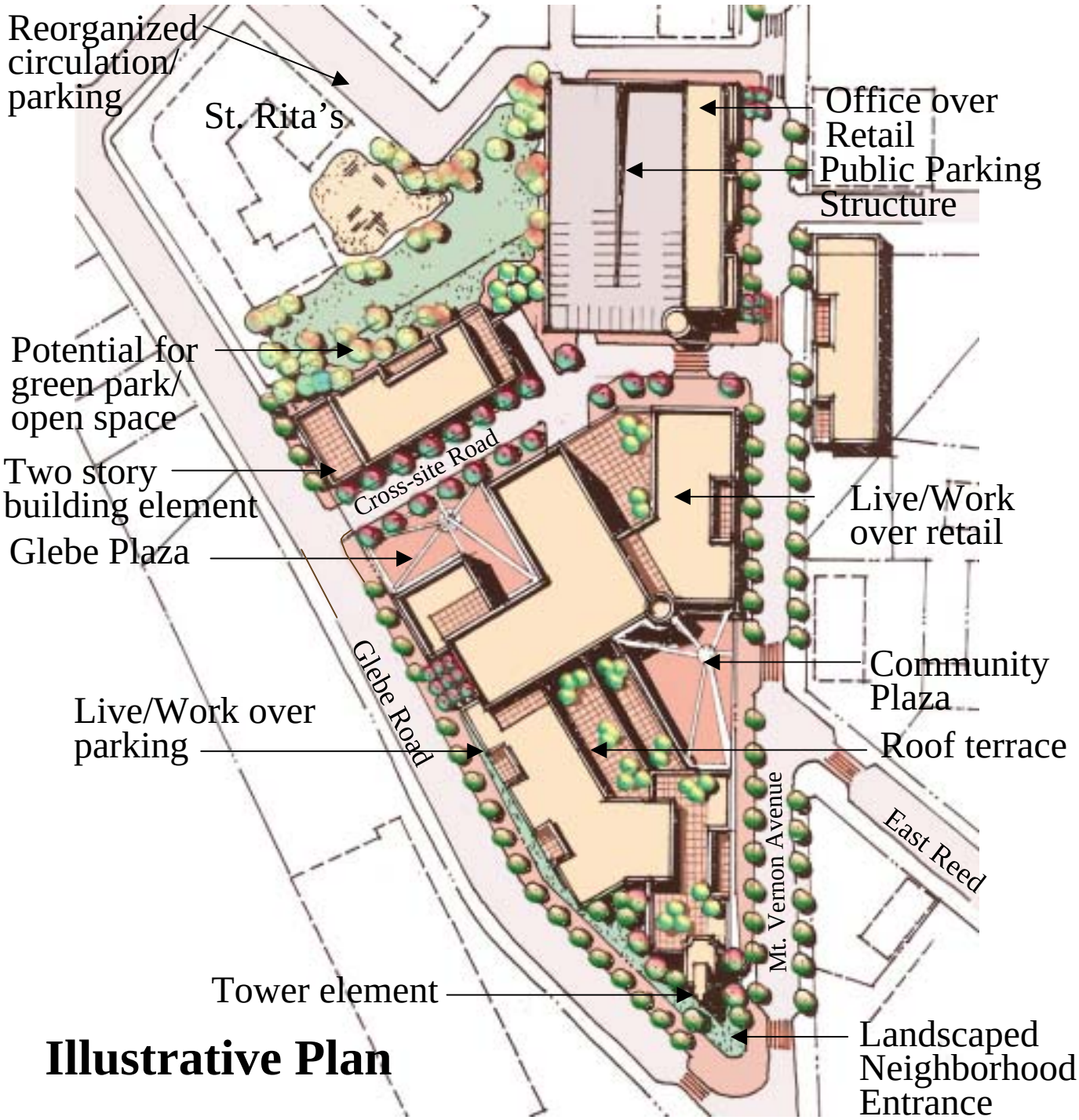
Upper Potomac West

SAFEWAY / DATATEL

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

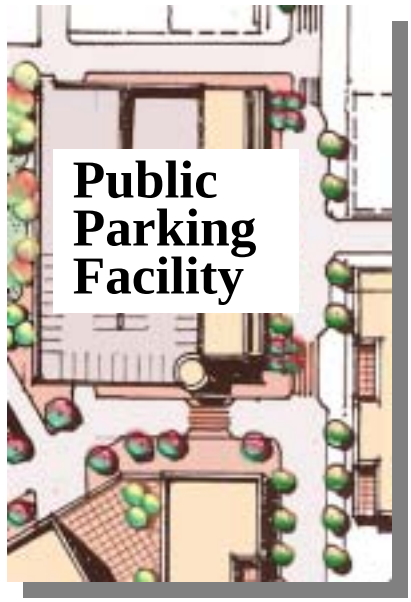
The Illustrative Plan demonstrates one approach for a design concept that conforms to the recommendations of the market analysis and the community design recommendations



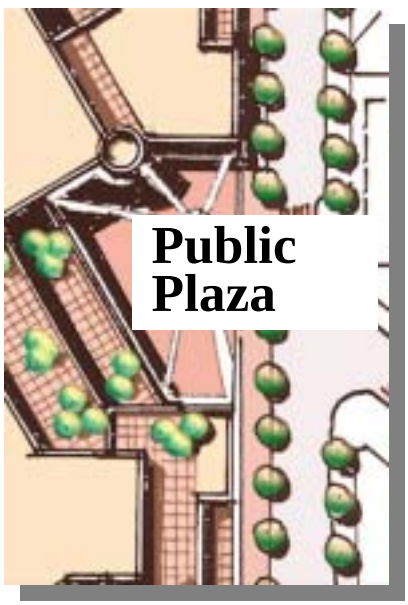
Illustrative Plan

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

The Illustrative Plan locates a public parking facility at the north end of the site. Construction of the parking structure requires the acquisition and demolition of the Datatel building and two other properties controlled by Weissberg Corp. The public parking facility provides approximately 375 parking spaces in a four-story building on five levels (including the roof). The parking structure is faced with one level of retail and two levels of office along Mt. Vernon Avenue, thus hiding the structure from Mt. Vernon Avenue. Other faces of the garage are designed for compatibility with the architecture of the complex and screened with base landscaping and landscaping incorporated into the architecture.



The anchor grocery store is located immediately to the south of the public parking. The grocery faces the parking, the street and a major pedestrian plaza located on the visual end of East Reed Avenue at the point where it intersects with Mt. Vernon Avenue. The public plaza provides a community focus for pedestrian activities such as art shows, public markets and small performances. Vehicular access to the public parking structure and the garage that provides parking to serve the upper level uses is from a new cross-site roadway linking Glebe Road to Mt. Vernon Avenue. The roadway is designed with traffic calming devices to dissuade motorists from using the new roadway as a cut through. The new roadway will provide access for service facilities for the grocery store and the balance of the retail and commercial uses. The service area is screened from public view. Parallel with the roadway is a handsome, landscaped pedestrian way that creates a pedestrian link from Glebe Road to Mt. Vernon Avenue.



ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Active retail uses are located along Mt. Vernon Avenue and the face of the Mt. Vernon public plaza. There is a significant grade change between Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue; therefore, the retail on level one (Mt. Vernon Avenue) will be a full level below the retail or other commercial uses located around the smaller plaza facing Glebe Road. A pedestrian stair and elevator serving the balance of the building will provide a connection between the two plazas.

The gateway to the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue commercial neighborhood is at the intersection of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue. The intersection includes pedestrian crossings with enhanced paving to announce the entrance to the district. The corner will be landscaped and a tower or marquee element incorporated in the architecture to identify the importance of the location to the neighborhood.

Uses on the upper floors of the building include residential or live/work units. The buildings, generally, have three-story facades on the street or two levels of live work over a level of retail. The facades are articulated to provide a recognition of the fact that the typical historic neighborhood is composed of small parcels. Along the façade, the third floor is recessed a minimum of fifteen feet from the face of the building so that the portion of the building with a three-story façade is never more than 50’ in length. Areas of the building that are taller than 40’ are setback at least 60’ from Mt. Vernon Avenue and 30’ from Glebe Road.

At the northwest end of the site, the building complex is setback 30’ from the St. Rita’s church property and the school. The portion of the building closest to the church property maintains a two-story façade along Glebe Road to provide compatibility with the height of the school. Further, the façade facing the church property is articulated to ensure that the majority of this face of the building is two-stories with the balance being no taller than three-stories.

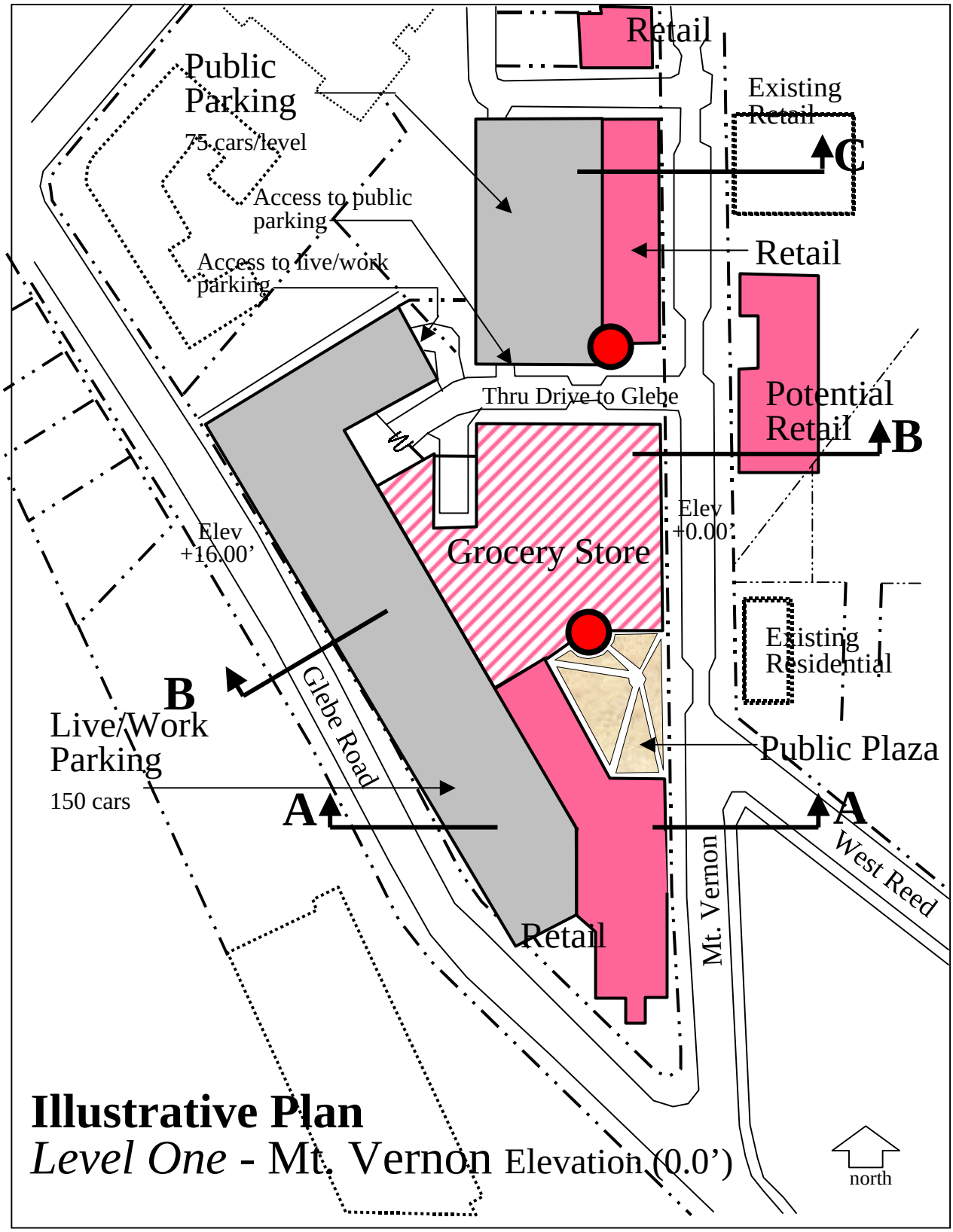
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Working cooperatively with St. Rita's, the parking, drop-off and circulation for the church is revised to take advantage of the additional space offered by the thirty foot setback and the location of the public parking structure, which the church could use for its needs. The ability to organize the circulation creates an opportunity for church and school uses to enter or exit from both Russell Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue and provides the opportunity to increase the amount of landscaped open space and school play area between the new development and the church/school.

Further, the new public parking facility provides the potential for the redevelopment and revitalization of the balance of the properties on Mt. Vernon Avenue. The small parcels to the north of the Safeway/Datatel site do not have the necessary land to provide parking; however, the public parking facilities would provide the necessary parking to support the upgrading or the upsizing of the retail facilities. The Birchmere's parking occupies major frontage on Mt. Vernon Avenue. With the ability to use the public parking facility for its nighttime uses, some of the current on-grade parking could be converted to retail, office or restaurant space, thus allowing the Birchmere to have a presence on the Avenue. Further, the patrons of the Birchmere using the public parking facility would become pedestrians on Mt. Vernon Avenue and potential patrons of the retail merchants.

The new Safeway/Datatel complex provides the necessary southern anchor to stimulate the redevelopment of the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue retail neighborhood . The following diagrammatic floor plans indicate how the various land uses are proposed to be arrayed on the site in the Illustrative Plan.

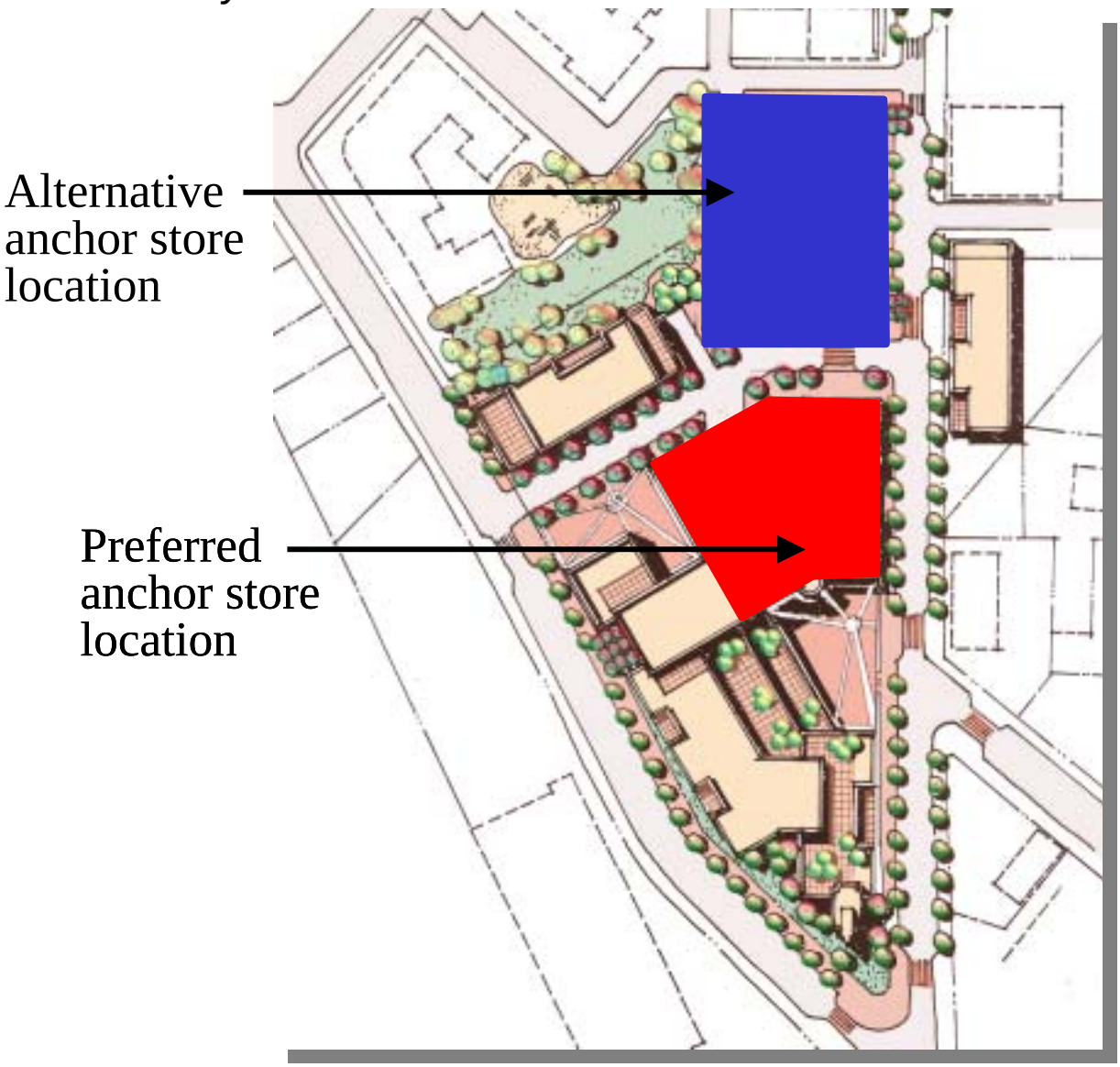
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



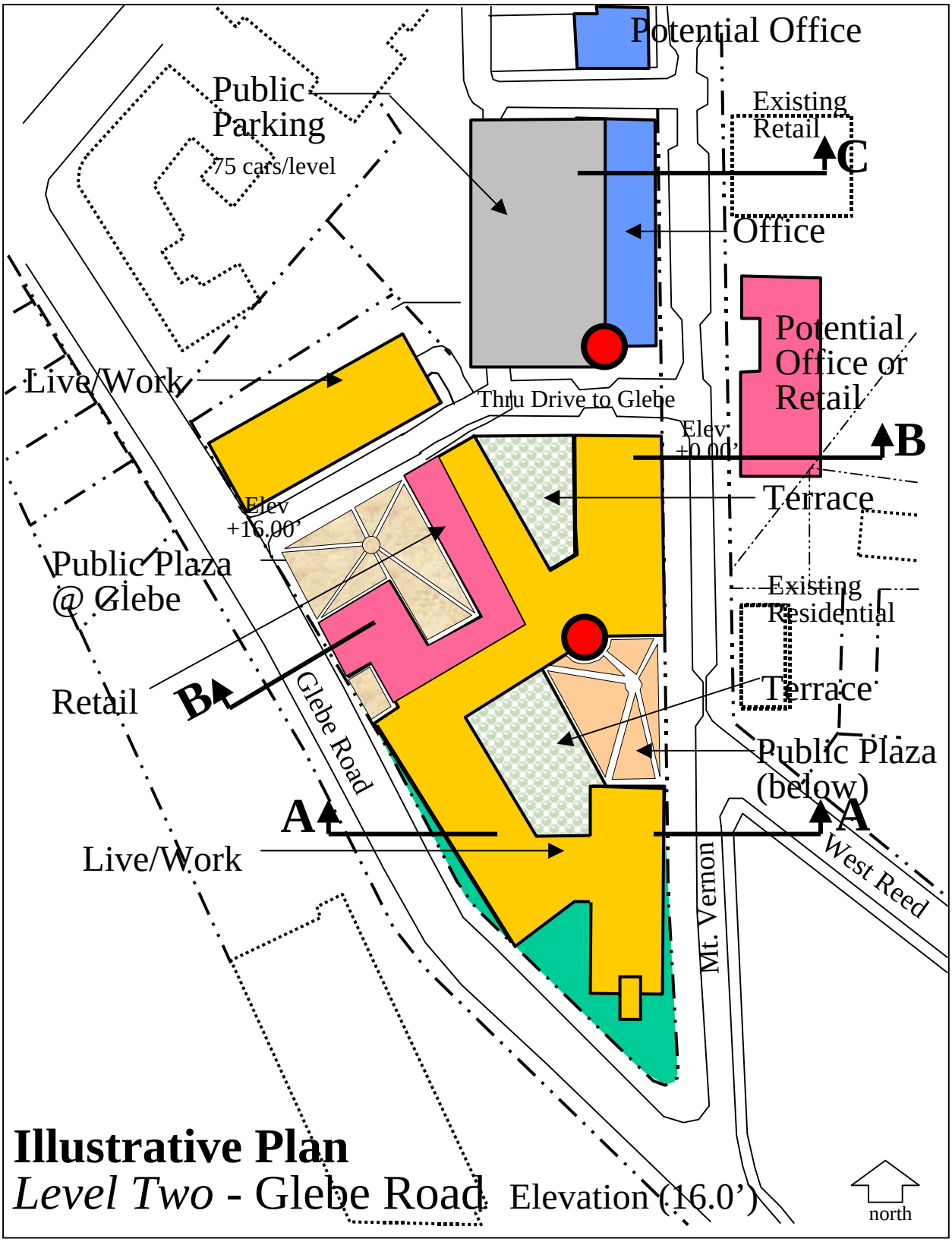
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Alternative Grocery Store Locations

The Safeway/Datatel site includes a deed restriction that prohibits the use of the site for a grocery store without the permission of Safeway. Should an agreement not be able to be reached with Safeway, the diagram below offers an alternative location for a grocery story anchor that is not on the Safeway site.



ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



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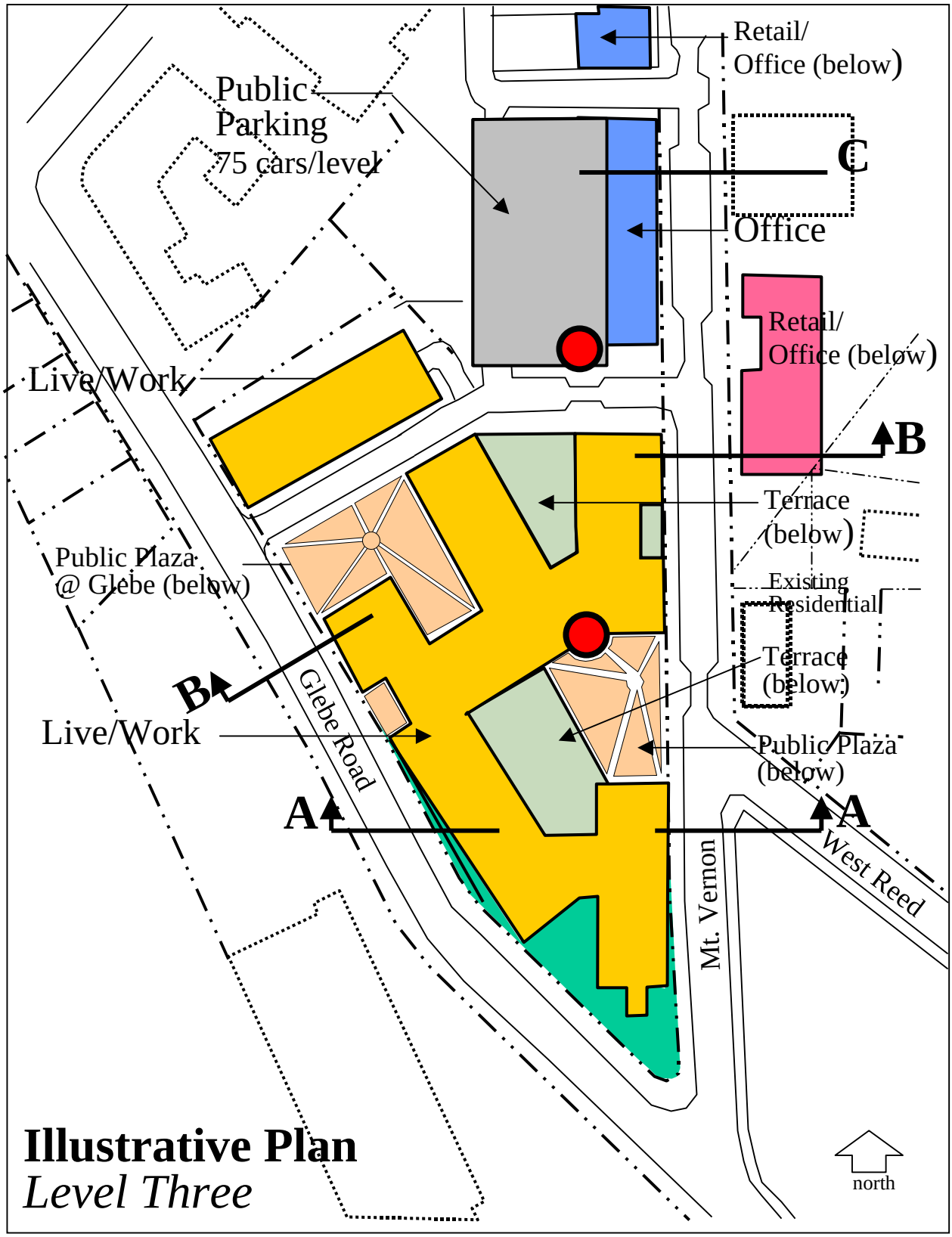

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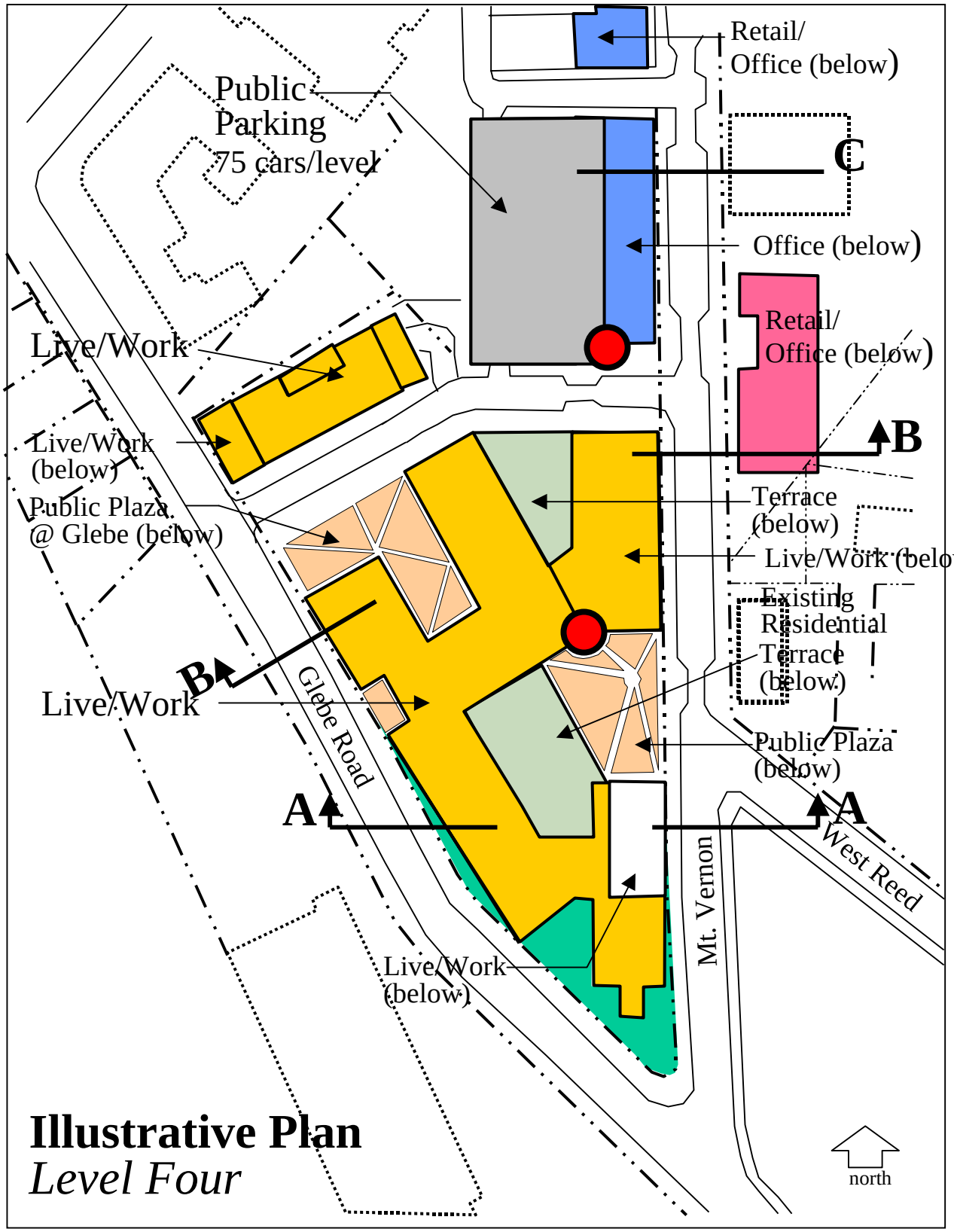

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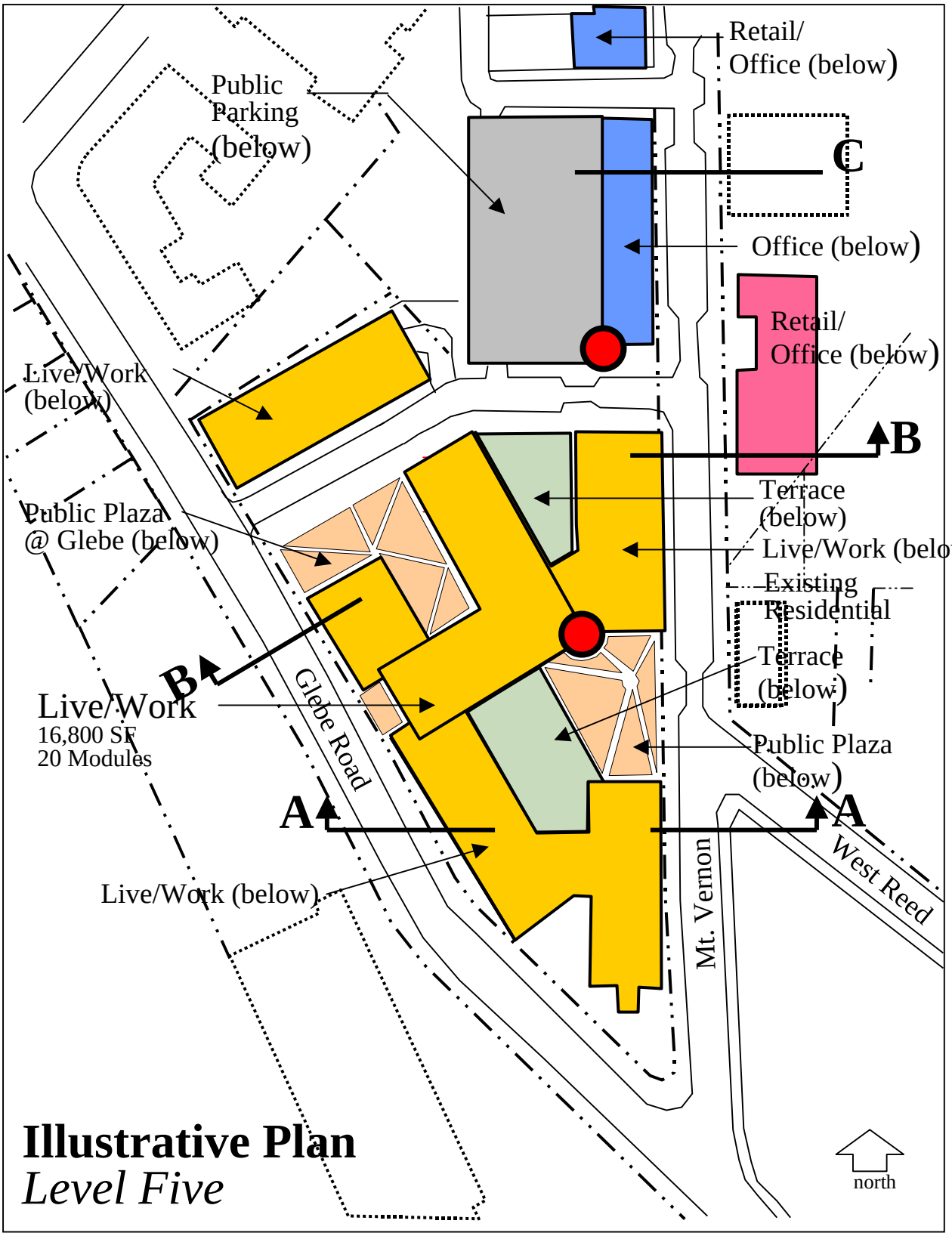


ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

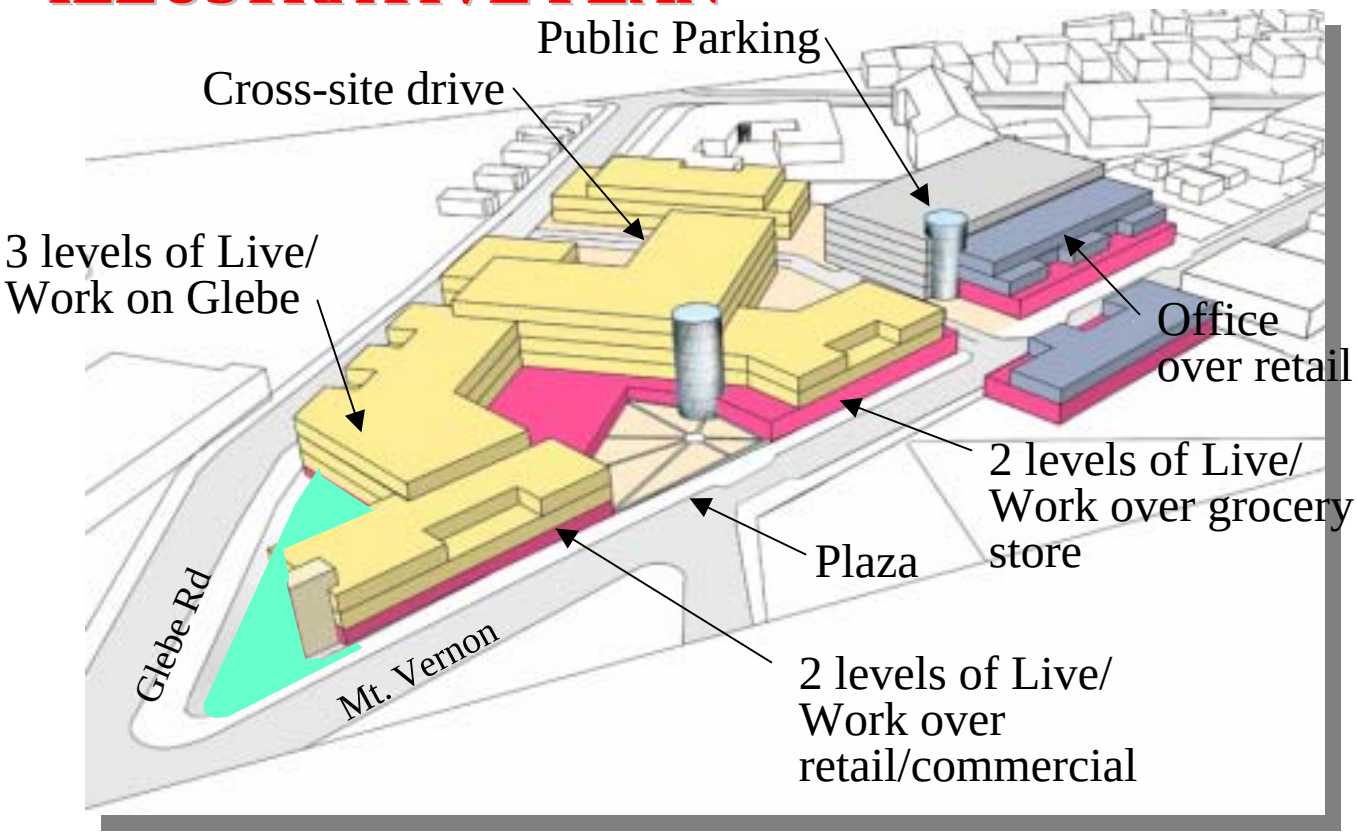
The following table outlines the floor areas for each land use as documented in the Illustrative Plan. The notes include the assumptions for the amount of parking for the live/work and the for the area per car in each of the parking garage types. Further, the table includes the FAR based upon three methods for evaluating the FAR.

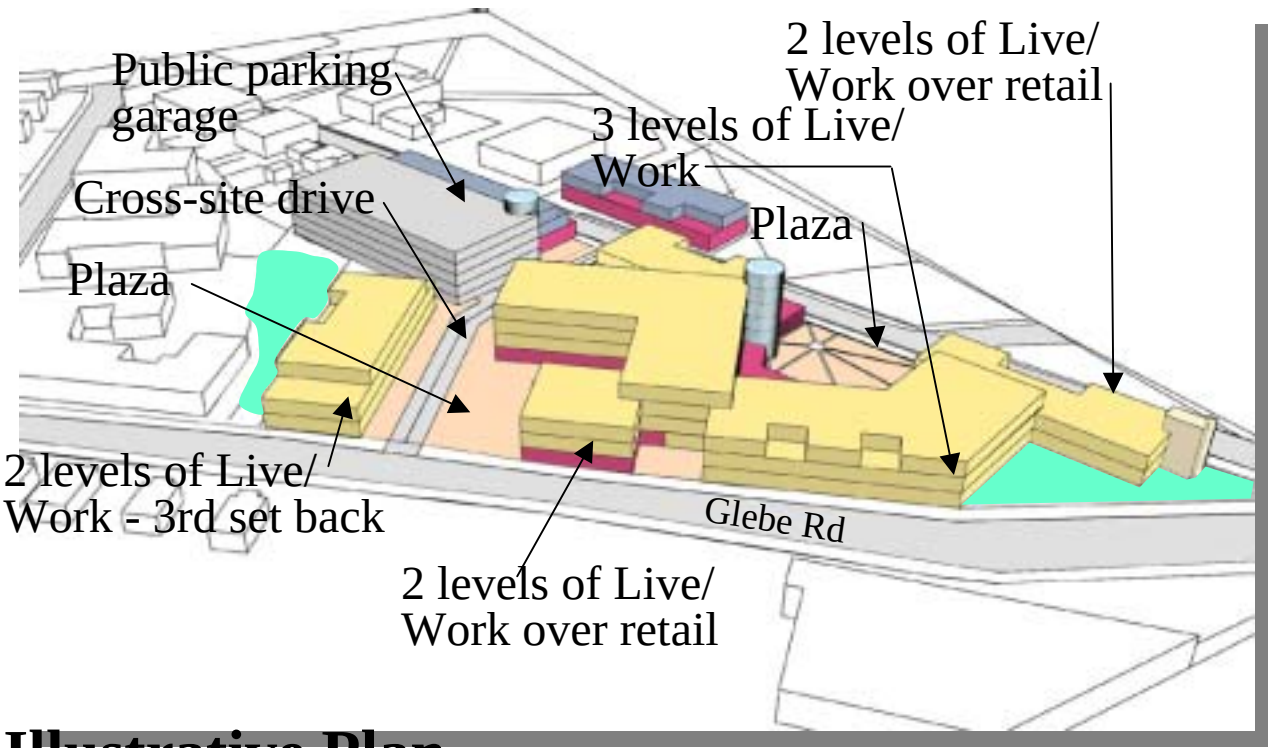
• Anchor Store (grocery)	40,000 SF
• Retail	33,500 SF
• Office	12,500 SF
• Live/Work or Residential (315 modules)*(4)*	270,000 SF
• Public Parking 375 cars *(1)*	132,000 SF
• Live/Work Parking*(3)* 315 cars *(2)*	120,000 SF
Total Area	608,000 SF

FAR (net area - not including parking)	1.59
FAR (gross area - not including parking)	1.87
FAR (gross area - but including above grade parking)	2.5

(1) 1 car = 350 SF
(2) 1 car = 380 SF
(3) assumes 1 car/module
(4) module + 700 SF net & 850 SF gross

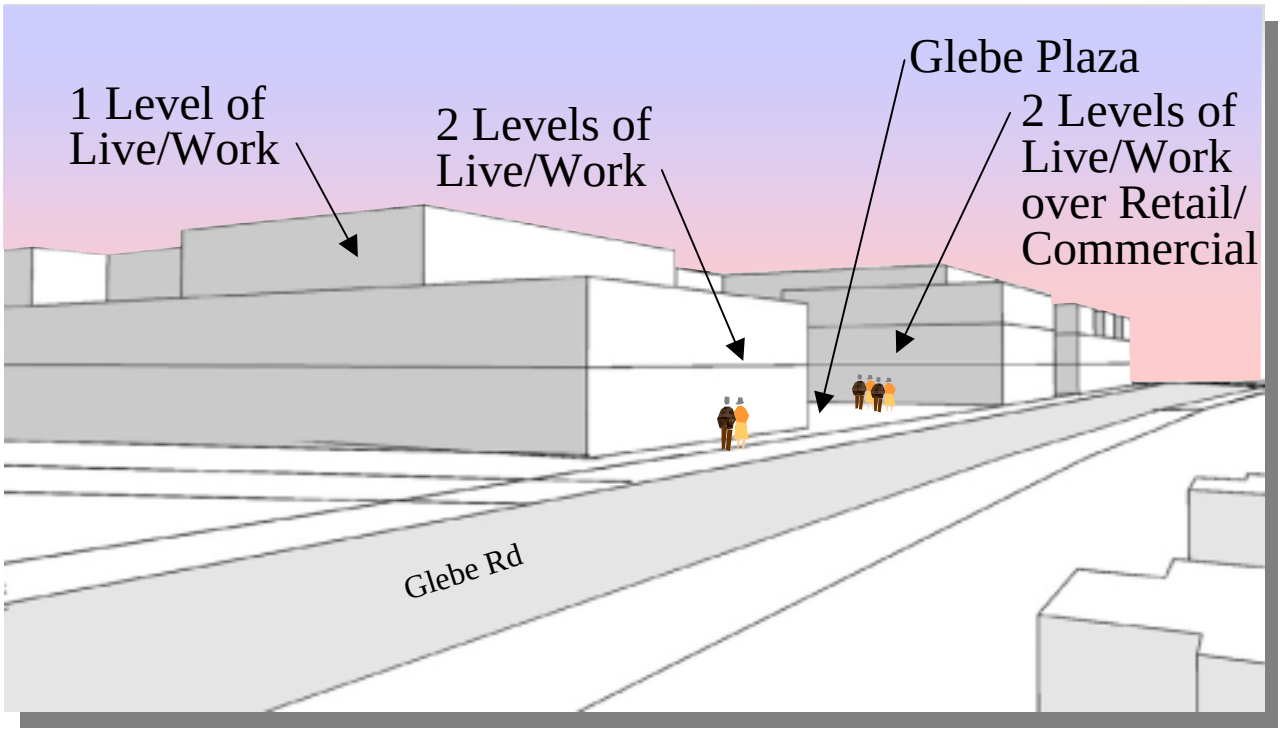
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



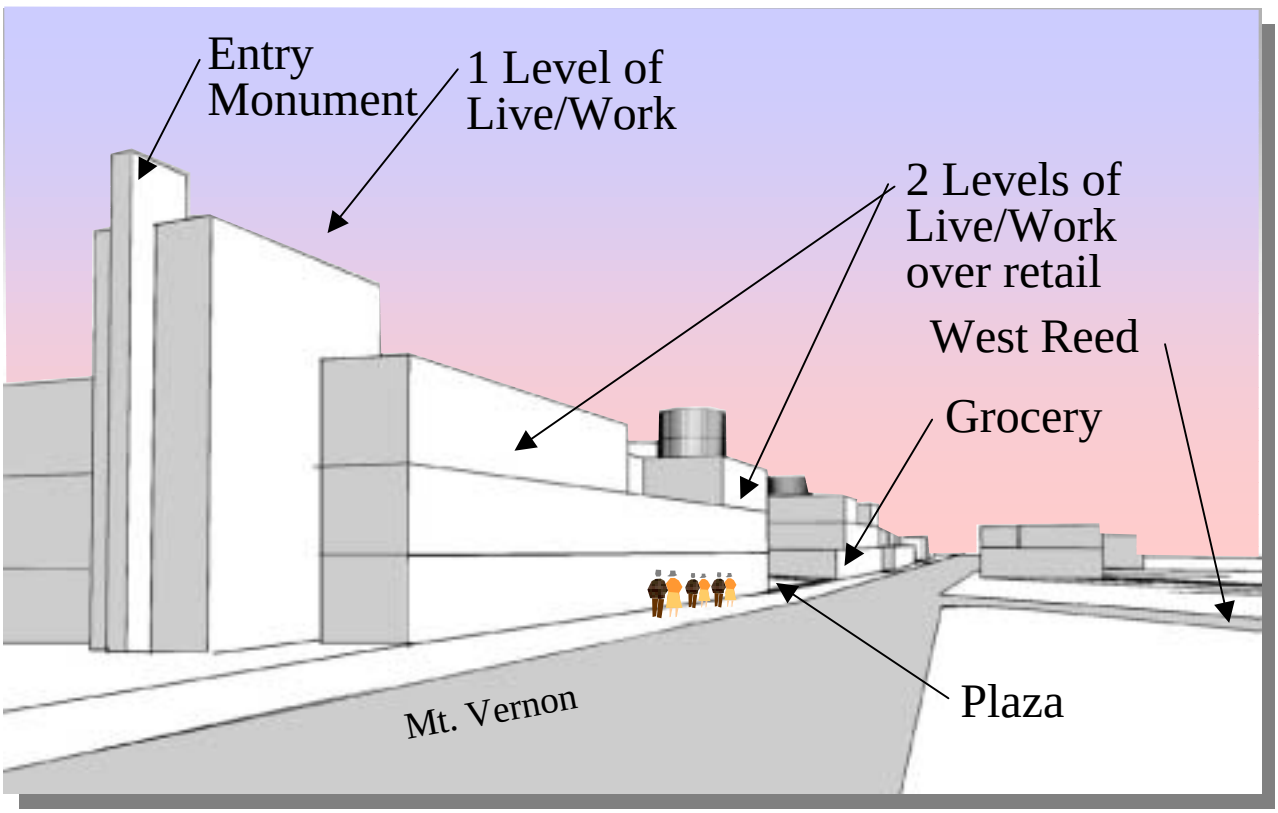


Illustrative Plan

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

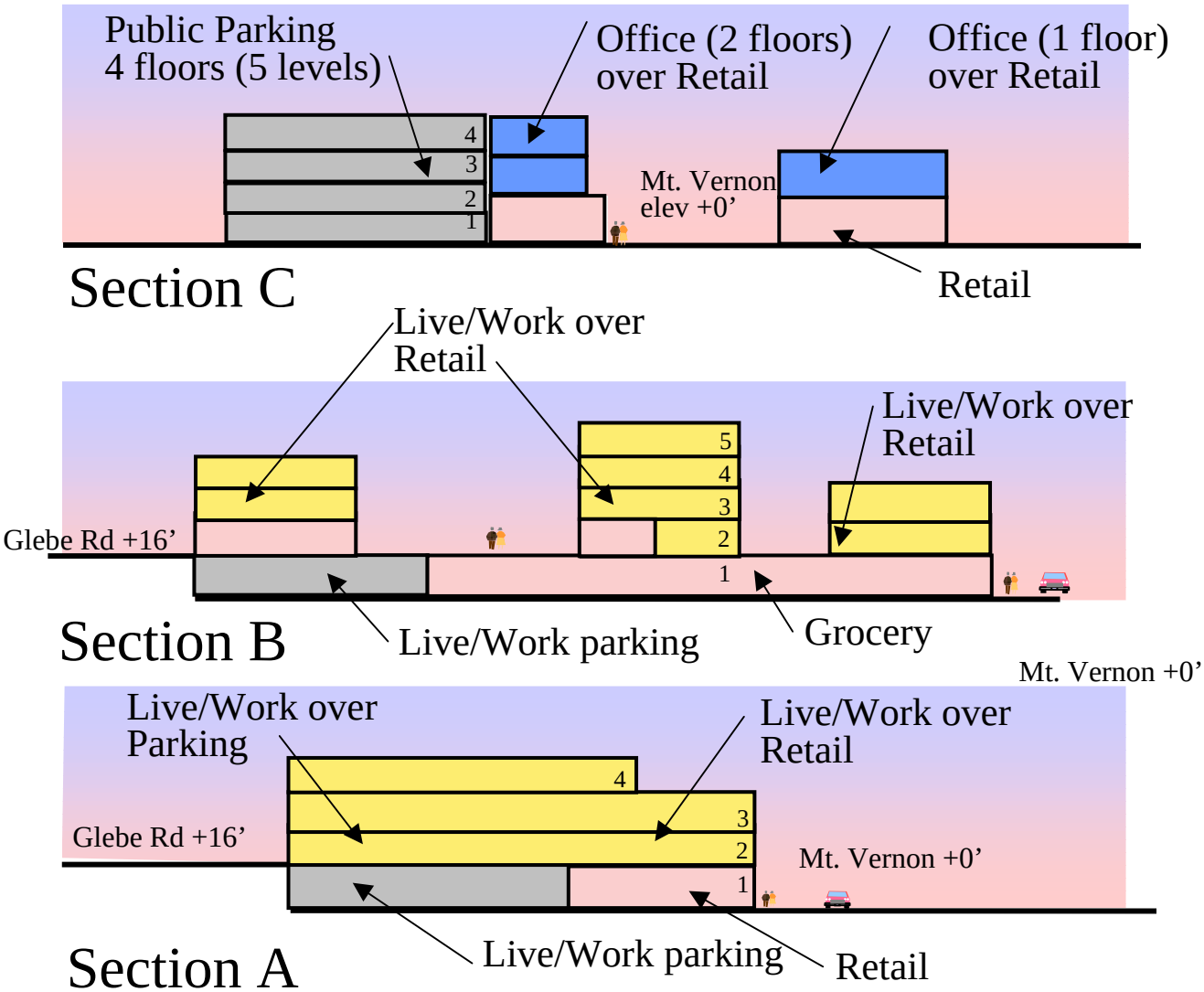


Looking Southeast down Glebe Road



Looking North up Mt. Vernon

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



Site Sections

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

View to the Plaza looking north on Mt. Vernon Avenue

Looking South on Mt. Vernon Avenue

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

View from the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road

View of the Glebe Road Plaza looking east from Glebe Road

Upper Potomac West

EAST REED AVENUE

Upper Potomac West

EAST REED AVENUE

THE PLANNING PROCESS

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The mission of the East Reed Avenue Work Group was to focus on the land north of East Reed Avenue and to:

- investigate and understand the potential for redevelopment;
- assess the consequences of redevelopment for property owners and the neighborhood; and
- educate the property owners and the community about the potential for redevelopment.

The planning was coordinated by the East Reed Avenue Work Group which met on a schedule parallel to the Safeway/Datatel Work Group. The following are the members of the work group:

- Rosa Byrd, Chair
- Conrado Aguilar
- Brenda Smith
- Harold Brooks, unofficial member of the work group, neighbor

The planning process included the involvement of the property owners, the occupants, the neighbors and interested parties such as Lincoln Properties, the developers of the apartment complex to the north, and the work group engaged in outreach efforts in order to include as many community participants as possible in its discussions.

THE PLANNING PROCESS (continued)

In November of 2000 the work group sponsored a community meeting to which all East Reed property owners, occupants and the larger community were invited. The meeting was well attended and it gave the work group the opportunity to convey to the community the idea that the City was focusing planning efforts on the site. While there was no clear consensus with regard to East Reed Avenue, the following themes were expressed during the community meeting:

•Concern was expressed about the need to improve the level of care that tenants take with regard to their rented properties, e.g. trash, drug activities and prostitution.

•Concern was expressed about the need to have absentee landlords properly maintain their properties

•Concern was expressed by the property owners that they should receive a fair return on their investments

•One property owner expressed the view that the site should be converted to public open space

•One property owner/occupant expressed concern that he would be unable to sell his property at fair market value and convert the proceeds to another house in Alexandria

•Concern was expressed that redevelopment would be disruptive and would change the existing neighborhood

•The group expressed the belief that the City had a responsibility to assist with any solution to the issues of East Reed Avenue.

THE PLANNING PROCESS (continued)

Early in its work, the work group focused on three potential approaches for the north side of East Reed Avenue, but the group's thinking about each of them changed as its work continued through the year.

- **The "do nothing" approach.** The work group considered the consequences if the City and the community decided to simply keep the status quo for this block of homes. This approach was attractive because it is the least disruptive and the least expensive.

  The work group met with a series of developers and market economists in order to assess the likelihood of the block being redeveloped and learned that there was a high probability that the block would be redeveloped by private developers without stimulus from the City. In fact, market economists advised the group that the block presents a very desirable site for infill residential development, especially in light of the changes around the site, such as the new construction at Lincoln Properties and the future development at Potomac Yard. It became clear that if the group chose to "do nothing," development would still occur, but it might occur in a piecemeal fashion and it would leave the community without any voice in the future of the site.

THE PLANNING PROCESS (continued)

- **Rehabilitation by property owners or the private market**. Still interested in not displacing long term residents and not disrupting the neighborhood with more redevelopment, the work group considered the possibility that the existing homes could remain, but could be renovated, thus upgrading the appearance of the block and increasing property values for long time owners. If new kitchens and bathrooms, second floors, new systems (air conditioning, plumbing, etc) and parking could be added, then the area could remain relatively the same, but would become more attractive and more desirable for new families.

  There are existing programs involving low cost loans that assist property owners with rehabilitation, but today they are only available for owner occupants. Without any leverage over absentee owners, the work group had no assurance this option would be pursued for the units that need it the most.

  In addition, outside market consultants advised the group that the private market would not be interested in renovating the existing structures because there would be an insufficient economic return from the effort. In other words, the cost to rehabilitate the existing structures is more than the market would pay for the renovated home. Therefore, the work group concluded that this option was not realistic.

THE PLANNING PROCESS (continued)

- **The redevelopment approach**. Although it is the most disruptive, this approach allows the community to participate in the planning for the area and leads to the upgrade of the entire site. Because it is almost certain that the north side of East Reed Avenue will redevelop in the near future, the work group focused its efforts during the second half of its work on that potential reality in two ways. First, it increased its attempts to include property owners in its discussions and was successful. In the second half of the planning process, work group meetings were attended by several property owners, some of whom were consistent participants.

  Second, the work group considered what it would like to see if redevelopment occurred. Examples from other development within the City were presented to demonstrate the potential for development on the site. Examples included the potential density of development and the various types of townhouses and other housing prototypes that could be used in the redevelopment of the site. Other examples included the potential to include usable open space as an integral part of the general site layout.

Working with the property owners and the community, the work group developed a consensus for the approach to the redevelopment of the site as documented in an Illustrative Plan and Community Design elements.

Upper Potomac West

EAST REED AVENUE

COMMUNITY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOALS & OBJECTIVES for the COMMUNITY

The East Reed Avenue Work Group had several clear goals and objectives for itself and for the community:

- *To improve East Reed Avenue and the neighborhood generally.*
- *To assess the options for residents and property owners on the north side of East Reed Avenue.*
- *To educate the community and the property owners about the potential for and consequences of redevelopment.*
- *To guide the use, form and intensity of redevelopment so that it does not overwhelm or destabilize the existing residential neighborhoods.*
- *To protect existing owner occupants on the north side of East Reed Avenue from displacement by redevelopment.*
- *To ensure that the community has a voice in any redevelopment that occurs so that the neighborhood's interests are protected.*

Upper Potomac West

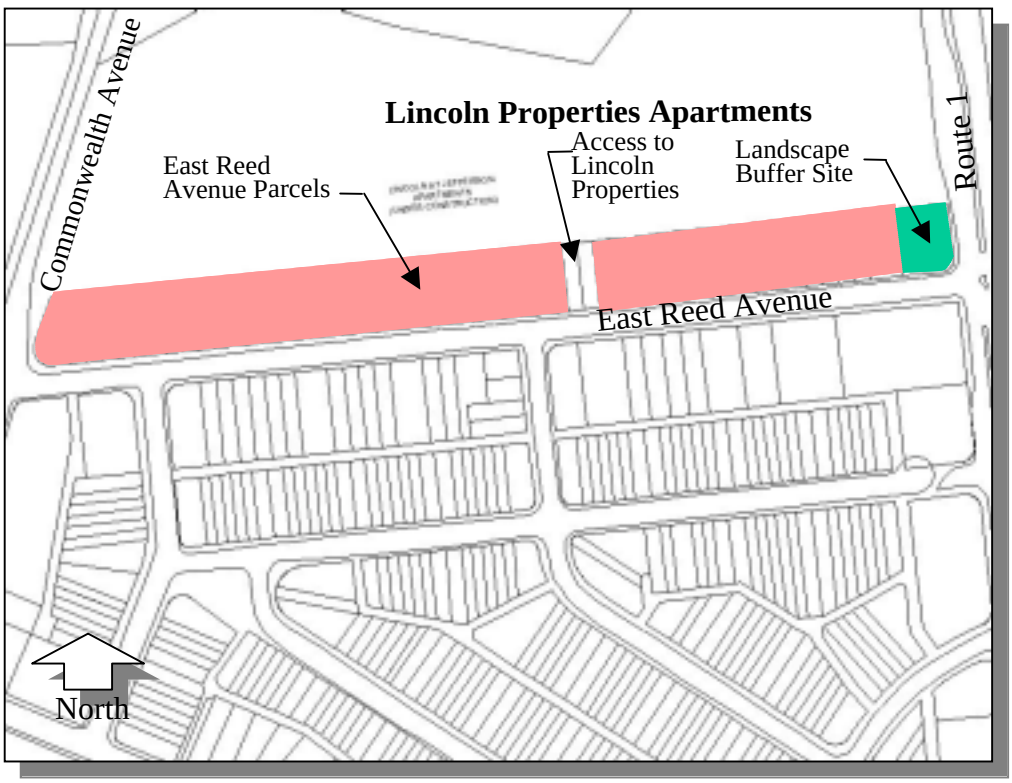
EAST REED AVENUE

THE SITE

EAST REED AVENUE

THE SITE

The East Reed Avenue site is located on the north side of East Reed Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1). The site encompasses some 3.25 acres in 46 separately owned parcels. The site is bordered on the north by a major apartment complex that is currently under construction by Lincoln Properties and on the south side of East Reed Avenue by residential properties and the Lynhaven neighborhood. The site is bordered on the west by Commonwealth Avenue and the Hume Springs neighborhood. The corner site at Route 1 is owned by the City. Upon completion of the apartment complex it will be converted to a landscape buffer to separate the site from Route 1. Originally there were 49 lots, but two were purchased by Lincoln Properties to provide access from East Reed Avenue to the large garages serving the apartments.



The East Reed Avenue site

THE SITE (continued)

Of the 46 lots, 10 lots are owner occupied. The remainder are occupied by renters and the ownership is by an investor/ absentee land owner. One owner owns as many as seven lots.

East Reed Avenue Residence

The majority of the buildings on the site were built in 1947 following World War II and are either single-family residences or side by side two-family residences (duplexes).

The lots are typically 2,625 SF, although four of the lots are double sized. The homes are very small by today's standards at approximately 700 SF per dwelling. Some of the residences are in substandard condition although all meet the minimum building code requirements.

The area was subject to periodic flooding until the Four Mile Run was channeled in the 1970s. The flood control abated the general flood problem, although some occupants report periodic flooding in basements.

East Reed Avenue Residence

Assessments on the single lots are relatively consistent at approximately $63,000 to $67,000 per lot with some as high as $70,000 to $80,000.

The double lots are valued at $120,000 to $150,000. The total assessed value for the 46 lots comprising the site is $3.5 million.

THE SITE (continued)

Zoning

The land is currently zoned RB, which is a traditional townhouse zone. The RB zone allows for single-family, two family and townhouse units. The minimum lot size under the zone is 1,980 SF per dwelling unit, but with special approval, based upon exceptional design, lot size can be reduced to 1,600 SF. The overall density is limited to 22 units per acre with the stipulation that both the density and the lot size requirements must be met if they are not consistent.

The minimum width of an interior townhouse is 18' and 26' for end units and 38' for units on corner lots. Variations are allowed with the use of cluster design. The floor area ratio (FAR) is limited to 0.75 and the maximum height is 45'.

The required open space is 800 SF per townhouse lot.

East Reed Avenue Residence

East Reed Avenue Residence

East Reed Avenue Residence

Upper Potomac West

EAST REED AVENUE

ECONOMIC/MARKET CONDITIONS

ECONOMIC/MARKET CONDITIONS

The work group obtained input from the private development sector and independent real estate market analysts prior to establishing its recommended approach.

The consensus of the real estate professionals was as follows:

- There is a strong market for this site for residential development.
- If the City does nothing the market will eventually redevelop this property.
- The new development in the vicinity, such as the Lincoln Properties apartments, Arna Valley and Potomac Yard residential, make this site an "opportunity site" for infill development at a different price point than will be available at those projects.
- The price for a townhouse in this location should not exceed $300,000.
- The challenge for redevelopment is land assembly; however, the City should not consider land assembly an insurmountable hurdle. The private sector prefers that the City not get involved in the land assembly.
- The market would prefer to acquire the entire site; however, given the Lincoln Properties drive access, the project could be done in two parts.
- There is no value to the market in the units as they currently exist. It is not economically feasible to acquire the land and units, rehabilitate the units and resell.
- Rezoning may be necessary for redevelopment.
- The best use of the land is for townhouses and stacked townhouses.

DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

The north side of East Reed - in fact the entire Upper Potomac West area - lies within a larger area which is experiencing rapid changes. The addition of the Potomac Yard retail center and the Jack Taylor Toyota development on Route 1, the future development of the remainder of Potomac Yard, and the recent residential development at Arna Valley in Arlington all contribute to a sense that the East Reed Avenue area is a target for redevelopment. In addition, the Safeway/Datatel site and the National Car Rental site are both likely to redevelop in the near future, and both will have an impact on East Reed Avenue.

As these new developments occur, the north side of East Reed Avenue will become more and more desirable for redevelopment from a market standpoint, and physically less compatible with the new development. At the same time, the new developments in the area make it all the more important that existing residential neighborhoods that are stable, such as Lynhaven and Hume Springs, are protected.

The large apartment complex at Lincoln Properties directly north of the East Reed site, and especially the tall garages which border the homes on the north side of East Reed Avenue, make the redevelopment of that block face more likely and more acceptable. However, even if feasible from a market standpoint, it is important that the redevelopment opportunity not extend south of the north side of East Reed Avenue to encroach into the remainder of the Lynhaven neighborhood. One of the express goals of the Upper Potomac West Task Force has been to channel redevelopment to appropriate areas while protecting existing, stable residential neighborhoods, and the East Reed Avenue circumstance is an example of the issue.

Upper Potomac West

EAST REED AVENUE

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The East Reed Work Group developed the following implementation objectives to guide the redevelopment of the site:

- Create a plan to guide the appropriate redevelopment of the neighborhood in accordance with the desires of the community.
- Create changes to the zoning ordinance if necessary to permit the implementation of the plan.
- Promote the development of the land in accordance with an approved residential plan.
- Motivate all of the landowners to sell their properties in bulk to permit the most appropriate redevelopment of the residential neighborhood.
- Protect owner occupants to the extent possible from displacement.

The East Reed Work Group has been successful in creating a coalition of property owners on the north side of East Reed Avenue. Mr. Richard Eubanks, one of the property owners, has organized a majority of the lot owners. The group of property owners, including all of the owner occupant parcels, appears to have reached consensus that it is willing to sell its land, if it can achieve a price for the land that it believes fairly represents its value. The group is considering signing a mutual contract with a realtor and jointly offering to sell its properties.

However, the market consultants with whom the work group met were consistent in their findings that to achieve the prices sought by the property owners, redevelopment of the land would have to occur at a high residential density, similar to the Lincoln Properties apartment project. The redevelopment concept the work group thought would be appropriate for the site and the larger neighborhood consists of townhouses and stacked townhouses at a lower density. Thus, there are differing views about the appropriate plan for redevelopment of the site, and the market place will eventually determine whether the lot owners' expectations are realistic or not.

Upper Potomac West

EAST REED AVENUE

COMMUNITY DESIGN

LAND USE CONCEPT

The following is a summary of the preferred land use for the East Reed Avenue site

---

Preferred Land Use Concept

- The preferred land use is for residential townhomes that will provide a transition in scale from the Lincoln Properties apartments to the north of the site to the residential uses south of East Reed Avenue.
- The land use concept envisions a variety of townhouse types arranged on the site to create variety in the streetscape and sales prices, a balance between enclosed and open parking and usable open space.
- The following are examples of the variety of townhouse types that could be incorporated into the overall site plan.
    - **Typical Townhouse** with integrated garage in the rear. Note the on street parking with expanded landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the car.

Cameron Station Townhouses

LAND USE CONCEPT (continued)

- **Mews Townhouse** - The mews townhouse turns the row of townhouses perpendicular to the roadway and the residential units face onto a landscaped mews. The mews concept places the narrow dimension of the townhouse row on the street thus providing variety from the continuous rows of houses facing the roadway. Further the landscaped mews adds open space along the streetscape.

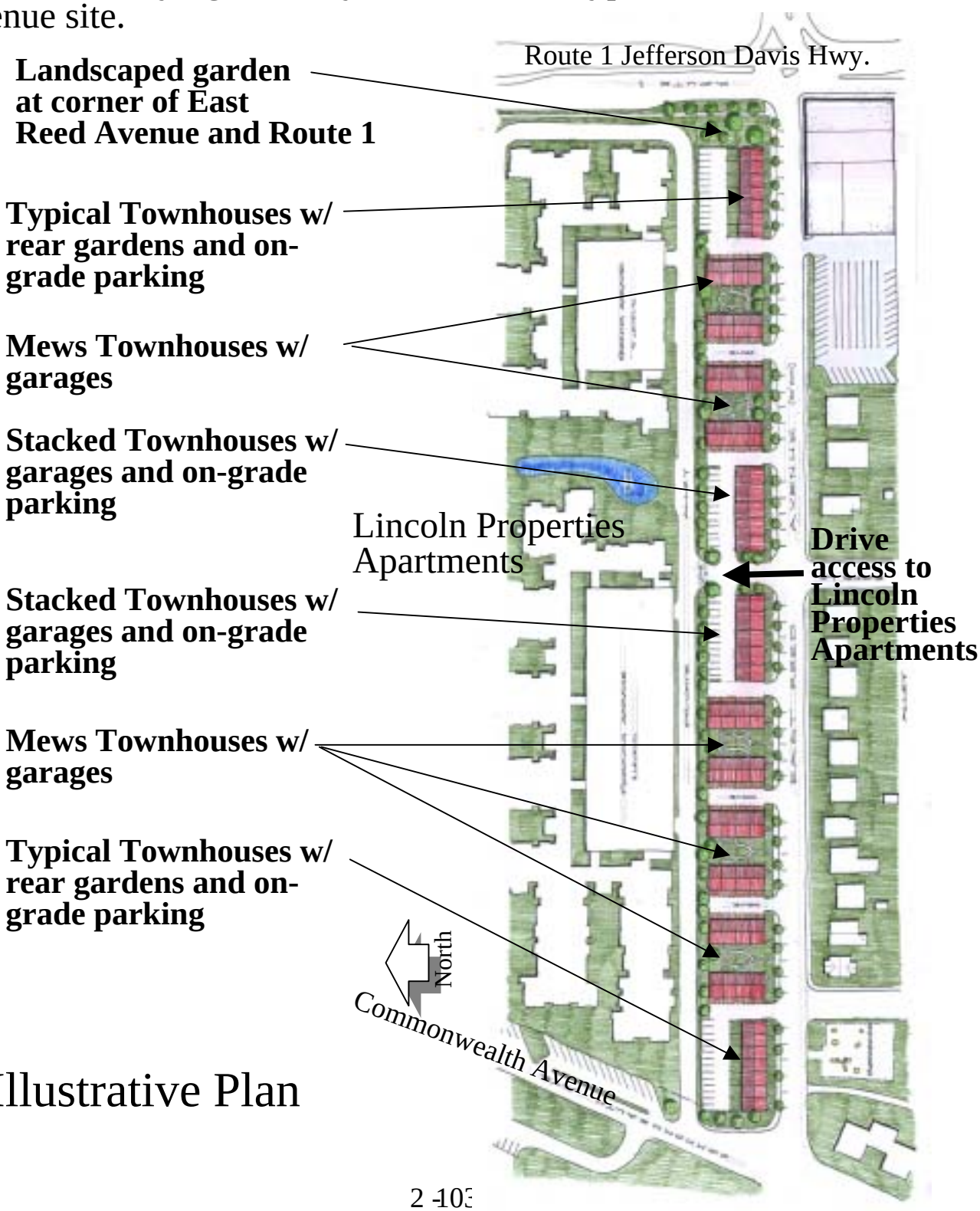
Old Town Village Mews Townhouses

- **Stacked Townhouse** The stacked townhouse provides another variety in both the parking and the building facades. Note the variety in the cornice height and the small front yard garden provided with the lower unit.

Cameron Station Stacked Townhouses

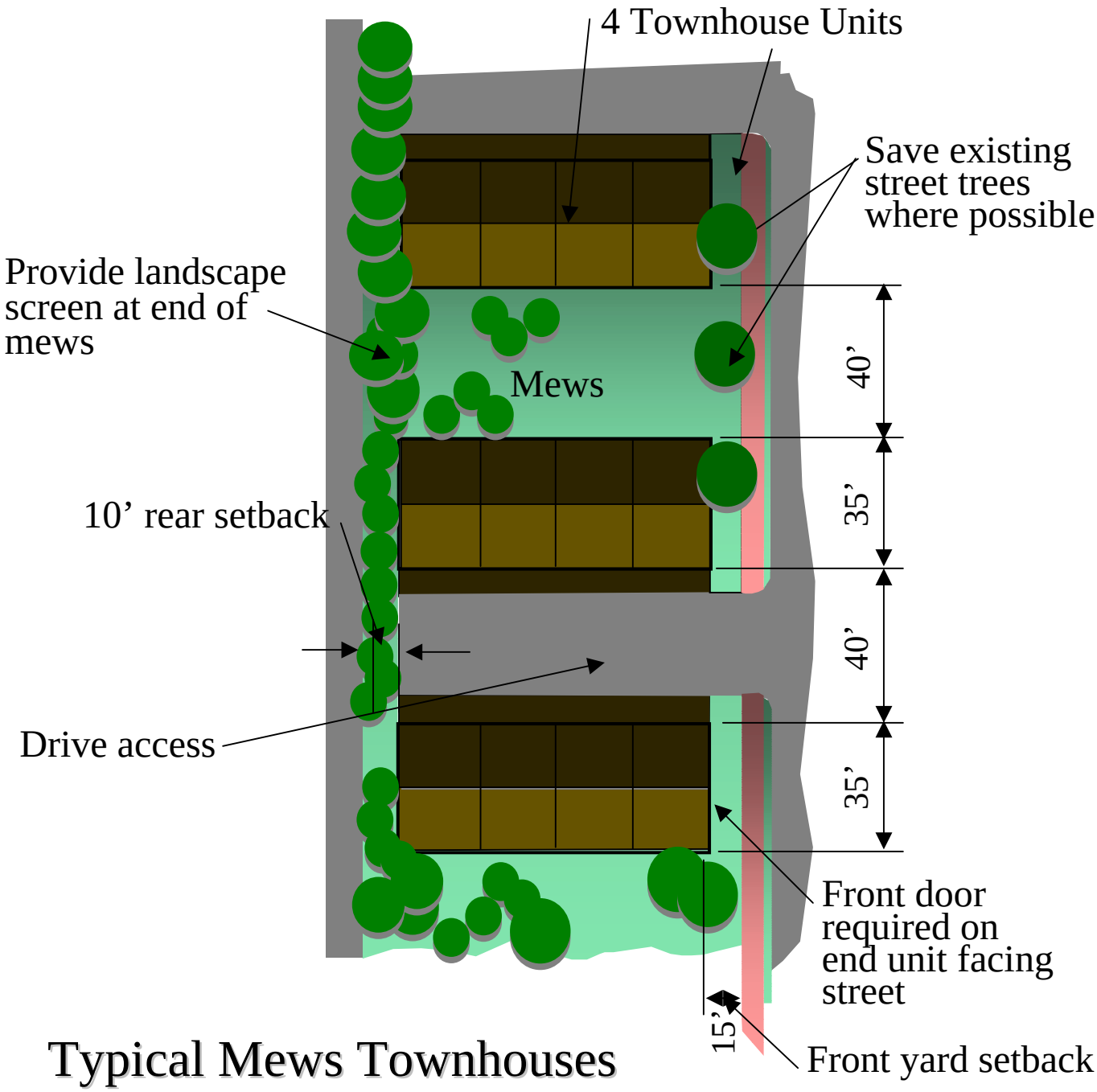
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

The Illustrative Plan provides a visual demonstration of one method of arraying a variety of townhouse types on the East Reed Avenue site.



Illustrative Plan

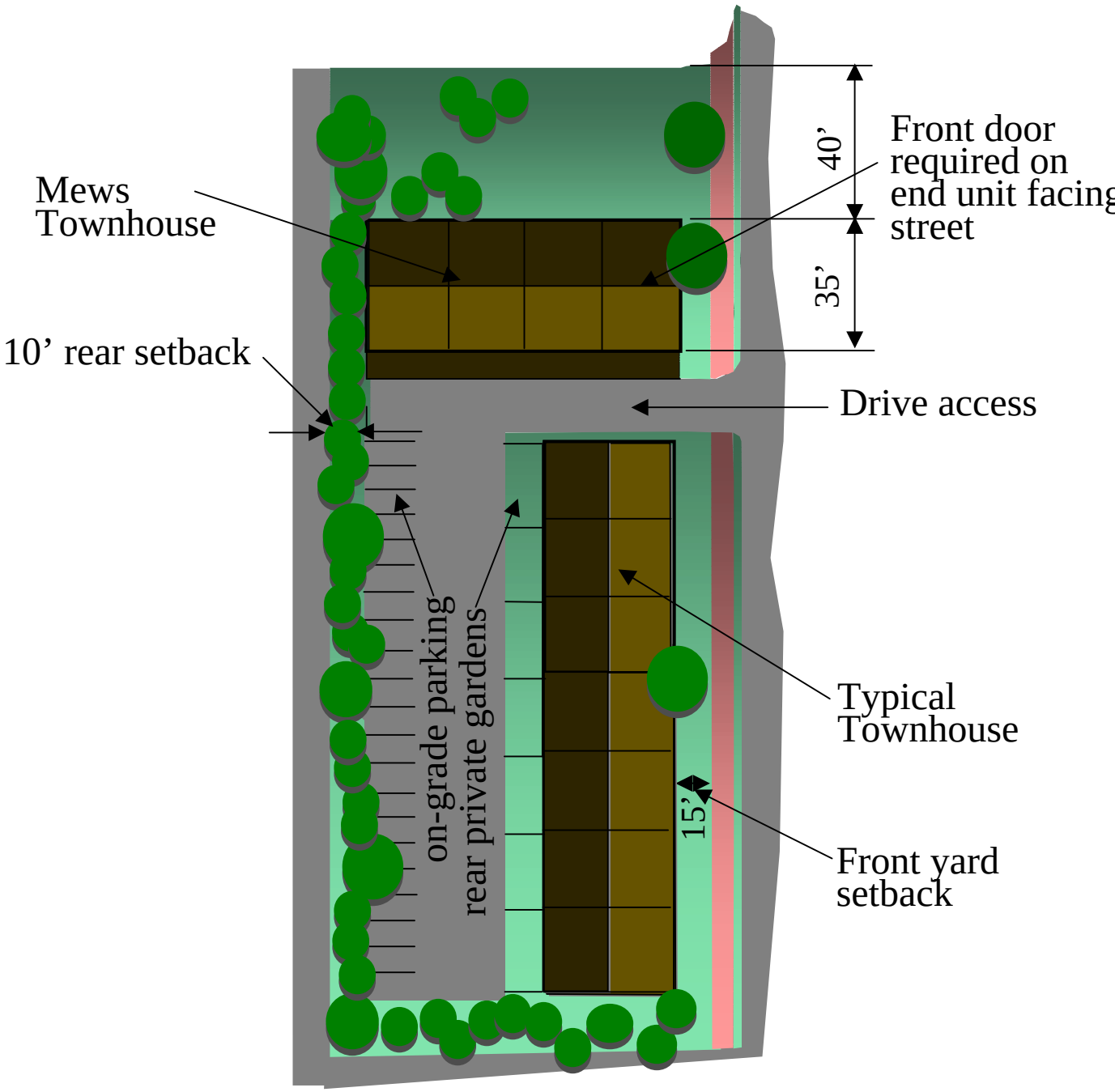
DESIGN GUIDELINES/CONTROLS



Typical Mews Townhouses

- The maximum height of the building shall be 3 1/2 stories and/or 35’ in height. Typical width of unit is 20’.

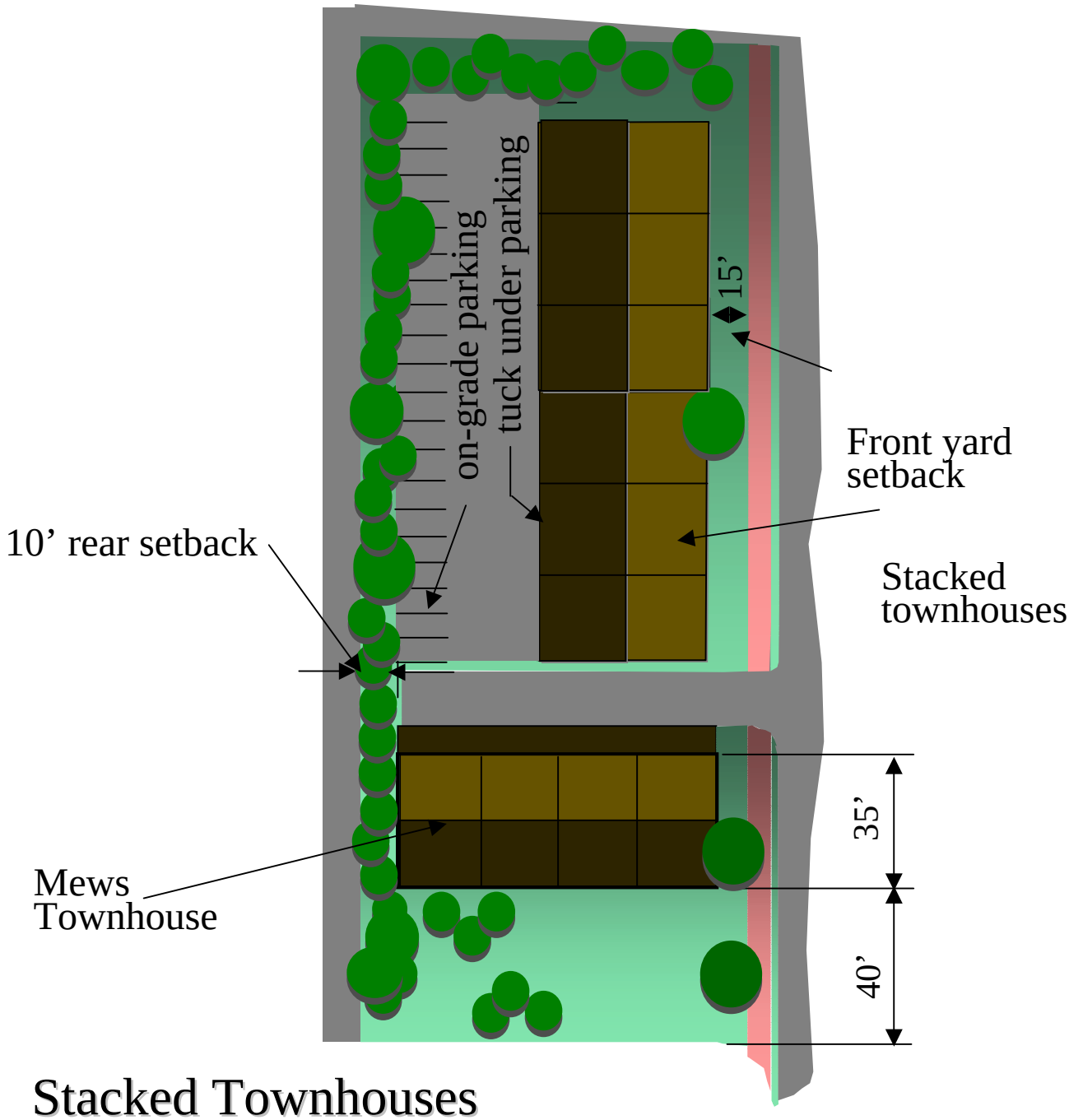
DESIGN GUIDELINES/CONTROLS



Typical Townhouses

- The height of the building shall be 2 1/2 stories and/or 25’ in height. Typical width of unit is 18’.

DESIGN GUIDELINES/CONTROLS



Stacked Townhouses

- The height of the building shall be 3 1/2 stories and/or 35’ in height. Provide for a variety in the height of the cornice line along the street. Typical width of unit is 24’.

Upper Potomac West
APPENDIX

Thoughts from some Task Force participants on implementation

Marlin G. Lord
Stephen Weinstock
James VanZee

1. Possible Implementation Techniques

The visions of the Task Force for these properties are far beyond those permitted by right under the current zoning. The current zoning which was approved in 1992, drastically cut back the allowable construction permitted prior to the revision. For example, height limits were cut from 150' to 50' and the allowable floor area ratio was cut back from 3.0 to 0.5. Densities necessary to enable amenities such as underground parking and to offset the infrastructure cost such as the major storm sewer which traverses the middle of the site just below the surface are not permitted with the changed zoning. The existing zoning would essentially permit not much more than is on the site currently. The Commercial General zone is thus too restrictive. New approaches are necessary if any of the visions of the Task Force are to be realized. Following are several options/mechanisms/ tools to be considered by City Council and the City staff. Some of the following lists may overlap or be duplication or maybe parts of the acceptable direction. The approach proposed must include a change of attitude from "don't want to, because". . . to "can do, if."

a. Establish a Community Development District (CDD) overlay zone with specific redevelopment and design objectives and guidelines or performance standards by declaring the CG zoned are a redevelopment district with a redevelopment plan adopted as an amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan. The area for the COD should not be just the Safeway/Datatel site but should include all the CG zoned areas in and around the Glebe/Mt. Vernon intersection including the Foodway/Shoe store site and all properties along Glebe Road to Russell Road and properties east and west of Mount Vernon Avenue. Inclusion of the entire area is to insure that a project exemplifying the visions of the Task Force is not surrounded by a lot of unsightly properties.

b. Establish a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to go about the process of land assemblage.

c. Define a Development Overlay District with performance standards.

d. The Mulct Plan for the City of Alexandria which needs to be updated every 5 or 10 years, as called for in the Charter, opens up the opportunity to undertake this rezoning.

e. Phase any residential component to be the last part of the redevelopment to prevent new occupants from becoming the future opposition of needed mixed use development.

f. The City should consider undertaking the relocation project and cost for the underground storm sewer which bifurcates the site. This should be looked at as an investment by the City in fostering redevelopment with the payback coming through increased taxes. If left to the developer the cost for relocation can only be translated into increased density.

g. The City should consider undertaking construction of the underground garage much like it has done on Union Street and on Cameron Street. Cost payback from these projects should be examined to evaluated similar payback on the

Safeway/Datatel sites. Establish guidelines that parking should not be surface parking but be structured in either all below grade parking structures or partially below grade and in structured parking that is totally encapsulated behind other buildings.

h. The Datatel building should be added the blighting influence list and acquired and demolished. This building is an impediment to a functional and aesthetically pleasing project.

i. Designate or hire specific staff person(s) to stay with the implementation of the project from beginning to fulfillment and to guide the rezoning and approval processes,

j. Eminent Domain should be utilized to acquire properties (and write down the cost if necessary) where needed to satisfy the communities visions where these properties stand in the way of a functional and aesthetically pleasing project and where negotiation has not produced consolidation.

k. The redevelopment project should be phased such that several of the businesses can be relocated and the economics be worked out that the existing business is not priced out by unaffordable rents. Rent subsidies should not be ruled out. Relocation assistance should be provided for relocation within Alexandria for those not accommodated.

l. Consider a special taxing district.

m. Negotiate the property line configuration between these sites and St. Rita's church giving St. Rita's improvements in the efficiency of their property configuration allowing them better use of the land without imposing any burdens. Include notions of shared parking facilities.

n. Impose requirements on the underlying zoning such as not allowing Special Use Permits for uses not consistent with the redevelopment design objectives and guidelines. No exceptions would be granted. Create a carrot and stick approach enabling existing property owners to partner with the major redevelopment partner.

o. Create a new innovative zoning category not available in the current zones for the City. Examine zoning opportunities by researching those for other cities in the US.

p. Draw upon the funding set aside in the Housing Partnership Fund for creating affordable housing,

q. Define the redevelopment district as a Tax Increment District to finance public improvements as is required for a private-public partnership to realized the visions of the Task Force.

r. Prepare a circulation plan for the entire community surrounding the site, changing street patterns as necessary where the existing do not currently work to foster improved circulation while attempting to reduce impact on the communities. Integrate a transit system to connect this site to the Braddock, King and future Potomac Yard Metro stations.

s. Create a zoning category that provides increased density for property

assemblage, i.e. with each additional property added to the Safeway property (or Datatel) the property owner obtains additional density in FAR increments of .25.

t. Parking should be calculated for individual uses such as office, retail and residential but the required parking should acknowledge day-time and night time uses that would allow parking to be shared thus reducing the cost of construction.

2. Streamlining, simplifying and speeding up the filing. building and sit plan approval process

a. The existing process from project inception to permit approval and inspection is cumbersome and time consuming. Whereas time is money and the extras costs results in added density, there needs to be an overall improvement in this process but within the existing laws and codes.

b. Establish City teams with all appropriate players (perhaps including City Council representation and community representation) overseen by the City Manager to work as a committee as a whole with one sole purpose which would be to do everything necessary to make the project a success.

c. If necessary ordinances should be changed to avoid the Council appointed Boards and Commission from dragging out the approvals by imposing another set of standards and individual attitudes inconsistent with the Task Force visions.

d. Hire sufficient staff to handle plan review work load and control over-review beyond code issues overlooked.

e. Create a subcommittee of the Planning Commission for site plan review. The purpose of the subcommittee is to review the property developer plans and to make a report to the Planning Commission with recommendations. The committee is to be staffed with citizen representatives from the UPWTF civic associations. This will allow the property developer to make one presentation rather than have to go to multiple civic associations. The committee meetings should also be attended by one representative from Planning and one from T& ES.

f. Change the current zoning categories to reduce the number and type of uses required to have S.U.P.'s just for the Mount Vernon Avenue district,

g. Establish an Expedited Plan Review Program similar to that established by Fairfax County.

3. Expediting regulatory processes for UPW revitalization Projects

a. Combine with #2 above.

4. Utilities and Infrastructure

a. See f and g above.