EXHIBIT NO. 1

7
3-12-05

Potomac West Small Area Plan

including

Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan

The Department of Planning & Zoning
City of Alexandria
March 1, 2005

Docket Item # 7
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT #2005-0001
REZONING #2005-0001
TEXT AMENDMENT #2005-0001
POTOMAC WEST SMALL AREA PLAN
MT. VERNON AVE BUSINESS AREA PLAN

Planning Commission Meeting
March 1, 2005

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for (1) a revision of and an amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to include the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, new CDD guidelines and general updated language; (2) amendments to the City of Alexandria zoning map to reflect the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone, a new CDD #13 and a new CDD #14; (3) amendments to Section 5-602 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance to add new CDD #13 and CDD #14 zoning designation; (4) amendments to Section 2-100 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance to add definitions; and (5) enactment of Section 6-600 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay zone.

APPLICANT: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning and Zoning

LOCATION: The commercial properties along the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor bounded generally by Herbert Street to the north and Nelson Street to the south, including the properties located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, MARCH 1, 2005:

- On a motion by Mr. Komoroske, seconded by Mr. Dunn, the Planning Commission voted 7-0 to approve the revision of and amendments to the Potomac West Small Area Plan to include the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, as amended by the Planning Commission, new CDD guidelines and general updated language;
- On a motion by Mr. Komoroske, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the Planning Commission voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the amendments to the zoning maps to reflect the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone, a new CDD #13 and a new CDD #14;
- On a motion by Mr. Komoroske, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the Planning Commission recommended approval of amendments to Section 5-602 of the zoning ordinance to add new CDD #13 and CDD #14 zoning designation; and
- On a motion by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Komoroske, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendments to Section 2-100 of the zoning ordinance to add definitions and the enactment of Section 6-600, as amended by the Planning Commission, of the zoning ordinance pertaining to the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone.

Reason: The Planning Commission strongly supported the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, the new CDD guidelines and the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone. They expressed gratitude to the residential and business community for its involvement in the community planning process that resulted in the development of the Plan and the new zoning and land use recommendations.

The Commission shared the concern expressed by the speakers about the lack of pedestrian lighting along Mt. Vernon Avenue and recommended additional language be added to the Plan to place greater emphasis on the importance of pedestrian scale lighting and building lighting. The Commission also shared the concerns raised about pedestrian safety along the Avenue, and specifically as to pedestrians trying to cross the street. The Commission directed T&ES staff to investigate the potential of installing signs to warn drivers to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk and that failure to do so will subject them to enhanced penalties, as described by the City Attorney.

Given the recent assemblage of the Triangle Sites properties (proposed CDD #13), members of the Commission expressed their desire to ensure that the developer has the degree of flexibility necessary with regard to the proposed CDD guidelines to redevelop the site. Considerable discussion about the desire to afford this flexibility occurred, with Planning staff stating that the maximum allowable FAR, open space requirement, and height limitations have been carefully considered by staff and supported by the community during the planning process, and specifically as to FAR, the proposed FAR is a significant increase over the current allowable FAR. Planning staff stated there is flexibility as to the remaining guidelines that could be discussed with an applicant during the development review process. Members of the Commission expressed the view that any future amendments to the proposed CDD guidelines for this site should be seriously considered. As to the concerns raised about the proposed building setback angle, Planning staff stated that there is a balance between allowing for some additional density, while not overbuilding these sites, and minimizing impacts on adjacent residents. As such, Planning staff recommends that the existing angle remain in place.

As to the zoning changes, the Commission found them to be consistent with the powers delegated in the City Charter. In addition, and to the extent applicable, the changes are consistent with good zoning practices and the general welfare.

AMENDMENTS BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION: The Planning Commission incorporated the following amendments as part of its motion to recommend approval of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan:

Text recommended to be deleted shown in ~~strikethrough~~; new text shown in **underlined and bold**

P. 60 Section 4.4 Affordable Housing, at the top of the second column

For the two larger properties where future redevelopment is desired or likely, specifically the "Triangle Site," and the Giant/CVS site on Monroe Avenue, new on-site affordable housing units should be provided. New Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs) for those properties would require the developer to provide on-site affordable housing units in accordance with the affordable housing policies in effect at the time. ~~; but no fewer than 10% of the units should be affordable.~~

P. 107 Section 7.2 Affordable Housing, bottom of the second column, second bullet

As new development is proposed, work with the property owner and developer to ensure incorporation of as much affordable housing into the project as possible in accordance with the City's overall Affordable Housing Policy. ~~but no fewer than 10% affordable units in the two CDD zones~~

Reason: This amendment is simply a housekeeping one to ensure the Plan is consistent with the City's affordable housing policy that is currently under revision. The remaining language requires that on-site affordable units be provided in accordance with the City's overall policy which will allow for adjustments, as adopted by City Council, over time.

P.103 Section 6.5 Pedestrian Environment and Streetscape Recommendations, Add to the Lighting section as a new paragraph before the following section (Street Trees)

The Plan also encourages building owners and business operators to install lighting that contributes to the illumination of the sidewalk and enhances the pedestrian experience. A high priority should be placed on the provision of effective lighting for pedestrians.

Reason: The Planning Commission shared the concerns raised by the community regarding the poor lighting for pedestrians along Mt. Vernon Avenue and sought to add emphasize to the importance for pedestrian scale lighting and building lighting to improve the pedestrian environment.

AMENDMENTS BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION: The Planning Commission incorporated the following amendments as part of its motion to recommend approval of the new Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone:

New text shown **underlined and bold**

1. **Added new text to Section 6-600(C)(g) to related to the general standards section for all administrative uses.**

(g) Trash and garbage shall be stored inside or in sealed containers that do not allow odors to escape or invasion by animals. No trash and debris shall be allowed to accumulate outside of those containers. **Outdoor trash receptacles shall be screened to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning.**

Reason: Concern was expressed regarding the appearance of unenclosed trash dumpsters. The Commission shared this concern and recommended additional language requiring outdoor trash receptacles be enclosed to the satisfaction of the Director.

2. **Revised Sections 6-607(C)(4)(a) and 6-607(C)(5)(c) related to the hours of operation for both indoor and outdoor dining for restaurants.**

6-607(C)(4)(a) The hours of operation shall be limited to 7:00 a.m to ~~**11:00 p.m. daily**~~ **10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.** The closing hour for indoor seating may extend until 12:00 midnight four times a year for special events.

6-607(C)(5)(c) The hours of operation of the outdoor dining area shall be limited to 7:00 a.m. to ~~**10:00 p.m. daily**~~ **10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.** The outdoor dining area shall be cleared and washed at the close of each business day that it is in use.

Reason: The Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) requested shorter hours of operation for restaurants on weekdays because of the potential impacts associated with a later closing hour on adjacent residences. While recognizing that many existing restaurants currently operate with later hours of operation, on consideration, the Commission expressed support for DRCA's request.

Speakers:

Justin Wilson, on behalf of Del Ray Citizens Association, expressed its support for the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan and related zoning changes and recognized the lengthy community planning process that lead to the development of the Plan. He requested an amendment limiting the hours of operation proposed for administrative restaurant uses in order to protect nearby neighbors from the impacts associated with later hours of operation.

Bill Hendrickson, 304 E. Spring Street, stated that he supports the Plan and zoning changes and believes that there is widespread support in the community for the Plan. He stated that the administrative special use permit process was essential to bringing new small businesses to the Avenue and that there are sufficient controls administrative uses to correct problems if raised by residents.

Gayle Reuter, 110 E. Del Ray Avenue, stated that she is a 20 year plus resident of Del Ray and fully supports the Plan. She noted that businesses care about and are involved with the community and that the streamlined approval process will bring new businesses to the Avenue. She expressed concern about the poor level of lighting for pedestrians along the Avenue.

Vicky Newell, 209 E. Del Ray Avenue, stated that she has lived in Del Ray for 20 years and complimented the Plan. She questioned the extent to which the Plan would be a basis for evaluation of future projects and expressed concern about the potential impacts of a new building on and adjoining lot with access from Del Ray Avenue. She referenced a letter sent by her neighbor, Grace Brenner, outlining those concerns. She stated that the vacant lot has been used in the past as a gathering place and an informal dog park. She asked that other uses, including open space, be considered for the lot.

Marlin Lord, 2724 Hickory Street, strongly recommended approval of the Plan and the proposed zoning changes to create the mixed use, vibrant streetscape envisioned in the Plan. He expressed concern that the proposed setback angle in the building form design guidelines would not allow enough density as proposed and recommended alternative ratios as outlined in a letter he submitted. He also requested a reduced ceiling height for retail buildings and encouraged the installation of pedestrian scale lighting.

Marj Green, representing Document Management Industries Association, stated that they are located immediately adjacent to the Giant grocery store on Monroe Avenue and have no desire to modify their building.

Tom Welsh, recent past president of the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA), stated that he supports the Plan. He stressed the need and the community's desire for pedestrian scale lighting along Mt. Vernon Avenue as the existing cobra head light poles do not illuminate the sidewalk. He stated that the spacing and location of the existing fixtures along one side of the Avenue makes retrofiting them with a pedestrian-scaled arm problematic. He also expressed concern about losing industrial space in the City for service uses and that certain uses that provide services that City residents need.

David Englin, 1505 Wayne Avenue, stated that he supports the Plan and the amendment offered by DRCA. As the traffic committee chair for DRCA, he expressed concern about the pedestrian-unfriendly aspects of Mt. Vernon Avenue, such as the lack of pedestrian lighting and the difficulty crossing the Avenue, even with the traffic calming measures that have been installed. He recommended installing signs at the entrances to the neighborhood to remind drivers to give pedestrians in the crosswalks the right-of-way.

Arthur Johnson, 2712 Mosby Street, expressed concern that there was no reason why new businesses would open on Mt. Vernon Avenue and that the Avenue needed to grow to survive. He expressed concern that the setback angle in the building form design guidelines was too restrictive and that, if residences can overshadow one another, commercial buildings should be allowed to overshadow residences.

Lonnie Rich, on behalf of James Yates, property owner of two properties in the Triangle Sites area. He submitted a letter dated March 1, 2005, stating that Mr. Yates has purchased property in the City to relocate his taxi dispatch business and that the four property owners of the eleven parcels have agreed to assemble their respective properties for sale and redevelopment in accordance with the recommended Coordinated Development District (CDD) principles outlined in the Plan for this area. He stated that, while generally supportive of the Plan and CDD principles, they would like flexibility in terms of FAR, height, open space, and an expedited approval process in order to develop a project that meets the vision depicted in the Plan. He also stated that they support the reconfiguration of the four lane section of the Avenue down to two travel lanes, with parking on both sides of the street, not just along the west side of the Avenue as proposed in the Plan.

Sarah Haut, 228 E. Nelson Avenue, requested an amendment to the general standard in the administrative uses section of the proposed overlay zone to require that trash stored outdoors be screened from view.

Amy Slack, 2307 E. Randolph Avenue, speaking as an individual, stated that she believes that the business community is too fragile for a business improvement district. She suggested that the illumination of buildings should also contribute to the pedestrian experience by asking building owners to improve their lighting. She stated that she supports the DRCA request related to restaurant hours and that outdoor garden centers should be required to go through the full special use permit approval process rather than as an administrative use as proposed in the overlay zone.

David Fromm, 2307 E. Randolph Avenue, stated that there are many revisions proposed to the Potomac West Small Area Plan and updating of demographic and other information. He stated that the Small Area Plan applies to the entire Potomac West area, not just Mt. Vernon Avenue, and that he is concerned about any amendments to the Route 1 corridor.

Stewart Beckwith, 239 E. Monroe Avenue, stated that he generally supports the Plan, but lives close to Mt. Vernon Avenue, and was opposed to any relaxation of the building setback angle and height limits. He stated that he supports DRCA as to the hours of operation for restaurants, and the screening of unscreened dumpsters.

Pat Miller, 1806 N. Cliff Street, described the planning process and the work by all members and staff to explore and resolve issues as the Plan and zoning recommendations were developed.

Harry Falconer, 44 Kennedy Street, on behalf of Warwick Village Citizens Association, stated that the Association supports the Plan, pedestrian scale lighting on the Avenue, and improvements to Mt. Vernon Avenue to create two travel lanes, a parking lane and a bike lane. He stated that the Association fully supports the proposed CDD #13 for the Triangle Sites and wants a mixed use development, with some retail on the lower floor, to be constructed as soon as possible. He stated that the Association would be happy to work with the developer of the Triangle Sites as to a future development proposal. He also stated that what happens to the area between the Arlandria and Mt. Vernon Plans along Mt. Vernon Avenue is also important.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission, on its own motion, initiate the following amendments:

1. Amendment to and revision of the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to include the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, CDD guidelines and general updated language;

2. Amendment to the zoning maps to reflect the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay zone, new CDD #13 and new CDD #14;

3. Amendment to Section 5-602 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance to add new CDD #13 and new CDD #14 zoning designation;

4. Enactment of Section 6-600 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay zone; and

5. Amendment to Section 2-100 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance to add definitions.

BACKGROUND:

Over the years, a series of planning efforts have been undertaken, with substantial public investment and community involvement, to improve the Potomac West area. Most recently, a three year long planning process in the Arlandria neighborhood resulted in the creation of the Arlandria Neighborhood Plans and related zoning and small area plan changes that were adopted by City Council in June 2003.

The City continues to recognize that Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vital corridor, with a rich history and eclectic character that makes it an attractive place to live, work and shop. In late spring 2003, the City formed the Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group (Work Group) to embark on a comprehensive planning effort for Mt. Vernon Avenue's "Main Street" retail district, broadly defined between Glebe Road and Luray Avenue. Working collaboratively with the Work Group comprised of residents, businesspeople and community representatives from the Del Ray and Warwick Village Citizens Associations and the Mt. Jefferson Civic Association, and the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA), a future direction for Mt. Vernon Avenue (the Avenue) was defined to guide neighborhood changes while protecting adjoining neighborhoods.

MT. VERNON AVENUE BUSINESS AREA PLAN:

The vision for the Avenue involves preserving its traditional neighborhood character, protecting its unique historical identity, serving the needs of the surrounding community and maintaining its viability and competitiveness as a commercial district. Building upon its unique characteristics, the Avenue will remain a special neighborhood as change takes place. The Work Group adopted the following statement that succinctly expresses this vision:

> *Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vibrant and welcoming Main Street that reflects the surrounding neighborhoods' diversity, integrity and small town charm. The Avenue is comprised of enthusiastic, successful and responsible community partners. We offer an eclectic and friendly living, working and shopping environment for Alexandrians and visitors alike.*

With extensive community input, guiding principles were developed to direct the future of Mt. Vernon Avenue and the specific recommendations of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan (Plan)*. These guiding principles are to:

- Preserve existing historic scale and character;
- Protect and enhance Mt. Vernon Avenue as a vibrant commercial corridor;

- Encourage and support mixed use development;
- Celebrate the Town of Potomac Historic District;
- Preserve and protect existing residential areas;
- Promote partnerships;
- Enhance public spaces;
- Provide convenient parking and transportation solutions to support retail growth;
- Encourage independent retail;
- Capitalize on the neighborhood arts community; and
- Provide alternative multi-modal transportation linkages

The primary study area extends along the length of the Avenue from Herbert Street to Nelson Avenue. Due to the differing characteristics along the length of the street, the study area is divided into three focus areas, as follows:

- ***Commonwealth District*** – Extending from Herbert Street on the north to Uhler Avenue, this area functions as a transition area between the pedestrian-oriented traditional urban form of the Historic Core and the more automobile-oriented form on the street and properties to the north;
- ***Historic Core*** -- From Uhler Avenue south to Bellefonte Avenue, this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue is located within the Town of Potomac National Register Historic District and has maintained a traditional "Main Street" feel over the years; and
- ***Monroe Gateway*** – Extending south from Bellefonte Avenue to Nelson Avenue, (and including the small shopping center located on the west side of the Avenue at Luray Avenue and the Giant grocery store and CVS pharmacy located in the 400 block on Monroe Avenue), this area is the most diverse, with a variety of service and automotive uses, small retail, office and residences, and is the linkage to the Route 1 corridor.

Plan Strategies

The Plan outlines six interrelated strategies that work together to achieve the overall vision for a vibrant, competitive Main Street where change builds upon and preserves the existing historic and eclectic characteristics of the community. Strategies for land use, parking, pedestrian and multi-modal connections, retail marketing and arts promotion, urban design/streetscape and zoning have been developed consistent with the guiding principles and the vision for the Avenue. A brief overview of each strategy is provided below.

Land Use Strategy

The land use strategy is generally focused towards promoting and reinforcing a consistent, vibrant and pedestrian-oriented retail environment, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods. The strategy includes overall recommendations for the entire Avenue, as well as those specifically crafted for the three focus areas. For the entire Avenue, the Plan recommends:

- ***Promoting infill development*** compatible with the mass and scale of existing buildings, through the use of building form design guidelines;
- ***Protecting residential neighborhoods***, by minimizing impacts through the use of buffers and building stepbacks;
- ***Enhancing the pedestrian streetscape***, through improved lighting, streetscape and crosswalk improvements, strengthened connections to the Metro station and improved appearance of the service uses;
- ***Providing visual open space,*** by maintaining existing visual open space elements and providing open space in new construction on medium and larger sized sites; and
- ***Encouraging a mix of uses***, including second floor residential and office uses to support the retail activity and concentrated retail in key locations.

For the individual focus areas, the specific land use, open space and streetscape recommendations are:

Commonwealth District - Herbert Street south to Uhler Avenue

- ***Encouraging a mix of uses,*** including residential, office and institutional uses with limited retail, as well as a variety in the housing types, and some affordable housing;
- ***Promoting coordinated development*** of the underutilized properties in the triangular assemblage north of Commonwealth Avenue for a quality residential and retail project with defined development standards;
- ***Improving streetscape, open space and pedestrian safety***, through pedestrian improvements in key locations, street tree planting and enhancements to Colosanto Park; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for two opportunity sites***, the Sun Trust property at Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues, and the lots at the southeast corner of Mt. Vernon and Raymond Avenues.

Historic Core - Uhler Avenue south to Bellefonte Avenue

- ***Encouraging street-level retail***, by defining a retail focus area to target the ground floor for retail uses;
- ***Preserving the historic character***, by utilizing several historic preservation approaches, including tax credits and community education, and allowing appropriate infill development through the building form design guidelines;
- ***Creating a "town square,"*** by providing improvements to the City lot at Oxford and Mt. Vernon Avenues to enhance this lot as a public gathering space for community events;
- ***Considering reuse of the historic fire station/town hall*** for community functions/activities should the station outgrow the current facility; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for three opportunity sites***, the parking lot behind 2401 Mt. Vernon Avenue, the vacant lot at 2207 Mt. Vernon Avenue and the 7-11 Store at Custis and Mt. Vernon Avenues.

Monroe Gateway - Bellefonte Avenue south to Nelson Avenue, the Giant/CVS sites on Monroe Avenue

- ***Encouraging a mix of uses,*** including residential and retail uses that promote a transition into the Historic Core area;
- ***Enhancing the streetscape and urban design,*** by completing the undergrounding and streetscape improvements and improving the appearance of the automobile and service-related uses;
- ***Improving Gateway Park*** on land made available by the realignment of the Monroe Avenue/Route 1 bridge, in a manner that provides a high-quality gateway for the community;
- ***Enhancing the neighborhood Giant and CVS sites***, by working with the owners to maintain the facilities as part of the community, and, if market forces make it no longer viable, to redevelop the sites with residential in a coordinated manner using specific design guidelines and incorporating the grocery/pharmacy use as part of the redevelopment;
- ***Enhancing access to the Metro Station***, by providing bike and pedestrian access on the east side of George Washington Middle School, identifying other opportunities for pedestrian improvements with the Potomac Yard development, and enhanced signage, lighting and bus shelters; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for six opportunity sites***, the Salvation Army sites in the 1800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue, the service uses in the 1800 and 1900 blocks, the auto dealerships in the 1600 and 1700 blocks, the service stations at Monroe and Mt. Vernon Avenues, the undeveloped lot at 1503 Mt. Vernon

Avenue and the Verizon building at 301 Alexandria Avenue. Although it is unlikely that these sites will redevelop in the short term, the *Plan* recommends property and site improvements to enhance their appearance.

The creation of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone is recommended as the primary mechanism to implement the *Plan*'s land use, parking and urban design recommendations. The overlay zone is principally intended to provide zoning and parking flexibility to encourage new retail uses, to allow restaurants, outdoor dining and other limited uses by Administrative SUP, and to provide the mechanism to apply the building form design guidelines to new infill development. In addition, the Coordinated Development District (CDD) approach is recommended for the consolidated Triangle sites and the Giant/CVS sites to implement the design, use and development recommendations for these sites. The overlay district and the CDDs are discussed in more depth later in this report.

Parking Strategy

Consistent with other urban neighborhoods, parking along Mt. Vernon Avenue is at a premium during certain times of the day. The perception of insufficient parking has raised neighborhood concern when new businesses seek to locate on Mt. Vernon Avenue or existing businesses desire to expand their operations. There is limited ability to create new parking opportunities along the Avenue, due to the developed character of the street, the typically small lots and the desire to maintain the continuity of the retail and the pedestrian environment along the street.

With the finite supply of parking, the principal goals of the *Plan* are to better utilize the existing parking resources and to balance the supply and demand for parking to ensure that parking demand is met without negatively impacting nearby residences. A parking utilization study was conducted to understand current and potential future parking conditions along the Avenue and to assist in formulating appropriate parking strategies. The study concluded that the current supply of and demand for parking are in balance although parking utilization along the Avenue varies by location as well as the time and day of the week.

A shared parking program is recommended to more fully utilize ten identified privately owned off-street parking lots during the lot's off-peak hours. Using the overlay is also recommended to provide some flexibility in the parking requirements. Such flexibility includes waiving the increase in parking requirements when an existing office or personal service use changes to retail; waiving the parking requirement for outdoor dining; and reducing parking requirements for new infill development and additions on constrained lots where the new development is compatible with the building form design guidelines delineated in the

Plan. A parking reduction policy is also outlined to provide guidance in assessing future parking reduction applications.

The parking strategy balances small increases in density and changes in use with significant development, and requires the latter to comply with the existing parking regulations. Inherent in this strategy is the need to monitor parking demand and utilization over time as well as the responsiveness of the strategies as the area changes and demand increases. The Plan recognizes that the existing parking resources have a finite capacity and includes several options that could be considered over time to further manage parking and, if the conditions warrant, to construct new public parking.

Pedestrian and Multi-Modal Strategy

To support and enhance the existing pedestrian-oriented nature of the Avenue and nearby neighborhoods, a multi-modal strategy is recommended, and highly desired by the community. The major focus of this strategy is to encourage and promote greater use of transit, walking and bicycling, and increase pedestrian safety. Actions such as enhancing existing bus stops with benches and shelters, providing bicycle racks and other streetscape amenities and improving pedestrian connections to the Braddock Road Metro Station will encourage people to use these modes of transportation. Expanding DASH service to the Avenue is also recommended when the new maintenance facility is complete in 2008 to provide more frequent service and better cross-town connections between the Avenue and the rest of the City.

A priority improvement of the Work Group is the installation to pedestrian lighting of the sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety. Their second priority is the reduction of the existing four lane section of the Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road to two lanes by restriping the existing road section to include two vehicle travel lanes, two bicycle lanes and one parking lane, or two travel lanes and two parking lanes. This improvement can be undertaken at minimal cost, greatly reducing vehicle speeding and increasing pedestrian safety. Bulb-outs and crosswalks at key intersections will also enhance pedestrian safety by highlighting areas for pedestrian movement and reducing the street's crossing distance.

Retail Marketing and Arts Promotion Strategy

To strengthen the existing retail district and attract new complementary businesses, a marketing strategy is recommended that builds on the successful efforts of Potomac West Business Association (PWBA). This strategy includes utilizing a variety of media to market the Avenue, integrating retail marketing efforts into events and festivals, such as Art on the Avenue or First Thursday events, maintaining uniform hours of operation for stores, and enhancing the identity of the Avenue through vertical banners, heritage signage

and gateway improvements.

The arts are a fundamental component of the Avenue's retail marketing strategy. The arts have played an important role in the revitalization and growth of the Avenue into the vibrant Main Street character it has today. From the efforts of the Del Ray Artisans to the success of Art on the Avenue, art and the Avenue have a very complementary and synergistic relationship. The *Plan* places a high priority on developing and maintaining the arts as a prominent feature of the Avenue's retail and cultural offerings and recommends the development of an arts promotion strategy. Elements of the strategy include artists' studios, galleries, art supply stores, an art education center, public art and arts-related festivals and promotions.

The community has significant accomplishments in marketing and promotion through a dedicated group of volunteers. In organizing events, marketing the Avenue and making community improvements, PWBA, Del Ray Artisans and neighborhood citizens associations have significantly contributed to the improvement of the Avenue's business climate. It is difficult, however, using solely volunteer efforts to sustain a high level of activity over time. For such efforts to continue, the Plan suggests the establishment of a business improvement district (BID) to provide a consistent funding source to sustain and expand existing marketing and promotions activities, ensuring that current efforts are continued on a long-term basis. As an implementation item, the Plan suggests a series of steps to undertake in exploring the creation of a BID.

Urban Design/Streetscape Strategy

The urban design strategy seeks to enhance the character and definition of those elements that make up the public realm – the public streetscape, public and private open space and the scale and form of the buildings that define the street. The guiding principles for the urban design strategy are to:

- ***Preserve and protect existing residential areas,*** through the use of building form design guidelines to buffer adjoining uses and minimize the impacts associated with commercial activity;
- ***Encourage and support a mixed-use environment,*** by emphasizing retail uses on the ground floor and developing standards to enhance the quality of the pedestrian/retail experience;
- ***Preserve existing historic scale and character,*** through the use of standards/guidelines for quality and appropriately-scaled infill development, and encouraging the redevelopment of incompatible buildings; and
- ***Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District,"*** by improving the Avenue's appearance through streetscape and facade improvements.

Building Form Design Guidelines

A major thrust of the urban design recommendations for the Avenue is to protect and enhance its historic and eclectic character as change takes place. Building form design guidelines have been developed to ensure quality development that reflects the existing pattern of development along the Avenue while preserving the contributing buildings in the Town of Potomac Historic District. The building form design principles are intended to meet the following general objectives:

- New construction should reflect the scale of existing buildings;
- A consistent street wall should be maintained, with some variations to allow for landscaped open space, an opportunity for side windows and for site access where necessary;
- New construction should be two to two and one-half stories, with a setback where a third story is provided;
- New buildings should help define the corners where side streets intersect Mt. Vernon Avenue, with retail storefront windows extending onto the side streets;
- Appropriate building setbacks and parking lot screening will minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties;
- Ground level retail storefronts should contribute to the vitality of the streetscape and the pedestrian experience;
- Direct driveway access to Mt. Vernon Avenue is not desirable; and
- Off-street parking lots should be located to the rear of the property, with access provided from rear alleys, when available, side streets or access easements from adjoining properties.

Specific building form design guidelines are used to achieve the general objectives. These guidelines are depicted visually in the *Plan*, using graphics to show the desired form and location of buildings and parking areas, building massing, height and scale, building facades and screening requirements. The design intent for each guideline is presented to ensure an understanding of goal and application of each guideline.

Storefront Guidelines

The *Plan* recognizes that storefronts are generally the first point of contact with potential customers and that they define the character of a neighborhood and retail street. With the unique, eclectic nature of the retail along the Avenue, standardized or generic storefronts are strongly discouraged. Storefront design should reinforce the Main Street quality of the Avenue, with its organic small town character, and is recommended to include the following elements:

- Individual storefronts displays should change often to add richness to the Avenue;
- The primary pedestrian entrance should directly front along the sidewalk or at the corner;
- On corner sites, ground level retail storefront windows should extend a minimum of 20 feet along the side street, and both the architecture of the building and the storefront design should address and articulate the corner at intersections along the Avenue;
- Storefronts should have a minimum of 75 percent glass at the ground floor facade, with signage limited to the ground level;
- Creative displays of merchandise and services should be included in storefront windows; and
- Ground level storefronts are encouraged to have exterior awnings that are coordinated with the storefront design.

The existing Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines, adopted by City Council in 1993, have been incorporated into the proposed guidelines, to enhance and maintain consistency in building facades along the Avenue.

Streetscape Improvements

The *Plan* recommends improvements to lighting, sidewalks, bulb-outs and crosswalks, street trees, public signage, and site amenities, including street furniture and public art to enhance the pedestrian environment. Pedestrian scale lighting is strongly desired by the community to enhance pedestrian safety along the Avenue during evening hours. The existing cobra head light fixtures illuminate the street. Limited light filters through the existing tree canopy to the sidewalk level. Of the pedestrian safety improvements, the Work Group unanimously selected pedestrian scale lighting and a reduced roadway width north of Commonwealth Avenue to Glebe Road as their highest priorities.

Implementation Strategy

Specific delineated approaches for implementing the *Plan's* recommendations are critical to ensuring the goals of the *Plan* are achieved. A key element for implementation will be a coordinated effort of public and private entities. The Potomac West Business Association is the recommended organization to implement the marketing, business organization and retail promotion efforts. A Business Improvement District approach is outlined to provide a regular source of funding in benefit of business along the Avenue.

The *Plan* outlines a series of actions and steps, and the principal agencies involved, to ensure the successful implementation of the vision, guiding principles and strategies. Taking that one step further, a draft implementation schedule is included with this report that identifies the proposed actions, the departments

responsible for each action and the projected fiscal year during which the actions will be undertaken. With limited public funding available to undertake the suggested physical improvements, working with the community to prioritize the public improvements is an initial implementation step.

Conclusion

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area planning effort has lead to the creation of a plan outlining a vision and guiding principles to ensure the Avenue continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community while realizing its potential as a vibrant and competitive place for business. The *Plan* includes strategies to strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses along the Avenue; to provide a direction for marketing and arts promotion efforts; to improve the pedestrian/retail environment; to maximize parking resources; and to ensure high quality new construction of compatible mass and scale. An implementation schedule for immediate, mid and long term improvements and actions will move the community closer to achieving its vision and goals for the future of the Avenue.

LAND USE AND ZONING ACTIONS

In order to incorporate the Mt. Vernon Avenue planning work within the City's Master Plan and to implement the zoning recommendations of the Plan, the following actions are necessary:

Amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to include the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan (the Plan) and CDD guidelines, and general updated language.

The recent Mt. Vernon Avenue planning process has resulted in a plan with planning principles and design guidelines to ensure that, as new development and infill development occurs, the bulk, mass, scale and orientation of the new buildings are compatible with the existing character of the commercial district along the Avenue.

In general, the creation of two new coordinated development districts (CDDs)(discussed in more depth in the following pages), incorporate the guidelines and planning principles developed during the planning process into the text of the CDDs. The purpose of the defined principles is to guide new development in accordance with the community's vision, to establish an appropriate level of development for the CDD sites, and to provide certainty to the property owner/developer of the amount of desirable development. The text seeks to provide a clear understanding among all interested and affected parties – residents, commercial property owners, City staff and elected officials, and the development community about the standards for compatible building design and the bulk, mass and scale of new development, and to protect the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods while providing some certainty as to the acceptable scale and type of new construction.

The adoption of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* as part of the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan represents the second major change to that Small Area Plan. (The first major amendment was the adoption of the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* and CDD guidelines in June 2003.) In addition to incorporating these planning efforts, the Small Area Plan has been amended to reflect changing physical conditions, including the approved Potomac Yard project, since its original adoption in 1992 and to provide up-to-date demographic information on the area.

Amendment to the zoning maps to reflect the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay zone, a new CDD #13 and a new CDD #14.

The Avenue is regarded as one of the region's most unique neighborhoods, due in large part to its small

town, Main Street character. The current CL zoning regulations, however, do not provide a framework to ensure that the form and scale of new or infill development will be compatible with the historic scale and character of existing buildings along the Avenue.

A new overlay zone, the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay zone, is proposed to supplement the traditional Commercial Low (CL) zone and would be applied to those properties with frontage along Mt. Vernon Avenue from Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue (see attached map). The purpose of the overlay zone is to achieve a mixed use, pedestrian-oriented environment that both supports economic activity and protects existing residential neighborhoods, and to provide for appropriately scaled infill development, compatible with the character of Mount Vernon Avenue, the existing community and the Town of Potomac Historic District. With the *Plan's* emphasis on form, quality and the relationship of buildings to each other and the street, a more flexible, design-oriented zoning approach is necessary to support and encourage appropriately scaled and designed new construction. (The specific provisions of the overlay zone are discussed later in this report.)

The creation of two new coordinated development districts (CDDs) is also proposed. CDD #13 is proposed for the 11 parcels, totaling approximately two acres in size, located on the east side of the Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and Herbert Street, known collectively as the "Triangle Sites." (The property, with an existing office building at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Herbert Street, is not included in the proposed CDD, nor is the parcel to the east of this area developed with the Commonwealth Terrace Apartment building.) The creation of a CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner consistent with the design and planning principles presented in the Plan. The underlying zoning for the new CDD #13 is Commercial Low (CL); however, in order to offset market forces and to achieve the mixed use development desired by the community, single, two-family and townhouse uses will not be permitted by right.

CDD #14 is proposed for the two parcels totaling 1.9 acres in size, located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue. The parcels are developed with a Giant grocery store and CVS pharmacy and are known as the "Giant and CVS Sites." The creation of a CDD is proposed to ensure a coordinated redevelopment of the sites should market conditions render the current buildings or uses obsolete. The community strongly supports the existing grocery and pharmacy uses in this location and such uses are desired in any future redevelopment of the sites. The underlying CL zone will remain.

Amendments to Section 5-602 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance with respect to a new CDD #13 and

a new CDD #14.

The requested amendment will add two new coordinated development districts to those delineated in the zoning ordinance.

CDD #13 Triangle Sites

The designation o f CDD zoning for the Triangle Sites, on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue, north of Commonwealth Avenue is intended to provide the guidance necessary to ensure that redevelopment of the properties occurs in a coordinated manner and is generally consistent with the design guidelines and planning principles articulated in the *Plan*. The new CDD #13 has the following features:

- The underlying CL zone is applicable without a CDD Special Use Permit, except that single, two-family and townhouse uses are no longer permitted by right;
- With a CDD SUP, an increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 is permitted. An additional bonus increase of 0.25, for a maximum of 1.25, is allowed subject to the provision of affordable housing. Any increase in density is subject to the performance standards;
- The overall height of buildings is limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs to Commonwealth Avenue;
- Site design and building massing should consider the location of Commonwealth Terrace Apartments and include appropriate setbacks and height reductions to minimize potential impacts and provide an appropriate transition;
- Desired uses include residential and/or office with ground floor retail in a mixed use building;
- A minimum of 25% ground level, consolidated and usable open space, a significant portion of which should be publicly visible from Mt. Vernon Avenue; and a large functional open space area at the corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue that is physically accessible;
- Affordable housing units should be provided on site in accordance with the policies in effect at the time of the CDD SUP application;

- The development should conform with the design recommendations in the *Plan*, as adopted in the Potomac West Small Area Plan.

CDD #14 Giant and CVS Sites

Creation of a new CDD for the two parcels known collectively as the Giant and CVS Sites, at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue, is designed to ensure coordinated redevelopment of the sites if future market conditions render the current buildings or uses obsolete. Further, the CDD zoning is intended to ensure generally consistency with the design guidelines and planning principles expressed in the *Plan*. The community strongly supports the existing grocery and pharmacy uses in this location, and desires these uses in any future redevelopment of the sites. The new CDD #14 has the following features:

- The underlying CL zone remains for development without a CDD Special Use Permit.
- With a CDD SUP, an increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 is permitted. An additional bonus increase of 0.25, for a maximum of 1.25, is allowed subject to the provision of affordable housing. Any increase in density is subject to the performance standards;
- The overall height of buildings is limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs to any adjoining residential use;
- Building mass and scale should be compatible with existing mass, scale and character of the area;
- Desired uses include grocery store, pharmacy, and other ground floor retail uses, with residential and/or office uses on upper floors;
- A minimum of 25% ground level, consolidated and usable open space, a significant portion of which should be publicly visible.
- Affordable housing units should be provided on site in accordance with the policies in effect, at the time of the CDD SUP application;

- Internal streets and open space should be coordinated with Potomac Yard and the existing neighborhood;

- The development should conform with the design recommendations in the *Plan,* as adopted in the Potomac West Small Area Plan.

Enactment of Section 6-600 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay zone.

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone is designed to achieve the vision of the *Plan* for a mixed use, pedestrian oriented corridor where the business environment is strengthened and the adjacent residences are protected, and to provide a mechanism to allow appropriately scaled infill development compatible with the existing character of the Avenue, the existing community, and the Town of Potomac Historic District.

The major purpose for the overlay zone are to:

- encourage ground floor uses that promote an active retail street;
- provide more flexibility for desired uses, such as restaurants and outdoor dining, by allowing administrative approvals subject to standards instead of a special use permit;
- promote signage that creates a more attractive streetscape in keeping with the character of the street;
- encourage the retention of contributing structures within the Town of Potomac Historic District; and,
- encourage compatible development of infill and vacant sites by allowing the use of form based development in lieu of the more traditional CL zoning approach.

Permitted and Special Uses

There are a few uses within the existing CL zone that are inconsistent with the goal of an urban, pedestrian-oriented retail environment. The overlay zone specifically prohibits the following uses:

- Seminary, convent or monastery;
- Medical laboratory;

- Public school;
- Funeral home;
- Rooming house;
- Check cashing business;
- Payday loan business;
- Pawnshop; and;
- Motor vehicle parking or storage, except that a public parking lot is allowed with a special use permit.

For the most part, these uses are not prevalent along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

The current CL zoning does not permit amusement enterprises such as live theater, music venues and other forms of entertainment. However, the market analysis for the Mt. Vernon Avenue retail found that this type of use would complement the existing restaurant and retail uses and is thus proposed to be permitted in the overlay zone in two ways: (1) live theater is allowed as an administrative use (see details below); and (2) live theater that exceeds the limitations as an administrative use, as well as music venues and other similar entertainment establishments are permitted with a SUP.

Retail Focus Area Uses

In order to strengthen retail in the core of the Mt. Vernon commercial area, a retail focus area is designated within the overlay zone. The retail focus area is generally consistent with the Town of Potomac Historic District boundaries on the Avenue and extends from Bellefonte Avenue on the south to Uhler Avenue on the north (see attached map). Within the retail focus area, uses occupying first floor space of a building will be limited to the following:

- Retail shopping establishment;
- Restaurant;
- Amusement enterprise, as limited above;
- Personal service establishment, with less than 30 feet of frontage on Mount Vernon Avenue (additional frontage space may be permitted with a special use permit);
- Arts and crafts studios, where arts and crafts products are created on site, with 50% of the building frontage on Mount Vernon Avenue devoted to retail display and sales; and
- In addition, for existing buildings clearly not conducive to retail activity (defined with a first floor 40 inches or more above grade), office and residential uses are allowed.

The purpose of the retail focus area is to strengthen the existing compact commercial district to retain existing businesses, attract new complementary businesses and prevent the conversion of first floor retail space to office and other non-active uses. Economic development and marketing professionals recommend the concentration of retail uses in a compact area to achieve an active and healthy commercial area,, with customers able to shop both sides of the street. Along Mt. Vernon Avenue, this condition exists between Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues, in the heart of the commercial district. It should be noted that office and residential uses are permitted on the upper floors of buildings located in the retail focus area.

Administrative Uses

This category of uses will be permitted through an administrative permit process, subject to general and use-specific standards. The administrative uses are:

- restaurants, with 60 seats or less;
- outdoor dining, with 16 or fewer seats;
- live theater;
- outdoor food and crafts market;
- neighborhood outdoor garden center of less than 10,000 square feet; and
- outdoor display of goods.

The standards for these uses are modeled after those adopted by City Council in June 2003 as part of the rezoning of the commercial properties fronting along Mt. Vernon Avenue in Arlandria. The standards were initially derived from the list of standard conditions that City Council imposes on all special use permit approvals. They include requirements to police the property and adjacent rights-of-way for litter, to complete the Crime Prevention work with the Alexandria Police Department, to store trash and garbage properly, to require employees who drive to work to park off-street, to participate in a shared parking program when/as adopted by City Council, and to encourage the use of public transportation by posting information about routes and the locations where fare passes are sold. Use-specific conditions are included to address the possible impacts of a particular use. For example, limitations on restaurants include the number of seats, both indoors and outdoors, the hours of operation and alcohol sales to ensure that the restaurant does not adversely impact its residential and commercial neighbors.

An applicant for an administrative permit is required to submit an application for review for compliance with the applicable standards. Notice of a pending administrative permit will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City, posted on the subject property and given to nearby civic and business associations.

Any change in the nature of the use or any enlargement, extension or increase in the intensity of the use will be reviewed by the Director and a determination will be made as to whether a special use permit approved by City Council is required. Similarly, if an applicant is unwilling to comply with the administrative standards, he or she may file an application for a special use permit and go through the normal public hearing process.

The goal of the administrative uses is to allow new business development on the Avenue to open much more quickly than if they were required to obtain special use permit approval, while having standards in place to protect the community. Staff believes the standards will minimize potential impacts on adjacent neighborhoods and that this approach, with its flexibility, should be tried to support and to strengthen the business district and make it attractive to new business investment.

Accessory Apartments

Under the existing CL zoning, a maximum of two apartment dwelling units are currently permitted on the upper floors above commercial or retail uses as accessory uses. In order to encourage the provision of residential uses above first floor commercial uses and a mix of uses on the Avenue, a maximum of eight units may be provided within the overlay zone.

Noncomplying Uses

Any use within the overlay zone that is inconsistent with the provisions of the zone (e.g. a check cashing business) and legally existing on the date that the ordinance is adopted will become a noncomplying use. Under the current regulations regarding noncomplying uses, these uses may continue to operate as they currently operate; however, any expansion or intensification of the use requires special use permit approval. The purpose of changing the status of these uses is not to prohibit them outright, but rather to acknowledge they exist and to provide for their continued operation, while anticipating that they will ultimately be replaced with more desired uses. These uses are delineated in a prior section.

The automobile-oriented uses currently located on the Avenue, such as the gas stations at the corner of Monroe and Mt. Vernon Avenue, and the Hyundai car storage lot, were made nonconforming or noncomplying with the comprehensive rezoning in 1992. No changes are proposed to the status of these existing uses.

Parking

The overlay zone proposes to provide some flexibility with off-street parking requirements. Currently whenever a change of use occurs, the new use is required to comply with today's off-street parking requirement. However, in many cases, buildings were not constructed with off-street parking spaces or there is not enough land on which to build parking, thus when a change of use occurs, the new use cannot comply with today's requirements. In that case, either the proposed operator seeks another location for the business or he or she may file a special use permit application for a parking reduction in hopes of getting the parking requirement waived by City Council. Most of the properties along the Avenue have this constraint. In order to allow for uses to change to desired retail use without discouraging new businesses or requiring a special use permit, staff recommends the waiver of the additional parking requirement for such change of use.

Furthermore, the additional parking required by the expansion or enlargement of a retail use is waived. Staff believes this waiver is supportable for a number of reasons. Existing buildings along the Avenue are small, with an average retail use occupying approximately 1,500 square feet. In addition, the existing mixed-use and walkable nature of the neighborhood encourages patrons to frequent the businesses without the use of an automobile or by drivers who park once and visit more than one business. It is true that certain uses, such as retail shipping and postal services, copying, and even patrons purchasing coffee and other quickly consumable carry-out goods, generate a higher demand for parking. However, unlike other driving customers who may park for extended periods of time, customers of these businesses usually spend a brief amount of time inside the business and use the parking for a few minutes at most, allowing for a greater turnover of the parking spaces.

The parking requirements for the first 16 outdoor seats at a restaurant and for an outdoor food and crafts market are proposed to be waived, as these uses are seasonal and therefore have little practical impact in parking. Restaurants, even those proposed to be permitted administratively, are required to comply with the current parking requirement. Except for outdoor markets, no waiver or reduction of parking requirements is proposed for the other administrative uses.

For new construction meeting the building form design guidelines, the requirement for and amount of parking varies depending on the lot size. These requirements are described in detail below in the form based development section.

On balance, staff believes that this parking flexibility will be beneficial for small business owners without overburdening the existing parking resources and impacting nearby residents. As is stressed at length in the *Plan*, monitoring parking supply and demand over time is critical to ensure that the parking supply and demand are in balance and to determine when additional strategies are necessary.

Signs

The purpose of the proposed sign requirements is to achieve pedestrian-scale building signage that will enhance and strengthen the small town, Main Street character of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The language in the existing Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines encourages appropriate signage but lacks the authority to require it. In the overlay zone, signs oriented to the automobile, such as freestanding signs, internally illuminated signs, and box signs affixed perpendicular to the building wall will no longer be permitted. They will be considered noncomplying. Existing freestanding signs may be substituted with a monument sign. Aside from the replacements for existing freestanding signs, new monument signs will not be permitted. Wall signs, projecting signs, signs applied to storefront windows and awnings are permitted below the second floor of the building.

Form Based Development

The Avenue is regarded as one of the region's most unique neighborhoods, due in large part to its eclectic, small town character. The current zoning regulations, however, do not provide the framework to ensure that the form and scale of new or infill development will be compatible with the historic scale and character of existing buildings along the Avenue. With its emphasis on form, quality and the relationship of the buildings to each other and the street, a more flexible, design-oriented approach is recommended to support and encourage appropriately scaled and designed new construction.

In order to prepare the building form design guidelines, an analysis was conducted to understand the existing built environment and the relationship among the adjacent properties, uses and the street. The analysis found several commonalities among the three focus areas, including:

- Typical commercial lot size is approximately 60 feet wide by 110 feet deep;
- Sidewalk width varies;
- Typical width of the Avenue is 40 feet from curb-to-curb;
- The location of the building (i.e. the street wall) varies but is generally located 10 to 15 feet from the curb; and
- Building heights are primarily 2 to 2 ½ stories, with some one- and three-story structures interspersed.

The next step in the analysis was to understand the location of the buildings and parking and their relationship to adjacent residential and commercial properties. As part of this analysis, issues and challenges were identified to assist in the development of the design principles that make up the form design approach. Several issues identified include dissimilar building types along the Avenue that create variety and diversity in some places and discontinuity of the street wall in other places, the presence of historic structures that should be preserved to maintain the history and character of the Avenue, small infill lots with little opportunity for access to rear yards for parking, and vehicle access directly from the Avenue that interrupts the street wall and the continuity and safety of pedestrian flow.

With an understanding of the existing built environment, the relationship of buildings, parking and adjacent properties, a series of design principles were developed to direct new construction that will be compatible with the existing development pattern, preserves historic structures, and minimizes impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods. Briefly, the design principles call for a consistent street wall, with some variations for landscaping or open space, appropriate building setbacks and parking lot screening to reduce potential impacts on adjacent residences, and off-street parking provided behind buildings accessed to the greatest extent possible by side streets, alleys or access easements from adjoining properties. Based on these design principles, the proposed building form design guidelines have been created. The design principles are depicted graphically in Section 6.3 of the *Plan.*

The overlay zone proposes to allow the waiver of the underlying CL requirements for area and bulk for new development designed in accordance with the building form design guidelines through the SUP process. Form-based development provides an option for developers and property owners who choose to build pursuant to the standards instead of the rules for development under the CL zone. The form-based development process is available for new projects exceeding 1,000 square feet in size.

The existing density, area and bulk requirements of the CL zone do not reflect the development pattern along Mt. Vernon Avenue, thus precluding the design of new buildings to complement the desired urban

form of mixed use buildings with a variety of heights. The proposed building form design approach addresses this conflict through the use of design guidelines and the waiver of the current FAR limitation for new construction, while preserving historic structures and discouraging the consolidation of existing lots for the purposes of achieving a larger development. The SUP approval process will ensure that the proposed development meets or exceeds the building form design guidelines and achieves the high quality of development that the City and the community expect.

The proposed parking and open space requirements for form-based development were developed after careful analysis to determine the amount of both open space and parking that is feasible to provide based on the constraints of existing lot size and scope of desired development:

Lot Size	**Parking Requirement**	**Open Space Requirement**
7,000 sf or less	No requirement for interior land-locked lots May reduce requirement for corner lots and lots with rear yard access	Undeveloped land should be designed and planted to serve as amenity for residents and users of building
7,001 - 15,000 sf	1 space per residential dwelling unit Provide a minimum of half of the required parking for non-residential uses	Minimum 15% ground level visible usable open space Provision of additional open space is encouraged
15,000 sf +	Provide all the required parking on site	Minimum 25% ground level usable open space, publicly visible and consolidated Provision of additional open space is encouraged

While potentially limited in number, development projects of 15,000 square feet or greater in lot area are expected to represent the highest standards of building design and materials, site layout and orientation, provision of open space, and the ability to be integrated into the scale, character and context of the existing neighborhood. To achieve this standard, additional requirements are outlined in the guidelines to reduce the mass and scale of such projects to reflect the existing small lot development pattern along the Avenue.

Amendment to Section 2-100 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance to add definitions.

Currently, the following uses are not defined in the City's zoning ordinance. Staff recommends adding these definitions that will be applicable in both the new overlay zone and the existing zones as well:

Section 2 - 127.1	*Check cashing business*: A business regulated by Section 6.1- 432 et seq. of the Virginia Code.
Section 2 - 182.1	*Payday loan business*: A business regulated by Section 6.1 - 444 et seq. of the Virginia Code.
Section 2-198.1	*Theater, Live*: An establishment that has an audience viewing hall or room and a permanent stage for the presentation of live performances by live actors to a live audience in a theater setting. Theaters may include but are not limited to live performances of music, dance, plays and orations.

CONCLUSION

The *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* defines a future direction for the corridor and provides recommendations to help guide neighborhood change, while protecting the adjoining residential neighborhood. Adoption of the *Plan*, and incorporation in the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan, is the first step towards bringing the Plan to reality. Staff recommends approval of the amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan to incorporate the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*, the new CDD guidelines and the general updated language.

Staff recommends adoption of the proposed Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay zone and its application to the CL - commercially zoned properties that abut Mount Vernon Avenue. The new overlay zone was designed to achieve a mixed use, pedestrian oriented corridor that strengthens the existing businesses and allows for appropriately scaled new construction compatible with the existing character of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Further, it will provide some flexibility in terms of parking requirements, administrative uses and FAR that will enhance the functioning of the retail environment, while preserving the integrity of the adjacent residential zones.

Staff also recommends approval the creation of the two new CDDs, in order to provide guidelines that ensure that new development is compatible with the existing development pattern and that it relates well to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. These zoning elements, as well as the revised Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan, will provide clear guidance to the public and the development community as to the desired vision for the *Mt. Vernon Business Area Avenue* and the greater Potomac West area.

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Kimberley Fogle, Chief, Neighborhood Planning;
Kathleen Beeton, Urban Planner.

RESOLUTION NO. **MPA 2005-0001**

WHEREAS, under the Provisions of Section 9.05 of the City Charter, the Planning Commission may adopt amendments to the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria and submit to the City Council such revisions in said plans as changing conditions may make necessary; and

WHEREAS, the City initiated an extensive community participation process to establish a shared vision and direction for the future development and enhancement of Mt. Vernon Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the community planning process culminated in the development of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan that represent a comprehensive approach to guide and manage future development along Mt. Vernon Avenue; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed amendment was held on March 1, 2005, with all public testimony and written comment considered; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The proposed amendments are necessary and desirable to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of Mt. Vernon Avenue as part of the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the City; and

2. The proposed amendments are generally consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the 1992 Master Plan and with the specific goals and objectives set forth in the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the 1992 Master Plan; and

3. The proposed amendments show the Planning Commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the Potomac West Small Area Plan; and

4. Based on the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which the Planning Commission may properly take notice in making and adopting a master plan for the City of Alexandria, adoption of the amendments to the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the 1992 Master Plan will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of the City;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria that:

1. The Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, CDD guidelines and updated language are hereby adopted in their entirety as an amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the 1992 Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia in accordance with Section 9.05 of the Charter of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

2. This resolution shall be signed by the Chairman of the Planning Commission and attested by its secretary, and a true copy of this resolution forwarded and certified to the City Council.

ADOPTED the 1st day of March, 2005.

Eric Wagner, Chairman
Alexandria Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Eileen P. Fogarty, Secretary

DRAFT

The Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan

The City of Alexandria, Virginia

Department of Planning and Zoning

NOVEMBER 2004

REVISED FEBRUARY 15, 2005

Acknowledgements

City Council
Mayor William D. Euille
Vice Mayor Redella S. Pepper
Councilman Ludwig P. Gaines
Councilman K. Rob Krupicka
Councilman Andrew H. MacDonald, PHD
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg
Councilwoman Joyce Woodson

Planning Commission
Chair Eric R.Wagner
Vice Chair Richard Leibach
Donna Fossum
John Komoroske
H. Stewart Dunn, Jr.
J. Lawrence Robinson
Jesse Jennings

City Manager's Office
James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Philip Sunderland, Former City Manager

Department of Planning and Zoning
Eileen Fogarty, Director
Kimberley Fogle, Chief, Neighborhood Planning and Community Development
Kathleen Beeton, Urban Planner
Eric Forman, Urban Planner

Consultant Team
EDAW
Paul Moyer, AICP
Natalie Topa

The Odermatt Group
Robert A. Odermatt, FAIA

Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut and Kuhn Architects
Matthew J. Bell, AIA
Jeff A. Evans

Kimley-Horn Associates, Inc,
Edward Y. Papazian, P.E.

Cooper Cary Inc
David Kitchens

Robert Charles Lesser, LLC
Leonard Bogorad
Marc McCauley

Justice and Sustainability Associates
Don Edwards

Alice Kale, Watercolors and Drawings,
703-683-3988, jkale@erols.com, copyright 2003.

Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group
Michael Babin
Lee Blount
Wendy Campbell
Marilyn Doherty
Harry M. Falconer, Jr.
Mary Ellis Fannon
David Fromm
Joan Gaskins
Donal Goff
Tara Hardiman
Sarah Haut
Bill Hendrickson
Bob Larson
Joe Lavigne
Marlin Lord
Pat Miller
Kevin Reilly
Gayle Reuter
Stephanie Sample
Robert Steele
Lois Walker
Tom Welsh

Interdepartmental Team
Alexandria Transit Company (DASH)
Sandy Modell
Al Himes

Fire Department, Code Enforcement
Gary Mesaris, Fire Chief
Arthur Dahlberg, Director
Robert Rodriguez

General Services
Peter Geiling

Office of Historic Alexandria
Pamela Cressey

Office of Housing
Mildrilyn Davis, Director
Robert Eiffert

Human Services
Colby Hatch

Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs
Kirk Kincannon, Director
Aimee Vosper
Julie Rasmussen

Transportation and Environmental Services
Richard Baier, Director
Thomas Culpepper
Doug McCobb

Contents

Executive Summary	**E1**
1.0 Introduction	**1**
1.1 The Study Area	1
1.2 Mt. Vernon AvenueWork Group	2
1.3 Planning Process	3
1.4 Mission	4
1.5 Guiding Principles	4
2.0 Avenue Characteristics	**5**
2.1 The Study Area	5
2.2 History	8
2.3 Demographic Characteristics	10
2.4 Existing Land Use	10
2.5 Existing Zoning	12
2.6 Open and Public Spaces	13
2.7 Affordable Housing	14
2.8 Streetscape	15
2.9 Pedestrian Circulation	17
2.10 Vehicular Circulation	17
2.11 Transit	18
2.12 Parking	18
2.13 BusinessCharacteristics	19
3.0 Retail Market	**23**
3.1 Guiding Principles	23
3.2 Retail Market Analysis	23
3.3 Market Strategy and Recommendations	32
3.4 Arts Promotion Strategy	33
3.5 Business Improvement District Approach	39
4.0 Land Use	**41**
4.1 Vision	41
4.2 Guiding Principles	41
4.3 Land Use Recommendations	42
4.4 Affordable Housing	60
4.5 Historic Preservation	61
4.6 Land Use Controls	65
5.0 Parking and Multi-Modal Linkages	**69**
5.1 Guiding Principles	69
5.2 Parking Utilization Study	70
5.3 Parking Strategy and Recommendations	75
5.4 Pedestrian Strategy and Recommendations	82

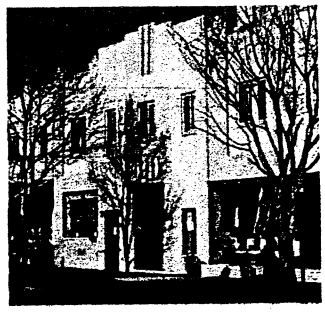
continued on next page

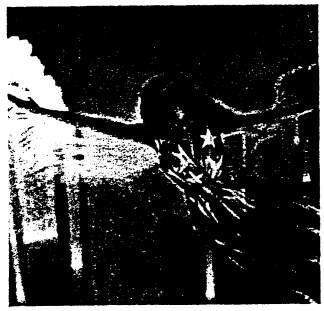
Contents *(Continued)*

6.0	**Urban Design and Streetscape**	**85**
6.1	Guiding Principles	85
6.2	Building FormDesign Approach	86
6.3	Specific Building Form Design Guidelines	90
6.4	Storefront Guidelines	96
6.5	Pedestrian Environment and Streetscape Recommendations	99
7.0	**Implementation**	**107**
7.1	Land Use	107
7.2	Affordable Housing	107
7.3	Historic Preservation	108
7.4	Streetscape	108
7.5	Pedestrian and Multi-Modal Strategy	109
7.6	Development of a Shared Parking Program	110
7.7	Other Parking Enhancements	110
7.8	Retail Strategy/Arts Promotions	111
7.9	Marketing/Promotions	111
7.10	Business Improvement District Implementation	112
7.11	Development Controls	112
7.12	Capital Improvements Program	113

Executive Summary

Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vital corridor, with a rich history and eclectic character that makes it an attractive place to live, work and shop. Building upon its unique characteristics, the Avenue will remain a special neighborhood as change takes place. The vision for Mt. Vernon Avenue involves preserving its traditional neighborhood character, protecting its unique historical identity, serving the needs of the surrounding community and maintaining the Avenue as a competitive and viable place for business.





Vision

Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vibrant and welcoming Main Street that reflects the surrounding neighborhoods' diversity, integrity and small town charm. The Avenue is comprised of enthusiastic, successful and responsible community partners. We offer an eclectic and friendly living, working and shopping environment for Alexandrians and visitors alike.

Planning Process

Over the years, the area has been improved and enriched, with businesses and residents working together, through the efforts of the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) and the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA), among others. These organizations worked with the City on the development of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan (the *Plan*) to ensure that the Avenue continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community while realizing its potential as a vibrant place to meet, gather and conduct business.

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group (Work Group) was formed by the City of Alexandria in the spring of 2003 to collaborate on a comprehensive planning effort for Mt. Vernon Avenue's "Main Street retail district" from Glebe Road to Luray Avenue. Along with DRCA and PWBA, the Work Group was comprised of community stakeholders, including business owners, property owners, residents, representatives of the Mt. Jefferson Civic and Warwick Village Citizens Associations and City officials. Over the course of 16 months, the Work Group defined a future direction for the Avenue, guiding neighborhood change while protecting the adjoining residential neighborhoods.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles were developed through extensive community input to define the vision for Mt. Vernon Avenue and provide a framework to guide future development and other activities. The guiding principles of the Plan are to:

- Preserve existing historic scale and character
- Protect and enhance Mt. Vernon Avenue as a vibrant commercial corridor
- Encourage and support mixed-use development
- Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District"
- Preserve and protect existing residential areas
- Promote partnerships
- Enhance public spaces
- Provide convenient parking and transportation solutions to support retail growth
- Encourage independent retail
- Capitalize on the neighborhood arts community
- Provide alternative multi-modal transportation linkages

Land Use Strategy

The land use recommendations in the *Plan* are designed to promote and reinforce a consistent, vibrant and pedestrian-oriented retail environment, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods. Strategies are recommended that apply to the entire length of the Avenue as well as specific strategies for the three focus areas, described below.

Avenue-Wide Recommendations

PROMOTE APPROPRIATE INFILL DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure that new development is consistent with the neighborhood's existing character through the use of Building Form Design Guidelines
- Allow modest increases in allowable floor area along Mt. Vernon Avenue, consistent with the Building Form Design Guidelines, where new construction retains historic buildings, maintains the historic character and scale, provides open space where feasible, and protects adjacent residential.

PROTECT RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The potential for negative impacts on adjacent residences is reduced by:

- Stepping the height of buildings; and,
- Providing a buffer to reduce the visual impact on the neighborhood.

ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN STREETSCAPE

Build upon and enhance the existing pedestrian orientation of the Avenue and improve pedestrian safety through:

- Pedestrian scale lighting;
- Streetscape and crosswalk improvements;
- Strengthened connections to the Braddock Road Metro Station;
- Enhanced public transportation;

- Design guidelines for new construction; and,
- Improvement to the appearance of service and auto-related uses.

Pedestrian and streetscape improvements, as well as private investment in properties and buildings, should be made along the entire length of the Avenue from Braddock Road to W. Glebe Road, to improve the appearance of the Avenue and create stronger visual and physical connections to the Arlandria neighborhood on the north.

ENCOURAGE A MIX OF USES

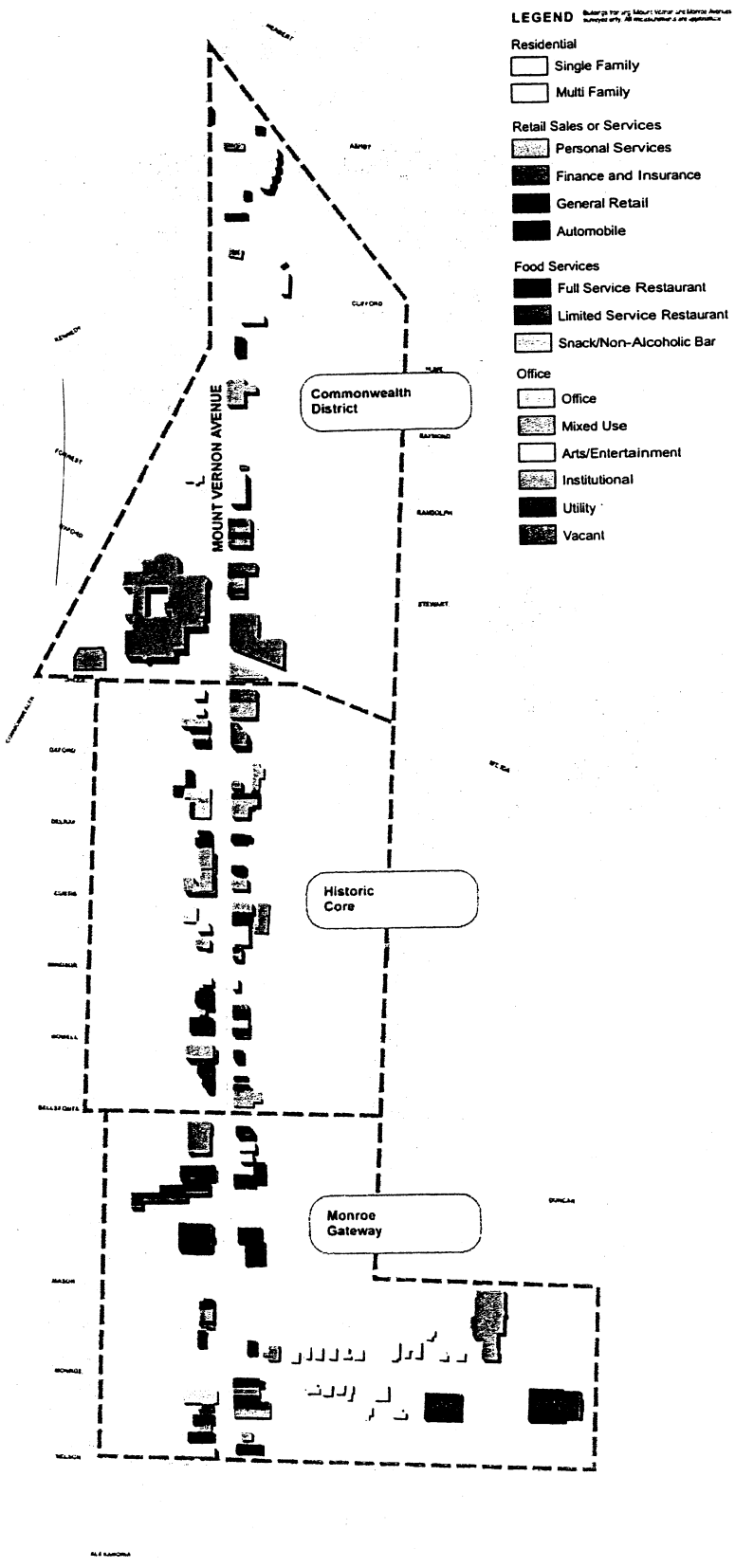
The overall concept for the Avenue is to encourage new multi-family residential and 2nd floor office uses to support the retail activity, and to concentrate the retail activity on the ground floor in key locations. The mix of residential and office uses help to provide a 16 hour/7 day level of activity desirable for a successful retail environment.

The market analysis has projected a limited demand for additional retail uses. Thus, it is critical not to spread out the retail uses along the length of the Avenue, but to concentrate retail to benefit from the synergy created by continuous retail street frontage.

Focus Area Recommendations

The planning area is divided into three major focus areas:

- Commonwealth District from Herbert Street to Uhler Avenue;
- Historic Core from Uhler to Bellefonte Avenues; and,
- Monroe Gateway from Bellefonte to Nelson Avenues, including the small shopping center located on the west side of the Avenue at Luray Avenue and the Giant grocery store and CVS pharmacy located in the 400 block of Monroe Avenue.



Land Use with Focus Areas

Land use, open space, streetscape improvements and other recommendations were developed for each focus area.

Commonwealth District

ENCOURAGE A MIX OF USES

- Encourage residential, office, and institutional uses, with limited retail, with a compatible building scale
- Encourage a mix of the type of residential units and provide affordable housing

PROMOTE COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT

A key site in the Commonwealth District is the triangular-shaped assemblage of property north of Commonwealth Avenue on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The 11 parcels in this area, totaling approximately 2 acres, are underutilized and offer a significant opportunity for redevelopment that complements the entire district and strengthens the Avenue as a whole. The *Plan* recommends the coordinated redevelopment of these parcels, with a potential increase in floor area ratio, consistent with defined development standards for a quality multi-family development with publicly visible and usable open space. Coordinated Development District zoning would be applied as an overlay to these parcels.

IMPROVE STREETSCAPE, OPEN SPACE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The *Plan* envisions a high quality streetscape in the Commonwealth District area, with healthy street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and street furnishings to reflect an attractive and safe pedestrian environment. Pedestrian improvements are incorporated at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Mt. Vernon Avenue, and recommendations are made to enhance pedestrian safety north of Commonwealth Avenue by reducing the number of travel lanes from four to two and placing on-street parking and bike lanes within the existing curb-to-curb section. Improvements are recommended to Colasanto Park to enhance it as a key community asset.

Historic Core

ENCOURAGE STREET-LEVEL RETAIL

The Avenue will be more vibrant and retail uses will be more successful by focusing ground floor retail and personal service use in this area. To achieve this, the *Plan* recommends to:

- Limit office and residential uses to the floors above the ground floor; and,
- Limit frontage of new personal service and financial uses in this area to a maximum storefront width.

PRESERVE HISTORIC CHARACTER

The Historic Core is that area of Mt. Vernon Avenue located within the Town of Potomac National Register Historic District and includes a number of contributing historic buildings. The *Plan* outlines strategies to preserve the historic character by allowing infill development that is compatible with and respects the scale of existing historic structures and the residences that immediately abut the commercial properties along the Avenue.

CREATE A PUBLIC GATHERING PLACE

Following evaluation of options, enhancement and possible expansion of the City lot/Farmer's Market site as a public gathering place is desired. This location provides the opportunity to create a small public space, centrally located within the active retail area, while retaining the parking function. It will provide greater flexibility in the operation of the Del Ray Farmer's Market and is highly visible along the Avenue.

CONSIDER FIRE STATION REUSE

The City's Fire Station #202 is housed within the original Town of Potomac Town Hall and Fire Station on Windsor Avenue. Historically the center of the Town of Potomac's civic and social life, this building is an historic landmark within the community. Should the needs of the Fire Department change and the City seek to relocate this function, the *Plan* recommends consideration of this building for reuse for community functions and activities.

Monroe Gateway

ENCOURAGE A MIX OF USES

The Monroe Gateway area is a suitable place for residential, retail, and commercial uses that promote a transition into the Historic Core area. Additional residential development can contribute to the commercial success of the Avenue by placing potential clientele nearby.

ENHANCE STREETSCAPE AND URBAN DESIGN

The appearance of the public right-of-way can be enhanced with street trees, sidewalk pavers and other amenities. A key factor in improving this segment of the Avenue is addressing the existing service and automobile dealership uses with screening of parking lots, relocation of contractors' vehicles and materials to less visually prominent locations on the sites, and related building and site improvements. It is recommended that all streetscape improvements extend to Luray Avenue in order to connect the small commercial center at Luray Avenue with the business area to the north.

IMPROVE GATEWAY PARK

As improvements are made to the Route 1/Monroe Avenue bridge and the existing Simpson Stadium Park

Watercolor by Alice Kale.

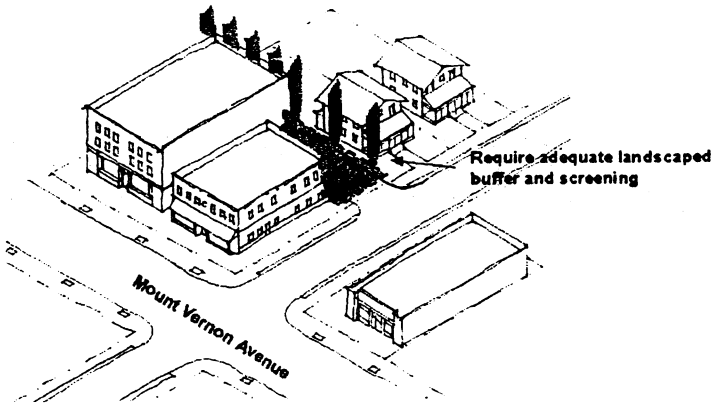
expanded, the design for this additional parkland should emphasize a park-like gateway for the community with views provided into the Park.

ENHANCE THE NEIGHBORHOOD GIANT AND CVS SITES

While the community strongly desires to retain the existing grocery and pharmacy uses in the present location on Monroe Avenue, it is recognized that market forces may result in future changes that make retention of the existing uses difficult. In such case, it is critical that the City provide adequate leadership in directing a new vision for this site. Should market forces push the redevelopment of these parcels, the *Plan* recommends the coordinated redevelopment of the two sites for mixed-use, incorporating a grocery and retail at the ground level and compliance with specific development standards. Coordinated Development District zoning would be applied as an overlay to these parcels.

ENHANCE ACCESS TO THE METRO STATION

The *Plan* recommends identifying opportunities for pedestrian improvements linking the Braddock Road Metro Station to Del Ray and coordinating with the improvements to Potomac Yard. New signage and lighting to encourage evening travel between the Metro and Mt. Vernon Avenue are recommended.



Buffer adjoining residences

Historic Preservation

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Plan seeks to strengthen the existing historic district for the Town of Potomac, especially the commercial buildings located along the Avenue, by encouraging the retention of the contributing buildings through reuse, appropriate renovations and infill construction. Design guidelines are included for infill development that complement the existing mass and scale of these buildings.

Strategies included to strengthen and improve the historic district are to:

- Designate additional identified contributing structures to the National Historic Register;
- Explore the expansion of the existing Town of Potomac Historic District boundaries;
- Create and install heritage and interpretive signs; and,
- Promote awareness of the Town of Potomac Historic District and the tax benefits of the rehabilitation of contributing structures.

Parking Strategy

A parking utilization study was conducted to understand the current and potential future parking conditions along Mt. Vernon Avenue and to assist in formulating the appropriate parking strategies. Generally speaking, the parking study indicated that the existing parking supply and demand for the spaces is balanced with sufficient surplus spaces to accommodate regular turnover of the spaces. Utilization of the existing parking spaces varies depending on the time of day and day of the week. The mixed-use and walkable nature of the neighborhood, with businesses often frequented by area residents without the use of automobiles or by drivers who park once and visit more than one business during a single trip, contributes to the relatively stable parking conditions.

Convenient parking and transportation solutions are recommended to support retail growth, including alternative forms of transportation. The goals of the parking strategy are to:

- Maintain a balance in the supply and demand for parking;
- Maximize the use and turnover of on-street parking to serve retail customers, with employees and longer term customers using off-street parking;
- Optimize the utilization of existing parking resources; and,
- Ensure that parking demand is met without negatively impacting nearby residences.

Strategies to accomplish these goals are to:

- *Develop a shared parking program* to more efficiently share use of the underutilized private parking resources to alleviate some of the demand on the existing parking supply particularly during evening and weekend hours;

- *Create a parking overlay district* that provides parking flexibility where the ability to provide additional parking is severely constrained by small lots and the desire to maintain the historic character of the area. Some flexibility in the parking requirements for new retail uses and small compatible infill development is recommended by:

  · *Waiving or reducing parking requirements in specific circumstances where business activity would be enhanced without impacts on the community;*

  · *Providing no parking reduction for tear downs of contributing buildings;*

  · *Continuing the requirement for an SUP to reduce parking for any use other than retail that does not comply with the current parking requirement; and,*

  · *Implementing a parking reduction policy to guide the review of future requests.*

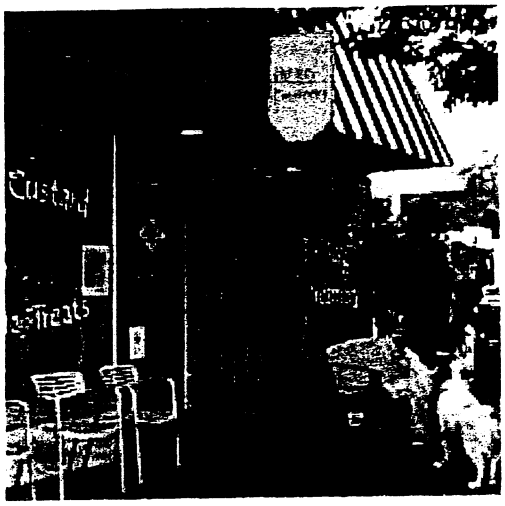
- *Monitor parking demand and supply over time* to ensure that parking supply and demand will continue to be accommodated without resulting in spillover parking or congestion on residential streets. The development of utilization thresholds is important to ensure that greater proactive measures are undertaken when found necessary to address the changing demand for parking.

Pedestrian and Multi-Modal Strategy

To support and enhance the existing pedestrian-oriented nature of Mt. Vernon Avenue and its nearby residential neighborhoods, the *Plan's* multi-modal strategy includes transit, walking and bicycling, as well as parking and circulation improvements, with the following elements:

- Encourage greater use and availability of transit by enhancing bus stops, promoting public transit, and providing better pedestrian connections to the Braddock Road Metro Station;
- Provide DASH bus service along the Avenue (by 2008);
- Encourage walking and bicycling by providing streetscape and pedestrian lighting improvements along the Avenue;
- Reduce the potential for speeding, increase pedestrian safety, and enhance the streetscape along the four-lane section of Mt. Vernon Avenue north of Commonwealth Avenue by reducing the number of travel lanes, providing crosswalks and bulb-outs, bicycle lanes and a parking lane; and,
- Prioritize the pedestrian over the automobile in the redevelopment of automobile-oriented uses, such as the gas stations, service uses, and automobile dealerships, to ensure a pedestrian friendly environment.

Colasanto Park



Retail Marketing/Arts Promotion Strategy

The retail market study projected demand for an additional 10 percent "Main Street" retail/restaurant space along the Avenue by 2010. Retail recommendations include:

- Targeting new complementary businesses such as specialty food stores, housewares and home furnishings, antiques and artwork, art supply stores, and custom card/stationery stores;
- Encouraging new restaurant opportunities, such as a diner, family-oriented restaurant and restaurants with entertainment, to round out the dining opportunities along the Avenue; and,
- Undertake a detailed arts promotion effort that includes the creation of artists' studios, either in a single building or dispersed throughout the area; public art displays and exhibitions, arts festivals and an art education and/or supply store.

The recommended marketing strategy builds upon the recent Potomac West Business Association (PWBA) successes, including:

- Utilizing a variety of media such as radio station commercials, regional publications, advertisements on Metrobuses and the like;
- Integrating retail marketing into events and festivals, such as Art on the Avenue and First Night Alexandria;
- Maintaining unified store hours among retailers; and,
- Installing community banners, heritage signage, and gateway improvements to create a greater sense of identity for the Avenue.

To continue and support the successful efforts of the PWBA, the establishment of a business improvement district is suggested to ensure that the current efforts are continued on a long-term basis and to provide a consistent funding source to sustain and expand on existing efforts.

Urban Design Strategy

Mt. Vernon Avenue has a unique, small town, Main Street character. The urban design strategy focuses on enhancing that character with a flexible design-oriented approach. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the form and scale of new or infill development will be compatible with the historic scale and character of the existing buildings along the Avenue. The current zoning regulations do not provide the necessary framework to support and encourage such appropriately scaled and compatible development. The *Plan* outlines a series of Building Form Design Guidelines to guide the design of new construction.

The major design principles incorporated in the *Plan* meet the following objectives:

- New construction should reflect the scale of existing buildings;
- A consistent street wall should be maintained, with some variations to allow for landscaped open space, an opportunity for side windows and for other site use where desired;
- New construction should be two to two and one-half stories, with a setback where a third story is provided;
- New buildings should help define the corners where side streets intersect Mt. Vernon Avenue. Ground level retail storefront windows should extend onto the side streets;
- Appropriate building setbacks and parking lot screening will minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties;
- Ground level retail storefronts should contribute to the vitality of the streetscape and the pedestrian experience;
- Direct driveway access to Mt. Vernon Avenue is not desirable; and,
- Off-street parking lots should be located to the rear of the property, with access provided from rear alleys, when available, side streets or access easements from adjoining properties.

Zoning Strategy

The main zoning approach to implement the *Plan's* vision and recommendations is through the development and application of an overlay district. The purpose of the Mt. Vernon Urban Overlay District is to encourage a mix of land uses and compatible infill construction, protect residential neighbors, support the historic character and the preservation goals of the historic district, preserve and enhance the existing urban character of the corridor and promote enhanced economic activity. A key element of the Overlay District is the application of the Building Form Design Guidelines. The Overlay District will allow a waiver of the underlying CL (Commercial Low) requirements for floor area ratio, yards, open space, etc. by Special Use Permit, where a proposed building is consistent with the design guidelines in the *Plan*. In addition, due to the goal to maintain a pedestrian environment on Mt. Vernon Avenue by limiting curb cuts, as well as concerns about the potential for larger, incompatibly-scaled building on larger parcels, the Overlay District will provide a three-tier approach related to the size of the parcel to address parking and open space needs.

Tier 1 —
Lots of 7,000 square feet or less in size

- Waive open space and parking requirements for land-locked lots
- Waive some required parking for corner lots and lots with rear access

Tier 2 —
Lots between 7,001 and 15,000 square feet in size

- Provide 14% minimum ground level open space
- May reduce parking up to half for uses, except residential where at least one parking space is required per unit

Tier 3 —
Lots larger than 15,000 square feet

- Provide 25% minimum ground level, publicly visible open space
- Provide required parking on-site
- Additional requirements for building massing and open space to ensure compatibility of building size and scale

The consolidation of individual lots to create a larger development is strongly discouraged.

The overlay district will apply to properties fronting along Mt. Vernon Avenue from Nelson Avenue on the south to Commonwealth Avenue on the north. The district will include provisions for land use, building form, parking and access, building signage, outdoor display and administrative permits. The existing CL/Commercial Low zoning will remain as the underlying zoning. A retail focus area is defined in the overlay district between Uhler Avenue and Bellefonte Avenue (the Historic Core) and will target the location of new retail and complementary businesses at the ground floor along the Avenue.

Implementation

The *Plan* concludes with a series of implementation measures designed to bring together the planning and design recommendations, outlined in the strategies for land use, zoning, urban design, retail/arts promotion, parking and enhancing pedestrian/multi-modal opportunities. A key element for implementation will be a coordinated effort of public and private entities. The Potomac West Business Association is the recommended organization to lead the marketing, business organization and retail promotion efforts. A Business Improvement District approach is outlined to provide a source of regular funding in benefit of the business along the Avenue. A series of actions and steps are outlined to ensure the successful implementation of the vision, guiding principles and strategies recommended in the *Plan*.

With limited public funding available to undertake the suggested physical improvements, working with the community to prioritize the public improvements in an initial implementation step. As part of the *Plan*, the Work Group determined pedestrian scale lighting of the sidewalks along Mt. Vernon Avenue and Monroe Avenues to be the highest priority to address pedestrian safety concerns and to encourage people to walk from the Braddock Road Metro Station to and along the Avenue. Their second highest priority is the restriping and related improvements to the four-lane section of the Avenue from Commonwealth Avenue north to Glebe Road. These improvements will have the most immediate, positive impact on the Avenue and adjacent residential neighborhoods and support the *Plan* recommendations.

Introduction 1.0

Mt. Vernon Avenue in Alexandria, Virginia has long been a vital corridor that has linked communities, neighbors and businesses. The City of Alexandria, in conjunction with the Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group, has prepared the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan (the *Plan*) to ensure that the Avenue continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community while realizing its potential as a vibrant and competitive place for business.

Mt. Vernon Avenue has a rich history, beginning as a main thoroughfare connecting the Del Ray and St. Elmo subdivisions in the late 19th century. The corridor went on to become an important regional route, paralleling U.S. Route 1 between Washington, D.C. and Alexandria. The Avenue's rich history parallels that of the Potomac Yard rail yard, a major railroad switching station on the East Coast.

Today, Mt. Vernon Avenue has a unique character that is a showcase for the different periods of its eclectic past. The purpose of the *Plan* is to ensure that Mt. Vernon Avenue remains a special place. The *Plan* provides a framework for the future growth of the corridor. The following chapters outline a strategy for preserving the traditional neighborhood character, protecting its unique and historical identity, serving the needs of the surrounding community and maintaining the Avenue as a competitive and commercially viable place for business.

This *Plan* defines a future direction for the corridor and provides recommendations to help guide neighborhood change, while protecting the adjoining residential neighborhood. The *Plan* outlines detailed concepts for key focus areas and recommendations for land use, zoning, historic preservation, urban design and public space, parking, retail/marketing, and implementation strategies. The principal objective of the *Plan* is to protect the unique identity of the corridor, and capture its potential as a lasting amenity for the community and for the region.

1.1 The Study Area

This planning effort initially encompassed the length of the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor from Braddock Road on the south to W. Glebe Road on the north, including the neighborhoods known as Del Ray, Mt. Jefferson and Warwick Village. During the course of the planning effort, the study area was focused, as follows:

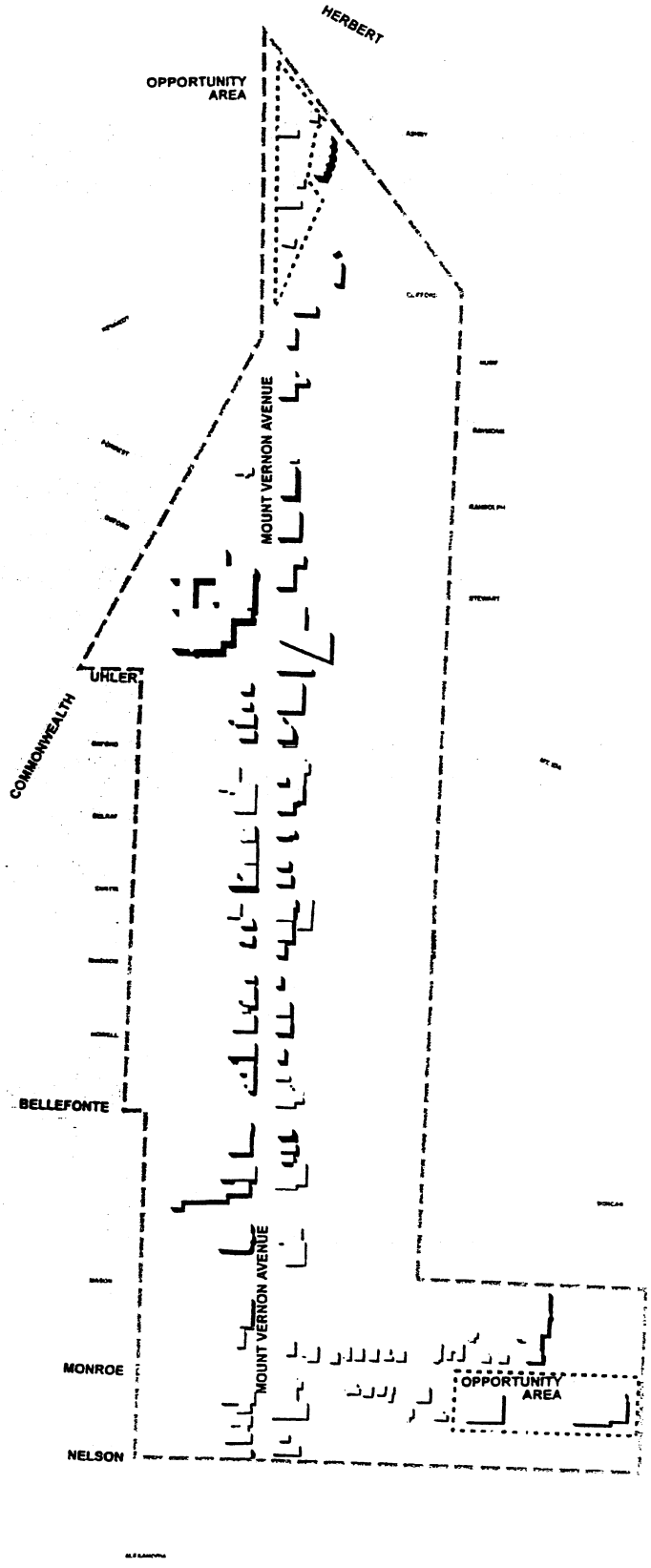


Figure 1.1 The Study Area

- Primary study area along the Avenue between Nelson Avenue and Herbert Street—this area is further defined into focus areas discussed later.

- Two opportunity areas:

  Mt. Vernon Avenue north of Commonwealth Avenue

  Monroe Avenue east from Mt. Vernon Avenue to Route 1

The two opportunity areas have a direct interaction with the primary area and the adjoining neighborhoods. Activity and changes within these areas will likely have an impact on the business core of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The section of Mt. Vernon Avenue to the south, between Luray Avenue and Braddock Road, is a stable residential area, where little change is anticipated. This *Plan* focuses on the primary study area, with recommendations for specific properties within the opportunity areas.

1.2 Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group (Work Group) was created by the City of Alexandria in the spring of 2003 to advise the City on the planning of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The Work Group is comprised of community stakeholders including business owners, property owners, residents, and City officials. The group has met on a regular basis to discuss its vision for the future of the Avenue as well as alternative concepts and recommended actions to guide its vision. In addition, several open public meetings have been held to elicit input from the broader community.

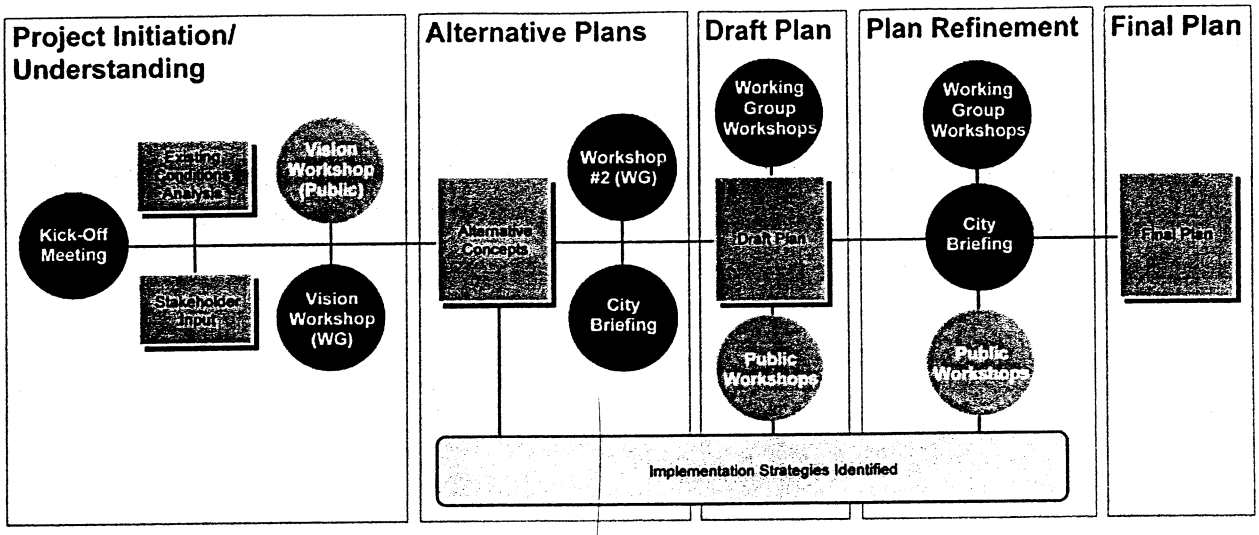


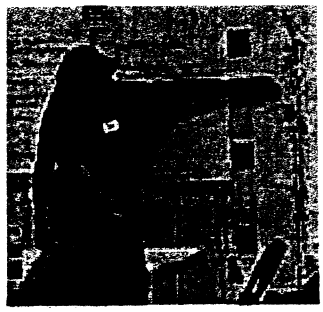
Figure 1.2 Planning Process Diagram

1.3 Planning Process

The planning process for Mt. Vernon Avenue was conducted in five phases (See Figure 1.2). First, the City planning team examined existing conditions of the Avenue by conducting site visits, analyzing physical and market conditions, and interviewing a number of key stakeholders. The results of the existing conditions analysis are included in Chapter 2.0 of the *Plan*. As part of the analysis process, there were two Work Group meetings and a Public Workshop held on June 25, 2003 to discuss the existing conditions and identify key opportunities and constraints for planning the Avenue.

With the analysis of the area, specific study was made of the retail market conditions, the parking resources along the corridor, and the form and character of the built environment. With the retail market analysis, the existing conditions were evaluated and the potential for additional demand for retail space in the future was determined. The parking study included an evaluation of the existing on-street parking supply, identification of underutilized parking lots and their potential for shared parking, as well as the future demand for parking. Analysis of the form of existing buildings provides the basis for recommendations on the desired form of infill development. During the second phase, the planning team developed alternative concept plans for the Avenue. These concept plans were discussed with the Work Group on October 2, 2003 and November 13, 2003. They were then presented to the public on December 3, 2003 and the City Council on February 2, 2004. The planning team took the comments based on the input from both the Work Group and public and developed a *Draft Plan*.

Two subcommittees of Work Group members were formed to study the retail/ marketing and parking issues in greater depth. These groups met several times in February and March 2004 to discuss and develop specific approaches and recommendations for the retail/marketing and parking strategies, and later, shared their recommendations with the full Work Group. This information formed the basis for the recommended retail and marketing, and parking strategies, outlined later in this *Plan*.



With input from the Work Group, the *Plan* was further developed and refined to present more detailed recommendations for the study area including:

- Overall Concept Plan
- Land Use Plan
- Recommendations for Opportunity Sites
- Streetscape Enhancements
- Parking Strategies
- Retail/Marketing Strategies
- Historic Preservation
- Affordable Housing
- Building Form and Design
- Zoning Recommendations

1.4 Mission

A subcommittee of Work Group members crafted a mission statement to guide the vision and implementation of the *Plan* that was later endorsed and adopted by the entire Work Group. The mission reads:

Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vibrant and welcoming Main Street that reflects the surrounding neighborhoods' diversity, integrity and small town charm. The Avenue is comprised of enthusiastic, successful and responsible community partners. We offer an eclectic and friendly living, working and shopping environment for Alexandrians and visitors alike.

1.5 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles were developed through extensive input from the Work Group and key community stakeholders to define the vision and provide a framework for the future development of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The guiding principles of the *Plan* are to:

- Preserve existing historic scale and character
- Protect and enhance Mt. Vernon Avenue as a vibrant commercial corridor
- Encourage and support mixed-use development
- Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District"
- Preserve and protect existing residential areas
- Promote partnerships
- Enhance public spaces
- Provide convenient parking and transportation solutions to support retail growth
- Encourage independent retail
- Capitalize on the neighborhood arts community
- Provide alternative multi-modal transportation linkages

Avenue Characteristics 2.0

2.1 The Study Area

Within the study area, the *Plan* identifies three focus areas along the Avenue located between Herbert Street on the north and Nelson Avenue on the south. These focus areas were defined with the Work Group during the initial site analysis phase, by distinguishing the unique physical and economic characteristics of each focus area. These focus areas provide a way to define specific recommendations and organize the Avenue into manageable sections, relative to their characteristics.

The focus areas from north to south are:

- Commonwealth District, extending from Herbert Street to Uhler Avenue;
- Historic Core, the six block area from Uhler Avenue south to Bellefonte Avenue; and,
- Monroe Gateway, extending generally from Bellefonte Avenue south to Nelson Avenue, but also including the Giant grocery store and CVS pharmacy sites located on Monroe Avenue, and the small commercial district on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue at Luray Avenue.

While not in the detailed study area, the section of Mt. Vernon Avenue south to Braddock Road and north to W. Glebe Road are an integral part of the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor.

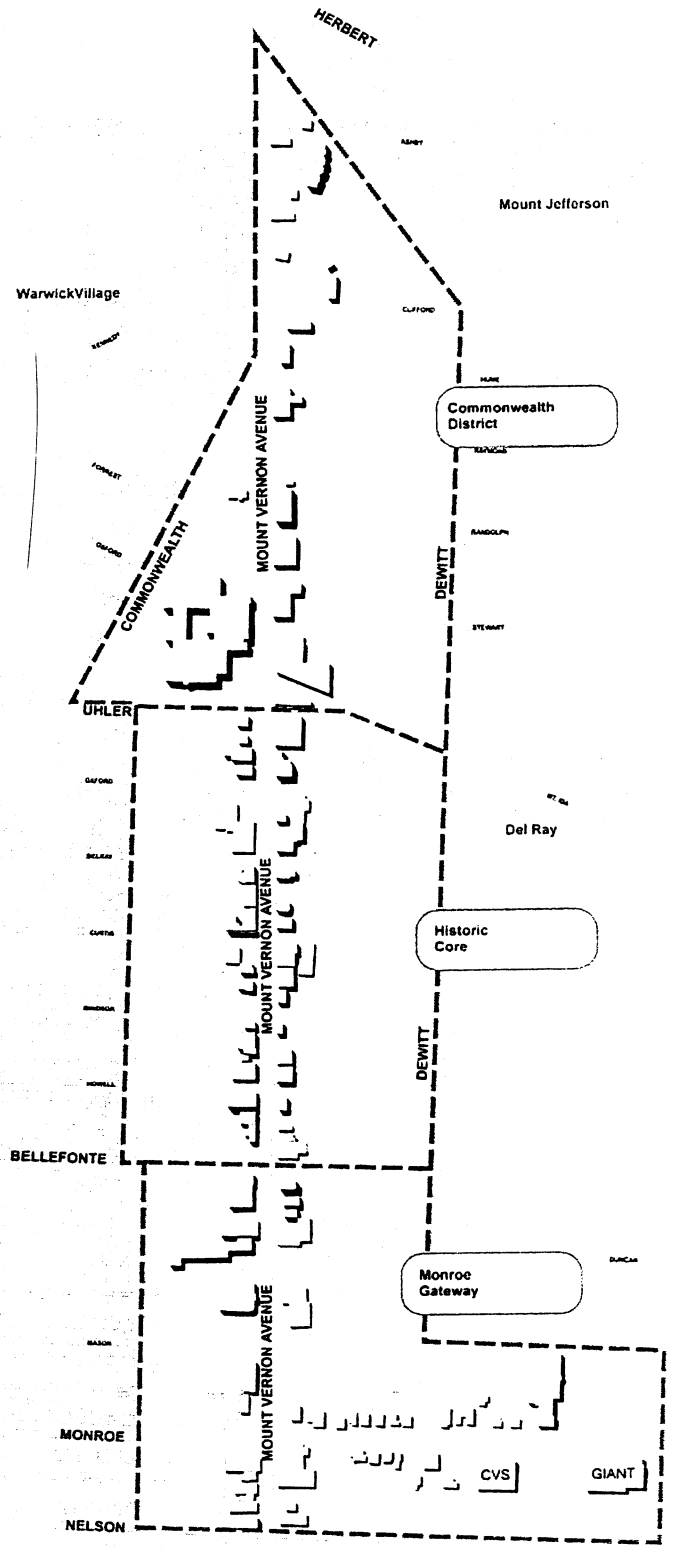


Figure 2.1 Focus Areas

Commonwealth District

The north end of the study area, between Herbert Street and Uhler Avenue, has a distinct character based upon its variety of uses, scale and character of the streetscape. It functions as a transition area between the pedestrian-oriented, traditional urban form of the Historic Core area and the more automobile-oriented form of the street and properties to the north. Neighborhoods in this area include Del Ray, Mt. Jefferson and Warwick Village.

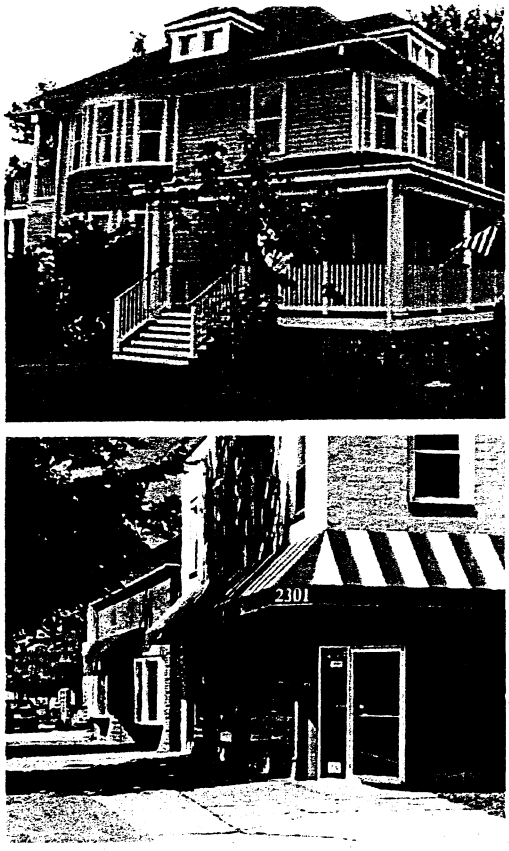
North of Commonwealth Avenue, on the west side of the Avenue, the predominant land use is residential, with a mix of townhouse and multifamily units. With the exception of the high-rise Calvert Apartments further to the north, the scale of the residential is generally two-story. On the eastern side of the Avenue is a series of underutilized and vacant properties. Existing land uses in this area include two taxicab companies and two small restaurants, with street frontage surface parking. This eastern area has been identified in the *Plan* as a redevelopment area, known as the "Triangle Site" with a vision for redevelopment that is defined in Section 4.3.

Commonwealth District Character

South of Commonwealth Avenue, the existing land uses include a mix of commercial, residential, and institutional, including the Mt. Vernon Community School and Recreation Center and the office building occupied by the City's Department of Human Services. The development pattern for this section of the Avenue is unique in that the community school and Colasanto Park extend along the entire western side of the Avenue. Retail, personal service, restaurant and office uses are located along the eastern side of the Avenue. With the exception of a few second-story residential units, the only residential use in this part of the Commonwealth District is a four-story apartment building, located at the northeast corner of Randolph and Mt. Vernon Avenues. A vacant property, proposed for development as residential or live/work use, is located in the same block, at the southeast corner of Raymond and Mt. Vernon Avenues.

Historic Core

The Historic Core is the area between Uhler Avenue and Bellefonte Avenue and includes the portion of Mt. Vernon Avenue located within the Town of Potomac National Register Historic District. This area is characterized by small retail buildings interspersed with office and residential uses that have maintained a traditional Main Street feel throughout the years. This Historic Core is considered to be the heart of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Neighborhoods in this



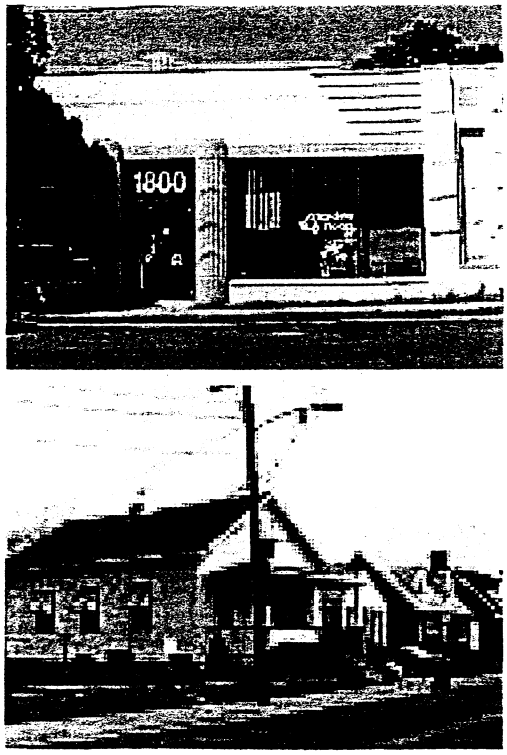
Historic Core Character

area include Del Ray and Mt. Jefferson. This portion of the Avenue was established as a national historic district in 1992, and has come to take on a special character that is unique to the region and distinct from other, nearby Main Street corridors. The characteristics of this focus area include a quaint visual appeal and walkable scale. With few exceptions, the "street wall," defined by the buildings that line the street and the streetscape, is visually consistent, creating a pleasant pedestrian environment on the Avenue.

Monroe Gateway

The Monroe Gateway area is a diverse section of the Avenue, comprised of a wide range of uses including service uses, automobile service stations, automobile dealerships, small retail shops, restaurants, offices and residences. It extends from Bellefonte Avenue south to Nelson Avenue and includes a small shopping center located at the corner of Luray and Mt. Vernon Avenues. This area includes the two properties developed with a Giant grocery store and CVS pharmacy on Monroe Avenue, between Mt. Vernon Avenue and Route 1 (Jefferson Davis Highway).

Monroe Avenue currently provides a direct link to Route 1, a major transportation corridor. Monroe Avenue and Route 1 will be significantly changed by the planned reconstruction of the Route 1 / Monroe Avenue Bridge that is likely to begin in 2006 and by the development of Potomac Yard. The bridge will be straightened to directly connect Route 1 north and south, and the access to Monroe Avenue will be relocated through Potomac Yard's Main Street, thus transforming the connection between Route 1 and the Del Ray neighborhood. This realignment will provide new development opportunities on the west side of Route 1 that are described in Section 4.3 of the *Plan*.



Monroe Gateway Character

2.2 History

The Del Ray and St. Elmo sections of the Town of Potomac were platted in 1894 by developers from Ohio. Originally, the grid layout of the subdivisions consisted of long blocks oriented in an east-west fashion to maximize access to transportation networks, including the Washington Alexandria Turnpike (now Route 1), the Washington Old Dominion Railroad to the east and the Washington, Alexandria and Mt. Vernon Electric Railroad (built between 1892 and 1904) along the western boundary of the town. In the late 1880s, a ceremonial route was envisioned to transport visitors from Washington, D.C. to Mount Vernon through northern Virginia:

The road was to have begun at the Virginia end of a memorial bridge from Washington, to run along a path to the present day Ridge Road [in Arlington County] and Mt. Vernon Avenue, through Alexandria to Mt. Vernon, ending at Washington's tomb...The road as planned was never built, although a portion of the route still carries the name Mt. Vernon Avenue.[1]

The town was incorporated in 1908 and included vacant land, the "notorious" St. Asaph Race Track, residences and commercial uses.

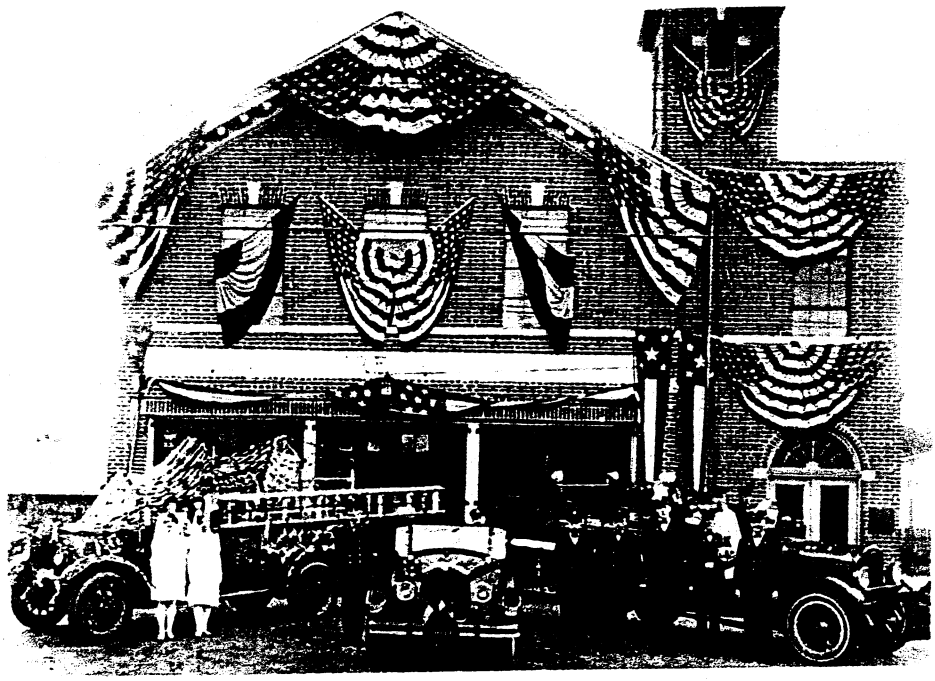
Between 1910 and the 1920s, the Town of Potomac grew into a self-sufficient community. By 1925 it had a combination Town Hall and Fire House, a public high school with a gymnasium, a fire department 'with motorized apparatus and two volunteer companies of fifty members each' and a complete sewer system connected to every house in town.[2]

Residents of the town commuted by railroad and electric rail to Washington, where many people worked for the federal government. Residents also worked at the Potomac Yard, a major railroad switching

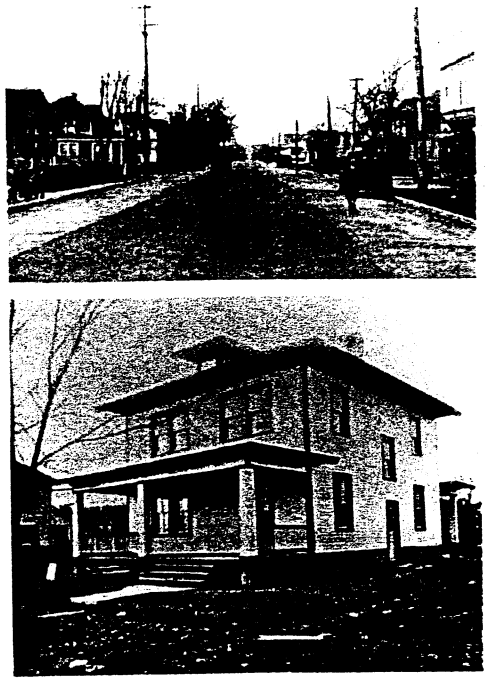
1. *Excerpt from Robert L. Crabill, "History of the Town of Potomac", 1982, pp. 11-12.*

2. *ibid, pp. 9.*

Artist's rendering of Mount Vernon Avenue circa 1915. *Watercolor by Alice Kale.*



Town of Potomac Town Hall



Sampson Collection, Alexandria Library

Many homes in Del Ray were constructed between 1910 and 1920. The newly-constructed home above was for sale in 1920

station located adjacent to the Washington Alexandria Turnpike. The Town of Potomac remained independent for only a short period of time until it was annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1930.

Originally more of a residential street, Mt. Vernon Avenue evolved over time into a commercial corridor. During the 1950s and 60s, property values in the area were in decline. A turnaround began in the early 1970s, when younger, more affluent homebuyers started to move in from outlying areas. Under the Community Develpment Block Grant Program, the City initiated a revitalization effort in the late 1970s with the development of the Mount Vernon Avenue Revitalization Plan. Revitalization efforts continued over the next two decades with a series of public actions, including infrastructure improvements, a loan subsidy program to assist neighborhood businesses and to encourage business growth along the Avenue, a neighborhood conservation program involving housing rehabilitation loans and grants, home ownership assistance and the removal of blighting influences, and the location of a major City agency, the Department of Human Services, on the Avenue. To recognize the historic character of the area, designation of the Town of Potomac as a National Register Historic District took place in the early 1990s. In 1996, the City funded the establishment and work of the Potomac West Alliance, a public/private partnership of area businesses, residents, civic and business organizations, with the City, to coordinate City and community economic development activities and to engage in other activities to improve the Potomac West area. That organization continued until 2000.

In recent times, this area has continued to grow and evolve. Through the combined efforts of the City, the Potomac West Business Association and active citizen associations, the community continues to attract new residents and businesses.

2.3 Demographic Characteristics

The neighborhoods surrounding the study area, including Del Ray, Warwick Village and Mt. Jefferson[1], have experienced a significant change in demographics over the past 15 years. Generally speaking, the area has become attractive to urban professionals, with higher educational levels, more income and fewer children.

1. Census Tracts 12.02, 13.00 and 14.00

While the area experienced a 6.8% loss in population during the 1990s, the number of households increased by 3.8%. Thus, the average household size has been reduced, from 2.4 persons per household in 1990 to 2.17 persons in 2000 (though still higher than the city-wide average of 2.04 persons per household). The number of single-person households rose by 21.3% during the 1990s to represent 38.5% of all households. It should be noted that the number of housing units in the area remained constant during the time period; the increase in the number of households is attributable to the reduction in the number of vacant units, from 6% of the housing stock in 1990 to 2.5% of the stock in 2000.

During the 1990s, an increasing number of homes were purchased and renovated by urban professionals, with the percentage of owner-occupied homes rising by 13.6% to encompass 53.1% of all households, substantially higher than the 40% owner-occupancy experienced city-wide.

Almost all of the 6.8% population loss can be attributed to a loss in minority residents. Overall, the minority population in the neighborhood declined modestly as a percentage of the total population between 1990 and 2000 (from 39.4% of the population to 36.8%). However, a significant number of Black residents (1,028 persons) left the neighborhood over the 10 year period, reducing that population by 33.3% from the 1990 count of 3,085 persons. At the same time, the Hispanic population increased by 295 persons (or 34.6%).

The educational levels of residents also increased substantially, with the percentage of residents over 25 years of age with a college degree increasing by 31.8% between 1990 and 2000.

In 2000, the average household income was $80,069, about 4.8 % higher than the $76,370 average for all City households. This is a substantial reversal from 1990, where the average income of all City households at $52,581 was 12.6% higher than the neighborhoods' average of $46,684, and from earlier decades when there was a much larger disparity between incomes of neighborhood residents and those of City residents as a whole, with neighborhood residents having significantly lower incomes.

The increased vibrancy of the area as a mixed-use urban neighborhood has been attracting new residents, who are generally single, with higher educational levels and higher incomes—those most able to afford the rapidly rising housing prices.

2.4 Existing Land Use

Mt. Vernon Avenue consists of a dynamic mix of land uses and building functions. (see Figure 2.2) Currently, the predominant land uses involve a variety of commercial activities, including retail and office uses. The variation of establishments and restaurants, ranging from small antique stores and coffee shops to full-service restaurants, offers residents and visitors convenience-type shopping and entertainment opportunities. Typical office uses consist of small businesses such as professional services, printing, banking, graphic arts and other enterprise support services.

Service uses, such as Kesterson Plumbing and Heating, R&B Heating and Air Conditioning, and Fannon Printing are also located on the Avenue. There are several large institutional uses on Mt. Vernon Avenue, including Mt. Vernon Community School and Recreation Center, George Washington Middle School, the Salvation Army and the City of Alexandria Department of Human Services. Automobile-oriented uses are also prevalent in the southern part of the Avenue and include two car dealerships, two gas stations with car repair service.

Though residential uses surround the Mt. Vernon Avenue commercial area, residential uses along the Avenue are generally located north of Commonwealth Avenue and south of Nelson Avenue. These include single-family town homes and multifamily apartments. A limited number of residential structures also exist between Commonwealth and Nelson Avenues, including both single-family detached units and residential apartments above commercial uses. Several single-family detached and multifamily units are also located along Monroe Avenue.

Figure 2.3 provides a summary of the land uses that are adjacent to the Avenue.

As part of the planning process, the Work Group identified a series of opportunity sites. (see Figure 2.4) The opportunity sites are properties that are either vacant, underutilized or have a propensity to change over time. See Section 4.3 for a list of the sites and recommendations to guide future short and long term changes for each site.

Use Type		Units
Residential	493	Dus
Retail	151,000	SF
Restaurants	45,250	SF
Office	163,500	SF
Institutional	371,500	SF
Auto Oriented	65,000	SF

Figure 2.3 Land Use Summary

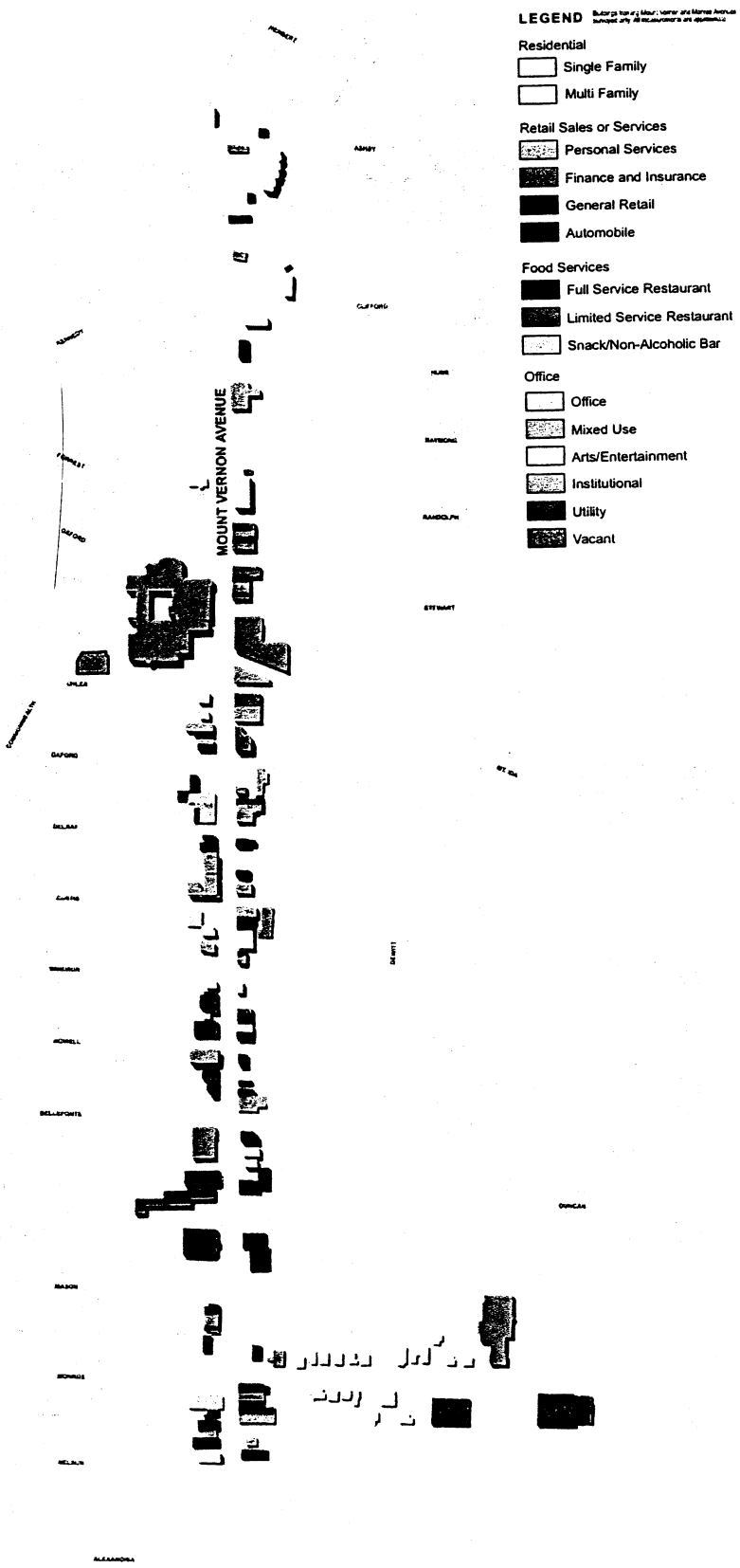


Figure 2.2 Land Use

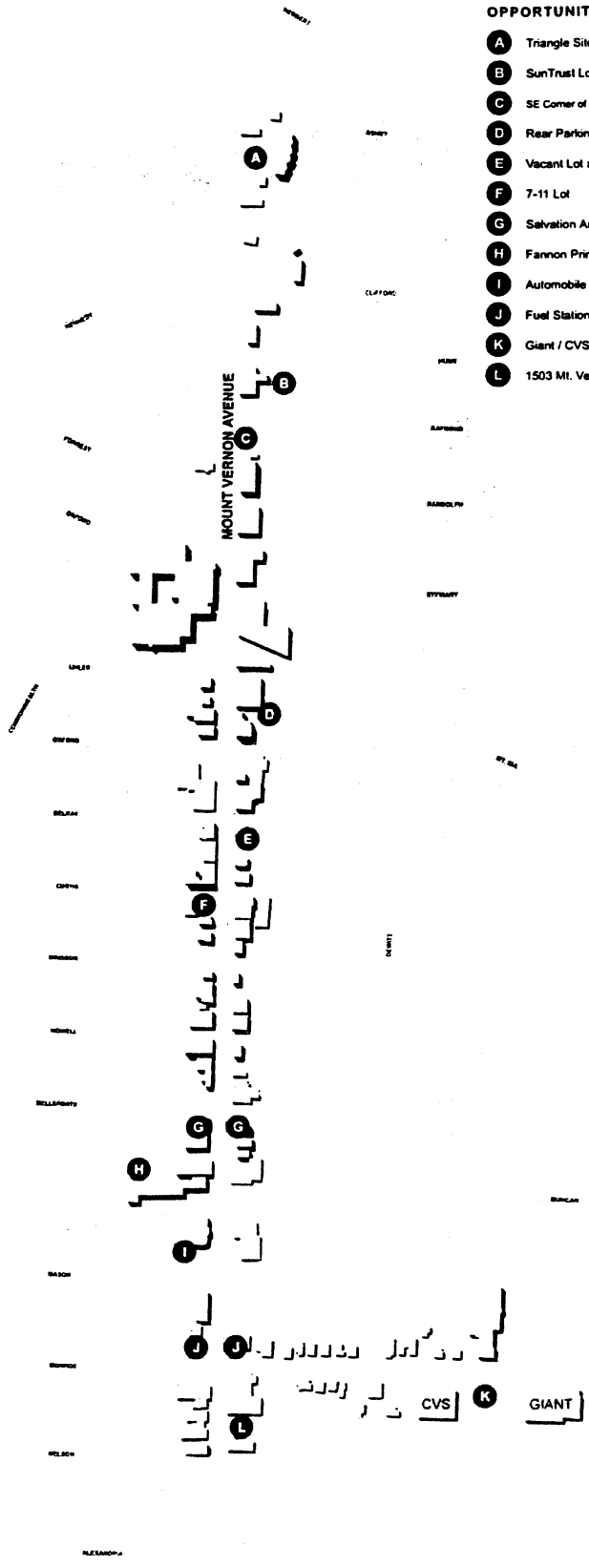


Figure 2.4 Opportunity Sites

2.5 Existing Zoning

The predominant zoning of the commercially developed properties fronting Mt. Vernon Avenue is CL/Commercial Low. The purpose of the CL zone is to provide for small scale retail and service uses that are pedestrian-oriented and typically serve the neighborhood. Permitted uses include residences, business and professional offices, retail shops and personal service uses such as beauty salons. Special use permit uses include day care center, massage establishment, outdoor garden center, restaurant, and social service use.

Along the Avenue, the publicly-owned institutional properties are not zoned for commercial use. These include the Mt. Vernon Community School, zoned R-2-5/Single and Two Family zone; and the Mt. Vernon Recreational Center and Colasanto Park properties zoned POS/Public Open Space. The residences between Nelson and Luray Avenues are zoned RB/Townhouse zone, and the residential neighborhoods that abut the corridor south of Luray Avenue and north of Commonwealth Avenue are primarily zoned RB and R-2-5.

Prior to the adoption of the 1992 Potomac West Small Area Plan and the 1992 City-wide comprehensive rezoning, the commercial properties along Mt. Vernon Avenue were zoned to allow a significantly larger scale of development than the neighborhood (and the character of the neighborhood) could support -- a 3.0 Floor Area Ratio (FAR), with a 150 foot building height. This zoning was immediately adjacent to low and medium density residential neighborhoods.

Recognizing that this scale was incompatible with, and would have substantial impact on the small lot, 2-3 story pattern of existing development, the zoning was changed to include an FAR of .75 for lots with an area of 5,500 square feet or less

for nonresidential uses, and .5 (up to .75, with special use permit approval) for lots larger than 5,500 square feet. Maximum residential FAR is .75, with the density not to exceed a maximum of 27 dwelling units per acre for multifamily uses or 22 units per acre for townhouse developments. The building height was reduced to 35 feet for a flat roof and up to 45 feet for a pitched roof.

The maximum allowable FAR of up to .75 was identified in this planning process as a key issue that constrained the ability to have infill development consistent with the existing building pattern, particularly in the Historic Core. A number of existing buildings along the Avenue are already developed beyond this FAR, including a one-story structure and a number of historically-contributing buildings. The sections of the Avenue that create the strongest traditional main street character have a consistent facade of two stories or more. The current FAR is too low to acheive this ideal building form. In addition to the preferred two-story height of buildings, a number of lots are small and may not be feasible to develop or redevelop at a .75 FAR when designed to modern building code requirements.

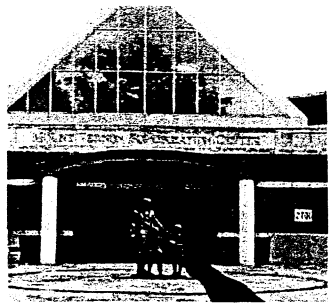
In addition, with the adoption of the CL District in 1992 a purposeful effort was made to focus the area for more pedestrian-friendly uses. Automobile-oriented uses, such drive through windows, gas stations, auto sales, and services, were removed from the listing of allowable uses. Existing uses were made noncomplying and no new ones can be established.

2.6 Open and Public Spaces

Given the existing development pattern along Mt. Vernon Avenue within the study area, there are few open spaces and public gathering spaces. There are several large public park/open spaces on the edges of the study area. Colasanto Park (named for the late Alexandria resident—Nicholas Colasanto—who was the city manager of Alexandria during the late 1940s and served five terms on the City Council) is located north of the Mt. Vernon Community School and Recreation Center. The park includes the triangular green, open space, the swimming pool and tennis courts. Simpson Stadium Park is another large park located just beyond the boundaries of the study area on Monroe Avenue, near Route 1. The 13-acre park includes basketball and tennis courts, a playground, jogging/walking trail, demonstration gardens, baseball fields, a dog exercise area, and restrooms. Ball fields are located at Braddock Field adjacent to the George Washington Middle School, at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road. A series of small neighborhood parks abut the study area, including the Mt. Jefferson Park and Greenway, Mt. Ida Greenway, Charles W. Hill Park, St. Asaph Park, and Mason Avenue Mini Park.

While not part of this planning process, the community recently identified, in response to the Open Space Steering Committee's report to City Council on priority open space sites, several sites in the neighborhood that could be acquired and preserved as open space. In order to be designated by City Council as open space sites, the site(s) must be nominated for official consideration and acceptance. None of the following sites have undergone this process to date. Of the sites suggested, only one is located within the study area: the vacant property located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Custis and Del Ray Avenues that is periodically used for community events, including the Art on the Avenue festival held in October each year.

Colasanto Park



Mt. Vernon Recreation Center

The Work Group has identified this property as a potential opportunity site for infill development. (See Section 4.3 for details.) The other sites identified by the community, though outside the boundaries of the *Plan*, are located at the:

- Intersection of Del Ray Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue
- Intersection of W. Mt. Ida Avenue and Hickory Street
- Intersection of Russell Road and Rosecrest Avenue
- Intersection of W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Intersection of Howell Avenue and Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1)
- Intersection of Lloyds Lane and Russell Road
- Property within Potomac Yard

The community meets informally at shops, restaurants, and along the Avenue. Community events are held in a variety of locations, including on the Avenue, at the Mt. Vernon Avenue Community School, the Mt. Vernon Recreation Center and at Colasanto Park. The most formalized public gathering space along the Avenue is the public parking lot located at the corner of Oxford and Mt. Vernon Avenues. From April to December, the Del Ray Farmers' Market is held on Saturday mornings. First Thursday events sponsored by the Potomac West Business Association also use this space during summer months. The staging of other annual events, such as Art on the Avenue, also occurs there, as do other special community events.

Work Group and community members have expressed a strong desire for a town square that could accommodate small and large gatherings. Several locations for a town square were evaluated. See Section 4.3 for the details of the evaluation and recommended location.

2.7 Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing citywide is a critical issue facing the City as a whole. Increasing property values and attractive market conditions are rapidly pricing the average Alexandrian out of the housing market. Between 1998 and 2004, assessed values for single family homes increased 112.1% in the Potomac West area[1] versus 99.6% city-wide. A similar pattern has occurred with condominium properties where assessed values rose faster in Potomac West (176.8%) than in the City as a whole (111.7%).

In the Potomac West area alone, the number of single-family homes and condominium units assessed at less than $100,000 dropped from 1,055 in 1997 to 47 in 2004. As depicted in Figure 2.5, the number of homes assessed at $250,000 and over skyrocketed from 429 in 1997 to 4,595 in 2004, with very little new construction activity. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find affordable housing in the neighborhood. Thus, the provision of affordable housing on Mt. Vernon Avenue is a critical component of the City's goal to ensure that housing is available and affordable to residents at all income levels.

1. The Potomac West area is one of the City's 14 planning areas, encompassing this study area as well as portions of the surrounding area

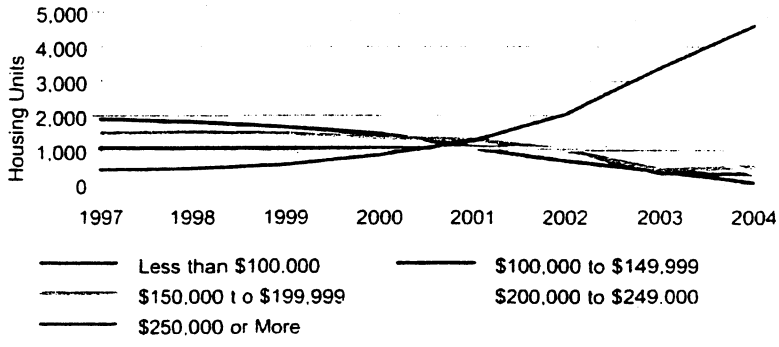


Figure 2.5 Median Assessment for Single Family Homes and Residential Condiminiums *Source: Department of Real Estate Assessments*

In 1993, the City adopted an affordable housing policy to address many key concerns, including the high cost of housing in the City, the loss of previously affordable market rate housing, insufficient federal expenditures for housing, and a need for rental housing appropriately sized for families.

The City's Affordable Housing Policy was last updated in November 2002 and defines affordable housing as housing that a household can afford without paying more than 30 percent of its income for rent or 32 percent of its income for mortgage payments. The maximum income limits for City homeownership assistance programs currently ranges from $68,700 for one or two persons to $79,500 for three or more persons. The maximum sales price limit for City homeownership assistance programs is currently $370,800. With the rising values in the Potomac West area, it is increasingly difficult to find housing at a price where the prospective purchaser can participate in the City's homeownership assistance programs.

For new rental housing, the City has a Set-Aside Rental Unit Program. The City arranges for set-aside rental units in new developments and monitors these programs to ensure that the units are rented to persons within the specified income limits and at the specified rents. The maximum income limits for this program are based on the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development criterion of 60 percent of area median income. At this writing, these income levels range from $36,540 for a single person household to $68,880 for a household of eight or more people. Maximum gross rent limits for the Set-Aside Rental Unit Program are based on the Federal Low Income Tax Credit Program. Rents allowed in the City for households at 60 percent of the median income range from $913 for an efficiency unit to $1,670 for a five-bedroom unit. These figures, along with the City's Affordable Housing Policy, are reviewed and updated from time to time.

2.8 Streetscape

The City of Alexandria implemented streetscape improvements over 15 years ago, including utility undergrounding, new sidewalks, street trees and street signs, along the Mt. Vernon Avenue frontage from Arlandria south to Bellefonte Avenue. Recent work has focused on the last phase of the undergrounding of utilities from Bellefonte Avenue to Nelson Avenue that will be completed this fall. In addition, the City recently implemented crosswalk improvements at each intersection along the Avenue within the Historic Core area, between Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues.

While the City has committed resources over time to improve Mt. Vernon Avenue, some outstanding streetscape issues remain. Members of the Work Group and the community have expressed concern about an insufficient level of lighting on the sidewalks. Cobra-head light fixtures light the street but do not, in many cases, provide adequate illumination of the sidewalk. As a consequence, residents have expressed safety concerns and strongly support the installation of pedestrian scale lighting along the Avenue.

There is a discontinuity of street tree planting on portions of the Avenue, with some portions completely lacking in street trees. A number of the existing trees have reached maturity and may need to be replaced in the near future. There is a similar lack of or discontinuity of street furniture, including benches, trash cans and bus shelters. With regard to sidewalk paving, many property owners did not participate in the City's offer many years ago to extend the sidewalk pavers onto their private property, when the original

Lack of trees

Poor quality pavers

Lack of street trees and amenities

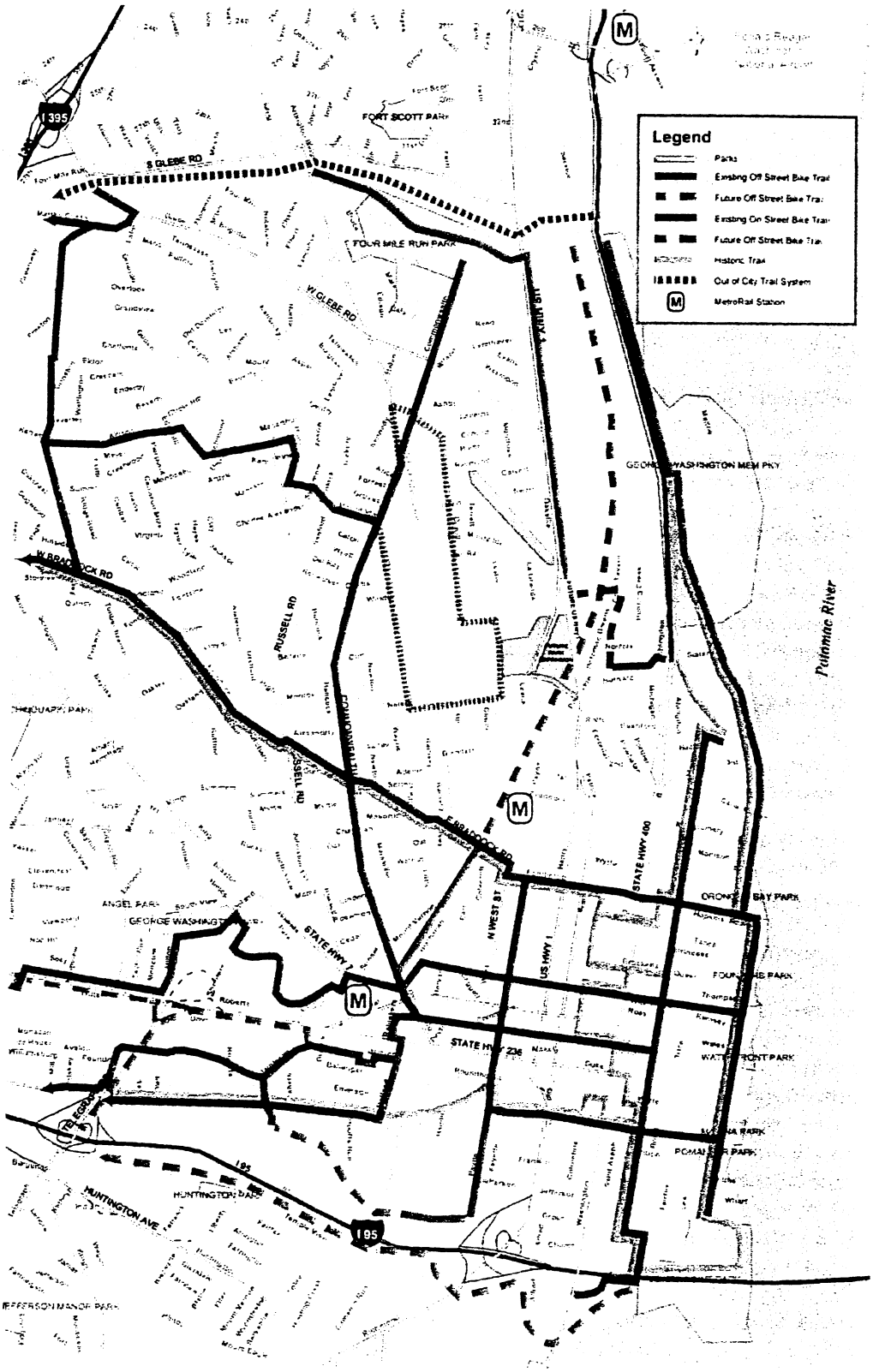


Figure 2.6 Trail Map with Mount Vernon Avenue Study Area shown in yellow.

streetscape improvements were made. Thus, there are a number of instances in the main retail core of the Avenue where the area of private property between the building wall and the property line consists of asphalt or concrete, rather than pavers or landscaping.

The streetscape along the entire length of the Avenue varies. While the Avenue has seen many recent improvements, it requires maintenance to ensure that it continues to embody its present character. Recommendations to strengthen and improve the streetscape are detailed in Section 6.5 of the *Plan*.

2.9 Pedestrian Circulation

During the planning process, community and Work Group members have stressed their desire to enhance and strengthen the existing pedestrian connections along Mt. Vernon Avenue to reinforce the primacy of the pedestrian over automobiles, to increase pedestrian safety and to encourage people to walk to the Avenue.

The pedestrian experience along the length of the Avenue varies. While past streetscape improvements made in conjunction with the City's program of placing overhead utility lines underground have resulted in attractive public sidewalks, with street trees, many private properties that abut the sidewalk have not been similarly improved. These semi-public spaces should be improved with pavers and/or landscaping that will enhance the street frontage. The final section of the public program from Bellefonte to Nelson Avenues will be completed this year, with streetscape improvements to follow. In other sections of the Avenue, additional improvements to screen parking or on-site storage, and widen sidewalks, should be undertaken to enhance the pedestrian environment and encourage people to walk comfortably along the Avenue.

In addition to pedestrian circulation along the street, Mt. Vernon Avenue has access to both local and regional trail networks. (See Figure 2.6.) These include off-street and on-street bike trails, out-of-city bike trails, historic trails and future trail connections. There is a concentration of trail access points and the junction of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road, and there are opportunities to enhance access to trails to the north and the east of the Avenue. Recent streetscape improvements along the Avenue include bulb-outs designed to slow down traffic along the Avenue and provide a safe area for pedestrians to wait to cross the street. Section 4.3 for recommended improvements designed to enhance and promote pedestrian circulation.

2.10 Vehicular Circulation

Mt. Vernon Avenue is a two-way street along its entire length with a single lane of traffic in each direction from Braddock Road north to Raymond Avenue. The number of travel lanes increases to four between Raymond Avenue and West Glebe Road, with a free flow right in the southbound direction where the four lanes transition down to two lanes. This change in roadway size dramatically alters the character of this northern portion of the study area, and has raised issues related to vehicle speeding and pedestrian crossing safety. In this .39-mile (about 2,060 feet) stretch from W. Glebe Road to Commonwealth Avenue, there are no controlled intersections to help reduce travel speeds and to provide opportunity for safe pedestrian crossing.

On-street parking is generally permitted on both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue from Braddock Road to Commonwealth Avenue, except in front of Mt. Vernon Elementary and George Washington Middle Schools. The parking is generally signed for 2-hour parking (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) to encourage turnover and

availability for retail customers. There is currently no on-street parking in the four lane section north of Raymond Avenue.

2.11 Transit

The Braddock Road Metro Station is the nearest Metrorail stop to Mt. Vernon Avenue, with access to both the Yellow and Blue Lines. The proximity of Metrorail adds great value for area residents who use it for leisure or commuting. Existing bus routes along Mt. Vernon Avenue are currently limited to WMATA Metrobus service. These bus routes include:

- 10A—Hunting Towers to the Pentagon via Crystal City
- 10B—Hunting Towers to Ballston via Shirlington
- 10E—AM rush north to Pentagon (return travels on Route 1), PM rush heading south (return travels on Route 1)
- 10P—Braddock Road Metro Station to Crystal City via South Glebe Road and Potomac Yard Shopping Center

During peak and non-peak hours on weekdays and Saturdays, headways along Mt. Vernon Avenue average about 15 minutes. The 10 E bus has a shorter, 10 minute headway, however, it provides limited weekday service from the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Monroe Avenue to the Pentagon, traveling northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon. In addition, the service provided by the 10P tends to overlap the 10 A and 10 B, traveling within one or two minutes of both buses, which generally have 30 minute headways. This overlap creates service inefficiencies leading to gaps in service and uncertainty among bus riders as to the bus schedules.

The City of Alexandria's bus system, DASH, is currently planning for an expanded maintenance facility that will permit the agency to acquire new buses in future years. The new facility, anticipated to be completed in 2008, will allow DASH to initiate service on Mt. Vernon Avenue, providing the opportunity for expanded routes, including a loop route between Potomac Yard, the Braddock Road Metro Station, and the Avenue, and for more frequent headways. It is anticipated that the DASH service could likely replace the service currently offered by WMATA's 10P route. Based upon demand, 10- to 15- minute peak headways are anticipated, with 20- to 30- off-peak headways. Although the non-peak headways will increase slightly, as a practical matter, the service will reduce existing inefficiencies by providing increased schedule reliability, thus promoting bus ridership to the Avenue.

2.12 Parking

Consistent with other urban neighborhoods whose development generally predates the use of the automobile as a primary means of transportation, parking is often mentioned as a concern by residents and business owners in Del Ray. The perception of an insufficient amount of parking is widely held and causes neighborhood concern when new businesses seek to locate on Mt. Vernon Avenue or existing businesses desire to expand their operations. Much of the area was developed with small, shallow lots that constrain the ability to provide parking for these businesses. The same development pattern exists on the nearby residential streets in Del Ray, with many residences built with no or limited off-street parking. As is the trend citywide, a substantial number of residents in Del Ray own more vehicles than can be accommodated on their property, with additional vehicles parked on the street. As a result, there is competition for parking spaces between residents and business owners, their employees and customers.

As a consequence, parking is often a concern by the community. To address these concerns, the Work Group, assisted by staff, studied the current demand and utilization of parking on the Avenue, in the first block of streets that cross the Avenue, and several parking lots to evaluate parking supply, demand and make recommendations. See Section 5.2 and 5.3 of the *Plan* for a discussion of the parking study and recommended parking strategy.

2.13 Business Characteristics

The first Enterprise Zone in Northern Virginia was designated for the northeast section of the City of Alexandria in 1994. The boundaries of the Enterprise Zone extend from the City limits on the north, to a portion of Windsor Avenue on the south, the west side of Route 1 to the east, and portions of Russell Road and West Glebe Road to the west. The Zone consists of approximately 690 acres and represents 6.5% of the 10,048 total acres in the City. The commercial properties located in the Commonwealth District and a portion of the Historic Core are located in the Zone. The purpose of the Zone is to stimulate private investment and job opportunities by offering state and local incentives to businesses. The estimated number of total businesses in the Zone is 598, with approximately 70 new business licensed in 2002. The Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) administers the Zone, and interested businesses should contact them for details about Zone incentives.

Although built for the requirements of a bygone era, Mt. Vernon Avenue's retail position remains competitive today as a location for shopping and dining in a small town atmosphere. The Avenue's small town feel is reflected in its retail and restaurant businesses, most of which are independently owned and operated. Several of the Avenue's businesses have a regional reputation, which has helped the area gain more recognition in recent years among many Washington-area consumers.

The Avenue has a mix of restaurant, retail and service businesses. With the restaurants, the food service options range from full table service restaurants, to quick-service and take-out establishments, to dessert-oriented businesses. These restaurants offer, on average, indoor seating for about 40 patrons. A few restaurants have outdoor seating as well. The current restaurants in the main commercial core are listed in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 Mt. Vernon Avenue Restaurants, 2004

Restaurant	Address
Fireflies	1501 Mt. Vernon
Al's Steakhouse	1504 Mt. Vernon
Mancini's Cafe	1508 Mt. Vernon
Mt. Vernon Deli	1606 Mt. Vernon
Los Amigos	1905 Mt. Vernon
Evening Star Cafe	2000 Mt. Vernon
Sundae Times	2003-A Mt. Vernon
Thai Peppers	2018 Mt. Vernon
St. Elmo's Coffee Pub	2300 Mt. Vernon
Del Ray Dreamery	2310 Mt. Vernon
Taqueria Poblano	2400-B Mt. Vernon
Caboose Bakery	2419 Mt. Vernon
Tsim Yung Chinese Food	2603 Mt. Vernon
Los Tios Grill	2615 Mt. Vernon
Georgio's Piatsa	3015 Mt. Vernon
Mandarin Inn	3045 Mt. Vernon

Figure 2.7 Retail-oriented Businesses along Mt. Vernon Ave., 2004

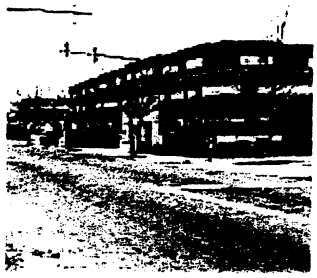
Type of Business	Quantity
Food Service (restaurants, etc.)	12
Misc. Shoppers' Goods	9
Salon	8
Housewares, etc.	8
Misc. Personal Services	7
Auto Sales and Service	7
Convenience/Food/Drugs	5
Apparel	4
Financial Services	4
Studio (dance, etc.)	3
Total	**67**

Note: Retail-Oriented businesses include restaurants, retail stores, and personal services that derive a significant share of business from walk-in clientele.

Non-restaurant businesses are also prevalent along the Avenue. Most of the Avenue's retail-oriented businesses are located in buildings with storefronts that face directly onto the street. These retail and personal service businesses range from household goods to vintage clothing.

As shown in Figure 2.7, food service is the most common retail-oriented category, with 12 restaurants and related establishments along the Avenue. Nine stores sell miscellaneous shoppers' goods (ranging from electronics to pottery to general merchandise), and eight sell housewares such as antiques, hardware, etc. The Avenue also contains eight beauty salons, the most common type of personal service establishment.

The Avenue's three focus areas, as identified in this *Plan*, have distinct characteristics regarding their business composition, as follows:



Alexandria Department of Human Services

Commonwealth District

In the Commonwealth District, commercial development exists only along the east side of the Avenue across from the Mt. Vernon Community School and Recreation Center properties. Consequently, the overall intensity of commercial activity is less than in the Core or in the Monroe Gateway areas, where retail exists on both sides of the street.

The south end of the Commonwealth District houses two institutional uses, the First Agape Baptist Community of Faith and the Alexandria Department of Human Services. Directly across from the Mt. Vernon School in the 2600 block, there are two strips of retail shops, containing nine retail businesses. A number of these shops have high business turnover. To the north, separated by an apartment building and two vacant parcels, is the underutilized one-acre site that currently contains SunTrust Bank and ASAP Printing & Mailing. The retail in this area lacks in continuity and retail character to be a successful part of the pedestrian retail experience in the long term.

Building in Commonwealth District

Multi-story retail and office space

Historic Core

The Avenue's Historic Core, in the 1900-2400 blocks of Mt. Vernon Avenue, contains the majority of corridor's retail and restaurant establishments. Of the 67 retail-oriented establishments noted in the preceding table, 37 are located within the Historic Core, including seven of the 12 restaurants and six of the eight salons.

Both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue throughout the Historic Core are developed with buildings that are suitable for retail use, creating a continuous expanse of retail and restaurant activity through most of the six-block area.

Many other businesses, besides those that are retail-serving, are located within this area as well. Commercial buildings in the Core tend to be multi-story structures with retail-appropriate space on the ground level, and office space available on the upper stories. As a result, there is considerable business activity, in both retail and non-retail sectors. Figure 2.8 illustrates the overall business mix within the Historic Core area.

As shown, retail, restaurants and personal services combined constitute just over 40% of the total businesses located in the Historic Core, with the remainder consisting primarily of offices uses, such as professional service firms and non-profit organizations. Many of these non-retail establishments are located above retail stores, or in small-scale office buildings such as the Potomac Town Square office condominium at the northwest corner of Mt. Vernon and Custis Avenues.

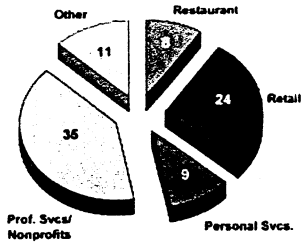


Figure 2.8 Historic Core Businesses by Category, 2004

Monroe Gateway

The Monroe Gateway area along Mt. Vernon Avenue has less intensive retail development than does the Core itself. Contributing to this lack of retail intensity is the cluster of auto sales and service uses between Monroe and Duncan Avenues, with two service stations and two recently renovated car dealerships. The two dealerships, Alexandria Hyundai and Audi of Alexandria, utilize a series of adjoining parcels on both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue that combine to a size of over two acres.

In addition to the automotive businesses, the Monroe Gateway area is home to the Salvation Army Alexandria Corps headquarters (at the corner of Mt. Vernon and Bellefonte Avenues), and two non-retail contracting firms. Retail-oriented uses, in buildings similar to those found in the Historic Core, are interspersed with the automotive businesses and other non-retail establishments. The automobile dealerships and service uses interrupt the continuity of retail uses along this section of the Avenue, making it difficult to have an active retail environment.

Another important area within the Monroe Gateway is the section of Monroe Avenue running east of Mt. Vernon Avenue to Route 1. While this 1/3-mile stretch contains largely residential uses, it also houses a Burke & Herbert Bank, located near the Mt. Vernon Avenue intersection, as well as a Giant supermarket and CVS pharmacy situated on adjoining parcels with a shared parking area. The Giant supermarket is located in a 24,000 square foot building, considerably smaller than is common in the market today. As new grocery stores are provided on redevelopment parcels in other proximate areas of the City, there is concern about the long-term viability of this undersized store.

Two sizable institutional uses are also located along Monroe Avenue, the Alexandria Branch YMCA, and the St. Andrew & St. Margaret of Scotland Anglican Catholic Church. Both the YMCA and the church are located on the north side of the street, while the Giant and CVS are on the south side.

Varied uses make it difficult to activate a retail environment.

Retail Market

3.0

This chapter provides an analysis of existing market conditions, market projections through 2010, and outlines a strategy and recommendations to enhance the market.

3.1 Guiding Principles

Encourage independent retail

- Strengthen efforts to retain existing independent businesses
- Focus on recruiting unique retail stores that are locally owned and operated, and compatible with the character of the Avenue
- Focus on retail sectors that pose the greatest opportunity for growth in a main street environment

Capitalize on neighborhood arts community

- Incorporate public art into the Avenue's streetscape
- Continue to offer events and festivals that promote the wares and abilities of local artists

Watercolor by Alice Kale.

3.2 Retail Market Analysis

A retail market analysis has been prepared to identify retail development opportunities for Mt. Vernon Avenue. This analysis examined current retail activity along Mt. Vernon Avenue from Nelson Avenue northward to Commonwealth Avenue, as well as projected changes in retail demand through 2010.

The analysis has found that:

- The retail market along Mt. Vernon Avenue is largely in balance between the supply and demand of retail space. With help from the enhanced marketing efforts recently undertaken by the Potomac West Business Association, there will be a modest demand for retail space through 2010 along the Avenue—estimated at approximately 10,000 square feet.
- The strongest demand is for restaurants, with some demand for Convenience Goods stores. Overall, there is projected to be a diminishing demand for Comparison Goods stores; however some sectors, such as home furnishings, are identified as potential growth areas.
- Retail sectors that pose the greatest opportunity for growth along Mt. Vernon Avenue include specialty/ gourmet food markets, confectionary shops, home furnishings, antiques, art supplies, and restaurants such as diners and family-style establishments.

The retail component of Mt. Vernon Avenue consists primarily of older, unanchored shopping nodes and small stand-alone buildings. The Avenue itself contains a mixture of retail, services, commercial and residential uses. Restaurants are the most common retail use along the Avenue, and the increase in the number of restaurants in recent years has helped establish the Avenue as an attractive alternative to Old Town, especially for residents of the nearby neighborhoods.

Suitability of Retail Space

With the character of the Avenue and the small sizes of sites that are potentially available for retail development, it is clear that only certain types of retailers will fit into the Avenue. In particular, the Avenue is a strong location for Main Street-type retail stores, but is not an acceptable location for larger, more conventional shopping centers.

Given this situation, this analysis examines only the demand for Main Street-type stores—those that would seek a smaller store in an urbanized environment such as exists in the Del Ray portion of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

It should be noted that the establishment of the Avenue as a quaint retail district should not cloud the realities of the Washington region's competitive retail environment. Mt. Vernon Avenue will continue to compete with other established "urban Main Street" locations such as Old Town Alexandria, and Clarendon/ Courthouse, Shirlington and Pentagon Row in Arlington. These locations have more regional drawing power, and will continue to overshadow the Avenue in the greater metropolitan marketplace.

Market Report Methodology

To examine which retail sectors hold the greatest promise for success along Mt. Vernon Avenue, this analysis uses a 2002 report by Robert Charles Lesser & Co. entitled Preliminary Market Analysis for Mt. Vernon Avenue Corridor as a starting point. This *Plan* augments the Preliminary Market Analysis with more detailed information concerning a recommended mix of retail stores to guide future development along the Avenue.

The Preliminary Market Analysis used marked-based economic assumptions to reach a level of "unmet retail demand"—that is, how much net new retail activity can be supported along the Avenue. The projections were calculated for 2006 and estimated, among other things, the total expenditure potentials for residents of the nearby areas and the amount of inflow (from outside of Alexandria) retail traffic. The majority of these assumptions and the methodology used to calculate expenditure estimates are carried forth into this analysis, but modified to reflect projected market conditions to 2010.

Throughout this analysis, retail establishments are divided into three broad categories based on the nature of goods and services provided. These categories are as follows:

Convenience Goods Everyday items such as groceries, toiletries, cards and gifts, drug store items, florists' products, and related merchandise that consumers typically purchase in establishments that are proximate to their place of residence. There is relatively little comparison shopping for individual items.

Comparison Goods Items that typically involve a certain degree of comparison shopping for price, quality or selection.

"Comparison Goods" include durable items such as furniture, appliances and household goods, as well as items such as clothing, books, electronics, etc.

Food and Drink Establishments that serve prepared food and/or drink products to patrons, either in a dining or carry-out format.

MARKET AREAS

Although the Avenue has, and will continue to have, appeal to residents of other areas, the largest share of retail demand originates from residents within the Primary Market Area (PMA) which includes Del Ray and its immediately surrounding neighborhoods. Other significant sources of retail patronage include the areas to the south, west, and east. Figure 3.1 shows these four market areas, as referenced throughout this analysis.

A critical component of projecting future retail demand is population growth in the immediate areas. The number of households in the PMA is growing slowly, primarily because this area is mostly built out with stable residential neighborhoods. Most new household growth in the identified market areas is projected to occur in the East and South market areas, due to residential projects such as those in the Potomac Yard, Carlyle, Eisenhower East and Braddock Road Metro areas.

This analysis projects retail demand to the year 2010. Figure 3.2 shows City demographic projections of household growth for each of the four market areas along with the number of households recorded in the 2000 Census.

As shown, the number of households within the four market areas is projected to increase by about 14 percent (or 4,000 households) between 2000 and 2010.

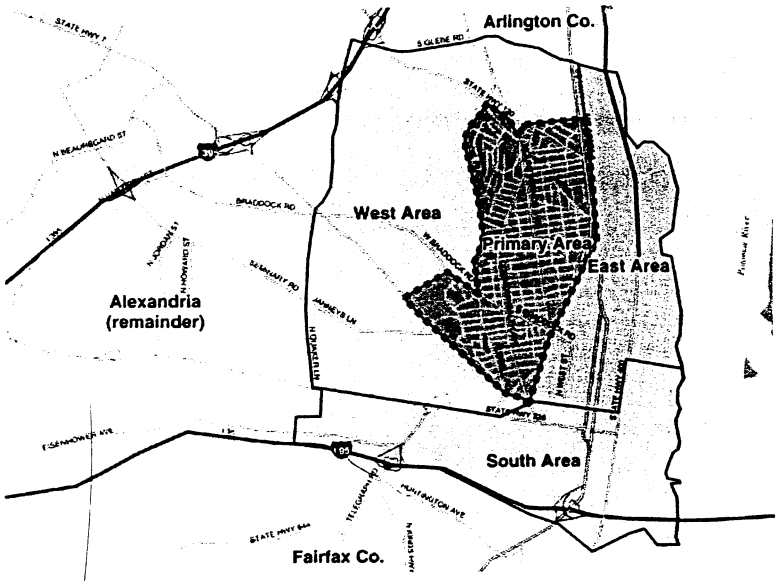


Figure 3.1 Market Areas from Preliminary Market Analysis

Trade Area	2000 Census	2010 Projection	% Increase
Primary Area	7,362	7,492	1.8%
East Area	5,049	6,322	25.2%
South Area	7,025	8,978	27.8%
West Area	9,479	10,168	7.3%
Total	**28,915**	**32,960**	**14.0%**

Figure 3.2 Market Area Population Projections

Sources: US Census Bureau and Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning.

Inflow Estimates

Another input into the calculation of retail demand potential concerns the rate of "inflow" expenditures—or dollars spent by customers who live outside of these four market areas. The analysis calculates inflow by estimating the percentage of total retail sales that would likely come from out-of-area patrons. The percentage of sales from "inflow consumers" is estimated at between 6 and 50 percent, depending on the store category (generally Restaurants and Comparison Goods stores generate more inflow sales than do Convenience Goods stores). Figure 3.3 provides a summary of the estimated retail inflow percentages by store category.

Note: Figures represent percentages of total market-area sales.

Store Category	Est. Inflow %
Convenience Goods	
Grocery	25.0%
Pharmacies / Health	6.3%
Liquor / Gas / Convenience	31.3%
Misc. Retail	6.3%
Comparison Goods	
General Merchandise	20%
Apparel / Accessories	20%
Sporting / Books / Music	20%
Office / Pets	20%
Electronics / Computers	20%
Furniture / Housewares	20%
Restaurants	
Restaurants (all)	50%

Figure 3.3 Inflow Sales percent Estimates, 2010
Sources: US Census Bureau and Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning.

The estimated inflow is somewhat higher than corresponding estimates within the Preliminary Market Analysis report. This is justified given the Avenue's increasing visibility among consumers throughout the Washington region—due in large part to effective marketing efforts such as those undertaken by the Potomac West Business Association.

Market Projections

The market projections that follow are derived from the 2010 household and inflow sales projections and estimate the amount of net new demand for retail stores along Mt. Vernon Avenue through 2010.

As shown in Figure 3.4, the major retail categories are predicted to experience the following increased or reduced retail demand through 2010:

Retail Category	SF Existing	2010 Projection	Retail Demand
Convenience Goods	22,000	26,500	4,500
Restaurant	40,000	48,400	8,400
Comparison Goods	38,000	35,300	-2,700
Total	**28,915**	**32,960**	**10,200**

Figure 3.4 Retail Demand in Square Feet, 2010

Sources: US Census Bureau and Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning.

- **Convenience Goods**
  Approximately 4,500 square feet of increased retail space.

- **Restaurant**
  Approximately 8,400 square feet of increased restaurant space.

- **Comparison Goods**
  The market analysis predicts an overall shrinkage in demand of approximately 2,700 square feet for main-street type Comparison Goods retail along Mt. Vernon Avenue. However, this does not mean that there will be no further development in this retail category. Within the Comparison Goods category, there is projected to be approximately 5,000 square feet of increased demand in the Furniture/ Housewares retail sector.

These figures indicate that there is modest, yet meaningful demand for additional main street retail space along Mt. Vernon Avenue. In light of the projected net new retail demand along Mt. Vernon Avenue through 2010, specific retail sectors have been identified that have the greatest potential to generate new sales along Mt. Vernon Avenue, and at the same time reflect the community's expressed preference for a vibrant and unique main street experience. These retail sectors are:

CONVENIENCE GOODS DEMAND

Dominated by grocery goods and drug store items, the vast majority of the nation's Convenience Goods market is satisfied by large-scale retailers such as supermarkets, drug store chains and convenience stores. Consumers are highly sensitive to pricing and to selection quantities, giving mass retailers an immense advantage over smaller, independent retailers in the

Convenience Goods market. Independent retailers are generally not competitive with the larger stores when offering a general line of merchandise.

However, specialized Convenience Goods merchants are able to compete in the marketplace when they offer a competitive advantage based on specialization or quality of their goods.

The market analysis identifies a modest demand for Convenience Goods retailing in the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor, and this demand will likely be satisfied by specialized Convenience Goods retailers offering specific services with personalized customer service. Key Convenience Goods sectors that can satisfy this requirement include:

Meat, Seafood or Gourmet Foods

The food retailing market is undergoing a dramatic transformation. On one hand, supermarkets are becoming increasingly large (often exceeding 50,000 or 100,000 square feet) and are being included as components of superstores or warehouse clubs. On the other hand, many consumers are increasingly shopping at specialty or gourmet food retailers for fresh food.

Traditional butcher shops or seafood markets were once thought to be obsolete, but are now gaining preference, particularly among high-end food shoppers who believe such stores offer fresher or healthier merchandise. The Washington region is home to many well-off households that have ample disposable income and an interest in high-end food merchandise. Yet there are relatively few specialty food markets such as butchers in the region, and there are few dedicated (non-restaurant) meat or seafood markets in Alexandria.

Gourmet food stores that sell either a variety of goods, or have a specialty, are also a growth segment in the retailing sector. Such retailers often sell packaged, ready-to-eat foods and accompaniments such as appetizers, cheeses and condiments. Consumer tastes, particularly in urban markets, are shifting towards a preference for gourmet and imported food items. Accordingly, expenditures in gourmet foods categories are expected to increase in coming years—U.S. cheese expenditures alone are forecast to increase by 20 percent over the next five years.

Establishments such as gourmet or specialty food stores can draw customers from the local Del Ray market, as well as establish a broader geographic base due to a relative lack of direct competition.

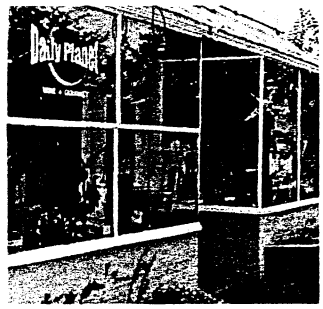
Chocolatier or Confectionary

Some Convenience Goods can both satisfy local customers' needs yet also complement a shopping district's Comparison Goods sector. One example would be an establishment that produces or sells sweets such as candies, chocolates, preserves, etc.

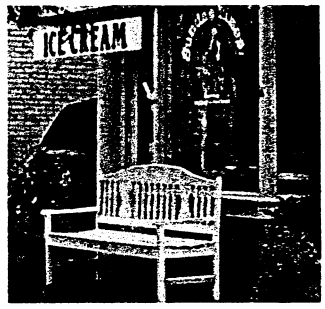
Such stores also have the ability to offer products that appeal to a wide range of budgets—from inexpensive or individually-wrapped treats to gourmet items such as truffles, taffies, fudge products and others. In addition, gourmet chocolate sales are regarded as being a fast-growing segment of the overall food retailing market.

Shops that sell sweets can be very successful in a pedestrian-oriented retail setting due to their proclivity to attract impulse buyers and to have a symbiotic relationship with other nearby retailers. Customers will often shop at other stores, and then stop into a candy store for a dessert or a special treat.

Florist



Gourmet Food



Chocolatier

Housewares

Home Furnishings

Antiques

Mt. Vernon Avenue currently has establishments that specialize in ice cream or related products, showing that sweets-based retailing can be successful along the Avenue. A candy-oriented store would complement these stores and enhance the overall retail setting of the neighborhood.

COMPARISON GOODS DEMAND

Similar to Convenience Goods, the Comparison Goods market is largely dominated by national-name chain stores. Customers of mainstream Comparison Goods tend to be very price conscious and will patronize stores that offer a competitive advantage on prices.

Many retail sectors, such as apparel, have long been controlled by chain stores, and the chains' reach into the overall Comparison Goods market has grown stronger in recent years. Some retail sectors have only recently seen a large amount of expenditures at chain stores—for example, sporting goods, music, pet supplies, and computer equipment are all sectors in which chain stores have made significant advances in recent years.

Yet there are still opportunities for smaller stores that sell these goods. Customers who seek specialized or higher-end merchandise value the expertise, customer service, and personalized attention that smaller stores can offer. It is important for smaller retailers to avoid concentrating on any product that large nearby retailers sell because smaller stores are generally not competitive on price, and therefore must gain an advantage through other means.

While the retail market analysis has found there is no additional net new demand for Comparison Goods retailing along the Avenue, there are still some growth areas that offer retailing potentials. The most promising Comparison Goods retail sectors include:

Housewares and Home Furnishings

Consumers in the Washington region spend much more on furniture and housewares than do residents of most parts of the country. Washington households spend 60 percent more on furniture and nearly 50 percent more on housewares than do most American households.

Much of this is attributable both to the high incomes of many area households and also to the transient nature of the region's population—when people move into a new house, their expenditures on furniture and housewares increase dramatically.

While much of the housewares market is dominated by mass retailers and specialty chains (Crate & Barrel, etc.), there is still ample demand in the marketplace for specialty housewares, particularly upscale or handmade/custom-made goods. The housewares market is thought to be one of the most recession-proof retail industries, especially in areas such as Northern Virginia that are growing in wealth and population.

The overall housewares retail category includes a diverse array of products, and the niche potential for housewares retailing is substantial. The general rule of thumb in housewares retailing in recent years is the supposed shift from a needs-based to a desire-based market—meaning that people are more inclined to purchase luxury goods than they have been in the past. Long-term retail trends point to a divaricating industry where housewares are sold to either extremely budget-conscious buyers or to the exact opposite—buyers interested in uniqueness and exclusivity. It is the exclusive buyers who represent a major source of purchasing power for the types of housewares stores that would fit into Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Examples of these types of stores include those offering unique or hard-to-find articles of household equipment such as kitchen/cooking supplies, bathroom merchandise, lamps and fixtures and related goods.

Antiques/Artwork

Antiques and artwork retailers are generally subject to the same economic trends as general housewares retailers. In retail markets such as the Washington metro area, where housewares sell well, antiques and artwork similarly enjoy a large pool of potential customers.

However, one distinguishing feature about antiques and artwork retail store locations is that such stores tend to be more successful if they are located near other, similar stores such as in an "antique row" or an arts district.

In this capacity, Mt. Vernon Avenue is well positioned to take advantage of its existing retail mix (which includes numerous arts/antique related establishments), current arts-related events such as Arts on the Avenue, and also the general reputation of Alexandria among the regional arts community.

Artwork retailing may include visual arts such as paintings and sculptures, and also other handmade wares such as ceramics or jewelry. Antique retailing may incorporate both generalized stores and also those antique stores specializing in one particular pursuit.

Antiques and artwork retailers depend on an appreciative customer base that can afford to spend money on luxury goods such as art or antiques. Mt. Vernon Avenue satisfies this criterion. This retail category also conforms well to the Avenue's vision of promoting unique retail offerings.

Art Supplies

Alexandria is renowned as an arts-savvy city—due largely to the widespread reputation of the Torpedo Factory Art Center and art galleries in Old Town. More locally, the Del Ray Artisans group has long been driving arts-based development along Mt. Vernon Avenue and the recent success of Art on the Avenue has helped to heighten the neighborhood's reputation among the region's arts community.

While Alexandria has built a notable reputation for the arts, there is no large-scale arts supply store within the City. In fact, there are few throughout the entire region. An art supply store offering personalized expertise and service, as well as hard-to-find supplies, could fill a gap that currently exists in the marketplace. The art supply store currently located in the Torpedo Factory is extremely small, while other retail choices include large chain craft stores that cater to a more generalized customer base or specialty arts stores located elsewhere in the metro area.

The operation of an arts supply stores also dovetails with the community's desire to continue stressing the arts in its development strategy. Arts stores have the potential to draw artists from a region-wide base and can augment the neighborhood's reputation among arts enthusiasts.

Stationery/Custom Cards

Another sector for Main Street-type retailing opportunities is stationery and related goods. At first glance, the stationery retailing industry is not one in which to expect growth among smaller retailers. The mainstay of the industry, greeting cards, are available at most supermarkets and drug stores for as little as 99 cents—not leaving much room in the market for independent competition.

Artwork

Art Supplies

Further, many stationers' products, such as calendars and planners, have been overtaken in the market by electronic goods—available at reduced prices at big-box electronics stores.

However, there are growth areas within the independent retailing end of the stationery market—stores that would be suitable to Mt. Vernon Avenue. One such area is in Custom Cards—greeting cards that are printed specifically for one customer (i.e., wedding invitations and the like).

The Custom Cards market is one that thrives on consumers who are looking for a more unique product than what is available at a mainstream retail outlet—featuring items such as hand-made cards and paper, along with journals and scrapbooks. The overall demand for such products is a small component of the total stationery and card market, but it is a demand that can be satisfied by quality stores in desirable retail locations. These are all items that a small retailer would be able to sell competitively.

The stationery market is also subject to fast-moving consumer trends, such as the popularity in the last few years of "scrapbooking." While these trends alone are not enough to support a store in the long term, smaller retailers are often able to more quickly respond to such trends than are their larger counterparts, and therefore can keep at the cutting edge of consumer preferences.

Independent stationers do not require a lot of retail space, particularly if the retailer does not sell many space-demanding greeting cards. Because of this, one feasible set-up for this type of store (and one that would fit in along Mt. Vernon Avenue) is as an ancillary use to another, existing business.

RESTAURANT DEMAND

The development and success of restaurants along Mt. Vernon Avenue continues to be one of the Avenue's defining characteristics. Del Ray has built a regional reputation for its unique restaurants, and with the market analysis indicating a continuing demand for new restaurant services, considerable opportunity still exists for new food service establishments along the Avenue.

For most of the past decade, American families' expenditures at restaurants have grown annually. Current research by the National Restaurant Association predicts that restaurant expenditures will increase by over four percent during 2004 alone. This high tendency to eat out is particularly true in the Washington region. It is estimated that Washington-area households spend on average one-third more on eating out than do typical American households.

In Del Ray, the greatest opportunity for restaurant growth is in the dinner-oriented casual table-service market segment. The more upscale fine-dining segment is well satisfied by nearby King Street and other high-priced areas, and the "quick service" segment is largely dependent on heavy lunchtime or tourism customer traffic, neither of which Del Ray has in abundance. However, an upscale fine-dining restaurant would be a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

The most successful approach to restaurant development along the Avenue is to attract restaurants that fill a market niche that is currently empty. Given this touchstone, there are several specific restaurant themes that potentially fill a need in the current market structure, as follows:

Diner

Within the casual table service restaurant market, one sector that is not currently represented along the Avenue is the traditional diner. After years of losing market share to fast food and other quick-service restaurants, the popularity of diners is again increasing, as consumers look for traditional value-conscious home-style food.

Diners offer an informal, family-friendly atmosphere, and rarely serve alcohol. One hallmark of diners is that breakfast is often available throughout the day, and the hours of operation frequently extend beyond customary suppertime hours.

Throughout the country, the diner market has seen increased popularity in recent years. This is a theme that, in a traditional urban storefront setting, would work well on Mt. Vernon Avenue, and fit in with the community's desire to maintain a casual, unpretentious, but yet unique retail environment.

Family-oriented

Many of the restaurants located along Mt. Vernon Avenue have been oriented towards mature customers, not necessarily targeting the family dining market. A restaurant that is directly targeted towards families would be a welcome addition to the restaurant mix along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Given the market demand for additional restaurant space, a family-oriented restaurant, with quality table-service food, a varied menu, and reasonably competitive pricing would find ample market support from a Mt. Vernon Avenue location.

Restaurant with Entertainment/Arts

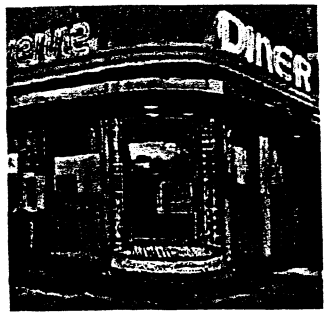
One way for a restaurant to stand out among competing establishments is to offer some type of live entertainment in addition to food service. While a purely entertainment-oriented venue such as a club would not be in character with the Avenue, live music or entertainment in an intimate setting within a restaurant would add a unique customer experience to the Avenue's retail mix.

Entertainment is good for a restaurant's business because it creates a pleasant diversion from the dining experience. Such an offering also increases revenues by encouraging patrons to stay longer and creates a buzz among local residents and other potential customers.

Live music or other entertainment tends to be very effective in higher-average-check restaurants as well as at establishments such as coffee shops. Since performers at such venues are often local artists, such a restaurant could contribute significantly to Mt. Vernon Avenue's arts promotion strategies.

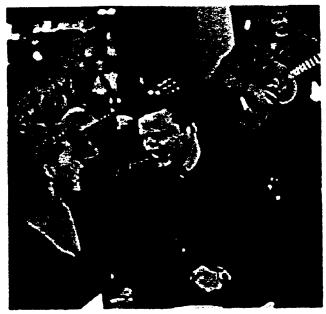
A restaurant needs little in the way of physical improvements to be ready for live music or entertainment, and such activities can easily be added to an existing restaurant. A stage is helpful, and accessories such as acoustic ceiling or wall tiles help to improve sound quality. Amplification technology has improved to the point where speakers are small and unobtrusive, and can be easily aimed at specific parts of the restaurant. Most performers bring their own equipment, so that is typically not within the restaurateur's concern.

Live entertainment provides people with an additional reason to come to a particular area. Mt. Vernon Avenue could benefit from an establishment offering entertainment—whether it is a new establishment altogether or a re-theming of an existing restaurant. The *Plan* recommendations are designed to build on the existing market, promote independent retail businesses, and foster opportunities for continued market growth.



Diner

Family-oriented



Entertainment/Arts

Art Supply Store

Public Art Program

Public Art Sculpture

Example of Artists' Loft Building, Artspace Projects Inc.

3.3 Market Strategy and Recommendations

New Retail Business Attraction

- Focus retail business attraction on sectors that have the greatest potential to generate new sales along Mt. Vernon Avenue, and at the same time reflect the community's expressed preference for a vibrant and unique main street atmosphere. These include the following:

  Meat, seafood or gourmet food stores

  Chocolatier or confectionary

  Housewares and home furnishings stores

  Antiques and artwork stores

  Art supply stores

  Stationery/custom card stores

New Restaurants

- Focus restaurant attraction on types of food service that can fill a market niche that is currently empty. There are several specific restaurant themes that potentially fill a need in the current market structure, as follows:

  Diner

  Family-oriented restaurant

  Restaurant with entertainment/arts

Business Organization Approach

- Enhance and strengthen the Potomac West Business Association as an organization to develop and implement marketing, promotions, and retail management district initiatives

  Consider use of a business improvement district (BID) as discussed in Section 3.5 to provide continuing funding for marketing and business related activities

Arts Promotion

- Promote the arts in tandem with promoting other retail activity along the Avenue. This would include various elements of arts promotion (art galleries, public art, etc.) would still generate excitement for the Avenue and is a goal that is reachable for the neighborhood

3.4 Arts Promotion Strategy

The arts comprise a fundamental component to both the Avenue's retail marketing strategy and community development strategy. A strong arts promotion strategy will not only encourage the arts to flourish along Mt. Vernon Avenue, but it will also contribute to the vitality of the Avenue in general.

An arts promotion strategy that includes the development of a major anchor project would generate the most excitement for Mt. Vernon Avenue, but is likely not practicable given the land and space constraints in the neighborhood. A non-anchor strategy that incorporates various elements of arts promotion (art galleries, public art, etc.) would still generate excitement for the Avenue and is a goal that is reachable for the neighborhood. Regardless of the anchor strategy however, other components of the arts promotion strategy such as encouraging public art or pursuing an art supply retail store or education center, should be vigorously pursued.

Promoting the arts in tandem with promoting other retail activity along the Avenue will help to ensure that this unique component of Mt. Vernon Avenue's character will remain a significant feature of the area.

An essential component of the planning process for Mt. Vernon Avenue involves promoting the arts. The arts have consistently played an important role in Mt. Vernon Avenue's growth into the vibrant Main Street atmosphere that it is today. From the work of the Del Ray Artisans organization to the success of Art on the Avenue, arts and the Avenue have gone hand-in-hand. This *Plan* places a high priority on developing and maintaining the arts as a prominent feature of Mt. Vernon Avenue's retail and cultural offerings.

This section addresses the specifics of an arts-based marketing strategy for Mt. Vernon Avenue—an effort intended to run concurrently with other planning and business-related efforts.

An arts promotion strategy for Mt. Vernon Avenue could follow one or more of the following routes:

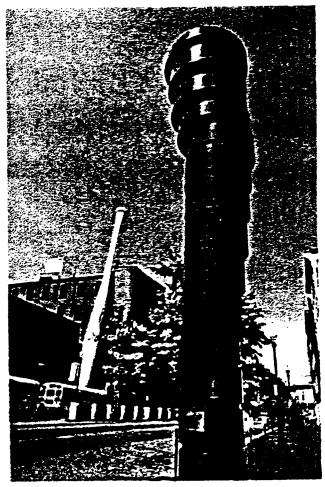
- **Option 1—Anchor Strategy**
  Having an "anchor" facility, such as a large artists' studio development as the focal point of the strategy.

- **Option 2—Non-anchor Strategy**
  Conducting the arts promotion strategy without an anchor development, using artists' studios scattered throughout the Avenue, as well as other means of arts promotion.

- **Option 3—Bolstering Art by Other Means**
  Including other elements in the arts promotion strategy besides artists' studios, such as increased arts festivals, promoting public art displays, and attracting an art supply store or an art education center.

These three options are presented in detail below:

Example of Artists' Loft Building, Artspace Projects Inc.



Themed Public Art Sculptures

Loft Building Concept Sketch, Artspace Projects Inc.

Option 1—Anchor Strategy

An anchor facility, when referring to an arts promotion strategy, is a single facility that serves as the center of an area's arts and cultural scene and attracts a substantial number of customers to the neighborhood. For example, the Torpedo Factory Art Center serves as Old Town's arts anchor and central point of attraction related to the arts in Old Town.

Along Mt. Vernon Avenue, an arts anchor would be smaller than the Torpedo Factory, but would likely have a similar mission. Such a facility would be composed of artists' studios and other facilities such as education and/or gallery space.

FINDING A LOCATION FOR THE ANCHOR

An arts and cultural anchor appropriate for Mt. Vernon Avenue would likely contain between 5,000 and 15,000 square feet of gross building space—this would be large enough to allow at least a dozen separate studios. A larger facility could also permit the inclusion of classroom space or other artists' space as demanded by the market.

However, no discussion concerning a project of this size along Mt. Vernon Avenue can be complete without a consideration of where such a facility would be located. Most likely, such a project would locate in an existing building, if one should become available. This is a more economically feasible option than building a new facility altogether. However, this brings about certain challenges:

- **Locating a Site** There are few buildings along Mt. Vernon Avenue that are suitable for redevelopment into an arts anchor. From a physical standpoint, the building currently housing the Alexandria Department of Human Services at 2525 Mt. Vernon Avenue would be an acceptable location should space within the building become commercially available (the City's lease runs through 2009 for its space in the building). Other potentially suitable sites for an anchor include the existing retail strip on the 2700 block (opposite the Mt. Vernon Community School) and the current Verizon building at 301 E. Alexandria Avenue. Another alternative would be the construction of the anchor as part of the redevelopment of the properties known as the Triangle Site on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue north of Commonwealth Avenue.

- **Owner Participation** If an arts anchor facility were to be developed along Mt. Vernon Avenue, it would probably be on privately owned land. Thus, such a project would not occur without the participation and enthusiasm of the property owner(s). Art studio leases tend to be somewhat trickier than standard commercial leasing arrangements because artists' studio developments are often subsidized to some extent by grants, foundations, or government agencies.

Given these challenges, the success of such a project would hinge upon having a property owner who is eager to enter into an artists' studio venture, and would also depend on having a strong management organization that is able to pull together and work with various stakeholders in the process.

DECIDING ON THE TYPE OF STUDIO

Should an arts anchor be created along Mt. Vernon Avenue, its primary function would likely be a location for artists' studios. But within artists' studio developments, there can be substantial differences in what a studio contains. The two most common types are Standard and Live/Work studios. These are described following:

- **Standard Artists Studio**
  Similar to the Torpedo Factory in Old Town, standard artists' studio buildings contain individual studios meant for retail sales of visual art. The buildings have a single management entity that leases studios to either individual artists or to multiple artists who would then share the studio. Studios range from 250 square feet to 1,000 square feet, depending on the numbers of lessees and/or the types of artwork being sold.

  Physical Needs Art studios can be retrofitted into a wide range of buildings. The studios themselves are not demanding from a physical needs standpoint—no more than the bare minimum is generally required for utilities unless specialized equipment is being installed such as kilns or equipment that requires gas. Open floor plans tend to work well with studios because they let in more light, and also facilitate the construction of modular walls to separate individual studios.

- **Live/Work Artists Studio**
  The Live/Work Studio is similar in execution to the Standard Artists Studio as described above, however the artists live in the building in addition to creating and selling artwork. The living space is either provided separate from the studio itself, or as a combined unit. Because of the living space component, live/work studios tend to require a larger building than do standard artists' studio projects.

  Physical Needs Live/Work studio developments require more extensive retrofitting work when a building is being converted from another use. The inclusion of residential units necessitates more extensive utilities, and the overall floor plan needs to be more elaborate in order to accommodate living spaces.

DECIDING ON THE BEST ANCHOR

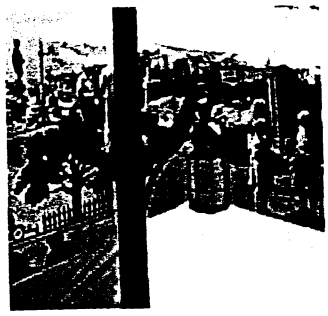
Given the limited availability of suitable building space or available buildable land, a Standard Studio would be a more feasible option on Mt. Vernon Avenue than a Live/Work Studio arrangement. Further, new construction would require higher start-up costs than would a rehabilitation project on an existing building—making a rehab project more fiscally manageable. A Standard Studio created from an existing building would be the most suitable anchor development strategy given current market conditions.

If the challenges of finding a suitable space are overcome, an artists' studio development would serve to heighten the Avenue's arts environment and bring additional activity and liveliness to the area in a manner consistent with the community's vision to promote arts-based development strategies.

DETERMINING HOW TO FINANCE

To operate in a market-based economy, particularly in an area with high real estate values such as Mt. Vernon Avenue, artists' studio developments tend to receive considerable support from external sources such as from grants or foundations. In addition, many studio projects receive some manner of subsidy from municipal or state governments. Subsidies could entail in-kind contributions, such as below-market rent on a municipally owned building, or could include other kinds of operating assistance or tax credits.

It is in the long-term interest of the Mt. Vernon Avenue neighborhood to promote a plan that relies as little as possible on continuing operating subsidies for any commercial entity on the Avenue. The most pragmatic way to achieve such a goal is to find a private-sector or non-profit partner for the construction and operation of the studios. Such an



Outdoor Market / Festival Venue

An anchor draws other investment

approach is often used by municipalities seeking to create a studio-type project. For example, an artists' studio project currently underway in Mt. Rainier, Md.—the "Gateway Arts District"—is using a private management company to build and operate an artists' loft development. The project is also assisted by state and local government financing.

An arrangement similar to that being used in the Gateway Arts District would likely be suitable for an artists' studio project along Mt. Vernon Avenue, if such a development were to occur.

Storefront Galleries

Option 2—Non-anchor Strategy

As detailed above, a major obstacle to achieving an artists' studio development along Mt. Vernon Avenue is the challenge of finding a suitable building or appropriate buildable lot. There is a shortage of both land and building resources along the Avenue, meaning that an arts-based marketing strategy may have to take place without the benefit of an anchor development such as a stand-alone studio building.

A more viable approach would be for the Mt. Vernon Avenue community to plan for a first-rate arts promotion strategy that is not wholly dependent on opening an anchor development such as an artists' studio building.

ATTRACTING ARTISTS TO RETAIL STORES

The first step in this strategy is to attract artists themselves to set up galleries along Mt. Vernon Avenue. There are three main components to such a strategy:

- **Coordination with City Agencies** City agencies involved in retail promotion, such as the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP), should actively market Mt. Vernon Avenue as an arts corridor to interested and relevant retailers. This would best be accomplished in partnership with the local arts community. The Avenue has the advantage of being in a known arts-appreciative location (due in large part to the success of Art on the Avenue), but offers retailers a substantial savings in rent from a location such as one in Old Town. Active marketing of the Avenue as an area with great potential from an arts retailing perspective will encourage artists to consider a Mt. Vernon Avenue location.
- **Differentiate Del Ray from Old Town** If Mt. Vernon Avenue in Del Ray is to be marketed as an arts location, it is important that that marketing effort not compete for business with other parts of Alexandria, notably Old Town, which already has an established arts community. Therefore, it is important for Mt. Vernon Avenue to market itself as being different from Old Town.

  One way to be different is to be more affordable—both in terms of the rent that artists pay and also in terms of the cost of their merchandise. This would seemingly carve out a niche for Mt. Vernon Avenue as a hub for relatively affordable artwork. But if this strategy is to be pursued, there would emerge the question of whether "affordable" artists can pay market rents in Del Ray.

  Differentiating based on price necessitates having affordable spaces for artists to rent. This is difficult to achieve because the cost of rent—while less costly than Old Town—could still be out of reach for many artists. One possible solution is to seek a cooperative arrangement where a group of artists or an artists' association is the lead tenant, and individuals would either sublease portions of the given store, or operate in a format where various artists' goods are sold in the same store. This effectively pools together resources and makes a Mt. Vernon Avenue location that is realistic for emerging artists.

- **Artwork Diversity**
  Given the community's desire to be unique and different, one way to build on that goal within the context of arts-based marketing is to attempt to offer types of artwork different than what is available elsewhere in the City or region. For example, one or two quality art galleries with specializations such as textile arts, sculpture, etc. would be helpful in making Mt. Vernon Avenue a unique destination and would further the goal of differentiating the area from other arts-intensive districts.

The attraction of artists' studios or galleries would be a capstone goal in any Mt. Vernon Avenue arts promotion strategy. But there are other means as well to fortify the position of the arts in the Avenue's overall plan; some of these means are detailed in the following section.

Option 3—Bolstering Art by Other Means

A comprehensive arts promotion strategy would include items other than the "big-ticket" goals of establishing art galleries or studios. Other means are equally important to developing a broad-based arts strategy for Mt. Vernon Avenue—regardless of whether an anchor strategy or non-anchor strategy is pursued. These include the following:

ARTS-RELATED FESTIVALS AND PROMOTIONS

The Mt. Vernon Avenue area has enjoyed tremendous success with its annual Art on the Avenue festival. The festival, which brings together artists and craftsmen from throughout the region, draws thousands of visitors each year and has been instrumental in raising awareness of the Mt. Vernon Avenue retail corridor.

If arts promotion is to be a major thrust of a Mt. Vernon Avenue marketing strategy, the area should host more events such as Art on the Avenue. In addition to the general benefits to the Avenue's businesses, such events enable area artists to gain valuable exposure to potential customers.

An arts-related festival strategy could be undertaken using the following general approach:

- **Events should reflect the diversity of Mt. Vernon Avenue.** The Avenue and its surrounding neighborhoods are diverse, not just in an ethnic sense, but also among types of businesses, ages of residents, etc. By hosting festivals throughout the year, continued interest can be maintained by offering activities that appeal to a variety of interests and ages, but all centering on the arts.

- **Coordinate events with other Alexandria neighborhoods.**
  The concept of increasing the number and visibility of community events is not unique to the Mt. Vernon Avenue area—other neighborhoods in the City have similar goals. These goals, however, need not be exclusive of each other; there is ample opportunity to coordinate events with nearby neighborhoods such as Old Town or Arlandria, or other City neighborhoods.

- **Don't overdo it.** Community events are excellent ways to generate interest in the Mt. Vernon Avenue business district, but care should be taken to avoid hosting too many events. Events that occur too often tend to dilute the effectiveness of individual ventures and can generate opposition from nearby residential areas due to increased numbers of visitors and parking demand. During the spring-to-fall season when the weather is conducive to outdoor festivals, such events should not be held more often than once every two months. This will

Street Festival Tents

Arts Festival on the Avenue

Public Art incorporated into sidewalk paving creates interest and ornamentation.

maintain a level of excitement for each of the events, but will not overwhelm the Del Ray residential community with visitors.

- **Events should be managed by one individual.** An events strategy for Mt. Vernon Avenue will be most effective if it is managed by one designated individual. Should a "Business Improvement District" be created (in coordination with other programmatic and promotional activities) to fund improvements along the Avenue, funding for a designated individual could be secured through the revenue thereby collected. In the absence of funding for a full-time position, such an individual would most likely operate on a volunteer basis.

OTHER PROMOTIONAL GOALS

Besides organized events, there are other goals that should be pursued regardless of the community's ability to recruit artists or to hold festivals. These goals reinforce the Avenue's commitment to the arts and would go a long way to raising awareness of the arts throughout the City.

- **Public Art** A strategy that incorporates provisions for public art displays to be integrated into Mt. Vernon Avenue's urban design will be an important element to the overall arts strategy for the Avenue. This should be done in close collaboration with one or more local arts groups (i.e., Del Ray Artisans and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts). Public art displays should feature distinctive works of art by artists throughout the region on a rotating basis (with displays rotating annually or biannually). Art would initially be destined for public places along the Avenue, but should also come to include private property whose owners would like to participate in the public arts strategy.

- **Art Supply Store** As mentioned previously in the Retail Strategy section of this report, an art supply store is one of the proposed retail sectors to target for recruitment along the Avenue. Such a store would heighten the Avenue's reputation as an arts district and would attract artists and art enthusiasts from a wide area.

- **Art Education Center** Another type of potential arts-related tenant is that of an art education center—either a local branch of an established institution (i.e., Northern Virginia Community College or The Art League) or a separate independent facility. An art education center can rent space in a building that is not necessarily well suited to retail stores (lower-visibility space such as second- story space), and would be a good ancillary tenant for a building that is already rented to arts-related establishments (such as art galleries, or supply store).

3.5 Business Improvement District Approach

The Mt. Vernon Avenue community has made significant accomplishments in marketing and promotion through a dedicated group of volunteers. In endeavors of organizing events, marketing the Avenue, and making community improvements, PWBA (and other groups such as Del Ray Artisans) have significantly contributed to the improvement of Mt. Vernon Avenue's business climate.

Such efforts should continue, however, a permanent approach needs to be established to financially ensure a consistent level of effort will continue year after year. This structure could take one of three forms:

- Through a membership organization and paid by membership dues.[1]
- Operated directly by the City of Alexandria or a city agency.[2]
- Funded through a Business Improvement District.

Of these options, the Business Improvement District (BID) would best suit the needs of Mt. Vernon Avenue by giving the business community ownership of the organization. A BID (also called a "Special District") can fund improvements and/or marketing efforts though an additional levy on real estate assessments within a defined district. A detailed discussion of BIDs follows.

Characteristics of a Business Improvement District

A BID is an entity established to create a steady funding source for community-oriented services that are not typically provided by City government, such as marketing and promotions, landscaping, beautification, sidewalk improvements, parking resources, and other services that provide a direct benefit to properties in a given area. Funding for these services is made possible because properties within the BID incur an additional levy on top of the properties' standard real estate tax rate. This additional payment is dedicated to fund improvements within the District and thereby provide a reliable funding stream for special services.

Additional Tax Levy

The per-parcel amount of this additional levy would vary depending upon each property's valuation and the size of the district that is established. Tax levies on individual properties would be significantly lower if the BID boundary includes the length of the commercial corridor (1500-2900 blocks) as opposed to the smaller Historic Core (1900-2400 blocks), by virtue of the larger area's bigger tax

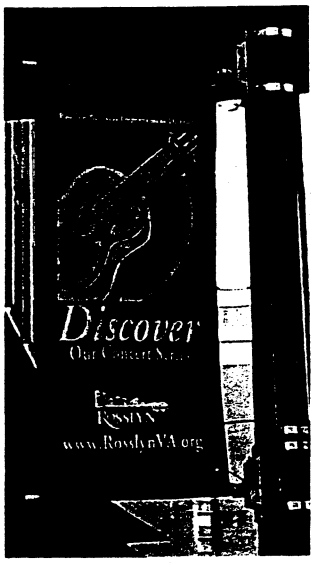
1. PWBA currently operates as a membership organization; however the revenues generated are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to fund enhanced marketing and promotions activities.

2. A prior effort by the City of Alexandria with the funding of the Potomac West Alliance was not found to be the best approach to meet the needs of the community.

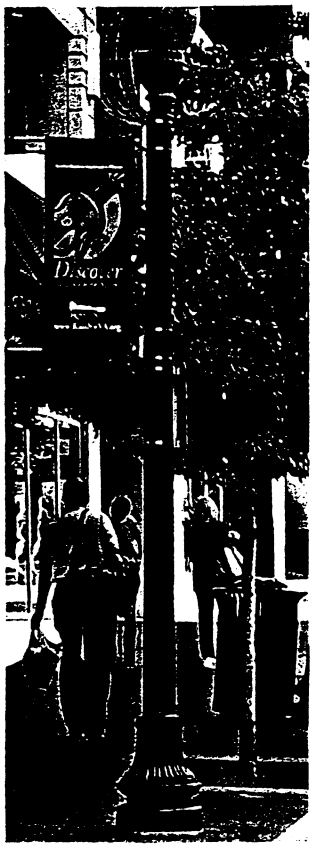
Annual BID Budget	Additional Tax Levy (¢ per $100 of Assessed Value)		Additional Tax Levy on Properties with $400,000 Value		Additional Tax Levy on Properties with $600,000 value	
	Total Area	Historic Core	Total Area	Historic Core	Total Area	Historic Core
$35,000	5.37¢	10.91¢	$215	$436	$322	$654
$40,000	6.14¢	12.47¢	$246	$499	$369	$748
$45,000	6.91¢	14.02¢	$276	$561	$415	$841
$50,000	7.68¢	15.58¢	$307	$623	$461	$935
$55,000	8.45¢	17.14¢	$338	$686	$507	$1,028
$60,000	9.21¢	18.70¢	$369	$748	$553	$1,122
$65,000	9.98¢	20.26¢	$399	$810	$599	$1,215
$70,000	10.75¢	21.82¢	$430	$873	$645	$1,309
$75,000	11.52¢	23.37¢	$461	$935	$691	$1,402
$80,000	12.28¢	24.93¢	$491	$997	$737	$1,496

Figure 3.5 Estimate of Additional BID Property Tax Payments

Note: Calculations based upon City of Alexandria property tax assessments, Jan. 2004.



BID Banner in Rosslyn, VA.



base. Should the Mt. Vernon Avenue BID operate on a budget of $50,000 per year, the additional tax levy on a $400,000 property would be $623 if the District's boundary were limited to the Historic Core, but would be $307 if the boundary includes the total Mt. Vernon Avenue area. See Figure 3.5 for an estimate potential revenue needs for the two district options based on possible budget amounts.

A BID along Mt. Vernon Avenue would yield benefits to commercial property owners throughout the length of the commercial corridor—not just limited to properties located within the historic core. Therefore, due to the wide range of benefits, and the fact that individual properties' BID levies would be much less if the BID has a larger boundary, it is more practicable for a Mt. Vernon Avenue BID to include the total area from Nelson Avenue northward to Commonwealth Avenue. In Virginia, a city may enact a Service District by ordinance, with the boundaries and purpose of the district specifically outlined as part of the ordinance. The tax rate would be established on an annual basis based on a defined work program for the use of the funds.

Examples of BIDs in Virginia

BIDs have been used widely in Virginia as part of business vitalization efforts for smaller "Main Street" communities, as well as in defined business districts in larger cities. Many of these districts are analogous in size, scale and type of business to the Mt. Vernon Del Ray area. Such districts can be found in:

RICHMOND serves and promotes the downtown area and coordinates new real estate development

ROANOKE two separate BIDs; a downtown BID and a commercial corridor BID that seek to attract and retain businesses, plan and organize events, and fund or undertake other beautification efforts

NORFOLK markets downtown area, and funds uniformed staff to assist visitors, and funds maintenance workers to keep public areas clean

STAUNTON enhances economic development in downtown through promotions, implements design standards and recruits businesses

WINCHESTER focuses on promotion, and increased maintenance activities in the downtown area

For the most part, the purpose of these districts is to make streetscape improvements and ensure maintenance of public spaces, undertake marketing and promotion activities, and recruit new businesses. They are generally structured as 501(c)(6) non-profit organizations.

Although BIDs have been used for many years in other parts of Virginia and in other states, they are still relatively new in Northern Virginia. The first BID in Northern Virginia was formed in 2003 to service the Rosslyn neighborhood of Arlington County, and a second BID was recently created by the City of Fairfax for the Lee Highway commercial corridor.

The functions of a Mt. Vernon Avenue BID could include enhanced marketing and promotions, business recruitment and retention, oversight of a shared parking program and other similar activities.

Land Use

4.0

4.1 Vision

Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vibrant and welcoming Main Street that reflects the surrounding neighborhoods' diversity, integrity and small town charm. The Avenue is comprised of enthusiastic, successful and responsible community partners. We offer an eclectic and friendly living, working and shopping environment for Alexandrians and visitors alike.

4.2 Guiding Principles

Protect and enhance Mt. Vernon Avenue as a vibrant commercial corridor

- Market the Avenue locally and regionally
- Focus commercial uses in the Historic Core between Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues
- Preserve the small town, Main Street character

Encourage and support mixed-use development

- Emphasize retail uses on the ground floor
- Promote new residential on upper floors
- Create new affordable housing opportunities

Celebrate "Town of Potomac Historic District"

- Protect and enhance the corridor's visual appearance through streetscape and façade improvements
- Define and enhance the unique community identity through interpretive graphics program

Preserve existing historic scale and character

- Allow for appropriate infill development and redevelop incompatible buildings
- Adopt standards and guidelines to ensure quality development that reflects the scale of existing historic structures

Preserve and protect existing residential areas

- Protect nearby residences from impacts associated with commercial activity
- Ensure new development is compatible with neighboring residential uses.
- Protect existing affordable housing stock

Enhance public spaces

- Improve existing green space, parks and urban trails
- Promote the use of gathering spaces such as a Town Square

4.3 Land Use Recommendations

The *Plan* recommendations for land use are designed to promote and reinforce a consistent, vibrant and pedestrian-oriented retail environment that supports living, working, and playing on Mt. Vernon Avenue, while protecting the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Strategies are recommended that apply to the entire length of the Avenue, as well as specific strategies for the three focus areas. Recommendations for the specific opportunity sites identified during the planning process are also included for each focus area.

PROMOTE APPROPRIATE INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Ensure that new development is consistent with the neighborhood's existing character through the use of Building Form Design Guidelines.

Allow modest increases in allowable floor area along Mt. Vernon Avenue, consistent with the Building Form Design Guidelines, that achieve the following performance criteria:

- Retains historic buildings;
- Maintains historic character and scale;
- Provides open space, where feasible and desirable; and,
- Protects adjacent residential neighborhoods.

To assure that new development is in keeping with the existing neighborhood character, new zoning provisions are recommended that incorporate elements of Building Form Design Guidelines. In addition to controlling setbacks and heights, Building Form Design Guidelines establish a preferred pattern of development along the street and a virtual "envelope" to define the desired form of new buildings. The specific recommendations for the Building Form Design Guidelines are outlined in Section 6.3 of this *Plan*.

PROTECT RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

To reduce the potential for negative impacts on adjacent residences, the *Plan* recommends:

- *"Stepping" the height of buildings to minimize impact on adjacent residential properties*

  This approach would physically concentrate building density on the portion of the property that adjoins the Avenue making the commercial activity oriented toward the street, and away from homes that border the commercial properties. See Section 6.3 for specific recommendations.

- *Providing a buffer to reduce the visual impact on the neighborhood*

  Special treatments such as fences, screening and plantings should be used for buffering residences from the retail areas. In addition all exterior lighting and service facilities should be designed to mitigate the lighting and noise impacts on the adjacent residential properties. See Section 6.3 for specific recommendations.

ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN STREETSCAPE

The *Plan* seeks to build upon the existing pedestrian-orientation of the Avenue with specific recommendations to improve pedestrian safety, including new or improved crosswalks and pedestrian-scale lighting; provide streetscape improvements, including benches to promote walking along the Avenue; strengthen connections between the Braddock Road Metro Station and the Avenue by working collaboratively with the Alexandria Schools to identify a foot path that is safe for pedestrians and school children; enhance public transportation with bus shelters, benches, and schedules and improved connections between the Avenue and the City of Alexandria; and

ensure that new and infill development improves the pedestrian environment by locating parking behind buildings, or underground where feasible, and provide public benefits such as public art, landscaping and other improvements which enhance the pedestrian environment, create vibrancy, and reinforce the unique character of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Additional recommendations include:

- Providing improved pedestrian lighting on the sidewalk;
- Implementing a coordinated approach to public signage;
- Enhancing the visual appearance of service and auto-related uses by improving individual building facades and business signage to enhance the pedestrian and visual quality of the Avenue; and,
- Completing the sidewalk and/or landscaping improvements, especially between the inside edge of the existing sidewalk and the face of the buildings.

Improvements to the northern area (north of Commonwealth Avenue to W. Glebe Road) provide the opportunity to create stronger visual and physical connection between the Arlandria neighborhood to the north and the Del Ray neighborhood to the south. All public streetscape improvements and tree planting should extend in this northern area. In addition, private investment in properties and buildings is encouraged to improve the appearance of the Avenue.

PROVIDE VISUAL OPEN SPACE

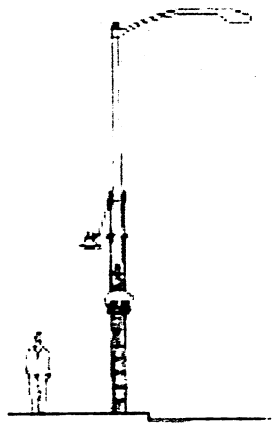
The pattern of open space located along Mt. Vernon Avenue that is visually accessible to pedestrians varies along the length of the Avenue. As new construction occurs, maintaining the visible open spaces is important in order to maintain the character of the Avenue. In many cases, the existing visual open space consists of the lawn of a residential building or simply a small courtyard. These spaces are character defining elements of the street. For commercially developed properties, such open space may be nonexistent or may consist of planters with landscaping.

In the future, when new contruction is proposed, publicly visible open space is desirable in a consolidated manner for the enjoyment of the future user and for visual and environmental benefits that accrue to the broader community. On individual parcels it may not be possible to provide publicly visible open space. In those cases, streetscape and/or other public benefits should be provided. In cases of construction on more than one parcel or where commercial uses are proposed, a fountain, plaza or similar gathering space may be considered. Although not green, this type of open space is appropriate in urban, pedestrian-oriented Main Street environments like Mt. Vernon Avenue and provides other important respite/recreational opportunities. See Section 4.6 Land Use Controls for additional details.

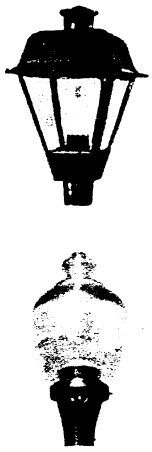
ENCOURAGE A MIX OF USES

A key approach to the enhancement of Mt. Vernon Avenue as a vibrant commercial "Main Street" is to encourage and maintain a mix of land uses, including retail, residential, office and service uses. The residential and office uses help to provide a 16 hour/7 day level of activity desirable for a successful retail environment.

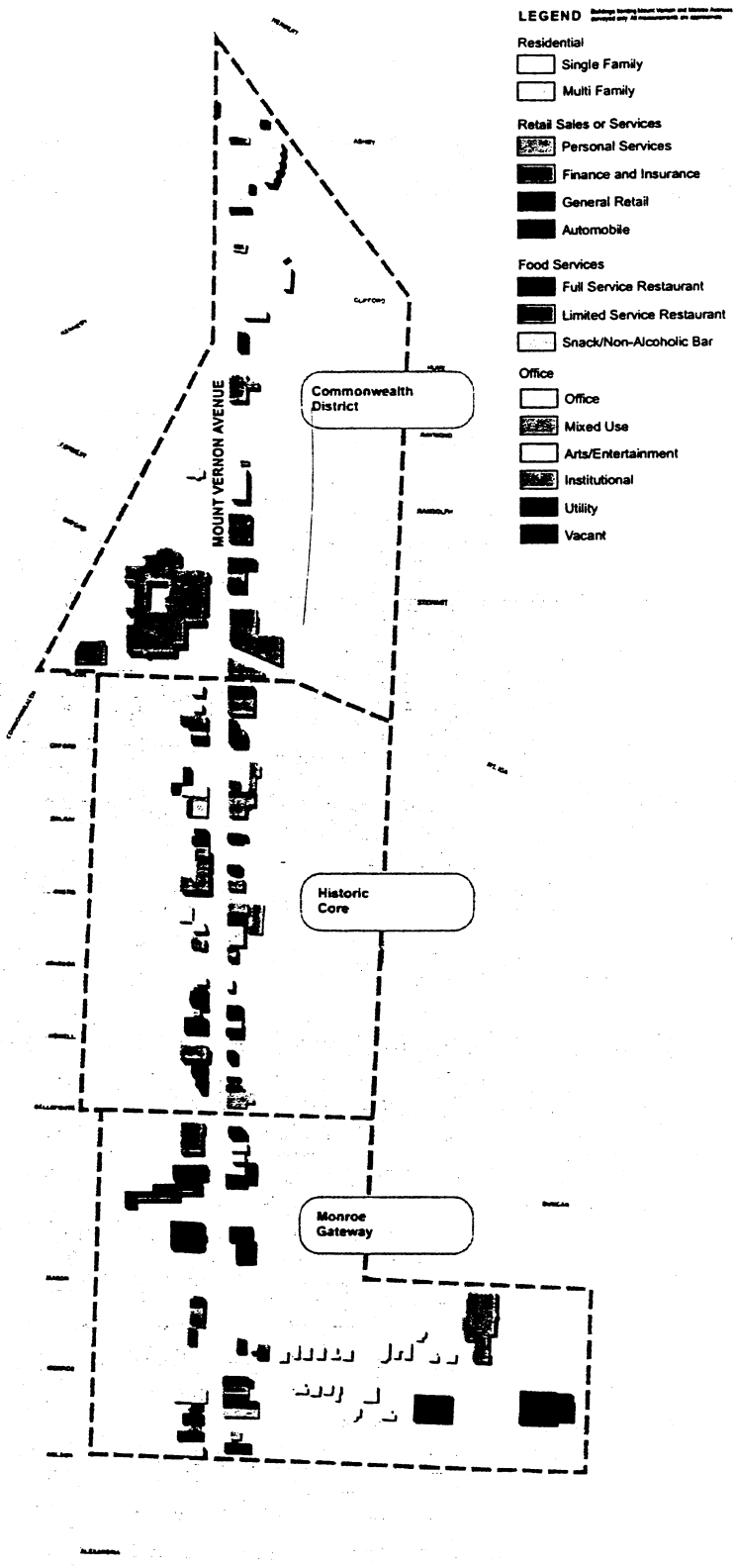
The overall concept for the mix of uses is to encourage new multi-family residential and 2nd floor office in the corridor to support the retail activity, and to concentrate the retail activity on the ground floor in key locations. As previously discussed in the market analysis, the Avenue has limited projected demand for additional retail uses, thus it is critical to concentrate retail uses to benefit from the synergy created by continuous commercial street frontage.



Modified Cobrahead Light Pole



Examples of pedestrian lighting heads.



Land Use with Focus Areas

Commonwealth District

The Commonwealth District is appropriate for primarily residential, office, and institutional uses, with modest retail – a strategy that promotes and strengthens the concentration of commercial activity in key locations, or nodes, such as the Historic Core. The success of traditional Main Street retail districts depends on the ability for customers to shop both sides of the street. That pattern does not exist in this area because of the predominantly residential and institutional uses, such as the community school and the park, developed along the west side of the Avenue. Given the existing development pattern, new residential, rather than retail, uses are highly appropriate in this area and will provide new affordable housing opportunities, as well as strengthen the commercial core to the south.

ENCOURAGE A MIX OF USES

- Encourage residential and office uses, with limited retail, in a building form that is compatible in scale with adjacent uses and protects adjacent residences.
- Encourage a mix of residential units and provide affordable housing; a varied housing stock enhances the housing choices for residents in the neighborhood and citywide.

PROMOTE COORDINATED REDEVELOPMENT

One of the key sites in the Commonwealth District is the triangular-shaped assemblage of property north of Commonwealth Avenue on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue. This "Triangle Site" consists of several parcels that are currently occupied by two restaurants and two taxicab companies and a few vacant parcels. The combination of these parcels creates an approximately 2.0 acre site. (See Figure 4.1 highlighting the parcels.) Due to its grade change, with access opportunity from Commonwealth Avenue, as well as the site's visibility, this assemblage of property offers a significant opportunity for redevelopment that complements the entire district, and strengthens the Avenue as a whole.

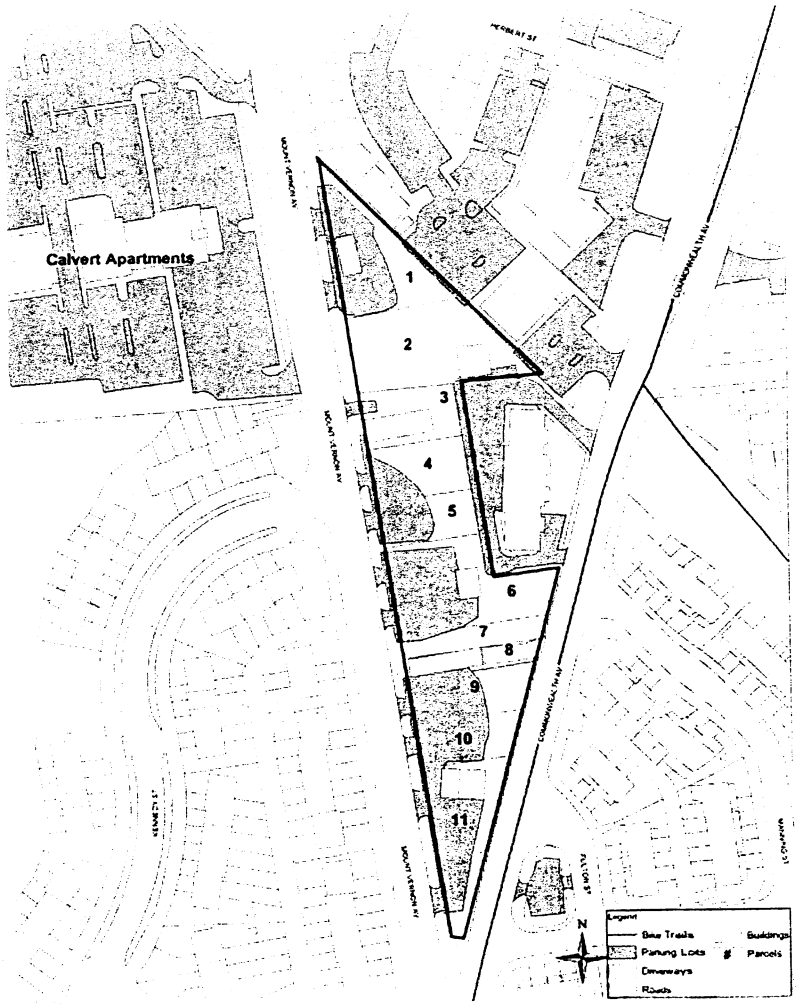


Figure 4.1 Triangle Site Parcels

The *Plan* recommends the coordinated redevelopment of these parcels, with potential FAR increases from .75 to 1.25. Achieving this density requires a development plan that meets or exceeds the following goals:

- Redevelopment is undertaken as a single unified development, with a site design that addresses the unique topography of the sites and the frontage on both Commonwealth Avenue and Mt. Vernon Avenue;
- Building height is limited to three stories along Mt. Vernon Avenue, stepping down to meet the residential scale of buildings along Commonwealth Avenue;
- Publicly-visible usable open space is provided on-site;
- Buildings complement existing character of Mt. Vernon Avenue and are of high architectural design and quality of materials;
- Underground structured parking is provided to meet the requirements of the development, with access from Commonwealth Avenue;
- On-site affordable housing units are interspersed in the development; and,
- Consistent streetscape improvements along both Mt. Vernon and Commonwealth Avenue frontages are provided.

Figure 4.2 illustrates one concept for a consolidated redevelopment of these underdeveloped parcels. The sketch illustrates a mixed-use concept that would consist of multifamily residential units, with some supporting retail on the first floor, and usable public open space at the intersection.

Figure 4.2 Triangle Site Development Concept Sketch

IMPROVE STREETSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

A high-quality streetscape in the Commonwealth District area should be consistent with those in the Historic Core. The streetscape on both sides of the Avenue, south of Commonwealth Avenue, should be improved by integrating healthy street trees where there is currently deteriorating vegetation. Pedestrian-scale lighting, as well as street furnishings such as benches and waste receptacles should reflect an upgraded, attractive and safe pedestrian environment.

Areas in the northern section of the Commonwealth District should receive streetscape improvements, and new development projects should uphold the aesthetic integrity of the community. Specifically, when the "Triangle Site" is redeveloped, the development should implement the streetscape improvements on the adjacent portions of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue.

Pedestrian improvements should also be incorporated at the intersection of Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues. These improvements should include pedestrian count-down signals, special paving in the crosswalks and bulb-outs where feasible to minimize crossing distance.

A key open space element for the Avenue is the Colasanto Park. (See Figure 4.3) This space provides a number of neighborhood recreation uses including a playground, athletic fields, basketball courts, a swimming pool and the location for the annual Christmas

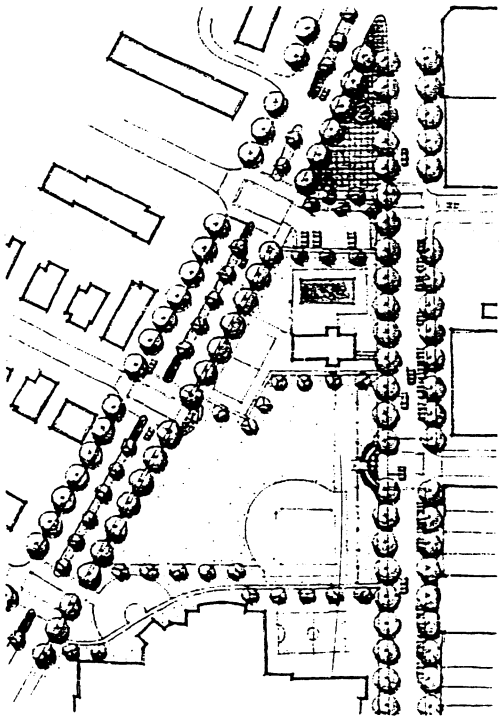


Figure 4.3 Colasanto Park Concept Sketch

tree display. While not in the center of the Avenue's activity, this site should be improved as a key community asset. Potential improvements include the following:

- Provide attractive seating areas at the entrances to the park;
- Improve or remove the existing fencing around the park in areas where it has become visually outdated or deteriorated in condition;
- Connect the park to Mt. Vernon Avenue through signage and improved sidewalks that can accommodate strollers, wheelchairs, etc.; and,
- Create an upgraded gathering area at the north end of the park incorporating the Christmas tree display area, using landscape elements and public art that showcase the area's established art community.

SunTrust Lot

2707-2711 Mt. Vernon Avenue

Opportunity Sites

- **Triangle Site (Yellow/Diamond Cab and Adjacent Sites). 3015-3111 Mt. Vernon Ave.**

  As previously discussed, the vision for these properties is a coordinated redevelopment plan for multifamily residential uses or office with modest ground floor retail. Incorporation of an arts anchor or artist live/work space as recommended in the Arts Promotion Strategy Section 3.4 could also be considered as part of the redevelopment of the site.

- **SunTrust Lot. 2809 Mt. Vernon Ave.**

  This is a large underutilized site near the corner of Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues, developed with a bank/office building oriented to the northwest corner of the lot, with surface parking areas to the side and rear. The property is constrained by sanitary sewer and stormwater lines that bisect the site under the existing parking lot and by a 10 foot wide sewer easement located along the frontages of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Hume Avenue. In the short term, the underutilized parking lot is targeted as a possible shared parking lot. Mixed-use development, with underground or structured parking, is an appropriate future reuse of the site. Any redevelopment should respect the scale of the adjacent residences.

- **Lots at southeast corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Raymond Avenue. 2707-2711 Mt. Vernon Ave**

  These two lots are currently vacant and abut a property to the south that is developed with a series of one and two story structures. A coordinated development of all three properties is recommended, with residential and/or live/work units. Parking should be provided on-site either below grade or behind the buildings.

Historic Core

ENCOURAGE STREET-LEVEL RETAIL

Limit office and residential uses to the floors above the ground floor of buildings located within the Historic Core.

The Avenue will be more vibrant and retail uses will be more successful by focusing ground floor retail and personal service uses in this area.

Limit frontage of new personal service and financial uses along the Avenue to a maximum storefront width of 30 feet

A variety of retail uses and a diverse pattern of storefronts on each block creates interesting looking places, resulting in a vibrant street-level pedestrian environment.

Vibrant retail streets are typically characterized by a continuous frontage of active uses at the street level. Such uses may include restaurants, shops and services, and the Historic Core of Mt. Vernon Avenue generally conforms to this pattern. In order to maintain the retail vibrancy of this area, ground floor retail activity must be emphasized in future development within the Historic Core.

PRESERVE HISTORIC CHARACTER

Allow appropriate infill development that respects the scale of existing historic structures

The Historic Core is part of the Town of Potomac Historic District, and includes a number of contributing historic buildings (see Figure 4.4 on the next page). The *Plan* outlines a series of strategies to strengthen and improve the historic district. These historic preservation strategies are outlined in Section 4.5.

New development projects within the Historic Core should retain and incorporate any historic structures existing within their respective development sites. The physical design of all new development projects should complement the historic character and scale of the area. Additional discussion on appropriate character and scale of buildings is included in Chapter 6.0.

CREATE A TOWN SQUARE

Enhance the City parking lot (Farmers Market site) at the corner of Oxford and Mt. Vernon Avenues to serve as a gathering space for community events

This location, as shown in Figure 4.4, is centrally located to accommodate community events, as well as small gatherings.

Several properties in the core area were evaluated for their potential as a town square, based on an evaluation of the physical attributes, location and cost to acquire and develop. The ideal attributes for a town square are that it is centrally located, enclosed by commercial or public buildings, accessible on more than one side and properly sized based upon the scale of the adjoining buildings and the street. In addition, the space should contribute to the street and not simply as a break in the street wall.

In addition to the Oxford Avenue site, two other locations were evaluated; however, while centrally located, both sites were developed with historically contributing structures and bordered residential uses on the side street. These sites were removed from consideration due to the potential cost of acquisition and the impact on the neighborhood. In the potential site evaluation, a portion of the Mt. Vernon Community School site,

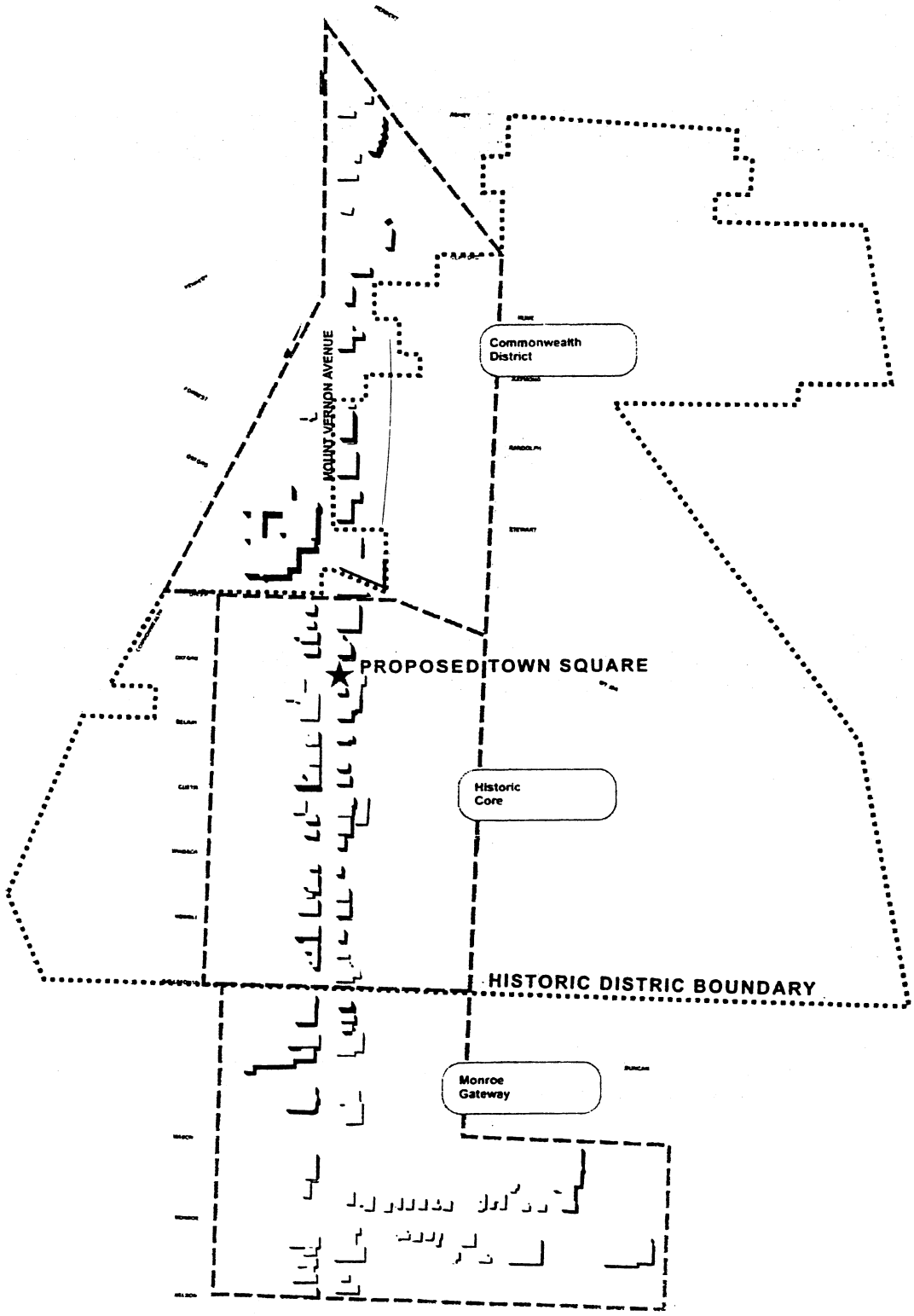


Figure 4.4 Historic Distric Boundary and Proposed Town Square Site

at the northwest corner of Uhler and Mt. Vernon Avenues was also considered, but ultimately was rejected due to the lack of alternative sites for the tot lot currently existing on the property.

The most feasible opportunity was found to be the enhancement and possible expansion of the City lot/Farmer's Market site. Expanding the existing parking lot to the south would require the acquisition of the adjacent property and either the demolition of the existing structure or its incorporation into the design of the square. This location provides the opportunity to create a small public space central to the active retail area, while retaining the parking function and offers an additional opportunity to provide greater flexibility in the operation of the regular Del Ray Farmers' Market. This location is also ideal for the town square because it is highly visible along the Avenue and is buffered from nearby residences by buildings occupied by commercial uses.

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 illustrate two possible concepts for the recommended Town Square site. The first concept depicts the expanded town square with the acquisition of the adjacent property and demolition of the building. (Figure 4.5) The intent is that the square would be a multi-function space with handsome paving. During most of the week it would function as a parking resource for the commercial uses with a small gathering area, but on Saturdays it would provide an expanded plaza for the Farmers' Market, as well as provide public space for special events and larger gatherings. Public benches shaded by trees are provided along the sidewalk edge.

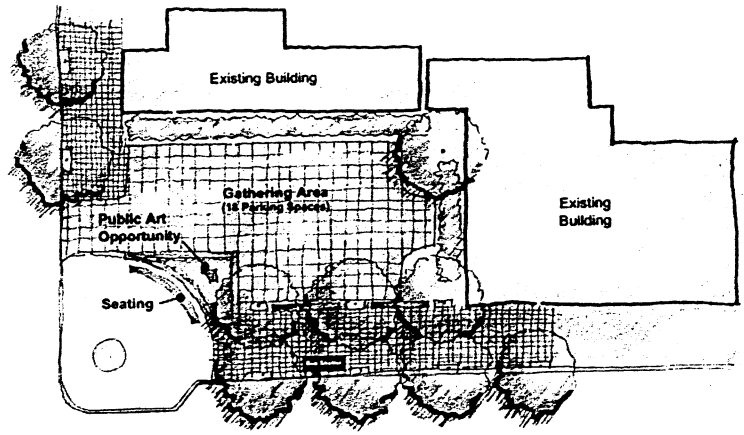


Figure 4.5 Town Square Concept One

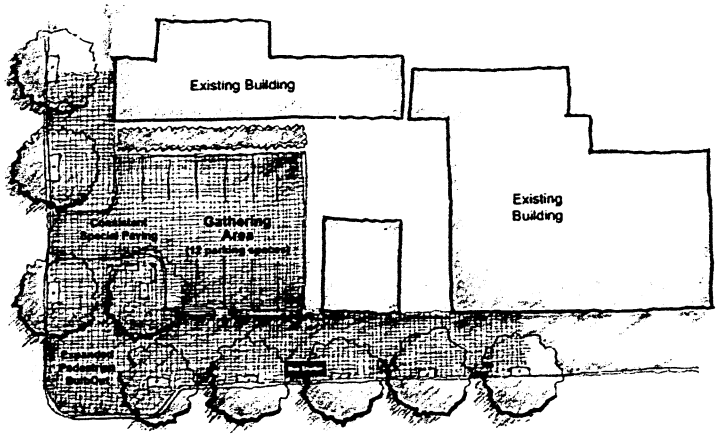


Figure 4.6 Town Square Concept Two

The second concept (Figure 4.6) depicts the redevelopment of the existing parking lot area only. This concept would reduce redevelopment costs, but would not include the additional parking spaces as shown in the first option and would result in a smaller plaza. While the proposed town square affords many benefits, including the creation of a few additional off-street parking spaces, it must be large enough and designed to function properly as a town square. There are costs associated with the acquisition of additional land and subsequent improvements. Regardless of which option is implemented, the space must be designed to retain its functionality as a public gathering space, as well as a parking area.

Outdoor Market

Fire Station #202

CONSIDER FIRE STATION REUSE

Should Fire Station #202 outgrow the existing facility, consider reuse of the building for community functions/activities

Constructed in 1926 and used as a town hall/fire station, this historic building located on Windsor Avenue was the center of the Town of Potomac's civic and social life. The Fire Department continues to occupy the building that is home to a hazardous materials team.

If the needs of the Fire Department outgrow the existing facility's ability to meet them and consideration is given to relocating their operations, the *Plan* recommends that the building be preserved and reused for community functions/activities. Although not located along Mt. Vernon Avenue, the site is centrally located in Del Ray and offers the additional advantage of off-street parking to accommodate community meetings and events. The *Plan* supports the reuse of the building as gathering space because it is compatible with its residential neighbors and desired by the community.

Opportunity Sites

- **Parking lot behind 2401 Mt. Vernon Ave.**

The existing parking lot behind this privately-owned building is heavily utilized during the day as parking for the City's Department of Human Services and on weekends, but is only moderately used in the evenings. The parking lot was evaluated as a potential location for a parking structure. However, the construction of above-grade parking will impact adjacent residences and the Avenue. If, in the future, the neighborhood finds the construction of a parking structure is warranted, this site may be appropriate for new above-grade parking, provided any negative impacts on adjacent residences and the Avenue are mitigated.

- **Vacant lot on east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Del Ray and Custis Avenues. 2207 Mt. Vernon Ave.**

Located between two developed properties, this lot could be developed with a mixed-use building, with ground floor

Figure 4.7 Concept for new infill project at 2207 Mount Vernon Ave. *Image by Larson Koenig Architects*

retail and residential or office uses on the upper floors. Access to the property should be provided from the nearest side street (Del Ray Avenue) and not directly from Mt. Vernon Avenue in order to maintain the street wall, enhance the pedestrian experience and minimize obstructions to the Mt. Vernon Avenue sidewalk. On-site parking should be located behind the building. One concept for an appropriately-scaled infill project is shown as Figure 4.7.

- **7-Eleven Convenience Store Site. 2108 Mt. Vernon Ave.**

Currently the site, at the southwest corner of Mt. Vernon and Custis Avenues, is developed with a 7-Eleven convenience store. As developed, the site is automobile-oriented, with surface parking located in front of the building adjacent to the sidewalk and vehicular access provided by curb cuts on both streets. Redevelopment activities should reorient the building to the front of the site, placing the parking area behind the building with vehicle access provided exclusively from Custis Avenue.

Until redevelopment is feasible, interim measures should be undertaken to enhance the appearance of the building and site and to make the site more pedestrian friendly. Improvements should include a new building façade, new landscaping along both street frontages to screen the parking lot and create additional green space on site, attractive pedestrian connection from the street to the building and a lower scale monument sign to replace the existing freestanding sign. These improvements will have a dramatic impact on the Avenue and will improve both the visual appearance of the site and the streetscape along the Avenue.

Monroe Gateway

The area south of the Historic Core, between Bellefonte Avenue and Nelson Avenue, including the small shopping center at Luray Avenue, is a gateway into Mt. Vernon Avenue from the south and east, and acts as a transition area between the retail core and residential areas to the south. The Monroe Gateway can reinforce the sense of entrance into a special place by creating a distinction through signage, landscaping and scale. These concepts should be incorporated to showcase the identity of the Avenue and surrounding community, and to create a sense of arrival. This section of the Avenue currently includes a combination of retail, service and residential uses. Although it has the same Main Street scale as the Historic Core, it lacks the continuous retail street frontage given the mix and location of service and automobile-oriented uses. There is an opportunity to strengthen the traditional Main Street retail environment by filling the gaps in street wall where incompatible uses or underutilized parcels exist and by improving uses that currently detract from the quality of the street environment.

7-Eleven Convenience Store Site

ENCOURAGE A MIX OF USES

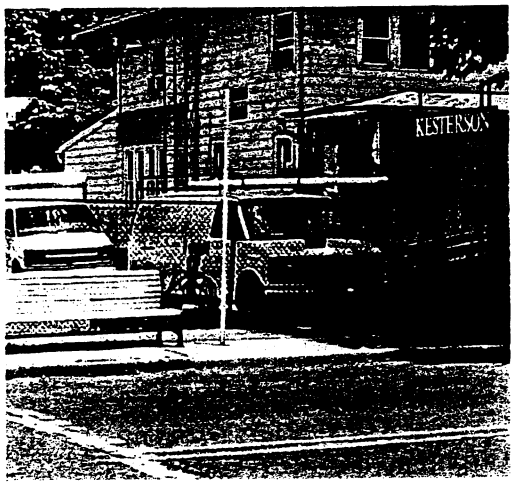
Due to its location on the southern edge of the Historic Core, the Monroe Gateway Area is a suitable place for complementary uses such as residential and retail uses that promote a transition into the Historic Core area. Additional residential development in this area can contribute to the commercial success of the Avenue by placing potential clientele nearby.

ENHANCE STREETSCAPE AND URBAN DESIGN

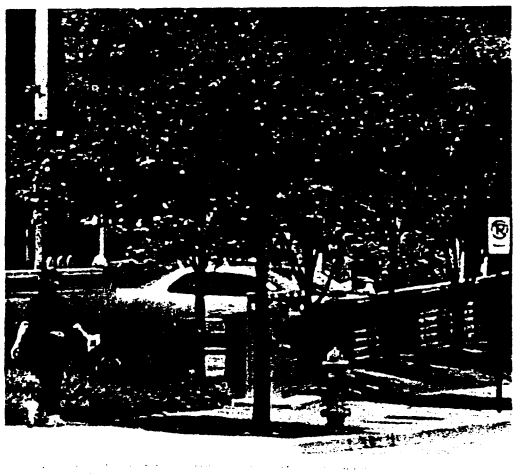
Complete the streetscape improvements along the Avenue and improve the appearance of automobile-oriented uses

Much of the streetscape in this section of the Avenue will be improved as the City completes the final phase of the undergrounding project. New pavers, street trees, and street furniture will be installed.

A key factor in improving this portion of the Avenue is addressing the appearance of the existing service uses. The visual appearance of automobile-oriented uses such as fuel and service stations, may be greatly minimized by orienting buildings, instead of the parking areas, onto the Avenue, and using attractive seating walls and vegetative screening to visually buffer car uses. The City should work with individual property owners on innovative ways to complement the streetscape and visual appeal of this gateway.



Parking area without screen



Parking area with wall and buffer

All streetscape improvements should extend down to Luray Avenue in order to connect the small commercial center at Luray Avenue with the business area to the north.

IMPROVE GATEWAY PARK

The realignment of the Route 1 / Monroe Avenue Bridge offers an opportunity to expand the existing Eugene Simpson Stadium Park to the east. Design of this additional parkland on the north side of Monroe Avenue should emphasize a park-like gateway for the community. Currently, the park is surrounded by a retaining wall. With any park expansion, views into the park should be emphasized to provide a high quality gateway for the community.

ENHANCE THE NEIGHBORHOOD GIANT AND CVS SITES

The community has expressed a desire to maintain the combination of the CVS Pharmacy and Giant Foods Grocery Store at their current locations in the 400 block of Monroe Avenue. As such, the primary goal is to work with the existing property owners and tenants to identify ways for the site to continue to operate with the current uses and meet the establishments' future requirements. The current uses appear to be very compatible with and complementary to the surrounding neighborhoods. However, the stores are considerably smaller than the industry standard and may be subject to market forces as grocery stores in nearby neighborhoods are developed or enlarged.

Should a future shift in market realities render the current sites or uses obsolete and unsuitable for long-term operation, it will be critical that the City provide adequate leadership in directing a new vision for this site.

Given its location in relation to major transportation routes, the attraction of the Historic Core and surrounding neighborhoods, there are two appropriate directions for the long-term development of these sites. The first option is to maintain the sites as commercial parcels with locally serving uses. The second is to redevelop the sites as a consolidated mixed-use project incorporating commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above. The addition of residential uses onto the site will enhance the existing residential neighborhood. The new ground floor commercial uses would continue to support the needs of the local community. No other changes to the existing properties along Monroe Avenue between Route 1 and Mt. Vernon Avenue are proposed.

Should market forces push the redevelopment of these parcels, the *Plan* recommends the coordinated redevelopment of the two sites, with potential FAR increases from .75 to 1.25. Achieving this density requires a development plan that meets or exceeds the following goals:

- Redevelopment is undertaken as a single unified mixed-use development, with the desired mix of uses to include a grocery, pharmacy and other retail on the ground floor and residential or office use on the upper levels;
- Building height is limited to three stories along Monroe Avenue, stepping down to adjacent residences;

Figure 4.8 **Giant / CVS Site Development Concept Sketch**

- Publicly-visible usable open space is provided on-site;
- Buildings complement existing character of the Del Ray area and are of high architectural design and quality of materials;
- Underground structured parking is provided to meet the requirements of the development;
- On-site affordable housing units are interspersed in the development; and,
- Streetscape improvements along the Monroe Avenue frontage are provided.

Figure 4.8 illustrates one concept for redevelopment of the Giant and CVS sites. This concept illustrates a consolidated redevelopment of these two parcels, with a total lot area of almost two acres. The principal goal is to maintain these community-supporting uses on these sites. The intention of this concept plan is to illustrate an approach to redevelopment if market forces drive a change of use. The sketch illustrates a mixed-use concept that includes residential with retail uses on the first floor that should include a grocery store and/or pharmacy and other retail uses.

Note: No change is being proposed for the property developed with an existing office building located immediately adjacent to the Giant at 433 Monroe Avenue.

ENHANCE ACCESS TO THE METRO STATION

Another element of the *Plan* for the Monroe Gateway Area is to take full advantage of some of the additional changes that will occur to the south of this area due to the Route 1/Monroe Avenue bridge reconstruction. Current plans call for improvements to Leslie Avenue, which runs parallel to the Metrorail tracks. This road should be upgraded to provide pedestrian and bicycle access along the east side of George Washington Middle School to the Braddock Road Metro Station.

In addition, other opportunities should be identified for pedestrian improvements linking the Braddock Road Metro Station to Del Ray and coordinated with the Potomac Yard improvements. New signage and lighting to encourage evening travel between the Metro and Mt. Vernon Avenue should also be included. In addition, an attractive bus shelters should be integrated along the Avenue for visitors who arrive by bus. Information kiosk(s) near the Braddock Road Metro and along the Avenue could be incorporated as part of a wayfinding system to direct visitors to Mt. Vernon Avenue and other nearby amenities.

Opportunity Sites

The following opportunity sites play an important role in filling existing gaps within Mt. Vernon Avenue's street wall with a scale of development that frames the Avenue and is consistent with the existing character and scale of buildings.

With many of the sites, it is not anticipated that they will redevelop in the short term. However, the *Plan* provides a vision for future use of the sites when redevelopment is considered. In the short term, the *Plan* recommends that building facades and properties be upgraded with improved signage, landscaping and other features that contribute to an enhanced streetscape and shift the emphasis from the primacy of the automobile to the safety of the pedestrian.

- **Salvation Army Sites, 1800 Block of Mt. Vernon Avenue**

The Salvation Army owns several properties in the 1800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The church building is located on the west side of the Avenue (1804 Mt. Vernon Avenue) and has a large surface parking lot behind it. The Salvation Army currently allows shared parking on its lot during non-peak hours and this parking resource should continue to be available in the future, which will help to reduce the demand for limited on-street parking. As a consequence, any future redevelopment of the site should retain the parking resources. Directly across the Avenue from the church to the east are two single-family homes (1805 and 1807 Mt. Vernon Avenue) owned by the Salvation Army and operated as transitional housing. The *Plan* supports the transitional housing use in this location and recommends that any redevelopment on the site include one-for-one replacement of the transitional units, as well as additional affordable housing units and market rate units. Partnering with the newly-formed nonprofit Alexandria Housing Development Corporation (AHDC) should be explored to facilitate the provision of affordable housing.

- **Fannon Printing/Arlandria Floors/ R&B Heating and Air Conditioning/ Kesterson Plumbing and Heating properties, 1800 and 1900 blocks of Mt. Vernon Avenue**

Although redevelopment of any of these sites is unlikely in the near future, a mix of uses, with ground floor retail, is recommended when reuse or redevelopment of these sites is considered. If structurally feasible, the Arlandria Floors building, a fine example of Art Deco architecture, would be an appropriate candidate for the addition of second-floor residential or office use.

In the short term, building and site improvements should be undertaken to enhance the appearance of the contractor sites and improve the streetscape. Recommended improvements include the relocation of heavy equipment to a less visually prominent location on the site; removal of old building appurtenances or site features, such as chain link fencing located immediately adjacent to the sidewalk; and the screening of parking areas facing the Avenue. Other recommended improvements include new, pedestrian-oriented signage, landscaping and other similar improvements designed to enhance the appearance of the property and streetscape.

Contractors' vehicles and equipment are visible from the street through chainlink fence.

Salvation Army Transitional Housing

Figure 4.9 Service Station Improvement Concept

Car Dealerships

- **Auto Dealerships, 1600 and 1700 Blocks of Mt. Vernon Avenue**

Two automobile dealerships, Alexandria Hyundai and Audi of Alexandria, currently operate in the 1600 and 1700 blocks of Mt. Vernon Avenue. These uses are inconsistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan and with the existing zoning that does not allow automobile-oriented uses such as automobile dealerships. Although it is unlikely that either dealership property will redevelop in the foreseeable future, mixed-use buildings, with ground floor retail and residences or offices above would be compatible with adjacent residences and would complement the Historic Core and the nearby retail area at Mt. Vernon and Monroe Avenues. On-site parking should be provided below grade, and access to the sites should be provided via a side street and not directly from the Avenue. Any new construction activity should seek to define and develop the street wall in these blocks, while providing building breaks with publically visible open space and landscape areas.

Recommended interim improvements to the properties include new, pedestrian-oriented signage, replacement of pavement adjacent to the sidewalk with pavers that complete the streetscape, landscaping to screen parked cars, and other similar improvements designed to enhance the appearance of the property and streetscape.

- **Service Stations, 1600 and 1601 Mt. Vernon Ave.**

The Mt. Vernon Exxon station located at the northeast corner of Mt. Vernon and Monroe Avenues is a nonconforming use. The business is allowed by Special Use Permit (SUP) approved prior to the 1992 comprehensive rezoning to operate until 2010 at which time the SUP expires. The Alexandria Shell station located directly across the street on the northwest corner is a noncomplying use and may continue to operate indefinitely. Similar to the automobile dealerships, service stations are not permitted under the existing zoning and are inconsistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan that calls the redevelopment of auto-oriented uses to pedestrian-oriented uses.

Although it is unlikely that the service station properties will be redeveloped in the near term, the expiration of the approval for Mt. Vernon Exxon in 2010 will provide an opportunity for reuse or redevelopment of the site. The site abuts the nonconforming Alexandria Hyundai automobile storage lot, and the operator of the lot must seek an extension of the lot's SUP approval prior to 2011, with continuance of the use to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council. Thus, there is a potential for redevelopment or reuse of both the Mt. Vernon Exxon and Hyundai storage sites within the next ten years. A coordinated redevelopment of both sites could create an anchor in this area that would draw people down the Avenue and strengthen the small commercial area at Monroe Avenue. Mixed-use, including residential or office uses, with ground floor retail, is appropriate in this location and compatible with its residential and commercial neighbors. Figure 4.9 shows a simple approach for improving the sites on an interim basis.

- **1503 Mt. Vernon Avenue**

This site is a an undeveloped lot located immediately adjacent to the shopping center at the southeastern corner of Mt. Vernon and Monroe Avenues. It is currently used as the display area for the Eclectic Nature Garden Center, which began operating in 2004. While it is unlikely, given the recent investment in the property, that any change in use will occur in the near term, any future infill development should include ground floor retail uses. In order to maintain a streetwall in this block, vehicular access to the property should be provided from a side street or an access easement with an adjacent property rather than directly from Mt. Vernon Avenue.

- **Verizon Building, 301 Alexandria Avenue**

Located along the west side of Avenue, at the corner of Alexandria and Mt. Vernon Avenues is the telephone switching station owned by Verizon. Although Verizon has no plans at present to vacate the building, as communications technology changes and evolves, this station may be rendered obsolete. If that occurs, it is recommended that the building, if retained, or the property be used for residences, provided adequate provisions for parking are made without impact on the adjoining neighborhood. A residential use is compatible with existing residential neighborhood.

- **Giant and CVS sites, 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue**

As previously discussed, the community strongly desires to retain the grocery store and pharmacy in this location. In the short-term, measures should be taken to identify ways for the current tenants to continue to operate on the sites. However, given the relatively small footprint of the Giant store (much smaller than most modern supermarkets), and competition from new, large or specialty grocery stores, it is likely that market conditions will dictate whether the uses remain in operation. To guide future redevelopment of these sites, a coordinated redevelopment of both parcels is envisioned, with grocery and drug store uses accommodated on-site.

1503 Mt. Vernon Avenue

Service Stations

Verizon Building
301 Alexandria Avenue

4.4 Affordable Housing

Guiding Principles

Preserve and protect existing residential areas

- Protect existing affordable housing opportunities

Encourage and support mixed-use development

- Create new affordable housing opportunities

Affordable Housing Apartment Building

Affordable Housing as a second story above retail

A two-pronged strategy is recommended along Mt. Vernon Avenue to ensure the provision of affordable housing. The recommendations are designed to provide guidance to the development community as to the City's goals for affordable housing both citywide and on Mt. Vernon Avenue, and to encourage the development of new affordable housing units on Mt. Vernon Avenue.

As previously discussed, retail is the most beneficial ground floor use on Mt. Vernon Avenue to reinforce and strengthen the commercial areas. As opportunities for infill or new development occur, new affordable housing is encouraged and should be provided on the floors above the ground floor. Residential uses at street level may be appropriate on Mt. Vernon Avenue north of Uhler Avenue and south of Nelson Avenue. On-site affordable housing is the most desirable condition as it helps to provide housing for a wider variety of people. However, there may be cases where it is not feasible to provide on-site affordable housing. In those instances, the developer should contribute to the City's Housing Trust Fund as set forth in the Affordable Housing Policy.

For the two larger properties where future redevelopment is desired or likely, specifically the "Triangle Site," and the Giant/CVS site on Monroe Avenue, new on-site affordable housing units should be provided. New Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs) for those properties would require the developer to provide on-site affordable housing units in accordance with the affordable housing policies in effect at the time, but no fewer than 10% of the units should be affordable.

The *Plan* recommends encouraging new home ownership opportunities and resident participation in the homeownership programs sponsored by the City, to minimize the number of people that are priced out of the market over time.

An important part of this affordable housing strategy is educating residents and the development community about the need for affordable housing in the City, the City's Affordable Housing Policy guidelines, and the types of funding available to provide affordable housing. The *Plan* recognizes and supports the ongoing programs and homeownership fairs offered by the Office of Housing and encourages all community stakeholders to actively participate in the efforts to expand awareness of and support for affordable housing.

4.5 Historic Preservation

Guiding Principles

Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District"

- Protect and enhance the corridor's visual appeal through streetscape and façade improvements
- Define and enhance the unique community identity through interpretive graphics

Preserve the existing historic scale and character

- Allow for appropriate infill development and redevelop incompatible buildings
- Implement standards and guidelines to ensure quality development that reflects the scale of existing historic structures

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Plan seeks to strengthen the existing historic district, especially the commercial buildings located along Mt. Vernon Avenue, by encouraging the retention of the contributing buildings through reuse and appropriate renovations or new construction. The *Plan* also includes design guidelines for infill development in the Historic Core area that complement the existing mass and scale of these buildings.

There are numerous architectural styles prevalent in the Town of Potomac Historic District. The Town's commercial buildings include examples of Art Deco and Moderne architecture as well as many vernacular two-story brick commercial buildings built with second floor apartments. The architectural styles of the town's residences include foursquare, bungalows, and modified Queen Anne style.

In the early 1990s, a survey of over 900 properties in the Town of Potomac area was conducted and an application was submitted nominating the area for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Close to 700 of the buildings surveyed were deemed to be contributing structures, i.e., those structures whose original features are still intact and that contribute positively to retention of the character of the historic fabric. In 1992, the Town of Potomac was officially entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

Watercolor by Alice Kale.

The *Plan* recommends the following strategies to strengthen and improve the historic district:

- **Update the National Historic Register to designate certain previously noncontributing structures as contributing buildings within the historic district**

Twelve years have passed since the City's nomination for designation of buildings to the National Register. Three buildings that did not meet the National Register age threshold (i.e., at least 50 years of age at the time of the nomination) could not be included in the nomination as contributing structures at the time, but are of sufficient age and architectural merit to be designated as contributing structures today. The *Plan* recommends amending the designation of the following buildings from noncontributing to contributing:

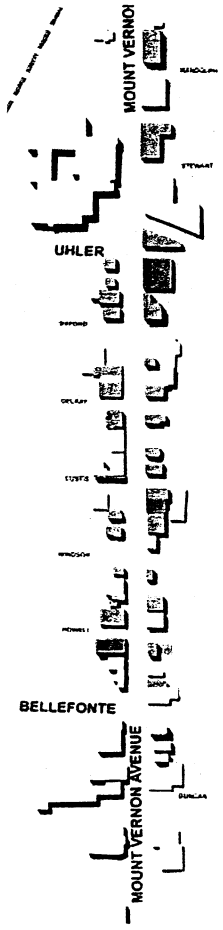


Figure 4.10 Contributing Structures (Pink) Potentially Contributing Structures (Orange)

Figure 4.11 Post Office Building

1. Post Office building, 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue; A.F. & A.M. Lodge Building, dedicated 1946 (cornerstone)

This structure is a three story brick, commercial, fraternal and office building occupied by the United States Post Office on the first floor and offices on the upper floors. This is perhaps the most distinctive building along Mt. Vernon Avenue. It is a combination of Federal Revival and Art Deco stylistic influences. The building combines traditional seven course American bond red brick and twelve-over-twelve wood windows with a glass block window and transoms and fluted cast concrete door surrounds. The building is slightly asymmetrical in composition and has five bays fronting on Mt. Vernon Avenue. The first floor has a central entry door with a cast concrete surround, glass block transom above with an inset of a stylized cast concrete American eagle and is flanked by metal storefront system. A secondary entrance with a fluted cast concrete door surround with glass block transom provides access to the offices on the second and third floors. Incised letters over this entrance read: "A.F. & A.M. Lodge #349 Henry Knox Field" (Ancient Free and Accepted Masons). Both entrances are flanked by Art Deco influenced wall sconces. The second level has central cast concrete circular window centered over the entrance below flanked by twelve-over-twelve double hung windows with brick jack arches with cast concrete keystone. An over large glass block window is set over the secondary entrance. The third level has four twelve-over-twelve double hung windows. The secondary elevations are more regular in fenestration with all windows being twelve-over-twelve double hung windows with brick jack arches and cast concrete keystone. There is a loading dock on West Howell side of the building. The roof is flat and there is an elevator penthouse. It seems likely that the disparate building materials employed in the construction of the building reflect the shortages of available building materials in the immediate post war years.

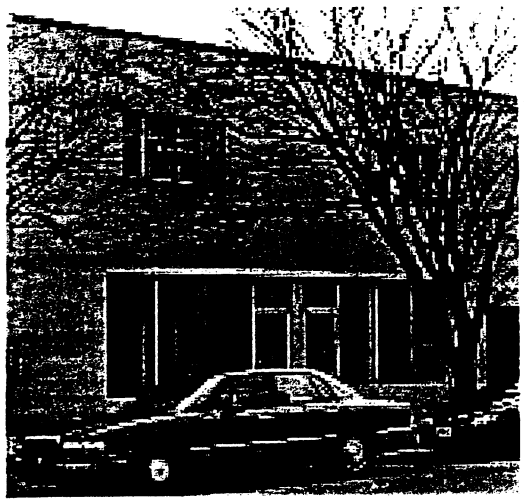


Figure 4.12 2107 Mount Vernon Avenue

2. A two story office building, 2107 Mt. Vernon Avenue

This is a simple, essentially vernacular retail and office building. It was constructed 1954-1955 by Mr. Jen Mallis. It is two stories in height and is covered in unpainted buff brick. The building is approximately 45' in width and 59' in length. There are two storefronts facing Mt. Vernon Avenue both with aluminum storefront systems. The second level

fenestration facing Mt. Vernon Avenue has two picture windows each flanked by multi-pane metal casement windows. The fenestration on the secondary elevations is all metal windows and a mixture of double hung and casement types. The roof is flat.

Figure 4.13 2401 Mount Vernon Avenue

3. Buildings occupied by a restaurant (Caboose Bakery), Pilates studio, 2401 Mt. Vernon Avenue, stylistically 1935-1940

The existing two story brick building was originally constructed with retail uses on the first floor, with offices above and the "Del Ray Bowling Alleys" in the basement. In 1955, the second floor office uses were converted to apartments. Stylistically the building is stripped down Art Deco with eight projecting brick piers on the front that extend beyond the roof parapet dividing the building into symmetrical bays with a central, projecting entry feature with recessed doorway. The entry way has a two story surround of brick laid up in a contrasting pattern outlining the entrance. Windows for apartments are replacement casement windows. Retail uses on first floor have replacement metal and glass storefront systems with glass block windows on the south side. The roof is a flat slag roof.

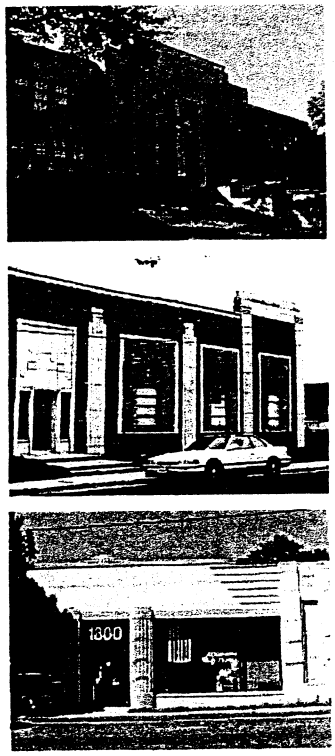
The *Plan* further recommends that the designation of additional noncontributing buildings in the Town of Potomac Historic District be reevaluated as additional buildings meet the 50-year old test in the future.

- **Explore the expansion of the existing Town of Potomac Historic District boundaries**

There may be other buildings outside the existing boundaries of the Town of Potomac Historic District that should be preserved as contributing to the historic character of the area. These buildings need to be identified and research conducted to determine whether the boundaries of the existing district should be expanded to include additional buildings. The *Plan* recommends seeking a cost-share grant with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) to survey the buildings on the edge of the Town of Potomac and evaluate the possible expansion of the boundaries of the historic district.

- **Specific recommendations for infill and new construction**

Specific recommendations include the preservation of existing contributing buildings in the Town of Potomac Historic District. The *Plan* recommends against the demolition of any contributing buildings over 750 square feet in size in this area. New infill development and construction should respect the style and scale of the preserved buildings and authentic Art Deco and Moderne styling, and the design elements of new construction should incorporate existing characteristics. New buildings and additions should not overpower historic buildings and should step down to them. (See Section 6.3 for additional discussion of building design guidelines.)



Examples of Art Deco styling

Historic Marker

- **Create and install heritage and interpretive signs**

In order to help identify and raise awareness of the historic district, heritage and interpretive signs should be installed in the district.

- **Promote awareness of the Town of Potomac Historic District**

Residents and business owners may not be aware that their buildings are located in a historic district. In addition, they may also not be aware of existing rehabilitation tax credit programs offered by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal government that could be utilized to reduce the overall cost of renovations.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides a 25 percent tax credit, which is applied to an individual's or corporation's state income tax for the rehabilitation of contributing properties within the National Historic Register District. 'The federal tax credit is 20 percent for income producing-properties. (Thus, the rehabilitation of a personal residence does not qualify for the federal tax credit, but would qualify for the Virginia tax credit.) An income-producing property, such as a business, multifamily apartment building or single-family home that is rented, would qualify for both the federal and state tax credits.

A 10 percent federal tax credit is also available for the rehabilitation of noncontributing structures in the historic district. Neither the state nor federal program is mutually exclusive, however, a property must be income-producing to qualify for the federal tax credit. In that case, up to a 45 percent credit is possible to defray renovation costs.

Efforts to promote awareness of the historic district are recommended, as follows:

- *partnering with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to provide information to the community about the Town of Potomac Historic District and programs offered by the DHR including state preservation grants, rehabilitation tax credits, and other programs. Educational efforts could include a presentation to the Del Ray Citizens Association, semiannual workshops, and other similar efforts.*
- *providing technical assistance to the community regarding the design of compatible infill and new construction, and the use of rehabilitation tax credits as incentives.*

The *Plan* recommends these strategies both to ensure the preservation of historic resources in the Town of Potomac and to guide improvement of existing buildings and new development activities in a manner that protects the historic elements and promotes a quality retail district.

4.6 Land Use Controls

Mt. Vernon Urban Overlay District

The *Plan* recommends the creation of the Mt. Vernon Urban Overlay District to provide the zoning mechanism to implement the *Plan's* land use, parking and urban design recommendations. The purpose of the Mt. Vernon Urban Overlay District is to encourage a mix of land uses and compatible infill construction, protect residential neighbors, support the historic character and the preservation goals of the historic district, preserve and enhance the existing urban character of the corridor and promote enhanced economic activity.

The overlay district will apply to properties fronting along Mt. Vernon Avenue from Nelson Avenue on the south to Commonwealth Avenue on the north. The district will include provisions for land use, building form, parking and access, building signage, outdoor display and administrative permits. A retail focus area is defined in the overlay district between Bellefonte Avenue and Uhler Avenue and is co-terminus with the section of the corridor located within the Town of Potomac National Register Historic District.

Major elements of the overlay district are the application of the Building Form Design Guidelines as outlined in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the *Plan,* allowance for variation to the requirements of the underlying CL zoning district through the Special Use Permit (SUP) approval process and the potential for reduction of parking requirements for infill development. This overlay will:

- Allow waivers of lot size, floor area ratio, yards and open space
- Ensure the preservation of the historic character, mass and scale of the Avenue through the use of the Building Form Design Guidelines

PARKING AND OPEN SPACE

- Allow for the reduction in parking requirements for infill development that does not involve the demolition of historic buildings (over 750 square feet) that are designated as contributing structures in the Town of Potomac Historic District
- Provide a three tiered approach to requirements for parking and open space for construction in accordance with the Building Form Design Guidelines, based on the size of the development parcel, as follows:

  - *Lots of 7,000 square feet or less: Allow waiver of ground level open space requirements for new mixed use involving upper floor residential, the waiver of parking requirements for land-locked interior parcels and the reduction of parking requirements for corner lots and lots with rear access.*

  - *Lots of 7,001 - 15,000 square feet: Require 15% ground level open space, a portion of which is visually accessible from Mt. Vernon Avenue; and a reduction up to half of the parking required. A minimum of one parking space per residential unit must be provided.*

  - *Lots greater than 15,000 square feet: Maintain a minimum of 25% ground level, open space, visible from the public way, appropriate for the size of the project and ensure that sufficient parking is provided to meet the full needs of the development. Additional open space and massing requirements will ensure that larger projects maintain compatibility with the existing character of buildings along Mt. Vernon Avenue.*

The consolidation of individual lots to create a larger development is strongly discouraged.

- Allow waiver of parking requirements for:
  - *Change of use from personal service/ office to retail*
  - *Outdoor dining*

RETAIL FOCUS

- Defines a retail focus area from Uhler to Bellefonte Avenues
  - *Only retail, restaurant and personal service uses permitted on first floor; personal service uses limited to 30 feet of frontage*
  - *Arts and crafts studios or stores are not considered personal service uses provided that retail sales areas occupy at least 75 percent of the frontage along Mt. Vernon Avenue*

RESTAURANT / RETAIL

- Admin approval for:
  - *Restaurants with 60 seats or less with outdoor dining*
  - *Live theater*
  - *Outdoor markets*
  - *Outdoor garden center*
- Administrative approval for outdoor display
- Incorporate storefront guidelines for new retail

Existing noncomplying uses are allowed to continue indefinitely under existing noncomplying rules. The zoning overlay district will not replace the existing underlying zoning regulations. The overlay district provides design recommendations aimed at achieving appropriately scaled and designed commercial and mixed-use infill development that closely resembles neighboring buildings and complements the existing character of the Avenue.

Coordinated Development Districts

Two areas are designated as Coordinated Development Districts (CDD). These two areas are 1) the properties on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and Herbert Street, referred to as the "Triangle sites", and 2) the Giant and CVS sites on the south side of the 400 block of Monroe Avenue.

TRIANGLE SITES

The following elements are recommended in the designation of this property as a CDD:

- Underlying zoning remains CL
- Underlying zoning district to exclude single-family and townhouse dwellings
- Allow increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 with a SUP. An additional bonus increase of 0.25, for a maximum FAR of 1.25, is allowable subject to the provision of affordable housing. Any increase in FAR is subject to the following performance standards:
- Desired development includes mixed use building with ground floor retail and residential and/or office uses on upper floors;
- Greater density and height to be provided on the northern portion of the site; provide a mix of building typology;
- Building mass and scale compatible with existing mass, scale and character of area;
- Sufficient building articulation is required to break up the mass into smaller components;
- Building height limited to 2 1/2 – 3 stories, with step downs in building mass along Commonwealth Avenue;

- Protect adjacent residential neighborhood with appropriate building stepbacks, breaks in massing and the provision of rear buffers and setbacks;
- Provide a minimum of 25% ground-level, consolidated and usable open space, a significant portion of which shall be publicly visible from Mt. Vernon Avenue ;
- Provide a large functional open space area at the corner of Mt. Vernon and Commonwealth that is physically accessible;
- Vehicular access to the site from Mt. Vernon Avenue is strongly discouraged;
- Provide underground structured parking to meet parking requirements, with access provided along Commonwealth Avenue in a manner that does not conflict with the access to Commonwealth Terrace Apartments; service access from Mt. Vernon Avenue is prohibited;
- Where underground parking is adjacent to public streets, residential use as a liner use shall be provided on the street frontage; in other locations, architectural treatment shall be provided;
- Provide on-site affordable housing in accordance with policies in effect;
- Provide public art, including sculpture, murals, fountains, other similar features;
- The primary facades of the building shall be masonry (brick, stone or precast), secondary façade may include cemetious siding;
- The site design and building massing shall consider the location of Commonwealth Terrace Apartments and include appropriate setbacks and height reductions to minimize potential impacts, and provide an appropriate transition.

GIANT/CVS SITES

As discussed earlier, retention of the existing grocery and pharmacy is desired. However, given concerns that market conditions may force a change in the ability of these establishments to compete, the Plan recommends the designation of these sites as a CDD with the following elements:

- Underlying zoning remains CL
- Allow increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 with a SUP. An additional bonus increase of 0.25, for a maximum FAR of 1.25, is allowable subject to the provision of affordable housing. Any increase in FAR is subject to the following performance standards:
- Desired development includes grocery store with pharmacy, other ground floor retail uses, with residential and/or office uses on upper floors;
- Building mass and scale compatible with existing mass, scale and character of area;
- Sufficient building articulation is required to break up the mass into smaller components;
- Building height limited to 2 1/2 – 3 stories, with step downs in scale to any adjoining residential use;
- Protect adjacent residential neighborhood with appropriate building stepbacks, breaks in massing and the provision of rear buffers;
- Provide a minimum of 25% ground-level, consolidated and usable open space, a significant portion of which is publicly visible;
- Construct underground structured parking to meet parking requirements;
- Provide on-site affordable housing in accordance with policies in effect;
- Provide public art, including sculpture, murals, fountains, other similar features;
- Coordinate internal streets and open space with Potomac Yard and the existing neighborhood.

The vision for these sites is described in detail in Section 4.3 of the *Plan*.

Parking and Multi-Modal Linkages

5.0

5.1 Guiding Principles

Provide convenient parking and transportation solutions to support retail growth

- Maintain a balance in the supply of and demand for parking
- Maximize the use and turnover of Mt. Vernon Avenue on-street parking to serve retail customers
- Serve employees and longer term customers with off-street parking
- Develop innovative parking strategies to optimize existing resources

Provide alternative multi-modal transportation linkages

It is essential to improve the utilization of existing parking resources and balance the supply and demand for parking along Mt. Vernon Avenue in order to ensure that parking demand is met without negatively impacting nearby residences. The following recommendations are important to accomplishing this goal:

Key Strategies:

- Develop a shared parking program
- Create a parking overlay district
- Establish a parking reduction policy
- Monitor parking demand

Other Recommendations:

- Improve access and circulation in the parking lots behind buildings
- Enforce existing parking limitations
- Identify spaces for shorter-term parking
- Resolve conflict in parking limitations in key locations
- Identify alternative locations for the existing taxicab stand

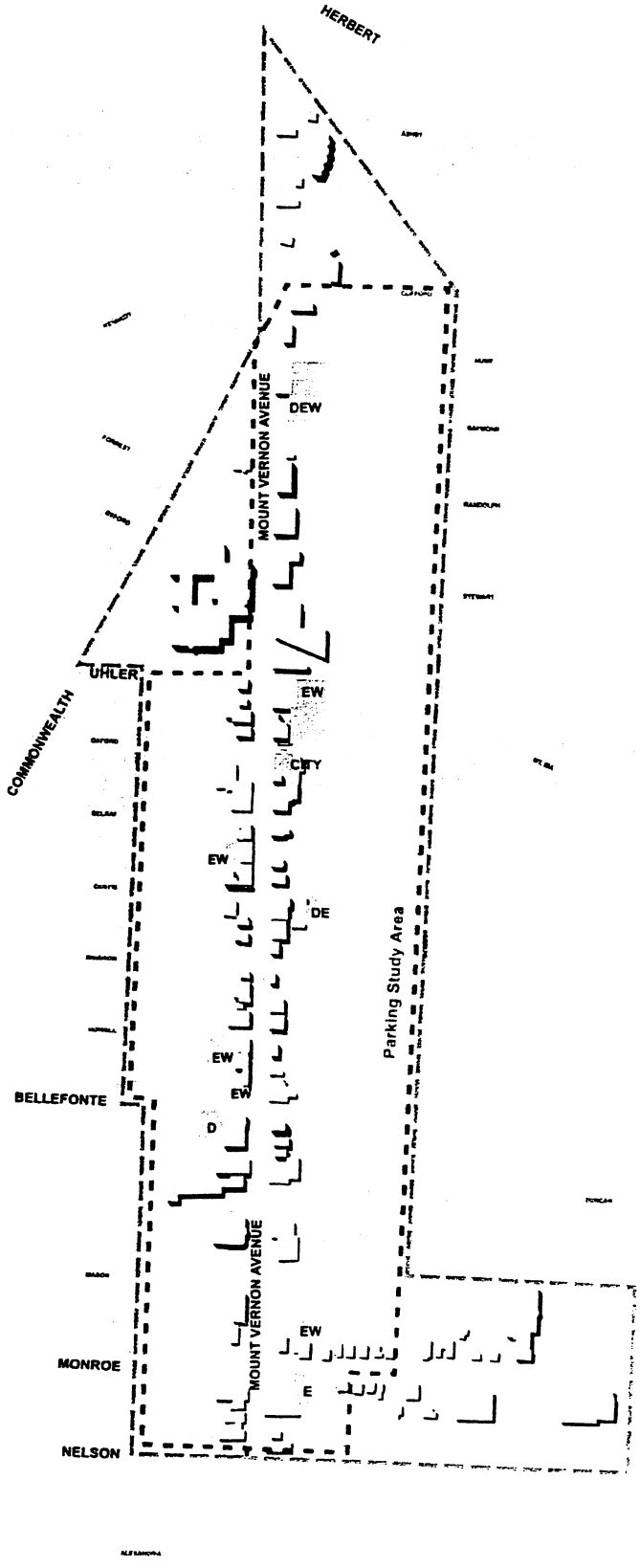


Figure 5.1 **Potential Shared Parking Lots: D=Day, E=Evening, W=Weekend**

5.2 Parking Utilization Study

A parking utilization study was conducted as part of this Plan to understand the current and potential future parking conditions along Mt. Vernon Avenue and to assist in formulating the appropriate parking strategies. The study surveyed parking spaces serving businesses including the on-street spaces on Mt. Vernon Avenue, the public parking lot located at the corner of Oxford and Mt. Vernon Avenues, and ten targeted private parking lots identified by staff as having the potential for shared parking due to low observed utilization of the spaces. A total of 361 spaces exist on these lots. In addition, the first blocks of east-west residential cross streets (from Hume Avenue to Nelson Avenue) were analyzed to assess the ability of these streets to handle their adjoining residential parking and to explore potential impact of overflow business parking.

Custis Avenue residential cross street

Purple Goose Shops

Findings

The neighborhood currently has an overall supply of parking spaces that exceeds the measured demand. Generally speaking, the parking study indicates that the existing parking supply and demand for the spaces are balanced with sufficient surplus spaces to accommodate regular turnover of the spaces. Utilization of the existing parking spaces ranges from 60 to 69 percent midday during weekdays. On weekday and weekend evenings between 40 and 56 percent of the existing parking spaces are utilized. A contributing factor to this relative equilibrium is the mixed-use and walkable nature of the neighborhood, with businesses often frequented by area residents without the use of automobiles or by drivers who park once and visit more than one business during a single trip.

In addition, the study has found that the majority of unused spaces are located in private, off-street parking lots. In the Historic Core area, for example, between 139 and 176 unused private parking spaces in the targeted lots were observed during the parking study on weekday evenings. The parking study found that the utilization of the lots depended upon the principal users of the spaces, and that peak and non-peak hours of utilization varied depending on the type of use as well. Private parking lots associated with office uses were predictably heavily utilized during regular office hours, with large amounts of available parking in the evenings. Parking spaces are available in these lots that could be used, during their respective off-peak hours, to accommodate parking demand from other Mt. Vernon Avenue businesses.

Commonwealth District

The highest utilization of on-street public parking spaces in the Commonwealth District is on weekend days when between 62 and 65 percent of parking spaces are utilized. The next highest utilization is on weekday evenings, when between 51 and 57 percent of spaces are occupied. Utilization of parking on weekend evenings is much lower than daytime rates, ranging from 42 to 45 percent. Weekday daytime utilization fluctuates from a low of 22 percent to a high of 48 percent.

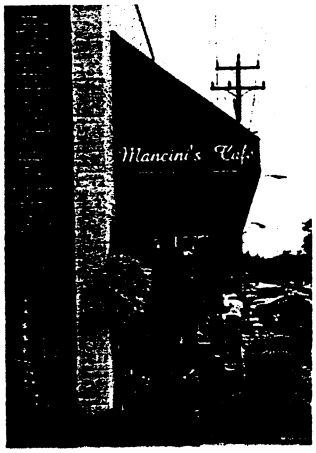
Mt Vernon Avenue in the Commonwealth District

Utilization of the single targeted private off-street parking lot in the Commonwealth District is the same for both weekday and weekend daytime parking and ranges between 35 and 40 percent. Weekday and weekend evening utilization rates are also similar, with between 14 and 24 percent of the spaces occupied. The low utilization rates of the private parking spaces on weekday evenings (when demand for parking is high) afford considerable opportunity for shared parking. Shared parking of the private spaces is also possible on weekend days when the utilization of the public spaces is highest, because almost 60 percent of the private parking spaces are unused at that time.

As for residential parking on the Commonwealth District's cross streets, there are 130 registered vehicles and 84 residences, roughly 1.5 vehicles per residence. This is less than the ratio of vehicles-to-residences in both the Historic Core (1.75) and the Monroe Gateway (2.0). A total of 206 on-street and off-street parking spaces exist in this area, or 76 (37%) more spaces than the number of registered vehicles. Although the parking utilization rates in this area are comparable to those in the other areas, the lower number of

St. Elmos

Typical Residences



Mancini's Cafe

Residences on the Avenue

vehicles per residence and the number of additional spaces provides a significant cushion should demand for parking increase and also reduces the potential for competition of parking spaces.

Historic Core

In general, the on-street public parking spaces in the Historic Core area are heavily utilized throughout the day and evening, on weekdays and on weekends. This area has the highest demand for, and utilization of, public on-street spaces.

The highest occupancy of spaces occurs on weekday evenings, when between 79 and 95 percent of the on-street parking is full. Weekend daytime parking has the next highest utilization with between 82 and 89 percent of the spaces fully occupied. Weekend evening utilization is slightly lower than the daytime rate and ranges between 71 and 73 percent.

Utilization of parking in the Historic Core's six private, off-street lots, identified for potential shared parking, ranges from a high of 71 percent during weekday days to a low of 10 percent on weekend evenings. A similar utilization pattern occurs on weekday evenings when only 10 to 29 percent of the parking lot spaces are utilized. Thus, these private parking lots experience the least demand for parking when the nearby on-street spaces are most in demand – on weekday evenings and weekend days. Given the underutilization of the private parking lots during times of peak overall demand, shared parking of the private spaces is possible and would provide more efficient use of existing parking resources.

In the first blocks of the residential cross streets (those blocks intersecting Mt. Vernon Avenue), there are 312 registered vehicles and 178 residences in this area, or roughly 1.75 registered vehicles per residence. A total of 425 residential on-street and off-street parking spaces exist along these blocks, or 113 (27%) more spaces than vehicles. While this indicates a surplus of residential spaces relative to the number of registered vehicles, there may still be competition for those spaces by Mt. Vernon Avenue's business operators, their customers and employees, who may not find parking on the Avenue and park instead on these adjoining residential blocks. Sharing the existing underutilized private parking lots would reduce this competition and allow for greater turnover of the public on-street spaces on Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Monroe Gateway

The Monroe Gateway area has a lower demand for and occupancy of public on-street parking spaces than does the Historic Core area. In terms of weekday evening and weekend day parking, the demand in this area is comparable to the demand for spaces in the Commonwealth District area north of the Historic Core.

Peak utilization of on-street public spaces occurs on weekday evenings and weekend days. On weekday evenings, 53 to 58 percent of the spaces are occupied. Weekend daytime parking utilization ranges from 72 to 85 percent. Utilization of parking during weekday days falls between these ranges, with roughly 61 to 77 percent of the spaces full.

Peak utilization of the three targeted private, off-street parking lots in this area occurs on weekday days, and ranges from 47 to 59 percent. The next highest utilization occurs on weekend days with 32 to 34 percent of the spaces full. Weekday and weekend evening utilization rates are the lowest and range from 14 to 19 percent.

Given the low utilization rates of the private parking lots when parking demand for on-street spaces in this area is high (i.e., weekday evenings and weekend days), an opportunity exists to share private parking resources at those times. Although demand for parking is not as high on weekend evenings, low utilization of the private parking lots at that time also offers another opportunity to maximize the existing parking resources and reduce competition among residents, business operators, their customers and employees for parking in this area.

With regard to residential parking on cross streets within the Monroe Gateway area, there are 259 registered vehicles and 129 residences in this area, or roughly 2 vehicles per residence. This ratio of vehicles to residences is the highest of all three areas. A total of 302 on-street and off-street parking spaces exist on the cross streets, only 43 (14%) more spaces than vehicles. Again, while there is a measured surplus of residential spaces in this area, there may still be competition for those spaces by business operators, their customers and employees, who may not find parking on the Avenue and park instead in these blocks. As in the Historic Core and Commonwealth District areas, sharing the existing underutilized parking lots would reduce this competition and allow for greater turnover of the public spaces on Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Future Parking Demand

The study also evaluated future parking demand and utilization if building density on Mt. Vernon Avenue is increased. Building density is measured by Floor Area Ratio (FAR), the ratio of allowable building square footage to land area. The current maximum FAR permitted along Mt. Vernon Avenue under existing zoning regulations is 0.75. At a 0.75 FAR, a property consisting of 10,000 square feet of land may be developed with a maximum building square footage of 7,500 square feet. Currently, the overall average FAR for Mt. Vernon Avenue properties is about 0.53, although many sites are developed at an even higher density than what is currently allowed.

The additional development levels up to 0.75 FAR that could be achieved on a property were calculated for those properties currently developed at less than 0.75 FAR. For properties that currently exceed the allowable FAR, no increase in development was assumed as part of this analysis.

The study found that the maximum additional development at 0.75 FAR would result in the need for 372 parking spaces. For an overall increase in development to a higher 1.0 FAR, 687 spaces would be needed. In both cases, with the utilization of only on-street spaces and targeted parking lots, the number of needed spaces exceeds the number of unused spaces. The study assumed that it was not desirable to consider using spaces on the residential cross streets to accommodate increased demand generated by additional development along Mt. Vernon Avenue. As a consequence, without the provision of additional off-street parking, there is insufficient parking to meet the demand generated by those hypothetical increases in density.

As shown, the analysis focused on future parking demand as a function of maximum build-out of all the properties developed at lower densities; this was done to ensure an equitable measurement of the Avenue's greatest possible future parking demand. However, it is extremely unlikely these properties will uniformly increase to the maximum allowable density. In addition, the market analysis determined that a modest increase in retail demand is likely over the course of the next five years. Thus, while some increase in density is possible,

market forces are unlikely to spur every property owner with the potential for additional square footage to fully build out their properties.

The parking strategy seeks to balance the technical parking requirements with the constraints of providing new private off-street parking for a range of uses and development intensities while protecting the residential neighborhoods from adverse impacts. For small sites that cannot accommodate parking, waiving or reducing the requirements in certain cases is recommended. Allowing changes from existing office or personal service uses to retail without requiring additional parking provides flexibility for commercial property owners and their tenants and obviates the requirement for technical parking reductions. New residential units must provide at least one off-street parking space. Significant development is required to comply with the current off-street parking regulations to ensure that the parking demand it generates is fully accommodated on the site as is appropriate for large developments.

Potential New Parking Resources

During the planning process, a comprehensive analysis was performed to evaluate potential locations for new public parking, identify the impacts on the street and the adjoining neighborhoods, and determine whether the construction of new parking resources would be suitable. The creation of new public parking lots or garages is not recommended along Mt. Vernon Avenue due to the potential conflicts of new parking facilities with the existing streetscape and neighborhood atmosphere.

The analysis found that new on-site parking on Mt. Vernon Avenue is difficult to achieve because the commercial parcels are small and shallow, and generally have no rear yard access. Allowing direct access via curb cuts on Mt. Vernon Avenue is not desirable as such curb cuts conflict with pedestrian movement and safety, interrupting the continuity of the retail street wall. Furthermore, the consolidation of lots and demolition of existing buildings to provide on-site parking is not desirable as it adversely impacts the fabric and character of the street. The creation of additional surface parking spaces in this area would harm the existing streetscape and detract from the qualities that make it an attractive place.

In addition to these impacts, the provision of new surface parking where it is most needed, within the Historic Core, would require the acquisition and demolition or relocation of existing buildings. In analyzing several properties, site acquisition and construction of new surface parking spaces were found to be prohibitively expensive at approximately $25,000 per space, while yielding only a modest number of new spaces. Thus, it is not economical, practical, nor desirable to construct new public parking lots along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Another option explored was the construction of structured public parking. Very limited opportunities to construct such parking exist along the Avenue, due to the developed nature of the street and the small platted lots. Two potential properties were evaluated and it was found that the development of a new parking structure on the Avenue would have significant impacts to the character of the street and the pedestrian retail environment, in addition to the negative impacts on adjoining residential properties.

As a consequence, neither strategy is recommended to accommodate the current and future demand for parking. The negative physical and visual impacts of these strategies and associated construction costs far outweigh the benefit of some additional parking in this area.

5.3 Parking Strategy and Recommendations

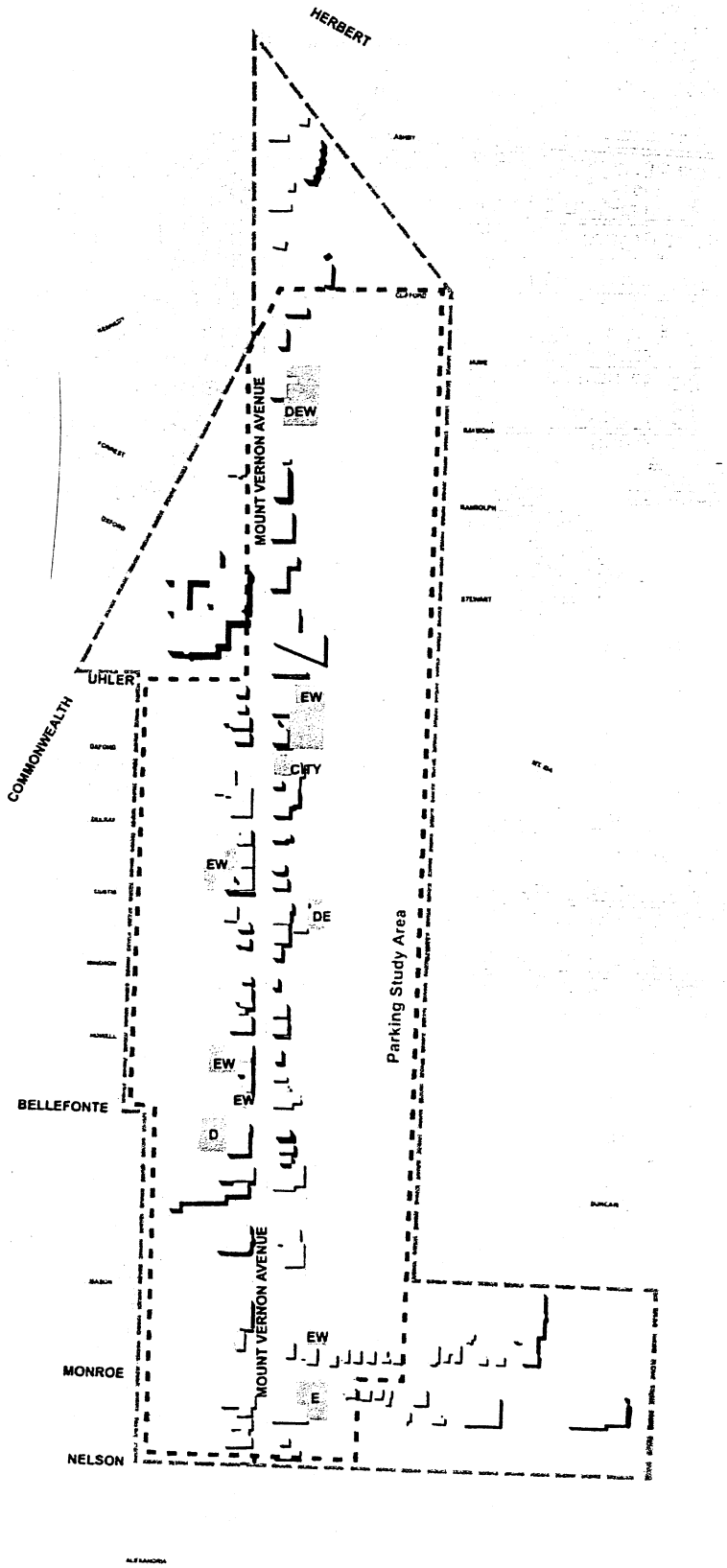
To respond to the concerns about parking availability and location, this parking strategy is designed to capitalize on available resources, provide flexibility in the existing business environment, increase the supply with new construction activity, and monitor the parking situation over time to ensure that a balance of supply and demand is maintained.

Recognizing both the issues and impacts associated with the creation of new parking and the underutilization of existing parking, several strategies are recommended to better utilize and manage the existing parking resources. These strategies include a shared parking program, reducing or waiving parking requirements in certain cases, and other related strategies.

Key to ensuring the future success of the Avenue as a retail center is implementing a parking strategy that allows for additional development and changes in use that will not significantly impact the neighborhood. In addition, parking management can be enhanced through an environment that encourages alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and public transit. See Section 5.4 for the multi-modal strategy and recommendations.

Shared Parking

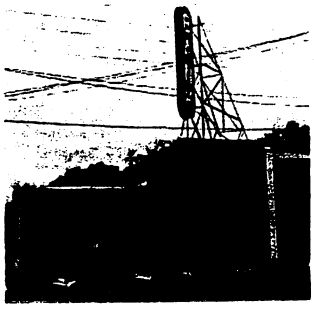
In each of the three areas along the Avenue, overall demand for and utilization of public on-street parking spaces is high. The utilization of the ten targeted private parking lots is lower at those times when demand for on-street parking spaces peaks. A shared parking strategy could greatly reduce the competition for limited on-street parking, provide greater turnover of the spaces, and more efficiently use an underutilized resource in proximity to the commercial district.



(Figure 5.1) **Potential Shared Parking Lots: D=Day, E=Evening, W=Weekend**

SunTrust parking lot

Parking lot behind 2401 Mt. Vernon Avenue



Shared lot with Burke & Herbert

The existence of many underutilized private parking spaces presents an opportunity to capitalize on this resource to alleviate some of the demand on the existing supply of parking, particularly during evening and weekend hours.

A shared parking program would create greater efficiency in the use of existing public and private parking resources and reduce competition among residents, business employees and customers for on-street parking. In addition, relocating employee cars to off-street parking lots maximizes the use and turnover of on-street parking spaces by customers.

A shared parking program includes the following elements:

- **Organization**—Identify an organizational structure to initiate and manage program planning and implementation, preferably through an existing organization such as PWBA
- **Targeted Users**—Identify businesses, employees and tenants as potential parkers
- **Operational Factors**—Identify and address issues and costs associated with:

  Liability insurance

  Parking lot maintenance

  Parking usage and availability

  Possible conflicts with existing SUP approvals
- **Promotion**—Develop an approach to promote the use of the lots, provide incentives, if needed, to encourage employee use, and create community awareness
- **Monitoring**—Establish a program to monitor and evaluate the operation and success of the program over time

Instituting a shared parking program would require the cooperative and collaborative efforts of the owners of targeted private parking lots, business owners and their employees, and nearby residents. In order for the strategy to work and to shift some existing parking demand from on-street spaces to these private lots, lot owners must be willing to allow shared parking on their lots during non-peak hours. Initial discussions with property owners of the targeted parking lots were favorable and owners expressed an interest in a shared parking program.

Business owners and their employees would be the most likely group to utilize the shared parking lots. These individuals could park in the shared lot spaces, thus allowing greater utilization of the on-street spaces by customers. This would afford greater turnover of the highly visible on-street parking spaces that are preferred by customers.

With business owners and employees being the main users of the shared private parking lots, the lot owners would have a degree of certainty as to the users of their parking, and tags or stickers could be assigned to those parkers. Initial discussions with private parking lot owners have been mostly favorable, however some owners have expressed concerns about liability, lot maintenance, lighting and compensation. These concerns must be addressed to as part of the implementation of this strategy. In addition, the ability to monitor, promote and address parking-related issues that may arise is necessary to ensure the success of this strategy.

Parking Overlay District

Another element of this parking strategy is to create parking flexibility within the Historic Core where the ability to provide additional parking is severely constrained by the small parcels and the desire to maintain the historic structures and character. A parking overlay district for the Historic Core area provides a zoning mechanism to allow a reduction or waiver of parking requirements for defined situations. Currently, whenever a change of use occurs (e.g.., from office to retail use), the new use is required to comply with today's off-street parking requirement. However, in most cases, buildings were not constructed with off-street parking spaces or with enough land to construct new parking. Many properties along Mt. Vernon Avenue share these constraints, so in order to allow for uses to change without discouraging new businesses or requiring special use permit approval by City Council, it is recommended that flexibility be provided in certain cases.

In the Historic Core, the recommendations are to:

- Waive the increase in parking requirements when an existing office or personal service use changes to retail;
- Waive the parking requirement for outdoor seating at restaurants and cafes;
- Reduce parking requirements for compatible infill development and additions, consistent with the Building Form Design Guidelines, except where such construction results in the demolition of existing historically contributing buildings.

Given the size and shape of existing parcels, it is nearly impossible to construct a new building or addition and provide all of the required parking on-site. Moreover, the demolition of existing buildings and consolidation of lots is not desirable in this historic district as it detracts from the visual quality and historic character of the area.

The parking strategy balances small increases in density and changes in use with significant development, and requires the latter to comply with the existing parking regulations thereby accommodating parking demand on the site.

A rational reduction in parking requirements for infill projects will allow small buildings or additions while providing some on-site parking. It is expected that this approach will result in minimal, if any, adverse impacts on the balance of supply of and demand for parking due to the mixed-use nature of the neighborhood

Parking Reduction Policy

The above parking recommendations recognize that the typical land parcel in Del Ray does not allow opportunity for parking sufficient to meet the requirement as expressed in the zoning ordinance. At the same time, it is important to maintain those small lots in order to retain the Main Street character of the area, with its small and varied buildings and uses. The goal of the *Plan* is to protect adjacent residential neighborhoods, while encouraging the neighborhood-oriented eclectic mix of retail, personal service and residential uses.

The Building Form Design Guidelines for infill and new buildings address the parking issue and anticipate a waiver of parking in development cases. The extent of the waiver will depend on the size of the development and the land parcel, the type (residential or commercial), and the development's compliance with the form based Building Form Design Guidelines for development.

As to individual uses that may not involve new building, the parking reduction SUP has been routinely employed in the past to allow new uses to occupy buildings without compliance with standard parking requirements. While it would be preferable for new restaurants or other uses to avoid the necessity of the SUP, there is a concern that a global alternative, such as a legislative waiver of parking for all uses on Mount Vernon Avenue, would be too sweeping in application, and that a waiver as to some uses would be too prejudicial. In fact, the uniqueness of each application – both the use and the location – argues in favor of continued treatment on a case by case basis.

On the other hand, this *Plan* is an opportunity to address the issue with regard to future parking reduction cases. The following policy statements should be considered in assessing those cases:

1. Generally, parking reduction SUPs for individual uses are favored where individual small lots are not capable of providing sufficient parking to meet requirements.
2. The small size of most Mount Vernon Avenue lots is a desirable and character defining feature of the area.
3. Continued economic development of Mt Vernon Avenue involves the attraction and approval of new uses, including restaurants and music venues, as well as retail uses. From an economic development standpoint, it is important that new uses of a type consistent with this *Plan's* vision for the street not be foreclosed because the technical parking requirements have not been met.
4. It is imperative that adjacent residential neighborhoods be protected from overflow parking from Mount Vernon Avenue uses, especially in the evenings. Many of residences were built without parking or without adequate parking, and the occupants rely on public street parking, thus competing with commercial uses at peak times.
5. The parking analysis completed as part of this *Plan* shows that current parking demand and availability is relatively in balance, despite the fact that many uses on the Avenue do not provide the ordinance required amount of parking. This fact suggests that the natural ebb and flow of demand at various times of the day, for different uses, coupled with the pedestrian factor, works to supply approximately the right amount of parking. In fact the analysis shows that there are free spaces at certain times of the day and in some places. The *Plan* calls for periodic updated analysis, which should be considered when evaluating parking reduction cases in the future.
6. The City should review the *Plan's* parking analysis with regard to the different areas of the Mt Vernon corridor and their different parking utilization and demand characteristics when considering a parking reduction case.

7. On new development sites, the City should encourage as much parking as possible, especially where land parcels are being consolidated. The City should not allow a development to maximize its size if that means that less than full parking is provided.

8. Therefore, a parking reduction SUP should be assessed with regard to the following criteria, without limitation, as appropriate to the case:

A. Is the use providing the maximum reasonable amount of conveniently located parking possible;

· *Are spaces uniquely for the use being provided;*

· *Are there shared parking opportunities, i.e., available private parking opportunities, not in use at peak times of proposed use;*

· *Are there other arrangements for parking that are or could be made?*

B. Is there parking available in the area, as a practical matter, at the peak times of the proposed use?

C. Is the applicant taking steps to ensure that its employees will not burden the parking situation in the area?

· *Will they be required to park off street;*

· *Will they be provided off street parking;*

· *Will their Metro or transit use be subsidized or otherwise promoted?*

D. Is the applicant taking any additional steps to reduce demand or add to supply?

Monitoring Parking Demand

Inherent in these strategies is the need to monitor parking demand and utilization as well as the responsiveness of the strategies as the area changes and demand increases. The *Plan* recommendations seek to better utilize existing parking resources, while recognizing that these resources have a finite capacity.

To ensure that parking supply and demand will continue to be accommodated without resulting in spillover parking or congestion on residential streets, it is important that parking demand and utilization be monitored over time. Utilization thresholds should be developed to ensure that greater proactive measures are undertaken when necessary. At present parking utilization rates, no additional action is necessary. However, should utilization rates increase, several options should be considered to manage the parking supply, including:

- As a long term strategy, the installation of parking meters and enhanced enforcement of 2-hour parking along Mt. Vernon Avenue; and
- Creation of a residential parking permit system for adjacent streets similar to the permit system in place in Old Town.

Lastly, a public-private partnership should be established to develop new parking to accommodate demand generated by increased development or demand that exceeds the available supply of parking.

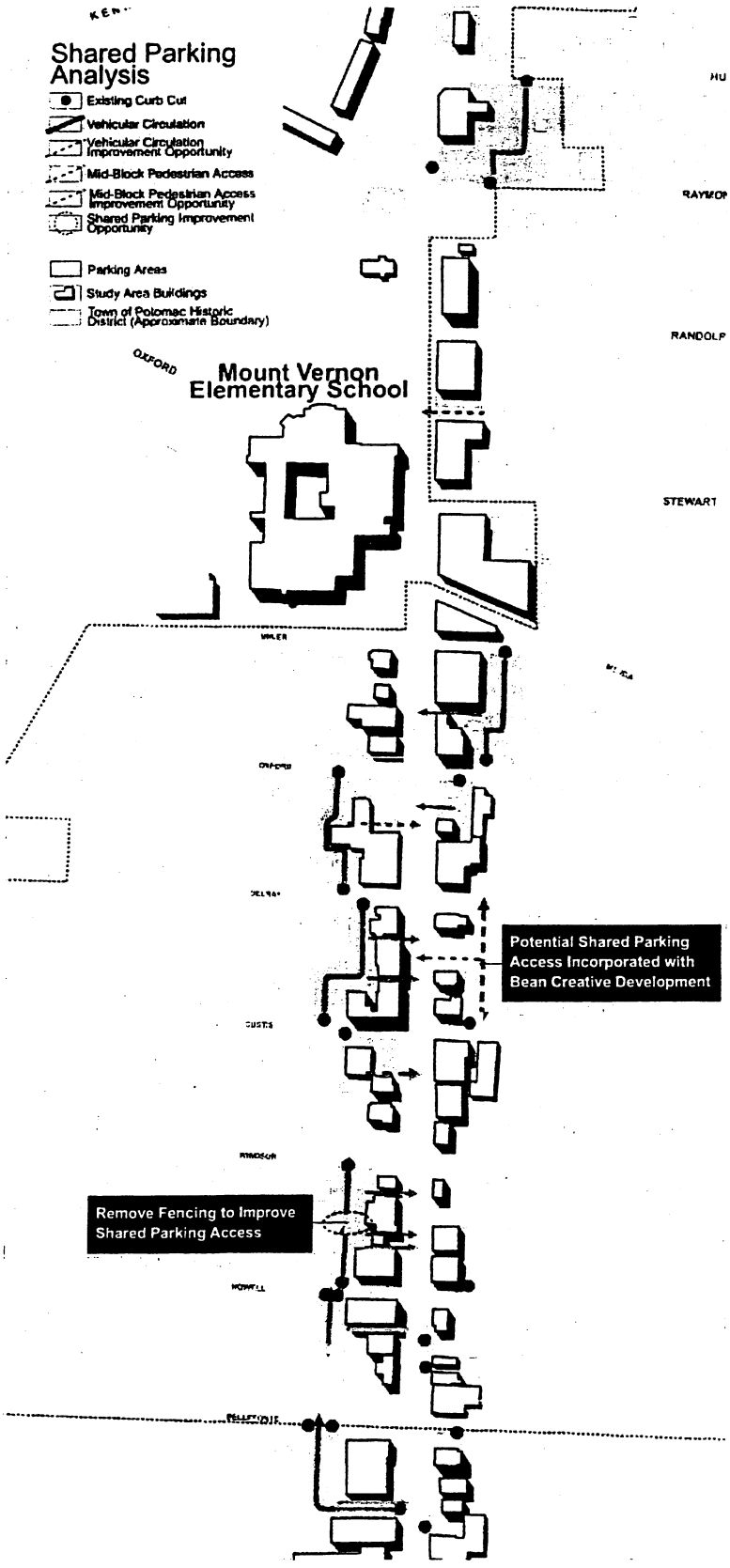


Figure 5.2 Parking Access and Connections Diagram

Additional Strategies

The following strategies are recommended to complement the proposed shared parking program.

Rear Yard Access or Rights-of-Way from Alleys

There is opportunity to provide rear access to existing parking lots and between adjoining lots where alleys do not currently exist. To take full advantage of the opportunities, it will be necessary to work with property owners to obtain cross-access easements to allow people to drive across the rear yards to access parking. While this strategy does not create many new parking spaces, it does provide the opportunity to better utilize existing resources, improve connectivity between lots and promote the use of these rear parking lots.

Improvements to the rear yards and rear portions of buildings will make these areas more attractive and desirable to use. A program similar to the existing facade improvement grant program could be developed with the goal of improving these rear yard spaces. The provision of signage along Mt. Vernon Avenue, as part of a coordinated approach, should also be aimed at directing drivers to these rear parking areas. In the case of new construction and substantial property upgrades, implementation of connections should be required where feasible.

Greater Enforcement of Existing Limitations

Enhanced enforcement of the existing parking restrictions on Mt. Vernon Avenue will ensure consistent turnover of the spaces and allow greater parking opportunities for customers.

Identify Spaces for Short-Term Parking

Several business operators who depend on providing quick in-and-out service to their customers have expressed the desire for a few, shorter-term parking spaces on Mt. Vernon Avenue. The suggestion is to allow a single 15-minute or 30-minute parking space adjacent to those businesses whose customer base is characterized by a series of brief customer visits over the course of a day. Unlike other retail stores, customers to these businesses usually spend a brief amount of time inside the business and use the parking for a few minutes at most.

To accommodate this demand, it is recommended that two, shorter-term spaces be provided on Mt. Vernon Avenue. To address current business needs, one space should be located on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue in the 2300 block adjacent to St. Elmo's Coffee Pub and the UPS Store. The second space should be located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue in the 2600 block adjacent to Happy Photo. These spaces should be periodically evaluated after designation to ensure they function as intended.

Resolve Conflicts in Parking Limitations at Mt. Vernon Community School

The existing parking restrictions on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue adjacent to Mt. Vernon Community School are inconsistent and oftentimes confusing because there are numerous signs with different hours and regulations posted within the school's immediate vicinity.

Short Term Parking Space adjacent to St. Elmo's Coffee

Short Term Parking Space adjacent to Happy Photo

It is recommended that these restrictions be reviewed in toto and changes made to:

- Clearly identify and simplify the hours during which parking is and is not permitted along the street;
- Allow 2-hour parking in the existing 30-minute parking space area during non-pick-up and drop-off times for the school; and,
- Extend the existing 2-hour parking north along Mt. Vernon Avenue in the vicinity of the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center.

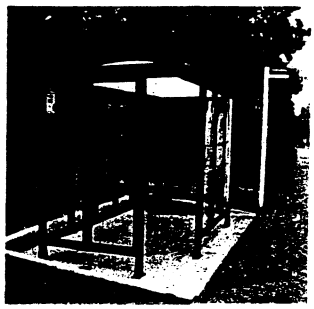
Taxicab Stand location at Alexandria Hyundai

Taxicab Stand location at Windsor Avenue

Identify Possible Locations for Existing Taxicab Stand

A taxicab stand with three spaces is currently located on Mt. Vernon Avenue at the northwest corner of the intersection with Windsor Avenue, a location where the demand for parking spaces is high to serve the nearby businesses. In its present location, the stand is underutilized and occupies nearly 70 feet of street frontage. This area would be better utilized as parking for adjacent businesses; thus relocation of the stand is recommended.

The most suitable location for the taxicab stand is the east side of the 1600 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue, in front of the Alexandria Hyundai storage lot. The advantage of this location is that there is currently a prohibition of parking at that location, thus no on-street spaces would be lost to the taxi stand relocation. Additionally, it is near the active uses in the vicinity of Monroe Avenue (including laundry, convenience retail store, and a deli/carry-out) that are likely to generate more taxicab fares than the commercial uses in the vicinity of the existing taxicab stand.



Bus Shelter

DASH Bus

5.4 Pedestrian Strategy and Recommendations

Improvements on the Avenue should continue to be geared towards "heels and wheels," to ensure that it is safe and attractive for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles alike. Provisions for alternative modes of transportation, in addition to vehicular, can improve the pedestrian experience, alleviate congestion, and reduce parking demand. A multi-modal strategy is recommended, consisting of a series of interconnected and supporting strategies designed to increase the use of various modes of transportation.

Recommendations

To support and enhance the existing pedestrian-oriented nature of Mt. Vernon Avenue and its nearby residential neighborhoods, the Plan's multi-modal strategy includes transit, walking and bicycling, as well as parking and circulation improvements, with the following elements:

Encourage greater use and availability of transit by:

- Enhancing existing bus stops with benches, shelters and schedules
- Promoting public transit as a way to get to the Avenue
- Providing better pedestrian connections to the Braddock Road Metro Station

  Work with the School Board to formalize a safe, accessible path for pedestrians and students

- Provide DASH bus service along the Avenue

  Contingent on the construction of a new bus maintenance facility and purchase of new buses (anticipated completion of the bus maintenance facility in 2008)

  Provide new cross-town routes to connect the Avenue with other neighborhoods in the City

  Provide loop service to Potomac Yard

Encourage walking and bicycling by providing streetscape and lighting improvements along the Avenue:

- Improve pedestrian crossings
- Provide bicycle racks

Reduce the potential for speeding, increase pedestrian safety, and enhance the streetscape along the four-lane section of Mt. Vernon Avenue north of Commonwealth Avenue by:

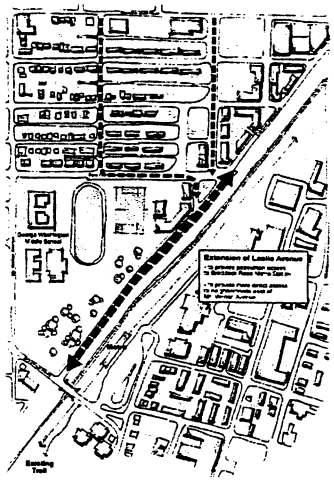
- Restriping Mt. Vernon Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue to West Glebe Road to create two, 11-foot wide travel lanes, two 5-foot wide bicycle lanes, and an 8-foot wide parking lane; or 2 travel lanes and two parking lanes. Work with the City of Alexandria's bicycle community on the need for / desirability of bike lanes.
- Constructing bulb-outs on each side of the Avenue at Commonwealth Avenue, Kennedy Street, and Sanborn Place

Prioritize the pedestrian over the automobile in the redevelopment of automobile-oriented uses, such as the gas stations, service uses, and automobile dealerships, to ensure a pedestrian friendly environment.

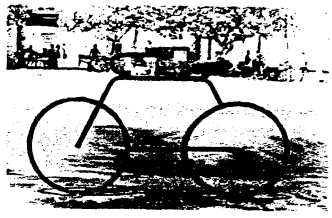
Wherever possible, the signage and wayfinding systems along the Avenue should direct pedestrians and cyclists between the trail system, Mt. Vernon Avenue and links to the bus and rail networks. Where appropriate, trails should be improved by reinforcing them with proper striping when part of the street, and with markers and lighting when part of natural surfaces in off-road areas. Trail systems should be highlighted on kiosks and bus shelters along with route and on scheduling information for buses and Metrorail.

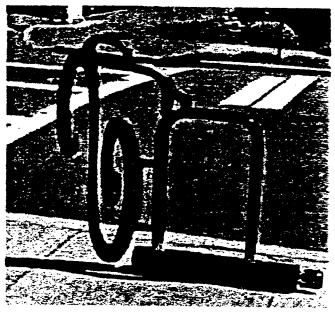
An existing dedicated bicycle lane is located just west of the study area along Commonwealth Avenue. To encourage residents and visitors to use the bicycle trails, bicycle storage should be integrated in the streetscape improvements along Mt. Vernon Avenue, with clearly marked bicycle racks in public view to maintain the safety of bicycles. Bicycle racks should be designed to contribute to the character of the Avenue without disrupting pedestrian flow.

Mount Vernon Four Lane Section

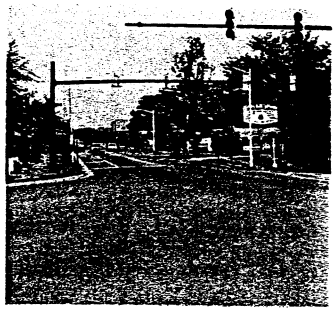


Connection to Metro





Recommended Bike Racks



Lack of Crosswalks

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Urban Design and Streetscape

6.0

Urban design involves the character and definition of those elements that make up the public realm, including the public streetscape, public and private open space, and the buildings that define and address the street. Urban character is defined by the scale and form of the buildings, the pedestrian scale, and the public spaces created by the buildings.

The urban design concept for the *Plan* recognizes the historic and eclectic character of Mt. Vernon Avenue and seeks to protect and enhance its unique character as change takes place. The *Plan* guides future development to maintain a vibrant, low-scale mixed-use neighborhood where Alexandria residents may live, work, shop and play. This chapter provides urban design recommendations for the public streetscape and the private building form to ensure quality design as envisioned by the *Plan*.

The design guidelines outlined in this chapter incorporate the existing Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines (adopted by Council in 1993). The guidelines herein shall supercede the previously adopted guidelines for this portion of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

6.1 Guiding Principles

Preserve and protect existing residential areas

- Protect nearby residences from impacts associated with commercial activity

Encourage and support a mixed-use development

- Emphasize retail uses on ground floor

Preserve existing historic scale and character

- Allow for appropriate infill development and redevelop incompatible buildings
- Implement standards and guidelines to ensure quality development that reflects the scale of existing historic structures

Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District"

- Protect and enhance the corridor's visual appearance through streetscape and façade improvements

6.2 Building Form Design Approach

Mt. Vernon Avenue is regarded as one of the region's most unique neighborhoods, due in large part to its small town, Main Street character. The current zoning regulations, however, do not provide a framework to ensure that the form and scale of new or infill development will be compatible with the historic scale and character of the existing buildings along the Avenue. With its emphasis on form, quality, and the relationship of buildings to each other and the street, a more flexible design-oriented zoning approach is appropriate to support and encourage appropriately scaled and designed new construction.

The preparation and application of a building form design approach for a particular neighborhood requires a deep understanding of the existing built environment and the relationships between the adjacent properties, uses and the street. In order to understand the unique built environment in this area, an analysis of properties along the Avenue was conducted. The analysis found several commonalities among the various sections of the Avenue, including:

- Typical commercial lot sizes are approximately 40-60 feet wide by 110 feet deep;
- Typical residential lot sizes are approximately 24 feet wide by 110 feet deep;
- Sidewalk width varies;
- Typical width of the Avenue from curb-to-curb is 40 feet;
- The street wall (i.e., the location of the face of the building) varies, but is generally located 10-15 feet from the curb; and,
- Buildings are primarily 2- 2 ½ stories in height, with some one- and three-story structures interspersed.

Existing Building Typologies

Mt. Vernon Avenue has a variety of building types (Figures 6.2 – 6.4).

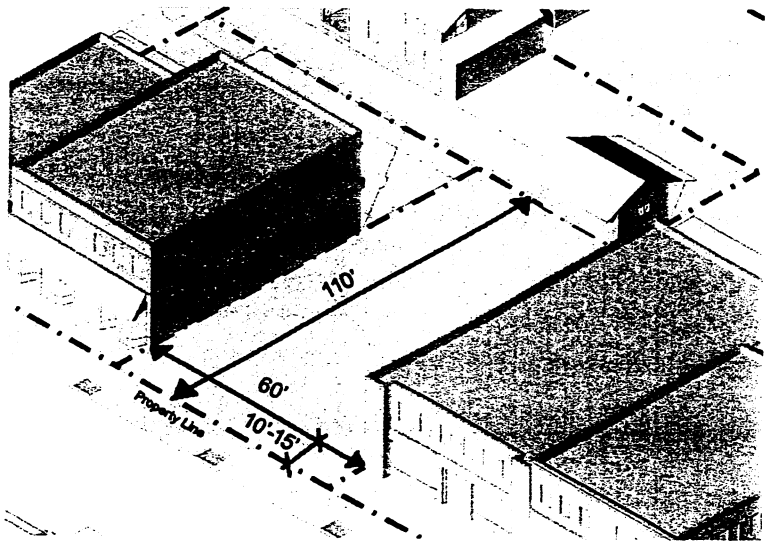


Figure 6.1 Typical infill site

- Retail / Commercial Use
- Flat roofs with parapet
- 60% Glazing / Storefront
- Awnings
- Retail Signage

- Lot Size: ~ 60'x110'
- Lot Coverage: ~ 50% - 60%
- Set Back: ~ 0'- 10'
- Building Height: ~ 12'- 16'

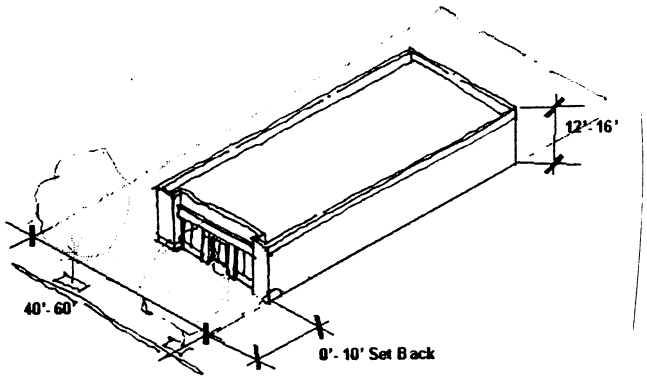


Figure 6.2 Building Typology: One Story Retail / Commercial

- Ground floor retail use
- Flat roofs with parapet
- 75% - 80% glazing/storefront at ground floor
- Vertically proportioned windows at upper floors
- Awnings, overhangs & retail signage
- Entrances, storefronts & architectural features address the corner

- Lot Size: ~ 60'x110'
- Lot Coverage: ~ 60% - 75%
- Set Back: ~ 0'- 5'
- Building Height: ~ 24'- 30'

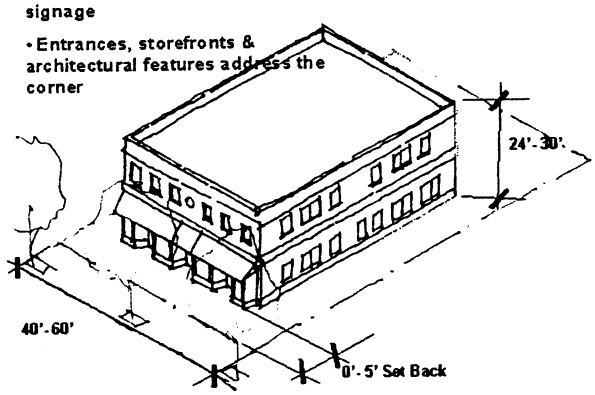


Figure 6.3 Building Typology: Two Story Retail / Commercial

- Flat roofs with parapet
- 75% - 80% Glazing/Storefront at ground floor
- Vertically proportioned windows at upper floors
- Awnings and overhangs
- Retail Signage

- Lot Size: ~ 60'x110'
- Lot Coverage: ~ 75% - 80%
- Set Back: ~ 0'- 5'
- Building Height: ~ 30'- 36'

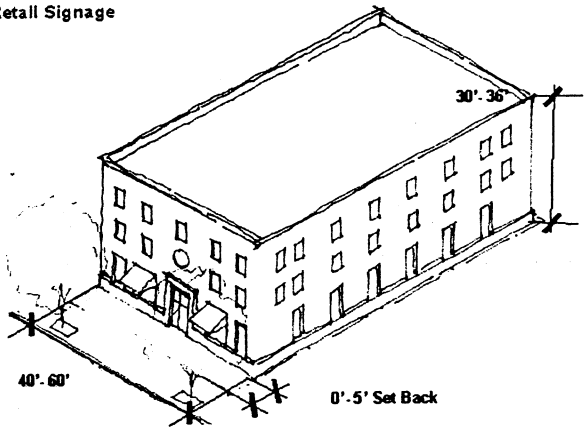


Figure 6.4 Building Typology: Three Story Retail / Commercial

- Commercial Retail - Reuse
- Gabled roof fronts street
- Fenced front yards
- Front porches ~ 8'-10' deep
- Deep roof overhangs
- Vertical windows

- Lot Size: ~ 24'x110'
- Lot Coverage: ~ 30%
- Set Back: ~ 10'- 15'
- Building Height: ~ 18'- 24'

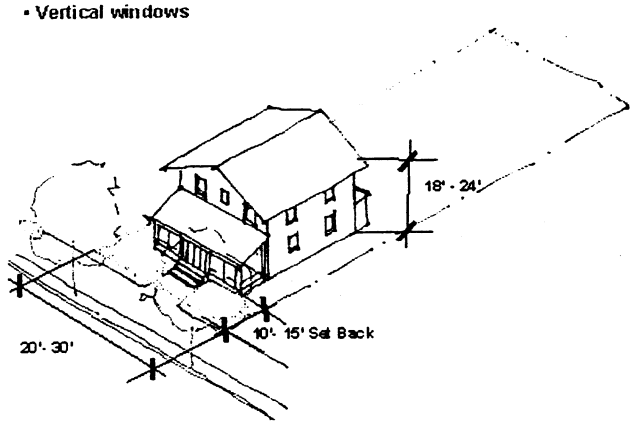


Figure 6.5 Building Typology: Single Family Detached

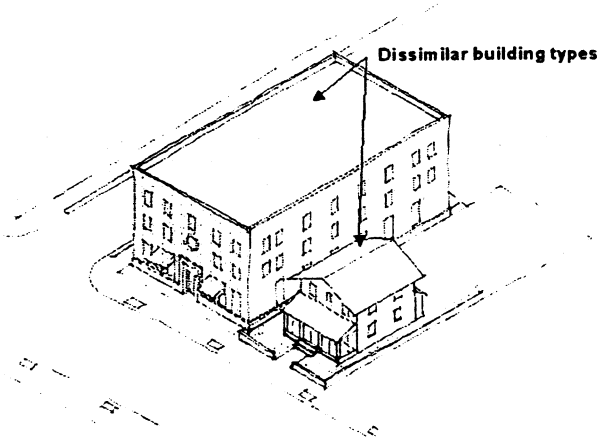


Figure 6.6 Dissimilar building types

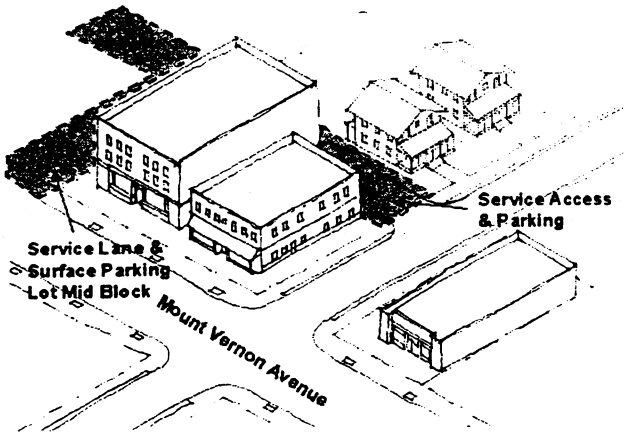


Figure 6.7 Discontinuity of pedestrian flow with mid block curb cut

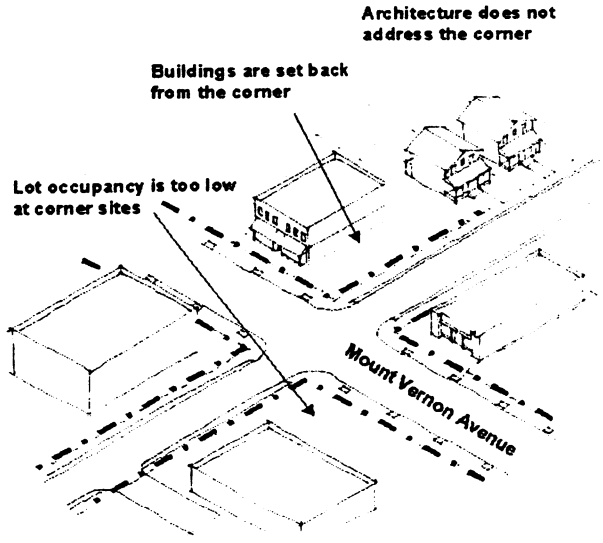


Figure 6.8 Lack of street wall and definitions at corners.

Issues and Challenges

Critical to this analysis was an understanding of the location of the buildings and parking and their relationship to adjacent commercial and residential properties. As part of this analysis, issues and challenges were identified to assist in the development of the design principles that underlie the building form design approach. These issues and challenges include:

- Instances of dissimilar building types that create variety and diversity in some places and discontinuity of the street wall in other places;
- Building scale, setbacks and massing that are out of proportion or lack appropriate transition between building types;
- The presence of historic structures that should be preserved to maintain the history and character of the street;
- Small infill lots with little opportunity for access to rear yards for parking;
- Some building setbacks and surface parking lots compromise the definition of the street wall;
- Retail and commercial service uses abut to residential uses creating undesirable impacts when the screening/ buffering is inadequate;
- Vehicle access directly from Mt. Vernon Avenue interrupts the street wall, as well as the continuity of pedestrian flow and retail when located mid-block; and,
- Lack of street wall definition at some corners where the lot occupancy is low, the buildings are set back from the corner or the architecture does not address its corner location

Overall Design Principles

The building form design approach is intended to build on the existing pattern of development along the Avenue while preserving the scale of buildings within the historic district and minimizing impacts on the residences that abut the commercial properties.

Generally, the design principles meet the following objectives:

- New construction should reflect the scale of existing buildings;
- A consistent street wall should be maintained, with some variations to allow for landscaped open space, an opportunity for side windows and for other site use where desired;
- New construction should be two to two and one-half stories, with a setback where a third story is provided;
- New buildings should help define the corners where side streets intersect Mt. Vernon Avenue. Ground level retail storefront windows should extend onto the side streets;
- Appropriate building setbacks and parking lot screening will minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties;
- Ground level retail storefronts should contribute to the vitality of the street-scape and the pedestrian experience;
- Direct driveway access to Mt. Vernon Avenue is not desirable; and,
- Off-street parking lots should be located to the rear of the property, with access provided from rear alleys, when available, side streets or access ease-ments from adjoining properties.

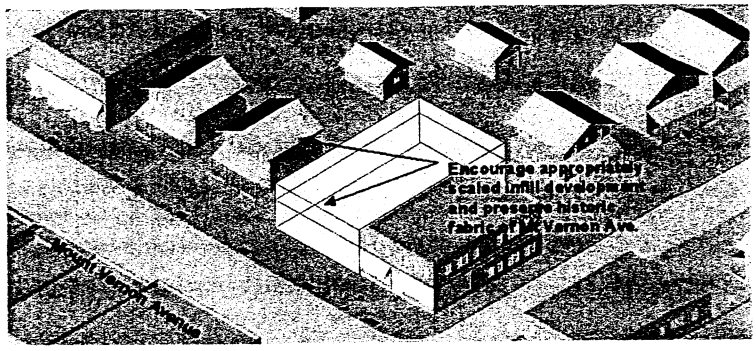


Figure 6.9 Encourage appropriately scaled infill

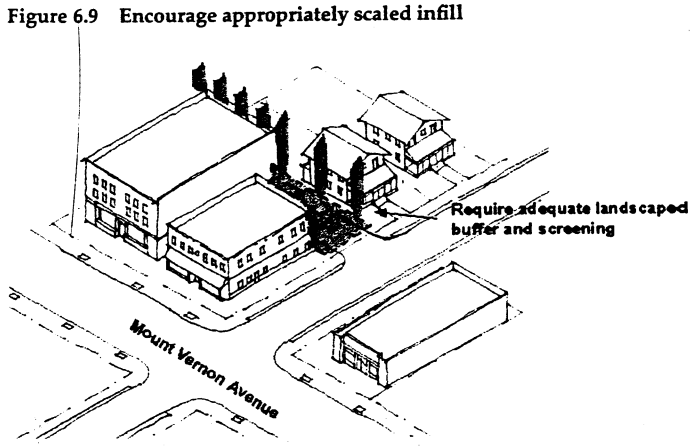


Figure 6.10 Buffer adjoining residences

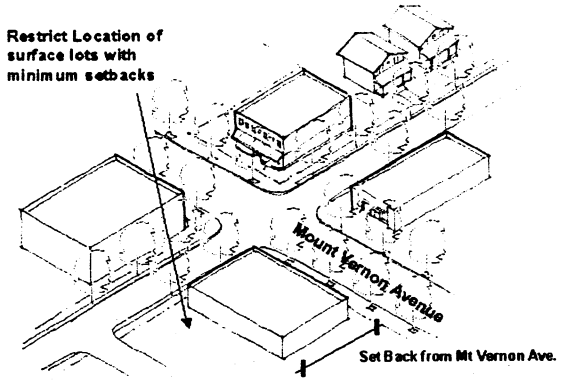


Figure 6.11 Parking in rear

6.3 Specific Building Form Design Guidelines

The guidelines are set forth visually, with graphics depicting the desired form and location of buildings and parking areas, building massing, height and scale, building facades, and screening requirements. A brief discussion of the design intent accompanies each graphic.

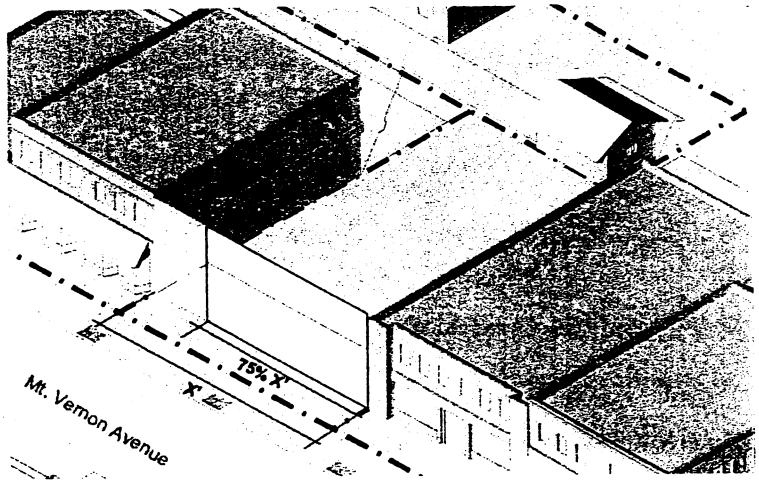


Figure 6.13 Street frontage interior site

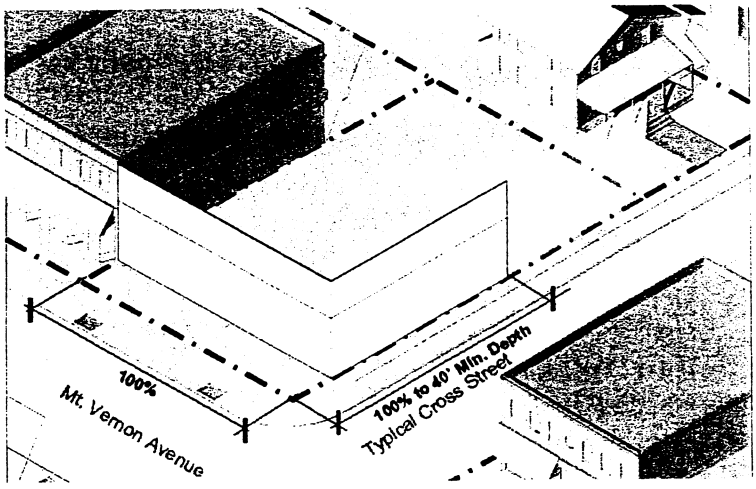


Figure 6.14 Street frontage corner site

Street Wall and Frontage

DESIGN INTENT

New construction will define the street wall with a similar height and scale to existing buildings, while minimizing gaps in the continuity of the urban fabric along the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor and the commercial transition on the corners of the side streets.

On interior sites

It is desirable to have definition of the full frontage along the street. Buildings should define a minimum of 75% of the street wall for the width of lot. The remaining 25% of lot width may be occupied by landscaping, garden walls or similar defining features. (Figure 6.13)

On corner sites

Buildings are expected to define 100% of the street front along Mt. Vernon Avenue and 100% of the street front to a depth of 40 feet back from the front building wall on the cross street. The primary building entrance should be on Mt. Vernon Avenue or, where appropriate, oriented toward the corner. However, when the corner is used as an entry or architectural focal element, alteration of the street wall at the corner may be appropriate. (Figure 6.14)

DESIGN INTENT

New development will maintain the continuity of the street wall and contribute to the subtle variety and complexity of building facades along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Building facades must be located within 10 – 15 feet of the front property line and align, where appropriate, with at least one existing neighboring building face to maintain continuity in the street wall. (Figure 6.15)

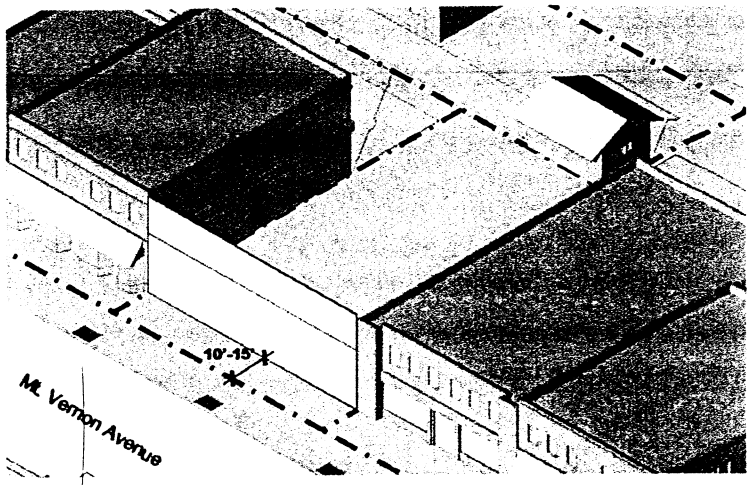


Figure 6.15 **Continuity of street wall**

DESIGN INTENT

Architectural elements are used to provide architectural interest and heighten pedestrian activity at the ground level.

Entry to retail, commercial and institutional buildings should be directly at ground level. The entry to the building should be clearly visible from the street. Prominent, defined entries are encouraged for both architectural interest and as an element of scale and orientation.

Architectural details, such as a change in materials, ornamentation and the use of smaller, human scaled elements will be provided at the pedestrian level. (Figure 6.16)

Figure 6.16 **Architectural detail and interest**

Building Height and Massing

DESIGN INTENT

New construction will be similar in height and scale to existing buildings along the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor.

A minimum two-story façade (a minimum of 25 feet in height) is required along Mt. Vernon Avenue. A maximum of three stories, where compatible with existing scale, with a required 10-15-foot setback at the third floor, is permitted along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Where a sloped roof and dormers are proposed, no setback is required at the third floor.

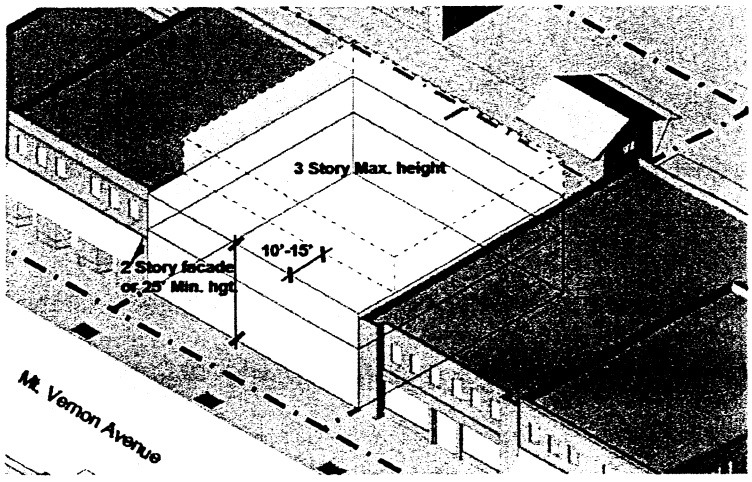


Figure 6.17 **Building height and massing**

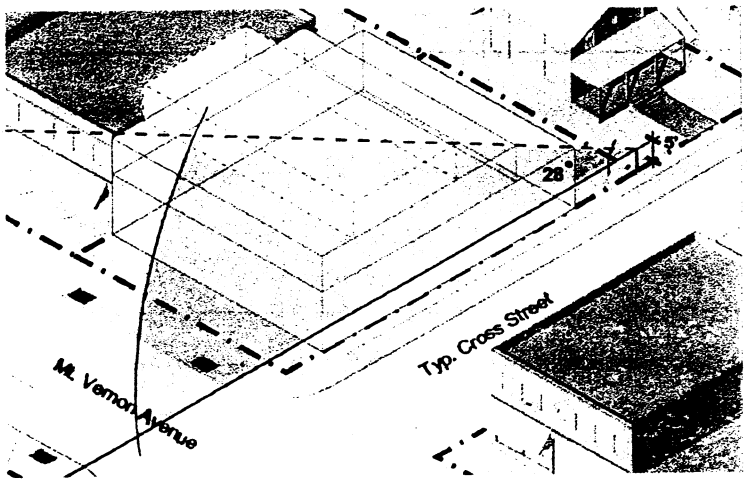


Figure 6.18 **28 degree setback angle**

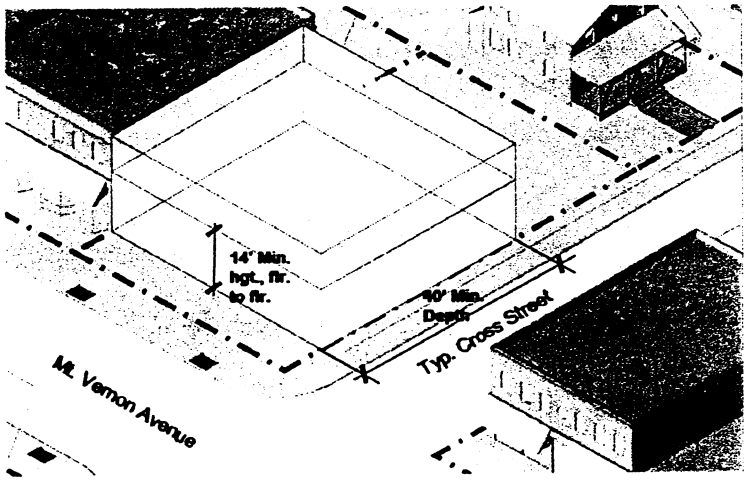


Figure 6.19 **Retail floor height and depth**

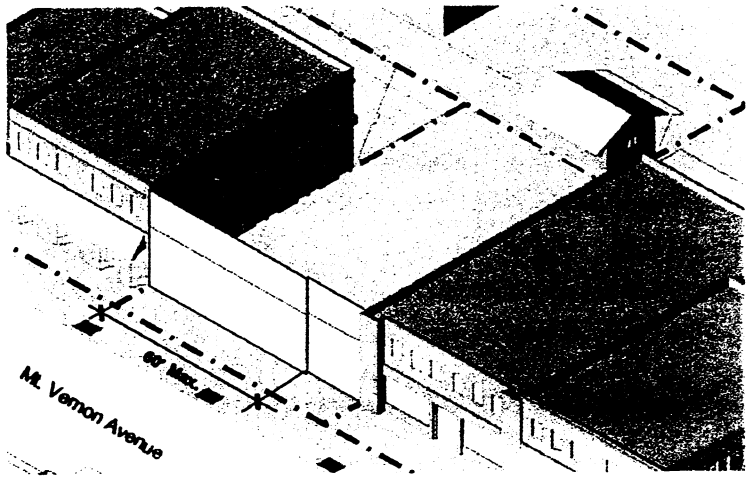


Figure 6.20 **Maximum width of continuous facade**

DESIGN INTENT

Appropriate massing for new construction provides adequate setbacks for light, air and privacy to neighboring residential uses, while maximizing development opportunity

Building mass and height may not exceed a 28-degree setback angle measured from 5-feet above the ground at the rear property line. (Figure 6.18)

Ground floor retail in newly constructed buildings particularly in the retail focus area should have a minimum 12-13 foot floor-to-floor height and a minimum depth of 40 feet for the width of the building. Larger retail spaces should have higher floor-to-floor heights, such as the 14-foot minimum shown in Figure 6.19.

DESIGN INTENT

Facades on new construction have surface articulation and variation in a scale and complexity similar to existing building facades along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Building facades may have a maximum width of 60 feet of continuous vertical surface, after which a change in material, plane or vertical articulation is required. Further articulation within the 60-foot width is necessary to break down the building mass into smaller units. Large blank facades are not allowed. (Figure 6.20)

All new development must approximate in street front appearance the existing Mt. Vernon Avenue character of 40-foot to 60-foot wide two story buildings with varying roof heights and setbacks. For new construction that occupies a lot or lots larger than the typical lot of 60 feet by 110 feet, the buildings must be designed to look smaller or have the appearance of separate buildings, with a change in architectural treatment of facades, setbacks, roof lines and styles in order to break up the mass of the buildings. (Figure 6.21)

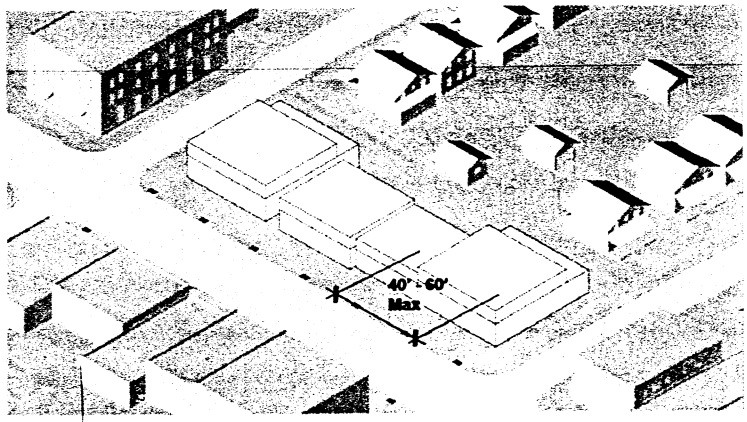


Figure 6.21 **Maintain 40–60 foot module**

DESIGN INTENT

Appropriate massing and roof forms enhance the architectural character of the street and add to the continuity and variety of the street wall.

Architectural elements, such as dormers or details at the cornice level help to break down the apparent mass of the building, compensate for changes in height and scale with existing buildings and create interest in the skyline.

A variety of roof forms are encouraged, including flat with a parapet, sloped with ridge parallel to Mt. Vernon Avenue or a combination of sloped, flat, or appropriately designed forms. Roofs are restricted to a maximum height of 40 feet to the top of the parapet for flat roofs and 40 feet to the mid-point of the slope for all sloped roofs. (Figure 6.22)

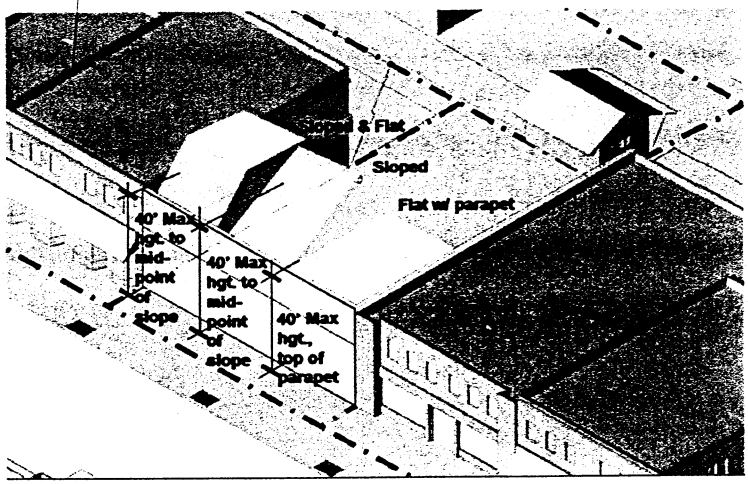


Figure 6.22 **Building height**

Buildings are encouraged to include 3rd floor "loft-type" space (such as illustrated in Figure 6.17) that are stepped back from the front building wall at the second story, creating useable outdoor open space on the second story roof. Such buildings may include unique roof designs on the third floor such as angled or curved trusses which create "loft-type" volume spaces. Such roofs shall be no higher than 45 feet at their highest point.

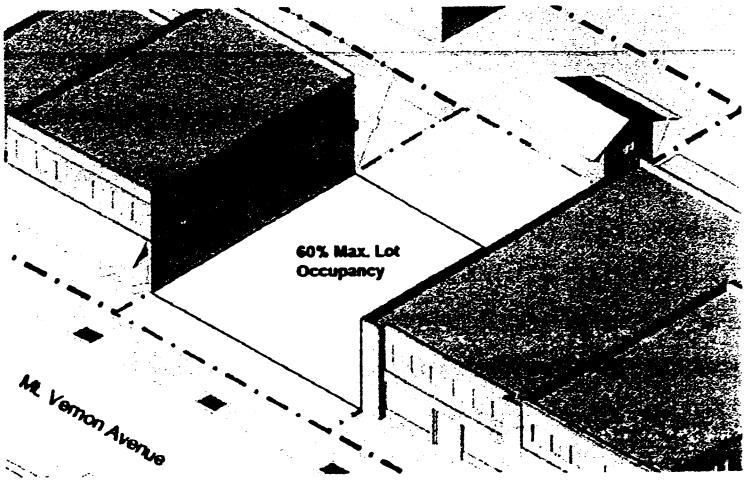


Figure 6.23 **Lot occupancy**

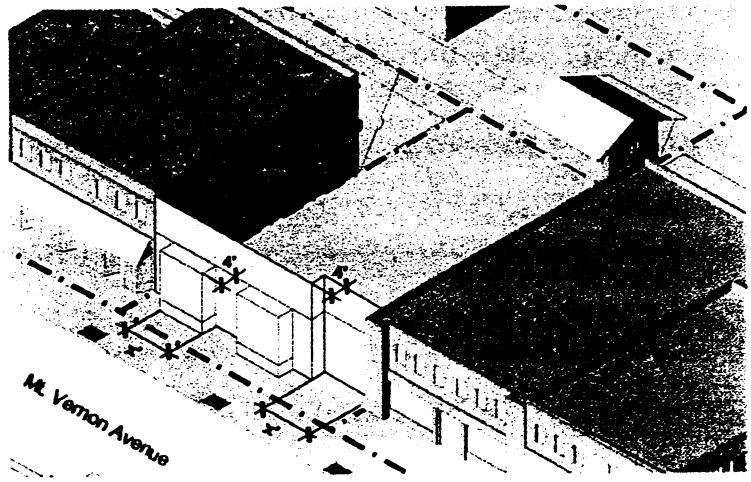


Figure 6.24 **Facade articulation**

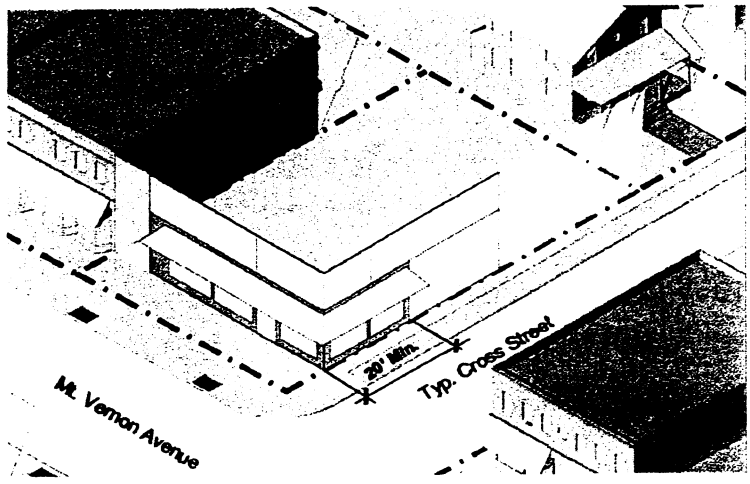


Figure 6.25 **Corner articulation**

Lot Occupancy

Maximum lot occupancy of 60% is required on Mt. Vernon Avenue to accommodate building placement on the front of the lot and parking/screening on the rear of lots, except on small lots where off-street parking is waived. In such case, consideration may be made to increase the lot occupancy based on the merit of a given proposal. (Figure 6.23)

Facade Articulation

DESIGN INTENT

Diversity of the surface articulation and variation of building facades is accomplished through setbacks and projections while minimizing their intrusion into the building setback or detraction from the continuity of the street wall.

Building façade projections and setbacks may have a maximum depth of 4 feet while maintaining the desired 10-foot setback. Bays or other more subtle means of façade articulation are encouraged. (Figure 6.24)

DESIGN INTENT

Architectural features address the corner and ensure the character and activity of the streetscape extend along the cross streets of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Ground level retail storefront windows should extend a minimum of 20 feet along cross streets. The building's primary entrance shall be on Mt. Vernon Avenue or on the corner. Architecture is expected to address and articulate the corner of intersecting streets. (Figure 6.25)

DESIGN INTENT

Building façades contribute to the architectural character by creating a high amount of transparency at the ground level and a higher opacity on the upper floors.

For retail/commercial uses the wall/window ratio must be a minimum of 25/75, with 75% glazing on the storefront. For all uses other than retail/commercial, ground and uppers floors of building facades must have 30% to 50% glass, as a percentage of the wall surface. Individual "punched" or framed windows shall be provided on the upper levels. (Figure 6.26)

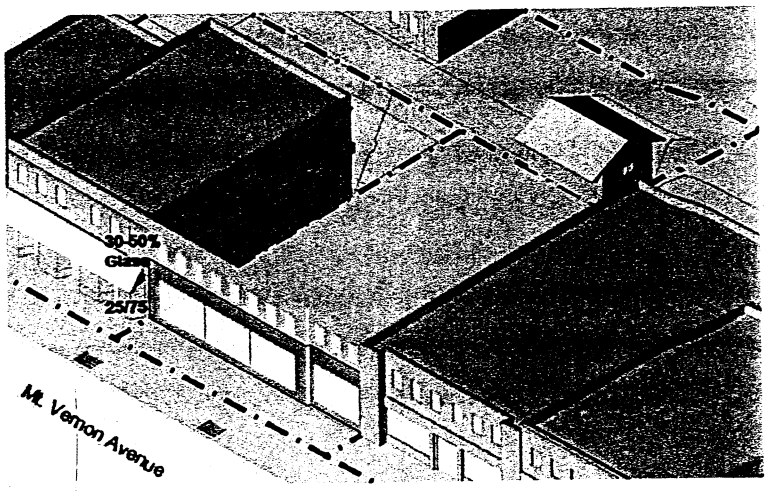


Figure 6.26 Wall / Window ratio

The upper floor windows of new buildings must be vertically proportioned and appropriately scaled to the building façade. The ratio of window height to width should be 1.75/1 or greater. (Figure 6.27)

Figure 6.27 Window proportion

Parking and Screening

DESIGN INTENT

Gaps in the continuity of the street wall are minimized and the pedestrian experience is strengthened by prohibiting curb cuts along Mt. Vernon Avenue and restricting the width and number of curb cuts along side streets.

On interior sites

Curb cuts along Mt. Vernon Avenue are strongly discouraged. Vehicular access to the property should be provided in the rear from alleys or easement from adjoining property/parking area. Where that is not feasible and the proposed development is well-designed, strong consideration will be given for reasonable waiver to parking requirements. (Figure 6.28)

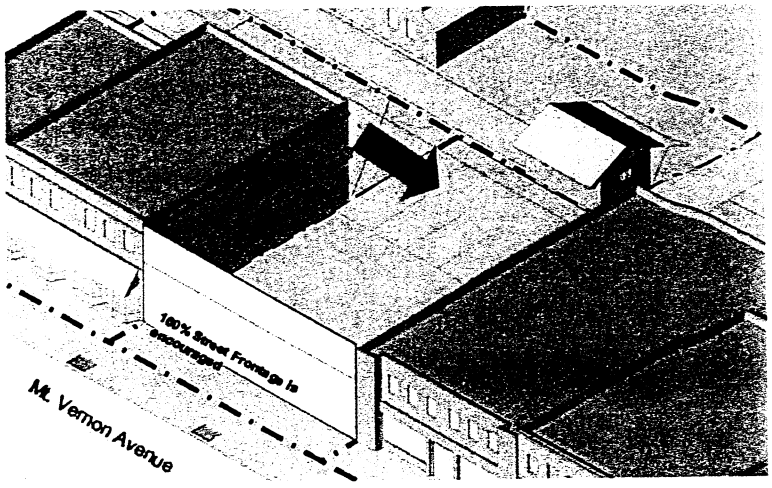


Figure 6.28 Restrict curb cuts on Mt. Vernon Avenue

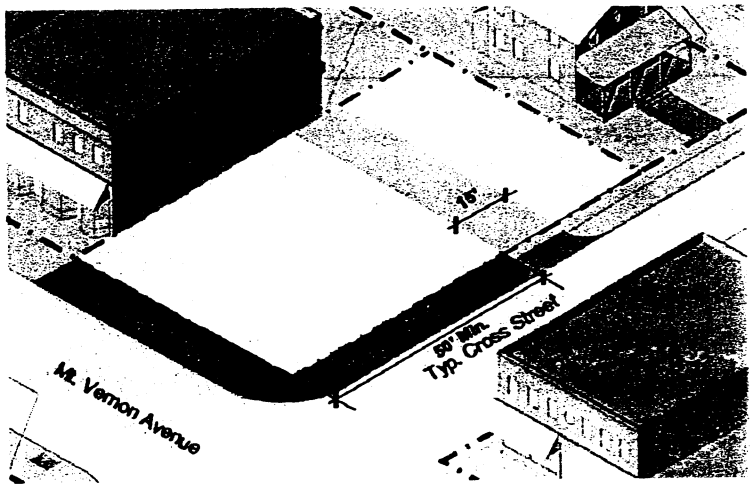


Figure 6.29 Access on corner lots

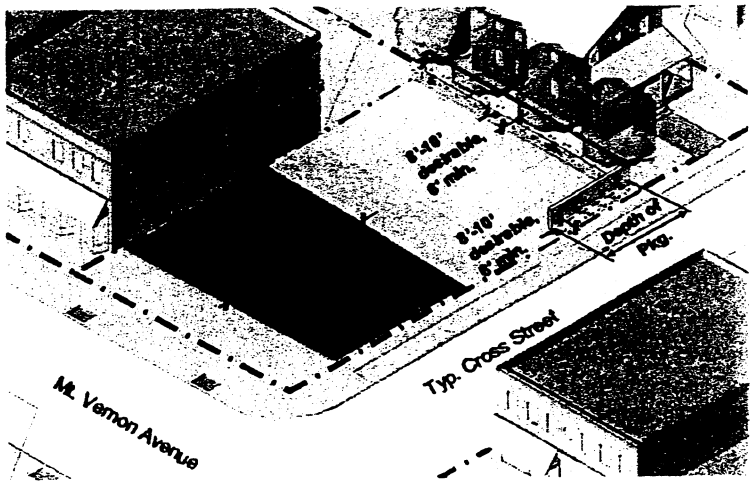


Figure 6.30 Parking and screening

On corner sites

Curb cuts are prohibited along Mt. Vernon Avenue for corner sites. Rear yard and parking for corner sites must be accessed from cross streets. While 100% street frontage is encouraged, one curb cut with a 15-foot drive lane is permitted along the cross street provided it is set back 50 feet from the property line at Mt. Vernon Avenue. (Figure 6.29)

DESIGN INTENT

The suitable location of surface parking minimizes gaps in the continuity of the street wall and provides appropriate setbacks for screening and landscape buffering to reduce impacts on neighboring residential uses.

Above grade and surface parking lots must be setback a minimum of 40 feet from Mt. Vernon Avenue. An 8 – 10-foot landscaped screening buffer is desired (with a 6-foot minimum depending on the quality of the screening) at the rear of the lot (and on the side street for corner lots) for the entire depth of the parking lot, except where a rear alley intersects perpendicular to the lot. In such instance, a break in the screening buffer is required to accommodate current or future access. Regardless of whether the parking requirement has been waived or reduced, a buffer must be provided as described above to provide screening for adjacent uses.

This design standard does not apply to the Town Square site, as it abuts commercially used property to the rear and the goal in the design of the square it to integrate it into the design of the streetscape, providing the opportunity for both large and small gathering spaces.

6.4 Storefront Guidelines

It is important to maintain consistency in building facades and related treatments throughout the Avenue, particularly with Mt. Vernon Avenue's mix of architectural styles and colors that have evolved as

the surrounding areas have grown over the last few decades (Figures 6.31 and 6.32 illustrate various configurations of appropriately desired storefronts).

Storefront Design

Storefronts are generally the first point of contact with potential customers and define the character of a neighborhood and retail street. Standardized or generic storefronts are strongly discouraged on Mt. Vernon Avenue. Storefront design should reinforce the "Main Street" quality of the Avenue, with its unique small town character. Storefront design should include as many of the following elements as possible:

- Individual storefronts displays should change often to add richness to the Avenue
- The primary pedestrian entrance should directly front along the sidewalk or at the corner
- On corner sites, ground level retail storefront windows should extend a minimum of 20 feet along the side street, and both the architecture of the building and the storefront design should address and articulate the corner at intersections along the Avenue
- Storefronts should have a minimum of 75 percent glass at the ground floor facade
- Creative displays of merchandise and services should be included in storefront windows
- Ground level storefronts are encouraged to have exterior awnings that are coordinated with the storefront design. Along the Avenue, particularly in the historic district, shed or sloped awnings are strongly encouraged and are more appropriate than other awning forms. Awnings shall not overwhelm or obscure the architecture and decorative features of historically contributing buildings. Awnings shall not be backlit.

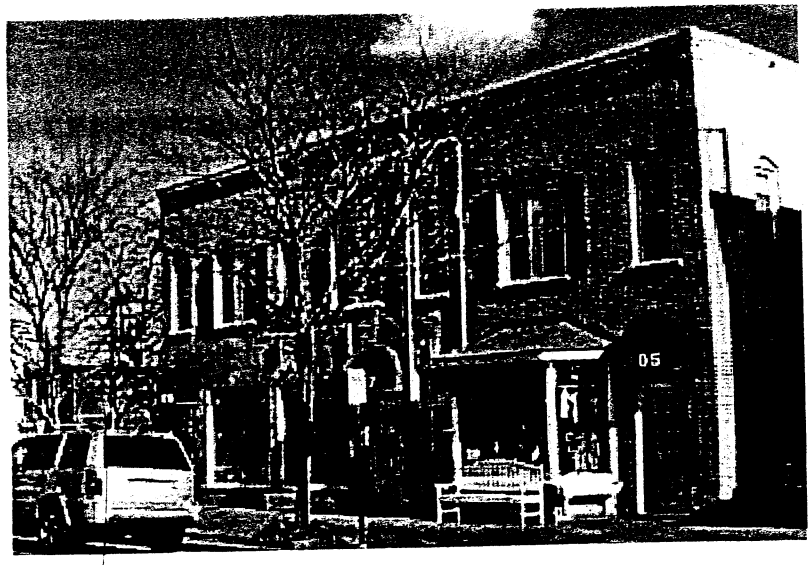


Figure 6.31 Quality storefront

Figure 6.32 Quality storefront

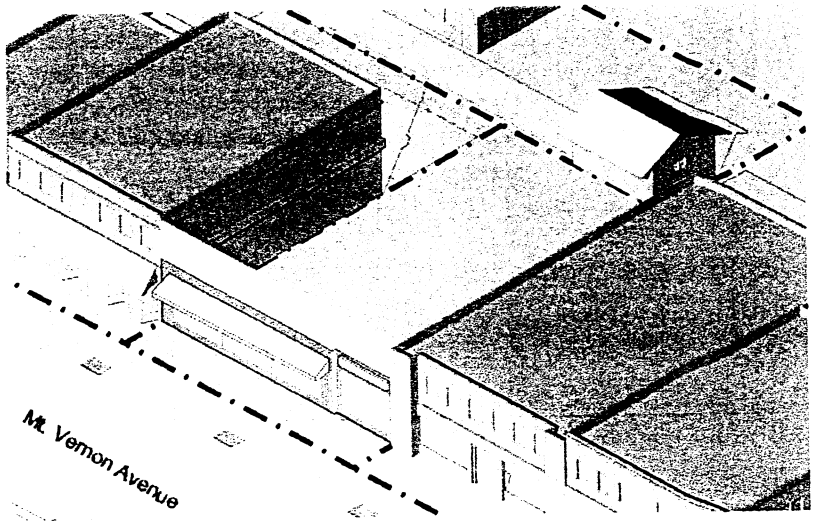
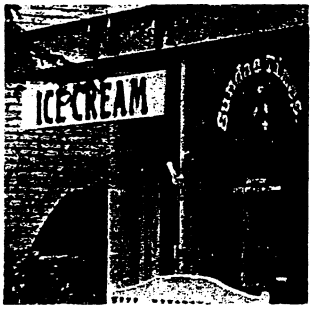


Figure 6.33 Awnings

Building Signage

Business name on Awning



Variety of sign types

Signage should clearly communicate the business name and should be restricted to the ground level. Facades should be enhanced through awnings, decorative signage, unique window dressings and displays, and detailed trim to add variety to the street wall and distinguish stores from one another. These improvements will enhance the pedestrian experience by offering interesting outposts of stores, eateries and miscellaneous services through a unique visual journey along the Avenue.

Signage should be consistent in scale and language, appropriate to the surrounding context and oriented to the pedestrian. Bright and flashy themed signs should be avoided, as they are not in character with the local neighborhood. Most architectural facades along the Mt. Vernon Avenue are traditional in style; in order to preserve this character, they should not be overwhelmed with signage. Commercial signage on the Avenue should consist of small scale, wall mounted signs located between the first and second floors of a building, glass-applied signage in storefront windows, or those hung from posts perpendicular to the building facade. Internally illuminated box signs should be prohibited and existing signs should be replaced with appropriate signage. Freestanding signs should be prohibited. For buildings with multiple retail units, a coordinated signage approach is desired.

6.5 Pedestrian Environment and Streetscape Recommendations

The *Plan* recommends improvements to lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, signage, site amenities, including street furniture and public art to improve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Sidewalks and Right-of-Way Treatment

Sidewalks are generally adequate and easily navigable by foot, but paving type and texture are inconsistent throughout the Avenue. As the Avenue evolved from residential uses to a combination of uses, sidewalks outside of the improved area have remained narrow and unimproved. This is particularly evident in the treatment of the strip of land between the public right-of-way and private property.

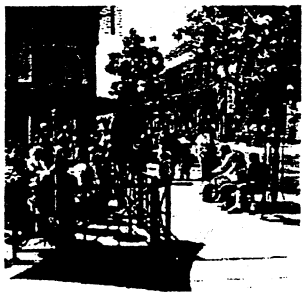
Consistency in sidewalk surfaces would result in an improved appearance and cohesive boundary of the Avenue. The *Plan* recommends using two to three paving types such as concrete, brick pavers, and stone that will not only provide an aesthetic improvement but also distinguish areas of use, such as incorporating one paving type for outdoor dining directly adjacent to a clearly marked walkway of a contrasting material (Figures 6.34 and 6.35). The use of alternative quality pavement material coordinated with the building façade or retail use is encouraged.

In most locations there is a narrow space (approximately 5-10 feet) between the edge of the public sidewalk and the front of the buildings, called the "public/private zone." This is private property, but this area plays an important role in complementing the sidewalk. There are several options for the treatment of this area, as follows:

- The area is utilized as part of the outdoor seating for the cafes and restaurants;
- It serves as part of the entrance to retail and service uses – so it should be treated as a continuation of the sidewalk;
- It acts as the foreground to existing residential or office uses on the Avenue. As such, it should be planted and maintained with appropriate foundation plantings, with adequate sidewalk area to serve the use.

Figure 6.34

Figure 6.35 **Paving defines retail entrance**



Outdoor Dining

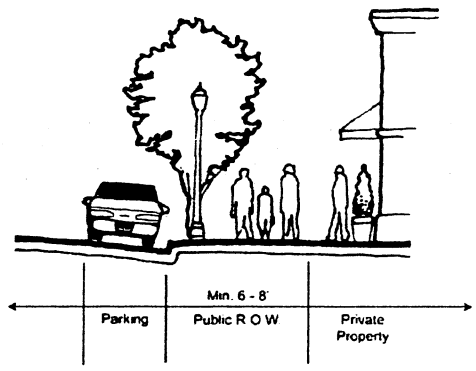


Figure 6.36 **Retail, Pave to building foundation**

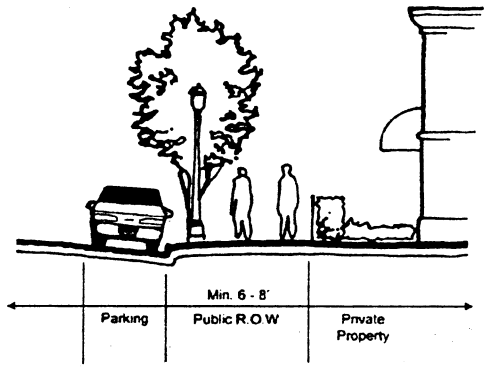


Figure 6.37 **Residential Landscaping at entrance**

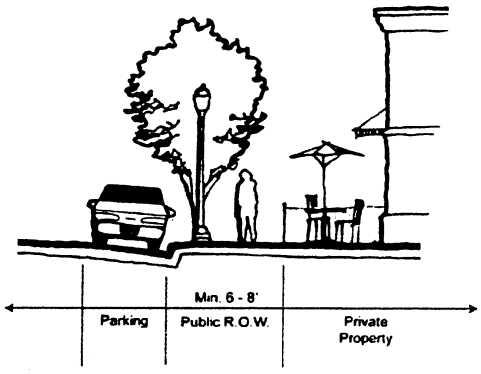


Figure 6.38 **Outdoor Dining**

The *Plan* recommends that the area located between the city right-of-way and the sidewalk-entry of businesses be paved using the same style of pavement as the existing sidewalk areas – generally brick pavers. Consistency in the treatment of the public/private zone will enhance cohesive identity along Mt. Vernon Avenue. In areas where a residential use is adjacent the right-of-way, ground surfaces is typically planted. For the areas adjacent to commercial and retail uses, the *Plan* recommends that sidewalks be paved to the building foundation. (Figure 6.36 and 6.37). An edge treatment, such as precast white concrete tree planter curb or brick edging for the unidecor pavers, is recommended where the sidewalk meets planting areas or grass.

In order to create activity on the street, outdoor, cafe-style seating should be encouraged and can have areas designated by special paving materials (Figure 6.38). Outdoor seating already occurs in some limited areas of the Avenue, and encouraging additional restaurants and cafes to provide outdoor seating will contribute to the street as a lively public area. Where outdoor dining currently occurs, this space is identified with temporary bollards or planters that identify the edge of the dining area, while others have installed low height metal, or wrought iron fencing. Areas that are used as outdoor dining may be paved in materials that differentiate the areas from pedestrian flow.

The *Plan* recommends that the portions of the Avenue adjacent to parking lots should be treated with a screen or planted buffer. In conjunction with vegetation, low walls can reinforce the delineation and screening of parking areas. (Figures 6.39 and 6.40).

There are several parking lots and service uses within the Historic Core and Monroe Gateway areas that should be screened to the greatest extent possible. This buffer could include a low seat wall that would provide multiple uses, such as screening and an attractive seating space along the Avenue.

Figure 6.39 Parking area without screen

Figure 6.40 Parking area with wall and buffer

Pedestrian Crosswalks

The existing crosswalks on the Avenue vary in design and maintenance, and several crosswalks are currently being upgraded from painted stripes to stamped asphalt, an attractive and cost effective method for highlighting crossing areas that can be easily updated with routine road maintenance.

A series of actions are recommended to improve the existing conditions of many crosswalks to optimize pedestrian safety. Existing crosswalks in poor condition, such as those at the intersections of Nelson and Monroe Avenues, warrant re-striping at a minimum in the short term. A related issue is the variety in the treatment of crosswalks at other intersections. For example, the crosswalks at the Howell and Mt. Ida Avenue intersections are constructed of brick pavers, while both a painted ladder-style and a stamped asphalt crosswalk are provided at Del Ray and Oxford Avenues. A unique, but consistent crosswalk treatment is recommended to reinforce the character of the Historic Core area.

The *Plan* also recommends a standard treatment for the crosswalks outside the Core area, with special care taken at the two public schools, George Washington Middle School and Mt. Vernon Community School, to upgrade the existing faded and poorly marked crosswalks. These particular crosswalks should be upgraded in the short term with signage, lighting and enhanced treatment to help distinguish these crossings for drivers and to enhance pedestrian safety for children and others crossing the Avenue

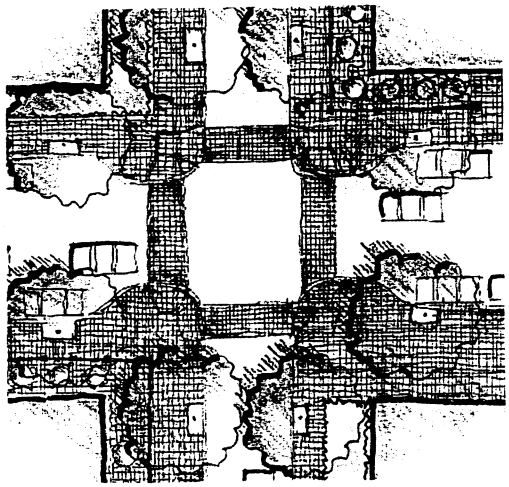


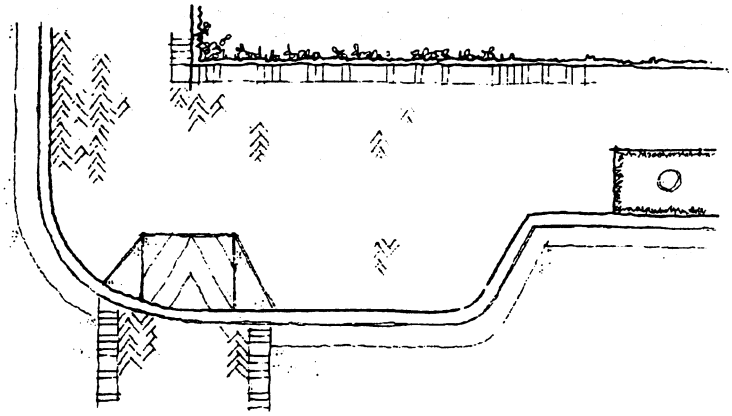
Figure 6.42 Crosswalk, alternative materials

Bulb-outs

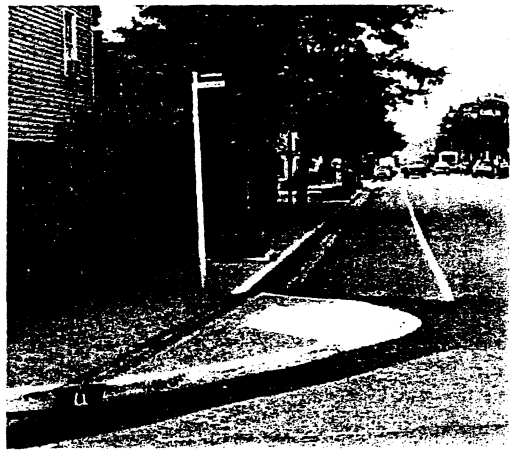
Bulb-outs generally serve to slow traffic, shorten road crossing distance and enhance pedestrian safety. The use of paving materials should continue to be integrated in areas where people and vehicles interact, particularly within the Monroe Gateway and the Historic Core.

The City has provided pedestrian bulb-outs at several intersections. These should also be incorporated at other intersections within the Historic Core area. Such improvements strengthen the Avenue as a safe, pedestrian domain.

Larger bulb-outs are recommended for intersections that accumulate greater numbers of pedestrians and can also offer an opportunity for planted areas or wayfinding at key intersections.



Recommended Bulb-out design



Example of Existing Bulb-out

Lighting

A major concern expressed by community members is the lack of pedestrian-scale lighting along the length of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Currently, the street is lit by tall, cobra-head style lights located on one side of the street that illuminate a broad area of the street for vehicular traffic. In many instances, light from these fixtures is directed away from the sidewalk onto the street and may be obscured by the existing tree canopy, with little light filtering down through the trees onto the sidewalk. These conditions create an illusion of a poorly-lit and undesirable space for pedestrians. Installing pedestrian-scale lighting along the entire length of the Avenue, connecting to the Braddock Road Metro Station will help promote street-level activity during the evening hours and encourage pedestrians and others to use the Metro station during non-daylight hours.

In developing the specifications for streetscape lighting, luminaries should not exceed 14 feet in height. This height preserves the scale of the overall community and its adjacency to residential neighborhoods.

Other options to provide additional light on the sidewalk during evening hours are building lighting and lighted storefront windows. Lighting of storefronts should be done in such a manner that provides light on the sidewalk while not negatively impacting adjacent residences.

As an alternative to the expensive installation of new fixtures, the existing cobra-head style light poles could be modified to include an additional light source oriented towards the sidewalk and pedestrians.

The *Plan* recommends that the cost and feasibility of the pedestrian-scale lighting options be considered, and that whichever alternative is selected, a phasing

plan is developed to implement the new lighting over time. In addition, a plan for new bulb-outs should be developed as part of the overall streetscape improvements to coordinate the installation of these improvements.

Street Trees

The existing street trees are reasonably mature and generally appropriate for the scale and traffic speed of Mt. Vernon Avenue. However, they are irregular in spacing in some areas and discontinuous in the northern segment of the Avenue.

The *Plan* recommends that trees along the length of the Avenue be replaced over time to ensure consistent streetscape pattern. Deteriorating vegetation easily detracts from the positive elements that the Avenue has to offer.

Newly planted trees should not exceed 30 to 40 feet in spacing so that buildings are not obscured and to ensure the provision of adequate space for both pedestrian movement and lighting (Figures 6.41 and 6.42).

Tree planting will be implemented with the streetscape improvement accompanying the undergrounding from Bellefonte Avenue to Nelson Avenue. A tree planting plan should be developed to infill the remainder of the street.

Figure 6.41 Street Trees

Figure 6.42 Street Trees

Bus Stops lack distinction

Banners and historic markers identify the area.

Public Signage

The signage for both public and private uses is inconsistent throughout the Avenue. Older painted street signs are non-reflective and must be replaced. No signs exist to identify the Town of Potomac Historic District. Bus stop signage is consistent with WMATA signage, but the signs are small and inconspicuous. Bus stops along Mt. Vernon Avenue are generally constructed of asphalt and only marked by Metrobus signage.

Light pole mounted banners are recommended for displaying screen-printed vinyl or fabric signs. Banners can be good theme-oriented displays for neighborhood character that should be considered as one element of a comprehensive package to reinforce and celebrate the identity of the area. Banners should be placed at pedestrian level above head height and could be used to reduce the scale of the cobra head lighting to a more pedestrian scale. The banners should be installed on the sidewalk side of the pole to better orient the banners towards the pedestrian.

Another streetscape improvement should be the incorporation of identity signage at the edge of the Town of Potomac Historic District to coincide with the boundary of the Historic Core (Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues). This signage will provide a special identity feature for this important district and help reinforce the Avenue as a historic main street area. Historic district signage should be incorporated where there is adequate space, such as in planted areas, and where they do not obstruct pedestrian flow.

The Del Ray Citizens Association and Town of Potomac Historical Association have sought to provide interpretative signage in the neighborhood to raise awareness of the Town of Potomac National Historic Register District and to educate residents and visitors about Del Ray's unique history. A grant has been awarded to the group to design and install signs at several key sites in the community explaining the history of Del Ray and highlighting significant sites. A total of five signs are proposed at the following locations:

- The public parking lot at Mt. Vernon and Oxford Avenues

  The sign in this location will describe the evolution of Del Ray/St. Elmo into the Town of Potomac and its annexation by the City of Alexandria. The sign will include photos showing Mt. Vernon Avenue in 1915 and 1929.

- The former Town of Potomac Town Hall, now Fire Station #202, 213 E. Windsor Avenue

  A sign will be installed at the Fire Station describing the town fire department, with photos of the fire station at its opening in 1926 and the personnel and equipment of the original fire company.

- The Mt. Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Avenue

  A sign is planned for the area adjacent to the recreation center and will describe the electric railway that ran down present-day Commonwealth Avenue. A map of the route, including stations, and photos will also be included.

- Along Route 1 (Jefferson Davis Highway), exact location to be determined

  A sign will be installed along Potomac Yard to describe the former rail yard operations and will feature photos of the old yard.

- Charles Hill Park on Oxford Avenue

  This sign will depict the racetrack that was formerly located north of the park.

The *Plan* supports implementation of this interpretative sign program. The program will complement the related *Plan* recommendations that are intended to better identify and celebrate the area's history.

A wayfinding system should be designed to orient pedestrians and vehicles toward parking, historic attractions, the Avenue, public parks, and the Braddock Road Metro Station. These signs should be designed in accordance with the local character.

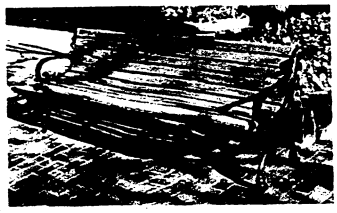
Drawing on the strengths of the local arts and crafts community, local artists should be invited into the process for designing local signage and wayfinding features. This can provide a unique element to the Avenue, while highlighting the eclectic identity of area residents.

Site Amenities

The community character could be better identified through the integration and improvement of certain amenities. The existing architecture and urban design in the public realm is eclectic and has evolved over time. Elements such as street pole banners, consistent lighting styles and street furniture could help to express the local character. For example, the current street furniture is traditional-style wood and wrought iron benches that are generally in good condition. However, many benches appear weathered from years of exposure and should be updated. Trash receptacles are consistent along parts of the Avenue, but are mixed randomly with aging metal bins that have been painted as part of a local art project. The local touch of art should be supplemented with maintained receptacles.

Site Furniture/Public Art

Benches, bicycle racks and trash receptacles should be in keeping with architectural standards of the Avenue. Given the arts and crafts character of the Del Ray neighborhood, there is an opportunity to capture the creative talent on the Avenue by engaging local artists in the design of benches, sculptures, signs, street lamps, murals and mobile art. Art can often serve as functional material such as a sculpture that operates as a seat, outdoor table for games, etc. The physical integration of art into the public realm can help to express the diverse community character in a unique way, showcasing the eclectic essence of the Avenue and its residents. This is can also work to further the goals of an Arts Promotion Strategy as outlined in Section 3.4.



Utilities and Service

Access to buildings for service such as delivery or trash removal should be from the rear of the site wherever possible. Trash dumpsters should be screened from view by plant materials, fences or walls. Special consideration should be give to the long-term durability of such screening.

New construction should provide space for pad-mounted transformers within the building footprint. If this is not feasible, other alternatives may be explored. In priority order, these alternatives are: 1) transformers are located adjacent to an alley or at the rear of the property; and 2) they are located behind the building line and screened by an opaque wall and evergreen plantings. On larger redevelopment sites, such as the triangle sites, underground placement in a vault is the most desirable location for transformers.

Bus Shelters

Bus Shelter

Currently, there are three bus shelters within the study area. The first shelter is located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue at Oxford Avenue, and the second shelter is located on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue adjacent to the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center at Raymond Avenue. Another shelter is located just north of the Commonwealth District area on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue at Sanborn Place.

Bus shelters should be located at strategic points to capture the greatest ridership, and conveniently deliver and pick up riders in activity nodes along the Avenue. Activity nodes include spaces along the Avenue where there is an accumulation of pedestrian flow and street-level activity; areas near major destinations or intersections; and areas with connections to other transportation modes including additional bus routes, bicycles trails, or pedestrian routes. Shelters should act as points of information for orientation on the Avenue, local trail connections, and local route and schedule information for all transit serving the vicinity (DASH and Metrobus), as well as Metrorail system-wide maps and taxi service information.

Three existing bus stops on Mt. Vernon Avenue meet WMATA's boarding and alighting standards for bus shelters: on the east side at Hume Avenue and Bellefonte Avenue, and on the west side of the Avenue at Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues. While the ridership warrants bus shelters in these locations, the existing right-of-way is not sufficiently wide to accommodate a shelter. The *Plan* recommends exploring the possibility of acquiring additional right-of-way or an easement from private property owners to allow the installation of bus shelters.

Implementation 7.0

Strategies for implementing the *Plan* recommendations are key to ensuring that the goals of the *Plan* are achieved. This chapter outlines suggested approaches for realizing the *Plan's* recommendations, and identifies the principal agencies involved in implentation. The lead agency is shown in bold.

7.1 Land Use

Create a public gathering space at the corner of Oxford and Mt. Vernon Avenue (P&Z; RPCA; T&ES)

- Develop conceptual designs for the two options
- Conduct a cost and design feasibility study for acquisition of land, design and construction
- Work with the community to select the preferred design option based on the feasibility analysis
- Incorporate the preferred design option into the City's Capital Improvements Program and/or work with the community on alternative funding strategies
- Should the property acquisition option be favorable, consider negotiating a right of first refusal for acquiring the property at a future date

Improve Gateway Park at Route 1 and Monroe Avenue (RPCA; P&Z; T&ES)

- Design improvements and gateway features in conjunction with the design of the Monroe Avenue bridge improvements and the development at Potomac Yard
- Coordinate gateway and park improvements with the realignment of the Monroe Avenue bridge

Work with existing property owners and tenants of Giant/CVS sites to continue to operate in the present location (P&Z; CMO)

- Meet with property owners and express community's desire to retain the uses

7.2 Affordable Housing

Encourage new home ownership opportunities and resident participation in City-sponsored home ownership programs through fairs and other means to expand awareness of and support for affordable housing (OH; P&Z)

- Work with the City's Office of Housing on programs in the Del Ray area
- As new development is proposed, work with the property owner and developer to ensure incorporation of as much affordable housing into the project as possible in accordance with the City's overall Affordable Housing Policy but no fewer than 10% affordable units in the two CDD zones

AEDP—Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

BID—Business Improvement District

CA—City Attorney

CMO—City Manager's Office

DASH—Alexandria Transit Company

HA—Historic Alexandria

OH—Office of Housing

P&Z—Planning and Zoning

PWBA—Potomac West Business Association

RPC&A—Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

T&ES—Transportation and Environmental Services

7.3 Historic Preservation

Update the National Historic Register to designate certain previously noncontributing buildings within the historic district (P&Z; HA)

Explore the expansion of the boundaries of the existing Town of Potomac Historic District (P&Z)

- Conduct a formalized survey of the identified buildings along Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Identify other potential contributing structures on the edges of the Historic District that should be included within the District
- Seek a cost-share grant with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources or other grant funding to survey the identified structures and to prepare the nomination package for inclusion in the Historic District
- Once the nomination package is complete, submit it to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Develop and implement a heritage and interpretive sign program (HA; P&Z)

- Coordinate sign programs with other public sign programs, including gateway and wayfinding signage
- Support installation of five proposed neighborhood interpretative signage

Promote awareness of Town of Potomac Historic District, state and federal historic preservation tax credits, and technical assistance regarding the design of infill and new construction (P&Z; HA)

- Work with Virginia Department of Historic Resources staff to host community workshops to promote the awareness and use of historic preservation tax credits, to provide technical assistance and other means of support to encourage historic preservation and rehabilitation of contributing structures in the Town of Potomac Historic District

7.4 Streetscape

Develop a design plan that identifies the following improvements: (P&Z; T&ES; RPCA)

- Enhance existing crosswalks or provide new crosswalks, bulb-outs and other features to increase pedestrian safety

  As new bulb-outs are constructed, consider relocation of existing bus stops to align with new bulb-outs to accommodate disabled passengers

- Enhance existing bus stops with shelters, benches, schedules
- Identify locations for new public art, bicycle racks, trash containers, benches and related street furniture, and opportunities for on-street loading areas within each block
- Evaluate condition of street trees and install new trees, as appropriate, to replace deteriorated trees and infill where trees are lacking
- Complete the sidewalk and/or other landscaping improvements

Proactively work with property owners in final phase of the undergrounding project about extending paving and otherwise improving their private property, with the goal of ensuring the highest level of participation (P&Z; T&ES)

Involve community representatives in discussion of streetscape improvements, with particular attention to the intersection of Mt. Vernon and Monroe Avenues, and develop a comprehensive streetscape plan that can be phased in over time and would anticipate future improvements to private property (P&Z; T&ES; RPCA)

Work with PWBA, businesses, and property owners for coordinated building and storefront lighting that illuminates the sidewalk (P&Z)

Evaluate cost and feasibility of pedestrian scale lighting (T&ES; P&Z)

Pedestrian scaled lighting has been determined to be the top priority to address safety concerns. The desire is to have pedestrian scaled lighting along Mt. Vernon Avenue beginning at the Braddock Road Metro Station and extending north along the Avenue, and including the blocks along Monroe Avenue.

Develop and implement a coordinated approach to public signage either through the City's comprehensive signage program if it is funded in the near future or as a separate approach focused on Mt. Vernon Avenue (P&Z; T&ES; HA)

Encourage and support the enhancement of the visual appearance of automobile-oriented uses through technical assistance and façade improvement grant money (P&Z; AEDP)

Evaluate suggested improvements to Colasanto Park (RPCA; P&Z)

Work with the community to continue to prioritize public improvements (P&Z; T&ES; RPCA)

Develop a steering committee to include Work Group members, representatives from the residential community (Del Ray Citizens Association, Mount Jefferson Civic Association, and Warwick Village Citizens Association), the business community (PWBA), property owners, and City staff to assist in the implementation of the Plan recommendations, including but not limited to streetscape, business improvement district, and other implementation measures. (P&Z)

7.5 Pedestrian and Multi-Modal Strategy

Provide DASH service along Mt. Vernon Avenue (T&ES/DASH)

- Develop a promotional campaign for the use of public transit as a way to get to Mt. Vernon Avenue

Work with the school system and developers of Potomac Yard to enhance access to the Braddock Road Metro Station from Mt. Vernon Avenue (P&Z; T&ES)

Explore new opportunities to improve connections between Mt. Vernon Avenue and existing trails (RPCA; P&Z)

Restripe Mt. Vernon Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and West Glebe Road from 4 lanes to 2 travel lanes, with bicycle and parking lanes, or two travel lanes and two parking lanes. Work with the bicycle community about desireability for bike lanes. Construct bulb-outs and crosswalks on Mt. Vernon Avenue at Commonwealth Avenue, Kennedy Street and Sanborn Place. These improvements were the second highest priority of the Work Group in addition to pedestrian scale lighting to address pedestrian safety issues. (T&ES/P&Z; RPCA)

7.6 Development of a Shared Parking Program

Develop and implement a shared parking program (P&Z; CA)

The parking study confirmed that the ten targeted off-street parking lots have excess capacity at various times of the day and could be made available as shared parking for others when underutilized by principal users. These steps have been identified as critical to the development of a shared parking program:

- Work with parking lot owners to identify shared parking issues and to develop formal commitment to the program
- Develop an organizational structure and identify the roles of the organization, the City and other identified groups for the planning and implementation of the shared parking program
- Evaluate potential costs for the individual lot owner in terms of liability insurance, lot maintenance and lighting.
- Develop an equitable approach for cost sharing and a program for the generation of revenues. Consider use of BID funds to assist in program funding.
- Promote interest and participation among business owners, employees and tenants
- Develop a mechanism and criteria to monitor and evaluate the operation and success of the program.

7.7 Other Parking Enhancements

Explore rear access opportunities (P&Z; T&ES)

- With new development proposals and use applications, explore opportunities to provide rear yard access or rights-of-way from alleys to improve access and circulation between adjoining lots. Where opportunities are found, proactively work with property owners to obtain easements or shared access.

Provide a few shorter-term parking spaces and adequately spaced loading zones; resolve conflicts in parking limitations; and consider relocation of taxicab stand (T&ES; P&Z)

- Develop and submit recommended approach for these issues to the Traffic and Parking Board for approval and implementation

Provide consistent enforcement of existing parking limitations on Mt. Vernon Avenue (Police)

7.8 Retail Strategy/Arts Promotions

Work with the Small Business Development Center to: (AEDP/CMO)

- Conduct merchandising audits with individual businesses and provide input on store layout, merchandising, operations, and marketing strategies.
- Provide assistance in the development, or revision, of 3 to 5 year business plans for individual independent businesses (not for franchised businesses).
- Provide Small Business Administration (SBA) loan package information and other financing information for individual businesses to invest in capital improvements, or for working capital and marketing.
- Communicate information about Alexandria's small business assistance programs to existing business owners.

Promote participation in the Enterprise Zone and monitor/evaluate the program to ensure it functions to stimulate private investment and job opportunities in the Enterprise Zone. (AEDP; P&Z)

Establish a working group comprised of representatives of the Avenue's arts community to best plan for implementing the arts promotion strategy. (PWBA/BID; RPCA; P&Z)

7.9 Marketing/Promotions

Ensure coordination to market to the types of businesses outlined in the retail strategy (PWBA/BID; AEDP)

- Create promotional materials in printed and/or electronic formats that highlight the Mt. Vernon Avenue area, focusing on the area's suitability for the targeted types of businesses.
- Actively market suitable commercial properties to tenants in targeted industries, when such properties come on the market for sale or for rent.

Encourage and promote alternative means of transportation, including public transportation, to access Mt. Vernon Avenue. (PWBA/BID; DASH; P&Z)

- Develop information identifying public transportation and other alternative forms of accessing Mt. Vernon Avenue and promote this information in printed and electronic formats; on PWBA/BID website; and on the websites of individual businesses.
- Distribute the information in the promotional materials of events on the Avenue, such as Art on the Avenue; First Thursdays; Turkey Trot and other similar events.
- Share the information with other public and private agencies such as Alexandria Convention and Visitors Center (ACVA); Alexandria Chamber of Commerce; Alexandria Visitors Center; and other similar agencies to promote public transportation and other means to access Mt. Vernon Avenue.

7.10 Business Improvement District Implementation

(P&Z/CMO; PWBA; AEDP)

The Plan envisions the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA) as the organization to develop and implement marketing, promotions, and retail management district initiatives. To strengthen and support the work of PWBA, a Business Improvement District (BID) is recommended as a source of regular funding in benefit of the businesses along the Avenue.

In order to initiate a BID along Mt. Vernon Avenue, the following steps need to be taken:

- Organize a committee comprised of PWBA, City of Alexandria representatives, and affected property owners to work on the BID implementation process.
- Define the potential boundaries and properties to be included in the BID.
- Develop, with the Committee, a general business plan for the prospective BID, including responsibilities and a projected annual budget.
- Publicize the concept of the BID to property owners and businesspeople within the prospective service area in order to inform people and to gauge a general level of support. Prepare outreach materials to explain and promote the benefits and responsibilities of the BID. Hold community meetings to discuss the BID concept.
- Hold a public hearing to discuss BID details, as required by State legislation, prior to the creation of any service district including a BID.
- Depending on the outcome of the public hearing, City Council may adopt an ordinance authorizing the creation of a BID along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

7.11 Development Controls

(P&Z)

The implementation of the Plan necessitates the following changes to the Master Plan, zoning ordinance and map:

- Mt. Vernon Avenue Overlay: Adopt a new overlay zone for CL/Commercial Low zoned properties on Mt. Vernon Avenue between Commonwealth and Nelson Avenues that includes building form principles and design guidelines to build on the existing pattern of development along the Avenue while preserving the scale of buildings within the historic district and minimizing impacts on the residences that abut the commercial properties. The overlay district should include the following objectives:

  · *To maintain the existing mass and scale of buildings while allowing infill development subject to performance standards*

  · *To provide flexible parking requirements for new retail uses and small infill development*

  · *To encourage new small businesses by providing an administrative approval process for certain businesses*

  · *Waive certain parking requirements in historic core*

  · *Allow certain uses administratively*

- New Coordinated Development District 13 –Triangle Site

  · *Encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the 11 individual parcels known collectively as the "Triangle Site"*

  · *Conduct informational meetings with property owners and solicit buy-in to the vision for redevelopment*

  · *Ensure the new CDD designation and regulations, as well as any new development, are consistent with the Plan recommendations for floor area ratio, development level, building height, mix of uses, open space, underground parking and streetscape improvements.*

· *Seek public input and adoption of the revisions as part of the Zoning Ordinance.*

- New Coordinated Development District 14 – Giant/CVS Sites, 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue

  · *Should market forces adversely impact the continuation of the existing uses, proactively work towards reuse or redevelopment of the sites to include a grocery and pharmacy and other ground floor retail uses and residential or office on upper floors*

  · *Ensure the new CDD designation and regulations, as well as any new development, are consistent with the Plan recommendations for floor area ratio, development level, building height, mix of uses, open space, underground parking and streetscape improvements.*

  · *Seek public input and adoption of the revisions as part of the Zoning Ordinance.*

Revise and adopt Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to incorporate this planning effort, the recommended land use and zoning changes, and updated demographic information.

7.12 Capital Improvements Program

(P&Z; T&ES; RPCA)

The City of Alexandria has a six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that, beginning with the current update for FY2006-2011, will be updated on a biannual basis. The CIP establishes the City's capital priorities within available resources.

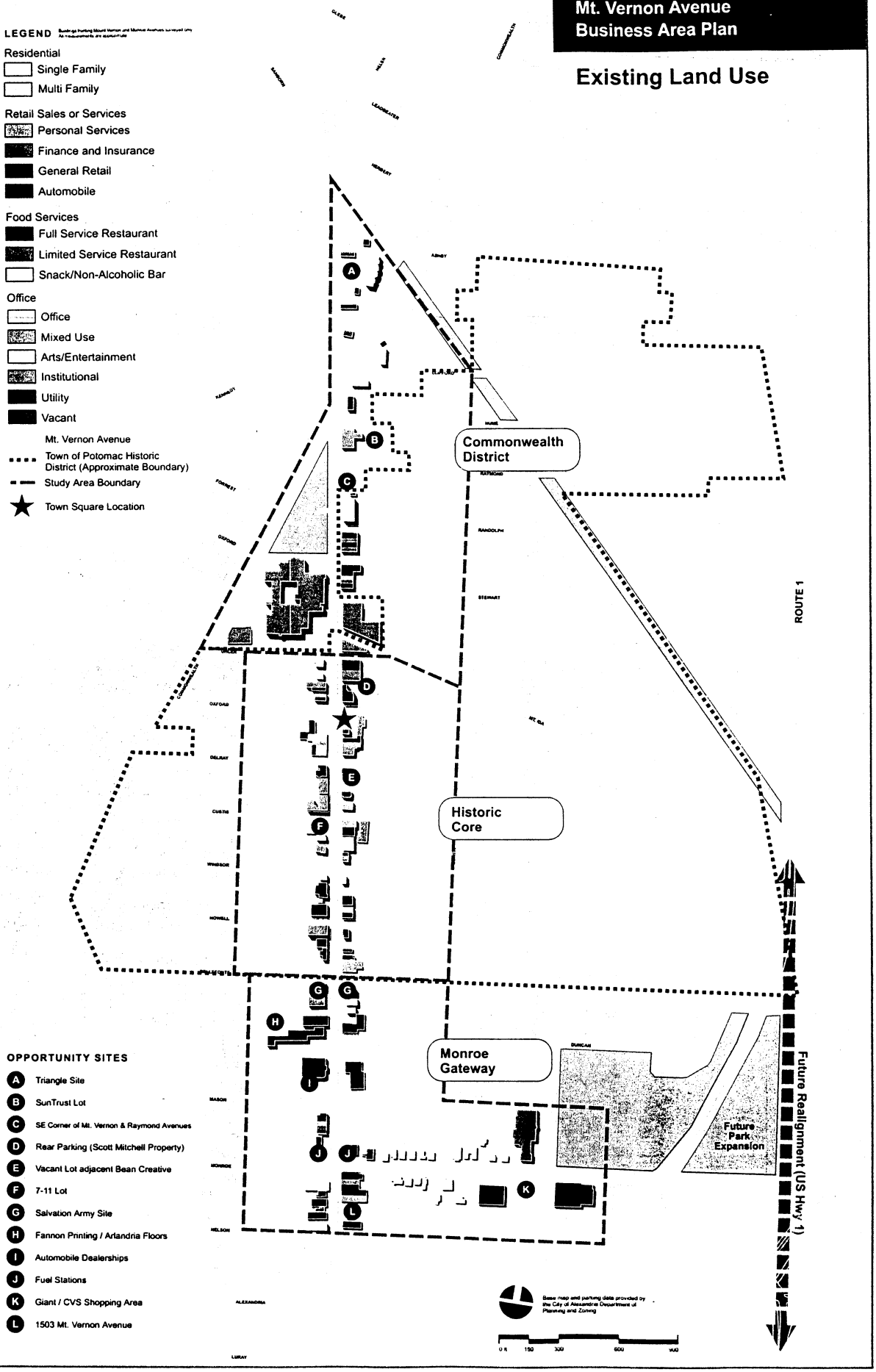
The *Plan* outlines a series of public improvements, focused on the streetscape and the public gathering space at Oxford Avenue. These improvements should be prioritized with the community prior to consideration for inclusion within the City's Capital Improvements Program. The Work Group has initially prioritized pedestrian-safety improvements as the most pressing need. Such improvements with the highest priority are:

1. Pedestrian lighting and

2. Measures to reduce road width, deter speeding and increase safety on Mt. Vernon Avenue north of Commonwealth Avenue

Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan

Existing Land Use



MOUNT VERNON AVENUE URBAN OVERLAY ZONE

Sec. 6-600 Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone

6-601 *Purpose.* The Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone is intended to supplement traditional zoning for certain properties on Mount Vernon Avenue in order to achieve a mixed use, pedestrian oriented community that both supports economic activity and protects existing residential neighborhoods, and to provide for appropriately scaled infill development that is compatible with the character of Mount Vernon Avenue, the existing community and the Town of Potomac Historic District. The provisions of this overlay zone therefore:

(A) encourage certain uses, especially those ground floor uses that promote an active retail street;

(B) provide more flexibility for some uses, by allowing administrative approvals subject to standards instead of a special use permit;

(C) promote signage that creates a more attractive streetscape in keeping with the character of the street;

(D) encourage the retention of contributing structures within the Town of Potomac Historic District; and,

(E) encourage compatible development of infill and vacant sites by allowing the use of form based development in lieu of the traditional CL zoning approach, subject to standards and the principles of the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.

6-602 *Application of overlay zone.*

(A) *Overlay zone.* The Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone shall apply to all property with frontage on Mount Vernon Avenue between Nelson Avenue on the south and Commonwealth Avenue on the north, and shown in more detail on the "Mount Vernon Urban Overlay Zone Map, dated _____(date of adoption)."

(B) *Retail Focus Area.* Within the Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone, a portion of the area is designated as a Retail Focus Area, and is the subject of specific additional regulations. The Retail Focus Area is generally consistent with the Town of Potomac Historic District boundaries on Mount Vernon Avenue, and extends from Bellefonte Avenue on the south to Uhler Avenue on the north. The Retail Focus Area is shown in more detail on the map titled, "Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone Map, dated _____(date of adoption)."

(C) The overlay zone requirements including the retail focus area provisions, parking provisions, sign provisions, form based development provisions, and

administrative uses shall apply in addition to the requirements of the underlying CL zone. In the case of a conflict, the overlay zone shall prevail.

6-603 *Uses.*

(A) *Permitted and Special Use Restrictions* The following uses, otherwise allowed either as permitted or special uses in the CL zone, are not permitted in the overlay zone area:

(1) Seminary, convent or monastery;
(2) Medical laboratory;
(3) Public school;
(4) Funeral home;
(5) Rooming house;
(6) Check cashing business;
(7) Payday loan business;
(8) Pawnshop;
(9) Motor vehicle parking or storage, except that a public parking lot is allowed with a special use permit.

(B) *Special Use Additions.* The following uses are allowed by special use permit, in addition to those listed in the CL zone:

(1) amusement enterprise, limited to live theater, music venues and similar entertainment opportunities.

(C) *Retail Focus Uses.* Within the retail focus area, uses occupying first floor space of a building shall be limited to the following:

(1) Retail shopping establishment
(2) Restaurant
(3) Amusement enterprise, as limited in Section (B)(1) above.
(4) Personal service establishment, provided that the use shall occupy no more than 30 feet frontage on Mount Vernon Avenue, and provided further that additional frontage space may be permitted with a special use permit.
(5) Arts and crafts studios, which are facilities where arts and crafts products are created on site. If at least 50% of the frontage of the space on Mount Vernon Avenue is devoted to retail display and sales, then the use is not considered a personal service establishment.
(6) Office or residential uses, in an existing building with a first floor located at least 40 inches above the grade of the sidewalk.

(D) *Administrative Uses.* Notwithstanding any contrary provisions of the zoning ordinance, the following uses may be allowed by the Director by administrative review and approval pursuant to the standards and procedures of Section 6-608 of this ordinance; provided however that the Director may determine that a special use permit approval shall be required if the applicant fails to consent to the conditions of the administrative permit or if after consultation with the Police Department it is determined that there are documented criminal or nuisance activities or zoning ordinance violations at the proposed location or with the proposed operator. Alternatively, at the applicant's discretion, the applicant may seek special use permit approval for such uses pursuant to Section 11-500 of this ordinance.

(1) Restaurants, up to a maximum of 60 seats
(2) Outdoor dining, up to a maximum of 16 seats
(3) Amusement enterprise, limited to live theater
(4) Outdoor food and crafts markets
(5) Neighborhood outdoor garden center, limited to a maximum size of 10,000 square feet
(6) Outdoor display of retail goods

(E) *Accessory Apartments.* The regulation for accessory apartments in Section 4-108 is modified to allow residential uses on the upper floors of a building to apply to up to eight apartments.

(F) *Noncomplying Uses.* Notwithstanding the language of 12-301 regarding the definition of noncomplying uses, any use within the urban overlay zone that is legally existing on _____(date of ordinance adoption) and inconsistent with these provisions shall be deemed a noncomplying use and allowed to continue subject to the rules for noncomplying uses in Section 12-302 of this ordinance.

6-604 *Parking Requirements.* The provisions of Article VIII of this ordinance shall apply within the overlay zone the following additions and modifications:

(A) The requirements of Sections 8-200(F) (1) and (2) regarding provision of parking as a result of a change of use, a significant enlargement or a significant alternation shall not apply if the use after the change, enlargement or alteration is a retail establishment.

(B) Outdoor dining requires no parking for the first 16 seats.

(C) Outdoor food and crafts markets shall have no parking requirement, and may, like other permitted temporary uses approved by the Director, occupy areas

with required parking spaces for their limited duration.

(D) For form based development pursuant to Section 6-606, parking additions or modifications are provided in that Section.

6-605 *Signs.* The provisions of Article IX of this ordinance shall apply within the overlay zone the following additions and modifications:

(A) *Sign Designs Compatible with Mount Vernon Avenue*. The following sign types are permitted:

(1) *Sign type*. All signs shall be wall-mounted, projecting signs, glass applied or located on the valance of an awning;

(2) *Sign Location*. All signs shall be located below second floor windows;

(3) *Awnings*. Awnings shall be designed to coordinate with the design of the building. Awnings shall not be internally illuminated. Light fixtures mounted to the building wall to illuminate the building or sidewalk are permitted.

(B) *Prohibited Signs on Mount Vernon Avenue*. The following specific sign types are prohibited:

(1) Freestanding signs, exceeding six square feet in size and six feet in height. Except that such freestanding signs existing on _____ (date of adoption) may be replaced on a one-time basis with a monument sign not to exceed eight feet in height. Any such replacement signs, shall be deemed a noncomplying structure, subject to Section 12-100, and shall not be subject to the conditions of Section 6-605 (C).

(2) Signs with internal illumination.

(3) Box signs hung perpendicular to a building wall.

(C) *Noncomplying Status*. Any signs existing on _____ (date of adoption) that are inconsistent with the requirements of Sections 6-605 (A) and (B) shall be subject to the following restrictions: such signs may not be physically expanded, enlarged or intensified; such signs must be removed if the use existing on _____(date of adoption) to which it is accessory ceases operation, or if the use of the sign is abandoned for a period of 12 months. No change of sign face or message shall be permitted for a sign deemed noncomplying under this Section.

6-606 *Form Based Development.* The following system for new development within the overlay zone has been designed to supplement and substitute for the conventional zoning rules found in the CL zone in order to assure that new buildings and additions to existing buildings include the most desirable characteristics of Mount Vernon Avenue and are compatible with existing buildings in the area. Form based development provides an option for developers and property owners who choose to build pursuant to the following standards instead of the rules for development under the CL zone.

(A) *Waiver of CL zone rules.* The area and bulk requirements of the CL zone shall not apply for development for which a form based development SUP is approved.

(B) *Eligible construction.* Any new construction or addition to an existing building that exceeds 1,000 square feet may apply for a form based development special use permit.

(C) *SUP Procedure.* An application for form based development SUP shall follow the procedures and application requirements for special use permits pursuant to Section 11-500.

(D) *Eligible land parcels.* The land that is the subject of an application for form based development SUP shall be a lot within the overlay zone that has frontage on Mount Vernon Avenue and that conforms to the following:

(1) *Historic Buildings.* Each building listed as a contributing building in the records of the National Register of Historic Places for the Town of Potomac Historic District and over 750 square feet in size shall be retained.

(2) *Consolidation of lots.*

(a) Consolidation of lots for the purpose of development is permitted only in extraordinary circumstances because the form based development standards are based on the size of typical, existing lots and reflect the historic development pattern.

(b) An applicant for form based development who proposes the consolidation of lots for development shall demonstrate by clear and convincing justification that the resulting development achieves a design, mass, scale and configuration which are more consistent with the form based development

standards than would be possible without consolidation.

(c) An applicant for form based development who proposes to consolidate a CL-zoned lot without frontage with a lot with frontage on Mount Vernon Avenue shall demonstrate by clear and convincing justification that the resulting development achieves a design consistent with and meets the goals of the form based development standards to a greater extent than would occur without consolidation and that the impact on adjoining residential development is no greater than would occur without consolidation.

(E) *Standards and requirements for form based development.* An application for form based development SUP shall be reviewed for consistency and compliance with the following:

(1) The standards for SUP approval in Section 11-500.

(2) Chapter 6 of the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Plan, as adopted as part of the Potomac West Small Area Plan, which includes the City's goals for the urban design and streetscape elements for buildings on Mount Vernon Avenue, and enumerates both general and specific elements for applicants to follow related to, without limitation, building height, setbacks, coverage, buffering, access and parking locations, facade treatment and articulation, scale and massing, and architecture.

(3) The following specific rules regarding open space and parking based on the size and scope of development:

(a) *Tier 1: lots of 7,000 square feet or less.*

(1) *Open Space.* The undeveloped land resulting from the building coverage in Chapter 6 of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan should be located, designed and planted so as to serve as an amenity for residents and users of the building.

(2) *Parking.* The parking requirements of Section 8-200 (a) shall not apply for land locked interior lots and may be reduced for corner lots and lots with rear access as part of the form based development SUP review process.

(b) *Tier 2: lots of 7,001-15,000 square feet.*

(1) *Open Space.* A minimum of 15% of the lot area shall be provided in open and usable ground level open space. The provision of additional open space at ground level and in the form of roof tops, terraces or similar non-ground level open space is strongly encouraged.

(2) *Parking.* For residential uses, a minimum of one space for each dwelling unit is required. For any other use, a minimum of 50 % of the number of parking spaces otherwise required under Section 8-200 of this ordinance shall be provided, plus such additional number as is feasible consistent with achieving the goals of Chapter 6 of the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.

(c) *Tier 3: lots of greater than 15,000 square feet:*

(1) *Open space.* A minimum of 25% of the lot area shall be provided in open and useable ground level open space that is publicly visible and consolidated in a size and location appropriate for the size and type of project being proposed. The provision of additional open space at ground level and in the form of roof tops, terraces or similar non-ground level open space is strongly encouraged and may be required.

(2) *Parking.* The parking requirements of Section 8-200 are not waived. Parking sufficient to meet the full requirement of the project shall be provided.

(3) *Additional requirements.* Tier 3 projects are expected to represent the highest standards of building design and materials, site layout and orientation, provision of open space, and the ability to be integrated into the scale, character and context of the existing neighborhood. To achieve this standard, additional requirements suitable for the size, scope and type of project may be imposed consistent with Chapter 6 of the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.

(F) *Degree of compliance.* An application for form based development shall meet or exceed each of the above standards and guidelines fully, specifically and rigorously. Any failure to meet the above standards will result in the denial of an application unless a deviation is approved as provided herein. Deviation from any of the standards of Section 6-606 (E) shall be explained in narrative as well as graphic form and supported by design and rationale demonstrating that the proposal achieves the goals of the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan to the same extent as strict compliance with the standard and/or guideline from which deviation is requested. Each such deviation shall be specifically approved by City Council as part of the form based development SUP. Any request for a deviation shall be clearly identified in the notice provision under Section 11-300.

6-607 *Standards and Procedures for Administrative Approvals.*

(A) *Application of this Section generally.*

(1) An applicant may seek administrative approval of a use listed in Section 6-603(D) pursuant to the standards and procedures outlined in this Section.

(2) At the applicant's discretion, the applicant may choose, as an alternative to an administrative permit, to seek special use permit approval for such uses pursuant to Section 11-500 of the zoning ordinance.

(3) Any change in the nature of the use or any enlargement, extension or increase in the intensity of that use beyond that outlined in the standards of this Section shall be subject to review by the Director and shall require a special use permit approved by the city council;

(4) In the event any person, whether owner, lessee, principal, agent, employee or otherwise, materially fails to comply with any standard of this Section, the Director may suspend or revoke the administrative approval in whole or in part and on such terms and conditions as deemed necessary to effect the cure of such failure. The applicant or his successor in interest may appeal this suspension or revocation pursuant to Section 11-205(B) et. seq. of this ordinance, except that such appeal shall be heard by the Planning Commission.

(B) *Procedure.*

(1) Applicants for administrative permits under this Section shall file an application with the Director on such forms and subject to such procedures as the Director may establish for the purpose. The application shall include a statement identifying the applicant as required by Section 11-503 of this ordinance.

(2) Notice of a pending administrative permit application shall be made in a newspaper of general circulation in the city, posted on the subject property, and given to nearby civic and business associations The public may submit comments to the Director within 14 days after publication of the notice.

(3) After review for compliance with the standards of this Section 6-607, the Director may approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application. The decision of the Director shall be deemed to have the force and effect of a special use permit, under Section 11-500, except that provisions of 11-507 shall not apply. The Director's decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission. Such appeal shall be filed within 30 days from the date of the decision appealed by filing a notice of appeal with the Department of Planning and Zoning. Such notice shall be a written statement specifying the grounds on which the person is aggrieved and the basis for the appeal.

(C) *Standards for Administrative Permits.*

(1) *General standards for all administrative uses*:

(a) The application shall be reviewed for compliance with this Section 6-607 as well as with applicable provisions of Section 11-500.

(b) The Director may determine that administrative approval is not appropriate and that special use permit approval shall be required if the applicant fails to consent to the conditions of the administrative permit or if after consultation with the Police Department it is determined that there are criminal or nuisance activities or zoning ordinance violations at the proposed location or with the proposed operator.

(c) The administrative permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a

controlling interest. Any change in the ownership of the use that is the subject of the administrative permit may be transferred administratively with the approval of the Director pursuant to the requirements of Section 11-503(F) of this ordinance.

(d) The applicant shall provide information on alternative forms of transportation to access Mt. Vernon Avenue including but not limited to printed and electronic business promotional material, posting on the business website, and other similar methods. The applicant shall encourage its employees and customers to use mass transit or to carpool when traveling to and from work, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes for transit are sold, and advertising of carpooling opportunities.

(e) At such time that a shared parking program has been adopted by the City Council, the applicant shall participate in the program. In addition, the applicant shall require its employees who drive to work to use off-street parking.

(f) The applicant shall install signs inside the building indicating the location of off-street parking in the area and shall inform customers about the parking.

(g) Trash and garbage shall be stored inside or in sealed containers that do not allow odors to escape or invasion by animals. No trash and debris shall be allowed to accumulate outside of those containers. **Outdoor trash receptacles shall be screened to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning.**

(h) The applicant shall contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department for a security survey and robbery awareness program for employees prior to the operation of the business.

(i) Litter on the site and on public rights-of-way and spaces adjacent to or within 75 feet of the premises shall be monitored and picked up at least twice during the day and at the close of the business, and more often if necessary, to prevent an unsightly or unsanitary accumulation, on each day that the business is in operation.

(j) No outdoor speakers shall be permitted.

(k) The administrative permit approved by the Director pursuant to this Section 6-607 shall be displayed in a conspicuous and publicly accessible place. A certificate provided by the city shall inform the public of its right to examine the list of standards associated with the permit. A copy of the list of standards associated with the permit shall be kept on the premises and made available for examination by the public upon request.

(l) Improvements may be required to the facade or the front of the business establishment, including landscaping and site improvements, consistent with Chapter 6 of the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan as adopted as part of the Master Plan, and as determined by the Director to be necessary and appropriate to achieve the design and streetscape objectives of that Plan.

(m) The Director may require conditions additional to those listed in the standards of this Section if the Director finds it to be reasonable to support the use and its compatibility with surrounding uses and the neighborhood.

(2) *Specific Standards for Live Theater*

(a) The applicant may offer limited wine and beer sales in conjunction with performances at the intermission or one hour before the performances commence, with the appropriate licenses as required by law.

(b) The applicant may offer wine and beer in conjunction with a show opening or other wine and cheese event, with the appropriate licenses as required by law. A maximum of one event each month is permitted.

(c) The hours of performances shall be limited to 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. daily.

(3) *Specific Standards for Outdoor Food and Crafts Markets*

(a) No alcohol sales shall be permitted;

(b) No on-site storage of trailers is permitted;

(c) No on-site food preparation shall be permitted;

(d) The hours of operation shall be limited to 7:00 a.m. to sundown and the market shall be open on those days specified in the approved permit, not to exceed a maximum of two days a week.

(e) Market operations shall include:

(1) The applicant shall designate one person to serve as the Market Master, and another person to serve as alternate, and shall provide the names of those persons and their home and work telephone numbers to the Director prior to the opening of the market;

(2) The Market Master or his/her designee shall be present prior to the opening of the market and at the closing of the market and shall oversee the cleanup of the lot and adjacent sidewalk areas at the end of the market;

(3) The Market Master shall prepare a plan for the layout of the market for approval by the Director prior to beginning operations, and shall obtain approval of the Director for any changes to those plans.

(4) The Market Master shall prepare a set of rules for operation of the market for approval by the Director who shall review any changes to those rules. Copies of those rules shall be given to each vendor, to nearby residents and businesses, and to the civic associations in the vicinity;

(5) The rules shall state who is eligible to sell goods in the Market and under what conditions. It is expected that the market shall include the sale of produce, and baked and prepared goods, and that the produce will be predominantly grown by the vendors, except during the spring and late fall when resale produce may predominate;

(6) The Market Master shall maintain a list of vendors with addresses and telephone numbers.

(4) *Specific Standards for Restaurants*

(a) The hours of operation shall be limited to 7:00 a.m to ~~**11:00 p.m. daily**~~ **10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.** The closing hour for indoor seating may extend until 12:00 midnight four times a year for special events.

(b) The applicant shall post the hours of operation at the entrance to the restaurant.

(c) Meals ordered before the closing hour may be served, but no new patrons may be admitted after the closing hour, and all patrons must leave by one hour after the closing hour.

(d) Restaurant seating shall be limited to 60 seats.

(e) Limited, non-amplified live entertainment may be offered at the restaurant. No admission or cover fee shall be charged. All entertainment shall be subordinate to the principal function of the restaurant as an eating establishment. Any advertising of the entertainment shall reflect the subordinate nature of the entertainment by featuring food service as well as the entertainment.

(f) Full service restaurants with a minimum of 40 seats may offer delivery service which shall be limited to one delivery vehicle, with a dedicated off-street parking space, and shall not be parked on the public right-of-way.

(g) Beer and wine table service may be provided. No off-premise alcohol sales are permitted.

(h) No food, beverages, or other material shall be stored outside.

(i) Kitchen equipment shall not be cleaned outside, nor shall any cooking residue be washed into the streets, alleys or storm sewers.

(j) The applicant shall control odors and smoke from the property to prevent them from becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties, as determined by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services.

(5) *Specific Standards for Outdoor Dining*

(a) No more than sixteen seats may be located at outdoor tables in front of the restaurant. Outdoor seating shall not encroach onto the public right-of-way unless authorized by an encroachment ordinance.

(b) The outdoor dining shall be an accessory use to an approved restaurant.

(c) The hours of operation of the outdoor dining area shall be limited to 7:00 a.m. to ~~**10:00 p.m. daily**~~ **10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.** The outdoor dining area shall be cleared and washed at the close of each business day that it is in use.

(6) *Specific Standards for Neighborhood Outdoor Garden Center*

(a) The site for the outdoor garden center may be no larger than 10,000 square feet.

(b) The hours of operation shall be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 8:00 a.m to 8:00 p.m on Sunday.

(c) A plan showing the layout of the garden center, including areas for storage, on site deliveries, and vehicles; appropriate screening; the design of any building or structure; and the view from Mount Vernon Avenue and neighboring properties shall be submitted for review and approval by the Director.

(d) Deliveries shall be limited to during normal business hours and shall occur in the location shown in the approved plan.

(7) *Specific Standards for Outdoor Display.* Notwithstanding any contrary provisions of this ordinance, the display of goods from a retail sales establishment is permitted, subject to the following:

(a) The requirements of Section 4-107(A) shall apply.

(b) Only goods from the adjacent store are permitted to be displayed.

(c) Signage for the outdoor display is allowed in addition to signage otherwise permitted for the business, but shall be limited to a maximum aggregate size of one square foot.

(d) No sales may occur in the outdoor display area.

(e) The outdoor display area may include no structures or other permanent changes to the exterior.

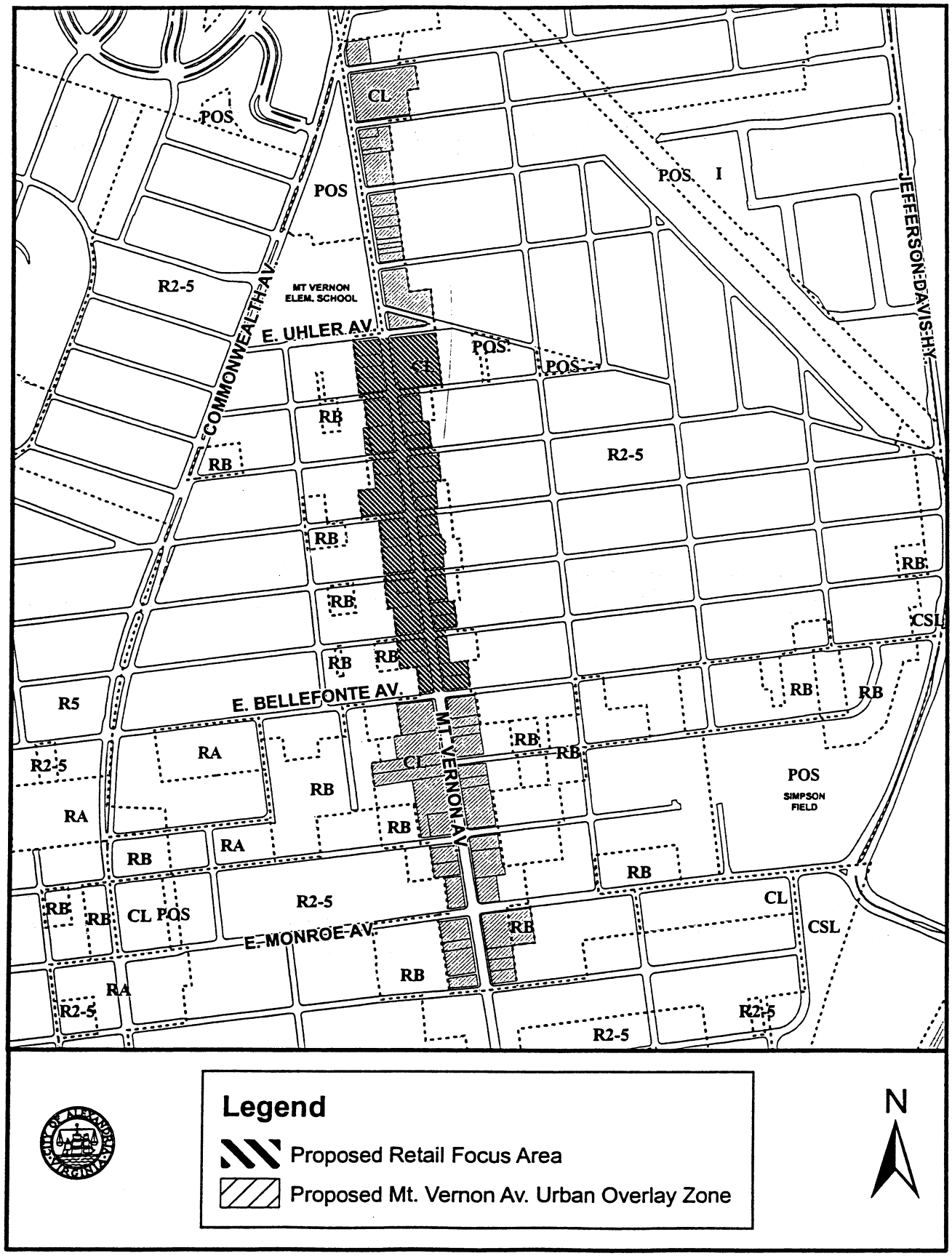
(f) There shall be no music, speakers, or amplified sounds associated with the outdoor display.

(g) The approved duration of the outdoor display shall be specified in the permit which may but is not required to be limited to four times a year.

(h) The outdoor sales may not encroach into the public right of way.

New Definitions to be part of Text Amendment:

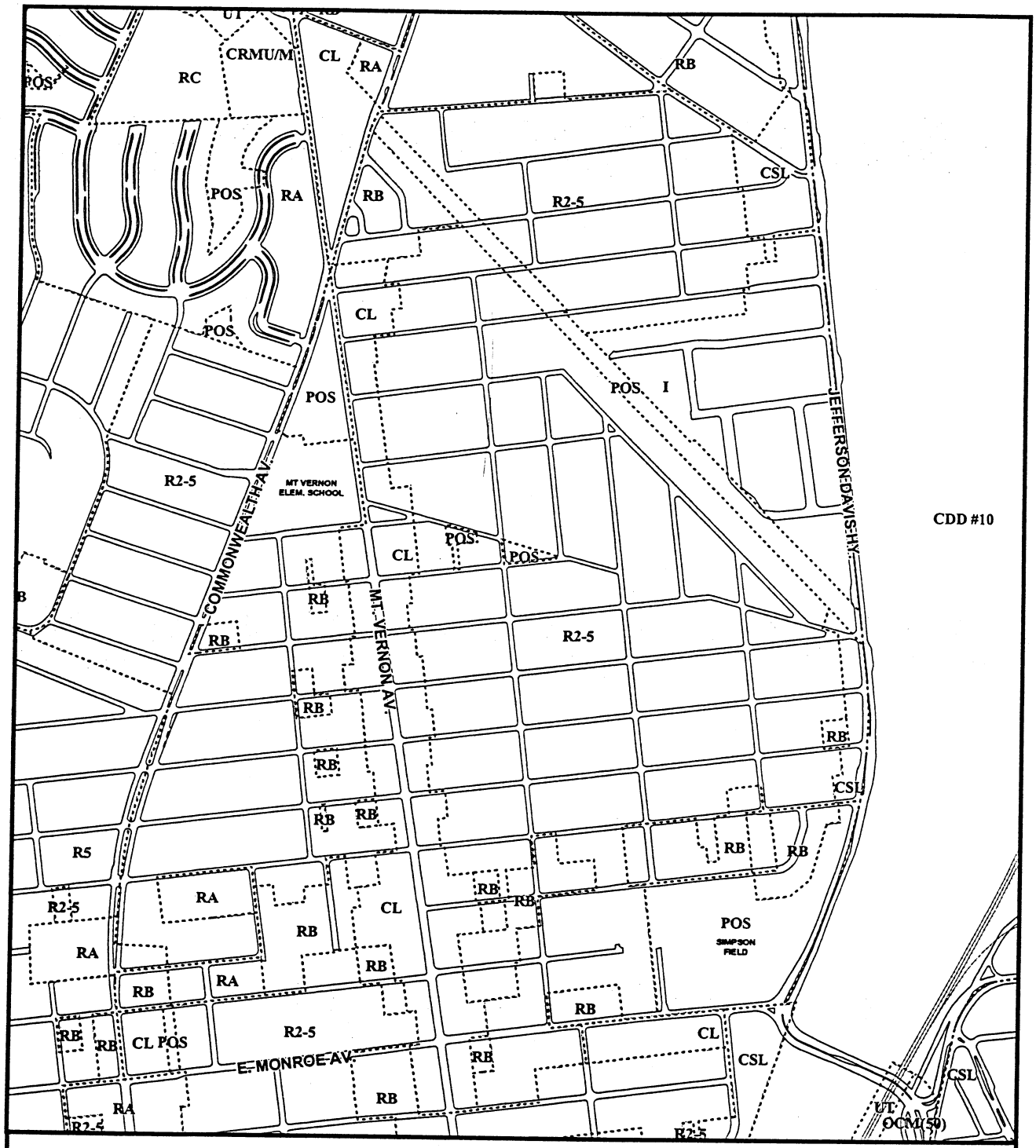
Section 2-198.1	*Theater, Live*: An establishment that has an audience viewing hall or room and a permanent stage for the presentation of live performances by live actors to a live audience in a theater setting. Theaters may include but are not limited to live performances of music, dance, plays and orations.
Section 2 - 127.1	*Check cashing business*: A business regulated by Section 6.1- 432 et seq. of the Virginia Code.
Section 2 - 182.1	*Payday loan business*: A business regulated by Section 6.1 - 444 et seq. of the Virginia Code.



POS
CL
POS
POS
I
JEFFERSON DAVIS HY.
R2-5
MT VERNON ELEM. SCHOOL
COMMONWEALTH AV.
E. UHLER AV.
POS
POS
CL
RB
RB
R2-5
RB
RB
RB
CSL
RB
RB
R5
E. BELLEFONTE AV.
RB
RB
MT VERNON AV.
RB
RB
R2-5
RA
CL
POS
SIMPSON FIELD
RB
RA
RA
RB
RB
RB
RB
CL
R2-5
RB
RB
CL POS
CSL
E. MONROE AV.
RB
RA
RB
R2-5
R2-5
R2-5
Legend
Proposed Retail Focus Area
Proposed Mt. Vernon Av. Urban Overlay Zone
N

CDD No.	CDD Name	Without a CDD Special Use Permit	With a CDD Special Use Permit		
			Maximum F.A.R. and/or Development Levels	Maximum Height	Uses
13	Triangle Sites	CL zone regulations shall apply, except that single, two family, and townhouse dwellings are prohibited.	1.0 FAR, - except that an increase to 1.25 FAR may be allowed with the provision of affordable housing pursuant to Section 7-700, except that the allowed density increase may be 25%. New development shall be in accordance with the guidelines in Chapter 6 of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, as adopted in the Potomac West Small Area Plan.	Building height should be limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in building mass along Commonwealth Avenue. Maximum building height is 45 feet.	A mix of uses, including some ground floor retail, with residential or office use, and a large functional open space at the corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue.

CDD No.	CDD Name	Without a CDD Special Use Permit	With a CDD Special Use Permit		
			Maximum F.A.R. and/or Development Levels	Maximum Height	Uses
14	Giant-CVS	CL zone regulations shall apply.	1.0 FAR, - except that an increase to 1.25 FAR may be allowed with the provision of affordable housing pursuant to Section 7-700, except that the allowed density increase may be 25%. New development shall be in accordance with the guidelines in Chapter 6 of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, as adopted in the Potomac West Small Area Plan.	Building height should be limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in building mass to adjoining residential uses. Maximum building height is 45 feet.	A mix of uses, including grocery store, pharmacy, and other ground floor retail uses, with residential or office use.

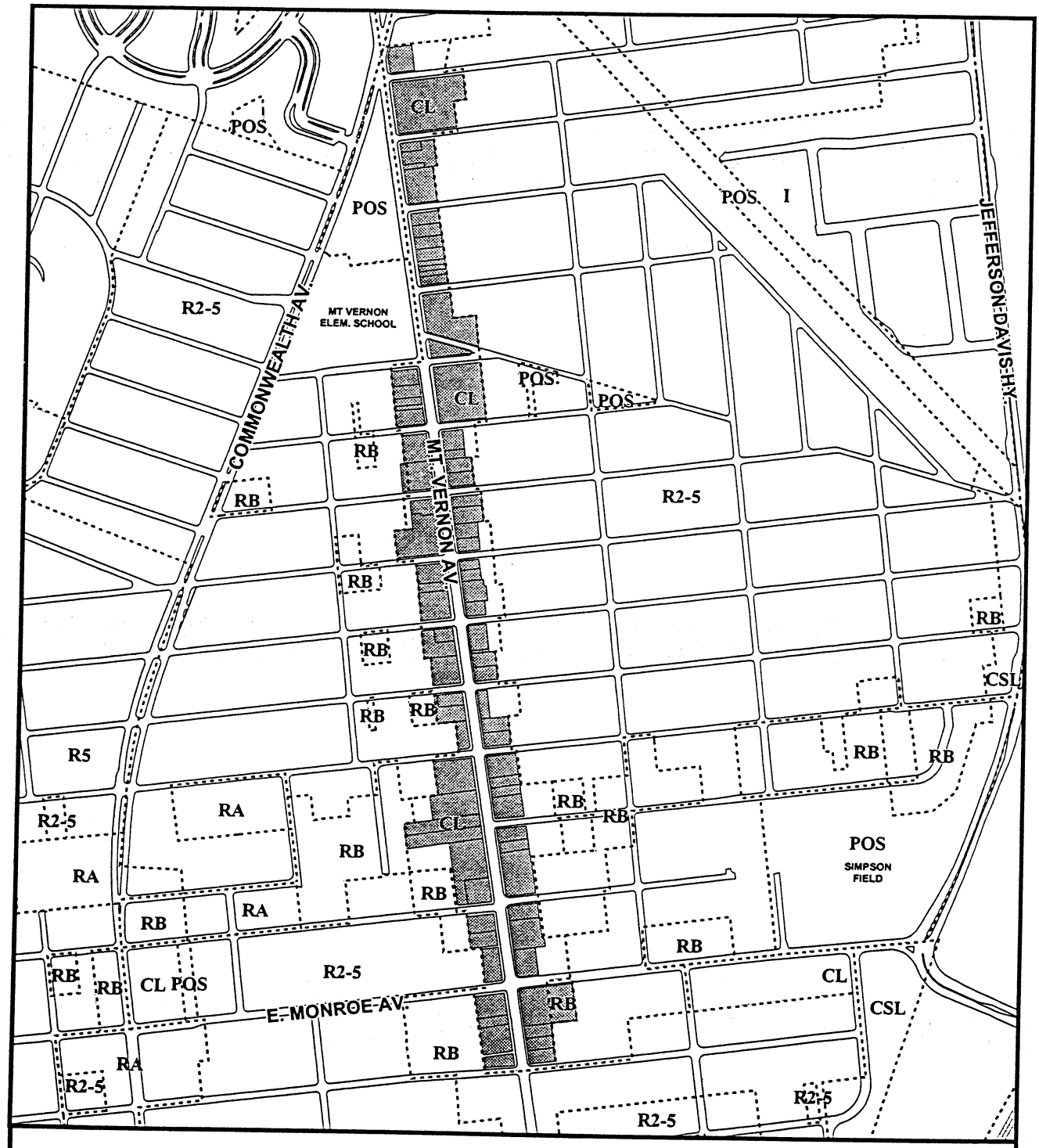


Existing Zoning

MPA #2005-0001
TA #2005-0001
REZ #2005-0001

03/01/05

N

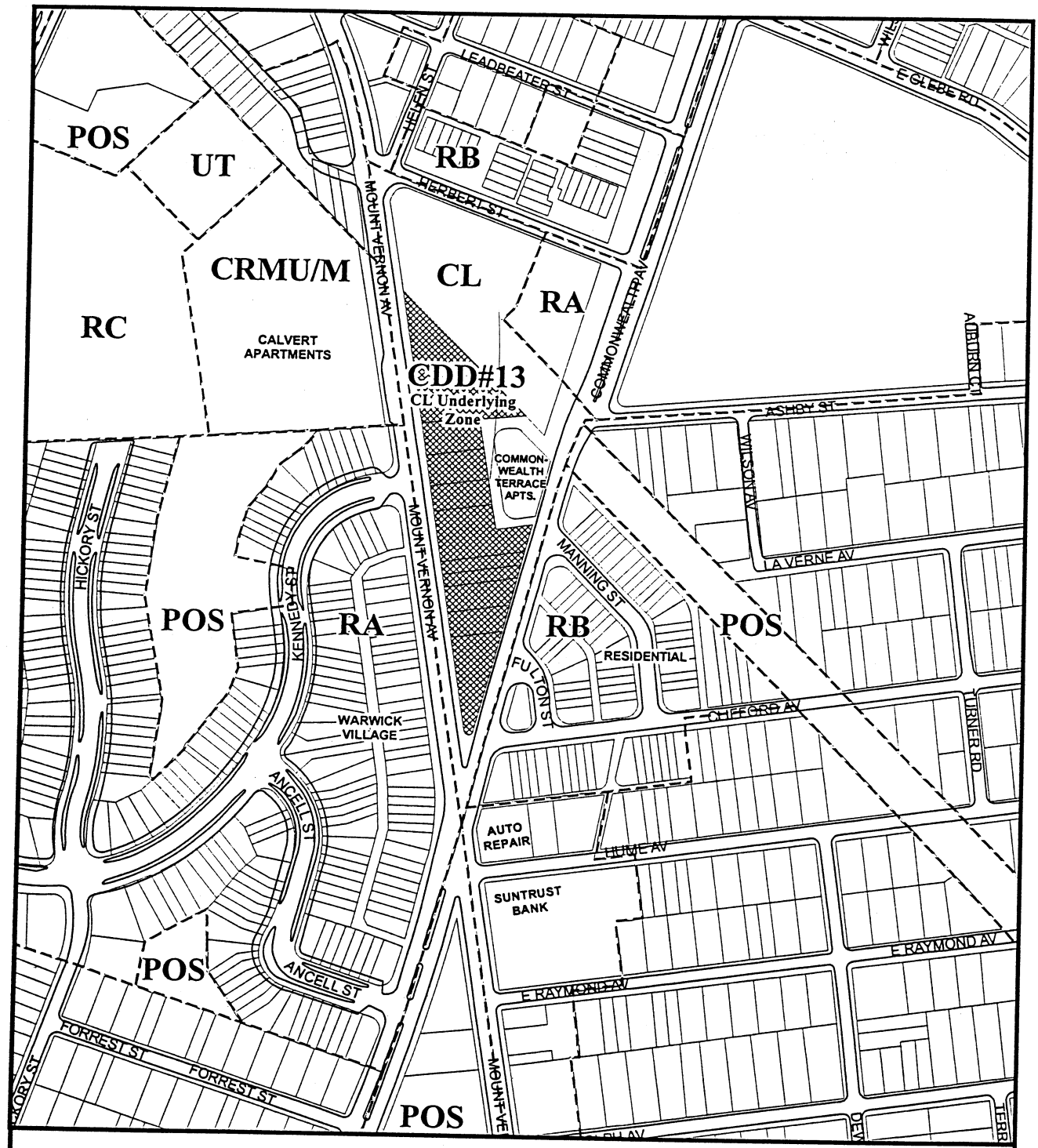


Proposed Mt. Vernon Av. Urban Overlay Zone

MPA #2005-0001
TA #2005-0001
REZ #2005-0001

03/01/05

N

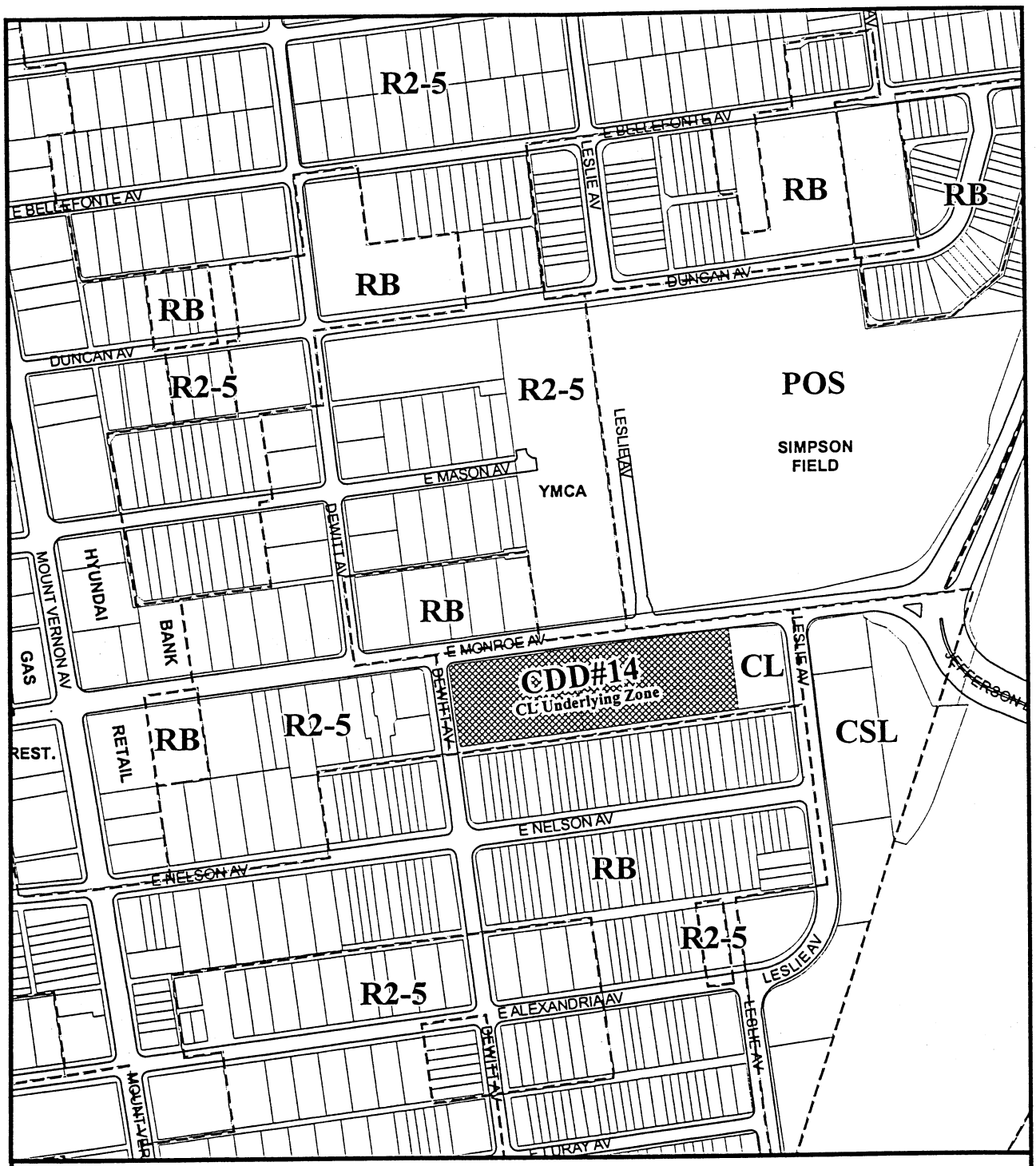


Proposed CDD#13

MPA #2005-0001
TA #2005-0001
REZ #2005-0001

03/01/05

N



Proposed CDD#14

MPA #2005-0001
TA #2005-0001
REZ #2005-0001

03/01/05

N

POTOMAC WEST

SMALL AREA PLAN

ADOPTED 1992 MASTER PLAN

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Amended 12/17/1994 Ordinance #3767
Amended 6/17/1995 Ordinance #3805
Amended 1/25/1997 Ordinance #3910
Amended 12/12/1998 Ordinance #4030
Amended 6/14/2003 Ordinance #4309

POTOMAC WEST

SMALL AREA PLAN

as amended March 2005

ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL

Mayor William D. Euille

Vice Mayor Redella S. Pepper

Ludwig P. Gaines

K. Rob Krupicka

Andrew H. Macdonald, Ph.D.

Paul C. Smedberg

Joyce Woodson

CITY MANAGER

James K. Hartmann

PREPARED BY:

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING STAFF

Eileen Fogarty, Director

Project Planners:

Kimberley Fogle

Kathleen Beeton

Katrina Newtson

Valerie Peterson

Graphic Support:

Steven Chozick

Jason Antagone

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose of the Plan	5
Background and Issues	7
Description of the Area	8
Historic Districts	12
Demographics	15
Existing Land Use	22
Existing Zoning	30
Economic Activity and Development Trends	37
Transportation	48
Urban Design	54
Open Space	59
Policy History	60
~~Issues~~	~~47~~
~~Plan~~ Goals and Recommendations	66
Goals and Objectives	67
Land Use Recommendations	69
Zoning Recommendations	78
Height Recommendations	87
Urban Design Recommendations	90
Arlandria Neighborhood Plans	100
Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan	105

LIST OF MAPS

1. ~~Study Area~~ Potomac West SAP Area 10
2. Neighborhoods 11
3. ~~Existing Land Use~~ Historic Districts 14
4. ~~Mt. Vernon Avenue Subareas~~ Census Tracts 21
5. ~~Existing Zoning~~ Generalized Existing Land Use 29
6. ~~Potential Development Sites~~ Existing Zoning 36
7. ~~Major Thoroughfare Plan~~ Enterprise Zone 46
8. ~~City Sponsored Residential Rehabilitation~~ Potential Development Sites 47
9. ~~Commercial Revitalization~~ Major Thoroughfares 53
10. ~~FY74-90 Capital Improvement Projects~~ Proposed Land Use 77
11. ~~FY88-89 Capital Improvement Projects~~ Proposed Zoning 86
12. ~~Adopted 1982 Potomac West Land Use Map~~ Existing Heights 88
13. ~~Land Use Concept~~ Proposed Heights 89
14. ~~Proposed Land Use Plan Changes~~ ~~39~~
15. ~~Proposed Land Use Plan~~ ~~40~~
~~16.~~ ~~Proposed Zoning Changes~~ ~~46~~
~~17.~~ ~~Proposed Zoning~~ ~~47~~
~~18.~~ ~~Existing Height Limits by Right~~ ~~53~~
~~19.~~ ~~Proposed Heights~~ ~~54~~
~~20.~~ ~~Deleted; Ordinance #4309~~
~~21.~~ ~~Deleted; Ordinance #4309~~

LIST OF TABLES

1. ~~Employment - Jobs in the Study Area~~ Population Growth 15
~~2. Median Income - Resident Households 5~~
~~3. Existing Land Use 6~~
~~4. Mt. Vernon Avenue -Commercial Inventory 10~~
~~5. Existing Zoning 12~~
~~6. C-2 Commercial Zoned Land by Use 14~~
~~7. Built Commercial vs. Theoretical Zoning Envelope 15~~

UPDATE TO SMALL AREA PLAN

Several amendments are proposed to ~~update~~ the Potomac West Small Area Plan (SAP) chapter of the Master Plan to update existing information on conditions in the small area and to incorporate the strategies identified in the *Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.* The Mount Vernon Avenue Work Group was formed by the City of Alexandria in the spring of 2003 to collaborate on a comprehensive planning effort for Mount Vernon Avenue from Glebe Road to Luray Avenue. Over the course of 16 months, the Work Group defined a future direction for the Avenue, guiding neighborhood change while protecting the adjoining residential neighborhoods, and working closely with City staff, developed the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* (the *Plan*). By reference, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* is incorporated into the Small Area Plan, along with the design guidelines and planning principles that stem from the *Plan.* Amendments to the Urban Design Recommendations are proposed to reflect the land use and zoning recommendations in the *Plan.*

Updated demographic and other information have been included in the Small Area Plan to reflect the changes that have occurred in the Potomac West area since 1992. Conversely, outdated demographic and other information is deleted in this revised Small Area Plan. New text is shown in underline; text to be deleted is shown in strikethrough. Once the small area plan has been adopted by City Council these proofreading tools will be deleted.

~~. the plan documents that were developed with the community during two recent planning processes in Arlandria (see attached Arlandria Neighborhood Plans section). By reference, the Upper Potomac West Task Force Plan and the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood are incorporated into the small area plan, along with the design guidelines and planning principles that stem from these Plans. In addition, amendments are proposed to the existing Urban Design Recommendations section to reflect the land use and zoning changes recommended in the Plans.~~

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this document is to update the Adopted 1992 Potomac West Small Area Plan (SAP) chapter of the Master Plan ~~.update the Adopted 1982 Potomac West Area Plan and to incorporate a new 1988 Potomac West Plan into the City's new Master Plan. This plan will~~ This SAP will serve as the basis for future City Council policy initiatives and actions affecting land use, zoning, capital improvements and other programs in the Potomac West area.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS

The Potomac West ~~Plan~~ SAP is organized into two sections: Background and Issues, and Plan Recommendations. The first section reviews and analyzes existing conditions and trends in the study area including physical description, demographics, land use, zoning, economic development activities and trends, transportation and urban design. This section also retraces past City policies

including adopted plans, rezonings, resolutions and capital improvement programs. Based on this analysis this section identifies issues which need to be addressed in the plan for the area.

The second section lists the goals, objectives and specific recommendations on land use, zoning, transportation and urban design.

PLANNING PROCESS

~~This plan has been~~ The original SAP was developed in consultation with citizens, property owners, and community and business groups, through a series of meeting which included review of existing conditions and trends in the Potomac West area, identification of issues, review of ~~the 1982 and 1974~~ prior plans ~~of~~ for the area. ~~and review of plan recommendations~~.

Recent planning efforts since 2000 have resulted in the development of two plans for the Arlandria neighborhood: the *Upper Potomac West Task Force Report* and the *Long-Range Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.* These Plans are known collectively as the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans*. The Upper Potomac West Task Force was a community-based planning effort that identified and created a vision for redevelopment of three key sites in Arlandria: Safeway/Datatel Sites; Mt. Vernon Village Center/Birchmere Sites; and the north side of East Reed Avenue, part of the existing Route 1 Properties. As that planning process concluded, it was recognized that there were other community concerns that had not been addressed and there was a need and desire for a long-range plan for the remainder of the commercial property fronting along Mt. Vernon Avenue in Arlandria. A Work Group comprised of community representatives, residents, commercial property owners and business operators worked with the City to develop the *Long-Range Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.* That *Plan* identified a vision for redevelopment and infill construction along the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor and developed an action plan with short, mid and long term implementation items to address the community's concerns. Both *Plans* were adopted by City Council in June 2003 and were incorporated into the Potomac West Small Area Plan at that time.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The Potomac West area is located in Planning District II, in the northeastern part of the City. The area is delineated by Four Mile Run on the north, ~~the~~ Potomac ~~Railroad~~ Yard to the east, Union Station to the south and Russell and Glebe Road to the west. ~~The boundaries used in this Plan are based on the Adopted 1982 Potomac West Plan~~ This area is one of the small areas that encompass the City's Master Plan.

Potomac West (Map 1) consists of an 1,116 acre area, ~~which~~ extendsing north-south, from the City line at Four Mile Run to the Virginia Railway Express/Amtrak Station on Callahan Drive. The area is formed by four major north-south streets. Russell Road, defining the western boundary of the area from King Street to Glebe Road, is a ~~four~~ predominantly two lane roadway fronted by single family detached homes. Commonwealth Avenue, which parallels Russell Road to the east, is a broad four lane street with a wide, central median and fronted by single family detached homes and townhouses.

Mt. Vernon Avenue bisects the area and serves as the commercial spine of Potomac West. Forming the eastern boundary of the area, US Route 1, ~~or~~ also known as Jefferson Davis Highway, is a major commuter thoroughfare fronted by light industrial, and service uses, several newly developed multi-family projects, Potomac Yard Shopping Center and by the larger Potomac ~~Railroad Freight Classification~~ Yard development site.

Topographically, the Potomac West area is relatively flat. The area slopes upward toward Russell Road which forms a ridge defining Beverly Hills to the west. One of the most important natural features in Potomac West is Four Mile Run and its flood plain ~~which~~ that forms the northern boundary of the planning area.

The Potomac West study area is primarily residential and distinguished by a narrow grid of streets, closely spaced bungalow houses and small, single-family lots subdivided around the turn of the century - in the pre-automobile era. Its residential character and development history reflect the important influence of the nearby Potomac Yards as a source of jobs. Potomac West was a convenient residential location for many railroad workers int the early part of this century. Transportation facilities such as the railroad, and, later, nearby Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport also influenced the location of industries along US Route 1 ~~Jefferson Davis Highway~~.

As a large, diverse residential community, Potomac West can be divided into five defined neighborhoods (Map 2). Starting in the northern part of the area is Arlandria, a neighborhood located between Four Mile Run, Glebe Road and Commonwealth Avenue. This neighborhood contains a very dense concentration of garden apartments which predominate the area. There are also smaller concentrations of duplexes, rowhouses and single family detached residential units located east and west of Mt. Vernon Avenue and along Reed Avenue. The Hume Springs neighborhood is located in this area.

Del Ray/Warwick Village is located in the central portion of Potomac West and is defined by Randolph Avenue and the former W&OD right of way on the north and by Braddock Road to the south. Del Ray contains older, single family homes dating from the turn of the century and the Warwick Village rowhouses ~~condominiums~~. Warwick Village, built as a planned unit development rental project in the 1950s, was converted to home ownership in the 1970s.

Lynhaven encompasses the blocks of rowhouses bounded by Glebe Road, Commonwealth Avenue, East Reed Avenue and US Route 1. It also includes two older apartment complexes, Lynhaven Gardens and Auburn Gardens, the latter of which has ~~recently~~ undergone renovation and conversion to condominiums.

St. Elmo/Mt. Jefferson is a relatively small area bounded by US Route 1, Mt. Vernon Avenue, Ashby Street and Glebe Road. The neighborhood contains mainly single-family houses dating from the 1930s, some as early as 1900. This residential area abuts the Oakville Industrial triangle located to the south.

Lower Rosemont, generally east of Russell Road and south of Braddock Road, is a section of the Rosemont neighborhood that lies within Potomac West. It consists mainly of single-family detached houses and a few older garden apartments in small buildings, primarily along Commonwealth Avenue.

Map 1
Potomac West SAP Area

Map 2
Neighborhoods

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Within Potomac West there are two National Register historic districts that were designated in 1992. The Town of Potomac Historic District includes both commercial and residential properties, while the Rosemont Historic District is strictly residential. The approximate boundaries of the Rosemont Historic District are Rucker Place and West Walnut Street to the north, Commonwealth Avenue to the east, and King Street to the south and west. A portion of this district is located in the North Ridge/Rosemont Small Area Plan. The Town of Potomac has approximate boundaries along East Bellefonte Avenue to the south, Mt. Vernon Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue to the west, East Uhler and La Verne Avenue to the north and the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad (W&OD) right-of-way and Montrose Avenue to the east (Map 3). The original subdivision of these districts, and the history of each, reflects the current pattern of development.

In 1894 developers from Ohio platted the Del Ray and St. Elmo sections of the Town of Potomac. The subdivisions were laid out in a grid pattern with the longer side of the blocks running east-west between the Washington Alexandria Turnpike (US Route 1) and Mt. Vernon Avenue respectively. In its early years, the residents of these neighborhoods were often federal government workers who were able to commute to Washington, DC by rail on the W&OD Railroad or by electric rail on the Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon electric railroad. Many of the residents also worked at the Potomac Yard railroad switching station that opened in 1906 adjacent to the Washington Alexandria Turnpike.

Rosemont, platted later than the Town of Potomac, became a popular suburban community with commuters due to its close proximity to Washington D.C. and the City of Alexandria. It offered commuters several rail options. Like the Town of Potomac, the Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon electric railroad served the neighborhood with two trolley stations and later steam rail served the neighborhood at the Alexandria Union Station. The first houses in the neighborhood were built in 1908, with development continuing in three distinct phases.

The lots within the Town of Potomac were generally small with buyers often purchasing multiple lots. Originally, residents in the Town of Potomac had wells, but used outhouses and desired better services. Eventually water service was provided along with improved roads, gas service and sanitary sewer lines. Unlike the Town of Potomac, new residential development in Rosemont offered many services early, such as gas, electric, water and sewer, and the developers touted these amenities in promoting the subdivision. The Rosemont lots were generous in size and the houses built were generally larger in comparison to those in the Town of Potomac, with some houses designed by prominent architects.

Over time, the Town of Potomac gained more residents and established more services. By the mid-1920s, the Town had two volunteer fire companies as well as a high school. Rosemont also continued to develop during this time period, with the last major phase of development occurring during the 1930s.

Originally, both of these historic districts were part of Alexandria County, Virginia. In 1915, Rosemont became part of the City of Alexandria through annexation, which was generally seen as positive for growth. Conversely, the citizens of the Town of Potomac fought annexation by the City of Alexandria on several occasions, but the lack of services finally led citizens to accept, albeit reluctantly, annexation by the City in 1930.

The number of residents grew over time in both districts; however, in the 1950s and 1960s, property values in the Town of Potomac area began to decline. In the 1970s, the City initiated a revitalization program through the Community Development Block Grant Program. The City continued to support revitalization in the area with infrastructure improvements, loan programs to support businesses and the rehabilitation of housing. Over time, the area has became more attractive to younger, more affluent homebuyers. Today, the residential neighborhoods in the Town of Potomac are stable, and the commercial areas along Mt. Vernon Avenue continue to attract new businesses.

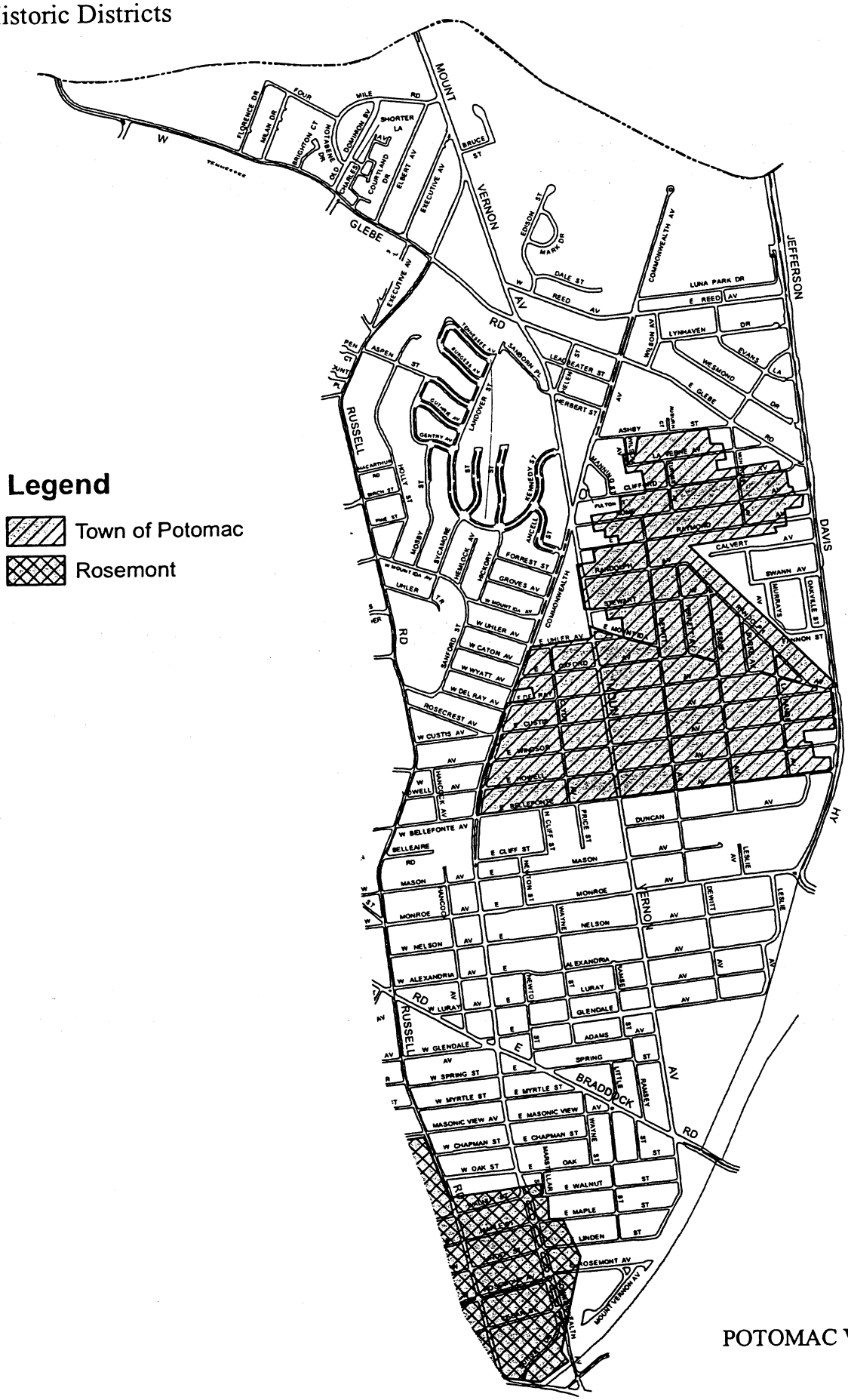
The City recognizes the unique character of the Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts and wishes to preserve the character of the neighborhoods as well as preserve the homes and buildings. Following a community driven effort, the Town of Potomac and Rosemont areas were designated as National Register Historic Districts in 1992. The City recognizes and will continue to support the Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts.

SUMMARY - HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- The Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts have unique histories, resulting in neighborhoods with a unique and defined character, buildings and homes that are of historic value. The City has recognized the value of preserving their history.

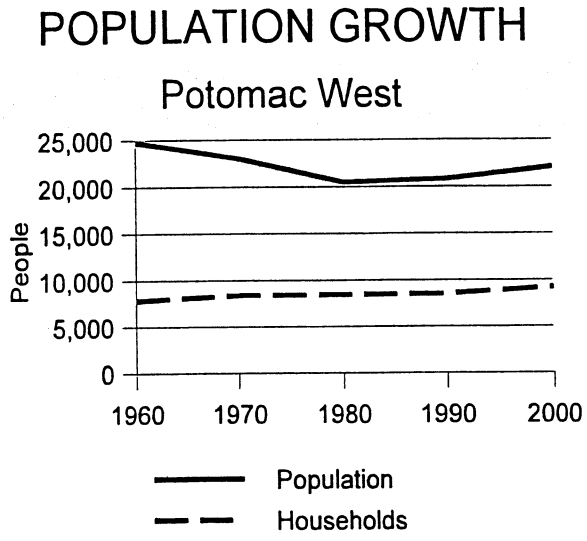
- The City supports and encourages the protection and enhancement of the historic value of the Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts.

Map 3
Historic Districts



DEMOGRAPHICS

Key Characteristics



- Potomac West is one of the most varied areas in Alexandria. Arlandria in the north is young, minority and foreign born, with a poorly educated population. Lower Rosemont in the south is generally middle-aged, white-non-Hispanic, wealthy and educated. In between, Del Ray is transitioning into an area of young adults, many of whom live alone, who are relatively well-educated and financially stable.

- Potomac West's population grew slowly during the 1990s due to the limited construction of new housing, a low vacancy rate and a trend towards smaller household size

- Occupations in Potomac West follow the same pattern as income levels and educational attainment, with management, business and professional occupations more prevalent in Lower Rosemont, and construction and service occupations more prevalent in Arlandria.

- There are high levels of owner-occupied homes in the southern portion of Potomac West and high concentrations of rental housing in the north.

- The population of Potomac West will continue to change as new residential development occurs on formerly commercial sites and as obsolete buildings are renovated or redeveloped.

Population

In 1960 Potomac West was at its highest population in decades with 24,726 residents. The number of residents fell significantly during the 1960s and 1970s. After increasing by 327 people during the 1980s, Potomac West's population continued to grow slowly during the 1990s. In 2000 its population rose to 22,135 people from 20,827 ten years earlier. While significant for Potomac West, this increase of 6.3% during the 1990-2000 period was substantially lower than the City-wide growth rate of 15.3%.

Potomac West	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population	23,016	20,521	20,827	22,135
Households	8,382	8,426	8,515	9,217

Households

There were 9,217 households in Potomac West in 2000, an 8.2% increase over the 8,515 households in 1990. . This increase in households had less to do with the construction of new housing units than with a reduction in the number of vacant units and the trend towards smaller households generally in Potomac West. In fact, during the 1990-2000 period , the number of housing units in Potomac West increased by only 89 units.

The average household size in Potomac West was 2.4 in 2000, down slightly from 2.42 in 1990. Even with this reduction, households were larger in Potomac West than the overall citywide rate of 2.04 people per household. Within Potomac West, the average household size varied from 3.02 people in Arlandria to 2.07 in Del Ray West.

Race, Ethnicity and Foreign Born

Potomac West's population is racially very diverse. In 2000, White non-Hispanic people were in the minority (at 44%), with Black and Hispanic races representing over half of Potomac West's population.

Growth in Potomac West's Hispanic population is driving the increase in this area's racial and ethnic diversity. Of the 6,199 Hispanic people living in Potomac West in 2000, 4,436 resided in Arlandria and this neighborhood alone was the home to nearly one-quarter (23.5%) of all the Hispanic people in Alexandria.

In the Del Ray/Warwick Village/Mt. Jefferson areas, which experienced a 6.8% loss in population during the 1990s, almost all of the loss can be attributed to a loss in minority residents. A significant number of Black residents (1,028 persons) left the neighborhood over the 10 year period, reducing that population by 33.3% from the 1990 count of 3,085 persons in that area. At the same time, the Hispanic population increased by 295 persons (or 34.6%).

Income Levels and Education

Incomes in the Potomac West area are increasing faster than the City-wide average. In 1999, the average household income for Potomac West was $69,549, about 8.9% less that the $76,370 average income for all City households. This is an improvement over1989 when the area's average household income of $46,684 was 11.2% less than the City's average household income of $52,581. It was also an improvement from even earlier decades when there was a much larger disparity

between incomes of Potomac West residents and those of City residents as a whole, with the Potomac West residents having significantly lower incomes.

The educational levels of residents also increased substantially, with the percentage of residents over 25 years of age with a college degree increasing by 31.8% between 1990 and 2000.

Occupations

Occupations - Civilian Labor Force - People 16 and Over	Warwick Village 12.02	Arlandria 12.03	Lynhaven Mt. Jefferson 12.04	Del Ray East 13.00	Del Ray West 14.00	Lower Rosemont 15.00 Part	Alexandria
Management & Finance	21.6%	9.8%	11.2%	21.5%	27.1%	25.8%	23.8%
Professional	33.3%	9.2%	24.7%	34.8%	36.3%	46.7%	32.5%
Service	15.1%	31.7%	17.3%	8.8%	8.4%	6.9%	11.9%
Sales & Office	20.3%	15.0%	23.4%	21.4%	20.0%	16.6%	21.2%
Construction & Maintenance	4.3%	25.8%	11.7%	6.1%	4.2%	1.7%	5.4%
Production & Transportation	5.4%	8.5%	11.6%	7.4%	4.0%	2.4%	5.2%
Total Employed	2,051	3,474	1,647	1,940	2,448	1,377	76,548

The occupations of the residents of Potomac West varied by neighborhood (See Map 5 for Census Tract boundaries).. For instance in Arlandria there was a high percentage of people working in services and the construction trades while in the Lower Rosemont neighborhood there was a large percentage of people working in management and the professions.

Housing

In 2000 Potomac West had 9,548 housing units, only 1.1% more units than existed in 1990. A recent addition to the housing stock is the construction of the Reserve at Potomac Yard, a multifamily development with 588 rental apartments, on a formerly vacant site on the west side of US Route 1, north of Reed Avenue. The Reserve was completed in 2002. In the future, there are some smaller commercial sites, as well as several larger, underutilized sites scattered throughout Potomac West, that could be redeveloped for residential or mixed uses, thereby increasing the housing stock

While over half of the housing in Potomac West was renter-occupied in 2000, tenure varied significantly by neighborhood. In Lower Rosemont, 68% of the housing was owner-occupied. Conversely, in Arlandria, only 13.4% of housing was owner-occupied. Home ownership in Potomac

West appears to be correlated to income levels, and as income levels rise, so do home ownership levels. Overall, only 2.5% of the housing units were vacant in 2000.

The cost of single family units and condominiums rose substantially in Potomac West as it has throughout the City. For the year 2003 alone, assessed values in Potomac West increased by 18.4% for single family units and by 52.9% for condominiums. Between 2000 and 2004, rental apartments also became more expensive in Potomac West. Virtually all apartment rents increased by at least 10%, although the percentage size of the increases varied from apartment building to apartment building.

SUMMARY- DEMOGRAPHICS

Potomac West is one of the most diverse communities in Alexandria. The neighborhoods surrounding the study area, including Del Ray, Warwick Village and Mt. Jefferson have experienced a significant change in demographics over the past 15 years. Generally speaking, the area has become attractive to urban professionals, with higher educational levels, more income and fewer children. As the demographics continue to change over time, the City needs to ensure that the ethnic diversity of the area is maintained, while simultaneously maintaining the quality and affordability of the housing stock.

~~Population~~

~~Potomac West, with a 1985 population of 19,624, contains 18% of the City's residents. The population of the Potomac West study area decreased 5% from a 1980 population of 20,594. This decline is primarily due to an ongoing national trend toward a decrease in average household size, which is quite noticeable in Alexandria. From 1980 to 1985, average household size in the Potomac West area went from 2.37 persons per household to 2.19. At the same time, the number of households actually increased, going from 8,693 in 1980 to 8,944 in 1985, an increase of 3%.~~

~~Employment~~

~~An estimated 5,442 people worked at locations within the Potomac West area in 1985, not including self-employed persons. As shown in Table 1 jobs increased by 34% over the past 9 years, primarily in the industrial and service sectors.~~

~~TABLE 1~~

~~Employment~~
~~Potomac West Area~~

	~~1976~~	~~1980~~	~~1985~~	~~% Change~~
~~Industrial~~	~~1,189~~	~~1,630~~	~~1,742~~	~~+46.5%~~

Wholesale	]	289	253	]
	] 1,252			-4.6
Retail	]	939	942	]
F.I.R.E.	178	180	233	+30.9%
Services	892	1,000	1,617	+81.3%
Federal	]	19	18	]
	] 337			] +76.3%
State/Local	]	344	576	]
Self Employed	304	580	383	+26.0%
Total	4,152	4,981	5,575	+34.3%

SOURCE: COG Regional Employment Census 1976, 1980, 1985.

The increase in industrial sector employment stands in marked contrast to other parts of the city which have experienced a steady loss of industrial employment. The prime industrial site in Potomac West is the Oakville Triangle located along Route 1 between the W& OD right-of-way and Raymond Avenue. The 31 firms in this area provide some 836 jobs.

The economic diversity in Potomac West is also reflected in the different income levels of households living in the study area. Potomac West is one of the few remaining areas in the City which has affordable housing for low and moderate income families.

Table 2 compares the median household income for the different neighborhoods within Potomac West to the Citywide median income.

TABLE 2

1980 Median Income - Resident Households
Potomac West Area

Neighborhood	Warwick Village	Arlandria	St. Elmo	Del Ray East	Del Ray West	Rosemont
1980 Median	$23,420	$12,254	$14,851	$16,941	$19,024	$25,655
% of City	111.4%	58.3%	70.7%	80.6%	90.5%	122.1%

SOURCE: 1980 U.S. Census.

SUMMARY - DEMOGRAPHICS

- ~~Potomac West is primarily a turn of the century residential area containing a wide diversity of neighborhoods, housing types and households.~~

- ~~As an area whose origins were linked to a nearby railroad classification yard Potomac West has retained its industrial employment base which is still growing.~~

Map 4
2000 Census Tracts

EXISTING LAND USE

The Potomac West study area (excluding street and alley right-of-ways) includes approximately 1,116 acres of land, with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, open space and recreational land uses. The predominant land use in the area is residential (Map 5).

Residential Land Use

~~About 77% of the total land area (859 acres) in Potomac West is devoted to residential use.~~ Single-family detached homes and rowhouses are the predominant form of housing in Potomac West. With the exception of ~~four~~ five mid to high-rise apartment/ condominium buildings (the Portals, the Calvert, and the Landover House, the Preston, the Reserve at Potomac Yard), developments in the area are three stories or less in height.

~~TABLE 3~~

~~Existing Land Use~~
~~Potomac West Area~~

~~Land Use~~	~~Acres~~	~~% of Total~~
~~Residential~~	~~858.87~~	~~76.97~~
~~Commercial~~	~~82.57~~	~~7.43~~
~~Industrial~~	~~71.67~~	~~6.45~~
~~Recreational[†]~~	~~100.44~~	~~8.96~~
~~Institutional[²]~~	~~1.15~~	~~.09~~
~~Utilities~~	~~1.30~~	~~.09~~
~~TOTAL~~	~~1,116.00~~	~~100.00~~

~~[†] includes school buildings~~
~~[²] includes Y, Fire Department, and Salvation Army, excludes Library, Human Services.~~

Potomac West primarily has an older housing stock consisting of single family detached homes constructed prior to 1940; rowhouses, built during the 1940s; garden apartments, erected from the 1930s to the 1950s; some high-rise apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s. In the last decade, two new apartment and condominium/townhouse developments have been constructed on US Route 1.

Rowhouses are concentrated in Arlandria ~~East~~ (along Mark, Edison, Reed and Dale Streets), Lynhaven, Warwick Village and those sections of Del Ray north and ~~south~~ west of George Washington Middle School. Garden apartments are located throughout the study area, with the major complexes concentrated in central Del Ray (between US Route 1, Bellefonte Avenue and Monroe Avenue near Commonwealth Avenue) and in the northern portions of the study area, most notably in Arlandria ~~West~~ and along US Route 1.

According to the ~~1980~~ 2000 U.S. Census, there were ~~9,151~~ 9,550 housing units in the Potomac West study area. Of these, some ~~2,819~~ 4,144 were apartments, with the majority of housing units being single family homes.

Commercial Land Use

The commercial uses in Potomac West are predominantly small scale retail establishments and small business office uses. The majority of the commercial uses are concentrated along Mt. Vernon Avenue, Glebe Road and US Route 1 with a few small pockets of commercial uses along Monroe Avenue and Braddock Road. The businesses, with the exception of those along US Route 1, tend to be neighborhood oriented businesses that serve the immediate area. Directly to the east of the Potomac West Area is the Potomac Yard Shopping Center, a big box retail center about 600,000 square feet in size that serves the region.

There is a wide variety of retail, restaurant and office uses throughout Potomac West, ranging from coffee shops, full-service restaurants to convenience stores, auto parts stores and dry cleaners/laundromats. The office uses consist primarily of small businesses, such as professional services, banking, printing, graphic design and the like.

Many of the businesses in Potomac West are auto-oriented. This is particularly true along US Route 1, where many of the businesses cater to the automobile, including gas stations, body and other repair services, automobile dealerships and auto parts stores. In general, the properties located along the western side of US Route 1 were developed for easy automobile access from the road. In addition, there are a number of auto-oriented uses along Mt. Vernon Avenue, including gas stations, automobile dealerships and service uses.

~~Commercial land uses account for 7.4% (83 acres) of the total land use in the study area. Mt. Vernon Avenue, running two and a half miles from Braddock Road north to Four Mile Run, is the focus for much of the commercial activity in Potomac West. Mt. Vernon Avenue is not a typical commercial strip. The Avenue actually is composed of a mix of commercial, residential, recreational and institutional uses. Commercial uses are quite varied and are best described as distinct subareas - each with its own character (Map 4).~~

~~Starting from the north the Arlandria\Glebe Road Subarea includes 72 commercial properties on Mt. Vernon Avenue between Four Mile Run and Commonwealth Avenue and the properties along Glebe Road between Russell Road and Helen Street. This area includes approximately 93 businesses which occupy 418,327 square feet of floor space on 35 acres of land.~~

~~The Arlandria\Glebe Road commercial area is distinguished by its large scale commercial facilities including a neighborhood shopping center (Arlandria) built during the 1940's, a mid-rise office building, a major chain drug store, two grocery stores, a UP Telephone Training Center, a film processing plant, a foreign car dealership, three gas stations and an auto parts store. In addition, there are Map 4 - Mt. Vernon Avenue Subareas smaller scaled establishments which provide personal services such as beauty salons, barber shops, fast food restaurants, appliance, radio and T.V. repair shops, dry cleaners and other convenience stores.~~

~~Historically, this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue was subjected to repeated flooding of nearby Four Mile Run during the 1960's and 1970's which discouraged investment and development of the area. However, the completion of the flood control project during the mid-1970's has effectively eliminated the flooding problem.~~

~~The Mt. Vernon School\Del Ray Subarea includes commercial uses from Commonwealth Avenue to Monroe Avenue. There are approximately 140 businesses located on this segment of the Avenue with a total of 294,000 square feet of floor area. Many of the businesses are located in two to four story commercial structures or converted residences. In some cases, a commercial activity occupies the first floor of a building and residential quarters are located on the upper two floors. This subarea consists of 16 acres.~~

~~The businesses in this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue include convenience stores, cafes, restaurants, shoe repair shops, hair salons and barber shops and several second-hand furniture shops and antique shops. In contrast to the Arlandria\Glebe Road commercial area this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue is characterized by small scale buildings and shops and is often referred to as "Main Street" because of its small town character. A dominant feature of this section of the Avenue is the Mt. Vernon Elementary School and its adjacent library, play field and swimming pool.~~

~~It is noted that there are some larger scaled commercial uses along this segment of the Avenue including the Crestar Bank with its surface parking lot and an auto dealership located towards Monroe Avenue. The only large office structure in the sub-area is the City Department of Human Resources Building which contains approximately 27,000 square feet of space in a two story structure.~~

~~The Monroe Avenue\Braddock Road Subarea is a tree lined section of Mt. Vernon Avenue that covers an area between Monroe Avenue and Walnut Street. The low density of development provides a pleasant transition or buffer between the more commercially active areas and the residential properties. Complementing the transitional setting is the George Washington School facility and the adjacent Braddock Play field. The school and recreational facilities cover 21.9 acres and are the most prominent uses along this segment of the Avenue.~~

~~Commercial activity in this section consists of 24 businesses totaling 81,707 square feet located in commercial clusters. These clusters are mixed with single family houses, rowhouses and garden apartments.~~

The largest commercial use is the C&P Telephone Switching Center. While this center, located between Alexandria and Luray Avenue, is a major structure, few persons are employed there.

Near the intersection of Monroe and Mt. Vernon Avenues, there are several well established businesses including a music store, an oriental rug shop and cleaners, a restaurant, a hardware store, an auto accessory store and a medical supply store.

Another cluster of businesses is focused at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road. This commercial area includes a convenience store, sub shop, two service stations, a roofing company, an office supply firm and a hair salon. A former fast food and garage site is located at the northwest corner of the intersection.

Although Mt. Vernon Avenue is the primary locus of commercial activity there is a supermarket and a drug store on Monroe Avenue near the Monroe Avenue Bridge which serves the Del Ray neighborhood.

Table 4 displays the commercial square footage by type of use for each subarea and for the entire Avenue. Although the database is seven years old there has not been a significant amount of new commercial space added along the Avenue since the detailed survey was conducted. As shown, commercial uses along Mt. Vernon Avenue are predominantly retail and services. Office uses are a relatively minor feature of the Avenue. Most of the office space is concentrated in the former Datatel Building just north of Glebe Road and in the Human Services Building located across from the Mt. Vernon Elementary School.

~~TABLE 4~~
~~Mount Vernon Avenue~~
~~Inventory of Commercial Uses-1981~~

~~Mount Vernon Commercial Section~~

	~~I~~	~~II~~	~~III~~	~~Total~~
~~Commercial Use~~	~~Arlandria Glebe Rd.~~	~~Mt. Vernon School Del Ray~~	~~Monroe Ave. Braddock Rd.~~	
~~Office~~	~~92,120~~	~~54,770~~	~~0~~	~~146,890~~
~~Retail~~	~~161,558~~	~~70,621~~	~~27,475~~	~~259,654~~
~~Services~~	~~40,158~~	~~46,274~~	~~11,724~~	~~98,156~~
~~Eating~~	~~27,931~~	~~4,308~~	~~2,838~~	~~35,077~~
~~Other~~	~~64,647~~	~~46,342~~	~~37,417~~	~~148,406~~
~~Vacant~~	~~31,913~~	~~72,595~~	~~2,253~~	~~106,761~~
~~TOTAL~~	~~418,327~~	~~294,910~~	~~81,707~~	~~794,944~~

Industrial Land Use

~~Industrial uses cover 6% (72 acres) of the total land area and are concentrated at Oakville Triangle and at other locations along Route 1.~~

The 24.3 acre Oakville Industrial Triangle (bounded by US Route 1, the abandoned W&OD right-of-way and Raymond Avenue) is the principal location of industrial activity in Potomac West. The Triangle consists of one and two story brick and metal warehouse structures occupied by a variety of firms including printing, metal fabrication, equipment and construction materials supply companies, ~~a dairy~~ and auto related businesses. With the limited amount of industrial land in the City, this area continues to be fully-leased and its long-term viability should considered as part of the future City-wide industrial uses study.

~~Because this industrial area is wedged in on the south by the W&OD embankment, uses on this site are partially cut off and screened from adjacent residential uses. The exception is along Raymond Avenue where there is no real transition between the industrial and residential uses.~~

~~Another large industrial site (23 acres) is located at the northern city boundary at Four Mile Run, Jefferson Davis Highway and Reed Avenue. Referred to as the Route 1 properties, this site contains some auto repair related industrial uses. However, the site is mostly vacant. The Hertz Rental Car Company is located in a new office building to the rear of the site near Commonwealth Avenue and Four Mile Run.~~

In addition to the Oakville Triangle, ~~most~~ much of the frontage along the US Route 1 is industrial in character with little transition between the industrial uses and the abutting residential neighborhoods. Many of these uses include auto repair, services and sales. Additionally, there are a few restaurants, carry-outs and convenience stores. ~~and consists of printing, auto repair, moving and storage firms, a bottling company, contractors, equipment storage, bottled gas and warehouse storage firms. Aside from a restaurant, carry-outs, a tire store and a gas station there are few retail uses (and no office uses) on Jefferson Davis Highway.~~

There is also some industrial property along Leslie Avenue ~~which~~ that is primarily used for light manufacturing and warehouse purposes. Left over from a time when this portion of US Route 1 was predominantly industrial, this area is changing from industrial to a mix of quasi-industrial, heavy commercial and flex space uses ~~such as Schindler Elevator Company, MCC~~, that include Fitzgerald Moving and Storage ~~and American Transmission~~.,the Georgetown University Print Shop, and the Gold Crust Bakery, offices and a private school.

Open Space

The Potomac West area has several major park and recreational facilities, as well as numerous pocket parks, including Mt. Jefferson Park and Greenway, Mt. Ida Greenway, Charles W. Hill Park, St. Asaph Park and Mason Avenue Mini Park. The major open space and recreational sites are located at Four Mile Run Park, Simpson Stadium Park, Nicholas Colasanto Park adjacent to the Mt. Vernon Community School and Recreation Center, George Washington Middle School and along the W&OD right-of-way and Hooff's Run Park. There are also two public swimming pools in the area, Warwick Pool and Del Ray Pool. Many of the pocket parks have playgrounds or provide space for passive uses.

Institutional Use

There are several large institutional uses in the Potomac West area. The public schools include the Mt. Vernon Community School, George Washington Middle School, and Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology. Additionally, there is the Salvation Army, City of Alexandria Department of Human Services, Mt. Vernon and Cora Kelly Recreation Centers, James M. Duncan Library and the YMCA. Most of these uses are located along Mt. Vernon Avenue or within a few blocks of the Avenue.

~~The Potomac West area has several major park and recreational facilities, as well as numerous pocket parks, covering a combined total of 62.4 acres or 5.6% of the land area. The Alexandria~~

~~portion of Four Mile Run Park (some 25 acres) and Mt. Jefferson Park are in the area. The major open space and recreational sites in Potomac West are located in the northern end of the study area at Four Mile Run Park, at Simpson Stadium, adjacent to Mt. Vernon Elementary School and George Washington School, along the W&OD right-of-way and Hooff's Run Park. Other parks include Warwick Village and Hoofs Run Park in the Rosemont area. In addition, Simpson Stadium and Braddock Field are located in Potomac West. There are also two public swimming pools in the area, Warwick Pool and Del Ray Pool.~~

~~Institutional uses cover about 3.1% (34.8 acres) of the land in the study area and include the Cora Kelly School, Mt. Vernon School, George Washington School, Duncan Library, the Y.M.C.A. and the Salvation Army.~~

Vacant Land and Underutilized Properties

~~About 2.7 percent (30 acres) of the land in the study area is vacant. The most significant vacant parcel is the so-called Route 1 properties, the northernmost collection of properties west of Route 1 between Four Mile Run, Commonwealth and Reed Avenues. The rest of the v~~ Vacant properties are scattered throughout the study area and are generally small parcels. In addition to these properties, several areas have been identified as underutilized in the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* and the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*. In Arlandria, identified underutilized properties include the Safeway/Datatel sites, the Mt. Vernon Village Center, the Birchmere property, and a few infill sites. The Neighborhood Retail (NR) zone, along with guidelines for the existing Coordinated Development District (CDD) and the creation of a new CDD for the Safeway/Datatel sites, encourage the coordinated redevelopment of these properties with a mix of uses, including pedestrian scale retail along the street, and commercial, office or residential uses on the upper floors. The *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* specifically identifies the 11 parcels on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue, north of Commonwealth Avenue (designated the "Triangle" sites) for future redevelopment. Smaller infill sites are also identified, with detailed guidelines and incentive to encourage their development in a manner compatible with the historic scale of the Avenue.

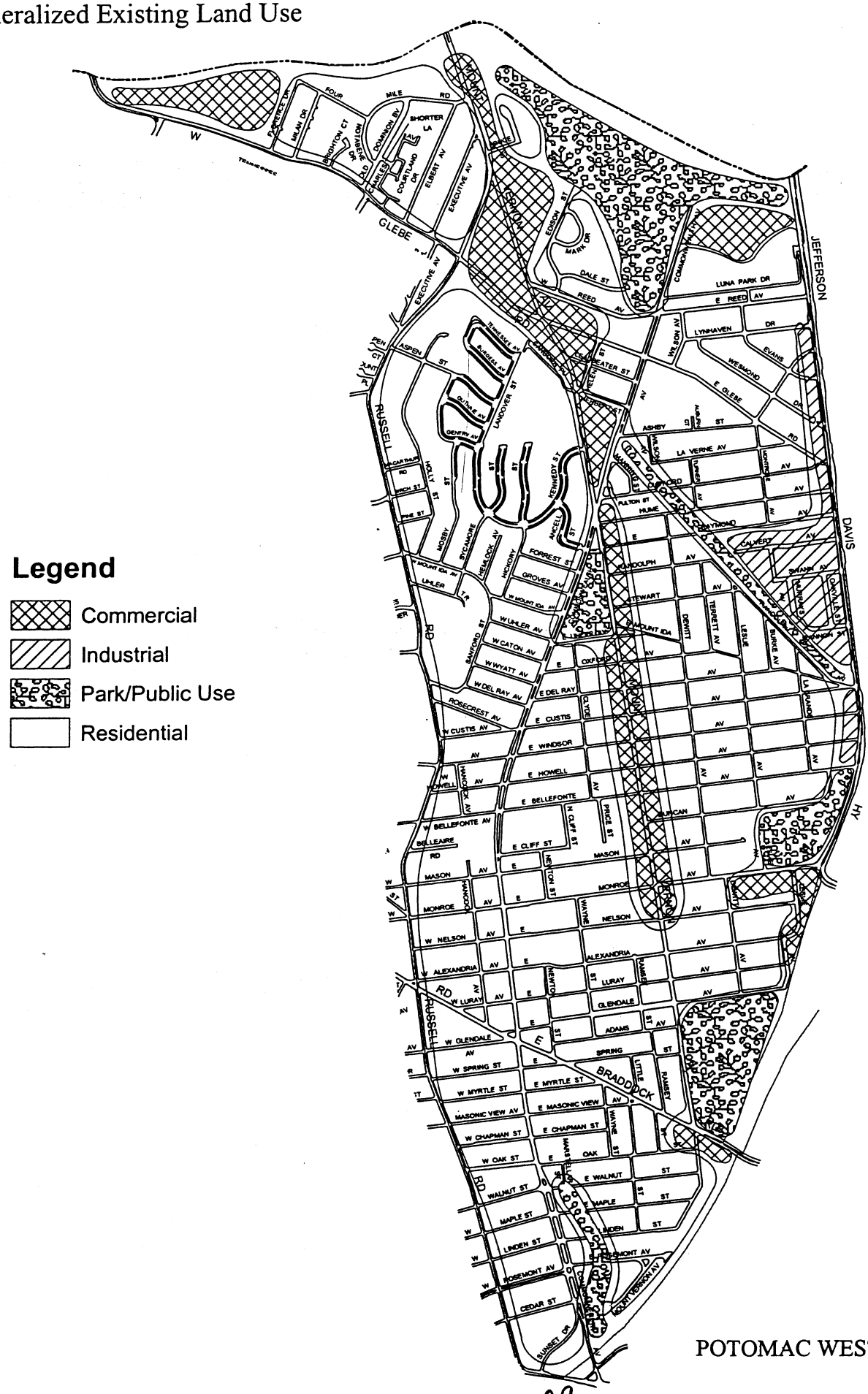
SUMMARY - LAND USE

- Land use within the Potomac West area is predominantly residential with commercial concentrated along the major thoroughfares. Industrial uses are found along the US Route 1 corridor.

- Both the *Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* and the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* encourage mixed use development that is pedestrian oriented and strengthens the "Main Street" type retail environment in these areas.

- ~~Except for the Route 1 properties, t~~ There is very little vacant land available in the planning area, but there are areas that are underutilized. The City has implemented several planning tools to support the coordinated redevelopment of larger vacant or underutilized commercially zoned properties.

Map 5
Generalized Existing Land Use



EXISTING ZONING

Zoning in the Potomac West area essentially mirrors the land use pattern, with residential being the cldearly predominant category. The majority of the commercial zoning is located along the major thoroughfares. Although there are uses along US Route 1 that are more industrial in nature, industrial zoning is concentrated in the Oakville Triangle. Throughout the study area, there are parcels zoned Public Open Space (POS) with the largest being Four Mile Run Park. ~~About 77% of the land (865 acres) is zoned for residential development, with commercial and industrial zoning accounting respectively for about 7.4% and 6.4% of the remaining land area. Industrial zoning is located primarily along Route 1 with the largest parcels at the Oakville Triangle and at the Route t property and in a strip along Route 1 which connects these two sites. In addition, the VEPCO utility facility, on West Glebe Road, is also presently zoned industrial.~~

~~TABLE 5~~

~~Existing Zoning~~
~~Potomac West Area~~

	~~Acres~~	~~% of Total~~
~~Commercial~~	~~82.57~~	~~7.39~~
~~Industrial~~	~~71.67~~	~~6.42~~
~~Residential~~	~~865.00~~	~~77.50~~
~~TOTAL~~	~~1,109.24~~	~~91.30*~~

~~* difference is due to institutional and recreational uses zoned commercial and not included here~~

Residential Zoning

The residential zoning in the area is divided between the R2-5; R-5, R-8, RB and RA categories. Of these, the largest residential zoning category is R2-5, which permits single family and two family homes at densities of up to 17.42 units per acre. This zone is found primarily in the middle portion of Potomac West, between Ashby Street and Glendale Avenue. Along the western edge of the study area and Russell Road are found R-8 and R-5 zoning, which permit only single family homes at medium densities of 5.45 and 8.71 units per acre respectively.

The majority of RB zoning is located at the northeast and southeast edges of Potomac West and at scattered, small sites throughout the study area. RB zoning permits single-family and townhouse homes at densities of up to 22 units per acre and multifamily units at densities of 27 units per acre, if built prior to 1973. Under the current RB zoning regulations, the maximum permitted density for both single family and multifamily developments is 22 dwelling units per acre.

RA zoning allows single, two or multi-family dwellings at densities of up to 27 units per acre. RA zoning is scattered throughout the area, with the largest concentration near the intersections of Mt. Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road, south of Glebe Road between Tennessee Avenue, Mosby Street, Ancell Street and Ashby Street to Mt. Vernon Avenue; and east of Commonwealth Avenue between Ashby Street and Glebe Road. Another large concentration of RA zoning is located ~~at~~ near Four Mile Run Park at the northern boundary of the study area. (Map 6.)

In addition to the more traditional zoning districts there are a few mixed use and coordinated development districts discussed in a later section that include residential uses. These districts are located on Mt. Vernon Avenue and US Route 1, with the residential component including a mix of apartments, condominiums, and townhouses.

Commercial Zoning

Within Potomac West, there are multiple commercial zoning districts. Much of the commercial area along Mt. Vernon Avenue in the Del Ray neighborhood is zoned CL. The purpose of the CL zone is to allow small scale retail and service uses that are pedestrian oriented and offer services for the nearby residential neighborhood. Generally, this zoning district permits uses such as residences, business and professional services, retail shops and personal services. The maximum allowable FAR is 0.75 on lots less than 5,500 square feet and 0.5 on larger lots by right and 0.75 with a special use permit (SUP). The maximum height allowed is 35 feet by right and 45 feet with a special use permit.

As part of the implementation of the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans*, the NR zoning district was adopted in June 2003 and applied to the formerly CL-zoned and commercially developed parcels that abut Mt. Vernon Avenue between the City boundary and West Glebe Road. The intent of the NR zone is to revitalize properties by promoting a mix of uses with ground floor retail that is pedestrian in scale and orientation to achieve a vibrant urban environment while protecting the adjacent residential neighborhoods(Map 6). NR zoning applies a build-to line instead of a required front yard and the maximum permitted FAR is 0.5, except in the case of a mixed use development with ground floor retail, a FAR of up to 1.5 is permitted with a special use permit. Maximum height in this zoning district is 35 feet or up to 50 feet if upper floor setback conditions are met.

As part of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*, the City proposes to create an overlay zone along Mt. Vernon Avenue in the Del Ray area (Map 11). The purpose of the overlay zone is to encourage a mix of land uses, preserve historic buildings and promote the use of form-based design standards for compatible infill development. The overlay will apply specific building form design guidelines with tiered standards for parking and open space based on lot size.

The other commercial zoning districts are CSL and CG. The CSL zoning district allows light service and industrial uses that are compatible in operation and service with the adjacent residential neighborhoods. The CG zoning district allows auto oriented retail businesses that serve the community. Both of these zoning districts allow a FAR of 0.5 for non-residential uses and a 0.75 FAR for residential use with a limit on the number of units. The maximum allowed height is 50 feet.

The CSL districts are located along the west side of US Route 1 and on the east side of Leslie Avenue. CG districts are located along W. Glebe Road near the City boundary and east of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Mixed Use Zoning

There are currently several mixed used zoning districts in Potomac West, including a commercial residential mixed use zone (CRMU-M) and three coordinated development districts (CDD #6, CDD #7, and CDD#12). There are two parcels in Potomac West zoned CRMU-M. One of these parcels is the Calvert Apartments that has a mix of retail stores, offices and apartments. The other is the Preston, a condominium and townhouse project at the southwest corner of US Route 1 and West Reed Avenue. The FAR in the CRMU-M zone is dependant on the mix of use. In general, a larger FAR is allowed with residential uses. The maximum allowable FAR is 2.0 with a special use permit and compliance with defined conditions.

The CDD zones are intended to encourage desirable coordinated development of areas that are significant either due to size or location and could have significant development related effects on the City. Generally, with a Special Use Permit, the CDD zoning will allow a greater FAR than the underlying zoning. Each CDD has specific guidelines aimed at improving development within the district. Two additional CDDs are proposed for incorporation in the Potomac West Small Area Plan: CDD#13 at Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues and CDD #14 on Monroe Avenue.

~~Commercial zoning in Potomac West is almost entirely C-2, with a few spots of C-1 zoning. The C-2 zone extends primarily along Mt. Vernon Avenue and allows office, retail and service uses at a density of 3.0 F.A.R. and at heights of up to 150 feet. The C-1 zone allows commercial and residential uses at densities of 1.0 F.A.R. and heights of up to 150 feet. Almost all of the commercially zoned land in Potomac West falls under the C-2 category.~~

~~In the Potomac West area, a significant portion (25.7%) of C-2 zoned parcels are presently used for noncommercial purposes (see Table 6). Approximately 15.5 acres of commercially zoned land is used for residential purposes. In addition, recreational, institutional and utility uses are also zoned C-2.~~

~~TABLE 6~~

~~C-2 Commercial Zoned Land By Use~~
~~Potomac West Area~~

	~~Acres~~	~~% of Total~~
~~Residential~~	~~15.50~~	~~18.79~~
~~Institutional~~	~~1.15~~	~~1.39~~

~~Utility~~	~~1.30~~	~~1.57~~
~~Recreational~~	~~3.28~~	~~3.97~~
~~Commercial~~	~~61.34~~	~~74.28~~
~~TOTAL~~	~~82.57~~	~~100.00~~

Industrial Zoning

Within the study area, only the Oakville Triangle is zoned industrial. Industrial zoning allows light to medium industrial use, such as service, distribution, manufacturing and wholesale and storage facilities at low densities. The intent is that these uses will not negatively impact adjacent neighborhoods. The maximum allowable height for a building is 50 feet with the maximum allowable FAR of 0.85, an increase to 1.25 is allowed with a SUP.

~~Except for the Route 1 north parcels (zoned I-2), the industrial zoning in the study area is I-1. The I-1 zone allows non-noxious industrial activities including light manufacturing, storage, warehousing and distribution. In addition, the industrial zones allow most commercial uses, including office, retail and service uses, while under a Planned Unit Development permit, residential uses are also allowed. Densities and heights permitted are a 2.5 F.A.R. and 77 feet by right or a 5.0 F.A.R. and heights of up to 200 feet with a P.U.D.~~

~~In the Potomac West area, almost all of the industrially zoned parcels are proximate to residential areas; the major exception is the Route 1 properties fronting Jefferson Davis Highway.~~

Utility and Transportation Zoning

There are several parcels located along West Glebe Road that are zoned UT. Dominion Virginia Power owns these parcels and uses them for offices and equipment storage.

Public Open Space Zoning

Four Mile Run Park in the northern section of the study area is the largest area zoned POS. The remaining POS zoning is scattered throughout the study area and coincides with the parks and open space land uses discussed earlier.

~~Theoretical vs. Built Commercial Zoning Envelopes~~

~~Table 7 compares the amount of commercial development which would theoretically be allowed under the C-2 zone versus the actual built commercial square footage. As shown there is only a~~

12.596 utilization of the theoretical development rights along the Mt. Vernon Avenue commercial corridor.

In part, the underutilization of commercial property is a reflection of market conditions. As noted, there is little demand evidenced for high density office development along the Avenue. In large measure, however, the low utilization of the theoretical envelope reflects parcelization, zoning patterns and zoning constraints.

Many of the parcels along Mt. Vernon Avenue are small and fragmented. The zoning pattern usually is high density commercial zoning next to low and medium density residential zoning. This pattern means that commercial development along the Avenue must provide a zone transition setback from the abutting residential zones The zone transition requirement effectively lowers the achievable height and density of commercial development for many parcels along the Avenue.

Another constraint is the parking requirement which for small, narrow parcels makes redevelopment at high densities and heights difficult. There is the option to structure or underground parking but this is expensive and not always economically feasible.

In fact if all zoning standards are applied to a typical block frontage along the Avenue the result is likely to be a three story building with a 1.3 floor area ratio.

TABLE 7

Built Commercial vs. Transitional Zoning Envelope
By Commercial Section
Potomac West Area

Sector	Built	Zoning Envelope	% Utilized
I	418,327	4,180,369	10.0
II	328,517	1,877,407	17.0
III	81,000	527,089	15.0
TOTAL	827,844	6,585,456	12.5%

SUMMARY-ZONING

- Zoning in the Potomac West area is predominantly low to medium density residential.

- ~~Non-residential zoning is split fairly evenly between commercial and industrial zones. Most of the commercially zoned land is along Mt. Vernon Avenue, while most of the industrially zoned land is along US Route 1.~~ Industrial zoning is only found predominantly in the Oakville Triangle. This area should be included in a future City-wide industrial uses study.

- ~~Almost all commercially zoned land allows high density development and 150 foot building heights, with C-2 zoning adjacent to low and medium density residential areas.~~

- ~~The C-2 zone is used extensively for non-commercial uses such as residential, institutional and open space purposes.~~

- ~~Parking and setback requirements on commercially zoned land along Mt. Vernon Avenue effectively reduce heights and densities from what would otherwise be maximally allowed under the C-2 zone.~~

- The commercial zoning along Mount Vernon Avenue as well as the existing and proposed Coordinated Development Districts promote a mix of uses as well as pedestrian oriented commercial uses.

Map 6
Existing Zoning

Zoning Description

- CDD#10 - Coordinated development district #10
- CDD#12 - Coordinated development district #12
- CDD#6 - Coordinated development district #6
- CDD#7 - Coordinated development district #7
- CG - Commercial general zone
- CL - Commercial low zone
- CRMU/M - Commercial residential mixed use (medium) zone
- CSL - Commercial service low zone
- I - Industrial
- NR - Neighborhood retail
- POS - Public open space
- R 12 - Residential single family zone, 12,000 square foot lot
- R 2-5 - Residential single family or two family zone, 5,000 square foot lot
- R 5 - Residential single family zone, 5,000 square foot lot
- R 8 - Residential single family zone, 8000 square foot lot
- RA - Residential multi-family zone
- RB - Residential townhouse zone
- RC - Residential high density apartment zone
- UT - Utility and transportation zone

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND TRENDS

The focus ~~for~~ of economic activity in Potomac West is Mt. Vernon Avenue. Much of the impetus for commercial revitalization has been the City's active role in using capital improvement and business loan programs to encourage business development along the Avenue. ~~Some 30 new businesses have located on the Avenue since 1980- many of which occupy renovated structures.~~

~~Most new commercial construction has occurred in the Arlandria/Glebe Road area and include the Duron Paint store, Erol's Video and the 24 Hour Express convenience store. In addition, a 48,000 square foot complex of three story, townhouse style professional office buildings, Vernon Square, was recently completed at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Herbert Street.~~

Over the past several years, Potomac West has seen increased commercial activity in both the Del Ray and Arlandria commercial districts. Further commercial improvement and redevelopment is likely in the coming years, spawned by an overall increase in the Washington region's economy and by the desirable and centralized location of Potomac West.

In the last decade, the Potomac Yard Shopping Center was constructed at the northern portion of the former railroad yard adjacent to Four Mile Run and Arlington County. Approximately 600,000 square feet in size, the shopping center consists of a grocery store, several big box style retail uses, and personal service uses. Restaurants and retail uses are located on pad sites adjacent to US Route 1, and a 16 screen movie theater is located behind the shopping center.

Potomac West is home to Alexandria's Enterprise Zone, the first in Northern Virginia. The 690-acre zone was designated by the Governor of Virginia in 1994 to stimulate private investment and job opportunities by offering businesses located within the area a package of state and local incentives. The Enterprise Zone is located at the northern end of Potomac West and is bounded by Four Mile Run to the north, US Route 1 to the east, Custis and Windsor Avenues to the south, and Russell Road, Mt. Ida Avenue, Sycamore Street and Landover Street to the west (See Map 7).

~~Other commercial activity in the form of proposed projects include Potomac Town Square, located at 2200 Mt. Vernon Avenue, to consist of 33.000 square feet of office and retail space and Mt. Vernon Associates property, located at the comer of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road, to consist of 40,000 square feet of office and retail. Both projects will be three stories in height.~~

~~Coupled with increased commercial activity has been increased housing investment and renovation. Much of this activity has occurred in Arlandria West where some 1400 apartment units have been renovated. Also in Arlandria West, under a unique agreement between the Sunnyside residents, the owner of the Sunnyside tract and the City, some 103 new townhouses are to be constructed with 15 of the units to be made available to Sunnyside residents and their families at a discounted price. The City has also been instrumental in renovating townhouses in Arlandria East through the Tower Homes project.~~

As part of recent comprehensive planning studies, specific economic analyses have been conducted for both the Del Ray and Arlandria commercial corridors of the Potomac West area. Both studies have indicated modest demand for retail niche marketing that would both serve the needs of nearby residents and complement the overall neighborhood characteristics.

The *Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* and *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* project a steadily increasing retail demand along the Avenue for "Main Street" retail in the coming years. Recommendations for the Avenue are to:

- Focus retail business attraction on sectors that have the greatest potential to generate new sales along Mount Vernon Avenue, and at the same time reflect the community's expressed preference for a vibrant and unique main street atmosphere.
- Focus new business and restaurant attraction on those types that can fill market niches. There are several specific restaurant and retail themes that could potentially fill a need in the current market structure.
- Enhance and strengthen the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA) as an organization to develop and implement marketing, promotions, and retail management district initiatives.
- Promote the arts in tandem with promoting other retail activity along the Avenue. This would include various elements of arts promotion such as art galleries, public art, and so forth that would generate considerable excitement for the Avenue.
- Capitalize on the activities in Four Mile Run Park and incorporate in marketing themes for the Arlandria area

In general the residential real estate market in Potomac West is strong, as it is throughout the City. ~~Single family residential assessments have increased 11.2% on average over the past year.~~

Potential Development and Redevelopment Sites

Although Potomac West is largely built up, there are sites and areas ~~which~~ that could be redeveloped over the next 10-20 years. The three ~~two~~ most significant sites subject to major development or redevelopment are the Mt. Vernon Village Center and Birchmere sites, the Safeway/Datatel sites, and the Triangle sites. In addition, there are scattered individual sites along US Route 1, as well as a collection of parcels along the north side of East Reed Avenue, with the potential for future redevelopment. ~~Arlandria Shopping Center/ Berkey Photo properties and the Route 1 properties~~ (Map 8).

~~Arlandria Center/ Berkey Photo Site~~ Mt. Vernon Village Center and Birchmere Sites (CDD #6)

The Mt. Vernon Village Center and the Birchmere sites are located adjacent to each other on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue in the 3700 and 3800 blocks. ~~Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo site includes approximately 6.5 acres composed of the; Arlandria Shopping Center and the Berkey Photo building.~~ In addition to these two major sites, there are ~~another 2.0 acres of~~ other adjacent small parcels that could be assembled with the larger sites. This potential 8.5-acre assemblage would make this site the largest commercially zoned and redevelopable tract of land along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

~~All of these abutting properties are located on the east side of Mount Vernon Avenue south of Bruce Street, with Four Mile Run Park to the east and the Tower Homes subdivision to the south.~~

The Mt. Vernon Village ~~Arlandria~~ Center (previously the Arlandria Center) has been ~~was~~ an active neighborhood shopping facility since ~~during~~ the 1940s ~~through. the 1960's~~. The Center includes approximately 60,000 ~~included some 85,000~~ square feet of space and as of 2005, features tenants such as My Organic Market (Mom's), CVS pharmacy, several restaurants, small retail shops and personal service uses. The Mt. Vernon Village Center is a three story, art deco styled shopping center that is auto-oriented, but has the potential to be a pedestrian-oriented, mixed use anchor development. ~~featured junior department stores, a shoe store, a pharmacy, an ABC store and carpet shop.~~

~~However, over the years, as major flooding from Four Mile Run resulted in extensive damage to toe Center and to other properties and businesses in Arlandria; the shopping center went into decline. The completion of the flood control project during the 1970's removed the threat of periodic flooding and improved the investment prospects for the property. Recently there was a change in ownership and a major investment made to improve the facade of the building and the parking area.~~

~~Although the recent face-lift has~~ Given the recent renovation of the shopping center, it is unlikely that the renovated portion of the property will redevelop in the short term. The *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* present several illustrative visions for future redevelopment of the site, one with the existing center retained and another illustrating a concept for full redevelopment. ~~the shopping center suffers from functional and physical obsolescence. Because of past flooding problems and changes in the surrounding neighborhoods, much of the market support for the Center, at least from the more affluent nearby areas, has shifted elsewhere to competitive centers such as Bradlee or Shirlington. The large sized store modules designed for junior department stores and five-and-dime stores are now less viable in light of changes in the market and changes in consumer tastes. The inability to relet a large space viable by Robcyn's Department Store over the past three years is a good indicator of this problem.~~

~~The Center is also disadvantaged by the placement of the building close towards the Avenue and the location of the majority of the parking to the rear of the building not visible from the street. This means that the majority of the customers have to walk around the building to enter the stores to shop.~~

~~This large 4.6 acre site zoned C-2 for high density office development could be redeveloped. The site itself is only built out at a .42 Floor Area Ratio whereas the zoning would permit 3.0 FAR and a 150 foot building.~~ This site is zoned CDD #6 for development as a Coordinated Development District. Such zoning facilitates development as a mixed-use center incorporating retail, office uses, and possibly residential uses – a scheme that would heighten the area's neighborhood characteristics. ~~Alternatively, the shopping center could be modernized, redesigned and expanded to make it more competitive and attractive.~~

Abutting the ~~Arlandria Shopping~~ Mt. Vernon Village Center to the southeast is the Birchmere ~~Berkey Photo~~ property. This site ~~side is 1.89~~ consists of 2.4 acres and is occupied by a 56,000-square foot, one-story building~~.~~, that houses the nationally-known Birchmere music venue. The property abuts the back yards of townhouse residences in Hume Springs and Four Mile Run Park, and has minimal ~~very little~~ frontage or physical presence along Mt. Vernon Avenue other than its parking lot and freestanding sign. As with the shopping center site to the north, the zoning for this site is CDD #6, permitting a mixed-use redevelopment. Any redevelopment should provide for coordination and connection between the properties as shown on the illustrative concept plans. ~~Again the zoning is C-2 which permits high density office development.~~

~~The remaining abutting properties in this area include the Feaser and Town and Country vacant properties which front the Avenue and some small office and retail buildings.~~

Such redevelopment of these sites would provide for retail on the ground floor that would add vitality to the street and encourage a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. Residential uses are encouraged on the upper floors to support the mixed use, active neighborhood center desired by the community. A network of streets and pedestrian walkways is also strongly desired to connect the two sites and create better public access to Four Mile Run from Mt. Vernon Avenue and the neighborhoods.

While these properties as currently developed function in the current marketplace, it is possible that – given the accelerating regional real estate market – the sites could redevelop in the near future. These are high profile sites for the neighborhood, and with over 8 acres of combined size, represent a unique opportunity for commercial redevelopment inside of the Capital Beltway. The potential redevelopment of these sites could be used as an anchor to further the neighborhood's goals of community-oriented, vibrant mixed use development that serves local needs. (See the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* for illustrative concepts for future development in and around these sites.) Should redevelopment occur, incorporation of the Birchmere music venue is strongly desired as it adds significantly to the neighborhood. ~~It is not certain whether a developer would consider assembling all of these properties for redevelopment. It is likely, however, that an investor would want to control or coordinate the type and quality of development for all of these sites to protect his/her investment. Locationally, and from a developer's perspective, the future of these properties are linked.~~

Safeway/Datatel Sites (CDD #12)

TheSafeway/Datatel sites consist of eight separate parcels on a 4.2-acre triangular-shaped piece of land at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and West Glebe Road, and is developed with several

buildings, including the 22,000-square foot former Safeway grocery store. This site is located at the southern entrance to the Arlandria neighborhood and has a great potential to be redeveloped with mixed-uses. Currently, the former Safeway grocery store is occupied by a full service buffet restaurant, a dollar store and small carry-out restaurant, with a large parking lot in front of the building. In the fall of 2002, the City purchased the property formerly developed with the Datatel office building and demolished the building. As an interim use, a public parking lot is planned until the site is redeveloped. At that time, structured parking is envisioned to support the redevelopment of the site as well as the nearby retail core along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

The community envisions this site as a focal point for the neighborhood , with redevelopment to create a place that features a mix of uses, including ground floor retail uses, a public plaza and open space and to reflect the uniqueness of the neighborhood.

In the current retail market, a 22,000-square foot stand-alone grocery store is not considered desirable space however, the underlying real estate has great potential value for redevelopment. Similar to the Mt. Vernon Village Center property, if this site were to be redeveloped, it could present a unique opportunity to further the community's goals of creating a unique, community-oriented mixed use development with public plazas and open space. The parcels are zoned Coordinated Development District #12. A conceptual plan for the redevelopment of these sites is presented in the *Upper Potomac West Task Force Report* incorporated into the Small Area Plan.

Triangle Sites

The 11 parcels known collectively as the Triangle Sites, located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue, roughly between Herbert Street and Commonwealth Avenue, comprise one of the few contiguous tracts of underutilized or vacant land in Potomac West outside of the Arlandria neighborhood. As desired by the community, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends the creation of a new CDD to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels with a mix of uses including ground floor retail, with residential or office uses on upper floors. The CDD will include design guidelines and planning principles to ensure that redevelopment occurs in a coordinated manner and is generally consistent with the *Plan.*

Giant/CVS Sites

The Giant and CVS sites are located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue and are located on approximately 1.9 acres. The community strongly supports the existing grocery and pharmacy uses in this location. As such, the primary goal is to work with the existing property owners and tenants to identify ways for the uses to continue to operate and meet the businesses' future requirements. However, the stores are considerably smaller than the industry standard and may be subject to market forces as existing grocery stores in the nearby area are enlarged or new stores are constructed. Should a future shift in the market render the current sites or uses obsolete and unsuitable for long-term operation, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends the creation of a new CDD to ensure a coordinated redevelopment. The desired mix of uses includes a grocery and a pharmacy, and other retail uses on the ground floor, with residential or office uses on the upper floors. Planning principles and design guidelines have been developed to ensure that any redevelopment is compatible

in scale with the adjacent residential neighborhood and connect to the future Potomac Yard development.

~~Route 1 Properties~~ US Route 1 Corridor

Numerous properties located on the west side of US Route 1 could be considered potential redevelopment sites. The massive Potomac Yard development, currently underway on the east side of US Route 1, will change the character of this major north/south route and may lead to the redevelopment of parcels on the west side of the road. Detailed evaluation of the future use and design to complement the Potomac Yard development is needed.

Currently, most of the parcels along the US Route 1 corridor are in low-intensity commercial or retail use. Many of the developable parcels are zoned CSL (Commercial Service Low), while the properties located between Hume Avenue and Custis Avenue are zoned for industrial use. In many cases the commercial and industrial uses abut residential uses without adequate buffering or transition. In addition, there are residential developments at the north end of the corridor, and Potomac Yard on the east side of US Route 1 is approved for residential uses. It is also important that impacts on adjacent residential areas are minimized and may be achieved through more extensive landscaping, masonry walls, or other materials that would buffer any impacts from the commercial and industrial uses.

~~The Route 1 Properties are located just south of the Arlington County/ Alexandria City line and (Four Mile Run Channel, west of Commonwealth Avenue, Cora Kelly Elementary School and Four Mile Run Park, north of Reed Avenue and east of U.S Route 1 -Jefferson Davis Highway and the Potomac Rail Yard.~~

~~The major portion of the site consists of seven parcels owned by four different owners with the remainder of the site consisting of 49 frame built duplex and single family homes along Reed Avenue under multiple ownership.~~

~~The major parcels consist of the Hertz rental car turn around facility and administrative offices, 5,05 acres zoned I-1 and I-2; the Smith Properties, 13.17 acres zoned I-2 of which 5.12 acres is located in an easement for the Four Mile Run Channel; the Arban and Carosi property, 2.52 acres zoned I-2; the Poladian properties, 8.24 acres zoned RD and I-1 and 1.95 acres zoned I-2. In addition, there are 26 residential properties zoned RB along E. Reed Avenue under multiple ownerships (all but 11 absentee) totaling 1.7 acres and a City owned .3 acre parcel zoned I-1 and located at the corner of E. Reed Avenue and Jefferson Davis Highway. Combined these properties offer 20 to 25 acres for development and redevelopment.~~

~~Most of the site is vacant or marginally developed except for the four year old Hertz Administrative building. The residences along E. Reed Avenue are generally in fair to poor condition.~~

~~Since the early 1970s this area site has been recognized as a future potential development area.~~ This area offers numerous advantages for commercial or service-oriented development, with a location on a heavily-trafficked highway and ~~The site has~~ excellent access to Crystal City and to Ronald

Reagan Washington National Airport. This access is being ~~has been~~ enhanced by the road improvements ~~recently made to Jefferson Davis Highway~~ through Crystal City and the planned realignment of the Monroe Avenue bridge. ~~connecting to I-395 and Washington D.C. As part of the second phase of this project, Route 1 is being widened to six lanes from the Airport Viaduct to a point 100 feet north of E. Reed Avenue. The site also has good access from 1395 via South Glebe Road in Arlington.~~

East Reed Avenue

The existing 46 single family dwellings are developed on 3.25 acres of land on the north side of East Reed Avenue between US Route 1 and Commonwealth Avenue. Redevelopment of the residential properties on the north side of East Reed Avenue is encouraged consistent with the planning principles and design guidelines set forth in the Arlandria Plans as well as with the CDD guidelines, while ensuring that existing property owners have the opportunity to live in the redevelopment housing if they desire.

~~Although these properties have good access and tremendous visibility to Route 1 there are negative factors which could affect optimum development of the site. The fragmentation of ownership may result in uncoordinated development where the uncertainty and risk of not knowing how an adjacent property will be developed may deter quality development and encourage suboptimal use of the properties. The sites also has poor soil conditions which will restrict or make expensive underground parking. There is a major storm water easement in the center of the site running north/south and emptying into Four Mile Run which would have to be maintained.~~

~~In addition to site constraints, the types and conditions of uses adjacent and near the site may be a deterrent to investment. Along Jefferson Davis Highway between the Airport Viaduct and the Alexandria City Line, there are car rental agencies, various Industrial uses, the Four Mile Run Bus Garage, the Arlington Sewer Treatment Facility and a car dealership. Although some of the private uses may eventually be upgraded the public uses are unlikely to change. The problem is that between Crystal City and the Route 1 properties is a no man's land which might deter developer interest in the site or major development activity.~~

~~Adjacent to the site on the eastern side of Jefferson Davis Highway is the Potomac Railroad Yard. Although it is anticipated that part or all of the Yard will be redeveloped eventually, this would not even begin to occur for at least 10 years. In the interim, the railroad use is a negative factor in terms of encouraging quality development on the Route 1 properties.~~

~~Other negative adjacency factors are the condition of the houses along both sides of E. Reed Avenue, to some extent the physical condition of the Cora Kelly School, the baseball fields along Commonwealth Avenue and Four Mile Run Park. These conditions are treatable through neighborhood conservation programs, school facility upgrading, landscaping and facility improvements to Four Mile Run Park;~~

~~Other Potential Sites~~

~~The aforementioned sites are the largest and the most likely candidates for redevelopment. There are other larger underutilized sites within Potomac West which possibly could be redeveloped if warranted by market conditions. For example, the intersection of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue is characterized by large sites with low scaled retail and auto oriented uses. If there was evidence of a demand for office development, these sites, which are zoned C-2, might be subjected to development pressures.~~

~~Since this is not the case and since these sites may have long term leases encumbering any change in use, the Glebe Road area is not considered to be a potential development area at least for the foreseeable future.~~

~~There are other underutilized properties further south along Mt. Vernon Avenue which are smaller and which could be subject to redevelopment. The Crestar Bank site at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Hume Avenue is 1.23 acres and consists of a two story office bank building and a large parking lot. The zoning is CL (Commercial Low). C-2 and R2-5: it is possible that this site, could be redeveloped with office and residential.~~

~~Another site is the Jack Taylor Toyota dealership located on both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue near Duncan Avenue, Mason Avenue and Monroe Avenue. Although the site has one story showcase buildings to serve the dealership, most of the site is used to store cars.~~

~~Combined, the dealership contains 2.36 acres, all zoned for C-2 high density office development. Although some of the zoning constraints discussed previously may effect achievable densities and heights, the size of the assembled properties and the amount of frontage along Mt. Vernon Avenue make this site a potential development site should the dealership relocate.~~

SUMMARY - ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

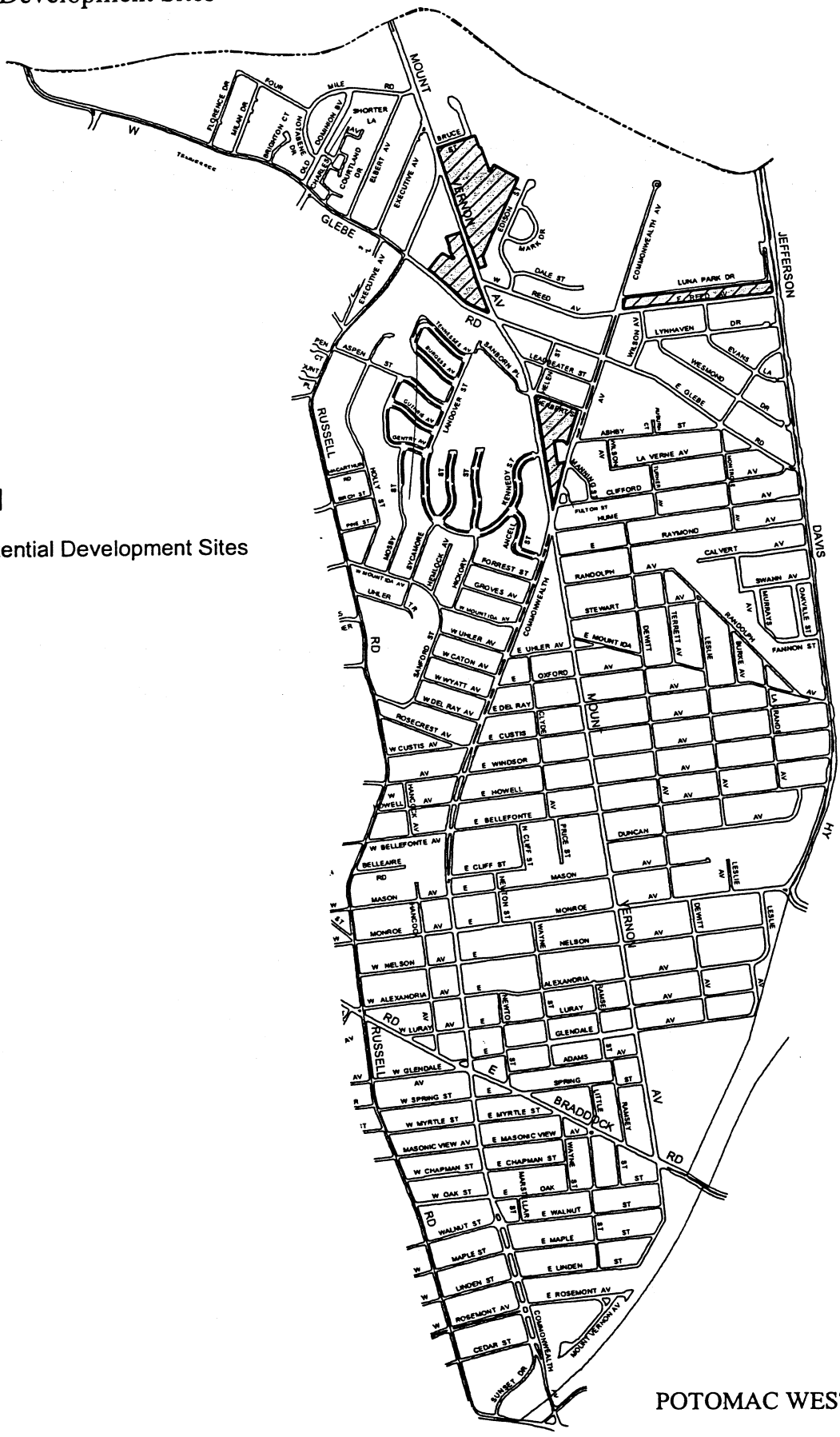
- Through a combination of public programs and private initiatives, Potomac West is renewing with both commercial and residential development and renovation activity. ~~itself with residential renovation activity and new businesses.~~
- Commercial activity is characterized by neighborhood-oriented retail stores and services and professional office uses.
- ~~Recent development proposals reflect interest in small~~ The characteristics of the neighborhood favor smaller-scale office and retail development rather than large scale, multi-tenant office projects such as have been developed in other parts of the City.
- The area lacks large amounts of speculative office space and is not a major office center.

Most of Potomac West is built up, with proportionately minimal ~~very little~~ land left for development. However, the several high-visibility sites may redevelop in coming years due to private sector interest in creating more commercial space in this easily accessible neighborhood. ~~However, there~~

~~are two major sites where development and redevelopment could occur; the Arlandria Center/ Berkey Photo Site and the Route 1 Properties.~~

Map 7
Enterprise Zone

Map 8
Potential Development Sites



TRANSPORTATION

Street System

The street system in the Potomac West area is dominated by four major north-south through streets: Mt. Vernon Avenue, which traverses the heart of the area; Commonwealth Avenue, which intersects Mt. Vernon Avenue; Russell Road, which constitutes the western boundary of the area; and US Route 1, which is at the eastern edge of the area. Major east-west movements within the study area occur on Monroe Avenue, Braddock Road and Glebe Road. To the east of Commonwealth Avenue, the street system is primarily a basic grid pattern; to the west, curving streets.

~~1974~~ Major Thoroughfares ~~Plan~~

The ~~1974 Major Thoroughfare Plan classified~~ City of Alexandria classifies its streets into five categories: expressways, arterials, primary collectors, residential collectors and local streets (Map 9). Of these, the last four may be found within Potomac West.

US Route 1/Jefferson Davis Highway is a four lane arterial which serves north south traffic through the City. Mt. Vernon Avenue between Commonwealth and the City limit and Braddock Road between West Street and Commonwealth are also arterials.

West Glebe Road, Commonwealth Avenue, the remainder of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road , Monroe Avenue and a portion of Russell Road above West Glebe are classified as primary collectors: Glebe Road carries traffic from the Four Mile Run area of Arlington County to US Route 1 along an east/west axis. Commonwealth Avenue carries traffic from the northern end of the study area to connect ultimately with King Street, while Mt. Vernon Avenue runs north/south through the center of Potomac West and connects with South Glebe Road ~~Vernon~~ in Arlington County and Braddock Road in Alexandria.

Russell Road and Monroe Avenue are both residential collectors, which take traffic from a number of lesser residential streets and provide access to primary collectors or arterials. Russell Road carries traffic north-south from the Arlandria portion of Potomac West to King Street, while Monroe Avenue runs east/west through the study area connecting Russell Road to US Route 1.

Most of the rest of the streets in the Potomac West area are local streets, which function primarily as a means of providing access to residential areas.

A description of each of these categories, with examples from Potomac West's street system, is given below:

> Arterial: A four- to six-lane divided highway with controlled access.
> Arterials provide major traffic movements' not served by expressways. (US Route 1 - Jefferson Davis Highway)

Primary Collector: A highway with 80-foot right-of-way widths and serving through traffic at medium speeds. Primary collectors connect two arterials or an arterial with another collector. (Glebe Road, Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues).

Residential Collector: A major street with a 66-foot right-of-way to collect traffic from a number of lesser residential streets and provide access from residential areas to primary collectors or arterials. (Russell Road, Monroe Avenue).

Local Street: A minor street primarily functioning to provide access to properties in residential areas. Right-of-way widths vary from 44-66 feet, with a minimum width of 60 feet required for all new streets. (Most of the streets in Potomac West are in this category).

The City is currently undertaking a comprehensive effort to update the transportation element of the Master Plan. When completed, the transportation approach for Potomac West should be updated to reflect new transportation policy.

Existing Traffic Flow

Potomac West's street system is adequate to serve the traffic generated by land uses located within the area. There is use of certain major streets by through commuter traffic which, during the rush hours, causes some congestion on Mt. Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, Glebe Road and Monroe Avenue and US Route 1. Local streets are also sometimes used to bypass points of congestion. However, overall traffic congestion within Potomac West is not a major problem.

Recent and Planned Capital Improvements

Begun in 1985, the City will complete the final phase of the undergrounding of utilities along Mt. Vernon Avenue from Bellefonte Avenue to Nelson Avenue. As part of this project, the City will also continue the streetscape improvements by planting trees, repairing curbs and gutters, installing pavers, street furniture and signs. Additionally, there have been improvements made to the crosswalks along Mt. Vernon Avenue between Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues in Del Ray and in front of George Washington Middle School. These improvements include stamped asphalt crosswalks and bulb-outs designed to make pedestrian crosswalks safer and slow down traffic.

Along Braddock Road, between West Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue, the City proposes landscape improvements to the medians and adjacent right-of- ways. In Arlandria, pedestrian safety measures, such as bulb-outs and crosswalks are envisioned along with bus shelters, benches, and bicycle racks. Additionally, pedestrian safety improvements are planned for the Mt. Vernon Avenue and the Glebe Road intersection.

There have been several traffic calming measures taken in Potomac West. Along the sections of Russell Road and Commonwealth Avenue south of Braddock Road, the City installed speed tables

to slow traffic. Additionally, speed tables exist on Monroe Avenue just west of the US Route 1 intersection. The City has also installed several stamped asphalt crosswalks on West Glebe Road.

~~The recently opened Monroe Avenue Bridge has improved access to Potomac West from the south. While the new bridge retains the same four through lane configuration as did the old bridge the new bridge provides full turning lanes at either end of the bridge which does not interfere with through traffic movement.~~

~~Future road improvement projects inched in the 1989 Capital Improvements Plan are the widening of Mt. Vernon Avenue from Russell Road to Four Mile Run and the widening of Jefferson Davis Highway north of Reed Avenue to Four Mile Run. Also scheduled is the widening of the four approaches to the Mt Vernon Avenue/Glebe Road intersection with a provision of left turn bays.~~

Public Transit Facilities

The Potomac West area is served by Metrorail immediately to the south of the study area by the Braddock Road and King Street Metro Stations and by both Metro bus and DASH bus routes. Metro runs four lines along Mt. Vernon Avenue and two along US Route 1, which serve the study area. In addition, DASH has a bus route along Glebe Road and Russell Road connecting with the Braddock Road Metro Station which serves the Potomac West area. Additionally, the City is currently planning to construct a new bus maintenance facility by 2008, that will accommodate more buses in the system allowing the provision of DASH service along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Bike and Pedestrian Paths

~~One~~ Several of the City's designated bikeways runs through the area. Along ~~on~~ Commonwealth Avenue, there is an on-street bicycle trail that continues north to Four Mile Run Park where it connects with an off-street bike trail that runs along US Route 1 and through Four Mile Run Park to Mt. Vernon Avenue. Additionally, there are two other on-street bike trails, one that begins along West Mt. Ida that leads into the North Ridge/Rosemont Area and another along E. Braddock Road.

Future Traffic Flow

As a mostly built up area it is unlikely that Potomac West will internally generate much additional traffic impacting the overall street system. Future traffic growth will be generated by specific development sites within Potomac West which will impact streets and intersections immediately adjacent to the sites.

Outside the study area, the Potomac Yard development does have the potential to impact traffic flow in the Potomac West area. Several steps have been taken to avoid increasing traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods. Within the Potomac Yard development, a large "spine" road, Potomac Avenue, will provide new traffic capacity and will handle some traffic that would otherwise travel on US Route 1. Potomac Avenue will terminate at US Route 1 on the south end of the development

north of Monroe Avenue and will intersect with South Glebe Road at the northern end, providing access to Crystal City and its street network.

Another element of the Potomac Yard development that affects the study area is the future realignment of US Route 1/Monroe Avenue bridge. Once the road is realigned, direct access from US Route 1 to Monroe Avenue will no longer be provided. Instead, Monroe Avenue will intersect with Main Street, a street within Potomac Yard providing direct access to the development from the study area.

To increase the safety for pedestrians in walking along or across US Route 1, pedestrian safety improvements are necessary. Although US Route 1 is predominantly auto-oriented, pedestrians from the adjacent neighborhoods currently walk to the Potomac Yard Shopping Center, and it is likely that pedestrian traffic will increase as the Potomac Yard becomes fully developed. Sidewalks, street trees, benches, bus shelters, lighting and crosswalks should be enhanced to consider pedestrian safety. Heavily used crosswalks should be identified and improved accordingly.

~~If the Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo site ever redeveloped as an office center as allowed under the C-2 zone, the site could theoretically be developed with over 1 million square feet of office development which could generate some 1900 peak hour vehicles. This level of peak traffic could not be accommodated by Mt. Vernon Avenue which has limited through capacity and virtually no capacity to handle left hand turning movements.~~

~~The Route 1 properties, a site three times as large as the Arlandria site, could also be developed at high densities and could also generate large peak hour traffic volumes. Traffic generation and directional flow would be lessened somewhat by the RD zoning which would allow mostly residential development for a portion of the entire site. Traffic impacts would also be mitigated by the fact that this site can access a six lane Route 1 with provisions for turning movements. South Glebe Road in Arlington affords this site good east west access which will not impact City streets.~~

~~Local Alexandria streets which could be directly impacted by development of this site are E. Reed Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue. This traffic would impact the residential areas and the Cora Kelly School. Care would have to be taken to emphasize Route 1 vehicular access to the site and to discourage, if not prohibit, commercial vehicular access to Commonwealth Avenue and to at least the residential portion of E. Reed Avenue, to protect the neighborhood from traffic impacts generated by development of the Route 1 properties.~~

~~Although not within the study area itself, the possible redevelopment of the Potomac Yard could have an enormous traffic impact on the Potomac West area. Unless additional roadway capacity and alternative access are provided, development of the Yard would have a direct impact to Route 1 which during the peak hour is at or near capacity. More important to Potomac West neighborhoods would be the amount of east/west traffic attracted to the Yard site which would filter through residential streets. One mitigation solution would be the improvement of South Glebe Road in Arlington to serve as a major east/west connector to the site.~~

SUMMARY-TRANSPORTATION

- Vehicular access to the study area is, on the whole, good, with adequate north-south and east-west connections. Commuter traffic filters through the study area on primary collector streets, but there are no major points of congestion.

- The Braddock Road Metro Station, immediately south of the study area, affords good transit service to Potomac West; as does the Metro and DASH feeder bus routes and service.

- ~~Future traffic growth will focus on potential development sites. Depending upon how these sites are developed, the mix and intensity of uses, these sites could have a significant traffic impact on the surrounding street system.~~

- ~~Unless additional road improvements could be constructed to facilitate north/south and east/west movement, possible redevelopment of the Potomac Yard could have an enormous impact on Potomac West.~~

- The further development of Potomac Yard has the potential to impact traffic in the study area. However, with the construction of interior roads within the Potomac Yard development and the realignment of the Monroe Avenue bridge, as well as transit use, the impact on the study area has been reduced. The impacts of the Potomac Yard will need to be continually monitored once the project is completed.

- Improvements to pedestrian safety are strongly encouraged to promote walking and bicycling as transportation alternatives to and from Potomac Yard, the Braddock Road Metro Station, and the neighborhoods west of US Route 1.

Map 9
Major Thoroughfares

URBAN DESIGN

The Potomac West area is primarily a low scale residential area comprised of single-family detached and semi-detached two and three story housing units. Most of the older housing is generally frame construction on lots ranging from 2,500 to 5,000 square feet. Neighborhoods are not always well defined because of the varied housing styles that exist; housing units can vary dramatically within each block. Nevertheless, the placement of mostly single family homes on a fairly uniform grid system gives the residential areas an overall cohesiveness.

The main commercial area in Potomac West is along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Low scale, two story buildings prevail; most businesses are small scale and neighborhood serving. The type, scale and character of most of the businesses along the Avenue relate well and are compatible with the abutting residential areas. Among other factors, it is this relationship, hearkening back to a quieter historic era, which makes Potomac West unique.

The principle industrial area is the Oakville Triangle and a strip along US Route 1. While the area has seen some multi-family residential redevelopment, ~~T~~ the commercial and industrial frontage along US Route 1 could be generally characterized as the typical arrangement of highway oriented buildings ranging from retail and commercial service uses to manufacturing and light industrial activities.

To some extent the relationship between the highway oriented industrial uses and the abutting residential uses further west are compatible. In other cases the transitions are awkward; industrial uses seem to encroach upon the residential character of a street such as Raymond Avenue.

With the overall built form of Potomac West well established, the focus of the urban design analysis is on those elements within the area that are likely to change - the commercial uses along Mt. Vernon Avenue and potential growth sites - and how these elements might affect the character of Potomac West.

Mt. Vernon Avenue

Cutting through the middle of Potomac West is Mt. Vernon Avenue, a major commercial corridor serving much of Potomac West. As indicated previously, Mt. Vernon Avenue does not present a linear procession of stores and commercial uses. Schools, parks, playgrounds and residential uses are interdispersed among shops and stores.

Nor are the types of commercial uses uniform. The upper Mt. Vernon Avenue area, including Arlandria and Glebe Road, contain mostly larger scaled commercial uses which are auto-oriented and fronted by surface parking lots. Within this area only the row of buildings beginning with the Waffle Shop and ending before ~~the~~ a public parking lot, previously occupied by the Datatel Building, present an urban facade of small shops close to the street. The remainder of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Glebe and Four Mile Run is a jumble of garden apartment residential, large frontages of

vacant lots, gas stations, the ~~Arlandria Shopping~~ Mt. Vernon Village Center, free standing commercial buildings, a suburban style dry cleaners and an auto parts store.

More confusing from an urban design perspective is the commercial area at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road and the area between West Reed Avenue and Glebe Road. The streets themselves are in large measure the source of the problem by diagonally cutting up parcels and fragmenting the area. The overwhelming auto orientation of the commercial uses with numerous curb cuts; large asphalted parking lots and lack of landscaping contribute to the harshness of the environment.

~~Finally, the buildings themselves are undistinguished and semi-industrial in character. There are several free standing buildings which have been vacant and boarded for some time, others in disrepair.~~

The remainder of the Avenue moving southward stands in contrast to Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue. Although there are still gas stations and auto-oriented uses, there are more blocks of small shops with a strong street presence along the section of the Avenue south of Commonwealth Avenue than there are north of Commonwealth.

In some cases this concentration of commercial uses is broken up by non-commercial uses, by small vacant lots and by lots which have marginal buildings on them. This section of Mt. Vernon Avenue offers many opportunities for small scale infill development.

In other cases there are larger, possibly underutilized sites which could redevelop as focal points along the Avenue. Sites such as the ~~Crestar~~ Sun Trust Bank property at Hume Avenue and Mt. Vernon and the ~~Jack Taylor Toyota~~ Alexandria Hyundai and Audi of Alexandria properties at Mason Avenue and Mt. Vernon Avenue are larger than simply infill sites, but smaller than the potential development sites identified in Arlandria. ~~and along Route 1.~~ Because of their size and their frontage along the Avenue, redevelopment of these sites will play an important role in shaping the character of the surrounding areas. The properties developed with car dealerships and service uses are automobile oriented sites that, if redeveloped, could provide a bridge between businesses on the south side of Monroe Avenue with the commercial core area to the north as well as enhance the pedestrian oriented nature of this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Although redevelopment of these sites is not anticipated in the near term, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends site and building improvements to enhance their appearance and make them more pedestrian friendly.

A major urban design consideration with respect to infill development along the Avenue is scale compatibility and building orientation. Keeping the building scale low and the building frontage oriented towards the street would be principles consistent with maintaining or strengthening the pedestrian orientation of the street and the character of the surrounding neighborhoods. The *Plan* identifies a number of urban design and streetscape strategies. The *Plan* recognizes the historic and eclectic character of Mt. Vernon Avenue and seeks to protect and enhance its unique character as change takes place. The *Plan* guides future development to maintain a vibrant, low-scale mixed-use

neighborhood where Alexandria residents may live, work, shop and play. The design guidelines in the plan incorporate the Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines, adopted by City Council in 1993.

~~In contrast, the introduction of large scale buildings amidst three to three and a half story buildings may weaken the character of the Avenue. Such is the effect of the Datatel Building which looms oddly above its surroundings. Similarly, the pedestrian orientation of an Avenue is weakened by a succession of buildings which are set back from the street to allow for parking and curb cuts. Such is the effect of the buildings along Glebe Road.~~

Design considerations for Mt. Vernon Avenue are identified in the *Plan*, with specific guidelines for street wall and frontage, building height and massing, lot occupancy, facade articulation, parking and screening, storefront design, and building signage, as well as pedestrian and streetscape improvements in the public realm.

In addition to building scale, building orientation and parking, other design considerations for Mt. Vernon Avenue include; maintaining adequate sidewalk widths for pedestrian movement, providing pedestrian crosswalks, with perhaps special pavement treatment at major crosswalk points, special pavement treatment for sidewalks coupled with standardized street furniture, landscaping and street trees, undergrounding of utilities and commercial signage controls.

~~Arlandria Center/ Berkey Photo~~

~~As described earlier, this site, in consideration of all abutting properties which could be assembled, is 8.5 acres. The site is dominated by the three story art deco styled Arlandria Shopping Center which sits to the north, the other large element on the site being the one story Berkey Photo Building.~~

~~The site has extensive frontage along Mt. Vernon Avenue. The most significant feature of the site in terms. of its development potential is the depth of the lots. The bulk of the site faces Four Mile Run Park and the Tower Homes and Potomac West apartments to the south and the Potomac Village apartments to the north. The context for the site is residences and open space for the rear portion and commercial uses for the front portion of the properties.~~

~~In terms of redevelopment, a possible option would be to encourage residential development to the rear of the site and focused on the Berkey Photo property, allow for office and retail uses to fill in the Mt. Vernon Avenue frontage and to revitalize the Arlandria Shopping Center through building redesign, modernization and reconfiguration.~~

~~The size of the site would allow for some flexibility and variety in heights. Taller buildings could pe placed to the rear of the site and adjacent to the park areas. Care would have to be taken to provide for transitions to existing low scale residential uses.~~

~~Also important, the scale of Infill buildings along Mt Vernon Avenue should relate to the low scale retail buildings across the street. Parking should be to the rear of buildings or in structure. Any parking which needs to front the street should be screened~~

This option envisions that the Arlandria Center/ Berkey Photo Birchmere site would be redeveloped mostly with a combination of retail and residential with some office uses. Although the C-2 zoning of this site would allow for this combination of uses, this zoning category would also allow for high density office development up to150 feet in height .

There is a question as to whether this type of zoning is appropriate. From a design perspective, redevelopment of the Arlandria Center site for high density office uses and tall buildings would result in a project which would be out of scale and character with the surrounding residential and retail use. From a market perspective, there seems to belittle market support for high density office. centers Tong Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Lastly from a traffic perspective, Mt. Vernon Avenue functions efficiently because it has no major traffic generators at any one location. However, redevelopment of the Arlandria Center site as an office center would cause considerable local traffic congestion at Mt. Vernon and Glebe Road and at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Russell Road.

Route 1 Properties

The major design considerations for the Route 1 properties are that the site fronts Jefferson Davis Highway and the Railroad Yard to the east; Four Mile Run, and the Sewer Treatment Plant to the north; Four Mile Run Park and the Cora Kelly School and ballfields to the west and low scaled residences with some auto oriented commercial uses to the south.

These adjacency factors suggest that commercial uses would be most appropriate fronting Jefferson Davis Highway where there is good visibility and access afforded by the six lane highway. Similarly, residential uses would be most appropriate along Commonwealth Avenue and E. Reed Avenue. These uses would not have as significant a traffic impact as office uses and would be compatible with existing residential uses and community facilities.

Consideration of these adjacency factors also suggest what would be appropriate height relationships; taller buildings towards the northeaster portion of the site and smaller buildings as building sites approach the existing residential areas.

Overall, a large mixed use office, residential, retail and hotel project could be accommodated on this site. Commercial uses would be focused on Jefferson Davis with buildings of descending height from north to south. The residential areas would front along Commonwealth Avenue and E. Reed Avenue with a possible mix of townhouses, garden apartments and mid-rise units - gradually scaling up the further away from existing residential uses.

Coupled with a possible coordinated mixed use development for this site may be City and/or private efforts to upgrade Four Mile Run Park, provide screening of the Arlington side of Four Mile Run and upgrading the surrounding residential areas and school site. These efforts could improve the environment for residential development along Commonwealth Avenue and E. Reed Avenue.

~~Another important consideration for residential redevelopment is the possible displacement of existing residents along East Reed Avenue. The City should consider strategies to ensure that relocation needs and replacement housing are provided to existing tenants and that the impacts of displacement are minimized.~~

OPEN SPACE

Providing enough open space for the residents of Alexandria is a high priority for the City. In 2002, the City adopted an Open Space Plan that addresses a number of short and longer term open space needs in the City. Priorities in the Potomac West area include:

- Protecting and enriching existing parks within Potomac West;
- Protecting, expanding, and connecting stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive areas;
- Maximizing use of public open space areas to satisfy local needs;
- Creating public open space from vacant land;
- Linking and expanding the pedestrian, bicycle and trail system; and
- Enhancing streetscapes and gateways.

More specifically, the Open Space Plan identifies Commonwealth Avenue as a significant parkway and model for future parkways in the City. Rehabilitation tasks for this parkway would include: clearing of dead/diseased vegetation, replacement and infill with new vegetation, replanting of median strips and extension of medians where feasible, and on-going maintenance activities. The Open Space Plan identifies an appropriate location for streetscape improvements as the intersection of US Route 1 and Jefferson Streets. The US Route 1 gateway and streetscape priority calls for the preservation of multiple linear sites on the south side of East and West Glebe Roads, between US Route 1 and I-395, that would allow for the creation of a linear park in the Del Ray area. This can be achieved through acquisition, easements or other methods of open space preservation in the short term.

Another open space initiative in the area is the Four Mile Run Restoration Project. The lower portion of Four Mile Run, from I-395 at the upstream end to the mouth at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, was channelized in the 1970s following several floods in the area. Since the completion of the flood control project, the channel has safely conveyed the high storm flows through Arlington and Alexandria. However, the concrete channel lacks the beauty and environmental habitat of a natural stream channel. In 2000, a federal appropriation of $1 million was secured for Arlington County and the City of Alexandria to fund the development of a master plan to transform the lower portion of Four Mile Run. The goal of the planning effort is to restore the habitat and environmental features, recreational opportunities, aesthetics and urban form of the flood control channel. Staff from Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers are working together, with consultants, on the Four Mile Run restoration effort. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2006.

POLICY HISTORY

Over the past three decades, City policy in the Potomac West area has focused consistently on four main themes which have been articulated and acted upon in Planning documents, Council resolutions, City expenditures, special programs and zoning actions. These four themes have been:

- preserving and strengthening existing neighborhoods and creating housing opportunities for a range of household incomes
- encouraging commercial revitalization and business development along Mt. Vernon Avenue
- focusing of potential development or redevelopment at limited select locations
- Using capital improvement, commercial revitalization and housing programs to support the above policies.

City policies for Potomac West for neighborhood conservation, housing rehabilitation, retail revitalization and controlled development ~~are~~ were reflected in the Adopted 1982 Potomac West Plan. ~~The~~ That Plan emphasized:

- recognizing Potomac West as a mostly built up "non-growth" area
- encouraging conservation of most existing uses
- strengthening the existing residential character of Potomac West
- encouraging infill residential development consistent with the scale and density of surrounding housing
- providing effective buffers between residential and adjoining commercial and industrial uses
- encouraging mixed-use medium density development along Mt. Vernon Avenue
- retaining industrial uses fronting on Route 1 as far north as Reed Avenue
- revitalizing neighborhood serving commercial areas along Mt. Vernon Avenue
- consolidating commercial activity into nodes
- designating the Arlandria Center area and the Route 1 Properties as a development/redevelopment sites

In concert with the 1982 Plan, the City has developed ongoing programs in housing conservation, commercial revitalization and capital improvements.

The City's neighborhood conservation program includes rehabilitation loans, home ownership assistance, senior rehabilitation grants, blighting influences removal and rat baiting. Since the mid 1970s, over $2,872,934 have been spent to improve over 324 residences in the area. ~~(Map 8.)~~

In support of commercial revitalization, in 1982 the City initiated a loan subsidy program to assist neighborhood businesses and to encourage new business growth along the Avenue. Nearly $2 million in City, Federal and private funds have gone into renovations, new construction, signs and equipment to over 25 Potomac businesses ~~(see Map 9)~~ resulting in more than 150 jobs.

~~Most recently~~ In addition, over the years, the City as proactively promoted business development along the Avenue through the Enterprise Zone, the Mt. Vernon Revitalization Task Force, the City's Office of Housing and the joint City/Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Program. ~~sponsored production of a brochure promoting business development along the Avenue.~~

Since 1972, the City has used the Potomac West Neighborhood Program to preserve and upgrade residential areas. During the first two years of the seven- year, $5 million improvement program, the following projects were initiated: acquisition of land for future park and greenway construction; closing of four streets in the Lynhaven neighborhood at their intersections with Route 1; execution of extensive curb, gutter and sidewalk construction; installation of pedestrian oriented lighting; planting of landscape beautification at Ancell Street, Mount Ida, Commonwealth Avenue and Mount Avenue; development of the W&OD trailway; development of Hooff's Run Park.

The City has also used capital improvements to stimulate commercial revitalization. Since ~~FY '85~~ 1985, the City has spent over $~~1~~ 2.5 million to underground utility wires and poles along Mt. Vernon Avenue and to implement streetscape improvements. ~~Another $1 million is programmed for utility undergrounding by FY '90 (Map 10). Other capital improvement projects programmed for Potomac West for the upcoming fiscal year are shown on Map 11.~~

In 1986, because of proposed purchase and rehabilitation of many of the apartments housing low and moderate income households in Arlandria, City Council appointed two Councilmen to form the Arlandria Subcommittee. Although the Subcommittee focused on the most immediate problem of tenant dislocation due to private upgrading of the housing stock, the scope of its recommendations included all of Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue, Arlandria East, Lynhaven and the Route 1 properties.

City Council adopted the Subcommittee Report which included recommendations to:

- promote the revitalization of the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue area as a vibrant commercial retail center

- develop a gateway to Mt. Vernon Avenue by encouraging redevelopment and in-fill development, providing additional landscaping, and by working with developers to coordinate plans

- use capital improvements to encourage revitalization

- encourage coordinated mixed use development of the Route 1 properties

SUMMARY - POLICY

- The City has viewed Potomac West as mostly a built up non-growth area and has encouraged programs emphasizing the conservation and rehabilitation of existing uses.

- To further enhance and serve residential neighborhoods, the City has encouraged commercial revitalization along Mt. Vernon Avenue using a business loan program and capital improvements.

- Significant capital improvements in the forms of flood control, parks, street closings, streetscaping and the undergrounding of utilities have been made by the City to strengthen the residential and commercial components of the area.

- The City has adopted policies to preserve existing industrial areas.

- The City has ~~selected two~~ designated five sites for coordinated development/redevelopment; ~~Arlandria Center and~~ Route 1 /East Reed Avenue Properties; Mt. Vernon Village Center/Birchmere Sites; Safeway/Datatel Sites; Triangle Sites; and Giant/CVS Sites.

~~ISSUES~~

~~Potomac West is one of the older neighborhoods in the City. Its character and built form have developed over at least the past century. Potomac West is changing; it is beginning to renew itself gradually, and mostly through renovation and small scale infill development.~~

~~Over the past 20 years, City policies have fostered the process of self-renewal, emphasizing preservation rather than redevelopment, and viewing Potomac West as a non-growth area except for selected key sites where development could invigorate and serve the area. The City's revitalization and conservation programs have been successful and need to continue.~~

~~Perhaps the key issue facing Potomac West and addressed in the Plan is that the commercial and industrial zoning within Potomac West is largely discordant, or out of sync, with this process of self renewal and with the policy objectives and programs pursued vigilantly by the City the past two decades.~~

~~The industrial zones and the C-2 commercial zone were established in 1952 upon adoption of the City's first comprehensive zoning code. The zones allowed many different uses and were applied) to many different urban contexts. The application of the C-2 zone to commercial, residential, recreational and institutional uses within Potomac West exemplifies the wide range use of a single zone which was designed primarily for commercial uses.~~

~~The cumulative nature of the industrial and commercial zoning means that high density office uses are allowed by right. Although the height by right allowance within the industrial zone has been reduced to 77 feet, the C-2 zone still carries a 150 foot height allowance (this despite the reduction in the allowable C-3 zone to 77 feet).~~

~~At a time in the 1950's when the City was less complex, less diverse, more industrial less commercial these all encompassing zones seemed appropriate and seemed to work. The notion of the City developing into an employment center with high density office development was remote. The notion that office development would price out the use of land for residential development was also remote.~~

~~Over the past 30 years the City has become more urban, more diverse, far less industrial. Certain areas of the City such as downtown, the Metro Station areas, the north waterfront have established themselves as office centers. Potomac West has not; it has retained some of its industrial character and has experienced small scale infill retail and professional office development. Yet despite these trends and City policies, the old high density zoning persists.~~

~~What also sometimes persists are expectations among landowners that their C-2 zoned property should be priced for high density office development despite physical, zoning and market constraints which probably preclude such development. The result of these unrealistic expectations can be that underutilized or vacant land is kept off the market to remain unproductive until price expectations~~

~~are met. Alternative uses such as residential, which may be more marketable than office development may get priced out.~~

~~The industrial and commercial zoning in Potomac West needs to be changed to insure that the scale of commercial development is compatible with abutting residential areas. It is also important that the zoning support the City's goals for Potomac West renewal and preservation. The industrial areas to be retained should not be subjected to zoning which encourages office redevelopment. The residential sites to be retained, zoned C-2, should not be subjected to possible office conversion. Those neighborhood serving commercial uses such as grocery stores, convenience stores and shopping centers which can be vital to the quality of life in a neighborhood need to be preserved and not zoned for high density office uses. Instead, the zoning should be structured to preserve those uses desired for the neighborhood and to allow upgrading and possible infill development or redevelopment in scale with the surrounding neighborhoods.~~

~~Where larger scaled development is desirable, the zoning should be used to implement planning guidelines for coordinated development. This relates to the larger issue of developing guidelines for future development of the Arlandria Center site and the Route 1 Properties.~~

~~The Arlandria Center site, zoned C-2, is one of the few areas in Potomac West where high density office development could be physically realized. Yet this type of development would be undesirable in consideration of the low scale residential, retail and park uses adjacent to the site.~~

~~The analysis suggests that the existing shopping center should be preserved and modernized to once again serve as a thriving retail center. A mix of residential uses seems appropriate for the back portions of the site where the Berkey Photo building is located. Low scaled office and retail uses could fill the now vacant frontage along the Avenue. What is needed is a zone which is tailored to this general concept and which provides incentives for coordinated development of this site.~~

~~The 25 acre Route 1 properties site is probably the only location within Potomac West which can accommodate high density development including an office center without harming the adjacent residential areas. Commercial development could be concentrated on Jefferson Davis Highway with access limited to the highway and to the easternmost portion of East Reed Avenue. Residential development could focus on those portions of the site fronting Commonwealth Avenue and the western portions of East Reed Avenue.~~

~~What is desirable is coordinated mixed use development of the site. However, there are many obstacles to overcome before this concept could be realized. Although the site is a gateway to the City, has good access and exposure, and is proximate to Crystal City and to National Airport, the site does not present itself well and is not helped by the condition of adjacent uses.~~

~~Moreover, the fragmentation of ownership and expectations of the owners concerning the value of the site may make coordinated development of the site difficult. Also problematic are the zoning patterns which poorly relate to this concept. Whereas frontage along Commonwealth Avenue is most~~

~~suitable for residential development there is industrial zoning. (From this perspective, it is unfortunate that the Hertz building is located on a site more suitable for residential use.)~~

~~Whereas residential development of the site should provide a mix of housing types with height transitions, the zoning pattern pits an elongated, high density, 100 unit per acre RD zoned parcel next to a long strip of RB townhouse zoned parcels along East Reed Avenue with no transition. The shape of the RD parcel is not ideal for development because of its narrowness and lack of frontage along Commonwealth Avenue. The RB zoned parcels, if redeveloped, could result in a three block long row of townhouses unrelieved by side streets.~~

~~What is needed for the Route 1 properties is a concept and design guidelines for mixed use redevelopment of the site and a zone which is tailored to the concept and which provides a combination of zoning incentives and controls to encourage coordinated development of the site.~~

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the 1988 Potomac West Plan are to:

- to preserve and strengthen the residential area in Potomac West
- revitalize and support neighborhood oriented, small scale retail and office development
- to preserve existing concentrations of industrial uses and the job base these uses provide
- to encourage coordinated mixed use development on the ~~Arlandria Center~~ Mt. Vernon Village Center and Route 1 Properties sites
- discourage the use of streets in Potomac West for through traffic
- provide for the use of effective buffer areas between residential sites and adjacent higher-density and non-residential uses
- require any new residential development to be of the same scale and density as the surrounding residential neighborhood
- discourage the development of major office and commercial sites within Potomac West
- encourage the consolidation and revitalization of commercial areas that serve the Potomac West neighborhood, particularly along Mt. Vernon Avenue

These goals translate into the following specific objectives:

- provide a land use plan which reflects the City's policies to preserve and to protect existing uses and to indicate where coordinated mixed use is desired
- redesign the industrial zones to encourage retention of existing industrial uses and to prohibit high density office development
- ~~remove commercial C-2 zoning from non-commercially used land to replace this zoning with more appropriate zoning categories~~
- ~~replace commercial C-2 zoning with zones which emphasize low scaled neighborhood serving uses~~
- reduce overall heights in Potomac West to reflect the low scale character of the area
- continue existing City capital improvement, housing and commercial revitalization programs

- develop guidelines and appropriate zoning controls and incentives for development of the ~~Arlandria Center~~ Mt. Vernon Village Center and the Route 1 sites

- increase and coordinate public transportation services along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

~~The Adopted Land Use Plan Map for Potomac West, based on the 1982 Plan is shown on Map 12.~~ The ~~Plan~~ SAP designates most of the residential areas in accordance with existing land use patterns; either residential low or medium with the mid to high rise apartments designated for residential high. The two major potential development sites are designated for mixed use. Along Mt. Vernon Avenue, the Glebe Road area is designated for commercial while the "main street" portion of the Avenue is designated for mixed use low.

~~Map 10 shows the proposed land use concept for Potomac West. The concept is similar to the 1982 Land Use Plan but provides more detail and specificity for the commercial and development areas.~~

Map 10 shows the proposed changes to the land use plan, incorporating the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan land use recommendations to create two new Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs) and the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone. These changes are discussed in detail below. ~~The land use designations used are more detailed than the previous plan. The purpose of these more detailed land use categories and the changes to the Adopted Land Use Map is to better reflect the diversity of uses in Potomac West and to better express the types and scales of uses desired for the area and consistent With City policy.~~

The CL or commercial low category is designed for the "Main Street" portion of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The intent of CL is to provide for the types of low scale retail, office and residential uses which are typically found along this section of the Avenue. An urban overlay zone is proposed for the commercial properties along Mt. Vernon Avenue from the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue. The purpose of the overlay zone is to encourage pedestrian-oriented retail and complementary uses and allow new construction that exceeds the current CL bulk regulations in compliance with the building form design guidelines enumerated in the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan. The underlying CL zoning will remain.

The CSL designation or commercial service low, is designed for low scale commercial uses with some light industrial activity which would be compatible with nearby residential areas.

The CG category or commercial general, is intended for larger scale retail uses such as shopping centers, grocery stores, auto dealerships and fast food establishments. The special use permit requirement should continue to be enforced for fast food restaurants and auto dealerships. ~~Auto dealerships and fast foods will not be allowed in CGX category.~~

The NR designation is proposed to replace the existing CL, and in some cases CG, zoning to promote redevelopment and infill development in Arlandria with a mix of uses, including ground floor retail and office and residential uses on the floors above. Retail and design guidelines are included in this zone to ensure that, as new development occurs, the bulk, mass, scale and orientation of the new buildings are compatible with the existing character of the commercial district and with the long-term vision depicted in the Upper Potomac West (UPW) Task Force Report and the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood (the Plans).

The CDD designation or Coordinated Development District, is applied to the three potential development sites; Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, the Route 1 Properties and the Safeway-Datatel properties. The intent of this designation is to demarcate areas where development/redevelopment is desired in accordance with a coordinated plan for mixed use development. The CDD designation sets the stage for specialized zoning which provides for greater control over the future development of important sites within the City yet which also provides more flexibility for the developer than conventional zoning.

Two new CDDs are proposed as recommended in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.* The first CDD consists of the 11 underutilized or vacant parcels located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Herbert Street and Commowealth Avenue, known as the "Triangle Sites." The Plan calls for the coordinated redevelopment of this area with a mix of uses including ground floor retail, with residential or office uses. The second CDD is the Giant Grocery Store and CVS Pharmacy sites located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue. The community strongly supports and desires their continued operation. Should market forces render either the uses or buildings obsolete, the Plan calls for the coordinated redevelopment of both sites with retail uses, including grocery and pharmacy uses, and other retail uses, with residential or office uses above. No other land use changes are recommended in the Plan for the remainder of Monroe Avenue.

The I industrial category is designed for light industrial, warehouse, service or limited office or flex space.

The Oakville Triangle should remain industrial. The City holds open the possibility of reevaluating the area in the future as development occurs in the Route 1 corridor. The area may be considered as a CDD in the future.

The area known as Arlandria East (bounded by Mt. Vernon Avenue, Four Mile Run, Route 1 and Reed Avenue) should be designated by the City to be planned as a whole in a creative innovative manner to encourage development of the sites now under fragmented ownership, and to examine the best location for the school, recreation, park and land use elements for a quality design. Development should include open space and recreational facilities to accommodate the additional residential and employment populations. Open space should be reconfigured to better serve the existing and new communities; wet lands should be protected.

A park-like entrance and improved portal into the community should be created at Reed Avenue. A connection should be built between the Wayne Anderson and W & OD bike trail.

~~Proposed~~ Prior Changes to the Land Use Plan

The following changes were made with the adoption of the 1992 Potomac West Small Area Plan, and amendments made thereafter. These changes are specifically mapped in the original version and subsequent amendments to the Small Area Plan.

1. From Commercial to Commercial General

   The change to Commercial General is more appropriate for these auto oriented retail uses including a Pizza Hut and a 7/11 store.

2. From Industrial to Utility/Transportation

   This is the Virginia Power site and the utility designation reflects the present use of the site.

3. From Residential High to Residential Medium

   This medium density residential designation reflects the character of the existing and surrounding residential development.

4. From Commercial to Residential High

   This is a residential site, and the proposed land use plan should reflect the desire to maintain the residential use.

5. From Commercial and Mixed Use to Commercial Low

   This is the northernmost section of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The change in classification would provide for low scale commercial development compatible with the planning of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

6. Institutional to Park and Open Space

   This area includes the parts of Four Mile Run Park not already designated park and recreational facilities including ball fields located next to Cora Kelly School. The recommended change more accurately reflects existing uses.

7. From Mixed Use to Coordinated Development District

   This is the Arlandria Center site. The Plan calls for mixed use retail and residential development with some office uses. The Arlandria Shopping Center would be modernized or redeveloped and the Berkey Photo building redeveloped for residential. Other portions of the site would be developed for smaller scale retail and office uses. The CDD designation

would be the basis for rezoning the site to a new zoning category which could accomplish these land use objectives.

8. From Commercial to Commercial Low

This is the commercial retail block along Mt. Vernon Avenue across from the Arlandria Center. This CL designation would allow these uses to continue and remain a low scale retail area.

9. From Commercial to Residential Medium

This is a residential area that was shown as commercial in the existing plan. A goal of the Potomac West plan is to preserve existing residential areas. The designation to a residential land use reflects this goal.

10. From Commercial to Commercial-Low

This is a small office complex on the south side of Glebe Road at Russell Road. The change to CL would be compatible with the existing use of this site and insure continued low scale uses.

11. From Commercial to Commercial General

This area along the corner of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue includes the Food Barn site, Ray Burnette's Volkswagen, Murrays Steak and McDonalds. The Commercial General designation reflects the retail nature of this area.

12. From Commercial to Commercial Service Low

This would more appropriately reflect existing uses. It would retain low scale commercial uses compatible with the surrounding residential character and would be consistent with the development along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

13. From Commercial to Commercial Low

This site is the triangle between Commonwealth Avenue, Mt. Vernon Avenue and Herbert Street. The change to Commercial Low would provide for low scale commercial uses and allow uses compatible with the surrounding residential area.

14. From Residential Medium to Park

The Park designation reflects the existing park use.

15. From Residential Medium and Residential High to Park

This area includes the old W&OD right-of-way and the existing parks at the ends of Landover Street and Mosby Street. The City should consider purchasing the right-of-way, or, at least obtaining an easement.

16. From Residential High to Utility/Transportation

This designation reflects the existing use.

17. From Residential Medium to Commercial Low

This is a small commercial complex located at the northeast corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road. The uses are compatible with the surrounding residential area and the CL classification would be in keeping with the present uses and scale.

18. Commercial and Residential Low to Residential Medium

The proposed designation reflects the existing use.

19. From Industrial to Commercial Service Low

The CSL designation would not only more appropriately reflect the existing uses along Route 1, but it would provide for low intensity uses compatible with the surrounding residential area.

20. From Residential Medium and Industrial to Commercial Service Low

This would remove the possibility of heavy industrial development next to low scale residential and allow the continuation of low scale development on these properties.

21. From Residential Low to Residential Medium

A goal of the Potomac West plan is to maintain existing residential densities. This designation reflects the existing medium density residential use.

22. From Residential Medium to Residential Low

This designation reflects the existing low density residential uses.

23. From Commercial to Commercial Low

The designation of this site, which contains a Peoples Drug Store and a Giant Food Store, to Commercial General would allow these uses to continue. This classification is designed for retail uses and small offices and would restrict major office development. Fast foods and auto related uses are not permitted.

24. From Residential Medium to Commercial Service Low

This designation would eliminate the risk of intrusion of industry in the surrounding residential area. The low scale uses would be compatible with the general residential character of the area.

25. From Institutional to Park and Open Space

This is the George Washington School ballfield.

26. From Commercial to Commercial Low

This is a vacant site located at the northwest comer of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road. The Commercial Low classification would insure low scale, residentially compatible, development of this site.

27. From Commercial to Commercial Service Low

This area is situated south of Braddock Road and includes both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The change to Commercial Service appropriately reflects the current uses of these properties.

28. From Mixed Use and Commercial to Commercial Low

This area is frequently referred to as the "main street" of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Most of the area is low scale commercial, office, retail and residential. The Commercial Low classification would allow the continuation of a mixture of uses including residential while maintaining low scale appearance.

29. From Residential Low to Residential Medium

This designation reflects the existing density of development.

30. From Residential Medium to Residential Low

This designation reflects the existing density of development.

31. From Residential Medium to Park

This designation reflects the existing park use.

32. From Institutional to Park and Open Space

This is the Mt. Vernon School ballfield.

33. From Residential Low to Residential Medium

This designation reflects the existing density of development.

34. From Commercial to Commercial Low

These two areas are low scale commercial along Monroe Avenue. The proposed use designation is more appropriate for these uses and would insure continued low scale commercial use of these properties.

35. From Mixed Use to Coordinated Development District

This is the Route 1 Properties site. The plan calls for mixed use residential, office, retail and hotel uses on the site as part of a coordinated development. This plan supports high density and tall buildings on part of this site, but only in the context of a coordinated, mixed use development plan which concentrates the dense commercial development on the northeast part of the site, with residential development to the south and west along Reed and Commonwealth. Further, the plan calls for the heights and densities to moderate toward Reed Avenue for compatibility with nearby residential areas. The plan would be the basis for rezoning the entire site to a new zoning category which could accomplish these objectives.

36. From Commercial Low and Commercial General to Neighborhood Retail

This area consists of the commercially zoned properties that abut Mount Vernon Avenue from Four Mile Run south to the intersection of West Glebe Road in Arlandria, including parcels located in the CDD#6 Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere (formerly Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo), and several properties located at the intersection of Mount Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road. The UPW Task Force Report and the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood recommend maintaining the strong mixed-use development pattern on Mount Vernon Avenue with ground floor retail and residential and commercial uses on the floors above, support the redevelopment of existing automobile-oriented uses with pedestrian-oriented uses and, with infill development at a mass, scale, and orientation that is compatible with the existing scale of two and three story buildings oriented to Mount Vernon Avenue.

37. From Commercial Low and Commercial General to Coordinated Development District

These are the eight parcels, approximately 4.27 acres of land, that collectively comprise the site identified and known as Safeway-Datatel. The change from CL and CG to CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the UPW Task Force Report.

Proposed Changes to the Land Use Plan
The following changes, shown on Map 10, are recommended:

1. Apply the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone to the Commercial Low properties

   This area consists of the commercially zoned properties that abut Mount Vernon Avenue from the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue. The *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends encouraging the strong mixed-use pedestrian-oriented development pattern on Mount Vernon Avenue with ground floor retail and residential and office uses on the floors above.

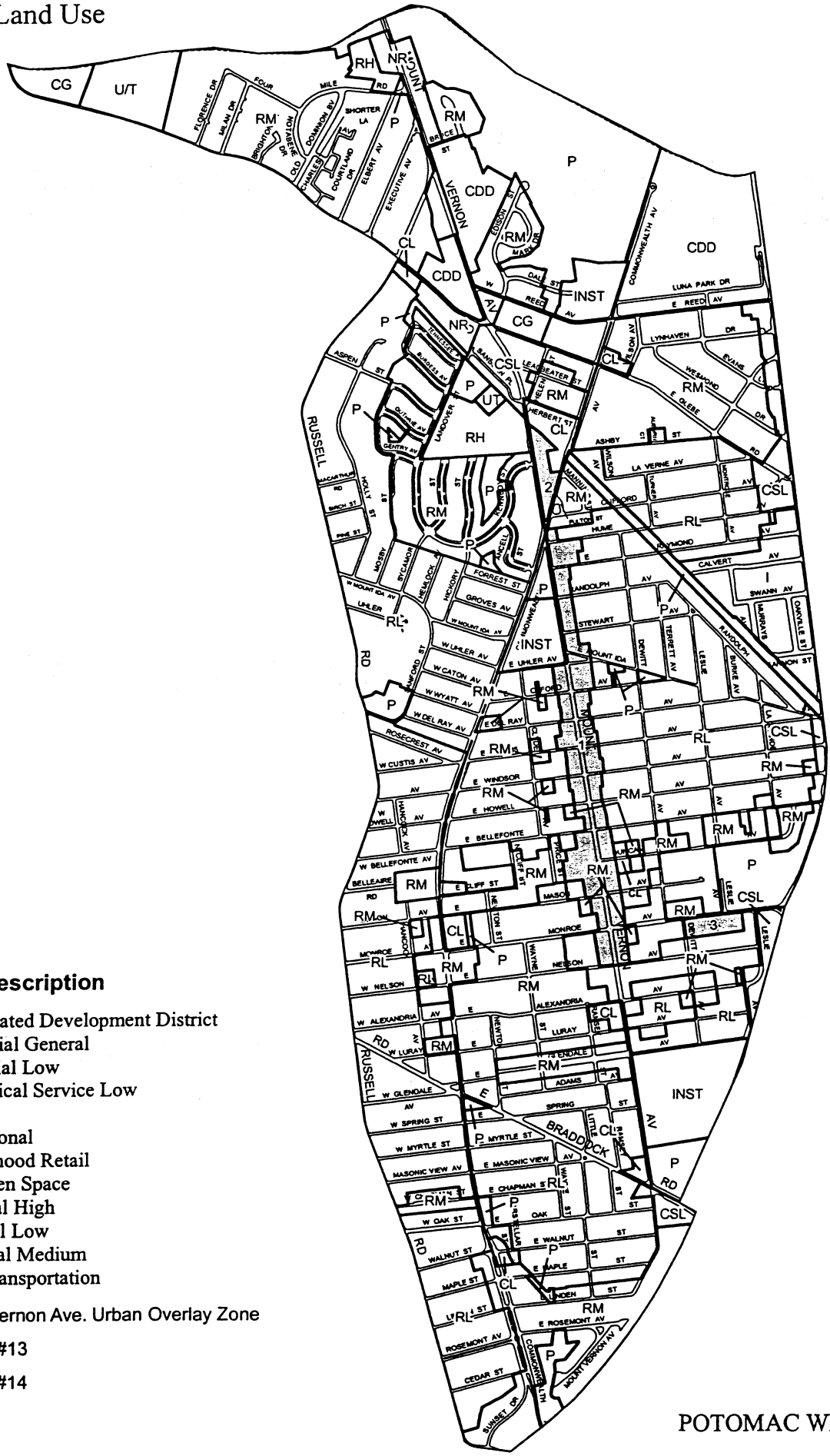
2. From Commercial Low to Coordinated Development District

   These are the 11 parcels, approximately 2 acres of land, that collectively comprise the site identified and known as in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* as the "Triangle Sites." The change from CL to CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels that complements the area, strengthens Mt. Vernon Avenue and improves the connection between the Arlandria neighborhood to the north with the Warwick Village, Mt. Jefferson and Del Ray neighborhoods to the south consistent with the design principles enumerated in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.*

3. From Commercial Low to Coordinated Development District

   The two parcels of land, approximately1.9 acres, are developed with a Giant Grocery Store and CVS Pharmacy. The CDD is proposed to encourage a coordinated redevelopment of the sites should market conditions render the current buildings or uses obsolete. The community strongly supports the existing grocery and pharmacy uses in this location and are desired in any future redevelopment of the sites.

Map 10
Proposed Land Use



Land Use Description

CDD - Coordinated Development District
CG - Commercial General
CL - Commercial Low
CSL - Commerical Service Low
I - Industrial
INST - Institutional
NR - Neighborhood Retail
P - Parks & Open Space
RH - Residential High
RL - Residential Low
RM - Residential Medium
U/T - Utility/Transportation

1 - Mt. Vernon Ave. Urban Overlay Zone
2 - CDD#13
3 - CDD#14

POTOMAC WEST

N
W E
S

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

~~In order to implement the proposed land use plan it is critical that rezonings occur. One of the problems with the 1982 Potomac West Plan is that there was not a comprehensive rezoning of the area following adoption of the Plan.~~ A comprehensive rezoning occurred in 1992 with the adoption of the Potomac West Small Area Plan and subsequent amendments incorporated the following changes. These changes are specifically mapped in the original version and subsequent amendments to the Small Area Plan.

Map 12 shows the ~~recommended~~ prior zoning changes as the existing zoning. ~~Almost all the zoning changes affect commercial and industrial parcels, parks and institutional uses, and some high density residential uses. Virtually no zoning changes are recommended for residential neighborhoods.~~ These changes affect the commercially zoned and developed properties along Mt. Vernon Avenue and Monroe Avenue.

~~Many of the changes will require new zones which will have to be developed by the Zoning Task Force and eventually acted upon by City Council.~~ Map 11 shows the proposed zoning.

~~Proposed~~ Prior Changes to Zoning Map

1. Rezone from 1-1 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial General designation (CG).

   Low scale general commercial is the current use of the property and the commercial general designation would be more appropriate for these uses to continue.

2. Rezone from I-1 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Utility/Transportation designation (U/T).

   This area is the Virginia Power Company and is designated as utility on the proposed land use plan.

3. Rezone from C-2 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

   This is the northernmost section of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The change in zoning would provide for low scale commercial development compatible with adjacent residential and appropriate to commercial parcels of limited depth.

4. Rezone from C-2 to RC Residential

This site was known formerly as the Warner Towers high rise apartments. The proposed change in zone classification will properly place this use in a residential high density zone rather than in a commercial high density zone.

5. Rezone from C-2 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Coordinated Development District designation (CDD).

This is the Arlandria Center site. The proposed change to CDD would provide for more specific use, density and height guidelines within the context of a coordinated plan. (For detail on these guidelines see Urban Design Recommendations.)

6. Rezone from RA to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation

This area includes Four Mile Run Park and recreational facilities associated with Cora Kelly School. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

7. Rezone from I-1. I-2 and RD to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Coordinated Development District designation (CDD).

This is the Route 1 Properties site. The CDD designation calls for a coordinated development plan in which the uses, heights and densities can be made flexible and subject to negotiation within the context of design guidelines. (see Urban Design Recommendations)

8. Rezone from R-8. RA. C-2 and C-2-B to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This area includes the old W&OD right-of-way and the existing parks at the ends of Landover Street and Mosby Street.

9. Rezone from CO and C-2-B to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This is a small office complex on the south side of Glebe Road at Russell Road. The change to CL would be compatible with the existing use of this site and insure continued low scale uses.

10. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial General designation CG).

This area includes the Food Barn, Ray Burmettes Volkswagen, Murrays Steak and McDonalds. The change to CG would seek to retain neighborhood retail use of the property and to remove the high density office zoning.

11. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

This would more appropriately reflect existing uses. It would retain low scale commercial uses compatible with the surrounding residential character and would be consistent with the development along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

12. Rezone from C-2 to RA Residential

This is the Arlandria Apartments. This use is more appropriately placed in a multifamily residential zone than in a high density commercial zone.

13. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation

This is a small commercial complex located at the northeast corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road. The uses are compatible with the surrounding residential area; the CL classification would be in keeping with the present uses and scale.

14. Rezone from I-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

The CSL designation reflects the existing uses along Route 1, and provides for low intensity uses compatible with the surrounding residential area. The designation also allows highway-related commercial uses.

15. Rezone from C-2 and RA to RC Residential.

The area is presently known as the Calvert high rise apartments. The proposed zone allows high density residential with ground floor commercial. This zoning change would properly place this primarily residential use in a residential zone.

16. Rezone from C-2 and C-2-B to a zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This site is the triangle between Commonwealth Avenue, Mt. Vernon Avenue and Herbert Street. the change to CL would provide for low scale commercial use and allow uses compatible with the surrounding residential area.

17. Rezone from RA to a new zone consistent with the Master Pan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This includes the Goat Hill, Timberland and Gentry parks. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

18. Rezone from R-2-5 to a new zone consistent with the (Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This area is the northern portion of the Mt. Vernon school site, situated between Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues. The site is used for recreational activities which include tennis, swimming and a landscaped park. The new zone would be appropriate for the present use of the site.

19. Rezone from RA & C-2-B to a zone consistent with the Master Plan Utility /Transportation designation (U/T).

The new utility zone is appropriate for this utility use.

20. Rezone from R-2-5 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

The property is known as the old W&OD right-of-way and was acquired by the City for use as a park and greenway system. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

21. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This area is low scale commercial, office, retail and residential. The Commercial Low, classification would allow the continuation of a mature of uses including residential while maintaining low scale appearance compatible with nearby low scale residential.

22. Rezone from R-2-5 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

These are two small parks. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space -none.

23. Rezone from C-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

The site is a small low scale commercial retail center along Commonwealth Ave. north of Monroe Ave. The Commercial Low category is similar to C-1 and insures continued low scale use of this site.

24. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Residential Low designation (R-2-5).

This is the YMCA building on Monroe Avenue. Institutional uses are recommended for rezoning to residential zones which are consistent with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods, so that if redevelopment occurs it will be to compatible residential uses.

25. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This site is currently known as Simpson Stadium and is and will continue to be used as a recreational facility. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

26. Rezone from I-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

This designation would grandfather existing uses but would insure that any new uses would be compatible with the general residential character of the area.

27. Rezone from C-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan designation (CL).

This block is along the west side of Mt. Vernon Ave. between Alexandria and Luray Ave. The Commercial Low designation maintains the low scale character of the commercial uses adjacent to residential.

28. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master P1 an Park and Open Space designation (P).

This site is the present location of George Washington school recreation facility, also known as Braddock Field. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

29. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This is a vacant site located at the northwest corner of Mt. Vernon Ave. and Braddock Rd. The Commercial Low classification would insure low scale, residentially compatible development of this site.

30. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

This area is situated south of Braddock Rd. and includes both sides of Mt. Vernon Ave. The change to Service Commercial appropriately reflects the current use of these properties but limits intensity of development to that which is compatible with nearby residential.

31. Rezone from C-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This is a small low scale commercial area east of Commonwealth Ave. along Walnut St. It contains a market and a bank. The proposed zoning designation is more appropriate for these uses and would insure continued low scale commercial use of these properties.

32. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

These sites are the Hooff's Run Park and Greenway between Rosemont and Commonwealth Avenues. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are being recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

33. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

The designation of this site, which contains a People's Drug Store and a Giant Food Store, to Commercial Low would allow these uses to continue. This classification is designed for retail and small office uses and would restrict major office development. Fast foods and auto related uses are excluded.

34. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Residential Medium designation (RA).

This is a part of the "Presidential Greens" apartments which face onto Mt. Vernon Area Since the area is residential, the change would conform to the use of the property.

35. Rezone from C-2 to RA residential.

This area is residential and the change would conform to the use of the property.

Changes 35 through 45, below, resulted from a request by the Del Ray Citizen's Association to study the rezoning of 114 residential properties in the Potomac West study area to zones which are consistent with the existing development of the sites. All of these changes were considered and approved by City Council on February 23, 1991 for inclusion in this plan.

36. From RB and RA to R-2-5 Residential.

37. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

38. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

39. From RB to R-2-5 Residential.

40. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

41. From RA-to R-2-5 Residential.

42. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

43. From RB to R-5 Residential.

44. From RB to R-2-5 Residential.

45. From A-2-6 : to RB Residential.

46. From RB to R-2-5 Residential.

47. Rezone from CL and CG (underlying zone of CDD #6 - Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, formerly Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo) to a new zone Neighborhood Retail (NR)

This is the commercial corridor that extends along Mount Vernon Avenue in Arlandria from Four Mile Run at the northern boundary of the City, including the properties currently zoned CDD#6 Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere to the intersection of Glebe Road and several properties located at the intersection of Mount Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road. The change is consistent with the Long-Term Vision Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood which recommends pedestrian-oriented retail uses at the ground level and a mix of uses on the floors above, at a scale that is appropriate with the existing scale of development along Mount Vernon Avenue and respects the residential neighborhoods that abut the commercially zoned land.

48. Rezone from CL and CG to a new Coordinated Development District (CDD) #12

These are the eight parcels, approximately 4.27 acres of land, that comprise the site known collectively as Safeway-Datatel. The creation of a CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the UPW Task Force Report. The underlying zone for this new CDD #12 would be NR/Neighborhood Retail, consistent with the proposed rezoning of commercial properties along the Mount Vernon Avenue corridor in Arlandria.

Proposed Changes to the Zoning Map

The following changes to the zoning map, shown on Map 11, are recommended:

1. Create Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone and apply to CL Zoned Properties

   This is the commercial corridor that extends along Mt. Vernon Avenue from the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue. The creation of an urban overlay zone is consistent with the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* which recommends a mix of retail, service, office and residential uses. Within the overlay, a retail focus area is designated for the parcels located on Mt. Vernon Avenue between Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues to promote and strengthen the retail shops and encourage new complementary businesses. Building form design guidelines are included to ensure that new and infill development is appropriately scaled to Mt. Vernon Avenue and the adjacent residences.

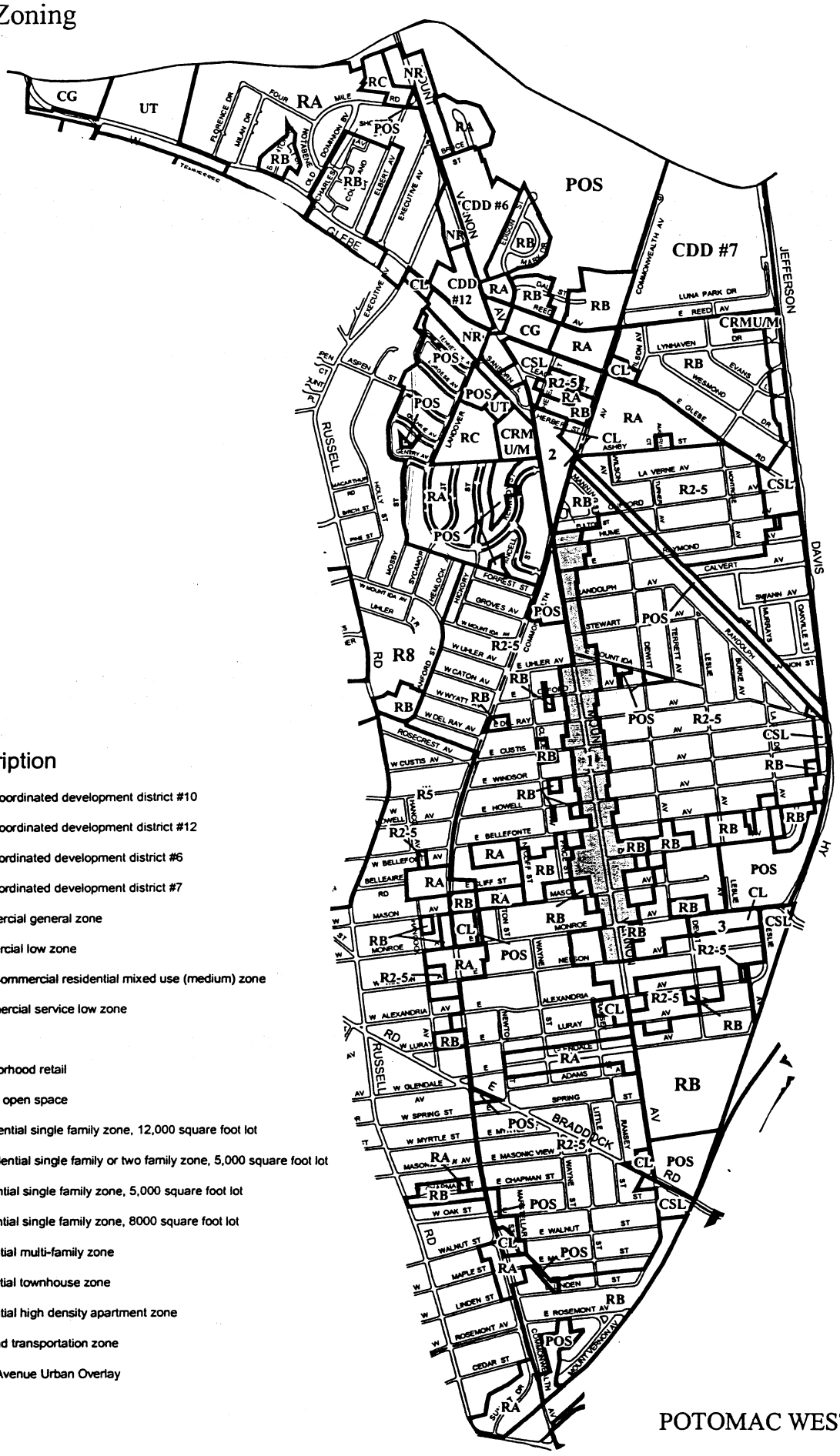
2. Rezone from CL to a new Coordinated Development District #13

   These are the 11 parcels, approximately 2 acres of land, that comprise the site known as the "Triangle Sites" in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*. The creation of a CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan. The underlying zoning will remain CL.

3. Rezone from CL to a new Coordinated Development District #14

   The two parcels of land, approximately 1.9 acres, located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue that are developed with a Giant Grocery Store and CVS Pharmacy. The creation of a CDD is proposed to ensure the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*. The underlying zoning will remain CL.

Map 11
Proposed Zoning



Zoning Description

- CDD#10 - Coordinated development district #10
- CDD#12 - Coordinated development district #12
- CDD#6 - Coordinated development district #6
- CDD#7 - Coordinated development district #7
- CG - Commercial general zone
- CL - Commercial low zone
- CRMU/M - Commercial residential mixed use (medium) zone
- CSL - Commercial service low zone
- I - Industrial
- NR - Neighborhood retail
- POS - Public open space
- R 12 - Residential single family zone, 12,000 square foot lot
- R 2-5 - Residential single family or two family zone, 5,000 square foot lot
- R 5 - Residential single family zone, 5,000 square foot lot
- R 8 - Residential single family zone, 8000 square foot lot
- RA - Residential multi-family zone
- RB - Residential townhouse zone
- RC - Residential high density apartment zone
- UT - Utility and transportation zone
- 1 - Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay
- 2 - CDD#13
- 3 - CDD#14

POTOMAC WEST

N
W E
S

HEIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS

As shown on Map 12, most of the Potomac West area is low scale residential limited to 35' by right with 45' by right allowed in the medium density residential zones. The Small Area Plan recommends no change to these heights.

~~Along Mt. Vernon Avenue, within the commercially zoned areas, the present C-2 zoning allows for heights of 150' by right. Because of the low scale character of the surrounding residential areas, the Plan recommends that heights be reduced along Mt. Vernon Avenue to~~ The maximum height is 35 feet (45 feet with SUP) for areas currently designated Commercial Low and up to 50' for those areas designated Service Commercial Low. The Commercial General designated parcels ~~would~~ have a 35' height limit.

The maximum permitted height in the proposed Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone is 45 feet as described in the building form design guidelines in Section 6 of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.* Building heights for the sites designated CDD #13 and CDD #14 are limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in building mass and scale adjacent to residential uses. (45 feet maximum)

Map 13 is the recommended height map.

The proposed heights for the industrial properties along US Route 1 ~~would be~~ was previously reduced from 77 feet to make the height allowance more compatible with adjacent residential areas.

For the current CDD designated sites: Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, Safeway-Datatel, and the East Reed Avenue ~~Route 1 Properties~~, heights would be based on the design principles recommended in the *UPW Task Force Report and Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood* and as established as part of ~~new and existing~~ the Coordinated Development District zones. ~~which are proposed to be revised to include the design principles consistent with the Plans (see Urban Design Recommendations section).~~

The maximum building height proposed in Arlandria in the new Neighborhood Retail zone is 35 feet along the street, except that the maximum permitted building height may be increased to 50 feet with a building step back of 15 feet from the front facade of the building. The minimum building height is 25 feet.

Map 12
Existing Height Limits By Right

* Height Determined by CDD

** 50 with a 15 ft. Step Back
at a 35 ft. Height

POTOMAC WEST

N
W E
S

Map 13
Proposed Heights

* Height Determined by CDD

** 50 with a 15 ft. Step Back at a 35 ft. Height

+ Refer to Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay District

Proposed Heights

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The urban design recommendations focus on establishing design guidelines for development/ redevelopment of the designated Coordinated Development Districts: Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, Route 1 Properties, and the ~~a new coordinated development district (CDD) comprised of the~~ Safeway-Datatel properties. Illustrative plans depicting the design guidelines and planning principles for use in the redevelopment of these sites are located in the *Upper Potomac West (UPW) Safeway-Datatel Task Force Report and the Long-Term Vision and the Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood* (the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans*, incorporated herein).

Two new CDDs are recommended for the Triangle Sites, 11 vacant or underutilized parcels located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue across from the Calvert Apartments; and for the lots developed with the Giant Grocery and CVS Pharmacy in the 400 block of Monroe Avenue. Urban design guidelines consistent with the design and planning principles outlined in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*, incorporated herein, are listed below.

CDD Guidelines for the Mt. Vernon Village Center and Birchmere Properties

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the NR/Neighborhood Retail zone regulations shall apply with a floor area ratio (FAR) not to exceed .5 for nonresidential and .75 for a mixed use project including residential and ground floor retail uses.

Development with a special use permit

1. Development shall consist of a mix of uses including retail and residential uses. Other desirable uses to be integrated into the development include live entertainment and theater facilities, an inn or conference center, and office uses.

2. Parking to serve the site should be integrated into the development plans and not along the fronts of buildings on Mt. Vernon Avenue.

3. Deleted Ordinance #4309 (6/14/03)

4. Buildings shall be situated on the site to create a defined retail streetscape along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

5. Residential uses of a similar scale, such as townhouses, shall provide a height and mass transition from the mixed use development down to the Hume Springs neighborhood. In addition, an appropriate height and mass transition shall be provided on the north side of the property, adjacent to the Arlandria-Chirilagua Housing Cooperative.

6. Four Mile Run Park should be recognized as an integral part of the development plan and the Arlandria neighborhood; every effort should be made to provide views and access to the park as part of the development plan.

7. Access to the site should be provided with no new curb cuts along Mt. Vernon Avenue and existing curb cuts should be closed to the greatest extent possible.

8. Parking on the site should be located underground, or if structured should be faced with active uses to screen the cars from public areas.

9. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 3.0 gross floor area including above grade structured parking provided the overall development includes a mix of residential and commercial uses and retail on the ground floor, and complies with the design recommendations in the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood. Gross floor area is defined as the sum of all gross horizontal areas under a roof or roofs. These areas are measured from the exterior faces of walls or from the center-line of party walls. Elevator and stair bulkhead, multi-story atriums and similar volumetric construction not involving floor space are excluded.

10. Ground level open space shall be incorporated in the project at no less than 10-15% of the site area. Such open space may include public plazas and landscaped areas visible or accessible from the public realm. Public plaza(s) should be provided within the development and oriented towards the neighborhood retail area and the park. Additional open space which should be about 5% of the site area should be included within the development.

11. The height of the proposed buildings should be no higher than 35 feet along the street; building height may be increased up to 50 feet where a minimum step back of 15 feet from the front facade is provided. Building height may be further increased up to 65 feet for a maximum of 50 percent of the development footprint where the building massing and scale are compatible with the adjoining development and where the design elements are compatible with recommendation of the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.

12. The development should include a series of roadways or pedestrian walkways to break up the scale of the sites and create more typical urban sized blocks.

13. The provision of on-site affordable housing is encouraged.

14. All new development shall be consistent with the design recommendations in the Arlandria Neighborhood Plans, adopted as an element of this small area plan.

CDD Principles for the Route 1 Properties

Within this CDD, the properties on the north side of East Reed Avenue are likely to redevelop in the near future. As part of the Upper Potomac West (UPW) Task Force planning process, an illustrative plan was developed for the redevelopment of those parcels. The plan envisions a mix of townhouse residential units at a higher density than currently exists or is permitted. Design and planning principles, including the requirement to provide on-site affordable housing units, are proposed to be incorporated into the CDD guidelines to allow this type of development, and density, with a CDD special use permit.

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the RB zone regulation shall apply along Reed Avenue, the RC zone regulation shall apply along Commonwealth Avenue to the depth of 100 feet and the OC regulation shall apply on the remainder of the site, provided that heights in the area along Commonwealth Avenue do not exceed 45 feet.

Development with a special use permit

1. The entire site should be developed for a mix of office, residential, retail, hotel and open space uses.

2. Higher density commercial uses should be oriented toward US Route 1 and the tallest buildings should be oriented toward the northeast portion of the site furthest away from existing residential uses. The scale of commercial buildings would descend as building sites approach Reed Avenue.

3. Residential uses are to be located along the north side of East Reed Avenue and along Commonwealth Avenue. Residential development on the north side of East Reed Avenue should consist of townhouse and stacked townhouse uses, with a maximum density of 27 dwelling units per acre.

4. Vehicular access to and from the site along Commonwealth Avenue should be limited to residential uses only while all commercial traffic should be limited to access along US Route 1. As redevelopment occurs on the north side of East Reed Avenue, the number of curb cuts onto Reed Avenue should be minimized and off-street parking for the proposed residential uses should be located behind the residences or underground.

5. Parking should be accommodated within structures and, wherever possible, upper decks and plazas should be landscaped and designed for public uses.

6. The residential portion of the project should include a mix of housing types - townhomes, garden apartments, and mid-rise. Consideration should be made for replacement housing for displaced low and moderate income households along E. Reed Avenue.

7. The scale of residential buildings should decrease as building sites approach E. Reed Avenue and the Cora Kelly School and there should be gradual height transitions among the residential uses.

8. The following guidelines are specific to redevelopment on the north side of East Reed Avenue:

   A. A minimum of 35 percent ground-level usable open space should be provided in a manner consistent with the concept in the UPW Task Force Report illustrative plan providing consolidated, publicly-visible open space areas.

   B. A minimum of 10 percent of the total number of new residential units should be affordable units as defined in the City of Alexandria Affordable Housing Policy, and of that total number, 70 percent of the units should consist of two or more bedrooms.

   C. The layout of the new development should seek to maintain as many mature trees as possible. Trees to be retained shall be protected from damage during the development process.

   D. Building articulation shall be incorporated in the building design. Articulation should include building breaks, setbacks and projections, and incorporate a variety of color, material and fenestration to ensure articulation of the street and to avoid an uninterrupted street wall. No more than eight units in a row shall be permitted. Variation in roof heights and cornice lines shall be included.

To further encourage residential development on the Mount Vernon Village Center site and on the Route 1 Properties site and to ensure the further development of Park facilities in Arlandria it is recommended that the City develop a Park Master Plan for Four Mile Run Park. A master plan should be developed for this area that would reflect improved treatment of the drainage areas and Four Mile Run embankment. Natural areas should be retained, and community recreational needs, as well as any future growth or development changes adjacent to the park, should be provided for. The relationship of park functions and future park uses should be improved.

Connections to the park need to be enhanced and additional pedestrian access should be considered, where needed. The park provides a splendid opportunity for improving the relationship between passive and active use of the park and its adjacent uses.

CDD Principles for the Safeway-Datatel Properties

The Safeway-Datatel properties were the subject of an extensive community process by the UPW Task Force that resulted in detailed recommendations for the future redevelopment of the properties at a higher than currently permitted level in a manner that would enhance the neighborhood retail environment. The CDD guidelines herein coincide with the recommendations of the UPW Task Force Report.

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the NR/Neighborhood Retail zone regulations shall apply with a floor area ratio (FAR) not to exceed .5 for nonresidential and .75 for a mixed use project including residential and ground floor retail uses.

Development with a special use permit

1. Development shall consist of a mixed use, neighborhood center that provides a retail anchor, such as a food/grocery store, and supporting retail, office, and live/work or residential uses. The project shall include a public parking component, which shall not be counted against the maximum FAR noted herein.

2. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 3.0 gross floor area including above grade structured parking for the total development. Gross floor area is defined as the sum of all gross horizontal areas under a roof or roofs. These areas are measured from the exterior faces of walls or from the center-line of party walls. Elevator and stair bulkhead, multi-story atriums and similar volumetric construction not involving floor space are excluded.

3. As new construction occurs, a minimum of 10 percent of the total number of residential units shall be affordable as defined in the City of Alexandria Affordable Housing Policy.

4. Active retail uses shall be provided at the ground floor or at the level adjacent to the sidewalk or roadway along Mount Vernon Avenue and should extend a minimum of 100 feet along W. Glebe Road from the southwest building corner. Within this CDD, one check cashing establishment, not to exceed 2,000 square feet in size, may be included as a permitted, active retail use.

5. Ground level open space shall be incorporated in the project at no less than 10-15% of the site area. Such open space may include public plazas and landscaped areas visible or accessible from the public realm. Public plazas capable of hosting community events shall be provided within the development and oriented towards the neighborhood retail area. Additional open space which should be about 5% of the site area should be included within the development.

6. A public parking garage, faced with a minimum depth of 30 feet of retail with office and other uses above up to a height of 40 feet, should be provided on the Datatel site. The garage should consist of five levels of public parking.

7. The maximum height of proposed buildings at the street is 40 feet (3 levels), except that if the building includes a major retail space of more than 35,000 square feet, that portion of the building housing said retail use may be no higher than 45 feet at the street. Otherwise, overall height of the proposed buildings on the Safeway and adjacent sites should be generally consistent with the height recommendations set forth in the UPW Task Force Report. With an exceptional design, increases in building height above the height recommendations may be approved and accommodated within the central portion of the project, provided that such height and building mass do not have an adverse impact onto adjoining properties or the community.

8. All new development shall be consistent with the design recommendations in the Arlandria Neighborhood Plans, adopted as an element of this small area plan.

CDD Principles for the Triangle Sites

The Triangle Site properties were the subject of an extensive community process during the preparation of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.* The *Plan* includes recommendations for the future redevelopment of the properties at a higher than currently permitted level in a manner that would significantly enhance the pedestrian-oriented neighborhood and strengthen Mt. Vernon Avenue, while providing appropriate transition in building height, mass and scale to the lower scale neighborhoods adjacent to these properties. The CDD guidelines herein coincide with the recommendations of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.*

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the CL/Commercial Low zone regulations shall apply except that single, two family and townhouses are prohibited. The floor area ratio (FAR) in the CL zone is .75 for nonresidential development on lots of 5,500 square feet or less, and .5 for lots greater than 5,500 square feet. The FAR may be increased to an amount not to exceed .75 with a special use permit. For residential development, the maximum permitted floor area ratio is .75, with a maximum of 27 units per acre for multifamily. Single and two-family and townhouse dwellings shall not be permitted in the underlying CL zone.

Development with a special use permit

An increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 is permitted with a special use permit. An additional bonus density of 0.25, for a maximum allowable FAR is 1.25, is subject to the provision of affordable housing. Any increase in FAR is subject to compliance with the following performance standards and building form design guidelines enumerated in Section 6 of the *Mt. Vernon Business Area Plan.* Achieving this density requires a development plan that meets or exceeds the following goals:

- Development shall be mixed use with ground floor retail and residential and/or office uses;
- Greater density and height should be provided on the northern portion of the site. A mix of building typology is desirable;
- Building mass and scale shall be compatible with existing mass, scale and character of area;
- Sufficient building articulation shall be provided to break up the mass into smaller components;
- Building height should be limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in building mass along Commonwealth Avenue;
- The adjacent residential neighborhood shall be protected with appropriate building stepbacks, breaks in massing and the provision of rear buffers and setbacks;
- A minimum of 25% ground-level, consolidated and usable open space shall be provided, a significant portion of which shall be publicly visible from Mt. Vernon Avenue;
- A large functional open space area at the corner of Mt. Vernon and Commonwealth Avenues shall be provided that is physically accessible and visible from the street;

- Vehicular access to the site from Mt. Vernon Avenue is strongly discouraged;
- Underground structured parking to meet parking requirements shall be provided, with access provided along Commonwealth Avenue in a manner that does not conflict with the access to Commonwealth Terrace Apartments. Service access from Mt. Vernon Avenue is prohibited;
- Where underground parking is adjacent to public streets, residential use as a liner use shall be provided on the street frontage; in other locations, architectural treatment shall be provided;
- On-site affordable housing in accordance with policies in effect should be provided;
- Public art, including sculpture, murals, fountains, other similar features should be provided;
- The primary facades of the building shall be masonry (brick, stone or precast), secondary façade may include cementious siding; and
- The site design and building massing shall consider the location of Commonwealth Terrace Apartments and include appropriate setbacks and height reductions to minimize potential impacts, and provide an appropriate transition.

CDD Principles for the Giant and CVS Sites

Retention of the existing grocery and pharmacy is strongly desired by the community. If market conditions force changes in the ability of these establishments to compete, the Plan recommends the redevelopment of these sites as a CDD with a mix of uses including grocery/pharmacy and other retail uses, residential and office uses as described in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.*

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the CL/Commercial Low zone regulations shall apply with a floor area ratio (FAR) not to exceed .75 for nonresidential development on lots of 5,500 square feet or less, and .5 for lots greater than 5,500 square feet. The FAR may be increased to an amount not to exceed .75 with a special use permit. For residential development, the maximum permitted floor area ratio is .75, with a maximum of 27 units per acre for multifamily or 22 units per acre for townhouse development.

Development with a special use permit

An increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 is permitted with a special use permit. An additional bonus density of 0.25, for a maximum allowable FAR is 1.25, is permitted subject to the provision of affordable housing. The delineated performance standards and building form design guidelines enumerated in Section 6 of the *Mt. Vernon Business Area Plan* are required. Achieving this density requires a development plan that meets or exceeds the following goals:

- Development shall include a mix of uses, including a grocery store with pharmacy, other ground floor retail uses, with residential and/or office uses;
- Building mass and scale shall be compatible with the existing mass, scale and character of area;
- Sufficient building articulation shall be provided to break up the mass into smaller components;
- Building height should be limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in scale to any adjoining residential use;
- The adjacent residential neighborhood shall be protected with appropriate building stepbacks, breaks in massing and the provision of rear buffers;
- A minimum of 25% ground-level, consolidated and usable open space shall be provided, a significant portion of which is publicly visible and publicly accessible;
- Underground structured parking shall be provided to meet parking requirements;
- On-site affordable housing should be provided in accordance with policies in effect;
- Public art, including sculpture, murals, fountains, other similar features should be provided; and
- Internal streets and open space shall be coordinated with Potomac Yard and the existing neighborhood.

ARLANDRIA NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

- Upper Potomac West Task Force Report
- A Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood

~~The purpose of t~~ This section ~~is to update the existing Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan by~~ incorporates ~~ing~~ the recommendations of two ~~recent~~ planning processes ~~that have occurred~~ in the Arlandria neighborhood ~~since the Small Area Plan was last updated~~ undertaken between 2000 and 2003. These planning processes ~~have~~ resulted in the development of the *Upper Potomac West Task Force Report* and the *Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.* The Plan documents are hereby incorporated by reference into the Potomac West Small Area Plan ~~(see attached Plans)~~.

Planning Process, Key Issues and General Goals

Upper Potomac West Task Force

In June 2000, City Council created the Upper Potomac West (UPW) Task Force to assist in the planning for the redevelopment of key sites in the Potomac West area north of Glebe Road. The Task Force focused on the then-vacant Safeway and Datatel properties, located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road, and the north side of East Reed Avenue, between Commonwealth Avenue and Route 1. The Task Force developed planning principles and illustrative plans to reflect the community's vision and design recommendations, consistent with the market analyses prepared for the sites that are outlined in the UPW Task Force Report.

Some of key neighborhood issues identified by the Task Force include improving pedestrian and vehicular circulation with more direct means to access shopping, service and park areas; connecting activities within the area with walkways and bicycle paths and; making intersections more pedestrian friendly. The Task Force believed that it is important to retain the existing diversity in Arlandria and expressed the desire to include ethnic representation, such as ethnic restaurants, and to retain existing businesses in any redevelopment and marketing efforts. It also recognized that the neighborhood now contains a variety of affordable housing options and that any new development should respect the importance of existing residential neighborhoods.

The Task Force's goals include the revitalization of the neighborhood, maintenance of the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods, including the stock of affordable housing, enhancement of the infrastructure, and maintenance of the existing businesses to the greatest extent possible.

For the Safeway-Datatel properties, the community's goals include the creation of a neighborhood focal point and identity at the site that is a unique, pedestrian friendly place, with public or quasi public outdoor spaces for a farmers' market, flea market, art shows and other similar activities to help energize the economic life and health of the neighborhood.

With the East Reed Avenue properties, the Task Force's goals include improving the street and neighborhood, educating the community and property owners about the potential for and consequences of redevelopment, protecting existing owner occupants on the north side of East Reed Avenue from displacement by redevelopment, and ensuring that the community has a voice in any redevelopment that occurs so that their interests are protected.

Arlandria Neighborhood Plan

As the Task Force planning process concluded, it was recognized that there were other community concerns that had not been addressed and that there was a need and desire for a long- range plan for the remainder of the commercial property fronting on Mount Vernon Avenue in Arlandria. At the direction of City Council, in January 2002, the City Manager convened the Upper Potomac West/Arlandria Work Group to identify and address the community concerns as well as to advise and assist Department of Planning and Zoning staff in the preparation of the action and vision plans. Over the course of a year, the Work Group developed an action plan to address neighborhood concerns and issues in the immediate, mid and long term, and a long-range vision plan to guide both redevelopment of the key "opportunity sites" in Arlandria and infill development activities on other commercial sites on Mount Vernon Avenue.

The main concerns identified by the community include a lack of residential and commercial parking; pedestrian safety, including the lack or inappropriate location of crosswalks and specific problem intersections, especially Mount Vernon Avenue and Russell Road; the desire to make Mount Vernon Avenue more pedestrian friendly and to improve its appearance; better coordination with the neighborhood to solve problems; and, police problems related to car theft, loitering, prostitution, and public drinking and vandalism in the community and at Four Mile Run Park. The Tenants and Workers' Support Committee expressed social service needs, including a teen center, a medical clinic offering acute/primary care for low-income people, and the maintenance of affordable housing in the neighborhood.

The vision for the future development of the area evokes the desire for a healthy, mixed use community focusing on the redevelopment of three underutilized "opportunity sites": Safeway-Datatel, the Birchmere, and the Mt. Vernon Village Center (formerly the Arlandria Shopping Center); active and viable commercial retail that serves both the neighborhood and the broader community; a transition in automobile-oriented to pedestrian-oriented uses; visual and physical connections to Four Mile Run Park; and, a safer environment for pedestrians.

Market Conditions

In both planning processes, a study of the existing and future economic conditions was conducted which generally found that there is a strong market for a variety of housing types, both rental and for-sale, a limited market for office uses, and the potential to significantly increase the inflow and demand for the area's commercial space. Current market conditions in Arlandria do not exist to spur redevelopment of the opportunity sites, and an interim niche marketing strategy is recommended to capitalize on the strengths of the existing business district and to attract new, complementary businesses that will strengthen the market and encourage the redevelopment of the Safeway-Datatel site over the course of the next few years. Incorporating the concepts of family, health, recreation, and the multi-cultural diversity of Arlandria, and building upon the entertainment and restaurant opportunities in the neighborhood, the niche marketing strategy calls for better marketing and promotion of Arlandria within the City as well as the region. It was recognized that the Birchmere attracts patrons from across the region and that better marketing and promotion of the existing business district, including the Birchmere, will attract new businesses and create a vibrant retail environment. The retail guidelines and planning principles articulated in the Arlandria Neighborhood Plans recommend strengthening the existing retail

environment, encouraging new pedestrian-oriented retail uses and creating a safer pedestrian environment to complement and support the niche marketing strategy.

Proposed Zoning Changes

A new zone, the Neighborhood Retail (NR) zone, is proposed to replace the existing Commercial Low (CL) and the Commercial General (CG) zones along Mount Vernon Avenue from Four Mile Run to the intersection of Glebe Road, as well as several properties at the intersection of Mount Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road (see attached map). The purpose of the NR zone is to encourage new business growth, existing business expansion and revitalization of the commercial corridor with a mix of uses including pedestrian scale retail, by allowing certain uses with standards and providing some flexibility with other regulations that will achieve an active urban environment while preserving the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Several amendments are also proposed to the two existing Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs) in Arlandria, CDD#6 - Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere (formerly Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo) and CDD#7 - Route 1 Properties. The creation of a new CDD #12 for the Safeway-Datatel site is also proposed. The design principles and guidelines for the CDDs are delineated within the body of the Potomac West Small Area Plan.

In general, the amendments to the existing CDDs as well as the provisions within the new CDD, incorporate of the guidelines and planning principles developed during the planning processes. The purpose of the defined principles is to guide new development in accordance with the community's vision, to establish an appropriate level of development for the CDD sites, and to provide certainty to the property owner/developer of the amount of desirable development. The current CDDs do not include any guidelines or principles regarding compatible building design or the bulk, mass and scale of new development, nor do they provide a clear understanding among all interested and affected parties – residents, commercial property owners, City staff and elected officials, and the development community – as to the type and scale of redevelopment that is appropriate in these districts. The new text seeks to address these deficiencies and to protect the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods while providing some certainty as to the acceptable scale and type of redevelopment.

With regard to the Route 1 Properties CDD, the amendments proposed by staff relate specifically to the redevelopment of the properties on the north side of East Reed Avenue in a manner that is generally consistent with the redevelopment plan depicted in the UPW Task Force Report. The proposed amendments will allow a greater density than currently allowed under the existing underlying RB/Townhouse zone and will allow stacked townhouse units (considered multifamily uses under the current zoning ordinance). Recognizing that the existing dwellings are affordable for the people residing in them, the CDD includes a requirement that a minimum 10 percent of the total number of new dwelling units be affordable, as defined in the City of Alexandria Affordable Housing Policy, and that, of that number, seventy percent of the affordable units consist of two or more bedrooms.

Conclusion

Taken together, the recent planning efforts have lead to the creation of two complementary redevelopment plans for the greater Arlandria neighborhood; an interim marketing strategy to strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses that will both improve the market and encourage redevelopment activities; retail guidelines to improve individual storefronts; an action plan to address community concerns with an implementation schedule for immediate, mid and long term improvements; and, new zoning changes to revitalize the area in a manner that is consistent with the Plans. These changes provide an understanding of, and a blueprint for, the potential for present and future development activities in Arlandria.

MT. VERNON AVENUE BUSINESS AREA PLAN

The purpose of this section is to update the existing Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan by incorporating the recommendations of the recent Mt. Vernon Avenue planning process that has resulted in the development of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* (the *Plan*). The *Plan* document is hereby incorporated by reference into the Potomac West Small Area Plan (see attached *Plan*).

Background

Over the years, a series of planning efforts have been undertaken, with substantial public investment and community involvement, to improve the Potomac West area. Most recently, a three year long planning process in the Arlandria neighborhood resulted in the creation of the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* and related zoning and small area plan changes that were adopted by City Council in June 2003.

The City continues to recognize that Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vital corridor, with a rich history and eclectic character that makes it an attractive place to live, work and shop. In late spring 2003, the City formed the Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group (Work Group) to embark on a comprehensive planning effort for Mt. Vernon Avenue's "Main Street" retail district, broadly defined between Glebe Road and Luray Avenue. Working collaboratively with the Work Group comprised of residents, businesspeople and community representatives from the Del Ray and Warwick Village Citizens Associations and the Mt. Jefferson Civic Association, and the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA), a future direction for Mt. Vernon Avenue (the Avenue) was defined to guide neighborhood changes while protecting adjoining neighborhoods.

The vision for the Avenue involves preserving its traditional neighborhood character, protecting its unique historical identity, serving the needs of the surrounding community and maintaining its viability and competitiveness as a commercial district. Building upon its unique characteristics, the Avenue will remain a special neighborhood as change takes place. The Work Group adopted the following statement that succinctly expresses this vision:

> *Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vibrant and welcoming Main Street that reflects the surrounding neighborhoods' diversity, integrity and small town charm. The Avenue is comprised of enthusiastic, successful and responsible community partners. We offer an eclectic and friendly living, working and shopping environment for Alexandrians and visitors alike.*

With extensive community input, guiding principles were developed to direct the future of Mt. Vernon Avenue and the specific recommendations of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan (Plan)*. These guiding principles are to:

- Preserve existing historic scale and character;
- Protect and enhance Mt. Vernon Avenue as a vibrant commercial corridor;
- Encourage and support mixed use development;
- Celebrate the Town of Potomac Historic District;
- Preserve and protect existing residential areas;
- Promote partnerships;

- Enhance public spaces;
- Provide convenient parking and transportation solutions to support retail growth;
- Encourage independent retail;
- Capitalize on the neighborhood arts community; and
- Provide alternative multi-modal transportation linkages

The primary study area extends along the length of the Avenue from Herbert Street to Nelson Avenue. Due to the differing characteristics along the length of the street, the study area is divided into three focus areas, as follows:

- ***Commonwealth District*** – Extending from Herbert Street on the north to Uhler Avenue, this area functions as a transition area between the pedestrian-oriented traditional urban form of the Historic Core and the more automobile-oriented form on the street and properties to the north;
- ***Historic Core*** -- From Uhler Avenue south to Bellefonte Avenue, this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue is located within the Town of Potomac National Register Historic District and has maintained a traditional "Main Street" feel over the years; and
- ***Monroe Gateway*** – Extending south from Bellefonte Avenue to Nelson Avenue, (and including the small shopping center located on the west side of the Avenue at Luray Avenue and the Giant grocery store and CVS pharmacy located in the 400 block on Monroe Avenue), this area is the most diverse, with a variety of service and automotive uses, small retail, office and residences, and is the linkage to the Route 1 corridor.

Plan Strategies

The *Plan* outlines six interrelated strategies that work together to achieve the overall vision for a vibrant, competitive Main Street where change builds upon and preserves the existing historic and eclectic characteristics of the community. Strategies for land use, parking, pedestrian and multi-modal connections, retail marketing and arts promotion, urban design/streetscape and zoning have been developed consistent with the guiding principles and the vision for the Avenue. A brief overview of each strategy is provided below.

Land Use Strategy

The land use strategy is generally focused towards promoting and reinforcing a consistent, vibrant and pedestrian-oriented retail environment, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods. The strategy includes overall recommendations for the entire Avenue, as well as those specifically crafted for the three focus areas. For the entire Avenue, the *Plan* recommends:

- ***Promoting infill development*** compatible with the mass and scale of existing buildings, through the use of building form design guidelines;
- ***Protecting residential neighborhoods***, by minimizing impacts through the use of buffers and building stepbacks;
- ***Enhancing the pedestrian streetscape***, through improved lighting, streetscape and

crosswalk improvements, strengthened connections to the Metro station and improved appearance of the service uses;

- ***Providing visual open space***, by maintaining existing visual open space elements and providing open space in new construction on medium and larger sized sites; and
- ***Encouraging a mix of uses***, including second floor residential and office uses to support the retail activity and concentrated retail in key locations.

For the individual focus areas, the specific land use, open space and streetscape recommendations are:

Commonwealth District - Herbert Street south to Uhler Avenue

- ***Encouraging a mix of uses***, including residential, office and institutional uses with limited retail, as well as a variety in the housing types, and some affordable housing;
- ***Promoting coordinated development*** of the underutilized properties in the triangular assemblage north of Commonwealth Avenue for a quality residential and retail project with defined development standards;
- ***Improving streetscape, open space and pedestrian safety***, through pedestrian improvements in key locations, street tree planting and enhancements to Colasanto Park; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for two opportunity sites***, the Sun Trust property at Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues, and the lots at the southeast corner of Mt. Vernon and Raymond Avenues.

Historic Core - Uhler Avenue south to Bellefonte Avenue

- ***Encouraging street-level retail***, by defining a retail focus area to target the ground floor for retail uses;
- ***Preserving the historic character***, by utilizing several historic preservation approaches, including tax credits and community education, and allowing appropriate infill development through the building form design guidelines;
- ***Creating a "town square,"*** by providing improvements to the City lot at Oxford and Mt. Vernon Avenues to enhance this lot as a public gathering space for community events;
- ***Considering reuse of the historic fire station/town hall*** for community functions/activities should the station outgrow the current facility; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for three opportunity sites***, the parking lot behind 2401 Mt. Vernon Avenue, the vacant lot at 2207 Mt. Vernon Avenue and the 7-11 Store at Custis and Mt. Vernon Avenues.

Monroe Gateway - Bellefonte Avenue south to Nelson Avenue, the Giant/CVS sites on Monroe Avenue

- ***Encouraging a mix of uses***, including residential and retail uses that promote a transition into the Historic Core area;
- ***Enhancing the streetscape and urban design***, by completing the undergrounding and

streetscape improvements and improving the appearance of the automobile and service-related uses;

- ***Improving Gateway Park*** on land made available by the realignment of the Monroe Avenue/US Route 1 bridge, in a manner that provides a high-quality gateway for the community;
- ***Enhancing the neighborhood Giant and CVS sites***, by working with the owners to maintain the facilities as part of the community, and, if market forces make it no longer viable, to redevelop the sites with residential in a coordinated manner using specific design guidelines and incorporating the grocery/pharmacy use as part of the redevelopment;
- ***Enhancing access to the Metro Station***, by providing bike and pedestrian access on the east side of George Washington Middle School, identifying other opportunities for pedestrian improvements with the Potomac Yard development, and enhanced signage, lighting and bus shelters; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for six opportunity sites***, the Salvation Army sites in the 1800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue, the service uses in the 1800 and 1900 blocks, the auto dealerships in the 1600 and 1700 blocks, the service stations at Monroe and Mt. Vernon Avenues, the undeveloped lot at 1503 Mt. Vernon Avenue and the Verizon building at 301 Alexandria Avenue. Although it is unlikely that these sites will redevelop in the short term, the *Plan* recommends property and site improvements to enhance their appearance.

The creation of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone is recommended as the primary mechanism to implement the *Plan*'s land use, parking and urban design recommendations. The overlay zone is principally intended to provide zoning and parking flexibility to encourage new retail uses, to allow restaurants, outdoor dining and other limited uses by Administrative SUP, and to provide the mechanism to apply the building form design guidelines to new infill development. In addition, the Coordinated Development District (CDD) approach is recommended for the consolidated Triangle sites and the Giant/CVS sites to implement the design, use and development recommendations for these sites.

Parking Strategy

Consistent with other urban neighborhoods, parking along Mt. Vernon Avenue is at a premium during certain times of the day. The perception of insufficient parking has raised neighborhood concern when new businesses seek to locate on Mt. Vernon Avenue or existing businesses desire to expand their operations. There is limited ability to create new parking opportunities along the Avenue, due to the developed character of the street, the typically small lots and the desire to maintain the continuity of the retail and the pedestrian environment along the street.

With the finite supply of parking, the principal goals of the *Plan* are to better utilize the existing parking resources and to balance the supply and demand for parking to ensure that parking demand is met without negatively impacting nearby residences. A parking utilization study was conducted to understand current and potential future parking conditions along the Avenue and to assist in formulating appropriate parking strategies. The study concluded that the current supply of and

demand for parking are in balance although parking utilization along the Avenue varies by location as well as the time and day of the week.

A shared parking program is recommended to more fully utilize ten identified privately owned off-street parking lots during the lot's off-peak hours. Using the overlay is also recommended to provide some flexibility in the parking requirements. Such flexibility includes waiving the increase in parking requirements when an existing office or personal service use changes to retail; waiving the parking requirement for outdoor dining; and reducing parking requirements for new infill development and additions on constrained lots where the new development is compatible with the building form design guidelines delineated in the *Plan*. A parking reduction policy is also outlined to provide guidance in assessing future parking reduction applications.

The parking strategy balances small increases in density and changes in use with significant development, and requires the latter to comply with the existing parking regulations. Inherent in this strategy is the need to monitor parking demand and utilization over time as well as the responsiveness of the strategies as the area changes and demand increases. The *Plan* recognizes that the existing parking resources have a finite capacity and includes several options that could be considered over time to further manage parking and, if the conditions warrant, to construct new public parking.

Pedestrian and Multi-Modal Strategy

To support and enhance the existing pedestrian-oriented nature of the Avenue and nearby neighborhoods, a multi-modal strategy is recommended, and highly desired by the community. The major focus of this strategy is to encourage and promote greater use of transit, walking and bicycling, and increase pedestrian safety. Actions such as enhancing existing bus stops with benches and shelters, providing bicycle racks and other streetscape amenities and improving pedestrian connections to the Braddock Road Metro Station will encourage people to use these modes of transportation. Expanding DASH service to the Avenue is also recommended when the new maintenance facility is complete in 2008 to provide more frequent service and better cross-town connections between the Avenue and the rest of the City.

A priority improvement of the Work Group is the installation to pedestrian lighting of the sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety. Their second priority is the reduction of the existing four lane section of the Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road to two lanes by restriping the existing road section to include two vehicle travel lanes, two bicycle lanes and one parking lane, or two travel lanes and two parking lanes. This improvement can be undertaken at minimal cost, greatly reducing vehicle speeding and increasing pedestrian safety. Bulb-outs and crosswalks at key intersections will also enhance pedestrian safety by highlighting areas for pedestrian movement and reducing the street's crossing distance.

Retail Marketing and Arts Promotion Strategy

To strengthen the existing retail district and attract new complementary businesses, a marketing strategy is recommended that builds on the successful efforts of Potomac West Business Association (PWBA). This strategy includes utilizing a variety of media to market the Avenue, integrating retail marketing efforts into events and festivals, such as Art on the Avenue or First Thursday events,

maintaining uniform hours of operation for stores, and enhancing the identity of the Avenue through vertical banners, heritage signage and gateway improvements.

The arts are a fundamental component of the Avenue's retail marketing strategy. The arts have played an important role in the revitalization and growth of the Avenue into the vibrant Main Street character it has today. From the efforts of the Del Ray Artisans to the success of Art on the Avenue, art and the Avenue have a very complementary and synergistic relationship. The *Plan* places a high priority on developing and maintaining the arts as a prominent feature of the Avenue's retail and cultural offerings and recommends the development of an arts promotion strategy. Elements of the strategy include artists' studios, galleries, art supply stores, an art education center, public art and arts-related festivals and promotions.

The community has significant accomplishments in marketing and promotion through a dedicated group of volunteers. In organizing events, marketing the Avenue and making community improvements, PWBA, Del Ray Artisans and neighborhood citizens associations have significantly contributed to the improvement of the Avenue's business climate. It is difficult, however, using solely volunteer efforts to sustain a high level of activity over time. For such efforts to continue, the *Plan* suggests the establishment of a business improvement district (BID) to provide a consistent funding source to sustain and expand existing marketing and promotions activities, ensuring that current efforts are continued on a long-term basis. As an implementation item, the *Plan* suggests a series of steps to undertake in exploring the creation of a BID.

Urban Design/Streetscape Strategy

The urban design strategy seeks to enhance the character and definition of those elements that make up the public realm – the public streetscape, public and private open space and the scale and form of the buildings that define the street. The guiding principles for the urban design strategy are to:

- ***Preserve and protect existing residential areas,*** through the use of building form design guidelines to buffer adjoining uses and minimize the impacts associated with commercial activity;
- ***Encourage and support a mixed-use environment,*** by emphasizing retail uses on the ground floor and developing standards to enhance the quality of the pedestrian/retail experience;
- ***Preserve existing historic scale and character,*** through the use of standards/guidelines for quality and appropriately-scaled infill development, and encouraging the redevelopment of incompatible buildings; and
- ***Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District,"*** by improving the Avenue's appearance through streetscape and facade improvements.

Building Form Design Guidelines

A major thrust of the urban design recommendations for the Avenue is to protect and enhance its historic and eclectic character as change takes place. Building form design guidelines have been developed to ensure quality development that reflects the existing pattern of development along the Avenue while preserving the contributing buildings in the Town of Potomac Historic District. The

building form design principles are intended to meet the following general objectives:

- New construction should reflect the scale of existing buildings;
- A consistent street wall should be maintained, with some variations to allow for landscaped open space, an opportunity for side windows and for site access where necessary;
- New construction should be two to two and one-half stories, with a setback where a third story is provided;
- New buildings should help define the corners where side streets intersect Mt. Vernon Avenue, with retail storefront windows extending onto the side streets;
- Appropriate building setbacks and parking lot screening will minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties;
- Ground level retail storefronts should contribute to the vitality of the streetscape and the pedestrian experience;
- Direct driveway access to Mt. Vernon Avenue is not desirable; and
- Off-street parking lots should be located to the rear of the property, with access provided from rear alleys, when available, side streets or access easements from adjoining properties.

Specific building form design guidelines are used to achieve the general objectives. These guidelines are depicted visually in the *Plan*, using graphics to show the desired form and location of buildings and parking areas, building massing, height and scale, building facades and screening requirements. The design intent for each guideline is presented to ensure an understanding of goal and application of each guideline.

Storefront Guidelines

The *Plan* recognizes that storefronts are generally the first point of contact with potential customers and that they define the character of a neighborhood and retail street. With the unique, eclectic nature of the retail along the Avenue, standardized or generic storefronts are strongly discouraged. Storefront design should reinforce the Main Street quality of the Avenue, with its organic small town character, and is recommended to include the following elements:

- Individual storefronts displays should change often to add richness to the Avenue;
- The primary pedestrian entrance should directly front along the sidewalk or at the corner;
- On corner sites, ground level retail storefront windows should extend a minimum of 20 feet along the side street, and both the architecture of the building and the storefront design should address and articulate the corner at intersections along the Avenue;
- Storefronts should have a minimum of 75 percent glass at the ground floor facade, with signage limited to the ground level;
- Creative displays of merchandise and services should be included in storefront windows; and
- Ground level storefronts are encouraged to have exterior awnings that are coordinated

with the storefront design.

The existing Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines, adopted by City Council in 1993, have been incorporated into the proposed guidelines, to enhance and maintain consistency in building facades along the Avenue.

Streetscape Improvements
The *Plan* recommends improvements to lighting, sidewalks, bulb-outs and crosswalks, street trees, public signage, and site amenities, including street furniture and public art to enhance the pedestrian environment. Pedestrian scale lighting is strongly desired by the community to enhance pedestrian safety along the Avenue during evening hours. The existing cobra head light fixtures illuminate the street. Limited light filters through the existing tree canopy to the sidewalk level. Of the pedestrian safety improvements, the Work Group unanimously selected pedestrian scale lighting and a reduced roadway width north of Commonwealth Avenue to Glebe Road as their highest priorities.

Zoning Strategy
The Avenue is regarded as one of the region's most unique neighborhoods, due in large part to its small town, Main Street character small town, Main Street character. The current CL zoning regulations, however, do not provide a framework to ensure that the form and scale of new or infill development will be compatible with the historic scale and character of existing buildings along the Avenue. With its emphasis on form, quality, and the relationship of buildings to each other and the street, a more flexible, design-oriented zoning approach is necessary to support and encourage appropriately scaled and designed new construction.

A new overlay zone, the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone, is proposed to supplement the traditional zoning for existing Commercial Low (CL) zoned properties that have frontage along the Avenue from Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue (see attached map). The purpose of the overlay zone is to achieve a mixed use, pedestrian oriented community that both supports economic activity and protects existing residential neighborhoods, and to provide for appropriately scaled infill development that is compatible with the character of Mount Vernon Avenue, the existing community and the Town of Potomac Historic District. The existing CL zone will remain as the underlying zone.

The creation of two new Coordinated Development Districts (CDD) is also proposed. CDD #13 is proposed for the Triangle Sites, the 11 vacant or underutilized parcels located on the east side of the Avenue, across from the Calvert Apartments. CDD #14 is proposed for the Giant/CVS sites located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue. In this case, the designation of the CDD is to ensure a coordinated redevelopment of the properties should market forces result in changes on the sites. The design principles and guidelines for the proposed CDDs are delineated in the Zoning Recommendations section of the Potomac West Small Area Plan. In general, the provisions within the new CDDs incorporate of the guidelines and planning principles developed during the planning process. The guidelines seek to protect the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods while providing some certainty as to the acceptable scale and type of redevelopment on the designated sites.

Implementation Strategy

Specific delineated approaches for implementing the *Plan's* recommendations are critical to ensuring the goals of the *Plan* are achieved. A key element for implementation will be a coordinated effort of public and private entities. The Potomac West Business Association is the recommended organization to implement the marketing, business organization and retail promotion efforts. A Business Improvement District approach is outlined to provide a regular source of funding in benefit of business along the Avenue.

The *Plan* outlines a series of actions and steps, and the principal agencies involved, to ensure the successful implementation of the vision, guiding principles and strategies. Taking that one step further, a draft implementation schedule is included with this report that identifies the proposed actions, the departments responsible for each action and the projected fiscal year during which the actions will be undertaken. With limited public funding available to undertake the suggested physical improvements, working with the community to prioritize the public improvements is an initial

Conclusion

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area planning effort has lead to the creation of a plan outlining a vision and guiding principles to ensure the Avenue continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community while realizing its potential as a vibrant and competitive place for business. The *Plan* includes strategies to strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses along the Avenue; to provide a direction for marketing and arts promotion efforts; to improve the pedestrian/retail environment; to maximize parking resources; and to ensure high quality new construction of compatible mass and scale. An implementation schedule for immediate, mid and long term improvements and actions will move the community closer to achieving its vision and goals for the future of the Avenue.

Draft Mt. Vernon Avenue Implementation Schedule

Work Item	Departments	FY's 2005-2006	FY's 2007-2009	FY 2010+
MASTER PLAN/ZONING ORDINANCE				
Create overlay zone	*P&Z*	IN PROGRESS		
Create CDD #13 for Triangle site	*P&Z*	IN PROGRESS		
Create CDD #14 for Giant/CVS sites	*P&Z*	IN PROGRESS		
Amend Potomac West Small Area Plan	*P&Z*	IN PROGRESS		
Establish and work with steering committee on plan implementation	*P&Z*			
STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS				
Develop design plan for streetscape improvements incl street furniture, crosswalks, public art, trees, loading areas	*P&Z, T&ES, RP&CA*			
Install new street trees as appropriate	*RP&CA, P&Z, T&ES*			
Construct sidewalk and landscaping improvements	*T&ES, RP&CA, P&Z*			
Work w/prop owners during final undgrd. proj. to encourage improvement of private property	*P&Z, T&ES*			
Evaluate cost/feasibility of pedestrian-scale lighting	*P&Z, T&ES*			
Develop design plan for lighting	*P&Z, T&ES*			
Develop phasing plan for installation of lighting	*T&ES, P&Z*			
Install pedestrian-scale lighting	*T&ES, P&Z*			
Work with property owners to install bldg lighting	*P&Z, PWBA*			
Develop/implement coord. approach to public signs	*P&Z, T&ES, HA*			
Encourage enhancement of auto-oriented uses	*P&Z, AEDP*	Ongoing		
Work with property owners to improve sites/buildings	*P&Z, AEDP*	Ongoing		
Continue facade improvement grant program	*P&Z*			

Schedule subject to change based on community priorities and funding considerations.

Green indicates capital improvement projects.

Draft Mt. Vernon Avenue Implementation Schedule

Work Item	Departments	FY's 2005-2006	FY's 2007-2009	FY 2010+
OTHER PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS				
Create public gathering space	*P&Z, RP&CA, T&ES*			
Develop conceptual designs for two options	*P&Z,RP&CA, T&ES*			
Conduct cost and design feasibility	*P&Z,RP&CA, T&ES*			
Work w/ comm on preferred design	*P&Z,RP&CA, T&ES*			
Incorporate into CIP and identify alternative funds	*P&Z,RP&CA, T&ES*			
Construct desired improvement	*T&ES, RP&CA*			
Design and improve Gateway Park at Rt. 1 and Monroe	*RP&CA, P&Z,*			
Coordinate design and improvements w/bridge, PY	*P&Z, RP&CA*			
Evaluate suggested improvements to Colasanto Pk.	*RP&CA, P&Z*			
Construct desired improvements to Park	*RP&CA*			
PEDESTRIAN/MULTIMODAL				
Make improvements to Ave. betw. Comm/Glebe	*T&ES, P&Z, RP&CA*			
Restripe travel lanes from 4 to 2; w/pkg/bike lanes	*T&ES, P&Z, RP&CA*			
Work with bicycle comm re: bike lanes	*T&ES, P&Z, RP&CA*			
Construct crosswalks and bulb-outs	*T&ES*			
Provide DASH service along the Avenue	*T&ES, DASH*			
Develop program to promote transit to Avenue	*DASH, PWBA*			
Explore opportunities to improve trail connections	*RP&CA, P&Z, T&ES*			
Enhance ped access to Braddock Rd Metro Station	*P&Z, T&ES*			

Schedule subject to change based on community priorities and funding considerations.

Green indicates capital improvement projects.

Draft Mt. Vernon Avenue Implementation Schedule

Work Item	Departments	FY's 2005-2006	FY's 2007-2009	FY 2010+
PARKING				
Develop and implement shared parking program	*P&Z, CA*			
Develop formal commitment with property owners	*P&Z*			
Evaluate potential costs for property owners	*P&Z*			
Develop equitable approach for cost sharing	*P&Z*			
Promote interest and participation in program	*P&Z, PWBA/BID*			
Develop method to monitor and evaluate program	*P&Z*			
Resolve misc. on-street parking/loading issues	*T&ES, P&Z*			
Provide shorter term parking spaces	*T&ES, P&Z*			
Provide adequately spaced loading zones	*T&ES, P&Z*			
Resolve conflicts in parking limitations at School	*T&ES*			
Consider relocation of taxicab stand	*T&ES*			
Explore rear access opportunities	*P&Z, T&ES*			
Provide consistent parking enforcement	*Police*	Ongoing		

Draft Mt. Vernon Avenue Implementation Schedule

Work Item	Departments	FY's 2005-2006	FY's 2007-2009	FY 2010+
RETAIL ENHANCEMENT				
Explore Business Improvement Dist. (BID)	*P&Z/CMO, PWBA, AEDP*			
Organize a committee	*P&Z/CMO, PWBA, AEDP*			
Define the potential boundaries and properties				
Develop a general business plan for BID				
Publicize concept - hold comm mtgs, etc				
Hold public hearing				
Authorize adoption of BID if desired				
Promote participation in Enterprise Zone	*AEDP, P&Z*	Ongoing		
Monitor and evaluate EZ program	*AEDP, P&Z*			
Establish work group to implement arts promotion	*PWBA, AEDP, RP&CA, P&Z*			
Misc. Retail Enhancement	*PWBA/BID,AEDP,SBDC,P&Z*			
Merchandising audits w/ businesses	*P&Z, SBDC*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Provide business plan assistance	*P&Z, SBDC*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Provide SBA & other financing info.	*P&Z, SBDC*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Provide info. abt. business assistance pgms	*P&Z, SBDC*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Ensure coordinated marketing efforts	*PWBA/BID, AEDP*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Assist w/ facade improvements	*P&Z, AEDP*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Work w/ prop owners re: Giant/CVS	*P&Z*			

Schedule subject to change based on community priorities and funding considerations.

Green indicates capital improvement projects.

Draft Mt. Vernon Avenue Implementation Schedule

Work Item	Departments	FY's 2005-2006	FY's 2007-2009	FY 2010+
HISTORIC PRESERVATION				
Update the National Historic Register	*P&Z, HA*			
Seek grant and state cost sharing funds to survey bldgs identified in Plan	*P&Z, HA*			
Prepare and submit nomination package	*P&Z, HA*			
Explore expansion of boundaries of Historic Dist.	*P&Z, HA*			
Develop and imp heritage/interp sign program	*HA, P&Z*			
Coordinate w/ other public sign programs	*HA, P&Z*			
Support installation of five proposed inter signs				
Promote awareness of historic district	*P&Z, HA*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Work w/VA DHR to host comm workshops				
Promote awareness and use of tax credits		Ongoing	*Continued*	
AFFORDABLE HOUSING				
Encourage new homeownership	*OH, P&Z*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Promote City-sponsored home ownership programs	*OH*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Expand awareness of and support for aff housing	*OH, P&Z*	Ongoing	*Continued*	
Incorporate new units in new construction	*P&Z,OH*	Ongoing	*Continued*	

Schedule subject to change based on community priorities and funding considerations.

Green indicates capital improvement projects.