

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

Fairfax's success in achieving the community's vision for future development hinges upon effective growth strategies for the City's areas of highest redevelopment potential. These areas will accommodate the majority of new commercial activity, higher density residential neighborhoods, and transportation improvements. Success in achieving this vision will be measured not by the magnitude of new investment, but rather by the attributes that can transform a disjointed pattern of development into an attractive and welcoming neighborhood. If the City's Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers can be transformed into areas with attractive physical characteristics and a mix of uses, then the City will realize a major aspect of its goal to be a vibrant 21st century community.

While higher intensity mixed-use redevelopment of older commercial properties can provide economic and social benefits to the community, these benefits would be most realized if concentrated in key areas to

Guiding Principle:

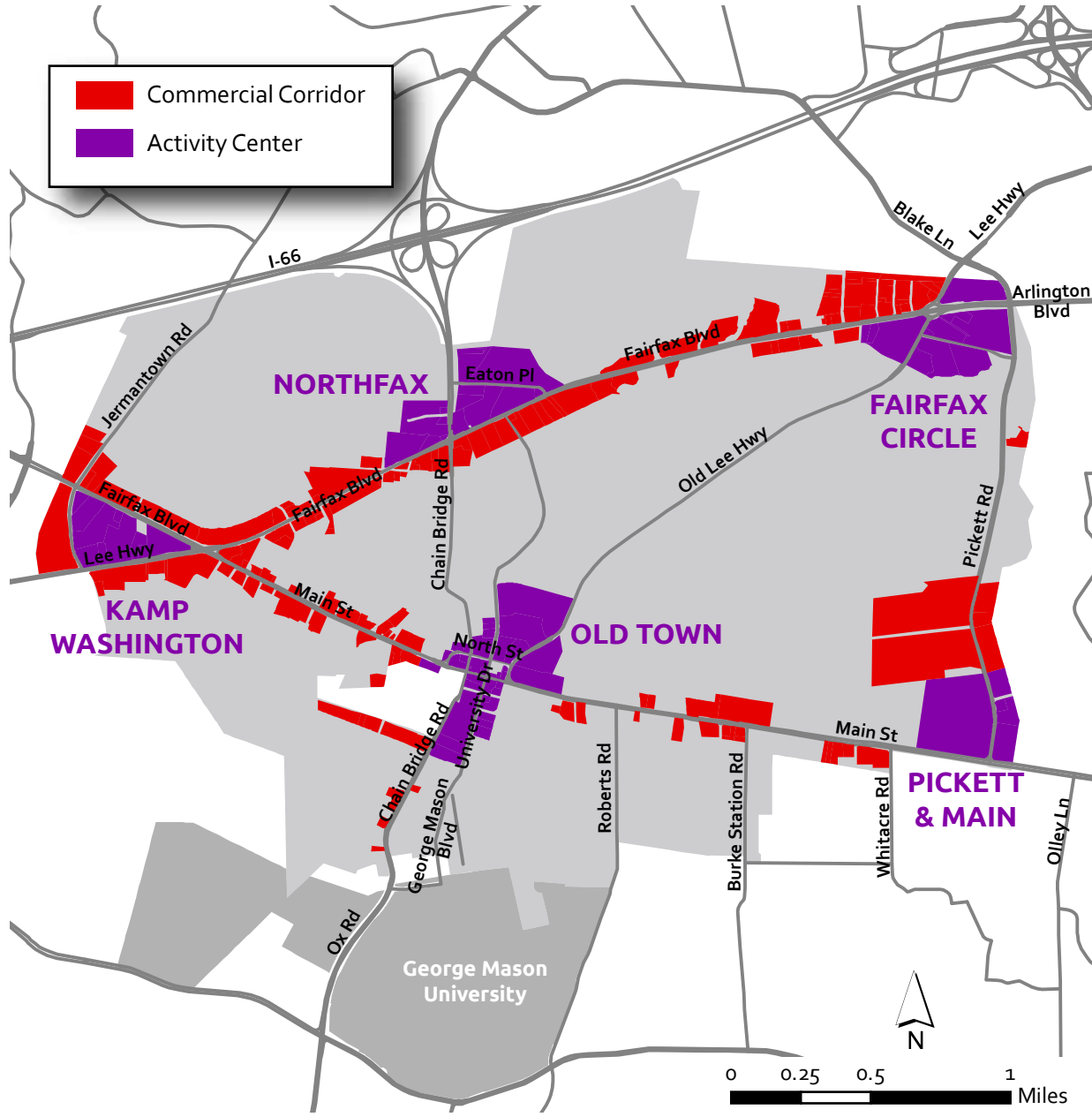
In 2035, Fairfax is a city with... flourishing centers of commercial and mixed-use activity that include an assortment of grocery stores, restaurants, cafes, entertainment venues, retail stores, offices, and housing.



Photo Credit: Hord Coplan Macht

allow new developments to complement each other, avoid oversaturating the market, and minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods. These types of uses are primarily envisioned in Activity Centers, as indicated on the Future Land Use Map. While a mix of uses and connected street grids are envisioned in all Activity Centers, such development is always encouraged in the Old Town Fairfax and Northfax Activity Centers. More specific guidance is provided for these two areas in the Activity Center Place Type (pages 35-36) and through the goals of this Guiding Principle.

FIGURE 11 ACTIVITY CENTERS AND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



While reinvestment and redevelopment of properties in Commercial Corridors is encouraged, incorporation of residential mixed uses is not recommended. Stronger pedestrian orientation and improved aesthetics are encouraged in Commercial Corridors through the physical attributes of the Place Type and recommendations of the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines.

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

Goal 1

Enhance Commercial Corridors.

Many commercial properties in the City are underutilized with an overabundance of surface parking. These properties are often suitable for redevelopment, whether to achieve greater use of the land or to make the properties more market competitive. New development and redevelopment must enhance commercial activities along the City's major corridors with a mix of retail, office, and service offerings in an attractive and welcoming setting. Recently-approved projects indicate that there is demand for additional investment in many of these properties.

OUTCOME CCAC1.1: Commercial Corridors with attractive physical characteristics that provide shopping, dining, services, and other businesses.

ACTION CCAC1.1.1 Encourage commercial redevelopment that offers amenities and atmosphere to attract top-tier commercial tenants.

ACTION CCAC1.1.2 Identify underutilized properties (i.e., buildings assessed at considerably less than the total property value) and, working with the City's Economic Development Authority, encourage redevelopment.

ACTION CCAC1.1.3 Encourage creativity and architectural excellence in new commercial developments.

ACTION CCAC1.1.4 Develop urban design concept diagrams for small block and multi-block areas along the City's Commercial Corridors outside the Activity Centers.

ACTION CCAC1.1.5 Encourage tree-lined and heavily-landscaped property edges, particularly where surface parking is adjacent to the public rights-of-way.

ACTION CCAC1.1.6 Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby neighborhoods.

OUTCOME CCAC1.2: Tenants representing diverse business sectors that meet current and emerging trends in neighborhood-serving retail, service, and other business demands.

ACTION CCAC1.2.1 Strengthen existing retail businesses and expand choices to capture retail spending by residents.

ACTION CCAC1.2.2 Create a marketing plan to generate excitement about the current retail and service offerings.

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

Goal 2

Promote redevelopment in the City's Activity Centers.

While actions throughout the City will contribute to fulfill the community's vision for the City's future, those pertaining to land use planning in these specific areas carry an outsized importance. The City will promote redevelopment in Activity Centers to strengthen economic vitality; provide retail, office, and residential opportunities for sustained demand; and reinforce the City's regional appeal. Given the potential scope of redevelopment opportunities, new construction in these areas to accommodate various types of housing units and commercial tenants could accomplish many of the goals set forth elsewhere in this Plan's Land Use Chapter.

OUTCOME CCAC2.1: Old Town Fairfax, including an expanded downtown area to its north and south, is a lively, economically viable, walkable cultural hub for the City.

ACTION CCAC2.1.1 Capitalize on the authenticity and appeal of Old Town Fairfax as an historic place and a shopping, dining, and tourist destination.

ACTION CCAC2.1.2 Attract and retain businesses along Main Street and market it as a primary retail street for Old Town Fairfax.

ACTION CCAC2.1.3 Maximize the use of publicly-owned properties to contribute to the economic and cultural vibrancy of Old Town Fairfax.

ACTION CCAC2.1.4 Encourage redevelopment of privately-owned, underutilized sites north and south of Old Town Fairfax, such as the Courthouse Plaza shopping center and the area west of University Drive between Sager Avenue and Armstrong Street, as mixed-use developments.

ACTION CCAC2.1.5 Market the connection to Old Town Fairfax from George Mason University and emphasize Old Town Fairfax as a desirable place for students and faculty to shop, dine, and live.

ACTION CCAC2.1.6 Support efforts by Fairfax County to develop a Master Plan for the County Courthouse Complex including encouraging improved connections between the complex and surrounding areas, as well as uses that contribute toward, rather than compete with the vibrancy of the Old Town Activity Center.

OUTCOME CCAC2.2: A pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use destination at Northfax that capitalizes on its location to successfully compete with other regional centers.

ACTION CCAC2.2.1 Pursue feasibility of a public-private partnership to develop parking structures.

ACTION CCAC2.2.2 Consistently articulate expectations for unified developments and support measures that facilitate property consolidation.

ACTION CCAC2.2.3 Encourage the redevelopment of Northfax as a major commercial center and transit-oriented development that capitalizes on a potential future Metrorail station along I-66.

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

Goal 2



OUTCOME CCAC2.3: Old Town Fairfax, Northfax, and the other Activity Centers are well-designed and desirable places to live, work, shop, and dine.

ACTION CCAC2.3.1 Encourage structured parking and minimize surface parking, particularly adjacent to public rights-of-way.

ACTION CCAC2.3.2 Promote the orientation of buildings facing toward streets with architecture that engages street-level activity.

ACTION CCAC2.3.3 Promote active streetscapes with minimal building setbacks, pedestrian amenities, street furniture, on-street parking, landscaping, and other features.

ACTION CCAC2.3.4 Support land planning that balances connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

ACTION CCAC2.3.5 Prepare individual Small Area Plans, as defined in Section 15.2-2303.4 of the Code of Virginia, for each of the Activity Centers that clearly demonstrate the desired mix of uses, residential density, building intensity, design aesthetic, specific street locations and multimodal connections, infrastructure improvements, parking, and open space.

ACTION CCAC2.3.6 Target and coordinate public infrastructure improvements with desired infill, reinvestment, and redevelopment areas to encourage and stimulate private development.