



November 5, 2019

THE CITY OF FAIRFAX
City Council / Planning Commission
Work Session



DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AREA PLANS INTERIM UPDATE NORTHFAX AND OLD TOWN



CUNNINGHAM | QUILL ARCHITECTS PLLC

Bolan Smart Associates

Kittleson & Associates

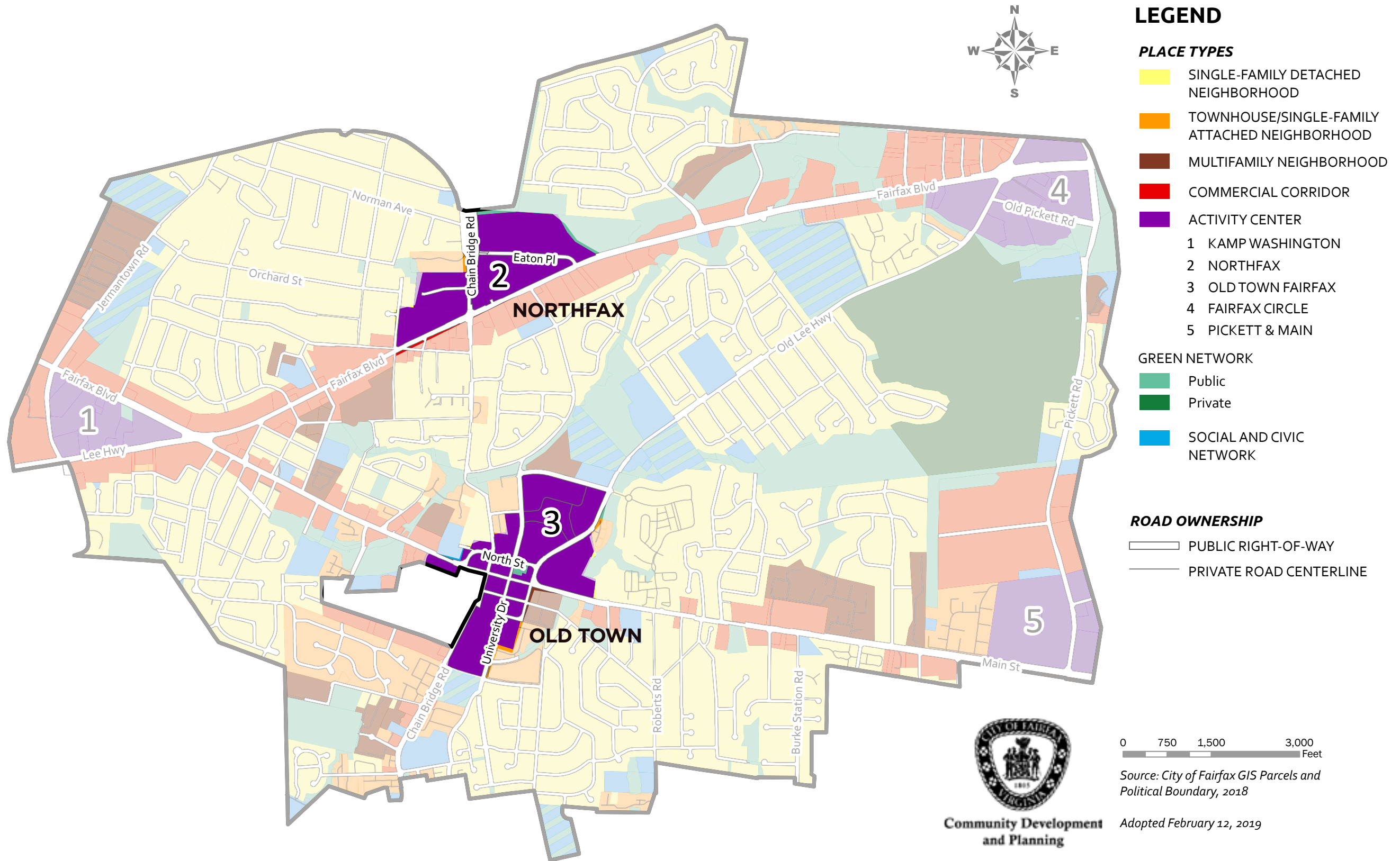
OCULUS

Walter L. Phillips

UtilityPros

BUILDING ON THE 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TWO ACTIVITY CENTERS: NORTHFAX & OLD TOWN



LEGEND

PLACE TYPES

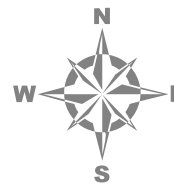
- SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED NEIGHBORHOOD
- TOWNHOUSE/SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED NEIGHBORHOOD
- MULTIFAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD
- COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
- ACTIVITY CENTER
 - 1 KAMP WASHINGTON
 - 2 NORTHFAX
 - 3 OLD TOWN FAIRFAX
 - 4 FAIRFAX CIRCLE
 - 5 PICKETT & MAIN

GREEN NETWORK

- Public
- Private
- SOCIAL AND CIVIC NETWORK

ROAD OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY
- PRIVATE ROAD CENTERLINE



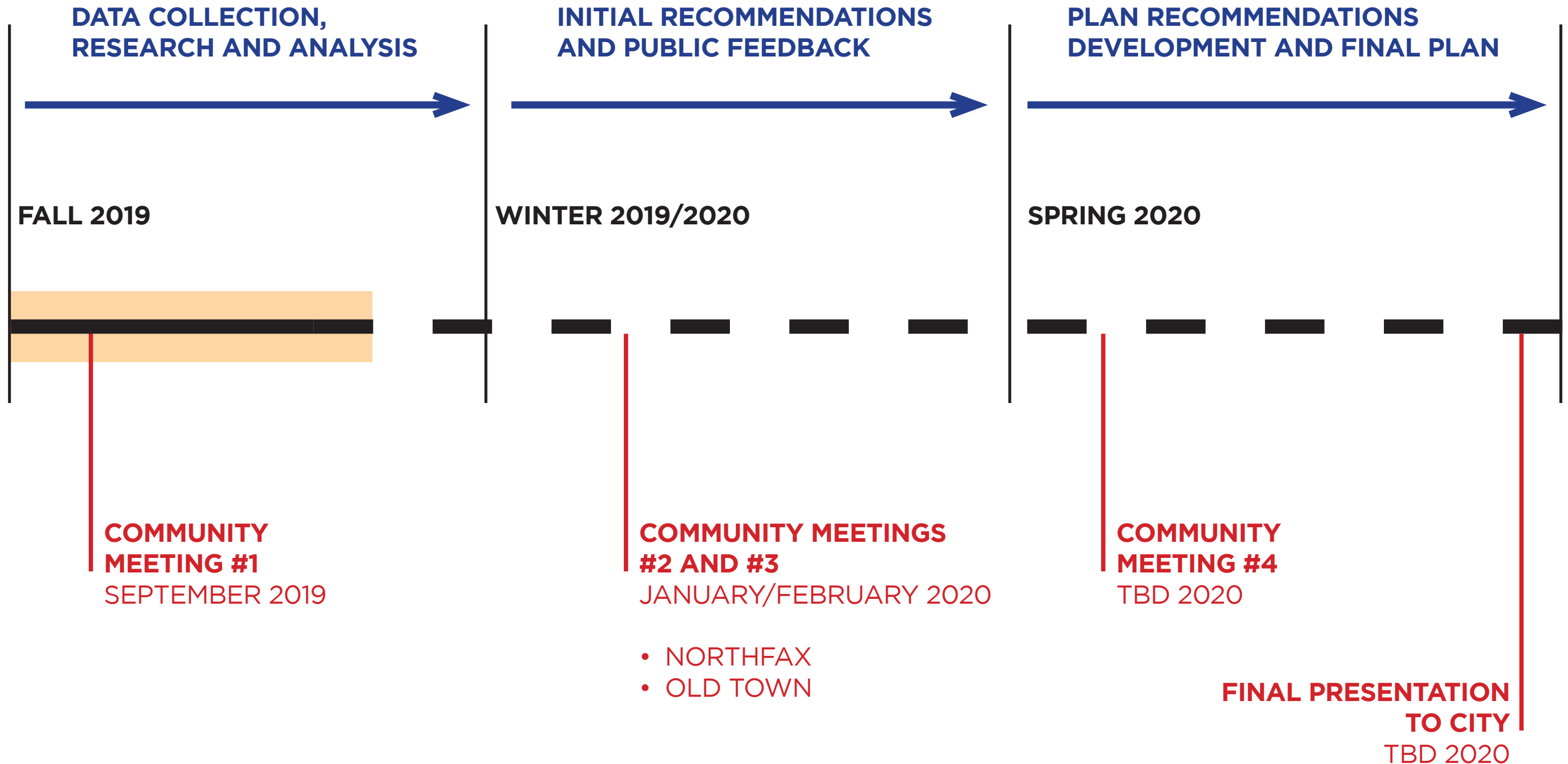
Community Development
and Planning

0 750 1,500 3,000
Feet

Source: City of Fairfax GIS Parcels and
Political Boundary, 2018

Adopted February 12, 2019

PROJECT TIMELINE



COMMUNITY OUTREACH INFORMING AND LISTENING



COMMUNITY MEETING #1

SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

- 140+ Person Sign-In Sheet
- Cross-section of Fairfax Community
- 28+ Public Comments from Community
- 20+ Written Survey Comments
- Follow-up Meetings and Calls

COMMON THEMES / KEY TAKEAWAYS

HOPES / DESIRES:

- Expectations for a **Better Fairfax**
- **Vibrant College Town** (Boulder, Charlottesville as Models)
- More **Public Spaces and Parks**
- Regional Draw and **Better Retail Experience**
- Expression of **Local Arts**

CHALLENGES / CONCERNS:

- Concerns about **Implementation**
- **Awkward Connection** between **GMU and Old Town**
- **Attract Students** to Old Town
- **Pedestrian and Biking Safety** throughout City
- Lack of **Affordable Housing**
- Restrictive **Retail Signage** Regulations
- Better **Retail Wayfinding**
- Increased **Density and Traffic**
- Poor **Parking Experience**

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

EXTENSIVE OUTREACH



- City Staff and Experts
- OLD TOWN
 - » Old Town Visioning Committee
 - » Commercial / Private Property Owners
 - » Business Owners
 - » Residential Community Members



- NORTHFAX
 - » Commercial Property Owners
 - » Auto Dealers
 - » Residential Community Members



- Meetings in Process:
 - » George Mason University
 - » Civic Organizations (e.g. Citizens for Smarter Growth)
 - » Residential Neighborhoods
 - » Specific Property Owners
 - » Boards and Commissions

COMMON THEMES / KEY TAKEAWAYS

HOPES / DESIRES:

- **Mixed-Use Developments** that Serve the Community
- Positive Outlook on **Demographics and Regional Economics**
- Signs of Strong **Local Businesses**
- Positive Reactions to the **Comprehensive Plan**

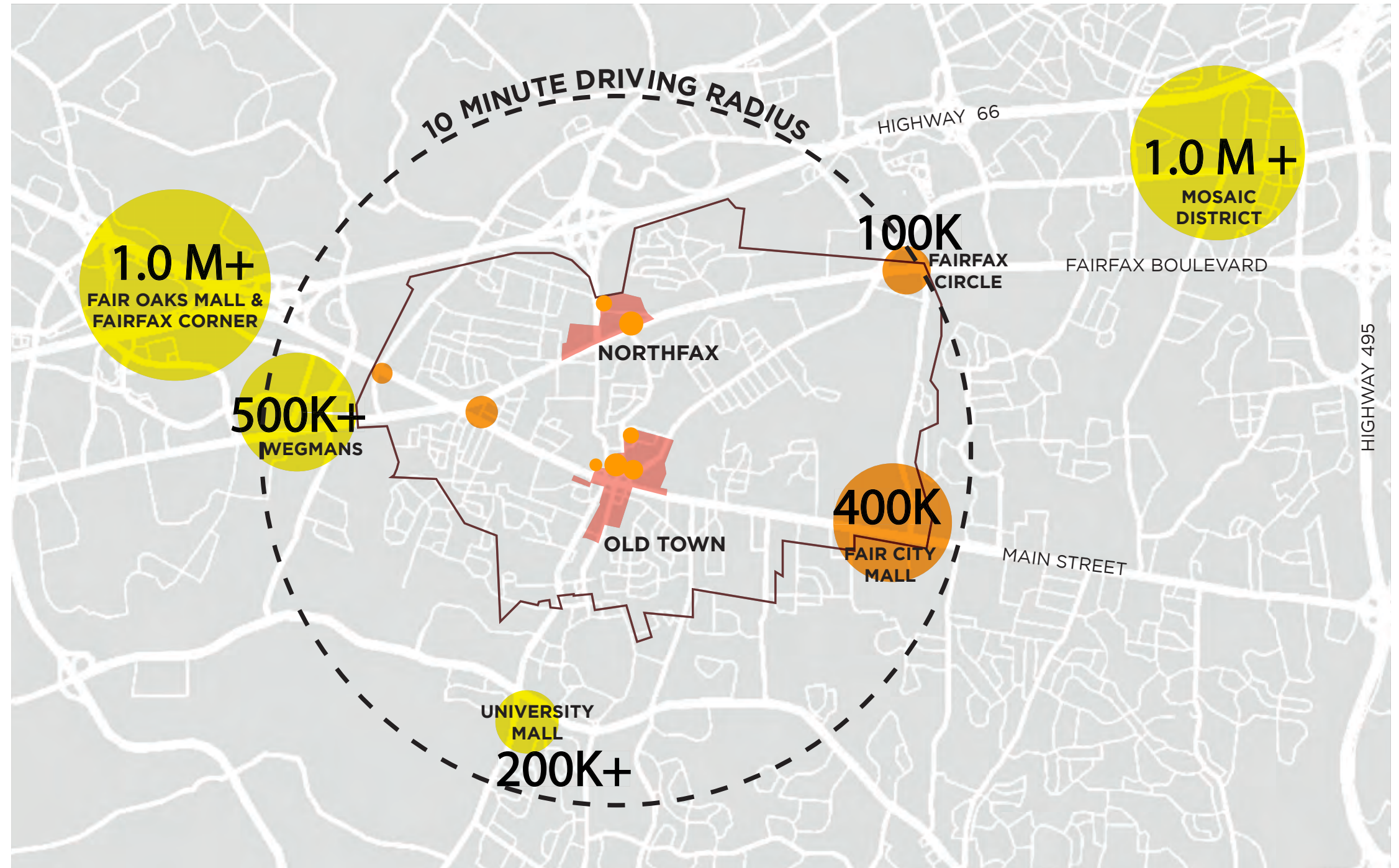
CHALLENGES / CONCERNS:

- **Realistic Path to Implementation**
- Perceived Lack of **Clarity** on **Process and Approvals**
- Perceived Lack of **Clarity** on **Site Development Potential**
- Sense that **City and GMU** Can Have More **Synergy**
- Commercial and Residential **Rents** are Not Often High Enough to Comfortably Redevelop Sites
- Difficulty with **Parking Costs, Public Space Costs**
- **Allowable Density** May Be Too Low in Some Areas
- **Townhouse Parcels** are Key to Financing Mixed-Use Developments and Public Amenities
- City is Lacking an **“Instagram Moment”** / Downtown Needs more **Art, Creativity and Uniqueness**

MARKET FEASIBILITY & DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

- City part of Dynamic Sub-Region
- Positive Retail / Hotel Market – New at City Border
- Transitioned Corporate Office Locations – Niche Local
- Strong Residential Market – Opportunities to Leverage Value to Underwrite Other Improvements
- Perceived Land Values Exceed Redevelopment Value
- Opportunities to Facilitate Investment in a Range of Underdeveloped Properties
- Strong Civic Commitment to Economic Development – Mixed Community Backing

MAJOR NEW OR REFURBISHED RETAIL & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS (SF)



NORTHFAX TODAY



NORTHFAX -1937
AGRARIAN PAST



08 38.861 Degrees

NORTHFAX - 2019

- MAJOR CROSSROADS AND ENTRY POINT TO CITY
- HISTORY OF CONNECTION TO GREEN SPACES
- AUTO-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL USES



NORTHFAX - NEAR TERM ACTIVITIES



NORTHFAX - NEAR TERM ACTIVITIES

1. POINT 50
(WHOLE FOODS)

2. NORTHFAX
EAST STREET
EXTENSION

3. FLOOD
MITIGATION
AT ORCHARD
STREET

4. PROPOSED
BROWNS MAZDA
REDEVELOPMENT

5. PROPOSED
FARR AVENUE
EXTENSION

6. PROPOSED
INTERSECTION
IMPROVEMENTS
AT CHAIN BRIDGE
ROAD AND
MCLEAN AVE.

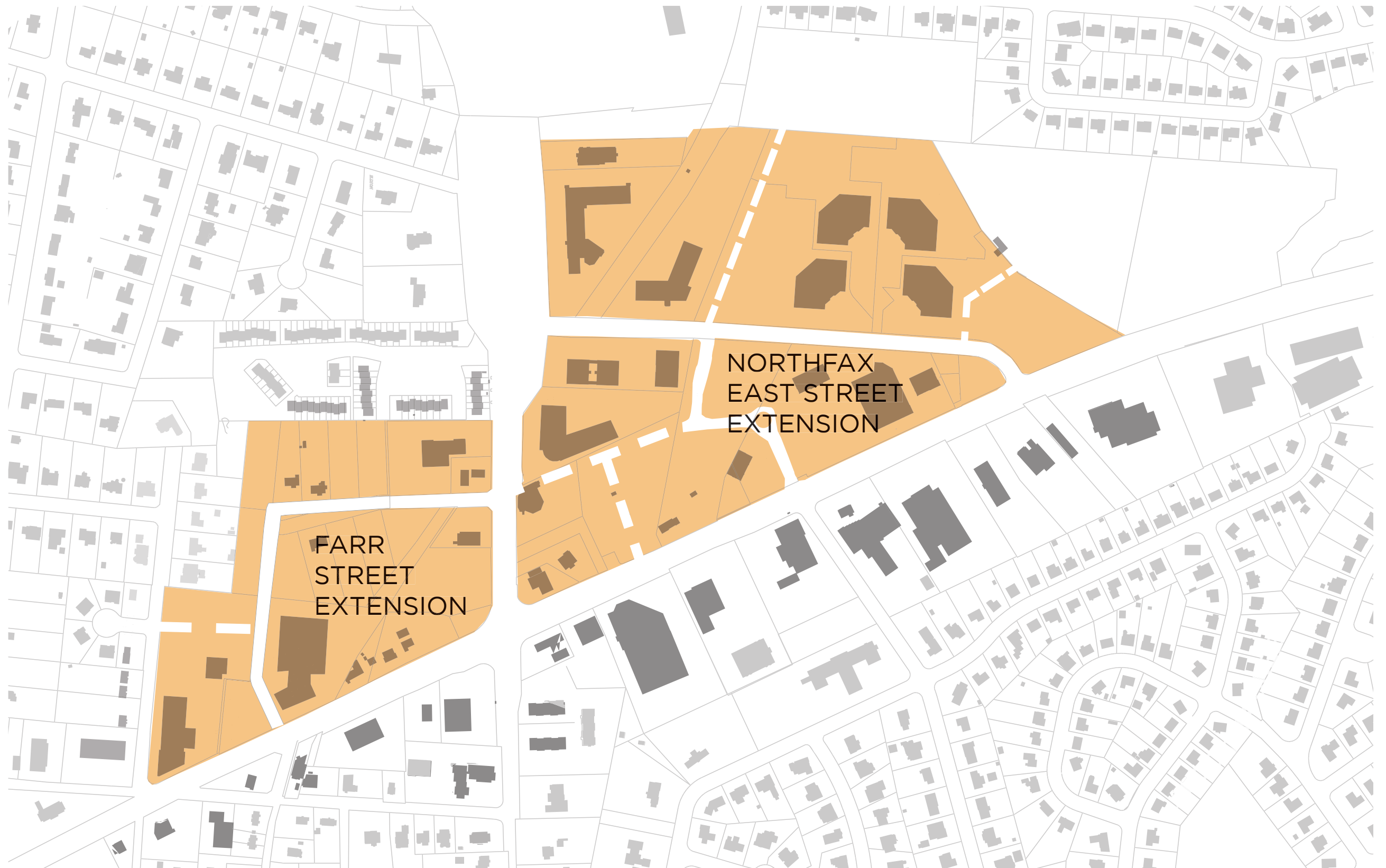
7. PROPOSED
TRAIL NETWORK



NORTHFAX - LARGE BLOCKS & POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS

OBSERVATIONS:

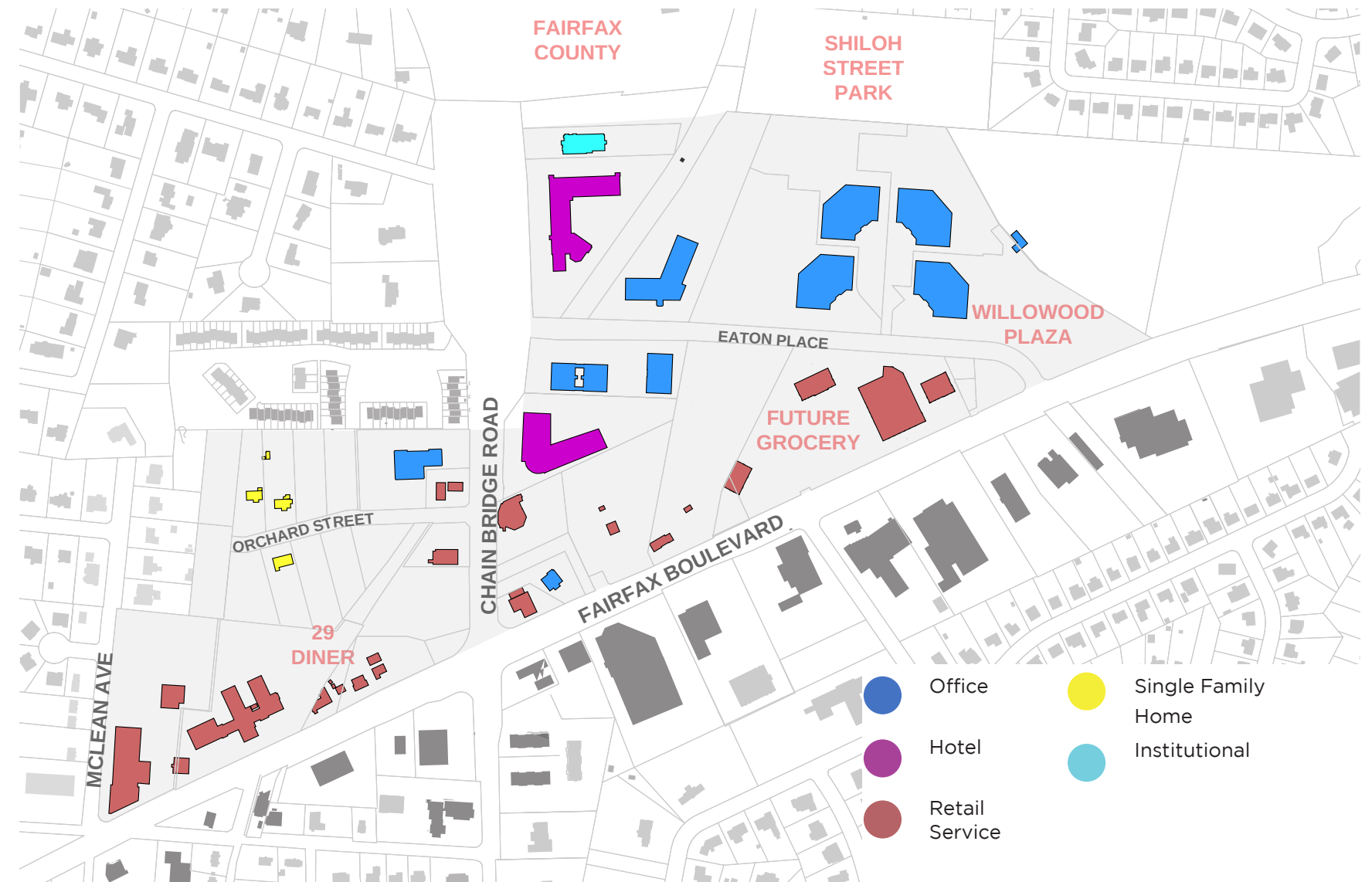
- Large Existing Block Sizes
- Lack of Porosity
- Dominated by Private Uses
- Lack of Public Space and Amenities
- Opportunity for a Street and Block Plan
- Opportunities to Connect with Adjacent Neighborhoods and Trail Networks



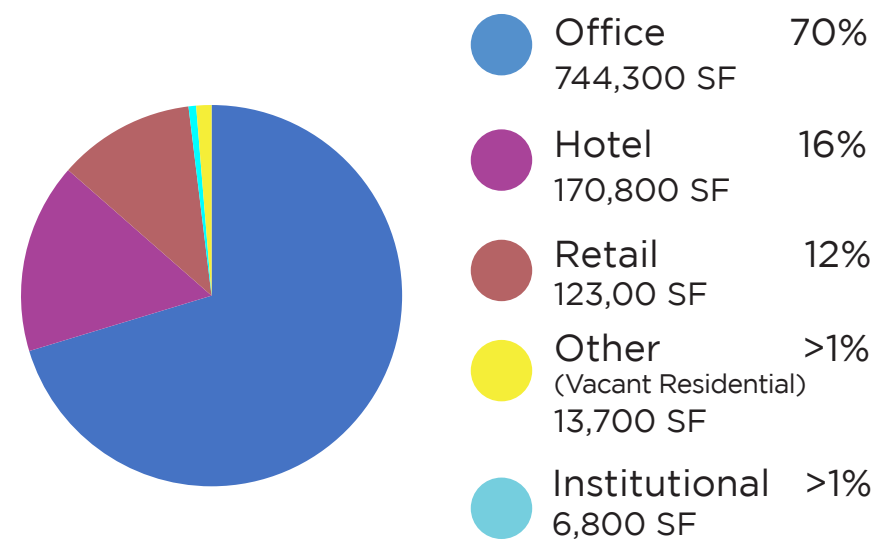
NORTHFAX - LAND USE HIGHLIGHTS

Northfax Market Constraints

- Static Absorption Office Conditions (25% Vacant)
- Commercial Market Saturation Elsewhere
- Unmet Multi-Year Planning Expectations
- Zoning Restrictions - Construction Type - Townhouse

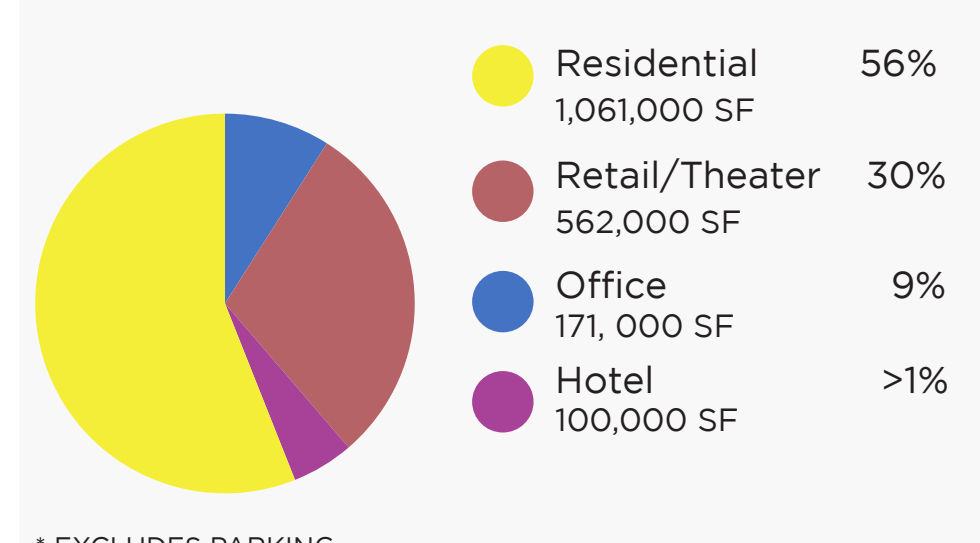


NORTHFAX- CURRENT LAND USE
Approx 12% building land coverage



* EXCLUDES PARKING

MOSAIC DISTRICT LAND USE



* EXCLUDES PARKING

NORTHFAX - LAND USE HIGHLIGHTS

Northfax Market Opportunities

- Energy From New Investments (Point 50 etc.)
- Needs Added Node-Serving Amenities (Retail, Public Spaces)
- Potential to Unlock Residential Value Driver
- Larger Parcel Redevelopment Opportunities (and Economies)
- Overlay of New Infrastructure Framework
- Potential to Transform Identity

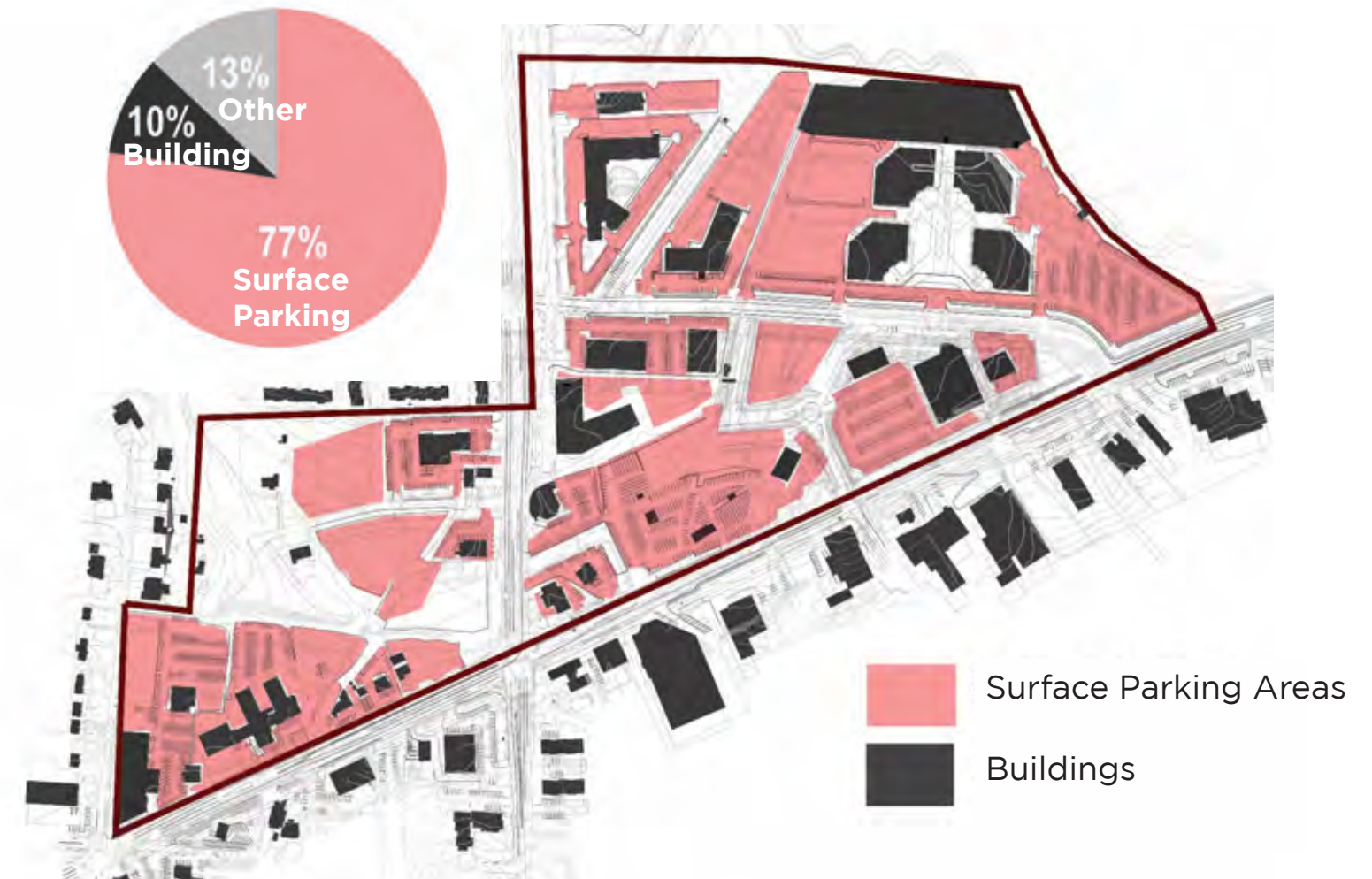


LOW BUILDING VALUE
TO LAND VALUE RATIO
(0.0 TO 1.0)

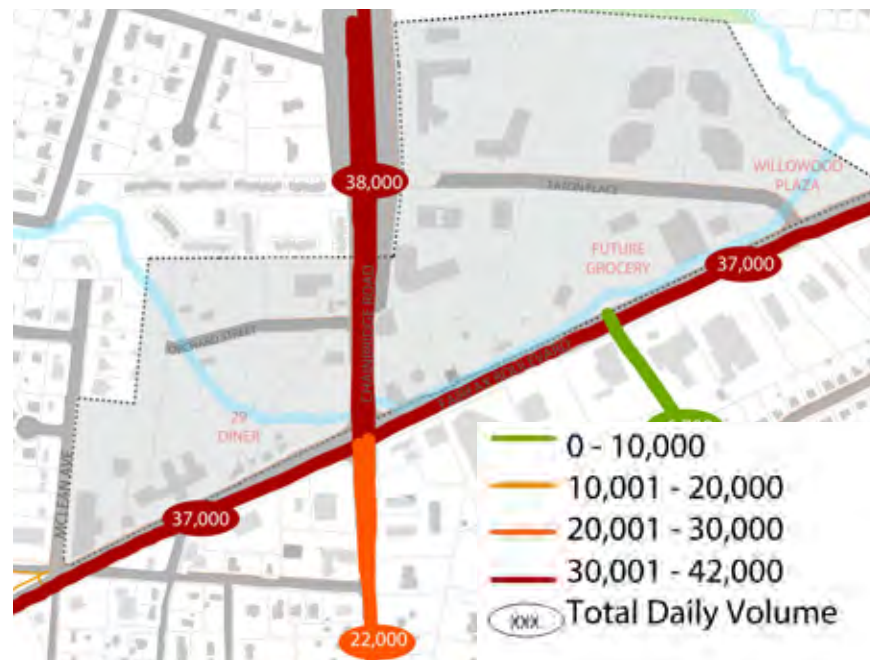
NORTHFAX

TRANSPORTATION OBSERVATIONS

- Limited Functional Street Network Limits Traffic to Chain Bridge Road & Fairfax Boulevard
- Lack of Options for People Walking & Biking from Surrounding Neighborhoods to Access Northfax
- Site Location & Layout Provides an Abundance of Opportunities:
 - Site Access
 - Site Layout - Inward v/s Outward
 - Multimodal Connections to Surrounding Neighborhoods
- Parking Oversupply & Automobile Storage Use



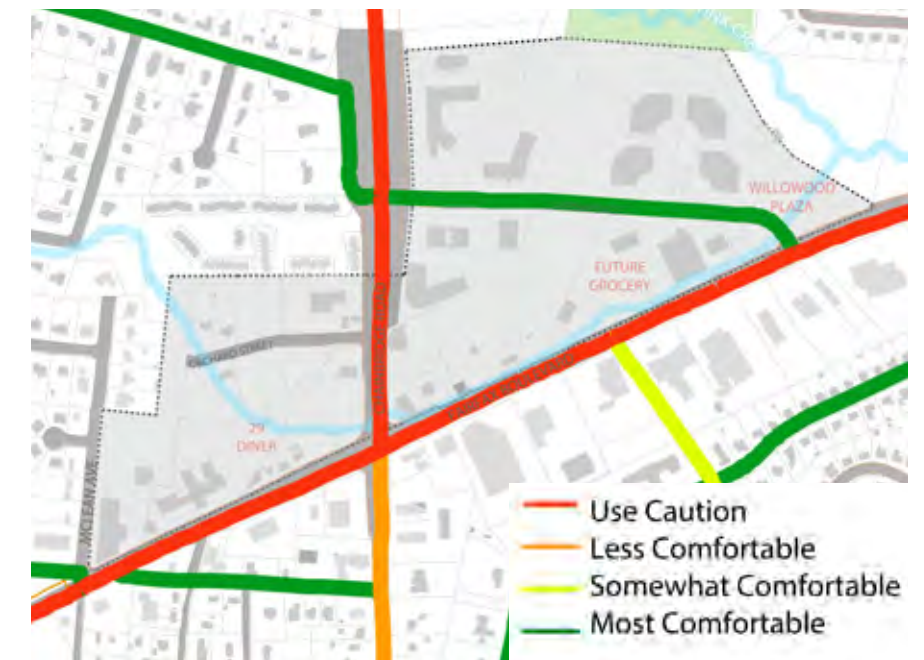
Paved/ Impervious Lot Coverage



Traffic Volumes



Lack of Sidewalk Connections



Level of Bicycle Comfort

OLD TOWN TODAY



MASSEY
COMPLEX

FUTURE
CAPSTONE
DEVELOPMENT

MAIN STREET

OLD TOWN
SQUARE

CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD

UNIVERSITY DRIVE

OLD TOWN - 1937

EARLY STREET GRID

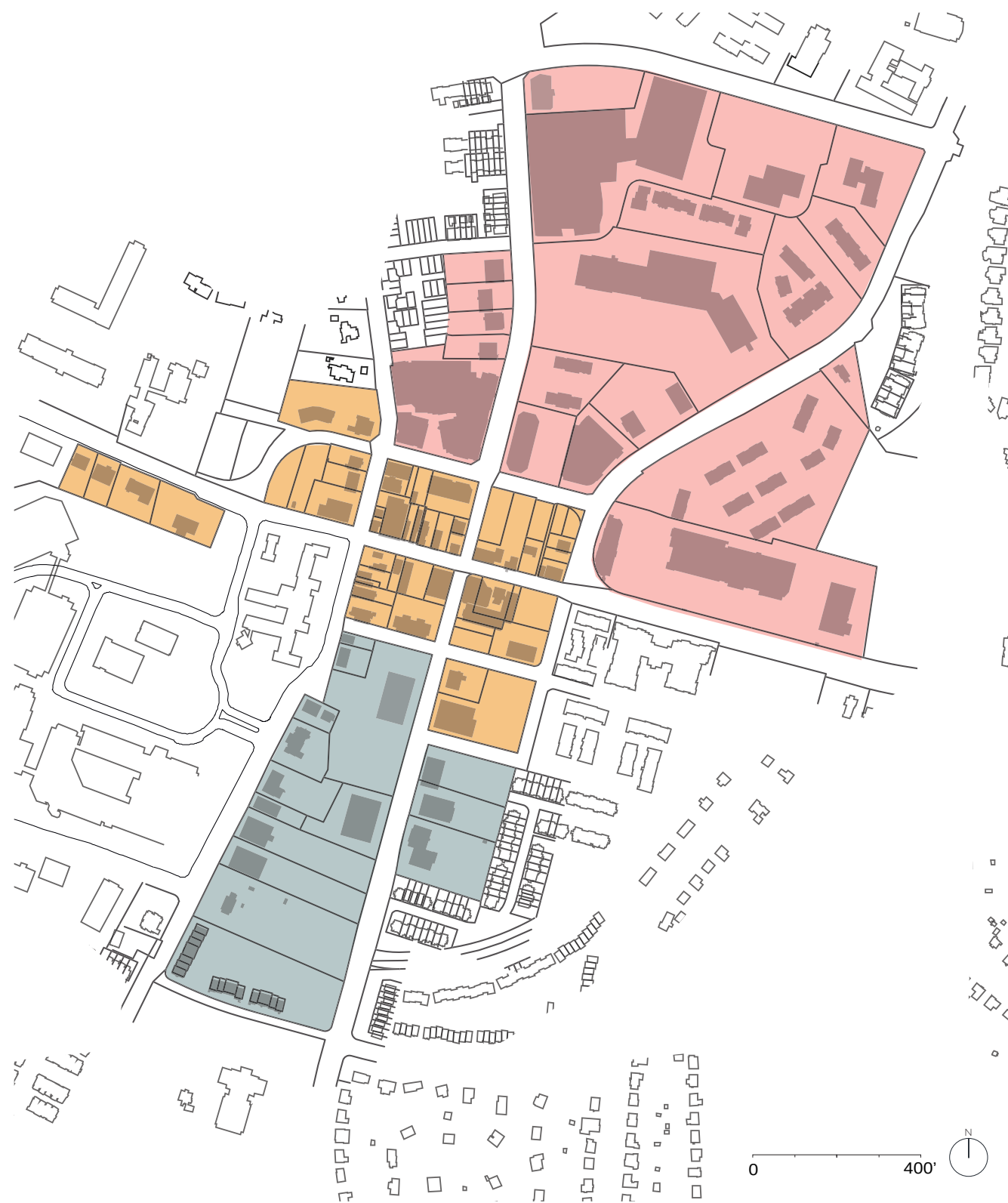


OLD TOWN - 2019 TODAY



OLD TOWN - 2019

CHARACTER AREAS & OPPORTUNITIES



- 1** Old Town North
Emerging Mixed-Use Community
- Larger Consolidated Parcels
 - Emerging Residential & Retail Uses
 - Shared Parking Strategies



- 2** Cultural Core
Historic Heart
- Opportunities to Highlight Unique Character
 - Infill development
 - Historic Preservation / Adaptation



- 3** Old Town South
Connecting Downtown
- Opportunities for Infill Development
 - Supporting Niche Office Market
 - Better Connectivity with GMU

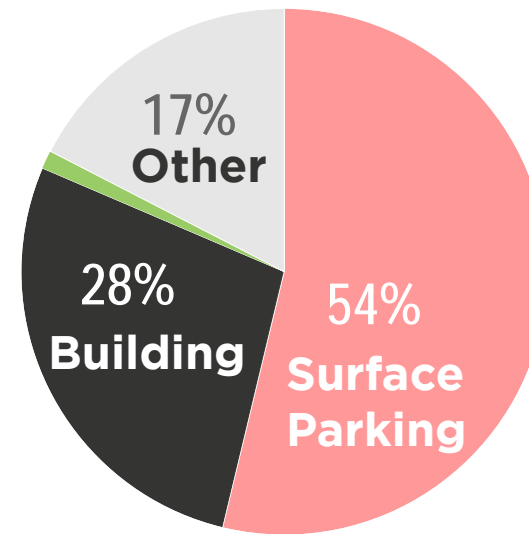


OLD TOWN TRANSPORTATION OBSERVATIONS

- Established Street Grid & Block Pattern
- Limited Space for People Walking on Existing Sidewalks
- No East-West connection for People Biking
- Mismatch Between the Locations of Parking and Desired Destinations
- Congested East-West Options for People Driving through Old Town

Paved / Impervious Lot Coverage

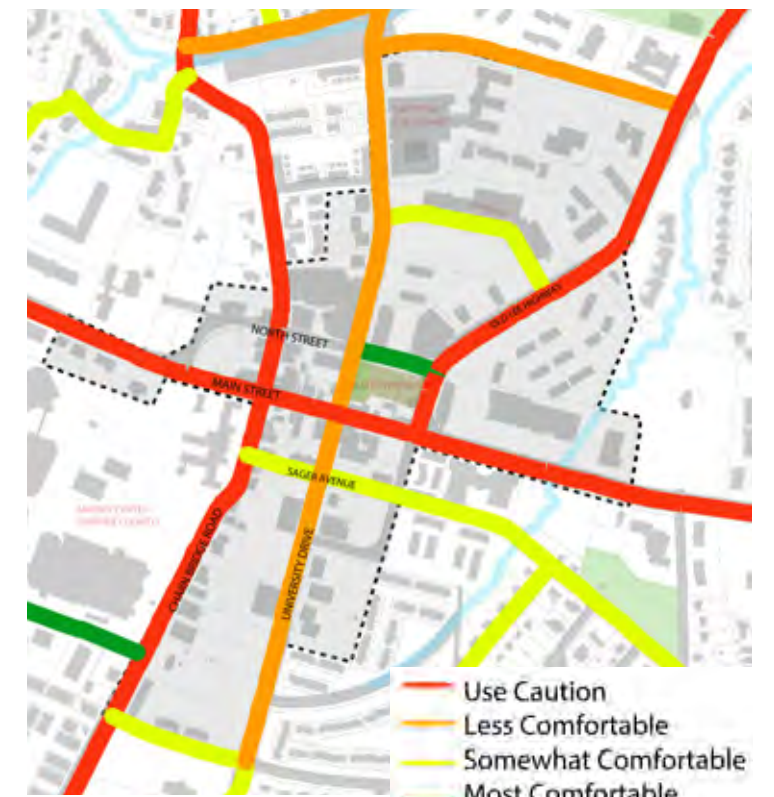
- Building or Garage
- Surface Parking



Traffic Volumes



Sidewalk Widths

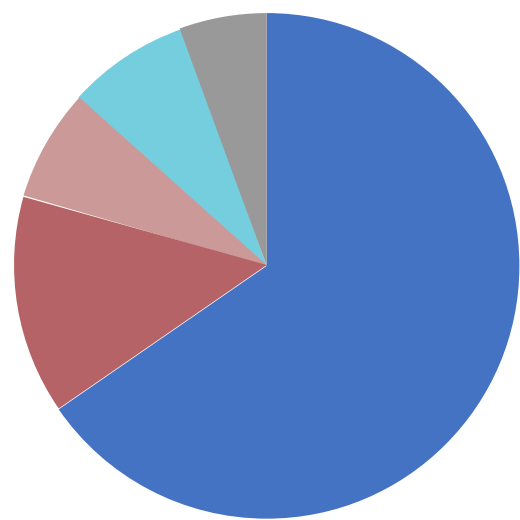


Level of Bicycle Comfort

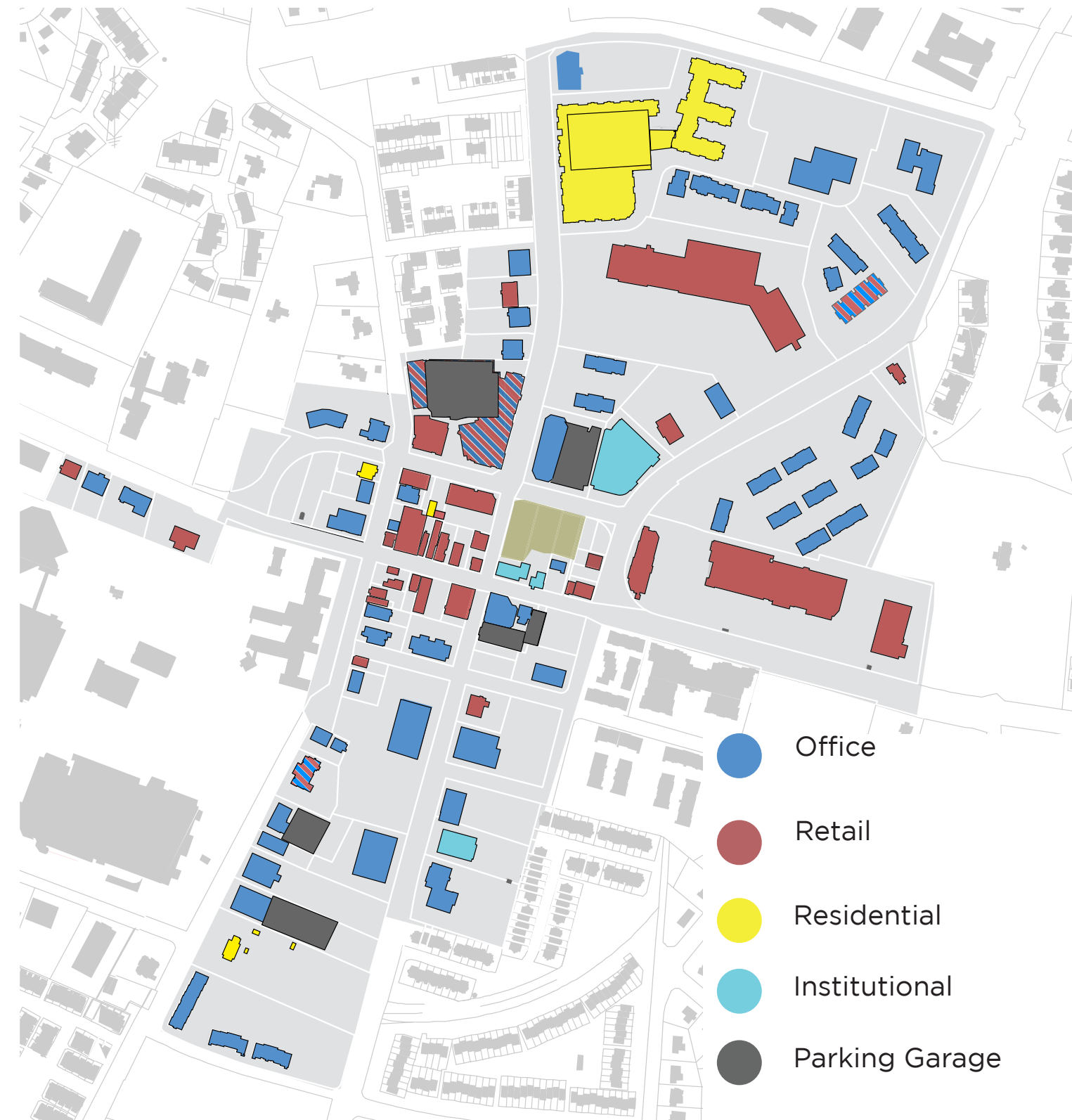
OLD TOWN LAND USE

Old Town Market Constraints

- Variety but Dispersed Retail Uses & Turnover
- Supermarket Future?
- Lacking Experiential Unifying Identity
- Pedestrian Challenged
- Zoning and Development Restrictions



	Office	916,600 SF	65%
	Retail	195,600 SF	14%
	Restaurant Retail	99,100 SF	7%
	Institutional	111,900 SF	8%
	Vacant	78,500	6%



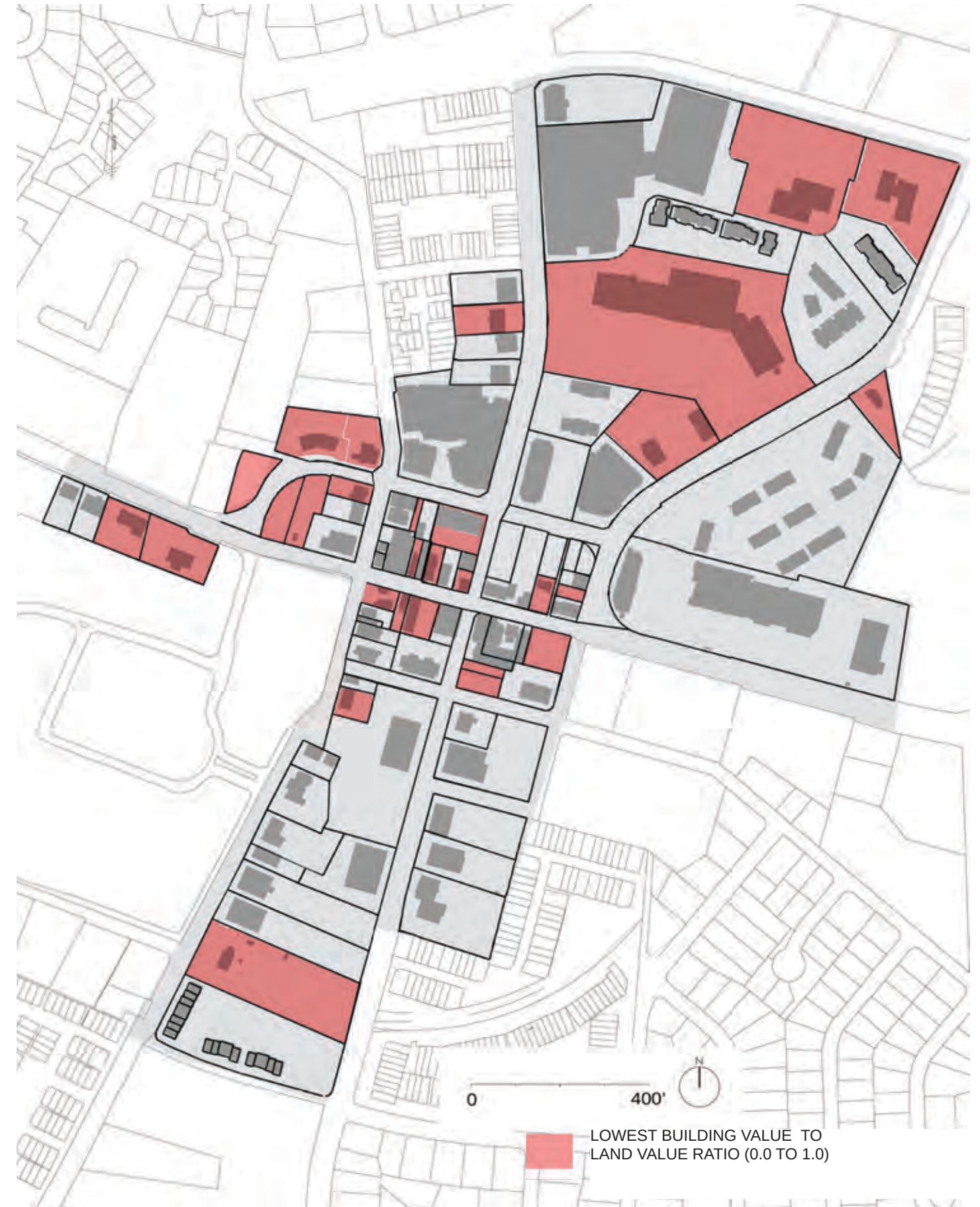
OLD TOWN- CURRENT LAND USE

NOTE: EXCLUDES CAPSTONE & NEGLIGIBLE RESIDENTIAL USE

OLD TOWN LAND USE

Old Town Market Opportunities

- Destination Restaurant District
- Multiple Market Patronage Drivers (GMU / Massey Complex / Library / Etc.)
- Niche Office Market - User Cost Effective
- Hospitality - Leverage Amenity Base / GMU Linkage
- Unlimited Range of Residential Demand
- New Synergistic Investments (Student / Senior Housing)



OLD TOWN OBSERVATIONS

LACK OF EXPERIENTIAL IDENTITY



Shaw
Washington, DC



Historic
Old Town
Alexandria, VA



Historic
Blagden Alley
Washington, DC

UNFOCUSED RETAIL DESTINATIONS



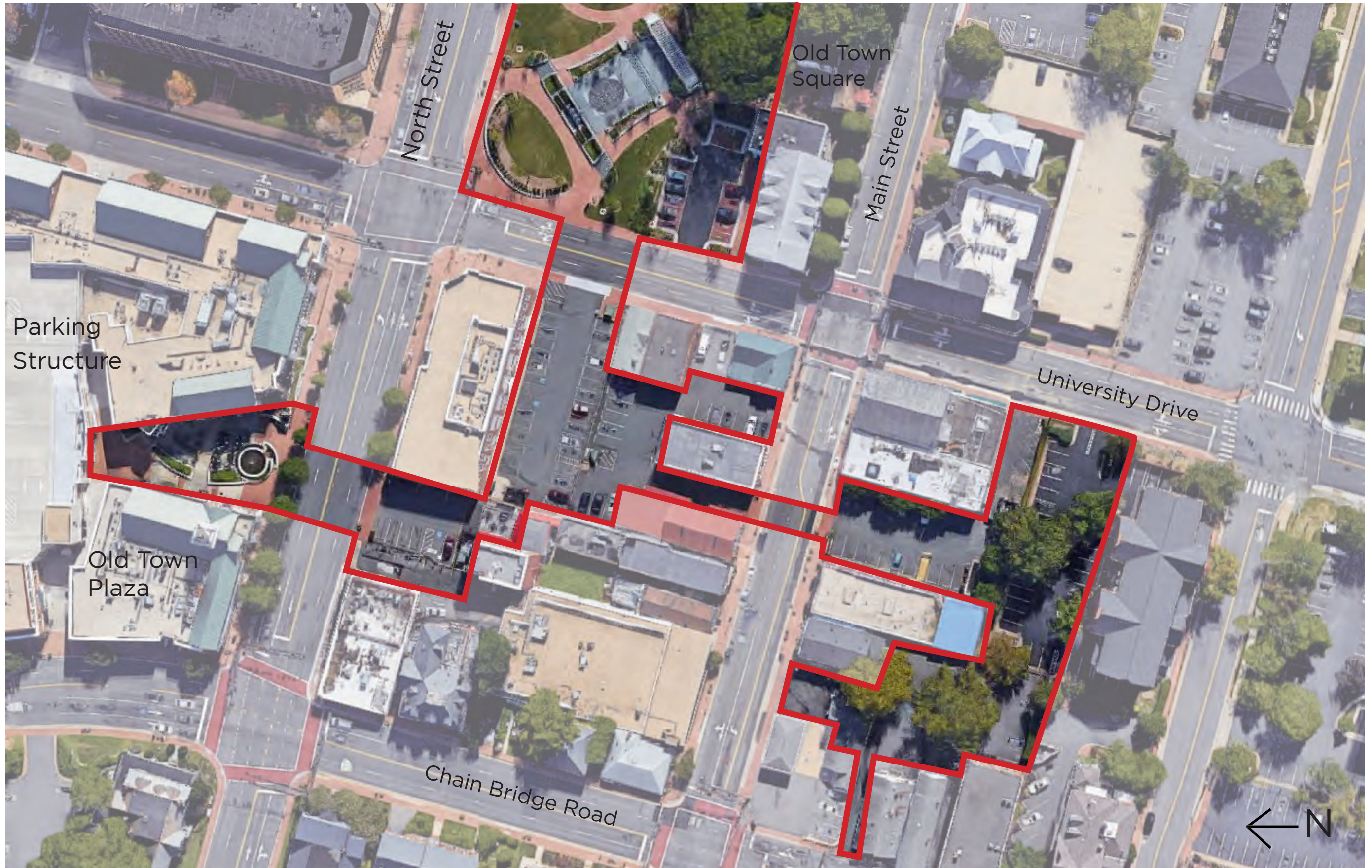
● Active Storefronts:
Restaurants &
Retail Destinations

● Old Town Square

● Library & Old Town Hall

OLD TOWN - CHARACTER

LINKING RETAIL AND PUBLIC SPACES - THE IN BETWEEN SPACES





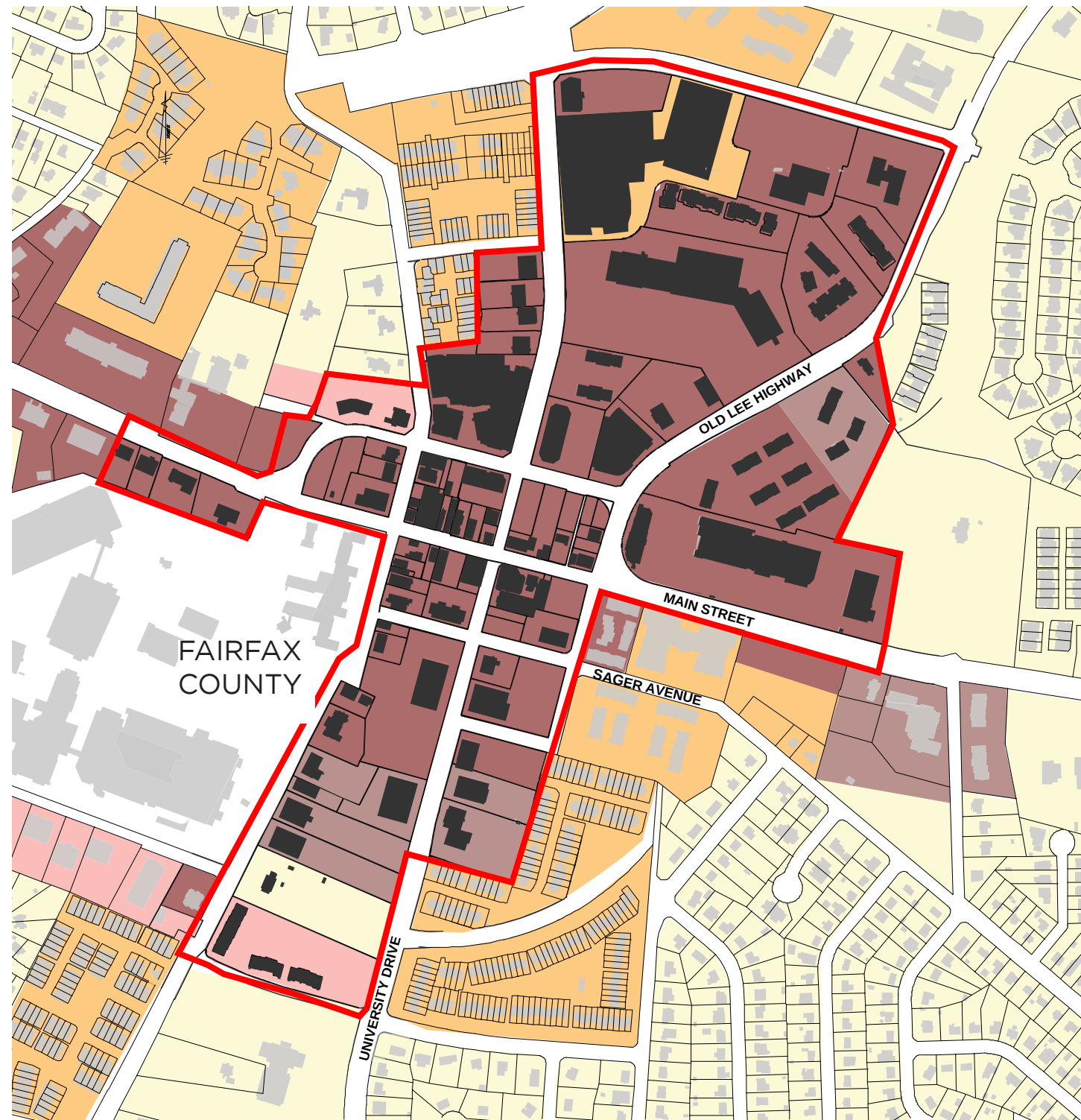
- FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION
- LOCAL RETAIL TENANTS
- CULTURAL HUB (ARTS)
- INFILL CONSTRUCTION, HISTORIC PRESERVATION
- RETAIL BASED ON EXPERIENCE
- NICHE OFFICE MARKET
- INSPIRATION FROM THE PAST



- GATEWAY NEIGHBORHOOD
- GENERAL RETAIL
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (NATURE)
- NEW CONSTRUCTION, HIGHER DENSITY
- RETAIL & SHOPPING BASED ON NEED
- CORPORATE OFFICE MARKET
- LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

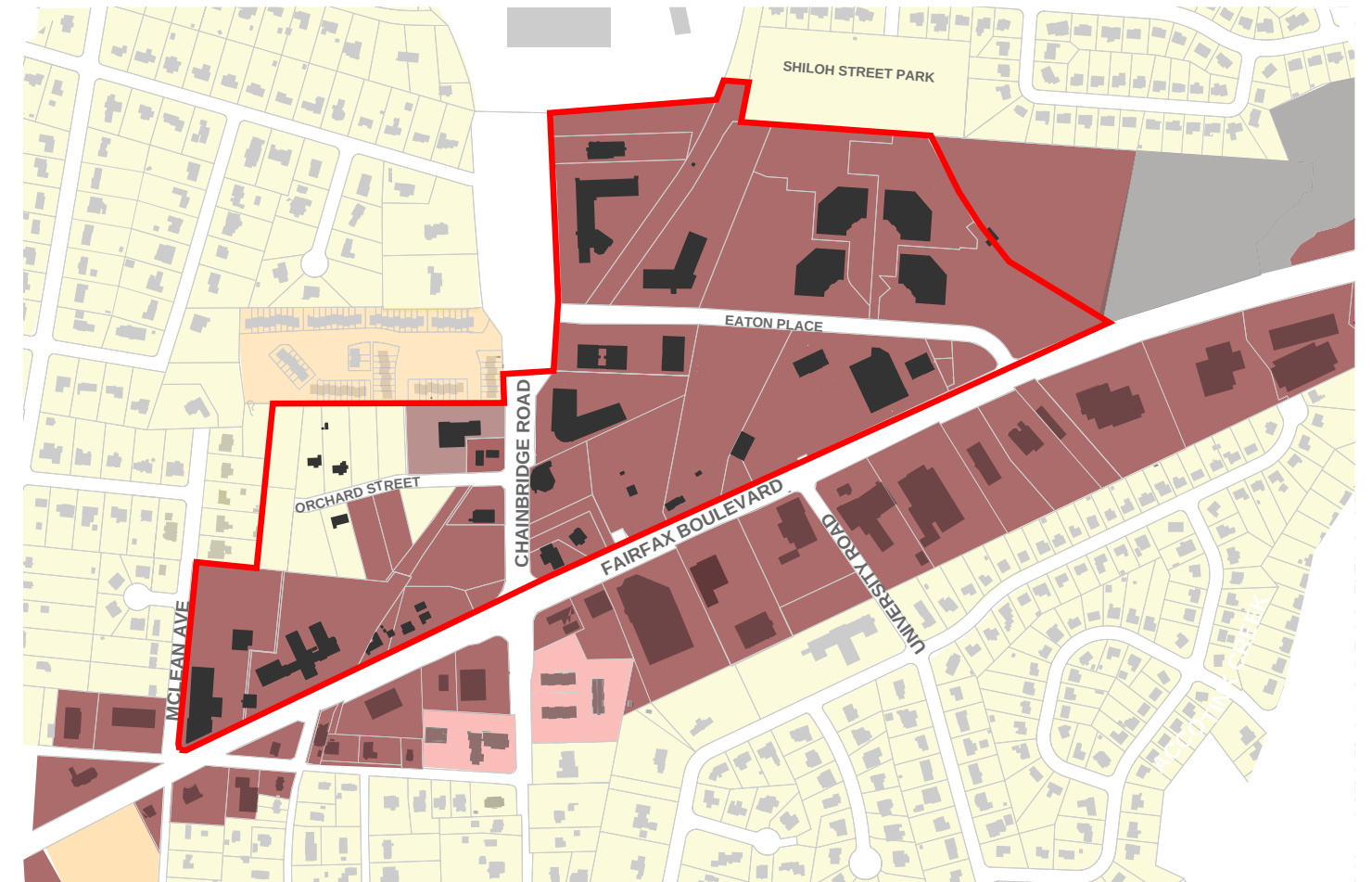
SHARED CHALLENGES + **OPPORTUNITIES**

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT: ZONING OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS



* NOTE: Planned Developments Noted By Their Predominate Zoning Use

NORTHFAX



KEY OBSERVATIONS:

Existing Zoning and Land Use prohibit many key components of contemporary mixed-use developments

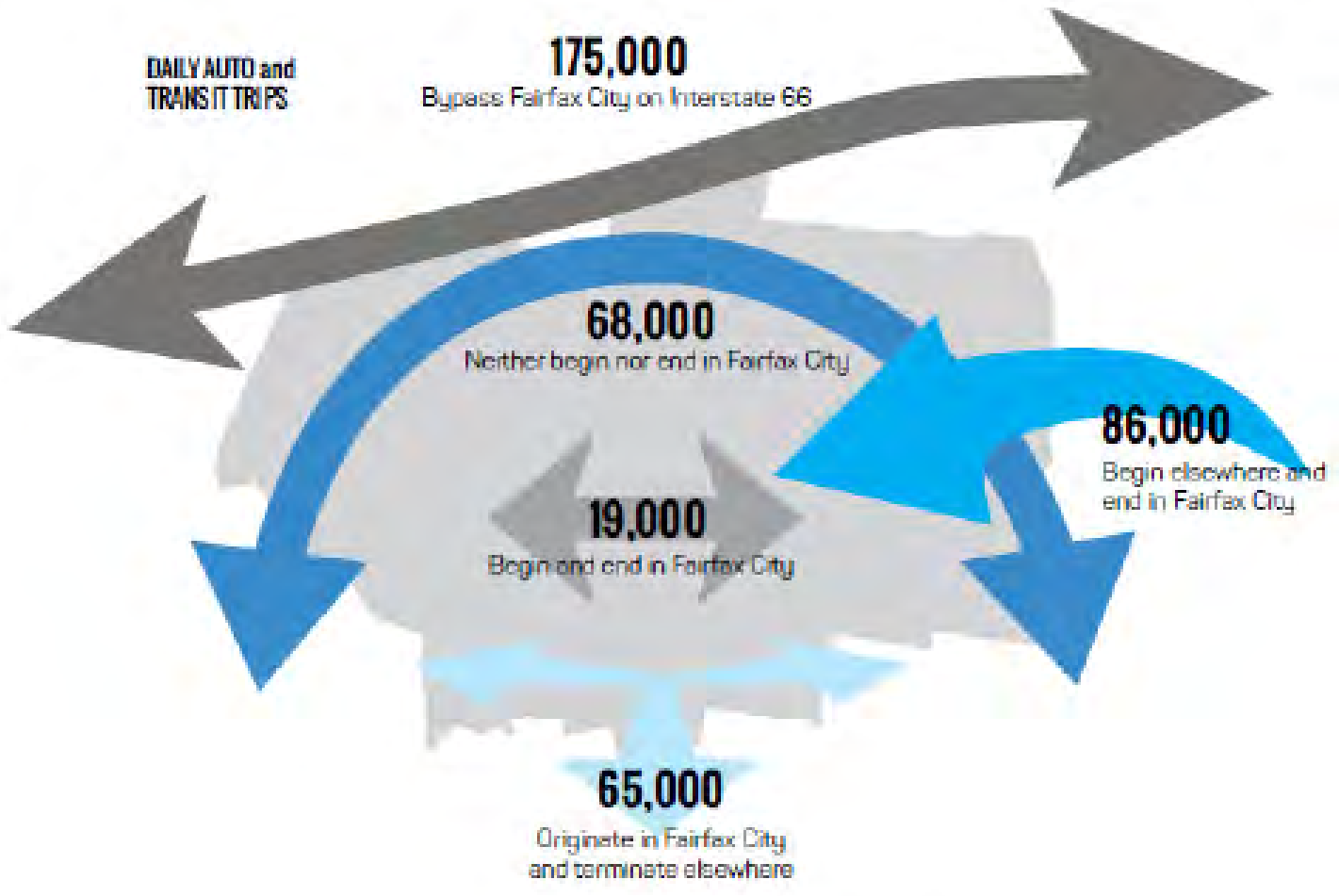
- 5 Story Maximum per Zoning
- 3/4 Story at Historic Overlays
- Townhouses Prohibited
- Podium 5+1 Typology Prohibited

- Commercial Limited (CL)
- Commercial Office (CO)
- Commercial Retail (CR)
- Low Density Residential (RM, RL)
- High Density Residential (RT, RT-6, RH, MU-R)
- Industrial (IL)

DESIGNING TRANSPORTATION FOR REGIONAL VS. LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE

Regional Traffic Challenges Local Quality of Life.

Every Day, 68,000 Regional Travelers, Most of Them Motorists, Travel Through the City of Fairfax without Making a Stop in the City.



Source: The City of Fairfax Multi-modal Transportation Plan (2017)



Main Street, Fairfax, VA



North Street, Fairfax, VA

PEDESTRIAN REALM

Pedestrian Realm Zones



Curbside Use Zone	Curb / Buffer	Bicycle Facility Zone	Curb	Street Furniture Zone	Clear Walkway Zone	Building Frontage Zone
Car Parking Bike/Scooter Parking Loading-Unloading Pick-Up Drop-off		One-way / Two-way Separated Bike Lanes		Trees Landscape Lighting Benches Trash Cans	Walkway	Cafe Tables & Chairs Business Signs

Existing Pedestrian Realm



University Drive, Old Town



Fairfax Boulevard & Chain Bridge Road, Northfax

Inviting Pedestrian Realm: Precedents



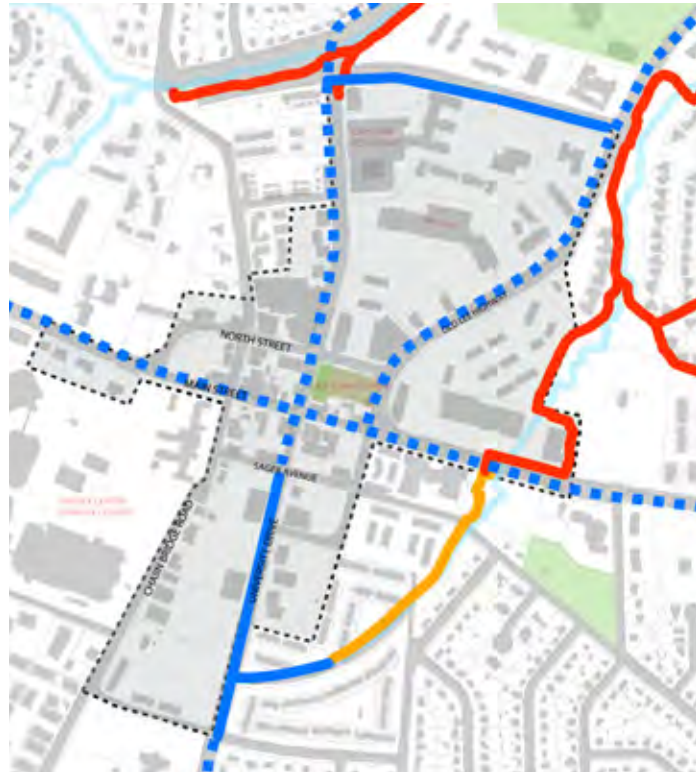
King Street, Alexandria, VA



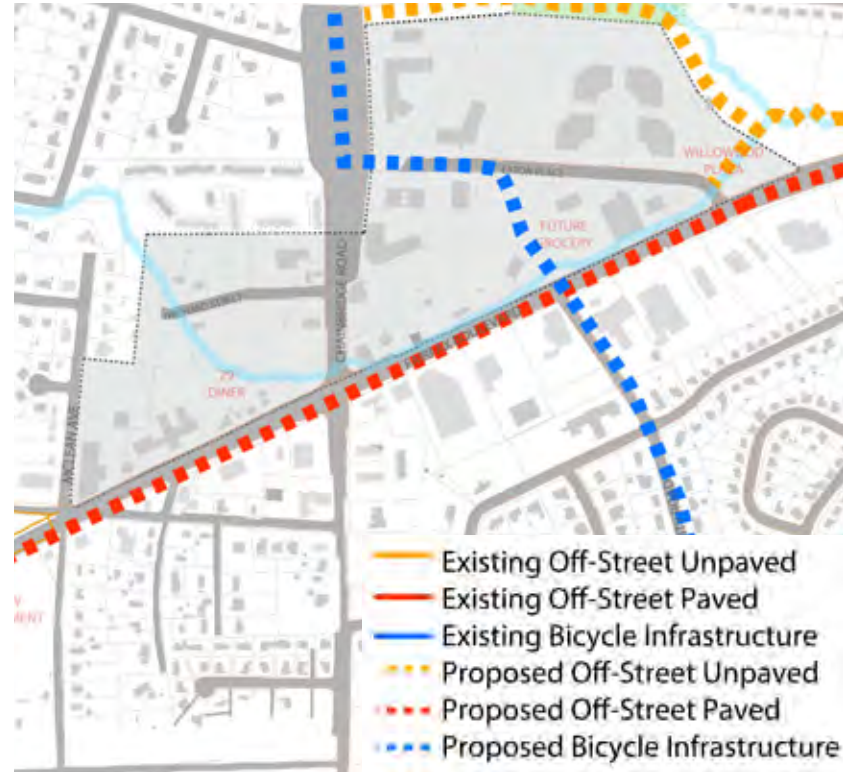
Main Street, Davidson, NC

BICYCLE FACILITIES AND TRAIL NETWORK

Existing & Proposed Bicycle Facilities



Old Town



Northfax

Trail Networks in Study Areas



Old Town

Existing Bicycle Facilities



Bike Lanes on University Drive



Fairfax City Bike Trail Crossing at Sager Avenue



Northfax

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & WATERSHED



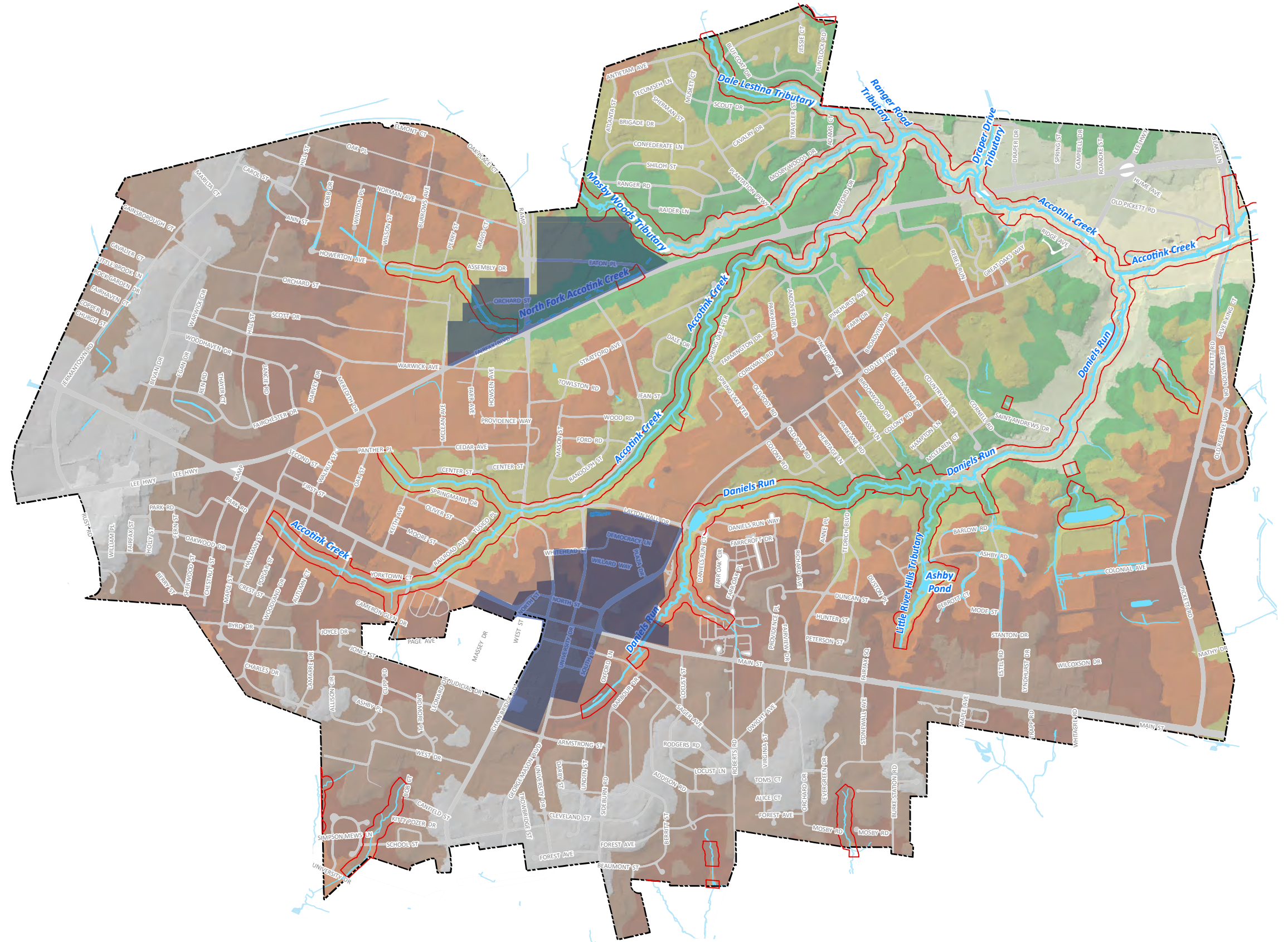
Orchard Street with Old Rail Bed Visible in Distance - Looking West



Willow Wood Parking Garage From Shiloh Street Park



Fairfax Cycling Trail at Main Street



CONNECTING THE CITY - BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS

1



1 **“No way to safely cross Fairfax Boulevard as a pedestrian or cyclist”**
- Lifelong Resident

2

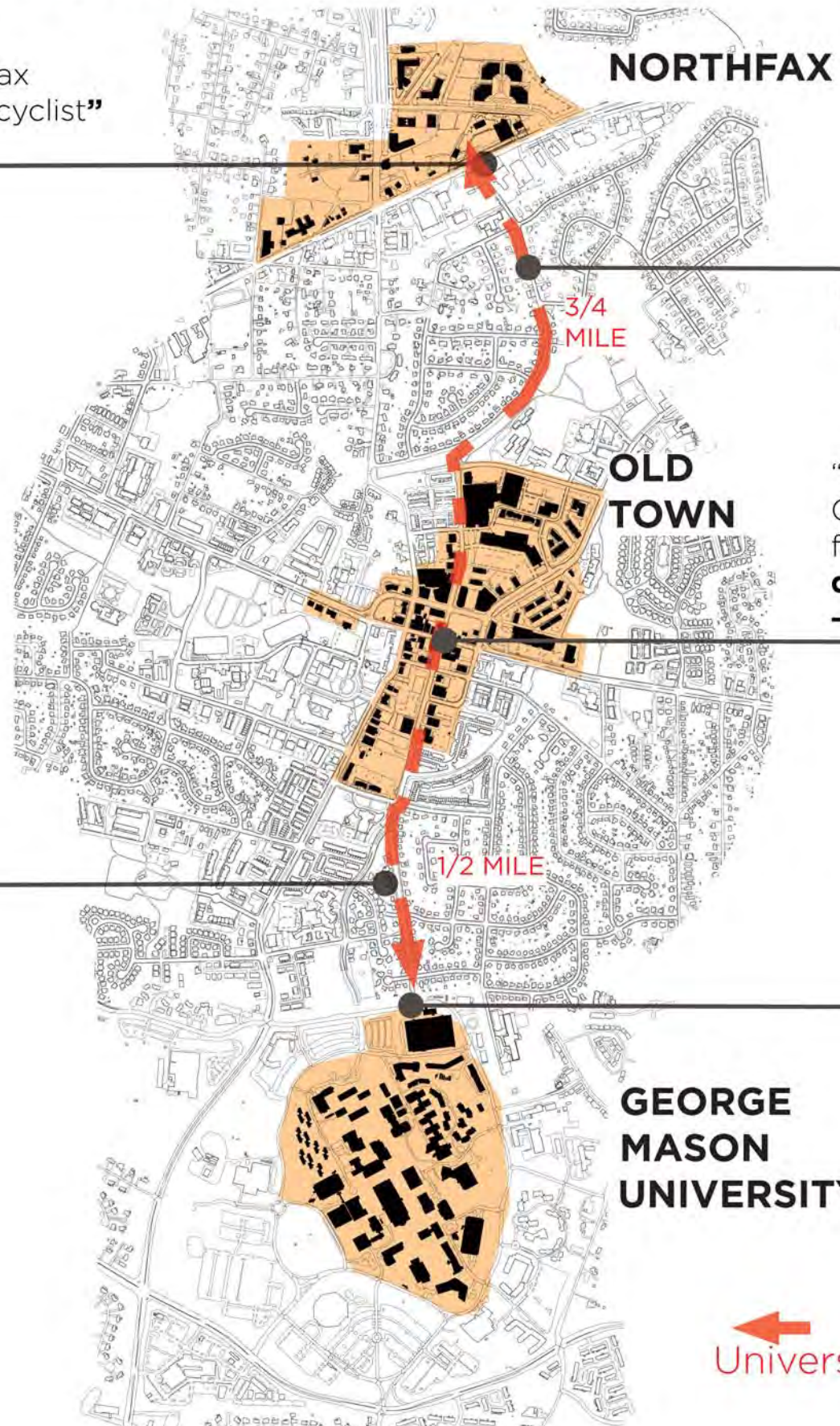


4 **“Feel like I am intruding walking through the residential neighborhood to go to Old Town.”**
-GMU Student

3



4



2 **“We do not feel safe even going out of our driveway.”**
It is unsafe.”
- Mom & Resident

Ongoing: University Drive Traffic Calming Projects

3 **“Narrow Sidewalks in historic Old Town make it unfriendly for pedestrians and scary for drivers and cyclists”**
- Local Transportation Expert

“No obvious gateway signaling you enter the city of Fairfax along University Road from GMU.”
- Urban Designer

NEXT STEPS

