

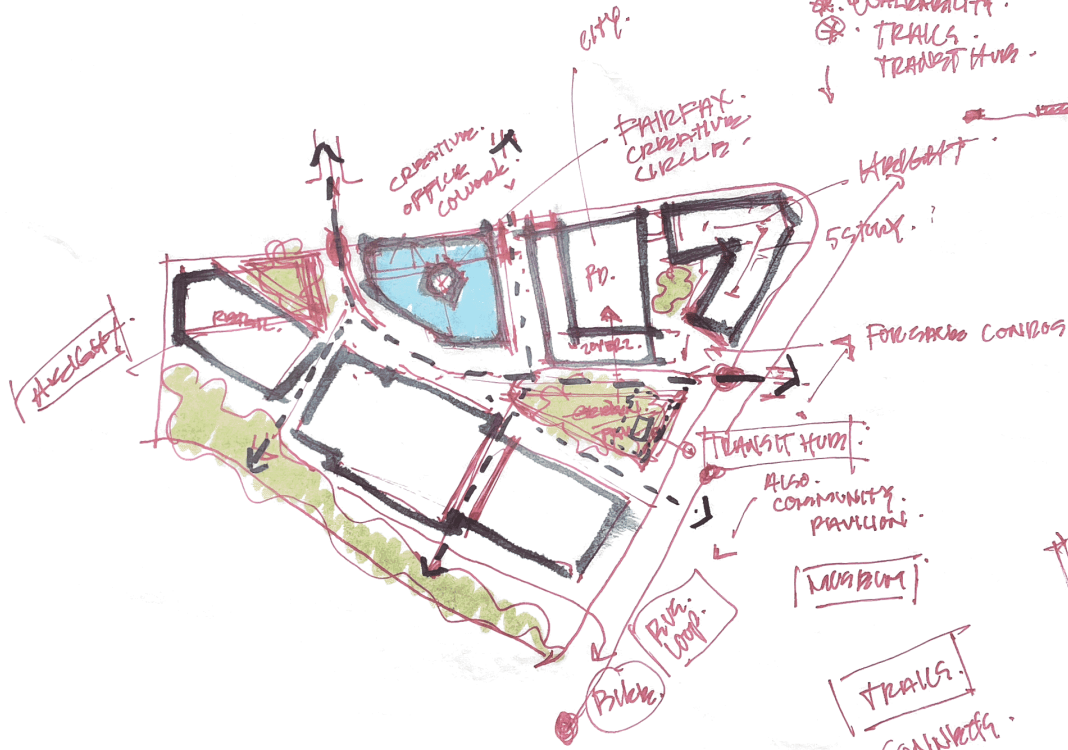
CITY OF FAIRFAX

Fairfax Circle

College Park
studies.

History.
Motels.
+ Restaurants.

- ↑ ORGANIC INFRASTRUCTURE
- ⊗ STREET GRIDS.
- ⊗ 29150 ↔
- ⊗ ACTION MAPS.
- ⊗ STREET SECTIONS.
- ⊗ UNAWARRE / CONTRACTUALIZED.
- ⊗ WALLMOUNT.
- ⊗ TRAILS.
- TRAVEL HUB.



200
100
400
100
50
100
1,000,000

Historical
Tavern

GMV.
Preferences?

Future - no
Amplitude.
Stores.
Student
Housing.
Living - Learning
Space - School - ?

TRAILS
CONNECT

About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission: shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and the Asia Pacific region, with members in 80 countries.

More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

About ULI Virginia

ULI Virginia serves Hampton Roads, Richmond, and Charlottesville and has over 400 members. As a preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI Virginia facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, and regional leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

ULI District Council Leadership

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ULI Advisory Services: National and Global Programs

Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international panelists are specifically recruited to form a panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics.

An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this intimate conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

Learn more at americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/.

Distinct from Advisory Services panels, TAPs leverage local expertise through a half-day to two-day process.

Technical Assistance Program: (TAP)

Since 1947, the Urban Land Institute has harnessed its members' technical expertise to help communities solve difficult land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

provide expert, multidisciplinary, unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in the Tampa Bay area. Drawing from our seasoned professional membership base, ULI Tampa Bay offers objective and responsible guidance on various land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project and presenting it to the panel. TAP members typically spend two days developing an understanding of the problem, coming up with recommendations, and contributing those findings and recommendations to the sponsoring organization.

The focus of this TAP program for Woodberry aligns with the Urban Land Institute's Net Zero Imperative, a multiyear program providing research and technical assistance to public and private-sector leaders to accelerate decarbonization in the built environment through a combination of technical panels and long-term engagement. The goal of the effort is to help owners, cities, and other relevant constituents reduce or eliminate carbon emissions by providing concrete ideas and strategies to the beneficiaries of the panels and the general public.

Acknowledgments

ULI Virginia is grateful to the City of Fairfax for inviting ULI to explore strategies for redevelopment of the SW Fairfax Circle study area. Special thanks to City leadership and staff for preparation and assistance to the TAP team before and during the exercise including the following individuals:

City Staff

- Rob Stalzer – City Manager
- Paul Nabti, Division Chief, Planning
- Lyndsey Clouatre – Planner II
- Brooke Hardin – Community Development and Planning Director
- Wendy Sanford – Transportation Director
- Chris Bruno – Economic Development Director
- Satoshi Eto – Program Manager, Stormwater and Floodplain Management

Mayor David Meyer

Boards and Commissions

- Mark Angres – Planning Commission Chair
- Matt Rice – Planning Commissioner
- Kathleen Paley – Chair - Economic Development Authority
- Jennifer Rose – Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

Technical Assistance Panel Team

ULI VA selected the panel members below from within its membership based on subject matter expertise specific to this effort including the following areas of experience:

- Community Planning
- Land Planning and Site Design
- Transportation Planning
- Landscape Architecture
- Real Estate Development

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. OBJECTIVE FOR THE STUDY

The City of Fairfax requested the technical assistance panel (TAP) to develop a vision for the southwest Fairfax Circle area that meets the goals of the comprehensive plan, identifies, and overcomes barriers to redevelopment or reinvestment in properties, and encourages coordination and partnerships between property representatives and the city.

B. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance a key node and gateway, and create another vibrant center in the city
- Develop land use and urban form consistent with the city's activity center concept
- Plan for incremental redevelopment toward an overall coordinated plan for the study area
- Redevelop Lotte Plaza site as a catalyst for executing a coordinated master plan
- Enhance the public realm on all frontages and along the adjacent natural amenity
- Consider additional height and intensity where appropriate relative to adjacent land uses
- Introduce more residential uses to activate the study area
- Improve transportation, mobility, and connectivity internal and external to the site
- Break up "superblock" with better vehicular and pedestrian connectivity
- Incorporate a transit hub within Fairfax Circle activity center with stronger connections to metro stations
- Enhance greenway connections and wayfinding
- Incorporate meaningful public gathering spaces for passive and programmed activities
- Bring resilient green space from reclaimed RPA into the site
- Create placemaking opportunities including public art and green space
- Address real and perceived safety issues
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure around site perimeter and internally
- Improve water quality and stormwater management conditions on site

Challenges

- Property ownership – facilitating a cooperative effort among multiple parcels and owners
- Traffic safety and efficiency issues with the existing Fairfax Circle intersection
- Pedestrian and bike safety concerns along both Fairfax Blvd and Old Lee Hwy
- Existing development encroachment in RPA / floodplain areas
- Long-term leases as a barrier to change in use or ownership and parcel consolidation
- Lack of property owner consensus relative to the proposed extension of Old Pickett Road
- Parking inventory and location out of balance with current land uses
- Perceived public safety and security issues

- Lack of branding and wayfinding to announce greenway trailheads
- Potential impact of us route 1 widening plan to redevelopment opportunities:
- Provides for limited vehicular access into the study area
- Provides for limited bike and pedestrian connectivity
- Maintains physical & mental barriers for crossing the highway

C. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CRITICAL PATH ACTION ITEMS

Priority Recommendations

1. Select a design direction for the Fairfax Circle intersection: Give consideration to traditional, signaled intersection concepts and potential benefits for access solutions to the study area. Selecting a design alternative will help to pursue funding and to inform land planning for the quadrant.

2. Small Area Plan Development:

Creation of the Small Area Plan will create a long-term vision, continue to build reinvestment interest in the area, give the community a stake in the vision, and give the city a tool for guiding and reviewing redevelopment proposals.

3. Establish design standards for the public realm along major frontages for all quadrants:

Streetscape improvements and pedestrian/bike safety improvements are paramount for redevelopment, in coordination with modifications to Fairfax Circle. Improvements for streetscape frontages include wide sidewalks, pedestrian-level lighting, landscaping zones, street trees, and street furnishings. Improve pedestrian/bike safety with new crossings and bike infrastructure.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Reconsider the geometry and function of the proposed through-street extension of Old Pickett Road. Look at alternatives for private, internal circulation and connection to Spring Street on the west end.
- Encourage and support owners and developers toward consolidation of parcels.
- Consider revenue producing programs (i.e BID, etc) as funding mechanisms for site amenities, event programming and security.
- Consider increased intensity and height solutions appropriate for this location. Consider height/density/other bonuses as incentives for repairing RPA.
- Reduce total impervious area. Reclaim developed RPA area and convert to green space.
- Create a central, publicly accessible green space to anchor the development.
- Implement a public art program and funding mechanisms for the entire Activity Center.
- Improve public safety and security: Consider a full-time, on-site police presence and/or an ambassador program for high-visibility policing and promoters of the brand.
- Improve visibility and access to trail system. Add branding and wayfinding elements.

II. THE CHALLENGE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY AND THE TAP PROCESS



A. CITY VISION AND TAP OBJECTIVES

- The City of Fairfax requested the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to develop a vision for the southwest Fairfax Circle area that meets the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, identifies and overcomes barriers to redevelopment or reinvestment in properties, and encourages coordination and partnerships between property representatives and the City.
- The southwest Fairfax Circle area includes eight parcels within the Fairfax Circle Activity Center, one of five activity centers identified in the City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan, where a greater mix of uses, coordinated redevelopment, and a pedestrian oriented atmosphere are encouraged. Per recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, the City intends to develop a Small Area Plan for the entire Fairfax Circle Activity Center, which would help define parameters for new growth and encourage redevelopment and reinvestment in existing properties. The Small Area Plan is expected to begin in 2022.
- Figure 1 below shows the extent of the Fairfax Circle Activity Center from the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, with the proposed Southwest Fairfax Circle Study Area identified by the dashed line.

Figure 1: Fairfax Circle Activity Center

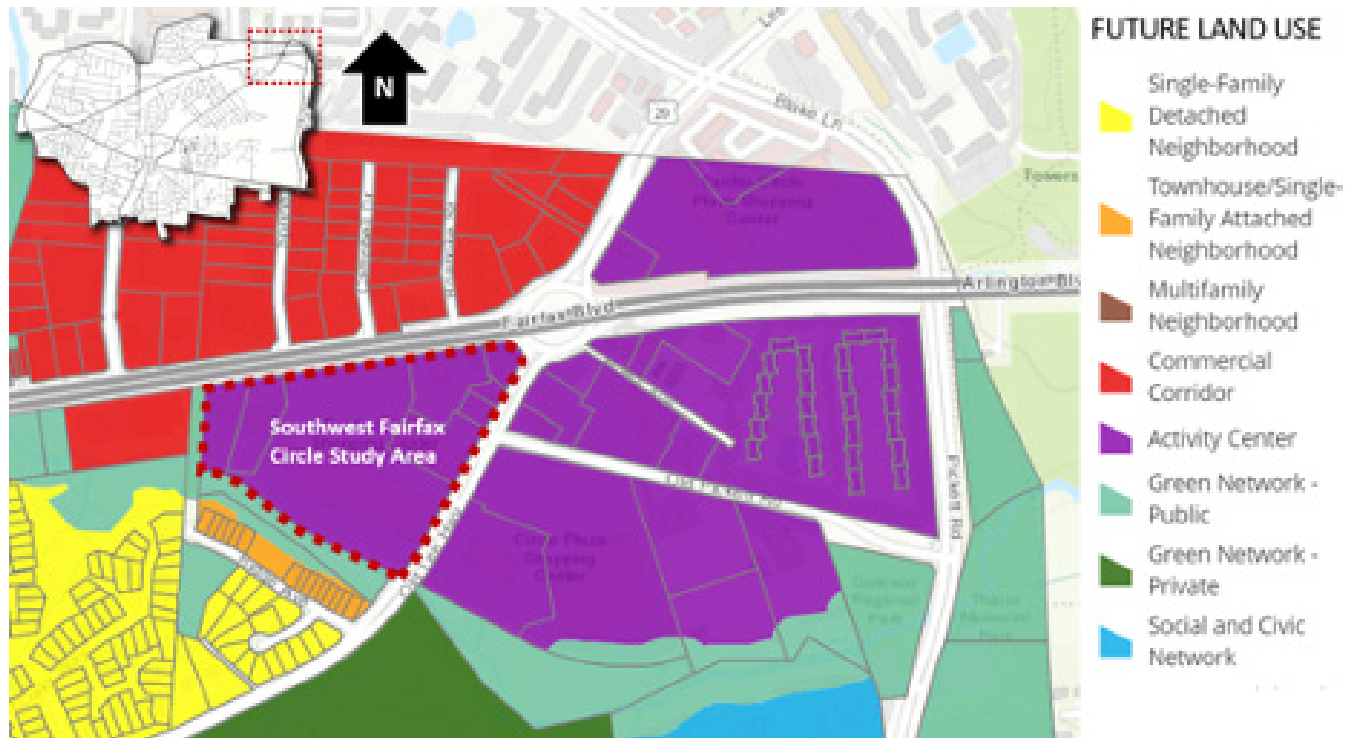


Figure 2 provides an aerial of the Southwest Fairfax Circle Study Area with the eight parcels identified. Southwest Fairfax Circle Study Area



Interest in redevelopment opportunities has been created by the Fairfax Circle Activity Center plan. Anticipated challenges include the number of individual property owners and specific challenges around the parcel at 3250 Old Lee Highway (AKA Lotte Plaza). This parcel occupies a centralized location within the study area and includes a 36,000 square foot, single story building with limited site area to meet typical commercial parking requirements. Previously, higher parking requirements were accommodated through a combination of converting interior building space to parking, leaving some interior tenant space vacant, leasing of parking spaces from nearby properties, approved parking reductions, and acquisition of the adjacent vacated 7-11 site for parking. The City believes the best opportunities for redevelopment or reinvestment in the southwest Fairfax Circle area is through a coordinated vision that is achievable for all property stakeholders.

NOTE: Prior to the TAP program, 3250 Old Lee Highway and the former 7-11 parcel were put under contract for purchase by a prospective development group seeking to redevelop with a potential mixed-use project. The stated goal of the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) was as follows:

To develop a vision for the southwest fairfax circle area that meets the goals of the comprehensive plan, identifies and overcomes barriers to redevelopment or reinvestment in properties (with particular focus on recommended next steps and outcomes for 3520 old lee highway), and encourages coordination and partnerships between property representatives as well as the city.

QUESTIONS FOR THE ULI TAP PANEL: The ULI TAP panel was asked by the City to specifically address the following issues:

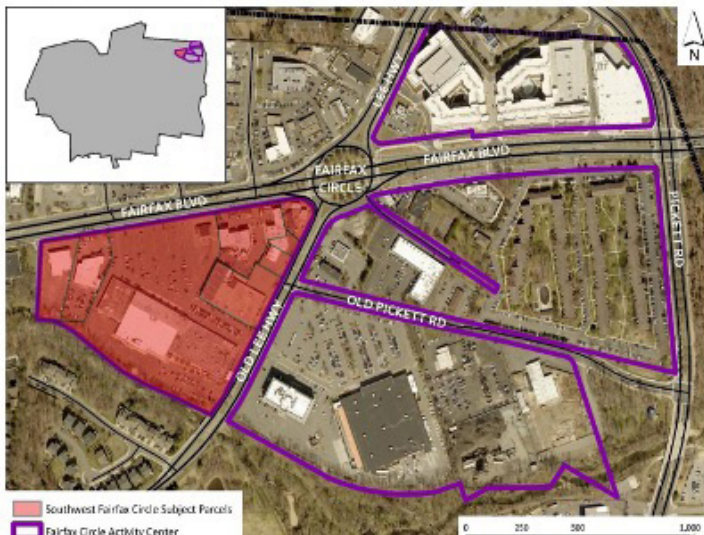
1. **STUDY AREA PLANNING:** Provide a vision for the southwest Fairfax Circle area with appropriate land uses and urban form in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan Activity Center model while supporting and encouraging investment by property owners
2. **LOTTE SITE:** What are primary obstacles to renewed use or redevelopment of the Lotte Plaza property at 3250 Old Lee Highway? What are the recommended short term and long-term next steps
3. **COORDINATION:** Should coordination or consolidation among properties be encouraged to help support the vision for the southwest Fairfax Circle area and create a cohesive urban fabric? If so, how can such partnerships be incentivized? What strategies can help ensure a coordinated development strategy for the area if consolidation does not occur.
4. **PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE:** What are some public infrastructure improvements or enabling projects that might benefit all parties and spur redevelopment and what are some strategies to allow the goals of City efforts to be realized while supporting better use of the properties in the study area?

B. SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The summary of key existing conditions below was developed based upon various inputs to the ULI TAP team prior to, and during, the program including the following sources of information:

- review of background materials provided by the city
- observations made while touring the study area
- direct conversation with stakeholders

SW Fairfax Circle Subject Parcels



SW Fairfax Circle Local Context

Summary of Key Site Characteristics

Physical Site Characteristics

- Significant grade change across site, generally draining south toward Accotink Creek on the southern edge of the study area. This condition presents some opportunities to minimize the visual impact of height for structures closest to the creek.
- Almost 100% impervious area. This condition presents an opportunity for redevelopment to achieve a reduction in total impervious area and improved stormwater management characteristics.
- Poorly defined public realm. The study area edges offer narrow public sidewalks, few viable shade trees, and no bike facilities making for an unpleasant pedestrian experience along both major frontages. Updated lighting fixtures and no overhead utilities are positive attributes, but these conditions are not consistent on the opposite side of the street frontages.
- Existing parking inventory appears more than sufficient under normal conditions. However, distribution and allocation to parcels is not efficient and results in large expanses of underutilized paved surfaces under normal conditions.

Regulatory Framework

- RPA/Floodplain area – limits redevelopment activity but could be reclaimed for open space and recreation.
- Study area is within the adopted Fairfax Circle Activity Center
- Properties are zoned CR commercial retail. Code modifications or zoning overlays could be considered to support redevelopment and a mix of land uses. Existing land use and urban form is generally not consistent with adopted future land use plans.

Access / Transportation / Connectivity

- The signalized traffic circle is problematic, including documented safety issues, and is not pedestrian or bicycle friendly. Study for the redesign of the circle is currently in progress, including more traditional traffic circles, grade-separated solutions, and modified 4-leg intersection designs.
- Pedestrian safety is a major issue associated with the circle and crossing of both Fairfax Boulevard and Old Lee Highway to and from the study area.
- The city has approved plans for new multimodal transportation infrastructure and modified geometry on Old Lee Hwy adjacent to the study area.
- The study area has multiple site access locations from Fairfax Blvd. and from Old Lee Highway. Some access locations are limited movement and some full-movement, but with no signalized intersections accessing the property.
- Public transportation in the surrounding area is generally good but needs improved connectivity to bus stops and the nearby Metro station.

- Adjacent Accotink Creek – Willcoxon Trail is a great community amenity, but lacks visibility, trailhead branding, or wayfinding.

Market Demand Input

- City staff and property owners report that existing retail space is regularly near 100% occupancy.
- City staff reports good demand for workforce housing in the area but limited demand for office, except for a lack of class A space in the broader area.

Other Notable Conditions

- Vagrancy Issues

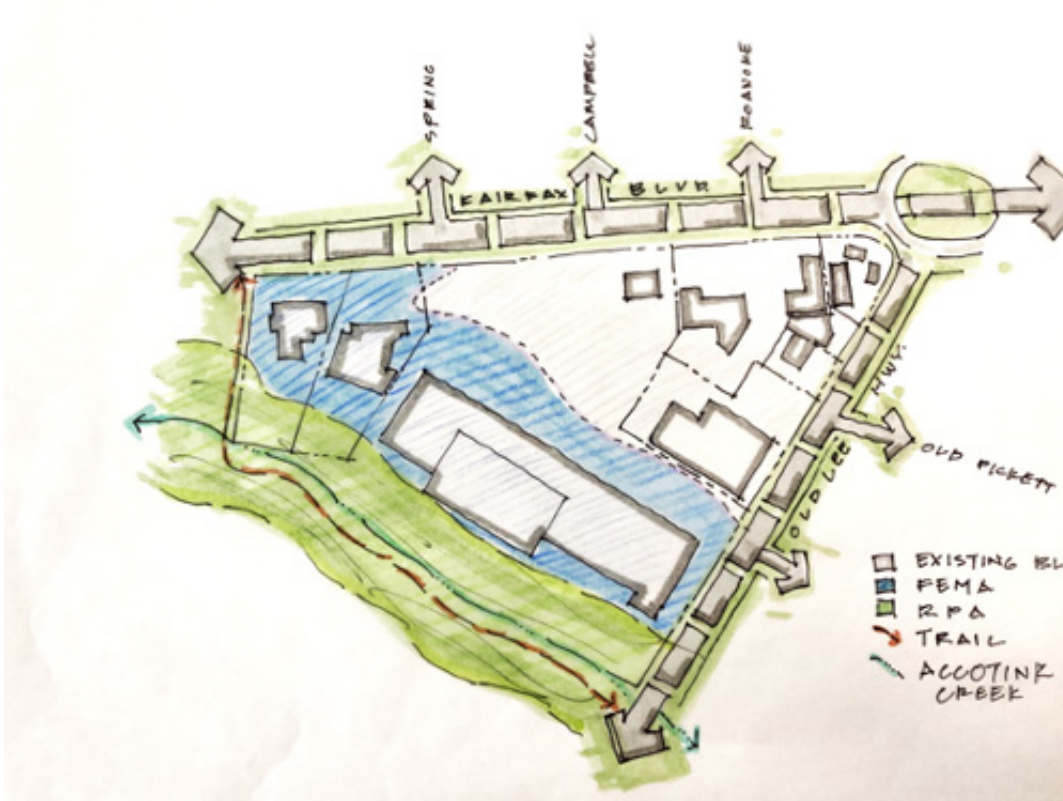
Observed Advantages and Disadvantages – from the City TAP Application:

- Location: The study area is within an Activity Center that will be the subject of an upcoming small area plan. This will provide guidance on land use and development opportunities. The study area is also at a highly visible and highly accessible location.
- Interest: The vacant property at 3250 Old Lee Highway has received a lot of interest from potential investors.
- Market: While many of the properties in and around the study area are aging, vacancy rates are relatively low and some properties have been subject to recent reinvestment or redevelopment.

Observed Disadvantages – from the City TAP Application:

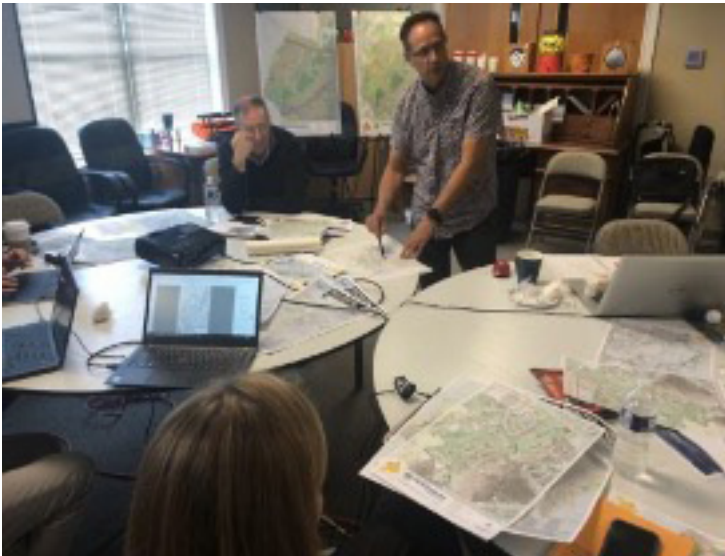
- Design: Many of the properties in the study area were developed with a focus on the automobile over pedestrian access and placemaking. The result is a general character dominated by parking lots with little harmony or connectivity between destinations.
- Vehicular Traffic: In addition to challenges with the design of individual properties, adjacent roadways carry high volumes of traffic, creating challenges with establishing a harmonious environment across the entire Activity Center.
- Fairfax Circle: The Fairfax Circle intersection, while not within the study area, is confusing for motorists and a barrier for pedestrians. While the City is exploring options for improvements to this intersection, some of the options are dependent on use of nearby private property, including some in the study area.

Existing Conditions



C. The TAP PROCESS AND APPROACH TO THE CHALLENGE

The TAP process was a partnership between the City of Fairfax and the ULI panel selected specifically for this challenge. The TAP process included review of background materials provided by the city prior to the team's arrival, followed by a two-day charrette working locally near the subject property.



The general outline of the two-day program was as follows:

ULI TAP PROGRAM AGENDA

Tuesday August 30

10:30 – 10:45 am	Team arrival and set-up
10:45 – 12:00 am	Site Tour: TAP team + City Staff
12:00 – 1:00 am	Working lunch: Stakeholder interviews with City staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Paul Nabti – Division Chief of Planning ◦ Lyndsey Clouatre – Planner II ◦ Brooke Hardin – Planning Director ◦ Rob Stalzer – City Manager ◦ Wendy Sanford – Transportation Director ◦ Satoshi Eto – Program Manager, Stormwater and Floodplain Management
1:00 – 5:00 pm	Stakeholder Meetings – including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Selected property owners ◦ Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce ◦ City of Fairfax Mayor David Meyer
6:00 pm	TAP team dinner + city guests

Wednesday August 31

8:30 – 12:00 pm	Panel working session
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Working lunch
1:00 – 4:00 pm	Panel working session
4:00 – 5:00 pm	Finalization of presentation
5:00 – 6:00 pm	Presentation of recommendations to sponsor and general public

The presentation of findings and recommendations was presented to representatives from the city and members of the public to conclude the two-day TAP program, followed by delivery of this report documenting the overall process and final recommendations.

III. ISSUE IDENTIFICATION: KEY ISSUES, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Issue identification for the ULI TAP panel typically results from an exploration and discovery process including information extracted from review of sponsor background materials, a tour of physical study area assets, and stakeholder interviews. Below is a summary of what the panel learned from the discovery process followed by a summary of the key issues extrapolated from that input to help inform the observations and recommendations in Section V (Framework for Action) of this report.

Deliberations to identify key issues and recommendations focused on the following Guiding Principles as guidance and a framework for discussion:

Land use – the panel considered potential land uses for the property reflecting the following principles and guidance:

- Uses are appropriate internal to the study area and relative to adjacent land uses within the broader Activity Center
- Uses generally advance the city goals for mixed-use development, creating a destination, and supporting objectives of the Activity Center model
- Uses are market-driven to ensure viability and sustainability

Environmental Stewardship – redevelopment of the site would represent an opportunity to heal damaged land, visibly demonstrate an approach to building healthy communities, and provide opportunities for public education around good environmental stewardship practices

Connectivity – redevelopment would be an opportunity to improve connectivity within the property and to external networks for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, as well as improved connections to public transportation facilities

Wholistic Vision – the development of a vision for the SW quadrant must be viewed in relation to the broader Activity Center and objectives to create a unified plan for all of Fairfax Circle.

Following is a discussion of each of the key issues and a summary of key challenges and opportunities, all of which serve as the basis for the panel recommendations that follow.

KEY ISSUE 1: CITY VISION and PLANNING FOR CHANGE

The completed Fairfax Circle Activity Center plan, studies for modifications to the Fairfax Circle intersection, and plans for the development of a Small Area Plan to include the study area demonstrate the city's commitment toward revitalizing this area. The general move toward mixed-use development patterns within Activity Centers makes sense and the Fairfax Circle area exhibits all of the basic elements to support that approach in the form of access to transit, green infrastructure, and access from major thoroughfares and collectors.



KEY ISSUE 2: CONTROL OF LAND and a COORDINATED PLANNING EFFORT

It is understood that the presence of multiple properties and multiple property owners creates a hardship relative to executing a coordinated vision for the study area. Consolidation of key parcels would support planning efforts for a more unified development model and while there is expressed interest in the market to make that happen, it remains subject to the individual goals for each property owner. The city's efforts to prepare guidance through Activity Center and Small Area Plan process is their best tool for encouraging consolidation as those plans create a roadmap for owners and the development community to consider redevelopment and reinvestment options and to assess risk. Adopted plans provide the community and investors a vision, and some assurances that proposals consistent with these guiding documents should be met with some level of community support.

The property at 3250 Old Lee Highway, and the adjacent former 7-11 parcel, have long been identified as key pieces of the puzzle to reimagine the study area. Together they occupy key frontage and a key location for site access. Focus on changes in ownership and/or land use of these parcels seems to be an important first-step toward redevelopment. Stakeholder interviews with property owners indicated an understanding of the importance of a consolidated plan and at least some willingness to participate in discussions for development of long-range, coordinated plans for the area.

KEY ISSUE 3: LAND USE and ZONING

1. Mixed-Use Development Pattern: The city has identified this area for mixed-use development, including residential uses. Mixed-use development would be well supported in this quadrant given the advantage of frontage on major thoroughfares, connectivity to green infrastructure, and access to public transportation. Incorporating residential uses would further activate the area which in turn can help create a safer overall environment. Nearby Scout on the Circle is an example of a mixed-use development pattern that represents an appropriate scale and urban form for the area.

2. Development Intensity and Urban Form: The panel suggests that the study area is a strong candidate for higher intensity development, including significant height for some structures given the nature of adjacent land uses. Ultimately, the controlling factors in determination of development intensity should be the ability for the street network to accommodate vehicle trips and shared parking solutions to support the amount of development. A mix of uses, access to public transportation, and strong bike and pedestrian facilities will help reduce new vehicle trips on the network resulting from a mixed-use development pattern.

3. A Market-Driven Approach: It is important that plans reflect market conditions and provide flexibility to move with market changes as they shift over time. Significant changes in retail and office land use patterns relative to demand, space requirements and product design are an example of conditions that are impacting land use planning, urban form, parking demand, and zoning conditions in all markets. Land use plans should aim for long-term sustainability while responding to realistic market conditions. Zoning should provide some flexibility for development to move with the markets while maintaining the overall character and quality of the vision. Retail uses, for example, are often most susceptible to location and market demand and zoning can provide for those uses without mandating them, allowing for re-purposing of tenant spaces as needed over time. It may be advantageous to create a unique zoning district or overlay to support the desired development patterns in this area.

KEY ISSUE 4: TRANSPORTATION, ACCESS, and CONNECTIVITY

Site vehicular access, safe pedestrian crossings, and internal circulation were quickly identified as key issues relative to redevelopment of the study area. Some of the key transportation issues include the following:

- Site access: the location and level of access provided around the site perimeter greatly impacts redevelopment opportunities. The lack of signalized, full-movement access into the site is currently a limiting factor. The lack of signalized access also limits the ability to have safe pedestrian crossings to the site.
- Internal circulation: There is a need to balance planned improvements to the external street network with potential impacts on redevelopment opportunities within the SW quadrant. Proposals to create a new, public street through the study area connecting Old Lee Highway to Fairfax Blvd. may provide some traffic management benefits but could also create some challenges to internal circulation, parking fields, subdivision, and redevelopment. This item deserves more study in collaboration with property owners.

- **Parking:** Planners' and developers' efforts to right-size parking requirements are still evolving with new development models and mobility trends. The current parking inventory in the study area reflects an older, more suburban approach to parking, resulting in an excess of inventory and impervious area for most days of the year. Any redevelopment should reassess parking requirements based upon the development program, potential shared use between a mix of uses, and the impact of improved multi-modal facilities for walking, biking, and public transportation. Structured parking solutions, if feasible, could help reduce the overall surface parking footprint.
- **Multi-modal Connectivity:** The study area has some distinct advantages relative to creation of a robust multi-modal, transit-oriented development pattern. A greenway system, good bus routes, plans for bike and pedestrian facilities, and a nearby Metro station are all good components of a strong multi-modal system to support mixed-use development patterns. Redevelopment plans for all four quadrants of the Activity Center should capitalize on these components with a coordinated plan for connectivity.

KEY ISSUE 5: URBAN FORM and THE PUBLIC REALM

The study area exhibits traditional suburban patterns of development with single-story structures, parking fields between buildings and streets, large expanses of surface parking, minimal pedestrian facilities, and minimal landscaping or tree canopy. While the retail environment is quite viable, there is no placemaking or destination feel to the area. This quadrant of Fairfax Circle is also quite inhospitable to access by foot or by bike. It is a fundamental reality that our experience of community is greatly impacted by how we interact and visually perceive the built environment around us from our public streets. Enhancement of the site perimeter and repositioning of buildings to better address the street must be part of any redevelopment plans. Introduction of tree canopy on the perimeter and internally will help mitigate heat gain from paved surfaces. A mix of building height and some building transparency facing the natural area on the southern edge will also create some opportunities to improve the overall urban design quality of the place.

KEY ISSUE 6: ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Regulated floodplain and Resource Protection Area (RPA) within the study area are concentrated along the creek edge and are currently encroached upon by development, including building structures and paved surfaces. There are no active stormwater management facilities to address water quantity or quality issues within the property. Redevelopment of the area would provide opportunities to reclaim RPA and introduce more green space, thereby reducing impervious area and improving the stormwater runoff characteristics of the site.

Southwest Fairfax Circle Land Constraints

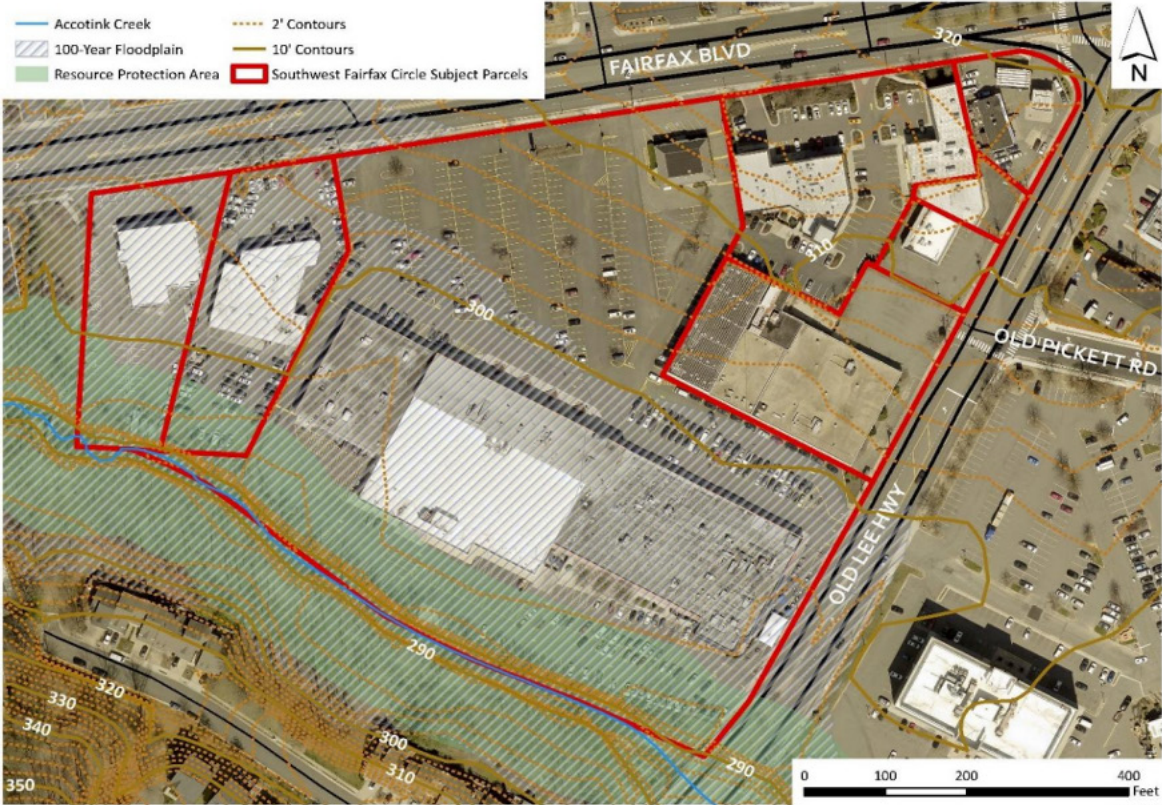


Figure 7: Land and other environmental constraints that impact the Study Area.

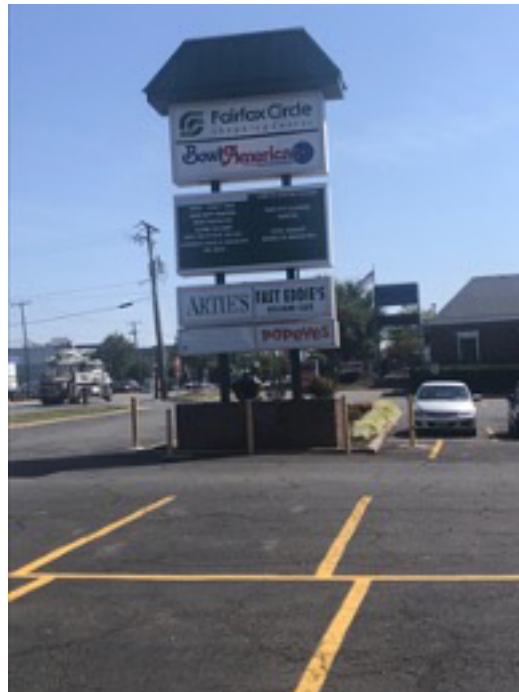
May 2022
Source: City of Fairfax GIS

SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES:

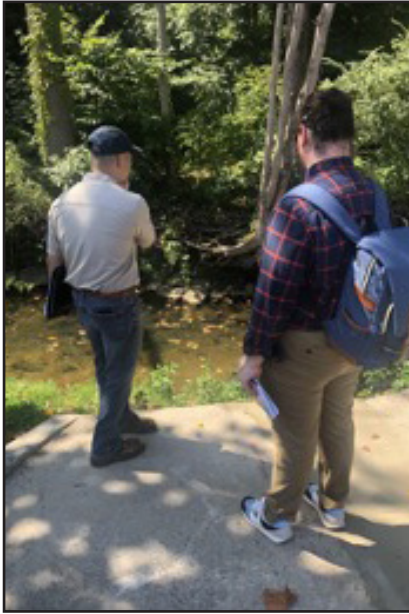
- Property ownership – multiple parcels with different owners
- Existing traffic safety and efficiency issues with Fairfax Circle
- Pedestrian safety concerns along both Fairfax Blvd and Old Lee Hwy
- Existing development within RPA / Floodplain areas
- 15-20 yea long-term leases involving some key parcels
- Lack of property owner consensus regarding proposed extension of Old Pickett Rd.
- Maintaining adequate fire protection access with current parcel configurations
- Site feels “cut off” from other parts of the city by major thoroughfares
- Parking inventory and location out of balance with current land uses
- Perceived public safety and security issues
- Lack of branding and wayfinding to announce greenway trailheads

Fairfax Circle shopping Center





Accotink Creek behind the study area and Willcoxon Trail
(along creek and western edge of the study area)



COLLATERAL OPPORTUNITIES - In the course of planning for and implementing your vision, there will emerge tangential opportunities for placemaking. It is important to be open to and intentional about identifying and nurturing these opportunities along the journey as teaching moments, possible enhancements to the process, and means to engage more stakeholders.

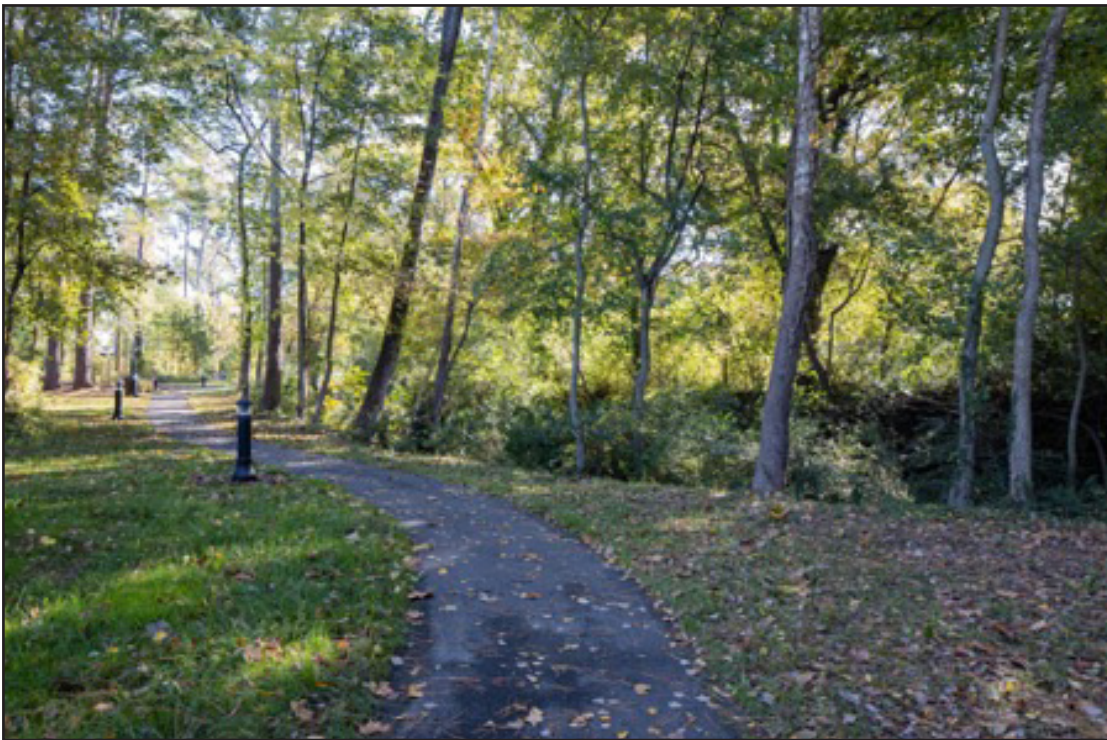
Create A Model for Healthy Communities: redevelopment of an environmentally challenged site is an opportunity to create a highly visible model for healthy living, and healing of the land. Redevelopment offers a canvas to paint a picture of integrated land uses, reduced vehicle trips, improved walkability, reduced heat-island effect, improved water quality, and small urban social spaces for the community.

IV. CONCEPTUAL LAND USE

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The ULI TAP panel considered what might be an appropriate mix of land uses for the SW quadrant of Fairfax Circle based upon the information gathered during this study. Following is a general list of complimentary uses and urban design elements that might serve as a basis for developing a coordinated plan.

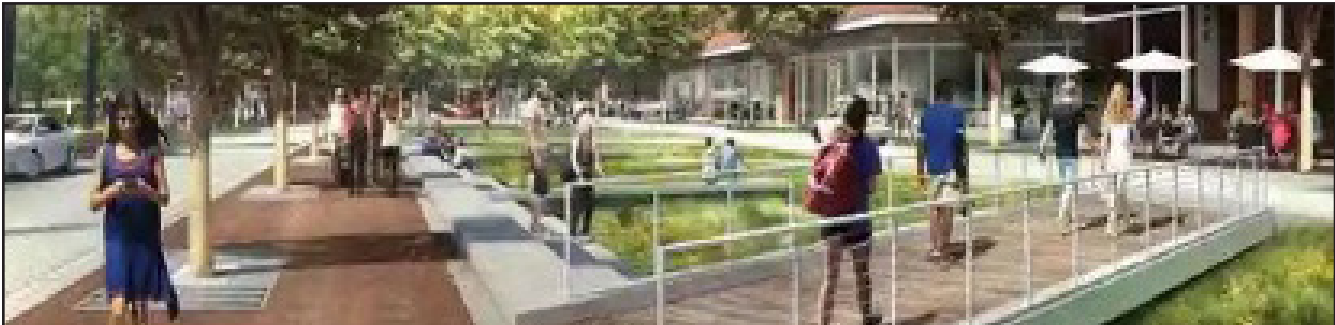
- Mix of high-density residential products to attract a diverse, multi-generational demographic
- Ground floor retail goods and services
- Mix of heights, including midrise and higher structures with some residential units overlooking green corridor along Accotink Creek
- Programmable outdoor amenity space/outdoor open space and green infrastructure including restored RPA
- Enhanced trail connections to the Willcoxon greenway
- “Right sized” parking requirements; consider shared, structured parking to reduce overall impervious area
- Local transit hub with improved connections to metro stations
- Public art to activate trail and open spaces
- Enhanced pedestrian crossings of Fairfax Blvd. and Old Lee Highway.
- Reinforce historical circle form with architecture, landscape, and hardscape geometry



Pedestrian Amenity Space



Sustainable Amenity Features



Programmable Green Space



Examples Of Creative Placemaking And Public Art



SUMMARY OF CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PLAN

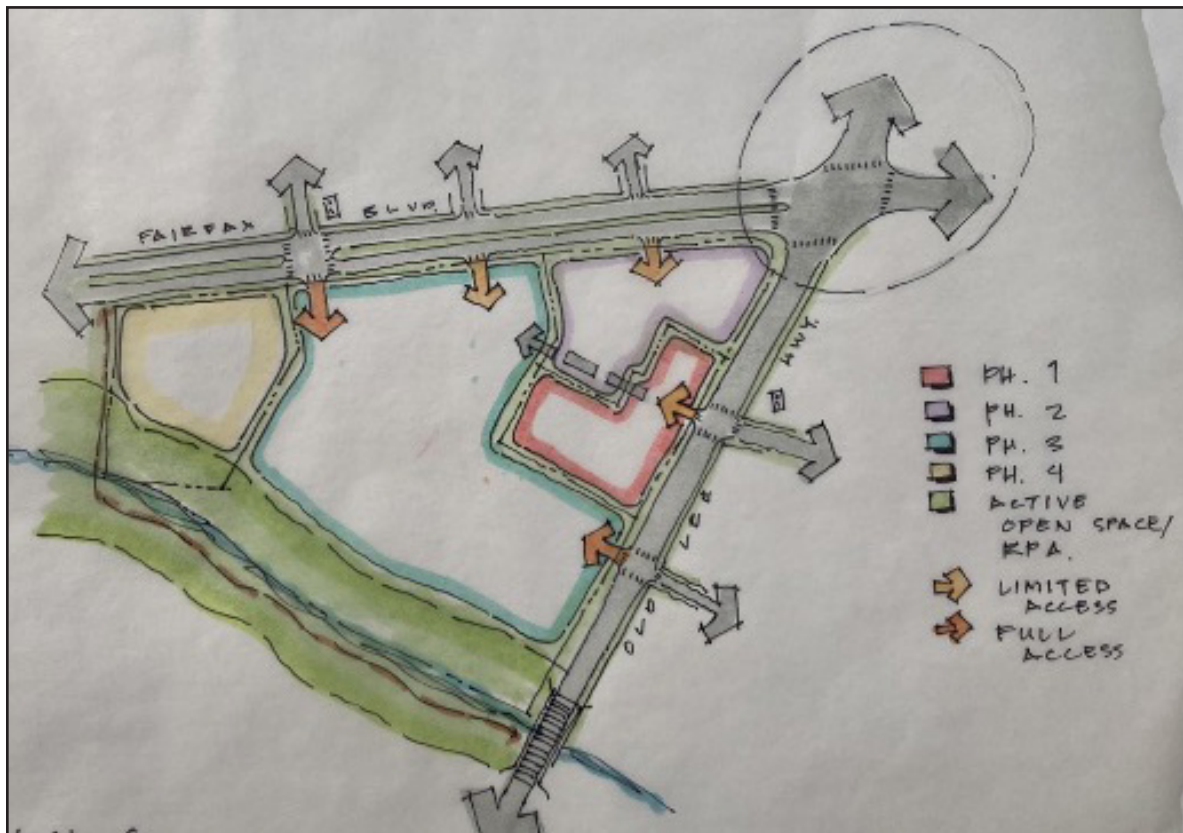
The images illustrate a potential approach to redevelopment of the study area. It is important to note that long-range planning efforts often inherently ignore parcel lines and ownership as a necessity to achieve an overall vision. The conceptual phasing of redevelopment simply suggests a logical way toward a coordinated plan, making broad assumptions about what parcels might require a change in use or ownership to implement the vision. In the absence of total control of the area by one owner, it will be up to the city, property owners, and the development community, to work collaboratively toward the long-term good of the whole composition, including the balance of the Fairfax Activity Center area.

There are two key items of guidance regarding conceptual land planning to consider:

1. The panel would stress the importance of decisions around the final geometry and function of the Fairfax Circle intersection relative to impacts on redevelopment opportunities in the study area. Acknowledging the historical relevance of the modified circle in its current form, the panel urges consideration of more traditional intersection solutions to reduce the overall footprint of the intersection, create opportunities for urban design elements in the residual land created by such a solution, and for its potential advantages regarding spacing to signalized access into the study area. Of course, all of this requires further traffic engineering analysis to understand the repercussions of each solution on real estate decisions internal to the study area. Should a more traditional intersection design be implemented, there are creative ways to recreate the circle geometry on the ground plane with landscaping and hardscaping patterns.

2. Urban Form: there was much conversation around urban form and orientation of buildings to either address the primary street frontages or have an internal focus. We emphasize throughout our recommendations the need to enhance the public realm along Fairfax Blvd. and Old Lee Highway and the need for all four quadrants of the Activity Center to be unified, and connected in form, both visually and functionally. The orientation of buildings to the street is the most effective way to address both of those objectives. Transparency of buildings along the main frontages will better activate the street environment and relate better to development on opposite sides of the streets. Additionally, orientation of buildings to internal streets and to the natural area are recommended.

Development Area 1: The phased development concept below suggests one approach to redevelopment, starting with the Lotte Plaza and the former 7-11 properties. As part of redevelopment, these two parcels could accommodate a signalized access as a fourth leg to the existing Old Pickett Rd. intersection. This is important to create a safe, full movement access from this frontage. It will be critical for the city and developers to collaborate on the design of the circulation through the site from this location and whether this results in a public street through the entire site connecting with Fairfax Blvd., a private street doing the same, or simply internal private circulation. Each decision comes with benefits and challenges. A public through-street with right-of-way may ease congestion on the external street network but comes with design standards and driveway spacing guidelines that may limit flexibility for redevelopment and be a barrier to internal pedestrian circulation. A private street could handle traffic in a similar manner but provide some flexibility in design, including connectivity to Spring Street further west to leave the central development area more open to redevelopment. A signalized intersection at Spring would also give the site a safe, full-movement access from Fairfax Blvd.



Development Area 2 of redevelopment might focus on the hard corner at the intersection, encompassing the Lothrop and Kapoor properties. These parcels offer an opportunity to address the street with a more pedestrian-focused urban form, some “gateway” architecture, and building forms that embrace the intersection.

Development Area 3 in this concept identifies the central core of the site, including the existing Rosenthal shopping center parcel. The most significant features of this area are the potential amount of frontage along the green corridor, access to a large, central parking field, and inclusion of potential signalized access opposite Spring Street. Redevelopment of this area might include reclamation of RPA area for development of more green infrastructure and development of residential product facing the natural area.

Development Area 4 illustrated here includes the western-most parcels of land. This property has important adjacency to the greenway trail access and RPA areas, as well as a potential point of access from Fairfax Blvd..

The illustration below represents a conceptual plan with internal circulation and green space as a framework for redevelopment. This demonstrates how critical the circulation pattern is to creation of development pads. This concept also suggests how green space from the RPA areas can be brought into the center of the development as public amenity and how residential product could face south to overlook the creek and natural area.



Green Infrastructure

V. A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

This section provides a framework for an action plan including key recommendations, priority action items, and a some Big Ideas. The recommendations are focused on actionable items related to creation and implementation of a long-term vision for the SW quadrant of Fairfax Circle. All recommendations are viewed as important, and connected, but some are deemed a higher priority as they are time-sensitive or represent enabling projects or actions necessary to set the table for other actions.

The Priority Recommendations represent the panel's suggested order of importance for the top three priorities. The Additional Recommendations are not intended to imply a required order of action and could occur concurrently in support of the priority actions assuming they do not distract focus or drain resources away from the priority action items.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Select a design direction for the Fairfax Circle intersection: Give traditional, signalized intersections careful consideration and the potential benefits for access solutions to the study area associated with those solutions. Selecting a design solution will help to pursue and secure funding for improvements and to inform land plan decisions for the quadrant.
2. Small Area Plan Development: Creation of the Small Area Plan will create a long-term vision, continue to build reinvestment interest in the area, give the community a stake in the vision, and give the city another tool for guiding and reviewing redevelopment proposals.
3. Establish design standards for the public realm along major frontages for all quadrants: Streetscape improvements and pedestrian/bike safety improvements are paramount for redevelopment, in coordination with modifications to Fairfax Circle. Improvements should include wide sidewalks, pedestrian-level lighting, landscaping zones, street trees, and street furnishings. Improve pedestrian/bike safety with new crossings and bike infrastructure.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Reconsider the geometry and function of the proposed through-street extension of Old Pickett Road. Look at alternatives for private, internal circulation and connection to Spring Street on the west end.
- Encourage and support consolidation of parcels to support a unified plan.
- Consider increased density and height solutions. Focus tall, iconic architecture closest to intersection to emphasize the historic circle form and function.
- Reduce impervious areas. Reclaim developed RPA area and convert to green space.
- Consider height/density/other bonuses as incentives for repairing RPA
- Create a central, publicly accessible green space to anchor the development. Employ an event manager to keep the space programmed and highly activated.
- Implement a public art program for the entire Activity Center. Highlight local artists.
- Improve public safety and security: Consider a full-time, on- site police presence and/or an ambassadors program for high-visibility policing and promoters of the brand.
- Improve visibility and access to trail system. Add branding and wayfinding elements
- Consider revenue producing programs (i.e. BID) as funding mechanisms for site amenities, event programming and security

- Identify clustering opportunities to create a unique, local destination (art; food; music; maker-space; start-ups, etc)
- Continue to reflect and reinforce the historical form and character of the Fairfax Circle in the landscape and hardscape geometry of the site, regardless of the final design solution.

BIG IDEAS:

Big Ideas represent opportunities that may warrant exploration as residual benefits to the process. The ideas below represent thoughts from a combination of stakeholder suggestions and successful efforts from the past experience of the ULI TAP panel members.

- Create roles for local sustainability champions, on staff and from the community.
- Implement interpretive exhibits on-site to highlight and educate the public around environmental issues and how the site represents efforts to repair environmentally challenged land.
- Incorporate public art in the recreation areas and to support the intersection, engaging local artists and arts organizations to showcase their work and program public events on the property.



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