

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Chair Feather and Members of the Planning Commission

**From:** Paul Nabti, Planning Division Chief

**Subject:** Introduction and discussion of the Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan

## Meeting

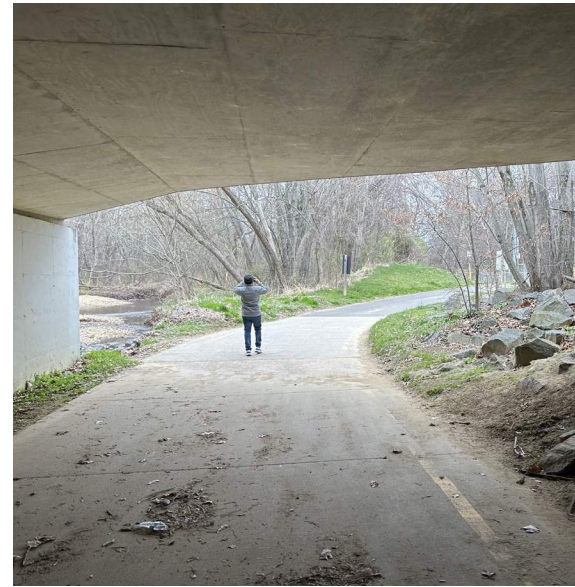
**Date:** June 26, 2023

The City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan recommends Small Area Plans be developed for each of the five activity centers identified in the plan to provide more specific guidance for public investment and private development in these areas. Small area plans were adopted for Old Town and Northfax in 2020 and for Kamp Washington in 2022. City staff and the consultant began working on the small area plan for Fairfax Circle in March 2023.

At this work session, the consultant will brief the Planning Commission on the initial observations developed during the first phase of the project, *Data Collection, Assessment and Analysis of Existing Conditions*. This briefing includes a summary of observations from community input and stakeholder interviews, historical reviews, economic and regional analysis, multimodal transportation observations, environmental and utility analyses, and zoning and land use considerations. A summary of these observations is included in the presentation provided in Attachment 1. Following the presentation, the project team will seek feedback from the Planning Commission on existing conditions in the study areas, as well as priority considerations as we prepare to beginning work on the second phase, *Initial Recommendations and Public Outreach*.

## Attachments:

1. Presentation



# DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AREA PLANS

## FAIRFAX CIRCLE INTRODUCTION MEETING

CUNNINGHAM | QUILL ARCHITECTS PLLC

Bolan Smart  
Associates

Kittelson &  
Associates

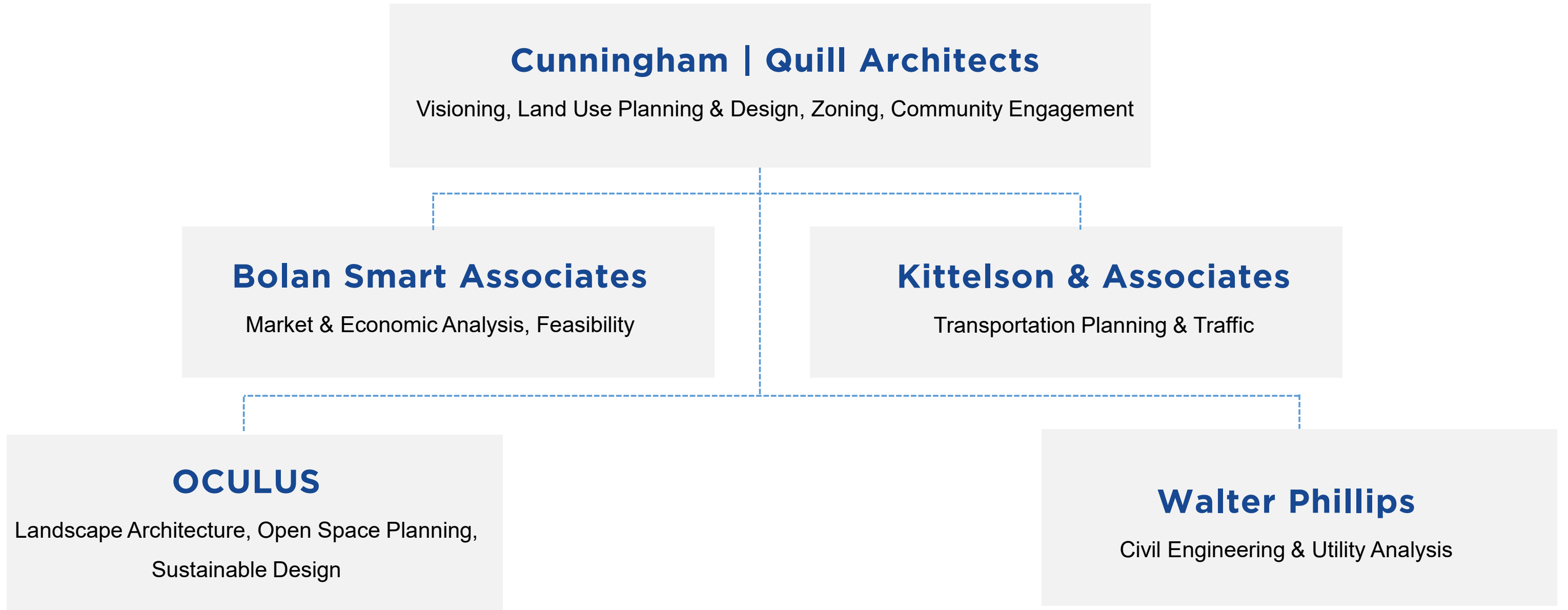
OCULUS

Walter L.  
Phillips

WHO WE ARE

# OUR TEAM

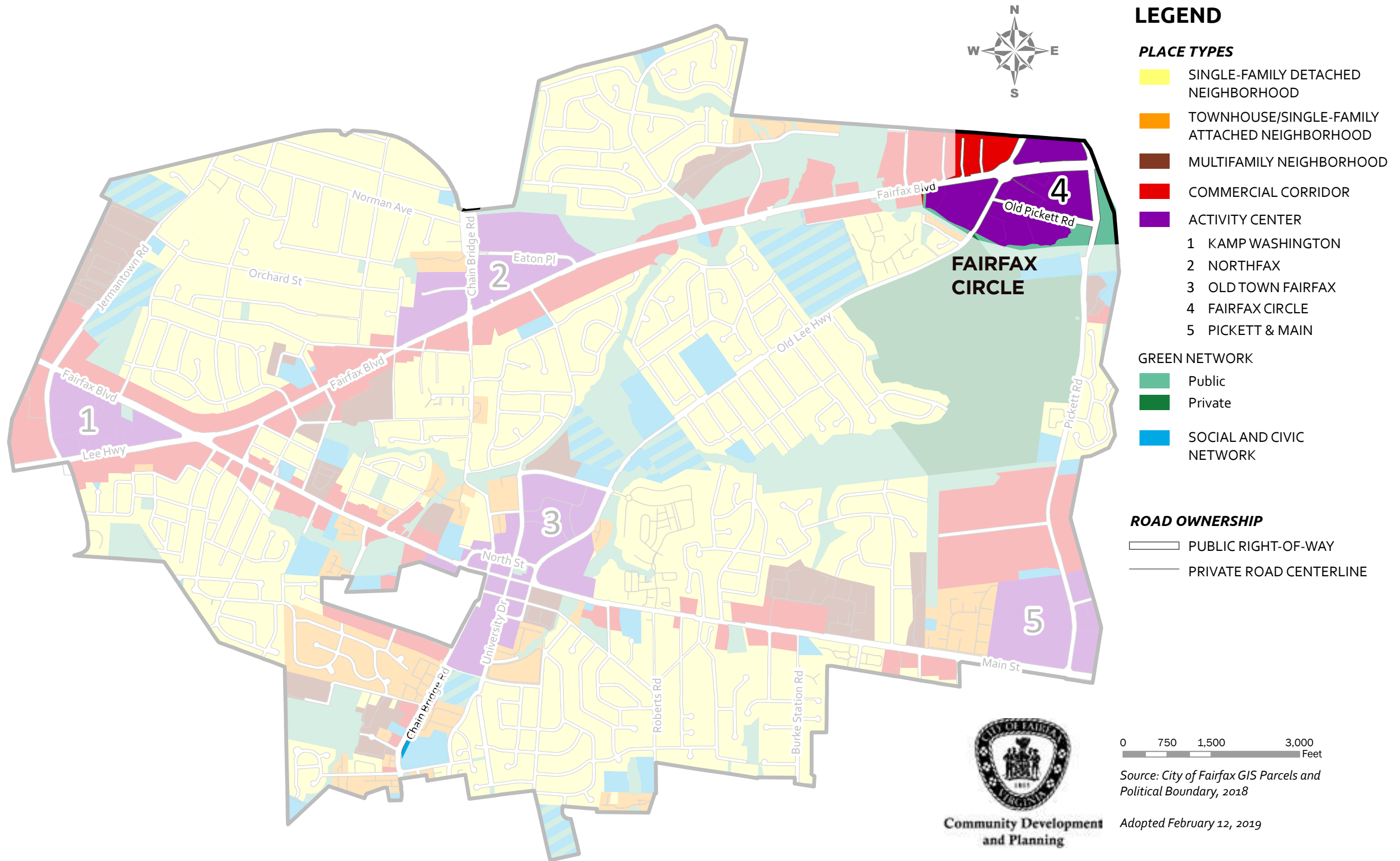
LOCAL EXPERTS INVESTED IN THE CITY



# INTRODUCTION

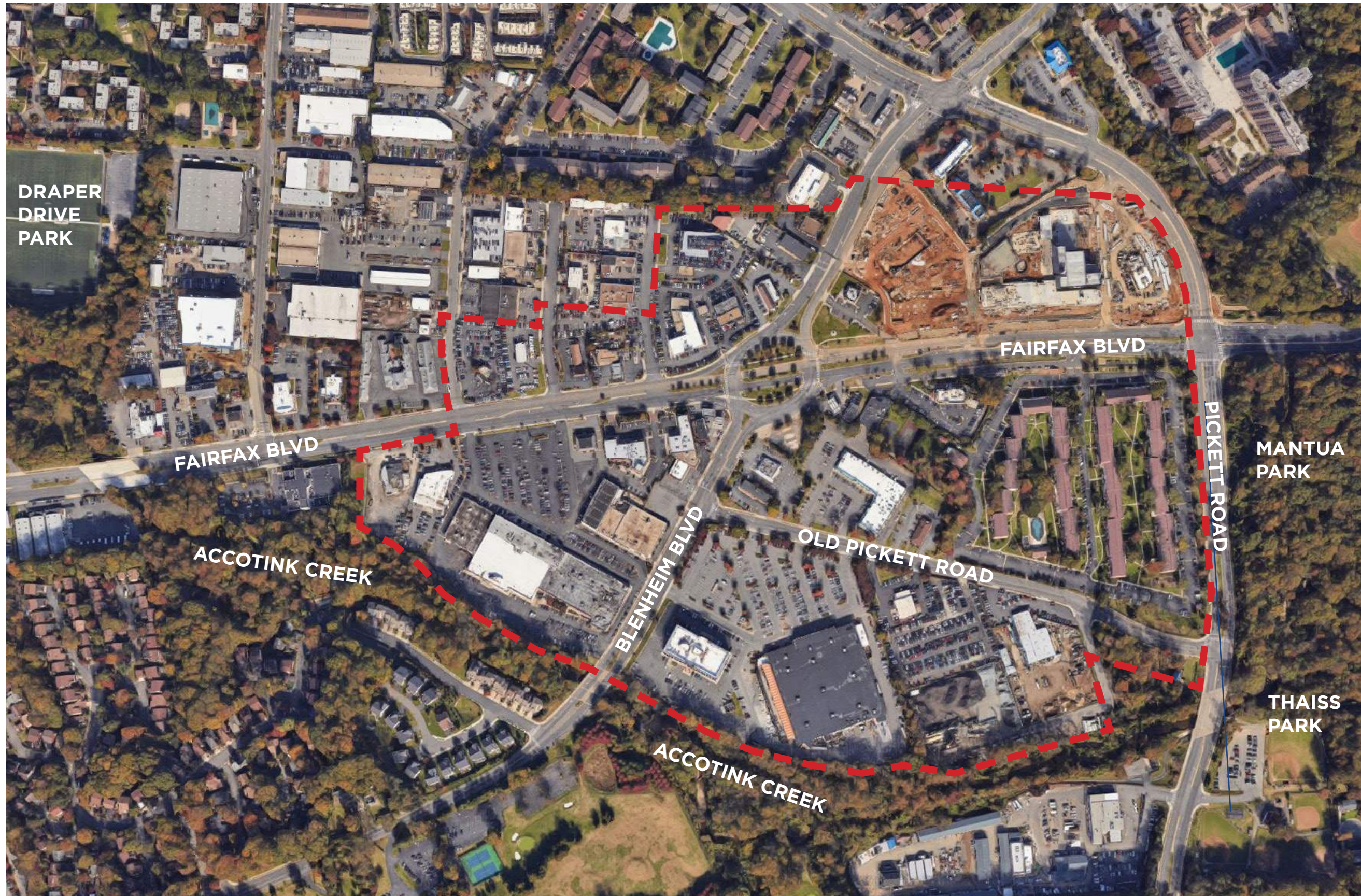
# BUILDING ON THE 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## ACTIVITY CENTER: FAIRFAX CIRCLE

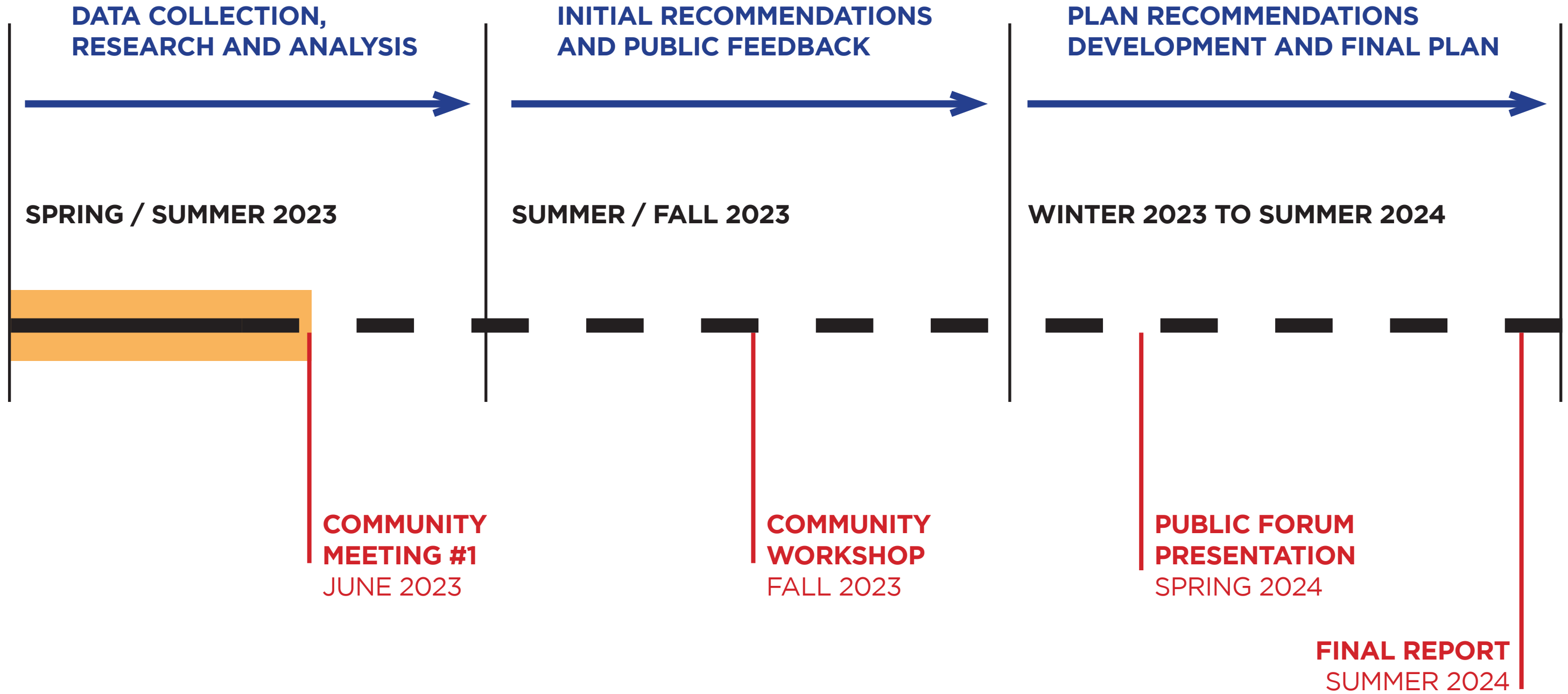


# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

# STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



# PROJECT TIMELINE



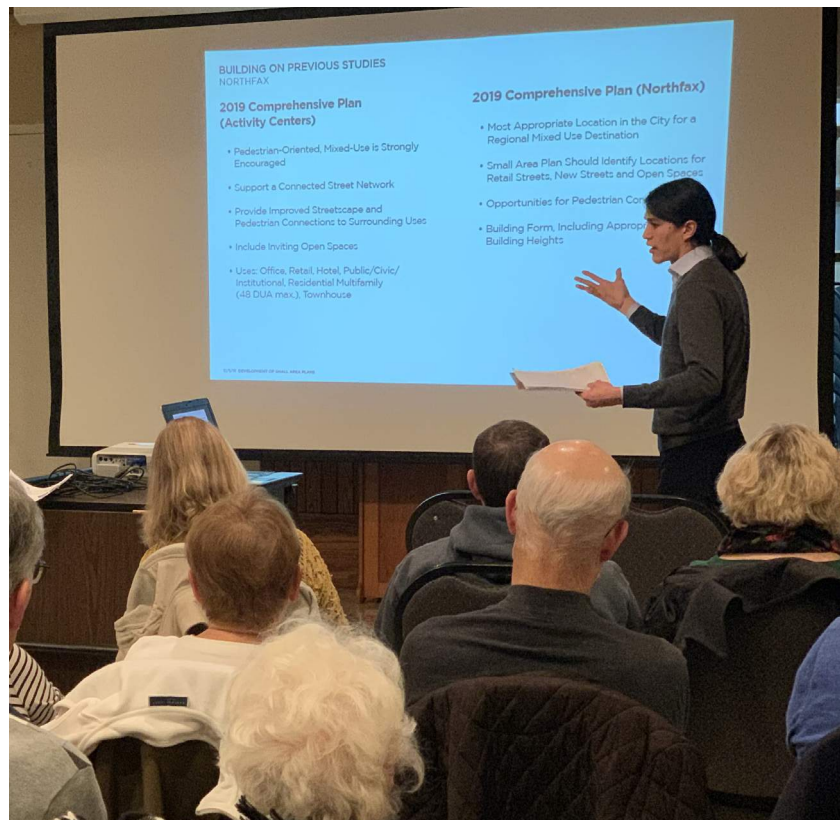


# COMMUNITY OUTREACH INFORMING AND LISTENING



## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

- City Council and Planning Commission
- Boards and Commissions
- City Staff and Experts
- Commercial / Private Property Owners
- Business Owners (Restaurant, Small Businesses, Others)
- Residents and the General Public



## TOPICS WE'VE HEARD ABOUT

- Commercial Real Estate Trends (Retail, Office, Residential)
- High Interest Rate Environment
- Excitement for the Future (Highest and Best Uses)
- Nature and Green Spaces
- Stormwater and Flooding
- Housing and Affordability
- Safety (Pedestrian, General)

# COMMUNITY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

June 20, 2023



# COMMUNITY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

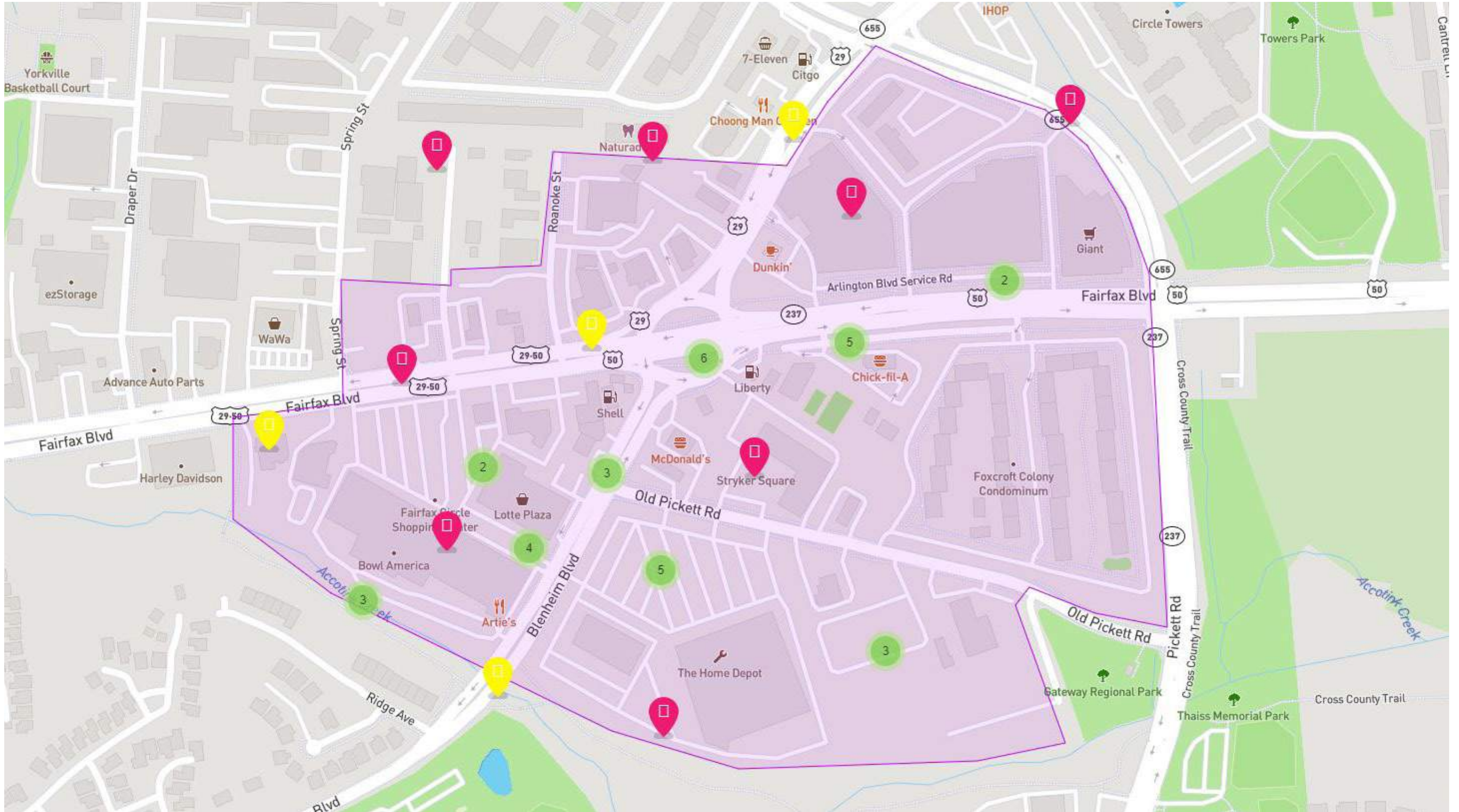
June 20, 2023

- Concerns about unhoused populations and their impact on safety and economic vitality.
- Concerns about stormwater management and flooding—particularly at residential areas like Foxcroft and the Scout
- Desire for better transportation network, bikeability, access to metro, and walkability throughout the study area.
- Desire for reinvention of Fairfax Circle that improves navigability of vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians.
- Excitement and support for better open spaces including trails, access to Accotink Creek, improved park networks, and greenspace in study area.
- Interest in mixed use residential and affordable housing
- Recommendations on engagement with high school users and George Mason college students.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

<https://engage.fairfaxva.gov/fairfax-circle-small-area-plan>



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

<https://engage.fairfaxva.gov/fairfax-circle-small-area-plan>

This traffic “circle” is easily one of the most dangerously designed traffic interchanges I have experienced on the east coast. Needs redesign.

Let’s make this the development that brings back an RPA... make the southern edge of Fairfax Circle natural and peaceful again. It would help our local environment, alleviate some storm water issues and get us beautiful views. Outdoor dining along the new edge would be lovely.

Fairfax Circle Shopping Center needs to be totally redeveloped. This is a huge property representing a huge opportunity for a walkable mixed-use shopping district with enhancement to the creek.

Please consider the impacts to Accotink Creek. Plan for conservation of the area, protection against runoff, and possible improvements that might make this a nice walking area.

While it needs reconfiguration, Fairfax Circle is an iconic gateway to the city. Its placemaking value should be considered through its redesign.

Ensure safe, well-lit, publicly-accessible and maintained bathrooms for after-hours unhoused patrons.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

1937



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

1953





# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

1960



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

1972



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

1976



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

1990



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

2002



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

2011



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE

TODAY  
2021 AERIAL

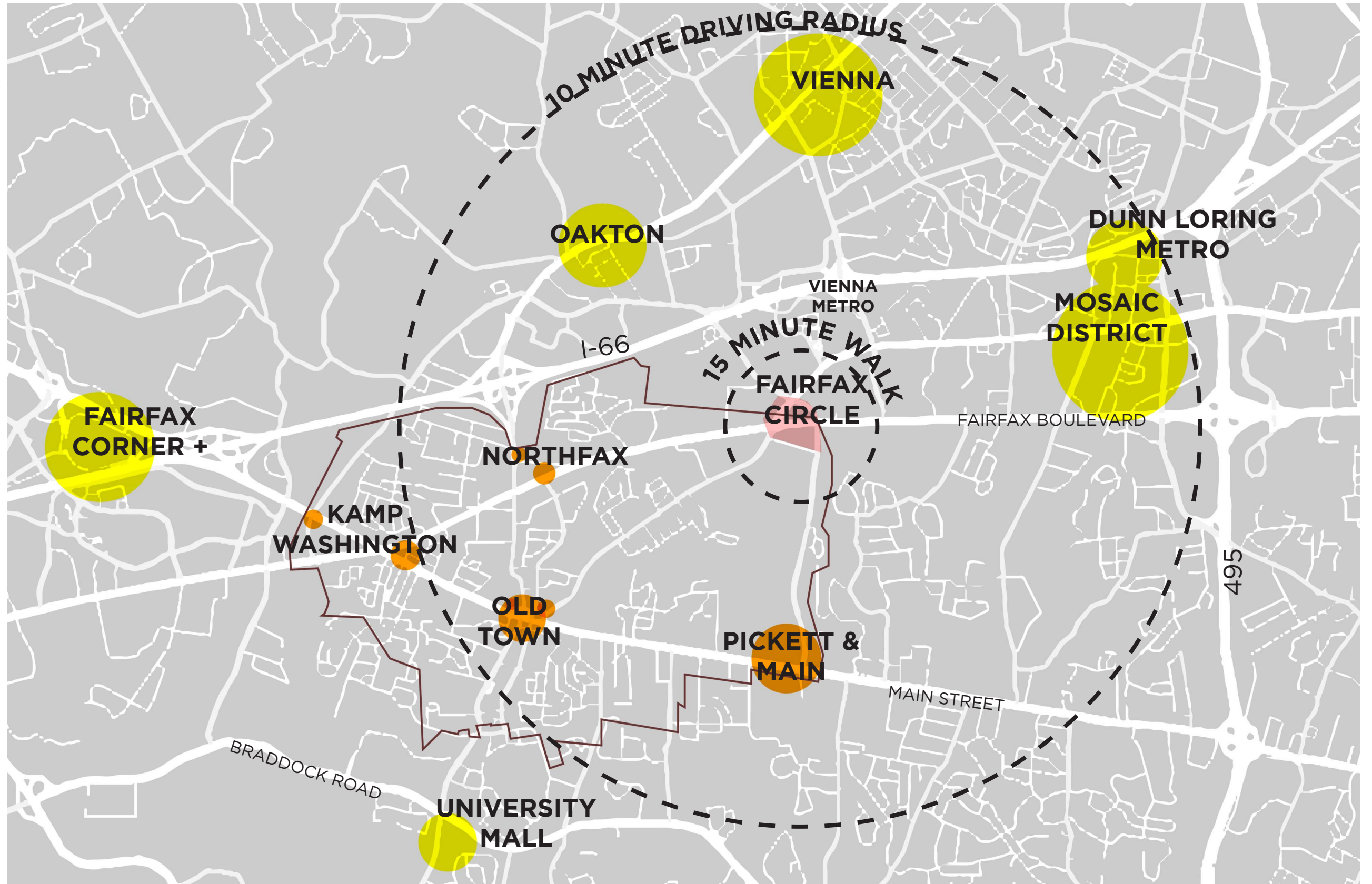


# ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

## CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

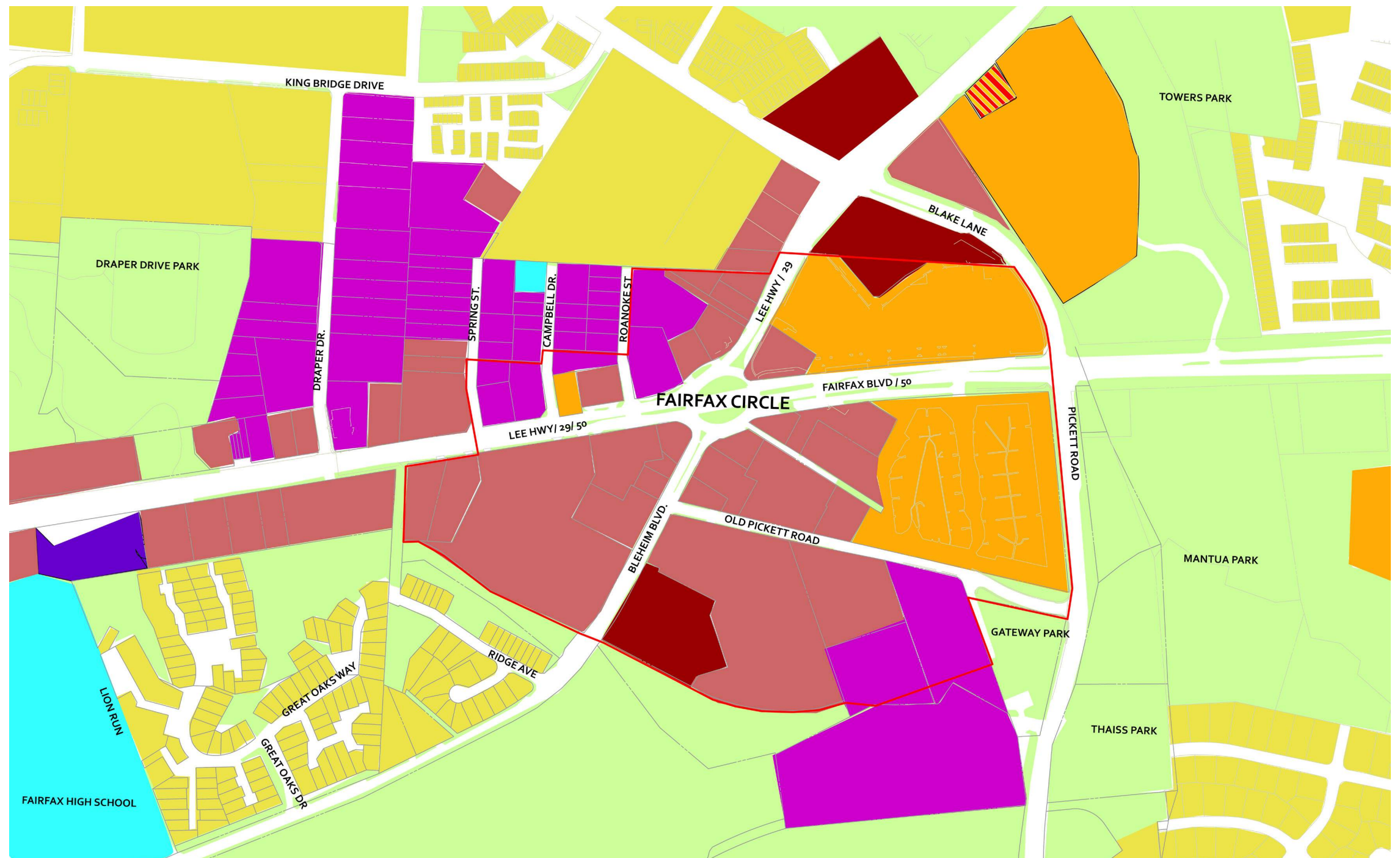


# FAIRFAX CIRCLE - REGIONAL COMMERCIAL CONTEXT



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE AREA MARKET

- Variety of commercial, industrial, and multifamily uses
- Established auto industry location
- Location for special purpose type uses: range of public utilities
- Proximate areas are mostly built out or park / open space



## Dominant Land Use (By Parcel)

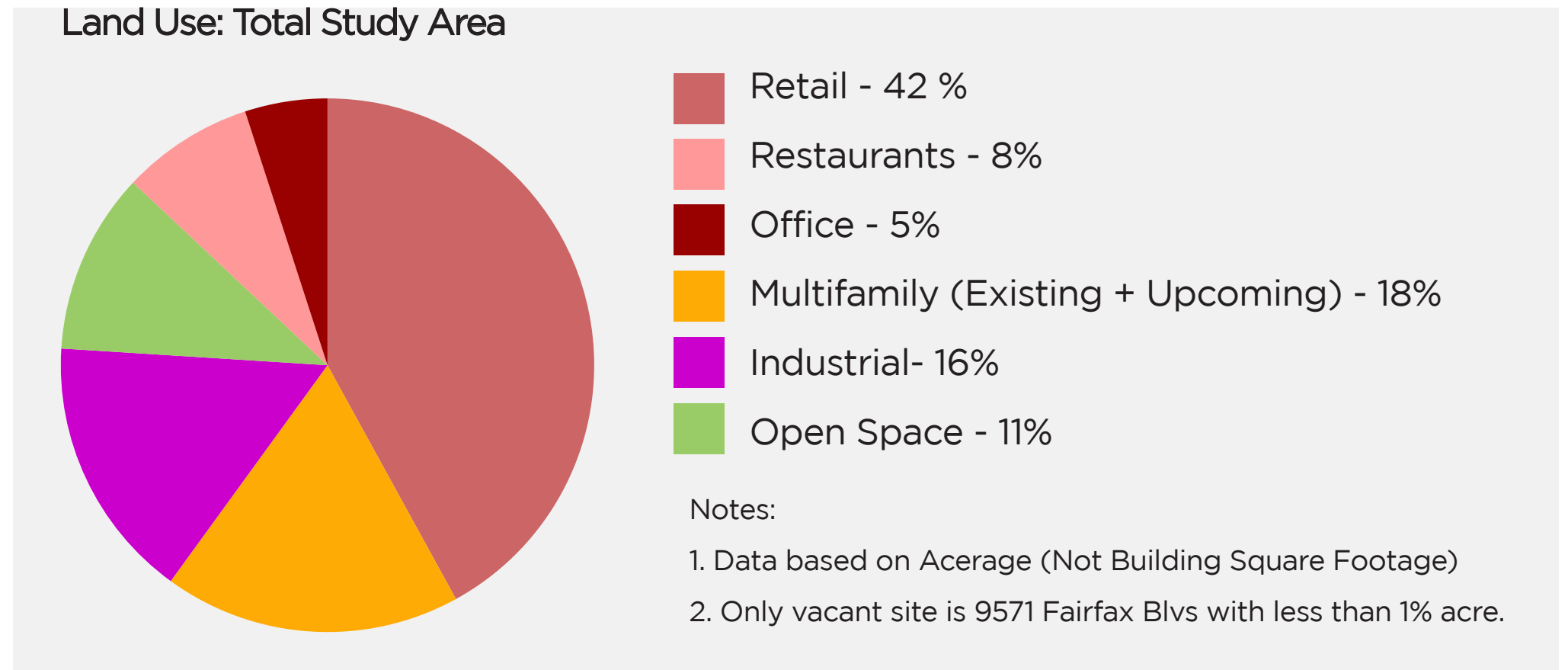


# STUDY AREA LAND USE HIGHLIGHTS

- Versatile and transitional retail location
- Some office space; not considered an office market node
- Some older multifamily and newer residential mixed-use
- Defined by subareas with quite different characteristics (mixed commercial / retail, mixed industrial, residential mixed-use and lower density residential,)
- Mix of building types and ages, relatively low density
- Some specific conflicting land use adjacencies
- Variety of indicators signaling redevelopment potential - some obsolesce

## Land Use

- 76.55 Acres Total
- 40 Properties
- 1.28 Million SF Built
- .38 FAR



The Scout



Fairfax Circle Shopping Center

# SAP CONDITIONS

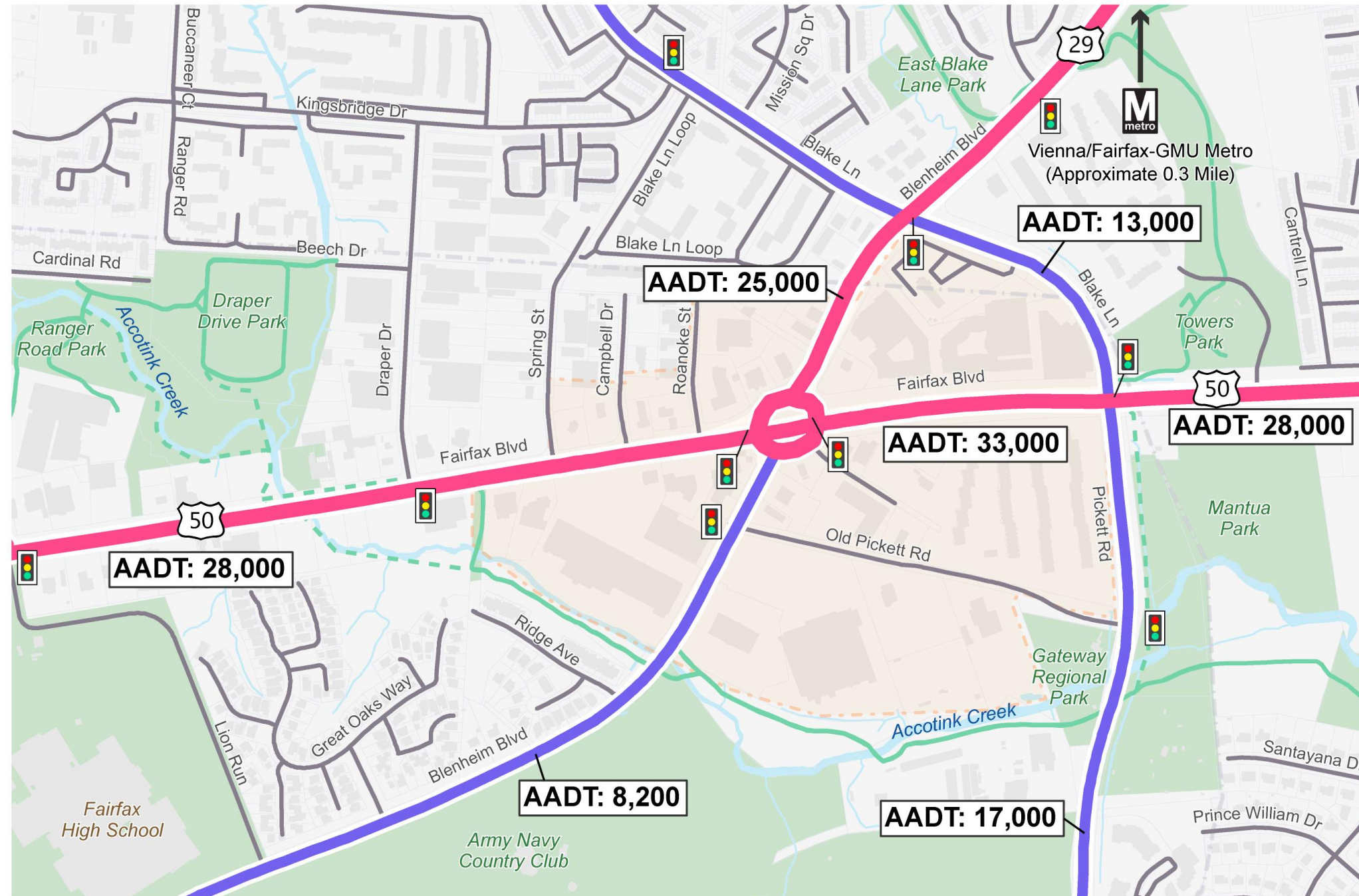
- Closest SAP to a Metro Station  
– perception of transit-oriented impact
- Limited market demand associated with adjacent land uses
- Access barriers from adjacent land uses
- Has established Fairfax “Circle” identity
- Disorienting traffic patterns
- Existing uses defined by Commercial Retail (CR) zoning
- Existing properties are largely income producing



# TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

# LIMITED STREET NETWORK AROUND FAIRFAX CIRCLE

## Functional Classification and Annual Average Daily Traffic (2020)



### Legend

- Water
- Parcel Boundary
- City/County Boundary
- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Park
- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Traffic Signal

### Functional Classification

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Local Street

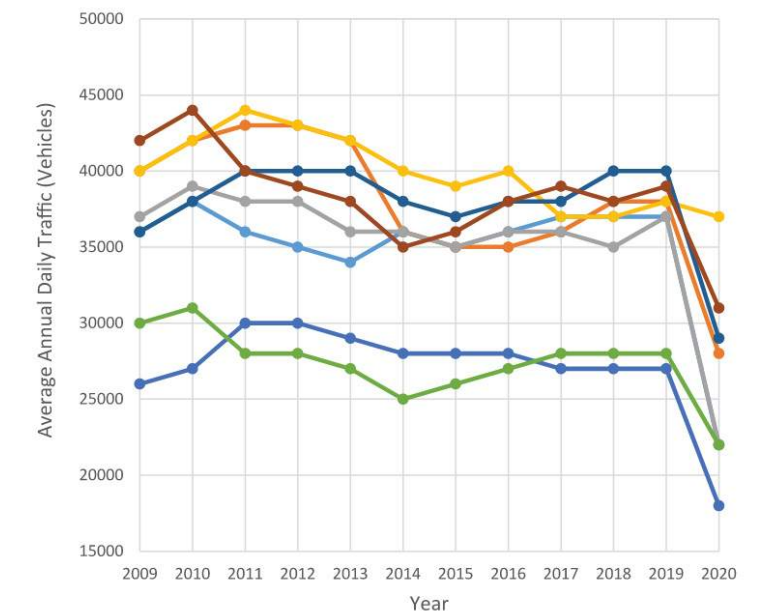
Source: Roadway Centerlines (2023), Fairfax County, and Traffic Volumes (2020), Virginia Department of Transportation.

0 500 1,000 Feet



Fairfax Circle  
Small Area Plan

- Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard are Principal Arterials.
- Blake Lane, Pickett Road, and Blenheim Boulevard south of Fairfax Boulevard are Minor Arterials.
- Traffic decreased significantly in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, but is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023.
- Traffic on most arterials did not fluctuate dramatically between 2009 and 2019.

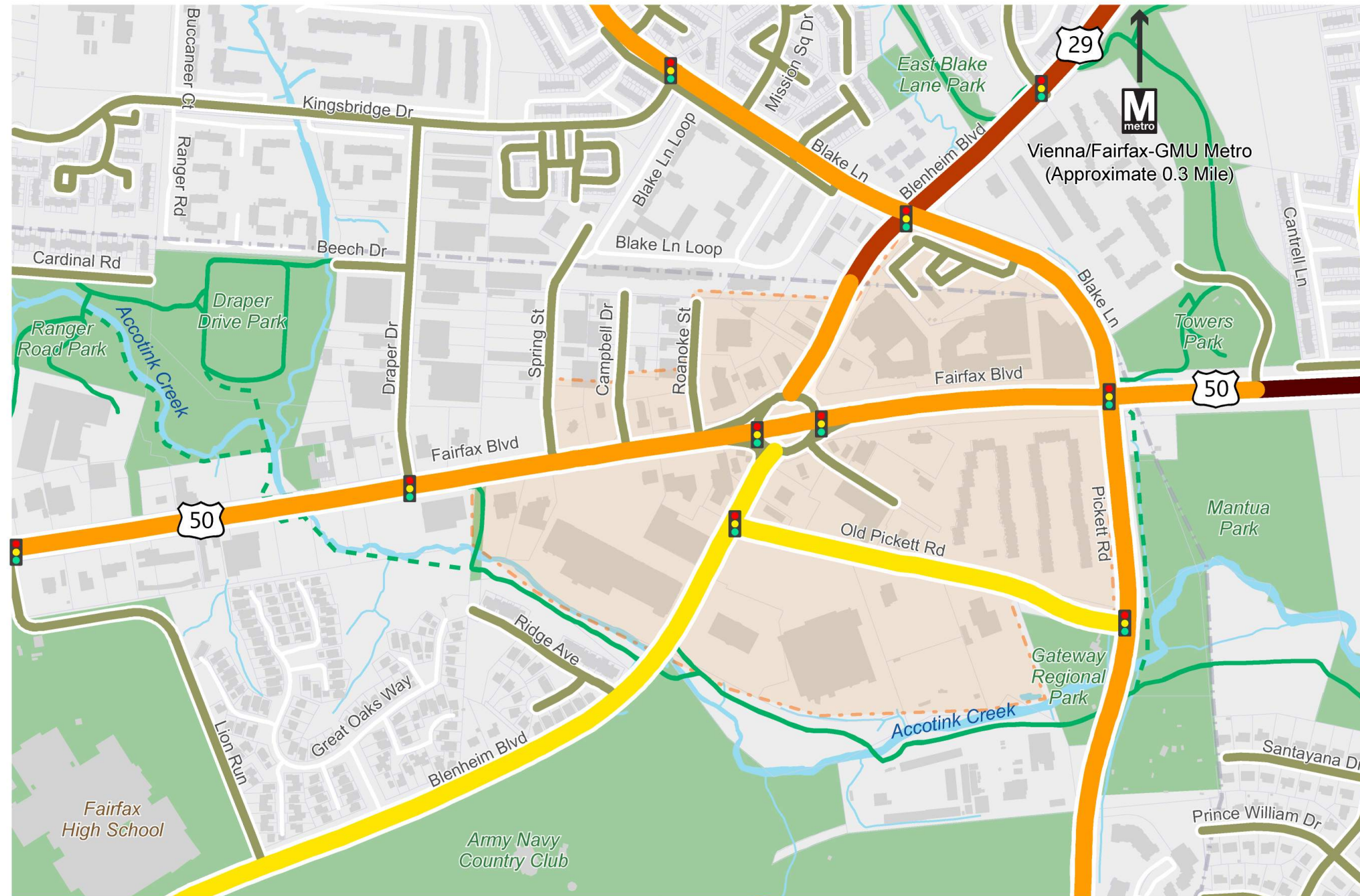


- (1) US 29 between Jermantown Road and US 50/Main Street
- (2) Main Street between US 29/50 and West Street
- (3) US 29/50 between US 29/Main Street and Chain Bridge Road
- (4) US 29/50 between Fair Woods Parkway and Draper Drive
- (5) Pickett Road between Main Street and Colonial Avenue
- (6) Chain Bridge Road between City Line and Judicial Drive
- (7) Main Street between Blenheim Boulevard and Whitacre Road
- (8) Chain Bridge Road between US 29/50 and Interstate 66

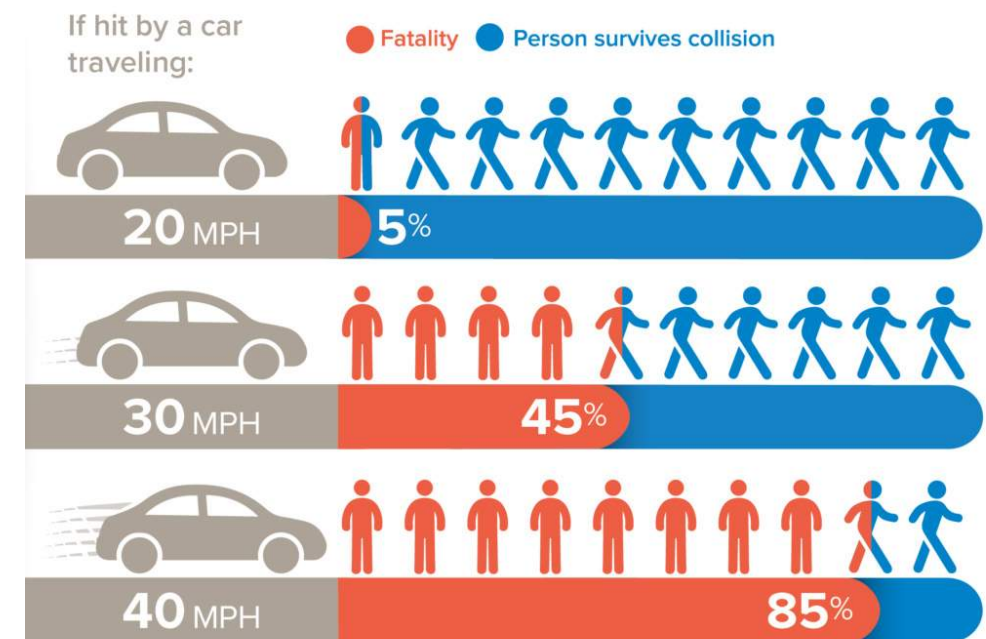
Annual Traffic Trends Source: City of Fairfax - Fairfax Circle Fact Book

# MAJOR ROADS HAVE POSTED SPEEDS OF 30-35 MPH

## Speed Limits



- Fairfax Boulevard, Blenheim Boulevard (north of Fairfax Circle), Blake Lane, and Pickett Road has a speed limit of 35 MPH.
- Blenheim Boulevard (south of Fairfax Circle) and Old Pickett Road has a speed limit of 30 MPH.



**Relationship between vehicular speed and chances of survival in case of a crash with pedestrian**  
Source: National Traffic Safety Board (NTSB)

**Legend**

- Water
- Parcel Boundary
- City/County Boundary
- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Park
- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Traffic Signal

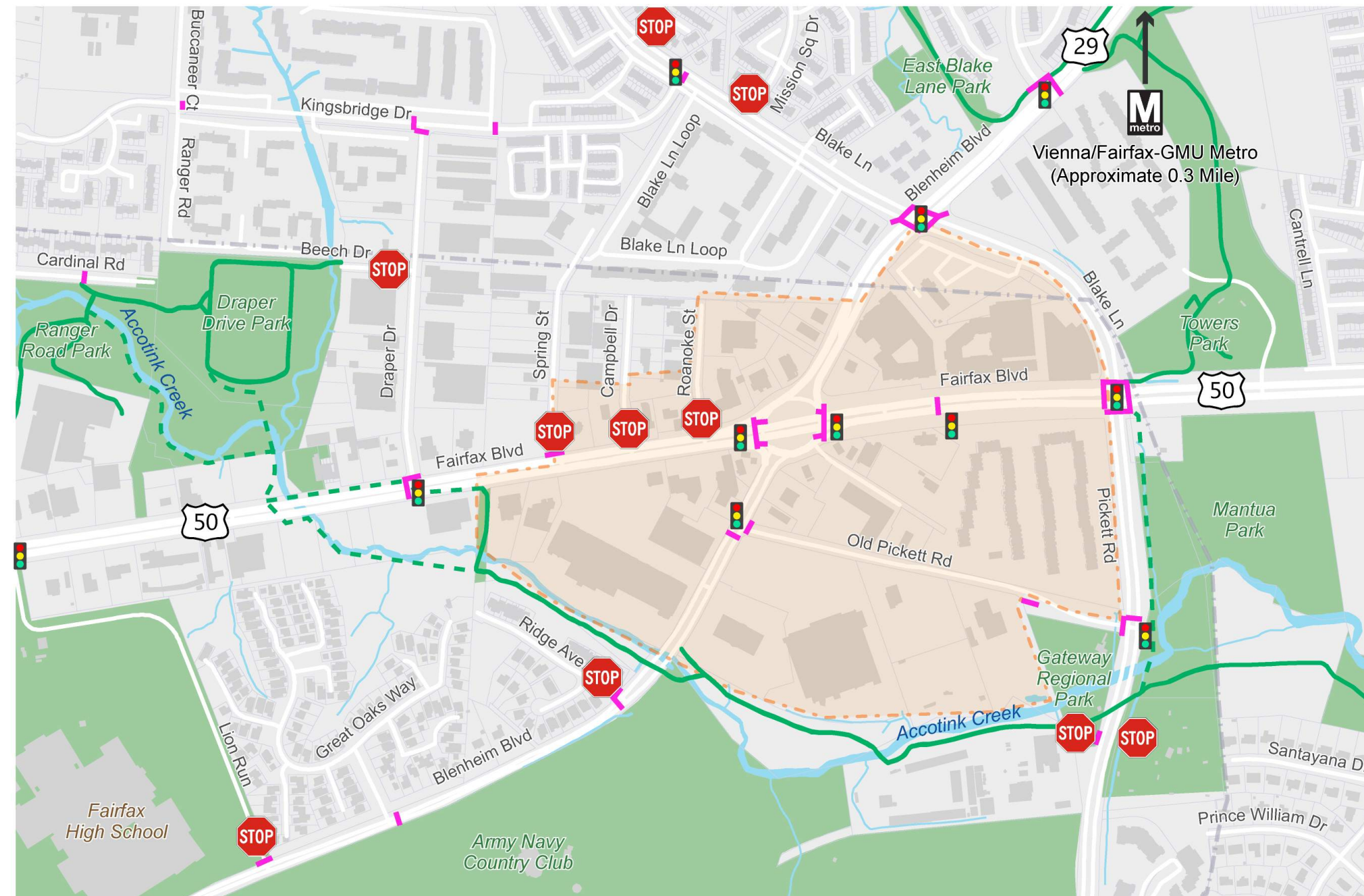
**Speed Limit**

- 25 MPH
- 30 MPH
- 35 MPH
- 40 MPH
- 45 MPH



# FEW SIGNALS - LIMITING PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

## Existing Traffic Control Devices



### Legend

- Water
- Park
- Stop Sign
- Parcel Boundary
- Existing Trail
- Traffic Signal
- City/County Boundary
- Planned Trail
- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Marked Crosswalk

Source: Sidewalks (2021), Fairfax County GIS.  
Data was supplemented with Google Maps.

0 500 1,000 Feet



Fairfax Circle  
Small Area Plan

- Few signalized intersections in the study area limiting the number of controlled pedestrian crossings.
- Average spacing of signalized intersections:
  - Fairfax Boulevard = 1,500 feet
  - Blenheim Boulevard = 800 feet
  - Old Pickett Road = 1,800 feet
  - Pickett Road = 1,100 feet
- City's comprehensive plan recommends signalized intersections in Activity Centers at 500 feet spacing.
- Most minor street approaches are stop-controlled with free-flow traffic along major roads.

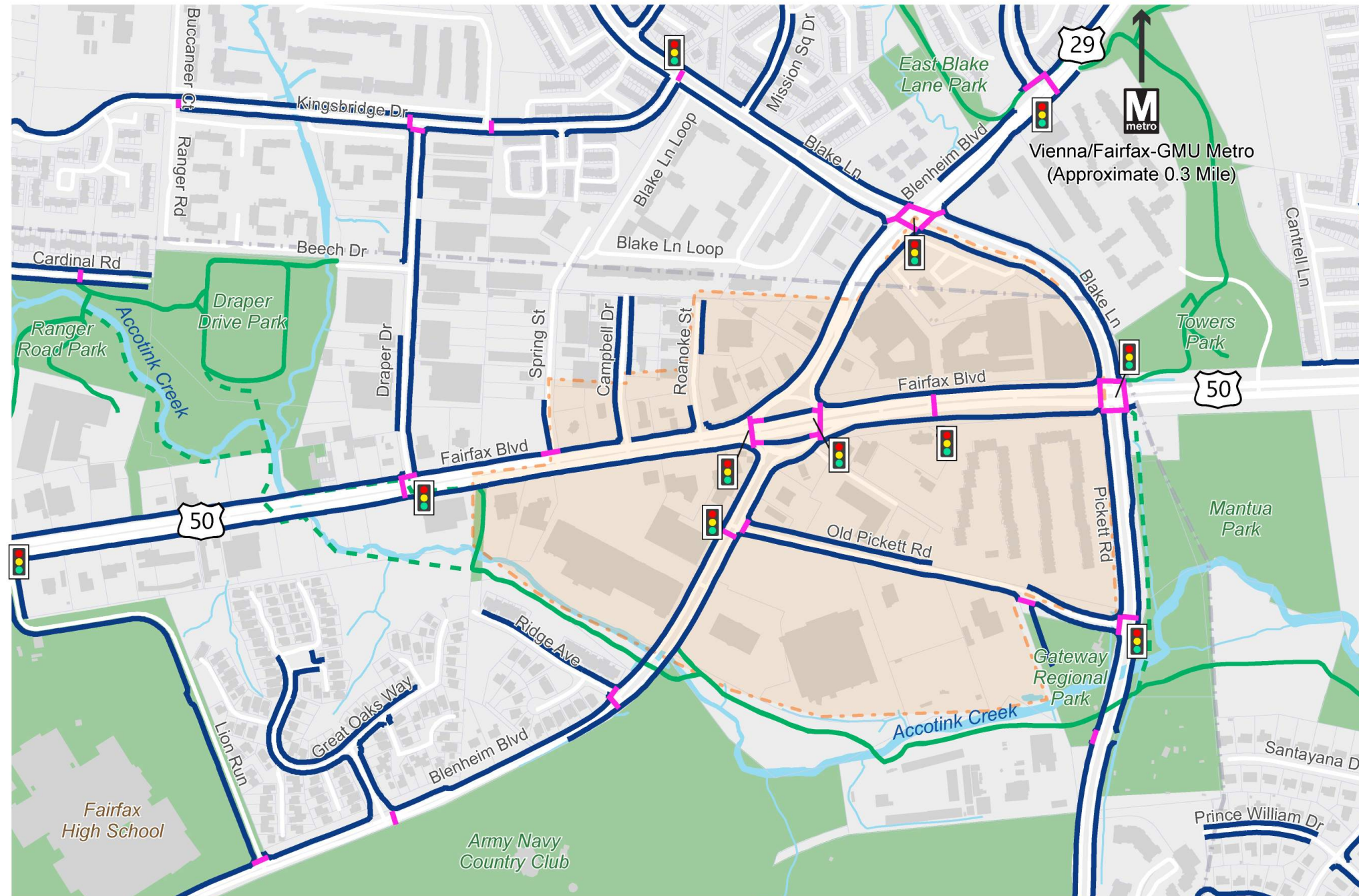


Signalized intersection at Blenheim Boulevard and Old Pickett Road



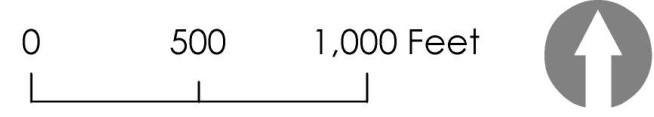
# SIDEWALKS ALONG MAJOR ROADS DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE

## Existing and Planned Pedestrian Network



- Legend**
- Water
  - Parcel Boundary
  - City/County Boundary
  - Small Area Plan Boundary
  - Park
  - Existing Trail
  - - Planned Trail
  - Sidewalk
  - - Marked Crosswalk
  - Traffic Signal

Sources: Sidewalks (2021), Fairfax County. Data was supplemented with Google Maps.



Fairfax Circle  
Small Area Plan

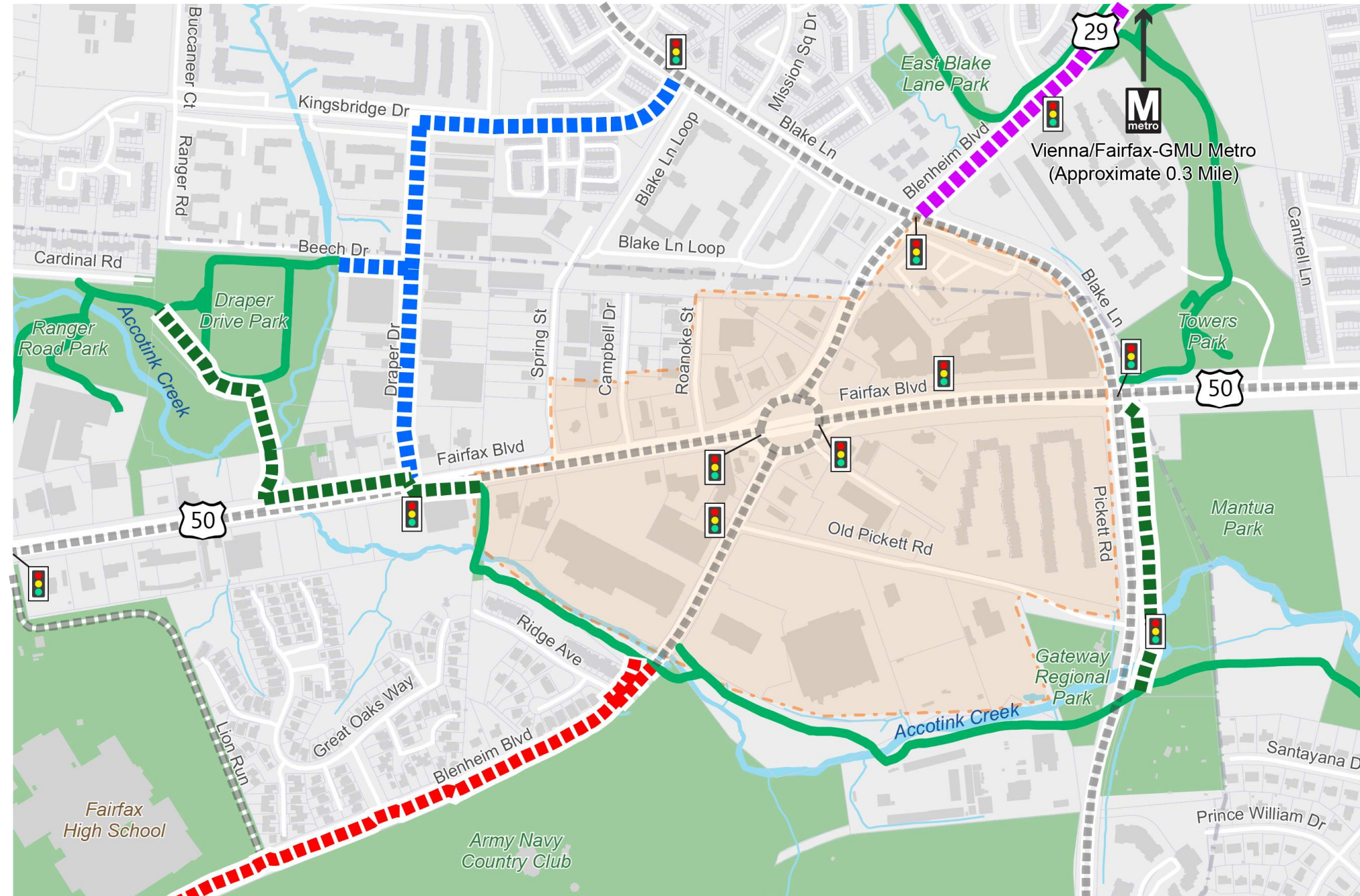
- There are sidewalks along most of the Principal and Minor Arterials within the study area; however, these are not separated by a buffer from vehicular traffic.
- Few sidewalk gaps exist on local streets.
- Marked crossing opportunities are limited to signalized intersections, however, not all legs have marked crosswalks.
- Off-street trails provide a comfortable, low-stress pedestrian facility as an alternative for those passing through the area.



Sidewalks with no buffers along Fairfax Boulevard

# MANY EXISTING TRAILS AND PLANNED BICYCLE FACILITIES

## Existing and Planned Bicycle Network

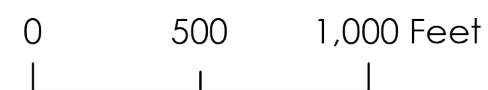


- Trails make up the main facilities in the existing bicycle network in the study area.
- Train extensions are planned to connect proposed George Snyder Trail and existing Willcoxon Trail.
- Two-way separated bike lanes are planned along Blenheim Boulevard south of Ridge Avenue.
- Bicycle Plan recommends bike lanes along Draper Drive and long-term improvements along Fairfax Boulevard and Blenheim Boulevard.

**Legend**

Water	Park	Trail
Parcel Boundary	Existing Trail	Bike Lanes
City/County Boundary	Traffic Signal	Two-Way Separated Bike Lane
Small Area Plan Boundary		Shared Use Path
		Long-Term Improvements

Sources: Bike Fairfax City (2021) and Bicycle Trails (2022), Fairfax County GIS

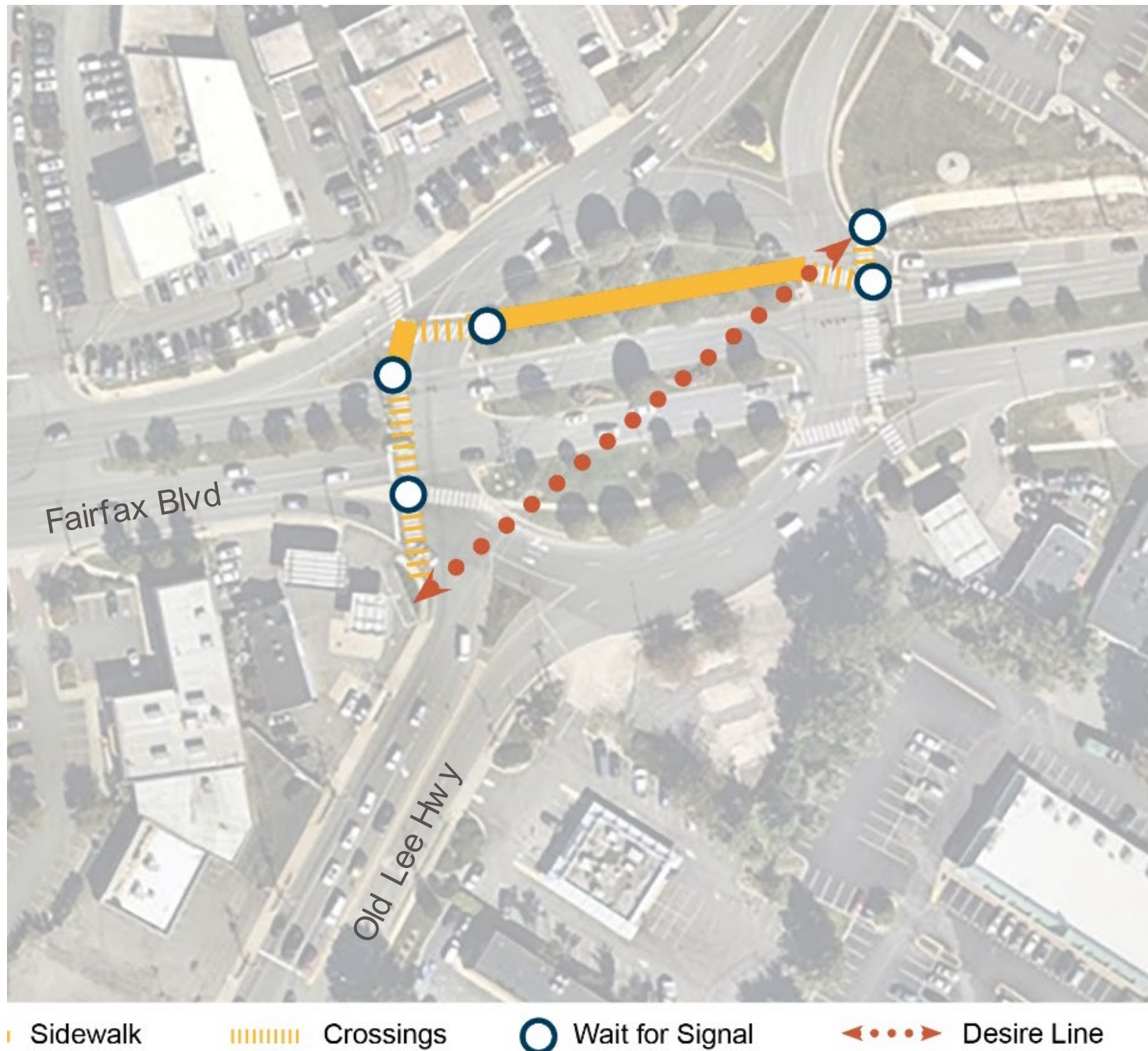


Fairfax Circle  
Small Area Plan



Willcoxon Trail along Accotink Creek provides a low-stress and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facility

# FAIRFAX CIRCLE IS NOT A PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY INTERSECTION



Source: Fairfax Circle Visioning and Multimodal Intersection Alternatives Study (2021), City of Fairfax.

<b>Total Time (minutes):</b>	<b>6:00</b>
Walk Time (minutes):	1:45
Wait Time (minutes):	4:15
<b>Traveled Distance:</b>	<b>500'</b>
<b>Crow-fly Distance:</b>	<b>375'</b>
% Detour (traveled/crow-fly):	33%
<b>Signalized Crossings:</b>	<b>5</b>

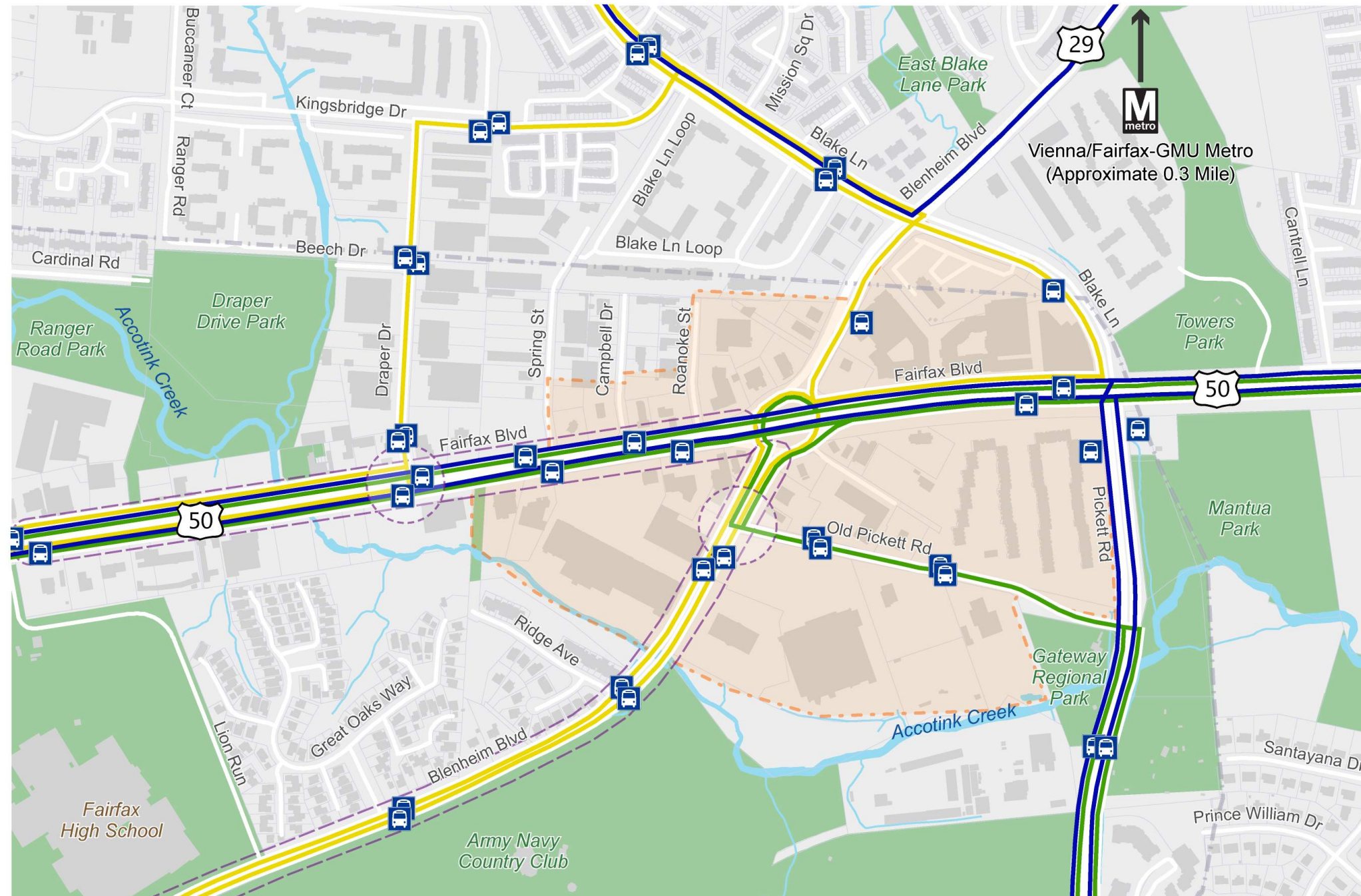
- Crossing at Fairfax Circle takes a long time
- Existing crosswalks at Fairfax Circle do not match pedestrian desire lines



Pedestrian crossings through Fairfax Circle

# BUS TRANSIT ROUTES & STOPS ALONG MAJOR ROADS

## Existing and Proposed Transit Network



### Legend

- Water
- Parcel Boundary
- City/County Boundary
- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Park
- Metrobus Lines
- CUE Gold 1 & 2
- CUE Green 1 & 2
- Bus Stop
- Bus Improvement Corridor
- Bus Transfer Improvement Area

Source: Metrobus Lines, CUE Lines, and Bus Stops, WMATA and City of Fairfax. City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan, City of Fairfax.

0 500 1,000 Feet



Fairfax Circle  
Small Area Plan

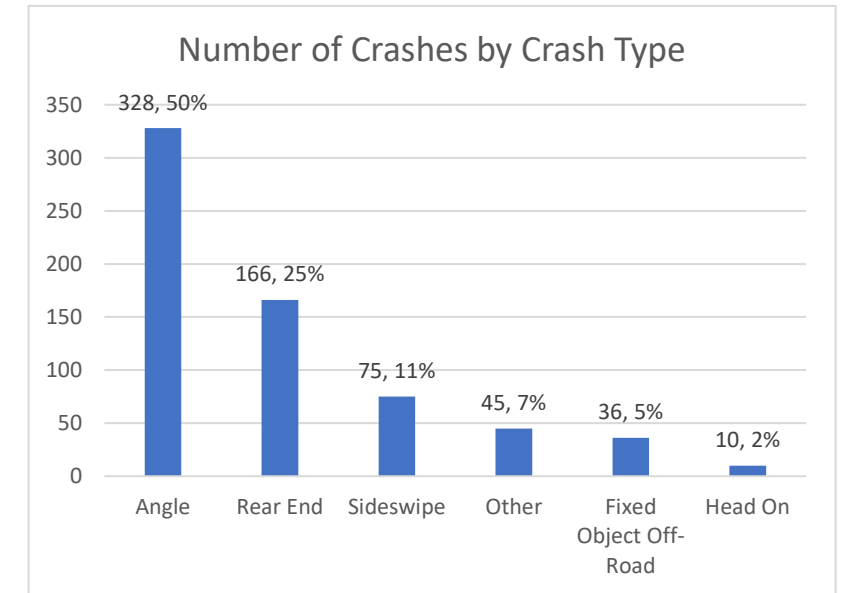
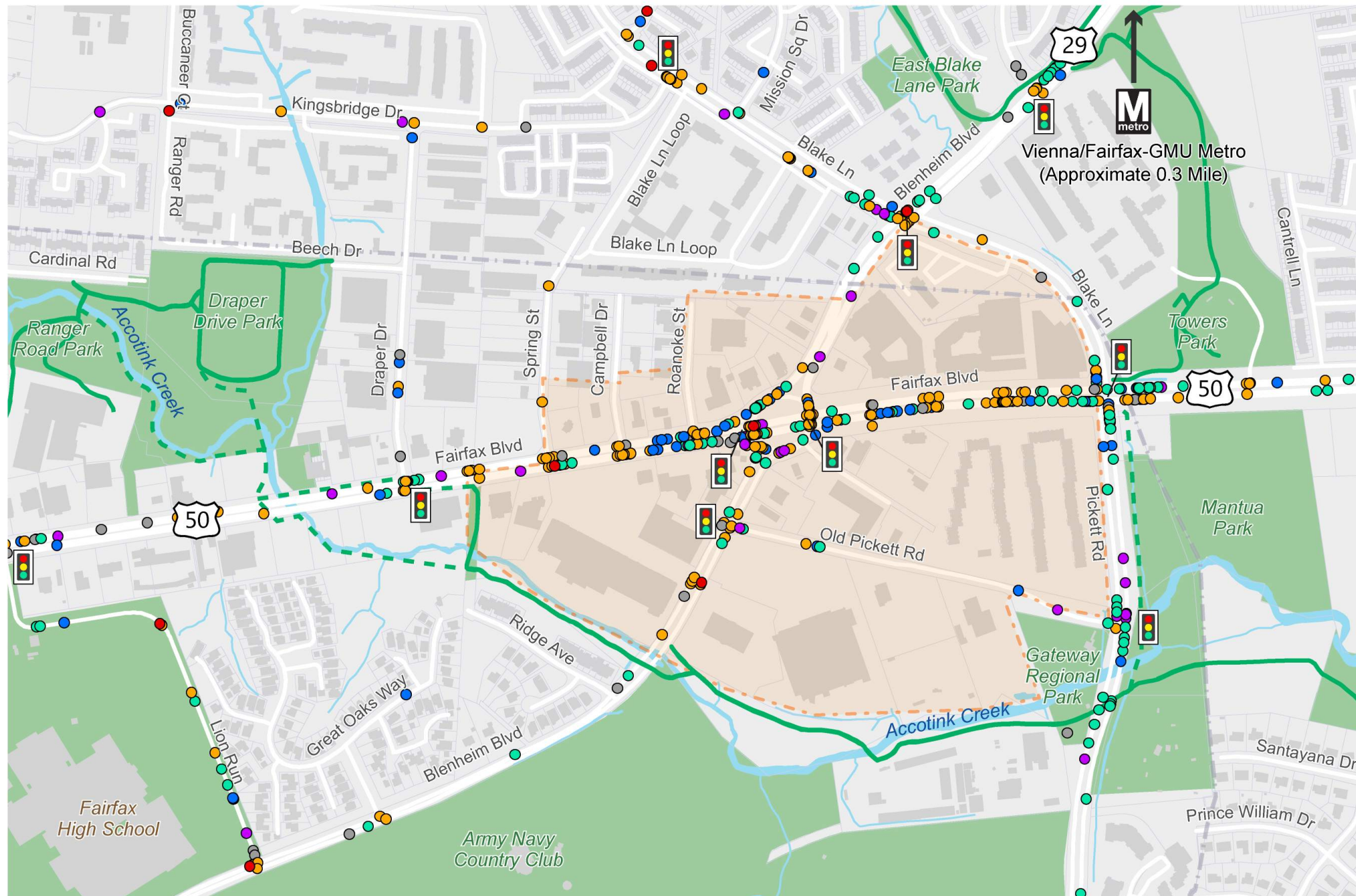
- CUE Gold 1 & 2 and CUE Green 1 & 2 Lines run within the study area.
- WMATA Metrobus Routes 1C, 2B, and 29N run within the study area.
- The Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metro Station is approximately 0.3 Miles north from the study area.
- Limited to no amenities present at existing bus stops.



Narrow sidewalks with no buffers leading up to a bus stop with no amenities along Fairfax Boulevard

# 660 CRASHES IN LAST 7 YEARS, MOSTLY ALONG MAJOR ROADS

## Crashes by Crash Type (2016-2022)



- Between 2016 and 2022, there were 660 total crashes.
- The most common crash types were angle (328, 50%), rear end (166, 25%), and sideswipe (75, 11%).
- Crashes concentrated around major intersections.

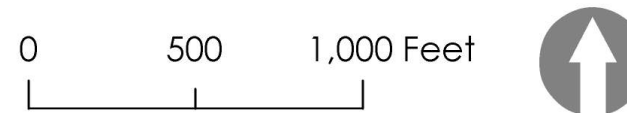
**Legend**

- Water
- Parcel Boundary
- City/County Boundary
- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Park
- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Traffic Signal

**Crash Type**

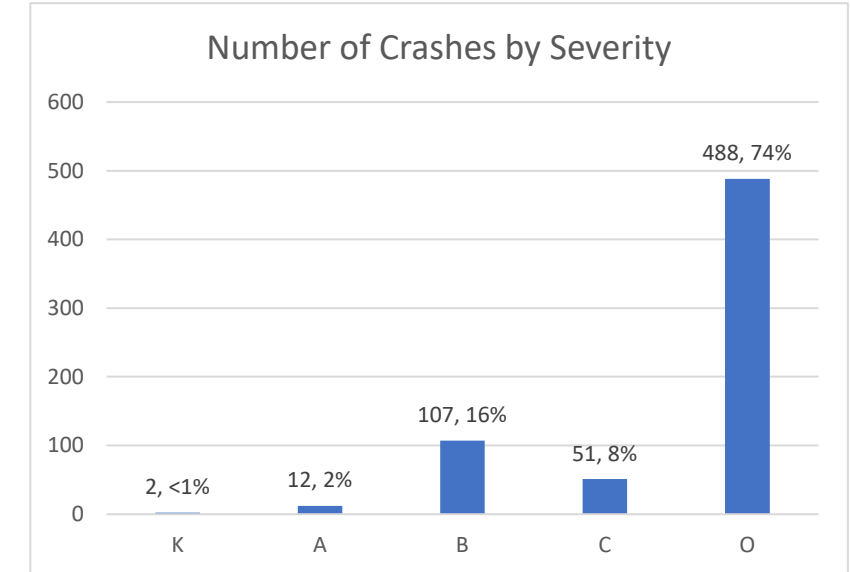
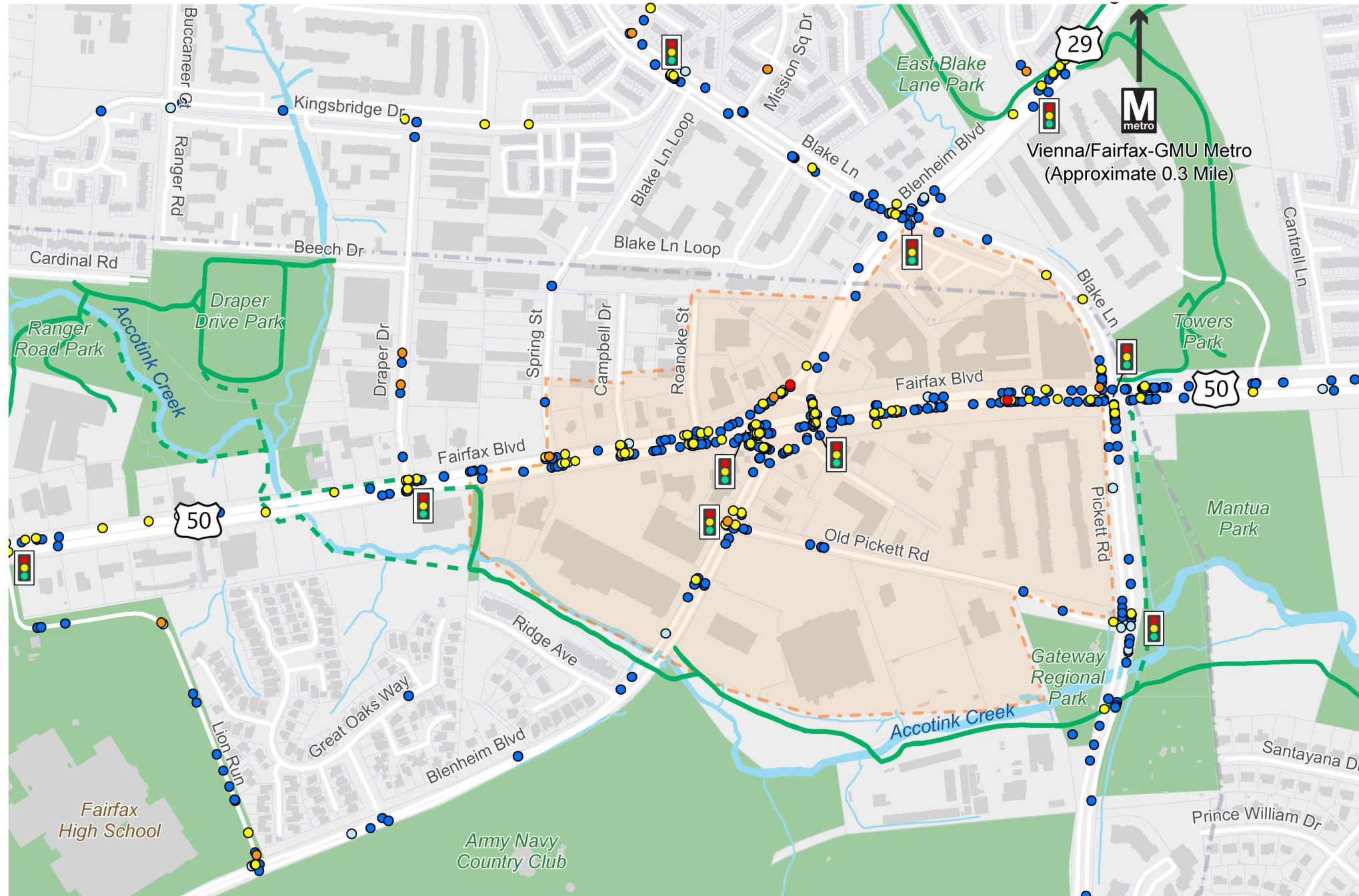
- Angle
- Head-On
- Rear End
- Sideswipe
- Fixed Object (Off-Road)
- Other

Source: Crashes (2016-2022), Virginia Department of Transportation



# CRASHES BY SEVERITY

## Crashes by Severity (2016-2022)



- Most crashes were Property Damage Only (Pdo) - (488, 74%).
- Two fatalities were reported within the study area between 2016 and 2022.

### Legend

- |                          |                |                          |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Water                    | Park           | Property Damage Only     |
| Parcel Boundary          | Existing Trail | Possible Injury          |
| City/County Boundary     | Planned Trail  | Suspected Minor Injury   |
| Small Area Plan Boundary | Traffic Signal | Suspected Serious Injury |
|                          |                | Fatality                 |

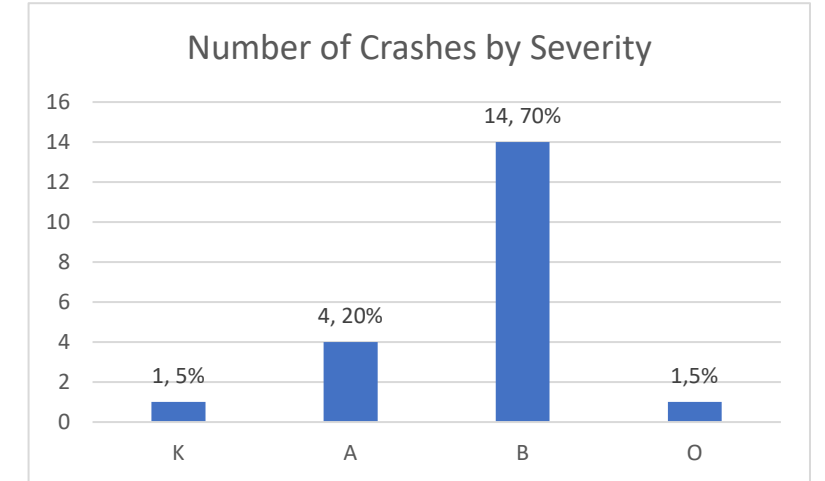
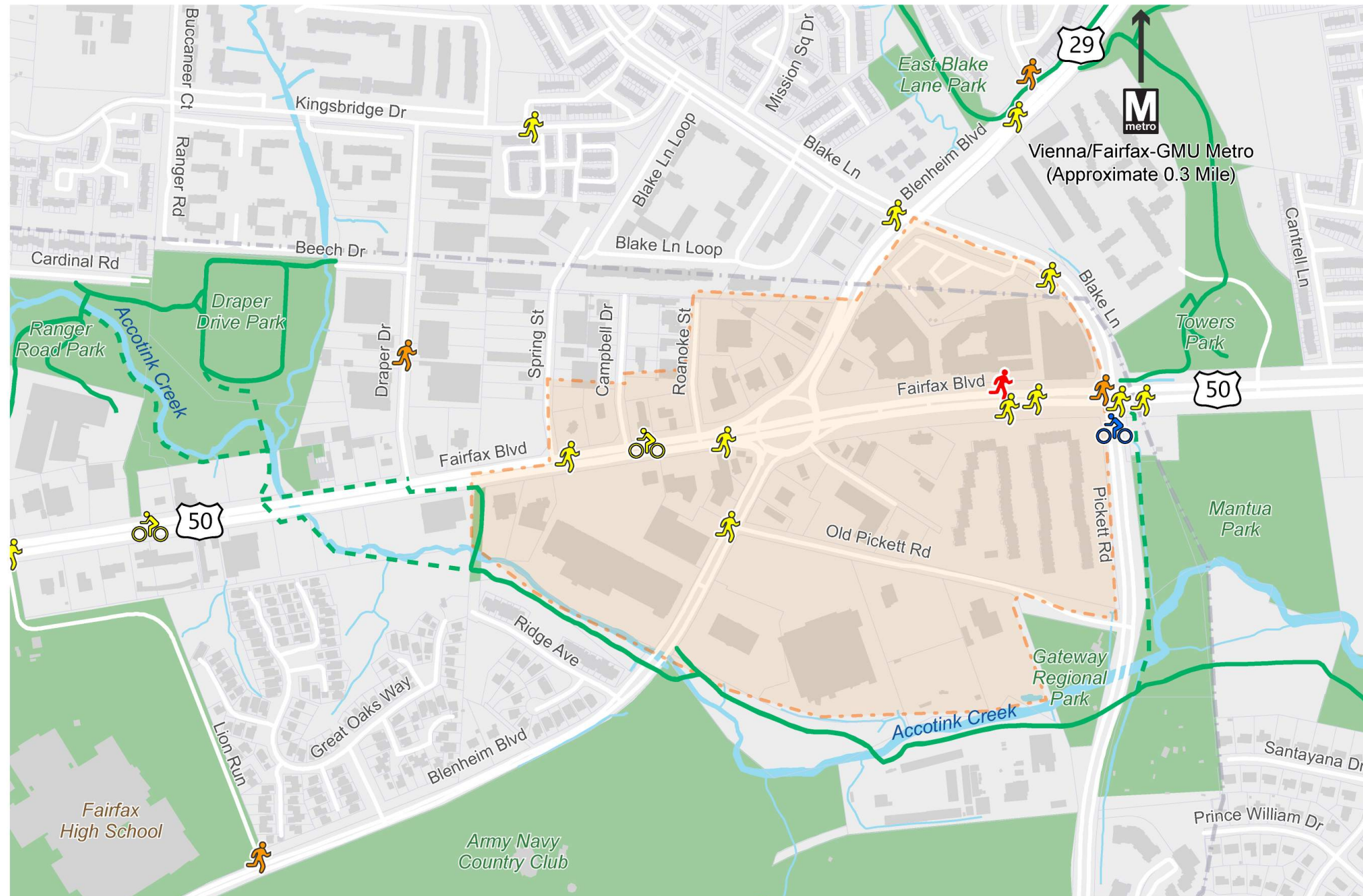
Source: Crashes (2016-2022), Virginia Department of Transportation

0 500 1,000 Feet



# PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE CRASHES

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes by Severity (2016-2022)



- Between 2016 and 2022, there were 17 pedestrian-related crashes and 3 bicycle-related crashes.
- Most crashes had a severity level, or suspected minor injury.
- A crash with one pedestrian fatality was recorded in 2016 along Fairfax Boulevard between Blenheim Boulevard and Blake Lane.

### Legend

- Water
- Parcel Boundary
- City/County Boundary
- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Park
- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Pedestrian-Related Crash
- Bicycle-Related Crash
- Property Damage Only
- Suspected Minor Injury
- Suspected Serious Injury
- Fatality

Source: Crashes (2016-2022), Virginia Department of Transportation

0 500 1,000 Feet



# FAIRFAX CIRCLE TLC STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

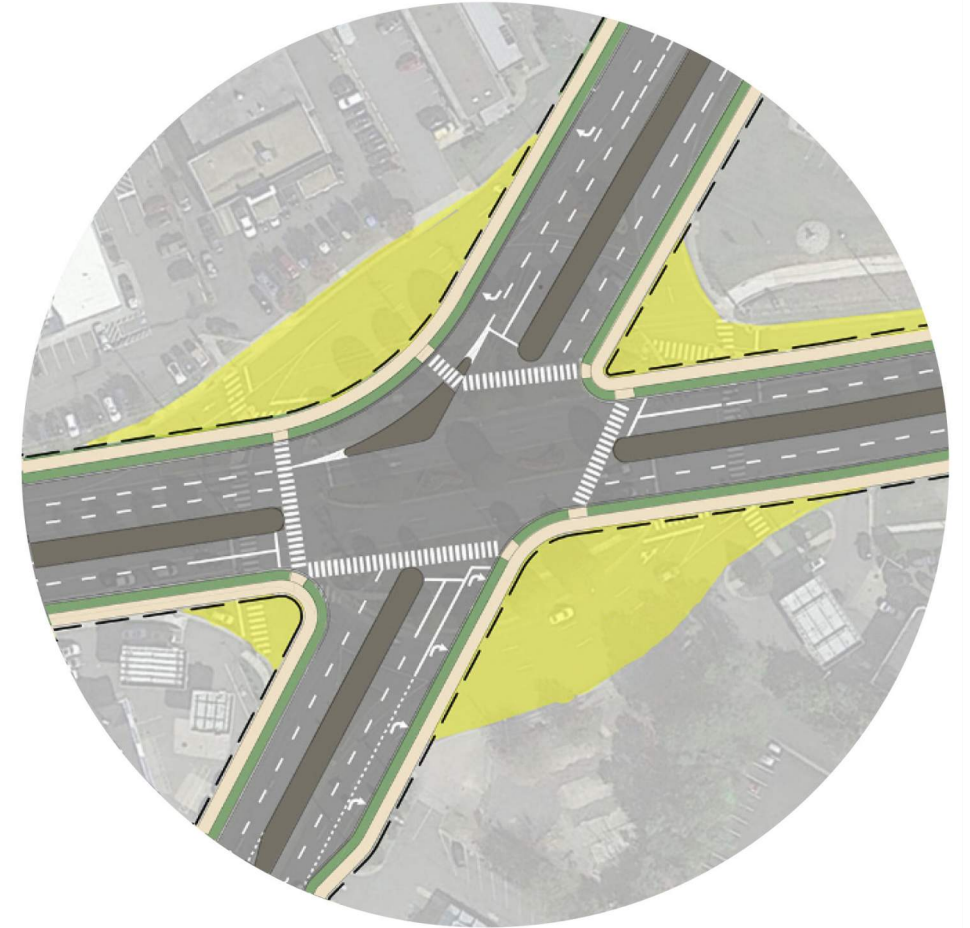
**Traditional Intersection (with Skew)**



**Roundabout with Grade Separation**



**Quadrant Roadway Intersection**



**Traditional Intersection  
(with skew)**

This alternative replaces the circle with a traditional four-legged signalized intersection using the existing alignment of Lee Hwy. and Old Lee Hwy.



**Roundabout with Grade Separation**

This alternative retains the circle configuration, removing slip lanes and signals to create a roundabout; it also removes the heaviest volumes (through movements on Fairfax Blvd.) from the intersection by placing them below-grade.



**Quadrant Roadway Intersection**

This alternative replaces the traffic circle with a traditional four-legged signalized intersection; it utilizes a new roadway through the southwest quadrant to accommodate left turns, enabling a smaller footprint for the primary intersection.

- LEGEND**
- Median
  - Reclaimed Right-of-Way
  - Sidewalk
  - Buffer Strip

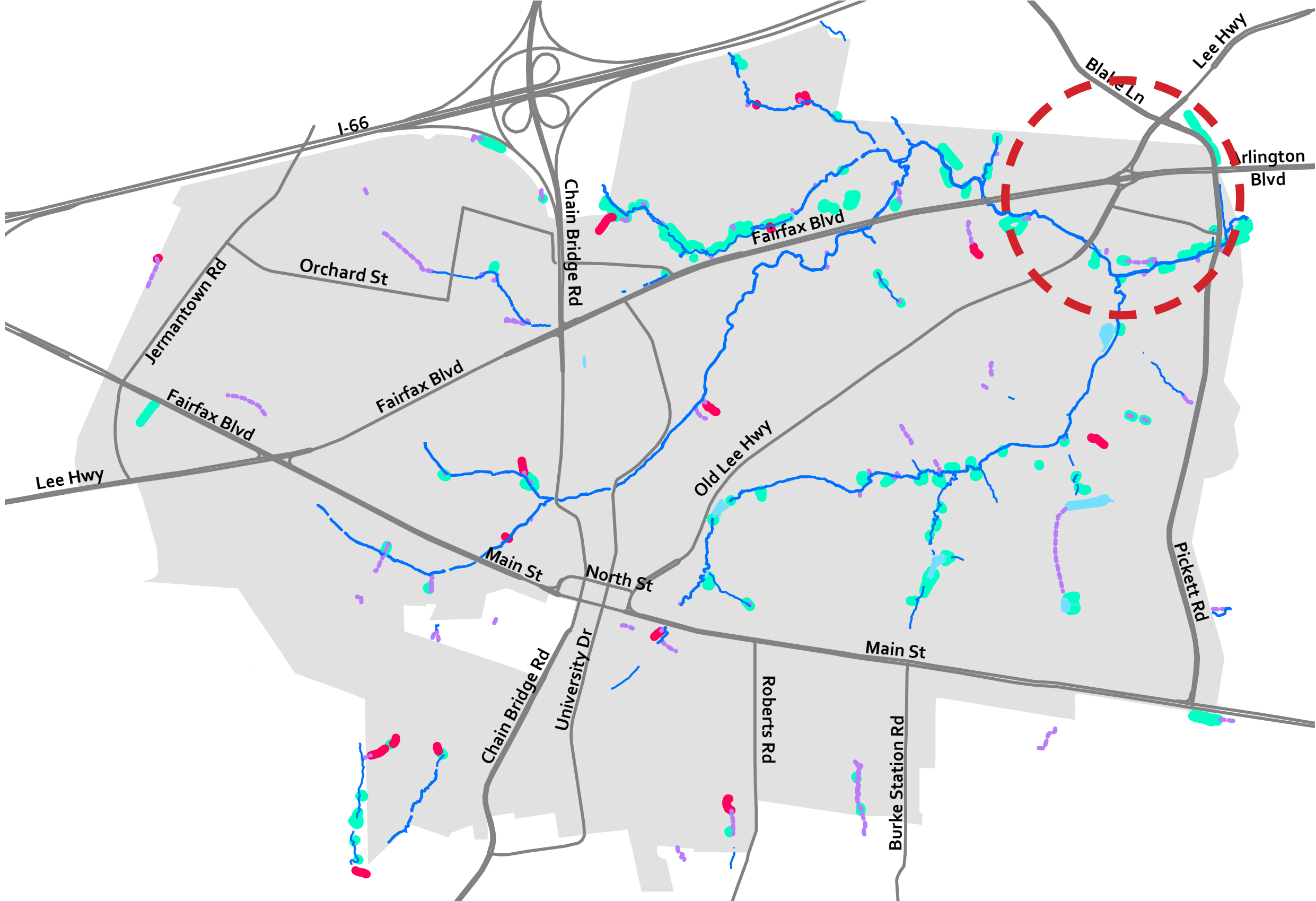
Source: Fairfax Circle Visioning and Multimodal Intersection Alternatives Study (2021), City of Fairfax.



# KEY OBSERVATIONS

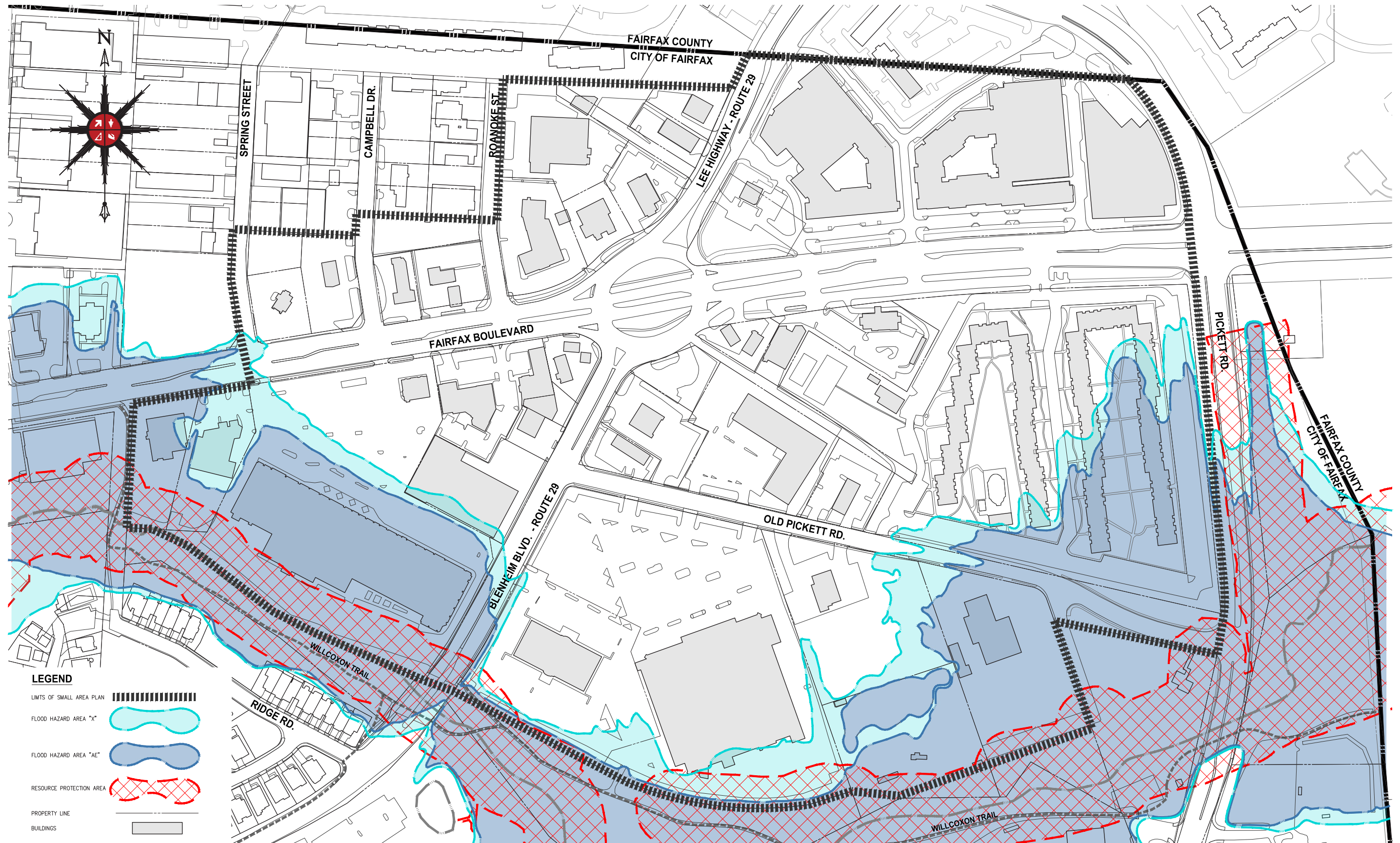
# OBSERVATION #1: THE ACCOTINK WATERSHED

Focal Point for Topography and Stormwater

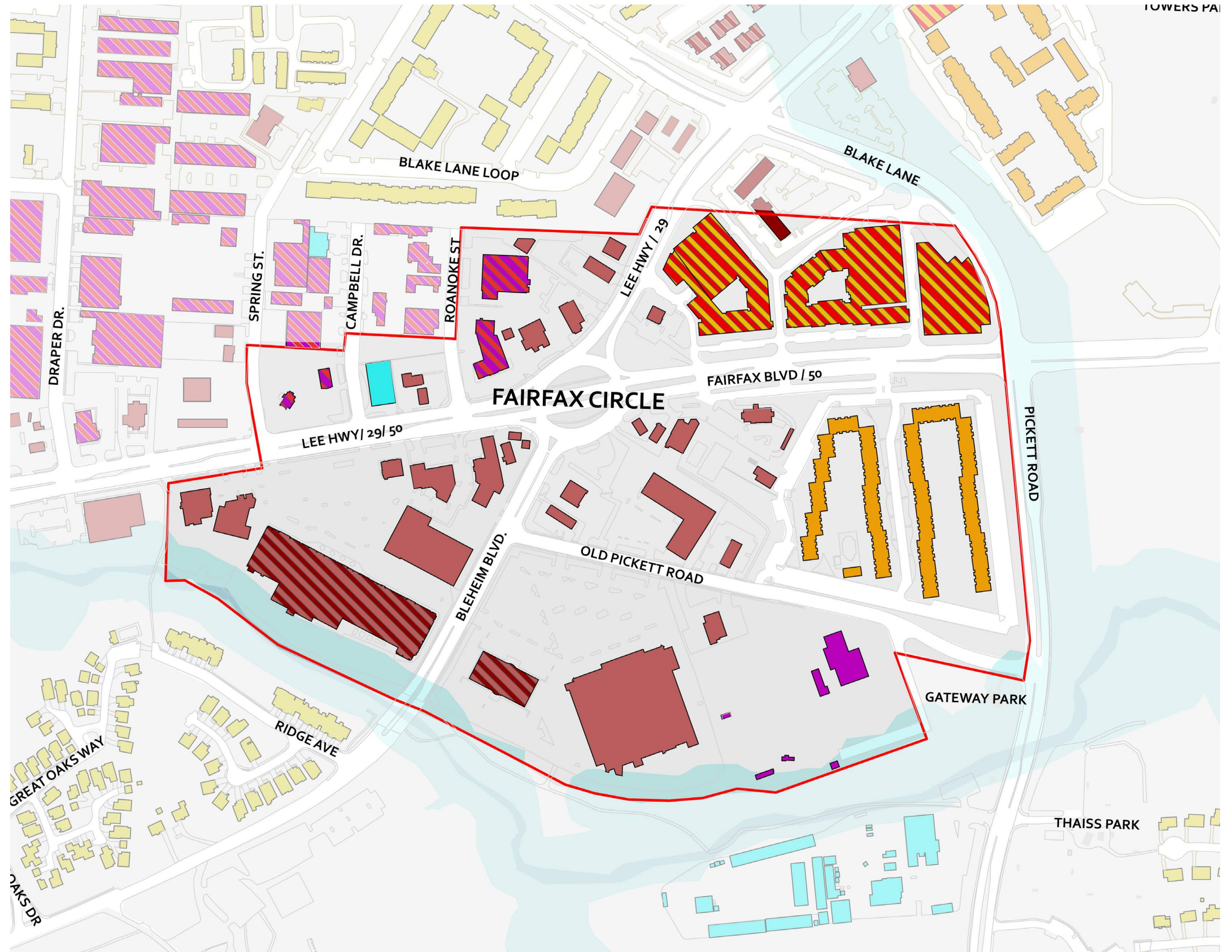


# OBSERVATION #1: THE ACCOTINK WATERSHED

## Focal Point for Topography and Stormwater




# OBSERVATION #2: EVOLVING LAND USE

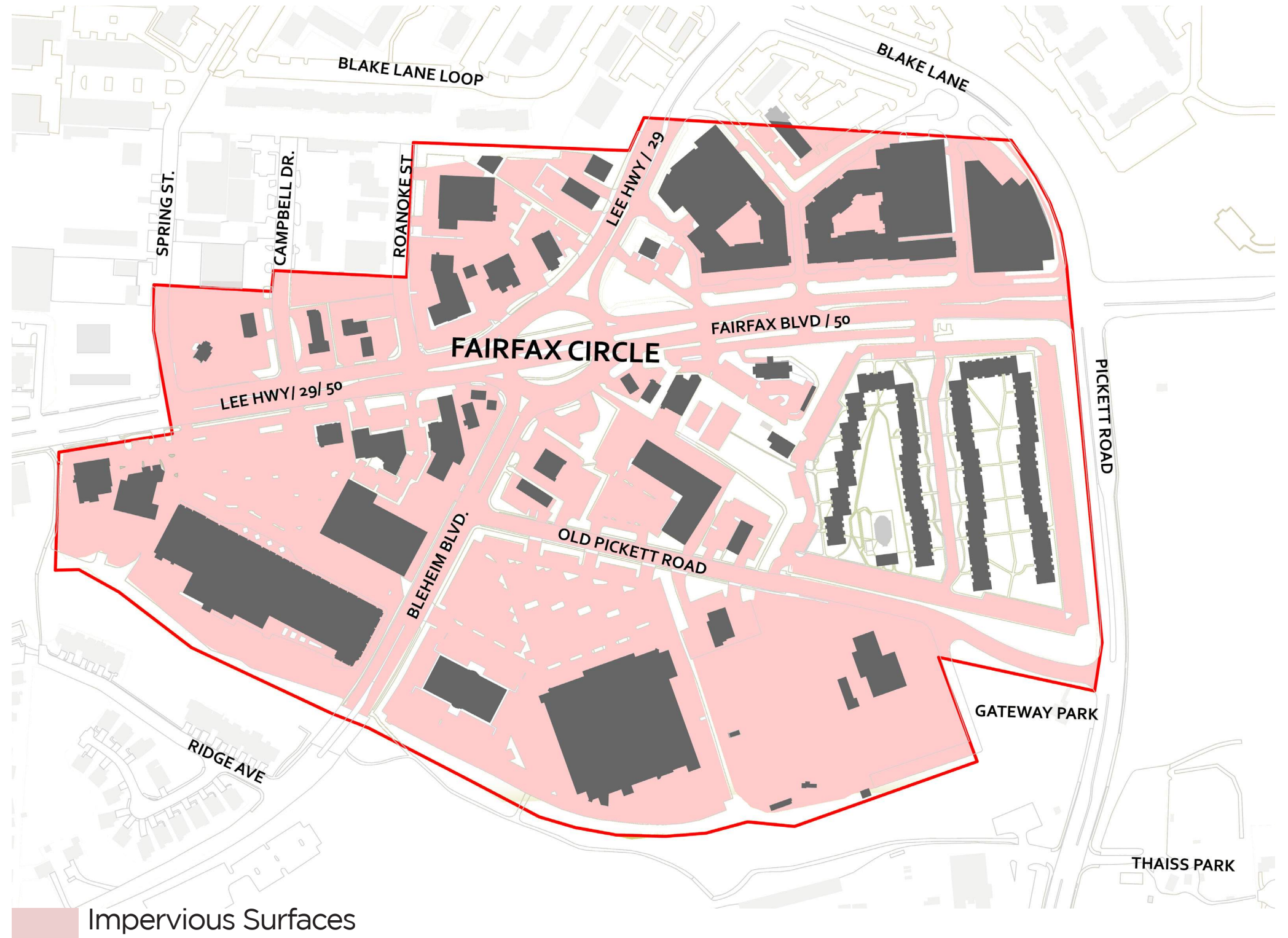


# OBSERVATION #3: OPEN SPACE AND PARKING

## Connecting to Nature

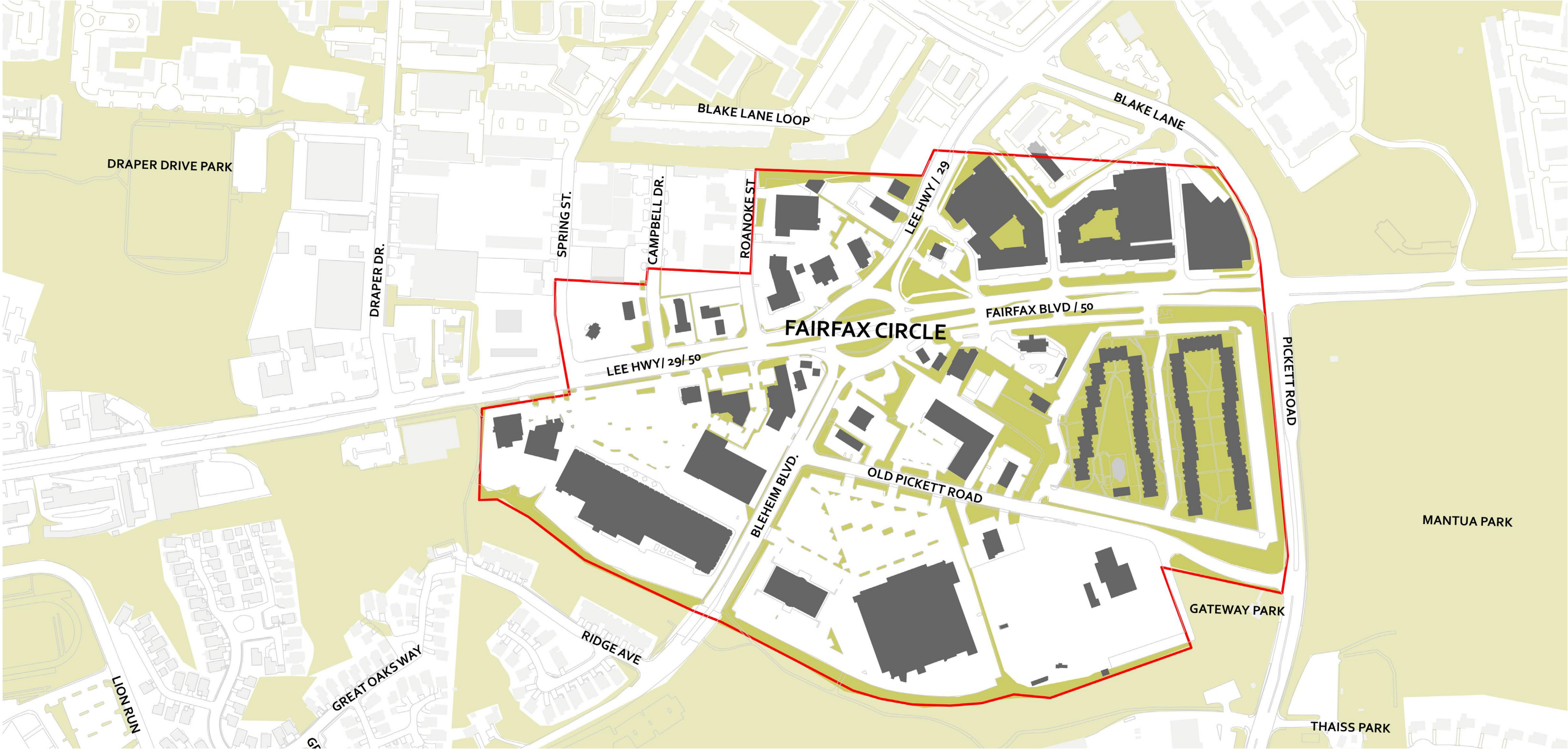
### Study Area

 Approx. 77% Impervious Surfaces  
(Buildings + Surface Parking)



# OBSERVATION #3: OPEN SPACE AND PARKING

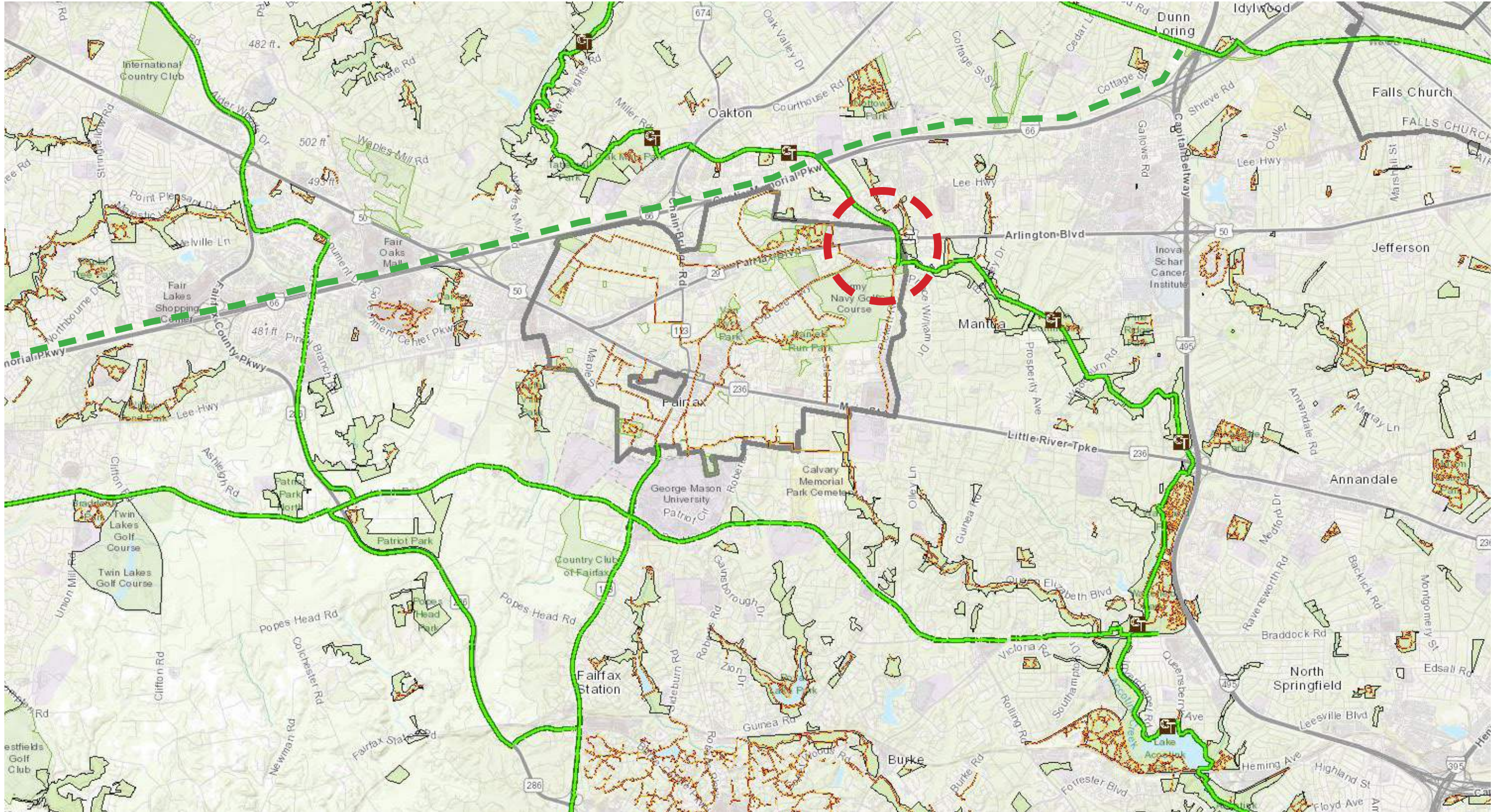
## Connecting to Nature



Greenspaces

# OBSERVATION #4: REGIONAL GREEN NETWORK

## Fairfax Circle as a Regional Trail Node



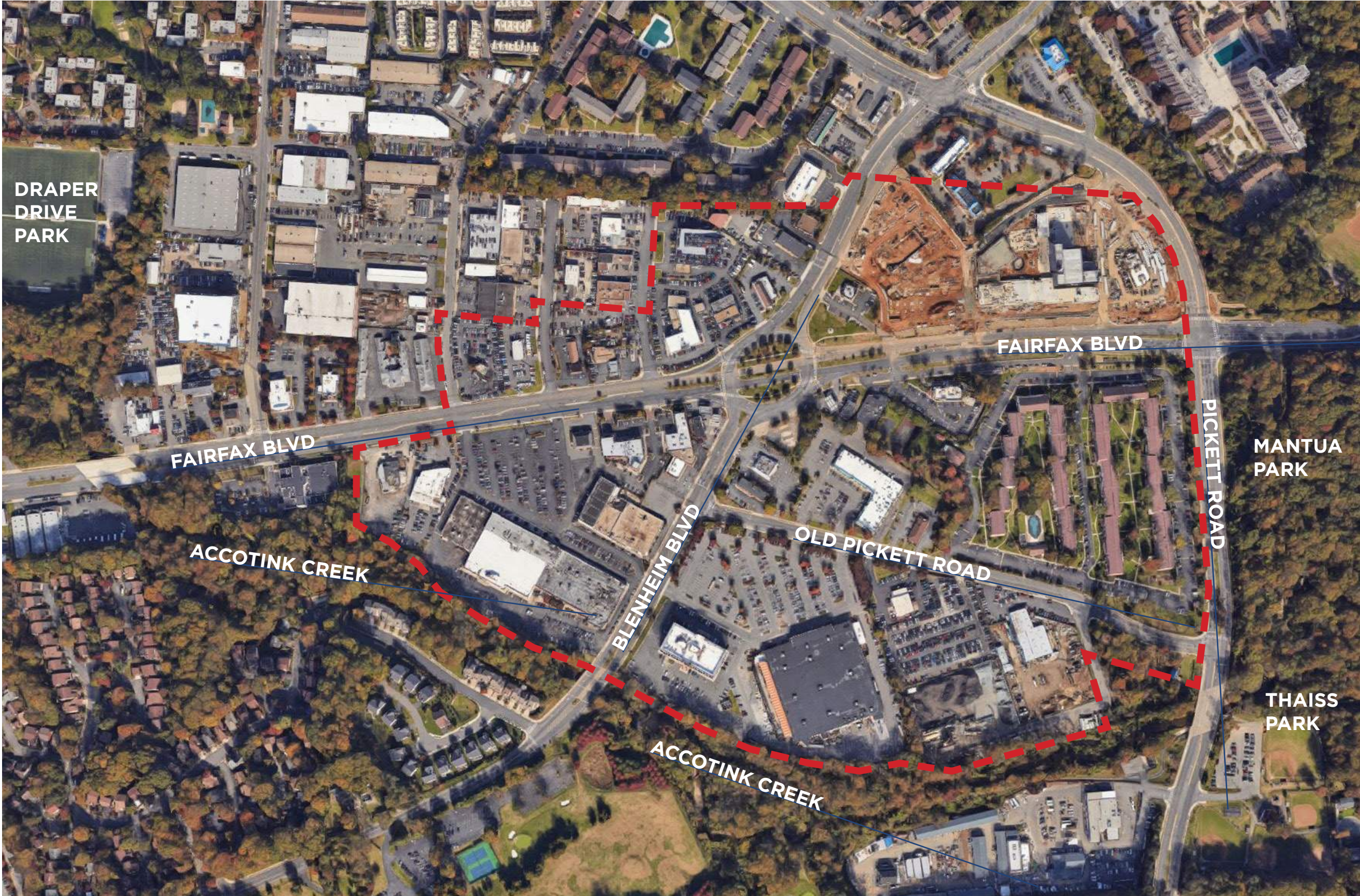
# OBSERVATION #5: FAIRFAX CIRCLE IDENTITY

## History and Regional Identity





# STUDY AREA



# OPEN COMMUNITY DIALOGUE