



Vision Fairfax Mason Charrette

@VisionFFXMason





What is your #VisionFairfaxMason?



FIELD
PAOLI

GEORGE
MASON
UNIVERSITY



nvrc
Northern Virginia Regional Commission

Gibson
transportation consulting, inc.
STRATEGIC
ECONOMICS

Thank you to sponsors:





**More than
200 participants!**

Motto of Fairfax, Virginia



“FARE & FAC”
SPEAK & DO

As in the Fairfax Mason Charrette

The Fairfax Mason Study Area





Inspirational Talks

Charrette in process



Memorable Charrette Quotations

“We want a place you go to, not a place you go through.”

“Fairfax and Mason are connected at the hip for everyone’s mutual benefit.”

“Tough times don’t last; tough people do.”

Comments we heard:

Better communication
between Fairfax and Mason

Senior-friendly housing

More shuttles

More community service
opportunities

More of a college town feel

More housing in Fairfax for
students

Supportive, safe environment

Job opportunity marketing
and communication

More bike trails

More parking in Fairfax

More Mason involvement in
Fairfax

Connect Mason to Old Town

TRANSPORTATION

Vision Fairfax Mason Charrette

November 6-8, 2014



TRANSPORTATION

ISSUES

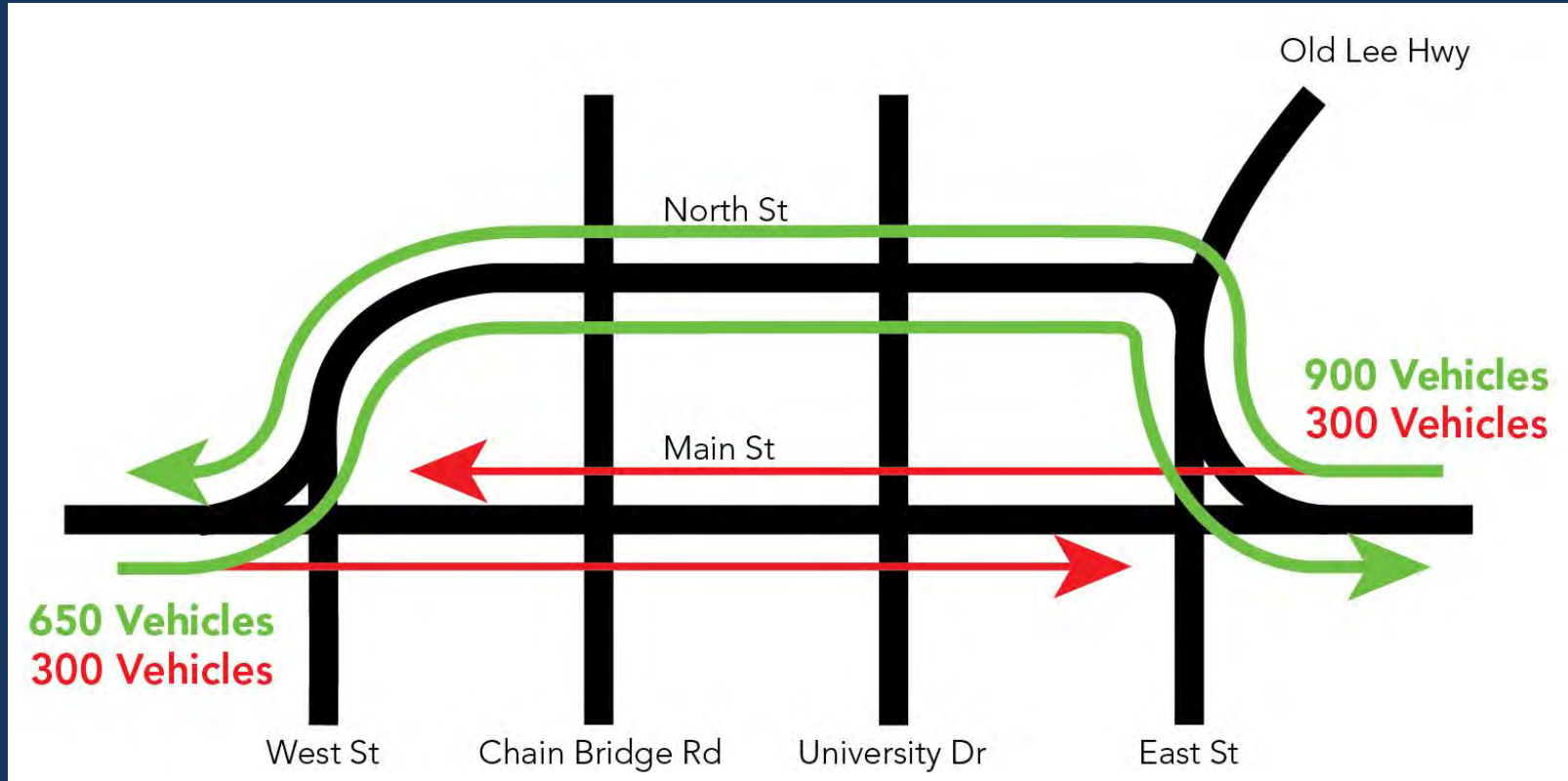
- Traffic within Old Town
 - Through Traffic
- Parking Distribution
- Mason/Old Town Connection



ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS



TRAFFIC THROUGH OLD TOWN



THROUGH TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS

- Signal Timing Priority
- Further De-emphasize Main St
- Lengthen Storage Areas
- Local Parallel Routes
- Regional Bypass Routes

POTENTIAL REGIONAL BYPASS



PARKING

- Occupancy ??
- Distribution in Old Town
 - Shortage in SE Corner
- University
 - Provide Real-Time Parking Info at Campus Entrances



MASON ON-CAMPUS PARKING



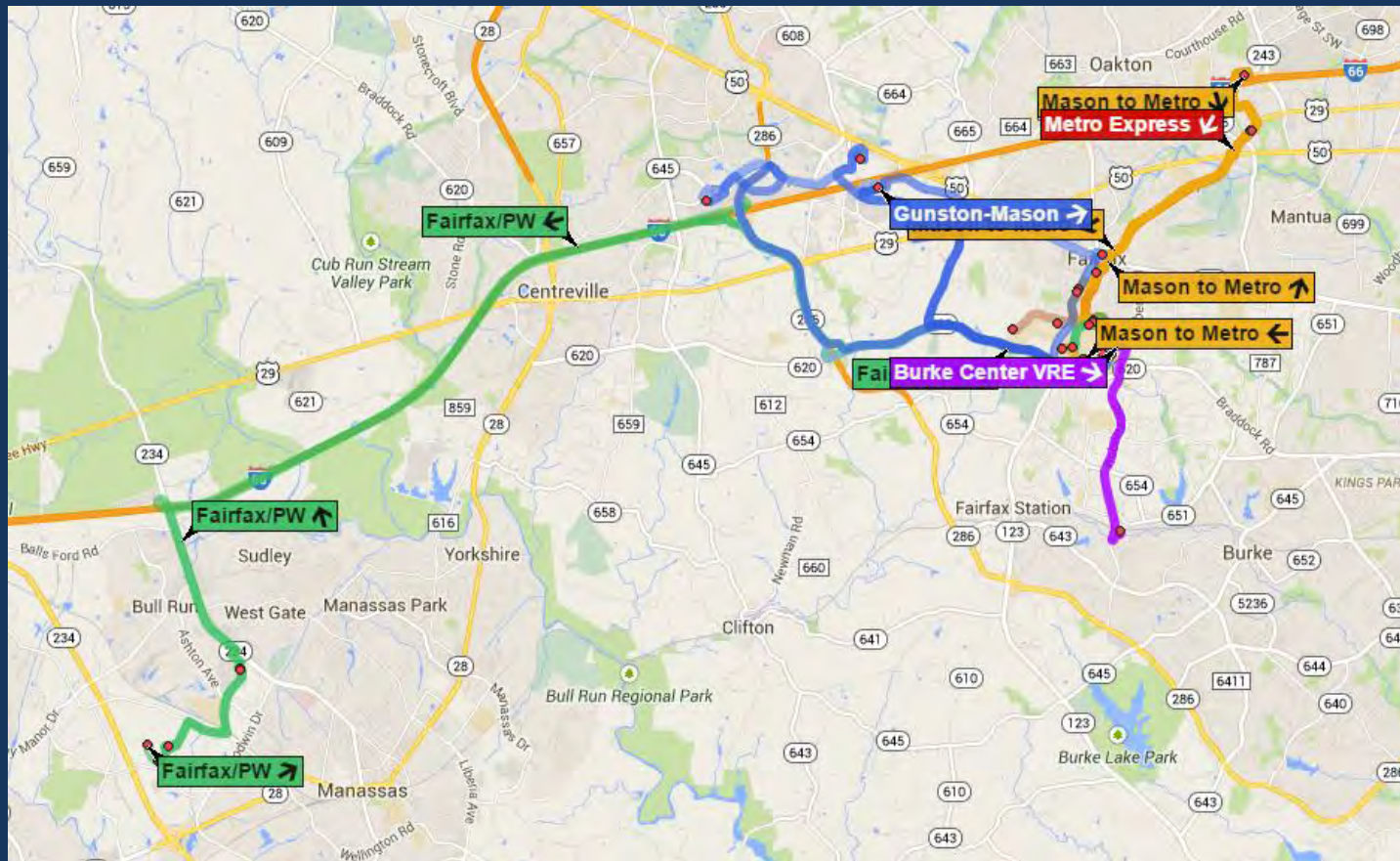
10,000
Spaces

MULTI-MODAL

- Transit
 - CUE and Mason Shuttles
- Bicycle
 - Trails and Streets
- Pedestrians
 - Crosswalk Concerns
 - Missing Sidewalk



MASON SHUTTLES



BICYCLE FACILITIES



BICYCLE NODE



BIKABLE TRAIL



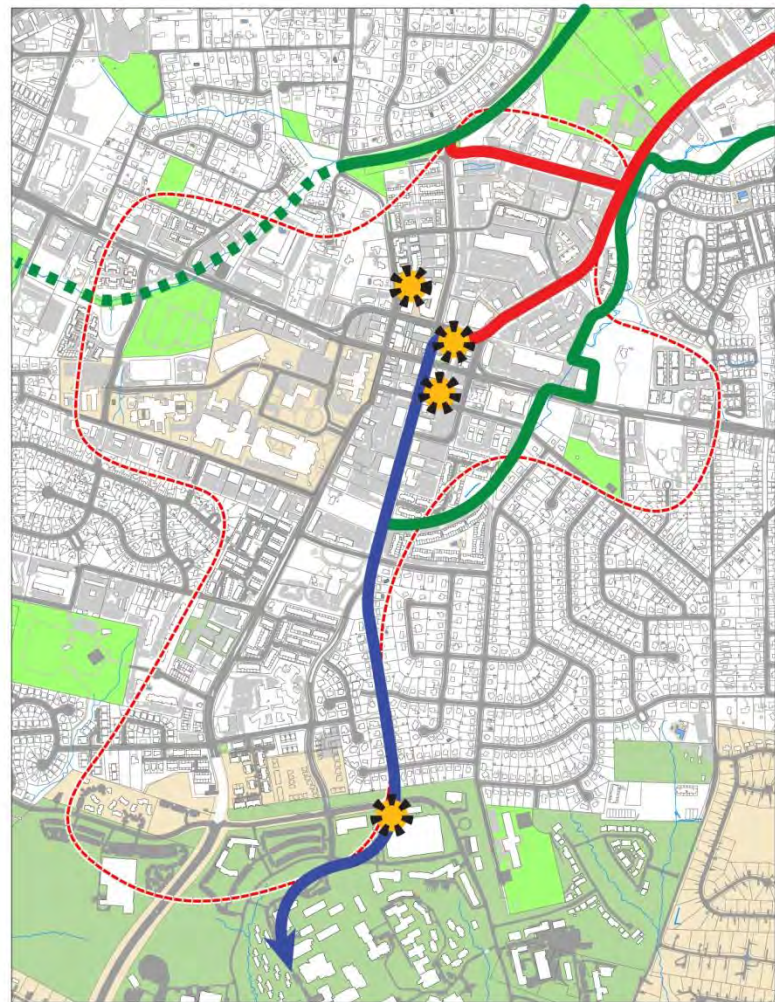
POTENTIAL FUTURE BIKABLE TRAIL



BICYCLE LANE UNDER STUDY



PROPOSED MASON TO OLD TOWN
BICYCLE CONNECTION



UNIVERSITY DR – EXISTING CONFIGURATION



4 Lanes

42 Feet Wide

UNIVERSITY DR – PROPOSED CONFIGURATION



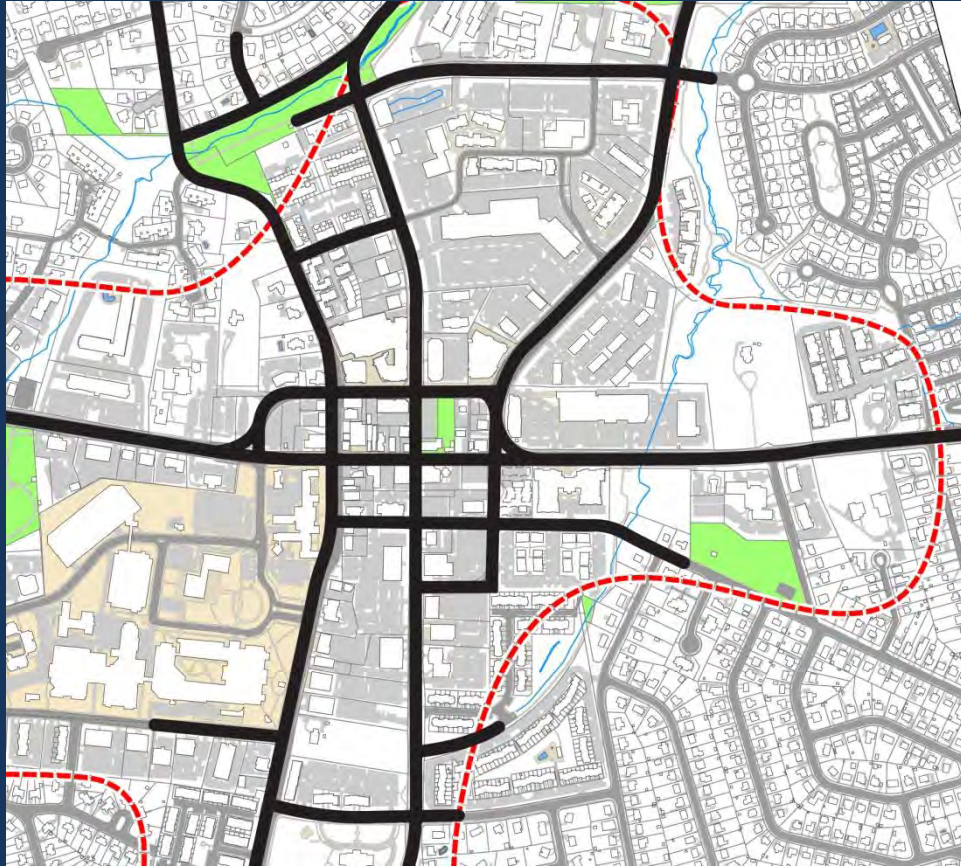
3 Lanes Plus
6-Foot Bicycle
Lanes

UNIVERSITY DR IN NEIGHBORHOOD



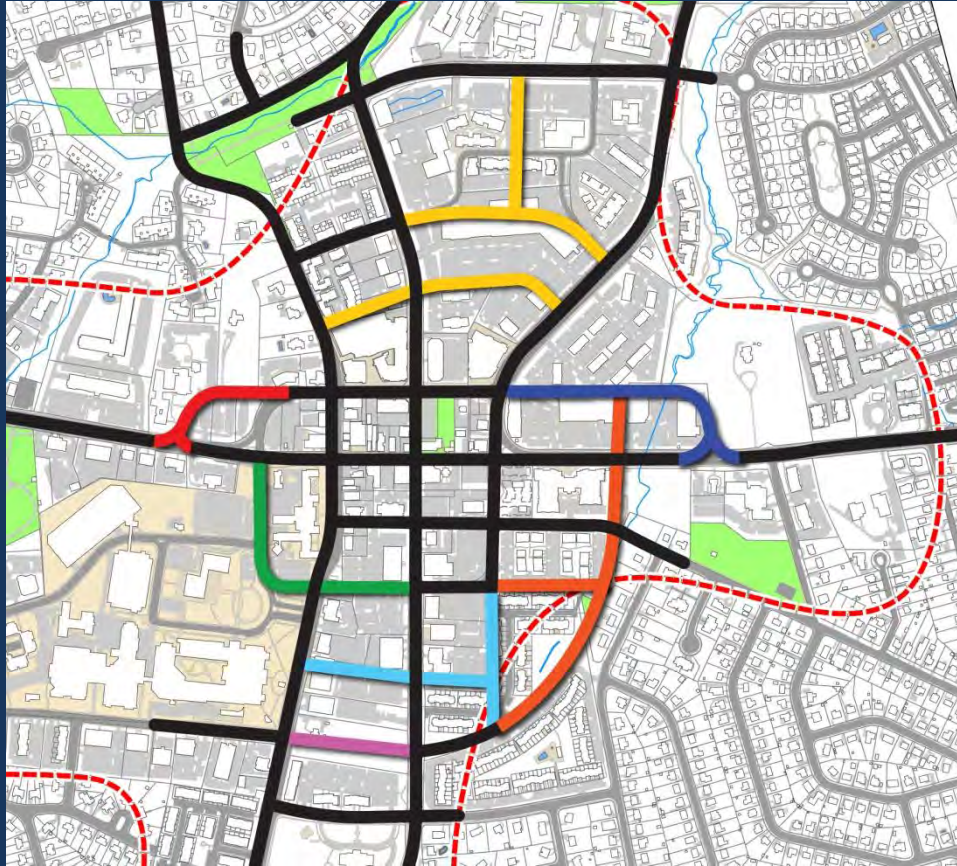
Bicycle Route or
Striped Bicycle
Lane

EXISTING STREET SYSTEM



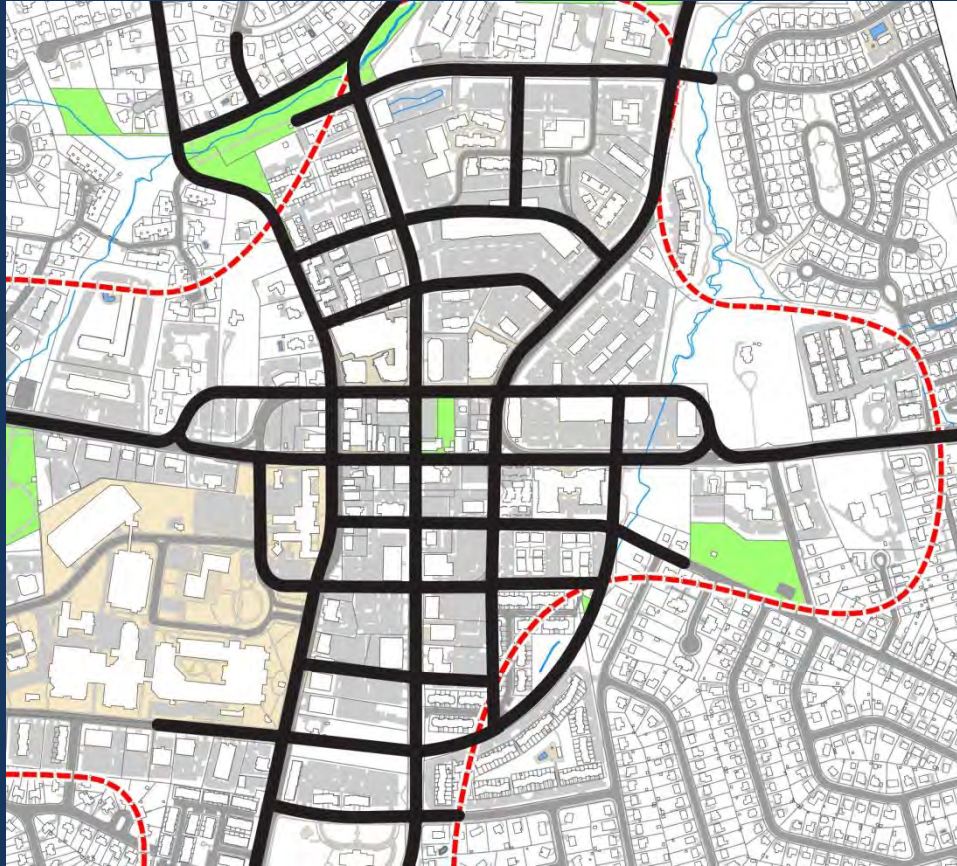
East-West Traffic is
Focused on Main St and
North St

POTENTIAL STREET ADDITIONS



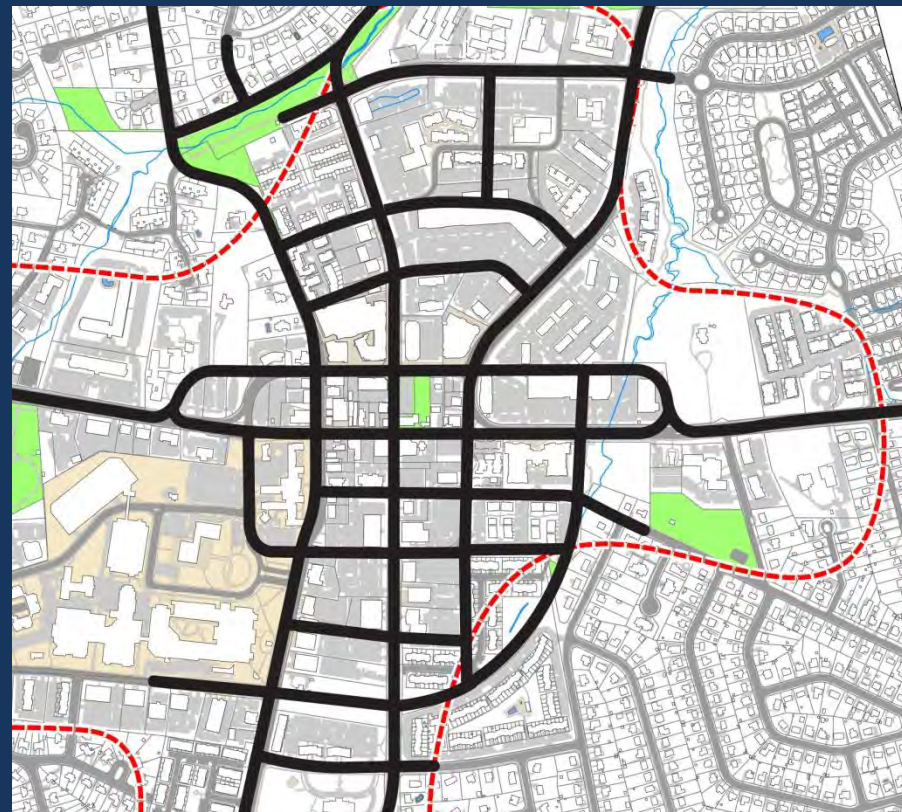
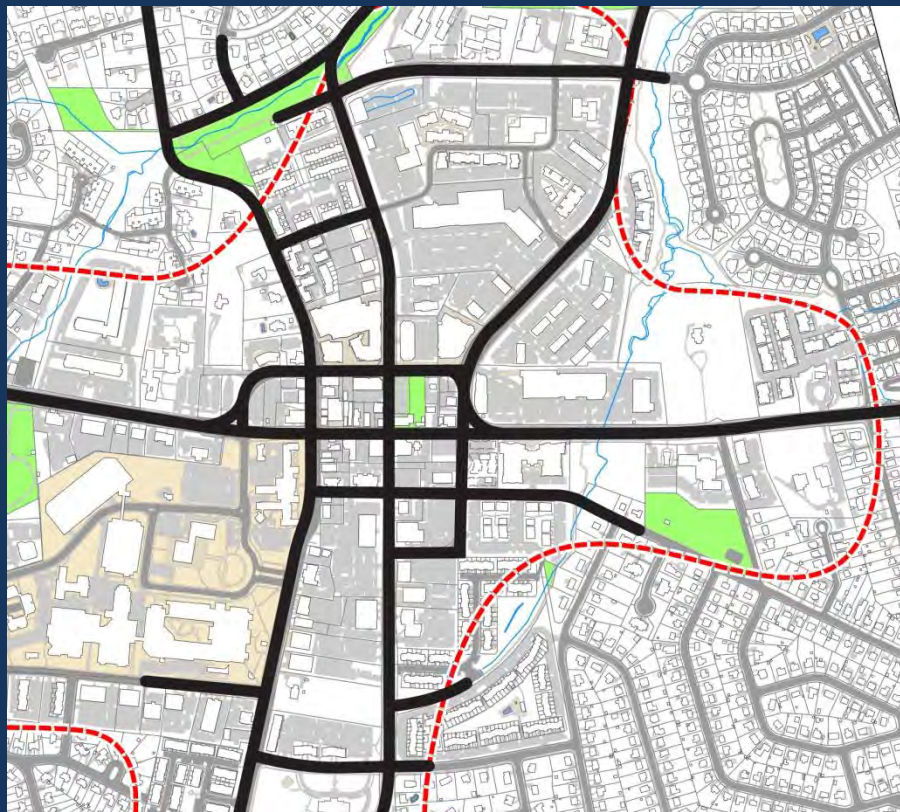
Individual Street
Additions or Extensions
Could be Constructed
Over time as
Redevelopment Occurs

ULTIMATE STREET SYSTEM



Parallel Streets relieve
Pressure on Main St and
North St and Support
Additional Development

EXISTING VS. ULTIMATE



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, RETAIL AND CULTURAL ARTS

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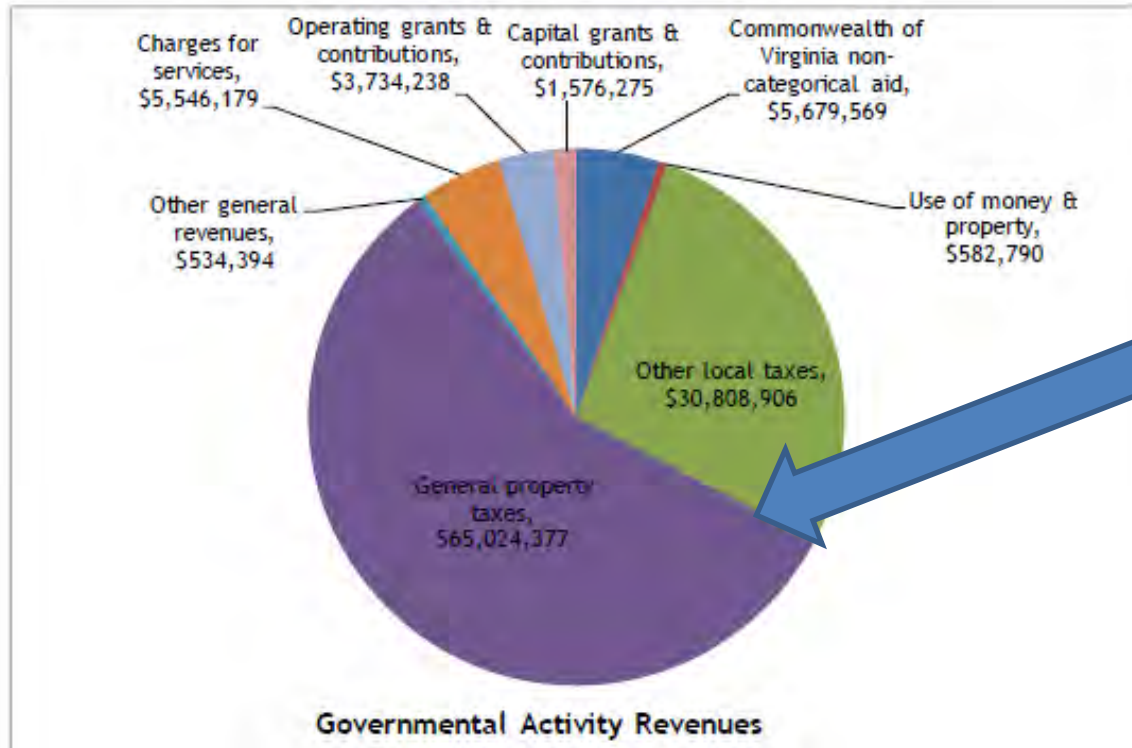


Economic Development, Retail, and Cultural Arts

Why invest in Old Town/Downtown?

Here's Why: It Helps Your Property Revenues, which Are Essential to the City

The chart below shows F/Y 2013 governmental revenues by program source:



General Property Taxes Account for a significant proportion of the City's Revenue

Downtowns Have a Very High Assessed Value Per Acre



**ASHEVILLE
WALMART**



**DOWNTOWN
MIXED-USE**

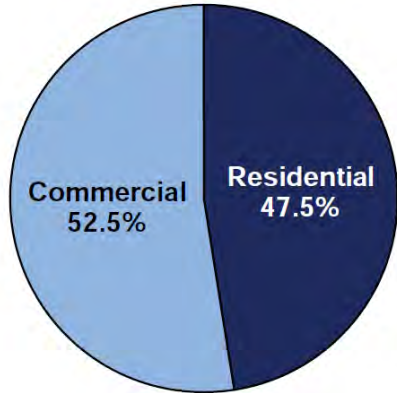
Land Consumed (acres):	34.0	00.2
Total Property Taxes per Acre:	\$6,500	\$634,000
Retail Taxes* per Acre to City:	\$47,500	\$ 83,600
Residents per Acre:	0.0	90.0
Jobs per Acre:	5.9	73.7

*Estimated from public reports of annual sales per sq.ft..

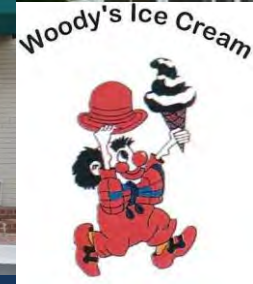


Downtowns Anchor Adjacent Dense Residential Neighborhoods

**City of Fairfax Gross Revenues
Fiscal Year 2011-2012**



And, the Restaurants Contribute Meal Taxes!



Old Town/Downtown Has Many Strong Assets to Build On

- Historic resources (Old town Hall, old court house, Virginia Room, etc.)
- Unique shops and restaurants
- Town Square Park
- It feels like an “authentic” place
- Plenty of demand for more activity and more housing

Old Town/Downtown Also Has Some Challenges:

1. Lacks a critical mass of activity
2. Tension about the area's "identity" is it historic buildings and small businesses, or is it about national retailers and brand names?
3. Not enough housing units close by to create an "internal" market
4. Getting building permits, sign permits and other City approvals is expensive and time consuming



Old Town/Downtown Also Has Some Challenges:

5. Some of the existing retail is getting “long in the tooth”
6. Too much traffic, not enough parking in the right places
7. Lacks clear policy vision or support
8. Lacks a marketing strategy



Emerging Vision Consensus To Start Addressing The Challenges:

- Old Town is more than just the historic core!
- Main Street should remain the “business incubator” for small unique businesses
- But national retailers, bigger users, and housing can go in areas north and south of the Old Town core

We Can Have Our Cake and Eat it Too!



HOUSING

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Housing

- Affordability is becoming a higher profile issue in Fairfax
 - Regional housing market is very strong
 - More seniors on fixed incomes
 - More students both undergrad and grad
 - More pressure on working families due to high regional housing prices combined with stagnating wages

What Does “Affordable” Mean

- Area Median Income (AMI) is \$107,000 (Source: City of Fairfax)
- Households making 60-70% of AMI (\$64,200) can afford market rate rental housing (Source: Strategic Economics back of the envelope estimate)
- Households making about 90% of AMI can afford the median price of a house in Fairfax (Source: Strategic Economics back of the envelope estimate)

According to Zillow, the Fairfax median housing sales price in the last year has been \$476,733

Affordable Housing Funding Sources

Traditional Methods (below 60% AMI):

- Proffers negotiated with developers
- Low income housing tax credits
- HUD Section 202 Funding for Elderly Supportive Housing

Affordable Housing Programs and Incentives

Additional Methods:

1. Streamlining permitting process to cut developer costs
2. Increase supply of land zoned for multi-family housing
3. Zone for small units and limited parking

Affordable Housing Programs and Incentives

1. Accessory dwelling units
2. Publically owned land dedicated to affordable housing
3. Community land trust
4. Limited equity ownership models

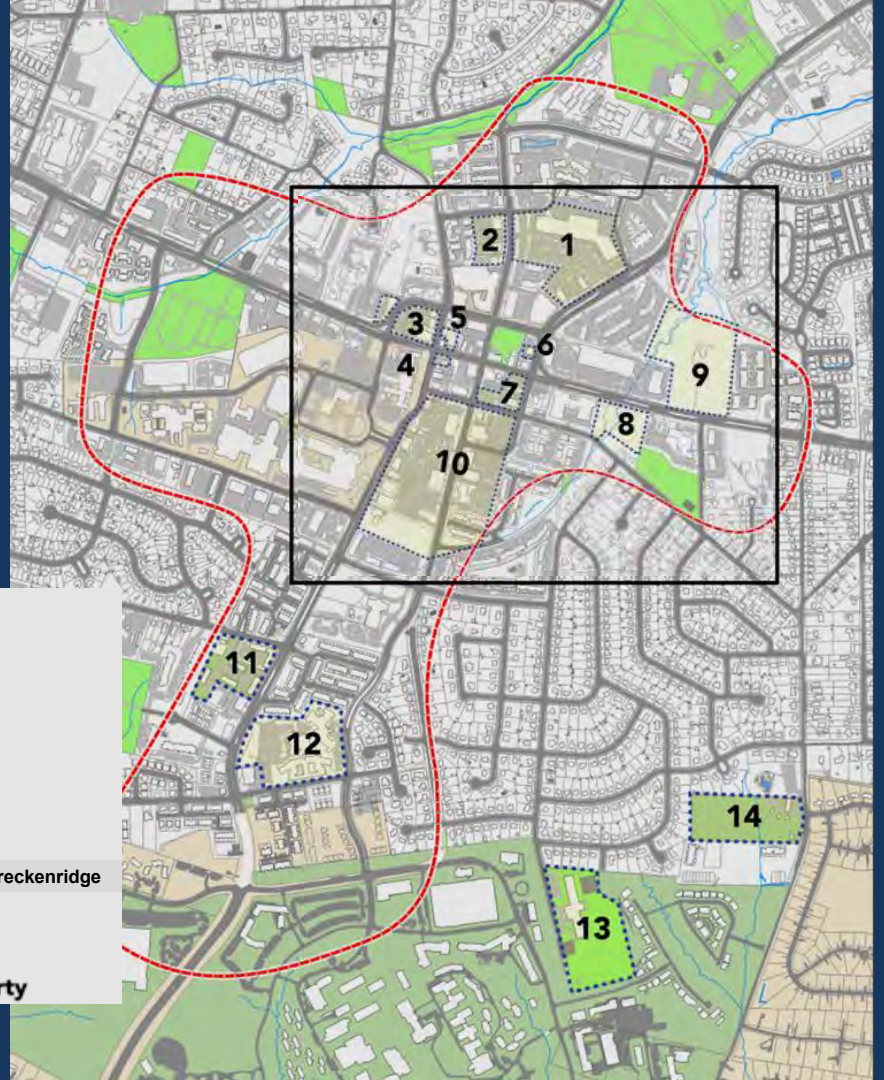
LAND USE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Discussion Sites



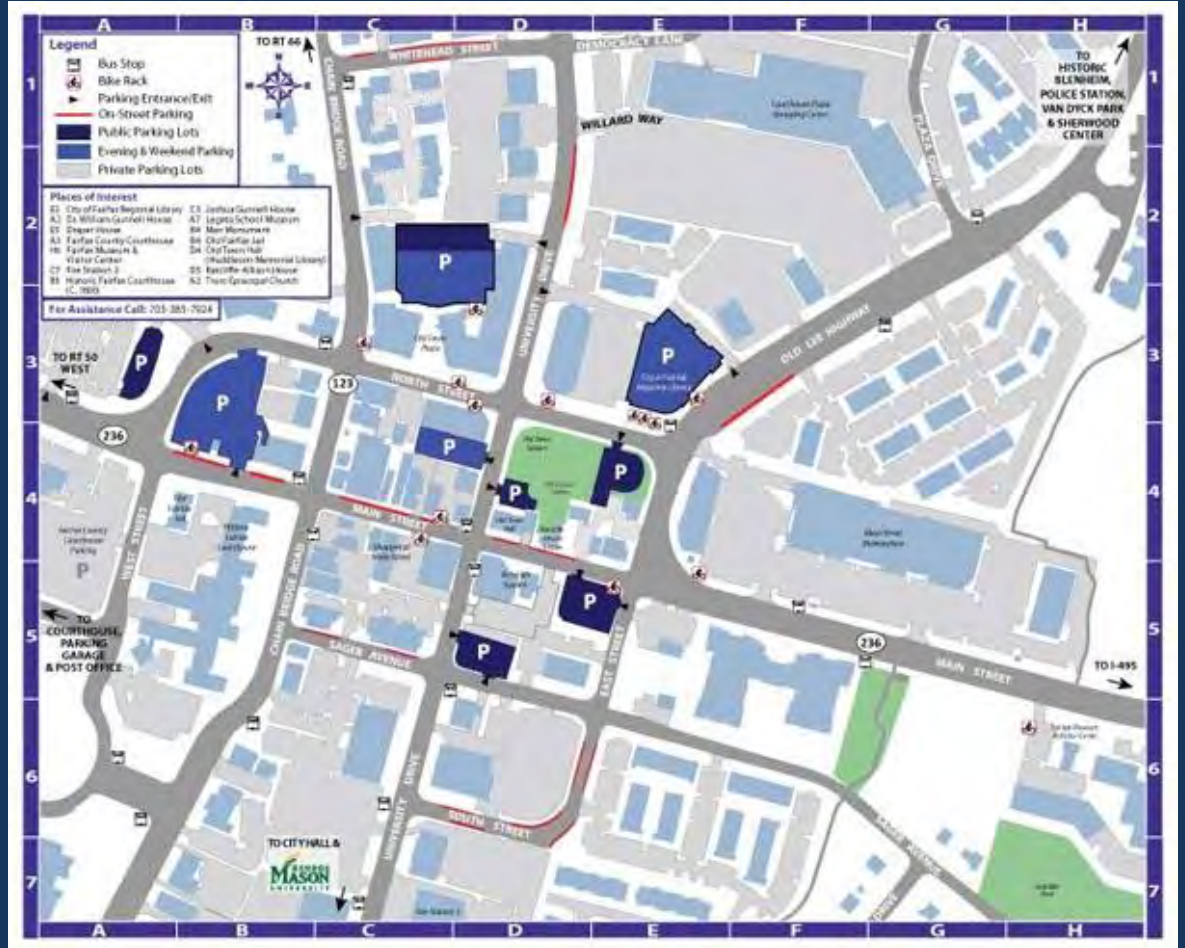
- 1- Courthouse Plaza
- 2 - 3900-3930 University Drive
- 3 - Bank of America block
- 4 - Royal Gas
- 5 - Fairfax Plaza Building
- 6 - Surf Shop
- 7 - Amoco Lot/ Sager Avenue
- 8 - Cantone Property
- 9 - Farr Homeplace
- 10 - University Drive - Sager to Breckenridge
- 11 - West Drive Property
- 12 - INOVA/ Sunrise
- 13 - Green Acres
- 14 - OLLI Center / Tallwood Property

WAYFINDING

- Better wayfinding signage is needed for cars to parking and for pedestrians & bicycles
- Wayfinding is needed for Old Town, Downtown, and the Mason campus
- The wayfinding program should connect the City of Fairfax & George Mason University

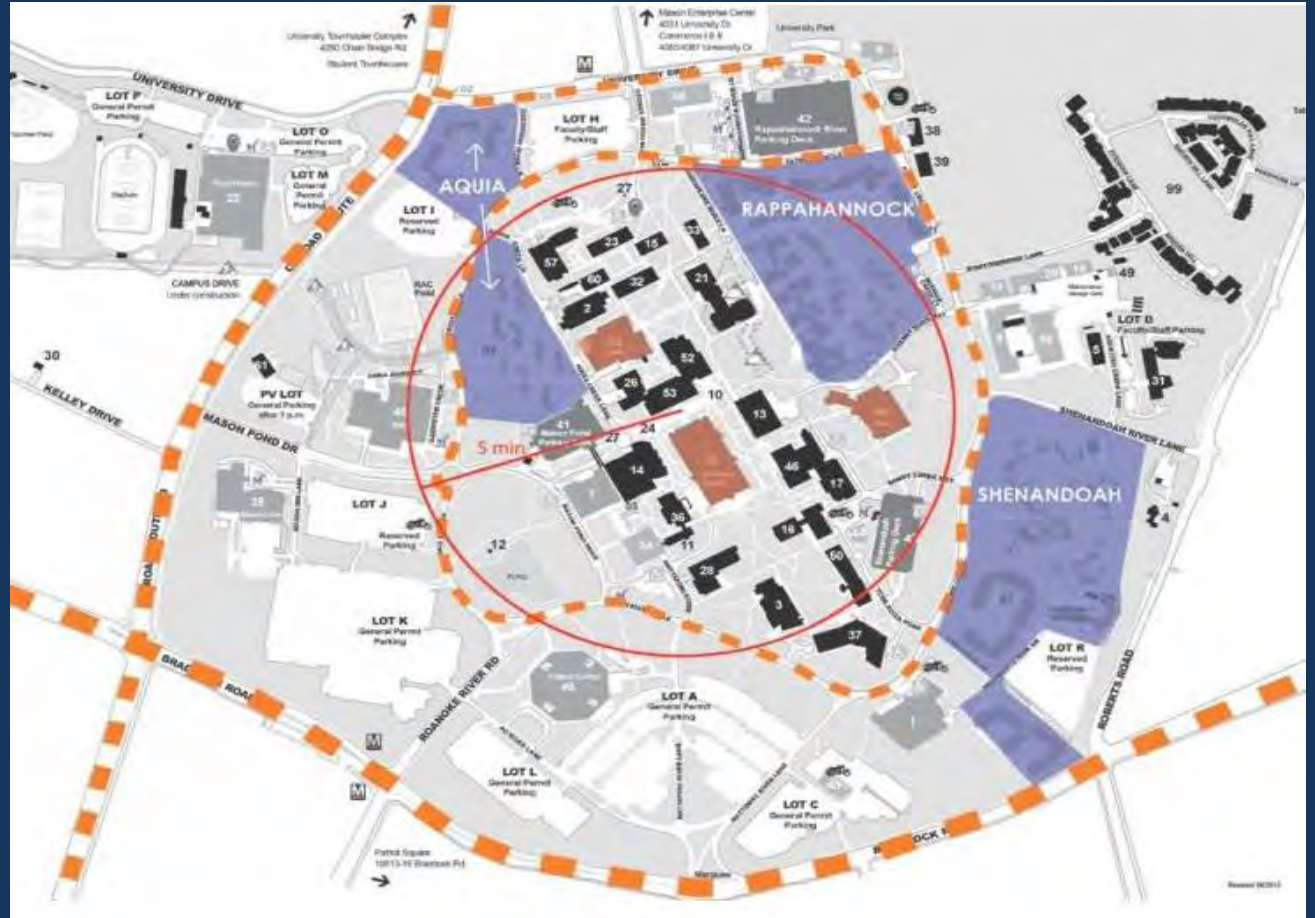
MAPS

for Fairfax
and
Mason



MASON

George Mason University



Old Town

¼ mile radius =
5 minute walk

1 mile

Mason

¼ mile radius =
5 minute walk

Downtown South

¼ mile radius =
5 minute walk

0.6 mile

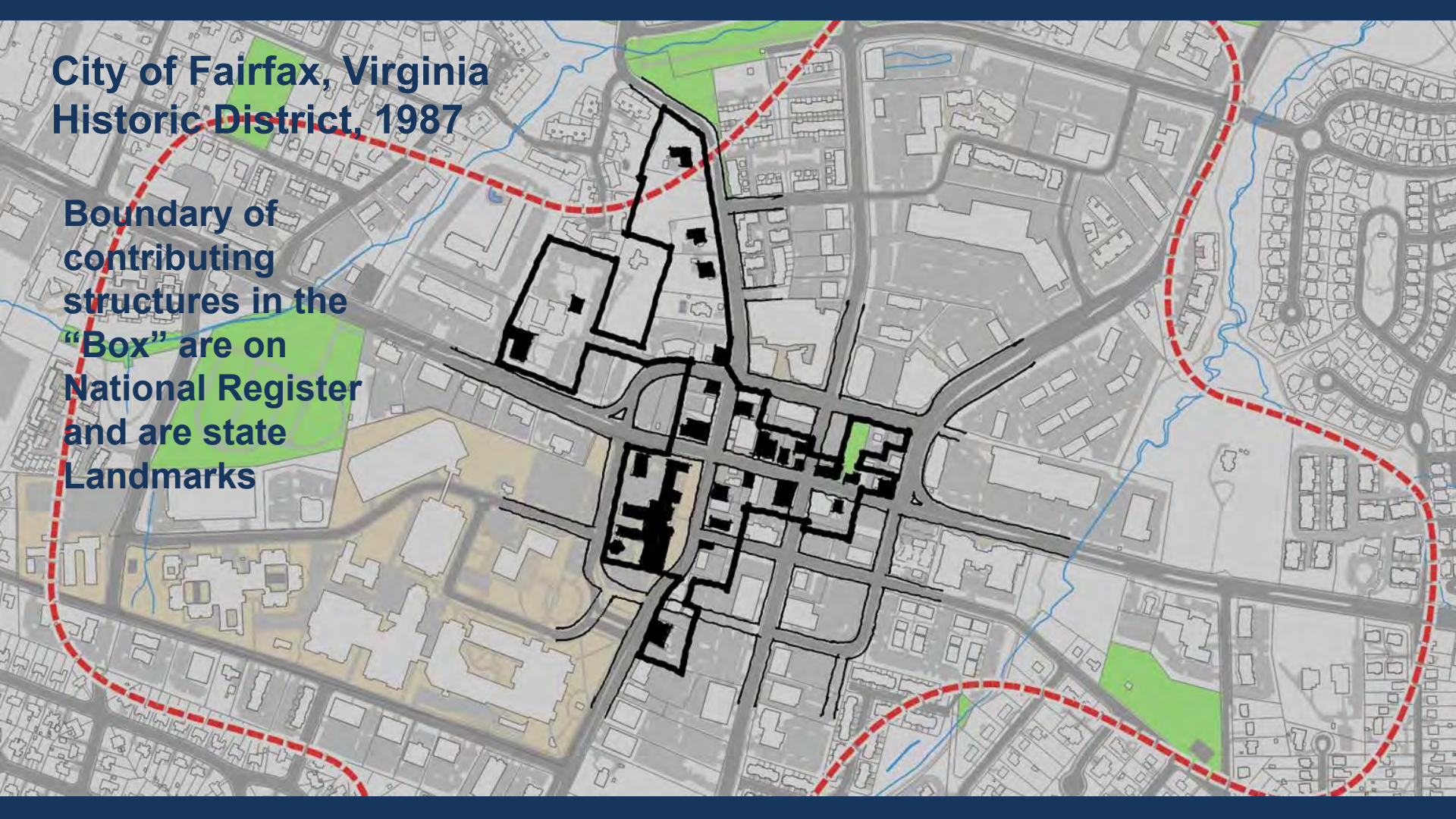
Mason

¼ mile radius =
5 minute walk



**City of Fairfax, Virginia
Historic District, 1987**

**Boundary of
contributing
structures in the
"Box" are on
National Register
and are state
Landmarks**



The "Box"

and Primary Historical Sites



Downtown & Campus

On High Ground,
Defined by
Topography,
Creeks & Trails



THE PLAN DIAGRAM

THURSDAY

Land Use and Historic
Preservation
Breakout Group



THE PLAN DIAGRAM

FRIDAY

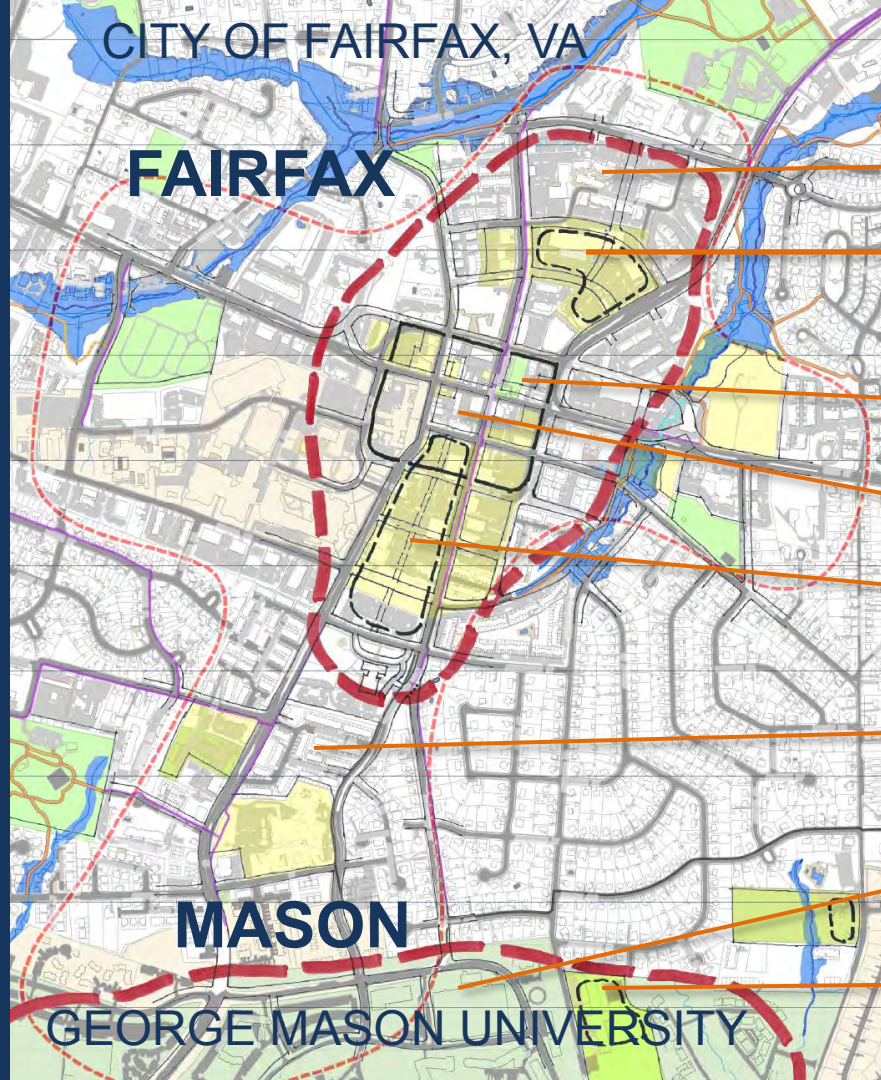
Land Use and Historic
Preservation
Breakout Group



THE PLAN DIAGRAM

SATURDAY

The Team &
The Charrette



DOWNTOWN

POTENTIAL
PROJECT(S)

OLD TOWN SQUARE

OLD TOWN

POTENTIAL
PROJECT(S)

CITY-CAMPUS
CONNECTION

CAMPUS

GREEN ACRES

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision Fairfax Mason Charrette

November 6-8, 2014



RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation

Immediate Action

1. Late Night Public Access to Mason Shuttles
2. Restripe University Dr for Bicycle Lanes
3. Stripe University Dr Neighborhood for Bike Lanes
4. Real-Time Parking Counters at Mason Entrances
5. New Directional Signs Approaching Old Town

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation

Short-Term (2-5 years)

1. Old Lee Hwy Bicycle Study
2. Bike Parking in Garage, Old Town Park, Mason Garages
3. Bike Share Station at Bike Nodes
4. Mason Shuttle Stop in Old Town
5. Study County Bypass Routes
6. Develop Mason Buildings on University Dr (w New Streets)
7. Street Extensions
 - New Streets with Massey Building Removal
 - Extend North to Church

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation

Long-Range (5-10 years)

1. Add Public Parking in SE Corner Development
2. Surf Shop to Become “Restaurant on the Green”
3. Street Connections with Redevelopment
 - Safeway Center
 - Crossroads Center
 - Courthouse Rd to South St
4. Signalize Sager Ave & Chain Bridge Rd

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation

Very Long-Range (10-20 years)

1. Rail Connection – Mason to Metro through Old Town
2. Implement County Bypass Route(s)
3. Judicial Dr Extension – Chain Bridge Rd to North Street

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic Development, Retail, and Cultural Arts

Near Term:

1. Refresh the Downtown Coalition working with the City's Economic Development staff and the Economic Development Authority with an initial focus on marketing existing Old Town/Downtown businesses and cultural activities and on business recruitment
2. Adopt appropriate zoning for Old Town/Downtown allowing for a mix of uses, densities, and building types – diversity in all things!

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic Development, Retail, and Cultural Arts

Near Term:

1. Create clear standards and design guide lines to have greater control over building appearance.
2. Consider creating topic based working groups between Fairfax and Mason.
3. Continue to encourage downtown merchants to accept Mason Money and carry Mason gear.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic Development, Retail, and Cultural Arts

Mid-term:

4. Look for near term opportunities to add housing in the “Downtown” area
5. Consider re-focusing the current cultural arts programming to include more entertainment activities targeted to all age groups (under 21, 20 somethings, and on up)
6. Create a “lesson plan” for Mason students to learn about city activities and offerings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic Development, Retail, and Cultural Arts

Long Term:

1. Consider creating a more formal Business Improvement District
 - Marketing and promotion
 - Landscaping and beautification
 - Programming events
 - Business incubation and technical assistance
2. Look for opportunities to incorporate Mason performing arts in Downtown.

How Do We Pay for What We Want?

1. City's bonding capacity
2. Old Town Service District Revenues (consider expanding the area)
3. Entertainment tax (as entertainment uses evolve)
4. Public improvements required as conditions of approval
5. State Transportation Tax monies

RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing

Short Term:

1. Conduct working sessions with City Council on affordable housing
2. Adopt Affordable Housing Work Group Recommendations providing policy framework for Proffer negotiations
3. Work with non-profit developers to identify sites for either new construction or rehabilitation of units affordable to households with incomes below 60% AMI

RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing

Mid Term:

1. Prepare comprehensive affordable housing strategy focusing on production as well as acquisition and rehabilitation through zoning and other planning “best practices”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use and Historic Preservation

Short-Term (1-2 years)

1. Discuss planning with the County
2. Continue working with Mason on sites in Downtown
3. Coordinate Mason Campus Plan with Downtown concept
4. Create design guidelines for new Downtown
5. Coordinate plans with historic district & buildings in Old Town as a part of the larger Downtown

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use and Historic Preservation

Short-Term (1-2 years)

6. Complete zoning code revisions for new Downtown
7. Complete a wayfinding study for City of Fairfax & coordinate with Mason
8. Incorporate sustainability throughout planning and development process
9. Include storm drainage, urban forestry, green building principles and alternative energy sources/solar energy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use and Historic Preservation

Mid-Term (2-5 years)

1. Coordinate streets and Massey demolition with County
2. Plan new West and South Street with County
3. Plan North and Main Streets at West
4. Establish sites for development at North & Main at West
5. Consider development on north downtown site(s)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use and Historic Preservation

Mid-Term (2-5 years)

6. Discuss south downtown plans with property owners
7. Create plan for south downtown with Mason
8. Study Performing Arts venues in Downtown and Mason
9. Work with Mason on OLLI, south downtown, and the performing arts venues

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use and Historic Preservation

Long-Term (6-20 years)

1. Develop south Downtown sites north of Armstrong
2. Develop north Downtown sites south of Layton Hall
3. Plan and complete development with County at West
4. Plan and complete new eastern Downtown streets
5. Plan and complete development on sites along connection routes to Mason
6. Continue to plan and develop infill sites in the historic Old Town



FAIRFAX & MASON

History & Future

THANK YOU

An aerial map of a suburban area with houses, streets, and green spaces. The text is overlaid on this map.

What is your #VisionFairfaxMason?

@VisionFFXMason

#VisionFairfaxMason