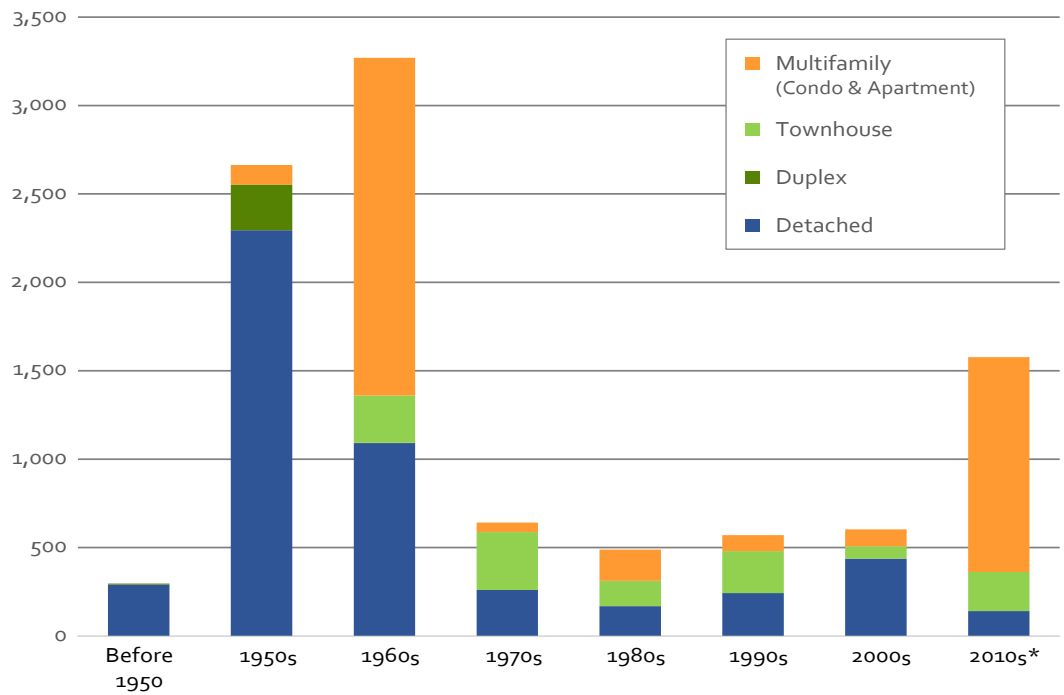
2 Land Use

The City's residential neighborhoods are distinct in housing types, age, and character. While much of the land area of the City is encompassed by single-family neighborhoods initially developed in the 1950s and 1960s, there is also a significant amount of multifamily neighborhoods built primarily during the 1960s. Since then, the City has continued to accommodate residential development on smaller sites, including single-family homes, townhomes, and multifamily residences.

As developable land has become scarcer, new residential development has been more dependent on infill and redevelopment sites. Developers are offering higher-end products and seeking greater densities to offset the higher land values and development costs associated with redevelopment sites. In addition, some homes in existing single-family neighborhoods are being significantly renovated, expanded, or redeveloped.

FIGURE 2 HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE AND DECADE BUILT



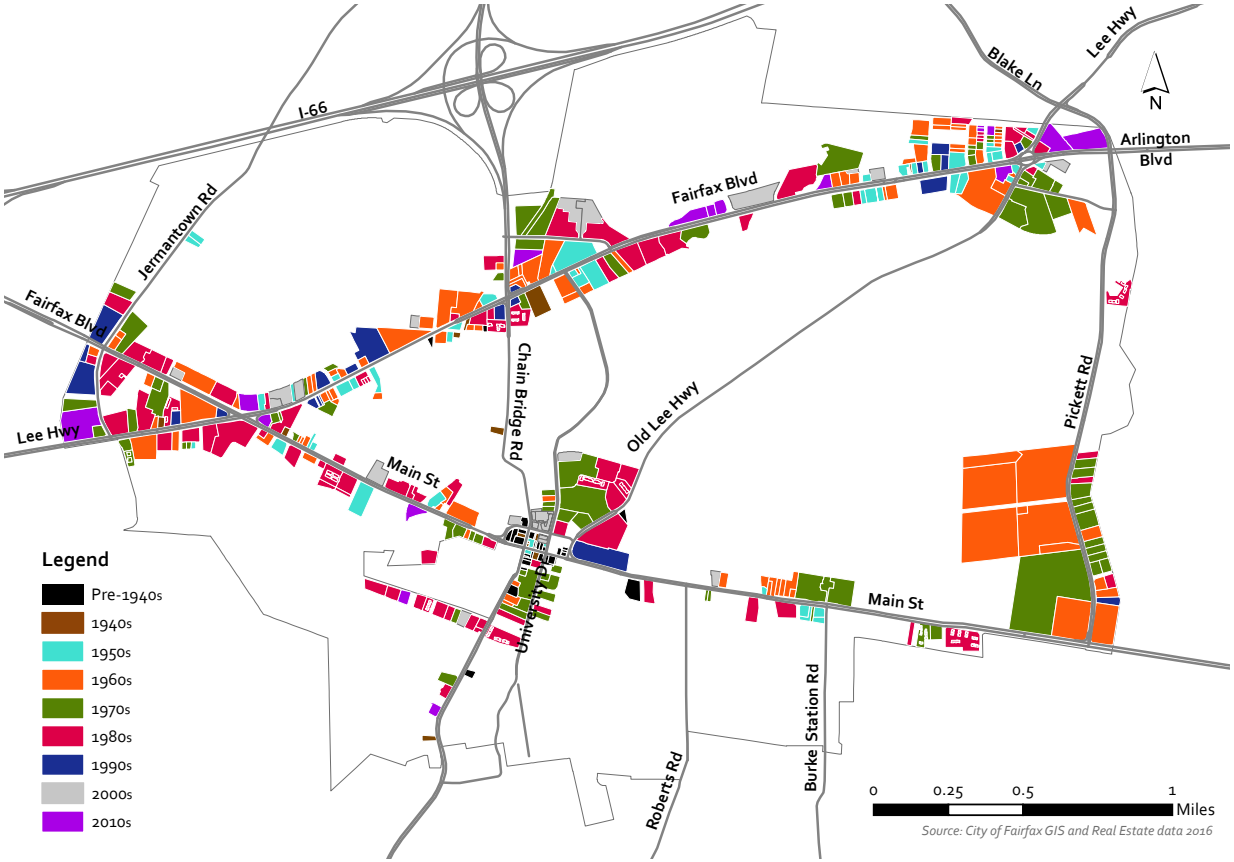
Note: Includes housing units existing and approved as of January, 2018. "2010s" includes housing units under construction, as well as projects that have been approved by City Council, but for which construction has not begun.

Source: Fairfax City Real Estate Assessments

Commercial uses in the City have historically benefited from its location at a crossroads of several regional transportation routes. While most neighborhoods in the City were established in the 1950s and 1960s, heavy commercial growth continued through the 1980s. This was fueled by continuing regional population growth and by general market trends that supported extensive office and retail growth. There has been less commercial growth in recent years as the commercial real estate market has changed and new development in surrounding areas of Fairfax County has added competition to the local market. Despite this, the City has experienced some redevelopment of older commercial properties, and recently approved mixed-use projects indicate that unsubsidized redevelopment remains feasible.

The Land Use Chapter encompasses the following Guiding Principles: Land Use Strategies, Neighborhoods, Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers, Housing, and Community Design and Historic Preservation.

FIGURE 3 COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDING AGE BY DECADE BUILT

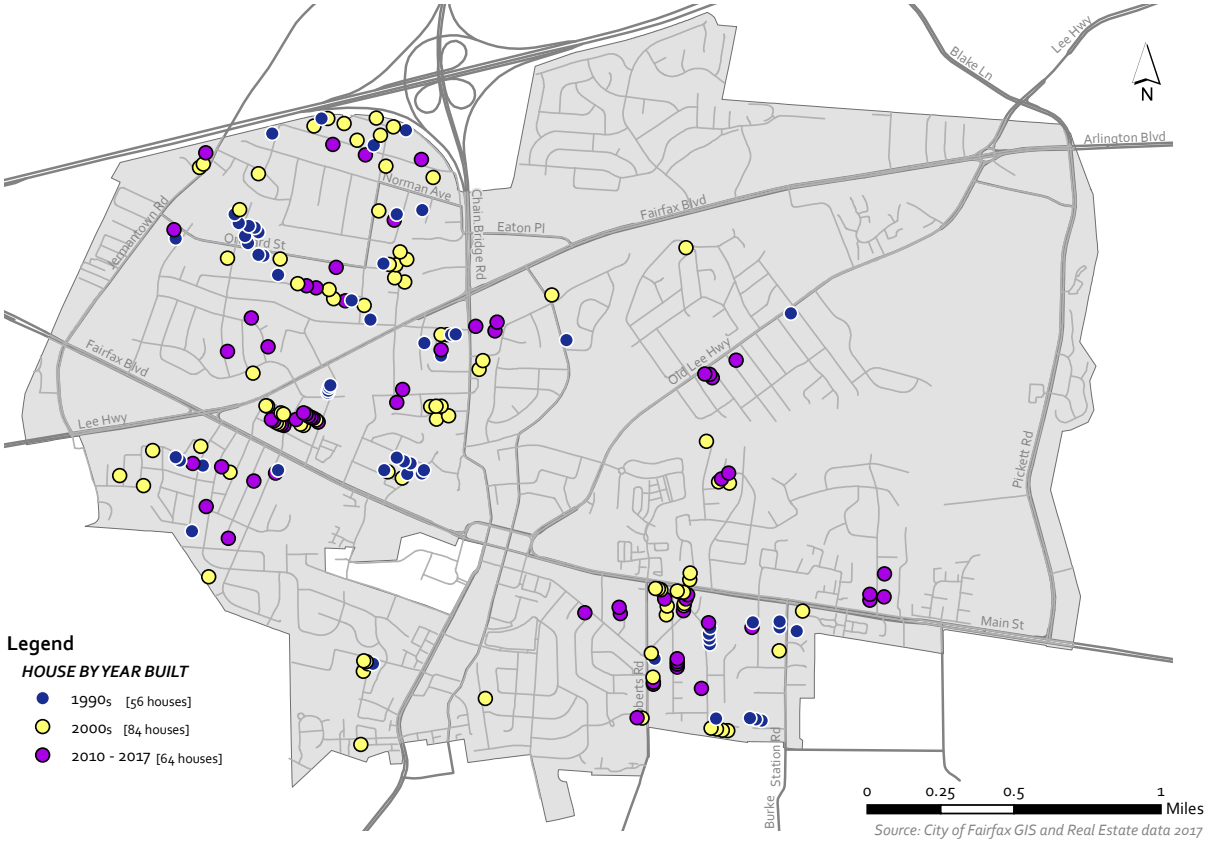


Opportunities and Challenges

Residential improvements

With an aging housing stock, there is consistent pressure for upgrading or replacing existing homes. While this can help keep neighborhoods current with consumer desires and housing preferences, it can also impact the character of existing neighborhoods.

FIGURE 4 INFILL HOUSING BY DECADE BUILT

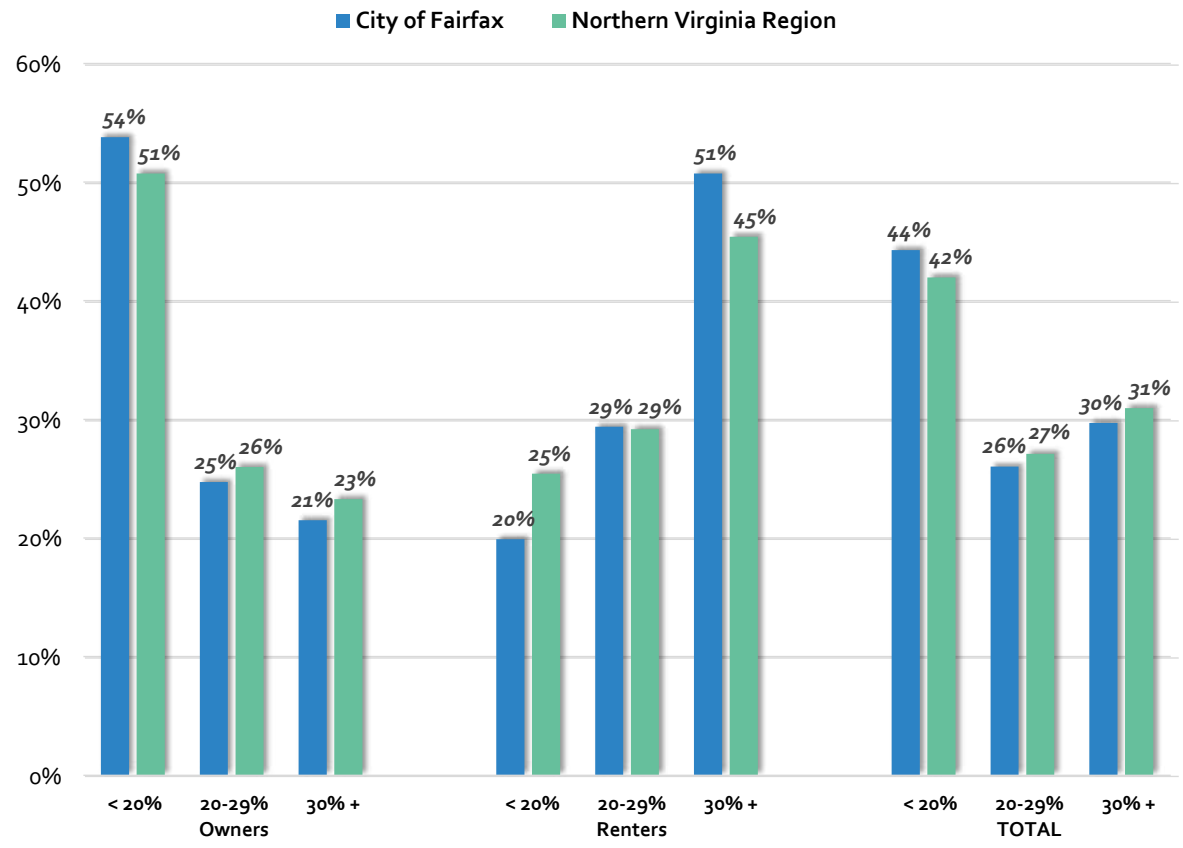


Housing affordability

As the regional economy has grown, increases in housing values have outpaced increases in income. As a result, there are few residential units in the City that are affordable to lower income households. About one-third of City households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs, as shown in Figure 5 , which also highlights that almost half of renters reside in units that are potentially cost-burdensome.

While many of the apartments that were built in the 1960s are more affordable than newer apartments in the surrounding areas of Fairfax County, their asking rents are not achievable to a full range of incomes. There is also no guarantee that these apartment complexes will remain as "naturally occurring affordable housing." Redevelopments of two complexes have been approved since 2013, and there has been communicated interest in redevelopment of additional complexes.

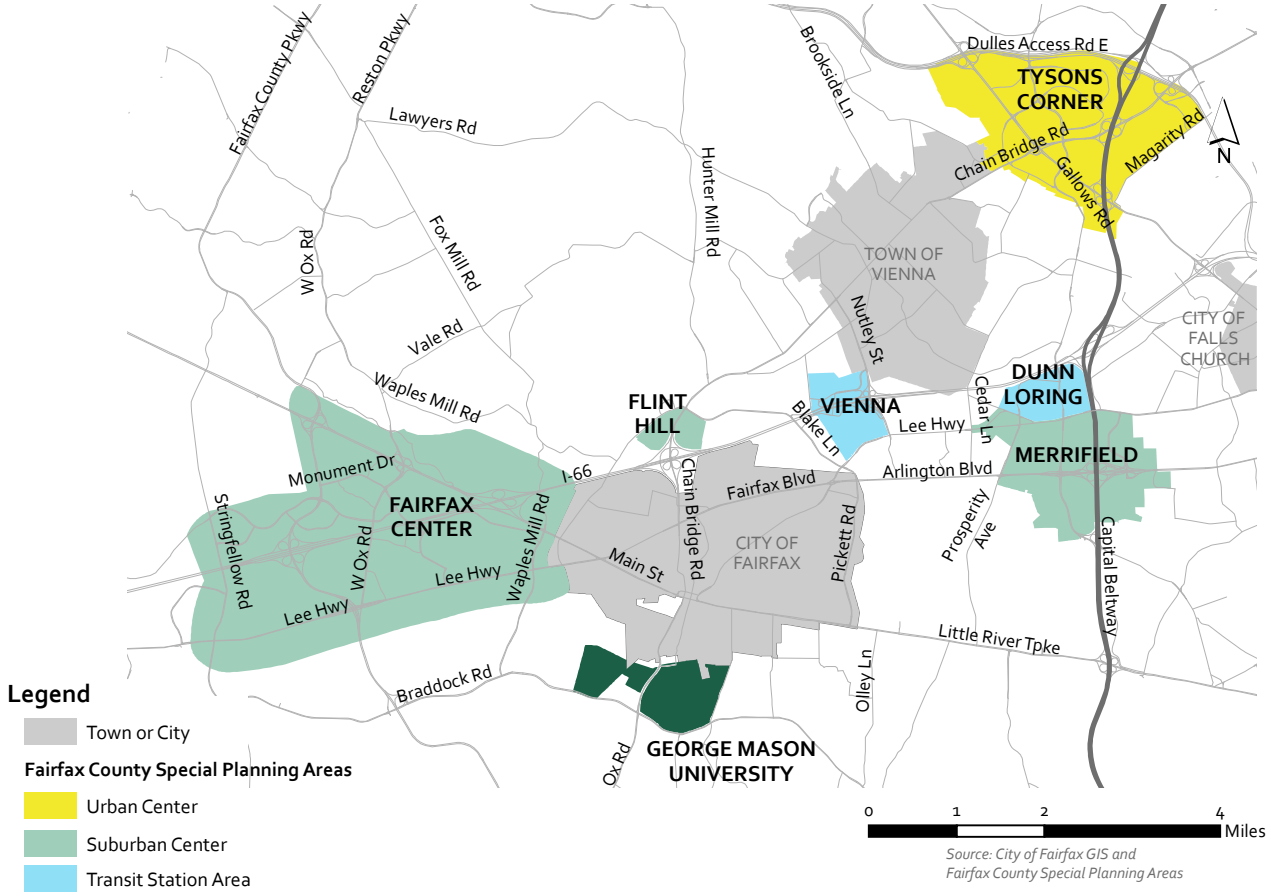
FIGURE 5 HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY TENURE AND IN TOTAL



Source: US Census ACS, 2012-16

Note: The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines cost-burdened families as those who pay more than 30% of their income for housing and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.

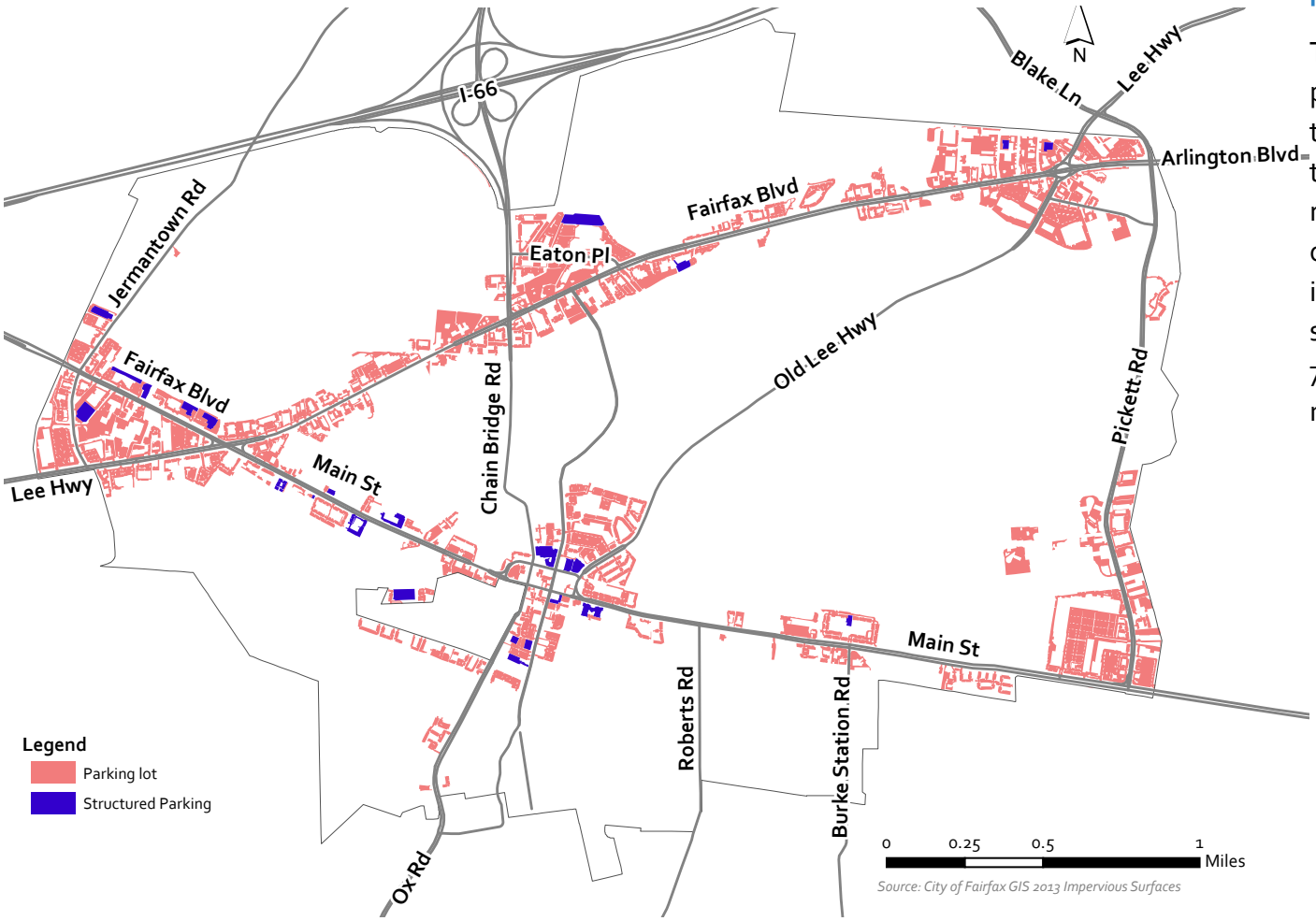
FIGURE 6 NEARBY MAJOR MIXED-USE CENTERS



Commercial market changes

Long-term shifts in retail and office markets have added uncertainty to the continued marketability of some commercial properties in the City. In addition, new development to the east and west of the City absorbs potential demand for destination commercial offerings, and the City's Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers currently lack many popular types of retail and entertainment establishments. This trend could continue with the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan encouraging new commercial and mixed-use development in designated Special Planning Areas proximate to the City, as shown in Figure 6.

FIGURE 7 COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL SURFACE AND STRUCTURED PARKING



Commercial redevelopment potential

There are numerous commercial properties throughout the City with the potential for redevelopment or to reposition themselves for current market demands. Characteristics of potential redevelopment sites include significant amounts of surface parking, as shown in Figure 7, and low building-to-land value ratios.

Land Use Strategies

More than 200 years of growth and development have formed Fairfax into a unique small city with development patterns and building styles that span multiple eras. A variety of land uses are distributed throughout the City to complement and support each other. Existing land uses and a summary of land use coverage areas in the City are shown in Figure 8. The City, however, continues to evolve to accommodate changing needs of residents and businesses. The Land Use Strategies Guiding Principle supports measures to manage growth in such a way to allow the City to evolve while maintaining the unique character that has taken decades to build.

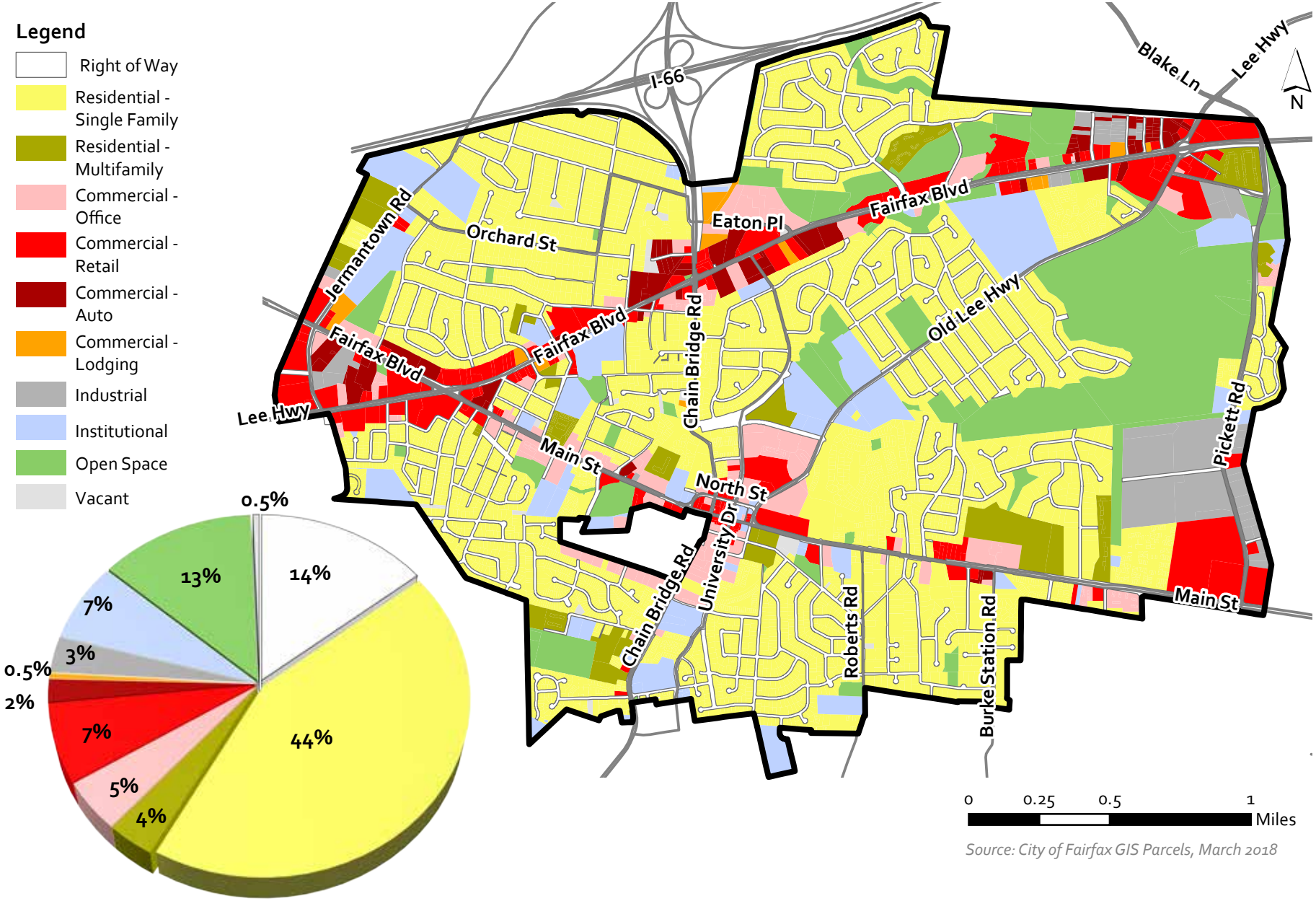
Managing development depends heavily on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (shown on p. 27). This map, which is supported by Goal 1 of this Guiding Principle, illustrates the desired land uses in the City organized by Place Types, which are locations within the City that are intended to share similar physical characteristics and have both zoning and "Link + Place" street types (as defined under Multimodal Transportation Goal 2) that are consistent with these characteristics.

Guiding Principle:

In 2035, Fairfax is a city with...
a close-knit community and a population that is diverse in its culture, demographics, and lifestyles, that capitalizes on its location in the center of the growing region and with easy access to the nation's capital.

Rather than show land uses as they exist today, the Future Land Use Map shows how the Comprehensive Plan foresees appropriate development over the next 15 to 20 years. The Place Types shown on the map communicate the types of uses and character of development envisioned throughout the City.

FIGURE 8 EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Source: City of Fairfax GIS Parcels, March 2018

Land Use Strategies

Goal 1

Ensure development is complementary.

OUTCOME LU1.1:	The Future Land Use Map is used in conjunction with other recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan to guide development throughout the City.
ACTION LU1.1.1	Maintain and update, as necessary, a Future Land Use Map that provides for a balanced mix of development types and addresses current and future needs of the City.
ACTION LU1.1.2	Use the Future Land Use Map (Figure 9), Place Types, and general text from the Comprehensive Plan as a guide when considering new development throughout the City.
ACTION LU1.1.3	Refer to Parcel Specific Recommendation, as detailed on pages 39-44 for potential alternative uses. Amend the Comprehensive Plan to provide additional Parcel Specific Recommendations as appropriate.
OUTCOME LU1.2:	Zoning regulations that accommodate high-quality design and development practices.
ACTION LU1.2.1	Consistently review the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and the Zoning Map to ensure they are able to support the Future Land Use Map and other guidance of the Comprehensive Plan.

While the 6.3 square mile City is primarily built out, leaving few opportunities for large new development, there is consistent pressure for the City's variety of land use types to adapt to environmental, economic and cultural demands. This means that some flexibility must be provided with a balanced mix of development types that accommodate adaptations without negatively impacting the existing community. New development and redevelopment should be complementary to surrounding areas and contribute to an attractive, accessible, and economically viable place.

This can be managed by using the Future Land Use Map in conjunction with recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan and the requirements of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to guide development within the City. While the Future Land Use Map communicates the most appropriate types of uses and character of development, the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances provide the regulatory measures to accommodate such development. The Ordinances may occasionally be amended to furnish necessary changes for various land uses.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is provided in Figure 9, with specific guidance on development for each of the Place Types identified on the map provided on the following pages. Additional guidance is provided for certain specific sites beginning on page 38. When using the Future Land Use Map, consideration should also be given to the other Guiding Principles of this chapter, depending on site location and types of uses.

The following information is provided for each of the Place Types:

1. Definition: A brief description of the types of uses and structures the Place Type applies to.
2. Zoning Districts: A list of Zoning Districts that are most likely to accommodate the uses and structures provided in the definition for the Place Types.
3. Link + Place Street Types: A list of the types of streets (as provided in the Multimodal Transportation Chapter) where the Place Type is most appropriate.
4. Physical Characteristics: A description of general preferences for site design and building placement.
5. Concept diagrams and photos: Provided to show typical development patterns for each Place Type.

Most new development is anticipated to occur in areas designated as an Activity Center Place Type. There are five areas of the City that have this Place Type designation: Old Town Fairfax, Northfax, Kamp Washington, Fairfax Circle, and Pickett & Main. The following additional guidance is provided for the Activity Center Place Type:

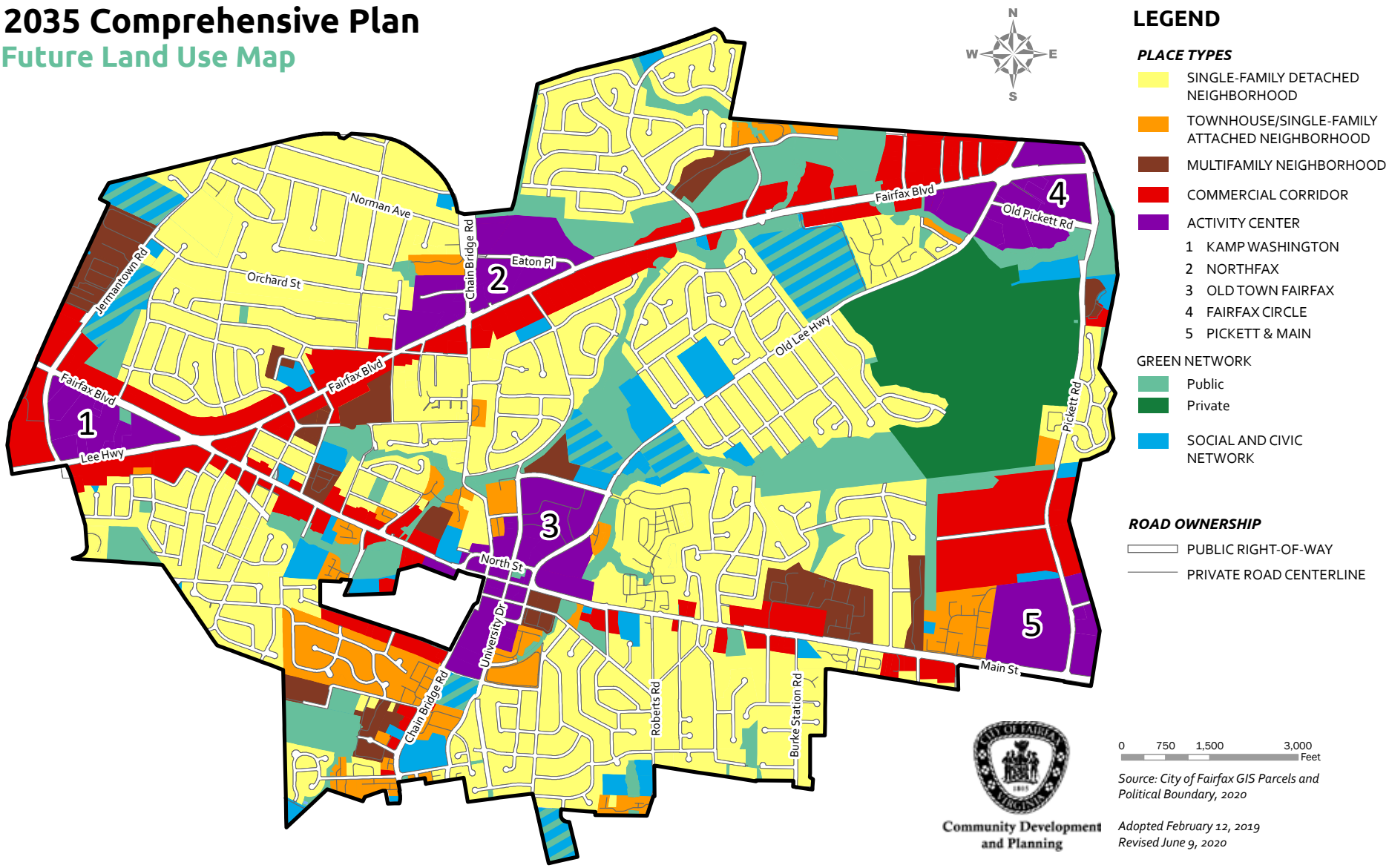
6. Use Characteristics: Since multiple uses can be accommodated in the Activity Center Place Type, separate physical characteristics are provided for various uses to ensure that new development provides a consistent character in spite of varying uses.
7. Residential Limitations: As a more detailed analysis of specific development scenarios is not included in this plan, limitations on the number of residential units that can be absorbed in each Activity Center are provided. This is intended to communicate to developers and the general public that unrestrained increases in residential development will not be considered in these areas of the City.

Small Area Plans

Small Area Plans are an opportunity to conduct detailed analyses of concentrated geographic areas of the City and provide more specific recommendations on issues such as land use and transportation than that provided in the Comprehensive Plan. Once approved, Small Area Plans serve as the primary source for guidance on development in the respective Activity Centers. As supported by Land Use Action CCAC2.3.5, Small Area Plans are proposed for each of the five Activity Centers. As each of the Small Area Plans is completed and adopted, the recommendations from that plan will supersede the Activity Center Place Type recommendations from the Future Land Use Map. This may include the guidance provided for Physical Characteristics, appropriate Street Types, Use Characteristics, and Residential Limitations.

In June 2020, Small Area Plans were adopted for the Old Town Fairfax and Northfax Activity Centers. While a brief description of these two Activity Centers is provided in the Activity Center Place Type description, please refer to the respective Small Area Plans for specific guidance in those two areas. The general guidance in the Activity Center Place Type description applies to Kamp Washington, Fairfax Circle, and Pickett & Main until Small Area Plans are adopted for those Activity Centers.

FIGURE 9 FUTURE LAND USE MAP



SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED NEIGHBORHOOD

Definition

The Single-Family Detached Neighborhood Place Type, identified in yellow on the Future Land Use Map, applies to neighborhoods that are primarily developed with single-family detached homes. Accessory uses associated with these residences are permitted, such as home-based businesses and accessory dwelling units.

Physical Characteristics

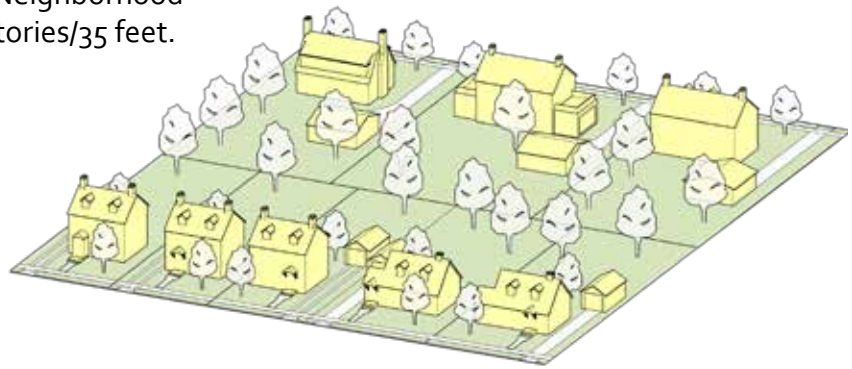
New development of single-family detached homes in an existing residential neighborhood should reflect the character of that neighborhood by providing similar lot widths and building setbacks as surrounding properties. In order to support shared stormwater management facilities and usable open space, narrower lot widths and building setbacks may be considered where a new development provides a similar overall density to the surrounding neighborhood. New development is considered to be within an existing neighborhood where any vehicular access is taken from an existing Limited Connection Residential street or a Neighborhood Circulator. New residential units on all lots that are adjacent to those streets should be oriented with the front of the structure facing that street, even where vehicular access is taken from a new public or private street. Predicated on the underlying zoning district, the Single-Family Detached Neighborhood Place Type supports up to 7 dwelling units per acre and a maximum height of 3 stories/35 feet.

Zoning Districts

- RL, Residential Low
- RM, Residential Medium
- RH, Residential High
- PD-R, Planned Development Residential

Link + Place Street Types

- Limited Connection Residential
- Neighborhood Circulators
- Some existing Single-Family Detached Neighborhoods are present along Avenues and Boulevards, such as portions of Chain Bridge Road, Old Lee Highway, and Main Street.



TOWNHOUSE/SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED NEIGHBORHOOD

Definition

The Townhouse/Single-Family Attached Neighborhood Place Type, identified in orange on the Future Land Use Map, applies to neighborhoods that are primarily developed with townhouses and single-family attached or duplex housing. Single-family detached uses may be considered in the Townhouse/Single-Family Attached Neighborhood Place Type when developed in conjunction with Townhouse/Single-Family Attached Neighborhood uses.

Physical Characteristics

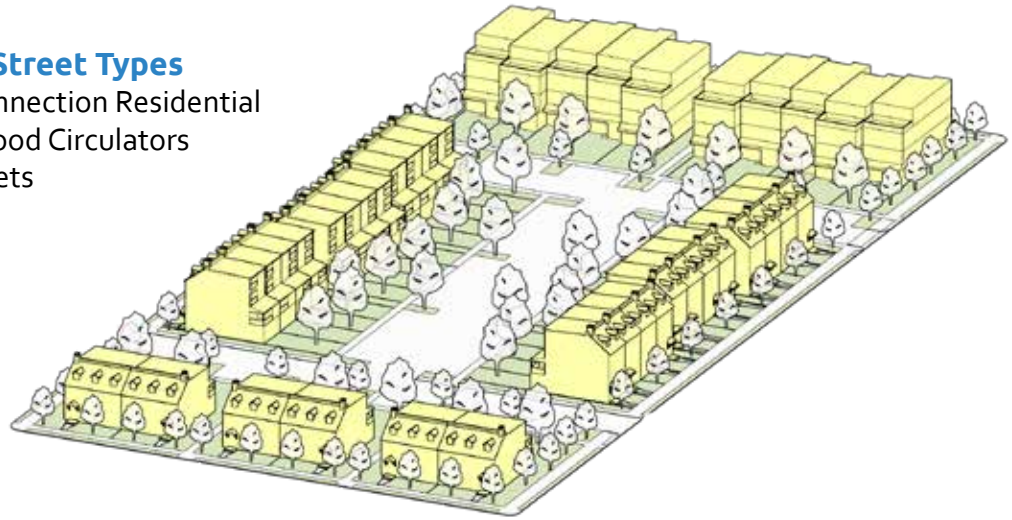
The design and layout of new Townhouse and Single-Family Attached Neighborhood developments should reflect the location of the development within the City. In particular, development that is adjacent to Single-Family Detached Neighborhoods within City limits, or to neighborhoods zoned primarily for single-family detached residences within adjacent jurisdictions, should have a maximum of three floors and provide landscaped setbacks for that portion of the site that is adjacent to any such neighborhood. Otherwise, a building height of up to four stories or 45 feet may be considered. Predicated on the underlying zoning district, the Townhouse/Single-Family Attached Neighborhood Place Type supports up to 12 dwelling units per acre.

Zoning Districts

- RT, Residential Townhouse
- RT-6, Residential Townhouse
- PD-R, Planned Development Residential

Link + Place Street Types

- Limited Connection Residential
- Neighborhood Circulators
- Active Streets
- Avenues
- Boulevards



MULTIFAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD

Definition

The Multifamily Neighborhood Place Type, identified in brown in the Future Land Use Map, applies to neighborhoods that are primarily developed with multifamily apartment or multifamily condominium housing. Townhouse/Single-Family Attached Neighborhood uses and Single-Family Detached Neighborhood uses may be considered in the Multifamily Neighborhood Place Type when developed in conjunction with Multifamily Neighborhood uses.

Physical Characteristics

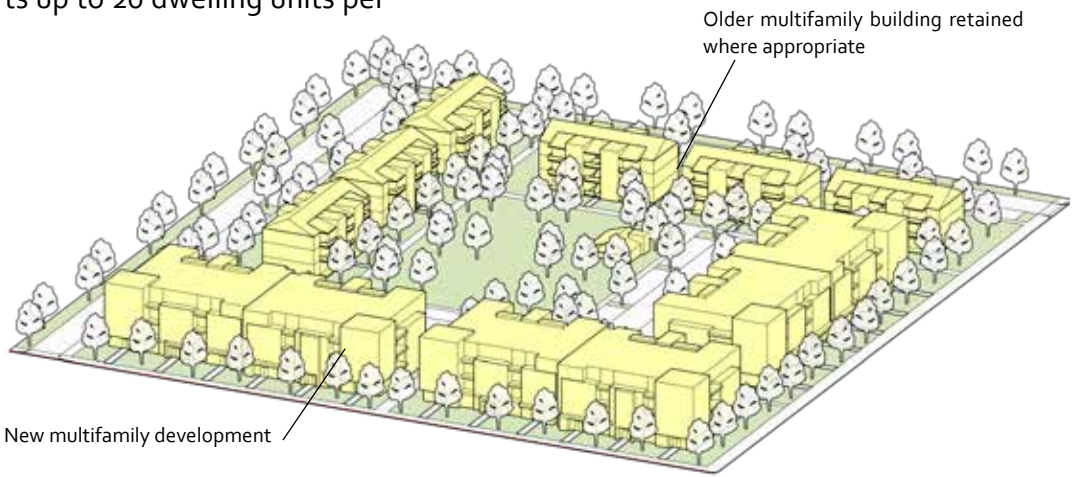
The design and layout of new Multifamily Neighborhood developments should reflect the location of the development within the City. Development that is adjacent to Single-Family Detached or Townhouse/Single-Family Attached neighborhoods within City limits, or to neighborhoods zoned primarily for single-family detached or single-family attached residences within adjacent jurisdictions, should have a maximum of three floors and provide landscaped setbacks for portions of the site that are adjacent to any such uses. Otherwise, a building height of up to four stories or 45 feet may be considered. In order to retain the relative affordability available in many existing multifamily structures, redevelopment of existing multifamily sites within Multifamily Neighborhood land use areas, where additional density is permitted by the Zoning Ordinance, should consider accommodating existing multifamily structures. Predicated on the underlying zoning district, the Multifamily Neighborhood Place Type supports up to 20 dwelling units per acre and a maximum height of 4 stories/45 feet.

Zoning Districts

- RMF, Multifamily
- PD-R, Planned Development Residential

Link + Place Street Types

- Limited Connection Residential
- Neighborhood Circulators
- Active Streets
- Avenues
- Boulevards



COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Definition

The Commercial Corridor Place Type, identified in red on the Future Land Use Map, includes a mix of retail, restaurant, service, medical, office, and other commercial uses. Limited manufacturing and other light industrial uses may also be considered. Heavy industrial uses should not be added or expanded beyond areas where they currently exist (such as the tank farm on Pickett Road). Residential uses are not recommended in Commercial Corridors. Commercial areas should accommodate access via a variety of transportation modes and be accessible to adjacent neighborhoods via pedestrian and bicycling facilities.

Physical Characteristics

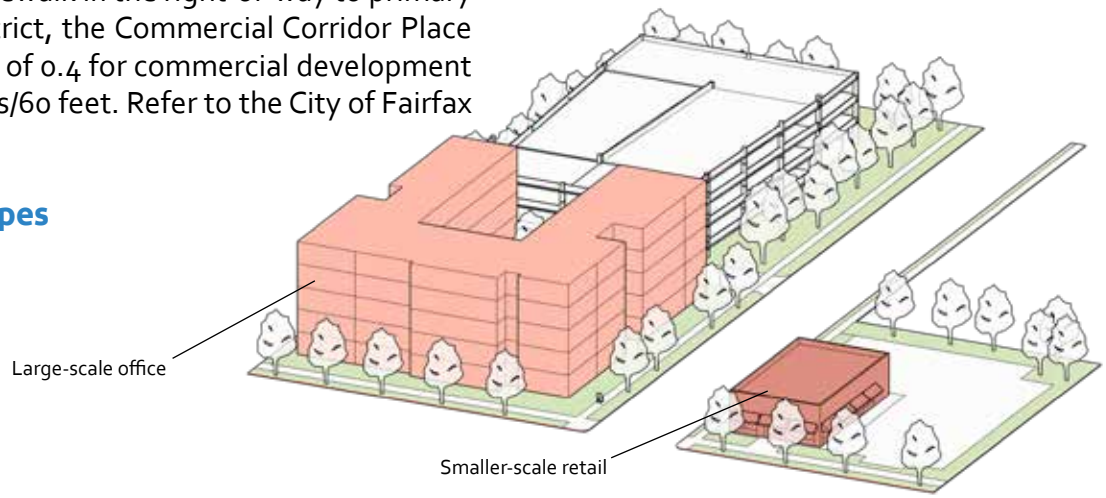
Commercial Corridor Place Types can accommodate a variety of buildings from small footprint retail buildings to multi-story office buildings. The desired orientation and placement of buildings on a Commercial Corridor site is primarily dependent on the adjacent Street Type. For sites located along Commercial Mains, buildings should have similar setbacks and building orientation as recommended for the nearby Activity Centers. Parking is encouraged in above-ground structures or underground, should be provided to the side or rear of buildings, and should be screened from view from the right-of-way by building mass or landscaping. For sites located along Boulevards or other street types, buildings should be located near front property lines with parking provided to the side or rear. Direct pedestrian access should be provided from the sidewalk in the right-of-way to primary building entrances. Predicated on the underlying zoning district, the Commercial Corridor Place Type supports a density of a minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.4 for commercial development and a maximum building height of 3 stories/35 feet to 5 stories/60 feet. Refer to the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines for more specific guidance on site design.

Zoning Districts

- CL, Commercial Limited
- CO, Commercial Office
- CR, Commercial Retail
- CG, Commercial General
- IL, Industrial Light
- IH, Industrial Heavy
- PD-C, Planned Development Commercial
- PD-I, Planned Development Industrial

Link + Place Street Types

- Boulevards
- Commercial Mains



ACTIVITY CENTER

Definition

The Activity Center Place Type, identified in purple on the Future Land Use Map, applies to locations in the City where pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development is strongly encouraged. (Mixed-use development is pedestrian-oriented development that allows multiple activities to take place by layering compatible land uses, public amenities, and active streets accommodating multimodal transportation, and community-serving commercial.) Uses should be integrated as a mix of commercial uses, multifamily housing, and townhouses, either in the same building (i.e., vertical mixed-use) or as a combination of single-use buildings featuring a range of complementary uses within the Activity Center (i.e., horizontal mixed-use).

Photo Credit: Hord Coplan Macht

Physical Characteristics

Activity Centers can accommodate a variety of building types based on the different uses permitted and varying characteristics among individual Activity Centers. Recommended physical characteristics for specific uses are provided under Use Characteristics (p. 33) and more specific recommendations are provided for the Old Town Fairfax and Northfax Activity Centers on the following pages. The Comprehensive Plan also recommends Small Area Plans be developed for each of the City's five Activity Centers. As each of these plans is completed and adopted, the recommendations will supersede the pre-existing guidance of this Comprehensive Plan.

In general, new development in Activity Centers should support a connected street network as recommended in the Multimodal Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan; provide an improved streetscape and pedestrian connections to surrounding uses, including links to the existing pedestrian network; and include inviting public and/or private open spaces. Parking should be provided in structured or below-grade facilities where reasonable.

Development in Activity Centers must meet the Code of Virginia definition for an Urban Development Area (Virginia Code § 15.2-2223.1) and follow the recommendations for Private Site Design and Elements in the applicable district of the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines. Predicated on the underlying zoning district, the Activity Center Place Type supports a density of a minimum FAR of 0.4; at least six townhouses or at least 12 multifamily dwelling units per acre; or any proportional combination of residential and commercial densities with building heights predominantly five stories or less, unless otherwise specified in an adopted Small Area Plan.

ACTIVITY CENTER (con't)

Use Characteristics

Office: Office uses are acceptable as components of mixed-use buildings or as stand-alone buildings.

Retail: Retail uses may be provided on the ground floor of mixed-use buildings, as stand-alone buildings, or on upper floors of buildings where larger tenant floor area requirements would detract from an active presence on the first floor. Retail uses are preferred along Commercial Mains, except where indicated otherwise in adopted Small Area Plans, but may be provided at other locations within an Activity Center.

Hotel: Hotels are acceptable as components of mixed-use buildings or as stand-alone buildings. Hotels are particularly encouraged in high visibility locations along Commercial Mains and at key intersections, or as may otherwise be identified in adopted Small Area Plans.

Public, Civic, and Institutional: Public, civic and institutional uses that are allowed by special use permit in commercial districts in the Zoning Ordinance may be provided as components of mixed-use buildings or as stand-alone buildings.

Residential Multifamily: Residential multifamily uses are acceptable as components of mixed-use buildings or as stand-alone buildings. Ground floor residential uses in multifamily or residential mixed-use buildings, including accessory spaces and amenities but not including residential lobby areas, should not be provided along Commercial Mains, unless such uses are identified in adopted Small Area Plans. Where ground-floor residential units are located adjacent to Active Streets or Commercial Mains, direct exterior access should be provided to individual units.

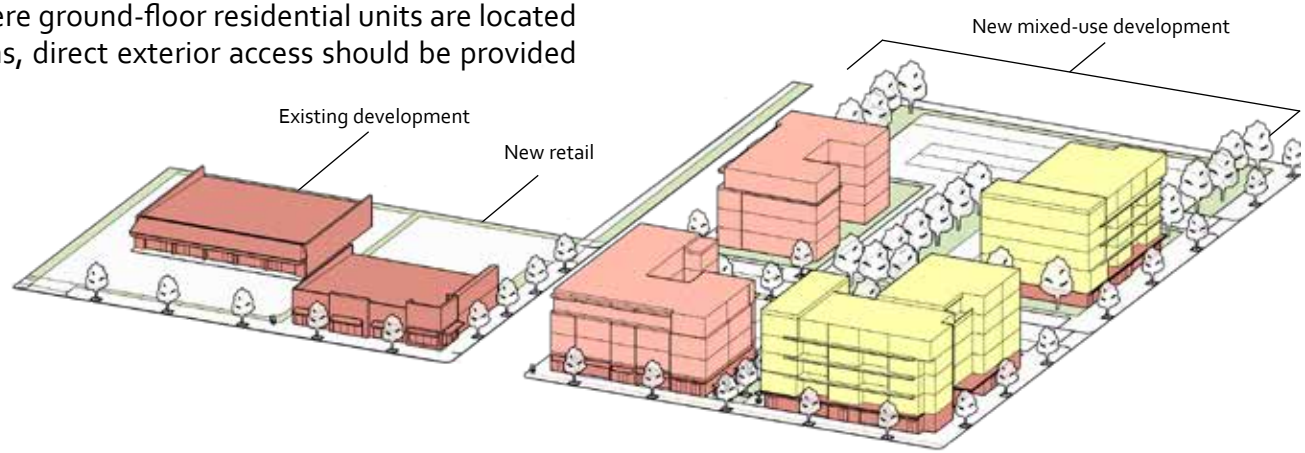
Townhouse: Residential townhouses should only be considered to serve as a transitional use to existing development outside of the Activity Center.

Zoning Districts

- CU, Commercial Urban
- PD-R, Planned Development Residential
- PD-C, Planned Development Commercial
- PD-M, Planned Development Mixed Use

Link + Place Street Types

- Active Streets
- Commercial Mains



ACTIVITY CENTER (con't)

Residential Limitations

The majority of future residential growth is anticipated to occur within the five Activity Centers identified in the Future Land Use Map. Refer to adopted Small Area Plans for specific recommendations on growth in each Activity Center. For Activity Centers for which a Small Area Plan has not yet been adopted, any unified development application within an Activity Center that contains a residential component should have a density of no more than 48 dwelling units per acre. Such developments must offer benefits that support the vision of the Comprehensive Plan for the Activity Center. Such benefits should include the following:

1. A mix of uses within the development site;

2. Contributions toward a connected street grid;

3. Usable open space, and;

4. High quality design.

Should a unified development application fail to offer these benefits, that development may contain no more than 20 dwelling units per acre.

Direct fiscal benefits to the City from residential developments are not typically as strong as those from commercial properties. In order to avoid significant displacement of commercial uses in Activity Centers, new residential development should first focus on lower value commercial or industrial sites unless a significant commercial component is included. Conversion of commercial space in existing buildings into residential space is not generally supported.

ACTIVITY CENTER - OLD TOWN FAIRFAX

The Old Town Fairfax Activity Center ("Old Town Fairfax") encompasses a cultural hub for the City, with a concentration of historic buildings, public services, active open space, and commercial buildings. Old Town Fairfax can also capitalize on its proximity to George Mason University to attract university supported businesses and arts and entertainment venues. The entirety of Old Town Fairfax is within the Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District (HOD) or the Old Town Fairfax Transition Overlay District (TOD) and is subject to those provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines.

Refer to the Old Town Fairfax Small Area Plan, dated June 2020, for specific recommendations within Old Town Fairfax, including locations for future streets and open spaces, opportunities for pedestrian connections across Commercial Mains, building form (including appropriate locations for more or less restrictive building heights from the Activity Center standards), and general land use and development limitations. The overall concept plan for Old Town Fairfax, as provided in the Small Area Plan, is shown to the right.

ACTIVITY CENTER - NORTHFAX

The Northfax Activity Center ("Northfax") is considered the most appropriate location in the City to accommodate a regional mixed-use destination. Its location at the intersection of Fairfax Boulevard and Chain Bridge Road, with immediate access to Interstate 66 and a potential future Metro station, is more accessible than other Activity Centers. It is also equidistant from existing regional mixed-use destinations at Merrifield and Fairfax Corner. In order to leverage these characteristics, the City should strive to market Northfax to a wide range of commercial tenants and retail uses in order to take advantage of these benefits. New residential uses and amenities such as open spaces and a pedestrian-friendly multimodal transportation network, should also be leveraged to improve the commercial marketability of the Activity Center.

Refer to the Northfax Small Area Plan, dated June 2020, for specific recommendations within the Northfax Activity Center, including locations for future streets and open spaces, pedestrian connections, building height and form, general land use, and development limitations. The overall concept plan for Northfax, as provided in the Small Area Plan, is shown to the right.

SOCIAL AND CIVIC NETWORK

Definition

The Social and Civic Network Place Type, identified in blue on the Future Land Use Map, includes public and private schools, libraries, places of worship, post offices, and other public facilities There are no specific corresponding Link + Place Street Types for this category because the varying types of Social and Civic Network land uses are appropriate in a variety of conditions. There is no zoning district specifically related to this Place Type. More information on the zoning districts for which uses in this Place Type are permitted, or constitute a special use, is provided in the Principal Use Table in the Zoning Ordinance. In order to support the recommendations of the Housing Guiding Principle in this chapter, residential uses may be considered in conjunction with other uses in the Social and Civic Network Place Type, provided such residential uses are considered affordable.

Physical Characteristics

New development of, or modifications to existing, social and civic uses located in any Residential Neighborhood should complement the character of the surrounding properties and provide transitional screening where necessary. Any new, or modifications to, existing social and civic uses located in an Activity Center should reflect the typical context of the center. New buildings should be oriented towards the street network and provide additional pedestrian connections to surrounding uses as recommended in the Multimodal Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

GREEN NETWORK

Definition

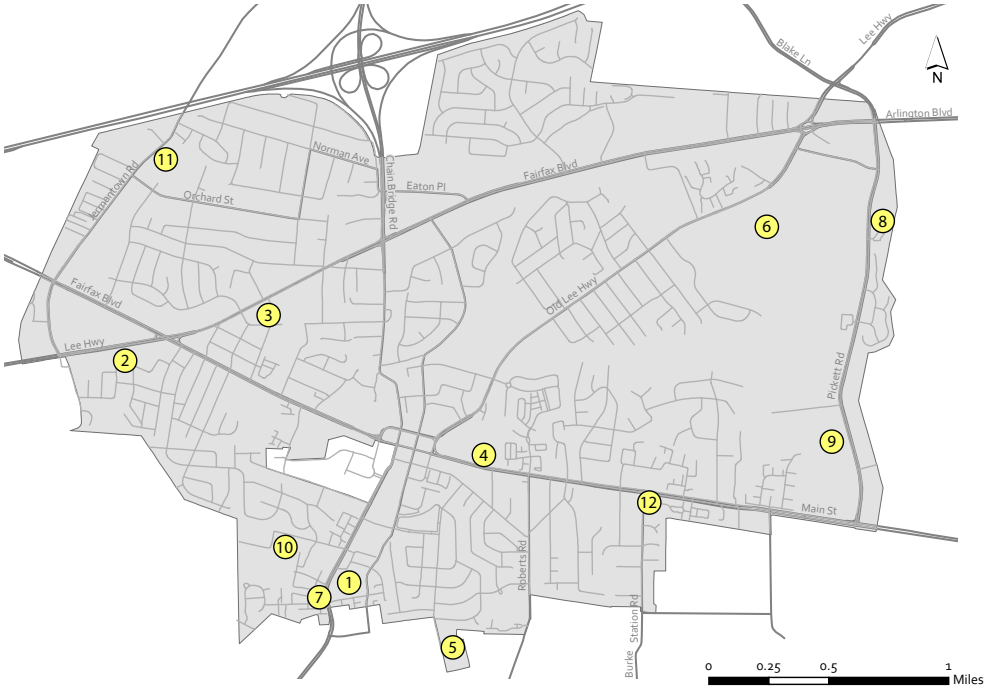
The Green Network Place Type includes public spaces, such as active and passive parks, trails, playing fields, public recreation facilities, cemeteries, open space, and private facilities such as golf courses and private open space. There are currently no zoning districts specifically related to this Place Type. Green Network uses are permitted in the CR, Commercial Retail; CU, Commercial Urban; and CG, Commercial General zoning districts and constitute a special use in all of the residential zoning districts. Outdoor recreational uses, such as tennis courts and golf courses, are permitted as a special use in all of the nonresidential zoning districts except for CL, Commercial Limited.

Physical Characteristics

New recreational facilities shall provide connections to the pedestrian and street network as recommended in the Multimodal Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Proposed connections to other green spaces to complete the network should be prioritized for recreation and transportation purposes as well as ecological benefits. Properties in the network also include natural areas for conservation and protection. Parking facilities for specific recreational uses shall be integrated into the site so as not to prioritize vehicular access over pedestrian connections.

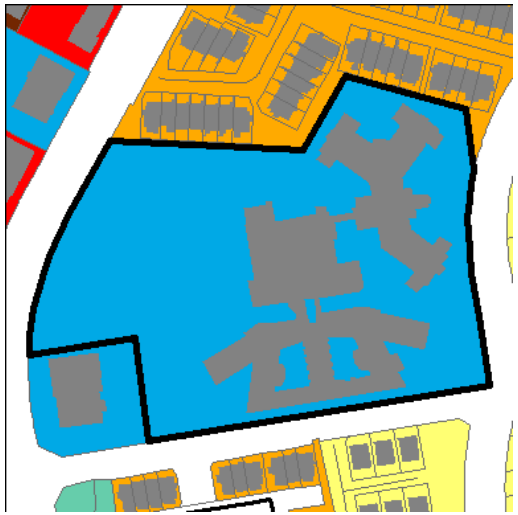
Parcel Specific Considerations

In some cases, the appropriate Place Type for a parcel or group of parcels can vary based on the specifics of design, changes in market demand and variations in surrounding conditions. Several sites in the City have been identified for further consideration of their Place Type designation based on these factors. These sites are identified on the map to the right and described below. While alternatives may be considered, the existing Place Type designation on the Future Land Use Map is the primary recommendation for each site. This list may be expanded in future modifications of this in plan. In particular, potential alternative Place Type designations should be considered for privately-owned sites with a Social and Civic Network designation.



1. Inova and Sunrise Assisted Living

The Inova Emergency Care site, located on Chain Bridge Road, School Street, and George Mason Boulevard, encompasses 9.6 acres and is currently occupied by the Inova Fairfax Emergency Care Center, Sunrise Assisted Living, and the PACE senior medical care center. This site is likely to become available for redevelopment within the next few years. Its unique location makes it suitable for different uses to include commercial, multifamily, and/or townhouse uses. Commercial uses are appropriate along Chain Bridge Road. Any multifamily development should provide substantial buffering to abutting residential uses to the north. Building heights should be no more than three floors along the north, east, and south property lines. Additionally, townhouse uses may be considered as a transition to adjacent, lower-density residential uses.



2. Park Road Properties

Four properties located along Park Road, totaling 0.89 acres, are located within the Westmore Neighborhood but are commercially zoned. Two of the parcels contain a commercial building. The other two parcels contain single-family residential buildings, though one is occupied by a commercial business. Given the location of these lots and their dependence on access from within the neighborhood, alternative uses may be more appropriate than a commercial zoning designation.

Single-family attached residential uses would provide a logical transition between the single-family detached neighborhood to the south and commercial uses to the north. Single-family detached residential uses may also be appropriate. Commercial uses may be appropriate if the properties are consolidated with commercial properties to the north so vehicular access is not dependent on Park Road.

3. Oak Street Properties

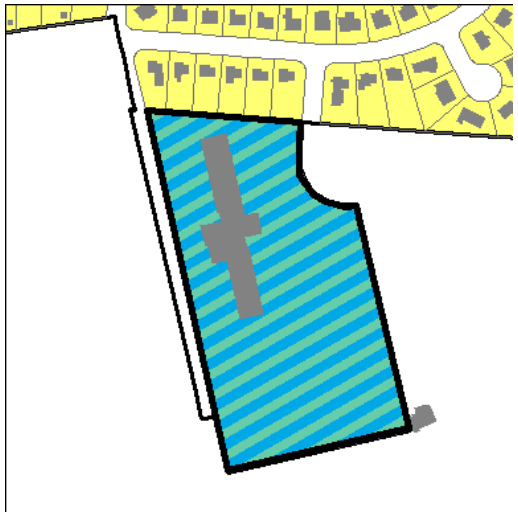
Five parcels (059 through 063 on the attached map) located along the west side of Oak Street between Fairfax Boulevard and Cedar Avenue are designated as Single-Family Attached and Single-Family Detached though they are surrounded by higher intensity uses, including the potential Fairfax Garden redevelopment to the west and commercial uses to the north and east. While the Place Type designation supports the current uses, these properties may be appropriate for a Multifamily Neighborhood Place Type designation if they are all included in a parcel consolidation. Alternatively, parcel 063 may be appropriate for a Commercial Corridor designation if it is consolidated with properties with that Place Type designation to the north.

4. Farr Homeplace

This 9.4-acre property located along Main Street between Farrcroft and Main Street Marketplace is privately-owned and the location of the "Farr Homeplace," also known as "Five Chimneys." There is a Resource Protection Area in the rear of the property. Although no historic designation exists, it should be explored for inclusion within a Historic Overlay District. An alternate use may include Single-Family Attached Neighborhood. Any development should retain the existing house, minimize disturbance in the Resource Protection Area, and consider appropriate relationships with the Farrcroft neighborhood to the east.

5. Green Acres

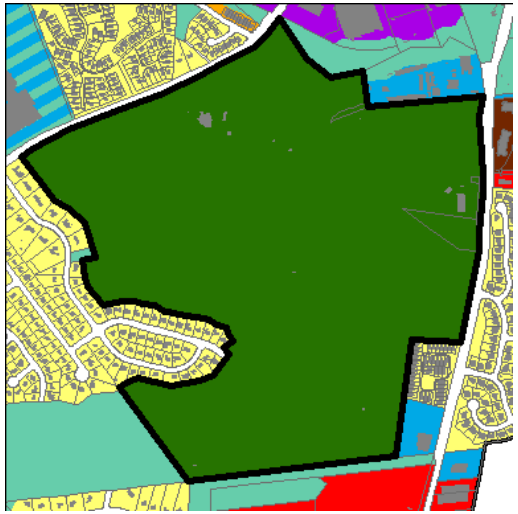
The Green Acres site encompasses 10 acres of land surrounded by George Mason University with one street leading to it through a residential neighborhood. The 2016 Green Acres Feasibility Study found that it is not best suited for the community center use it currently serves and recommended a new community center be constructed elsewhere in the City. The study proposed three alternatives for the future use of the Green Acres site; retaining the entire site for future community uses, selling the entire site, or retaining a portion of the site for community use and selling a portion of the site. The study does not recommend specific uses.



The City of Fairfax School Board reserves the right to retain the site for construction for a future school if necessitated by enrollment demands. This is governed through a covenant on the property. For this reason, the Social and Civic Network Place Type designation should remain. If this covenant is transferred to another property in the City, it would no longer be needed at Green Acres, and the site would become available for other uses.

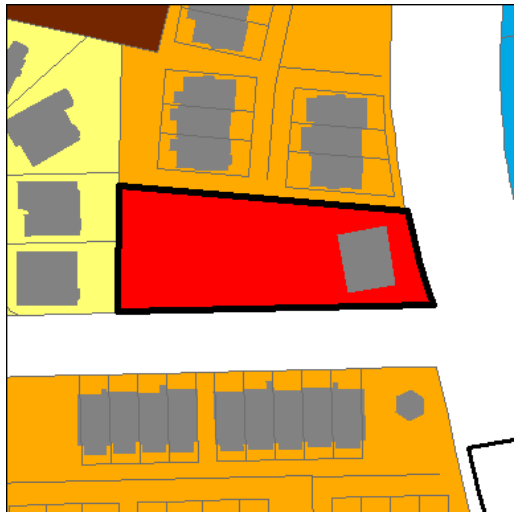
6. Army Navy Country Club

Covering approximately 234 acres, the Army Navy Country Club is the largest individual property in the City and the largest area of open space. While there are no known plans for the Country Club to vacate or for the property to be developed, and this plan supports continued use of the property for open space, priorities for the future of the site should be considered. Given the wide array of potential implications development of this site could have on the various Guiding Principles for the City, an advisory committee should be formed to conduct a comprehensive analysis and provide recommendations on key priorities if development becomes likely.



7. 4328 Chain Bridge Road

Encompassing just over half an acre, this site is located on the northwest corner of Chain Bridge Road and School Street. Adjacent properties to the north, west and south are occupied by fairly new townhomes and single-family homes that are not expected to be redeveloped within the timeframe of this plan. Redevelopment on this site should be limited to three stories to integrate with surrounding development. An alternative use for the site could include townhomes for which partial fourth stories could be considered for portions of the site that are not directly adjacent to shorter buildings.

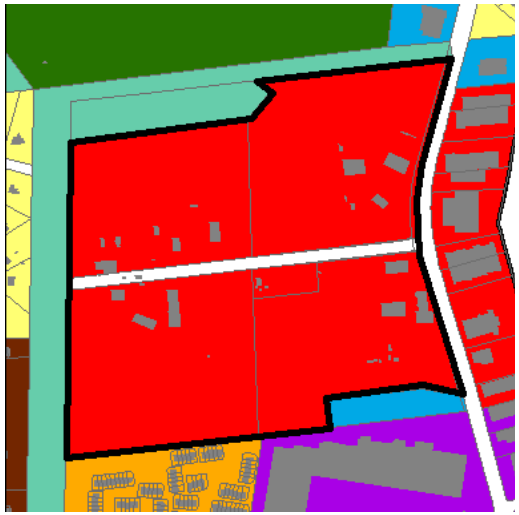


8. Mantua Professional Center

The Mantua Professional Center was originally approved as an office development in 1975, though only a portion of the approved development was ever constructed. Since that time, the original approved plan has been amended several times, including separate amendments that converted portions of the site to be used as a private school and multifamily condominiums. As a result, the current complex is now occupied by three distinct uses. Alternative uses could include multifamily residential or townhomes in the portions of the site currently designated as Commercial Corridor and Social/Civic Network. Any expansion of residential uses in the complex should be cognizant of existing neighborhoods to the south and east and should provide adequate transitions in these areas.

9. Tank Farm

The Pickett Road tank farm comprises above-ground storage for four commercial gasoline and fuel oil facilities and an underground pipeline station on approximately 71 acres. No expansion of the existing heavy industrial uses at this site would be appropriate, and the Commercial Corridor place type is recommended for future development. While there are no known plans for the tank farm to be redeveloped, guidance on development priorities and alternative uses that complement recommendations for the Pickett & Main Activity Center should be established for the site.

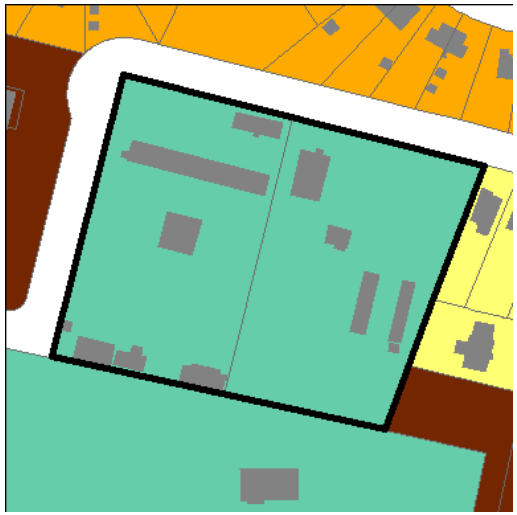


Fairfax County Property Yards

Fairfax County currently owns and manages three property yards within the City, located on West Drive, Jermantown Road, and Main Street. Fairfax County may consider some of these locations for closure in order to provide more efficient services from a consolidated, centralized location. Should Fairfax County choose to vacate any of these locations and dispose of the properties, the City should consider pursuing acquisition. These properties have been identified as potential locations for park uses, open space, affordable housing partnerships between the City and non-profit entities, school sites, property yard functions, or other uses.

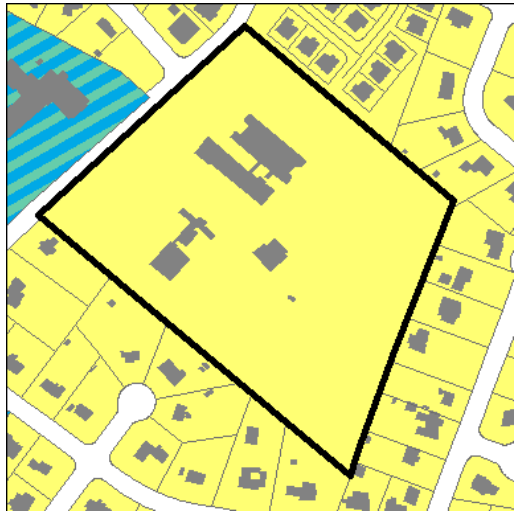
10. West Drive

The two properties that make up the West Drive property yard site encompass 4.2 acres and present a logical extension of the adjacent Providence Park. Their inclusion in the park area would also make Providence Park large enough to host a potential future elementary school in place of the Green Acres site, should that site be desired for other uses. If the City does not acquire this site, it is most suitable for residential development, including single-family detached, single-family attached, or multifamily units. Residential development should provide logical transitions to adjacent uses, particularly along the eastern property line where it abuts existing single-family uses.



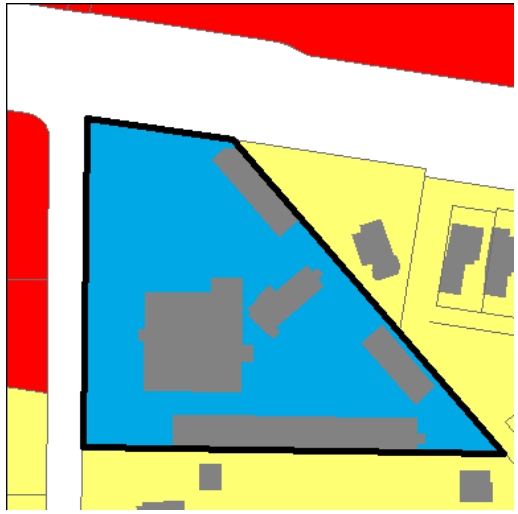
11. Jermantown Road

If this 15-acre property discontinues its function as a property yard and the City does not acquire it, single-family detached residential uses are an appropriate use, consistent with surrounding uses. The cemetery on this parcel should not be impacted by any redevelopment.



12. Main Street

This 2.45-acre parcel is bounded on two sides by roads, Main Street and Burke Station Road. If the City obtains this site, one potential reuse would be a relocation of some of the City's public works services, currently located at the Property Yard on Pickett Road. The existing property yard has flooding issues and diminishing space. The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan also recommends identification of new potential park sites in the southeast portion of the City. While this site is relatively small, open space uses would provide an amenity in a portion of the City in which open space is not abundant. If the City does not purchase this property, appropriate uses include single-family detached, single-family attached, or commercial uses.



Neighborhoods

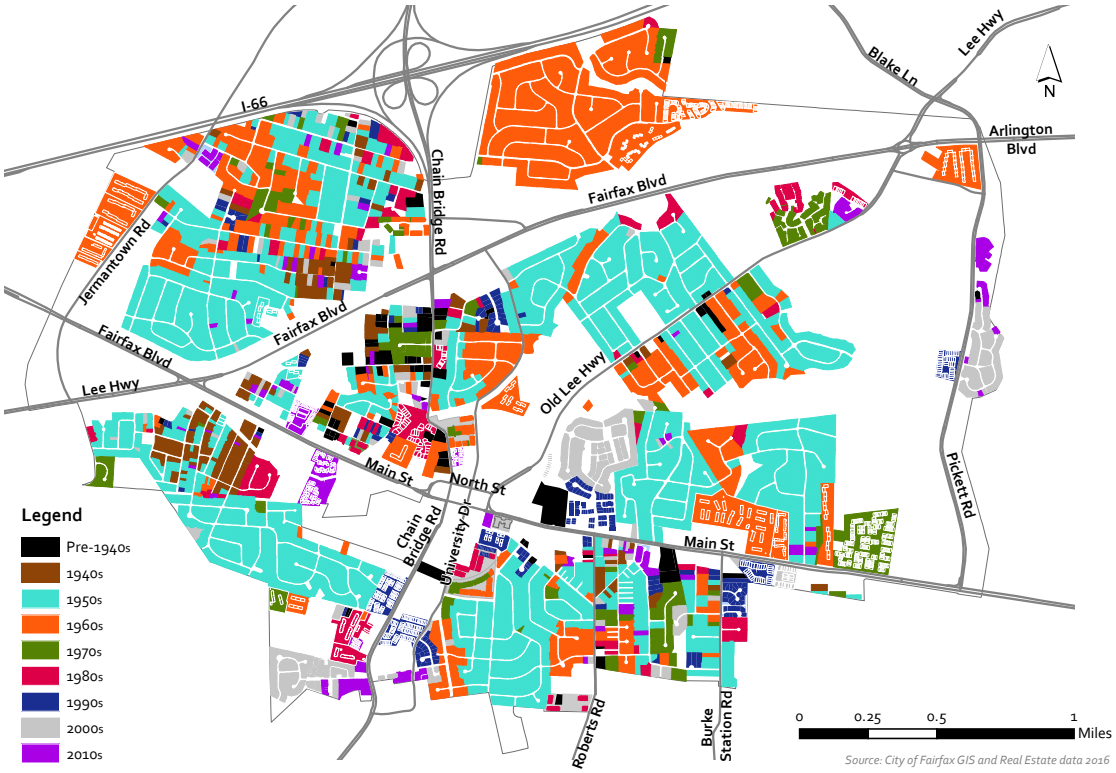
Neighborhoods – the places where we live, learn, play, and increasingly work – constitute the largest geographical use of land in the City, though physical boundaries are not the only defining character trait of a neighborhood. Numerous characteristics define neighborhoods, including the period of building and development (Figure 10), subdivision patterns, architectural style, location of public amenities and services, and presence of social or civic organizations. The City's neighborhoods each have their own unique character and offer a variety of housing and lifestyle opportunities.

Neighborhoods are supported by a separate Guiding Principle in this Plan due to their importance to residents. City growth and development policies must both preserve the quality of neighborhoods and protect neighborhoods from adverse consequences of growth. However, this should not imply that Fairfax's neighborhoods should remain static. Well-designed and properly scaled infill can be an appropriate strategy to foster walkability, better amenities, and housing affordability. This section's goals strive to balance these concerns and take advantage of opportunities through improved policies and regulations, and increased communication with and within the community.

Guiding Principle:

In 2035, Fairfax is a city with...
inviting neighborhoods, each with its own unique character.

FIGURE 10 HOUSING AGE BY DECADE BUILT



Neighborhoods

Goal 1

Enhance neighborhood character.

There is relatively little undeveloped land available in the City for new residential neighborhoods. As the City's housing stock ages, replacements for, or additions to, existing structures will be the prevalent methods of updating housing to meet current market demands. The City should use this as an opportunity to enhance the character and inclusiveness of the City's neighborhoods. Any modification or new construction on residential lots located in established neighborhoods should be compatible with the character of that neighborhood. In order to encourage reinvestment in neighborhoods, the City and civic associations should educate residents about programs available to them (such as Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corporation loans) and the processes involved in updating their homes.

OUTCOME N1.1:	Infill housing that complements the character of surrounding homes in existing neighborhoods.
ACTION N1.1.1	Maintain regulatory standards to ensure infill housing fits in with the surrounding neighborhood context.
OUTCOME N1.2:	Residents have regular communication and positive interactions with other members of their neighborhood as well as the larger City community.
ACTION N1.2.1	Encourage and support community engagement through homeowner, condominium, and civic associations.
ACTION N1.2.2	Establish regular communication with homeowner, condominium, and civic associations and residential property managers as a means to keep individual citizens informed about City business.

Neighborhoods
Goal 2

Provide neighborhood pedestrian connections.

Walkability was frequently cited as a desired attribute of the City during the Comprehensive Plan's public outreach process. Ensuring our neighborhoods are designed to both encourage pedestrian activity and to provide various transportation alternatives will enable people of all abilities to get around the City efficiently and reduce traffic congestion. Improving walkability is not just about adding more sidewalks and trails, but also looking at destinations residents can walk to – such as parks, schools, Commercial Corridors, Activity Centers, and other local destinations – and identifying the condition of the transportation network that can get them there. The strength of a network to get someone from point A to point B is only as good as its weakest link.

OUTCOME N2.1:	Residents of all abilities safely and easily move about the community.
ACTION N2.1.1	Identify opportunities for future open space and trails in neighborhoods that are currently deficient in offering these amenities.
ACTION N2.1.2	Expand existing pedestrian network to increase connectivity within neighborhoods and to other destinations.

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

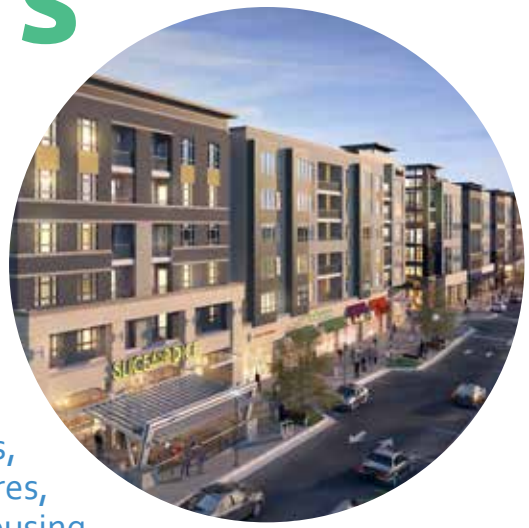


Photo Credit: Hord Coplan Macht

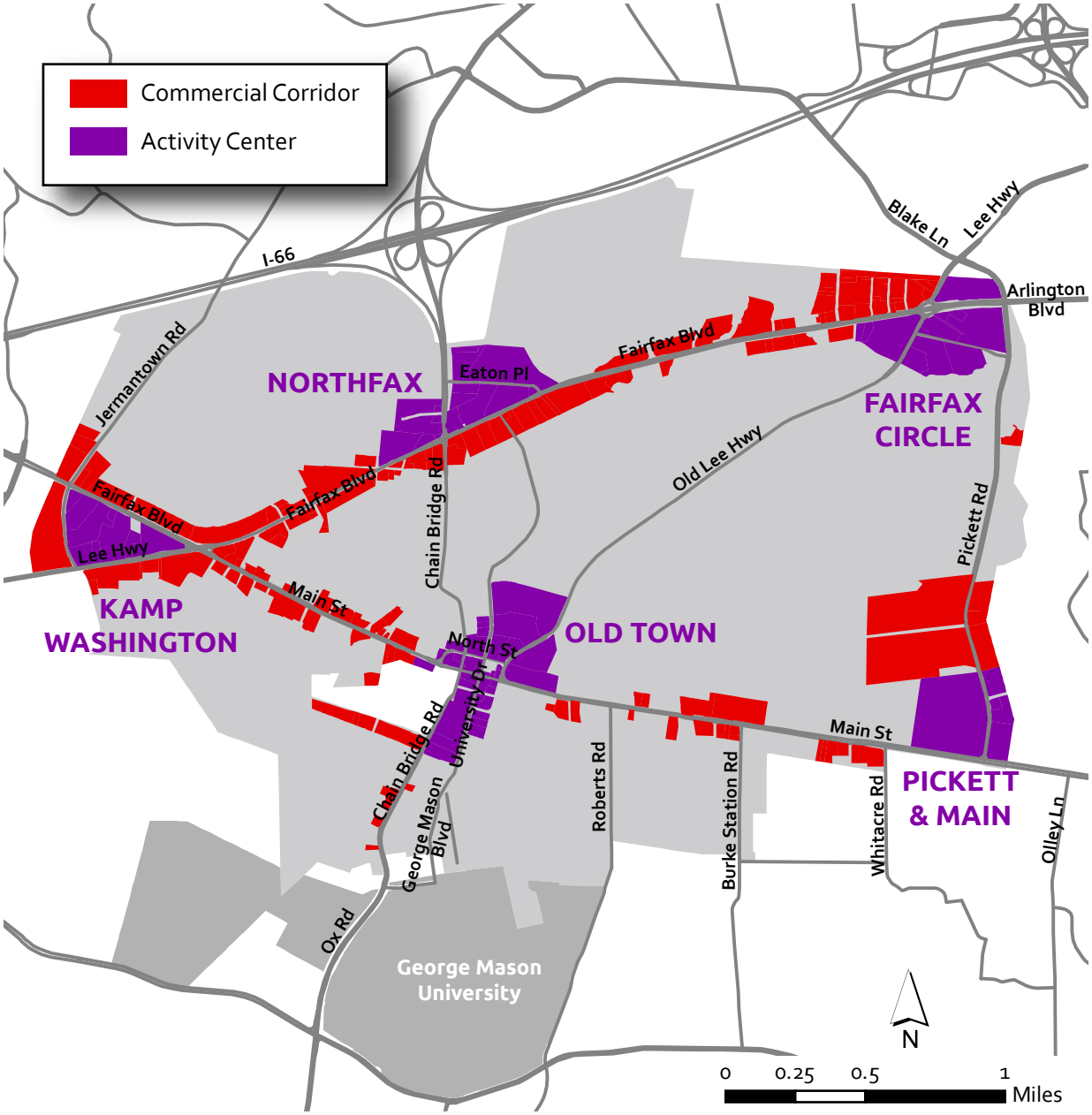
Guiding Principle:

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

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

While higher intensity mixed-use redevelopment of older commercial properties can provide economic and social benefits to the community, these benefits would be most realized if concentrated in key areas to allow new developments to complement each other, avoid oversaturating the market, and minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods. These types of uses are primarily envisioned in Activity Centers, as indicated on the Future Land Use Map. While a mix of uses and connected street grids are envisioned in all Activity Centers, such development is always encouraged in the Old Town Fairfax and Northfax Activity Centers. More specific guidance is provided for these two areas in the Activity Center Place Type (pages 35-36) and through the goals of this Guiding Principle.

FIGURE 11 ACTIVITY CENTERS AND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



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

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

Goal 1

Enhance Commercial Corridors.

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

OUTCOME CCAC1.1:	Commercial Corridors with attractive physical characteristics that provide shopping, dining, services, and other businesses.
ACTION CCAC1.1.1	Encourage commercial redevelopment that offers amenities and atmosphere to attract top-tier commercial tenants.
ACTION CCAC1.1.2	Identify underutilized properties (i.e., buildings assessed at considerably less than the total property value) and, working with the City's Economic Development Authority, encourage redevelopment.
ACTION CCAC1.1.3	Encourage creativity and architectural excellence in new commercial developments.
ACTION CCAC1.1.4	Develop urban design concept diagrams for small block and multi-block areas along the City's Commercial Corridors outside the Activity Centers.
ACTION CCAC1.1.5	Encourage tree-lined and heavily-landscaped property edges, particularly where surface parking is adjacent to the public rights-of-way.
ACTION CCAC1.1.6	Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby neighborhoods.
OUTCOME CCAC1.2:	Tenants representing diverse business sectors that meet current and emerging trends in neighborhood-serving retail, service, and other business demands.
ACTION CCAC1.2.1	Strengthen existing retail businesses and expand choices to capture retail spending by residents.
ACTION CCAC1.2.2	Create a marketing plan to generate excitement about the current retail and service offerings.

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

Goal 2

Promote redevelopment in the City's Activity Centers.

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

OUTCOME CCAC2.1:	Old Town Fairfax, including an expanded downtown area to its north and south, is a lively, economically viable, walkable cultural hub for the City.
ACTION CCAC2.1.1	Capitalize on the authenticity and appeal of Old Town Fairfax as an historic place and a shopping, dining, and tourist destination.
ACTION CCAC2.1.2	Attract and retain businesses along Main Street and market it as a primary retail street for Old Town Fairfax.
ACTION CCAC2.1.3	Maximize the use of publicly-owned properties to contribute to the economic and cultural vibrancy of Old Town Fairfax.
ACTION CCAC2.1.4	Encourage redevelopment of privately-owned, underutilized sites north and south of Old Town Fairfax, such as the Courthouse Plaza shopping center and the area west of University Drive between Sager Avenue and Armstrong Street, as mixed-use developments.
ACTION CCAC2.1.5	Market the connection to Old Town Fairfax from George Mason University and emphasize Old Town Fairfax as a desirable place for students and faculty to shop, dine, and live.
ACTION CCAC2.1.6	Support efforts by Fairfax County to develop a Master Plan for the County Courthouse Complex including encouraging improved connections between the complex and surrounding areas, as well as uses that contribute toward, rather than compete with the vibrancy of the Old Town Activity Center.
OUTCOME CCAC2.2:	A pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use destination at Northfax that capitalizes on its location to successfully compete with other regional centers.
ACTION CCAC2.2.1	Pursue feasibility of a public-private partnership to develop parking structures.
ACTION CCAC2.2.2	Consistently articulate expectations for unified developments and support measures that facilitate property consolidation.
ACTION CCAC2.2.3	Encourage the redevelopment of Northfax as a major commercial center and transit-oriented development that capitalizes on a potential future Metrorail station along I-66.

Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

Goal 2

OUTCOME CCAC2.3:	Old Town Fairfax, Northfax, and the other Activity Centers are well-designed and desirable places to live, work, shop, and dine.
ACTION CCAC2.3.1	Encourage structured parking and minimize surface parking, particularly adjacent to public rights-of-way.
ACTION CCAC2.3.2	Promote the orientation of buildings facing toward streets with architecture that engages street-level activity.
ACTION CCAC2.3.3	Promote active streetscapes with minimal building setbacks, pedestrian amenities, street furniture, on-street parking, landscaping, and other features.
ACTION CCAC2.3.4	Support land planning that balances connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.
ACTION CCAC2.3.5	Prepare individual Small Area Plans, as defined in Section 15.2-2303.4 of the Code of Virginia, for each of the Activity Centers that clearly demonstrate the desired mix of uses, residential density, building intensity, design aesthetic, specific street locations and multimodal connections, infrastructure improvements, parking, and open space.
ACTION CCAC2.3.6	Target and coordinate public infrastructure improvements with desired infill, reinvestment, and redevelopment areas to encourage and stimulate private development.

Housing

Guiding Principle:

In 2035, Fairfax is a city with... a choice of housing types that meet the needs of our community.

In order to function equitably and inclusively, the City must prioritize the availability of housing units for people of widely varying income levels, ages, and lifestyle choices. While there is great variety among the approximately 9,000 housing units in the City, several types or characteristics of housing may be underrepresented among the current housing mix, especially as other nearby communities undergo redevelopment and expand their offerings.

Although the City is primarily built out, a variety of new housing types can be accommodated through redevelopment on a relatively limited basis to broaden the current offerings and accommodate changing demands. Accordingly, housing that is affordable, housing that is designed for older adults and people with disabilities to accommodate the City's relatively high proportion of older adults, and housing for growing younger families seeking modern single-family housing without leaving the City should be prioritized.

Existing housing units can also accommodate changing demands through renovations and retrofits. Prioritizing additional housing units in underrepresented market segments, improving the functionality of existing housing units, and accommodating in-demand housing types would help to ensure that the City is as welcoming as possible to current and potential residents, regardless of socioeconomic status, age, or other circumstances.

In addition to expanding housing choices, proactive strategies should be taken to ensure that existing housing units that are affordable are preserved and that new units that are affordable are added to the City's overall housing unit mix.

Housing
Goal 1

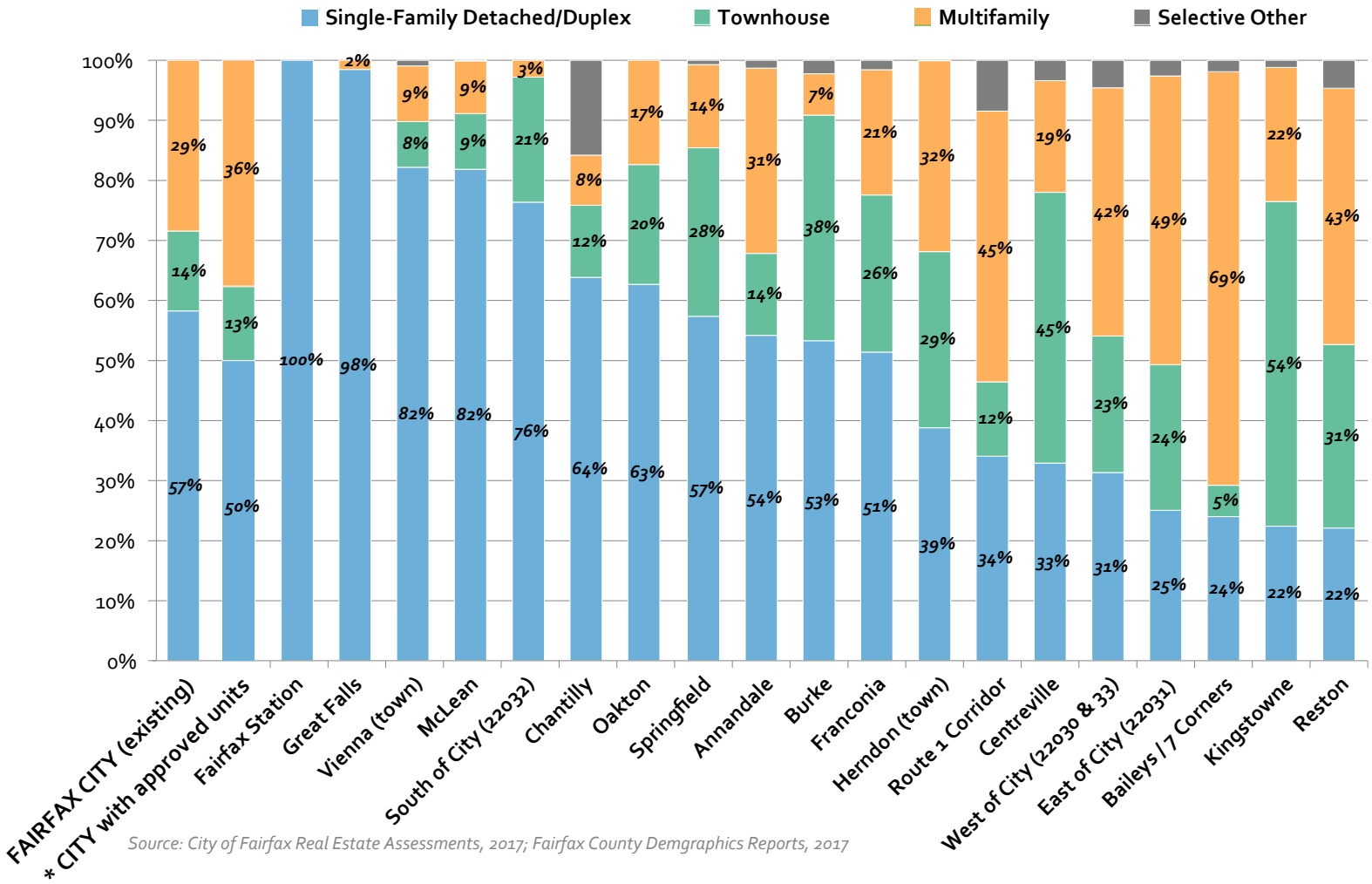
Support a wide range of housing types.

It is vital that a variety of high-quality, attractive housing choices continue to be available in the City to support differing needs and demands of residents. Housing needs and demands are reflective of the existing housing stock and fluctuating market trends, making them subject to change over time. Specific housing types are identified in the Land Use Strategies Section of the Comprehensive Plan. Current shortages could include multifamily rentals and condominiums, of which the majority of the City's stock was built in the 1960s, and townhomes, of which the City currently has a lower ratio than many surrounding communities in Fairfax County. Although significant single-family development is not anticipated as the City is primarily built-out, potential redevelopment and infill housing that keep up with modern expectations and meet demand are encouraged, provided they comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

OUTCOME H1.1:	Continued development of housing types that are underrepresented in the City's existing stock of housing units.
ACTION H1.1.1	Create a housing policy that can best provide for the types of housing units that are most in demand.
1.1.1.1	Conduct a housing assessment to examine the types of housing that are most in demand in the City for a full income range of households, or are most supportive of growing sectors of the local economy.
1.1.1.2	Support development of housing types that are not heavily represented in the City's housing stock, as identified in the housing assessment, where reasonable.
1.1.1.3	Consider efforts to market new and existing housing stock in the City to growing sectors of the regional economy.
ACTION H1.1.2	Research changes to the zoning regulations to expand opportunities for accessory dwelling units, while ensuring they do not negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood.

Figure 12 on the following page provides a comparison of housing type percentages between the City (both current and approved) and other parts of Fairfax County.

FIGURE 12 HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



Source: City of Fairfax Real Estate Assessments, 2017; Fairfax County Demgraphics Reports, 2017

* City with approved units = Approved and unbuilt units as of the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.

Housing
Goal 2

Ensure availability of housing that is affordable.

During the Comprehensive Plan outreach process, affordable housing was the primary issue that rose to the forefront of the housing discussion. (Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2201 defines affordable housing as housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays no more than thirty percent of his gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities. However, the actions associated with this goal could target households with incomes below the median.) In addition, Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2223 states that the Comprehensive Plan "shall include the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality." There are a number of tools available to encourage the establishment of new affordable residential units as well as to preserve existing "naturally occurring affordable housing" that is affordable to families earning below the region's median household income. Affordable housing should be encouraged in higher-density areas of the City, particularly in the Activity Centers.

OUTCOME H2.1:	Affordable housing units have been added to the City's housing stock through redevelopment and strategic investments.
ACTION H2.1.1	Maintain a robust housing affordability program and dedicated housing trust fund that could be used to rehabilitate and preserve existing housing that is affordable or to help leverage other funding streams for new construction.
ACTION H2.1.2	Provide regulatory and financial incentives to increase the supply of affordable housing, including amending the City's Zoning Ordinance to include an Affordable Dwelling Unit ordinance.
ACTION H2.1.3	Pursue a contractual partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development to administer elements of a housing affordability program for the City.
ACTION H2.1.4	Provide alternative means of accommodating new dedicated affordable housing units, such as leveraging vacant or underutilized public land; supporting or partnering with private, non-profit, or faith-based organizations; and co-locating affordable housing with public construction.
OUTCOME H2.2:	Preservation of and reinvestment in the City's existing supply of affordable multifamily rental housing units.
ACTION H2.2.1	Facilitate partnerships between existing property owners and nonprofit organizations to preserve and ensure long-term affordability of existing multifamily complexes.
ACTION H2.2.2	Promote the use of the Low Income Housing Tax Credits, tax abatements, low-interest loans, the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Program, and other funding sources available to reinvest in and upgrade existing multifamily complexes.

Housing
Goal 3

Provide housing options for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Housing that is designed for older residents and persons with disabilities was another issue that rose to the forefront of the housing discussion during the Comprehensive Plan's public outreach sessions. Given the relatively high concentration of older adults in the City as compared to surrounding jurisdictions, demand for such units from existing City residents could be strong. Housing should be suitable for a range of choices, such as aging in place, accessory dwelling units, dedicated senior housing, and assisted living/nursing care. In addition, options should be available for people with a variety of disabilities and incorporate features of universal design - the design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors.

OUTCOME H3.1:	A range of accessible housing types with appropriate levels of support and care is available for older adults and persons with disabilities that incorporate the concept of universal design.
ACTION H3.1.1	Express preferences regarding housing units that are appropriate and/or in demand for seniors and those with disabilities and incorporate features of universal design at a range of price points.
ACTION H3.1.2	Encourage development of congregate living facilities - a group of independent dwelling units that have common kitchen and dining areas - to support older adults and persons with disabilities.
ACTION H3.1.3	Review provisions within the City's Zoning Ordinance to identify and amend provisions that impede the ability to construct or modify housing containing minimal physical barriers for people of all ages and abilities, including but not limited to standards of universal design.

Housing
Goal 4

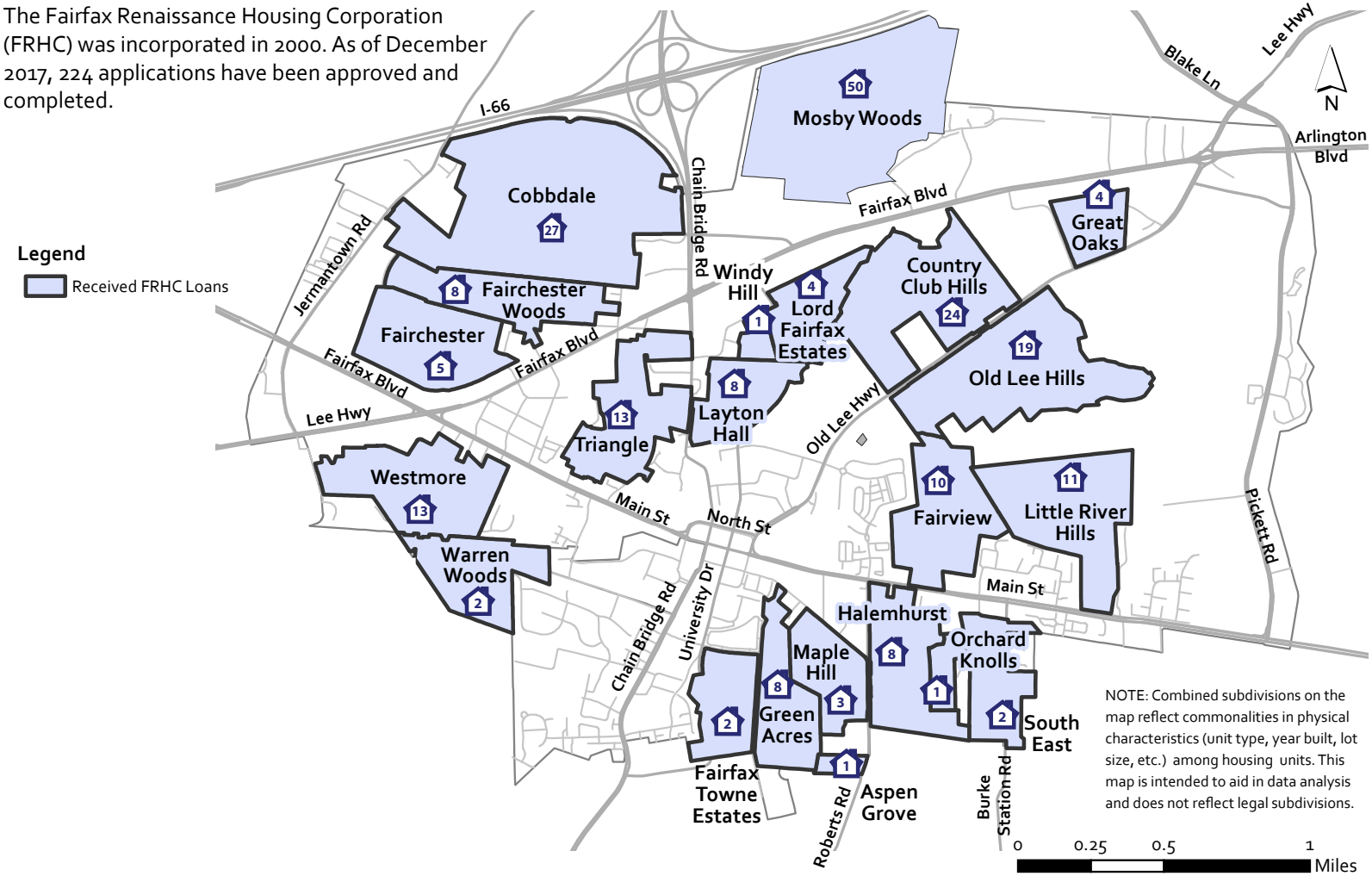
Support residential improvements of existing housing units.

Home renovations and expansions allow existing housing units in the City to keep up with modern expectations, including characteristics such as floor area, layout, style, technological amenities, and sustainable infrastructure. The Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corporation has assisted in such housing improvement projects throughout the City since 2000, as shown in Figure 13. In addition, the City has engaged in other programs, such as Solarize NOVA, to encourage residents to consider sustainable elements in home renovations.

OUTCOME H4.1:	A greater number of renovated housing units.
ACTION H4.1.1	Continue to encourage property owners to undertake residential reinvestment projects that can collectively modernize the City's housing stock.
ACTION H4.1.2	Encourage energy-efficient retrofits that reduce water use and heating and cooling costs.
ACTION H4.1.3	Continue to enforce compliance with building and property maintenance codes to prevent deteriorated, unsafe, and unhealthy housing conditions.
ACTION H4.1.4	Incentivize reinvestment in existing multifamily complexes.
OUTCOME H4.2:	Expanded City-sponsored residential improvement programs.
ACTION H4.2.1	Continue to explore modifications to the FRHC program to encourage greater participation.
ACTION H4.2.2	Encourage further engagement of programs to promote sustainable retrofits and incorporation of sustainable elements in residential renovations.

FIGURE 13 RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS WITH FAIRFAX RENAISSANCE HOUSING CORPORATION (FRHC) LOANS

The Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corporation (FRHC) was incorporated in 2000. As of December 2017, 224 applications have been approved and completed.



Source: Fairfax City GIS Parcels 2017 & FRHC Data January 2018

Community Design and Historic Preservation

Guiding Principle:

In 2035, Fairfax is a city with...
architecture that contributes to a vibrant, creative place and complements our historic character.

An attractive, well-designed City instills civic pride; improves the visual character of the community; creates a strong, positive image; and attracts quality developments. Community Design relates not just to what buildings look like, but to the spaces between buildings, as well as to the street and public realm. While accommodating new growth and change, consideration must be given to preserving significant elements of the community that contribute to the City's unique character.

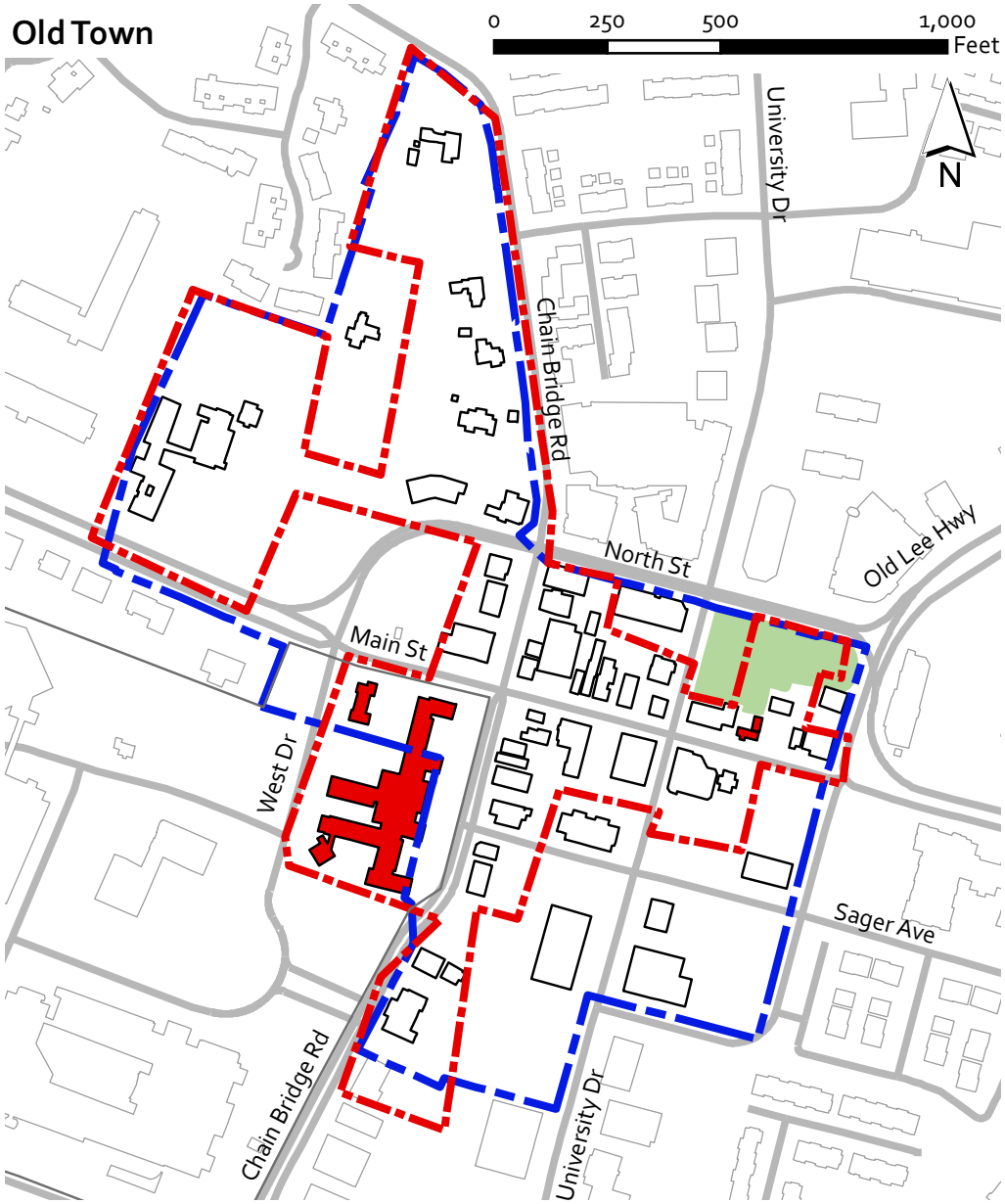
The intent of the Community Design and Historic Preservation Guiding Principle is to capitalize on unique features of the City in a manner reflecting the community's values and its connection to the history and traditions that distinguish it from other communities in the region. This can be accomplished through review and adjustment of planning, regulatory and incentive tools, and by improving coordination among stakeholders who impact the future development of the City, without unreasonably burdening the review process.

The primary resource on design elements for new construction, expansions and renovations is the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines. Separate design characteristics are described in the guidelines for the Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District, the Old Town Fairfax Transition Overlay District (both described on the following pages), and the Architectural Control Overlay District (which encompasses all properties within the City except for single-family residential properties and those properties located within one of the other overlay districts). The Board of Architectural Review, along with City staff, reviews development applications to determine if proposals meet the intent of the design guidelines.

Historic Overlay Districts

The majority of the City's historic architectural resources are concentrated in Old Town, the City's traditional core. Old Town is recognized and preserved both nationally as a National Register of Historic Places district as well as through a City preservation district zoning overlay (Figure 14). There are 52 buildings, 10 "other structures," and a monument within the National Register of Historic Places' "City of Fairfax Historic District," many of which are considered "contributing elements." Six of the buildings predate 1850 while others are from the turn of the 20th century to the early 1930s. The City's locally-designated Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District is larger in area than the National Register district.

FIGURE 14 HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND BUILDINGS



Source: City of Fairfax GIS 2016 Impervious Surfaces, Zoning Overlays, National Register Districts

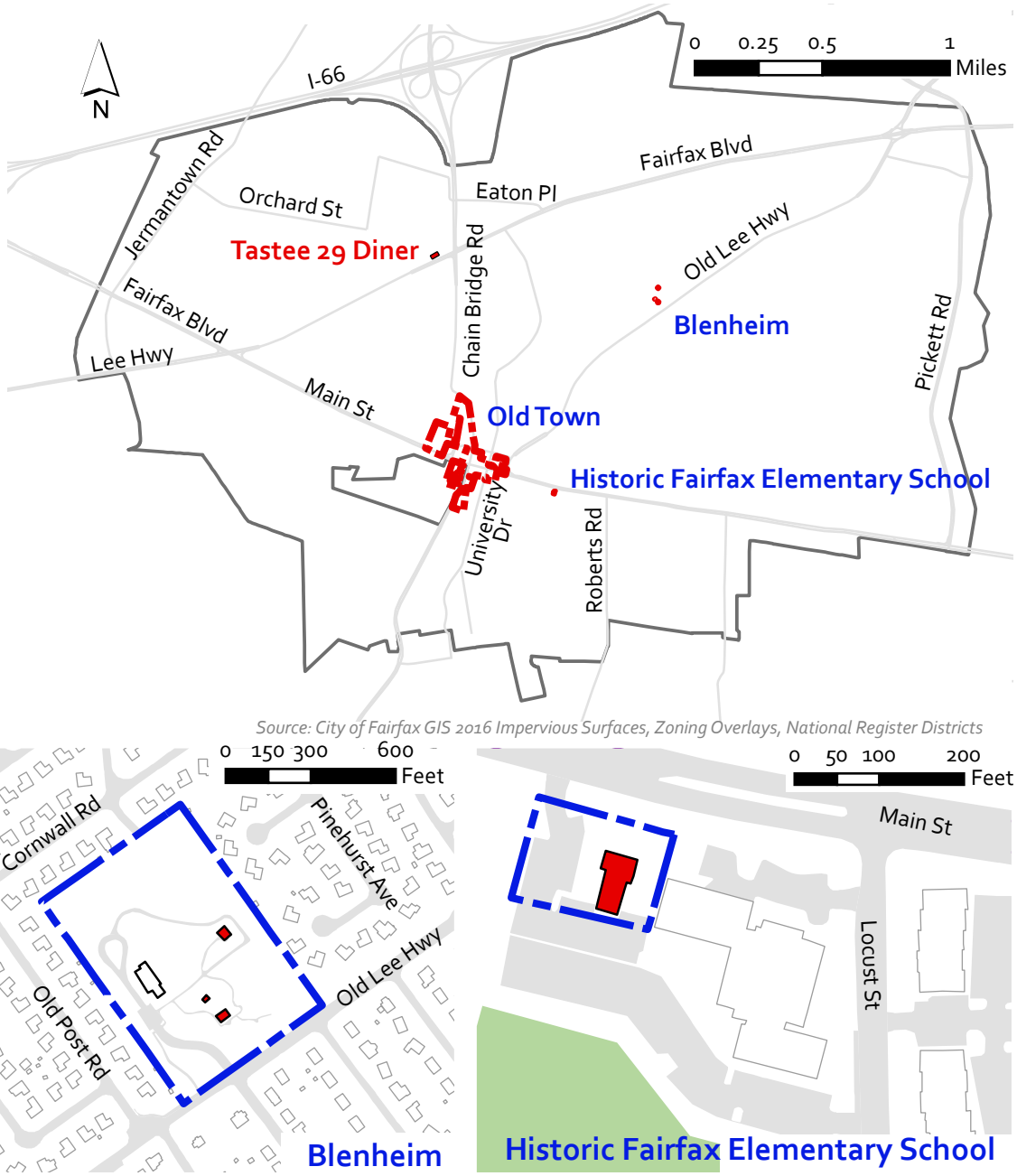
Legend

- National Register Historic District
- National Register Historic Building
- City Historic District
- Building
- Centerline of Road
- Park

In addition to Old Town, the City has historic zoning overlay districts for two other properties, the Fairfax Public School and Blenheim (Figure 15).

Additionally, there are many properties and structures with historic characteristics that have not been designated at the local, state, or national levels. Over 4,800 structures in the City are 50 years of age or older, one of the criteria to determine eligibility of historic designation. The significance of a given property or structure to architectural history, landscape history, events or activities in the past, or to lives of important people are other criteria for preservation. Remaining large estates such as the Farr Homeplace and the Sisson House may also be considered for preservation, as well as landforms such the Manassas Gap Railroad Bed.

FIGURE 15 HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND BUILDINGS



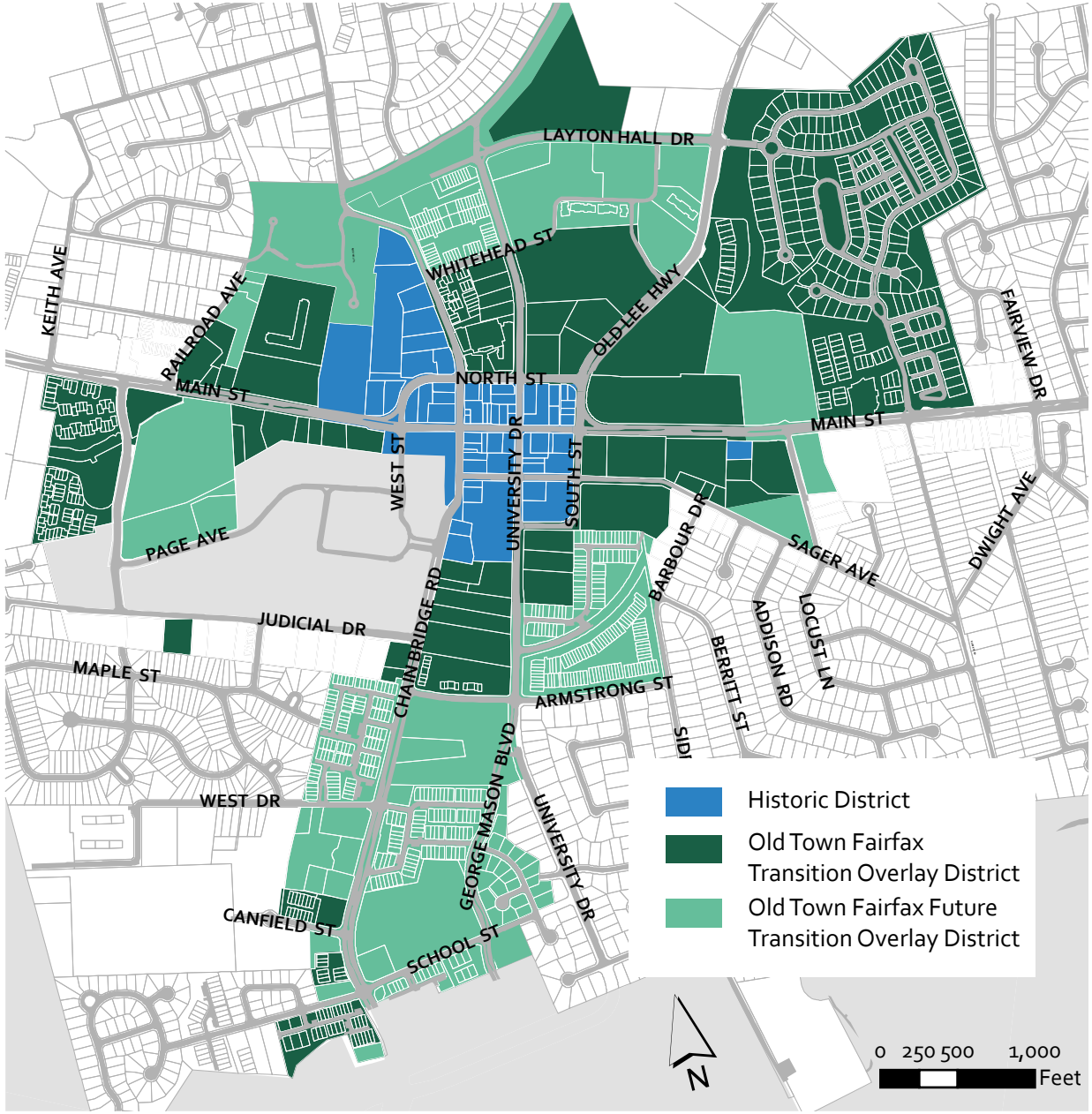
Source: City of Fairfax GIS 2016 Impervious Surfaces, Zoning Overlays, National Register Districts

Old Town Fairfax Transition Overlay District (Transition District)

The Transition District is established in areas surrounding Old Town Fairfax as a means to ensure the character of those areas complements that of the historic districts. This is accomplished through regulations in the Zoning Ordinance limiting the height of new construction, encouraging buildings to be oriented toward the street, and requiring more extensive streetscape improvements than the base standards. The current extent of the Transition District and potential Future Transition Overlay District are provided in Figure 16.

Properties located in the Future Transition Overlay District may be added to the Transition District either upon application from the property owner (typically in conjunction with an individual property rezoning) or as part of a larger City-initiated rezoning. The extent of the potential expansion area for the Transition District stretches farther away from the historic district in order to continue these characteristics along corridors leading into Old Town Fairfax.

FIGURE 16 HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND TRANSITION OVERLAY DISTRICTS



Community Design and Historic Preservation

Goal 1

Require high-quality, sustainable design.

Beyond residential neighborhoods, there is a wide variety of building uses in the City, from office and retail buildings to industrial and institutional buildings. These buildings were constructed over several decades and encompass an array of design styles and architectural influences. The City requires high-quality, sustainable design and construction of new buildings and public spaces along with similarly high-quality modifications and additions to existing buildings and open spaces. The intent of the design review process in areas of the City outside the historic districts is to continue to allow architectural variety while encouraging higher quality materials and design rather than designating specific design styles. The City can further support aesthetic quality through public investment in visible infrastructure, such as streetscapes and signage, and through public-private partnerships to promote desired types of development.

OUTCOME CDHP1.1:	Clear expectations for the required design elements and building materials for the City's historic districts and commercial centers.
ACTION CDHP1.1.1	Determine design aesthetic of Fairfax Boulevard and Main Street with input from City boards and commissions and convey through design documents such as the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines and other documents that may be prepared.
OUTCOME CDHP1.2:	Attractive buildings, inviting public spaces, and welcoming gateways that contribute to our economic vitality and unique character.
ACTION CDHP1.2.1	Identify commercial economic investment areas and provide financial support through the Economic Development Authority.
ACTION CDHP1.2.2	Continue to develop and refine design standards with a menu of options to encourage variety, visual interest, and durability in the design of new development.
ACTION CDHP1.2.3	Explore public-private partnerships to create neighborhood centers inclusive of gathering places.
ACTION CDHP1.2.4	Create attractive gateway features at key City entry points.

Community Design and Historic Preservation

Goal 2

Protect and enhance historic resources.

Inclusion of properties or structures in a local historic district should be based on the criteria described on p. 61. Local protections give the City the ability to designate specific characteristics of a property or district that are intended to be preserved, as well as provide regulatory measures that protect those properties. Local districts can be applied to individual properties or a group of properties, such as a neighborhood. Establishment of any new historic districts should be contingent upon support from owners of the affected properties.

Preservation and appreciation of historic properties and other historic resources in the City can be supported through events and programs that highlight the history of the City and the importance of the historic properties in historic events. City historic resources, such as the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, Blenheim Civil War Interpretive Center, and the Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House can be utilized to engage the public through special programs, tours, events, exhibitions, and outreach efforts.

OUTCOME CDHP2.1:	Protection of eligible structures, properties, and neighborhoods through local historic designation and strategic investments.
ACTION CDHP2.1.1	Develop an inventory of historic and archaeological resources readily available on the City's website that is reviewed and updated at least every 10 years.
ACTION CDHP2.1.2	Work with neighborhoods to gain support for new locally-designated historic districts and landmarks, where appropriate.
ACTION CDHP2.1.3	Encourage the preservation of existing buildings of historic or architectural significance whenever feasible.
OUTCOME CDHP2.2:	Redevelopment that respects nearby historic structures and the established architectural pattern.
ACTION CDHP2.2.1	Ensure all new development subject to the requirements of the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines is compliant, and continue to monitor the review process for Certificates of Appropriateness to ensure it is effective.
ACTION CDHP2.2.2	Rezone all properties in the Old Town Fairfax Future Transition Overlay District to the Old Town Fairfax Transition Overlay District, either proactively or as each property seeks land use amendments.
OUTCOME CDHP2.3:	The City's historic resources are utilized to provide educational programs to the community and promote preservation of historic properties.
ACTION CDHP2.3.1	Promote greater awareness of the City's historic resources and the history of the City and surrounding area, identifying educational, economic, and recreational benefits of historic structures, properties, and districts.
ACTION CDHP2.3.2	Evaluate the need to expand the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, currently located in the Historic Fairfax Elementary School building.