

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Feather and Members of the Planning Commission

From: Paul Nabti, Planning Division Chief

Subject: Update and discussion on the Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan

Meeting

Date: April 8, 2024



The City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan recommends Small Area Plans be developed for each of the five activity centers identified in the plan to provide more specific guidance for public investment and private development in these areas. Small area plans have been developed and adopted for the Old Town, Northfax, and Kamp Washington activity centers to date.

Work on the Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan began in Spring 2023 with the first phase focusing on data collection, initial outreach, including a public meeting held on June 15, 2023, and interviews with stakeholders. During the second phase of the project, the consultant developed a summary of findings and initial ideas to guide further development of the plan. This was influenced by a public workshop held on November 2, 2023, feedback received through the project's [Engage Page](#), and comments received through other sources such as attendees at the Fall Festival. In the third phase, the consultant developed a draft concept plan and is currently seeking feedback before finalizing the plan and bringing it back to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration of adoption in July 2024. This includes a public meeting held on March 21, 2024, a special meeting for all board and commission members held on April 4, 2024, and work sessions with the Planning Commission and City Council held on April 8 and April 9 respectively.

At this work session, the consultant will present the draft recommendations as well as summarize the background information that informed these recommendations. This information is included in the draft presentation provided in Attachment A.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Draft Presentation



DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AREA PLANS

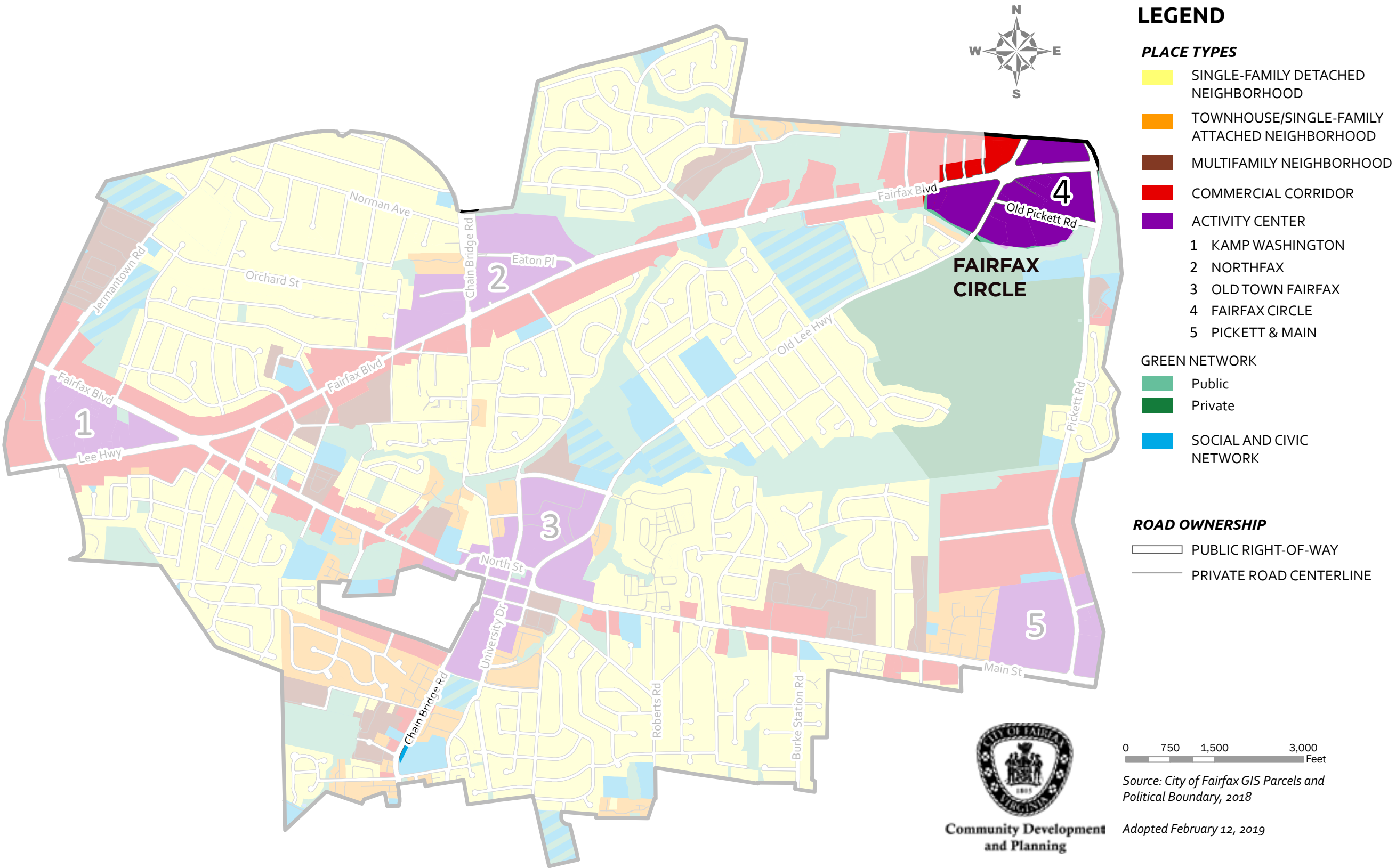
FAIRFAX CIRCLE PLANNING COMMISSION PRESENTATION 4/8/24

CUNNINGHAM | QUILL ARCHITECTS PLLC

Bolan Smart Associates Kittelson & Associates OCULUS Walter L. Phillips

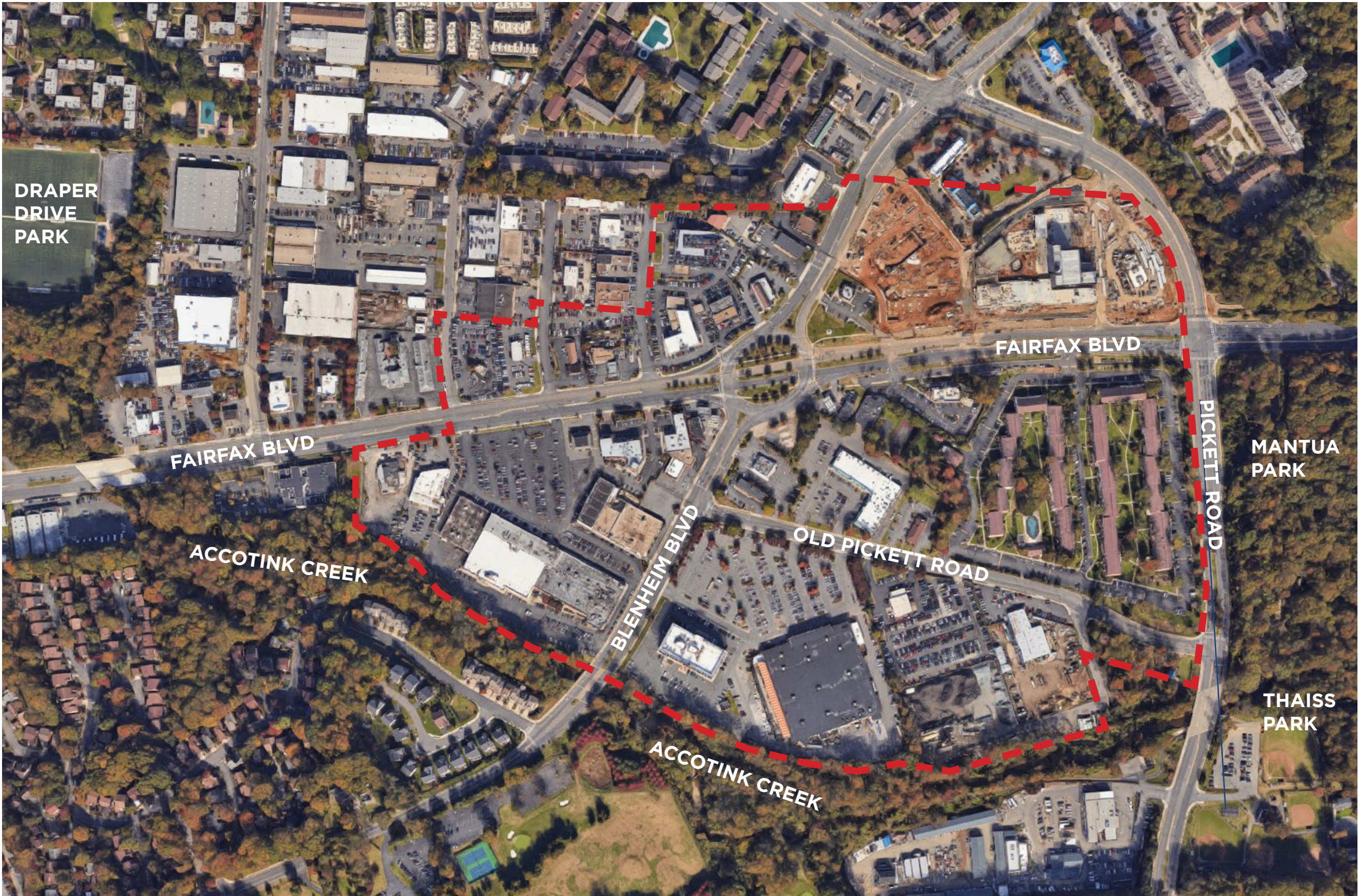
BUILDING ON THE 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ACTIVITY CENTER: FAIRFAX CIRCLE

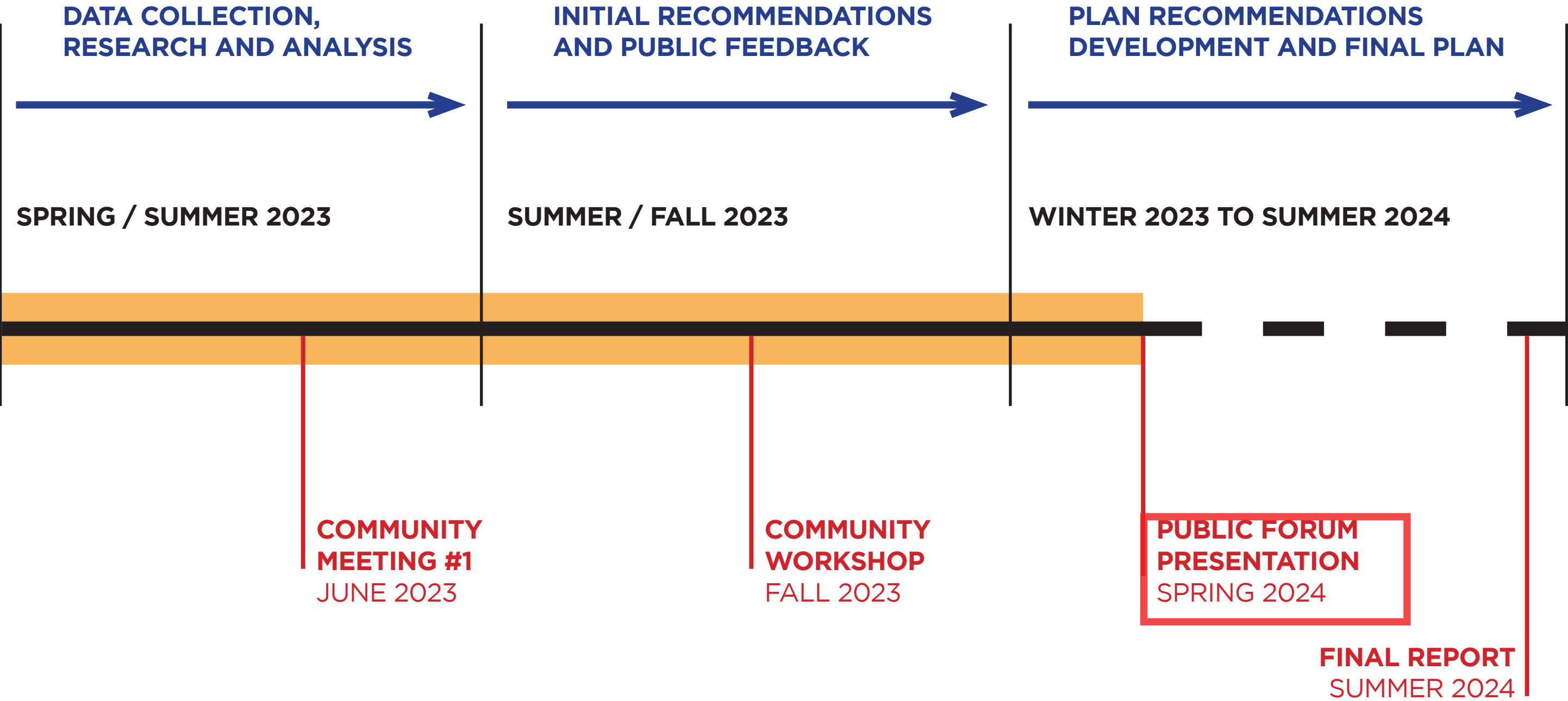


FAIRFAX CIRCLE

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



PROJECT TIMELINE



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

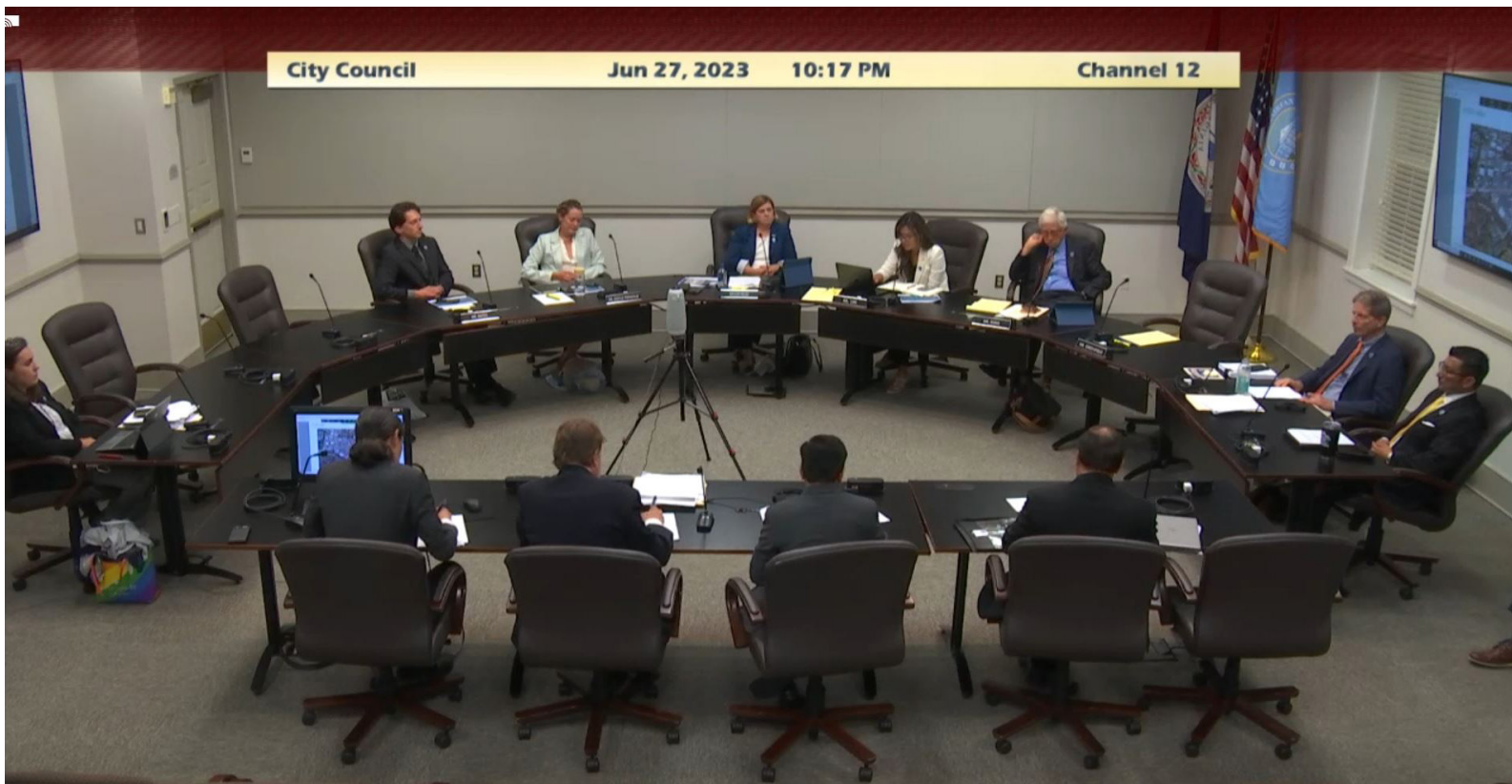
WHAT WE HAVE HEARD



COMMUNITY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS -

June 15, 2023

- Stormwater management and flooding concerns
- **Concern for the unhoused and crime**
- Desire for **better transportation network**, bike-ability, access to metro, and walkability
- **Reinvention of Fairfax Circle** that improves navigability of vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians.
- Better open spaces including trails, access to **Accotink Creek**, improved park networks, and greenspace
- **Interest in mixed use residential** and affordable housing
- Plan that engages with high school and university

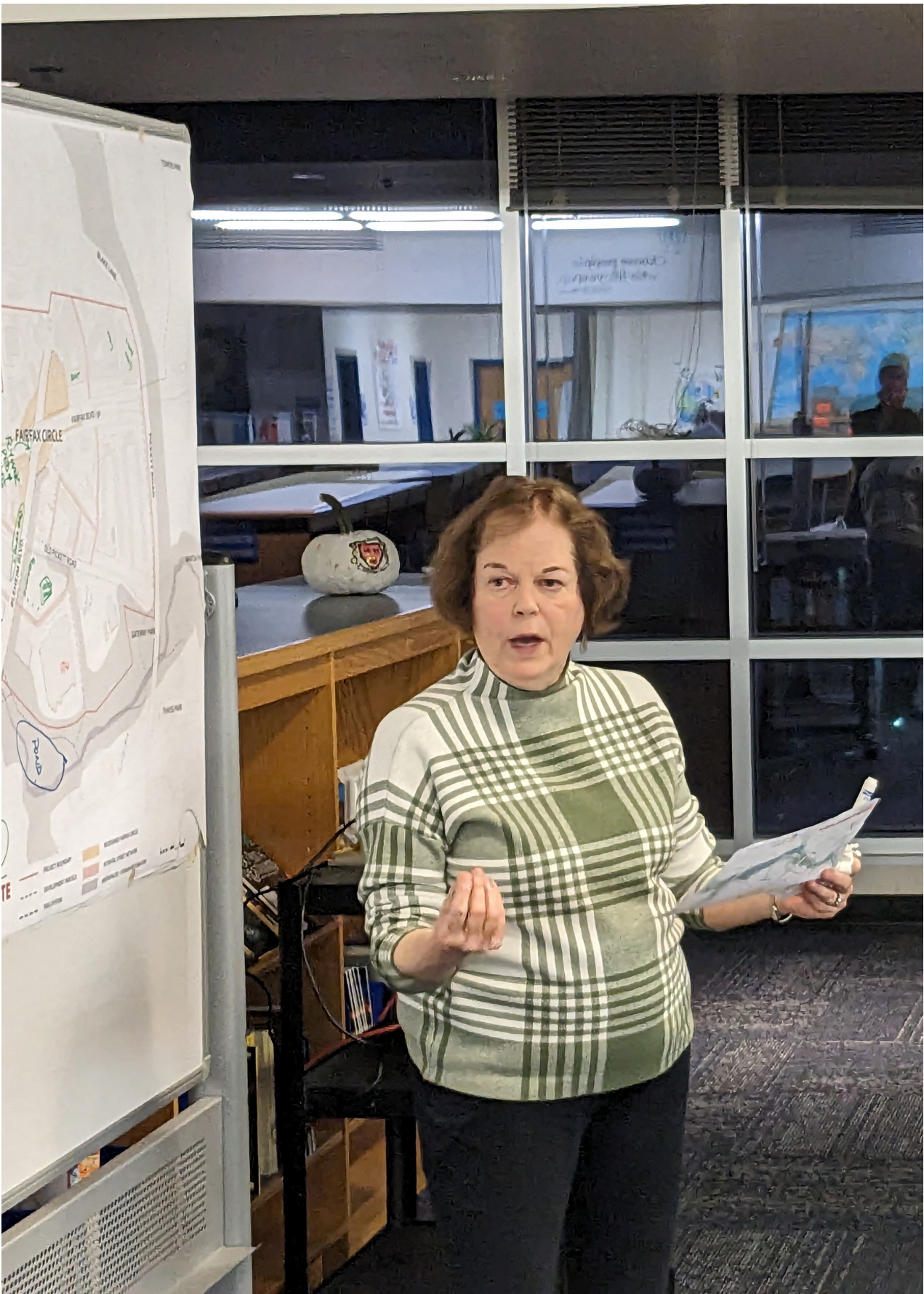


PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS-

June 26 and 27, 2023

- Importance of community outreach and creative input
- Working with business and residential communities
- **Connect to existing uses (industrial, retail, residential)**
- Reducing **impervious surfaces, flooding and heat islands**
- Retaining **Fairfax Circle identity** - regional recognition
- Safe crossings and street connections
- Prioritizing walkability, especially across Fairfax Boulevard
- Implementation for **future generations**

COMMUNITY CHARRETTE - 11/2/23



COMMUNITY CHARRETTE - 11/02/23

ADDITIONAL AND MORE DETAILED COMMENTS

“We would like to make this a recognizable place where people go”

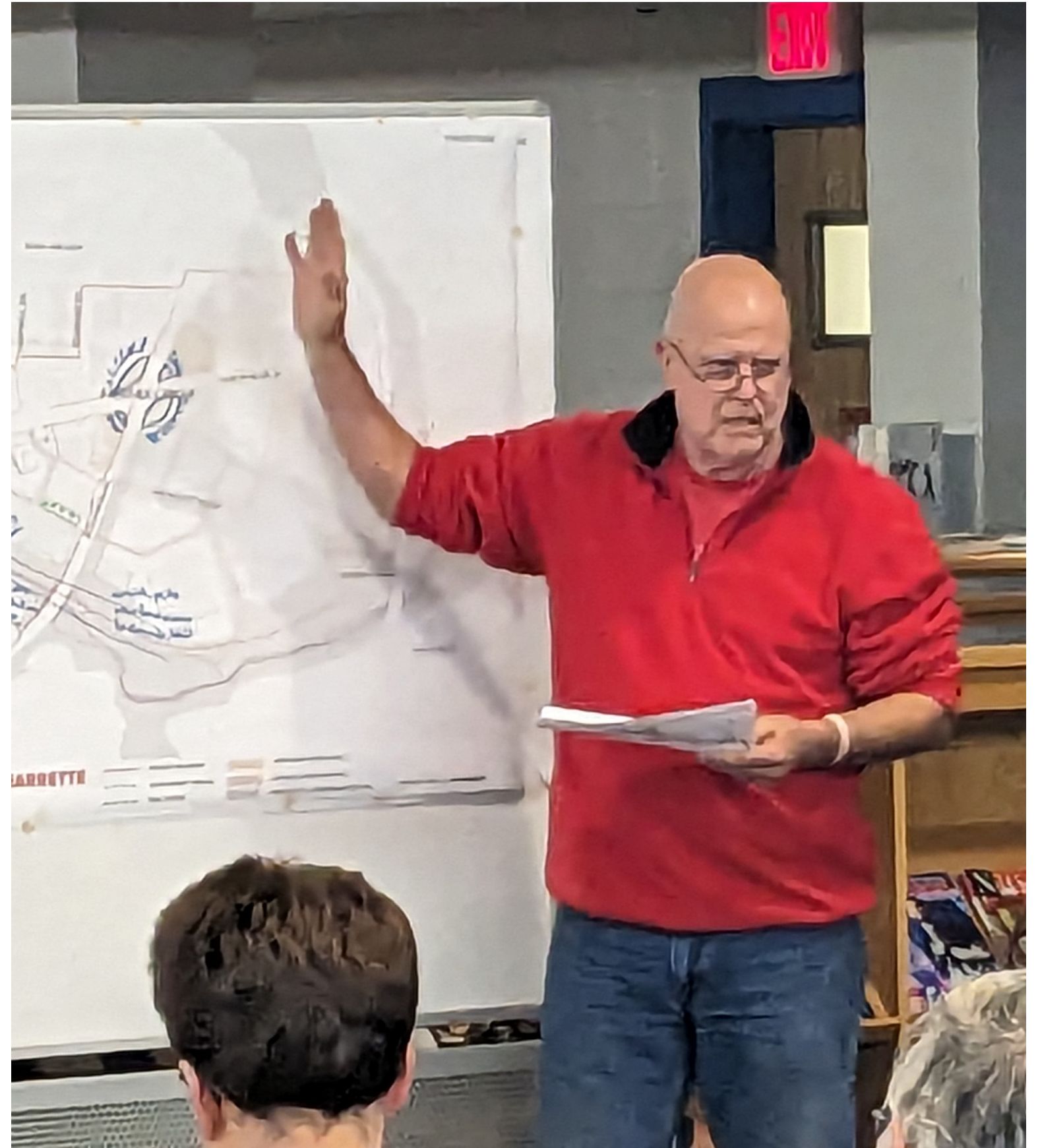
“The Accotink is character defining.”

“Not Fairfax Circle-
make its Fairfax CYCLE”.

“Redo the circle into an intersection but bring
an element of commemoration”

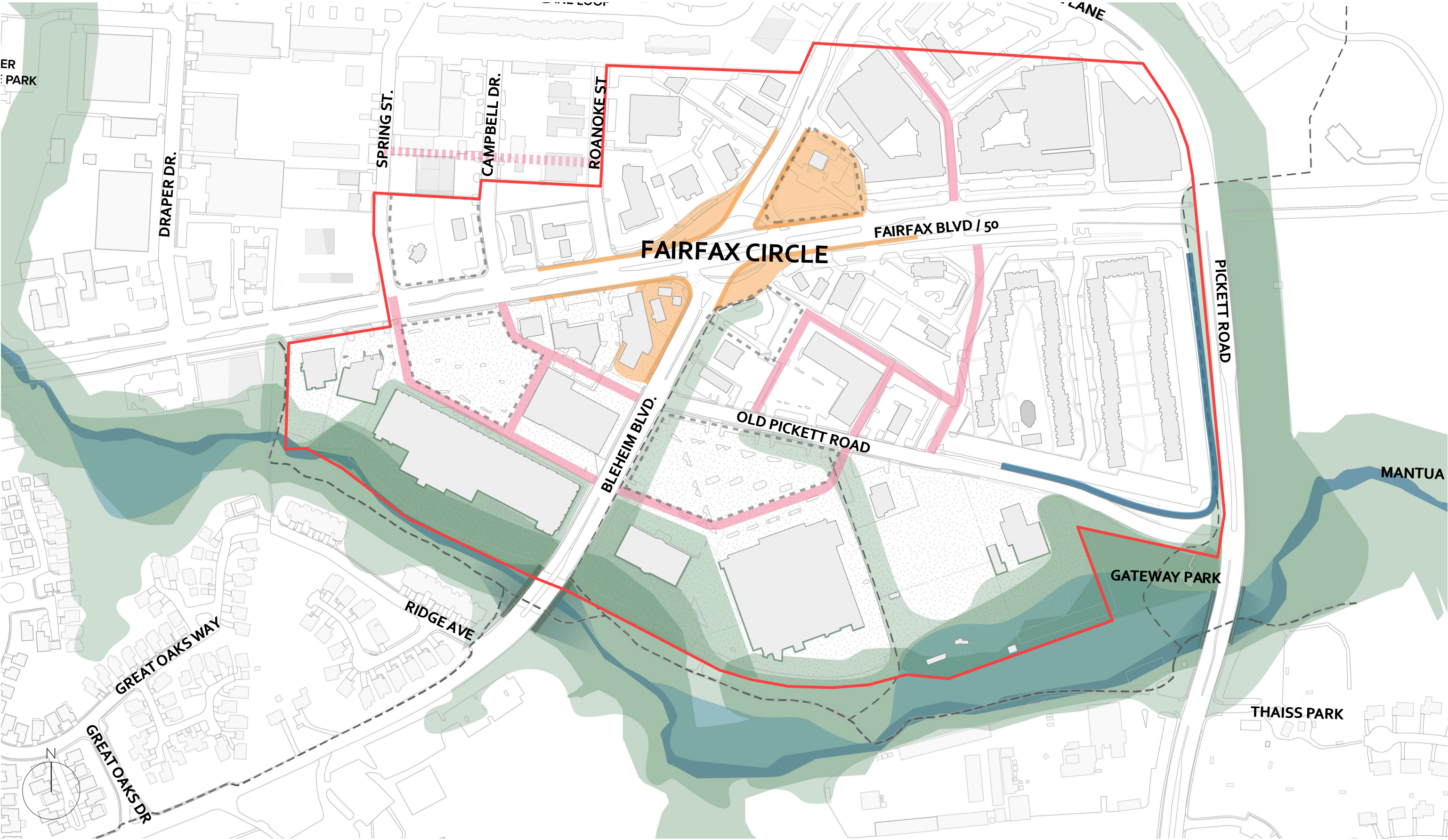
“Have a grid of streets with signalized
intersections - pedestrian oriented streets or
even pedestrian only”

Concerns about crime and homelessness.



BUILDING THE PLAN VISION

VISION PLAN (CHARRETTE TABLE DRAWING)



BUILDING A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN VISION



BUILDING BLOCKS + IDEAS

IDEA 1: Reinventing
Fairfax Circle

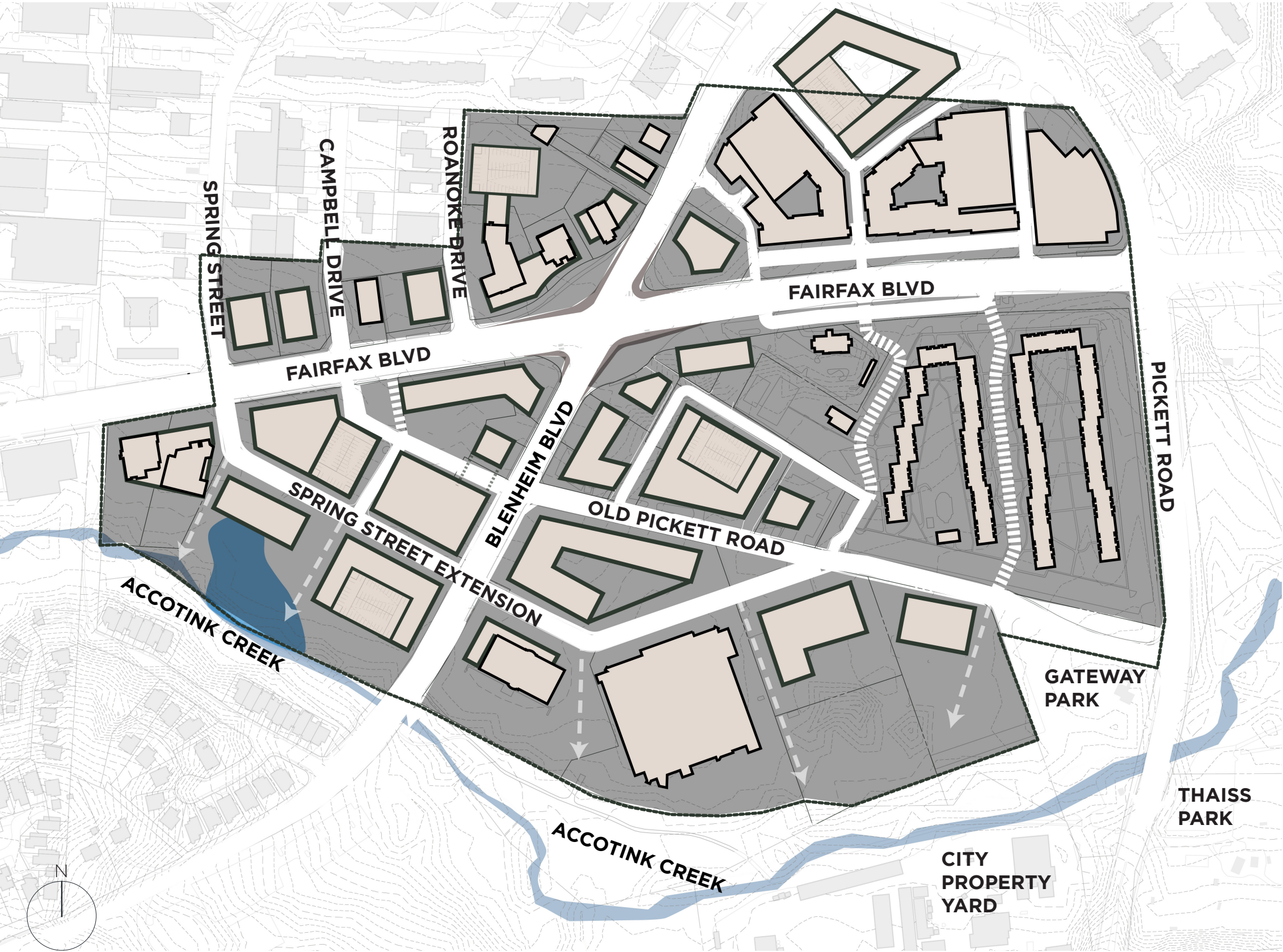
IDEA 2: Introducing
and Enhancing
Green Spaces
With Enhanced
Stormwater
Managements

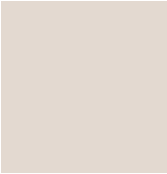
IDEA 3: A Better
Multi-Modal
Environment

IDEA 4: Fostering
A Better Mixed Use
Community

STREET AND BLOCK PLAN

FROM SUPERBLOCKS TO HUMAN SCALE

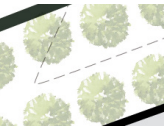


-  **BLOCKS**
-  **PROPOSED BUILDINGS**
-  **PRIVATE ROADS**
-  **POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN TRAILS**

OPEN SPACE + SUSTAINABILITY

INVITING NATURE, RECREATION, AND STORMWATER RESILENCY



-  PARKS, TRAILS, AND GREEN FINGERS
-  CREEK + STORM INFRASTRUCTURE
-  STREET TREES + LANDSCAPE

BALANCING PEDESTRIAN + VEHICLE ORIENTED RETAIL

PEDESTRIAN REALM WITH PARKING LOCATED BEHIND BUILDINGS



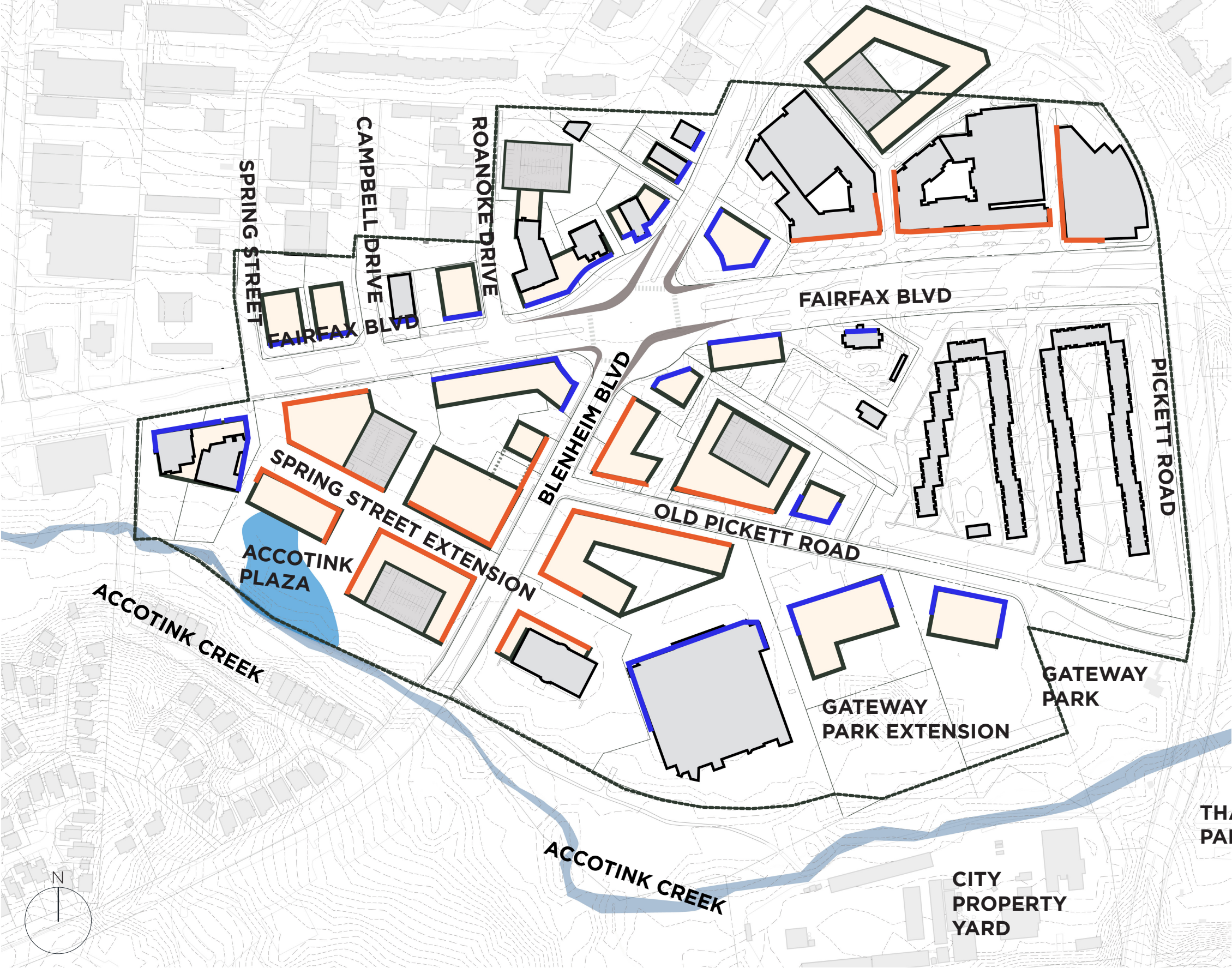
BALANCING PEDESTRIAN + VEHICLE ORIENTED RETAIL

PEDESTRIAN REALM WITH PARKING LOCATED BEHIND BUILDINGS



BUILDING FRONTAGES

BALANCING WALKABILITY WITH REQUIRED VEHICLE ACCESS



PEDESTRIAN EMPHASIZED FRONTAGE

Retail storefronts or active primary entrances and lobby encouraged for a continuous retail experience. Parking in garages or smaller surface lots at rear.

FLEXIBLE COMMERCIAL FRONTAGES

Respond to higher traffic along main roads and retrofits for existing buildings. Intended to enhance the pedestrian oriented walkable environment but allow more flexibility for parking on surface lots at larger rear or side of property and encourage ground floor uses from retail and residential to office to production/automotive.

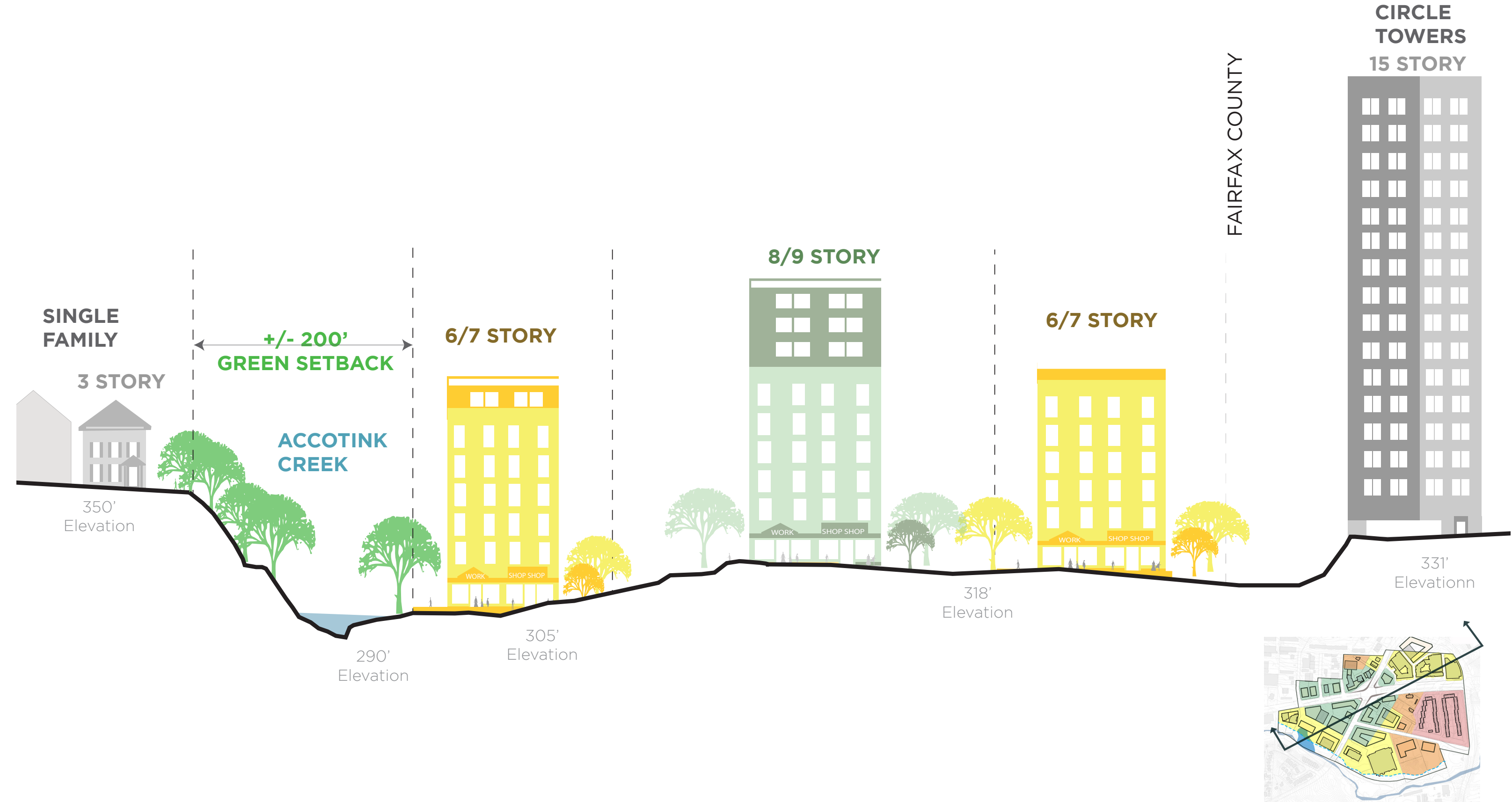
HEIGHT AND SCALE TRANSITIONS

TRANSITIONING TO NATURE AND EXISTING RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES



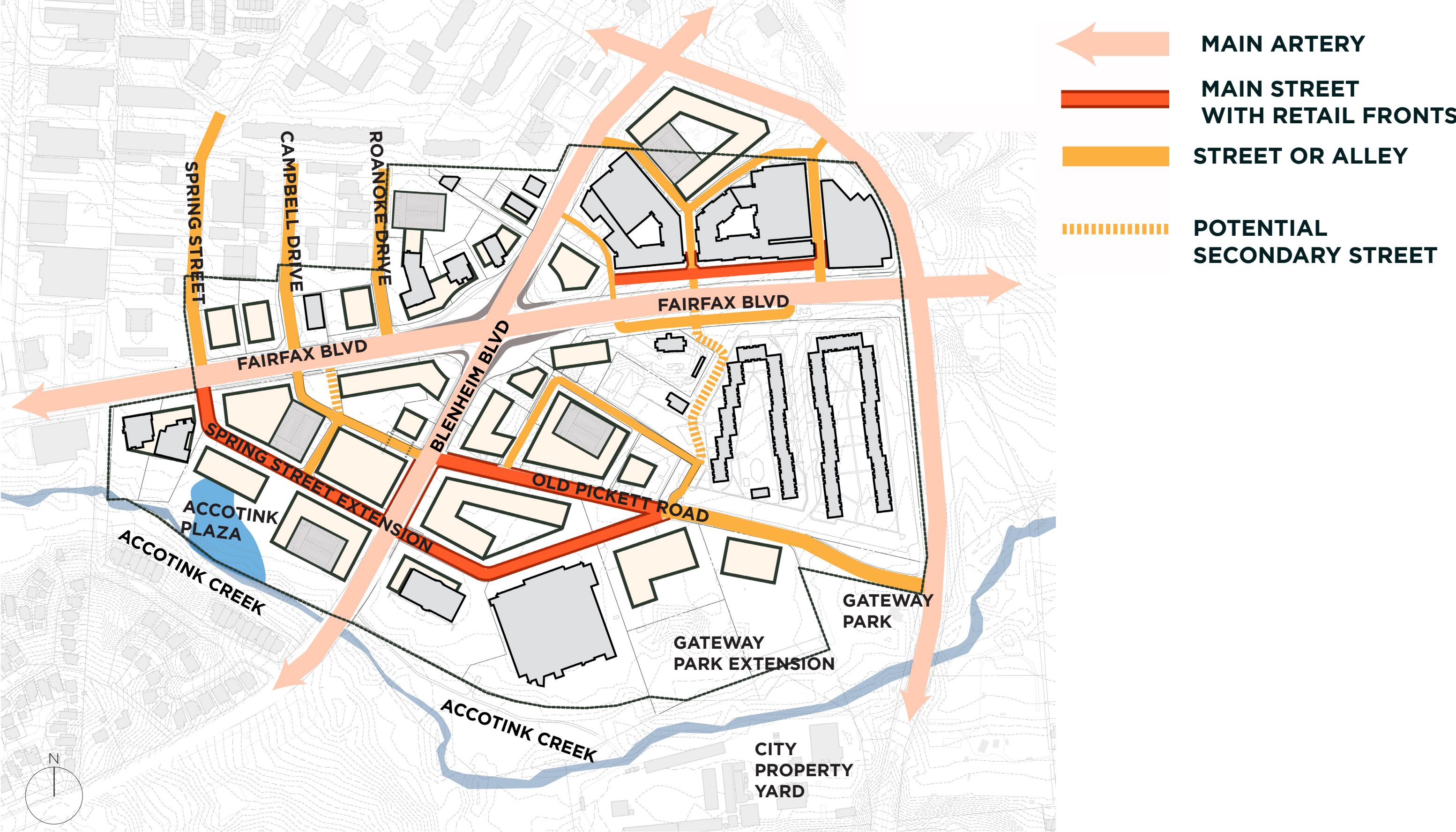
HEIGHT AND SCALE TRANSITIONS

WORKING WITH CHANGES IN ELEVATION



STREET TYPES AND NETWORK

FOSTERING PEDESTRIAN PRIORITIZED MAIN STREETS



IDEA 1:
REINVENTING
FAIRFAX CIRCLE

EXISTING AND PROPOSED DESIGN



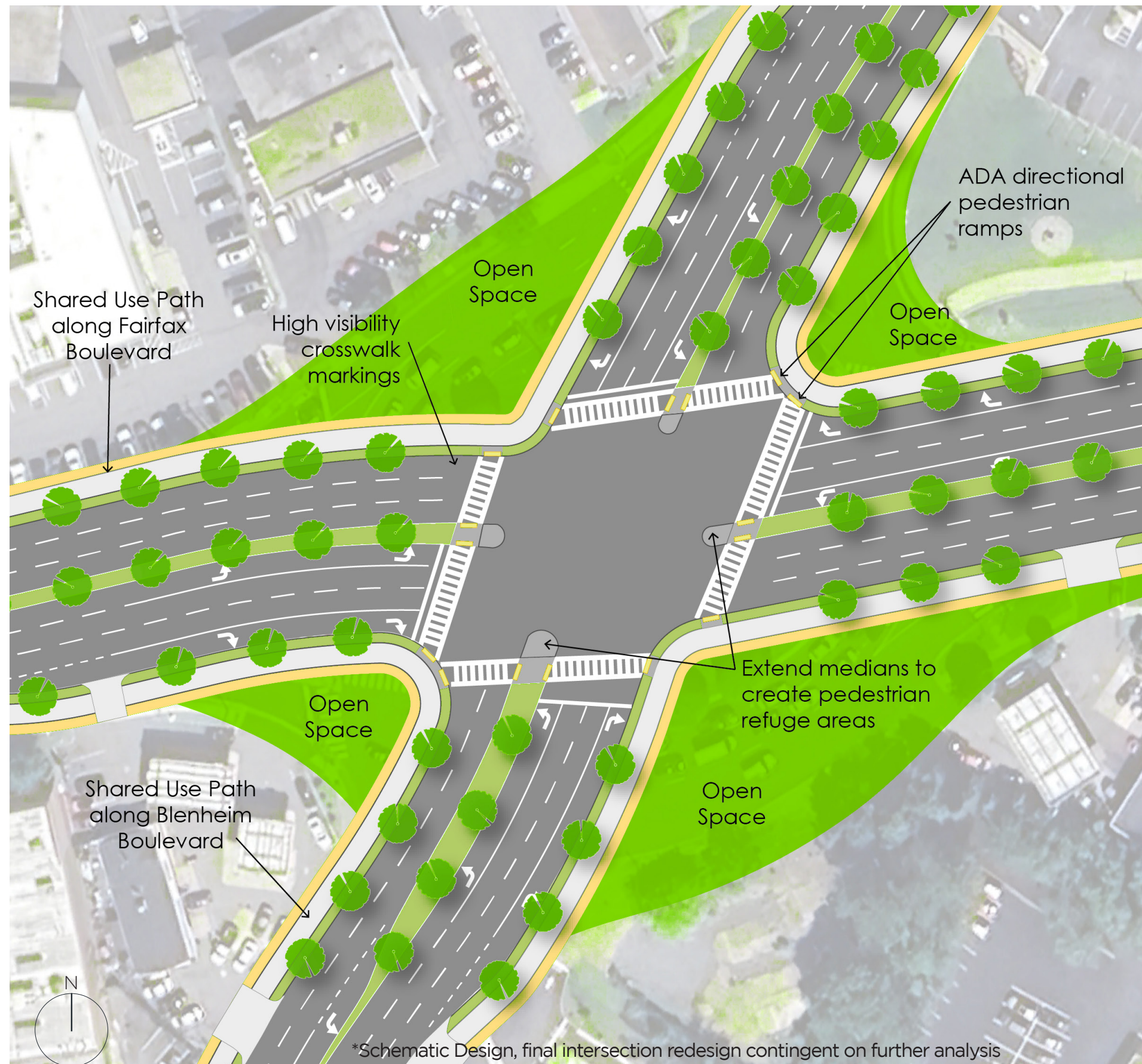
EXISTING



PROPOSED*

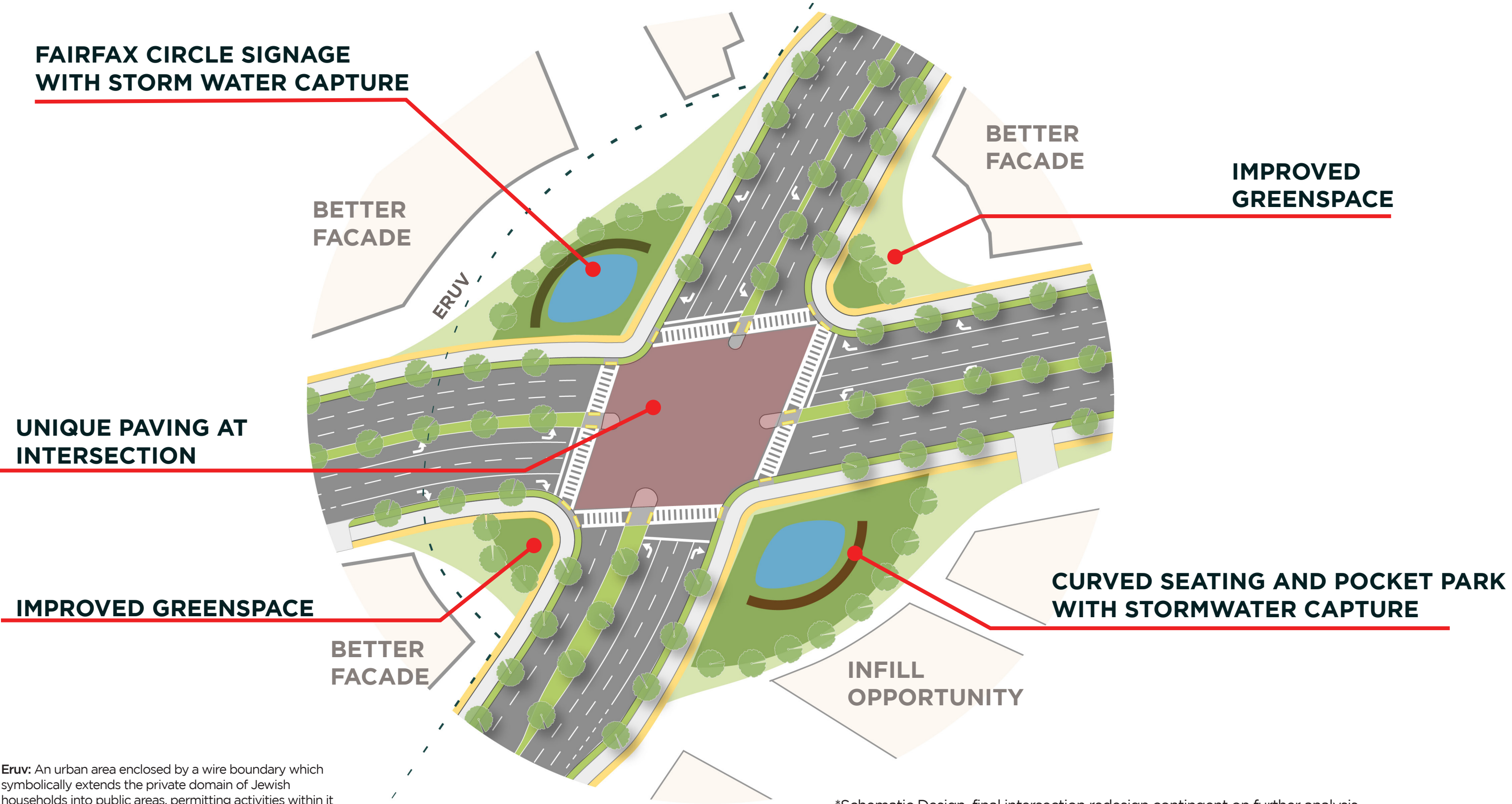
*Schematic Design, final intersection redesign contingent on further analysis

PROPOSED DESIGN IN DETAIL*



- More intuitive design for navigation
- Less curb-cuts and conflicting movements
- Fewer required pedestrian crossings
- Shorter pedestrian crossing distances and times
- Cycle-track and shared-use Path infrastructure
- Availability of underutilized land with potential new uses such as open space or facades of nearby buildings)
- New placemaking opportunities

REINVENTING FAIRFAX CIRCLE*: PLACEMAKING AND IDENTITY



Eruv: An urban area enclosed by a wire boundary which symbolically extends the private domain of Jewish households into public areas, permitting activities within it that are normally forbidden in public on the Sabbath.

*Schematic Design, final intersection redesign contingent on further analysis

REINVENTING FAIRFAX CIRCLE: PLACEMAKING AND IDENTITY



IDEA 2:
INTRODUCING GREEN
SPACE + ENHANCED
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

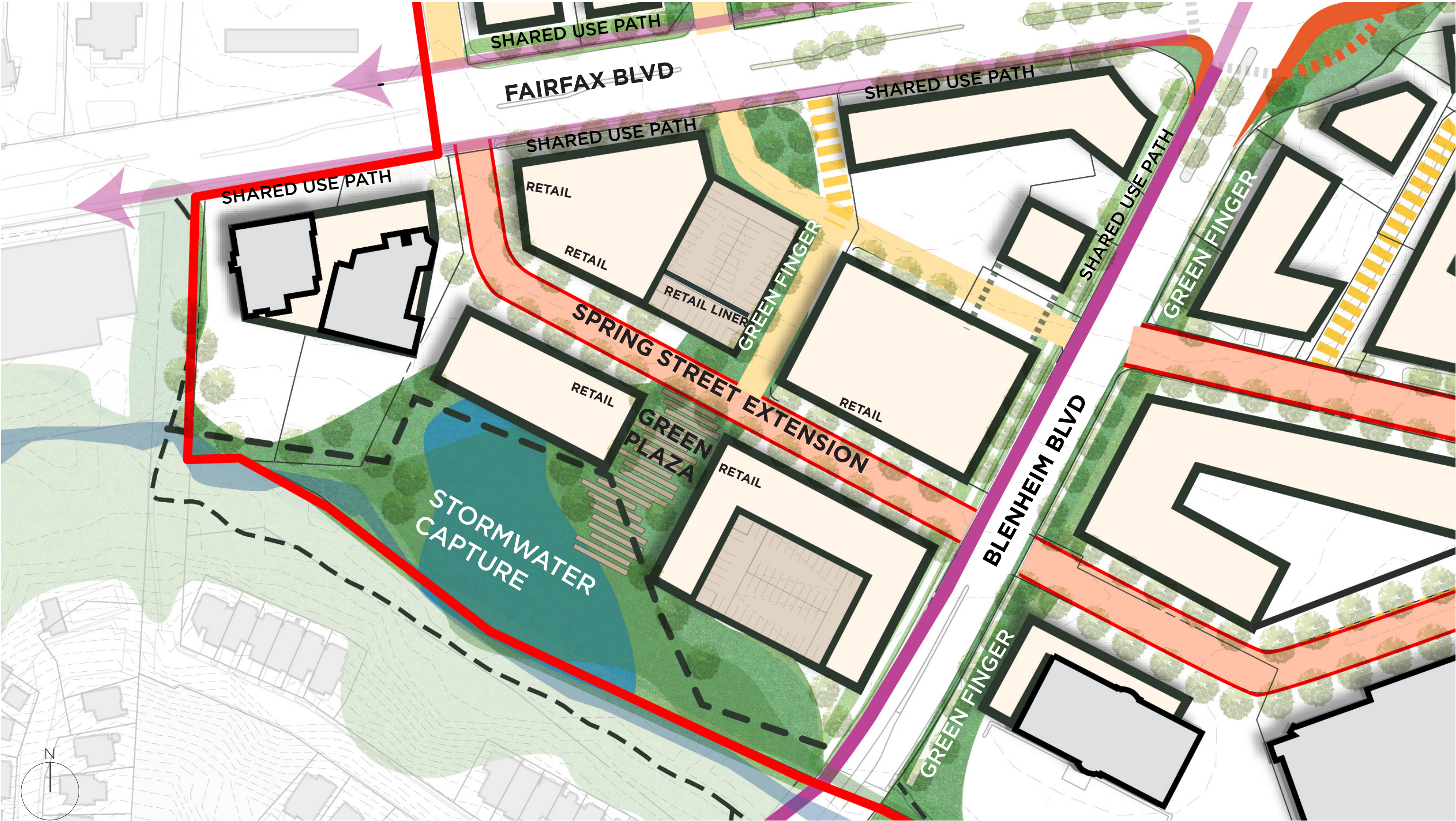
TRANSFORMING HARDSCAPES INTO SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

PLAZAS, PARKS AND “GREEN FINGERS”



NEW ACCOTINK CREEK PLAZA

THE NEIGHBORHOOD PUBLIC GATHERING SPACE



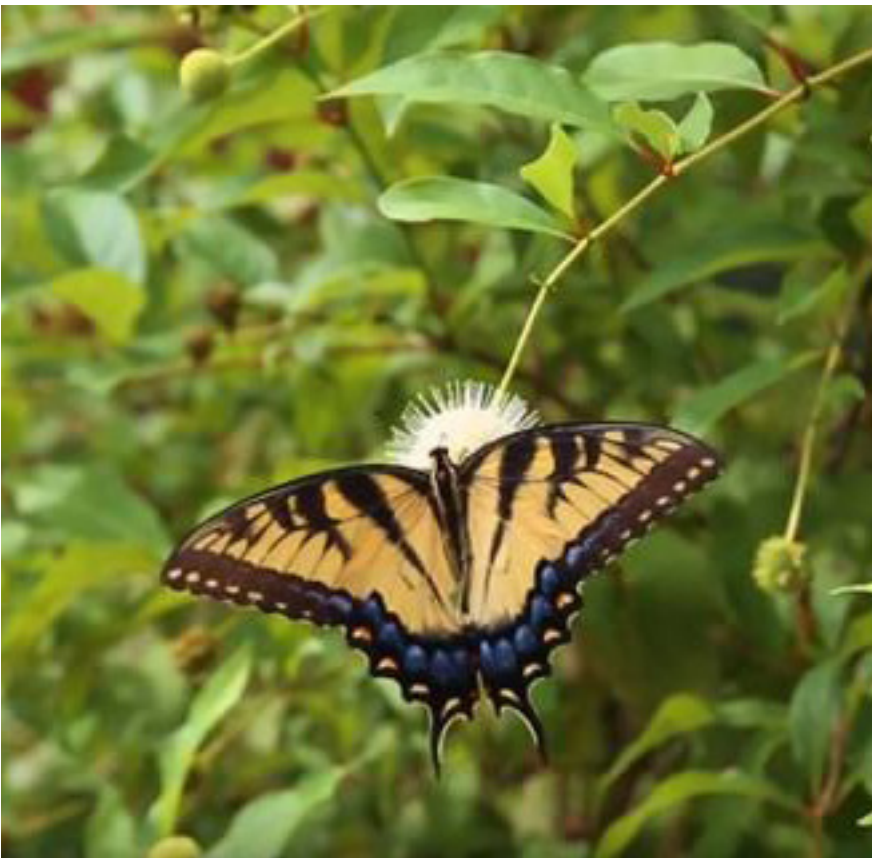
BRINING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PUBLIC SPACE

EXAMPLE: TANNER SPRINGS PARK- PORTLAND, OREGON



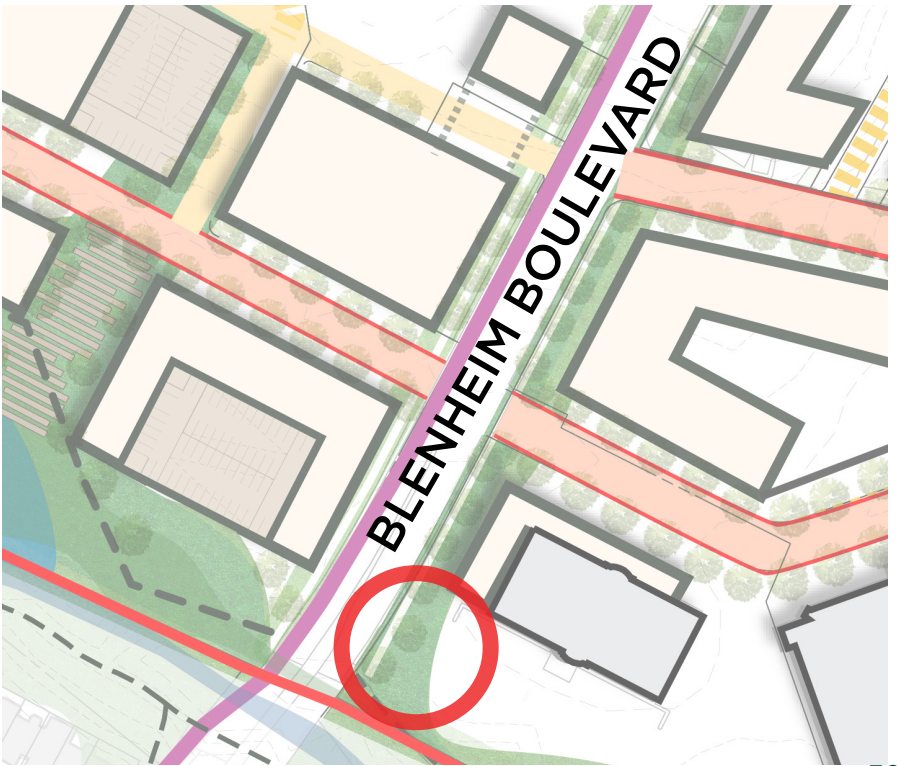
DEFINING THE LANDSCAPE “FINGERS”

TRANSFORMING HARDSCAPES INTO LANDSCAPES



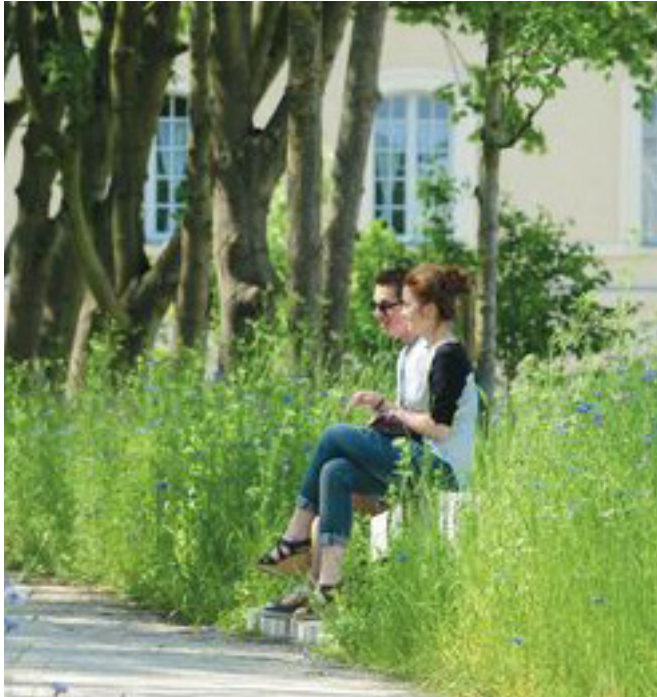
NEW LANDSCAPE “FINGERS”

EXAMPLE: INTEGRATING SWALE AND NATIVE PLANTINGS



NEW LANDSCAPE “FINGERS”

EXAMPLE: INTEGRATING NATIVE PLANTINGS AT NARROWER RIGHT OF WAY



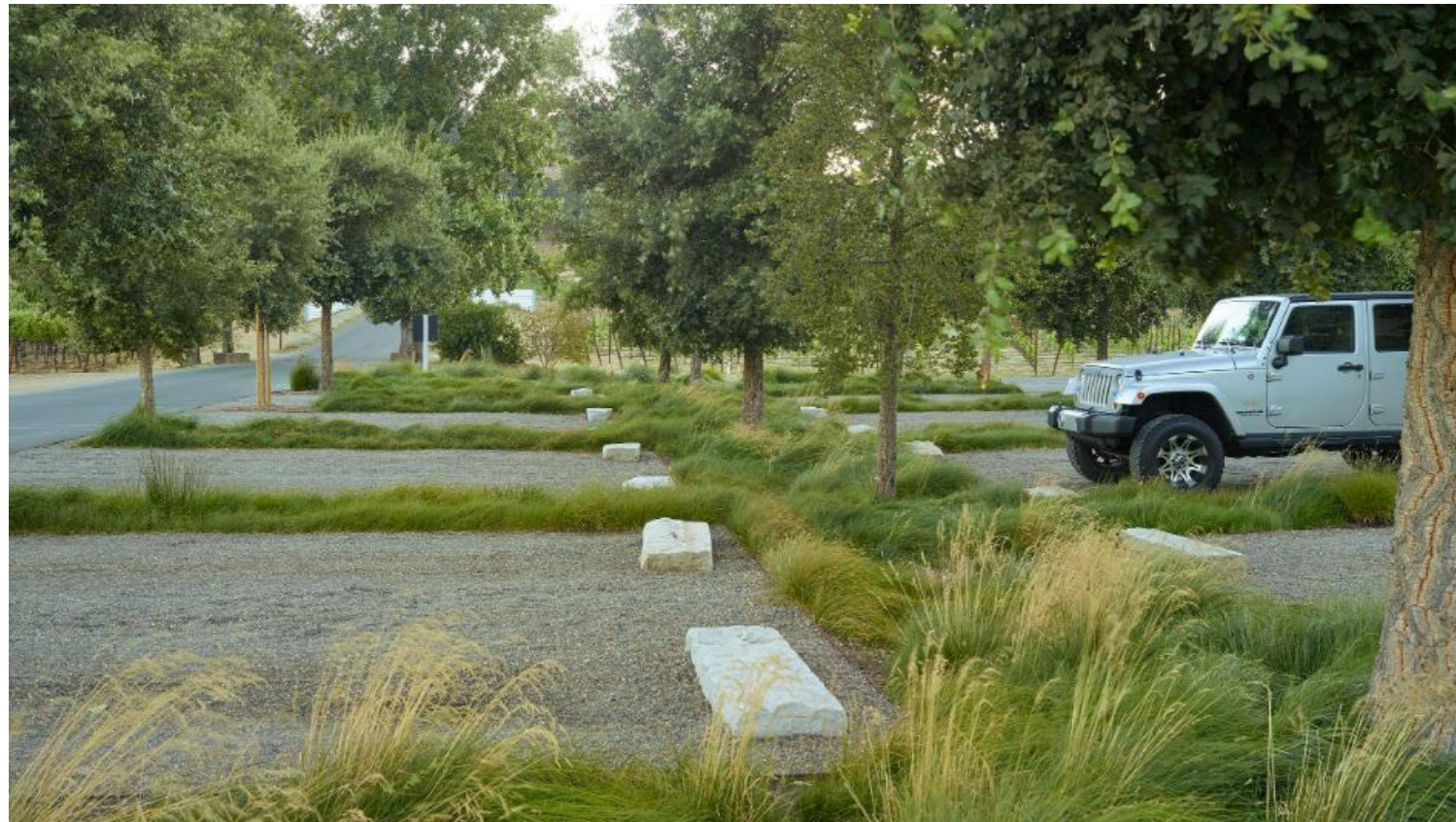
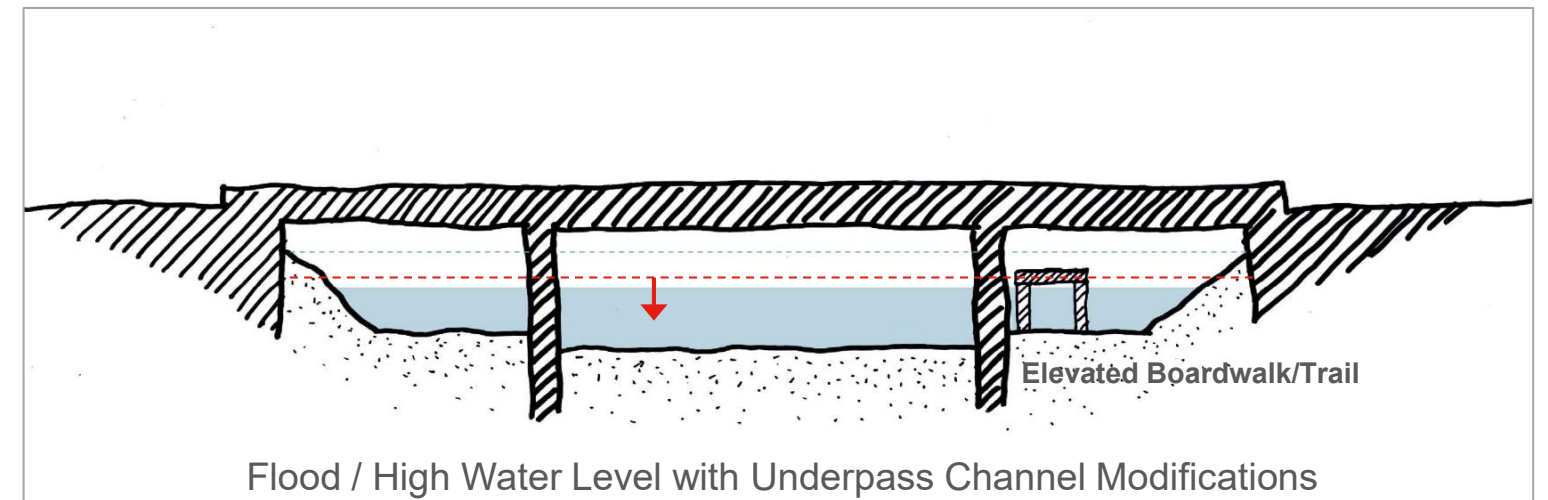
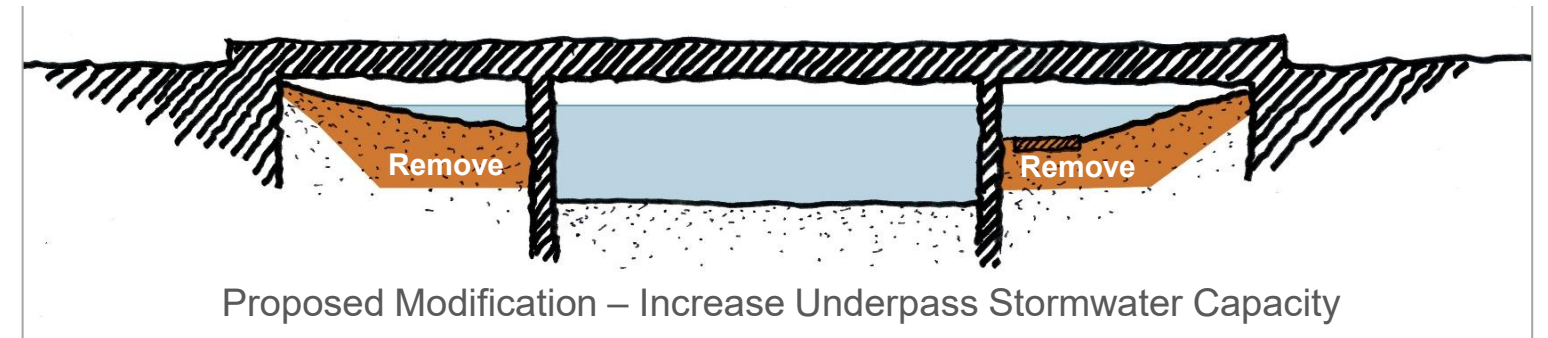
GATEWAY PARK EXPANSION

DESTINATION NATURE CENTER + STORMWATER MANAGEMENT



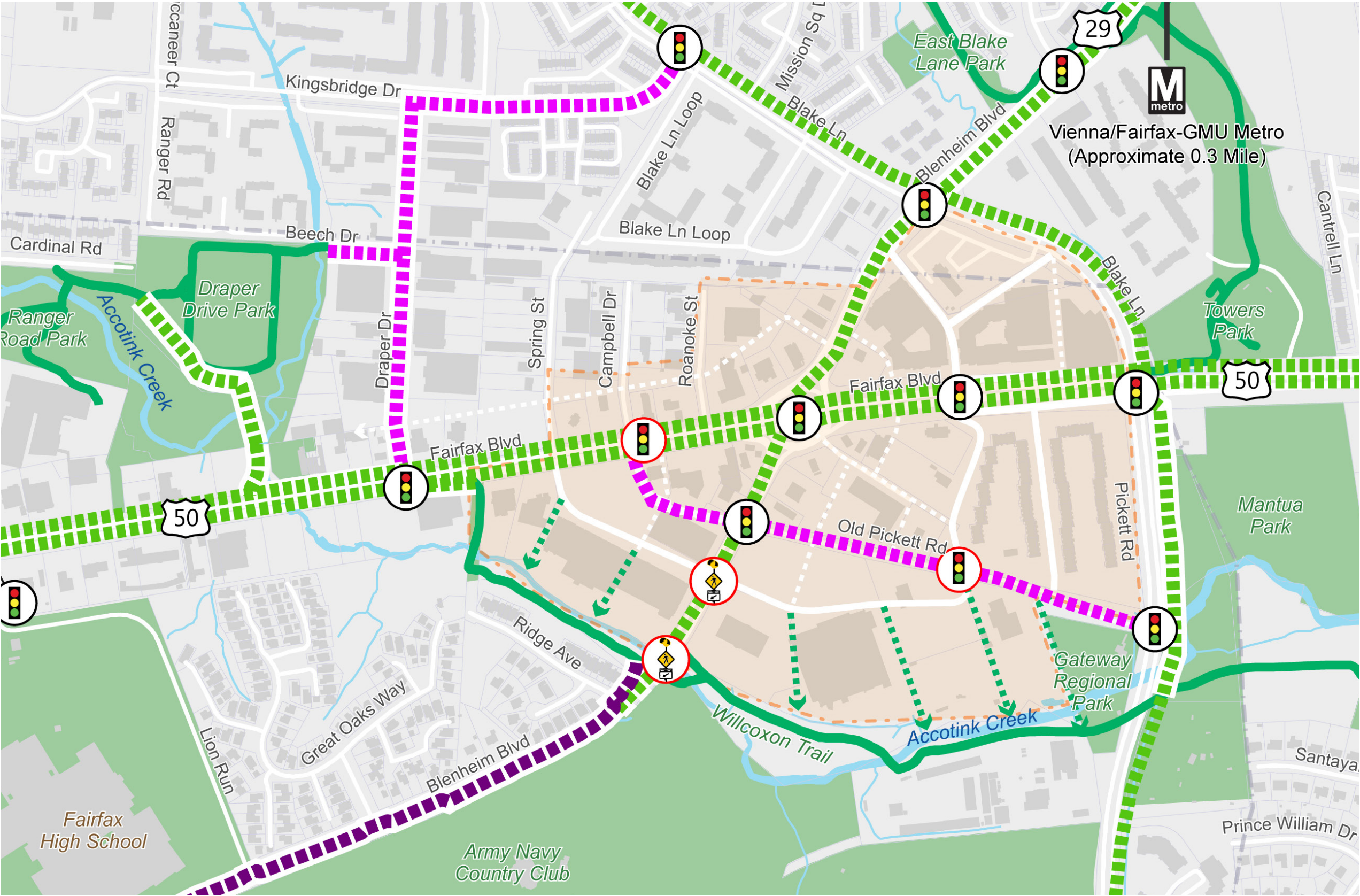
OTHER STORMWATER STRATEGIES

- Deepening Creek Capacity
- Stream Restoration
- Native Erosion Sensitive Plantings
- Permeable Paving and Green-Designed Parking Lots
- Flood Walls and Levees

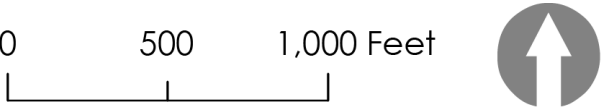


IDEA 3:
A BETTER
MULTI-MODAL
ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING + POTENTIAL BICYCLE NETWORK



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



PROPOSED STREET NETWORK



- **Spring/Campbell Fairfax Signal:** Signal can be at Spring or Campbell depending on final road alignment.
- **Campbell Road Alignment:** This alignment is still under review. The map displays alignment at Campbell as well as a dash beside it to show the two potential options.
- **Purple and green dashed lines** represent goals of easement and connection via alley, drive aisle, or trails. Exact route will vary.

Existing Trail

Planned Trail

Traffic Signal

Potential New Signal/
Controlled Crossing

Potential RRFB/Pedestrian
Activated Signal

Commercial Mains

Active Streets

Boulevards

Avenues

Neighborhood Circulator Streets

Limited Connection Streets

Secondary Streets (Alley/Driveway)

Comprehensive Plan

Link + Place Street Type

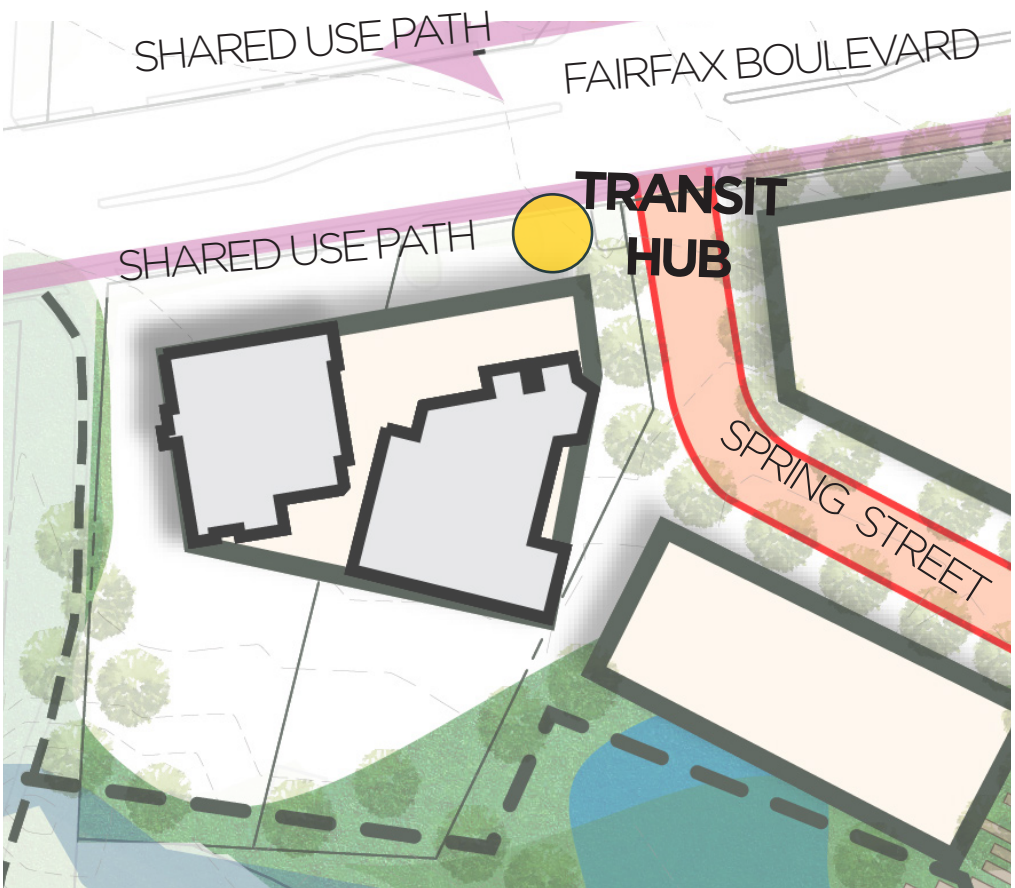
3/21/24 FAIRFAX CIRCLE SMALL AREA PLAN

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IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AT KEY NODES

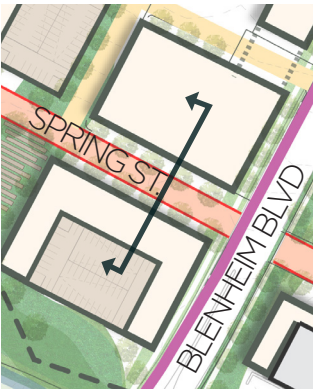
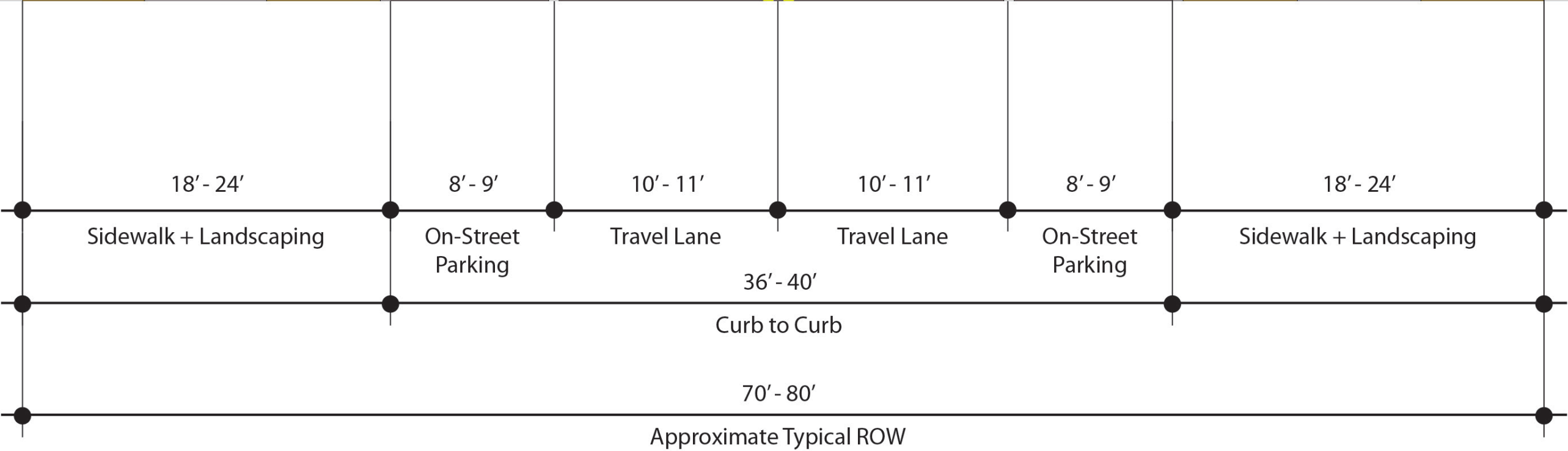


Example- Transit Shelter - Richmond, VA



SPRING STREET EXTENSION (TOWARD BLENHEIM)

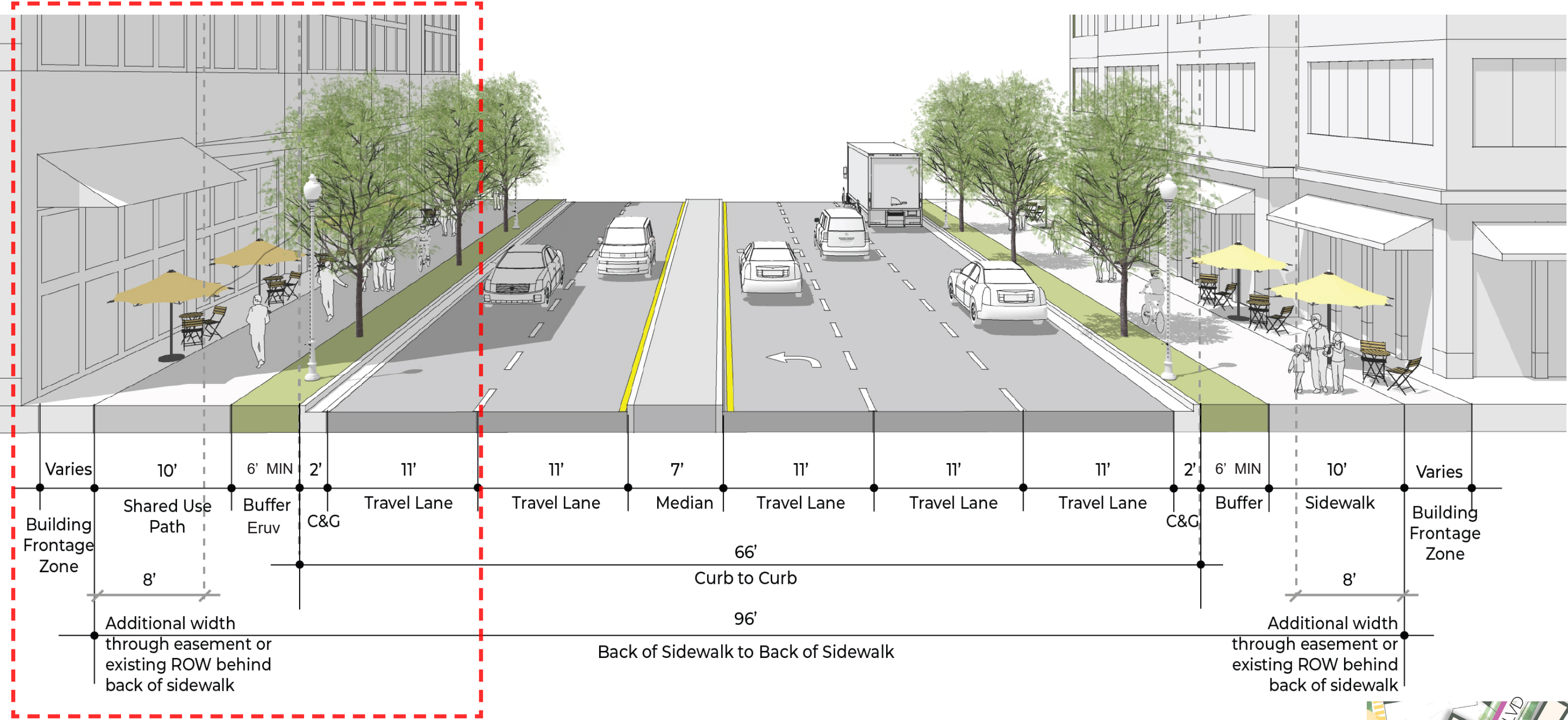
RETAIL MAIN STREET - SW QUADRENT



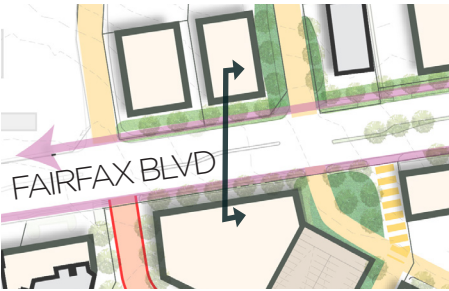
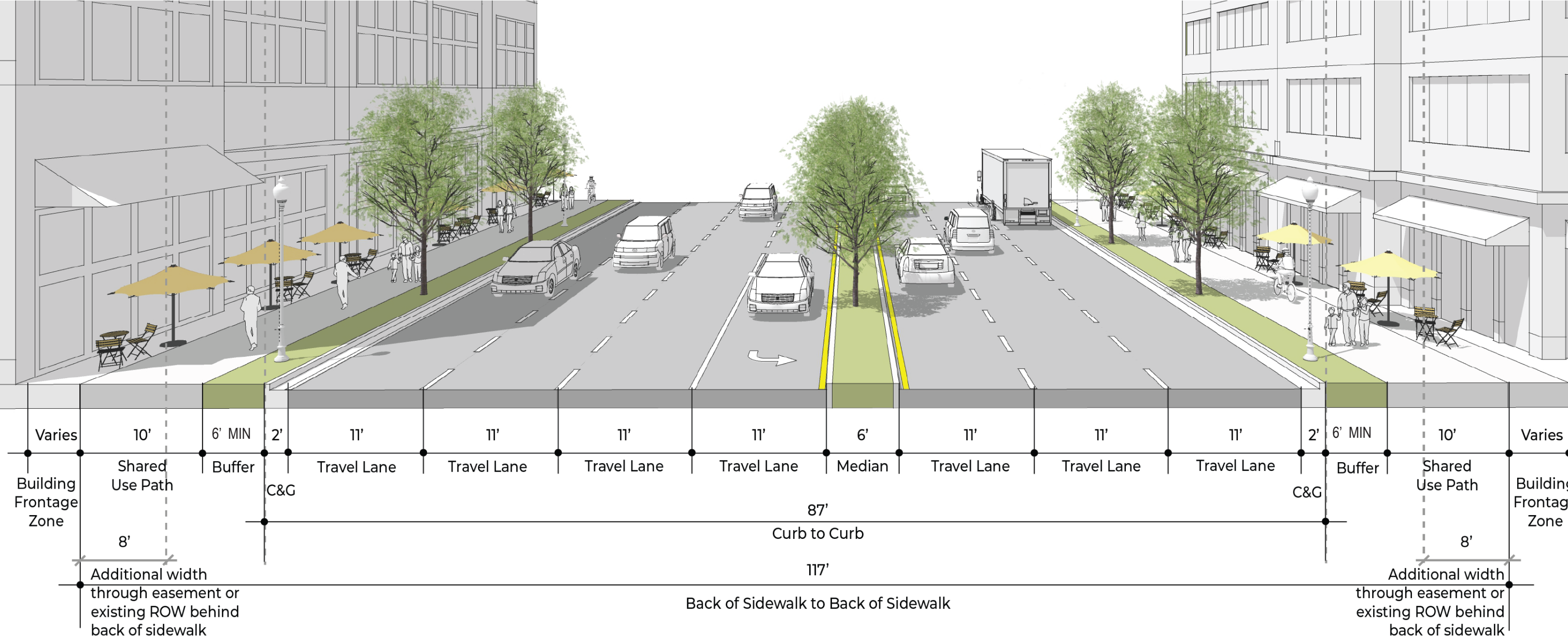
BLenheim BOULEVARD

TOWARD FAIRFAX CIRCLE

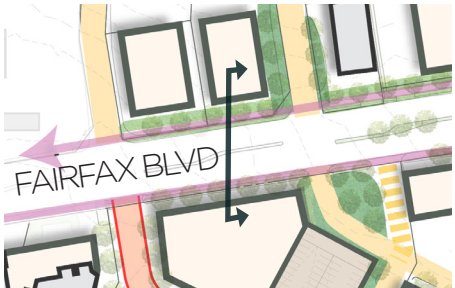
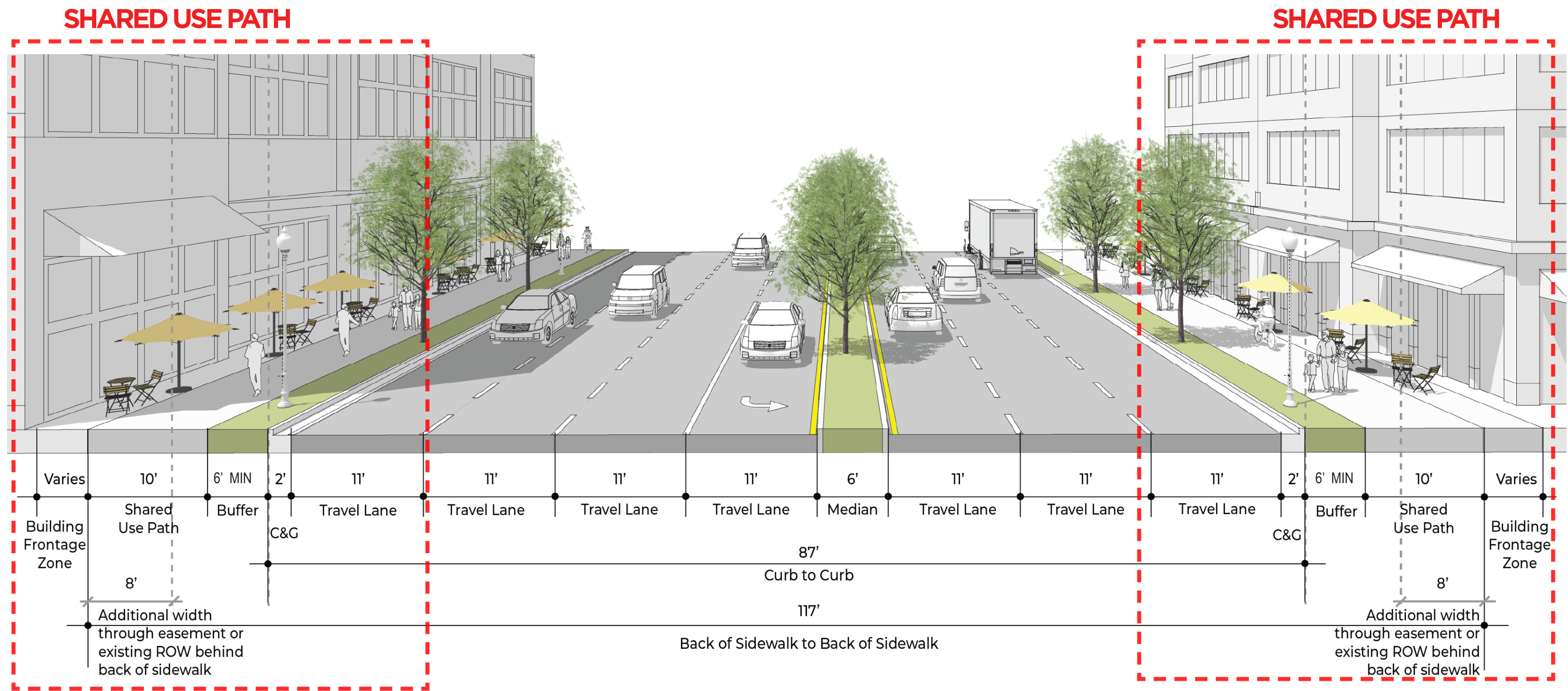
SHARED USE PATH



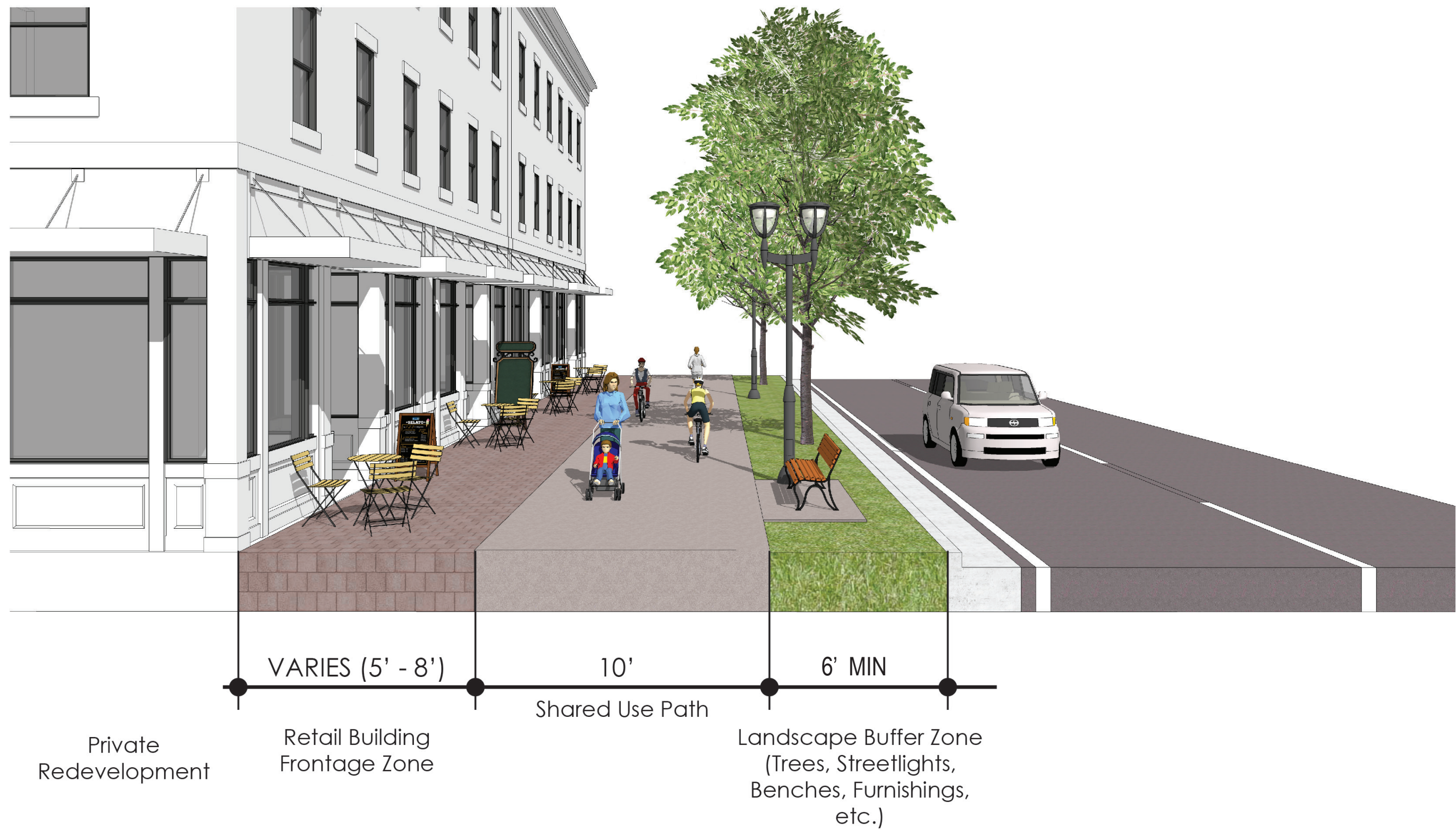
FAIRFAX BOULEVARD



FAIRFAX BOULEVARD

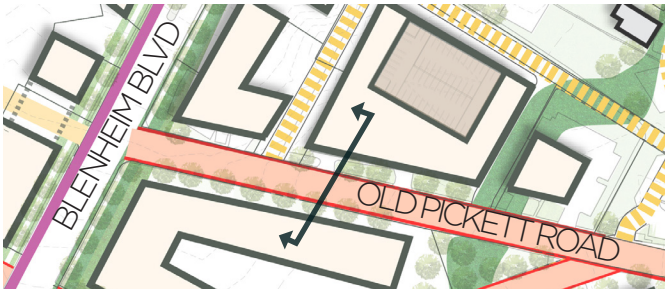
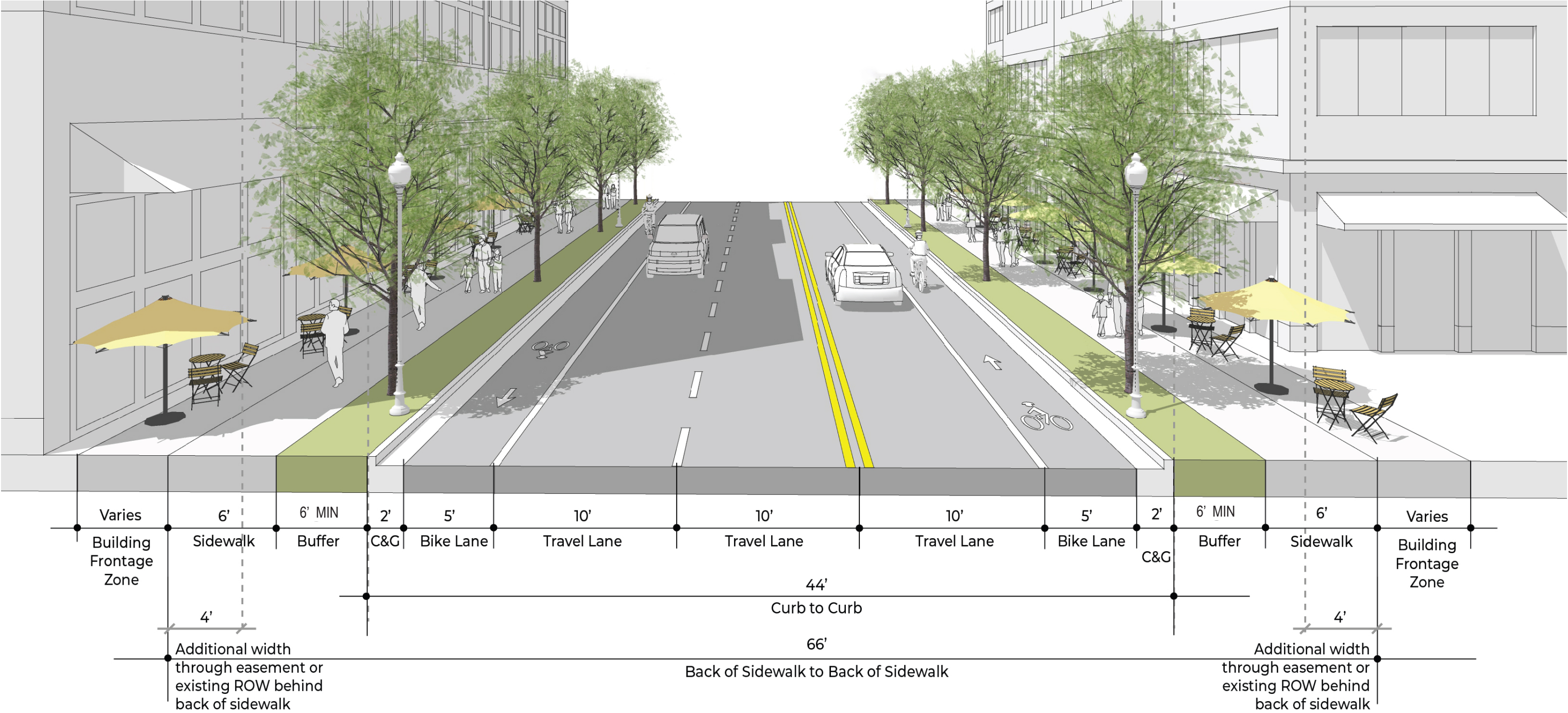


TYPICAL SECTION FOR SHARED-USE PATHS



OLD PICKETT ROAD

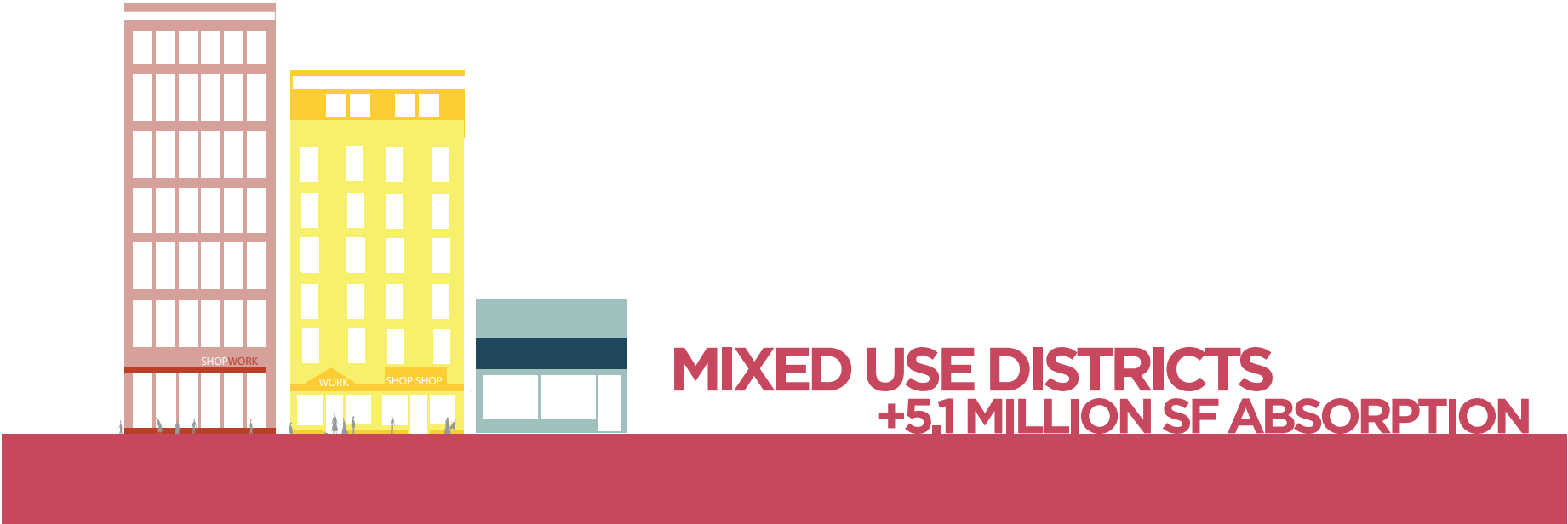
TOWARD BLENHEIM BLVD



IDEA 4:
RETAINING AND
ENHANCING A MIX OF
USES

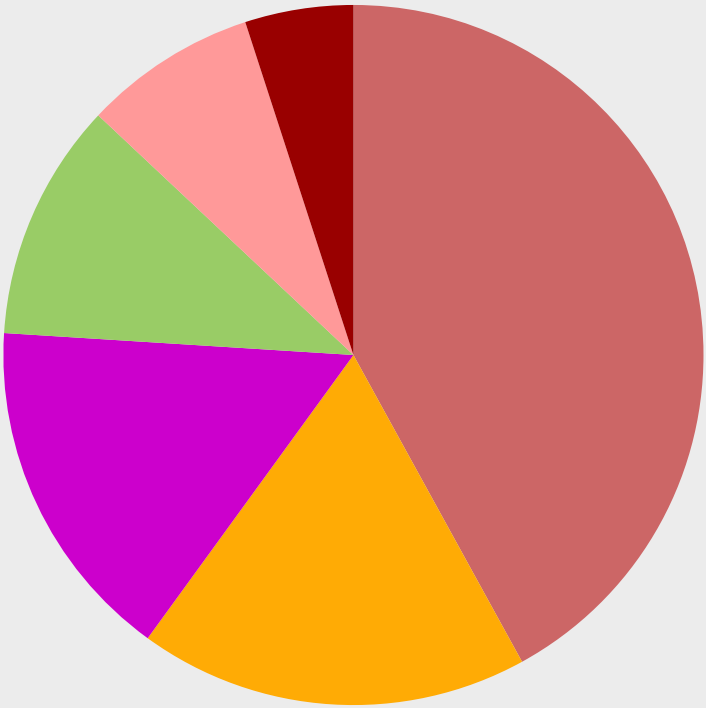
MIXED-USE COMMUNITIES ARE RESILIENT

RECENT ECONOMIC DATA AND TRENDS SINCE PANDEMIC



Source: JLL Research

FAIRFAX CIRCLE
EXISTING USES



- Retail - 42 %
- Restaurants - 8%
- Office - 5%
- Multifamily (Existing + Upcoming) - 18%
- Industrial- 16%
- Open Space - 11%

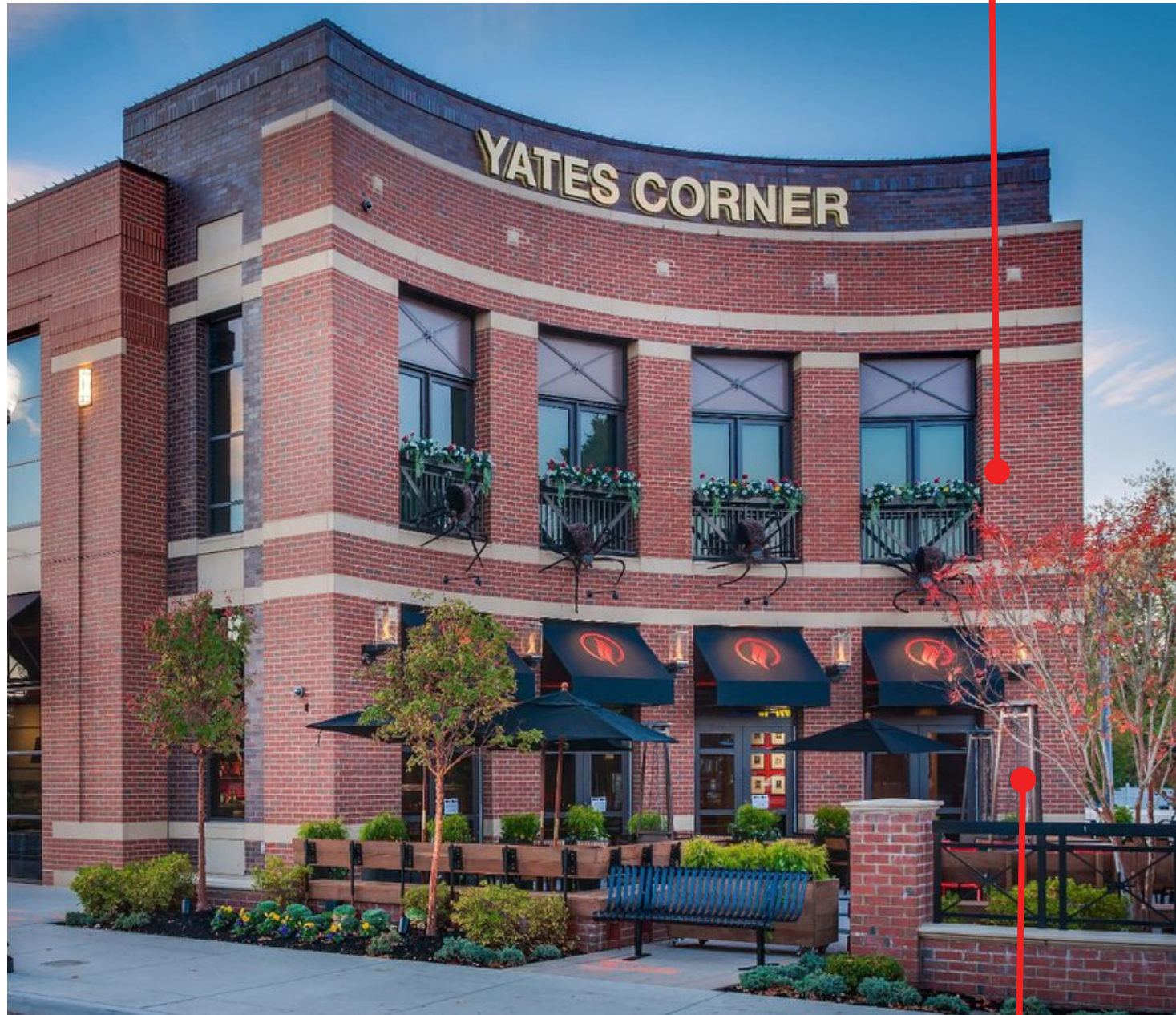
Notes:

1. Data based on Acreage (Not Building Square Footage)
2. Only vacant site is 9571 Fairfax Blvd. with less than 1% acre.

MIXED USE TYPOLOGIES FOR INNOVATION USES

EXAMPLE: MIXED USE PRODUCTION, REPAIR, AND DISTRIBUTION

RETAIL, OFFICE, AND RESTAURANTS



**HIGH QUALITY MATERIALS + PEDESTRIAN
ORIENTED AT MAIN CORRIDOR**

AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR WORK SPACE AT REAR



**GARAGE DOORS & DOUBLE
HEIGHT WAREHOUSE; PARKING LOT IN REAR**

ENHANCING EXISTING MIXED USE

EXAMPLE: INCUBATOR USE MIXING OFFICE AND PRODUCTION



HITT Co|Lab - Falls Church, VA

ENHANCING EXISTING MIXED USE

EXAMPLE: MIX OF MULTIFAMILY AND RETAIL AT SEVERAL BUILDING HEIGHTS



The Scout at the Circle

PUBLIC SAFETY

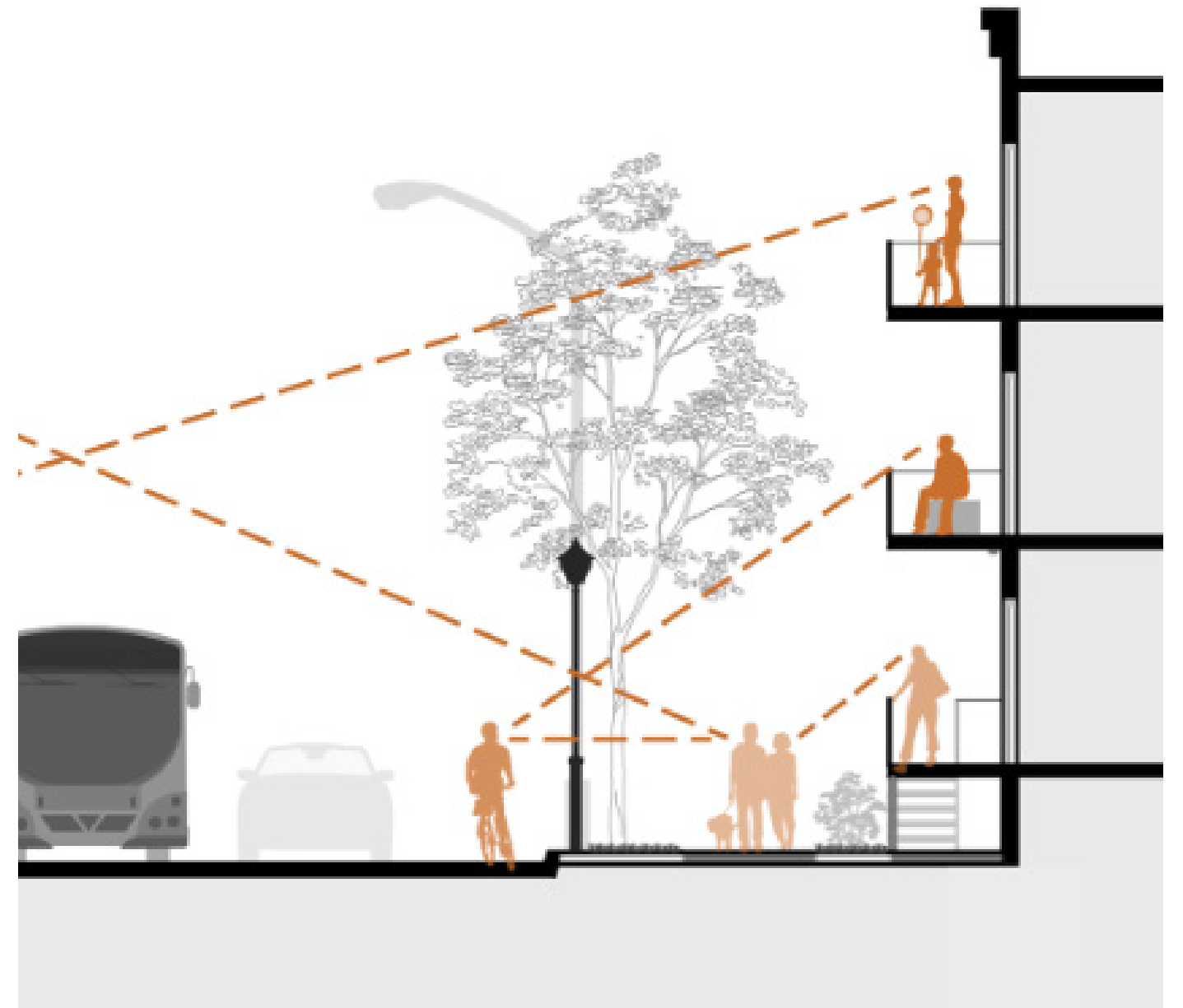
BRINGING “EYES TO THE STREET”

URBAN DESIGN:

- Building entrances and windows at street and sidewalk
- Building **designs that interact** and bring eyes to street
 - Balconies, decks, and porches
 - Large windows on main corridors
 - Interactive, inviting public parks
 - Walkable pedestrian streets
 - Low and see through fencing (ie. pickets, wrought iron)
- **Avoiding large expanses of blank walls**
- Better lighting and elimination of dark corners
- Establishing public restrooms and neighborhood oriented services
- **Encouraging mix of uses at different times of day** to keep spaces active, lively, and visible
- Well maintained appearance with clear designed purposes

STEWARDSHIP FRAMEWORKS:

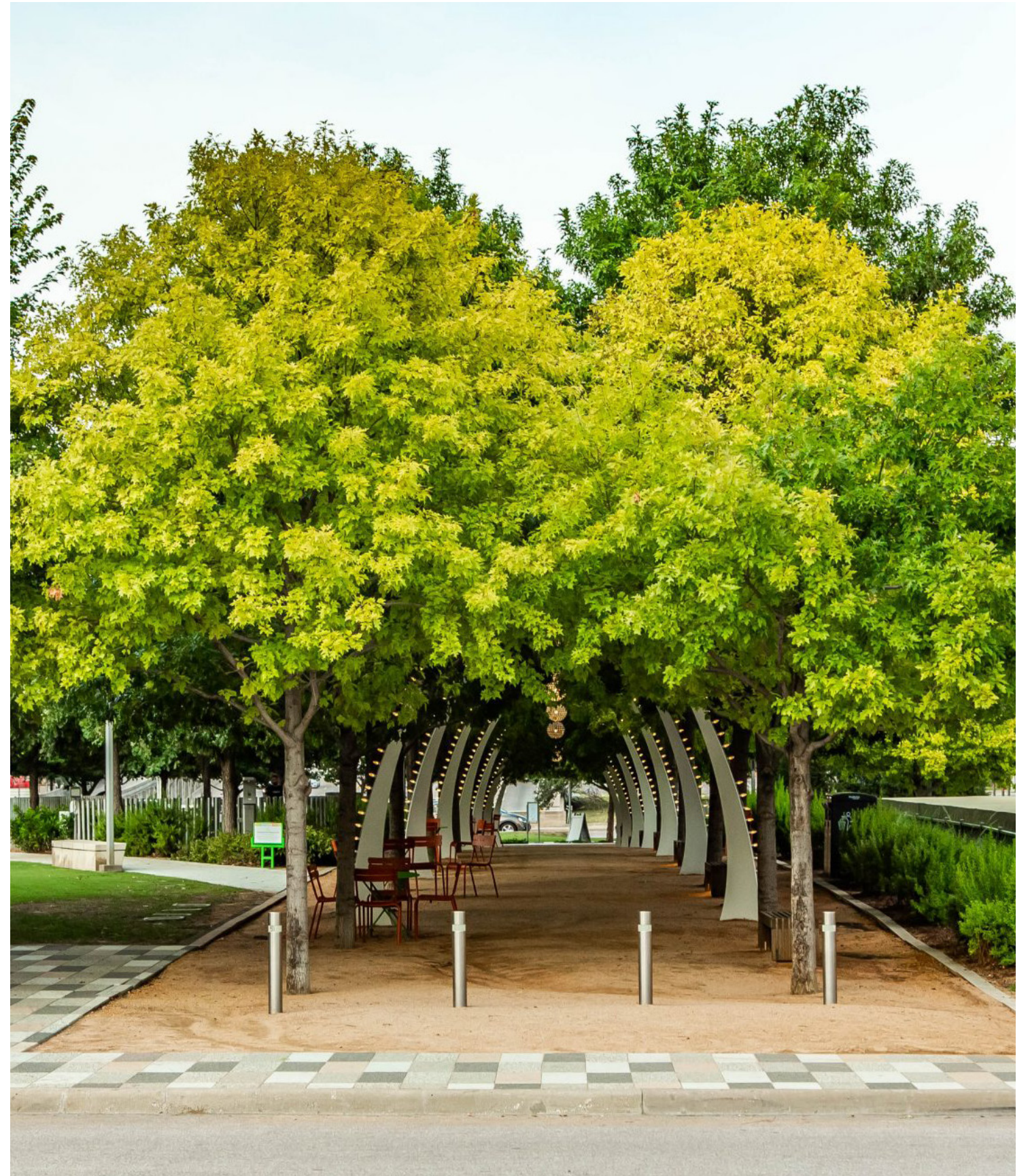
- Establishing a **Merchant Group or Business Improvement District (BID)** to bring continued stewardship, recommendations, and funding for improvements.
- Enhanced community focused security
- Better maintenance, sanitation, and trash clean up
- Enhancing branding, event planning, and coordination across property owners and community stakeholders



PUBLIC SAFETY

GREEN SPACES AND PARKS

- **Stewardship** (Private property owner, BID, Park Employee, etc.) to keep spaces **cleaned and maintained**.
- **Clear site lines** on major paths or roads
- Plantings should be arranged to **avoid creation of ‘blind corners’ and hiding places** along public walkways and trails.
- **Keeping trees trimmed and careful choices in shrubs** to invite transparency (example: limbing up existing/future trees to 8 feet min. above ground surface in public areas)
- Integrating landscape **lighting**
- Fostering **interactive, inviting public parks** that connect to nearby mixed uses



URBAN DESIGN FEATURES (SOUTHWEST QUADRANT)

- 1** New Shared Use Paths and Streetscapes
- 2** Transportation Hub for Bike/Bus
- 3** Retrofitted or Flexible Retail/Office
- 4** Stormwater and Green Infrastructure
- 5** New Accotink Creek Plaza- Outdoor Public Space
- 6** Mixed-Use Buildings Residential, Retail, Office with Activation along Spring Street



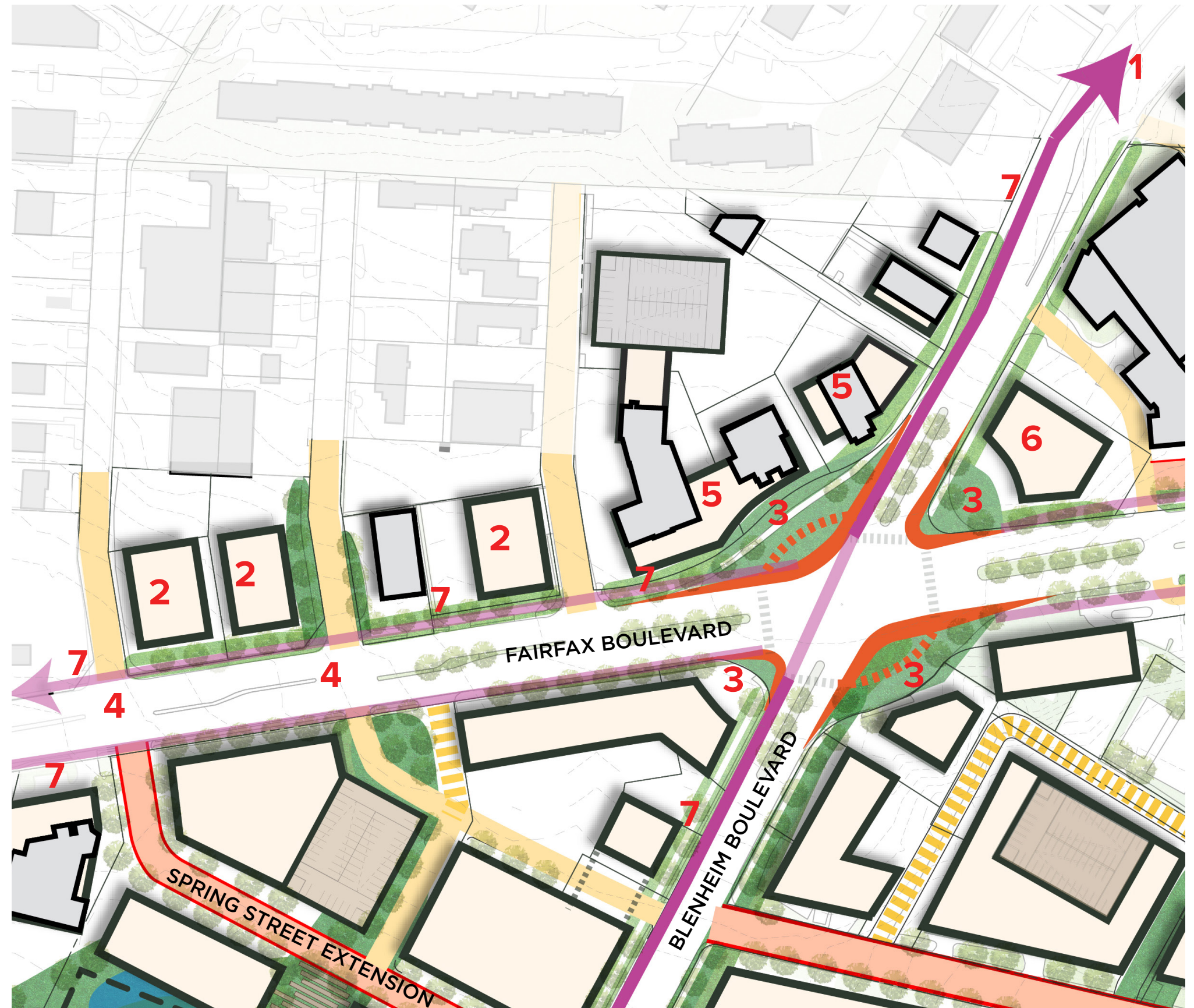
URBAN DESIGN FEATURES (SOUTHEAST QUADRANT)

- 1** New Shared Use Paths and Streetscapes
- 2** Enhanced Pedestrian Oriented Crossings
- 3** Reinvented Fairfax Circle
- 4** New Street and Block System
- 5** Expanded Gateway Park + Stormwater Management
- 6** Mixed-Use Buildings- Residential, Retail, Office
- 7** Other Buildings- Retail, Office, PDR, or Mix
- 8** Potential Stormwater Enhancements



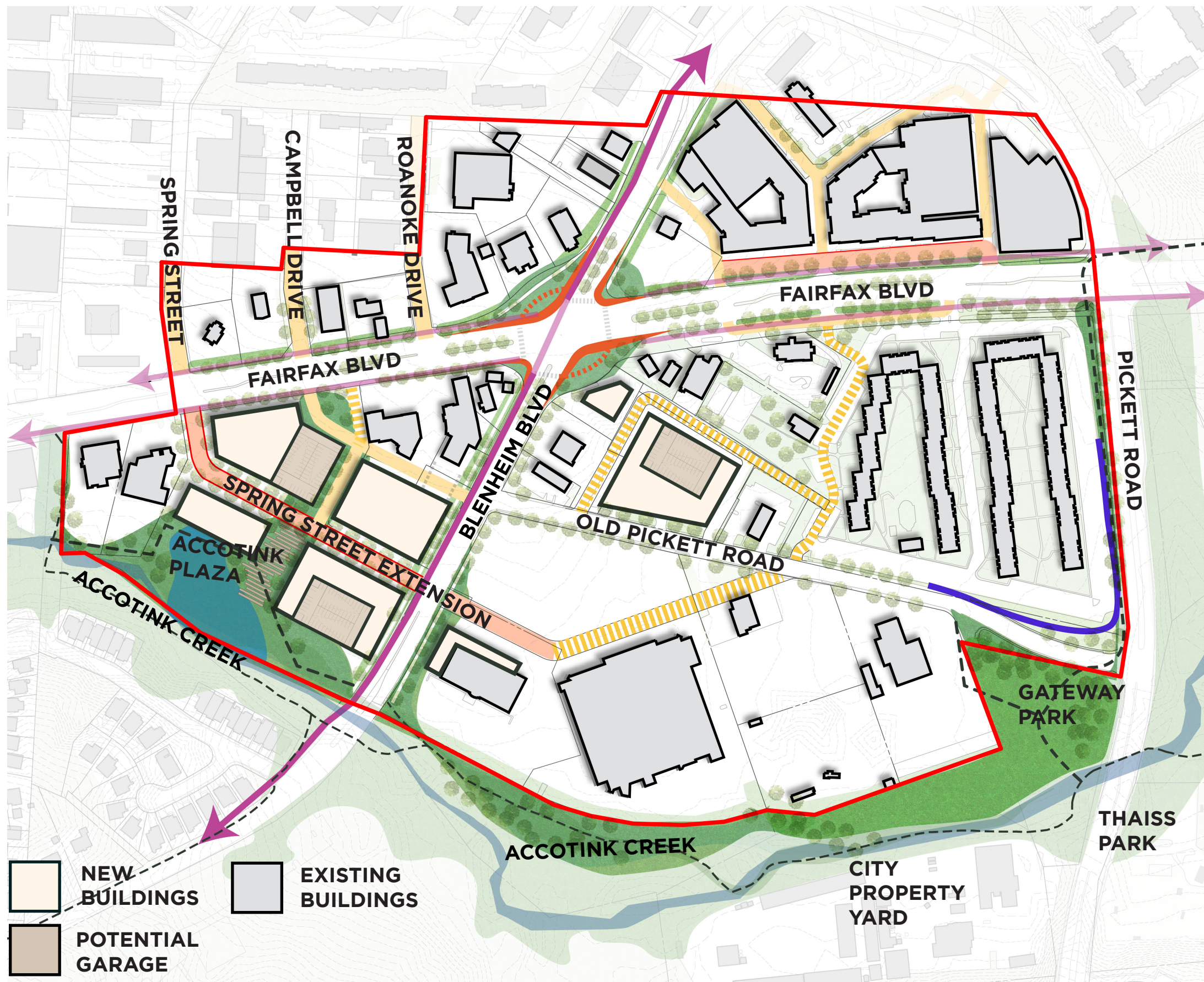
URBAN DESIGN FEATURES (NORTH)

- 1** Bike Connection to Vienna Metro Station
- 2** New or Adapted Production, Distribution, and Repair Buildings or New Mixed Uses
- 3** New Intersection Design and Green Infrastructure
- 4** Enhancing Pedestrian Connections Across Fairfax Boulevard at Either Spring or Campbell
- 5** Facade Enhancements and Adaptive Reuse
- 6** Mixed-Use Buildings- Residential, Retail, Office
- 7** Shared Use Paths



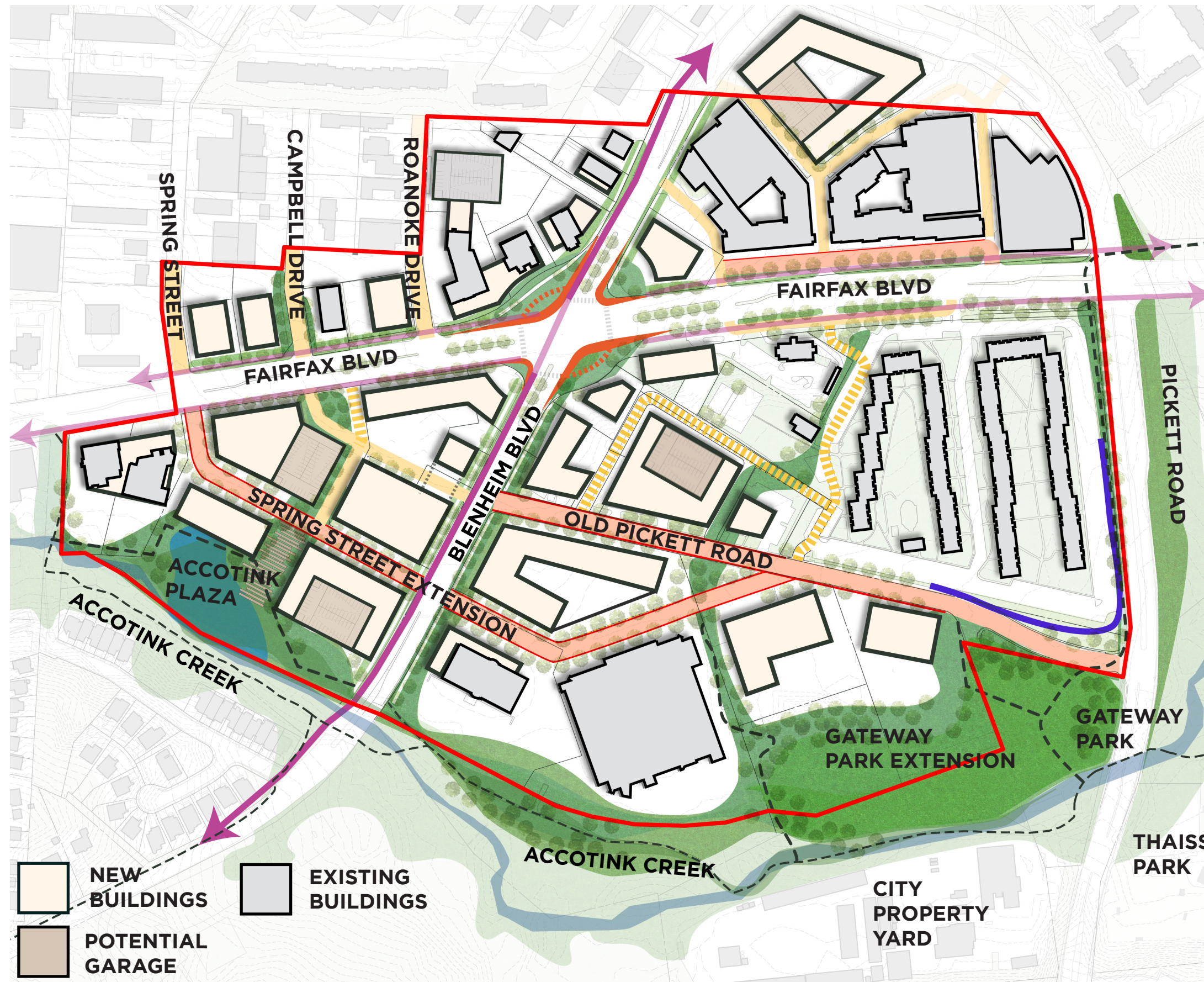
NEAR-TERM AND LONG-TERM OUTLOOK

NEAR-TERM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (1-10 YEARS)



- **Infrastructure Improvements-**
 - Fairfax Circle Redesign
 - Enhanced Green + Stormwater Infrastructure,
 - Revitalized Gateway Park
 - New Accotink Plaza
 - Increased Shared Use Paths
- **Residential** - Limited infill mostly focused on the southwest quadrant
- **Retail** - New mixed use infill and adaption of existing vehicular focused retail with better pedestrian experience.
- **Office** - Stabilizing and retaining existing office
- **Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR)** - Integrating existing and new PDR uses with pedestrian focused enhancements and/or mixed-use models.

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



- **Infrastructure Improvements-**
 - Expansion of Gateway Park
 - Continued improvement of Accotink Creek
 - Enhanced Green + Stormwater Infrastructure,
- **Residential** - Encourage continued mixed-use and multifamily
- **Retail** - New mixed use infill and adaption of existing vehicular focused retail with better pedestrian experience.
- **Office** - Limited expansion
- **Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR)** -
 - Reduced footprint in flood risk areas near Gateway Park.
 - New facades at Fairfax Circle at existing PDR uses
 - New or mixed use models encouraged throughout

Q+A SESSION