

# INTRODUCTION



# CHAPTER 1 | EXISTING CONDITIONS



**Figure 1-1 | Study Area Location Map:** The Beauregard Corridor Study Area (outlined in red) is situated on the western edge of Alexandria along Interstate 395.

## 1.1 | The Planning Area

### Overview

The Beauregard Corridor Plan planning area is a 430-acre area (including approximately 35 acres of public right-of-way) located near the western edge of the City of Alexandria along Interstate 395. The portion of the study area northwest of Interstate 395 is located within the Alexandria West small area plan. The area southeast of I-395 is located within the Seminary Hill - Strawberry Hill small area plan. The boundaries of the planning were established to encompass those areas that are most likely to redevelop in the future, and the redevelopment of which would have traffic and transportation implications on the Beauregard Street and Seminary Road corridors.

The planning area is closely tied to a context area that extends as far as Quaker Lane on the east, Duke Street on the south and the City limits on the west and north. The context area includes areas that depend on the planning area for goods and services, and areas where access to and through the

planning area to reach the regional transportation system is common.

Most of the planning area has been developed with a suburban development pattern that contrasts the historic urban grid found within Old Town Alexandria and surrounding communities. A variety of uses that include a mix of mid to high-rise apartments, offices, shopping centers, hotels and several institutional uses are currently found within the planning area.

### Need for a New Plan

Three factors make planning for this area important now. First, the City's recently adopted Transportation Master Plan has identified Beauregard Street as one of three transportation corridors for the City with high capacity transit in dedicated lanes. This system will significantly improve the transit service in the City.

Second, the selection of Mark Center as the site for 6400 new employees as part of the BRAC-133 Department of Defense relocation program will bring significant changes to the area. Third, aging garden apartments and shopping centers are seen as opportunity



**Figure 1-2 | Study Area Map:** The Beauregard Corridor Study Area includes a mix of apartments, offices and retail uses that are predominantly accessed via Beauregard Street and Seminary Road.

areas for redevelopment by their owners, particularly given the opportunities presented by transit and the BRAC-133 project.

With the potential for significant change within the Study Area, timing is ideal for the adjacent community to establish a new vision and identity for itself within the City of Alexandria and the greater Washington Metropolitan region.

### Identified SubZones

The overall Beauregard Corridor Study Area is comprised of seven unique subzones, each of which has unique character based on land uses, location, physical features or other elements. These zones contribute to the variety of the overall environment within the study area and offer the opportunity to establish future neighborhoods, villages or other community elements with defined edges and identities within the study area.

#### Identified Zones within the Beauregard Corridor:

- Seminary Zone
- Southern Towers/Goodwin House Zone
- Fairbanks-Foster/Hermitage Zone
- Winkler Botanical Preserve Zone
- Mark Center Zone
- Upper Hill Zone
- Lower Hill Zone

The following pages provide a detailed overview of the existing conditions, issues and opportunities for each of these areas.

## Seminary Zone

The Seminary Zone is prominently situated at the western gateway into the City of Alexandria, but lacks a pedestrian-oriented environment and integration between land uses.

The area currently lacks a strong connection to the areas on the opposite side of Interstate 395, with the only connection coming via the auto-dominated Seminary Road interchange.

Existing uses include the Seminary Plaza strip commercial center, Alexandria Professional Office Center, Courtyard by Marriott and the Seminary Tower and Seminary Hill Apartments.



Seminary Zone

## Opportunities

- Located at a prominent western gateway into the City of Alexandria.
- Direct access and visibility from I-395.
- The existing Seminary Plaza shopping center is successful, with an anchor grocery store and several retail and service establishments.

## Challenges

- A majority of the land uses within the Seminary Zone are dominated by surface parking.
- Existing development in the area is disjointed and poorly linked.
- The area lacks a pedestrian-oriented scale, with large buildings and parking lots creating large and open environments.
- The existing office and medical buildings do not have enough parking to meet their current needs, which strains adjacent parking areas.
- The Seminary Plaza shopping center "backs" to adjacent neighborhood, creating a poor relationship between these land uses.
- Pedestrian crossings over Interstate 395 are long, indirect, steep, hard to navigate and are not pedestrian-friendly.



Existing Seminary Plaza shopping center and parking lot, with Alexandria Professional Center in background.



Kenmore Avenue is currently lined with the Seminary Towers and Seminary Hill apartments.



Aerial view overlooking Kenmore Avenue, with the Seminary Hill (foreground) and Seminary Towers (background) apartments and associated surface parking lots lining the street.



This aerial view overlooking the Seminary Plaza shopping center and adjacent uses highlights the disjointed land use pattern in the area and the dominance of surface parking in the built landscape.



The existing streetscape environment along Kenmore Avenue at Seminary Plaza lacks a pedestrian-friendly scale.



The Courtyard by Marriott is an isolated use that lacks a street presence along Kenmore Avenue and strong linkages to adjacent uses.

## Southern Towers/Goodwin House Zone

The Southern Towers/Goodwin House Zone features several high-rise apartment buildings, which are oriented around a central park and green space. Adjacent uses include Goodwin House, Hermitage Hill Apartments, and the Church of the Resurrection.

This area is located along Interstate 395, Seminary Road and Beauregard Street, and may be well positioned to take advantage of the future transit line and continued growth at the Mark Center.

### Opportunities

- Prominent location at the western gateway into Alexandria.
- Access and visibility from I-395.
- Direct access from I-395 Ramp into the Southern Towers parking lot along Seminary Road.
- The established park/green space within Southern Towers features mature trees, recreational amenities and a quality environment that adds value to the area.
- There may be an opportunity to expand the retail establishments within Southern Towers into a larger local destination for goods and services.
- The area is adjacent to the proposed transit line, which would make the existing parking lots ideal for redevelopment.

### Challenges

- Much of the area is dominated by surface parking, diminishing its role as a gateway into Alexandria.
- The apartment towers lack a streetscape presence, which disconnects them from the overall framework of the community.
- The tall buildings and open parking lots create an environment that lacks an intimate and animated pedestrian-oriented scale.
- The existing residential communities “back” to one another and lack physical connections.



Southern Towers/Goodwin House Zone Map



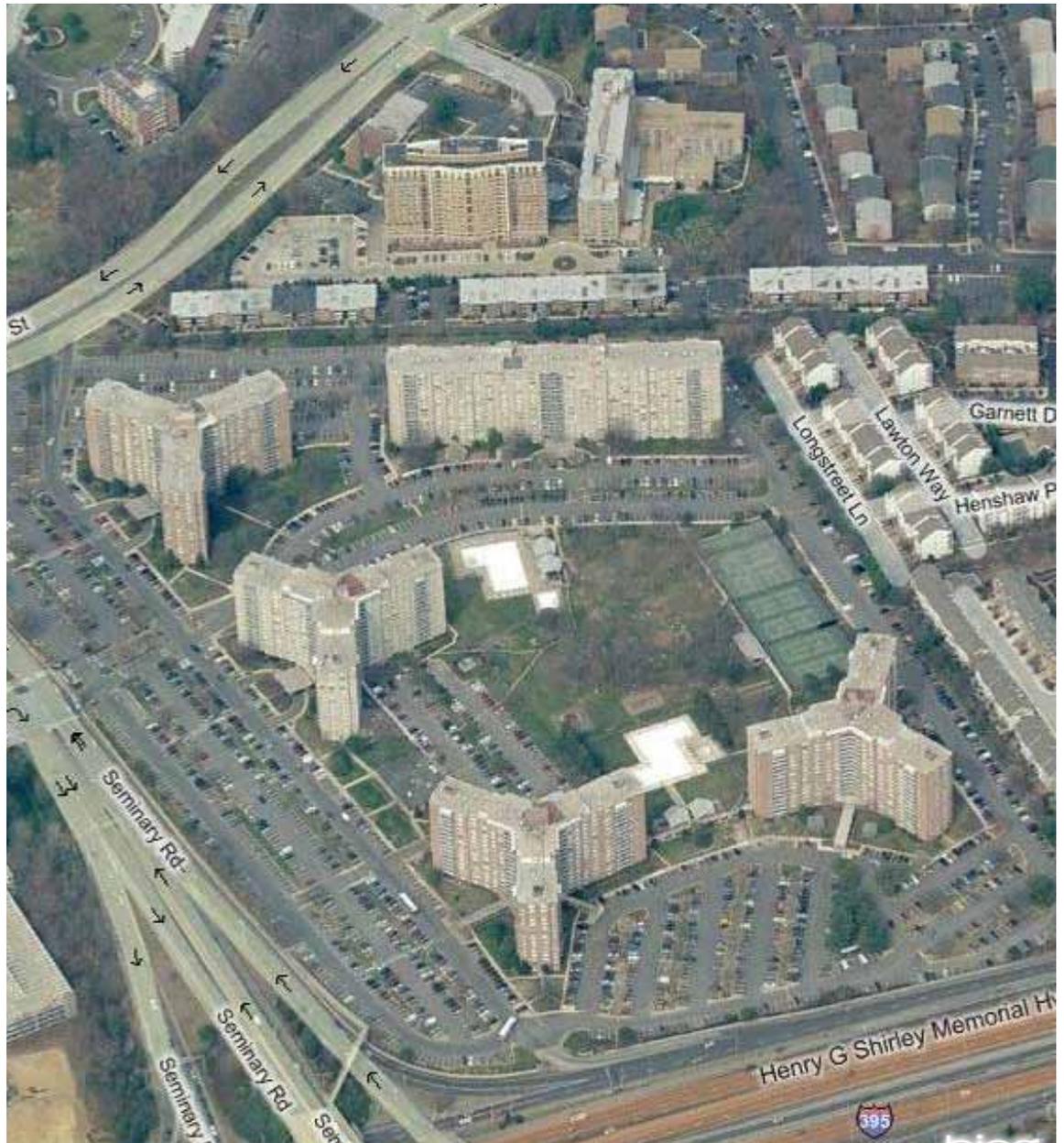
The tall buildings and abundant surface parking, at Southern Towers creates an environment that lacks street presence and pedestrian scale.



The central green within Southern Towers is a mature parklike setting that can be an amenity to the area.



There is a distinct lack of pedestrian and vehicular connections between existing uses in the area. This photo highlights the poor relationship between Goodwin House and Southern Towers.



This aerial view highlights the lack of physical connections between the existing residential communities and how with better connections, the central green space within Southern Towers could become a community-wide amenity.



Southern Towers currently has a handful of retail and service uses that serve their immediate community.



The disconnect between adjacent land uses often creates awkward physical relationships and views. Here, the Goodwin House overpowers the Hermitage Hill Apartments.

## Shirley Gardens/Hermitage Zone

Although it is located at the prominent and visible intersection of Beaugard Street and Seminary Road, the Shirley Gardens /Hermitage Zone consists primarily of modestly-sized single-family homes on large lots and the Hermitage Senior Living Community.

As the surrounding area continues to evolve, this area will likely be subject to redevelopment pressures as the transit line along Beaugard Street is implemented.

### Opportunities

- Prominent location at the intersection of Beaugard Street and Seminary Road, makes this area a gateway into the study area.
- The existing single-family homes are an optimal location for redevelopment and are well-positioned to take advantage of future transit.

### Challenges

- Challenging vehicular access onto Seminary Road and Beaugard Street may be limiting.
- Steep grades may limit the presence of uses directly fronting directly onto Beaugard Street.
- The area is adjacent to a well-established neighborhood to the north, which may impact future uses.
- Assembling property with a number of individual owners can be a challenge for redevelopment.



Shirley Gardens/Hermitage Zone Map



Existing single-family homes in the Shirley Gardens neighborhood are ideal locations for future development.



The Hermitage is a senior living community that would benefit from the proposed transit line and increased services in the area for residents.



This overview highlights the existing under-utilized land uses of the Shirley Gardens / Hermitage Area and the more intensive land uses that surrounding it along Beauregard Street and Seminary Road.



The pedestrian environment along Seminary Road is undersized in relation to the size and speed of the roadway.



Steep slopes along Beauregard Street may limit the potential for future development to line its edges.



The area lacks share-the-road bike lane facilities that would promote inter-connectivity and complete streets.



The Potomac Cleaners and adjacent park space are located at the gateway into the Beauregard Corridor Study Area.

## Winkler Botanical Preserve Zone

Located along I-395 and among the Mark Center Office and Residential Developments, the Winkler Preserve features natural amenities, walking trails and educational programs for the public.

### Opportunities

- Its central location makes the Winkler Preserve an amenity for the community, particularly for children.
- Steep topography creates a quiet atmosphere, secluded from the rest of the City of Alexandria.
- Existing walking trails open to the public during the day connect to adjacent land uses.
- The preserve has an excellent collection of native plants on site.
- Water features and waterfalls add great value within the existing landscape of the Preserve.
- Significant size makes the area a valuable wildlife habitat. Connecting this area better to the extensive habitat of Holmes Run in the future could increase habitat value.

### Challenges

- Challenging access, with only one vehicular access point off of Roanoke Avenue.
- Poor way-finding and directional signage leading to the Preserve makes access extremely difficult for users not familiar with the area.
- Potential impacts from roadway improvements considered in the Interchange Justification Report and Mark Center access studies.
- Streams are severely eroded and are in need of restoration.



Winkler Botanical Preserve Zone Map



The existing trails within the Winkler Preserve are an excellent amenity within the community.



Water features and other amenities within the Winkler Preserve offer a unique retreat within Alexandria.



The existing pond creates a tranquil environment around which to explore.



These overviews highlight how adjacent land uses have been oriented to capitalize on open space views into and over the Winkler Botanical Preserve. The central pond is located within a depression, creating a unique environment that is enclosed within the existing hillsides.



Surrounding buildings, including the WHS building (under construction) have been situated to overlook the Winkler Preserve.



The main building within the Winkler Botanical Preserve is a focal point in the landscape and a hub for educational activities.

## Mark Center Zone

The Mark Center is ideally situated at the I-395/Seminary Road Interchange and features a variety of office uses, the Hilton Alexandria at Mark Center Hotel and a handful of retail/restaurant establishments.

The completion of the BRAC-133/WHS facility and the future expansion of the IDA facilities within Mark Center will make this area a more important regional employment hub that will demand new services and amenities in and around the area.

### Opportunities

- Surface parking areas and low-rise office buildings on the northern side of Beauregard Street are potential redevelopment sites.
- Adjacent to the Winkler Preserve, with direct pedestrian access.
- Numerous existing and proposed jobs create a high demand for supporting uses and services in this area.
- The Hilton Alexandria at Mark Center hotel is a destination anchor.
- Existing parking garages that line Beauregard Street may be opportunities for redevelopment in the future.

### Challenges

- Challenging/limited vehicular access from Beauregard Street, Seminary Road and Interstate 395.
- Traffic concerns due to the expansion of the Mark Center and Washington Headquarters Services (WHS).
- Poor connections to adjacent land uses, including the Shops at Mark Center and adjacent residential communities.
- Department of Defense force protection standards may limit the location and design of future uses and amenities.



Mark Center Zone Map



The new WHS facility will add more than 6,400 jobs to the Mark Center.



The construction of the WHS and the future expansion of the IDA facility will require new road improvements along Mark Center Drive.



The Hilton Alexandria at Mark Center is a regional anchor and provides a unique setting for the community and guests.



The Mark Center features a variety of office buildings, many of which are oriented around the Winkler Preserve and other internal amenities. The existing offices north of Beauregard Street are low to mid-rise buildings with surrounding surface parking, while the southern side features mid to high-rise buildings with adjacent parking garages. The construction of the WHS facility and future expansion of the IDA facility at the terminus of Mark Center Drive will further define the Mark Center as a regional employment center.



Many existing office buildings within Mark Center have been designed with quality materials and public spaces, which has added great value to the area.

The existing low-rise office buildings and surface parking areas on the northern side of Beauregard Street are ideal locations for redevelopment, which may allow for better connections to the adjacent neighborhoods.

## Upper Hill Zone

The Upper Hill Zone is a mixed residential community with apartments, condominiums and town homes. The Zone has two activity hubs - the Shops at Mark Center and John Adams Elementary School.

### Opportunities

- The Shops at Mark Center is a retail destination and is centrally located.
- The John Adams Elementary School is a hub of activity and features play fields and spaces.
- Topography provides broad views to the surrounding area from the higher elevations. The slopes create areas of interest with trees and natural areas.

### Challenges

- The John Adams Elementary School does not have a "street presence".
- Steep topography in some areas makes access and interconnections difficult.
- Newer communities are gated, reducing pedestrian and vehicular connectivity.
- Areas of redundant roadways within the townhome community adjacent to the John Adams Elementary School overwhelm the community with paved areas.
- Existing resource protection areas (RPAs) along the western edge of this zone.
- Design for areas of private townhome ownership with areas of rental apartments.
- Preservation of affordable and workforce housing.



Upper Hill Zone Map



The Shops at Mark Center is a local retail hub with a Giant grocery store and adjacent restaurants and stores.



The John Adams Elementary School is a central hub of activity in the area, but lacks a strong identity and street presence.



This overview shows how residential communities in Upper Hill have been transitioning from suburban-style garden apartments (top left) to an urban-based townhome and apartments community (at bottom). The Shops at Mark Center (top right) are currently a retail hub within the community.



The townhouse community off of Rayburn Avenue has redundant service streets that result in a wide paved area out of scale with the intimate scale of the residences.



The Town Square at Millbrook apartments were recently redeveloped to create a more village-scale appearance and relationship to the streetscape.



A majority of the existing garden apartments are oriented around informal open spaces instead of the surrounding street network.



The newer residential communities are currently gated, which segregates uses in the area and disconnects pedestrian and vehicular connections.

## Lower Hill Zone

The Lower Hill Zone is a rental apartment community built on the hillsides leading from the Winkler Preserve to the Holmes Run. The area is in a somewhat secluded setting near several open space areas, including the Winkler Preserve and Holmes Run, that provide a natural setting, and a variety of recreational and educational opportunities.

### Opportunities

- Adjacent to Winkler Preserve and Holmes Run, which provides a natural setting and excellent access to open space areas.
- Large areas of mature vegetation are located along Holmes Run and among the garden apartments.
- If reestablished, Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) and the Holmes Run floodplain could create new open space linkages between the Dora Kelley Nature Park and Winkler Preserve.
- Sanger Road is a potential location for a full or partial interchange along Interstate 395.
- A variety of recreational amenities including regional trail connections are located along the Holmes Run.

### Challenges

- Rolling topography and grade changes have impacted existing development patterns and will impact future uses.
- Areas directly along I-395 are isolated by steep grades from the rest of the area.
- The floodplain along Holmes Run extends up into the garden apartment areas.
- Several existing garden apartments are located within Resource Protection Areas and the Holmes Run floodplain.
- Preservation of affordable and workforce housing.



Lower Hill Zone Map



The Lower Hill Area consists of numerous garden style apartments with adjacent parking areas.



Larger parking areas within Lower Hill may provide opportunities for redevelopment or new vehicular and pedestrian connections.



Existing buildings lack a strong presence along Beaugard Street and have parking areas lining their edges.



The garden apartments within Lower Hill are oriented organically on the hillside rising from Holmes Run to the Upper Hill Area, which was in response to the rolling topography of the area. The small stream creates a linear green space that has potential to become an open space connection between the Winkler Preserve and Holmes Run.



The Dora Kelley Nature Park is an excellent community asset that provides open space trails and amenities along the Holmes Run.



The underpass at Sanger Road and Interstate 395 has potential to become a partial or full interchange, which would increase accessibility in the area.



Several amenities including pools and other recreational facilities are located along the Holmes Run area.



Beaugard Street has large stands of mature vegetation along its edges as it climbs from the Lower Hill area to the Upper Hill Area.