



# VAN DORN VISION - GOALS FOR SUCCESS

City of Alexandria, Planning & Zoning

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**EHRENKRANTZ ECKSTUT & KUHN ARCHITECTS**

- **Goals**
- **Success on the Ground**
- **Synthesizing Your Ideas**

# Current Van Dorn Vision Plan Boundaries



I-395

Holmes Run

Duke Street

S. Van Dorn  
Street

M

# New Van Dorn Vision Plan Boundaries



# Transit & Transportation

## DRAFT GOALS – BEFORE WORKSHOP

Provide convenient access to a multimodal transportation system with choices for access to local activities and to activities throughout the region.

Enhance walking access to local facilities and services and to transportation choices from each neighborhood.

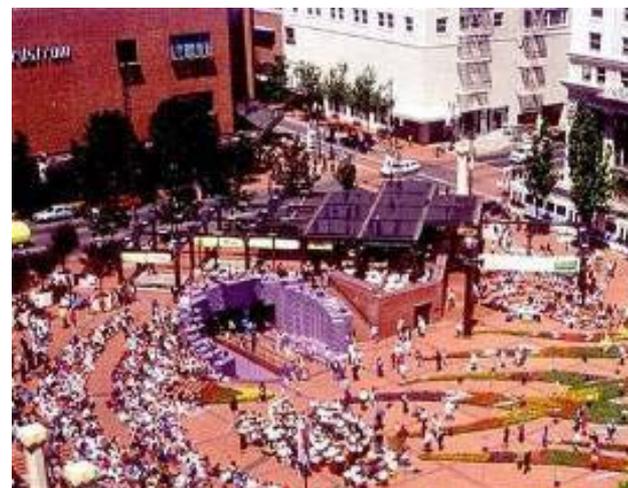
Promote a mix and intensity of uses in corridors and centers that can provide and sustain a high level of public transportation service.



# Transit & Transportation

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – FROM MORNING SESSION

- **Increase transit ridership** through reliable, convenient, and coordinated transit services throughout the area, with emphasis on effective transit service along Van Dorn Street **between Landmark Mall and the Van Dorn Street Metro Station**.
- **Create safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian and bicycle access** to all transit nodes, centers, and stations.
- **Provide off-street, dedicated pedestrian and bicycle paths** where feasible to connect transit, activity centers, neighborhoods, open space, and community facilities.
- **Create a more urban street grid system** where feasible with walkable blocks to provide increased mobility for both pedestrians and vehicles.



# Transit & Transportation

## IDEAS FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION:

- Improved access to the Van Dorn Street Metro Station, including the potential for a pedestrian bridge connection to the southern portion of the study area
- Potential for VRE Station
- Transit center at Landmark Mall
- Balance between pedestrian and traffic friendly streets
- Coordination of transportation issues with Fairfax County
- Synchronization of traffic signals along Van Dorn Street

# Housing, Development & Neighborhood Enhancement

## DRAFT GOALS – BEFORE WORKSHOP

Plan for places with distinct “neighborhood character” that provide a wide range of goods and services, housing types, jobs, and opportunities for cultural enrichment for the diverse population it serves.

Provide walkable neighborhoods with convenient access to open space, community facilities, and local shopping and services.

Require mixed-use developments (residential, office, retail) on all larger parcels to minimize the need for auto trips.

Construct buildings, public facilities and infrastructure that are built to last, but are flexible in response to changes and can be readily maintained and enhanced as conditions, needs and desires change.



# Housing, Development & Neighborhood Enhancement

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – FROM MORNING SESSION

- Provide for a **variety of housing types**, including mid-rise and high-rise units, compatible with existing housing types and groups within the community.
- Maintain a **diverse mix of ownership and rental** housing, and market rate, affordable, and workforce housing.
- Provide a **mix of uses and sizes of development, with a focus on** vibrant neighborhoods, neighborhood needs, and **human scale**.
- The Landmark Van Dorn Area should become a **gateway for the City of Alexandria**.
- **Landmark Mall should serve regional, local, and neighborhood needs.**
- **Promote the history and diversity of the area** as background for establishing and re-enforcing neighborhood character.



## IDEAS FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION:

- Appropriate mix of office, retail, and residential uses for different redevelopment sites within the area
- Definition of and implementation of affordable and workforce housing programs within the study area
- Location of activity centers and redevelopment nodes along Van Dorn Street
- Placement of taller buildings

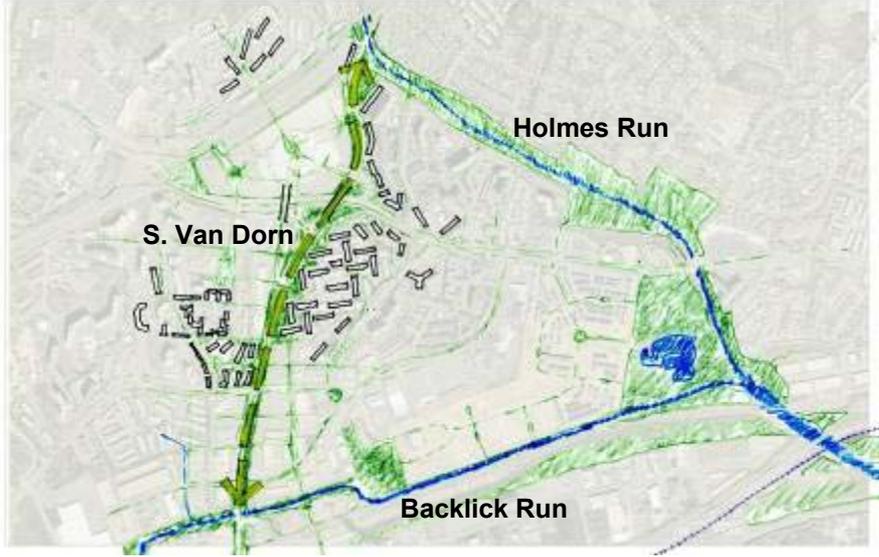
# Open Space & Civic Amenities

## DRAFT GOALS – BEFORE WORKSHOP

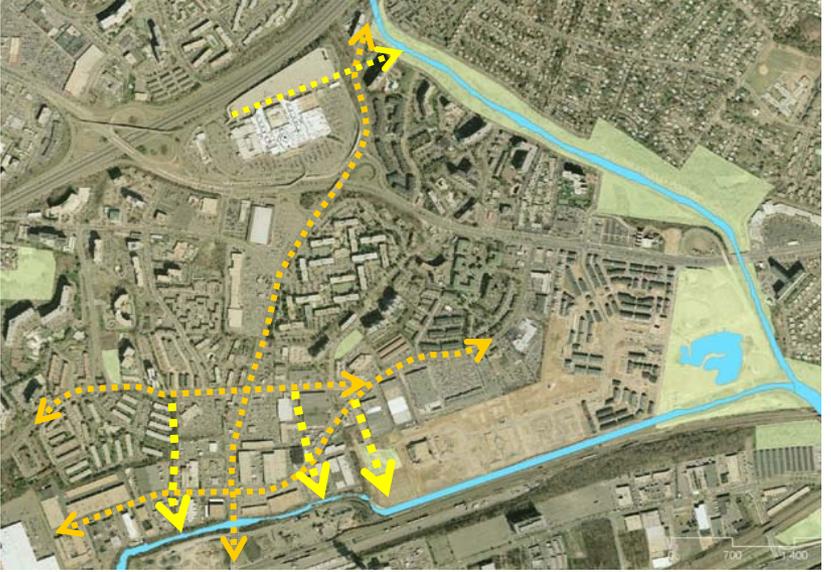
Provide an interconnected open space system with a variety of scales and types of open spaces (parks, town squares, and diverse street types) spaced widely throughout the community, including tree-lined walking streets and safe play areas for young children where families can gather.

Minimize surface parking, except where used along streets to create a protected pedestrian environment and successful retail streets.

Plan for both quiet places and active, vibrant, busy places.



Re-establishing Backlick Run as a natural environment with S. Van Dorn as a green boulevard.



# Open Space & Civic Amenities

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – FROM MORNING SESSION

- **Preserve and enhance existing green space**, natural areas, and features, including neighborhood oriented open space and parks.
- Provide **increased opportunities for seasonal, programmed facilities and activities for all age groups**, such as an ice rink, farmer's market, fountains, evening events, and recreation centers.
- **Introduce more cultural facilities** integrated into adjacent uses and neighborhoods.



## DRAFT GOALS – BEFORE WORKSHOP

Develop and enhance natural corridors and water to sustain plant communities and wildlife and bring nature into the community.

Conserve land, energy and natural resources by having resource-conserving site and building design and support systems, and by supporting effective alternatives to the single-occupant motor vehicle.



## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – FROM MORNING SESSION

Establish an areawide, comprehensive approach for environmentally sustainable development, including:

- LEED standards
- Best practices in local and regional stormwater management (rain gardens, retention ponds)
- Reduced impervious areas
- Enhanced water quality
- Protection and restoration of habitat areas and natural features throughout the study area
- Green roofs

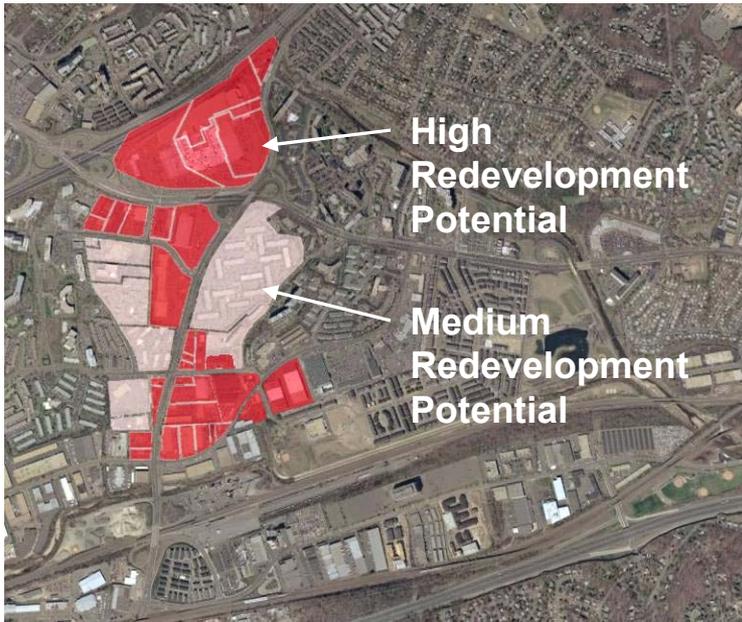


# Implementation & Fiscal Sustainability

## DRAFT GOALS – BEFORE WORKSHOP

Create a vibrant community that can sustain itself over time via a healthy level of economic activity, providing continuing value to support public facilities and services through local revenues.

Provide a diversity of functions including shopping, jobs and a variety of living environments that make the area less susceptible to cycles of change than single-purpose areas that appeal to only one social or economic group.



### COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – FROM MORNING SESSION

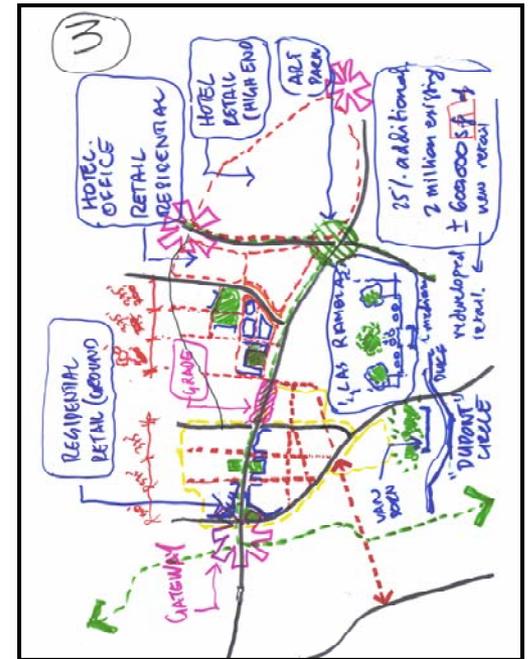
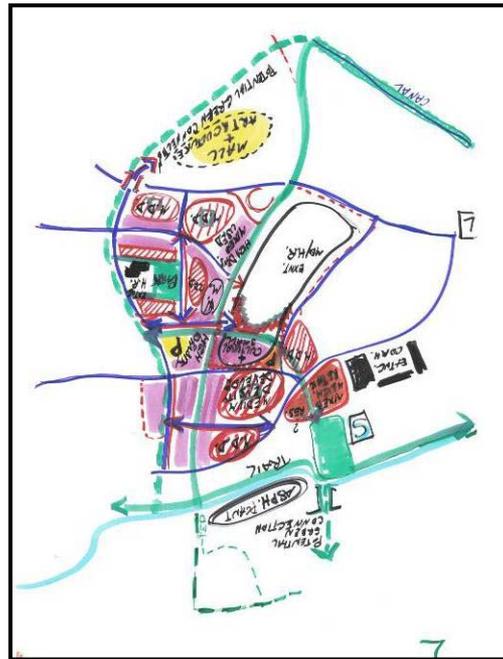
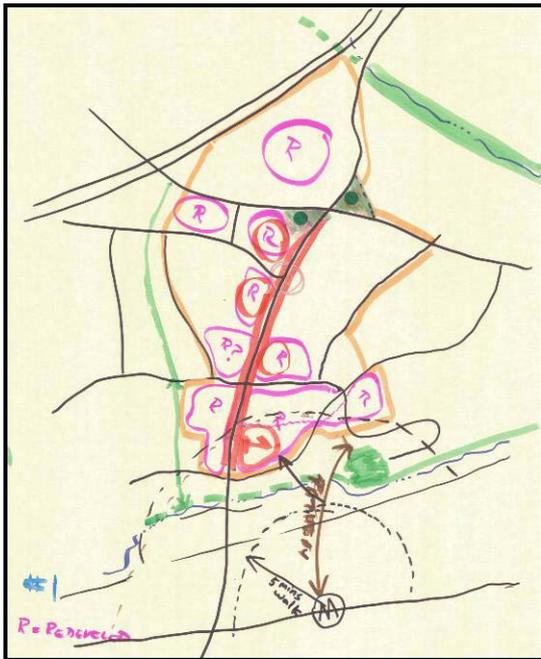
- Use the City's Economic Sustainability Task Force recommendations as a guide to maximize office, retail, and hotel development, in a manner consistent with creating vibrant activity centers and mixed use neighborhoods.

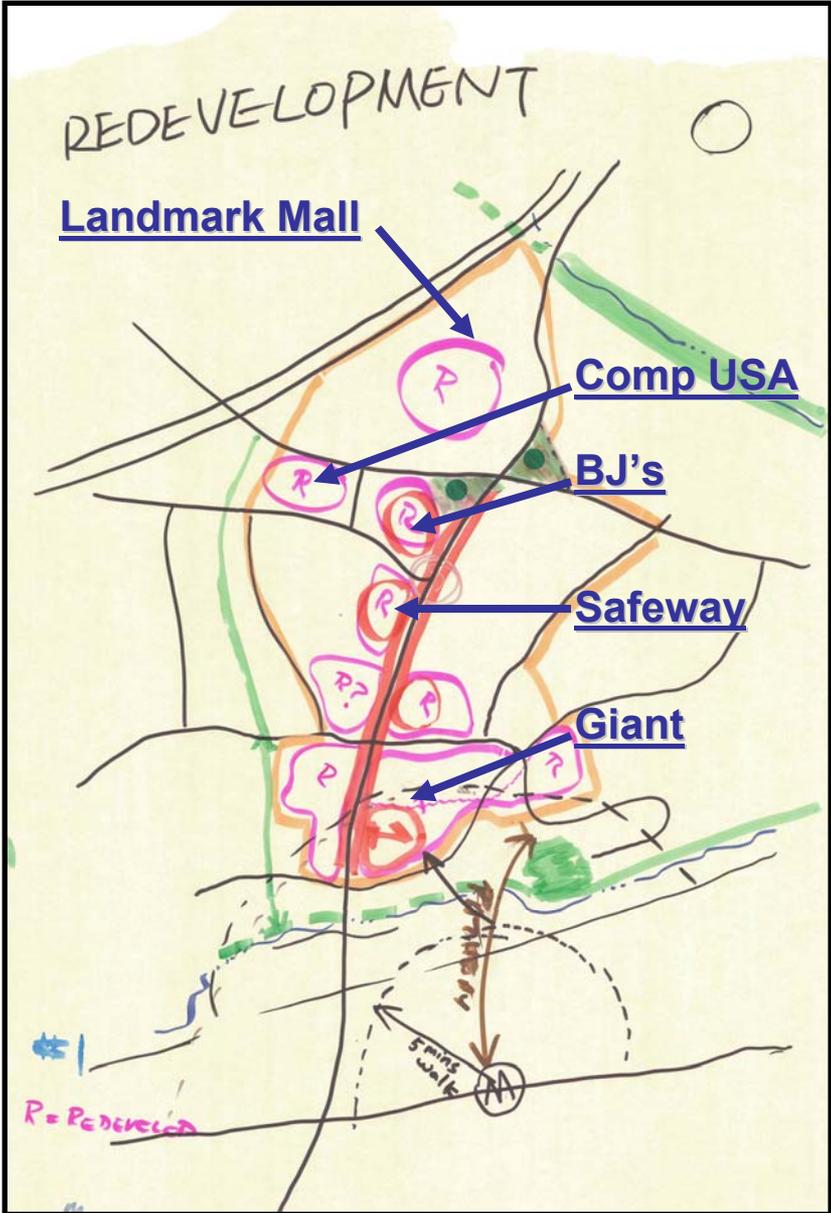
### IDEAS FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION:

- Appropriate mix of office, retail, and residential uses for different redevelopment sites within the area
- Methods to maximize opportunity for office development at key redevelopment sites throughout the study area
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Leveraging the visibility and access provided by I-395 and transit improvements to secure major office development
- Understanding fiscal impact of different land uses (office, residential, retail)

## Success on the Ground

### Afternoon Work Session



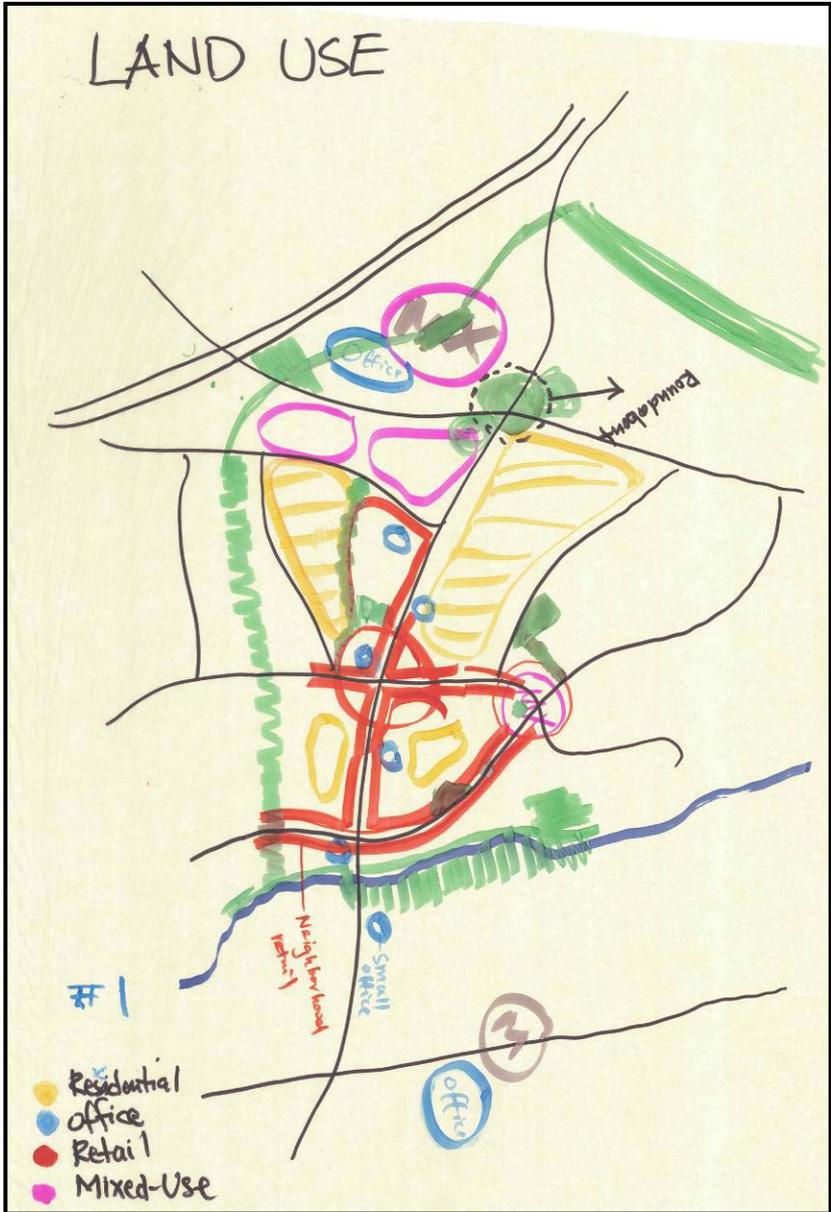


## Major Redevelopment Sites include:

1. Landmark Mall
2. Comp USA
3. BJ's
4. Safeway
5. Giant

- Differences based on location, size and access
- Consider relationship between smaller sites vs. larger sites
- As properties develop, introduce new streets & connections
- Include Landmark Watergate neighborhood in the boundary

# Success On The Ground – Work Session Group 1: Land Uses



## Housing

- Preference of mid-rise for housing
- Propose provision to allow different heights
- Desire for “Workforce Affordable” housing & rentals
- Residential on top of retail
- Promote mixed uses (especially at Mall site)
- Concern about “projects” model

## Retail

- Stores @ shopping center lack visibility
- Wrap garages with retail, concentrate it on highway side

## Office

- Intensity of office
- Majority of office space located at Mall and Metro

## Open Space

- Potential for pocket parks
- Large green space at Mall
- More civic spaces
- Preserve and enhance (now unused) green space available right now
- Stream valley as landscape resource & amenity
- Make connections to bike trails



## ADDITIONAL NOTES & SITE ISSUES (MORNING & AFTERNOON SESSIONS)

### Environment

- Place emphasis on green buildings
- Discourage auto-repair type businesses along Van Dorn



## ADDITIONAL NOTES & SITE ISSUES (MORNING & AFTERNOON SESSIONS)

### Character

- There needs to be a “Gateway” for city of Alexandria
- Differentiate the West End from the “Colonial” theme of Old Town
- Create character themes for nodes along Van Dorn



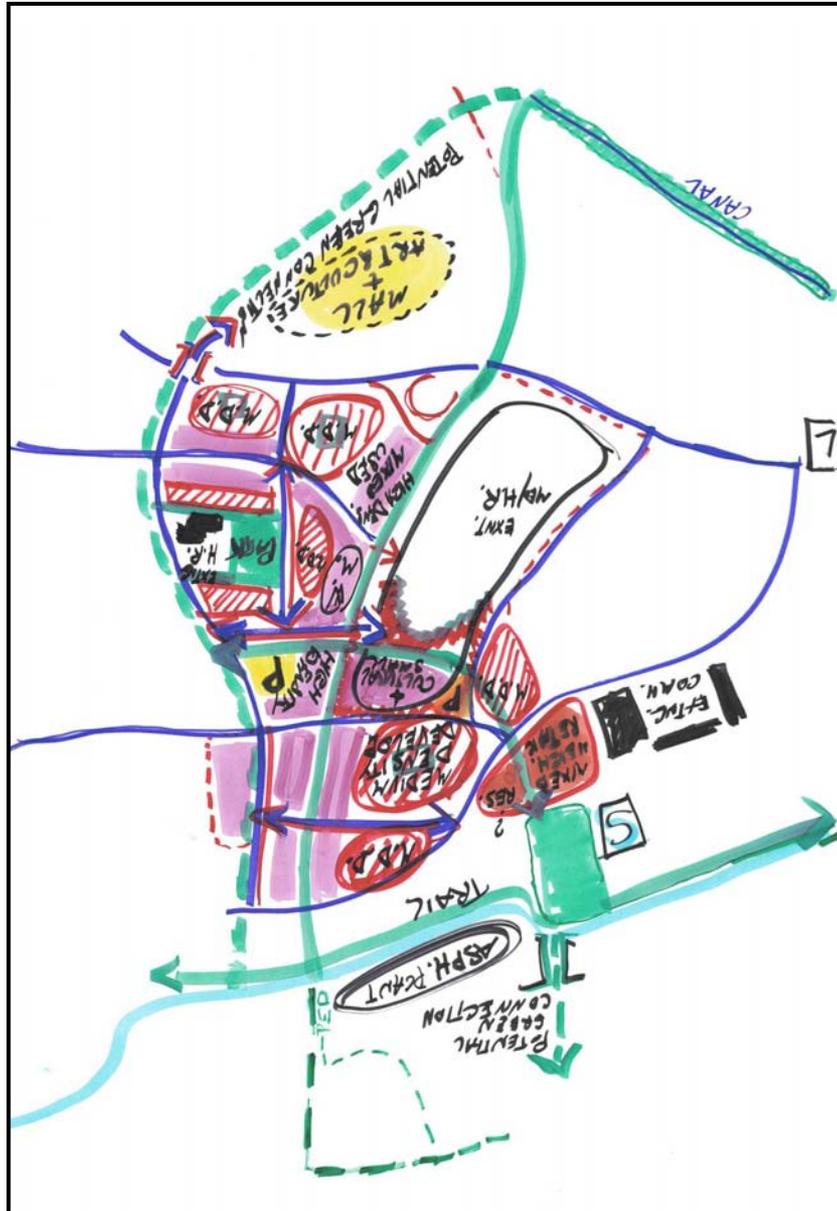
## ADDITIONAL NOTES & SITE ISSUES (MORNING & AFTERNOON SESSIONS)

### **Implementation**

- Coordinate transit & infrastructure with Fairfax County
- Lack of communication between Alexandria and Fairfax County



# Success On The Ground – Work Session Group 2: Summary Diagram



## Development Density

- High density development at & adjacent to Mall site (CompUSA, BJ's)
- Medium density development along Van Dorn
- Concern about higher density

## Green & Open Space System

- Importance of preserving and enhancing green spaces – current lack of quality green spaces, protect natural habitat/wetlands, create gathering spaces for the community, bike paths
- Van Dorn as “Green Boulevard” carrying also traffic – define its character

## Housing

- Affordable housing opportunities mixed into the Landmark/Van Dorn area

## Transit & Connections

- Introduce dedicated transit lanes, better & wider sidewalks
- Create public parking to support new amenities

## ADDITIONAL NOTES & SITE ISSUES (MORNING & AFTERNOON SESSIONS)

### Character

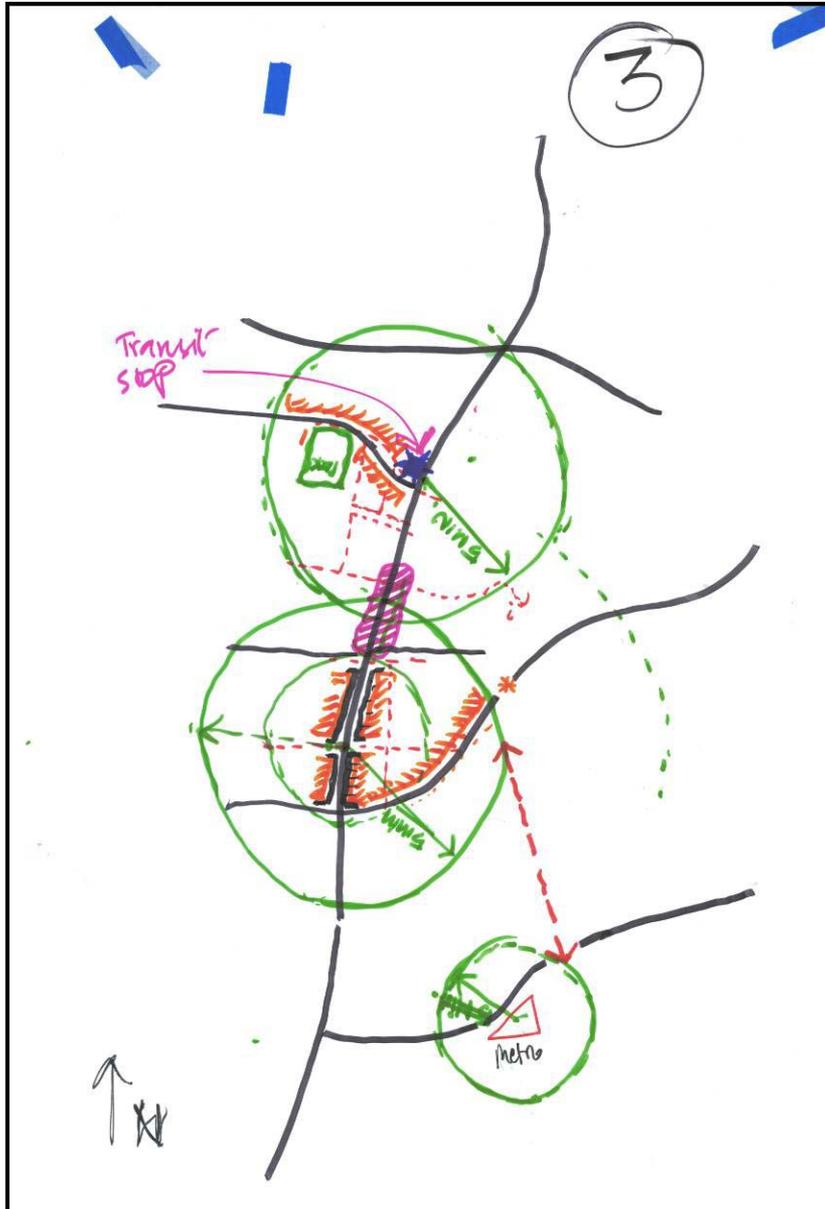
- Improve Van Dorn as green boulevard – create a series of destinations and “places” along Van Dorn, define character of Van Dorn
- Landmark Mall should become both a regional and local destination – two different characters, both important
- Integrate arts/cultural elements into the entire area - more than one arts area is desirable, smaller art resources in area other than the Mall



### Implementation

- Achieve economic sustainability for all stakeholders – limit City costs, affordable housing, mix of incomes
- Consider areas that will not develop soon, es. residential along Reynolds
- Street improvements paid for also by developers
- Reasonable green approach – do not go overboard





## Create Distinct Neighborhoods, Centered around important Nodes & Transit Stops

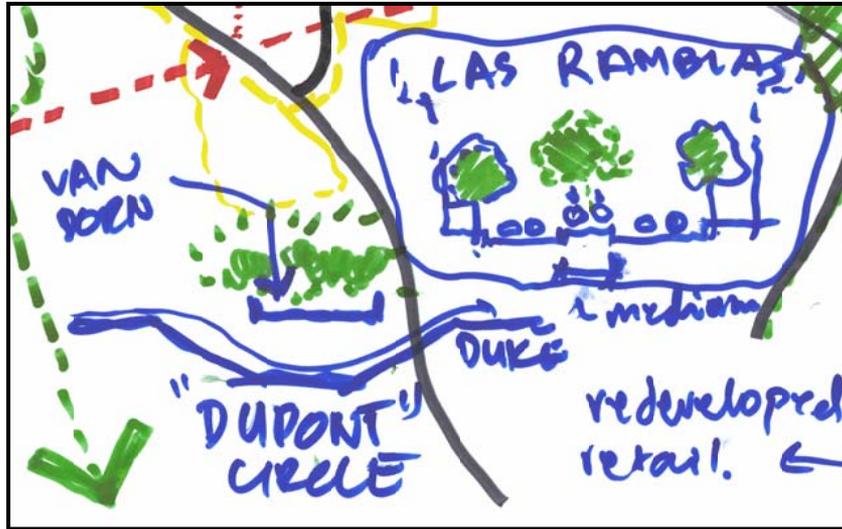
- Create neighborhoods based on 2000' walking distance - 10 min walk from transit stops
- Van Dorn should become a unifying street (not a divider)
- Create centers along Van Dorn, which become major intersections

## Street Grid

- Break-up Safeway parcel with new streets
- Create a connection thru BJ's parcel
- Possibility to combine Greenberg with McGuire
- Connection to Metro from Armistead park
- Terrain can create breaks between places
- Dangerous to walk



# Success On The Ground – Work Session Group 3: Summary Diagram



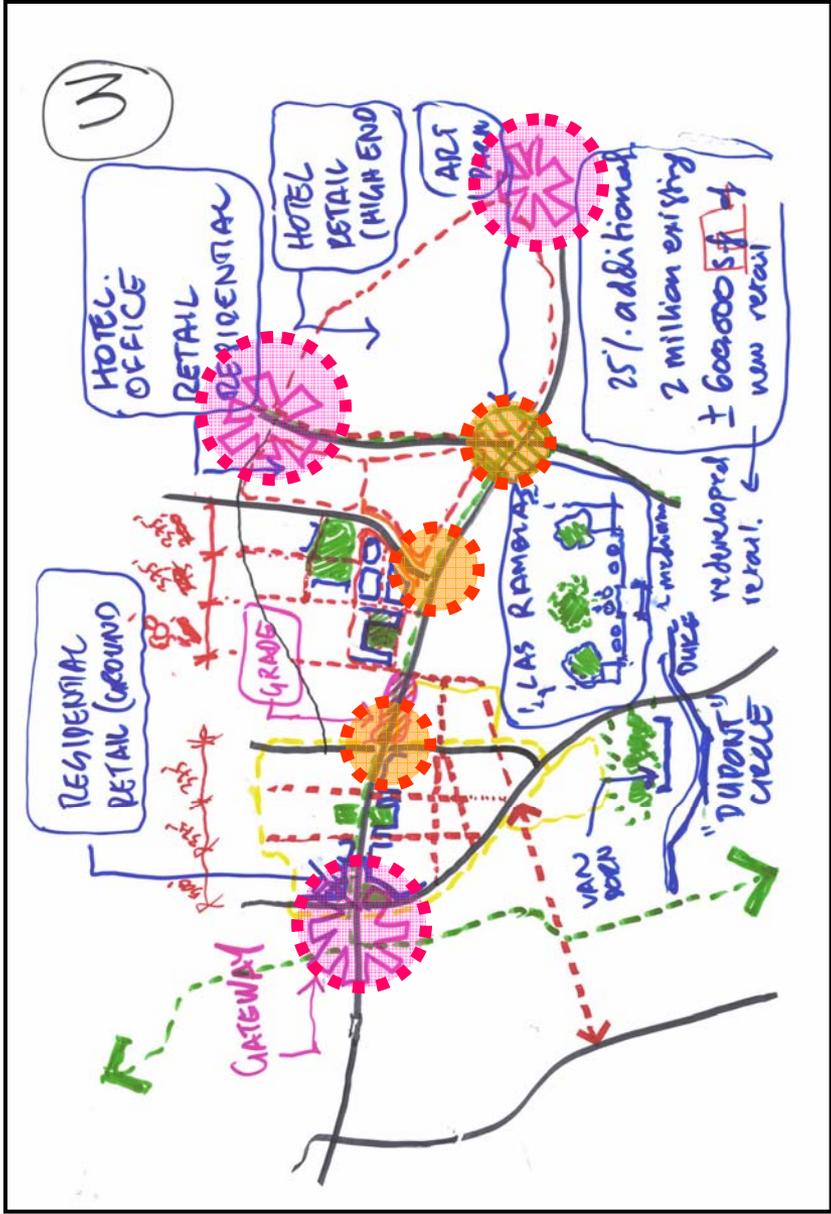
## Transit & Transportation

- Improve connections to Van Dorn Metro from the intersection of Pickett Street and Edsall Road
- Van Dorn should be designed as a boulevard, with transit, similar to “Las Ramblas” in Barcelona
- Possible transit in the center of Van Dorn
- Locate transit stops at places along Van Dorn
- New shared parking & street behind





# Success On The Ground – Work Session Group 3: Summary Diagram



### Gateways

• Gateways that announce the transition into the

new neighborhoods of Van Dorn at:

- Pickett and Van Dorn (green)
- Van Dorn and I-395
- Duke Street and I-395

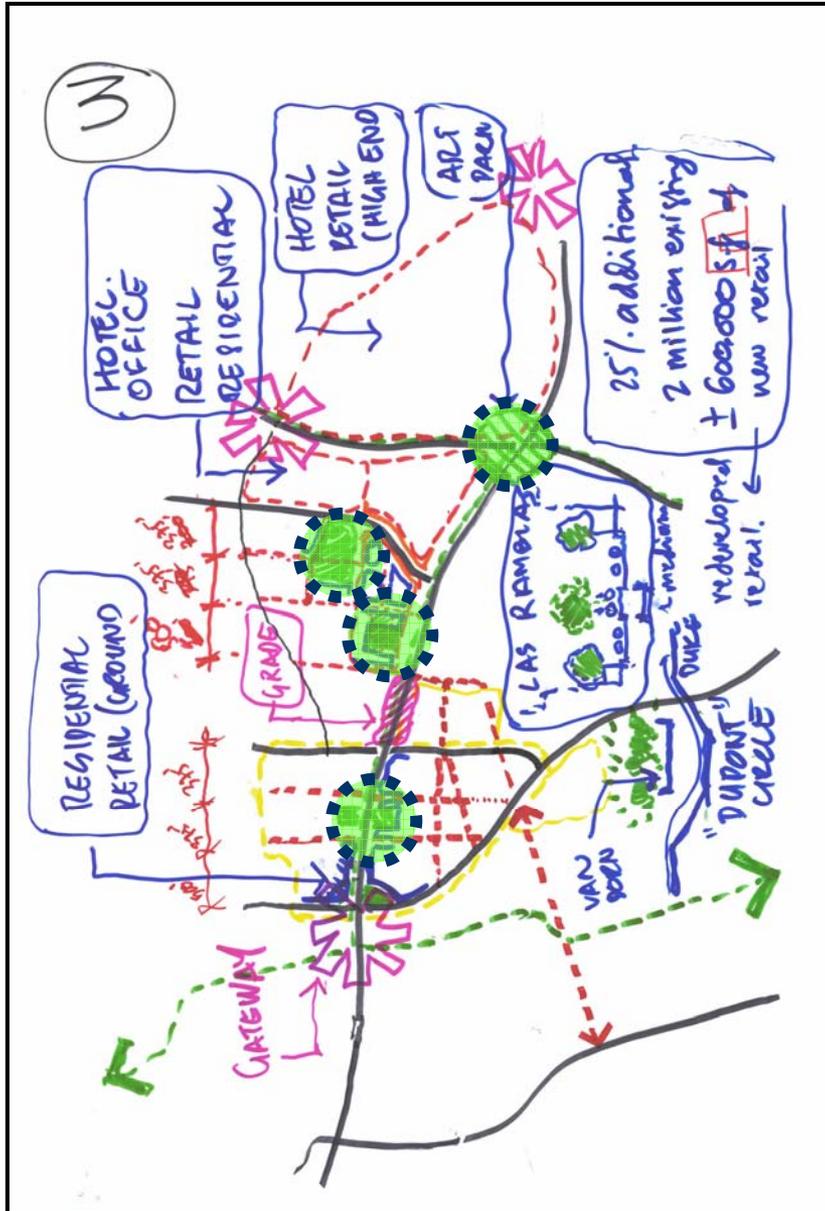
### Nodes

Nodes that create “places” and concentration of activities along Van Dorn:

- Van Dorn & Duke
- Van Dorn & Stevenson
- Van Dorn & Edsall
- Van Dorn & New Street



# Success On The Ground – Work Session Group 3: Summary Diagram



## Open Space

- “Parks with attitude” – a public art park at the Van Dorn and Duke Street intersection
- An improved Neighborhood Park near Walker Street and Stevenson Avenue intersection
- An urban square, much like Clarendon Market Commons, within the new street grid of the Safeway store parcels
- An Urban Square fronting Van Dorn street, within the new street grid of the Giant Store
- Green pockets breaking into Van Dorn
- Excited about small parks
- Work closely with developers to get more green space



## ADDITIONAL NOTES & SITE ISSUES (MORNING & AFTERNOON SESSIONS)

### Implementation

- Examine in greater detail the opportunities for TIF Districts to subsidize major infrastructure improvements.

### Affordable Housing

- Make proactive policies that preserve the available affordable housing stock in the area, as well as mandate the inclusion of affordable housing units in new development

### Environment

- Improve storm water run-off quality from Van Dorn
- Make “Green Roofs” a mandatory requirement for new construction, to reduce the “Heat Island Effect”

## Synthesizing Your Ideas

- **Importance of enhanced street grid**
- **Walkability**
- **Improved transit service, dedicated lanes, linkage between mall and Metro**
- **Improved access to Metro Station**
- **Gateway features and distinctive character**
- **Higher intensity of land use at northern portion of study area**
- **Mixed-use centers**
- **Activity nodes at cross streets along Van Dorn Street**
- **Affordable and workforce housing**
- **Green connections and open space**
- **Public art, cultural facilities, performing arts, cultural celebrations**
- **Importance of environmental and economic sustainability**