

*A Long-Term Vision and  
Action Plan for the*  
**Arlandria Neighborhood**

The Department of Planning & Zoning  
City of Alexandria

May 8, 2003

*Arlandria*  
**Acknowledgements**

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# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Executive Summary**

The Arlandria planning effort was initiated in January 2002 following the work of the Upper Potomac West (UPW) Task Force. During their review of the specific recommendations for the Safeway/Datatel sites and the East Reed Avenue properties that were the focus of the Task Force Report, the City Council recognized the need to develop an overall vision for the Arlandria neighborhood and a plan to direct and guide its future development. The Council approved a multi-faceted approach that included the creation of a vision and direction to revitalize the area in the long-term, while identifying immediate community concerns and addressing those concerns in the short and mid-term in order to stabilize and strengthen the neighborhood.

### ***Process***

The City manager appointed the Upper Potomac West/Arlandria Work Group (the Committee) to advise and assist the Department of Planning and Zoning staff in the development of the Vision and Action Plans. The Committee met over several months to develop a long-term vision, with design concepts and planning principles, to guide future redevelopment and infill development in Arlandria. The Committee studied the properties most likely to redevelop over the next 20 years as well as other neighborhood factors, including the existing retail pattern, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and access to Four Mile Run Park. The Committee recognized that properties will likely redevelop over time and that some infill development may occur. Following this analysis, the Committee engaged in a “hands-on” planning process to explore planning concepts for consideration in the creation of the long-term vision for Arlandria.

In addition to the long-term visioning activities, the Committee also worked in smaller residential and commercial subgroups for several months to focus on the immediate needs and concerns affecting those areas. The groups worked with representatives from Planning and Zoning, Transportation and Environmental Services, Code Enforcement and the Police Department to discuss their concerns and to develop solutions and approaches to address the concerns. These solutions are incorporated into the Action Plan.

### ***Vision***

The Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood includes the following common elements:

- the desire for a healthy, mixed use community focusing on redevelopment of three underutilized “opportunity” sites: Safeway-Datatel, the Birchmere and the Mt. Vernon Village Shopping Center;

## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Executive Summary**

- active and viable commercial retail that serves both the neighborhood and the broader community;
- a transition in uses from automobile-oriented to pedestrian-oriented; and
- visual and physical connections to Four Mile Run Park; and a safer environment for pedestrians.

The illustrative plans outline a vision for the long-term potential of the neighborhood. The vision incorporates two major concepts identified by the community:

- Visually opening and enhancing access to Four Mile Run Park by providing better pedestrian and vehicular access to the Park in several key locations, including at the northern edge of the park by Four Mile Run, between the existing Duron Paint and 24 Express properties, and providing connections to the Park from Mt. Vernon Avenue as the Mt. Vernon Village Center and Birchmere properties are redeveloped;
- Optimizing the future development of the three major sites identified as underutilized and “opportunity sites.” The plan envisions the redevelopment of these properties with ground floor retail and entertainment uses, with office and residential uses on the floors above. Structured off-street parking would be faced with active uses. Plazas and other open spaces would be provided.

### ***Design and Planning Principles***

The schematic plans provide one approach for directing new development in accordance with the vision. There are other land development configurations that may be undertaken and achieve the same results. The key objective is to incorporate the design concepts and planning principles in new construction to ensure that the long-term vision for the neighborhood is achieved. The major elements included in the design and planning principles are:

- Redevelopment of the automobile-oriented retail uses with pedestrian-oriented retail uses;
- Maintenance of the strong mixed-use land use pattern on Mt. Vernon Avenue with a combination of commercial and residential uses;

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Executive Summary**

- Enhancement of the pedestrian environment with an improved streetscape with wider landscaped sidewalks, street furniture, and street graphics that provide for gateways to identify the neighborhood;
- Encouragement of new on-site affordable units as new residential construction occurs.

For the redevelopment of the “opportunity sites,” the plan calls for a series of roadways or pedestrian walkways to create typical urban sized blocks. It was recognized that the mass, scale, and rhythm of new buildings should be compatible with the character of the existing urban commercial corridor, with its repetition of smaller storefronts, pedestrian scale, and Art Deco features. Where the commercial district abuts adjacent residential neighborhoods, the plan recommends the transitioning the scale of the commercial development in order to protect, not overwhelm, the neighborhoods.

To define the neighborhood as a distinct area, the plan envisions the creation of an enhanced streetscape with gateways to Arlandria at Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road and at Four Mile Run, open spaces and plazas, and improved pedestrian and vehicular access to Four Mile Run Park are recommended.

### ***The Action Plan***

In addition to formulating a long-range plan, with planning and design principles, actions are identified to resolve community concerns. The Plan presents a mix of short, mid and long term actions to address neighborhood problems and to improve the quality of life.

The main community concerns identified include:

- A lack of residential and commercial parking; pedestrian safety, including the lack or inappropriate location of crosswalks and specific problem intersections, especially Mt. Vernon Avenue and Russell Road;
- The desire to make Mt. Vernon Avenue more pedestrian friendly and to improve its appearance;
- The need for better coordination with the neighborhood to solve problems and raise awareness of the appropriate City agencies to contact with problems or concerns;
- Police problems related to car theft, loitering, prostitution, public drinking and vandalism in the community and at Four Mile Run Park.

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Executive Summary**

Other concerns raised by members of the Tenants and Workers Support Committee include:

- The need for a teen center;
- The need for a medical clinic offering acute/primary care for low-income people and;
- The maintenance of the affordable housing in the neighborhood.

The social needs raised by the Tenants and Workers Support Committee, as well as other social and health care needs of the neighborhood should be considered as part of a City-wide approach to the provision of services and facilities. The recommendations of the action plan focus on actions that may be undertaken to address the community's physical and infrastructure-related problems.

As part of the action plan, the creation of a new retail zone is recommended for the commercial properties located along Mt. Vernon Avenue. The goal of the zone is to help revitalize the area with a mix of uses, including pedestrian scale retail along the street, and by allowing certain uses with standards and providing some flexibility with parking and other regulations that will help to achieve an active urban environment while preserving the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

### ***Marketing and Retail Strategy***

As part of this planning process, a marketing and retail strategy was developed in order to confirm that the proposed long-range vision is feasible from a market perspective, to identify an interim strategy to improve existing businesses and to attract new business, and to strengthen the market over the next five years to encourage the redevelopment of the Safeway-Datatel site.

The study identified the local economic factors, including the opportunity sites, the emerging neighborhood with recent significant residential and commercial development, the central location of the Arlandria area, and the strong market for retail. The existing business district is diverse and strong, with a large walk-in trade, and sales averaging \$286 per square foot, a healthy figure for a neighborhood retail area.

## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Executive Summary**

The Plan includes the niche destination marketing strategy designed to capitalize on the existing strengths of the business district and to attract new businesses. The marketing themes of this strategy include incorporating the concepts of family, health and recreation, and multi-cultural diversity. An important component is building upon the entertainment and restaurant opportunities generated by the location (and clientele) of the Birchmere. Key to the success of the marketing strategy is bringing together the existing businesses to develop as a business organization that will create and implement a marketing and promotions program, plan events, develop consistent business hours and other business enhancement activities. This proactive retail strategy includes public improvements, guidelines/loans to assist business owners with the improvement of their storefront facades, zoning tools and incentives to leverage new private investment, and the marketing and promotions of the business district. The market study and strategy are discussed in greater detail in the latter part of the Plan.

The Plan concludes with a series of implementation measures designed to tie together the planning and design recommendations, the action plan, and the retail/marketing strategy. The measures consist of a series of tasks, with the identification of the agencies or organizations that will be responsible for or will assist in the implementation of the redevelopment, revitalization, and marketing initiatives within the Arlandria neighborhood.

# The Process

City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

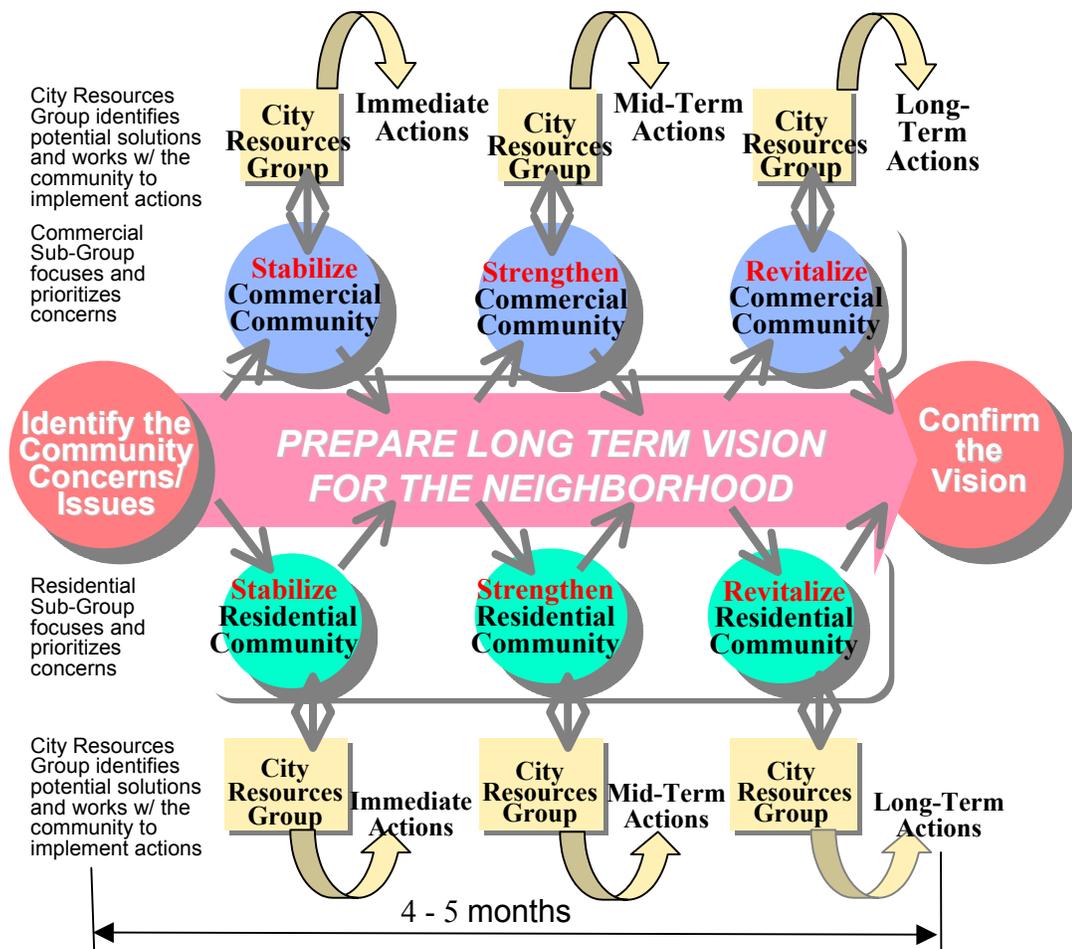
## Neighborhood Planning for Arlandria Neighborhood

In January of 2002, the City Council met to review the status of the Safeway/Datatel and East Reed Avenue studies and to discuss on-going planning for the Arlandria neighborhood. The Council approved a multi-pronged program to create a long-term vision for the future of the neighborhood and to identify current issues with a program of short, mid and long-term actions to address neighborhood concerns.

The City Manager appointed the Upper Potomac West Work Group (the Committee) to advise and assist the Department Staff in preparing the long-term Vision.

A residential and a commercial sub-group were selected from the Committee to identify the neighborhood concerns and to work with a City Resources Group, composed of City staff from a number of departments, to craft solutions that could mitigate the community concerns and be realistically accomplished in the immediate, mid or longer-term.

The intent of the planning process was to proceed with the visioning process to assure that solutions to current issues were consistent with the community's long range vision for the neighborhood.



## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **The Arlandria Neighborhood Study Area**

The Study area is roughly a triangular plot bounded on the north by Four Mile Run, on the southwest by W. Glebe Road and on the east by a line approximately 400' east of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The Committee felt that the automobile oriented development surrounding the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road was an important contributor to the neighborhood and should be included in the Study Area.



### **The Arlandria Neighborhood Planning Process**

A workshop planning process was proposed to facilitate the creation of the Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood. Three major workshops have been accomplished.

#### ***Workshop No. 1***

Held on February 7, 2002 the first workshop was devoted to reviewing some of the basic attributes of the neighborhood and reviewing important input from the Safeway/Datatel Task Force, but the most important aspect of the initial workshop was identifying the problems and concerns and the prioritization of the most important issues on which to focus. The Committee divided into two groups, the business sub-group and the residential sub-group, to address short-term issues relating to the real estate development and social issues that face the neighborhood.

#### ***Workshop No. 2***

On March 21, 2002 the second workshop was held with the specific goal of allowing the community to have a “hands on” opportunity to participate in the planning of the neighborhood. Following a review of the Committee’s input at the prior workshop three teams were formed. The Staff provided base maps, photographs and support, for each of the teams to identify their concepts for the long-term neighborhood vision. At the end of the workshop, each of the teams presented their thoughts and ideas to the entire group.

#### ***Workshop No. 3***

On May 16, 2002 the third workshop was held to begin the process of

consolidating the thoughts put forth by the Committee at the last workshop and to review initial thoughts prepared by the staff about the Vision, using an Illustrative Plan as a planning tool.

#### ***Follow-up Workshops***

The Vision for the neighborhood was defined in a series of goals and objectives and design/ development principles to guide the future development within Arlandria. The Illustrative Plans document one way that the principles can be applied to the revitalization and redevelopment of the neighborhood.



*Workshop No. 1*

# The Long-Term Vision

City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Background and Issues**

At the first workshop, the Committee reviewed the work of the Safeway/Datatel Task Force – The following were the key Goals and Objectives and Statements/Principles identified for the neighborhood from the earlier Task Force.

### **Safeway/Datatel Task Force Goals and Objectives**

- *Create a neighborhood focus and identity*
  - *a unique place*
  - *a pedestrian environment*
  - *a complex that provides a focus for the surrounding areas*
- *Revitalize the neighborhood*
- *Create a mixed-use, higher density Neighborhood Center as opposed to the auto-oriented development that is prevalent in the area*
  - *a unique place*
  - *a pedestrian environment*
- *Promote economically viable new development to support the retail neighborhood*
- *Maintain the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods*
  - *Maintain the affordable housing stock*
- *Enhance the infrastructure and manage the traffic flow*

### **Safeway/Datatel Task Force Statements/Principles**

- *The neighborhood is unique and desirable because of its economic and cultural diversity*
- *The pedestrian deserves an elevated position to preserve the neighborhood*
- *Any new development should be economically viable*
- *Traffic should be managed for a safe environment*
- *Housing needs to be affordable for all citizens*
- *Infrastructure is a shared responsibility of both public and private interests*
- *Uses should be mixed, in order to create a day and night environment.*
- *Any redevelopment should build on the existing strengths of the area*
- *Open space and recreation are very important ingredients in any new development.*
- *Existing neighborhoods should be maintained and stabilized.*
- *The Upper Potomac West area should have an identity of its own - and a name?*

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Background and Issues

The Committee brainstormed the issues facing the neighborhood and the following is a summary of identified concerns, and questions to be answered during the visioning process.

### Land Use

- Too many check cashing facilities
- VA Power site is dead space

*What are the desired/ appropriate uses?*

### Commercial Streetscape

- Improve the overall appearance
- Create an entrance or gateway into the neighborhood
- Enhance the pedestrian environment
  - Lighting, trees, street furniture, graphics

*What is the desired character?*

### Residential

- Improve the quality of life - adequate parking, open space, safety, building quality, maintenance

*What long term approaches should supplement the short-term actions?*

### Cultural

- Capitalize upon the diversity of cultures
- Create public education
- Establish celebrations of culture

*What types of programs should be undertaken?*

### Parking

- Interim solutions for increased parking

*Where/What are the opportunities?*

### Pedestrian

- Improve intersections for pedestrian safety
- Provide pedestrian crossings
- Provide pedestrian access from residential neighborhoods

*Where/How?*

### Traffic

- Balance the need for neighborhood access with reality of through traffic
- Capitalize on thru-traffic as potential customers
- Manage thru-traffic on W. Glebe Road

*Where/What?*

### Open Space

- Provide better access/visibility to the hidden asset of Four Mile Run
- Identify and/or develop new community spaces

*Define the function/type and accessibility to community open spaces?*

### Neighborhood Operations

- Common business promotions
- Common business hours
- Lighting and signage consistency
- Neighborhood identification as a cohesive shopping environment
- Cultural education

*How should the community be organized for success?*

## Background and Issues

In preparation for the Committee to participate in a “hands-on” planning session, the Staff prepared an analysis of the neighborhood and basic data for the consideration of the Committee. The following is a summary of the information presented to the Committee.

### Local Economic Factors

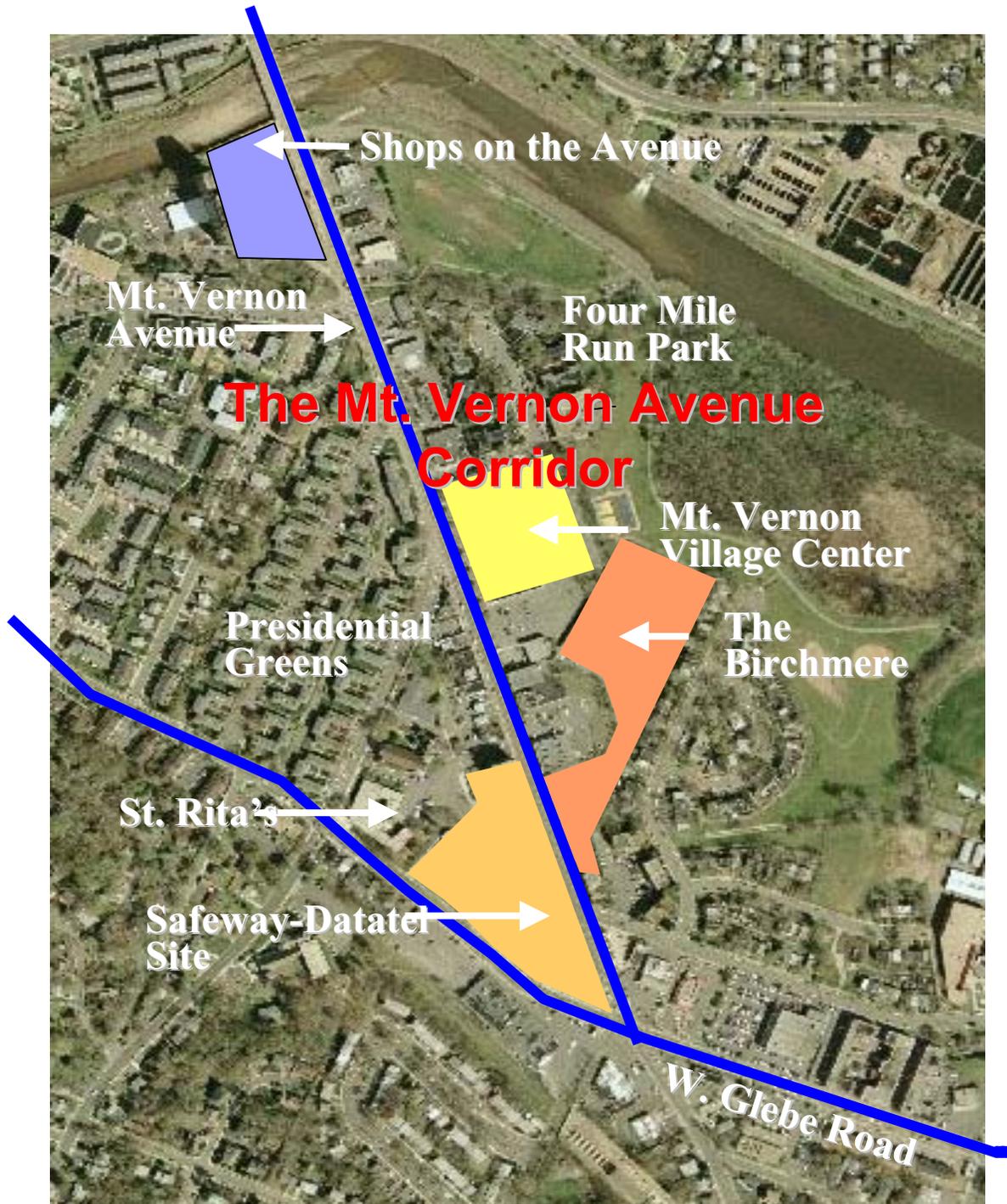
- *The neighborhood is in its initial phase of revitalization*
- *The neighborhood has an increasingly affluent residential population*
  - Average household income within 1/2 mile of the site appears to be \$70,000/year and \$80,000/year within 1 mile
  - National average of \$60,000/year.
  - 25,000 people within 1 mile of the site with average household incomes of \$80,000/year.
- *Major new residential projects recently developed in the vicinity of the site:*
  - Lincoln Properties - 588 units, Avalon Bay - 950+ units
- *A Lincoln Properties/Avalon Bay resident can support 10-20 SF of retail; therefore, could support 60,000 SF +/- of new retail*
- *The City of Alexandria retail market is typically “under-served” (national average \$600/SF, some stores in Alexandria doing \$1200/SF)*
- *There is developer interest in the local area as reflected in recent projects*
  - Lincoln Properties, Abramson, Dwoskin, Mt. Vernon Village Center, Presidential Greens
- *The neighborhood has been constrained over time by a series of physical and economic factors:*
  - the floodplain, Route 1 and the Potomac Yard development, access and traffic congestion
- *Potomac Yard serves a regional market*
  - PY has become over crowded; lacks convenience for the local neighborhood
  - PY is sterile, lacks the character, interest and personal service that a local serving retail complex could offer
- *There are only three sites within a half mile radius that could support a 60,000 square foot center*
  - Safeway/Datatel, Mt. Vernon Village Center/the Birchmere and the Virginia Power site on W. Glebe Road
  - Safeway/Datatel offers superior access
- *There are only 2,000 people within 1/4 of a mile which rules out an exclusively walk-to retail center.*
- *The neighborhood has the potential to draw from other areas, examples are the Birchmere and RT’s restaurant.*

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Background and Issues

Aerial photograph of the Mt. Vernon Avenue portion of the Study Area.

### Planning Context



## Urban vs. Suburban Retail

The Safeway/Datatel Task Force and the Committee expressed the strong desire to restore the traditional pedestrian retail environment along Mt. Vernon Avenue. The following are diagrams that explain the difference between a traditional or urban pedestrian retail pattern and the automobile dominated suburban pattern.

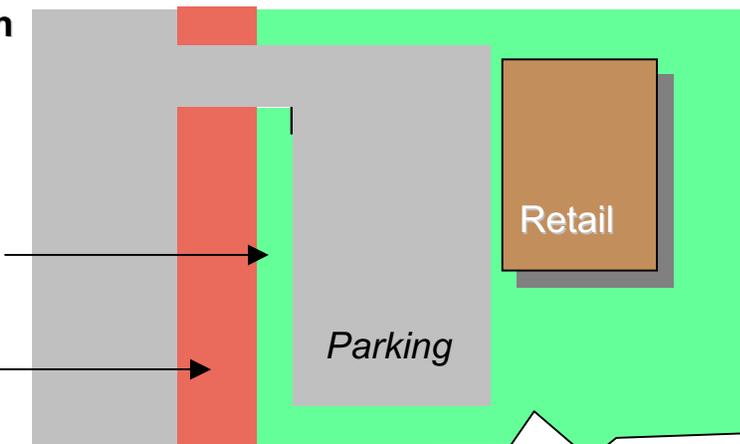
### Comparison of the Pedestrian Oriented Retail (Urban Pattern) and Auto Oriented Retail (Suburban Pattern)

#### Typical Suburban Pattern Auto Dominated

*Streetscape dominated by the automobile*

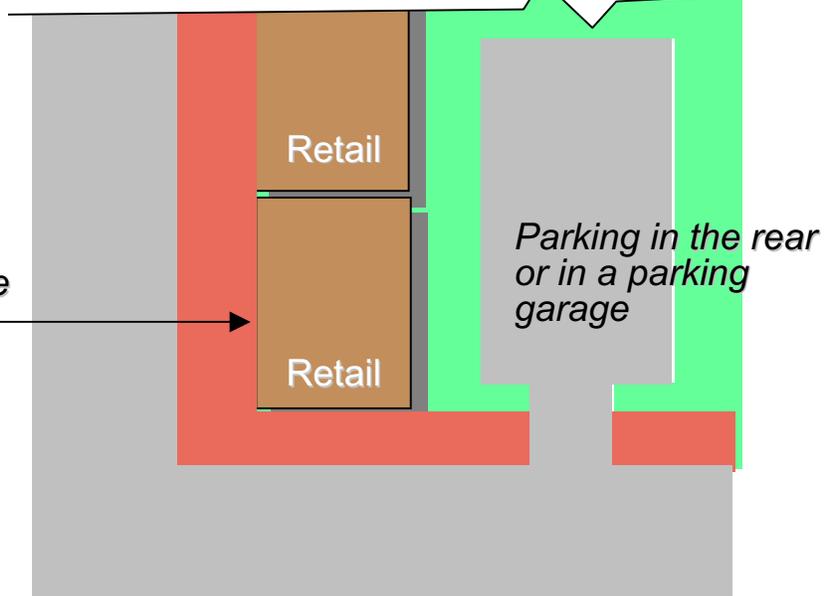
*Sidewalk separated from the retail*

*Sidewalk*



#### Typical Urban Pattern Pedestrian Dominated

*Direct interaction between the pedestrian way and the storefront*



# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Urban vs. Suburban Retail

An analysis of Mt. Vernon Avenue was undertaken to determine the areas where the retail is automobile oriented or pedestrian oriented. Below is the analysis of Lower Mt. Vernon Avenue

### Auto Oriented v. Pedestrian Oriented (Lower Mt. Vernon Avenue)



*Pedestrian Retail*



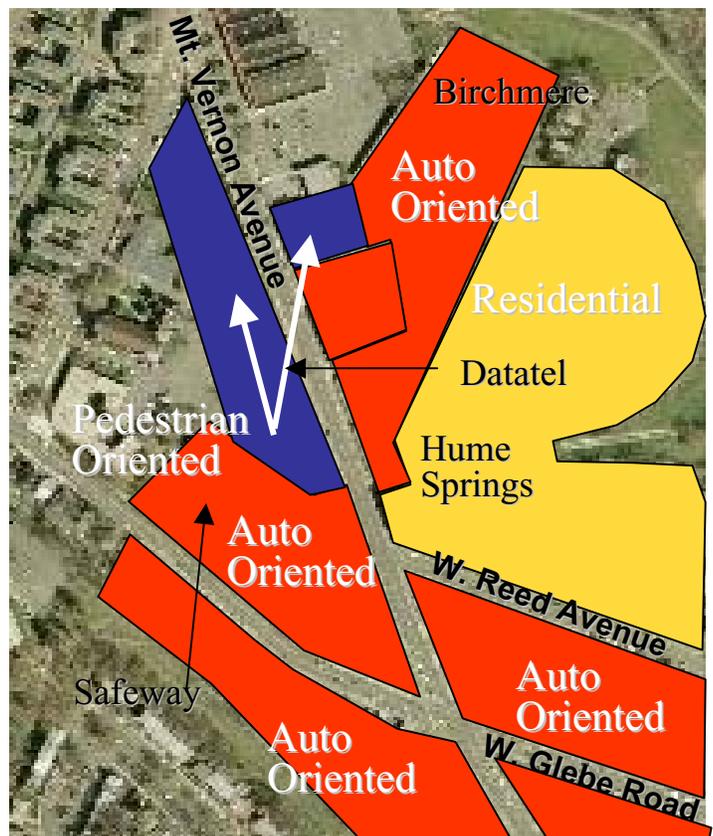
*Residential frontage*



*Not quite Pedestrian Retail*



*Definitely Not Pedestrian Retail*



*Lower Mt. Vernon Avenue*

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

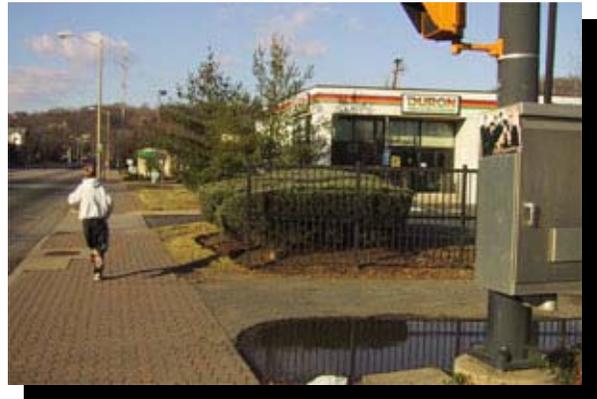
## Urban vs. Suburban Retail

The analysis of the retail pattern on Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue is shown below.

### Auto Oriented v. Pedestrian Oriented (Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue)



*Automobile Retail*



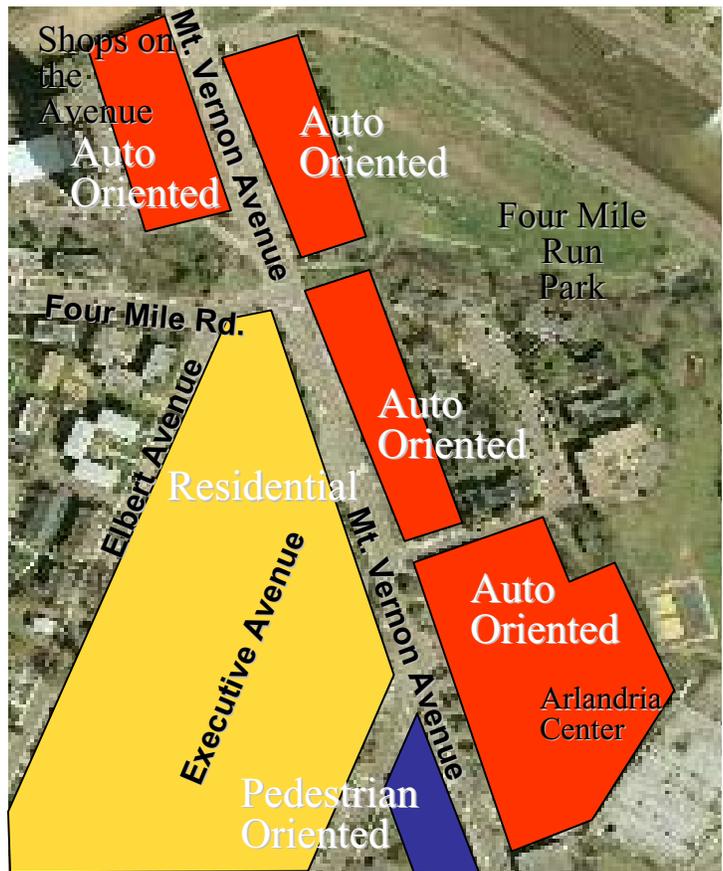
*Automobile Retail*



*Pedestrian Retail*



*Residential Frontage*



*Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue*

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Neighborhood Analysis

The following is a summary of the major items that will shape the future of the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor.

### Retail Pattern

The length of Mt. Vernon Avenue from the intersection with W. Glebe Road northward to the bridge over Four Mile Run is in excess of one-half mile. The optimum distance for a positive pedestrian experience is 1000' to 1500' or one-quarter of a mile. The length of Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue is, therefore, too long to create a viable continuous retail experience.

It appears that the concept developed during the Safeway/Datatel planning of creating an "anchor" with the Safeway/Datatel development on the south and the Mt. Vernon Village Center on the north is a viable concept. The 1250' between the two centers could be redeveloped with a typical urban retail pattern.

The Neighborhood Analysis Diagram summarizes the existing location of the automobile and pedestrian oriented retail.

Note that the intersection of W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue is dominated by automobile uses.

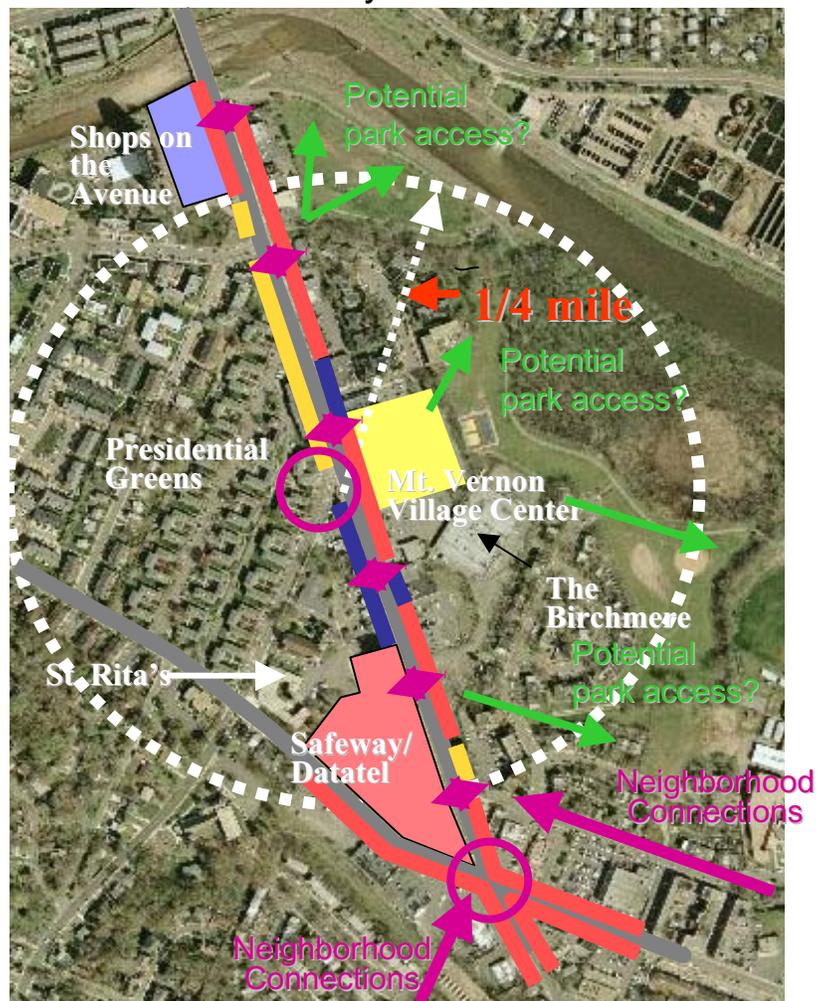
### Circulation

Bringing pedestrians from the neighborhood to the Avenue is important, as is enhancing the pedestrian experience while on the Avenue. The diagram indicates the need to improve

the intersections of W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue and Russell Road with Mt. Vernon Avenue. Additional cross walks are also indicated.

### Park Access

Four Mile Run Park is a hidden asset. The community and the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department cited the need to explore alternatives to "open" the park to provide more visibility, better access and a higher level of security.



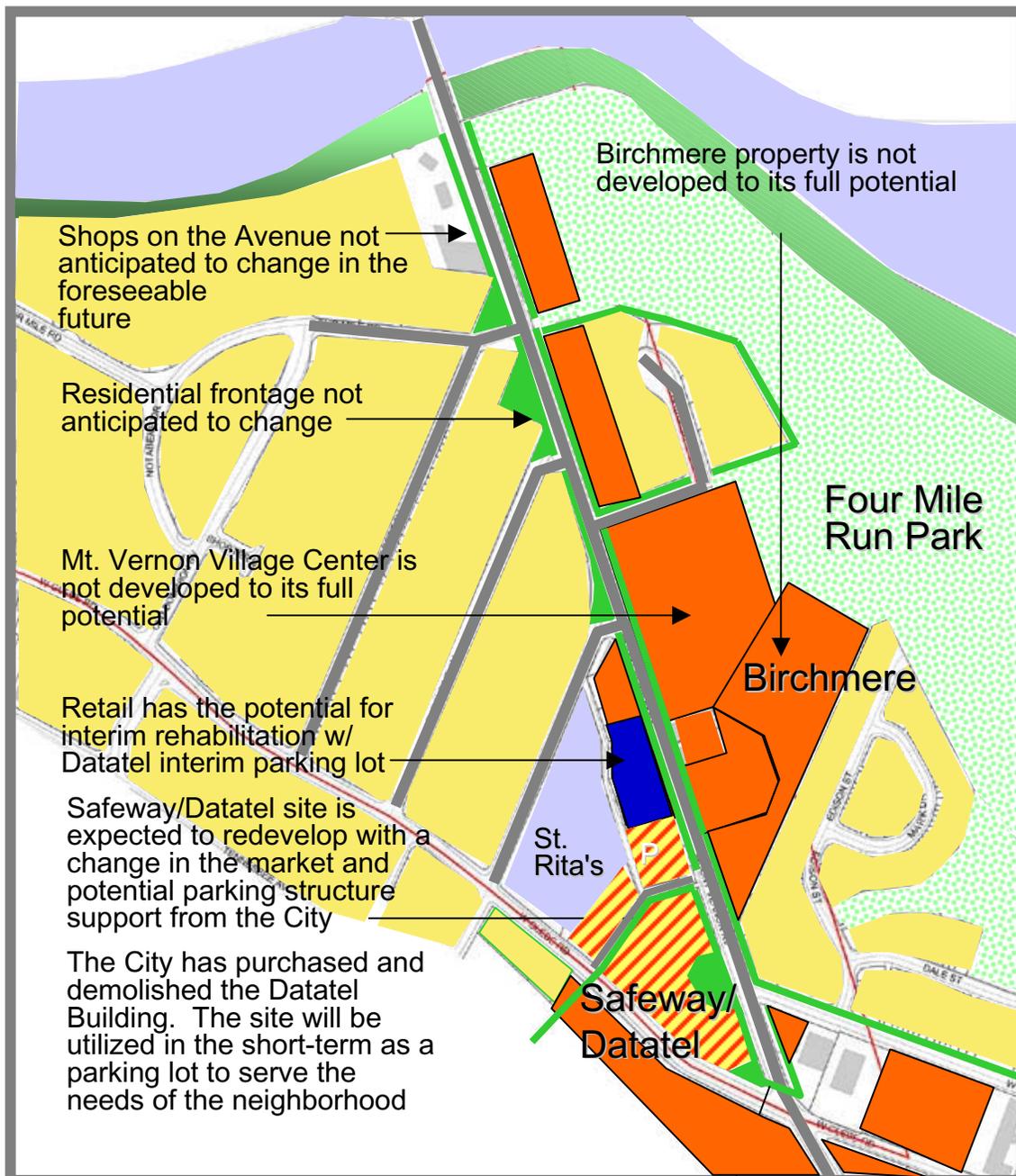
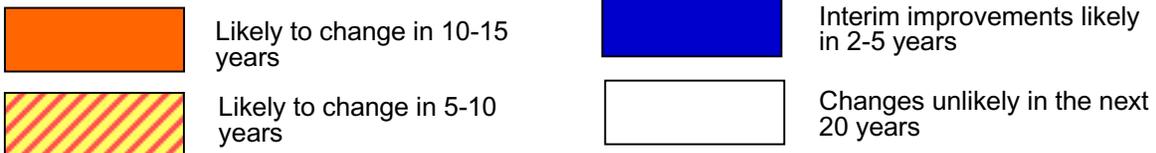
Neighborhood Analysis Diagram

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Neighborhood Analysis

The neighborhood was analyzed for the propensity to change, or those areas of the neighborhood that are more likely than others to change over time

### Propensity to Change



## Neighborhood Analysis

The staff explored opportunities for enhancing the access to Four Mile Run Park and opening up the park to all of the neighborhood.

### Park Access

#### Access Point 1

The community indicated that the access point and the small parking area at the north end of Mt. Vernon Avenue was not highly used except for the users of the soccer field. It was suggested that this part of the park should be “opened up,” and that perhaps as adjacent properties became available that they could be acquired to provide a better window into the park.

#### Access Point 2

The existing pedestrian access just north of the 24 Express store could be widened to provide automobile access.

#### Access Point 3

The access at the end of Bruce Street is probably most appropriate for a pedestrian access.

#### Access Point 4

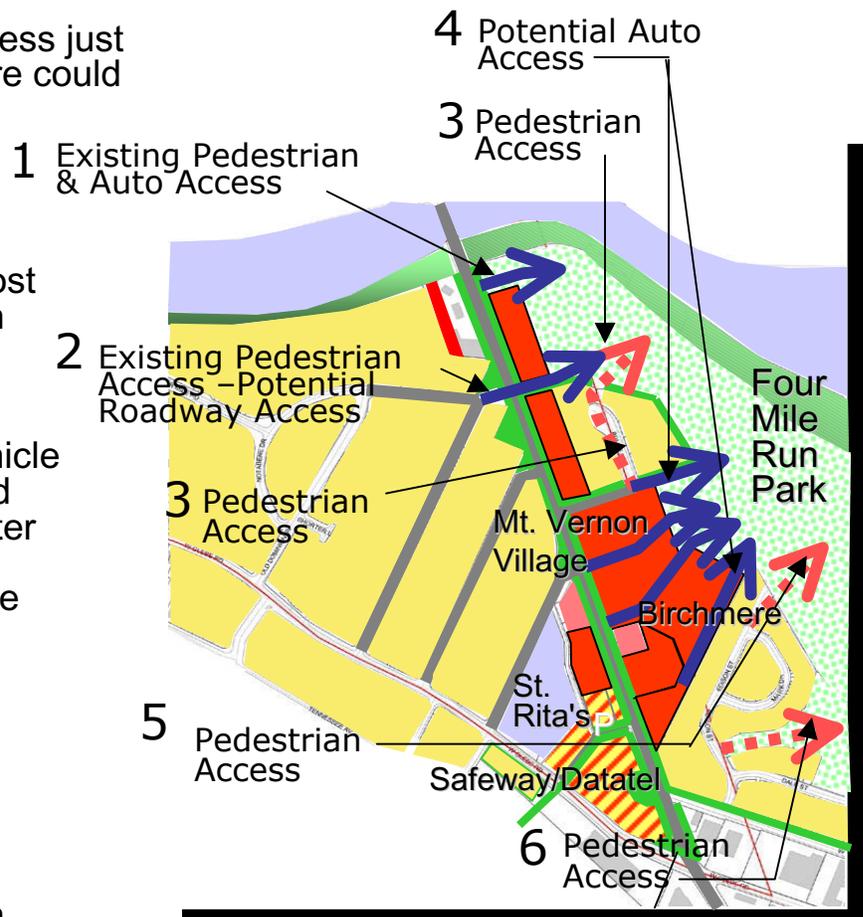
There are four potential vehicle access points in and around the Mt. Vernon Village Center and the Birchmere. These access roads could enhance the development of these properties while providing enhanced park access.

#### Access Point 5

The access point through Hume Springs on Edison Street is probably most appropriate for a pedestrian access.

#### Access Point 6

This access point includes an area planned for a wetland improvement project and is best maintained as a pedestrian access point.



*Park Access*

## Neighborhood Analysis

Working with the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, staff explored optional concepts for increasing the vehicular access to the park.

### Park Vehicular Access

Given the identified points of access, the following are two alternatives for connecting the access points with a continuous road way or providing cul-de-sac access points.

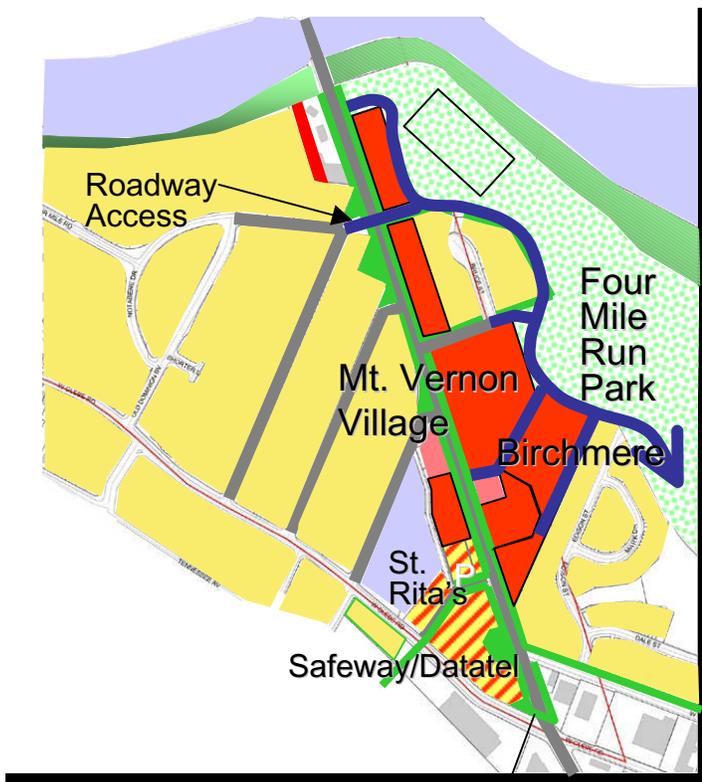
#### Alternative No. 1

This alternative provides a continuous roadway at the edge of the park linking the access roads. This roadway would open up the park and would provide security – “eyes on the park” and linear curb parking throughout the park.

#### Alternative No. 2

This second alternative utilizes cul-de-sacs at the end of each of the vehicular access roads. Parking could be provided at all or some of the access points.

This alternative is preferable as it minimizes impacts onto existing Park land.



*Alternative 1 – Park Vehicular Access*



*Alternative 2 – Park Vehicular Access*

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Defining the Vision

The Committee was invited to participate in a “hands-on” planning process to explore planning concepts for consideration in the Vision for Arlandria

### The Workshop Planning Process

Following the briefing by the Staff on the analysis of the neighborhood, the Committee was divided into three planning groups. Each of the groups was provided with a lecture pad, markers, an aerial photograph of the neighborhood and a plan sheet showing the property lines and building locations.

The three teams were invited to develop concepts that would define their vision for the long-term future of the neighborhood, and address the issues that were identified in the prior workshop. Most importantly, they were requested to develop concepts that capitalize upon the opportunities that are available to the neighborhood. Specifically, instructions were given to the teams to address the items to the right of this page. A summary of the output from the three teams is outlined on the following pages.



### **DEFINE A VISION FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD:**

- **Land Use**
  - Identify the appropriate mix of uses
  - The best place(s) for the various uses
  - The intensity of use - how much/how high?
- **Character of the Neighborhood**
  - Determine the balance of pedestrian to automobile retail
  - Identify concepts to maintain the existing retail
  - Define specific design elements, e.g. gateways
  - Sidewalk/streetscape guidelines
- **Open Space**
  - Determine how to open up and establish “eyes on the park” for security
  - How to open up and improve accessibility
- **Pedestrian Improvements**
  - Sidewalk/intersection improvements
  - Access to the neighborhood
  - Crossing points
- **Parking**
  - Opportunities for shared parking
  - New parking

## Defining the Vision

The following is a summary of the planning concepts identified by Group 1.

### Group 1 - Vision for the Neighborhood

Group 1 addressed the west end of the neighborhood (W. Glebe Road and S. Glebe Road) where they felt that a gateway to the neighborhood was important. They also indicated that a large area of this portion of the neighborhood was ripe for redevelopment.

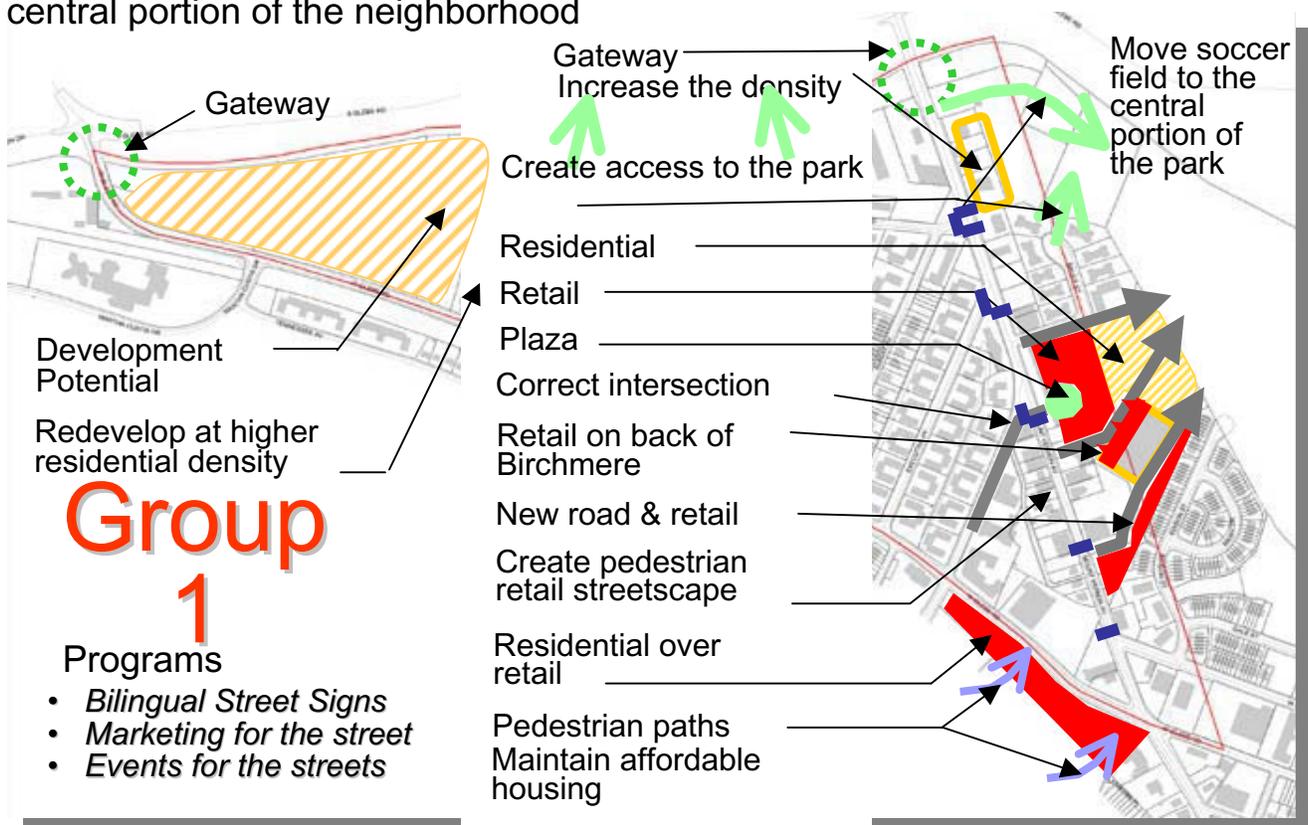
At the north end of Mt. Vernon Avenue they felt that it was also important to also have a gateway element, and that the access to and visibility of the park should be enhanced. The existing auto retail on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue should be redeveloped at a higher density in a pedestrian retail pattern.

The focus of Group 1 was on the central portion of the neighborhood

and the redevelopment of Mt. Vernon Village Center and the Birchmere. The concept suggests a plaza on Mt. Vernon surrounded by retail and residential development to the east, overlooking the park. A new road was suggested on the south side of the Mt. Vernon Village that would provide access to new retail located on the north side of the Birchmere.

Improvements to intersections along Mt. Vernon Avenue and new crosswalks are shown to enhance the pedestrian experience.

New residential development over retail is shown south of W. Glebe Road with enhanced access from the neighborhoods.



## Defining the Vision

The following is a summary of the planning concepts identified by Group 2.

### Group 2 - Vision for the Neighborhood

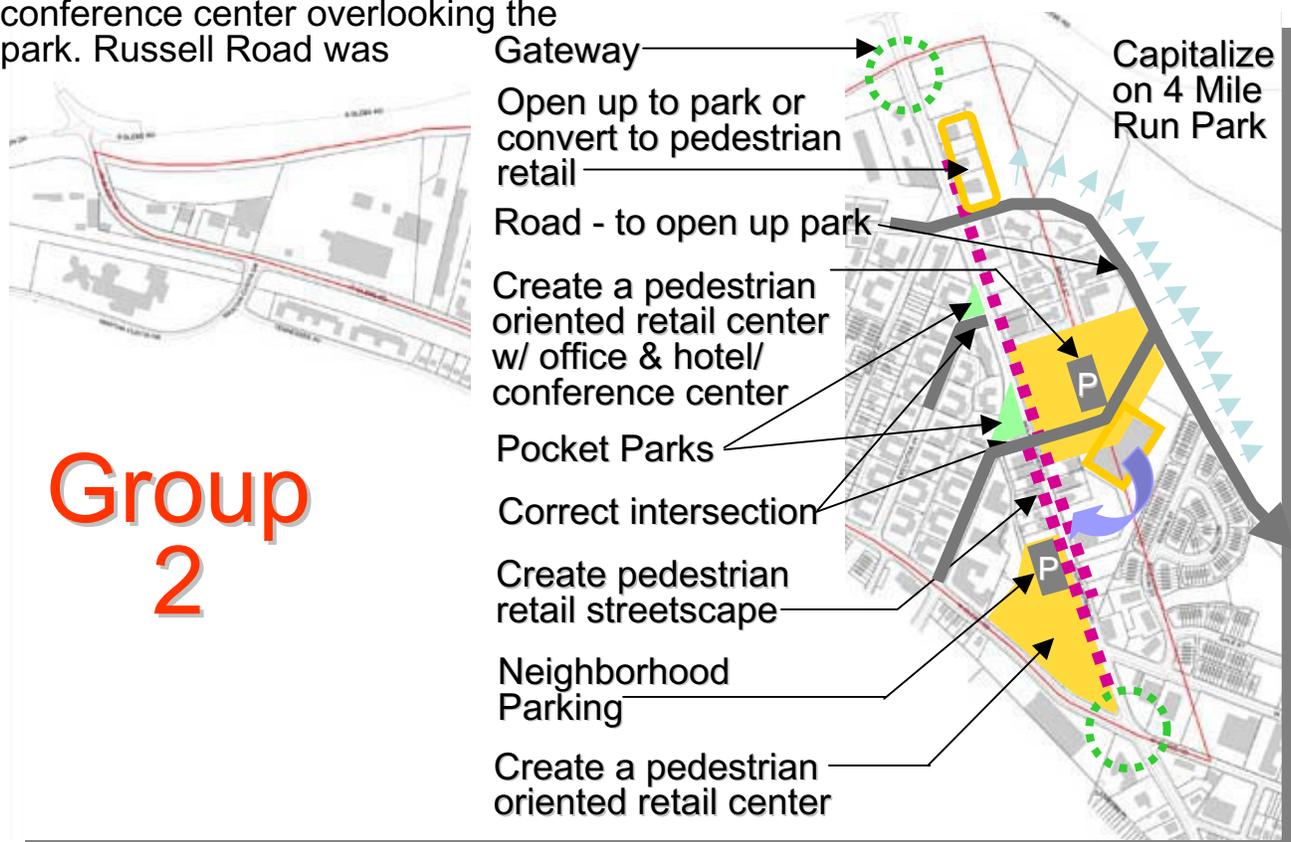
Group 2 located a gateway element at the north end of Mt. Vernon Avenue. This group felt that it was important to either open up the park to Mt. Vernon Avenue by acquiring existing retail parcels on the east side of the street, or to redevelop the retail parcels at a higher density in a pedestrian retail pattern.

Group 2 suggested that the pedestrian retail pattern should be developed on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue from Safeway/Datatel to Russell Road and from the Birchmere to the bridge on the east side of the Avenue. The Mt. Vernon Village Center was redeveloped into a retail center with a hotel and conference center overlooking the park. Russell Road was

extended to the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue and out to the park. A new public garage was suggested for the Mt. Vernon Village Center area similar to the garage at Safeway/Datatel.

With the creation of the public parking garage on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue, it was suggested that the Birchmere property should be redeveloped with the key elements relocated so that the facility has Avenue frontage and contributes to the neighborhood activity.

Pocket parks were included with the improvement of the intersections with Russell Rd. and Executive Avenue.



## Defining the Vision

The following is a summary of the planning concepts identified by Group 3.

### Group 3 - Vision for the Neighborhood

Group 3 also addressed the west end of the neighborhood and recommended the creation of a gateway and green space to identify the entrance to the neighborhood and the City. A bike trail along the south side of Four Mile Run was suggested to provide access to the park.

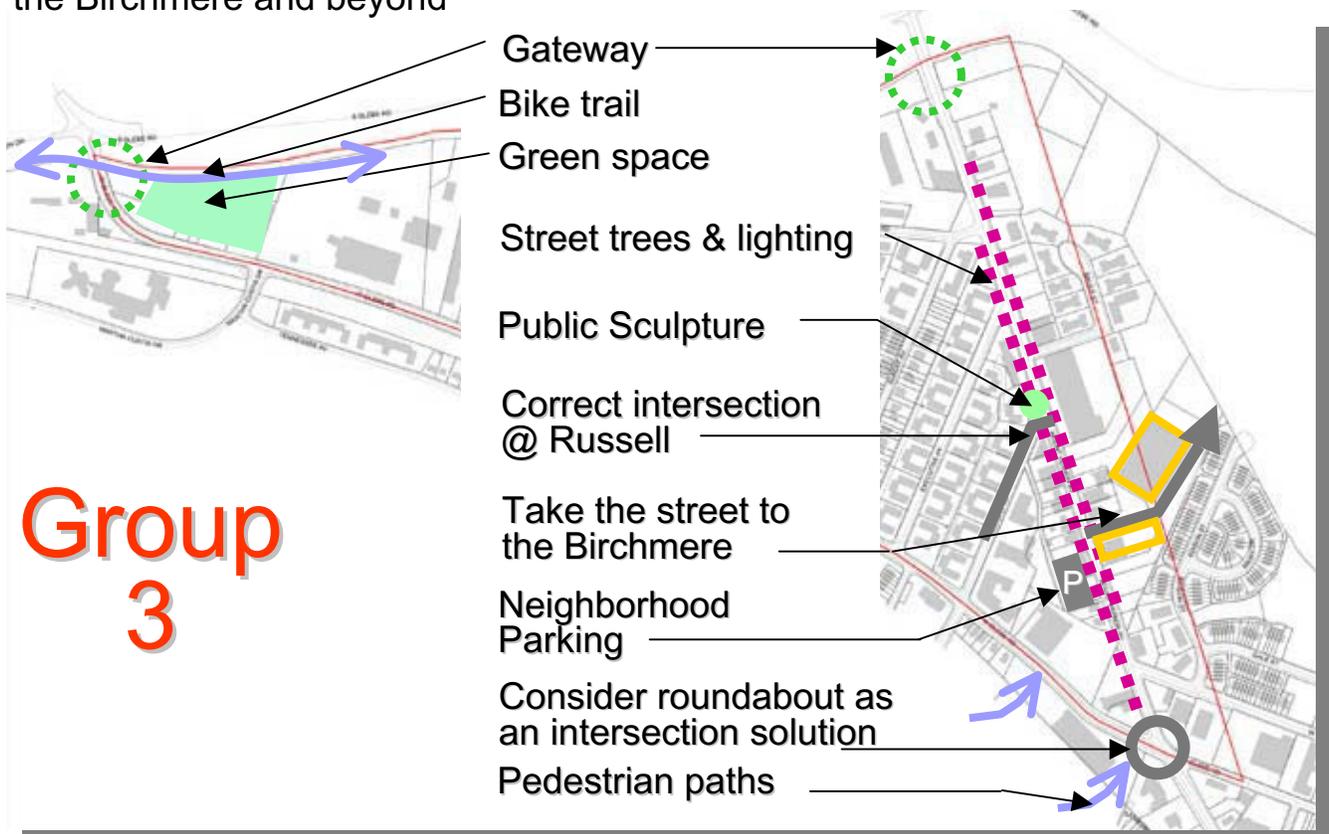
Group 3 suggested enhanced streetscape with trees and lighting along Mt. Vernon Avenue along with the correction of the intersections of the diagonal streets with the Avenue.

The group did not address the redevelopment of the Mt. Vernon Village Center, but did suggest creating a road from the Avenue to the Birchmere and beyond

to psychologically assist in bringing the Birchmere to the Avenue.

The Group supported the creation of a public neighborhood parking facility on the site of the Dataltel building, and recommended the enhancement of the pedestrian access paths from the neighborhoods to the west.

Finally, the Group suggested that the City consider a roundabout as a method of solving the traffic problems at the corner of W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue.



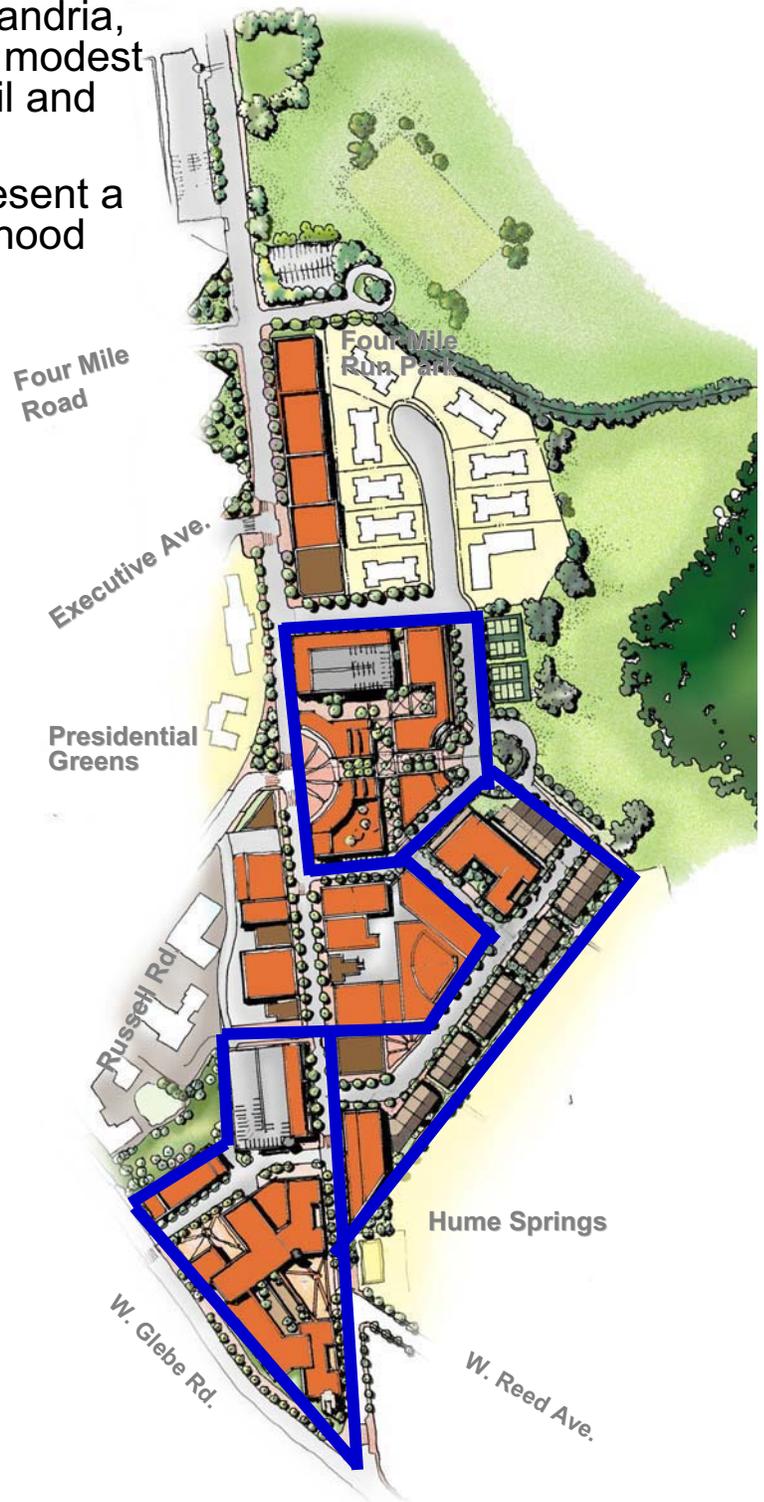
## A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

### Defining the Vision

There are differing visions for Arlandria, from complete redevelopment to modest development with enhanced retail and neighborhood improvements.

The common elements that represent a long-term vision for the neighborhood are:

- Healthy mixed use community by capitalizing on three opportunity sites
- Active and viable commercial retail center-- both neighborhood serving and destination retail
- A transition from auto-dominated to pedestrian retail street
- Visual and physical connections to the Park
- Safer environment--traffic, walking, physical safety



# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## The Illustrative Plan

The planning and design concepts outlined by the Committee in their three group concepts were consolidated into an Illustrative Plan that illustrates the long-term development potential for the neighborhood.

The Illustrative Plan outlines a future, long-term vision for the Arlandria neighborhood. The vision incorporates two major concepts identified by the community:

- Visually opening the park to the Avenue and enhancing the access to the park
- Optimizing the future development of the three major sites identified as underutilized and “opportunity sites”
  - Safeway/Datatel
  - Birchmere property
  - Mt. Vernon Village Center

The Vision maintains the strong mixed-use pattern on the Avenue with a combination of residential and commercial uses. The pedestrian environment is enhanced through an improved streetscape with wider landscaped sidewalks, new street furniture, and street graphics that provide for gateways to identify the neighborhood. The pedestrian experience is also improved through a more controlled automobile presence with new lane patterns, revisions to major intersections and new pedestrian crossings. Access to commercial uses is enhanced through new on-street parking and proposed new parking structures.

The Park is expanded to Mt. Vernon Avenue with new streets along the length of the Avenue to open the park to the neighborhood and increase the visibility and access.



**Illustrative Plan**

## The Illustrative Plan

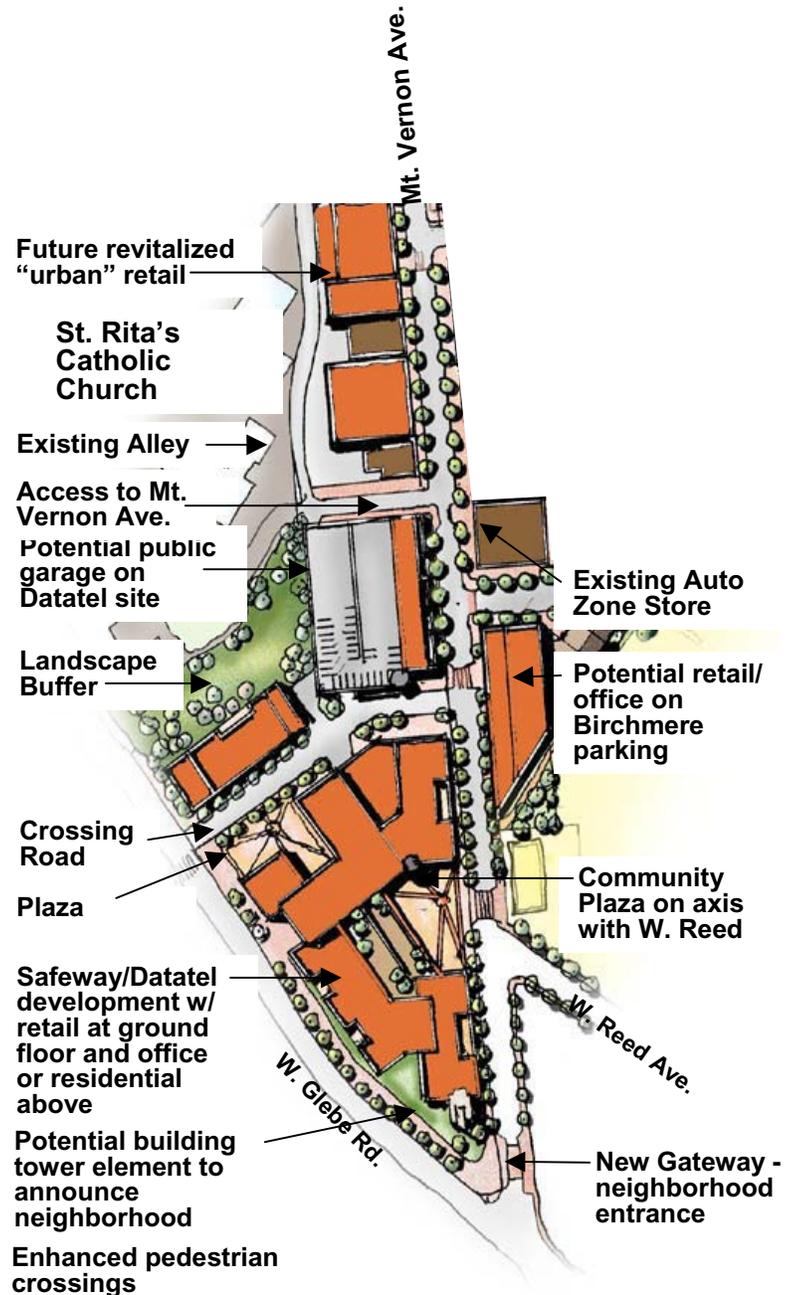
### Southern Mt. Vernon Avenue

The southern entrance to the revitalized Arlandria neighborhood is announced by a new graphic and landscaped "gateway." A new mixed-use development on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue anchors the southern end of the neighborhood. A community plaza surrounded by retail uses is located to visually terminate the view to the west from W. Reed Avenue.

A new crossing road is located to provide access to a proposed new 400 space parking structure from both W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue. The crossing road also provides a pedestrian connection and access to underground parking for the new mixed-use development. A plaza is located where the crossing road intersects with W. Glebe Road to emphasize the new pedestrian route.

The new parking structure provides parking to stimulate the development and revitalization of new "urban" retail toward the north, as well as, providing the opportunity to create new retail or restaurants on the current Birchmere parking lot (where it fronts Mt. Vernon Avenue). The Auto Zone store's on-grade parking is redeveloped into additional retail as the existing parking is replaced in the public structure.

A new landscaped area provides a visual buffer between the development and St. Rita's.



The Illustrative Plan -  
Southern Mt. Vernon Avenue

## The Illustrative Plan

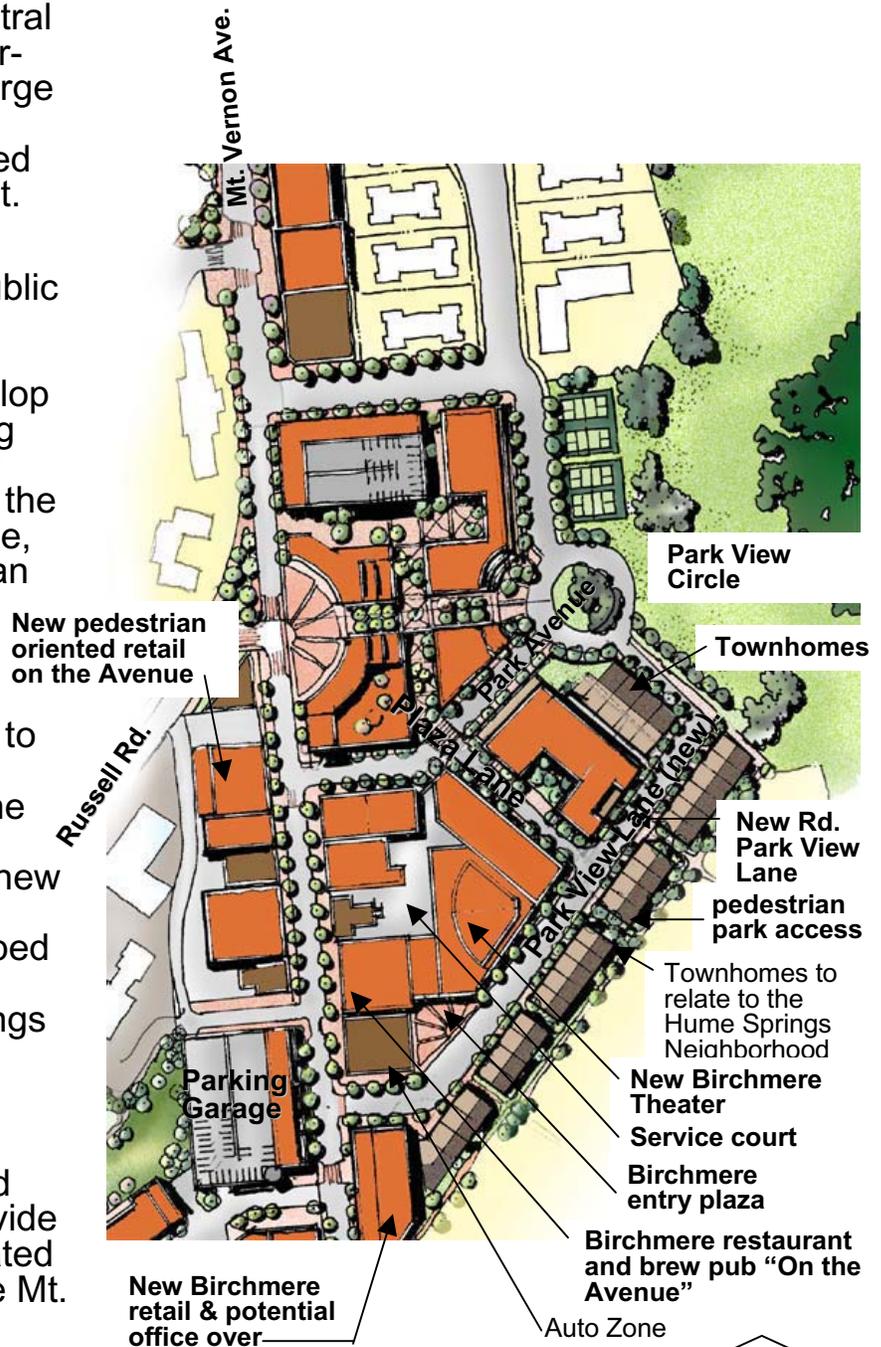
### South Central Mt. Vernon Avenue

The major opportunities for revitalization of the south central area of the Arlandria neighborhood are dominated by the large underdeveloped Birchmere parcel and the underdeveloped parcels on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

With the development of a public garage in the neighborhood, there is the potential for the Birchmere property to redevelop its extensive on-grade parking lots. The primary opportunity would be the development of the lot fronting Mt. Vernon Avenue, thus providing more pedestrian oriented retail on the street.

Future potential would be to redevelop the entertainment facilities with more of a focus to the street. A new road, Park View Lane, would enhance the access to the east end of the site. On the east side of the new street, and facing the park, townhouses could be developed to provide an appropriate interface with the Hume Springs neighborhood.

A new N/S street is created (Plaza Lane) to connect Park View Lane to the redeveloped property to the north and provide frontage for new retail integrated with the redevelopment of the Mt. Vernon Village Center to the north. Above the retail level are two floors of office or residential with up to two additional stories if appropriately set back from the street. Parking for the residential is accessed from a service court.



The Illustrative Plan -  
South Central Mt. Vernon Avenue

## The Illustrative Plan

### North Central Mt. Vernon Avenue

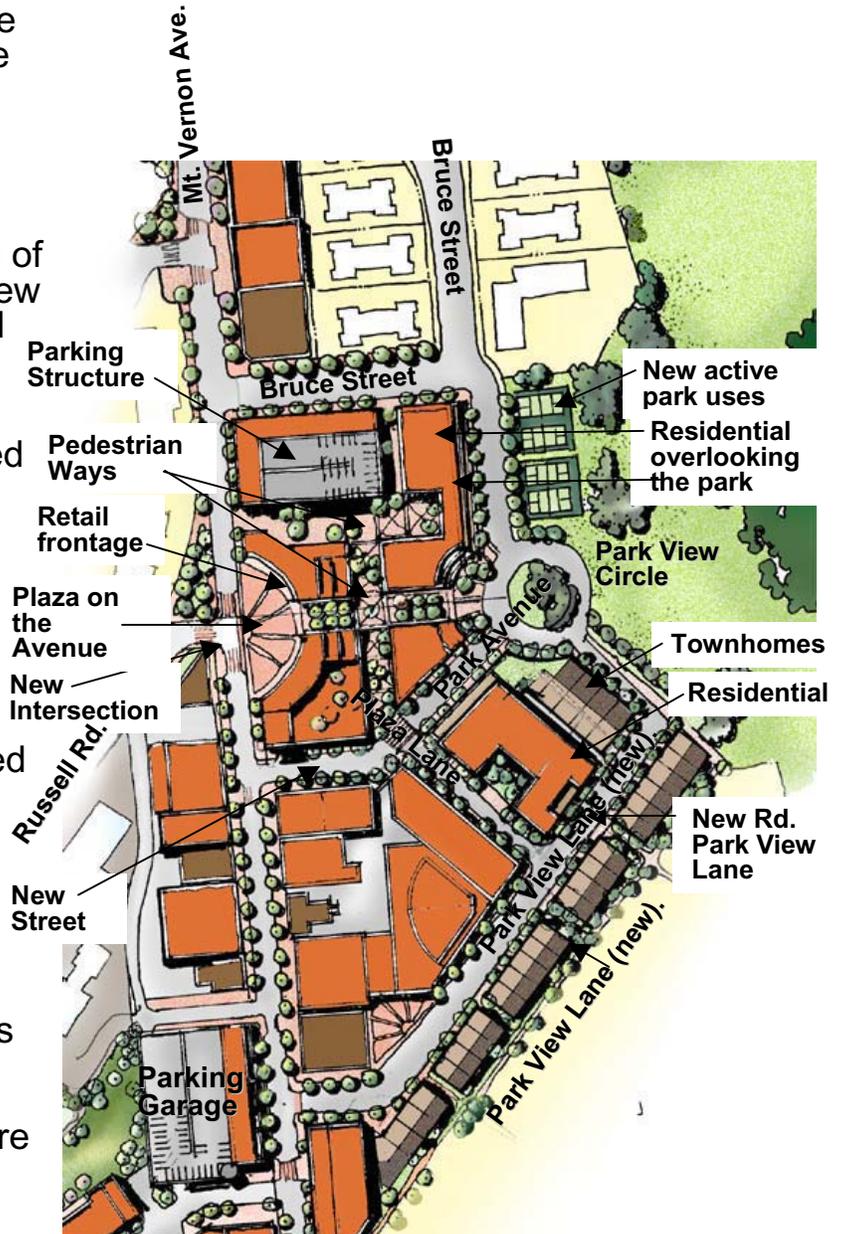
The large underutilized Mt. Vernon Village Center property is the site of a second plaza on the Avenue at the revised intersection of Russell Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Retail shops front the plaza and extend eastward along a system of pedestrian ways that lead to a new roundabout and the park beyond

A new road, Park Avenue, provides access to the site and frontage for retail along enhanced pedestrian sidewalks. Park Avenue leads to the Park View Circle and new park access and visibility. From the circle a road leads north along the park and new park facilities to the intersection with Bruce Street.

A new parking structure accessed from Mt. Vernon Avenue along Bruce Street provides the major parking for the neighborhood shopping.

Retail is focused along all of the streets and pedestrian ways. Above the retail are opportunities for residential development that overlooks the neighborhood and the park. The street frontages are generally developed to three stories with retail on the ground floor and residential or office above. A fourth and fifth floor could be incorporated with appropriate setbacks. The site also lends it self to offices for associations with the potential for a small residential conference center.



The Illustrative Plan -  
North Central Mt. Vernon Avenue



## The Illustrative Plan

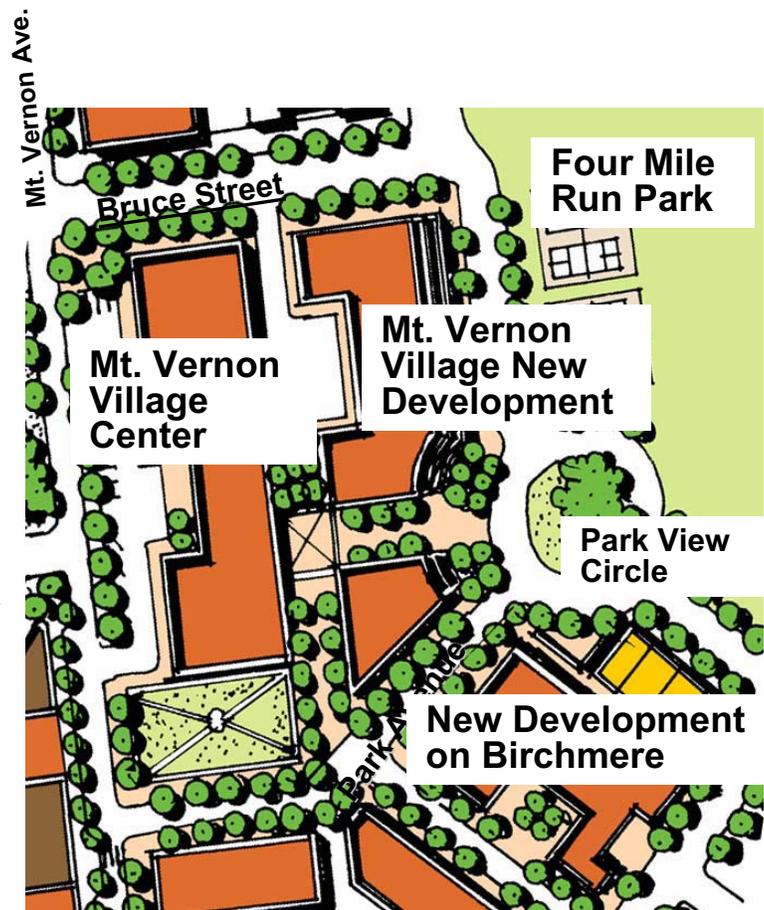
### North Central Mt. Vernon Avenue – Interim Plan

The vision for Arlandria recognizes that the neighborhood will evolve and develop over time.

The sketch plan on this page provides one thought on how the central portion of the neighborhood could evolve over time.

The Mt. Vernon Village Center building, which has been recently remodeled, remains in place with its automobile oriented frontage along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Park Avenue is developed along the south side of the site to provide enhanced access to the east side of the site and leads to Park View Circle, the Park and northward connecting to Bruce Street. A new park or plaza is located on the corner of northeast corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Park Avenue to remove the blight of on street parking lots and to create a community activity place and announce the entrance to Four Mile Run Park.

In the early phases, parking for the Mt. Vernon Village Center may be on grade to the east of the existing building. However, in later phases the parking may be incorporated into the development of a residential or residential/office structure on the east side of the site overlooking the Park, or as suggested in the long-term vision, parking could be accommodated in a new structure when the Mt. Vernon Village Center is redeveloped



**Interim Plan -  
North Central Mt. Vernon Avenue**



## The Illustrative Plan

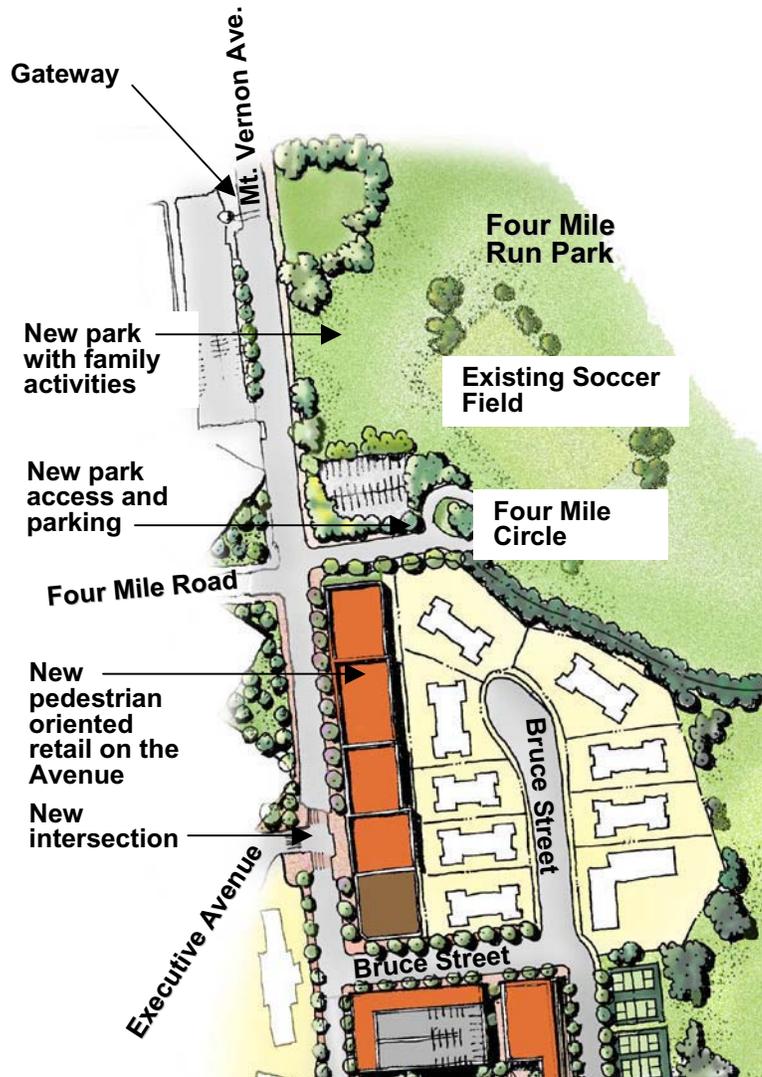
### Northern Mt. Vernon Avenue

A new gateway at the southern end of the bridge crossing Four Mile Run announces the Arlandria neighborhood.

This northern portion of the neighborhood offers the opportunity to significantly open the park to the community and increase the presence of the park in the neighborhood. Should the four parcels on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue north of the intersection with Four Mile Road not redevelop with new pedestrian-oriented retail within the next 15 years, the Illustrative Plan envisions the purchase of these parcels to create a new auto entrance to the park and new, expanded parking.

In this scenario, the park extends westward to abut Mt. Vernon Avenue, thus opening the “Park to the Avenue” and the “Avenue to the Park.” This greater visibility will stimulate more use of the park and in turn create a much safer environment. New family-oriented recreation activities would be incorporated into the new area of the park within easy reach of the new retail and the existing residential communities.

The east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue north of the Mt. Vernon Village Center provides the opportunity to convert the existing automobile oriented retail into pedestrian retail that is supported by the new parking and the enhanced pedestrian environment.



A redesigned intersection with Executive Avenue incorporates new, safe pedestrian crosswalks.

### The Illustrative Plan - Northern Mt. Vernon Avenue



## Design and Planning Principles

### Southern Mt. Vernon Avenue

The following are Design and Planning Principles to guide the development along Mt. Vernon Avenue between W. Glebe Road and the Four Mile Run Bridge

Consolidate the Safeway/Datatel parcels to facilitate the development of a new mixed-use development to anchor the southern end of the Arlandria neighborhood

- Five levels (as measured from Mt. Vernon Avenue) total w/ retail at the ground level (three story facades on W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue) with articulated third level.
- Public sponsored parking garage to provide incentive for major retail development and Crossing Road to provide access to public garage and private parking from both W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue.
- Reroute roadways within St. Rita's to provide enhanced day care outdoor area and access to the public garage.
- Set back new development from St. Rita's and provide open space and landscape buffer.

Encourage the Birchmere to develop its Mt. Vernon Avenue frontage. Public parking provides replacement parking for Birchmere and new uses.

Provide a Plaza along W. Glebe Road to announce pedestrian route to Mt. Vernon Avenue.

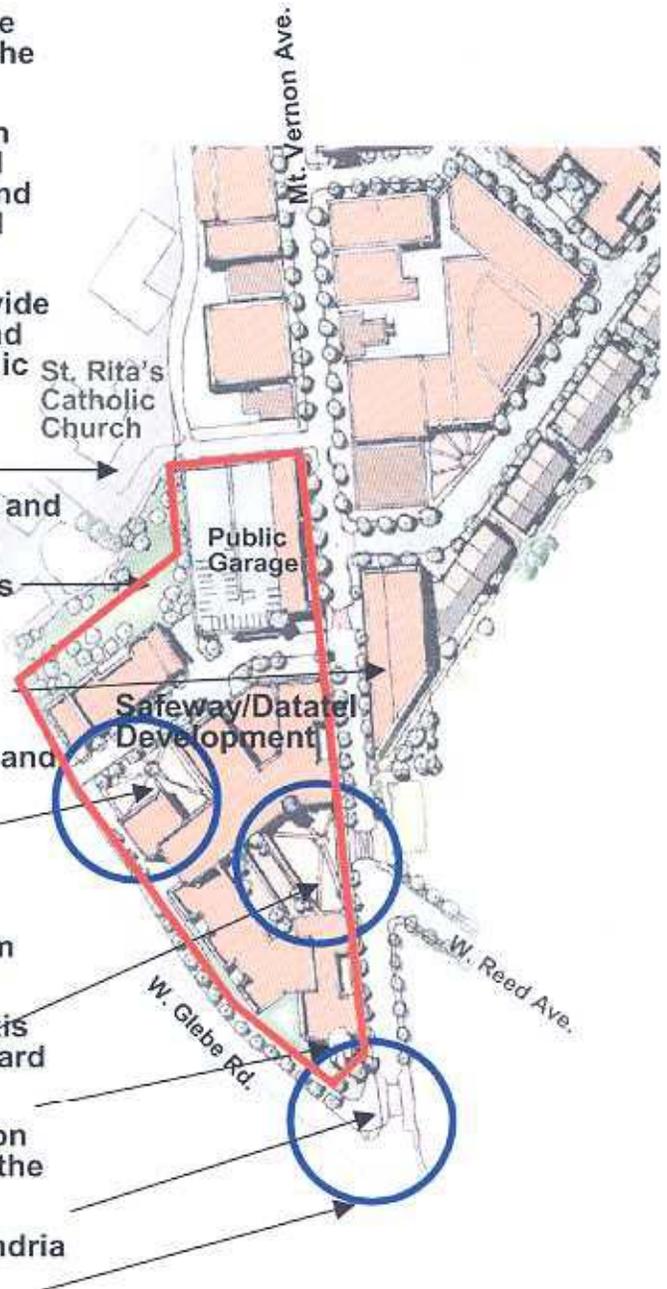
Enhance the pedestrian pathway system from the neighborhoods to the south and west

Provide a Plaza on Mt. Vernon Avenue on axis with W. Reed Avenue to terminate the westward view.

Consider a prominent architectural element on the Safeway/Datatel development to identify the beginning of the neighborhood.

Provide a visual gateway to identify the Arlandria neighborhood from the south

Improve the intersection of W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue to provide safe pedestrian crossing

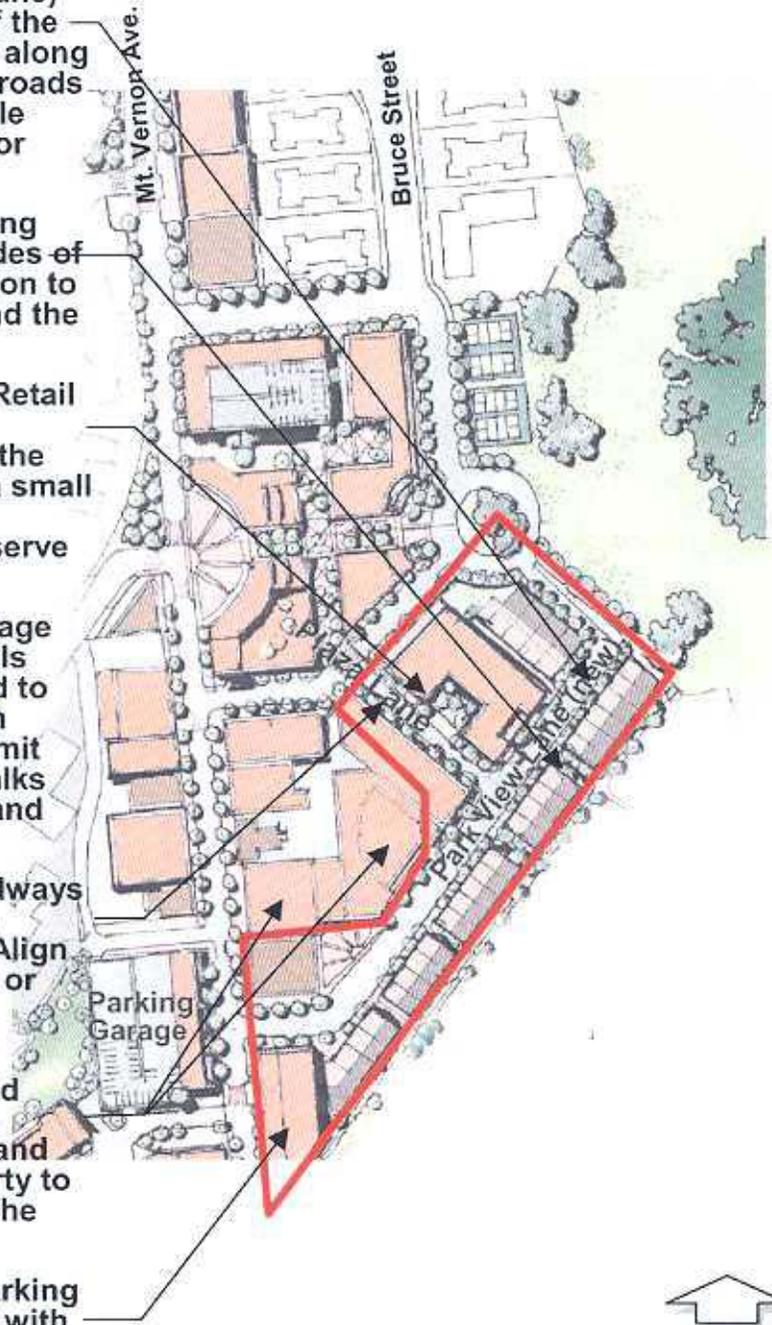


## Design and Planning Principles

### South Central Mt. Vernon Avenue

Encourage the Birchmere properties to redevelop to create a greater presence of this important community asset on the Avenue.

- Create a new roadway (Park View Lane) to provide access to the east end of the site, eventually linking the roadway along the park up to Bruce Street. These roads will open the park to public use while providing valuable street frontage for new retail uses.
- Develop three story townhomes along the southeast and the northeast sides of Park View Lane to provide a transition to the Hume Springs neighborhood and the park.
- Develop the site with mixed-uses. Retail on the ground floor with either residential or office commercial on the upper floors. The development of a small inn or conference center should be considered along with offices that serve associations.
- The buildings along the street frontage should be no higher than three levels with the total building height limited to five levels where the fourth and fifth levels are appropriate set back to limit visibility from the street and sidewalks and to limit shadows on the street and the Park.
- Encourage the development of roadways perpendicular to Park View Lane to create typical urban sized blocks. Align the roadways with pedestrian ways or streets within the redeveloped Mt. Vernon Village Center.
- Encourage the relocation of the food services and entertainment venues closer to or on Mt. Vernon Avenue and redevelop the balance of the property to take advantage of the proximity to the Park.
- Redevelop the existing on grade parking lots adjacent to Mt. Vernon Avenue with new retail/office uses. Parking for the uses provided at the new public garage on the Safeway/ Datatel site.



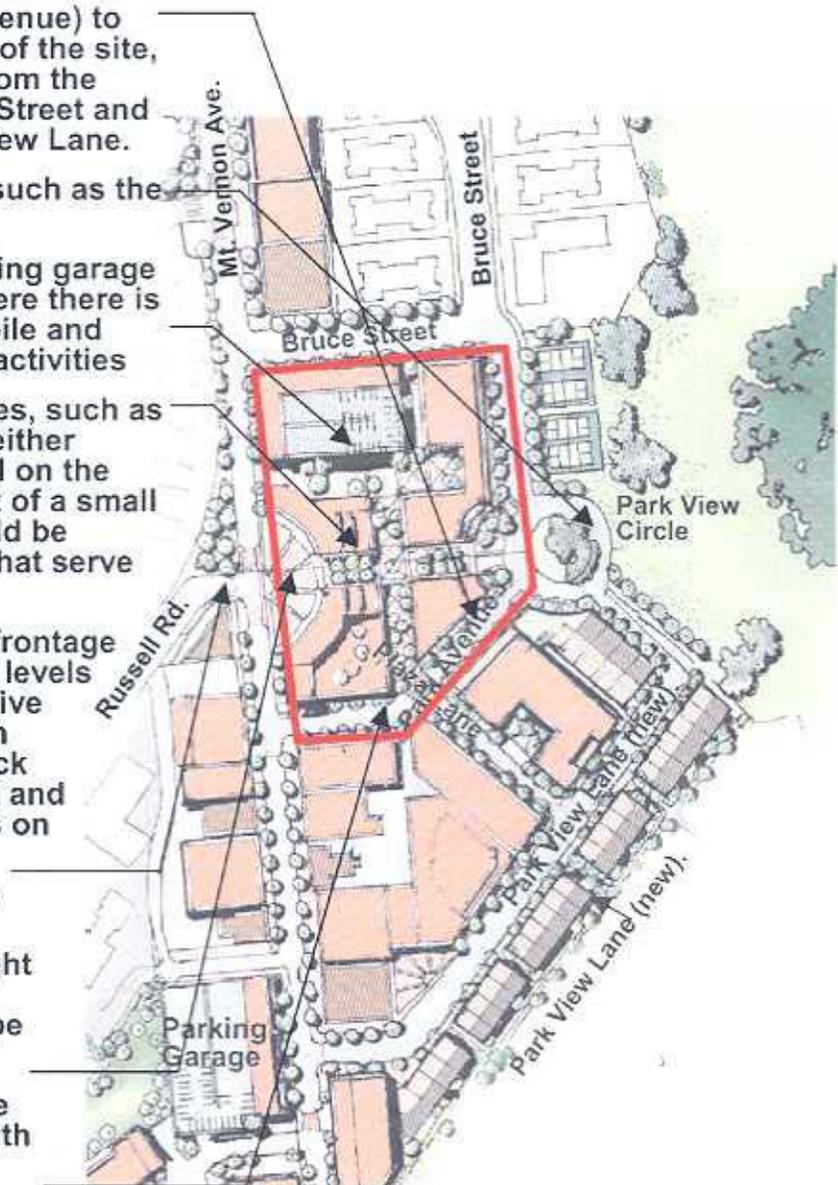
South Central Mt. Vernon Avenue

## Design and Planning Principles

### North Central Mt. Vernon Avenue

Encourage the Mt. Vernon Village Center properties to redevelop to create a mixed-use anchor development.

- Create a new roadway (Park Avenue) to provide access to the east end of the site, which will (with participation from the City) link to the north to Bruce Street and to the south to the New Park View Lane.
- Create a park visibility feature such as the Park View Circle roundabout
- Consider the creation of a parking garage on the north end of the site where there is ease of access for the automobile and pedestrian access to the retail activities
- Develop the site with mixed-uses, such as retail on the ground floor with either residential or office commercial on the upper floors. The development of a small inn or conference center should be considered along with offices that serve associations.
- The buildings along the street frontage should be no higher than three levels with the total height limited to five levels where the fourth and fifth levels are appropriately set back to limit visibility from the street and sidewalks and to limit shadows on the street and the park.
- Reconstruct the intersection of Russell Road with Mt. Vernon Avenue to eliminate the free right hand turn and to enhance the pedestrian crossing. Landscape the resulting open space.
- Locate a pedestrian plaza at the intersection of Russell Road with Mt. Vernon Avenue.
- Encourage the development of a series of roadways or pedestrian walkways to create typical urban sized blocks that will accommodate the residential and commercial uses. Align the roadways with pedestrian ways or streets within the redeveloped Birchmere property.



North Central Mt. Vernon Avenue

## Design and Planning Principles

### Northern Mt. Vernon Avenue

Create a new gateway from the north at the south end of the bridge.

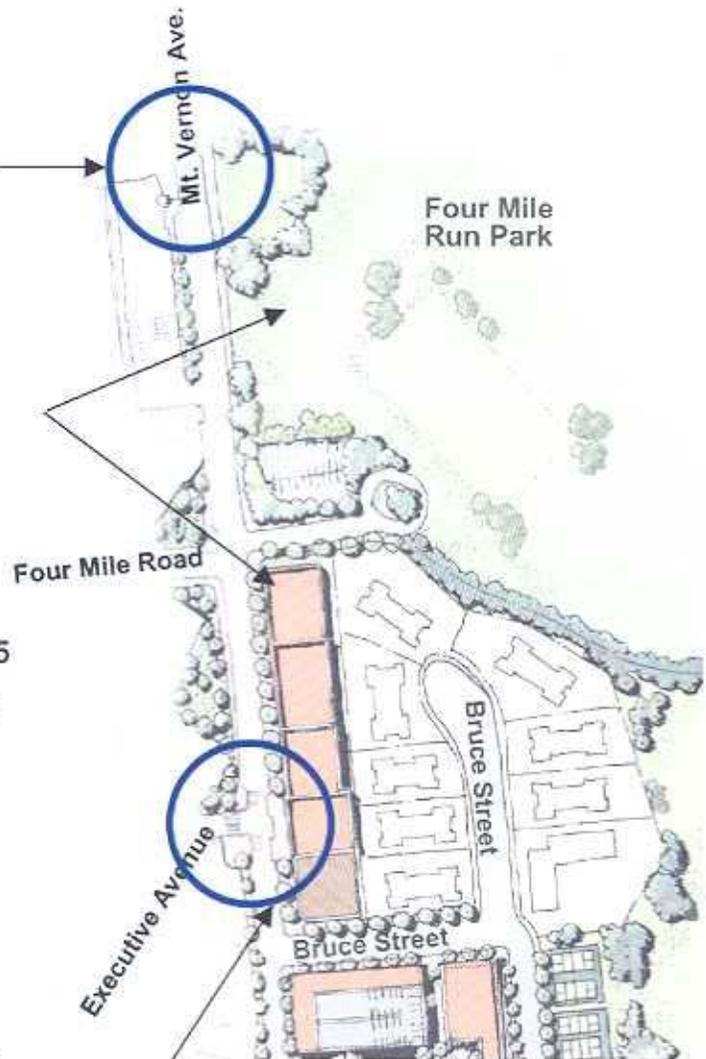
Encourage the redevelopment of the automobile oriented retail to pedestrian oriented retail.

However, if the four parcels (under one ownership) north to the existing pedestrian access opposite Four Mile Road do not redevelop within the next 15 years as market conditions improve, consider acquisition of the land in order to enhance visibility and access to the park. Should acquisition of this new park land occur:

- Create new family-oriented activities in the new Park area
- Create a new parking area

Create a new public access cul-de-sac road opposite Four Mile Road to provide new access to the park

Reconstruct the intersection of Executive Avenue with Mt. Vernon Avenue to provide a safer pedestrian and auto environment.



Northern Mt. Vernon Avenue

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Design and Planning Principles

### Illustrative Examples



*Three story façade on street.  
Taller elements set back from street facade*



*Three story façade on street.  
Two stories of residential over retail*



*Three story façade on street.  
Taller elements set back from street facade*



*Landscaped mini park looking to the  
east to three story street facade*



*Plaza at Safeway/Datatel at end of  
W. Reed Avenue*



*Three story façade on street.  
Two stories of office over retail*

## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Significant Architectural and Urban Characteristics**

Prior to the 1930s, much of Mt. Vernon Avenue in Arlandria was small residential homes except for some retail buildings clustered at the corner of W. Glebe. Extensive development began in the late 1930s and early 1940s adding an Art Deco style theater, the Colonial Revival style Presidential Greens apartment complex, and Potomac Village (Chirilagua).

Presidential Greens was built in two phases, the first phase composed of seven buildings along Russell Road, and the second included the remaining fourteen buildings. The complex today remains much the same architecturally as when it was built, and is the most significantly unique building grouping in the Arlandria area.



*Presidential Greens*



*Presidential Greens*



*Presidential Greens*

## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Significant Architectural and Urban Characteristics**

Chirilagua was originally built in 1939 and consisted of an eight-building complex with some Art Deco detailing which remains intact today. The buildings have been somewhat altered over the years, and two new buildings were added over the past thirty years. Both Presidential Greens and Chirilagua have well planned landscape areas with pedestrian parkway style paths, making them unique garden-style apartments.



*Art Deco building*

Several more Art Deco structures were built along Mt. Vernon Avenue in front of Chirilagua. Two of these remain today as the Lilian's building and the Arlandria Shopping Center. The significance of the Lilian's building has been greatly diminished by the demolition of the Beverly Plaza next door which is now used as a parking lot for Lilian's. Together these structures made up a substantial Art Deco presence and history concentrated around the intersection of Bruce Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue.



*Arlandria Shopping Center*



*Lilian's curved Art Deco entry*

## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Significant Architectural and Urban Characteristics**



Although these buildings together do not constitute a historic district eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, it is felt that what remains should be preserved and enhanced with any new development along this portion of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

#### **The recommendations for redevelopment are as follows:**

- Existing structures should be preserved whenever possible
- New development should respect the style and scale of the preserved buildings
- Authentic Art Deco styling and design elements should be incorporated into new buildings in this area
- New buildings should not over-power the preserved buildings, and should step down to them



## **Summary of General Neighborhood Principles**

- Maintain the strong mixed-use pattern on Mt. Vernon Avenue with a combination of residential and commercial uses.
- Enhance the gateways to Arlandria at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Four Mile Run and Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road with landscaping, signage, and other features.
- Enhance the pedestrian environment with an improved streetscape with wider landscaped sidewalks, street furniture, and street graphics that provide for gateways to identify the neighborhood.
- Improve the pedestrian experience through a more controlled automobile presence with new lane patterns, revisions to major intersections, and new pedestrian crossings.
- Enhance access to commercial uses through new on-street parking and proposed new parking structures.
- Optimize the future development of the three major sites identified as underutilized and “opportunity sites:” Safeway/Datatel; Birchmere property; Mt. Vernon Village Center.
- Open Four Mile Run Park to the neighborhood and increase the visibility and access in order stimulate more use of the park.
- Complement the Art Deco/Art Modern style of existing buildings by incorporating design elements from this style into the architecture of new buildings.
- As new construction takes place, encourage new on-site affordable units.

## **Infill Development Principles**

- Encourage the redevelopment of automobile-oriented retail to pedestrian-oriented retail
- Orient buildings to the street with buildings located adjacent to the sidewalk
- Provide parking in the rear with access from rear alleys where possible
- Provide storefront facades with no blank walls visible from the public realm
- The mass, scale, and rhythm of new buildings should be compatible with the existing urban commercial corridor, characterized by the repetition of smaller storefronts, pedestrian scale, and Art Deco features
- Where buildings of increased height are proposed, efforts should be made to transition to the existing building by stepping down and/or by breaking up the mass of the building
- Buildings along the street frontage should be no higher than three stories with the total building height limited to five stories where the fourth and fifth stories are appropriately set back
- Development proposals should conform with the standards and principles of the plan and with the adopted Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Summary**

The Plan presents the community's long-range vision of the future of the Arlandria neighborhood, as well as design concepts and planning principles to help guide future development activities. The major goals focus on:

- Creating an "Arlandria" identity for the neighborhood;
- Visually opening the Park to the Avenue and enhancing access to the Park;
- Focusing major redevelopment efforts to the underutilized opportunity sites;
- Maintaining and enhancing the pedestrian environment;
- Increasing the amount of pedestrian-oriented retail development;
- Ensuring the provision of adequate parking facilities; and
- Improving the quality of the business and retail environment.

The illustrative plans provide just one approach for directing new development in accordance with the vision. There are other approaches that may be undertaken. The key objective is for redevelopment and new infill development to incorporate the design concepts and planning principles in new construction to ensure that the long-term vision for the neighborhood is achieved.

The long-term vision sets the direction for what the community would like to see in their neighborhood. It represents one aspect of a comprehensive approach towards improving the physical environment in the Arlandria neighborhood and ensuring the success of the business environment. In order to ensure the long-term vision is achieved, improvements must be made to address community challenges and concerns.

The Action Plan identifies those actions that need to be undertaken in the short, mid and long-term to address community challenges and to move in the direction of stabilizing, strengthening and revitalizing the neighborhood. The short and mid-term actions identified in the Action Plan are essential towards strengthening the neighborhood and setting the stage with the opportunity for new development as market conditions in the neighborhood improve.

# The Action Plan

City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **The Action Plan**

### **The Goal**

The goal for the Action Plan is to identify actions that are consistent with the long-term vision, to address the current challenges for the residential and commercial community and to create a strategy for short, mid and long-term actions to stabilize, strengthen and revitalize the neighborhood.

### **The Process**

The current neighborhood planning process seeks to identify the long-term future potential of the neighborhood. The Action Plan process is focused on creating a consensus within the community on issues and concerns that could be addressed through community and City actions in the short, mid and long-term.

To facilitate this process, the Committee at their initial meeting participated in a facilitated brainstorming session to identify and discuss community concerns and challenges. To refine the issues and to identify actions to mitigate the concerns, the Committee divided into two groups, a residential sub group and a commercial sub-group. The sub-groups worked independently for several weeks and came together to discuss the actions each group proposed to address the residential and commercial issues. After considerable discussion, staff developed a document identifying the Committee's collective issues and proposing a mix of short, medium and long-term actions to resolve the neighborhoods' concerns.



*Workshop No. 2*



*Workshop No. 2*

## **The Action Plan**

### **The Concerns**

#### ***Traffic and Parking***

Committee members expressed concerns about a lack of residential and commercial on-street parking in the community, and about the excessive speed of traffic along W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue.

#### ***Pedestrian Safety***

Committee members expressed concern about the lack of crosswalks and the inappropriate location of existing crosswalks on Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road. They identified specific problem intersections, especially targeting the intersection of Russell Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue, as well as, traffic signal coordination that allows speeding. They requested improvements that would increase the pedestrian safety on Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road.

#### ***Streetscape/Pedestrian-Orientation of Mt. Vernon Avenue***

The Committee expressed the desire to make Mt. Vernon Avenue more pedestrian friendly by improving the appearance of the streetscape, including the provision of amenities such as benches, bicycle racks, brick pavers, landscaping, and lighting.

#### ***Coordination with neighborhood to solve problems & the need to raise awareness about appropriate City agencies to contact with problems or concerns***

The Committee expressed concern that residents and business owners are not knowledgeable of City regulations and that outreach in English and Spanish is necessary to make the community aware of local rules. They expressed the desire for an enhanced inspection of the area to identify and resolve code, zoning and other violations.

#### ***Police issues***

Members described problems with car theft, loitering, public drinking, prostitution and vandalism occurring in the community and in Four Mile Run Park.

## **The Action Plan**

### **Other neighborhood concerns**

A community meeting was held jointly with the Tenants and Workers Support Committee and attended by the residents of the Chirilagua cooperative to discuss the current planning efforts in Arlandria and to obtain feedback about the conceptual plans. The residents offered the following comments:

#### ***Need for a Teen Center***

Residents expressed a need for community services, including a teen center to provide activities for teens.

#### ***Desire for a medical clinic offering acute/primary care***

Residents expressed a concern about the lack of neighborhood health services, particularly a clinic that would serve low-income people who do not have health insurance.

#### ***Maintain the affordable housing in the neighborhood***

Residents had significant concerns about maintaining the affordable housing in the neighborhood and the possible effect new development will have on housing costs and values.

#### ***Problem turning left from Mt. Vernon Avenue onto South Glebe Road into Arlington County***

This issue has been raised by virtually every group as a problem that leads to traffic congestion on the bridge over Four Mile Run and traffic back ups on Mt. Vernon Avenue in Arlandria.

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## The Action Plan

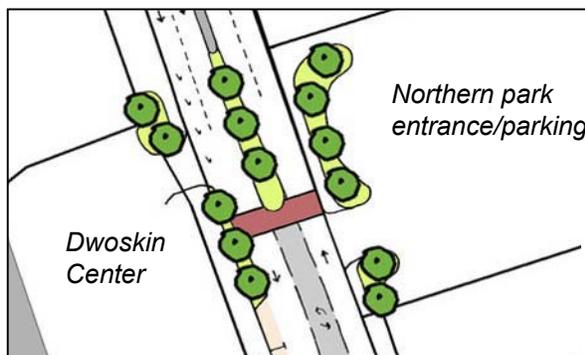
### Short & Mid-Term Actions

The following were identified as potential short and mid-term actions to address the concerns of the community.

#### Develop a Conceptual Plan for Mt. Vernon Avenue

Create a comprehensive plan to outline the short and mid-term improvements to enhance the safety and the appearance of Mt. Vernon Avenue, including:

- Connections to the Park and gateway improvement
- Intersection improvements
- Traffic calming and flow
- Sidewalk/streetscape plan, including crosswalks, sidewalk pavers, street trees, bike racks, trash cans, street graphics, and lighting
- New on-street parking opportunities in the public right-of-way



Plan at Northern Gateway



Existing Condition



Gateway Improvements with Sign



Gateway Improvements with One Pylon



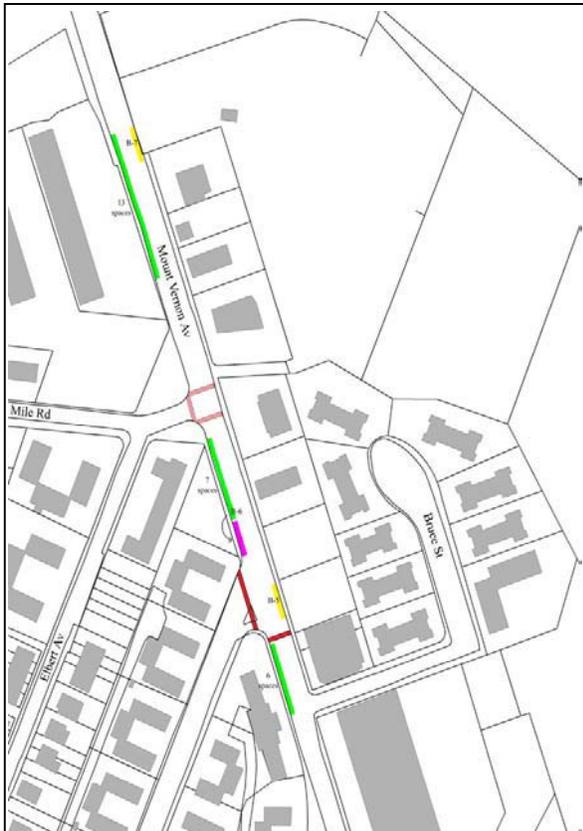
Gateway Improvements with Two Pylons

### Northern Gateway Alternatives

## The Action Plan

### Short & Mid-Term Actions

#### Conceptual Plan for Mt. Vernon Avenue



#### Parking, Bus Stops & Crosswalk Plan

-  Existing Bus Stops
-  Relocated Bus Stops
-  New On-Street Parking
-  New Crosswalks
-  Crosswalks to be repainted



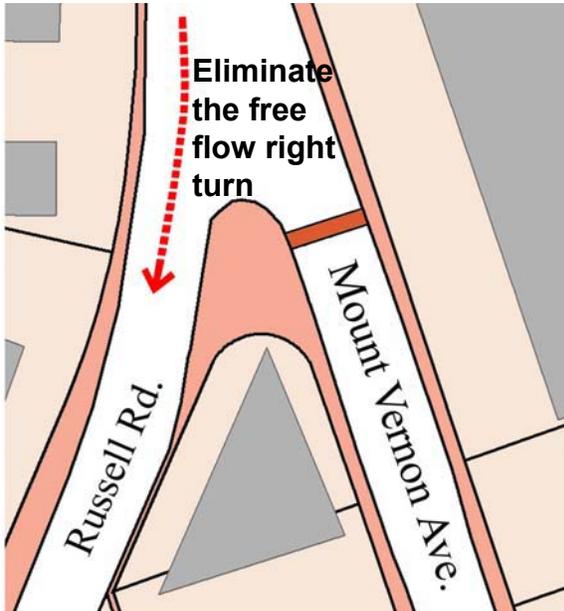
Typical brick crosswalks

## The Action Plan

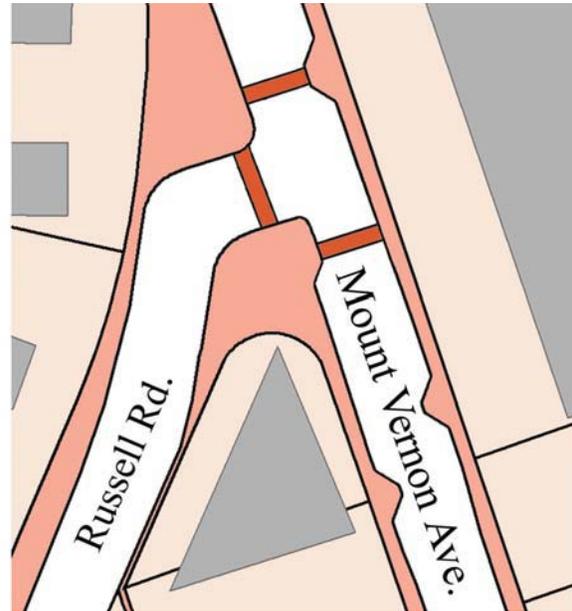
### Short & Mid-Term Actions

#### Conceptual Plan for Mt. Vernon Avenue

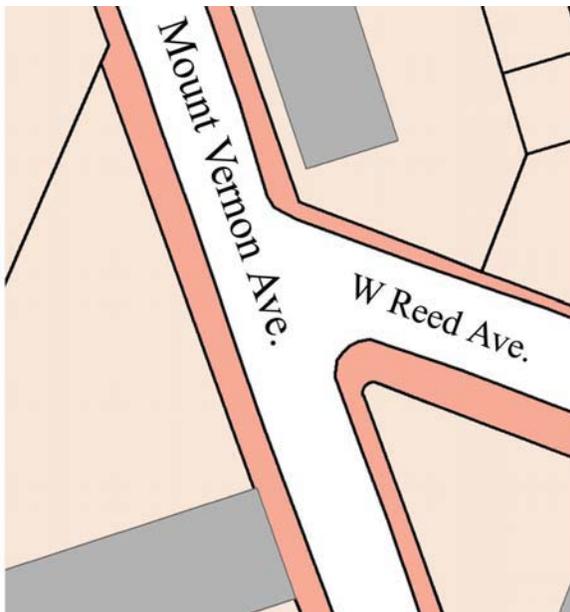
Redesign the intersection of Russell Rd. and Mt. Vernon Avenue to eliminate free flow right turn



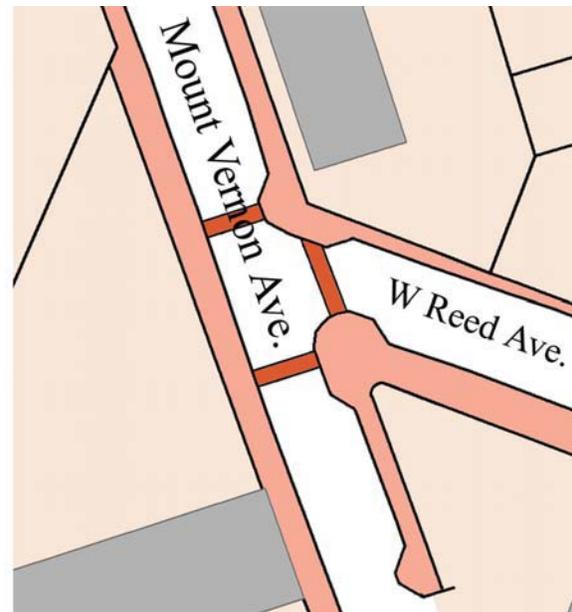
Existing Russell Rd. & Mt. Vernon Ave.



Proposed Russell Rd. & Mt. Vernon Ave.



Existing W. Reed Ave. & Mt. Vernon Ave.



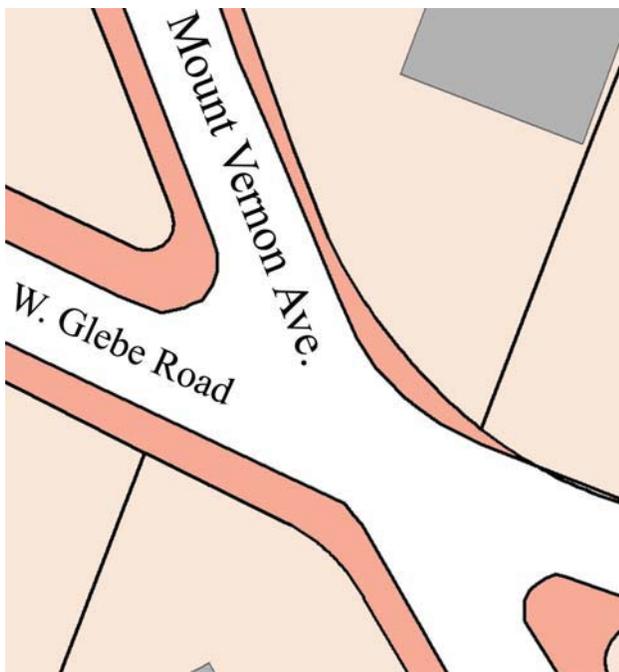
Proposed W. Reed Ave. & Mt. Vernon Ave.

#### Revised Intersections with Enhanced Crosswalks

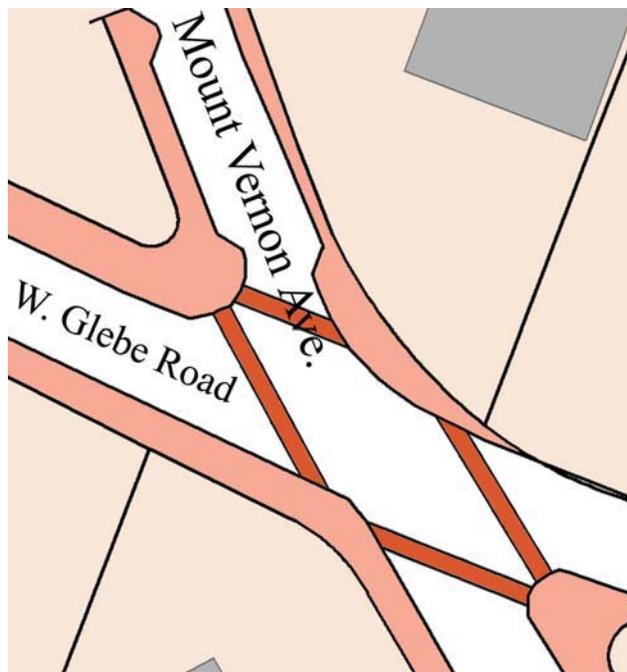
## The Action Plan

### Short & Mid-Term Actions

#### Conceptual Plan for Mt. Vernon Avenue



Existing W. Glebe Road & Mt. Vernon Ave.



Proposed W. Glebe Road & Mt. Vernon Ave.

Develop implementation plan for the provision of mid-block crosswalks on Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road

#### Mid Block Crosswalks

- Require a change in materials
- Require extra signage
- Helpful to have sidewalk bulb-outs



Typical Mid-Block Crossing

### Revised Intersections with Enhanced Crosswalks

## The Action Plan

### Short & Mid-Term Actions

Undertake a traffic study to address specific problems identified by the community:

- Traffic calming on Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Placement of a mid-block crosswalk on W. Glebe Road between Russell Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Potential relocation of bus stops on W. Glebe Road to coordinate with crosswalks
- Left turn movement and signalization from W. Glebe Road onto Russell Road
- Traffic signal progression to reduce speeding on Mt. Vernon Avenue between Four Mile Road and Executive Avenue
- Reconfigure intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Russell Road
- Signalized crosswalk at W. Reed Avenue and Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Other functional issues as needed

Install new traffic signal at intersection of Old Dominion Blvd. and W. Glebe Road.

Redesign and implement new design for the intersection of W. Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue

Construct bulb-outs and crosswalk improvements along W. Glebe Road

Work with Arlington County on the installation of a dedicated left turn lane from north-bound Mt. Vernon Avenue onto west-bound S. Glebe Road

Construct interim off-street public parking spaces on Datatel and adjacent parcels



## The Action Plan

### Short & Mid-Term Actions

Add new residential on-street parking spaces along W. Glebe Road and Four Mile Drive to assist in residential overflow parking. Parking has recently been added to the west side of Old Dominion Blvd. north of W. Glebe Road.

Encourage communication about shared parking with the Birchmere, St. Rita's Church and others

Add new commercial on-street parking spaces along Mt. Vernon Avenue as shown on page 51 to assist in residential and commercial overflow parking



T & ES Plan for Short Term Residential Neighborhood Improvements

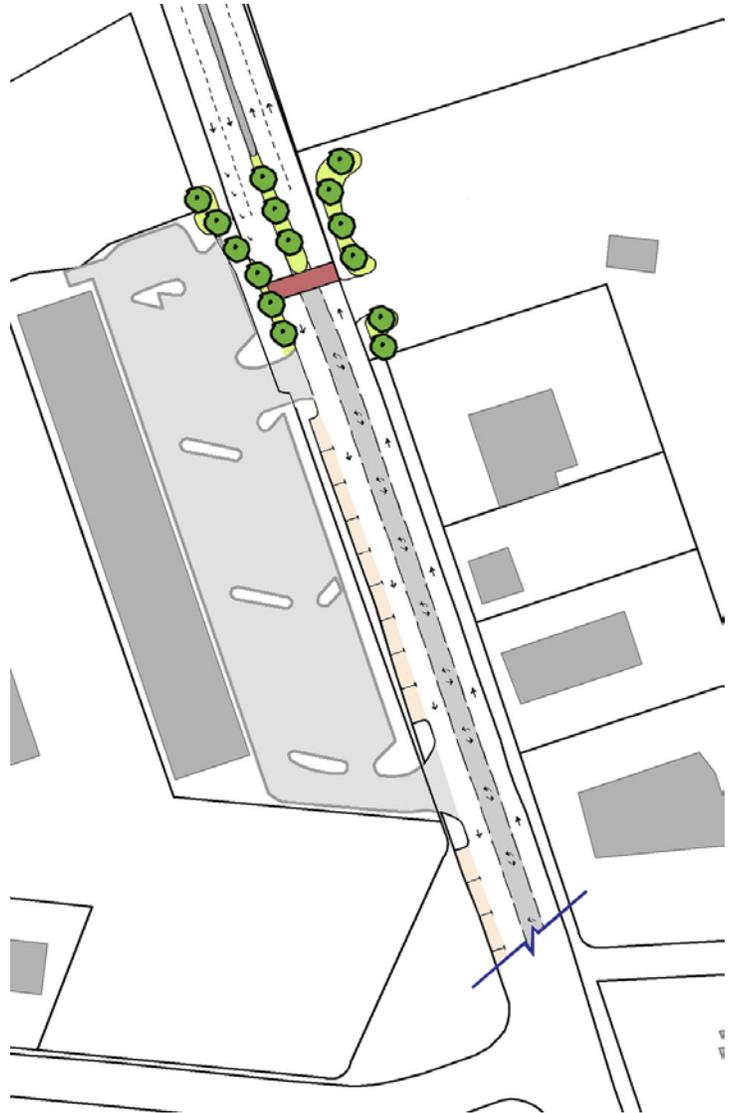
## **The Action Plan**

### **Short & Mid-Term Actions**

Develop implementation plan for the reconfiguration of the north end of Mt. Vernon Avenue starting at the gateway into Arlandria

Reduce the existing travel lanes down to Four Mile Drive from 4 to 3 including a dual center turning lane and provide on-street parking spaces on the west side of the street

Work with property owner to reconfigure parking lot entrance to work around new gateway and crosswalk



*Existing condition looking south*



*Proposed enhancements*

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## The Action Plan

### Short & Mid-Term Actions

#### Plant street trees along Mt. Vernon Avenue

First phase of tree planting to occur in the 3800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Later phases will result in a continuous line of trees along the length of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

#### Street trees offer many benefits:

- Help define and order the street
- Visually narrow the street, add pedestrian scale
- Offer shade and protection to pedestrians
- Add beauty, greenery, and seasonal color
- Frame and enhance the buildings and storefronts
- Help clean the air

#### Planting principles:

- Tree spacing approximately 35' on center
- Location/placement of trees to complement building facades, entrances, and signs
- Tree species should be more upright to work with storefronts and signs



Existing condition looking north



Proposed new street trees

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **The Action Plan**

### **Short & Mid-Term Actions**

#### **Install banners along Mt. Vernon Avenue**

Banners add a festive look and feel to a street, and help add life, color and a unique identity to a neighborhood.

Banners also are a festive way of announcing events and neighborhood happenings.

#### **Install brick pavers in areas where they are missing**

Brick pavers give the public realm an elegance and uniformity, and create ideal areas for sidewalk cafes and walking.



*Existing sidewalk looking north*



*Proposed new brick pavers and trees*

## **The Action Plan**

### **Short & Mid-Term Actions**

#### **Encourage sidewalk cafes**

Sidewalk cafes add life and vitality to a street, help encourage pedestrian activity, and assist in the revitalization of an area. They also help increase property values, and attract other businesses to an area.

#### **Components of sidewalk cafés:**

- Wide sidewalks to accommodate the tables and chairs as well as pedestrians
- Shops interspersed with the cafés to add variety and interest
- Colorful umbrellas, chairs and tables unique to each café / restaurant
- Colorful awnings and storefronts
- Street trees and landscaping for shade, beauty, and protection from the street
- Nearby bike racks to encourage bike use
- It is desirable to create streets with a number of cafés / restaurants together to energize the entire block



*Bethesda, Maryland*



*Existing condition at Lilian's Restaurant*



*Computer-enhanced image with cafe*

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## The Action Plan

### Short & Mid-Term Actions

#### Preserve and enhance historic buildings

Arlandria has a number of significant historic buildings that give the area a unique character, and are therefore worth preserving both as individual structures, and as a collection of distinct buildings

#### Characteristics worth preserving:

- Unique structures with styling and/or detailing characteristic of the architectural period or style
- A significant collection of unique buildings that together add up to a distinct sense of place (such as Presidential Greens)
- A collection of buildings surrounding an intersection forming a unique mix (such as at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Bruce Street)

#### Encouraging preservation:

- Façade easements, tax breaks, and/or matching grants to property owners who commit to preservation and enhancement
- Historic designation on the National Register



*Presidential Greens*



*Lilian's entrance*



*Presidential Greens*



*Arlandria Shopping Center*



*Art Deco building*



*Lilian's rounded Deco corner*

## **The Action Plan**

### **Short & Mid-Term Actions**

Enhance access and visibility to Four Mile Run Park

Provide more landscaping and better signage at Four Mile Run Park



*Enhancement to park north park access*



*Potential new access points to park*

### **Enhancements to Park access and visibility**

## **The Action Plan**

### **Short & Mid-Term Actions**

Remove newspaper boxes that impede sidewalk access and negotiate a voluntary agreement with the vendors to enhance the boxes similar to the program in Old Town

Develop a program to raise awareness of City regulations for residential and business community

Implement regular street cleaning, with appropriate signage, and continue twice weekly street cleaning by street infrastructure worker

Adjust end time period for existing restricted two hour parking to coincide with the closing hour of businesses on Mt. Vernon Avenue (extend from 10:00 p.m. to Midnight)

Increase multi-agency walking tour inspection of Mt. Vernon Avenue during summer months; continue to take issues to the Citywide Code Compliance meeting

Continue Code Enforcement work with resident property managers and other concerned citizens to identify and resolve situations where overcrowding or illegal rooming houses are observed

Maintain the existing Police presence; implement a Police satellite office; develop neighborhood watch program at Old Dominion Blvd. and Tennessee Ave.

## **The Action Plan**

### **Short & Mid-Term Actions**

#### **Neighborhood Retail Zone**

A new neighborhood retail zone is proposed for the Arlandria retail corridor to help revitalize the area with a mix of uses, including pedestrian scale retail along the street, by allowing certain uses with standards and providing some flexibility with other regulations that will help to achieve an active urban environment while preserving the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The intent of the new zone is to 1) create a pedestrian-oriented, vibrant place, with opportunities for shopping, recreation and cultural amenities, 2) promote infill development and redevelopment of existing properties consistent with the principles developed in the vision for Arlandria, and 3) aid in the implementation of the proposed market strategy for the neighborhood.

The new zone would include the following elements:

- Selected uses that are desirable in the neighborhood from a market standpoint are recommended to be permitted uses, subject to compliance with operational standards. These uses will not require a special use permit (SUP), but will be subject to certain administrative standards:
  - o Restaurants, with limitations on indoor and outdoor seating, hours of operation, alcohol sales, delivery, and live entertainment
  - o Outdoor food and crafts market
  - o Live theater
- Provisions for parking that will maximize the use of the existing supply of parking among businesses in the corridor and provide flexibility in the amount of required parking when the use of an existing building changes.
- A listing of prohibited uses, such as drive-in establishments, that are not supportive of a pedestrian retail environment.
- Provisions for public art and murals to help create a sense of place and define the neighborhood.
- Standards for signage and community-identifying banners.
- General guidelines to assist store owners in the creation of successful retail store frontages.
- Revised bulk regulations and guidelines related to height, mass, scale and landscaping to ensure that future redevelopment is compatible with the long range vision and the general neighborhood and infill principles set forth in this Plan.

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## The Action Plan

### Long-Term Actions

Potential Long Term Parking Solutions in the Residential Neighborhood include:

- Provide 28 parking spaces on Executive Avenue, south of Glebe Road
- Additional parking on Four Mile Road

Design and construct new T intersection at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Russell Road as shown on page 52

Design and construct extension of Four Mile Road (with T intersection) into Four Mile Run Park as shown on page 61

Undertake necessary process with FEMA to evaluate and adjust the floodplain boundary in Arlandria.

- The floodplain boundary currently extends approximately 750 feet into the Arlandria commercial area. While no flooding has occurred since the channelization of Four Mile Run in the 1970s, businesses must comply with FEMA regulations. Reevaluation of the flood plain boundaries and application of the regulations in this area is warranted.



T & ES Plan for Long-Term Residential Neighborhood Improvements

## **The Action Plan**

### **Long-Term Actions**

If the automobile-oriented retail uses adjacent to Four Mile Run Park do not redevelop within 15 years as market conditions improve, consider acquisition of the four parcels (under one ownership) to the north of the existing pedestrian access opposite Four Mile Road.

Acquiring the subject property would provide more park land, open the park to Mount Vernon Avenue, and create new family oriented activities in the new park area. It would also allow for the relocation of the park entrance to a controlled intersection, with parking provided and screened from the street.



*Potential land acquisition to open up the park*

## The Action Plan

### Long-Term Actions

#### Street Tree Planting along Mt. Vernon Avenue

Expand first phase of tree planting to create a continuous line of street trees the entire length of Mt. Vernon Avenue. As new development and improvements occur, incorporate street tree planting along Mt. Vernon Avenue frontage of the property.

#### PLAN KEY

-  New Street Trees
-  Existing Trees
-  Future Trees



# Arlandria Retail Market Potential

City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

### **Arlandria Retail Market Potential**

This section summarizes the report prepared by Randall Gross/Development Economics, entitled “Arlandria -- Our Place to Be: Market Potentials Analysis for the Arlandria/Upper Potomac West Retail District”, which is incorporated by reference as part of this document.

The market analysis assesses the near-term market demand for different types of retail stores and proposes an appropriate “interim” strategy that helps define a marketing identity and strengthen the retail environment.

#### **Existing Conditions**

Mount Vernon Avenue is the primary retail corridor through the neighborhood. The commercial area also extends up to one block beyond the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and West/East Glebe Road in all directions. These additional retail areas are logical extensions of the Arlandria commercial district.

- Arlandria is in a central location, with good access and nice amenities, including Four Mile Run Park.
- Most traffic is short-cut or locally oriented, with little destination traffic.
- Limited visibility constrains opportunities for large, region-serving destination uses.
- There are few elements that help define Arlandria as a unique place.
- Arlandria is perceived as a Latino business hub with a strong sense of community.
- The district currently serves a distinctly local market, with an unusually high dependence on walk-in trade.

#### **Retail Inventory & Business Mix**

- Arlandria has 265,800 square feet of retail space, equivalent in size to a large community shopping center or a small shopping mall.
- There is very little vacancy, with most existing vacancy concentrated in the Safeway building and Mount Vernon Village Center.
- For a small, urban commercial district with 90 businesses, Arlandria has a surprisingly diverse mix of retail and other businesses.

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Retail Inventory & Business Mix (continued)

- There is a large concentration of specialty food stores, ethnic restaurants, cleaners, and general merchandise stores.
- Arlandria is home to a nationally-recognized entertainment venue, The Birchmere.

COMMERCIAL SPACE BY RETAIL CATEGORY, ARLANDRIA, 2002		
Category	Sq. Ft.	Percent
Convenience Goods	69,735	26.2%
Shoppers Goods	47,239	17.8%
Eating/Drinking	26,528	10.0%
Entertainment	56,000	21.1%
Personal & Repair Svc	13,159	5.0%
Vacant	53,135	20.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>265,795</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>All Comml Space</i>	333,383	
Sources:	City of Alexandria RE Assessments; Store owners/management; and Randall Gross / Dev. Economics.	

## Building Space

- About 40% of the retail space is concentrated in three shopping centers, with the rest of the retail space scattered in freestanding buildings or former residential properties.
- Commercial rents average \$28.17 per square foot, with a broad range from \$12 to \$38 per foot, depending on the building and tenant.
- The average age of buildings is about 50 years.
- Building values average \$95 per square foot, less than the cost of new commercial construction.

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Customer Base & Sales Trends

- Sales are averaging \$286 per square foot, a healthy figure given national and regional averages. The highest performing stores are those with a regular, walk-in clientele.
- Almost 70% of the stores report increasing sales over the past three years, with an average rate of 3.3% per year.
- Following the events of September 11, 2001, many stores saw sales decline dramatically, with several stores reporting up to 40% loss.
- Most sales (72%) are generated from households within walking distance or within a five-minute drive of the commercial district.

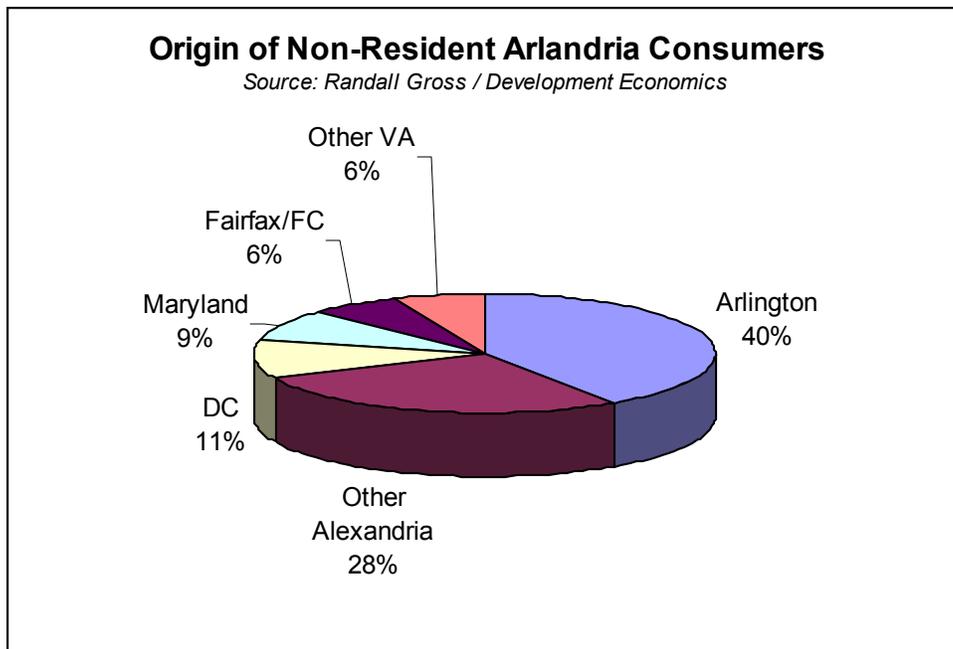
RETAIL SALES CHARACTERISTICS, ARLANDRIA BUSINESS DISTRICT, 2002		
<b>Average Sales</b>		
Mean	\$ 286.22	Per Square Foot
Range	\$65-\$950	Per Square Foot
<b>Local Origin/Walk-In</b>		
Weighted by Sales	72.3%	of Customer Base
Unweighted Average	64.3%	"
Median & Mode	80.0%	"
Range	5%-90%	"
<b>Sales Trends</b>		
Stores Increasing	69%	
Stores Declining	31%	
Total Sales Change	3.34%	Per Year
Change Since 9/11	up to -40%	
Sources:	Sample Arlandria merchants, realtors, Randall Gross / Development Economics.	

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Consumer Intercept Survey

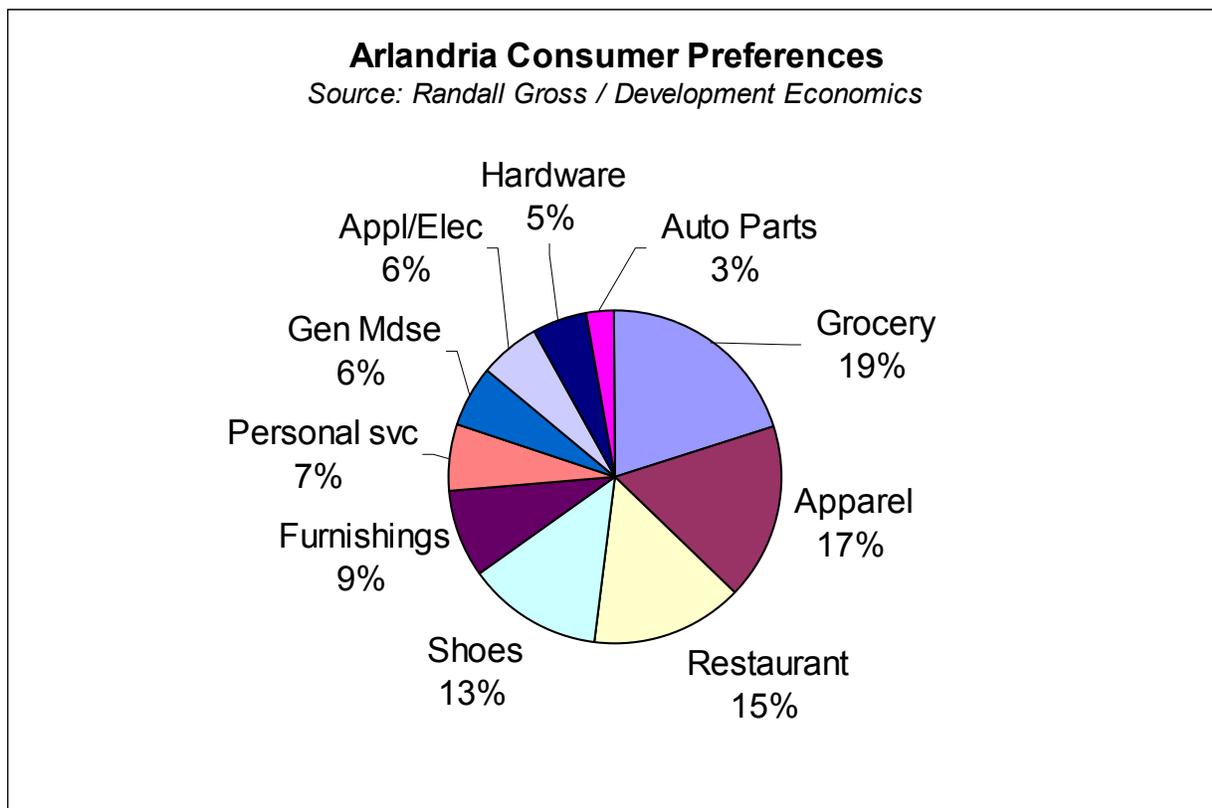
A Shopper's Intercept Survey was conducted to elicit input on Arlandria's strengths and weaknesses, competitive issues, and consumer demographics and behavior. Highlights of the survey are:

- Almost exactly 50% of the consumers interviewed live within the Arlandria neighborhood, confirming the importance of the walk-in trade to existing neighborhood businesses.
- Of the non-Arlandria shoppers, 40% are from Arlington and 28% are from other parts of Alexandria.
- Surveyed shoppers expressed the desire for grocery, apparel and shoe stores, and restaurants



# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Arlandria Consumer Retail Preferences



## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Spending Behavior**

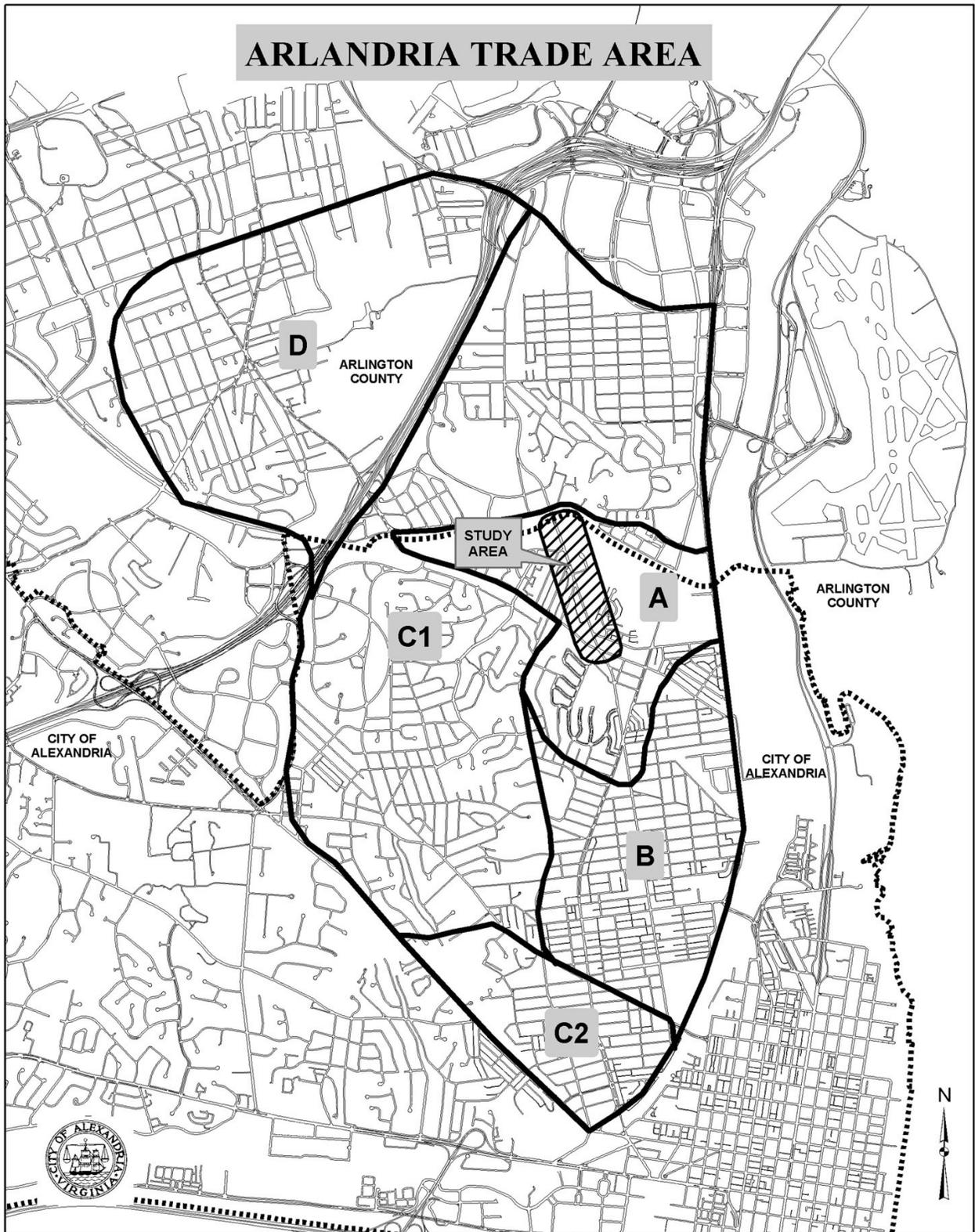
- The largest number of shoppers visit the area at least two times per week, with a weighted average of 2.48 trips per week.
- Arlandria shoppers spend an average of \$47.64 per trip, with the largest number of shoppers spending between \$30 and \$50 per visit.
- Overall spending is about \$6,000 per consumer per year.
- 70% of consumers have household incomes of less than \$30,000.
- 15% of consumer households have incomes in excess of \$50,000 per year.

### **Market Potentials Analysis**

The larger Arlandria Retail Trade Area is generally bounded by Jefferson Davis Highway (U.S. Route 1) on the east, King Street on the southwest, 18th Street (in Arlington) on the north, and with an extension along Glebe Road to Columbia Pike on the northwest.

The Retail Trade Area is defined to include the region from which 75% to 80% of sales should be generated for businesses within the Arlandria commercial district. The boundaries were defined based on an analysis of transportation access, traffic flow, natural and man-made barriers, housing densities, driving and walking time and other factors. The Retail Trade Area is further subdivided into five subareas based on these factors (See attached Arlandria Trade Area map).

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood



## A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

### DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS FOR TRADE AREAS, ARLANDRIA COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, 2002-2007

Factor	2002	2007	2002-2007 Change	
			Number	Percent
<u>Trade Area A</u>				
Population	11,342	11,913	570	5.0%
Households	4,377	4,592	215	4.9%
HH Income	\$ 64,465	\$ 67,449	\$ 2,984	4.6%
<u>Trade Area B</u>				
Population	9,102	8,826	(276)	-3.0%
Households	3,683	3,562	(121)	-3.3%
HH Income	\$ 87,018	\$ 97,562	\$ 10,544	12.1%
<u>Trade Area C1</u>				
Population	20,118	20,696	578	2.9%
Households	9,058	9,472	414	4.6%
HH Income	\$ 108,584	\$ 118,333	\$ 9,749	9.0%
<u>Trade Area C2</u>				
Population	3,439	3,410	(29)	-0.8%
Households	1,326	1,312	(14)	-1.1%
HH Income	\$ 163,007	\$ 189,298	\$ 26,291	16.1%
<u>Trade Area D</u>				
Population	14,424	14,853	429	3.0%
Households	6,829	7,028	200	2.9%
HH Income	\$ 61,998	\$ 63,770	\$ 1,772	2.9%

Note: Income expressed in constant 2002 dollars.

Source: Claritas, Inc. and Randall Gross / Development Economics.

- Total Personal Income in the Trade Area totaled approximately \$2.226 Billion in 2002 and is expected to increase by 8.5% during the next five years, to \$2.475 Billion in 2007.
- Retail expenditure potentials total \$693,907,000 in 2002 and are expected to increase to \$769,945,000 by 2007.

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Competitive Framework**

Arlandria businesses have a specialized destination niche and must also compete against specialty retail districts and downtowns nearby and throughout the region. Competing local specialty districts include:

- Mt. Vernon Avenue (Del Ray)
- Old Town
- Shirlington

Other primary competing centers for destination shopping and entertainment are:

- Potomac Yard Center
- Landmark Shopping Center
- Ballston Common
- Pentagon City / Pentagon Row
- Crystal City

Several of the most proximate smaller retail nodes are:

- Shirley Park Shopping Center on South Glebe Road. This is the closest competition for convenience goods, with 80,000 square-feet of neighborhood convenience retail, anchored by Gold's Gym (formerly a bowling alley) and Giant Foods.
- Avalon @ Arlington Square. This new commercial area includes about 30,000 square feet of business and live-work space, with only about 30% occupied.
- West Glebe Road. Located along the western edge of the Arlandria neighborhood, adjacent to Arlington County, this small retail node has about 15,000 square feet of space.

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Retail Potentials

Two scenarios were developed to account for in-flow sales to Arlandria's businesses from outside of the trade area.

### Scenario 1: Community Scenario

The results of the Community Scenario, which assumes primarily local trade area marketing, are summarized below.

WARRANTED DEMAND BY USE, ARLANDRIA DISTRICT – COMMUNITY SCENARIO, ALEXANDRIA, 2002 & 2007				
Type of Good	Gross Demand (SF)		Existing Uses 1/	Warranted Demand
	2002	2007		
Convenience	65,762	72,650	69,735	2,915
Shoppers Gds	72,031	78,879	47,239	31,640
Eating/Drinking	20,250	22,112	26,528	(4,417)
Entertainment	4,349	4,996	-	4,996
Personal Svces	7,691	8,488	5,650	2,838
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170,084</b>	<b>187,125</b>	<b>149,151</b>	<b>37,974</b>
<i>Existing Vacant</i>			53,135	
<i>Excluding Safeway</i>			30,957	
<b>Net New Space</b>				<b>7,017</b>
<b>Note:</b>	1/ Existing Entertainment excludes Birchmere.			
<b>Source:</b>	Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

•With the existing inventory of retail space, there will be *net* demand for about 7,000 square feet of additional retail space by 2007.

## A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

### Scenario 2: Destination Scenario

The Destination Scenario assumes the creation of a specialty niche market that appeals to higher-income households and niche markets both within and outside of the trade area, with the following demand.

<b>WARRANTED DEMAND BY USE, ARLANDRIA DISTRICT - DESTINATION SCENARIO, ALEXANDRIA, 2002 &amp; 2007</b>				
<b>Type of Good</b>	<b>Gross Demand (SF)</b>		<b>Existing Uses 1/</b>	<b>Warranted Demand</b>
	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007</b>		
Convenience	65,762	81,044	69,735	11,309
Shoppers Gds	72,031	83,346	47,239	36,107
Eating/Drinking	20,250	29,996	26,528	3,468
Entertainment	4,349	7,687	-	7,687
Personal Svces	7,691	8,569	5,650	2,919
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170,084</b>	<b>210,642</b>	<b>149,151</b>	<b>61,491</b>
<i>Existing Vacant</i>			53,135	
<i>Excluding Safeway</i>			30,957	
<b>Net New Space</b>				<b>30,534</b>
<b>Note:</b>	1/ Existing Entertainment excludes Birchmere.			
Source:	Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

- With the existing retail inventory, there would be a net new warranted demand for about 30-35,000 square feet of additional retail space in the district by 2007.
- The demand for new space is higher if several non-competitive existing retail buildings are excluded, including houses with a total of about 5,000 square feet. Thus, net new demand is closer to 40,000 square feet in this scenario.
- There is net demand for about 11,000 square feet of additional grocery store space in this niche-market, destination-driven scenario.

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Recommended Mix

Arlandria should be marketed both as a local-serving, community-oriented convenience hub as well as a unique retail destination with broader market appeal. A niche-marketing concept and program would include the following recommended business mix.

<b>RECOMMENDED ADDITIONS TO INTERIM RETAIL MIX, ARLANDRIA COMMERCIAL DISTRICT</b>		
<b>Type of Store</b>	<b>Square feet</b>	<b>Specialty Niches</b>
Expanded Latin Grocery Store	10,000- 18,000	Latin Foods; Meats
Weekly Flea & Food Market	- -	Discount Mdse
Children's' Apparel & Toy Store	1,200- 1,500	Children's
Specialty Apparel & Svcs- Bridal	800- 1,200	Latin/Bridal
Specialty Apparel-Sporting Gds	3,500- 7,500	Health & Fitness
Discount Shoes 1/	1,200- 2,500	Discount
Home Furnishings-Specialty	1,500- 3,000	Asian Imports/Intl
Fabric/Sewing-Specialty	1,200- 2,700	Intl Fabrics/Imports
Garden Supply Center/Florist	1,000- 1,500	Intl Varieties
Books, Software & Music-Spanish	2,000- 3,000	Latin/Language/Intl
Family Entertainment Center	7,500- 10,000	Family
Family Restaurant	2,500- 4,000	Family/Children
<b>Total (Net New)</b>	<b>28,581 - 49,781</b>	
<b>Note:</b>	1/ Assumes replacement only.	
<b>Source:</b>	Randall Gross / Development Economics.	

The recommended interim retail mix builds on the area's existing strengths, including its strong Latino community, specialty ethnic food markets and international restaurants, while also enhancing the longer-term opportunities for capturing the broad destination market. With the location in the neighborhood of the Birchmere, a nationally-recognized entertainment venue, there is an existing destination "entertainment" draw to the area. Capitalizing on this market by promoting additional entertainment and restaurant venues may present a unique opportunity for the neighborhood to enhance its distinctiveness.

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Niche Marketing Strategy**

### *Multi-Cultural Community Theme*

- Highlighting specific cultural strengths helps create character, in the form of a unique business and community environment, that attracts people for the experience
- The Hispanic market is the most concentrated and fastest growing ethnic market in the trade area
- Arlandria has a large, vibrant and successful base of Latino and other ethnic-owned or themed retailers, restaurants, travel agents and other businesses
- The market includes middle and higher income households who are not yet fully tapped in Arlandria or elsewhere
- There is limited competition for the Hispanic market in Alexandria or in the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the trade area

### *Family-orientation Theme*

- A strategy to change the negative perceptions of crime
- Consistent with and builds on the ethnic marketing identity

### *Health and Recreation Theme*

- Four Mile Run Park is an exceptional recreation asset
- Opportunity to attract a major recreation or sport-oriented retailer with opening of new My Organic Market

### *The Arlandria Name*

- Traditional name used by residents and outsiders to describe the neighborhood
- Powerful word unique to this area

### *Business Mix*

- Latin grocery – expand on existing market
- Family entertainment venue and restaurant
- Sporting goods and equipment store
- Spanish and international books, music, software store
- Weekly flea and food market

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Niche Marketing Strategy - continued**

### *Design recommendations*

- Incorporate flags, banners and gateways that reinforce the cultural identity and the diverse international character of the area
- Provide better access to the Park and integrate it with Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Incorporate public art into the streetscape

### *Anchor recreation amenity*

- Explore additional recreational opportunities at the Park

### *Advertising and promotions*

- Focus on key marketing concepts of Latino community, family-orientation, and health and recreation
- Use humor to build recognition for unique and quirky Arlandria name

### *Programming*

- Regional soccer matches and training camp
- Outdoor family movie nights
- Multi-cultural street festival on Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Folk/cultural music festival (in conjunction with the Birchmere)
- Weekly flea market

## **Marketing and Promotions Organization**

A participatory organization to market and promote the Arlandria retail district will be necessary for the successful implementation of the recommendations. There are several organizations, including the Potomac West Business Association, Arlandria Business Association and Tenants and Workers Support Committee, as well as technical resources, including the City, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the Small Business Development Center, that should be brought together to work on the development of a marketing and promotions organization.

# Proactive Retail Strategy

City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Proactive Retail Strategy



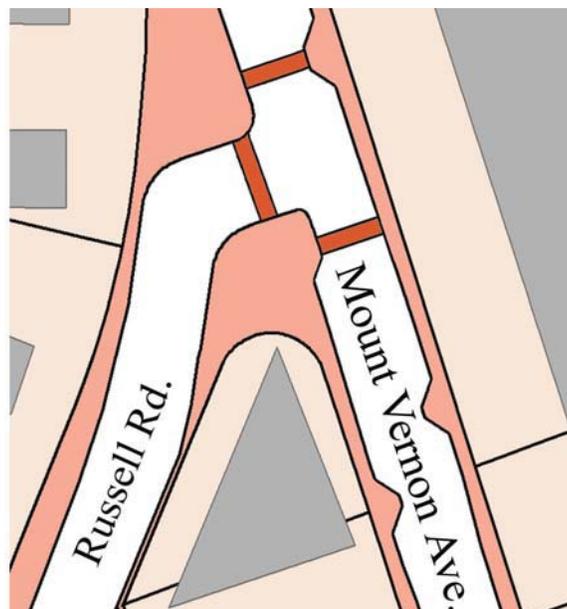
### Implementation

#### Program:

- Public Investment
- Proactive Retail Strategy
- Zoning Tools
- Marketing and Promotions

### Public Investment:

- Datatel parking lot
- Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
  - Mid-term streetscape and pedestrian improvements
  - Long-term intersection redesign and construction



## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### **The Strategy**

#### ***Public Improvements***

- Streetscape and gateway improvements
- Intersection and pedestrian improvements

#### ***Guidelines***

- Create guidelines/loans to assist business owners with the improvement of their storefront facades

#### ***Incentives – Zoning Tools***

- Provide flexibility in zoning rules regarding uses that require special use permit approval and off-street parking; allow increase in floor area ratio with special use permit
- Use parking to leverage new private investment

#### ***Marketing and Promotions***

- Retain the unique Arlandria name in marketing efforts
- Incorporate niche destination marketing themes
- Enhance a business organization to work towards developing and implementing
- Strengthen individual businesses with business plans and merchandizing strategies—match potential retail users with available space



*Illustrative*

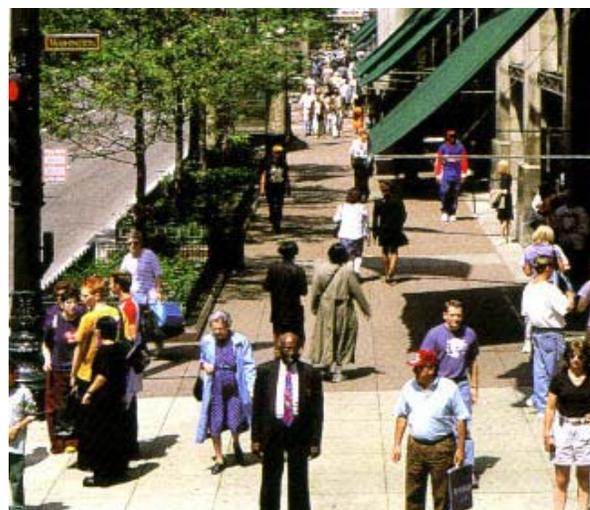
## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**

#### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

Good building and storefront design greatly enhances the success of each individual business as well as the entire commercial district. Potential benefits to property and business owners who adopt these guidelines:

- Increased store sales and profits
- Stabilized and enhanced property values
- Increased tourism resulting in increased sales
- Reinforced sense of community and a pleasing environment
- Preserved community's identity and uniqueness
- Increased sense of quality of the individual stores and business district

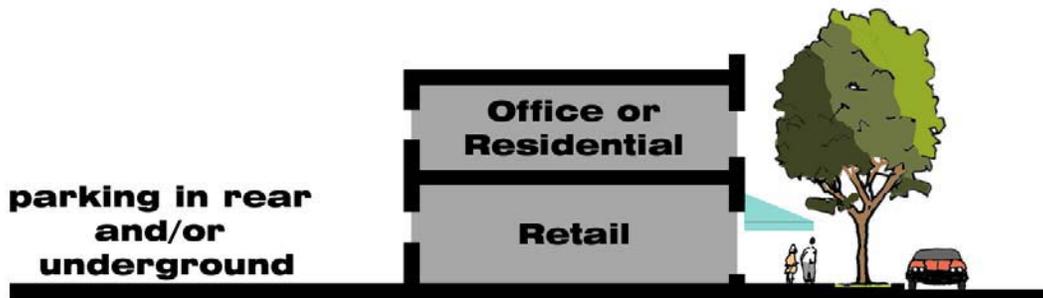


## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

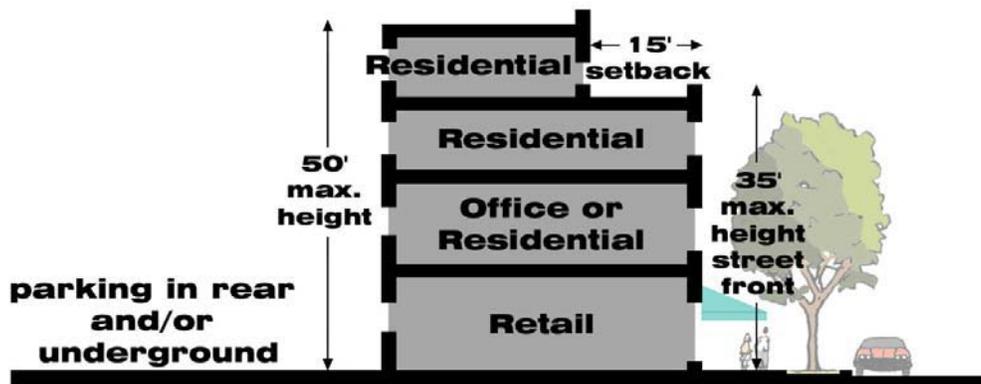
### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

Along Mt. Vernon Avenue, infill and new development of properties is encouraged with buildings that incorporate a mix of uses, with ground floor retail and office or residential above, and at a mass and scale that is appropriate and compatible with the existing character of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

#### ***Building envelope***



**Building Scale (.5 FAR)**



**Building Scale w/SUP (1.5 FAR)**

# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

#### ***Building facades***

Newly constructed buildings and additions should contribute to the creation of a streetscape with varying architectural treatments, and should be designed to reflect the small lot character (i.e. 50 foot lot widths) of the neighborhood.

Building elevations should be modulated at a minimum of every 50' to break up the mass of the building facade into smaller increments. This modulation is created by a setback in the plane of the facade with a minimum of 5' from the front building wall, and a minimum 5' change in the height of the parapet. This is further emphasized by a change in facade material, color, and/or stylistic detail.



Decorative architectural elements such as cornices, belt courses, and eaves should be incorporated to give scale and interest to the facades, define building elements, and create three dimensional richness.



# *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

#### ***Facade Rhythms***

The building facades should incorporate multiple rhythms or cadences (rather than a single repetitive rhythm) similar to that found in the historic or traditional buildings in the neighborhood.

Encourage changes and/or breaks in the facade at least every twenty five feet (25') in length with a change in color or materials, changes in wall planes, placement of awnings, or other similar methods.



## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**

#### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

Building walls should be punctured by well-proportioned window openings that provide three dimensional relief, detail, interest and rhythmic variation in the wall.

A more specific list of the elements that make up a rhythmic variation in buildings includes the following:

- Recessed windows
- Projecting windows
- Bay windows
- Structural elements
- Textures, patterns and colors
- Trim elements
- Balconies
- Belt-courses
- Cornices
- Awnings and shutters
- Landscape elements

The intent is to incorporate sufficient offsets and other devices that will create a façade that is in scale with the traditional pattern of small buildings found along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

New and remodeled facades should conform to the general Art Deco architectural style of the historic buildings in Arlandria and the greater neighborhood. Flat roofs are encouraged.



*Art Deco elements*



*Art Deco elements*

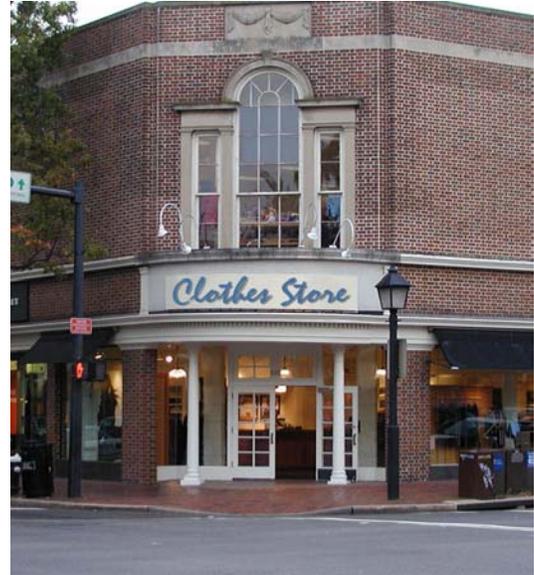


## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

#### ***Corner Treatment***

In cases where buildings are on a corner, special treatment is encouraged for the buildings at these locations. This includes such things as rounded or cut corners, articulated corner entrances, accented display windows, special corner roof features, etc.



#### ***'T' Intersection Treatment***

In cases where buildings terminate the view down a street at a 'T' intersection, special treatment is encouraged including what is mentioned above, plus special facade treatment that lines up with the street view it is terminating. These would include special accented architectural features, distinctive façade fenestration, accented roof profile, special building materials, etc.



# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Proactive Retail Strategy

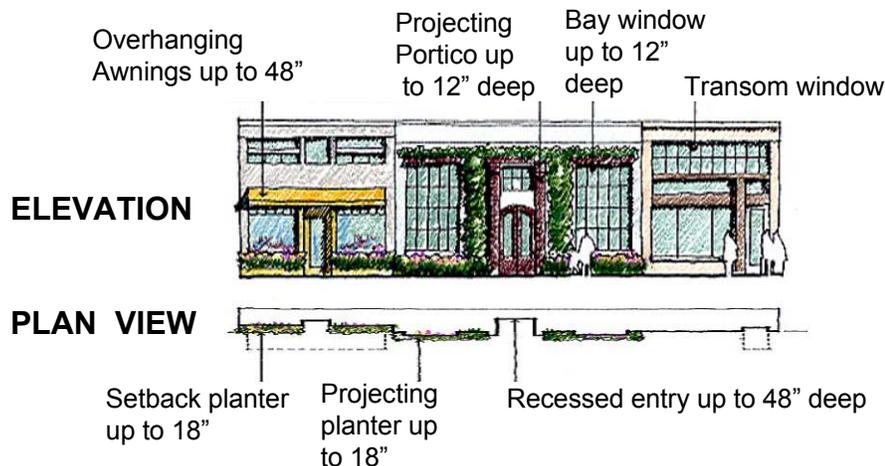
### Building and Retail Guidelines

#### Storefront Design

Storefronts are the first point of contact with potential customers and together with neighboring storefronts define the character of a neighborhood and retail street. The addition of outdoor cafes extends the store out onto the sidewalk and adds additional life to the street.



The storefront should work with the architecture of the overall building facade, should clearly and simply market the name of the business and the type of services and products offered. The following elements illustrate simple, desirable variations in storefront articulation.



## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

#### ***Storefront Design***

*Storefront design should include as many of the following items as possible:*

- Individual storefront facades should be narrow and change often to add a richness to the sidewalk, street, and neighborhood. The preferred width of the storefront is approximately 20-25 feet, and should be a maximum of 50 feet.



- Primary pedestrian entrances should directly front the sidewalk
- Entrances should be recessed up to 48 inches from the facade
- Detailed window frames with decorative moldings are encouraged
- A pattern of transom windows, horizontal elements and mullions that provide unique rhythm of glass and trim elements in the storefront is encouraged.
- 65-75% of the ground floor façade should be windows with clear glass
- Creative display of merchandise and/or services should be included in storefront windows

# A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood

## Proactive Retail Strategy

### Building and Retail Guidelines

#### Undesirable



*Cluttered Signage and Appearance*

Too many business and window signs creates a cluttered appearance, confusing customers and blocking visibility into the store.

#### Desirable



*Clear, Legible Signage*

A few legible signs identify the businesses and create a distinctive storefront and streetscape.

#### Undesirable



*Single-Story Building*

The construction of single story buildings is strongly discouraged.

#### Desirable



*Multi-Story Buildings*

New construction should be at a scale that is compatible with the existing urban commercial corridor, with buildings of two to three stories along the street.

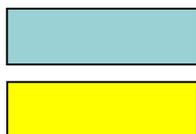
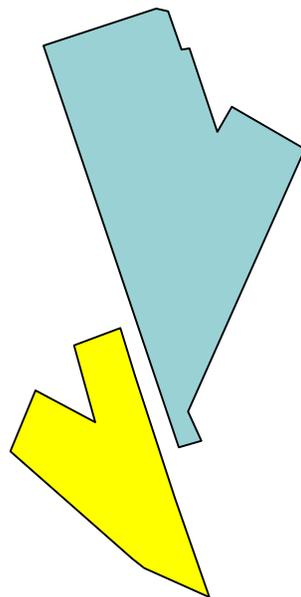
## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Incentives – Zoning Tools***

- **Potomac West Small Area Plan**
  - Incorporate the recommendations of this plan document and the UPW Task Force for Safeway-Datatel into the City's Master Plan
  
- **Coordinated Development District (CDD)**
  - Amend Arlandria CDD to reflect the planning principles and design concepts from this plan document
  - Create Safeway-Datatel CDD to incorporate the planning principles and design concepts of the UPW Task Force Plan
  
- **Arlandria Neighborhood Retail Zone**
  - Revitalize the area with mix of uses that are desirable from a market perspective, including pedestrian-scale retail, by providing:
    - Flexibility in parking for change of use
    - Administrative review for desired uses (limited restaurant operations, live theater, outdoor market)
  - Promote infill and redevelopment consistent with long range vision for an active pedestrian retail street
    - FAR incentives
    - Scale, height, bulk, setbacks to create an “urban village”
  - Provide flexibility to implement the proposed marketing strategy
    - Public art and murals
    - Signage and community identifying banners
    - Store frontage guidelines

**Proactive Retail Strategy**

***Arlandria Neighborhood Retail Zone and  
Coordinated Development Districts***



CDD Overlays

## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Flexible parking requirements***

The provision of convenient, short-term parking for customers is a major issue affecting the potential viability of retail businesses. The construction of the public parking lot on the former Datatel site provides the opportunity to give flexibility to the small business and property owners by providing parking in convenient proximity to the main pedestrian retail area along Mt. Vernon Avenue. In order to allow the small businesses to expand and for limited infill development to occur along the corridor, provision for flexibility in the parking requirements for retail uses is incorporated into the retail strategy. The following flexible parking provisions are recommended, with the actual parking demand being met by the public parking facility:

- Restaurants may provide up to 16 outdoor seats with no additional off-street parking requirement;
- If a business does not have parking now, it will not be required to provide it;
- For new buildings or additions to existing buildings of up to 5,000 sf or less of retail and office/residential space located within 500 feet of a public parking facility, only 40 percent of the total parking requirement is required to be provided on-site and;
- When there is a change in use to a use that has a greater parking requirement than the previous use and is located within 500 feet of a public parking lot or facility and the development complies with the design and retail guidelines, no additional off-street parking is required.

The parking lot on the former Datatel site is not intended to serve the long-term needs of the neighborhood. The long-term proposal is for the construction of a public parking garage on the site to serve the retail needs of businesses and new development along Mt. Vernon Avenue. As the parking lot can only accommodate a limited number of cars, it is suggested that the use of this lot to meet parking requirements will need to be monitored over time. Once 20,000 square feet of new construction takes place using the lot to reduce parking requirements, the parking reduction provisions should cease to be in effect until such time as the public parking structure is constructed.

## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### **Marketing and Promotions**



- Retain the unique Arlandria name in marketing efforts
- Build upon the area as an entertainment venue
- Incorporate niche destination marketing themes:
  - Family
  - Health and recreation
  - Multi-cultural diversity
- Enhance a business organization to work towards developing and implementing:
  - Marketing and promotion plans
  - Program events
  - Consistent business hours
  - Other business enhancement activities
- Strengthen individual businesses with business plans and merchandizing strategies—match potential retail users with available space
- Assist businesses to develop and to prosper using via existing agencies (Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the Alexandria Small Business Development Center). The Alexandria Small Business Development Center offers the following services:
  - Cash flow assessment and management
  - Managing accounts receivable and inventory
  - Expansion feasibility/advice
  - Financial analysis and access to capital sources
  - Business best practices
  - Tax/regulatory compliance guidelines

# Implementation Measures

City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

## **Implementation Measures**

Specific actions are listed below for implementation of the marketing, revitalization and redevelopment initiatives within the Arlandria neighborhood, along with the responsible party.

### **Objective: To create a Marketing and Promotions organization**

Technical assistance from Neighborhood Planning and Community Development division (NP&CP) of the City's Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP)

#### **Establish Focus Group to initiate intensive business organization development process involving:**

- Potomac West Business Association
- Arlandria Business Association
- Tenant and Workers Support Group
- Arlandria Businesses
- Other targeted groups or individuals

#### **Activities of New organization might include:**

1. Create Organization, Outreach and Fundraising plans for the organization. The Outreach Plan should focus on increasing and broadening membership.
2. Draft three-year Marketing & Promotions plan, utilizing the concepts and information provided in this report. As part of the plan, examine opportunities for distribution of direct mail, newsletters, and promotional materials to households in the larger trade area.
3. Assess opportunities for operating weekly Arlandria Flea or Farmer's Market and Summer Movie Nights, on a trial basis
4. Complete multi-year plan for operations of Flea or Farmer's Market, Movie Nights, and other promotions on a regular basis.

## **Implementation Measures**

### **Activities of New Organization (continued):**

5. Coordinate with the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, and Convention and Visitors' Bureau on business participation and on events planning and promotions, especially for expansion and re-orientation of an annual city-wide Latino street festival that would be held in Mt. Vernon Avenue (and with additional activities in adjoining Four Mile Run Park).
6. Working with NP&CD and the Department of Finance, begin to examine opportunities for a Business Improvement District (BID) or mechanism for funding joint marketing, capital improvement, and management initiatives. This should only be considered once the business association has a critical mass of members, perhaps 60-75 percent of all Arlandria property and business owners and operators.
7. Initiate discussions with The Birchmere on increased exposure within the commercial district, increased local marketing, and on opportunities for site development and better use of underutilized property.
8. Working with NP&CD, initiate discussions with stakeholders (including property owners) with regards to phasing for the Safeway-Datatel site redevelopment, including the concept of a Phase 1 development that includes the grocery and/or family entertainment anchor and other businesses as indicated in this report. Test interest among property owners in joint-venture marketing (with AEDP) of the Phase 1 project to prospective developers. The City would prospectively offer development of structured parking to leverage such investment as part of a mixed-use project.

## **Implementation Measures**

**Objective: To strengthen individual business plans and merchandising strategies**

Alexandria Small Business Development Center (SBDC), with assistance as needed from AEDP and the Chamber of Commerce

1. Conduct merchandising audits with individual businesses and provide input on store layout, merchandising, operations, and marketing strategies.
2. Provide assistance in the development (or revision) of 3-5 year business plans for individual independent businesses (not for franchised businesses).
3. Provide Small Business Association (SBA) loan package information and other financing information for individual businesses to invest in capital improvements, or for working capital and marketing.
4. Ensure coordination with AEDP in communicating information about Alexandria's small business assistance programs to existing business owners in Arlandria.
5. Coordinate with AEDP and Arlandria's business association on establishing a monitoring system for individual business plans, re-merchandising, and individual store marketing & promotions. The monitoring system should encourage cooperative efforts among the various businesses, such as in tracking merchandising changes, establishing joint promotions, improving signage & marketing, and extending hours of operation.

## **Implementation Measures**

### **Objective: To incorporate commercial district marketing concepts into park planning**

City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RP&CA) in coordination with Neighborhood Planning & Community Development (NP&CD)

1. Examine and prioritize proposals to enhance access to Four Mile Run Park and proposals for public plazas as urban active spaces that are incorporated (or open) into Four Mile Run Park.
2. Identify additional land for potential expansion of Four Mile Run Park, as part of mid-term and long-term park planning. This land might be “created” through redevelopment of existing underutilized buildings or parking areas.
3. Identify potential opportunities for new or expanded *active* recreation facilities (such as a small soccer stadium or recreation components of a family entertainment center) in Four Mile Run Park or the area that are consistent with the overall marketing concepts for the commercial district.
4. Coordinate with AEDP and the Marketing and Promotions organization on planning for weekly events and festivals that incorporate both the park and the commercial district.

### **Objective: To implement recommended traffic improvements**

City of Alexandria Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) in coordination with NP&CD

1. Review proposed improvements for area to ensure that they will alleviate existing congestion issues and improve pedestrian access and safety.
2. Identify and examine appropriate traffic improvements necessary to improve access for Four Mile Run Park.
3. Establish timeline for specific traffic and pedestrian improvements as outlined in the plan, with requests for funding to be included in the City’s Capital Improvement Program.

## **Implementation Measures**

**Objective: To encourage the implementation of urban design improvements and redevelopment projects, incorporating the recommended interim marketing concepts**

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division (NP&CD)

1. Work with RP&CA and T&ES to implement street tree planting in the 3800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue.
2. Incorporate target-marketing concepts into urban design plans and determine costs for urban design improvements. Incorporate the marketing concepts through:
  - a. Use of public art that builds on the specific strengths of the community. Participation by area children or families in design or construction is recommended.
  - b. Use of street furniture that responds to particular community needs and marketing. Design and grouping of street furniture to accommodate family gatherings, etc.
  - c. Use of public plazas and other public areas as a central element for marketing the business district and for creating access to Four Mile Run Park.
  - d. Gateways, street signs, and other public “hardware” that are consistent with the marketing concepts in their design, siting, and implementation.
  - e. Recommendations for façade improvements and other physical improvements for private building owners and businesses to implement. Such improvements would be designed to maximize the development of the marketing concepts. Specific recommendations for such improvements should be illustrated and shared with property owners and businesses.

## **Implementation Measures**

### **Objective: Urban design improvements (continued)**

3. Incorporate alternative concept for a phasing approach (Phase 1) redevelopment of the Safeway-Datatel site, including the proposed parking.
  - a. Review phasing concept with stakeholders.
  - b. Examine potential for utilizing structured parking (or other public improvements) as an incentive for leveraging Phase 1 development.
  - c. Pro-actively establish appropriate regulatory framework (zoning overlay, CDD guidelines, etc) in support of any redevelopment of this site or within the commercial district as a whole.
4. Determine specific further urban design improvements City will make to leverage private investment.
5. Working with the marketing and promotions organization and AEDP, review the Mt. Vernon Avenue design standards and propose new overlay design standards that respond more specifically to the marketing concepts for Arlandria. These standards might incorporate recommendations for a *menu* of appropriate materials, signage styles, etc.
6. Provide AEDP and the marketing and promotions organization with recommendations for specific design improvements for individual buildings and streetscaping that might be funded in part through City loan programs or through a potential Business Improvement District (BID).

### **Objective: To incorporate the recommendations and vision outlined herein as part of the City's Master Plan**

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division (NP&CD)

1. Draft revisions to the Potomac West Small Area Plan to reference the principles and guidelines developed as part of the vision for the neighborhood.
2. Seek public input and adoption of the revisions to the Small Area Plan.

## **Implementation Measures**

**Objective: To incorporate the proposed development guidelines as a component of the Arlandria Coordinated Development District (CCD#6)**

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division (NP&CD)

1. Draft revisions to CDD#6 to include recommendations for floor area ratio, development level, building height, build-to lines, mixture of uses and connections to properties within and adjoining the district that will implement the principles and guidelines developed as part of the vision for the neighborhood.
2. Seek public input and adoption of the revisions as part of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Objective: To create and implement an Neighborhood Retail zone to proactively target regulatory solutions to help encourage revitalization of the neighborhood**

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division (NP&CD)

1. Develop appropriate standards to encourage and expedite new business development, including uses such as restaurants, outdoor markets and live theatre (without SUP), and provisions for public art, signage, neighborhood banners and shared parking.
2. Seek public input and adoption of the overlay district as part of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Objective: To improve environmental conditions in the neighborhood**

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division (NP&CD)

1. Continue to work with the City-wide Code Compliance Committee on operational problems (trash, lighting, zoning concerns, etc.) and on community outreach.
2. Re-evaluate conditions as problems arise.

## **Implementation Measures**

**Objective: To develop an approach for beneficiaries of public parking to contribute to the cost of construction and operation of the proposed Datatel parking garage**

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division (NP&CD), in coordination with the Department of Finance and City Manager's Office

1. Explore the establishment of a parking district, whereby properties which cannot provide a defined level of on-site parking may contribute to a fund for the construction and operation of the Datatel parking garage, thus providing a mechanism that will allow the development of their properties.
2. Seek public input and property owner support for the resulting program or parking district approach.

**Objective: To enhance the streetscape and vitality of the street through the provision of appropriate street furniture**

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division (NP&CD), in coordination with Transportation and Environmental Services

1. Evaluate the need and potential locations for benches, bus shelters and similar street furniture. Develop appropriate standards and a plan for implementation.
2. Incorporate recommendations into the Capital Improvements Program for funding or seek other funding sources.
3. As properties redevelop, encourage the provision of such furniture as part of the development plan.