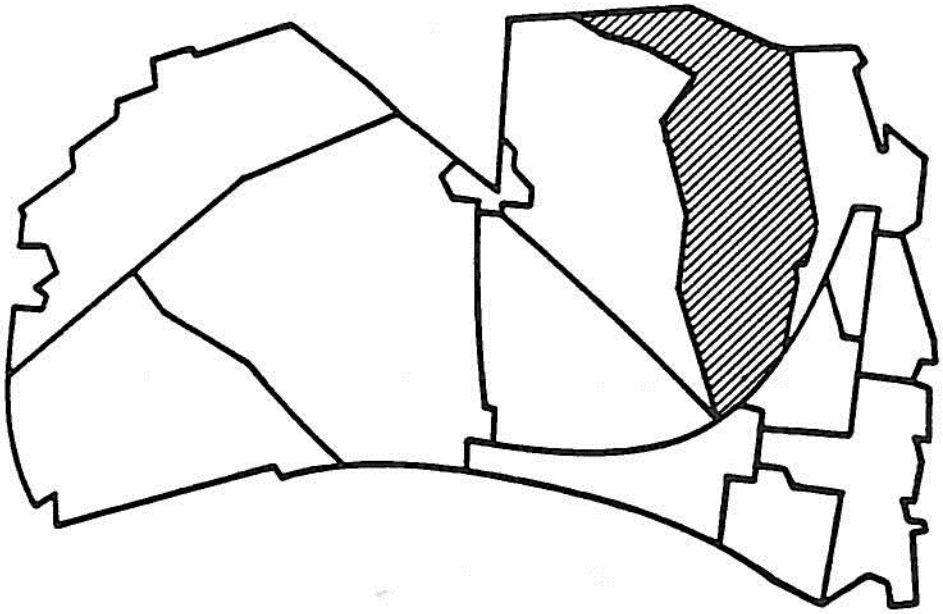
POTOMAC WEST

SMALL AREA PLAN



ADOPTED 1992 MASTER PLAN

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Amended 12/17/1994, Ordinance 3767
Amended 6/17/1995, Ordinance 3805
Amended 1/25/1997, Ordinance 3910
Amended 12/12/1998, Ordinance 4030
Amended 5/8/2002, Ordinance 4253
Amended 6/25/2002, Ordinance 4261
Amended 6/14/2003, Ordinance 4309
Amended 5/14/2005,Ordinance 4398
Amended 3/18/2006,Ordinance unknown
Amended 11/13/2010, Ordinance 4687
Amended 2/23/2013, Ordinance 4792
Amended 11/14/2015, Ordinance 4976
Amended 04/16/2016, Ordinance 4998

AMENDMENTS TO POTOMAC WEST SMALL AREA PLAN - as of 04/25/2016

Master Plan Amendment #	Ordinance #	Passage Date	Description/Address	Small Area Plan	Land Use Change
MPA94-0009; MPA94-0010	3767	12/17/1994	3110 Mt. Vernon Avenue (Calvert Complex); Portion of property at 3699 Russell and 3200 Mt. Vernon Avenue (formerly used as railroad right of way)	PW	Change in land use designation from RH to CRMU-M; and from POS to RM
MPA94-0004A	3805	6/17/1995	3200-3306 Mt. Vernon Avenue	PW/OTN	Change in land use designation from CSL, CG, RH to RM
MPA96-0007	3910	1/25/1997	3800-3804 Jefferson David Highway	PW	Amend CDD language to allow auto dealership in the CDD#7 / Rt. 1 properties
MPA98-0003	4030	12/12/1998	5 Year Update	PW/OT/NR	Amend plan goals and show designation in National Register of Historic Districts
MPA2002-0001	4253	5/18/2002	111-119 East Reed Ave.	PW	Change in land use designation from CSL and RM to CRMU-M
MPA2002-0002	4261	6/25/2002	Rear portion of 2100 Mt. Vernon Ave.	PW	Change in land use designation from RL to CL
MPA2003-0005	4309	6/14/2003	Area bounded by Four Mile Run to the north, Jefferson Davis Hwy to the east, W. Glebe Road to the west, and the intersection of Mt. Vernon Ave. and W. Glebe to the south	PW	Amend plan to incorporate Upper West Potomac Task Force Report, Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for Arlandria and CDD guidelines
MPA2005-0001	4398	5/14/2005	Include Mt. Vernon Business Area Plan; Major revisions to SAP text and maps	PW	Include Mt. Vernon Business Area Plan, and new and revised CDD guidelines
MPA2006-0001	Unknown	3/18/2006 http://dockets.alexandriava.gov/dsr/fy06dock.nsf/536ee1fcf306fd	Four Mile Run Restoration Plan		
MPA2009-0005	4687	11/13/2010	3110 Mt. Vernon Avenue (Calvert Complex)	PW	Remove any reference to proffer from 1994 (RZ 94-009, Ord. 3768)
MPA2012-0006	4792	2/23/2013	114, 116, 116 1/2, 118, 118 1/2, 120 East Reed Ave; 3600 Jefferson Davis Highway	PW	Change in land use designation from CDD to CRMU-M; and change height limit from 45' to 60'
MPA2015-0004	4976	11/14/2015	Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor Vision Plan and Urban Design Standards & Guidelines	PW	Amend Plan to incorporate Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor Vision Plan and Urban Design Standards & Guidelines as amended
MPA2015-0007	4998	4/16/2016	Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor Vision Plan and Urban Design Standards & Guidelines	PW	Amend boundary to Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor Plan; include development summary table, information regarding implementation and uses

POTOMAC WEST

SMALL AREA PLAN

as amended March 2005

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    Amended 12/17/94, Ord. 3767; Amended 6/17/95, Ord. 3805; Amended 1/25/97, Ord. 3910; Amended 12/12/98, Ord. 4030; Amended 5/18/02, Ord. 4253; Amended 6/25/02, Ord. 4261; Amended 6/14/03, Ord. 4309; Amended 5/14/05, Ord. 4398; Amended 11/13/10, Ord. 4687; Amended 2/23/13, Ord. 4793 Amended 11/14/15, Ord. 4976; Amended 04/16/16, Ord. 4998

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UPDATE TO SMALL AREA PLAN

Several amendments are proposed to the Potomac West Small Area Plan (SAP) chapter of the Master Plan to update existing information on conditions in the small area and to incorporate the strategies identified in the *Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*. The Mount Vernon Avenue Work Group was formed by the City of Alexandria in the spring of 2003 to collaborate on a comprehensive planning effort for Mount Vernon Avenue from Glebe Road to Luray Avenue. Over the course of 16 months, the Work Group defined a future direction for the Avenue, guiding neighborhood change while protecting the adjoining residential neighborhoods, and working closely with City staff, developed the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* (the *Plan*). By reference, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* is incorporated into the Small Area Plan, along with the design guidelines and planning principles that stem from the *Plan*. Amendments to the Urban Design Recommendations are proposed to reflect the land use and zoning recommendations in the *Plan*.

Updated demographic and other information have been included in the Small Area Plan to reflect the changes that have occurred in the Potomac West area since 1992. Conversely, outdated demographic and other information is deleted in this revised Small Area Plan.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this document is to update the Adopted 1992 Potomac West Small Area Plan (SAP) chapter of the Master Plan. This SAP will serve as the basis for future City Council policy initiatives and actions affecting land use, zoning, capital improvements and other programs in the Potomac West area.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS

The Potomac West SAP is organized into two sections: Background and Issues, and Plan Recommendations. The first section reviews and analyzes existing conditions and trends in the study area including physical description, demographics, land use, zoning, economic development activities and trends, transportation and urban design. This section also retraces past City policies including adopted plans, rezonings, resolutions and capital improvement programs. Based on this analysis this section identifies issues which need to be addressed in the plan for the area.

The second section lists the goals, objectives and specific recommendations on land use, zoning, transportation and urban design.

PLANNING PROCESS

The original SAP was developed in consultation with citizens, property owners, and community and business groups, through a series of meeting which included review of existing conditions and trends in the Potomac West area, identification of issues, review of prior plans for the area.

Recent planning efforts since 2000 have resulted in the development of two plans for the Arlandria neighborhood: the *Upper Potomac West Task Force Report* and the *Long-Range Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.* These Plans are known collectively as the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans*. The Upper Potomac West Task Force was a community-based planning effort that identified and created a vision for redevelopment of three key sites in Arlandria: Safeway/Datatel Sites; Mt. Vernon Village Center/Birchmere Sites; and the north side of East Reed Avenue, part of the existing Route 1 Properties. As that planning process concluded, it was recognized that there were other community concerns that had not been addressed and there was a need and desire for a long-range plan for the remainder of the commercial property fronting along Mt. Vernon Avenue in Arlandria. A Work Group comprised of community representatives, residents, commercial property owners and business operators worked with the City to develop the *Long-Range Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.* That *Plan* identified a vision for redevelopment and infill construction along the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor and developed an action plan with short, mid and long term implementation items to address the community's concerns. Both *Plans* were adopted by City Council in June 2003 and were incorporated into the Potomac West Small Area Plan at that time.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The Potomac West area is located in Planning District II, in the northeastern part of the City. The area is delineated by Four Mile Run on the north, Potomac Yard to the east, Union Station to the south and Russell and Glebe Road to the west. This area is one of the small areas that encompass the City's Master Plan.

Potomac West (Map 1) consists of an 1,116 acre area, extending north-south, from the City line at Four Mile Run to the Virginia Railway Express/Amtrak Station on Callahan Drive. The area is formed by four major north-south streets. Russell Road, defining the western boundary of the area from King Street to Glebe Road, is a predominantly two lane roadway fronted by single family detached homes. Commonwealth Avenue, which parallels Russell Road to the east, is a broad four lane street with a wide, central median and fronted by single family detached homes and townhouses.

Mt. Vernon Avenue bisects the area and serves as the commercial spine of Potomac West. Forming the eastern boundary of the area, US Route 1, also known as Jefferson Davis Highway, is a major commuter thoroughfare fronted by light industrial, and service uses, several newly developed multi-family projects, Potomac Yard Shopping Center and by the larger Potomac Yard development site.

Topographically, the Potomac West area is relatively flat. The area slopes upward toward Russell Road which forms a ridge defining Beverly Hills to the west. One of the most important natural features in Potomac West is Four Mile Run and its flood plain that forms the northern boundary of the planning area.

The Potomac West study area is primarily residential and distinguished by a narrow grid of streets, closely spaced bungalow houses and small, single-family lots subdivided around the turn of the century - in the pre-automobile era. Its residential character and development history reflect the important influence of the nearby Potomac Yards as a source of jobs. Potomac West was a convenient residential location for many railroad workers int the early part of this century. Transportation facilities such as the railroad, and, later, nearby Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport also influenced the location of industries along US Route 1.

As a large, diverse residential community, Potomac West can be divided into five defined neighborhoods (Map 2). Starting in the northern part of the area is Arlandria, a neighborhood located between Four Mile Run, Glebe Road and Commonwealth Avenue. This neighborhood contains a very dense concentration of garden apartments which predominate the area. There are also smaller concentrations of duplexes, rowhouses, townhouses and single family detached residential units located east and west of Mt. Vernon Avenue and along Reed Avenue. The Hume Springs and Sunnyside neighborhoods, among others, are located in this area.

Del Ray/Warwick Village is located in the central portion of Potomac West and is defined by Randolph Avenue and the former W&OD right of way on the north and by Braddock Road to the south. Del Ray contains older, single family homes dating from the turn of the century and the

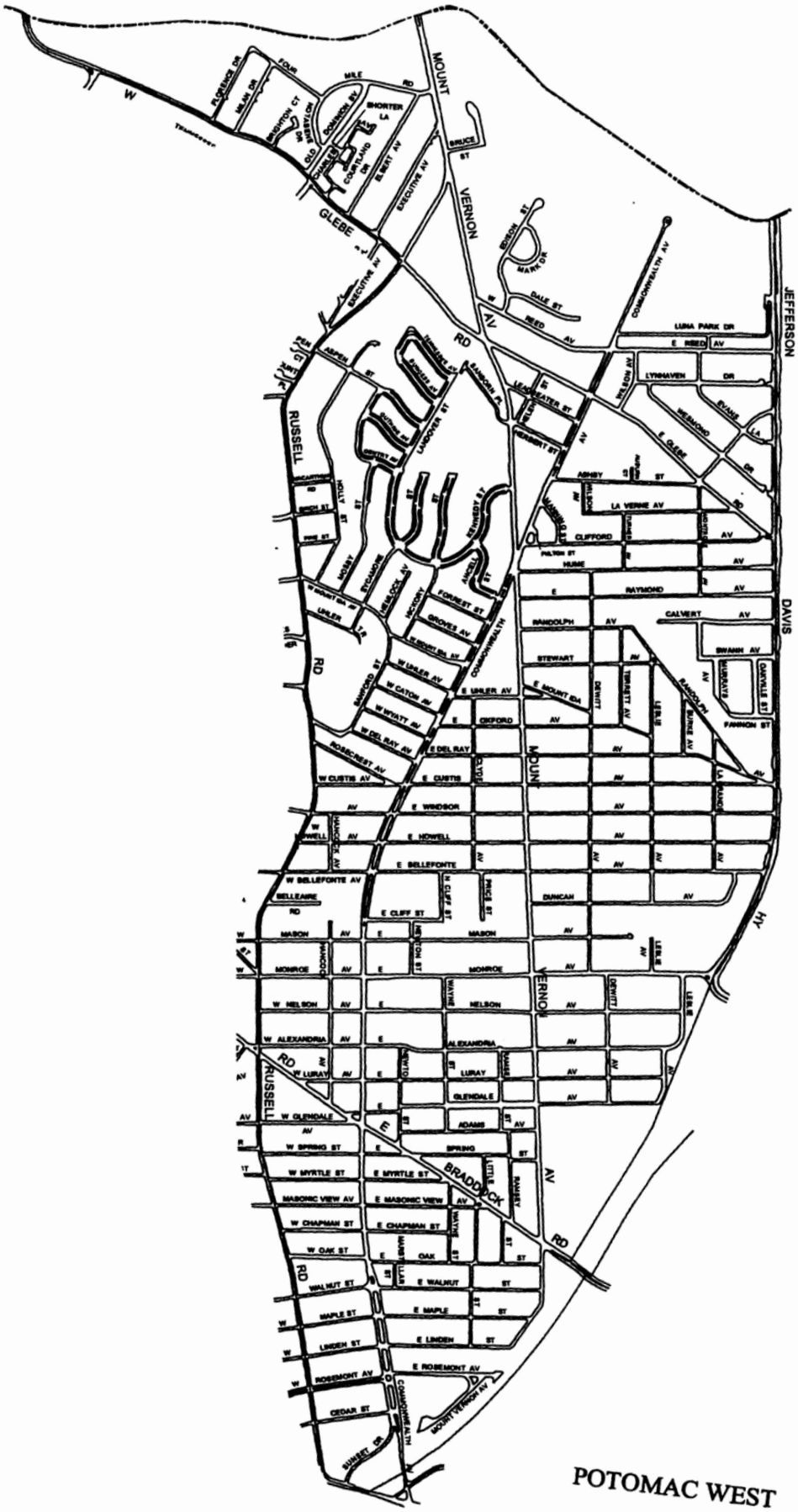
Warwick Village rowhouses. Warwick Village, built as a planned unit development rental project in the 1950s, was converted to home ownership in the 1970s.

Lynhaven encompasses the blocks of rowhouses bounded by Glebe Road, Commonwealth Avenue, East Reed Avenue and US Route 1. It also includes two older apartment complexes, Lynhaven Gardens and Auburn Gardens, the latter of which has undergone renovation and conversion to condominiums.

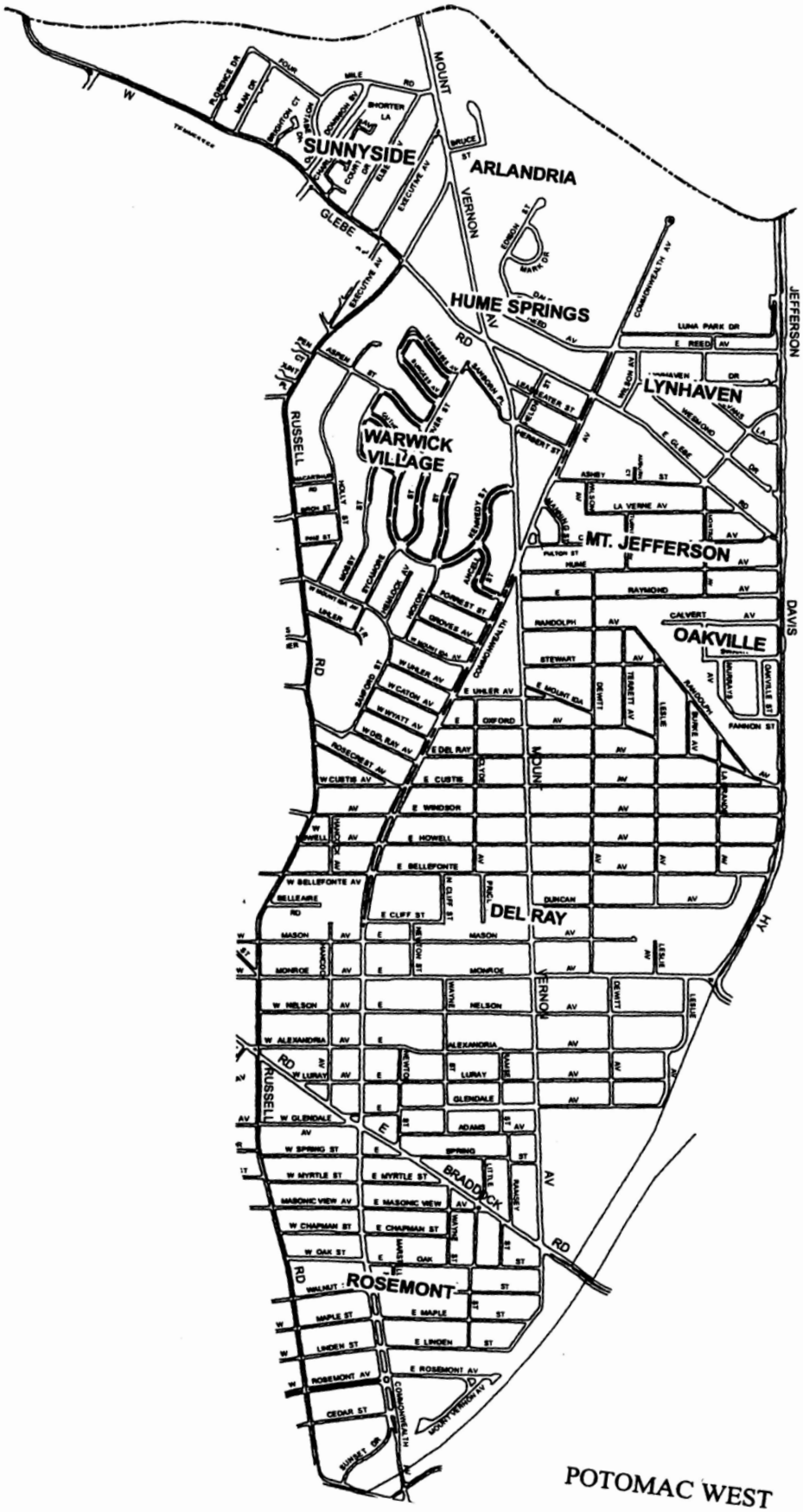
St. Elmo/Mt. Jefferson is a relatively small area bounded by US Route 1, Mt. Vernon Avenue, Ashby Street and Glebe Road. The neighborhood contains mainly single-family houses dating from the 1930s, some as early as 1900. This residential area abuts the Oakville Industrial triangle located to the south.

Lower Rosemont, generally east of Russell Road and south of Braddock Road, is a section of the Rosemont neighborhood that lies within Potomac West. It consists mainly of single-family detached houses and a few older garden apartments in small buildings, primarily along Commonwealth Avenue.

Map 1
Potomac West SAP Area



Map 2 (2005)
Neighborhoods



HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Within Potomac West there are two National Register historic districts that were designated in 1992. The Town of Potomac Historic District includes both commercial and residential properties, while the Rosemont Historic District is strictly residential. The approximate boundaries of the Rosemont Historic District are Rucker Place and West Walnut Street to the north, Commonwealth Avenue to the east, and King Street to the south and west. A portion of this district is located in the North Ridge/Rosemont Small Area Plan. The Town of Potomac has approximate boundaries along East Bellefonte Avenue to the south, Mt. Vernon Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue to the west, East Uhler and La Verne Avenue to the north and the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad (W&OD) right-of-way and Montrose Avenue to the east (Map 3). The original subdivision of these districts, and the history of each, reflects the current pattern of development.

In 1894 developers from Ohio platted the Del Ray and St. Elmo sections of the Town of Potomac. The subdivisions were laid out in a grid pattern with the longer side of the blocks running east-west between the Washington Alexandria Turnpike (US Route 1) and Mt. Vernon Avenue respectively. In its early years, the residents of these neighborhoods were often federal government workers who were able to commute to Washington, DC by rail on the W&OD Railroad or by electric rail on the Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon electric railroad. Many of the residents also worked at the Potomac Yard railroad switching station that opened in 1906 adjacent to the Washington Alexandria Turnpike.

Rosemont, platted later than the Town of Potomac, became a popular suburban community with commuters due to its close proximity to Washington D.C. and the City of Alexandria. It offered commuters several rail options. Like the Town of Potomac, the Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon electric railroad served the neighborhood with two trolley stations and later steam rail served the neighborhood at the Alexandria Union Station. The first houses in the neighborhood were built in 1908, with development continuing in three distinct phases.

The lots within the Town of Potomac were generally small with buyers often purchasing multiple lots. Originally, residents in the Town of Potomac had wells, but used outhouses and desired better services. Eventually water service was provided along with improved roads, gas service and sanitary sewer lines. Unlike the Town of Potomac, new residential development in Rosemont offered many services early, such as gas, electric, water and sewer, and the developers touted these amenities in promoting the subdivision. The Rosemont lots were generous in size and the houses built were generally larger in comparison to those in the Town of Potomac, with some houses designed by prominent architects.

Over time, the Town of Potomac gained more residents and established more services. By the mid-1920s, the Town had two volunteer fire companies as well as a high school. Rosemont also continued to develop during this time period, with the last major phase of development occurring during the 1930s.

Originally, both of these historic districts were part of Alexandria County, Virginia. In 1915, Rosemont became part of the City of Alexandria through annexation, which was generally seen as positive for growth. Conversely, the citizens of the Town of Potomac fought annexation by the City of Alexandria on several occasions, but the lack of services finally led citizens to accept, albeit reluctantly, annexation by the City in 1930.

The number of residents grew over time in both districts; however, in the 1950s and 1960s, property values in the Town of Potomac area began to decline. In the 1970s, the City initiated a revitalization program through the Community Development Block Grant Program. The City continued to support revitalization in the area with infrastructure improvements, loan programs to support businesses and the rehabilitation of housing. Over time, the area has became more attractive to younger, more affluent homebuyers. Today, the residential neighborhoods in the Town of Potomac are stable, and the commercial areas along Mt. Vernon Avenue continue to attract new businesses.

The City recognizes the unique character of the Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts and wishes to preserve the character of the neighborhoods as well as preserve the homes and buildings. Following a community driven effort, the Town of Potomac and Rosemont areas were designated as National Register Historic Districts in 1992. The City recognizes and will continue to support the Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts.

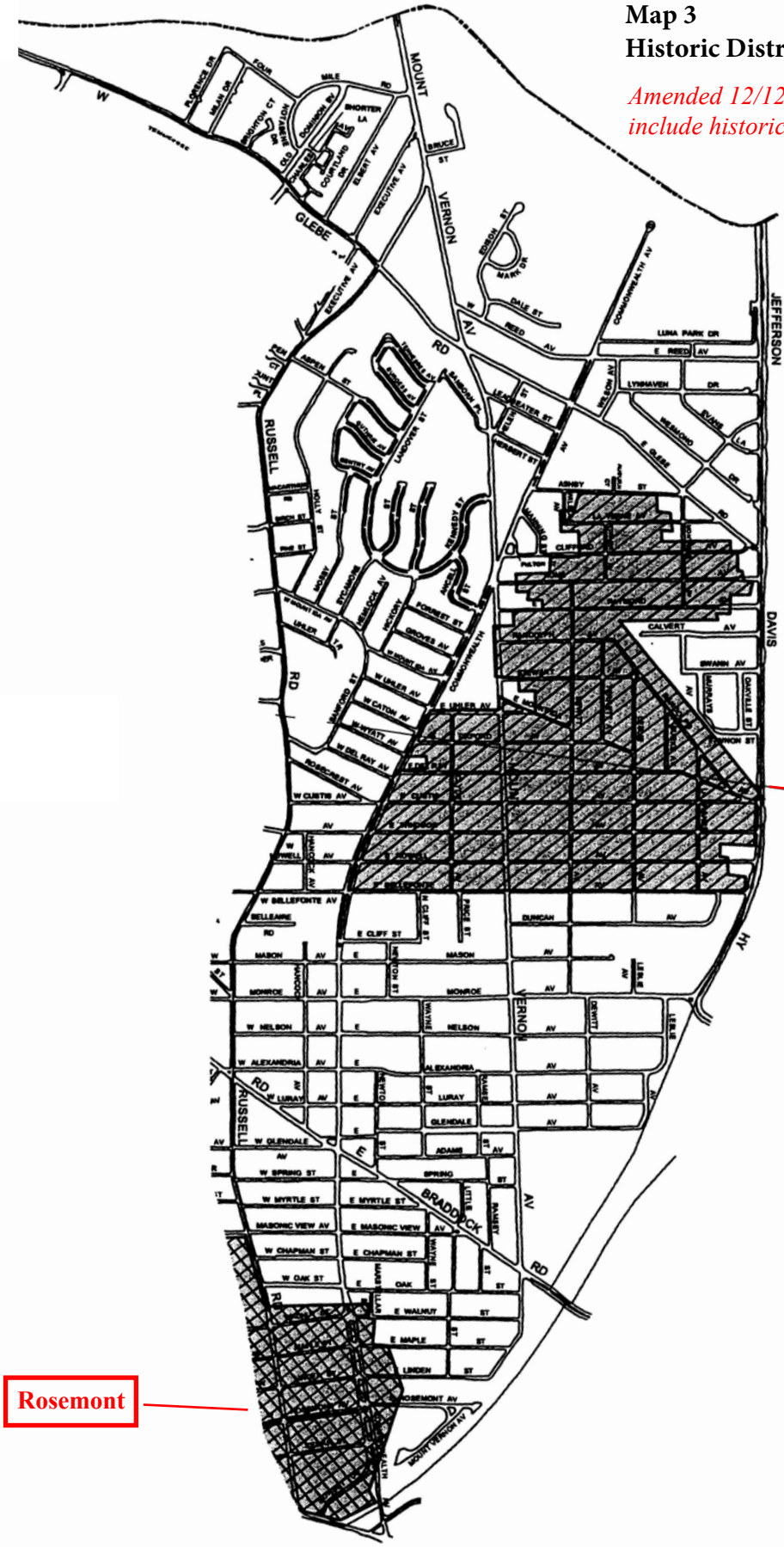
SUMMARY - HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- The Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts have unique histories, resulting in neighborhoods with a unique and defined character, buildings and homes that are of historic value. The City has recognized the value of preserving their history.

- The City supports and encourages the protection and enhancement of the historic value of the Town of Potomac and Rosemont Historic Districts.

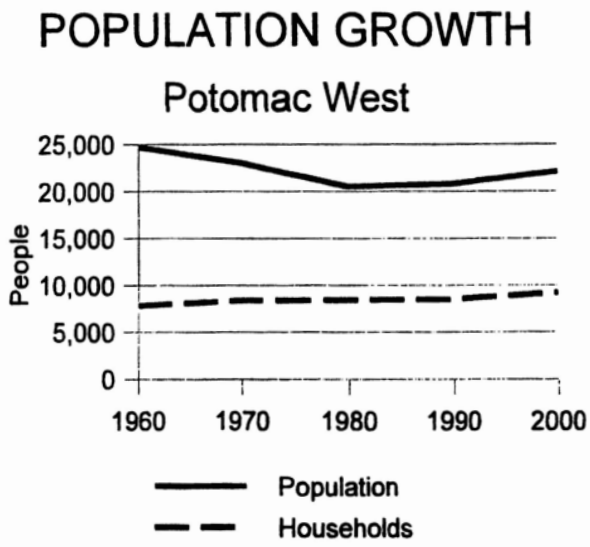
Map 3
Historic Districts

Amended 12/12/9, Ord. 4030 to include historic districts



DEMOGRAPHICS

Key Characteristics



- Potomac West is one of the most varied areas in Alexandria. Arlandria in the north is predominantly young, minority and foreign born, with a generally lower educated population. Lower Rosemont in the south is generally middle-aged, white-non-Hispanic, wealthy and educated. In between, Del Ray is transitioning into an area of young adults, many of whom live alone, who are relatively better educated and financially stable.

- Potomac West's population grew slowly during the 1990s due to the limited construction of new housing, a low vacancy rate and a trend towards smaller household size

- Occupations in Potomac West follow the same pattern as income levels and educational attainment, with management, business and professional occupations more prevalent in Lower Rosemont, and construction and service occupations more prevalent in Arlandria.

- There are high levels of owner-occupied homes in the southern portion of Potomac West and high concentrations of rental housing in the north.

- The population of Potomac West will continue to change as new residential development occurs on formerly commercial sites and as obsolete buildings are renovated or redeveloped.

Population

In 1960 Potomac West was at its highest population in decades with 24,726 residents. The number of residents fell significantly during the 1960s and 1970s. After increasing by 327 people during the 1980s, Potomac West's population continued to grow slowly during the 1990s. In 2000 its population rose to 22,135 people from 20,827 ten years earlier. While significant for Potomac West, this increase of 6.3% during the 1990-2000 period was substantially lower than the City-wide growth rate of 15.3%.

between incomes of Potomac West residents and those of City residents as a whole, with the Potomac West residents having significantly lower incomes.

The educational levels of residents also increased substantially, with the percentage of residents over 25 years of age with a college degree increasing by 31.8% between 1990 and 2000.

Occupations

Occupations - Civilian Labor Force - People 16 and Over	Warwick Village 12.02	Arlandria 12.03	Lynhaven Mt. Jefferson 12.04	Del Ray East 13.00	Del Ray West 14.00	Lower Rosemont 15.00 Part	Alexandria
Management & Finance	21.6%	9.8%	11.2%	21.5%	27.1%	25.8%	23.8%
Professional	33.3%	9.2%	24.7%	34.8%	36.3%	46.7%	32.5%
Service	15.1%	31.7%	17.3%	8.8%	8.4%	6.9%	11.9%
Sales & Office	20.3%	15.0%	23.4%	21.4%	20.0%	16.6%	21.2%
Construction & Maintenance	4.3%	25.8%	11.7%	6.1%	4.2%	1.7%	5.4%
Production & Transportation	5.4%	8.5%	11.6%	7.4%	4.0%	2.4%	5.2%
Total Employed	2,051	3,474	1,647	1,940	2,448	1,377	76,548

The occupations of the residents of Potomac West varied by neighborhood (See Map 5 for Census Tract boundaries). For instance in Arlandria there was a high percentage of people working in services and the construction trades while in the Lower Rosemont neighborhood there was a large percentage of people working in management and the professions.

Housing

In 2000 Potomac West had 9,548 housing units, only 1.1% more units than existed in 1990. A recent addition to the housing stock is the construction of the Reserve at Potomac Yard, a multifamily development with 588 rental apartments, on a formerly vacant site on the west side of US Route 1, north of Reed Avenue. The Reserve was completed in 2002. In the future, there are some smaller commercial sites, as well as several larger, underutilized sites scattered throughout Potomac West, that could be redeveloped for residential or mixed uses, thereby increasing the housing stock

While over half of the housing in Potomac West was renter-occupied in 2000, tenure varied significantly by neighborhood. In Lower Rosemont, 68% of the housing was owner-occupied. Conversely, in Arlandria, only 13.4% of housing was owner-occupied. Home ownership in Potomac

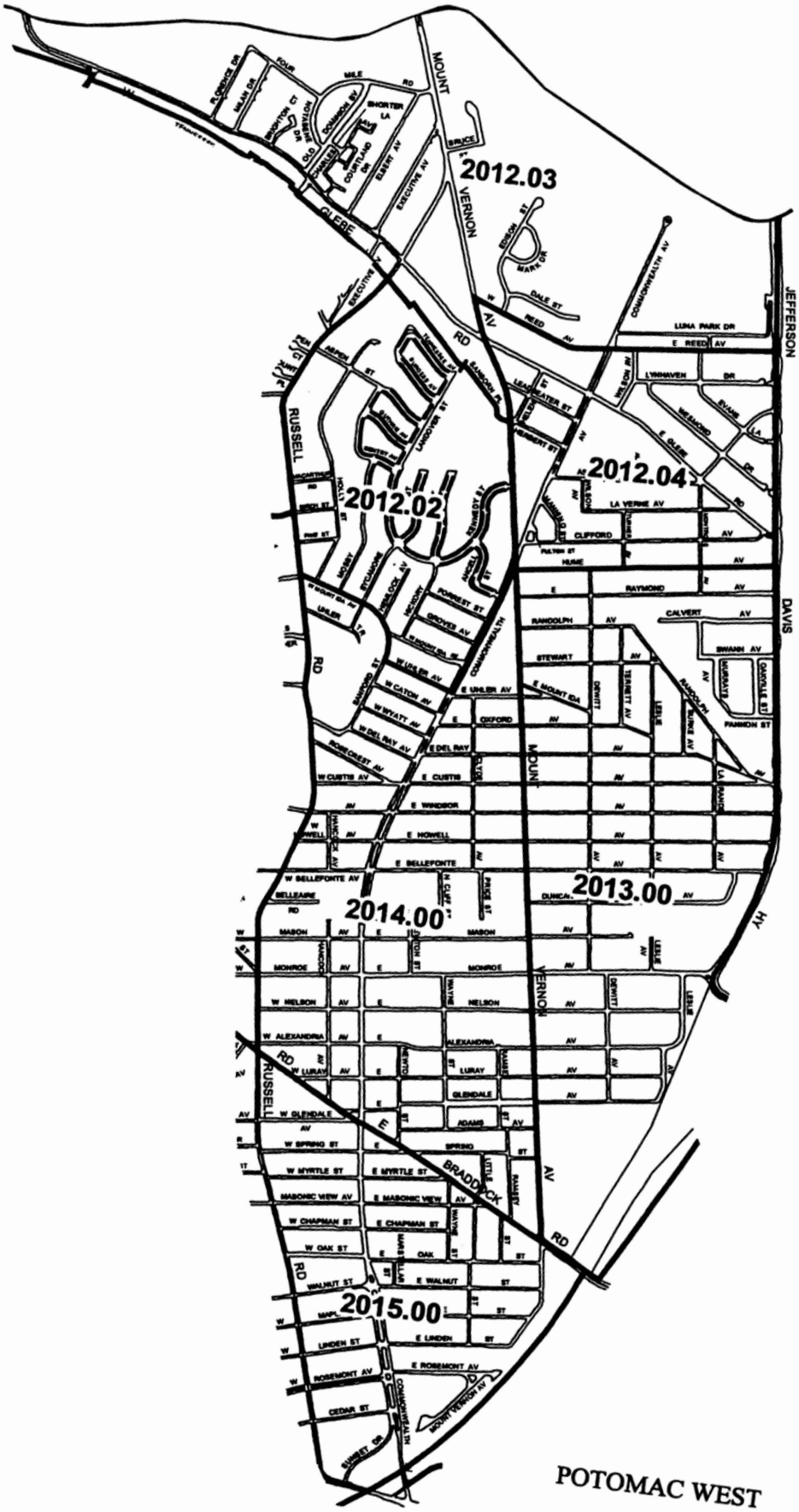
West appears to be correlated to income levels, and as income levels rise, so do home ownership levels. Overall, only 2.5% of the housing units were vacant in 2000.

The cost of single family units and condominiums rose substantially in Potomac West as it has throughout the City. For the year 2003 alone, assessed values in Potomac West increased by 18.4% for single family units and by 52.9% for condominiums. Between 2000 and 2004, rental apartments also became more expensive in Potomac West. Virtually all apartment rents increased by at least 10%, although the percentage size of the increases varied from apartment building to apartment building.

SUMMARY- DEMOGRAPHICS

Potomac West is one of the most diverse communities in Alexandria. The neighborhoods surrounding the study area, including Del Ray, Warwick Village and Mt. Jefferson have experienced a significant change in demographics over the past 15 years. Generally speaking, the area has become attractive to urban professionals, with higher educational levels, more income and fewer children. As the demographics continue to change over time, the City needs to ensure that the ethnic diversity of the area is maintained, while simultaneously maintaining the quality and affordability of the housing stock.

Map 4
2000 Census Tracts



EXISTING LAND USE

The Potomac West study area (excluding street and alley right-of-ways) includes approximately 1,116 acres of land, with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, open space and recreational land uses. The predominant land use in the area is residential (Map 5).

Residential Land Use

Single-family detached homes and rowhouses are the predominant form of housing in Potomac West. With the exception of five mid to high-rise apartment/ condominium buildings (the Portals, the Calvert, and the Landover House, the Preston, the Reserve at Potomac Yard), developments in the area are three stories or less in height.

Potomac West primarily has an older housing stock consisting of single family detached homes constructed prior to 1940; rowhouses, built during the 1940s; garden apartments, erected from the 1930s to the 1950s; some high-rise apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s. In the last decade, two new apartment and condominium/townhouse developments have been constructed on US Route 1.

Rowhouses are concentrated in Arlandria (along Mark, Edison, Reed and Dale Streets), Lynhaven, Warwick Village and those sections of Del Ray north and west of George Washington Middle School. Garden apartments are located throughout the study area, with the major complexes concentrated in central Del Ray (between US Route 1, Bellefonte Avenue and Monroe Avenue near Commonwealth Avenue) and in the northern portions of the study area, most notably in Arlandria and along US Route 1.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 9,550 housing units in the Potomac West study area. Of these, some 4,144 were apartments, with the majority of housing units being single family homes.

Commercial Land Use

The commercial uses in Potomac West are predominantly small scale retail establishments and small business office uses. The majority of the commercial uses are concentrated along Mt. Vernon Avenue, Glebe Road and US Route 1 with a few small pockets of commercial uses along Monroe Avenue and Braddock Road. The businesses, with the exception of those along US Route 1, tend to be neighborhood oriented businesses that serve the immediate area. Directly to the east of the Potomac West Area is the Potomac Yard Shopping Center, a big box retail center about 600,000 square feet in size that serves the region.

There is a wide variety of retail, restaurant and office uses throughout Potomac West, ranging from coffee shops, full-service restaurants to convenience stores, auto parts stores and dry cleaners/laundromats. The office uses consist primarily of small businesses, such as professional services, banking, printing, graphic design and the like.

Many of the businesses in Potomac West are auto-oriented. This is particularly true along US Route 1, where many of the businesses cater to the automobile, including gas stations, body and other repair services, automobile dealerships and auto parts stores. In general, the properties located along the western side of US Route 1 were developed for easy automobile access from the road. In addition, there are a number of auto-oriented uses along Mt. Vernon Avenue, including gas stations, automobile dealerships and service uses.

Industrial Land Use

The 24.3 acre Oakville Industrial Triangle (bounded by US Route 1, the abandoned W&OD right-of-way and Raymond Avenue) is the principal location of industrial activity in Potomac West. The Triangle consists of one and two story brick and metal warehouse structures occupied by a variety of firms including printing, metal fabrication, equipment and construction materials supply companies, and auto related businesses. With the limited amount of industrial land in the City, this area continues to be fully-leased and its long-term viability should considered as part of the future City-wide industrial uses study.

In addition to the Oakville Triangle, much of the frontage along the US Route 1 is industrial in character with little transition between the industrial uses and the abutting residential neighborhoods. Many of these uses include auto repair, services and sales. Additionally, there are a few restaurants, carry-outs and convenience stores.

There is also some industrial property along Leslie Avenue that is primarily used for light manufacturing and warehouse purposes. Left over from a time when this portion of US Route 1 was predominantly industrial, this area is changing from industrial to a mix of quasi-industrial, heavy commercial and flex space uses, that include Fitzgerald Moving and Storage ,the Georgetown University Print Shop, and the Gold Crust Bakery, offices and a private school.

Open Space

The Potomac West area has several major park and recreational facilities, as well as numerous pocket parks, including Mt, Jefferson Park and Greenway, Mt. Ida Greenway, Charles W. Hill Park, St. Asaph Park and Mason Avenue Mini Park. The major open space and recreational sites are located at Four Mile Run Park, Simpson Stadium Park, Nicholas Colasanto Park adjacent to the Mt. Vernon Community School and Recreation Center, George Washington Middle School and along the W&OD right-of-way and Hooff's Run Park. There are also two public swimming pools in the area, Warwick Pool and Del Ray Pool. Many of the pocket parks have playgrounds or provide space for passive uses.

Institutional Use

There are several large institutional uses in the Potomac West area. The public schools include the Mt. Vernon Community School, George Washington Middle School, and Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology. Additionally, there is the Salvation Army, City of Alexandria Department of Human Services, Mt. Vernon and Cora Kelly Recreation Centers, James M. Duncan Library and the YMCA. Most of these uses are located along Mt. Vernon Avenue or within a few blocks of the Avenue.

Vacant Land and Underutilized Properties

Vacant properties are scattered throughout the study area and are generally small parcels. In addition to these properties, several areas have been identified as underutilized in the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* and the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.* In Arlandria, identified underutilized properties include the Safeway/Datatel sites, the Mt. Vernon Village Center, the Birchmere property, and a few infill sites. The Neighborhood Retail (NR) zone, along with guidelines for the existing Coordinated Development District (CDD) and the creation of a new CDD for the Safeway/Datatel sites, encourage the coordinated redevelopment of these properties with a mix of uses, including pedestrian scale retail along the street, and commercial, office or residential uses on the upper floors. The *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* specifically identifies the 11 parcels on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue, north of Commonwealth Avenue (designated the "Triangle" sites) for future redevelopment. Smaller infill sites are also identified, with detailed guidelines and incentive to encourage their development in a manner compatible with the historic scale of the Avenue.

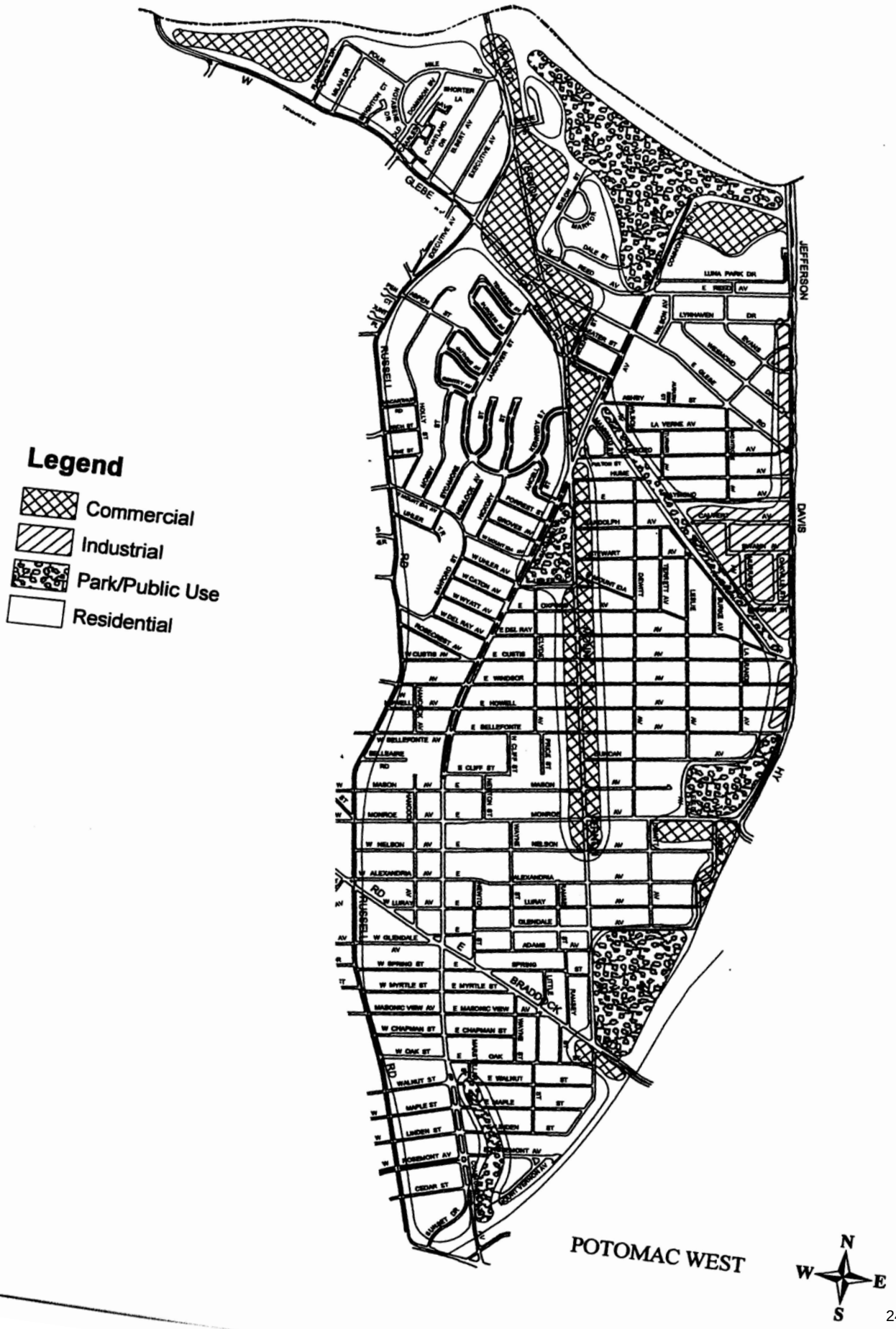
SUMMARY - LAND USE

- Land use within the Potomac West area is predominantly residential with commercial concentrated along the major thoroughfares. Industrial uses are found along the US Route 1 corridor.

- Both the *Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* and the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* encourage mixed use development that is pedestrian oriented and strengthens the "Main Street" type retail environment in these areas.

- There is very little vacant land available in the planning area, but there are areas that are underutilized. The City has implemented several planning tools to support the coordinated redevelopment of larger vacant or underutilized commercially zoned properties.

Map 5
Generalized Existing Land Use
(2005)



EXISTING ZONING

Zoning in the Potomac West area essentially mirrors the land use pattern, with residential being the cldearly predominant category. The majority of the commercial zoning is located along the major thoroughfares. Although there are uses along US Route 1 that are more industrial in nature, industrial zoning is concentrated in the Oakville Triangle. Throughout the study area, there are parcels zoned Public Open Space (POS) with the largest being Four Mile Run Park.

Residential Zoning

The residential zoning in the area is divided between the R2-5; R-5, R-8, RB and RA categories. Of these, the largest residential zoning category is R2-5, which permits single family and two family homes at densities of up to 17.42 units per acre. This zone is found primarily in the middle portion of Potomac West, between Ashby Street and Glendale Avenue. Along the western edge of the study area and Russell Road are found R-8 and R-5 zoning, which permit only single family homes at medium densities of 5.45 and 8.71 units per acre respectively.

The majority of RB zoning is located at the northeast and southeast edges of Potomac West and at scattered, small sites throughout the study area. RB zoning permits single-family and townhouse homes at densities of up to 22 units per acre and multifamily units at densities of 27 units per acre, if built prior to 1973. Under the current RB zoning regulations, the maximum permitted density for both single family and multifamily developments is 22 dwelling units per acre.

RA zoning allows single, two or multi-family dwellings at densities of up to 27 units per acre. RA zoning is scattered throughout the area, with the largest concentration near the intersections of Mt. Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road, south of Glebe Road between Tennessee Avenue, Mosby Street, Ancell Street and Ashby Street to Mt. Vernon Avenue; and east of Commonwealth Avenue between Ashby Street and Glebe Road. Another large concentration of RA zoning is located ~~at~~ near Four Mile Run Park at the northern boundary of the study area. (Map 6.)

In addition to the more traditional zoning districts there are a few mixed use and coordinated development districts discussed in a later section that include residential uses. These districts are located on Mt. Vernon Avenue and US Route 1, with the residential component including a mix of apartments, condominiums, and townhouses.

Commercial Zoning

Within Potomac West, there are multiple commercial zoning districts. Much of the commercial area along Mt. Vernon Avenue in the Del Ray neighborhood is zoned CL. The purpose of the CL zone is to allow small scale retail and service uses that are pedestrian oriented and offer services for the nearby residential neighborhood. Generally, this zoning district permits uses such as residences, business and professional services, retail shops and personal services. The maximum allowable FAR is 0.75 on lots less than 5,500 square feet and 0.5 on larger lots by right and 0.75 with a special

use permit (SUP). The maximum height allowed is 35 feet by right and 45 feet with a special use permit.

As part of the implementation of the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans*, the NR zoning district was adopted in June 2003 and applied to the formerly CL-zoned and commercially developed parcels that abut Mt. Vernon Avenue between the City boundary and West Glebe Road. The intent of the NR zone is to revitalize properties by promoting a mix of uses with ground floor retail that is pedestrian in scale and orientation to achieve a vibrant urban environment while protecting the adjacent residential neighborhoods(Map 6). NR zoning applies a build-to line instead of a required front yard and the maximum permitted FAR is 0.5, except in the case of a mixed use development with ground floor retail, a FAR of up to 1.5 is permitted with a special use permit. Maximum height in this zoning district is 35 feet or up to 50 feet if upper floor setback conditions are met.

As part of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*, the City proposes to create an overlay zone along Mt. Vernon Avenue in the Del Ray area (Map 11). The purpose of the overlay zone is to encourage a mix of land uses, preserve historic buildings and promote the use of form-based design standards for compatible infill development. The overlay will apply specific building form design guidelines with tiered standards for parking and open space based on lot size.

The other commercial zoning districts are CSL and CG. The CSL zoning district allows light service and industrial uses that are compatible in operation and service with the adjacent residential neighborhoods. The CG zoning district allows auto oriented retail businesses that serve the community. Both of these zoning districts allow a FAR of 0.5 for non-residential uses and a 0.75 FAR for residential use with a limit on the number of units. The maximum allowed height is 50 feet. The CSL districts are located along the west side of US Route 1 and on the east side of Leslie Avenue. CG districts are located along W. Glebe Road near the City boundary and east of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Mixed Use Zoning

There are currently several mixed used zoning districts in Potomac West, including a commercial residential mixed use zone (CRMU-M) and three coordinated development districts (CDD #6, CDD #7, and CDD#12). There are two parcels in Potomac West zoned CRMU-M. One of these parcels is the Calvert Apartments that has a mix of retail stores, offices and apartments. The other is the Preston, a condominium and townhouse project at the southwest corner of US Route 1 and West Reed Avenue. The FAR in the CRMU-M zone is dependant on the mix of use. In general, a larger FAR is allowed with residential uses. The maximum allowable FAR is 2.0 with a special use permit and compliance with defined conditions.

The CDD zones are intended to encourage desirable coordinated development of areas that are significant either due to size or location and could have significant development related effects on the City. Generally, with a Special Use Permit, the CDD zoning will allow a greater FAR than the underlying zoning. Each CDD has specific guidelines aimed at improving development within the

district. Two additional CDDs are proposed for incorporation in the Potomac West Small Area Plan: CDD#13 at Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues and CDD #14 on Monroe Avenue.

Industrial Zoning

Within the study area, only the Oakville Triangle is zoned industrial. Industrial zoning allows light to medium industrial use, such as service, distribution, manufacturing and wholesale and storage facilities at low densities. The intent is that these uses will not negatively impact adjacent neighborhoods. The maximum allowable height for a building is 50 feet with the maximum allowable FAR of 0.85, an increase to 1.25 is allowed with a SUP.

Utility and Transportation Zoning

There are several parcels located along West Glebe Road that are zoned UT. Dominion Virginia Power owns these parcels and uses them for offices and equipment storage.

Public Open Space Zoning

Four Mile Run Park in the northern section of the study area is the largest area zoned POS. The remaining POS zoning is scattered throughout the study area and coincides with the parks and open space land uses discussed earlier.

SUMMARY-ZONING

- Zoning in the Potomac West area is predominantly low to medium density residential.
- Industrial zoning is only found predominantly in the Oakville Triangle. This area should be included in a future City-wide industrial uses study.
- The commercial zoning along Mount Vernon Avenue as well as the existing and proposed Coordinated Development Districts promote a mix of uses as well as pedestrian oriented commercial uses.

Map 6
Existing Zoning
(2005)

Zoning Description

- CDD#10 - Coordinated development district #10
- CDD#12 - Coordinated development district #12
- CDD#6 - Coordinated development district #6
- CDD#7 - Coordinated development district #7
- CG - Commercial general zone
- CL - Commercial low zone
- CRMU/M - Commercial residential mixed use (medium) zone
- CSL - Commercial service low zone
- I - Industrial
- NR - Neighborhood retail
- POS - Public open space
- R 12 - Residential single family zone, 12,000 square foot lot
- R 2-5 - Residential single family or two family zone, 5,000 square foot lot
- R 5 - Residential single family zone, 5,000 square foot lot
- R 8 - Residential single family zone, 8000 square foot lot
- RA - Residential multi-family zone
- RB - Residential townhouse zone
- RC - Residential high density apartment zone
- UT - Utility and transportation zone

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND TRENDS

The focus of economic activity in Potomac West is Mt. Vernon Avenue. Much of the impetus for commercial revitalization has been the City's active role in using capital improvement and business loan programs to encourage business development along the Avenue.

Over the past several years, Potomac West has seen increased commercial activity in both the Del Ray and Arlandria commercial districts. Further commercial improvement and redevelopment is likely in the coming years, spawned by an overall increase in the Washington region's economy and by the desirable and centralized location of Potomac West.

In the last decade, the Potomac Yard Shopping Center was constructed at the northern portion of the former railroad yard adjacent to Four Mile Run and Arlington County. Approximately 600,000 square feet in size, the shopping center consists of a grocery store, several big box style retail uses, and personal service uses. Restaurants and retail uses are located on pad sites adjacent to US Route 1, and a 16 screen movie theater is located behind the shopping center.

Potomac West is home to Alexandria's Enterprise Zone, the first in Northern Virginia. The 690-acre zone was designated by the Governor of Virginia in 1994 to stimulate private investment and job opportunities by offering businesses located within the area a package of state and local incentives. The Enterprise Zone is located at the northern end of Potomac West and is bounded by Four Mile Run to the north, US Route 1 to the east, Custis and Windsor Avenues to the south, and Russell Road, Mt. Ida Avenue, Sycamore Street and Landover Street to the west (See Map 7).

As part of recent comprehensive planning studies, specific economic analyses have been conducted for both the Del Ray and Arlandria commercial corridors of the Potomac West area. Both studies have indicated modest demand for retail niche marketing that would both serve the needs of nearby residents and complement the overall neighborhood characteristics.

The *Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* and *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* project a steadily increasing retail demand along the Avenue for "Main Street" retail in the coming years. Recommendations for the Avenue are to:

- Focus retail business attraction on sectors that have the greatest potential to generate new sales along Mount Vernon Avenue, and at the same time reflect the community's expressed preference for a vibrant and unique main street atmosphere.
- Focus new business and restaurant attraction on those types that can fill market niches. There are several specific restaurant and retail themes that could potentially fill a need in the current market structure.
- Enhance and strengthen the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA) as an organization to develop and implement marketing, promotions, and retail management district initiatives.
- Promote the arts in tandem with promoting other retail activity along the Avenue. This

would include various elements of arts promotion such as art galleries, public art, and so forth that would generate considerable excitement for the Avenue.

- Capitalize on the activities in Four Mile Run Park and incorporate in marketing themes for the Arlandria area

In general the residential real estate market in Potomac West is strong, as it is throughout the City.

Potential Development and Redevelopment Sites

Although Potomac West is largely built up, there are sites and areas that could be redeveloped over the next 10-20 years. The three most significant sites subject to major development or redevelopment are the Mt. Vernon Village Center and Birchmere sites, the Safeway/Datatel sites, and the Triangle sites. In addition, there are scattered individual sites along US Route 1, as well as a collection of parcels along the north side of East Reed Avenue, with the potential for future redevelopment. (Map 8).

Mt. Vernon Village Center and Birchmere Sites (CDD #6)

The Mt. Vernon Village Center and the Birchmere sites are located adjacent to each other on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue in the 3700 and 3800 blocks. In addition to these two major sites, there are other adjacent small parcels that could be assembled with the larger sites. This potential 8.5-acre assemblage would make this site the largest commercially zoned and redevelopable tract of land along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

The Mt. Vernon Village Center (previously the Arlandria Center) has been an active neighborhood shopping facility since the 1940s. The Center includes approximately 60,000 square feet of space and as of 2005, features tenants such as My Organic Market (Mom's), CVS pharmacy, several restaurants, small retail shops and personal service uses. The Mt. Vernon Village Center is a three story, art deco styled shopping center that is auto-oriented, but has the potential to be a pedestrian-oriented, mixed use anchor development.

Given the recent renovation of the shopping center, it is unlikely that the renovated portion of the property will redevelop in the short term. The *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* present several illustrative visions for future redevelopment of the site, one with the existing center retained and another illustrating a concept for full redevelopment.

This site is zoned CDD #6 for development as a Coordinated Development District. Such zoning facilitates development as a mixed-use center incorporating retail, office uses, and possibly residential uses – a scheme that would heighten the area's neighborhood characteristics.
Abutting the Mt. Vernon Village Center to the southeast is the Birchmere property. This site consists of 2.4 acres and is occupied by a 56,000-square foot, one-story building, that houses the nationally-known Birchmere music venue. The property abuts the back yards of townhouse

residences in Hume Springs and Four Mile Run Park, and has minimal frontage or physical presence along Mt. Vernon Avenue other than its parking lot and freestanding sign. As with the shopping center site to the north, the zoning for this site is CDD #6, permitting a mixed-use redevelopment. Any redevelopment should provide for coordination and connection between the properties as shown on the illustrative concept plans.

Such redevelopment of these sites would provide for retail on the ground floor that would add vitality to the street and encourage a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. Residential uses are encouraged on the upper floors to support the mixed use, active neighborhood center desired by the community. A network of streets and pedestrian walkways is also strongly desired to connect the two sites and create better public access to Four Mile Run from Mt. Vernon Avenue and the neighborhoods.

While these properties as currently developed function in the current marketplace, it is possible that – given the accelerating regional real estate market – the sites could redevelop in the near future. These are high profile sites for the neighborhood, and with over 8 acres of combined size, represent a unique opportunity for commercial redevelopment inside of the Capital Beltway. The potential redevelopment of these sites could be used as an anchor to further the neighborhood's goals of community-oriented, vibrant mixed use development that serves local needs. (See the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* for illustrative concepts for future development in and around these sites.) Should redevelopment occur, incorporation of the Birchmere music venue is strongly desired as it adds significantly to the neighborhood.

Safeway/Datatel Sites (CDD #12)

TheSafeway/Datatel sites consist of eight separate parcels on a 4.2-acre triangular-shaped piece of land at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and West Glebe Road, and is developed with several buildings, including the 22,000-square foot former Safeway grocery store. This site is located at the southern entrance to the Arlandria neighborhood and has a great potential to be redeveloped with mixed-uses. Currently, the former Safeway grocery store is occupied by a full service buffet restaurant, a dollar store and small carry-out restaurant, with a large parking lot in front of the building. In the fall of 2002, the City purchased the property formerly developed with the Datatel office building and demolished the building. As an interim use, a public parking lot is planned until the site is redeveloped. At that time, structured parking is envisioned to support the redevelopment of the site as well as the nearby retail core along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

The community envisions this site as a focal point for the neighborhood , with redevelopment to create a place that features a mix of uses, including ground floor retail uses, a public plaza and open space and to reflect the uniqueness of the neighborhood.

In the current retail market, a 22,000-square foot stand-alone grocery store is not considered desirable space however, the underlying real estate has great potential value for redevelopment. Similar to the Mt. Vernon Village Center property, if this site were to be redeveloped, it could present a unique opportunity to further the community's goals of creating a unique, community-oriented mixed use development with public plazas and open space. The parcels are zoned

Coordinated Development District #12. A conceptual plan for the redevelopment of these sites is presented in the *Upper Potomac West Task Force Report* incorporated into the Small Area Plan.

Triangle Sites

The 11 parcels known collectively as the Triangle Sites, located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue, roughly between Herbert Street and Commonwealth Avenue, comprise one of the few contiguous tracts of underutilized or vacant land in Potomac West outside of the Arlandria neighborhood. As desired by the community, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends the creation of a new CDD to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels with a mix of uses including ground floor retail, with residential or office uses on upper floors. The CDD will include design guidelines and planning principles to ensure that redevelopment occurs in a coordinated manner and is generally consistent with the *Plan*.

Giant/CVS Sites

The Giant and CVS sites are located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue and are located on approximately 1.9 acres. The community strongly supports the existing grocery and pharmacy uses in this location. As such, the primary goal is to work with the existing property owners and tenants to identify ways for the uses to continue to operate and meet the businesses' future requirements. However, the stores are considerably smaller than the industry standard and may be subject to market forces as existing grocery stores in the nearby area are enlarged or new stores are constructed. Should a future shift in the market render the current sites or uses obsolete and unsuitable for long-term operation, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends the creation of a new CDD to ensure a coordinated redevelopment. The desired mix of uses includes a grocery and a pharmacy, and other retail uses on the ground floor, with residential or office uses on the upper floors. Planning principles and design guidelines have been developed to ensure that any redevelopment is compatible in scale with the adjacent residential neighborhood and connect to the future Potomac Yard development.

US Route 1 Corridor

Numerous properties located on the west side of US Route 1 could be considered potential redevelopment sites. The massive Potomac Yard development, currently underway on the east side of US Route 1, will change the character of this major north/south route and may lead to the redevelopment of parcels on the west side of the road. Detailed evaluation of the future use and design to complement the Potomac Yard development is needed.

Currently, most of the parcels along the US Route 1 corridor are in low-intensity commercial or retail use. Many of the developable parcels are zoned CSL (Commercial Service Low), while the properties located between Hume Avenue and Custis Avenue are zoned for industrial use. In many cases the commercial and industrial uses abut residential uses without adequate buffering or transition. In addition, there are residential developments at the north end of the corridor, and Potomac Yard on the east side of US Route 1 is approved for residential uses. It is also important

that impacts on adjacent residential areas are minimized and may be achieved through more extensive landscaping, masonry walls, or other materials that would buffer any impacts from the commercial and industrial uses.

This area offers numerous advantages for commercial or service-oriented development, with a location on a heavily-trafficked highway and excellent access to Crystal City and to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. This access is being enhanced by the road improvements through Crystal City and the planned realignment of the Monroe Avenue bridge.

East Reed Avenue

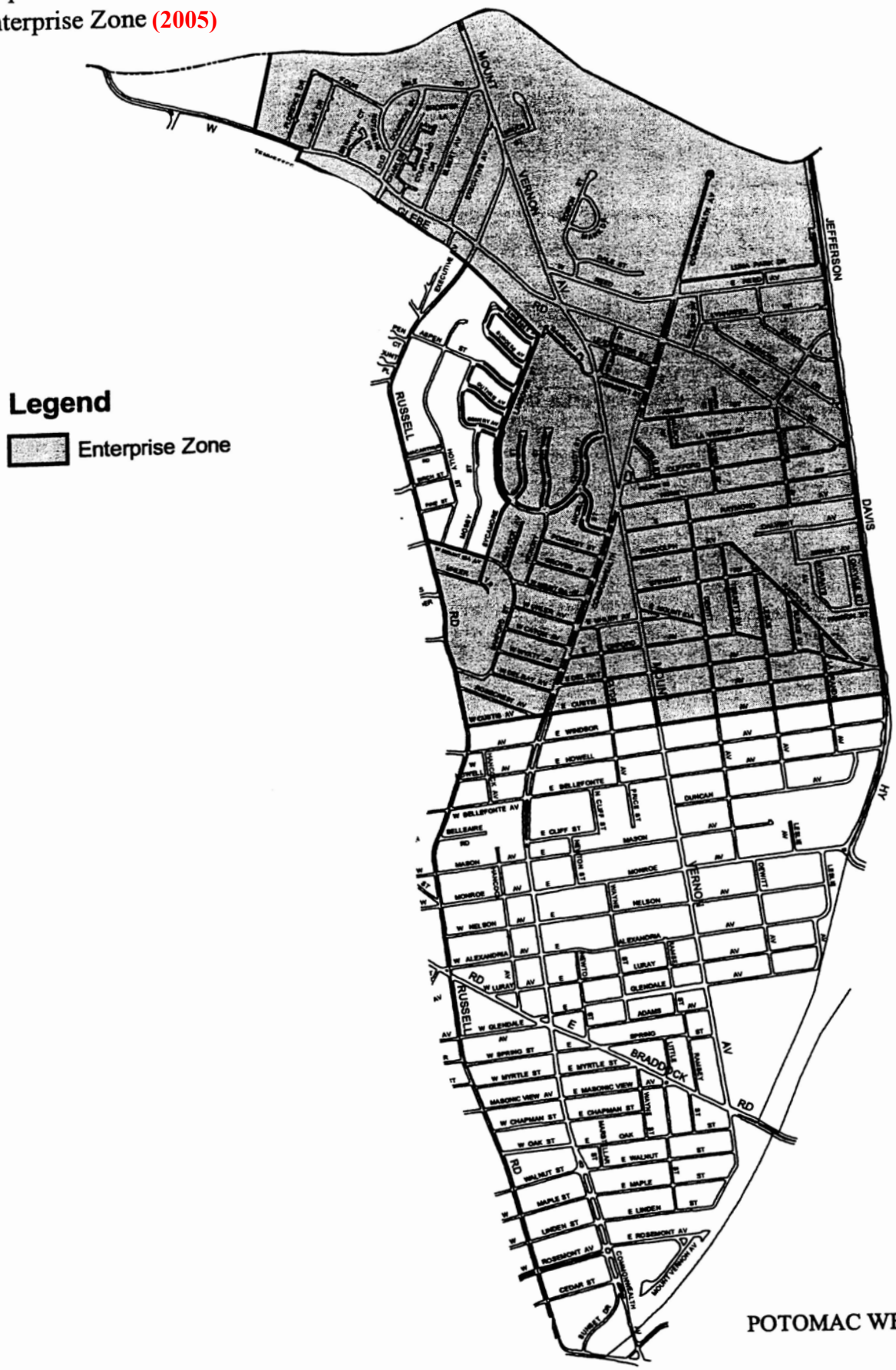
The existing 46 single family dwellings are developed on 3.25 acres of land on the north side of East Reed Avenue between US Route 1 and Commonwealth Avenue. Redevelopment of the residential properties on the north side of East Reed Avenue is encouraged consistent with the planning principles and design guidelines set forth in the Arlandria Plans as well as with the CDD guidelines, while ensuring that existing property owners have the opportunity to live in the redevelopment housing if they desire.

SUMMARY - ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

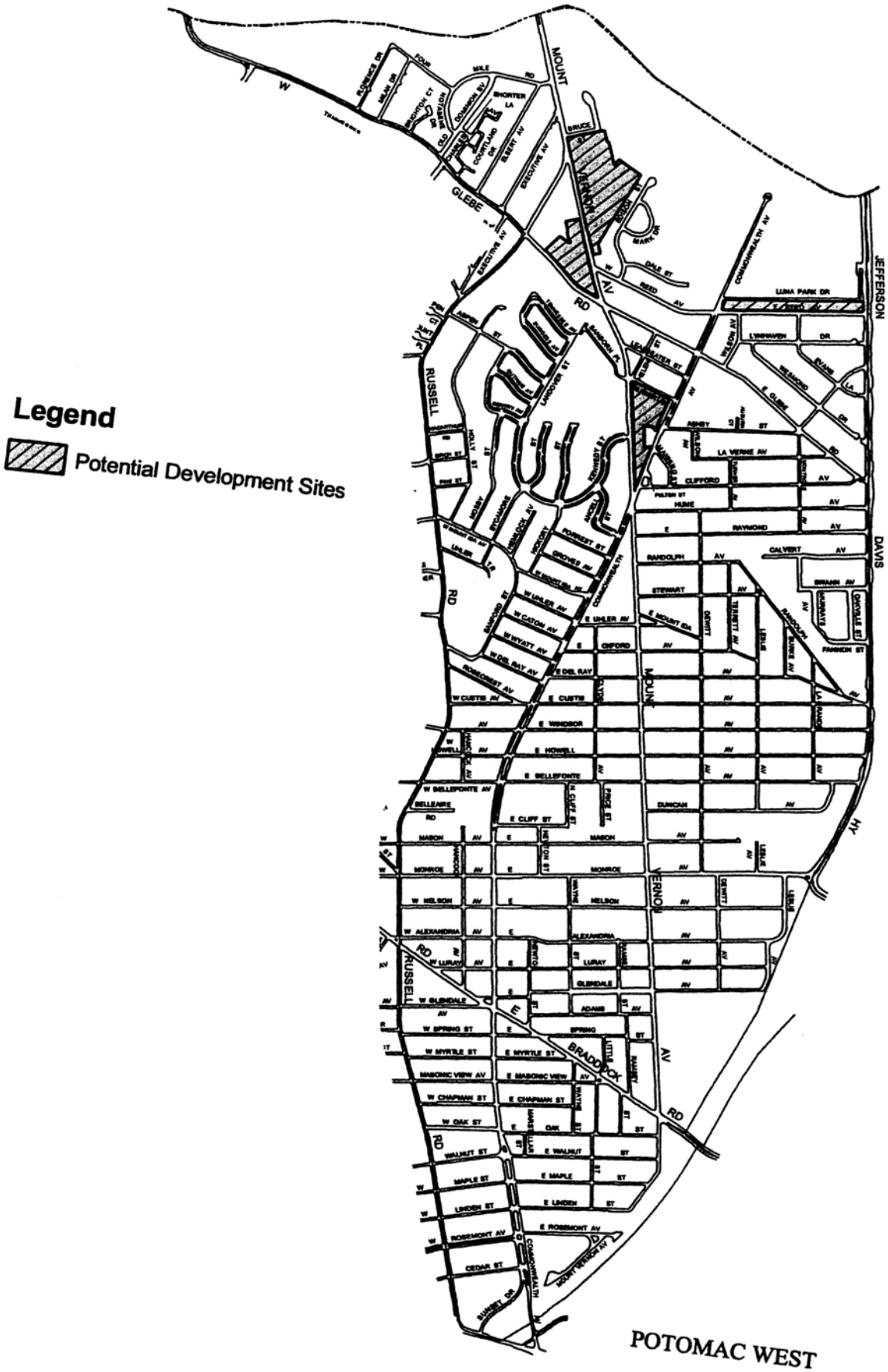
- Through a combination of public programs and private initiatives, Potomac West is renewing with both commercial and residential development and renovation activity.
- Commercial activity is characterized by neighborhood-oriented retail stores and services and professional office uses.
- The characteristics of the neighborhood favor smaller-scale office and retail development rather than large scale, multi-tenant office projects such as have been developed in other parts of the City.
- The area lacks large amounts of speculative office space and is not a major office center.

Most of Potomac West is built up, with proportionately minimal land left for development. However, the several high-visibility sites may redevelop in coming years due to private sector interest in creating more commercial space in this easily accessible neighborhood.

Map 7
Enterprise Zone (2005)



Map 8
Potential Development Sites
(2005)



TRANSPORTATION

Street System

The street system in the Potomac West area is dominated by four major north-south through streets: Mt. Vernon Avenue, which traverses the heart of the area; Commonwealth Avenue, which intersects Mt. Vernon Avenue; Russell Road, which constitutes the western boundary of the area; and US Route 1, which is at the eastern edge of the area. Major east-west movements within the study area occur on Monroe Avenue, Braddock Road and Glebe Road. To the east of Commonwealth Avenue, the street system is primarily a basic grid pattern; to the west, curving streets.

Major Thoroughfares

The City of Alexandria classifies its streets into five categories: expressways, arterials, primary collectors, residential collectors and local streets (Map 9). Of these, the last four may be found within Potomac West.

US Route 1/Jefferson Davis Highway is a four lane arterial which serves north south traffic through the City. Mt. Vernon Avenue between Commonwealth and the City limit and Braddock Road between West Street and Commonwealth are also arterials.

West Glebe Road, Commonwealth Avenue, the remainder of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road , Monroe Avenue and a portion of Russell Road above West Glebe are classified as primary collectors: Glebe Road carries traffic from the Four Mile Run area of Arlington County to US Route 1 along an east/west axis. Commonwealth Avenue carries traffic from the northern end of the study area to connect ultimately with King Street, while Mt. Vernon Avenue runs north/south through the center of Potomac West and connects with South Glebe Road in Arlington County and Braddock Road in Alexandria.

Russell Road and Monroe Avenue are both residential collectors, which take traffic from a number of lesser residential streets and provide access to primary collectors or arterials. Russell Road carries traffic north-south from the Arlandria portion of Potomac West to King Street, while Monroe Avenue runs east/west through the study area connecting Russell Road to US Route 1.

Most of the rest of the streets in the Potomac West area are local streets, which function primarily as a means of providing access to residential areas.

A description of each of these categories, with examples from Potomac West's street system, is given below:

> Arterial: A four- to six-lane divided highway with controlled access.
> Arterials provide major traffic movements' not served by expressways. (US Route 1 - Jefferson Davis Highway)

Primary Collector: A highway with 80-foot right-of-way widths and serving through traffic at medium speeds. Primary collectors connect two arterials or an arterial with another collector. (Glebe Road, Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues).

Residential Collector: A major street with a 66-foot right-of-way to collect traffic from a number of lesser residential streets and provide access from residential areas to primary collectors or arterials. (Russell Road, Monroe Avenue).

Local Street: A minor street primarily functioning to provide access to properties in residential areas. Right-of-way widths vary from 44-66 feet, with a minimum width of 60 feet required for all new streets. (Most of the streets in Potomac West are in this category).

The City is currently undertaking a comprehensive effort to update the transportation element of the Master Plan. When completed, the transportation approach for Potomac West should be updated to reflect new transportation policy.

Existing Traffic Flow

Potomac West's street system is adequate to serve the traffic generated by land uses located within the area. There is use of certain major streets by through commuter traffic which, during the rush hours, causes some congestion on Mt. Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, Glebe Road and Monroe Avenue and US Route 1. Local streets are also sometimes used to bypass points of congestion. However, overall traffic congestion within Potomac West is not a major problem.

Recent and Planned Capital Improvements

Begun in 1985, the City will complete the final phase of the undergrounding of utilities along Mt. Vernon Avenue from Bellefonte Avenue to Nelson Avenue. As part of this project, the City will also continue the streetscape improvements by planting trees, repairing curbs and gutters, installing pavers, street furniture and signs. Additionally, there have been improvements made to the crosswalks along Mt. Vernon Avenue between Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues in Del Ray and in front of George Washington Middle School. These improvements include stamped asphalt crosswalks and bulb-outs designed to make pedestrian crosswalks safer and slow down traffic.

Along Braddock Road, between West Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue, the City proposes landscape improvements to the medians and adjacent right-of- ways. In Arlandria, pedestrian safety measures, such as bulb-outs and crosswalks are envisioned along with bus shelters, benches, and bicycle racks. Additionally, pedestrian safety improvements are planned for the Mt. Vernon Avenue and the Glebe Road intersection.

There have been several traffic calming measures taken in Potomac West. Along the sections of Russell Road and Commonwealth Avenue south of Braddock Road, the City installed speed tables

to slow traffic. Additionally, speed tables exist on Monroe Avenue just west of the US Route 1 intersection. The City has also installed several stamped asphalt crosswalks on West Glebe Road.

Public Transit Facilities

The Potomac West area is served by Metrorail immediately to the south of the study area by the Braddock Road and King Street Metro Stations and by both Metro bus and DASH bus routes. Metro runs four lines along Mt. Vernon Avenue and two along US Route 1, which serve the study area. In addition, DASH has a bus route along Glebe Road and Russell Road connecting with the Braddock Road Metro Station which serves the Potomac West area. Additionally, the City is currently planning to construct a new bus maintenance facility by 2008, that will accommodate more buses in the system allowing the provision of DASH service along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Bike and Pedestrian Paths

Several of the City's designated bikeways run through the area. Along Commonwealth Avenue, there is an on-street bicycle trail that continues north to Four Mile Run Park where it connects with an off-street bike trail that runs along US Route 1 and through Four Mile Run Park to Mt. Vernon Avenue. Additionally, there are two other on-street bike trails, one that begins along West Mt. Ida that leads into the North Ridge/Rosemont Area and another along E. Braddock Road.

Future Traffic Flow

As a mostly built up area it is unlikely that Potomac West will internally generate much additional traffic impacting the overall street system. Future traffic growth will be generated by specific development sites within Potomac West which will impact streets and intersections immediately adjacent to the sites.

Outside the study area, the Potomac Yard development does have the potential to impact traffic flow in the Potomac West area. Several steps have been taken to avoid increasing traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods. Within the Potomac Yard development, a large "spine" road, Potomac Avenue, will provide new traffic capacity and will handle some traffic that would otherwise travel on US Route 1. Potomac Avenue will terminate at US Route 1 on the south end of the development north of Monroe Avenue and will intersect with South Glebe Road at the northern end, providing access to Crystal City and its street network.

Another element of the Potomac Yard development that affects the study area is the future realignment of US Route 1/Monroe Avenue bridge. Once the road is realigned, direct access from US Route 1 to Monroe Avenue will no longer be provided. Instead, Monroe Avenue will intersect with Main Street, a street within Potomac Yard providing direct access to the development from the study area.

To increase the safety for pedestrians in walking along or across US Route 1, pedestrian safety improvements are necessary. Although US Route 1 is predominantly auto-oriented, pedestrians

from the adjacent neighborhoods currently walk to the Potomac Yard Shopping Center, and it is likely that pedestrian traffic will increase as the Potomac Yard becomes fully developed. Sidewalks, street trees, benches, bus shelters, lighting and crosswalks should be enhanced to consider pedestrian safety. Heavily used crosswalks should be identified and improved accordingly.

SUMMARY-TRANSPORTATION

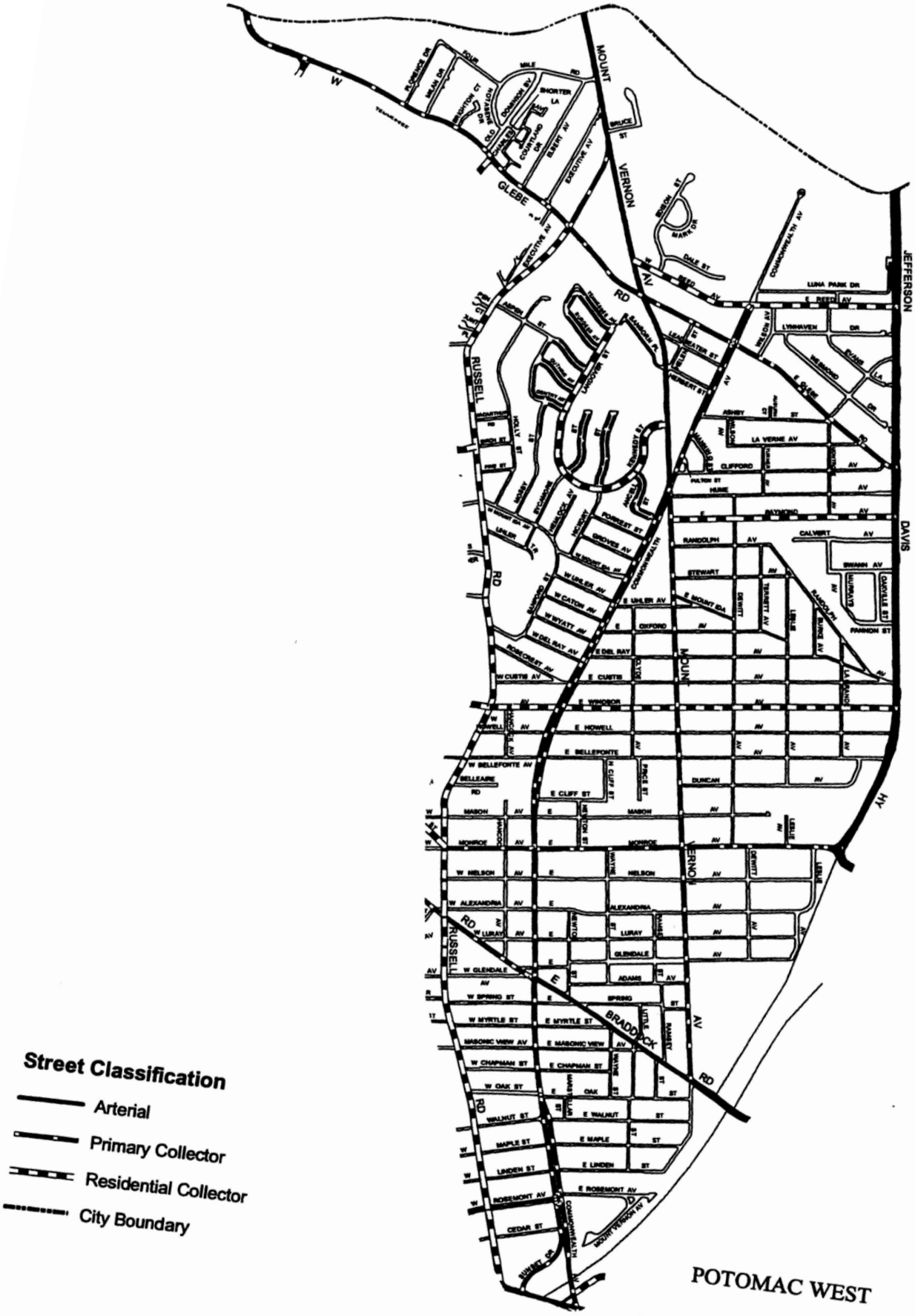
- Vehicular access to the study area is, on the whole, good, with adequate north-south and east-west connections. Commuter traffic filters through the study area on primary collector streets, but there are no major points of congestion.

- The Braddock Road Metro Station, immediately south of the study area, affords good transit service to Potomac West; as does the Metro and DASH feeder bus routes and service.

- The further development of Potomac Yard has the potential to impact traffic in the study area. However, with the construction of interior roads within the Potomac Yard development and the realignment of the Monroe Avenue bridge, as well as transit use, the impact on the study area has been reduced. The impacts of the Potomac Yard will need to be continually monitored once the project is completed.

- Improvements to pedestrian safety are strongly encouraged to promote walking and bicycling as transportation alternatives to and from Potomac Yard, the Braddock Road Metro Station, and the neighborhoods west of US Route 1.

Map 9
Major Thoroughfares (2005)



URBAN DESIGN

The Potomac West area is primarily a low scale residential area comprised of single-family detached and semi-detached two and three story housing units. Most of the older housing is generally frame construction on lots ranging from 2,500 to 5,000 square feet. Neighborhoods are not always well defined because of the varied housing styles that exist; housing units can vary dramatically within each block. Nevertheless, the placement of mostly single family homes on a fairly uniform grid system gives the residential areas an overall cohesiveness.

The main commercial area in Potomac West is along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Low scale, two story buildings prevail; most businesses are small scale and neighborhood serving. The type, scale and character of most of the businesses along the Avenue relate well and are compatible with the abutting residential areas. Among other factors, it is this relationship, hearkening back to a quieter historic era, which makes Potomac West unique.

The principle industrial area is the Oakville Triangle and a strip along US Route 1. While the area has seen some multi-family residential redevelopment, ~~T~~ the commercial and industrial frontage along US Route 1 could be generally characterized as the typical arrangement of highway oriented buildings ranging from retail and commercial service uses to manufacturing and light industrial activities.

To some extent the relationship between the highway oriented industrial uses and the abutting residential uses further west are compatible. In other cases the transitions are awkward; industrial uses seem to encroach upon the residential character of a street such as Raymond Avenue.

With the overall built form of Potomac West well established, the focus of the urban design analysis is on those elements within the area that are likely to change - the commercial uses along Mt. Vernon Avenue and potential growth sites - and how these elements might affect the character of Potomac West.

Mt. Vernon Avenue

Cutting through the middle of Potomac West is Mt. Vernon Avenue, a major commercial corridor serving much of Potomac West. As indicated previously, Mt. Vernon Avenue does not present a linear procession of stores and commercial uses. Schools, parks, playgrounds and residential uses are interdispersed among shops and stores.

Nor are the types of commercial uses uniform. The upper Mt. Vernon Avenue area, including Arlandria and Glebe Road, contain mostly larger scaled commercial uses which are auto-oriented and fronted by surface parking lots. Within this area only the row of buildings beginning with the Waffle Shop and ending before a public parking lot, previously occupied by the Datatel Building, present an urban facade of small shops close to the street. The remainder of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Glebe and Four Mile Run is a jumble of garden apartment residential, large frontages of

vacant lots, gas stations, the Mt. Vernon Village Center, free standing commercial buildings, a suburban style dry cleaners and an auto parts store.

More confusing from an urban design perspective is the commercial area at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road and the area between West Reed Avenue and Glebe Road. The streets themselves are in large measure the source of the problem by diagonally cutting up parcels and fragmenting the area. The overwhelming auto orientation of the commercial uses with numerous curb cuts; large asphalted parking lots and lack of landscaping contribute to the harshness of the environment.

The remainder of the Avenue moving southward stands in contrast to Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue. Although there are still gas stations and auto-oriented uses, there are more blocks of small shops with a strong street presence along the section of the Avenue south of Commonwealth Avenue than there are north of Commonwealth.

In some cases this concentration of commercial uses is broken up by non-commercial uses, by small vacant lots and by lots which have marginal buildings on them. This section of Mt. Vernon Avenue offers many opportunities for small scale infill development.

In other cases there are larger, possibly underutilized sites which could redevelop as focal points along the Avenue. Sites such as the Sun Trust Bank property at Hume Avenue and Mt. Vernon and the Alexandria Hyundai and Audi of Alexandria properties at Mason Avenue and Mt. Vernon Avenue are larger than simply infill sites, but smaller than the potential development sites identified in Arlandria. Because of their size and their frontage along the Avenue, redevelopment of these sites will play an important role in shaping the character of the surrounding areas. The properties developed with car dealerships and service uses are automobile oriented sites that, if redeveloped, could provide a bridge between businesses on the south side of Monroe Avenue with the commercial core area to the north as well as enhance the pedestrian oriented nature of this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Although redevelopment of these sites is not anticipated in the near term, the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends site and building improvements to enhance their appearance and make them more pedestrian friendly.

A major urban design consideration with respect to infill development along the Avenue is scale compatibility and building orientation. Keeping the building scale low and the building frontage oriented towards the street would be principles consistent with maintaining or strengthening the pedestrian orientation of the street and the character of the surrounding neighborhoods. The *Plan* identifies a number of urban design and streetscape strategies. The *Plan* recognizes the historic and eclectic character of Mt. Vernon Avenue and seeks to protect and enhance its unique character as change takes place. The *Plan* guides future development to maintain a vibrant, low-scale mixed-use neighborhood where Alexandria residents may live, work, shop and play. The design guidelines in the plan incorporate the Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines, adopted by City Council in 1993.

Design considerations for Mt. Vernon Avenue are identified in the *Plan,* with specific guidelines for street wall and frontage, building height and massing, lot occupancy, facade articulation, parking and screening, storefront design, and building signage, as well as pedestrian and streetscape improvements in the public realm.

In addition to building scale, building orientation and parking, other design considerations for Mt. Vernon Avenue include; maintaining adequate sidewalk widths for pedestrian movement, providing pedestrian crosswalks, with perhaps special pavement treatment at major crosswalk points, special pavement treatment for sidewalks coupled with standardized street furniture, landscaping and street trees, undergrounding of utilities and commercial signage controls.

OPEN SPACE

Providing enough open space for the residents of Alexandria is a high priority for the City. In 2002, the City adopted an Open Space Plan that addresses a number of short and longer term open space needs in the City. In addition to the recommendations in the Arlandria Plan, priorities in the Potomac West area include:

- Protecting and enriching existing parks within Potomac West;
- Protecting, expanding, and connecting stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive areas;
- Maximizing use of public open space areas to satisfy local needs;
- Creating public open space from vacant land;
- Linking and expanding the pedestrian, bicycle and trail system; and
- Enhancing streetscapes and gateways.

More specifically, the Open Space Plan identifies Commonwealth Avenue as a significant parkway and model for future parkways in the City. Rehabilitation tasks for this parkway would include: clearing of dead/diseased vegetation, replacement and infill with new vegetation, replanting of median strips and extension of medians where feasible, and on-going maintenance activities. The Open Space Plan identifies an appropriate location for streetscape improvements as the intersection of US Route 1 and Jefferson Streets. The US Route 1 gateway and streetscape priority calls for the preservation of multiple linear sites on the south side of East and West Glebe Roads, between US Route 1 and I-395, that would allow for the creation of a linear park in the Del Ray area. This can be achieved through acquisition, easements or other methods of open space preservation in the short term.

Another open space initiative in the area is the Four Mile Run Restoration Project. The lower portion of Four Mile Run, from I-395 at the upstream end to the mouth at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, was channelized in the 1970s following several floods in the area. Since the completion of the flood control project, the channel has safely conveyed the high storm flows through Arlington and Alexandria. However, the concrete channel lacks the beauty and environmental habitat of a natural stream channel. In 2000, a federal appropriation of $1 million was secured for Arlington County and the City of Alexandria to fund the development of a master plan to transform the lower portion of Four Mile Run. The goal of the planning effort is to restore the habitat and environmental features, recreational opportunities, aesthetics and urban form of the flood control channel. Staff from Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers are working together, with consultants, on the Four Mile Run restoration effort. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2006.

POLICY HISTORY

Over the past three decades, City policy in the Potomac West area has focused consistently on four main themes which have been articulated and acted upon in Planning documents, Council resolutions, City expenditures, special programs and zoning actions. These four themes have been:

- preserving and strengthening existing neighborhoods and creating housing opportunities for a range of household incomes
- encouraging commercial revitalization and business development along Mt. Vernon Avenue
- focusing of potential development or redevelopment at limited select locations
- Using capital improvement, commercial revitalization and housing programs too support the above policies.

City policies for Potomac West for neighborhood conservation, housing rehabilitation, retail revitalization and controlled development were reflected in the Adopted 1982 Potomac West Plan. That Plan emphasized:

- recognizing Potomac West as a mostly built up "non-growth" area
- encouraging conservation of most existing uses
- strengthening the existing residential character of Potomac West
- encouraging infill residential development consistent with the scale and density of surrounding housing
- providing effective buffers between residential and adjoining commercial and industrial uses
- encouraging mixed-use medium density development along Mt. Vernon Avenue
- retaining industrial uses fronting on Route 1 as far north as Reed Avenue
- revitalizing neighborhood serving commercial areas along Mt. Vernon Avenue
- consolidating commercial activity into nodes
- designating the Arlandria Center area and the Route 1 Properties as a development/redevelopment sites

In concert with the 1982 Plan, the City has developed ongoing programs in housing conservation, commercial revitalization and capital improvements.

The City's neighborhood conservation program includes rehabilitation loans, home ownership assistance, senior rehabilitation grants, blighting influences removal and rat baiting. Since the mid 1970s, over $2,872,934 have been spent to improve over 324 residences in the area.

In support of commercial revitalization, in 1982 the City initiated a loan subsidy program to assist neighborhood businesses and to encourage new business growth along the Avenue. Nearly $2 million in City, Federal and private funds have gone into renovations, new construction, signs and equipment to over 25 Potomac businesses resulting in more than 150 jobs.

In addition, over the years, the City as proactively promoted business development along the Avenue through the Enterprise Zone, the Mt. Vernon Revitalization Task Force, the City's Office of Housing and the joint City/Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Program.

Since 1972, the City has used the Potomac West Neighborhood Program to preserve and upgrade residential areas. During the first two years of the seven- year, $5 million improvement program, the following projects were initiated: acquisition of land for future park and greenway construction; closing of four streets in the Lynhaven neighborhood at their intersections with Route 1; execution of extensive curb, gutter and sidewalk construction; installation of pedestrian oriented lighting; planting of landscape beautification at Ancell Street, Mount Ida, Commonwealth Avenue and Mount Avenue; development of the W&OD trailway; development of Hooff's Run Park.

The City has also used capital improvements to stimulate commercial revitalization. Since 1985, the City has spent over $ 2.5 million to underground utility wires and poles along Mt. Vernon Avenue and to implement streetscape improvements.

In 1986, because of proposed purchase and rehabilitation of many of the apartments housing low and moderate income households in Arlandria, City Council appointed two Councilmen to form the Arlandria Subcommittee. Although the Subcommittee focused on the most immediate problem of tenant dislocation due to private upgrading of the housing stock, the scope of its recommendations included all of Upper Mt. Vernon Avenue, Arlandria East, Lynhaven and the Route 1 properties.

City Council adopted the Subcommittee Report which included recommendations to:

- promote the revitalization of the upper Mt. Vernon Avenue area as a vibrant commercial retail center

- develop a gateway to Mt. Vernon Avenue by encouraging redevelopment and in-fill development, providing additional landscaping, and by working with developers to coordinate plans

- use capital improvements to encourage revitalization

- encourage coordinated mixed use development of the Route 1 properties

SUMMARY - POLICY

- The City has viewed Potomac West as mostly a built up non-growth area and has encouraged programs emphasizing the conservation and rehabilitation of existing uses.

- To further enhance and serve residential neighborhoods, the City has encouraged commercial revitalization along Mt. Vernon Avenue using a business loan program and capital improvements.

- Significant capital improvements in the forms of flood control, parks, street closings, streetscaping and the undergrounding of utilities have been made by the City to strengthen the residential and commercial components of the area.

- The City has adopted policies to preserve existing industrial areas.

- The City has designated five sites for coordinated development/redevelopment; Route 1 /East Reed Avenue Properties; Mt. Vernon Village Center/Birchmere Sites; Safeway/Datatel Sites; Triangle Sites; and Giant/CVS Sites.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The SAP designates most of the residential areas in accordance with existing land use patterns; either residential low or medium with the mid to high rise apartments designated for residential high. The two major potential development sites are designated for mixed use. Along Mt. Vernon Avenue, the Glebe Road area is designated for commercial while the "main street" portion of the Avenue is designated for mixed use low.

Map 10 shows the proposed changes to the land use plan, incorporating the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan land use recommendations to create two new Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs) and the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone. These changes are discussed in detail below.

The CL or commercial low category is designed for the "Main Street" portion of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The intent of CL is to provide for the types of low scale retail, office and residential uses which are typically found along this section of the Avenue. An urban overlay zone is proposed for the commercial properties along Mt. Vernon Avenue from the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue. The purpose of the overlay zone is to encourage pedestrian-oriented retail and complementary uses and allow new construction that exceeds the current CL bulk regulations in compliance with the building form design guidelines enumerated in the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan. The underlying CL zoning will remain.

The CSL designation or commercial service low, is designed for low scale commercial uses with some light industrial activity which would be compatible with nearby residential areas.

The CG category or commercial general, is intended for larger scale retail uses such as shopping centers, grocery stores, auto dealerships and fast food establishments. The special use permit requirement should continue to be enforced for fast food restaurants and auto dealerships.

The NR designation is proposed to replace the existing CL, and in some cases CG, zoning to promote redevelopment and infill development in Arlandria with a mix of uses, including ground floor retail and office and residential uses on the floors above. Retail and design guidelines are included in this zone to ensure that, as new development occurs, the bulk, mass, scale and orientation of the new buildings are compatible with the existing character of the commercial district and with the long-term vision depicted in the Upper Potomac West (UPW) Task Force Report and the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood (the Plans).

The CDD designation or Coordinated Development District, is applied to the three potential development sites; Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, the Route 1 Properties and the Safeway-Datatel properties. The intent of this designation is to demarcate areas where development/redevelopment is desired in accordance with a coordinated plan for mixed use development. The CDD designation sets the stage for specialized zoning which provides for greater control over the future development of important sites within the City yet which also provides more flexibility for the developer than conventional zoning.

Two new CDDs are proposed as recommended in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*. The first CDD consists of the 11 underutilized or vacant parcels located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Herbert Street and Commowealth Avenue, known as the "Triangle Sites." The Plan calls for the coordinated redevelopment of this area with a mix of uses including ground floor retail, with residential or office uses. The second CDD is the Giant Grocery Store and CVS Pharmacy sites located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue. The community strongly supports and desires their continued operation. Should market forces render either the uses or buildings obsolete, the Plan calls for the coordinated redevelopment of both sites with retail uses, including grocery and pharmacy uses, and other retail uses, with residential or office uses above. No other land use changes are recommended in the Plan for the remainder of Monroe Avenue.

The I industrial category is designed for light industrial, warehouse, service or limited office or flex space.

The Oakville Triangle should remain industrial. The City holds open the possibility of reevaluating the area in the future as development occurs in the Route 1 corridor. The area may be considered as a CDD in the future.

The area known as Arlandria East (bounded by Mt. Vernon Avenue, Four Mile Run, Route 1 and Reed Avenue) should be designated by the City to be planned as a whole in a creative innovative manner to encourage development of the sites now under fragmented ownership, and to examine the best location for the school, recreation, park and land use elements for a quality design. Development should include open space and recreational facilities to accommodate the additional residential and employment populations. Open space should be reconfigured to better serve the existing and new communities; wet lands should be protected.

A park-like entrance and improved portal into the community should be created at Reed Avenue. A connection should be built between the Wayne Anderson and W & OD bike trail.

Prior Changes to the Land Use Plan

The following changes were made with the adoption of the 1992 Potomac West Small Area Plan, and amendments made thereafter. These changes are specifically mapped in the original version and subsequent amendments to the Small Area Plan.

1. From Commercial to Commercial General

   The change to Commercial General is more appropriate for these auto oriented retail uses including a Pizza Hut and a 7/11 store.

2. From Industrial to Utility/Transportation

   This is the Virginia Power site and the utility designation reflects the present use of the site.

3. From Residential High to Residential Medium

   This medium density residential designation reflects the character of the existing and surrounding residential development.

4. From Commercial to Residential High

   This is a residential site, and the proposed land use plan should reflect the desire to maintain the residential use.

5. From Commercial and Mixed Use to Commercial Low

   This is the northernmost section of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The change in classification would provide for low scale commercial development compatible with the planning of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

6. Institutional to Park and Open Space

   This area includes the parts of Four Mile Run Park not already designated park and recreational facilities including ball fields located next to Cora Kelly School. The recommended change more accurately reflects existing uses.

7. From Mixed Use to Coordinated Development District

   This is the Arlandria Center site. The Plan calls for mixed use retail and residential development with some office uses. The Arlandria Shopping Center would be modernized or redeveloped and the Berkey Photo building redeveloped for residential. Other portions of the site would be developed for smaller scale retail and office uses. The CDD designation

would be the basis for rezoning the site to a new zoning category which could accomplish these land use objectives.

8. From Commercial to Commercial Low

This is the commercial retail block along Mt. Vernon Avenue across from the Arlandria Center. This CL designation would allow these uses to continue and remain a low scale retail area.

9. From Commercial to Residential Medium

This is a residential area that was shown as commercial in the existing plan. A goal of the Potomac West plan is to preserve existing residential areas. The designation to a residential land use reflects this goal.

10. From Commercial to Commercial-Low

This is a small office complex on the south side of Glebe Road at Russell Road. The change to CL would be compatible with the existing use of this site and insure continued low scale uses.

11. From Commercial to Commercial General

This area along the corner of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue includes the Food Barn site, Ray Burnette's Volkswagen, Murrays Steak and McDonalds. The Commercial General designation reflects the retail nature of this area.

12. From Commercial to Commercial Service Low

This would more appropriately reflect existing uses. It would retain low scale commercial uses compatible with the surrounding residential character and would be consistent with the development along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

13. From Commercial to Commercial Low

This site is the triangle between Commonwealth Avenue, Mt. Vernon Avenue and Herbert Street. The change to Commercial Low would provide for low scale commercial uses and allow uses compatible with the surrounding residential area.

14. From Residential Medium to Park

The Park designation reflects the existing park use.

15. From Residential Medium and Residential High to Park

This area includes the old W&OD right-of-way and the existing parks at the ends of Landover Street and Mosby Street. The City should consider purchasing the right-of-way, or, at least obtaining an easement.

16. From Residential High to Utility/Transportation

This designation reflects the existing use.

17. From Residential Medium to Commercial Low

This is a small commercial complex located at the northeast corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road. The uses are compatible with the surrounding residential area and the CL classification would be in keeping with the present uses and scale.

18. Commercial and Residential Low to Residential Medium

The proposed designation reflects the existing use.

19. From Industrial to Commercial Service Low

The CSL designation would not only more appropriately reflect the existing uses along Route 1, but it would provide for low intensity uses compatible with the surrounding residential area.

20. From Residential Medium and Industrial to Commercial Service Low

This would remove the possibility of heavy industrial development next to low scale residential and allow the continuation of low scale development on these properties.

21. From Residential Low to Residential Medium

A goal of the Potomac West plan is to maintain existing residential densities. This designation reflects the existing medium density residential use.

22. From Residential Medium to Residential Low

This designation reflects the existing low density residential uses.

23. From Commercial to Commercial Low

The designation of this site, which contains a Peoples Drug Store and a Giant Food Store, to Commercial General would allow these uses to continue. This classification is designed for retail uses and small offices and would restrict major office development. Fast foods and auto related uses are not permitted.

24. From Residential Medium to Commercial Service Low

This designation would eliminate the risk of intrusion of industry in the surrounding residential area. The low scale uses would be compatible with the general residential character of the area.

25. From Institutional to Park and Open Space

This is the George Washington School ballfield.

26. From Commercial to Commercial Low

This is a vacant site located at the northwest comer of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road. The Commercial Low classification would insure low scale, residentially compatible, development of this site.

27. From Commercial to Commercial Service Low

This area is situated south of Braddock Road and includes both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The change to Commercial Service appropriately reflects the current uses of these properties.

28. From Mixed Use and Commercial to Commercial Low

This area is frequently referred to as the "main street" of Mt. Vernon Avenue. Most of the area is low scale commercial, office, retail and residential. The Commercial Low classification would allow the continuation of a mixture of uses including residential while maintaining low scale appearance.

29. From Residential Low to Residential Medium

This designation reflects the existing density of development.

30. From Residential Medium to Residential Low

This designation reflects the existing density of development.

31. From Residential Medium to Park

This designation reflects the existing park use.

32. From Institutional to Park and Open Space

This is the Mt. Vernon School ballfield.

33. From Residential Low to Residential Medium

This designation reflects the existing density of development.

34. From Commercial to Commercial Low

These two areas are low scale commercial along Monroe Avenue. The proposed use designation is more appropriate for these uses and would insure continued low scale commercial use of these properties.

35. From Mixed Use to Coordinated Development District

This is the Route 1 Properties site. The plan calls for mixed use residential, office, retail and hotel uses on the site as part of a coordinated development. This plan supports high density and tall buildings on part of this site, but only in the context of a coordinated, mixed use development plan which concentrates the dense commercial development on the northeast part of the site, with residential development to the south and west along Reed and Commonwealth. Further, the plan calls for the heights and densities to moderate toward Reed Avenue for compatibility with nearby residential areas. The plan would be the basis for rezoning the entire site to a new zoning category which could accomplish these objectives.

36. From Commercial Low and Commercial General to Neighborhood Retail

This area consists of the commercially zoned properties that abut Mount Vernon Avenue from Four Mile Run south to the intersection of West Glebe Road in Arlandria, including parcels located in the CDD#6 Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere (formerly Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo), and several properties located at the intersection of Mount Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road. The UPW Task Force Report and the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood recommend maintaining the strong mixed-use development pattern on Mount Vernon Avenue with ground floor retail and residential and commercial uses on the floors above, support the redevelopment of existing automobile-oriented uses with pedestrian-oriented uses and, with infill development at a mass, scale, and orientation that is compatible with the existing scale of two and three story buildings oriented to Mount Vernon Avenue.

37. From Commercial Low and Commercial General to Coordinated Development District

These are the eight parcels, approximately 4.27 acres of land, that collectively comprise the site identified and known as Safeway-Datatel. The change from CL and CG to CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the UPW Task Force Report.

Proposed Changes to the Land Use Plan

The following changes, shown on Map 10, are recommended:

1. Apply the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone to the Commercial Low properties

This area consists of the commercially zoned properties that abut Mount Vernon Avenue from the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue. The *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* recommends encouraging the strong mixed-use pedestrian-oriented development pattern on Mount Vernon Avenue with ground floor retail and residential and office uses on the floors above.

2. From Commercial Low to Coordinated Development District

These are the 11 parcels, approximately 2 acres of land, that collectively comprise the site identified and known as in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* as the "Triangle Sites." The change from CL to CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels that complements the area, strengthens Mt. Vernon Avenue and improves the connection between the Arlandria neighborhood to the north with the Warwick Village, Mt. Jefferson and Del Ray neighborhoods to the south consistent with the design principles enumerated in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.*

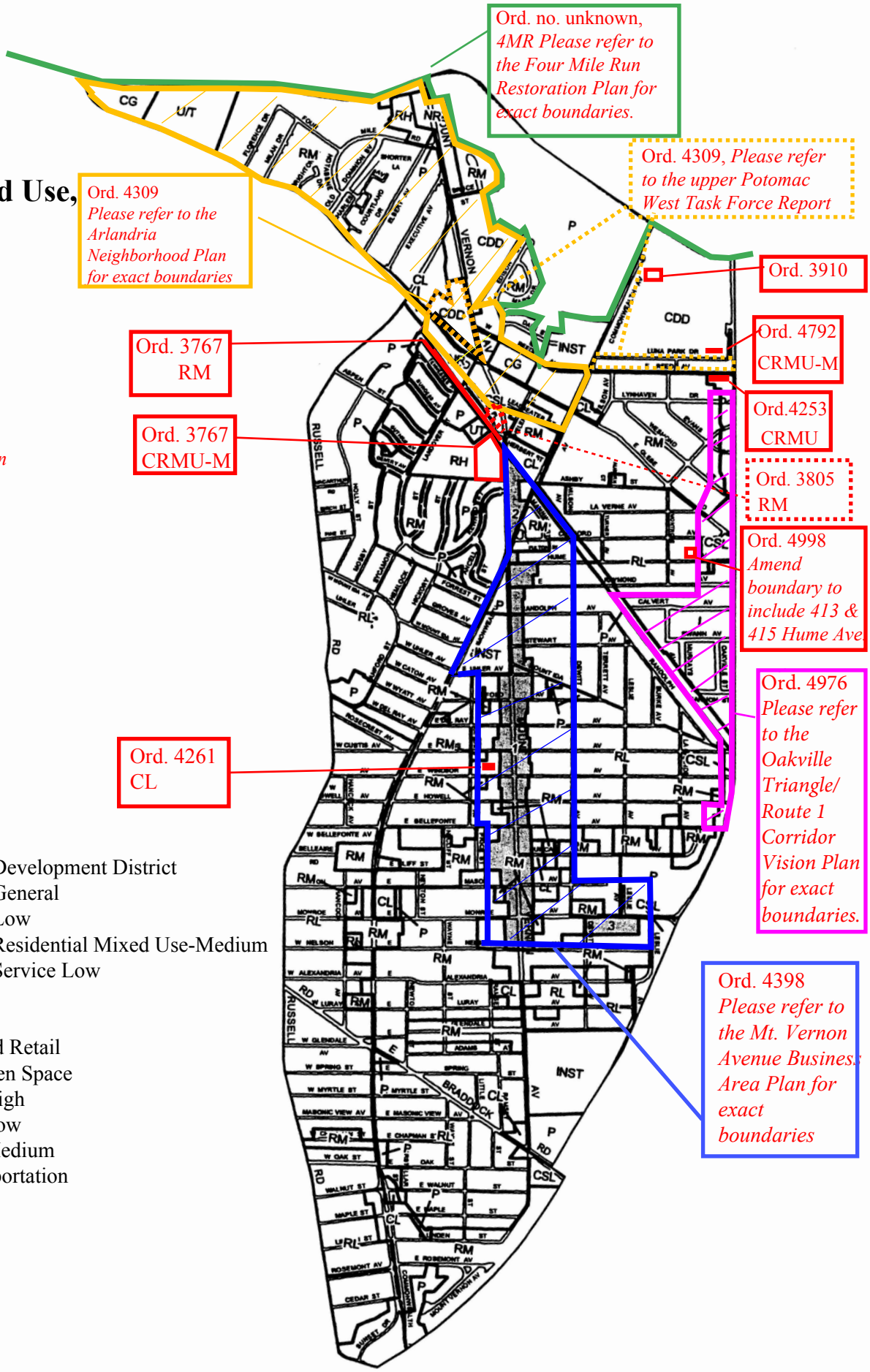
3. From Commercial Low to Coordinated Development District

The two parcels of land, approximately1.9 acres, are developed with a Giant Grocery Store and CVS Pharmacy. The CDD is proposed to encourage a coordinated redevelopment of the sites should market conditions render the current buildings or uses obsolete. The community strongly supports the existing grocery and pharmacy uses in this location and are desired in any future redevelopment of the sites.

Please refer to Map 10 for currently approved land use.

Map 10
Potomac West Land Use, as amended

Amended 12/17/94, Ord. 3767
Amended 6/17/95, Ord. 3805
Amended 1/25/97, Ord. 3910
Amended 5/18/02, Ord. 4253
Amended 6/25/02, Ord. 4261
Amended 6/14/03, Ord. 4309
Amended 5/14/05, Ord. 4398
Amended 3/18/06, Ord. unknown
Amended 11/13/10, Ord. 4687
Amended 2/23/13, Ord. 4792
Amended 11/14/15, Ord. 4976



Land Use Description

CDD	- Coordinated Development District
CG	- Commercial General
CL	- Commercial Low
CRMU-M	- Commercial Residential Mixed Use-Medium
CSL	- Commercial Service Low
I	- Industrial
INST	- Institutional
NR	- Neighborhood Retail
P	- Parks and Open Space
RH	- Residential High
RL	- Residential Low
RM	- Residential Medium
UT	- Utility/Transportation

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

A comprehensive rezoning occurred in 1992 with the adoption of the Potomac West Small Area Plan and subsequent amendments incorporated the following changes. These changes are specifically mapped in the original version and subsequent amendments to the Small Area Plan.

Map 12 shows the prior zoning changes as the existing zoning. These changes affect the commercially zoned and developed properties along Mt. Vernon Avenue and Monroe Avenue.

Map 11 shows the proposed zoning.

Prior Changes to Zoning Map

1. Rezone from 1-1 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial General designation (CG).

   Low scale general commercial is the current use of the property and the commercial general designation would be more appropriate for these uses to continue.

2. Rezone from I-1 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Utility/Transportation designation (U/T).

   This area is the Virginia Power Company and is designated as utility on the proposed land use plan.

3. Rezone from C-2 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

   This is the northernmost section of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The change in zoning would provide for low scale commercial development compatible with adjacent residential and appropriate to commercial parcels of limited depth.

4. Rezone from C-2 to RC Residential

   This site was known formerly as the Warner Towers high rise apartments. The proposed change in zone classification will properly place this use in a residential high density zone rather than in a commercial high density zone.

5. Rezone from C-2 to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Coordinated Development District designation (CDD).

   This is the Arlandria Center site. The proposed change to CDD would provide for more specific use, density and height guidelines within the context of a coordinated plan. (For detail on these guidelines see Urban Design Recommendations.)

6. Rezone from RA to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation

This area includes Four Mile Run Park and recreational facilities associated with Cora Kelly School. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

7. Rezone from I-1. I-2 and RD to new zone consistent with the Master Plan Coordinated Development District designation (CDD).

This is the Route 1 Properties site. The CDD designation calls for a coordinated development plan in which the uses, heights and densities can be made flexible and subject to negotiation within the context of design guidelines. (see Urban Design Recommendations)

8. Rezone from R-8. RA. C-2 and C-2-B to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This area includes the old W&OD right-of-way and the existing parks at the ends of Landover Street and Mosby Street.

9. Rezone from CO and C-2-B to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This is a small office complex on the south side of Glebe Road at Russell Road. The change to CL would be compatible with the existing use of this site and insure continued low scale uses.

10. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial General designation CG).

This area includes the Food Barn, Ray Burrnettes Volkswagen, Murrays Steak and McDonalds. The change to CG would seek to retain neighborhood retail use of the property and to remove the high density office zoning.

11. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

This would more appropriately reflect existing uses. It would retain low scale commercial uses compatible with the surrounding residential character and would be consistent with the development along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

12. Rezone from C-2 to RA Residential

This is the Arlandria Apartments. This use is more appropriately placed in a multifamily residential zone than in a high density commercial zone.

13. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation

This is a small commercial complex located at the northeast corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road. The uses are compatible with the surrounding residential area; the CL classification would be in keeping with the present uses and scale.

14. Rezone from I-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

The CSL designation reflects the existing uses along Route 1, and provides for low intensity uses compatible with the surrounding residential area. The designation also allows highway-related commercial uses.

15. Rezone from C-2 and RA to RC Residential.

The area is presently known as the Calvert high rise apartments. The proposed zone allows high density residential with ground floor commercial. This zoning change would properly place this primarily residential use in a residential zone.

16. Rezone from C-2 and C-2-B to a zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This site is the triangle between Commonwealth Avenue, Mt. Vernon Avenue and Herbert Street. the change to CL would provide for low scale commercial use and allow uses compatible with the surrounding residential area.

17. Rezone from RA to a new zone consistent with the Master Pan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This includes the Goat Hill, Timberland and Gentry parks. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

18. Rezone from R-2-5 to a new zone consistent with the (Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This area is the northern portion of the Mt. Vernon school site, situated between Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues. The site is used for recreational activities which

include tennis, swimming and a landscaped park. The new zone would be appropriate for the present use of the site.

19. Rezone from RA & C-2-B to a zone consistent with the Master Plan Utility /Transportation designation (U/T).

The new utility zone is appropriate for this utility use.

20. Rezone from R-2-5 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

The property is known as the old W&OD right-of-way and was acquired by the City for use as a park and greenway system. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

21. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This area is low scale commercial, office, retail and residential. The Commercial Low, classification would allow the continuation of a mature of uses including residential while maintaining low scale appearance compatible with nearby low scale residential.

22. Rezone from R-2-5 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

These are two small parks. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space -none.

23. Rezone from C-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

The site is a small low scale commercial retail center along Commonwealth Ave. north of Monroe Ave. The Commercial Low category is similar to C-1 and insures continued low scale use of this site.

24. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Residential Low designation (R-2-5).

This is the YMCA building on Monroe Avenue. Institutional uses are recommended for rezoning to residential zones which are consistent with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods, so that if redevelopment occurs it will be to compatible residential uses.

25. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

This site is currently known as Simpson Stadium and is and will continue to be used as a recreational facility. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

26. Rezone from I-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

This designation would grandfather existing uses but would insure that any new uses would be compatible with the general residential character of the area.

27. Rezone from C-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan designation (CL).

This block is along the west side of Mt. Vernon Ave. between Alexandria and Luray Ave. The Commercial Low designation maintains the low scale character of the commercial uses adjacent to residential.

28. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master P1 an Park and Open Space designation (P).

This site is the present location of George Washington school recreation facility, also known as Braddock Field. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are begin recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

29. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This is a vacant site located at the northwest corner of Mt. Vernon Ave. and Braddock Rd. The Commercial Low classification would insure low scale, residentially compatible development of this site.

30. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Service Low designation (CSL).

This area is situated south of Braddock Rd. and includes both sides of Mt. Vernon Ave. The change to Service Commercial appropriately reflects the current use of these properties but limits intensity of development to that which is compatible with nearby residential.

31. Rezone from C-1 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

This is a small low scale commercial area east of Commonwealth Ave. along Walnut St. It contains a market and a bank. The proposed zoning designation is more appropriate for these uses and would insure continued low scale commercial use of these properties.

32. Rezone from RB to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Park and Open Space designation (P).

These sites are the Hooff's Run Park and Greenway between Rosemont and Commonwealth Avenues. All park, open space and recreation areas in the City are being recommended for rezoning to a new Park and Open Space zone.

33. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Commercial Low designation (CL).

The designation of this site, which contains a People's Drug Store and a Giant Food Store, to Commercial Low would allow these uses to continue. This classification is designed for retail and small office uses and would restrict major office development. Fast foods and auto related uses are excluded.

34. Rezone from C-2 to a new zone consistent with the Master Plan Residential Medium designation (RA).

This is a part of the "Presidential Greens" apartments which face onto Mt. Vernon Area Since the area is residential, the change would conform to the use of the property.

35. Rezone from C-2 to RA residential.

This area is residential and the change would conform to the use of the property.

Changes 35 through 45, below, resulted from a request by the Del Ray Citizen's Association to study the rezoning of 114 residential properties in the Potomac West study area to zones which are consistent with the existing development of the sites. All of these changes were considered and approved by City Council on February 23, 1991 for inclusion in this plan.

36. From RB and RA to R-2-5 Residential.

37. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

38. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

39. From RB to R-2-5 Residential.

40. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

41. From RA-to R-2-5 Residential.

42. From RA to R-2-5 Residential.

43. From RB to R-5 Residential.

44. From RB to R-2-5 Residential.

45. From A-2-6 : to RB Residential.

46. From RB to R-2-5 Residential.

47. Rezone from CL and CG (underlying zone of CDD #6 - Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, formerly Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo) to a new zone Neighborhood Retail (NR)

This is the commercial corridor that extends along Mount Vernon Avenue in Arlandria from Four Mile Run at the northern boundary of the City, including the properties currently zoned CDD#6 Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere to the intersection of Glebe Road and several properties located at the intersection of Mount Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road. The change is consistent with the Long-Term Vision Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood which recommends pedestrian-oriented retail uses at the ground level and a mix of uses on the floors above, at a scale that is appropriate with the existing scale of development along Mount Vernon Avenue and respects the residential neighborhoods that abut the commercially zoned land.

48. Rezone from CL and CG to a new Coordinated Development District (CDD) #12

These are the eight parcels, approximately 4.27 acres of land, that comprise the site known collectively as Safeway-Datatel. The creation of a CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the UPW Task Force Report. The underlying zone for this new CDD #12 would be NR/Neighborhood Retail, consistent with the proposed rezoning of commercial properties along the Mount Vernon Avenue corridor in Arlandria.

Proposed Changes to the Zoning Map

The following changes to the zoning map, shown on Map 11, are recommended:

1. Create Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone and apply to CL Zoned Properties

This is the commercial corridor that extends along Mt. Vernon Avenue from the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue. The creation of an urban overlay zone is consistent with the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* which recommends a mix of retail, service, office and residential uses. Within the overlay, a retail focus area is designated

for the parcels located on Mt. Vernon Avenue between Uhler and Bellefonte Avenues to promote and strengthen the retail shops and encourage new complementary businesses. Building form design guidelines are included to ensure that new and infill development is appropriately scaled to Mt. Vernon Avenue and the adjacent residences.

2. Rezone from CL to a new Coordinated Development District #13

These are the 11 parcels, approximately 2 acres of land, that comprise the site known as the "Triangle Sites" in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.* The creation of a CDD is proposed to encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan. The underlying zoning will remain CL.

3. Rezone from CL to a new Coordinated Development District #14

The two parcels of land, approximately 1.9 acres, located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue that are developed with a Giant Grocery Store and CVS Pharmacy. The creation of a CDD is proposed to ensure the coordinated redevelopment of the parcels in a manner that is consistent with the design and planning principles enumerated in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.* The underlying zoning will remain CL.

For current zoning, please refer to the citywide zoning map located on the GIS Standard Maps page, www.alexandriava.gov/gis.

This map is no longer being updated. For current zoning, please refer to the citywide zoning map located on the GIS Standard Maps page, www.alexandriava.gov/gis.

Map 11 - Proposed Zoning

HEIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS

As shown on Map 12, most of the Potomac West area is low scale residential limited to 35' by right with 45' by right allowed in the medium density residential zones. The Small Area Plan recommends no change to these heights.

The maximum height is 35 feet (45 feet with SUP) for areas currently designated Commercial Low and up to 50' for those areas designated Service Commercial Low. The Commercial General designated parcels have a 35' height limit.

The maximum permitted height in the proposed Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone is 45 feet as described in the building form design guidelines in Section 6 of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*. Building heights for the sites designated CDD #13 and CDD #14 are limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in building mass and scale adjacent to residential uses. (45 feet maximum)

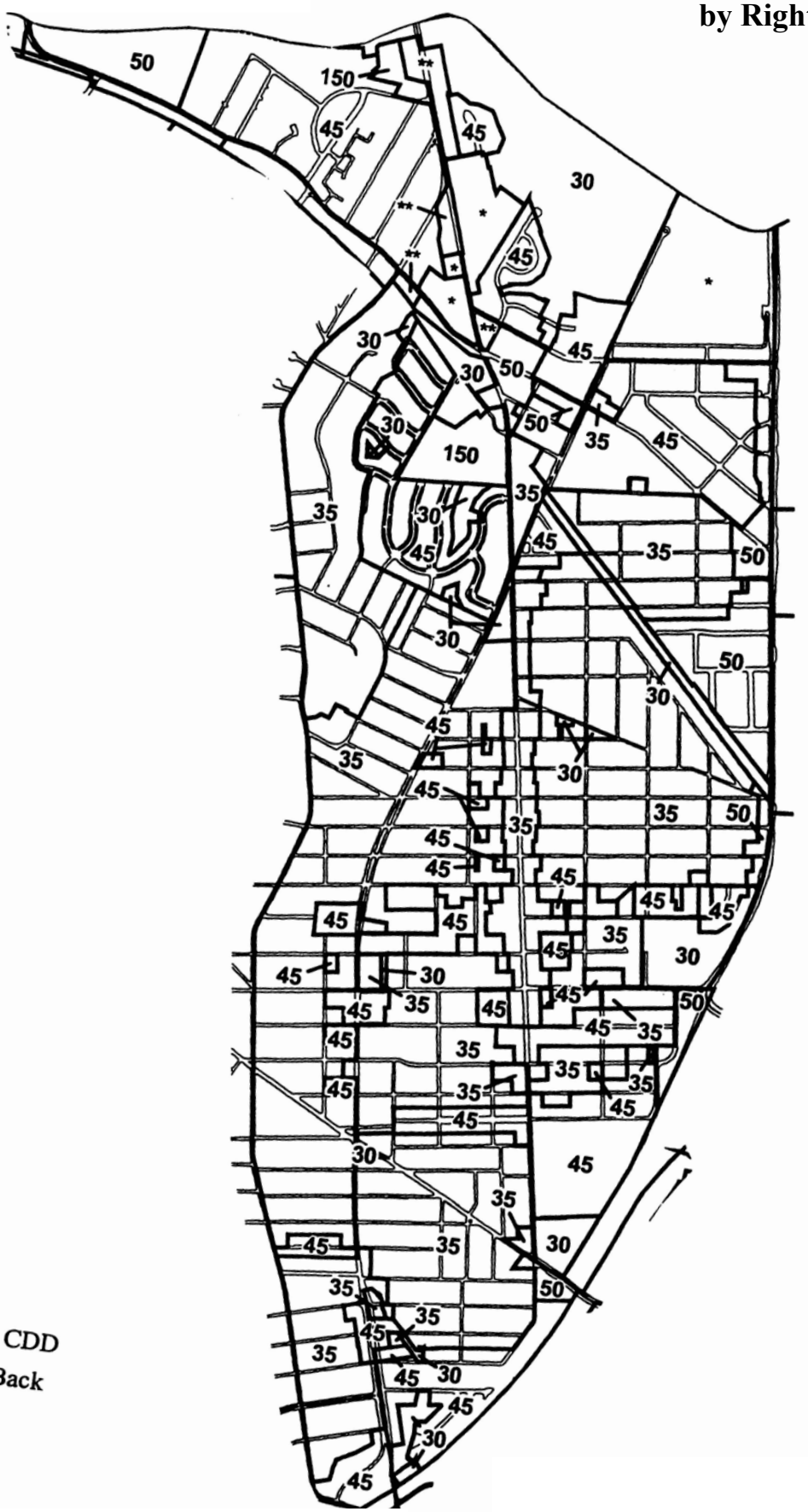
Map 13 is the recommended height map.

The proposed heights for the industrial properties along US Route 1 was previously reduced from 77 feet to make the height allowance more compatible with adjacent residential areas.

For the current CDD designated sites: Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, Safeway-Datatel, and the East Reed Avenue, heights would be based on the design principles recommended in the *UPW Task Force Report and Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood* and as established as part of the Coordinated Development District zones.

The maximum building height proposed in Arlandria in the new Neighborhood Retail zone is 35 feet along the street, except that the maximum permitted building height may be increased to 50 feet with a building step back of 15 feet from the front facade of the building. The minimum building height is 25 feet.

Map 12
Existing Height Limits by Right (2005)

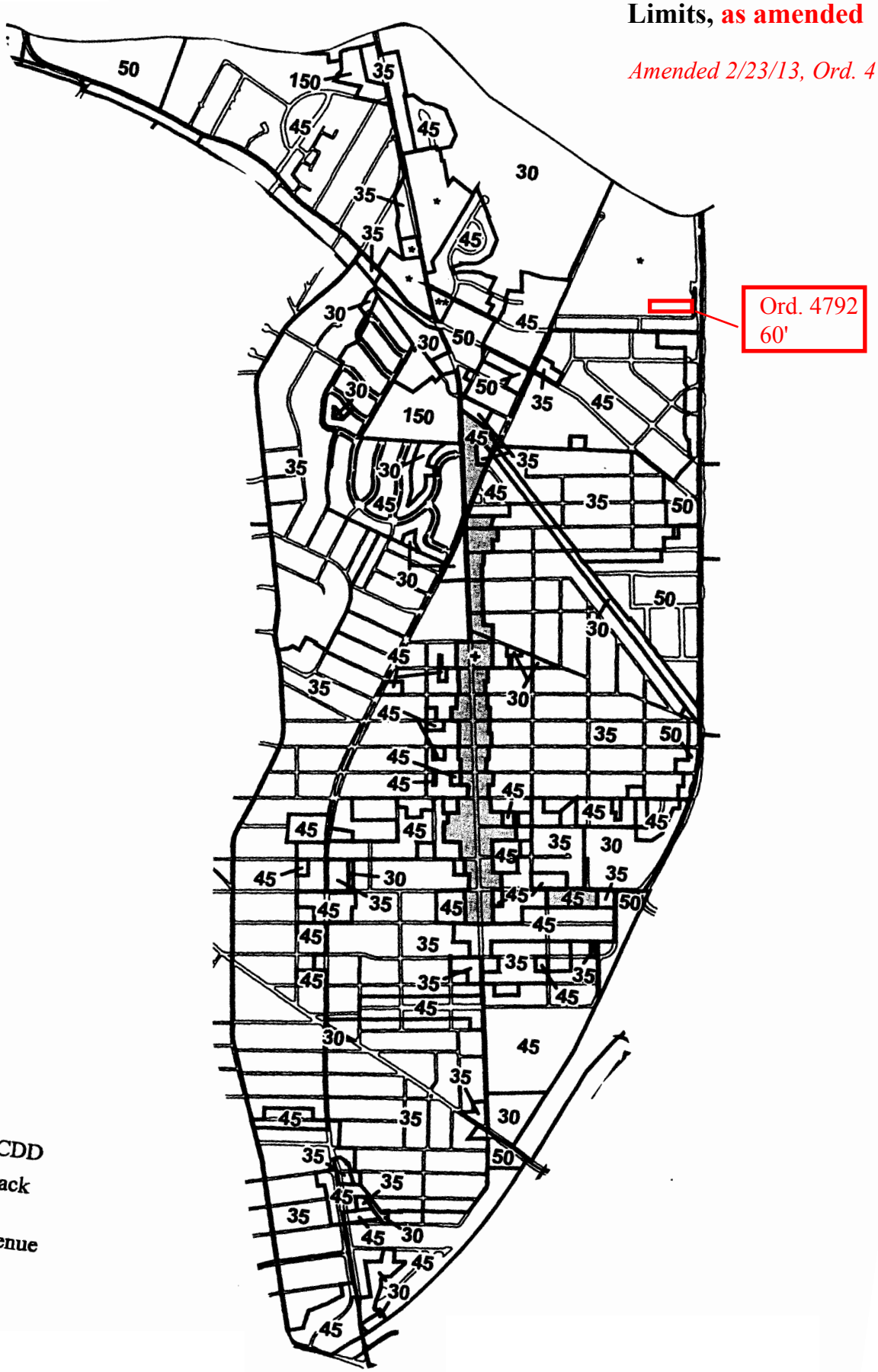


* Height Determined by CDD

** 50 with a 15 ft. Step Back at a 35 ft. Height

Map 13
Potomac West Height Limits, as amended

Amended 2/23/13, Ord. 4792



* Height Determined by CDD
** 50 with a 15 ft. Step Back at a 35 ft. Height
\+ Refer to Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay District

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The urban design recommendations focus on establishing design guidelines for development/ redevelopment of the designated Coordinated Development Districts: Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere, Route 1 Properties, and the Safeway-Datatel properties. Illustrative plans depicting the design guidelines and planning principles for use in the redevelopment of these sites are located in the *Upper Potomac West (UPW) Safeway-Datatel Task Force Report and the Long-Term Vision and the Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood* (the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans*, incorporated herein).

Two new CDDs are recommended for the Triangle Sites, 11 vacant or underutilized parcels located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue across from the Calvert Apartments; and for the lots developed with the Giant Grocery and CVS Pharmacy in the 400 block of Monroe Avenue. Urban design guidelines consistent with the design and planning principles outlined in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*, incorporated herein, are listed below.

CDD Guidelines for the Mt. Vernon Village Center and Birchmere Properties

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the NR/Neighborhood Retail zone regulations shall apply with a floor area ratio (FAR) not to exceed .5 for nonresidential and .75 for a mixed use project including residential and ground floor retail uses.

Development with a special use permit

1. Development shall consist of a mix of uses including retail and residential uses. Other desirable uses to be integrated into the development include live entertainment and theater facilities, an inn or conference center, and office uses.

2. Parking to serve the site should be integrated into the development plans and not along the fronts of buildings on Mt. Vernon Avenue.

3. Deleted Ordinance #4309 (6/14/03)

4. Buildings shall be situated on the site to create a defined retail streetscape along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

5. Residential uses of a similar scale, such as townhouses, shall provide a height and mass transition from the mixed use development down to the Hume Springs neighborhood. In addition, an appropriate height and mass transition shall be provided on the north side of the property, adjacent to the Arlandria-Chirilagua Housing Cooperative.

6. Four Mile Run Park should be recognized as an integral part of the development plan and the Arlandria neighborhood; every effort should be made to provide views and access to the park as part of the development plan.

7. Access to the site should be provided with no new curb cuts along Mt. Vernon Avenue and existing curb cuts should be closed to the greatest extent possible.

8. Parking on the site should be located underground, or if structured should be faced with active uses to screen the cars from public areas.

9. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 3.0 gross floor area including above grade structured parking provided the overall development includes a mix of residential and commercial uses and retail on the ground floor, and complies with the design recommendations in the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood. Gross floor area is defined as the sum of all gross horizontal areas under a roof or roofs. These areas are measured from the exterior faces of walls or from the center-line of party walls. Elevator and stair bulkhead, multi-story atriums and similar volumetric construction not involving floor space are excluded.

10. Ground level open space shall be incorporated in the project at no less than 10-15% of the site area. Such open space may include public plazas and landscaped areas visible or accessible from the public realm. Public plaza(s) should be provided within the development and oriented towards the neighborhood retail area and the park. Additional open space which should be about 5% of the site area should be included within the development.

11. The height of the proposed buildings should be no higher than 35 feet along the street; building height may be increased up to 50 feet where a minimum step back of 15 feet from the front facade is provided. Building height may be further increased up to 65 feet for a maximum of 50 percent of the development footprint where the building massing and scale are compatible with the adjoining development and where the design elements are compatible with recommendation of the Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.

12. The development should include a series of roadways or pedestrian walkways to break up the scale of the sites and create more typical urban sized blocks.

13. The provision of on-site affordable housing is encouraged.

14. All new development shall be consistent with the design recommendations in the Arlandria Neighborhood Plans, adopted as an element of this small area plan.

CDD Principles for the Route 1 Properties

Within this CDD, the properties on the north side of East Reed Avenue are likely to redevelop in the near future. As part of the Upper Potomac West (UPW) Task Force planning process, an illustrative plan was developed for the redevelopment of those parcels. The plan envisions a mix of townhouse residential units at a higher density than currently exists or is permitted. Design and planning principles, including the requirement to provide on-site affordable housing units, are proposed to be incorporated into the CDD guidelines to allow this type of development, and density, with a CDD special use permit.

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the RB zone regulation shall apply along Reed Avenue, the RC zone regulation shall apply along Commonwealth Avenue to the depth of 100 feet and the OC regulation shall apply on the remainder of the site, provided that heights in the area along Commonwealth Avenue do not exceed 45 feet.

Development with a special use permit

1. The entire site should be developed for a mix of office, residential, retail, hotel and open space uses.

2. Higher density commercial uses should be oriented toward US Route 1 and the tallest buildings should be oriented toward the northeast portion of the site furthest away from existing residential uses. The scale of commercial buildings would descend as building sites approach Reed Avenue.

3. Residential uses are to be located along the north side of East Reed Avenue and along Commonwealth Avenue. Residential development on the north side of East Reed Avenue should consist of townhouse and stacked townhouse uses, with a maximum density of 27 dwelling units per acre.

4. Vehicular access to and from the site along Commonwealth Avenue should be limited to residential uses only while all commercial traffic should be limited to access along US Route 1. As redevelopment occurs on the north side of East Reed Avenue, the number of curb cuts onto Reed Avenue should be minimized and off-street parking for the proposed residential uses should be located behind the residences or underground.

5. Parking should be accommodated within structures and, wherever possible, upper decks and plazas should be landscaped and designed for public uses.

6. The residential portion of the project should include a mix of housing types - townhomes, garden apartments, and mid-rise. Consideration should be made for replacement housing for displaced low and moderate income households along E. Reed Avenue.

7. The scale of residential buildings should decrease as building sites approach E. Reed Avenue and the Cora Kelly School and there should be gradual height transitions among the residential uses.

8. The following guidelines are specific to redevelopment on the north side of East Reed Avenue:

   A. A minimum of 35 percent ground-level usable open space should be provided in a manner consistent with the concept in the UPW Task Force Report illustrative plan providing consolidated, publicly-visible open space areas.

   B. A minimum of 10 percent of the total number of new residential units should be affordable units as defined in the City of Alexandria Affordable Housing Policy, and of that total number, 70 percent of the units should consist of two or more bedrooms.

   C. The layout of the new development should seek to maintain as many mature trees as possible. Trees to be retained shall be protected from damage during the development process.

   D. Building articulation shall be incorporated in the building design. Articulation should include building breaks, setbacks and projections, and incorporate a variety of color, material and fenestration to ensure articulation of the street and to avoid an uninterrupted street wall. No more than eight units in a row shall be permitted. Variation in roof heights and cornice lines shall be included.

To further encourage residential development on the Mount Vernon Village Center site and on the Route 1 Properties site and to ensure the further development of Park facilities in Arlandria it is recommended that the City develop a Park Master Plan for Four Mile Run Park. A master plan should be developed for this area that would reflect improved treatment of the drainage areas and Four Mile Run embankment. Natural areas should be retained, and community recreational needs, as well as any future growth or development changes adjacent to the park, should be provided for. The relationship of park functions and future park uses should be improved.

Connections to the park need to be enhanced and additional pedestrian access should be considered, where needed. The park provides a splendid opportunity for improving the relationship between passive and active use of the park and its adjacent uses.

CDD Principles for the Safeway-Datatel Properties

The Safeway-Datatel properties were the subject of an extensive community process by the UPW Task Force that resulted in detailed recommendations for the future redevelopment of the properties at a higher than currently permitted level in a manner that would enhance the neighborhood retail environment. The CDD guidelines herein coincide with the recommendations of the UPW Task Force Report.

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the NR/Neighborhood Retail zone regulations shall apply with a floor area ratio (FAR) not to exceed .5 for nonresidential and .75 for a mixed use project including residential and ground floor retail uses.

Development with a special use permit

1. Development shall consist of a mixed use, neighborhood center that provides a retail anchor, such as a food/grocery store, and supporting retail, office, and live/work or residential uses. The project shall include a public parking component, which shall not be counted against the maximum FAR noted herein.

2. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 3.0 gross floor area including above grade structured parking for the total development. Gross floor area is defined as the sum of all gross horizontal areas under a roof or roofs. These areas are measured from the exterior faces of walls or from the center-line of party walls. Elevator and stair bulkhead, multi-story atriums and similar volumetric construction not involving floor space are excluded.

3. As new construction occurs, a minimum of 10 percent of the total number of residential units shall be affordable as defined in the City of Alexandria Affordable Housing Policy.

4. Active retail uses shall be provided at the ground floor or at the level adjacent to the sidewalk or roadway along Mount Vernon Avenue and should extend a minimum of 100 feet along W. Glebe Road from the southwest building corner. Within this CDD, one check cashing establishment, not to exceed 2,000 square feet in size, may be included as a permitted, active retail use.

5. Ground level open space shall be incorporated in the project at no less than 10-15% of the site area. Such open space may include public plazas and landscaped areas visible or accessible from the public realm. Public plazas capable of hosting community events shall be provided within the development and oriented towards the neighborhood retail area. Additional open space which should be about 5% of the site area should be included within the development.

6. A public parking garage, faced with a minimum depth of 30 feet of retail with office and other uses above up to a height of 40 feet, should be provided on the Datatel site. The garage should consist of five levels of public parking.

7. The maximum height of proposed buildings at the street is 40 feet (3 levels), except that if the building includes a major retail space of more than 35,000 square feet, that portion of the building housing said retail use may be no higher than 45 feet at the street. Otherwise, overall height of the proposed buildings on the Safeway and adjacent sites should be generally consistent with the height recommendations set forth in the UPW Task Force Report. With an exceptional design, increases in building height above the height recommendations may be approved and accommodated within the central portion of the project, provided that such height and building mass do not have an adverse impact onto adjoining properties or the community.

8. All new development shall be consistent with the design recommendations in the Arlandria Neighborhood Plans, adopted as an element of this small area plan.

CDD Principles for the Triangle Sites

The Triangle Site properties were the subject of an extensive community process during the preparation of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan*. The *Plan* includes recommendations for the future redevelopment of the properties at a higher than currently permitted level in a manner that would significantly enhance the pedestrian-oriented neighborhood and strengthen Mt. Vernon Avenue, while providing appropriate transition in building height, mass and scale to the lower scale neighborhoods adjacent to these properties. The CDD guidelines herein coincide with the recommendations of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.*

The *Plan*'s goal is for a mixed use development, with the provision of quality on-site open space and underground parking. The City will be flexible in applying the design guidelines as it works with a future developer on a development proposal that achieves the best possible project, as envisioned by the community and outlined in the *Plan.*

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the CL/Commercial Low zone regulations shall apply except that single, two family and townhouses are prohibited. The floor area ratio (FAR) in the CL zone is .75 for nonresidential development on lots of 5,500 square feet or less, and .5 for lots greater than 5,500 square feet. The FAR may be increased to an amount not to exceed .75 with a special use permit. For residential development, the maximum permitted floor area ratio is .75, with a maximum of 27 units per acre for multifamily. Single and two-family and townhouse dwellings shall not be permitted in the underlying CL zone.

Development with a special use permit

An increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 is permitted with a special use permit. An additional bonus density of 0.25, for a maximum allowable FAR is 1.25, is subject to the provision of affordable housing. Any increase in FAR is subject to compliance with the following performance standards and building form design guidelines enumerated in Section 6 of the *Mt. Vernon Business Area Plan.* Achieving this density requires a development plan that meets or exceeds the following goals:

- Development shall be mixed use with ground floor retail and residential and/or office uses;
- Greater density and height should be provided on the northern portion of the site. A mix of building typology is desirable;
- Building mass and scale shall be compatible with existing mass, scale and character of area;
- Sufficient building articulation shall be provided to break up the mass into smaller components;
- Building height should be limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in building mass along Commonwealth Avenue;

- The adjacent residential neighborhood shall be protected with appropriate building stepbacks, breaks in massing and the provision of rear buffers and setbacks;
- A minimum of 25% ground-level, consolidated and usable open space shall be provided, a significant portion of which shall be publicly visible from Mt. Vernon Avenue;
- A large functional open space area at the corner of Mt. Vernon and Commonwealth Avenues shall be provided that is physically accessible and visible from the street;
- Vehicular access to the site from Mt. Vernon Avenue is strongly discouraged;
- Underground structured parking to meet parking requirements shall be provided, with access provided along Commonwealth Avenue in a manner that does not conflict with the access to Commonwealth Terrace Apartments. Service access from Mt. Vernon Avenue is prohibited;
- Where underground parking is adjacent to public streets, residential use as a liner use shall be provided on the street frontage; in other locations, architectural treatment shall be provided;
- On-site affordable housing in accordance with policies in effect should be provided;
- Public art, including sculpture, murals, fountains, other similar features should be provided;
- The primary facades of the building shall be masonry (brick, stone or precast), secondary façade may include cementious siding; and
- The site design and building massing shall consider the location of Commonwealth Terrace Apartments and include appropriate setbacks and height reductions to minimize potential impacts, and provide an appropriate transition.

CDD Principles for the Giant and CVS Sites

Retention of the existing grocery and pharmacy is strongly desired by the community. If market conditions force changes in the ability of these establishments to compete, the Plan recommends the redevelopment of these sites as a CDD with a mix of uses including grocery/pharmacy and other retail uses, residential and office uses as described in the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan.*

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the CL/Commercial Low zone regulations shall apply with a floor area ratio (FAR) not to exceed .75 for nonresidential development on lots of 5,500 square feet or less, and .5 for lots greater than 5,500 square feet. The FAR may be increased to an amount not to exceed .75 with a special use permit. For residential development, the maximum permitted floor area ratio is .75, with a maximum of 27 units per acre for multifamily or 22 units per acre for townhouse development.

Development with a special use permit

An increase in FAR from .75 to 1.0 is permitted with a special use permit. An additional bonus density of 0.25, for a maximum allowable FAR is 1.25, is permitted subject to the provision of affordable housing. The delineated performance standards and building form design guidelines enumerated in Section 6 of the *Mt. Vernon Business Area Plan* are required. Achieving this density requires a development plan that meets or exceeds the following goals:

- Development shall include a mix of uses, including a grocery store with pharmacy, other ground floor retail uses, with residential and/or office uses;
- Building mass and scale shall be compatible with the existing mass, scale and character of area;
- Sufficient building articulation shall be provided to break up the mass into smaller components;
- Building height should be limited to 2 ½ to 3 stories, with step downs in scale to any adjoining residential use;
- The adjacent residential neighborhood shall be protected with appropriate building stepbacks, breaks in massing and the provision of rear buffers;
- A minimum of 25% ground-level, consolidated and usable open space shall be provided, a significant portion of which is publicly visible and publicly accessible;
- Underground structured parking shall be provided to meet parking requirements;
- On-site affordable housing should be provided in accordance with policies in effect;
- Public art, including sculpture, murals, fountains, other similar features should be provided; and
- Internal streets and open space shall be coordinated with Potomac Yard and the existing neighborhood.

ARLANDRIA NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

- Upper Potomac West Task Force Report
- A Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood

This section incorporates the recommendations of two planning processes in the Arlandria neighborhood undertaken between 2000 and 2003. These planning processes resulted in the development of the *Upper Potomac West Task Force Report* and the *Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.* The Plan documents are hereby incorporated by reference into the Potomac West Small Area Plan.

Planning Process, Key Issues and General Goals

Upper Potomac West Task Force

In June 2000, City Council created the Upper Potomac West (UPW) Task Force to assist in the planning for the redevelopment of key sites in the Potomac West area north of Glebe Road. The Task Force focused on the then-vacant Safeway and Datatel properties, located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road, and the north side of East Reed Avenue, between Commonwealth Avenue and Route 1. The Task Force developed planning principles and illustrative plans to reflect the community's vision and design recommendations, consistent with the market analyses prepared for the sites that are outlined in the UPW Task Force Report.

Some of key neighborhood issues identified by the Task Force include improving pedestrian and vehicular circulation with more direct means to access shopping, service and park areas; connecting activities within the area with walkways and bicycle paths and; making intersections more pedestrian friendly. The Task Force believed that it is important to retain the existing diversity in Arlandria and expressed the desire to include ethnic representation, such as ethnic restaurants, and to retain existing businesses in any redevelopment and marketing efforts. It also recognized that the neighborhood now contains a variety of affordable housing options and that any new development should respect the importance of existing residential neighborhoods.

The Task Force's goals include the revitalization of the neighborhood, maintenance of the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods, including the stock of affordable housing, enhancement of the infrastructure, and maintenance of the existing businesses to the greatest extent possible.

For the Safeway-Datatel properties, the community's goals include the creation of a neighborhood focal point and identity at the site that is a unique, pedestrian friendly place, with public or quasi public outdoor spaces for a farmers' market, flea market, art shows and other similar activities to help energize the economic life and health of the neighborhood.

With the East Reed Avenue properties, the Task Force's goals include improving the street and neighborhood, educating the community and property owners about the potential for and consequences of redevelopment, protecting existing owner occupants on the north side of East Reed Avenue from displacement by redevelopment, and ensuring that the community has a voice in any redevelopment that occurs so that their interests are protected.

Arlandria Neighborhood Plan

As the Task Force planning process concluded, it was recognized that there were other community concerns that had not been addressed and that there was a need and desire for a long- range plan for the remainder of the commercial property fronting on Mount Vernon Avenue in Arlandria. At the direction of City Council, in January 2002, the City Manager convened the Upper Potomac West/Arlandria Work Group to identify and address the community concerns as well as to advise and assist Department of Planning and Zoning staff in the preparation of the action and vision plans. Over the course of a year, the Work Group developed an action plan to address neighborhood concerns and issues in the immediate, mid and long term, and a long-range vision plan to guide both redevelopment of the key "opportunity sites" in Arlandria and infill development activities on other commercial sites on Mount Vernon Avenue.

The main concerns identified by the community include a lack of residential and commercial parking; pedestrian safety, including the lack or inappropriate location of crosswalks and specific problem intersections, especially Mount Vernon Avenue and Russell Road; the desire to make Mount Vernon Avenue more pedestrian friendly and to improve its appearance; better coordination with the neighborhood to solve problems; and, police problems related to car theft, loitering, prostitution, and public drinking and vandalism in the community and at Four Mile Run Park. The Tenants and Workers' Support Committee expressed social service needs, including a teen center, a medical clinic offering acute/primary care for low-income people, and the maintenance of affordable housing in the neighborhood.

The vision for the future development of the area evokes the desire for a healthy, mixed use community focusing on the redevelopment of three underutilized "opportunity sites": Safeway-Datatel, the Birchmere, and the Mt. Vernon Village Center (formerly the Arlandria Shopping Center); active and viable commercial retail that serves both the neighborhood and the broader community; a transition in automobile-oriented to pedestrian-oriented uses; visual and physical connections to Four Mile Run Park; and, a safer environment for pedestrians.

Market Conditions

In both planning processes, a study of the existing and future economic conditions was conducted which generally found that there is a strong market for a variety of housing types, both rental and for-sale, a limited market for office uses, and the potential to significantly increase the inflow and demand for the area's commercial space. Current market conditions in Arlandria do not exist to spur redevelopment of the opportunity sites, and an interim niche marketing strategy is recommended to capitalize on the strengths of the existing business district and to attract new, complementary businesses that will strengthen the market and encourage the redevelopment of the Safeway-Datatel site over the course of the next few years. Incorporating the concepts of family, health, recreation, and the multi-cultural diversity of Arlandria, and building upon the entertainment and restaurant opportunities in the neighborhood, the niche marketing strategy calls for better marketing and promotion of Arlandria within the City as well as the region. It was recognized that the Birchmere attracts patrons from across the region and that better marketing and promotion of the existing business district, including the Birchmere, will attract new businesses and create a vibrant retail environment. The retail guidelines and planning principles articulated in the Arlandria Neighborhood Plans recommend strengthening the existing retail

environment, encouraging new pedestrian-oriented retail uses and creating a safer pedestrian environment to complement and support the niche marketing strategy.

Proposed Zoning Changes

A new zone, the Neighborhood Retail (NR) zone, is proposed to replace the existing Commercial Low (CL) and the Commercial General (CG) zones along Mount Vernon Avenue from Four Mile Run to the intersection of Glebe Road, as well as several properties at the intersection of Mount Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road (see attached map). The purpose of the NR zone is to encourage new business growth, existing business expansion and revitalization of the commercial corridor with a mix of uses including pedestrian scale retail, by allowing certain uses with standards and providing some flexibility with other regulations that will achieve an active urban environment while preserving the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Several amendments are also proposed to the two existing Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs) in Arlandria, CDD#6 - Mount Vernon Village Center/Birchmere (formerly Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo) and CDD#7 - Route 1 Properties. The creation of a new CDD #12 for the Safeway-Datatel site is also proposed. The design principles and guidelines for the CDDs are delineated within the body of the Potomac West Small Area Plan.

In general, the amendments to the existing CDDs as well as the provisions within the new CDD, incorporate of the guidelines and planning principles developed during the planning processes. The purpose of the defined principles is to guide new development in accordance with the community's vision, to establish an appropriate level of development for the CDD sites, and to provide certainty to the property owner/developer of the amount of desirable development. The current CDDs do not include any guidelines or principles regarding compatible building design or the bulk, mass and scale of new development, nor do they provide a clear understanding among all interested and affected parties – residents, commercial property owners, City staff and elected officials, and the development community – as to the type and scale of redevelopment that is appropriate in these districts. The new text seeks to address these deficiencies and to protect the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods while providing some certainty as to the acceptable scale and type of redevelopment.

With regard to the Route 1 Properties CDD, the amendments proposed by staff relate specifically to the redevelopment of the properties on the north side of East Reed Avenue in a manner that is generally consistent with the redevelopment plan depicted in the UPW Task Force Report. The proposed amendments will allow a greater density than currently allowed under the existing underlying RB/Townhouse zone and will allow stacked townhouse units (considered multifamily uses under the current zoning ordinance). Recognizing that the existing dwellings are affordable for the people residing in them, the CDD includes a requirement that a minimum 10 percent of the total number of new dwelling units be affordable, as defined in the City of Alexandria Affordable Housing Policy, and that, of that number, seventy percent of the affordable units consist of two or more bedrooms.

Conclusion

Taken together, the recent planning efforts have lead to the creation of two complementary redevelopment plans for the greater Arlandria neighborhood; an interim marketing strategy to strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses that will both improve the market and encourage redevelopment activities; retail guidelines to improve individual storefronts; an action plan to address community concerns with an implementation schedule for immediate, mid and long term improvements; and, new zoning changes to revitalize the area in a manner that is consistent with the Plans. These changes provide an understanding of, and a blueprint for, the potential for present and future development activities in Arlandria.

MT. VERNON AVENUE BUSINESS AREA PLAN

The purpose of this section is to update the existing Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan by incorporating the recommendations of the recent Mt. Vernon Avenue planning process that has resulted in the development of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan* (the *Plan*). The *Plan* document is hereby incorporated by reference into the Potomac West Small Area Plan (see attached *Plan*).

Background

Over the years, a series of planning efforts have been undertaken, with substantial public investment and community involvement, to improve the Potomac West area. Most recently, a three year long planning process in the Arlandria neighborhood resulted in the creation of the *Arlandria Neighborhood Plans* and related zoning and small area plan changes that were adopted by City Council in June 2003.

The City continues to recognize that Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vital corridor, with a rich history and eclectic character that makes it an attractive place to live, work and shop. In late spring 2003, the City formed the Mt. Vernon Avenue Work Group (Work Group) to embark on a comprehensive planning effort for Mt. Vernon Avenue's "Main Street" retail district, broadly defined between Glebe Road and Luray Avenue. Working collaboratively with the Work Group comprised of residents, businesspeople and community representatives from the Del Ray and Warwick Village Citizens Associations and the Mt. Jefferson Civic Association, and the Potomac West Business Association (PWBA), a future direction for Mt. Vernon Avenue (the Avenue) was defined to guide neighborhood changes while protecting adjoining neighborhoods.

The vision for the Avenue involves preserving its traditional neighborhood character, protecting its unique historical identity, serving the needs of the surrounding community and maintaining its viability and competitiveness as a commercial district. Building upon its unique characteristics, the Avenue will remain a special neighborhood as change takes place. The Work Group adopted the following statement that succinctly expresses this vision:

> *Mt. Vernon Avenue is a vibrant and welcoming Main Street that reflects the surrounding neighborhoods' diversity, integrity and small town charm. The Avenue is comprised of enthusiastic, successful and responsible community partners. We offer an eclectic and friendly living, working and shopping environment for Alexandrians and visitors alike.*

With extensive community input, guiding principles were developed to direct the future of Mt. Vernon Avenue and the specific recommendations of the *Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan (Plan)*. These guiding principles are to:

- Preserve existing historic scale and character;
- Protect and enhance Mt. Vernon Avenue as a vibrant commercial corridor;
- Encourage and support mixed use development;
- Celebrate the Town of Potomac Historic District;
- Preserve and protect existing residential areas;
- Promote partnerships;

- Enhance public spaces;
- Provide convenient parking and transportation solutions to support retail growth;
- Encourage independent retail;
- Capitalize on the neighborhood arts community; and
- Provide alternative multi-modal transportation linkages

The primary study area extends along the length of the Avenue from Herbert Street to Nelson Avenue. Due to the differing characteristics along the length of the street, the study area is divided into three focus areas, as follows:

- ***Commonwealth District*** – Extending from Herbert Street on the north to Uhler Avenue, this area functions as a transition area between the pedestrian-oriented traditional urban form of the Historic Core and the more automobile-oriented form on the street and properties to the north;
- ***Historic Core*** -- From Uhler Avenue south to Bellefonte Avenue, this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue is located within the Town of Potomac National Register Historic District and has maintained a traditional "Main Street" feel over the years; and
- ***Monroe Gateway*** – Extending south from Bellefonte Avenue to Nelson Avenue, (and including the small shopping center located on the west side of the Avenue at Luray Avenue and the Giant grocery store and CVS pharmacy located in the 400 block on Monroe Avenue), this area is the most diverse, with a variety of service and automotive uses, small retail, office and residences, and is the linkage to the Route 1 corridor.

Plan Strategies

The *Plan* outlines six interrelated strategies that work together to achieve the overall vision for a vibrant, competitive Main Street where change builds upon and preserves the existing historic and eclectic characteristics of the community. Strategies for land use, parking, pedestrian and multi-modal connections, retail marketing and arts promotion, urban design/streetscape and zoning have been developed consistent with the guiding principles and the vision for the Avenue. A brief overview of each strategy is provided below.

Land Use Strategy

The land use strategy is generally focused towards promoting and reinforcing a consistent, vibrant and pedestrian-oriented retail environment, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods. The strategy includes overall recommendations for the entire Avenue, as well as those specifically crafted for the three focus areas. For the entire Avenue, the *Plan* recommends:

- ***Promoting infill development*** compatible with the mass and scale of existing buildings, through the use of building form design guidelines;
- ***Protecting residential neighborhoods***, by minimizing impacts through the use of buffers and building stepbacks;
- ***Enhancing the pedestrian streetscape***, through improved lighting, streetscape and

crosswalk improvements, strengthened connections to the Metro station and improved appearance of the service uses;

- ***Providing visual open space,*** by maintaining existing visual open space elements and providing open space in new construction on medium and larger sized sites; and
- ***Encouraging a mix of uses***, including second floor residential and office uses to support the retail activity and concentrated retail in key locations.

For the individual focus areas, the specific land use, open space and streetscape recommendations are:

Commonwealth District - Herbert Street south to Uhler Avenue

- ***Encouraging a mix of uses,*** including residential, office and institutional uses with limited retail, as well as a variety in the housing types, and some affordable housing;
- ***Promoting coordinated development*** of the underutilized properties in the triangular assemblage north of Commonwealth Avenue for a quality residential and retail project with defined development standards;
- ***Improving streetscape, open space and pedestrian safety***, through pedestrian improvements in key locations, street tree planting and enhancements to Colasanto Park; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for two opportunity sites***, the Sun Trust property at Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues, and the lots at the southeast corner of Mt. Vernon and Raymond Avenues.

Historic Core - Uhler Avenue south to Bellefonte Avenue

- ***Encouraging street-level retail***, by defining a retail focus area to target the ground floor for retail uses;
- ***Preserving the historic character***, by utilizing several historic preservation approaches, including tax credits and community education, and allowing appropriate infill development through the building form design guidelines;
- ***Creating a "town square,"*** by providing improvements to the City lot at Oxford and Mt. Vernon Avenues to enhance this lot as a public gathering space for community events;
- ***Considering reuse of the historic fire station/town hall*** for community functions/activities should the station outgrow the current facility; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for three opportunity sites***, the parking lot behind 2401 Mt. Vernon Avenue, the vacant lot at 2207 Mt. Vernon Avenue and the 7-11 Store at Custis and Mt. Vernon Avenues.

Monroe Gateway - Bellefonte Avenue south to Nelson Avenue, the Giant/CVS sites on Monroe Avenue

- ***Encouraging a mix of uses,*** including residential and retail uses that promote a transition into the Historic Core area;
- ***Enhancing the streetscape and urban design,*** by completing the undergrounding and

streetscape improvements and improving the appearance of the automobile and service-related uses;

- ***Improving Gateway Park*** on land made available by the realignment of the Monroe Avenue/US Route 1 bridge, in a manner that provides a high-quality gateway for the community;
- ***Enhancing the neighborhood Giant and CVS sites***, by working with the owners to maintain the facilities as part of the community, and, if market forces make it no longer viable, to redevelop the sites with residential in a coordinated manner using specific design guidelines and incorporating the grocery/pharmacy use as part of the redevelopment;
- ***Enhancing access to the Metro Station***, by providing bike and pedestrian access on the east side of George Washington Middle School, identifying other opportunities for pedestrian improvements with the Potomac Yard development, and enhanced signage, lighting and bus shelters; and
- ***Providing future use direction and improvement for six opportunity sites***, the Salvation Army sites in the 1800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue, the service uses in the 1800 and 1900 blocks, the auto dealerships in the 1600 and 1700 blocks, the service stations at Monroe and Mt. Vernon Avenues, the undeveloped lot at 1503 Mt. Vernon Avenue and the Verizon building at 301 Alexandria Avenue. Although it is unlikely that these sites will redevelop in the short term, the *Plan* recommends property and site improvements to enhance their appearance.

The creation of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone is recommended as the primary mechanism to implement the *Plan*'s land use, parking and urban design recommendations. The overlay zone is principally intended to provide zoning and parking flexibility to encourage new retail uses, to allow restaurants, outdoor dining and other limited uses by Administrative SUP, and to provide the mechanism to apply the building form design guidelines to new infill development. In addition, the Coordinated Development District (CDD) approach is recommended for the consolidated Triangle sites and the Giant/CVS sites to implement the design, use and development recommendations for these sites.

Parking Strategy

Consistent with other urban neighborhoods, parking along Mt. Vernon Avenue is at a premium during certain times of the day. The perception of insufficient parking has raised neighborhood concern when new businesses seek to locate on Mt. Vernon Avenue or existing businesses desire to expand their operations. There is limited ability to create new parking opportunities along the Avenue, due to the developed character of the street, the typically small lots and the desire to maintain the continuity of the retail and the pedestrian environment along the street.

With the finite supply of parking, the principal goals of the *Plan* are to better utilize the existing parking resources and to balance the supply and demand for parking to ensure that parking demand is met without negatively impacting nearby residences. A parking utilization study was conducted to understand current and potential future parking conditions along the Avenue and to assist in formulating appropriate parking strategies. The study concluded that the current supply of and

demand for parking are in balance although parking utilization along the Avenue varies by location as well as the time and day of the week.

A shared parking program is recommended to more fully utilize ten identified privately owned off-street parking lots during the lot's off-peak hours. Using the overlay is also recommended to provide some flexibility in the parking requirements. Such flexibility includes waiving the increase in parking requirements when an existing office or personal service use changes to retail; waiving the parking requirement for outdoor dining; and reducing parking requirements for new infill development and additions on constrained lots where the new development is compatible with the building form design guidelines delineated in the *Plan*. A parking reduction policy is also outlined to provide guidance in assessing future parking reduction applications.

The parking strategy balances small increases in density and changes in use with significant development, and requires the latter to comply with the existing parking regulations. Inherent in this strategy is the need to monitor parking demand and utilization over time as well as the responsiveness of the strategies as the area changes and demand increases. The *Plan* recognizes that the existing parking resources have a finite capacity and includes several options that could be considered over time to further manage parking and, if the conditions warrant, to construct new public parking.

Pedestrian and Multi-Modal Strategy

To support and enhance the existing pedestrian-oriented nature of the Avenue and nearby neighborhoods, a multi-modal strategy is recommended, and highly desired by the community. The major focus of this strategy is to encourage and promote greater use of transit, walking and bicycling, and increase pedestrian safety. Actions such as enhancing existing bus stops with benches and shelters, providing bicycle racks and other streetscape amenities and improving pedestrian connections to the Braddock Road Metro Station will encourage people to use these modes of transportation. Expanding DASH service to the Avenue is also recommended when the new maintenance facility is complete in 2008 to provide more frequent service and better cross-town connections between the Avenue and the rest of the City.

A priority improvement of the Work Group is the installation to pedestrian lighting of the sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety. Their second priority is the reduction of the existing four lane section of the Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road to two lanes by restriping the existing road section to include two vehicle travel lanes, two bicycle lanes and one parking lane, or two travel lanes and two parking lanes. This improvement can be undertaken at minimal cost, greatly reducing vehicle speeding and increasing pedestrian safety. Bulb-outs and crosswalks at key intersections will also enhance pedestrian safety by highlighting areas for pedestrian movement and reducing the street's crossing distance.

Retail Marketing and Arts Promotion Strategy

To strengthen the existing retail district and attract new complementary businesses, a marketing strategy is recommended that builds on the successful efforts of Potomac West Business Association (PWBA). This strategy includes utilizing a variety of media to market the Avenue, integrating retail marketing efforts into events and festivals, such as Art on the Avenue or First Thursday events,

maintaining uniform hours of operation for stores, and enhancing the identity of the Avenue through vertical banners, heritage signage and gateway improvements.

The arts are a fundamental component of the Avenue's retail marketing strategy. The arts have played an important role in the revitalization and growth of the Avenue into the vibrant Main Street character it has today. From the efforts of the Del Ray Artisans to the success of Art on the Avenue, art and the Avenue have a very complementary and synergistic relationship. The *Plan* places a high priority on developing and maintaining the arts as a prominent feature of the Avenue's retail and cultural offerings and recommends the development of an arts promotion strategy. Elements of the strategy include artists' studios, galleries, art supply stores, an art education center, public art and arts-related festivals and promotions.

The community has significant accomplishments in marketing and promotion through a dedicated group of volunteers. In organizing events, marketing the Avenue and making community improvements, PWBA, Del Ray Artisans and neighborhood citizens associations have significantly contributed to the improvement of the Avenue's business climate. It is difficult, however, using solely volunteer efforts to sustain a high level of activity over time. For such efforts to continue, the *Plan* suggests the establishment of a business improvement district (BID) to provide a consistent funding source to sustain and expand existing marketing and promotions activities, ensuring that current efforts are continued on a long-term basis. As an implementation item, the *Plan* suggests a series of steps to undertake in exploring the creation of a BID.

Urban Design/Streetscape Strategy

The urban design strategy seeks to enhance the character and definition of those elements that make up the public realm – the public streetscape, public and private open space and the scale and form of the buildings that define the street. The guiding principles for the urban design strategy are to:

- ***Preserve and protect existing residential areas,*** through the use of building form design guidelines to buffer adjoining uses and minimize the impacts associated with commercial activity;
- ***Encourage and support a mixed-use environment,*** by emphasizing retail uses on the ground floor and developing standards to enhance the quality of the pedestrian/retail experience;
- ***Preserve existing historic scale and character,*** through the use of standards/guidelines for quality and appropriately-scaled infill development, and encouraging the redevelopment of incompatible buildings; and
- ***Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District,"*** by improving the Avenue's appearance through streetscape and facade improvements.

Building Form Design Guidelines

A major thrust of the urban design recommendations for the Avenue is to protect and enhance its historic and eclectic character as change takes place. Building form design guidelines have been developed to ensure quality development that reflects the existing pattern of development along the Avenue while preserving the contributing buildings in the Town of Potomac Historic District. The

building form design principles are intended to meet the following general objectives:

- New construction should reflect the scale of existing buildings;
- A consistent street wall should be maintained, with some variations to allow for landscaped open space, an opportunity for side windows and for site access where necessary;
- New construction should be two to two and one-half stories, with a setback where a third story is provided;
- New buildings should help define the corners where side streets intersect Mt. Vernon Avenue, with retail storefront windows extending onto the side streets;
- Appropriate building setbacks and parking lot screening will minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties;
- Ground level retail storefronts should contribute to the vitality of the streetscape and the pedestrian experience;
- Direct driveway access to Mt. Vernon Avenue is not desirable; and
- Off-street parking lots should be located to the rear of the property, with access provided from rear alleys, when available, side streets or access easements from adjoining properties.

Specific building form design guidelines are used to achieve the general objectives. These guidelines are depicted visually in the *Plan*, using graphics to show the desired form and location of buildings and parking areas, building massing, height and scale, building facades and screening requirements. The design intent for each guideline is presented to ensure an understanding of goal and application of each guideline.

Storefront Guidelines

The *Plan* recognizes that storefronts are generally the first point of contact with potential customers and that they define the character of a neighborhood and retail street. With the unique, eclectic nature of the retail along the Avenue, standardized or generic storefronts are strongly discouraged. Storefront design should reinforce the Main Street quality of the Avenue, with its organic small town character, and is recommended to include the following elements:

- Individual storefronts displays should change often to add richness to the Avenue;
- The primary pedestrian entrance should directly front along the sidewalk or at the corner;
- On corner sites, ground level retail storefront windows should extend a minimum of 20 feet along the side street, and both the architecture of the building and the storefront design should address and articulate the corner at intersections along the Avenue;
- Storefronts should have a minimum of 75 percent glass at the ground floor facade, with signage limited to the ground level;
- Creative displays of merchandise and services should be included in storefront windows; and
- Ground level storefronts are encouraged to have exterior awnings that are coordinated

with the storefront design.

The existing Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines, adopted by City Council in 1993, have been incorporated into the proposed guidelines, to enhance and maintain consistency in building facades along the Avenue.

Streetscape Improvements
The *Plan* recommends improvements to lighting, sidewalks, bulb-outs and crosswalks, street trees, public signage, and site amenities, including street furniture and public art to enhance the pedestrian environment. Pedestrian scale lighting is strongly desired by the community to enhance pedestrian safety along the Avenue during evening hours. The existing cobra head light fixtures illuminate the street. Limited light filters through the existing tree canopy to the sidewalk level. Of the pedestrian safety improvements, the Work Group unanimously selected pedestrian scale lighting and a reduced roadway width north of Commonwealth Avenue to Glebe Road as their highest priorities.

Zoning Strategy
The Avenue is regarded as one of the region's most unique neighborhoods, due in large part to its small town, Main Street character small town, Main Street character. The current CL zoning regulations, however, do not provide a framework to ensure that the form and scale of new or infill development will be compatible with the historic scale and character of existing buildings along the Avenue. With its emphasis on form, quality, and the relationship of buildings to each other and the street, a more flexible, design-oriented zoning approach is necessary to support and encourage appropriately scaled and designed new construction.

A new overlay zone, the Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone, is proposed to supplement the traditional zoning for existing Commercial Low (CL) zoned properties that have frontage along the Avenue from Commonwealth Avenue south to Nelson Avenue (see attached map). The purpose of the overlay zone is to achieve a mixed use, pedestrian oriented community that both supports economic activity and protects existing residential neighborhoods, and to provide for appropriately scaled infill development that is compatible with the character of Mount Vernon Avenue, the existing community and the Town of Potomac Historic District. The existing CL zone will remain as the underlying zone.

The creation of two new Coordinated Development Districts (CDD) is also proposed. CDD #13 is proposed for the Triangle Sites, the 11 vacant or underutilized parcels located on the east side of the Avenue, across from the Calvert Apartments. CDD #14 is proposed for the Giant/CVS sites located at 415 and 425 Monroe Avenue. In this case, the designation of the CDD is to ensure a coordinated redevelopment of the properties should market forces result in changes on the sites. The design principles and guidelines for the proposed CDDs are delineated in the Zoning Recommendations section of the Potomac West Small Area Plan. In general, the provisions within the new CDDs incorporate of the guidelines and planning principles developed during the planning process. The guidelines seek to protect the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhoods while providing some certainty as to the acceptable scale and type of redevelopment on the designated sites.

Implementation Strategy

Specific delineated approaches for implementing the *Plan's* recommendations are critical to ensuring the goals of the *Plan* are achieved. A key element for implementation will be a coordinated effort of public and private entities. The Potomac West Business Association is the recommended organization to implement the marketing, business organization and retail promotion efforts. A Business Improvement District approach is outlined to provide a regular source of funding in benefit of business along the Avenue.

The *Plan* outlines a series of actions and steps, and the principal agencies involved, to ensure the successful implementation of the vision, guiding principles and strategies. Taking that one step further, a draft implementation schedule is included with this report that identifies the proposed actions, the departments responsible for each action and the projected fiscal year during which the actions will be undertaken. With limited public funding available to undertake the suggested physical improvements, working with the community to prioritize the public improvements is an initial

Conclusion

The Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area planning effort has lead to the creation of a plan outlining a vision and guiding principles to ensure the Avenue continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community while realizing its potential as a vibrant and competitive place for business. The *Plan* includes strategies to strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses along the Avenue; to provide a direction for marketing and arts promotion efforts; to improve the pedestrian/retail environment; to maximize parking resources; and to ensure high quality new construction of compatible mass and scale. An implementation schedule for immediate, mid and long term improvements and actions will move the community closer to achieving its vision and goals for the future of the Avenue.