

Gordon Road Triangle Technical Assistance Panel

Presentation of Recommendations

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025



What is a TAP?

The Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) offers technical analysis to communities and organizations facing land-use challenges.

ULI members volunteer their time to provide unbiased, expert advice and specific recommendations for improvement. Local industry leaders draft a plan to revive, rethink, and restore communities to ultimately enact change and improve the lives of people in the DC region

Day One

- Meetings with sponsor representatives
- Interviews with stakeholders and community representatives

Day Two

- Work session to develop recommendations
- Presentation to sponsor and stakeholders

How does ULI provide this assistance?

A community group or organization approaches ULI with a request.

ULI convenes a group of experts to focus on specific questions in a concentrated, finite effort and communicates the results.

- group of experts = Technical Assistance Panel
- specific questions = defined by the sponsor
- concentrated, finite effort = two intense days
- communicates the results = presentation to the sponsor/stakeholders *and* published report

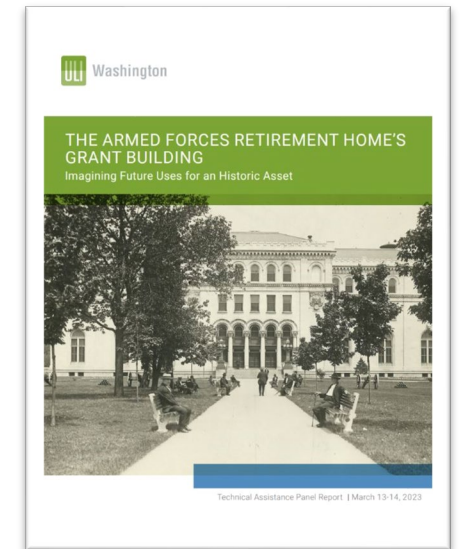
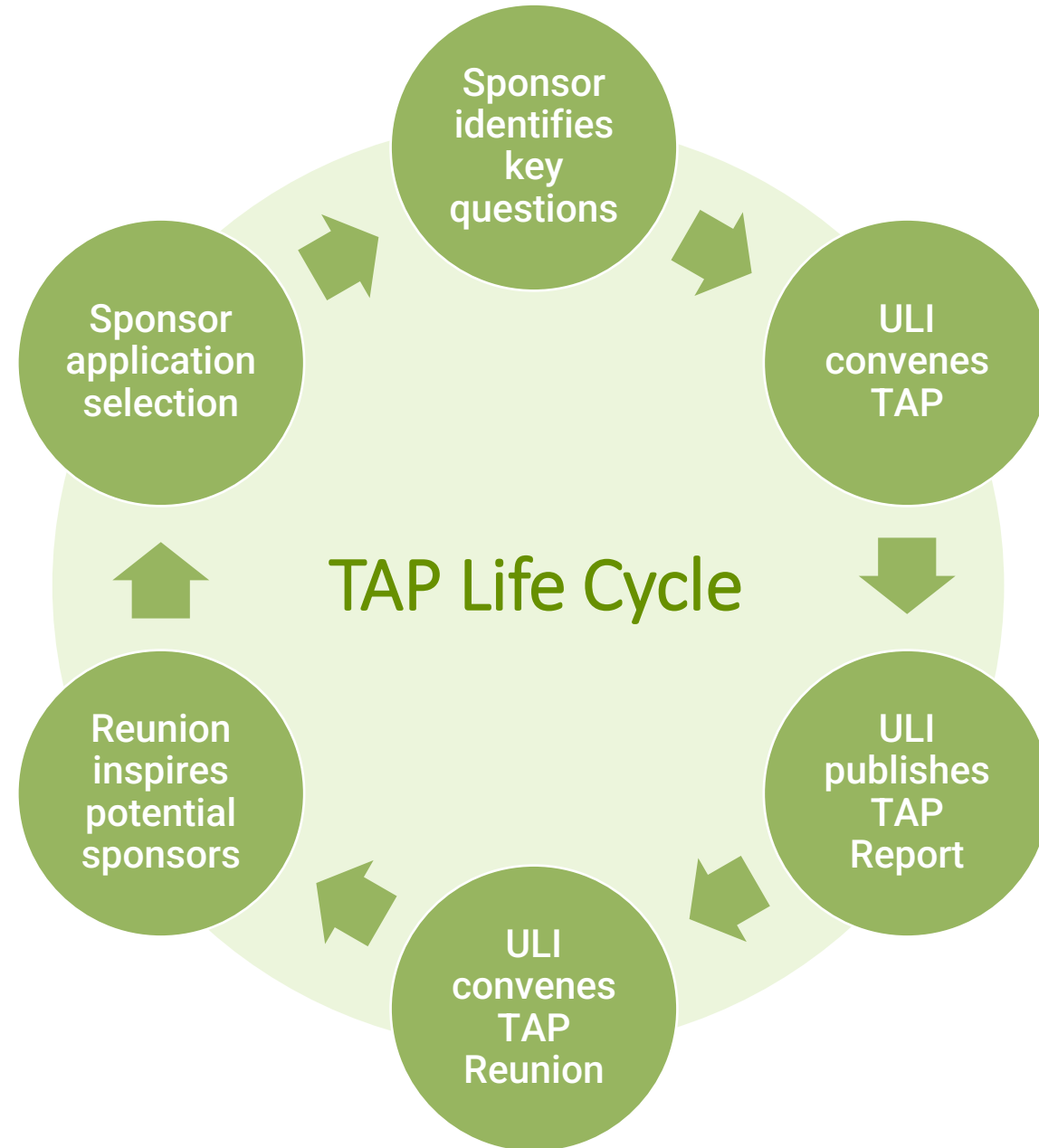
Sponsor pays a fee for service to ULI Washington.

Additional support provided by the

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments





Panelists & Staff



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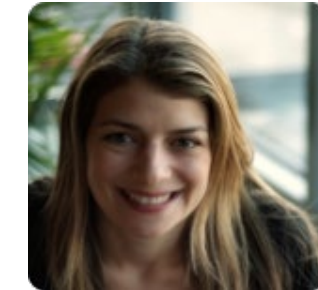
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The Young Group



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TAP Report Writer



The Assignment

The Goals of the TAP

1. Identify strategies for reinvestment in the Gordon Road Triangle
2. Explore the feasibility of a public-private financing structure for the Operations Yard
3. Enhance multi-modal connections offered by the W&OD Trail and West Falls Church Metrorail Station



The Assignment

The Big Questions to Address

1. **Public Private Partnerships**

What models to consider?

2. **Land Use**

What uses are appropriate here?

3. **Transportation & Connectivity**

How to enhance multi-modal connectivity?

4. **Equity**

How to expand the homeless shelter and promote equitable development?

5. **Regional Coordination**

What are the best opportunities for advancing a regional best practice of land use?

Image Credit: ULI Technical Assistance Panel

Thank You to Our Incredible Stakeholders!

Arthur Agin, *Citizen's Advisory Committee on Transportation*

Laura Arseneau, *Falls Church Planning*

Mary Beth Avedesian, *Hoffman Development*

Monica Backmon, *The NOVA Authority*

Elise Bengtson, *Falls Church Chamber of Commerce*

Alyssa Beyer, *Northern Virginia Transportation Authority*

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Brian Bowden, *Human Services Advisory Council*

Alan Brangman, *Village Preservation Improvement Society*

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Marybeth Connelly, *Falls Church City Council Member*

Amy Crumpton, *Urban Forestry Commission*

Sara Ferrara, *Housing Commission / Affordable Living Policy Work Group*

Erin Flynn, *Councilmember*

Sharon Friedlander, *Planning Commission*

Mike Garcia, *Fairfax County*

Greg Goodwin, *MWCOG*

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Tara Hoff, *Falls Church Department of Public Works*

Dana Jones, *Falls Church Housing & Human Services*

Genevieve Jordan, *EYA*

Dan Kirk, *Public Utilities Commission*

John Krauss, *Craftsman Auto Body*

Paul Krauss, *Caliber Collision Centers*

Carlos Lamas, *Open Road*

Thank You to Our Incredible Stakeholders!

Robert Leopold, *Mary Riley Styles
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Kerri Oddenino, *Falls Church Planning*

Charley O'Hara, *Falls Church –
Recreation & Parks*

Andrew Olesen, *Bike Falls Church*

Graham Owen, *Fairfax County
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Hannah Pekalski, *Virginia DOT*

Ellen Salsbury, *League of Women
Voters*

Andrew Scott, *WMATA*

Vikram Sinha, *NOVA Transit*

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Elise Stein, *Library Board*

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Tracy Strunk, *Fairfax County Planning
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Dave Tarter, *GMU Center for Real
Estate Entrepreneurship*

Justine Underhill, *Falls Church City
Council*

Becky Witsman, *City of Falls Church
CPEDS*

Bob Wulff, *GMU Center for Real Estate
Entrepreneurship*

Kay Zacharias-Andrews, *Friends of
Falls Church Homeless Shelter*

Henry Zhang, *Falls Church Planning*

Stakeholder Roundtable Sessions



What We Heard in Stakeholder Roundtables:

Provide more
affordable housing

*"[City Services] can't get lost
in this process"*

More tree canopy
and green space

*"Homeless shelter
needs to be
modernized"*

Create a place for
smaller businesses to
thrive – not another
big retailer

Too many
curb cuts on
Broad Street

More Pedestrian and
Bike Connections to the
W&OD Trail

Parking

Presentation Outline


- Context Analysis
- Framework Plan
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Governance
- Implementation
- Q&A





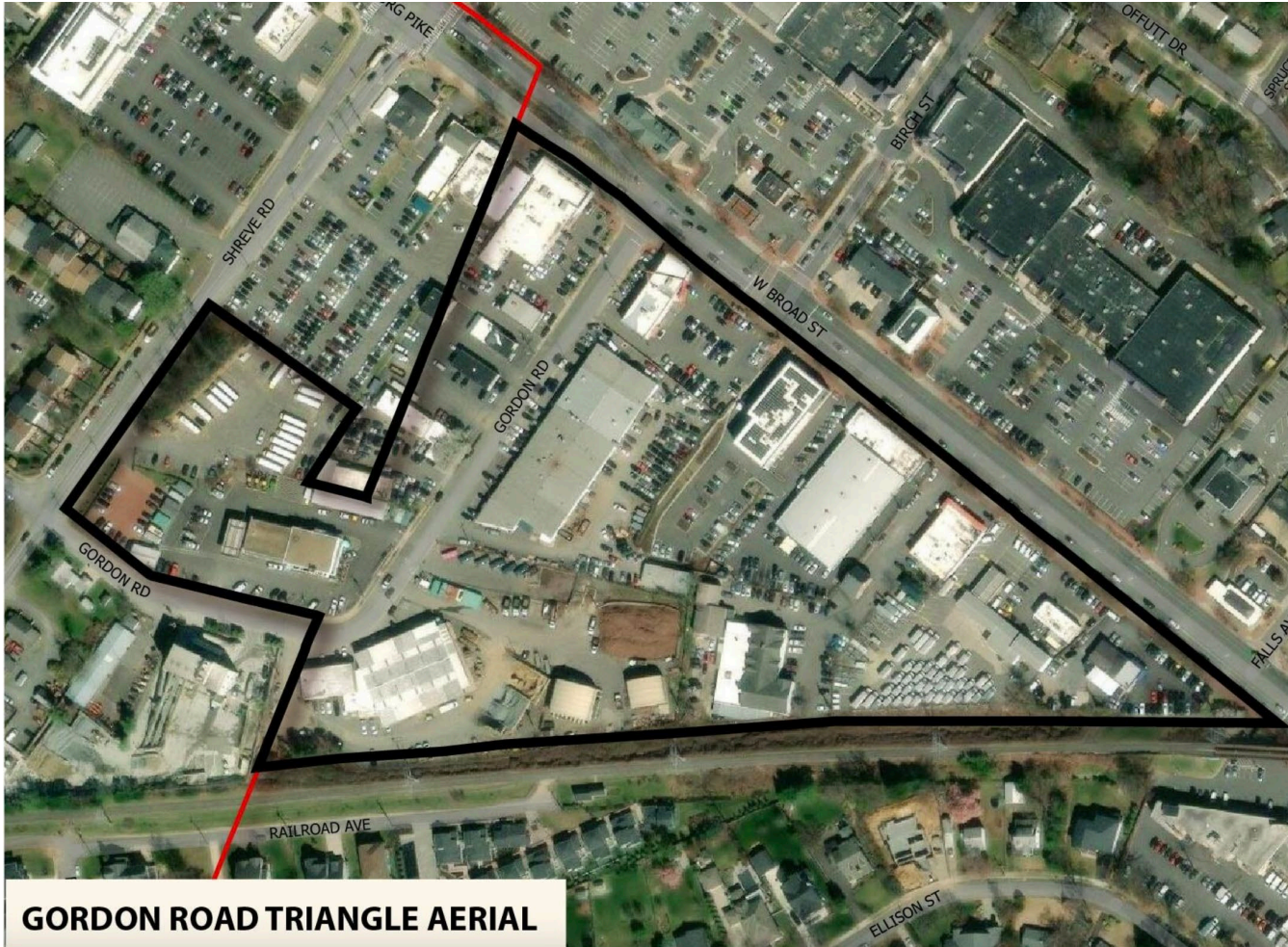
Section 1: Context Analysis





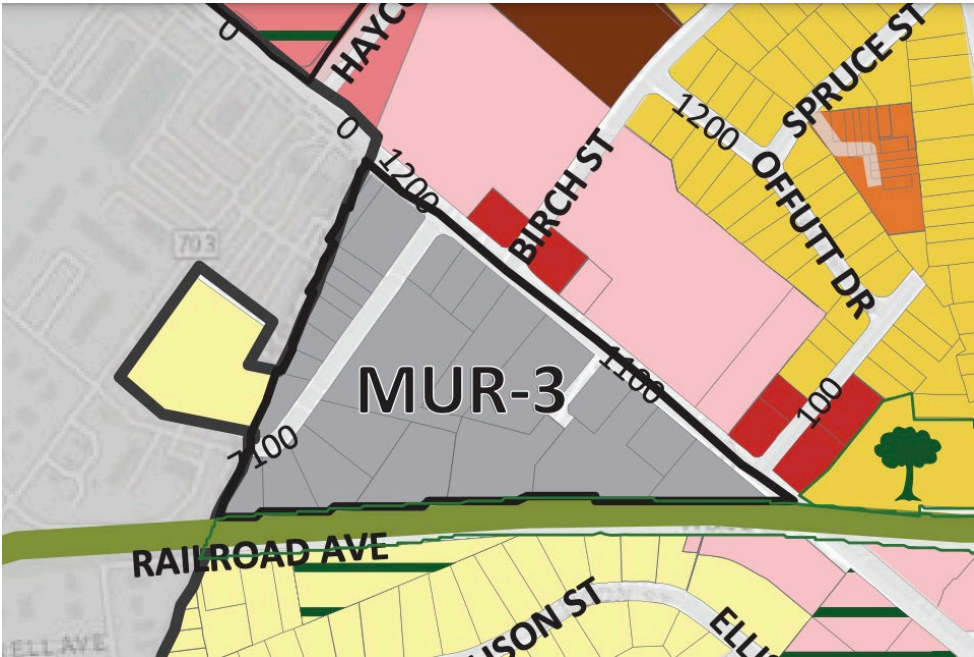
There is great enthusiasm from stakeholders and City leadership to invest in Gordon Road Triangle in a way that creates more equitable housing and improves multi-modal transportation while reimagining the existing Public Works facilities.

Site Introduction

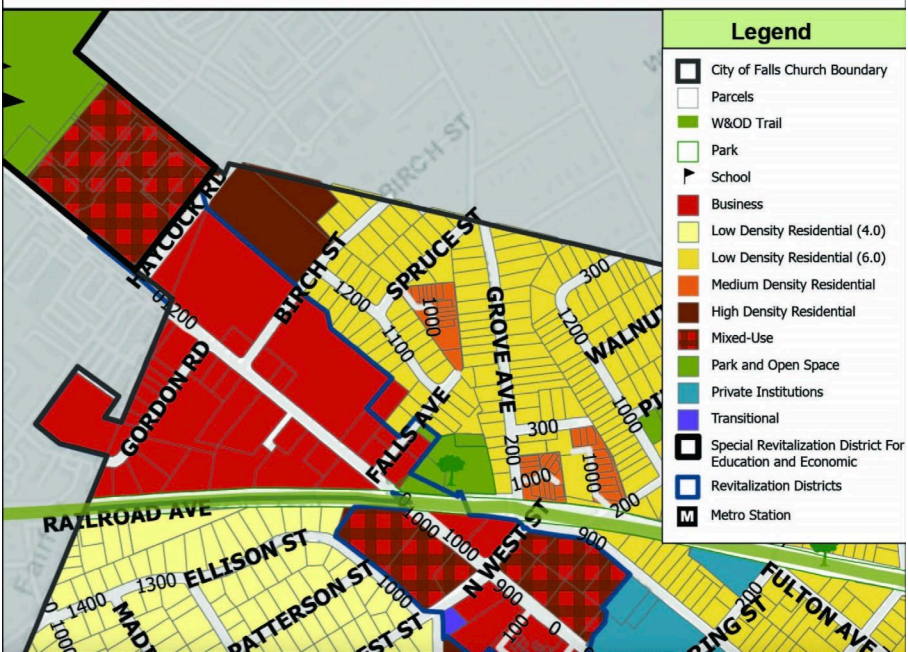


- Bound to the North by West Broad St. (Rt. 7)
- Bound to South by W&OD Trail
- Bound to West by Shreve Road (and to certain extent Gordon Road)

Site Details



Currently zoned Light Industrial w/ Mixed-Use overlay

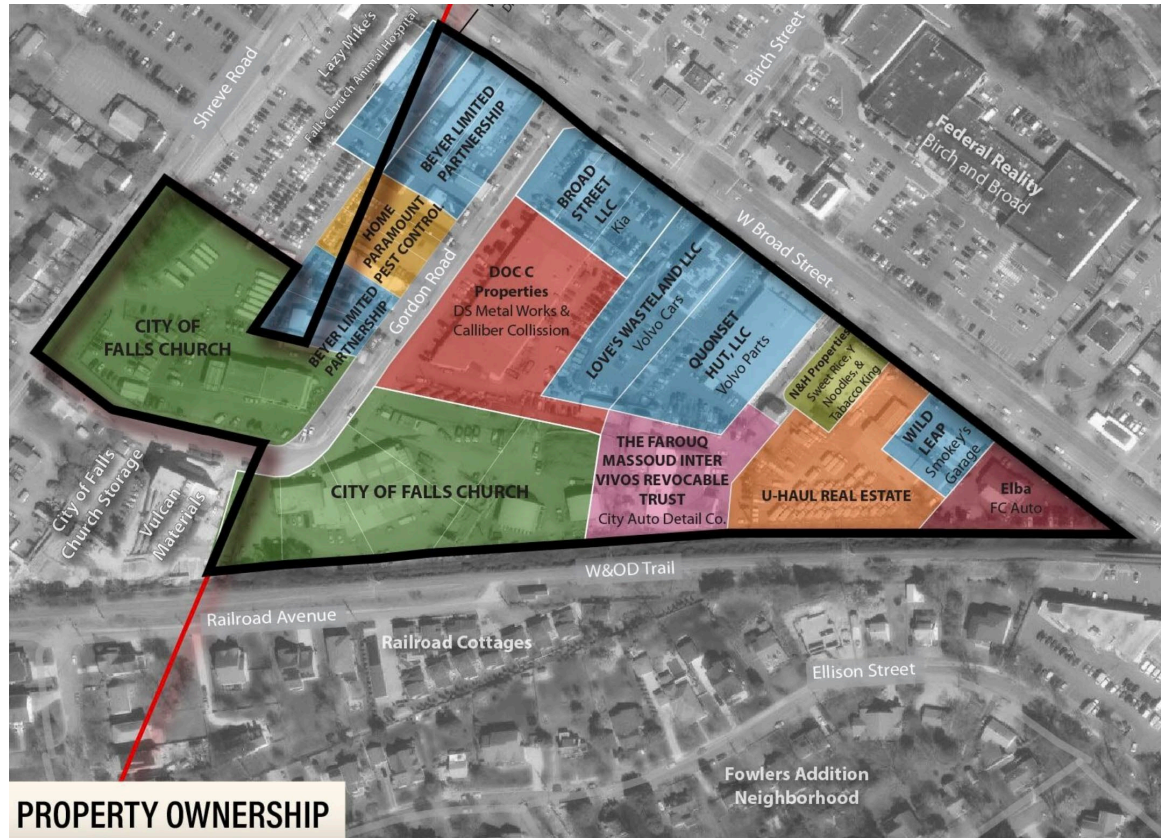


Future Land Use – Zoned Business

Source: City of Falls Church

Site Details

Current Mix of Uses



Source: City of Falls Church

- City of Falls Church Public Services
 - Bus Parking
 - Recycling Center
 - Warehouse
 - Department of Public Works
 - Hypothermia Shelter
 - Police Impound Lot
- Auto & Body Shops
 - Caliber Collision
 - Smokey's Garage
 - FC Auto
- Paramount Pest Control
- Beyer Volvo & Kia
- UHaul
- Sweet Rice Restaurant

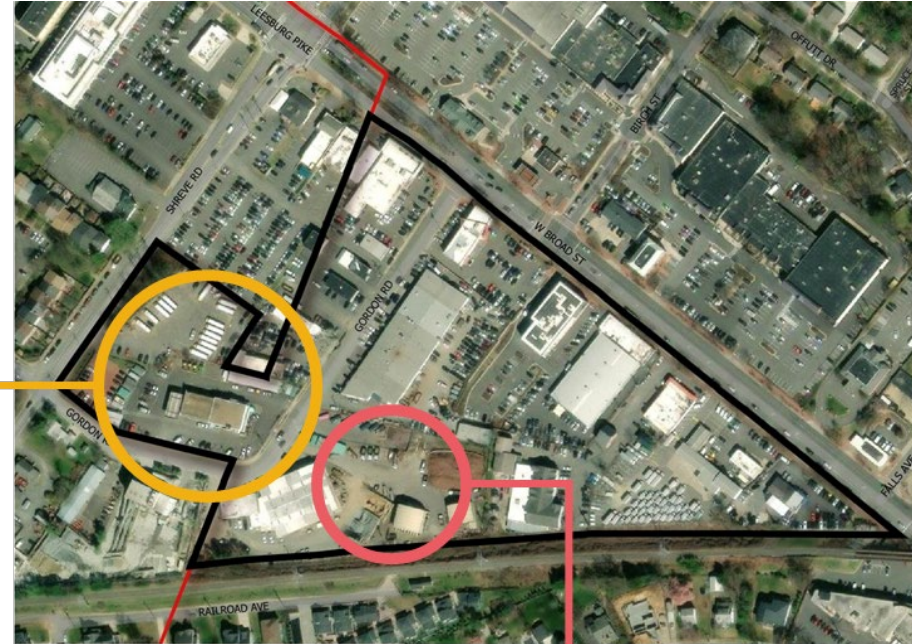
Site Details

City of Falls Church Public Services



The City of Falls Church should take initial steps on these two parcels: the public works building + and the salt and mulch location.

This will create synergy between City and land owners and be the catalyst for the larger Gordon Road Triangle project.



Site Constraints



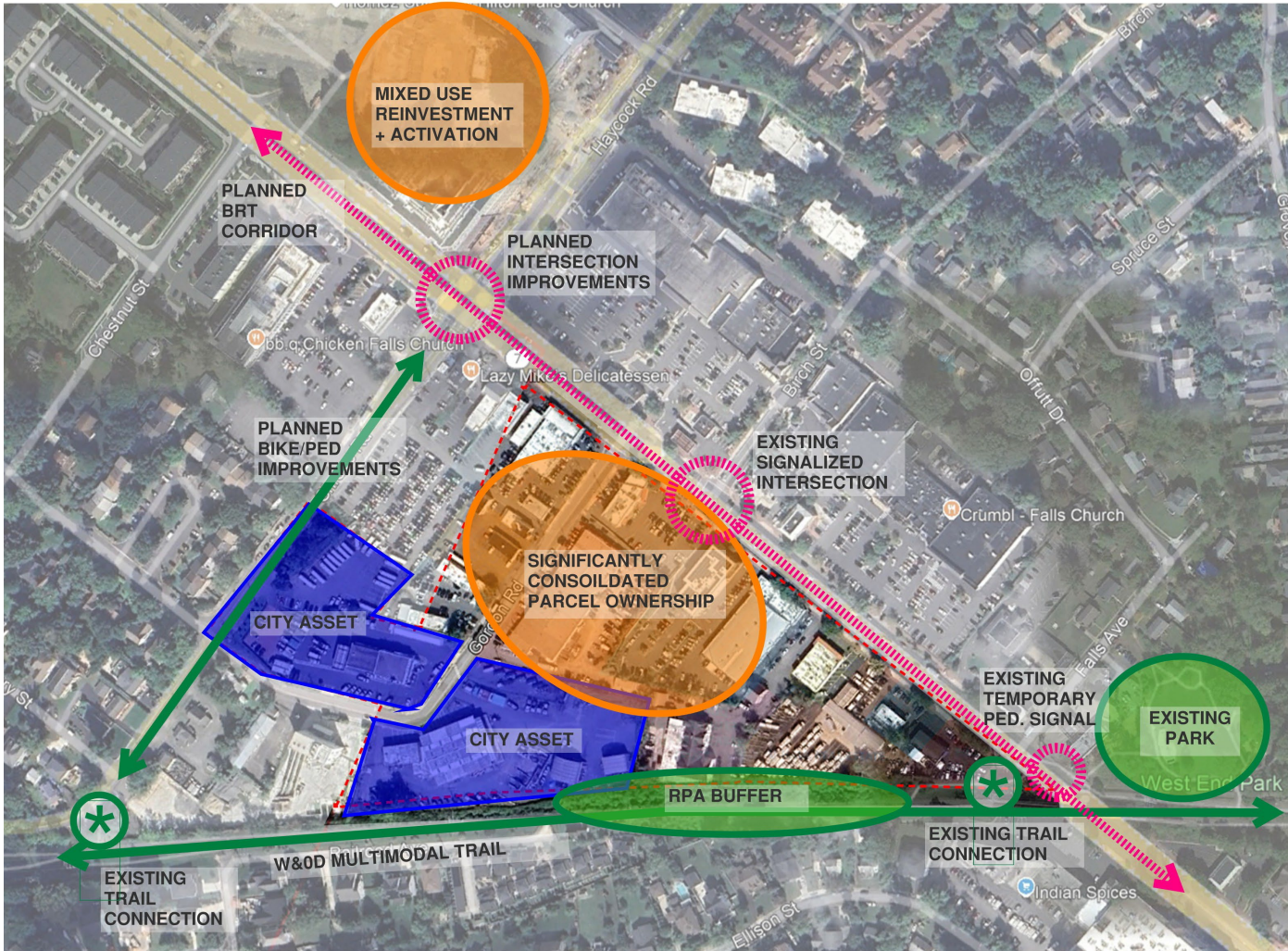
Source: ULI Technical Assistance Panel



Google Maps

- Poor bike/pedestrian infrastructure.
- Currently **not connected to W&OD**. Fencing and stream barrier to accessing area amenities.
- Site only served by Gordon Road with **subpar pedestrian connectivity**, narrow sidewalks, encroached by park cars. Gordon is a cut through street with high speed and limited site lines.
- Difficult to cross Broad St. safely and conveniently. Driveways and curb cuts create conflicts for people walking and biking.
- **Little tree canopy**
- Identified areas of **frequent flooding**

Site Opportunities



- Green space
- Connectivity
- Equity
- Housing
- Industrial

Desired Elements

Green Space

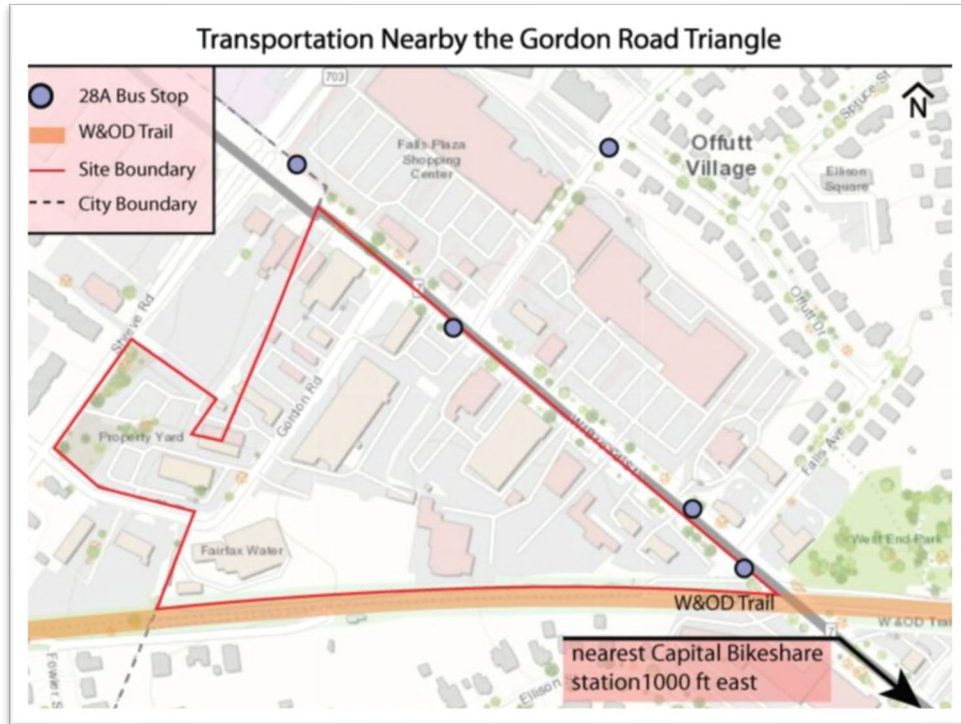


Source: Congress for New Urbanism

- GOAL: facilitate connectivity with W&OD trail, increase tree canopy, and create livable natural spaces within the Subject Area.

Desired Elements

Connectivity

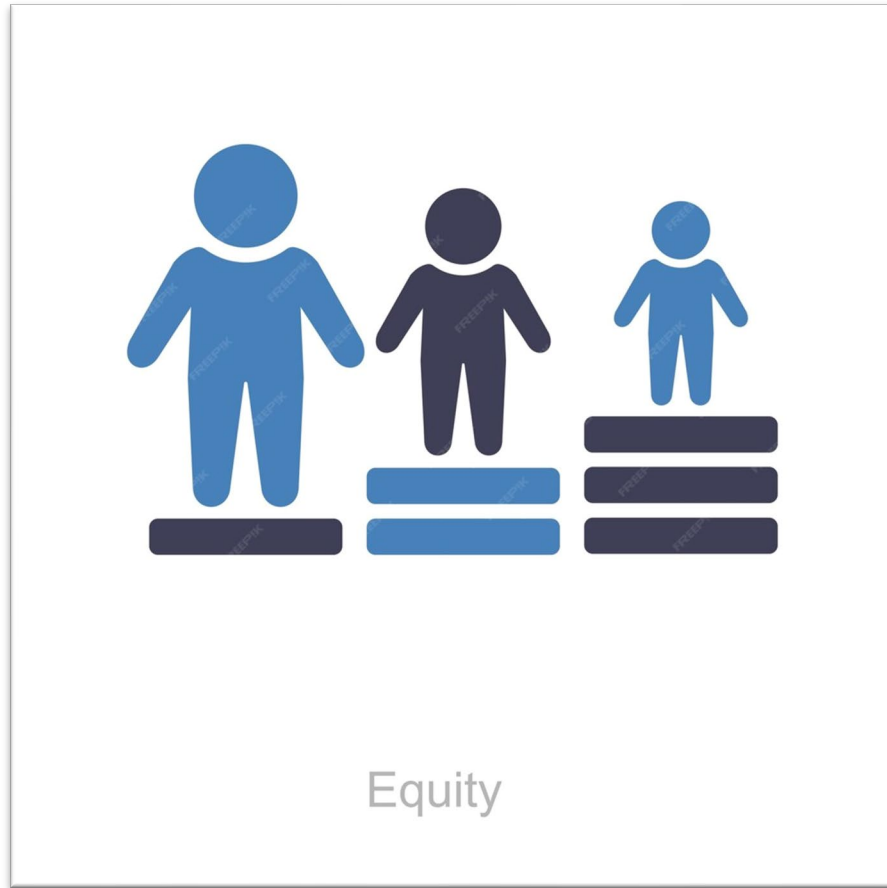


- **GOAL:** Blend automotive, bicycle, and pedestrian access in a manner that promotes sustainable and safe passage through the Gordon Road Triangle and connect with the nearby West Falls Church Metro station.

Source: City of Falls Church

Desired Elements

Equity



- GOAL: Design the future of the Gordon Road Triangle in a way that provides equal access to new residents, uses, employment, and investment without displacing current stakeholders.

Desired Elements

Housing



- GOAL: Provide a critical mix of housing options to accommodate the needs of new and existing Falls Church residents across the demographic spectrum, from market rate multifamily to reimagining the City's hypothermia shelter.

Desired Elements

Industrial



- GOAL: Retain and modernize necessary industrial uses ranging from City DPW Services and vocational training to private sector needs.

Desired Elements

Retail



- GOAL: Combination of destination and resident focused retail amenities consistent with the City's overall comprehensive plan and the needs of the Community.

Source: MKSK
Studios

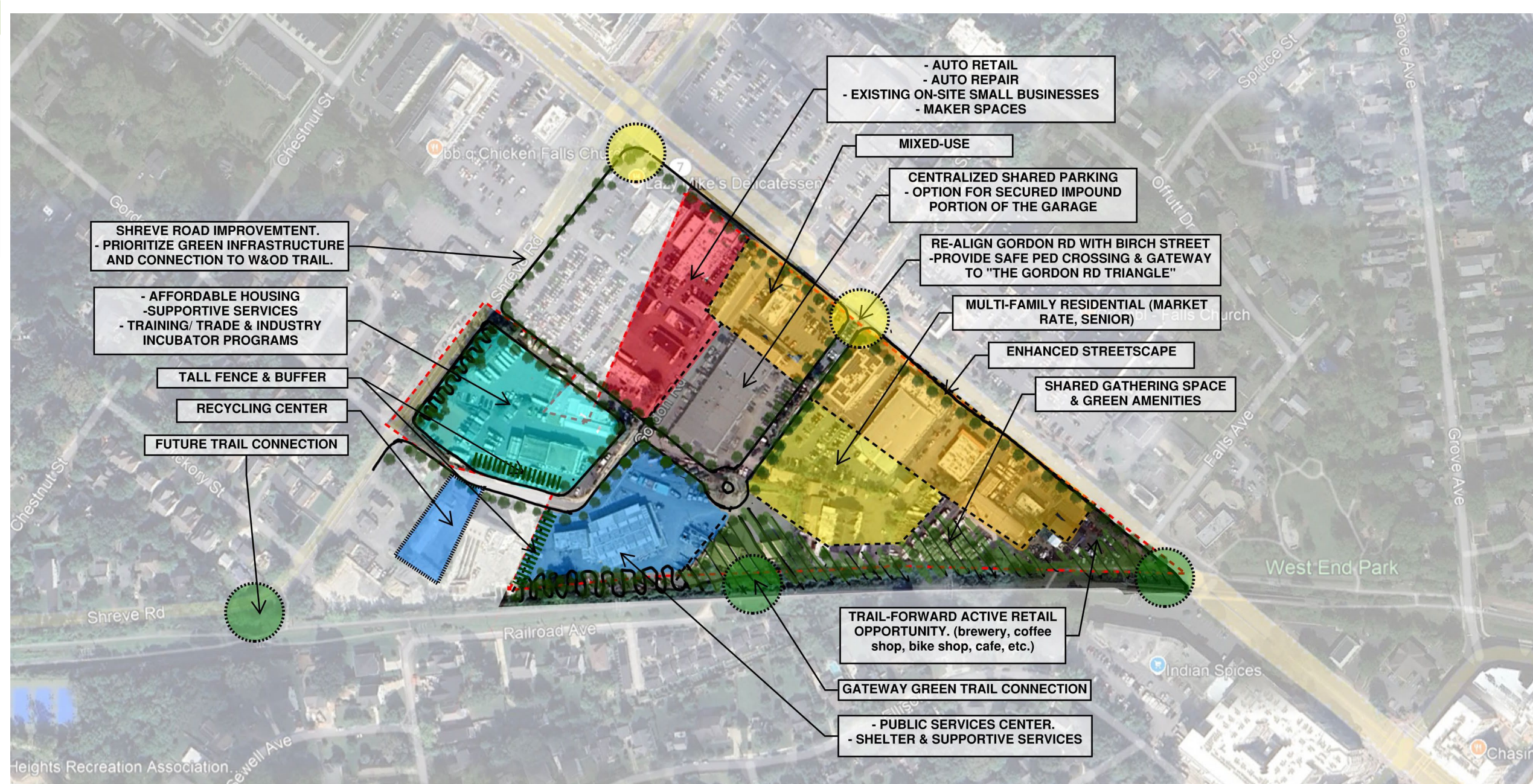


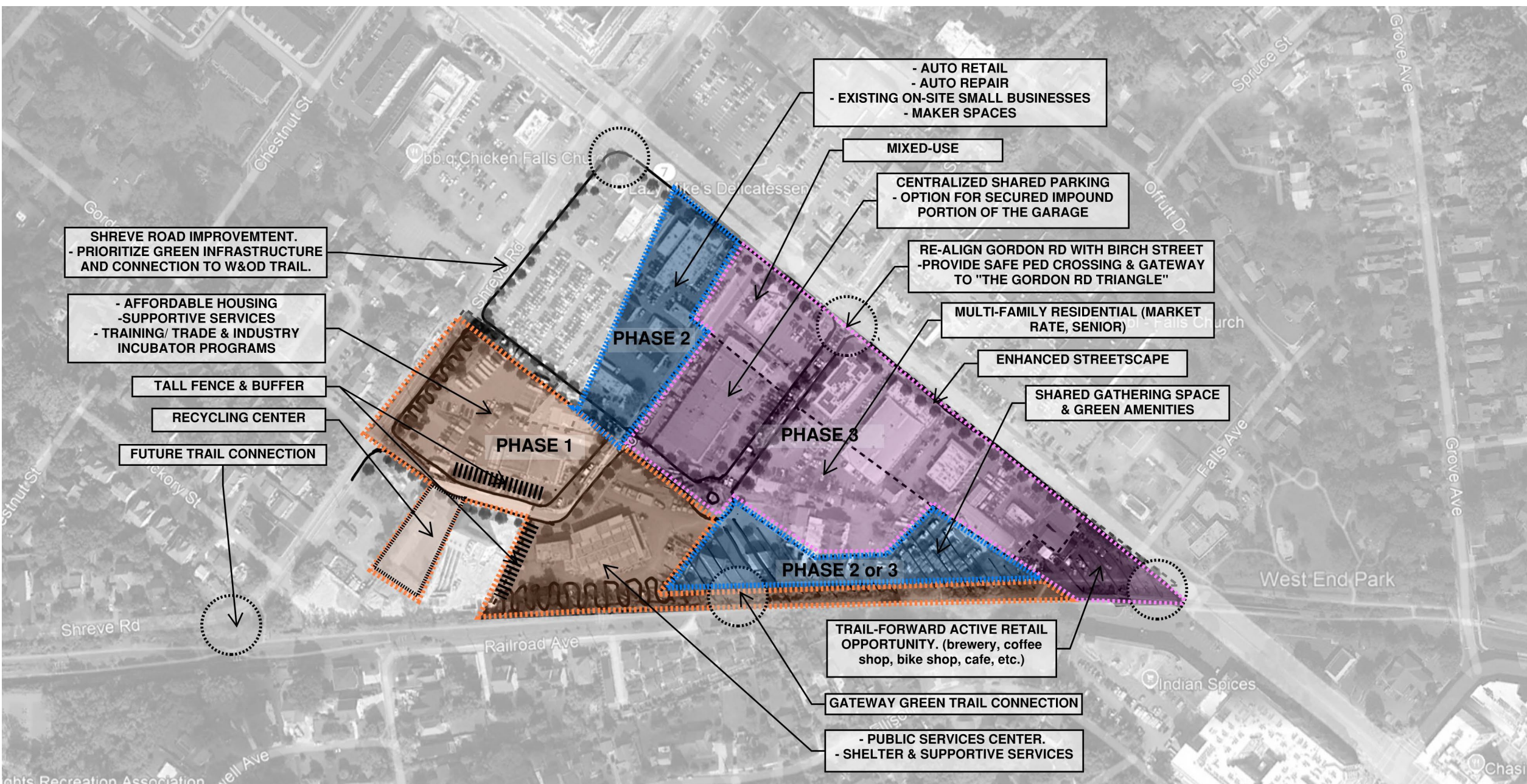
Section 2: A Framework Plan for Gordon Road Triangle





A Phased Development Framework for Investment in the Gordon Road Triangle





PUBLIC SERVICES CENTER (PSC)

"PSC": consolidated municipal facilities

- First thing: step away from previous study
- Do a full program analysis
- Blocking/stacking diagrams
- Get realistic project financials

Big Moves

- Utilize existing City property
- Consolidate building footprint
- Positive relationship to streets and open spaces
- Buffer to concrete plant



Source: ULI

PRECEDENTS: PUBLIC SERVICES CENTER



Affordable Housing & Homeless Shelter

Recommendation: Create Attainable Housing

- Focus higher density along Broad Street (northern section of GRT) and step down towards the W&OD trail to provide an appropriate transition to the low-density residential development south of the Gordon Road Triangle.
- The existing homeless shelter should be accessible to all users (comply with ADA requirements), expanded (additional beds, better balance of beds for men and women) and modernized.



Carpenter's Shelter + The Bloom | Source: [Cooper Carry](#)



Source: ULI

GREENSPACE: TREE CANOPY

Existing Tree Canopy is scarce

- There is currently very little tree canopy with the Gordon Road Triangle area.
- Any reinvestment in the Gordon Road Triangle should **provide a minimum of 15% tree canopy** (within 10 years) for the overall Gordon Road Triangle.
- Substantial tree planting/greenspace should be provided along the boundaries of all parcels abutting the W&OD trail.



PRECEDENTS: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



The Boro | Source: LandDesign.com



Braddock Gateway | Source: LandDesign.com

W&OD TRAIL & OPEN SPACE

Recommendation: Establish a relationship with the W&OD trail.

- The W&OD trail is a major opportunity for the reinvestment of the Gordon Road Triangle.
- Provide open space and recreation opportunities for employees, residents and visitors in the Gordon Road Triangle area.
- Preserve some existing buildings near the W&OD in the interim.



[Caboose Brewery, Vienna, VA](#) | Source: William F. Yurasko on flickr



Source: ULI

PRECEDENTS: TRAIL RETAIL



Camp North End | Source: LandDesign

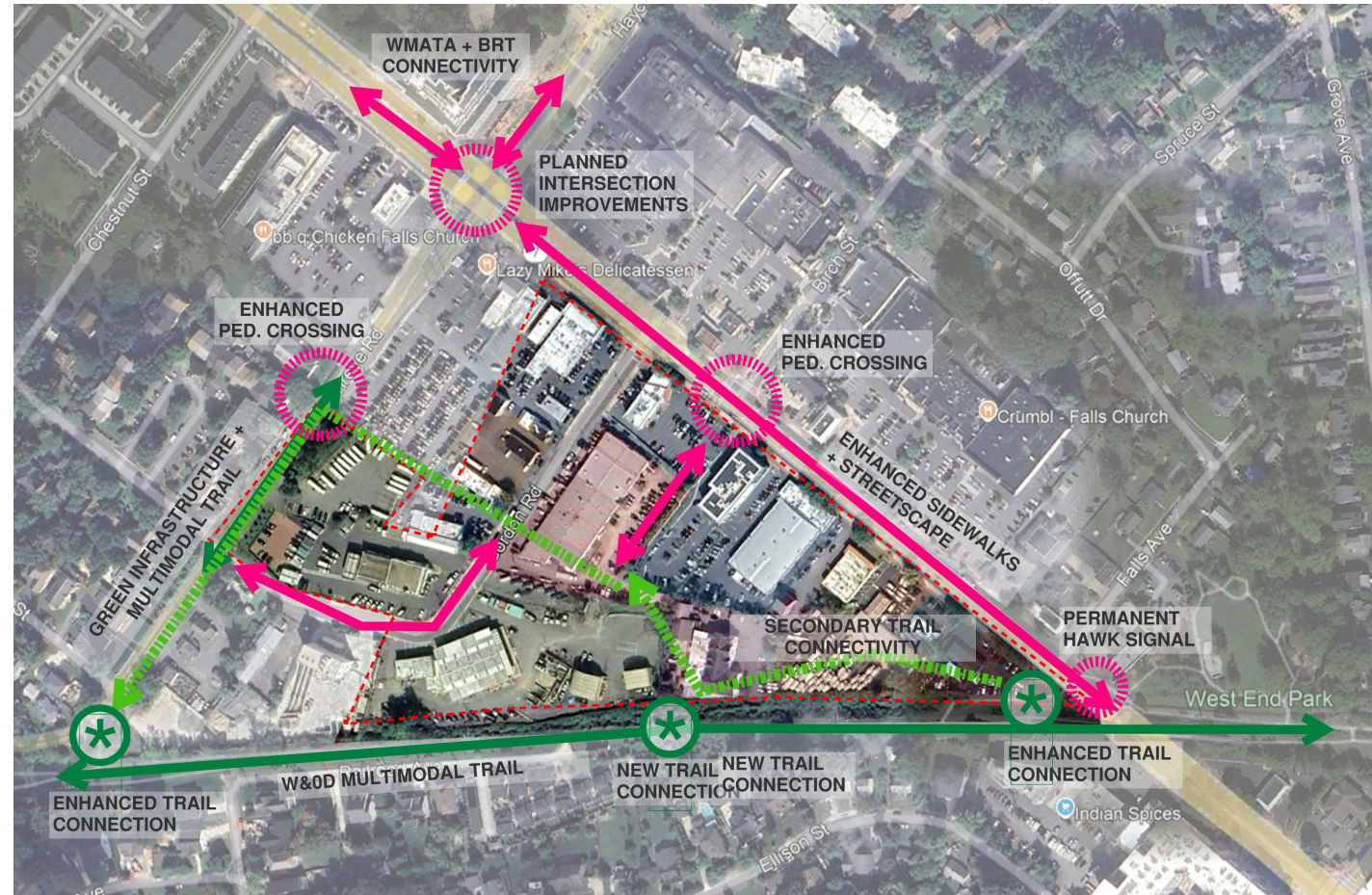


Source: ULI

W&OD TRAIL & OPEN SPACE

Recommendation: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to the W&OD trail.

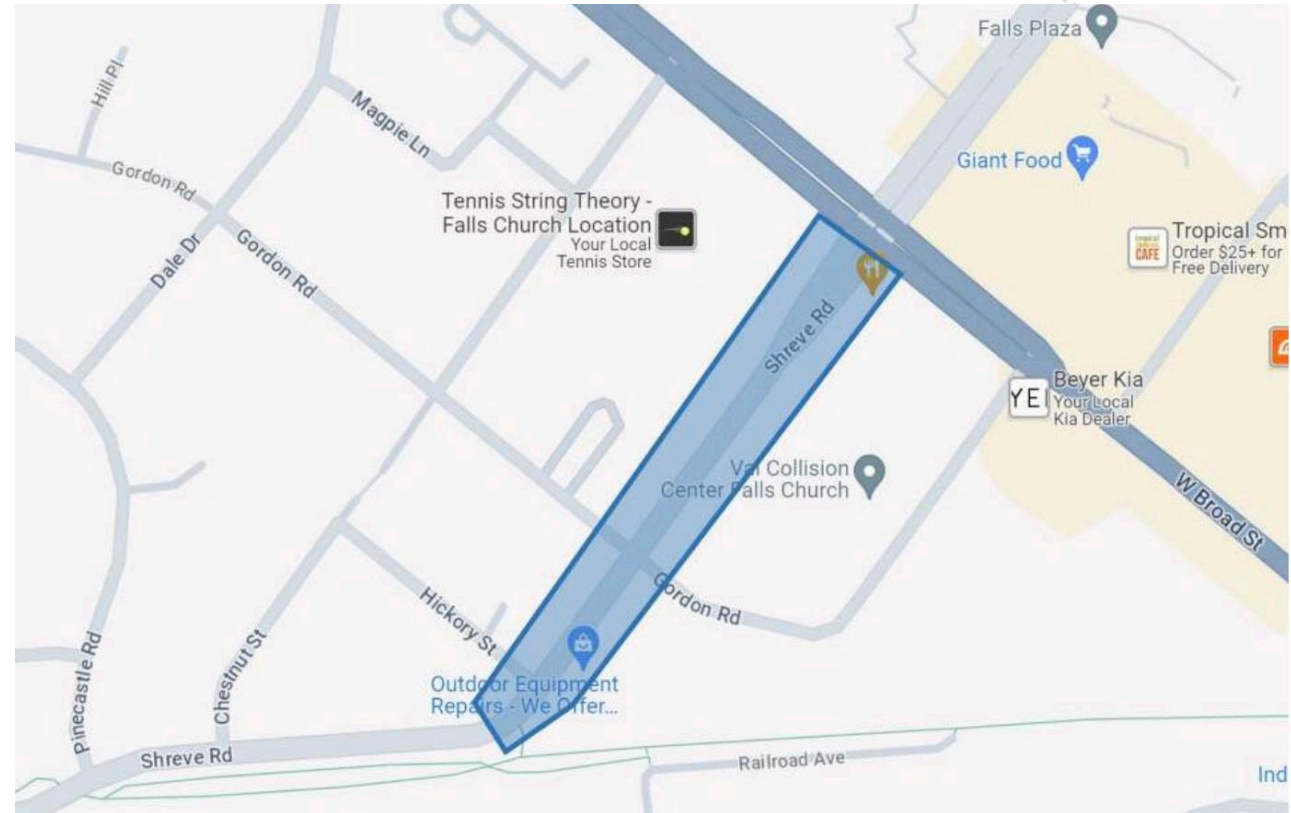
- Add a pedestrian and bicycle connection to the W&OD trail at the Gateway Greenway serving the Public Services Center property
- Improve W&OD connection to Gordon Road Triangle at base of bike/ped bridge
- Provide open space/recreation opportunities along W&OD frontage on the Gordon Road Triangle side connected with a parallel, slower, shared use path
- Encourage the preservation of some existing buildings on the site to recognize the history of the site.



Shreve Road

Recommendation: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections along Shreve Road

- Implement Shreve Road Connector project providing a 10' shared use path connection between the W&OD Trail and West Falls development and Metro
- Activate Shreve Road frontage to embrace streetscape improvements

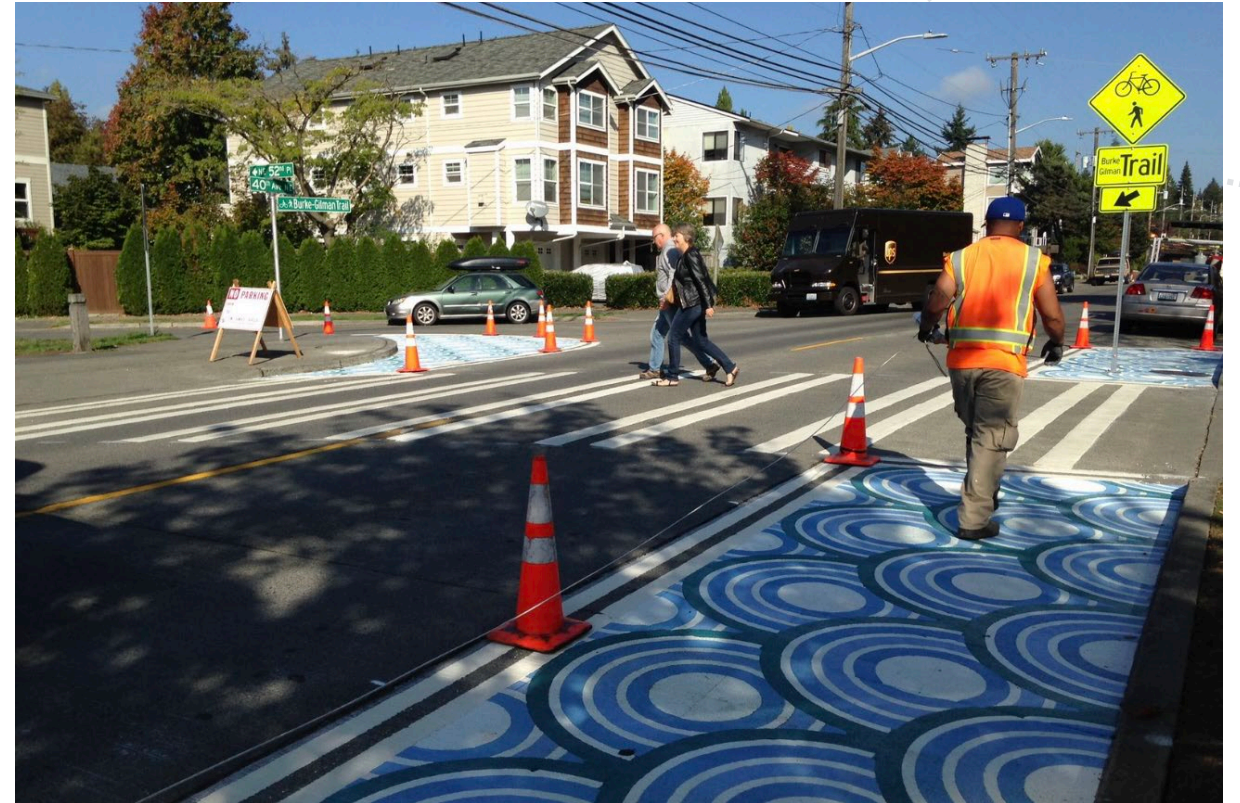


Source: Google Maps

Gordon Road

Recommendation: Improve pedestrian safety on Gordon Road

- Provide **traffic calming** on Gordon Road, especially near operations center
 - Include high visibility crosswalk, better delineation of pedestrian zones, and signage for drivers to expect pedestrians
- Use of **asphalt art** to create sense of place and provide traffic calming
- Establish "**sense of place**" and provide traffic calming



Source: [SDOT Photos on flickr](#)

Street Grid

Recommendation: Implement a street grid

- Implement **Grid of streets** respecting current ownership
- **Align Gordon Road and Birch Street** to provide better connectivity
- Provide **wide sidewalks + bike facilities** for all streets

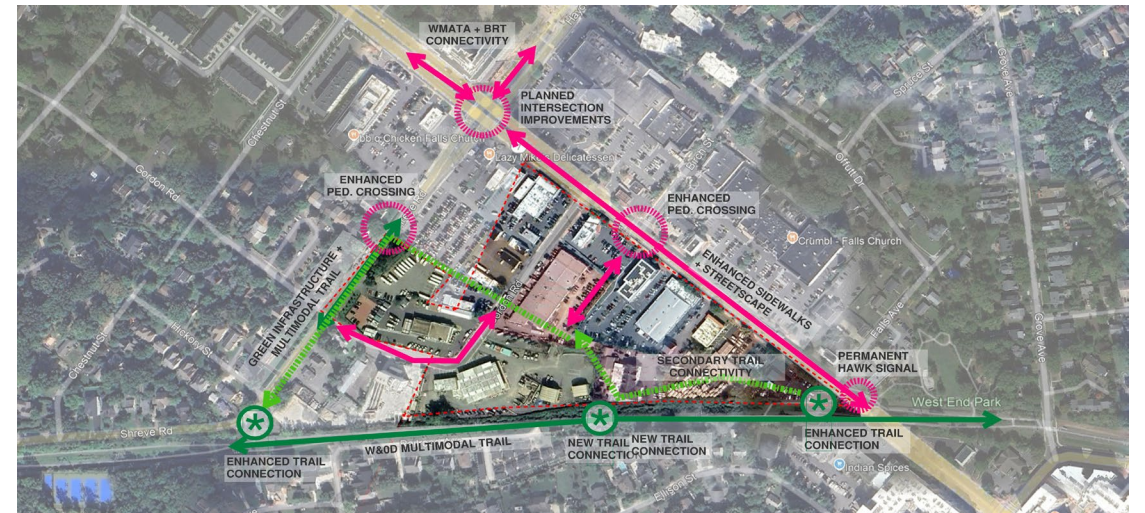


City of Falls Church West End Small Area Plan

Broad Street

Improve safety crossing and walking along Broad Street

- Make **temporary signalized crossing** near W&OD bridge permanent with a pedestrian activated signal and high visibility cross walk
- Add a **pedestrian activated signal** between Birch Street and Falls Ave
- Implement **pedestrian safety improvements** at the Broad/Shreve intersection
- Improve streetscape as part of redevelopment
 - Provide **planting strip w/bioretention and healthy street trees**
 - Replace bricks with more **ADA compliant surface**
 - Reduce curb cuts





Section 3: Public-Private Partnerships





Envision, finance, grow.

Financing Strategies

Positions for Reinvestment In Alternative Ways

To finance the city's ambitious vision that integrates **maker spaces, light industrial use, affordable and luxury housing, public services, parking, and green pathway** we recommend a diversified and **innovative financing approach** that leverages both conventional and alternative instruments.

- **Alternative Debt & Equity-Based Financing Instruments**

Instrument Type	Description	Partner(s)
Zero-Coupon Bonds	Issued at a discount and paid in full at maturity, reducing the city's short-term cash outflows while securing long-term capital.	FC, FC EDA
Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs)	Used instead of General Obligation (G-O) bonds to fund industrial and economic development projects without direct taxpayer liability.	FC Economic Development Authority
Islamic Bonds & Equity Instruments	Asset-backed and interest-free, appealing to long-term investors in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Japan who seek structured returns tied to real assets. <i>I.e City Center, The Wharf, Rosslyn, etc</i>	FC, FC EDA, Specialized Firms

Financing Strategies

Alternatives Cont. & Attainable Housing for a Thriving Community

■ Synthetic Leasing for Asset Development

- A lease-structured financing mechanism where the city **retains operational control** over key infrastructure (maker spaces, public services, industrial parks, housing) while keeping the asset off-balance-sheet.
- This structure attracts private sector capital while **optimizing tax benefits** and reducing the impact on the city's debt capacity.

■ Driving a Thriving, Mixed-Income Community

- Attainable housing ensures that people of all income levels can **live, grow, and work together**, making the district a true destination for all.
- LIHTC incentives attract private investment, helping to create high-quality housing that supports a diverse and vibrant community.

■ Strengthening Economic & Social Vitality

- Mixed-income communities foster neighborhood stability, enhancing the district's appeal as a place where businesses, families, and innovators can thrive.
- Workforce housing allows essential workers to live near job centers, reinforcing the City's vision as an inclusive and dynamic hub.



Source: Ricky Lavaugn, The Golden Image

Action Items

Steps to Move Forward

- **Step 1- Finalize the Reinvestment Vision**
 - Define the city's long-term reinvestment strategy that aligns with stakeholders
 - Develop a compelling presentation to showcase the plan
- **Step 2 - Engage Private and Public Partners**
 - Connect with capital placement firms specializing in long-term investors to reduce risk, increase cash flows, and increase private participation
 - Establish rapport with public partners (i.e. Fairfax County, Virginia, and Federal partners) to create impact for the greater area
- **Step 3 - Grow “The Triangle” into a Model District**
 - Create a vibrant mixed-use hub as a *catalyst* for a broader city reinvestment
 - Leverage industrial, residential, and commercial synergies
- **Executing the Plan**
 - Transition from vision to implementation with clear milestones
 - Align City policies, funding strategies, and development partners will create a successful public private partnership

This financing strategy ensures the city has flexibility, low-cost capital access, and alignment with long-term economic reinvestment.



Section 4: Governance

Why governance matters

- Complex area with scattered site ownership and parcelization
- Unique to have business owners that are property owners
- Need a plan for a plan
- Promotes accountability



Recommendations

- **Recommendation #1: Appoint a Gordon Road Triangle Implementation Manager at the City of Falls Church to champion project**
 - Lead planning and development effort
 - Coordinate with Fairfax County
 - Coordinate city working group
 - Coordinate regular meetings with property owners
 - ~0.5 FTEs
 - This person needs leadership support from the City Manager and City Council
- Precedent: Montgomery County and the District of Columbia have used this model with plan implementation

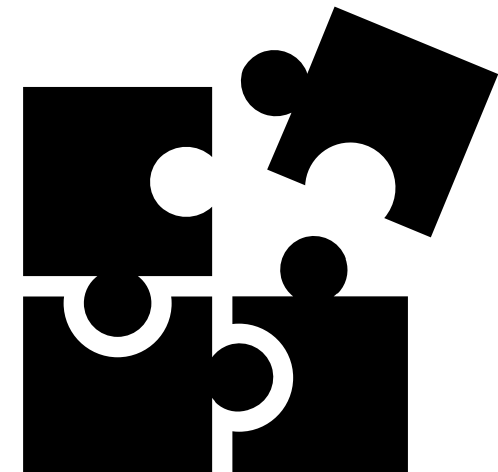


Recommendations

- **Recommendation #2 : Formalize agreement with Fairfax County to advance reinvestment in Gordon Road Triangle**
 - Parcel at the corner of Shreve Road and Broad Street is important for gateway to Downtown Falls Church
 - Need to rationalize densities across the jurisdictional boundaries
 - Articulate and document shared goals for the area
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other type of agreement
 - Identify additional opportunities for collaboration
- **Recommendation #3: Convene City Working Group to advance development of new Public Services Center**
 - Involved parties: Public Works, OEM, Police, HHS, Schools, other agencies space needs at facility. We heard there may be additional space needs beyond what was covered in the Fox plan
 - Need clear decision-making structure to resolve any issues that arise

Recommendation

- **Recommendation #4: Convene working group of property owners**
 - Promotes private sector engagement in future vision of Triangle
 - Regular meetings demonstrate City's commitment to reinvestment
 - Coordinate individual property redevelopment plans, including identifying opportunities for consolidation, land swaps
 - Identify ways to support and enhance existing businesses in Triangle
 - **Key task: Conduct parking needs assessment study to help evaluate demand for shared parking facility**





Implementation & Key Recommendations



Illustrative Implementation Matrix

Action Item	Responsible Party	Key Partners/ Stakeholders	Phase of Implementation
Define the city's long-term reinvestment strategy that aligns with stakeholders	City of Falls Church (CPEDS)	Landowners	Immediate
Develop a compelling presentation to showcase the plan	City of Falls Church (CPEDS)	Office of Communications, Marketing Agency	Immediate
Establish rapport with affordable housing partners such as Virginia Housing, HUD, AHC, True Ground, etc.	City of Falls Church (City Manager)	Developer(s), Landowners	Short
Transition from vision to implementation with clear milestones	City of Falls Church (CPEDS)	Developer(s), Landowners	Short
Leverage industrial, residential, and commercial synergies	City of Falls Church (EDO)	Landowners	Short, Medium
Align City policies, funding strategies, and development partners for successful public private partnership	City of Falls Church (Finance)	Developers, Fairfax County	Short, Medium
Connect with capital placement firms specializing in long-term investors	City of Falls Church (CPEDS)	Developer(s)	Short, Medium
Create a vibrant mixed-use hub as a catalyst for a broader city reinvestment	City of Falls Church (CPEDS, HHS)	Developer(s), Landowners	Medium, Long

Key Takeaways

1. Protect and maintain existing operations and businesses.
2. Leverage the **City-owned properties as a catalyst** that provides for the long-term needs of the City.
3. Conduct **programming and feasibility study** to define scope of work for PSC.
4. Introduce **more green space** as a buffer.
5. Partner with Fairfax County and private property owners.
6. Appoint an **implementation manager**

Q&A

More Questions?

Contact ULI Washington at:

Washington@uli.org

**Contact the City of Falls
Church:**

ebazemore@fallschurchva.gov



Washington