



Washington



REIMAGINING THE GORDON ROAD TRIANGLE

Falls Church, Virginia

Technical Assistance Panel | January 30–31, 2025

About

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Cover photo: The ULI Technical Assistance Panelists at the pedestrian bridge adjacent to the Gordon Road Triangle. (ULI)

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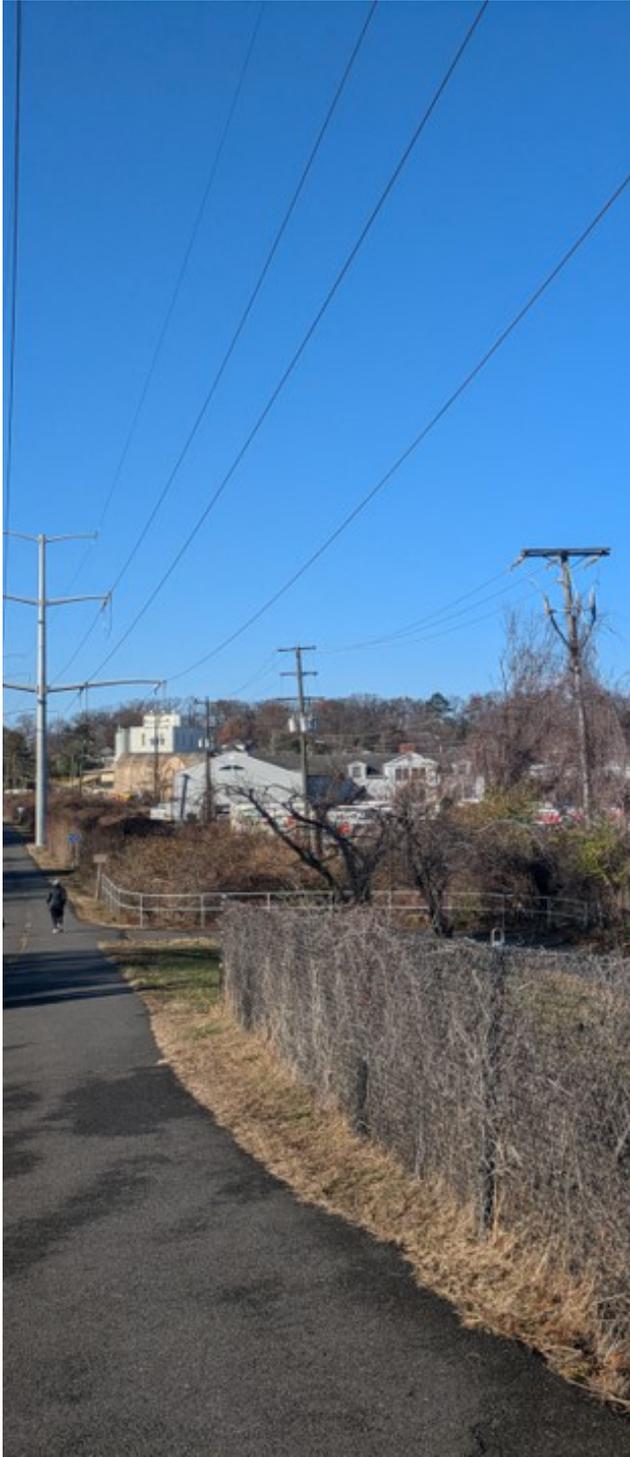
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Executive Summary

The area known as the Gordon Road Triangle is 20 acres in size and located in the northwest corner of the City of Falls Church (“the City”), which owns about a quarter of the property in the Gordon Road Triangle. The area houses the City’s Operations Yard, which includes bus parking, a recycling center, a warehouse, the City of Falls Church Department of Public Works Operations Yard, a homeless shelter, and police impound lot. The local businesses include auto body shops, pest control, Beyer Volvo and Kia car dealerships. The City believes that the Gordon Road Triangle has potential for development and improvement and convened a two-day Technical Assistance Panel through ULI (“the Panel”) to come up with ideas and solutions.

After touring the site and listening to City leadership and stakeholder feedback, the Panel came up with a Framework Development Plan and a number of recommendations, all of which allow for enough flexibility to work with current property owners and adjust as the City deems fit. The recommendations include: updating the Operations Yard to become a “Public Services Center,” realigning the surrounding streets to adhere to a grid and have better access to the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail while making it safer for bikes and pedestrians, adding more

green space and tree canopy, and adding affordable and market-rate housing with centralized parking that services the area. The Panel also identified that a champion entity should be appointed to carry out this development and that the City should convene a City Working Group and partner with Fairfax County and the existing property owners to facilitate collaboration. The Panel also shared options for public-private partnerships for reinvestment that will not incur additional debt for the City, nor pass the cost along to its residents.

At the conclusion of the TAP, the Panel expressed that the City of Falls Church has tremendous potential to invest in the Gordon Road Triangle in such a way that protects and maintains existing operations and businesses, and in doing so could add more housing options while still retaining and attracting retail. The collaborative guidance of City Leadership and the support of a champion who can work with many stakeholders will help ensure its success.



ULI

The Panel tours the Operations Yard on January 30, 2025.



ULI

The presentation of TAP recommendations on January 31, 2025.

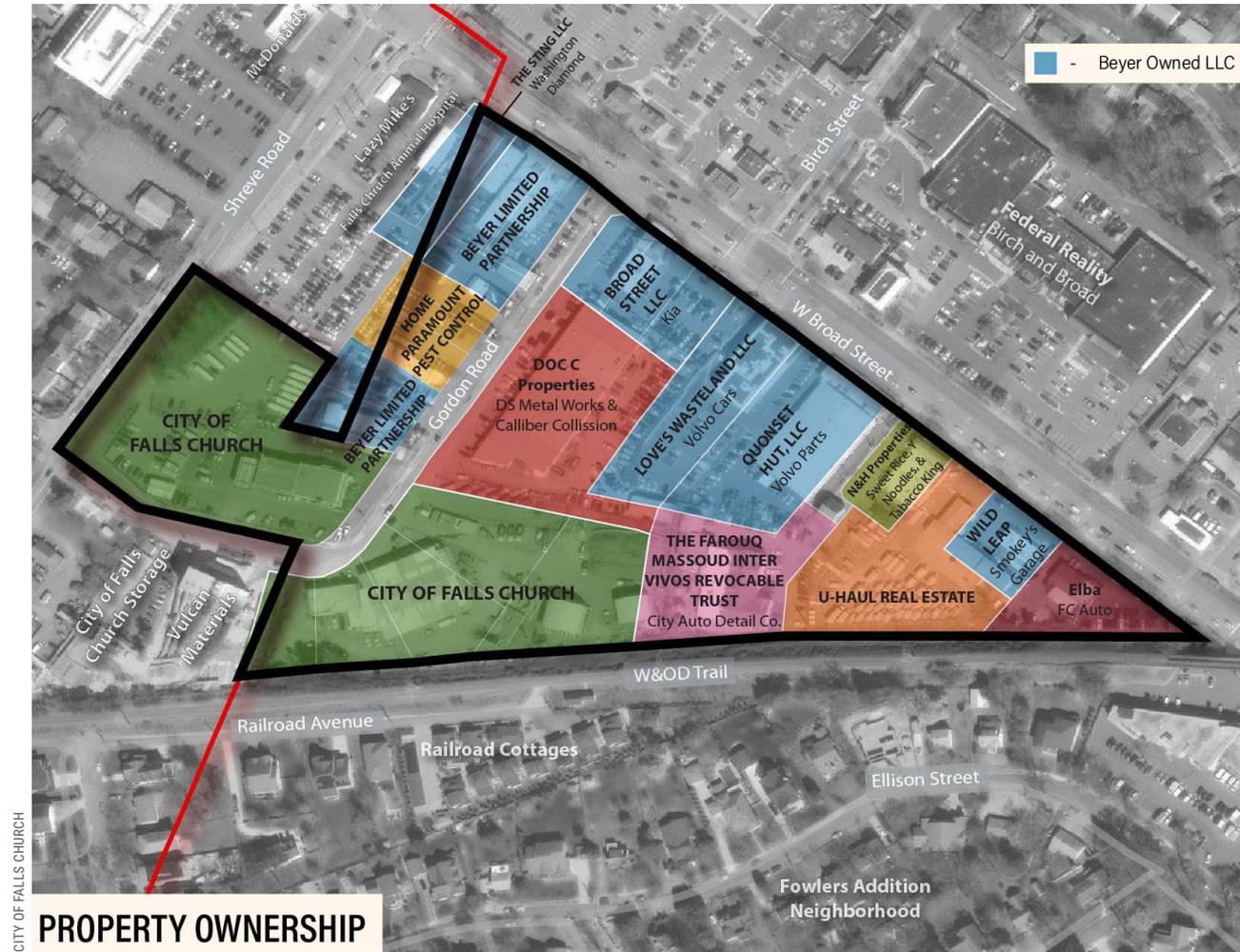
Background

The Gordon Road Triangle study area is 20 acres in size and located in the northwest corner of the City. The area is bounded by West Broad Street (Route 7) to the northeast, the W&OD Trail to the south and Fairfax County to the west. Gordon Road passes through the area, intersecting with both Shreve Road and West Broad Street. The City has established Planning Opportunity Areas (POAs) whose boundaries provide a guide for where the City promotes revitalization, and are the basis for small area planning. The Gordon Road Triangle is identified as POA 4 which is a focus of the West End Small Area Plan. The study area is zoned M-1, Light Industry; with the exception of the former Fairfax Water property at 7100 Gordon Road, which is Zoned R-1A, Low Density Residential.

The area surrounding the Gordon Road Triangle is referred to as the West End. The West End has become a hub of development, reinvestment, and innovation. It has gained an advantage in location because of its proximity to multiple transportation arteries, including the West Falls Church Metrorail Station, Interstate 66, West Broad Street (Route 7), the Route 28A bus route and future Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Route, and the W&OD Trail. Northwest of the study area across Route 7 are the Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School and newly constructed Meridian High School campuses, which comprises 34 acres. Adjacent to these institutions was the former Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center, which is being

redeveloped into an innovation hub that will include the Virginia Tech Coalition for Smart Construction Center and the headquarters of HITT Contracting. Within the study area, the City has ownership of approximately 5.35 acres, including the City's Operations Yard.

The study area is made up of 26 parcels, owned by 13 property owners. The largest landowner in the area is the City of Falls Church with a total of 5.35 acres. The second largest land owner is the Beyer family, who own 4.58 acres through 6 different LLCs.



With several parcels under single ownership, there is an opportunity for a larger mixed-use development within the study area. The City of Falls Church Operations Yard holds parking for Falls Church City Public Schools' buses as well as facility staff vehicles, a recycling center, a storage warehouse that includes a sign printer, as well as the City's Department of Public Works, homeless shelter, and police impound lot. The local businesses include auto body shops, Beyer Volvo and Kia car dealerships, a metal fabrication business, pest control services, two restaurants, and several other businesses.

Questions Posed by Sponsors

The City of Falls Church (the 'City') and the Community Planning and Economic Development Services (CPEDS) Department staff shared their sentiment that the Gordon Road Triangle has great potential for development and improvement. The sponsors felt that a comprehensive reinvestment approach for the study area will require balance between existing and new land uses, enhanced connectivity throughout the existing multimodal transportation network, and plan for a viable public-private partnership that incorporates existing governmental uses in the development.

The goals for the TAP were to:

- **Identify strategies for reinvestment in the Gordon Road Triangle.** The existing Operations Yard use should be retained but a new building should be constructed that will incorporate a DPW Operations

Center and will also include additional spaces for the City Departments currently housed there such as the Fire Marshal, the Office of Emergency Management, Police and the Schools. Any potential redevelopment in the study area should incorporate compatible private uses. For example, a mixed-use development that includes active retail uses and housing that pairs with the existing light industrial uses.

- **Explore the feasibility of a public-private financing structure for the Operations Yard specifically.**
- **Utilize and create additional multimodal connections offered by the existing transportation network including the W&OD Trail and West Falls Church Metrorail Station** to enhance walking, biking and rolling in the area.
- **Develop a process, identify capital, and reimagine the current site for a successful long-term repositioning.** The sponsors asked the Panelists to leverage institutional and socially-motivated capital to maximize positive impacts for the surrounding residents through redevelopment and/or renovation.

Prior to the TAP, the sponsors provided ULI with a list of questions to be addressed, including:

1. **Public-Private Partnership.** What private uses might be most suitable for a public-private partnership with the City in addition to the Operations Yard? What is

a model for public-private partnership that the City could consider and how could that be coordinated with any potential redevelopment of surrounding privately-owned land?

2. **Land Use.** The City of Falls Church's Operations Yard houses critical City functions and must remain within the Gordon Road Triangle. Currently light industrial uses are present in the Gordon Road Triangle such as auto repair and metal fabrication. What existing and new uses are compatible with proximity to an Operations Yard? How can existing businesses fit in with the future development? How could small-scale manufacturing uses such as breweries, distilleries, and arts and craft markets contribute to the area? Can adaptive reuse be considered for the existing buildings?
3. **Transportation & Connectivity.** The Gordon Road Triangle is within a mile of both the West Falls Church Metrorail Station and I-66, and is directly adjacent to the W&OD Trail. How can we increase pedestrian, bike, and transit connectivity among the Gordon Road Triangle, Downtown Falls Church, the West Falls Economic Development, Virginia Tech campus redevelopment, the City's Middle and High School Campus, and Fairfax County's upcoming mixed-use developments around the West Falls Church Metro Station?

4. **Equity.** The Gordon Road Triangle presents an opportunity for the development of workforce and affordable housing, given its proximity to employers, excellent transportation and transit services, government and school facilities. How can the development of workforce and affordable housing and the expansion of the City’s shelter for persons experiencing homelessness be incorporated into any potential development in Gordon Road Triangle?
5. **Regional Coordination.** Redevelopment of the area should emphasize regional coordination with Fairfax County’s Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Transportation, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks), Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA), and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). A portion of the Gordon Road Triangle is in Fairfax County, so planning for the area will need to be compatible with the County’s future plans. What are the biggest opportunities for advancing a regional best practice of land use planning leveraged by partnering with and learning from other jurisdictions?

The Process

The City of Falls Church engaged ULI Washington to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) with the overall goal of addressing the future of the Gordon Road Triangle and look into ways to redesign and reinvest in the area. The Panel consisted of ten members with expertise in urban design and planning, transportation, architecture, real estate development, tax and finance.

The two-day TAP convened on January 30, 2025 at the Hilton Garden Inn on Broad Street in Falls Church, Virginia. The Panel spent part of the first day on a walking tour of the Gordon Road Triangle study area and surrounding streets. The Panel then interviewed over 60 stakeholders and members of City leadership, many of whom were City residents, and re-convened in the afternoon to deliberate and formulate their recommendations. During the second day, the Panel finalized the recommendations and invited the sponsors and stakeholders to hear the presentation of their findings at the hotel.

Lessons from Stakeholders

Multiple themes emerged in the stakeholder interviews that the panelists took into account when forming their recommendations, including:

Affordable and Workforce Housing

Stakeholders also spoke of the need for more affordable and workforce housing in the area and how the location of the Gordon Road Triangle could be ideal, given its access to

transportation and amenities, including proximity to the Metro station, retail, and multimodal transportation options with the W&OD and the upcoming Bus Rapid Transit. “Everyone is used to mixed use housing now” and in transitioning from industrial to residential, the noise would be the biggest concern, but not something that couldn’t be overcome, and the dust produced from the Vulcan Materials cement plan would need to be addressed.

Existing Business Preservation

There was concern for preserving the existing businesses that already add so much value to the area. One stakeholder posed the hypothetical question: “do you really want to run some of the businesses out and all of a sudden you are driving to Chantilly to get your car repaired?” Stakeholders also mentioned the need to upgrade and expand the City of Falls Church Operations Yard and to consider modernizing and upgrading the homeless shelter.

Retaining Industrial Uses

Stakeholders expressed an interest in keeping a meaningful amount of industrial use in the Gordon Road Triangle, because the City of Falls Church wants to have easy access to the Public Works system and it is in line with how the area is already zoned. Some stakeholders expressed concern that this area is some of the City’s last land that is zoned for light industrial and do not want it all to be rezoned, as it would never be recaptured once lost.

Green Space

Stakeholders spoke of the need for more green space and increasing the tree canopy, especially along the W&OD Trail. Stakeholders expressed concern about stormwater and sewer flooding that happens in the study area on the Fairfax County side. Addressing the stormwater management plan was something stakeholders felt should be addressed in the updated Gordon Road Triangle plans.

Homeless Shelter

Stakeholders wanted the homeless shelter to remain but they said it needs to be expanded and modernized. Right now, it's on the second floor and not accessible to individuals with limited mobility; it lacks a dishwasher and has challenges with heating and cooling. The shelter is open between November and March, and functions as a hypothermia shelter during that time, but stakeholders were open to discussion and assessment to see if it would need to be open for more months.

Additional Neighborhood Amenities

Stakeholders mentioned additional amenities that might be an ideal addition to the space - a pool or aquatic center since the local high school does not have one, a second library for the City of Falls Church, a tech business incubator, a bike shop to serve people using the Trail, maker spaces, gathering spaces, a dog park, and public art. Stakeholders were specific that they did not want a grocery store in the Gordon Road Triangle, given the plethora of nearby grocery options.

Connectivity and Safety Improvements

In discussions about transportation, it became clear that the issues with the bike-pedestrian connectivity within and adjacent to the Gordon Road Triangle are well known and there are many ways to improve upon it, both for people traveling through the area and those that work there. There are concerns about crossing the traffic-heavy areas surrounding the Gordon Road Triangle, including Route 7. With the future for Bus Rapid Transit and the existing 28A Metro Bus Route that runs along Route 7 and future F20 express bus, there will be additional pedestrian and bike traffic and the need to cross the streets.

The W&OD pedestrian and bike bridge is useful, but stakeholders felt that bike and pedestrians had to go out of their way to access it, and an additional ground level crossing is desired for local use. The current crosswalk and temporary signal are in good spots, but Route 7 would need another crosswalk and signal at another intersection.

Stakeholders mentioned that there were too many curb cuts on Route 7 which conflict with bikes and pedestrians - vehicles pulling in and out of the retail spots make it much harder for bikes and pedestrians in the area.

Parking

Stakeholders mentioned the need to consolidate the parking so the visual experience of the area is not just continuous strings of parking lots. Stakeholders also acknowledged that the currently automobile-



Stakeholder interviews during the TAP process.

dominated public realm necessitates a re-consideration of how driving to and parking within the Gordon Road Triangle should feel.

Capital Concerns

Stakeholders expressed concern that the City of Falls Church is near their debt limit because of the City's investment in the construction of Meridian High School. When it comes to creating additional debt, the limit would be along the lines of \$30 million maximum debt capacity they would want to see set for this project. Stakeholders also expressed that any plan for affordable housing should include incentives to help offset the cost.

Considerations

Panelists listened to stakeholders' concerns and spent time discussing the best ways forward, taking into account the need for more affordable housing, the multimodal transportation options for the Gordon Road Triangle, and the existing City services, properties and streetscape in the area. Knowing that financing was key in any future for the Gordon Road Triangle, the Panel also came up with financing strategies to accompany the recommendations, which are included in this report.

The Panel focused on achieving the following goals with their recommendations.

- **Improve green space:** Increase tree canopy, and create livable natural spaces



The Panel concluded that there is great enthusiasm from stakeholders and City leadership to invest in the Gordon Road Triangle in a way that creates more housing and improves multimodal transportation while reimagining the existing Public Works facilities.

within the study area of the Gordon Road Triangle. The Panel observed the lack of green space while on the site tour and heard from multiple stakeholders that this was something people wanted to see improved.

- **Connectivity:** Facilitate connectivity with the W&OD Trail and accommodate the highlighted Resource Protection Area to create livable natural spaces within the study area.

- **Transportation:** Blend automotive, bicycle, and pedestrian access in a manner that promotes sustainable and safe passage through the Gordon Road Triangle, both around the site and to the nearby West Falls Church Metro station.
- **Improve equity outcomes:** Design the future of the Gordon Road Triangle in a way that invites new residents, uses, employment, and investment without displacing current stakeholders.
- **Housing:** Housing is a great need throughout our region. Provide a critical mix of housing options to accommodate the needs of new and existing Falls Church residents across the demographic spectrum. In addition, modernize and expand the City's homeless shelter to accommodate the need for more robust support for the most vulnerable among the population.
- **Industrial:** Retain and modernize necessary industrial uses ranging from City DPW Services to private sector needs. The City greatly depends on these public works services.
- **Retail:** Combination of destination and resident focused retail amenities consistent with the City's overall comprehensive plan and to meet the needs of new and surrounding residents.

Constraints

The panelists identified a number of site constraints of the Gordon Road Triangle, which include poor bike and pedestrian infrastructure, which currently does not allow for strong connectivity to the W&OD Trail. The surrounding fencing and streams are a barrier to accessing area amenities.

The site is served by Gordon Road, which has subpar pedestrian connectivity, narrow sidewalks, and is encroached by parked cars. Gordon Road is also a cut-through street with high speed and limited site lines. The Panel found that it was difficult to cross Broad St. safely and conveniently and that driveways and curb cuts create conflicts for people walking and biking.

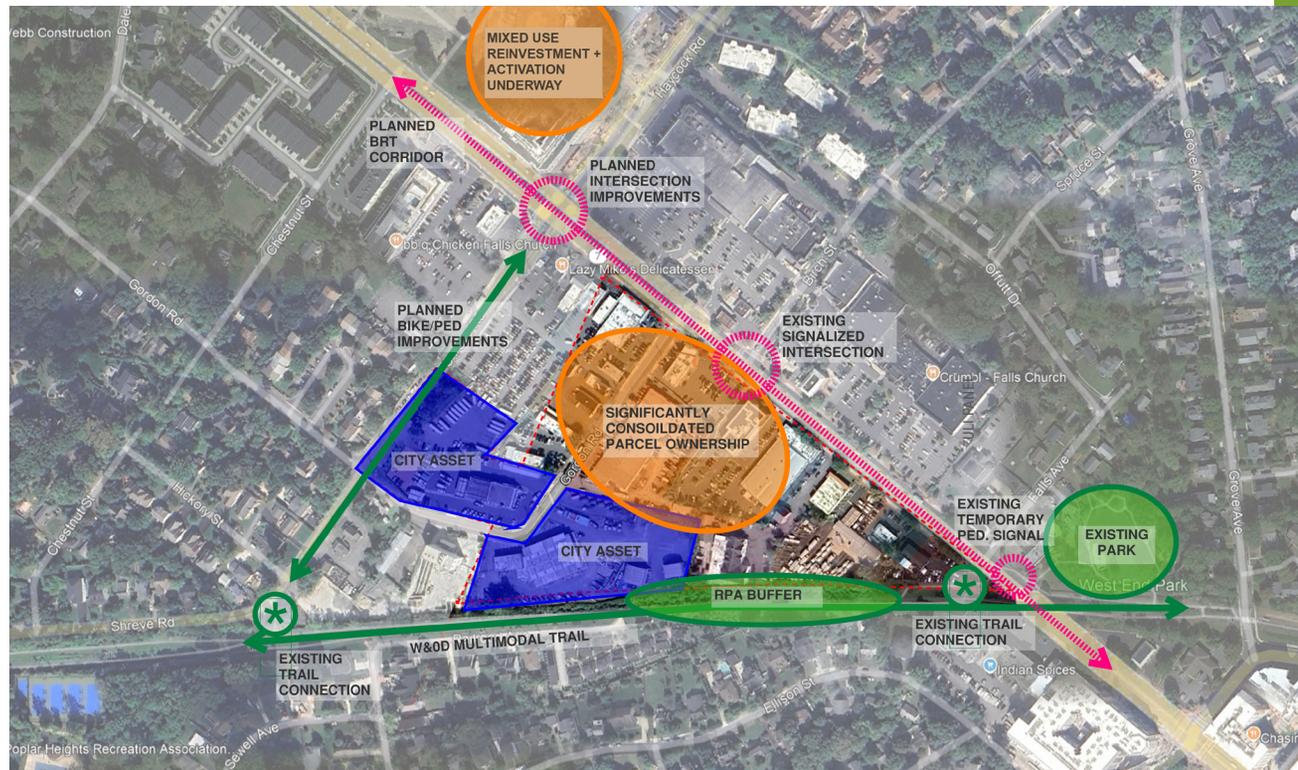
As stakeholders mentioned, there is little tree canopy and green space in the Gordon Road Triangle and surrounding areas, and the Panel identified areas of frequent flooding in the parcels adjacent to the Gordon Road Triangle, especially in the nearby residential communities that are within Fairfax County.

Opportunities

There are immense opportunities for investment and improvement in the Gordon Road Triangle, which include more green space, greater transportation connectivity, a focus on equity, creation of more housing, and protecting and better utilizing the industrial space.



Above: Constraints on development identified by the Panel informed by the sponsor and stakeholders.
Below: The strongest opportunities identified by the Panel diagrammed on the site.





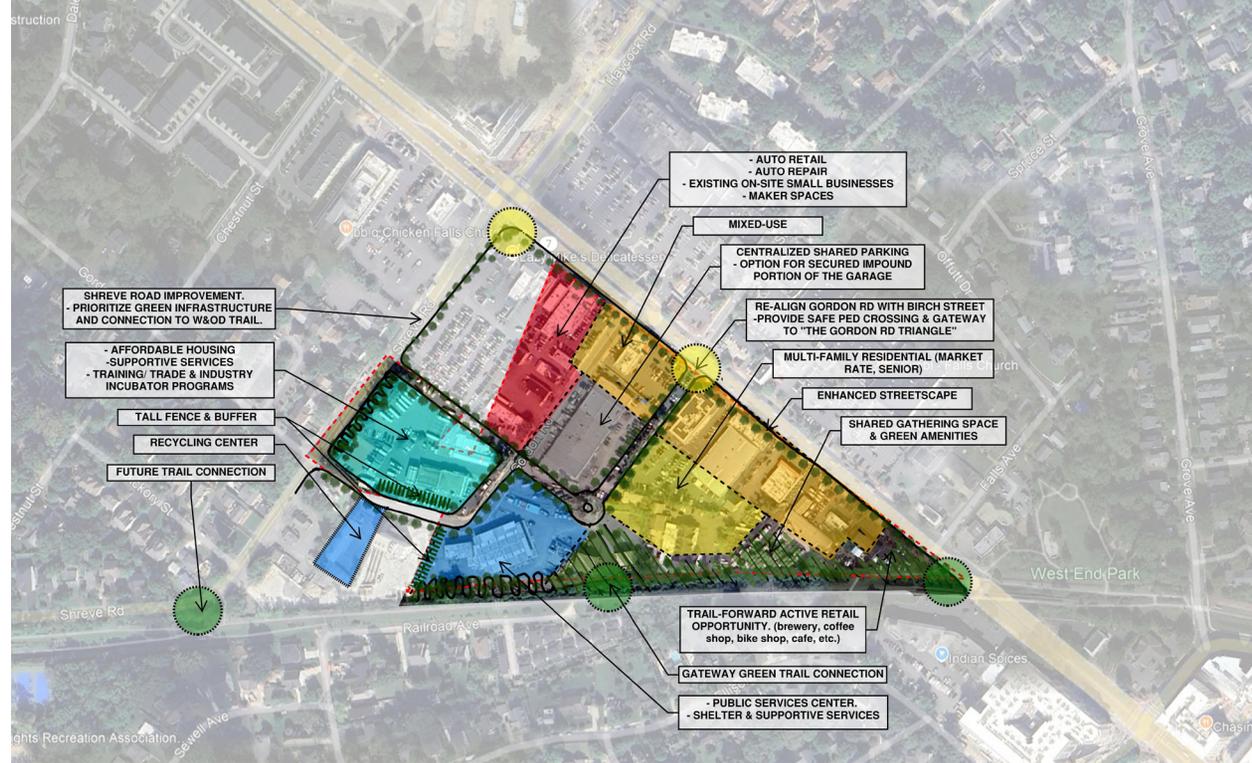
Recommendations

The Panel devised a phased development framework for investment in the Gordon Road Triangle. This is intended as an overall framework rather than a master plan or precise rendering of what the plan could look like, and it has been designed with maximum flexibility to take into account the multiple stakeholders including the area's existing business and property owners.

The Panel believes that the reinvestment in the Gordon Road Triangle can focus on retaining the critical City services. The Panel recommends unlocking redevelopment and improvement of those spaces first and immediately to address those critical needs. The goal is that by tackling the City services first, it can be done up front and then there would still be the option for maximum flexibility for the rest of the Gordon Road Triangle and further investment.

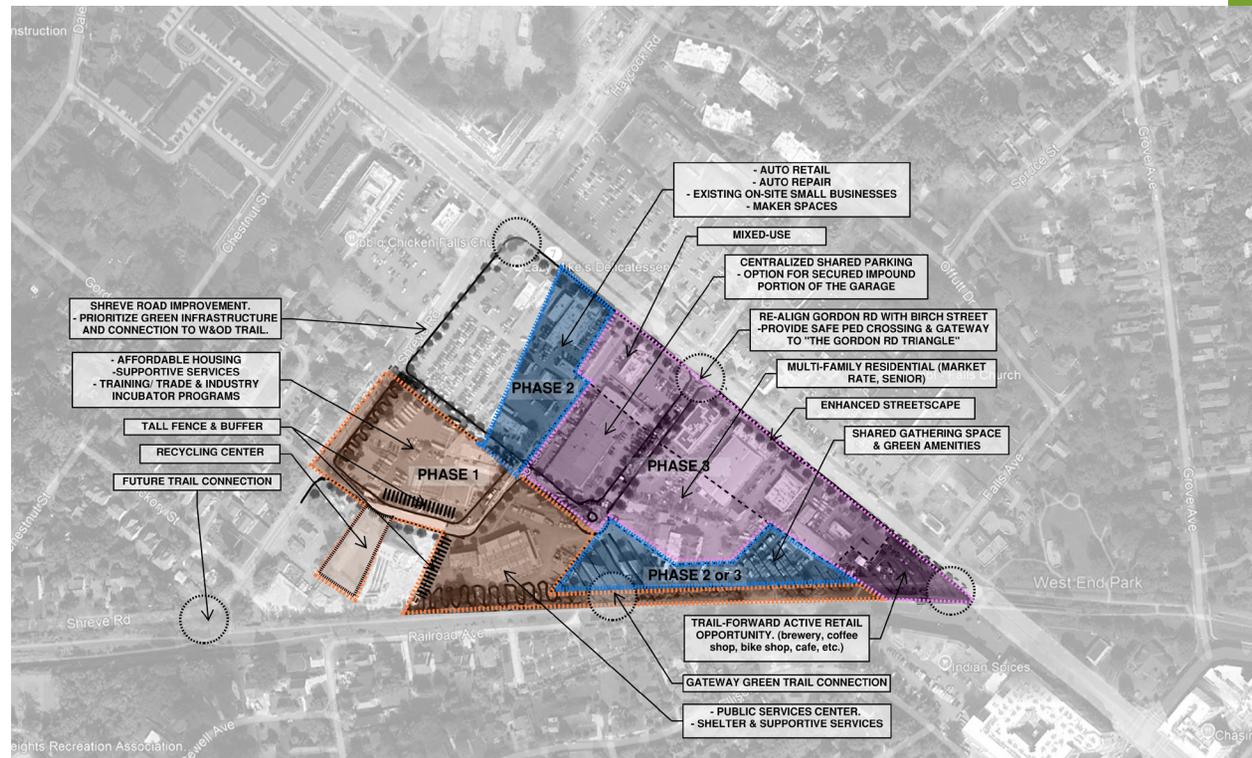
The Panel also wanted the Framework Plan to set the tone that the Gordon Road Triangle retains a light industrial character but still has a “people first” message that acknowledges that many peoples’ livelihood depends on the services performed here.

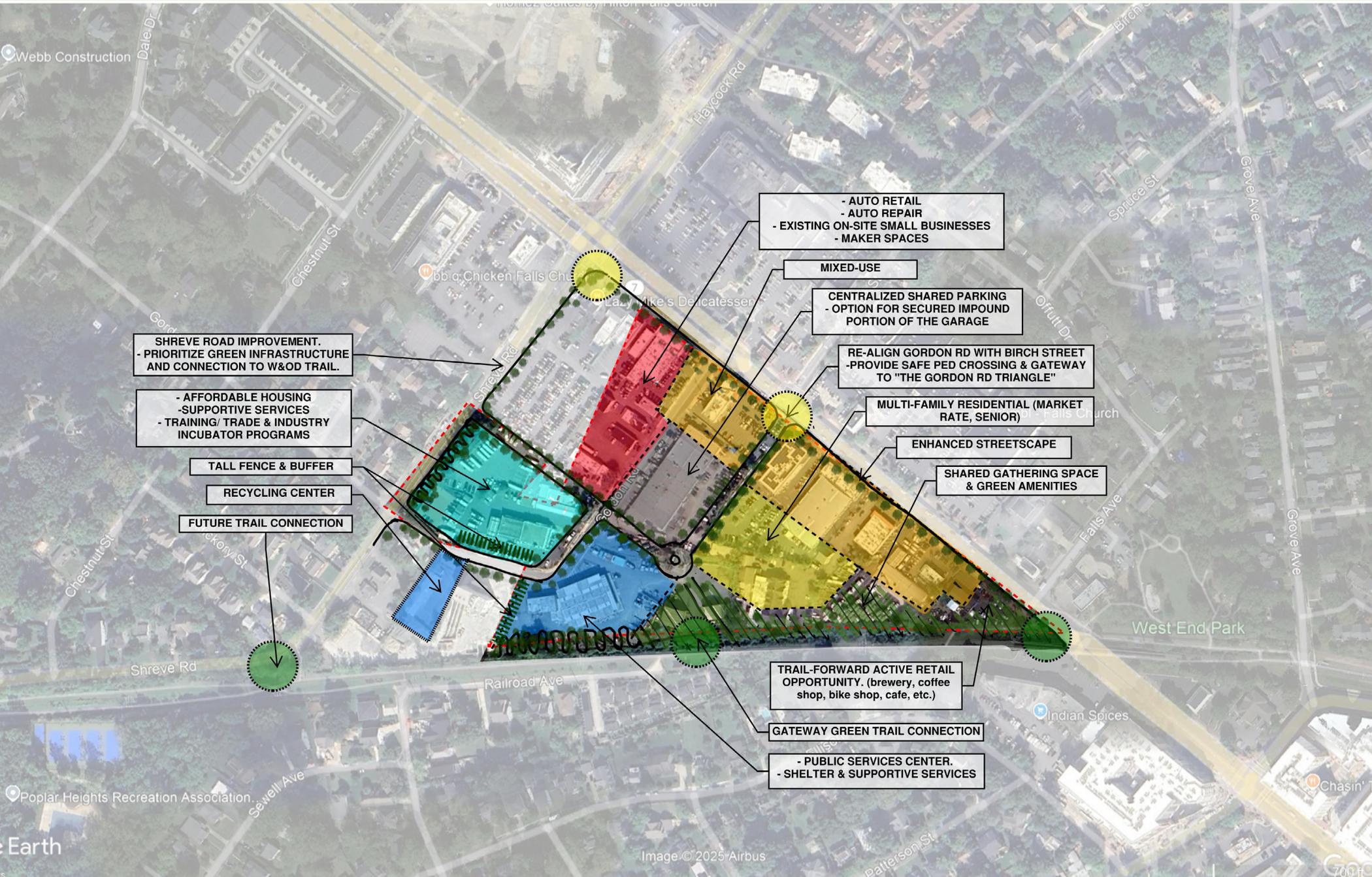
The Panel took deliberate steps to organize the Framework Plan in a prescribed order to accommodate the existing land ownership, and so that the City’s needs can be unlocked first. Currently, the Gordon Road Triangle’s existing land ownership is most consolidated in the western end between three land owners – one of which is the City. The Panel determined that the urgent nature of the City’s needs should prioritize the City’s Operations Yard’s expansion into a new “Public Services Center” including the expanded homeless shelter, supporting services, shared parking structure, as well as the realignment of Gordon Road. The rest of the development will follow.



Above: The Framework Plan

Below: The recommended phasing of redevelopment in the Gordon Road Triangle





The Panel's Framework Plan for the Gordon Road Triangle.

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- AUTO RETAIL
- AUTO REPAIR
- EXISTING ON-SITE SMALL BUSINESSES
- MAKER SPACES

MIXED-USE

CENTRALIZED SHARED PARKING
- OPTION FOR SECURED IMPOUND
PORTION OF THE GARAGE

RE-ALIGN GORDON RD WITH BIRCH STREET
- PROVIDE SAFE PED CROSSING & GATEWAY
TO "THE GORDON RD TRIANGLE"

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (MARKET
RATE, SENIOR)

ENHANCED STREETSCAPE

SHARED GATHERING SPACE
& GREEN AMENITIES

TRAIL-FORWARD ACTIVE RETAIL
OPPORTUNITY. (brewery, coffee
shop, bike shop, cafe, etc.)

GATEWAY GREEN TRAIL CONNECTION

- PUBLIC SERVICES CENTER.
- SHELTER & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

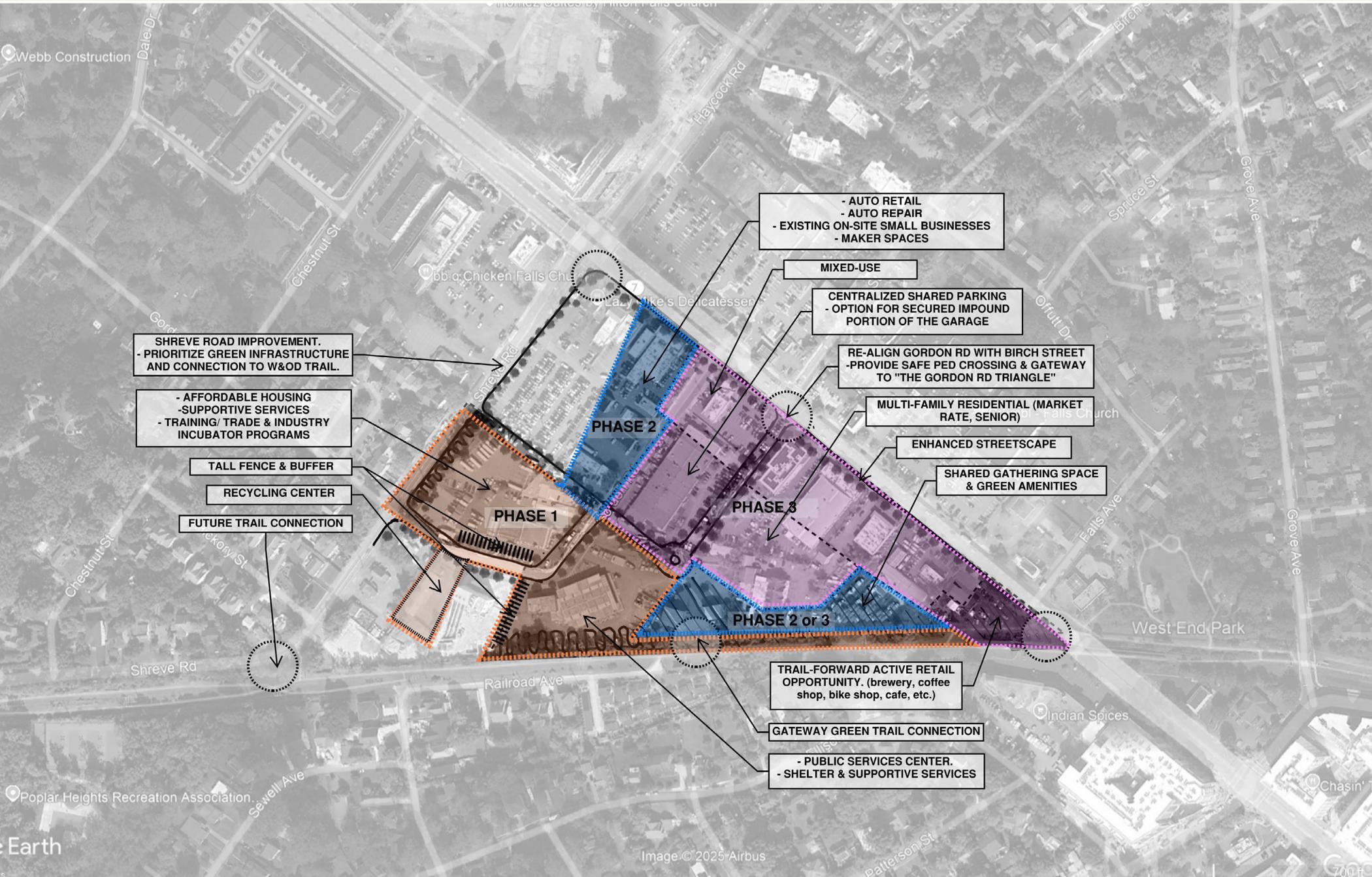
SHREVE ROAD IMPROVEMENT.
- PRIORITIZE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
AND CONNECTION TO W&OD TRAIL.

- AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
- TRAINING/ TRADE & INDUSTRY
INCUBATOR PROGRAMS

TALL FENCE & BUFFER

RECYCLING CENTER

FUTURE TRAIL CONNECTION



The Panel's Phasing Plan for the Gordon Road Triangle.

ULI, GOOGLE EARTH

Recommendations Summary:

Updating the “Public Services Center”

- Add Centralized Parking
- Create an Apprenticeship Program for Public Works-Related Disciplines
- Establish a permanent Supportive Housing program by expanding the homeless center

A Framework for the Gordon Road Triangle

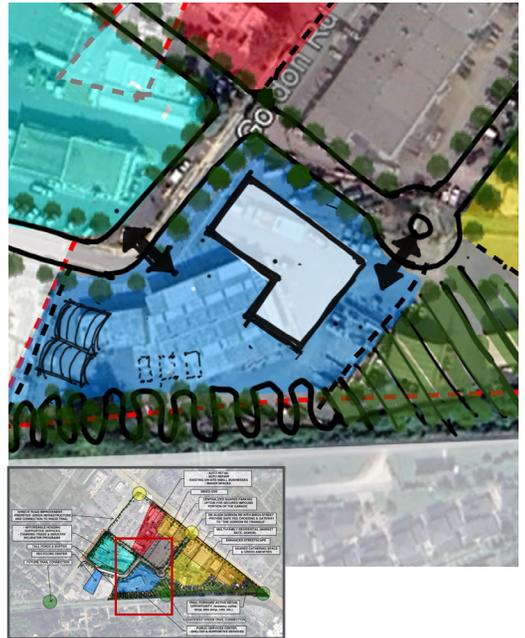
- Realignment of Gordon Road
- Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections to the W&OD Trail
- Reimagine Shreve Road
- Improve Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Surrounding Broad Street
- Build Affordable Housing
- Create More Green Space

Governance Recommendations

- Appoint a Champion
- Formalize agreement with Fairfax County
- Convene City Working Group
- Convene working group of property owners

Updating The “Public Services Center”

As noted in the diagram above, the dark blue spaces would house the existing City services that are currently in the space - updated and modernized to better coexist



The updated “Public Services Center” and recommended access points in the Panel’s framework plan.

with the neighborhood around it and to better meet the demand of the growing population of the City of Falls Church. The Panel envisions this as an updated “Public Services Center.” This would include the recycling center, shelter, and expanded supportive services in addition to those currently housed at the operations yard. This is a core component of the panel’s recommendations and will serve as a catalyst for change in the rest of the Study Area.

The Panel identified the name “Public Services Center” as a fitting representation of the activities that take place in the Gordon Road Triangle. These are activities that are critical to the City and critical to be in close proximity

to the residents that they are serving. Any modifications to the Public Services Center in Phase 1 of this Framework Plan should also include creating a new expanded and accessible homeless shelter, as the existing one is in need of modernization and additional capacity. The Panel recommends doubling the number of available beds, moving from a non-ADA-compliant second-story location to an accessible ground floor location, and exploring the feasibility of extending the number of months during which it would be open.

The Panel also recommends that the City and stakeholders move away from the previous study on how to use the site and perform a full program analysis complete with realistic project financial estimates. The goal of this consolidated Public Services Center is to utilize the City property, consolidate the building footprint, create a positive relationship to street and open spaces, and include a buffer to the concrete plant, which stakeholders said at times had trouble containing dust. Additionally, a potential rezoning of the City-owned parcel currently zoned R1-A could be rezoned concurrently with the redevelopment of the City’s parcels into the new Public Services Center, as these two sites were recommended to be the initial steps the City should take for redevelopment in the Gordon Road Triangle.

The Panel envisions integrating the Public Services Center with the rest of the Gordon Road Triangle as a way to become an employment and economic hub, including by establishing an apprenticeship program

for training for public works disciplines and trades, expanding the homeless shelter and introducing elements of permanent supportive housing, and conceptualizing other supporting similar uses like maker space and shared community hubs/ gathering spaces. Each of these three recommendations will be discussed in more detail in this section of the report.

Adding Centralized Parking

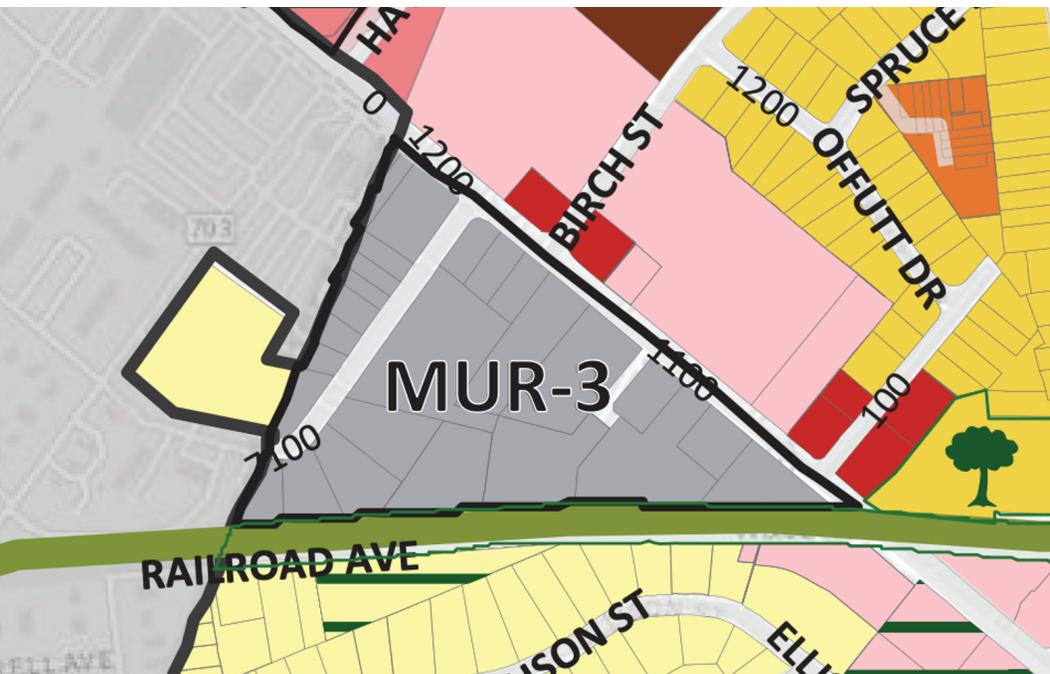
Any updates to the Gordon Road Triangle and the possible addition of housing would require parking. The Panel recommends a centralized shared parking option, which would include a secure impound section for

the City. This could be placed on a ground floor with a taller profile that allows for school bus parking. The Panel acknowledged that some bus parking may spillover into additional surface parking areas that can be designed into the other parcels. Staff parking and charging stations for electric vehicles and electric buses would also be housed within the centralized shared parking structure, which has quick access to the other parcels on site. This important central location would serve the auto repair and other small businesses while also providing convenient access to the nearby high school and middle school campuses. Investing in a parking structure is an opportunity for the existing businesses in the Gordon Road

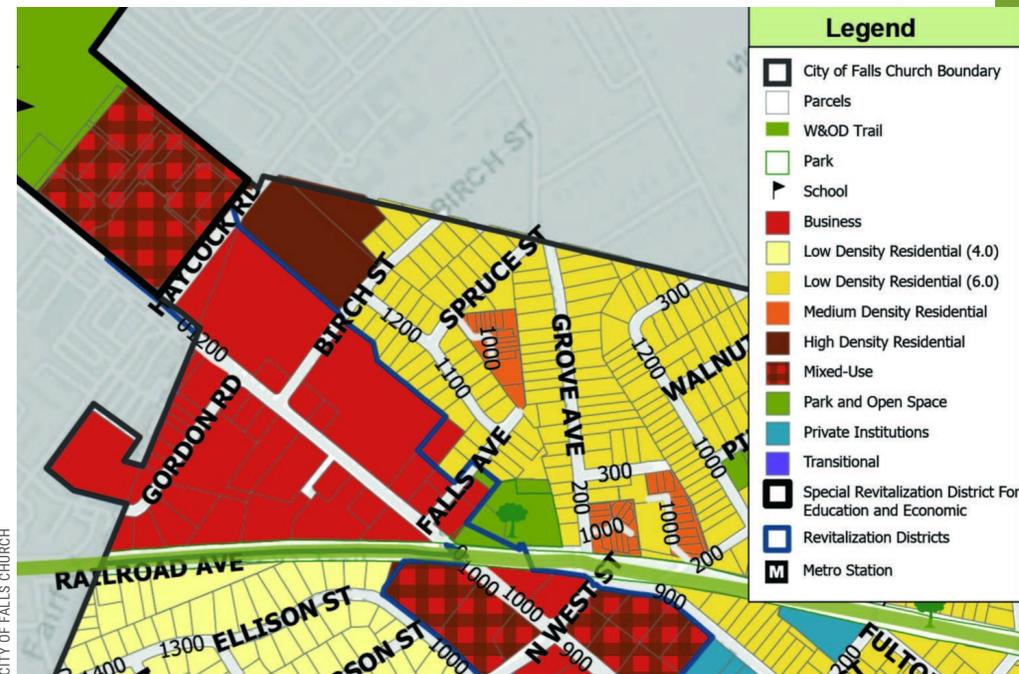
Triangle to be preserved in a way that allows customers easy access to their storefronts.

Create an Apprenticeship Program for Public Works-Related Disciplines

The Panel recommends creating an apprenticeship program for public-works related disciplines that could be housed within the reimagined Public Works Center and offer job opportunities for people in the surrounding area. By relying on the apprenticeship model, workers will have the opportunity for on-the-job training and skills acquisition, and the new space can be designed to house the requisite number of teaching facilities to make this possible. It will also shore up the next generation of



The City of Falls Church Adopted Zoning Map (Gordon Road Triangle Portion).



The City of Falls Church Adopted Future Land Use Map (Gordon Road Triangle Area).

workers for the City and the region and do so in a way that will make the City a model for apprenticeship training in the Public Works. The agglomeration of private businesses that operate in the Gordon Road Triangle in relevant trades would also support the localization of these important skill sets.

Case Study: Reimagining Public Works in Arlington

The new Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility (AOMF) in Arlington, Virginia is an example of how a state-of-the-art Public Works facility can be a catalyst for growth. This structure includes a maintenance, operations, and administration building and surface parking for the buses and a three-story parking structure for employee vehicles. This facility has allowed Arlington County to centralize transit operation and maintenance operations. Central shared spaces include a training room, exercise room and conference rooms, and wellness and quiet rooms are integrated on upper floors.

Establish a Permanent Supportive Housing Program

The Panel recommends supplementing the emergency housing services already housed on site by developing a supportive housing program. The first step would be to expand and modernize the existing homeless shelter, which only has 12 beds and is open for half the year between November to March. Doing so by designing a ground-floor space with double the number of beds would better serve a larger part of the population, while recognizing the critical need for the City to assist the most vulnerable unhoused citizens in their dire time of need. In addition to exploring keeping the shelter open for more months than it currently operates, the Panel identified the value in partnering with an affordable housing developer and a supportive services provider to help people avoid homelessness and maintain stable housing arrangements.

The Panel recommends that this expanded shelter could be located on the first floor of a new affordable housing residential building, as precedent exists for this combination, as seen in the nearby Alexandria Carpenter Center.

A Framework for the Gordon Road Triangle

Realignment of Gordon Road

The Framework Plan includes a realignment of Gordon Road. The Panel felt this was important to happen on all three sides - including Broad Street and Shreve Road, with the W&OD Trail to the south. This realignment would include the following aspects:

- Improve access to the Trail: Improved access to the Trail is critically important for the area - both because it offers additional modality for transportation purposes and pedestrian and biker access and because of the need for additional green space.
- Implement a street grid: The Panel recommends implementing a grid of streets, **but it must be done in a way that respects current ownership**. The street grid would align Gordon Road and Birch Street to provide better connectivity and to provide wide sidewalks and bike facilities for all streets, which would better improve bike and pedestrian safety.
- Add traffic calming and placemaking. The Panel recommends adding traffic calming to Gordon Road, especially near the new Public Services Center. This would include high visibility crosswalks, better delineation of pedestrian zones, and signs for drivers that they should expect pedestrians. The Panel also recommends the use of asphalt art to

create a “sense of place” which both calms traffic and creates more of a neighborhood feel to the area.

Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections to the W&OD Trail

The Panel recommends improving the pedestrian and bicycle connections to the W&OD Trail. This can be done by adding a new trail connection at the Gateway Greenway, and enhancing the two existing trail connections, one near the West End Park and the other at Shreve Road. (diagram below)

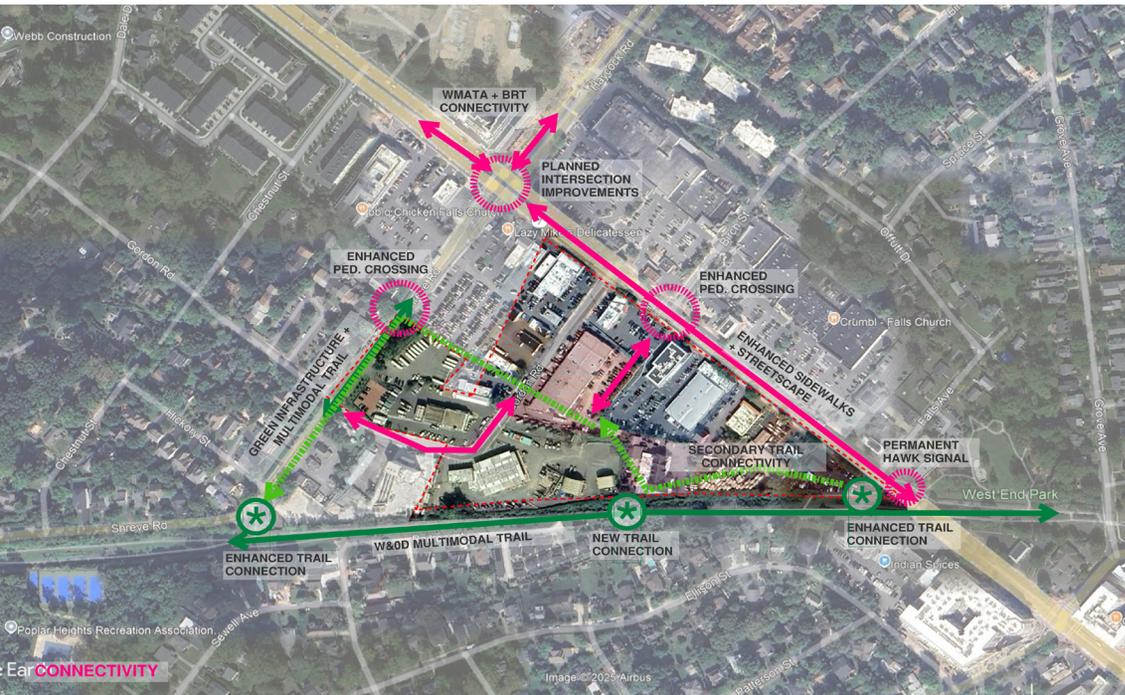
These locations were chosen because it is critical to maintain a 100 foot [Resource](#)

[Protection Area](#), or RPA, on each side of the perennial Grove Branch stream, a tributary of Tripp’s Run that flows parallel to a segment of the W&OD Trail, so as to prevent runoff or erosion, and the extra connection points outlined in the Framework Development Plan would allow for this.

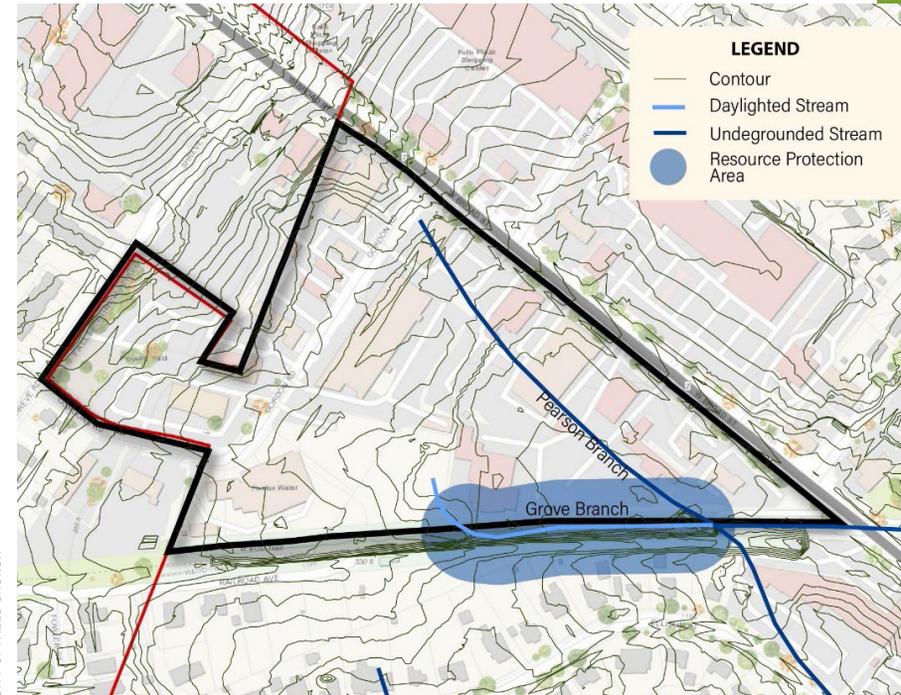
The Panel recommends establishing a relationship between the Gordon Road Triangle and the W&OD Trail, especially through the implementation of additional green space and connections. As mentioned earlier in the recommendations, improving the W&OD connection to the Gordon Road Triangle at the base of the bike and

pedestrian bridge offers the opportunity to provide more open space and recreation amenities along W&OD frontage on the Gordon Road Triangle side. This area could be connected with a parallel, slower, shared use path, and the Panel also recommends the preservation of some existing buildings on the site, whether permanently or as an interim condition. The Panel also identified the value in enhancing this corner of the study area with “Trail-forward active retail” like bike shops, breweries, and cafes.

The Panel also recommends exploring the opportunity to preserve some of the existing buildings near the Trail to recognize the history



The design of the Gordon Road Re-alignment would improve access to the W&OD Trail and would improve traffic flow to and within the Gordon Road Triangle.



Topography, Streams, ad Resource Protection Areas in the Gordon Road Triangle



LANDDESIGN

Camp North End, a small business incubator in Charlotte, NC that transformed buildings once used as an assembly plant for the Ford Motor Company through a Public-Private Partnership.

Retail Along the Trail

The Panel recommends looking into retail establishments that serve people utilizing the W&OD Trail. Vienna, VA has a number of restaurants and shops, including Caboose Brewing Company, that are places where runners and bikers begin and end their group exercise. Such an amenity would draw additional traffic and business to the Gordon Road Triangle and help make it a more attractive place to live, work, and play.

of the site and maintain a unique character, and look into adaptive re-use to add amenities that would benefit the neighborhood and residents connected to the W&OD Trail.

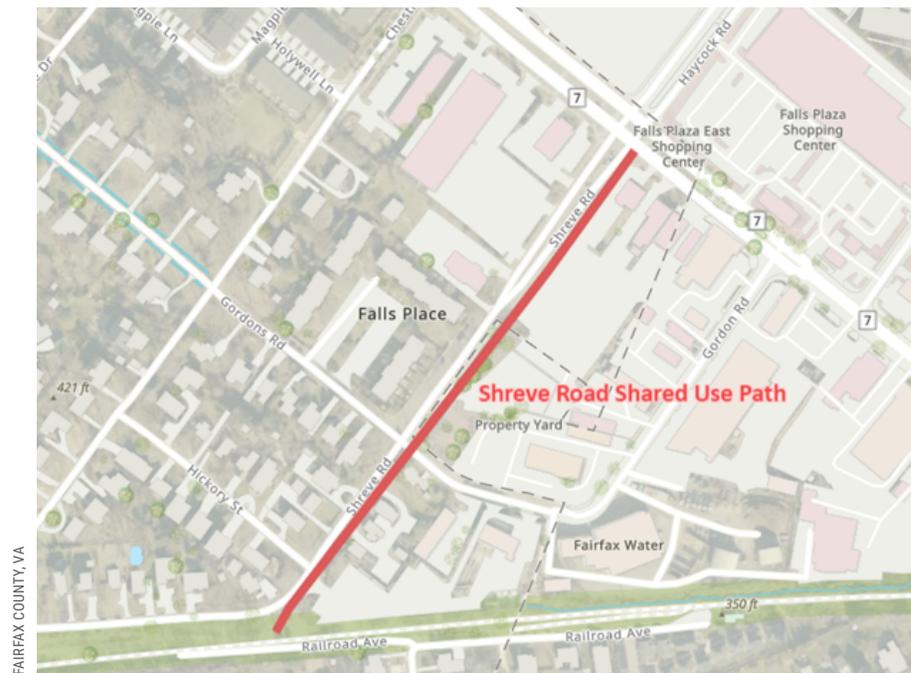
Planning these improved connections to the W&OD Trail would necessitate a relationship with NOVA Parks, who manages the Trail. Additionally, the easement owned by Dominion Power along the Trail warrants coordination with that company as a stakeholder in future planning efforts. The Panel recommends engaging these entities early and coordinating review of the detailed plans that might be informed by this Framework Plan with these key stakeholders to ensure a smooth approval process.

Reimagining Shreve Road

The planned Shreve Road Connector project will provide a 10-foot shared-use path connection between the W&OD Trail and the West Falls Development and Metro. With this new re-alignment, access to Shreve Road would be improved, for car traffic, pedestrians and bikes, and have better connectivity to the W&OD Trail.

Improving Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Surrounding Broad Street

The Panel recommends improving safety crossings and walking along Broad Street (Route 7). This can be done in the ways described on the following page.



FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA

The rough area examined by the Shreve Road Connector Project, providing a safer connection from Broad Street to the W&OD Trail.

- Make a temporary signalized crossing near the W&OD Trail pedestrian 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 Street and Shreve Road intersections.
- Improve streetscape as part of redevelopment, including providing a planting strip with bioretention and healthy street trees, replacing the bricks with a more ADA compliant sidewalk surface, and reducing curb cuts to improve the safety for pedestrians and bikes.

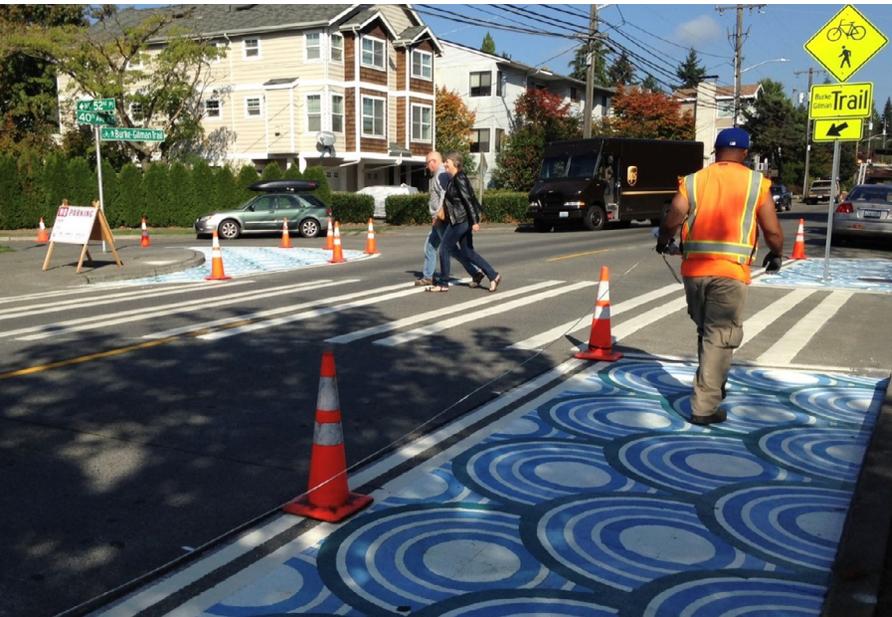
Building Affordable Housing

With a consolidated Public Services Center and an improved street grid with better access for pedestrians and bikers, the Gordon Road Triangle will have ample space available for affordable housing.

The Panel recommends a second phase of the development to focus on affordable housing. As seen on the Framework development plan, the light blue areas would be used for affordable housing and include supportive services, a training center for trade and industry, as well as incubator programs. Separating this housing section from the Public Services Center would be a tall fence with a buffer and additional healthy trees. The housing would have a frontage to

Shreve, which is the most residential of the three border streets and adds to the affiliation that is already there.

Also the yellow portion of the Framework that borders Broad Street would also have ample space for mixed use and multi-family residential, which could include market-rate and senior housing. The Panel envisions an enhanced streetscape with shared gathering space and green amenities that would border the W&OD Trail. This would also include a realignment of Gordon Road with Birch Street to provide a safer pedestrian crossing and serve as a placemaking asset as a gateway to the Gordon Road Triangle. Though the Panel recommends this area for housing, there is also ample flexibility to use as the City and stakeholders see fit.



Asphalt Art at 40th Ave NE and the Burke-Gilman Trail in Seattle, WA.

SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



The Panel's recommendation would increase both the green space and tree canopy of the site area.

Creating More Green Space

In each of the stakeholder conversations and in the Panel's own observations of the Gordon Road Triangle, the need for more green space was clear. In addition, the W&OD Trail requires an RPA of 100 feet on either side of Grove Branch, within which construction is prohibited, so providing additional green space in the site area will allow for compliance with that regulation. The Panel sees this RPA in this instance as an intuitive opportunity.

The Panel recommends additional tree canopy along the W&OD Trail and surrounding the affordable housing, as well as a buffer around the Public Services Center. As indicated in the Framework Development Plan, there is additional shared gathering space with green amenities near the Trail, near the Gateway Green Trail connection. Substantial tree planting/greenspace should be provided along the boundaries of all parcels abutting the W&OD Trail. Early and consistent coordination with NOVA Parks and Dominion Energy would also be prudent to align priorities with constraints put forth by either party on plantings and vegetation.

The Panel recommends that investment in the study area should collectively provide a minimum of 15 percent tree canopy (within 10 years) within the overall Gordon Road Triangle.

Governance

The Panel came up with several recommendations related to Governance, which is critically important in a complex area with scattered site ownership and parcelization. It is a unique area for investment given that so many of the business owners are also the property owners. The City will benefit from a strong governance plan that allows the property owners, businesses, residents, Fairfax County and City of Falls Church Agencies to work together.

Appoint a Champion

The Panel recommends that the City appoint a Gordon Road Triangle Implementation Manager at the City of Falls Church to champion the project. The Panel envisions this person as the quarterback of the project - both as its default leader and the one corralling the disparate stakeholders to come to a consensus. This person would take the

lead in all the planning and development efforts and coordinate between multiple stakeholders, including Fairfax County and the City working group. Tasks would include coordinating regular meetings with property owners. The Panel envisions this person working ~0.5 FTEs, or half of a full time employee. The person would need to be set up for success and requires leadership support from the City Manager and City Council. There is a precedent for such an arrangement, both in Montgomery County and the District of Columbia who have used this model with plan implementation, including the White Flint and White Oak plans.

Formalize Agreement with Fairfax County

The Panel recommends that the City of Falls Church formalize an agreement with Fairfax County to advance investment in Gordon Road Triangle and to explore other areas of cooperation between the City and County. Doing so would allow the two entities to



The Panel recommends that the City find ways to work in tandem with other stakeholders including City agencies, property owners, businesses, residents and Fairfax County.

111

articulate and document their shared goals for the area. The parcel at the corner of Shreve Road and Broad Street is an important gateway to Downtown Falls Church. The Panel also recommends rationalizing densities across jurisdictional boundaries, which can be done through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other type of agreement

Convene City Working Group

The Panel recommends the City convene a City Working Group to advance development of a new Public Services Center. Involved parties should include Public Works, OEM, Police, HHS, Falls Church City Public Schools, and other agencies with space needs at the facility. The Panel heard there may be additional space needs beyond what was covered in the 2023 conceptual design scheme and master plan produced by Fox Architects. Doing so would allow for a clear decision-making structure to resolve any issues that arise.

Convene Working Group of Property Owners

The Panel also recommends a Working Group of the property owners in the Gordon Road Triangle. Doing so promotes private sector engagement in the future vision of the Triangle. The working group would involve regular meetings demonstrating the City’s commitment to investment in the area, and allow property owners to coordinate individual property redevelopment plans, including identifying opportunities for consolidation and land swaps. This also could be an opportunity for the property owners to identify ways to support and enhance existing businesses in the Gordon Road Triangle.

Public-Private Partnerships

The Panel has several recommendations for the City to explore Public-Private Partnerships for investment, and has emphasized several recommendations that would reduce the City’s financial risk and taxpayer liability.

To finance the City’s ambitious vision that integrates maker spaces, light industrial use, affordable and luxury housing, its strong auto industry, parking, and green pathway, the Panel recommends a diversified and innovative financing approach that leverages both conventional and alternative instruments. Having a diversified and innovative financing structure is a strength that cannot be understated. Such financing mechanisms will not affect the City’s overall debt ceiling.

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

Affordable housing ensures that people of all income levels can live, grow, and work together, making the district a true destination for all. Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) incentives attract private investment, helping to create high-quality housing that supports a diverse and vibrant community.

Financial Instrument	Description	Partners
<u>Zero-Coupon Bonds</u>	Issued at a discount and paid in full at maturity, reducing the city’s short-term cash outflows while securing long-term capital.	Falls Church Economic Development Authority
<u>Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs)</u>	Used instead of General Obligation (G-O) bonds to fund industrial and economic development projects without direct taxpayer liability.	Falls Church Economic Development Authority
<u>Islamic Bonds & Equity Instruments</u>	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.e City Center, The Wharf, Rosslyn, etc.	Falls Church Economic Development Authority; Specialized Investment Firms

Strengthening Economic & Social Vitality

Mixed-income developments 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 Panel's vision as an inclusive and dynamic hub. The City of Falls Church has already done a strong job in doing this, and the Panel recommends continuing this going forward.

This financing strategy would ensure the City has flexibility, low-cost capital access, and alignment with long-term economic reinvestment. There are a number of firms in the Washington area that regularly undertake the design, construction and financing of public/private ventures. The Panel is confident that a well-structured Request for Proposals for the new Public Services Center and other recommendations in this report will elicit responses from several qualified companies.

Steps For Implementation

The Panel recommends three phases of implementation for the Framework Plan for the Gordon Road Triangle. The following action items would address the recommendations above in this report.

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
- Conduct parking needs assessment study to help evaluate demand for a shared parking facility

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, The Commonwealth of Virginia, and Federal partners) to create impact for the greater area

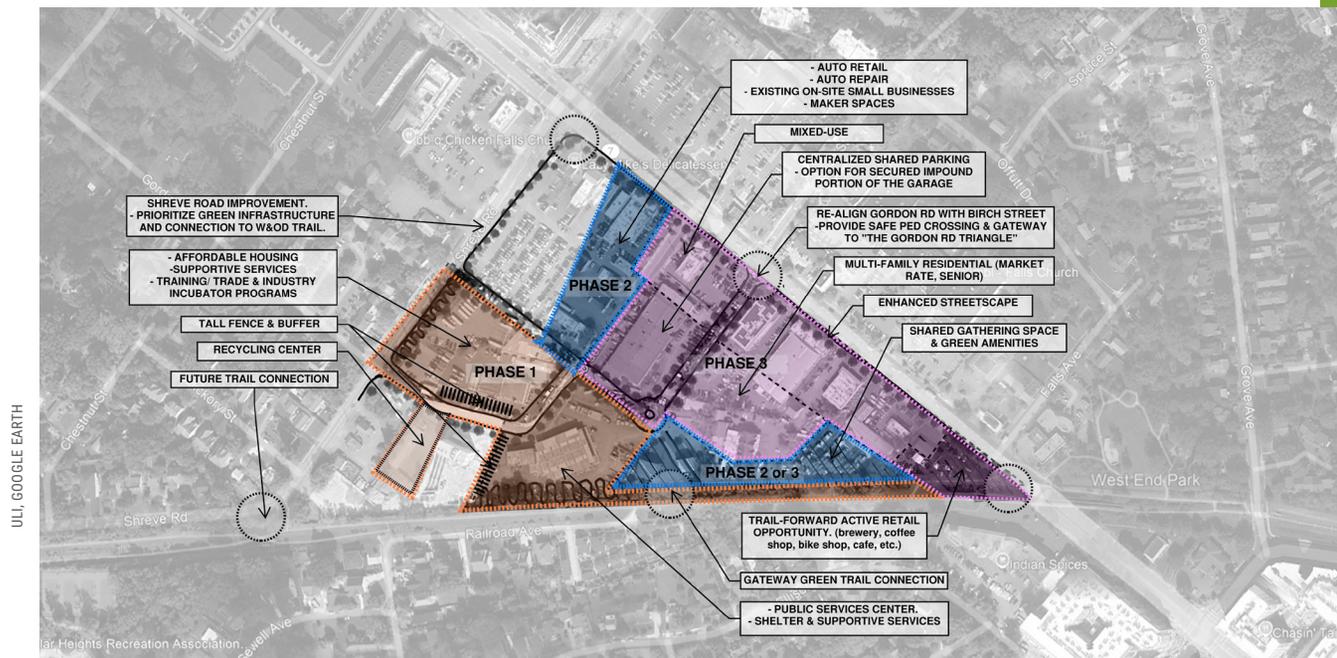
Step 3 - Grow The Gordon Road Triangle into a Model District

- Create a vibrant mixed-use hub as a catalyst for a broader City reinvestment
- Leverage industrial, residential, and commercial synergies

When Executing the Plan:

- Transition from vision to implementation with clear milestones
- Align City policies, funding strategies, and development partners to create a successful public private partnership

The Panel felt that there was a strong consensus that in order to create synergy between City and land owners, the City of Falls Church should take initial steps to re-vision their two parcels and be the catalyst for the larger Gordon Road Triangle redevelopment.



Conclusion

The Panel feels that the City of Falls Church has tremendous potential to invest in the Gordon Road Triangle in such a way that protects and maintains existing operations and businesses. The City can transform the City-owned properties into a world-class Public Services Center, which will provide for the long-term needs of its residents and also set the tone and give investors confidence that positive change will occur in the site.

The City should take thoughtful steps in doing so, beginning with a programming and feasibility study to define the scope of work for the Public Services Center, be mindful to introduce more green space, and create strong partnerships with Fairfax County and private property owners. A project of this scope needs an implementation manager who has ownership and the backing of City leaders, as well as a flexible mindset on how best to utilize the space. The Panel expressed confidence that the Gordon Road Triangle can continue its use as both a light industrial site and allow for more housing options while still retaining and attracting retail. The Panel has faith in the strong City leadership which has approached this project with thoughtful consideration and an eye to the future of Falls Church.



A view looking north through the Operations Yard with the West Falls development in the background.



The Panel and sponsor team on the W&OD Trail at the southeast corner of the study area.

Appendix A: List of Stakeholders

The Panel would also like to thank the many stakeholders and organizations who participated in the process, providing valuable input that shaped this report:

Mayor Letty Hardi, City of Falls Church

Marybeth Connelly, City Falls Church Council Member

Erin Flynn, City of Falls Church Council Member

Justine Underhill, City of Falls Church City Council Member

Arthur Agin, Citizen's Advisory Committee on Transportation

Laura Arseneau, City of Falls Church Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Services

Mary Beth Avedesian, Hoffman Development

Quinn Haley, The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

Elise Bengtson, Falls Church Chamber of Commerce

Alyssa Beyer, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

James N. Bierman Jr., Fairfax County Dranesville District Supervisor

Brian Bowden, Human Services Advisory Council

Alan Brangman, Village Preservation and Improvement Society

Jiwan Chhetri, City of Falls Church Police Department

Amy Crumpton, City of Falls Church Urban Forestry Commission

Sara Ferrara, City of Falls Church Housing Commission / Affordable Living Policy Work Group

Sharon Friedlander, City of Falls Church Planning Commission

Mike Garcia, Fairfax County Transportation Planning

Greg Goodwin, Metropolitan Washington Council Of Governments

Chris Herrington, Fairfax County Department of Public Works

Tara Hoff, City of Falls Church Department of Public Works

Dana Jones, City of Falls Church Housing & Human Services

Genevieve Jordan, EYA LLC

Dan Kirk, City of Falls Church Public Utilities Commission

John Krauss, Craftsman Auto Body

Paul Krauss, Caliber Collision Centers

Carlos Lamas, Open Road

Robert Leopold, Mary Riley Styles Public Library

Ross Litkenhous, City of Falls Church Economic Development Authority

Lonni Marquetti, City of Falls Church Department of Public Works

Mike McCarroll, DOCC Properties

Kerri Oddenino, City of Falls Church Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Services

Charley O'Hara, City of Falls Church Department of Recreation & Parks

Andrew Olesen, Bike Falls Church

Graham Owen, Fairfax County Planning & Development

Supervisor Dalia Palchik, Fairfax County Providence District Supervisor

Andrew Painter, Beyer Auto

Hannah Pekalski, Virginia Department of Transportation

Ellen Salisbury, League of Women Voters

Andrew Scott, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Vikram Sinha, NOVA Transit

Jim Snyder, City of Falls Church, former Director of Community Planning and Economic Development Services (now retired)

Caitlin Sobsey, City of Falls Church Department of Public Works

Michelle Stahlhut, Fairfax County Planning & Development

Elise Stein, City of Falls Church Library Board of Trustees

Tim Stevens, City of Falls Church Planning Commission

Tracy Strunk, Fairfax County Planning Director

Bernard Suchicital, Walsh Colucci Lubeley & Walsh

Dave Tarter, George Mason University Center for Real Estate Entrepreneurship

Becky Witsman, City of Falls Church Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Services

Bob Wulff, George Mason University Center for Real Estate Entrepreneurship

Kay Zacharias-Andrews, Friends of Falls Church Homeless Shelter

Henry Zhang, City of Falls Church Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Services

Appendix B: Implementation Matrix

City of Falls Church Departments:

COFC: City of Falls Church, holistically

DPW: Department of Public Works

EDO: Economic Development Office

CC: City Council

PD: Planning Division

R&P: Recreation and Parks Department

Other Agencies:

NP: NOVA Parks

FC: Fairfax County

VDOT: Virginia Department of Transportation

Recommended Action	Phase of Implementation	Responsible Party	Partners / Stakeholders
The Framework Plan			
Improve WO&D connection at base of bike/ped bridge	Short Term	DPW	R&P
Provide open space/recreation opportunities along WO&D frontage on the GRT side connected with a parallel slow mixed-use trail	Short Term	PD	R&P
Provide traffic calming on Gordon Road, especially near Operations Yard	Short Term	DPW	PD
Use street art to create sense of place and provide traffic calming	Short Term	COFC	PD, DPW
Make temporary signalized crossing near W&OD bridge permanent with a pedestrian activated signal and high visibility cross walk	Short Term	DPW	VDOT
Add a pedestrian activated signal between Birch Street and the location of current temporary crossing	Short Term	DPW	VDOT
Implement pedestrian safety improvement to the Rt. 7/Shreve intersection	Short Term	DPW	VDOT
Add a pedestrian and bicycle connection to the W&OD trail at the Gateway Greenway serving the Public Services Center property	Medium Term	DPW	VDOT
Implement Shreve Road Connector project providing a 10' shared use path connection between the W&OD Trail and West Falls redevelopment and Metro	Medium Term	FC, DPW	VDOT
Activate Shreve Road frontage to embrace streetscape improvements	Medium Term	PD, DPW	EDO
Implement Grid of streets	Medium Term	DPW	VDOT
Align Gordon Road and Birch Streets to provide better connectivity	Medium Term	DPW	VDOT
Provide wide sidewalks + bike facilities for all streets	Medium Term	PD	DPW
Establish 15% tree canopy for the Gordon Road Triangle	Long Term	COFC	R&P
Establish a relationship with the W&OD Trail	Long Term	PD, DPW, Property Owners	NP, FC, Employees, Residents
Encourage the preservation of some low-intensity industrial buildings on the site	Long Term	EDO	Property Owners
Preserve light industrial buildings and utilize for Tech flex and maker space	Long Term	EDO	Property Owners

Recommended Action	Phase of Implementation	Responsible Party	Partners / Stakeholders
Partnerships			
Define the city's long-term reinvestment strategy that aligns with stakeholders	Short Term	PD, CC, EDO	Property Owners
Develop a compelling presentation to showcase the plan	Short Term	PD	CC
Establish rapport with affordable housing partners such as Virginia Housing, HUD, etc.	Short Term	COFC	EDO
Transition from vision to implementation with clear milestones	Short Term	PD	EDO, CC
Align City policies, funding strategies, and development partners for successful public-private partnership	Medium Term	COFC	CC, Developers
Leverage industrial, residential, and commercial synergies	Medium Term	EDO	CC
Connect with capital placement firms specializing in long-term investors	Medium Term	EDO	CC
Create a vibrant mixed-use hub as a catalyst for a broader city reinvestment	Long Term	COFC	Developers, Property Owners

Appendix C: Panelist Biographies

Panel Chair



Robert Atkinson
Retired

Robert is very active in ULI Washington. He chaired the membership committee and founded and co-chaired the

Placemaking Initiative. He is an Urban Plan volunteer and has participated in numerous TAPS's and previously served on the management committee and advisory board. Nationally he is a member of the TOD Product Council. Until recently Robert was a Vice President and Associate Principal with Davis Carter Scott (DCS) architects, where he was responsible for identifying new opportunities, expanding relationships with existing clients, writing design guidelines for mixed-use development projects, and contributing to multiple urban design projects. Robert has extensive knowledge of local development conditions and opportunities. Prior to joining DCS, Robert spent fourteen years with the Department of Economic Development in Arlington County, Virginia, where he undertook a wide spectrum of urban design, project review and policy assignments. Previously, Robert was the City of Little Rock's first Urban Designer. Robert holds a Bachelor of University Studies from the University of New Mexico, with concentrations in architecture, planning and architectural history.

Panel Members



Ishmam Ahmed
Advisor
Georgetown
University

Ishmam Ahmed is a dynamic leader in affordable housing,

Islamic finance, and global real estate development. As the Director of Sanctuary AP3, a Virginia-based nonprofit, Ishmam collaborates with houses of worship and community organizations across the United States to create affordable housing solutions. Under his leadership, Sanctuary AP3 has partnered with Georgetown University's Affordable Housing Initiative to conduct feasibility studies in over 20 states and counting, helping transform underutilized land into thriving community assets.

In his role as Managing Director of Hoya Advisory, a global consulting firm, Ishmam specializes in connecting clients with capital, legal partners, and Shariah-compliant financial solutions. His firm's innovative approach has made it an approved advisor for over 80 organizations and has offices in several countries, including the US, Colombia, Morocco, Kuwait, and Indonesia.

Ishmam is also an Advisor for Georgetown University's Master of Real Estate program, where he has mentored students for over 2 years. In this capacity, he guides aspiring real estate professionals in navigating complex projects, focusing on global real estate development and affordable housing initiatives. Additionally, Ishmam has been a guest lecturer at Johns Hopkins University, where he shared insights on sustainable ventures.

A recognized thought leader, Ishmam holds a Master's degree in Real Estate from Georgetown University, with a focus on Global Real Estate Development and Affordable Housing. He is passionate about bridging gaps between developers, investors, and financial institutions to realize transformative projects that align with social impact and ethical finance principles.

When not consulting, Ishmam actively mentors emerging leaders and engages with local and international communities to advance affordable housing and sustainable development goals.



Sonya Breehey
Northern Virginia
Advocacy Manager
Coalition for Smarter
Growth

Sonya Breehey is the Northern Virginia

Advocacy Manager for the Coalition for Smarter Growth. She is a dedicated and passionate advocate for expanding sustainable transportation options and creating vibrant, livable, and inclusive communities. She cultivates support for equitable transit-oriented development, affordable housing, public transit, and active transportation projects through cross-sector collaboration, community outreach and engagement, working with local and state decision makers, and leveraging local media. A champion for safer street designs and ensuring walking and biking is safe and convenient for everyday travel, Sonya spearheaded the Safe Streets for Bailey's campaign, championed a safer Richmond Highway, and is a strong advocate for redesigning dangerous arterials around the region. Sonya serves on the Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Commission as the Providence District

Commissioner and the Board of Fairfax Families for Safe Streets. She is also a member and former President of the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling. Sonya holds a Masters in Public Policy from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany. She lives in Falls Church, Virginia, and enjoys yoga, gardening, and taking walks and bike rides on area trails.



Susan England
Senior Associate
LandDesign

Susan is a Senior Associate whose work ranges in type and scale with community at its center. Whether urban multifamily developments or park and recreation master plans, she believes in the power of carefully listening to users to bring creative problem solving and implementable solutions, from concept through construction. Her passion for creating equitable spaces, particularly in urban contexts, has created a special focus in public parks and open spaces, playgrounds and outdoor learning environments, and community engagement. Her personal interests in plants stem from her own childhood play experiences and continue in urban agriculture experiments at home.



Collin Koonce
Vice President of
Urban Design &
Landscape
Architecture, Partner
BKV Group

Collin is a thoughtful urban planner and landscape architect who has transformed spaces for 15 years, with his creations spanning across the country and globally. He has led a variety of projects including; large-scale mixed-use developments, urban scale parks, civic plazas, ecological restorations, and culturally significant sites. Collin's collaborative nature and expert communication build unifying teams and projects that reflect his vision for equitable public spaces and cities. Driven by an unwavering dedication to his local community, Collin actively seeks opportunities to contribute and remain engaged in initiatives aimed at enhancing communities urban fabric. Consistently guiding his profession, Collin's leadership, combined with his contributions through written articles and firmwide research, has resulted in impactful outcomes that significantly bolster the firm's competitive edge.



Carrie McCarthy
Division Chief for
Research and Strategic
Projects
Montgomery County
Department of Planning

Caroline "Carrie" McCarthy is the Division Chief for Research and Strategic Projects at Montgomery Planning. She oversees the team responsible for providing demographic, economic, housing real estate, and forecasting analysis to support master plans, development review, and other land use policy decisions. In addition to serving as a member of the core team directing Thrive Montgomery 2050, she has overseen research on master plan implementation, demographic trends, neighborhood change, and economic development. Prior to joining the department in April 2016, Carrie was a principal at HR&A Advisors, a national real estate, economic development, and public policy consulting firm. She has extensive experience developing market analyses and implementation strategies for master plans of complex sites, including brownfields, former military bases, downtowns, and transit-oriented development. She has also provided economic and real estate market advisory services to private sector clients looking to advance real estate development and public policy initiatives. Carrie holds a Master of City and Regional Planning degree from Rutgers and a Bachelor of Arts in economics from Wesleyan University. She is a full-member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and served as a co-chair of ULI NEXT Washington from 2021-2024. She is also a board member for Montgomery Women, a local women's leadership development non-profit, and a member of the American Planning Association.



Michael Sponseller
Vice President
NAI Michael

Mike has extensive experience in market analysis, zoning,

residential and commercial leasing, sales, and entitlement management. His professional background includes work in the Mid-Atlantic and Colorado regions. Currently, he co-manages a portfolio consisting of approximately 1,500 residential units and 250,000 square feet of industrial space in projects throughout the DC Metro Area, collaborating with various industry partners. Additionally, Mike possesses expertise in bankruptcy, workout, and other lender-involved transactions within private agency and court-ordered engagements.

Originally from Frederick, Maryland, Mike now resides in West Hyattsville, Maryland. In his personal time, he enjoys bicycling, motorsports, snowboarding, surfing, and engaging in philanthropic activities through organizations such as Becky's Fund, Friends of Truxton Park, and Skatepark of Baltimore.

Throughout his career, Mike has collaborated with notable firms including Gilbane Development, Granite Canyon Partners, Sandy Spring Bank, Lennar Homes, Pleasants Development, Reliable Real Estate Services, and Hogan Development Group. He is actively involved with ULI. Mike holds degrees from the University of Colorado Leeds School of Business and the Graziadio Business School at Pepperdine University.



Kendra Whitaker
Co-Founder &
Executive Director
MORE

In a world where housing is too often treated as a privilege

rather than a human right, Kendra Whitaker is on a mission to transform lives by creating affordable homes and thriving neighborhoods where everyone can reach their highest potential. As an educator working with hearing-impaired students, Kendra discovered her passion for empowering others. But it was her transition into real estate that ignited her true purpose. Establishing herself as a successful realtor and broker in the DMV area, she decided to address the stark inequities in housing access. In 2021, she and her husband Jason co-founded MORE – a nonprofit dedicated to stimulating entrepreneurship, developing affordable housing, and eradicating poverty in DC's most disadvantaged communities.

Through MORE, Kendra has spearheaded innovative initiatives that provide grants, entrepreneurship training, and youth programming to empower residents and build resilient neighborhoods from within. Additionally, she founded Grey Crown Investments, LLC, a development firm committed to addressing the critical shortage of Missing Middle housing in the region.

Kendra's leadership is characterized by her tireless pursuit of growth and her deep commitment to making a lasting impact. She has completed programs such as Momentus' EDI program, CSH's Supportive Housing Institute, and has acquired a GPRO construction management certificate. She also recently graduated from the DC Contractor Incubator Program, equipping her with the skills to drive change in the energy efficiency sector. In 2022, Kendra and her family set out on a transformative road trip to examine the detrimental effects of discrimination and environmental injustices on black communities across the country. This experience further fueled her resolve to dismantle systemic barriers and create a more equitable future for all.

With her distinct expertise, strategic vision, and passion for social justice, Kendra reminds us of what is possible when we lead with empathy, integrity, and commit to uplifting others. Her story invites us all to reflect on our own paths, find our own unique ways of contributing to the greater good, and remember that true impact is about service, sacrifice, and the courage to create change, one community at a time.



St. Clair Williams
Senior Planner
Fairfax County
Department of
Planning

St. Clair Williams is a Senior Planner in the Zoning Evaluation Division of the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development. A strategic leader with over 15 years of public sector planning experience, he oversees the evaluation of complex zoning applications and leads key initiatives that shape the future of Fairfax County's landscape. St. Clair has provided expert guidance on land use policy and urban design for major development projects in Tysons and the Reston Transit Station Areas, supporting the County's vision for sustainable, transit-oriented communities.

In his previous role, St. Clair served as the lead planner for the Reston Study and Comprehensive Plan Amendment process, spearheading the creation of a comprehensive framework for the area's long-term development. His leadership ensured a collaborative approach to stakeholder engagement, balancing innovative planning principles with community priorities. Throughout his career with Fairfax County, he has held pivotal positions in the Department's Zoning Administration Division and Urban Centers Section, contributing to policy development, regulatory compliance, and the implementation of zoning ordinances.

Prior to joining Fairfax County, St. Clair was a Land Development Planner at Burgess and Niple Engineering in Woodbridge, Virginia. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Master of Public Administration from West Virginia University, where he was a Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Work Study Fellow.

Beyond his professional pursuits, St. Clair enjoys traveling, running, and hiking.



Peter Young
President
The Young Group

Peter Young serves as the President of the Young Group, a role he took over in December,

2024 after 23 years in education, including 13 as a principal across diverse locations.

Peter holds a Master's degree in Real estate from Georgetown University, a Master of Education, Educational Leadership and Administration from Harvard University, and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Teaching from Vanderbilt University.