



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



Lorton Core Study Plan Amendment

Task Force Meeting
October 23, 2023

AGENDA

Monday, October 23, 2023

1. Welcome (Task Force Co-Chairs)

Task Force Co-Chairs

Nick Firth
Walter Clark

2. Consultant's Presentation

Renaissance Planning

Becca Buthe

SB Friedman

Lance Dorn

- **Public Feedback on the Community Vision**
- **Renaissance Planning Land Use Recommendations**
- **SB Friedman Market Catalysis Strategies**

Planning & Development Staff

Steve Waller
Lia Niebauer
Graham Owen
Salem Bush

3. County Staff - Next Steps for the Plan Amendment

- **Impacts Analysis**
- **Policy Formation**



Lorton-Fairfax Vision

Task Force Meeting #4

October 23rd, 2023

Land use, development character and intensity

- Establish walkable, mixed use, more compact urban nodes in the suburban centers
- Intensify residential in and within walking distance of centers
- Encourage building character that activates pedestrian streets and supports transit access at key nodes
- Reposition industrial into more modern mixed commercial/industrial districts
- Enhance south Lorton employment area with infill residential to create a mixed-use district

Multimodal transportation infrastructure

- Create street typology zones to adjust speeds and street design that reinforces adjacent land use desired modes of transportation
- Enhance walk and bike connectivity and enhanced local transit between centers
- Maximize economic benefits of I-95, VRE, Amtrak and future BRT access to area
- Maximize place-making elements in the design of enhanced streetscapes

Parks, recreational areas, and environmental areas

- Better connect significant new parks and open space in the greater Lorton area to key centers and neighborhoods through trail networks
- Preserve high value ecological assets while enabling some passive connectivity thru greenspaces

Other key features

- Better define each centers with distinct branding that reinforces key function and sense of place
- Elevate branding to align with regional economic development initiatives for job-generating uses
- Align placemaking and heritage resources by encouraging adaptive reuse and public art that celebrates the area's rich history as well as its evolving future

PLACEMAKING & THE EVOLUTION OF CENTERS

1 Lorton Town Center

Modest infill of parking areas with housing and “third places.” Maximize opportunities around transit as a portal in and out of Lorton.

2 Lorton Marketplace

Transformation into stronger regional commercial center with mix of uses that maximizes highway and auto-train access. Building character that reinforces a sense of ‘arrival’ at interchange with new internal streets and connections at the pedestrian scale transitioning into nearby neighborhoods.

3 Gunston Plaza

Transformation into dynamic community center of Lorton. Mix of both neighborhood serving retail and larger office-based employment that benefits from future BRT access. Infill of higher density housing with pedestrian oriented public spaces.

4 Civic Center

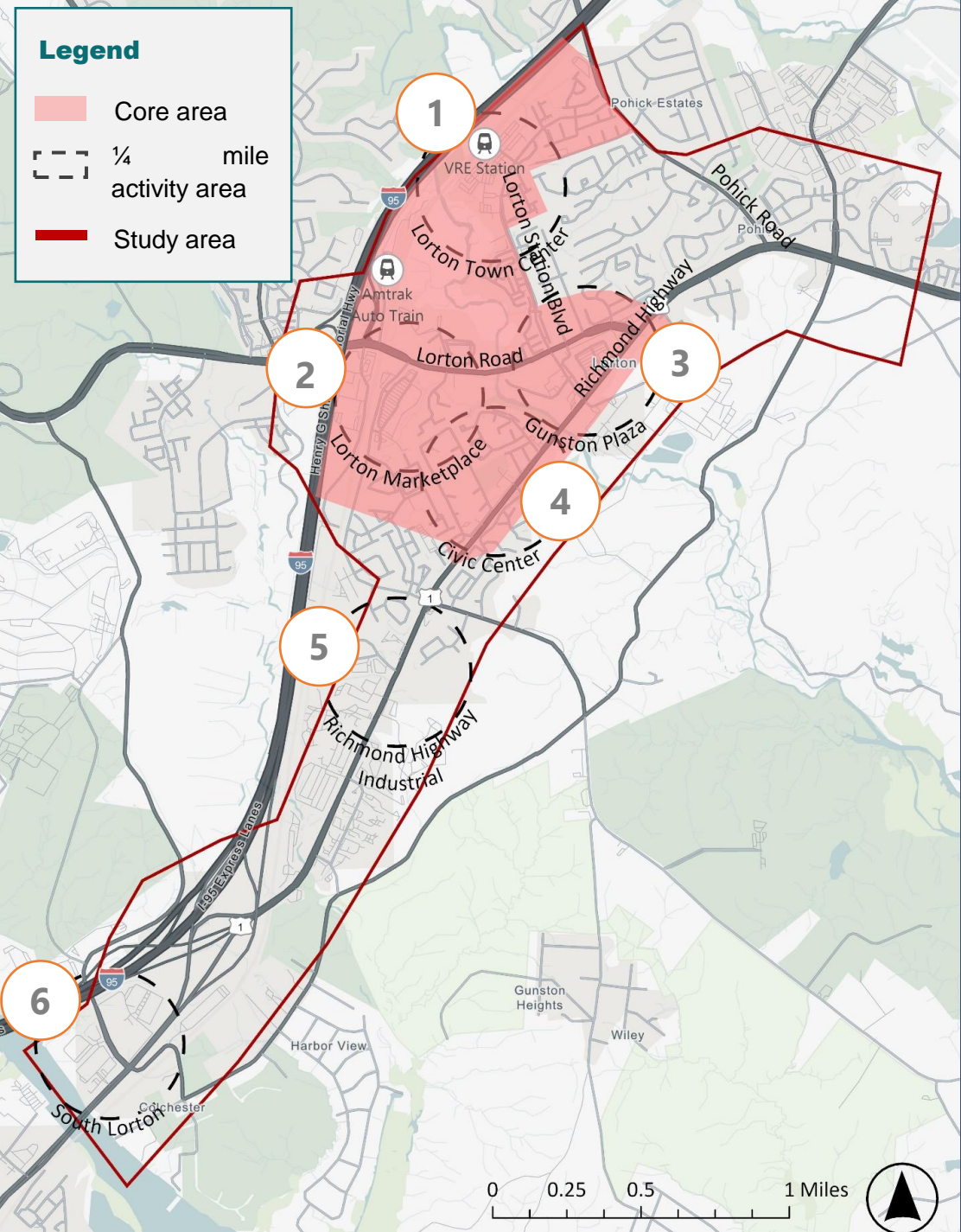
Transformation into civic hub with infill residential, library, open space and community gathering places. New pedestrian connections to Lorton Gateway.

5 Richmond Highway Industrial

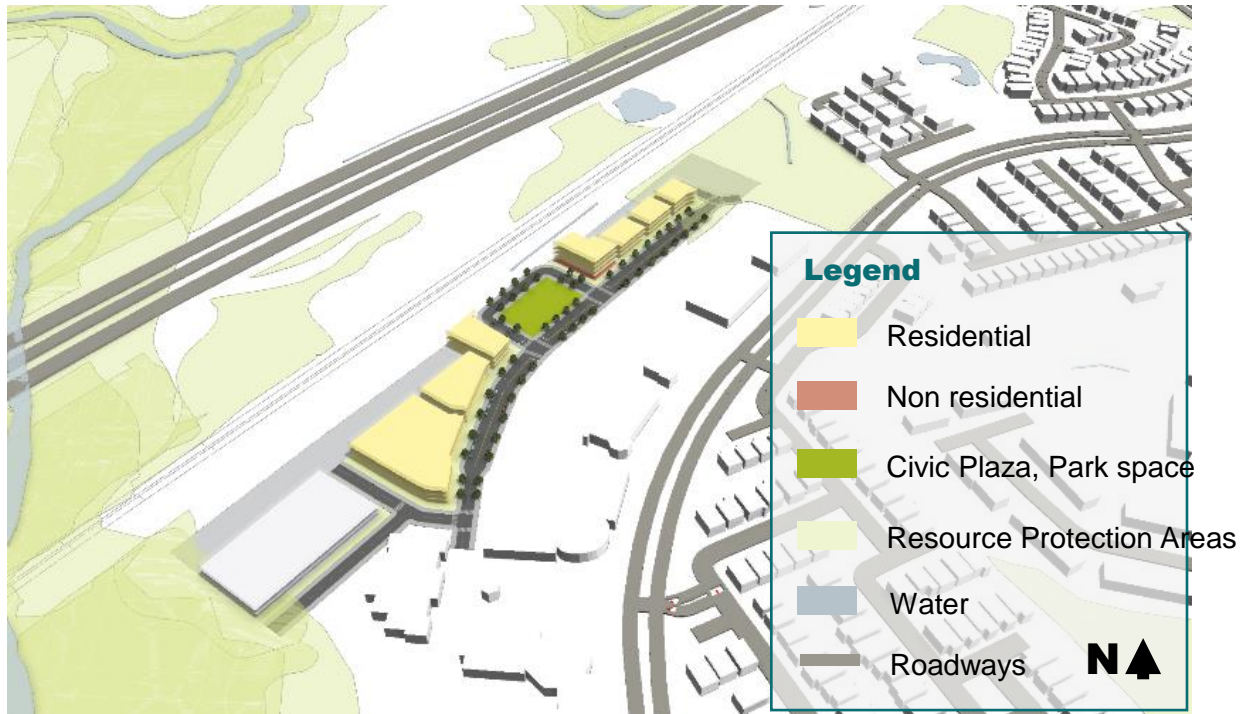
Repositions of industrial into Industrial flex space, higher employment concentration and mixed use for complementary non-residential.

6 South Lorton

Continued growth as employment hub with infill housing and retail to create a vibrant workplace center and gateway.

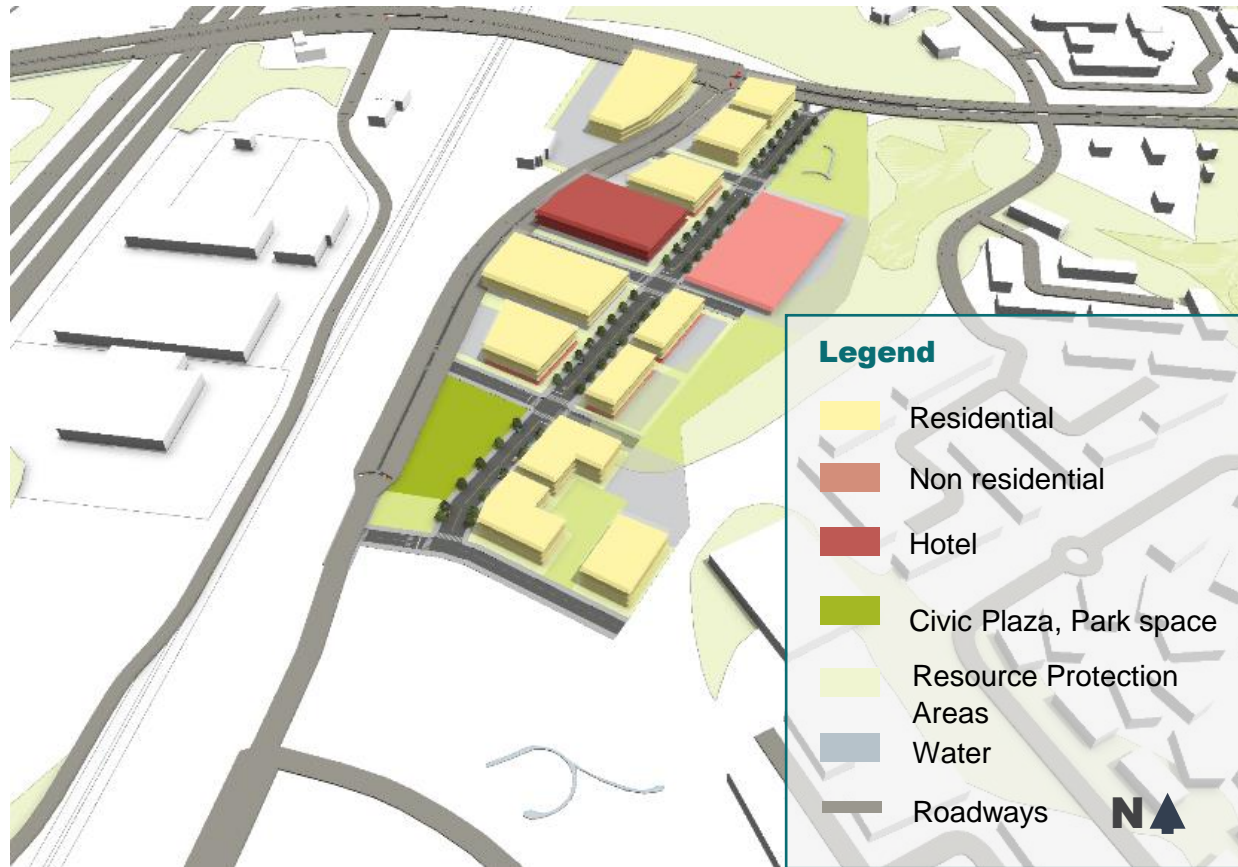


Activity Node 1: Lorton Town Center



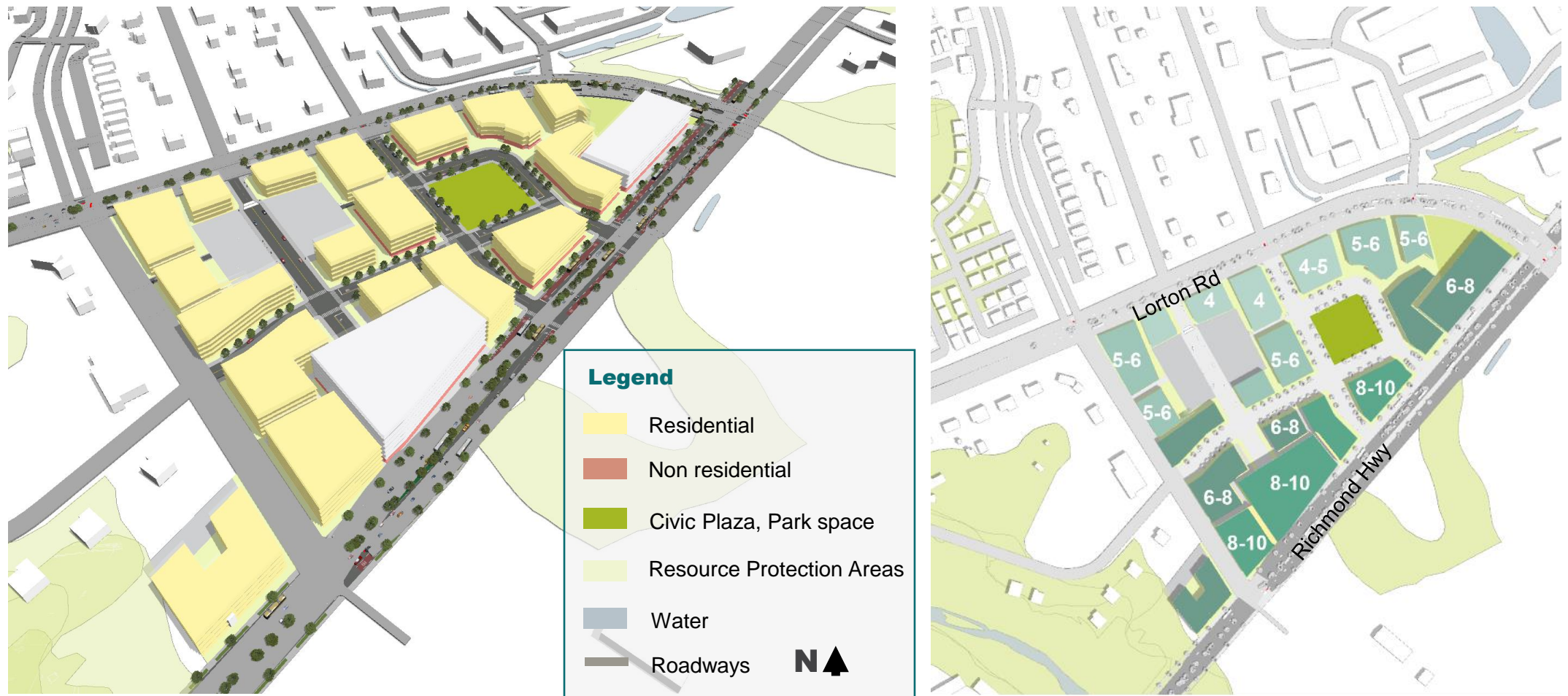
The future vision for this Activity Node, includes building on this existing foundation of mixed-use development in the Town Center, strengthening it with infill housing on existing parking lots, improved multimodal connectivity with the rest of Lorton, and additional opportunities for public green spaces. This transformation will support opportunities to maximize development around the VRE as an important gateway into and out of Lorton. The images below show the large underused parking lots for the VRE that could be used for infill housing and public green space, with better connections to the Pohick Creek.

Activity Node 2: Lorton Marketplace



The vision for Lorton Marketplace includes a transformation from its current auto-oriented landscape into a stronger regional commercial center with a mix of uses that maximizes access to I-95 and Amtrak service. This transformation will build on the character that reinforces a sense of arrival at the highway interchange with new internal streets and connections at a pedestrian scale transitioning into nearby neighborhoods.

Activity Node 3: Gunston Plaza



Its central location, size, and current use as a commercial center provides the potential to transform this Activity Node into the dynamic heart of Lorton with a mix of both neighborhood serving retail and larger office-based employment that will benefit from future BRT access. Higher density residential infill around the site will support the pedestrian accessibility of the site, and pedestrian oriented public spaces will serve as a draw for residents and visitors alike. The future BRT extension along Richmond Highway and improved pedestrian connectivity up to the Library and Community Center will improve a unified sense of place between the two Activity Nodes.

Activity Nodes 4 - 6

Activity Node 4: Civic Center

The land use mix around the Lorton Library and Community Center should remain the same, though with potential for greater residential intensity and increased connectivity between Activity Node 2 (Lorton Marketplace) and Activity Node 3 (Gunston Plaza).

Activity Node 5: Richmond Highway Industrial

The County's industrial land is valuable and should be positioned for its highest and best use. The future land use mix for the Richmond Highway Industrial area should allow for greater flexibility in use as an industrial flex space, innovation space, or clean laboratory space. Industrial flex land uses can include a combination of industrial, warehouse, office, and retail spaces in the same complex. The buildings themselves may be adaptable to different uses to meet requirements of specific businesses.

Activity Node 6: South Lorton

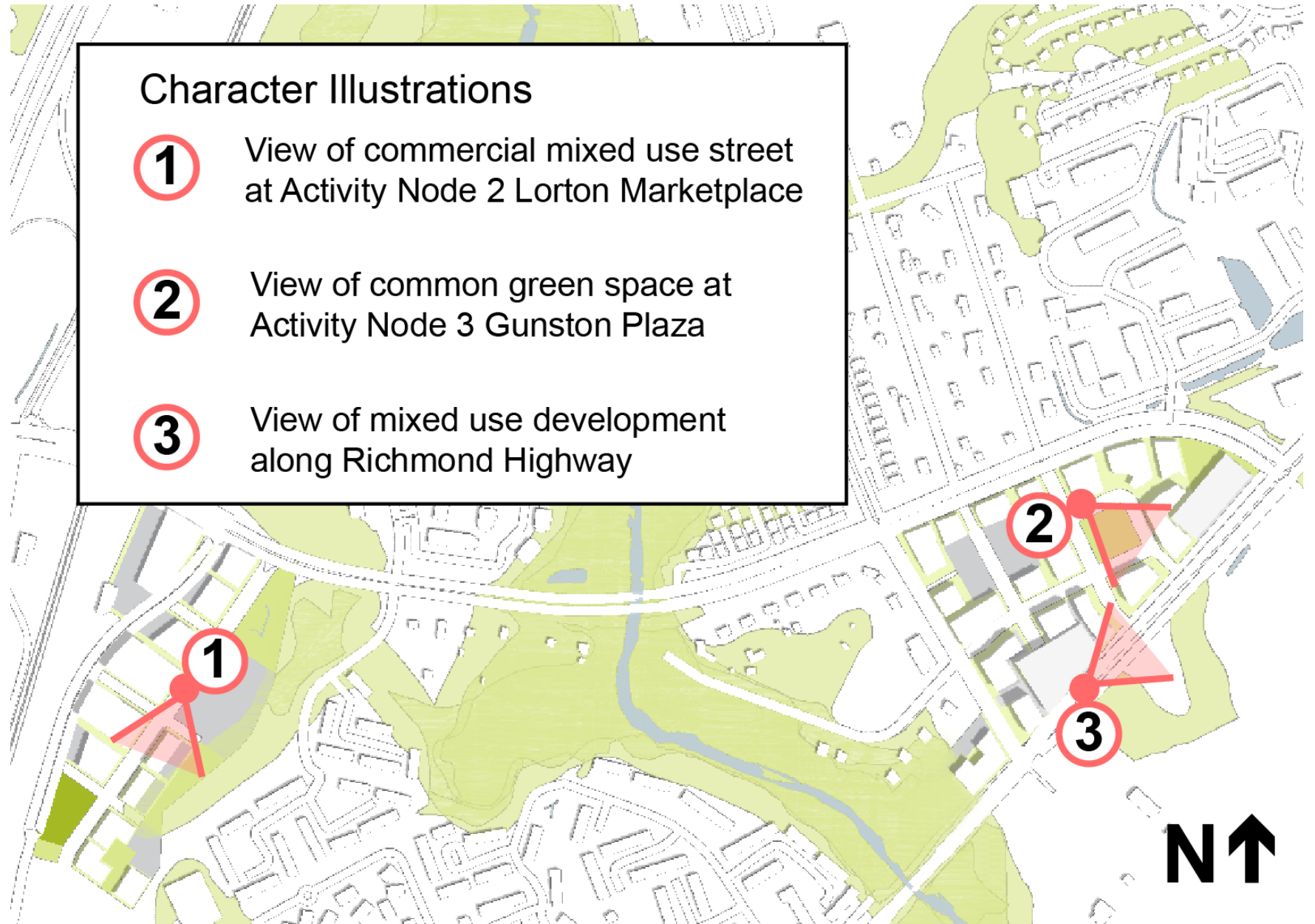
The land use mix for Activity Node 6 should include infill residential to support a more vibrant and active workplace center and gateway into Lorton. Existing land uses should remain the same, while being supplemented by this residential infill.

Land Use	Vision Plan / Future Development Potential	
	Dwelling Units or Jobs	Approximate Gross Square Feet (Sf)
Residential	2,700 units	N/A
Non-Residential	1,350 jobs	655,000 Sf
Retail	480 jobs	195,000 Sf
Office	190 jobs	60,000 Sf
Hotel	80 jobs	60,000 Sf
Industrial	580 jobs	60,000 Sf
Total	2,700 dwelling units and 1,350 jobs	

Character Illustrations

Character Illustrations

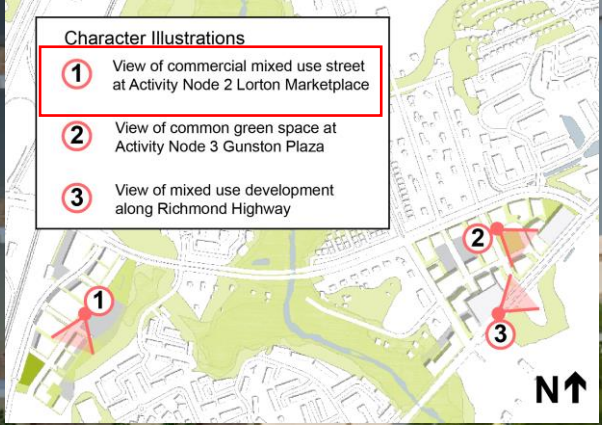
- 1** View of commercial mixed use street at Activity Node 2 Lorton Marketplace
- 2** View of common green space at Activity Node 3 Gunston Plaza
- 3** View of mixed use development along Richmond Highway





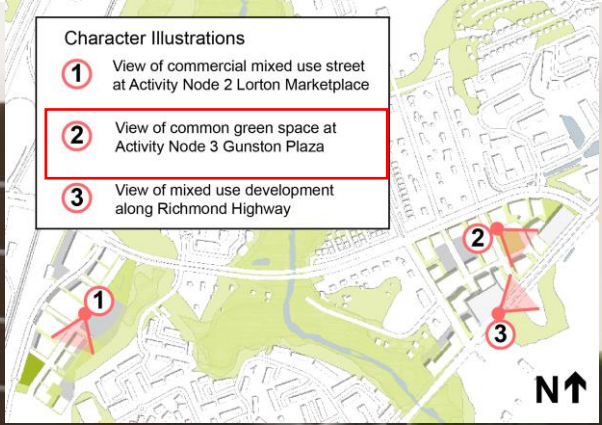
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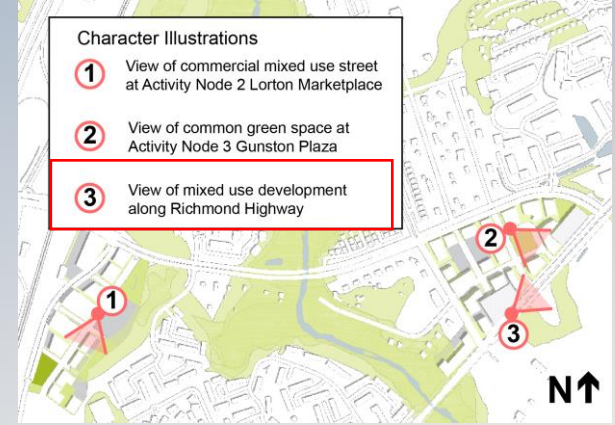


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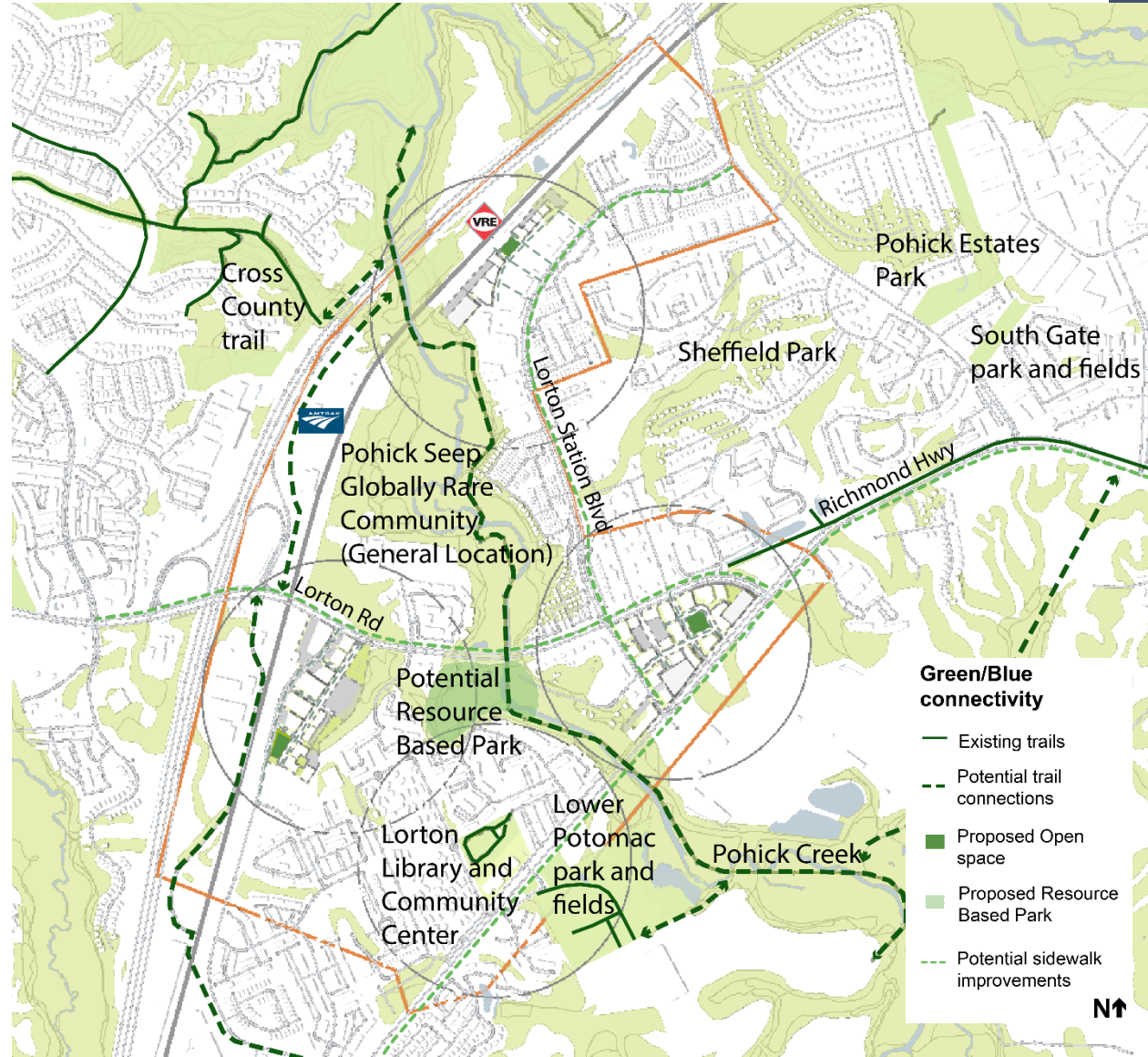
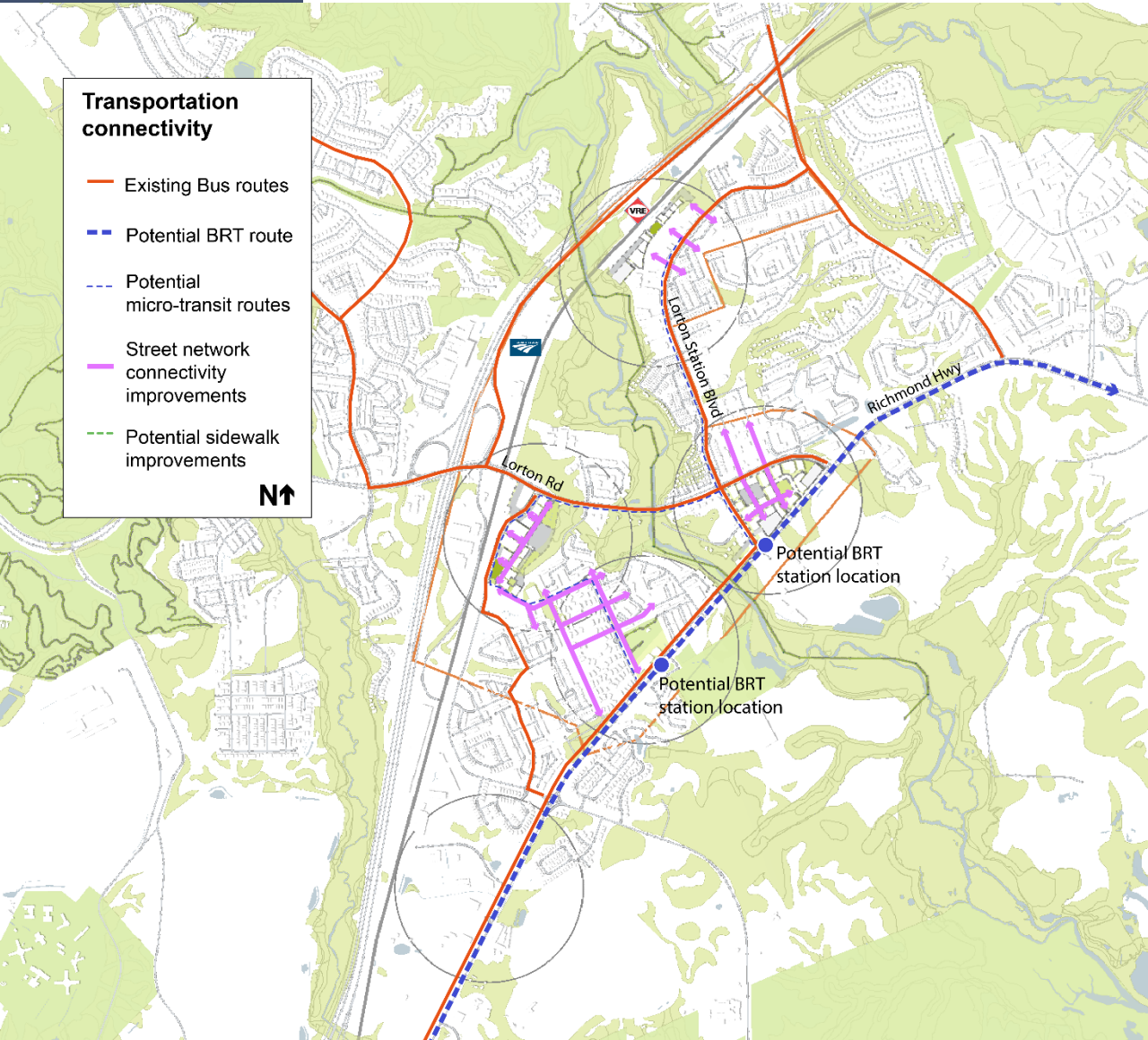




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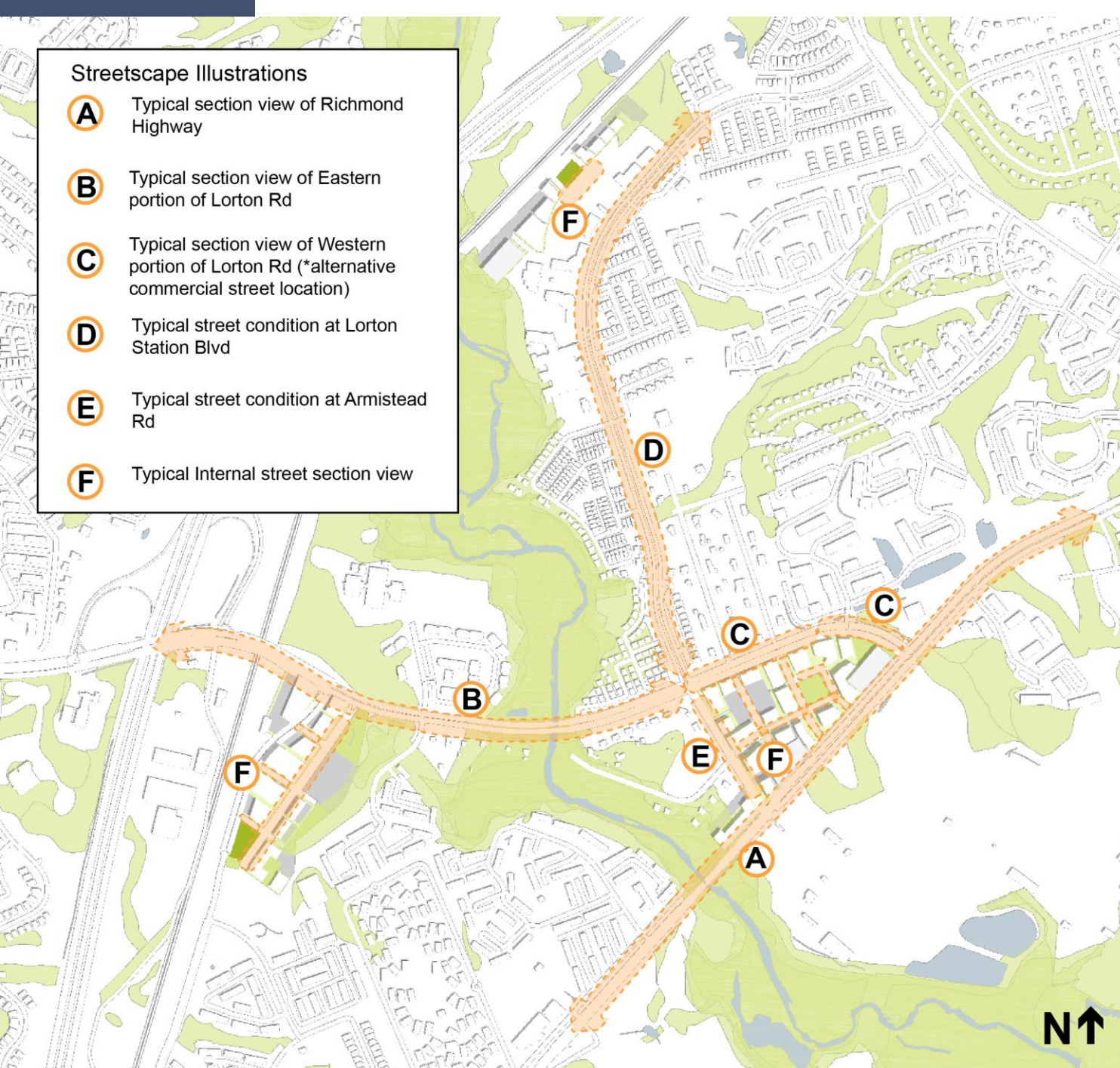


Transportation Connections

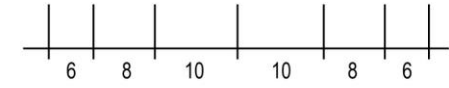


Streetscape Illustrations

- A** Typical section view of Richmond Highway
- B** Typical section view of Eastern portion of Lorton Rd
- C** Typical section view of Western portion of Lorton Rd (*alternative commercial street location)
- D** Typical street condition at Lorton Station Blvd
- E** Typical street condition at Armistead Rd
- F** Typical Internal street section view

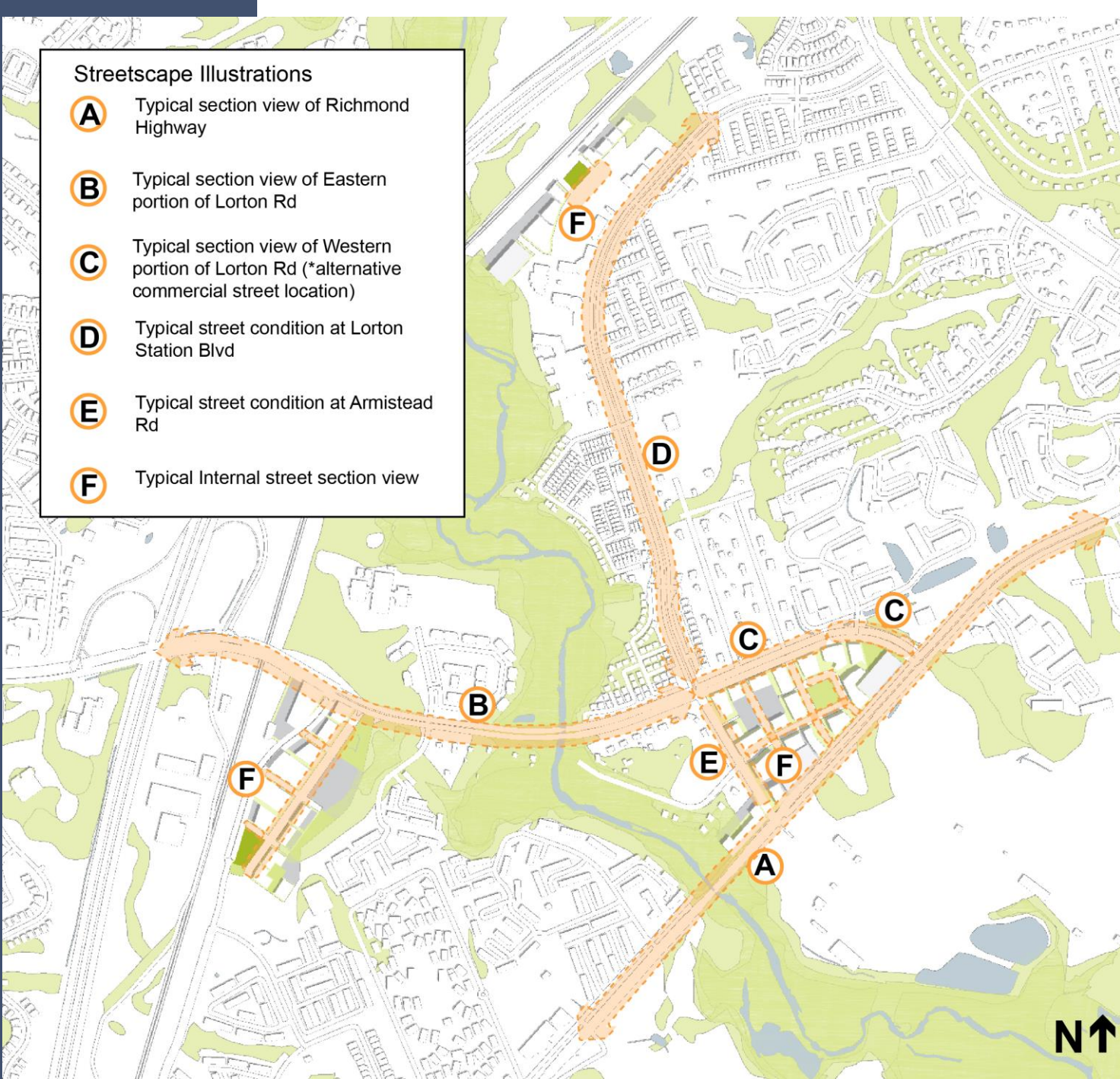


Typical street section - Typical Interior Street

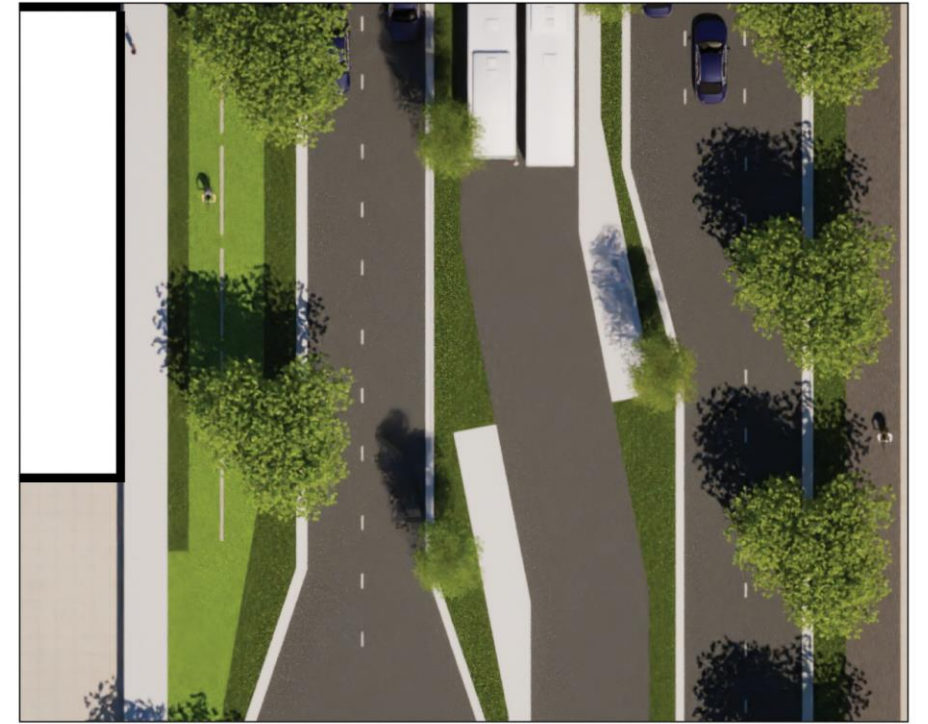
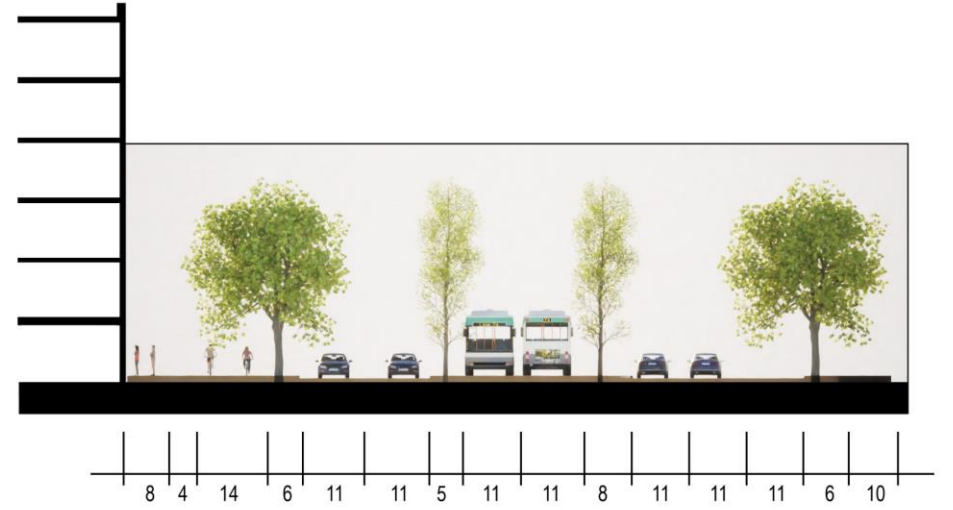


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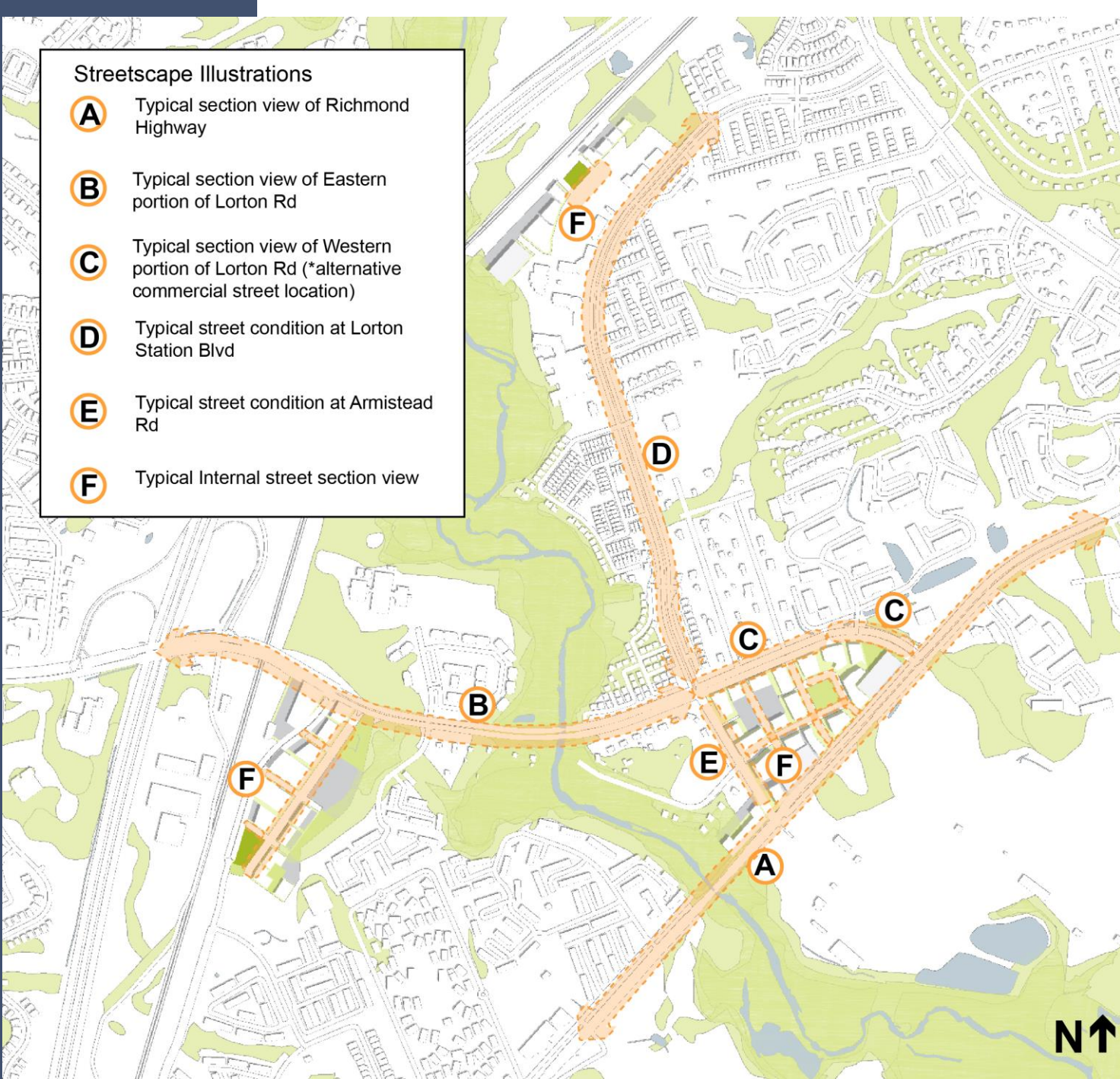


Typical street section - Richmond Rd

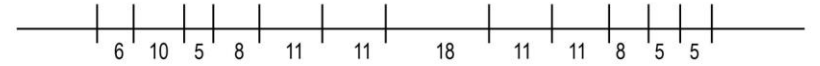
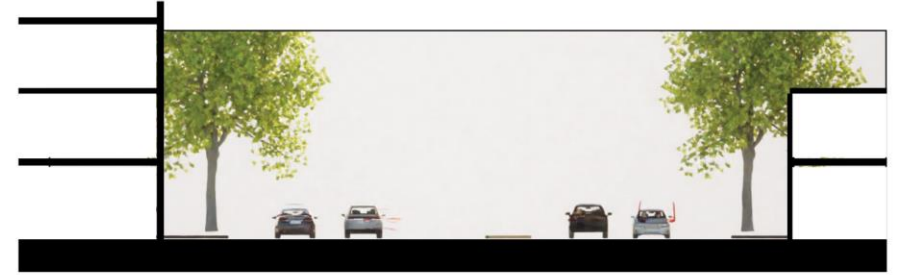


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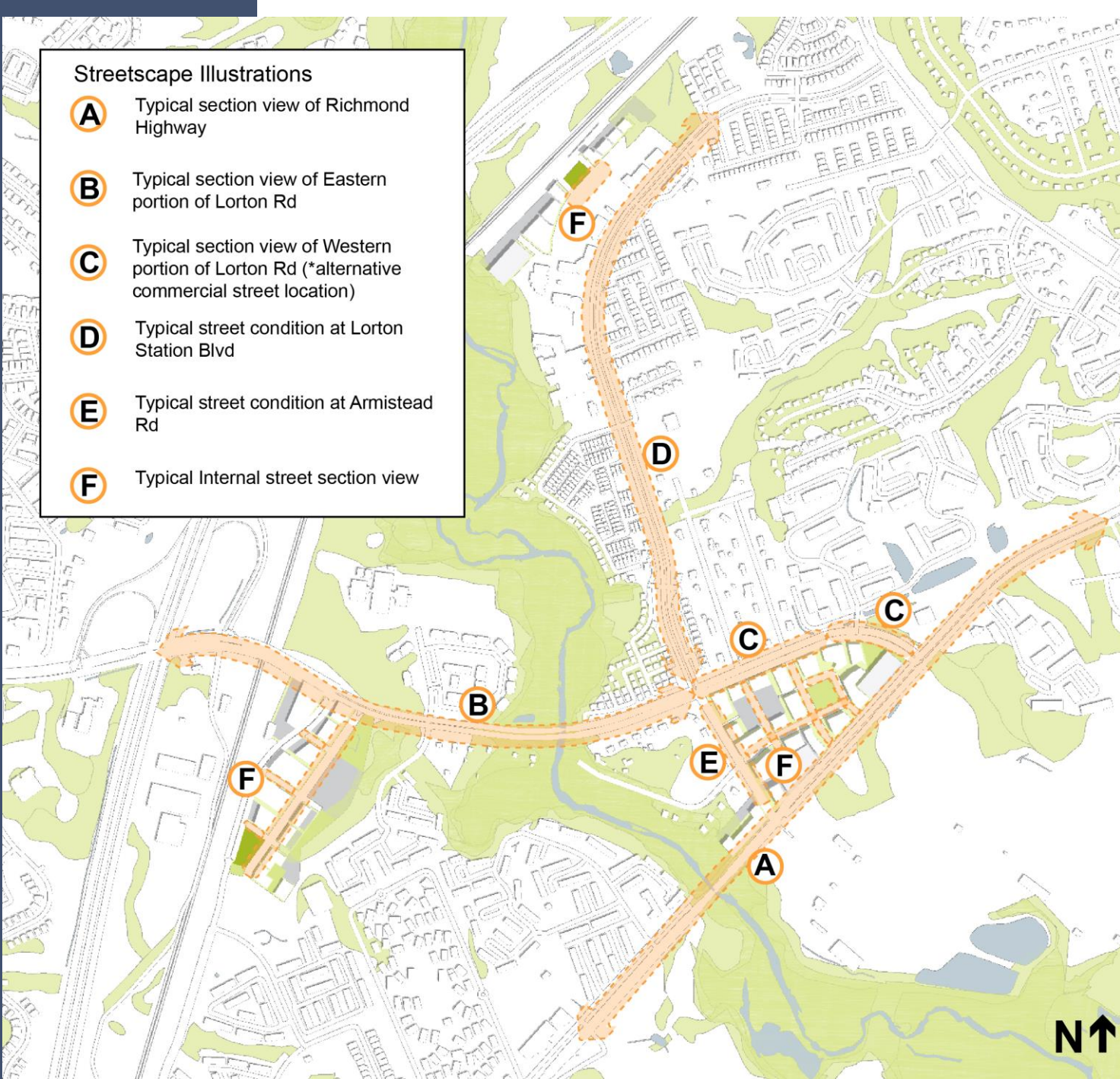


Typical street section - Lorton Ave

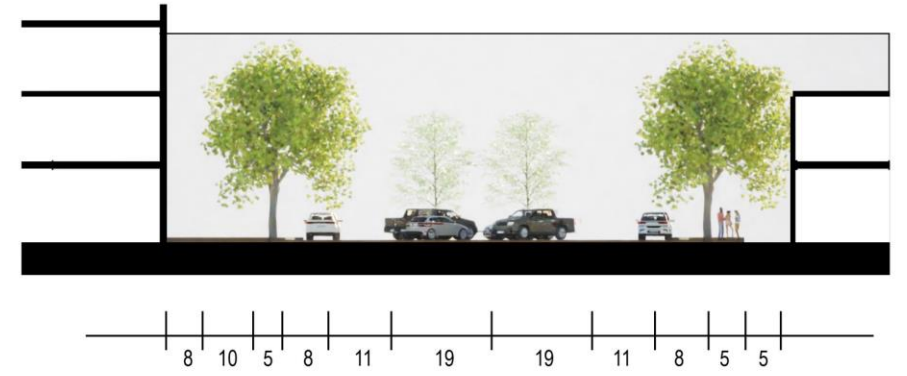


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Typical street section - Lorton Ave center parking



Community Feedback

Out of 44 responses in person, and 92 responses online	Yes	No	Unsure
1. Does a greater mix of uses and activities supported with a higher density of housing within walking distance seem right for Lorton?	74%	15%	12%
2. Do taller building heights seem right for Lorton?	71%	21%	5%
3. Do these kinds of transportation priorities seem right for the long term future of Lorton?	88%	4%	4%

Community Comments

Housing must bring other improvements and community amenities

“I am okay with more housing as long as it brings more retail, restaurants, and other amenities to the area. Right now I have to drive too far to get to stores to meet everyday needs. Please be sure to plan for green space and recreation opportunities when planning more density. I love Lorton but I still have to leave to take care of a lot of things. Make Lorton more walkable!”

“I would support it with thoughtful design and continued support of our natural resources. “

“Please consider the environmental impact to our open spaces, including the watershed areas. “

Development must consider protection of natural resources

Pedestrian and bicyclist safety is a top concern

“Safety of pedestrians is at risk because there are plenty of places where the sidewalk is not continuous and riding bikes puts one at significant risk of injury and death.”

MARKET-RELATED STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Lorton Visioning Study



VISION
ECONOMICS
STRATEGY
FINANCE
IMPLEMENTATION

What are potential market-related strategic interventions to encourage redevelopment?

SBF Approach:

- **Engaged County Departments**
 - Discussed Fairfax County incentives and intervention tools
- **Conducted outreach to developers active in Fairfax County**
 - Gathered insight on Lorton and Fairfax County market strengths and development challenges
- **Engaged property owners in areas of potential change**
 - Discussed long-term plans for key sites
- **Researched local case studies**
 - Identified successful public sector interventions throughout Fairfax County

WHY IS PUBLIC SECTOR INTERVENTION LIKELY NEEDED?

1

Desire for placemaking and local economic development

County investment could be foundational to:

- Developing central node for community activities/identity
- Fostering additional employment-generating uses

2

Land use framework has not promoted/encouraged development that aligns with the community's vision

Regional need for additional housing and flexible industrial space exists

Community desires a higher-level of commercial uses than currently available

3

Private owners control much of the areas of potential change

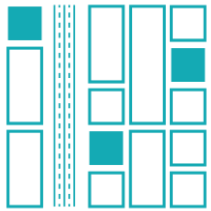
Commercial areas are well-leased, meaning that redevelopment will likely be complicated and expensive

MARKET-RELATED STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

County-led or supported interventions to assist with redevelopment



WHAT COULD COME NEXT?



Regulatory and Zoning



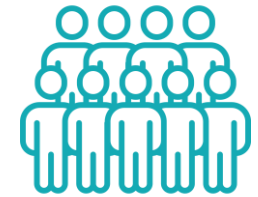
Direct Investment in Public Realm and Infrastructure



County Land Activation and Strategic Acquisition



Development Incentives




Place-Based Economic Development Organization

REGULATORY AND ZONING

Market-Related Strategic Interventions

Consider allowing flexibility in the regulatory framework to:

- Encourage mid-rise mixed-use development at strategic locations to expand commercial consumer base
- Encourage a mix of residential types, in order to appeal to multiple housing market segments
- Encourage intensification of employment-related uses, particularly flex, innovation, and clean lab space along Richmond Highway
- Integrate new development with existing and new mobility connections throughout Lorton and the region



<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Urban-Design-Guidelines/Vol2-DDG-Annandale-Full-Documen-May25-2021-A-1a.pdf>

Annandale District Design Guidelines

- Comprehensive plan includes a goal to transition towards a more pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use urban form.
- Design guidelines provide recommendations for site and building design, street network layout, and public realm improvements to support comprehensive plan goals

DIRECT INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Market-Related Strategic Interventions

Identify placemaking opportunities that will:

- Reinforce a unique sense of place through signage, public art, and landscaping
- Align with consumer preferences for experiential commercial spaces

Make direct investments to:

- Develop a compelling public space to anchor redevelopment, generate activity, and attract outside consumer spending
- Improve linkages between anchors and areas identified for change to strengthen market connections
- Strategically place any new high-traffic County facilities in locations that can catalyze redevelopment of adjacent privately-owned sites



<https://www.fcrevite.org/merrifield/mosaic-district>

Merrifield Town Center Development (Mosaic District)

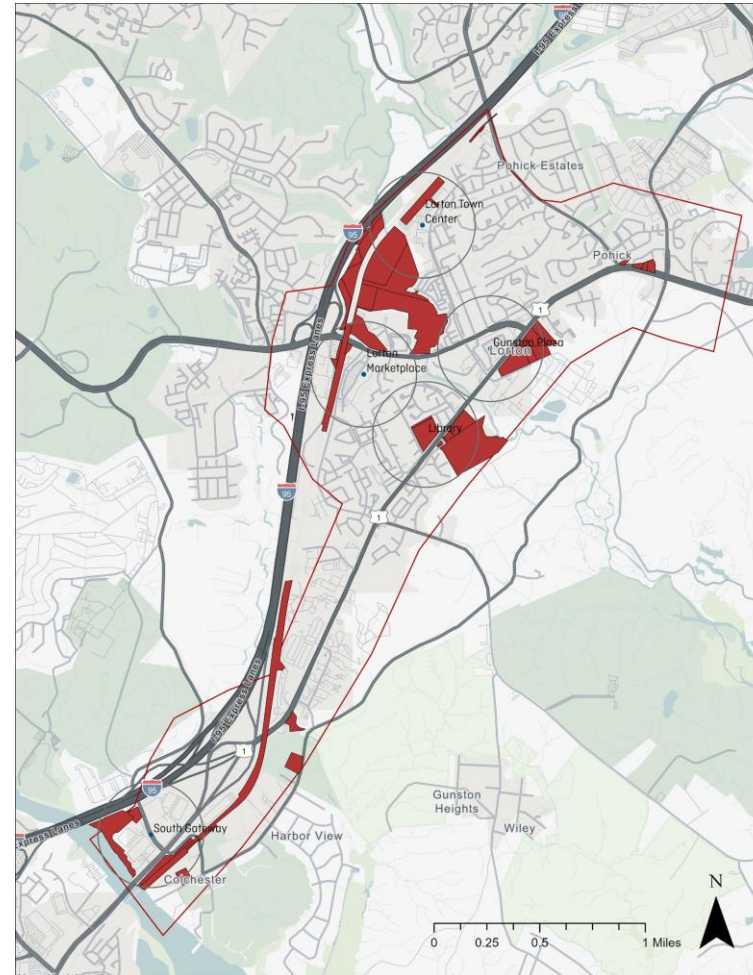
- Mosaic Community Development Authority was created in 2009 by Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to guide the development of the Mosaic district.
- Utilized incremental property tax growth to issue \$65.7 million in tax revenue bonds to fund a portion of road improvements, parks, and parking that supported the Mosaic District.

COUNTY LAND ACTIVATION AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITION

Market-Related Strategic Interventions

Expand opportunities for economic development and placemaking by:

- Activating strategically located County-owned land (e.g., VRE parking lot)
- Identifying a development partner through the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act that can deliver on community goals
- Consider site assembly at strategic locations to catalyze new development



Publicly-owned parcel



<https://alexandercompany.com/projects/laurel-hill/>

Liberty Redevelopment

- County acquired 2,000+ acres from the federal government, including the decommissioned Lorton Correctional Complex.
- County sought a development partner to create a master plan for the site according to the Public-Private Educational Facilities and Infrastructure Act.
- County and developer worked together to redevelop the correctional facility complex into a mixed-use neighborhood with 300+ housing units.

DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Market-Related Strategic Interventions

Communicate incentives that could motivate development on key privately owned sites by:

- Making the business case for redevelopment during outreach to private property owners (e.g., development feasibility study, return on investment study)
- Conducting proactive outreach to developers to make them aware of the community's vision, any available sites, and County incentives
- Align the adoption of any development incentives with the identification/completion of new projects to maximize incentive



<https://www.ffxnow.com/2023/01/18/apartment-building-proposed-at-annandales-eastgate-shopping-centre/>

Annandale Retail Center Redevelopment

- Financial feasibility of a phased redevelopment of a retail center in Annandale is supported by the Fairfax County Economic Incentive Program
- Property tax abatement and reduced site plan fees allowed the developer to pursue redevelopment

PLACE-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Market-Related Strategic Interventions

Support the establishment of an economic development organization focused exclusively on Lorton or a collection of nearby communities to:

- Develop a brand for Lorton and deploy a coordinated and cohesive marketing campaign in partnership with the Potomac Banks effort
- Actively program public spaces in Lorton to attract visitors and generated more commercial activity
- Develop a toolkit of available incentives to support development of unique small businesses and cultural uses
- Pursue new development that aligns with community vision

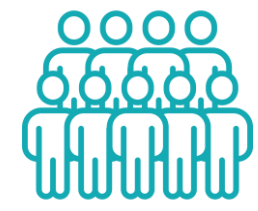


<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=542872437874648&set=a.542872427874649>

Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation

- Non-profit economic development corporation created in 1981 that champions local business development and expansion
- Active in decisions to invest nearly \$2B in new construction and redevelopment within six community business centers along the Richmond Highway corridor to create mixed use town centers with pedestrian-friendly design

SUMMARY



Regulatory and Zoning	Direct Investment in Public Realm and Infrastructure	County Land Activation and Strategic Acquisition	Development Incentives	Place-Based Economic Development Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage mid-rise mixed-use development at strategic locations to expand commercial consumer base Encourage a mix of residential types, in order to appeal to multiple housing market segments Encourage intensification of employment-related uses, particularly flex, innovation, and clean lab space along Richmond Highway Integrate new development with existing and new mobility connections throughout Lorton and the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce a unique sense of place through signage, public art, and landscaping Align with consumer preferences for experiential commercial spaces Develop a compelling public space to anchor redevelopment, generate activity, and attract outside consumer spending Improve linkages between anchors and areas identified for change to strengthen the market Strategically place any new high-traffic County facilities in locations that can catalyze redevelopment of adjacent privately-owned sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate strategically-located County-owned land (e.g., VRE parking lot) Identify a development partner through the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act that can deliver on community goals Consider site assembly at strategic locations to catalyze new development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the business case for redevelopment during outreach to private property owners (e.g., development feasibility study, return on investment study) Conduct proactive outreach to developers to make them aware of the community's vision, any available sites, and incentives Align the adoption of any development incentives with the identification/completion of new projects to maximize incentive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a brand for Lorton and deploy a coordinated and cohesive marketing campaign Actively program public spaces in Lorton to attract visitors and generated more commercial activity Develop a toolkit of available incentives to support development of unique small businesses and cultural uses Pursue new development that aligns with community vision



Lorton-Fairfax Vision

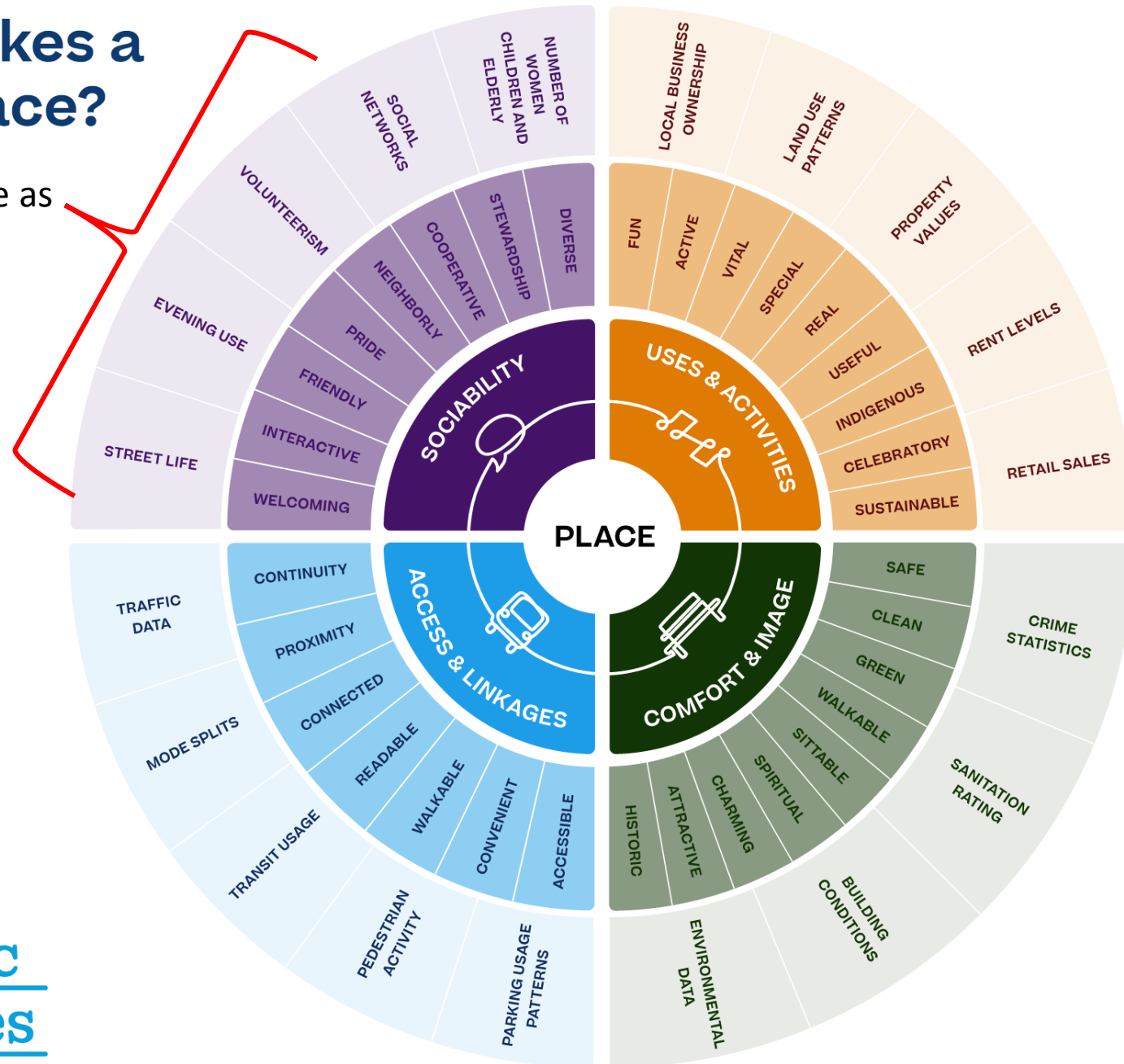
Next Steps

Placemaking

- What opportunities do you have to improve *place* as development happens incrementally?
- How do you activate the spaces you already have?

What Makes a Great Place?

Opportunity to improve as development happens incrementally



Project
for Public
Spaces

Daily activation as the goal



- Tournaments
- Festivals/Holiday events
- Conventions

- Concerts
- Movie series
- School performances

- Farmers market
- Food trucks
- Yoga classes

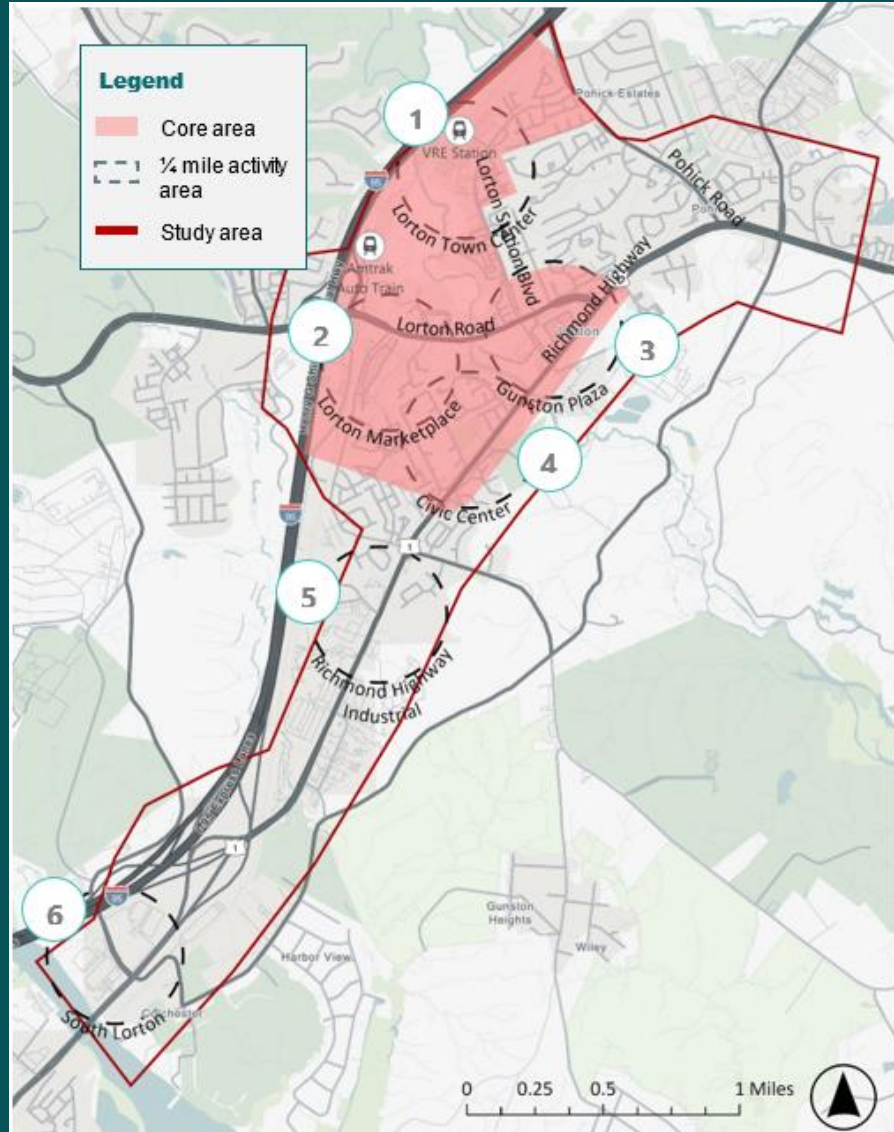
- Art installation
- Lawn games
- Self-led uses

Next Steps

- Specific recommendations were developed based on your vision
- County departments to review and provide any feedback on impacts and feasibility (FCDOT, parks, schools, etc)
- DPD drafts final comprehensive plan amendment
- Public hearing before Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors where it is then approved

Plan Amendment Next Steps

Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center Core Area

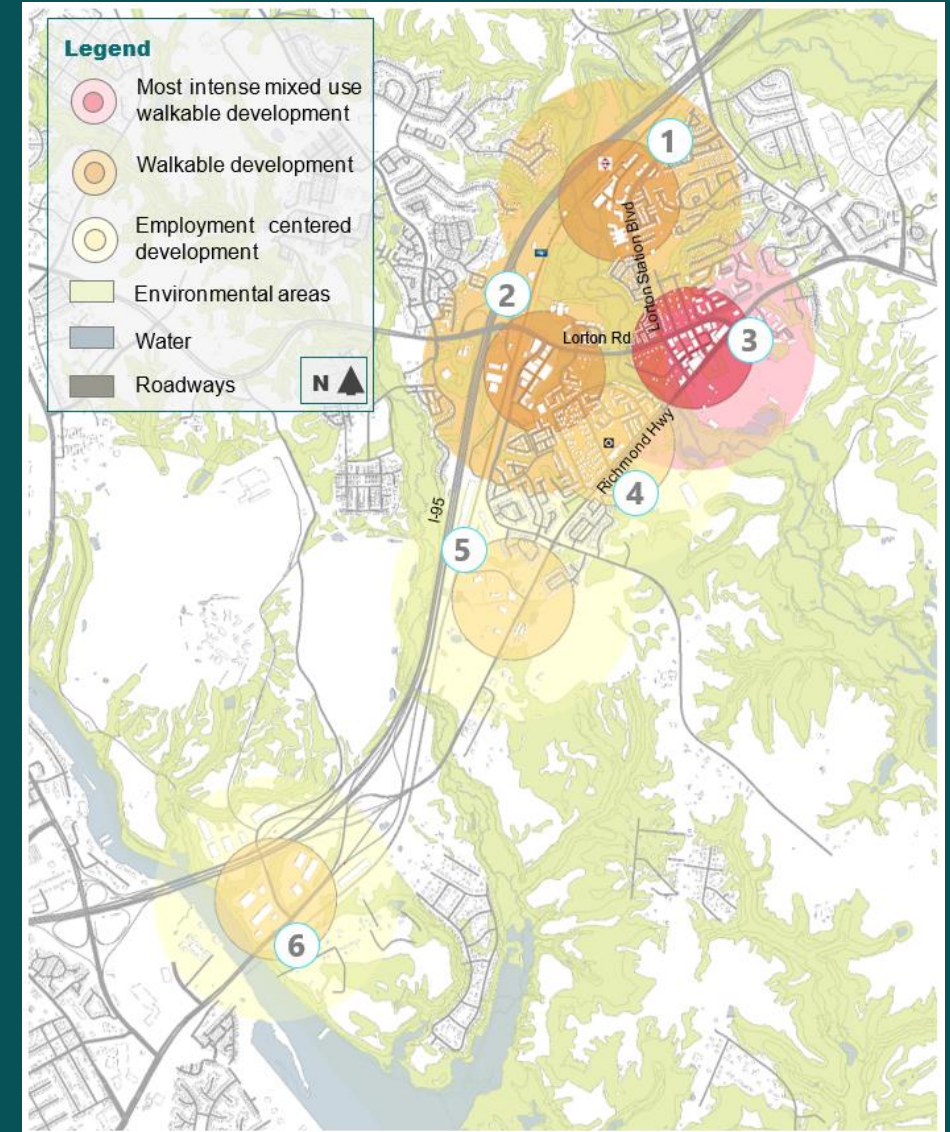


Community Vision



Activity Nodes

1. Lorton Station
2. Lorton Marketplace
3. Gunston Plaza
4. Civic Center
5. Richmond Highway Industrial
6. Lorton South



Core Area Activity Nodes

Center

1/4-Mile

1/2-Mile

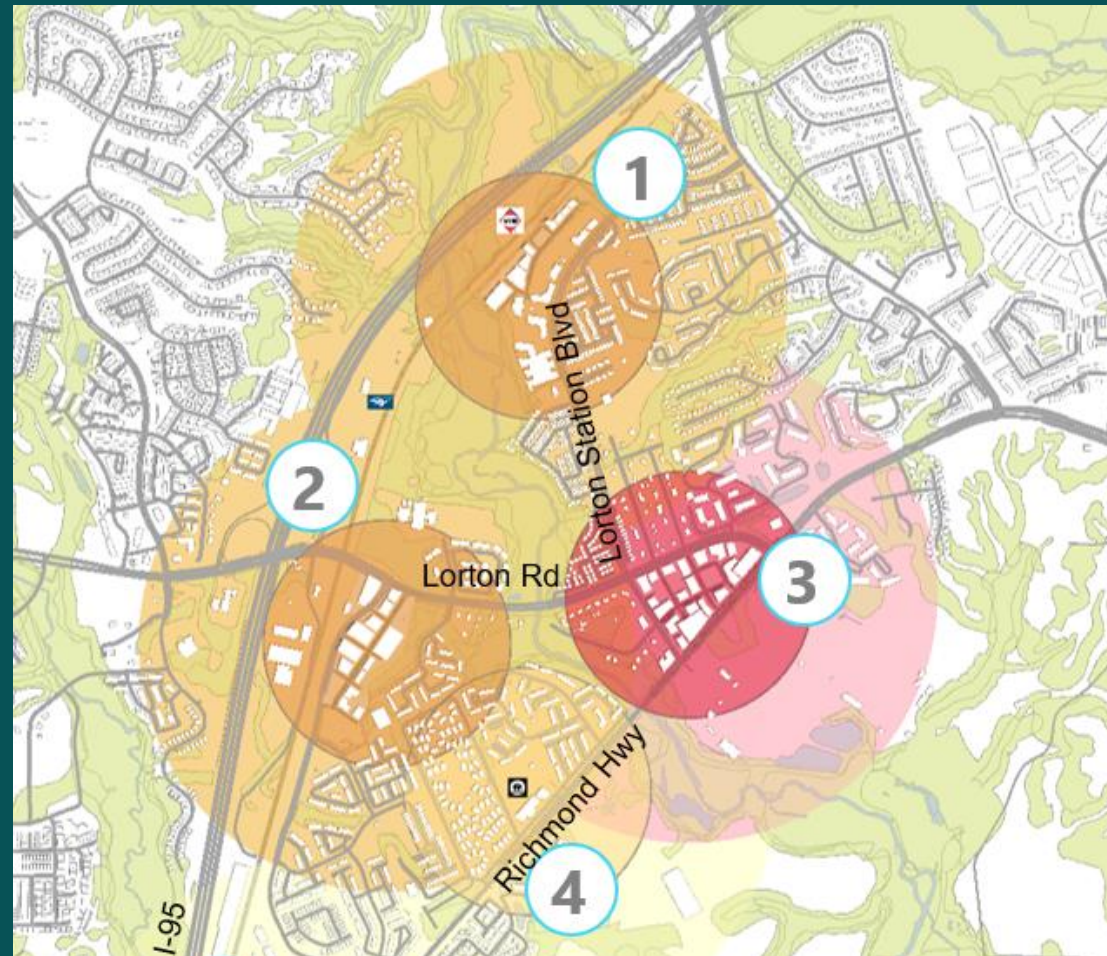


Mixed Use Development

Improved Access
(Between Nodes)

Highest Intensity/ Density

Tallest Building Heights



Proper Transitions

Improved Access
(To Node Centers)

Lowest Intensity/ Density

Lowest Building Heights

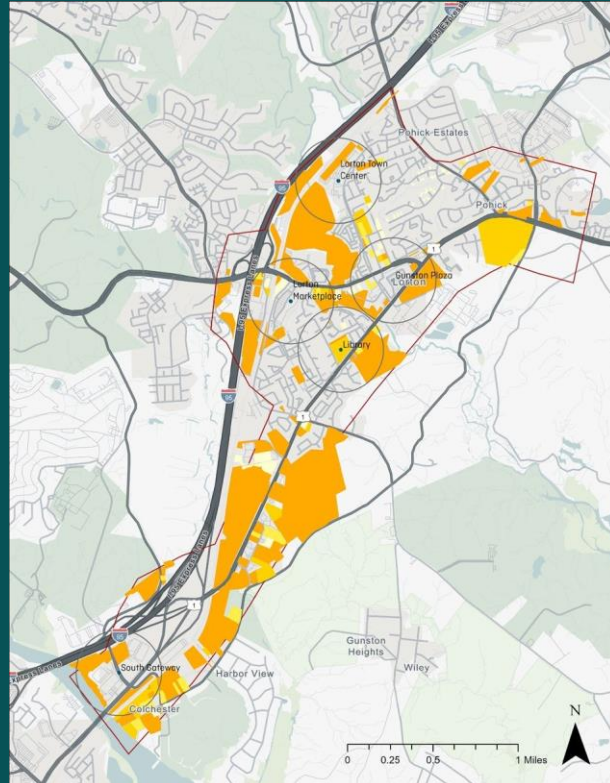
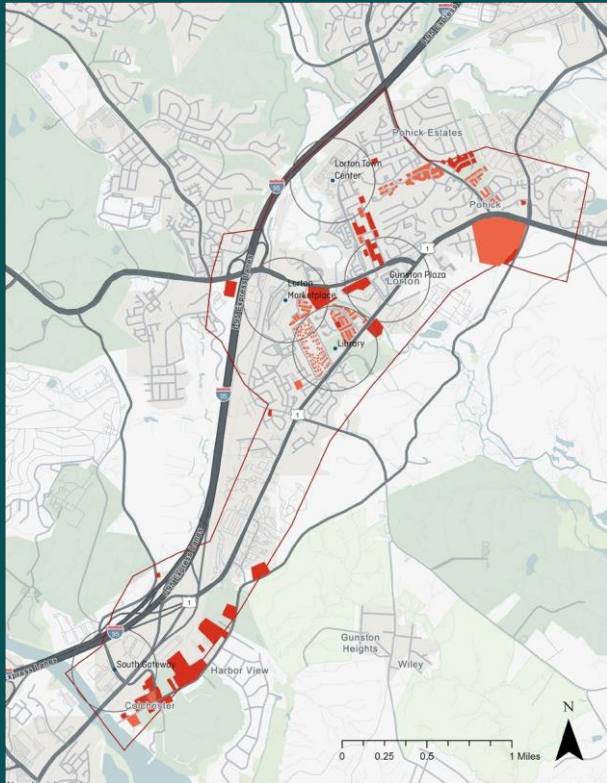
Objective Factors that will Influence Change

AGE OF STRUCTURE

LAND TO BUILDING VALUE

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP



BUILT IN 1980 OR EARLIER

LAND VALUE EXCEEDS BUILDING VALUE

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT LESS THAN 0.30 FAR

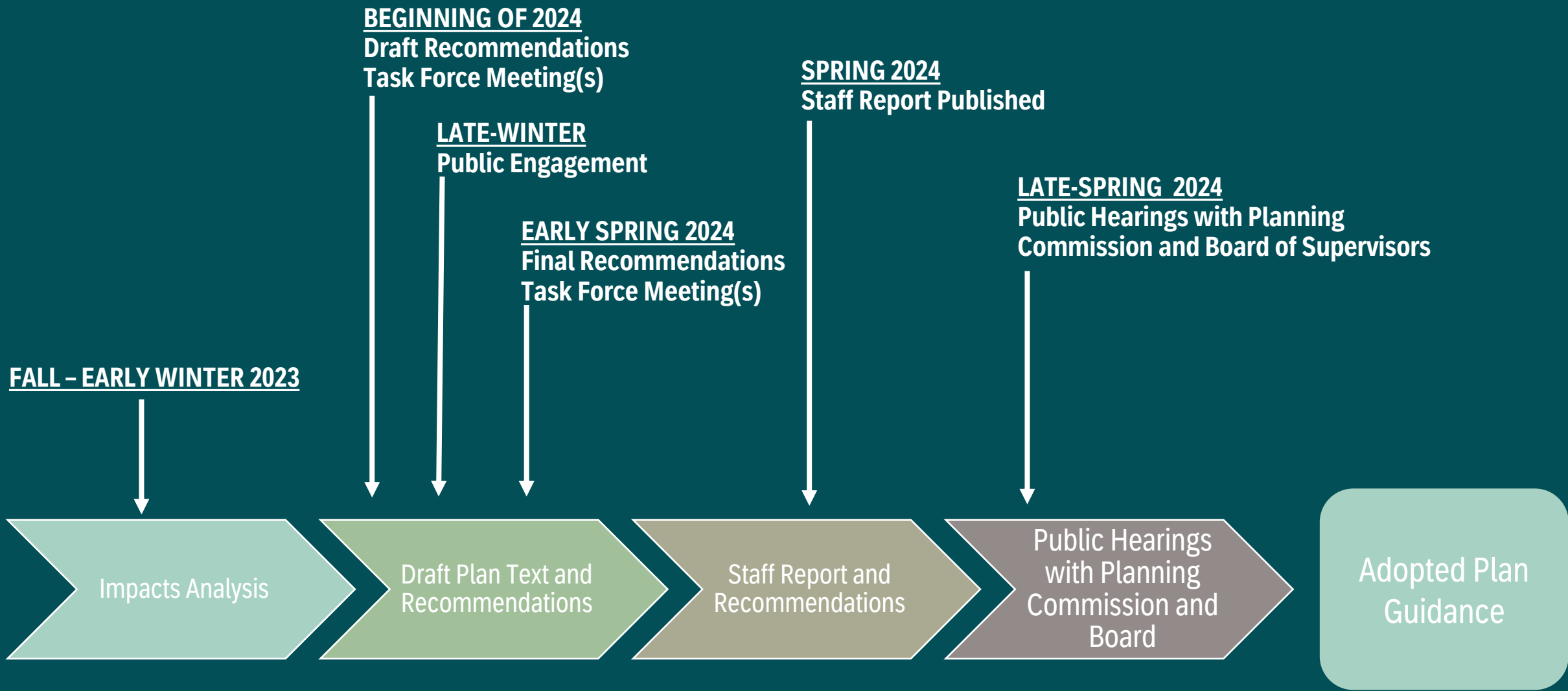
FAIRFAX COUNTY AND OTHERS

Next Phase Plan Amendment Analysis

Review and discuss impact analyses with partner agencies.



PLAN AMENDMENT TIMELINE



*Schedule and event dates are subject to change, with dates to be determined.

Questions and Discussion