

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **Franconia-Springfield Area Area IV, Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition**

**November 25, 2009**

The following proposed Comprehensive Plan text for the Franconia-Springfield Area is divided into three sections: Areawide Recommendations, Land Unit Recommendations, and Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance. Revisions to the Springfield Planning District are also recommended to reflect the changes to Franconia-Springfield text.

The Areawide recommendations are written as a replacement of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Area, pages 1-2, as amended through 8-3-2009. The Land Unit recommendations are written as a modification of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2007 Edition, Area IV, Franconia-Springfield Area, Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area and Springfield Community Business Center sections, as amended through 8-3-2009, pages 33-83. The Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance is written as an appendix to the areawide and land unit recommendations.

The Engineer Proving Ground section, which is located prior to the Springfield CBC and the Franconia-Springfield TSA recommendations in the adopted Plan text, is proposed to follow the Franconia-Springfield Area recommendations and is not shown in this document.

#### **COMPREHENSIV PLAN MAP MODIFICATIONS:**

The Comprehensive Plan Map will be updated to show the expansion of the CBC.

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## **FRANCONIA-SPRINGFIELD AREA AND ENGINEER PROVING GROUND**

### **OVERVIEW**

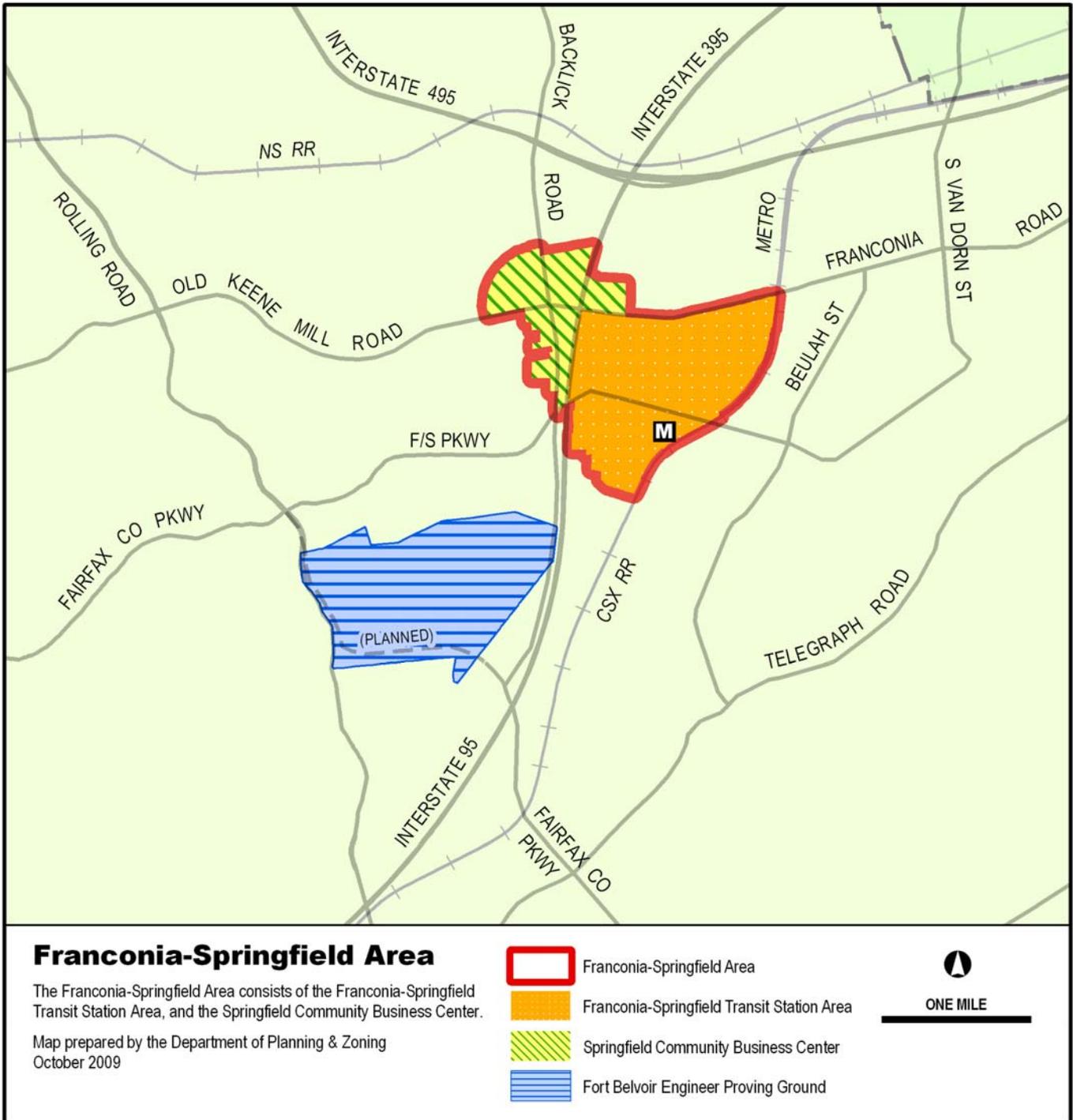
The Franconia-Springfield Area is located in the central portion of the Springfield Planning District, generally extending along I-95 from Commerce Street to the I-95/Newington interchange to the south, and from the Garfield Elementary School to the CSX Railroad tracks to the east. The area contains two established employment and retail centers, the Springfield Community Business Center and the Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area (See Figure 1), which also comprise several established neighborhoods and residential areas. The retail centers serve to provide essential and luxury needs and services and job locations to the neighborhoods within and surrounding the area, and to the region.

The majority of the Springfield Community Business Center is located west of I-95, north and south of Old Keene Mill Road. A small portion of the CBC is located east of the Interstate and north of Franconia Road. The CBC offers a variety of community-serving retail goods and services. The CBC contains some housing and has potential for additional mixed-use development. The Community Business Center is envisioned to function as the community-serving urban village of the Franconia-Springfield Area.

The Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area is located east of I-95 and south of Franconia Road, north of the Loisdale Estates neighborhood, and west of railroad tracks. The Transit Station Area includes several places of interest. The Joe Alexander Transportation Center features Metrorail and Virginia Rail Express service, commuter parking and local and regional bus services. The Transit Station Area also includes Springfield Mall, a regional shopping center, and the General Services Administration (GSA) Parr Warehouse. The redevelopment of the mall into a mixed-use town center represents a major step in the revitalization of the area.

The Engineer Proving Ground site is an approximately 805-acre military reservation located between I-95 and Rolling Road, south of Hooes Road, less than a mile away from the Franconia-Springfield Area to the south. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions will bring up to 18,000 new jobs to northern Virginia. These actions should facilitate the redevelopment and revitalization of the Franconia-Springfield Area as associated support services and employee and contractor needs may be accommodated in the nearby Franconia-Springfield Area and the amenities and public transportation options offered. The former military research and training facility is planned for a mixed-use development comprised of office, research and development, conference center/hotel, neighborhood retail and residential uses. The implementation of this plan would require special federal legislation.

**FIGURE 1. Franconia-Springfield Area and Engineer Proving Ground**



## **FRANCONIA-SPRINGFIELD AREA**

### **CHARACTER AND LOCATION**

#### Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area

The Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area is located in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Interstate 95 and Franconia Road, between I-95 and the CSX Railroad tracks. The Transit Station Area includes the Joe Alexander Transportation Center; the Springfield Mall; retail, office, and hotel uses west of Loisdale Road; retail uses along the east side of Frontier Drive; the GSA Parr Warehouse; and the Springfield Center Industrial Park. It also includes the Springfield Crossing, Springfield Station Springfield Forest, Greenwood townhouses, and New Charleston residential communities. Most of the housing in the area is comprised of single-family detached units with a few multi-family units located north and south of the Franconia-Springfield Parkway.

The Joe Alexander Transportation Center is located at a site south of the Franconia-Springfield Parkway adjacent to the CSX Railroad right-of-way. The Transportation Center includes a Metro Station, a Virginia Railway Express commuter rail station, a Greyhound bus station, approximately 5,000 parking spaces, and local bus transfer facilities.

The stream valleys of the upper tributaries of the Long Branch of Accotink Creek cover most of the central and eastern portion of the Springfield Planning District. The headwaters of the Long Branch of Accotink Creek form the basis of an environmental quality corridor in this area. Vegetation and wildlife habitats along the stream enhance the open space system. Portions of the area are located in the Coastal Plain geologic province within an aquifer recharge zone and may contain slippage-prone swelling clay soils.

Oak Grove, a plantation house built around 1820, was located in this planning sector. The Oak Grove site is a significant heritage resource listed in the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites. A list and map of heritage resources are included in the Springfield Planning District Overview section, Figures 4 and 5. Due to this historic site, large, undeveloped areas along the CSX Railroad have a high potential for significant heritage resources.

#### Springfield Community Business Center

The Springfield CBC is located in the northwest, northeast, and southwest quadrants of the intersection of I-95 and Route 644 (Old Keene Mill Road), north and west of the Transit Station Area. The CBC functions as a neighborhood- and

community-serving retail and services center and to some extent, as a regional employment center. A limited amount of apartments are located along the northwestern edge of the CBC. These apartments function as a transition between the commercial uses and the neighboring, low-density, residential communities.

The Community Business Center is characterized by a number of shopping centers interspersed throughout the area, each center with a corresponding surface parking lot. Freestanding structures such as banks, restaurants and office buildings occur in disparate locations along the internal road network of the area. Architectural styles are diverse and there are few amenities such as plazas or visual focal points. Several streets in the northern portion of the CBC were improved with continuous sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, crosswalks, and landscaping through the implementation of the Springfield Streetscape Concept Plan (March 2000). However, these improvements have not been universally applied across the entire area.

The area south of Old Keene Mill Road is segmented both by Amherst Avenue and Backlick Road and is characterized by strip commercial uses along both roadways. Access to some areas is difficult. The predominant development is auto-oriented, with uses such as auto dealerships, service stations, and auto repair and accessories shops present. Older retail plazas line Backlick Road. The linear development pattern and numerous curb cuts contribute to traffic congestion and discourage pedestrian use of the area. In general, the portion of the Community Business Center south of Old Keene Mill Road consists of many freestanding uses that lack a unifying architectural theme or identity.

## PLANNING HISTORY

The county initiated a revitalization study of the planned land use and transportation recommendations in the Springfield area with an Urban Land Institute advisory services panel in early 2006. The report, entitled “Springfield, Virginia: Strategies for Revitalization” was published in May 2006. This report, in conjunction with the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC), which was assumed to bring 18,000 new Department of Defense jobs to Fort Belvoir main post and the Engineer Proving Ground, triggered a follow-up effort by the county, called the Springfield Connectivity Study.

The Springfield Connectivity Study examined the Springfield area, including the Springfield Commercial Revitalization District and the Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area. The Study evaluated opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization within Springfield and generated recommendations that proposed land use changes, urban design and placemaking concepts, context-sensitive street design, and other transportations facility and service improvements that would encourage redevelopment in the Springfield area and address the potential BRAC impacts. The final report, entitled

*The Springfield Connectivity Study Transportation and Land Use Evaluation (Part 1) and Framework Plans and Street Typologies (Part 2)*, was published in August 2008. The following recommendations for the Franconia-Springfield Area are informed by the Connectivity Study report, as well as other proposed BRAC-related Plan amendments that were submitted in the 2008 BRAC Area Plans Review process. Detailed guidance can be found in Connectivity Study final report. The report was the basis for the Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance, appended to this plan, but the original report also should guide the review of development proposals.

#### CONCEPT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Concept for Future Development identifies both the Springfield Community Business Center and the Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area as mixed-use centers. Mixed-use centers, depending on their scale and offerings, serve as community and/or regional focal points. Recommendations for the Springfield CBC are intended to enhance the community-serving commercial aspects of Springfield with an urban village component, while the Transit Station Area focuses on the regional aspects of the Springfield Mall/Town Center. Both areas encourage multi-modal usage, with the Transit Station Area also including a transit-oriented development component with the Joe Alexander Transportation Center. Recommendations for both areas reflect the growing need to integrate housing and employment in proximity to one another.

#### VISION FOR THE FRANCONIA-SPRINGFIELD AREA

The vision for redevelopment in the Franconia-Springfield Area is to transform the area into a mixed use, easily accessible, and inter-connected place. Residents, employees, and visitors will have their essential needs and services proximate to one another and easily accessible by multiple means of transportation, particularly by walking and biking. Redevelopment also will serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and, to a certain extent, the region. The vision has been developed to foster revitalization and reinvestment of the area and is expressed through the following guiding principles:

- Provide opportunities for high density, mixed-use redevelopment, which would allow residents, employees, and visitors to work, shop, exercise, and live in relative proximity to each other;
- Enhance multi-modal linkages throughout the area and to the Joe Alexander Transportation Center and other transportation nodes;
- Maintain easy access to regional transportation systems;
- Develop a unique identity that reflects the character of the area through design consistency;

- Create a usable wayfinding system, which would efficiently move people through the area;
- Enhance the safety and security of the area through innovative, environmental design features, such as improved lighting, safe pathways, and additional windows facing the street;
- Identify and minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts by separating the pedestrians from vehicular traffic, improving traffic circulation, and developing the pedestrian realm;
- Encourage even traffic flows through enhancements to the public transit system, incentives for carpooling, and implementation of a coordinated program of transportation demand management strategies;
- Encourage revitalization through enhancing the economic competitiveness of local businesses;
- Preserve and protect stable, low density residential neighborhoods that surround the Franconia-Springfield Area through screening, buffering, and tapering of development at the transitional boundaries;
- Utilize innovative design and engineering techniques to preserve, enhance, and restore the existing natural resources in the area;
- Identify, preserve and promote awareness of heritage resources through research, survey and community involvement; and,
- Complement revitalization efforts made by the local community.

## CONNECTIVITY

Currently connectivity between and within the CBC and the TSA is severely restricted due to major regional roadways that divide the area into quadrants. These quadrants are adversely affected by auto-oriented uses, discontinuity among land uses, design variations, and poor signage. A major strategy involved in the achievement of the vision for the Franconia-Springfield Area entails improving the connectivity, or linkage, among the four quadrants in the area. Connectivity should come in the form of enhanced physical connections, such as roadway and trail improvements; enhancements to networks such as open spaces; and uniform thematic elements, such as design consistency and placemaking characteristics. These connective elements should unite the four quadrants into a recognizable place.

Existing east-west vehicular connections between the CBC and the TSA occur at the Commerce Street Bridge, Route 644 (Old Keene Mill/ Franconia Roads), and the Franconia-Springfield Parkway. Out of the three roadways, the Commerce Street Bridge is considered the only connection that accommodates pedestrians. A pedestrian bridge is located on the southern end of the CBC that is planned to be demolished with future transportation improvements. The reconstruction of this bridge or another pedestrian connection over the Interstate at this location should be considered. Veterans Bridge (Amherst Avenue overpass) links the portion of the CBC north of Old Keene Mill Road to the commercial uses, located on the south side, through vehicular and pedestrian connections. Connectivity between the Springfield Mall area and the General Services Administration (GSA) warehouse in the TSA is limited to Loisdale Road and a private shuttle road that connects the GSA to the Transportation Center. The shuttle road is accessible only to private shuttle buses, pedestrians, and bicycles. Loisdale Road has a trail on the west side and a sidewalk on the east side of the road.

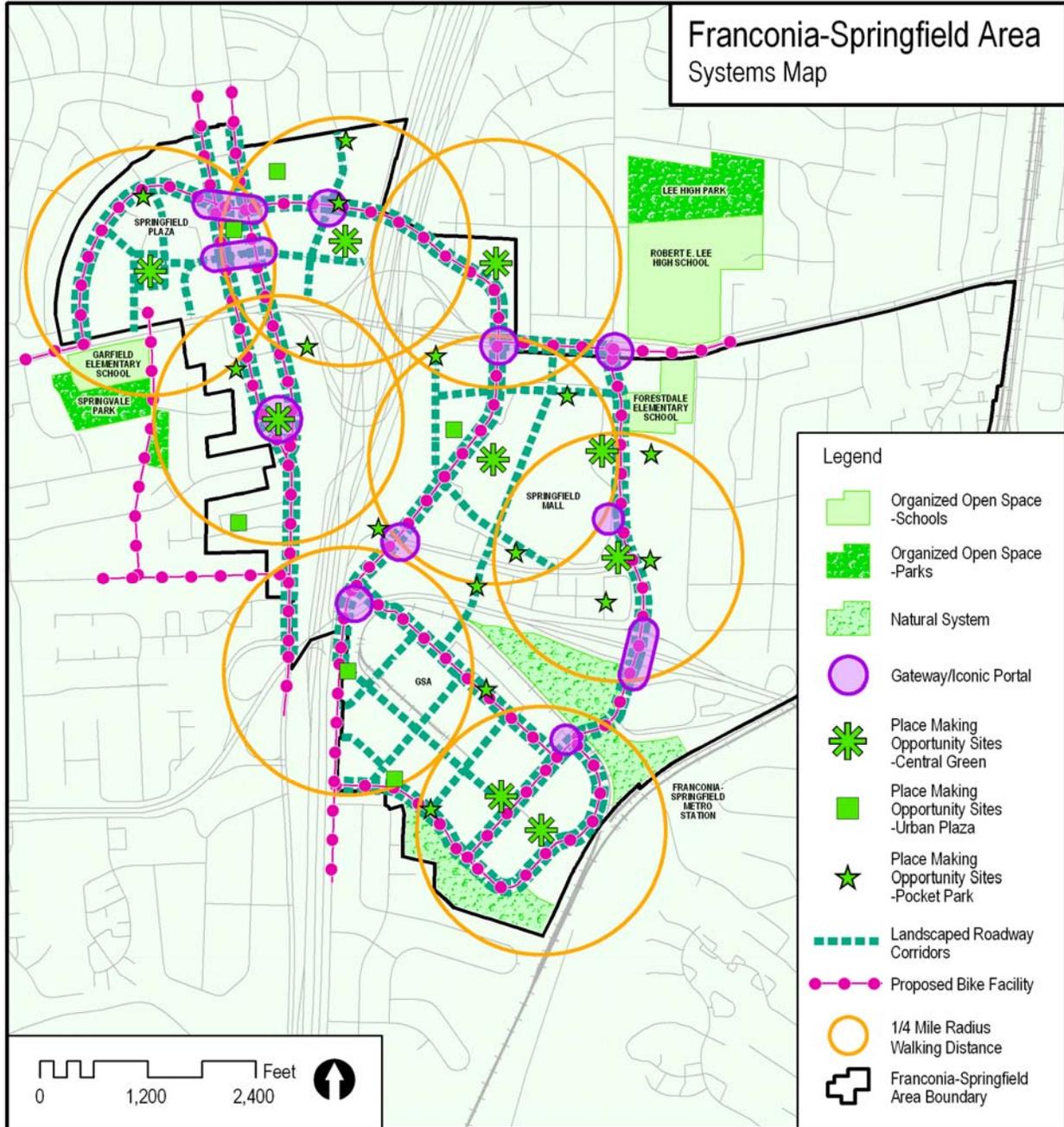
The Franconia-Springfield Area is served by several bus transit routes that connect the Transportation Center/Metrorail station, the TSA, and/ or the CBC to other areas in Springfield. The buses operate primarily on weekday service. An internal bus route, operated by the Transportation Association of Greater Springfield (TAGS), provides transit service between portions of the TSA and the Transportation Center. Additional service and extended networks would encourage public transit usage and provide further transit connectivity internal to the CBC and the TSA.

The majority of the roadways in the Franconia-Springfield Area have minimal pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Many of the roadways that connect the area link to interstate or regional roadways and experience major through and regional movements. These roadways are fed by auto-oriented land use patterns with large, surface parking lots and minimal landscaping. Existing trails, streetscapes, and crossings are not uniformly constructed in the area and often lack sufficient space, amenities, or adequate paving. This lack of uniformity and consistency inhibits safe, accessible, and enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle usage. The regional traffic network and land uses further discourage the development of the pedestrian and bicycle realm and increase the danger to non-motorized movement.

The vision for redevelopment in the Franconia-Springfield Area is to transform the area into an inter-connected, multi-modal place, which will promote alternative means of transportation, such as walking and biking. Pedestrians and bicyclists are to be accommodated through safe pathways, continuous corridors, uniform signage, usable urban parks, civic plazas, attractive architecture, bicycle facilities and other amenities, as shown on Figure 2. Figure 2 is based on the Systems Map in the *Springfield Connectivity Study Framework Plans* report, August 2008, and depicts a framework for this type of environment in the Franconia-Springfield Area. At the area-wide level, the connectivity and integration among systems is visible as the systems are distributed evenly throughout

the area and address the need for the entire area. Figure 2 illustrates the existing and proposed open spaces and primary pedestrian and bicycle connections within and to the Franconia-Springfield Area. The map also shows the recommendations for other placemaking opportunities that will create, contribute to, and reinforce the uniqueness and identity of the Franconia-Springfield Area. The design guidance on the following pages describes each of these characteristics in greater detail.

FIGURE 2: Franconia-Springfield Area Systems Map



S09-CW-3CP Franconia-Springfield Area, new Figure X, Systems Map

\* Illustration is conceptual. Specific road alignments and Placemaking locations will be determined during implementation

The Systems Map depicts the locations of a number of placemaking elements that are distributed throughout the Franconia-Springfield Area. These elements are proposed to improve connectivity in the area by supporting the creation of a unified theme and appearance for the area. Gateway features are one example of the placemaking elements. Gateway features should ornament and announce primary entry points or key intersections in the area. The features should help to establish the theme or identity of the area through the consistent use of design, patterning, and materials and should communicate expectations for the area. The features should reflect the character of the community. Gateway features may vary in scale, depending on the context. They may include a prominent building with unique architecture or design, signage, or landscaping features.

The network of open spaces, urban parks, and civic plazas are also represented on the Systems Map and will support connectivity and placemaking goals. These spaces should be provided at a variety of different scales, functions, and forms. The spaces should work to enhance the sense of community by acting as focal points or gathering spaces and should provide opportunities for programmed or casual social interaction and recreation. All of these places should be publicly accessible. These open spaces should be distributed throughout the area so that they are easy to access, visible, and act as places of respite as people move through the area. These spaces should be form a network of walkable green or open spaces throughout the area. Similar to the gateways, they can help to establish or reinforce the identity of the area through the materials use, water features, landscaping, public art, benches or other street furniture. The Urban Parks section in this plan describes in more detail the forms, functions, designs, and locations of these places.

The Systems Map also conceptually portrays landscaped roadway corridors, bicycle trails, and roadway elements that will improve connectivity. The landscaped corridors are linear, continuous spaces that emphasize the presence of the pedestrian and the bicyclist in the streetscape and street cross-section. The corridors are ornamented with plantings, which could be low-cut grass or shrubs to taller, tree-lined streets. This landscaping should serve to beautify the street and to separate and protect the pedestrian from motorists. These corridors also function as places for active recreation, such as jogging, walking, or cycling. Specific roadway improvements that will be discussed in more detail in the following pages are conceptually depicted as well. These elements include the addition of local street grids, improved access to the Joe Alexander Transportation Center south to the GSA area, and an additional, north-south crossing over Old Keene Mill Road.

The recommendations of the Systems Map are supported by the framework plans, street typologies, and intersection improvements that are described in the Franconia-Springfield Area Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance, appended to this plan. The framework plans illustrate conceptual development plans for specific areas within the

Franconia-Springfield Area: the CBC, the Springfield Mall area, and the GSA area. The plans depict land use and transportation improvements that support the vision for redevelopment in the areawide and land unit recommendations. The street typologies and intersection improvement plans illustrate a hierarchy of streets and identify the corresponding streets in the Franconia-Springfield Area. The typologies depict the means to achieve pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular connectivity through streetscape cross-sections.

## REVITALIZATION

The Springfield Commercial Revitalization District (CRD) encompasses the majority of the Springfield CBC. The county established the CRD in 1988 to improve the economic vitality and attractiveness within and around this area, to improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation throughout the area, and to maintain the community-serving function of the commercial area.

Designation as a CRD entails placing an additional zoning overlay district over the area in furtherance of the County's commitment to revitalization. The overlay district establishes a unique set of regulations, which provide flexibility in the development or redevelopment of properties located within the CRD. In addition, it provides for facilitated review of development proposals and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Supervisors views CRDs as desirable areas for consideration of public/private partnerships to generate and support investment activity.

The expansion of the CRD to include portions of the Franconia-Springfield TSA should be considered. The application of the CRD in this area should encourage coordinated redevelopment. This redevelopment should focus on utilizing the reduced parking and expedited review incentives.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Transforming the Franconia-Springfield Area into a connected, multi-modal, mixed-use place, as the vision entails, will necessitate infrastructure and service improvements. An innovative implementation plan will be needed in order to bring the recommendations into reality. The implementation strategy will need to consider traditional and new policies and partnerships.

The participants will need to contribute to and cooperate with one another in order to effectively implement the vision. These participants will include the present and future community, business and land owners, county staff, political leaders, and financial interests. This effort will involve detailed planning and zoning activities, developing funding strategies and partnerships, and establishing systems to manage and operate infrastructure and services. Development projects will be proposed as opportunities are

recognized, and the specific, supporting infrastructure and services are identified. This redevelopment should be coordinated with, and phased to, the provision of new infrastructure and services. Partnerships and cooperation between and within public and private sectors will need to be made.

The implementation of public infrastructure improvements will require creative and innovative funding and management tools to adequately address the needs of the area, in addition to the traditional means of federal, state, and county funding and contributions from the development community. Options for consideration include public-private partnerships, business improvement districts, community development authorities with self-taxing authority, service districts, areawide roadway and transit improvement funds, and tax increment financing. One or more or other approaches that may be identified should be adopted to work in partnership with the county to develop, manage, and operate many of the services. The magnitude of the transportation infrastructure need necessitates specific strategies for funding consideration. A road club is envisioned to address a portion of this need. Additional guidance for the road club and other transportation funding sources is found in the Transportation section of this plan.

County and state policy and regulations also will need to be reviewed and possibly updated in order for the vision to be implemented. For example, recommendations expressed in the transportation section, such as those that involve the pedestrian realm and street cross-sections may not correspond to traditional suburban standards. VDOT should become a full partner in creating the kind of pedestrian environment the Plan envisions. Street cross-sections and traffic mitigation measures proposed on streets in the Franconia-Springfield Area should apply to all streets, including private development streets and those controlled by VDOT.

## **AREAWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Land Use**

A mixture of uses should be provided in the Franconia-Springfield Area such that a vibrant, unique, and social place is created that extends activity beyond the normal working hours. The success of the retail centers in the CBC and TSA should continue to be encouraged with complementary uses and services, responding to the needs of the local residents, employees, and regional users, and by a coordinated, conceptual design plan. In order to promote their competitiveness, the activity in each of these places should focus on a central node. The mixture of uses should be located in these areas, with the inclusion of more intense residential, office, hotel, and ground-floor retail uses.

On the west side of the Interstate and north of Old Keene Mill Road, the core area of Land Unit A should expand into a greater community-serving urban village, which attends to the needs of the nearby neighborhoods. Land Unit I, which contains the

Springfield Mall on the east side of the Interstate, should redevelop as a mixed-use town center. The redevelopment as a town center should act as a catalyst for revitalization of the area, attracting regional and local populations. The mixture of uses should be publicly accessible and diverse. In these areas, the mixture of uses should allow residents, employees and other users to walk to work, run errands without using a personal vehicle, and find places of recreation nearby, if not on-site.

In order to encourage continuity among land uses and discourage automobile usage, small, single-use free-standing structures and uses should be avoided, unless it can be demonstrated that their design and placement would enhance the area or provide an appropriate transition among adjacent areas. In this case, the architecture should be of similar character and/ or scale as the nearby uses. Similarly, drive-through uses should be minimized in the area and, specifically, avoided near the town center in the long-term development plans

### **Urban Design and Streetscape Guidelines**

The urban design guidelines support the vision for the Franconia-Springfield Area by providing the means to improve the image, appearance, and function as an important place and destination. The purpose of the urban design guidelines is to create a distinct identity and strengthen the perception of the Franconia-Springfield Area as a cohesive place. As such, the guidelines should establish a unified design theme, which enhances connectivity and orients the area to the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit riders. Part of this theme should include a program of public art, signage, and/or other wayfinding elements, which will make the area more attractive and inviting, and easily direct and orient residents, employees, and visitors through the area.

The following urban design guidelines should be used in the development review process:

#### **Buildings**

Buildings should be designed at a scale that encourages pedestrian and street activity. The buildings should create an enjoyable, attractive, and safe environment to walk, bike, and ride public transit. In order to accomplish these goals, buildings should encourage an active streetscape with such features as multiple entrance points, display windows, animated facades, arcades, and awnings to support the pedestrian realm. Architectural design features such as façade variations of window or building details should be encouraged. Loading areas and rear-façades should be treated in such a way that does not detract from the street experience.

Ground-floor retail uses should be encouraged to activate the street and distinguished through building features that complement the surrounding style. If retail uses cannot be integrated into the first-floor facades, these façades should be at least

decorated with store-front windows, awnings, and/or vegetated walls. Faux windows or storefronts should be used only when necessary, and long expanses of blank walls or facades should be avoided on main pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular thoroughfares.

Buildings should be oriented to and aligned with the street or the plaza on which the building is located in order to frame the street and visually reinforce the building line on the street. Buildings should have minimal setbacks from the sidewalk and/or property line, taking into consideration the need to accommodate entranceways, browsing zones for window shopping, arcades, sidewalk cafés, or other urban design amenities. Build-to lines, which define how far the building can extend towards the property line, may be considered. It is desirable that surface parking should not be located in front of buildings, unless the parking is on-street, teaser, or loading spaces.

Building heights should vary to provide visual interest, allow in greater amounts of sunlight, and preclude a canyon-like appearance from the sidewalk. To the extent possible, taller buildings should step-back their frontage for similar reasons, particularly above the third floor. However, the buildings along the residential edges of the Franconia-Springfield Area should taper towards the edges of the area to provide a transition to the adjacent communities.

Buildings should be designed to accommodate telecommunications antennas and equipment cabinets in a way that is compatible with the building's architecture and conceals the antennas and equipment from surrounding properties and roadways by flush mounting or screening antennas and concealing related equipment behind screen walls or building features.

### Gateways

As identified on the Systems Map (Figure 2), the Franconia-Springfield Area should be marked by significant features, or gateways, located at the entrance points or major approach intersections into the area. These features should serve as landmarks to announce to the pedestrian, rider, and driver that they have arrived at an important place, destination, and center for their area. The gateways should introduce these users to the unique identity of the area and reflect the design theme. In this way, the gateway should serve to communicate the first impression for the area and what can be found in the area. This impression should represent the character of the area and what the community would like to portray. The gateway features should include prominent architectural features, public art, buildings, architectural features, signage, or plazas.

Signature buildings with unique architectural design should be used as gateway features. These buildings can be taller than the surrounding buildings and stand out as a noticeable landmark. The buildings should be located at the entrances to the area, such as the intersection of Loisdale Road and Franconia Road or at Commerce Street Bridge in Land Unit A of the CBC.

Public Art

The identity of the Franconia-Springfield Area should be established through the presentation and distribution of public art throughout the area. Artwork should create an inviting and attractive place for residents, employees, and visitors to inhabit. Redevelopment projects and public spaces should include works of public art in their design. These pieces of art should be selected based on factors, including, but not limited to, aesthetic, historic, cultural, or functional value. An opportunity for community input should be sought in the selection process.

Parking

The vision of the Franconia-Springfield Area speaks to the transformation of an auto-oriented, mostly surface-parked, minimally landscaped area into a dynamic, multi-modal place. Parking is critical to this transformation. Parking should be consolidated into structures and integrated into the streetscape. On-street and underground parking should be given preference over other forms of parking, such as surface parking lots or structured parking garages. On-street parking lots could be used as teaser parking for ground-floor, retail shops. Surface parking lots should be avoided or located in the rear of the buildings when necessary. In this case, space for trees and other landscaping features should be accommodated. The redesign and consolidation of existing, private, surface parking lots should be encouraged.

Creative approaches to reduce the amount of parking provided should be considered. Shared parking agreements are recommended for uses that have different operating hours or peak hours when parking is needed. Establishing shared parking rates should be considered. Accompanied by a parking analysis, reductions to parking standard minimums should be encouraged for mixed-use projects. These reductions should take advantage of the synergy among land uses, enhanced transit services through the circulator, and other transit demand management programs. Loading or delivery areas should be treated in such a way that does not detract from the pleasant street experience and should avoid impeding vehicular movement.

As a critical element to the creation of animated and active streetscapes, structured parking should not be visible from major pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular thoroughfares. These structures should be accessible from side streets or exterior passageways between buildings. However, if site constraints prevent this design and the structure must be visible from such a roadway, then the design of the structure should be integrated into the streetscape. In this case, the façade treatment of the structures should contribute to the visual appeal of the streetscape. Façades should be attractive and inviting from both pedestrian and vehicular perspectives and should incorporate architectural elements to provide visual interest.

It is desirable to have on-street, parallel parking contiguous to a paved refuge strip on the curb. The refuge strip should allow passengers to exit parked cars without having

to step into landscaped areas. Trees should be spaced appropriately to allow car doors to swing open without obstruction. However, it is recognized that conflicts may arise with the design of the streetscape and the functionality of the parking, and flexibility in design should be considered in order to achieve a complete street.

#### Wayfinding and Signage

A unified, comprehensive signage system should be established to contribute to the distinctive theme and identity of the Franconia-Springfield Area. The signs should share a consistent or similar appearance or nomenclature, regardless of their function, location, or message. Such similarities could include color, shape, typography, or logo. The system should use a hierarchy of signage types, as expressed in more detail in the Franconia-Springfield Area Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance, appended to this plan, to invite people into the area and allow them to easily move through it. This hierarchy should include gateway signs, municipal facility signs, banners, directional or trailblazing signs, or pedestrian kiosks. Visual clutter should be avoided. Building-mounted signs should be encouraged, and pole mounted business signs should be prohibited.

#### Streetscape

Another element involved in the transformation of the Franconia-Springfield Area into a multi-modal place is the expansion of the pedestrian and bicyclist realm along the roadway through the development of the streetscape. The existing, auto-oriented roadways should be enhanced or reconstructed to include features that create a high quality, attractive, functional and safe environment for the pedestrian, bicyclist, transit rider, or other non-motorized vehicle user. The streetscape design should contribute to the creation of the identity or theme for the area. As detailed in the Franconia-Springfield Area Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance appendix, the streetscape guidance and corresponding intersection plans embody a complete streets policy intended to ensure that the right-of-way is designed and operated to enable safe travel by all users and all modes. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities should be able to safely move along and across a complete street. Design elements should address safe pedestrian crossings and enhanced pedestrian movement, with the goal of reducing pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and improving accessibility.

The streetscape design and intersection plans should be applied to the reconstruction and addition of all roadways in the Franconia-Springfield Area with any redevelopment. The design should be employed continuously and contain uniform or similar elements to make a cohesive circulation network. Curb cuts should be minimized through consolidation of street access and provision of interparcel access. The scale of the streetscape should vary based on the type of street and the context of the adjacent planned or existing uses. The Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance establishes a typology of streets for this reason and identifies specific streets in the area

for each type. In general, areas with higher pedestrian activity, such as major retail streets, should have wider streetscapes to accommodate increased street activity.

Each typology shows a cross-section of the streets, which divides the streetscape into three pedestrian zones, in addition to the roadway elements of on-street parking, bike lanes, and travel lanes, and medians. The three pedestrian zones primarily should serve to safely separate pedestrian activity from the roadway. The first zone, the building zone, should be located between the sidewalk and the building facade. The character of the building zone should be determined by the use of the adjacent building and could be used for outdoor cafés, seating, or browsing store windows. The next zone, the sidewalk, should be reserved for pedestrian movement and should not contain any street furniture. The use of texture, pattern, and color of materials, such as brick or brick-paving materials, should be encouraged. Finally, the landscape amenity panel should be located next to the curb and includes streetlights, tree grates, planting beds, planters, paving, bus shelters, bicycle racks, public art, and benches. The dimensions of these zones and roadway elements should be followed during any redevelopment.

The pedestrian crossings at intersections should be highly-visible, well-delineated, safe, and accessible to all users. The design could include bulb-outs, reduced turning lanes and travel lanes, painted or paved crosswalks, refuge medians, pedestrian signals, and pedestrian detectors, particularly important at major intersections. Signal modification to accommodate pedestrian movement may be an option as well. Details of these elements are expressed in the appendix.

Variation from the streetscape guidance should be permitted if infill or expansion of buildings or other existing features constrain a site's design. Where flexibility is granted, the streetscape should include acceptable sidewalk widths and an acceptable amount of street trees and landscaping planted within an environment that will sustain growth. When street trees and other plantings are to be located in proximity to roadways or within medians, safety and sight distance should be taken into consideration upon reviewing a development proposal's streetscape design. Modifications to the streetscape guidance are appropriate to account for these issues when viable alternatives in streetscape design are provided to ensure continuity in the streetscape pattern.

Streetscape improvements may be provided on a combination of publicly owned right-of-way and private property. When the public right-of-way is utilized to provide streetscape improvements, commitments should be made by the property owner to maintain the streetscape area or by a local business organization. In addition, when the sidewalk is not entirely within the right-of-way, a public access easement will need to be provided for the portion of the sidewalk located on private property, if additional right-of-way can not be acquired.

Below are general guidelines for all streetscapes, which are followed by design guidelines for each individual streetscape type (Major and Minor Arterials, Collectors, and Local Streets).

*General Streetscape Elements*

**Underground Utilities and Stormwater Infrastructure:** Utilities and stormwater infrastructure should be placed underground and should be coordinated with future roadway improvements and sidewalks to foster a pedestrian environment and other Plan objectives. They should be located under sidewalks, parking lanes, or the building zone; they should not be located under street trees. New development should provide underground utility conduits or provide commitments to facilitate future improvements on adjacent properties. Utility boxes for phone, cable, electricity, natural gas, information systems and/or other services should be located to the rear or side of the development, along service alleys, within buildings, or placed in sub-grade vaults.

**Street Lighting:** Street lighting should maintain the overall character and quality of the area, providing adequate lighting levels that ensure public safety without creating glare or light spillage. Light fixtures should be full cutoff and use energy-saving technology. Street lights should be located so as to not conflict with street trees at their projected maturity.

**Street Furniture, Bicycle facilities, and Other Elements:** Street furniture selections, such as benches, water fountains, bus shelters, and bike racks, should be consistent within the area. This may include the compatible model, size, and finish. Bicycle features should be covered, preferably, and located in a safe and visible place.

**Street Planting:** Street trees and other landscaping in the planting strips should be planted in an environment that promotes healthy root growth. Vegetation within the planting strips could include ornamental shrubs, ground cover, flowering plants, and grasses. These plantings should occur in areas that are clear of vehicles parked on the street, and they should incorporate hardscaped pedestrian access points. Consideration should be given to the use of a broad palette of native and drought tolerant species.

**Median Landscape Strip:** Where medians are provided, they should be planted with attractive landscaping. Consideration should be given to the use of low impact development techniques, native plants, and plants that are drought tolerant, low in maintenance, and resistant to disease, pollution and heat.

## **Transportation**

With its proximity to Shirley Highway (I-95/I-395) and the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495), the Franconia-Springfield Area is provided extensive access to the regional highway network. Access to the interstate system is afforded by interchanges at Old Keene Mill Road/Franconia Road and at Franconia-Springfield Parkway and I-95. Arterial highway movement through the area in a north-south direction is provided by Amherst Avenue and Backlick Road to the west of I-95, and Loisdale Road to the east. East-west arterial movement through the area is afforded by Franconia Road/Old Keene Mill Road and the Franconia-Springfield Parkway. The recent completion of the Springfield interchange improvement project north of the area has improved regional access to the Franconia-Springfield Area and reduced traffic congestion at this important transportation crossroads.

Many public transportation services and facilities serve the Franconia-Springfield Area, including the Franconia-Springfield Metro station, the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter rail station, over 5,000 commuter parking spaces, Greyhound interstate bus service, Metrobus regional service, and County bus services including the Fairfax County Connector and Prince William County services, brought together at the Joe Alexander Transportation Center located south of the Franconia-Springfield Parkway at Frontier Drive. In addition to regional and county transit services, the Transportation Association of Greater Springfield (TAGS) provides local circulator bus service weekdays between the Transportation Center and the Springfield regional shopping mall/future town center. Planned high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes on I-95, I-395 and I-495 will provide further transit connectivity and service to the Franconia-Springfield Area, while also providing needed additional roadway capacity on these facilities.

The Franconia-Springfield Area is home to one of the largest and longest-lasting carpool staging (“slugging”) operations in the nation, currently serving over 500 commuters who park in various lots in the CBC and form carpools at Old Keene Mill Road near the I-95 ramps, to take advantage of the I-95/I-395 high occupancy vehicle lanes for commuting trips to the Pentagon and Washington D.C. core employment destinations.

### Future Conditions

Transportation and land use evaluation undertaken in the Springfield Connectivity Study, published in the final report, August 2008, supplemented with analysis of BRAC Plan amendment proposals in 2009, provided the basis for the recommended land use plan for the area. Forecasts of future conditions based on the planned land use show substantial increased daily and peak hour traffic within the Franconia-Springfield Area as the area builds out. There will be diminished traffic levels-of-service at intersections within the area, and increased traffic on many of the arterial streets that pass through the area and provide access to the Franconia-Springfield Area. While the Franconia-

Springfield Area will be affected by continued growth in the surrounding communities and throughout Northern Virginia, increased land activity within the activity center will be the largest contributor to adding more traffic and congestion to the local area roadway system.

A number of conditions in the recommended plan for the area will help to alleviate the impacts of future development. The land use plan encourages an optimal land use mix, designed to increase transit and walking trips and reduce peak hour automobile reliance. By improving the ratio of jobs-to-housing in the area, the plan is designed to reduce travel times for many residents and workers while animating the future streets of the Franconia-Springfield Area with more pedestrian activity. These objectives are supported by streetscape and context-sensitive design guidance so that future streets in the area can function as more than vehicular thoroughfares. A complete streets philosophy is embodied in the streetscape guidance, intended to ensure that the right-of-way is designed and operated to enable safe travel by all users and all transportation modes. This design guidance is supported by recommendations to develop a more multi-modal transportation network serving the Franconia-Springfield Area, with emphasis on transit, pedestrian, and bicycle mobility and connectivity.

#### Multi-modal Connectivity

The transportation plan for the Franconia-Springfield Area has been developed to achieve a number of connectivity and mobility objectives designed to ease travel in and around the Franconia-Springfield Area, with the goal of improving access and helping revitalize the area. In undertaking a multi-modal assessment, it was recognized that there may be tradeoffs necessary in order to meet all mobility needs and achieve optimum convenience and safety. For example, where vehicular traffic flows smoothly with minimal delay or congestion, as indicated by a high vehicular level-of-service (LOS), there may be a corresponding low pedestrian LOS. Thus the balancing of vehicular traffic flow and pedestrian safety at an intersection might require acceptance of a lower vehicle LOS standard for traffic mitigation. Similarly, where access to transit and traffic flow conflict, balancing mobility needs may require more favorable treatment of transit users in the design of road and intersection improvements at the expense of maximum vehicle throughput.

Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity are major elements of the recommended transportation guidance for developing the Franconia-Springfield Area. Access to the area through these means should be maximized to support the recommended land use concept and achieve the optimal densities and mix of uses. Transit, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity should be improved in order to achieve the objectives of reducing reliance on the automobile and creating more transit-oriented, walkable, and bicycle-friendly communities.

The transportation recommendations for the Franconia-Springfield Area consist of Policy Recommendations, Streets and Circulation Improvements, and Public Transportation Improvements. These are described below:

Policy Recommendations

The following transportation policy recommendations have been developed to set the framework and guide future development in the Franconia-Springfield Area:

*Complete streets* – A complete streets policy is embodied in the Franconia-Springfield Area’s streetscape guidance, intended to ensure that the right-of-way is designed and operated to enable safe travel by all users and all transportation modes. The streetscape guidance addresses pedestrian, bicycling, bus and motorized vehicular traffic. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities should be able to safely move along and across a complete street. Design elements address safe pedestrian crossings and enhanced pedestrian movement, with the goal of reducing pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and improving accessibility. This approach is recommended to be applied to the redesign and improvement of arterial roadways in the area. The Franconia-Springfield Area Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance, appended to this plan should be used for guidance in the development of these improved street sections and intersections.

*Level-of-service E* – In order to achieve the multi-modal connectivity goals set forth, while maintaining a balance between vehicular and pedestrian/non-motorized movement in the area, a level-of-service (LOS) E standard is recommended to be applied in assessing transportation system adequacy. A LOS E standard allows more congestion with greater amounts of delay than the general countywide standard of LOS D. Applicants for new development should demonstrate that their proposals meet the LOS E standard when proposing mitigation needed for critical road segments and intersections impacted by the site development. This standard is established in recognition that other improvements will also be made with the goal of creating a more multi-modal transportation system serving the area, including transit, pedestrian and bicycling connectivity improvements. In exchange for establishing a lower vehicle LOS policy for traffic mitigation, commitments should be made by applicants to help bring about the evolution of the Franconia-Springfield Area into a more transit-oriented and walkable activity center.

At locations where conditions are worse than LOS E and cannot be mitigated, remedies should be considered and provided to offset impacts, under the “non degradation” and “offsetting impacts” policies described in the Policy Plan. Where LOS E cannot be attained, mitigation of problem intersections or locations should follow this sequence:

- First, determine whether additional capacity and/or increased operational efficiency is possible;
- Failing that, decrease future site-generated traffic by: reducing the intensity of development, phasing development to minimize adverse impacts, changing the mix of land uses (e.g., replacing office or retail with residential use), increasing transit use through provision of new or improved services, and/or optimizing the application of TDM measures that support the use of more transit, walking, and bicycling;
- Failing that, provide appropriate contributions to an areawide transportation fund established for eventual mitigation of problem locations.

These remedies should be designed to help reduce area traffic, improve future accessibility, and/or add capacity to the transportation system serving the Franconia-Springfield Area. Applying the LOS guidance described above, intersections in and around the area should be improved to the extent possible. Modifications to geometry, lane configuration, timing and operation of signals, and pedestrian accommodations should be provided at these intersections, in order to improve access and safety and minimize traffic congestion.

*Public transportation/mode split performance* – The land use concept recommended for the Franconia-Springfield Area is based on the assumption that at least 10 percent of trips generated by development will be arriving and departing by public transportation. Implementation of this policy would substantially reduce future peak hour traffic, and is based on achieving the public transportation recommendations described below. In the areas closest to Metrorail station (within a ½ mile walking distance of the station platform), transit mode shares in excess of 10 percent would be expected. It is recommended to adopt the 10 percent minimum transit mode share as a policy for redevelopment in areas beyond the ½ mile walking distance of the metro station. Under this policy, development proposals would be expected to achieve at least a 10 percent transit mode split at their developments. This minimum would be accomplished by contributing to the development of bus circulator service and implementing enforceable TDM programs.

*Funding of Transportation Improvements* – Transportation improvements needed to support development and redevelopment in the Franconia-Springfield Area at an acceptable level of service will require substantial increased capital investment. Capital costs for improving arterial roadways and enhancing transit services are estimated to exceed \$350 million (in 2010 dollars). This estimate does not include the costs of providing local street improvements, which would be expected to be built as part of development, nor the operating and maintenance costs for recommended public

transportation facilities or services. The estimates will be revised when project planning studies are undertaken.

A combination of public and private sector funding sources will be necessary to cover the costs of recommended transportation improvements in the Franconia-Springfield Area. Identifying one or more stable and ongoing funding sources for these improvements is critical to their implementation due to the magnitude of the proposed improvements. These new sources of funding are needed to supplement traditional federal, state, and county sources. New public and private sector funding initiatives need to be studied and preferred approaches identified and adopted as soon as possible in order to address the area's growing deficiencies in transportation funding.

The private sector will need to contribute a substantial and equitable share to transportation improvements and/or funds required to meet the transportation needs of the area, similar to other county activity centers in Tysons and the Fairfax Center Area. An areawide roadway fund is envisioned to provide a structure to accumulate private transportation contributions as redevelopment occurs. The road fund will be based on an analysis of the total roadway improvement need and an estimation of the cost. The fund will establish a voluntary contribution rate that is based on a shared responsibility between public funding sources and private contributions. This rate may need to be adjusted as future planning studies are undertaken. Private sector funds will at a minimum contribute to the anticipated costs of projects that have been identified as having the highest priority. The future levels of public sector participation will be determined by the availability of federal and state funds, the county's own fiscal and budgetary policies, and competing needs and priorities for transportation improvements established on a countywide basis.

Other funding sources will be needed to supplement the road fund and to expedite implementation. Particularly important are sources that provide for a dedicated source of funding to offset the costs of on-going projects, such as the bus circulator operation. A pro-rata projects reimbursement approach, a service district, and other funding mechanisms with self-taxing authority also could be utilized to fund the circulator and to facilitate other transportation improvements. These or other options will be necessary to satisfactorily address the funding of transportation capital improvements for the Franconia-Springfield Area. Further detailed examination of these options is essential as preferred approaches are selected.

#### Streets and Circulation Improvements

The recommended streets and circulation plan for the Franconia-Springfield Area shown in Figure 3 addresses needs for three basic types of travel: 1) through traffic (regional or "external" traffic passing through the Franconia-Springfield Area; 2) local traffic and circulation (traffic with one or both ends of the trip occurring in the Franconia-Springfield Area); and 3) property access (provided by local streets). The street and

circulation improvements accommodate these three basic forms of travel. Completion of these improvements will allow the Franconia-Springfield Area to maintain LOS E or better traffic conditions into the future as development in the area builds out.

The following streets and circulation recommendations have been developed to guide the future development of the Franconia-Springfield Area:

*New street typologies with context-sensitive design* – A typology of streets and proposed street cross-sections is recommended in the Franconia-Springfield Area Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance, appended to this plan, based on the context of the surrounding and planned land use. These proposed roadway cross sections should be used to undertake improvements and facilitate safe and active streetscapes. The streetscape guidance addresses pedestrian, bicycling, bus, and automobile traffic. Design elements address safe pedestrian crossings and enhanced pedestrian movement, with the goal of reducing pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and improving accessibility. This approach is recommended to be applied in the redesign and improvement of arterial roads in the Franconia-Springfield Area, including development frontage roads. The Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance should be used for guidance in the development of these improved street sections.

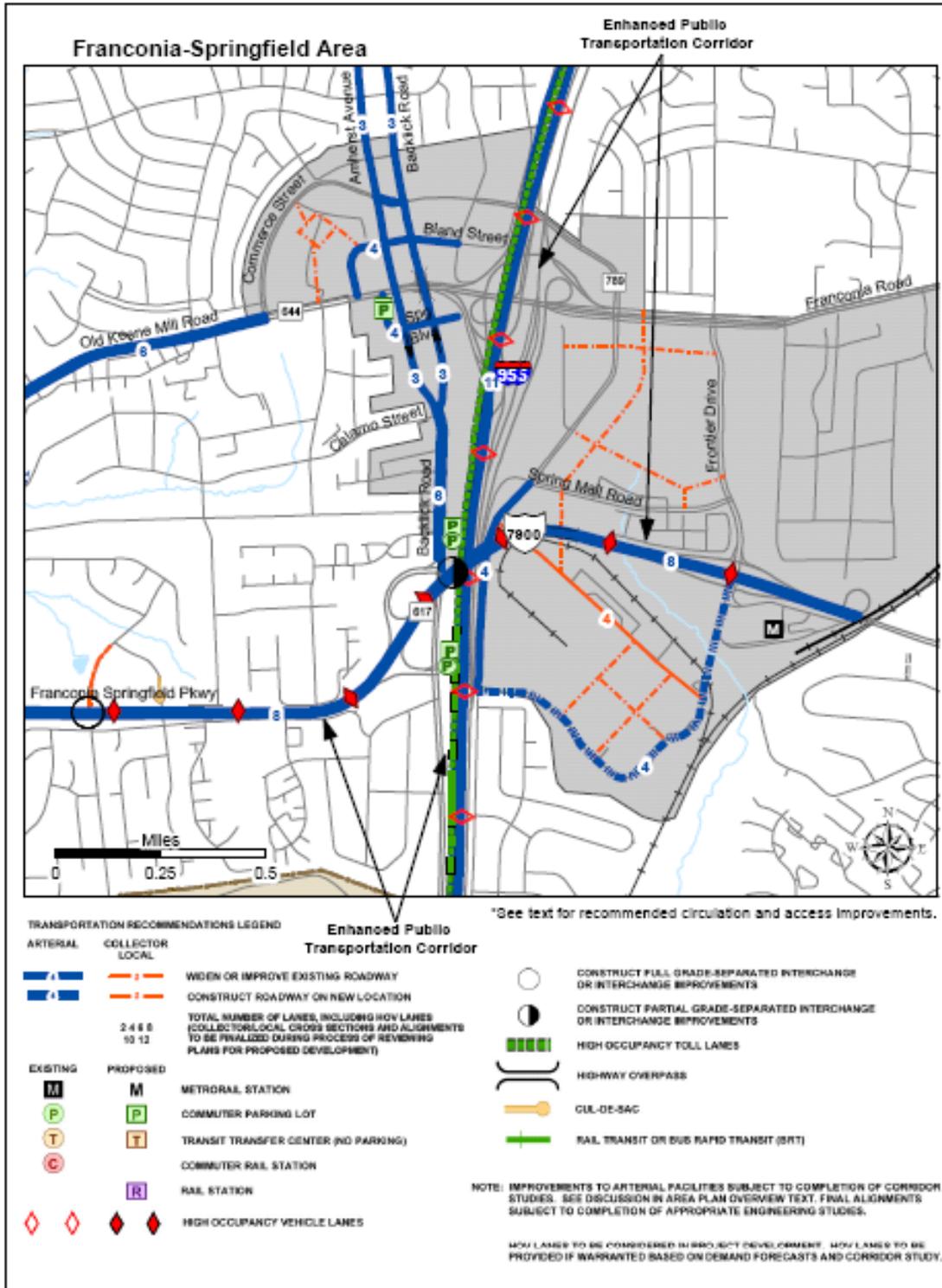
*Major street improvements* – The transportation recommendations for the Franconia-Springfield Area include a number of major street improvements that would add capacity and enhance accessibility to the area. These recommendations include:

- *Franconia-Springfield Parkway 8 lanes between the Fairfax County Parkway and Frontier Drive* - The Franconia-Springfield Parkway is a limited access expressway carrying high volumes of traffic between the Fairfax County Parkway, I-95, and the Franconia-Springfield Area. The Parkway serves as a major access to the Springfield town center, and the primary access to the Joe Alexander Transportation Center/Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. The transportation plan recommends widening the facility to 8 lanes to include HOV lanes providing peak period service between the Joe Alexander Transportation Center, I-95 HOV/HOT lanes, and Fairfax County Parkway.
- *Backlick Road Bridge and one-way paired streets* – In combination with the recommended enhancement of street connectivity in the CBC core, a new bridge should be built over Old Keene Mill Road at Backlick Road, and Amherst Avenue and Backlick Road should be converted through the core area to one-way paired streets. From the Calamo Street intersection to north of the area, Amherst Avenue/Backlick Road would serve as a one-way couplet with 3 full travel lanes in each direction. The one-way couplet would add needed capacity to support redevelopment in the core without having to widen existing streets. It eliminates the forced turns at Cumberland Avenue, reduces intersection conflicts, and

- simplifies signal timing by eliminating left turns at critical CBC intersections, decongesting these intersections. The one-way streets design also provides an opportunity to add new bike lanes running north and south through the area, and wider sidewalks with improved pedestrian crossings of streets in the redeveloping high density, mixed-use center.
- *Backlick Road 6 lanes from Calamo Street to the Franconia-Springfield Parkway ramps* - Backlick Road should be reconstructed in the future to a 6-lane divided arterial cross-section to include wider sidewalks, enhanced median treatment, streetscaping, and safe pedestrian crossings. Site access along the Backlick Road corridor should be consolidated with improved access management as commercial uses along the roadway are upgraded, or replaced through redevelopment.
  - *Bland Street 4 lane improvement* - Bland Street serves as an entryway to the core area for traffic coming from I-95 and points east, while also serving as a connecting road to Amherst Avenue for traffic heading north or south. It will need to be improved to a 4 lane facility in combination with intersection improvements needed at Amherst Avenue and Backlick Road. East of Backlick Road, Bland Street should be designed to function as a main street, with on-street parking, serving the future high-density, mixed-use, core area.
  - *Springfield Boulevard 4 lane improvement* – Springfield Boulevard will require additional capacity and access improvements to serve the 1,000+ space commuter parking garage and multi-modal center planned together with associated development at Old Keene Mill Road. Springfield Boulevard will provide the primary ingress and egress for traffic generated by the commuter facility. Improved lane geometry and signage will be needed to facilitate traffic movements at the intersections with Old Keene Mill Road, Amherst Avenue, and Backlick Road.
  - *Loisdale Road* – Loisdale Road between its intersection with Franconia Road and Spring Mall Road is recommended for improvement to accommodate the new accesses and streetscape improvements associated with the Springfield town center redevelopment. South of the town center, Loisdale Road between Spring Mall Road and Springfield Center Drive is recommended to be improved to a 4 lane section to accommodate growth in traffic on this link as the GSA warehouse area and Springfield industrial park undergo redevelopment.
  - *Frontier Drive Extended* – Frontier Drive, south of its current intersection with the Franconia-Springfield Parkway should be extended to interconnect with the GSA warehouse area roadway network and provide a terminus at Loisdale Road. Frontier Drive Extended is recommended as a major transportation network enhancement in the Franconia-Springfield Area. The extension should function

as a 4-lane divided arterial facility, and include median treatments, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and bike lanes, in concert with the “complete streets” policy recommended for street improvements in the area. The new roadway should provide improved access and a new entrance to the Joe Alexander Transportation Center and Metro station from the south, as well as access to the redeveloping GSA warehouse/ Springfield industrial park area from the Franconia-Springfield Parkway. Equally important, it should allow for a more direct pedestrian access from the Transportation Center to the industrial park area, facilitating transit-oriented development. As part of the design, improvements will also be required to maintain efficient traffic operations at the Transportation Center.

FIGURE 3. Transportation Recommendations



*Collector and local street improvements* – An interconnected network of local streets should be provided in the Franconia-Springfield Area in order to improve vehicular access to individual development sites and facilitate circulation within developments and throughout the activity center. New local street connections help to distribute traffic from arterial to local streets, reducing congestion; improve the walkability of the area, reducing the need for automobile trips; support mixed-use development and higher densities, by making such development more accessible; and enhance transit access, by providing more convenient and direct pathways for circulator and shuttle services. Local street grids are recommended to be implemented in the redevelopment of the Springfield Mall (future town center), in the GSA warehouse/Transportation Center area, and at the Springfield Plaza area in the western portion of the CBC, north of Old Keene Mill Road, as these areas undergo redevelopment. The recommended framework plans, street typologies, cross-sections and intersection plans, described in the Franconia-Springfield Area Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance, appended to this plan, should be used during the implementation of these local street networks.

*Pedestrian and bicycle circulation* - As the Franconia-Springfield Area undergoes redevelopment, improvements will be needed to make the area safer and more friendly for pedestrian and bicyclist travel. These improvements are supported by the Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance. Specific pedestrian and bicycle connectivity improvement recommendations include the following:

- *Develop a pedestrian circulation system* - A pedestrian circulation system emphasizing improved pedestrian safety and circulation through the area should be designed into the streetscape. The pedestrian circulation system should interconnect interior sections of developments with destinations and places at the edges or surrounding the property where people congregate. Logical pathways should be provided through developments that connect to external crossing points. Pedestrian movement and safety should be facilitated in future developments in association with implementation of a wayfinding signage plan. On the edges of properties, wide sidewalks should be provided to allow for safe and more active pedestrian movement. Pedestrian crossings should be incorporated into the redesign of streets around the property, accommodating full pedestrian movements whenever possible. Each major development should adopt a pedestrian circulation plan to integrate pedestrian circulation on the site with areas exterior to the development.
- *Improve the pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Joe Alexander Transportation Center and Springfield Mall (future town center)*-This improvement is recommended in order to strengthen the transit connection between the planned Springfield Mall (future town center) and Joe Alexander Transportation Center by facilitating walk and bike trips from the Metro station, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter rail station, and Metrobus, Fairfax

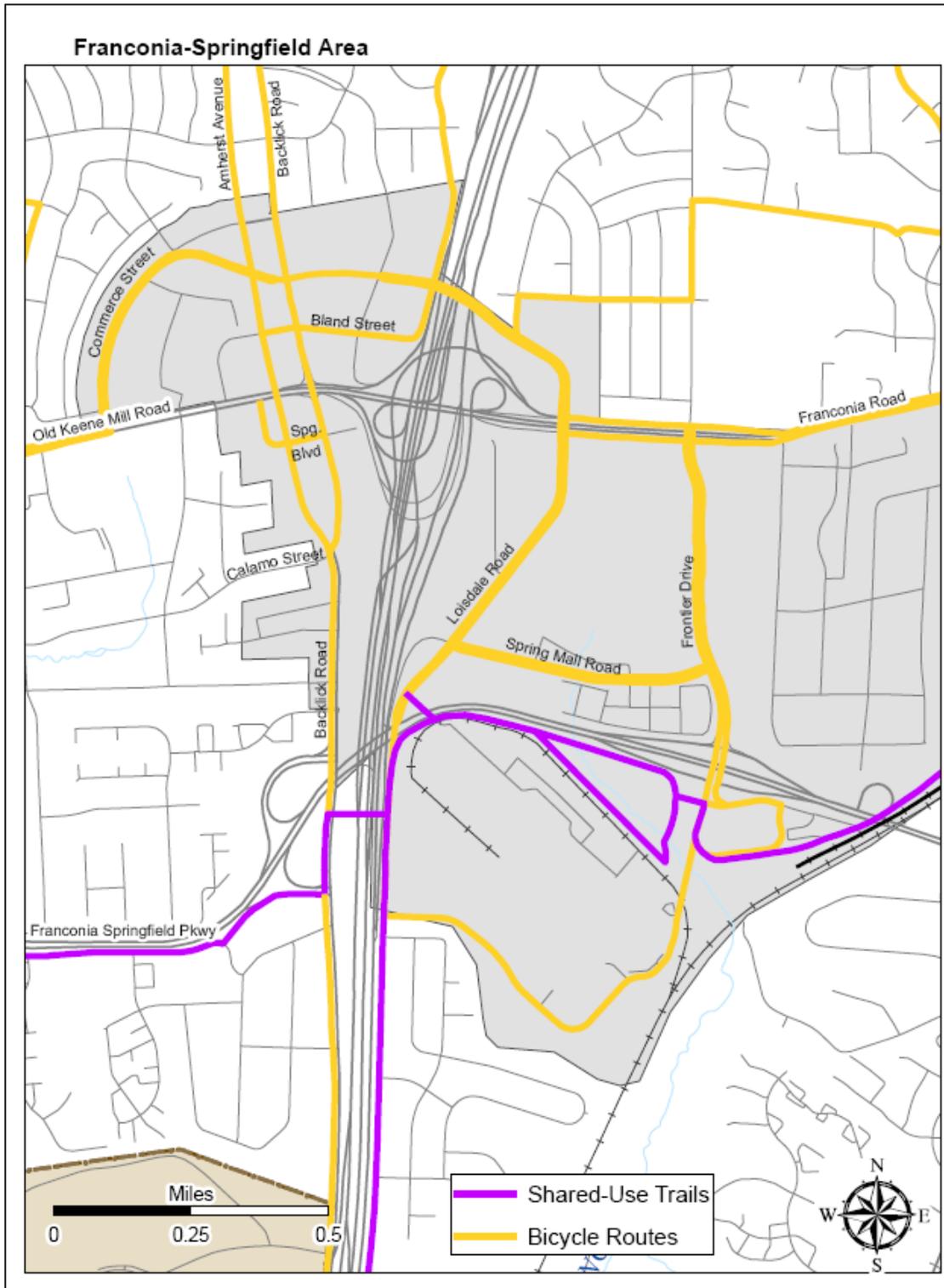
Connector and other transit services congregated at the center. By improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and access to/from the station, automobile travel to the area can be reduced. Redesign of intersections and ramp crossings, wider sidewalks, bike lanes, enhanced lighting, and aesthetic treatments are recommended to improve pedestrian safety and enhance the pedestrian/bike experience. These design and access improvements will strengthen the orientation to Metro and extend the influence of transit into the redeveloping town center area.

- *Improve the pedestrian and bicycle connection across I-95* – Commerce Street currently serves as the only local area street providing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity across I-95. It is the major link between the east and west sides of the Franconia-Springfield Area. The street is currently designed to facilitate through movement and access to the interstate, including ramps to I-95 and I-495. In order to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety on this link and facilitate circulation across I-95, Commerce Street should be upgraded to add bicycle lanes in each direction, physical barriers or separators and/or other design treatments to protect pedestrians from adjacent street traffic, improved signage, and safe pedestrian crosswalks at intersections. The intersection of Commerce Street/Franconia Road/Loisdale Road should be enhanced with features to improve pedestrian safety and facilitate bicycle movement through this complicated intersection and critical gateway area.
- *Integrate safe pedestrian crossings into the design and redesign of streets and intersections* – Safe pedestrian crossings should be integrated into the redesign of streets throughout the area. As illustrated in the Urban Design and Streetscape Guidance, appended to this plan, streets should be designed with wide sidewalks, center medians of sufficient width to allow pedestrians to take refuge when crossing multi-lane arterial roadways, and landscaping and utility panels between the street and sidewalk that provide a safety buffer from traffic. Safe pedestrian movement should be complemented through development of an integrated system of walkways, crossings, signal modifications, signage, and design features integrated into the streetscape. Pedestrian enhancements at crossings may include delineated crosswalks, retiming of traffic signals, installation of countdown signals, sidewalk extensions (bulb-outs), crossings on all legs of intersections, and other design features that are integrated into the street section with the goal of reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, and improving safety.
- *Provide mid-block pedestrian crossings where appropriate* – At locations where pedestrian crossings are expected to be heavy, or the street face or block is very long, a grade-separated pedestrian bridge or signalized at-grade mid-block crossing should be provided in order to ensure pedestrian safety. Such crossings should be provided at major development entrances or access to transit and

commuter facilities, such as the town center, transit centers, and park-and-ride facilities. Mid-block crossings should be designed in conjunction with and integrated into adjacent development whenever possible, and be signed, lighted and marked to clearly identify the pedestrian orientation of the facility.

- *Create a system of bicycle lanes and facilities* – In conjunction with the “complete streets” guidance, an integrated system of bicycle lanes should be provided on the minor arterial streets of the Franconia-Springfield Area, allowing the major destinations in the area to be accessed and interconnected with the County and regional bikeway system, as shown in Figure 4. Minor arterial roadways serving the area such as Commerce Street, Loisdale Road, Backlick Road, Amherst Avenue, and Frontier Drive should be retrofitted to provide on-road bike lanes as these road sections are rebuilt. These bicycle facilities would interconnect with facilities planned or already operating outside the activity center. Supporting features such as storage lockers, racks, and bicycle sharing facilities should be provided at key destinations in the area such as the Joe Alexander Transportation Center and Springfield commuter parking facility and multi-modal center at Old Keene Mill Road.

FIGURE 4. Recommended Bicycle Network



Public Transportation Improvements

The land use plan and development concept for the Franconia-Springfield Area recognizes that street and circulation improvements alone would be insufficient to support the planned development potential, and that a multi-modal approach should be applied in assessing the adequacy of the transportation system. The development concept is predicated upon achievement of at least a 10 percent mode share for public transportation usage in areas away from the Joe Alexander Transportation Center, and an even greater mode share at the transit-oriented developments to be located closer to the station (within approximately a ½ mile walk). Public transportation is defined in the Policy Plan as consisting of transit and high occupancy vehicle use.

The following public transportation improvement recommendations have been developed to guide future development and improve the connectivity of the Franconia-Springfield Area:

*Improved access to the Joe Alexander Transportation Center* - Improving access to the Joe Alexander Transportation Center, which includes the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail station, a VRE commuter rail station, and bus transit services, is critical to improving transportation connectivity and reducing automobile traffic within, to, and from the Franconia-Springfield Area. The Joe Alexander Transportation Center serves as a hub for County, regional, interstate, and local transit services. The current access is highly vehicle-oriented and hostile to pedestrians. New pedestrian and bike infrastructure and street connections are recommended to improve access to the station.

Recommendations to improve access include: 1) improving the existing pedestrian connection through the Frontier Drive/ Franconia-Springfield Parkway underpass with wider sidewalks, enhanced lighting, safer crosswalks, and supporting design features; 2) adding bicycle lanes to both existing Frontier Drive and the future Frontier Drive extension, thus providing safe access for future bicycle commuters to the station from both the north and south directions; 3) providing a direct pedestrian connection between the station and the GSA warehouse area as an important element of the Frontier Drive extension improvement; and 4) providing pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections located within a ½ mile walk of the station.

*Enhanced bus circulator* – Although the Franconia-Springfield Area is currently served by several bus routes and the Metrorail and VRE commuter rail stations, the opportunity exists to enhance transit connectivity through improved service frequency and coverage. Building on the existing Transportation Association of Greater Springfield (TAGS) service, which currently provides weekday circulator service and coverage to areas near the station, three new bus routes are recommended with the goal of greatly enhancing connectivity and service throughout the area. The three routes include a circulator bus running seven days a week all day throughout the area on short headways, in both directions, and two shuttle bus routes providing point-to-point service between the Joe

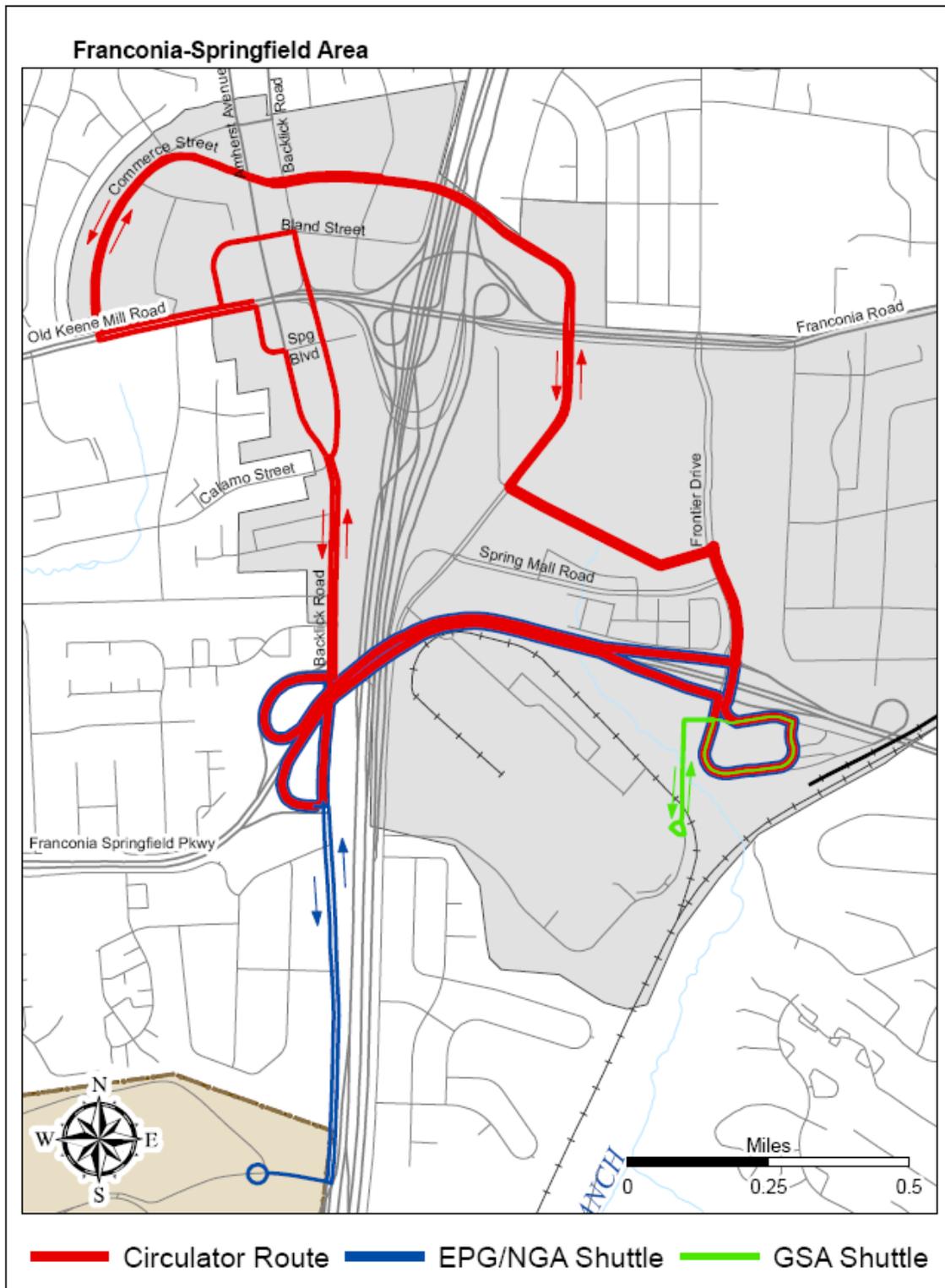
Alexander Transportation Center and GSA, and the Transportation Center and the EPG, running only on weekdays during the peak hours of travel. The routes for these proposed transit services are shown in Figure 5.

The Franconia-Springfield Area circulator bus service is planned to interconnect the Transportation Center and Franconia-Springfield Metro station with the Springfield Mall (future town center), CBC, and other parts of the Franconia-Springfield commercial area. The bus circulator would extend the influence of the Metro system to a larger area, while also providing connectivity across I-95 and between various nodes of activity within the commercial center. In order to provide a high quality of service that can effectively attract new transit riders, the circulator is recommended to run in two directions on shorter frequencies, such as 12 minutes or better, for most of the day, seven days a week. By running in two directions, the headways (or service frequencies) in the areas farthest from the Transportation Center would be effectively reduced by half. This would provide a high level of service comparable to Metrorail operations during peak travel hours. The provision of greatly expanded coverage throughout the area, combined with shorter headways and longer hours of service, will allow the circulator to improve connectivity for employees, shoppers, visitors and residents, while also serving as a branding and marketing vehicle for a revitalized Franconia-Springfield Area.

The circulator service is proposed to be supported by construction of bus shelters throughout the commercial area, with appropriate signage, scheduling information, and other passenger amenities. The circulator is recommended to be funded through a combination of public expenditures for operations and equipment, and private contributions, raised through the development process. As the circulator develops a secure funding base, it is recommended that the service should be administered and operated through a community-based development corporation, transportation association, service district, or similar authority.

*Transit shuttles* -As shown in Figure 5, shuttle services are recommended to be provided between the Transportation Center and GSA warehouse area, and between the Transportation Center and future BRAC-related employment at the EPG. These shuttles are proposed to also operate on shorter headways, such as 12 minute frequencies or better, but only on weekdays during the peak periods of travel. This schedule would allow the shuttles to meet the need to provide commuters to these destinations a competitive transit option to the automobile. The proposed shuttles would be privately operated. Once established, service hours and coverage could be enhanced and more funding secured in the future as additional employment occurs in these areas.

FIGURE 5. Recommended Transit Services



*Commuter parking facility and multi-modal center* – Park-and-ride activity and organized carpooling, or “slugging”, occurs in the Springfield CBC to take advantage of the HOV facility on I-95/I-395 for commuting trips to the Pentagon and Washington DC core employment destinations. The Springfield CBC has been home to a successful slugging operation for more than 30 years. Over 500 commuters currently park in the CBC at four different locations on private lots and congregate at the south side of Old Keene Mill Road near the I-95 entrance ramps to stage carpools going to various employment destinations in the I-95/I-395 corridor.

As the Springfield CBC undergoes revitalization, the long-term availability of these commuter parking spaces will become uncertain. A commuter parking facility of 1000+ spaces combined with a multi-modal transportation center is recommended to be constructed at the south side of Old Keene Mill Road (Land Unit E), where sluggers are currently forming their carpools. The facility is proposed to accommodate community-serving and retail uses that can take advantage of the available parking on evenings and weekends. As the HOT lanes improvements are completed to serve the Shirley Highway (I-95/I-395) and Capital Beltway (I-495) corridors, demand for park-and-ride service in the CBC is expected to grow substantially. More detail on this commuter facility is provided in the Land Unit E guidance of this area.

*Transportation demand management* – Transportation demand management (TDM) programs have been found to be an effective tool for reducing automobile reliance and encouraging use of public transportation and non-motorized transportation modes. While a TDM program is not a solution to transportation problems in and of itself, if effectively administered and enforced it can be a complement to the provision of more capital-intensive improvements and services. TDM programs are most effective when applied at the employer level, where there is management supervision and control, and employee travel behavior can best be monitored. TDM measures may consist of employee services, programs, facilities, agreements, and/or subsidies, all designed to bring about trip reductions (see Figure 6).

TDM programs are recommended to be established as a function of all future development in the Franconia-Springfield Area. The TDM program should encourage the use of transit, HOV, and non-motorized transportation, and employ a variety of measures to reduce automobile trips. The TDM program should achieve specified trip reduction targets identified for phases of the development. It should be maintained and funded by the business owner and/or homeowner’s association. The TDM program should be designed to work in conjunction with and complement the transit, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity improvements identified in the plan. TDM measures employed should facilitate and complement these physical improvements and street design features. The TDM program adopted should identify a full complement of measures that could be implemented, including alternative transportation services, employee support facilities

and/or programs, and pricing measures, and should include enforcement, evaluation, and penalty provisions in the event trip reduction thresholds are not achieved.

Commensurate with the trip reduction levels identified during implementation, the TDM program should achieve a minimum level of at least 20 percent trip reduction in non-transit-oriented development (TOD) areas of the Franconia-Springfield Area, attributable to support for and provision of transit service (at least 10% of the mode share), and an expectation that additional TDM program elements will achieve greater results. In designated TOD areas (approximately within a ½ mile or 5-10 minute walk to the station platform), established trip reduction thresholds should be substantially higher, to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Trip reduction levels should be identified in the traffic study and realized through the TDM program with a detailed monitoring process. These reductions are predicated upon the provision of attractive, safe, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections by the development, enhanced bus circulator service as described and recommended in the plan, and street improvements that further these objectives.

**FIGURE 6: Examples of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Measures**

**Individual Employer TDM Measures**

*Alternative Transportation Services*

- Shuttle Bus (es)
- Company Vanpools
- Telecommuting

*Support Facilities/Programs*

- On-Site Transportation Coordinator
- Employer Ridematching Services
- Preferred high Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) Parking Locations
- Flexible Work Hours
- Guaranteed Ride Home Programs

*Pricing Programs*

- Parking Management/Pricing Programs
- Subsidies for use of HOV Modes

*Implementation*

- CEO Commitment
- Proffers/Negotiated Agreements
- Participation in Transportation Management Association (TMA)

**Area-wide TDM Measures**

*Alternative Transportation Options/Services*

- Expand Transit Services (peak, off peak and midday hours)
- Carpools, Vanpools
- Shuttle Bus (es)

*Support Facilities/Programs*

- Transit Center
- Park & Ride lots
- HOV Lanes
- Parking Location
- Multi Employer Ridematching Services
- Guaranteed Ride Home Program

*Pricing Programs*

- Road/Congestion Pricing Programs
- Parking Management/Pricing Programs
- Transportation Allowances

*Implementation*

- Employer Trip Reduction: Reduction Ordinance
- Parking Management Ordinance
- Site Design Controls
- Proffers/Negotiated Agreements
- TMA Coordination

### **Urban Parks and Open Spaces**

*On-Site* – The Franconia-Springfield Area has been developed with automobile-oriented commercial uses having little to no park space. As the area redevelops, the addition of urban park amenities and park spaces would be appropriate. Use of the urban parkland standard (1.5 acre per 1,000 residents plus 1 acre per 10,000 employees) and the Fairfax County Park Authority Urban Park Framework document that describes urban park design and park types should be used as guidance to integrating future urban parks within any development that occurs. The addition of urban parks would also support connectivity and placemaking goals. Urban parks sites should be publicly accessible, within walkable distances of most residential and mixed-use areas, and reasonably distributed throughout the Franconia-Springfield Area. To accommodate a wide range of users and activities, the following types of urban parks should be developed, in accordance with the draft Fairfax County Urban Parks Framework, as modified by the Fairfax County Park Authority:

- *Common Green* – The common green park spaces serve a civic function by providing publicly-accessible opportunities for passive and active recreation. A central lawn is the main focus of this type of park, although the design and function of these parks offer multiple spaces or “rooms” to serve complementary uses or activities. Additional facilities such as programmable spaces, off-leash dog areas, community garden plots, landscaping, water features, shade structures, gathering areas, amphitheaters, hardscape areas, bocce courts, urban picnic tables, board game tables, tot lots and playgrounds, small skate parks, fitness courses and paved trails, and sport courts are components of the common green. The Transit Station Area and the Community Business Center in the Franconia-Springfield Area, each should contain at least one common green space. These spaces should serve as focal points for the areas and should be at least one acre in size. The common green spaces could be publicly, privately, or jointly owned, developed, and operated.
- *Urban/Civic Plaza* – The urban or civic plaza describes public gathering spaces set aside for civic purposes and commercial supporting activities. Civic plazas are usually located at the intersection of important streets or other significant locations and also may have multiple “rooms,” similar to the common green. The plazas serve as unique placemaking features that include flexible, programmable spaces. Size may depend on the context, function, and area, but should be at least one acre. The design should feature primarily hardscape elements, but may also include trees or other landscaping, seating, public art, or water features. Plazas such as these could support open air markets, concerts, festivals, outdoor exercise classes, or special events. Public/private partnerships are encouraged to fund the construction of these spaces.

- *Pocket Park* – Usually less than one acre in size, these urban parks are characterized as well-distributed, small-scale open spaces incorporated into developments and designed for casual use by people working and living in the immediate area. Pocket parks may consist of hardscape elements or lawn and landscaped areas, seating, and visual amenities. These places should likely be integrated throughout the Transit Station Area and Community Business Center into development projects to provide publicly accessible outdoor spaces for casual, social activities, such as gathering areas, outdoor cafes, fountains, or other focal points of interest.

As is shown on the Franconia-Springfield Area Systems Map (Figure 2), the asterisks represent the types of urban parks at different placemaking “scales” and suggested locations where they should be located to best promote connectivity and sense of place. The largest asterisk represents a significantly scaled major open space, such as the common green. The medium-sized asterisk represents urban/civic plazas. The smallest asterisks represent pocket parks. These parks are the small, infill-type spaces to be incorporated into mixed use developments. In addition to those areas indicated on the Systems Map, development should be creative in its application of recreation spaces and identify non-traditional locations, such as rooftops or interior public spaces to address public leisure and recreation needs. Indoor program space within private buildings is also desirable. This may include space for exercise and fitness classes or educational workshops.

*Off-Site* – Redevelopment in the Franconia-Springfield Area also would create additional need for active recreation such as field sports and other athletic activities. These active recreation facilities would require larger sites that cannot reasonably be accommodated within the Franconia-Springfield Area. These recreation impacts should be mitigated through enhancements at existing parks and schools outside of the Franconia-Springfield Area, but within the service area of proposed redevelopment. These sites provide an opportunity for larger-scale recreational facilities to serve the study area residents.

As redevelopment occurs, these most proximate parks can be improved to include enhanced recreation facilities, including adding full cut off lights or converting existing fields to synthetic turf. Parks in the service area where facility capacity enhancements might occur include Lee District, Franconia, Hoes Road and Manchester Lakes. Additionally, several existing park sites are located at the edges of the area, including Lee High Park, Springfield Forest Park, Springvale Park, and Loisdale Park. These parks are close enough that pedestrian and bicycle linkages to the Franconia-Springfield Area should be constructed.

Several larger parks, which can be accessed by vehicles, will also serve new residents of the area. These parks include Lake Accotink, the Cross County Trail in the Accotink Stream Valley, and Huntley Meadows. Park enhancements to accommodate

the future development could include trail improvements and amenities, and upgrading of courts, playgrounds, picnic facilities, RECenters, family recreation areas and nature centers.

Organized open space available to the public for active and passive recreation also exists at surrounding public school sites. These include Garfield Elementary School, Forestdale Elementary School, Springfield Estates Elementary School, Francis Scott Key Middle School, and Robert E. Lee High School. Additionally, existing natural systems can be found in the Franconia-Springfield Area. These open spaces are existing, unorganized spaces and natural ecosystems whether by design or naturally occurring. They are green spaces, but are not public and do not support recreation activities and are planned to remain as such. They function as storm water management areas, wetland, or green buffer. They include the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Storm Water Management Area, the area south of Springfield Center Drive, and Hampton Creek.

A strong pedestrian link should be provided to the Cross County Trail within the Accotink Stream Valley Park to the west of the CBC. This linkage will provide the residents a connection to the major 40-mile north-south trail system in the County, to Lake Accotink Park and other park resources along this trail.

### **Heritage Resources**

Any development or ground disturbance in the Franconia-Springfield Area on private and public land should be preceded by a heritage resource study and alternatives should be explored for the avoidance, preservation or recovery of significant heritage resources that are found. In those areas where significant heritage resources have been recorded, an effort should be made to preserve them. If preservation is not feasible, then, in accordance with countywide objectives and policies as cited in the Heritage Resources section of the Policy Plan, the threatened resource should be thoroughly recorded and in the case of archaeological resources, the artifacts recovered.

### **Sustainability**

As the Franconia-Springfield Area evolves into a multi-modal, mixed-use place, long-term sustainability will be a key consideration in evaluating redevelopment. By employing sustainability in planning and design, the Franconia-Springfield Area should promote increased quality of life for the public and improve the quality of natural resources. The Policy Plan's Environment Section provides guidance for green building practices and standards applicable to Community Business Centers and Transit Station Areas. Redevelopment in the Franconia-Springfield Area should include sustainable practices in accordance with the Environment Section of the Policy Plan guidance, such as the achievement of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and

Environmental Design (LEED) certification or equivalent third-party certification. Considerations for sustainable practices may include:

- *Low Impact Development Stormwater Techniques* - Innovative stormwater management techniques should be utilized, which may include retention and detention, infiltration measures, or other means to reduce the impacts of stormwater run-off. These techniques should exceed the requirements for the baseline level in the areas of stormwater management and should complement other green and sustainable features within this redevelopment.
- *Site Design and Construction* - New and renovated buildings should be designed to minimize impacts to the environment, incorporating solar orientation for heating and cooling, on-site renewable energy production, low energy lighting fixtures, green roofs, and the use of recycled materials during construction. Wastewater should be reused on site where possible.
- *Habitat and Wetlands* - Portions of a site that include significant native habitat or wetlands should be protected, native species should be restored in open spaces, and invasive species should be removed. Trees should be planted throughout the area, and water use for irrigation purposes should be minimized.
- *Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design* - Building layout and streetscape facilities should provide enhanced pedestrian accessibility to minimize automobile dependence in the Franconia-Springfield Area, supporting the connectivity goals described in the Urban Design and Streetscape Guidelines appendix.

## **Noise**

Given the proximity to Interstate 95, Franconia-Springfield Parkway and other roadways, significant noise impacts are likely in some parts of the Franconia-Springfield Area. Current Comprehensive Plan policies recommend against new residential development and other noise-sensitive uses in areas where current and future noise levels exceed 75 decibel (dBA) day-night loudness (DNL). However, residential development and other noise-sensitive uses may be planned and located in these areas due to the compact, urban nature of the Franconia-Springfield Area plan. Such noise sensitive uses in these locations may be considered only with the completion of a noise study during the review of the development, noise mitigation measures, and, potentially, the provision of disclosure statements and a post-development noise study. The noise study during development review should clearly define the noise levels impacting the proposed uses as a measure of dBA DNL. The noise study should include noise contours with current noise levels and future noise levels based on a minimum 20-year traffic volume projection for the roadway and other transportation noise sources.

For those studies that indicate noise levels in excess of 75 dBA DNL on proposed noise sensitive uses, mitigation measures should be provided with the goal of achieving 45 dBA DNL for interior space and 65 dBA DNL for outdoor recreation areas. Attenuation may include siting and orientation of the noise sensitive use, as well as the use of building materials and noise barriers. Disclosure statements should be provided to potentially affected residents and users within the impacted uses or units, which clearly identify the mitigated and unmitigated noise levels for interior space and the noise levels for any affected balconies. Post-development noise studies should be conducted to help staff evaluate the effectiveness of interior noise mitigation measures.

### **Affordable Housing & Universal Design**

Any redevelopment in the Franconia-Springfield Area should conform to County policies on affordable housing which includes conformance to the Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance (ADU) and the Board of Supervisors Workforce Housing Policy (WDU). Per County policy, any residential use should provide at a minimum 12% of new units as affordable housing. The residential use should accommodate a variety of households such as families, senior housing and residential studio units. The units, at a minimum, should meet ADA requirements and accommodate universal design.

### **Schools**

The impact of development on schools should be mitigated. The redevelopment should work with the community and Fairfax County Public Schools to identify the appropriate commitments to address projected impacts.