



# FAIRFAX CENTER AREA STUDY SUBURBAN CENTER CORE AREA

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Phase III Update, January 2024



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

## **THE FAIRFAX CENTER AREA**

The Fairfax Center Area is located, appropriately, in the geographic center of Fairfax County, and is a mixed use employment activity center with thriving neighborhoods, shopping, offices, nearby parks, and public facilities. The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, the County's long-range guide for decision-making about the built and natural environment, divides the Fairfax Center Area into three land use categories: a mixed use Suburban Center, predominately

residential Suburban Neighborhoods, and, on the Center's periphery, Low Density Residential Areas.

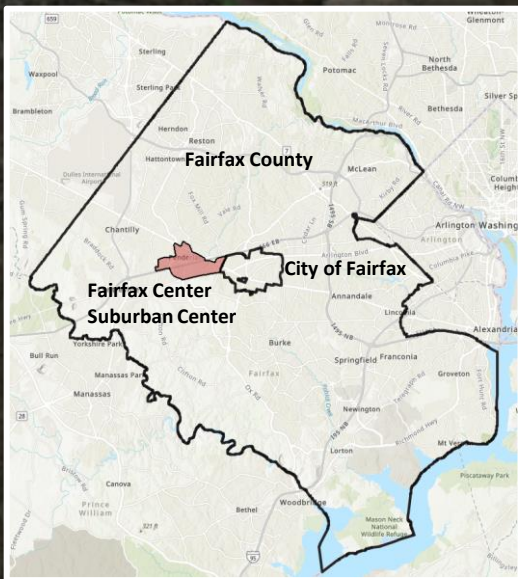
The Fairfax Center Area extends over four Supervisor Districts, Sully, Providence, Braddock, and Springfield, with the core of the Suburban Center in the Braddock and Springfield districts.

## **ABOUT THE STUDY**

The Fairfax Center Area has been the subject of several replanning efforts over the past decade, each focusing on different aspects of the area. The current planning effort, Phase III, examines the suburban Core Area where the highest intensity of mixed-use development is envisioned, leveraged and supported by enhanced multimodal connectivity and future access to public transit options along the Interstate 66 corridor. Locations within the Core Area include the Fairfax County Government Center, Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax Corner, Fairfax Towne Center, Fair Oaks Promenade, and other sites.

This report is intended to guide Phase III by detailing existing conditions in the suburban Core Area, including the area's demographics, land use, multimodal transportation, the environment, schools, and parks/open space. Information sources include, but are not limited to, prior studies and data produced by Fairfax County and its consultants, The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and other publicly-available data.

The Core Area's existing conditions were last evaluated in 2013 as part of the existing conditions report for Phase 1 of the study. That report is available upon request.



### **PHASE 1: 2013**

Phase 1 of the study examined the Low Density Residential Areas and Suburban Neighborhoods at the periphery of the study area.

### **PHASE 2: 2016**

Phase 2 focused on the overall vision for the Suburban Center and recommended areas for further analysis, pending a transportation study.

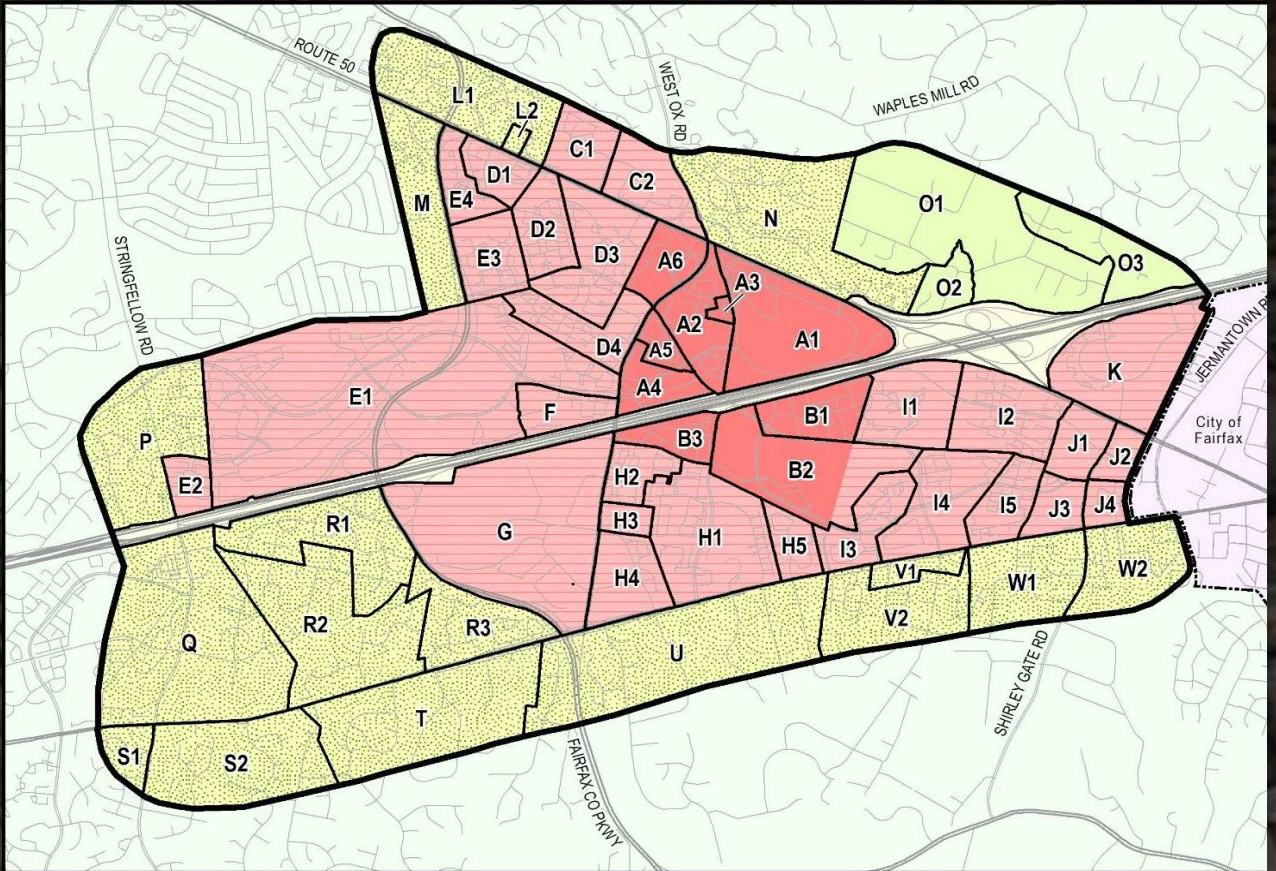
### **PHASE 3: 2023-**

Phase 3 includes the recommended transportation study and evaluates the land uses and intensities within the Core Area. A key part of Phase 3 is an update to the vision of the **Fairfax County Government Center Complex**.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/>

# THE FAIRFAX CENTER AREA



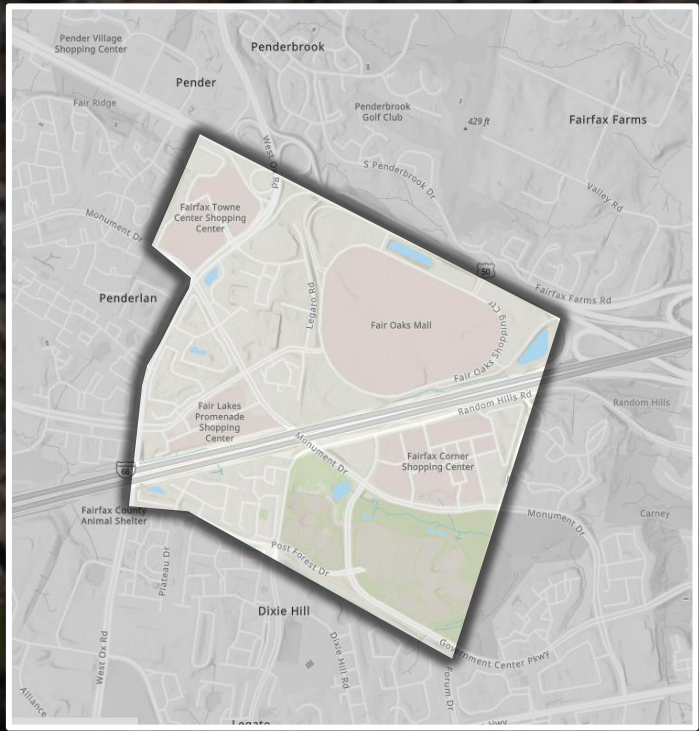
**Concept Map**  
Fairfax Center Area

Prepared by DPZ September 2016  
Reflecting Amend 2013-III-FC1 (B)

<b>Key</b>	Suburban Center (Core)	Fairfax Center Area Boundary
Suburban Center (Non-core)	Sub-Unit Boundary	
Suburban Neighborhood		
Low Density Residential Area		

0 2000 4000 Feet

## Concept for Future Development



The Comprehensive Plan's Concept for Future Development divides the county into multiple nodes of growth. The Fairfax Center Area contains both low-intensity suburban neighborhoods and the Fairfax Center Suburban Center, where more intense, mixed-use growth is planned to foster economic development around major transportation corridors.

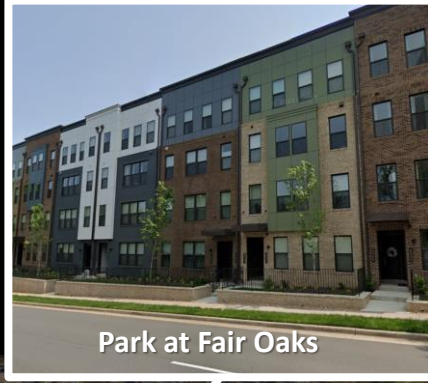
The core of the Suburban Center, the focus of this study, is comprised of Land Units A and B. Full recommendations for the Fairfax Center Area are found in the Comprehensive Plan.

*The Suburban Core Area (Land Units A and B)*

# CHARACTER – RESIDENTIAL



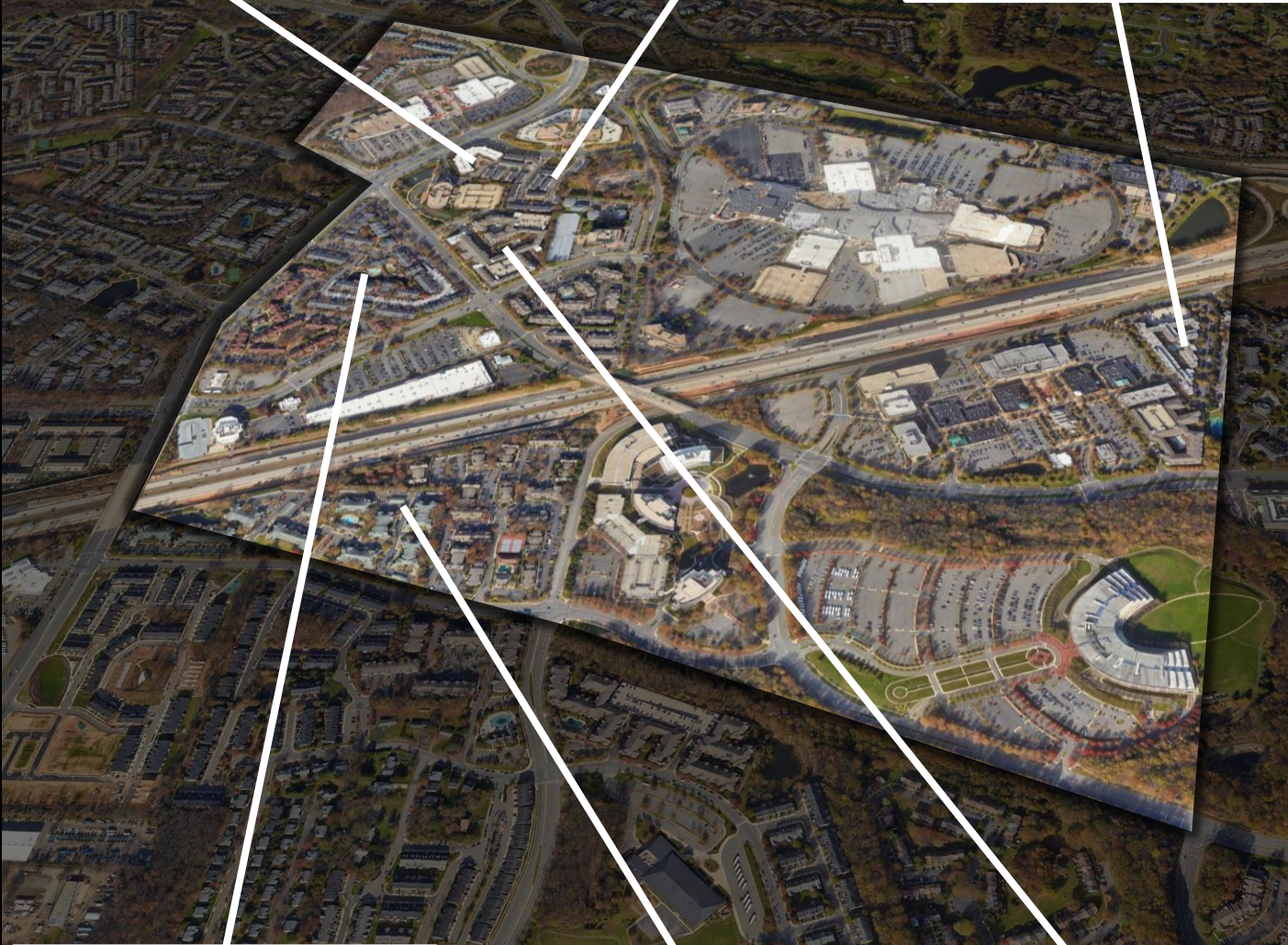
Gables Centrepoint



Park at Fair Oaks



Camden Fairfax Corner



Halstead Fair Oaks



Fair Oaks Landing

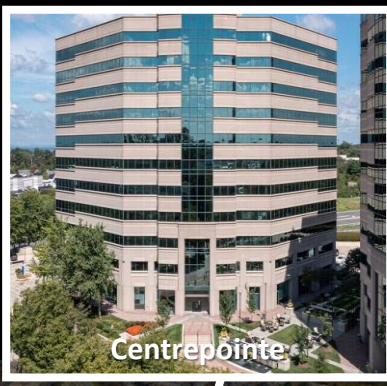


Camden Monument Place

CHARACTER – NON-RESIDENTIAL



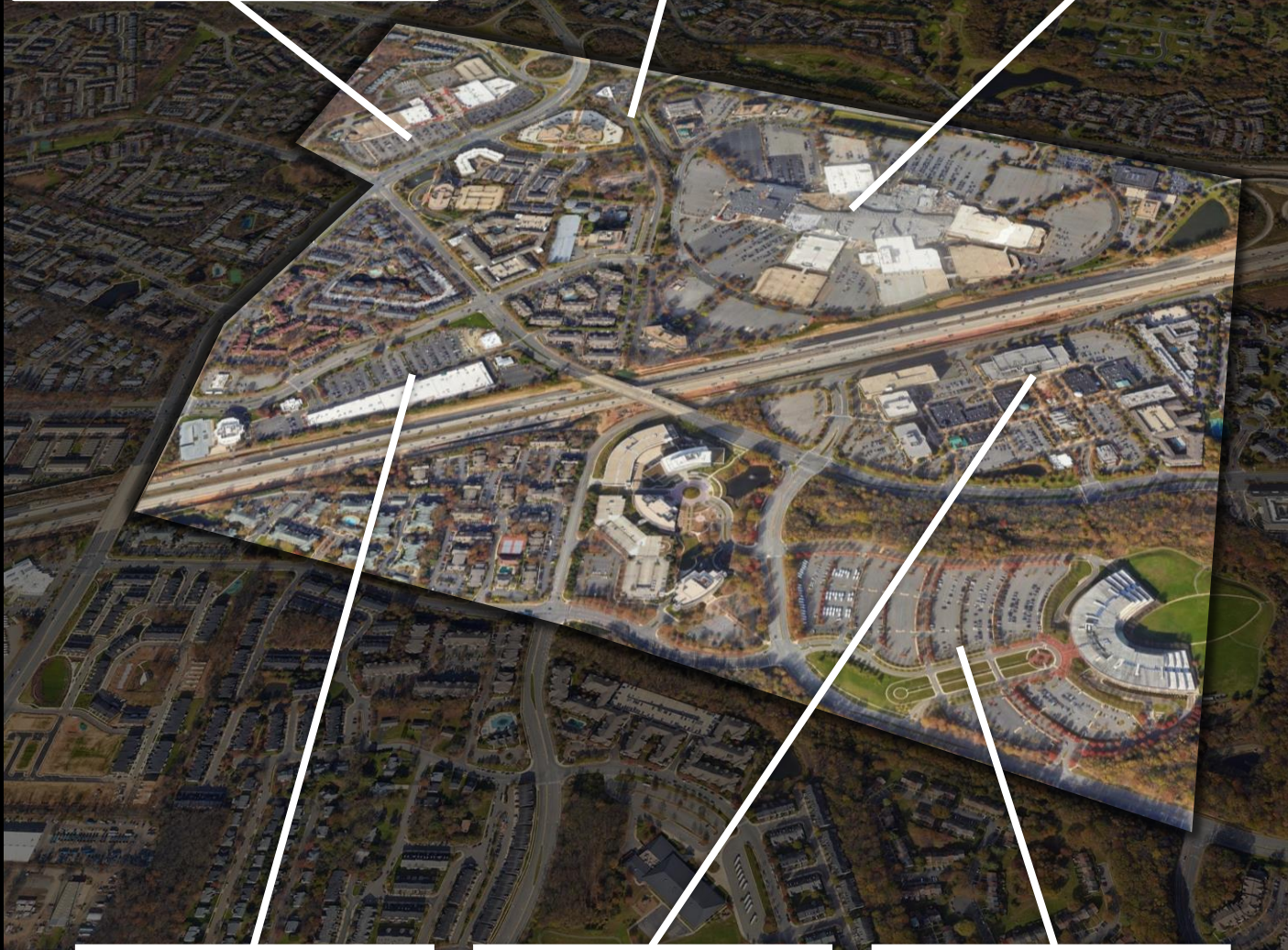
Fairfax Towne Center



Centrepointe



Fair Oaks Mall



Fair Lakes Promenade

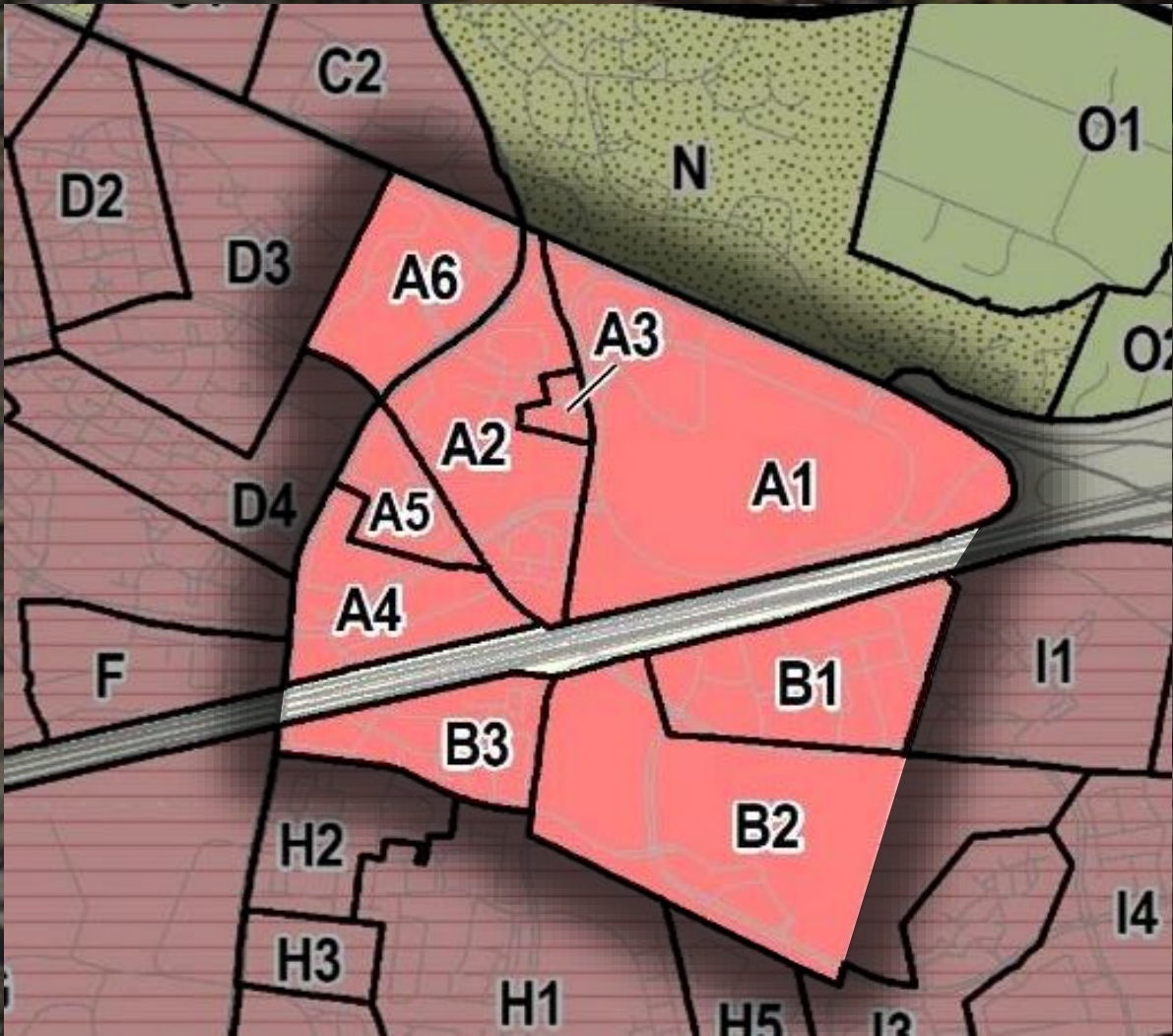


Fairfax Corner



Fairfax County Government Center

# CORE AREA PLANNED LAND USE



Land Unit	Overlay Recommendation
A1	Mall Property - Mixed Use up to 1.0 FAR Remainder – Retail, Office, Hotel up to 0.65 FAR
A2	Office Mixed Use up to 1.0 FAR
A3	Institutional Use up to 0.5 FAR Office use up to 1.0 FAR
A4	Office Mixed Use up to 0.5 FAR
A5	Office Mixed Use up to 0.5 FAR
A6	Office Mixed Use up to 0.45 FAR
B1	Office Mixed Use up to 0.35 FAR, 300-room hotel; Option for up to 1.0 FAR for Fairfax Corner area
B2	Government Center: Office Mixed Use up to 0.35 FAR; Option for affordable housing
B3	Residential Use at 20 dwelling units per acre

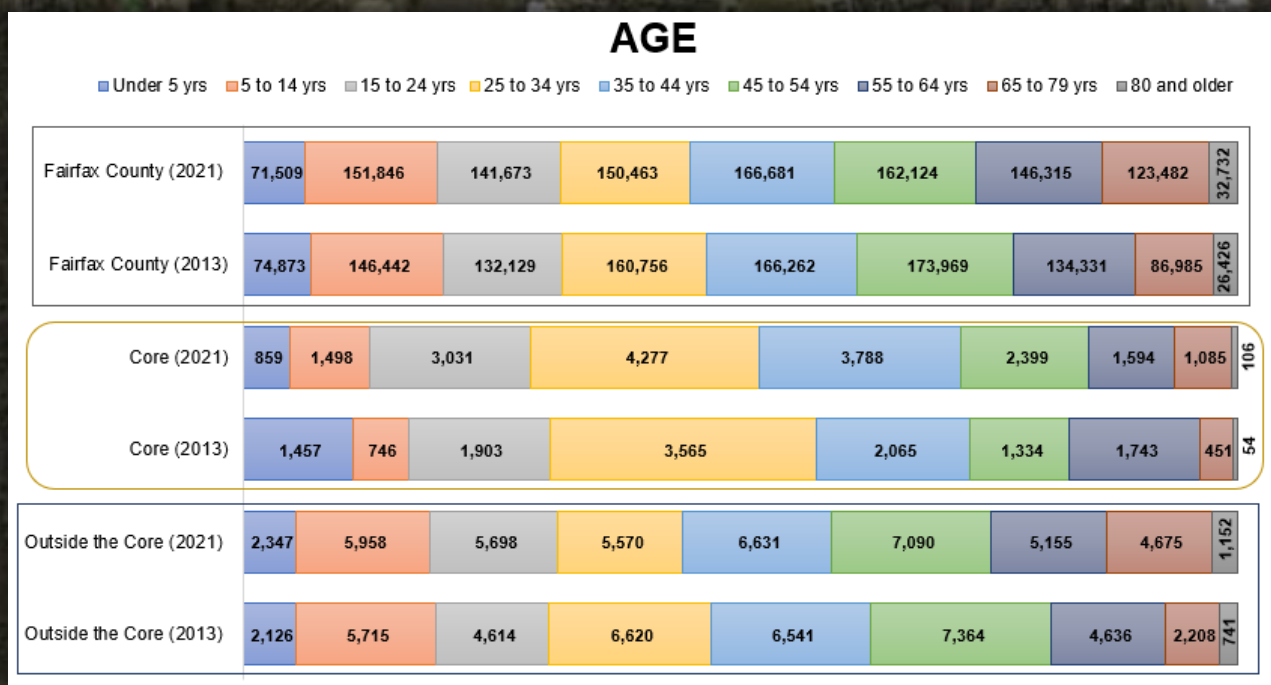
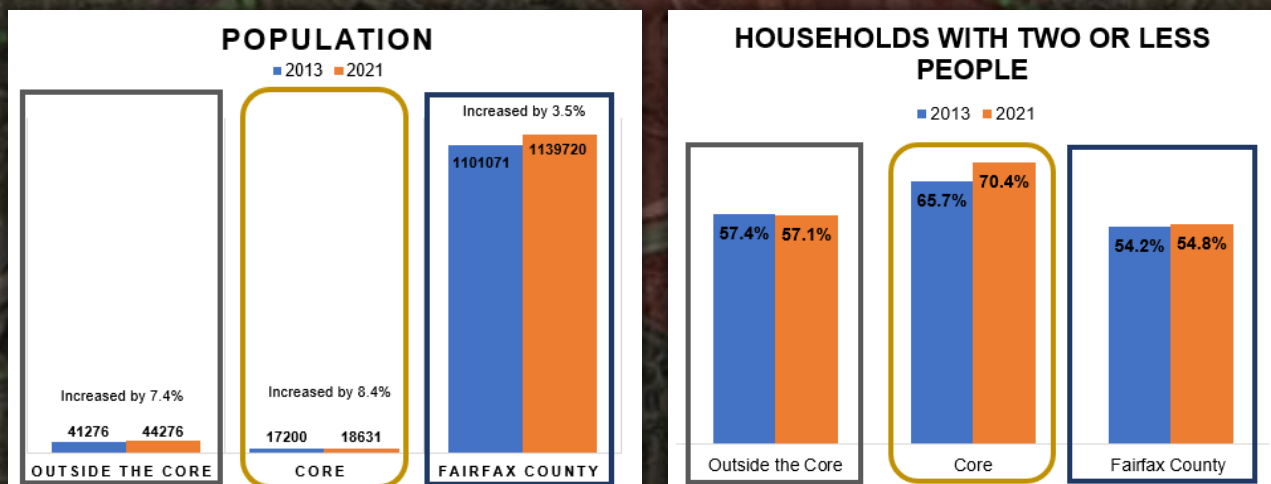
# DEMOGRAPHICS – HOUSEHOLDS/AGE

In examining the Suburban Core’s Area’s demographics, it is helpful to compare those living in the Suburban Core, those within the broader Fairfax Center Area, and the County as a whole. The core of the Fairfax Center Area is home to a diverse population. According to the 2021 Census, there are 18,637 residents in the Census tracts that make up the Fairfax Center Core Study Area. The Core Area is a desirable place to live: between 2013 and 2021, the population increased by 8.4%; a higher population increase than the area outside the core, and Fairfax County.

Residents in the Core Area are younger than in other areas of the County. The current median age for the population in the core is 33.8 years. The population of the area is younger than that outside the Core Area (39.7 years) and of the county (38.3 years). Yet the population is aging: The median age increased from 2013 to 2021 by 10% within the core, 7.9% outside the core, and 2.4% for the county.

Approximately 15.4% of the core population is under the age of 18, lower than that outside the core (23.1%). The population under the age of 18 grew from 2013, at that time, the core was at 14.7%, and outside the core was at 22.4%. A majority (70.4%) of households have two or fewer people. This is higher than outside the core and the county, both in 2013 and 2021.

44.7% of the population living in the core are married; 44.3% of the population over age 15 has never married (doesn't include divorced or widowed).



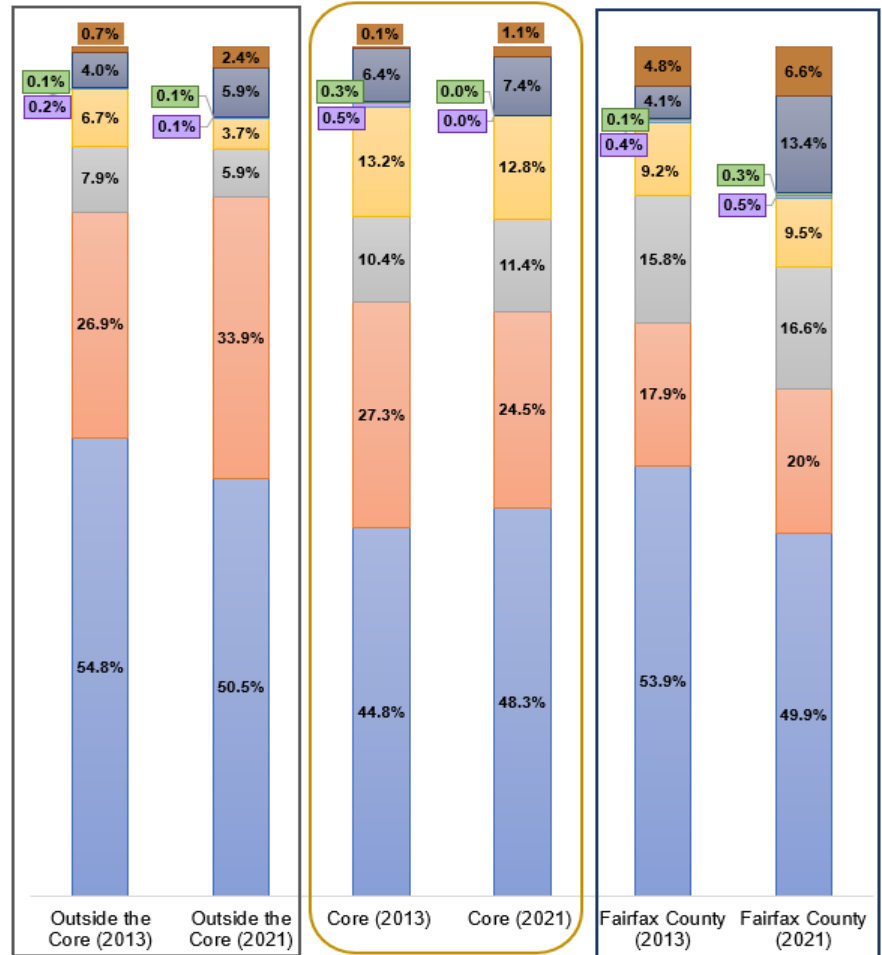
# DEMOGRAPHICS – RACE/LANGUAGE

The population of the Core Area is racially and ethnically diverse. According to 2021 estimates, White residents make up 48.4% of the population, an increase from 2013. Asian residents make up 24.5%, a decrease from 2013. Hispanic or Latino origin residents make up 11.4%, an increase from 2013. Black or African American residents make up 12.8%, a slight decrease from 2013. Residents of two or more races make up 7.4%, an increase from 2013. American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander both saw a decrease to 0% in 2021. In comparison to areas outside of the Core, as well as the County as a whole, the Core area’s racial makeup has remained relatively stable since 2013. The Core’s increased percentage of White residents, and decrease in Asian residents, run counter to Countywide trends.

The diversity of the Core Area is also reflected in the number of languages that are spoken at home. 57% of residents speak only English at home, an increase from 2013. 19.2% speak an Asian/ Pacific Islander Language, a decrease from 2013. 8.7% speak an Indo-European Language, an increase from 2013. 9% speak Spanish, an increase from 2013. Residents who spoke other languages grew from 4.3% to 6.1% from 2013 to 2021

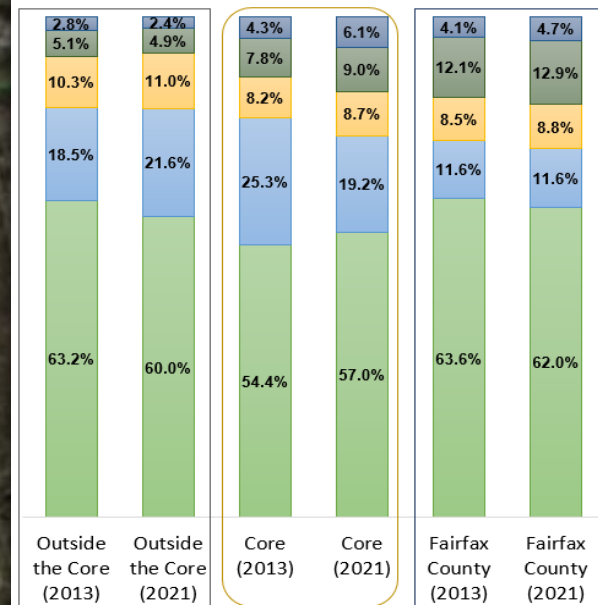
## RACIAL COMPOSITION

- White alone
- Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Two or More Races
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Some Other Race



## LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AGE 5 AND OLDER

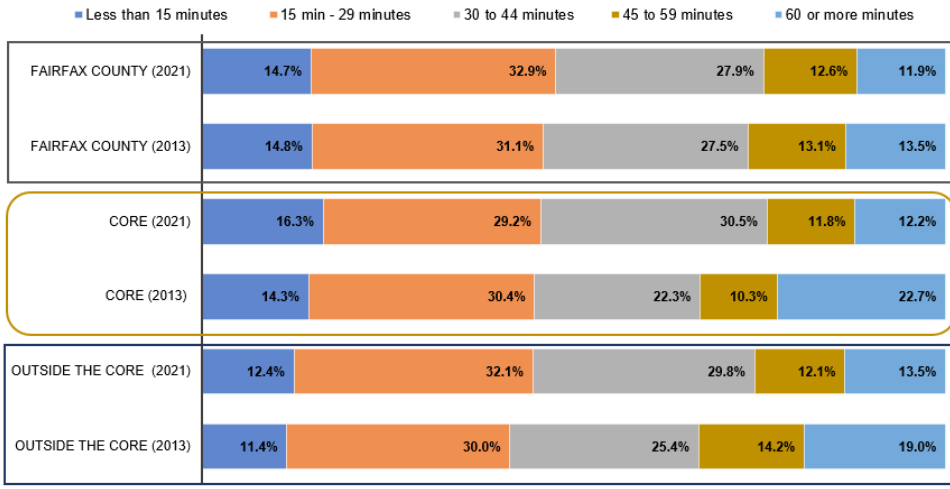
- Other languages
- Other Indo-European languages
- Speak only English
- Spanish
- Asian and Pacific Island languages





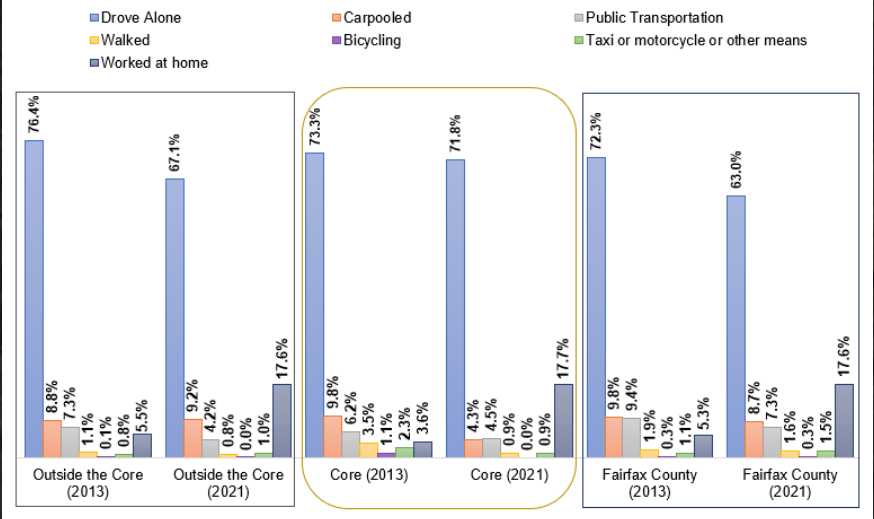
# DEMOGRAPHICS – TRAVEL HABITS

## TRAVEL TIMES TO WORK WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OLDER



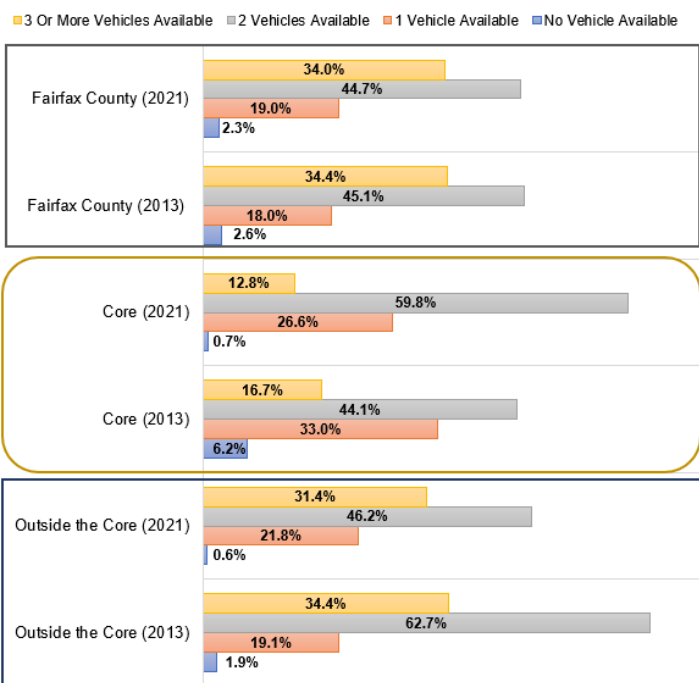
The majority of workers drove a car alone to work (71.8% of workers ages 16 and older), while 4.3% carooled, and 4.5% took public transportation. Walking and biking were at 0.9% and 0%, respectively. The amount of those who worked at home increased from 3% in 2013 to 17% in 2021, which is consistent with the area outside the Core Area and the county.

## MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OLDER



Commuting patterns in the Core have changed over the past decade, mostly due to the increases in remote work. Today, the estimated average travel time for workers (age 16 and older) is 31 minutes. Approximately 16.3% of workers have a commute of 15 minutes or less. Approximately 24% of workers have a commute of 45 minutes or more.

## VEHICLES PER HOUSEHOLD



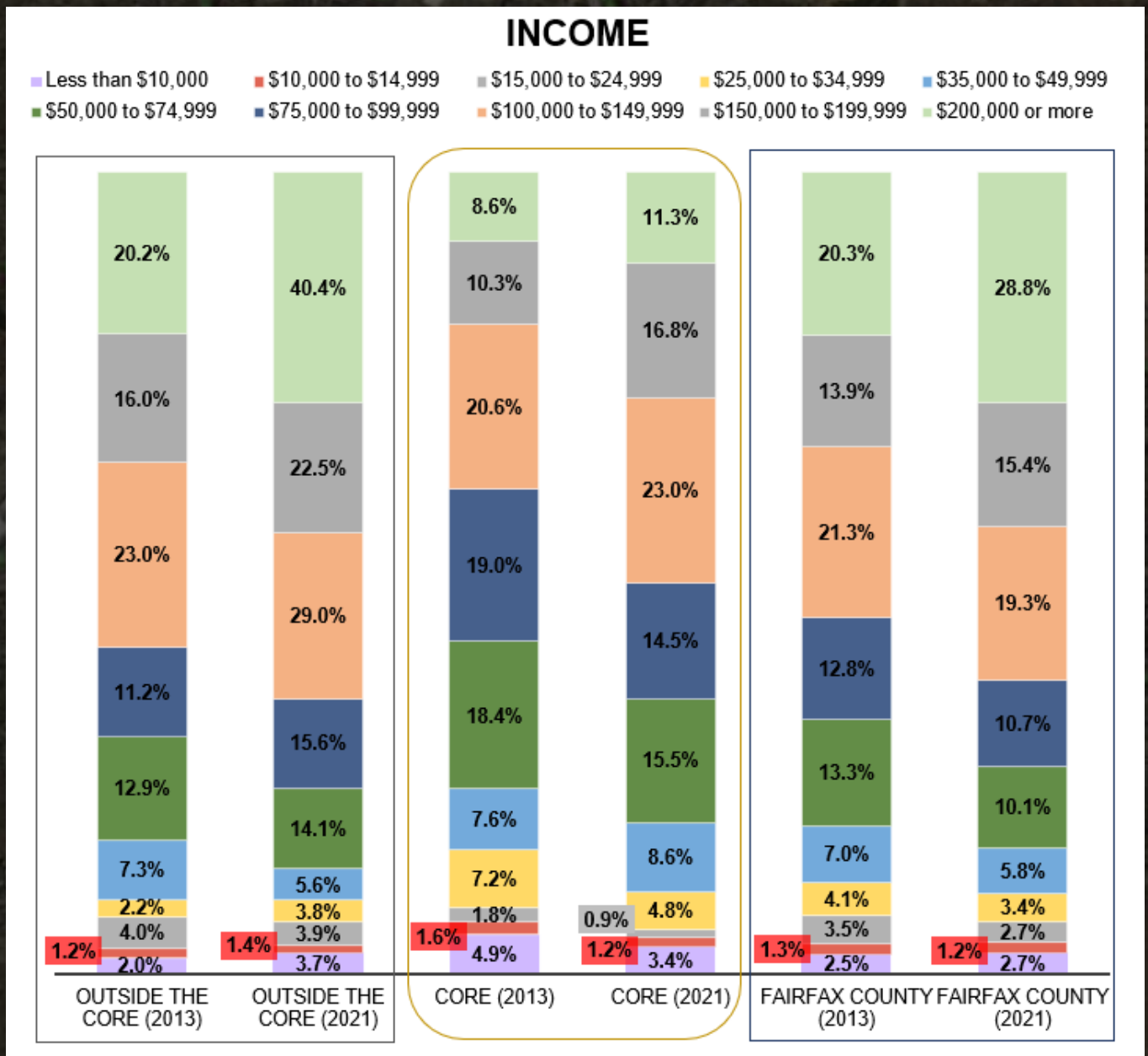
Importantly, the last decade has seen a decline of Core Area area residents using public transit, taxis, carpooling, biking, and walking to travel to work. This is not due to a shift to driving alone, which also slightly decreased, but rather the transition to working from home or remotely.

A majority of households within the Core Area have either one (26.6%) or two (59.8%) vehicles, while a small portion (less than 1%) of households have no vehicle. The number of households with access to two or more cars has increased since 2013.

# DEMOGRAPHICS - INCOME

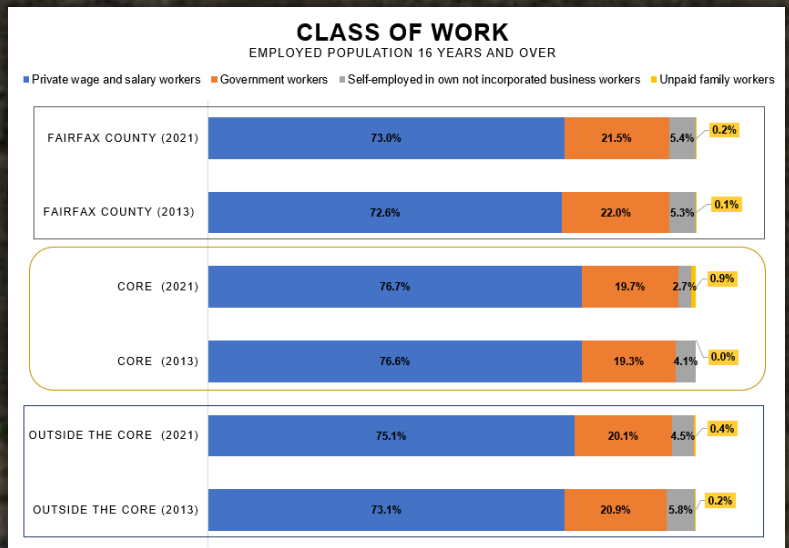
The Core Area contains households earning a wide range of income levels, with approximately 19% of residents making less than \$50,000 per year and 51% making over \$100,000. The core median household income is substantially less than in the area outside the core and the county.

In general, the Core Area has become more affluent in the past decade, with increases in those making over \$100,000 and the percentage of those making under \$100,000 showing decreases.



# DEMOGRAPHICS - EMPLOYMENT

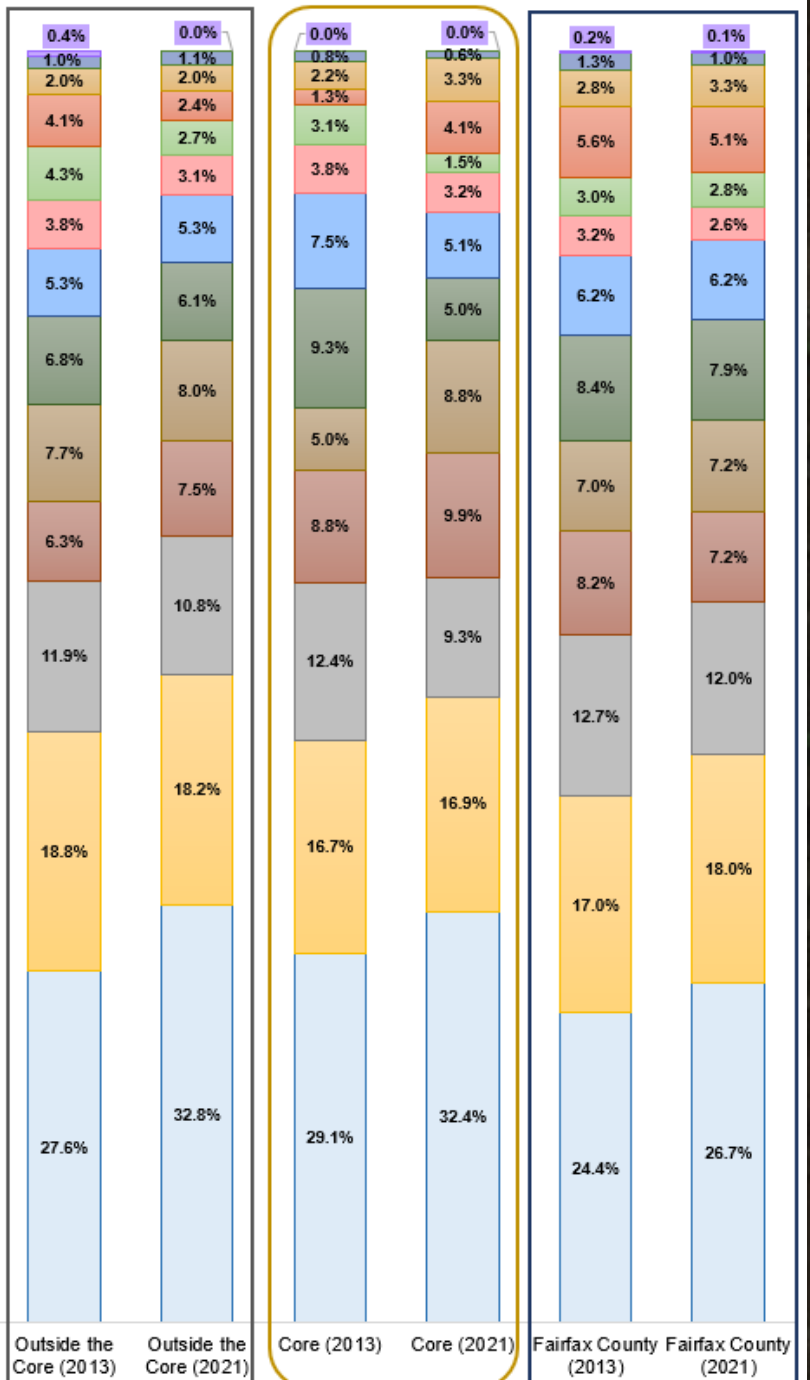
Approximately 79.9 % of the population age 16 and over are either self-employed or in the labor force. Of the employed persons, 76.7% are private wage and salary workers, 19.7% are government workers and 2.7% are self-employed. Since 2013, the core has seen a slight increase in unpaid family workers and a decrease in self-employed workers . This has remained relatively consistent within the core and in the county.



### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

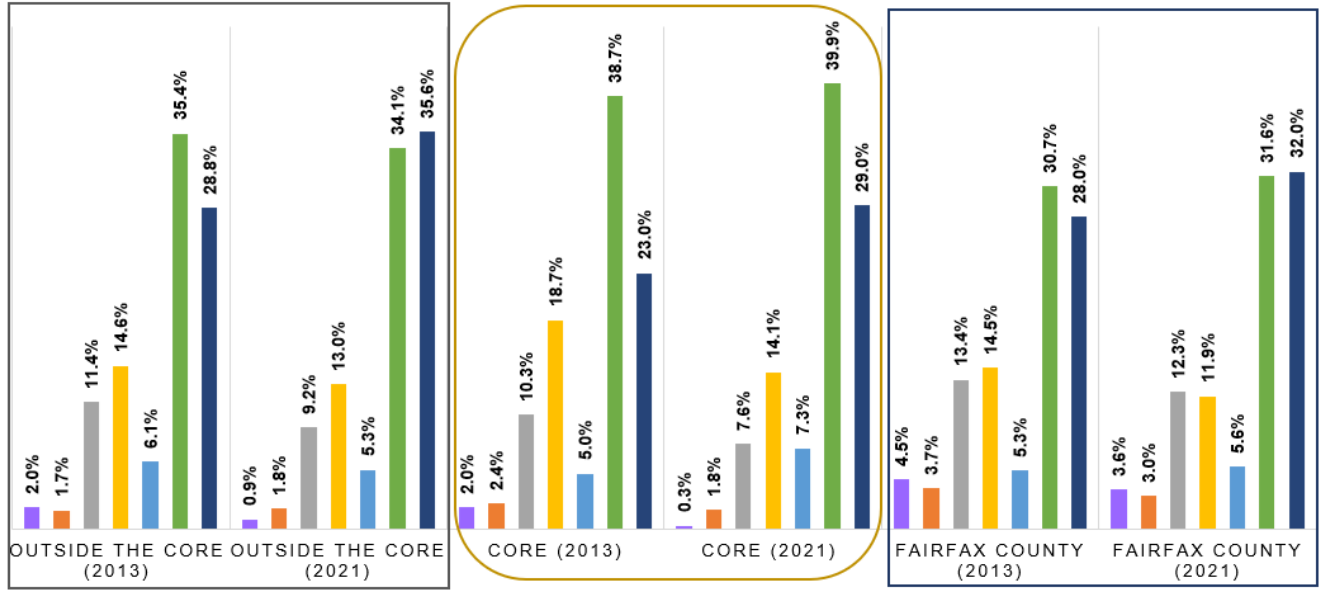
Employed Population 16 Years and Older

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, & mining
- Wholesale trade
- Transportation & warehousing, & utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Information
- Other services, except public administration
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services
- Finance & insurance, & real estate & rental & leasing
- Retail trade
- Public administration
- Educational services, & health care & social assistance
- Professional, scientific, & management, & admin & waste management services



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER

- Less than 9th grade
- 9th to 12th grade, no diploma
- High school graduate (includes equivalency)
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree



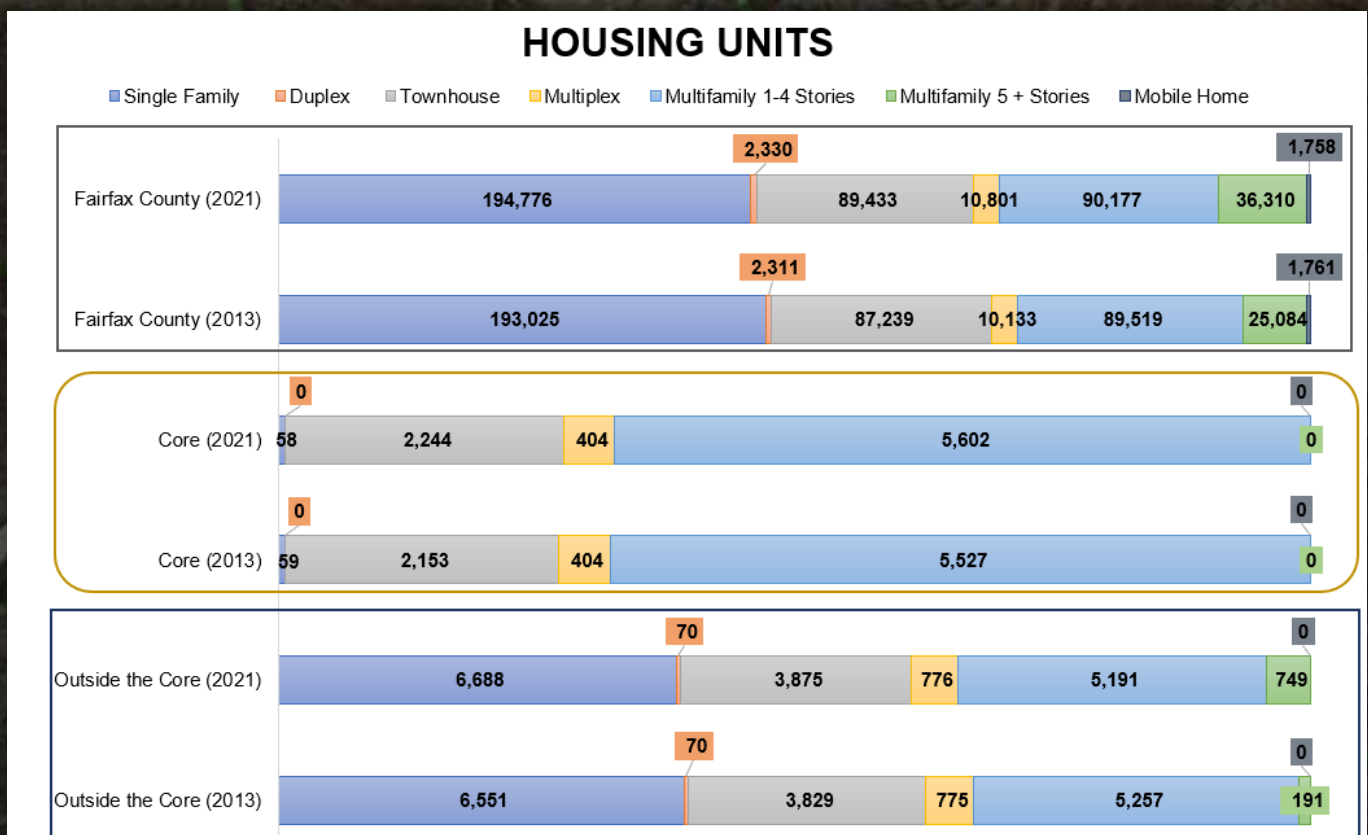
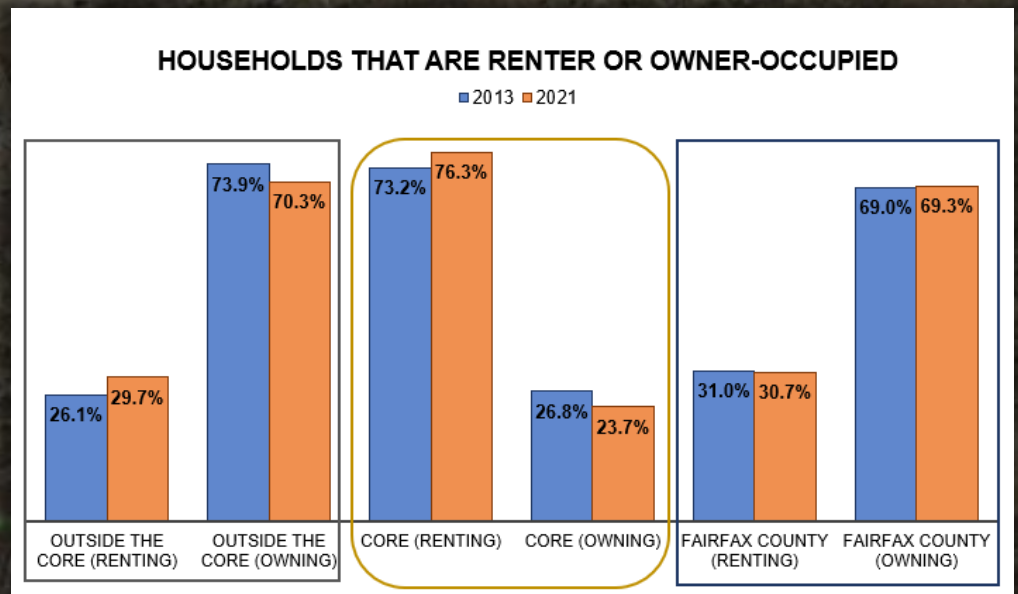
Educational attainment is high within the Core Area, with 68.9% of the population having a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

The Core Area has a slightly higher level of educational attainment than the county, with 63.6% of the population age 25 or over having a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

The Core Area has also seen a shift to higher education in the past decade, with increases in the percentage of the population with an associate's degree or greater. The greatest gain was in those with a graduate or professional degree, which increased from 23 percent in 2013 to 29 percent in 2021.

# DEMOGRAPHICS - HOUSING

The typical Core Area resident is a renter (76%), a rate that is more than double the rental rate outside the Core Area (29.7%) and the county (30.7%)



Building types within the Core Area and surroundings

The higher rental rate is reflected in the housing unit inventory as well, which is entirely multifamily, traditional and stacked townhomes. In contrast to outside the Core Area and county, there are no single family detached homes in the Core Area.

# DEMOGRAPHICS – FORECAST

## Estimated and Forecasted Population by Census Tract Fairfax County, January 2022

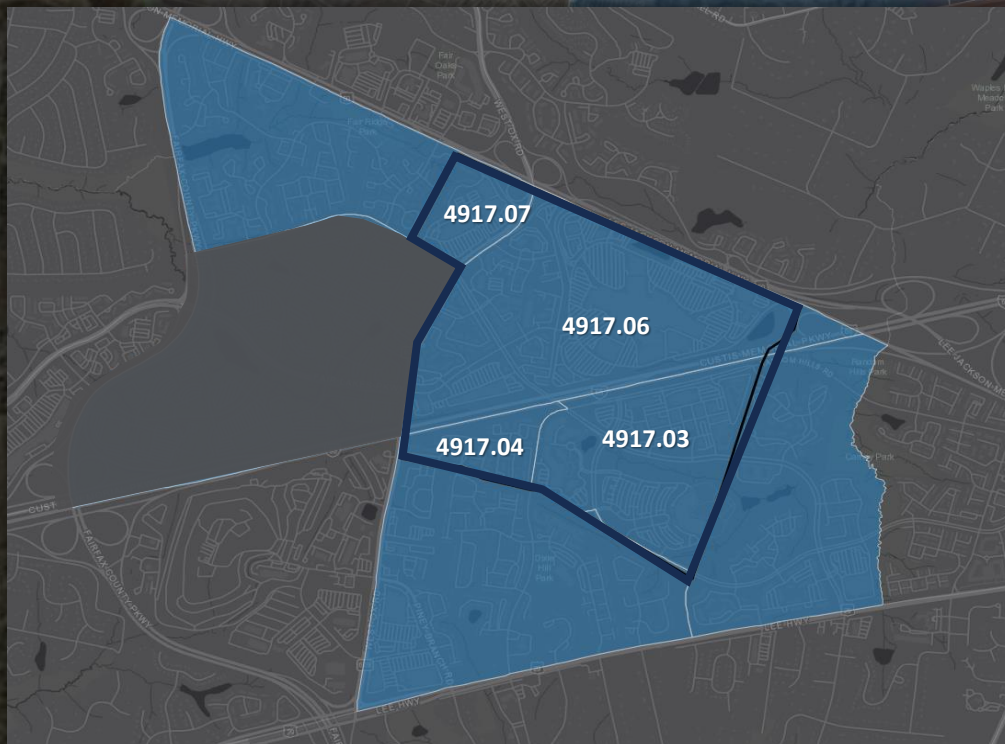
Census Tract	2022	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
4917.03	5,541	5,561	5,609	5,712	5,834	5,950	6,050
4917.04	5,488	5,512	5,575	5,593	5,613	5,633	5,651
4917.06	3,355	3,663	3,952	4,353	4,791	5,219	5,590
4917.07	4,355	4,509	4,725	4,843	4,956	5,066	5,164

## Estimated and Forecasted Housing Units by Census Tract Fairfax County, January 2022

Census Tract	2022	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
4917.03	2,640	2,650	2,672	2,722	2,780	2,835	2,883
4917.04	2,372	2,381	2,403	2,410	2,418	2,425	2,432
4917.06	1,557	1,694	1,828	2,015	2,220	2,420	2,593
4917.07	1,805	1,877	1,976	2,027	2,075	2,122	2,163

## Estimated and Forecasted Number of Households by Census Tract Fairfax County, January 2022

Census Tract	2022	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
4917.03	2,597	2,607	2,629	2,678	2,735	2,789	2,836
4917.04	2,339	2,348	2,371	2,377	2,385	2,392	2,399
4917.06	1,528	1,662	1,793	1,977	2,179	2,375	2,545
4917.07	1,778	1,848	1,946	1,996	2,043	2,089	2,130



Census Tracts encompassing the Core Area

The County updates its population forecasts on an annual basis. According to 2022 data, The census tracts encompassing the Core Area are projected to grow by approximately 20% by 2050, both in terms of population and housing units.

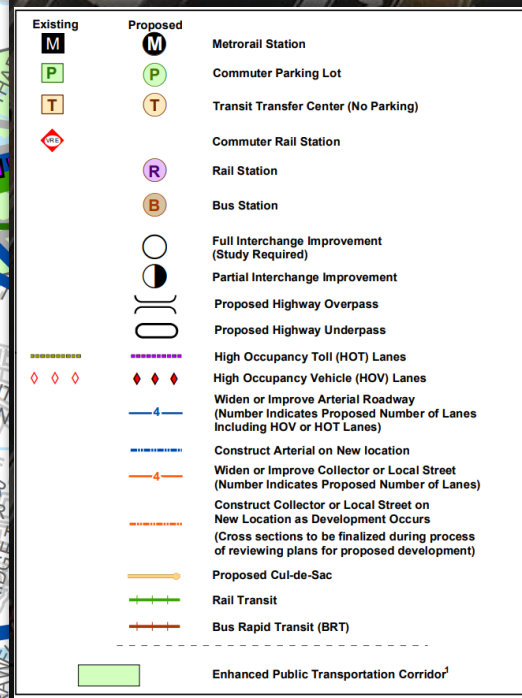
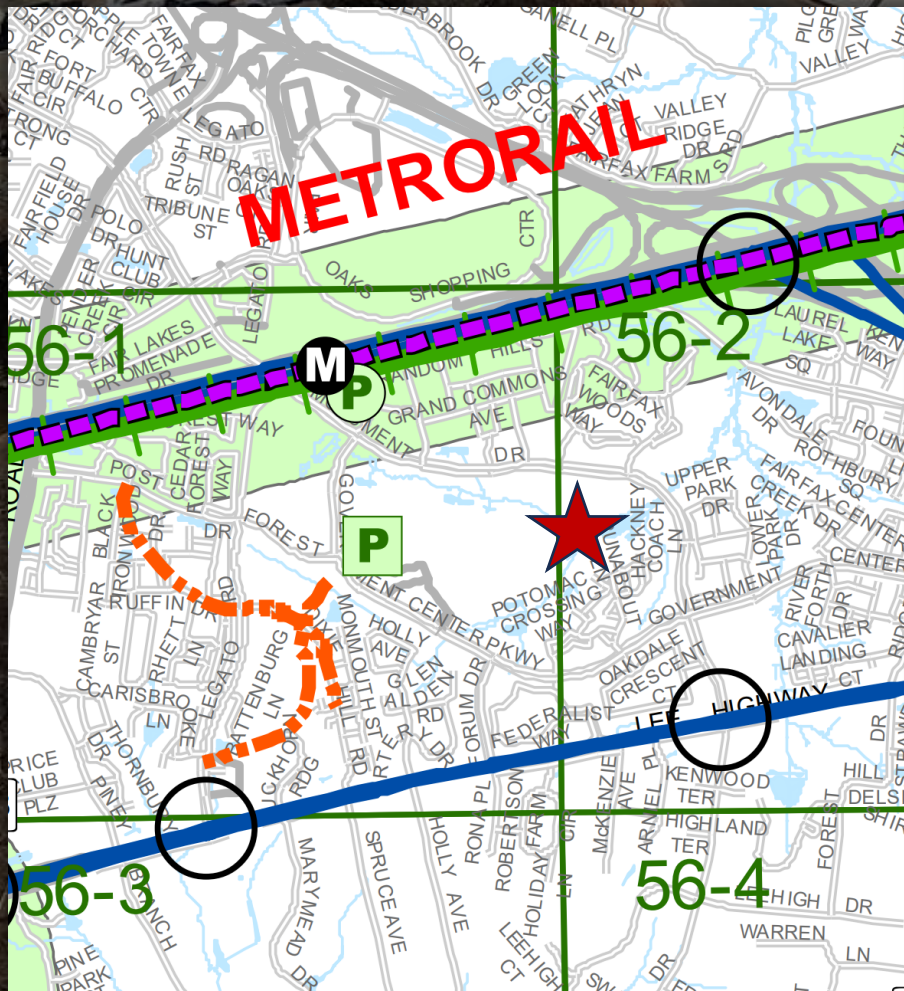
## ROAD NETWORK

The area is traversed by significant roads, including Route 66 (Freeway/Expressway), Routes 50 and 29 (Principal Arterials), West Ox and Shirley Gate Roads (Minor Arterials). The express/toll lanes on Route 66 were opened in Fall 2022 and provide regional east-west mobility.

Collector roads provide access to nearby shopping, entertainment, and employment. These include Government Center Parkway, which carried approximately 5,500 annual average daily trips (AADT) in 2019 prior to the pandemic, Post Forest Drive (9,700 AADT), Random Hills Road (8,500 AADT), and Monument Drive (9,700). Notably, all were designed as four lane roads and may have significant excess capacity available. Private roads make up a large part of the area's road mileage; however they are not well connected.

## SAFETY

During 2020, 2021, and 2022, there were 82 reported crashes in the area. 13 These included 2 fatal crashes, 1 critical injury crash, 18 severe injury crashes, 1 serious injury crash, and 60 property damage only crashes. Both fatal crashes killed pedestrians, one at the intersection of Monument Drive and Monument Court and the other mid-block on West Ox Road, north of its intersection with Legato Road. Most crashes occurred at intersections, however there were 29 crashes not at intersections, especially along West Ox Road and Route 50.

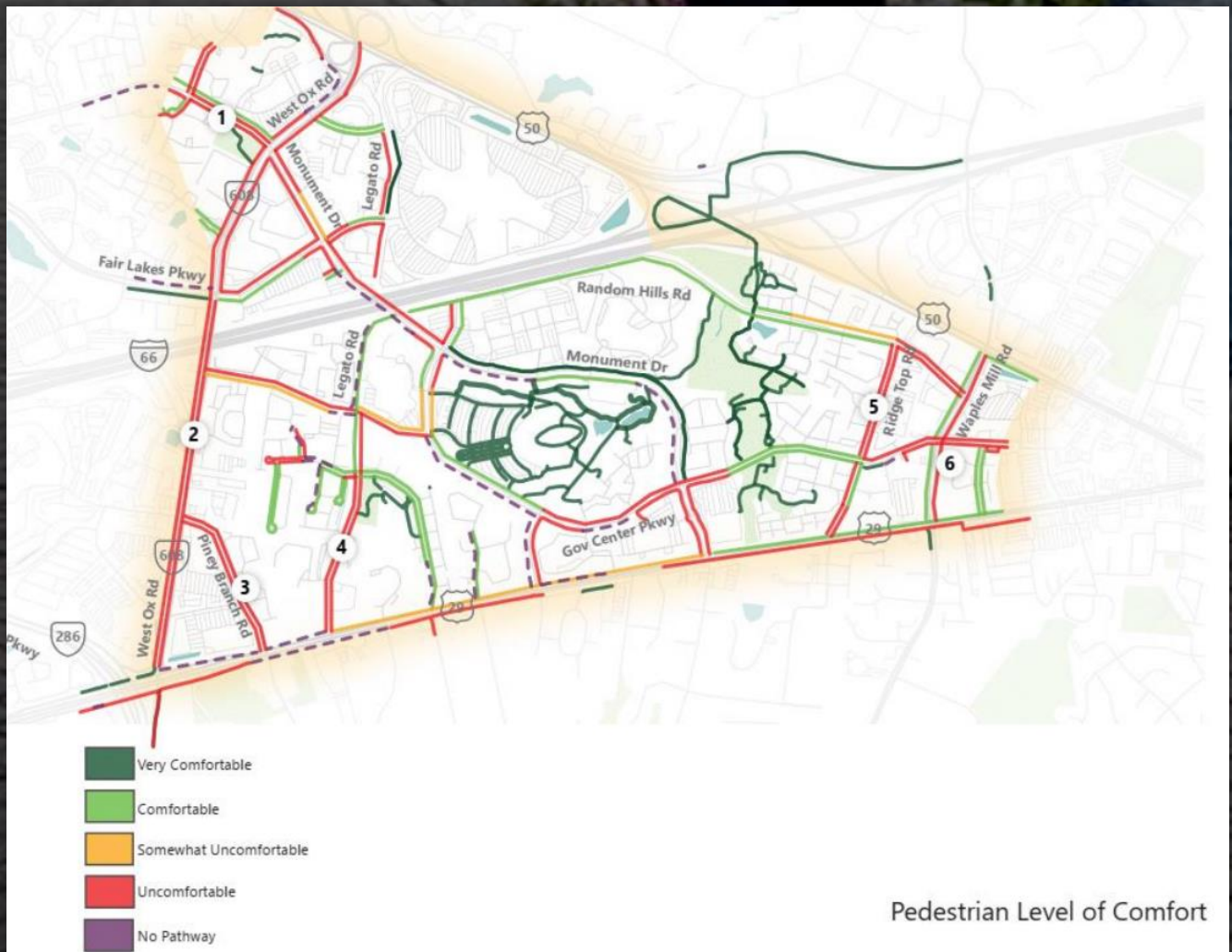


## PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The area's pedestrian conditions are also varied. Sidewalks and trails are present at most signalized intersections; however, long block lengths, long crossing distances, and a general lack of street trees and other amenities make walking less convenient and comfortable.

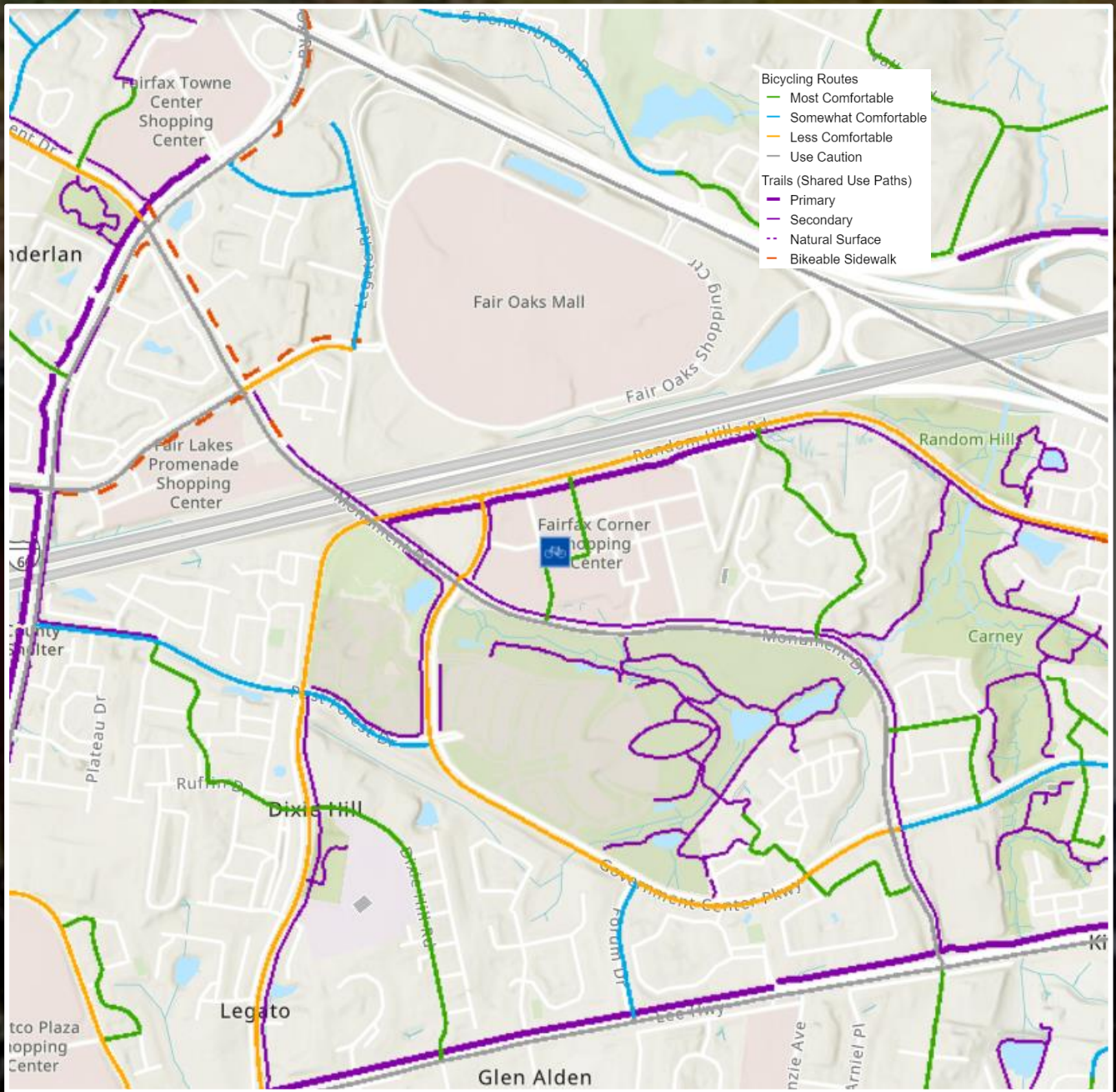
A notable feature of the Core Area is the popular trail network on the Government Center campus. Some of these trails consist of paved asphalt, while others are natural trails, the latter not meeting ADA standards. These trails are unlit, limiting their use to the daytime. The network is primarily recreational, but also provides some pedestrian transportation to the surrounding area.

One measure for evaluating the effectiveness of the pedestrian network is Pedestrian Level of Comfort, or how easily pedestrians can walk or roll in different conditions. While safety is always the primary goal of the network, comfort encompasses more than safety – it examines whether the network is enjoyable and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. An assessment of the Core Area and its immediate surroundings is shown in the figure below.





# TRANSPORTATION – BIKING



Fairfax County Bicycle Network Map, December 2023

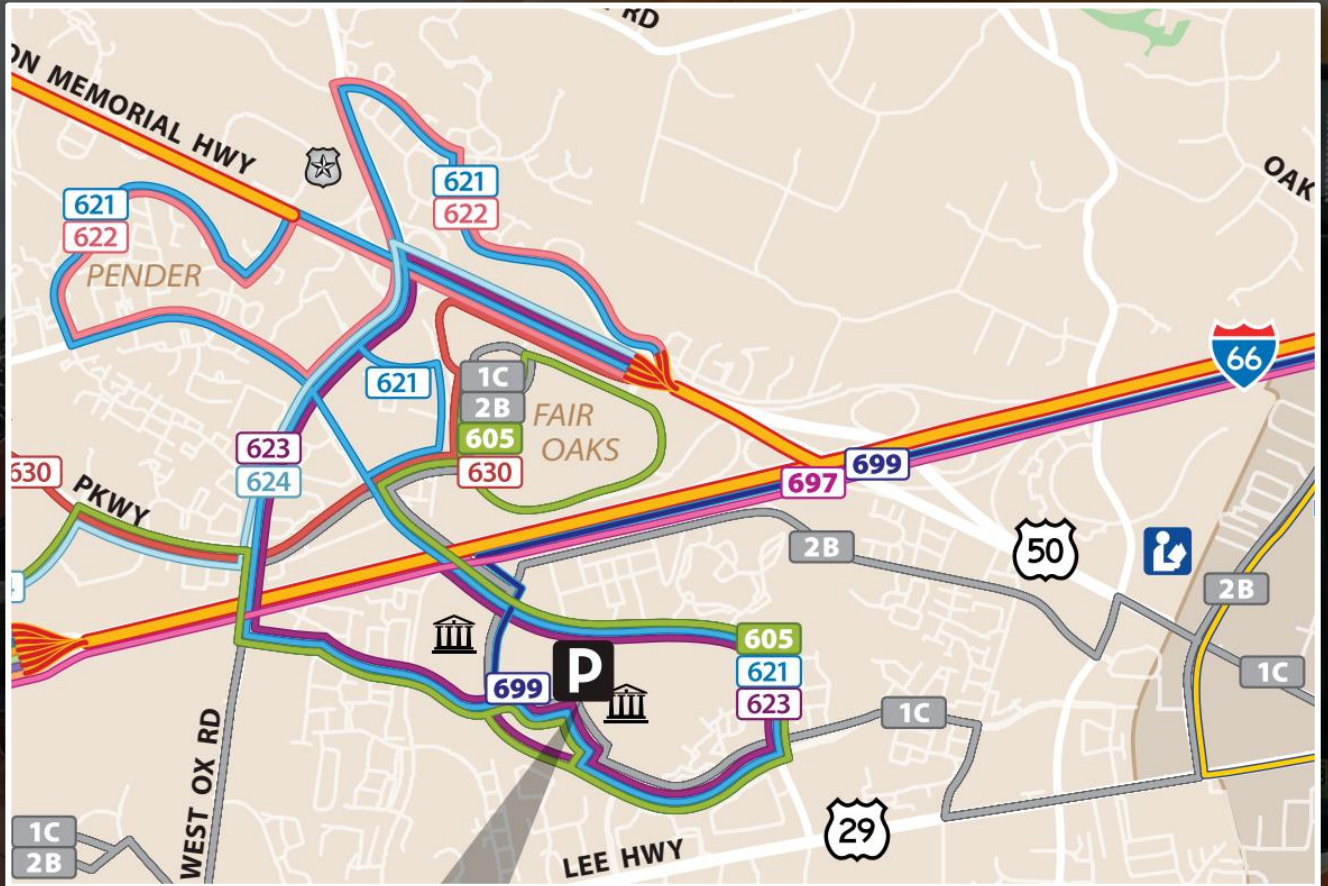
## BICYCLE NETWORK

Bicycle conditions in the area are varied. Buffered bicycle lanes have been striped on many area roads, including Government Center Parkway, Post Forest Drive, and Forum Drive; however, these lanes are inconsistent. Vehicle volumes and posted speed limits in the adjacent travel lanes often exceed 6,000 AADT and/or 30 mph, creating unsafe conditions. Per Federal Highway Administration guidelines, the preferred configuration in these situations is a separated bike lane or shared use path.

8-foot wide asphalt paths are present along Monument Drive, Random Hills Road, and a portion of Legato Road. While these do not meet the current VDOT 10-foot shared use path standard, these are important amenities that are comfortable for cyclists of all ages and abilities.

## TRANSIT NETWORK

The area is well served by thirteen existing bus routes that provide access to employment, shopping and connections to regional destinations such as Reston Town Center, the City of Fairfax, and the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU and Dunn Loring Metrorail stations. Except for Route 699, which provides express bus service to and from downtown Washington DC, the current bus travel times are unlikely to be competitive with driving.



Fairfax Connector Bus Routes in and near the Core Area

FCDOT, 2023

The Core Area is served by a variety of Fairfax Connector and Metrobus Routes that provide local and regional transit connections. will be served by the Monument Drive Transit Center, under construction in 2023, at the corner of Monument Drive and Government Center Parkway, shown in red.

The County's Transportation Plan Map includes a long-range plan for Metrorail's Orange Line extension, with a potential station location along the I-66 corridor. The location shown is approximate.



Location of the Monument Drive Transit Center (red) and a potential location for a future Metrorail station.

## Resource Protection Areas, Environmental Quality Corridors, and Floodplain

The Fairfax Center Area includes tributaries, steep slopes, and valleys that have associated Resource Protection Areas (RPA) and Environmental Quality Corridors (EQC).

Countywide policy recommends that new development minimize exposure to potential flood impacts. Protection of environmentally sensitive features is a prominent topic in the Comprehensive Plan guidance for the Fairfax Center Area

## Transportation-Generated Noise Impacts

Countywide policy recommends minimizing human exposure to unhealthy levels of noise. New development should not expose residents to DNL 45 dBA indoors or DNL 65 dBA in outdoor recreational areas. Within the Core Area potential noise sources include major highways such as I-66 and Route 50.

## Green Building

The County's green building policies recommend new development in Suburban Centers seek formal certification through the LEED rating system or equivalent. Additionally, elements such as electric vehicle charging and bird-friendly design are encouraged.

## Water Quality and Quantity Control

The Core Area is in the headwaters for four major watersheds: Cub Run, Difficult Run, Rocky Run, and Popes Head. All except Difficult Run are tributaries to the Occoquan Reservoir. Portions of the area are within the Water Supply Protection Overlay District.

The County's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) maintains a robust system of stormwater management assets such as wet and dry ponds, underground retention, bioretention, and outfalls.

## Capital Projects

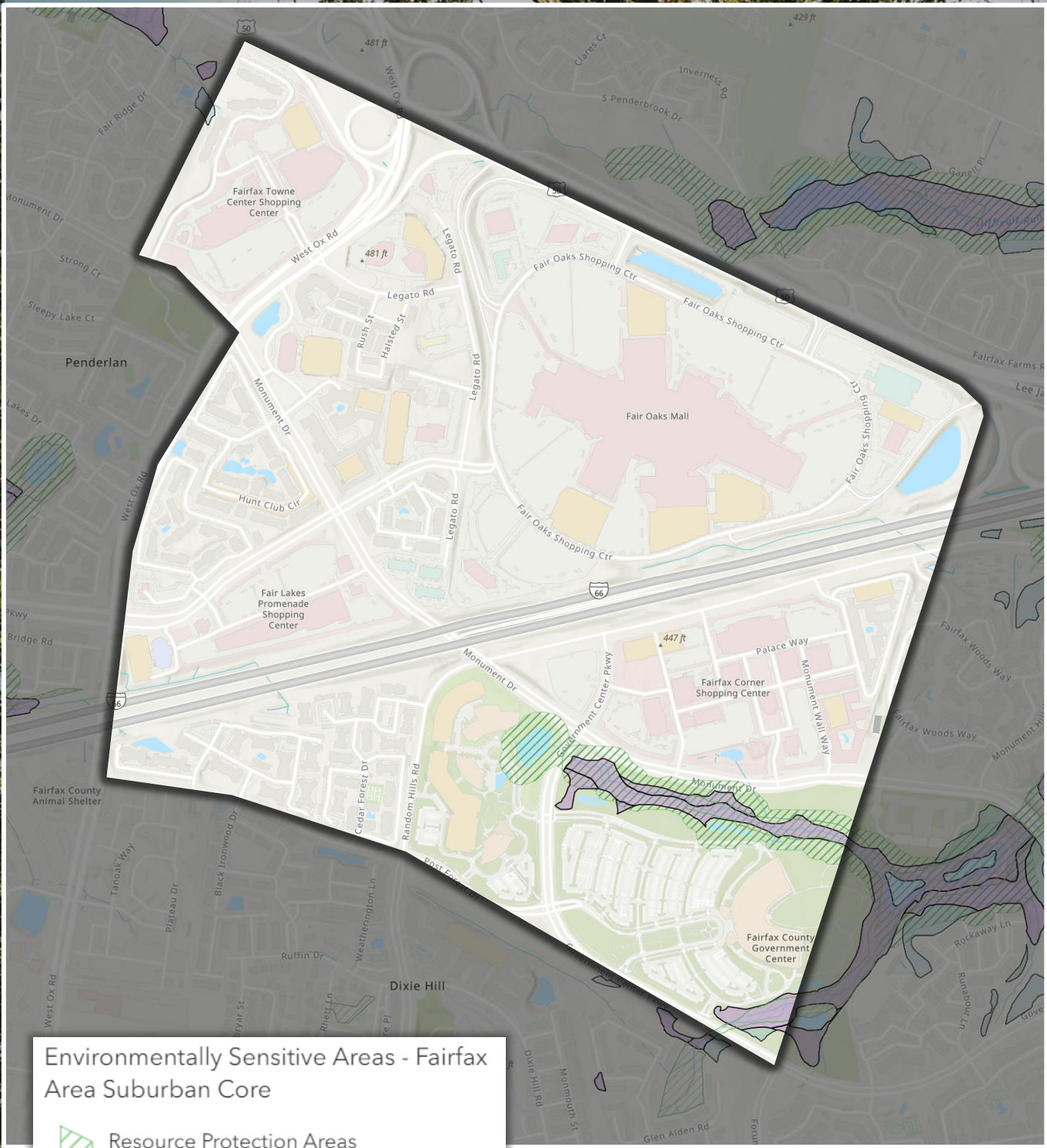
The **Difficult Run Tributary and Basins at the Government Center** project is an ongoing Capital Project that will restore 1,600 linear feet of stream using Natural Channel Design standards and dredge two amenity ponds. The work includes realignment and enhancement of the riparian corridor. Construction is planned throughout 2024. For more information: [Difficult Run Tributary and Basins at the Government Center \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com).

## Tree Cover and Landscaping

Countywide policy covers the need to protect and restore tree cover to improve air and water quality, and enhance quality of life.

In the Fairfax Center Area, impervious surfaces with less than 18% tree cover canopy prevail in many areas with expansive parking lots.

# ENVIRONMENT



## Environmentally Sensitive Areas - Fairfax Area Suburban Core

-  Resource Protection Areas
-  Floodplain
-  Drainage
-  Steep Slopes

Fairfax County's Environmentally Sensitive Areas Dataset, May 2023

# SCHOOLS & PUBLIC FACILITIES

## Existing Schools

Any new residential development within the Fairfax Center Area's core is anticipated to affect the area's public schools.

While there are no public schools in the Core Area itself, the schools serving the Core Area include **Fairfax High School**, **Katharine Johnson Middle School**, and **Eagle View and Greenbriar Elementary Schools**.

Note that the Core Area's middle and high school students attend in the City of Fairfax.

## School Capacity and Projected Students

Fairfax County Public Schools routinely evaluates school capacity and projected number of students as part of its capital planning efforts. These results are published as part of the **Adopted Capital Improvement Program**.

School	Capacity SY 2022-23	Membership SY 2022-23	Capacity Utilization SY 2022-23	Projected Membership SY 2027-28	Projected Capacity Utilization SY 2027-28
Fairfax HS <sup>1</sup>	2,390	2,359	99%	2,327	97%
Katherine Johnson MS <sup>1</sup>	1,144	1,069	93%	1,142	100%
Eagle View ES	717	621	87%	627	87%
Greenbriar East ES	977	888	91%	882	90%

<sup>1</sup> School located within the City of Fairfax.

Source: FCPS, *Adopted Capital Improvement Program FY 2024-28*, February 2023.

## Public Facilities



# PARKS AND RECREATION

## In the Core Area...

There are no Park Authority public parks or facilities within the Core Area. Two parks are adjacent: **Dixie Hill** and **Ox Hill Battlefield Park**. Penderbrook Golf Course is open to the public and is north across Route 50.

As the Core Area has built out, there have been no new public parks or facilities added as compared to other areas of the county.

Additionally, there are no public school sites that provide recreational facilities. The recreational opportunities that exist are provided by private homeowner associations and residential communities that have publicly-accessible park space.

Several non-FCPA parks, such as the Government Center's trails and passive recreation opportunities, serve the Fairfax Center Area's residents.

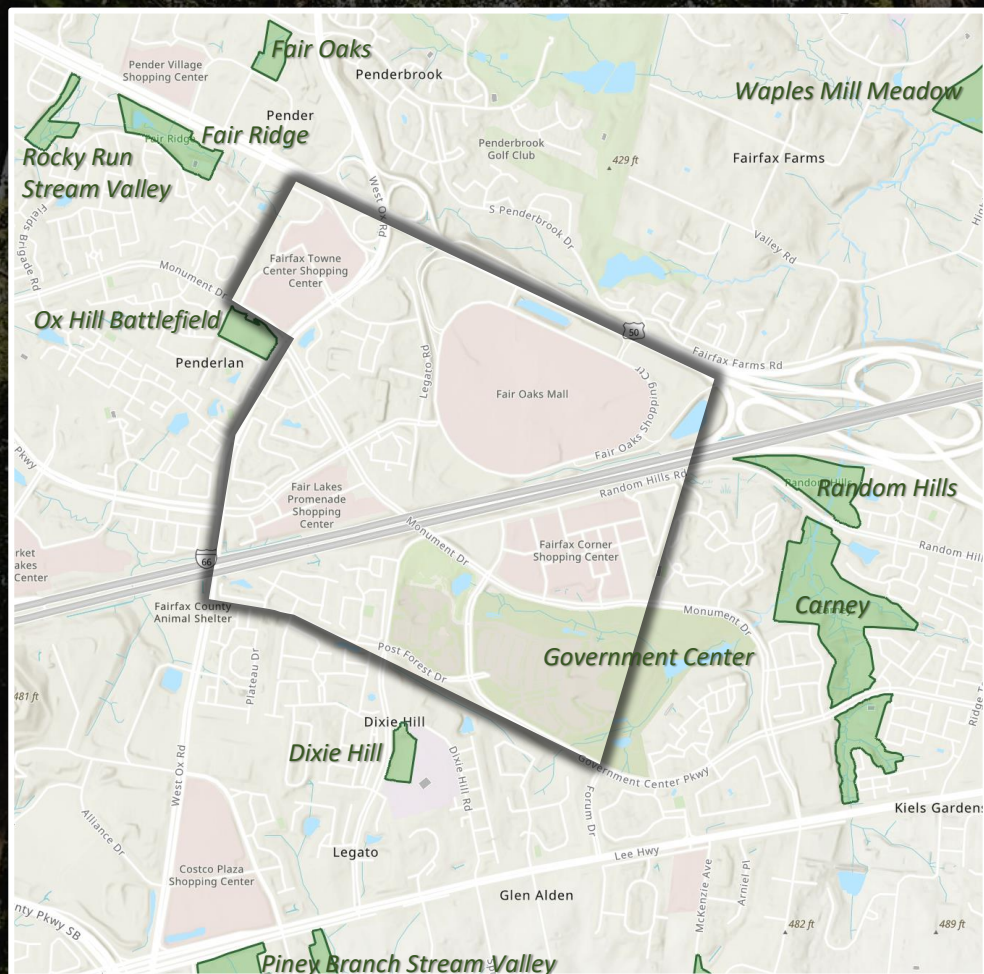
## ...And Beyond

Most parks serving the Fairfax Center Area outside of the Core Area are local-serving and resource-based parks. While **local-serving parks** may be suited for recreational opportunities such as playgrounds, playing fields and courts, **resource-based parks**, such as stream valleys, serve primarily to protect significant natural and/or heritage resources.

## Access and Connectivity

Future development for the Core Area should provide for bike and pedestrian access to recreational opportunities.

Using the Park Authority's population-based metrics, **there is a need for all types of parkland and facilities to serve the Core Area**. Only a portion of the current demand is being met; Core Area residents must travel outside the Core to visit a park.



*Fairfax County Park Authority public parks near the Core Area*