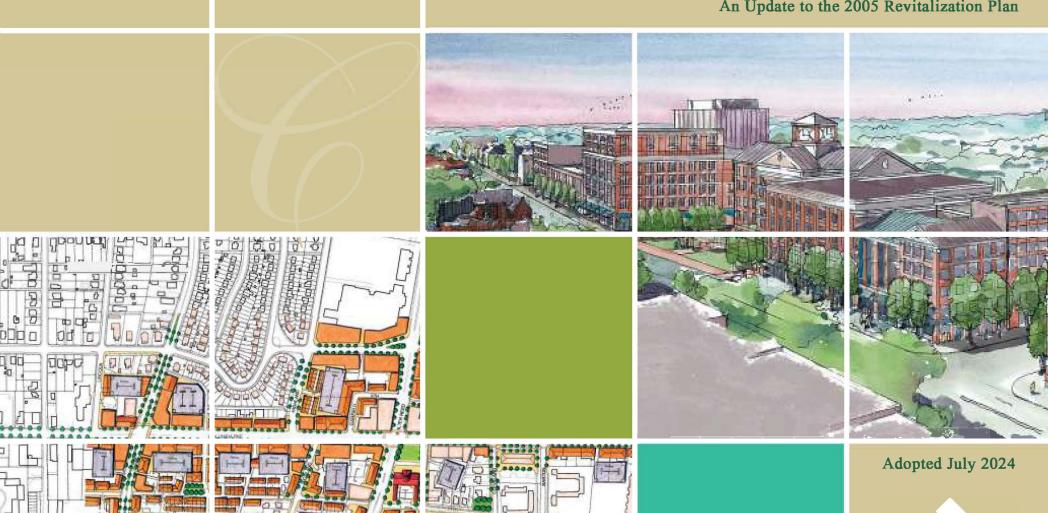
## **DRAFT**

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# COLUMBIA PIKE INITIATI

An Update to the 2005 Revitalization Plan





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#### Acknowledgments

Arlington County Board

Arlington County Advisory Boards and Commissions

Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room

Columbia Pike Civic Associations and Task Forces

Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

Department of Environmental Services

Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources

Arlington Economic Development

Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization

Dover, Kohl & Partners

Ferrell, Madden and Associates

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Virginia Department of Transportation

All Interested Citizens

#### **Special Thanks**

Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, Planning Division

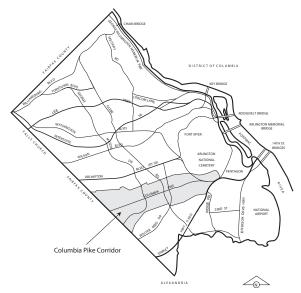
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#### Columbia Pike Corridor Location Map





#### **Purpose**

**♦** his document represents the most current overall framework for the revitalization of Columbia Pike. It reconciles the vision for the Columbia Pike corridor expressed in the Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan, adopted by the Arlington County Board on March 12, 2002, with the specific design recommendations formulated during the 2002 community-based charrette process and articulated in the Form Based Code, adopted on February 25, 2003. In addition, it provides updates on policy and implementation initiatives recommended in the original plan. All aspects of the policy described in this document have, at one time or another, been adopted by the Arlington County Board.

#### Refined Policy Framework

The underlying vision for Columbia Pike remains largely unchanged. That is, the goal continues to be the transformation from an aging, auto-oriented, suburban, commercial strip back into the more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, "Main Street"



destination that it originally was and could be yet again. The end goal is an improved, enhanced and walkable Main Street for South Arlington. A place where people can live, work and play—a place that is the center of the community's social and economic life.

What has changed, then, is not so much the vision, but rather the ways

and means of achieving the desired results. The 2002 revitalization plan foresaw the creation of an urban design manual to guide and shape development along the Pike. However, after further discussion among the County Board, the community, urban design experts and staff, it was decided instead to pursue a more innovative, cutting-edge approach.

The community came together during the 2002 charrette to develop its vision for the Pike.

Working with the consultant teams of Dover, Kohl & Partners and Geoffrey Ferrell and Associates, staff and over 700 members of the Columbia Pike community participated in an intensive, highly productive charrette from September 6-12, 2002. During the course of this collaborative visioning process, specific design prescriptions emerged. These recommendations were then distilled and graphically and verbally represented by the consultants in what is now the Form Based Code, a part of the County's Zoning Ordinance. The Code, with its building envelope diagrams, height limitations, streetscape plans and other recommendations and requirements is thus an expression of the community's goals in a detailed, cohesive format. Because the Code thus provides predictability for the community, as well as property owners, developers and investors interested in redeveloping sites along the Pike, it allows the development review process to be streamlined and accelerated. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, it provides the community with the certainty that the evolution of the corridor will match its desires for the future.



Early commercial development where South Barton Street meets Columbia Pike.

#### **Historical Context**

Columbia Pike is one of Arlington's oldest thoroughfares. Significant development began in the early 1900s, following improvements in road conditions and rail service. Streetcar service came to the area by World War I with a branch line connecting the Rosslyn and Nauck neighborhoods through Fort Myer that crossed the Pike at Walter Reed

and Four Mile Run Drives. The streetcar stop at the intersection of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive became the focal node of early commercial development. By the mid-1920s, a grocery, several cafes, drugstores and a stationery shop were located between Walter Reed Drive and Glebe Road. By this time, Columbia Pike was also serviced by a fledgling bus line that ran from the Barcroft neighborhood to

Washington, D.C. Following the trends of the times, buses eventually replaced streetcars.

In the 1920s and 1930s, commercial buildings generally were constructed close to the street with entries and display windows for retail shops on the ground floor, reflecting the importance of pedestrian access and trade. The upper stories often contained office space or apartments. The buildings were generally narrow and built close together, forming the continuous "street wall" characteristic of an urban environment. Parking lots were not provided because few people owned cars, though there was on-street parking in front of businesses along the two-lane roadway.

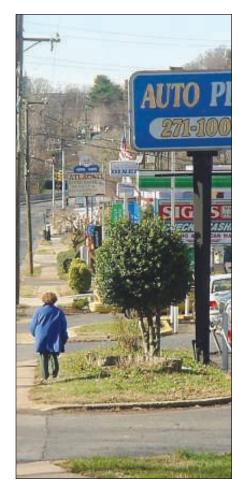
A new form of retail development, the neighborhood shopping center, became popular in following years when developers recognized that they could increase sales and profits by increasing consumer convenience with "one-stop" shopping. Developers recognized the growing importance of parking and highlighted convenient on-site parking in their advertising. These shopping centers often were provided as an amenity to new residential subdivi-



The Arlington Theater and other commercial buildings from the mid to late 1930s, visible in this early photograph of the intersection of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive, still line the Pike today.

sions. The centers were visually integrated with the neighborhoods through unified architecture, sign control and landscaping, with parking areas provided on-site. Tenants in neighborhood centers included grocery stores, bakeries, drugstores, cleaners, beauty shops and similar businesses. Because grocery stores drew the most customers, they be-

came the key tenants and anchors of the centers. The Arlington Village and Westmont neighborhood shopping centers opened in 1938 and 1941 respectively. These centers were located close to residential development and many customers walked to these stores, completing a number of errands in one trip.



The Pike is no longer the pedestrian-friendly Main Street it once was.

Automobile-oriented retailing increased in the 1930s and 1940s on Columbia Pike and elsewhere. Autorelated uses included gas stations, service centers and car dealerships, along with other businesses designed to accommodate auto usage, such as shopping centers and drive-in restaurants. These uses were frequently built within existing commercial areas, breaking up the continuous "street wall" in order to provide easy vehicle access and parking. Because pedestrian access was not a chief concern of these businesses, formerly compact shopping areas began to spread out, forming strips along the thoroughfares.

After World War II, additional neighborhood shopping centers, primarily associated with residential development, were built along Columbia Pike to serve the area's rapidly expanding population. The Pike was widened to four lanes to improve traffic flow, virtually eliminating all on-street parking. The majority of existing office space was built between 1961 and 1972 at scattered locations along the Pike and 9th Street South. New commercial construction on Columbia Pike in

the 1970s and 1980s consisted primarily of fast food restaurants, convenience stores and drive-through banking facilities. These facilities are all free-standing buildings surrounded by parking, which further fragmented Columbia Pike's compact, urban character and contributed to its transformation into a strip commercial area. Today the image of Columbia Pike is that of an older, neglected, auto-oriented, suburban commercial strip with a random assortment of retail, office and residential uses.

#### **Existing Conditions**

Currently, this 3 ½-mile long corridor is one of the most diverse in the Baltimore-Washington region, both in terms of the character of its development and its population. The Pike has a mixed commercial and residential character. The commercial and non-residential development, much of which is 25 to 30 years old, includes shopping centers, motels, free-standing office buildings, restaurants, auto dealerships, gas stations and churches. There is approximately 1.5 million square feet of gross commercial floor area along the Pike, representing only about 37 percent of the total by-right development potential. The residential development, much of which is 50 to 60 years of age, includes singlefamily and semi-detached homes, townhouses, and a large number of garden and mid-rise apartment and condominium buildings. Many of these older buildings are considered historic by the County's Historic Preservation Office. The commercial and residential development along the Pike is linked by an aging network of sidewalks and roads, which is in the process of being updated and upgraded.

Interest in the Pike has been building, however, and several new development projects have recently been approved. For instance, the Columbia Center Condominiums, located at 2906 Columbia Pike, will include over 250 residential units. The Majestic Oak project at 3501 South Glebe Road will provide an additional 13 single-family and 13 townhouse units, while the Townhomes at Alcova Row located at 4013-1029 Columbia Pike will offer 22 townhouse units.



Auto-oriented retail, including fast food establishments and shopping centers, dominates much of the Pike today.

Additionally, the Columbia Heights garden apartments at 5229 8th Road South are being redeveloped. The project will retain 109 units as affordable rental units. The remaining units have been demolished in order to construct the 96-unit Sierra Condominiums, 10 units of which will be affordable for households at 60 percent of the area's median income. There are also several projects pending along Columbia Pike.

In terms of its population, soon to increase due to new development, the corridor has a rich cultural and ethnic diversity. According to the 2000 Census, nearly 72,000

residents, representing roughly 38 percent of the County's entire population, live within the 23 census tracts located a ½-mile, or 15minute walking distance, from the Pike. As one of the top destinations for immigrants within the entire Baltimore-Washington region, nearly 128 countries of national origin are represented. Indeed, the corridor is home to almost 57 percent of the County's total Hispanic population. In 2000, the median household income of the approximately 32,000 households in this area was estimated at \$64,000 and the overall disposable income within the corridor was

\$1.74 billion, of which \$720 million is directed towards retail sales. The commercial and residential diversity of the Pike, coupled with the multiethnic character of its population, will serve as the foundation for a re-planned, revitalized corridor—a return to the basic character and functionality of the Main Street of yesteryear, but with renewed vitality and vibrancy.

#### **Planning Context**

In response to the progressive deterioration of the character and fabric of Columbia Pike, Arlington County decided to take proactive NEARLY 72,000 RESIDENTS, REPRESENTING ROUGHLY 38 PERCENT OF THE COUNTY'S ENTIRE POPULATION, LIVE WITHIN THE 23 CENSUS TRACTS LOCATED A HALF-MILE, OR 15-MINUTE WALKING DISTANCE, FROM THE PIKE.



The revitalized Town Center will be an attractive local and regional destination.

THE GOAL OF THIS INITIATIVE IS TO CREATE A SAFER, CLEANER, MORE COMPETITIVE AND VIBRANT COLUMBIA PIKE COMMUNITY.

measures to reverse the trend and bring new investment to the Pike. In 1985, the Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan was drafted and included recommendations on land use and zoning, urban design, parks and community facilities, transportation and the like. The following year, the County Board adopted land use and zoning recommendations for the corridor, including the establishment of a Special Revitalization District, with the goal of establishing a framework for community preservation and revitalization. The boundaries of the original Special Revitalization District, which were subsequently altered and expanded, encompass the area today known as the Columbia Pike Town Center. In 1989, the County Board adopted the Columbia Pike 2000: A Revitalization Plan, which included a comprehensive analysis and recommendations on urban design, open space, the retail market, circulation systems, transitional areas and related revitalization issues. In 1998, the County Board announced the creation of the Columbia Pike Initiative. The goal of this initiative is to create

a safer, cleaner, more competitive and vibrant Columbia Pike community.

Through the course of numerous meetings with the community in 2000 and 2001, a long-range vision and plan was established that focused on economic development and commercial revitalization, land use and zoning, urban design, transportation and public infrastructure, as well as open space and recreational needs. The development of the resulting two-volume Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan, adopted in 2002, was a cooperative effort between County staff, the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization and the residents and business and property owners based in this area. Following the adoption of this plan, the community participated in an intensive charrette in fall 2002 that produced specific design recommendations which became the basis of the Form Based Code, adopted in 2003. This plan, then, builds upon this long history of visioning and planning, providing a refined and updated set of goals and implementation strategies.

### LAND USE, ZONING & URBAN DESIGN

## The Vision: South Arlington's Main Street

↑ he Columbia Pike Initiative–A Revitalization Plan outlined a vision for a new, revitalized Columbia Pike-a vision that was confirmed and refined by the community through the subsequent charrette process and codified in the resulting Form Based Code. The basic premise of the vision is to create a vital "Main Street" for adjacent neighborhoods through a lively mix of uses with shopfronts, sidewalk cafes, and other commercial uses at street level, overlooked by canopy shade trees, upper story residences and/ or offices. In the past, the Columbia Pike corridor functioned as a "Main Street" for South Arlington. Through the implementation of visionary, yet practical, land use, zoning and urban design strategies, it can be yet again a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixeduse environment.

#### Corridor-Wide Concept

The overall vision for Columbia Pike has changed very little since the adoption of the *Columbia Pike Initiative–A Revitalization Plan*; how-

#### Successful Main Streets include:

- Mixed-use development districts (retail, office, residential, cultural)
- Public spaces
- Street frontage at a pedestrian scale with articulated ground-floor retail
- Buildings oriented to Columbia Pike
- Placement of buildings at the back of sidewalks
- Buildings built close together forming a continuous "street wall" characteristic of an urban environment
- Parking located underground or to the rear of buildings
- Appropriate transitions to residential neighborhoods
- Enhanced public and pedestrian transportation
- Enhanced streetscape

Such elements are critical to the realization of the community's overarching vision for the Pike, which is:

- A vibrant community with safe neighborhoods and active retail and office uses, as well as a variety of housing options and types, all involving a mix of renovation, revitalization and/or redevelopment
- An ethnically diverse and culturally rich community
- A community that can be easily accessed by public transportation and on foot
- A community with well-designed and attractive buildings, streetscapes, public art and open spaces that link the commercial corridor with the neighborhoods
- A corridor with distinct commercial mixed-use districts

ever various specific elements have evolved over the past two years. The resulting refined, revised vision is perhaps best understood by first examining the overarching, corridorwide concept and then analyzing the more specific concept plans for the individual nodes.

The corridor-wide concept revolves around an enhanced and im-

proved "Main Street" linked by a future bus rapid transit or streetcar system and consisting of four, major, mixed-use development nodes linked together by existing apartment and townhouse residential communities. The focal nodes include a Town Center, a larger-scale, mixed-use district serving as the heart of the Columbia Pike community; a Village Center with medium-scale, mixeduse development and community parks; a Neighborhood Center with smaller-scale development and such focal features as the Arlington Mill Community Center and Four Mile Run Park; and a Western Gateway with larger-scale development and a residential focus. The County has also identified a potential Eastern Gateway located near the Pentagon to be studied further at a later date.

#### **Individual Concepts**

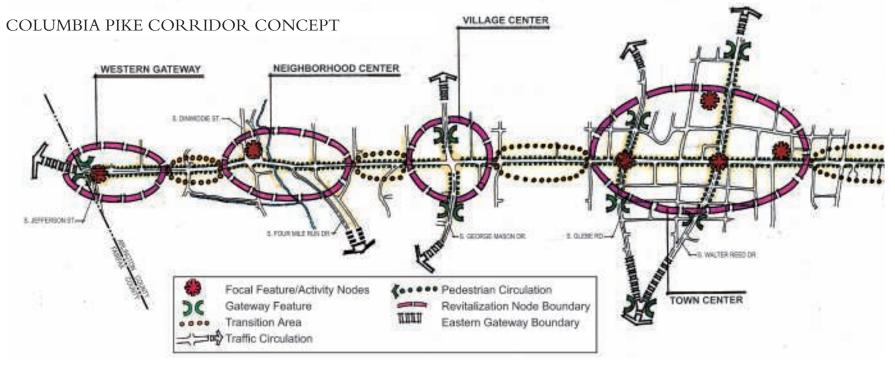
#### Town Center

The Town Center will serve as the heart of the "Main Street" and the greater community, creating a regional draw through its entertainment, cultural, restaurant and retail destinations. This area will be

#### COLUMBIA PIKE CORRIDOR ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Updated guidance for Barcroft Apartments and its adjacent commercial properties along Columbia Pike (Penske and Goodwill sites) can be found in the 2024 update to the Neighborhoods Area Plan.



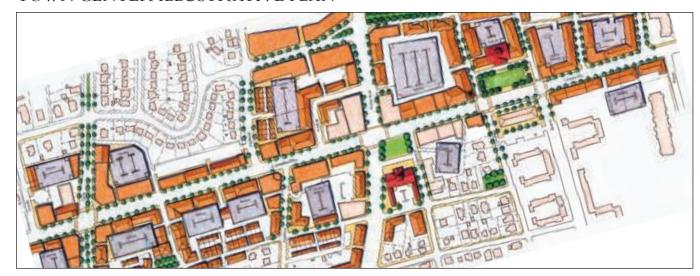


The plans and renderings found throughout this document are for illustrative purposes only and represent one artist's idea of how Columbia Pike could develop. Illustrative plans should not be taken to represent exactly what can or will be developed in any given area. For specific guidance, consult the Form Based Code.

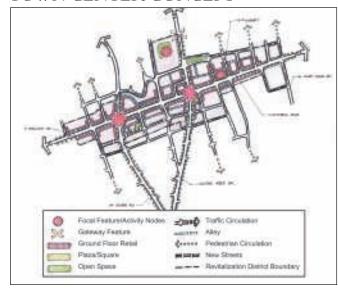
characterized by pedestrian-scale, mixed-use development, including office, residential, cultural and ground floor retail offerings. Given the unique, historical resources in this area, the County will encourage property owners and developers to preserve the historical architecture as they add new, high-quality buildings to the fabric of the Pike. Likewise, the County will encourage property owners and investors to build upon existing amenities, such as the artists' studio above the Arlington Cinema 'N' Draft House and the eclectic mix of restaurants and shops that currently exists along the Pike.

Future amenities will include a bus rapid transit or streetcar system and three public squares to be located near the intersection of 11th Street South and South Irving Street, the intersection of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive and between Barton and Cleveland Streets along the Pike. These squares will all be places where people can meet, congregate and recreate. The largest and most important will be the square located between Barton and Cleveland Streets. This square will be carefully designed to be an appealing and exciting public space that could be used for concerts, festivals

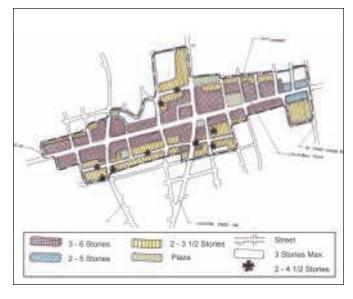
#### TOWN CENTER ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



#### TOWN CENTER CONCEPT

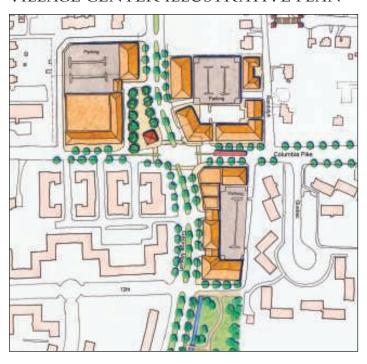


#### TOWN CENTER BUILDING HEIGHTS



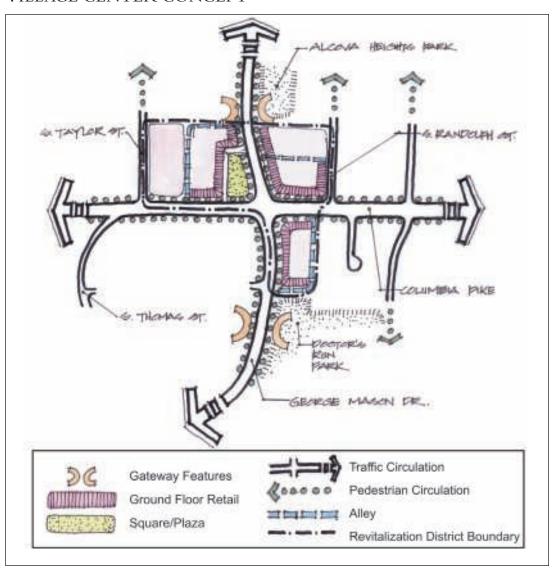


#### VILLAGE CENTER ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



Updated guidance for Barcroft Apartments and its adjacent commercial properties along Columbia Pike (Penske and Goodwill sites) can be found in the 2024 update to the Neighborhoods Area Plan.

#### VILLAGE CENTER CONCEPT





#### VILLAGE CENTER BUILDING HEIGHTS

Updated guidance for Barcroft Apartments and its adjacent commercial properties along Columbia Pike (Penske and Goodwill sites) can be found in the 2024 update to the Neighborhoods Area Plan.

3 - 6 Stories
2 - 5 Stories
2 - 3 Stories
3 - 6 Stories
4 Revitalization District Boundary
6 Stories Max. within 200 Feet of the Pike or 54 Feet Max. Beyond 200 Feet of the Pike

and other community gatherings. As the Town Center obviously will be a desirable place to live, work and visit, access will be facilitated through the creation of new streets parallel to Columbia Pike, including an extension of 11th Street South from South Cleveland Street to Glebe Road.

#### Village Center

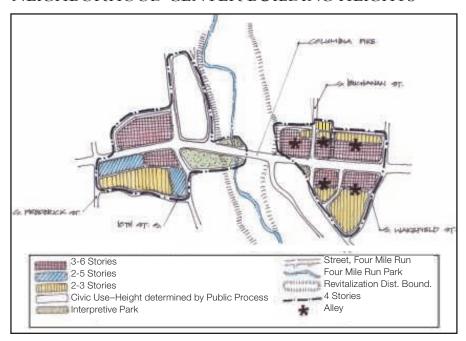
The Village Center, located at the intersection of George Mason Drive and Columbia Pike, provides for medium-scale, mixed-use development, including office, residential and neighborhood-serving retail. The Village Center will also boast a small public square near the aforementioned principal intersection. This very visible, centrally located square will animate the surrounding area by providing a space for social and recreational activities within the very heart of the Village Center. Other notable amenities in this area include Alcova Heights Park to the north and Doctor's Run Park to the south. These parks will link the surrounding neighborhoods with the Village Center. They will also continue to provide valuable open space for the immediate and larger communities. The day-lighting and restoration of Doctor's Run south of the development district will add to the environmental and aesthetic



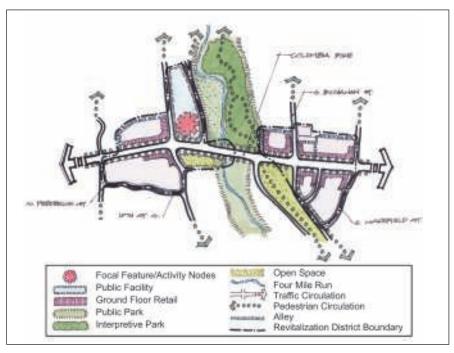
#### NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Updated guidance for Barcroft Apartments and its adjacent commercial properties along Columbia Pike (Penske and Goodwill sites) can be found in the 2024 update to the Neighborhoods Area Plan.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER BUILDING HEIGHTS



#### NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER CONCEPT



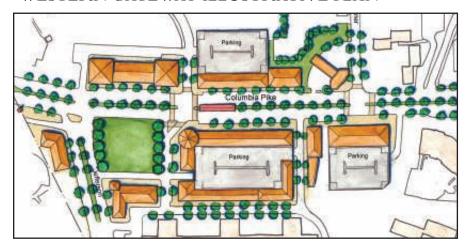
character of the area. Enhanced streetscape will further connect the neighborhoods with the commercial development centered at the main activity node and nearby parks.

#### Neighborhood Center

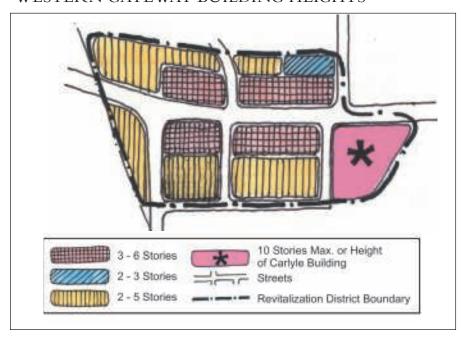
The Neighborhood Center will be characterized by smaller-scale, mixed-use development along the Pike to the west side of Four Mile Run with proposed park or open space, such as a plaza, to the east. Most of the development in this area will be residential in character with neighborhood-serving retail on the ground floor. All such development should be oriented toward the Pike in order to foster a lively, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and encourage people to stroll, shop and dine along the Pike. The redesigned, expanded Arlington Mill Community Center will bring people to this area from up and down the corridor and will serve, as does its precursor, as a major gathering place and focal point. Given the number of recreational, parkland and open spaces in this area, includ-



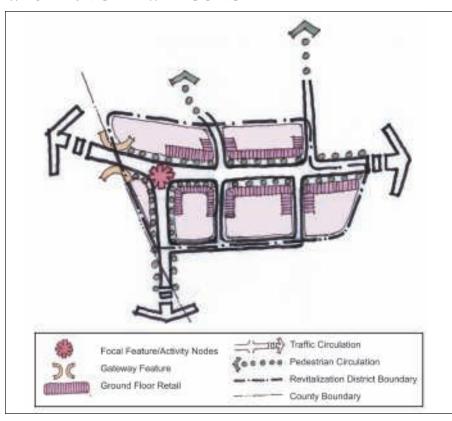
#### WESTERN GATEWAY ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



#### WESTERN GATEWAY BUILDING HEIGHTS



#### WESTERN GATEWAY CONCEPT



ing the Arlington Mill Community Center, Four Mile Run Park and the proposed interpretive park, redevelopment should be guided in such a way as to build upon and strengthen the connections between these valuable community resources.

#### Western Gateway

The Western Gateway links Arlington and Fairfax Counties. As such, it is important that this location provide a distinguishing and distinctive entrance to Arlington. New signage welcoming visitors to the County and the Columbia Pike "Main Street" will go a long way towards accomplishing this goal and

THE EASTERN END OF THE CORRIDOR, WITH ITS VIEWS OF THE POTOMAC RIVER AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE AN IMPRESSIVE. MONUMENTAL GATEWAY TO THE REVITALIZED COLUMBIA PIKE "MAIN STREET."

improving the overall appeal of this gateway area. High-quality architecture with retail on the ground level and housing above will also help to both beautify and reinvigorate this area. In terms of specific design elements, the building heights along the south side of the Pike may be higher here than in other areas of the corridor, given the current height of some of the apartment buildings in this vicinity. Improved streetscape will also enhance the aesthetics and functionality of the Western Gateway, while fostering connectivity with the other activity centers along the Pike.

#### Eastern Gateway

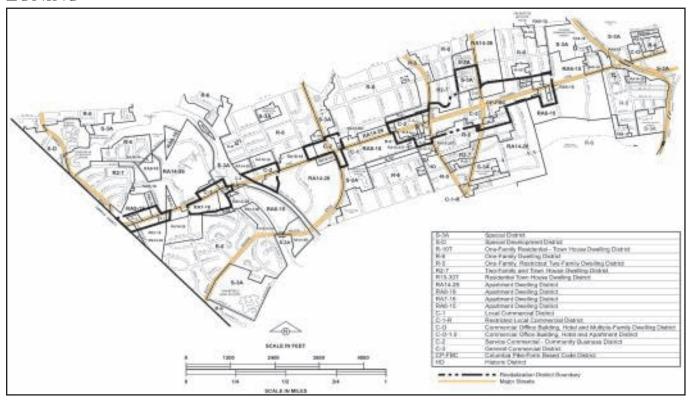
The eastern end of the corridor, with its views of the Potomac River and the District of Columbia, has the potential to be an impressive, monumental gateway to the revitalized Columbia Pike "Main Street." Working in conjunction with the federal government, a major landowner in this area, the County is discussing plans for this location, which will include the construction of various monuments and histori-

cal centers, as well as an expansion of Arlington National Cemetery. While some of the plans are still very much under discussion, approval has been granted for others, including the National Air Force Memorial. On September 15, 2004, ground was broken for the memorial, to be located on approximately three acres of the far eastern portion of the promontory now occupied by the Navy Annex. Designed by James Ingo Freed of Pei, Cobb, Freed & Partners, the memorial will consist of three stainless steel spires soaring to a height of 270 feet. Completion of the memorial is slated for September 18, 2006.

The Navy Annex, which dominates much of this area, is currently being used as office space for the Commandant of the Marine Corps and as swing space for Department of Defense staff during the renovation of the Pentagon. The renovation work should be complete by 2010, and the Commandant's office will be relocated to the Pentagon. At this time, the Navy Annex buildings will no longer be needed for their current use and are planned to be razed. After the Navy Annex site is cleared,

Arlington National Cemetery will expand across Southgate Road into this area. A portion of the Navy Annex also will be sought as a site for the construction of an Arlington Heritage Center, including a Black Heritage Museum, an Arlington History Museum and an Arlington County 9/11 Memorial. This would be an especially appropriate location for a heritage center, as it was, from 1863 to 1888, part of Freedman's Village, a community of former slaves established on the Arlington Estate and administered principally by the Freedman's Bureau. In order to free up more land in this area to accommodate these different programs, Columbia Pike is planned to be straightened and widened at its eastern end. The County will continue to study and plan for the redevelopment of this area and the creation of a bona fide Eastern Gateway to the Pike in conjunction with the federal government and other involved parties.

#### **ZONING**



## Form Based Code: An Implementation Strategy

The Form Based Code represents the primary tool for the realization of the aforementioned revitalization objectives for Columbia Pike. In February 2003, the Code was adopted by the County Board. The recommendations of the Code differ very little from what was proposed in the *Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan*, except in terms of building height maximums. The Code regulates land development, setting careful and clear controls on

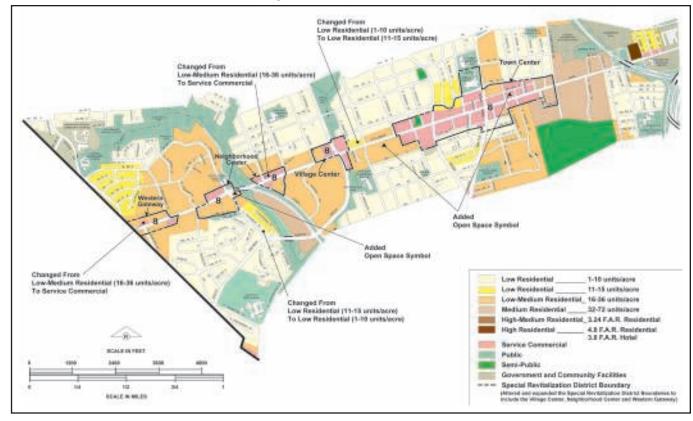
building form, with broad parameters on building use, to shape clear public space, including good streets, neighborhoods and parks, with a healthy mix of uses.

The Code, a part of the County's Zoning Ordinance, is intended to serve as a set of alternate development regulations that emphasize proper building form, enhancement of the pedestrian experience, and compatibility with traditional Main Street principles. Through the adoption of the Code, development proposals will be evaluated either through an administrative review process or a Special Exception Use Permit based on the conformance with traditional building principles expressed in the Code, such as building envelope and architectural standards. The Code does not rely on typical, traditional types of zoning regulations, such as setbacks and specific density recommendations. All properties that are zoned S-3A, RA14-26, RA8-18, RA7-16, RA6-15, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-O and C-O-1.0 and are located within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District will be eligible to utilize this tool without rezoning. In addition, all properties in zoning districts not listed above

that are within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District can be rezoned to CP-FBC, Columbia Pike Form Based Code District, in order to be able to use the Code. It is expected that the Code will spur redevelopment by creating more certain approval criteria, a shorter review period and anticipated economic incentives tied to the Code.

To help implement the refined vision for the Pike, the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) was amended and other Zoning Ordinance changes were adopted. Most notably, based on the recommendations of the Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan, the boundaries of the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District were altered and expanded to include three additional revitalization areas, the Village Center, Neighborhood Center and Western Gateway. The GLUP was also amended to reflect the County's desire for new open spaces north of Columbia Pike between South Cleveland Street and South Barton Street south of Columbia Pike; between South Quincy Street and South Monroe Street: and at the southeast intersection of Columbia Pike and South Columbus Street.

#### GENERAL LAND USE PLAN (Changes since 2002)

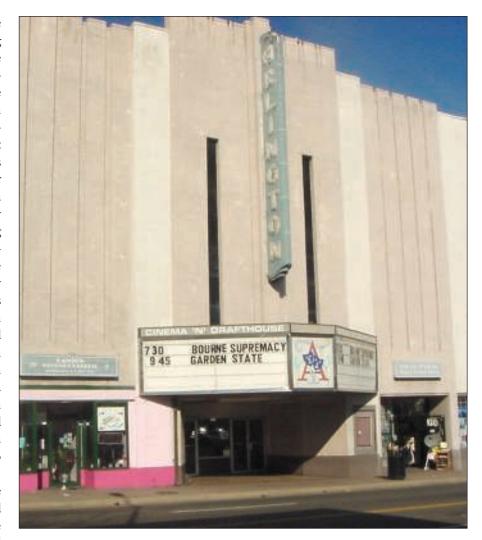


In conjunction with these changes, various reconciliations between the GLUP and the underlying zoning districts were executed. The Master Transportation Plan was also amend-

ed to better match the County's overarching goals for the corridor (see Transportation section).

#### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

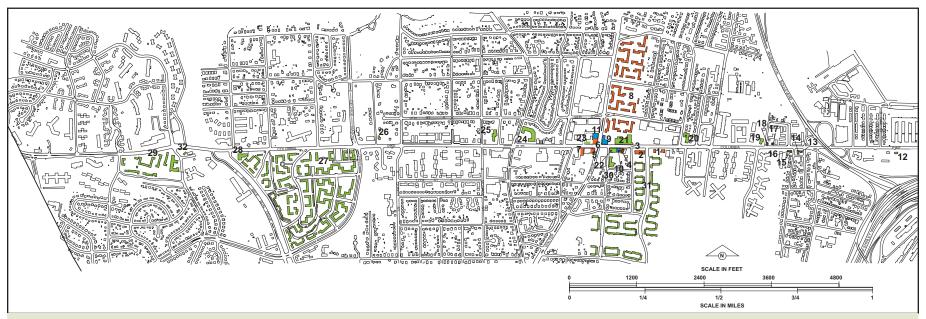
reserving and enhancing the historic, character-defining elements of Columbia Pike is a significant component of the vision for this area, and will become more so as the corridor evolves with increasing momentum. The preservation of the remaining significant historic resources along the Pike is important for various reasons. For one, these buildings represent a direct, physical link to the history and past of this rapidly changing area. More specifically, these buildings represent a connection to the heyday of this corridor when it truly was a Main Street. The properties also embody the compact urban form, continuous "street wall" and attractive streetscape layout which once defined the Pike as a Main Street and which can serve as a model for how it can be yet again a vibrant community center and destination, not merely a utilitarian thoroughfare. Preservation is also a proven catalyst for revitalization. That is, many areas resembling the Columbia Pike corridor have used preservation development to achieve a high level of commercial and retail activity which, in turn, created a



The former Arlington Theater, constructed in c. 1940 in the Art Deco style, is still today a notable cultural and architectural landmark along the Pike.

MANY AREAS RESEMBLING
THE COLUMBIA PIKE CORRIDOR
HAVE USED PRESERVATION
DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE A
HIGH LEVEL OF COMMERCIAL
AND RETAIL ACTIVITY
WHICH, IN TURN, CREATED
A SYNERGY FOSTERING
THE REVITALIZATION
OF SURROUNDING
RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

#### HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Historic buildings to be fully preserved through the Form Based Code include:

- 1. 2338-2344 and 2408 Columbia Pike, commercial buildings
- 2. 2500-2530 Columbia Pike, Arlington Village Shopping Center
- 3. 2624 Columbia Pike, **Arlington Animal Hospital**
- 4. 2628 Columbia Pike, Birds N' Things
- 5. 2900 Columbia Pike, Old Dominion Bank/ Blanca's Restaurant
- 6. 2903 Columbia Pike, Arlington Theater
- 7. 3014 Columbia Pike, Charles Building

8. 805 South Walter Reed Drive, Fillmore Gardens Apartments (The portion of the property south of 9th Street may be redeveloped, on condition that preservation is implemented for the portion north of 9th Street.)

Historic facades to be preserved through the Form Based Code are:

- 9. 2801-2811 Columbia Pike and 927 South Walter Reed Drive, Elkins Building
- 10. 2906-2922 Columbia Pike, Arlington Hardware
- 11. 900 block of South Walter Reed Drive, commercial buildings

Although not listed in the Form Based Code, the community has also identified other noteworthy historic proper-

ties that contribute to the character and integrity of the Pike and should also be considered if, and when, these sites are redeveloped. These sites include:

- 12. 1440 Columbia Pike, VDOT Central Control Building
- 13. 1724 Columbia Pike, house
- 14. 1726 Columbia Pike, house
- 15. 1802 Columbia Pike, house
- 16. 1806 Columbia Pike, house
- 17. 1827 Columbia Pike, house
- 18. 1833 Columbia Pike, house
- 19. 1905 Columbia Pike, St. John's Baptist Church
- 20. 2217 Columbia Pike, Trinity **Episcopal Church**
- 21. 2601-2705 Columbia Pike, Fillmore Gardens Shopping Center
- 22. 2704 Columbia Pike, Arlington Post Office/Ski Chalet

- 23. 2919 Columbia Pike, St. Coletta Thrift Shop
- 24. 3233 Columbia Pike, Westmont Shopping Center
- 25. 3507 Columbia Pike, Arlington Presbyterian Church
- 26. 4029 Columbia Pike, house
- 27. 4200 Columbia Pike, **Barcroft Apartments**
- 28. 4700-4714 Columbia Pike, **Barcroft Shopping Center**
- 29. 5104 Columbia Pike, Frederick **Courts Condominiums**
- 30. 1031-1041 South Edgewood Street, Edgewood Shops
- 31. 1400 South Edgewood Street, **Arlington Village Condominiums**
- 32. 4068 South Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington Mill site

synergy fostering the revitalization of surrounding residential areas.

This section provides updated strategies and tools, including the Form Based Code and national and local historic nominations, to protect important historic resources along the Pike.

## Form Based Code: Integrating the Past with the Future

The historic sites listed in the Form Based Code as buildings and facades to be preserved through the Special Exception Use Permit process are to be found on the preceeding page. Recognizing the challenges associated with incorporating historic properties into redevelopment projects, the Code allows developers who preserve these special historic properties additional height and modifications of the streetscape and required building line requirements. Flexibility is key in making such redevelopment projects feasible and illustrates how the Code can help to protect historic and architectural resources, while allowing for the revitalization and modernization of the corridor. The practicality of this approach has been demonstrated

with the approval on June 12, 2004 by the County Board of a mixed-use project that preserved the facade of 2906-2922 Columbia Pike, the Arlington Hardware site.

#### National and Local Historic Nominations

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places does not protect historic buildings from alteration or demolition, but does serve as a required threshold for property owners to apply for federal and state credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Nonetheless, buildings on the Register are generally more likely to be restored and reused than other older buildings. Local designation often offers the strongest protection against radical alteration and outright demolition. At this time, however, there is little community support among Columbia Pike business owners for the creation of local districts.

Some community leaders in the surrounding residential areas have pursued National Register listings for buildings in their neighborhoods. For instance, those individual buildings and complexes currently listed

on the National Register along the Columbia Pike corridor are: Arlington Village (April 2003), Commons of Arlington (May 2003), Columbia Forest (February 2004), Harry W. Gray House (February 2004) and the Penrose Historic District (November 2004). Additionally, the County has completed other National Register nominations, including one for the historic buildings situated at the intersection of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive, which have not yet been sent to the state for consideration. In the future, other residential and even commercial properties may be nominated for inclusion on the National Register. Similarly, the County may pursue the creation of new local historic districts in this area at a later date, should the community express sufficient interest.

Perhaps the primary benefit of listing a historic property on the National Register is that it confers eligibility for federal and state historic preservation tax credits. The Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program allows for a 20 percent tax credit on eligible rehabilitation expenses. The credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction of federal income tax liability.

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AND MODERNIZATION
OF THE CORRIDOR.



The c. 1881 Italianate Harry W. Gray house, located one block off the Pike, is recognized both for its architectural merit and for its importance to the African-American history of Arlington.

Properties eligible for the program must be income-producing and listed on the National Register either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district. The building does not have to be listed on the National Register before inception of the project; however it needs to be nominated prior to the completion of a 24-month project period. The size of the credit is calculated as a percentage of the eligible rehabilitation expenses. In addition to this program, the federal government also offers a tax deduction for preservation easements.

The state of Virginia offers a State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program similar to the aforementioned federal program. It differs, however, in several respects. First, the state tax credit is valued at 25 percent of a qualifying sum reinvested into a historic building. Second, the building in question may or may not be income-producing. Third, the qualifying reinvestment sum must only equal one-half of the property's adjusted basis (the value of the building, not the land) for a commercial project, and only a quarter of the adjusted basis in the case of private homes. Fourth, the property does not have to be listed on the National Register, just proven eligible for listing. Like the federal government, the state also offers tax deductions for preservation easements.

The County's Historic Preservation Program and Virginia Department of Historic Resources staffs are available to provide information and materials to property owners and developers about these tax credit and easement programs and assist them in completing the necessary paperwork.

The County provides a number of parks and recreational facilities along the Columbia Pike corridor. These offer a wide variety of features, amenities and programs, which are integral to sustaining the high quality of life Arlington residents have come to expect. There are, of course, opportunities to enhance and expand the current offerings and the County is actively engaged in pursuing such possibilities. This section provides an updated list of current and future projects, along with strategies for ensuring that the community's open space and recreational needs are met as the Pike is rethought and redeveloped.

## Form Based Code: New Open Spaces and Streetscapes

The County's open spaces are well-liked and well-used by local residents. A survey conducted by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources in 2002 found that 39 percent of Arlington households attend outdoor concerts, 36 percent regularly participate in festivals and events, and approximately 33 percent regularly attend artistic or



This rendering of the Western Gateway area expresses the community's desire for usable open spaces and enhanced streetscapes.

theatrical performances. Given such a high level of interest and participation, the County should continue to expand its offerings and incorporate more public space for events, such as festivals, along the Pike. The County's Public Art Master Plan, adopted in December 2004, recommends that these new open spaces and streetscapes also be regarded as pri-

ority sites for public art. The County is, indeed, committed to providing purposeful, not leftover spaces, as active, urban places. Recent General Land Use Plan amendments have reflected the County's desire for new open spaces north of Columbia Pike between South Cleveland and South Barton Streets, south of Columbia Pike between South Quincy and

THE COUNTY IS INDEED COMMITTED TO PROVIDING PURPOSEFUL, NOT LEFTOVER SPACES, AS ACTIVE, URBAN PLACES.



Built on the roadbed of the former Washington & Old Dominion Railroad, the W&OD Trail in the Village Center is very popular with bicyclists, walkers and joggers.

South Monroe Streets, and at the southeast intersection of Columbia Pike and South Columbus Street. In this plan and in the Form Based Code, exact locations for the aforementioned open spaces are provided and further defined as squares, civic greens, public plazas, urban parks and streetscapes. It is expected that most of these new open spaces will be provided through and synchronized with the approval of redevelopment projects, as was the case with the small square in front of the Eckerd Drug Store, now home to the successful Columbia Pike Farmers Market and other local events.

#### **Expansion and Improvement** of Existing Parks and **Recreational Facilities**

Some of the specific facilities located along the Pike include Arlington Heights Park, Alcova Heights Park, Cleveland Park, Doctor's Run Park, Towers Park and the Carver Community Center/ Hoffman Boston Education Center. The County is either in the midst of or planning to update and improve several other facilities, including:



Construction of a new Arlington Mill Community Center is slated to begin in 2007.

#### Projects Underway

Arlington Mill Community Center

This community center, located at 4975 Columbia Pike, offers programs related to recreation, education and human services. The County is currently working with an architectural and engineering team to design a new, larger community center to replace the existing one. At roughly 72,000 square feet, the new center is intended to better serve the needs of this diverse community. The larger facility will offer an expanded mix

of its already popular recreational, educational and human services programs. In addition to a continuing education high school, the center will offer adult education and early childhood programs. Various recreational opportunities will be offered in a range of spaces that will include a gymnasium, game room, art studio, computer lab, senior lounge, fitness room, classrooms and multipurpose meeting rooms. Planning and design will continue through 2006 with construction anticipated to begin mid 2007.

Walter Reed Community Center

Construction of the new Walter Reed Community Center, to be located on the site of the current center at 2909 16th Street South, is underway and expected to be completed by spring 2006. The center will be built in an environmentally sensitive manner to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, certification standards. It will encompass 30,000 square feet of recreation and senior programming space, including a canteen, game room, arts and crafts workshops, gymnasium, teen lounge, quiet room, multi-purpose room, recreational technology lab and exercise studio. A separate section of the building will serve as an adult, day healthcare facility. The amenities for this area include large and small activity rooms, a separate entrance convenient for drop-offs and pick-ups, administrative offices, a rest area, clinic and private enclosed garden.

Tyrol Hill Park - Phase One

Tyrol Hill Park is a 3.3 acre neighborhood park located in the Columbia Heights West neighborhood. A

Master Plan for the park was completed in 2003 using Neighborhood Conservation Program Funding. Phase One of the Master Plan implementation, currently scheduled to begin in September 2005, includes relocation and replacement of the existing volleyball and lighted basketball courts, installation of a loop trail, addition of a third park entrance, new site furnishings, a modest playground expansion and enhanced landscaping. The improvements will enhance the function of the park through better accessibility and a more optimal arrangement of uses (see Possible Future Projects section for phases two and three).

#### Possible Future Projects

Four Mile Run

The acquisition of the southwest side of Four Mile Run to create a western entrance to the Four Mile Run Park and Bike Trail is a long-term County goal. A feasibility study, currently being undertaken by the Columbia Forest neighborhood with Neighborhood Conservation Program funding, will explore the feasibility of relocating the Four



Four Mile Run is an important natural resource for the Columbia Pike community.



Together, County staff and the community developed this Master Plan for Tyrol Hill Park.

Mile Run Trail to the southwest side of the stream for at least part of the length between George Mason Drive and Columbia Pike. Public access to the area under consideration in the study is currently planned to be acquired through the voluntary granting of easements by the current property owners.

A related goal is the identification of funding sources for the creation of a Four Mile Run interpretive park that will educate users about the impact of the built community on the Four Mile Run valley and its relationship with the Potomac River and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. This interpretive park would be an appropriate location for art relating both to the Four Mile Run and Columbia Pike corridors. The County's Office of Neighborhood Services has already commissioned a conceptual study of art and interpretive elements for this location, and this study could serve as a point of departure for further artistic exploration of the site.

#### Washington Boulevard Trail

The Washington Boulevard Trail will be a shared-use, paved trail connecting Arlington Boulevard and Columbia Pike. The trail will run parallel to and east of Washington Boulevard and will travel through Towers Park before connecting to Columbia Pike at South Rolfe Street. The trail will be an important asset for both the bicyclists and pedestrians of this area. Construction is slated to begin in 2005.

Tyrol Hill Park -Phases Two and Three

Phases Two and Three of the Tyrol Hill Park Master Plan, not yet funded, call for the installation of a comfort station, picnic shelter, paved gathering space, entry feature and fencing enhancements, along with additional landscaping. Completion of these two implementation phases will improve the usability of the park for the neighborhood and will also greatly enhance the beauty of the park's street frontage.



wide range of housing opportunities, for both renters and owners, exists along the Columbia Pike corridor. Given the current regional market conditions, characterized by a housing market driven by robust job growth and a continued interest in living close to the District, the Columbia Pike corridor offers significant potential for additional residential redevelopment. Favorable interest rates encourage renters to purchase homes, townhouses and condominiums. Low

interest rates also provide developers with a financial incentive to develop new properties and redevelop existing ones. The near term future for the Pike could be more favorable than it has been in many years. That is, recent economic expansion has increased real estate property values throughout the County, thereby spurring interest in reinvestment. The Columbia Pike Corridor stands to benefit from this interest, in part because property values are not as high as in the Rosslyn-Ballston or Jefferson-Davis Metro

corridors and the Pike is beginning to be perceived as a better value in relation to the increasingly expensive Metro corridors.

Ownership opportunities have expanded from existing single-family homes to include newer townhouses, condominiums, and even new houses on infill lots. Prices vary widely, with condominiums offering the best opportunity for households with modest incomes to enter the market. Recent conversions, such as the Brittany and Shirlington Overlook,

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This is a good example of some of the high-quality, older, garden-style apartments found along the Pike.



The Monterey/Sierra redevelopment project preserved 96 affordable rental units, while creating new homeownership opportunities in the Columbia Heights West neighborhood.

offer first-time buyers an affordable alternative to higher-priced single family homes and townhouses with prices starting in the low to mid \$200,000s.

In terms of rental properties, existing apartments, totaling approximately 9,716 as of April 2005, provide the bulk of the available supply. On the one hand, there is little incentive for some of the owners of older apartment complexes to sell what are performing assets. In some instances, the same families or business have owned these complexes for decades, are carrying little or no debt and wish to avoid incurring substantial capital gains taxes by selling their properties. On the other hand, market forces are beginning to shift. That is, there is a mounting economic incentive for owners to renovate their properties, many of which are reaching 50 to 60 years of age with plumbing, electrical and heating systems and other infrastructure that are fast approaching the end of their useful life, and convert them into condominiums.

While many citizens living along Columbia Pike are supportive of the revitalization of the area, some are

also worried about how rapidly rents have been increasing and the pressure this is placing on low and moderate income households. Furthermore, the number of apartment buildings converting to condominiums is increasing. The conversions offer ownership opportunities for first time purchasers, but displacement for those unable to afford the sales prices. It is therefore important that the County continue to support efforts to maintain and preserve the affordable housing supply in and around the surrounding neighborhoods along Columbia Pike, while encouraging the overall revitalization of the corridor. The challenge is to effectively balance these dual objectives. Arlington County is committed to providing to households of all income levels an opportunity to live in safe, decent and affordable housing. At the same time, the County seeks to enhance commercial growth that will provide diverse employment opportunities for its citizens and expand services to residents.

## Form Based Code: Increasing Housing Opportunities

The Form Based Code is designed to create a vital "Main Street" and establishes the framework for the construction of new housing of various types within the revitalization districts along the Columbia Pike corridor. As the Code emphasizes the benefits of mixed-use development, much of this housing stock will be incorporated into projects with office and retail space. This mixed-use development will provide a new housing option for the corridor and will perhaps, through competition, spur reinvestment in older, existing housing. Interest in developing housing along the Pike is increasing and several new development projects involving multifamily and townhouse units have been approved or are under review.

#### **Publicly Assisted Efforts**

The County has funded several rental housing development proposals along Columbia Pike over the years through its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) Programs. Since 1982, the County has assisted with 13 projects involving the acquisition, rehabilitation and/or partial redevelopment of properties along the corridor. In all, the County invested \$18,591,446 in the rehabilitation and construction of these properties. The projects, in their entirety, cost approximately \$123,436,783. Each of these developments has or had a portion of the units set aside for low or moderate income households as committed affordable units. The total number of rental units involved is 1,254, of which 1,085 are committed affordable units.

Although the County has invested a significant amount of CDBG and AHIF resources in this area, leveraging nearly \$33 million in non-County dollars in the process, these revitalization efforts are only just beginning to be replicated by private owners of rental housing stock. Owners of some of the newer highrise complexes, such as Wildwood Park and Wildwood Towers, have recently completed renovations sans County assistance. These newer apartment complexes are more likely to command the higher rent levels



While the County is interested in encouraging new development along the Pike, it is also committed to preserving the stable, single-family neighborhoods that border the corridor.

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PIKE HOUSING INITIATIVE,
TO HELP OVERCOME SUCH
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TO THE RENOVATION AND
REHABILITATION OF THE
OLDER RENTAL HOUSING
ALONG THE PIKE.

needed to justify substantial rehabilitation than some of the older apartment buildings. The County, working in conjunction with property owners and the community, is in the process of developing more effective strategies, such as the Columbia Pike Housing Initiative, to help overcome such concerns and impediments to the renovation and rehabilitation of the older rental housing along the Pike.

#### Columbia Pike Housing Initiative

The Columbia Pike Housing Initiative, introduced in The Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan, is a program that seeks to enhance the quality of life along the corridor by improving existing housing and by expanding housing options. At the core of this initiative is the development of a housing revitalization plan with development strategies that would lead to specific "bricks and mortar" projects. The plan would meet the following objectives: the promotion of mixed-use development where appropriate; the creation of housing stock that is diverse in terms of both type and affordability; the preservation of affordable housing; the creation of homeownership opportunities; the provision of housing-related services; and the maintenance of sound housing conditions.

Specific areas originally identified in 2002 to be studied include, but are not limited to, the Columbia Heights Neighborhood, West Fillmore Gardens, Foxcroft Terrace and Barcroft. The plan will be designed to complement and further the objectives of other County policies and community activities, including the Columbia Pike Initiative, the County's Affordable Housing Goals and Targets, the Columbia Heights West Neighborhood Action Plan and the several Neighborhood Conservation Plans.

In order to complete this task, the County will organize a planning group consisting of community stakeholders, including interested citizens, civic association representatives, landowners, tenants and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization, to work with County staff throughout the process. The County also anticipates contracting with a private consultant with expertise in real estate and affordable

housing to develop achievable, sitespecific strategies, including development scenarios for various types of properties located throughout the corridor. These strategies, which would complement and enhance the goals previously outlined by the County in this and other plans, would then be implemented as properties come through the redevelopment process. It is expected that the process of developing and implementing such strategies will result in a more knowledgeable community with regards to housing redevelopment and affordable housing issues, efficient methods of leveraging private investment in housing, the costs involved in such revitalization efforts and the challenges of maintaining affordable housing and options for future development. It is anticipated that this work will commence during 2005.

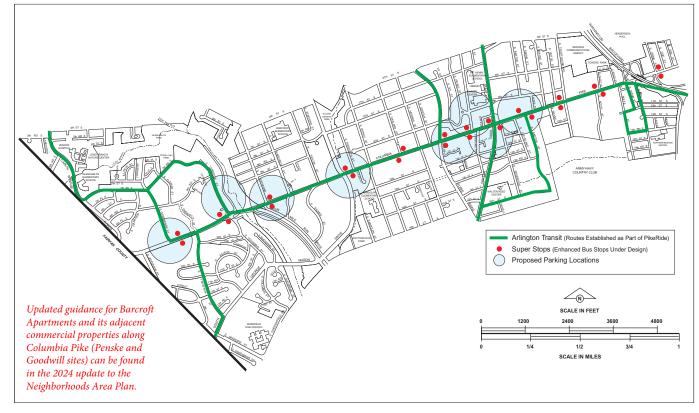


s Columbia Pike originated as a transportation corridor and continues to function as a major transportation artery, recommendations transportation constituted a substantial portion of the implementation recommendations outlined in the Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan. The refined, revised transportation strategy for Columbia Pike differs little in substance from the original. That is, it continues to focus on supporting the overarching vision to remake the corridor into a "Main Street" for South Arlington. The principles guiding the development of this strategy include enhancing public transit in the corridor, prioritizing the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists and managing the street system to promote safety and support planned and future development. Since the adoption of the plan in 2002, with the support of the County Board and the community, substantial work has been done to implement this vision.

## Form Based Code: From Thoroughfare to Main Street

The community design charrette

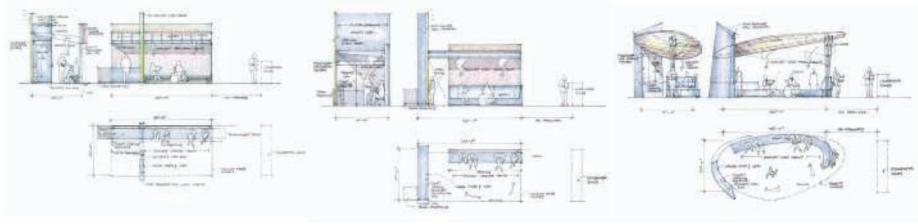
#### TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS AND PROPOSED PARKING LOCATIONS



and the resulting Form Based Code redefined the concept of "street" for Columbia Pike. The "street" now represents the entire public space between building faces, not just a travelway for vehicles. The street is to be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders and drivers. It is expected that many key transportation improvements will be implemented through redevelopment projects using the Form Based Code.

When the Form Based Code was

adopted in February 2003, there were still unresolved questions regarding the width, design and use of street space along Columbia Pike. At that time, the County Board established the Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force to con-



These concepts for Super Stop designs express the County's desire to improve the aesthetics and functionality of the popular Columbia Pike bus line.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS
WERE INTENDED TO REDUCE
THE SPEED OF TRAFFIC,
MINIMIZE PEDESTRIAN
CROSSING DISTANCES AND
INCREASE SIDEWALK SPACE.

sider these issues and develop recommendations for the length of the Pike from Joyce Street to the Fairfax County line. The citizen-led Task Force included representatives from the ten original civic associations near the Pike, as well as representatives from various County advisory groups and commissions. Staff and consultant support was provided. The Task Force met for nearly a year, heard from various experts and strove to balance competing needs for a limited amount of street space.

In February 2004, the County Board accepted the Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force Report. The County Board then revised the Master Transportation Plan to include a new Columbia Pike street space vision. New street profiles were created for different sections of the Pike and documented in a series of detailed cross sections (see Appendix). The new street configurations are intended to reduce the speed of traffic, minimize pedestrian crossing distances and increase sidewalk space. They include narrowed travel lanes, a five-lane street (with the center lane either a left turn lane or landscaped median), on-street parking in the commercial areas and bicycle lanes along most of the Pike. The new street profiles also establish the Required Building Lines used in the Form Based Code. To complement the recommendations of the Task Force, the County's Public Art Master Plan, adopted in December 2004, recommends that an artist in residence be retained to assist with integrating art projects into future streetscape planning along the Pike.

Subsequent to the Street Space Task Force process, the County Manager established the Columbia Pike Implementation Team, consisting of many of the same citizen members as the Street Space Planning Task Force, to advise staff on implementa-

tion. This group has been meeting to review improvement projects currently being planned or implemented. For projects such as the streetscape and utility undergrounding proposed between Garfield and Monroe Streets and between Wakefield Street and Four Mile Run Drive, the street space "vision" cannot be fully achieved at this time because of existing buildings and right-of-way limitations. The full cross sections of the improved streetscape will most likely be realized as sites redevelop along the corridor. For now, however, the Implementation Team is suggesting interim approaches to realize as much of the vision as possible, given existing conditions.

#### **Transit**

Columbia Pike is the busiest local bus corridor in Virginia, with connections at its eastern end to the Pentagon and Pentagon City Metrorail stations. In the Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan. it was recommended that the already high level of transit service along the Pike be enhanced through improved bus stops, transit information and



Improved sidewalks and new medians enhance both the aesthetics and safety of the Pike for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists alike.

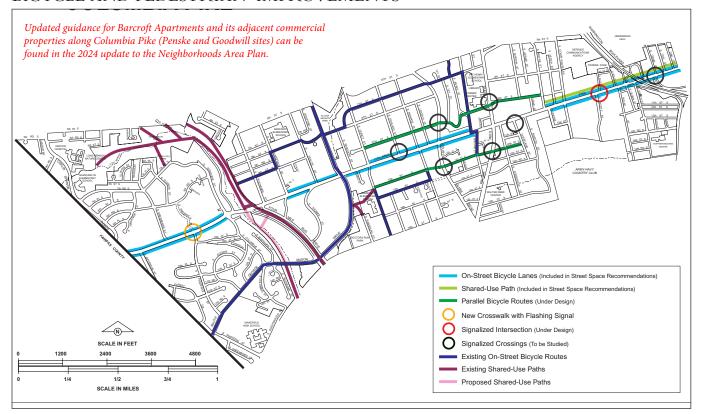
bus services. It further recommended that discussions continue regarding a higher-capacity form of transit to service the Pike in the future.

In September 2003, bus service in the corridor was restructured and promoted under the name of Pike Ride. Three levels of service are now provided. Metrobus continues to operate regional service between the Pentagon and the Annandale and Culmore areas of Fairfax

County. Metrobus also provides an Arlington-focused service to the Pentagon City Metrorail station that is synchronized with the Blue Line schedule. Arlington Transit provides localized services connecting several neighborhoods with activity centers in the County. A new cross-County Arlington Transit route also links the western part of Columbia Pike with the Ballston, Clarendon and Courthouse areas. Other bus-related

COLUMBIA PIKE IS THE BUSIEST LOCAL BUS CORRIDOR IN VIRGINIA, WITH CONNECTIONS AT ITS EASTERN END TO THE PENTAGON AND PENTAGON CITY METRORAIL STATIONS.

#### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



improvements include new, low-floor Metrobuses, better passenger information at bus stops, the introduction of SmartTrip readers on all Metrobuses and the installation of a system, currently in the testing phase, that gives priority to buses at

traffic signals.

To improve comfort and safety for bus riders and further promote the Pike Ride service, Arlington has hired an architectural firm to design new bus stops and shelters at 24 locations along Columbia Pike. Called "Super Stops," these are envisioned to be attractive, hospitable spaces with passenger amenities such as realtime bus information and offvehicle fare collection services. The County plans to start construction of the Super Stops by fall 2005. The

County continues to work with Fairfax County and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or WMATA, in planning long-term transit initiatives for the length of the corridor. The jurisdictions are cooperating together on the Pike Transit Initiative, a study of transit alternatives. The alternatives currently under consideration include bus rapid transit and streetcar technology. Both alternatives would operate on Columbia Pike in mixed traffic, connecting the Pentagon/Pentagon City area with the Baileys Crossroads area of Fairfax County.

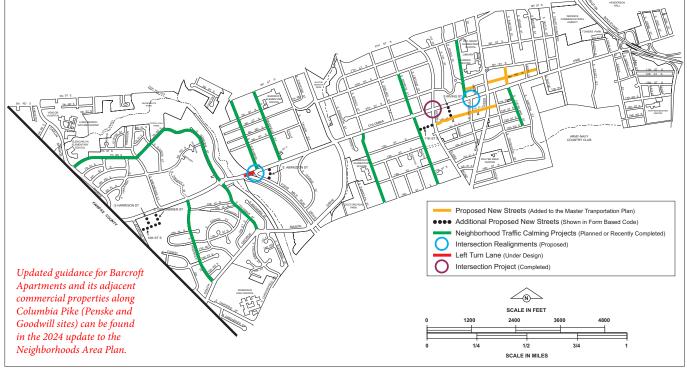
#### Pedestrian and Bicycle Initiatives

Given the objective to make the Columbia Pike corridor an attractive "Main Street," consideration of the pedestrian experience is a central tenet of both the *Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan* and the subsequent Street Space Task Force recommendations. Improving sidewalks and pedestrian facilities is a priority, as is providing for safer crossings of the Pike and other principal roadways. Some such projects are currently underway or have just

been completed. For instance, a recent intersection project at Glebe Road has improved sidewalks in the vicinity of this crossroads. A related project, involving the undergrounding of utility wires, the rebuilding and widening of sidewalks and the planting of trees to improve the streetscape in the Town Center area between South Garfield and South Oakland Streets, is already under way. Another utility undergrounding, sidewalk enhancement and landscaping project planned for the western part of Columbia Pike, between South Wakefield Street and Four Mile Run Drive, is expected to begin sometime in 2005.

Other pedestrian-focused projects that have been completed recently include the construction of new sidewalks and curbs on South Garfield Street and 9th Road South. a short stretch of sidewalk near South Rolfe Street and a sidewalk alongside the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) facility near the Navy Annex. A center median and a new crosswalk with a flashing pedestrian signal have been installed near Frederick Street. Near the east end of Columbia Pike, a signalized

#### STREET IMPROVEMENTS



pedestrian crossing is being designed for South Scott Street in conjunction with VDOT. Based on a recommendation of the Columbia Pike Implementation Team, the County is also discussing with VDOT a proposal to re-stripe the crosswalks on Columbia Pike with a highly-visible ladder design.

The Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan recommended establishing bicycle routes throughout the corridor, including bikeways along parallel streets and, where possible, bike lanes along Columbia Pike itself. The Street Space Task Force has identified areas where onstreet bicycle lanes are to be provided

in the future. At the present time, funding has been identified for the creation of parallel bikeways on 9th and 12th Streets between Quincy and Cleveland Streets. Anticipated improvements include enhanced signage and new pavement markings to delineate and highlight the bikeways, as neither 9th nor 12th Street

## Planned or recently completed neighborhood traffic calming projects include:

- Columbia Heights West: South Dinwiddie Street
- Columbia Forest: South Frederick and South Columbus Streets
- Barcroft: South Buchanan and South Wakefield Streets
- Douglas Park: South Quincy and South Monroe Streets
- Alcova Heights: South Monroe Street
- Arlington Heights: South Highland Street
- Columbia Heights: South Cleveland Street

has sufficient width to accommodate full-fledged bike lanes. Staff is studying how bikeways can be accommodated in the one-way section of 9th Street South between South Ivy and South Irving Streets. The Bicycle Advisory Committee is involved in development of the bikeway plans, with implementation slated to begin by summer 2005. Additionally, a new



Safety improvements are being instituted at various key intersections.

traffic signal planned for installation at the intersection of 12th Street and Glebe Road will further improve bikeway crossings at the intersection.

Other bicycle projects in the corridor include the creation of the Washington Boulevard Trail and possible relocation of a part of the Four Mile Run Trail. The Washington Boulevard Trail will connect Arlington Boulevard and Columbia Pike following a path generally parallel to Washington Boulevard. The trail will be located on the east side

of Washington Boulevard and will travel through Towers Park before connecting to Columbia Pike at South Rolfe Street. Construction of this shared-use, paved trail is anticipated to begin in 2005. As for the Four Mile Run Trail, the Columbia Forest Neighborhood Conservation Plan includes a recommendation to explore the possibility of relocating a portion of this trail or adding a segment to it on the west side of Four Mile Run between Columbia Pike and South George Mason Drive. A

## Proposed new connecting streets:

- 9th Road South from South Wayne Street to South Walter Reed Drive
- 9th Road South from South Garfield Street to South Highland Street
- 11th Street South from South Edgewood Street to South Monroe Road
- South Cleveland Street from 9th Street South to Columbia Pike
- South Irving Street from Columbia Pike to new 11th Street South
- South Abingdon Street from Columbia Pike to South Four Mile Run Drive (minor)
- 10th Street South from new South Greenbriar Street to South Jefferson Street
- South Greenbriar Street from Columbia Pike to new 10th Street South
- South Harrison Street from Columbia Pike to new 10th Street South



preliminary study funded through the Neighborhood Conservation program is underway at this time. Street System

The Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan recommended that traffic impact studies be conducted for major new developments along Columbia Pike. This requirement has been included in the administrative regulations for Form Based Code developments greater than 100,000 square feet.

The plan recommended improvements to several intersections along Columbia Pike, including adding left-turn lanes at South Glebe Road, realigning the South Highland Street and the South Buchanan Street/South Four Mile Run Drive intersections, and rebuilding the Washington Boulevard interchange. The Glebe Road intersection has been improved, with left-turn lanes now operational in all directions at that intersection. The South Highland Street intersection is being studied in relation to an approved Form Based Code project at Walter Reed Drive. Based on the Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan. the undergrounding and sidewalk

project near Four Mile Run was redesigned to include the interim recommendation to add a left-turn lane. Further study is being done to see whether it is practicable at this time to implement the longer-term recommendation to realign South Four Mile Run Drive where it meets South Buchanan Street. The County is continuing to work with VDOT on the redesign of the Washington Boulevard interchange to make it feasible under the currently programmed level of funding.

The plan recommends that neighborhood traffic calming projects be considered in the neighborhoods adjacent to Columbia Pike to deal with both existing traffic impacts and the potential effects of new development. Traffic calming includes such measures as speed humps, traffic circles, textured crosswalks, curb bumpouts or nubs and gateway treatments. Since adoption of the Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan. several traffic calming projects have been planned for or completed in the neighborhoods bordering the Pike.

The Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan also recommends that many of the driveway entrances along Columbia Pike be consolidated or eliminated. The Form Based Code takes a step in this direction by requiring that most access to parking and loading for new developments be from side streets and alleys, not directly from the Pike.

Several new local connecting streets were mentioned in the Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan and were subsequently incorporated into the Master Transportation Plan. Additional new street segments are shown on the Form Based Code Regulating Plans and County staff is currently working to reconcile what is shown in the Code with what is represented in the Master Transportation Plan. It is anticipated that these streets will be constructed as new development occurs. One such development, the approved mixed-use project at the corner of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive, includes a portion of a new 11th Street South. Survey and design work for this new street is underway and the street segment is expected to be completed by the County as new development comes on line. Other developments being considered in this area could result in the completion of additional segments of the new 11th Street. These and other new two-lane street segments will improve local circulation for vehicles and pedestrians and will help to realize the overall vision of the Pike as a Main Street for South Arlington.

### Parking Strategy

The Columbia Pike Parking Strategy was adopted by the County Board in February 2003 after it was determined that a flexible, diverse and creative approach to parking was needed in order to implement the goals and objectives of the Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan. This strategy is now integrated into the overall comprehensive transportation plan for the corridor which emphasizes walking, transit use, and biking. Below is the list of parking goals for Columbia Pike, as well as a general summary of the implementation strategies (a more detailed description of the parking strategies can be found in a companion document, the Columbia Pike Parking Strategy).

### Parking Goals

- Enable people to park once at a convenient location and access a variety of commercial enterprises in pedestrian-friendly environments by encouraging shared parking.
- · Create a coordinated, managed approach to parking that increases the visibility and accessibility of parking and uniformity of parking information, whether the parking is provided publicly or privately.
- · Reduce diffused, inefficient, single-purpose parking.
- Avoid adverse parking impacts on neighborhoods adjacent to redevelopment areas.
- Maximize on-street parking.
- Provide flexibility for redevelopment of small sites and for the preservation of historic buildings.
- Promote early prototype projects using flexible and creative incentives.

### **Implementation**

The Parking Strategies that were adopted in February 2003 include establishing minimum requirements

for parking; mitigating impacts in residential areas; studying, on a continuous basis, parking-related issues; establishing areas or zones where shared parking opportunities should occur (see Transit Improvements and Proposed Parking Locations map); investing in public-private partnerships; maximizing on-street parking; and improving signage. Other related strategies include enhancing pedestrian amenities, improving transit options, and ameliorating bicycle parking.

In response to a number of these strategies, the County has acomplished the following:

- Instituted a residential permit parking program in the Douglas Park and Columbia Forest neighborhoods in order to mitigate parking shortages in single family neighborhoods adjacent to higher density development areas along the Pike.
- Hired a parking coordinator to provide on-going analysis and leadership to achieve the County's parking goals throughout the County and along the Pike.
- Developed low or no cost Trans-

portation Demand Management, or TDM, strategies to encourage developers and businesses to offer occupants and/or employees transit, ridesharing or car sharing, bicycling and walking information and subsidies, to reduce vehicle trips, and, hence, parking demand, where possible.

The County is currently or continuously working on the following:

- Making prudent investments of County resources to meet interim and long-term parking needs.
- Adding on-street parking spaces along Columbia Pike and on proposed new streets based on the recommendations of the Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force Report.

THE COLUMBIA PIKE PARKING

STRATEGY WAS ADOPTED

**DIVERSE AND CREATIVE** 

APPROACH TO PARKING

IMPLEMENT THE GOALS

AND OBJECTIVES OF THE

REVITALIZATION PLAN.

COLUMBIA PIKE INITIATIVE—A

WAS NEEDED IN ORDER TO

BY THE COUNTY BOARD IN

FEBRUARY 2003 AFTER IT WAS

DETERMINED THAT A FLEXIBLE,

INITIATIVE



ne of the challenges faced on Columbia Pike is to offset the economic and market factors that have hindered the Pike's economic growth over recent decades, while taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the transformation of the regional economy from a traditional government industry base to new technology and federal paradigms. The County's plan for this area must reflect the need to strike a balance between strengthening neighborhood-serving businesses and injecting additional income through new residential, business and office development. With the relatively small amount of land directly controlled by the County, motivating private property owners to participate remains a formidable obstacle and underscores the need to offer incentives. The market gap between the Metro corridors and Columbia Pike is beginning to lessen as land prices continue to rise and larger sites disappear along the more developed corridors. As a result, the need for County economic assistance is diminishing, but still remains.

In order to realize the community's overall vision for the Pike and create



High quality architecture with ground floor retail will help to revitalize and reinvigorate the Village Center.

a place to live, work and play, both residential and commercial development must be stimulated. Several residential and mixed-use development projects are currently under review. Opportunities to attract new commercial development and investment to the Columbia Pike corridor will be closely tied to the ability to offer Class A office space at a full service price point below those rents asked in the County's Metro corridors and surrounding markets. Columbia Pike does have an impressive existing

technology infrastructure, thanks to the all-optical broadband communication network administered by the AT&T Central Telco office at 900 South Walter Reed Drive, which allows it to compete in a limited arena with fewer than a dozen other major urban technology areas nationally where such infrastructure is in place. Nonetheless, at present, there is no real market for Class A commercial office space along the Pike. It is thought, however, that demand for such space will follow the develop-

IN ORDER TO REALIZE THE COMMUNITY'S OVERALL VISION FOR THE PIKE AND CREATE A PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY, BOTH RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT MUST BE STIMULATED.

ment of successful residential and retail projects.

Defense contractors and high-tech firms are logical primary marketing targets, while association and nonprofit headquarters also represent potential sectors to pursue. The location of Columbia Pike relative to the Pentagon and the District of Columbia to the east and the hightech companies situated in Fairfax County to the west is significant.

In terms of the expanding defense sector, proximity to their federal government clientele is appealing to defense contractors. In terms of the high-tech industry, the metropolitan Washington area is recognized nationally as being one of the preferred locations for high-tech offices, although the District of Columbia, Fairfax and Prince William Counties are currently more sought after locations than Arlington County. One impediment facing the Pike is the dearth of large blocks of "ready to go" commercial space, such as those available in Crystal City and other nearby locations. Such space is very attractive to prospective tenants who like to be able to actually view their office space and will rarely commit to



Newer multifamily housing along the eastern end of the Pike is a sign that interest in this area is building within the development community.

a building on paper. At this juncture, a "speculative" commercial building on Columbia Pike has the potential to succeed, but would be virtually impossible to finance. Proactive measures must be taken in order to close the economic gap between this and other corridors and allow the Pike to realize its full potential.

## Form Based Code: Catalyst for Reinvestment

Investors are starting to turn to Columbia Pike as a more affordable alternative to the increasingly expensive, highly-developed Metro corridors. Investors are also drawn to the Pike because of the Form Based Code, which offers a more predict-

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able development process with a degree of certainty not found in the site plan process that guides development along other corridors. Developers who use the Form Based Code know up-front what can or cannot be built, as well as what the timing will be for the approval of a potential project. Projects are reviewed either through an administrative process or a streamlined Special Exception Use Permit process. Developers are also learning that mixed-use development can be a very lucrative proposition. Whereas mixed-use development can be challenging to pursue under more traditional zoning, the Code encourages and facilitates such development and could provide greater opportunities for additional densities than the current zoning. Prior to the adoption of the Code, there were few if any mixed-use proposals along the Pike. Now, however, there are one approved and several pending mixed-use projects that will bring new commercial, residential, office and cultural attractions to the corridor and undoubtedly serve as catalysts for additional investment and reinvestment.

### **Redevelopment Incentives**

While the Form Based Code represents the primary tool for stimulating interest in the development and redevelopment of the Pike, there are several other instruments the County is using to spur investment in the corridor. Most of the programs recommended in the Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan are being continued in a revised, updated form. Others, such as the commercial revolving loan fund, abandoned because it was determined that the County cannot provide direct financial assistance to private entities, have been succeeded by other programs.

### Columbia Pike Development Fund

The County Board established a development fund for the Columbia Pike corridor in 2002, and it is recommended that the County continue to support this fund. The fund was conceived of as a source of public "seed money" to fund public projects and to help narrow the feasibility/profitability margin for development projects that have various public components associated with them. The primary goal

of the fund, which was allocated \$1 million, was to leverage County dollars in order to achieve the goals of the overall plan for the corridor. Examples of ways in which the fund was originally intended to be used included: the facilitation of private redevelopment through public acquisition (or participation in the development) of select properties for public use/facilities; the development of financial participation strategies to satisfy public parking needs; the promotion of transit enhancements; where permitted with public funds, the funding of infrastructure site costs beyond the financial feasibility of a project; and the acquisition of right-of-way for new transportation initiatives and the possible realignment of key intersections.

While the fund has not yet been used to support such initiatives, it has instead been used to promote community involvement in the process of refining the overall vision for the redevelopment of the Pike. Perhaps most notably, the fund was used to hire a consultant team to lead the successful public charrette in 2002. The fund was also used to provide the citizen task force that developed

**DEVELOPERS ARE ALSO** LEARNING THAT MIXED-USE **DEVELOPMENT CAN BE A VERY** LUCRATIVE PROPOSITION.



Approved in 2004, Columbia Center will be a mixed-use condominium project near the intersection of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive.

the Columbia Pike Street Space plan with consulting services and expert analysis. The fund also helped to keep the community up-to-date on the plans for the corridor through the publication of the Columbia Pike Corridor Redevelopment Plan Newsletters, which focused on recent accomplishments and upcoming events.

In the future, the fund could be used to promote public infrastructure that would not otherwise be constructed and should take advantage of market opportunities. Use of the fund requires approval on a case-bycase basis by the County Manager and/or County Board and a financial analysis supporting the need and public purpose to be accomplished. Selected projects will have clear public purposes and benefits for the corridor and will help to transform the corridor both visually and functionally, as well as economically.

## Tax Increment Public Infrastructure Fund

The Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan recommended the designation of a Tax Increment Financing District along the Pike. While the County has decided not to pursue this mechanism, a Tax Increment Public Infrastructure Fund (TIPIF) was successfully implemented, and the recently approved Columbia Center project has already taken advantage of its benefits. The County determined that it was necessary and desirable to establish a policy for investment in public infrastructure designed to support and complement particular key private development projects and further associated public amenities along the Pike. The TIPIF is de-



signed to provide financial assistance to those significant projects that are anticipated to be the ones that most effectively initiate and anchor the entire Columbia Pike revitalization effort. In addition, the TIPIF may be used to provide funding for public infrastructure that supports the entire corridor revitalization effort.

The TIPIF is designed to give the County the flexibility to determine which projects shall receive financial assistance based on qualifying criteria including: the amount of private investment; the type of development being undertaken; the community benefit to accrue from the completion of the project; the ability of the public investment to leverage other private investments; the likelihood of the project benefiting from public infrastructure investment: and the ability of the public investment to make it possible for the private developer to achieve an acceptable return on the private investment opportunity.

The TIPIF only applies to up to 85 percent of the tax increment created by the initial private investment, as any future increase in taxes resulting from higher assessments over and

above the initial bump-up in value caused by the private investment will be accrued to the County's General Fund. Any initial funding required for public infrastructure investment may be made using existing County resources. Tax increment financing is a very useful tool, as it leverages future tax revenues to allow the private investment that will generate those revenues to take place today.

#### Rehabilitation Tax Exemption

The Columbia Pike Initiative—A Revitalization Plan also recommended reevaluating the Rehabilitation Tax Exemption in light of the ever-increasing economic challenges facing smaller property owners interested in the revitalization of their properties. In February 2003, the County adopted changes especially designed to aid the smaller property owner considering new investment and construction. The changes, which try to build upon the greater flexibility provided by the new Form Based Code, include substantially broadening the dollar value of projects eligible for the exemption that will be available for five years; increasing the emphasis on new construction by eliminating the replacement square footage constraint presently found in the ordinance; expanding the areas in the corridor in which such exemptions may be claimed; and stipulating that \$10 million will replace \$1 million as the cap on assessable improvements. The primary purpose of the Rehabilitation Tax Exemption ordinance is to stimulate the upgrading, expansion and replacement of aging commercial buildings in designated commercial districts such as this.

### Technology Zone

In January 2000, the County Board approved a Technology Zone in the Town Center area of Columbia Pike that offered qualifying technology businesses a 50 percent reduction in Business Professional Operational License (BPOL) taxes for a period of 10 years. Changes enacted in 2003 were designed to encourage reinvestment by making the rehabilitation tax exemption more meaningful and applicable, particularly when linked with the other incentives and actions being proposed for the

IN JANUARY 2000, THE
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PROFESSIONAL OPERATIONAL
LICENSE (BPOL) TAXES FOR
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**EXTENSIVE RESEARCH HAS BEEN** CONDUCTED BY BIZLAUNCH. **ARLINGTON COUNTY'S SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE** NETWORK, AND THE COLUMBIA PIKE REVITALIZATION **ORGANIZATION SINCE** SEPTEMBER 2004 IN ORDER TO PROACTIVELY PROVIDE **BUSINESS RESOURCES** TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SMALLER BUSINESSES ALONG COLUMBIA PIKE.

Columbia Pike corridor. The existing Technology Zone ordinance was revised to stimulate investment by technology industries within designated portions of the corridor, using a reduced BPOL tax rate for ten years as an incentive. The ordinance was also changed to include all of the areas within the revised Special Revitalization District boundaries, designating them as Qualified Technology Zones. This approach allows the tax incentive to function as an economic support mechanism to promote new business investment in these areas, complementing the existing and planned revitalization initiatives.

#### Small Business Assistance Network

Extensive research has been conducted by BizLaunch, Arlington County's Small Business Assistance Network, and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization since September 2004 in order to proactively provide business resources to meet the needs of small businesses along Columbia Pike. To continue this commitment, BizLaunch will be conducting one-on-one interviews

with businesses along Columbia Pike beginning April 2005. The survey has the complete endorsement of Arlington's Small Business Coordinating Council which consists of thirty members of small business service providers and small business owners throughout Arlington County. The goal is to visit every small business within the corridor to assess their business needs.

It is anticipated that this direct contact effort will not only provide input regarding additional services the County should consider offering to address small business owners' concerns, but will also introduce these businesses to BizLaunch, and the services already offered by Arlington County, including counseling, research and education. The information collected through the survey will be used at Arlington's Small Business Coordinating Council's Third Annual Small Business Expo to be held in June 2005.

#### Parking Strategy

In order for the various business establishments along the Pike to maintain and expand their client bases as the corridor is redeveloped, it is important to ensure the provision of convenient, adequate parking. Recognizing this, County staff devised the Columbia Pike Parking Strategy, which was adopted by the County Board in February 2003. This strategy includes various flexible parking solutions, such as encouraging public participation in the creation of shared parking. The County is also committed to making prudent investments of its resources to meet interim and long-term parking needs. The development and implementation of this strategy is important to the financial viability and overall success of the Pike as a Main Street and destination for shopping, dining and attending cultural events (for further information, see the Transportation Section).

## CONCLUSION

he Columbia Pike corridor was once the Main Street of South Arlington, a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use community center and regional destination. With careful planning and the coordinated efforts of community stakeholders, it can be yet again a successful, livable and functional "place," not merely a thoroughfare. While the transformation of this aging, autooriented, suburban, commercial strip is certainly not something that can be accomplished overnight, the progressive, urban design requirements outlined in the Form Based Code and the Columbia Pike Street Space Plan, along with the updated vision implementation strategies provided herein, establish the necessary framework.

Together the community-generated Form Based Code and the County's policy recommendations lay the foundation for the new, revitalized Columbia Pike. The Code will ensure a better-defined, more serviceable, physical form for the Pike, while the policy recommendations will ensure that the Pike meets the needs of all members of the immediate and larger community. That is, these recommendations will make

certain that the remaining historic resources linking the present to the past are incorporated into the redeveloped Pike; that new open spaces and recreational facilities are woven into the fabric of the corridor so that residents and visitors alike will have meaningful places to gather, relax and reestablish a connection with the natural world; that both existing and future housing will be safe, decent and affordable; that the transportation network will be expanded and improved to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders, as well as motorists; and, lastly, that investment and reinvestment in the Pike will be guided in such a way as to retain and expand existing businesses, while attracting new ones which will broaden employment opportunities and bolster the local economy.

Even now, interest and investment in the Pike is increasing steadily. As new projects are approved, the desired urban form and physical infrastructure of the corridor will begin to take shape. At the same time, the community's historic preservation, parks and recreation, housing, transportation and economic development plans will start to come to life. The

redevelopment of the corridor will serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of not only the Pike proper, but also the surrounding community. In due time, the Columbia Pike corridor will yet again be South Arlington's Main Street.

#### For Further Information:

Historical Planning Documents, including: Columbia Pike 2000-A Revitalization Plan (1990)

Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan, Volumes I and II (2002)

## Current Planning Documents, including:

The Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code

General Land Use Plan

Neighborhood Conservation Plans

Master Transportation Plan

Public Art Master Plan

### Other Documents, including:

Columbia Pike Corridor Redevelopment Plan Newsletter. Issues 1 and 2 (Fall 2002)

Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force Report

# APPENDIX - STREET SPACE CROSS SECTIONS

