

ORDINANCE NO. 3565

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain the Potomac West Small Area Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Master Plan, by adopting and incorporating therein the amendments heretofore approved by City Council to such Small Area Plan, and no other amendments, and to repeal all provisions of the said Small Area Plan as may be inconsistent with such amendments.

WHEREAS, the City Council of Alexandria, finds and determines that:

1. City council has heretofore adopted by ordinance as part of the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, the Potomac West Small Area Plan.

2. Subsequent to the adoption of the said small area plan, the Department of Planning and Community Development has held a series of meetings with residents and property owners within the area comprising such small area plan, for the purpose of identifying necessary and proper amendments to the said small area plan.

3. At the conclusion of these meetings the Department of Planning and Community Development has prepared, and has submitted to the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria, certain amendments to the aforesaid small area plan.

4. After full opportunity for comment and public hearing, the planning commission by resolution has adopted and certified certain amendments to city council for adoption as amendments to the heretofore adopted small area plan.

5. City council has conducted an informational public hearing on such amendments, as certified by the planning commission, and for the reasons stated in the record of such public hearing, has determined to adopt the amendments in conformity with the form and language in Exhibit A, attached hereto.

6. No credible evidence contrary to the findings and conclusions of the planning commission expressed in its resolution adopting the said small area plan amendments has been presented to the city council.

7. Based upon the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which city council may properly take notice in its capacity as the legislative body of the City of Alexandria, adoption of this ordinance is necessary and desirable to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the residents of the City of Alexandria; now, therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That the Potomac West Small Area Plan, as adopted on May 20, 1989, by Ordinance No. 3380, be, and same hereby is, amended and reordained by incorporating fully therein all text, descriptive matter, plats, maps, charts, tables and other materials as set forth in Exhibit A, which exhibit is attached hereto and incorporated fully herein by reference.

Section 2. That the hereinabove approved and adopted amendments to the Potomac West Small area plan, shall, and the same hereby do, supersede all text, descriptive matter, plats, maps, charts, tables and other materials heretofore comprising the said small area plan, which are in conflict with such hereinabove approved and adopted amendments.

Section 3. That the city clerk shall transmit a duly certified copy of this ordinance to the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and that said Clerk of the Circuit Court shall file same among the court records.

Section 4. That this ordinance shall become effective upon the date and at the time of its final passage.

PATRICIA S. TICER
Mayor

Final Passage: April 25, 1992

POTOMAC WEST

SMALL AREA PLAN

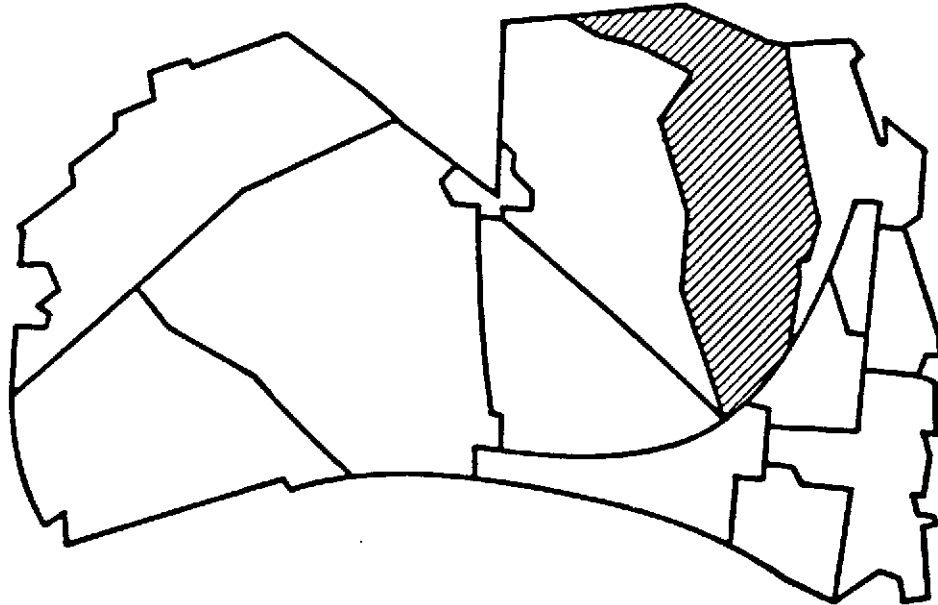
ADOPTED MAY 20, 1989

ORDINANCE 3380

WITH CHANGES APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL

11-14-90

2-23-91



MASTER PLAN
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

RECEIVED
MAR 2 1992
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CITY ATTORNEY

EXHIBIT A

POTOMAC WEST

SMALL AREA PLAN

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MAY 1989

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PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this document is to update the Adopted 1982 Potomac West Area Plan and to incorporate a new 1988 Potomac West Plan into the City's new Master Plan. This plan will serve as the basis for future City Council policy initiatives and actions affecting land use, zoning, capital improvements and other programs in the Potomac West area.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS

The Potomac West Plan is organized into two sections: Background and Issues and Plan Recommendations. The first section reviews and analyzes existing conditions and trends in the study area including physical description, demographics, land use, zoning, economic development activities and trends, transportation and urban design. This section also retraces past City policies including adopted plans, rezonings, resolutions and capital improvement programs. Based on this analysis this section identifies issues which need to be addressed in the plan for the area.

The second section lists the goals, objectives and specific recommendations on land use, zoning, transportation and urban design.

PLANNING PROCESS

This plan has been developed in consultation with citizens, property owners, and community and business groups, through a series of meetings which included review of existing conditions and trends in the Potomac West area, identification of issues, review of the 1982 and 1974 plans of the area and review of plan recommendations.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The Potomac West area is located in Planning District II, in the northeastern part of the City. The area is delineated by Four Mile Run on the north, the Potomac Railroad Yard to the east, Union Station to the south and Russell and Glebe Road to the west. The boundaries used in this Plan are based on the Adopted 1982 Potomac West Plan.

Potomac West (Map 1) consists of an 1,116 acre area which extends north-south, from the City line at Four Mile Run to the Amtrak Station on Callahan Drive. The area is formed by four major north-south streets. Russell Road, defining the western boundary of the area from King Street to Glebe Road, is a four lane roadway fronted by single family detached homes. Commonwealth Avenue, which parallels Russell Road to the east, is a broad four lane street with a wide, central median and fronted by single family detached homes and townhouses.

Mt. Vernon Avenue bisects the area and serves as the commercial spine of Potomac West. Forming the eastern boundary of the area, Route 1, or Jefferson Davis Highway, is a major commuter thoroughfare fronted by light industrial uses and by the Potomac Railroad Freight Classification Yard.

Topographically, the Potomac West area is relatively flat. The area slopes upward toward Russell Road which forms a ridge defining Beverly Hills to the west. One of the most important natural features in Potomac West is Four Mile Run and its flood plain which forms the northern boundary of the planning area.

The Potomac West study area is primarily residential and distinguished by a narrow grid of streets, closely spaced bungalow houses and small, single-family lots subdivided around the turn of the century -- in the pre-automobile era. Its residential character and development history reflect the important influence of the nearby Potomac Yards as a source of jobs. Potomac West was a convenient residential location for many railroad workers in the early part of this century. Transportation facilities such as the railroad, and, later, nearby National Airport also influenced the location of industries along Jefferson Davis Highway.

As a large, diverse residential community, Potomac West can be divided into five defined neighborhoods (Map 2). Starting in the northern part of the area is Arlandria, a neighborhood located between Four Mile Run, Glebe Road and Commonwealth Avenue. This neighborhood contains a very dense concentration of garden apartments which predominate the area. There are also smaller concentrations of duplexes, rowhouses and single family detached residential units located east and west of Mt. Vernon Avenue and along Reed Avenue.

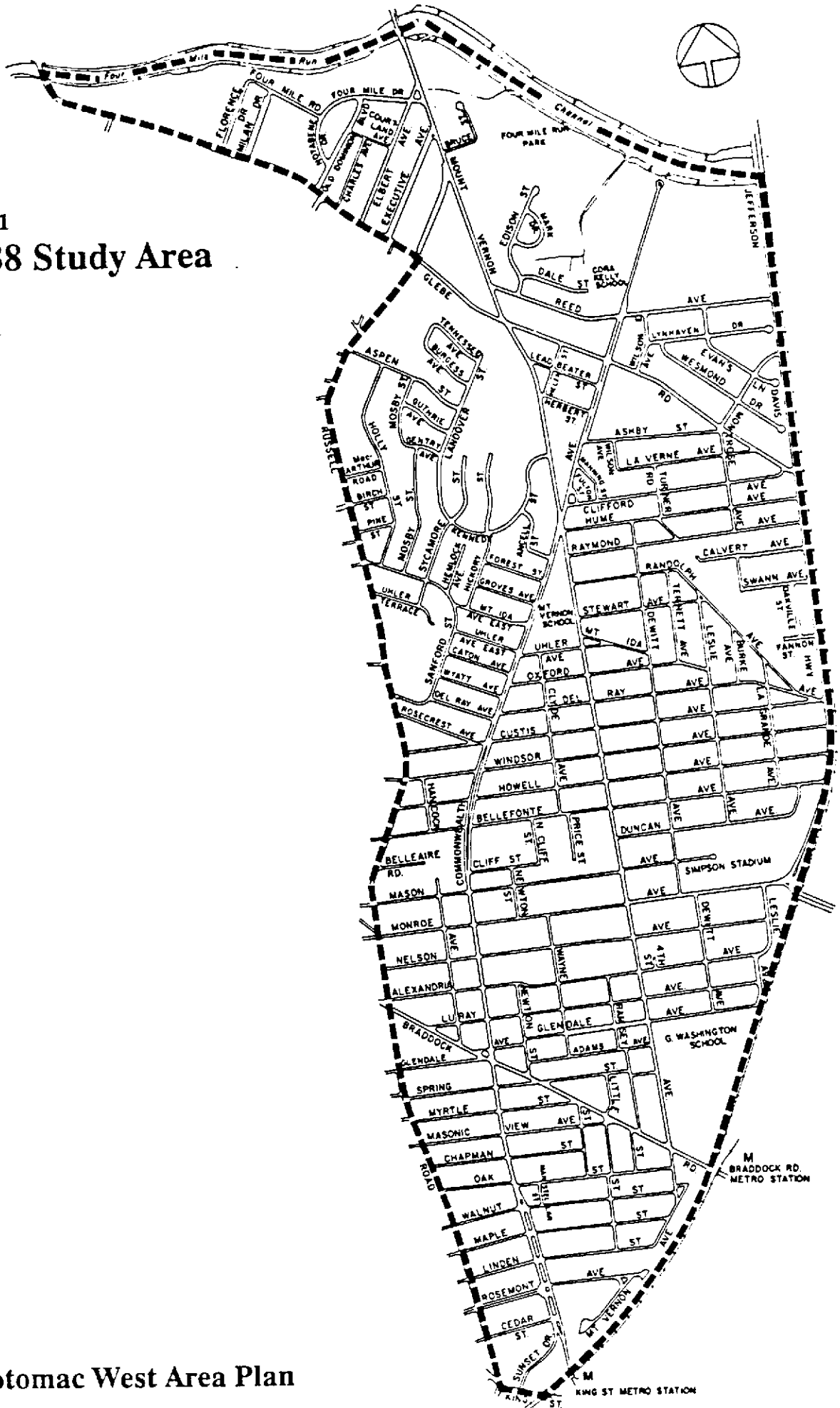
Del Ray/Warwick Village is located in the central portion of Potomac West and is defined by Randolph Street and the former W&OD right of way on the north and by Braddock Road to the south. Del Ray contains older, single family homes dating from the turn of the century and the Warwick Village rowhouse condominiums. Warwick Village, built as a planned unit development rental project in the 1950's, converted to home ownership in the 1970's.

Lynhaven encompasses the blocks of rowhouses bounded by Glebe Road, Commonwealth Avenue, East Reed Avenue and Route 1. It also includes two older apartment complexes, Lynhaven Gardens and Auburn Gardens, the latter of which has recently undergone renovation and conversion to condominiums.

St. Elmo/Mt. Jefferson is a relatively small area bounded by Route 1, Mt. Vernon Avenue, Ashby Street and Glebe Road. The neighborhood contains mainly single-family houses dating from the 1930's, some as early as 1900. This residential area abuts the Oakville Industrial triangle located to the south.

Lower Rosemont, generally east of Russell Road and south of Braddock Road, is a section of the Rosemont neighborhood that lies within Potomac West. It consists mainly of single-family detached houses and a few older garden apartments in small buildings, primarily along Commonwealth Avenue.

Map 1
1988 Study Area



DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

Potomac West, with a 1985 population of 19,624, contains 18% of the City's residents. The population of the Potomac West study area decreased 5% from a 1980 population of 20,594. This decline is primarily due to an ongoing national trend toward a decrease in average household size, which is quite noticeable in Alexandria. From 1980 to 1985, average household size in the Potomac West area went from 2.37 persons per household to 2.19. At the same time, the number of households actually increased, going from 8,693 in 1980 to 8,944 in 1985, an increase of 3%.

Employment

An estimated 5,442 people worked at locations within the Potomac West area in 1985, not including self-employed persons. As shown in Table 1 jobs increased by 34% over the past 9 years, primarily in the industrial and service sectors.

TABLE 1

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Industrial	1,189	1,630	1,742	+46.5%
Wholesale]		289	253]	
]	1,252]	-4.6
Retail]		939	942]	
F.I.R.E.	178	180	233	+30.9%
Services	892	1,000	1,617	+81.3%
Federal]		19	18]	
]	337]	+76.3%
State/Local]		344	576]	
Self Employed	304	580	383	+26.0%
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Total	4,152	4,698	5,575	+34.3%

SOURCE: COG Regional Employment Census 1976, 1980, 1985.

The increase in industrial sector employment stands in marked contrast to other parts of the city which have experienced a steady loss of industrial employment. The prime industrial site in Potomac West is the Oakville Triangle located along Route 1 between the W& OD right-of-way and Raymond Avenue. The 31 firms in this area provide some 836 jobs.

The economic diversity in Potomac West is also reflected in the different income levels of households living in the study area. Potomac West is one of the few remaining areas in the City which has affordable housing for low and moderate income families.

Table 2 compares the median household income for the different neighborhoods within Potomac West to the Citywide median income.

TABLE 2

**1980 Median Income - Resident Households
Potomac West Area**

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Warwick Village</u>	<u>Arlandria</u>	<u>St. Elmo</u>	<u>Del Ray East</u>	<u>Del Ray West</u>	<u>Rosemont</u>
1980 Median	\$23,420	\$12,254	\$14,851	\$16,941	\$19,024	\$25,655
% of City	111.4%	58.3%	70.7%	80.6%	90.5%	122.1%

SOURCE: 1980 U.S. Census.

SUMMARY –DEMOGRAPHICS

- o Potomac West is primarily a turn of the century residential area containing a wide diversity of neighborhoods, housing types and households.
- o As an area whose origins were linked to a nearby railroad classification yard Potomac West has retained its industrial employment base which is still growing.

EXISTING LAND USE

The Potomac West study area (excluding street and alley right-of-ways) includes approximately 1,116 acres of land, with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, open space and recreational land-uses. The predominant land use in the area is residential (table 3/map 3).

Residential Land Use

About 77% of the total land area (859 acres) in Potomac West is devoted to residential use. Single-family detached homes and rowhouses are the predominant form of housing. With the exception of four mid to high-rise apartment buildings (The Portals, The Calvert, and The Landover House) developments in the area are three stories or less in height.

TABLE 3

Existing Land Use
Potomac West Area

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Residential	858.87	76.97
Commercial	82.57	7.43
Industrial	71.67	6.45
Recreational ¹	100.44	8.96
Institutional ²	1.15	.09
Utilities	1.30	.09
Total	1,116.00	100.00

¹ includes school buildings

² includes Y, Fire Department, and Salvation Army, excludes Library, Human Services.

Potomac West primarily has an older housing stock consisting of single family detached homes constructed prior to 1940; rowhouses, built during the 1940's; garden apartments, erected from the 1930's to the 1950's; and some high-rise apartment buildings constructed in the 1960's.

Rowhouses are concentrated in Arlandria East (along Mark, Edison, Reed and Dale Streets), Lynhaven, Warwick Village and those sections of Del Ray north and south of George Washington School. Garden apartments are located throughout the study area, with the major complexes concentrated in central Del Ray (between Route 1, Bellefonte and Monroe Avenue near Commonwealth Avenue) and in the northern portions of the study area, most notably in Arlandria West.

According to the 1980 U.S. Census, there were 9,151 housing units in the Potomac West study area. Of these, some 2,819 were apartments, with the majority of housing units being single family homes.

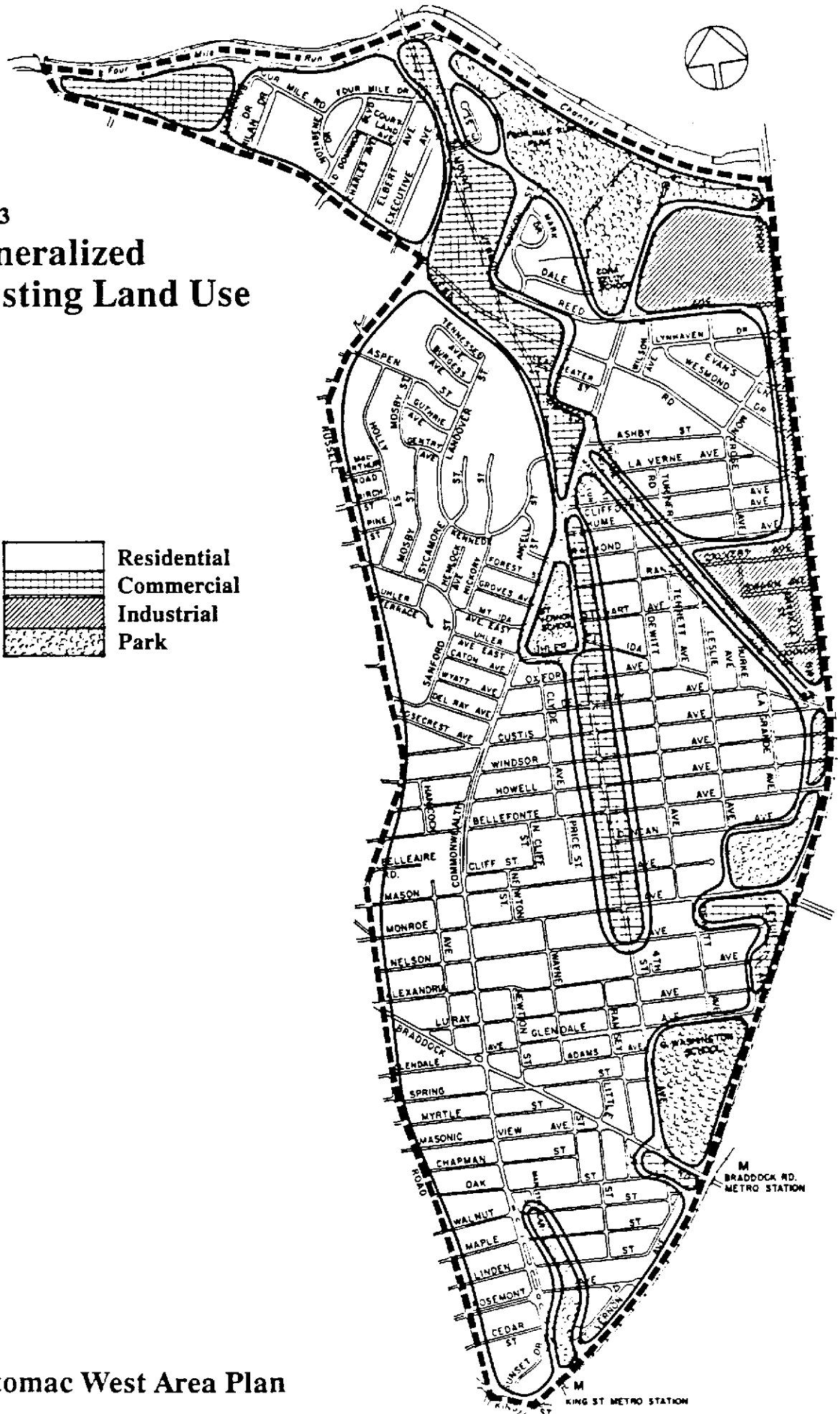
Commercial Land Use

Commercial land uses account for 7.4% (83 acres) of the total land use in the study area. Mt. Vernon Avenue, running two and a half miles from Braddock Road north to Four Mile Run, is the focus for much of the commercial activity in Potomac West. Mt. Vernon Avenue is not a typical commercial strip. The Avenue actually is composed of a mix of commercial, residential, recreational and institutional uses. Commercial uses are quite varied and are best described as distinct subareas - each with its own character (Map 4).

Starting from the north the Arlandria\Glebe Road Subarea includes 72 commercial properties on Mt. Vernon Avenue between Four Mile Run and Commonwealth Avenue and the properties along Glebe Road between Russell Road and Helen Street. This area includes approximately 93 businesses which occupy 418,327 square feet of floor space on 35 acres of land.

Map 3
**Generalized
 Existing Land Use**

	Residential
	Commercial
	Industrial
	Park



The Arlandria\Glebe Road commercial area is distinguished by its large scale commercial facilities including a neighborhood shopping center (Arlandria) built during the 1940's, a mid-rise office building, a major chain drug store, two grocery stores, a C&P Telephone Training Center, a film processing plant, a foreign car dealership, three gas stations and an auto parts store. In addition, there are Map 4 - Mt. Vernon Avenue Subareas smaller scaled establishments which provide personal services such as beauty salons, barber shops, fast food restaurants, appliance, radio and T.V. repair shops, dry cleaners and other convenience stores.

Historically, this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue was subjected to repeated flooding of nearby Four Mile Run during the 1960's and 1970's which discouraged investment and development of the area. However, the completion of the flood control project during the mid-1970's has effectively eliminated the flooding problem.

The Mt. Vernon School\Del Ray Subarea includes commercial uses from Commonwealth Avenue to Monroe Avenue. There are approximately 140 businesses located on this segment of the Avenue with a total of 294,000 square feet of floor area. Many of the businesses are located in two to four story commercial structures or converted residences. In some cases, a commercial activity occupies the first floor of a building and residential quarters are located on the upper two floors. This subarea consists of 16 acres.

The businesses in this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue include convenience stores, cafes, restaurants, shoe repair shops, hair salons and barber shops and several second-hand furniture shops and antique shops. In contrast to the Arlandria\Glebe Road commercial area this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue is characterized by small scale buildings and shops and is often referred to as "Main Street" because of its small town character. A dominant feature of this section of the Avenue is the Mt. Vernon Elementary School and its adjacent library, playfield and swimming pool.

It is noted that there are some larger scaled commercial uses along this segment of the Avenue including the Crestar Bank with its surface parking lot and an auto dealership located towards Monroe Avenue. The only large office structure in the sub-area is the City Department of Human Resources Building which contains approximately 27,000 square feet of space in a two story structure.

The Monroe Avenue\Braddock Road Subarea is a tree lined section of Mt. Vernon Avenue that covers an area between Monroe Avenue and Walnut Street. The low density of development provides a pleasant transition or buffer between the more commercially active areas and the residential properties. Complementing the transitional setting is the George Washington School facility and the adjacent Braddock Playfield. The school and recreational facilities cover 21.9 acres and are the most prominent uses along this segment of the Avenue.

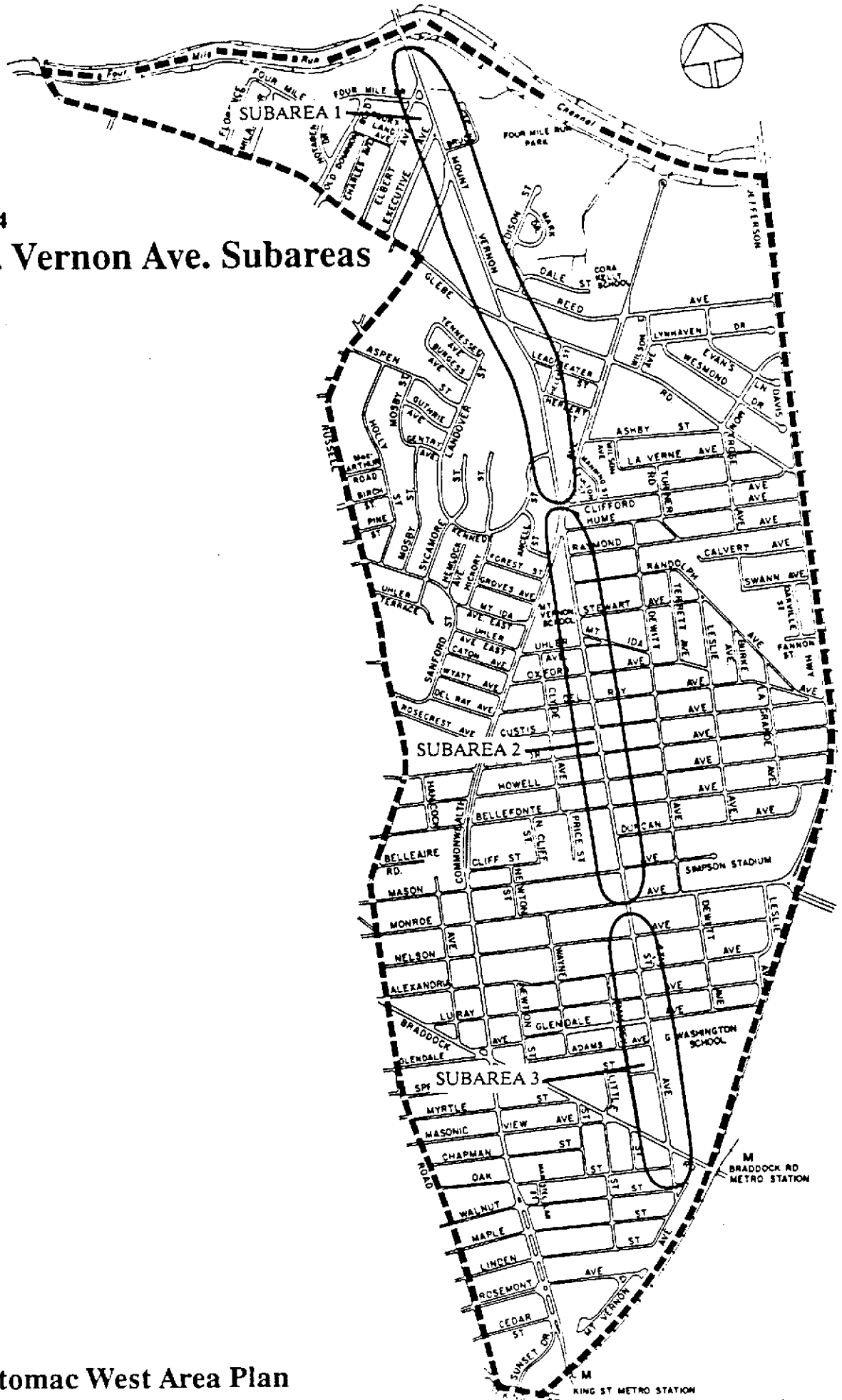
Commercial activity in this section consists of 24 businesses totaling 81,707 square feet located in commercial clusters. These clusters are mixed with single family houses, rowhouses and garden apartments.

The largest commercial use is the C&P Telephone Switching Center. While this center, located between Alexandria and Luray Avenue, is a major structure, few persons are employed there.

Near the intersection of Monroe and Mt. Vernon Avenues, there are several well established businesses including a music store, an oriental rug shop and cleaners, a restaurant, a hardware store, an auto accessory store and a medical supply store.

Another cluster of businesses is focused at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road. This commercial area includes a convenience store, sub shop, two service stations, a roofing company, an office supply firm and a hair salon. A former fast food and garage site is located at the northwest corner of the intersection.

Map 4
Mt. Vernon Ave. Subareas



Although Mt. Vernon Avenue is the primary locus of commercial activity there is a supermarket and a drug store on Monroe Avenue near the Monroe Avenue Bridge which serves the Del Ray neighborhood.

Table 4 displays the commercial square footage by type of use for each subarea and for the entire Avenue. Although the database is seven years old there has not been a significant amount of new commercial space added along the Avenue since the detailed survey was conducted. As shown, commercial uses along Mt. Vernon Avenue are predominantly retail and services. Office uses are a relatively minor feature of the Avenue. Most of the office space is concentrated in the former Datatel Building just north of Glebe Road and in the Human Services Building located across from the Mt. Vernon Elementary School.

TABLE 4
Mount Vernon Avenue
Inventory of Commercial Uses-1981

Mount Vernon Commercial Section

<u>Commercial Use</u>	I <u>Arlandria Glebe Rd.</u>	II <u>Mr. Vernon School Del Ray</u>	III <u>Monroe Ave. Braddock Rd.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Office	92,120	54,770	0	146,890
Retail	161,558	70,621	27,475	259,654
Services	40,158	46,274	11,724	98,156
Eating	27,931	4,308	2,838	35,077
Other	64,647	46,342	37,417	148,406
Vacant	<u>31,913</u>	<u>72,595</u>	<u>2,253</u>	<u>106,761</u>
TOTAL	418,327	294,910	81,707	794,944

Industrial Land Use

Industrial uses cover 6% (72 acres) of the total land area and are concentrated at Oakville Triangle and at other locations along Route 1.

The 24.3 acre Oakville Industrial Triangle (bounded by Route 1, the abandoned W&OD right-of-way and Raymond Avenue) is the principal location of industrial activity in Potomac West. The Triangle consists of one and two story brick and metal warehouse structures occupied by a variety of firms including printing, metal fabrication, equipment and construction materials supply companies, a dairy and auto related businesses.

Because this industrial area is wedged in on the south by the W&OD embankment, uses on this site are partially cut off and screened from adjacent residential uses. The exception is along Raymond Avenue where there is no real transition between the industrial and residential uses.

Another large industrial site (23 acres) is located at the northern city boundary at Four Mile Run, Jefferson Davis Highway and Reed Avenue. Referred to as the Route 1 properties, this site contains some auto repair related industrial uses. However, the site is mostly vacant. The Hertz Rental Car Company is located in a new office building to the rear of the site near Commonwealth Avenue and Four Mile Run.

In addition to the Oakville Triangle, most of the frontage along the Jefferson Davis Highway is industrial in character and consists of printing, auto repair, moving and storage firms, a bottling company, contractors, equipment storage, bottled gas and warehouse storage firms. Aside from a restaurant, carryouts, a tire store and a gas station there are few retail uses (and no office uses) on Jefferson Davis Highway.

There is also some industrial property along Leslie Avenue which is used for light manufacturing and warehouse purposes. Left over from a time when this portion of Route 1 was predominantly industrial, this area is changing from industrial to heavy commercial uses such as Schindler Elevator Company, MCC, Fitzgerald Moving and Storage and American Transmission.

Other Land Use

The Potomac West area has several major park and recreational facilities, as well as numerous pocket parks, covering a combined total of 62.4 acres or 5.6% of the land area. The Alexandria portion of Four Mile Run Park (some 25 acres) and Mt. Jefferson Park are in the area. The major open space and recreational sites in Potomac West are located in the northern end of the study area at Four Mile Run Park, at Simpson Stadium, adjacent to Mt. Vernon Elementary School and George Washington School, along the W&OD right-of-way and Hooff's Run Park. Other parks include Warwick Village and Hoofs Run Park in the Rosemont area. In addition, Simpson Stadium and Braddock Field are located in Potomac West. There are also two public swimming pools in the area, Warwick Pool and Del Ray Pool.

Institutional uses cover about 3.1% (34.8 acres) of the land in the study area and include the Cora Kelly School, Mt. Vernon School, George Washington School, Duncan Library, the Y.M.C.A. and the Salvation Army.

Vacant Land

About 2.7 percent (30 acres) of the land in the study area is vacant. The most significant vacant parcel is the so-called Route 1 properties, the northernmost collection of properties west of Route 1 between Four Mile Run, Commonwealth and Reed Avenues. The rest of the vacant properties are scattered throughout the study area.

SUMMARY –LAND USE

- o Land use within the Potomac West area is predominantly residential, with commercial uses focused on Mt. Vernon Avenue and industrial uses focused on Jefferson Davis Highway.
- o Except for the Route 1 properties, there is very little vacant land available in the planning area.

EXISTING ZONING

Zoning in the Potomac West area essentially mirrors the land use pattern, with residential being the clearly predominant category. About 77% of the land (865 acres) is zoned for residential development, with commercial and industrial zoning accounting respectively for about 7.4% and 6.4% of the remaining land area. Industrial zoning is located primarily along Route 1 with the largest parcels at the Oakville Triangle and at the Route 1 property and in a strip along Route 1 which connects these two sites. In addition, the VEPCO utility facility, on West Glebe Road, is also presently zoned industrial.

TABLE 5

**Existing Zoning
Potomac West Area**

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Commercial	82.57	7.39
Industrial	71.67	6.42
Residential	<u>865.00</u>	<u>77.50</u>
Total	1,109.24	91.30*

* difference is due to institutional and recreational uses zoned commercial and not included here

Residential Zoning

The residential zoning in the area is divided between the R2-5, R-5, R-8, RB and RA categories. Of these, the largest residential zoning category is R2-5, which permits single family and two family homes at densities of up to 17.42 units per acre. This zone is found primarily in the middle portion of Potomac West, between Ashby Street and Glendale Avenue. Along the western edge of the study area and Russell Road are found R-8 and R-5 zoning, which permit only single family homes at medium densities of 5.45 and 8.71 units per acre respectively.

The majority of RB zoning is located at the northeast and southeast edges of Potomac West and at scattered, small sites throughout the study area. RB zoning permits single-family and townhouse homes at densities of up to 22 units per acre and multi-family units at densities of 27 units per acre, if built prior to 1973.

RA zoning allows single, two or multi-family dwellings at densities of up to 27 units per acre. RA zoning is scattered throughout the area, with the largest concentration near the intersections of Mt. Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road, south of Glebe Road between Tennessee Avenue, Mosby Street, Ancell Street and Ashby Street to Mt. Vernon Avenue; and east of Commonwealth Avenue between Ashby Street and Glebe Road. Another large concentration of RA zoning is located at Four Mile Run Park at the northern boundary of the study area. (See Map 5.)

Commercial Zoning

Commercial zoning in Potomac West is almost entirely C-2, with a few spots of C-1 zoning. The C-2 zone extends primarily along Mt. Vernon Avenue and allows office, retail and service uses at a density of 3.0 F.A.R. and at heights of up to 150 feet. The C-1 zone allows commercial and residential uses at densities of 1.0 F.A.R. and heights of up to 150 feet. Almost all of the commercially zoned land in Potomac West falls under the C-2 category.

In the Potomac West area, a significant portion (25.7%) of C-2 zoned parcels are presently used for non-commercial purposes (see Table 6). Approximately 15.5 acres of commercially zoned land is used for residential purposes. In addition, recreational, institutional and utility uses are also zoned C-2.

TABLE 6

C-2 Commercial Zoned Land By Use
Potomac West Area

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Residential	15.50	18.79
Institutional	1.15	1.39
Utility	1.30	1.57
Recreational	3.28	3.97
Commercial	<u>61.34</u>	<u>74.28</u>
Total	82.57	100.00

Industrial Zoning

Except for the Route 1 north parcels (zoned I-2), the industrial zoning in the study area is I-1. The I-1 zone allows non-noxious industrial activities including light manufacturing, storage, warehousing and distribution. In addition, the industrial zones allow most commercial uses, including office, retail and service uses, while under a Planned Unit Development permit, residential uses are also allowed. Densities and heights permitted are a 2.5 F.A.R. and 77 feet by right or a 5.0 F.A.R. and heights of up to 200 feet with a P.U.D.

In the Potomac West area, almost all of the industrially zoned parcels are proximate to residential areas; the major exception is the Route 1 properties fronting Jefferson Davis Highway.

Theoretical vs. Built Commercial Zoning Envelopes

Table 7 compares the amount of commercial development which would theoretically be allowed under the C-2 zone versus the actual built commercial square footage. As shown there is only a 12.5% utilization of the theoretical development rights along the Mt. Vernon Avenue commercial corridor.

In part, the underutilization of commercial property is a reflection of market conditions. As noted, there is little demand evidenced for high density office development along the Avenue. In large measure, however, the low utilization of the theoretical envelope reflects parcelization, zoning patterns and zoning constraints.

Many of the parcels along Mt. Vernon Avenue are small and fragmented. The zoning pattern usually is high density commercial zoning next to low and medium density residential zoning. This pattern means that commercial development along the Avenue must provide a zone transition setback from the abutting residential zone. The zone transition requirement effectively lowers the achievable height and density of commercial development for many parcels along the Avenue.

Another constraint is the parking requirement which for small, narrow parcels makes redevelopment at high densities and heights difficult. There is the option to structure or underground parking but this is expensive and not always economically feasible.

In fact if all zoning standards are applied to a typical block frontage along the Avenue the result is likely to be a three story building with a 1.3 floor area ratio.

2

TABLE 7

**Built Commercial vs. Transitional Zoning Envelope
By Commercial Section
Potomac West Area**

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Built</u>	<u>Zoning Envelope</u>	<u>% Utilized</u>
I	418,327	4,180,369	10.0
II	328,517	1,877,407	17.0
III	<u>81,000</u>	<u>527,089</u>	<u>15.0</u>
Total	827,844	6,585,456	12.5%

SUMMARY - ZONING

- o Zoning in the Potomac West area is predominantly low to medium density residential.
- o Non-residential zoning is split fairly evenly between commercial and industrial zones. Most of the commercially zoned land is along Mt. Vernon Avenue, while most of the industrially zoned land is along Route 1.
- o Almost all commercially zoned land allows high density development and 150 foot building heights, with C-2 zoning adjacent to low and medium density residential areas.
- o The C-2 zone is used extensively for non-commercial uses such as residential, institutional and open space purposes.
- o Parking and setback requirements on commercially zoned land along Mt. Vernon Avenue effectively reduce heights and densities from what would otherwise be maximally allowed under the C-2 zone.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND TRENDS

The focus for economic activity in Potomac West is Mt. Vernon Avenue. Much of the impetus for commercial revitalization has been the City's active role in using capital improvement and business loan programs to encourage business development along the Avenue. Some 30 new businesses have located on the Avenue since 1980- many of which occupy renovated structures.

Most new commercial construction has occurred in the Arandria/Glebe Road area and include the Duron Paint store, Erol's Video and the 24 Hour Express convenience store. In addition, a 48,000 square foot complex of three story, townhouse style professional office buildings, Vernon Square, was recently completed at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Herbert Street.

Other commercial activity in the form of proposed projects include Potomac Town Square, located at 2200 Mt. Vernon Avenue, to consist of 33,000 square feet of office and retail space and Mt. Vernon Associates property, located at the corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road, to consist of 40,000 square feet of office and retail. Both projects will be three stories in height.

Coupled with increased commercial activity has been increased housing investment and renovation. Much of this activity has occurred in Arlandria West where some 1400 apartment units have been renovated. Also in Arlandria West, under a unique agreement between the Sunnyside residents, the owner of the Sunnyside tract and the City, some 103 new townhouses are to be constructed with 15 of the units to be made available to Sunnyside residents and their families at a discounted price.

The City has also been instrumental in renovating townhouses in Arlandria East through the Tower Homes project.

In general the residential real estate market is strong. Single family residential assessments have increased 11.2% on average over the past year.

Potential Development and Redevelopment Sites

Although Potomac West is largely built up, there are sites and areas which could be redeveloped over the next 10 years. The two most significant sites subject to major development or redevelopment are the Arlandria Shopping Center/Berkey Photo properties and the Route 1 properties (Map 6).

Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo Site

The Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo site includes approximately 6.5 acres composed of the Arlandria Shopping Center and the Berkey Photo building. In addition, there are another 2.0 acres of small parcels that could be assembled with the larger sites. This potential 8.5 acre assemblage would make this site the largest commercially zoned and redevelopable tract of land along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

All of these abutting properties are located on the east side of Mount Vernon Avenue south of Bruce Street, with Four Mile Run Park to the east and the Tower Homes subdivision to the south.

The Arlandria Center was an active neighborhood shopping facility during the 1940's through the 1960's. The Center included some 85,000 square feet of space and featured junior department stores, a shoe store, a pharmacy, an ABC store and carpet shop.

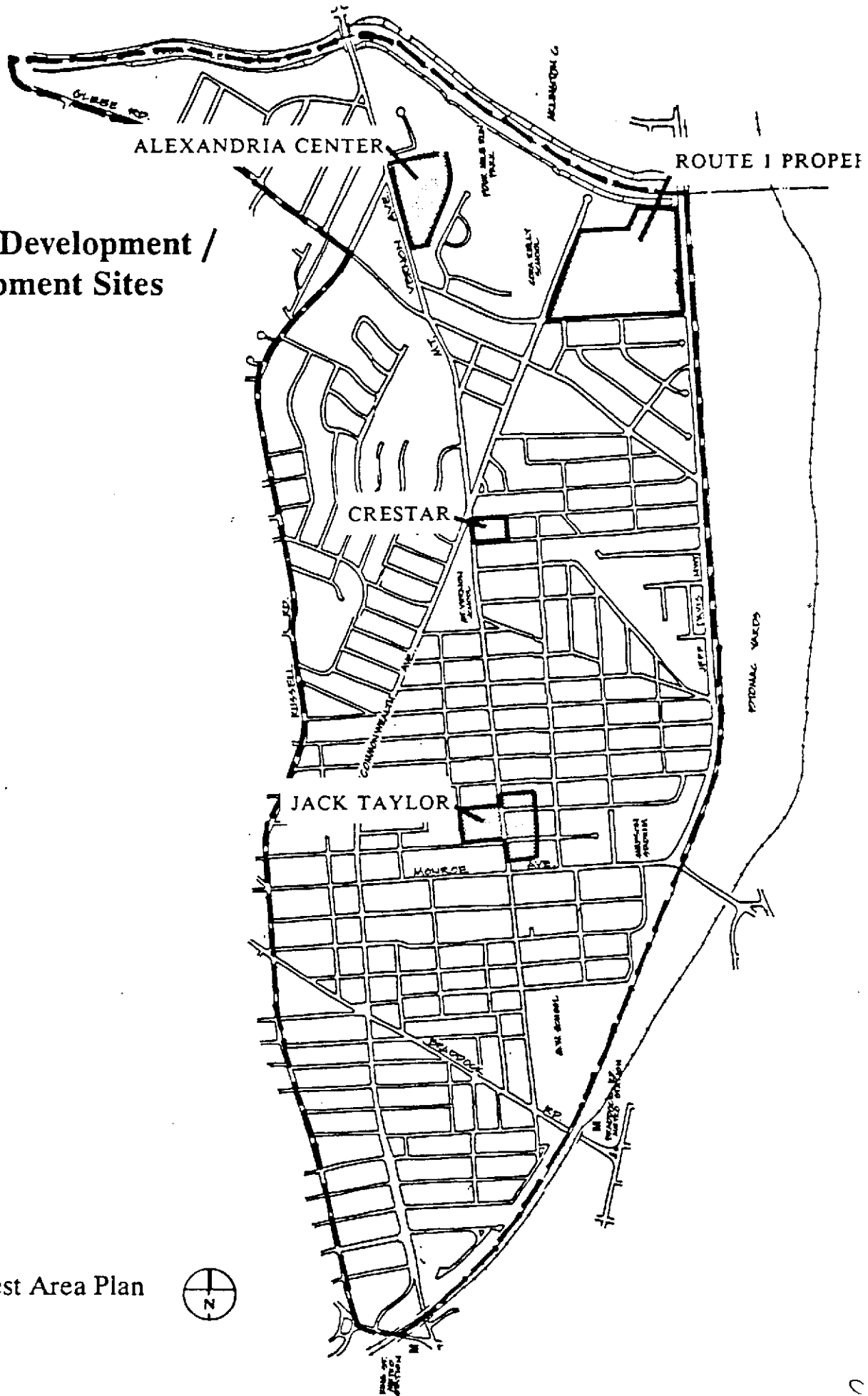
However, over the years, as major flooding from Four Mile Run resulted in extensive damage to the Center and to other properties and businesses in Arlandria, the shopping center went into decline. The completion of the flood control project during the 1970's removed the threat of periodic flooding and improved the investment prospects for the property. Recently there was a change in ownership and a major investment made to improve the facade of the building and the parking area.

Although the recent face-lift has enlivened its appearance, the shopping center suffers from functional and physical obsolescence. Because of past flooding problems and changes in the surrounding neighborhoods, much of the market support for the Center, at least from the more affluent nearby areas, has shifted elsewhere to competitive centers such as Bradlee or Shirlington. The large sized store modules designed for junior department stores and five and dime stores are now less viable in light of changes in the market and changes in consumer tastes. The inability to relet a large space vacated by Robcyn's Department Store over the past three years is a good indicator of this problem.

The Center is also disadvantaged by the placement of the building close towards the Avenue and the location of the majority of the parking to the rear of the building not visible from the street. This means that the majority of the customers have to walk around the building to enter the stores to shop.

This large 4.6 acre site zoned C-2 for high density office development could be redeveloped. The site itself is only built out at a .42 Floor Area Ratio whereas the zoning would permit 3.0 FAR and a 150 foot building. Alternatively, the shopping center could be modernized, redesigned and expanded to make it more competitive and attractive.

Map 6
Potential Development /
Redevelopment Sites



Potomac West Area Plan



Abutting the Arlandria Shopping Center to the southeast is the Berkey Photo property. This site is 1.89 acres and is occupied by a 56,000 square foot, one story building. The property abuts the backyards of townhouse residences and Four Mile Run Park and has very little frontage along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Again the zoning is C-2 which permits high density office development.

The remaining abutting properties in this area include the Feaser and Town and Country vacant properties which front the Avenue and some small office and retail buildings.

It is not certain whether a developer would consider assembling all of these properties for redevelopment. It is likely, however, that an investor would want to control or coordinate the type and quality of development for all of these sites to protect his/her investment. Locationally, and from a developer's perspective, the future of these properties are linked.

Route 1 Properties

The Route 1 Properties are located just south of the Arlington County/ Alexandria City line and Four Mile Run Channel, west of Commonwealth Avenue, Cora Kelly Elementary School and Four Mile Run Park, north of Reed Avenue and east of U.S Route 1 -Jefferson Davis Highway and the Potomac Rail Yard.

The major portion of the site consists of seven parcels owned by four different owners with the remainder of the site consisting of 49 frame built duplex and single family homes along Reed Avenue under multiple ownership.

The major parcels consist of the Hertz rental car turn around facility and administrative offices, 5.05 acres zoned I-1 and I-2; the Smith Properties, 13.17 acres zoned I-2 of which 5.12 acres is located in an easement for the Four Mile Run Channel; the Arban and Carosi property, 2.52 acres zoned I-2; the Poladian properties, 8.24 acres zoned RD and I-1 and 1.95 acres zoned I-2. In addition, there are 26 residential properties zoned RB along E. Reed Avenue under multiple ownerships (all but 11 absentee) totaling 1.7 acres and a City owned .3 acre parcel zoned I-1 and located at the corner of E. Reed Avenue and Jefferson Davis Highway. Combined these properties offer 20 to 25 acres for development and redevelopment.

Most of the site is vacant or marginally developed except for the four year old Hertz Administrative building. The residences along E. Reed Avenue are generally in fair to poor condition.

Since the early 1970's this site has been recognized as a future potential development area. The site has excellent access to Crystal City and to National Airport. This access has been enhanced by the road improvements recently made to Jefferson Davis Highway through Crystal City and connecting to I-395 and Washington D.C.. As part of the second phase of this project, Route 1 is being widened to six lanes from the Airport Viaduct to a point 100 feet north of E. Reed Avenue. The site also has good access from I-395 via South Glebe Road in Arlington.

Although these properties have good access and tremendous visibility to Route 1 there are negative factors which could affect optimum development of the site. The fragmentation of ownership may result in uncoordinated development where the uncertainty and risk of not knowing how an adjacent property will be developed may deter quality development and encourage suboptimal use of the properties. The site also has poor soil conditions which will restrict or make expensive underground parking. There is a major storm water easement in the center of the site running north/south and emptying into Four Mile Run which would have to be maintained.

In addition to site constraints, the types and conditions of uses adjacent and near the site may be a deterrent to investment. Along Jefferson Davis Highway between the Airport Viaduct and the Alexandria City Line, there are car rental agencies, various industrial uses, the Four Mile Run Bus Garage, the Arlington Sewer Treatment Facility and a car dealership. Although some of the private uses may eventually be upgraded the public uses are unlikely to change. The problem is that between Crystal City and the Route 1 properties is a no man's land which might deter developer interest in the site for major development activity.

Adjacent to the site on the eastern side of Jefferson Davis Highway is the Potomac Railroad Yard. Although it is anticipated that part or all of the Yard will be redeveloped eventually, this would not even begin to occur for at least 10 years. In the interim, the railroad use is a negative factor in terms of encouraging quality development on the Route 1 properties.

Other negative adjacency factors are the condition of the houses along both sides of E. Reed Avenue, to some extent the physical condition of the Cora Kelly School, the baseball fields along Commonwealth Avenue and Four Mile Run Park. These conditions are treatable through neighborhood conservation programs, school facility upgrading, landscaping and facility improvements to Four Mile Run Park.

Other Potential Sites

The aforementioned sites are the largest and the most likely candidates for redevelopment. There are other larger underutilized sites within Potomac West which possibly could be redeveloped if warranted by market conditions. For example, the intersection of Glebe Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue is characterized by large sites with low scaled retail and auto oriented uses. If there was evidence of a demand for office development, these sites, which are zoned C-2, might be subjected to development pressures.

Since this is not the case and since these sites may have long term leases encumbering any change in use, the Glebe Road area is not considered to be a potential development area at least for the foreseeable future.

There are other underutilized properties further south along Mt. Vernon Avenue which are smaller and which could be subject to redevelopment. The Crestar Bank site at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Hume Avenue is 1.23 acres and consists of a two story bank building and a large parking lot. The zoning is C-2 and R2-5. It is possible that this site could be redeveloped with office and residential.

Another site is the Jack Taylor Toyota dealership located on both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue near Duncan Avenue, Mason Avenue and Monroe Avenue. Although the site has one story showcase buildings to serve the dealership, most of the site is used to store cars.

Combined, the dealership contains 2.36 acres, all zoned for C-2 high density office development. Although some of the zoning constraints discussed previously may effect achievable densities and heights, the size of the assembled properties and the amount of frontage along Mt. Vernon Avenue make this site a potential development site should the dealership relocate.

SUMMARY – ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- o Through a combination of public programs and private initiatives Potomac West is renewing itself with residential renovation activity and new businesses.
- o Commercial activity is characterized by neighborhood oriented retail stores and services and professional office uses.

- o Recent development proposals reflect interest in small scale office development rather than large scale, multi tenant office projects such as have been developed in other parts of the City.
- o The area lacks large amounts of speculative office space and is not a major office center.
- o Most of Potomac West is built up with proportionately very little land left for development. However, there are two major sites where development and redevelopment could occur; the Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo Site and the Route 1 Properties.

TRANSPORTATION

Street System

The street system in the Potomac West area is dominated by four major north-south through streets: Mt. Vernon Avenue, which traverses the heart of the area; Commonwealth Avenue, which intersects Mt. Vernon Avenue; Russell Road, which constitutes the western boundary of the area; and Route 1, which is at the eastern edge of the area. Major east-west movements within the study area occur on Monroe Avenue, Braddock Road and Glebe Road. To the east of Commonwealth Avenue, the street system is primarily a basic grid pattern; to the west, curving streets.

1974 Major Thoroughfare Plan

The 1974 Major Thoroughfare Plan classified City streets into five categories: expressways, arterials, primary collectors, residential collectors and local streets (Map 7). Of these, the last four may be found within Potomac West.

U.S Route 1/Jefferson Davis Highway is a four lane arterial which serves north south traffic through the City. Mt. Vernon Avenue between Commonwealth and the City limit and Braddock Road between West Street and Commonwealth are also arterials.

West Glebe Road, Commonwealth Avenue, the remainder of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Braddock Road, Monroe Avenue and a portion of Russell Road above West Glebe are classified as primary collectors. Glebe Road carries traffic from the Four Mile Run area of Arlington County to Route 1 along an east/west axis. Commonwealth Avenue carries traffic from the northern end of the study area to connect ultimately with King Street, while Mt. Vernon Avenue runs north/south through the center of Potomac West and connects with South Glebe Road in Arlington and Braddock Road in Alexandria.




Russell Road and Monroe Avenue are both residential collectors, which take traffic from a number of lesser residential streets and provide access to primary collectors or arterials. Russell Road carries traffic north-south from the Arlandria portion of Potomac West to King Street, while Monroe Avenue runs east/west through the study area connecting Russell Road to Route 1.

Most of the rest of the streets in the Potomac West area are local streets, which function primarily as a means of providing access to residential areas.

A description of each of these categories, with examples from Potomac West's street system, is given below:

Arterial: A four- to six-lane divided highway with controlled access. Arterials provide major traffic movements not served by expressways. (Route 1 - Jefferson Davis Highway)

Map 7 Major Thoroughfare Plan

-  Arterials
-  Primary Collectors
-  Residential Collectors

● IT IS THE POLICY OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA THAT COMMONWEALTH AVENUE SHALL NOT EXTEND ANY FURTHER THAN FOUR MILE RUN AND SHALL NEVER BE USED AS A HIGHWAY LEADING TO ARLINGTON COUNTY



Primary Collector: A highway with 80-foot right-of-way widths and serving through traffic at medium speeds. Primary collectors connect two arterials or an arterial with another collector. (Glebe Road, Commonwealth and Mt. Vernon Avenues).

Residential Collector: A major street with a 66-foot right-of-way to collect traffic from a number of lesser residential streets and provide access from residential areas to primary collectors or arterials. (Russell Road, Monroe Avenue).

Local Street: A minor street primarily functioning to provide access to properties in residential areas. Right-of-way widths vary from 44-66 feet, with a minimum width of 60 feet required for all new streets. (Most of the streets in Potomac West are in this category).

Existing Traffic Flow

Potomac West's street system is adequate to serve the traffic generated by land uses located within the area. There is use of certain major streets by through commuter traffic which, during the rush hours, causes some congestion on Mt. Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, Glebe Road and Monroe Avenue and Route 1. Local streets are also sometimes used to bypass points of congestion. However, overall traffic congestion within Potomac West is not a major problem.

Recent and Planned Capital Improvements

The recently opened Monroe Avenue Bridge has improved access to Potomac West from the south. While the new bridge retains the same four through lane configuration as did the old bridge the new bridge provides full turning lanes at either end of the bridge which does not interfere with through traffic movement.

Future road improvement projects included in the 1989 Capital Improvements Plan are the widening of Mt. Vernon Avenue from Russell Road to Four Mile Run and the widening of Jefferson Davis Highway north of Reed Avenue to Four Mile Run. Also scheduled is the widening of the four approaches to the Mt Vernon Avenue/Glebe Road intersection with a provision of left turn bays.

Public Transit Facilities

The Potomac West area is served by Metrorail immediately to the south of the study area by the Braddock Road and King Street Metro Stations and by both Metro bus and Dash bus routes. Metro runs four lines along Mt. Vernon Avenue and two along Route 1, which serve the study area. In addition, Dash has a bus route along Glebe Road and Russell Road connecting with the Braddock Road Metro Station which serves the Potomac West area.

Bike and Pedestrian Paths

One of the City's designated bikeways runs through the area on Commonwealth Avenue, north to Four Mile Run Park.

Future Traffic Flow

As a mostly built up area it is unlikely that Potomac West will internally generate much additional traffic impacting the overall street system. Future traffic growth will be generated by specific development sites within Potomac West which will impact streets and intersections immediately adjacent to the sites.

If the Arlandria Center/Berkey Photo site ever redeveloped as an office center as allowed under the C-2 zone, the site could theoretically be developed with over 1 million square feet of office development which could generate some 1900 peak hour vehicles. This level of peak traffic could not be accommodated by Mt. Vernon Avenue which has limited through capacity and virtually no capacity to handle left hand turning movements.

The Route 1 properties, a site three times as large as the Arlandria site, could also be developed at high densities and could also generate large peak hour traffic volumes. Traffic generation and directional flow would be lessened somewhat by the RD zoning which would allow mostly residential development for a portion of the entire site. Traffic impacts would also be mitigated by the fact that this site can access a six lane Route 1 with provisions for turning movements. South Glebe Road in Arlington affords this site good east west access which will not impact City streets.

Local Alexandria streets which could be directly impacted by development of this site are E. Reed Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue. This traffic would impact the residential areas and the Cora Kelly School. Care would have to be taken to emphasize Route 1 vehicular access to the site and to discourage, if not prohibit, commercial vehicular access to Commonwealth Avenue and to at least the residential portion of E. Reed Avenue to protect the neighborhood from traffic impacts generated by development of the Route 1 properties.

Although not within the study area itself, the possible redevelopment of the Potomac Yard could have an enormous traffic impact on the Potomac West area. Unless additional roadway capacity and alternative access are provided, development of the Yard would have a direct impact to Route 1 which during the peak hour is at or near capacity. More important to Potomac West neighborhoods would be the amount of east/west traffic attracted to the Yard site which would filter through residential streets. One mitigation solution would be the improvement of South Glebe Road in Arlington to serve as a major east/west connector to the site.

SUMMARY—TRANSPORTATION

- o Vehicular access to the study area is, on the whole, good, with adequate north-south and east-west connections. Commuter traffic filters through the study area on primary collector streets, but there are no major points of congestion.
- o The Braddock Road Metro Station, immediately south of the study area, affords good transit service to Potomac West, as does the Metro and DASH feeder bus routes and service.
- o Future traffic growth will focus on potential development sites. Depending upon how these sites are developed, the mix and intensity of uses, these sites could have a significant traffic impact on the surrounding street system.
- o Unless additional road improvements could be constructed to facilitate north/south and east/west movement, possible redevelopment of the Potomac Yard could have an enormous impact on Potomac West.

URBAN DESIGN

The Potomac West area is primarily a low scale residential area comprised of single-family detached and semi-detached two and three story housing units. Most of the older housing is generally frame construction on lots ranging from 2500 to 5000 square feet. Neighborhoods are not always well defined because of the varied housing styles that exist; housing unit sizes can vary dramatically within each block. Nevertheless, the placement of mostly single family homes on a fairly uniform grid system gives the residential areas an overall cohesiveness.

The main commercial area in Potomac West is along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Low scale, two story buildings prevail; most businesses are small scale and neighborhood serving. The type, scale and character of most of the businesses along the Avenue relate well and are compatible with the abutting residential areas. Among other factors, it is this relationship, hearkening back to a quieter historic era, which makes Potomac West unique.

The principle industrial area is the Oakville Triangle and a strip along Route 1. The commercial and industrial frontage along Route 1 could be characterized as the typical arrangement of highway oriented buildings ranging from commercial service uses to manufacturing and light industrial activities.

To some extent the relationship between the highway oriented industrial uses and the abutting residential uses further west are compatible. In other cases the transitions are awkward; industrial uses seem to encroach upon the residential character of a street such as Raymond Avenue.

With the overall built form of Potomac West well established, the focus of the urban design analysis is on those elements within the area that are likely to change - the commercial uses along Mt. Vernon Avenue and potential growth sites - and how these elements might affect the character of Potomac West.

Mt. Vernon Avenue

Cutting through the middle of Potomac West is Mt. Vernon Avenue, a major commercial corridor serving much of Potomac West. As indicated previously, Mt. Vernon Avenue does not present a linear procession of stores and commercial uses. Schools, parks, playgrounds and residential uses are interdispersed among shops and stores.

Nor are the types of commercial uses uniform. The upper Mt. Vernon Avenue area, including Arandria and Glebe Road, contain mostly larger scaled commercial uses which are auto oriented and fronted by surface parking lots. Within this area only the row of buildings beginning with the Waffle Shop and ending before the Datatel Building present an urban facade of small shops close to the street. The remainder of Mt. Vernon Avenue between Glebe and Four Mile Run is a jumble of garden apartment residential, large frontages of vacant lots, gas stations, the Arandria Shopping Center, free standing commercial buildings, a suburban style dry cleaners and an auto parts store.

More confusing from an urban design perspective is the commercial area at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Glebe Road and the area between West Reed Avenue and Glebe Road. The streets themselves are in large measure the source of the problem by diagonally cutting up parcels and fragmenting the area. The overwhelming auto orientation of the commercial uses with numerous curb cuts, large asphalted parking lots and lack of landscaping contribute to the harshness of the environment.

Finally, the buildings themselves are undistinguished and semi-industrial in character. There are several free standing buildings which have been vacant and boarded for some time, others in disrepair.