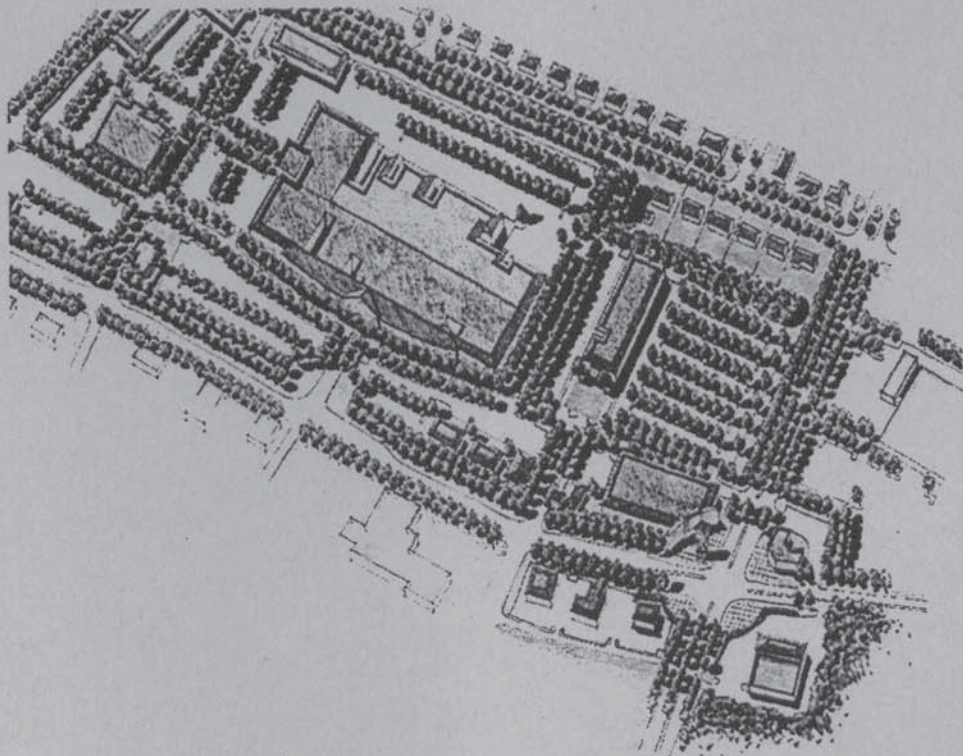


# NINE MILE ROAD

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND REVITALIZATION PLAN  
COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA



FINAL REPORT  
OCTOBER 21, 1997

PREPARED BY:  
HAMMER, SILER, GEORGE ASSOCIATES  
CHK ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS

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## I. Introduction

The decline of the Fairfield Commons Mall, triggered by the loss of the Sears Department Store, combined with a shift of convenience and eating and drinking establishments to Laburnum Avenue and Airport Drive, has had a major impact on the viability of Nine Mile Road. As a result of these changes, Nine Mile Road has lost both supermarkets and eating and drinking establishments to nearby activity centers. Beyond this, the loss of shopper's good stores in the Fairfield Commons Mall have forced a change in the shopping patterns of local households. As a result, local residents travel significant distances to obtain the shopping choices available in many other communities.

These changes in both convenience and shoppers goods retailing that have impacted the whole Nine Mile Road Corridor, including Highland Springs, have raised significant question with regard to the corridor's future economic role, even though there are assets within the corridor that are stable. These assets include the Eastern Henrico Government Center, the Mason Retirement Center, Patrick's Chevrolet, several schools, and church institutions and a number of professional service, retail/wholesalers, and construction businesses located in Highland Springs.

Our task here has therefore been to look at the factors affecting the transition of the corridor, its strengths and its weaknesses, and to propose a set of actions designed to assure that the corridor will be economically viable in the future.

Our approach has been to conduct field surveys to assess existing conditions, to undertake analyses of the retail and service, housing, and commercial office market and to review trends in the flex space market. Our findings in these areas have been used to formulate

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revitalization concepts that have been reviewed by the community and with major property owners. With the assistance of the County, we mail-surveyed property owners within the corridor area to get their input into the process, conducted personal interviews with the business community, and met on several occasions with the Business Task Force. This process has led us to come to our conclusions, recommendations and to establish priorities.

We are particularly sensitive to the length of the corridor and the range of recommendations that we are making. Since resources are limited, we have to establish a strong set of priorities with respect to both public and private actions. Because of these factors, we believe that efforts to improve the Fairfield Commons Mall and the Laburnum/Nine Mile Road Sector should receive the highest priority.

Hammer, Siler, George Associates



## II. Description of Corridor

The Nine Mile Road Corridor is a state road in Eastern Henrico County that runs from I-64 on the west to just beyond I-64 to the east (Exhibits 1 and 2). The name, Nine Mile Road, is based upon the distance between the terminal points of the road in Richmond and Seven Pines. Historical documents indicate that the road was once known as the New Bridge Road. There are basically two north-south access roads that intersect the corridor. These are Laburnum Road toward the western sector of the Nine Mile Road corridor and Airport Drive in the eastern sector. Most of the development that has occurred over the past fifteen years has been related to the development of these north/south corridors. This study is focused on those parcels which have a frontage on Nine Mile Road or that could be assembled with parcels fronting on Nine Mile Road to create economically viable developments.



Exhibit 1. County map showing location of study area.

# NINE MILE ROAD CORRIDOR

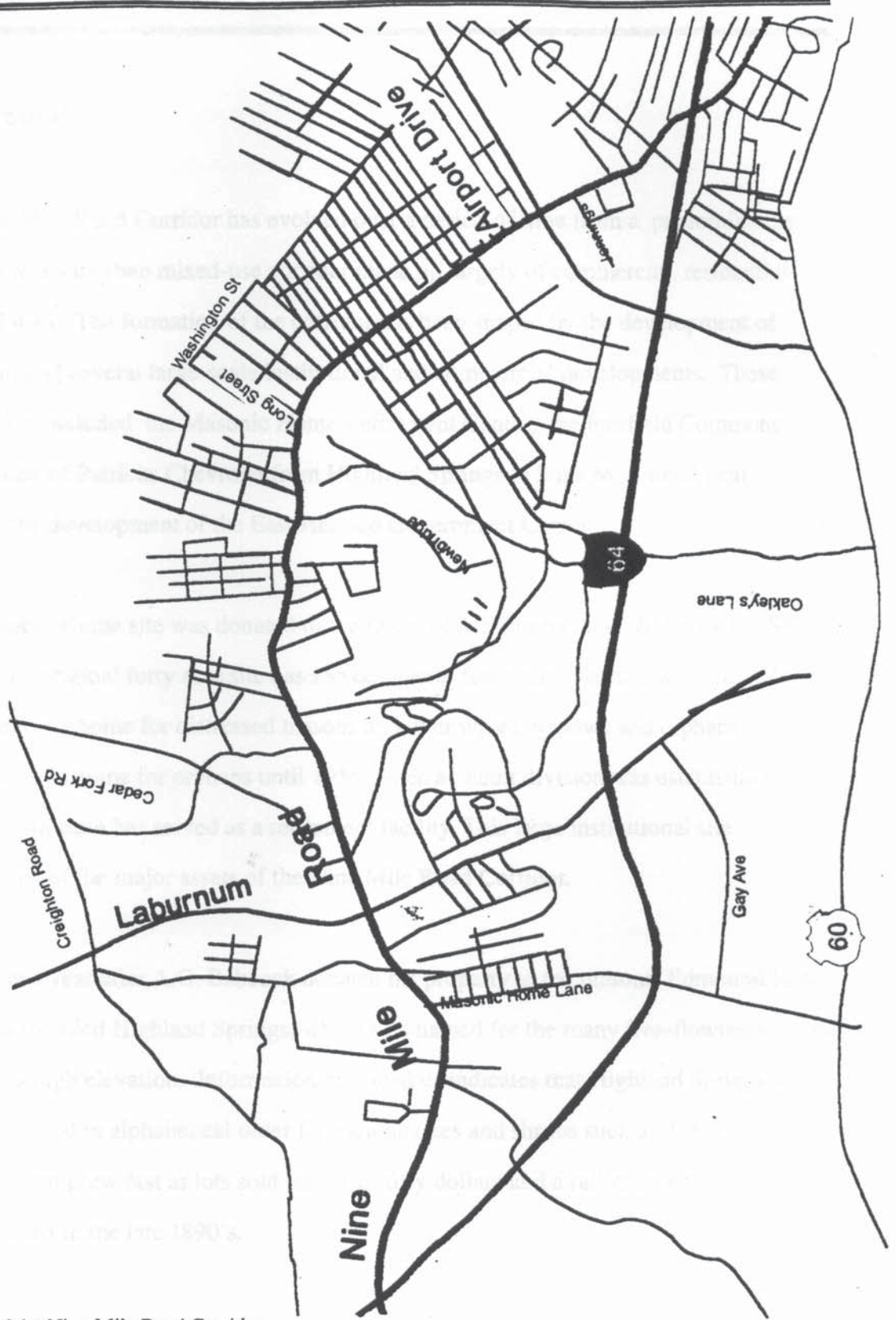


Exhibit 2. Map of the Nine Mile Road Corridor.



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## II. A. Background

The Nine Mile Road Corridor has evolved over a period of time from a predominately agricultural area to a suburban mixed-use corridor made up largely of commercial, residential and institutional uses. The formation of the corridor has been shaped by the development of Highland Springs and several large-scale institutional and commercial developments. These developments have included the Masonic Home Retirement Center, the Fairfield Commons Mall, the relocation of Patricks Chevrolet from Highland Springs to Nine Mile Road near Laburnum, and the development of the East Henrico Government Center.

The Masonic Home site was donated to the Order of Masons by A. G. Babcock in 1889. Since that time the original forty acre site has served several functions. The site was originally donated to establish a home for distressed masons and their wives, widows and orphans. It continued largely as a home for orphans until 1955, when an adult division was established. Since 1975 the institution has served as a retirement facility. This large institutional site continues to be one of the major assets of the Nine Mile Road Corridor.

Approximately one year after A.G. Babcock donated his property to the masons, Edmund Read and his two sons founded Highland Springs, which was named for the many free-flowing springs in the area and its high elevation. Information provided us indicates that Highland Springs was laid out in lots divided in alphabetical order for various trees and shrubs such as Ash, Beech, Cedar etc. The town grew fast as lots sold for about fifty dollars and a railroad depot and town hall was constructed in the late 1890's.

For many years the Seven Pines streetcar line connected Highland Springs with downtown

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Richmond. By 1922 Nine Mile Road had been paved and during the 1930's busses took over the streetcar route. During this period the corridor was largely rural. the 1950's and 1960's however reflected growing suburbanization with more residential and commercial development in the corridor.

A major development took place in 1967 with the building of the Eastgate Mall, now Fairfield Commons Mall. This mall was anchored by a Sears Department Store and a Talhimer's Department Store. In addition to these anchor stores the mall contained a Murphy's five and dime type store and a number of smaller shops. The development of the Eastgate Mall reflected the impact of suburbanization on this previously largely rural corridor. The development of Eastgate Mall created a new activity center along Nine Mile Road which became the center of the new suburban community that was developing. The decline of the mall started when Talhimers left the center. It was replaced by a Pebbles Department store in 1992. However, the Sears store left in 1995 and no replacement has been found. The mall is down to one department store and about twenty-five smaller tenants.

In the fall of 1967 Patrick's Chevrolet moved its operation from Highland Springs to its present location on Nine Mile Road across from the Eastgate Shopping Center. The relocation of Patrick's Chevrolet from Highland Springs reduced the base of outside customers patronizing shops in Highland Springs and contributed to the development of a new retail and service focus at the nexus of Nine Mile Road and Laburnum Avenue.

In 1986 the County built the East Government Center on a piece of the High Meadow's Farm. This property had been acquired by Josiah Dabbs in 1859. During the Civil War General Lee established his headquarters at the Dabbs House. The property was purchased in 1883 by



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the county to be used as an Alms House. Today the house, after enlargement, serves as the headquarters for the Henrico County Division of Police. This house is now joined by other buildings in a campus setting that makes up the East Government Center. In addition to the division-one police headquarters, the campus contains the administrative offices of the Henrico County Public Schools and representatives from county agencies designed to provide "one stop" service.

Over time a number of smaller commercial developments have been built in the corridor and some residential properties have been converted to commercial activities. What has resulted is a corridor with a mix of uses with varying degrees of competitiveness.



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## II.B. Existing Physical Conditions

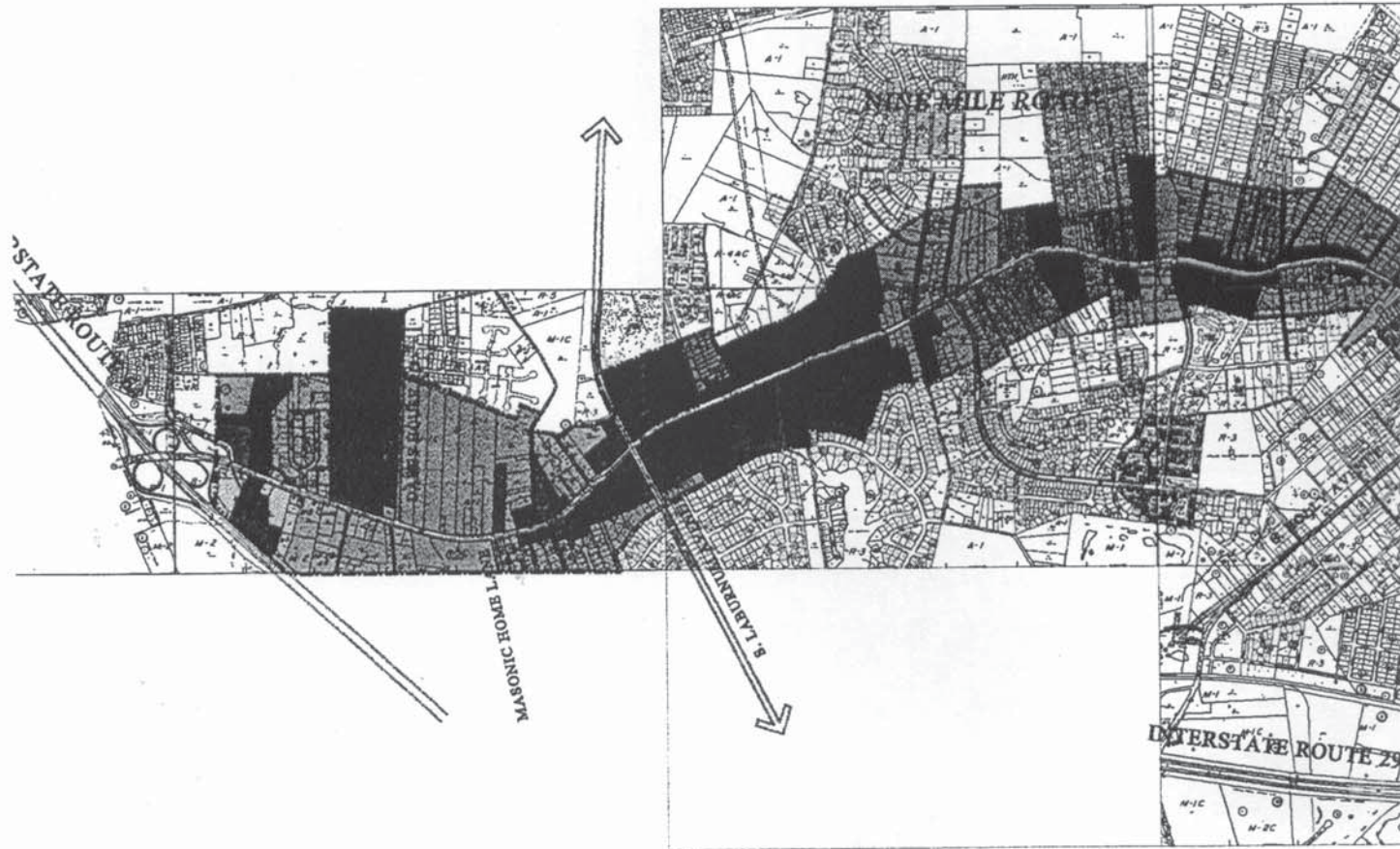
### 1. Land Uses

Existing land uses on Nine Mile Road between the I-64 interchange and Laburnum Avenue include two large scale institutional complexes, the East Henrico Government Center and the Masonic Home, and a scattering of small-scale office, commercial and light-industrial buildings as well as several vacant parcels (Exhibits 3 and 4). Also present north of the road are a number of former agricultural parcels with vintage houses, the majority of which are good architectural representations of the history of the area but are in a dilapidated physical condition. The Dabb's House, incorporated into the Government Center represents the most significant piece of architecture and historic resource of this area. The two institutional complexes with their large areas of manicured lawn, open space and historic buildings create a nice campus-like image to this portion of the roadway.



Exhibit 3. Aerial photograph at western end of Nine Mile Road near I-64 interchange.







# Nine Mile Road






## Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

Hammer, Siler, George Associates  
CHK Architects and Planners





### Existing Land Use

#### LEGEND




##### RESIDENTIAL

-  Rural Residential
-  Suburban Residential 1
-  Suburban Residential 2
-  Urban Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential

##### COMMERCIAL

-  Office
-  Office/Service
-  Commercial Arterial
-  Commercial Concentration

##### INDUSTRIAL

-  Light Industry
-  Heavy Industry
-  Planned Industry

##### ENVIRONMENTAL

-  Environmental Protection Area
-  Open Space/Recreation
-  Prime Agriculture

##### OTHER

-  Government
-  Semi-Public

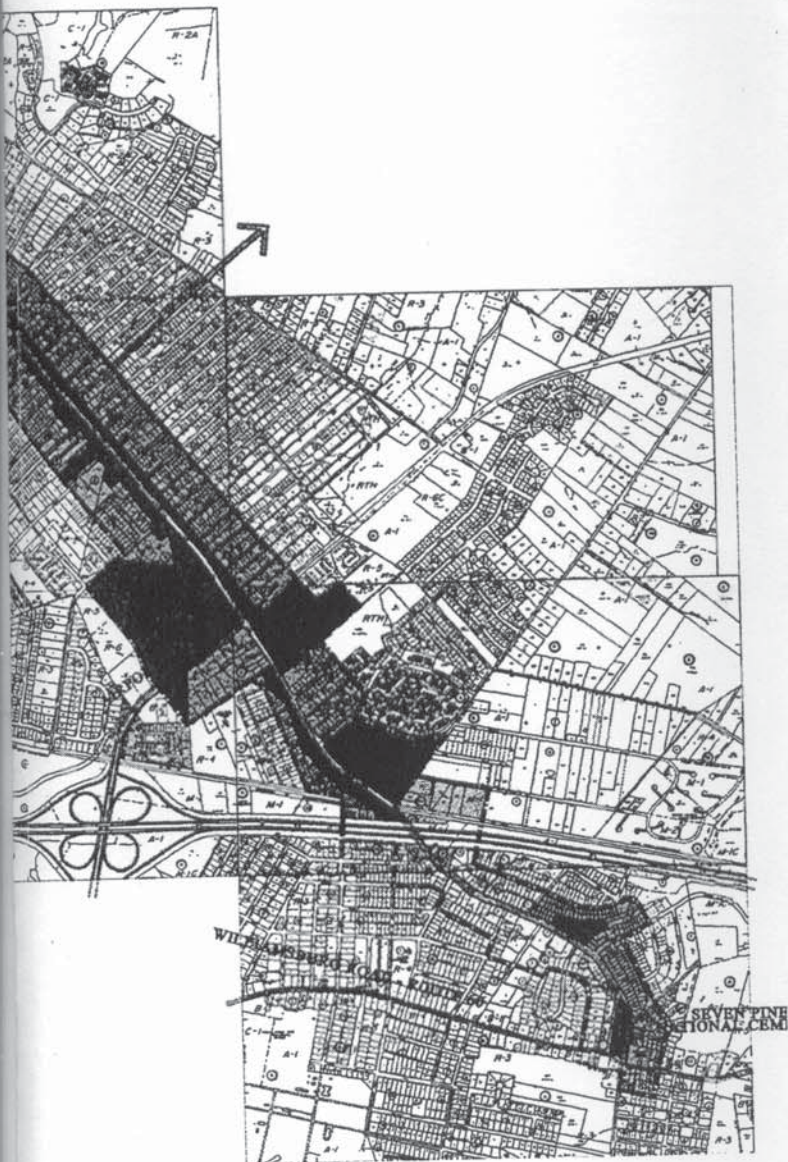


Exhibit 4

# Nine Mile Road



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The intersection of Laburnum Avenue and Nine Mile Road is a mix of new and older retail uses. On the western side of the intersection are a new Walgreen Drugstore and K-Mart. On the eastern side are Patrick's Chevrolet and the Fairfield Commons Mall. The Mall is the most significant feature in this area. The 30 acre site is divided into two parcels; the parcel on the corner is the site of a former Sears store which is currently unoccupied and a tire store which is still a viable enterprise. While the physical buildings on this lot are in reasonable condition the parking lot is suffering from increasing stages of deterioration including cracked asphalt and the growth of weeds. The second site parcel contains the remainder of the Mall and a free-standing building which used to be a grocery store. The former grocery store building as well as many stores within the Mall are vacant. The buildings themselves are only thirty years old. They have a dated and worn appearance but are probably otherwise structurally and physically sound. The Mall is a unique combination of stores entered from the parking lot and from an internal corridor.

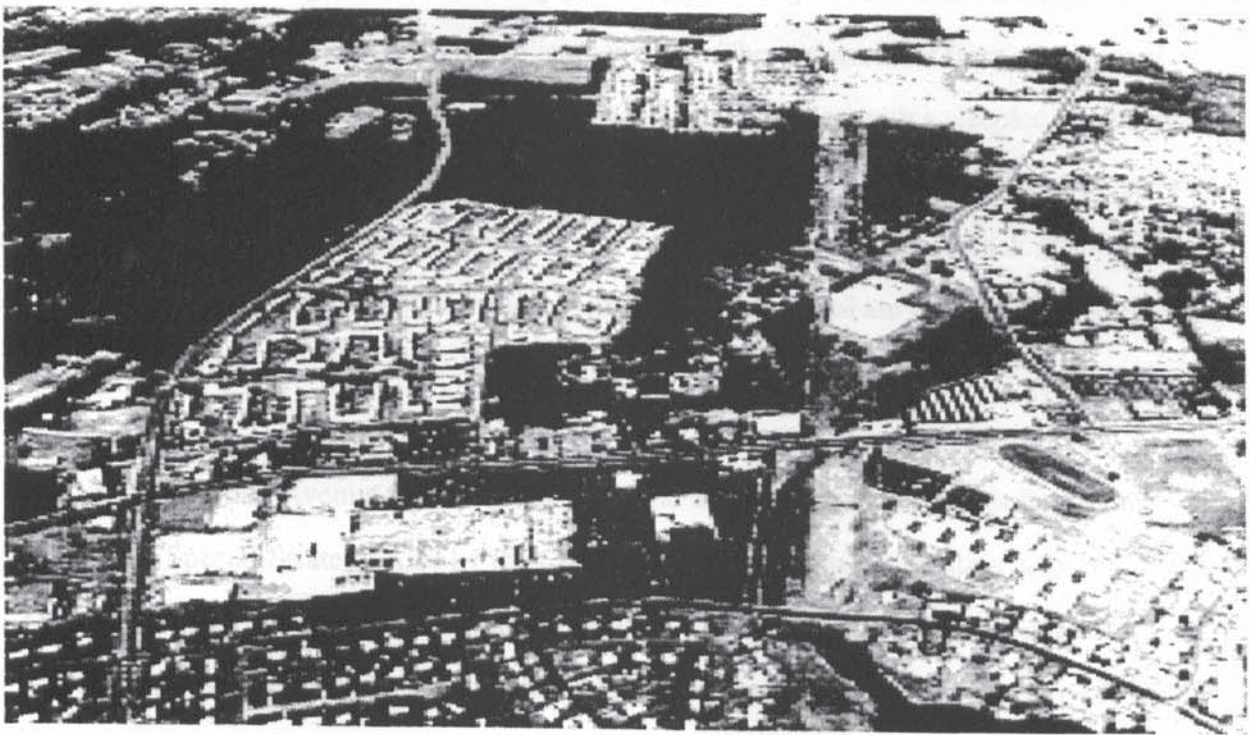


Exhibit 5. Aerial photograph of Fairfield Commons at intersection with Laburnum Ave.



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Despite this, the amount of solid wall facing the exterior and the lack of significant signage at entries give the Mall a somewhat forbidding appearance from Nine Mile Road.

Between the Mall and Highland Springs the corridor is a mix of generally smaller scale commercial uses, a major institutional use, and a number of residential parcels that have been zoned for business uses but not developed as such. Significant uses within this corridor are the Fairfield Middle School, two retail centers, Fairfield Shoppers World and the Newbridge Center, and the New Bridge Baptist Church. Fairfield Shoppers World is similar in condition to that of the Mall in that the buildings and their parking are physically sound but there are substantial vacancies which project a negative image. The site contains two pad sites adjacent to the road both of which are vacant. The Newbridge Center is fully leased and has undergone recent renovations, including the construction of a new store. Other commercial sites are one to two acre parcels with parking and free-standing generally one-story commercial buildings including a number of restaurants, dry-cleaning establishments, etc. These also suffer from a number of vacancies. The New Bridge Baptist church is a handsome complex with a steepled church and several adjacent brick structures. There are a number of residential buildings along the roadway; many of these sites have been zoned commercial but have not developed as such. The dwellings are newer than those located on the western portion of the road and are typically one-story capes or bungalow houses.

Beyond Holly Avenue the district of Highland Springs begins. This area has been designated a Special Strategy Area by the County; the intent of the designation is to establish that a focus is needed to improve the economic viability of the corridor. Recent streetscape improvements include new signage and the installation of new street lights. Existing commercial uses are located in small-scale brick and stucco buildings which front directly onto the street. The



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design of these buildings, with their scale, type of windows, and minimal setback give the street its main street character. Some of these buildings exist in consolidated blocks while others are interrupted by free-standing buildings or parking. A number of auto-service enterprises exist in the neighborhood which have parking in front of the store, otherwise parking occurs in the rear.



Exhibit 6. Aerial photograph at Highland Springs.

The intersection of Airport Drive and Nine Mile Road consists of a number of automobile oriented retail uses. Just beyond the intersection is located one of the larger retail centers which contains a Winn Dixie grocery store; around the interchange are a number of relatively recent fast-food restaurants and automobile service stations.

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## 2. Transportation Access

The Nine Mile Road Corridor is located north of Interstate I-64 in eastern Henrico County. Regional access to the corridor is provided by the interchange with I-64 at the western most point of Nine Mile Road just beyond the City of Richmond boundary. An additional link to I-64 is made on the eastern end of the corridor, at its intersection with Airport Drive. The corridor is located approximately two miles north of Richmond International Airport.

Laburnum Avenue and Airport Drive are the two major arterial links with Nine Mile Road. These two intersections carry the highest volume of traffic the majority of which continues traveling north-south rather than east-west along Nine Mile Road. These are the only two major roadways which intersect Nine Mile Road; a substantial central section of the roadway of approximately three and a half miles connects only with local roads.

From the western intersection with Route I-64 until the Newbridge Shopping Area, Nine Mile Road is a five-lane roadway with two lanes of traffic in each direction and either central lane for left-hand turns or designated left-hand turn lanes; within the New Bridge area the road becomes four lanes. The character of the roadway changes dramatically at Holly Avenue in Highland Springs and becomes a much narrower two lane section. The roadway again becomes a four lane section beyond Highland Springs in the area around Airport Drive.

## 3. Infrastructure

For much of its length, Nine Mile Road is served by public water and sewer. There are however gaps in water and sewer infrastructure; some of the former agricultural parcels as well



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as some smaller parcels located near the I-64 interchange are without water and sewer. Near the I-64 interchange, water mains are located in Nine Mile Road and Dabbs House Road and where development has occurred new water lines serving individual parcels have been constructed. However in undeveloped parcels such connections have not been made.

Public sewer in the same area is located well to the north and south of the road itself. On the south side of the road, public sewer exists to the south of the Virginia Employment Commission and stops at the eastern edge of that parcel. To the north in the same area separate sewer lines exist serving the Nine Mile Self -Storage facility, which continues south down Koch Avenue and the Eastern Henrico Government Center. The several agricultural parcels between these two facilities are without public sewer.

## **II.B. Key Economic Use Functions**

There are more than 150 businesses in the Nine Mile Road Corridor. These businesses are extremely diverse and include agricultural services, motor freight transportation and warehousing, general merchandise stores, food stores, auto dealers, gas stations, and home furnishings. Other types of businesses include construction, building materials, eating and drinking establishments, miscellaneous retail establishments, and apparel and accessory stores, drug stores. These are supplemented by office uses for fire, insurance, and real estate businesses, personal services, and other services.

The dominant business types located in the Nine Mile Road corridor are miscellaneous retail with twenty-one establishments, auto dealers and gas stations with twenty establishments, and personal services with seventeen establishments. However, if the twelve auto repair services

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were added to the auto dealers and gas stations, this group would dominate with thirty-two establishments giving the corridor a strong automobile services image. There are approximately five construction businesses, two motor freight transportation and warehousing businesses, nine food stores, and twelve apparel and accessory stores within the corridor. Approximately five establishments are primarily into wholesale trade and thirteen establishments are oriented to eating and drinking.

### Market Barriers

The major market barrier facing the Nine Mile Road area is the low income level of the surrounding community that expenditure power affects the ability of businesses to attract customers. The area also has a high percentage of certain types of quality and quantity of goods and services. The demographics of the area also represent a barrier. A portion of Herndon is a low income area, in 1990 the average household income in the Nine Mile Road Housing Project was \$12,035 or about \$10,000 less than the County as a whole. Thirty-eight percent of the Nine Mile Road Trade area households had incomes of less than \$25,000 in 1990 compared to only two percent for the entire County. These differences, combined with the low income level of the household base, represent a perception by the business community that the area is a less successful marketing environment. This market due to insufficient expenditure power is a barrier to the growth and development of the business community.



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### **III. Barriers to Development**

Any realistic assessment of the potential of Nine Mile Road must recognize both barriers to development and potential opportunities. The revitalization of Nine Mile Road faces a number of barriers. Among these are market barriers due to the absence of sufficient expenditure potential to support certain types of goods and services. Other barriers include certain zoning restrictions that limit the types of economic activities that may be considered and the absence of a wide range of development sites within the corridor.

#### **III. A. Market Barriers**

The major market barrier facing the Nine Mile Road Corridor is the perception by the business community that expenditure potential for the Nine Mile Road Trade Areas is not sufficient to support certain types of quality retail and entertainment establishments. These views stem from the demographics of the area as compared with the western portion of Henrico County. For example, in 1990 the average household income in the Nine Mile Road Housing Trade Area was \$33,485 or about \$10,000 less than that for the County as a whole. Thirty-eight percent of the Nine Mile Road Trade area households had incomes of less than \$25,000 in 1990 as compared with thirty-two percent for the county as a whole. These differences, combined with a smaller population and household base, have resulted in a perception by the business community that there is substantial risk in investing in this market due to insufficient expenditure potential. This perception on the part of many members of the business community is a major barrier to development.

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## 1. Convenience Goods

There are however some real rather than perceived limits to what the corridor can support in terms of additional convenience goods. Our analysis found that the market is already saturated with drug stores in each of the three trade areas. While there is some demand for additional space for food stores, there is not enough to support a new supermarket along Nine Mile Road. Trade Area A shows a demand for 17,000 additional square feet of food store space, and Trade Area B shows a demand for 12,800 square feet. New supermarkets are usually more than 35,000 square feet precluding the development of a new store.

Our analysis also indicates that there is little demand for additional space for hardware stores or liquor stores in the area. Trade Area A shows demand for 356 square feet of additional space for a liquor store and no demand for additional space for a hardware store. While the households in Trade Area B and C are not served by either a liquor store or a hardware store in their primary trade area, the expenditure potential for these retail stores is not enough to support an additional hardware store and liquor store in each. In Trade Area B, the demand for space for a liquor store is 1,800 square feet, and a hardware store is 2,500 square feet. In Trade Area C, the demand for space for a liquor store is 1,100 square feet, and a hardware store is 1,500 square feet. In neighborhood shopping centers, the median gross leaseable area for liquor stores is 2,800 square feet, and the gross leaseable area for a hardware store is 6,000 square feet. The demand for additional space for each type of store falls short of this in each trade area.

## 2. Housing

Henrico County has experienced tremendous growth over the last 15 years in population,



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households and housing units. Between 1980 and 1990 its population increased twenty percent, ranking it first in total growth in the Richmond region and second in the state of Virginia.

Despite this tremendous housing growth, little has been concentrated in the eastern half of the county.

The development of new housing and sale of existing housing in the study area is constrained by certain barriers, which potential home buyers cite for not purchasing a house in this market. They include the following:

- Lot sizes of existing units are too small
- Water and sewer lines are not available to some areas where vacant land could be developed for new housing
- East Henrico County does not provide the convenience to large shopping malls found in the western half of the county
- Noise from the airport is a deterrent

Potential buyers find the lot sizes of existing units in the east too small. These smaller lot sizes are attributable to an older housing stock. In addition, there has been relatively little new construction, and home buyers are finding new housing products being offered in the west end of the county.

While East Henrico County has more vacant land than the west, the lack of sewer and water lines to some areas in this part of the county makes prohibitive the development of this land. According to area realtors many of the existing homes in the eastern portion of the county are on well or septic tanks. Until the county provides the necessary infrastructure, housing development in the east will be confined to areas that already have water and sewer line hookups.

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The western half of the county is also viewed by potential home buyers as a better location to buy a house because it is more convenient to large shopping malls. Convenience to shopping is viewed by home buyers as an amenity that is lacking in the eastern portion of the county, despite existing retail establishments.

While these barriers may tend to limit what can be done in the revitalization of Nine Mile Road they in no way suggest that major improvements are not possible. Some of the barriers may be removed by changes in County policy, attitudes of potential retailers can be changed with more accurate information and better promotion, and projects can and should be developed that are consistent with the needs of the market.

### **III.B. Regulatory Barriers**

The main regulatory barriers are zoning and airport noise regulations.

#### **1. Zoning**

The majority of parcels abutting Nine Mile Road are zoned office, business or residential in the *Henrico County Zoning Ordinance*. Allowable uses include office and retail establishments as well as a variety of residential types. The B-2 designation which is the predominate designation for business uses does allow for some uses which are not strictly office such as printing and publishing establishments or drapery making shops. Warehouses or other light manufacturing facilities are prohibited except for several small parcels adjacent to the I-64 interchange.



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As will be indicated later on in this report, the vision of Nine Mile Road as a healthy business and commercial corridor can not be totally supported by the market analyses. The corridor currently has an excess capacity in its retail space. Opportunities for growth are indicated in other areas such as flex space/light manufacturing and new housing. Current zoning which in many instances confines uses along the corridor to business and office uses is thus potentially serving as an impediment to development.

### **III.C. Infrastructure**

The analysis of infrastructure will address the capacity and extent of roads, parking and public water and sewer.

#### **1. Roads**

Although designed for much of its length as a regional roadway, Nine Mile Road currently functions as a local road. Interstate 64, which roughly parallels Nine Mile Road, provides a more efficient east-west connector. The primary regional attraction, Fairfield Commons Mall, no longer generates regional traffic of any significant volume although other existing commercial uses such as Patrick's Chevrolet do bring in regional traffic. For much of its length the roadway appears to be carrying traffic below its designed volumes. Based upon available statistics, the functioning level of the roadway and its intersections are not an impediment to development. Conversely it appears that the lack of traffic volumes is an impediment to commercial development.

For much of its length Nine Mile Road is without trees or significant landscaping of any

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kind. In this aspect the standards of the roadway are substantially below other equivalent roads elsewhere in the County. This lack of landscaping increases the visibility of the overhead utility lines as well as the worn condition of existing parking lots and buildings some of which are vacant. All this combines to create a negative image for the roadway.

## **2. Parking**

The majority of the retail uses within the Nine-Mile Road corridor are suburban in nature and sufficient off-street parking is provided within each parcel. However, Highland Springs was developed as an older commercial main street when parking requirements were much lower than today's standards and much of that requirement was met by parallel parking located within the roadway. This parking has recently been removed from Nine Mile Road and there is a critical shortage of parking to service existing retail and commercial uses. This lack of parking, except for a few uses such as the Highland Springs Grocery Store, is an impediment to an increase in either the number or capacity of existing commercial establishments.

## **3. Public Water and Sewer**

Several sites in the vicinity of the I-64 interchange are not served by public water and sewer. Given the existing size of many of these parcels and the distance to public facilities, particularly sewer, the requirement to develop this infrastructure as an essential first step in development is a disincentive. Assemblage of the parcels into larger development packages or the contribution by the County to some of the costs of this infrastructure would help to sponsor development.



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## **IV. Opportunities for Development**

Despite the market barriers previously discussed, our market analysis indicates that opportunities exist for additional personal services, general merchandise stores, apparel and accessories, and eating and drinking establishments.

### **IV.A. Assessment of Market Opportunities**

#### **1. Retail and Service**

We found in each of the primary trade areas, there exists demand for additional space for personal services. In Trade Area A there is demand for 14,400 square feet of space; in Trade Area B, 4,000 square feet, and in Trade Area C, 6,500 square feet of additional space for personal services. Our inventory of personal service establishments along Nine Mile Road indicates that the area is well served by hair salons, nail salons, and dry cleaners. However, an opportunity for new personal service establishments might include shoe repair, film processing, travel agents, or a photo studio.

Shoppers goods include general merchandise stores, apparel and accessory stores, and furniture and home furnishings. While there is no demand for additional space for furniture and home furnishings, there are opportunities for new general merchandise stores and apparel and accessory stores. Some of this demand reflects the loss of tenants from the Fairfield Commons Mall. General merchandise stores include department stores and variety stores. Our analyses indicates that there is demand for 37,000 square feet of additional space for general merchandise. For apparel and accessories, the market can support an additional 14,800 square feet of space. While there is not enough market support for a new department store, there is an opportunity for

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these types of retail uses to fill in the vacant space that currently exists. A full assessment of the retail potential can be found in the Background Document, Appendix A.

## 2. Housing

Based on our analysis of the housing market in the Nine Mile Road market area, we have forecast the demand for new housing in the area using three potential scenarios:

1. In the first scenario, the housing market performs better than it has in the past. The market operates at 120 percent and absorbs 200 additional housing units per year. This will result in 1000 units over the next five years.

2. In the second scenario, the market does not deviate from present trends. In this scenario, the market absorbs 168 additional housing units per year, or 840 over the next five years.

3. The third scenario assumes the market will not perform as well as it has in the past. In this case, it is only able to absorb 80 percent of what it has done in the past. This results in the absorption of 134 units per year, for a total of 670 units by 2002.

Despite the barriers that were previously discussed, the Nine Mile Road Housing Study Area possesses several strengths that we feel will make scenario three less likely. The first is that the cost of housing is relatively less expensive than other parts of the county. The low prices of housing in this area is one of the strongest attractions to buying a house in this market. First-time home buyers, typically singles and young married couples, are attracted to this area because they cannot afford the higher priced housing in the western portion of the county, where new houses sell for anywhere between \$150,000 and \$300,000. In comparison, new houses in our



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study area sell for between \$80,000 and \$120,000 according to area realtors. Homeowners are able to get more house for their dollar.

According to the Henrico 2010 Land Use Plan, because the bulk of development has occurred in the west, the land use patterns there have been determined. Since there is relatively less undeveloped land in the western half of the county, this will increase the pressure to develop Eastern Henrico County in the future. A detailed assessment of the housing can be found in the Background Document, Appendix B.

### **3. Flex Space**

Our interviews with key real estate brokers confirmed that a big potential market opportunity generated by the Motorola/Siemens Joint Venture is for Office/Warehouse and Flex Space. This demand will be created by small suppliers needing less than 20,000 square feet of space. While absorption for office/warehouse space declined between 1993 and 1995 so did vacancy rates. Vacancy rates for Office/warehouse spaced declined from 22.67 percent in 1991 when absorption was only 92,592 to a low of 5.24 percent in 1995 when absorption was 174,134.

While absorption levels have been declining since 1993, most market observers are of the opinion that the Motorola-Siemens joint-venture will jump-start this market segment. Therefore we believe that the demand for office warehouse and flex space will be sufficient to absorb excess capacity in commercial retail space within the corridor if appropriate zoning changes are made to accommodate these uses.

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## **Conclusion**

Our analyses of the market suggest that housing demand and therefore household growth will not be sufficient to substantially expand the expenditure potential base. Therefore a stronger employment base is needed to improve the attractiveness of the market to eating and drinking establishments and better quality retailing and service establishments. As a result a dual strategy will be required that seeks to attract more employment to the area while at the same time achieving a growth of households. In order to implement this dual strategy the plan needs to modify and restructure existing retail space so that the excess capacity in the current retail inventory can be used more effectively to stimulate employment growth; and, so that we can make the retail space more competitive for retailing in the 1990's and year 2000. Second will be the need to target future household growth to middle income households as a means of increasing average household income levels and expanding expenditure potential. Third will be the need to take full advantage of the market opportunity to develop an entertainment and eating and drinking component as a complement to the retail and service activity.

### **IV.B. Assessment of Land Use Development Potentials**

Given the limited number of development sites within the Nine Mile Road corridor, we have attempted to identify those with high potential. (Exhibit 7)

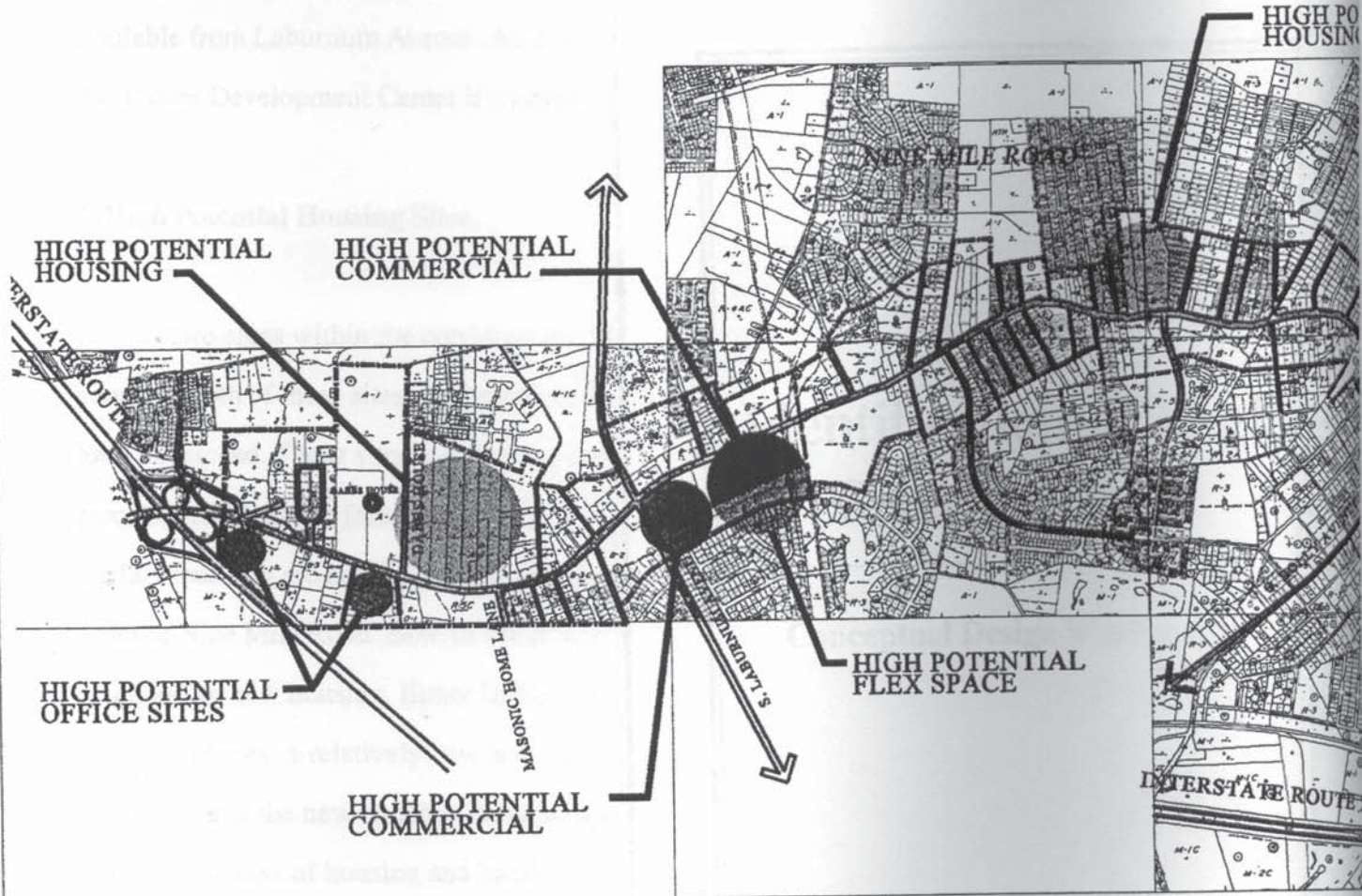
#### **1. High Potential Commercial Sites**

The highest potential commercial site identified within the corridor is the site of the former Sears store at the corner of S. Laburnum Avenue and Nine Mile Road. This site serves as



# Nine Mile Road Future Analysis and Development Plan

A significant gateway into Nine Mile Road corridor. The site is an ideal one for the laboratory Avenue stopping at the intersection of the most recent and most viable retail and reasonable retail/entertainment program available from Laboratory Avenue.



...of housing and ...  
...existing agriculture ...  
...however if two or more ...  
...figuration — the line ...  
...road with a maximum ...  
...early industrial tract ...



**Nine Mile Road**  
Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

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Hammer, Siler, George Associates  
CHK Architects and Planners

**Identification of High  
Potential Sites**

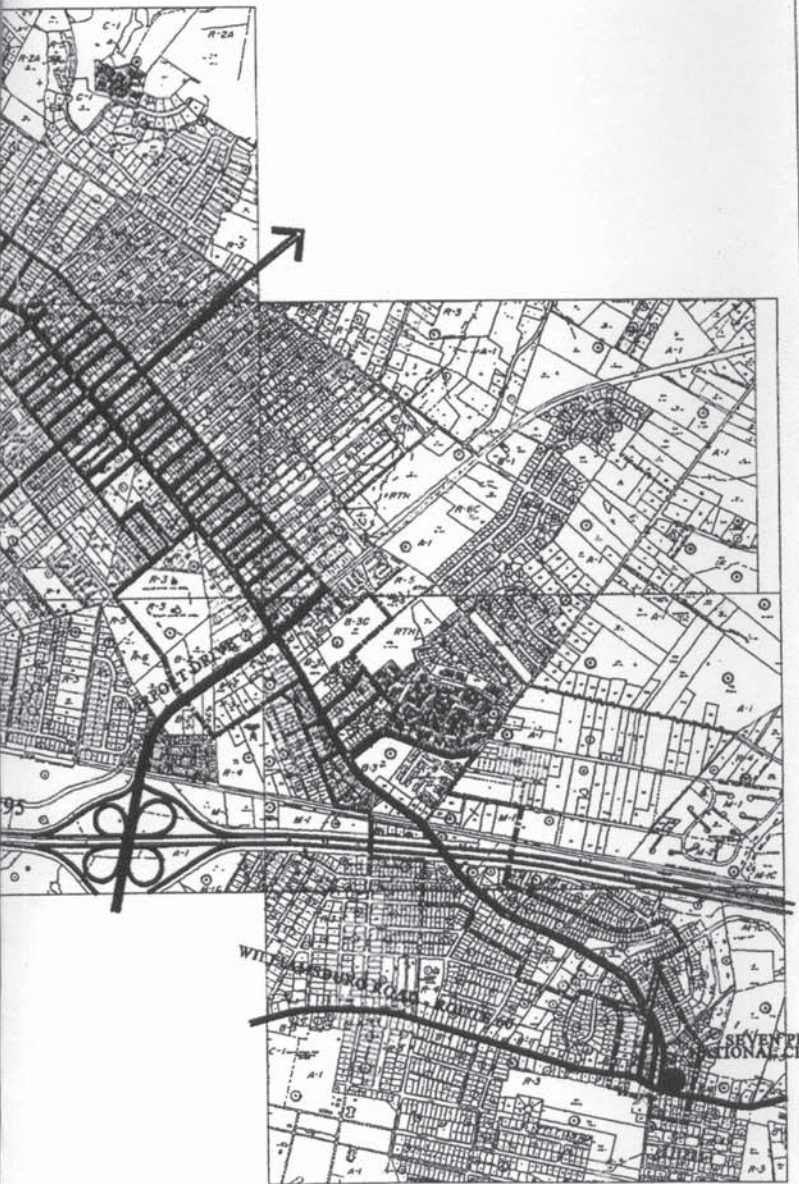
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Conceptual Design Illustrative

Exhibit 7

**Nine Mile Road**

POTENTIAL





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a significant gateway into Nine Mile Road and is thus critical to the success of the rest of the corridor. The site is an ideal one for retail because of the substantial volumes of traffic on Laburnum Avenue stopping at the intersection as well as the presence of several of the healthiest, most recent and most viable retail stores. The site is of sufficient acreage to accommodate a reasonable retail/entertainment program with adequate parking. Good access to the site is available from Laburnum Avenue. An alternate use might be to reuse the Sears building as a Workforce Development Center if commercial uses cannot be attracted.

## **2. High Potential Housing Sites**

Two areas within the corridor have been identified as key development sites for new housing. Both of these sites are former agricultural parcels that are no longer farmed but have not been developed. These sites are ideal for housing because of their location; the size of the parcels; their distance from the Airport, well outside of any zones impacted by airport noise; and the fact that they are not developed. The first is adjacent to the East Henrico Government Center north of Nine Mile Road. Both in use and in appearance the Government Center is an appropriate neighbor for new housing. Either Dabbs House Road or Nine Mile Road at this point provide good site entries; a relatively new housing subdivision, Fairfield Woods, has been built just north of this site and the new housing could be seen as an extension to this development creating a critical new mass of housing and building on the momentum of this new construction.

Individually the existing agricultural parcels are too linear in configuration for residential development however if two or more are consolidated they provide sufficient acreage and a reasonable configuration — the linear nature of the parcels creates a minimal amount of frontage on Nine Mile Road with a maximum amount of acreage away from the busy roadway. The site also contains many mature trees and development in single family houses will allow much of this

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forrestation to remain. This site is currently without public water and sewer.

The second area is in the New Bridge section of the roadway. Located across from the New Bridge Baptist Church this site is near an appropriate institutional use across the roadway and adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods on its northern and western sides. The size and configuration of these parcels are similar to those adjacent to the East Henrico Government Center.

### **3. High Potential Flex Space Sites**

The existing Fairfield Commons Mall is identified as the highest potential flex space site within the corridor. The Mall building itself is flexible enough in its configuration to be adapted to this new use and as an existing building is an asset for new development. Many of the rear stores of the Mall are equipped with loading docks. Existing parking on the site is more than sufficient to accommodate the requirements of light industrial spaces. Access to the site is available from S. Laburnum Avenue or from a private road located on the eastern boundary of the Mall, as well as Nine Mile Road itself; all of these roadways are removed from residential areas and traffic. Although this site abuts an existing residential neighborhood, a public road serves as the separation between them and additional buffering can provide sufficient protection for these residential uses.

### **4. High Potential Office Sites**

Two sites are identified as high potential office sites. Both are located at or near the interchange with I-64 and thus have good access from arterial roads. The westernmost high



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potential site has visibility from I-64 itself while the more eastern site is a linear parcel with good frontage and visibility from Nine Mile Road. Other significant office complexes, particularly the East Henrico Government Center, are located in this area; the presence and quality of these sites are attractive for potential office users. Both of these parcels are relatively small in size and appropriate to the scale of the office parks recommended in the market study. The market analysis can be found in the Background Document, Appendix C.

The site located adjacent to I-64 appears to be served by existing public water and sewer. However State Right Of Way, Wetlands or other environmental issues could be significant for water and sewer availability and an engineering study would be required to check the adequacy and viability of these services. The site along Nine Mile Road is not currently served by public water and sewer. This site also requires assembly into one larger parcel from five existing lots.

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## V. Revitalization Strategy Recommendations

### V.A. Goals of the Strategy

The goal of the revitalization strategy for the Nine Mile Road Corridor is to create a balance of economically viable uses that will increase the employment base, expand the household and income base, and improve the quality of life for households within the corridor through an expansion of shoppers goods, eating and drinking establishments, and entertainment. This goal will be achieved through the pursuit of the following objectives:

- (1) To expand the corridor's role as an employment center that provides increased job opportunities through the introduction of manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, in selected locations.
- (2) To revitalize the corridor's entertainment role for the community through the introduction of new eating and drinking establishments and family entertainment venues.
- (3) To improve the corridor's retail base and service function through the restructuring of retail offerings at Fairfield Commons Mall and through the attraction of a larger number of retail and service establishments to the Nine Mile Road Corridor.
- (4) To expand the expenditure potential base of the corridor through



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the introduction of market-rate housing targeted to middle income households in selected locations within the Nine Mile Road Corridor.

- (5) To maximize Nine Mile Roads' revitalization potential by assuring adequate infrastructure to support growth.

## **V.B. Revitalization Project Concepts**

The achievement of these objectives will require the implementation of six revitalization project concepts that will be essential to the revitalization of the Nine Mile Road Corridor. These six concepts include the following:

### **1. The Development of Small -Scale Office Parks**

Eastern Henrico County has had a difficult time in attracting a white collar employment base due to a lack of Class A office buildings or small -scale office parks. While we expect that demand for such space will continue to be strong in the western part of the County, we do see an opportunity to introduce at least one small-scale office development in the Nine Mile Road Corridor. Such a complex will work best in close proximity to the Eastern Henrico Government Center, using the strength of this asset to create the competitive environment that will be required. Such a park should be oriented to small space users requiring between 1,000-3,000 square feet of space who are looking for costs effective space in a human scale environment.

### **2. Expansion of Eating and Drinking**

Nine Mile Road must offer more eating and drinking establishments if it is to improve its

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vitality. Our analysis suggests that the corridor will be able to support an additional 77,000 square feet of eating and drinking space over the next five years. The Nine Mile Road Corridor cannot fully respond to some of this existing demand because some of the existing vacant facilities are tied up as a result of past lease commitments. The plan should therefore include the building of new eating and drinking facilities in locations where they have the best chance to succeed. The emphasis should be on family style restaurants with locations in the Nine Mile Road/Laburnum areas and in Highland Springs.

### **3. In-Fill Retail and Entertainment**

While the analysis does not show sufficient market support for a fully leased Fairfield Commons Mall, it does show support for an expanded mix of retail and personal services. Given the level of demand, we believe that the choice of shoppers goods and services can be dramatically improved for Nine mile Road shoppers. In order to take advantage of this market opportunity we believe that three things must occur. First would be a renovation of the Fairfield Commons Mall with a portion of the mall dedicated as a smaller scale retail center. Second would be the renovation and expansion of the Fairfield Shoppers World Center as a retail and service enclave, and third the building of new retail space along with an eating/drinking and movie theater complex on the old Sears site. As we have previously indicated, our analysis indicates that the market can support another 123,000 square feet of general merchandise, apparel and accessories, and personal services by 2001. A creative approach, starting with the renovation of a portion of the Fairfield Commons Mall, would in our opinion begin the process of turning around the dynamics of the market.



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#### **4. Office /Warehouse-Flex Space Parks**

There appears to be a niche in the market for office/warehouse and flex space for small assembly operations, manufacturers, and distributors. These types of small supplier operations are now prohibited by zoning in much of the Nine Mile Corridor . The plan should identify areas within the corridor where zoning should be changed to allow for these types of uses. The development of small flex space parks designed for suppliers who require less than 20,000 square feet of space is the niche area that should be targeted.

#### **5. Middle-Income Housing Subdivisions**

The Nine Mile Road Corridor has always been a mixed use corridor with housing as well as commercial uses. The plan should preserve and enhance the housing function within the corridor by introducing new subdivisions in selected locations. The emphasis should be placed on ownership units rather than rentals with an eye toward attracting a part of the existing rental population to home ownership. The housing should also be targeted toward middle income households with homes selling for between \$120,000-\$150,000 in 1997 dollars.

#### **6. Public Sector Impact Projects**

Public Sector Impact projects such as the Eastern Henrico Government Center can obviously make a positive impact on the economic viability of the Nine Mile Road Corridor. In this connection a planning effort is now underway to determine the feasibility of reusing the old Sears Building as an Employment Training Center/Junior College Campus. This proposal, which would be a partnership between the County Government and the Commonwealth, has

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substantial merit since it is capable of bringing a sizable number of people into the area. It would also offer an increased capacity in the community for workforce development. Other public sector impact projects should include a review of public mass transit routes to facilitate greater access to employment and retail centers such as the plan envisions for the Fairfield Commons Mall, the development of a stronger Code Enforcement Program in partnership with the Eastern Henrico Business Association that would focus on property maintenance issues with respect to commercial properties and vacant lots, and an expanded effort, with both the business and residential communities, to improve public safety.

## **7. Promotional Campaign**

The Nine Mile Road Corridor suffers from a negative image that must be overcome by the development of new initiatives and by getting the word out that the area has existing assets and that the development climate is improving. Such a promotional campaign should be the function of the business community supported by other civic organizations. The promotional campaign should focus on any new development or programmatic activities that are being undertaken in the community. This would include new stores, renovation activities, new housing being developed in the community, or new social or recreational activities. The idea behind such a promotional campaign should be that the Nine Mile Road Corridor is a good place to live and do business. The promotional campaign should include news releases, press briefings, community festivals on the Fairfield Mall parking lot and in Highland Springs, and promotional brochures depicting future plans for the corridor.



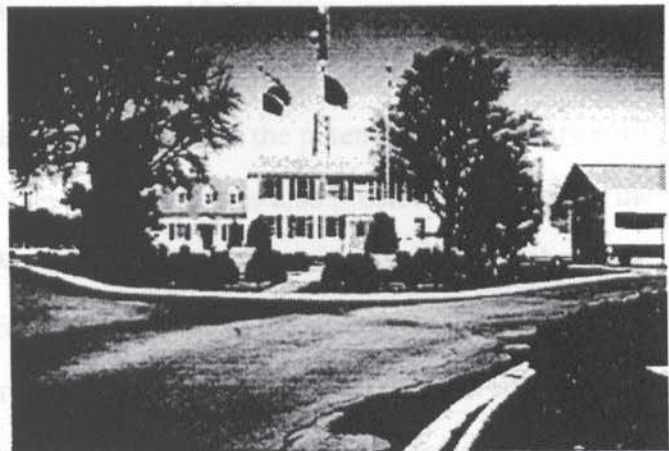
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## V.C. Action Area Development Program Recommendations

In the process of formulating the land use plan, the revitalization concepts have been used to establish land uses that meet the goal of this planning effort. Because of the length of the corridor and the need to establish priorities we have developed specific areas within the corridor in which new development initiatives should take place. They are as follows.

### 1. Government Center

The Government Center area is proposed as the site for two separate developments. Several parcels across from the East Henrico Government Center are proposed for a portion of the office uses identified in the market study (Exhibit 8). This site is currently a series of smaller parcels which could be consolidated into a small four acre office park which will accommodate approximately 60,000 square feet of new office space. The substantial frontage along Nine Mile Road as well as the proximity to the I-64 interchange and to other employment centers such as the Government Center and the Virginia Employment Center are all positive attributes of this site. A new facility in close proximity to these existing complexes as well as to the Masonic Home of Virginia will create a sufficient critical mass of handsome buildings to positively improve the image of the corridor.



East Henrico Government Center

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New office buildings should ideally front onto Nine Mile Road with parking located in the rear. The quality of their materials and facades should be in keeping with those of the employment centers mentioned above. These sites are currently without public water and sewer and the provision of these facilities will be essential to development taking place.

This portion of the corridor has also seen some new housing development. Additional sites adjacent to the Government Center have been identified as potential locations for additional new housing which will complement and build off of this. New housing development is appropriate in this portion of the corridor where institutional uses and small scale office uses predominate over larger retail complexes. Businesses that are currently in the area should remain until such time as it would be cost effective for them to relocate elsewhere in the Nine Mile Road Corridor. The plan therefore anticipates that these business will remain in place for the near term as a means of stabilizing the area's employment base.

The layout of these new neighborhoods should maximize the potential for a primary entry road to be located at Dabbs House Road and Nine Mile Road. It is also possible to connect to the new set of streets developed in the Fairfield Woods subdivision. The new subdivisions should be laid out with house sizes in the 2,500 square foot range as part of the strategy to raise median income in the area and create a more diverse range of housing types. Several recent subdivisions in the corridor have been developed with an architecture with more historical references, including elements such as front porches, as well as with product types which de-emphasize the car, including side-loaded garages and single front-loaded car garages. This type of architectural style will help to preserve and enhance the identification of this area as a more historic one and should be encouraged.



**Fairfield Woods  
Existing subdivision**

**Dabbs House Road**

**Existing industrial**

**New housing**

**Henrico Community  
Housing Corp.**

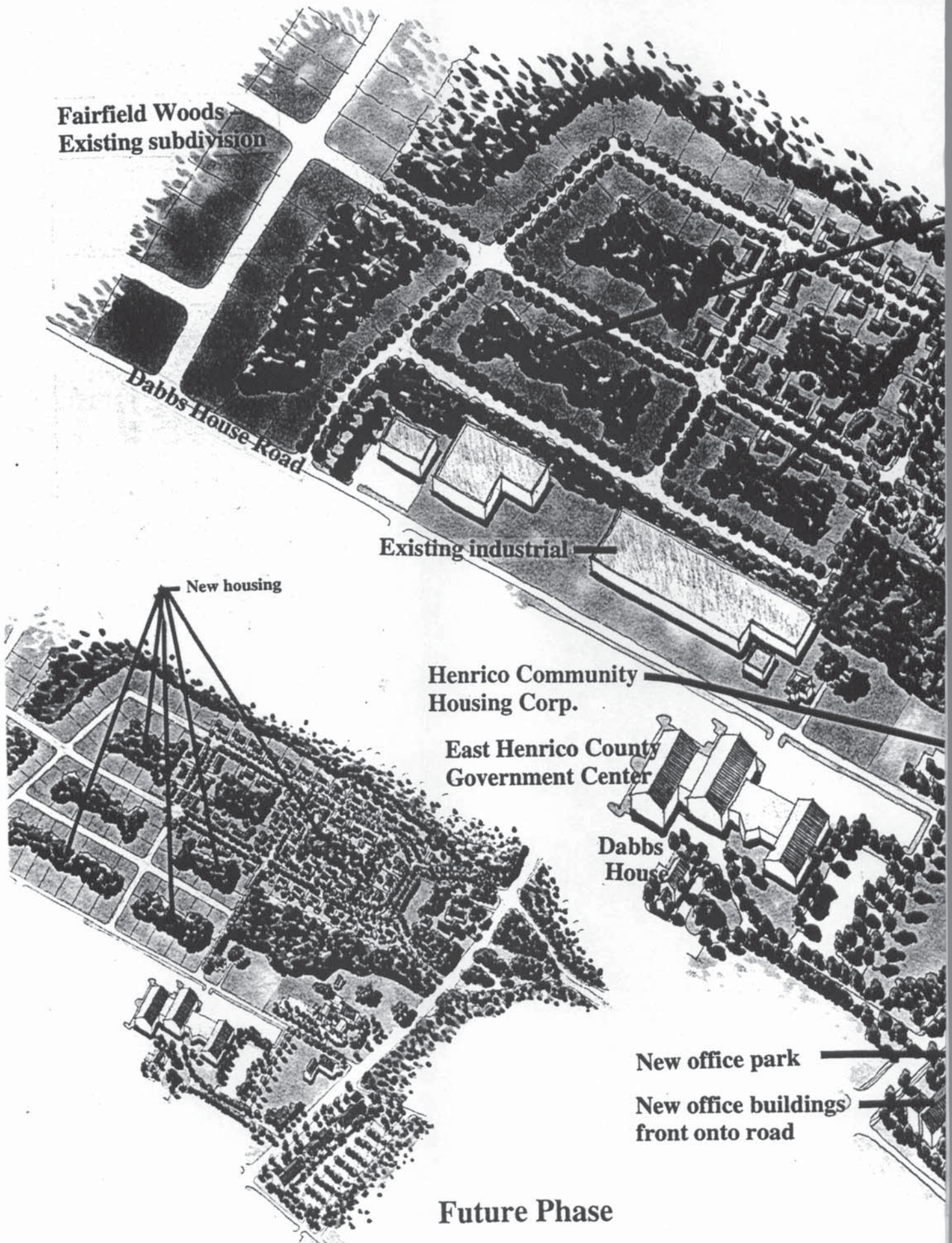
**East Henrico County  
Government Center**

**Dabbs  
House**

**New office park**

**New office buildings  
front onto road**

**Future Phase**







New housing :

Entry feature incorporates existing houses

Nine Mile Road

Masonic Home Of Virginia

Parking in rear of buildings

Phase I

## Nine Mile Road

Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

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Hammer, Siler, George Associates  
CHK Architects and Planners

## Government Center

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Conceptual Design Illustrative

Exhibit 8

## Nine Mile Road



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## 2. Fairfield Commons Mall

Fairfield Commons Mall is seen as the key site in any proposed revitalization of Nine Mile Road. The Mall itself and in particular the portion of the Mall located at the intersection of Laburnum Avenue and Nine Mile Road are integral to the overall perception and image of the corridor. The creation of a positive image at this intersection is an essential first step in any overall revitalization plan for the corridor.



Fairfield Commons Mall

The Mall site is separated into two ownership parcels and the strategy recommendations for the two are distinct. Two separate options are suggested for the Mall site and are different in terms of their strategy for the site at the corner of Laburnum Avenue and Nine Mile Road.

In Option 1 (Exhibit 9), the portion of the site at the corner of Laburnum and Nine Mile Road is identified as the highest potential location for new retail uses specifically, for a new development incorporating entertainment, restaurant and service retail. The site is recommended for a total of 70,000 square feet of new retail uses including 30,000 square feet of entertainment and 40,000 square feet of eating and drinking and service retail. The visibility of this location along Laburnum Avenue, its proximity to existing residential and employment centers are all important to the proposed use.

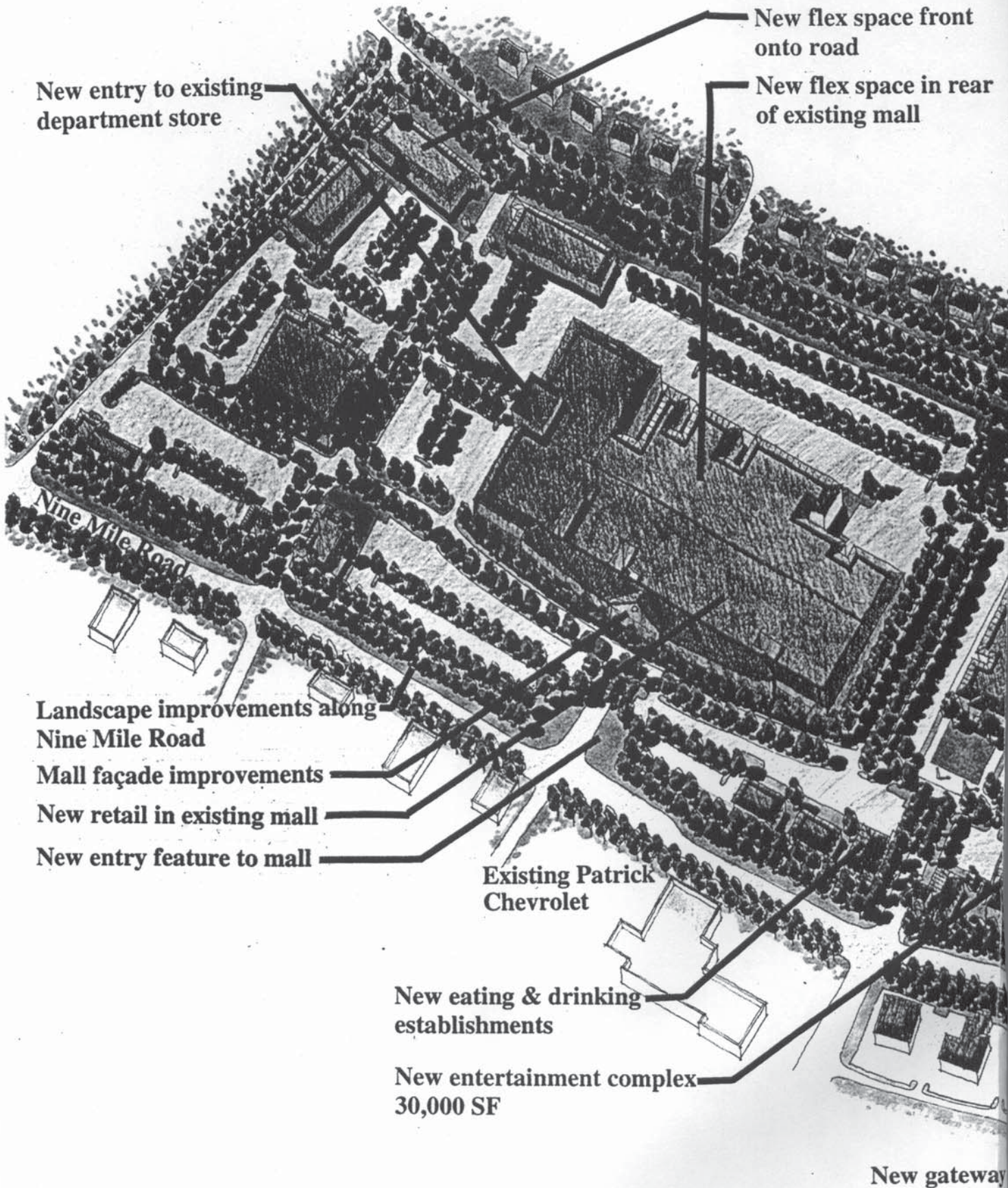
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In terms of the physical disposition of this site, it is important that these new uses create a dramatic change to the image of the center from the road. Siting buildings in close proximity to the roadway, particularly at the corner where the proposed entertainment uses are shown, will serve to create a significant gateway. Urban design guidelines should be established to further this concept in the location and arrangement of landscape elements. Features of the buildings themselves should be unique and arresting and create the appearance of a landmark complex — many modern entertainment complexes, such as Sony theaters, are designed as such. Service retail and eating and drinking establishments may then be located in separate buildings with their attendant parking. Buildings along Nine Mile Road should ideally also be located along the road itself to improve the appearance of the road creating the image of a boulevard and to lessen the impact of the parking from the road.

In Option 2 (Exhibit 10) the existing Sears building and Tire Store are proposed to remain. A new Employment Training Center/Junior College Campus is proposed as an adaptive reuse of the Sears building. This function is compatible with the physical characteristics of that structure and could serve to bring new vitality and activity to this important corner site. New landscaping within the existing parking lot and at the corner of Laburnum Avenue and Nine Mile Road can serve to improve the image of the site from the roadways, create the image of a “campus” and realize the gateway concept at the intersection.

In both Option 1 and Option 2 (Exhibits 9 and 10) the remainder of the Mall site is proposed as a combination of retail and flex space uses. The portion of the Mall that faces the parking lot along Nine Mile Road as well as the free-standing building that formerly housed the grocery store are proposed to remain as retail uses. Significant improvements should be made to the exterior facade of the Mall to create a new image to the center. Substantial landscape





New entry to existing department store

New flex space front onto road

New flex space in rear of existing mall

Landscape improvements along Nine Mile Road

Mall façade improvements

New retail in existing mall

New entry feature to mall

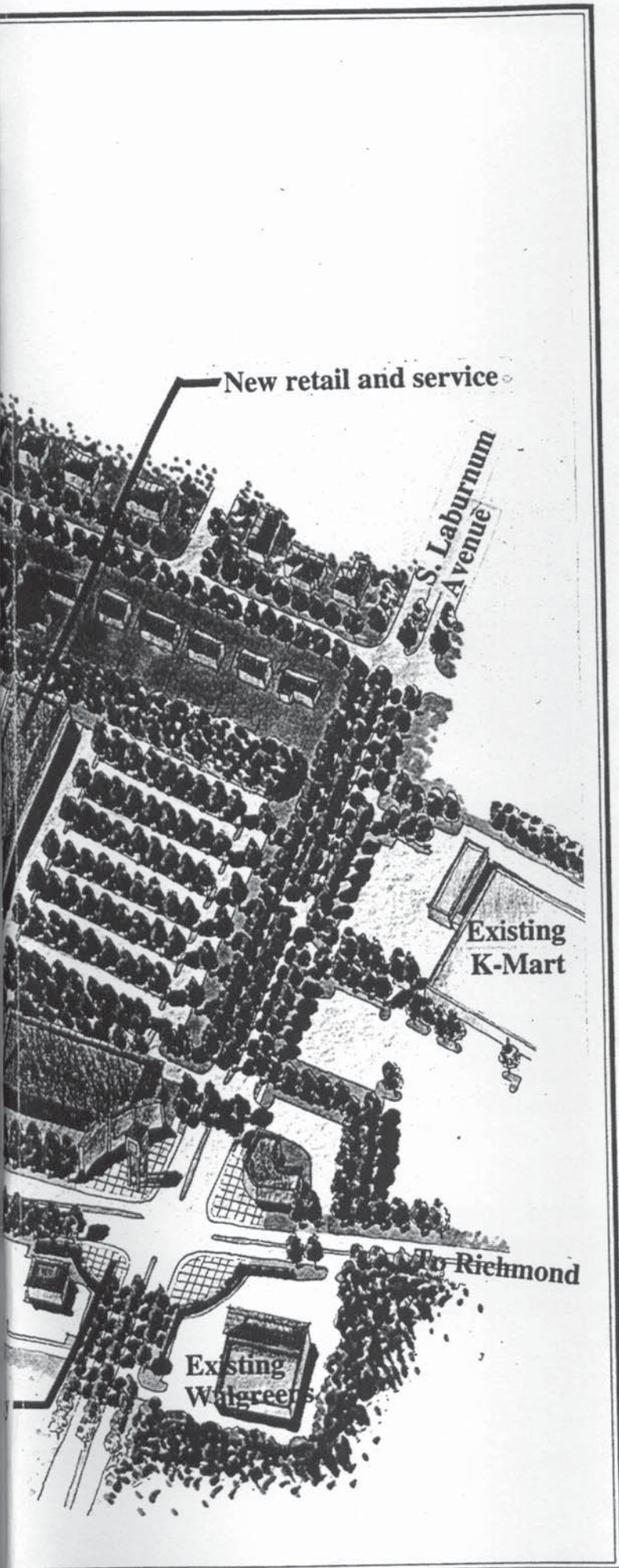
Existing Patrick Chevrolet

New eating & drinking establishments

New entertainment complex 30,000 SF

New gateway





## Nine Mile Road

Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

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Hammer, Siler, George Associates  
CHK Architects and Planners

## Fairfield Commons Mall

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Conceptual Design Illustrative  
Option 1

Exhibit 9

Nine Mile Road



**New entry to existing department store**

**New flex space front onto road**

**New flex space in rear of existing mall**

**Landscape improvements along Nine Mile Road**

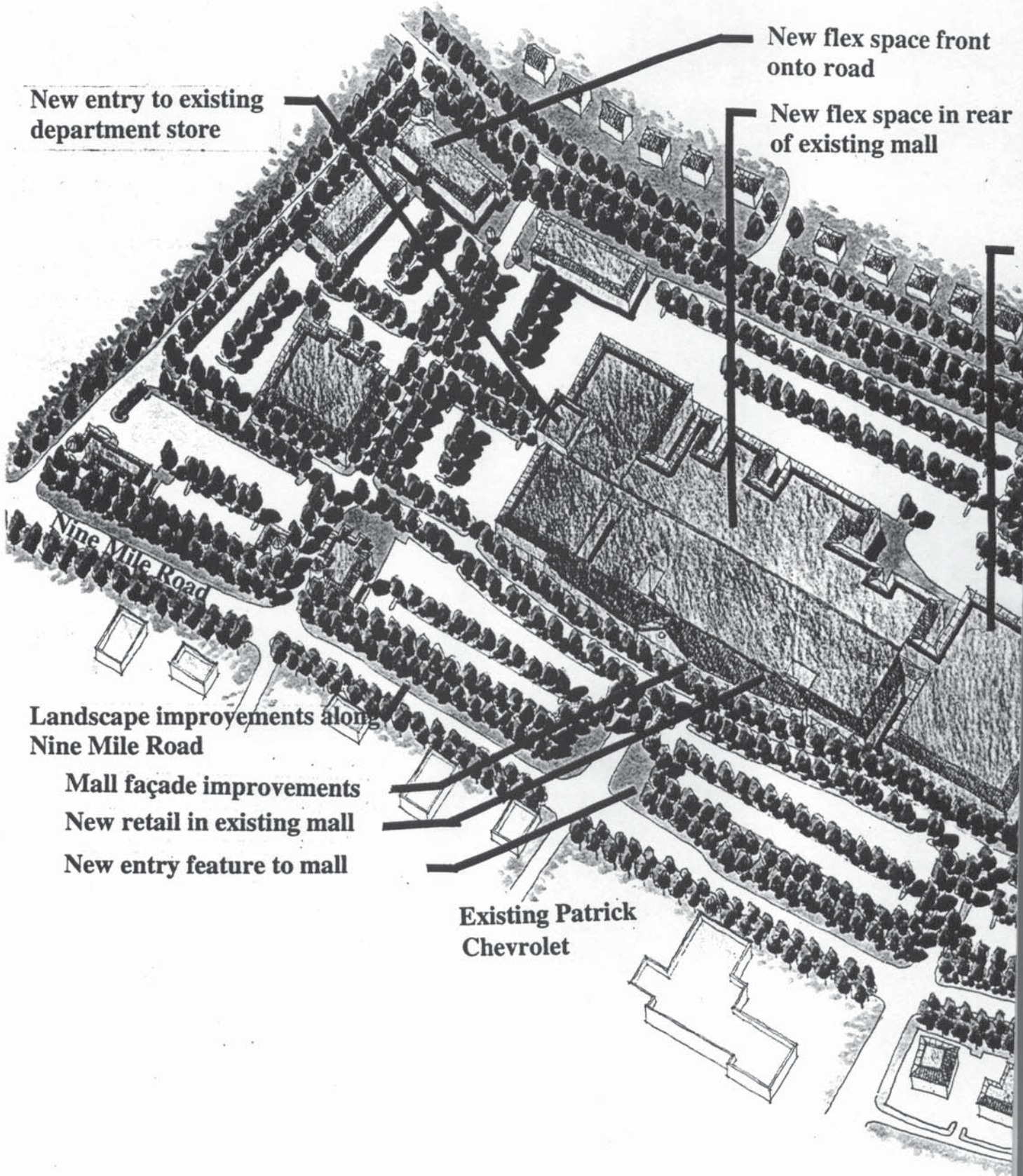
**Mall façade improvements**

**New retail in existing mall**

**New entry feature to mall**

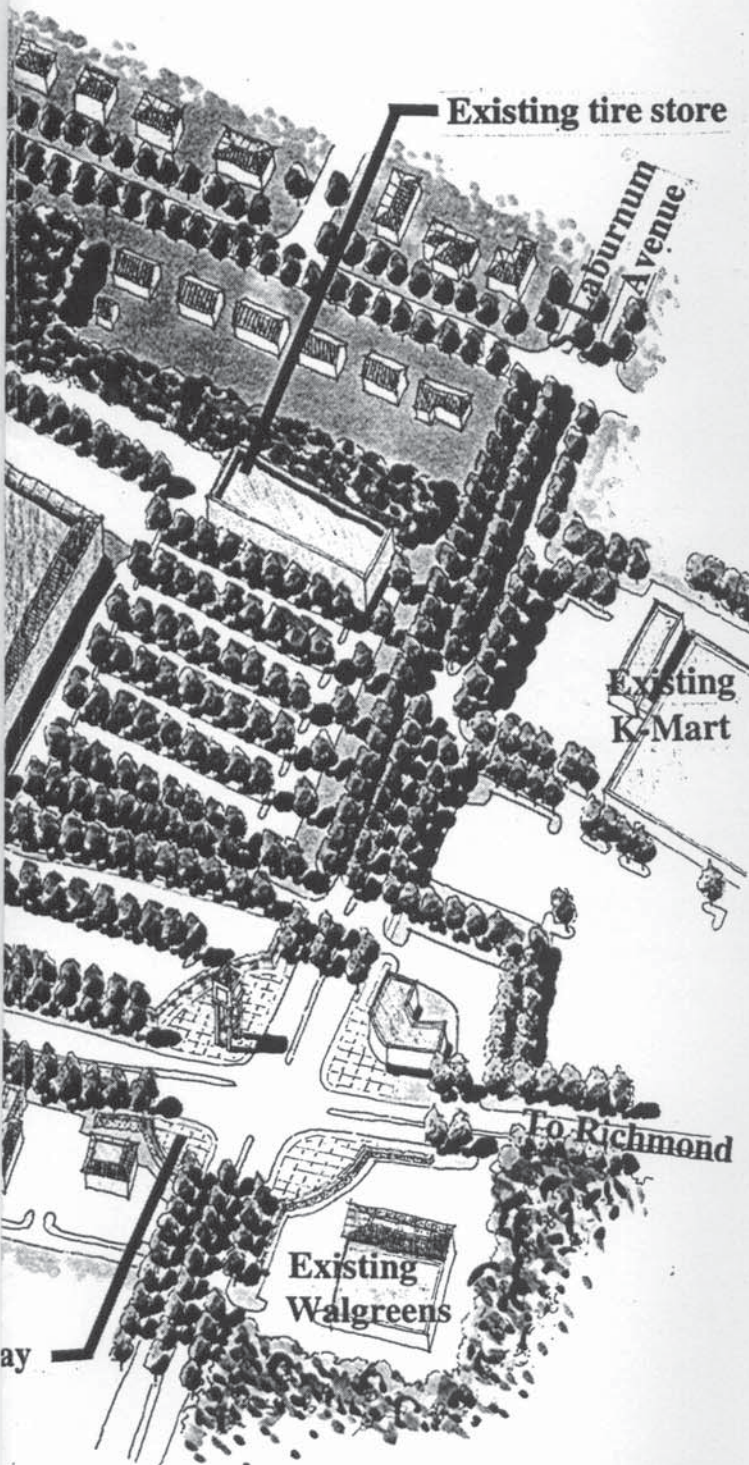
**Existing Patrick Chevrolet**

**New gatew**





Possible employment



## Nine Mile Road

Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

Hammer, Siler, George Associates

CHK Architects and Planners

## Fairfield Commons Mall

Conceptual Design Illustrative  
Option 2

Exhibit 10

Nine Mile Road



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improvements to the parking lot and the frontage along Nine Mile Road are also needed. The perception of the center as a significantly different place rather than as a modest update of the former Mall is essential to its continued viability in the future.

The portion of the Mall which contains the interior corridor as well as the Mall stores along the southern side are proposed as flex space. Many of these stores contain exterior loading docks and the sizes and interior subdivision of the spaces are flexible enough to accommodate the requirements of warehouse/office space. Potential reductions in parking because of the change in use as well as the possible utilization of parking reductions through shared parking will be sufficient to allow for the construction of new buildings to increase the amount of flex space. Such buildings should be located on the southern portion of the site to maintain the clear identity of the Mall from Nine Mile Road as a retail center. A public road exists between the proposed flex space uses and the existing residential neighborhood and will provide a good transition between the different uses; such a transition will also be supplemented by the required landscape and open space buffering within the Mall property itself.

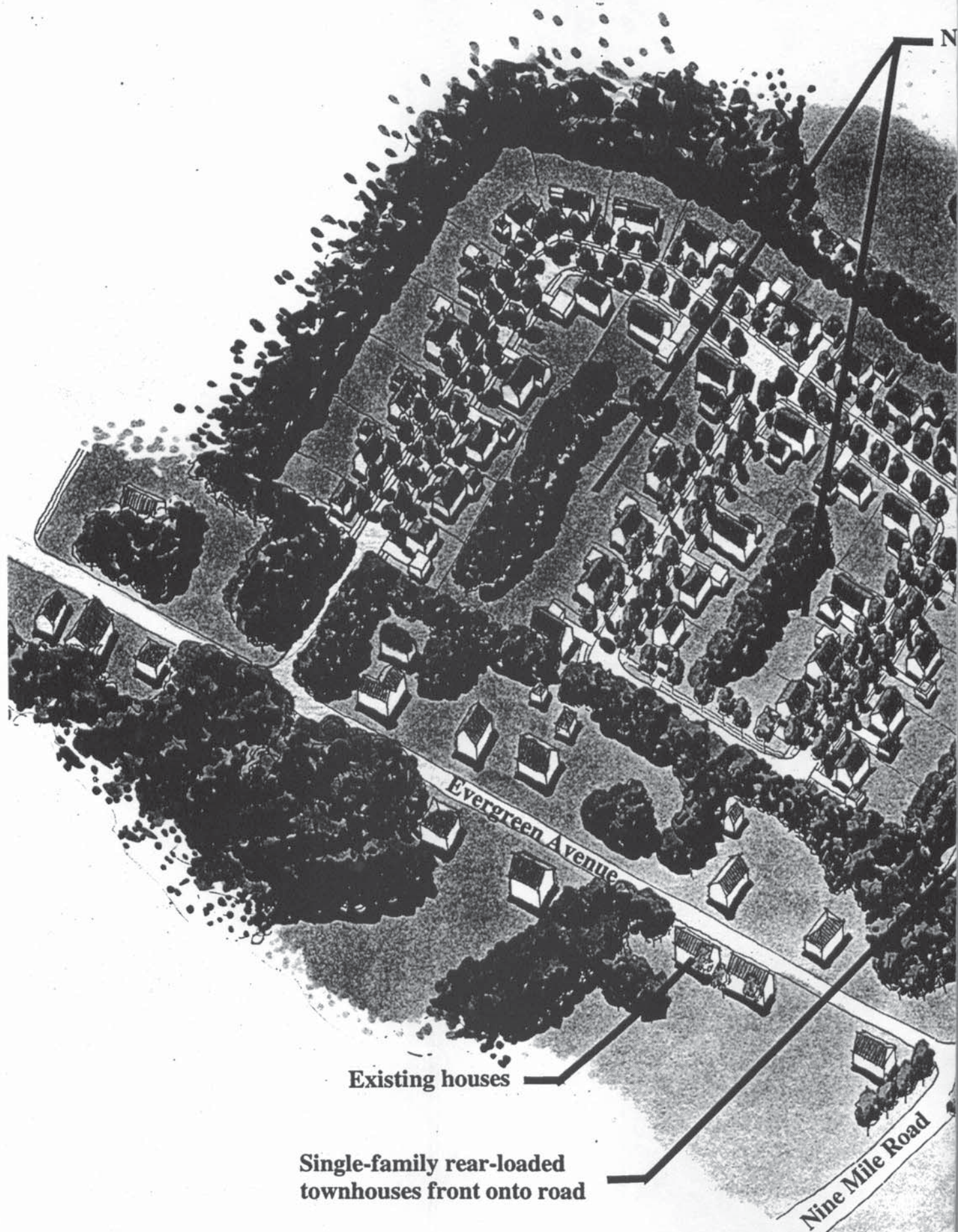
### 3. New Bridge

The New Bridge area is proposed as one of the two locations for new housing within the Nine Mile Road corridor (Exhibit 11). Many of the characteristics of the sites identified in this location are similar to those proposed at the Government Center — they are similar in their proximity to



New Bridge Baptist Church





Existing houses

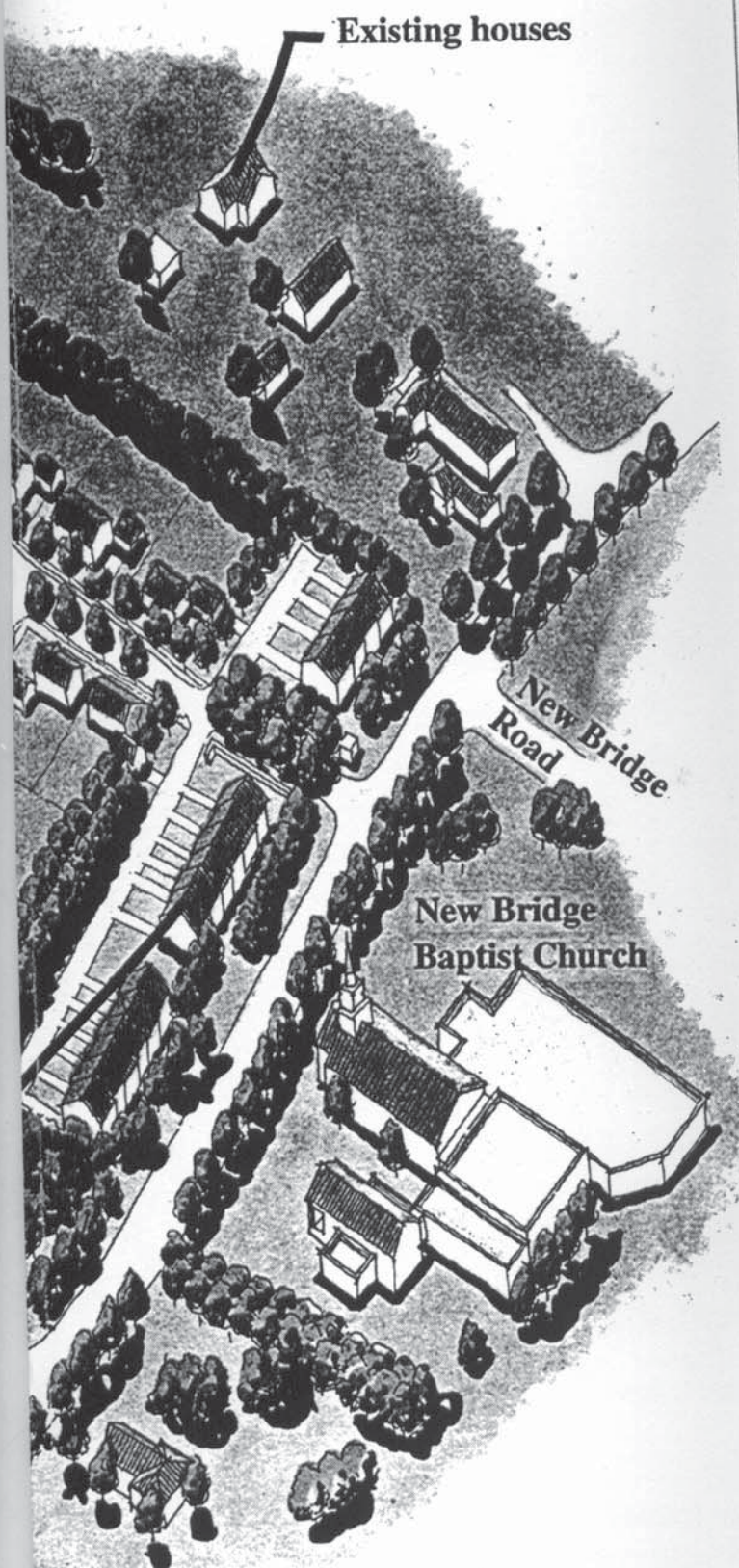
Single-family rear-loaded townhouses front onto road

Nine Mile Road

N



ew housing neighborhood



**Nine Mile Road**  
 Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

Hammer, Siler, George Associates  
 CHK Architects and Planners

**New Bridge**

Conceptual Design Illustrative

Exhibit 11

**Nine Mile Road**



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institutional uses, in their size and in their configuration. The general layout of these new subdivisions should follow the parameters discussed in the Government Center portion of this report, including the utilization of larger houses in the 2500 square foot range.

#### 4. Highland Springs

The revitalization strategy for Highland Springs builds on the steps the County has already taken to reinforce and preserve the identity of this neighborhood, including identifying it as a Special Strategy Area (Exhibit 12). The potential strength of the retail are its traditional main street characteristics — further steps should be taken to preserve and enhance this. This report recommends identifying a two block area, here suggested on either side of Holly Avenue, within which to concentrate a focused revitalization effort. That revitalization should include the purchase and development by the County of a one acre site as a parking lot to accommodate approximately 100 cars. The site indicated on Exhibit 12 for this parking is for illustrative purposes only; further study is required to determine the optimal site for such a use. This could be either a public metered parking lot or a public/private parking lot in which the public purchases the property and leases it out for private management. In the latter arrangement, spaces within the lot might be leased by local stores in the area. This report also recommends that parallel parking, recently removed from E. Nine

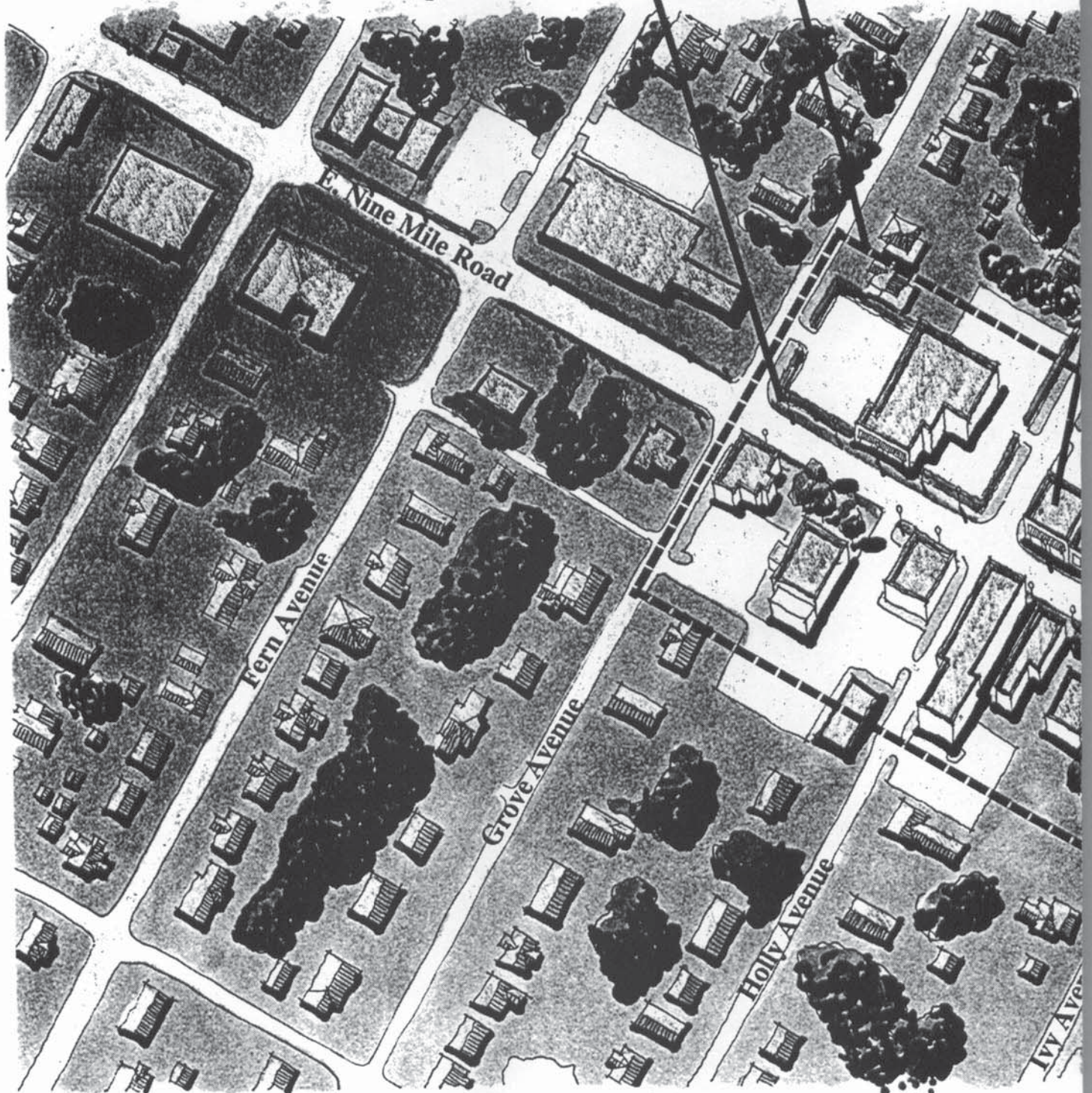


Historic Main Street Character of Highland Springs



Two block area of concentration

Continue urban design  
guidelines to enhance  
streetscape

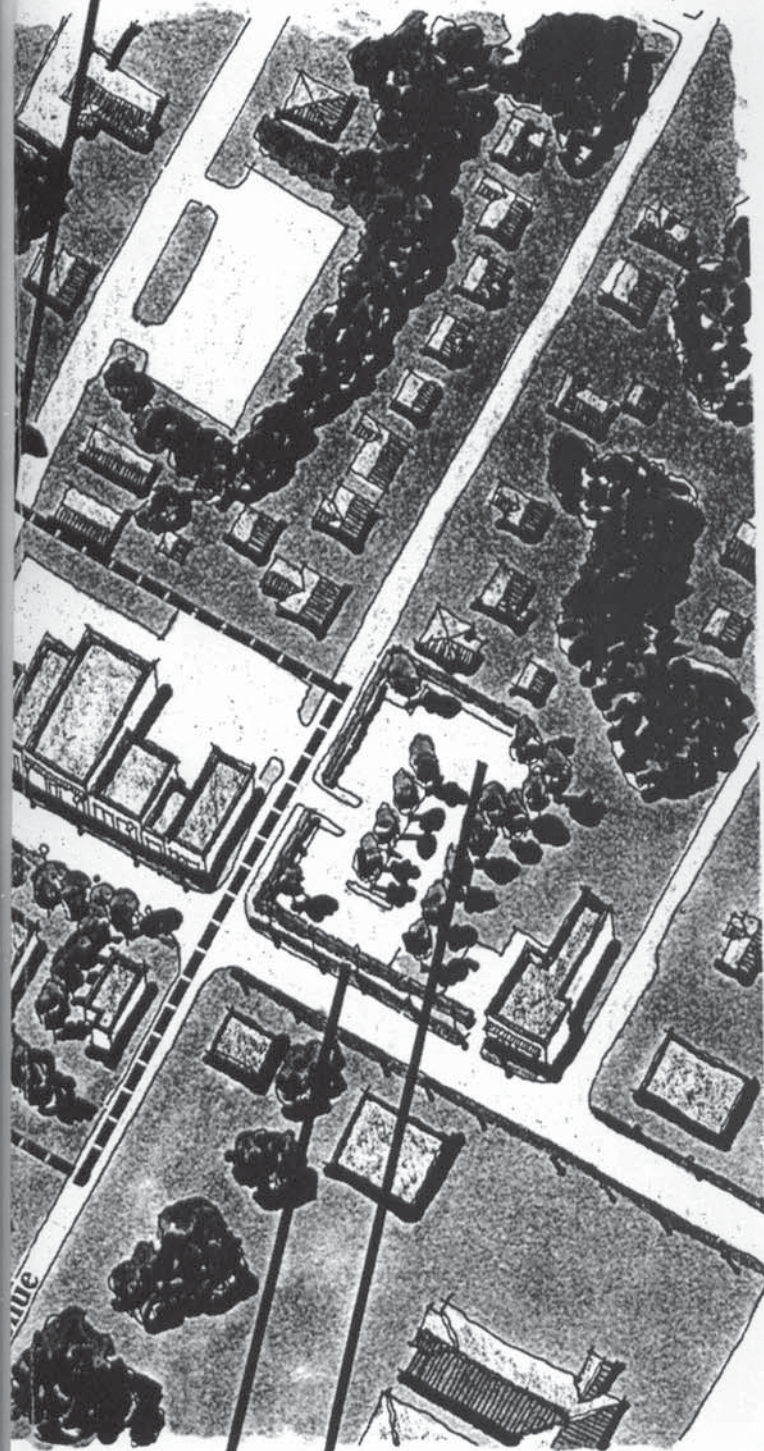


Landscaping also  
screen new park

New parking lot  
± 100 car parkin



Revitalize w/specialty/theme  
retail shops and eating &  
drinking establishments  
Reinforce historic "Main Street"  
character



ong road to  
ing lot  
to support uses  
g

## Nine Mile Road

Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

Hammer, Siler, George Associates

CHK Architects and Planners

## Highland Springs

Conceptual Design Illustrative

Exhibit 12

Nine Mile Road



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Mile Road in the Highland Springs area, be restored within the two block area on the north side of the road. This will not only serve to increase the parking supply but the protection the parked cars offer between the busy roadway and the sidewalks will help to encourage pedestrian traffic. Overall the provision of parking in adequate supply will do much to help attract increased retail traffic.

Given the provision of adequate parking, the increased development of retail uses are possible. Currently many of the existing retail and business uses are service oriented which do not provide substantial pedestrian traffic. This study proposes the creation of a specific type of retail identifying the area in a unique way, establishing it as a destination spot. Possible themes might be as an antique or a crafts center. Given the character of the street as well as its proximity to the intersection with Airport Drive this area also has potential for increased amount of eating and drinking establishments. Adopting all these steps within a confined area within the length of the Main street will serve both to identify the area and to begin to generate sufficient pedestrian traffic which in turn will sponsor further revitalization of retail activity along the length of the road.

### **5. Airport Drive/Nine Mile Road**

The intersection of Airport Drive and Nine Mile Road currently contains a concentration of automobile-oriented retail uses. These retail complexes are both some of the most recent and the most viable of those uses located along the length of the corridor, consequently no interventions are proposed within this area of the corridor.

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## **VI. Implementation Recommendations**

The proposals contained in this plan, while maintaining the present character of Nine Mile Road as a mixed use corridor, do call for several major changes in land use. The general thrust of the plan is to seek viable economic uses for parcels fronting the corridor consistent with the community's desire for a higher quality living environment.

The primary responsibility for implementing the revitalization plan should rest with the County Government and property owners. However, since the property owners have no inherent power to change land use regulations, such changes should be made based upon agreement by the property owner and the County with the proposed plan.

### **VI.A. Development Vehicles**

The plan anticipates that much of the development proposed will be undertaken by existing property owners, private sector housing or commercial developers, or other development entrepreneurs. However, there may be some development projects which require forms of public intervention in the market to restart the investment cycle. For this reason the plan proposes consideration of the Industrial Development Authority as developer of last resort for development projects that are within their range of expertise.

### **VI.B. Priority Action Areas and Projects**

Given the length of the Nine Mile Road Corridor, and the relatively scarce public financial resources now available, we think it important to establish priorities for the



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implementation process. There are a number of factors to consider in establishing the implementation priorities. However, it is our thinking that the most important factor would be those actions which have the most significant psychological impact on residents living in the market area and on investors from outside the market. Based on this criterion we have come to believe that the implementations of the recommendations for the Fairfield Commons Mall area should receive the highest priority. The Fairfield Commons Mall has become a symbol of the Nine Mile Road corridor's decline, making the mall viable would likewise be a symbol for the revitalization of the corridor.

The second priority should be the Highland Springs Action Area. Highland Springs remains a strong asset for the Nine Mile Road Corridor if it can fulfill its natural potential. We believe that this can be achieved through improving the mix of stores with more retailing, and eating and drinking establishments. It also will require a concentration of the new activities with associated parking. These are the logical next steps to build on the investments that have already been made by the County in streetscape improvements.

The third priority should be the Government Center area. We believe that this area has the potential for new middle income housing as well as a small office park. Any new housing could build on the strength of the Fairfield Woods subdivision while a new office park could build on the strength of the Eastern Henrico Government Center. The area therefore offers the potential for the introduction of two of the revitalization project concepts.

The fourth priority should be the New Bridge Action Area. This area has a viable neighborhood shopping center with good anchor tenants. The introduction of additional housing in this market would not only expand the relatively strong residential character of this area but

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also assist in expanding the expenditure potential available to both the New Bridge Shopping Center and to Highland Springs.

No specific actions have been recommended for the Airport Drive/Nine Mile Road Action Area.

## **VI.C. Incentive Requirements**

### **Partial Tax Abatements**

It is evident that, for a variety of reasons, private sector investors perceive higher risk in the Nine Mile Road Corridor than in other parts of Henrico County. This suggests the need to make the area more competitive for private investment dollars by reducing either development costs or operating costs. This can only be made possible by fully utilizing incentive legislation that has been provided by the state. This incentives legislation includes provisions for Local Technology Zones, Partial Tax Abatements, Enterprise Zones, and Local Incentives tied to Enterprise Zone Programs. Following is a summary of each of these incentive tools.

### **1. Local Technology Zones**

Under Title 58.1-3850 the Commonwealth of Virginia has authorized the creation of one or more technology zones by any city, county or town. Each zone may consist of up to 125 acres of real property where the locality may grant tax incentives and provide certain regulatory flexibility. The tax incentives may be provided for up to ten years and may include but not be limited to: (i) reduction of permit fees; (ii) reduction of user fees; (iii) reduction of any type of gross receipts tax. The extent and duration of such incentive proposals must however conform to the requirements of the Constitutions of Virginia and the United States.



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The governing body of the county may also provide for regulatory flexibility in such zone which may include, but not be limited to: (I) special zoning for the district; (ii) permit process reform; (iii) exemption from ordinances; and (iv) any other incentive adopted by ordinance, which shall be binding upon the locality for a period of up to ten years. The establishment of the technology zone shall not preclude the area from also being designated as an enterprise zone.

## **2. Partial Tax Abatements**

Under Title 58.1-3221 the governing body of any county, city or town may, by ordinance, provide for the partial exemption from taxation of real estate on which any structure or other improvement no less than twenty years of age, or fifteen years of age if the structure is located in an area designated as an enterprise zone by the Commonwealth, has undergone substantial rehabilitation, renovation, or replacement for commercial or industrial use.

The partial exemption provided by the local government may not exceed an amount equal to the increase in assessed value resulting from the rehabilitation, renovation or replacement of the commercial or industrial structure as determined by the commissioner of revenue or other local assessing officer or an amount up to fifty percent of the cost of rehabilitation, renovation or replacements determined by ordinance. The exemption shall be for a period not exceeding fifteen years.

Where rehabilitation is achieved through demolition and replacement of an existing structure, the exemptions provided above shall not apply when any demolished structure is a registered Virginia landmark or is determined by the Department of Historic Resources to contribute to the significance of a registered historic landmark.

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### 3. Enterprise Zones

Under Title 59.1-274, the governing body of any county, city or town may make written application to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to have an area designated or areas declared to be enterprise zones. Such application shall include a description of the location of the area or areas in question, and a general statement identifying proposed local incentives to complement the state and any federal incentives. Two or more adjacent jurisdictions may file a joint application for an enterprise zone lying in the jurisdictions submitting the application.

Under the statute, the Governor may approve the designation of up to fifty areas as enterprise zones for a period of twenty years. Any county, city, or town shall be eligible to apply for more than one enterprise zone designation; however, each county, city and town shall be limited to a total of three enterprise zones. Any such area seeking designation as an enterprise zone shall also meet at least one of the following criteria: (i) have twenty-five percent or more of the population with incomes below eighty percent of the median income of the jurisdiction, (ii) have an unemployment rate 1.5 times the state average, or (iii) have a demonstrated floor area vacancy rate of industrial and/or commercial properties of twenty percent or more.

### 4. Local Incentives

Under 659.1-283, the applying locality or localities for an enterprise zone may propose additional local tax incentives, including but not limited to : (i) reduction of permit fees; (ii) reduction of user fees; (iii) reduction of business, professional, and occupational license tax; (iv) partial exemption from taxation of substantially rehabilitated real estate under Title 58.1-



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3221; and (v) adoption of local enterprise development taxation program pursuant to Article 4.2 ( 58.1-3245.6 et seq.) of Chapter 32 of Title 58.1.

In order to maximize the number of potential incentives that might be available to attract private investment in the Nine Mile Road Corridor we would recommend that implement the following:

- (1) Apply to the State for Enterprise Zone Status that would provide for a General Income Tax Credit against the Virginia Income Tax, a Real Property Improvement Tax Credit, and Job Grants.
- (2) Provide for incentives from Henrico County that would include a real estate tax refund, machinery and tools tax refund, waivers of water and sewer connection fees, and a waiver of building permit fees.
- (3) Provide for low cost infrastructure loans for housing, commercial and industrial development from the Industrial Development Authority that would be offered to property owners seeking to improve their properties consistent with the plan recommendations.
- (4) Designate the Fairfield Commons Mall Action Area and the Highland Springs Action Area as Technology Strategy areas and provide for tax abatements on improvements.
- (5) Provide for partial tax abatements for the rehabilitation, renovation or

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Sub- replacement of all industrial and commercial structures over twenty  
Sub- years old in the Nine Mile Road Corridor.

Sub-Area 5 Airport Drive

If these incentives are properly packaged and promoted, we believe that they would make a major contribution to escalating private investment activity in the Nine Mile Road Corridor.

## **VI. D. Zoning Recommendations**

### **1. Special Strategy Area**

This report recommends that the Nine Mile Road corridor be designated a Special Strategy Area. Such a designation will serve to draw attention to the corridor in order that appropriate design considerations for development or redevelopment be made. In conjunction with this designation, a set of specific Zoning Amendments and Urban Design Guidelines are proposed; these are tailored to increase the flexibility of existing zoning standards and to improve the appearance of the corridor. These two strategies are deemed essential to revitalizing Nine Mile Road.

Sub-Area 1 Government Center

The physical characteristics of existing development differs along the length of Nine Mile Road. Rather than streamline this diversity into one single type of development, this report recommends that this varied nature, ranging from more conventional suburban development to a more traditional main street, be preserved. Consequently, five Sub-Areas (See Exhibit 13) have been established with a specific set of Zoning Amendments and Urban Design Guidelines for each. Those five Sub-Areas are:

Sub-Area 1 Government Center

Sub-Area 2 Fairfield Commons Mall



- 
- Sub-Area 3 Newbridge
  - Sub-Area 4 Highland Springs
  - Sub-Area 5 Airport Drive

## 2. Zoning Amendments

The primary goal of the Zoning Amendments is to increase the flexibility of existing zoning standards in critical areas within the Nine Mile Road corridor. That flexibility aims both to create a more varied set of standards that will preserve the character of existing areas and to create opportunities for response to market conditions. Zoning Amendments are recommended for two of the five Sub-Areas.

Potential amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are indicated below. Those Amendments shown within a specific Sub-Area are applicable only to developments located within that area. Proposed alterations to Zoning Ordinance language are in **bold print**.

### Sub-Area 2 - Fairfield Commons Mall

#### 1. Sec. 24-58.1 B-2 Business District. Principal uses permitted.

Amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to include the following uses:

- 1) **Artisans' and craft work**
- 2) **Business and office machine sales, rental and service**
- 3) **Communications systems, sales and service**
- 4) **Computer Center**

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## 5) Data-processing service

### 2. Section 24-96(2)a

Amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for shared parking for mixed uses which occur on two adjacent and contiguous lots. Such a provision would allow for the proposed retail and entertainment uses located at the corner of Laburnum and Nine Mile Road to share parking with that provided for the retail and flex space uses located on the Mall site. This would substantially increase the capacity for new retail uses located at the corner.

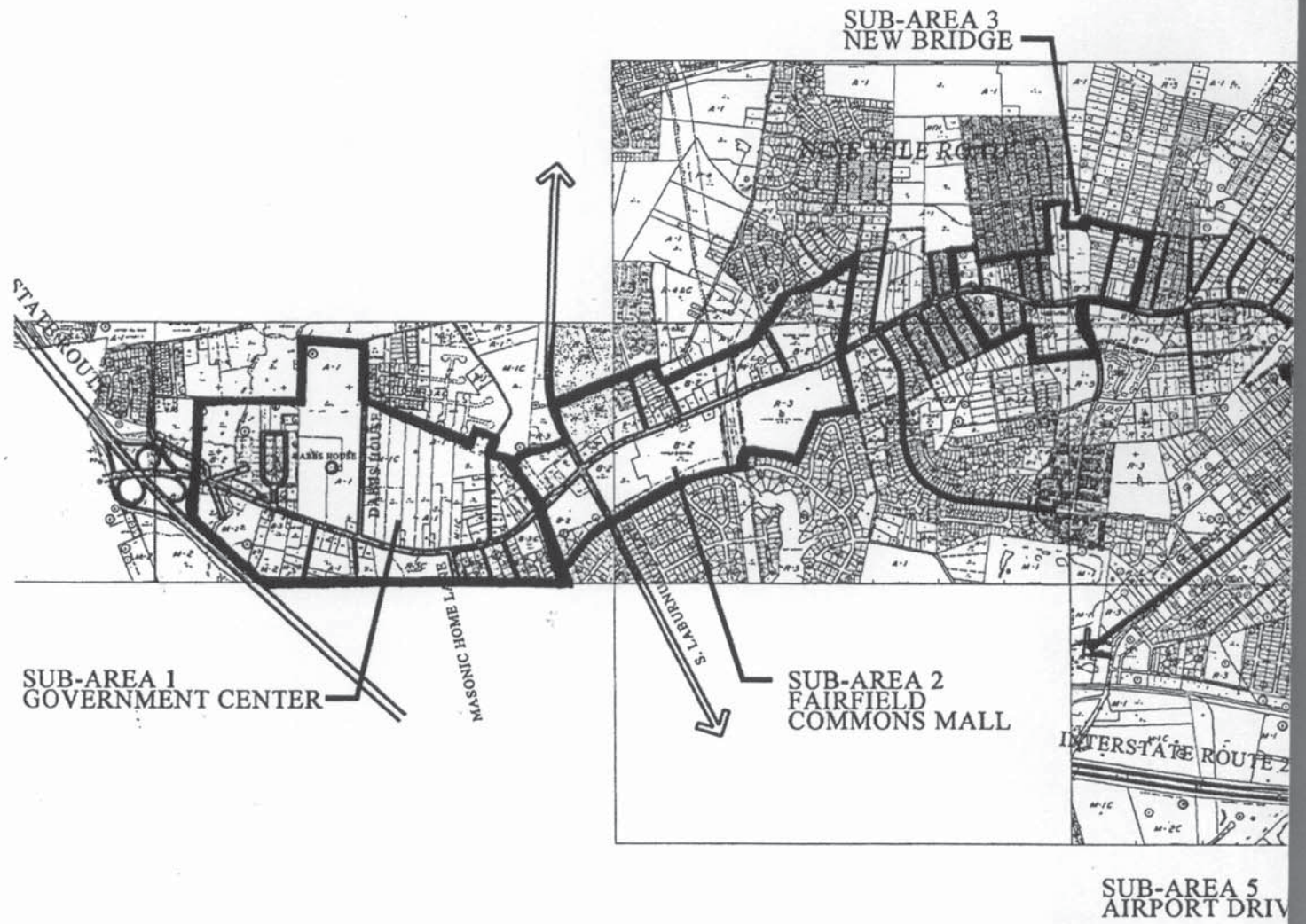
Ordinance to read as follows:

24-96(2)a. The planning commission may authorize a reduction in the number of parking spaces required by this chapter for certain mixed-use developments when located on the same lot **or when located on two adjacent lots** accomplished pursuant to section 24-106.

### 3. Section 24-96(2)b

Amend section of the Zoning Ordinance to include Flex Space, including certain office/light industrial uses as one of the possible uses which in combination with other uses will allow for eligibility for consideration of required parking as a mixed-use development. Such a provision would allow for the potential of the Flex Space component contained within the Fairfield Commons Mall to be maximized. Since the parking demand and usage for employment uses are different than those for retail uses, which are typically later in the day and on weekends, this is justified in terms of a shared parking strategy. These uses are not substantially different than



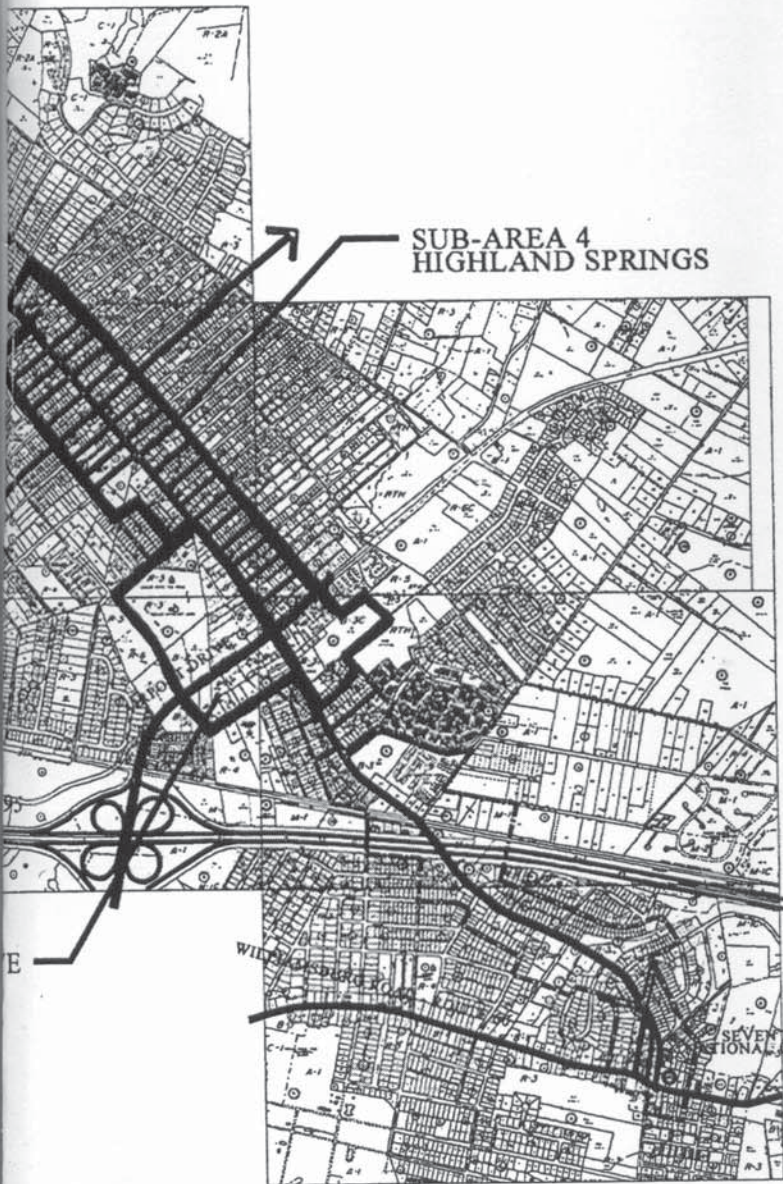




**Nine Mile Road**  
Economic Analysis and Revitalization Plan

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Hammer, Siler, George Associates  
CHK Architects and Planners



**Identification of  
Sub-Areas**

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Conceptual Design Illustrative

**Exhibit 13**

**Nine Mile Road**



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office uses which are allowed under the Ordinance.

Ordinance to read as follows:

b. To be eligible for consideration of a reduction in required parking, a mixed-use development shall consist of any combination of two or more of the following use groups:

**7. Flex space uses when containing light industrial or warehouse uses in combination with other office uses.**

4. Section 24-106.2(e)(3) Transitional Buffer Requirement.

Amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate the transitional buffer between B-2 and M-1 uses when such uses are located on the same lot. Such a provision would allow for truly integrated relationship between the retail and flex space developments proposed at the Fairfield Commons Mall. In that specific instance, amend the Matrix, Transitional Buffer Requirements and Permitted Alternatives as follows:

	B-2
	13
15. M-1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USES	0

5. Section 24-93. Height, Lot, Yard and Building Regulations. General Requirements.

Amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate rear and side yard setback requirements for M-1 and B-2 uses when they are located on the same lot and within the same structure. In addition, amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to allow B-2 uses when

located on Nine Mile Road or at S. Laburnum Avenue to have a more minimal front yard setback and so become more prominent features from the roadway. When those criteria are met, Section 24-94, Table of Regulations to be amended as follows:

	Stories	Feet	Total (sq.ft)	Min. Lot Width (feet)	Min. Front Yd. Depth (feet)	Min. Side Yard		Min. Rear Yd. Depth (feet)
						Least Yard(c) (feet)	Sum of Yards (feet)	
<i>B-2 district</i>								
Other permitted uses:								
1 to 3 stories	3	45			15	0	0	0
<i>M-1 District</i>								
1 to 3 stories		45			25	none(f)		0

Sub-Area 4 - Highland Springs

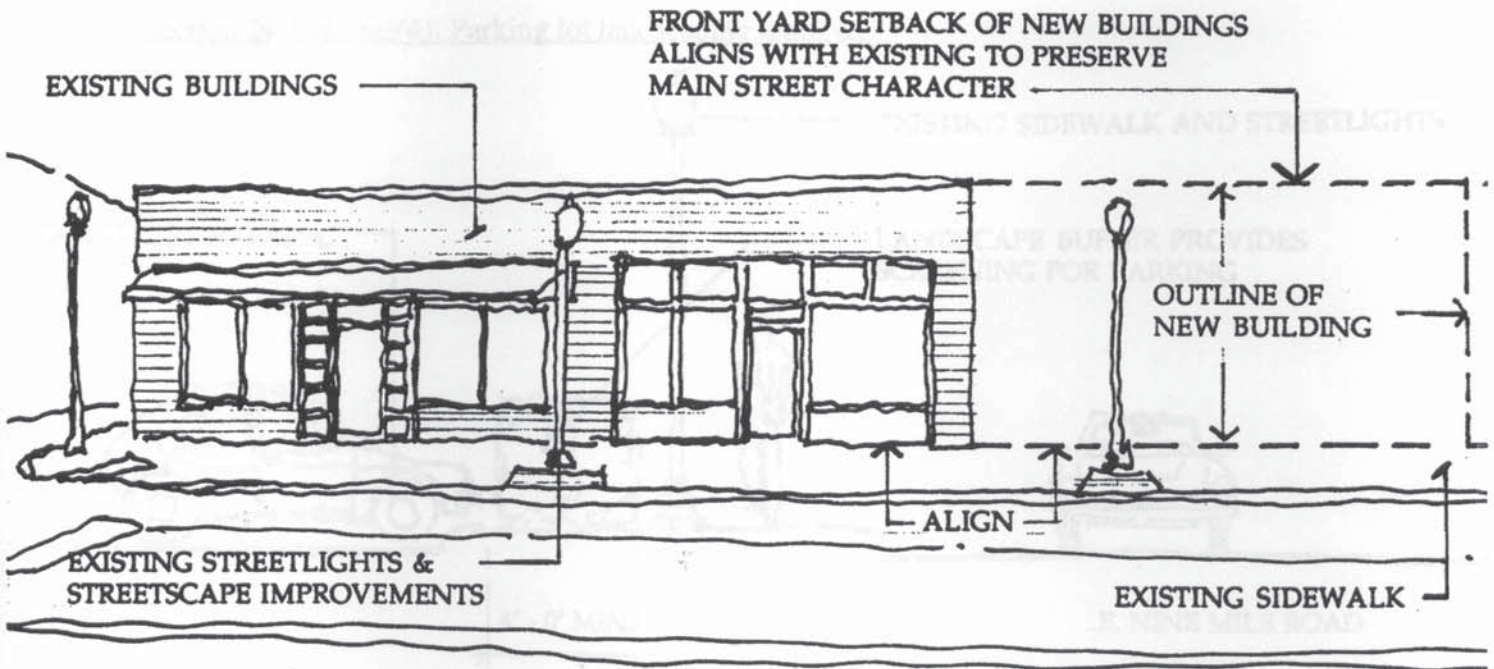
1. Section 24-93. Height, Lot, Yard and Building Regulations. General Requirements.

Amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate front and side yard setbacks along Nine Mile Road. This will allow for infill structures introduced between existing structures to be in keeping with their development and hence preserve the main street character of the business uses in Highland Springs (Exhibit 14). Section 24-94, Table of Regulations to be amended as follows:

	Stories	Feet	Total (sq.ft)	Min. Lot Width (feet)	Min. Front Yd. Depth (feet)	Min. Side Yard		Min. Rear Yd. Depth (feet)
						Least Yard(c) (feet)	Sum of Yards (feet)	
<i>B-1 district</i>								
Other permitted uses:								
1 to 3 stories	3	35			0	none(e)		40(s)
<i>B-2 district</i>								
Other permitted uses:								
1 to 3 stories	3	45			0	0	0	40(s)



Stories	Feet	Total (sq.ft)	Min. Lot Width (feet)	Min. Front Yd. Depth (feet)	Min. Side Yard		Min. Rear Yd. Depth (feet)
					Least Yard(c) (feet)	Sum of Yards (feet)	
<i>B-3 district</i>							
Other permitted uses:							
3	45			0	none(e)		40(s)



E. NINE MILE ROAD

Exhibit 14. Illustration of reduced front-yard setback

2. Section 24-106.2(e)(3) Transitional buffer requirements.

Amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the required transitional buffer between B-2 and R-0 through R-4A uses. This will allow more effective utilization of existing

vacant parcels within Highland Springs and the size of such buffers will be more in keeping with the tighter adjacencies of a denser and more traditional neighborhood. The Matrix titled Transitional Buffer Requirements and Permitted Alternatives to be modified as follows:

13. B-2 COMM. & COMMUNITY SHOP SERVICE ACTIVITY

R-0  
R-4A  
 10  
 D

3. Section 24-106.2(e)(4). Parking lot landscaping required.

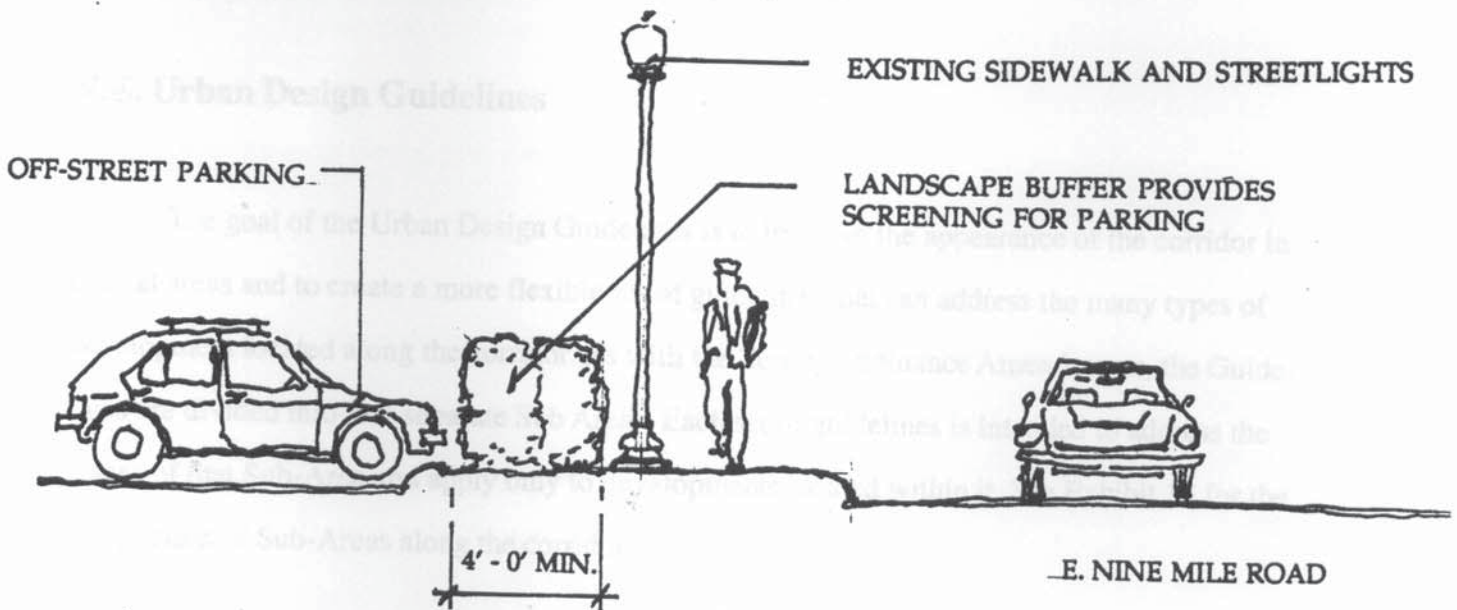


Exhibit 15. Illustration of buffer at parking lot

Amend this section of the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the landscape buffer required between a parking lot and Nine Mile Road within Highland Springs. The substitution of a narrower denser buffer will still serve to screen parking from the street right of way but will also be in keeping with the more traditional character of the area (Exhibit 15). Zoning Ordinance to be amended as follows:



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2. Where the property line abuts the right-of-way of a street:

i. A landscape strip a **minimum of four feet in width** shall be located between the parking lot and the property line. Where easements preclude such landscape strip adjacent to the right-of-way, it shall either be situated adjacent to the easement if practicable or an equivalent area shall be provided as close as practicable to the right-of-way or easement.

ii. **At least one shrub for every 3' - 0" o.c. shall be planted in the landscape strip.**

## V.E. Urban Design Guidelines

The goal of the Urban Design Guidelines is to improve the appearance of the corridor in critical areas and to create a more flexible set of guidelines that can address the many types of development located along the corridor. As with the Zoning Ordinance Amendments, the Guidelines are divided into five separate Sub Areas. Each set of guidelines is intended to address the issues of that Sub-Area and apply only to developments located within it. See Exhibit 13 for the designation of Sub-Areas along the corridor.

### SUB-AREA 1 - Government Center

1. 1 Office buildings or buildings exhibiting office-style design features should be located immediately adjacent to Nine Mile Road.

1. 2 Different buildings in larger projects should provide the appearance of a unified and coordinated site plan and architectural design concept. The use of common or complemen-

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tary colors, durable finish materials, landscaping, significant open spaces, or building design may accomplish this objective.

1.3 The bulk of office or industrial parking should not be visible from Nine Mile Road.

1.4 Loading areas should not be visible from Nine Mile Road.

1.5 Residential development on Nine Mile Road should present significant views to the corridor which may be either substantial landscape and open space buffers along the road frontage or building fronts, provided that sufficient buffering and setback requirements are provided and that no direct access to the road is included.

1.6 Residential development should incorporate and preserve existing older farmhouses as integral parts of developments wherever possible.

1.7 Streetscape landscaping should be provided along Nine Mile Road frontage in this area as follows:

a. If buildings are located immediately adjacent to the road and a specific building design and finish is committed to at rezoning or the filing of plans of development, the width of the streetscape landscaping may vary depending on the quality of construction and providing a substantial landscaped edge along the road.

b. If buildings are setback significantly from the roadway either a substantial open space buffer in the form of a manicured lawn or a substantial tree buffer must be provided.



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## SUB-AREA 2 - Fairfield Commons Mall

### Category One:

New developments requiring administrative review and redevelopment sites greater than ten acres.

- 2.1 Land development applications for properties fronting onto Nine Mile Road should include a concept development plan illustrating compliance with the development guidelines contained herein.
- 2.2 Retail structures located at the corner of Nine Mile Road and Laburnum Avenue should be located near the intersection and in their building composition and facade design create a powerful image to identify the corridor.
- 2.3 New buildings should be located adjacent to Nine Mile Road.
- 2.4 Different buildings in larger projects should provide the appearance of a unified and coordinated site plan and architectural design concept. The use of common or complementary colors, durable finish materials, landscaping, signage, or building design may accomplish this objective.
- 2.5 Streetscape landscaping should be provided along Nine Mile Road frontage in this area as follows:
  - a. If buildings are located immediately adjacent to the road and a specific building design

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and finish is committed to at rezoning or the filing of plans of development, the width of the streetscape landscaping may vary depending on the quality of construction and providing a substantial landscaped edge along the road.

b. If a specific design is not committed to, a substantial landscaped buffer should be provided.

2.6 Buffers between residential and non-residential developments should be sufficient to protect residential properties from noise, lighting and traffic generated from non-residential uses.

2.7 The width and type of buffer used between residential and non-residential properties should vary depending upon its effectiveness for specific business uses.

#### Category Two: Infill parcels

2.8 The setback of buildings from Nine Mile Road should be flexible to allow for conformance with the setback of existing buildings on adjacent parcels.

2.9 Building materials should be in keeping with the language of existing buildings.

#### SUB-AREA 3 - Newbridge

3.1 Residential development on Nine Mile Road should present significant views to the corridor which may be either substantial landscape and open space buffers along the road frontage or building fronts, provided that sufficient buffering and setback requirements are provided and that no direct access to the road is included.



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SUB-AREA 4 - Highland Springs

4.1 Building facades should immediately front onto Nine Mile Road in keeping with the traditional main street character of this portion of the corridor.

4.2 Finish building materials should be in keeping with the language and vocabulary of existing buildings.

SUB-AREA 5 - Airport Drive

No Urban Design Guidelines are recommended for this area.