



# BRANCH AVENUE TRANSIT CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PLAN

A MODEL FOR SUBURBAN RETROFIT

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD

ADOPTED 2013

PROJECT CATEGORY: URBAN DESIGN & MASTER PLANNING



The project is focused on primarily suburban communities in transition along the Branch Avenue (MD Rt. 5) corridor between the Terminal Blue Line Metro Station and Southern Maryland Hospital in Prince George's County, Maryland. These communities, and their existing commercial centers, share common opportunities and constraints and are part of an important commuter corridor. Future BRAC growth at the adjacent Air Force Base, the planned expansion of services and medical office space at Southern Maryland Hospital, and a planned BRT transit line on the corridor, create opportunities for reshaping growth and revitalization within existing communities along the corridor. The new station area plans provide a strategic framework for redeveloping and retrofitting aging strip retail centers into moderate density compact mixed-use, pedestrian friendly transit-oriented places, each with a unique identity and sense of place, informed by the communities they serve.



The corridor is broken down into several station plan focus areas: an aging commercial area on Allentown Road adjacent to the Air Force Base's official redevelopment areas' new pedestrian and shuttle entrance; Camp Springs – the historic former agricultural center of the area; Coventry Way – an older suburban neighborhood shopping and auto repair/ industrial center; Woodyard Road – one fading and one more recent late 20th century regional shopping area; and Southern Maryland Hospital – an expanding regional medical center. Each location possesses their own character, providing a foundation for shaping the future growth of each new station plan.



Redevelopment and revitalization recommendations by the urban design team (generated through intense research, study and an extensive public outreach and community engagement process of close to 20 community and stakeholder meetings) include: encouraging a mix of uses at key locations to create vibrant places with a range of quality housing; expanded job opportunities and better retail options; concentrating neighborhood-serving retail in appropriate locations around transit and repurposing obsolete commercial buildings to better serve the community's needs; ensuring that new development is well-designed to complement and enhance nearby neighborhoods; and reducing reliance on automobiles by providing enhanced and expanded access to transit, wide pedestrian sidewalks, trails, and a bike network in order to create better connectivity and a healthier environment. Additional recommendations include creating a gridded system of walkable streets with short block lengths to improve access to neighborhoods in each station area; building new community facilities and activity centers; creating a green network of streetscapes, central gathering spaces - village greens and regreening natural areas that enhance the public realm, expanding recreational opportunities that preserve valuable open space; providing a range of housing types and affordability to attract a diverse population and encourage transit ridership; and providing new business and housing opportunities to capitalize on the presence of the base.



# TRANSIT CORRIDOR STATION AREA PLANS

## SUBURBAN RETROFIT



EXISTING AERIAL

ALLENTOWN ROAD



EXISTING AERIAL

COVENTRY WAY



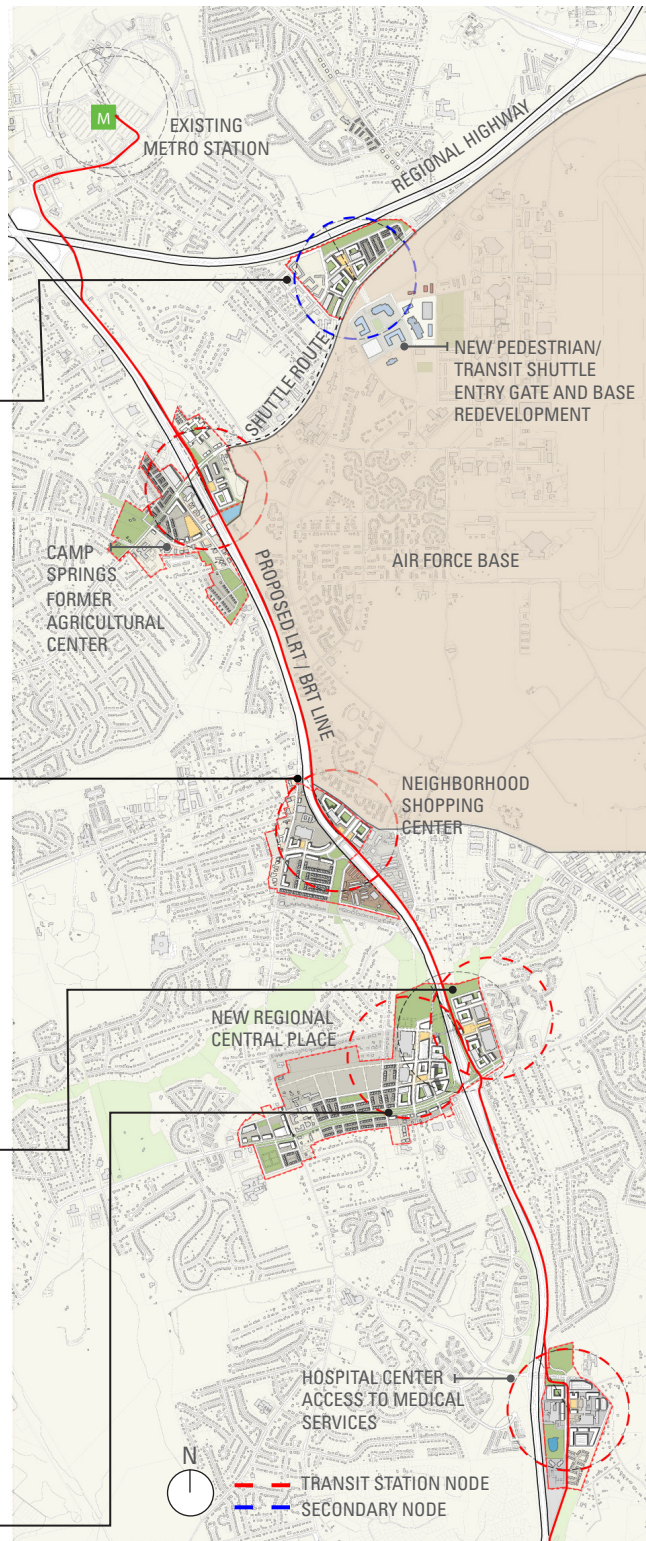
EXISTING AERIAL

WOODYARD EAST



EXISTING AERIAL

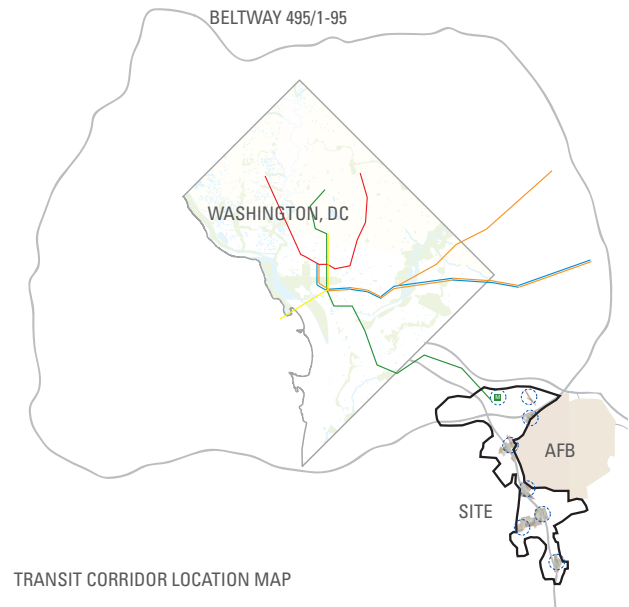
WOODYARD WEST



### TRENDS:

2011 Urban Land Institute Report

- Rising energy prices and increasing congestion will increase the demand for locations and real estate developments that offer live-work options, less driving, or enhanced opportunities to work at home
- Multi-family development demand will focus around public transit stations and near suburban centers
- Baby boomers downsizing out of larger suburban homes and into locations with convenient urban lifestyles
- Boomers will seek walkable places, with accessibility to grocery stores and medical offices
- As Gen Y and Boomers seek more urban living options, many gentrifying close-in neighborhoods and low-income households will be pushed into the weakening outer suburban rings requiring transit and housing
- Urban redevelopment shifting to the suburbs, where developers and planners will need to re-purpose dying retail strips and the suburban fringe areas



TRANSIT CORRIDOR LOCATION MAP

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One of the most critical components of a successful and sustainable development plan is an open and inclusive public participation process. During the course of the 12 month project, the team led five (5) community-wide charrette workshop meetings and conducted over fourteen (14) individual stakeholder, property owner and citizen advisory committee meetings. At each workshop meeting after an initial presentation of information, the community was divided into group tables to discuss concerns and brainstorm ideas about transportation, land use, streetscape, the pedestrian realm, development infill opportunities and vacant sites/buildings. The local citizens of Allentown Road, Camp Springs, Coventry Way, Clinton/Woodyard Road, and around Southern Hospital proposed many insightful and creative ideas, many of which were documented, illustrated and designed into the framework plan.



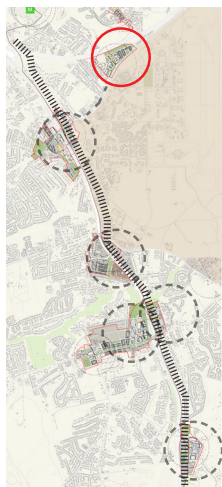
Community members report back ideas at Charrette Workshop



EXISTING PLAN | UNDER-PERFORMING STRIP RETAIL



PROPOSED PLAN | BASE FOCUSED NEW MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD AND CIVIC SPACE



CORRIDOR PLAN

The Allentown Road study area is located adjacent to a formerly closed vehicular access gate for the Air Force Base. The area is populated by under-performing large-format retail, strip retail and pad sites, many of which are vacant or obsolete.

The Air Force Base is a regional economic driver with a high-income workforce and a specialized local economy. Military base planners have proposed large scale future development inside the access gate, and the plan seeks to capitalize on these changes by opening up the gate for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed new mixed-use neighborhood development is tailored to the needs of both the military community and also the local residential community, with neighborhood-serving restaurants and retail, as well as civic spaces. The base plan is to open a pedestrian access only gate to receive a shuttle from the new BRT transit line and to allow access to the new neighborhood proposed across Allentown.

**NEW ALLENTOWN PHASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

- MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD ①
- VILLAGE GREEN ②
- JOINT BASE ANDREWS OFFICE DEVELOPMENT ③
- PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION & GATE / NEW SHUTTLE STOP ④

**ALLENTOWN ROAD**  
A NEW MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORTING THE BASE



EXISTING: VIEW TO UNDER-PERFORMING STRIP RETAIL CENTER



NEW CIVIC SPACE ORGANIZES THE STREET AND BLOCK REDEVELOPMENT PATTERN



PROPOSED PLAN

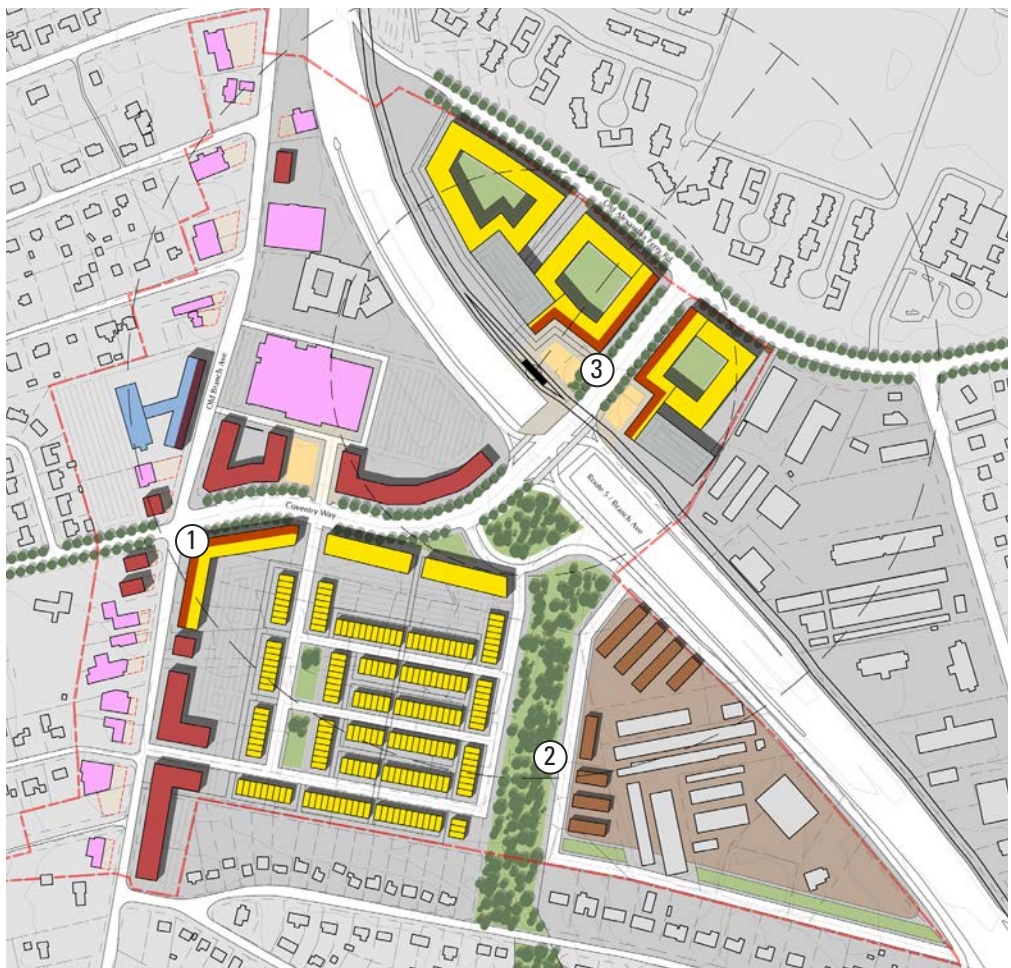


PROPOSED PLAN VISION: ALLENTOWN ROAD - VIEW FROM BASE GATE TO NEW INFILL AND MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD

**ALLENTOWN ROAD**  
 A NEW MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORTING THE BASE



EXISTING PLAN | STRIP RETAIL AND INDUSTRIAL SITES



PROPOSED PLAN | NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL, RESIDENTIAL, OPEN SPACES & INNOVATIVE INDUSTRIAL



CORRIDOR PLAN

Coventry Way is centrally located along the corridor, and is well suited for a highly visible transit station and adjacent development. Most of the plan area is located within a 5 minute walk distance from the new station, creating the ideal framework for mid-rise Transit-Oriented-Development. The plan envisions scaling up density near the station and creating a critical mass of retail and housing for a public plaza and other civic amenities.

A large percentage of land parcels in the southern portion of the Coventry Way study area are industrial or PDR (Production, Distribution and Repair) sites. The plan proposes to redevelop this area into a new mixed-use neighborhood (West), to restore and daylight an underground stream (Central), and to reposition the east side warehouses into creative PDR uses that facilitate artist spaces, new technology companies requiring large spaces, and traditional PDR uses.

**COVENTRY WAY PHASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

- NEW RETAIL/RESIDENTIAL INFILL ①
- RECLAIMING A GREENWAY AND STREAM ②
- TRANSIT STATION & CIVIC PLAZA ③

**COVENTRY WAY**  
A NEW TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



EXISTING: INDUSTRIAL SITE WITH CULVERTED CREEK BELOW



RECLAIMING A GREENWAY IN POST-INDUSTRIAL LAND SITES



DAYLIGHTING A CREEK AND RECLAIMING A GREENWAY



EXISTING: COVENTRY WAY STATION AREA

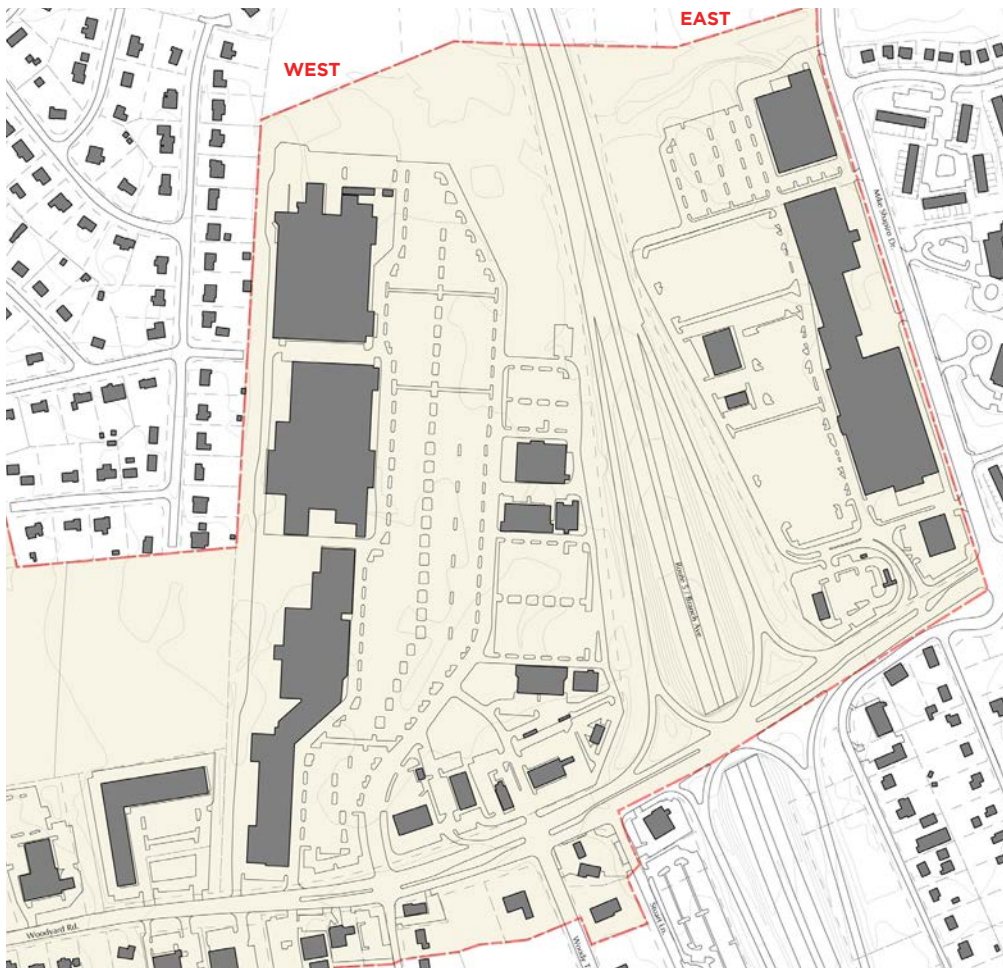


PROPOSED PLAN

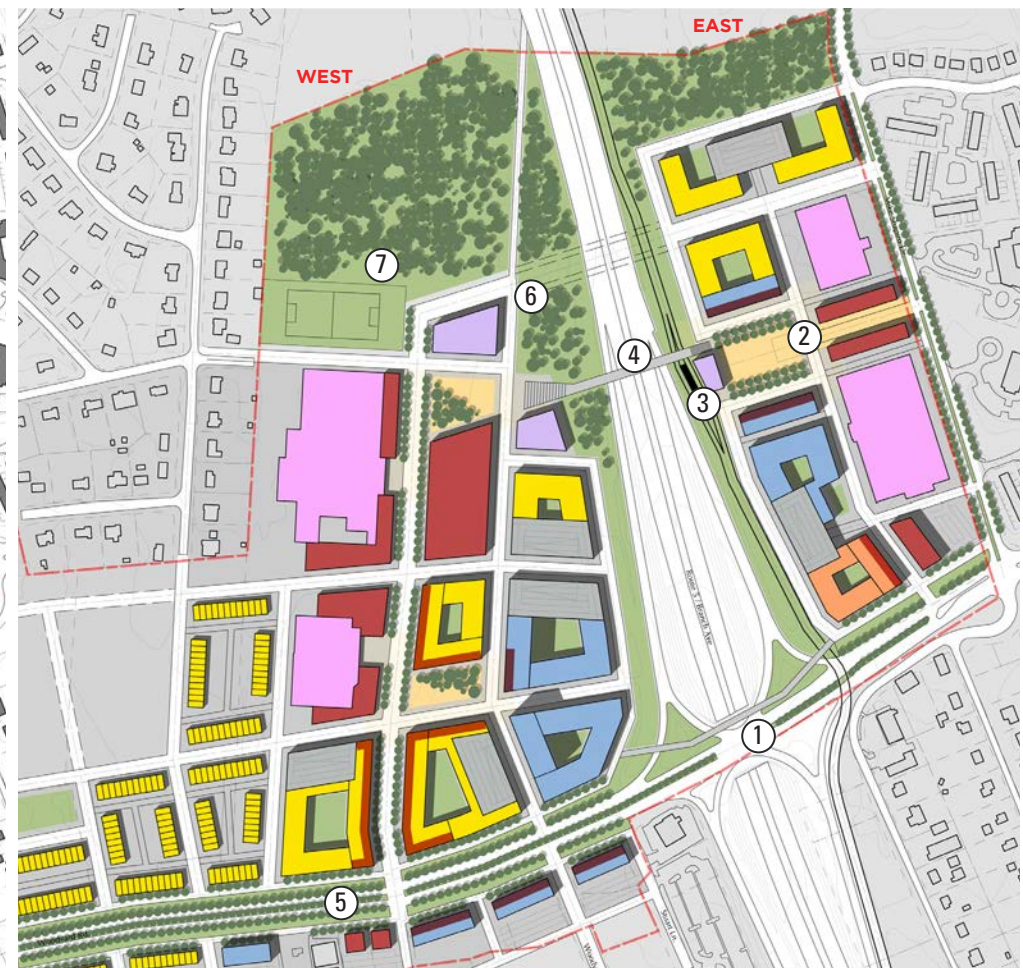


PROPOSED COVENTRY WAY TRANSIT STATION AND CIVIC PLAZA

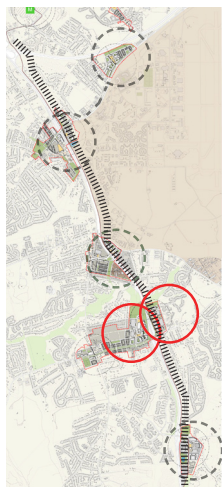
**COVENTRY WAY**  
A NEW TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



EXISTING PLAN



PROPOSED PLAN | WOODYARD EAST AND WEST



CORRIDOR PLAN

Today, Woodyard Road West is a large strip center containing several big-box and inline retail stores centered around a vast parking lot with scattered pad sites. The land parcels are connected by divided highways with little pedestrian connectivity.

The plan proposes redeveloping the parcels into a street and block gridded pattern, connected with pedestrian-friendly complete streets. Woodyard Road, with its wide right-of-way, is re-imagined as a multi-way boulevard to allow direct storefront parking and a pedestrian streetscape adjacent to the existing road network. The design will be carefully phased so that existing retail (a regional economic driver) can continue to function and transition during land redevelopment.

Woodyard Road East is a large site developed in the mid-twentieth century containing several large big-box retail stores. Many of the stores have since been downsized or bankrupted, leaving behind large vacant retail buildings and parking lots. Our economic analysis suggested a severe land use imbalance - too much retail and not enough residential and office uses. The plan proposes establishing Woodyard East as a new central gathering space for the greater community. It will re-establish an urban grid in-filled by residential and office mixed-use buildings - helping balance the overabundance of retail.

A new civic green is located at the center of the site adjacent to a new hybrid civic / transit center and station.

**WOODYARD EAST PHASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

- STREET LEVEL PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION ①
- OFFICE/RETAIL SPACE AT VILLAGE GREEN ②
- CIVIC BUILDING & FUTURE TRANSIT STATION ③

**WOODYARD WEST PHASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

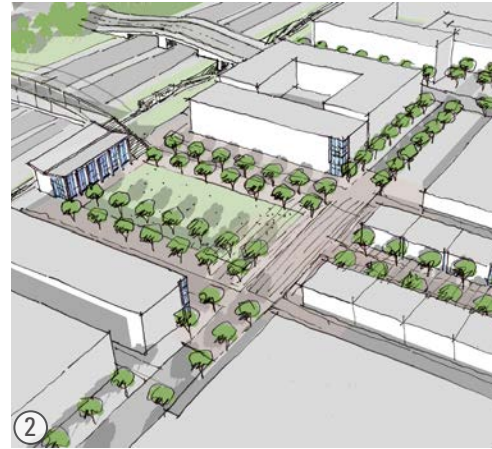
- PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE OVER EXPRESSWAY ④
- MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD ⑤
- FUTURE AUTOMOBILE BRIDGE & EXIT RAMP ⑥
- EXPANSION OF PARK & GREENWAY ⑦

**WOODYARD EAST/WEST**  
CREATING A REGIONAL CIVIC CORE





EXISTING: WOODYARD EAST - VACANT RETAIL AND EMPTY PARKING LOTS



INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT ANCHORED BY CIVIC AND OPEN SPACE COMPONENTS



PROPOSED PLAN | NEW CENTRAL PLACE



PROPOSED PLAN VISION: WOODYARD EAST - VILLAGE GREEN, NEW CIVIC BUILDING AND TRANSIT STATION WITH MIXED-USE INFILL

**WOODYARD EAST**  
CREATING A NEW REGIONAL CIVIC CORE



EXISTING: WOODYARD WEST - VIEW LOOKING EAST



CONVERTING STRIP MALL & RETAIL PADS INTO A COHESIVE STREET/BLOCK URBAN PATTERN



PROPOSED PLAN | NEW REGIONAL TOWN CENTER



PROPOSED PLAN VISION: WOODYARD WEST - VIEW LOOKING EAST | NEW MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD AND PEDESTRIAN/BIKEWAY

**WOODYARD WEST**  
CREATING A NEW REGIONAL CIVIC CORE