

Chapter 2: Vision—Concept Plan



Introduction

The decline and eventual demolition of the former Landover Mall in 2002 marked a major loss to nearby residents/property owners, Prince George’s County, and the Washington Metropolitan region. Once a thriving regional attraction, the former Landover site is now a mostly vacant land awaiting redevelopment.

In an attempt to focus attention to this area of Prince George’s County, the Councilman of Council District 5 sought the assistance from The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to facilitate an evaluation of the issues that affect the area in the absence of the former Landover Mall. In January 2006, M-NCPPC joined efforts with the Urban Land Institute (ULI), to explore alternative development concepts for the area. In March 2006, a ULI panel completed an assessment of the area and produced a document (Urban Land Institute, Technical Panel Planning Study) that recommended the need for a sector plan process to evaluate and address the issues that affect this area after the closure of the mall.

In June 2006, M-NCPPC sought and retained outside planning and design assistance to work with staff on a sector plan for the Landover Gateway area. M-NCPPC staff then embarked on a six-month community outreach program to engage major stakeholders—elected officials (local, federal, state, and county), property owners, residents, and interested parties.

After six months of community outreach, the Prince George’s County Planning Board and District Council initiated the Landover Gateway Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment. Immediately following the initiation, community brainstorming workshops and a five-day planning and design charrette were conducted to lay the groundwork for the sector plan vision.

Vision Statement

The plan envisions a transformation of the Landover Gateway area into a vibrant 24-hour activity center with

a dense urban form and a mix of uses. The core area is anchored by a complex of signature office towers offering a range of civic uses, ranging from governmental to cultural facilities adjacent to the Capital Beltway and including a mixed-use main street. Landover Gateway features a variety of businesses and attractions, from businesses that serve the needs of citizens who reside within a short walking distance from downtown to others that attract visitors throughout the region. The downtown core transitions into outer neighborhoods with a range of high- and moderate-density residential neighborhoods and complementary mixed-use development.

Landover Gateway serves as a major multimodal transportation hub, with the addition of direct transit service to support the new development. The area is buffered by a network of trails and open spaces that provides a needed amenity for residents that preserves sensitive stream valleys. The roadway network is transformed for pedestrian use with improved connectivity throughout (see Map 6: Land Use Plan on page 19 and see Map 7: Illustrative Plan on page 20).

Vision Elements

A new mixed-use downtown that centers on the former Landover Mall site and Brightseat Road.

The downtown features a compatible and complementary mix of uses that fosters round-the-clock activity and a genuine sense of place. A compact, connected grid of streets includes many small blocks and a variety of street and building types. The downtown functions as a place to live, work, play, and visit, with a variety of interrelated pieces forming a cohesive whole. The main street commercial district includes destination and neighborhood-oriented retail uses on ground floors, with offices and residences on the upper floors. The civic center serves as an employment and cultural destination with a mix of government, cultural, educational, and office uses. The downtown is accessible by transit and on foot. The urban grid is punctuated and complemented by civic places that accommodate a variety of needs, from public gatherings and activities to quiet contemplation (see

Map 8: Transportation Network Vision on page 21 and see Map 9: Illustrative Community Open Space on page 22).

Civic Center at Landover, a complex of government, cultural, educational, and office uses.

The civic center will serve as a new icon for Prince George’s County and a premier institutional, business, cultural, and residential neighborhood. The tallest structures, located adjacent to the Capital Beltway, are architecturally distinctive and visible from passing vehicles. Visually identifiable and attracting both office workers and visitors throughout the region, the civic center is a key component in establishing Landover Gateway’s regional presence. Although the civic center is envisioned as a possible government mix of uses, it also includes educational uses (i.e., a community college or higher education satellite campus), a range of corporate and service-oriented (i.e., medical) offices, residential and hotel uses, and an attractive urban plaza at its center.

A vibrant Main Street and commercial core.

The downtown features a walkable and economically vital main street that forms the central commercial spine of Landover Gateway. Mixed-use buildings, with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential and office uses above, are oriented to the street to create a continuous street wall. Wide sidewalks, ground floor retail, and a distinctive streetscape make the main street a pleasant, comfortable, and engaging place to stroll and shop.

A variety of neighborhoods with a range of housing types.

Landover Gateway includes a variety of neighborhoods, ranging from housing, integrated into mixed-use districts; high-density residential neighborhoods; and neighborhoods of town homes. These neighborhoods achieve a successful housing mix, offering housing opportunities across a broad spectrum of ages and incomes. The area includes mixed-income and workforce housing in a variety of housing types, which range from single-family attached townhomes to higher-density apartment buildings of various sizes. The housing mix accommodates older adults and families with children, as well as singles and couples seeking an urban lifestyle in Prince George’s County.

Economic development and a vital economic mix.

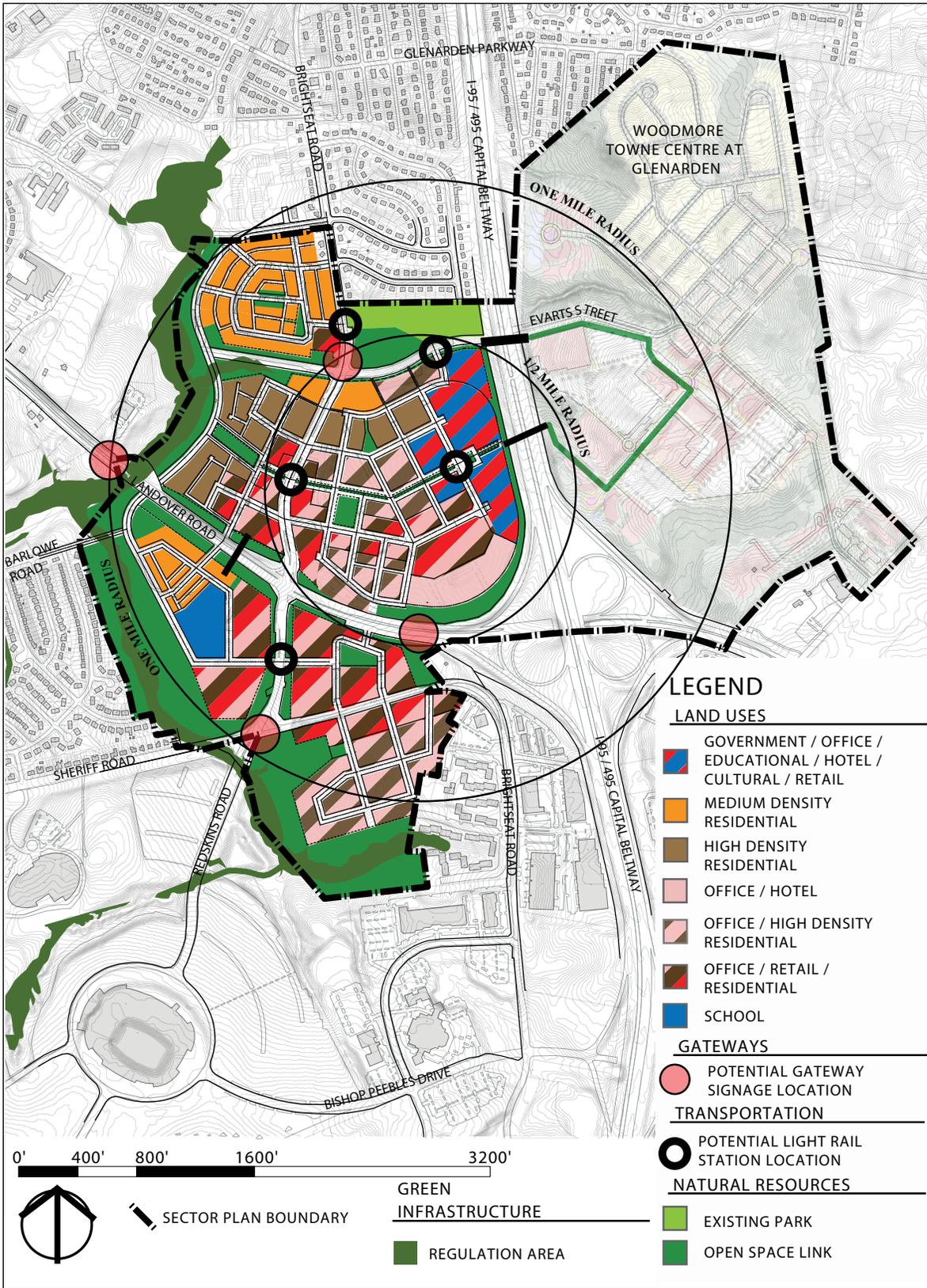
The area offers a variety of employment opportunities and generates substantial tax-based revenue for the county. Landover Gateway accommodates a diverse mix of business opportunities, having attracted anchor office tenants to destinations providing retail and restaurants, while reserving space for needed neighborhood-oriented services. By combining uses, the area achieves a synergy between uses and a vitality that continues well past the end of the workday; residents patronize local businesses, cultural uses enliven the downtown and attract visitors, and major employers provide a daytime population to support businesses.

A fully-integrated, multimodal transportation system.

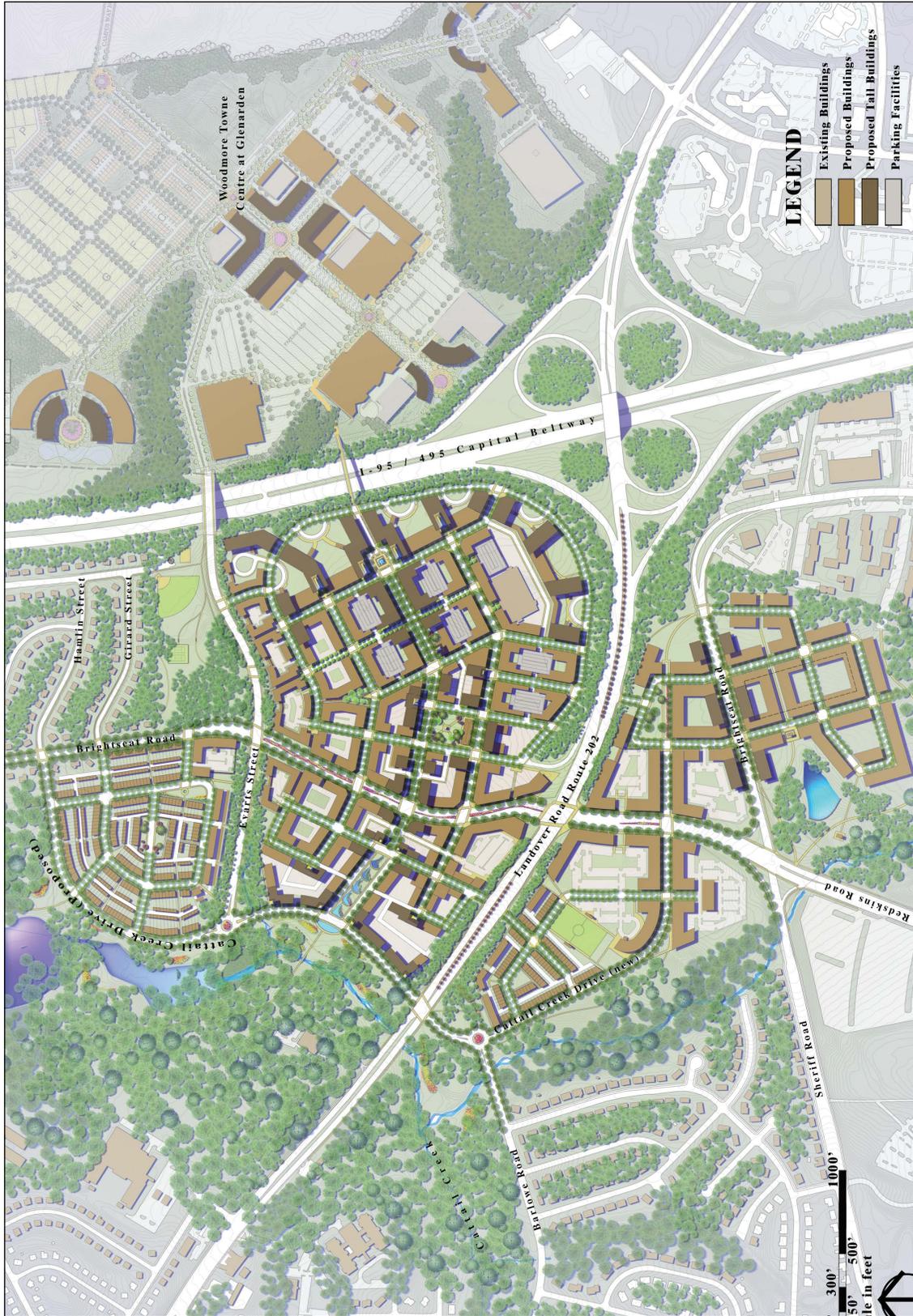
The vision for Landover Gateway provides a comprehensive, multimodal transportation network that fully accommodates transit, automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. A key component of the vision for Landover Gateway is the delivery of new transit service to the area in order to support the development envisioned area. The transportation system links Landover Gateway to other key destinations in the region, while encouraging travel on foot within the area by providing a safe pedestrian environment. The vision accommodates the addition of light-rail transit on Brightseat Road. New streets and road connections further limit traffic congestion by providing alternatives to the Brightseat Road and MD 202 intersection. New bridges across the Capital Beltway serve to unite the two sides of the sector area while fostering a complementary relationship between Landover Gateway and Woodmore Towne Centre (see Map 8: Transportation Network Vision on page 21).

An enhanced and expanded network of open space and civic places.

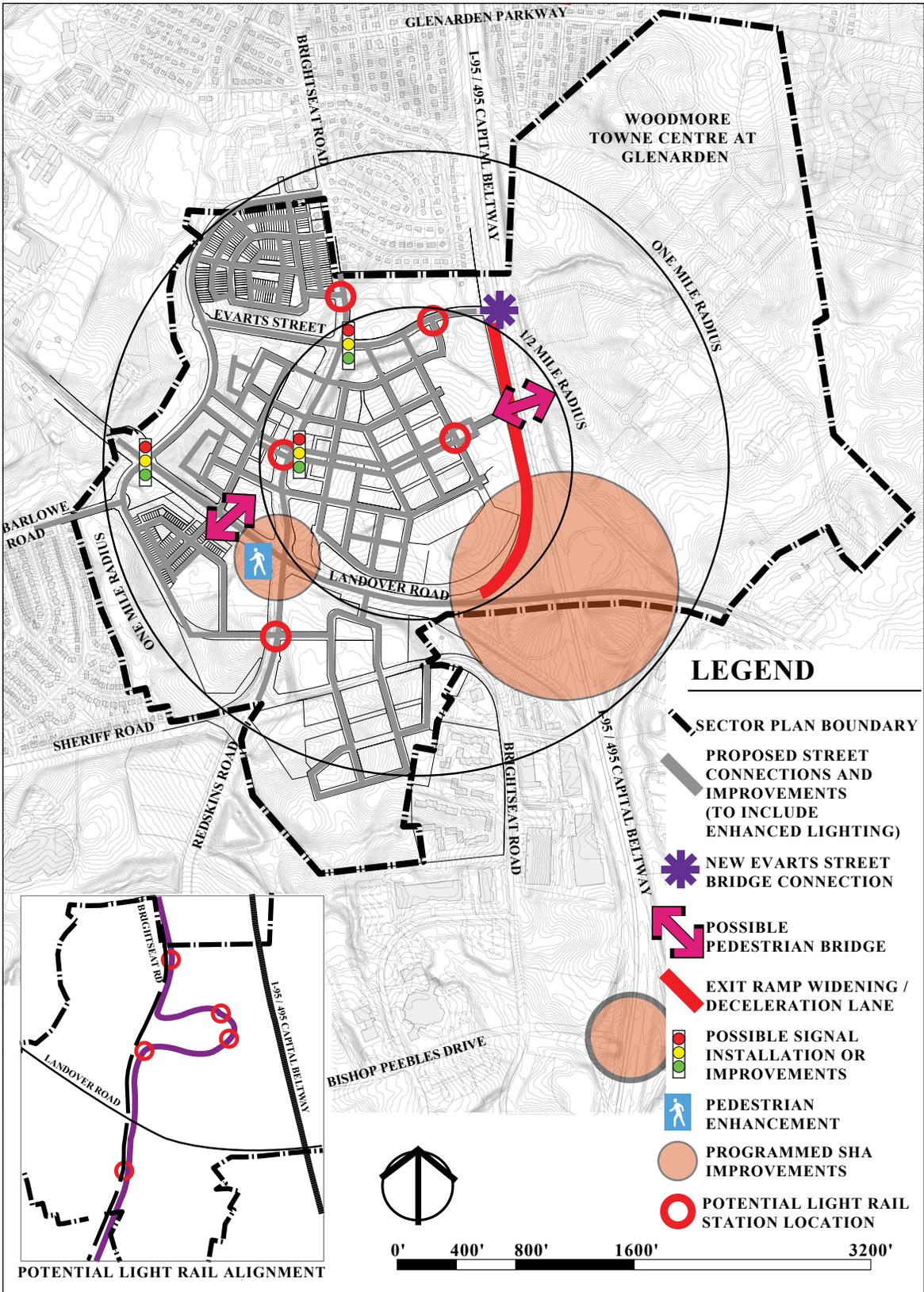
Landover Gateway includes an expanded open space network that comprises public greens and plazas, linear parks, promenades, natural resource-based parkland, and recreational amenities. The open space system provides public focal places in the hearts of neighborhoods, settings for public gatherings and events, opportunities for quiet contemplation and appreciation of nature, attractive connections between destinations, and opportunities for



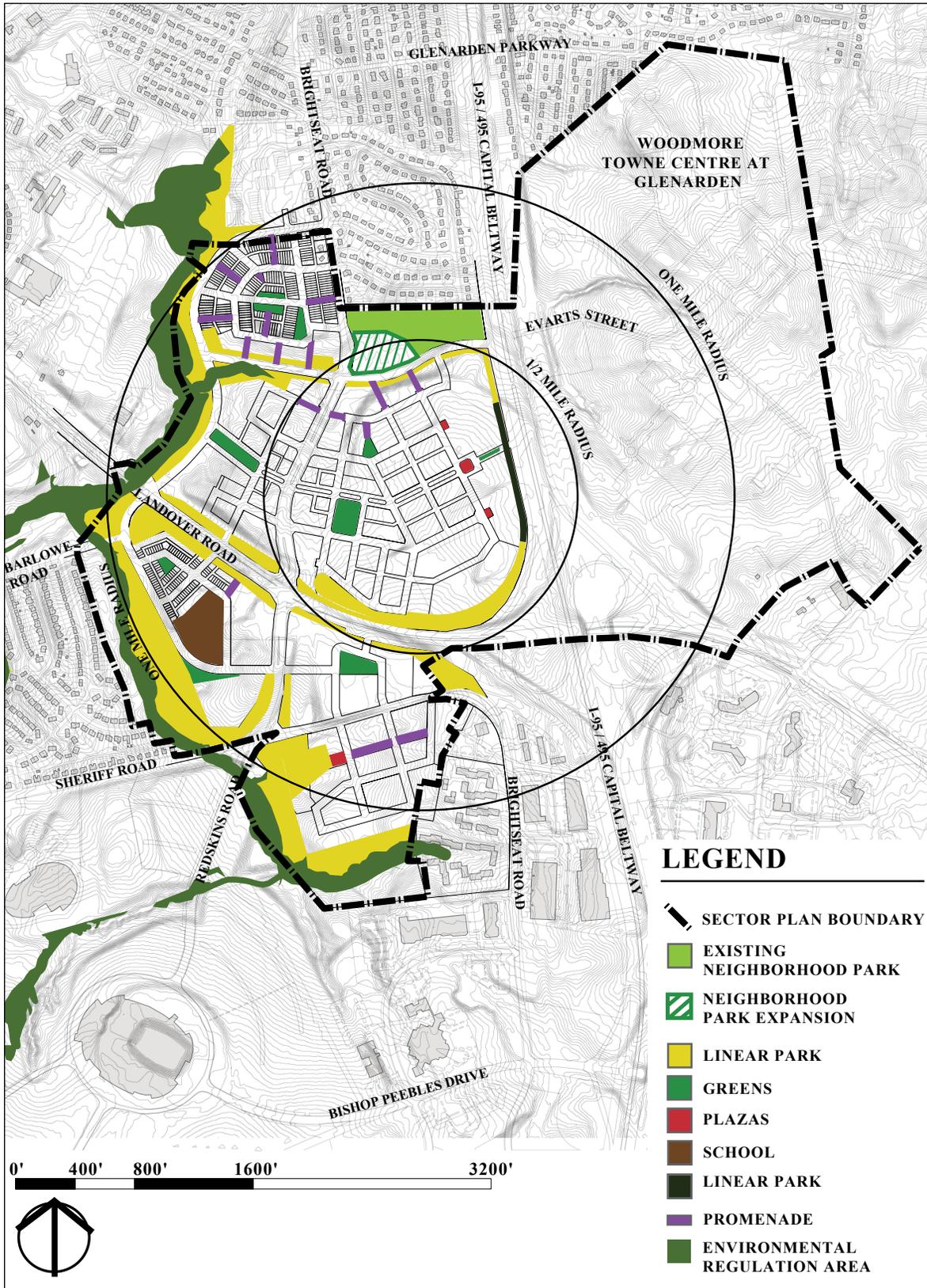
Map 6: Land Use Plan



Map 7: Illustrative Plan



Map 8: Transportation Network Vision



Map 9: Illustrative Community Open Space

passive and active recreation. The open space system is tied together by expanded trail connections linking Landover Gateway with surrounding areas (see Map 9: Illustrative Community Open Space on page 22).

Improved pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections.

The Landover Gateway area encourages residents and visitors alike to leave their automobiles behind. All destinations are accessible by a continuous network of sidewalks, safe pedestrian crossings, bicycle routes, and new trail connections along the Cattail Branch greenway and neighborhood connector trails. New development emphasizes linkages to schools, parks/recreational areas, commercial and employment centers for all ages.

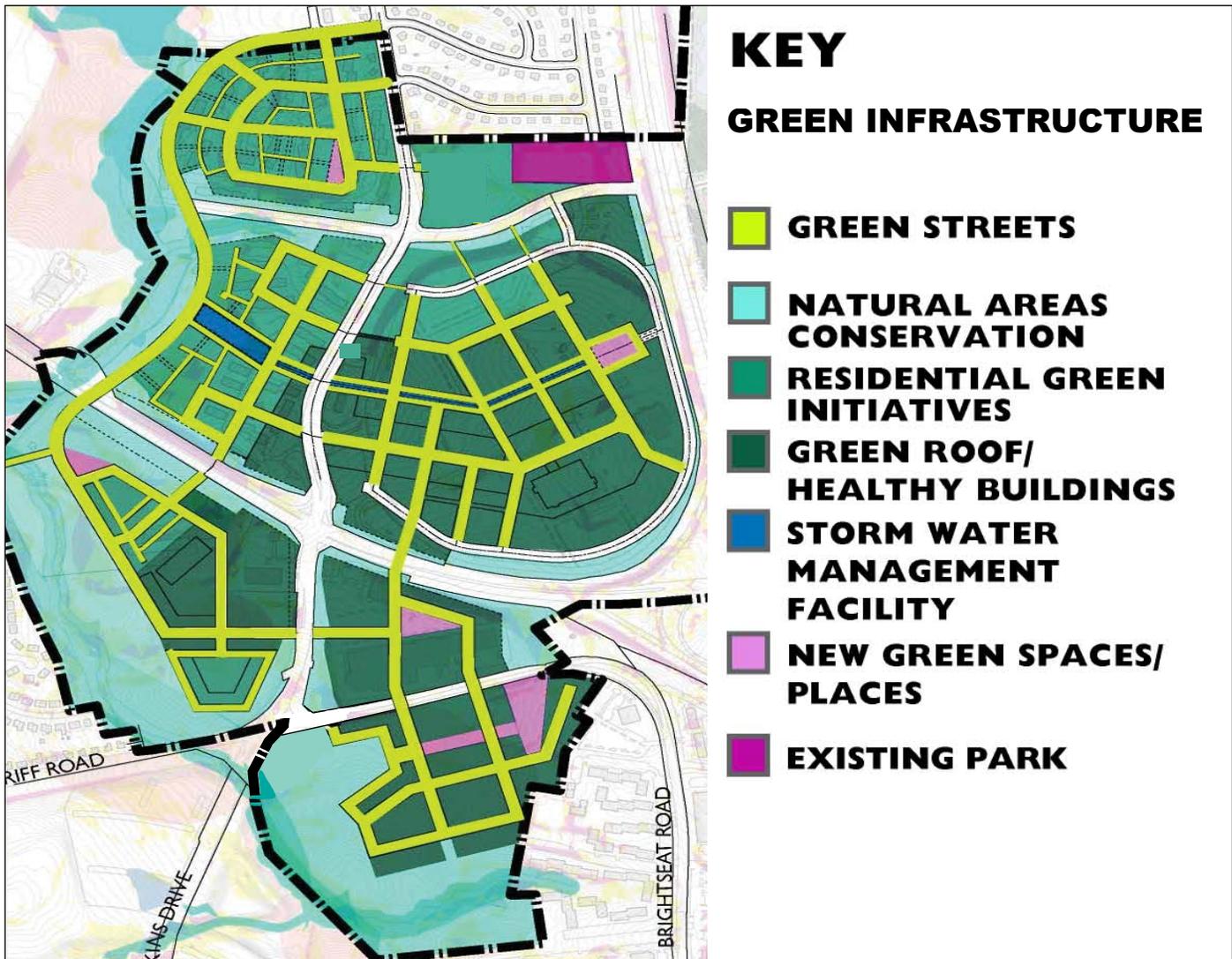
Planned public facilities to support, protect, and educate current and future residents of Landover Gateway.

The sector plan recommends the development of new “urban model” schools in the area and the replacement of deteriorated school facilities with new, state-of-the-art facilities. A new, architecturally-significant central library branch is envisioned within the urban core of Landover Gateway. In addition to new and renovated police, fire, and EMS stations, the physical fabric of Landover Gateway is designed with features that may help prevent crime,

including mixed-use development and walkable streets, to focus more “eyes on the street,” and design approaches that implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles.

A model of environmentally sensitive site design that preserves, enhances, and restores the environment and ecological functions.

Landover Gateway incorporates the leading edge of environmentally sensitive stormwater management practices that minimize and manage stormwater at its source, thereby protecting local and regional watersheds from harmful runoff. The area includes open spaces that combine stormwater management functions and public amenities. New development minimizes impervious surfaces and employs other low-impact design techniques. Following a “green streets” model, Landover Gateway features many street trees and multipurpose green spaces that function as community amenities, as well as areas for stormwater infiltration. Landover Gateway also preserves and enhances valuable networks of green infrastructure and associated ecological functions by protecting sensitive regulation areas along the Cattail Branch stream valley on the western perimeter of the sector area. Moreover, the area features an expanded network of green spaces and places that connect with natural resource areas (see Map 10: Green Design Concept on page 24).



Map 10: Green Design Concept



Stormwater Planters