



Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization Plan

**Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization, Inc.
Allison Platt & Associates
with Randall Gross Development Economics
July, 2001**

Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization Plan

Prepared for

Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization, Inc.

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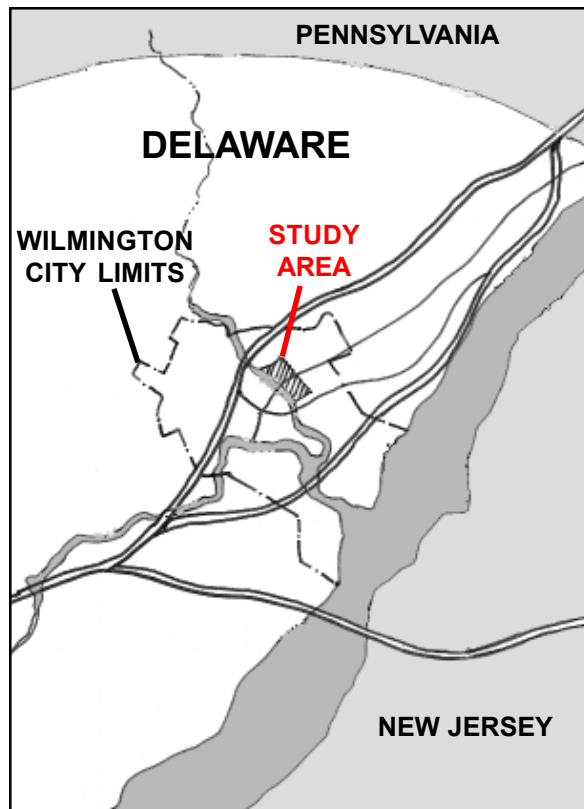
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Need and Purpose

In early 2000, Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization, Inc. (GVBR), a public-private development corporation serving the area immediately north of downtown Wilmington, Delaware, decided to contract with a consultant to prepare a Revitalization Plan. There were/are many vacant and underutilized properties along Market Street, the “main street” through the study area, and no clear vision existed for overall revitalization of the area. In addition, the neighborhoods around Market Street had problems with crime and disinvestment, and this trend was negatively affecting the commercial uses on Market. A plan was needed to create a vision for the area that will strengthen and enhance Market Street and the surrounding neighborhoods, realizing that these two elements are mutually dependent.

Figure 1.1: Location Map.



1.2 Study Area Boundaries

In the spring of 2000, Allison Platt & Associates (AP&A), along with Randall Gross Development Economics (RGDE), were hired by the Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization, Inc. to prepare a revitalization plan for the neighborhood it serves. The area includes three major arteries serving the city: Market Street, Concord Avenue, and Vandever Avenue. GBVR also includes within its boundaries a National Register Historic District that is primarily north of Brandywine Creek near Market Street, and residential neighborhoods to the east and west of Market. Figure 1.1 illustrates the location of the GBVR study area in relation to the rest of the city.

Initially, the principal concern of the organization was with the streetscape and commercial development along Market Street. With this focus in mind, the organization had already applied for and been awarded a TEA-21 grant to make improvements to the streetscape on Market before we began our work. As we conducted analysis and market studies, however, we came to the conclusion that commercial revitalization was unlikely to be successful without attention being directed to the housing on either side of Market Street, particularly the more distressed housing to the east. The GBVR boundaries, and thus our original study area boundaries, only included a few blocks of the housing to the east, and as far as we could determine there was no organization or agency taking the lead to revitalize this area. Therefore, about a third of the way through the study we recommended that the study area be modified to include more of the housing to the east. The original study area and the expanded study area are illustrated in Figure 1.2.

1.3 Study Process

AP&A began the process with photography, inventory and analysis of the study area. The results of this phase of work are presented in section 3.0. Once analysis drawings had been prepared, we conducted an initial community meeting to present the analysis and ask members of the community for their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the area and their goals for a revitalization plan. The notes from the initial community meeting are presented in Section 2.0.

After analysis and the initial community meeting were held, we concluded that the study area should be expanded, and after meetings with the board and steering committee of GBVR, we agreed to expand the study area. This required us to conduct further field work and to modify all the analysis drawings based on the expanded study area.

While this urban design work was proceeding, RGDE prepared a commercial and housing market analysis and recommendations. That work is presented in an appendix to this report. Mr. Gross's work helped to shape the recommendations for revitalization based on an evaluation of market demand for new housing and commercial development.

Once economic and urban design analysis work was complete, we prepared concept drawings illustrating which sites within the study area should be the focus of revitalization efforts, and making preliminary recommendations of suggested new development or renovation. The expanded analysis and concepts were presented at a community meeting held on February 20, 2001 at the St. John's Cathedral. Those attending agreed on the general concepts, and made some recommendations for the type of new development they favored. Concepts are presented in Section 4.0.

Following the concept presentations, AP&A prepared the revitalization plan drawings, showing suggested configurations of new development and other revitalization efforts, including streetscape, parking, and open space improvements. Two sketches were prepared to illustrate key revitalization projects. These recommendations were presented at a community meeting held on May 1st, 2001 and endorsed by those present at the meeting. The plan is presented in Section 5.0.

This final section of this report (Section 6.0) presents implementation strategies, including timelines, responsible parties, GBVR role, and possible project funding sources.

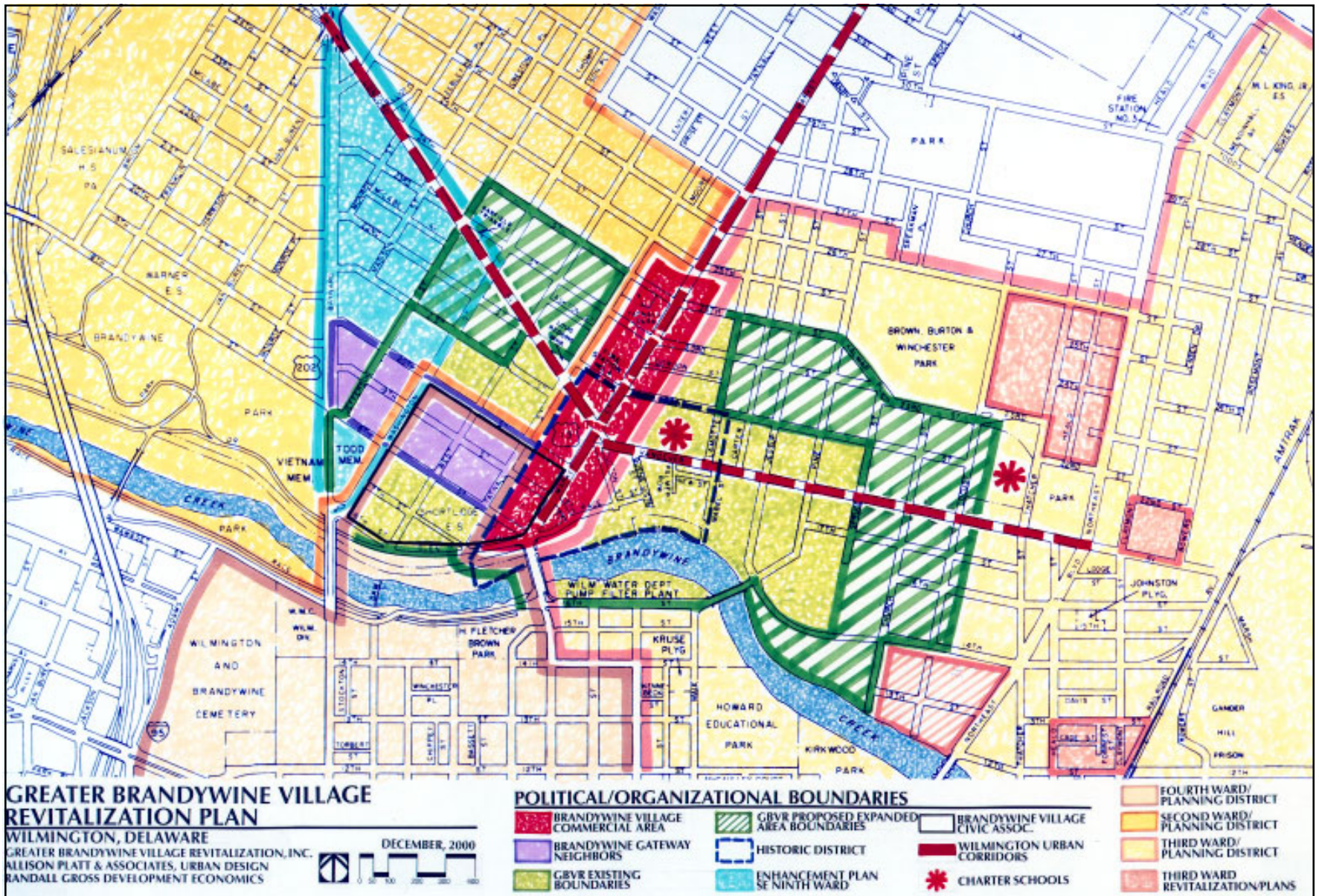


Figure 1.2: Political and Organizational Boundaries. This drawing illustrates the many groups interested in the study area. The black dashed line represents the historic district, and inner green line indicates the original study area boundaries, and the green striped areas the expanded study area.

2.0 Community Goals and Objectives

On June 29th, 2000 a community workshop was held to present the analysis and gather opinions and desires from citizens and stakeholders in the Brandywine Village area. The following lists of likes, dislikes, and desires summarize the input from that meeting.

2.1 Community Strengths

1. Brandywine Creek
2. Brandywine Park
3. History
4. Close to Downtown
5. Convenient Transportation
6. Bridges
7. No lawn to mow
8. Walk to work
9. Variety of people
10. One way streets
11. Good quality schools nearby
12. Close to Fire Station
13. Churches
14. Views
15. Nice neighbors
16. Easy access to I-95
17. Reasonably priced houses
18. Community centers
19. Senior Center
20. Antique shops
21. Other shops

2.2 Community Issues

1. Not enough parking
2. Trash
3. Crime
4. Noise

-
5. Gunshots
 6. Traffic
 7. Boarded up houses
 8. Lack of restaurants
 9. Missing shops
 - Grocery store
 - Hardware store
 - Pharmacy
 10. Unattractive street lights
 11. Overhead wires
 12. Too many liquor stores (loitering, crime problems)
 13. Don't like selection/quality of take-out food
 14. Unsupervised children
 15. No outdoor dining
 16. Jay-walkers
 17. Lack of government enforcement of housing codes
 18. Lack of traffic enforcement
 19. Divisions within the community because of political boundaries
 20. Abandoned gas stations
 21. Facades in poor repair
 22. Problems at intersections of Vandever Avenue and Concord and 18th and Market
 23. Drugs
 24. No trees, trash cans or benches
 25. No bus shelters, especially near the Senior Center
 26. Inconvenient bus routes
 27. Planned trolley will not come to Brandywine Village
 28. No Post Office
 29. Sidewalks in poor repair
 30. Unequal interest/attention to the two ends of Market Street
 31. "Forgotten River"
 32. Poor communication with community regarding special events in Brandywine Park (closing streets, parking, traffic)
 33. Safety in Brandywine Park

2.3 Goals and Objectives for the Plan:

1. Decent sidewalks
2. Market Street with historic facades all the way to the cemetery
3. Turn of the Century lighting
4. Police on bikes
5. Housing rehabilitation or replacement with housing or parks
6. Greenway at Superfund site
7. Cafes/outdoor dining
8. More home ownership
9. Off-street parking
10. Businesses that would be “gathering places” for the Village
11. Reuse of Wiltex building
12. Clean and beautify Brandywine Park
13. Restoration of Brandywine Academy as museum or headquarters for Nonprofit
14. Children’s playground(s)
15. Purpose-built child and adult daycare buildings/businesses
16. Grocery store
17. Convenience store
18. Coffee shop
19. Ice cream parlor
20. Village with small town feeling
21. Amphitheater
22. Accommodation for bikes
23. Athletic facilities/fields
24. Pedestrian bridge to downtown
25. More color in the streetscapes/Victorian flavor to streetscapes
26. Better cooperation between groups
27. Ways to educate the public about the history of the area



3.0 Inventory and Analysis

3.1 Neighborhood Strengths

Brandywine Village has many strengths upon which to build. The core of historic buildings, principally along Market Street, provides a positive first impression of the Village when driving north from downtown Wilmington. The boundaries of the National Register Historic District are shown in Figure 1.2.

The stone (formerly) residential structures on the west side of Market date back to the 19th Century, and are in excellent condition. Most of these buildings are now used for professional offices, one expanded building serves as the Wilmington Senior Center, and others have served as elderly housing. These structures were originally built as the residences of people who owned and worked in the mills that once stood in significant numbers along the banks of Brandywine Creek. A few remnants of the foundations of these mills can be seen between Superfine Lane and the river, and more buildings remain along the opposite side of the creek. Another significant structure, the Brandywine Academy building, stands a short distance to the east of the intersection of Vandever Avenue and Market Street. This building is currently vacant but appears to be in good condition.

A great asset for the community is St. John's Cathedral, on the southwest corner of Market and Concord. This historic stone church and related buildings and grounds are not only architecturally distinguished, but the church is an excellent neighbor and partner with Brandywine Village in revitalization.

Another strength of the community is that there are some strong blocks and neighborhoods of residential development, especially to the west of Market Street. The houses to the west tend to be generally larger and there are more duplexes and single family homes and fewer rowhouses than neighborhoods to the east. The neighborhoods to the west show a wide variety of architectural styles, as well.



Figure 3.1 (above): The location of Brandywine Village next to the downtown is a great advantage for the area. Figure 3.2: These stone historic district houses on Market Street are distinguished and in excellent condition.



Figure 3.3 (above left): St. John's Cathedral at Market and Concord. Figure 3.4-3.6: Examples of the varied and attractive housing in Brandywine Village.

Recently two charter schools have opened in the neighborhoods to the east of Market Street, and this is an excellent sign that the community is organizing for positive change. One school, the Edison Charter School, is run by a private nonprofit company, and the other is run by Shiloh Baptist Church. The church charter school is in temporary facilities at the eastern end of the block where the Job Corps facility is under construction. This school will move to a permanent home further to the east near North-east Boulevard in the future.

Although Vandever Avenue is in general an area of concern (see next section), there are some strong uses on the south side of this street. An industrial "condo" building and a few other businesses are well maintained and good neighbors to the surrounding area. And a large state services center along with a Boys' Club facility are well-maintained and provide needed services or employment for the community.

Brandywine Village is centrally located, right above the downtown near the geographical center of Wilmington. The Village is served by three major roads: Market Street, Concord Avenue, and Vandever Avenue. Market Street in

particular serves as the main street of the entire city since it bisects it, contains much of the city's retail development, and is one of the few north-south streets that provides through traffic along its entire length. The heart of the downtown is only a few minutes walk or drive from the center of Brandywine Village, and this represents a tremendous opportunity for commercial/retail development if this market can be tapped.



Figures 3.7-3.9. Many sections of the Village's main streets give a negative impression of the area. This gas station on Market (top) has been closed for years; Vandever Avenue (middle photo) is the least attractive; and Concord Avenue has fewer problems, but could still improve.

3.2 Neighborhood Issues

The most evident problems in Brandywine Village are the vacant, underutilized and poorly maintained buildings along Market and Vandever, and to a lesser extent, on Concord. Initial visual survey of the area gives the impression that the entire community is distressed. In fact, many sections of the neighborhood are very attractive, but deterioration of the main corridors creates a negative impression of the entire area.

On Market, there are dramatic contrasts. Historic buildings on the southern end of Market are very impressive and well-maintained. Some older commercial buildings near the historic buildings are in fair condition, but are poorly maintained and have unattractive signage. At the "100% corner" of the community (the intersection of Market, Concord, and Vandever), the cathedral stands on one corner, an abandoned gas station on another, the "Fry Corner", (a fast food store in an old and deteriorated building), and on the fourth corner is a single-story delicatessen that turns blank walls to the intersection.

Further north on Market, single story convenience stores with windows completely obscured by signs are interspersed with older buildings in good condition, vacant or poorly maintained residential buildings, storefront churches, and residential structures converted to ground-floor commercial uses with varying degrees of success. On the east side of the street above 22nd Street, the residential buildings were built at odd angles to the street, and though they are substantial structures, they now seem to work neither as residential nor as commercial buildings.

As mentioned above, the neighborhoods to the west generally seem to be in better condition than those to the east. Those west side areas with more problems, such as 20th Street, are now being systematically renovated by Brandywine Gateway Neighbors. BGN is an excellent nonprofit housing agency with interests (and successes) in several Wilmington neighborhoods. Other nonprofits are also involved in this area, including Habitat for Humanity and Interfaith Housing. There are also active neighborhood associations, including the Brandywine Village Association and an enhancement plan put in place by the Southeast Ninth Ward Planning Council.

To the east of market, however, the housing is in worse condition and there are few agencies involved in revitalization. The Wilmington Real Estate and Housing Department has been purchasing distressed housing along 22nd Street, but no clear plan exists for redevelopment. A HOPE VI project is now in the planning stages to the northeast of the study area, and this should have a positive impact in the future, but at the present time the housing between the HOPE VI project and Market Street is between a vacant housing project and a large tract of largely vacant



Figure 3.10-3.11: Buildings on Market Street. The top photo shows structures built as residential but no longer suited for residential or for adaptation to commercial. The bottom photo shows a more recently-built convenience store that is poorly maintained and has so many signs posted in the windows that you can no longer see into the store.



Figure 3.12-3.13: Residential buildings on the east side. The top photo shows 22nd street between Market and Lamotte, where there are many very small buildings in poor repair and problems with crime. The bottom photo show two abandoned buildings on Buena Vista.

industrial land near the creek. In addition, this housing is generally smaller and less desirable for restoration than many of the houses west of Market.

Vandever Avenue is also an issue in the community. This street serves mainly as a truck route between Market Street and Northeast Boulevard, and also serves the limited number of industrial uses located near Vandever within the study area. The street has a large number of high-tension wires running above the sidewalks, and for this reason there are no trees or other amenities of any kind. The character of the street does improve east of Spruce Street where industrial uses and vacant land give way to residential on both sides of the street.

Concord Avenue, although in better condition than either Market or Vandever, is still not reflective of the neighborhoods behind it. There are quite a large number of very small rowhouses right on the sidewalk. Because of the volume of traffic on Concord, it is clearly a less desirable location for residential, especially in buildings set so close to the street. Some of the buildings have been converted to ground floor commercial and office uses, but with limited success. Where these small rowhouses have been replaced by small purpose-built office or commercial buildings, they seem to be more successful. Parking is also very limited on Concord, making commercial development problematic.

3.3 Circulation

Figure 3.14 on the next page illustrates circulation both within the study area and adjacent to it. Streets shown in red are primary routes through the study area. These are roads that carry major volumes of traffic not only through the study area, but city-wide and regionally, as well. They include Market Street and Concord Avenue in the study area, and Baynard Boulevard to the west. Secondary roads are shown in dark brown. These include two-way connector streets within and adjacent to the study area, including Vandever Avenue, Washington Street and Race Street within the study area and Northeast Boulevard and 16th Street adjacent to it. Because Pine and Spruce Streets serve as a one-way pair bringing traffic across the 16th Street bridge from downtown, these two streets could probably also be considered secondary roads.

The rest of the streets within the study area are all one-way. One disadvantage of this one-way system is that it is difficult to negotiate the streets if you are unfamiliar with the area. On the other hand, it also tends to keep those who do not live in the area from using the streets as routes to other locations, and this can be a positive influence.

The drawing also shows possible locations for gateways into the neighborhood. These are logical locations because they are the sites where major roads enter the boundaries of the Village.

Major parking areas are also illustrated on this drawing. The red striped areas are major off-street parking areas that serve or could serve the commercial areas. It shows clearly what many business owners told us: that parking is severely limited within the study area. A complicating factor in the adequacy of parking is that many of the owners of these parking areas lease spaces to people who work downtown, so what parking there is, is not available to serve the needs of Village merchants. This is a circular problem, however, since the spaces are no doubt currently leased because the local merchants are not generating sufficient business to require the parking.

The parking areas shown in blue stripes are interior block parking areas. Some of these serve particular buildings nearby. Others are rows of small garages for rent. Still others are probably best characterized as vacant and poorly maintained “left-over” space behind residential buildings. If these parking areas are not owned by a single entity and/or are not properly maintained, they are a negative influence on the surrounding properties.

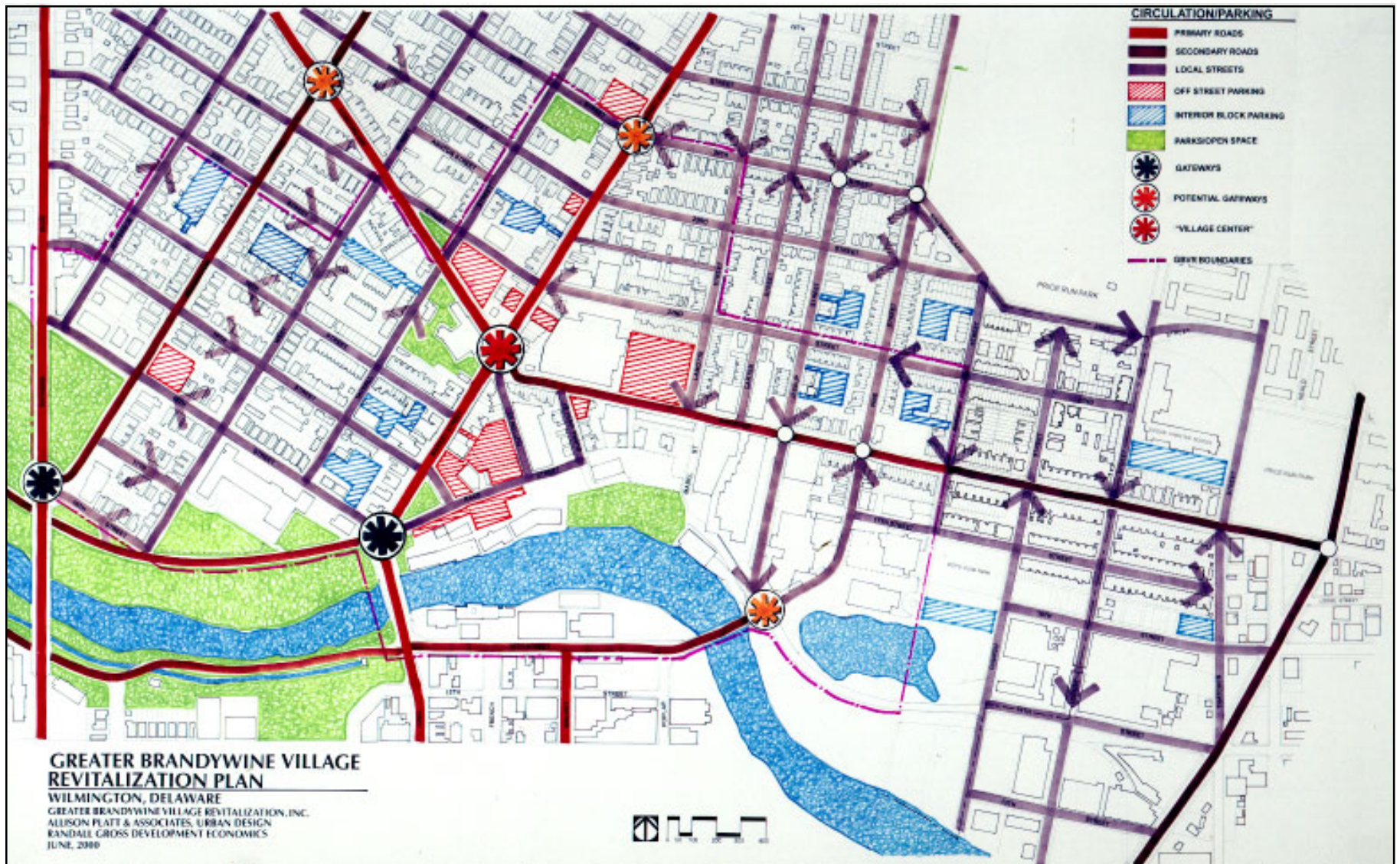


Figure 3.14: Existing Circulation. Most local street within the study area are one way. Only Concord, Vandever, Market and Jefferson are two way. This can be confusing for visitors, but it helps keep residential streets quieter and safer.

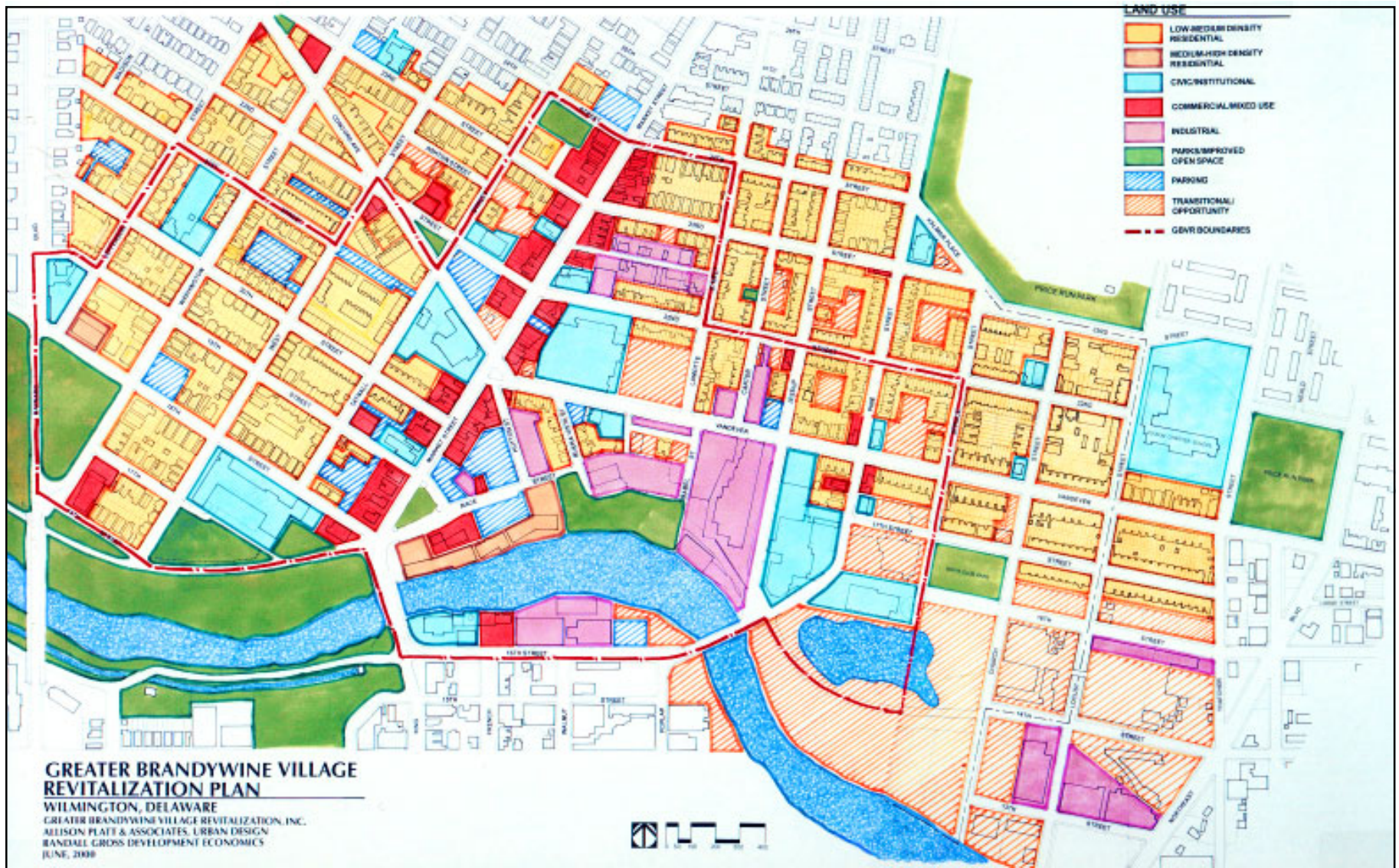


Figure 3.15: Existing Land Use. The main commercial corridor of the Village is Market Street. Residential occurs to the east and west, with mixed uses below Vandever. The largest number of vacant and underutilized properties occur on the east side along or south of Vandever.

3.4 Land Use

Figure 3.15 (previous page) illustrates current land uses in the study area. Cream-colored areas are residential; red are commercial/mixed use; light blue areas are institutional and civic; purple areas are industrial; green areas are open space, and orange striped areas are transitional or “opportunity” areas (vacant or underutilized). Retail is concentrated along Market, with a couple of small auxiliary areas a few blocks from Market on both Concord and Vandever. Institutional uses, mostly churches and schools, are spread throughout the study area, with a few state office buildings on or near Vandever. Transitional areas, shown in orange stripes, could be important to the revitalization plan because they are primarily vacant and so could easily become sites for new land uses. It is interesting to note that most of the land that falls into this category is in the portion of the study area east of Market.

3.5 Building Condition

AP&A conducted a survey of the neighborhood to determine the condition of buildings. This information is summarized in Figure 3.16 (next page). The drawing illustrates that Concord west of the intersection with 22nd has the largest concentration of buildings in poor condition on the west side. Commercial buildings along Market vary in condition widely except for the area with the historic stone buildings on the west side of Market. On the east side, all the blocks east of Market between Lamotte and Market and between 25th and Vandever are distressed, with more buildings in marginal or poor condition than anywhere else in the study area. Buildings in poor condition continue along 22nd from Lamotte to Spruce, and Pine from Vandever to 23rd is also distressed.

The center of problems for this part of the study area is generally agreed to be the block of 22nd between Market and Lamotte, with not only a large number of vacant and boarded buildings, but also high concentrations of crime and drug activity. Residents of the community repeatedly mentioned the urgent need to take action in this area before it negatively impacts the surrounding blocks to a greater extent than has already occurred.

Another area of concern is the largely vacant industrial area to the south of Vandever Avenue and east of Pine. The area below the Boys’ Club was a Superfund site, but it has been remediated and redevelopment plans are now being considered, although no definite plan has been announced. East from the Superfund site there are additional industrial lands in poor condition. It is our understanding that some of these sites may also require environmental remediation. A few of the buildings are occupied by offices or light industrial uses, but the overall condition and maintenance of this area is poor.



Figure 3.16: Building Condition. Buildings in poor condition are located in several areas: 1) along Concord; 2) along the northern portion of Market; 3) along 22nd street east of Market; and 4) in and beyond the southeast corner of the study area.

4.0 Concepts

Based on the analysis, market studies, and input from the second community meeting held on February 20th, 2001, revitalization concepts were developed for the study area. The two concept drawings are Figure 4.1, Redevelopment Concept, and Figure 4.2, Proposed Land Use. Taken together, these two drawings show where redevelopment efforts should be focused, and what new uses or revitalized existing uses are recommended. In the next section, the plan is presented in detail and explained.

4.1 Redevelopment Concept

Figure 4.1, Redevelopment Concepts (next page), shows “priority action areas” in red. Sites were chosen to be the focus of revitalization for one or more of the following reasons: they were the most distressed or deteriorated; they were vacant or underutilized; they were available for redevelopment; or they were key properties that should be redeveloped in order to improve the image of the Village.

Properties shown in orange are “transitional;” that is, they are in fair condition and should not be the immediate focus of revitalization efforts, but they may deteriorate further unless the surrounding areas remain stable and/or begin to improve. Areas shown in a cream color are stable and should be monitored to be sure they remain so, but they do not need any immediate action to remain as they are.

Properties shown in bright yellow have redevelopment plans already in place, and these should help to improve the properties around them in time.

Purple asterisks on the plan indicate areas where gateways could be installed to welcome visitors to the Village. This treatment could be as simple as a well-designed sign and some well-maintained landscaping around it.

Dark green lines indicate that the streetscape on Market should be improved to make it an important pedestrian-friendly street. Light green lines suggest simple streetscape enhancements to sidewalks (e.g. continuous concrete sidewalks) and the addition of street trees in order to make these streets more attractive.

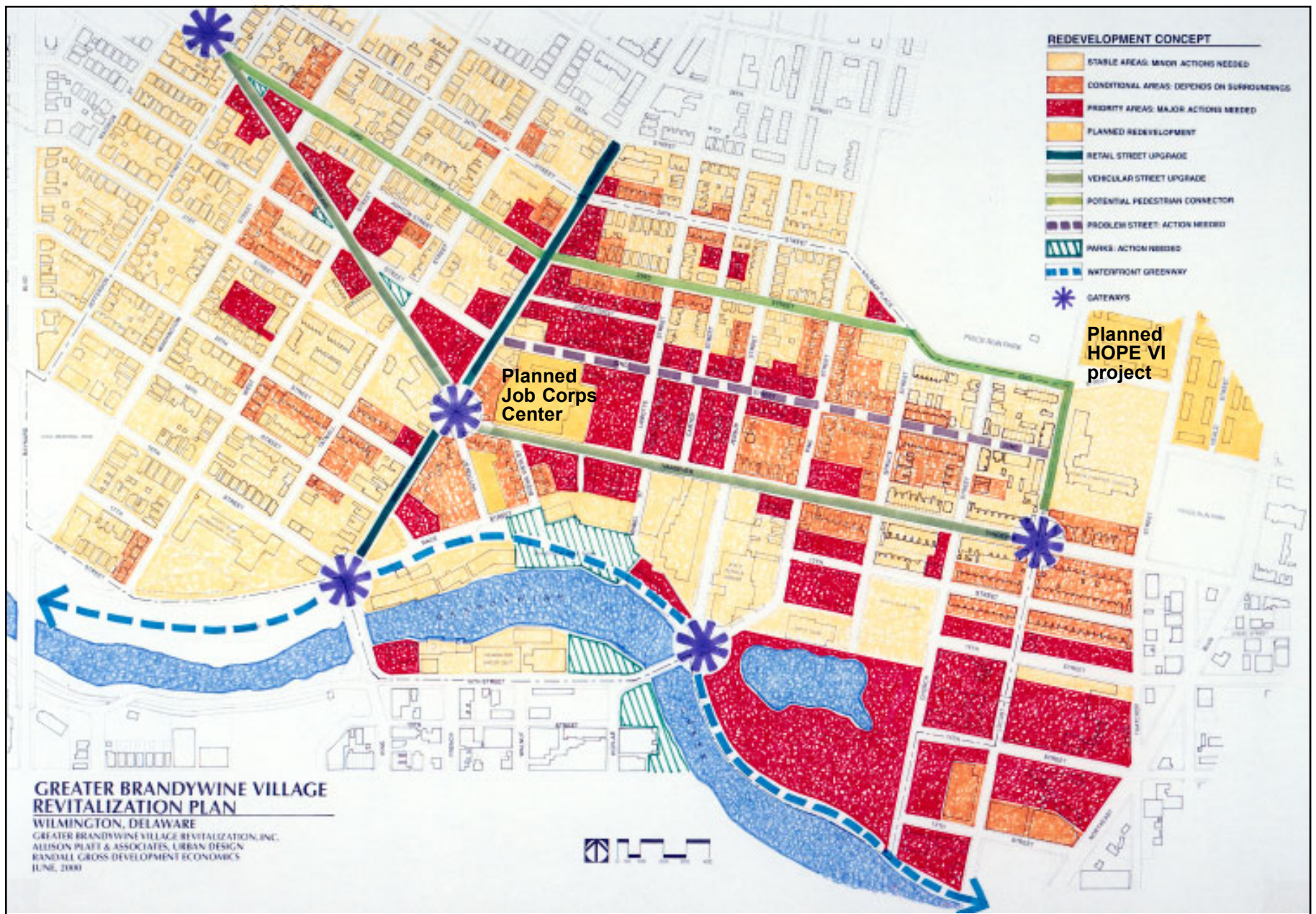


Figure 4.1: Redevelopment Concept. The drawing shows areas requiring immediate attention in red; transitional areas in orange, and stable areas in a cream color.

Green striped areas indicate open spaces that should be enhanced. We also recommend that the existing waterfront walkway in Brandywine Park be extended along Superfine Lane to connect Brandywine Park with Brandywine Mills Park, and beyond that from Brandywine Mills Park east to Northeast Boulevard (these connections are indicated with a turquoise dashed line along the water's edge).

4.2 Proposed Land Uses

Figure 4.2, Proposed Land Uses (next page), shows recommended new or redeveloped uses as striped areas on the drawing. Red striped areas are retail and mixed use; orange are residential; dark aqua areas are new office or light industrial; and light aqua are new civic and institutional uses.

The most critical area is probably the two blocks bounded by 23rd, Lamotte, Vandever and Market, and the triangular site bounded by Market, Concord, and 22nd. The first site is important because there are so many distressed properties concentrated in this area. The second is critical because it is so central to the study area and highly visible. New development on this site could be very important in improving the image of the Village in the minds of those living and working in the city. There are a few other retail/mixed use areas along Market that also show new development, or redevelopment of existing buildings.

The aggregate striped areas shown in the overall plan are probably the minimum necessary to create an improved image for the area. And in particular, on Market Street the red striped areas are probably the minimum number of new or renovated retail/commercial buildings needed to improve the economic prospects of Market Street businesses.

Further study is needed to determine whether there is a demand for office/light industrial uses in and beyond the southeast corner of the study area from the Superfund site to Northeast Boulevard. Since the housing market study determined that there is a very limited market for additional housing, an employment use of some kind might be an excellent choice.

The drawing also shows brown "X"'s in the center of some residential blocks. These illustrate the concept of removing the interior block parking areas by either adding them to adjacent properties or changing the relationship of these areas to the surrounding properties so that they will be better maintained. Such interior block spaces are nearly always a problem in urban areas unless access and ownership is limited to those who own the surrounding properties and surveillance is not a problem.

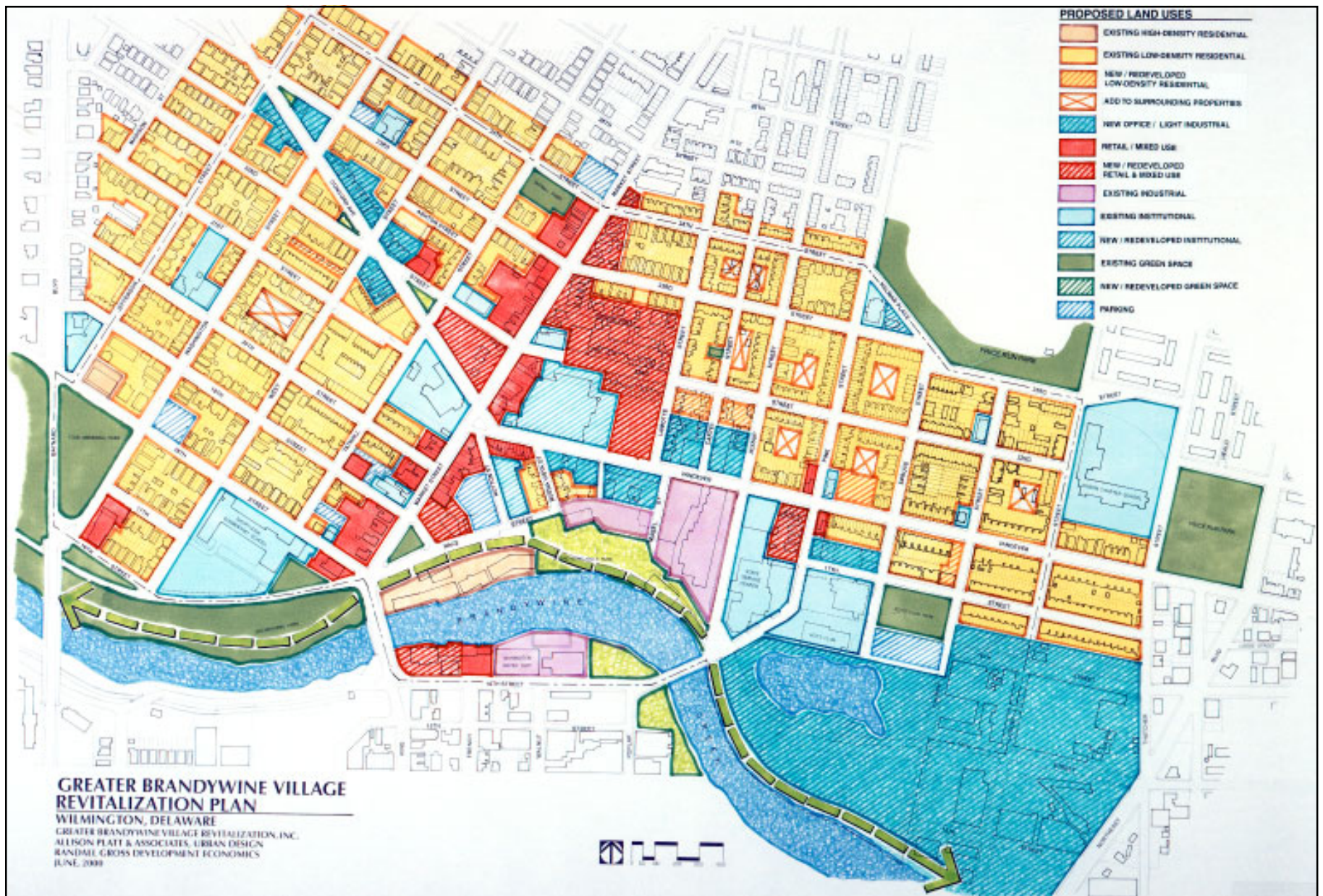


Figure 4.2: Proposed Land Uses. The striped areas on this drawing suggest what land uses would be appropriate for the areas shown in red on the previous plan.

5.0 The Revitalization Plan

The Revitalization Plan was presented to the community on May 1st, 2001, and was approved by the majority of those attending the meeting. It will still be necessary to establish a community process whereby the residents approve the plan, and it would also be desirable for the city to officially approve the plan, since this will assist with recruiting developers. The Revitalization Plan drawing is shown in Figure 5.1 (next page), and this section will explain in detail the recommendations of the plan.

It is important to understand that a master plan is not a literal document, but a representation of possibilities. It is unlikely that the plan will be implemented exactly as shown, but it is important to have general goals that the community agrees with and supports in order to move from the present conditions to a more successful Village.

Section 5.1 presents private development opportunities within the study area, and Section 5.2 presents public improvement recommendations. We will move from west to east to make it easier to follow the narrative. The order of presentation is *not* the recommended priority for implementation. Priorities will be presented in Section 6.0.

5.1 Private Development Opportunities

The following subsections explain in more detail elements of proposed private development in the plan. Please note that buildings in the plan shown in white are considered to be stable uses, and no action is required by this plan. All buildings shown in a cream color are transitional and should be monitored to ensure they do not further deteriorate while the areas with more serious problems are revitalized. Those areas of the plan shown in color are those with the greatest need for revitalization. The priority for renovation would be to concentrate on the main corridors first, especially Market Street, and on the most severely distressed housing on 22nd.

5.1.1 Office/Mixed Use on Concord

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate the existing conditions and proposed site plan for Concord Avenue. Because there is a limited market for retail, we recommend that new retail be encouraged to locate on Market Street, except for a few convenience retail uses on Concord and Vandever. We have shown the replacement of the existing liquor store (**?) on Concord at Washington with a new

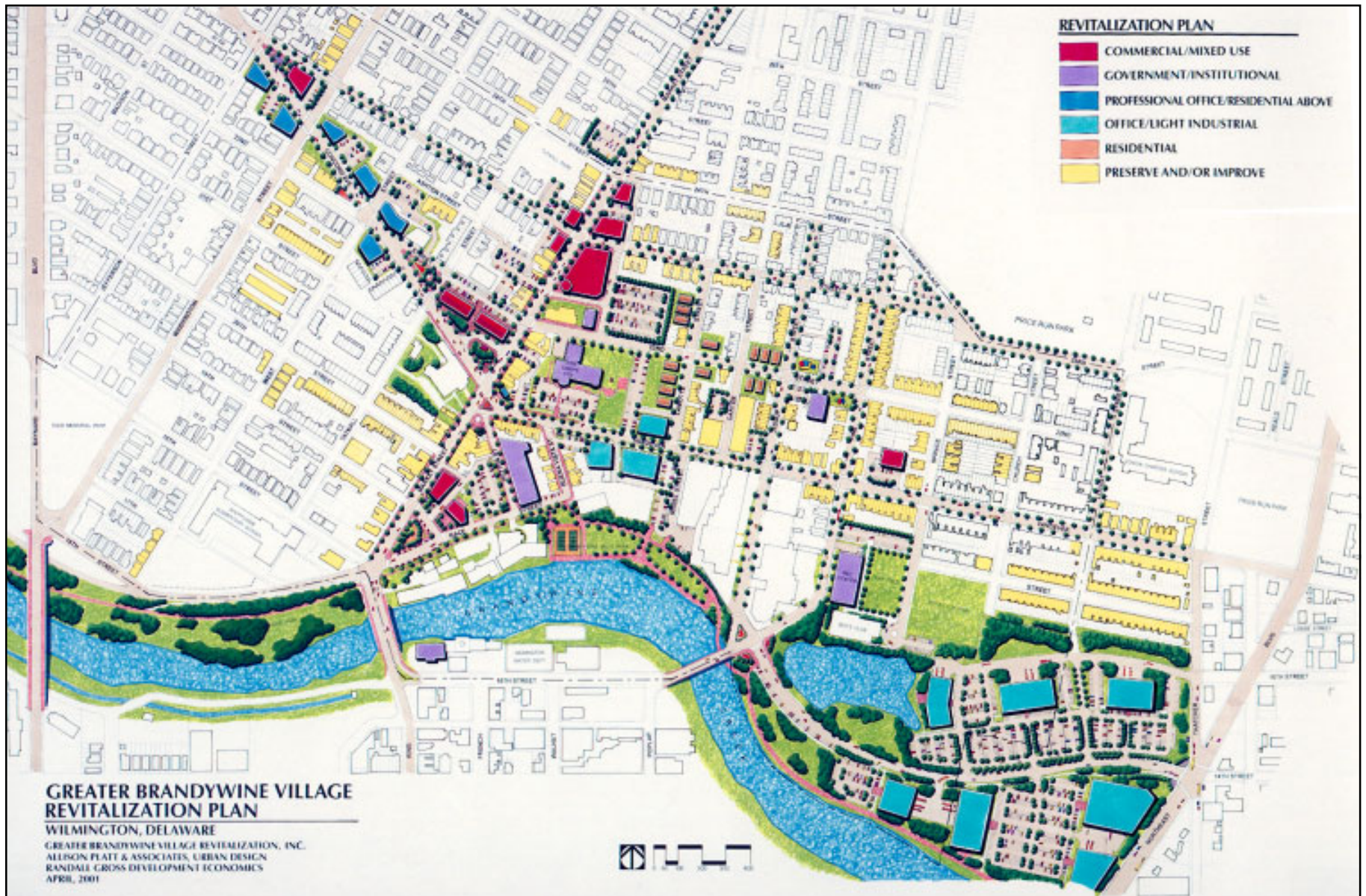


Figure 5.1: The Revitalization Plan. Portions of the plan are presented in close-up to better explain individual projects and recommendations.

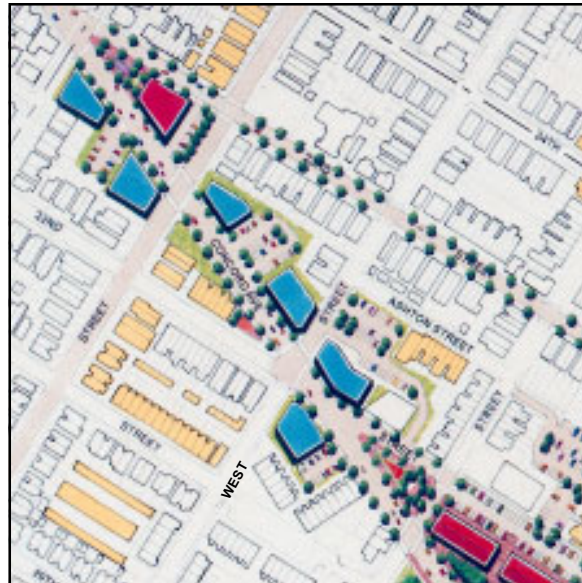


Figure 5.2: Existing Conditions of Concord Avenue. Figure 5.3: Recommendations for new office/mixed use on Concord Avenue.



Figure 5.4: Existing conditions on the northwest corner of Concord and Market. Figure 5.5: Recommendations for new retail/mixed use and open space at the “100% Corner.”

building, probably a convenience store or similar use. The existing housing on that triangular block has been removed, since it turns its back on Concord and is not in very good condition. This allows a more efficient building with parking to be constructed here. On the end of this parcel facing north of Concord is an improved Garfield Park/Gateway, and this is discussed in Section 5.2.1.

Other buildings along Concord shown in blue signify new office (or a mixture included some service uses) with additional office or residential above. Apartments above office or service uses could replace some of the existing housing that now exists along Concord, but with higher quality units set back a little further from the sidewalk.

New buildings should be located on the corners wherever possible, and with a 5-10' landscaped setback and no parking allowed in front of the buildings. Parking should be on the side or to the rear of all buildings, and screened from the sidewalk with a 30-36" wall or hedge. Because Concord is a busy street, it will be essential that dedicated parking be available near the buildings. Where parking or a new commercial building is adjacent to residential, a 6-foot high privacy fence should be installed.

5.1.2 New Retail Development at Concord and Market

Figure 5.4-5.5 show the existing conditions and proposed site plan for this site, which is bounded by Concord, Market, and 22nd Street.



Figure 5.6-5.7 show the existing view and proposed sketch of the site and improvements to the intersection of Concord, Market, and Vandever.

The vacant gas station at the northwest corner of Market and Concord has been a major deterrent to redevelopment of the site, and a negative influence on perceptions about the Village. It is essential that this site be redeveloped. We recommend that this become a public facility of some kind, either a park or a park that incorporates a bus turnaround and waiting area. Careful design is needed to ensure that a bus turnaround at this location would be designed to enhance and not detract from development nearby.



To the north of this area is a site for new development that incorporates two small existing buildings and the parking lot to the west owned by the Cathedral. Figure 5.7 illustrates in concept what such buildings might look like. We recommend two story buildings at a minimum, with three or even four stories possible. Ground floor uses should be retail and/or restaurant. One or more restaurants on the ground floor, accompanied by an attractive outdoor space, could attract downtown employees to the area for lunch or after work, especially if there is a convenient transit or trolley connection from the downtown.

Parking is shown behind and to the north of the two buildings. We recommend that 22nd Street be closed for this one block to accommodate parking, and that an arrangement be made with the Cathedral so they can use this parking for their services and other activities.

This project should have a high priority for implementation, since improvements to this site will be highly

Figure 5.6: Existing view looking northwest of the intersection of Concord, Market and Vandever.
Figure 5.7: Proposal for new retail/mixed use on this corner.



Figure 5.8: Existing conditions on Market Street south of Concord. Figure 5.9: Proposed new retail/mixed use on Market south of Concord.

visible to anyone visiting or driving through the area. Successful new retail can also help to boost other retail on Market Street.

5.1.3 New Retail/Mixed Use on Market Street South of Concord

Figure 5.8-5.9 show the existing and proposed site plans for Market Street south of Concord. Starting from the south end of this section of Market, we are recommending that a new use be found for the building near the northeast corner of 16th and Market, south of Brandywine Creek. This attractive building was the former home of the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, and another visitor-oriented use or nonprofit would be a fitting tenant.

A new building is shown on Market in the present location of Mammelle’s and the Dolorama store. This could be an expanded Mammelle’s including storage space for their stock, or new retail. The two existing single story buildings are not in great condition, and although it might be possible to renovate them, it would be preferable to replace them. A two- or three-story building would better balance the scale of the historic buildings across Market Street, and would also allow upper level office or storage space.

We recommend that the historic stone building behind Mammelle’s that is now used for storage be converted to a restaurant. This is an ideal location for such a use because it is surrounded by successful mid-rise residential and historic buildings, and is located across from a park and within view of the creek and the downtown. The parking lot between this building and 19th Street could be converted to a walled patio for outdoor dining.

The parking lots behind this new development are shown combined and reorganized for greater efficiency. If organized as suggested by the plan, there should be adequate parking for all uses on that block.

We have also shown the removal of the delicatessen on the corner of Vandever and Market. This single story building is a detriment to the appearance of this important corner. If a new location can be found for this business, we recommend its replacement with a small paved public space that would help to create an improved image for this important intersection.

Other buildings in this portion of Market Street south of Concord would benefit from façade renovations. There are already building renovation plans underway for the buildings north of 20th on the west side of Market. These buildings are owned by the Cathedral and they will be renovated and have new tenants in the near future.

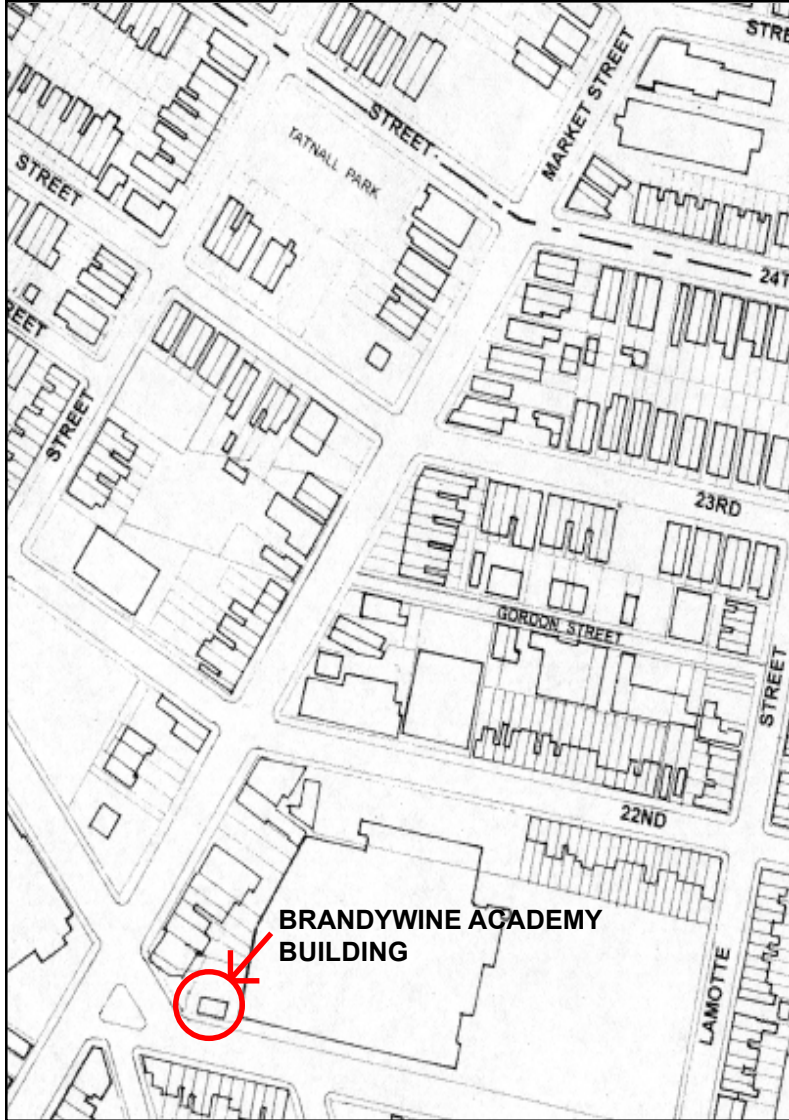


Figure 5.10: Existing conditions on Market Street north of Concord Avenue. Note highlighted location of Brandywine Academy building.

5.1.4 Retail/Mixed Use on Market North of Concord

Figure 5.10 shows existing conditions on Market Street north of Concord Avenue, and Figure 5.11 shows proposed development in this area. One recommendation that would enhance the intersection of Market and Vandever would be to move the Brandywine Academy building closer to the intersection. This structure is significant both in its history and its architecture, but unfortunately it is scarcely noticed in its present location near the fence for the planned Job Corps Center and behind the commercial buildings on Market. Because the Fry Corner building is in poor condition, we recommend that this building and the adjoining building be removed and the Academy building be moved to this location, facing into the intersection as shown in the plan. This would allow vehicular access along the backs of all the building facing on Market in this block, and also provide space for about 12 parking. It is our understanding that the Delaware Architecture Foundation, associated with the Delaware Chapter of the American Institute of Architects will use the Academy as its headquarters, and this prominent location would serve them well.

North of the historic Harriet R. Tubman Methodist Church we recommend removal of the rest of the buildings on the east side of the block between 22nd and 23rd and their replacement with a combined grocery store and pharmacy. Residents stated that they wanted both these businesses close to the center of the Village, and the retail market study confirms that a small grocery store of about 21,000 square feet combined with a pharmacy of about 7,000 square feet would be economically viable. This is a difficult site because the church and some of the houses on 23rd Street will remain, leaving an irregularly-shaped site for development. Although the usual site configuration for grocery stores is that the store is placed behind parking, in this case we recommend that the store be located on the street with a wide lane leading to entry and parking in the rear. There is ample room for parking in the rear of the site to serve both the grocery store and the church. Figure 5.12 shows a similar configuration at a FreshFields store in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Across Market Street from this development and on both sides of the street further to the north, suggested configurations of new commercial/mixed use buildings

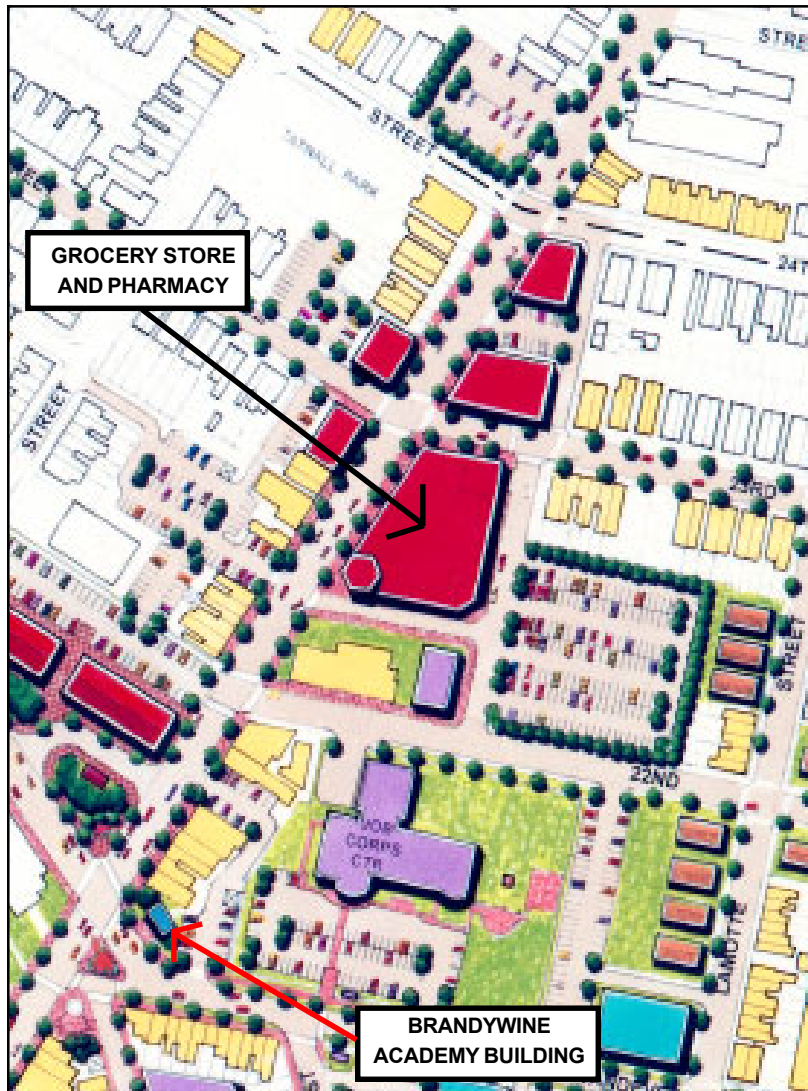


Figure 5.11: Proposed improvements to Market Street north of Concord Avenue. Note proposed new location for Brandywine Academy building.

Figure 5.12 (right): This FreshFields in Silver Springs, MD illustrates that a grocery store on the street can be successful. Parking and entry are in the rear.

are shown. These should be at least two or preferably three stories, with active ground floor uses and office or residential above. As on Concord Street, parking should be located to the side or rear of the buildings.

We have also shown an improved parking area on the interior of the west side of Market Street between 22nd and 23rd. There are three brick townhouses in the middle of this block, and two of them are vacant and boarded. We recommend that these be removed to create a landscaped edge and a more visible and inviting entry into an improved parking lot. At the present time the narrow alley entry to the parking area and poor maintenance and lighting make the public unwilling to use it, but with improvements it could serve businesses in the area very successfully.

We also recommend that a low wall or hedge be installed behind the sidewalk of the parking lot that serves the funeral home at 24th and Market.



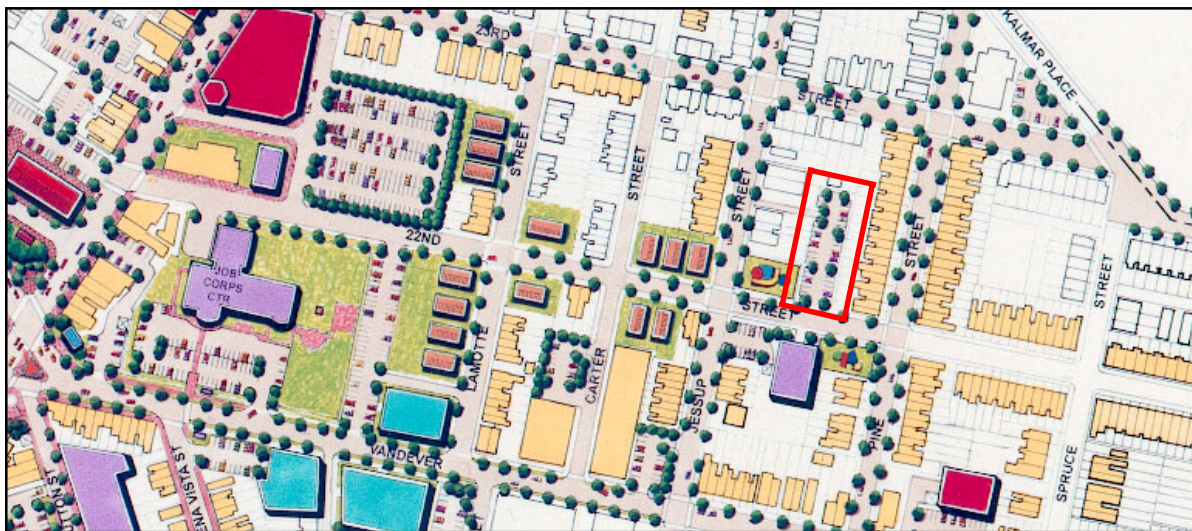


Figure 5.13: 22nd Street Existing Conditions. Figure 5.14: New housing (brown), daycare (purple), parking and open space on 22nd Street. Note reorganization of interior block parking highlighted.

5.1.5 Residential and Other Uses on 22nd

The plan shows that all the housing of 22nd between Lamotte and Market has been removed. Because there are a few groups of housing in good condition remaining on Lamotte between Vandever and 23rd, we placed new duplexes on Lamotte to support the existing strong housing. On 22nd between Lamotte and Jessup we have sited additional duplexes to reinforce the remaining housing on that block. On the next block east on 22nd, we have shown a playground on the north site and a daycare center on the south site. This location for a daycare center would be ideal, because it is in the center of the neighborhood to the east of Market.

Please also note that the interior block parking on the block bounded by Jessup, Pine, 22nd, and 23rd has been reorganized to work more efficiently. This parking should serve the housing around it, and a few spots could be reserved for those using the proposed playground on the south end of this block. This block is shown as a “typical” block, so illustrates the types of improvements that could be considered for the many interior block spaces in Brandywine Village.

We have shown the housing further to the east on 22nd in cream, indicating that we recommend rehabilitation for this housing. This rehab work should have a fairly high priority so

that it will reinforce new housing to the west.

5.1.6 Reverse One-Way Direction on 22nd

We recommend that the direction of one-way travel on 22nd be reversed so that vehicles will enter the street at Market and travel east towards the Edison Charter school at the end of the street, rather than the opposite. There are several reasons for this. First this would be the preferred route to enter the parking lot for the grocery store shown in the plan. Second, the present east-to-west direction of travel on 22nd Street combined with the fact that the street does not go through to Northeast Boulevard makes it unlikely that anyone will travel down the street unless they live there or are interested in the illegal drug activities that are known to occur there. Reversing the direction of traffic will make the street more accessible, and hopefully safer. Removing the problem housing on 22nd and replacing it with new housing will also help make the street safer.

5.1.7 New Development on Vandever Avenue

Figures 5.15 and 5.16 show the existing and proposed plans for the properties adjacent to Vandever Avenue. Site A had a limousine service and a printer. The printer has moved, and there is a good chance that Habitat for Humanity will occupy the space vacated by the printer. This use will be a definite asset to the Village.

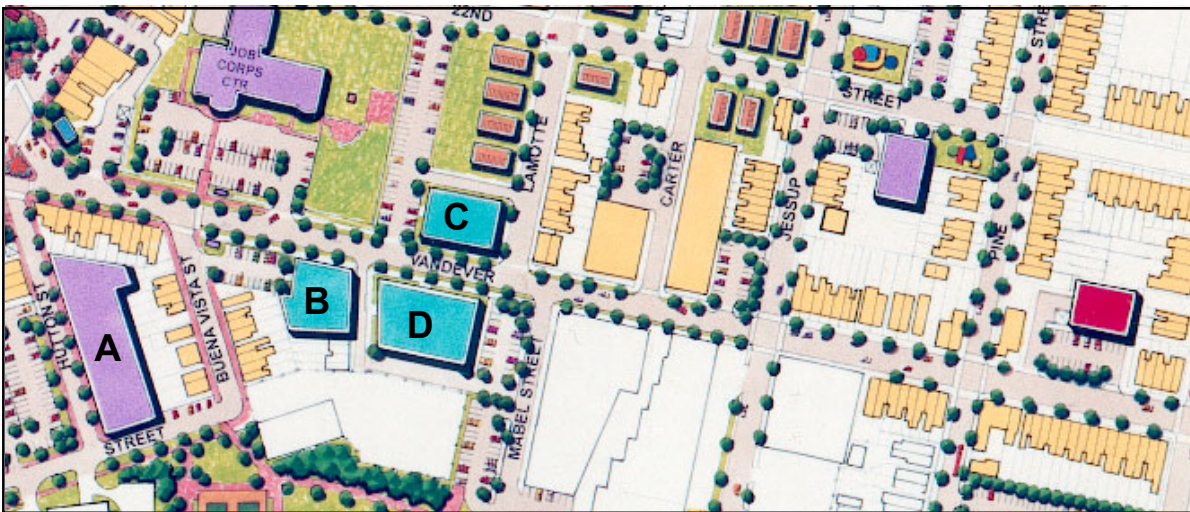


Figure 5.15: Existing Conditions on Vandever Avenue. Figure 5.16: Proposed new and renovated office/light industrial (aqua) and convenience (red) uses on Vandever Avenue.

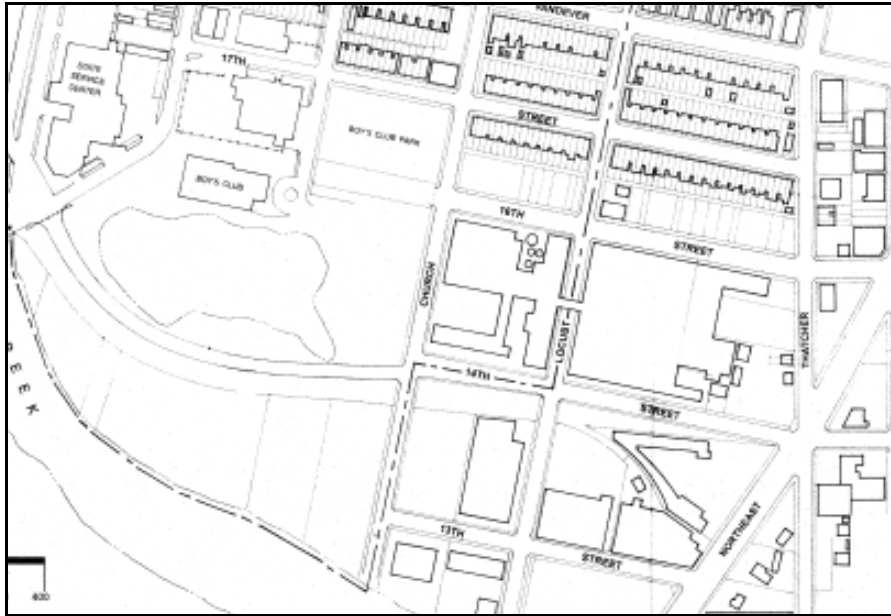


Figure 5.17 (left): Existing conditions between the Sixteenth Street bridge on the west, Northeast Boulevard on the east, Vandever Avenue on the north, and Brandywine Creek on the south. Figure 5.18: Proposed office/light industrial (aqua) for this site, with open space on the western end and a riverfront walkway. Note the recreation center (purple) and new open space next to the Boys' Club facility at the top left of the drawing.

Site B is an existing brick industrial building, now occupied by a church. If a new employment use could be found for this building, that would be ideal. The plan shows an improved parking area to the west of this building, screened from the street.

Two new office or light industrial uses are shown further to the east on Vandever, on Sites C and D, both with parking adjacent. These two new office/industrial buildings added to the existing buildings would create a small core of similar uses on this end of Vandever. Some business owners might be interested in taking advantage of the proximity of the Job Corps Center. If all have attractive landscaping, screening, and maintenance, this would go a long way to change the image of this street. Site D is on several sites now occupied by a printer, some vacant land and buildings, and several houses. By reconfiguring this site and removing buildings in poor condition, the printer could expand into a larger facility or another new use could be found.

On the next block to the east, between Lamotte and Jessup, the two existing industrial buildings could be renovated and screened parking areas could be added as shown. A strong emphasis should be placed on maintenance for these types of buildings, who could potentially be excellent neighbors. Possibly the types of loans available for façade renovation of retail buildings might also

be available for industrial buildings for renovations and improvements for parking and screening. Further to the east along Vandever between Pine and Spruce, a convenience store is shown on the north side of the street in the former location of a gas station, now demolished.

Although not highlighted in the plan, there is an existing small service/commercial area at the intersection of Vandever and Pine, including the locally renowned Walt's Flavor Crisp Chicken restaurant. These buildings remain in the plan, although they would benefit from a facelift.

South of this block next to the Boys' Club, the plan shows a new community building that could be used for meeting rooms and complementary recreational uses for the community. We have created a "campus" type arrangement of spaces, including parking and a new play field between the two buildings. (See Figure 5.18, above.)

5.1.8 Office/Light Industrial between the 16th Street Bridge and Northeast Blvd.

This series of sites along the creek and extending back towards 18th Street presents some challenges. The opportunities seem almost boundless for this site because of its proximity to and views toward the downtown, central location, excellent access and location on the Brandywine Creek. However, the site has one Superfund site (with cleanup now complete), and another very large property that is probably environmentally compromised and has not yet been thoroughly evaluated. Given the potential environmental problems, it is unlikely that housing would be an appropriate choice for this land. And in addition, market studies have shown that the housing market in this area of the city is flat or negative. What demand exists is likely to be fulfilled by the construction of the new Hope VI project immediately to the north. Given this, it is our recommendation that an employment use be located here. Further market studies will need to be conducted to ascertain whether and what exact type of development would be appropriate here, but it seems likely that an office/light industrial/distribution center would succeed because of the excellent location and access. Trucks servicing the site could enter directly off Northeast Boulevard, so the impact on the Village neighborhoods to the north and west would be minimal.

We have shown a public park on the western end of this area where the site is narrowed by the proximity of the quarry lake and the creek. A continuous waterfront walkway is also shown along the edge of the creek along the entire length of these properties. This is discussed in greater detail



Figure 5.19: Existing Conditions looking east on Concord Avenue at the intersection of Concord and 22nd. Figure 5.20: Proposed gateway treatment of Garfield Park plus new mixed use development at this intersection.

in Section 5.2.2.

5.2 Public Improvements

5.2.1 Gateways

Figure 4.1 illustrates possible locations for gateways. More elaborate treatments could be implemented at Concord and 23rd, and at Market and Race Streets, since these are the directions from which most people traveling into or through the Village will come. Improvements could be as simple as a small area sign with landscaping including annuals or perennials for color, to a small park area, to a gateway arch across the width of the street. Which is appropriate will depend on location, available space and available funds.

Figures 5.19 and 5.20 illustrate a before-and-after view of a potential gateway treatment at Concord and 23rd Street. There is a small existing park in this location, with a statue of President Garfield. The existing park is in very poor condition, and the statue is fenced in, presumably to protect it from vandalism or graffiti. We recommend that this park be slightly expanded and appropriately landscaped, with a welcome sign added at the point of the triangle. To protect the statue from vandalism, it could either be raised on a higher podium, or the entire park could be fenced with a steel picket fence and closed after dark.

We have also shown improvements to the triangular park at the corner of 22nd Street and Concord. This park could remain as it is for the immediate future, but the undulating brick in this park makes it uninviting as a space for pedestrians. A simple grass panel with a few trees and some annual beds for color would be more



Figure 5.21: Colorful gateway treatments such as this in one at the entry to the University of Maryland campus in College Park help to create a positive image of the community.

effective. As in the park at 23rd and Concord, if vandalism is a problem then this park could also be surrounded by a steel picket fence and closed at dusk. This type of arrangement usually requires that a local property owner or agency take responsibility for opening and closing the gates.

5.2.2 Improved Brandywine Mills Park and Riverfront access

At the present time Brandywine Mills Park is a nice park, but it suffers from lack of visibility and accessibility. We recommend that the park be redesigned to make it more visible from the end of Buena Vista Street, and that additional access and parking be provided from Mabel Street. Lastly, if the small industrial building that is now located on the creek west of the 16th Street bridge can be acquired and removed, which would open up the park at its eastern end as well. Although the tennis court remains in the plan, the treatment of this park is more formal than the present design, with more emphasis on the walk along the entire creek edge. We felt this would be a more appropriate treatment because of the spectacular views to the downtown available from this park. We have also shown a connection under the 16th Street bridge that will allow pedestrians and bicyclists to avoid

crossing the road at this busy intersection.

The community expressed the desire to extend riverfront access from Brandywine Park east towards Northeast Boulevard, and the plan shows a possible configuration of spaces that would accomplish that goal. The only place where a walkway along the creek edge is not possible is the site where the mid-rise apartments/condos are located, and for this stretch of the creek the walk could be moved to an improved sidewalk in front of the buildings, with signs directing people to the walkways on either side.

The plan shows a public park in the western end of the Superfund site. This area is quite narrow for development, and because of this it would be a good location for a neighborhood park and waterfront access. The treatment of this area could be similar to Brandywine Park.

Another open space opportunity would be to improve the land on either side of the 16th Street



Figure 5.22: A streetscape treatment such as this would be appropriate for Market Street. Elements should include unit paver sidewalks, tree grates to protect the trees (or raised planters), benches, trash receptacles, ornamental/flowering trees and special plantings in selected locations, and pedestrian lights with colorful banners

bridge on the other side of the creek. This land is presently underutilized but it is not a high priority because although it would improve the views from the north side of the creek, it would not have much of an impact on revitalization.

5.2.3 Overhead Utility Lines

Mitigation of the overhead utility lines should be considered for all the streetscape improvements, since if they remain as they are, it will be very difficult to plant trees and allow them to grow normally. And in addition, their number and lack of organization creates a negative impression. If possible, the lines should be buried, but if that is not possible, they should at least be consolidated and perhaps raised. Another possibility would be to leave them above grade but move them to the alleys or property lines behind the buildings. In situations where burial of the utility lines is prohibitively expensive, relocating them is often a good alternative.

5.2.4 Improved Streetscapes

Market Street. GVBR has always set a high priority on improvements to the environment and the buildings on Market Street, and we agree that this is appropriate. Design is now underway for improvements to the streetscape. We recommend that the streetscape include historic lights; concrete sidewalks with brick bands or brick sidewalks (depending on budget); quality historic street furniture, and trees in pits or grates. Tree grates are more expensive, but the current tree pits are poorly maintained and the trees are struggling to survive. If budget constraints make it impractical to use grates, then another possibility would be to raise the planters with a concrete curb to protect the plantings. Curbs only work, however, if there is at least two feet between the face of the curb and the planter curb (otherwise motorists hit their car doors on the planter curbs when they open them).

Other Streets. Other streets recommended for improvements in the Village do not require elaborate improvements because they do not generate a great deal of foot traffic. Nevertheless, the major corridors (Vandever and Concord Avenues) should be improved in order to provide a more positive image of the neighborhoods. Appropriate treatment would include concrete walks and tree pits with trees. Where utility lines are a problem, ways to relocate them or lessen their impact will be necessary. Streets that would benefit from this type of upgrade include Concord,



Figure 5.23: Simple treatments such as this concrete walk and tree-planting strip (or concrete walks with grassed tree pits for narrower right-of-way) are appropriate to improve residential streetscapes and vehicular streets such as Concord Avenue and Vandever. Trees and well-maintained walks can make a tremendous difference in perceptions about the quality of a neighborhood.

Vandever, Jessup and Pine.

On Concord, the sidewalks are very narrow buildings and stoops crowd the sidewalk and the street carries a large volume of traffic. We have therefore suggested that any new buildings on Concord be set back 5-10' from the right-of-way. This will allow installation of street trees and still leave enough room for at least a five-foot sidewalk inside the tree pits.

We have also shown improvements on 23rd Street. This street is one of the only through streets that is not a major vehicular connector running east-west through the neighborhoods on both sides of Market. It also has a significant number of houses in good condition at the present time. It also connects to Price Run Park on the east end of the street, and could be used by children from the neighborhood who walk to the Edison Charter School. We recommend that the walks be replaced and street trees be planted in order to reinforce this street as an attractive pedestrian connection through the neighborhoods.

6.0 Implementation Strategies

To move the plan forward, GBVR will need to coordinate with the city and nonprofits to promote and implement the plan. Here is a checklist of actions that experience tells us will help kick start the revitalization process. Those groups or entities that can assist in the process are also identified in italics, as are suggested time-lines for such actions.

6.1 Priority Projects and Actions Needed

- **Approve the Plan.** One of the most important steps that should be taken is for the community and the City to approve and adopt the plan. This will give the development community assurance that they can proceed with plans for redevelopment confident that they will be supported by the public sector. It will also greatly assist in the process of obtaining funding and other support essential to implementation. *Responsibility: GBVR and City. Timeframe: within six months.*
- **Create additional documentation needed designate the study area as an Urban Renewal Area.** The city planning department should begin review of the plan to determine what additional documentation is needed to create an urban renewal area. *Responsibility: City Planning Department with assistance as needed from GVBR. Timing: begin immediately with a goal of implementation of changes by the end 2001 or sooner.*
- **Review zoning regulations and make any needed changes.** Review the zoning codes and make any changes needed to implement the plan. *Responsibility: City Planning, with assistance as needed from GVBR. Timeline: complete by the end of 2001.*
- **Prepare design guidelines for Market Street, Vandever and Concord.** Design guidelines are not requirements, but rather design goals for the community. High quality developers tend to like working with communities that have such guidelines in place because they are reassured that if they build a high-quality development, nearby properties will be held to the same standard. Design guidelines deal with architecture, signs, materials, siting of buildings, and other site guidelines such as landscaping and screening of parking and trash dumpsters. *Responsibility: GBVR. Timeline: begin immediately with the goal of having the guidelines in place by the end of 2001.*
- **Guide process for establishment of Business Improvement District on Market Street in the Village.** GBVR should work with business owners on Market Street to promote the formation of a BID. Such an organization will be critical to the success on Market Street, and would undoubtedly assist with recruiting new businesses. Once the BID has been established, GBVR's Project Manager could act as part-time coordinator for this group if that is desired by

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- both entities. *Timeline: begin immediately, with a goal of establishing the BID during early or mid-2002.*
- ***Move forward with plans for streetscape improvements to Market Street and seek additional funds as needed to implement this and other streetscape.*** Plans for physical improvements to Market Street should move forward as soon as possible. In addition, additional funding sources should be identified and pursued for additional projects, such as the ***gateway on Concord*** and more modest improvements to ***Concord and Vandever***. If funding is limited for the first phase of improvements, choose a section of Market to improve rather than making less of an impact on a larger area. Choose the area for improvements to assist with initial development opportunities. *Responsibility: GBVR in cooperation with city and state transportation departments and city planning. Timeline: begin immediately, with the goal of implementing the first phase of improvements by the end of 2002.*
 - ***Begin assembling properties on 22nd and Lamotte for residential redevelopment.*** The Housing authority has already begun acquiring properties on 22nd. This process should continue with the goal of acquiring the most troubled properties on the three or four blocks adjacent to the intersection of 22nd and Lamotte. Work on building a coalition of neighborhood groups, nonprofits, GBVR and the city to give this project high priority and implement it as soon as possible. It will be critical to obtain enough properties to turn this area around as soon as possible. At the same time, investigate what actions may be needed to reverse the direction of traffic on 22nd. *Responsibility: The city Housing Authority should take the lead on this, with assistance as needed from GBVR and other community groups and nonprofits. Timeline: acquire any targeted properties that become available now, so that implementation can begin as soon as the urban renewal area designation is obtained. Smaller projects might begin even before that, such as demolition of vacant properties or redevelopment/rehab of some of the better properties by nonprofit housing groups.*
 - ***Begin work on assembling properties for the retail/open space project on the northwest corner of Concord and Market.*** The lead for this project should come from GBVR, with active promotion of the site for redevelopment as a first-class retail/mixed use project. Acquisition of the gas station will take a coordinated effort from city agencies, as well, including Real Estate and Development, Planning, and probably even the state Department of the Environment if there are questions about the tanks on the site. Transportation will also need to be involved if the suggestion for a bus turnaround is implemented, but care should be taken in the design of this facility to ensure that it does not negatively impact nearby development. *Timeline: begin immediately, with the goal of assembling the property and finding a developer by mid-2002.*
 - ***Promotion of other properties for redevelopment.*** Another key property is the ***grocery store and pharmacy*** on the east side of Market. This project will also require a coordinated effort

with the city, as acquisition/relocation of some of the businesses and residents will be a complex task. GBVR's role should be to act as the point of contact and liaison with the community, existing property owners and any developers interested in the area. Although the grocery store development should have a high priority, it will be important to remain flexible in order to respond to any opportunities that arise, such as a **restaurant in the Mammele's warehouse**. In order to attract a grocery store, state community development funds may need to be used for a low-interest loan or rent subsidy (RGDE). *Responsibility: City, state, GBVR. Timeline: ongoing.*

- **Promotion/marketing of Brandywine Village.** GBVR will have a major role to play in marketing and promoting the Village to the community, downtown workers, and potential home buyers, businesses, and industries. If a BID is set up in the Village, GBVR could also act as the part-time manager/coordinator of that entity. Promotion might also include coordination of efforts to maximize the visibility of the Village and the impact of historic resources through marketing materials, events, and press releases. See RGDE Implementation Strategy for more detail on this. *Responsibility: GBVR, with help from Main Street and BID. Timeline: develop a marketing plan and objectives and begin implementation immediately.*

6.2 Funding Strategies

Begin identifying possible funding sources for specific projects as soon as possible. Once the plan has been approved, all interested agencies should share ideas on ways to get elements of the plan implemented. Some groups might "adopt" a certain part of the plan and seek funding just for that portion of the plan (e.g. Habitat for Humanity might tackle housing in a particular area, or a community group might try to raise money for a recreation center). GBVR and the City should coordinate efforts for maximum effect. Funding sources might include:

- TEA-21 or DelDOT TIP funds for streetscape improvements
- CDBG or other community development funds tied to job creation for projects such as the grocery store or retail/mixed use at the intersection of Concord and Market
- Community reinvestment funds from local banks for projects such as low-interest loans and/or grants for building renovation and façade or site improvements
- Funds from a BID for a contribution to physical improvement to the streetscape
- Bonds for specific projects such as streetscape improvements
- Corporate sponsorships, donations or grants for GBVR operating expenses
- Electric company contributions for relocating/consolidation/burying of the overhead lines
- Donation of time/coordination by local educational institutions in elements such as events

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- related to the history of the Village
- Corporate/business/institutional sponsorships for community events
 - Foundation grants for specific elements of the plan
 - Private donations of bricks, benches, lights or special features for gateways, small parks or other discrete public improvements