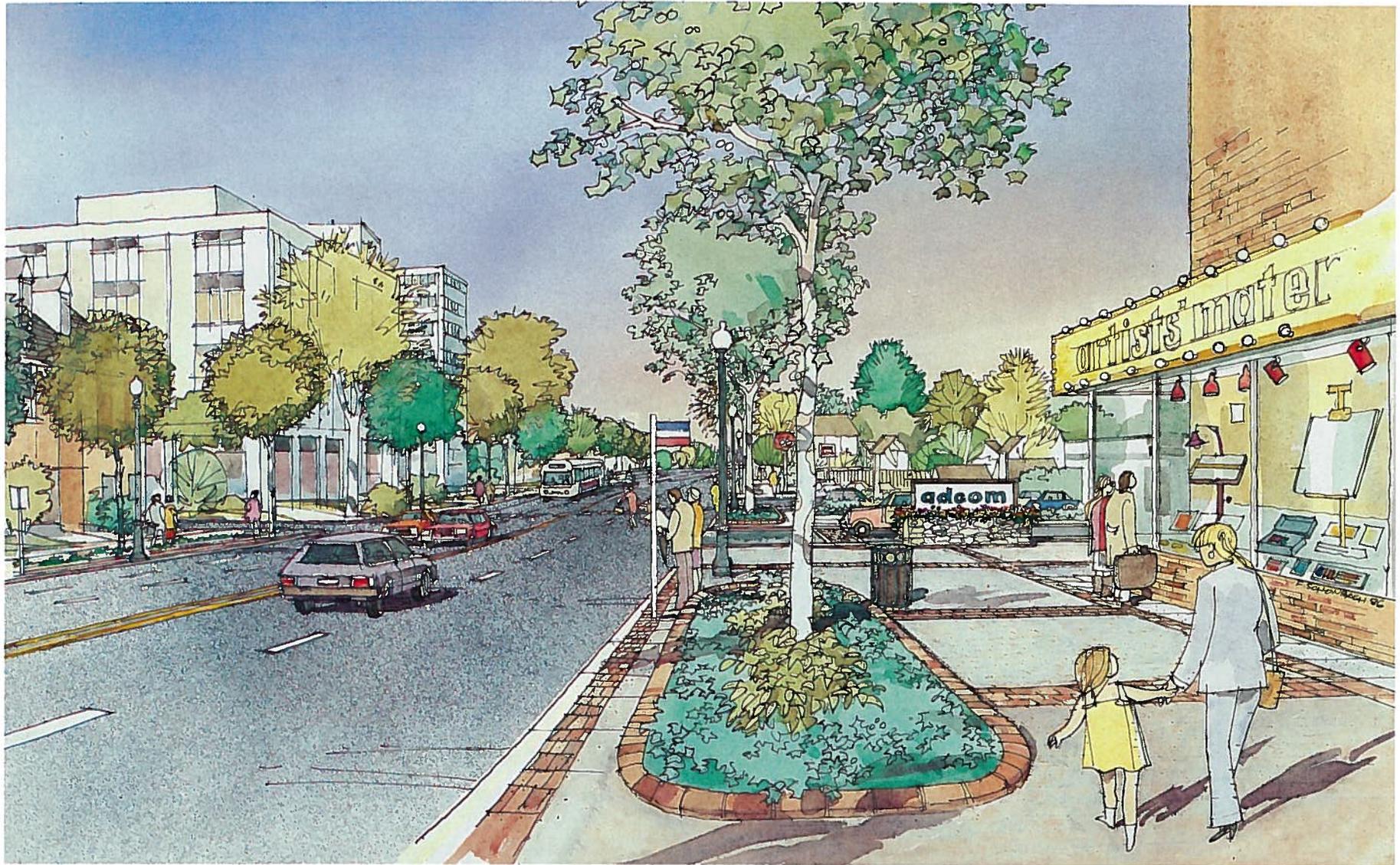


# ADOPTED STREETScape PLAN FOR WEST BROAD STREET



City of Falls Church

August 1987

STREETSCAPE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 1986

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Printed February 1988



## CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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January 27, 1988

Dear Residents and Business Persons of Falls Church:

On behalf of the City Council I am pleased to present to you the adopted "Streetscape Plan for West Broad Street". This Plan, adopted by the City Council on August 10, 1987, is the product of over two years of study, discussion, and consensus building.

For over a year, the Streetscape Advisory Committee and City staff studied the problems, potential solutions, and opportunities inherent in this important corridor. Their final report, "Streetscape Plan for West Broad Street; Recommendations of the Streetscape Advisory Committee", was published in December, 1986. This report provided a strong conceptual plan and a good basis for productive discussion, review, and decision making.

Following diligent review by the citizens of Falls Church and independent critiques by six landscape architecture firms, the plan was modified and adopted. The adopted plan is now being readied for implementation. The City and its landscape architectural consultant are preparing the final plans and specifications, in concert with the Virginia Department of Transportation. This work constitutes the final phase before construction of our long awaited West Broad Street Improvement Project.

We hope that this report will assist you in furthering your understanding of this important civic improvement, and that it will help citizens and business persons to become more informed about this project, so they may provide the City with continued input. We also hope that this report will aid those who wish to build or renovate, or who have other business interests in the affected area.

If you have any questions concerning the contents of this report, please contact the City's Department of Planning and Development.

Sincerely,

Carol W. DeLong,  
Mayor

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY OF PLAN

On December 14, 1981, and again on September 30, 1985, the Falls Church City Council adopted the "Route 7 (Broad Street) Improvement Program." This document outlined the goals, objectives, and conceptual design policies for the redesign of Broad Street and its right of way. The Improvement Program was incorporated into the Master Plan text and presented to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to serve as a guide during the design of the Route 7 road improvements. The formulation of the VDOT plans, which are currently under review, has stimulated an interest in a Broad Street Streetscape Plan.

In 1983 the Village Preservation and Improvement Society of Falls Church (VPIS) commissioned the firm of LA-W to propose a conceptual landscape plan for West Broad and North Washington Streets. This plan, named "Greensleeves," was presented to the City which reviewed it thoroughly. In January 1985 a set of conceptual design standards for street trees was developed by the City Arborist in conjunction with the landscape architectural firm of Douglas and Associates. This project, referred to as "The Greening of Falls Church," set forth technical standards and a conceptual landscape plan for part of the City's downtown.

On July 22, 1985, the Falls Church City Council formed the Streetscape Committee, composed of one representative each from the City Council, Planning Commission, Citizen's Advisory Committee on Transportation, Business Development Commission, Architectural Advisory Board, Tree Commission, Chamber of Commerce and Village Preservation and Improvement Society. The Committee was to "advise the staff, review its work, provide suggestions and criticisms and be a forum for creating consensus (or clearly understood differences of opinion) on the issues."

The Streetscape Committee published its final report, entitled "Proposed Streetscape Plan for West Broad Street," in December 1986. The Committee's recommendations were based on information and policies obtained from the above mentioned resources, staff research, and field trips. The plan reflected the efforts of the Committee to consolidate and evaluate numerous pieces of information and to formulate and agree upon a detailed design concept for the study area.

Throughout the winter, spring and summer of 1987, the recommendations of the Streetscape Committee were scrutinized by citizens, the City Council, Planning Commission, other boards and commissions, professionals and staff. During the spring six landscape architectural firms critiqued the proposed recommendations. These critiques, received by the City in June, provided advice, suggestions, and critical and positive comments. The majority of the critiques favored many of the proposed recommendations and concurred with the ideas presented in the proposal.

These critiques and many suggestions from various other individuals formed the basis for revisions to the Streetscape Committee's recommendations. On August 10, 1987, the City Council passed the revised recommendations creating the Adopted Broad Street Streetscape Plan. This Plan incorporates many of the Streetscape Committee's recommendations. The revisions maintain the flavor, cause, purpose and pursuits of this Committee and its decisions.

## THE PLAN AREA

The center of Falls Church is perceived as the intersection of Broad Street (Route 7) and Washington Street (Route 29). These streets act as the City's major commercial corridors and are part of Northern Virginia's major arterial network. They not only serve the commercial needs of Falls Church residents, but provide visitors with their principal image of the City.

This Plan focuses on Broad Street from its intersection with Fairfax Street west to Haycock Road (Figure 1). The major intersections of Washington and Broad and Haycock and Broad are included in the 1.5-mile stretch of this Plan. Although the Haycock and Shreve Road intersection is located just outside the City limits, it has been included due to its proximity to the City and City property.

The side streets within the Plan Area, including Washington Street, will be individually studied and planned during a future phase of this project.

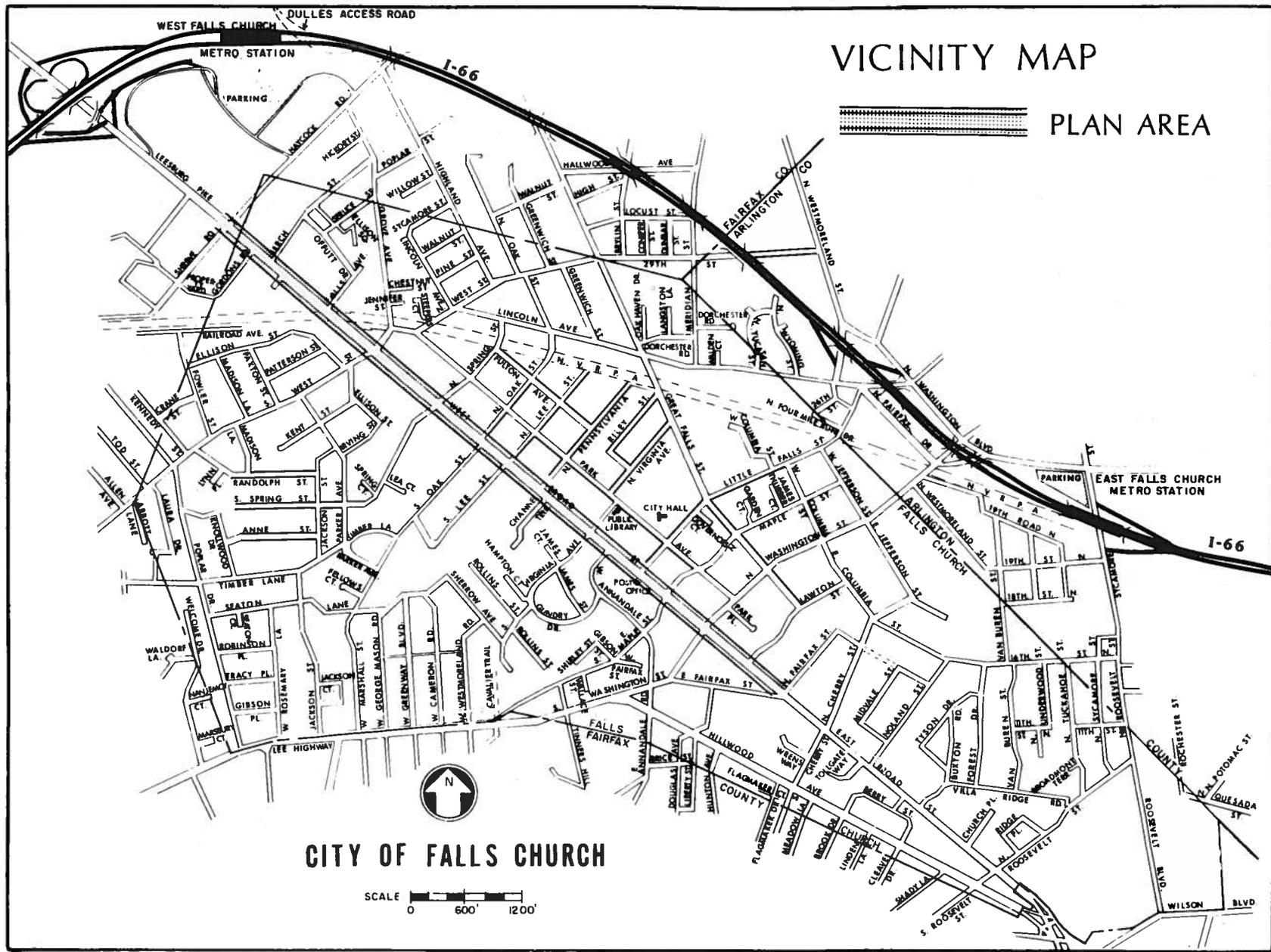


Figure 1.

## HISTORY OF THE PLAN AREA

Broad Street has always played an important role in the history of Falls Church. During the 18th century, Falls Church was a small village surrounding a major crossroad on the Leesburg Pike. In 1860 the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad (later the Washington & Old Dominion) brought rail service to Falls Church, connecting the City to Alexandria and Leesburg. Following the Civil War, a direct rail link to Washington attracted numerous new residents to the village. By 1875 the community decided to incorporate, forming the Town of Falls Church.

The 20th century brought trolley service to the City, along with automobiles, improved road conditions and increased home building. With these transportation improvements, especially the growing popularity of the automobile, more streets, subdivisions and houses came to Falls Church. In the years following World War II, Falls Church became a part of the Northern Virginia building boom.

In 1947, Falls Church became an independent City. It retained its own hub of business activity, but around its edges and down its main streets, auto-oriented commercial strip development became prevalent. The mid-1950's brought "progress" to West Broad Street, including the destruction of the large trees which lined this centuries-old street.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS IN THE PLAN AREA

Today, the Plan Area is marred by its commercial strip character. A jumble of signs, poles, asphalt expanses, numerous curb cuts, stunted landscaping and deteriorating sidewalks and facades leaves the impression of confusion, neglect and, in some locations, decline (Figure 2). This negative impression discourages pedestrian and business activity. It discourages drivers from slowing down and patronizing the businesses that line the street. More important, the numerous poles, traffic signs, poor drainage, insufficient lighting, poorly designed, neglected and unscreened parking lots, and frequent curb cuts create dangerous conditions for drivers. These conditions are compounded for pedestrians by the presence of narrow and crumbling sidewalks immediately adjacent to the vehicular travel ways. There is also a general lack of proper accessibility for handicapped and elderly persons. The absence of benches, litter receptacles, bus shelters, drinking fountains and quality landscaping creates discomfort and makes the area less inviting than it could be.

Currently, the Broad Street corridor is not a particularly active pedestrian area during the day, and it appears lifeless at night. The lack of pedestrians is a strong indication that the area fails to provide a pleasant, safe and positive pedestrian atmosphere. By discouraging pedestrian use, current conditions create greater dependency on motor vehicles, thus increasing vehicular congestion.

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PLAN AREA

These silent sidewalks suggest missed opportunities. An increase in pedestrians would increase the number of potential customers, clients, and investors. Better designed parking would make the area more convenient, comfortable, and inviting for the motorist. New and renovated offices, shops and restaurants, in conjunction with an improved pedestrian environment, would encourage the activity that is now missing.

The opportunity exists along Broad Street to make it a vital City corridor for both motorists and pedestrians. Its mixed commercial uses and nearby residential neighborhoods could allow for day and evening activity. The opening of the East and West Falls Church Metro Stations and other current market forces make Falls Church ripe for a renaissance of development and renovation appropriate to its scale and residential environment.

The City's concerned residents, its lovely neighborhood, and its active business community encourage and give credibility to the Streetscape Program. Falls Church has the concern and energy to create a cohesive, functional and pleasant Broad Street corridor.



Figure 2. *Current Conditions*

## II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the Broad Street Streetscape Plan reflect the various economic, aesthetic, ecological, and social aspects of the Plan Area.

The goals are:

- To provide an aesthetically pleasing and functional business corridor.
- To provide a safe, comfortable and inviting pedestrian environment.
- To encourage a renaissance of business use and activity consistent with the Master Plan.

The objectives set forth to achieve these goals are:

- To widen and improve pedestrian walks.
- To improve crosswalks.
- To create a physical and psychological separation between pedestrian and vehicular zones.
- To provide useful and attractive street furniture.
- To reduce the number of curb cuts.
- To complete the undergrounding of overhead utility lines.
- To improve existing storm sewers.
- To improve street lighting.
- To screen parking lots from streets and sidewalks.
- To provide a continuous canopy of tall street trees.

- To create streetscape design districts which reflect the nature and density of development adjacent to the street.
- To allow flexibility for variations in existing conditions and the design of future buildings along the street.
- To provide an attractive and functional frame for businesses that front on the street.
- To provide a streetscape scheme which is complementary to the City's sign controls.

# III. THE CONCEPT PLAN

The Concept Plan demonstrates the relationship of basic elements within the Plan (Figure 3). The Plan Area is a linear travel corridor. This Plan strives to enhance this important function by providing safer and more comfortable vehicular and pedestrian movement.

The Plan Area serves another purpose as well. It is a stage for pedestrian interaction and commercial endeavor. By providing an interesting, attractive and comfortable environment along the right of way, the Plan encourages pedestrian involvement and movement while enhancing the appearance and appeal of the retail and office structures which line Broad Street.

This concept was devised through the application of the previously stated goals. The Plan's typical streetscape consists of a 14-foot-wide area between the face of the curb and the rear edge of the public sidewalk. This 14-foot area incorporates a 5-foot-wide planting strip which buffers a 6-foot-wide public sidewalk from the street.

In areas where parking is adjacent to the public right of way, the parking will be screened by an additional row of trees and other landscaping. This second row of shrubs and trees visually screens the parked cars, asphalt, and the associated glare from the public right of way, shades the parking area and provides an overhead canopy of street trees for the pedestrian. This row of trees (located between the sidewalk and the parking lot) could be eliminated or modified, if landscape improvements, including the addition of trees, are made to the interior of the adjacent parking lot.

Four key concepts influenced the Streetscape Plan and its individual elements.

## Unity

A sense of unity and harmony is important to the Broad Street design concept. The Plan utilizes a unified set of street trees, streetlights, pavement and street furniture. A regularly spaced row of trees within planting strips, and streetlights are the strongest unifying components of this Plan. These components, within the framework of the building facades and the width of the street, provide a pleasing sense of enclosure for pedestrians and motorists.

Periodic, subtle variations in the type of landscaping and sidewalk pavement allow the streetscape to remain a single whole, provide additional identifying elements for the sub-districts, and guard against monotony and a horticultural monoculture.

## The Sub-districts

Variation is inherent to the Plan Area. Two types of environments have evolved. These two environments or sub-districts have been named the Urban Sub-district and the Village Sub-district. These sub-districts correspond to the number of travel lanes. The Urban Sub-districts have 5 lanes while the Village Sub-district has 4 lanes. The sub-districts' titles are derived from the style of architecture and the site plan layouts currently prevalent in the specific areas.

### *Urban Sub-districts*

The Urban Sub-districts have been identified as those areas located between Haycock Road and The Old Brick House (the West End) and between Little Falls Street and Lawton Street (the Downtown). Hard pavement and storefront commercial architecture is prevalent in these areas. Parking lots or wide sidewalks connect the public right of way to the structures. The majority of the structures are commercial in scale and appearance. The one block area located between Lawton Street and East and North Fairfax Streets exhibits the narrower street width and softer adjacent landscaping seen in the Village Sub-district. By blending these existing conditions with "Downtown Urban" streetscape improvements, a transition is created between the Urban Sub-district and the residential area east of Fairfax Street.

### *Village Sub-district*

The Village Sub-district has been identified as that area between The Old Brick House and Little Falls Street. A soft landscape of lawns and shrubs, with architecture of a residential scale and character, is common in this area.

The Streetscape Plan recognizes these areas and provides subtle variations in the design within the right of way. These are discussed in greater detail in Section IV, "Streetscape Elements". The overriding concern when preserving these sub-districts is maintaining those differences which exist away from the right of way. Figures 4-9 show the typical configuration of the Streetscape Plan within the three sub-districts.

### Focal Points or Nodes

As the sub-districts provide variation along the length of the streetscape, the focal points provide highlights within the streetscape. This added attention to specific points along the corridor provides special interest. In some cases these focal points break the linearity of the Plan not by destroying its cohesiveness but by allowing the public area to spread out away from the street. They interrupt the linearity by creating landmarks which divide the area into easily remembered segments, without destroying the overriding visual unity of the corridor. These landmarks also provide a greater sense of place. Many of them are unique to Falls Church and they highlight areas of historic importance or symbolism.

Certain streetscape elements and variations of the basic Streetscape Plan are utilized at each focal point. This special treatment unifies and highlights the focal points while still relating these areas to the overall Plan. These shared elements are:

- Twin luminaries of the streetlights.
- Brick sidewalks outlined in a decorative border.
- Additional landscaping including seasonal color, and/or flowering trees and evergreens.
- Designated areas for the display of public art, either now or when redevelopment occurs.

The individual focal points will undergo detailed design at a later date. Their individual significance and use plays an intricate role in their design. General treatments have been discussed.

*The West End Entry* - a gateway to Falls Church:

- Extend the streetscape project to the Haycock Road intersection.
- Provide a 16 foot wide crosswalk across Broad Street at Haycock Road.

- Landscape the median and erect signage incorporating the name of the City and the street.
- Put forth guidelines to encourage any redevelopment in the immediate area to recognize its importance as a "gateway".
- Encourage public open space, public art and other amenities adjacent to the right-of-way.

*The W&OD Bike Trail* - a major current and historic thoroughfare intersecting West Broad Street, providing pedestrian and bicycle access and green space.

- Develop well landscaped sitting areas where the bike trail meets the streetscape. Include extra benches, bike racks, a drinking fountain on the north side, litter receptacles, and displays or signage depicting and explaining Falls Church's rail history. The park areas located on either side of the street should complement each other, and bring additional depth and landscaping to the streetscape.
- Consider relocating the bike trail across the property north of the present car wash, down Falls Avenue, across Broad and diagonally back to the original trail developing the abandoned portions of the trail as parks.

*The Rees House* - one of the very few historic structures on West Broad Street. The Rees House provides a good example of Victorian architecture and a deep front yard in an area basically devoid of these elements. The residential and historic nature of the structure forms a symbolic connection between the commercial corridor of Broad Street and the nearby residential neighborhoods of Falls Church. The Rees House's location is midpoint in the streetscape.

- Provide additional benches and litter receptacles.
- Study the possibility of purchasing the Rees property for the utilization of the front yard as a Victorian public park, to include public art.

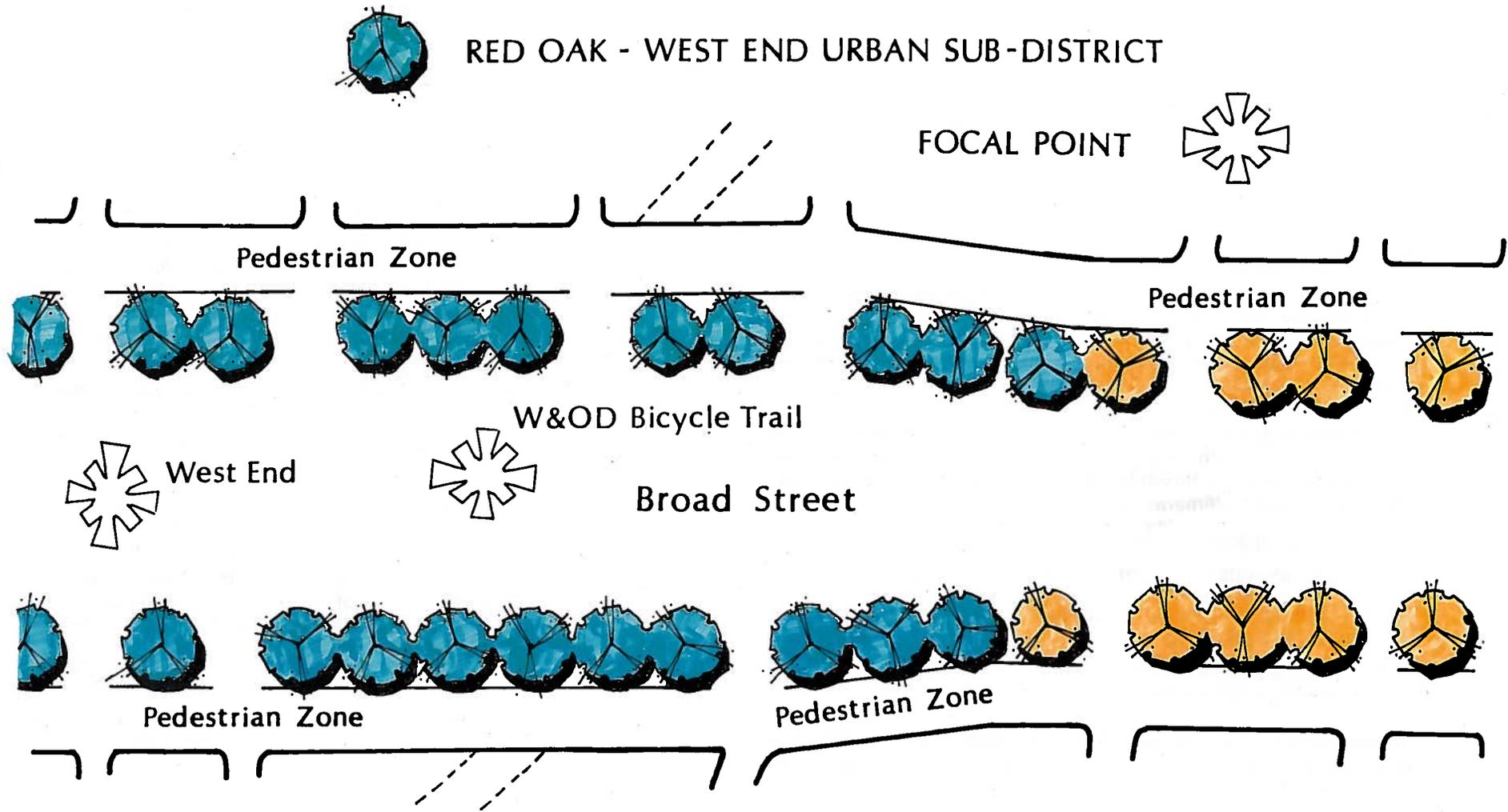


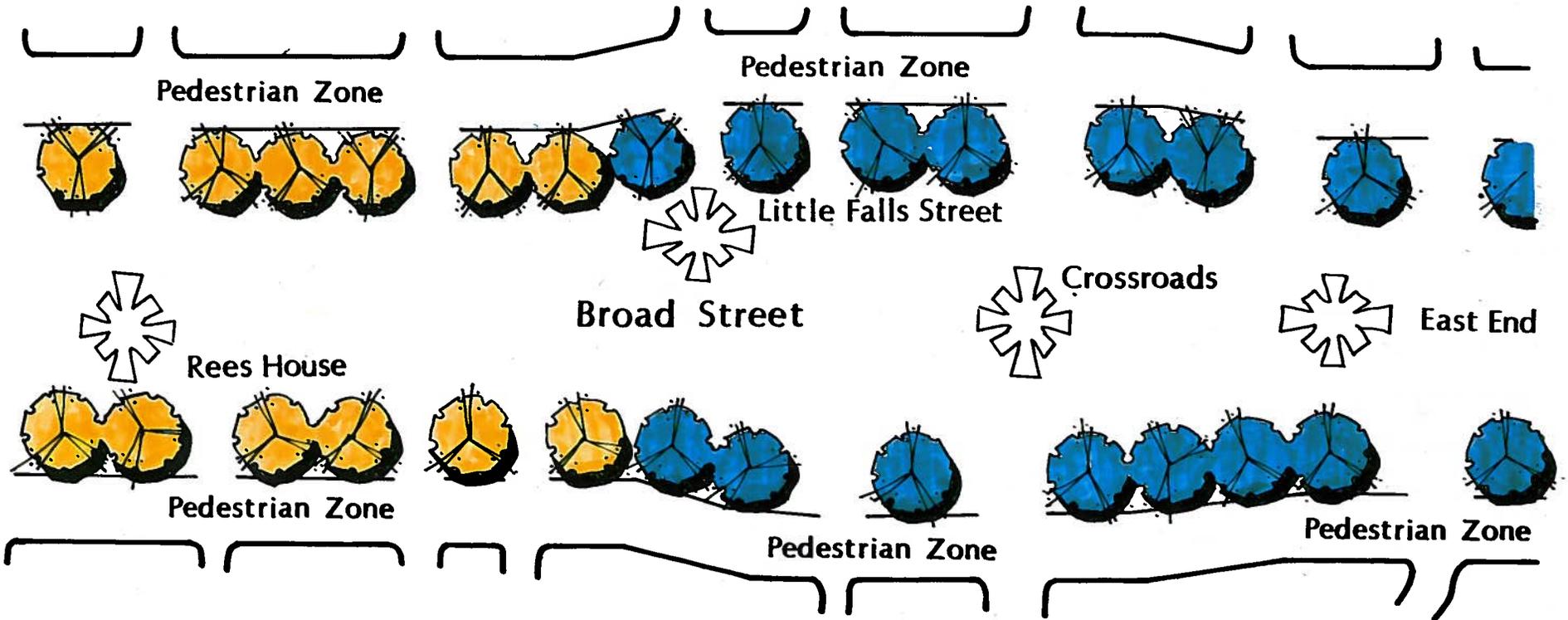
Figure 3.



WILLOW OAK - DOWNTOWN URBAN SUB-DISTRICT



LONDON PLANE TREE - VILLAGE SUB-DISTRICT



CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Not To Scale



November 1987

*Little Falls and West Broad Street Intersection* - a major connector, physically and symbolically, between the municipal and commercial areas of the City. The presence of the Post Office heightens the special quality of this area:

- Provide additional benches, litter receptacles and a bicycle rack.
- Provide directional signs to City Hall.
- Provide public space, art, additional landscaping and other amenities in future redevelopment.

*The Intersection of Broad Street and Washington Street* - historic center of both the City of Falls Church and its commercial corridors:

- Provide four 16-foot wide crosswalks to mark intersection.
- Encourage brick with concrete ribs for sidewalks when redevelopment occurs; provide brick sidewalks in plan.
- Encourage additional public pedestrian spaces near the intersection.

*East End Entry* - begins the transition into the commercial center of Falls Church and the streetscape.

- Provide benches, trash receptacles and landscaping at small park at the end of the Historic Triangle.
- Retain bus shelter.

## Eclecticism

The inclusion of the W&OD Bike Trail, the Rees House and the historic crossroads as nodes or focal points highlights various significant periods in Falls Church history. These three areas reflect Falls Church's growth over three centuries. Falls Church continues to display a historic continuum in its growth and development which will be reflected along its principal street.

To reflect the richness of Falls Church's history, the chosen streetscape elements do not recall one specific historic period. They utilize traditional as well as modern shapes and forms, blending into an eclectic combination equally appropriate before a modern glass and steel structure, a Victorian house, or a Georgian-inspired office building. This allows the streetscape to succeed in various environments. It also celebrates Falls Church's traditional roots without losing its several historic traditions in the quest to celebrate only one.

## Additional Studies

Further study needs to be given to five additional aspects of the Plan: side streets, focal points, parking, pedestrian paths, and the combination of design guidelines, zoning amendments, and incentives needed to enhance the differences between the various sub-districts. These issues are integral to the concept and success of this Plan.

## Side Streets

As described in Section I, the treatment of side streets is a matter of critical concern. The side streets within the corridor fall into three categories: major streets which are heavily traveled, streets of symbolic importance, and various other side streets of lesser use but of importance due to their connection to residential neighborhoods.

Major streets include North and South Washington Streets, North and South West Streets, Haycock Road and Shreve Road. In the symbolic category are East Fairfax Street, North Virginia Avenue, and Little Falls Street. The majority of other side streets connect Falls Church's residential neighborhoods to its commercial corridor.

Due to the importance of these side streets and the need to appropriately address each individual street, this Plan recommends that further study be given to the streetscape for these streets.

## Focal Points or Nodes

As stated previously, the focal points or nodes need additional study and design. These important streetscape features need to be studied individually and as a unit. Their purpose and the amount of land (if any) which will be acquired by the City should be considered. Their detailed design should be executed carefully and in accordance with the Streetscape Plan, and the overall and individual purpose of the node.

## Parking

Parking is also a major concern along Broad Street. Further study and recommendations need to be developed for treating existing and future parking in the area, including on-street parking along side streets. As described above, parking located adjacent to the right of way should be screened by additional trees and/or other landscaping.

Different solutions are necessary for incorporating parking into the various sub-districts. In both instances an easily accessible and attractive solution must be found. Guidelines, recommendations and incentives need to be developed in accordance with other sub-district guidelines.

## Pedestrian Paths

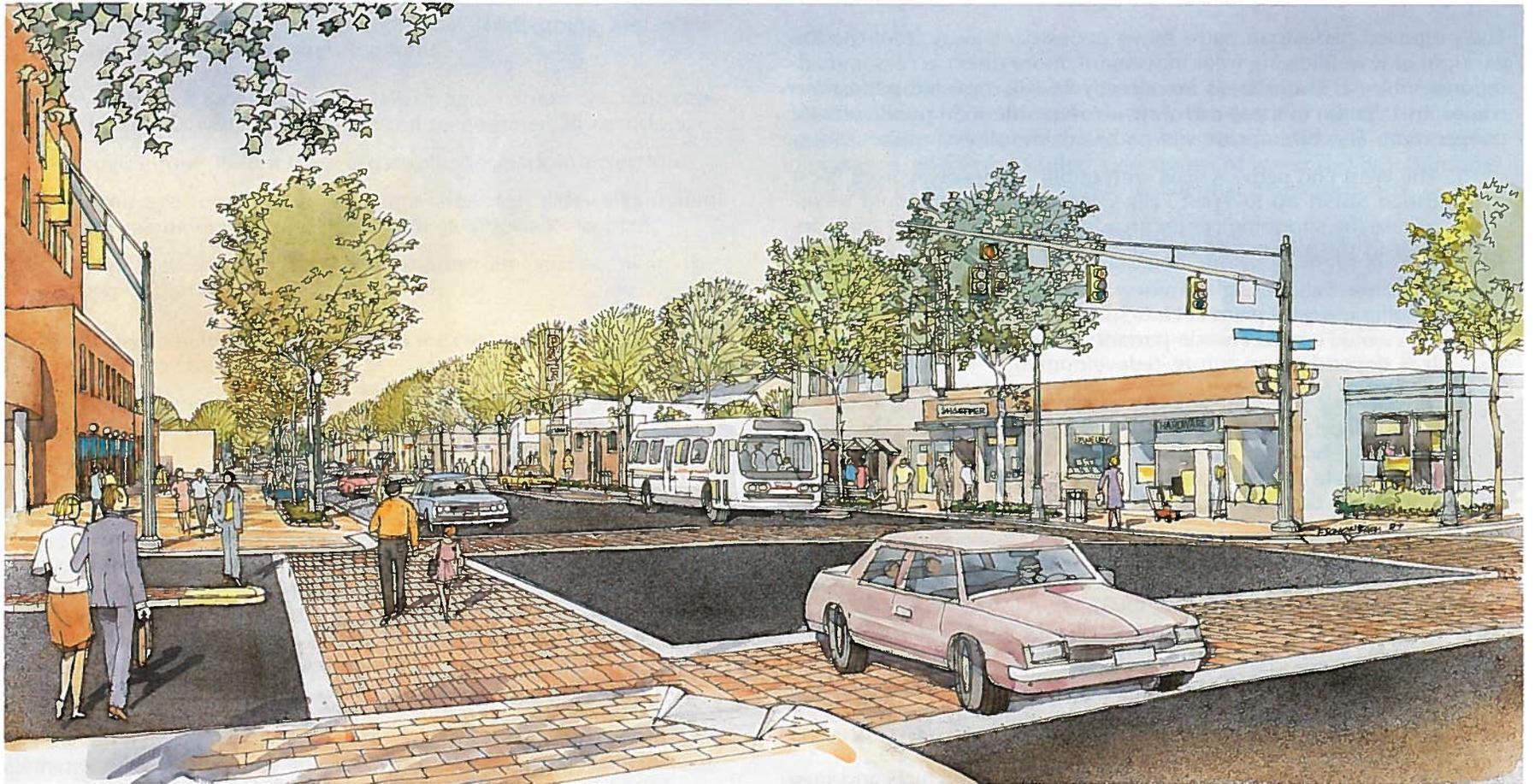
The proposed pedestrian paths move pedestrians away from the linear right of way, allowing freer movement, more direct access and additional interest. These areas are already heavily traveled pedestrian routes. Installation of these pathways are dependent on public/private cooperation. The three proposed paths are as follows:

1. The West End path - A walk with public access away from West Broad Street up to West Falls Center. This walk would incorporate the shopping center arcade, cross Birch Street and connect to the arcade at Falls Plaza and onto Haycock Road.
2. The Little Falls to Big Chimneys Park Path - a public walk connecting the focal point at Little Falls Street to Big Chimneys Park. This would connect two important and symbolic municipal areas. It is dependent on future redevelopment.
3. The Historic Triangle Path - A pedestrian path running from East Broad Street, east of Independence Square to East Fairfax Street, east of the historic Falls Church. This would allow the pedestrian to penetrate and traverse the historic triangle. Historic information could be provided on markers along the path.

## Design Guidelines

A study of design guidelines, zoning amendments and incentives is needed to help guide future development and redevelopment of private property along Broad Street. The purposes of this study would be to:

1. Retain a residential style and scale of buildings in the Village Sub-district, with front and side yard landscaping and parking placed well off of the street.
2. Develop appropriate urban, commercial style structures and sites in the urban sub-districts, with underground or well designed, above-ground, structured parking.



**Figure 4. Artist's Rendering of the Urban Downtown**

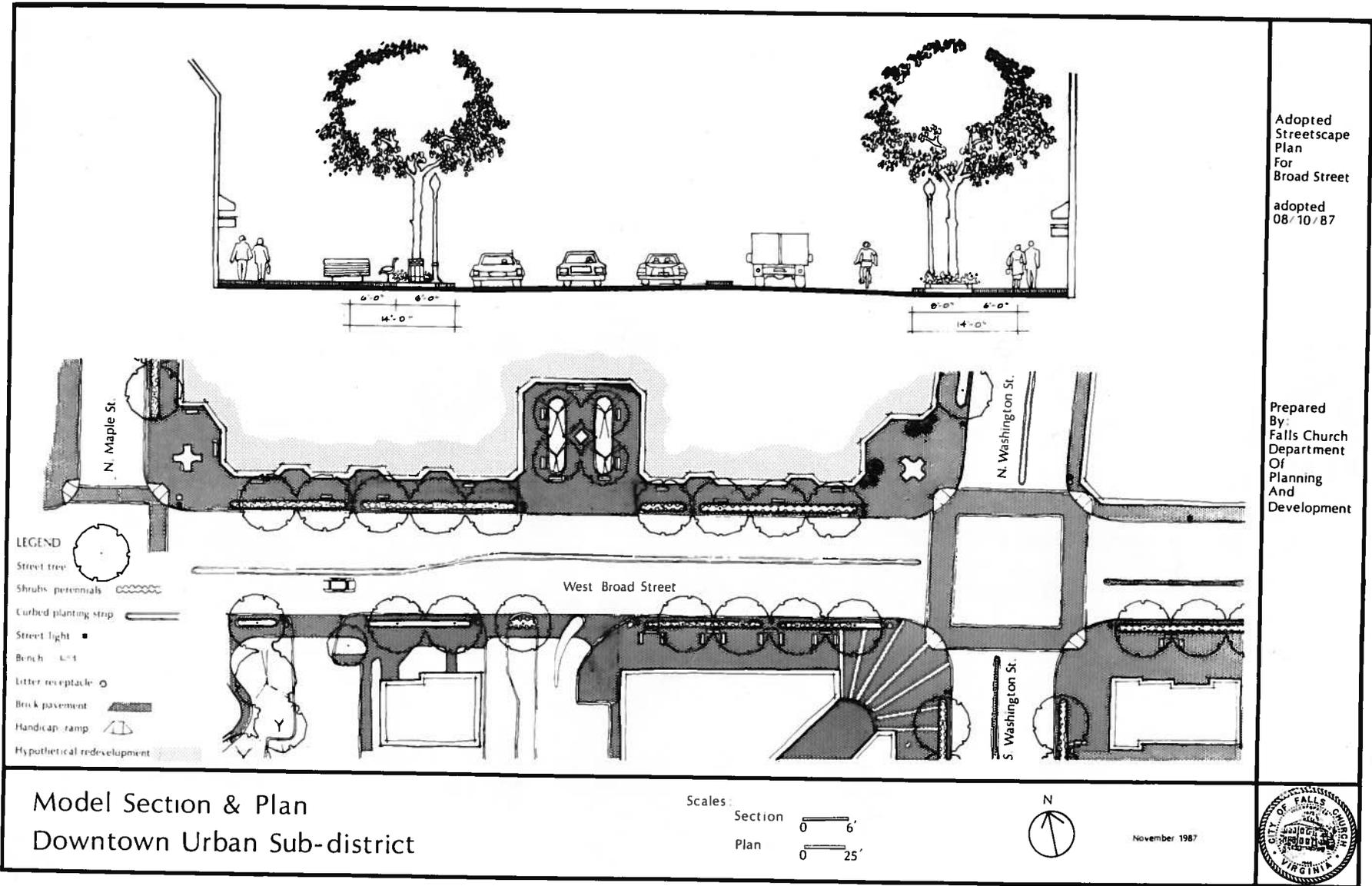


Figure 5. Section and Plan of the Downtown Urban Sub-District

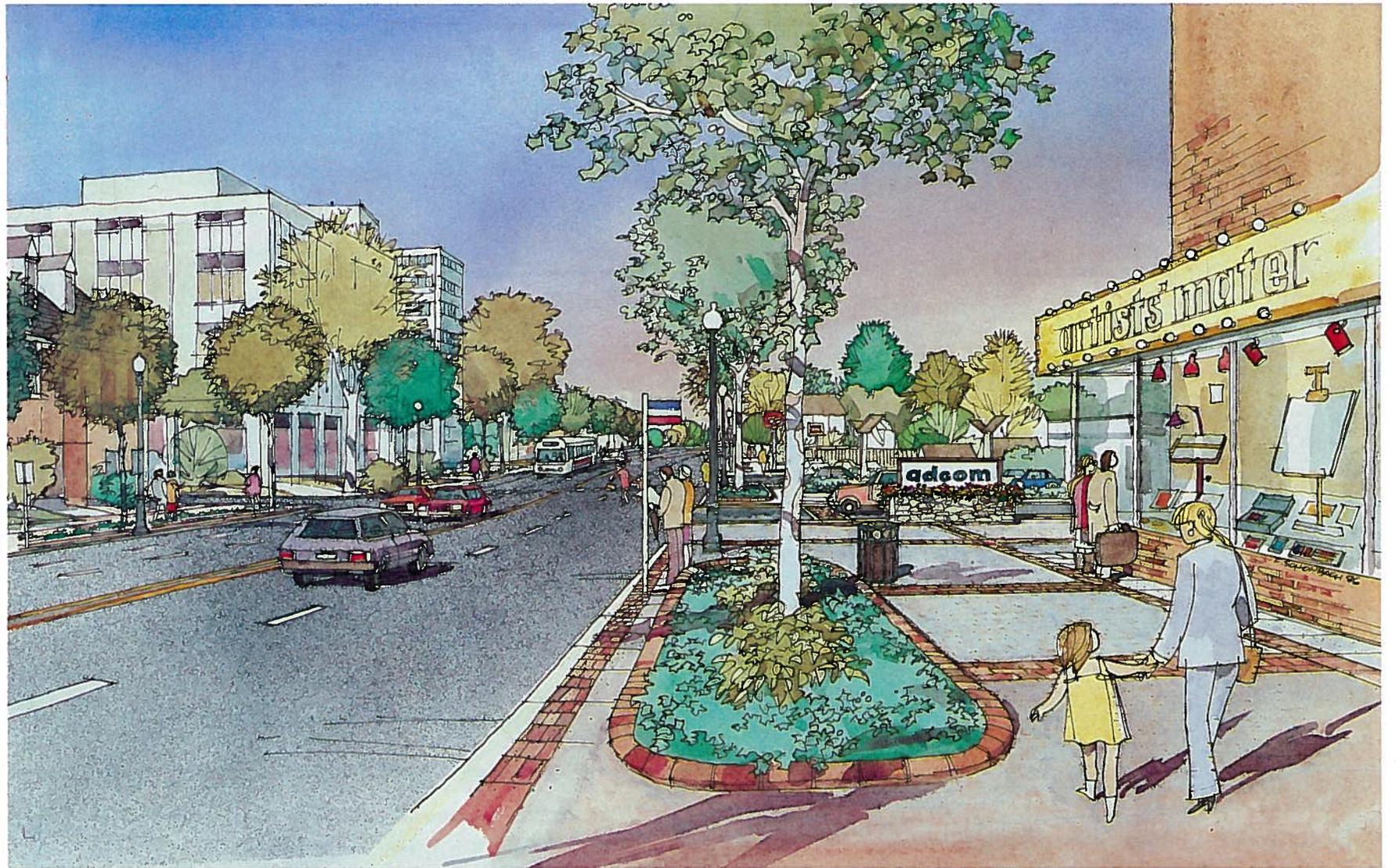
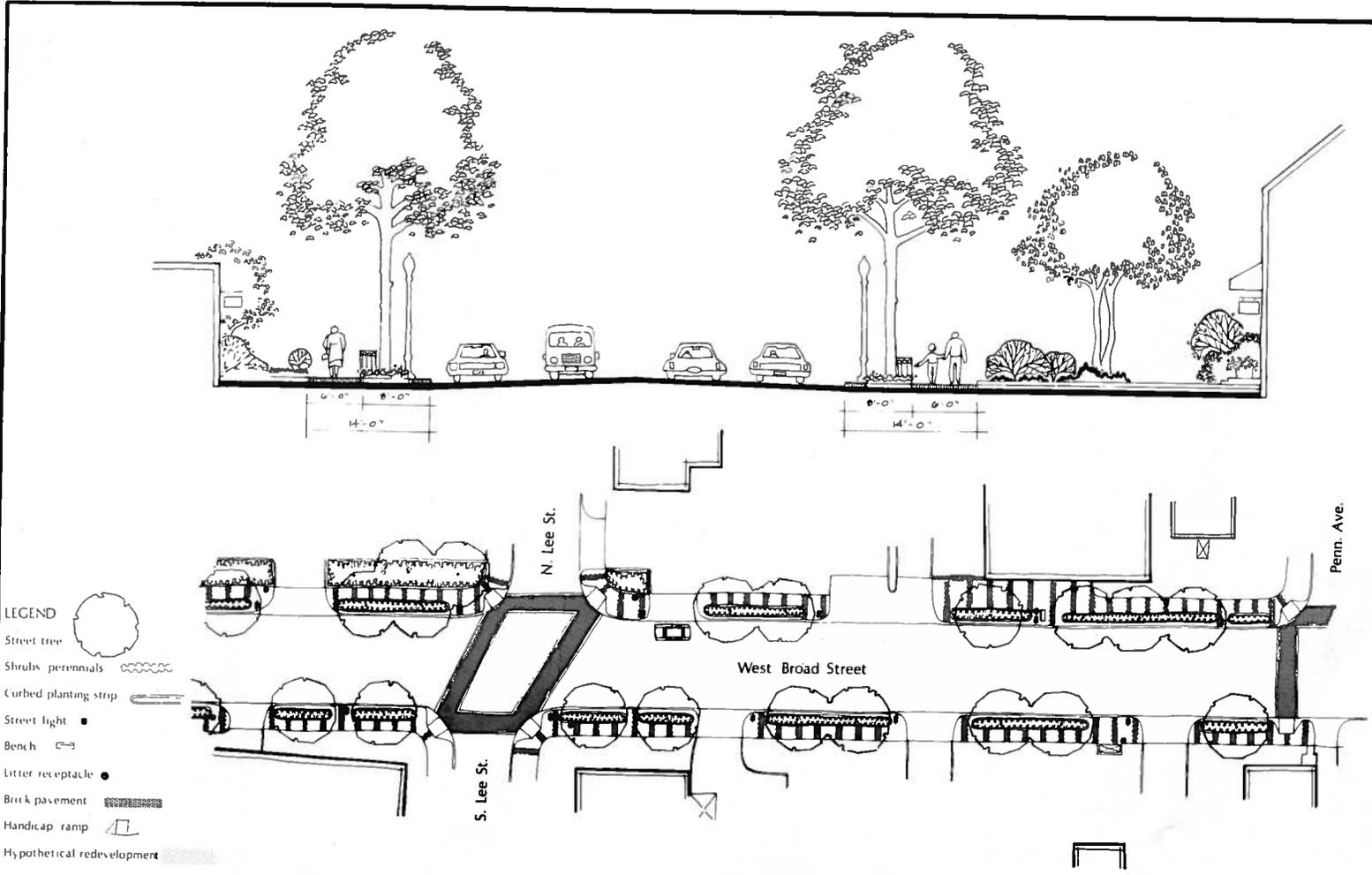


Figure 6. Artist's Rendering of the Village Sub-District

Adopted  
Streetscape  
Plan  
For  
Broad Street

adopted  
08 / 10 / 87

Prepared  
By:  
Falls Church  
Department  
Of  
Planning  
And  
Development



- LEGEND
- Street tree
  - Shrubs perennials
  - Curbed planting strip
  - Street light
  - Bench
  - Litter receptacle
  - Brick pavement
  - Handicap ramp
  - Hypothetical redevelopment

Model Section & Plan  
Village Sub-district

Scales:  
Section 0 6'  
Plan 0 25'



November 1987



Figure 7. Section and Plan of the Village Sub-District



**Figure 8. Artist's Rendering of the West End Urban Sub-District**

Adopted  
Streetscape  
Plan  
For  
Broad Street  
adopted  
08/10/87

Prepared  
By:  
Falls Church  
Department  
Of  
Planning  
And  
Development

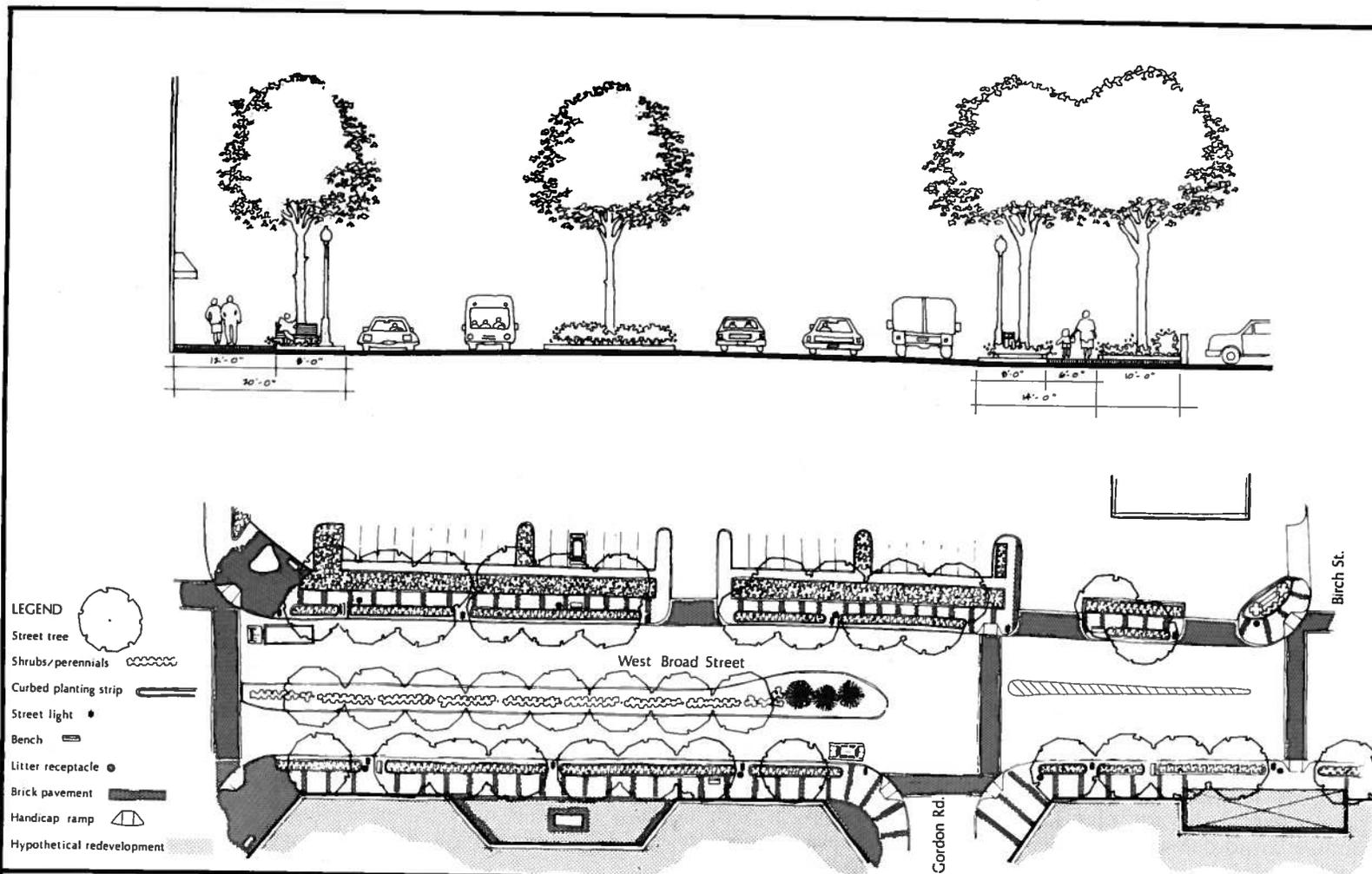


Figure 9. Section and Plan of West End Urban Sub-District



This method eliminates the added work, repair, and replacement problems of mortar joints. The "Hastings's Method" has been successfully used in numerous locations for years.

All driveways should receive the same pavement treatment as the adjacent walkway. In areas of brick pavement, the brick should carry across the drive, but a different pattern should be used to alert pedestrians to the possible presence of vehicles. These driveway pavers should be sized to accommodate heavier loads.

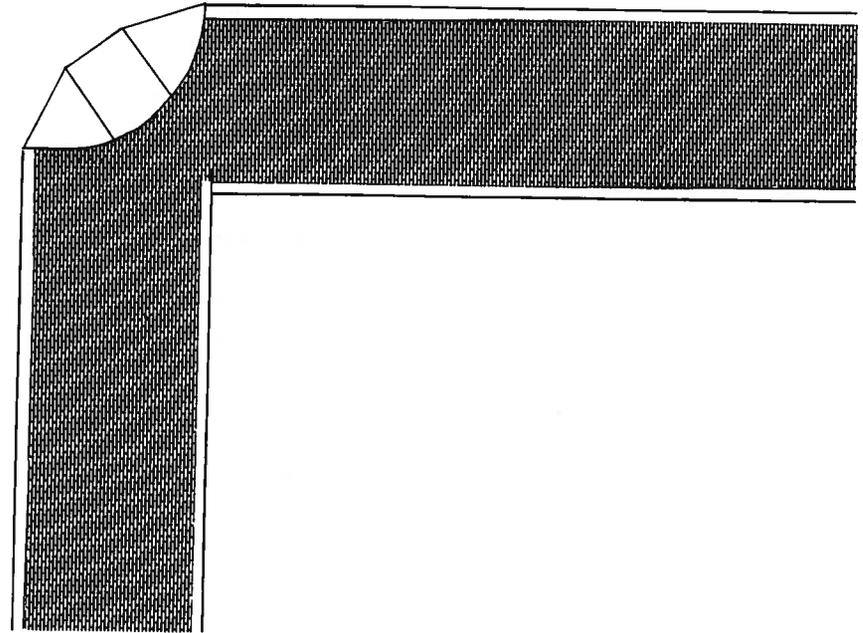
When two different pavement patterns or materials meet (except in the case of ribbing abutting the more dominant material) a decorative pattern should be developed as a transition. This border should not exceed a distance of eight feet and should use the colors, shapes, and textures of the adjacent pavements.

The different pavement surfaces, are based on the nature and history of the sub-districts. The brick pavement located in the Downtown Urban Sub-district is appropriate for this historic center of the City. At one time, a brick sidewalk did run from Little Falls into East Broad Street. The predominant use of brick structures and the presence of the colonial brick Falls Church within the historic triangle encourages the form, color, scale, and atmosphere of brick walks.

The West End Urban and Village Sub-districts are less historic in their appearance. The modern structures throughout most of the West End do not share the scale and historic ambience which brick exudes. The neutral tone of concrete is more adaptable to various building materials and designs, and will allow greater opportunity for redevelopment to add individual touches to the adjacent sidewalk. In the Village Sub-district the concrete walks relate to the residential walks nearby. By utilizing brick ribs in both of these sub-districts, a unifying element runs throughout the floor plane of the entire Plan Area.

Crosswalks are very important safety features. When easily visible, they warn drivers of possible pedestrians, and guide pedestrians to cross in safe and regulated areas. All crosswalks should have handicapped accessible ramps.

The Plan recommends utilizing a brick shaped and colored concrete paver. The pavers used in the crosswalks must have a high load-carrying capacity. The color should be slightly lighter than the sidewalk pavers to increase crosswalk visibility. The edges of the pavers should be beveled to decrease chipping and to create contrasts in texture. A border



**Figure 11. Crosswalk Pattern**

of concrete at least one foot wide should outline the crosswalks and stabilize the pavers (Figure 11).

Crosswalks at Haycock Road and Washington Street should be 16 feet wide. Crosswalks in the urban sub-districts should be 12 feet wide. In the Village Sub-district crosswalks should be 10 feet wide.

## STREETLIGHTS

Streetlights perform a very important safety function. Sufficient lighting protects vehicle occupants, pedestrians, animals, and property. Streetlights are also important to the aesthetic appeal of a street. Currently, the lighting along Broad Street is both insufficient and unattractive, creating a hazard and adding to the aesthetic neglect of the area.

The Plan recommends a light fixture and pole which will solve both problems. The light fixture is a traditional acorn style, with directional faceting to focus the light onto the street and to minimize wasted light. The light source will be color-corrected high-power sodium vapor, providing the most light for the least cost.

The pole is of durable and low-maintenance cast metal, painted the recommended streetscape color (government color number 24091). This pole, to be called the "Falls Church Pole", has a well proportioned, traditional fluted standard (Figure 12). The City of Falls Church seal will be incorporated into the service access plate in the base. No signs will be allowed to be attached to these poles except for those designated in the sign section.

To provide a sufficient amount of light to meet safety guidelines and regulations, the streetlights will be spaced at 50-to-55 foot intervals on alternating sides of the street. The streetlights will be 14 feet high to keep the light source below potentially obstructing tree limbs. This height will be in keeping with the scale of the streetscape.

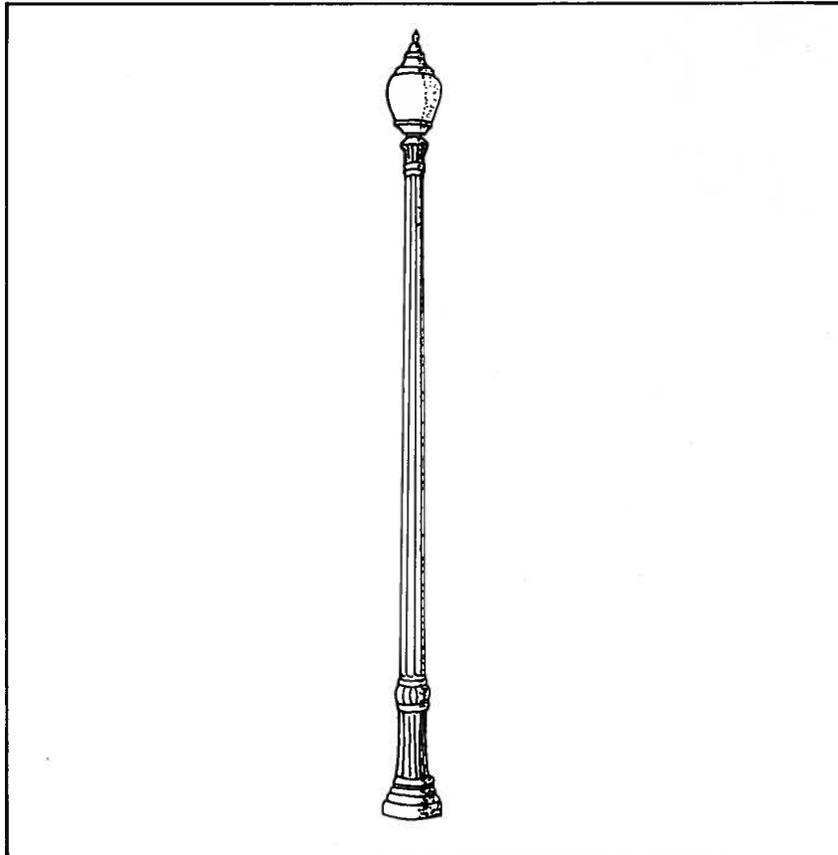


Figure 12. The "Falls Church" Streetlight

## PLANT MATERIAL

Street trees alter the streetscape environment dramatically. The trees chosen for this purpose should be tall-growing species whose overhead canopies provide a ceiling and a sense of enclosure. Their regularly spaced trunks should function as architectural elements, giving a sense of rhythm. The use of the same kind of tree over the distance of several blocks provides unity and identity to that area. Trees soften architectural lines and help establish a pedestrian scale. It is important that the trees chosen for use on Broad Street have growing habits that allow the easy removal of lower branches assuring the visibility of commercial signs and storefronts (Figure 13).

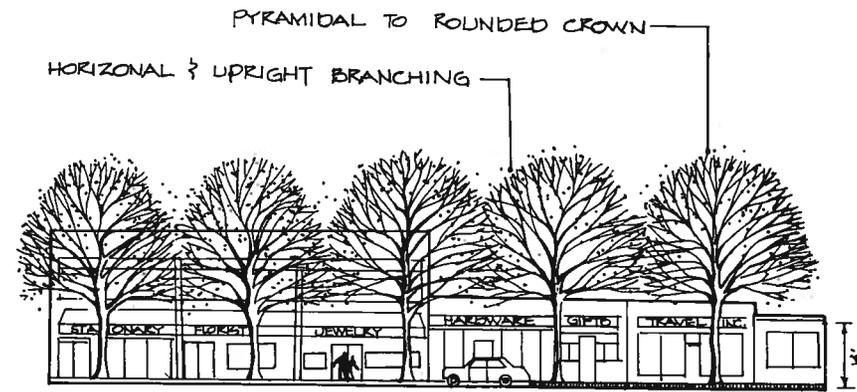
Three kinds of trees were chosen for the 13 block project in keeping with good horticultural practice. Red oaks and willow oaks were chosen as street trees for the Downtown and West End Urban Sub-districts. The largest and strongest of trees, the Oak, will be used in the areas of greatest building height and density. Both species have proven to be hardy in urban conditions. The fall color of the Red Oak, a reddish brown, contrasts with the golden yellow of the Willow Oak. There are already a number of these trees in place.

The "Bloodgood" London Plane Tree, also adaptable to urban conditions, was selected for use in the Village Sub-district. The creamy-white trunk of maturing London Planes, together with their golden autumn leaves, give a warm glow to everything beneath their tall-growing crowns.

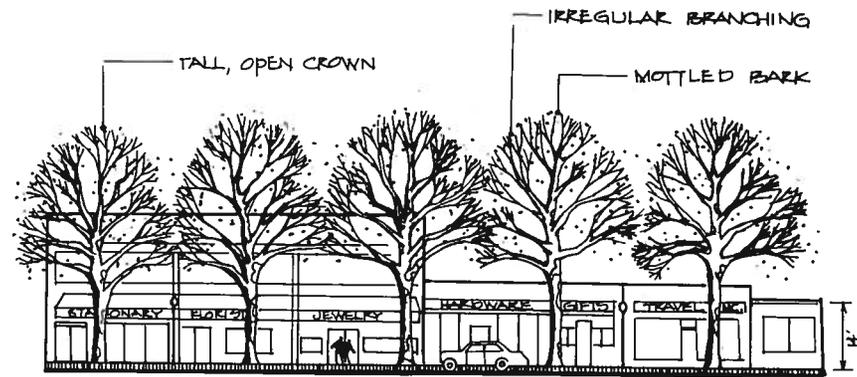
Trees throughout the Broad Street corridor will be spaced approximately 33 feet apart. This spacing will be compatible with the spacing of the new street lights: there will be one street light followed by three street trees, then a street light again, and so forth. The minimum-size street tree will have a trunk 3 1/2 to 4 inches in diameter. While this is a minimum, developers will be encouraged to plant larger trees, especially in areas of higher density development.

Of the existing trees along Broad Street, several are in good condition and of significant size and character. These should be incorporated into the Plan and protected during construction.

Additional plant materials will be incorporated into the Plan. These plants will be planted between street trees and the public right of way and parking lots. These shrubs, groundcovers and perennials, with bulbs and annuals added at focal points, will provide additional interest through their form, foliage, flower and fruit (Figure 14). They will



WILLOW OAK



LONDON PLANE



NORTHERN RED OAK

Figure 13. Illustration of Larger Street Tree Growing Habits and Trimming

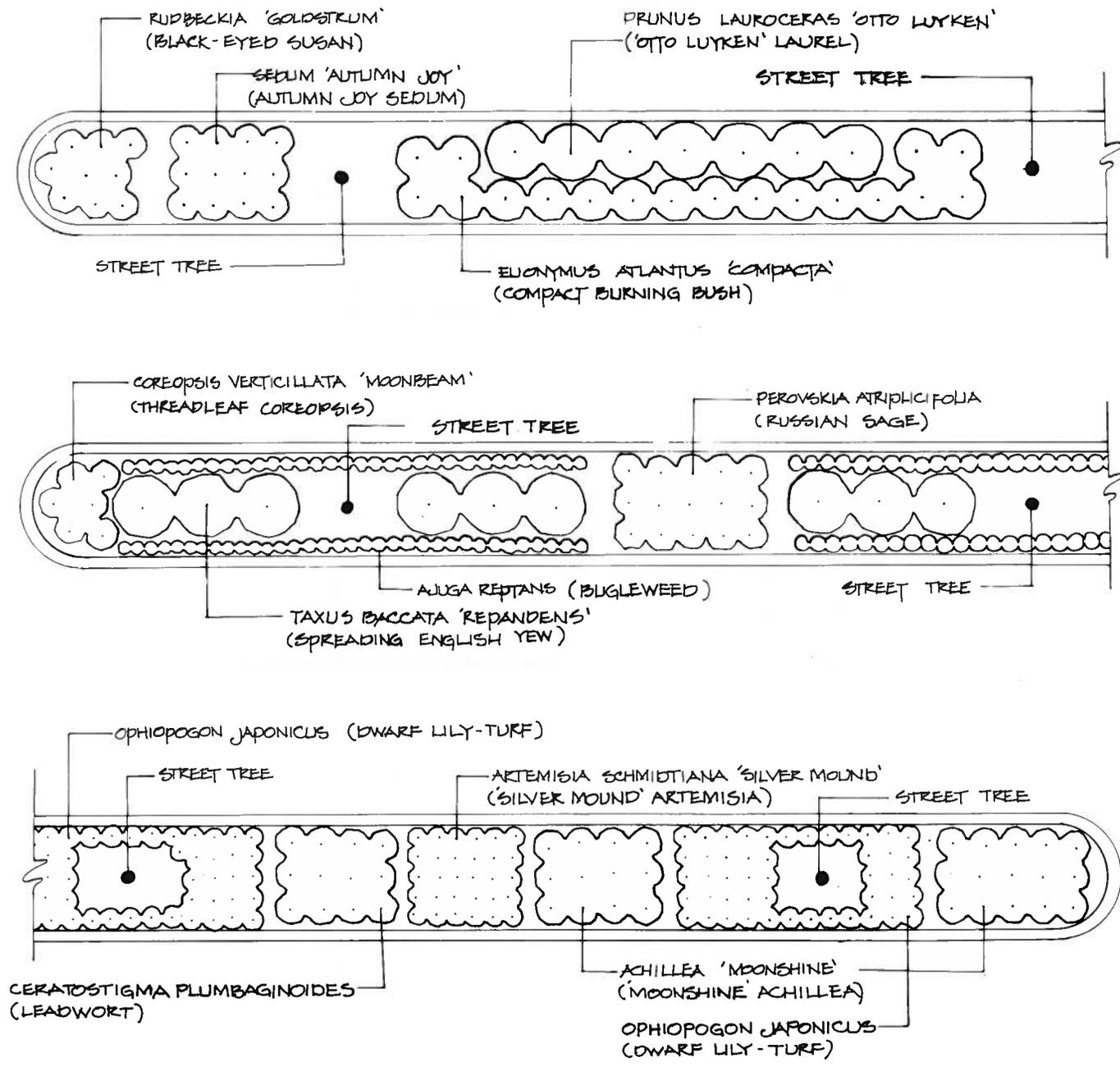


Figure 14. Model Planting Plans for Curbed Planting Strips

psychologically, physically and visually lessen the impact of moving and parked vehicles on the pedestrian. Among the many useful plants for these areas are:

*Low To Medium-size shrubs - (Examples):* - Taxus varieties (Yews), Ilex varieties (Hollies), Spiraea x thunbergii (Spirea), Euonymus alata nana (Dwarf Burning Bush), juniperus varieties (junipers), and Prunus, Otto Luyken' (Dwarf Laurel).

*Ground Covers and Perennials - (Examples):* - Vinca minor (Periwinkle), Ajuga (bugleweed), Liriope varieties (varigated and green), Sedum varieties, Rudbeckia 'Goldstrum', Achillea varieties, Coreopsis 'Moonbeam', Hemerocallis varieties (Daylilies), Perovskia atriplicifolia (Russian Sage), Ceratostigma plumbaginoides (leadwort), and ornamental grasses.

## PLANTING BEDS AND METHODS

Care must be taken to provide an adequate underground support system for the street trees and other plants. The planting corridor must include a mixture, based on soil analysis, of existing soil, high quality top soil, organic matter and select inorganic matter, to increase soil porosity and encourage horizontal root development (Figure 15). A drainage system connecting to the storm sewer system must be provided. An appropriate irrigation system should also be considered.

Curbed planting beds will be used throughout the Plan Area. These planting beds will be 5 feet wide and of varying lengths with no planting bed being less than 15 feet in length. These curbed beds will hold all trees and other plant materials planned within the project area. It has been determined that this extended planting corridor containing street trees and shrubs in ammended soil will provide the best opportunity for extended root development and good drainage.

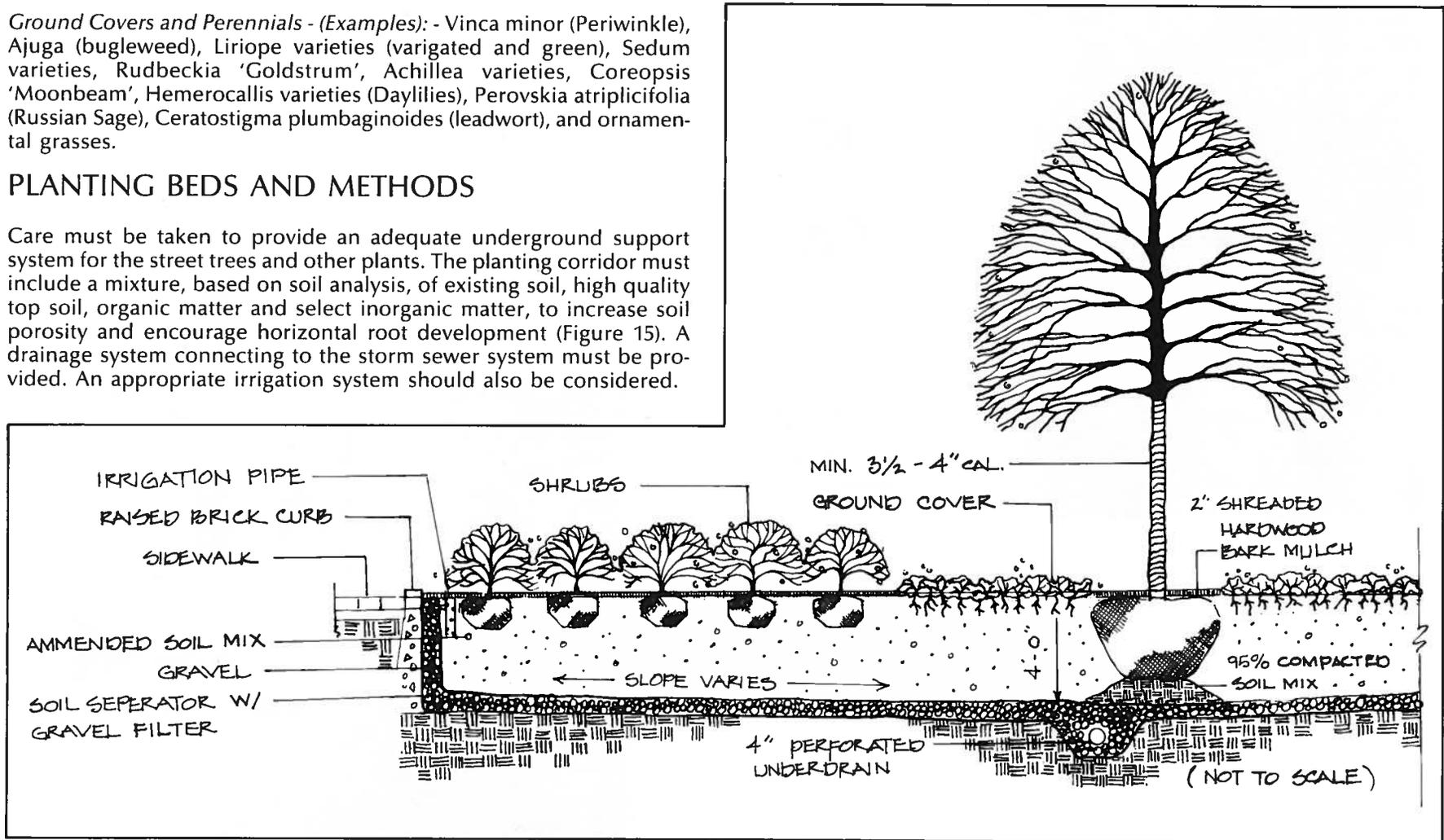


Figure 15. Planting Detail

These planting beds will be protected by a 4 to 6 inch high curb of "bull-nosed" brick (Figure 16). The planting beds will be curved at either end to eliminate squared corners. The brick curbing will prevent the loss of soil and mulch, decrease trampling of plants and prevent street runoff from reaching the trees.



**Figure 16. The Brick Curbing for Planting Strips**

## STREET FURNISHINGS

Street furnishings provide comfort and convenience and encourage pedestrian activity and interaction. By utilizing the same street furnishings throughout the Plan Area, these components will serve as major unifying elements in the streetscape. Street furnishings includes benches, litter receptacles, bike racks, drinking fountains, bus shelters, public telephones, and newspaper dispensers. The metal parts of these elements will be painted the proposed streetscape color, or a very similar color. The shapes and lines will be simple and classical, providing a timeless quality which will blend with most architectural styles. The materials will be of a superior grade and will require as little maintenance as possible.

## BENCHES

Benches play an important role in any streetscape. They provide comfort and rest for shoppers, office workers and other pedestrians. They help to make the landscape more inviting by providing a place for the pedestrian to linger. All benches in the Plan Area should be equipped with arms for the comfort and safety of those who need the additional support. The benches should be at least 6 feet in length to comfortably accommodate two strangers.

Landscape Forms' "Gretchen's Bench" has been chosen (Figure 17). This bench exhibits a simple, traditional form with smooth metal arms and supports. The wooden slats are of Kapur, which does not need painting or staining and which is a strong, durable, maintenance-free wood. These benches are comfortable, providing excellent support to a person's back and legs, and are priced lower than many other commercial benches. Although the Plan proposes free-standing benches, "Gretchen's Bench" does come in a wall-attached model, should this be desired for existing or future development.

Benches are proposed at all focal points and bus stops, except where shelters are present. Benches should not be placed too close to the curb, nor should they obstruct pedestrian walkways.



**Figure 17. The "Gretchen" Bench**

## LITTER RECEPTACLES

Litter receptacles serve a necessary and utilitarian need. They help maintain the cleanliness and neat appearance of the area. The more frequently they appear, the more frequently they are used. As a noticeable and frequent part of the landscape, the litter receptacle should be functional and attractive.

The Plan proposes the Victor Stanley RS-12 "Falls Church" Litter Receptacle (Figure 18). This receptacle's lines are simple, smooth and attractive. The style is subdued and blends well into the landscape. The receptacle is constructed of durable steel, which is easier to maintain than wrought iron. A steel lid sits below the decorative rings. The color will be either the Falls Church grey or a dark bronze.



**Figure 18. The "Falls Church" Litter Receptacle**



**Figure 19. The "Ribbon Rack" Bicycle Rack**

## BIKE RACKS

Bicycles provide a healthy, inexpensive and pleasant means of alternative transportation. With the presence of a regional bike trail in the Plan Area and two city bikeways within two blocks, the use of bicycles should be recognized and encouraged along Broad Street.

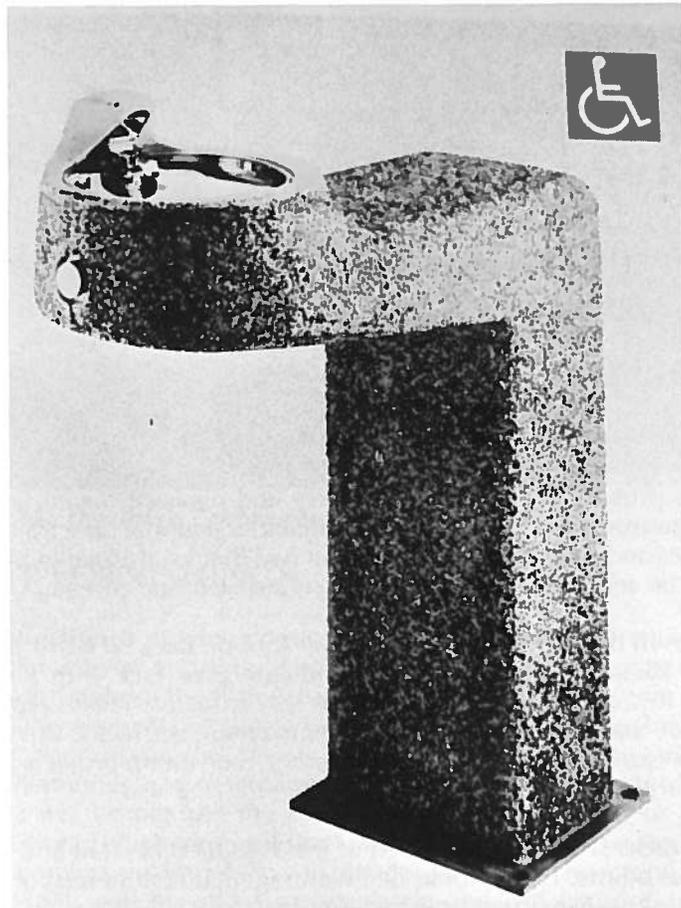
The chosen bicycle rack is the Brander "Ribbon Rack" (Figure 19). The Ribbon Rack is a low maintenance, secure bike rack with a simple design. It is competitively priced with less attractive racks and is less expensive than equally attractive, higher maintenance racks. This design has been successfully employed in historic renovation projects as well as modern office developments.

Bicycle racks should be provided at the W&OD Bike Trail and at certain focal points. They should be encouraged at commercial or office centers, as well as near any institutional uses which would attract bicyclists.

## DRINKING FOUNTAINS

Public drinking fountains add comfort and convenience to the streetscape. Although there is a need for public drinking fountains, this need is relatively localized. The Plan proposes one drinking fountain to be located on the north side of the W&OD Bike Trail crossing.

Environmental Features Type 1-82 drinking fountain has been chosen (Figure 20). This drinking fountain is wheelchair-accessible, and has a stone aggregate finish. The base and dish are designed to be vandal-resistant. It is not freeze-proof and will be turned off during the winter months.



**Figure 20. The Selected Drinking Fountain**

## BUS SHELTERS

Bus shelters provide for the comfort and safety of bus riders as well as other pedestrians in need of a place to wait. Bus shelters already in the Plan Area are located at East Fairfax Street, North Virginia Avenue, South Virginia Avenue and at Pennsylvania Avenue. Three of these shelters were constructed by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). They are built of steel and plexiglass and have a simple contemporary appearance. The fourth shelter was constructed out of brick by the developer of the Winter Hill/Cherry Hill residential community.

In many urban areas, building overhangs, arcades, and large covered entrances can serve virtually the same purpose as a bus shelter. Such opportunities should be considered during the course of redevelopment of properties located adjacent to bus stops. However, at least four additional bus shelters should be located in the study area: South Washington Street, North Maple Avenue, in front of the Old Brick House Square, and near Birch Street.

Research suggests that several companies are developing attractive and simple bus shelters that offer an acceptable compromise on price and quality. A small shelter is similar in size and design to the WMATA bus shelter is needed. It should be constructed of lasting materials such as steel and transparent hardened plexiglass. The steel should be painted the same muted grey color as other metal elements in the streetscape. A bench should be provided within the bus shelter.

## PUBLIC TELEPHONES

Public telephones are necessary for the safety and convenience of Falls Church pedestrians. Currently, the few public phones provided in the Broad Street corridor are heavily used. With an increase of pedestrians, more phones will be needed. No particular stylistic guidelines concerning public phones are recommended. The telephones should be noticeable and well lit. When located near the public sidewalk they should blend into the streetscape. Public telephones with easy access should be provided along the street during the course of any major development or redevelopment. In many cases, interior phones are suitable, but there should be some outdoor phones for 24 hour use.

## NEWSPAPER DISPENSERS

Newspaper dispensers serve a public need. They provide the pedestrian with quick, easy access to the latest news. The Plan recommends

limiting the placement of newspaper dispensers to bus stop locations. The dispensers should be well maintained. They should not be used to display advertisements other than the name of the newspaper.

A pole will be provided to which all newspaper dispensers will be attached. This will consolidate the placement of the dispensers and aid in protecting them from certain forms of vandalism.



Figure 21. The "No Parking" Graphic

## SIGNS

Signs are an important part of any commercial corridor. Due to their functional importance and aesthetic impact, the Plan contains guidelines for a number of sign types: regulatory signs, street name signs, street addresses, municipal holiday and festival banners, and private commercial signs. These signs can, and should, be a positive, integral part of the streetscape.

1. Regulatory Signs: Regulatory traffic signs are essential on any major street, but they often add to streetscape clutter. Haphazard placement of these signs can decrease safety and increase noncompliance. Regulatory signs within the Plan Area which are obsolete or in disrepair should be removed or replaced. Any replacement signs should utilize the latest designs in graphics and materials to increase visibility.

The current "No Parking" signs should be replaced by the relatively small "No Parking" graphic (Figure 21). All "No Parking" signs, and other small and medium-sized regulatory signs should be attached to the street light poles. No more than two signs should be attached to any one pole. All other regulatory signs should be on standard metal posts.

2. Street Name Signs: All street name signs should be clearly visible and easily read. The street signs should list block numbers. They should be attached to traffic light poles or street light poles whenever possible.

3. Street Addresses: Business address designations are not always easily found in the Broad Street corridor. Guidelines will be written to encourage a uniform policy concerning the placement, size and style of street address numbers. Due to the varied architectural styles in the area, two or three standard designs will be necessary.

4. Municipal Banners: The recommended street light pole can be equipped with banner arms. To brighten the streetscape, the Plan proposes the use of bunting or banners on selected street light poles for holidays and festivals. These would be placed on the poles by the City, would be temporary, and could not be used as advertising by private businesses.

5. Private Commercial Signs: The City Sign Ordinance controls commercial signs in the Plan Area. A review of the Ordinance shows a possible conflict between the streetscape features and signs more than 12 feet in height, which could conflict with the branches of street trees. Lower heights would be preferable so that the signs will not be obstructed by the trees (Figure 22).



Figure 22. Non-Conflicting Commercial Signage

## OTHER STREETScape FEATURES

This streetscape concept is intended to encourage and accommodate streetscape features such as outdoor restaurants, tasteful outdoor displays of merchandise, and the use of interesting awnings and marquees. All such activities and features would be located on private property adjacent to the public right of way. In addition, the presence of good pedestrian facilities along the street will encourage the development of attractive pedestrian amenities in adjacent private development, such as walkways, courtyards, arcades and through-the-block passageways. Such areas will increase the potential for retail commercial and service establishments in the Plan Area.

# V. STREETScape PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

## CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES

Figure 23 provides a tentative cost estimate of the streetscape improvements proposed in this report, as well as all other road improvements which are contemplated for the Plan Area. This cost estimate is a summary of block-by-block estimates prepared for the Streetscape Committee's December 1986 proposal. In general, the cost represents the "installed" price, which covers the costs of purchasing the materials as well as the cost of installation.

**Figure 23. General Cost Estimates**

<u>COST CATEGORIES</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Right of Way	1,028,866	1,643,585	2,672,451
Basic Streetwork	1,962,535	2,984,289	4,946,824
Undergrounding	4,231,597	—0—	4,231,597
Brick and Paver Sidewalks	2,275,464	165,319	2,440,783
Trees and Plantings	581,578	694,636	1,276,214
Other Streetscape Items	478,310	—0—	478,310
	<u>10,558,359</u>	<u>5,487,829</u>	<u>16,046,179</u>

These estimates are based upon FY1987-1988 costs. Spreading construction over a multi-year period will require allowances for inflation. It should be noted that funds received for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be used in some parts of the project.

The costs associated with the streetscape features discussed in this report are only a portion of the total costs shown for the entire street improvement project. If cost reductions are necessary, they can be accomplished by reducing the quantity of certain features, selecting a less expensive substitute, or stretching the project out over a longer period of time to reduce the amount of borrowed funds that would be required.

Cost transfers could also be made in some instances. From the City's point of view, this would involve shifting costs from the City onto other project participants, such as the state and private developers. Spreading the project over a longer period of time would probably increase the amount of streetscape improvements that would be paid for by private developers, who would be required to make streetscape improvements during the course of redevelopment of their properties along Broad Street. The project could intentionally be structured so that a portion of the improvements are installed by private developers during the course of redevelopment. Additionally, it may be possible to identify more project elements which are appropriately paid for by the state.

## FUNDING SOURCES AND COMMITMENTS TO DATE

State, City and private funds will be used to install the proposed streetscape improvements. In the two sections of Broad Street which are to be improved to five lanes, the streetscape improvements will be paid to a substantial extent by state funds. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has allocated the following amounts of federal and state funds for these two sections of Broad Street to date:

**Figure 24. State Allocations**

East of West Street to West of the City Line:	\$2,025,000
East Fairfax Street to Little Falls Street:	<u>1,400,000</u>
Total:	\$3,425,000

Sources: VDH&T 1986-87 Allocations and 26 Six-Year Improvement Program, and VDH&T Critical Highway Improvement Program (Senate Bill 79).

The amounts in Figure 24 can be compared to the amounts in Figure 23 which estimates the "State costs" for this project. The gap between the VDOT allocation and the estimated funding requirements is over \$2 million. It is anticipated that this gap will be closed by the State as project cost estimates are further refined.

City funds have been allocated and programmed, to date, as follows:

Appropriated through FY86:	\$1,794,100
Appropriated in FY87:	642,290
Programmed for FY88:	588,766
Programmed for FY89:	160,572
Programmed for FY90:	1,980,394
Programmed for FY91:	<u>1,980,394</u>
Total:	\$7,146,516

Source: Adopted Capital Improvements Program, FY1988-1992, City of Falls Church.

This amount can be compared to the amount shown as "City Cost" in Figure 23. The gap between the City funds now appropriated and

programmed and the expected funding requirement will also be closed as project cost estimates are further refined.

No expected funding requirement has been projected for the private sector. However, it is anticipated that when property fronting on Broad Street is redeveloped, the developer will be responsible for various improvement costs in the public right of way. The gaps in State and City funding for this project are substantial. However, they are not unusual in projects of this size and complexity, and their existence is understood by both entities. Both the City and the State have planning systems in place which provide for annual updating of project funding estimates as more becomes known about the true costs of each project. However, funding is not unlimited. If refined cost estimates go too high, it will be necessary to make adjustments to the project itself.

## CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Currently, the construction of improvements to West Broad Street is expected to take place during the next five-year period (through FY92), in the following segments.

1. Little Falls Street to Virginia Avenue: FY88 and 89
2. East of West Street to City Line: FY89 and 90
3. East Fairfax Street to Little Falls Street: FY89 and 91
4. Virginia Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue: FY89 and 90
5. Pennsylvania Avenue to Oak Street: FY90 and 91
6. Oak Street to East of West Street: FY91 and 92

These timing estimates are based upon the City's adopted "Capital Improvements Program, FY1988-1992," and upon the final "Six Year Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 1986-87 through 1991-92" of the Virginia Department of Transportation. These two programs contain

planned construction schedules, as well as funding estimates, and are subject to change as planning for the project enters its final stages.

## MAINTENANCE COSTS

Construction of the proposed improvements will result in reduced maintenance costs in some areas and increased maintenance costs in other areas. Reduced maintenance costs can be expected for street and sidewalk repairs over the short run. Adequate storm sewers should require less maintenance, due to increased efficiency and better design.

Increased maintenance costs can be expected for most of the streetscape items proposed in this report. The Committee has considered maintenance costs and problems during its deliberations. The street lights, for example, will be maintained by Virginia Power, but the City will be responsible for replacing any damaged light poles or fixtures. The City will pay the light bill, but it should be noted that the lights are efficient, and the number of lights has been minimized.

The trees and other plantings will cause the greatest increase in the City's maintenance costs. An additional crew of landscape maintenance workers will be needed to keep the trees and plantings trimmed and healthy. An estimate of increased maintenance costs has not been prepared. Consideration will be given to installing an irrigation system for the street trees and plantings during the final design phase. An irrigation system would reduce maintenance costs and also assure better plant growth with a reduction in replacement plantings.

## PROJECT COORDINATION

Several of the landscape architects who critiqued the proposed Streetscape Plan addressed the need to coordinate the implementation of the road and streetscape improvements. Some firms commented on specific issues such as temporary signage, while most addressed the general need to coordinate with the business community. Building upon these comments by the landscape architects, the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce, the Business Development Commission, Planning Commission and City Council members, the following matters have been incorporated into this Plan.

Prior to construction, communication with affected businesses and the provision of a central source of information will be arranged before and during construction. Communication with the business community and the public will include announcements in the "Business Focus" and "Focus" newsletters, the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Com-

merce's newsletter "Spotlight", and through news items on CABLE ACCESS CHANNEL 38.

To answer questions or assist in problems arising from construction, a "hotline" with a member of the City Staff serving as the single contact will be arranged. This staff member will have direct access to the VDOT staff.

To reduce any confusion caused by construction, the City is considering certain measures which would be taken in cooperation with area businesses. These measures include temporary signs to direct vehicles into the correct entrance for parking and access to a business, rear access and shared parking with directional signs, modification to the sign ordinance to accommodate temporary signs, evaluation by businesses of their access and cooperation by them with the City and their neighbors to make sure the best access is available to their businesses. Clearing alleys, sharing parking, reducing side street parking restrictions and other measures should be considered.

Effective coordination with VDOT regarding the phasing of construction, actual construction procedures with regard to access, traffic flow, hours of construction and other aspects of the actual work is necessary. VDOT is familiar with such construction projects, but there should be a coordinated effort with VDOT in the discussions about the construction procedures to incorporate the business community's concerns. This is especially necessary if businesses and/or property owners intend to make improvements to their property.

The proposed road improvements as well as the streetscape improvements will require acquisition of right-of-way and easements. In the case of the streetscape improvements, right-of-way acquisition will be to meet the set back requirements for full implementation of the proposed streetscape elements. In the majority of cases, this will not impact the properties in a real sense, e.g., building location, parking and signage. However, situations do exist in which some hardship may result. Such cases will be evaluated carefully by the City. If acquisition of land would significantly impact an existing business's parking, for example, and no reasonable alternatives exist to reduce the impact, a modification of the proposed streetscape in front of such a business will be considered. This is not to say that parking areas may not be affected or that signage may not be relocated.

Much of the coordination discussed here will take place only after the VDOT public hearings and right-of-way acquisition are completed. The time table is such that early discussions and planning may be valuable.

A fully coordinated implementation program must involve the business community, citizens, VDOT, the City Staff and the City's consulting landscape architects, and engineers.

## PUBLIC/PRIVATE COOPERATION

Several of the landscape architects who critiqued the proposed streetscape plan also suggested extending the improvements planned for the public right-of-way into the business properties themselves. It was suggested that improvements to the facades of establishments, business entrances and the private property between the sidewalk area and the buildings should be encouraged at the time when the streetscape and road improvements are undertaken. Many of the critiques suggested that public/private efforts should "dove tail" the street and pedestrian-area improvements with improvements to private properties.

While the Streetscape Plan calls for improvements in the right-of-way, many improvements and amenities by business establishments could enhance the Broad Street corridor. The placement of benches, bike racks and additional landscaping on private property will be encouraged. Further, land owners and businesses will also be encouraged to maintain their property after the streetscape improvements are completed. This is especially critical for areas which serve as landscape buffers between the sidewalk area and street front parking.

The City will evaluate resources that could be used to leverage investment such as the City's Capital Improvements Program project which provides public funds to encourage desirable private economic development projects. The funds from this source could be used as a way to promote private investment in the West Broad Street business corridor which would complement the streetscape improvements. The City could use such funds to write-down the costs of private sector purchase of streetscape furniture (benches, litter receptacles, and bike racks), or the City could offer a matching grant for facade improvements or provide design work for small businesses wishing to improve their property. Another approach the City could take is to offer technical assistance in landscape planning and planting selection, using its existing in-house expertise. Some localities have sponsored the establishment of local nonprofit corporations that could provide such funds and assistance.

The objective of such efforts should be to enhance the streetscape proposal by extending its elements into the private property area of business establishments which front West Broad Street. There are many

locations along West Broad Street where street furnishings are needed closer to the establishments, or where landscaping and maintenance between the sidewalk area and parking would greatly enhance the proposed improvements.

In order to encourage extension of the streetscape improvements into the private property along West Broad Street, and assist public/private efforts, the City will evaluate properties in which street furnishings or other improvements are appropriate, identify resources to promote private investment and improvements, and develop a plan and program to carry out such an effort.

Working with the businesses along West Broad Street is critical to the long-term success of the Streetscape Plan.