HOLLYWOOD COMMERCIAL STREETSCAPE: EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

College Park, Maryland

January 08, 2015

Study Prepared By:

FLOURA TEETER
landscape architects

KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.
TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING/PLANNING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Introduction.....1
02 Site Inventory.....6
03 Site Analysis.....19
04 Strategies.....22

01 INTRODUCTION

The Hollywood neighborhood was established as Hollywood on the Hill in the 1920's and 1930's and is part of the City of College Park. It is characterized by a mix of single family residential homes, a commercial core, schools, churches and other civic buildings as well as a network of green spaces.

The Hollywood Commercial District is a 1/3 of a mile stretch of Rhode Island Avenue in College Park, Maryland which is bordered by the Washington Capital Beltway (I-495) to the north, Muskogee Street to the south, the Hollywood Shopping Center and Narragansett Parkway to the east and the Hollywood Elementary School and neighborhood to the west. This commercial district includes two strong anchor retailers, Mom's Organic Market and REI, which not only serve neighborhood residents, but also draw visitors to the area. They both are well established within the neighborhood. Other retailers within the neighborhood are less established and are characterized by small stores, restaurants and service establishments which cater to local residents.

Figure 1: Hollywood Commercial District Context Map

LOCAL RESOURCES & INFLUENCES:

1 - MUSKOGEE PLAYGROUND
2 - PLAYGROUND AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
3 - SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
4 - HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PARK
5 - CONNECTION TO PAINT BRANCH TRAIL
6 - FUTURE GATEWAY PARK
7 - GREENBELT METRO
8 - HOLLYWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
9 - AL-HUDA ISLAMIC SCHOOL
10 - UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
11 - RHODE ISLAN AVENUE TROLLEY TRAIL

1.1 POSITIVE FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- A weekly farmer's market which is held in the Hollywood Shopping Center parking lot.
- The Greenbelt Metro Station – a 10 minute walk from the center of the commercial district. Many neighborhood residents use the Metro to commute to work in Washington.
- Rhode Island Avenue Trolley trail – including bike lanes marked in the shoulder.
- Several small parks and open space parcels on the periphery of the district including the Muskogee playground and the Hollywood Elementary School.
- The neighborhood has traditionally been very stable, now transitioning from long term residents to younger families of diverse origins, primarily Hispanic and Muslim. The Hollywood neighborhood is one of the least impacted by student housing in College Park.
- A pedestrian connection from the Hollywood Elementary School site to Rhode Island Avenue.

Farmers Market at Hollywood Shopping Center

Muskogee Playground at Narragansett Pkwy

Rhode Island Ave cycling north;
adjacent to Holllywood Shopping Center

Hollywood Elementary School Playground

1.2 CHALLENGES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Pedestrian signals at the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and Edgewood Road do not appear to be working. The push button devices do not depress or engage; it appears these may not have been activated after installation.

  Signal timing may need to be adjusted to better service pedestrians and allow adequate time to cross Rhode Island Avenue at a distance of approximately 70' and Edgewood Avenue at a distance of approximately 60'.

- Missing or narrow sidewalks.
- Overhead electric lines.
- A lack of consistent street trees.
- A lack of consistent signage or neighborhood identity.
- Stormwater and drainage problems were observed on our site visit.
- A lack of seating or public gathering areas.
- Surface parking lots fronting Rhode Island Avenue.
- Zoning (C-S-C) limits area to commercial uses.
- Circulation issues.
- Underutilized service roads.

Drainage problems that deter customers, near 9935 Rhode Island Avenue.

Service roads: underutilized space, looking south on the west side of Rhode Island Avenue.

Inconsistent commercial signage, on Edgewood Road near the intersection with Rhode Island Avenue.

Narrow sidewalk along Rhode Island Avenue, walking north adjacent to Hollywood Shopping Center.

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

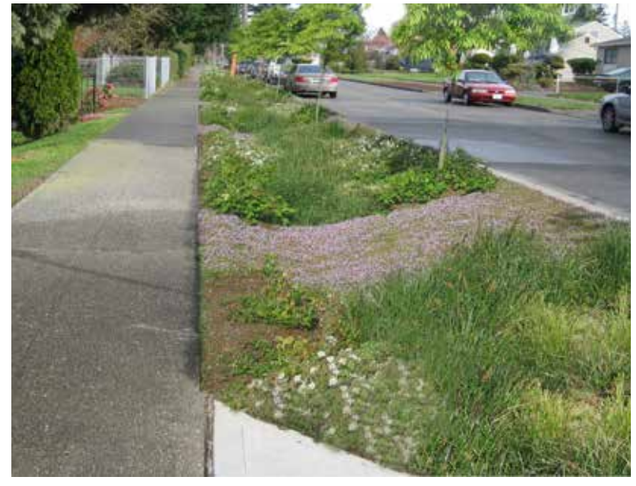
The purpose of this study is to evaluate the current conditions and opportunities for revitalized retail uses, increased pedestrian and bicycle use and integrated treatment of stormwater management and green space within the Hollywood Commercial District.

1.4 COMMERCIAL DISTRICT NEEDS

The City of College Park has identified the following needs for the Hollywood Commercial District, based on previous studies and resident surveys:

- Increased safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Places to gather including outdoor seating for restaurant establishments and venues for local community events.
- Screening of surface parking.
- Programming of temporary events and spaces to engage the community, creating a positive energy and interest in the neighborhood.
- Commercial District gateway elements.

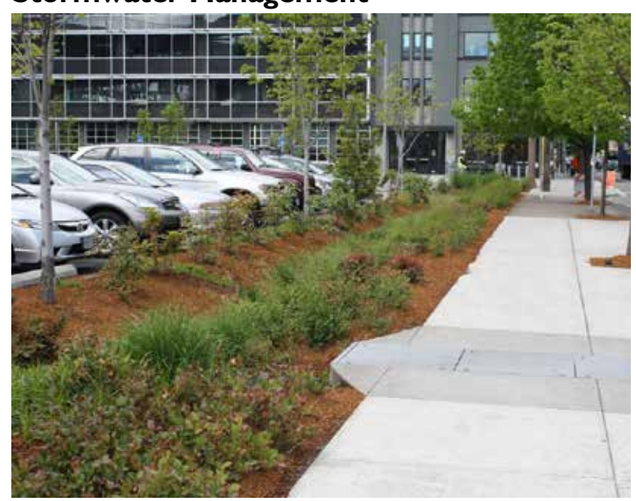
Bioswale



Unified and Safe Streetscape

http://www.gcbl.org/projects/complete-and-green-streets

Stormwater Management



http://www.scapestudio.com/projects/bnmc-streetscape/

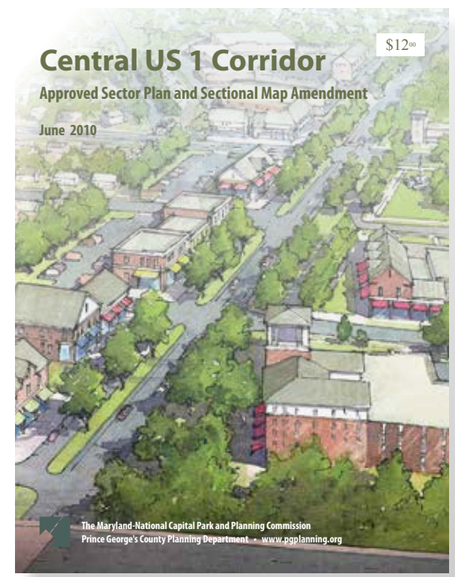
Green Space

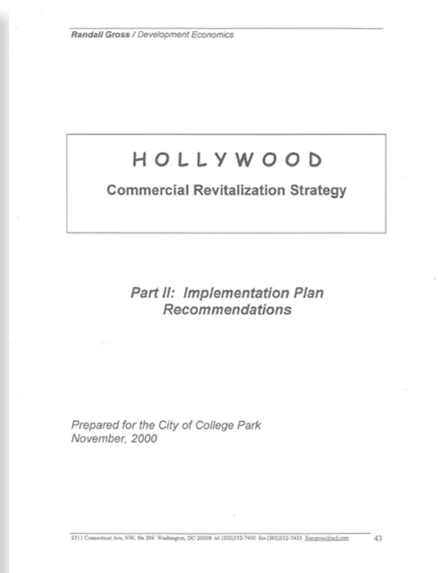
http://www.scapestudio.com/projects/bnmc-streetscape/

1.5 GOALS OF STUDY

The following goals address the community needs:

- Visually unify streetscapes.
- Strengthen connections between the commercial district, adjacent residential neighborhoods, green space, and transportation nodes.
- Provide a streetscape that is comfortable and safe for pedestrian and bicyclists of all ages.
- Create environment that attracts retail uses and strengthens existing businesses.
- Design recommendations that improve perceptions and create value for the Hollywood Commercial District.
- Improve the environmental and public health of the Commercial District.





1.6 EXISTING INITIATIVES

There are several studies and initiatives already underway or completed which will impact the Hollywood Commercial District and the surrounding neighborhoods. These include:

- The Central US 1 Corridor – Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment.
- Hollywood Commercial Revitalization Strategy – Part II Implementation Plan Recommendations.
- Design for banners for Hollywood.
- Facade upgrades for businesses through the Hollywood Facade Improvement Program.

These materials have been reviewed by the design team and their recommendations will be incorporated into this report as feasible and desirable.

2.3 EXISTING LAND USE

The Hollywood Commercial District encompasses several shopping centers along the Rhode Island Avenue Corridor between Muskogee Street and Ontario Road. Rhode Island Avenue itself is a principal arterial running north-south through the district. The corridor runs parallel to U.S. 1/ Baltimore Avenue and is surrounded by single family, residential neighborhoods along the minor streets that intersect the corridor. The study area and nearby neighborhoods have many recreational resources, such as the Trolley Trail and various parks and playgrounds. The center of the Hollywood Commercial District is about 1 mile northwest of the Greenbelt Metro Station and about 2.5 miles northeast of the University of Maryland, College Park Campus.

Figure 2: Land Use Map

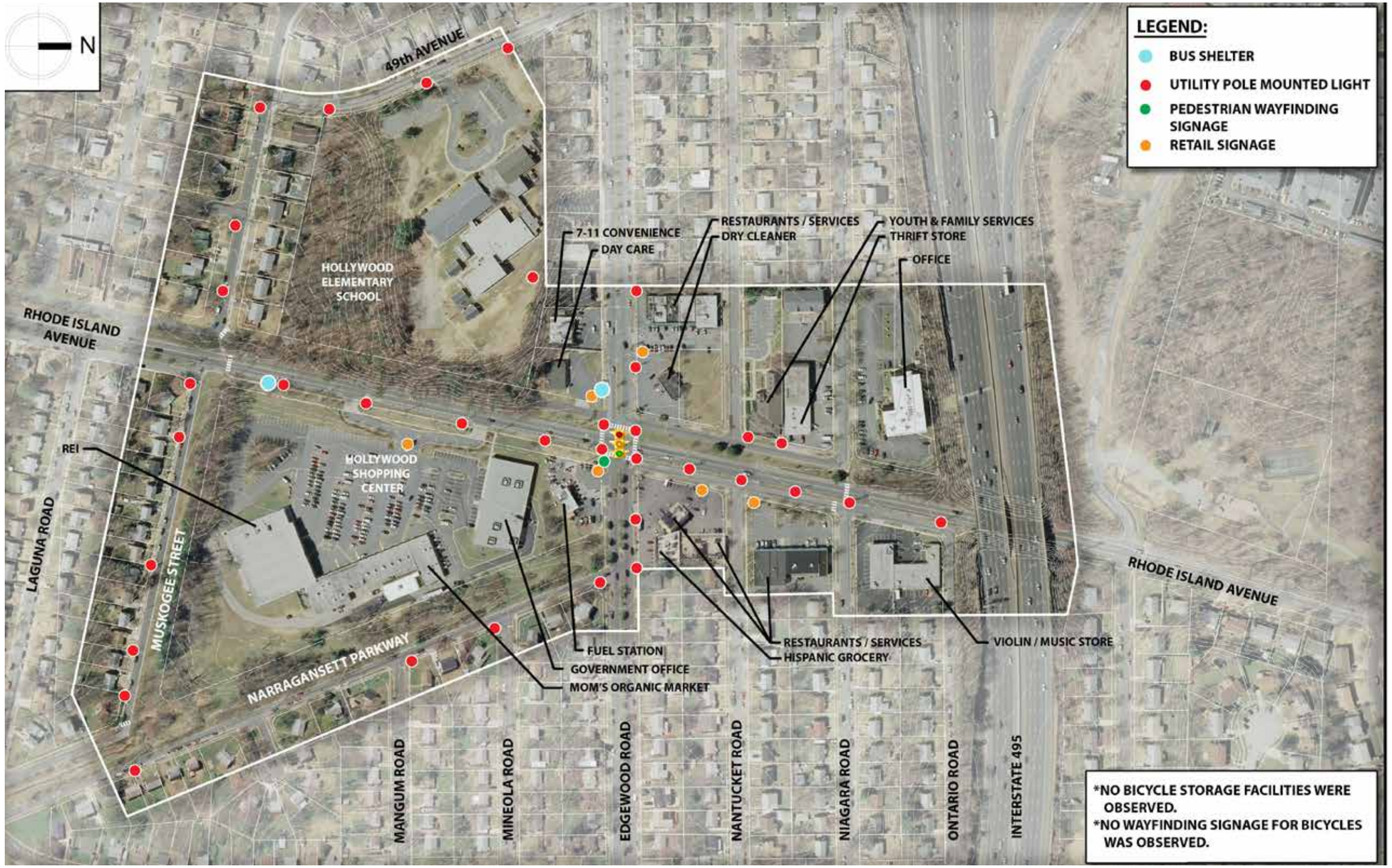


Figure 3: Streetscape Elements Streetscape Map

2.1 ZONING OVERLAY

The Hollywood Commercial District is primarily zoned Commercial Shopping Center (C-S-C), as indicated by the Prince George's County, Maryland Zoning Map. The northwest corner of the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and Edgewood Road is zoned open space, and land surrounding the Hollywood Commercial District is zonedR-55 which correlates to high density single family residential. The County Code, Prince George's County, Maryland, 2007 edition with 2010 supplement Section 27-454 outlines purposes of the Commercial Shopping Center Zone.

The purposes of the Commercial Shopping Center Zone are:

- To provide locations for predominantly retail commercial shopping facilities;
- To provide locations for compatible institutional, recreational, and service uses;
- To exclude uses incompatible with general retial shopping centers and institutions;

In addition, the Hollywood Commercial District is encompassed by the Development District Overlay as indicated by the Prince George's County, Maryland Zoning Map. The County Code, Prince George's County, Maryland, 2007 edition with 2010 supplement Section 27-548.20 outlines purposes of the Development District Overlay.

The specific purposes of the Development District Overlay Zone are:

(1) To provide a close link between Master Plans, Master Plan Amendments, or Sector Plans and their implementation.

(2) To provide flexibility within a regulatory framework to encourage innovative design solutions.

(3) To provide uniform development criteria utilizing design standards approved or amended by the District Council.

(4) To promote an appropriate mix of land uses.

(5) To encourage compact development.

(6) To encourage compatible development which complements and enhances the character of an area.

(7) To promote a sense of place by preserving character-defining features within a community.

(8) To encourage pedestrian activity.

(9) To promote economic vitality and investment.

The Development District Overlay provides guidance on specific streetscape treatments and amenities that support a vibrant streetscape environment including:

- Dimensioned street sections
- Street trees
- Sidewalk location and width
- Paving materials
- Benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, sculpture, artwork, bus shelters, and public seating
- Street lighting

Figure 4: Zoning Map

2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

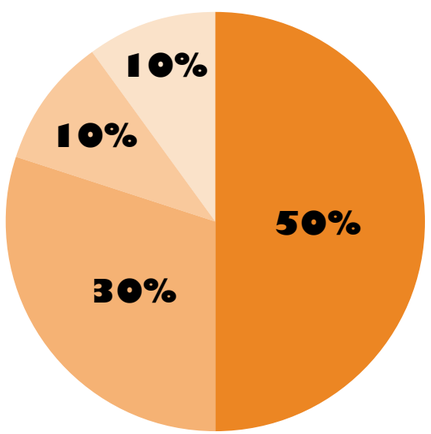
Population: 4,134

The most recent United States census data available is based on the 2010 census. The project study area is included in the census tract 8069. The size and limits of census tract 8069 generally equate to a ¼ mile radius from the center of the study area, the intersection of Edgewood Road and Rhode Island Avenue. The following information informs the design team's understanding of who lives in the neighborhood.

Median Household Income: $74,977 (2012 Dollars)

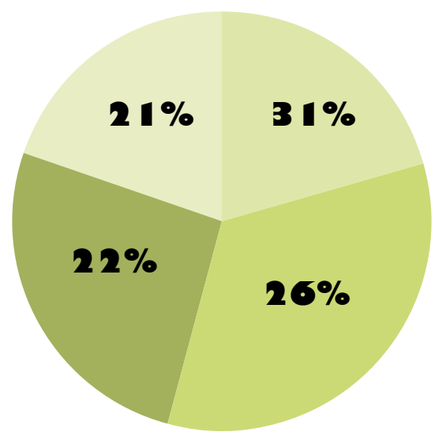
Education: Bachelor's Degree (25 yrs and older): 34%
High School Degree (25 yrs and older): 80%

Ethnicity



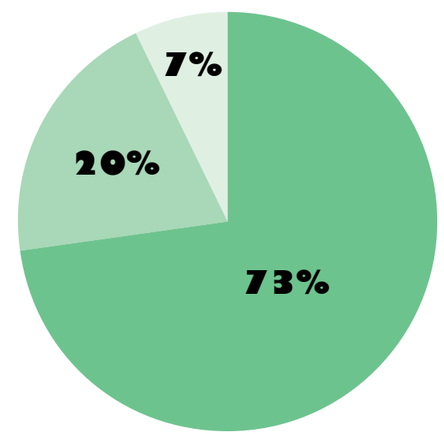
Caucasian
Hispanic/Latino
African American
Asian

Age



Children and Under 18
Over 50
18-34
35-49

Households - 1,396



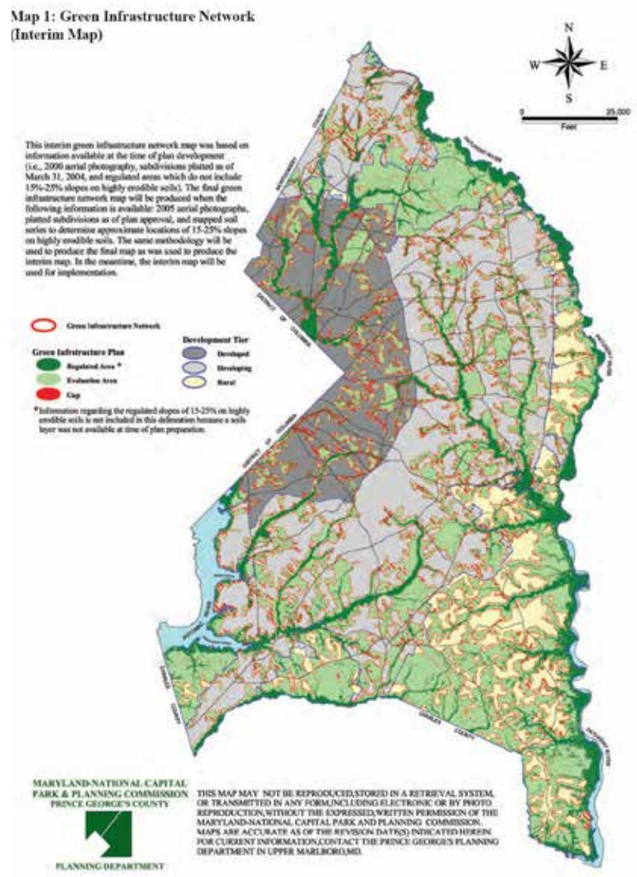
Owner Occupied
Renter Occupied
Vacant (For sale 44 homes, for rent 20 homes)

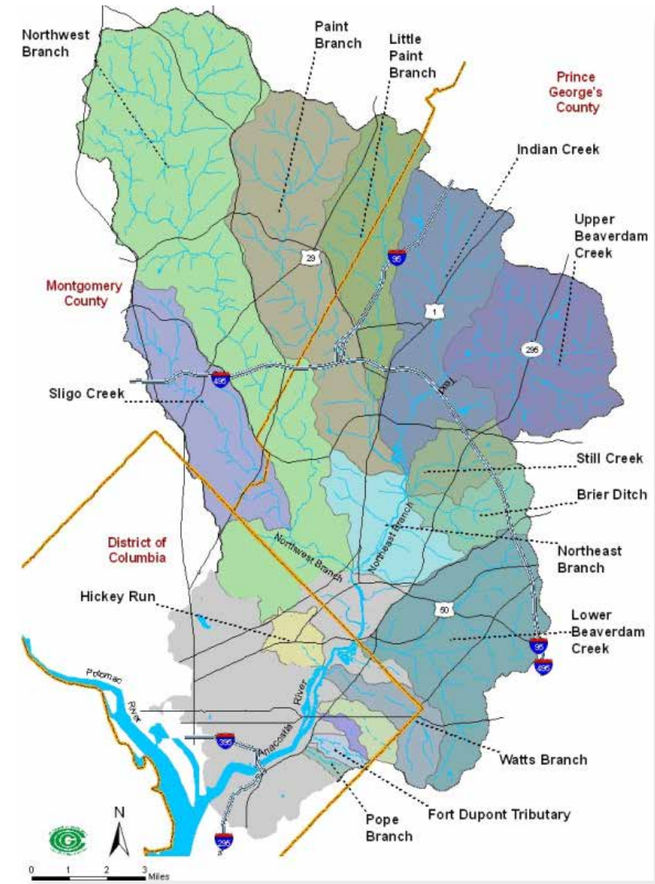
2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL OVERLAY

The study area falls within the Indian Creek sub-watershed which continues to the Anacostia watershed. The Anacostia watershed is highly urbanized and as a result has degraded rivers and streams. The Indian Creek sub-watershed is approximately 70-percent developed; moderate to extreme channel erosion is common, riparian buffers have been lost with only about 30% of stream miles exhibiting adequate riparian buffers, and poor water quality and high levels of suspended solids, the most of any other subwatershed in the Anacostia River watershed.

Stormwater / Environmental Site Design

Older neighborhoods, such as Hollywood, were developed before stormwater management rules and regulations were implemented. As efforts for improvements are implemented in these communities, incorporation of environmental site design (ESD) practices can solve local site drainage problems and contribute to the overall health of the receiving streams and watershed. Environmental site design practices including, but not limited to, bioretention facilities, bioswales, and rain gardens reduce the velocity of stormwater runoff, increase infiltration opportunities, and recharge groundwater resources thereby reducing runoff and pollutants currently reaching the Anacostia River and Chesapeake Bay. In support of the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Plan, the Indian Creek Sub-watershed Action Plan (SWAP) was prepared. The Indian Creek SWAP provides a vision statement and targets for restoration of the sub-watershed by the year 2020. Retrofitting existing communities with environmental site design practices will support the strategies of the Indian Creek SWAP.





Example of Soil Erosion on Indian Creek.

Example of Sediment within Anacostia Watershed.

2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL OVERLAY

Existing Green Space Network

The study area benefits from three neighborhood parks or playgrounds within a ¼ mile radius: Muskogee Park, Sunnyside Neighborhood Park, and Hollywood Elementary School Playground. The Hollywood Community Park and Duvall Field provide active recreation fields within a ½ - ¾ mile radius. Larger parks -Paint Branch Park to the west, Indian Creek Park and Greenbelt Park to the south-east create a system or network of green infrastructure.

Street Trees

Planting street trees creates green corridors that connect existing green infrastructure in the county, expanding the overall tree canopy, and providing environmental services that can have a positive impact on the health of environments and citizens.

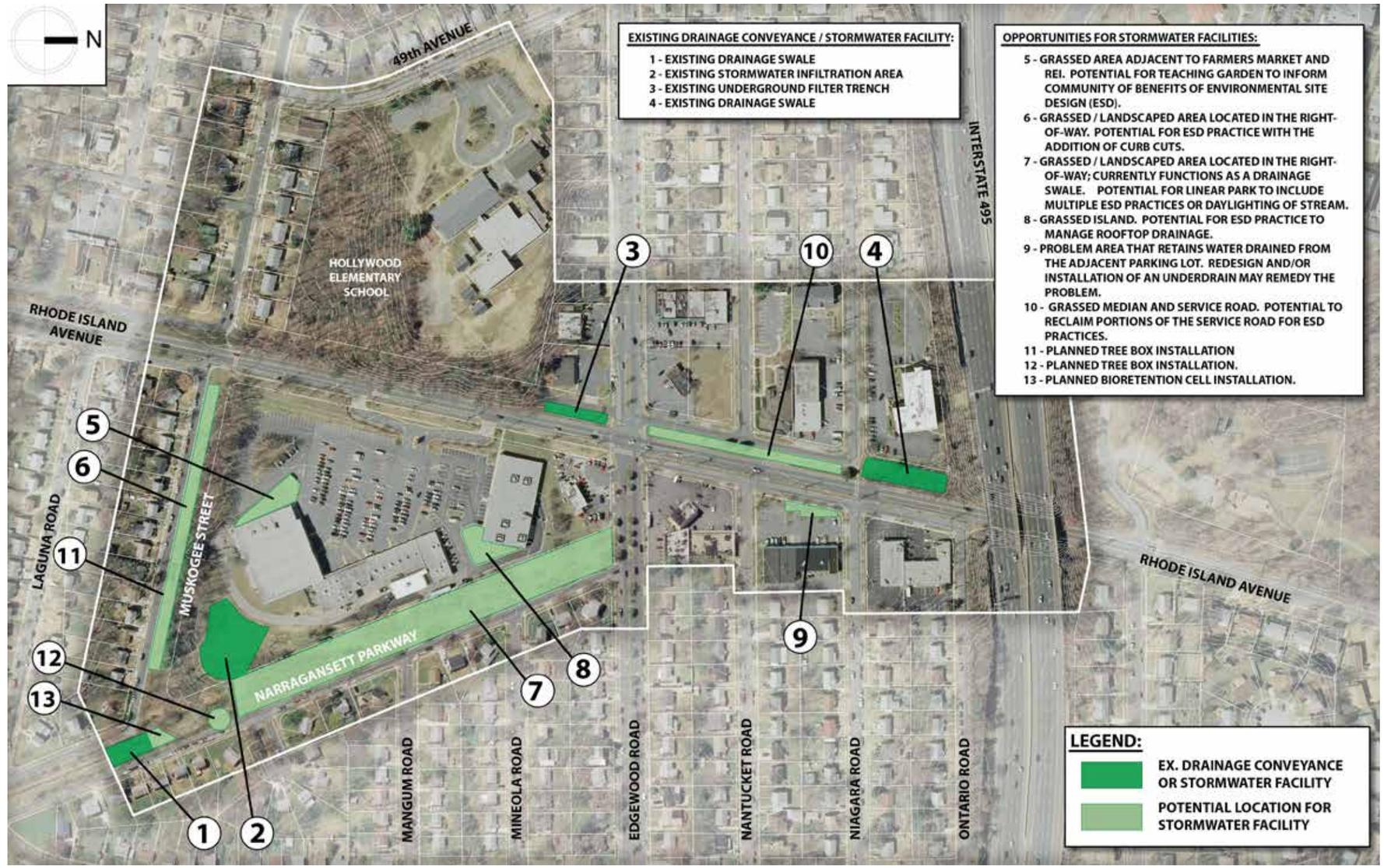


Figure 5: Stormwater Analysis

2.5 TRANSPORTATION

Vehicular Circulation

Despite much of the Hollywood Commercial District being accessible by foot and bicycle, the shopping centers provide ample surface parking for their patrons. Drivers are able to access the businesses and surface lots through a limited access service road. Figure 6 identifies the location in which drivers can access the service road.

As seen in Figure 6, there are limited points along the service road north of Rhode Island Avenue/Edgewood Road intersection to access the service road and the adjacent local streets and businesses. This creates confusion for drivers trying to access the businesses. Illegal or dangerous maneuvers have been observed in the field by drivers trying to correct movements to enter and exit the service road.

Rhode Island Avenue's cross section consists of one travel lane that varies from 11 to 12 feet and a bike lane varying from 5 to 6 feet in each direction. Rhode Island Avenue carries an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume of 14,100 cars a day. There is one signalized intersection in the study area at Rhode Island Avenue/Edgewood Road. While Rhode Island Avenue and Edgewood Road are one-lane in each direction, each approach of the intersection has 3 lanes to accommodate right turn and left turn lanes. It is a core point along Rhode Island in the study area where traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit have multiple conflict points.

North of the Rhode Island Avenue/Edgewood Road intersection and south of the Rhode Island Avenue/Muskogee Street intersection, a two-way, 20 foot service road runs on the east and west side of the street to provide access to the adjacent residences and developments. These service roads tend to be low volume, low speed roads and generally create a disconnect between Rhode Island Avenue and the residences and businesses for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars alike due to the nature of the road's limited access points. Similarly, the neighborhood and cross streets are low volume, low speed roads with many intersections controlled by two-way and all-way stop signs and have signage and speed bumps for traffic speed control.

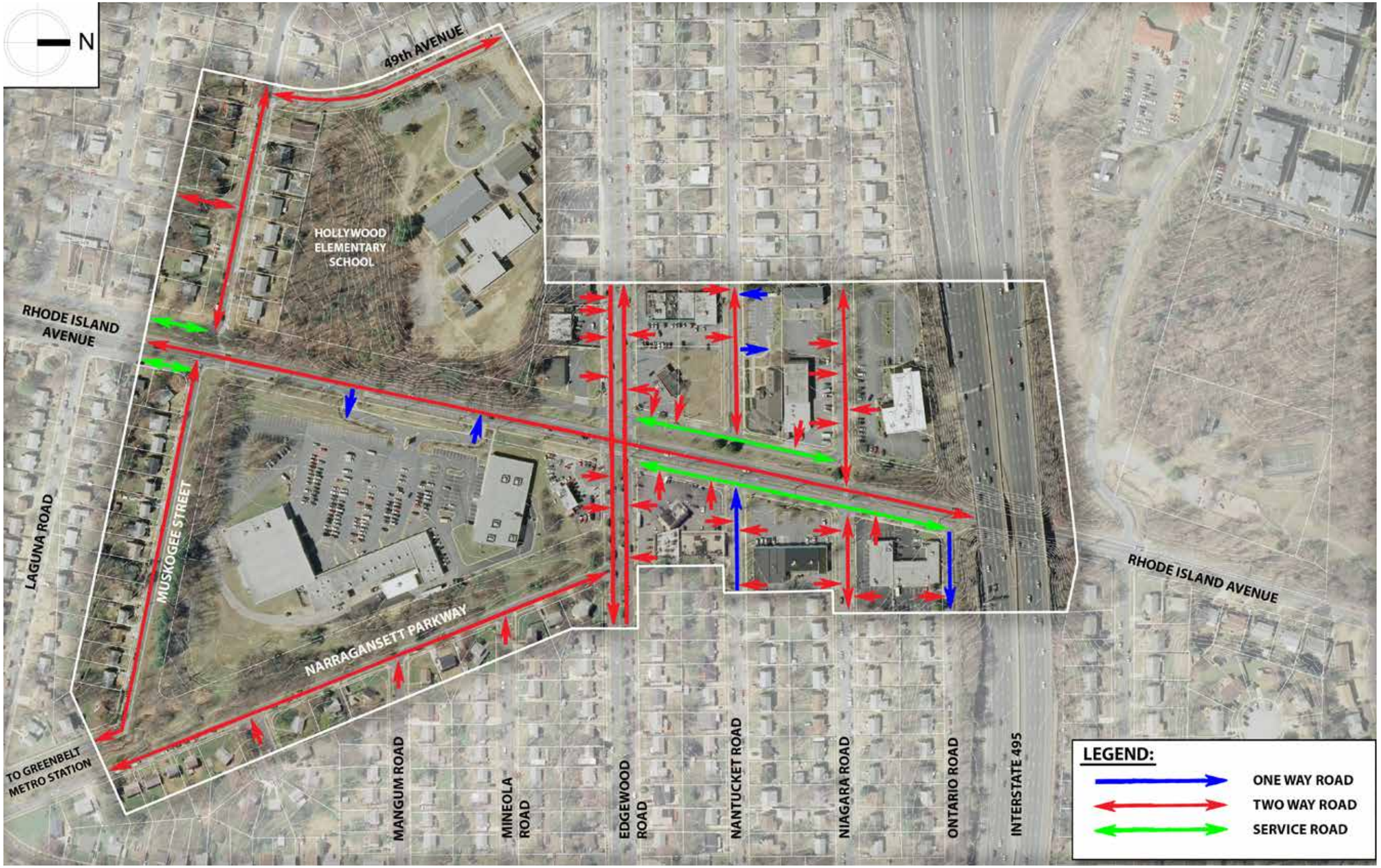


Figure 6: Vehicular Circulation

2.5 TRANSPORTATION

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Access

As seen in Figure 7, many of the side streets have sidewalks on both sides. Additionally, where there are service roads, there are sidewalks on the service road (but not on Rhode Island Avenue itself) adjacent to the businesses and surface lots. There are sidewalks adjacent to Rhode Island Avenue where the service road is not present between Muskogee Street and Edgewood Road. The businesses along the corridor face Rhode Island Avenue with a surface parking lot, and sometimes a service road, between the front of the business and Rhode Island Avenue. This creates two barriers for pedestrians trying to access these businesses from the Rhode Island Avenue side, or from the neighborhoods behind the shopping centers. Pedestrians who walk along Rhode Island Avenue must traverse a surface parking lot, an uncontrolled environment for pedestrians to access the business.

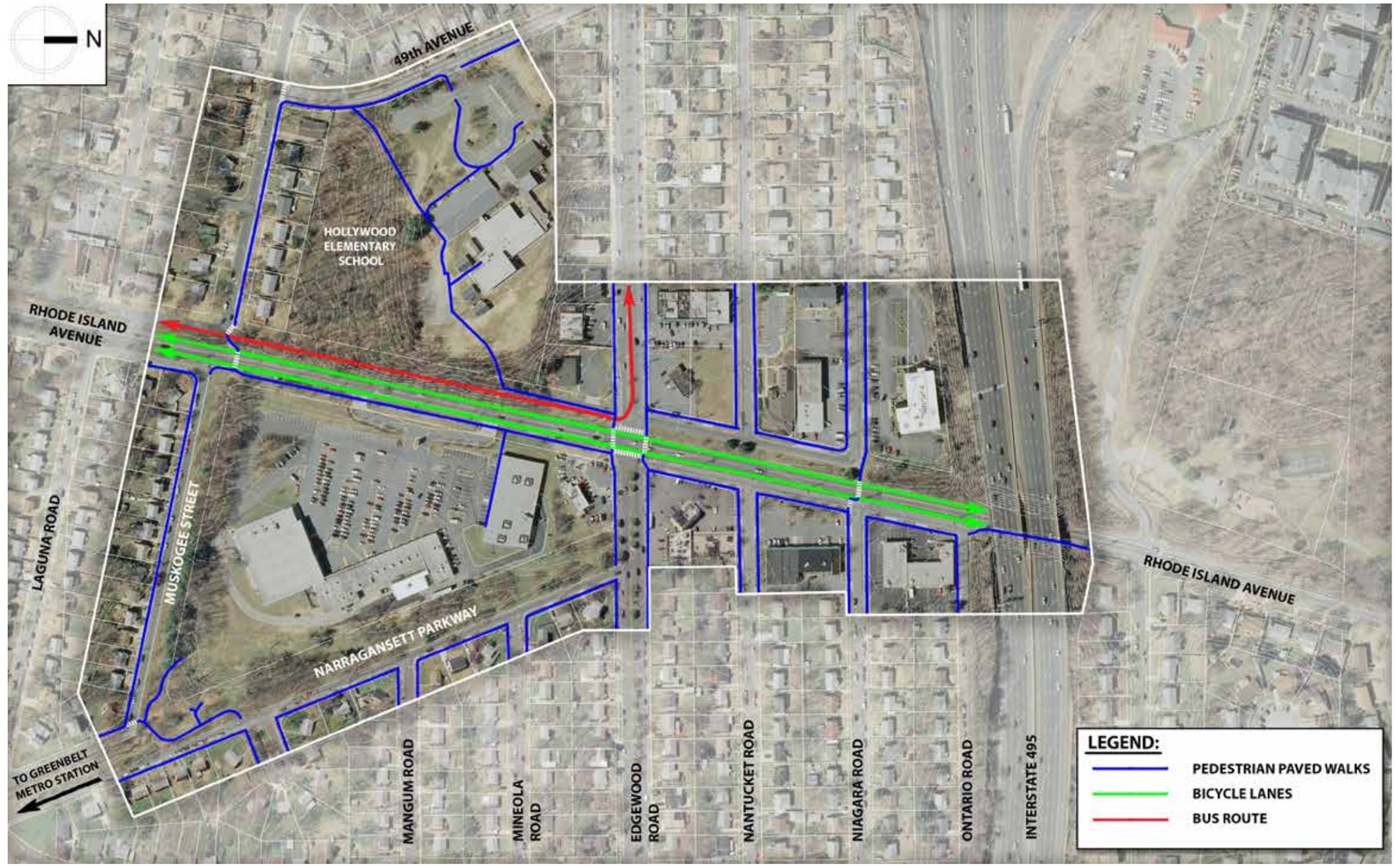


Figure 7: Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Map

Figure 8

Pedestrian walking in wooded area behind Hollywood Shopping Center (Left) and cattle path to back of Hollywood Shopping Center (Right)

Figure 9

Pedestrian cross at an unsignalized crosswalk, looking east at the intersection of Niagara Road and Rhode Island Avenue.

2.5 TRANSPORTATION

Pedestrian Access

The businesses along Rhode Island Avenue face away from the neighborhoods and lack direct pedestrian access to the neighborhood. This has created the development of many informal "cattle path" trails behind the REI and MOMs grocery store. As seen in Figure 8, pedestrians from the neighborhood are cutting through the wooded area on the back side of the businesses from Narragansett Avenue.

North of Edgewood Road, there is an unsignalized crossing across Rhode Island Avenue to allow pedestrians to access the businesses on either side of Rhode Island Avenue. However, the crossing is in a vulnerable location for pedestrians, as the main service road access to the businesses is located just to the north of the crossing. As seen in Figure 9, pedestrians cross at an unsignalized crosswalk just under 500 feet north of the Rhode Island Avenue/Edgewood Road intersection and adjacent to the major access point in the service road at Niagara Road.

Finally, Hollywood Elementary School is located on the southwest corner of the Rhode Island Avenue/Edgewood Road intersection. In the a.m. and p.m. peak hours for schools, many students cross at the intersection's long, 70 foot crosswalks. There is also a photo enforced school zone area on southbound Rhode Island Avenue through this intersection to monitor speeding and red-light running through the intersection.

2.5 TRANSPORTATION

Bicycle Access

While a bike lane is provided along Rhode Island Avenue, due to the nature of the roadway it tends to lend itself more to experienced cyclists. Figure 10 shows a cyclist in the bike lane on Rhode Island Avenue just North of Muskogee Street. The cyclist takes up a good portion of the 5 to 6 foot bike lane and the curb and gutter pushes the cyclist to ride closer to the travel lane than the curb. The travel lane is also 11 to 12 feet wide, creating a comfortable width for cars to travel at speeds above 30 mph.

While there is a dedicated bicycle facility on Rhode Island Avenue, much of the corridor has a low volume, low speed service road that runs parallel to the street as well as many low volume, low speed local streets that connect to it. Narragansett Parkway (Figure 11), north of Muskogee Street, is a parallel alternative to Rhode Island Avenue that can provide access to the businesses and a more comfortable bike connection across Edgewood Road.

Figure 10

The striped standard bicycle lane is most appropriate for experienced and confident bicyclists, riding south on Rhode Island Avenue.

Figure 11

Narragansett Parkway, looking Southbound at Mineola Road (one block south of Edgewood Road).

2.5 TRANSPORTATION

Transit

The bus routes that run along Rhode Island Avenue are WMATA bus #81 and #83. The 83 has 5 to 10 minute headways in the a.m. and p.m. peak service hours and 20 to 30 minute headways in the off peak hours. The bus runs along Rhode Island Avenue and turns onto Edgewood Road to continue on Baltimore
Avenue.

There are several bus stops with benches and/or shelters. However, due to the grade separation and lack of sidewalks along Rhode Island Avenue, many of the bus stops only provide ADA access from the street. Figure 12 provides an example bus stop on southbound Rhode Island Avenue at Rhode Island Avenue/ Hollywood Road. The bus stop provides access to a unsignalized crossing across Rhode Island Avenue and

As noted earlier, the center of the commercial district is approximately 1 mile from the Greenbelt Metro Station. Similar to the businesses, however, the station faces away from the neighborhoods. There is a pedestrian path through a park area that leads to a tunnel to access the backside of the station and the parking lot on the other side of the station (Figure 13).

Figure 12

Bus stop on southbound Rhode Island Avenue at Rhode Island Avenue and Hollywood Road.

Figure 13

Rear entrance to the Greenbelt Metro Station (Top) and shared use path leading from the neighborhoods to the station (Bottom).

3.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

As stated earlier, the study area and nearby neighborhoods have many recreational resources, such as the Trolley Trail and various parks and playgrounds. The existing shopping centers are well positioned geographically to be important neighborhood-serving retail destinations. WMATA Route 81 and 83 and the Greenbelt Metro station also connect the study area and surrounding neighborhoods to the local and regional transit network. The keys to maximizing the benefit that residents and visitors get from the proximity of these important resources are connectivity and legibility.

First, the resources must be connected with minimal detour by the kinds of paths, trails, intersection improvements, pedestrian crosswalks, sidewalks, bicycle boulevards and "recreational street" facilities that are safe and feel comfortable for a diversity of pedestrians bicyclists – Creating a network of these facilities is often described as an "8 to 80" approach. Second, these connections must be easy to identify, and the safe and comfortable path to a notable destination must be easy to identify. Wayfinding signage, maps, consistent landscaping, and other measures are all useful tools to provide this legibility to pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers attempting to access local resources.

Wayfinding signage orienting pedestrians and cyclists to nearby parks and recreation fields, Greenbelt Metro, and Youth and Family Services was observed at the southeast corner of Rhode Island Avenue and Edgewood Road. Wayfinding signage from Greenbelt Metro to the Hollywood Commercial District and other destinations was observed at the intersection of Lackawanna Street and Narragansett Parkway and at Lackawanna Street and Rhode Island Avenue (service Road).

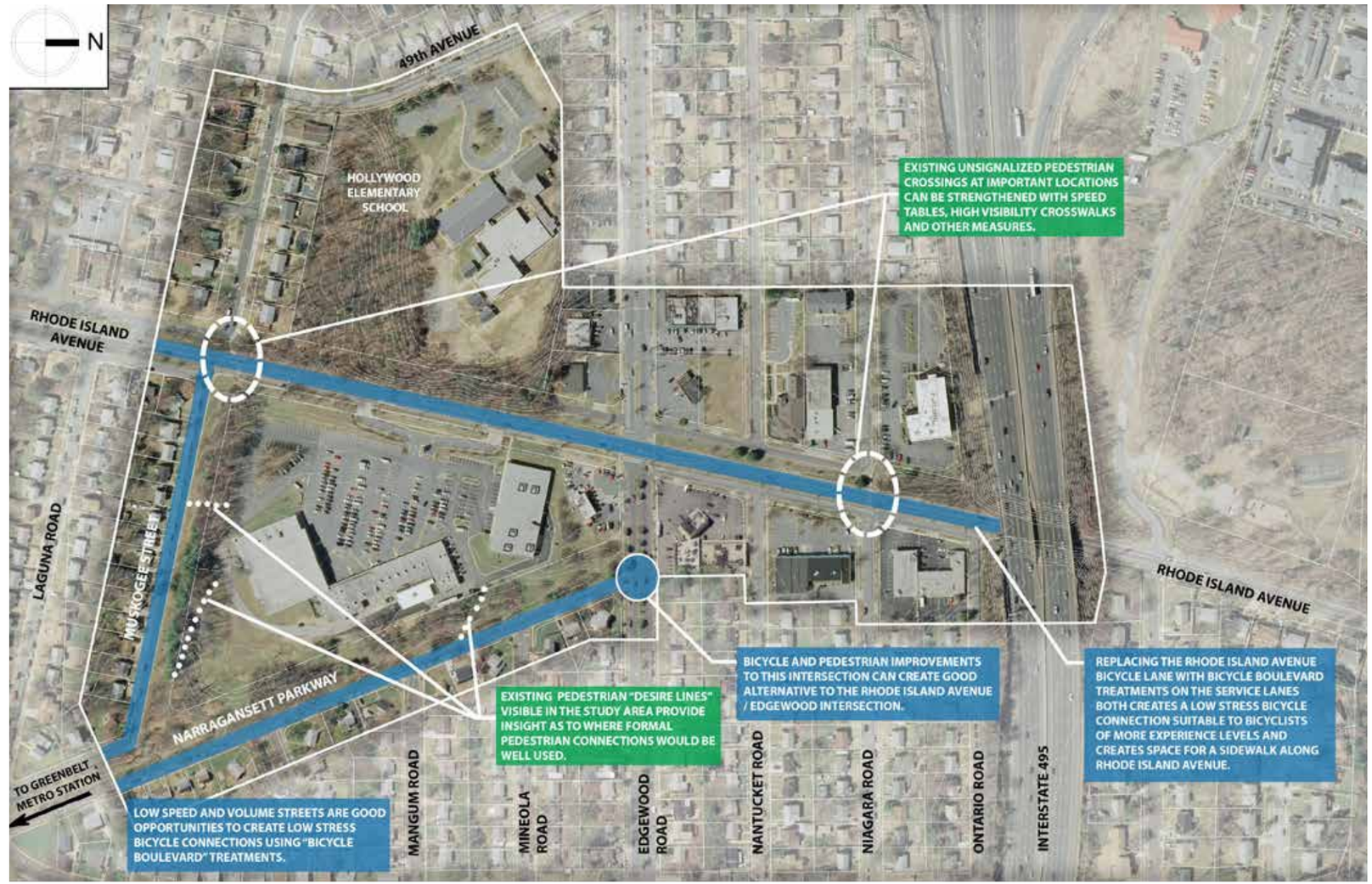


Figure 14: Opportunities for transportation improvements in the Hollywood Commercial District.

3.2 SUITABILITY FOR REVITALIZATION

The DC Office of Planning, in collaboration with Streetsense, published the DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit March 2012. Utilizing the analysis guidance and tools presented in this document, a Retail Mix Diagnostic Assessment was performed to determine the level of viability of the Hollywood Commercial District. The diagnostic assessment categorizes retail into three categories: Neighborhood Goods & Services (NG&S), Food & Beverage (F&B), General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, and Other (GAFO), and rates each as suitable market, modest market, and challenged market.

Key influences that are evaluated include:

- More than 2,000 people residing within ¼ mile;
- More than $65,000 median household income within ¼ mile;
- More than 25% with a Bachelor's Degree within ¼ mile;
- Daytime populations;
- Metro Station within three blocks;
- Pedestrian Traffic Volumes;
- Vehicular Traffic Volumes;
- An existing concentration of grocery, drugstore, dry cleaner, salon and barber type establishments.

For the three categories, the Hollywood Commercial District scores moderate to suitable.

Neighborhood Goods & Services: Suitable Market
Food & Beverage: Modest Market
General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, and Other: Modest Market

Strong retail anchors, REI and Mom's Organic Market, although destination retailers, provide the backbone for this small-scale neighborhood street. The indicators listed above demonstrate that the Hollywood Commercial District has the framework in place to become a vibrant retail district.

Hollywood Shopping Center

04 STRATEGIES

In addition to the overarching goals of the study, the following strategies will be considered as final recommendations are developed:

Shared Streets/Complete Streets

Shared streets are low-speed streets that function as a shared space for multiple users including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists where pedestrians and cyclists have the right-of-way. Often paving materials and patterns are used to help distinguish shared streets from traditional vehicle oriented throughways. The street level is designed to be flush with the sidewalk and be more reminiscent of a plaza. Parking for vehicles is removed and sidewalks are made wider to accommodate benches, outdoor seating, and plantings becoming more appropriate for non-drivers. Shared Streets are being used as a means to revitalize commercial districts and increase shopper spending.

High Performing Landscapes

High performing landscapes embody a design approach that anticipates parks and open spaces performing multiple functions that contribute to a city's overall environmental health in addition to providing recreation opportunities. Examples of elements in a high performing landscapes and their benefits:

- Street trees, in addition to creating an aesthetic streetscape, provide shade reducing heat island effect, absorb rainwater, and sequester carbon from the air.
- Rain gardens and bioswales filter stormwater runoff, increase infiltration, provide habitat and food for insects, butterflies, and birds.

Cohesive Design Vocabulary

Defining the district with a strong visual identity and brand through consistent materials and furnishings.

Creative Placemaking

The integration of art - both visual and performance - has potential to create a strong identity for the district as well as bring together people of diverse backgrounds, strengthening connections within the neighborhood and drawing interest from surrounding areas. Prince George's County has a wealth of artists who could be engaged to develop artwork for this area.

Marketing/Branding

Working hand in hand with creative placemaking, the development of a brand for the District can help guide all new developments and strategies implemented and provide an overlay by which to judge any proposed improvements.

Programming

Supporting a commercial or retail district through organized events that generate activity and interaction and create a destination. Events can support local retailers and restaurants as people visit Hollywood to take part in programmed events.

SUMMARY

The Hollywood Commercial District has great potential to be a thriving commercial district and a destination for local visitors. Strong retail anchors, residential neighborhoods, green space networks can all be improved to make Hollywood a vibrant neighborhood for the future.

Creative Placemaking

http://one.arch.tamu.edu/news/2013/2/4/tactical-urbanism-lecture/

Creative Placemaking

http://www.philly.com (David Swanson)

Shared Streets

http://movabilitVyaustin.org/2014/06/complete-streets-could-be-coming-to-austin/

Marketing

Programming

Complete Streets

http://www.njslom.org/magazine/2012-03/pg-34.html

Resources

http://2030palette.org/swatches/view/shared-streets/shared-streets-concepts

Bibliography

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, U.S. Census Data. Retrieved December 9, 2014, from http://www.census.gov/data/data-tools.html

February 2010, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Plan. Retrieved December 16, 2014, from http://www.anacostia.net/plan.html

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission & Prince George's County Planning Department, June 2005, Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan. Retrieved December 16, 2014 from http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Publications/Green_Infrastructure_Publication.htm