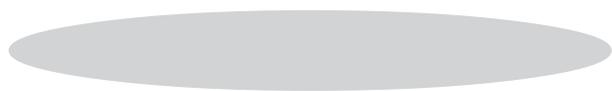


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# Executive Summary

The people of Mount Rainier, including residents, business owners and property owners, want their Town Center to realize its potential to function as a healthy, thriving business and residential hub. Much more than a wish, the revitalization of the Town Center is driving a number of public and private sector improvements, from new sidewalks and public buildings to fresh paint.

To assist with the revitalization, the City of Mount Rainier is pursuing a range of programs and resources. An important addition to the City's revitalization toolbox, the Mount Rainier Town Center Urban Renewal Plan (the "Plan") gives the City the power to acquire property in blighted areas through the power of eminent domain for eventual redevelopment with private developer partners, and resulting community improvement. This power is distinct from traditional use of eminent domain, in which governments acquire property to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens.

It is important to note that the Mount Rainier Town Center Urban Renewal Plan departs dramatically from the urban renewal plans that proliferated throughout the country in the 1960s, which resulted in the leveling of entire neighborhoods. In contrast, this plan proposes to use the power of condemnation to achieve redevelopment and revitalization that builds on the strengths of the existing community.

This Plan recommends that the power provided by the City Charter to carry out urban renewal projects by exercising the power of eminent domain be considered as a tool for only the four sites with the redevelopment potential described on page 20 of the Town Center Urban Renewal Plan. The Plan recommends that these sites be the priority of the City. The plan does not recommend or support the use of eminent domain outside of the M-U-TC zone.

The City of Mount Rainier Charter, in accordance with state enabling legislation, requires that the City have an Urban Renewal Plan in order to use its power of condemnation for an urban renewal project. In November 2000, the City of Mount Rainier formally requested that the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) help the City create an Urban Renewal Plan.

Since that time, MDP staff worked with business and property owners, residents, City staff and elected officials, and a Town Center Revitalization Task Force ("Task Force") to define and elaborate on a vision for the Town Center. As part of this work, MDP staff interviewed over 50 business and property owners; analyzed existing plans and policies; inventoried existing land uses and historic value of buildings; conducted a thorough analysis of the Town Center's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with the Town Center Revitalization Task Force; and worked with the Task Force to identify potential sites for redevelopment and revitalization, parking, and open space.

After analyzing existing plans and policies, as well as input from business and property owners, MDP staff compiled a draft vision statement and identified four guiding principles: Relationships, Image, Function, and Mobility. The guiding principles elaborate on the vision and provide a framework for specific strategies. Members of the Task Force later confirmed the vision and guiding principles.

In addition, the Task Force identified the need to add a section to the Plan that identifies resources to help with implementation of the Plan.

Another important component of the Plan is the "Vision Map" (Map 1), which identifies potential sites for redevelopment and revitalization, parking, and open space. The map is the physical embodiment of the vision and guiding principles.

## **Vision**

The Mount Rainier Town Center will be a thriving commercial, residential and civic center that serves Mount Rainier and surrounding communities. With an attractive mix of renovated historic buildings and new buildings, the Town Center will project a comfortable and safe environment, suitable for walking, bicycling, taking transit, or driving. The buildings will house a variety of uses, with shops and businesses at the street level, and residences and offices on upper stories. The strong relationships among residents, shop owners, business managers, and City staff will help to reinforce the lively Town Center.

## **Guiding Principles**

### **Relationships**

The vitality of Mount Rainier and its Town Center will be built upon strong and supportive relationships and partnerships among businesses, property owners, residents, civic associations, locally-elected officials, government staff, churches, schools, and the arts community.

### **Image**

The Town Center will project an attractive, vibrant, and unique image that reflects its historic, small town character and charm.

### **Function**

The Town Center will serve as a civic, commercial, and residential center for Mount Rainier and surrounding communities.

### **Mobility**

The Town Center will provide a variety of safe and convenient transportation alternatives, including walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving.

# Introduction

## A Brief History of Mount Rainier

The City of Mount Rainier is located four miles northeast of the U.S. Capitol building. The City's commercial center developed around a streetcar stop two blocks east of the District of Columbia border with Prince George's County. The streetcar line that connected Mount Rainier to Washington began operation in 1897, three years before land was purchased to found the City. The "District Line Station" was located at the current intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and 34<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1910, when the City was incorporated, the community's commercial center had developed near the streetcar station.

Mount Rainier grew during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 1950s, when the City's population peaked at 10,989 people. During the 1970s, the City's population declined as people moved to newer suburban areas outside the Washington Beltway. Population loss, aging buildings, and the economic shift to strip commercial shopping centers and regional malls led to the decline of the Town Center. In 2000, 8,498 people lived in the City.

In the late 1980s, Mount Rainier citizens, business owners, and elected officials embarked on a Town Center revitalization effort, undertaking a series of initiatives in collaboration with Prince George's County and the State. These revitalization efforts emerged simultaneously with a growing national, state and local awareness about the value of older buildings and architecture, known as the historic preservation movement.

## The Purpose of This Plan

The Mount Rainier Town Center Revitalization Plan (the "Plan") aims to create a cohesive and comprehensive guide for future development, revitalization, and related activities. It is designed to enable residents, business owners, landowners, city staff, and elected officials to track progress and plan for the next steps.

Since the 1980s, numerous studies, plans, and projects have been undertaken to aid Mount Rainier's revitalization efforts. In fact, in 1988, the Mount Rainier Business Area Improvement Handbook noted: "This business area is one of the most 'over-studied' areas inside of the Beltway: since 1970 it has been the subject of various surveys, Master Plans, zoning studies, visual analysis, parking studies, etc." Some revitalization initiatives are complete, while others are in progress. Over the years, people involved in developing visions, plans and projects for Mount Rainier have left the community or reduced their civic involvement while new residents and business owners have joined the community. This Plan reflects and incorporates these existing studies, plans, and projects and captures the current goals and objectives of the community.

In addition, this Plan serves as the Urban Renewal Plan required by the City Charter in order for the City to use its condemnation authority, which may be a key component of its revitalization strategy.

## **This Plan:**

- Compiles goals, objectives and policies and programs from existing documents related to Mount Rainier’s Town Center revitalization;
- Provides information for existing and prospective residents, building owners, business owners, elected officials and government staff about the Town Center revitalization goals, objectives, policies and programs;
- Coordinates various plans and initiatives under a cohesive Town Center Revitalization Plan to provide a context, avoid duplication, improve efficiency of various projects, and build a synergy among programs;
- Fills gaps in the existing revitalization plans and initiatives;
- Provides a gauge for tracking progress with the revitalization effort;
- Provides an overarching framework and marketing tool that the City, County, business and community associations can use to support project proposals and grant applications;
- Provides City leaders with guidance when making decisions about development proposals and City actions; and
- Meets City Charter requirements for an “Urban Renewal Plan.”

## **Revitalization Plan Requirements**

The City of Mount Rainier Charter requires the Plan to be: “sufficiently complete to indicate such land acquisition, demolition, and removal of structures, redevelopment, improvements and rehabilitation as may be proposed to be carried out.”

The Mount Rainier City Council formally designated the Town Center as an urban renewal area as required by the Charter. The official Town Center boundaries are identified on Map 1 on page 12.

## **Plan Preparation**

In November 2000, the Mount Rainier City Council requested assistance in drafting the plan from the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP). (See letter in Appendix A.)

In an effort to learn what the people with a direct investment in the Town Center think about how to stimulate further revitalization, staff from the Maryland Department of Planning met with over 50 business and building owners. (See Appendix B for a list of survey questions and responses.) Staff from the Maryland Department of Planning contacted as many of the business and property owners as possible and completed an inventory of existing land uses and historic value.

At the same time, Maryland Department of Planning staff reviewed and summarized existing plans and initiatives. Using the MDP’s *Maryland Property View* database and building footprints from the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, the Planning Data Services unit of the Maryland Department of Planning created maps of the Town Center that show land use and historic value.

At its June 2001 meeting, the City Council decided to assemble a Task Force to work with the Maryland Department of Planning to develop the Plan. (See

Appendix B for a list of committee members.) The Task Force met every three weeks between December 2001 and June 2002 to assess the Town Center's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and to evaluate the compilation of goals, objectives, policies, and programs in the context of this assessment. The Task Force held an open house in February 2003 to share and get feedback on the Plan with other members of the Town Center community.

## **Town Center Location and Context**

The boundaries of Mount Rainier's Town Center are based on existing City and County plans, including Prince George's County's 1994 Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map amendment for Planning Area 68 and the Mount Rainier Town Center Development Plan. After consideration of the goals of the Plan, the Task Force expanded the boundaries. For the purposes of this Plan, The Town Center extends along both sides of Rhode Island Avenue from the District of Columbia border to the Brentwood border. Along 34<sup>th</sup> Street, the Town Center includes a few properties south of Rhode Island Avenue, and extends north to include several properties beyond Bunker Hill Road. The Town Center also includes one block of 35th Street and extends short distances along Perry Street, Bunker Hill Road, and 37th Street.

The Town Center is strategically located as one of the commercial and business nodes along the Route 1 corridor, which connects the University of Maryland with Washington, D.C. A transit node for the Maryland Transit Administration, the Town Center is served by several bus routes and is connected by bus to the nearby Metro station.

The Town Center is part of a larger interdependent community that includes adjacent municipalities. In particular, community leaders recognize the functional interdependence of Brentwood, North Brentwood, Hyattsville, and Mount Rainier, and engage in many cooperative initiatives. In addition, Mount Rainier has ongoing partnerships with the State, County and other neighboring municipalities for planning initiatives and activities including: Route 1 corridor initiatives, Anacostia Trails Heritage initiatives, Gateway Communities initiatives, the Gateway Arts and Entertainment District, and revitalization efforts targeted to communities inside the Beltway.

### **Vision:**

*The Mount Rainier Town Center will be a thriving commercial, residential and civic center that serves Mount Rainier and surrounding communities. With an attractive mix of renovated historic buildings and new buildings, the Town Center will project a comfortable and safe environment, suitable for walking, bicycling, taking transit, or driving. The buildings will house a variety of uses, with shops and businesses at the street level, and residences and offices on upper stories. The strong relationships among residents, shop owners, business managers, and City staff will help to reinforce the lively Town Center.*

## **Town Center Vision**

The Master Plan for Prince George's County Planning Area Sixty Eight and various other documents and plans contain components of a vision for the Town Center, including articulated and implied goals and policies. These have been combined with information gained from interviews with Town Center business owners and building owners, and the Town Center Revitalization Task Force to craft the vision for this Plan.

## **Guiding Principles**

After analyzing input from business and property owners in the Town Center, the staff of the Maryland Department of Planning proposed the following four guiding principles, which were adopted by the Task Force for their work. These guiding principles are components of the vision that provide a framework for specific recommendations.

### **Relationships**

The vitality of Mount Rainier and its Town Center will be built upon strong and supportive relationships and partnerships among businesses, property owners, residents, civic associations, locally-elected officials, government staff, churches, schools, and the arts community.

### **Image**

The Town Center will project an attractive, vibrant, and unique image that reflects its historic, small town character and charm.

### **Function**

The Town Center will serve as a civic, commercial, and residential center for Mount Rainier and surrounding communities.

### **Mobility**

The Town Center will provide a variety of safe and convenient transportation alternatives, including walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving.

Members of the Town Center Revitalization Task Force agreed with the guiding principles and recommended the addition of another section to the plan: Resources. This has been incorporated into the Implementation section on page 22.

# Guiding Principles, Objectives and Recommended Strategies

## Principle One: Relationships

*The vitality of Mount Rainier and its Town Center will be built upon strong and supportive relationships and partnerships among businesses, property owners, residents, civic associations, government officials, government staff, churches, schools, and the arts community.*

### Summary:

Business owners, property owners and Task Force members noted the need to strengthen relationships between and among various groups in the Town Center. There was vocal dissatisfaction with the level of communication, particularly between the City and businesses, and there was general agreement that the business community and residents could benefit from better communication.

Moreover, as a city with limited resources, many needs and small taxable base, Mount Rainier needs to build relationships in order to leverage new resources. The most promising strategy the city can pursue -- and has pursued with success in recent years -- is to make a commitment to achieve its goals by developing partnerships with nonprofit, county and state agencies.

Ideas for ongoing communication enhancements were supplemented by ideas for Town Center activities, used as a way to bring the community together and attract more people to the Town Center.



### Objective 1:

Build supportive relationships and encourage communication among business owners, building owners, residents, City officials and staff, advocacy groups, and the faith-based community. Advocacy groups include historic preservation and environmental groups, Gateway Community Development Corporation, Anacostia Trails Heritage Association, and the Mount Rainier Business Association.

### Recommended Strategies:

1. Host regular business lunches or events, and invite other stakeholders from the community.
2. Work with faith-based organizations to reach out to the community, so that business owners and residents know what these organizations are doing (or may do) for the community.

3. Ensure that the leaders of the Mount Rainier Business Association are psychologically and personally invested in the community.

### **Objective 2:**

Maintain a business-friendly climate.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Establish a welcome committee, and greet new and potential new business owners with a welcome packet.
2. Make information on rules and regulations, tools, financial and other resources, incentives, events, and meetings readily available at a site in City Hall and on the website. Proactively distribute this information to business and property owners.
3. Establish a process to allow business owners to provide input to the City on specific issues, such as regular meetings between businesses and the City, or individual meetings with business owners.
4. Encourage existing businesses to be part of the redevelopment process.

### **Objective 3:**

Encourage residents and visitors to support local businesses.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Conduct a survey to determine what type of businesses people in Mount Rainier and in surrounding communities would support. Make sure the survey distinguishes between people who live within walking distance of the Town Center and people who do not.
2. Recruit new business to meet the needs/desires revealed in the survey.

3. Ensure that existing businesses are aware of the survey results, and help them adapt to meet residents' needs.

4. Market existing businesses. Investigate joint marketing possibilities, including special coupons, shared advertising, etc.

5. Develop a business recruitment and retention plan that recognizes the need for businesses to survive by attracting people who live within walking distance, as well as people who live farther away.

6. Explore opportunities to promote Mount Rainier businesses to the greater region.

### **Objective 4:**

Use special events to build relationships.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Recruit residents, business, and houses of worship to sponsor and/or organize special events.
2. Encourage business owners to advertise community events in their windows.
3. Hold gospel music and jazz concerts and festivals in churches or outside.
4. Highlight Mount Rainier's diversity with the annual "Pepper Fest."
5. Highlight Mount Rainier's bicycle and pedestrian-friendly nature with a festival.
6. Highlight the heritage area with festivals and other programmatic activities.
7. Hold a regular farmers' market.

## Principle Two: Image

*The Town Center will project an attractive, vibrant, and unique image that reflects its historic, small town character and charm.*

### Summary:

Business owners, property owners, and Task Force members expressed a desire to improve the appearance of individual properties and buildings, and the Town Center as a whole. Many people cited the need to upgrade the appearance of buildings, both commercial and residential. Generally, people want to build on the existing historic and small town character and take advantage of the wealth of historic buildings in the Town Center.

There was universal agreement that the Town Center must be free from trash and graffiti, because trash and graffiti contribute to an appearance of neglect and make people feel uncomfortable. In addition, many people expressed the belief that storefronts that are or appear to be vacant detract from the image of the Town Center as a busy place.

### Objective 1:

Celebrate the historic, small town character of the Mount Rainier Town Center as a community asset.

### Recommended Strategies:

1. Enhance the Gateway with an entrance sign and landscaping.
2. Use pavement treatments, street furniture, and civic art to complement the Town Center's historic image.
3. Design a banner that reflects the historic community and arts and entertainment district, to demonstrate the unity of the Town Center and connection with other Gateway communities.



4. Explore programs for façade improvements and design work, such as the program used by Gaithersburg.

5. Create a design for public sector signs that reinforces the unity of the district.

6. Encourage a unified appearance throughout the town center through signage and façade improvements.

### Objective 2:

As often as possible, protect historic buildings from demolition, neglect, inadequate maintenance, and deterioration, and incorporate historic buildings into new development and redevelopment. When a conflict does arise, judge the project in question on its own merits.

Note: This Plan prioritizes both preservation and enhancement of historic buildings (identified on Map 2), as well as redevelopment consistent with the vision of this Plan. Although these are generally compatible and mutually reinforcing priorities, this Plan also recognizes that the potential for conflict does exist. The intent of this Plan is to achieve both preservation and redevelopment goals.

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Secure the services of an architect to assess historic buildings, so that owners know what needs to be done in order to make their buildings commercially viable and attractive. Promote Mount Rainier property tax credits.
2. Encourage owners and tenants of historic buildings to maintain and renovate buildings so that they are commercially viable.
3. Promote federal, state, and local historic preservation tax credits as an incentive to renovate historic buildings. (Note: Portions of Mount Rainier are in a National Register Historic District. Currently, there is no local historic district in Mount Rainier. Prince George’s County’s tax credits are available only inside local historic districts.) See Appendix G for a description of the different credits.
4. Establish a policy to prohibit demolition of historic buildings identified on Map 2 to create new surface parking lots.

### **Objective 3:**

Encourage and facilitate coordinated renovation, infill development, and redevelopment that retain and complement the Town Center’s historic character.

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Ensure consistency with design guidelines in the Mount Rainier Town Center Development Plan (July 1994) that require new development and redevelopment to be sympathetic to the setbacks, height, facade, materials, bulk, and scale of historic buildings and complement the City’s street-fronts.
2. Identify areas in which increased building height is desired in order to define the space—this can include new construction and additions to existing buildings.

3. Hold building improvement seminars for tenants and property owners.
4. Provide property owners and developers with information on low-impact development and green building techniques, as well as State incentives for use of these techniques in new development and major redevelopment projects.
5. During land assembly negotiations and renovation planning, make every effort to accommodate existing businesses in renovated or new buildings.
7. Encourage cooperative renovation, maintenance, safety enhancement. For example, hire a contractor to work on several projects, for economies of scale.
8. Commission a study on the positive and negative aspects of establishing a split-rate property tax in which property owners are penalized for vacant land, and determine if and how it can be implemented in Mount Rainier.

### **Objective 4:**

Create inviting and walkable public places, sidewalks, and commercial areas.

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Ensure personal safety and comfort by installing attractive, pedestrian-oriented, and historically appropriate streetlights on sidewalks, streets, bus stops, parking areas, and other public places.
2. Encourage building owners and business owners to incorporate attractive, pedestrian-oriented lighting into their entrances and facades.
3. Establish a program within the Department of Public Works to upgrade existing crosswalks and ensure that new crosswalks are accessible, reflective, well marked, and signed.
4. Provide amenities such as shade, benches, and drinking fountains for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

5. Establish and seek funding to support a program to use public art to make the area attractive and functional.
6. Initiate a volunteer program to plant healthy and appropriate street trees throughout the Town Center. Engage the services of a landscape architect to identify appropriate street trees.
7. Do not allow long walls without windows and doorways along Rhode Island Avenue or 34th Street. Blank walls create uninviting spaces along sidewalks.
8. Establish a policy within the Department of Public Works to ensure timely sidewalk replacements, including widening, buffering, and use of alternative materials where appropriate. All sidewalks must meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
4. Conduct a public education campaign on litter, including encouraging students to meet community service requirements by engaging in projects to combat and raise awareness of litter.
5. Remove graffiti quickly if it appears.
6. Ensure property maintenance through strict and prompt code enforcement and licensing for all buildings, particularly rooming houses.
7. Change hours of liquor stores to address the problems that arise because liquor stores close earlier in D.C. than in Maryland.
8. Discourage public urination by establishing and enforcing clear policies, increasing lighting in alleys, and providing public restrooms.

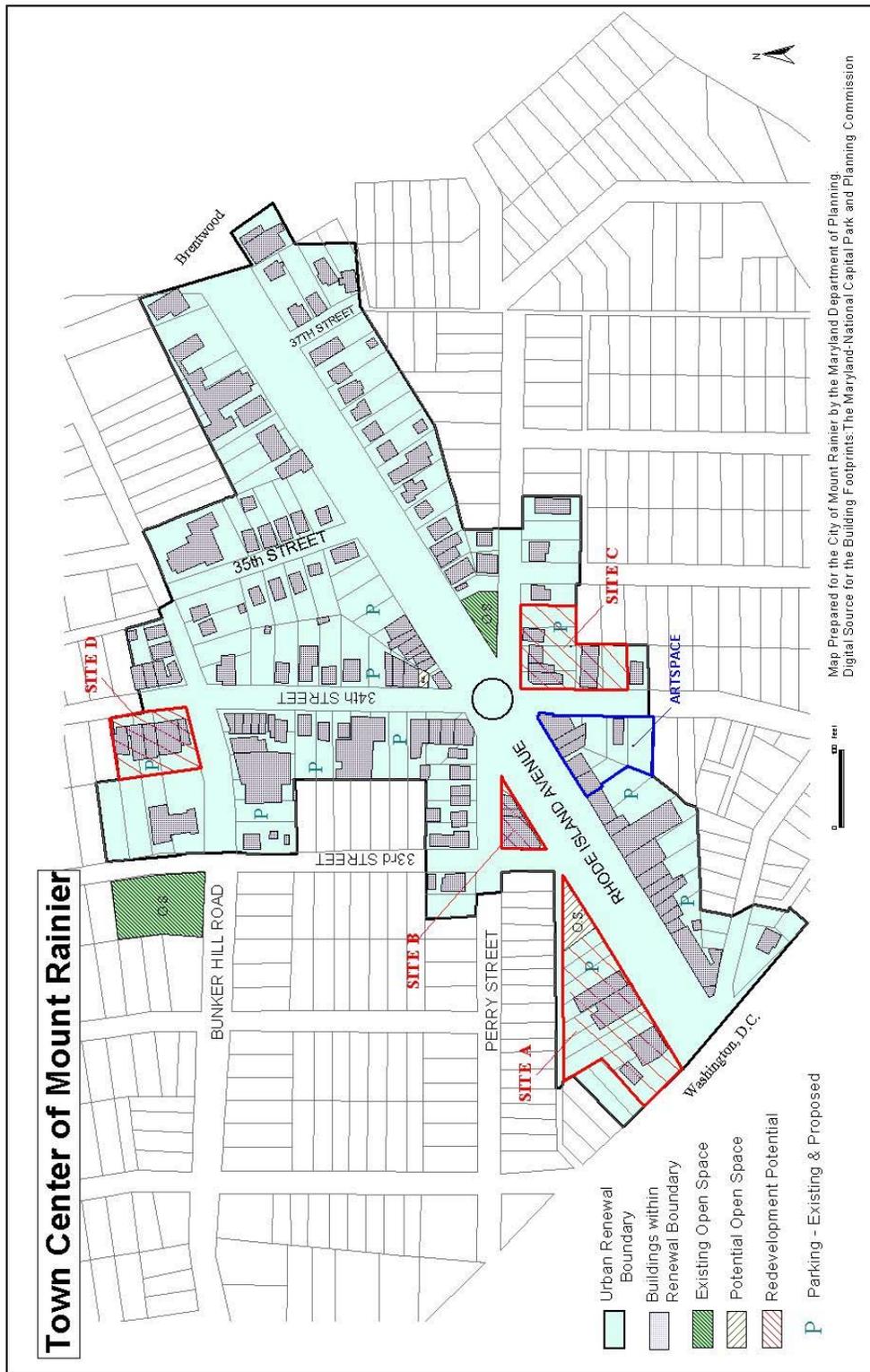
### **Objective 5:**

Provide a pleasant environment, free of physical blight, litter, graffiti, and poorly maintained buildings.

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Maintain public spaces, plazas and sidewalks so that they are attractive and free of litter, debris and snow.
2. Enforce laws that require owners of commercial property to keep the area between the property line and curb free of litter and weeds (3A-105(B)) and owners of residential property to keep the area between the property line and curb free of weeds (3A-105(A)). Further, consider establishing requirements for businesses to maintain a greater area outside of their establishment, similar to Washington, D.C.'s, which require businesses to maintain an area two feet beyond the sidewalk.
3. Increase the number of trashcans and the frequency of trash pickup, particularly on weekends, by rearranging the staff schedule or hiring a private contractor.

# Map 1 - The Vision Map

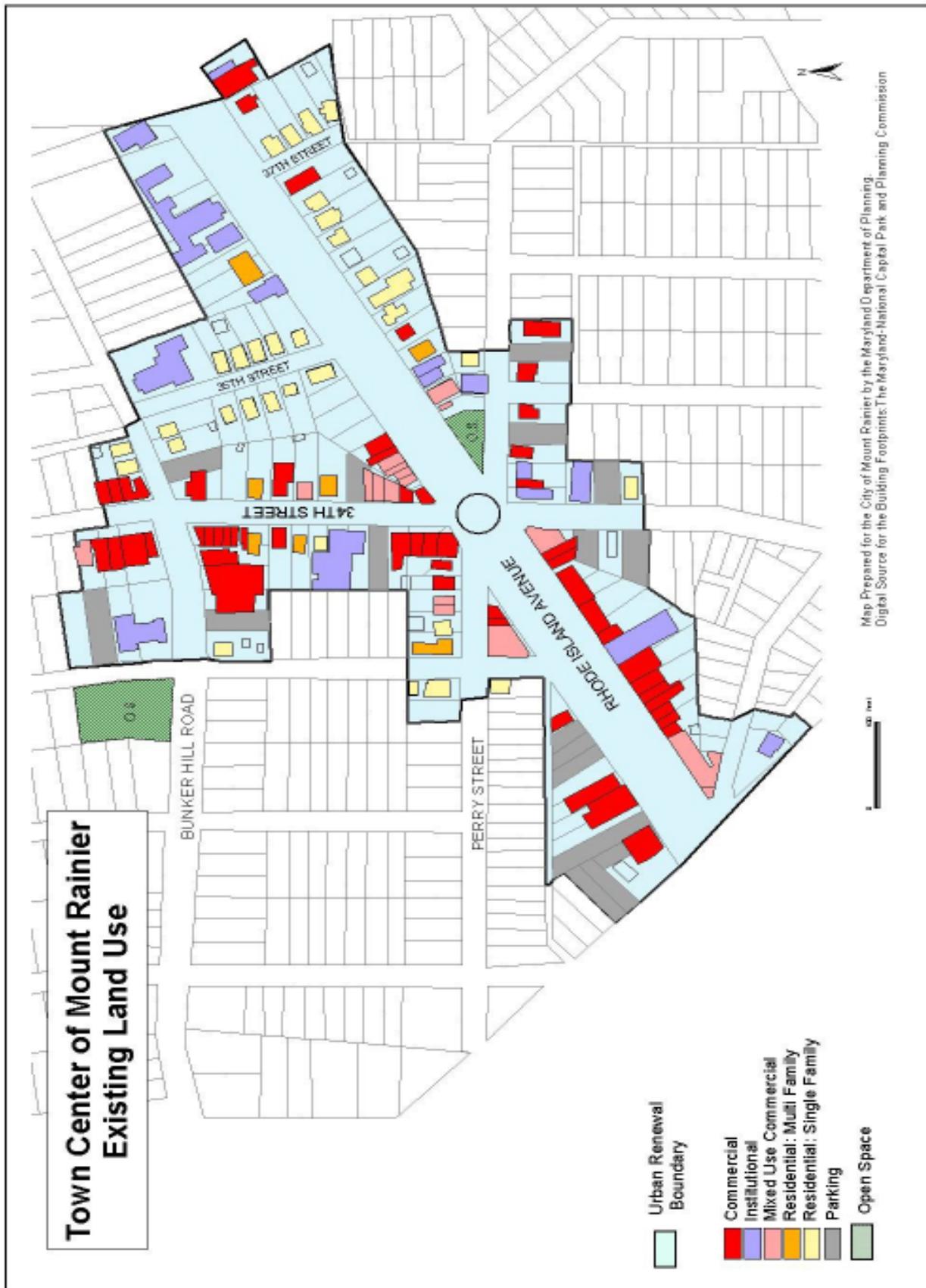


Map 2 - Historic Value



Adapted from Mount Rainier Historic District Resource Sketch Map, May 1989, Prince George's County.

Map 3 - Current Land Use



## Principle Three: Function

*The Town Center will serve as a civic, commercial, and residential center for Mount Rainier and surrounding communities.*

### Summary:

Business owners, property owners and Task Force members expressed the need for a greater mix of businesses in the Town Center in order to better serve residents and surrounding communities, reinforce patronage of existing businesses, and encourage people to walk between businesses. In particular, people noted the need for more anchors, businesses that generate foot traffic, and businesses that help to establish a niche for the Town Center. Businesses that generate pedestrian activity should occupy the ground floor of buildings, and residences and offices should occupy the upper stories.

### Objective 1:

Ensure that the town has a mix of uses and variety of anchors/activity centers located to encourage pedestrian traffic throughout the Town Center.

### Recommended Strategies:

1. Identify specific properties for development as anchors, and recruit anchors, such as a bank, grocery store, hardware store, restaurant, post office, library and government and civic facilities.
2. Market the Town Center. Provide banks and investors with important facts about the Town Center and surrounding areas. Highlight positive trends and developments, such as Artspace.
3. Use the City Hall plaza as an anchor and place for interaction by hosting regular events and activities at the plaza. Establish a policy to allow private and non-profit use of the plaza for public events.



4. Develop a Main Street program to focus on design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring.

5. Recruit businesses that reinforce the Arts and Entertainment district.

6. Expand, or relocate and expand, the Mount Rainier Public Library in a way that maximizes its potential to provide public services and to increase its activity level so that it provides a greater “spin-off” value for nearby businesses.

### Objective 2:

Promote Arts & Entertainment function and cultivate an identity based on this theme.

### Recommended Strategies:

1. Market Mount Rainier as an Arts & Entertainment District, using Artspace as a key selling point and the catalyst for future Town Center development.
2. Update Town Center Development Plan and Design Guidelines to encourage incorporation of art into development and redevelopment projects.

3. Ensure the commercial success of Artspace through business recruitment and retention.

4. Establish a policy within the Department of Public Works to ensure that certain infrastructure upgrades, such as fire hydrants and parking meters, incorporate art.

### **Objective 3:**

Promote street level occupancy by commercial businesses that generate pedestrian activity.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Work with representatives of land uses that do not generate daily traffic but are located at the street level to find more suitable space for their activities, or to develop a plan for more regular use of their space.

2. Design new buildings so that the first floor is oriented toward the street with shop windows and entrances that create a comfortable and attractive pedestrian sidewalk environment.

### **Objective 4:**

Promote residential and office use of building space above street level in Town Center buildings.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Identify specific office and commercial properties for conversion to residential uses.

2. Identify specific properties on Rhode Island Avenue for the addition of additional stories. Secure services of an architect or developer to do a feasibility study.

### **Objective 5:**

Ensure that public utilities and infrastructure are adequate to support land uses.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Examine the utilities in the Town Center to make sure that they are capable of handling new development.

2. Craft a Stormwater Management Plan that identifies key stormwater management projects, to which developers can contribute in lieu of on-site improvements.

3. Establish a land bank.

### **Objective 6:**

Use vacant and abandoned buildings as an opportunity to create business diversity.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Create and maintain a roster of vacant and abandoned buildings.

2. Contact, via letter, phone calls and personal visits, absentee landlords and owners of vacant buildings about incentives for fixing up and using their buildings and about the penalties (fines, condemnation) for not doing so.

3. Work with building owners to develop a vacant building plan for reuse of vacant street level storefronts, or for sale of the building.

4. Encourage the City to revisit its vacant building laws, and the enforcement of these laws, to better achieve the elimination of vacant buildings.

5. Enforce existing law related to vacant and abandoned buildings.

6. Do not allow street level storefronts and business spaces in new and existing buildings to remain vacant for extended periods of time. Storefronts occupied by closed or inactive businesses are considered vacant.

## **Objective 7:**

Support and reinforce the existing single-family neighborhood so that it remains a key element of the Town Center fabric, and so that residents and businesses can coexist harmoniously. Recognize the unique situation -- problems and opportunities -- of single-family housing in and adjacent to a commercial district and identify ways to minimize problems and seize opportunities.

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Reduce the impacts of commercial uses on residential uses. (See recommended strategies to ensure personal safety and comfort under Image, objectives 4 and 5.)
2. Help low-income households secure financial assistance to complete residential repairs.
3. Identify key properties that need repairs and talk to property owners about resources.

## Principle Four: Mobility

*The Town Center will provide a variety of safe and convenient transportation alternatives, including walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving.*

### Summary:

Business owners, property owners, and Task Force members expressed universal dissatisfaction with parking in the Town Center, but issues and solutions varied widely. Some business owners dislike the parking meter hours of operation and enforcement, for example, while others were more concerned about the availability of parking in general. Others noted that parking requirements might impede new business startups. In addition, people noted their interest in helping people get to and around the Town Center using a variety of transportation options.

### Objective 1:

Provide a safe, convenient, and accessible circulation network for walking to and through the Town Center.

#### Recommended Strategies:

1. Provide a variety of walkable destinations throughout the downtown.
2. Create a signage system to make it easier for people to locate various destinations within Mount Rainier.
3. Ensure safe, direct, well-lit, and inviting pedestrian access to parking (rear access, alleyways, and connectors), building entrances and public spaces.
4. Improve traffic controls for pedestrians. Provide a pedestrian crossing signal near the Artspace Building, and investigate the possibility of a mid-block crossing on Rhode Island Avenue near the new police station.



5. Reduce speeds on Rhode Island Avenue through the use of traffic calming measures.

6. Use signs and other devices to alert drivers to the roundabout, so that they can slow down in advance of the circle. Existing signs may need to be relocated.

### Objective 2:

Encourage and facilitate bike riding as an easy and efficient alternative to the car.

#### Recommended Strategies:

1. Identify routes for bike lanes or marked bicycle routes in the Town Center, and bike routes and paths that connect the Town Center with residential areas in Mount Rainier and neighboring communities. Identify funding sources for implementation.
2. Identify locations for bicycle parking, such as City Hall, Library, parking areas, and the transit station. Use functional art for bike racks. Identify funding sources for implementation.
3. Provide amenities such as public drinking fountains and gathering spaces for bicyclists.
4. Provide bicycle support services such as sales and repair shops, convenience stores, and snack shops.

### **Objective 3:**

Increase the use of public transit as a means of reducing congestion and parking demand.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Work with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and Prince George's County to revise the bus schedule to increase frequency and linkages, and to provide Sunday service. This will make the bus stop a stronger anchor.
2. Ensure that the Town Center transit stop is readily identifiable and easy to reach. Provide safe and comfortable spaces for people waiting for buses. Ensure that transit routes and schedules are readily available and visible.
3. Work with Prince George's County's Transportation Planning Division to investigate ways to provide and increase use of transit: light rail, electric buses, smaller buses, and trolley cars.
4. Explore possibility of linking to the proposed D.C. trolley line. Trolley stops can serve as anchors.
5. Commission a study to investigate the air quality benefits of alternative fuels for buses.
6. Turn buses off during layovers to minimize air pollution.

### **Objective 4:**

Provide for parking needs of businesses and residents.

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Determine parking areas for acquisition by the City, or for private ownership, consistent with Map 1.
2. Identify opportunities for shared parking, and work with property and business owners to craft formal agreements.
3. Improve the appearance and design of existing and new parking areas, with good lighting, trees, and clear directional signage, so that people can easily locate parking, feel safe in parking areas, and feel comfortable walking to and from parking areas.
4. Update the Parking Authority Parking Study with current figures for existing and potential future spaces, existing and future demand for parking.
5. Establish flexible parking requirements so that requirements do not hinder renovation and reuse of buildings.
6. Improve parking management and control measures.
7. Work with the Mount Rainier Business Association and business owners to increase cooperation with respect to parking issues.

## Sites with Redevelopment Potential as Urban Renewal Projects

This Plan identifies four sites with potential for future urban renewal projects. This Urban renewal Plan serves as the requested plan for urban renewal projects within the Urban Renewal Area. The Mayor and Council must follow the provisions of City Charter Section A1-104 and A1-105 (including adoption of a resolution identifying the specific project and holding a public hearing) in order to initiate an urban renewal project within the Urban Renewal Area.

Provision for change in the Urban renewal Plan is also found in the City Charter Section A1-105 (b). It states: Where the proposed modification will substantially change the urban renewal plan as previously approved by the municipality, the modification shall be formally approved by the municipality as in the case of an original plan.

It is important to note that “redevelopment potential” does not necessarily mean that all of the buildings on the site will be razed, or that they will all be preserved and incorporated into the redevelopment. See Image, Objective 2, for a more detailed explanation of how this Plan addresses the dual goals of preservation of historic buildings and redevelopment.

**Site A** is comprised of 10 individual parcels. It is recommended that the city pursue land assembly, so that all of the parcels are under single ownership. Redevelopment should feature urban density residential, supportive commercial uses, and public open space at the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue, 33rd Street, and Perry Street. Two of the five buildings on the site are identified as “contributing resources significant to the historic value” of the Town Center and should be incorporated into the new development. The former gas station should be renovated and serve as an integral component of the new public open space. Redevelopment should incorporate shared

parking with safe, direct, well-lit, and inviting pedestrian access. Parking should be designed with pedestrian-scale lighting, trees, and clear directional signage, so that people can easily locate parking, feel safe in parking areas, and feel comfortable walking to and from the parking areas.

**Site B** is comprised of three parcels and one architecturally important building, known as the Singer Building, which is identified as a “contributing resource significant to the historic value” of the Town Center. It is recommended that the City pursue renovation and reuse of the Singer Building. Potential uses of the building include office and residential, with a restaurant on the first floor in the proximate location of the existing B & B Carryout. The site plan for the Singer Building should address the existing open space on the east side of the property.

Redevelopment should incorporate shared parking with safe, direct, well-lit, and inviting pedestrian access. Parking should be designed with pedestrian-scale lighting, trees, and clear directional signage, so that people can easily locate parking, feel safe in parking areas, and feel comfortable walking to and from the parking areas.

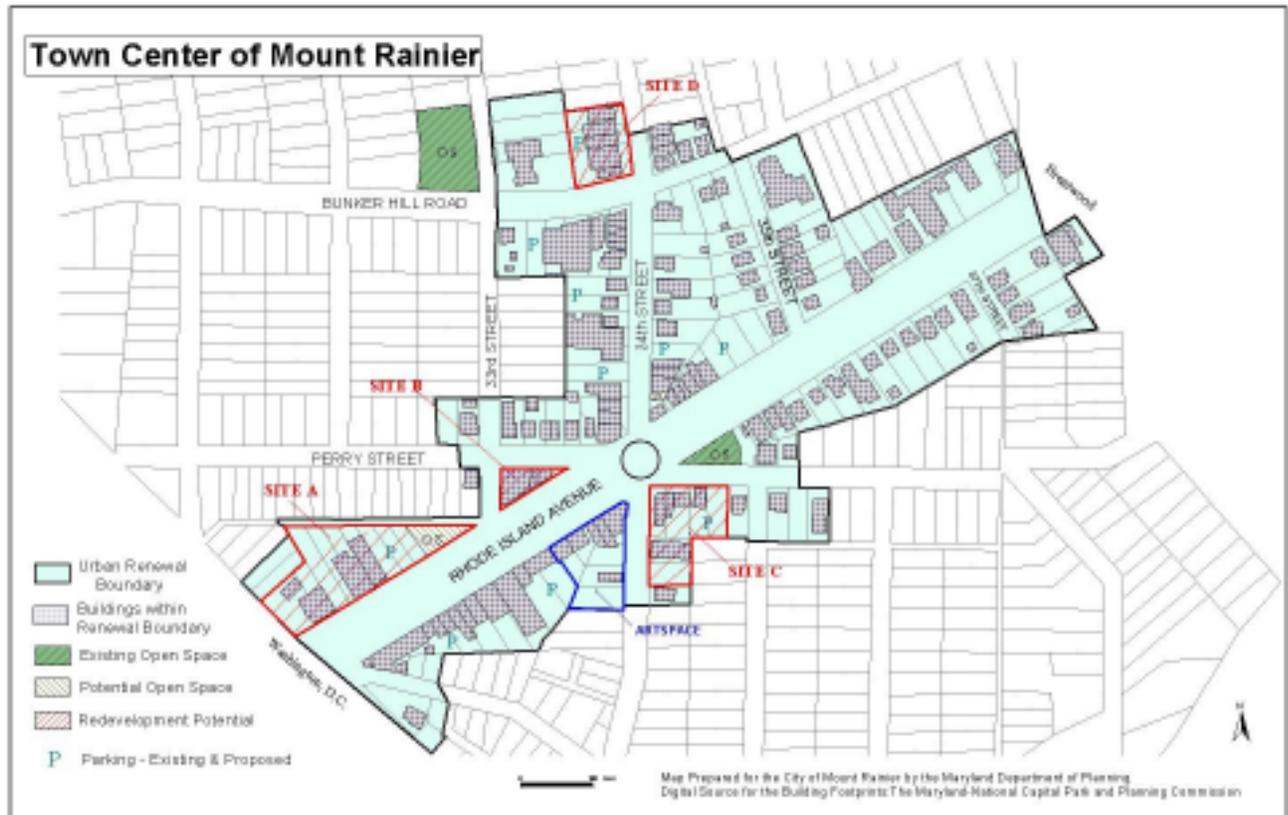
**Site C** is comprised of six individual parcels. Its location facing the roundabout makes it a critically important site. It is recommended that the City pursue land assembly to that all parcels are under the same ownership. Three of the buildings on the site are identified as “contributing resources significant to the historic value” of the Town Center and should be incorporated into plans for redevelopment. The City should examine commercial, residential, and public uses of the site.

Redevelopment should incorporate shared parking behind the building with safe, direct, well-lit, and inviting pedestrian access. Parking should be designed with pedestrian-scale lighting, trees, and clear directional signage, so that people can easily

locate parking, feel safe in parking areas, and feel comfortable walking to and from the parking areas.

**Site D** is comprised of three individual parcels. Four of the five buildings are identified as “contributing resources significant to the historic value” of the Town Center, and a comprehensive plan for reuse of these buildings is recommended. The City should examine office and retail use for this site. In keeping with the neighborhood feel of this part of 34th Street, it is not recommended that the City pursue increased building heights.

Redevelopment should incorporate shared parking behind the building with safe, direct, well-lit, and inviting pedestrian access. Parking should be designed with pedestrian-scale lighting, trees, and clear directional signage, so that people can easily locate parking, feel safe in parking areas, and feel comfortable walking to and from the parking areas.



# Implementation

*The following actions are crucial for the implementation of this Plan. It should be noted that all of the recommended strategies outlined in this Plan may not be achieved, because the Town Center is a dynamic entity and revitalization of the Town Center is an ongoing, evolutionary process.*

## Public Policy Amendments

This Plan shall be adopted as provided in the City Charter.

Amend the Town Center boundaries, consistent with Map 1, in the Mount Rainier Town Center Development Plan.

Establish a policy to encourage renovation of historic buildings.

Establish a policy to ensure that sidewalk replacements include widening and buffering where appropriate.

Establish a policy to ensure that lighting replacements are attractive, pedestrian-oriented, and historically appropriate.

Work with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County, to ensure that this Plan is consistent with the proposed Town Center Character Zoning.

Establish a policy to allow private and non-profit use of the City Hall plaza for public events.

Update the Town Center Development Plan and Design Guidelines to encourage incorporation of art into development and redevelopment projects.

Establish a policy to allow the City or its designee to condemn buildings that remain vacant for more than 18 months and for which the building owners do not have a valid vacant building plan.

## Preparing for Development

Identify areas in which increased building height is desired.

Examine the utilities in the Town Center to make sure that they are capable of handling new development.

Craft a Stormwater Management Plan that identifies key stormwater management projects, to which developers can contribute in lieu of on-site improvements.

Create and maintain a roster of vacant and abandoned buildings, and contact property owners about incentives to fix up and use their buildings, and about the repercussions for not doing so.

Install traffic calming techniques in conjunction with the State Highway Administration's streetscaping project.

## Resources and Staffing

Identify a sustainable source of funding for full-time staff to work on business development and promotion and to serve as the primary contact/outreach person for the City.

Increase frequency of trash pickup, particularly on weekends, by rearranging the staff schedule or hiring a private contractor.

Explore the possibility of sharing staff with other towns. Use the Port Towns model from Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, and Cottage City.

Find out if the county can designate the Gateway Towns of Mount Rainier, Brentwood, and North Brentwood as a revitalization area (similar to the Port Towns).

Coordinate with existing local, regional (Anacostia Trails Heritage Alliance, Gateway Community Development Corporation, Woodridge Community Development Corporation in DC), county, and State organizations and projects to better leverage resources.

Investigate ways to generate more money through the existing commercial district management authority, such as expanding the geographic area to include Brentwood and North Brentwood; taxing residences in addition to businesses; raising fees; or sharing staff with the City. These changes may necessitate amending the enabling legislation or creating a new special benefits district.

## **Encouraging Upkeep and Renovations**

Identify key residential properties in need of repair and contact property owners about their options.

Continue to encourage participation in Prince George's County's Commercial Area Revitalization Effort to upgrade building facades.

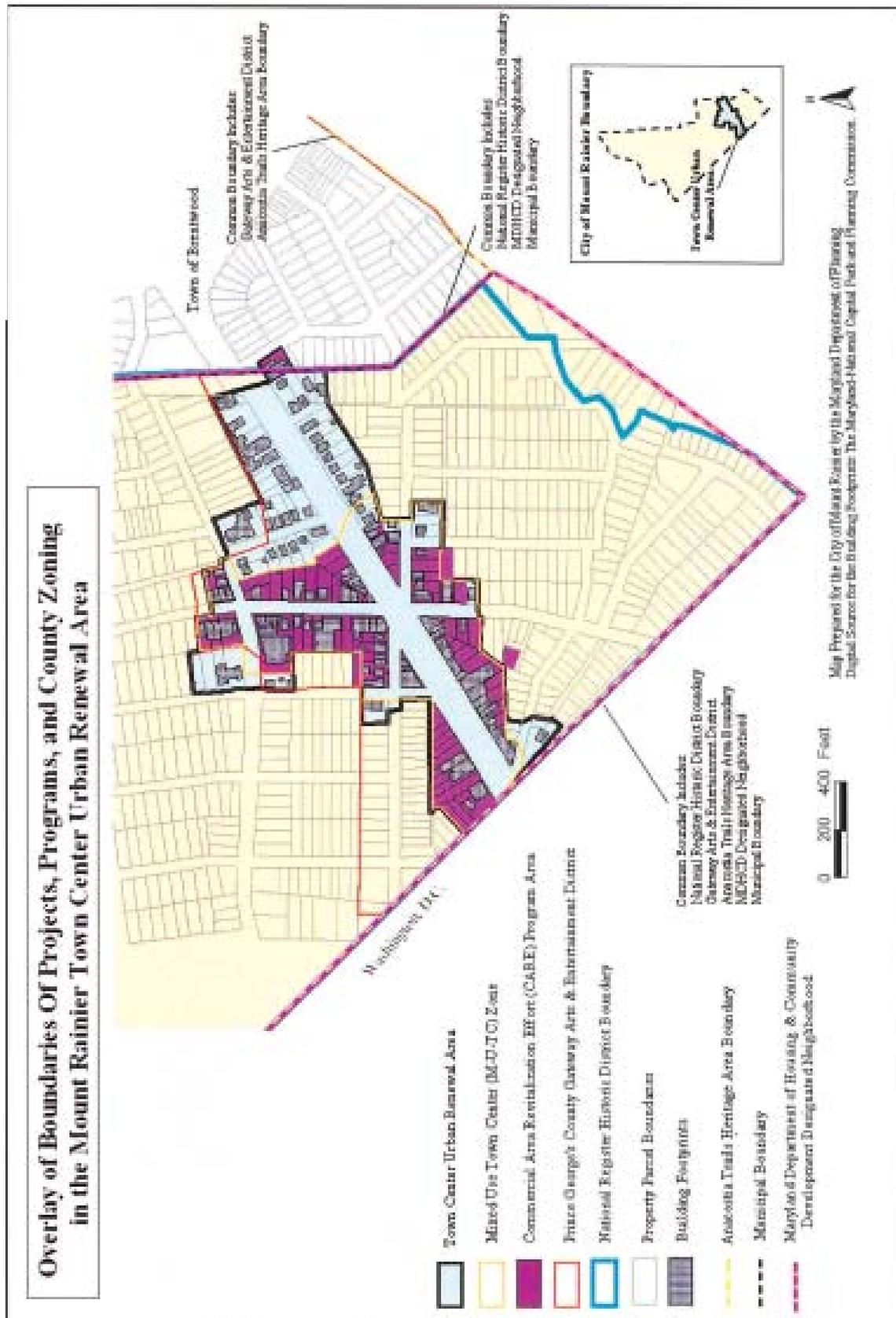
Promote Mount Rainier's property tax credit to encourage rehabilitation and restoration of historic properties.

## **Communication**

Establish a mechanism to improve communication between the City and various stakeholder groups.

Establish a welcome committee and packet of materials for new businesses.

Map 4 - Map of Related Boundaries



# Appendices

Appendix A	Letter from the City of Mount Rainier to the Maryland Department of Planning Requesting Assistance
Appendix B	Citizen Participation in the Planning Process
Appendix C	Partial List of Revitalization Initiative For Mount Rainier
Appendix D	Mount Rainier Historic Tax Credits Code
Appendix E	City of Mount Rainier Charter Appendix I. Urban Renewal Authority for Slum Clearance
Appendix F	City of Mount Rainier Ordinance 6-2004 An Ordinance to adopt an Urban Renewal Plan

## Appendix A



Incorporated 1940

*Mayor and City Council*

One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712  
Phone: 301-985-6585 Fax: 301-985-6595

November 2, 2000

Ms. Harriet Tregoning, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Planning  
301 West Preston St., Suite 1101  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Ms. Tregoning:

This letter is the official request from the City of Mount Rainier to the Maryland Department of Planning for planning services. I understand that you have been briefed on our request by your staff Larry Duket and Rupert Friday.

In accordance with state enabling legislation, the City of Mount Rainier Charter, Appendix I requires that an Urban Renewal Plan be in place for the undertaking of an urban renewal project. This requirement recently came to light when a city-contracted development advisor reviewed an unsolicited development proposal for the city. The development advisor stated the need for identification and articulation of public policy to guide development. She indicated that the community will be in a better position to respond to development proposals, and achieve the kind of desired development it wants, if a plan is in place. In addition, city work with a non-profit housing developer in the summer of this year and with vacant building nuisance abatement this fall has also demonstrated the need for an urban renewal plan. It was at this point that city staff began exploring opportunities for planning assistance in developing an urban renewal plan and contacted your department.

As you know, small communities like Mount Rainier, do not have the necessary planning expertise and other resources required for putting together an urban renewal plan. Therefore, we are requesting planning assistance from the Maryland Department of Planning for planning services to create an urban renewal plan required by our charter. We strongly believe that the creation of such a plan will put our community in a better position to be able to respond to development proposals and achieve the type of development desired by the community.

We further believe that now is a most appropriate time for us to work with the State department of Planning to prepare an urban plan. As you may know, there are several public sector projects currently underway in what has been identified as the urban renewal plan area. One is a roundabout streetscape project under construction by the Maryland Department of Transportation using Neighborhood Conservation funds. A second is a city police station which will be located in a rehabilitated historic building. This project is being partially funded with the aid of a state grant and state bonds. A third project is a consolidated fire station which will be undertaken by Prince George's County. A fourth project is affordable artist housing which will be developed in an historic apartment building. Funding for this project is scheduled to include state neighborhood partnership funds.

We sincerely hope the Maryland Department of Planning will be able to provide the requested planning services. We look forward to working with your staff. If you have any questions, please call me at (301) 985-6585 or Linda Cornish Blank at (301) 985-6584.

Sincerely,

Lucille Dickinson,  
City Manager

cc: Mount Rainier Mayor & Council  
Larry Duket, Dir. Local Govt. Assistance

## Appendix B Survey Questions

### Part I

#### Business Owners

We are working with the City on an urban revitalization plan and want your input. We want to begin by learning a little bit more about you and your business.

1. How long have you had your business in Mt. Rainier?
2. Do you live in town or nearby?
3. Do you rent or own?
4. How is your relationship with your landlord?

We want to learn how you feel about the area's business climate.

5. How would you describe the business climate in the area?
6. What are the good aspects of the business climate?
7. What are the aspects of the business climate that you think could be better?
8. What are the barriers to revitalization of the town center?
9. How can we build on existing assets?
10. What do you think about the public initiatives and investments? How are they useful or problematic?

*The Gateway CDC works on commercial revitalization in Brentwood, N. Brentwood, and Mount Rainier. In the spring of 2000, they surveyed business owners.*

11. The Gateway CDC survey (Spring 2000) found that many business owners believe that the city restrictions and approval process for new businesses are a problems. Do you have problems with city business approvals and restrictions?
12. What do you think about the *Commercial Area Revitalization Effort Program Area (CARE)* program? Do you plan to participate?  
We want to encourage you to participate in the development of an urban revitalization plan for the Mount Rainier Town Center, so that the plan and public policy support your interests. Your participation can further your interests and contribute to the momentum necessary for the successful revitalization of the Town Center.
13. If we hold a meeting for businesses and property owners on the Revitalization Plan, would you come?
14. What times are best for you (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice)?
15. What other factors would influence your decision to attend?
16. Can you identify business owners who care about the community and whose opinion others respect?
17. Do you think that there can be a cooperative effort between the building owners, the business owners, and the town to revitalize the town center?
18. Can we contact you again if we have any further questions?

## Commercial Property Owners

We are working with the City on an urban revitalization plan and want your input. We want to begin by learning a little bit more about you and your business.

1. How long have you owned property in Mt. Rainier? How many properties do you own in Mt. Rainier?
2. Do you live in town or nearby?
3. How is your relationship with your tenants?

We want to learn how you feel about the area's business climate.

4. How would you describe the business climate in the area?
5. What are the good aspects of the business climate?
6. What are the aspects of the business climate that you think could be better?
7. What do you think is preventing town center revitalization?
8. Have you recently renovated your property or do you have plans for renovation of your property?
9. What are the barriers that keep you or other property owners from renovating property?
10. Are you going to take advantage of the CARE program?
11. How readily do you find tenants? What efforts do you take to find tenants?

*The Gateway CDC works on commercial revitalization in Brentwood, N. Brentwood, and Mount Rainier. In the spring of 2000, they surveyed business owners.*

12. The Gateway CDC survey found that many business owners believe that the city restrictions and approval process for new businesses are a problems. Do you have problems with city business approvals and restrictions?

We want to encourage you to participate in the development of an urban revitalization plan for the Mount Rainier Town Center, so that the plan and public policy support your interests. Your participation can further your interests and contribute to the momentum necessary for the successful revitalization of the Town Center.

13. If we hold a meeting for businesses and property owners on the Revitalization Plan, would you come?
14. What times are best for you (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice)?
15. What other factors would influence your decision to attend?
16. Do you think that there can be a cooperative effort between the building owners, the business owners, and the town to revitalize the town center?
17. Can we contact you again if we have any further questions?

## Summary of Survey

MDP staff met with over 50 people, primarily people who own businesses, or who represent the owners of businesses.

Mount Rainier has a combination of new energy and demonstrated endurance. We found that businesses are an average of 11 years old, with a ranges of brand new to half a century old. Property owners have owned property in Mount Rainier from 3.5 years to 70 years, with an average duration of ownership of 23 years.

Half of the people interviewed had positive feelings about the business climate, and half had negative feelings.

We asked people to identify aspects of the business climate that could be better. Most frequently noted responses from business owners:

- Parking (65%)
- Security (65%)
  - role of police—visibility, response to requests for assistance
  - lighting—would like to feel safe behind buildings and in alleys
  - local and regional perception
  - activities that make people feel less safe, such as panhandling (65%)
- Communication (57%) OUT OF THE LOOP REGARDING DECISION-MAKING; NOTE THAT PEOPLE MENTIONED IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE CITY
  - information about programs, logistics, requirements
  - involvement
  - relationships between and among business owners, the city, the business association, residents, and customers
- Appearance (52%)
  - individual buildings
  - town center as a whole
  - trash
  - vacant storefronts, storefront churches
- Business Mix (52%)
  - no big draw
  - stability/turnover
  - duplication
  - complementary uses
  - foot traffic
  - specific uses—too few grocery stores, too many churches, liquor stores
- Bureaucracy (42%)

Other responses from business owners:

- Lack of resources
- Small businesses cannot participate in long range activities

- Lack of comprehensive plan
- Spaces are not competitive
- Residents can support businesses more

Most frequently noted responses from property owners:

- Parking (60%)
- Security (60%)
- Appearance (50%)
- Communication (20%)
- Bureaucracy (20%)

Other responses from property owners:

- Concern for return on investment in property.
- It is not economical for one person to invest in renovation if they aren't sure whether the rest of the town will also improve.
- Spaces are not competitive.

We asked people to identify strengths that can be built on. Most frequently noted responses from business owners:

- Friendly People (47%)
  - relationships with other business owners
  - long-term residents
  - diversity
  - growing Latino community
  - role in community
- Convenient Location (28%)
  - visibility
  - accessibility
  - proximity to home and jobs
- Traffic (depends on perspective—some people were pleased with a lot of traffic, others were pleased with little) (18%)
- Security (18%)
  - peaceful
  - good police visibility
  - meter reader adds to sense of security

Most frequently noted responses from property owners

- Location (70%)
- People (40%)

Other responses

- Bus/Transportation system
- Inexpensive
- Momentum of activists

## Part II

### Urban Renewal Town Center Task Force

The Mayor and City Council established The Mount Rainier Town Center Urban renewal Task Force. The Task force met over a period of met from December 2001 through May 2003. The purpose of the Task Force was to gather information and input from the widest possible spectrum of citizens. The Maryland Department of Planning facilitated the meetings.

On February 20, 2003 the Task Force presented their recommends for the Urban Renewal Plan to the Mount Rainier Community with an Open House. The purpose of an Open House is to provide the general community with a copy of the draft plan, and to talk with the community about the ideas in the Plan. Publicity for the Open House was extensive. The City sent letters of invitations to all business, commercial, and residential property owners in the proposed Urban Renewal Area. Flyers were left in stores and shops in the business area. An invitation to the Open House dominated the front page of the Message, the City's news bulletin. The City provided live coverage of the Open House on the local cable station.

The Open House was well attended. Attendees were encouraged to indicate their support or disapproval of the recommendations by marking the items according to their point of view. The Task Force also requested written responses. Generally, the Open House resulted in strong support for the Plan. The greatest issue of concern was for the status of single-family residential property owners in an urban renewal area. A fear was expressed that the single-family urban renewal properties may be subject to demolition under the power of eminent domain. The Task Force worked to address these concerns by inviting single-family residents to a Task Force meeting to discuss their concerns and conducted door-to-door outreach to discuss the plan. These efforts did not result in any responses that were not supportive of the Plan.

## Part III

### Single-Family Residential Outreach

During a work-session on the Plan the Mayor and City Council raised concerns about notification to single-family residents in the proposed Plan boundary. In response, the Task Force worked with the Maryland Department of Planning staff to mitigate this concern. During February and March of 2004 a comprehensive information campaign was undertaken. The outreach effort included door-to-door canvassing. Residents were engaged in discussion and a complete copy of the Plan was left with the resident for their information. The Task Force noted that a major focus of the Plan is to facilitate improvements to blighted and vacant commercial properties. However, it was pointed out that another key focus is to improve the livability of the residential areas adjacent to the commercial core. If a resident was not available for discussion of the Plan a copy of the document was left with a letter encouraging them to contact the Task Force or Maryland Department of Planning staff.

### Summary of Residential Outreach

A total of 31 single-family residential properties were identified in the proposed Urban Renewal area. Four of the properties were not accessible to the canvassers. Of the 31 properties, the members of the Task Force were able to engage 13 residencies in discussion. Contacted persons were encouraged to read the Plan, discuss it with their neighbors, and to contact the Department of Planning staff or the Task Force if they wished.

Generally, the residents were pleased that the Plan recognized the deteriorating conditions and the need for action. The residents stated the following as problems that needed to be addressed:

- Heavy volume of foot traffic and loitering, even into the evening and night
- Accumulated debris and overflowing public trash containers
- Public drinking of alcohol, public urination, suspected illegal activities
- Trespassing, vandalism, and theft
- Rat infestation
- Excessive noise from business operations and trucks
- On street parking taken by business owners and shoppers
- Need to repair and maintain streets, sidewalks, retaining walls, and step-way entrances,
- Inadequate lighting of alleys, sidewalks, and business parking lots.

There was general support for the four principles and most felt that the proposed guidelines and standards would improve relationships between the business and residential areas.

## Appendix C Revitalization Initiatives (Partial List)

1981—Prince George’s County creates the Mt. Rainier Revitalization District. (CR-69-1981). Waived county zoning requirements for off-street parking and loading to eliminate off-street parking requirements as an obstacle to upgrading the use of commercial properties.

1988—Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission publishes the Mt. Rainier Business Area Improvement Handbook.

- cites the extensive number of studies that have been undertaken for this area.
- cites the need for management assistance and capital investment funds<sup>1</sup>

Chapter 6, recommends:

- renovated and converted the parking rate of the City’s meters
- evaluated the parking meter time limits and adjusted the timing of meters to better match land use served by on-street parking.

1988—Mt. Rainier installs 9 hour meters on existing 14 car lot on 34<sup>th</sup> Street and on remote sections of Rhode Island Avenue to serve employee parking needs.

1988—Mt. Rainier Business Association incorporates. Begins to implement projects recommended in the County Revitalization Handbook.

1988—Peat Marwick Main & Company completes a parking study

- “effective parking management programs in combination with strategically located off-street public parking facilities were needed to serve the commercial district in Mount Rainier.”

1989—County Executive Order 89-29 creates Revitalization Task Force.

1990—MRBA hosts revitalization seminar with business and civic leaders from Takoma Park.

1990—Governor’s Office and National Park Service approve Mt. Rainier Historic District.

1991—XX Hosts Mt. Rainier downtown planning charrette.

1992—American Institute of Architects Regional Urban Design Team (R/UDAT) publishes Building from Strength: The Inner Beltway Communities.

- cites the problem of these urban areas being governed by suburban development standards - recommends simplifying the zoning.
- cites the pervasive concern about crime.
- cites the oversupply of retail and service space in the Inner-Beltway area.
- emphasizes town centers, community design, corridors, commercial reuse.

1992—The Parking Authority of Prince George’s County completes Mount Rainier Parking District Analysis (1992)

- studies parking demand in comparison to supply
- identifies and recommends potential off-street parking improvements
- recommends creation of a parking enterprise district
- recommends installation of bicycle racks

1993—State amends Article 28 to enable Prince George’s County to delegate some development review and approval authority to Municipal Councils in “Revitalization Overlay Zones.”

- design standards, parking , sign standards, variances (lot size, setbacks), and landscape requirements.

1994—Prince George’s County approves Master Plan & Sectional Map Amendment for Planning Area 68

- Vision
- Route 1 Corridor Plan
- Mount Rainier Town Center identified
- Detailed plans for Revitalization of the Mount Rainier
  - o Facade rehabilitation
  - o Improved entrance markers
  - o Improved pedestrian environment with widened brick sidewalks, cast iron lamps, restored facades, street trees, and well defined crosswalks. Utility wires underground or moved to service alleys.
  - o Median strip with street trees and plantings
  - o Street trees along major commercial streets
  - o Infill development
  - o Focal points and public spaces
  - o Improved window displays and signage
  - o Landscaped screening of parking lots
- Vision for Town Center - “to look and feel like a traditional downtown town - not a State highway.”

1994—Prince George’s County adopts Mixed Use Town Center Zone

- Purposes are to capitalize on the existing fabric of the County’s older commercial/mixed use centers; promote reinvestment and redevelopment in these areas; promote preservation and adaptive reuse of selected buildings in older commercial areas; ensure a mix of compatible uses, encourage pedestrian activity and promote shared parking; establish a safe and vibrant twenty-four hour environment; establish a flexible regulatory framework, based on community input, that encourages compatible development and redevelopment that will enhance the Town Center; and to preserve and promote those distinctive physical characteristics that are identified by the community as essential to the community’s identity.
- Provides that development be regulated according to a development plan prepared for the Town Center.

1994—Prince George’s County adopts tax incentives for development inside the Beltway.

1994—Prince George’s County adopts Town Center Development Plan

- Provides an historical overview
- Describes existing development characteristics in the Town Center
- Establishes the Town Center Design Review Committee and Process
- Establishes Design Principles and Guidelines
- Provides illustrations of design standards that apply to the Town Center

1994—Mt. Rainier constructs a new Town Hall at Perry Street and Rhode Island Avenue.

1994—The Chesapeake Group publishes its Market Analysis for Route 1 in Prince George’s County

1995—The Chesapeake Group follows up the Market Analysis for Route 1 with a list of businesses that could be recruited to Mt. Rainier.

1996—University of Maryland students complete a market study for 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

1997—Mt. Rainier applies for and receives approval for State status as a Designated Neighborhood for Revitalization through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

1997—Mt. Rainier applies for and receives approval for status as Main Street Maryland Community.

This nationally acclaimed approach to revitalization focus on 4 themes<sup>2</sup> :

- Design - enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitatin historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long term planning
- Organization - building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process.
- Promotion - marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors
- Economic restructuring - strengthen the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities — and challenges from outlying development.

1997—Gateway Community Development Corporation forms.

- Mission is the revitalization of Mount Rainier, North Brentwood and Brentwood.
- Vision is a vibrant, healthy community with attractive, well-kept public spaces and an abundance of community-friendly businesses, an art-district niche, accessible health care and a wealth of distinctive, well-maintained homes and apartments.
- Primary project activities are creating the Gateway Arts District.

1997—State adopts Income Tax Credits for renovation of buildings in Historic Districts.

1997—State makes initial Hot Spot Investments for public safety.

1999—Mt. Rainier's status as a Main Street Maryland Community is revoked because necessary boards and committees were not established or active. It was also noted that insufficient staff time was allocated to effectively implement the program.

1999—Mt. Rainier adopts Vacant Building Registration Ordinance.

2000—Gateway Community Development Corporation hires staff.

2000—Prince George's County selects Mt. Rainier to participate in the Commercial Area Revitalization Effort (CARE). This comprehensive program provides financial and technical assistance to owners and tenants of buildings with street level commercial retail space. Elements of the program are:

- Involve Merchants and Community Residents in Partnership  
CARE committee is essential. they prepare and implement the comprehensive economic revitalization plan
- Solicit Local Area Market Study to assess business potential of the area  
Determines the kinds and number of businesses that might be required to service the needs of people who reside in and frequent the area.
- Prepare Revitalization Plan
- Operation FACELIFT - small grants to storefront businesses for removal of deteriorating signs, repair of windows and painting
- Marketing Program & CARE Theme - cooperative marking program for the area
- Implement Storefront Facade Program - a architect is employed to work with each area

storefront on a facade design. This provides opportunities for creating a unifying appearance and facade renovation. The County rebates up to 50% of the cost of storefront improvements (up to \$3000 per storefront).

- Corridor Signage Program - banners and other appropriate promotional items will be hung along the streetscape. This is a one-time grant from the County for the corridor.
- Building Rehabilitation Loan Program
- Small Business Loan Program - with reduced interest rates
- Develop Area Crime Prevention Strategy - merchants working in partnership with surrounding residents and local police.
- Provide Security Grant Incentives - Commercial Area Security Survey is conducted in cooperation with County Police. Rebates of up to 50% are provided for installation and implementation of recommended security devices and improvements on each property.
- Establish Clean-up Campaign - coordinated by the merchants and residents in cooperation with the County Departments of Public Works, Transportation, and Environmental Regulation.
- Develop Business Attraction/Retention Program - the County will undertake a comprehensive marketing effort to recruit new businesses to the area.
- Business Assistance Program – provides managerial and technical assistance to area merchants to promote development and use of improved business practices.
- “Real World Entrepreneur” – eight week training program that provides business planning, marketing, accounting, inventory control, and finance skills for small businesses.

2001—Maryland implements new statewide building code, the Maryland Building Rehabilitation Code. The code is designed to reduce the costs of renovation and eliminate hardships previously encountered during renovation of historic buildings. Similar code revisions in New Jersey reduced the cost of building renovation by 20 percent and increased the level of investment in building renovation and reuse.

2002—Maryland Department of Transportation completes roundabout at the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and 34th Street and related streetscape improvements and transit amenities. Additional streetscaping is still in progress.

2003—Mt. Rainier opens its new police station in a renovated building on Rhode Island Avenue.

## Appendix D

### CHAPTER 2A Historic Preservation Tax Credits

#### § 2A-101. Establishment of Historic Preservation Tax Credits

§ 2A-102. Certification of Eligibility for Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

§ 2A-103. Availability of Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

#### **Section 2A-101. Establishment of Historic Preservation Tax Credits.**

A. Property Tax Credits for Construction Expenses. Under the authority granted by the Annotated code of Maryland, Tax-Property Article, Section 9-204, the City hereby establishes:

1. A ten percent (10%) property tax credit for a period of five (5) years against the cost of certified rehabilitation of residential and commercial buildings in the Mount Rainier National Register Historic District.

2. A five percent (5%) tax credit for a period of five (5) years for architecturally compatible new construction in the Mount Rainier National Register Historic District.

B. Property Tax Credit for Increased Assessment. The purpose of this section is to provide a property tax credit against taxes which result from significant increases in the assessed value of a newly rehabilitated or restored historic property. Under the authority granted the Annotated Code of Maryland, Tax-Property Article, Section 9-204.1, the City hereby establishes a property tax credit for a period of ten (10) years not to exceed the difference between:

1. The property tax that, but for the tax credit, would be payable after the completion of eligible improvements; and

2. The property tax that would be payable if the eligible improvements were not made .

#### **Section 2A-102. Certification of Eligibility for Historic Preservation Tax Credits.**

A. Eligible improvements” are defined to mean significant improvements to, or restoration or rehabilitation of, historic properties that qualify as contributing elements of the Mount Rainier National Register Historic District. Such improvements shall be conducted in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of Interior’s *Guidelines for Historic Preservation*.

B. To be eligible for the construction tax credits established in Section 2A-101(a):

#### §2A-102 MOUNT RAINIER CODE §2A-103

a. The property must meet the qualifications under the Annotated Code of Maryland, Tax-Property Article, Section 9-204, and

b. All proposed work must be approved in advance by the Prince George’s County Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Written notification of such approval by the HPO must be presented to the City Manager before work begins. The finished work must be approved by the City Manager upon advice from HPO.

C. To be eligible for the assessment tax credit established in Section 2A-101(b):

1. The property must meet the eligibility requirement under the Annotated Code of Maryland, Tax-Property Article, Section 9-204.1, and

2. All proposed work must be approved in advance by the Prince George’s County Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Written notification of such approval by the HPO must be presented to the City Manager before work begins. The finished work must be approved by the City Manager upon advice from HPO.

#### **Section 2A-103. Availability of Historic Preservation Tax Credits**

A taxpayer must apply to the City to receive the property tax credits established under Section 2A-101.

A. A taxpayer who applies for a property tax credit under Section 2A-101(a) or (b) on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> shall receive the tax credit for the current tax year and for the tax years immediately following.

B. A taxpayer who applies for a property tax credit under Section 2A-101(a) or (b) on or after October 1<sup>st</sup> shall receive the tax credit for the next tax year and for the tax years immediately following.

(Ord.21-94, 12/20/94)



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Redevelopment and Revitalization.

## Appendix E

### City of Mount Rainier Charter

#### Appendix I. Urban Renewal Authority for Slum Clearance

**Section A1-101. Definitions.** The following terms wherever used or referred to in this appendix shall have the following meanings, unless a different meaning is clearly indicated by the context:

- (a) “Federal Government” shall include the United States of America or any agency or instrumentality, corporate or otherwise, of the United States of America.
- (b) “Slum Area” shall mean any area where dwellings predominate which, by reason of depreciation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light or sanitary facilities, or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to the public safety, health or morals.
- (c) “Blighted Area” shall mean an area in which a majority of buildings have declined in productivity by reason of obsolescence, depreciation or other causes to an extent they no longer justify fundamental repairs and adequate maintenance.
- (d) “Urban Renewal Project” shall mean undertakings and activities of a municipality in an urban renewal area for the elimination and for the prevention of the development or spread of slums and blight, and may involve slum clearance and redevelopment in an urban renewal area, or rehabilitation or conservation in an urban renewal area, or any combination or part thereof in accordance with an urban renewal plan. Such undertakings and activities may include –
  - (1) acquisition of a slum area or a blighted area or portion thereof;
  - (2) demolition and removal of buildings and improvements;
  - (3) installation, construction or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements necessary for carrying out in the urban renewal area the urban renewal objectives of this appendix in accordance with the urban renewal plan;
  - (4) disposition of any property acquired in the urban renewal area including sale, initial leasing or retention by the municipality itself, at its fair value for uses in accordance with the urban renewal plan;
  - (5) carrying out plans for a program of voluntary or compulsory repair and rehabilitation of buildings or other improvements in accordance with the urban renewal plan;
  - (6) Acquisition of any other real property in the urban renewal area where necessary to eliminate unhealthful, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, lessen density, eliminate obsolete or other uses detrimental to the public welfare, or otherwise to remove or prevent the spread of blight or deterioration, or to provide land for needed public facilities; and
  - (7) the preservation, improvement or embellishment of historic structures or monuments.

- (e) “Urban Renewal Area” shall mean a slum area or a blighted area or a combination there of which the municipality designates as appropriate for an urban renewal project.
- (f) “Urban Renewal Plan” shall mean a plan, as it exists from time to time, for an urban renewal project, which plan shall be sufficiently complete to indicate such land acquisition, demolition and removal of structures, redevelopment, improvements, and rehabilitation as may be proposed to be carried out in the urban renewal area, zoning and planning changes, if any, land uses, maximum density and building requirements.
- (g) “Bonds” shall mean any bonds (including refunding bonds), notes, interim certificates, certificates of indebtedness, debentures or other obligations.
- (h) “Person” shall mean any individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, joint stock association, or body politic; and shall include any trustee, receiver, assignee, or other person acting in similar representative capacity.
- (i) “Municipality” shall mean “The City of Mount Rainier.” (1963. ch. 781, sec. 1.)

**Section A1-102. Powers.** The municipality is hereby authorized and empowered to carry out urban renewal projects which shall be limited to slum clearance in slum or blighted areas and redevelopment or the rehabilitation of slum or blighted areas to acquire in connection with such projects, within the corporate limits of the municipality, land and property of every kind and any right, interest, franchise, easement or privilege therein, including land or property and any right or interest therein already devoted to public use, by purchase, lease, gift, condemnation or any other legal means; to sell, lease, convey, transfer or otherwise dispose of any of said land or property, regardless of whether or not it has been developed, redeveloped, altered or improved and irrespective of the manner or means in or by which it may have been acquired, to any private, public or quasi public corporation, partnership, association, person or other legal entity. No land or property taken by the municipality for any of the aforementioned purposes or in connection with the exercise of any of the powers which by this appendix are granted to the municipality by exercising the power of eminent domain shall be taken without just compensation, as such compensation. All land or property needed or taken by the exercise of the power of eminent domain by the municipality for any of the aforementioned purposes or in connection with the exercise of any of the powers granted by this appendix is hereby declared to be needed or taken for public uses and purposes. Any or all of the activities authorized pursuant to this section shall constitute governmental functions undertaken for public uses and purposes and the power of taxation may be exercised, public funds expended and public credit extended in furtherance thereof.

The municipality is hereby granted the following additional powers which are hereby found and declared to be necessary and proper to carry into full force and effect the specific powers hereinbefore granted and to fully accomplish the purposes and objects contemplated by the provisions of this section:

- (1) to make or have made all surveys and plans necessary to the carrying out of the purposes of this subheading and to adopt or approve, modify and amend such plans, which plans may include by shall not be limited to: (i) plans for carrying out a program of voluntary or compulsory repair, rehabilitation of buildings and improvements; (ii) plans for the enforcement of codes and regulations relating to the use of land and the rehabilitation, demolition, or removal of buildings and improvements; and (iii) appraisals, title searches, surveys, studies, and other plans and work necessary to prepare for the

undertaking of urban renewal projects and related activities; and to apply for, accept and utilize grants of funds from the Federal Government for such purposes.

- (2) to prepare plans for the relocation of persons (including families, business concerns and others) displaced from an urban renewal area, and to make relocation payments to or with respect to such persons for moving expenses and losses of property for which reimbursement or compensation is not otherwise made, including the making of such payments financed by the Federal Government.
- (3) to appropriate such funds and make such expenditures as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this subheading, including the payment or reimbursement of reasonable actual costs incurred as a result of utility relocations when such relocations are made necessary by an urban renewal project, after making appropriate adjustment for any improvements or betterments to the utility's facilities made in connection with the relocation; and to levy taxes and assessments for such purposes to borrow money and to apply for and accept advances, loans, grants, contributions and any other form of financial assistance from the Federal Government, the State, County or other public bodies, or from any sources, public or private, for the purposes of this subheading, and to give such security as may be required therefore; to invest any urban renewal funds held in reserves or sinking funds or any such funds not required for immediate disbursement, in property or securities which are legal investments for other municipal funds.
- (4) to hold, improve, clear or prepare for redevelopment any property acquired in connection with urban renewal projects; to mortgage, pledge, hypothecate or otherwise encumber such property; to insure or provide for the insurance of such property or operations of the municipality against any risks or hazards, including the power to pay premiums or any such insurance.
- (5) to make and execute all contracts and other instruments necessary or convenient to the exercise of its powers under this subheading, including the power to enter into any agreement with any other public bodies or agencies (which agreements may extend over any period, notwithstanding any provision or rule of law to the contrary), and to include in any contract for financial assistance with the Federal Government for or with respect to an urban renewal project and related activities such conditions imposed pursuant to Federal laws as the municipality may deem reasonable and appropriate.
- (6) to enter into any building or property in any urban renewal area in order to make inspections, surveys, appraisals, soundings or test borings, and to obtain an order for this purpose from the Circuit Court for the county in which the municipality is situated in the event entry is denied or resisted.
- (7) to plan, re-plan, install, construct, reconstruct, repair, close or vacate streets, roads, sidewalks, public utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other public improvements in connection with an urban renewal project; provided the same shall be approved by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and to make exceptions from city or town regulations, but not county buildings regulations unless the same shall be approved by the County Building Inspector.
- (8) to generally organize, coordinate and direct the administration of the provisions of this subheading as they apply to such municipality in order that the objective of remedying slum and blighted areas and preventing the causes thereof within such municipality may be most effectively promoted and achieved.
- (9) to exercise all or any part or combination of powers herein granted. (1963. ch. 781, sec. 2)

**Section A1-103. Establishment of agency.** The municipality may itself exercise all the powers granted by this appendix or may, if its legislative body by ordinance determines such action to be in the public interest, elect to have such powers exercised by a separate public body or agency as hereinafter provided. In the event said legislative body makes such determination, it shall proceed by ordinance to establish a public body or agency to undertake in the municipality the activities authorized by this subheading. Such ordinance shall include provisions establishing the number of members of such public body or agency, the manner of their appointment and removal, the terms of said members and their compensation. The ordinance may include such additional provisions relating to the organization of said public body or agency as may be necessary. In the event the legislative body enacts such an ordinance, all of the powers by this appendix granted to the municipality shall, from the effective date of said ordinance, be vested in the public body or agency thereby established, except:

- (1) The power to pass a resolution to initiate an urban renewal project pursuant to Section A1-104 of this appendix.
- (2) The power to issue general obligation bonds pursuant to Section A1-109 of this appendix. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 3)
- (3) The power to appropriate funds, and to levy taxes and assessments pursuant to Section A1-109 of this appendix. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 3)

**Section A1-104. Initiation of project.** In order to initiate an urban renewal project, the legislative body of the municipality shall adopt a resolution which –

- (1) finds that one or more slum or blighted areas exist in such municipality;
- (2) locates and defines the said slum or blighted areas;
- (3) finds that the rehabilitation, redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of such area or areas, is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of such municipality. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 4)

**Section A1-105. Preparation and approval of plan.**

- (a) Procedure. The municipality, in order to carry out the purposes of this appendix, shall prepare or cause to be prepared an urban renewal plan for slum or blighted areas in the municipality, and shall formally approve such plan. Prior to its approval of an urban renewal project, the municipality shall submit such plan to the planning body of the municipality, for review and recommendations as to its conformity with the master plan for the development of the municipality as a whole. The planning body shall submit its written recommendation with respect to the proposed urban renewal plan to the municipality within sixty days after receipt of the plan for review; upon receipt of the recommendations of the planning body or, if no recommendations are received within sixty days, then without such recommendations, the municipality may proceed with a public hearing on an urban renewal project after public notice thereof by publication in a newspaper having a general circulation within the corporate limits of the municipality. The notice shall describe the time, date, place and plan, shall generally identify the

urban renewal project under consideration, and shall outline the general scope of the urban renewal project under consideration. Following such hearing, the municipality may approve an urban renewal project and the plan therefore if it finds that: (1) a feasible method exists for the location of any families who will be displaced from the urban renewal area in decent, safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations within their means and without undue hardship to such families; (2) the urban renewal plan substantially conforms to the master plan of the municipality as a whole; and (3) the urban renewal plan will afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the municipality as a whole, for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the urban renewal area by private enterprise.

- (b) Change. An urban renewal plan may be modified at any time, provided that if modified after the lease or sale of real property in the urban renewal project area, the modification may be conditioned upon such approval of the owner, lessee or successor in interest as the municipality may deem advisable and in any event shall be subject to such rights at law or in equity as a lessee or purchaser, or his successor or successors in interest, may be entitled to assert. Where the proposed modification will be substantially change the urban renewal plan as previously approved by the municipality, the modification shall be formally approved by the municipality as in the case of an original plan.
- (c) Effect. Upon the approval by the municipality of an urban renewal plan or of any modification thereof, such plan or modification shall be deemed to be in full force and effect for the respective urban renewal area and the municipality may then cause such plan or modification to be carried out in accordance with its terms. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 5)

#### **Section A1-106. Disposal of property in area.**

- (a) Powers. The municipality may sell, lease or otherwise transfer real property or any interest therein acquired for it by an urban renewal project, for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, educational or other uses or for public use, or may retain such property or interest for public use, in accordance with the urban renewal plan, subject to such covenants, conditions and restrictions, including covenants running with the land, as it may deem to be necessary or desirable to assist in preventing the development or spread of future slums or blighted areas or to otherwise carry out the purposes of this appendix. The purchasers or lessees and their successors and assigns shall be obligated to devote such real property only to the uses specified in the urban renewal plan, and may be obligated to comply with such other requirements as the municipality may determine to be in the public interest, including the obligation to begin within a reasonable time any improvements on such real property required by the urban renewal plan. Such real property or interest shall be sold, leased, otherwise transferred, or retained at not less than its fair value for uses in accordance with the urban renewal plan. In determining the fair value of real property for uses in accordance with the urban renewal plan, the municipality shall take into account and give consideration to the uses provided in such plan; the restrictions upon, and the covenants, conditions and obligations assumed by the purchaser or lessee or by the municipality retaining the property; and the objectives of such a plan for the prevention of the recurrence of slum or blighted areas. The municipality in any instrument of conveyance to a private purchaser or lessee may provide that such purchaser or lessee shall be without power to sell, lease or otherwise transfer the real property without the prior written consent of the municipality until he has completed the construction of any or all

improvements which he has obligated himself to construct thereon. Real property acquired by the municipality which, in accordance with the provisions of the urban renewal plan, is to be transferred, shall be transferred as rapidly as feasible in the public interest consistent with the carrying out of the provisions of the urban renewal plan. Any contract for such transfer and the urban renewal plan (or such part or parts of such contract or plan as the municipality may determine) may be recorded in the Land Records of the county in which the municipality is situated in such manner as to afford actual or constructive notice thereof.

- (b) Procedure. The municipality may dispose of real property in an urban renewal area to private persons only under such reasonable competitive bidding procedures as it shall prescribe or as hereinafter provided in this subsection. The municipality may, by public notice by publication in a newspaper having a general circulation in the community (not less than sixty days prior to the execution of any contract to sell, lease or otherwise transfer real property and prior to the delivery of any instrument of conveyance with respect thereto under the provisions of this section) invite proposals from and make available all pertinent information to private redevelopers or any persons interested in undertaking to redevelop or rehabilitate an urban renewal area, or any part thereof. Such notice shall identify the area, or portion thereof, and shall state that proposals shall be made by those interested within a specified period of not less than sixty days after the first day of publication of said notice, and that such further information as is available may be obtained at such office as shall be designated in said notice. The municipality shall consider all such redevelopment and rehabilitation proposals and the financial and legal ability of the persons making such proposal to carry them out, and may negotiate with any persons for proposals for the purchase, lease or other transfer of any real property acquired by the municipality in the urban renewal area. The municipality may accept such proposal as it deems to be in the public interest and in furtherance of the purposes of this subheading. Thereafter, the municipality may execute and deliver contracts, deeds, leases and other instruments and take all steps necessary to effectuate such transfers.
- (c) Temporary operation. The municipality may temporarily operate and maintain real property acquired by it in an urban renewal area for or in connection with an urban renewal project pending the disposition of the property as authorized in this subheading, without regard to the provisions of subsection (a) above, for such uses and purposes as may be deemed desirable even though not in conformity with the urban renewal plan.
- (d) Title. Any instrument executed by the municipality and purporting to convey any right, title or interest in any property under this appendix shall be conclusively presumed to have been executed in compliance with the provisions of this appendix insofar as title or other interest of any bona fide purchaser, lessees, or transferees of such property is concerned.
- (e) Residential property. In the event that urban renewal plans involve removal of residential housing, provision and plans must be made for their replacement with adequate facilities for the resident so displaced. (1963, ch. 791, sec. 6)

**Section A1-107. Eminent domain.** Condemnation of land or property under the provisions of this subheading shall be in accordance with the procedure provided in Article 33A of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* (1957 Edition, as amended) and acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 7)

**Section A1-108. Encouragement of private enterprise.** The municipality, to the greatest extent it determines to be feasible in carrying out the provisions of this appendix, shall afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the municipality as a whole, to the rehabilitation or redevelopment of any urban renewal area by private enterprise. The municipality shall give consideration to this objective in exercising its powers under this appendix. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 8)

**Section A1-09. General obligation bonds.** For the purpose of financing and carrying out of an urban renewal project and related activities, the municipality may issue and sell its general obligation bonds. Any bonds issued by the municipality pursuant to this section shall be issued in the manner and within the limitations prescribed by applicable law for the issuance and authorization of general obligation bonds by such municipality, and also within such limitations as shall be determined by said municipality. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 9)

**Section A1-110. Revenue bonds.**

- (a) Power. In addition to the authority conferred by Section A1-109 of this appendix, the municipality shall have the power to issue revenue bonds to finance the undertaking of any urban renewal project and related activities, and shall have power to issue refunding bonds for the payment or retirement of such bonds previously issued by it. Such bonds shall be made payable, as to both principal and interest, solely from the income, proceeds, revenues, and funds of the municipality derived from or held in connection with its undertaking and carrying out of urban renewal projects under this appendix; provided, however, that payment of such bonds, both as to principal and interest, may be further secured by a pledge of any loan, grant or contribution from the Federal Government or other source, in aid of any urban renewal projects of the municipality under this appendix, and by a mortgage of any such urban renewal projects, or any part thereof, title to which is in the municipality. In addition, the municipality may enter into an Indenture of Trust with any private banking institution of this State having trust powers and may make in such indenture of trust such covenants and commitments as may be required by any purchaser for the adequate security of said bonds.
- (b) Provisions. Bonds issued under this section shall not constitute and indebtedness within the meaning of any constitutional or statutory debt limitation or restriction, shall not be subject to the provisions of any other law or charter relating to the authorization, issuance or sale of bonds, and are hereby specifically exempted from the restrictions contained in Sections 9, 10, and 11 of Article 31 of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* (1957 Edition, as amended). Bonds issued under the provisions of this Article are declared to be issued for an essential public and governmental purpose and, together with interest thereon and income therefrom, shall be exempted from all taxes.
- (c) Issue. Bonds issued under this section shall be authorized by resolution or ordinance of the legislative body of the municipality and may be issued in one or more series and shall bear such date or dates, shall mature at such time or times, bear interest at such rate or rates, not exceeding six per centum per annum, be in such denomination or denominations, be in such form

either with or without coupon or registered, carry such conversion or registration privileges, have such rank or priority, be executed in such manner, be payable in such medium or payment, at such place or places, and be subject to such terms of redemption (with or without premium), be secured in such manner, and have such other characteristics, as may be provided by such resolution or trust indenture or mortgage issued pursuant thereto.

- (d) Sale. Such bonds may be sold at not less than par at public sales held after notice published prior to such sale in a newspaper having a general circulation in the area in which the municipality is located and in such other medium of publication as the municipality may determine or may be exchanged for other bonds on the basis of par; provided, that such bonds may be sold to the Federal Government at private sale at not less than par, and in the event less than all of the authorized principal amount of such bonds is sold to the Federal Government, the balance may be sold at private sale at not less than par at an interest cost to the municipality of not to exceed the interest cost to the municipality of the portion of the bonds sold to the Federal Government.
- (e) Officials. In case any of the public officials of the municipality whose signatures appear on any bonds or coupons issued under this appendix shall cease to be such officials before the delivery of such bond, or, in the event any such officials shall have become such after the date of issue thereof, said bonds shall nevertheless be valid and binding obligations of said municipality in accordance with their terms. Any provisions of any law to the contrary notwithstanding, any bonds issued pursuant to this appendix shall be fully negotiable.
- (f) Suits. In any suit, action or proceeding involving the validity or enforceability of any bond issued under this appendix or the security therefore, any such bond reciting in substance that it has been issued by the municipality in connection with an urban renewal project, as herein defined, shall be conclusively deemed to have been issued for such purpose, and such project shall be conclusively deemed to have been planned, located and carried out in accordance with the provisions of this appendix.
- (g) Investments. All banks, trust companies, bankers, savings banks and institutions, building and loan associations, savings and loan associations, investment companies and other persons carrying on a banking or investment business; all insurance companies, insurance associations, and other persons carrying on an insurance business; and all executors, administrators, curators, trustees, and other fiduciaries, may legally invest any sinking funds, monies, or other funds belonging to them or within their control in any bonds or other obligations issued by the municipality pursuant to this appendix, provided that such bonds and other obligations shall be secured by an agreement between the issuer and the Federal Government in which the issuer agrees to borrow from the Federal Government and the Federal Government agrees to lend to the issuer, prior to the maturity of such bonds or other obligations, monies in an amount which (together with any other monies irrevocable committed to the payment of principal and interest on such bonds or other obligations) will suffice to pay the principal of such bonds or other obligations with the interest to maturity thereon, which monies under the terms of said agreement are required to be used for the purpose of paying the principal of and the interest on such bonds or other obligations at their maturity. Such bonds and other obligations shall be authorized security for all public deposits. It is the purpose of this section to authorize any persons, political subdivisions and officers, public or private, to use any funds owned or controlled by

them for the purchase of any such bonds or other obligations. Nothing contained in this section with regard to legal investments shall be construed as relieving any person of any duty of exercising reasonable care in selecting securities. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 10)

**Section A1-111. Separability.** If any provision of this appendix, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the remainder of the appendix and the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, shall not be affected thereby. The powers conferred by this appendix shall be in addition and supplemental to the powers conferred by any other law. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 11)

**Section A1-112. Review and approval.** All plans, whether preliminary or final, prepared or presented under the provisions of this appendix by the municipality known as Mount Rainier shall not conflict with, and must conform to the master plan for Prince George's County. This provision shall be construed to mean that all urban renewal plans effecting a change in zoning shall be reviewed by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and any zoning amendments pursuant to this urban renewal program must be approved by the district council. (1963, ch. 781, sec. 12)

**Appendix F**

Introduced and Read June 8, 2004  
Adopted June 23, 2004  
Posted July 23 to July 30, 2004

**CITY OF MOUNT RAINIER  
ORDINANCE 6-2004  
(Drafted by Mayor Knedler)  
Introduced by Mayor Knedler**

**An Ordinance to adopt an Urban Renewal Plan.**

**WHEREAS** the Charter of the City of Mount Rainier authorizes the Mayor and Council to undertake urban renewal projects to remove blight and revitalize the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the Charter at Sec. A1-105 establishes the process for adoption of an urban renewal plan in order to implement the urban renewal powers within the designated urban renewal area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council has held a public hearing on the proposed urban renewal plan and complied with the adoption process set out in the Charter; and

**WHEREAS**, the Maryland Department of Planning has assisted a planning committee of citizens and business owners to develop an urban renewal plan to guide future urban renewal projects within that designated urban renewal area;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council, that the City of Mount Rainier hereby adopts the final draft of the Urban Renewal Plan, dated March 2004, in order to implement the City's urban renewal powers.

Attest:  
Jeannelle B. Wallace Bryan K. Knedler  
Jeannelle B. Wallace, City Manager Bryan K. Knedler, Mayor  
Carol A. Gandee  
Carol Gandee, Council Member, Ward 1  
Intisar Haamid  
Intisar Haamid, Council Member, Ward 1  
Malinda Miles  
Malinda Miles, Council Member, Ward 2  
Pedro E. Briones  
Pedro Briones, Council Member, Ward 2

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