

# Charrette Report

## Washington Plaza at the Lake Anne Village Center

A joint project by the Lake Anne at Reston Condominium Association (LARCA)  
and Fairfax County



August 2015

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# Introduction



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*I would like to paint or sketch the fountain, enjoying a cool beverage.\**

\* Quotes from residents and business owners at Lake Anne, describing their ideal day at the Village Center.

# INTRODUCTION

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This report is the result of surveys, a focus group meeting, and a culminating design charrette to develop design ideas and strategies that will meet the needs and desires of residents and business owners, while coordinating with the proposed development in the Lake Anne Village Center.

The report's emphasis is on short-term and long-term physical improvements that enhance connections, aesthetics, visibility, and uses in and around Washington Plaza.



The Lake Anne Village Center (LAVC) is located 18 miles west of Washington, DC on the northwestern edge of Fairfax County, Virginia. It was the first of five Village Centers in Robert E. Simon's master planned community of Reston, Virginia (Figure 1).

The Village Centers were designed to be within a ½ mile walk of most homes in Reston and provide for many of the retail and service needs of area residents. With a mix of residential and commercial uses integrated into a natural setting, the LAVC closely reflects the original intent of the master plan to provide residents with a unique environment in which they can live, work, and play.

Opened in 1966, the LAVC's design influences were drawn from many iconic cities and architectural inspirations including European coastal cities, the International Style, and the English Garden City movement.

The LAVC is considered a special place by local residents and is regarded by planners, architects, landscape architects, developers and the general public as one of the earliest examples of a master planned, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development (Figure 2).

Anchored by a man-made lake, Washington Plaza is the main public gathering space in the LAVC. (Figure 3). A variety of events and activities, such as a farmers market, concerts, and festivals, are scheduled regularly in this space.

The Plaza area is framed by a three-story crescent of mixed-use buildings with residential condominiums over retail shops. The vertical elements, concrete columns, and slightly protruding brick divisions between upper balconies are unified by horizontal concrete bands characteristic of modernism. Its brutalist architecture is tempered by its human scale and medieval elements.



Figure 2- Aerial of the Lake Anne Village Center  
Source: Google Earth, accessed on 16 June 2015.



Figure 3- Washington Plaza with the Lake and Heron House in the background  
Source: Lake Anne Development Partners, LLC presentation (October 24, 2013).

A concrete stairway leads to condominium entrances above the Plaza. Another entrance behind the pharmacy has the aura of a European hill town bringing residents and visitors down from the residences above into the crescent. In the center of the crescent is a large concrete fountain designed by James Rossant. The Plaza surface is red brick with concrete pavers reminiscent of Piazza San Marco in Venice (Figures 4-5).

Some of the most iconic and historically significant elements in Washington Plaza are the public art sculptures, including the fountain, steps, boat, the facade of the pharmacy wall, and the statue of Robert Simon (Figures 6-9).

In March 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan that expanded the boundary of the 1998 designated Commercial Revitalization Area (CRA), and provided recommendations for development in terms of uses and intensity. These changes reflected community values and perspectives, and positioned the LAVC to become an example of how innovative reinvestment and redevelopment can result in sustained economic prosperity.

Washington Plaza and portions of the adjacent parcels within the LAVC are designated as a Fairfax County Historic Overlay District. The Fairfax County Architectural Review Board (ARB) reviews all proposed improvements and alterations to the original buildings and public spaces within the Overlay District.

In June 2011, the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and the Virginia State Review Board endorsed the Historic District and the LAVC for listing in the *Virginia Landmarks Register* and for forwarding to the National Park Service for nomination to the *National Register of Historic Places*.

Given the historical and architectural significance of Washington Plaza and its role in the community, it is crucial to understand, preserve, and provide for its continued existence. It will be particularly important to create a successful transition between the historic Washington Plaza and future planned redevelopment of portions of the LAVC, in a way that protects the Plaza's identity and function.



Figure 4- Layout of the existing LAVC buildings



Figure 5- Aerial of Washington Plaza  
Source: GIS, Accessed April 20, 2015



Figure 6- Play Fountain



Figure 7- Climbable steps sculpture



Figure 8- Former pharmacy storefront super-graphics



Figure 9- Statue of Robert E. Simon

# COMMERCIAL REINVESTMENT PLAN

The unique design of the Washington Plaza, its mix of uses, and limited commercial options nearby contributed to its peak in commercial activity in the 1970s. In recent decades, increasing competition, declining commercial investment, and limited visibility have adversely affected retail activity in the Plaza.

In 2011, OCR retained Alvarez & Marsal and The Eisen Group to develop a Commercial Reinvestment Plan (CRP) for the non-residential uses within the LAVC (Figure 10). The CRP contains an assessment of current conditions affecting the non-residential uses, and provides short and long-term strategies to stabilize and sustain current establishments and to attract viable and complementary new non-residential establishments to the LAVC.

Implementation of the CRP is intended to improve the viability of the LAVC as a mixed-use commercial center, and to facilitate the process of achieving the longer-term community goal of redeveloping the property adjacent to Washington Plaza with compatible mixed-use development. Since the study's completion, a number of the recommendations have been implemented, while others will occur with redevelopment of adjacent parcels. The report is available at: <http://fcrevit.org/lakeanne/CRP.htm>



Figure 10- OCR Commercial Reinvestment Concept Options (September 2011)

# REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

To encourage revitalization of the LAVC, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors entered into a public/private partnership with the Lake Anne Development Partners, LLC (LADP). The Board also approved a rezoning to redevelop the surface parking lot associated with Washington Plaza, the Crescent Apartments property and some additional commercial properties within the LAVC. The 24.3 acre redevelopment project will include market rate and affordable housing, retail and office uses, and public parks, plazas and pedestrian connections. It will also result in the realignment of Village Road to improve circulation and create a clear visual connection to Lake Anne. The plan includes 1.17 million square feet of development that will be

comprised of 1,037 residential units, 136,173 square feet of office use, and 58,213 square feet of retail space which may include a grocery store. Retail and office uses will be incorporated into three new mixed-use buildings near Washington Plaza. Redevelopment is expected to occur in several phases over the next decade (Figure 11).



Figure 11- Lake Anne Village Center Redevelopment Master Plan  
Source: Lake Anne Development Partners, LLC. Crescent Site Plans and Renderings (November 2013).

# COMMUNITY INPUT

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Washington Plaza and the historic buildings adjacent to it were not included in the redevelopment plan. How the new development transitions visually and physically to the Plaza in a way that preserves the character of the existing Plaza is a primary concern to many of the residents and business owners of the LAVC.

LARCA requested that OCR assist it in developing design strategies to enhance the transition from the historic area to the new mixed-use development, and to better position the existing non-residential uses on Washington Plaza to capitalize on the new development. To help understand the attributes and issues of the LAVC, OCR conducted an online survey, a focus group, and a design charrette.

## ONLINE SURVEY

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An online survey was conducted to gather data regarding the challenges and opportunities of the LAVC from the stakeholder's point of view (See Appendix A). The survey was distributed through LARCA over the course of two weeks in May 2015. More than 100 respondents answered 12 questions. Themes emerged for improved maintenance of the Plaza and for more lake-based activities. The LAVC was recognized for the variety of experiences one could have at the Plaza. It was referred to by many as, "the only true mixed-use center in Fairfax on a picturesque lake".

More than 60% of the respondents were LARCA residents, 20% nearby neighbors, and 8% Lake Anne merchants. Top concerns/issues were the lack of activities on and surrounding Lake Anne, an inadequate mix of stores/services, and the lake's poor visibility from North Shore Drive/Baron Cameron Avenue.

The majority of the survey respondents (62%) agreed that there was a lack of variety of businesses and services at LAVC. Furthermore, 49% of participants believed that the LAVC faces the issue of poor visibility and 33% cited issues with clarity of information and lack

of clear signage. Only 32% of the participants indicated that there was sufficient transit access to the LAVC. A total of 65% of the participants agreed that the LAVC could increase its level of activities during the day and night, while 89% believed there was a relatively good frequency of community events.

Most participants celebrated the unique architecture of the LAVC and its sense of community and wanted to see those aspects enhanced. The majority of the participants agreed that the Plaza provides relatively comfortable places to sit (60%), and that there was a strong feeling of safety (64%) and overall attractiveness (44%).

Overall, the majority of participants believe that the community would be enhanced with activities focused primarily on and surrounding the lake. Furthermore, many felt that the lack of diversity of businesses, services, and restaurants that serve the LAVC are inhibiting its revitalization.



Figure 12– Focus group participants at the Reston Museum and Store, May 27, 2015

On May 27, 2015, OCR and LARCA held a focus group at the Reston Museum with 16 LAVC residents and business owners/managers. (Figure 12).

Many common themes emerged between the survey responses and those of the focus group. Although the unique architecture, history, identity, and beauty of Lake Anne were celebrated, many of the focus group attendees believed that there could be improvements in terms of diversity of activities and restaurants. Most agreed that building upon the diversity of Lake Anne’s

restaurant and business scene would be the principal way to complement Plaza activities and increase pedestrian traffic.

Participants were asked five questions and responses were recorded. A summary of the focus groups questions and responses can be found on pages 11-13 of this report.

# FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

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## **What makes LAVC special?**

### **Select Focus Group Responses:**

1  
Unique Architecture/History/Plaza  
Public Art  
Events  
Lake and fountain view from Plaza  
Boating to retail/restaurants  
Long-term and invested residents  
Mix of uses  
Locally owned businesses

## **What are the issues/barriers for LAVC to be successful into the future?**

### **Select Focus Group Responses:**

2  
Lack of visibility as to what is on the Plaza from North Shore Drive  
Business signage is not compelling or visible and is inconsistent  
Mainly a seasonal draw – business dries out in the winter  
Lacks chain restaurants and retail: there should be some businesses people already know  
Knowing/seeing what is in the stores is challenging  
Physical limitations of the retail store footprints  
Lack of security – limited police presence and no neighborhood watch  
Not enough retail or right mix; need a pharmacy, general merchandise, pizza, ice cream

## **Describe your dream day or experience at Lake Anne's Washington Plaza.**

### **Select Focus Group Responses:**

3

"To spend an entire Saturday here! For example: going to the Farmer's Market; listening to great music, walking over to lunch then continuing to look at the Craft Market. Pop in to the brew pub or chocolatier (or both) and see friends and neighbors hanging out there too. Then come back out later, have dinner and walk around the boardwalk and feel safe."

"I would enjoy coffee or breakfast at a local restaurant. I would sit and watch lake activities. I would join others in making art or music collaboratively."

"I would like to sit comfortably on the boardwalk with coffee or by the fountain and watch a lively scene of children playing and people going in and out of the museum and the shops. I want it to feel intimate and authentic but large enough [for me] to be anonymous, I don't want to feel like I'm being watched. And I don't want to feel overwhelmed by a large commercial strip as I do at Town Center."

"After an early morning walk/run around the lake, I would like to meet friends for breakfast at the drugstore- weather permitting- and talk about many things including how fortunate we are that Mr. Simon had the vision."

"I'd like to go to the Farmer's Market on a Saturday morning, go back upstairs to my condo to fix a wonderful breakfast before kayaking on the lake. Return to have a gelato before I browse in the bookstore. Run errands and return home to find live music at a restaurant down in the Plaza."

"My ideal day on the Plaza would include eating outside at one of the restaurants while music is being played for the benefit of all, not just one restaurant on the Plaza. Music, music, music, and more music!"

"Would like to actually dine on the lake – meals served on a pontoon boat restaurant; or take out from a Plaza restaurant for lunch/dinner on our boat."

## ***What are some quick fixes to improve the Plaza in the short-term without much money?***

4

### **Select Focus Group Responses:**

- Organize walks around the lake
- Increase events in the colder months, such as: a fire pit, a snowman contest, ice carving
- Install Lake Anne signage on spillway to capitalize on Metro traffic
- Add consistent, inviting signage for merchants
- Increase lake activities and events
- Create a signed path for walkers all the way around the lake
- Initiate an artesian theme by capitalizing on art studios and local talent
- Add a great coffee shop
- Increase advertising

## ***What is one thing that can be done in the long-term that would have the greatest benefit to the Plaza?***

5

### **Select Focus Group Responses:**

- More restaurants would attract still more restaurants and bring in new business
- Need to create a complete experience for visitors
- Increase residential density to support businesses
- Ice skating on the lake
- Engage a centralized management company for non-residential uses
- Eating/dining on the lake; including pontoon boat restaurants that float on the lake
- Establish restaurant delivery service to private boats on the lake
- Restore free public wi-fi on the Plaza and on the lake
- Improve signage and add awnings for quayside retailers
- Create consistent entrances on the quayside

# DESIGN CHARRETTE

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A one-day design charrette was held on June 10, 2015, at the Jo Ann Rose Gallery in the LAVC to develop physical design solutions that would enhance the Plaza's attributes to the benefit of residents, businesses, and visitors. Participants included LAVC stakeholders and planning and design professionals from the greater Washington D.C. area, including landscape architects, urban designers, architects and planners.

Key to the charrette was understanding the significant elements that define Washington Plaza's unique character while considering a variety of approaches to preserve and enhance the area through future redevelopment of adjacent areas. Participants were asked to acknowledge the historic aspects of the LAVC, while understanding that some physical changes may be necessary to affect change (Figure 13).

The charrette began with a tour of the Washington Plaza led by Mrs. Cheryl Terio-Simon and Mr. Rick Thompson from LARCA (Figure 14). The participants were asked to

observe and take note of what they identified as the attributes and the challenges of the Plaza.

Following the tour, the participants shared their thoughts with one another (Figure 15). The unique architecture and mixed-use environment were listed as the top attributes and the lack of activities on and surrounding the lake was seen as the biggest challenge and opportunity. A summary and illustrations of the attributes and issues can be found on pages 15 and 16 of this report.

After the group discussion, the participants formed into five smaller teams to discuss ways to enhance the attributes and find solutions to the issues they had identified. Each team developed design concepts, diagrams, and drawings to illustrate their ideas. Both short and long-term design concepts, ideas, and proposals were devised.



Figure 13- Design Charrette Team diagramming the Plaza



Figure 14- Charrette participants touring the area



Figure 15- Design Charrette, post-tour discussion

# ATTRIBUTES/OPPORTUNITIES

The unique architecture of the LAVC, and its sense of community were among the top attributes identified through the survey, focus group, and design charrette.

Many of the participants believed that a successful revitalization of Washington Plaza could be achieved with an increase in lake activities by creating a more dynamic edge along the lake, and by diversifying the businesses at the Plaza (Figure 16).

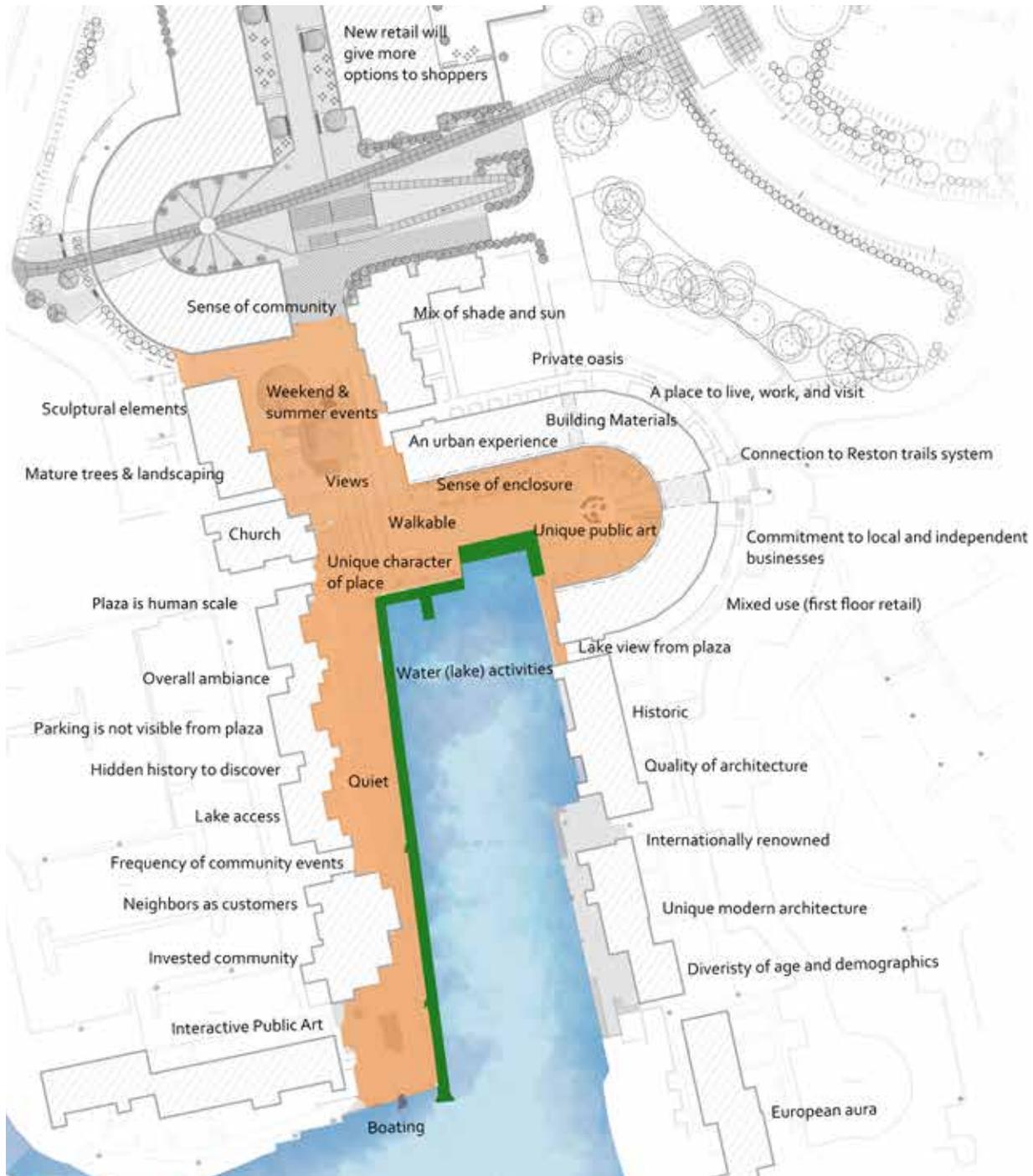


Figure 16- Attributes and opportunities of the LAVC

# ISSUES/CHALLENGES

Major issues identified from the survey, focus group, and the design charrette were: the lack of activity surrounding/on the lake, poor access to the lake, limited retail visibility, and lack of diversity of businesses at Washington Plaza (Figure 17).

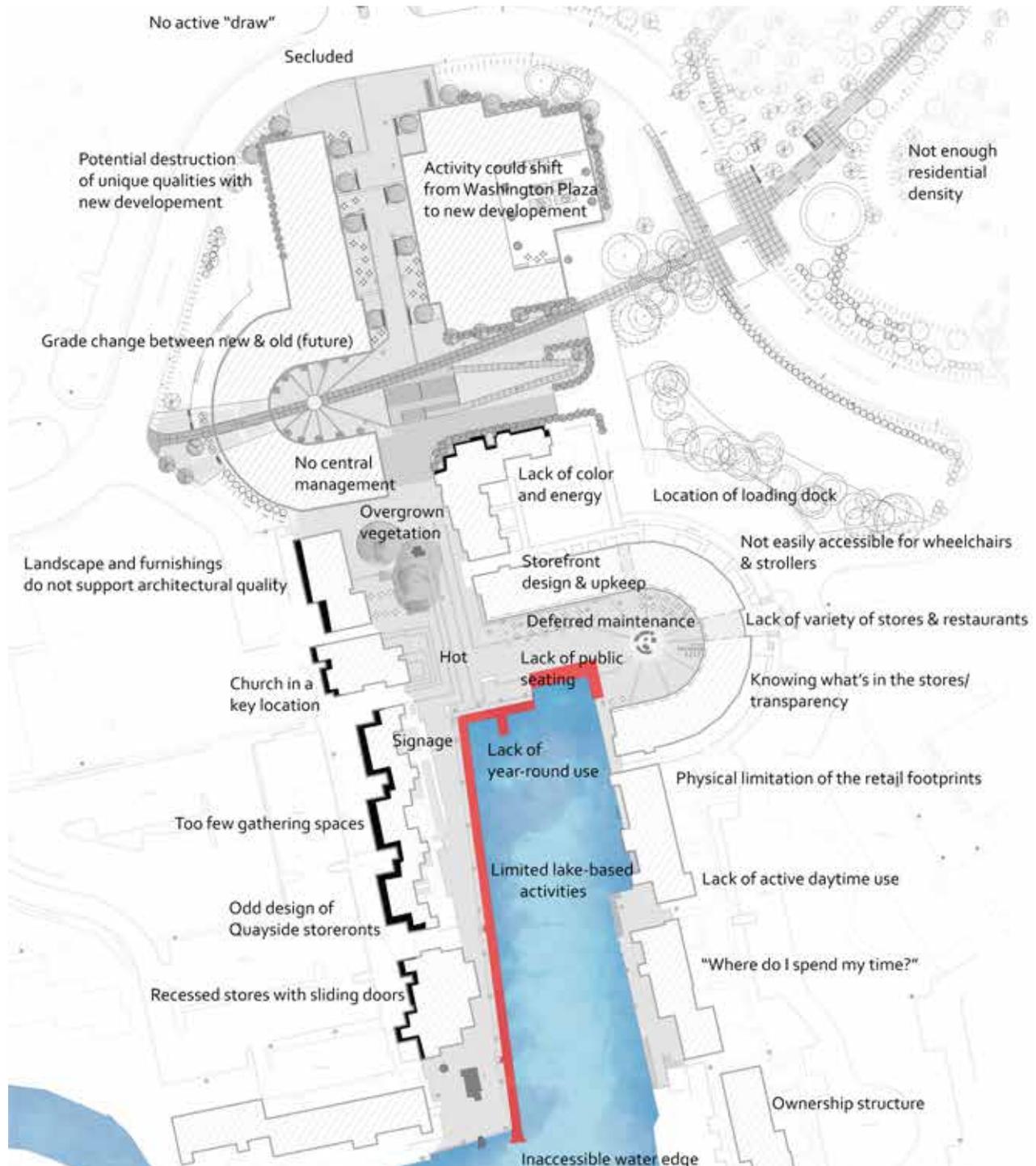


Figure 17- Issues and challenges of the LAVC

# Results



*I would like to actually dine on the lake with meals served on a pontoon boat restaurant; or take out from a Plaza restaurant for lunch or dinner on our boat.*

# TEAM IDEAS

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After the attributes and issues were identified, charrette participants formed into two teams to diagram ideas that could transform the issues into attributes and provide solutions to some of the design challenges.

## Team A Ideas

1. Increase transparency and permeability of the Plaza
2. Improve access to the lake and activation of the lake's edge
3. Create outdoor living rooms within the Plaza
4. Enhance the public realm
  - a. Master strategy
  - b. Link historic and new areas
  - c. Contemporary, human, and natural

## Team B Ideas

1. Emphasize the distinctive and quirky aspects of the LAVC
2. Create a destination using views and connections; provide seasonal places/activities
3. Improve water access and docks
4. Use public art to enhance under-utilized spaces

# OUTCOMES

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During the second half of the charrette, a number of specific approaches were developed using the initial ideas formed by the two teams. Participants divided themselves into small groups of four or five to focus on detailing one particular approach.

In general, the teams wanted more interaction with the water, both visually and physically, and believed that the lake, as an asset, is underutilized. Many suggestions centered on increasing the use of the lake, whether it was just looking at the lake or using the lake for water activities, including floating stages and extended dock areas for seating.

One group developed a manifesto that articulates the key design elements that makes the LAVC unique. Those include public art, paving patterns, lighting, architecture, vegetation, and signage.

The subsequent pages describe the five approaches developed by the individual teams. Each team sought to respond to the concerns and desires of residents and business stakeholders, including the survey and focus group and to use their professional observations to develop recommendations.

## Enhancing the character of place

The strategy of Approach 1 is to understand and preserve the strong, distinctive elements that contribute to the character of the LAVC. The team developed a manifesto that articulates the key design elements that make Lake Anne/Washington Plaza unique: public art, paving patterns, lighting, architecture, vegetation, and signage.

There are iconic, functional public art elements that are part of the original design of the Plaza. The design elements that already exist should be enhanced and extended. Some should be preserved, while others could be repurposed or relocated.

### Big Ideas

- Public Art
- Concrete paver details
- Highlighting architecture and uses
- Pedestrian lighting

### Public art

Examples of elements that should be preserved include:

- Climbable sculptures (Figure 18)
- LAVC Clock (Figure 19)
- Concrete watermark at the Heron House (Figure 20)
- Super-graphics such as those on the pharmacy building (Figure 21)

Elements that should be relocated or repurposed include the wooden carved podium signs which may

interfere with pedestrian movement. These can be clustered in the entrance breezeway that will lead to the new parking garage.

New art elements that enhance the character of place could be added. In keeping with the qualities established in the original design, new elements should have a vertical orientation to reflect the architectural language in the LAVC and should have a functional as well as aesthetic purpose.



Figure 18- Climbable sculptures



Figure 19- LAVC clock

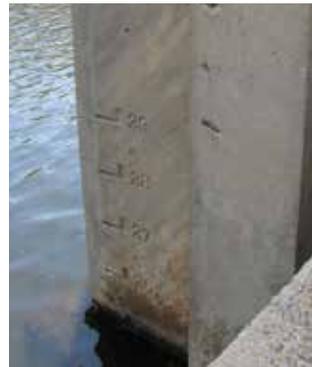


Figure 20- Concrete Watermark at the Heron House



Figure 21- Super-graphics on the pharmacy building

### Ideas to enhance the character of the LAVC through public art:

- Transform the service tunnel into the “Umbilicus”, a colorful, safe, and interesting pedestrian entrance to Washington Plaza. It should include strong graphics and colors, highlight pipes and infrastructure, create niches for art, use lighting, and employ special paving to direct and move people through the space. Converting this service space will have the added benefit of creating a new wheelchair and stroller connection between parking areas and the Plaza. (Figure 22)
- Form an educational program that increases the reach of the existing museum by creating an outdoor museum that provides tours and creative outdoor programming to visitors.
- Define outdoor dining areas with public art. Special planters along with corresponding paving patterns can be employed to better define and enhance outdoor spaces (Figure 23 and Figure 24).



Figure 22- Umbilicus, detail of a redesigned breezeway into Washington Plaza



Figure 23- Example of existing planters corresponding to paving patterns



Figure 24- Example of existing planter defining dining areas at Lake Anne

- Use art to define existing public pathways around LAVC that reference existing design details from under the bridge and the Heron House.
- Redesign the wayfinding directories to reflect the LAVC's architecture. The directories should be narrow and tall like the Heron House, and should become a landmark using bold colors and graphics reflecting the existing super-graphics on the buildings (Figure 25 and Figure 26).
- Connect new public art initiatives at the LAVC to the Public Art Master Plan (Initiative for Public Art Reston).



Figure 25-Super-graphics at the old Safeway at Lake Anne, circa 1966  
 Source: <http://pleasantfamilyshopping.blogspot.com/2010/08/well-planned-safeway-1966.html>

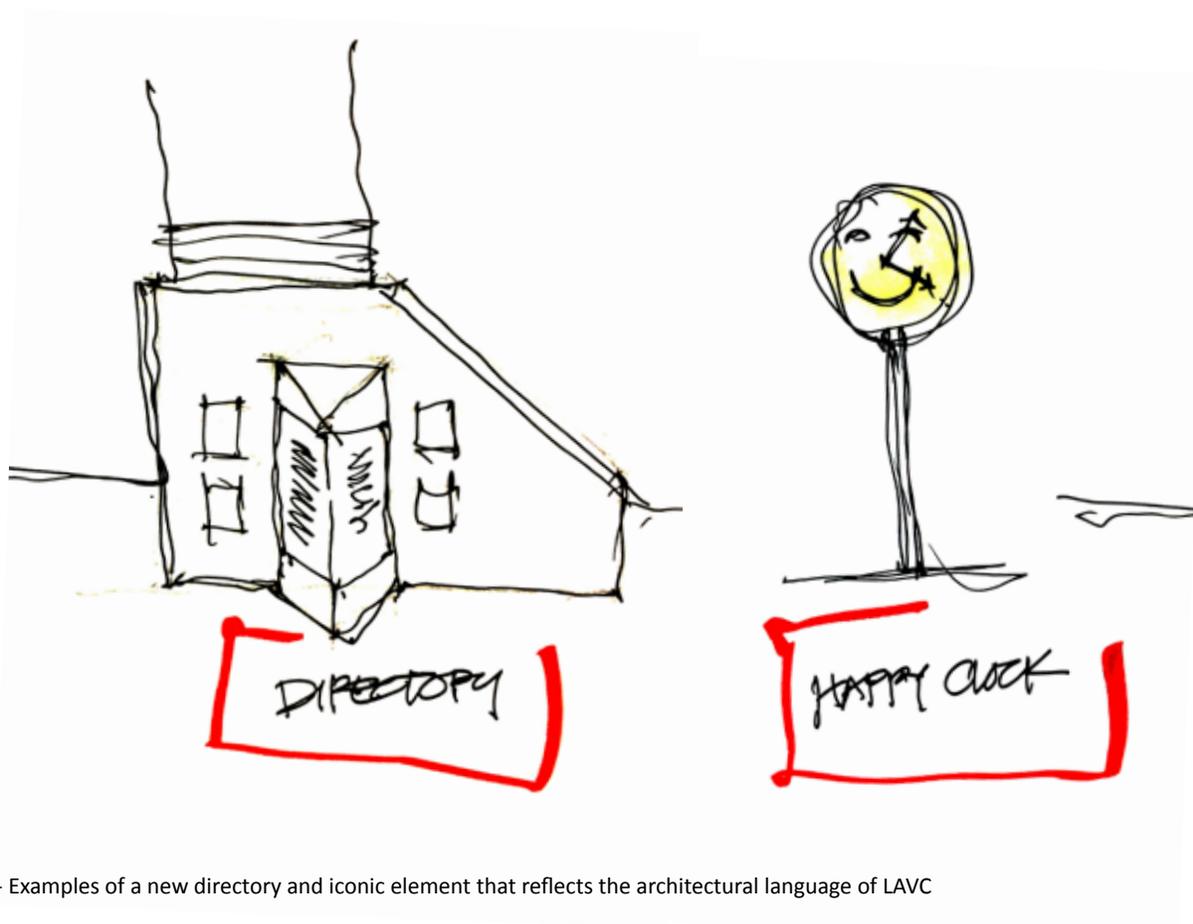


Figure 26- Examples of a new directory and iconic element that reflects the architectural language of LAVC

## ***Concrete Paver Details***

- Integrate the lean and highly contrasted concrete pavers found throughout the Plaza which draw the eye through the space (Figure 27). Paving patterns and a standardized planter system can be used to define spaces for restaurant seating and public walkways. Planters and fencing details should be designed in a way that is respectful of the LAVC’s architectural style.



Figure 27- Plaza paving design

## ***Highlight Architecture and Uses***

- Create an 8-foot wide pedestrian-through zone at the base of the J-building. Outdoor dining zones should be ‘pulled away’ from the base of buildings where a clear zone for pedestrians can be created to browse store displays and view restaurant menus (Figure 28).



Figure 28- Dining tables located close to the facade

## ***Pedestrian Lighting***

- Address the fact that the original intent of the pedestrian-scaled light fixtures was to create a ‘romantic’ light (Figure 29), which is insufficient for the Plaza. High maintenance costs along with operating challenges are incurred with the current fixtures. If additional lighting is added, new fixtures should reflect a romantic character of light dispersal and should be carried through both the new public spaces and the Plaza to create continuity between the two areas.



Figure 29- Pedestrian-scale light fixture

## APPROACH 2

### *Add attractions and improve access to Lake Anne*

Lake Anne is a primary draw for people visiting the LAVC and is an important feature that brings people into Washington Plaza. The strategy of Approach 2 is to increase public interactions at the water's edge by locating new activities at the lake (Figure 30).

A major goal is to enhance the access to and activity level at the lake by offering elements of surprise to draw you along the lake's edge and include places to stop along the way (Figure 31). This would bring more life to the lake's edge and make the water a prime destination.

#### Big Ideas

- Expand the existing dock and provide seating spaces around the lake
- Move boat docks and boat rentals to the southern edge of the boardwalk near the Heron House to add active uses around the lake's public edge and draw people to that end of the Plaza
- Add a floating restaurant or work with Plaza restaurants to offer take-out food to boaters
- Add signage around the lake to aid with wayfinding
- Cordon-off an area in the lake for ice skating in the winter and swimming in the summer

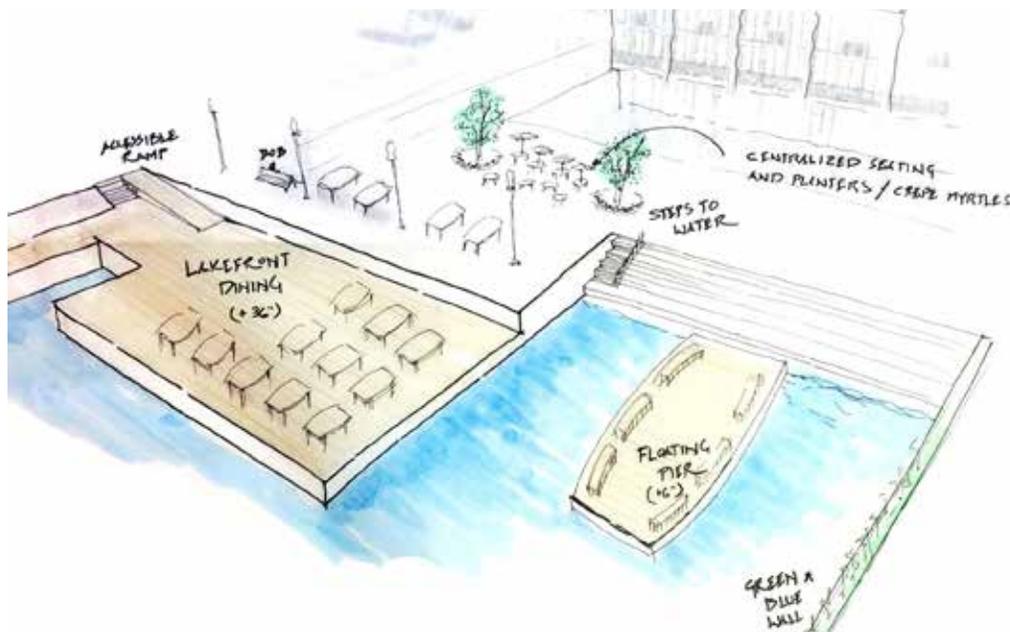


Figure 30- Enhancing lake access by extending the dock using varied terraces at +6", +36" and +66" above water level, adding moveable furniture, and adding a green/blue wall with fountain and plants cascading down

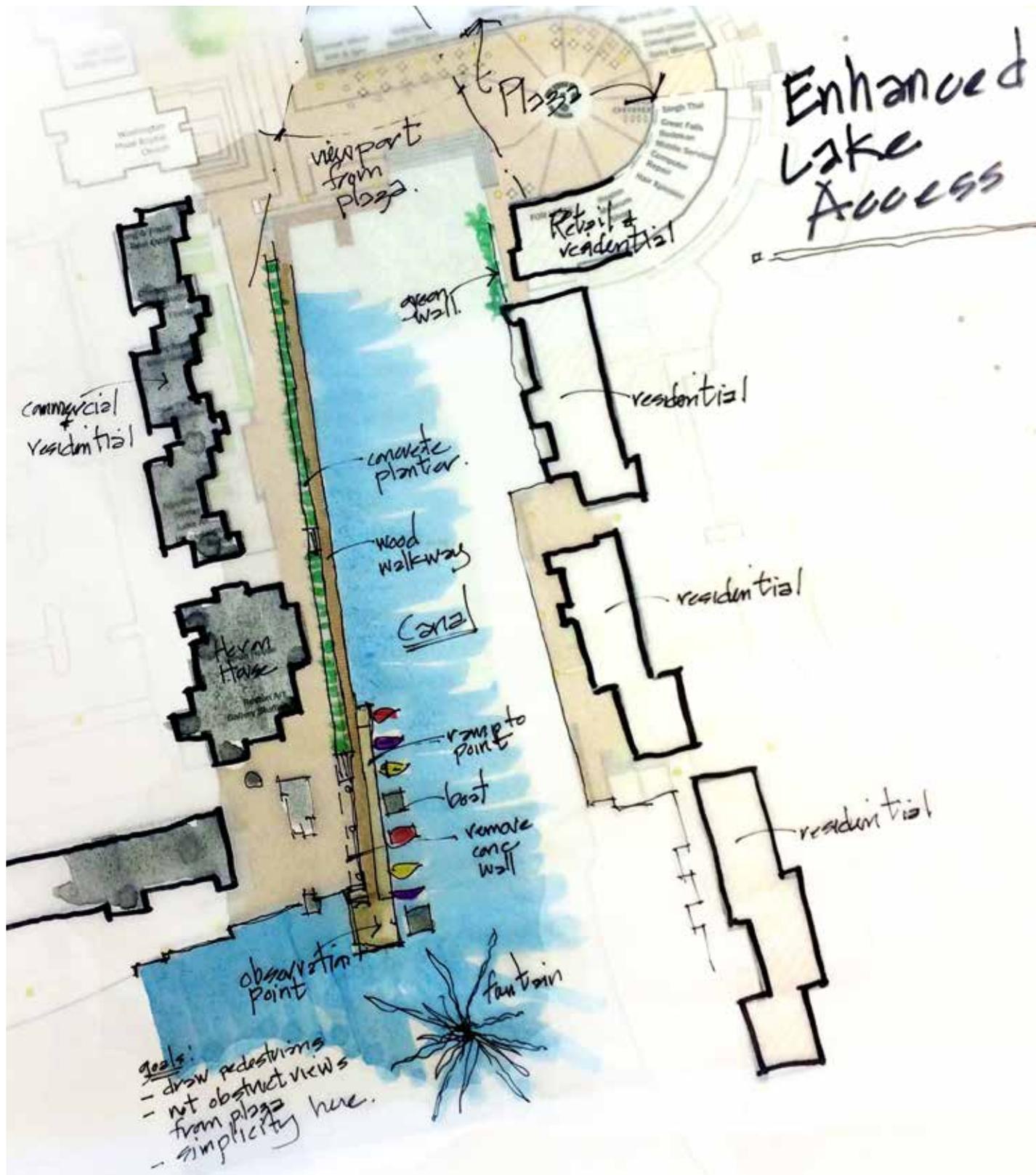


Figure 31- Design strategies to improve access along the lake's edge

# APPROACH 3

## Create a series of five outdoor rooms

The strategy of Approach 3 is to create a series of rooms in the Plaza, each with a unique character. These rooms are not actual, enclosed physical spaces, but rather outdoor spaces defined by use, materials, and theme. The rooms should provide shade, and be quiet and comfortable to encourage human interaction in a variety of environments.

The majority of existing seating available at Washington Plaza is located directly next to the restaurants, for the restaurant users. Benches that are located along the boardwalk are permanent and not movable.

According to the results of the survey, focus group, and design charrette, there is a strong interest in more seating options in order to watch lake activities and to congregate at the lake.

### Design strategies for the outdoor rooms

- Design rooms so they can accommodate different uses and serve different purposes
- Introduce movable and comfortable furniture that encourages interaction and customization by users, not simply for resting
- Change the direction of the brick pavers on the ground to define the boundaries of a room
- Add kiosks
- Highlight special spaces through lighting
- Increase the number of shade trees (Figure 32)
- Add planters to define seating areas



Figure 32- Tree planning detail in the rooms with suspended brick designed to maximize Plaza surface area



Figure 33- Perspective drawing of the Village Room, see page 28

Each of the six rooms (Figure 34) will offer a different experience and a different way for people to interact:

- The **Gateway Room** located at the entrance of the Plaza acts as a transition between the old and new. The Gateway Room has cantenary lighting which functions like a ceiling over the space, an information kiosk, and special pavers.
- The **Center Stage** located in front of the Washington Plaza Baptist Church features a performance stage and room for audience seating. The two steps of the church's stage should be removed in order for it to function as a performance stage.
- The **Village Room** adjacent to the E-building is an intimate space with a mixture of hardscape and landscape. Colorful, moveable seating, permeable pavers, and romantic lighting should be designed into the space (Figures 33 and 35). Existing trees should be evaluated for their health and longevity and additional shade trees should be incorporated.
- The **Washington Plaza Room** is the heart of Washington Plaza. It is surrounded by retail establishments and restaurants.
- The **Garden Room** is located between the Quayside buildings and the boardwalk and offers intimate seating near the water. The Garden Room interacts with the lake's edge through the creation of upper and lower terraces for gathering and dining. The room is defined by furniture and planting, and is tied into the architecture.
- The **Sunboat Room** incorporates new docks and the smaller public space at the end of the Plaza adjacent to the Heron House. This is a quieter space where boat rentals are offered, people embark and disembark from their boats, and other water activities such as fishing and swimming can occur (Figure 36).

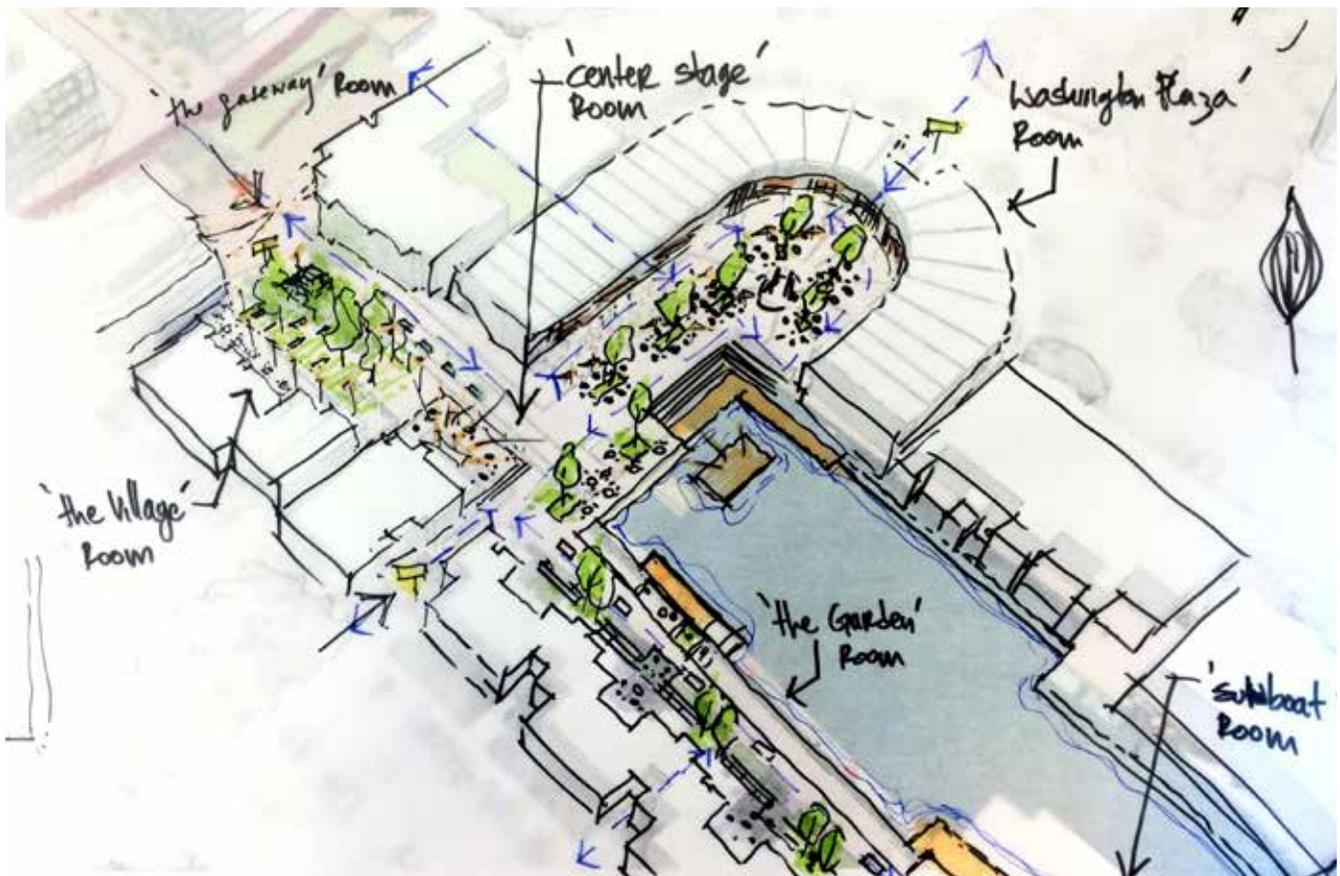


Figure 34- Diagram showing locations of each of the proposed rooms and floating stage

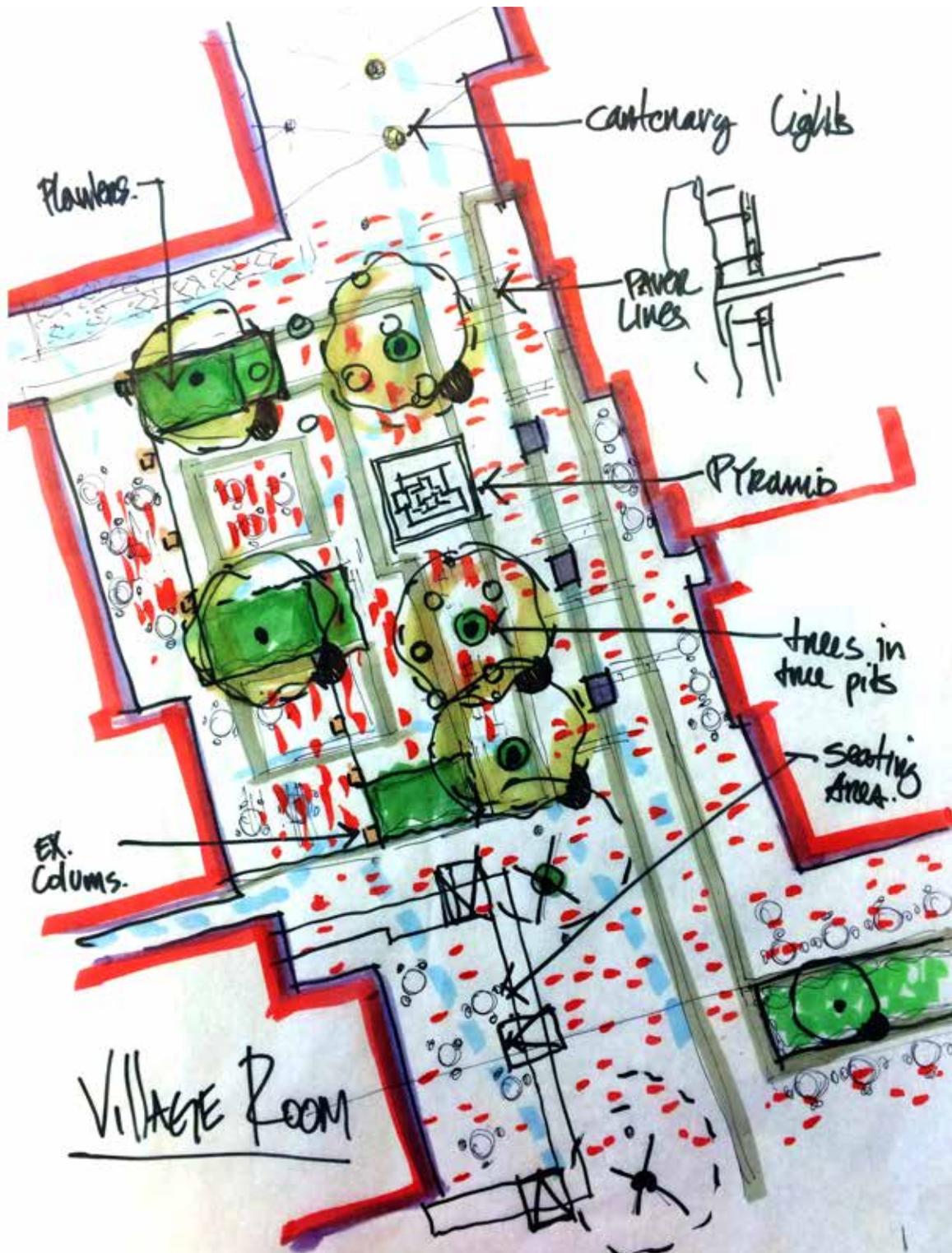


Figure 35- Village Room Concept Drawing



## *Improve access and wayfinding*

The strategy of Approach 4 is to improve access and wayfinding to Washington Plaza and mitigate challenges created by the new development, such as access to the Plaza from parking areas and grade changes.

Clear pathways should be made and signage added to connect the LAVC to the existing Reston Association trail. Careful consideration should be given to grade

changes which will impact pedestrian flow to and from Washington Plaza. The location of back-of-house facilities should be reconsidered so that they do not negatively impact pedestrian movement between parking areas and the Plaza.

### Big Ideas

- Where the new commercial development meets Washington Plaza, design stairs to include an integrated ramp and open the area up to make it inviting
- Shift the existing loading dock to limit pedestrian conflict points
- Design the future public parking garage for ease of use and access to Washington Plaza
- Consider other uses and designs for the Washington Plaza Baptist Church

### ***Grade Transition***

- An approximately eight-foot grade change will be created between the proposed new development and Washington Plaza. If not designed correctly, the grade transition could create a psychological barrier between the old and new space and discourage pedestrians from traversing down to the Plaza. Design an integrated ramp into the stairway (Figure 37).

- Where the new building is adjacent to Washington Plaza, eliminate a portion of the second-story to improve the view shed, create multi-level public spaces that enliven the space, and enhance the transition area by taking advantage of the grade change.



Figure 37- Integrated ramp and stair  
Source: <https://st11e.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/web-stramps.jpg>

## Loading Dock

- The location of the loading dock creates conflicts for pedestrians entering the Plaza from the proposed garage (Figure 38). The dock should be rotated 90 degrees to limit pedestrian conflict points.
- All trash and service should be located within new buildings.

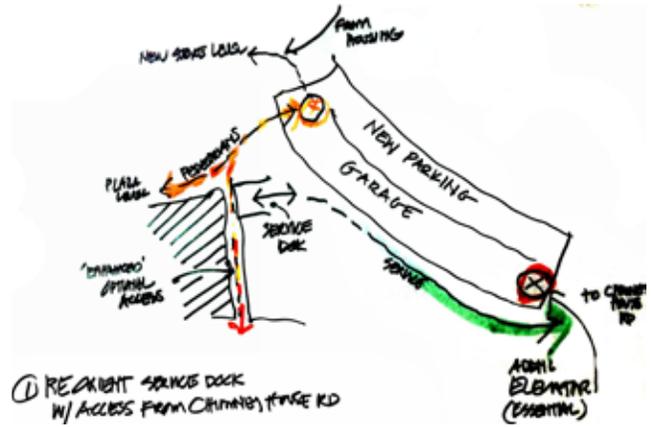


Figure 38- Potential conflict between existing loading dock and new parking garage

## Future Public Parking Garage

- The surface parking between the garage and the Plaza should be reduced to improve the pedestrian experience and safety (Figure 39).
- Elevators and stairs should be located at both ends of the garage to offer convenient access to the Plaza.
- A direct, landscaped pedestrian path should be created from the parking garage to the breezeway.
- The second floor walkway above the breezeway should be removed or other design solutions developed to open up this now important Plaza entrance.

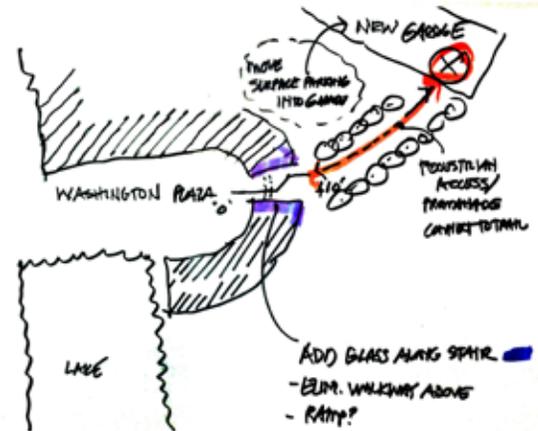


Figure 39- New pedestrian-friendly connection to future public parking garage

## Washington Plaza Baptist Church

- The location of the Church encloses the Plaza and limits view sheds. Other uses and designs should be considered for the church, for example, putting a retail or restaurant use on the ground floor, increasing transparency into the building or pivoting the church building to improve the view shed (Figure 40).
- Alternatively, two of the platform steps in front of the church should be removed to make the area functional for seating and for use as an outdoor living room.



Figure 40- Alternative location of the church could improve views and access

# APPROACH 5

## Enhance storefronts through increased transparency

The strategy of Approach 5 is to modify the transparent portions of the Plaza's storefronts, which are framed by a uniform concrete structure.

The design of new storefronts should not adversely impact the original design intent of the architecture.

### Big Ideas

- Enhance commercial storefronts to increase transparency and make it easier for businesses to display their offerings. Improve energy efficiency with modern upgrades.
- Define activity zones adjacent to the J-Building to make it easier to window shop, access stores, and view merchandise.



Figure 41-Location of storefronts and adjacent outdoor areas

- Define walking and seating zones within the Plaza adjacent to the retail uses (Figure 41). An 8-foot wide pedestrian walk-zone should be located immediately adjacent to retail uses so that people can easily see what is in the stores and walk all the way around under the building overhang. A restaurant seating zone should be located and defined adjacent to the pedestrian walk-zone.

- As a initial low cost step, paint the brown wooden frames a light color such as light gray or white to brighten the storefronts while emphasizing the architecture (Figure 44).

- When storefronts are replaced, utilize a standard storefront design that creates uniform retail bays. Retain verticality of the storefront bays consistent with the LAVC’s architecture and use thinner framing members.

- Consider new openings for storefront bays that foster indoor-outdoor environments. Types of openings could include:

- Garage roll-up doors that allow for inside-outside dining (Figure 42). See examples at the Mosaic District in Merrifield.
- Pivoting glass doors to take advantage of great weather (Figure 43).

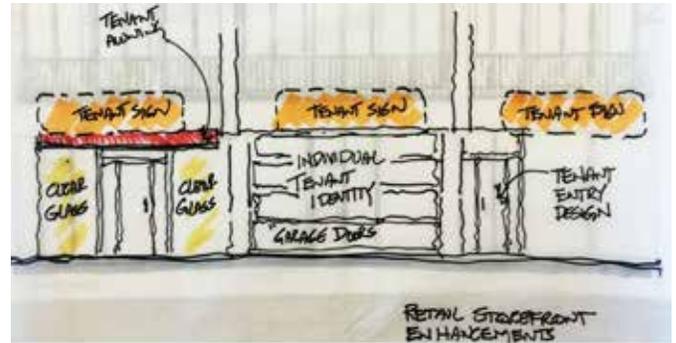


Figure 42- Detail of storefront enhancement

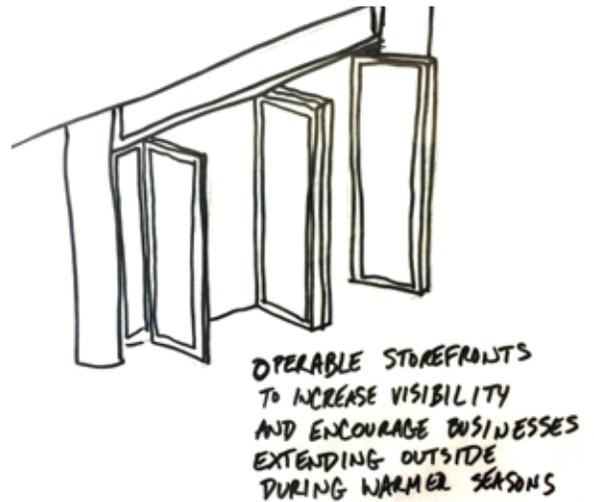


Figure 43- Detail of pivoting storefront doors

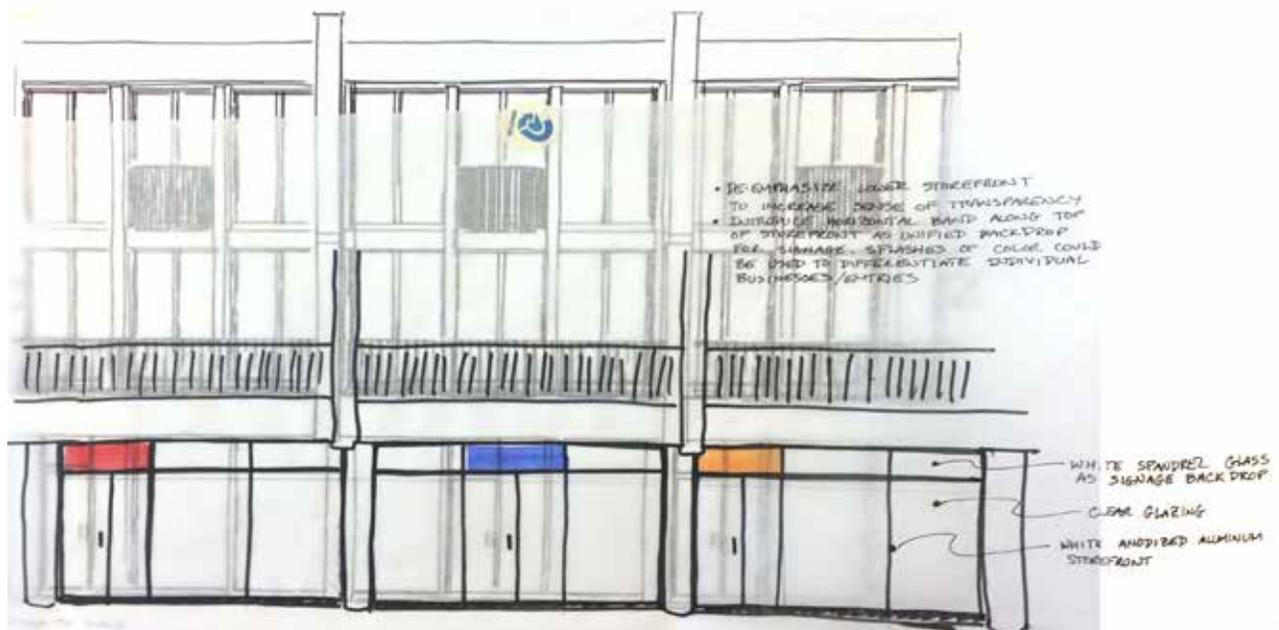


Figure 44- Storefront ideas

# Master Concept Plan



*I would like to eat breakfast at a great cafe with my husband, stick around for a musical performance or special event and have a paddle around the lake.*

# MASTER CONCEPT PLAN AND PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

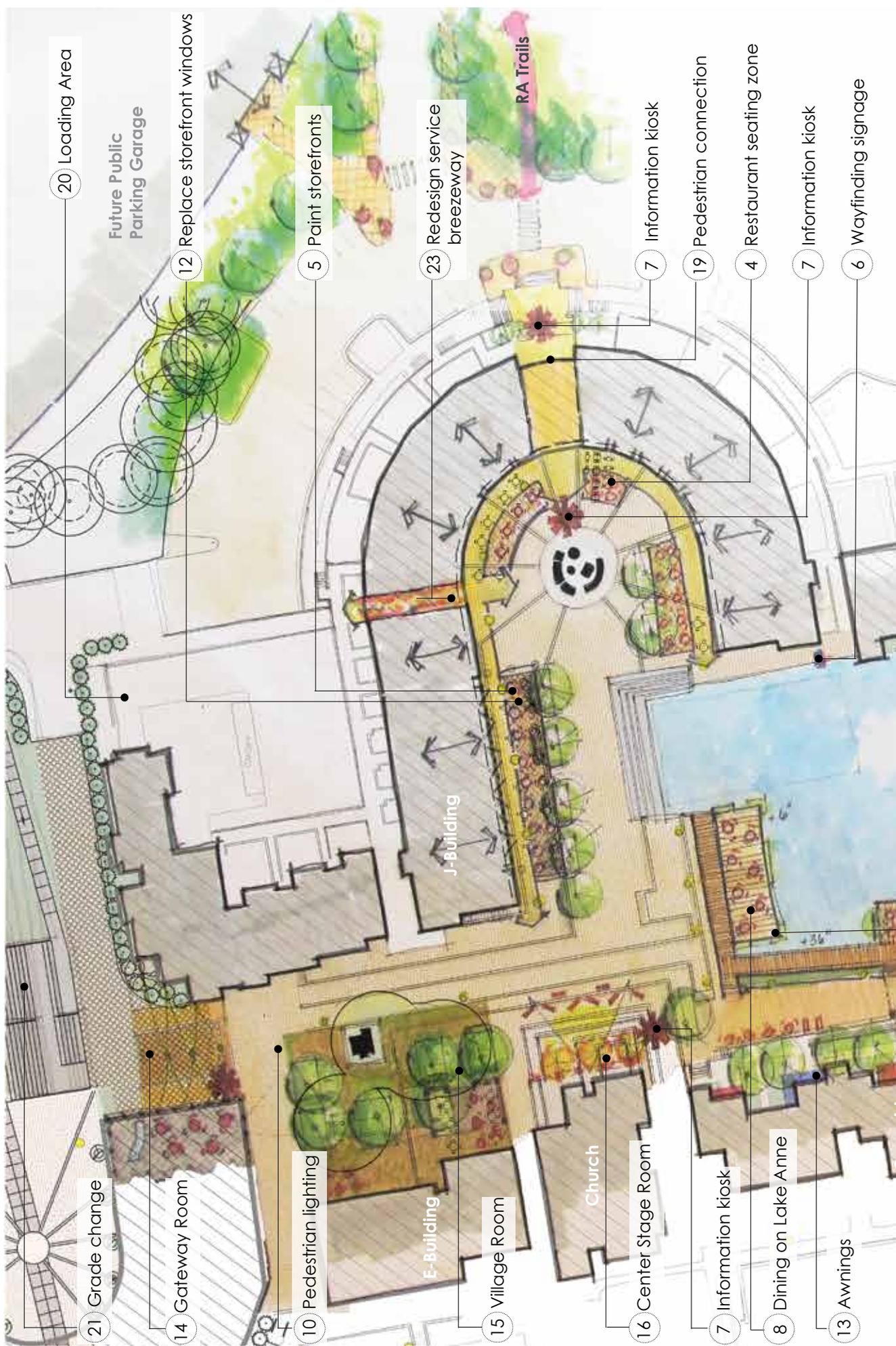
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The Master Concept Plan brings the ideas from the five approaches together into one conceptual design (Figure 45). The plan graphically describes how the Washington Plaza and surrounding public spaces can be enhanced so that the Plaza provides a unique experience for users and remains the centerpiece of LAVC even after new development is constructed.

The Prioritization Matrix is a tool to help LARCA select projects to focus on in the near-term and other projects that could be completed in the long-term (See pages 38-39).



# Master Concept Plan



20 Loading Area

Future Public Parking Garage

12 Replace storefront windows

5 Paint storefronts

23 Redesign service breezeway

RA Trails

7 Information kiosk

19 Pedestrian connection

4 Restaurant seating zone

7 Information kiosk

6 Wayfinding signage

21 Grade change

14 Gateway Room

10 Pedestrian lighting

E-Building

15 Village Room

Church

16 Center Stage Room

7 Information kiosk

8 Dining on Lake Anne

13 Awnings



Figure 45- Master Concept Plan

## Prioritization Matrix

| #  | Improvement   | Improvement Criteria |                                 |                       |  |  |
|----|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|    |   | Cost of construction | Increase business opportunities | Amenity for residents | Approval from outside organizations (other than LARCA) | Can be successfully completed prior to, or during the adjacent redevelopment project |
| 1  | Expand the existing boardwalk by at least 8-feet in depth by constructing a series of floating docks along the lake that include seating and gathering areas.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 2  | Move boat dock and boat rentals to southern edge of the boardwalk near the Heron House and expand dock.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 3  | Define walking and seating zones in areas adjacent to the J-Building (main Plaza area). Create an 8-foot wide pedestrian walk-zone immediately adjacent to the storefronts.                                 | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 4  | Define restaurant seating zone located outside of the walk-zone using planters and fencing.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 5  | Paint the brown framing members around storefront windows with a light color.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 6  | Add signage all the way around the lake to aid with wayfinding. Design all signage in a style consistent with LAVC architecture; include information about Reston, the LAVC, and Reston Museum programming. | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 7  | Add information kiosks at key locations and entrances to the Plaza. Design kiosks in a style that is reflective of the LAVC and include super graphics.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 8  | Create opportunities to dine on Lake Anne.  | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 9  | Create boatside delivery service from LAVC restaurants.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 10 | Add additional pedestrian-scaled lighting to increase security.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 11 | Add LAVC advertising signage at the spillway on Wiehle Avenue.  | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 12 | Replace storefront windows to create consistent design for storefronts and increase visibility and transparency. Use innovative storefront techniques.  | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 13 | Add colorful awnings with business signage for the Quayside businesses.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |

### Key



Positive



Neutral



Negative

| #  | Improvement   | Improvement Criteria |                                 |                       |  |  |
|----|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|    |   | Cost of construction | Increase business opportunities | Amenity for residents | Approval from outside organizations (other than LARCA) | Can be successfully completed prior to, or during the adjacent redevelopment project |
| 14 | Construct the Gateway Room with specialty cantenary lighting, unique pavers, and an information kiosk.  | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 15 | Construct the Village Room with permeable pavers, moveable seating, landscaping/shade trees, and romantic lighting.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 16 | Construct the Center Stage Room by redesigning the stairs and platform in front of the Church to create a small stage. Provide moveable seating.  | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 17 | Construct the Garden Room with terraced hardscaped areas that include small moveable tables and chairs and complementary landscaping. Can include expanded boardwalk (see #1).  | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 18 | Construct the Sunboat Room. Bring boat docks and rentals to this end of the water's edge and create opportunities for other water-based activities (swimming and fishing) at this location. Can include expanded dock (see #2).   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 19 | Enhance the pedestrian connection between the future public parking garage and the Plaza by creating a designated pedestrian path that is defined with specialty paving materials and landscaped. The connection should tie into the adjacent Reston Association trail. | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 20 | Work with LADP on the design of loading areas so that they do not interfere with pedestrian access.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 21 | Work with LADP to ensure that grade changes between the redevelopment area and the Plaza transition in a way that does not inhibit pedestrian flow and encourages people to walk down to the Plaza.   | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |
| 22 | Redesign the service breezeway so that it is ADA accessible and highlighted with public art and special lighting to make it colorful, bright, and a fun entrance to the Plaza.  | ●                    | ●                               | ●                     | ●  | ●  |

# Appendix



*I would enjoy coffee or breakfast at a local restaurant and sit to watch lake activities. I would join others in making art or music collaboratively.*

# APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY

---

The following questions were asked from participants on the online survey.

1. Please indicate your association with the Lake Anne Village Center.
  - a. LARCA Condominium resident or owner
  - b. Lake Anne Merchant
  - c. Nearby neighbor
  - d. Interested Reston resident
  - e. Local business owner/operator
  - f. Urban planner/architect
  - g. other
2. Rate the Plaza for appearance and comfort.
  - a. Comfortable place to sit
  - b. Feeling of safety
  - c. Quality of maintenance
  - d. Overall attractiveness
3. Rate the Plaza for access.
  - a. Visibility from a distance
  - b. Transit access
  - c. Clarity of information/signage
4. Rate the Plaza for use and activities.
  - a. Mix of stores/services
  - b. Frequency of community events
  - c. Level of activity, day and night
5. Rate the Plaza for sociability.
  - a. Sense of pride and ownership
  - b. Presence of children and seniors
6. What makes Lake Anne authentic?
7. List issues and barriers that keep Lake Anne from being as successful as possible.
8. Paint a picture of an experience you would like to have in Lake Anne or define your typical “ideal” day in Lake Anne. Specifically what would you be doing? Who would you be doing it with? Where in Lake Anne would you be doing it? Please be as detailed and creative with this question as possible.
9. List things you would do to improve Washington Plaza that could be done right away and wouldn’t cost a lot.
10. What changes would you make in the long-term that would have the biggest impact?
11. Do you have any additional comments or ideas that you would like to add?
12. Please provide your email address if you would like to stay informed about the project.

# APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

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## Meeting with Lake Anne Stakeholders on May 27, 2015

### Question 1 What Makes LAVC Special?

#### Theme: Unique Architecture/History/Plaza

- Unique Architecture\*\*\*
- Nowhere else like Lake Anne in the County
- History
- A unique, historic plaza
- Last and first Reston Village Center
- Sense of history
- Personality

#### Theme: Events

- Lake and fountain view from plaza\*\*\*\*\*
- Special events
- Farmers market
- Special events in the summer
- Boating to retail/restaurants

#### Theme: Long-Term Residents

- Large number of long term residents – loyalty
- Neighbors as customers

#### Theme: Uses/Local Identity

- Mixed use
- Urban/nature mix
- Mom and pop stores and restaurants
- Locally owned businesses
- Three very good restaurants
- Capitalize on uniqueness – boating and lake activities
- Emphasize “non-box” names

#### Theme: Local Commitment

- Strong community commitment to improvements

#### Theme: The View

- The view from the shops
- Plaza and lake view is shielded from traffic

\*Asterisk refers to the number of additional people who made a similar comment.

## Question 2

### What are issues / barriers for Lake Anne to be successful long into the future?

- Plaza is showing its age
- Not enough awareness or visibility from road. Lake Anne is Reston's secret: Some local residents are not aware of Lake Anne
- Lack of regional marketing outreach, more social media campaigns
- Need branding strategy that draws people
  - People know Reston Town Center (RTC) but not always Lake Anne; not to compete with RTC but create draw from uniqueness
- Seasonal draw – winter business dries out
- Not enough parking
- Lack of visibility from North Village Road of what is on the Plaza
- Signage – outside and in – not compelling or visible and inconsistent
- Not enough retail or right mix; pharmacy; general merchandising, grocery pizza, ice cream
- Public perception; stigma
- Lack of security – limited police presence and no neighborhood watch
- Plaza maintenance - shows age, broken glass, trash, aesthetics, needs power washing
- Need greater mix of retail
- Need more restaurants - consider both quantity + quality\*\*
  - No overarching set of retail requirements
  - Need stronger Merchant Association and retail strategy
  - Greater participation by vendors at merchant meetings
- No chain restaurants/retail names
- Not enough residential density
- Physical limitations of the retail store footprints
- Knowing what is in stores and who will lease spaces
- Not enough foot traffic to draw people here
- Need to invest in our revitalization
- Need to make ourselves more attractive
- Need coffee house or internet café - something up-to-date
- Cost of improvements

## Question 3

### Describe your dream day or experience at Lake Anne's Washington Plaza?

- Take a class or attend on event; then have dinner and drinks
- Shop for chocolate, wine, beer, olive oil and grand-kid stuff
- Wake up to the sound of the fountain and view of the lake
- Bird watch
- Walk dog around lake and greet neighbors
- Take art class at RCC
- Lunch at Montmartre
- Boat ride with fishing
- Wine on balcony with dinner as sun sets
- Spend the Afternoon having a glass of wine with my wife talking with friends - just chilling
- Walk around Lake Anne with my little one then have lunch at Café Montmartre and shop at Baby Blossom and Small Change

- Live in Lake Anne; work at the café; and greet my customers
- Enjoy walks with my family
- My girlfriend, her daughter and I run a few errands (groceries, staples, etc.) followed with some ice cream from local vendor sit and people watch. (ask some friends from North Point to join us.) Go out on the boat.
- Take a walk have a lunch with a friend.
- After my morning jog, I would have coffee in the shade. Later, would buy fresh fish and veggies for dinner. Pick up prescription at pharmacy and catch the entertainment at the Plaza after dinner at home.
- I would like my choice of live music indoors and outside, loud or soft, and walk around meeting people with a beer.
- Drive to Plaza, park easily, visit a bookstore and have coffee
- On Saturday, my husband and I would visit the farmers market and have breakfast in a local coffee shop. Then we would walk around the lake, return to the plaza and read by the lake. We love visit the Museum and browse in the bookstore and other quaint shops and then have lunch in an outdoor café.
- Occasional crab feast on the plaza with friends and family.
- Open the shades of my shop and look at the turtles and geese on the lake. Fill orders, wait on customers (some new, some that I've gotten to know over the years). Enjoy some of the live music on the lake before leading home.
- Walk or drive to attend a participatory class or lecture in a comfortable setting.
- Love to have morning coffee on a bench by the lake.
- Would like to actually dine on the lake – meals served on a pontoon boat restaurant; or take out from a plaza restaurant for lunch/dinner on our boat.
- Date night: go eat at Singh Thai. Then have drinks at Café Montemarte and finish off the night at Calypso's with an awesome band!
- Walk to plaza to meet friends, have dinner, listen to a concert, and have frozen yogurt or gelato.

#### Question 4

**What are some quick fixes to improve the plaza in the short-term with much money?**

- Organize walks around lake
- Create better map for lake walk
- Organize Lake Anne clean-up day or other community event
- Dance Night; teach dance
- Sunday movie night
- Events for colder months- bonfires, fire pit, snowman contests, ice carvings, etc.
- Put a Lake Anne sign on spillway to capitalize on Metro traffic
- No quick fixes; need to invest in centralized management, etc.
- Consistent, inviting signage for merchants, especially with new plaza
- Lake activities, events
- Create a signed path to be able to walk all the way around the lake
- Lake as advertising
- Artisans – capitalize on art studios, creating an artesian theme
- Add a great coffee shop
- Increase advertising
- Floating restaurant

### Question 5

**What is one thing that can be done in the long term that would have the greatest benefit to the plaza?**

- More restaurants would attract more restaurants and bring in new business\*\*\*
- Need to create a complete experience for visitors
- Residential density to support retail
- Ice skating on the lake
- Centralized management company
- Eating/dining on the lake
  - Pontoon boat restaurants
  - Floating restaurants
  - Restaurant delivery to private boats on the lake
- Holiday market
- Restore free public wi-fi on the plaza and on the lake
- Entrances not consistent - some sliding doors + some entry doors
- Awnings + signage by quayside retailers

