State of Place™
The Art & Science of Quantifying Walkability, Place Quality & the Triple Bottom Line

How MWCOG is using State of Place™ to guide
Economy Forward

Mariela Alfonzo, Ph.D.
Founder, State of Place™
President, Urban Imprint
Research Fellow/Adjunct Professor, NYU-Poly
www.urbanimprint.com/state-of-place

Why *walkability*? =
Sustainability & The Triple Bottom Line

- Better public health and reduced rates of chronic illness

- Social well-being and mental and spiritual health

- Decreased driving rates – tied to reduced CO_2 emissions & GHGs

- Higher image value; Enhanced cultural value

- More thriving neighborhoods

Why *walkability*? =
Demand, Competition, Economy

- Place quality → Place consumption

- 58% of Americans prefer to live in a neighborhood where you can easily walk to stores and businesses (NAR, 2012)

- Demographic trends pushing preferences for walkable places

- Mixed-use developments generate 25-59x revenue

- Residential values more stable in walkable neighborhoods

Why *State of Place™* ?

- ☐ Art → Science: Quantifying walkability
- ☐ Comprehensive, Objective, Reliable
- ☐ Captures "Micro-scale" & "Sensory" features
- ☐ Diagnostic, Empirically-Based
- ☐ Ties place quality, Economic Impact
- ☐ Evidence-based decision making, Accountability
- ☐ Provides empirically-based ROI predictions

Comprehensive. Reliable. Micro-scale.

Measuring Walkability: The Irvine Minnesota Inventory

Uses street-level built environment data

Collected using the Irvine Minnesota Inventory (IMI)

162 micro-scale features

- Sidewalk presence, street trees, street benches, parks, street facades, land uses, etc.

Reliable, used widely in research

Diagnostic. Empirically-based.

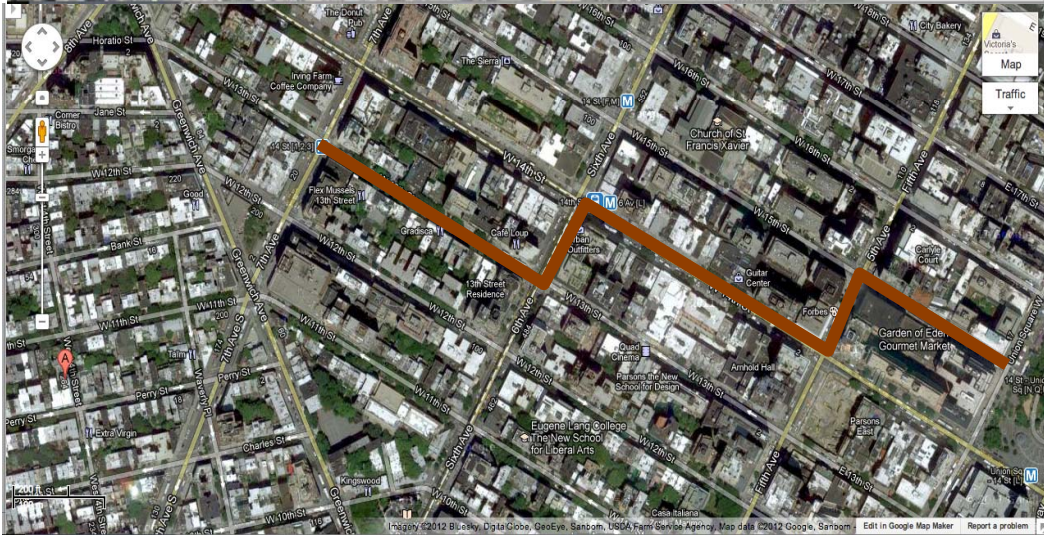# State of Place™ :
The IMI Scoring Algorithm

Dimensions	Description/Example Items
Density	Measure of enclosure based on building concentrations and height
Proximity	Presence of non-residential land uses
Connectivity	Measure of disconnectivty; Potential Barriers (e.g., six-lane roads)
Form	Measure of streetscape discontinuity (e.g. drive-thrus)
Parks and Public Space	Parks, Playgrounds, Plazas, Playing Fields
Pedestrian Infrastructure/Amenities	Curbcuts, Sidewalks, Street Furniture, Bike Racks
Personal Safety	Graffiti, Litter, Windows with Bars
Traffic Measures	Traffic Signals, Speed Limit, Traffic Calming
Aesthetics (Pleasurability & Maintenance)	Attractiveness, Open Views, Outdoor Dining, Maintenance
Physical Activity Facilities	Gym/Fitness Facilities, Other Recreational Uses

Density
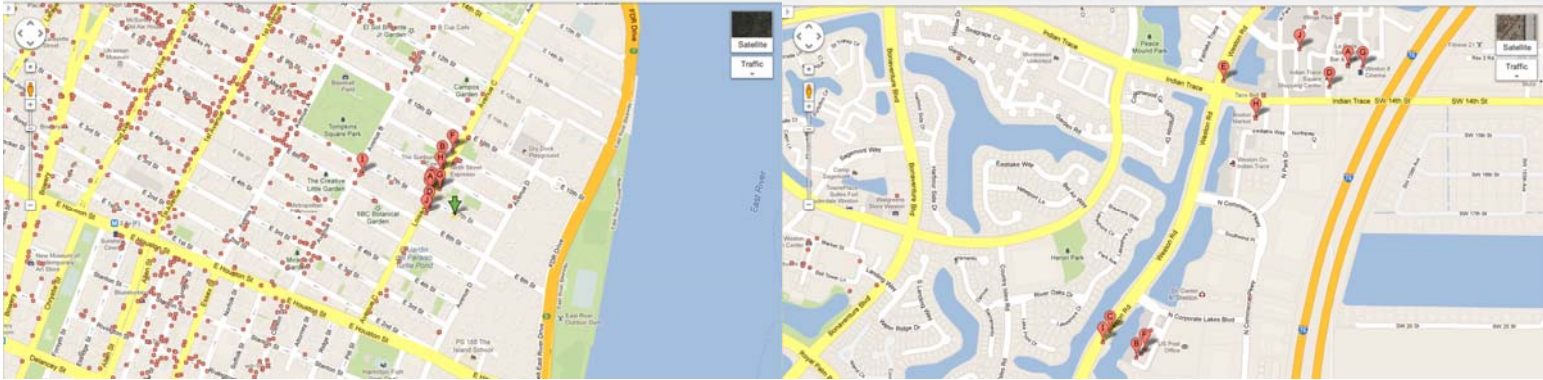
Proximity

Connectivity

Form

Parks & Public Space

Pedestrian Infrastructure & Amenities

Personal Safety

Traffic Safety

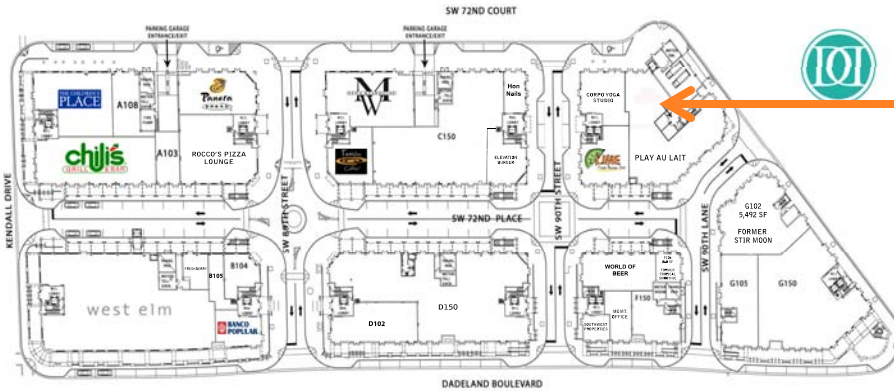# Aesthetics

Physical Activity Facilities

Density

Form

Pedestrian Amenities

Traffic Safety

State of Place™ Dimensions

Proximity

Aesthetics

Place Quality. Economic Impact.

State of Place™

Built Environment tied to Economic Value

Correlated Economic Performance →

Very Good Walkability

Good Walkability

Average Walkability

Poor Walkability

Very Poor Walkability

+ $9 sf office rents
+ $7 sf retail rents
+80% retail revenues
+ $300/unit res. rent
+81 sf for-sale res. value

From Brookings Institution report, "Walk this Way"
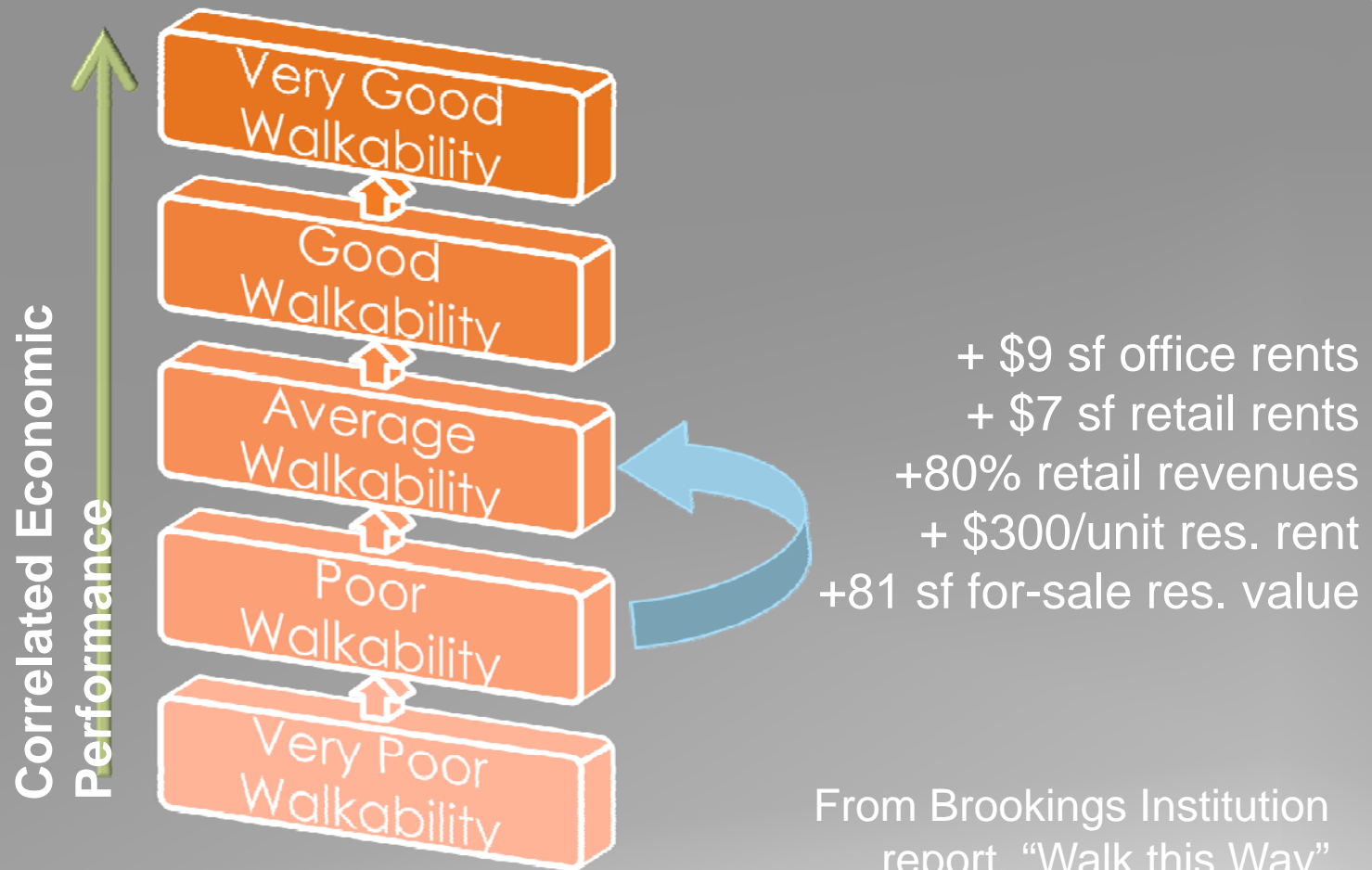
Walkability = Economic Indicator

Can quantify the value of place….

The State of Place™ index is linked to premiums of *up to*:

+74% residential rents/unit

+$1200/unit residential rent

+108% office rents

+84% retail rents

+23% premium valuation before recession;
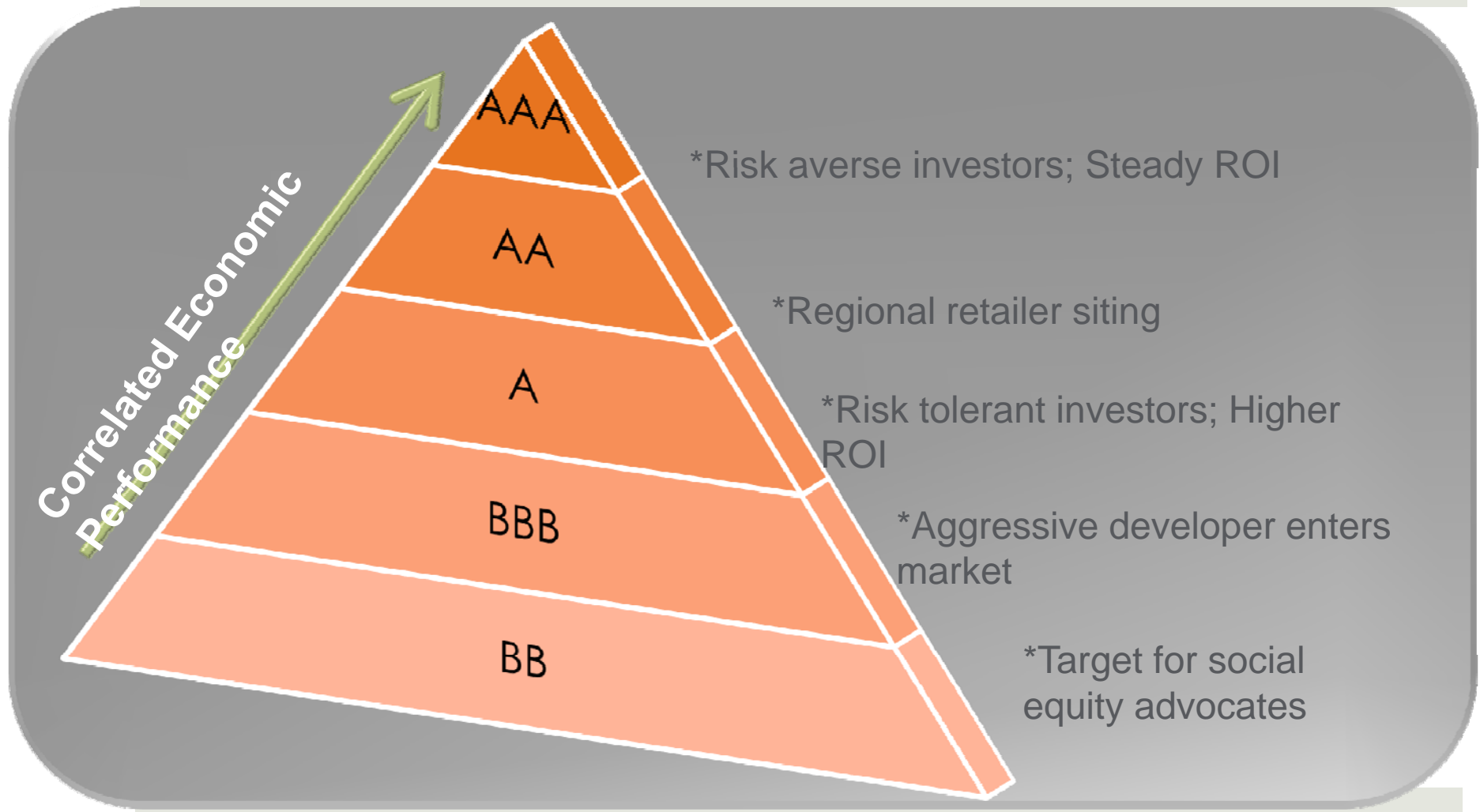
+44% premium post

For DC, this translates into *up to*:

+$744 mill in residential property taxes/neighborhood

+$96 mill in retail taxes generated/neighborhood

Decision-making tool.

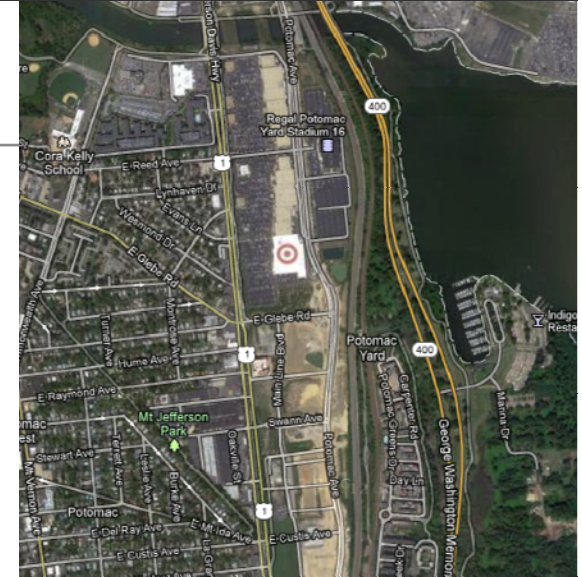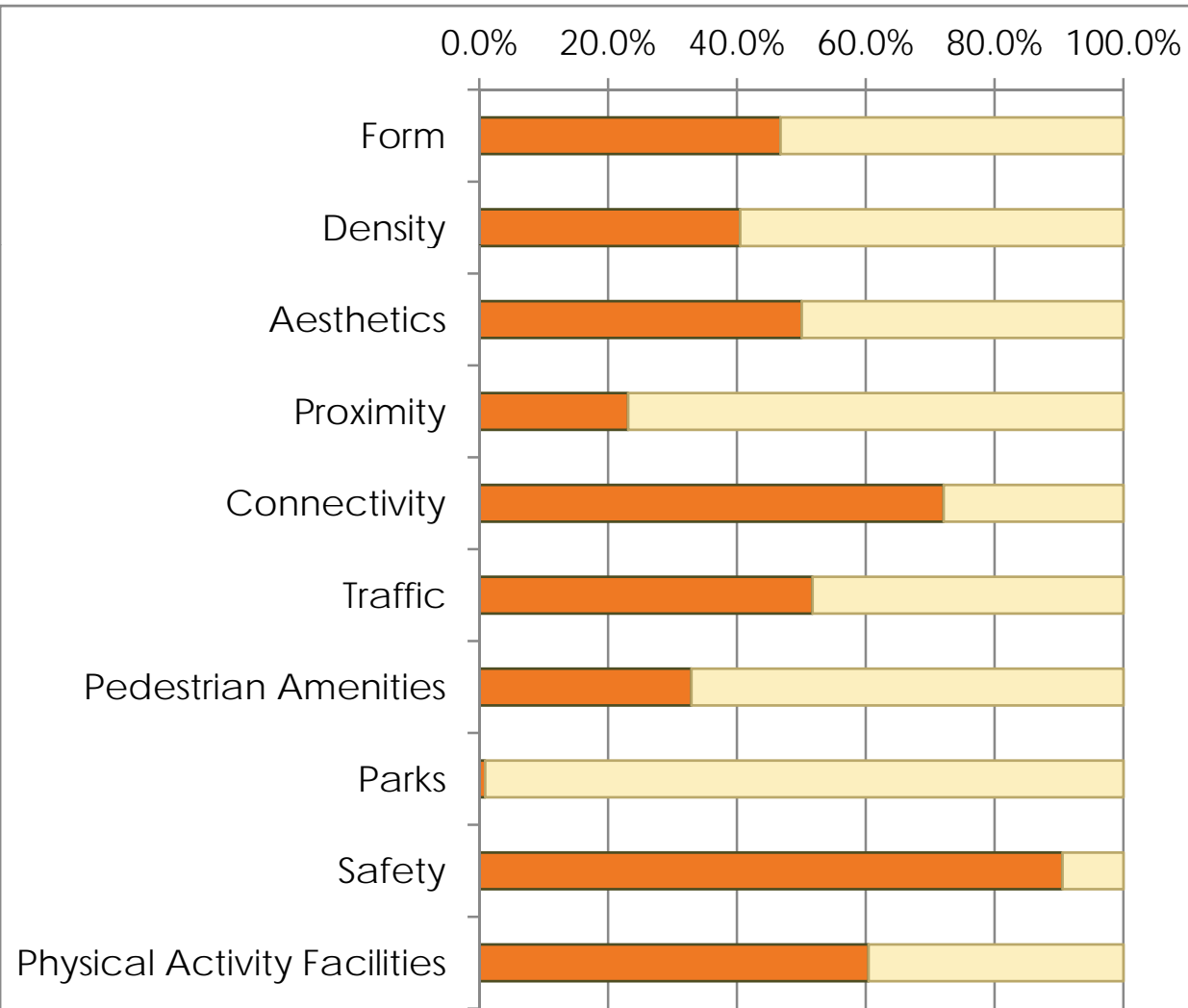# what *is* State of Place™?

Like an S&P rating for neighborhoods; Helps guide investment & underwriting; Aids branding; Siting
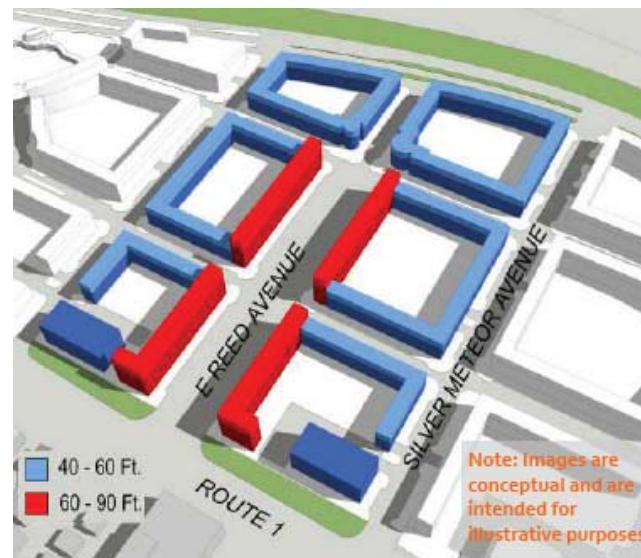

Correlated Economic Performance

AAA
*Risk averse investors; Steady ROI

AA
*Regional retailer siting

A
*Risk tolerant investors; Higher ROI

BBB
*Aggressive developer enters market

BB
*Target for social equity advocates

ROI Predictions. Prioritize. Maximize.

Potomac Yard Alexandria

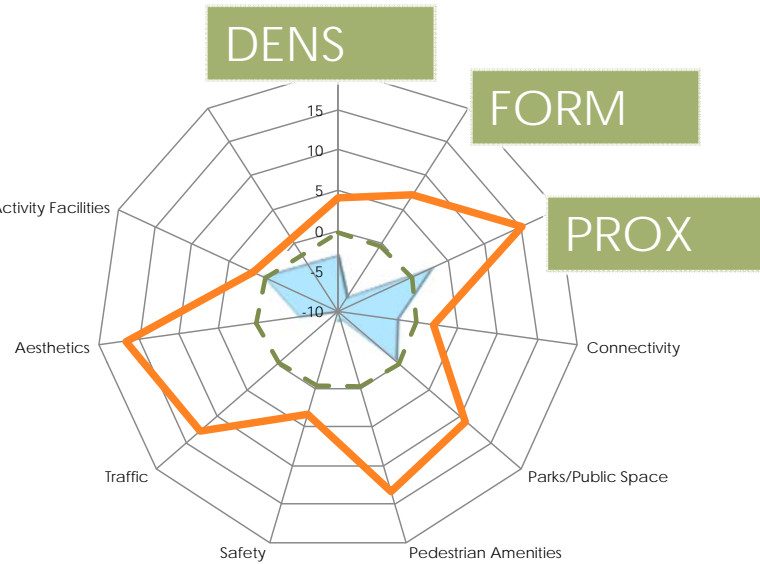|	
Form	
Density	
Aesthetics	
Proximity	
Connectivity	
Traffic	
Pedestrian Amenities	
Parks	
Safety	
Physical Activity Facilities	

0.0% 20.0% 40.0% 60.0% 80.0% 100.0%

☐ Max

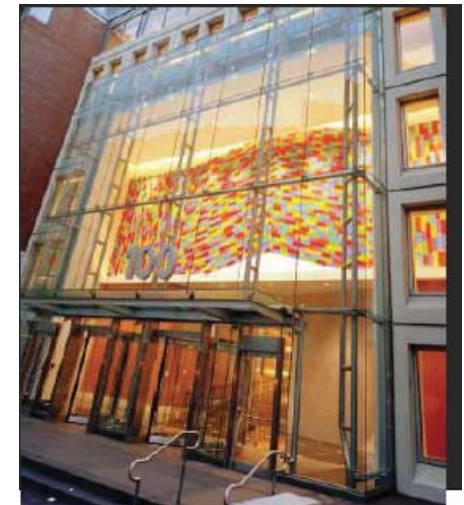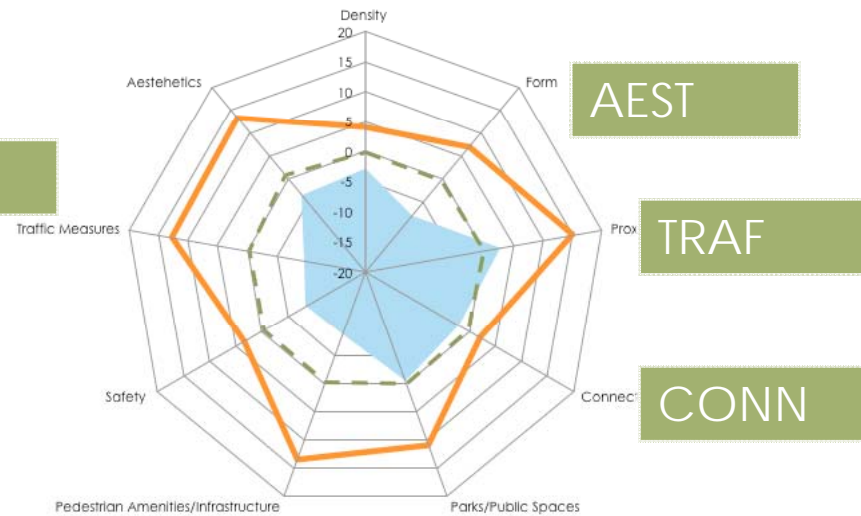# Potomac Yard Alexandria – Example Interventions

- Add grid of streets

- Add Commercial office, retail, housing (as market bears)

- Add infill Metrorail station

- Add BRT Transit Line
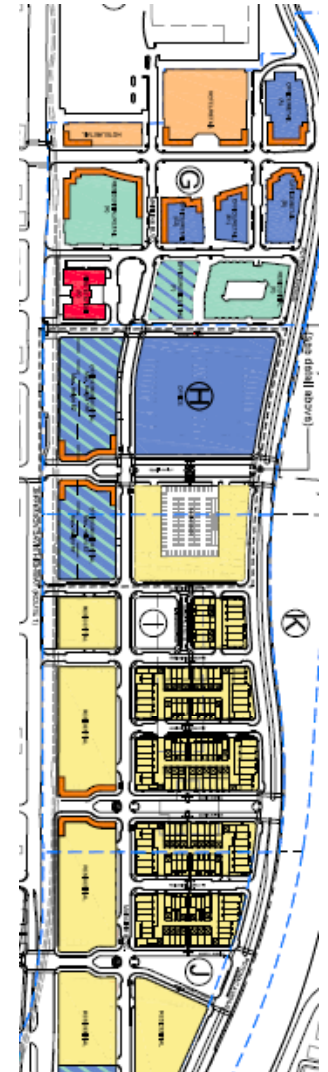
Potomac Yard Alexandria – Example Interventions

- Add sidewalks, buffers

- Add street furniture

- Add plaza, public space

- Streetscape improvements

- Traffic calming

PEDS

AEST

TRAF

CONN

Results. To Date.

State of Place™ & Economic Performance in select MWCOG Activity Centers