

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name New Town Center
other names University Town Center, Prince George's Plaza (PG: 68-104)

2. Location

street & number 6505 Belcrest Road, 6525 Belcrest Road, 3700 East-West Highway ☐ not for publication
city or town Hyattsville ☐ vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Prince George's County code 033 zip code 20782

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Erubeth Hopkin
Signature of certifying official/Title

Director/SHPO

10.4.2018
Date

Maryland Historical Trust
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

10.23.2018

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Business (Office Building)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Business (Office Building)

VACANT

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CAST STONE

walls CAST STONE

BRICK

roof SYNTHETICS

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

New Town Center sits on a rectangular site of approximately thirty acres that slopes down to the east. It is bounded by East-West Highway to the south, Democracy Avenue to the east, Toledo Road to the north and Belcrest Road to the south. The site is also bisected by three smaller roads: America Boulevard, which runs north-south and Liberty Lane and Freedom Way, which run east-west.

The initial building campaign of New Town Center, between 1963 and 1971, consisted of three buildings designed by Edward Durell Stone named Metro 1, 2 and 3. A second campaign, which is not considered historically or architecturally significant, began in the late 1990s, consisting of low- and high-rise buildings

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interspersed among the original construction, as well as two paved parking lots to the south. There are also paved sidewalks, limited landscaping and street trees and a terraced plaza with a fountain. In the southwest corner of the site is the former Perpetual American Bank designed in 1965 by Robert O. Scholz. This building is not associated with the New Town Center development.

All three buildings, although constructed over nearly a decade, share a common vocabulary of material, massing and design. Resembling a Classical column with a base, shaft and capital, they are clad in the modern materials of cast stone and glazed white brick and have a regular fenestration pattern with 3-sided aluminum oriel windows.

Metro 1

Metro 1 is an 8 ½-story rectangular building located near the southwest corner of the site (Photographs #1 and 2). It was the first building in the complex, designed between 1962 and 1963 by Edward Durell Stone. The east and west elevations are ten bays wide and the north and south elevations are thirty bays wide with a total of 290,000 square feet. All elevations are clad in fluted white cast concrete. Encircling the 1st floor is a covered veranda with a painted white metal railing and there are prominent projecting eaves between the 1st and 2nd floor and along the roofline. The fenestration pattern is consistent on all elevations. The 1st floor and basement, which is only visible in the east half of the building because of the change in grade, have 1-light aluminum storefront windows in all bays. The 2nd through 7th floors have narrow 3-sided aluminum oriel windows, which were replaced in 1996. The 8th floor has taller 3-sided aluminum oriel windows, which were also replaced in 1996. The building has a flat roof with a centered 1-story brick penthouse. Projecting from the 1st floor of the west elevation, facing Belcrest Road, is an elevated c. 2005 porch the three concrete, metal and glass hipped roof sections. The porch is accessed by a set of center stairs and flanking handicap ramps. It frames the primary entrance to the building, facing Belcrest Road, which contains paired contemporary aluminum sliding doors with 2-light aluminum transoms and 1-light aluminum sidelights. Projecting from the basement and 1st floor of the east elevation, facing America Boulevard, is a c. 2005 1-story brick veneer, concrete and stucco addition, which contains commercial space.

On the interior of the building, only the circulation core is consistent on each floor. Located in the center of the floor plate, there is an elevator lobby flanked by pairs of elevators to the north and south (Photographs #8 and 12). A fifth freight elevator is located to the northeast. There are also two U-return stairways to the northwest

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and southeast of the elevators (Photograph #11). The stairways have painted metal treads and risers and painted metal railings. All circulation provides access between all floors. Throughout the building, all buildings have been divided into a series of larger and smaller spaces with no cohesive arrangement (Photographs #7, 9, 10, 13 and 14). The finishes are largely contemporary, including contemporary marble, terrazzo, linoleum, concrete and carpeted floors, painted drywall partitions and ceilings, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting. As the entire interior of the building was renovated in 1996, there are no extant historic finishes.

Metro 2

Metro 2 is a 10 ½-story rectangular building located near the center of the site (Photographs #3 and 4). It was the second building in the complex, designed in 1967 by Edward Durell Stone. The east and west elevations are ten bays wide and the north and south elevations are thirty bays wide with a total of 385,000 square feet. On all elevations, the 1st and 2nd floors are clad in glazed white brick and the upper floors are clad in fluted white cast concrete. The exposed portion of the basement, which is only visible on the north elevation. There are also low concrete and glazed white brick retaining walls on the north and east elevations. As the bottom two floors have a larger floor plate than the upper floors, they are topped by a veranda with a painted white metal railing. The veranda is covered by a freestanding aluminum canopy supported by fluted cast concrete columns. The fenestration pattern is consistent on all elevations. The 1st and 2nd floors have 1-light aluminum windows separated by metal spandrel panels. The 3rd through 9th floors have narrow 3-sided aluminum oriel windows and the 10th floor has taller 3-sided aluminum oriel windows. The building has a flat roof with a centered 1-story brick penthouse. Projecting from the 1st floor of the west elevation, facing America Boulevard, is a c. 2005 1-story brick veneer, concrete and stucco addition, which contains commercial space. Projecting from the east end of the south elevation is a 1-story vestibule, which originally served as the primary entrance to the building. Clad in fluted cast concrete to match the remainder of the building, it has large 1-light windows and a double-leaf glazed aluminum door and a revolving aluminum door that open to the south.

On the interior of the building, only the circulation core is consistent on each floor. Located in the center of the floor plate, there is an elevator lobby flanked by pairs of elevators to the north and south (Photographs #15 and 17). A fifth freight elevator is located to the northwest. There are also two U-return stairways to the northwest and southeast of the elevators (Photograph #19). The stairways have concrete treads and risers and painted metal railings. All circulation provides access between all floors. Throughout the building, all buildings have been divided into a series of larger and smaller spaces with no cohesive arrangement (Photographs #16, 18 and

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20-22). The finishes are largely contemporary, including contemporary terrazzo, linoleum, concrete and carpeted floors, painted drywall partitions and ceilings, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting. As the entire interior of the building was renovated in 2006, the only extant historic finish is in some of the elevator lobbies and consists of marble cladding in various colors.

Metro 3

Metro 3 is an 11-story rectangular building located near the northwest corner of the site (Photographs #5 and 6). It was the third building in the complex, designed in 1971 by Edward Durell Stone. The east and west elevations are ten bays wide and the north and south elevations are thirty bays wide with a total of 420,000 square feet. All elevations are clad in fluted white cast concrete. As the bottom two floors have a larger floor plate than the upper floors, they are topped by a veranda with a painted white metal railing. The veranda is covered by a freestanding aluminum canopy supported partially by fluted cast concrete columns and by the projecting 3-sided aluminum oriel windows of the 3rd floor. The primary entrance is located in the center of the north elevation. It consists of three double-leaf glazed aluminum doors with 1-light aluminum transoms. The entrance bays are surrounded by a 1-story, three bay cast concrete porch supported by concrete pillars and topped by a flat roof. The fenestration pattern is consistent on all elevations. The 1st through 3rd floors have 3-sided aluminum storefront windows. The 4th through 10th floors have narrow 3-sided aluminum oriel windows and the 11th floor has taller 3-sided aluminum oriel windows. The building has a flat roof with a centered 1-story brick penthouse.

On the interior of the building, only the circulation core is consistent on each floor. Located in the center of the floor plate, there is an elevator lobby flanked by three elevators to the north and south (Photographs #25 and 29). The building has three U-return stairways with painted metal treads, risers and railings (Photographs #28 and 30). The stairways are located to the north of the elevators and near the northwest and northeast corners of the floor plate. All circulation provides access between all floors. Throughout the building, all buildings have been divided into a series of larger and smaller spaces with no cohesive arrangement (Photographs #23 and 27). The only unique element of the interior configuration is two square atriums between the two lower floors (Photographs #24 and 26). The finishes are largely contemporary, including contemporary marble, terrazzo, linoleum, concrete and carpeted floors, painted drywall partitions and ceilings, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting. As the entire interior of the building was renovated in 2006, the only extant historic

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finish is marble cladding on the 1st floor and in some of the elevator lobbies and consists of marble cladding in various colors.

Integrity

The buildings associated with the initial planning and construction of New Town Center retain a high degree of integrity. The overall materials, form, and defining architectural characteristics remain intact, including fluted cast stone, regular fenestration pattern with oriel windows, and columnar form. Although the windows in Metro 2 have been replaced, there is no obvious disparity from the original windows and none of the openings have been altered. The quality, placement and condition of the construction materials, as well as the notable Modern architectural design are both highly characteristic of the period and also all remain wholly intact. The workmanship is expressed in a consistent architectural style, is of good quality and is in keeping with contemporary trends. On the interior, the circulation core is intact in all three buildings. As this was the only consistent or deliberately designed element of these tenant office buildings, the interior renovations do not adversely impact the historic nature of the buildings.

The 1-story additions to the east elevation of Metro 1 and the west elevation of Metro 2, while unfortunate, do not detract from the overall massing and impact of the buildings. Both additions were constructed on the elevations that face the interior of the complex and are therefore essentially invisible from the primary roads, including East-West Highway and Belcrest Road. Within the complex, the additions are essentially only visible if you are standing directly in front of them. The repetitive nature of the façade also means that even though one portion is concealed, nothing has been lost from the overall design. The scale of the additions, and the way in which they are tucked in below the lower overhang marks them as secondary elements. Lastly, the striking white color, dominant Modern aesthetic and prominent architectural elements, such as the fenestration pattern and cornice line, leave no doubt as to the hierarchy of the buildings.

The location of the buildings remains intact since the initial construction, but the setting has certainly changed over time. A review of aerial photographs of the site between 1965 and 2000 shows the evolution from a single building (Metro 1) surrounded by dirt and parking lots with no formal circulation pattern to three buildings (Metro 1, 2 and 3) surrounded entirely by parking lots and still no formal circulation pattern. A 2005 aerial photograph shows the construction of three more buildings (3325 Toledo Road, 3311 Toledo Road, 6515 Belcrest Road) and implies future construction in the center of the complex as the parking lots have been

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cleared. The northernmost part of America Boulevard, adjacent to Toledo Road, is also visible. By 2007, three more buildings (6500 America Boulevard, 6501 America Boulevard, 6506 America Boulevard) and the terraced plaza occupy this location. America Boulevard has also been extended south to intersect with East-West Highway and the east-west roads of Liberty Lane and Freedom Way have also been paved. There have been no substantial changes to the site since that time.

While there is no question that these 21st century elements have had an impact, they are all clearly distinguishable as new elements and, because of their rather generic style, do not compete against the monumentality and individuality of the original buildings. The original boundary roads also remain and the new roads within the site are based on the axial grid created by the original arrangement of the historic buildings.

The feeling and associations of the buildings also have a high level of integrity, in large part because of the integrity of the previous five aspects. The operation of the site as a mixed-use complex and the function of the buildings as flexible tenant spaces effectively relay the sense of place and the notable Modern development of this former suburban outpost.

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1962-1971

Significant Dates

1963

1967

1971

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Blumberg, Marvin and Herschel, developers

Stone, Edward Durell, architect

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

See Attached.

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Library of Congress

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Summary Statement of Significance:

New Town Center is significant under Criterion A, in the area of Politics and Government, as an early and sizeable example of the General Services Administration (GSA) policy of the consolidation and decentralization of leased space in suburban Washington, DC in the mid-20th century. This strategy, which began in 1950 and continued through the 1960s, was both a pragmatic response to the Cold War-era threat of nuclear attack destroying the Capital in one blow, and a fiscally prudent adoption of the cheaper, larger and more flexible real estate offered by the outlying areas. The development of New Town Center, which also began in the 1950s, began as a large-scale, suburban, speculative office development but capitalized on this approach to finance its construction and relied on it for a consistent tenant base. By targeting itself to Federal agencies under the oversight of the GSA, the majority of Metro 1 and Metro 2 were leased before construction was complete.

The period of significance begins in 1962, when construction began on the project, and ends in 1971, when the final building was constructed; the GSA continued to lease space at New Town Center beyond that date.

Resource History and Historic Context:

A Brief History of the Construction and Operation of New Town Plaza

In the 1950s, brothers Marvin and Herschel Blumberg purchased 140 acres in Hyattsville, MD from Isadore Gudelsky, a family acquaintance.¹ The parcel, known as the Heurich Farm, was located at the northeast intersection of the East-West Highway, which was constructed in 1956, and Belcrest Road.² The first major commercial development in the immediate area was in 1959, when the county's first regional shopping mall was opened by Lathrop Douglas immediately adjacent to the Blumberg parcel on the south side of the East-West Highway.³ Hoping to use the popularity of the new mall as a springboard, the Blumbergs, under the

¹ Douglas Fruehling, "Back to the Future." *Washington Business Journal* (21 May 2007).

<http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2007/05/21/focus4.html?page=1>. Accessed on September 29, 2015. Hyattsville was founded in 1845 by Christopher C. Hyatt who purchased the original parcel of land and actively began to develop the lots into a comprehensive town. The town, which was first known as a railroad suburb, continued to expand in the 20th century with the arrival of the streetcar and the automobile. *Traceries MIHP*, 8:1.

² The East-West Highway connected Hyattsville to Bethesda.

³ Paul Weishar, "Prince George's Plaza." *Maryland Historic Trust, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form* (January 2010): 8:1.

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entity of the Spruell Development Corporation, began the process of constructing what they saw as a "rural Rockefeller Center," complete with a name brand architect.⁴

The Blumbergs initially approached Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a master of Modern architecture. However, after initial conversations that made it clear that Mies would not take into account the preferences of the Blumbergs, the Blumbergs pursued another route.⁵ Their next stop was Edward Durell Stone, an equally prominent architect and one with several ongoing commissions in Washington, D.C., including the National Geographic Society Building (1961) and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (1962).⁶ Stone had also completed numerous larger complexes, including the Stuart Company Plant and Office in Pasadena, CA (1958, NR 1994) and the Campus Center at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage, AK (1966, NR 1979). Although neither was at all as large as the initial design for New Town Center, they both were designed on an axial plan. In 1958, Stone commented that it was "doubtful whether anything as pure and as refined and as beautiful as the New England village green...has existed elsewhere in history."⁷ In this comment, as in all three of his designs for larger complexes, Stone emphasizes the importance of an axial balance between open space and structure, a clear arrangement of programmatically distinct and necessary structures and a need for referencing historical buildings without direct replication.

As with most of his work, New Town Center conveys the monumental and understated but unified forms that are an indirect ode to architecture of the past. In describing the project specifically, Stone said the buildings captured all of the successes of modern engineering with their large expanses of precast concrete while existing outside of the "world of plate glass and aluminum that is upon us."⁸ In viewing the project today, there is no question that these unique structures stand in contrast not only to their immediate surroundings, but also to the larger portfolio of mid-20th century architecture in the Washington metropolitan area, most of which, Stone felt, could be "ordered out of a catalog."⁹

⁴ "New Community Centers from Washington to Texas." *Architectural Forum* 118 (April 1963): 53.

⁵ Mies proposed floor to ceiling windows for the buildings and after Herschel, who had young children, questioned the safety aspect of such a design, Mies allegedly replied, "That's the mother's problem." Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson, *Retrofitting Suburbia* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009): 221.

⁶ A later building in Washington, D.C. by Stone was the Nassif Building, now known as the Constitution Center, which was completed in 1969.

⁷ Edward Durell Stone, "The Case Against the Tailfin Age." *The New York Times* (18 October 1959): 31.

⁸ Stone, 26.

⁹ John B. Willmann, "Suburban Building Development is Described by Architect Stone." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (16 January 1963): B2.

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Stone was a natural choice as he shared the brothers' interest to "answer to the critics of suburban sprawl" and began to develop a master plan for the project at a projected cost of \$78 million.¹⁰ The contractor for the project was the Bancroft Construction Company, which was also founded and operated by the Blumbergs.

Stone designed his town center on an axial grid with several office buildings and residential towers, a 1,400-seat movie theater, a cultural center, a youth center, an ice-skating rink, a reflecting pool, a sculpture garden, several plazas and fountains, a pedestrian mall, a swimming pool, a putting green and tennis courts (Figures 1-3).¹¹ In keeping with the inclinations of the day, all of the automobile circulation, enough for 3,000 cars, would be located below ground, separate from the pedestrians, and accessed by escalators that would open directly into the buildings. As such, Stone conceived the project, from the beginning, as a "planned urban center that combines all aspects of modern life..." and a "Rockefeller Center in the countryside..."¹²

In deference to its suburban location, the Blumbergs were promised that a spur to I-95 would be constructed at the northern portion of the site. This, combined with the existence of the East-West Highway, would place the complex at a major vehicular intersection. However, in an optimistic reference to its position as a "town center," a Metro stop was also proposed to be located below grade, officially recognizing both the importance of the rise of public transportation in the late 20th century and the prominence of the complex as the recipient of this placement.¹³

Construction on the first building, known as Metro 1, began in 1962. The 8-story building contained 232,280 square feet, making it the "largest private office building in the Washington suburbs."¹⁴ In June of that year, the General Services Administration (GSA) arranged to lease 80% of the building for the Department of Agriculture at a rate of \$3 per square foot with the stipulation that the work be complete by May 15, 1963.¹⁵ The final cost of the project was approximately \$5.5 million.

¹⁰ Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 221.

¹¹ Willmann, "Suburban Building Development is Described by Architect Stone," B2.

¹² John B. Willmann, "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (6 June 1964): E1 and E12; Willmann, "Suburban Building Development is Described by Architect Stone," B2.

¹³ Willmann, "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County," E1.

¹⁴ "New Community Centers from Washington to Texas."

¹⁵ "New Community Centers from Washington to Texas;" Fruehling.

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The second building, Metro 2, was constructed in 1967. Approximately the same size as Metro 1, 80% of the building, or approximately 280,000 square feet was again occupied by a government agency – the Naval Ship Engineering Center (NAVSEC), who committed to a 10-year lease at an annual cost of \$1.2 million.¹⁶ Approximately 2,000 employees occupied the building until 1982. Metro 3, the third and final building designed in keeping with Stone's master plan, was completed in 1971 and primarily occupied by the National Center for Health Statistics, who remained in the building until 2002.¹⁷

The Role of the GSA

In 1949, the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act established the GSA to “provide the resources needed by U.S. agencies to accomplish their missions.”¹⁸ Among other things, this included the absorption of the Federal Works Agency, including the Public Buildings Administration, which had previously managed the government's real estate holdings, into the GSA.¹⁹ Under that umbrella, the GSA had the authority to “assign and reassign space of all the executive agencies in Government-owned and leased buildings in and outside the District of Columbia upon a determination by the Administrator that such assignment or reassignment is advantageous to the Government in terms of economy, efficiency or national security.”²⁰

Through government-owned properties, public-private partnerships and straightforward private leases, it became the role of the GSA to choreograph the physical operations and holdings of the Federal government. As such, it was tasked with all procurement and management, a commission that involved not only finding new office space, managing large construction projects and negotiating lease details but also scheduling window cleanings, paying mortgages and obtaining tenants.

Not surprisingly, it was the buildings themselves that were the most time-consuming aspect of their charge. In particular, what space was required by the various agencies and where that space should be located. As early as 1947, the National Security Act proposed “the strategic relocation of industries, services, government and economic activities, the continuous operation of which is essential to the Nation's security.” However, this idea

¹⁶ Weishar, 8:2-8:3. Leasing for Metro 2 was handled by the Carey Winston Company.

¹⁷ In 2002, they moved to Metro 4, a new building constructed specifically for them and the first building that was a departure from Stone's original plan.

¹⁸ U.S. Congress, House, *The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949*, U.S. Statutes at Large 63 (1949): 377.

¹⁹ For a more detailed history of the GSA and its processes, see “Federal Office Building No. 6.” *National Register Nomination*, 2017. The GSA also oversaw the U.S. Treasury Department's Bureau of Federal Supply, the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Contract Settlement, the National Archives Establishment, and the War Assets Administration.

²⁰ U.S. Congress, House, *The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949*, U.S. Statutes at Large 63 (1949): 377.

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of the of decentralization to the suburbs “soon lost favor as the business community pressed of the placement of federal building’s in Washington’s downtown.”²¹ It was less formally reintroduced in 1950, when the GSA announced its plan to move agencies, especially the new ones concerned with atomic power and national security, away from the crowded downtown.”²² Indeed, when the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was developing their context statement for Modern architecture in Maryland, they went so far as to say, “the Government’s decentralization of federal agencies for security reasons during the Cold War can be considered a key component of one of the principal modernization campaigns stimulating new building in the Free State.”²³

This reversal was also partly financial, particularly in the standard leasing arrangement found at New Town Center. There was no long-term, economic benefit to leasing downtown and the suburbs simultaneously offered cheaper rents and new construction with larger, more flexible floor plates.

It wouldn’t be until 1955, however, that this Federal dispersal policy was officially implemented, with both the new Atomic Energy Commission and the Central Intelligence Agency relocating out of Washington, D.C. and establishing themselves in newly constructed headquarters in Montgomery County, MD and Fairfax County, VA, respectively.

The policy held through the 1960s but, by 1970, there was a swing in favor of urbanization, in large part to combat the many issues that plagued cities throughout the country. Concerns about environmental and social issues were looking to resolution in sustainability and economic development. The Federal government saw its power to be a catalyst for this change and Executive Order 11512 was signed in 1970, stating that “in locating or relocating Government facilities GSA consider the impact a selection will have on improving social and economic conditions in the area...”²⁴ One year later, the GSA issued a directive that “future federal offices in the Washington area located in leased private buildings be in the District of Columbia itself, rather than moving even farther...”²⁵ In 1980s, the GSA issued the statement that, “in general, we do not see potential tremendous

²¹ “Federal Office Building No. 6.” *National Register Nomination*, 2017, 8:23. Decentralization is defined as both a dispersal from downtown D.C. to the adjacent suburbs and from Metropolitan D.C. to other parts of the country.

²² Zachary M. Schrag, *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006): 19.

²³ Sies and Gournay, 38.

²⁴ *Executive Order 11512*, 1970. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=60482>. Accessed on August 27, 2018.

²⁵ Schrag, 201-202.

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development for substantial new privately occupied office development in the transit development area during the 1980s.”²⁶

The Leasing of Privately Owned Office Buildings by the GSA

The GSA had three approaches for obtaining office space for Federal agencies. It could specifically commission new construction, which would then be owned outright by the government. It could enter into a lend-lease arrangement, by which a private developer would commission and pay for the construction, thereby avoiding the time and hassle of an approval process by both Congress and the Commission of Fine Arts, and the GSA would repay the cost to the developer over time, eventually sole ownership of the building.²⁷ These two approaches had significant and formal long-term plans, such as the *1950 Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia* and the *1956 Construction Program Federal Buildings Plan for Washington, D.C. and Vicinity*.

Although the general philosophy was that Federal agencies were ideally housed in government-owned buildings, financial and temporal realities often meant that privately leasing space was either the best or the only option, a process that was simultaneously more straightforward and less formalized.²⁸ In 1955, the GSA formalized this approach by establishing a specific procedure for the leasing of privately owned buildings throughout the country. To begin, the leasing of privately owned buildings was to be considered only after it was determined that either space in existing Government buildings or currently leased buildings would not be sufficient for the proposed use or that the construction or renovation of either building category with Federal money was not economically feasible. Once these options had been eliminated, the GSA determined that new construction with private funding was permissible. To this end, the GSA would then develop the requirements for the building program, put the project out to bid and then select a developer willing to financing the project. This arrangement was beneficial to the developers because the GSA was essentially an ideal tenant, who could offer competitive financing rates and had excellent credit and was beneficial to the GSA because they could get

²⁶ Real Estate Research Council, *Market Analysis for the West Hyattsville and Prince George's Plaza Transit Development Area: Final Report* (Pomona, CA: Real Estate Research Council, 1981): np.

²⁷ Under the Federal Buildings Act of 1959, Congress needed to approve the funding for any GSA construction project and the Commission of Fine Arts needed to approve the design. As with any bureaucratic process, the avoidance of it was extremely appealing to all.

²⁸ Committee on Public Works, House of Representatives, *Report to the President by the Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Office Space* (1 June 1962): 2.

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a building designed to their exact specifications without either having to pay for it or commit to the building in the long-term.²⁹

From the time of its founding until the early 1960s, the GSA had simply looked for space as it was needed and eliminated space as it became outdated. It is "no overstatement" to say that this informal approach led to physically fragmented agencies, inefficient operations and both insufficient and redundant office spaces.³⁰ The GSA Annual Report from 1961 stated that the need for office space Metropolitan DC was the most critical, with 45% of "occupied space consisting of "dispersed rented quarters with varying sizes and poor functional arrangements and temporary or obsolete Government-owned buildings."³¹

Later that year, the Ad Hoc Committee of Federal Office Space began to survey both the existing leased and owned spaces occupied by Federal agencies,

1. To assess the general adequacy and suitability of space for department and agency operations;
2. To develop guidelines for meeting space requirements and improving the character of space accommodations in the area."³²

In the D.C. area, the committee identified 121,700 employees as being located in 115 government-owned spaces, sixty-six of which were considered to be obsolete, 51,500 employees in forty-seven temporary spaces and 16,200 employees in 129 leased spaces.³³ Given this obvious need, one of the committee's first recommendations was an emphasis on leasing space in suburban areas.³⁴ It also provided justification for the decentralizing of the physical fabric of office space and buildings: lower rental rates, convenient parking, reduction of downtown congestion and availability of large blocks of good quality space.

In 1962, the GSA implemented its first attempt at a comprehensive real estate management plan, addressing both pro-active procurement and in-house organization. As part of this, they put eight projects out to bid at a

²⁹ "GSA Lease-Purchase Rules Circumvent Promoters." *Architectural Forum* 102 (March 1955): 21.

³⁰ Committee on Public Works, 1.

³¹ General Services Administration, *Annual Report of the Administrator of General Services* (1961): 9.

³² Committee on Public Works, 1.

³³ General Services Administration, *Annual Report of the Administrator of General Services* (1963): 20; Committee on Public Works, ix.

³⁴ *Annual Report of the Administrator of General Services* (1963): 20.

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total of approximately 262,000 square feet, which all had to be located within eight miles of the Ellipse in Washington, D.C.³⁵³⁶

Chosen from twenty-two submissions, the selected projects included two projects in Arlington County, VA – one for the Department of Commerce at 57,373 square feet and one for the GSA at 30,100 square feet –, one in Arlington proper for the Department of Defense at 20,000 square feet; two in Bethesda, MD – one for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare at 138,199 square feet and one for the Atomic Energy Commission at 60,373 square feet –; two in Silver Spring, MD – one for the Department of Commerce at 92,420 square feet and one for the U.S. Geological Survey at 56,320 square feet.³⁷ The last project was for the Department of Agriculture, which required the largest floor plate at 171,659 square feet. The Department of Agriculture had previously been scattered in thirteen separate locations, with 1,350,000 square feet in their main building and nearly 200,000 square feet distributed throughout the remaining twelve properties.³⁸ Although this was typical of most large agencies at the time, and it was both felt by both the GSA and the department itself that consolidation would be both economically beneficial and “add to departmental efficacy.”³⁹

By leasing 80% of Metro 1 during to its construction, the Department of Agriculture was not only able to obtain its required square footage at a favorable rate, but it was also able to precisely customize that space. The developer equally benefitted by finding a large and stable tenant who could quickly fill such speculative office space. The bidding process for Metro 2 and Metro 3 was similar to that of Metro 1. Federal tenants who required significant office space – the Naval Ship Engineering Center and the National Center for Health Statistics – provided a natural fit for these new construction projects.

Although the participation of the GSA at the initial stages of the project was vital for the finance and construction of the three office buildings, there were also significant downsides to government involvement. In

³⁵ The Ellipse is an area of the National Mall located just to the south of the White House, and is, effectively, the center of Washington, D.C.

³⁶ Simultaneously, the GSA also commissioned the construction of 1 million square feet of Government-owned buildings in downtown Washington, D.C. This rush of new construction was largely necessary because of both the tremendous growth of existing Federal agencies and the wholesale creation of new ones, such as NASA. General Services Administration, *Independent Offices Appropriations for 1963* (9 July 1962): 2.

³⁷ “GSA Taking Space in 8 Buildings Planned for Suburban Locations.” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*. (29 June 1962): np.

³⁸ Committee on Public Works, 5.

³⁹ *Independent Offices Appropriations for 1963*, 2; Committee on Public Works, 5.

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the first place, there was the issue of image. While the GSA might be reasonably guaranteed to pay its rent on time, it was neither an exciting nor a glamorous tenant and certainly not one that would help to draw other businesses or potential future residents. Secondly, the ease of the GSA financing and tenancy served to create the impression that there was a viable market for this proposed town center, when the reality was starkly different. The GSA, naturally, did not extend their involvement into the construction of the proposed residential towers and amenities and the Blumbergs were unable to find funding from another source. Almost immediately, the extensive and ambitious master plan of Durell Stone was in decline.

As fate would have it, the second construction campaign did not resume until 2002, when the GSA once again needed additional office space. In the forty-year interim, the developers were never able to find another interested tenant.

The Impact of the GSA on the Suburbs of Washington, D.C.

The formal dispersal policy of Federal office space into the Washington, D.C. suburbs in the mid-20th century had a tremendous impact on the physical and human fabric of the area. From a technical perspective, these new buildings meant new roads, new parking lots, new Metro stations and new infrastructure. At a more personal scale, it meant new houses, schools, churches and stores. In some cases, such as the Metro, these elements were officially integrated into GSA policy. In others, such as housing, the lack of an initial formal strategy created a situation that later caused the entire approach to be rethought.

The three counties that benefitted most significantly from this policy of decentralization were Fairfax and Arlington Counties in Virginia and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland, not surprisingly those immediately surrounding downtown DC. Their "massive expansion" can be easily measured in both population and infrastructure, with both experiencing unprecedented growth.⁴⁰ In Prince George's County specifically, there was a population increase of over 600% between 1940 and 1970, making it the fastest growing county in the country.⁴¹ While this was certainly in part fueled by larger trends in post-war suburban

⁴⁰ Charles H. Levine, Richard D. Schmitt and George G. Wolohojian, *Trim: Causes and Consequences* (Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Maryland, 1981): 7.

⁴¹ "Kiplinger Editors Park." *National Register Nomination* (2015): 8:6. In 1940, the population was 89,460 and, by 1970, it had increased to 357,395. *History of Prince George's County*. <http://www.mnccppcapps.org/planning/publications/pdfs/77/History%20of%20Prince%20George's%20County.pdf>. Accessed on August 27, 2018. Prior to this suburbanization, Prince George's County had been large agricultural and wooded tracts.

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relocation, there is a more layered regional explanation. Initially, there was a tremendous influx of Government agencies, such as the Weather Bureau, the Naval Oceanic Office, the Federal Records Center, the Naval Intelligence Support Center, the Smithsonian Institution, the Naval Ice Center, the Federal Protective Service, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Naval Maritime Intelligence Center, the Government Services Administration, and the Army Communications Command. As these agencies needed to be staffed by someone, many middle- and upper-middle-class professionals moved out of Washington, D.C. to be closer to their government jobs. This move was buoyed by tremendous housing growth and better transportation routes and, such as the construction of the Capital Beltway in 1964. The Metro played a significant role as well. When the GSA was considering leasing sites, this was an important consideration as there was a "long-standing executive order [that] requires the federal General Services Administration to locate government agencies in downtowns or within a half mile of transit stations."⁴² Not only was the Metro extremely convenience for Federal employees, but it also had the byproduct of encouraging private development and, in an emerging area such as New Town Center, this would have been considered to be a significant benefit.⁴³

This initial growth was followed by a large investment from the private sector, further bolstering the decentralization. Companies such as Pepsi-Cola, Kiplinger Washington Editors, Volkswagen and the Salvation Army commissioned new facilities, lured by the same affordable land values and large floor plates that had appealed to their Federal predecessors.

New Town Center and the Proactive Development of Suburban Maryland

As early as 1909, the United States began to embrace the urban planning concept of planned communities. One of the first examples in the country was Forest Hills in Queens, designed by Grosvenor Atterbury and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. The "town" was based on the Garden City movement, popular in England, which advocated for self-contained communities with residential, agricultural and industrial components that were surrounded by greenbelts.⁴⁴ This notion of a self-sufficient town, in which people could live, work and play would become the basis for virtually all planned communities for the next 120 years.

⁴² Jason Beske and David Dixon, ed., *Suburban Remix: Creating the Next Generation of Urban Places* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2018):124.

⁴³ Although New Town Center did not have an operational Metro stop until 1993, the presence of one was an integral part of the development plan from the beginning.

⁴⁴ This new form of city planning was first conceived of by Sir Ebenezer Howard in 1898.

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There was little development in the field of town planning for nearly thirty years until Roosevelt's New Deal ushered in a new wave of interest. Between 1935 and 1937, the Federal government, under the supervision of the Resettlement Administration, funded the Greenbelt Town program.⁴⁵ This was the first time in United States history that the Federal government actively sponsored such an effort and it resulted in the construction of three towns, Greenbelt, MD outside of Washington, D.C. (1937), Greenhill, OH outside of Cincinnati (1938) and Greendale, WI outside of Milwaukee (1938). The plans for all three towns were based on the same principles of the Garden City movement, but on a much larger scale. With several thousand residents who primarily lived in rowhouses with large backyards, the towns offered schools, churches, movie theaters, markets, fire stations and shops. They were to contain the best aspects of the city within a country idyll. In addition, all three towns were strategically situated near an already established city.⁴⁶

The oldest of these towns, Greenbelt, was located in Prince George's County, Maryland. Cited by its National Historic Landmark nomination as embodying the "regional planning principles and architectural ideals of the mid-1930s," the town was not only physically planned to accommodate a diversity of form and function but was also socially engineered to house a population with a range of incomes and professions.⁴⁷ It was believed that by providing for a broad range of people and a broad range of opportunities, Greenbelt could approximate all of the positive attributes of an existing city without any of the drawbacks. As Greenbelt is located approximately six miles from New Town Center, there is no doubt that it stands as a formative precursor.

During the 1950s, Prince George's County gained 163,000 residents and had an 84.8% growth rate in the 1960s, which was the largest in both the state and the country.⁴⁸ As this left no doubt that people were moving into the county, the question became of how best to plan for them. After the relative success of Greenbelt, it is not surprising that the answer was once again that of a planned community. It was still believed that the community needed to have a balance between "residential, commercial, public service, and other parts both during the growing years and at its ultimate development" and have a developer who had both the time and the money to invest in the project.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ David R. Goldfield, *Encyclopedia of American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007): 537; Mary Corbin Sies and Isabelle Gourney, *The Modern Movement in Maryland*, 37-38.

⁴⁶ Marion Clawson, *Suburban Land Conversion in the United States* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971): 338. The other, less implemented, option was that of a wholly independent entity, similar to that of Levittown.

⁴⁷ "Greenbelt, Maryland Historic District." *National Historic Landmark* (March 1996): 8:1.

⁴⁸ Sies and Gournay, 37-38; The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, *Prince George's Modern, Midcentury Architecture: 1947-1971* (2015): 4.

⁴⁹ Clawson, 338-339.

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In Maryland, the best example of a planned community in the mid-20th century was Columbia, MD.⁵⁰ On a little over 1,000 acres, James W. Rouse first developed plans for the community in the early 1960s. Rouse saw a town with the same comprehensive objectives as Greenbelt: residential, commercial and social facets with construction that could both accommodate the initial development and expand as the town grew. This decision was a sensible one as the original group of 1,000 residents in 1968 ballooned to a town of 100,000 by 2005. Although Columbia is located in an adjacent county twenty miles to the north of New Town Center, it still serves as an important precedent for New Town Center. Maryland had become an incubator for these progressive planned communities and New Town Center was the natural extension of the narrative.

The vision for New Town Center is based on a similar precedent to Columbia, but on a naturally smaller scale. No less comprehensive however, the original plan determined areas for working, living and recreation and aimed to give both residents and employees a self-contained experience. The primary distinction between New Town Center and its predecessors, however, was that this development was already surrounded by infrastructure and commercial development, such as the large shopping center located directly to the west and constructed in 1959, rather than undeveloped, rural tracts. As such, it was able to benefit from the programmatic aspects of these elements while being simultaneously able to create itself as a unique, independent and comprehensive entity.

The Blumbergs understood these existing conditions and, because their concern with the issue of suburban sprawl, they were determined that their project would actively run counter to the dominant trend of random development. They saw that, after World War II, "suburban expansion was [characterized by] its ugliness, cultural conformity, social isolation and environmental problems."⁵¹ In 1963, Hershel Blumberg said, "the day has passed when the country can afford the wasteful practice of indiscriminate suburban sprawl out from our congested cities. The developers of land beyond our metropolitan cores must shoulder the responsibility of working closely with architects, community leaders and government planning agencies to insure the orderly and pleasing growth of unused suburban land."⁵²

⁵⁰ Other examples in the country are Reston, VA and Irvine, CA.

⁵¹ Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 2.

⁵² "Prince George's County Draws \$78 Million Project." *Washington World* 3:13 (March 1963): np.

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Edward Durell Stone had been thinking about similar issues since the 1950s. In 1958, he was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying that suburban sprawl was “desecrating the American landscape” and, the next year, wrote an editorial in *The New York Times* saying, “we have yet to realize that a beautiful, well-planned environment can be as much a part of our national wealth as our land, forests and other physical assets and that a splendid physical heritage is part of our moral obligation to future generations.”⁵³ He was more specific in 1963, saying that the “short-sighted exploitation of land around many of our cities has produced chaotic results. On the one hand is the proliferation of single-family homes on small plots of ground development en masse.... On the other are decaying clutters of small commercial centers. A recent innovation in suburbia, the shopping center, has added new problems with its emphasis on the automobile and the resultant proliferation of traffic and road building.”⁵⁴ This was particularly true in Maryland, where beginning in the early 1950s, a master plan called for the rebuilding of 3,100 miles of highways and the addition of 300 miles of new roads.⁵⁵ The clear and immediate outcome of this plan was that the placement of the roads promoted and “directed long-range suburban development and planning, especially office, retail and light industry construction.”⁵⁶

Therefore, when the Blumbergs approached Stone about an alternative approach to development, he was a natural participant. Although not known as an urban planner, he quickly conceived of a plan for a “self-contained community”, “a planned urban center that combines all aspects of modern life....”⁵⁷ By consolidating the residential and commercial components of the sprawl, he developed a program that was a “direct response to the problems of suburban sprawl as perceived at the time....”⁵⁸

During the 1940s, “small office buildings began being constructed in the retail zones of residential suburbs, specifically geared to branch offices and small service corporations....”⁵⁹ By the 1950s, “suburban office and corporate compounds became more frequent components of the suburbs.”⁶⁰ Therefore, when the proposal for New Town Center was first presented to the general public, the idea was not necessarily novel, but simply new and improved. Such a positive departure, in fact, that the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning

⁵³ Stone, 26 and 31.

⁵⁴ Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 221.

⁵⁵ Sies and Gournay, 41.

⁵⁶ Sies and Gournay, 41.

⁵⁷ Willmann. “Urban Center Under Way in Prince George’s County,” E1 and E12.

⁵⁸ Hunting, 35; Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 221-222.

⁵⁹ Louise A. Mazingo, *Pastoral Capitalism: A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011): 151.

⁶⁰ Sies and Gournay, 62.

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Commission even created a new zoning category for the construction, "planned urban center."⁶¹ Even the normally reactive zoning code was actively contributing to the notion that this development would be something different.

The change in zoning code also affirms that this suburban mixed-use center was an extremely early example of its type, not only in Prince George's County, but farther afield as well. In Maryland, concentrated developments in Bethesda and Silver Spring, presented an unsatisfactory juxtaposition between a historic town center and a new but separated shopping center. In Virginia, cities like Crystal City and Rosslyn began around the same time, but did not have the same consistency of development or overarching vision.

Public reaction to the proposal was overwhelmingly positive. William J. Stevens, Chairman of the MNCPPC said that the plan was a "glimpse into the future. It takes into account the unique assets of the area; its open space; its prime residential neighborhoods; its commercial potentials and its centers of community life. It then projects a future land use pattern which sets goals for future development."⁶² Senator Daniel Brewster and Representative Hervey Machen, both of Maryland, said of the move, "We believe that the PGC location is one of the best in the suburban area for Federal employees and facilities because of the availability of PGC of good schools, roads and housing."⁶³

The Role of the Federal Government in Planned Communities

Beginning with the implementation of the Green towns in the late 1930s, the Federal government often took an active and pivotal role in community planning in various degrees. As these towns were both difficult to finance, because of their complicated composition, and difficult to sustain, because they took such a long time to take root, the financial support from the government often provided much-needed assistance. This relief took a range of forms, including low mortgage rates, lenient financing terms or ready tenants.

In the 1960s, "Lyndon Johnson suggested that self-contained New Towns become part of the general strategy for ameliorating the problems of the inner city" and the "subsequent revival of New Town philosophy in the United States has been dominated by towns that were conceived and built as for-profit enterprises with

⁶¹ Willmann. "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County," E1 and E12.

⁶² Willmann. "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County," E1 and E12.

⁶³ Weishar, 8:3.

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government subsidy.”⁶⁴ The motivations of the government in the 1960s were similar to those in the 1930s, including “implementing innovative design solutions; employing new technologies; providing an appropriate mixture of land uses to ensure proximity between the paces where people live, work and play; and preserving open areas in balance with suburbanization.”⁶⁵ Shortly after Johnson’s declaration, Congress passed various legislation sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that expanded the development of suburban programs by granting benefits and guarantees to New Town developers, “particularly in the form of financial support.”⁶⁶

Unfortunately, the presence of the government often provided a false sense of security and success. Twelve of the thirteen projects funded by the HUD program failed because the initial influx of money was not enough to make these communities ultimately sustainable.

This relationship of both initial investment and lack of ultimate realization is equally prominently present at New Town Center. The GSA provided the necessary tenants both in the 1960s and the 2000s and, as such, continues this highly characteristic relationship. If New Town Center had succeeded, it would be an outlier. In this respect, its incomplete nature determines it to be an archetypal example of its form.

The Role of Modern Architecture

In many cases, one of the construction requirements of the GSA for new buildings was the specific selection of a certain architect, such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer.⁶⁷ Their preference for such prominent Modern architects, rather than those with a more Revivalist bent, for example, is a clear aesthetic illustration of what they saw as their progressive and proactive mid-century government.

Fortunately, this marketing strategy was also exactly in keeping with the ideals of New Town Center. This was to be a place that surpassed the traditional and expected suburban developments and re-conceptualized the notion of a town center. Consequently, a forward-thinking architect was required. As Stone is cited as having a

⁶⁴ William Flanagan, *Urban Sociology: Images and Structure* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2010): 340.

⁶⁵ Goldfield, 537.

⁶⁶ Flanagan, 340.

⁶⁷ Select commissions include the Federal Building in Chicago, IL by Mies van der Rohe (1960-1974), the Federal Building in Boston, MA by Gropius (1961) and the Federal Building in Washington, D.C. by Breuer (1960-1976).

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legacy of “effectively reconciling Modernism with popular culture,” he was the perfect person to adapt the traditional and familiar notion of the town center with a forward-thinking aesthetic.⁶⁸

Indeed, the very fact that the Blumbergs approached Stone in the first place indicates their prioritizing of this idea. The selection of a prominent architect showed that both the design and what that design stood for was a priority. In the vast majority of other suburban developments, a local, somewhat anonymous architect was chosen to spearhead the design. Although this would have been by far the cheapest and easiest approach for the Blumbergs to adopt, it wouldn't have met their programmatic and aesthetic objectives for the complex. The highly unusual decision to select an internationally known architect for a relatively obscure location and use clearly demonstrate their aspirations for the project and their ambitiousness in achieving that goal.

An Explanation of an Unrealized Design

Despite the overwhelming initial support for the project and the fact that it made such a convincing theoretical argument, it was quickly clear that it would not be developed as originally conceived. Firstly, the Blumbergs were never able to obtain financing for the remaining programmatic objectives, such as the residences and the amenities. The multiple high rises called for too much density without any supporting amenities and no one wanted to finance amenities that no one would visit. The most tangible example of this was a 33- or 34-story office and apartment building, which was issued permits in late 1965. It was to be “one of the tallest buildings in the metropolitan area” and the “highest privately-owned building in the Washington area” but, despite the permitting approval, no one came forward to ultimately finance it and take a risk on what was widely considered a risky endeavor.⁶⁹

But the ultimately insurmountable dilemma was that of transportation. From the beginning, New Town Center was marketed as an urban alternative. Although walkability from outside the complex was never an option, automobile and Metro access to the development were heavily promoted. This plan hinged on two construction projects that were due to begin imminently. The first was a spur from I-95, which was going to be extended into downtown Washington, D.C. and linking with the Southeast-Southwest Expressway. This would not only simplify vehicular access to the development, but would also put Hyattsville on the map, as it were, instigating

⁶⁸ Mary Ann Hunting, *Edward Durell Stone* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012): np.

⁶⁹ Bart Barnes, “34-Story Towers Asked on Prince George's Site: Plan Seeks 34-Story MD. Towers.” *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (29 October 1965): np; Bart Barnes, “295-Foot Tower Wins Approval in County.” *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (23 December 1965): D3.

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development in the area in general, and thereby further commodifying the new project. The promise of the spur continued as a possibility until 1977, when the project was officially terminated.⁷⁰

The second element was a Metro stop, which was originally scheduled to open at the western portion of the site, directly into one of the basements of the proposed buildings. While parking was to be incorporated into the project, although in a downplayed manner, the major innovative component of its program was that it was to be Metro-accessible, just like a "real" city. Ultimately, however the extension of the Metro never materialized and the development, like so many others before it, became just another standard suburban office park.

A less tangible, but perhaps nonetheless important element of unrealized nature of the project, was its lack of identity. Known by no fewer than five names, including New Town Center, Prince George's Center, Prince George's Plaza and Federal Center Buildings, it was seen as an office park, a shopping mall and a housing project.⁷¹ Although a successful town must necessarily have all of these components, it must also have a clear sense of place, which, despite all of the planning, New Town Center never seemed to be able to establish.

The end result of this unfortunate culmination of circumstances was that the three isolated office buildings were surrounded by a sea of paved parking lots, instead of the planned buildings, hardscaping, landscaping and amenities that Durell Stone and the Blumbergs had for so long envisioned.

The Development of New Town Center from 1993 Onward

In 1993, the long-promised Metro stop opened as an extension of the Green/Yellow line. As anticipated thirty years earlier, this both spurred development in the area and created a firm and simple link between Hyattsville, Washington, D.C. and points in between. It was also naturally a catalyst for a new construction campaign at New Town Center. The buildings originally known as Metro 1 and 2 were renovated in 1996. In 2002, a fourth office building was also constructed. Although this was the first element of construction at the site that deviated from Durell Stone's original plan, it was in keeping with the development in that, once again, its primary tenant was a government agency, the National Center for Health Statistics, who had formerly occupied Metro 3. A new 16-story residential building was also constructed in 2002, along with a large parking garage

⁷⁰ Lawrence Aurbach, "Prince George's Plaza Transit District." <http://pedshed.net/?p=11>. Accessed on September 15, 2016.

⁷¹ Fruehling.

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in the northeast corner of the site and, in 2006, Metro 3 was finally renovated. Since that time, the development has continued for the remainder of the site, including the construction of more residential and commercial buildings, a terraced plaza and a movie theater. Currently, there are 134 residential units, 910-student housing units and over 55,000 square feet of commercial space. Although none of these elements are in keeping with the original design for the site, there is no doubt that it currently reads as a town center, a multi-faceted, multi-purposed complex of which Herschel Blumberg felt that Edward Durell Stone would be proud.⁷²

⁷² Fruehling.

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Prince George's County, MD
County and State

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United States Department of the Interior
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PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

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Prince George's County, MD
County and State

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United States Department of the Interior
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Name of Property

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County and State

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New Town Center (PG: 68-104)

Name of Property

Prince George's County, MD

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.35 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1	8	3	3	1	0	6	5	4	3	1	5	1	0	2
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
2															

2															
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
4															

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

The boundary of New Town Center is shown by the red lines on the accompanying map entitled "National Register Boundary Map."

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

The nominated property includes the building footprints of the three included buildings. The surrounding landscape elements and new construction have been excluded as they are not a part of the original design of Edward Durell Stone and they do not therefore contribute to the significance of the resource.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Logan I. Ferguson, Senior Associate

Organization Powers and Company, Inc.

date August 23, 2018

street & number 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717

telephone (215) 636-0192

city or town Philadelphia

state PA

zip code 19107

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section 10 Page 1

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTO Page 1

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

Index to Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs which accompany this documentation:

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) Number: PG: 68-104

Name of Property: New Town Center

Location: Prince George's County, Maryland

Photographer: Robert Powers

Date taken: September 2016 and August 2018

Location of original digital files [or negatives]: Powers and Company, Inc., 1315 Walnut Street,
Suite 1717, Philadelphia, PA

Photo captions:

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0001.tif

New Town Center

Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road and Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway

Hyattsville, MD

West and south elevations, view northeast

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0002.tif

New Town Center

Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road and Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway

Hyattsville, MD

West and south elevations, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0003.tif

New Town Center

Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD

South elevation, view north

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0004.tif

New Town Center

Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD

South and east elevations, view northwest

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTO Page 2

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0005.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
South and west elevations, view northeast

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0006.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
South and east elevations, view northwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0007.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
North and east elevations, view southwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0008.tif
New Town Center
Hyattsville, MD
Site, View south

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0009.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
North and west elevations, view southeast

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0010.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
North and east elevations, view southwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0011.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road and Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
North and west elevations, view southeast

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTO Page 3

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0012.tif
New Town Center
Hyattsville, MD
Belcrest Road, View north

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0013.tif
New Town Center
Hyattsville, MD
Plaza, View northwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0014.tif
New Town Center
Hyattsville, MD
American Boulevard, View north

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0015.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
South and east elevations, view northwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0016.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
North and west elevations, view southeast

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0017.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Hallway, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0018.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
2nd floor, view south

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTO Page 4

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0019.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
2nd floor, Elevator lobby, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0020.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
5th floor, view northwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0021.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Stairway, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0022.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Elevator lobby, view west

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0023.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0024.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
8th floor, view northeast

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0025.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
Basement, Elevator lobby, view east

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTO Page 5

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0026.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
Basement, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0027.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Elevator lobby, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0028.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
3rd floor, view southwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0029.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
7th floor, Stairway, view west

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0030.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
7th floor, view northwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0031.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
10th floor, view northeast

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0032.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
Roof, view southwest

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
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Section PHOTO Page 6

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0033.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Entrance lobby, view west

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0034.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Atrium, view southwest

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0035.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Elevator lobby, view east

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0036.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Atrium, view northeast

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0037.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
3rd floor, Hallway, view west

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0038.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Stairway, view north

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0039.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Elevator lobby, view west

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTO Page 7

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0040.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD
7th floor, Stairway, view east

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section FIGURES Page 1

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

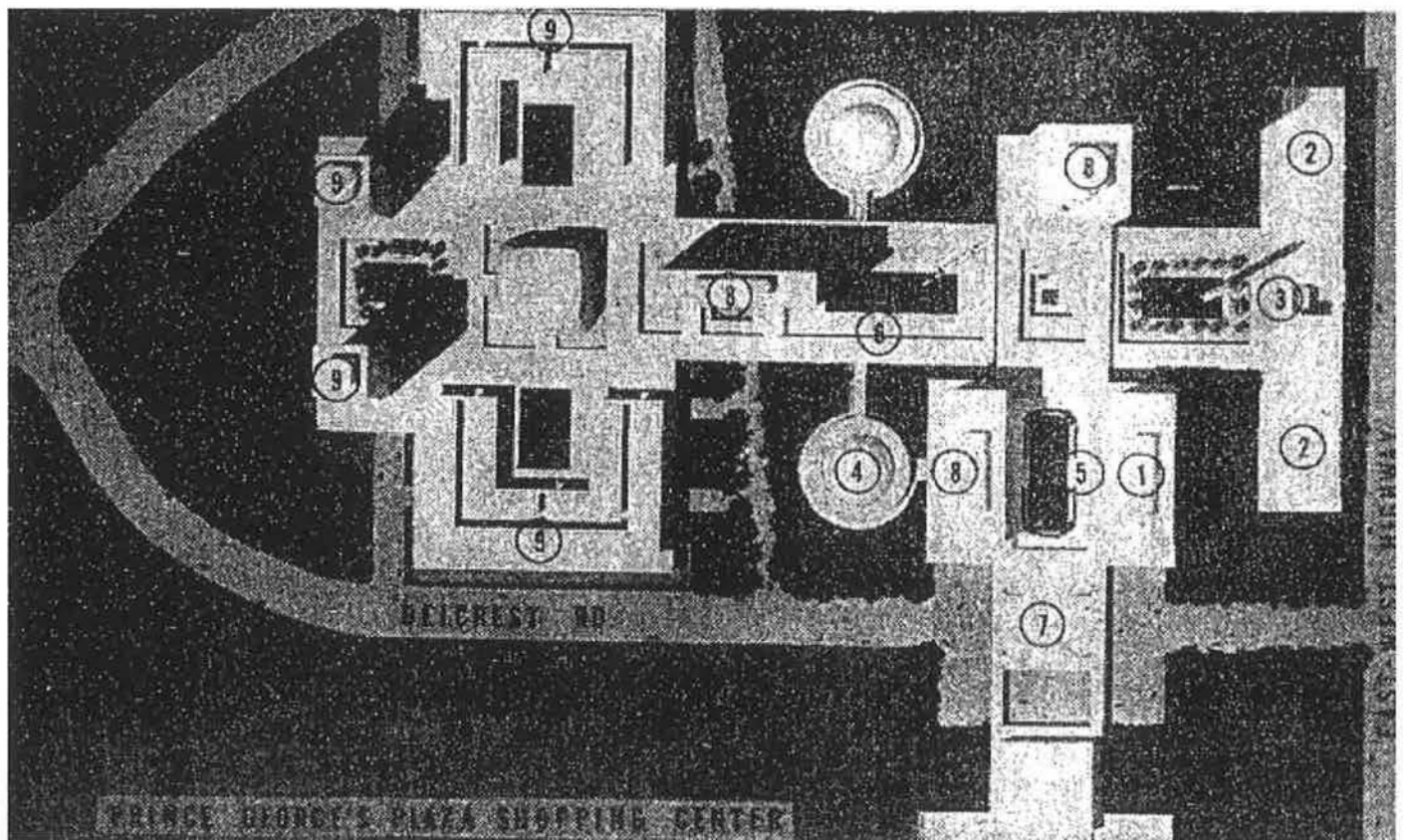


Figure 1 – "Study Model."

John B. Willmann, "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County." The Washington Post (6 June 1964): E1.
Metro 1 is marked as Building 1 above.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section FIGURES Page 2

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

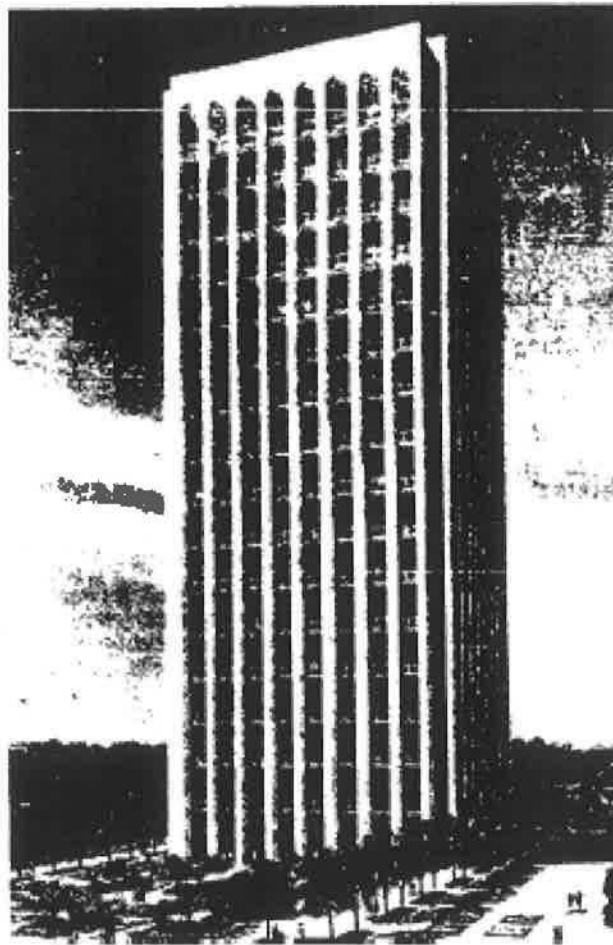


Figure 2 – Bart Barnes, “295-Foot Tower Wins Approval in County.”
The Washington Post, Times Herald (23 December 1965): D3.
A rendering of a proposed apartment tower that was never constructed.

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National Park Service

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section FIGURES Page 3

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

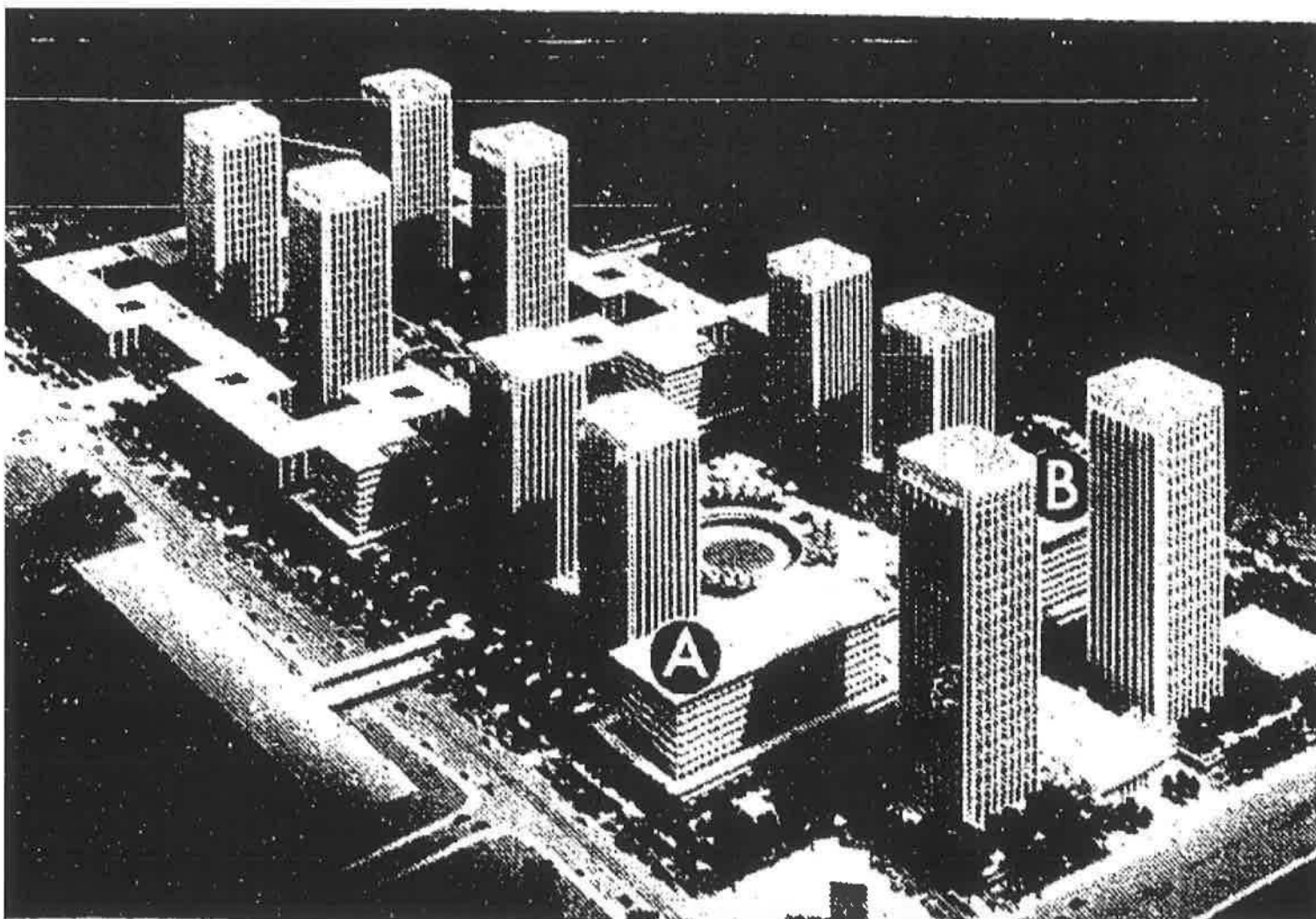


Figure 3 – “Prince George’s Center.” *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (25 November 1967): E2.
Metro 1 is marked “A” and Metro 2 is marked “B”. The remainder of the complex was never completed.

United States Department of the Interior
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PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section FIGURES Page 4

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

Location Map

UTM Coordinates 18 331065 4315102



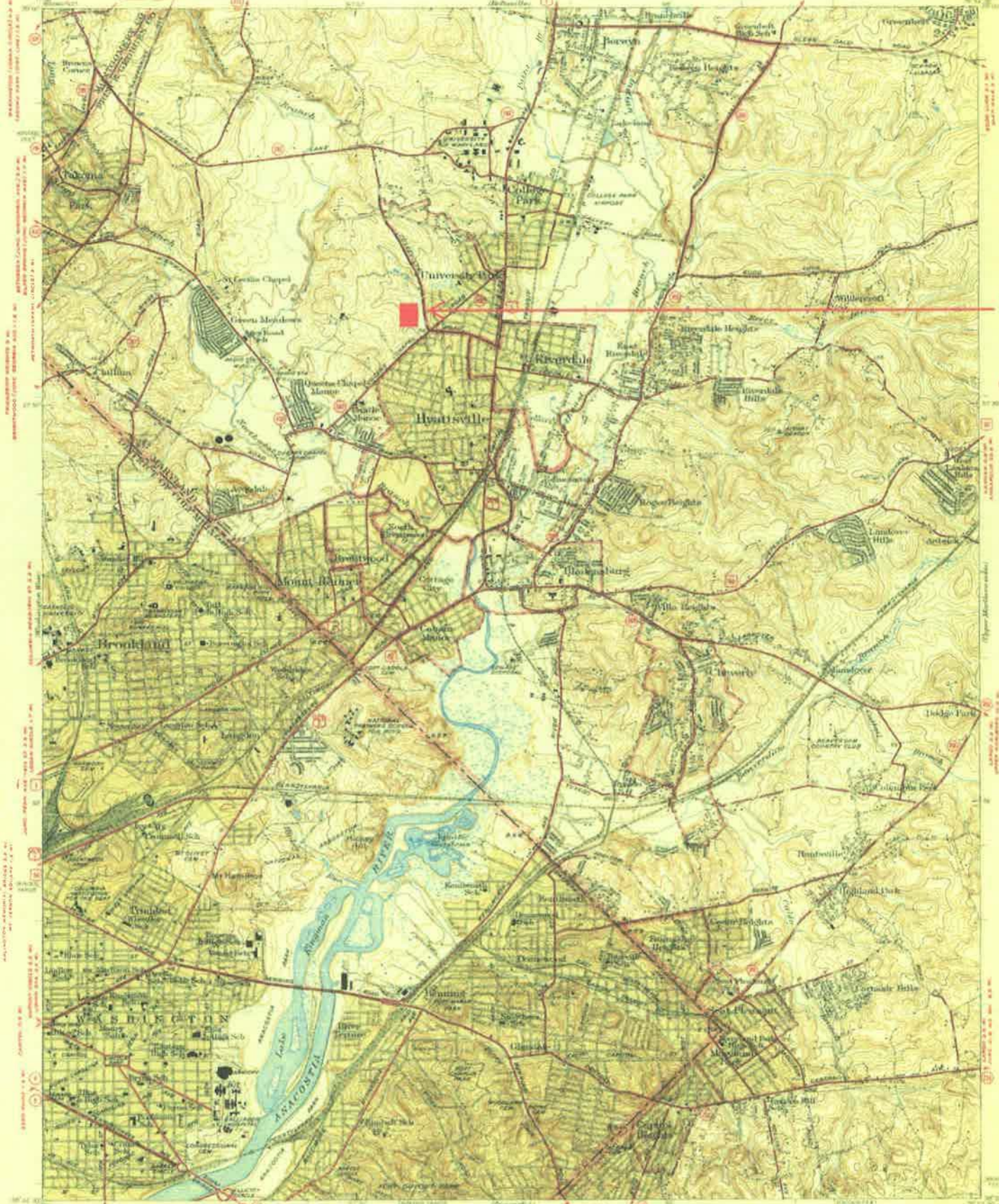
FROM CORNER (TOWN & R. 100 200 100 100)
USDA BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON, D.C.
1900

WASHINGTON, D.C.
1900

WASHINGTON, D.C.
1900



New Town
Center
Prince
George's
County, M

Map of the Washington, D.C. area, showing the Potomac River, Annapolis, and various towns and roads. A red square is marked near the center of the map, and a red line extends from it towards the right edge. The map includes contour lines, water bodies, and a grid system.

Map of the Washington, D.C. area, showing the Potomac River, Annapolis, and various towns and roads. A red square is marked near the center of the map, and a red line extends from it towards the right edge. The map includes contour lines, water bodies, and a grid system.

Map of the Washington, D.C. area, showing the Potomac River, Annapolis, and various towns and roads. A red square is marked near the center of the map, and a red line extends from it towards the right edge. The map includes contour lines, water bodies, and a grid system.

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Map of the Washington, D.C. area, showing the Potomac River, Annapolis, and various towns and roads. A red square is marked near the center of the map, and a red line extends from it towards the right edge. The map includes contour lines, water bodies, and a grid system.

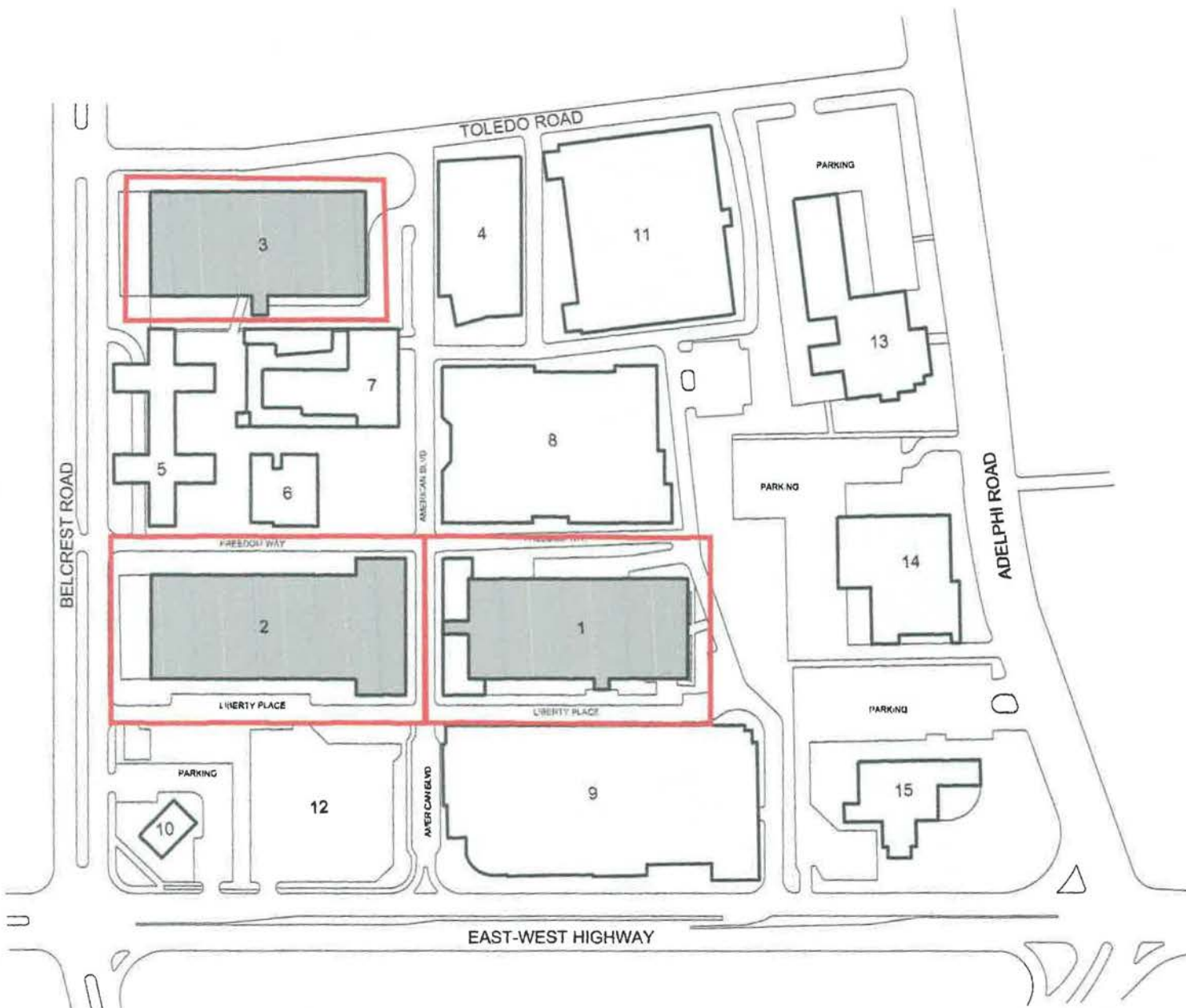
Map of the Washington, D.C. area, showing the Potomac River, Annapolis, and various towns and roads. A red square is marked near the center of the map, and a red line extends from it towards the right edge. The map includes contour lines, water bodies, and a grid system.

HISTORICAL FILES

(DO NOT REMOVE)

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

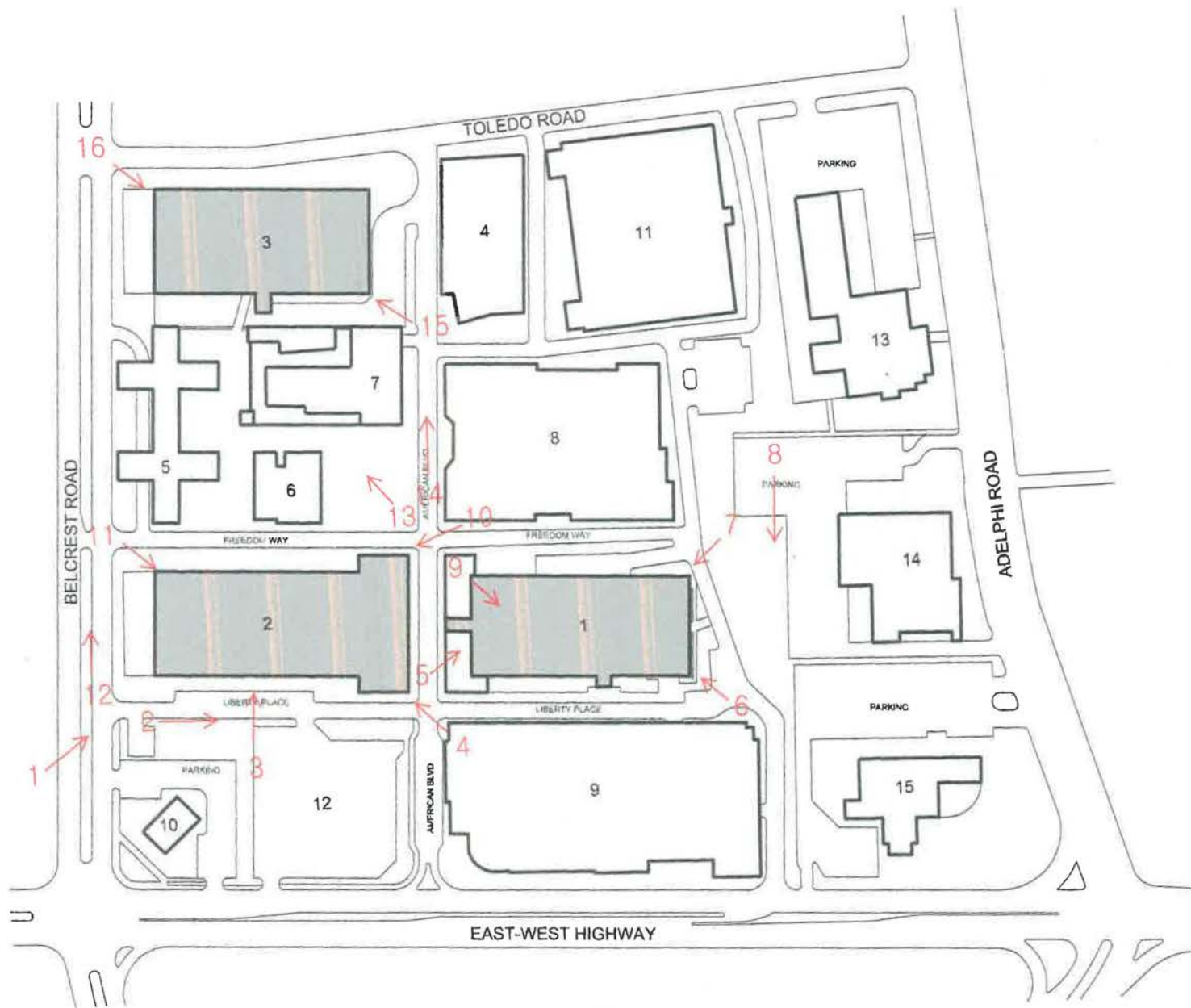
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



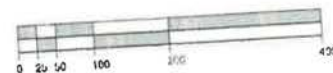
- 1 METRO II
- 2 METRO I
- 3 METRO III
PRINCE GEORGES
MEDICAL CENTER
- 4 NATIONAL CENTER FOR
HEALTH SERVICES
- 5 VIE TOWER STUDENT
APARTMENTS
- 6 HYATTSVILLE BRANCH
LIBRARY
- 7 UTC CONDO I
- 8 REGAL CINEMAS
- 9 SAFEWAY & PARKING GARAGE
- 10 FAMILY DENTAL GROUP
- 11 PARKING GARAGE
- 12 PARKING LOT
- 13 (FORMER) HYATTSVILLE
BRANCH LIBRARY
- 14 UNIVERSITY PARK
CHURCH OF CHRIST
- 15 THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF
LATTER-DAY SAINTS



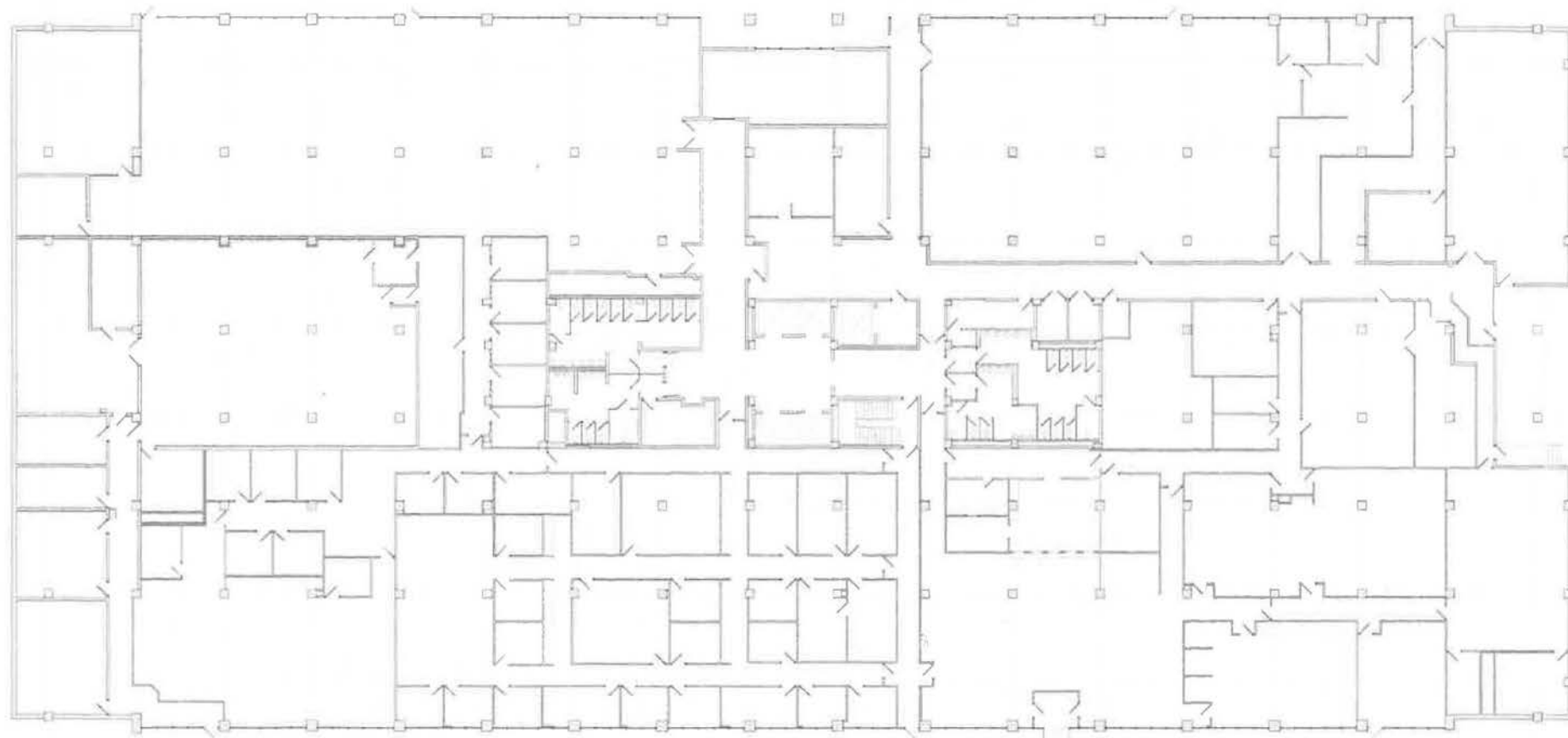
New Town Center
 6505 Belcrest Road, 6525 Belcrest Road, 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 National Register Boundary Map (Shown in Red)
 Pg: 68-104



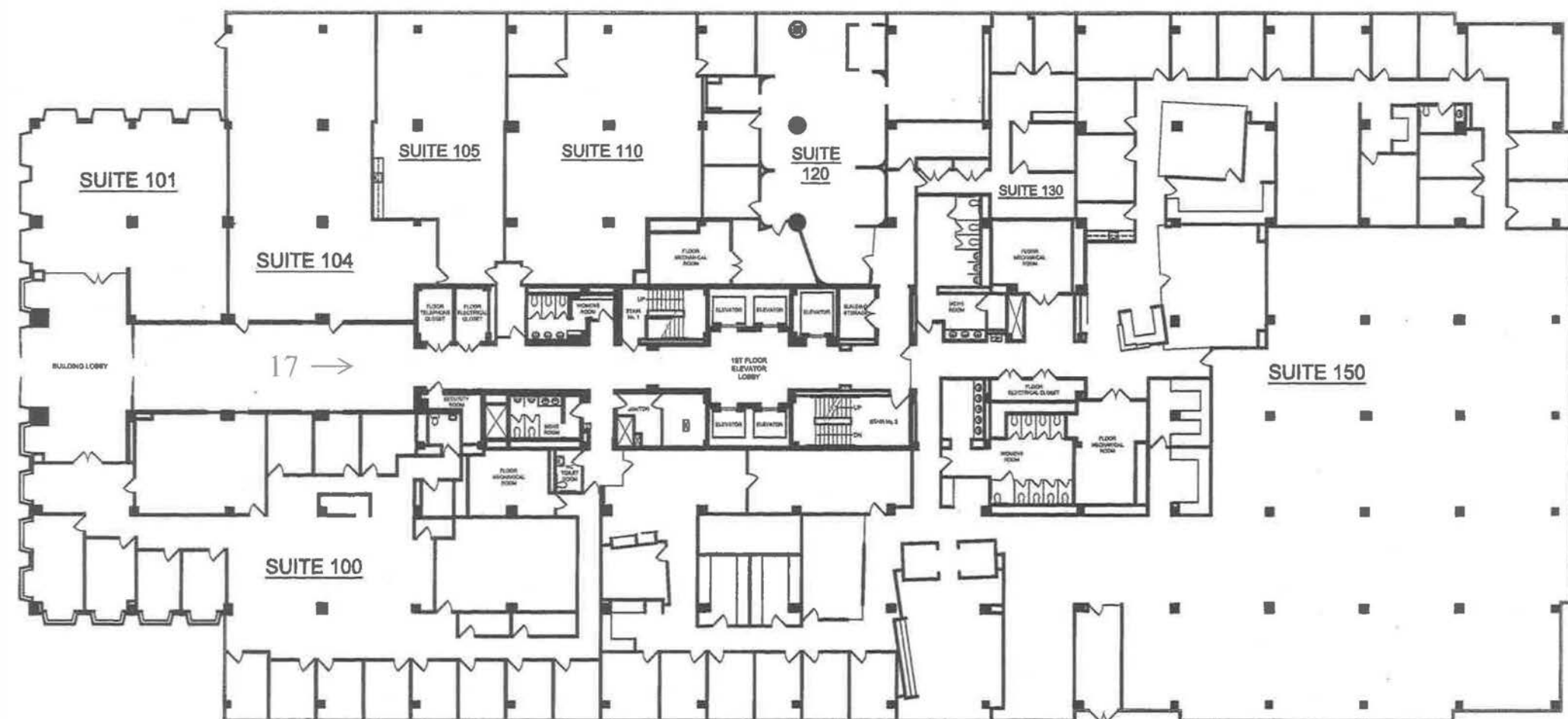
- 1 METRO II
- 2 METRO I
- 3 METRO III
PRINCE GEORGES
MEDICAL CENTER
- 4 NATIONAL CENTER FOR
HEALTH SERVICES
- 5 VIE TOWER STUDENT
APARTMENTS
- 6 HYATTSVILLE BRANCH
LIBRARY
- 7 UTC CONDO I
- 8 REGAL CINEMAS
- 9 SAFEWAY & PARKING GARAGE
- 10 FAMILY DENTAL GROUP
- 11 PARKING GARAGE
- 12 PARKING LOT
- 13 (FORMER) HYATTSVILLE
BRANCH LIBRARY
- 14 UNIVERSITY PARK
CHURCH OF CHRIST
- 15 THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF
LATTER-DAY SAINTS



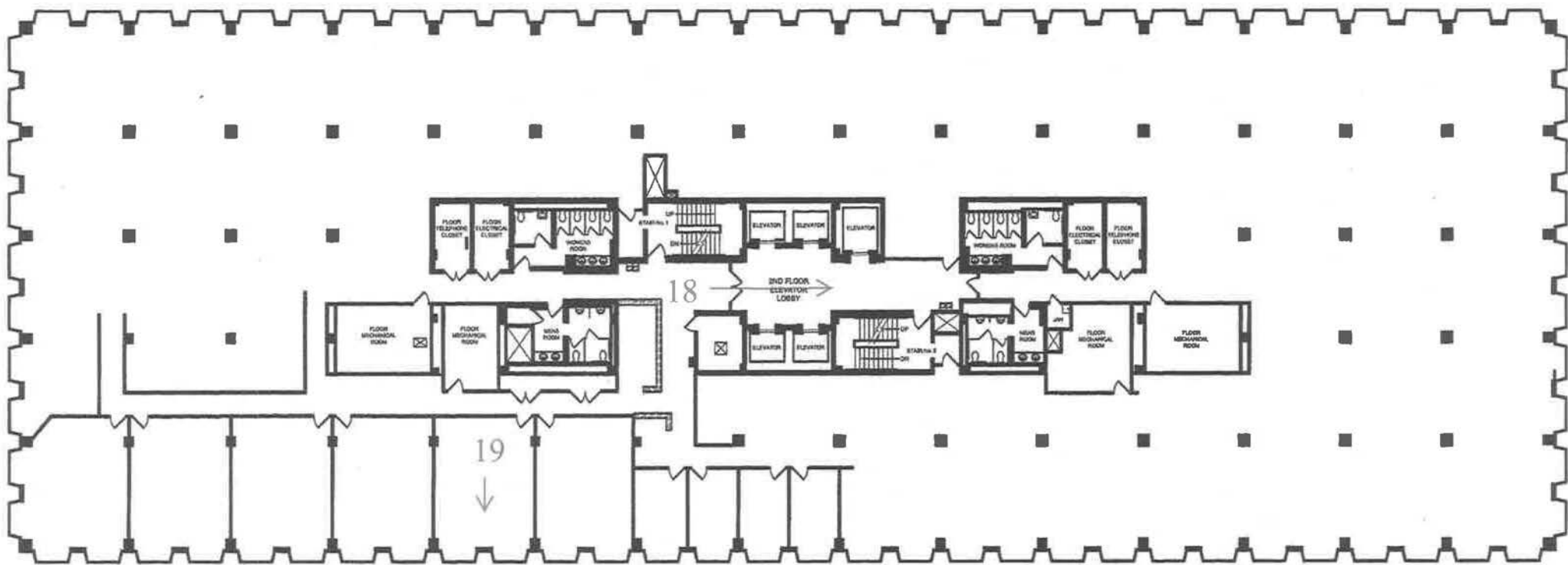
New Town Center
 6505 Belcrest Road, 6525 Belcrest Road, 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 Site Plan with Photograph Key
 Pg: 68-104



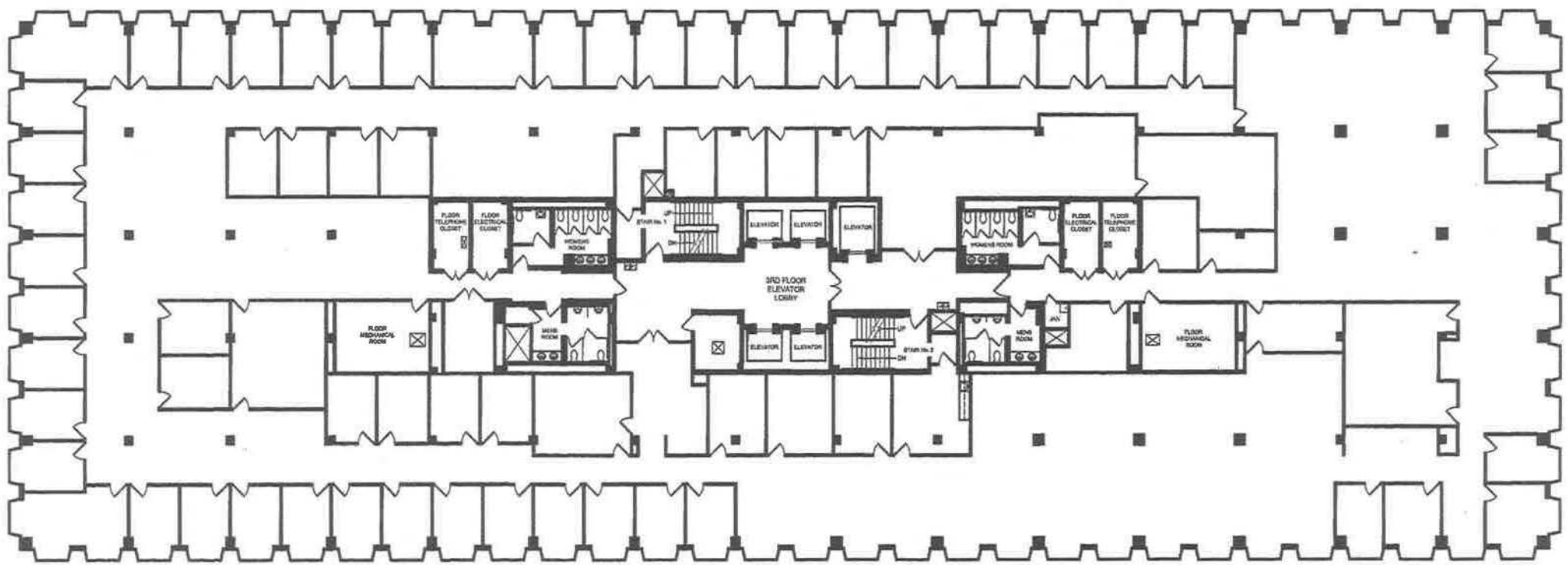
New Town Center
Metro 1
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
Basement Plan with Photograph Key



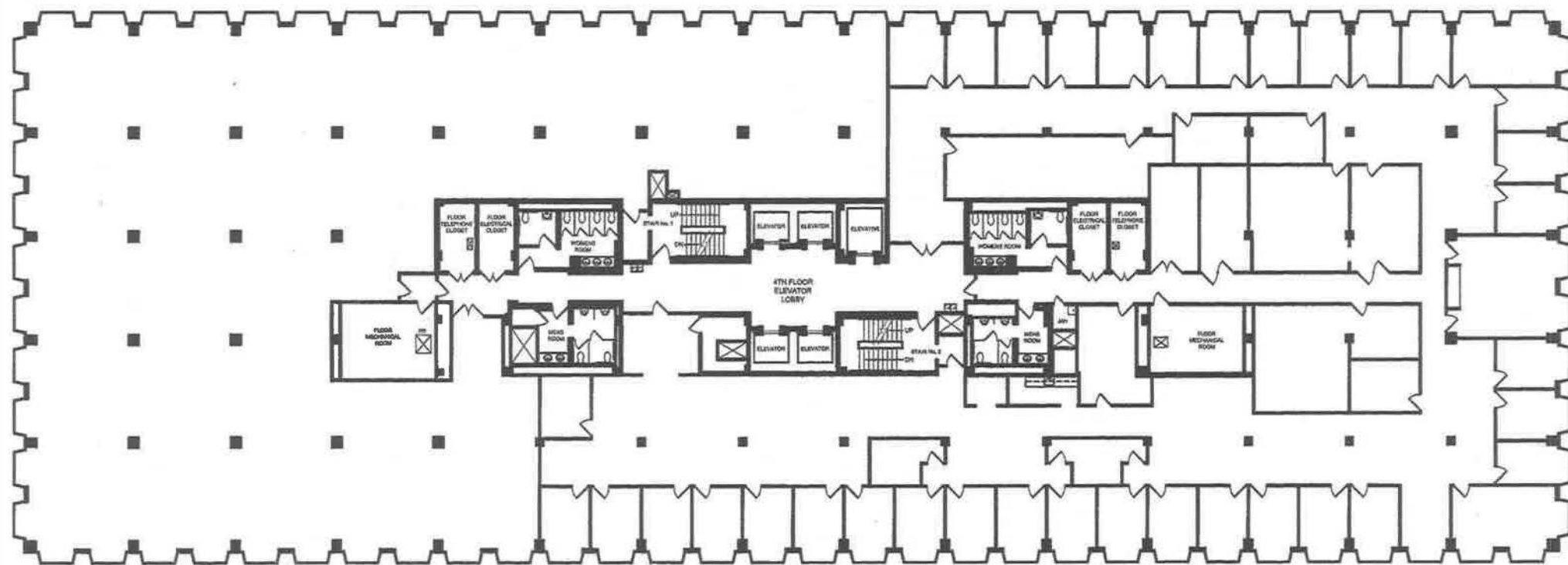
New Town Center
Metro 1
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
1st Floor Plan with Photograph Key



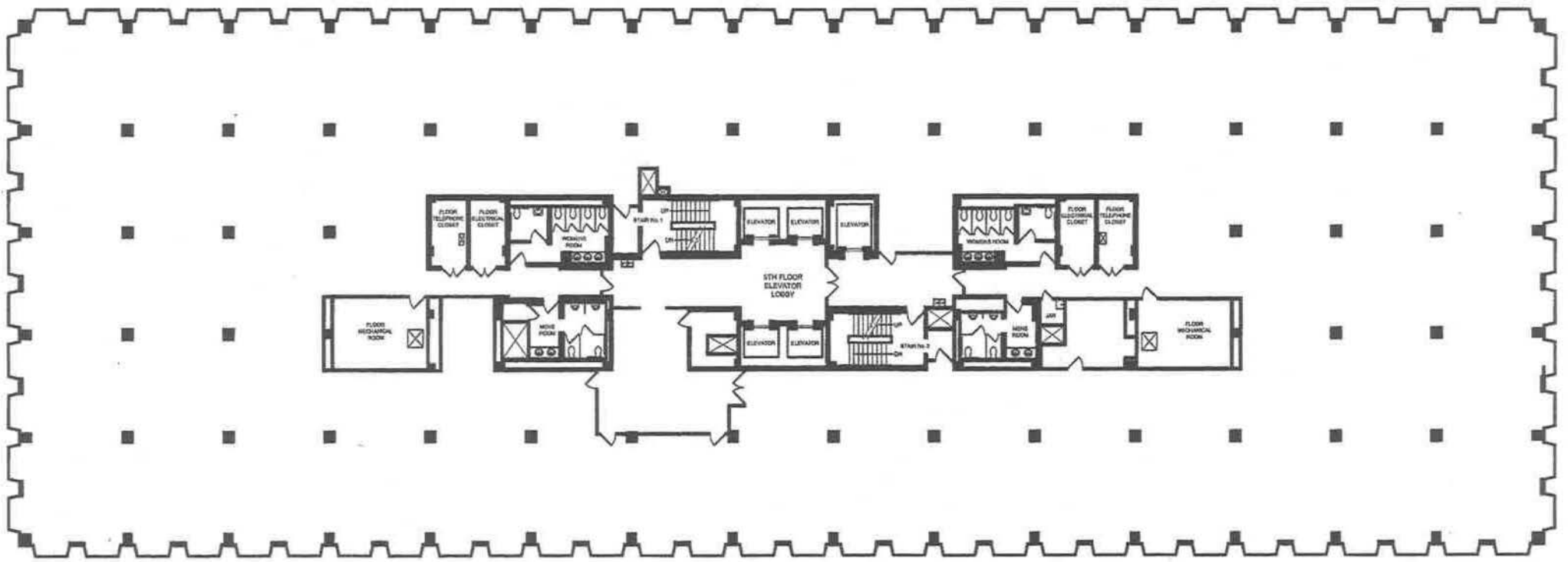
New Town Center
 Metro 1
 6505 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 2nd Floor Plan with Photograph Key



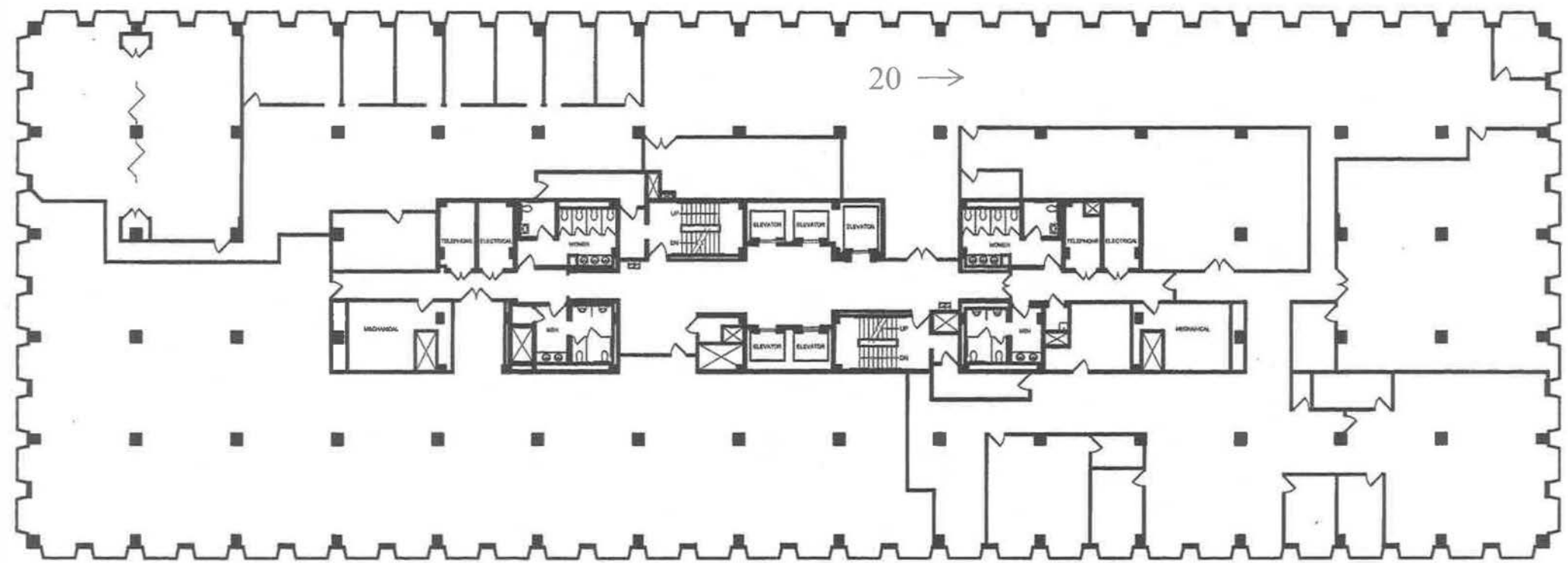
New Town Center
Metro 1
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
3rd Floor Plan with Photograph Key



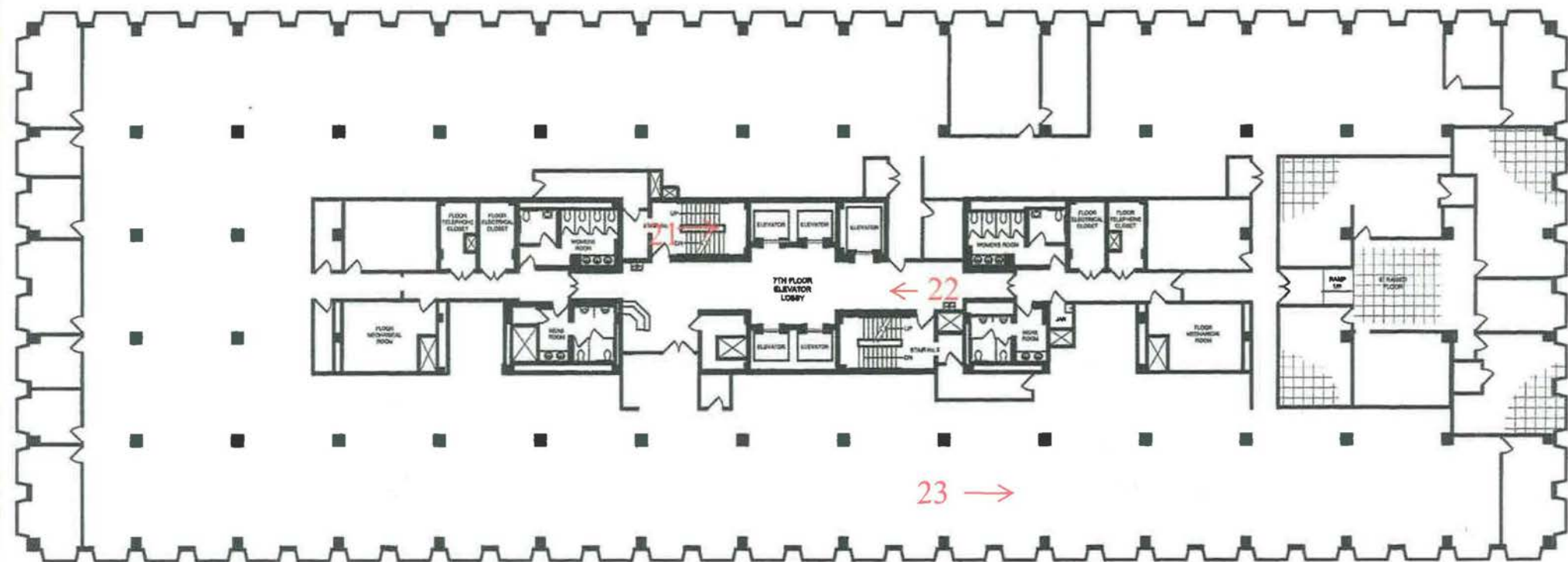
New Town Center
 Metro 1
 5505 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 4th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



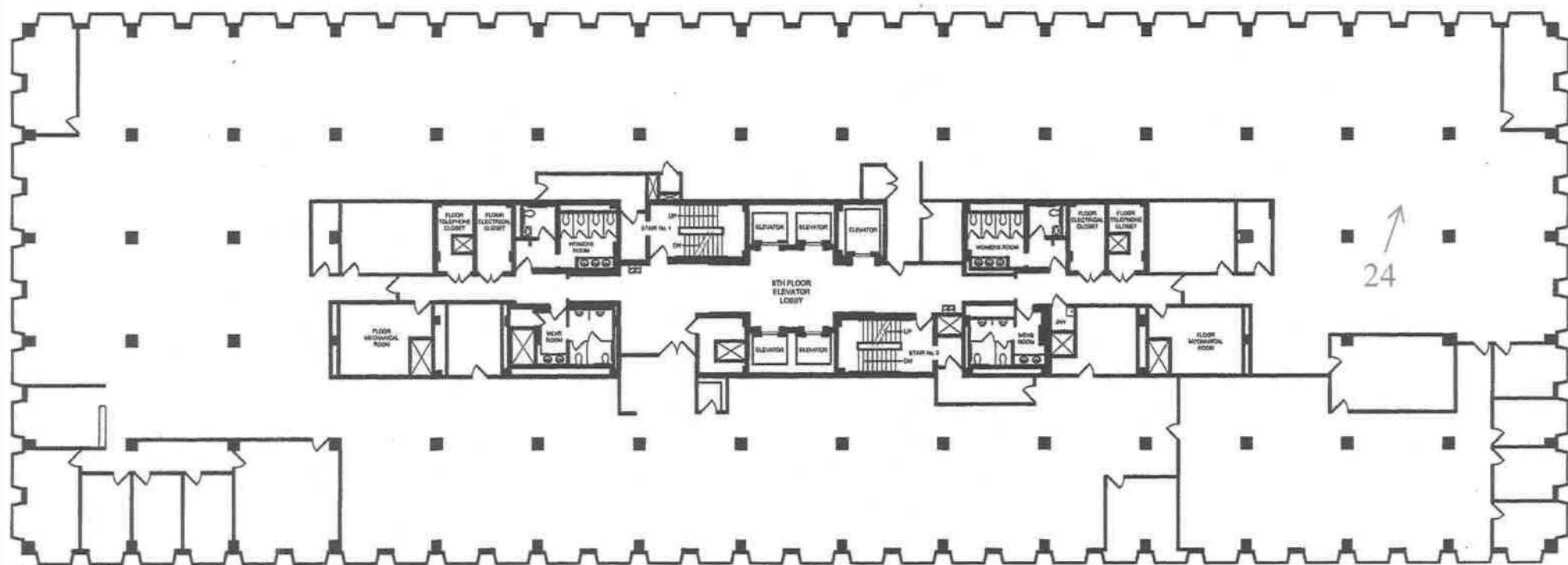
New Town Center
 Metro 1
 6505 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 5th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



New Town Center
Metro 1
5505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
5th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



New Town Center
Metro 1
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
7th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



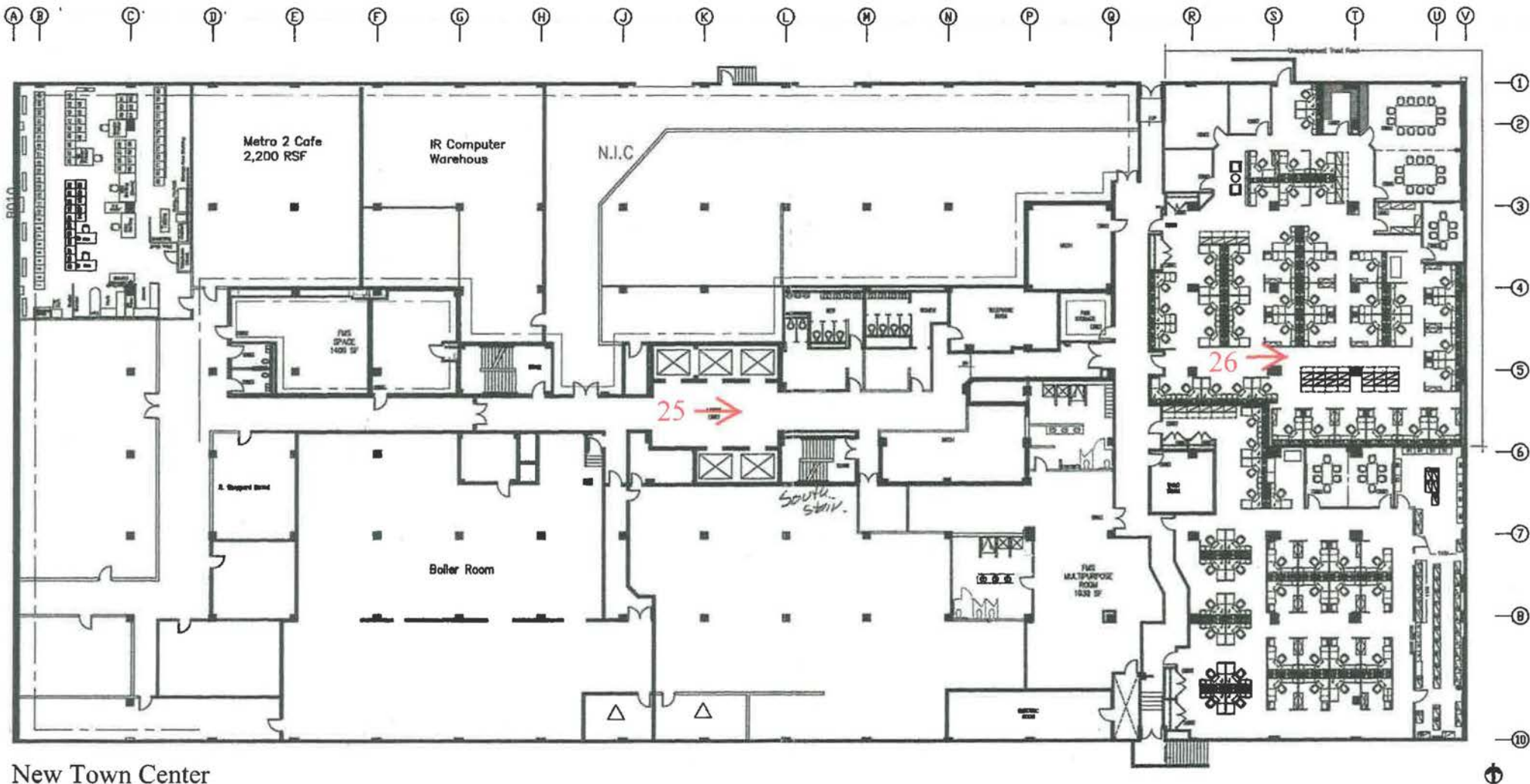
New Town Center

Metro 1

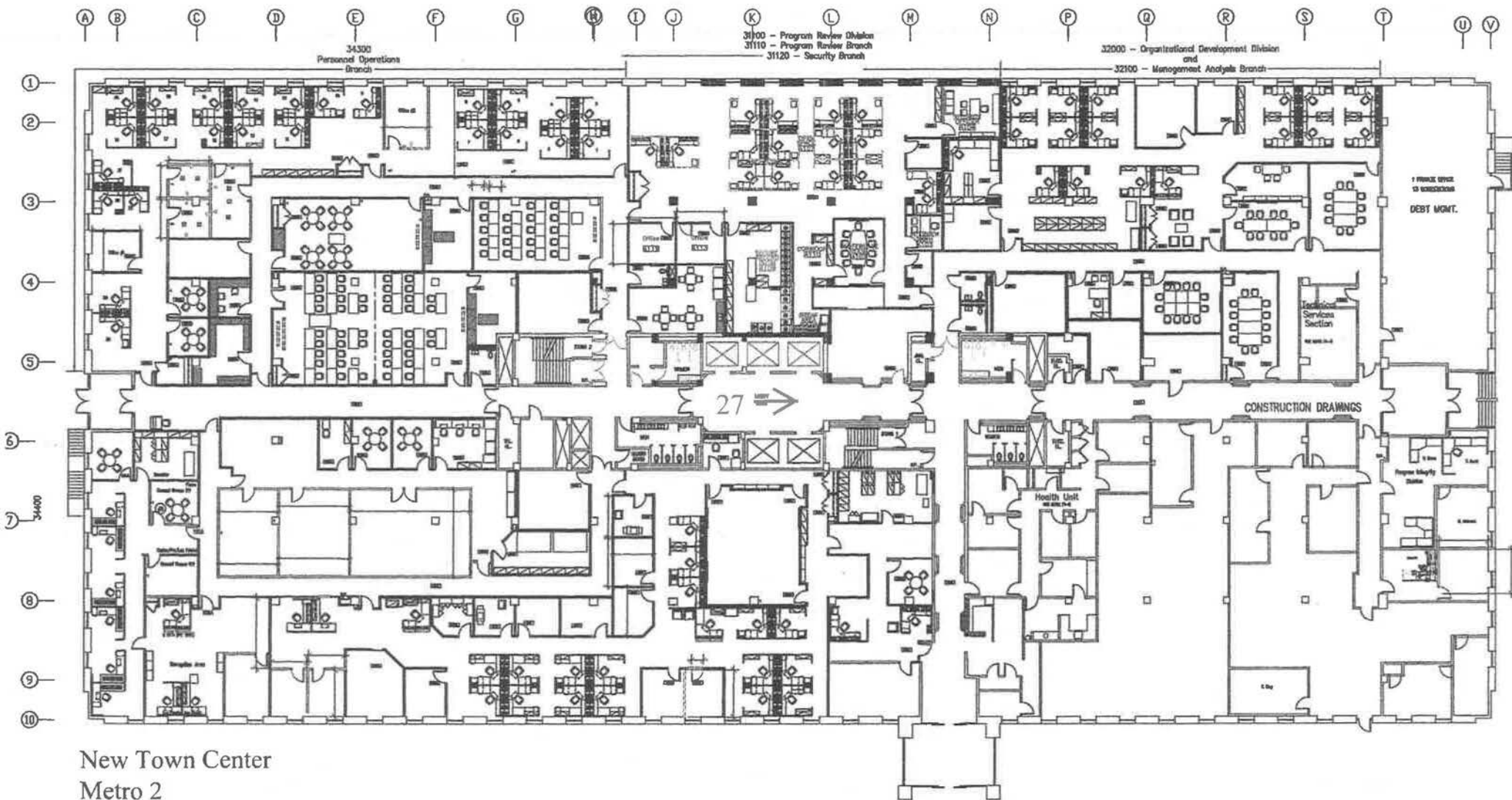
6505 Belcrest Road

Hyattsville, MD

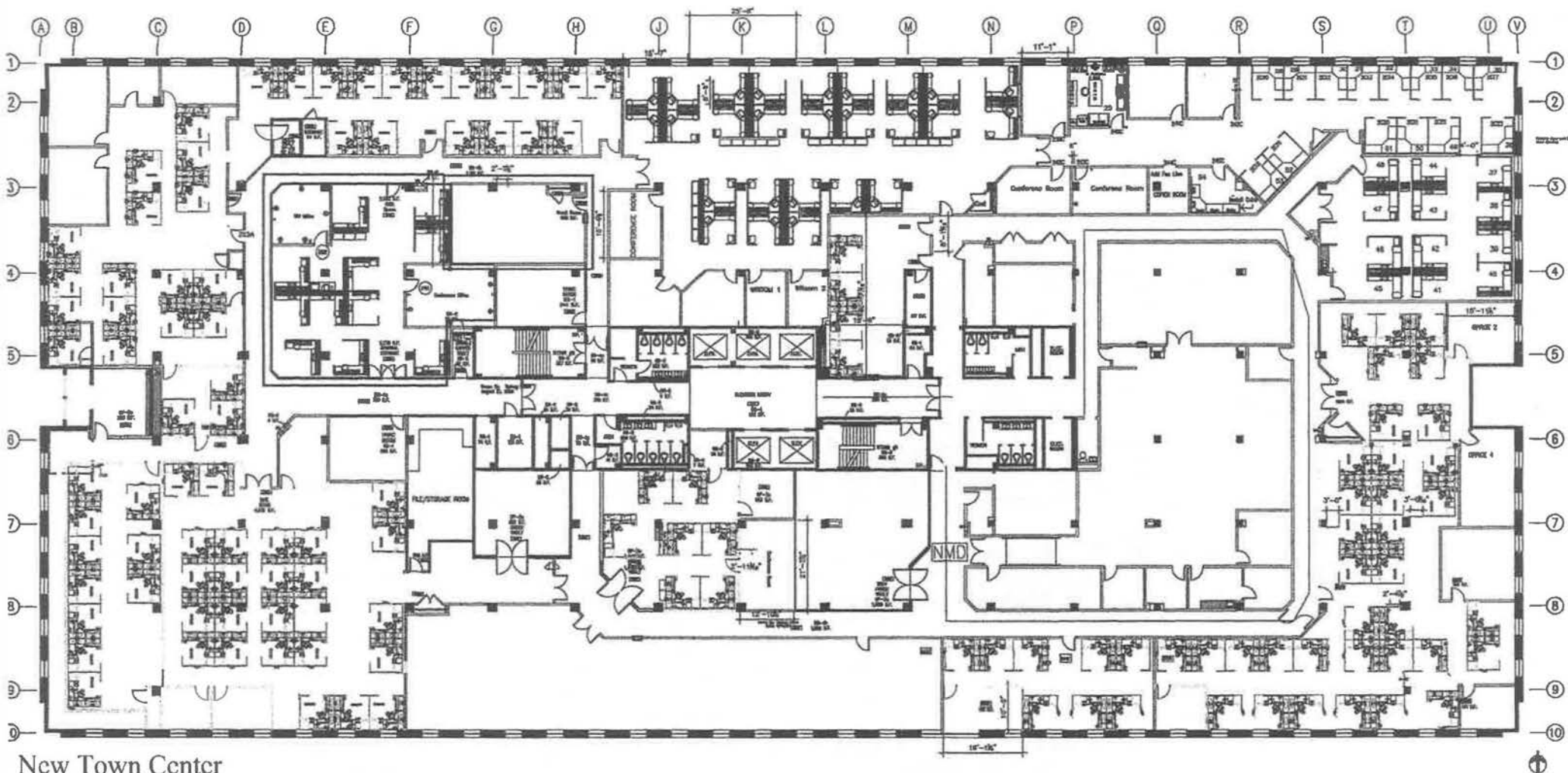
8th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



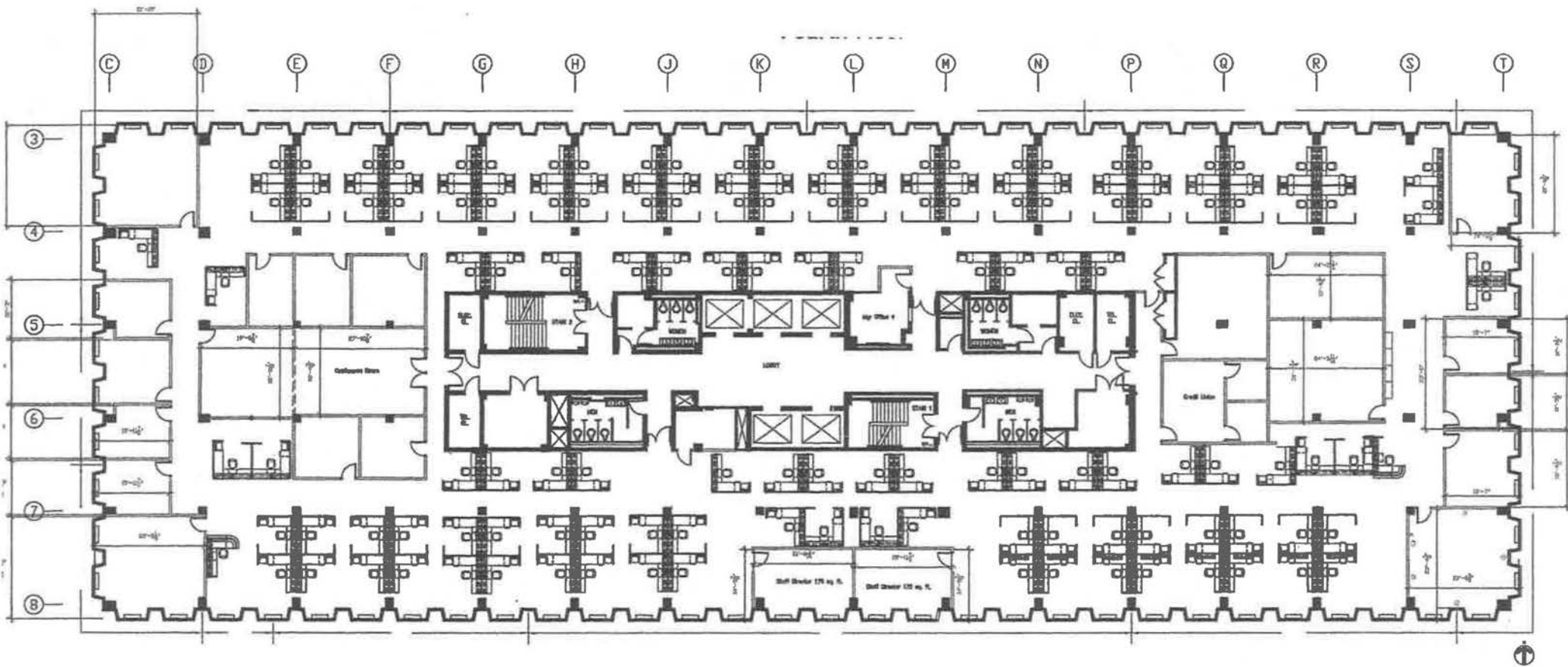
New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 Basement Plan with Photograph Key



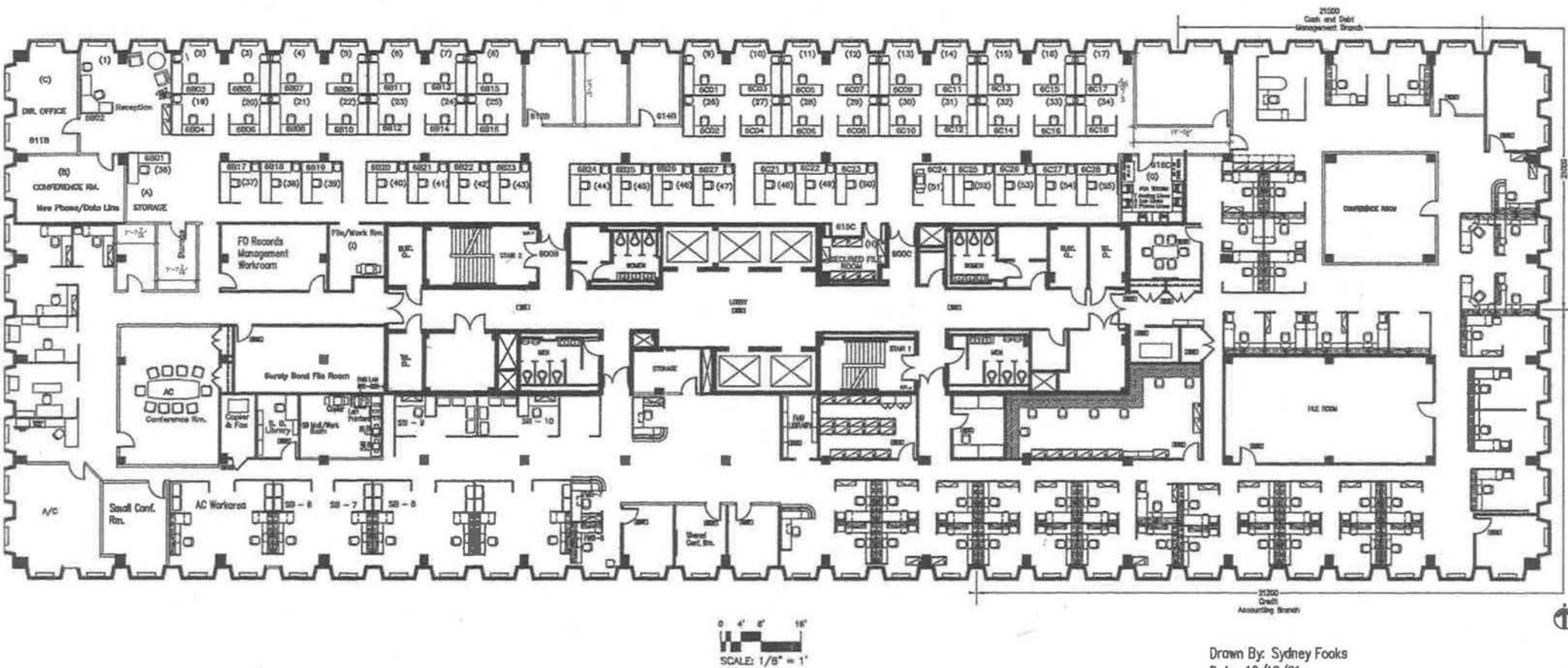
New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 1st Floor Plan with Photograph Key



New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 2nd Floor Plan with Photograph Key

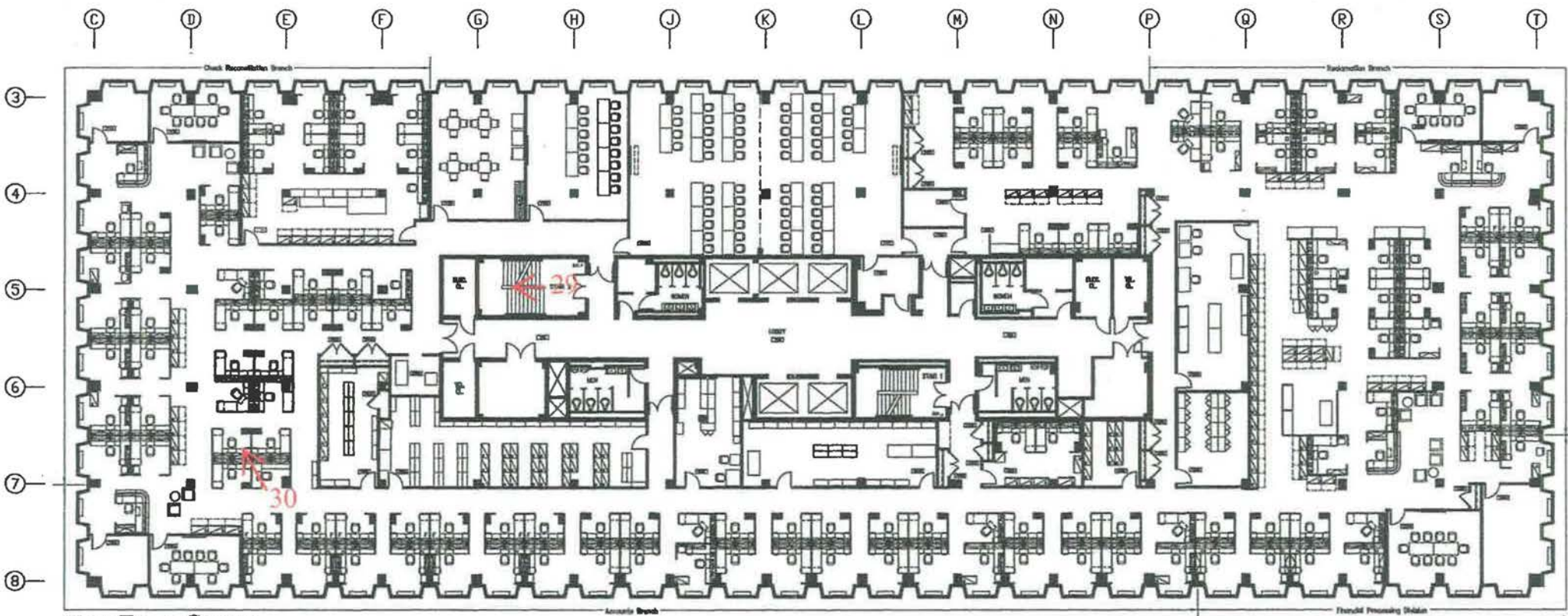


New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 4th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 6th Floor Plan with Photograph Key

Drawn By: Sydney Fooks
 Date: 10/12/01



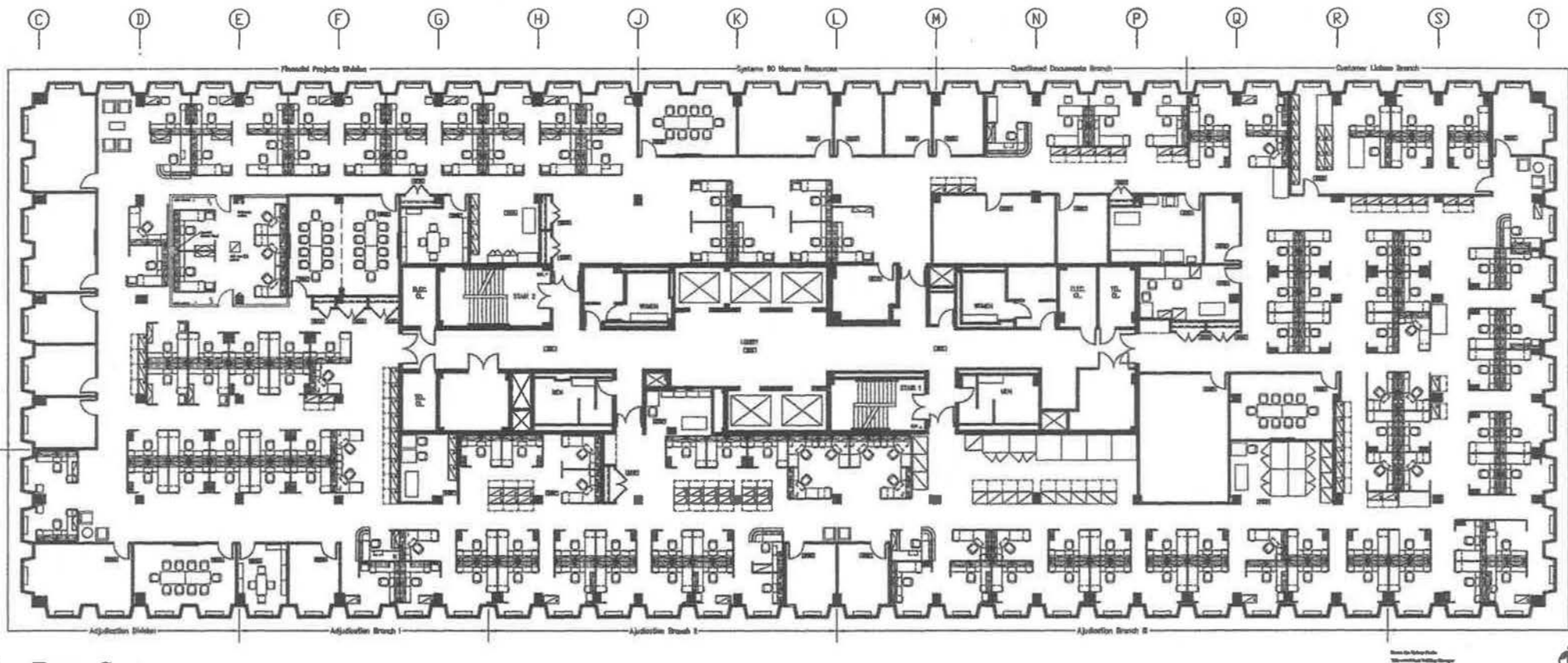
New Town Center

Metro 2

3700 East-West Highway

Hyattsville, MD

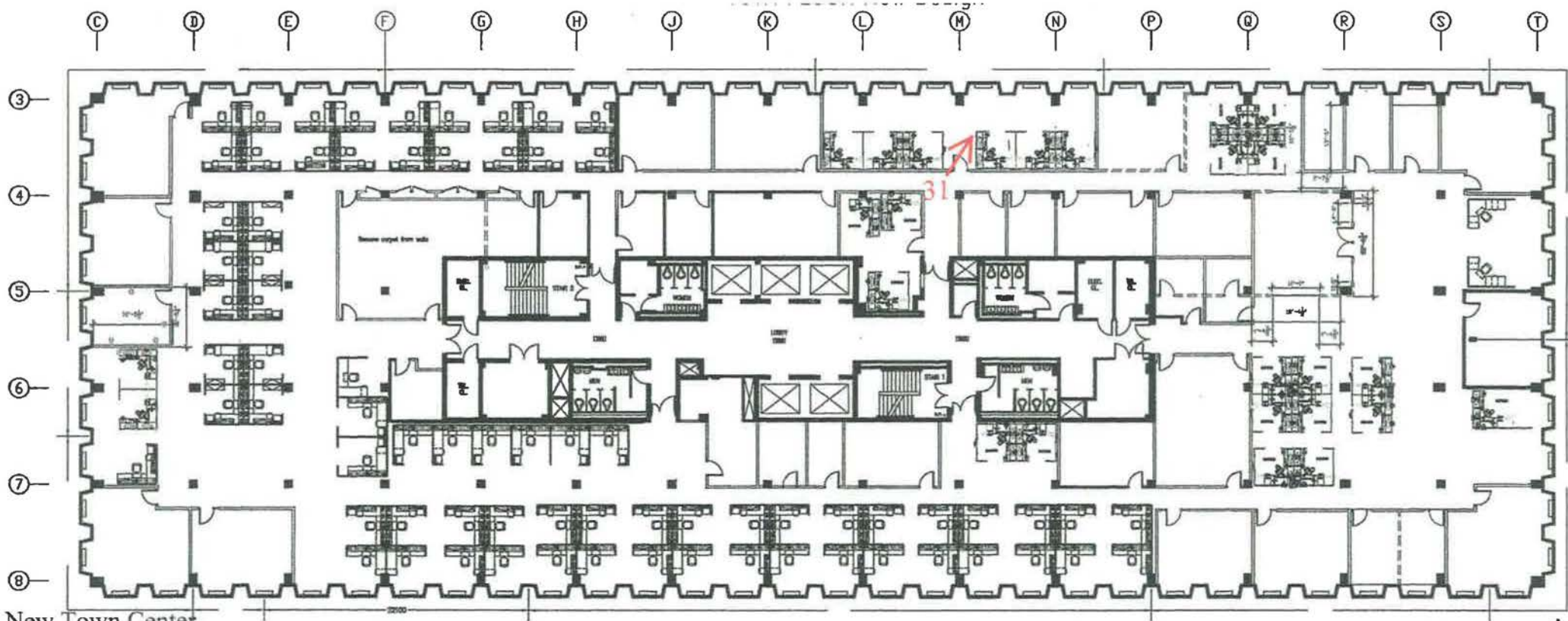
7th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 8th Floor Plan with Photograph Key

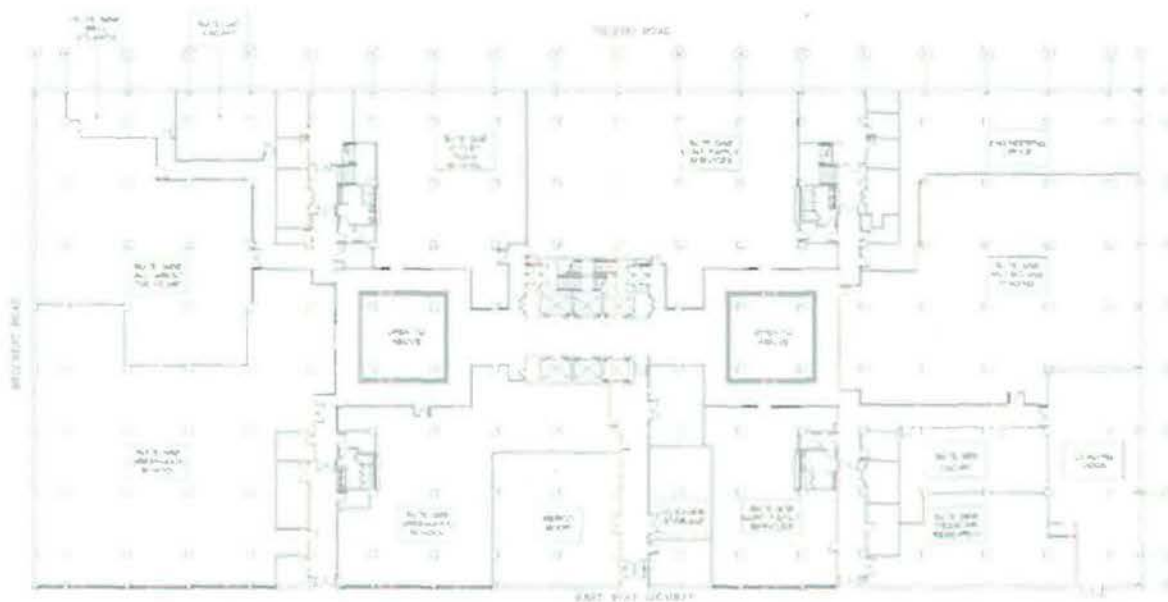


New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 9th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



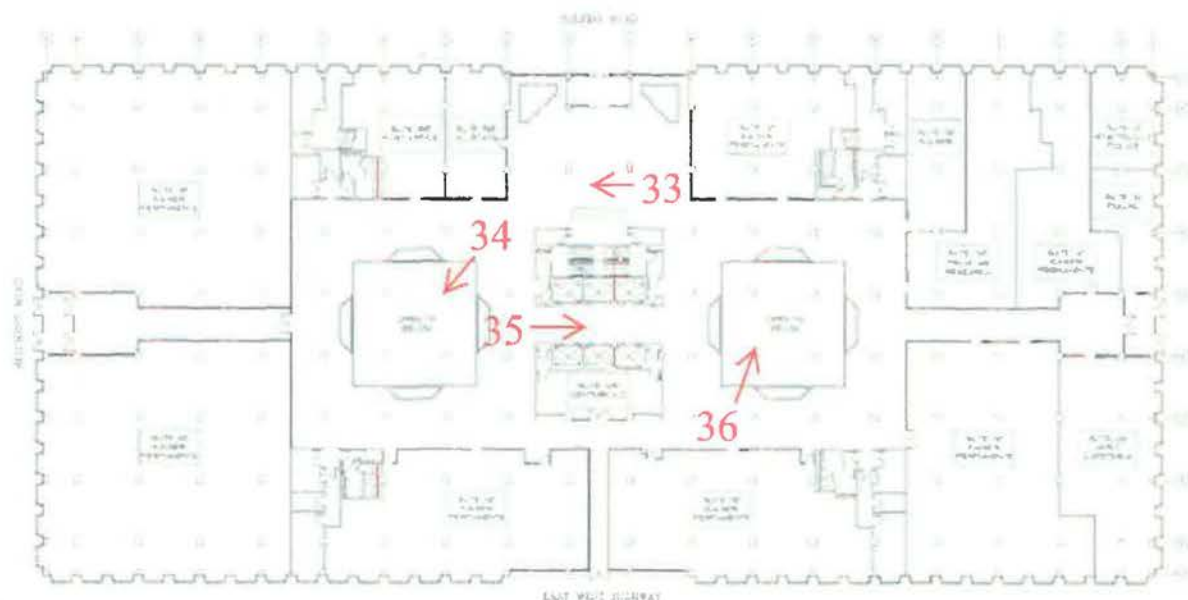
New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 10th Floor Plan with Photograph Key

Photograph #32: Roof

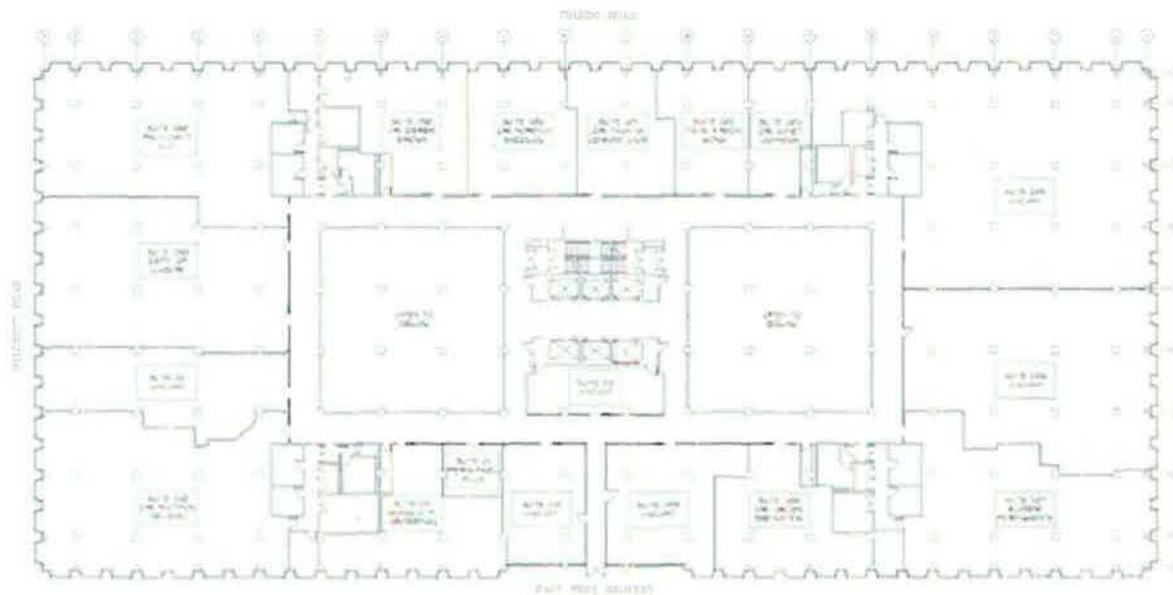


GROUND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

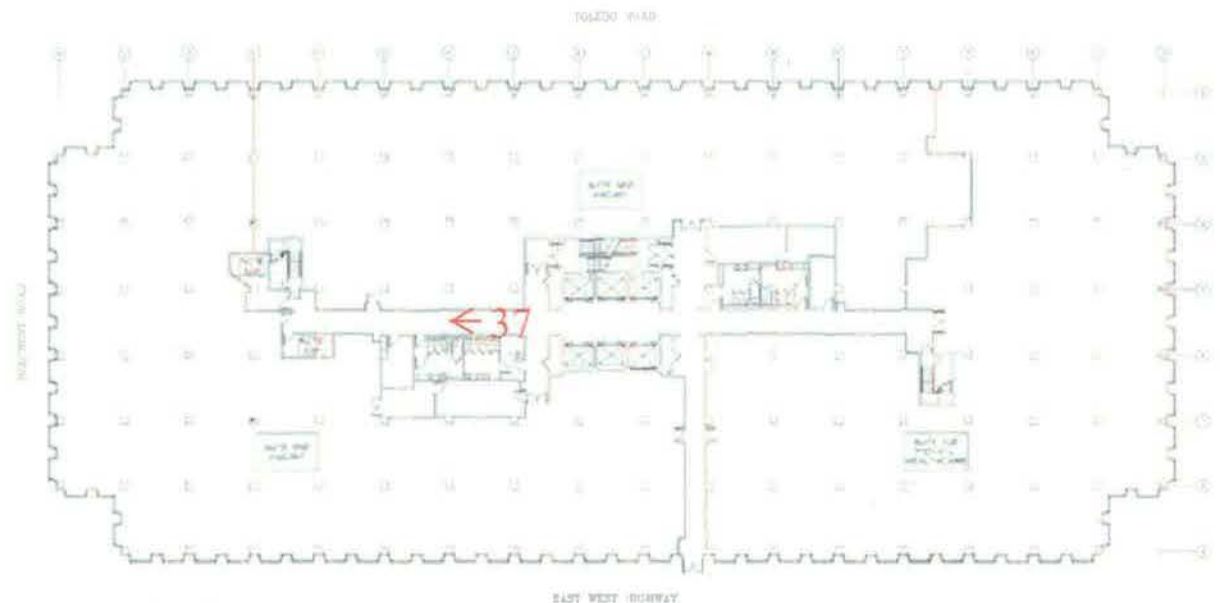


New Town Center
 Metro 3
 6525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 Basement and 1st Floor Plans with Photograph Key

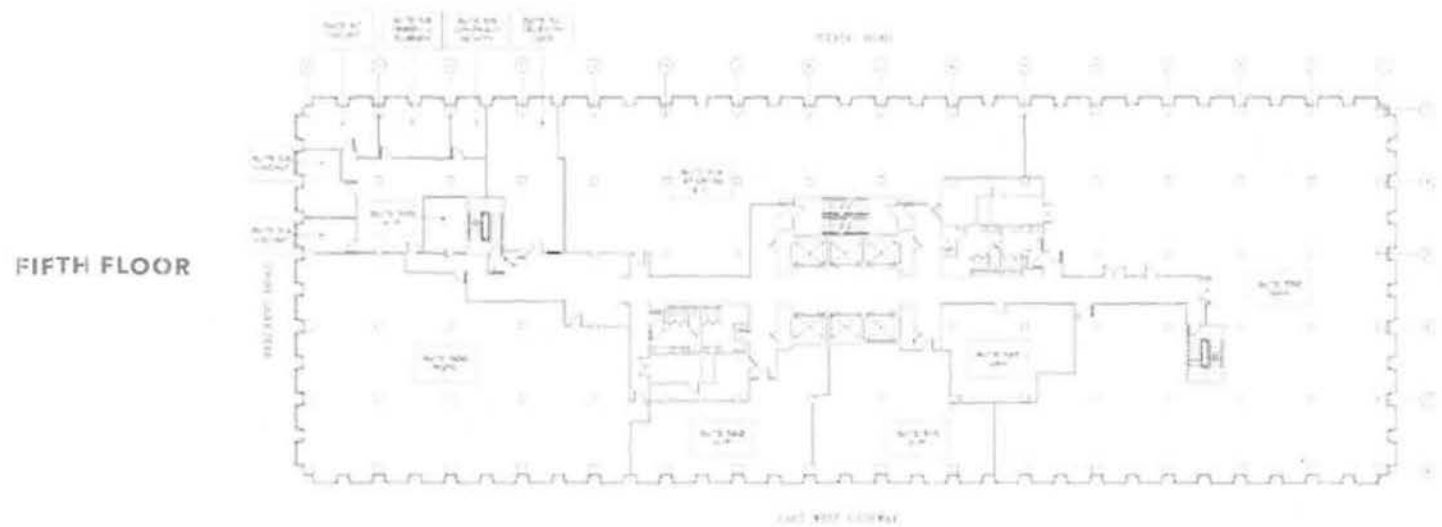
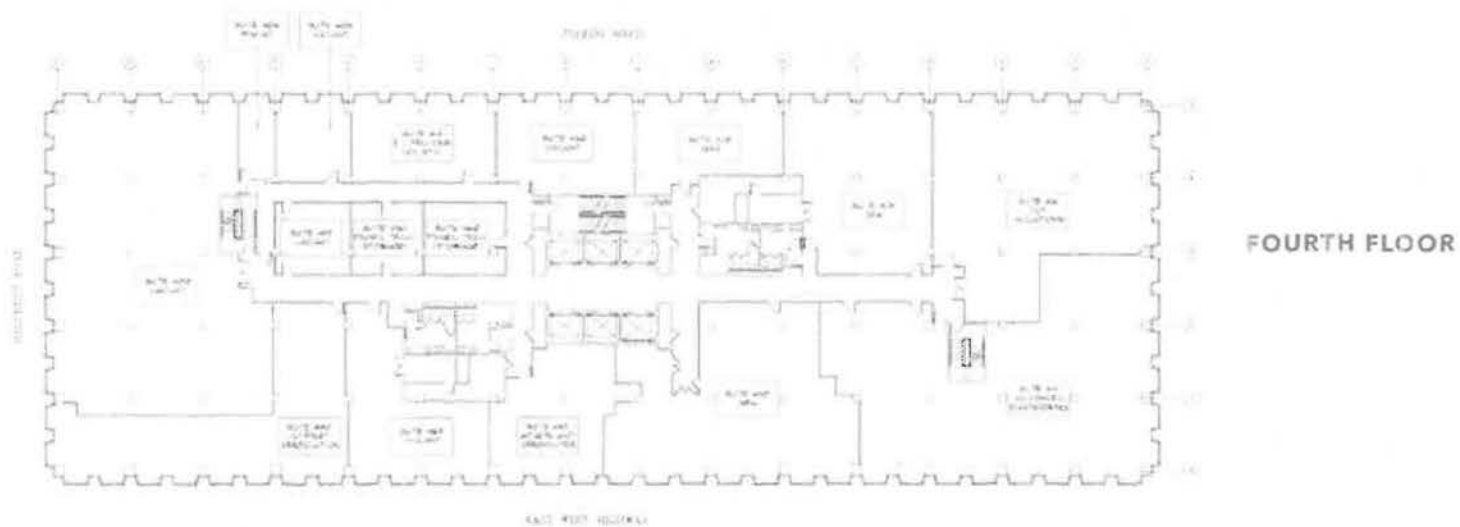


SECOND FLOOR

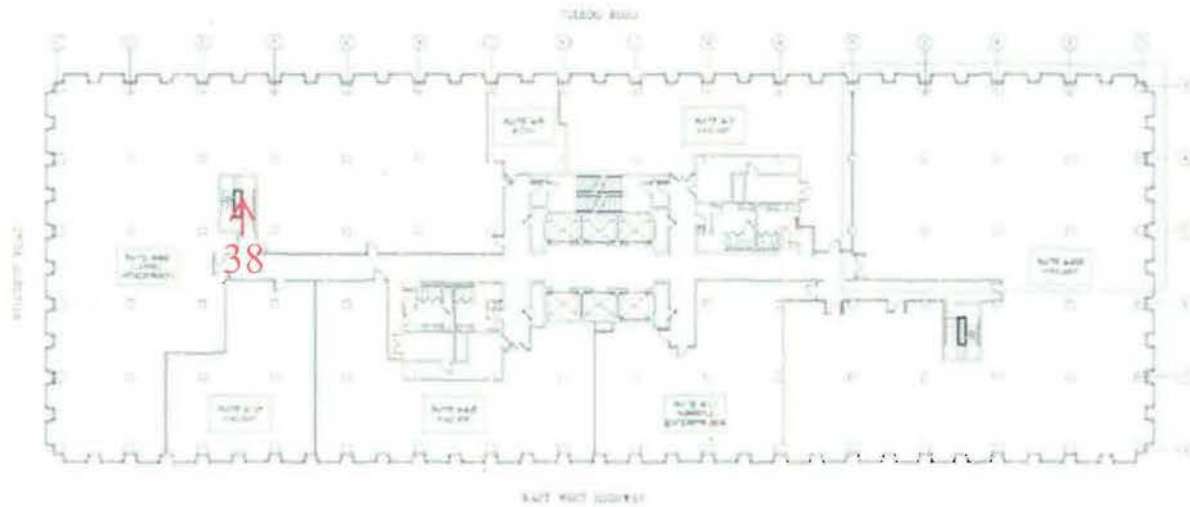
THIRD FLOOR



New Town Center
 Metro 3
 6525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 2nd and 3rd Floor Plans with Photograph Key

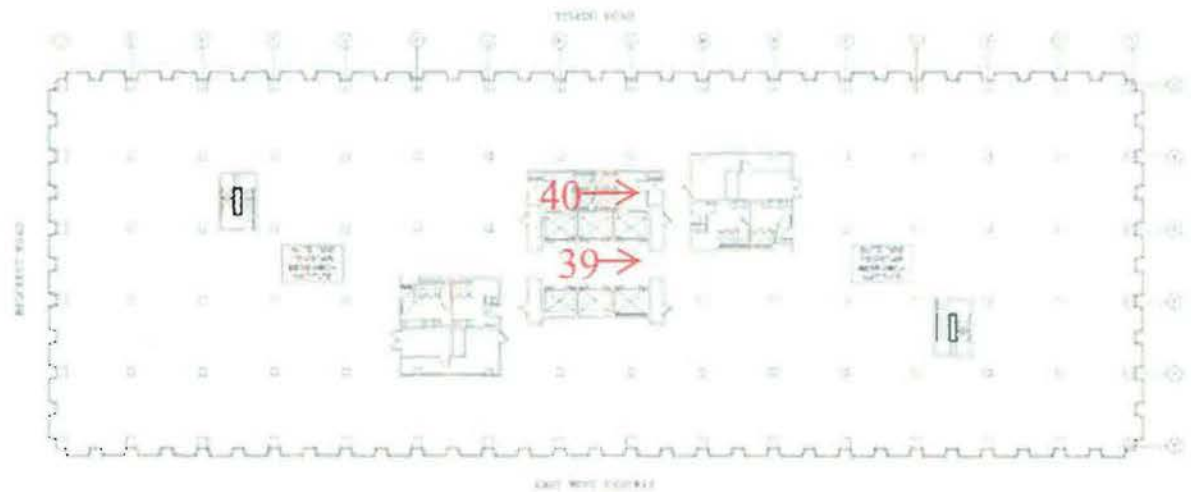


New Town Center
 Metro 3
 6525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 4th and 5th Floor Plans with Photograph Key

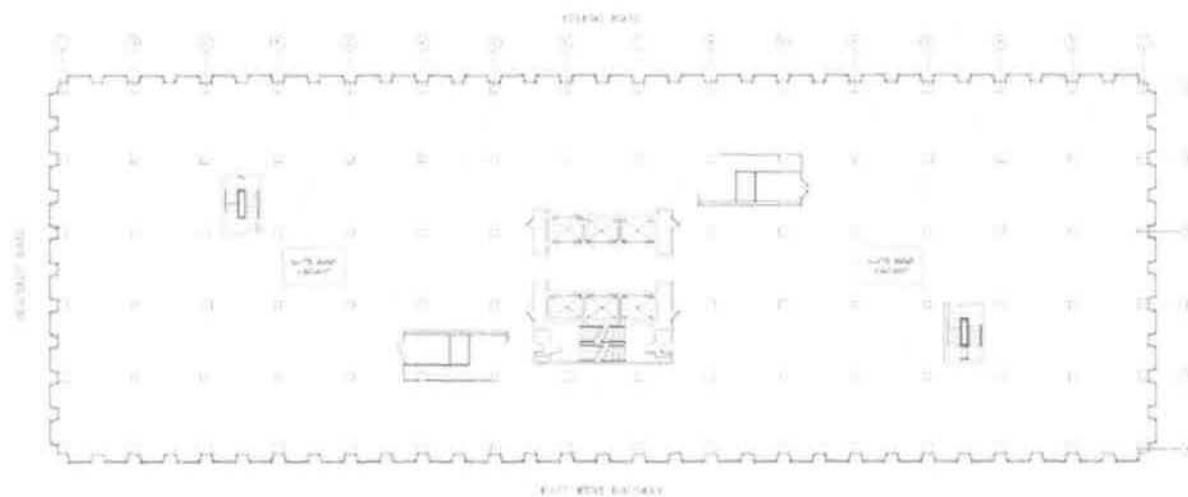


SIXTH FLOOR

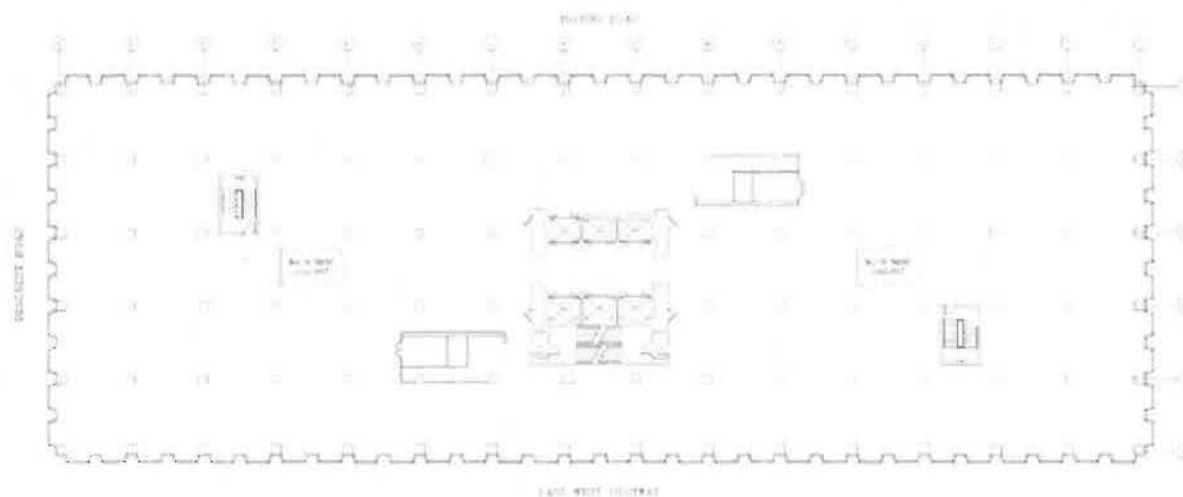
SEVENTH FLOOR



New Town Center
 Metro 3
 5525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 5th and 7th Floor Plans with Photograph Key



EIGHTH FLOOR



NINTH FLOOR

New Town Center
Metro 3
6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD

8th and 9th Floor Plans with Photograph Key







1001 LEASE 301-222-0200

991387











































G-015

G-015

































National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Resubmission

Property Name: New Town Center

Multiple Name:

State & County: MARYLAND, Prince George's

Date Received: 10/9/2018 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List: 11/23/2018

Reference number: RS100002683

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

X Accept Return Reject 10/23/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Addressed return comments to focus on the role of the Federal government, its policies, and practices that had a direct impact on the creation of this three-building complex. The original plan never came into fruition, but the Federal program of dispersing governmental functions out of the DC city core did cause a change in suburban development. When viewed in relation to similar projects, a pattern of development is seen. New Town center is a direct and locally significant result of Federal policy

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT/ NATIONAL REGISTER
RECOMMENDATION FORM



Property Name: New Town Center (68-104)

Location: 6505 Belcrest Road; 6525 Belcrest Road; 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville

County: Prince George's

CLG Name Prince George's County

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

☒ Nomination Recommended ☐ Nomination Not Recommended

Please check the applicable National Register criteria and/or considerations (exceptions) used in decision:

criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Justification of Decision: (use continuation sheet if necessary)

New Town Center is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Community Planning and Development, as an example of the practical application of a progressive suburban planning theory. The period of significance begins in 1962, when construction began on the project, and ends in 1971, when the first building campaign, in keeping with the original designs of Edward Durell Stone, was completed.

All three buildings designed by Stone, although constructed over nearly a decade, share a common vocabulary of material, massing and design. Resembling a Classical column with a base, shaft and capital, they are clad in the modern materials of cast stone and glazed white brick and have a regular fenestration pattern with 3-sided aluminum oriel windows.


Signature of Commission Chairman

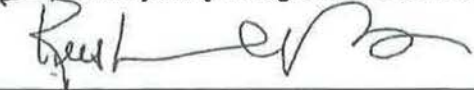
4/17/2018
Date

Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION

☒ I concur with the opinion of the historic preservation review commission.

☐ I do not concur with the opinion of the historic preservation review commission.
(Please justify disagreement on a separate sheet.)


Signature of Chief Elected Official
Title: County Executive

4/27/18
Date



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Robert S. McCord, Secretary



May 30, 2018

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Mail Stop 7228
[1849 C St, NW](#)
[Washington, D.C. 20240](#)

RE: New Town Center (PG: 68-104)
Prince George's County, Maryland

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed is documentation for nominating the above-referenced property to the National Register of Historic Places. The state review board and the owners concur in my recommendation for listing. Should you have questions in this matter, please contact Peter Kurtze at peter.kurtze@maryland.gov or (410) 697-9562.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hughes
Director-State Historic
Preservation Officer

AR/krg

cc: State Clearinghouse # MD 20170202-0074

Enclosures: NR form, maps, photographs, CD

Correspondence: owner notice

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name New Town Center

other names University Town Center, Prince George's Plaza (PG: 68-104)

2. Location

street & number 6505 Belcrest Road, 6525 Belcrest Road, 3700 East-West Highway ☐ not for publication

city or town Hyattsville ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Prince George's County code 033 zip code 20782

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Emilith Higley
Signature of certifying official/Title

Director/NPS

5.30.18
Date

Maryland Historical Trust
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Business (Office Building)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Business (Office Building)

VACANT

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CAST STONE

walls CAST STONE

BRICK

roof SYNTHETICS

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

New Town Center sits on a rectangular site of approximately thirty acres that slopes down to the east. It is bounded by East-West Highway to the south, Democracy Avenue to the east, Toledo Road to the north and Belcrest Road to the south. The site is also bisected by three smaller roads: America Boulevard, which runs north-south and Liberty Lane and Freedom Way, which run east-west.

The initial building campaign of New Town Center, between 1963 and 1971, consisted of three buildings designed by Edward Durell Stone named Metro 1, 2 and 3. A second campaign, which is not considered historically or architecturally significant, began in the late 1990s, consisting of low- and high-rise buildings

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

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Prince George's County, MD
County and State

interspersed among the original construction, as well as two paved parking lots to the south. There are also paved sidewalks, limited landscaping and street trees and a terraced plaza with a fountain. In the southwest corner of the site is the former Perpetual American Bank designed in 1965 by Robert O. Scholz. This building is not associated with the New Town Center development.

All three buildings, although constructed over nearly a decade, share a common vocabulary of material, massing and design. Resembling a Classical column with a base, shaft and capital, they are clad in the modern materials of cast stone and glazed white brick and have a regular fenestration pattern with 3-sided aluminum oriel windows.

Metro 1

Metro 1 is an 8 1/2-story rectangular building located near the southwest corner of the site (Photographs #1 and 2). It was the first building in the complex, designed between 1962 and 1963 by Edward Durell Stone. The east and west elevations are ten bays wide and the north and south elevations are thirty bays wide with a total of 290,000 square feet. All elevations are clad in fluted white cast concrete. Encircling the 1st floor is a covered veranda with a painted white metal railing and there are prominent projecting eaves between the 1st and 2nd floor and along the roofline. The fenestration pattern is consistent on all elevations. The 1st floor and basement, which is only visible in the east half of the building because of the change in grade, have 1-light aluminum storefront windows in all bays. The 2nd through 7th floors have narrow 3-sided aluminum oriel windows, which were replaced in 1996. The 8th floor has taller 3-sided aluminum oriel windows, which were also replaced in 1996. The building has a flat roof with a centered 1-story brick penthouse. Projecting from the 1st floor of the west elevation, facing Belcrest Road, is an elevated c. 2005 porch with three concrete, metal and glass hipped roof sections. The porch is accessed by a set of center stairs and flanking handicap ramps. It frames the primary entrance to the building, facing Belcrest Road, which contains paired contemporary aluminum sliding doors with 2-light aluminum transoms and 1-light aluminum sidelights. Projecting from the basement and 1st floor of the east elevation, facing America Boulevard, is a c. 2005 1-story brick veneer, concrete and stucco addition, which contains commercial space.

On the interior of the building, only the circulation core is consistent on each floor. Located in the center of the floor plate, there is an elevator lobby flanked by pairs of elevators to the north and south (Photographs #8 and 12). A fifth freight elevator is located to the northeast. There are also two U-return stairways to the northwest

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New Town Center
Name of Property

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and southeast of the elevators (Photograph #11). The stairways have painted metal treads and risers and painted metal railings. All circulation provides access between all floors. Throughout the building, all buildings have been divided into a series of larger and smaller spaces with no cohesive arrangement (Photographs #7, 9, 10, 13 and 14). The finishes are largely contemporary, including contemporary marble, terrazzo, linoleum, concrete and carpeted floors, painted drywall partitions and ceilings, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting. As the entire interior of the building was renovated in 1996, there are no extant historic finishes.

Metro 2

Metro 2 is a 10 ½-story rectangular building located near the center of the site (Photographs #3 and 4). It was the second building in the complex, designed in 1967 by Edward Durell Stone. The east and west elevations are ten bays wide and the north and south elevations are three bays wide with a total of 385,000 square feet. On all elevations, the 1st and 2nd floors are clad in glazed white brick and the upper floors are clad in fluted white cast concrete. The exposed portion of the basement, which is only visible on the north elevation. There are also low concrete and glazed white brick retaining walls on the north and east elevations. As the bottom two floors have a larger floor plate than the upper floors, they are topped by a veranda with a painted white metal railing. The veranda is covered by a freestanding aluminum canopy supported by fluted cast concrete columns. The fenestration pattern is consistent on all elevations. The 1st and 2nd floors have 1-light aluminum windows separated by metal spandrel panels. The 3rd through 9th floors have narrow 3-sided aluminum oriel windows and the 10th floor has taller 3-sided aluminum oriel windows. The building has a flat roof with a centered 1-story brick penthouse. Projecting from the 1st floor of the west elevation, facing America Boulevard, is a c. 2005 1-story brick veneer, concrete and stucco addition, which contains commercial space. Projecting from the east end of the south elevation is a 1-story vestibule, which originally served as the primary entrance to the building. Clad in fluted cast concrete to match the remainder of the building, it has large 1-light windows and a double-leaf glazed aluminum door and a revolving aluminum door that open to the south.

On the interior of the building, only the circulation core is consistent on each floor. Located in the center of the floor plate, there is an elevator lobby flanked by pairs of elevators to the north and south (Photographs #15 and 17). A fifth freight elevator is located to the northwest. There are also two U-return stairways to the northwest and southeast of the elevators (Photograph #19). The stairways have concrete treads and risers and painted metal railings. All circulation provides access between all floors. Throughout the building, all buildings have been divided into a series of larger and smaller spaces with no cohesive arrangement (Photographs #16, 18 and

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New Town Center
Name of Property

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20-22). The finishes are largely contemporary, including contemporary terrazzo, linoleum, concrete and carpeted floors, painted drywall partitions and ceilings, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting. As the entire interior of the building was renovated in 2006, the only extant historic finish is in some of the elevator lobbies and consists of marble cladding in various colors.

Metro 3

Metro 3 is an 11-story rectangular building located near the northwest corner of the site (Photographs #5 and 6). It was the third building in the complex, designed in 1971 by Edward Durell Stone. The east and west elevations are ten bays wide and the north and south elevations are thirty bays wide with a total of 420,000 square feet. All elevations are clad in fluted white cast concrete. As the bottom two floors have a larger floor plate than the upper floors, they are topped by a veranda with a painted white metal railing. The veranda is covered by a freestanding aluminum canopy supported partially by fluted cast concrete columns and by the projecting 3-sided aluminum oriel windows of the 3rd floor. The primary entrance is located in the center of the north elevation. It consists of three double-leaf glazed aluminum doors with 1-light aluminum transoms. The entrance bays are surrounded by a 1-story, three bay cast concrete porch supported by concrete pillars and topped by a flat roof. The fenestration pattern is consistent on all elevations. The 1st through 3rd floors have 3-sided aluminum storefronts windows. The 4th through 10th floors have narrow 3-sided aluminum oriel windows and the 11th floor has taller 3-sided aluminum oriel windows. The building has a flat roof with a centered 1-story brick penthouse.

On the interior of the building, only the circulation core is consistent on each floor. Located in the center of the floor plate, there is an elevator lobby flanked by three elevators to the north and south (Photographs #25 and 29). The building has three U-return stairways with painted metal treads, risers and railings (Photographs #28 and 30). The stairways are located to the north of the elevators and near the northwest and northeast corners of the floor plate. All circulation provides access between all floors. Throughout the building, all buildings have been divided into a series of larger and smaller spaces with no cohesive arrangement (Photographs #23 and 27). The only unique element of the interior configuration is two square atriums between the two lower floors (Photographs #24 and 26). The finishes are largely contemporary, including contemporary marble, terrazzo, linoleum, concrete and carpeted floors, painted drywall partitions and ceilings, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting. As the entire interior of the building was renovated in 2006, the only extant historic

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New Town Center
Name of Property

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Prince George's County, MD
County and State

finish is marble cladding on the 1st floor and in some of the elevator lobbies and consists of marble cladding in various colors.

Integrity

The buildings associated with the initial planning and construction of New Town Center retain a high degree of integrity. The overall materials, form, and defining architectural characteristics remain intact, including fluted cast stone, regular fenestration pattern with oriel windows, and columnar form. Although the windows in Metro 2 have been replaced, there is no obvious disparity from the original windows and none of the openings have been altered. The quality, placement and condition of the construction materials, as well as the notable Modern architectural design are both highly characteristic of the period and also all remain wholly intact. The workmanship is expressed in a consistent architectural style, is of good quality and is in keeping with contemporary trends. On the interior, the circulation core is intact in all three buildings. As this was the only consistent or deliberately designed element of these tenant office buildings, the interior renovations do not adversely impact the historic nature of the buildings.

The location of the buildings remains intact since the initial construction. Although the setting has changed slightly with the 1-story projections and the new construction throughout the site, all new elements are clearly distinguishable and, because of their rather generic style, do not compete against the monumentality and individuality of the original buildings. They are also on secondary elevations so the most prominent facades retain their original configuration. The original boundary roads also remain and the new roads within the site are based on the axial grid created by the original arrangement of the historic buildings.

The feeling and associations of the buildings also have a high level of integrity, in large part because of the integrity of the previous five aspects. The operation of the site as a mixed-use complex and the function of the buildings as flexible tenant spaces effectively relay the sense of place and the notable Modern development of this former suburban outpost.

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☒ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1962-1971

Significant Dates

1963

1967

1971

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Blumberg, Marvin and Herschel, developers

Stone, Edward Durell, architect

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

See Attached.

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Library of Congress

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section 8 Page 1

Prince George's County, MD
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Summary Statement of Significance:

New Town Center is significant under Criterion A, in the area of Community Planning and Development, for its representation of the evolution of regional ideological city planning principles and as an example of how the practical application of a progressive suburban planning theory alone is insufficient for its success. The participation of the Federal government in the initial development of New Town Center was a secondary element that simultaneously enabled its existence and ultimately contributed to its demise. The eventual inability of New Town Center to achieve its original vision further reinforces the archetypal nature of the project. It serves as a case study that is characteristic of both the standard trajectory of other city planning experiments of the era and of the theory that a successful city planning project cannot be an isolated entity. As all cities, both new and old, do not exist in a vacuum, they are necessarily dependent on the resources and uses of its setting and cannot succeed in a community that is not functionally equipped to receive it. Despite all of this, however, the unrealized nature of the project does not detract from its significance, as its significance is inherently derived from its novel and progressive conception and not from the physical application of those ideas. The period of significance begins in 1962, when construction began on the project, and ends in 1971, when the first building campaign, in keeping with the original designs of Edward Durell Stone, was completed. While the period of significance extends to a date less than fifty years in the past, the property meets Criteria Consideration G for its exceptional significance in representing a particular phase in the history of community planning ideology.

Resource History and Historic Context:

A Brief History of the Construction and Operation of New Town Plaza

In the 1950s, brothers Marvin and Herschel Blumberg purchased 140 acres in Hyattsville, MD from Isadore Gudelsky, a family acquaintance.¹ The parcel, known as the Heurich Farm, was located at the northeast intersection of the East-West Highway, which was constructed in 1956, and Belcrest Road.² The first major commercial development in the immediate area was in 1959, when the county's first regional shopping mall

¹ Douglas Fruehling, "Back to the Future." *Washington Business Journal* (21 May 2007). <http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2007/05/21/focus4.html?page=1>. Accessed on September 29, 2015. Hyattsville was founded in 1845 by Christopher C. Hyatt who purchased the original parcel of land and actively began to develop the lots into a comprehensive town. The town, which was first known as a railroad suburb, continued to expand in the 20th century with the arrival of the streetcar and the automobile. *Traceries MIHP*, 8:1.

² The East-West Highway connected Hyattsville to Bethesda.

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National Park Service

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PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

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was opened by Lathrop Douglas immediately adjacent to the Blumberg parcel on the south side of the East-West Highway.³ Hoping to use the popularity of the new mall as a springboard, the Blumbergs, under the entity of the Spruell Development Corporation, began the process of constructing what they saw as a "rural Rockefeller Center," complete with a name brand architect.⁴

The Blumbergs initially approached Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a master of Modern architecture. However, after initial conversations that made it clear that Mies would not take into account the preferences of the Blumbergs, the Blumbergs pursued another route.⁵ Their next stop was Edward Durell Stone, an equally prominent architect and one with several ongoing commissions in Washington, D.C., including the National Geographic Society Building (1961) and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (1962).⁶ Stone had also completed numerous larger complexes, including the Stuart Company Plant and Office in Pasadena, CA (1958, NR 1994) and the Campus Center at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage, AK (1966, NR 1979). Although neither was at all as large as the initial design for New Town Center, they both were designed on an axial plan. In 1958, Stone commented that it was "doubtful whether anything as pure and as refined and as beautiful as the New England village green...has existed elsewhere in history."⁷ In this comment, as in all three of his designs for larger complexes, Stone emphasizes the importance of an axial balance between open space and structure, a clear arrangement of programmatically distinct and necessary structures and a need for referencing historical buildings without direct replication.

As with most of his work, New Town Center conveys the monumental and understated but unified forms that are an indirect ode to architecture of the past. In describing the project specifically, Stone said the buildings captured all of the successes of modern engineering with their large expanses of precast concrete while existing outside of the "world of plate glass and aluminum that is upon us."⁸ In viewing the project today, there is no question that these unique structures stand in contrast not only to their immediate surroundings, but also to the

³ Paul Weishar, "Prince George's Plaza." *Maryland Historic Trust, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form* (January 2010): 8:1.

⁴ "New Community Centers from Washington to Texas." *Architectural Forum* 118 (April 1963): 53.

⁵ Mies proposed floor to ceiling windows for the buildings and after Herschel, who had young children, questioned the safety aspect of such a design, Mies allegedly replied, "That's the mother's problem." Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson, *Retrofitting Suburbia* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009): 221.

⁶ A later building in Washington, D.C. by Stone was the Nassif Building, now known as the Constitution Center, which was completed in 1969.

⁷ Edward Durell Stone, "The Case Against the Tailfin Age." *The New York Times* (18 October 1959): 31.

⁸ Stone, 26.

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larger portfolio of mid-20th century architecture in the Washington metropolitan area, most of which, Stone felt, could be "ordered out of a catalog."⁹

Stone was a natural choice as he shared the brothers' interest to "answer to the critics of suburban sprawl" and began to develop a master plan for the project at a projected cost of \$78 million.¹⁰ The contractor for the project was the Bancroft Construction Company, which was also founded and operated by the Blumbergs.

Stone designed his town center on an axial grid with several office buildings and residential towers, a 1,400-seat movie theater, a cultural center, a youth center, an ice-skating rink, a reflecting pool, a sculpture garden, several plazas and fountains, a pedestrian mall, a swimming pool, a putting green and tennis courts (Figures 1-3).¹¹ In keeping with the inclinations of the day, all of the automobile circulation, enough for 3,000 cars, would be located below ground, separate from the pedestrians and accessed by escalators that would open directly into the buildings. As such, Stone conceived the project, from the beginning, as a "planned urban center that combines all aspects of modern life..." and a "Rockefeller Center in the countryside..."¹²

In deference to its suburban location, the Blumbergs were promised that a spur to I-95 would be constructed at the northern portion of the site. This, combined with the existence of the East-West Highway, would place the complex at a major vehicular intersection. However, in an optimistic reference to its position as a "town center," a Metro stop was also proposed to be located below grade, officially recognizing both the importance of the rise of public transportation in the late 20th century and the prominence of the complex as the recipient of this placement.¹³

Construction on the first building, known as Metro 1, began in 1962. The 8-story building contained 232,280 square feet, making it the "largest private office building in the Washington suburbs."¹⁴ In June of that year, the General Services Administration (GSA) arranged to lease 80% of the building for the Department of

⁹ John B. Willmann, "Suburban Building Development is Described by Architect Stone." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (16 January 1963): B2.

¹⁰ Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 221.

¹¹ Willmann, "Suburban Building Development is Described by Architect Stone," B2.

¹² John B. Willmann, "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (6 June 1964): E1 and E12; Willmann, "Suburban Building Development is Described by Architect Stone," B2.

¹³ Willmann, "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County", E1.

¹⁴ "New Community Centers from Washington to Texas."

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Agriculture at a rate of \$3 per square foot with the stipulation that the work be complete by May 15, 1963.¹⁵ The final cost of the project was approximately \$5.5 million.

The second building, Metro 2, was constructed in 1967. Approximately the same size as Metro 1, 80% of the building, or approximately 280,000 square feet was again occupied by a government agency – the Naval Ship Engineering Center (NAVSEC), who committed to a 10-year lease at an annual cost of \$1.2 million.¹⁶ Approximately 2,000 employees occupied the building until 1982. Metro 3, the third and final building designed in keeping with Stone's master plan, was completed in 1971 and primarily occupied by the National Center for Health Statistics, who remained in the building until 2002.¹⁷

An Explanation of an Unrealized Design

Despite the overwhelming initial support for the project and the fact that it made such a convincing theoretical argument, it was quickly clear that it would not be developed as originally conceived. Firstly, the Blumbergs were never able to obtain financing for the remaining programmatic objectives, such as the residences and the amenities. The multiple high rises called for too much density without any supporting amenities and no one wanted to finance amenities that no one would visit. The most tangible example of this was a 33- or 34-story office and apartment building, which was issued permits in late 1965. It was to be "one of the tallest buildings in the metropolitan area" and the "highest privately owned building in the Washington area" but, despite the permitting approval, no one came forward to ultimately finance it and take a risk on what was widely considered a risky endeavor.¹⁸

But the ultimately insurmountable dilemma was that of transportation. From the beginning, New Town Center was marketed as an urban alternative. Although walkability from outside the complex was never an option, automobile and Metro access to the development were heavily promoted. This plan hinged on two construction projects that were due to begin imminently. The first was a spur from I-95, which was going to be extended into downtown Washington, D.C. and linking with the Southeast-Southwest Expressway. This would not only

¹⁵ "New Community Centers from Washington to Texas," Fruehling.

¹⁶ Weishar, 8:2-8:3. Leasing for Metro 2 was handled by the Carey Winston Company.

¹⁷ In 2002, they moved to Metro 4, a new building constructed specifically for them and the first building that was a departure from Stone's original plan.

¹⁸ Bart Barnes, "34-Story Towers Asked on Prince George's Site: Plan Seeks 34-Story MD. Towers." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (29 October 1965): np; Bart Barnes, "295-Foot Tower Wins Approval in County." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (23

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simplify vehicular access to the development, but would also put Hyattsville on the map, as it were, instigating development in the area in general, and thereby further commodifying the new project. The promise of the spur continued as a possibility until 1977, when the project was officially terminated.¹⁹

The second element was a Metro stop, which was originally scheduled to open at the western portion of the site, directly into one of the basements of the proposed buildings. While parking was to be incorporated into the project, although in a downplayed manner, the major innovative component of its program was that it was to be Metro-accessible, just like a "real" city. Ultimately, however the extension of the Metro never materialized and the development, like so many others before it, became just another standard suburban office park.

A less tangible, but perhaps nonetheless important element of unrealized nature of the project, was its lack of identity. Known by no fewer than five names, including New Town Center, Prince George's Center, Prince George's Plaza and Federal Center Buildings, it was seen as an office park, a shopping mall and a housing project.²⁰ Although a successful town must necessarily have all of these components, it must also have a clear sense of place, which, despite all of the planning, New Town Center never seemed to be able to establish.

The end result of this unfortunate culmination of circumstances was that the three isolated office buildings were surrounded by a sea of paved parking lots, instead of the planned buildings, hardscaping, landscaping and amenities that Stone and the Blumbergs had for so long envisioned.

The Development of New Town Center from 1993 Onward

In 1993, the long-promised Metro stop opened as an extension of the Green/Yellow line. As anticipated thirty years earlier, this both spurred development in the area and created a firm and simple link between Hyattsville, Washington, D.C. and points in between. It was also naturally a catalyst for a new construction campaign at New Town Center. The buildings originally known as Metro 1 and 2 were renovated in 1996. In 2002, a fourth office building was also constructed. Although this was the first element of construction at the site that deviated from Stone's original plan, it was in keeping with the development in that, once again, its primary

December 1965): D3.

¹⁹ Lawrence Aurbach, "Prince George's Plaza Transit District." <http://pedshed.net/?p=11>. Accessed on September 15, 2016.

²⁰ Fruehling.

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tenant was a government agency, the National Center for Health Statistics, who had formerly occupied Metro 3. A new 16-story residential building was also constructed in 2002 and, in 2006, Metro 3 was finally renovated. Since that time, the development has continued for the remainder of the site, including the construction of more residential and commercial buildings, a movie theater and a parking structure. Although none of these elements are in keeping with the original design for the site, there is no doubt that it currently reads as a town center, a multi-faceted, multi-purposed complex of which Herschel Blumberg felt that Stone would be proud.²¹

New Town Center and the Proactive Development of Suburban Maryland

As early as 1909, the United States began to embrace the urban planning concept of planned communities. One of the first examples in the country was Forest Hills in Queens, designed by Grosvenor Atterbury and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. The "town" was based on the Garden City movement, popular in England, which advocated for self-contained communities with residential, agricultural and industrial components that were surrounded by greenbelts.²² This notion of a self-sufficient town, in which people could live, work and play would become the basis for virtually all planned communities for the next 120 years.

There was little development in the field of town planning for nearly thirty years until Roosevelt's New Deal ushered in a new wave of interest. Between 1935 and 1937, the Federal government, under the supervision of the Resettlement Administration, funded the Greenbelt Town program.²³ This was the first time in United States history that the Federal government actively sponsored such an effort and it resulted in the construction of three towns, Greenbelt, MD outside of Washington, D.C. (1937), Greenhill, OH outside of Cincinnati (1938) and Greendale, WI outside of Milwaukee (1938). The plans for all three towns were based on the same principles of the Garden City movement, but on a much larger scale. With several thousand residents who primarily lived in rowhouses with large backyards, the towns offered schools, churches, movie theaters, markets, fire stations and shops. They were to contain the best aspects of the city within a country idyll. In addition, all three towns were strategically situated near an already established city.²⁴

²¹ Fruehling.

²² This new form of city planning was first conceived of by Sir Ebenezer Howard in 1898.

²³ David R. Goldfield, *Encyclopedia of American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007): 537; Mary Corbin Sies and Isabelle Gourney, *The Modern Movement in Maryland*, 37-38.

²⁴ Marion Clawson, *Suburban Land Conversion in the United States* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971): 338. The other, less implemented, option was that of a wholly independent entity, similar to that of Levittown.

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The oldest of these towns, Greenbelt, was located in Prince George's County, Maryland. Cited by its National Historic Landmark nomination as embodying the "regional planning principles and architectural ideals of the mid-1930s," the town was not only physically planned to accommodate a diversity of form and function but was also socially engineered to house a population with a range of incomes and professions.²⁵ It was believed that by providing for a broad range of people and a broad range of opportunities, Greenbelt could approximate all of the positive attributes of an existing city without any of the drawbacks. As Greenbelt is located approximately six miles from New Town Center, there is no doubt that it stands as a formative precursor.

During the 1950s, Prince George's County gained 163,000 residents and had an 84.8% growth rate in the 1960s, which was the largest in both the state and the country.²⁶ As this left no doubt that people were moving into the county, the question became of how best to plan for them. After the relative success of Greenbelt, it is not surprising that the answer was once again that of a planned community. It was still believed that the community needed to have a balance between "residential, commercial, public service, and other parts both during the growing years and at its ultimate development" and have a developer who had both the time and the money to invest in the project.²⁷

In Maryland, the best example of a planned community in the mid-20th century was Columbia, MD.²⁸ On a little over 1,000 acres, James W. Rouse first developed plans for the community in the early 1960s. Rouse saw a town with the same comprehensive objectives as Greenbelt: residential, commercial and social facets with construction that could both accommodate the initial development and expand as the town grew. This decision was a sensible one as the original group of 1,000 residents in 1968 ballooned to a town of 100,000 by 2005. Although Columbia is located in an adjacent county twenty miles to the north of New Town Center, it still serves as an important precedent for New Town Center. Maryland had become an incubator for these progressive planned communities and New Town Center was the natural extension of the narrative.

The vision for New Town Center is based on a similar precedent to Columbia, but on a naturally smaller scale. No less comprehensive however, the original plan determined areas for working, living and recreation and

²⁵ "Greenbelt, Maryland Historic District." *National Historic Landmark* (March 1996): 8:1.

²⁶ Sies and Gournay, 37-38; The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, *Prince George's Modern, Midcentury Architecture: 1947-1971* (2015): 4.

²⁷ Clawson, 338-339.

²⁸ Other examples in the country are Reston, VA and Irvine, CA.

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aimed to give both residents and employees a self-contained experience. The primary distinction between New Town Center and its predecessors, however, was that this development was already surrounded by infrastructure and commercial development, such as the large shopping center located directly to the west and constructed in 1959, rather than undeveloped, rural tracts. As such, it was able to benefit from the programmatic aspects of these elements while being simultaneously able to create itself as a unique, independent and comprehensive entity. William J. Stevens, chairman of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission spoke to this, saying that New Town Center was a

glimpse into the future. It takes into account the unique assets of the area; its open space; its prime residential neighborhoods; its commercial potentials and its centers of community life. It then projects a future land use pattern, which sets goals for future development.²⁹

The Blumbergs understood these existing conditions and because their concern with the issue of suburban sprawl, they were determined that their project would actively run counter to the dominant trend of random development. They saw that, after World War II, "suburban expansion was [characterized by] its ugliness, cultural conformity, social isolation and environmental problems."³⁰ In 1963, Hershel Blumberg said, "the day has passed when the country can afford the wasteful practice of indiscriminate suburban sprawl out from our congested cities. The developers of land beyond our metropolitan cores must shoulder the responsibility of working closely with architects, community leaders and government planning agencies to insure the orderly and pleasing growth of unused suburban land."³¹

Edward Durell Stone had been thinking about similar issues since the 1950s. In 1958, he was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying that suburban sprawl was "desecrating the American landscape" and, the next year, wrote an editorial in *The New York Times* saying, "we have yet to realize that a beautiful, well-planned environment can be as much a part of our national wealth as our land, forests and other physical assets and that a splendid physical heritage is part of our moral obligation to future generations."³² He was more specific in 1963, saying that the "short-sighted exploitation of land around many of our cities has produced chaotic results. On the one hand is the proliferation of single-family homes on small plots of ground development en masse.... On the other are decaying clutters of small commercial centers. A recent innovation in suburbia, the

²⁹ Willmann, "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County," E1.

³⁰ Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 2.

³¹ "Prince George's County Draws \$78 Million Project." *Washington World* 3:13 (March 1963): np.

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shopping center, has added new problems with its emphasis on the automobile and the resultant proliferation of traffic and road building."³³ This was particularly true in Maryland, where beginning in the early 1950s, a master plan called for the rebuilding of 3,100 miles of highways and the addition of 300 miles of new roads.³⁴ The clear and immediate outcome of this plan was that the placement of the roads promoted and "directed long-range suburban development and planning, especially office, retail and light industry construction."³⁵

So when the Blumbergs approached Stone about an alternative approach to development, he was a natural participant. Although not known as an urban planner, he quickly conceived of a plan for a "self-contained community", "a planned urban center that combines all aspects of modern life..."³⁶ By consolidating the residential and commercial components of the sprawl, he developed a program that was a "direct response to the problems of suburban sprawl as perceived at the time..."³⁷

During the 1940s, "small office buildings began being constructed in the retail zones of residential suburbs, specifically geared to branch offices and small service corporations..."³⁸ By the 1950s, "suburban office and corporate compounds became more frequent components of the suburbs."³⁹ Therefore, when the proposal for New Town Center was first presented to the general public, the idea was not necessarily novel, but simply new and improved. Such a positive departure, in fact, that the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission even created a new zoning category for the construction, "planned urban center."⁴⁰ Even the normally reactive zoning code was actively contributing to the notion that this development would be something different.

The change in zoning code also affirms that this suburban mixed-use center was an extremely early example of its type, not only in Prince George's County, but farther afield as well. In Maryland, concentrated developments in Bethesda and Silver Spring, presented an unsatisfactory juxtaposition between a historic town

³² Stone, 26 and 31.

³³ Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 221.

³⁴ Sies and Gournay, 41.

³⁵ Sies and Gournay, 41.

³⁶ Willmann. "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County," E1 and E12.

³⁷ Hunting, 35; Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 221-222.

³⁸ Louise A. Mazingo, *Pastoral Capitalism: A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011): 151.

³⁹ Sies and Gournay, 62.

⁴⁰ Willmann. "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County," E1 and E12.

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center and a new but separated shopping center. In Virginia, cities like Crystal City and Rosslyn began around the same time, but did not have the same consistency of development or overarching vision.

Public reaction to the proposal was overwhelmingly positive. William J. Stevens, Chairman of the MNCPPC said that the plan was a "glimpse into the future. It takes into account the unique assets of the area; its open space; its prime residential neighborhoods; its commercial potentials and its centers of community life. It then projects a future land use pattern which sets goals for future development."⁴¹ Senator Daniel Brewster and Representative Hervey Machen, both of Maryland, said of the move, "We believe that the PGC location is one of the best in the suburban area for Federal employees and facilities because of the availability of PGC of good schools, roads and housing."⁴²

The Role of the Federal Government in Planned Communities

Beginning with the implementation of the Green towns in the late 1930s, the Federal government often took an active and pivotal role in community planning in various degrees. As these towns were both difficult to finance, because of their complicated composition, and difficult to sustain, because they took such a long time to take root, the financial support from the government often provided much-needed assistance. This relief took a range of forms, including low mortgage rates, lenient financing terms or ready tenants.

In the 1960s, "Lyndon Johnson suggested that self-contained New Towns become part of the general strategy for ameliorating the problems of the inner city" and the "subsequent revival of New Town philosophy in the United States has been dominated by towns that were conceived and built as for-profit enterprises with government subsidy."⁴³ The motivations of the government in the 1960s were similar to those in the 1930s, including "implementing innovative design solutions; employing new technologies; providing an appropriate mixture of land uses to ensure proximity between the paces where people live, work and play; and preserving open areas in balance with suburbanization."⁴⁴ Shortly after Johnson's declaration, Congress passed various legislation sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that expanded the

⁴¹ Willmann. "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County," E1 and E12.

⁴² Weishar, 8:3.

⁴³ William Flanagan, *Urban Sociology: Images and Structure* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2010): 340.

⁴⁴ Goldfield, 537.

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development of suburban programs by granting benefits and guarantees to New Town developers, "particularly in the form of financial support."⁴⁵

Unfortunately, the presence of the government often provided a false sense of security and success. Twelve of the thirteen projects funded by the HUD program failed because the initial influx of money was not enough to make these communities ultimately sustainable.

This relationship of both initial investment and lack of ultimate realization is equally prominently present at New Town Center. The GSA provided the necessary tenants both in the 1960s and the 2000s and, as such, continues this highly characteristic relationship. If New Town Center had succeeded, it would be an outlier. In this respect, its incomplete nature determines it to be an archetypal example of its form.

The Leasing of Privately Owned Office Buildings by the GSA

Beginning in the 1950s and continuing through the 1960s, the bureaus and agencies of the federal government were decentralizing the physical fabric of their office space and buildings into the Maryland suburbs.⁴⁶ Indeed, when the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was developing their context statement for Modern architecture in Maryland, they went so far as to say, "the Government's decentralization of federal agencies for security reasons during the Cold War can be considered a key component of one of the principal modernization campaigns stimulating new building in the Free State."⁴⁷

In 1955, the GSA formalized this approach by establishing a specific procedure for the leasing of privately owned buildings throughout the country. To begin with, the leasing of privately owned buildings was to be considered only after it was determined that either space in existing Government buildings or currently leased buildings would not be sufficient for the proposed use or that the construction or renovation of either building category with Federal money was not economically feasible. Once these options had been eliminated, the GSA determined that new construction with private funding was permissible. To this end, the GSA would then develop the requirements for the building program, put the project out to bid and then select a developer willing to financing the project. This arrangement was beneficial to the developers because the GSA was

⁴⁵ Flanagan, 340.

⁴⁶ Sies and Gournay, 37.

⁴⁷ Sies and Gournay, 38.

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essentially an ideal tenant, who could offer competitive financing rates and had excellent credit, and was beneficial to the GSA because they could get a building designed to their exact specifications without either having to pay for it or commit to the building in the long-term.⁴⁸

In 1962, the GSA put eight projects out to bid, which, among other technical requirements, such as square footage, had to be located within eight miles of the Ellipse in Washington, D.C.⁴⁹ Chosen from twenty-two submissions, New Town Center had the largest square footage of all of the projects at 171,659 square feet and was one of five projects selected in Maryland.⁵⁰ The bidding process for Metro 2 and Metro 3 was similar to that of Metro 1. Federal tenants who required significant office space – the Naval Ship Engineering Center and the National Center for Health Statistics – provided a natural fit for these new construction projects.

Although the participation of the GSA at the initial stages of the project was vital for the finance and construction of the three office buildings, there were also significant downsides to government involvement. In the first place, there was the issue of image. While the GSA might be reasonably guaranteed to pay its rent on time, it was neither an exciting nor a glamorous tenant and certainly not one that would help to draw other businesses or potential future residents. Secondly, the ease of the GSA financing and tenancy served to create the impression that there was a viable market for this proposed town center, when the reality was starkly different. The GSA, naturally, did not extend their involvement into the construction of the proposed residential towers and amenities and the Blumbergs were unable to find funding from another source. Almost immediately, the extensive and ambitious master plan of Stone was in decline.

As fate would have it, the second construction campaign did not resume until 2002, when the GSA once again needed additional office space. In the forty-year interim, the developers were never able to find another interested tenant.

⁴⁸ "GSA Lease-Purchase Rules Circumvent Promoters." *Architectural Forum* 102 (March 1955): 21.

⁴⁹ The Ellipse is an area of the National Mall located just to the south of the White House, and is, effectively, the center of Washington, D.C.

⁵⁰ Of the other seven projects, one was located in Arlington (20,000 square feet for the Department of Defense); two in Arlington county (57,373 square feet for the Department of Commerce and 30,100 square feet for the GSA); two in Bethesda, MD (138,199 square feet for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and 60,373 square feet for the Atomic Energy Commission); and two in Silver Spring (92,420 square feet for the Department of Commerce and 56,230 for the Geological Survey). "GSA Taking Space in 8 Buildings Planned for Suburban Locations." *The Washington Post, Times Herald*. (29 June 1962): np.

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The Role of Modern Architecture

In many cases, one of the construction requirements of the GSA for new buildings was the specific selection of a certain architect, such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer.⁵¹ Their preference for such prominent Modern architects, rather than those with a more Revivalist bent, for example, is a clear aesthetic illustration of what they saw as their progressive and proactive mid-century government.

Fortunately, this marketing strategy was also exactly in keeping with the ideals of New Town Center. This was to be a place that surpassed the traditional and expected suburban developments and re-conceptualized the notion of a town center. Consequently, a forward-thinking architect was required. As Stone is cited as having a legacy of "effectively reconciling Modernism with popular culture," he was the perfect person to adapt the traditional and familiar notion of the town center with a forward-thinking aesthetic.⁵²

Indeed, the very fact that the Blumbergs approached Stone in the first place indicates their prioritizing of this idea. The selection of a prominent architect showed that both the design and what that design stood for was a priority. In the vast majority of other suburban developments, a local, somewhat anonymous architect was chosen to spearhead the design. Although this would have been by far the cheapest and easiest approach for the Blumbergs to adopt, it wouldn't have met their programmatic and aesthetic objectives for the complex. The highly unusual decision to select an internationally known architect for a relatively obscure location and use clearly demonstrate their aspirations for the project and their ambitiousness in achieving that goal.

⁵¹ Select commissions include the Federal Building in Chicago, IL by Mies van der Rohe (1960-1974), the Federal Building in Boston, MA by Gropius (1961) and the Federal Building in Washington, D.C. by Breuer (1960-1976).

⁵² Mary Ann Hunting, *Edward Durell Stone* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012): np.

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Name of Property

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New Town Center (PG: 68-104)

Name of Property

Prince George's County, MD

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.35 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1	8		3	3	1	0	6	5		4	3	1	5	1	0	2
	Zone			Easting						Northing							
2																	

2																	
	Zone			Easting						Northing							
4																	

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

The boundary of New Town Center is shown by the red lines on the accompanying map entitled "New Town Center – Site Plan with National Register Boundary." New Town Center has been associated with Parcels I, R, and L as noted on Tax Map 42 since the construction of Metro 1 in 1963, Metro 2 in 1968, and Metro 3 in 1971.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

The nominated property includes the building footprints of the three included buildings. The surrounding landscape elements and new construction have been excluded as they are not a part of the original design of Edward Laurell Stone and they do not therefore contribute to the significance of the resource.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Logan I. Ferguson, Senior Associate

Organization Powers and Company, Inc.

date February 22, 2017

street & number 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717

telephone (215) 636-0192

city or town Philadelphia

state PA

zip code 19107

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section 10 Page 1

Prince George's County, MD
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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et. seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Name of Property

Section FIGURES Page 1

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

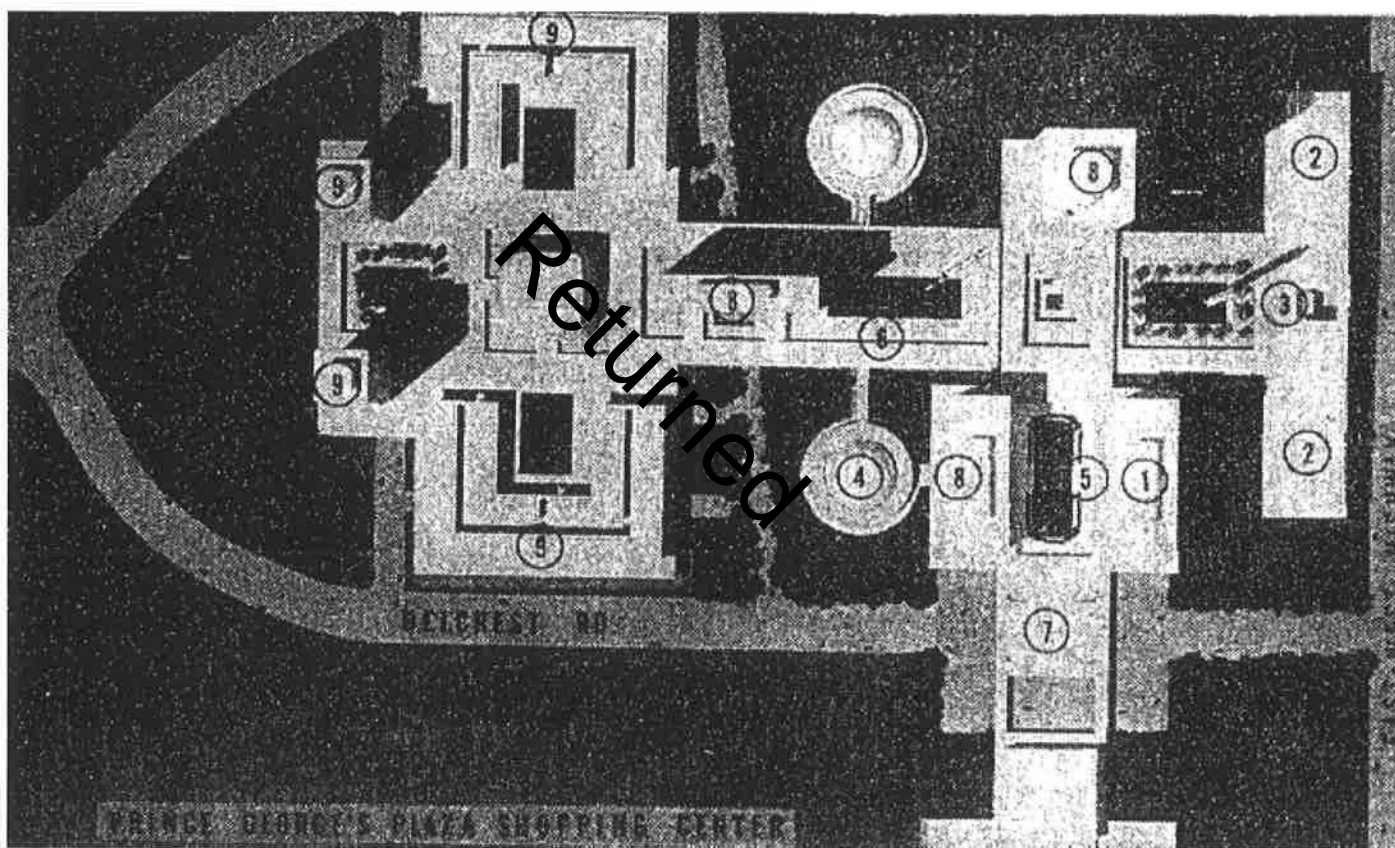


Figure 1 – "Study Model."

John B. Willmann, "Urban Center Under Way in Prince George's County." The Washington Post (6 June 1964): E1.
Metro 1 is marked as Building 1 above.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section FIGURES Page 2

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

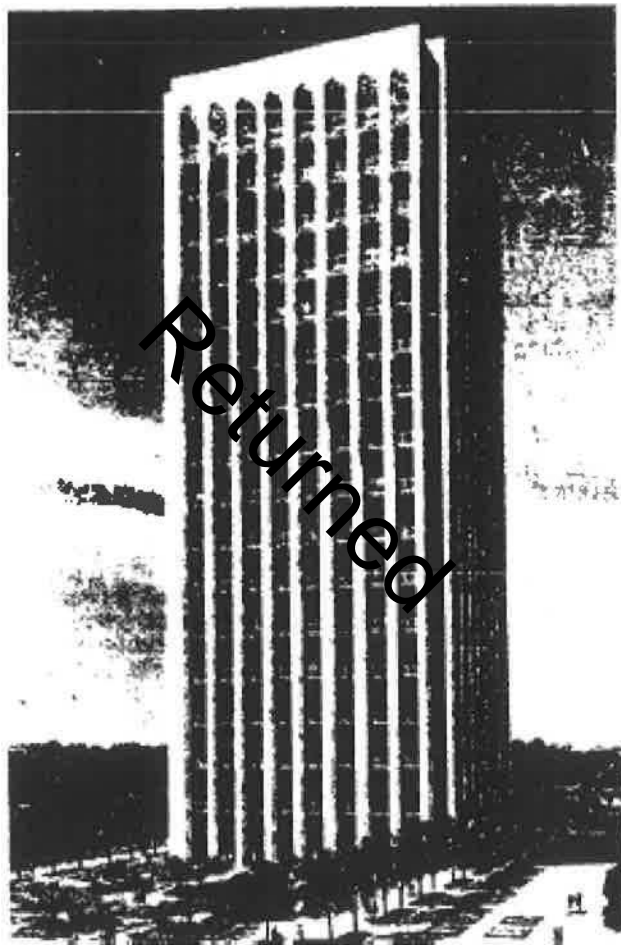


Figure 2 – Bart Barnes, “295-Foot Tower Wins Approval in County.”
The Washington Post, Times Herald (23 December 1965): D3.
A rendering of a proposed apartment tower that was never constructed.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

Section FIGURES Page 3

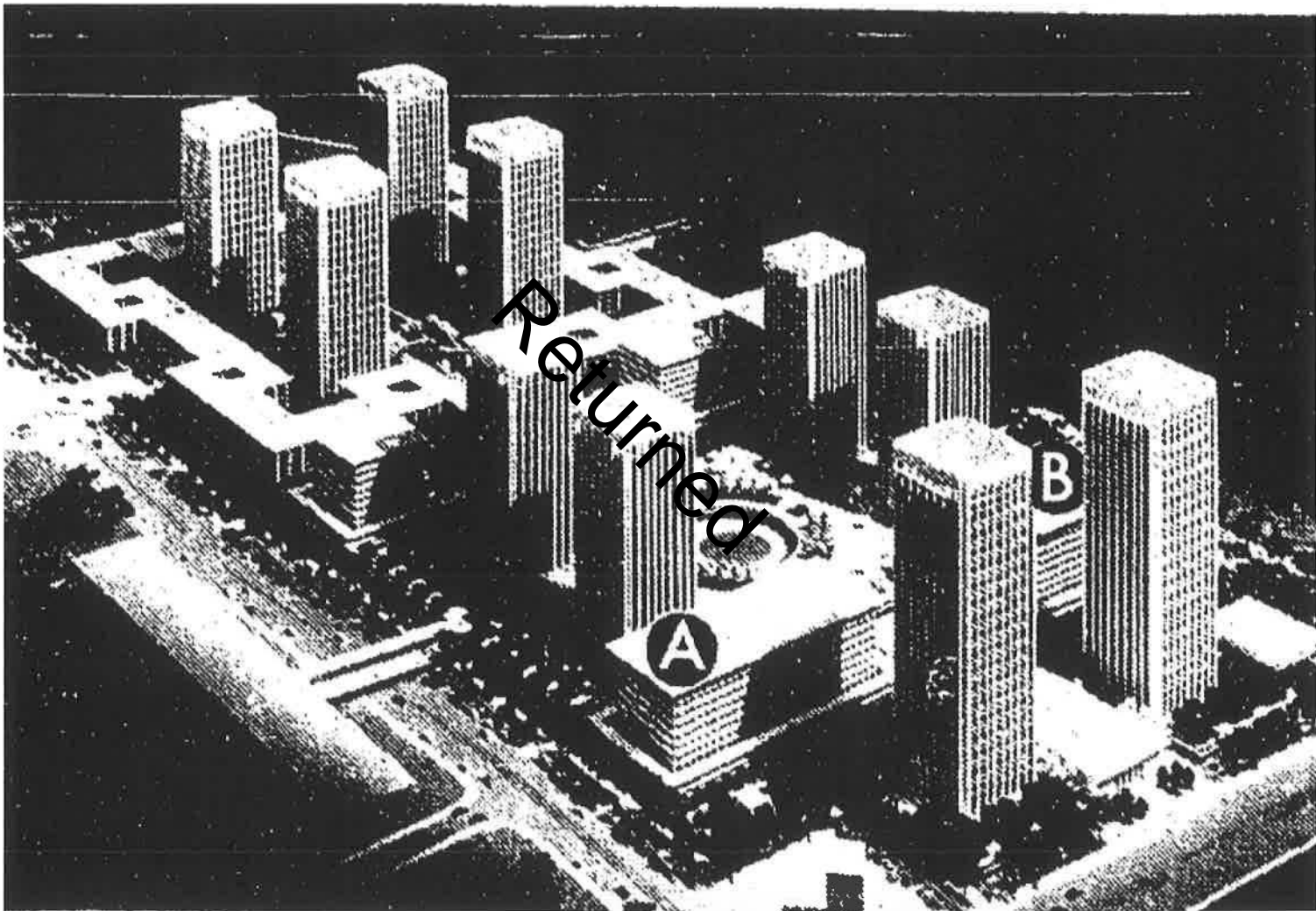


Figure 3 – “Prince George’s Center.” *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (25 November 1967): E2.
Metro 1 is marked “A” and Metro 2 is marked “B”. The remainder of the complex was never completed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

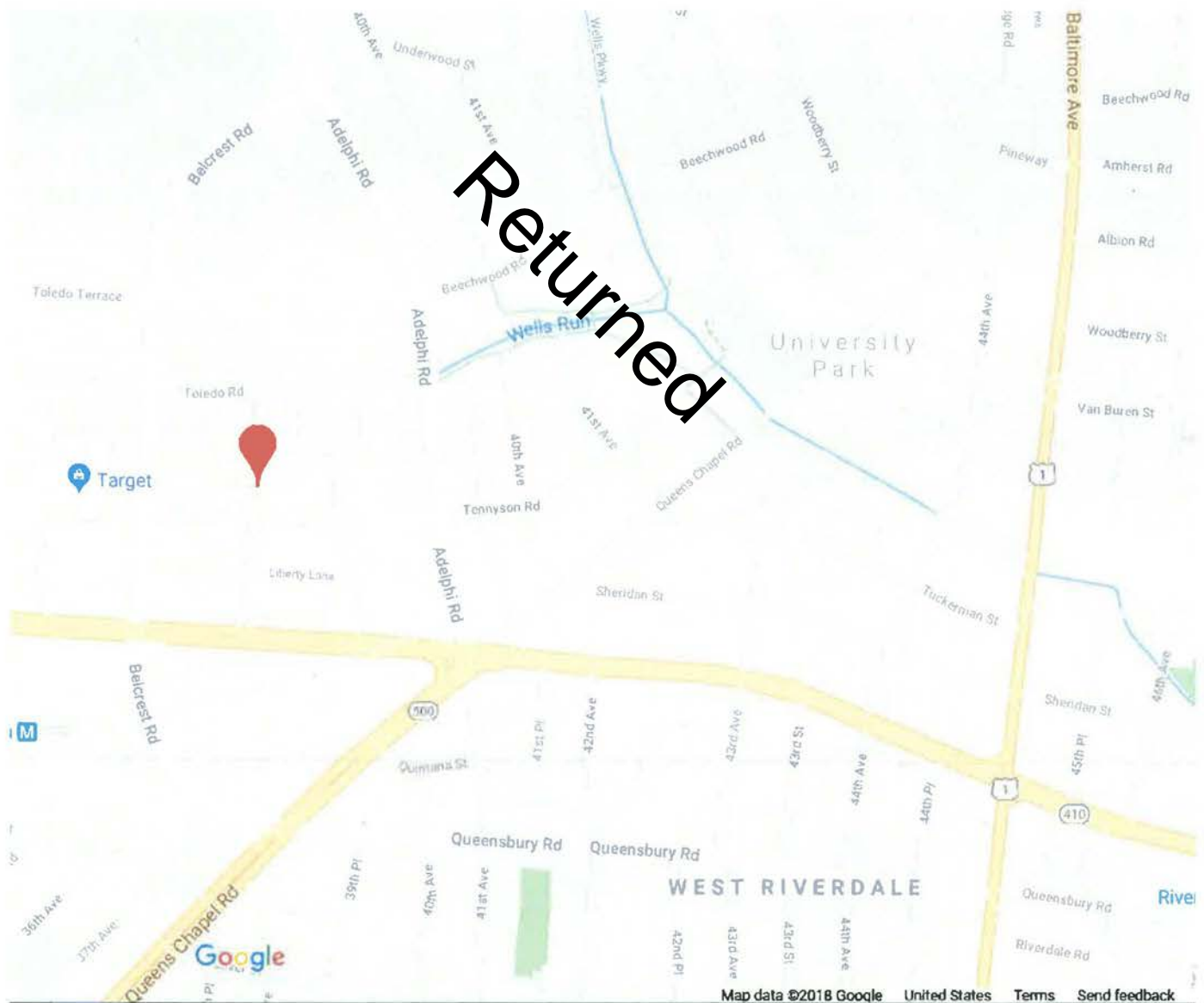
PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section FIGURES Page 4

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

Location Map

UTM Coordinates 18 331065 4315102



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 1

Prince George's County, MD
County and State

Index to Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs which accompany this documentation:

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) Number: PG: 68-104
Name of Property: New Town Center
Location: Prince George's County, Maryland
Photographer: Robert Powers
Date taken: September 2016
Location of original digital files: MD SPPO

Returned

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG: 68-104
New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 2

Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0001.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
West and north elevations, view southeast

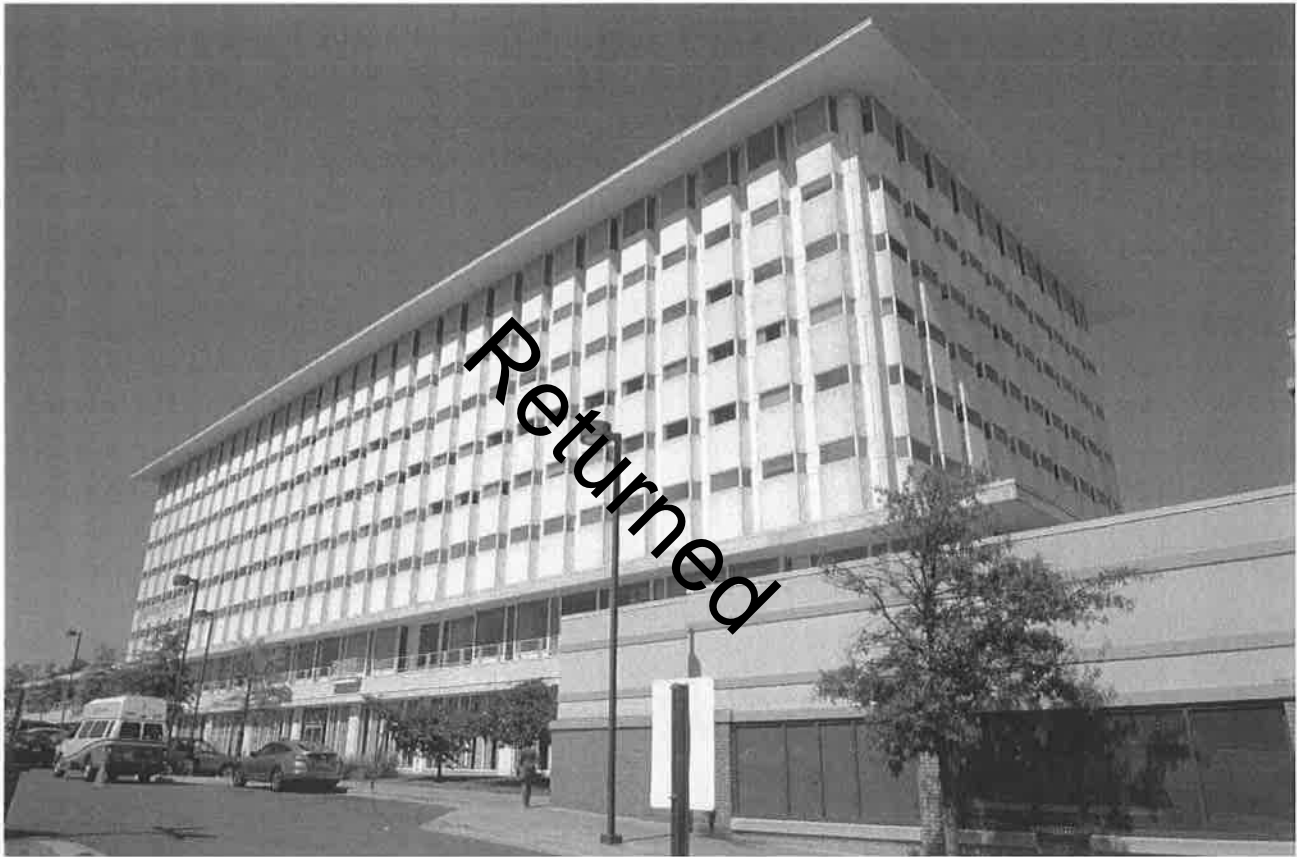
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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 3

Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0002.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
South and east elevations, view northwest

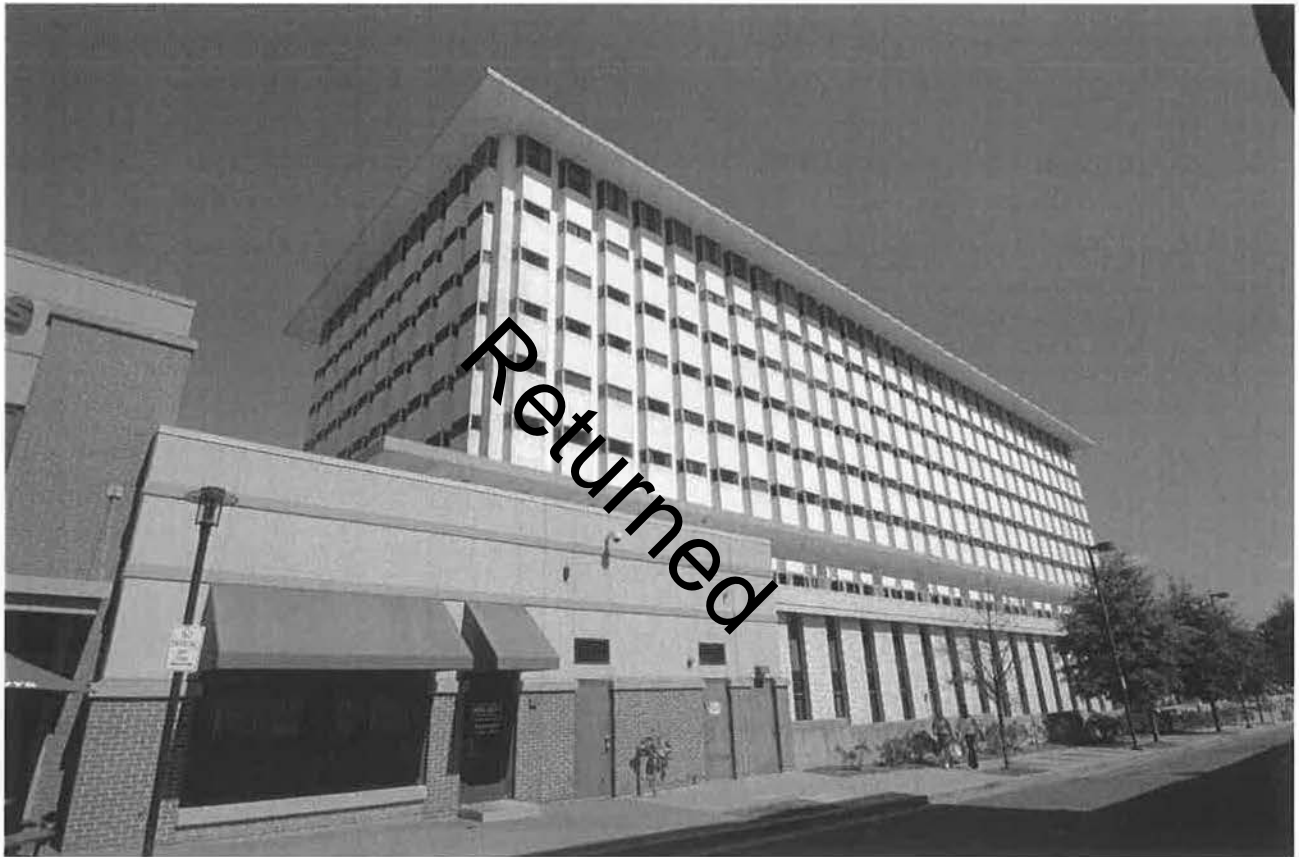
United States Department of the Interior
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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 4

Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0003.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
West and south elevations, view northeast

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 5

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0004.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
East and north elevations, view southwest

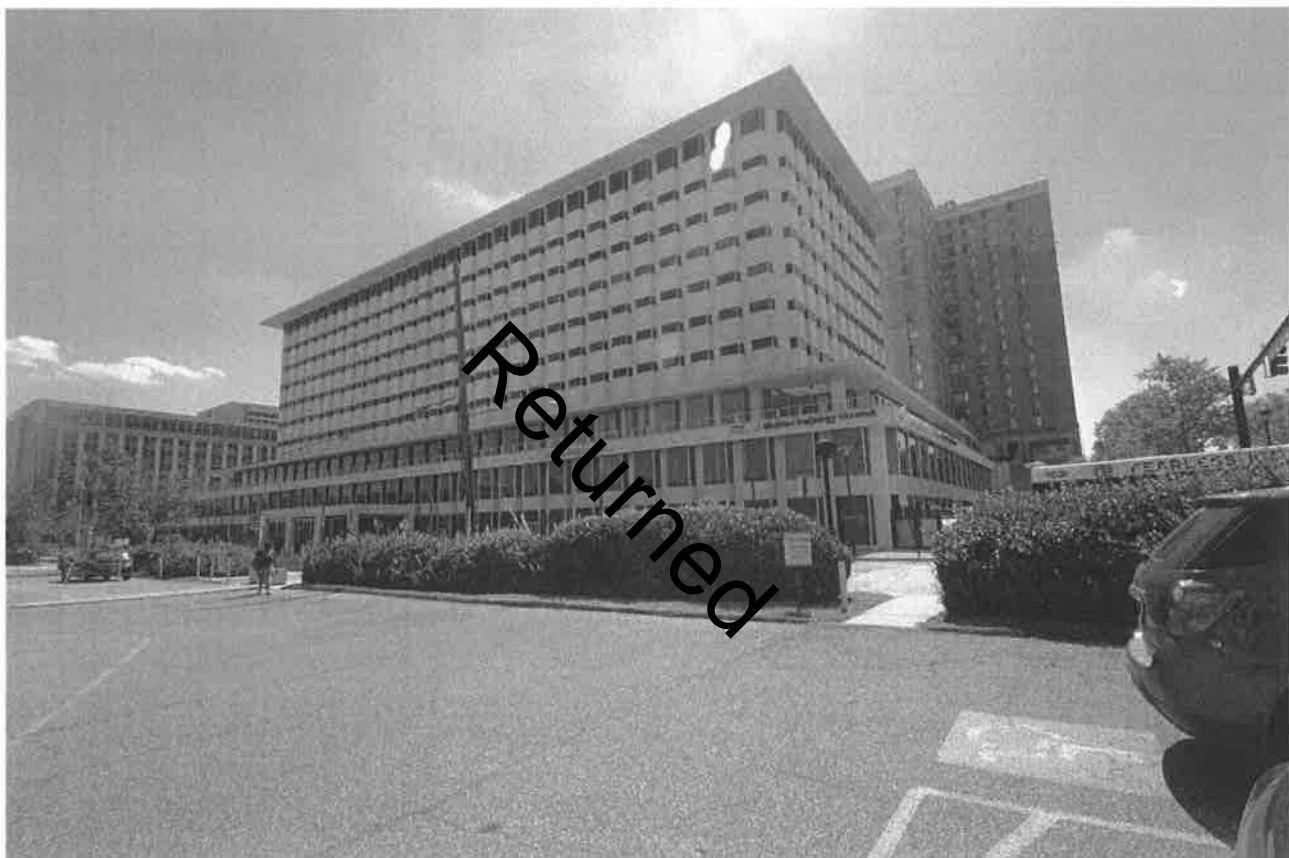
United States Department of the Interior
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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 6

Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0005.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
North and west elevations, view southeast

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Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0006.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
South and east elevations, view northwest

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Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 8

Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0007.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Hallway, view east

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Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 9

Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0008.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
2nd floor, view south

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 10

Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0009.tif

New Town Center

Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road

Hyattsville, MD

2nd floor, Elevator lobby, view east

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0010.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
5th floor, view northwest

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 12

Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0011.tif New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Stairway, view east

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 13

Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0012.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Elevator lobby, view west

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0013.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, view east

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New Town Center
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Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0014.tif
New Town Center
Metro I, 6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
8th floor, view northeast

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New Town Center
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Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 16

Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0015.tif

New Town Center

Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway

Hyattsville, MD

Basement, Elevator lobby, view east

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County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0016.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
Basement, view east

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New Town Center
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Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0017.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Elevator lobby, view east

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New Town Center
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Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0018.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
3rd floor, view southwest

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New Town Center
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Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 20

Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0019.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
7th floor, Stairway, view west

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0020.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
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7th floor, view northwest

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0021.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
10th floor, view northeast

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Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0022.tif
New Town Center
Metro II, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
Roof, view southwest

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0023.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Entrance lobby, view west

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Prince George's County, MD
County and State



MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0024.tif

New Town Center

Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road

Hyattsville, MD

1st floor, Atrium, view southwest

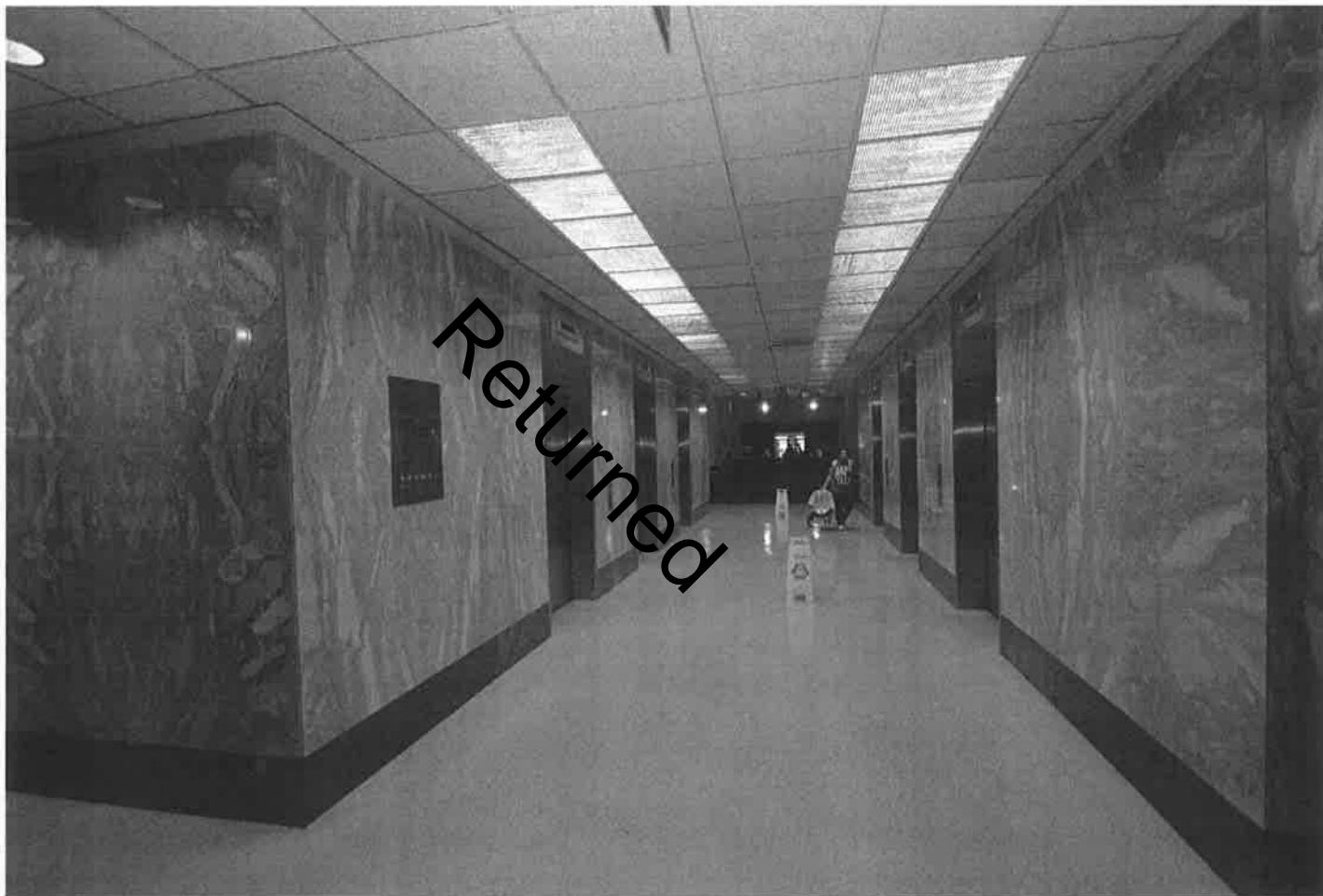
United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Town Center
Name of Property

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 26

Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0025.tif

New Town Center

Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road

Hyattsville, MD

1st floor, Elevator lobby, view east

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New Town Center
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Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0026.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
1st floor, Atrium, view northeast

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New Town Center
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0027.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
3rd floor, Hallway, view west

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0028.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Stairway, view north

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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0029.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
6th floor, Elevator lobby, view west

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Prince George's County, MD
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MD_PrinceGeorgesCounty_NewTownCenter_0030.tif
New Town Center
Metro III, 6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
7th floor, Stairway, view east

George's Plaza
Community
Center

Talado Rd

Metro 3

42

America Blvd

Metro 1

Metro 2

Returned

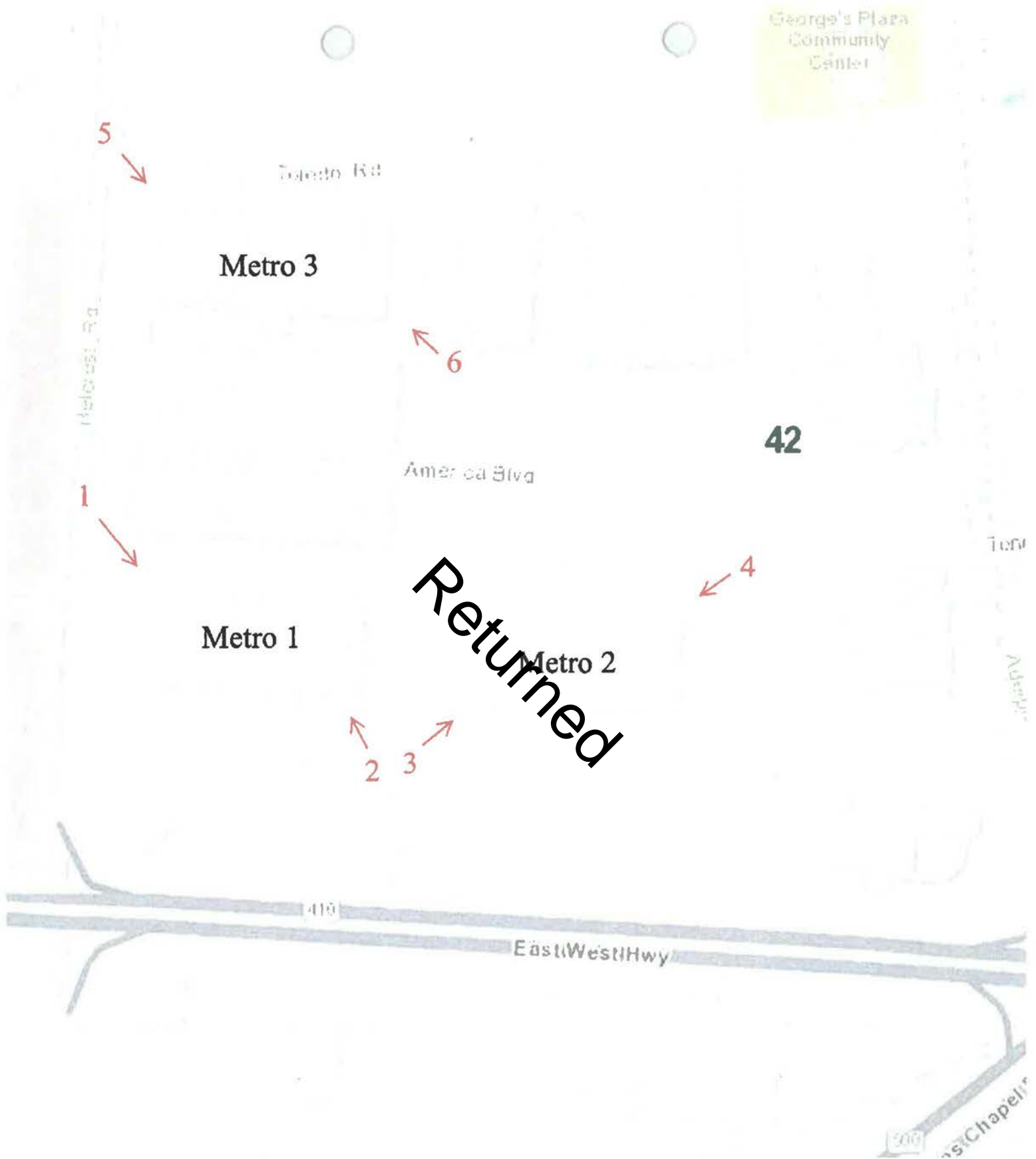
EastWest Hwy

St Chapel

New Town Center
6505 Belcrest Road, 6525 Belcrest Road, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
Site Plan with National Register Boundary
Pg: 68-104

0' 100'

N

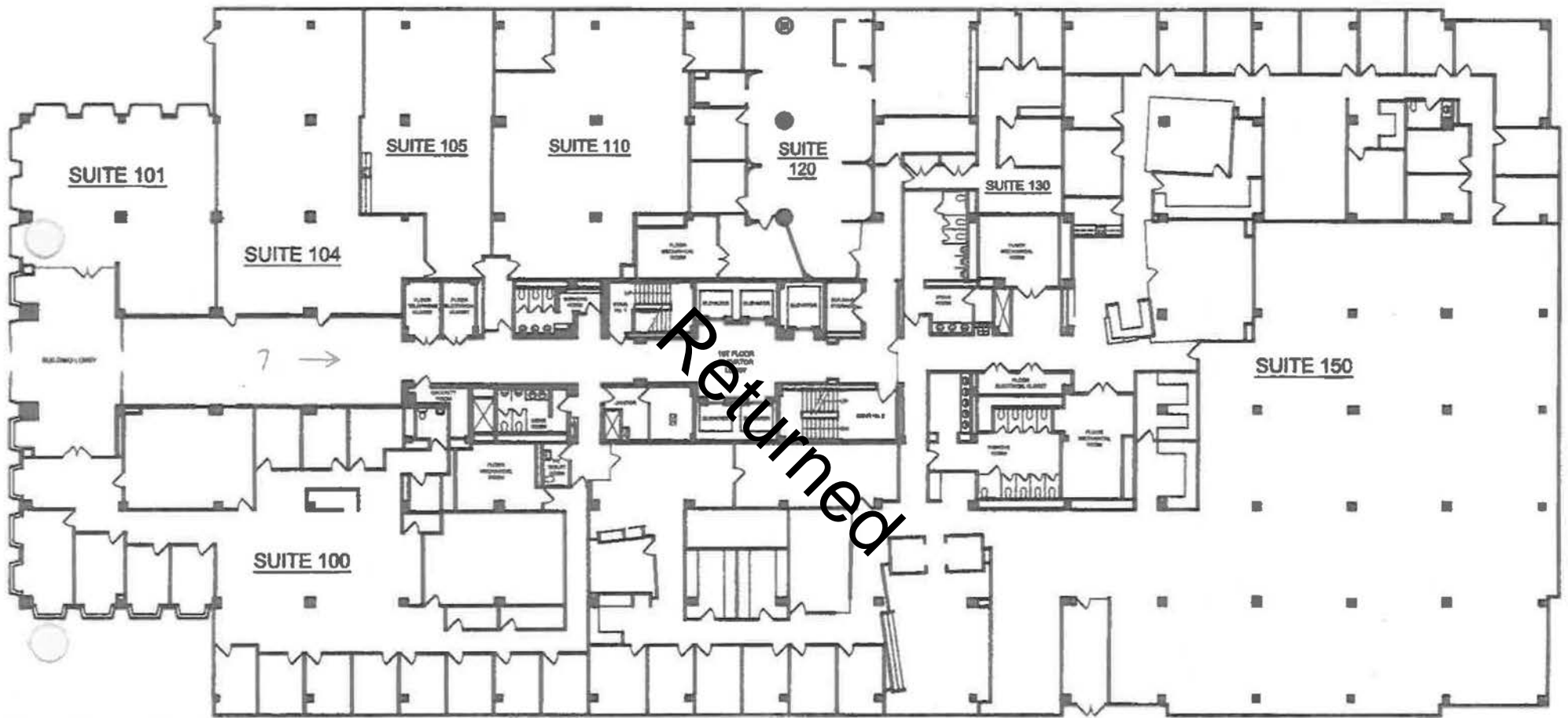


New Town Center
6505 Belcrest Road, 6525 Belcrest Road, 3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
Site Plan with Photograph Key
Pg: 68-104

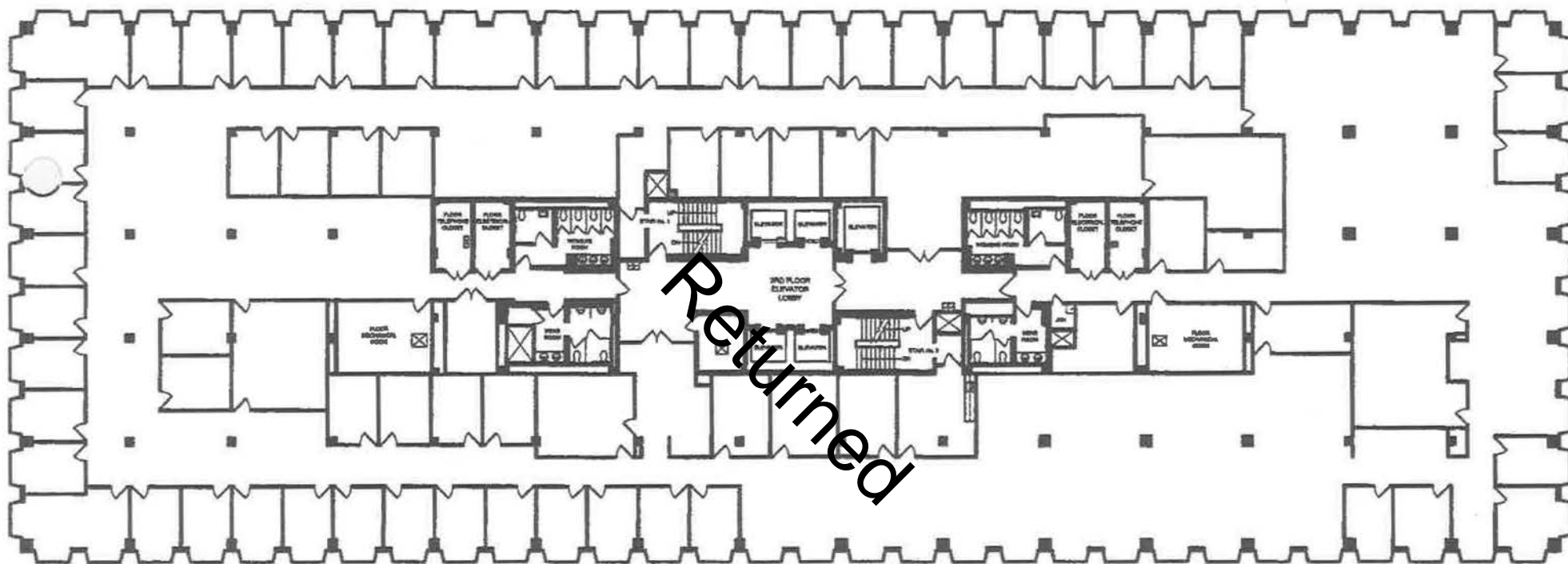


Returned

New Town Center
Metro 1
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
Basement Plan with Photograph Key



New Town Center
Metro 1
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
1st Floor Plan with Photograph Key



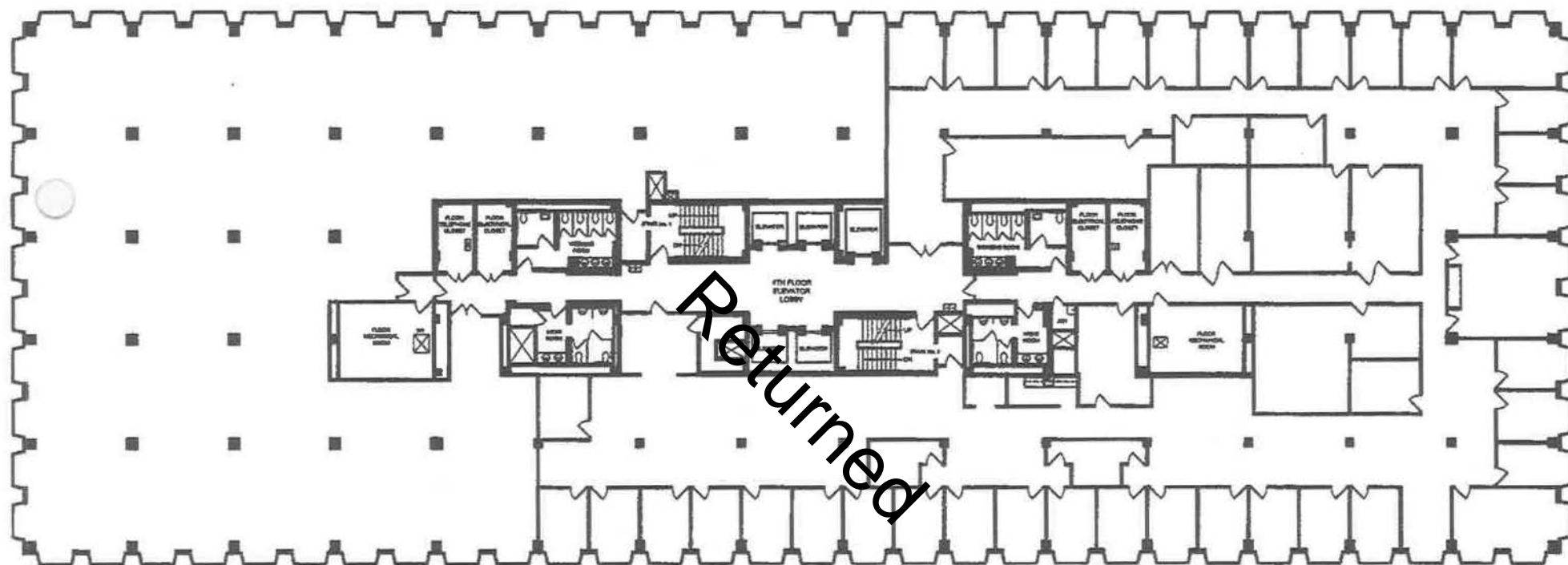
New Town Center

Metro 1

6505 Belcrest Road

Hyattsville, MD

3rd Floor Plan with Photograph Key



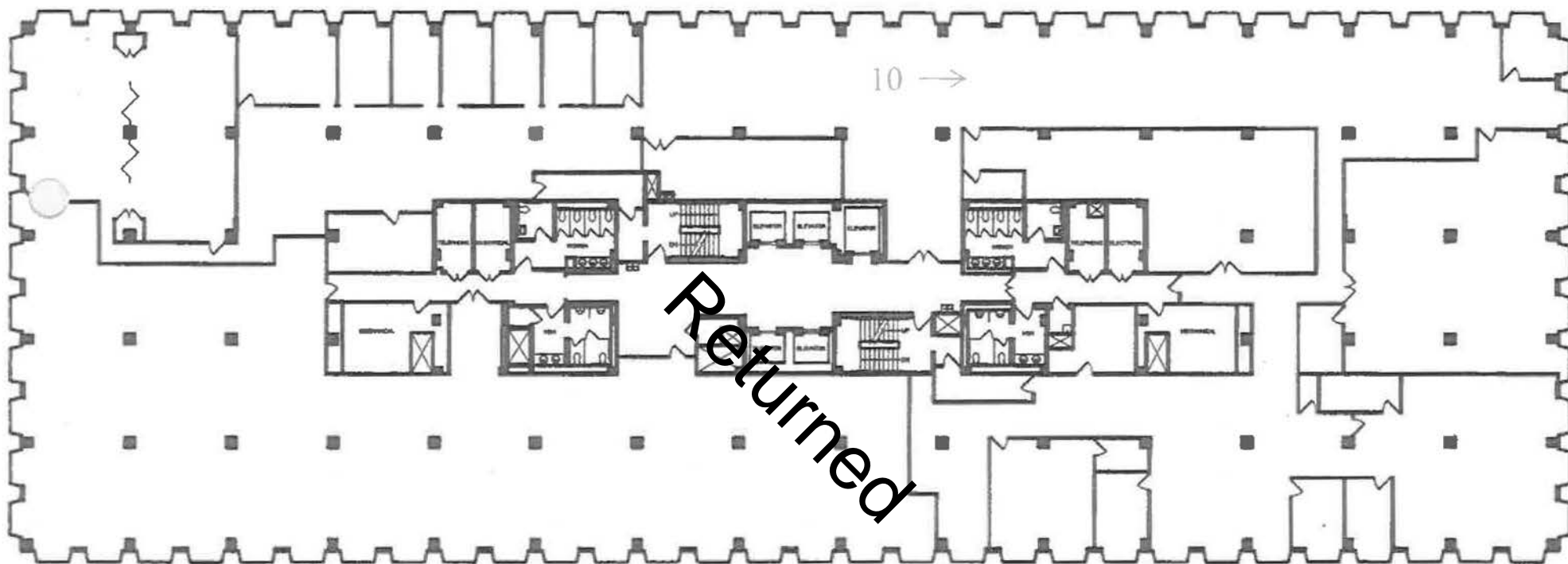
Jew Town Center

4th Floor 1

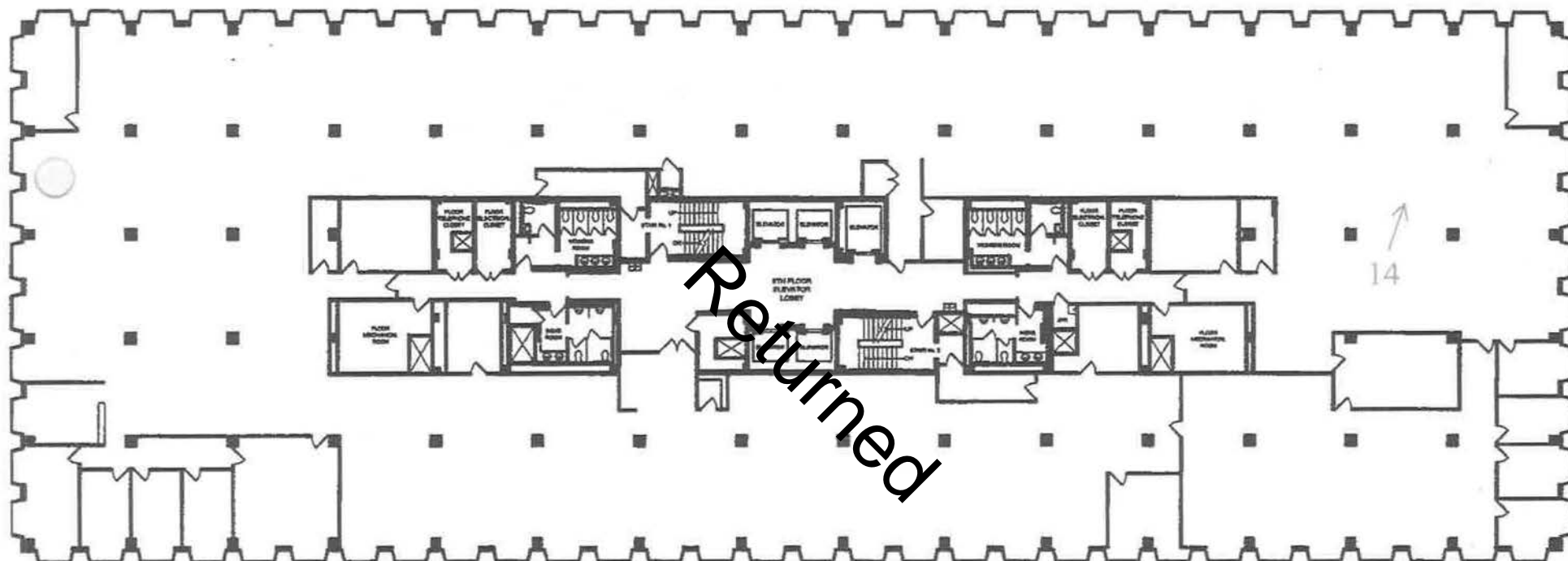
505 Belcrest Road

Hyattsville, MD

4th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



North Town Center
Metro 1
5505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
5th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



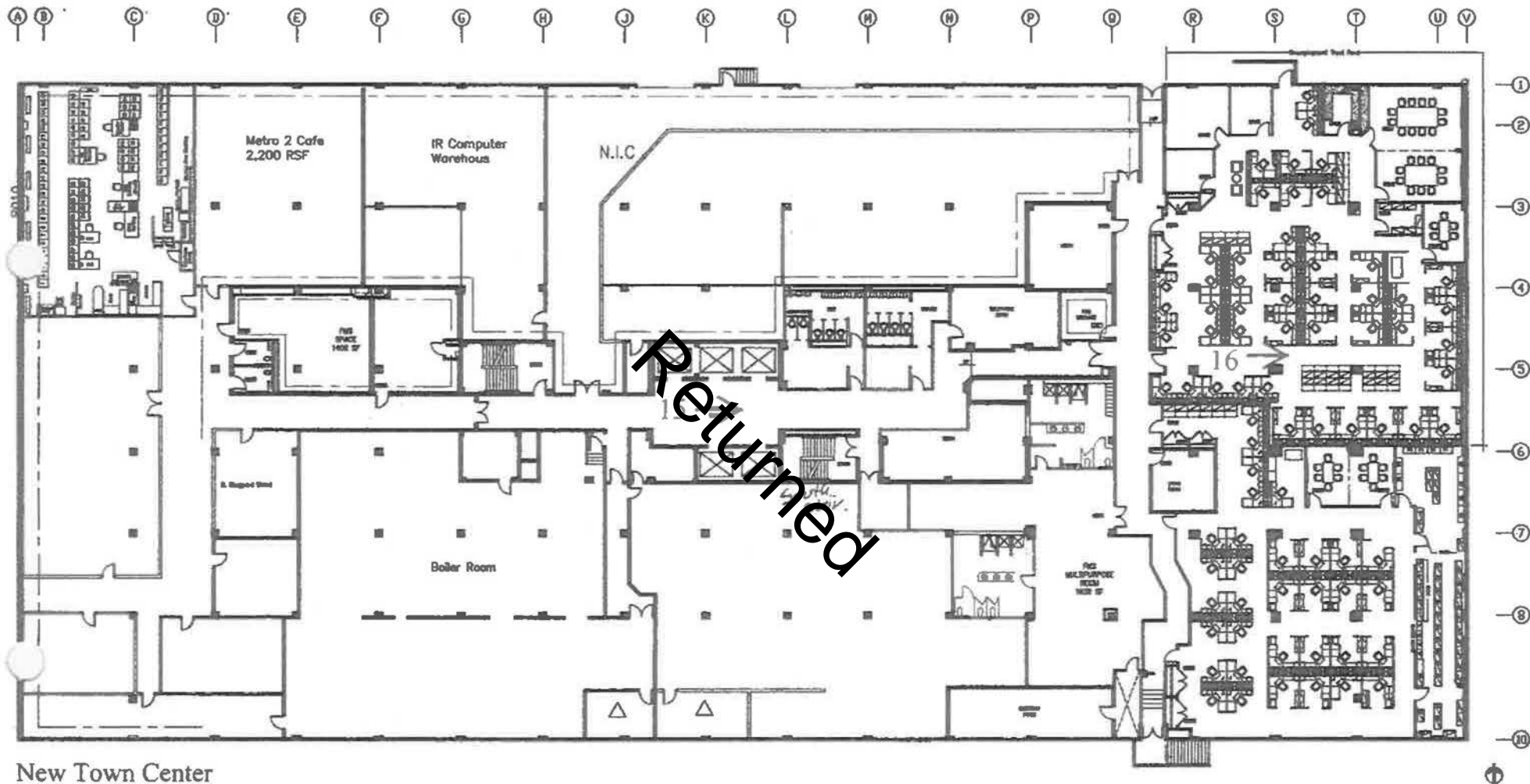
New Town Center

Metro 1

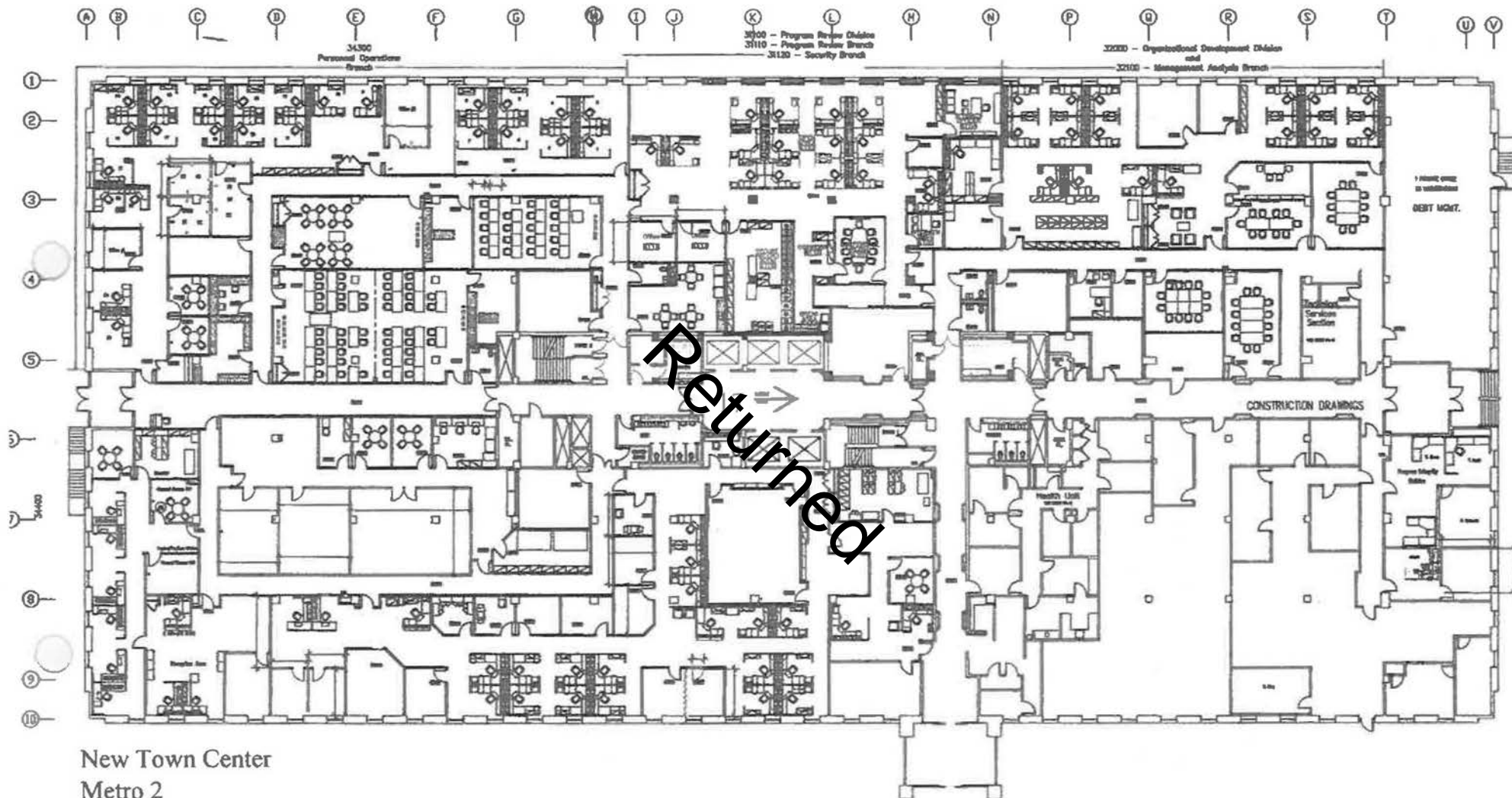
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Hyattsville, MD

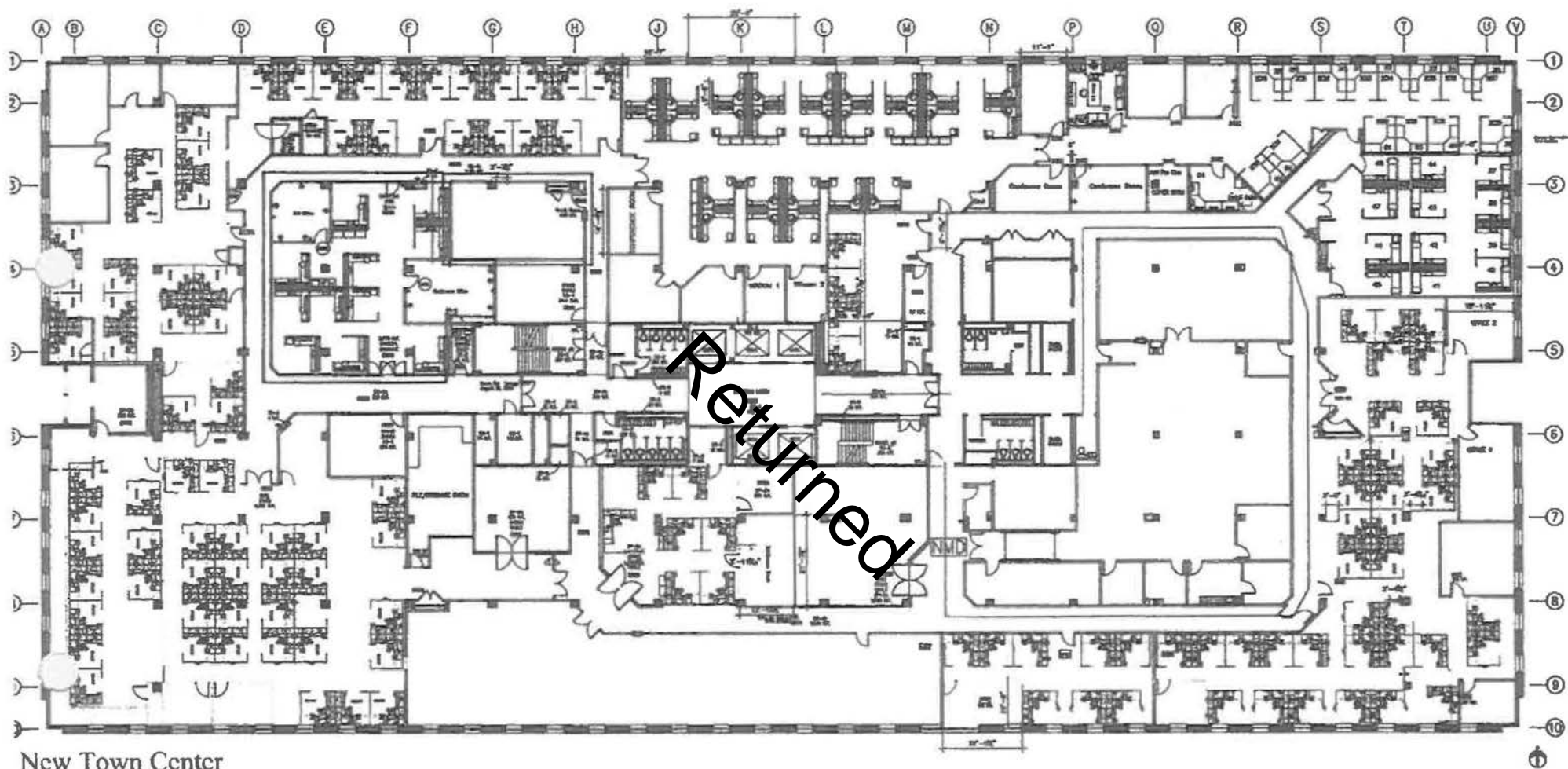
8th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



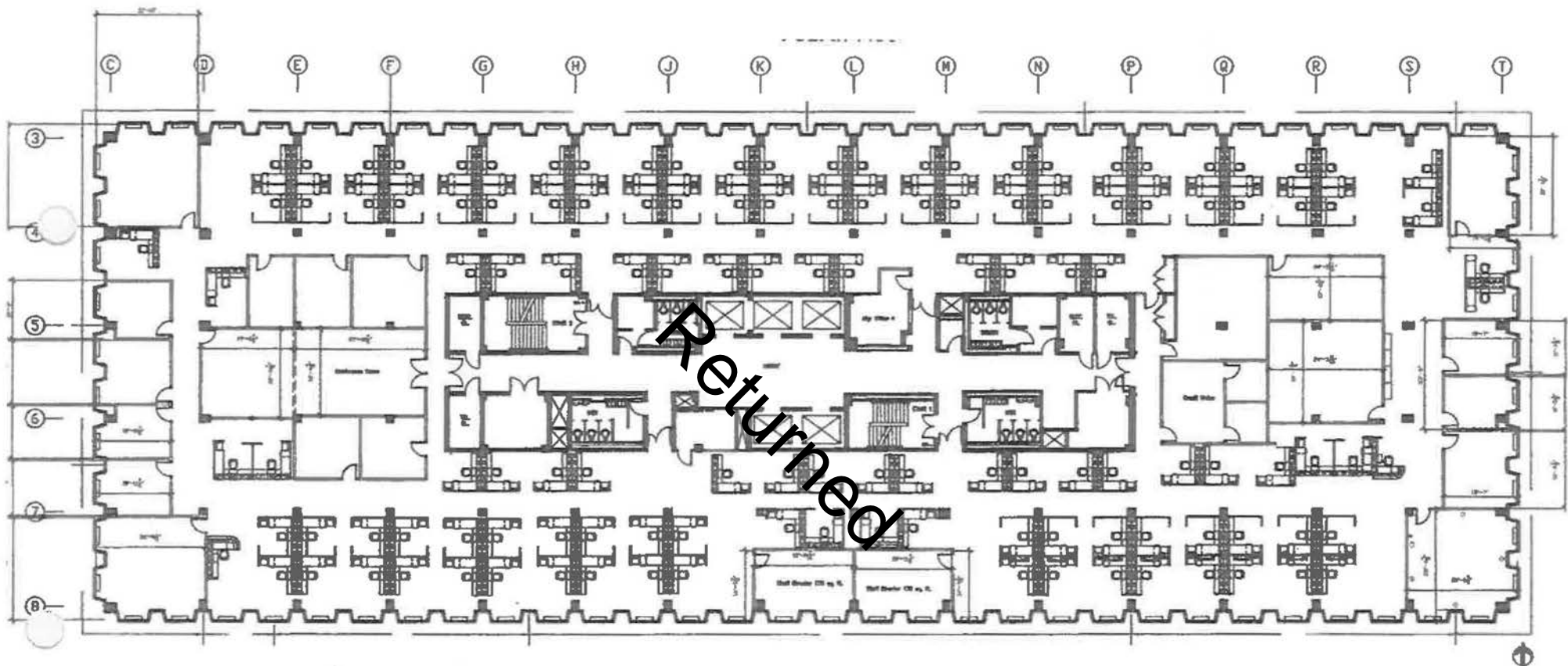
New Town Center
Metro 2
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
Basement Plan with Photograph Key



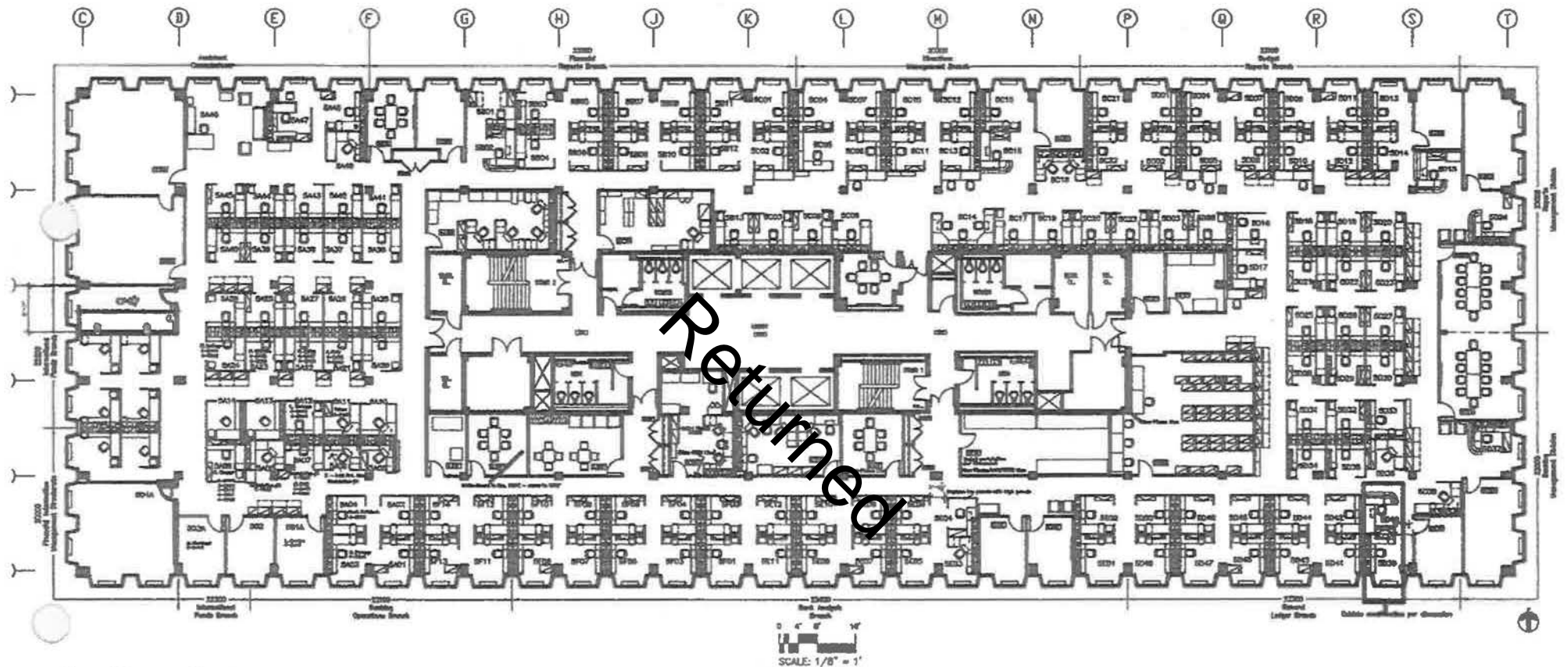
New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 1st Floor Plan with Photograph Key



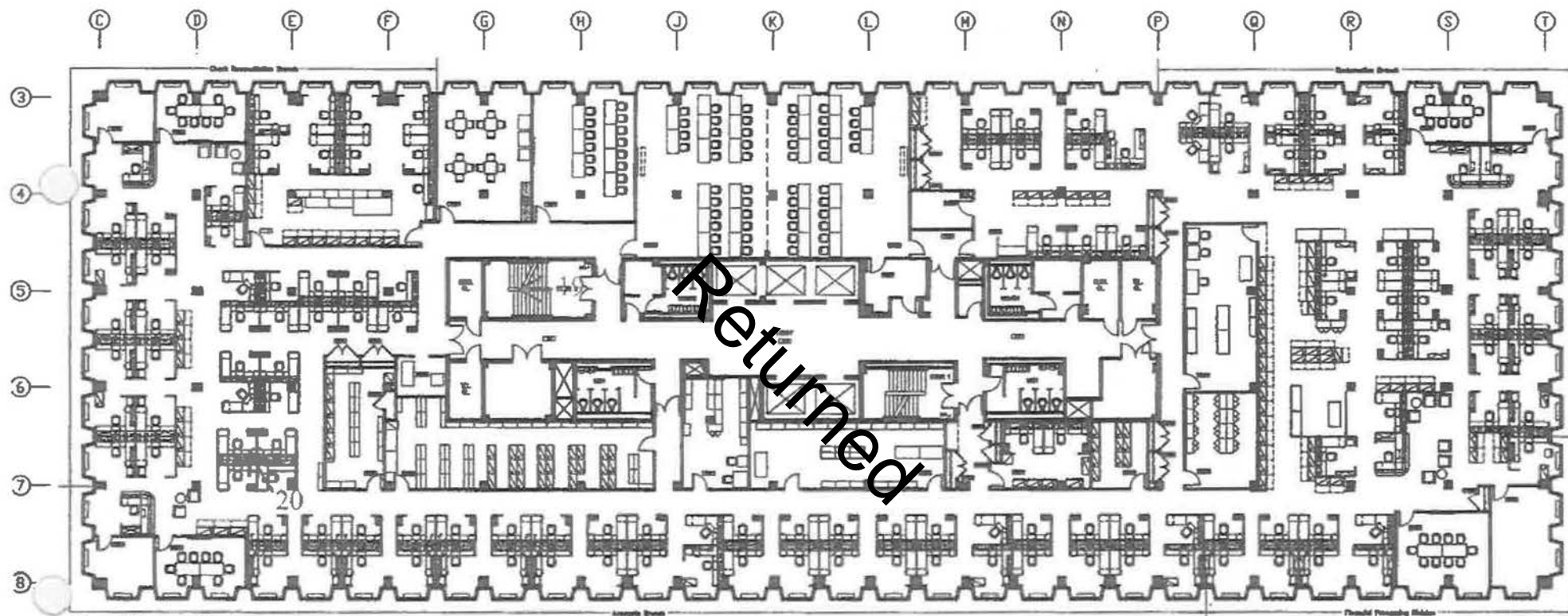
New Town Center
Metro 2
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
2nd Floor Plan with Photograph Key



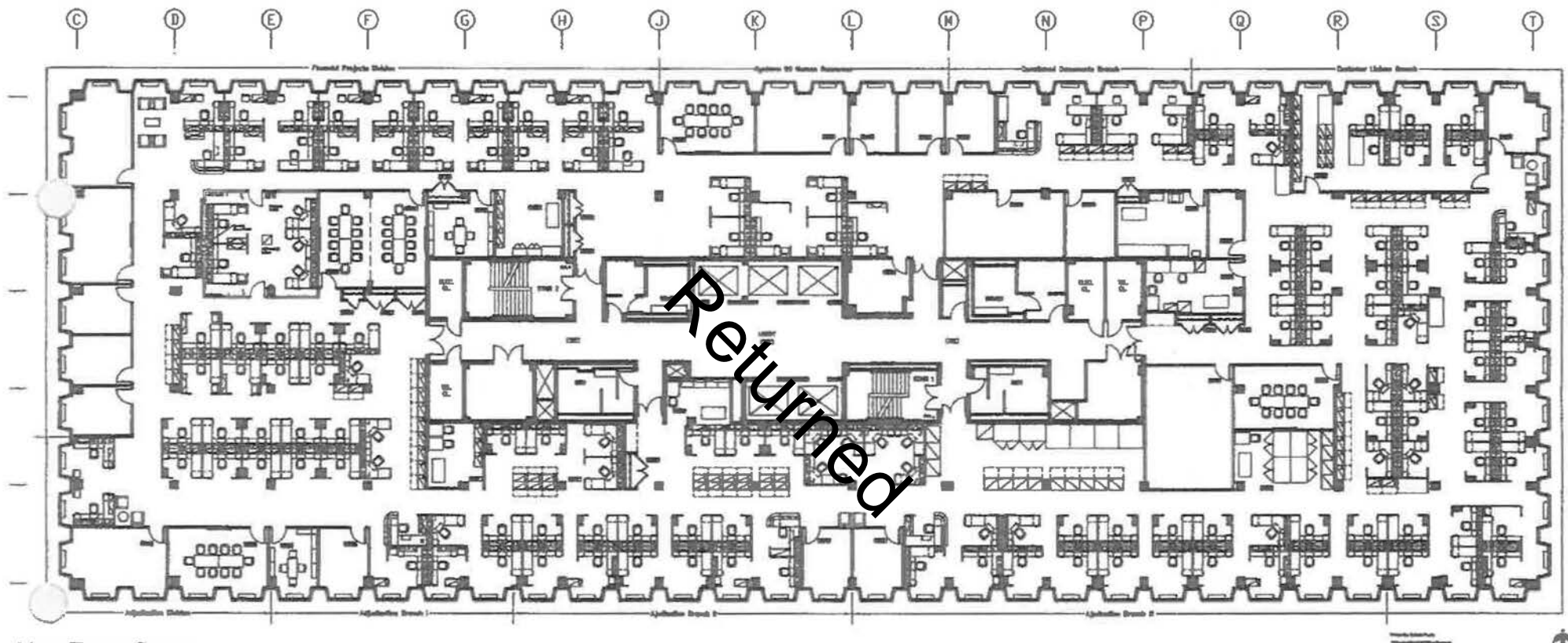
New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 4th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



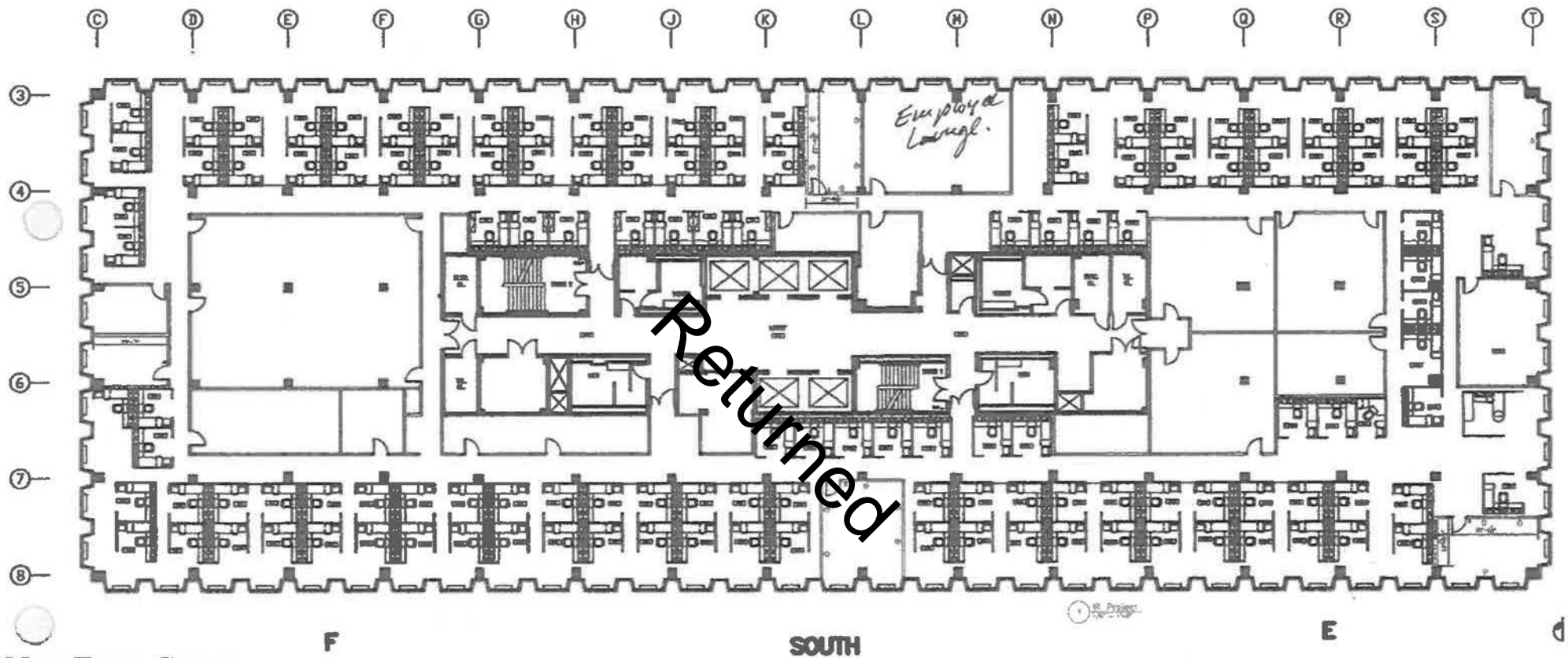
New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 5th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



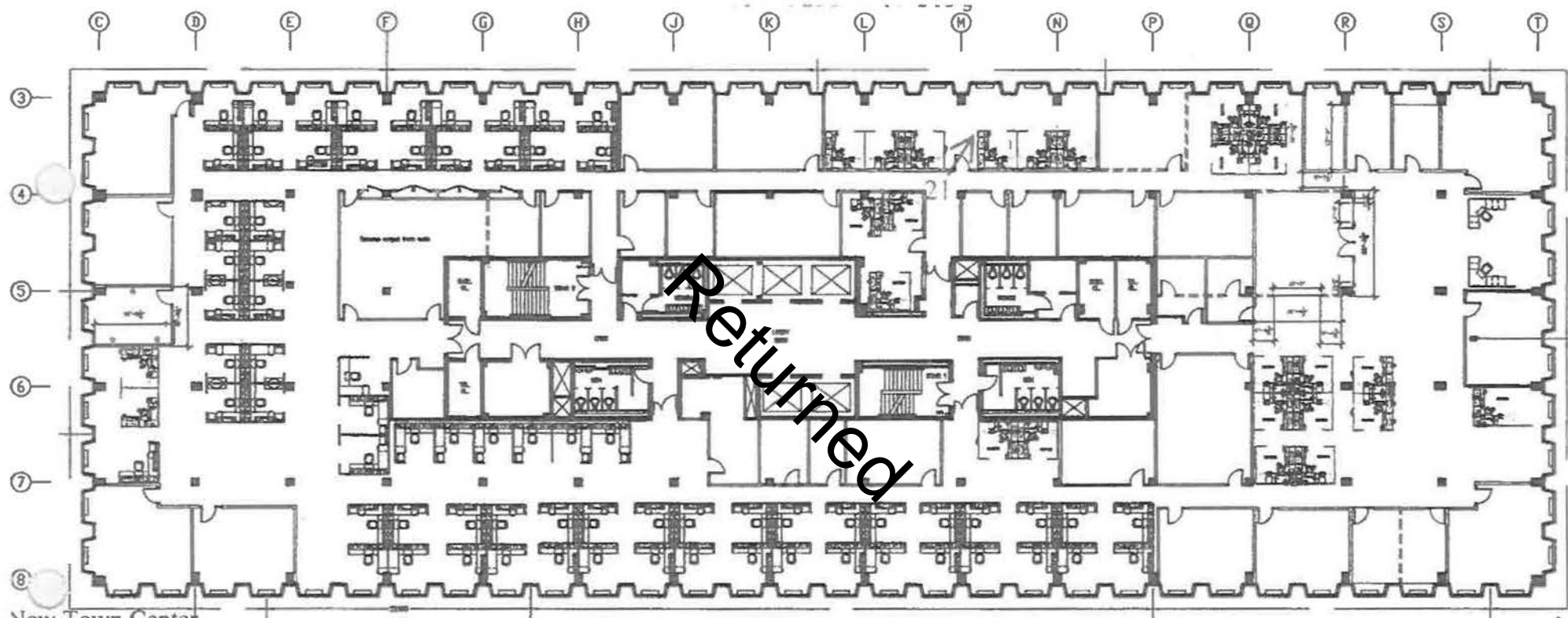
New Town Center
Metro 2
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
7th Floor Plan with Photograph Key



New Town Center
 Metro 2
 3700 East-West Highway
 Hyattsville, MD
 8th Floor Plan with Photograph Key

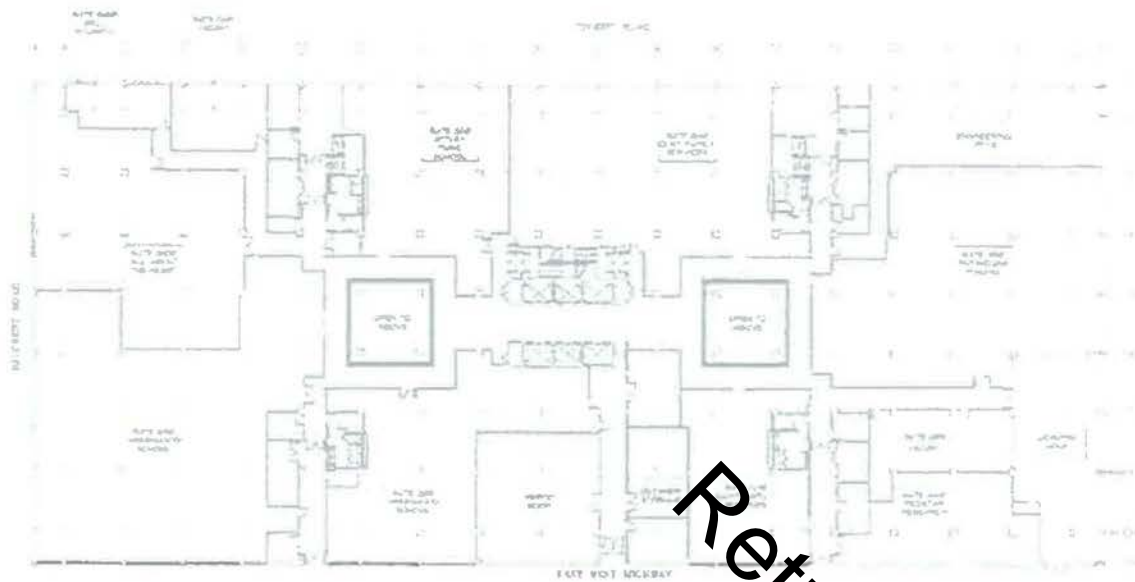


New Town Center
Metro 2
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
9th Floor Plan with Photograph Key

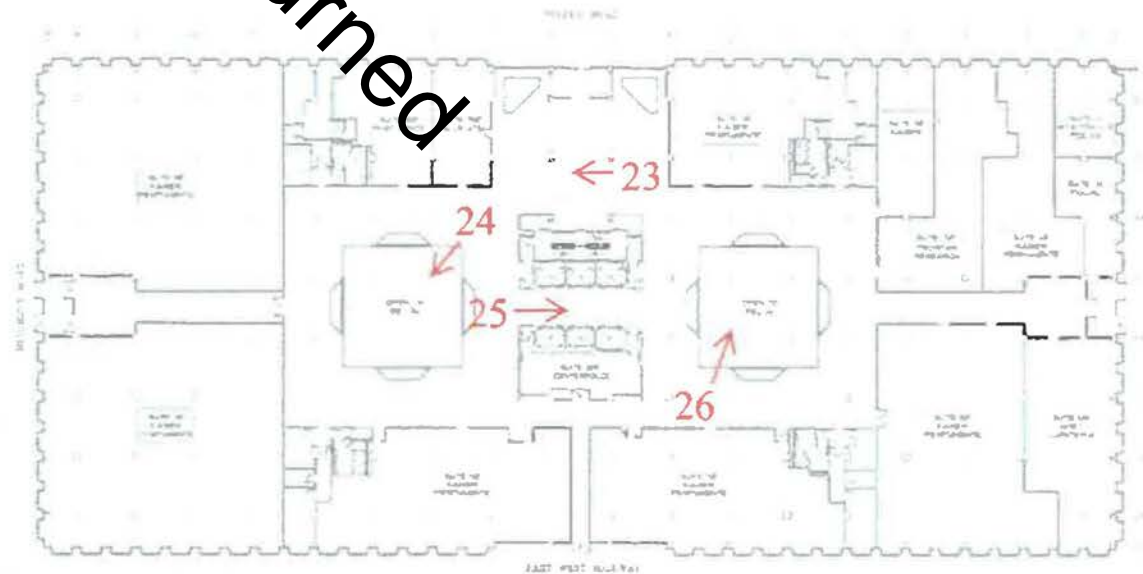


New Town Center
Metro 2
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD
10th Floor Plan with Photograph Key

Photograph #22: Roof

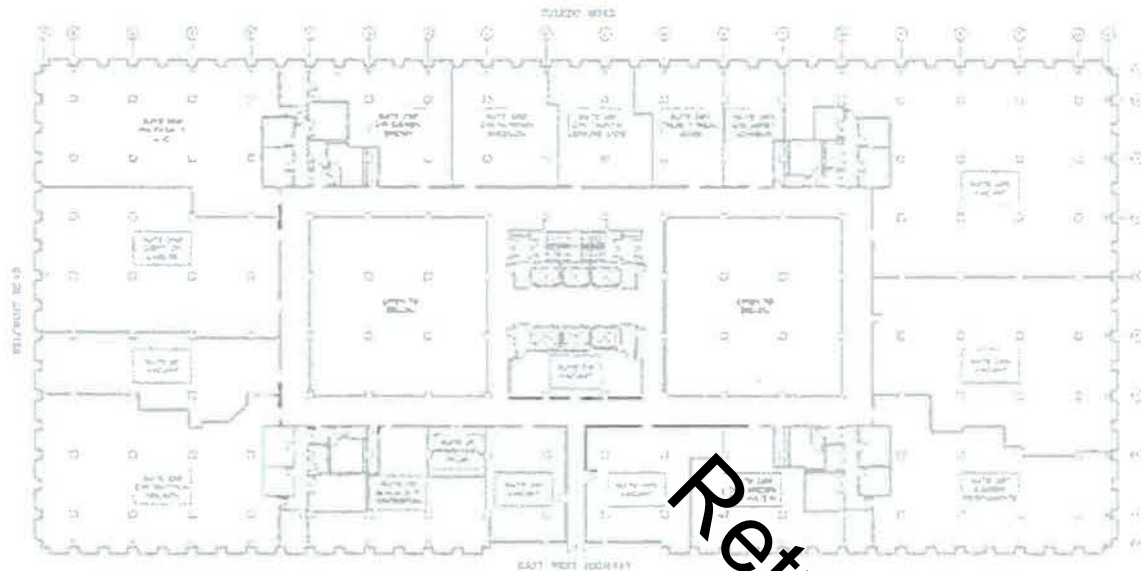


GROUND FLOOR

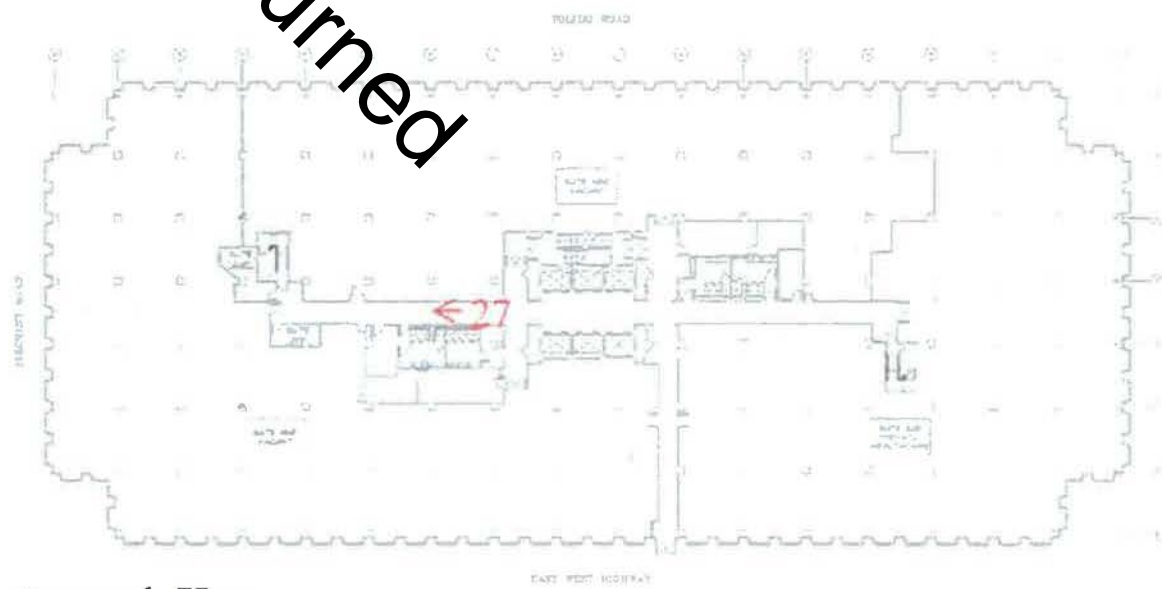


FIRST FLOOR

New Town Center
 Metro 3
 6525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 Basement and 1st Floor Plans with Photograph Key

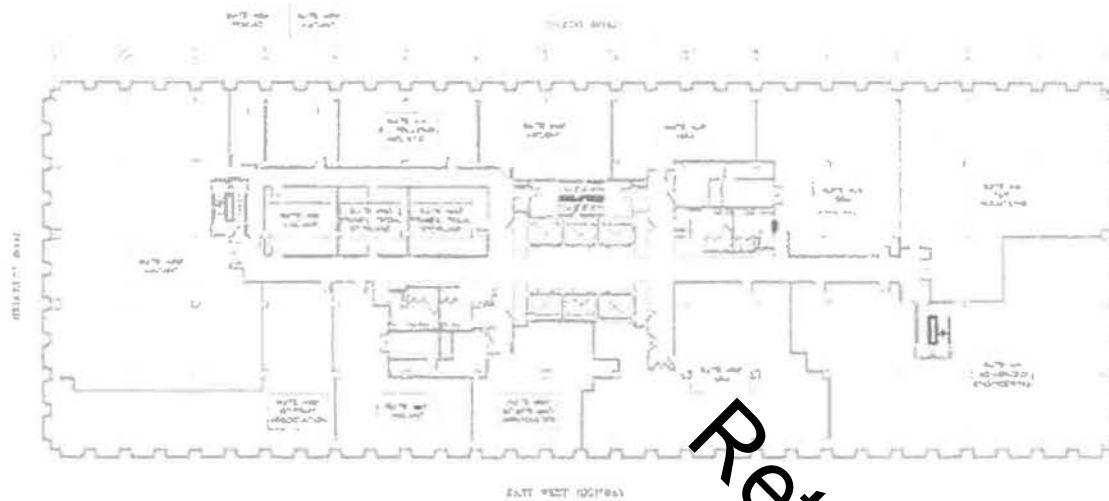


SECOND FLOOR



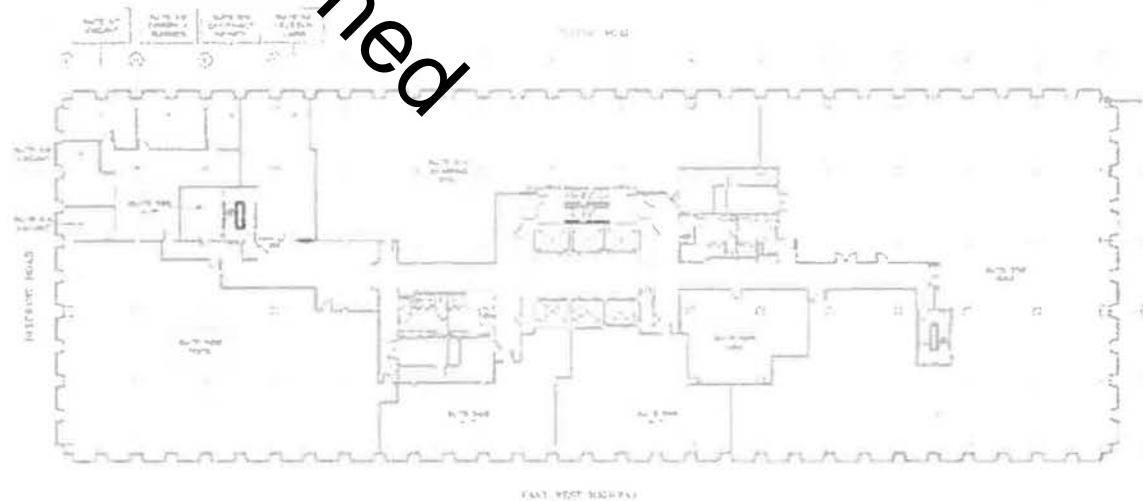
THIRD FLOOR

New Town Center
 Metro 3
 6525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 2nd and 3rd Floor Plans with Photograph Key

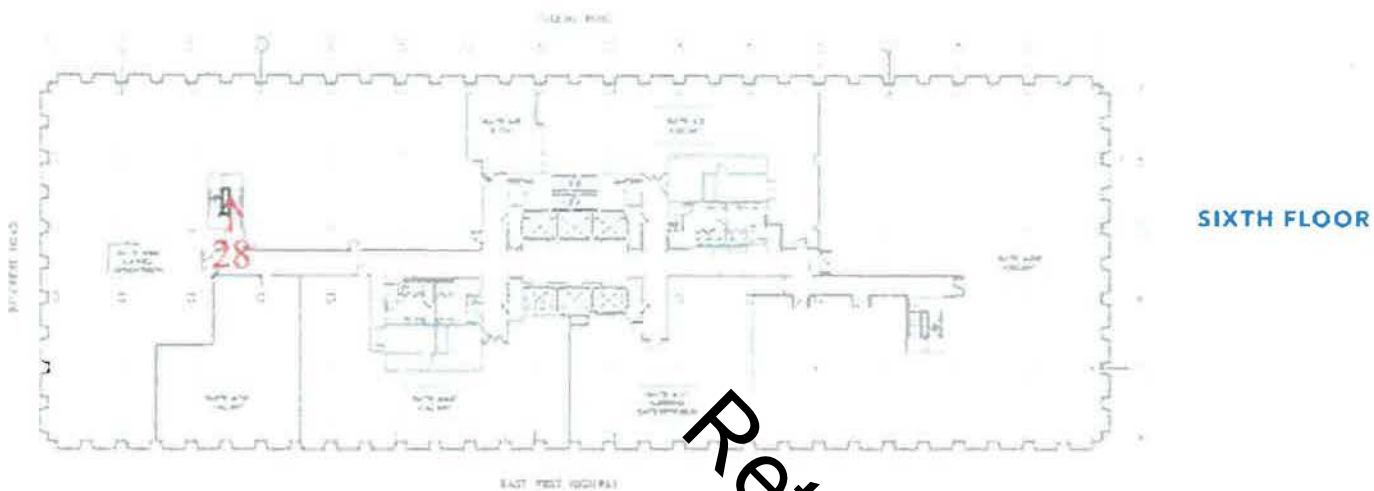


FOURTH FLOOR

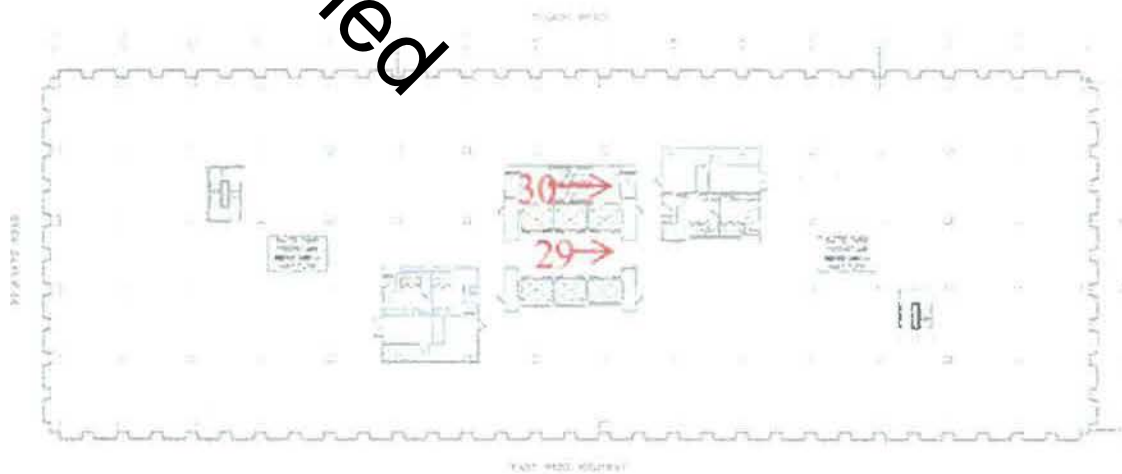
FIFTH FLOOR



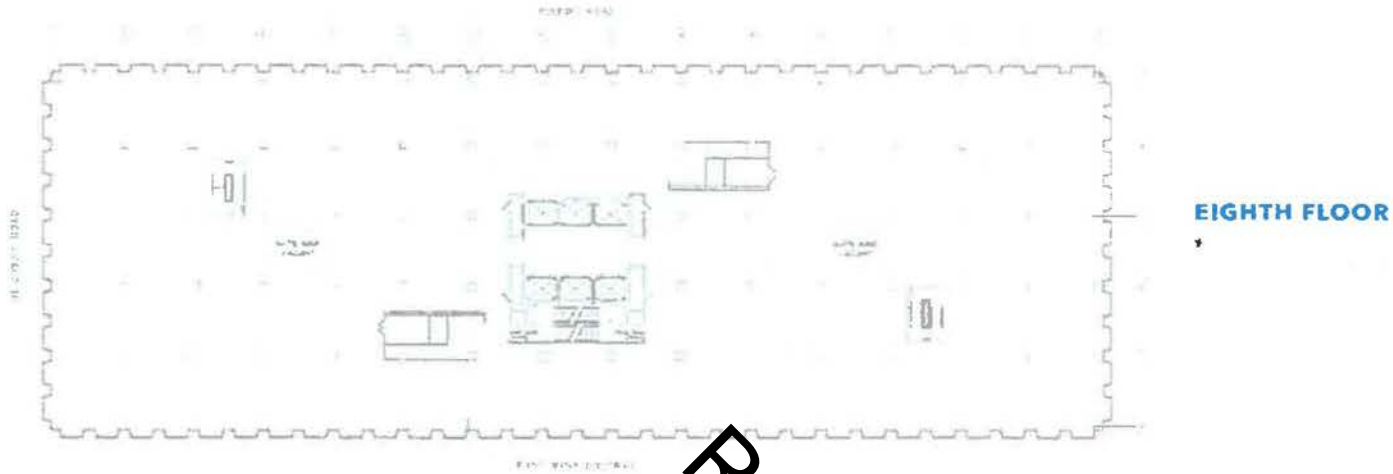
New Town Center
 Metro 3
 6525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 4th and 5th Floor Plans with Photograph Key



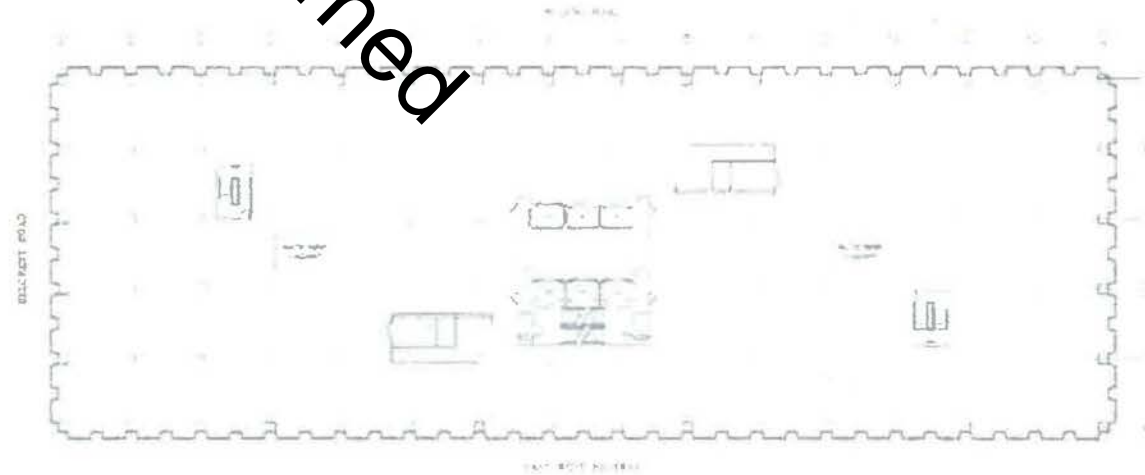
SEVENTH FLOOR



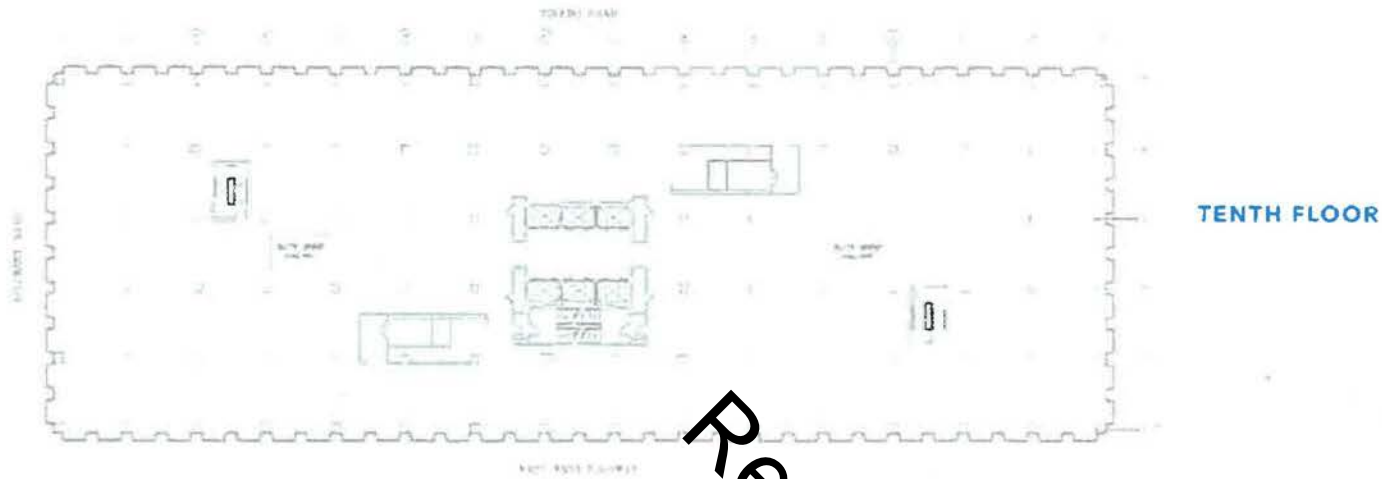
New Town Center
 Metro 3
 6525 Belcrest Road
 Hyattsville, MD
 6th and 7th Floor Plans with Photograph Key



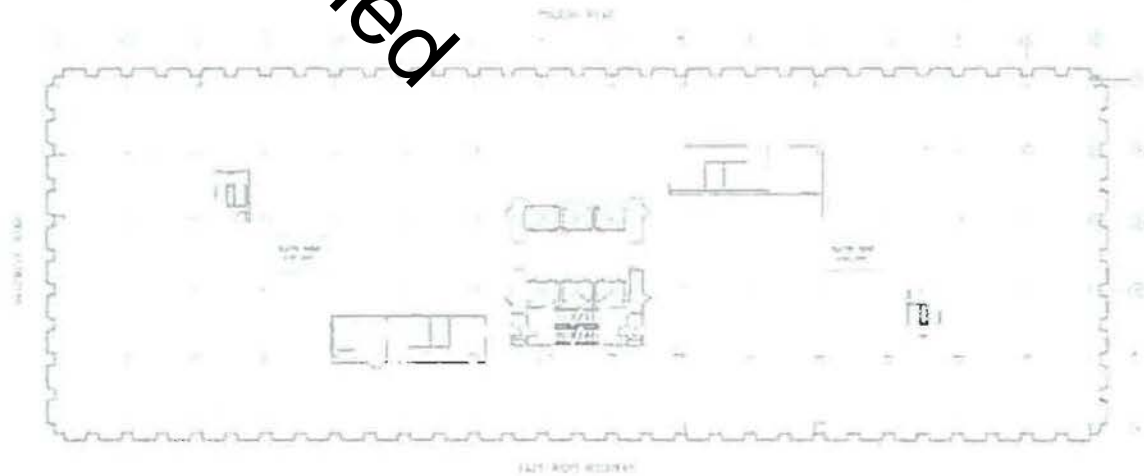
NINTH FLOOR



New Town Center
Metro 3
6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
8th and 9th Floor Plans with Photograph Key



ELEVENTH FLOOR



New Town Center
Metro 3
6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD
10th and 11th Floor Plans with Photograph Key































G-015



G-015
Waiting Conference Room

































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: New Town Center

Multiple Name:

State & County: MARYLAND, Prince George's

Date Received: 6/4/2018 Date of Pending List: 7/9/2018 Date of 16th Day: 7/24/2018 Date of 45th Day: 7/19/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100002683

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG	

☐ Accept ☒ Return ☐ Reject 7/12/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Issues with integrity, boundaries, maps, and justification under A. See detailed comments

Recommendation/
Criteria

Return

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : **Yes** see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: New Town Center, Prince George's County, MD

Reference Number: 100002683

Reason for Return

The New Town Center nomination is being returned for substantive and technical revision.

Substantive Issues

The nomination's central thesis is that the New Town Center is significant under Criterion A as an early example of centralized regional city planning and "as an example of how the practical application of progressive suburban planning theory alone is insufficient for its success." In other words, its significance is that it was a failure in planning. The issue we have in regards to the stated area of significance and the argument of significance related to the planning aspect is that the actual nominated property, the three Edward Durell Stone buildings, are not sufficient to represent the "planning" aspect. In order to substantiate the argument as presented, the entire property would have to be included. This would entail many noncontributing resources, a more deliberative examination of the integrity of the complex, and re-notification of all owners and review by the state review board.

Another option would be to resubmit the nomination with an emphasis on the role of the GSA, the Federal decisions and planning that led to disbursement of agencies to the suburbs in leased space, and the effect of that program on the nascent development. This puts the emphasis on the three buildings that were actually constructed and occupied, and obviates the need to include the entire planned development. You could look at this under Criterion A under either Politics/Government (as it relates to implementation of the Federal policy) or keep it under Community Planning and Development (with the emphasis on development).

In either scenario, there needs to be more discussion and analysis of the integrity of the area and the buildings themselves. The additions to Metro I and Metro II are given scant attention in the analysis of integrity, and the changes to the site over the past 12 years are

barely noted. Not only were new buildings constructed, but new roads/circulation patterns. These things need to be described more clearly, and analyzed for their impacts.

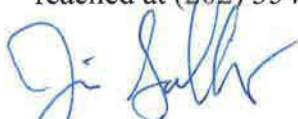
Technical Issues

The photographs provided with the nomination do not adequately convey the setting – this is directly related to the analysis of integrity. There are no images that depict the buildings in relation to their surroundings, and those that are provided de-emphasize recent changes (commercial, grade-level additions made to Metro I and Metro II). Please submit more representative images.

The verbal boundary description should either more explicitly describe the boundary of the nominated property, or if referencing a properly scaled map, the map should be clear and legible. The map accompanying the nomination form is almost illegible, with no reference points provided to place the red rectangles (denoting the buildings) in context. Please provide a clear boundary map that meets the standards described in Bulletin 16a or in our mapping guidance found on the National Register website.

One of these buildings has been submitted for the tax credit program. Please make sure that the appropriate box is checked in Section 9.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <James_Gabbert@nps.gov>.



Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
7/13/2018



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Robert S. McCord, Secretary



October 5, 2018

Julie H. Earnstein, Ph.D., RPA
Acting Chief, National Register & National Historic Landmarks Program
Deputy Keeper of the National Register
DOI-National Park Service
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Resubmission: NRIS number – 100002683
New Town Center (PG: 68-104)
Prince George's County, Maryland

Dear Dr. Earnstein:

Documentation to nominate the above-referenced property was originally submitted on May 30, 2018 but was returned by NR staff for reasons noted on the enclosed return sheet. We are re-submitting the documentation, which has been revised to address the review comments, and look forward to the listing of New Town Center in the National Register of Historic Places. Should you have questions in this matter, please contact Peter Kurtze at peter.kurtze@maryland.gov or (410) 697-9562.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hughes
Director-State Historic
Preservation Officer

EH/krq
Enclosures: NR form, photos, DVD