

## PART TWO : *Vision of Transit-Oriented Development*



### Vision Statement

The Capitol Heights Transit District Development Plan (TDDP) envisions the Town of Capitol Heights with a new mixed-use center at the Metro station and a revitalized business district along Old Central Avenue. The plan offers an unprecedented opportunity to attract new jobs, retail services, and housing choices to underutilized land around an existing Metrorail Blue Line station that is the first Blue Line stop in Prince George's County. Capitol Heights has a historic sense of place and community. Its grid of streets, wooded parks, and municipal self-government all add to the feel of a "real town." New and proposed projects on the other side of Southern Avenue in the District of Columbia are a harbinger of things to come as development spreads east from the District.

The potential exists for approximately 1,500 housing units in a diversity of building types; 290,000 square feet of office/commercial space providing potentially 558 jobs; an extensive system of civic, park and open spaces; and a finely balanced street and circulation network that maximizes accessibility while promoting streets as places of shared use. Map 3: Illustrative Development Concept Plan provides a visual overview of the Capitol Heights TDOZ at its full potential buildout.

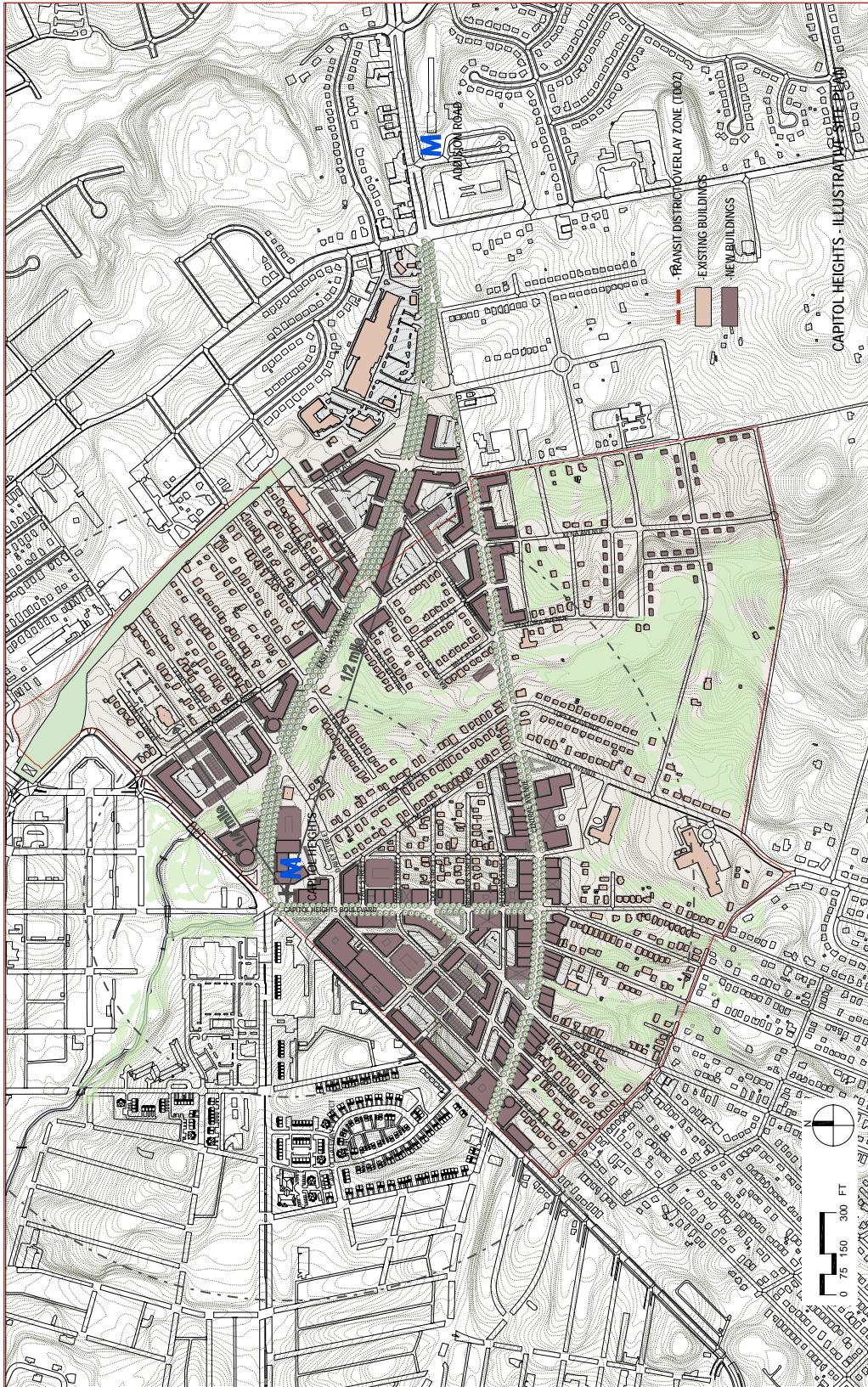
New development recognizes and builds upon the unique characteristics of the Town







## Vision of Transit-Oriented Development



**Map 3 Illustrative Development Concept Plan**

The illustrative development concept plan is only one possible scenario for how development could occur following the plan vision development standards and land use plan shown on page 43.



of Capitol Heights and promotes a wide range of building types. There are a variety of housing unit types and densities that will accommodate changing lifestyles for current Capitol Heights residents and provide options attractive to new residents. Existing neighborhoods are preserved even as new infill development takes place. High quality, compact development creates the economic base for new shops, stores, and cultural and entertainment venues that will enhance the quality of life for everyone in Capitol Heights and its environs. There is no big box retail; instead, there are smaller scale retail enterprises that are more consistent with the scale and character of the existing businesses along Old Central Avenue (MD 332). The result is many innovative, energy efficient, and aesthetically pleasing buildings and public places that attract people from throughout the area.

## Plan Elements

The Capitol Heights TDDP envisions compatible, moderate-to higher-density development located within an easy walk of the Metro station, generally with a mix of residential, employment and shopping opportunities. The built environment will favor pedestrians and bicyclists, promote the use of public transit, and accommodate the automobile. This type of development is transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD is defined as new construction or redevelopment designed to promote transit use. According to the General Plan (pages 44–45), successful TOD is characterized by three key elements:

**Density:** Intensity of development sufficient to provide a mass of transit riders.

**Diversity—Mix of Land Uses:** A mix of complementary uses whose interactions help to promote transit ridership by locating intermediate work trip destinations near public transit stations.

**Design:** Development that creates attractive, pedestrian-friendly environments and encourages residents, workers and visitors to arrive by modes of transportation other than the automobile; i.e., public transit, walking and bicycle.

TOD at Capitol Heights has four key features: character areas, environmental infrastructure, transportation systems, and low-impact development (LID) features. Figure 1: Capitol

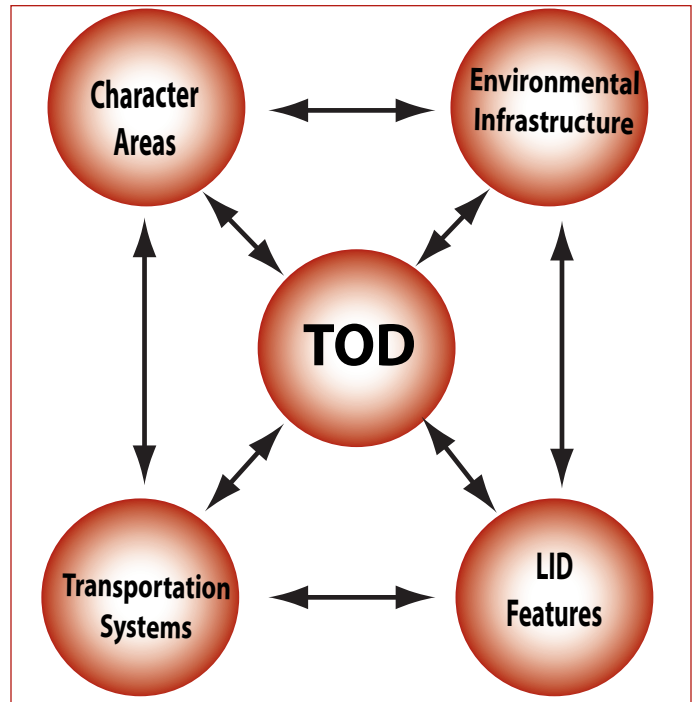


Figure 1 Capitol Heights TDOZ Plan Elements

Heights TDOZ Plan Elements illustrates the relationship between these elements and TOD.

**Character Areas** are essential components of the plan. Their distinctive and attractive physical appearance is designed to encourage walkability. Their more important function is to reinforce Capitol Heights' distinctive small-town sense of place. Walkability and sense of place are essential features of the pedestrian-friendly environments that characterize successful TOD. Definable and attractive character areas encourage residents and visitors to experience these places on foot and also take responsibility for their maintenance and development. These areas, whether residential or mixed use, should be compact and pedestrian friendly so that many activities of daily living are close to each other. They are safe, comfortable and attractive because of the high quality of their buildings and open spaces. Guidelines for designing safe built environments are found under Appendix C: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Guidelines.

**Environmental Infrastructure** consists of natural features and processes, wildlife, habitat, parks, recreation and open spaces. Well-designed environments combine natural and built





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elements in a way that encourages people to experience them on foot or bicycle. This pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly orientation is an essential feature of successful TOD. It also improves the quality of life for people and the other living creatures with which they share these spaces. Successful communities typically provide a range of natural areas, parks, and open spaces such as playgrounds, ball fields, and gardens as neighborhood amenities that define edges and provide connections.

*Transportation Systems* elements, such as streets, pedestrian pathways, and rail transit rights-of-way, help organize community structure. When these elements are properly planned and designed, they promote walking, bicycling and public transit as primary modes of travel within a neighborhood or district. This is the prime objective of TOD. A properly planned and balanced transportation system also allows all residents to enjoy independent mobility. Such independence is especially important for the young and the elderly, who are unable or unwilling to drive. The best streets are places of shared use that balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Well-designed streets are beautiful as well as functional and provide an attractive setting for a community's buildings.

*Low-Impact Development (LID) Features* mitigate the potential environmental impacts of excess stormwater runoff from paved and other impervious surfaces. In addition, well-designed LID features permit more compact and environmentally friendly development. Compact development is another essential feature of TOD. Typical LID features include green roofs, rain gardens, bioswales, micropools, and other creative uses of open space. Guidelines for LID are found in the appendices to this plan under Appendix B: Low-Impact Development Design Guidelines.

Development standards and guidelines for the Capitol Heights TDOZ may be found under the “Development Standards and Guidelines” chapter. These standards and guidelines are broken down into four areas: (1) building envelope and site, (2) open space and streetscape, (3) architecture, and (4) parking facilities.

### Character Areas

The TDDP envisions six distinct character areas in the Capitol Heights TDOZ: Metro Station Core, Metro Station

Edge, Main Street, Medium-Density Residential Edge, Urban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached, and Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached. (See Map 4: Capitol Heights Character Areas). These areas are described below.

### Metro Station Core

This area includes the Capitol Heights Metro Station area and the properties fronting Southern Avenue between Cavalier Street and Maryland Park Drive. It also includes Town of Capitol Heights-owned properties along the east side of Capitol Heights Boulevard between Davey and Dole Streets. The area is generally bounded by Southern Avenue/District line, Maryland Park Drive, Eagle Street, East Capitol Street Extended (MD 214), Davey Street, Quire Avenue, Dole Street, Capitol Heights Boulevard, Akin Avenue, and Cavalier Street. Map 5: Metro Station Core Locator depicts this character area in relation to the surrounding Capitol Heights TDOZ.

The Metro station core will be the most active and intensively developed of the Capitol Heights TDOZ character areas. It will contain the most diverse development mix and tallest buildings—mid- to high-rise residential units, office space, public parking, retail, and a new central square.

Buildings of 4 to 14 stories will distinguish the Metro station core. Buildings within 500 feet of the Metro station entrance will be eight stories or taller. These taller buildings will serve as landmarks for the surrounding community. Buildings will cover at least 60 percent of their lots; those closest to the Metro station may cover up to 100 percent of their lots. Metro core buildings on East Capitol Street Extended will sit 20 feet from the curb edge. Buildings on other streets in the character area will sit 12 feet from the curb edge. All off-street parking within the Metro station core will be structured with access preferably from the side or rear.

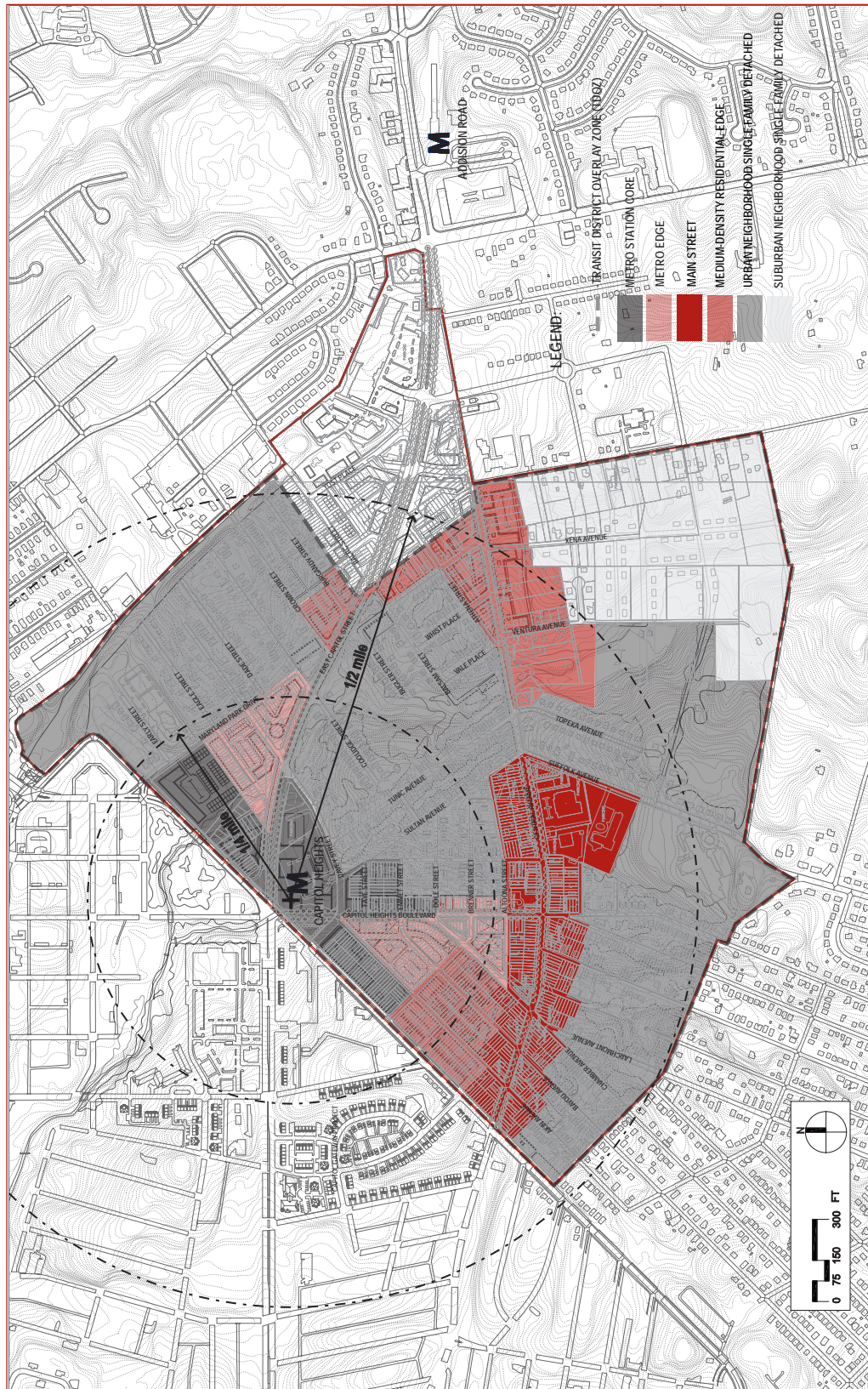
Appropriate development within the Metro station core will be similar in form and appearance to that illustrated.

### Parking

The plan envisions the existing surface parking at the Capitol Heights Metro Station being replaced with new high-rise, mixed-use development. Some replacement Metro parking



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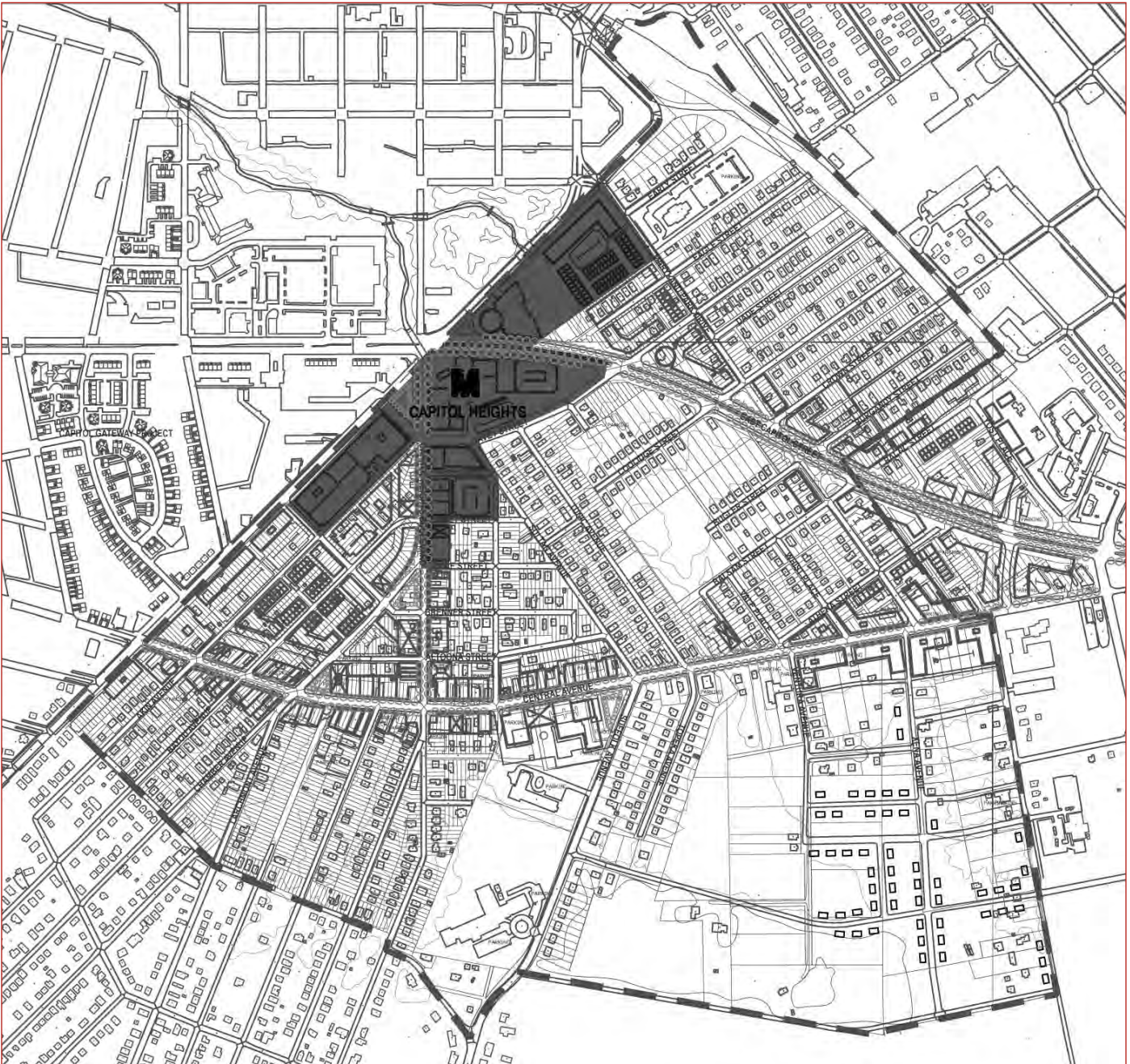


Map 4 Capitol Heights Character Areas





## *Vision of Transit-Oriented Development*



**Map 5 Metro Station Core Locator**



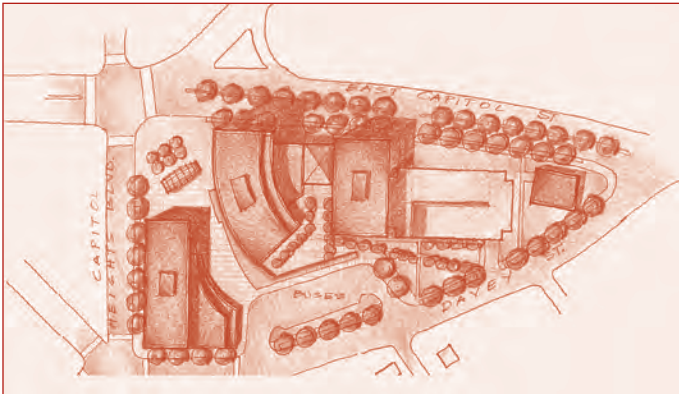


Figure 2 Metro Joint Development Site

(including kiss-and-ride spaces) may be retained on-site in a parking structure that is screened from the street with ground-floor “liner” retail/office space or full-height wrap-around residential/nonresidential uses. Figure 2: Metro Joint Development Site—Illustrative Development Concept depicts how appropriate development at this site might look.

Additional parking for Metro patrons, tenants, residents and visitors will be in off-site parking structures that are similarly screened from public view. The existing bus bays will be relocated to Davey Street to improve their access for buses and pedestrians, provide weather protection, and improve traffic flow around the new mixed-use center.

## Pedestrian Plazas

The plan envisions the extension of Capitol Heights Boulevard to East Capitol Street Extended. This extension will help create a focal-point pedestrian plaza surrounding the existing Metro station entrance and a new pedestrian plaza west of Capitol Heights Boulevard (extended). Both plazas would feature similar materials, lighting and landscaping to highlight their focus on the Metro station entrance. The pedestrian plazas will emphasize access and safety with well-marked and signal-controlled crosswalks, adequate lighting, and special pavement treatments.

Figure 3: Capitol Heights Metro Plaza—Illustrative Development Concept depicts a design option that would enlarge the western pedestrian plaza to include land freed by the closing of Southern Avenue between Davey and East Capitol Streets. (Note: Consent to close Southern Avenue would need to be obtained from the District of Columbia government, whose jurisdiction includes the entire Southern Avenue right-of-way.)

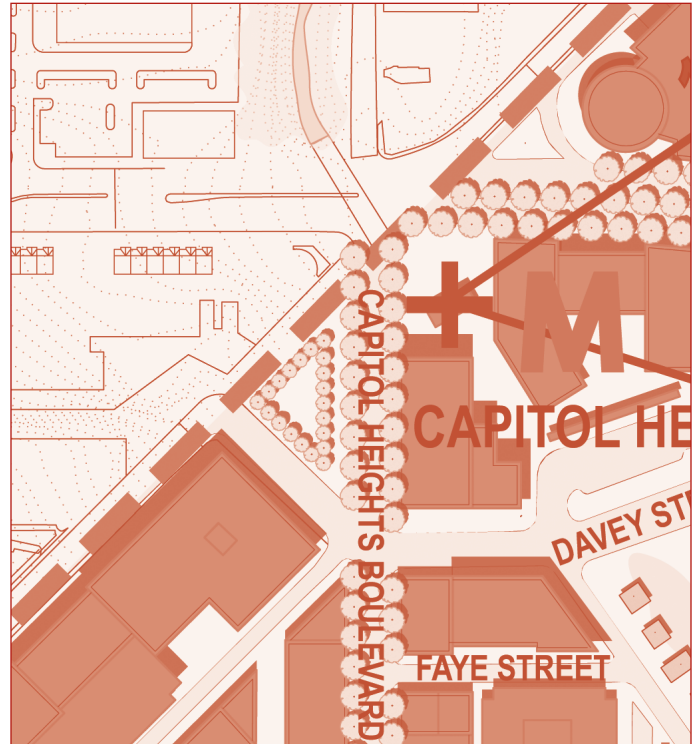


Figure 3 Capitol Heights Metro Plaza

New high-rise development at the station site will incorporate the station entrance with its overhead protective canopy as a strong architectural element and orienting landmark to complement the station plaza. Ground-floor retail will line the new buildings adjacent to the Metro entrance and bus area.

## Metro Station Edge

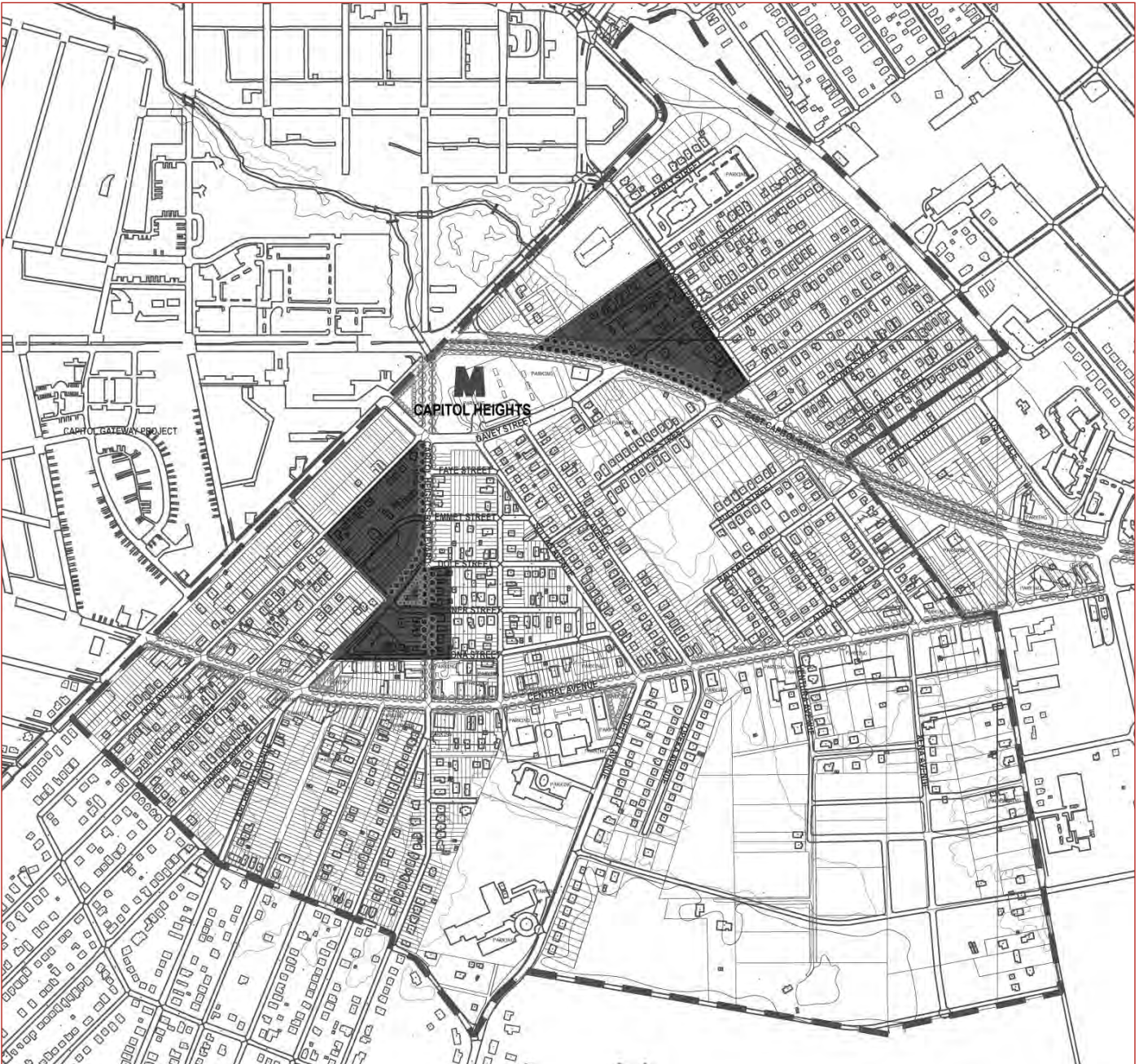
This character area is divided into two separate locations. The first one includes properties immediately south of the Metro station core along the west side of Capitol Heights Boulevard between Akin and Chamber Avenues, and both sides of Capitol Heights Boulevard between Dole and Altoona Streets. The second location consists of properties generally bounded by Eagle Street, Maryland Park Drive, Coolidge Street, and East Capitol Street Extended (MD 214). Map 6: Metro Station Edge Locator depicts this character area in relation to the surrounding Capitol Heights TDOZ.

The Metro station edge is envisioned as a buffer between the intensively developed Metro station core and the lower-density residential and mixed-use areas to the south and east.





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*Map 6 Metro Station Edge Locator*





It will contain a balanced mix of residential and commercial/retail uses. Residential uses will consist mostly of townhouse and mid-rise multifamily units. Nonresidential uses will consist of low-rise commercial office buildings with ground-floor retail space and ground-floor retail and office space in some multifamily residential buildings.

Buildings in the Metro station edge will range from three to five stories in height along Capitol Heights Boulevard and Maryland Park Drive; buildings elsewhere in the character area may range up to eight stories in height. They will cover at least 60 percent of their lots. Buildings along East Capitol Street Extended will sit 20 feet from the curb edge. Buildings along Maryland Park Drive and Capitol Heights Boulevard will sit 12 feet from the curb edge. Buildings elsewhere in the Metro station edge will sit 10 to 15 feet from the curb edge. Off-street parking will be structured. Townhouse units will feature tuck-under enclosed parking accessed from rear alleys or interior courts.

The Metro station edge will feature a mix of residential uses, including low- to mid-rise condominium apartments and attached townhouses. Commercial uses will be limited to the ground floors of residential and mixed-use buildings.

Appropriate development within this character area will be similar in form and appearance to that illustrated.

## Community Amenities

A public park or plaza is envisioned at the intersection of Capitol Heights Boulevard and Chamber Avenue. This public space may feature a green sitting area, street trees, and a public fountain. It will serve as a community amenity and gathering spot. Figure 4: Capitol Heights Boulevard/

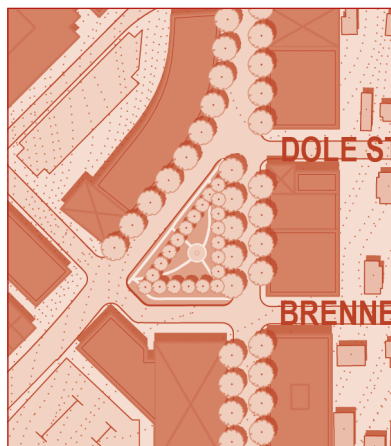


Figure 4 Capitol Heights Blvd./Chamber Ave. Pocket Park—Illustrative Site Plan

Chamber Avenue Pocket Park—Illustrative Design Concept shows how this proposed community amenity might look.

Another community amenity will be a restored and enhanced Watts Branch Stream Valley Parkway, a segment of which will cross the northern portion of the Metro station edge character area. A scenic pedestrian/bicycle path will run along the cleaned-up and restored streambed. Buildings flanking the stream valley park may incorporate scenic plazas designed to take advantage of the restored stream valley's amenity value. See the discussion under "Environmental Infrastructure" for further details about the proposed Watts Branch Stream Valley amenity and the Capitol Heights TDDP open space plan.

## Main Street

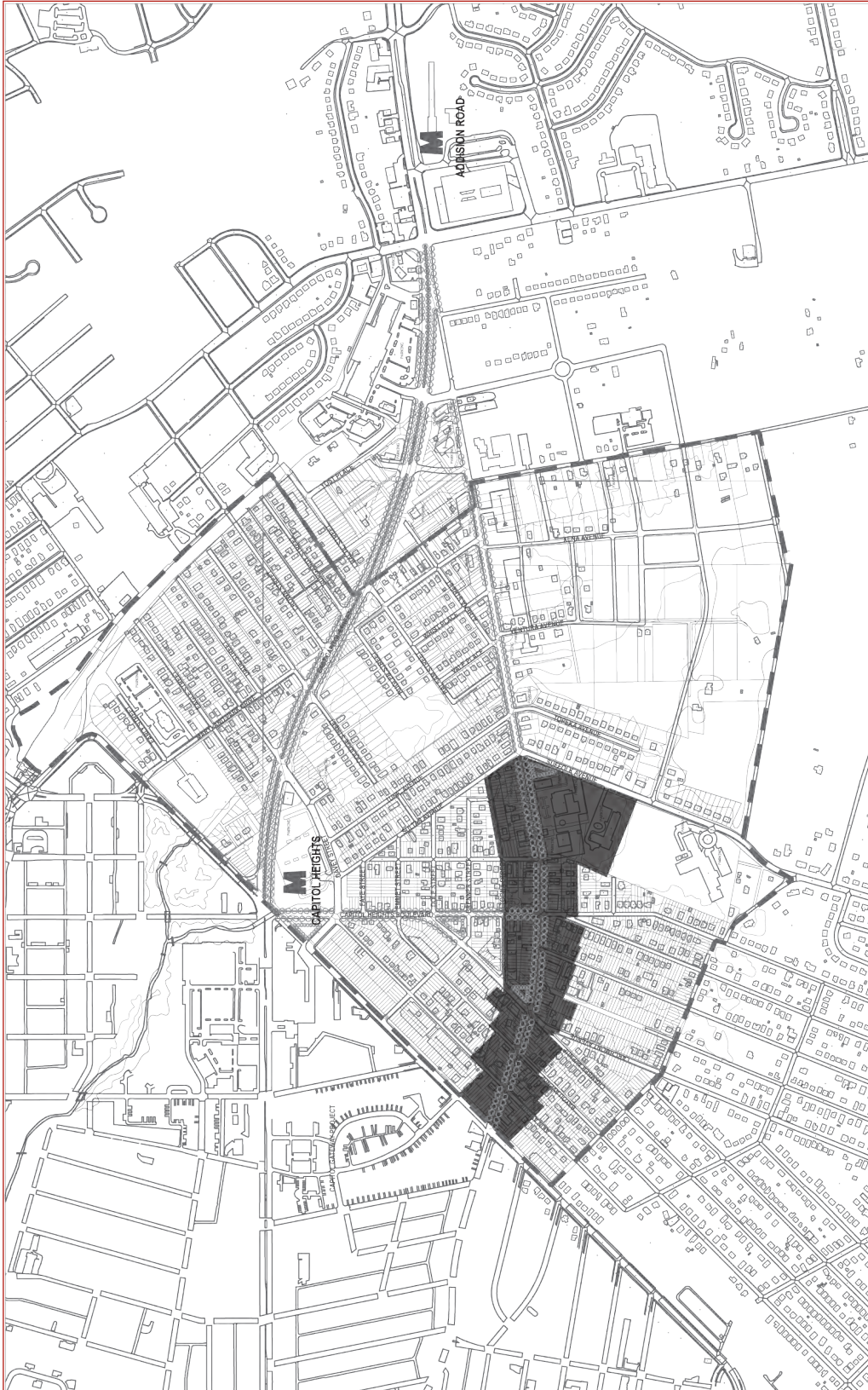
This area will feature the Old Central Avenue (MD 332) corridor as Capitol Heights' revitalized main commercial street and civic center. It generally includes properties fronting and/or within 100 feet of MD 332 between Southern Avenue/District line and Suffolk Avenue. Map 7: Main Street Locator depicts this character area in relation to the surrounding Capitol Heights TDOZ.

The plan envisions a pedestrian-friendly main street with a single travel lane in each direction, on-street parking on both sides of the street, and a bicycle lane on the south side of the street. Buildings along the street will house ground floor retail with commercial or residential uses above. They will be three to five stories in height and cover 60–80 percent of their lots. Buildings along Old Central Avenue will sit 12 feet from the curb edge. The only exceptions to this requirement will be properties at the corner of Capitol Heights Boulevard. Buildings at the corners of this intersection will sit 50 feet from the curb edge (see following discussion on the proposed town square and town civic center). Buildings on the side streets will sit 12 feet from the curb edge.

The predominant uses within the main street character area will be neighborhood-serving commercial businesses. These uses will occupy the ground floors of buildings lining Old Central Avenue and Capitol Heights Boulevard. A mix of office and residential uses will occupy the upper floors of these buildings.



## *Vision of Transit-Oriented Development*



**Map 7 Main Street Locator**





Figure 5 Main Street Character Area

Appropriate development within the Main Street character area will be similar in form and appearance to that illustrated in Figure 5: Main Street Character Area.

## Parking

All off-street parking will be in the form of shared parking located under or behind the uses they serve in a mixture of surface lots and low-rise parking structures. Surface parking lots will be attractively landscaped, with low-impact development (LID) features incorporated into their design where appropriate. See the discussion under “Low-Impact Development (LID)” features for additional details about this approach to stormwater management. Access to this parking will generally be from side streets or rear alleys.

## Civic Features

The plan envisions two major civic features that will help to define the main street character area as the functional heart and town center for Capitol Heights:

**Town Square:** The town square will be the heart of the Capitol Heights town center. Located at the intersection of Old Central Avenue and Capitol Heights Boulevard, the town square will be flanked on all sides by mixed-use retail and residential development of various types. It will be an open space that serves the community in many ways. The plan envisions the town square as an urban plaza that will accommodate parades, festivals and similar events. The town square will also enable people to simply sit, rest and enjoy the ever-changing scene. The square will be a specially designed street intersection with tree-shaded corner plazas. One or

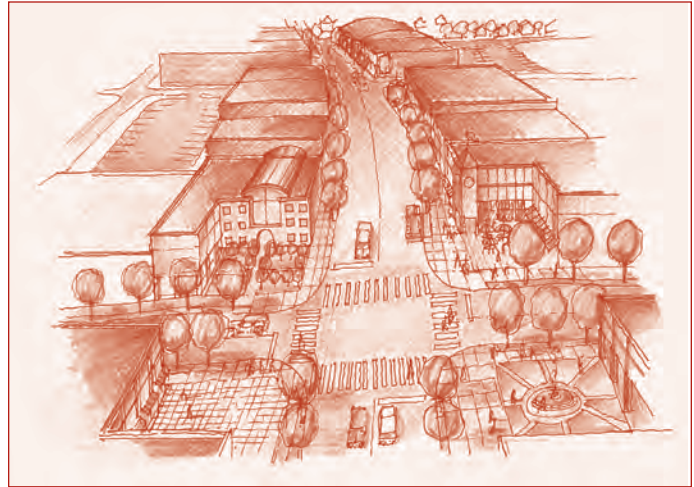


Figure 6 Illustrative View of Town Square Looking East

more of the corner plazas may feature a fountain, sculpture or other work of public art. Figure 6: Illustrative View of Town Square Looking East depicts what this civic feature might look like when completed.

**Town Civic Center:** A new town civic center is envisioned at the intersection of Old Central and Suffolk Avenues. This landmark structure will define the east end of the main street character area. The civic center will occupy the site of the existing U.S. Postal Service office immediately north of an existing mid-rise elderly housing building and the Capitol Heights Elementary School. The civic center will front on Old Central Avenue and feature a public plaza designed to complement adjacent retail and commercial uses in the east end of the main street character area. The civic center will consolidate the town’s municipal offices and services at one location. One design option envisions a ceremonial entrance and civic plaza on the building’s south side to avoid curb cuts on Old Central Avenue and provide a sunny public space. Limited parking, a tot playground, and a basketball court would also be located on the civic center site to replace similar facilities adjacent to the current town hall. Figure 7: Illustrative Site Plan of Town Civic Center depicts how this proposed facility might look when completed.

Outdoor cafes and street vendors will be encouraged at these and other locations along Old Central Avenue. Wider sidewalks, street trees, and special paving materials and patterns for sidewalks and crosswalks will render the street safer, more pedestrian friendly, and more attractive.



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Figure 7 Illustrative Site Plan of Town Civic Center

### Medium-Density Residential Edge

This character area comprises two separate locations within the Capitol Heights TDOZ. The westernmost area generally includes the properties bounded by Southern Avenue, Cavalier Street, Chamber Avenue, and Old Central Avenue (with the exception of properties fronting on or less than 100 feet north of Old Central Avenue). The second, larger area generally includes properties fronting Old Central Avenue between Suffolk and Rollins Avenues, and fronting the north side of Maryland Park Drive from Old Central Avenue to Crown Street. Map 8: Medium-Density Residential Edge Locator depicts this character area in relation to the surrounding Capitol Heights TDOZ.

The medium-density residential edge will be characterized primarily by mid-rise condominium buildings. Neighborhood-serving commercial uses will be in ground-floor space at scattered sites along Southern Avenue, Old Central Avenue, and East Capitol Street Extended. Buildings will range from



Figure 8 Typical Development in Medium-Density Residential Edge

4 to 6 stories in height and cover 60–80 percent of their lots. They will sit 15 feet from the curb edge, permitting extensive green landscaping and paved entrance plazas. Off-street parking will be a mixture of surface lots and structures, preferably accessed from rear alleys or side streets. Surface parking lots will be attractively landscaped, with low-impact development (LID) features incorporated into their design where appropriate. (See the discussion under “Low-Impact Development (LID)” features for additional details about this approach to stormwater management.)

Appropriate development within the medium-density residential edge character area will be similar in form and appearance to that shown in Figure 8: Typical Development in Medium-Density Residential Edge.

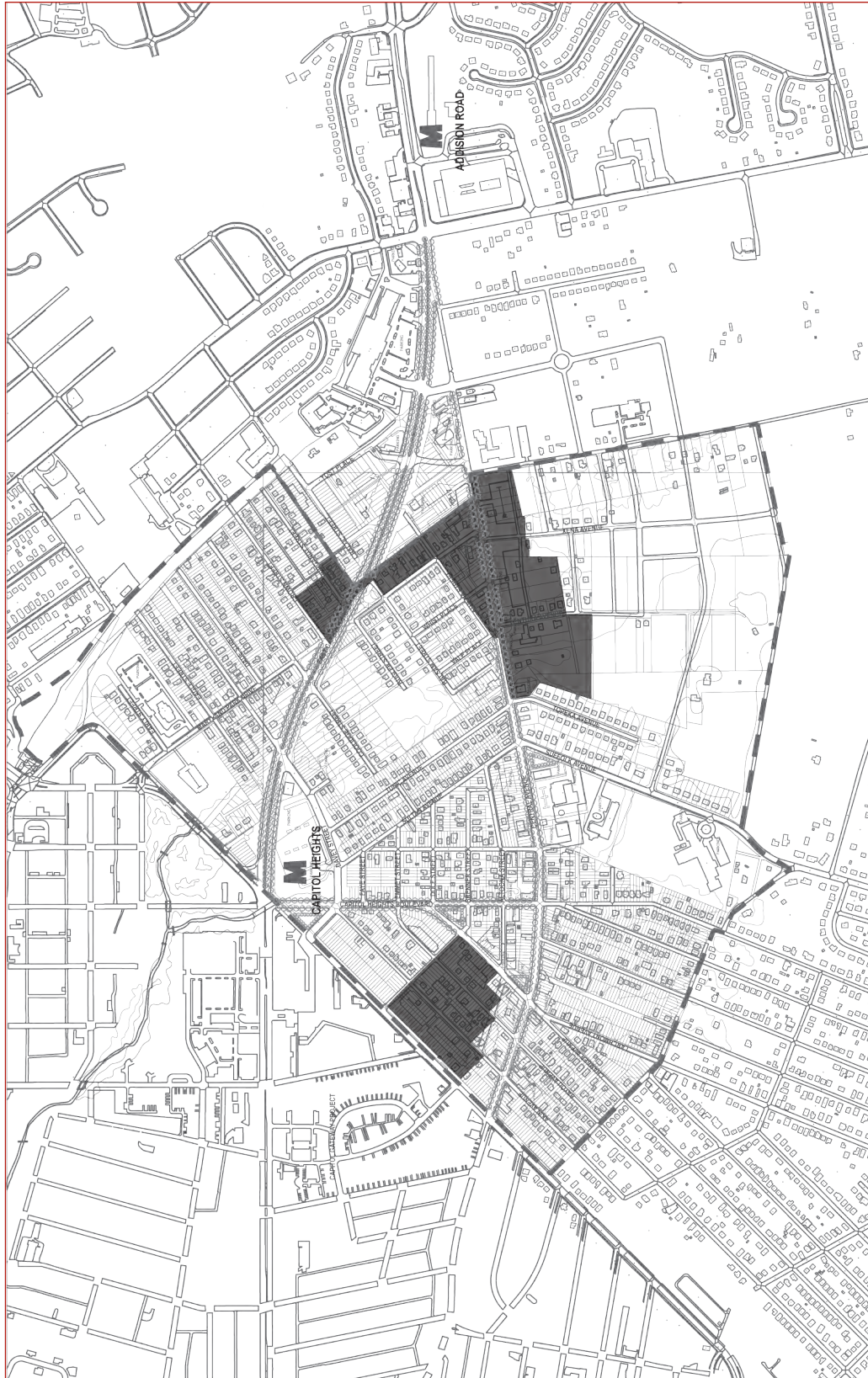
### Urban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached

This character area contains the existing single-family detached residences that occupy roughly half of the Capitol Heights TDOZ area. This character area is divided into three sections. The northernmost section generally includes properties north of Maryland Park Drive. The middle section is generally bounded by Quire Avenue, Davey Street, East Capitol Street Extended, Maryland Park Drive, Altoona Street, Sultan Avenue, Old Central Avenue, and Athena Street. The southernmost section generally includes properties south of Old Central Avenue (excluding properties fronting on and/or within 100 feet of Old Central Avenue) and west of Ventura Avenue. Map 9: Urban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached Locator depicts this character area in relation to the surrounding Capitol Heights TDOZ.

The urban neighborhood character area will retain its small-town residential flavor. Scattered infill single-family



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*Map 8 Medium-Density Residential Edge Locator*



## *Vision of Transit-Oriented Development*



*Map 9 Urban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached Locator*





Figure 9 Typical Development—Urban Residential Neighborhood

detached—and, here and there, attached—units will be the only noticeable change. New residences in this area will be two to 2½ stories in height. They will sit 10 to 15 feet from the curb edge.

New residences on blocks with rear alleys will have parking accessed from the alley. New dwellings on blocks without rear alleys will have front access and garages or parking pads that are generally in line with the residences' front façades. All new residential units will have combined side yards at least 17 feet wide (minimum 4 feet for any side yard), except for zero-lot-line units. Likewise, each new unit will cover 35–70 percent of its lot.

Appropriate development within the urban neighborhood character area will be similar in form and appearance to that shown in Figure 9: Typical Development—Urban Residential Neighborhood.

## Community Open Space

Two community open spaces will be located within the urban neighborhood: Bugler Street Park and Capitol Heights Neighborhood Park. These facilities are existing parks. One of these, Bugler Street Park, is envisioned in the plan as being upgraded. They are described below.

**Bugler Street Park:** This centrally located, 3.6-acre park is east of Tunic Street and north of Balsam Street. It is accessible from all three streets. Moderate to steep slopes, mature trees, and a children's playground make this a potentially attractive park. The Watts Branch Stream runs through the center of the park, adding to its natural setting.

The plan envisions Bugler Street Park as an upgraded green “living room” with new southern access from Old Central Avenue. The new southern entrance could include, for example, a sitting area with benches and a gazebo with a clear pedestrian linkage to the existing toddler's playground. All park facilities would be clearly visible from Old Central Avenue and nearby residential areas to help facilitate police surveillance of the park. A small, multifamily residential building might also be located adjacent to the park's new Old Central Avenue entrance, providing additional “eyes on the park” in the process.

**Capitol Heights Neighborhood Park:** Located east of Suffolk Avenue across from the Capitol Heights Elementary School, this is a 7.5-acre park that is heavily wooded and undeveloped. Its proximity to the Watts Branch stream valley makes this park feel much larger than it is. The plan envisions this neighborhood park as a nature preserve and protected wildlife habitat.

## Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached

This character area is generally located south of Central Avenue and east of Ventura Avenue, extending to Rollins Avenue. It is adjacent to the Addison Road Metro Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ). Map 10: Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached depicts this character area in relation to the surrounding Capitol Heights TDOZ.

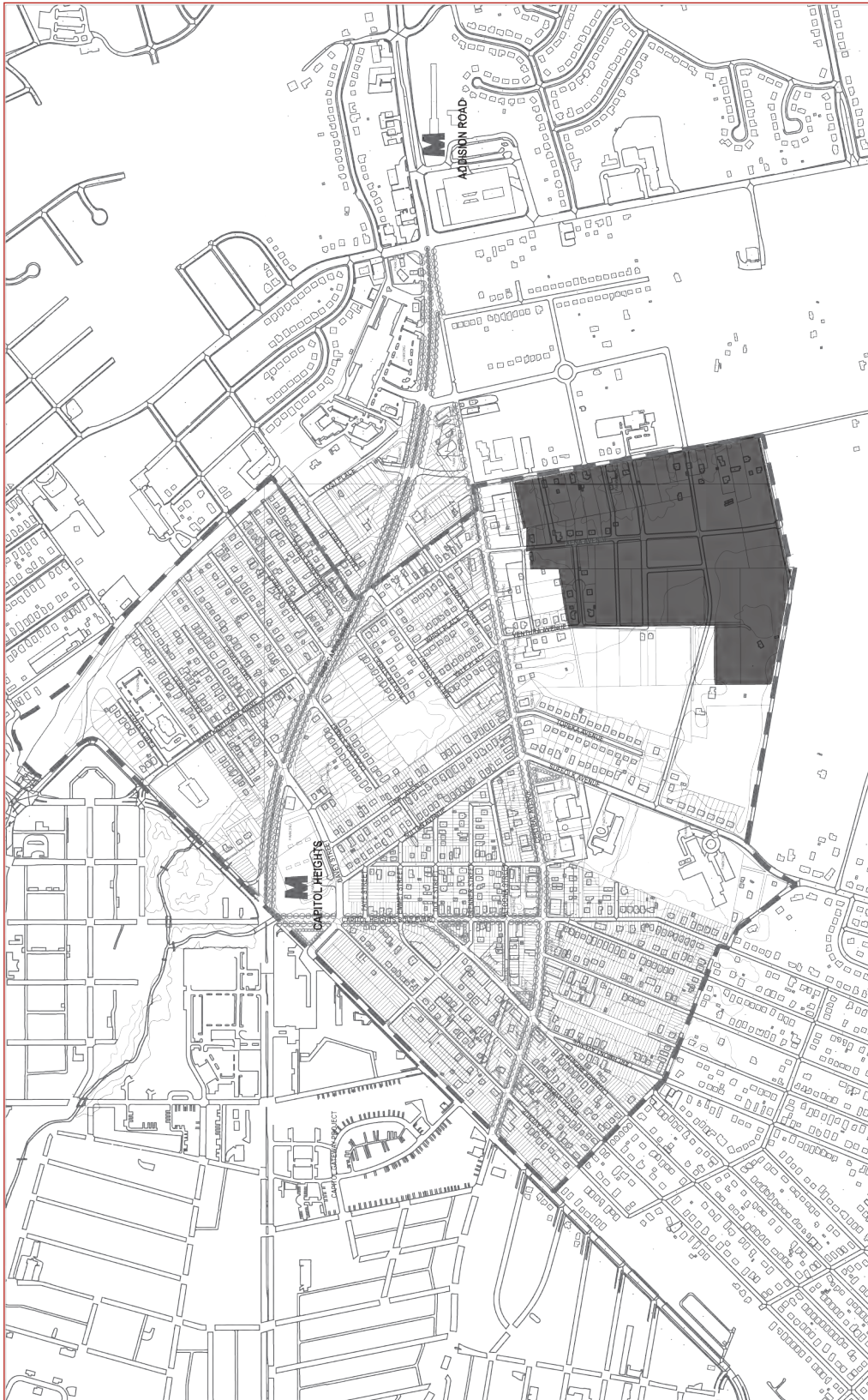
The suburban neighborhood will be the only low-density character area in the Capitol Heights TDOZ. It will consist of larger single-family detached dwellings on half-acre lots. To create a pedestrian-friendly and safe streetscape, new homes will sit 25 to 28 feet from the curb edge. Parking for all



Figure 10 Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached



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*Map 10 Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached*





residences will be accessed from the front. The garage, carport, or parking pad for each residence will be placed no closer to the street than the building's front façade.

New residences will be 1 to 2½ stories in height and have maximum lot coverage of 25 percent. Side yards for each dwelling will have a minimum combined width of 17 feet, with no single side yard being less than eight feet wide.

Appropriate development within the suburban neighborhood character area will be similar in form and appearance to that shown in Figure 10: Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached.

## Environmental Infrastructure

One of Capitol Heights' greatest assets is its large amount of existing open space, including public parks and wooded areas. The rolling topography adds to the village-like nature of the town. The plan envisions a system of parks and open spaces that capitalizes on these assets. New development along the steep slopes from Southern Avenue down to Chamber Avenue will be terraced to accommodate the steep topography, take advantage of scenic views, and preserve a number of mature trees.

## Open Space

The plan envisions an enhanced network of public open spaces throughout the Capitol Heights TDOZ. This system of public open space is illustrated on Map 11: Illustrative Open Space Plan.

The Watts Branch Stream Valley is the largest single environmental feature in the Capitol Heights TDOZ. Watts Branch is a tributary of the Anacostia River and drains a portion of the river's watershed. This stream valley runs northwest through the Capitol Heights TDOZ from south of Old Central Avenue to Southern Avenue, traversing all but one character area. It continues through the District to the Anacostia River. The District of Columbia is undertaking the restoration and upgrading of the Watts Branch stream valley west of Southern Avenue. The city designated its portion of the stream valley as the Marvin Gaye Memorial Park in April 2006 in honor of the famed Motown recording star and Washington, D.C., native. The Watts Branch stream valley is accessible to the Capitol Heights town center area.

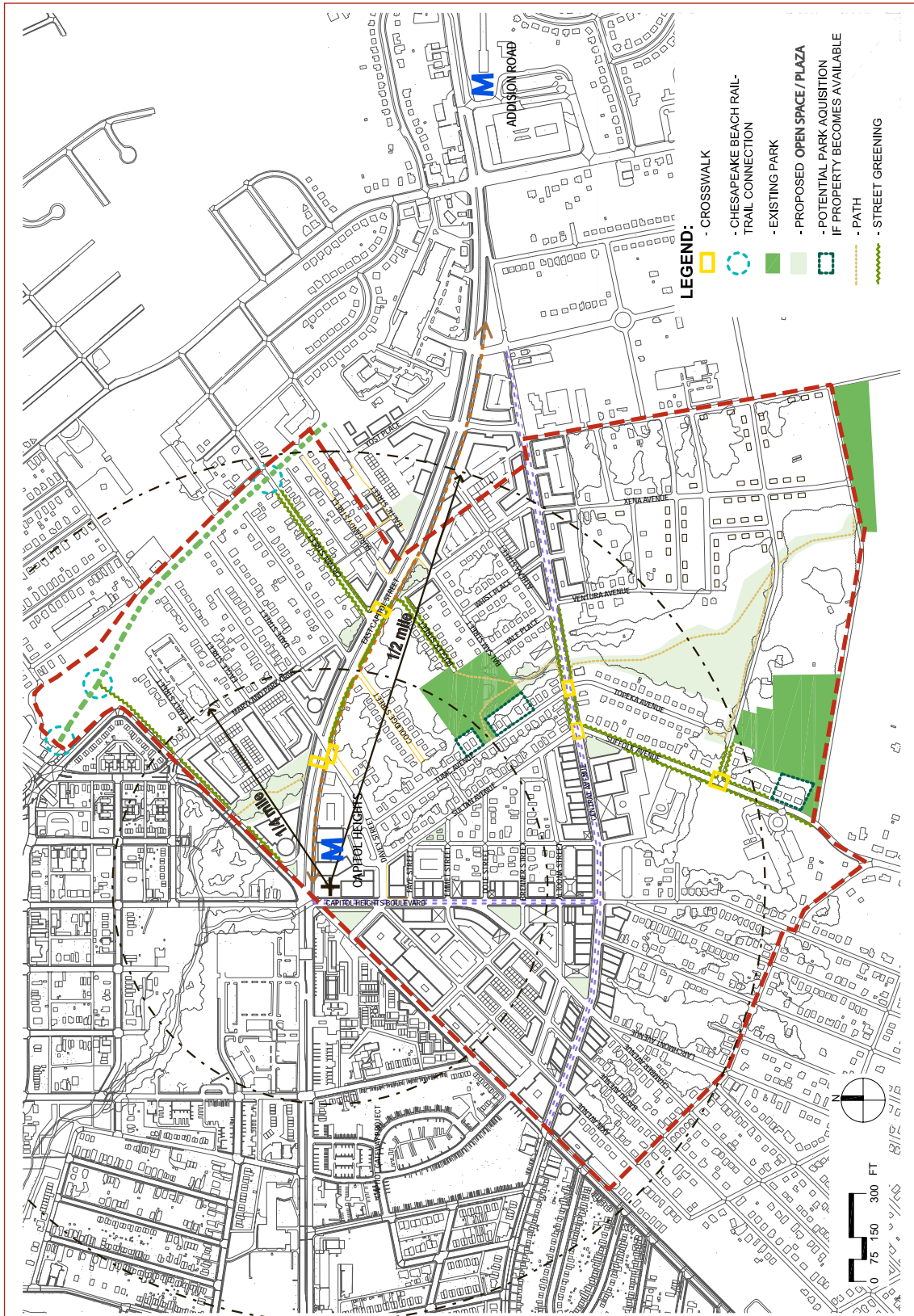
The plan envisions the Watts Branch Stream Valley as an upgraded greenway through the Capitol Heights TDOZ. The streambed will be restored and cleared of trash and overgrown vegetation. A paved hiker/bicycle path will parallel the stream along much of its length within the TDOZ. This path will connect with a similar bicycle path at Southern Avenue that continues into the District of Columbia through Marvin Gaye Memorial Park.

The plan recommends a four-part strategy to help clean up the Watts Branch Stream Valley within the TDOZ:

1. Close coordination between the Prince George's County Police Department (PGCPD) and the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources (DER) to strictly enforce anti-pollution and anti-littering statutes within the stream valley, including stiffened fines for violators.
2. County assistance primarily through the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) to aid the Town of Capitol Heights in addressing street maintenance and drainage issues within the town limits.
3. Development standards and stormwater management requirements that mandate reduced flows of stormwater run-off into local storm sewers. The Development Standards and Guidelines contained in this plan are intended to encourage environmentally sensitive building and site design approaches that will help achieve this objective. DPW&T could assist by requiring stormwater management plans to reduce stormwater runoff from development sites in order to gain approval.
4. Formation of an alliance between DER, the Town of Capitol Heights, and one or more nonprofit environmental remediation organizations that specialize in restoring damaged and neglected streambeds. This partnership would carry out the actual cleaning up and restoration of the Watts Branch streambed. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the State Highway Administration (SHA) might also play a role in this effort by providing state resources to help finance or provide material support for this project. Nonprofit organizations that could help leverage community support of the alliance include the Anacostia Watershed Society, Clean Water Action, and the Maryland Chapter of The Sierra



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Map 11 Illustrative Open Space Plan





Club. The local business community and area residents could also be recruited to help clean up and protect the streambed through special community events such as an “Adopt A Stream” campaign and special streambed cleanup days.

## Parks and Plazas

The plan envisions several more urban public parks and plazas throughout the TDOZ area. These elements will provide gathering places for community events and create value for the proposed development on their perimeters. The character of the environment within the TDOZ will vary from formally landscaped neighborhood parks and streetscapes to more informal, natural areas along the neighborhood edges.

The key features of the environmental element of the Capitol Heights TDDP include Metro plaza and the town square. They are described in detail in the character area descriptions for the Metro station core and main street, respectively. Map 11: Illustrative Open Space Plan and Map 14: Illustrative Pedestrian and Transit Circulation Plan show the locations of these features within the TDOZ.

## Transportation Systems

The Capitol Heights TDDP envisions many new residents, employees and visitors in the TDOZ. Most of the area’s future residents and workers will live and/or work within a ten-minute walk of the Metro Station and will not need to drive for most daily trips. Strategic traffic calming measures will be used to slow down vehicular traffic and transform streets into safer, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly places.

## Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

A key feature in the transportation plan for the TDOZ is the use of transportation demand management (TDM) techniques to ensure that average levels of service (LOS) for the roads serving this area do not exceed the minimum LOS standard of Level E mandated by the General Plan for areas within the Developed Tier. This requirement modifies the adequate public facilities (APF) requirement mandated for new development by requiring parking and pedestrian/bicycle access studies to determine the need for TDM within designated transit district overlay zones.

The Capitol Heights TDDP will permit the establishment of a transportation demand management district (TDMD) in accordance with the provisions of Title 20A, Transportation, of the Prince George’s County Code.

## Modal Choices

Successful TOD communities provide residents choices in making their journeys by locating a diverse mix of complementary uses within convenient reach of pedestrian/bicycle pathways and public transit, all within an attractive urban environment. By doing this, good TOD maximizes access and mobility while reducing dependence on the automobile. The TDDP takes full advantage of the Capitol Heights Metro Station by envisioning a TDOZ-wide network of safe and wide sidewalks and pedestrian/bicycle pathways, clearly marked on-street bicycle routes, convenient and frequent transit service, and vehicular routes reconfigured for greater pedestrian/bicyclist safety. This balanced approach to transportation planning and engineering will help provide convenient multimodal access throughout the TDOZ. It will also ensure that walking, bicycling and transit trips are as safe and enjoyable as automobile trips.

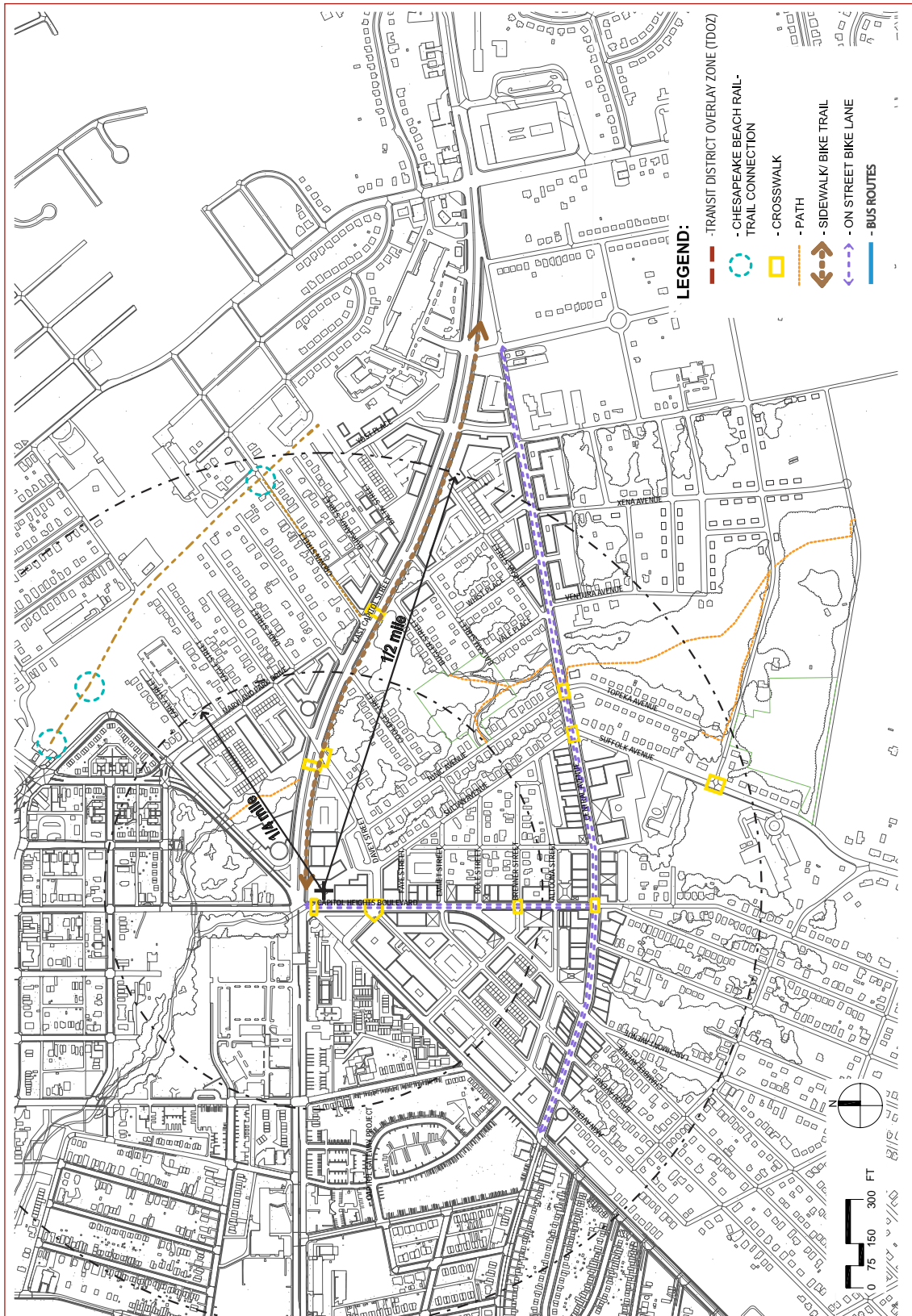
The following discussion of transportation systems within the Capitol Heights TDOZ is organized by primary transportation mode: streets and roadways; bus and rail transit; and pedestrian/bicycle trail facilities.

## Streets and Roadways

East Capitol Street Extended as a Landscaped Center-Median Boulevard: The plan envisions East Capitol Street Extended between Southern Avenue and Old Central Avenue as a landscaped center-median boulevard. As such, East Capitol Street Extended will function as a multipurpose street that carries both pedestrian/bicycle and vehicular traffic along separate paths. Extensive landscaping will serve as both visual amenity and pedestrian safety devices. The street will feature a landscaped median, wide sidewalks, and rows of street trees and other plantings along the sidewalks and median. On-street parking will be allowed during nonrush hours. The parked vehicles will provide pedestrians with additional protection from moving traffic. They will also help slow down vehicular traffic, thereby “calming” it (see detailed discussion on traffic calming below). Two new signalized pedestrian crossings will significantly improve pedestrian safety along East Capitol

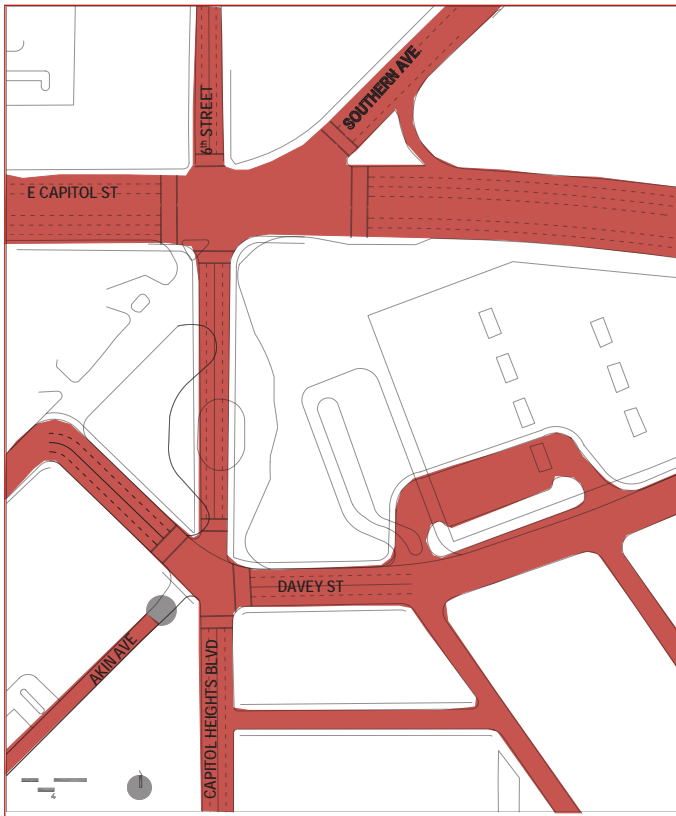


## Vision of Transit-Oriented Development



Map 12 Street Classification Plan





**Figure 11 Proposed Capitol Heights Boulevard/East Capitol Street Extended Intersection**

Street Extended. These crossings will be located at East Capitol Street Extended's intersections with Davey Street and Crown Street. A new intersection with Rollins Avenue Extended will permit direct vehicular access to Rollins Avenue south of Old Central Avenue. These facilities are depicted on Map 12, Illustrative Street Classification Plan.

**Streets:** The plan envisions all streets within the TDOZ as public places where much of the life of the community will take place. They will accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, public transit, and automobiles. Streets will be safe and comfortable, especially for pedestrians. Well-marked crosswalks will be standard at all intersections. Timed crossing signals with countdown displays will be located at most, if not all, signal-controlled intersections. The TDOZ's shared streets will be the most commonly used open space.

**Motorists:** The TDDP acknowledges the continuing importance of vehicular access even within TOD. However, it envisions vehicular access within the TDOZ as an important, but not dominant, feature of the future built environment.

Vehicles will be accommodated within an integrated network of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets, with motorists having easy access to on- and off-street parking. Off-street parking will be accessed generally from the side or rear of properties. Street front curb cuts for off-street parking access will be strictly limited within the Metro station core, Metro station edge, and Main Street character areas.

**Integrated Network:** The new TOD in the Capitol Heights TDOZ will respect the historic street network of the community at large. The transportation concept includes an interconnected network of streets, sidewalks, and off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths to provide critical linkages between neighborhoods, commercial services, and the Metro station. Map 12: Street Classification Plan depicts the street circulation network for the TDOZ.

**Pattern:** Capitol Heights already has a grid of urban blocks within the TDOZ. With some exceptions, blocks are no more than 400 feet in length. Small block sizes allow short, direct trips between uses. The plan leaves the existing grid in place with very few new streets being added. One of the new streets will be the extension of Capitol Heights Boulevard north from Davey Street to East Capitol Street Extended (see Figure 11: Proposed Capitol Heights Boulevard/East Capitol Street Extended Intersection). If the District of Columbia approves it, Southern Avenue between Davey Street and East Capitol Street Extended will be closed to create a new public plaza west of Capitol Heights Boulevard Extended.

**Functional Hierarchy:** The plan envisions primary connections to the surrounding region that will feature extensive landscaping and distinctive streetscapes. These elements will help identify the TDOZ as a unique urban place. Secondary routes that link neighborhoods and connect to community destinations will form the internal spine of the community. Internal streets for local access will be designed to impose slower vehicle speeds and function as places of shared use. Table 1, Street Classification Matrix, relates the terminology used to define the TDOZ street hierarchy to the functional street classification terminology currently used by Prince George's County.

**Parking:** The plan envisions parking facilities that complement the pedestrian environment in the TDOZ. This standard will apply to both on- and off-street parking. Properly sited on-street parking will serve as a pedestrian safety buffer on



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**Table 1**  
**Street Classification Matrix**

Type	County Equivalent	Transit District Example	Function
Primary (Boulevard)	Arterial	East Capitol Street Extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Highest capacity</li> <li>♦ Widest streets in station area</li> <li>♦ Connects station area with nearby communities</li> <li>♦ Medium vehicular speeds (maximum 35 mph recommended)</li> <li>♦ Divided landscaped median</li> <li>♦ Center turn lanes</li> <li>♦ Bicycle lanes</li> <li>♦ Restricted on-street parking (nonrush hour)</li> </ul>
Collector/Residential	Major Collector	Old Central Avenue Chamber/Larchmont Avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Links neighborhoods</li> <li>♦ Narrower than primary routes</li> <li>♦ Connects residential to commercial and retail activities</li> <li>♦ Moderately low vehicular speeds (maximum 25 mph recommended)</li> <li>♦ Local traffic</li> <li>♦ Bicycle lanes</li> </ul>
Minor/Low Volume	Residential Street	Tunic Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Primarily for local circulation and accessibility in residential areas</li> <li>♦ Narrowest widths</li> <li>♦ Low vehicular speeds (maximum 20 mph recommended)</li> </ul>
Off-Street Pathways	N/A		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Bicycle and pedestrian routes</li> <li>♦ Provide recreational benefits in open space/park areas</li> <li>♦ No vehicular traffic</li> </ul>





more heavily traveled commercial streets such as Old Central Avenue and East Capitol Street Extended. Off-street parking facilities, whether surface lots or structured parking, will be accessible without being ugly or unsafe for pedestrians. They will be designed to complement the surrounding built environment of the TDOZ.

The plan envisions the use of advanced methods of parking management for structured parking facilities located within the Capitol Heights TDOZ, possibly as part of an overall strategy for transportation demand management (TDM) in the area (see detailed discussion of TDM in the “Introduction”). Based on technical and economic feasibility, one such measure may be shared parking arrangements for attached uses with staggered hours of operation. An example of this might be parking shared between a medical office complex and a cinema or other entertainment complex. Another, more high-tech approach may be intelligent electronic parking management systems that include sensors to guide motorists to available parking spaces and interactive entrance signs that display the number of available spaces within a facility. These systems will be similar to the electronic parking management system used in the parking garages at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport. They will help reduce the energy waste and air pollution generated by motorists blindly cruising streets and parking facilities in search of available parking space.

The Capitol Heights TDDP/TDOZ parking plan is depicted in Map 13: Illustrative TDOZ Parking Plan.

## Bus and Rail Transit

**Transit:** The Capitol Heights Metro Station is a major community amenity within the TDOZ. However, the current layout of the station facility is that of an auto-oriented suburban transit hub with a large surface parking lot. It attracts much more vehicular traffic than foot/bicycle traffic. The plan envisions a transformed, urban transit facility with convenient intermodal connections and an attractive, pedestrian-friendly transit plaza framing its entrance. The existing surface Metro station parking lot will be replaced with mixed-use TOD. The structured parking will include dedicated replacement parking for public transit patrons. It will also include shared parking spaces for nearby uses and the public at large. Such shared parking will help to reduce the total amount of parking

needed to serve the Metrorail station and the surrounding development activity.

The plan also envisions bus stops along East Capitol Street Extended and Old Central Avenue being upgraded with attractive lighted shelters; posted route maps and schedules; and variable message signs that tell waiting passengers when the next bus will arrive and what route it serves. Map 14: Illustrative Pedestrian and Transit Circulation Plan depicts the network of bus routes that will serve the Capitol Heights TDOZ.

**Connectivity:** Access to the entire Metro bus and rail system is available from the TDOZ. The plan envisions this access being within a short (ten minutes or less) walk for future residents, workers and visitors.

## Trail Facilities

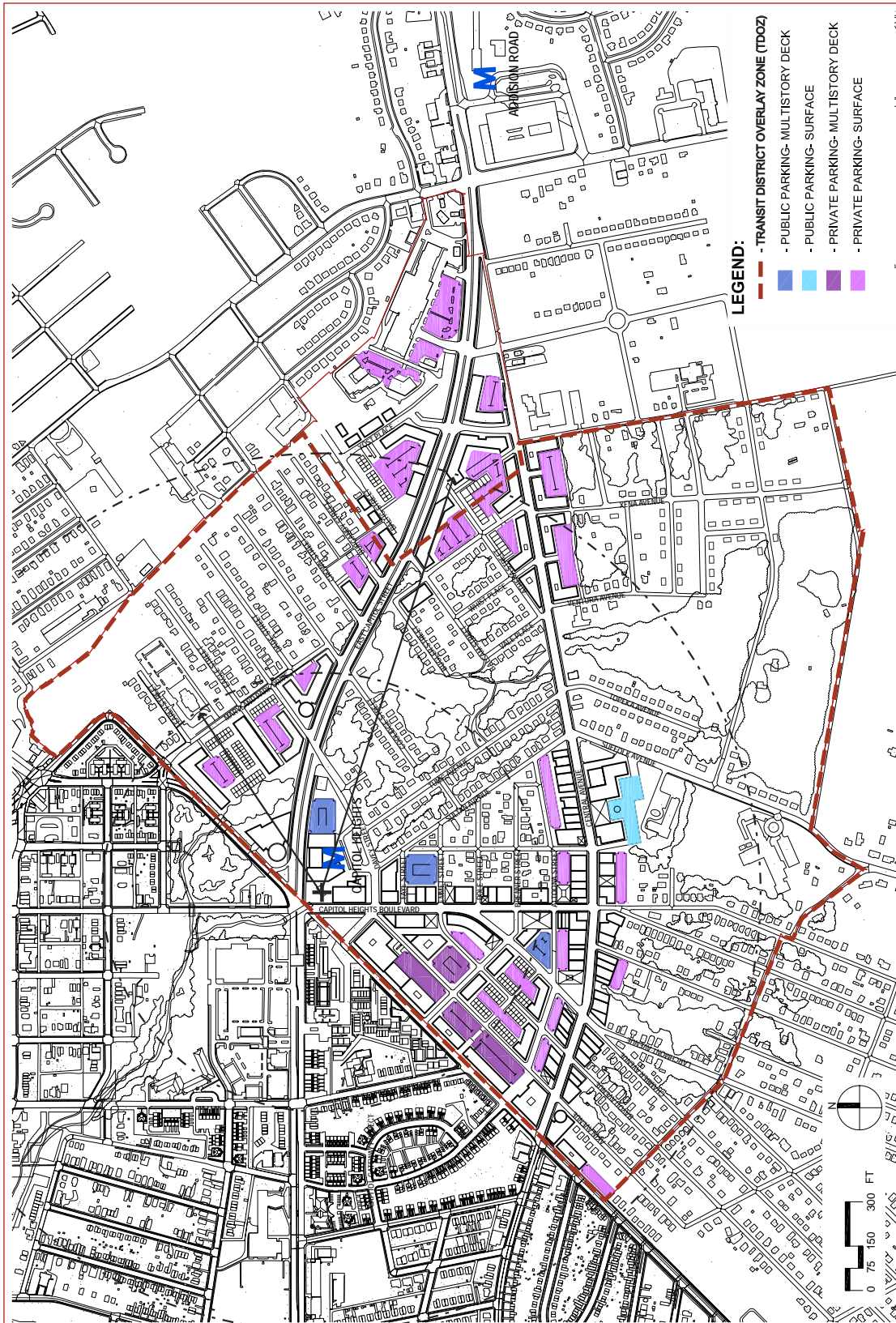
**Bicycle Trails:** The plan envisions additional on- and off-street bicycle routes and storage facilities within the TDOZ. Balanced streetscape design will reduce the dominance of motor vehicles and encourage bicyclists by providing clearly marked, continuous paths on- and off-street. Racks and lockers will be provided throughout the community, especially at activity centers and major destinations like the Metro station.

**Pedestrian Trails:** Within the TDOZ, pedestrian safety and access will be very important in the creation of a balanced multimodal transportation network. Pedestrians need to feel comfortable when crossing any street and walking to and from transit facilities. Clearly marked areas on the streets will help indicate where they can safely go. Pedestrians also need off-street paths to be easily accessible and seamlessly linked to the circulation network. The plan envisions a much more pedestrian-friendly streetscape within the TDOZ. Balanced streetscape design will encourage pedestrian use by providing attractive, wide sidewalks; clearly visible crosswalks and pedestrian signals at major street intersections; bumped-out curbs at intersections to slow down right-turning vehicles; and tight restrictions on curb cuts on blocks within the Metro station core, Metro station edge, and main street character areas.

The plan also envisions restricted (nonrush hour) parking on primary streets within the Capitol Heights TDOZ such

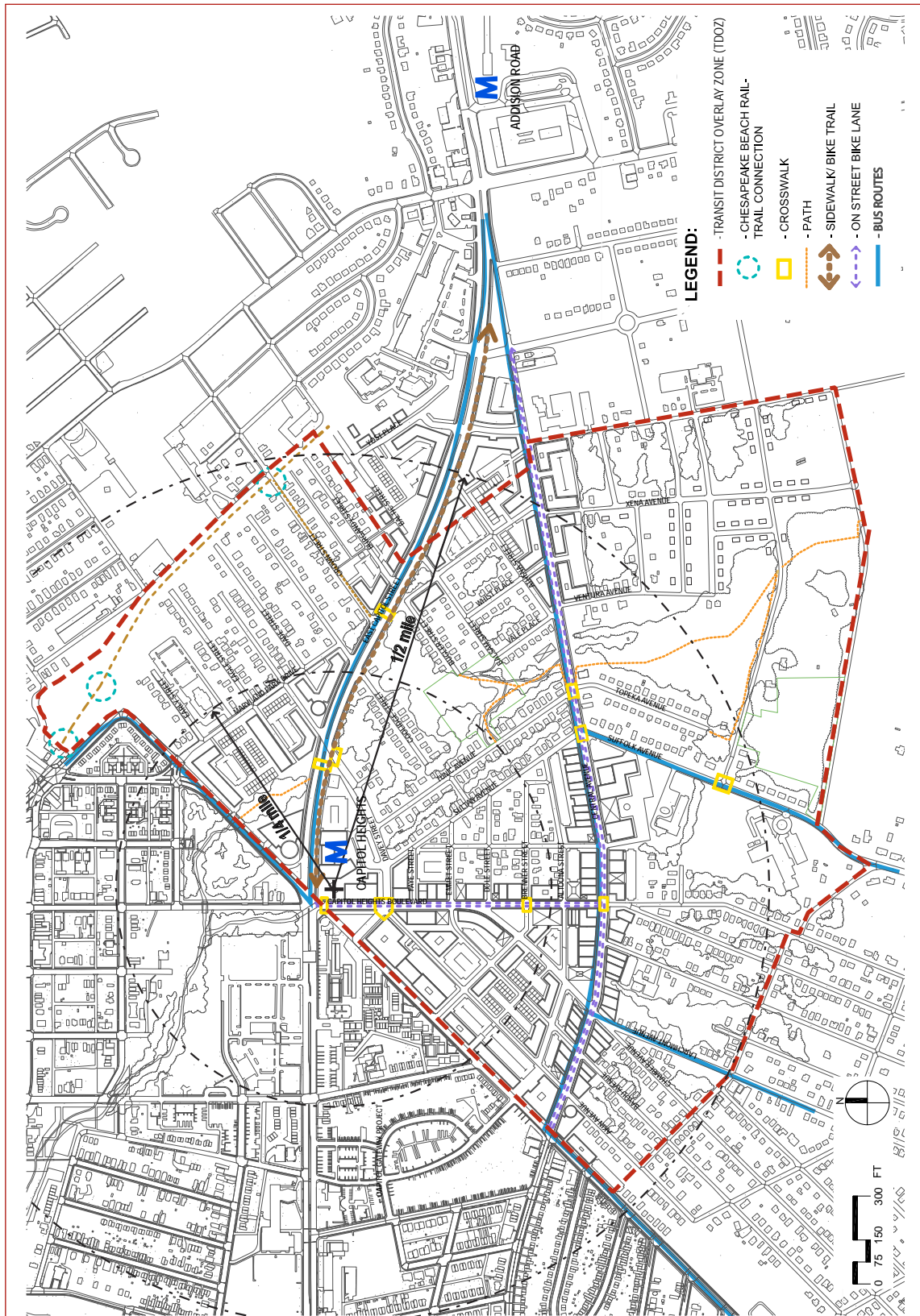


## Vision of Transit-Oriented Development





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Map 14 Illustrative Pedestrian and Transit Circulation Plan



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as East Capitol Street Extended and Old Central Avenue. On-street parking on these streets will serve primarily as an additional traffic-calming measure, but will also provide convenient access to adjacent businesses. Restrictive nonrush hour parking on these routes will be permitted subject to an executed memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Town of Capitol Heights, DPW&T, and the State Highway Administration (SHA) as appropriate. Map 14: Illustrative Pedestrian and Transit Circulation Plan details the integration of pedestrians into the circulation network for the TDOZ. The plan promotes the creation of a safe and pedestrian-friendly environment within the TDOZ.

*Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail:* This trail is being built along the abandoned historic Chesapeake Beach Railroad right-of-way. It will be part of a larger regional system of hiker/bicycle trails. That system will link the Anacostia River in the District of Columbia to Seat Pleasant, Capitol Heights, and points to the east. The trail is located at the northern boundary of the study area at 67<sup>th</sup> Place adjacent to Seat Pleasant.

The plan envisions a continuous hiking/bicycle trail along the northern boundary of the Capitol Heights TDOZ next to Seat Pleasant, Maryland. The trail will terminate at a new visitors center just outside of the TDOZ and fronting on Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway (MD 704). The center would be operated by the City of Seat Pleasant as a local tourist attraction. Just east of the TDOZ boundary, the trail would end at the Addison Plaza Shopping Center. Depending on future development opportunities and the consent of local property owners, the Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail might be extended to the southeast to run along Central Avenue. Historic markers will be placed at key points along the trail to present the history of the former railroad that connected Capitol Heights and Seat Pleasant with Annapolis and Chesapeake Beach.

*Pedestrian-Centered Streetscapes:* Within the Capitol Heights TDDP, streetscapes will function as unifying links between buildings and streets. Streetscape elements will include pedestrian walkways (including street crossings), lighting, signage, street furniture, and landscaping.

### Low-Impact Development (LID)

The TDDP envisions new LID development and infrastructure that will trap and filter stormwater runoff much

as natural environments do. This will be done with living green roofs and LID streets with specially designed planted medians, or bioswales. The green roofs, which incorporate natural vegetation, will improve stormwater quality. They will also reduce the amount of stormwater runoff released into the Watts Branch stream drainage. The roofs will also help to insulate the buildings on which they are installed, reducing space heating and cooling bills in the process. Likewise, the LID streets will trap stormwater runoff within bioswales and filtering strips. These features will filter stormwater runoff before releasing it into the ground or nearby storm sewers. Developers looking to build quality resource-conserving projects in the TDOZ will take advantage of the general design guidelines contained in Appendix B: Low-Impact Development (LID) Design Guidelines and the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design suggested best practices.

*Stormwater Management and Low Impact Development (LID):* The State of Maryland has well-established, state-of-the-art stormwater management regulations and guidelines. The state delegates responsibility to Maryland counties and municipalities to ensure compliance with these regulations. Prince George's County has adopted the state regulations as minimum criteria (hydrologic, hydraulic, and water quality). The county goes beyond state guidelines by encouraging integrated stormwater management using LID techniques. LID is an approach to stormwater management that attempts to trap and filter stormwater runoff like an undisturbed watershed does. The LID concept envisioned for the Capitol Heights TDOZ is supported by the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources, which has published several extensive manuals on LID. The Capitol Heights TDDP stormwater management plan embraces these LID techniques.

*Integrated Stormwater Management Practices (ISMPs) and Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs):* The Capitol Heights TDDP stormwater management plan envisions the use of a variety of LID-related stormwater management techniques throughout the TDOZ. These techniques will be integrated into comprehensive site plans that clean up and reduce stormwater runoff. Hydrologic issues related to stormwater runoff will also be addressed in these plans. Those issues include control of runoff volume, peak runoff rate, flow frequency and duration, and water quality. The ISMPs envisioned in the TDDP will address the hydrologic cycle of





stormwater from precipitation to runoff to receiving stream. ISMPs are strongly affected by subsurface conditions such as soil types and groundwater quality. Certain areas on steep slopes within the TDOZ may not be appropriate candidates for LID-based stormwater management features. These areas may require alternative options such as underground water storage facilities.

**Green Roofs:** Sometimes called “eco-roofs,” green roofs are contained spaces on top of buildings that actively filter and retain stormwater runoff. Green roofs typically include vegetation, a growing medium other than soil, drainage/filtering structures, root barriers, and high quality waterproofing. They may also include insulation, membrane protection, leak detection, water features, irrigation, walkways, borders, railings, and/or lighting. Green roofs are classified as either **extensive** (green roof structure six inches thick or less with grasses and/or other ground cover) or **intensive** (green roof structure more than six inches thick and supporting plants up to the size of a small tree). Typical green roof benefits include higher stormwater quality, lower runoff volume, improved air quality, reduced heat radiation, greater energy efficiency, improved roof longevity, and increased urban biodiversity. Green-roofed buildings may also qualify for U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design credits. It is envisioned that most new development within the TDOZ will use **extensive** green roofing systems to help manage stormwater runoff.

**Green Streets:** The plan envisions East Capitol Street Extended, Capitol Heights Boulevard, and Old Central Avenue as low-impact development (LID) or “green” streets. All three streets will feature continuous street tree pits that connect all of the street trees in a single drainage system for each block face. The street tree pits will collect and filter storm runoff before releasing it to the existing storm sewer network. The tree pits will also allow take-up of some storm runoff by the trees themselves. These measures will help lower the amount of storm runoff that is released to the Watts Branch drainage system while simultaneously improving its quality. The LID streets will be a visible component of a system of “green infrastructure” that is incorporated into the built environment of the Capitol Heights community. In addition, the street tree canopy and other plantings on LID streets will moderate air temperatures and improve air quality by absorbing airborne pollutants. Finally, the LID streets will help to minimize impacts on sensitive natural environments

within the TDOZ such as streambeds and wetlands. In sum, LID streets will help to create more colorful and interesting streetscapes and more distinctive character areas.

**Bioretention Areas—Continuous Street Tree Pits:** The plan envisions continuous street tree pits within three LID street rights-of-way: East Capitol Street Extended, Capitol Heights Boulevard, and Old Central Avenue. The new street tree pits shall be continuous and connected. This will allow for the filtering of storm runoff through the porous material in the pits that is then collected by pipes and run to the existing storm water system.

In general, bioretention areas are shallow, landscaped areas used primarily for water quality treatment of stormwater runoff. Bioretention areas typically capture all small storm events and the initial flows from larger storms.

**Filter Strips:** The plan envisions filter strips being used in off-street landscaped areas throughout the TDOZ to help trap and filter stormwater runoff. Also known as vegetated buffer strips, these are used to slow down and filter stormwater runoff. In a filter strip, water moves as sheet flow across a rough vegetated area where it is slowed and filtered. Depending on soil conditions, infiltration may also take place. Densely planted vegetation, a long flow path, and gentle slopes are the most effective features of well-designed filter strips. Filter strips are usually placed along roadways as a pre-treatment technique.

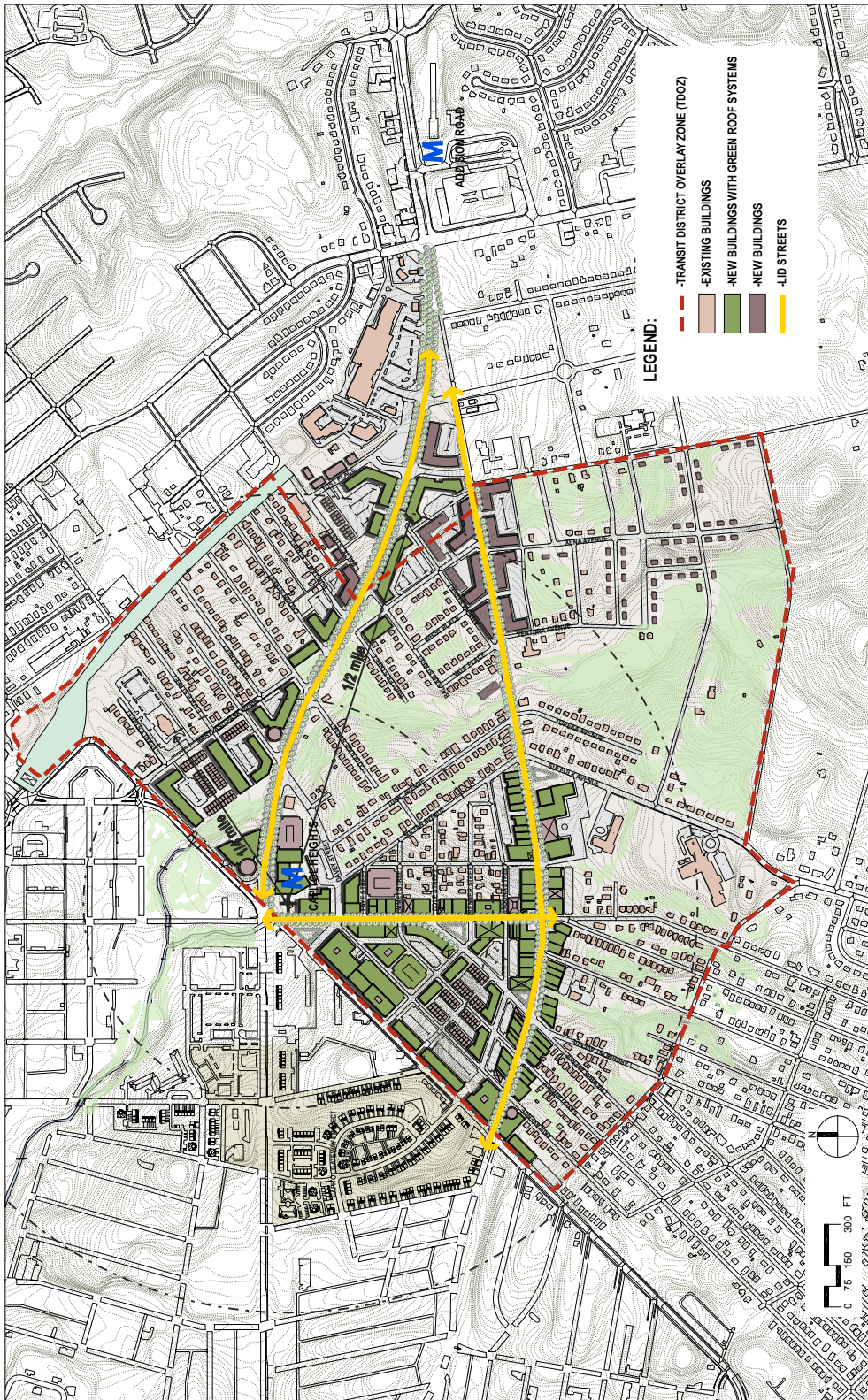
**Sand Filters:** Sand filters consist of sand-based growing media beneath turf areas that also acts as an infiltration device. The plan envisions these stormwater control devices being used at certain development sites where they are found to be the most feasible alternative for on-site stormwater management.

Map 15: Illustrative Stormwater Management/LID Plan depicts an example of LID measures applied systematically within the Capitol Heights TDOZ.

The Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) is responsible for enforcing stormwater management regulations within the county. DPW&T and M-NCPPC strongly recommend the use of LID design techniques in new development within the Capitol Heights TDOZ. Suggested LID design guidelines are in Appendix B. Low-Impact Development (LID) Design Guidelines.



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Map 15 Illustrative Stormwater Management/LID Plan