



# CHAPTER 2

## Defining the Context

## National Urbanization Trends: Implications for the Future of Prince George's County

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In the decade and a half since 2000, several major trends have impacted the growth of urbanized metropolitan regions across the United States. These include:

- The rising dominance of the growing Millennial Generation (born after 1980) and the declining, but still large, Baby Boomer Generation (born between 1940 and 1964) in urban metropolitan markets.
- The 2008 national economic recession that saw the virtual collapse of housing markets in many metropolitan areas across the country.
- The shrinking role of the federal government in helping to fund or provide a growing number of public services and jobs.
- The growing impact of extreme weather events (severe droughts, extreme flooding, summer heat waves, and harsh winters) due to global climate change.

## National Urbanization Trends: Implications | Demographic Change for the Future of Prince George's County

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The millennial and baby boomer generations are the two largest cohorts within the population of the United States. According to the Pew Research Center, these two generations total almost 160 million people and are roughly equal in size with about 80 million people each. A 2015 Urban Land Institute (ULI) report<sup>1</sup> shows the millennial generation possessing nearly equal percentages of city and suburban residents (37 percent and 36 percent of the millennial population, respectively). This study's findings contradict the popular stereotype of all, or even most, millennials living in big-city downtowns. It also indicates the trade-offs that millennials are making

between urban living and housing affordability. Nevertheless, the study finds that members of this major demographic prefer to live in neighborhoods with urban characteristics—including a high degree of walkability, transportation choices, and convenient access to shopping and cultural attractions—whether or not those neighborhoods are in urban areas. In addition, data continues to emerge that suggests that the millennial preference for walkable mixed-use neighborhoods is catching on with a growing number of baby boomers and generation X members (persons born between 1964 and 1980).

## National Urbanization Trends: Implications | Economic Disruptions and Public Sector Fiscal Challenges for the Future of Prince George's County

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The 2008 national economic recession stands as possibly the United States' worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. During this period, housing construction and home mortgage lending virtually came to a halt as Wall Street and

other global stock markets collapsed. The national economy also lost millions of jobs. These combined disruptions slowed or halted growth in metropolitan areas throughout the country; however, the Washington, D.C. region was somewhat cushioned

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<sup>1</sup>"Gen Y and Housing: What They Want and Where They Want It," Urban Land Institute, posted May 13, 2015, <http://uli.org/report/gen-y-housing-want-want>.

from the recession by a sustained public-sector economy. As of the end of 2014, while many metropolitan areas had begun to display signs of sustained growth, the Washington metropolitan area began to lag behind other regions due to the effects of federal budget sequestration. Uncertainty around the

funding of federal and state programs has forced Prince George's County and other local jurisdictions to seek diversification of their economies in an effort to better cushion their communities from future economic shocks.

## National Urbanization Trends: Implications | The Economic Advantages for the Future of Prince George's County of Walkable Urban Places

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The economic recession has also affected land prices and property values within U.S. metropolitan areas. In this case, however, mixed-use residential developments in walkable communities have held their value more successfully than single-use residential and commercial developments in sprawling suburban areas. This outcome was documented in a 2012 study of the link between neighborhood walkability and property values. The study analyzed the impacts of calculated walk scores on commercial and residential property values in 70 urban and suburban neighborhoods in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. One of the key findings of the study was that:

"...a one-level (or approximately 20-point) increase in walkability (out of a range of 94 points) translates into a \$8.88 value premium in office rents, a \$6.92 premium in retail rents, an 80 percent increase in retail sales, a \$301.76 per square foot premium in residential rents, and a \$81.54 per square foot premium in residential housing values."<sup>2</sup>

In short, walkable urban places not only attract people, they also attract much higher levels of private investment and generate higher tax revenues than less-walkable and less transit-accessible locations within a given area.

## National Urbanization Trends: Implications | Global Climate Change and for the Future of Prince George's County the Need for Resilient and Sustainable Communities

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Since 2005, every region within the United States has felt the impacts of extreme weather events such as droughts, heat waves, major hurricanes, tornado outbreaks, winter blizzards, flooding rains, and wildfires. In the November 18, 2013, issue of its online News, the World Bank stated that:

"Weather-related losses and damage have risen from an annual average of about \$50 billion in the 1980s to close to \$200 billion over the last decade, according to the Munich Re insurance group."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>"Walk this Way: The Economic Promise of Walkable Places in Metropolitan Washington, D.C.," Brookings Institute Senior Fellow Christopher Leinberger.

<sup>3</sup>"Weather-Related Loss and Damage Rising as Climate Warms," November 18, 2013, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/11/18/disaster-climate-resilience-in-a-changing-world>.



The U.S. Department of Defense has declared global climate change to be a major national security threat. The agency labeled recent conflicts in parts of Africa and the Middle East as resource wars fought over access to adequate and uncontaminated water. Closer to home, the Washington metropolitan area and other major cities along the Eastern seaboard have seen an increase in flood-producing rain events and severe thunderstorms with damaging winds. On its Ocean Facts webpage,<sup>4</sup> the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indicates that:

“There is strong evidence that global sea level is now rising at an increased rate and will continue to rise during this century.

While studies show that sea levels changed little from AD 0 until 1900, sea levels began to climb in the twentieth century.

The two major causes of global sea-level rise are thermal expansion caused by the warming of the oceans (since water expands as it warms) and the loss of land-based ice (such as glaciers and polar ice caps) due to increased melting.”



<sup>4</sup><http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/sealevel.html>.

Rising sea levels may have been a factor in the storm surge damage caused by Hurricane Sandy along the New Jersey and New York coastlines in 2012. They could ultimately expose portions of Prince George's County, along the tidal Potomac and Patuxent Rivers, to flooding from storm surges.

The challenges associated with global climate change call for the development of communities that are: (1) resilient in the face of natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and severe storms; and (2) sustainable in the sense of minimizing their ecological impacts on the natural environments that surround and support them. Resilient and sustainable communities promote the health and well-being of their residents in a variety of ways, especially in response to natural or human-caused disasters. More specifically, resilient and sustainable communities:

- Provide essential ecological necessities such as clean air, drinkable water, fresh (locally produced) foods, and the removal/recycling of solid and liquid waste.
- Create and maintain public spaces that invite residents and visitors into them due to their attractiveness, liveliness, perceived safety, choice of options for active play or relaxed people-watching, and sense of place.
- Support diverse, resource-efficient economic activities that provide meaningful employment; and start-up or expansion opportunities for their residents and local businesses.
- Create and maintain multimodal transportation services that allow residents, workers, and visitors of all ages, incomes, and states of health to move about without having to drive or be driven in an automobile.
- Accommodate floodwaters by imitating natural environments (retaining stormwater runoff and allowing it to infiltrate into the ground or flow into drainage channels more slowly).
- Direct new development to higher ground that is less likely to be affected by rising sea levels and retrofit existing development in vulnerable coastal areas to withstand storm surges with minimal damage.

- Plant drought-resistant vegetation to enhance natural environments while conserving water.
- Encourage urban agriculture (private and community gardens and urban farms) as insurance against weather-related disruptions to commercial food supplies.
- Encourage resource (energy, water, and recycled materials) conservation and onsite renewable energy production to help insulate homes and nonresidential uses from weather-related disruptions of electrical power and fuel supplies.

The transformation of the Prince George's Plaza Transit District into a walkable, vibrant, transit-oriented community offers the opportunity to create a resilient and sustainable community at the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station. By promoting the health and well-being of its residents, workers, and visitors, a resilient and sustainable Prince George's Plaza Transit District will inspire a collective sense of identity, pride, and shared ownership of this important community's future.

## Responding to Change: Plan Prince George's 2035

Plan 2035 addresses the future of Prince George's County in the context of the twenty-first century challenges described on the preceding pages. More specifically, the plan states that:

*"The purpose of Plan 2035 is to make Prince George's County a competitive force in the regional economy, a leader in sustainable growth, a community of strong neighborhoods and municipalities, and a place where residents are healthy and engaged. The process begins with a common vision articulated through Plan 2035's innovative outreach efforts, and the master and sector plans created through community consensus over the past decade. Based on its vision, Plan 2035 establishes a framework to capture a greater share of our region's forecasted job growth, meet the needs of our changing population, and preserve our valuable natural and historic resources."*

**Plan 2035 visions, policies, and strategies are guided by six principles:**

- 1. Concentrate Future Growth**—Plan 2035 commits to concentrating future growth to achieve our 2035 vision and illustrates where and how we should grow in the Growth Policy Map.
- 2. Prioritize and Focus our Resources**—Plan 2035 commits to aligning work programs across County agencies, supporting financial incentives and infrastructure improvements, and streamlining processes to accelerate growth in these different, but complementary areas.
- 3. Build on Our Strengths and Assets**—Plan 2035 commits to capitalizing on [Prince George's County's strengths and assets] as we plan for future growth and development and allocate resources.
- 4. Create Choice Communities**—Plan 2035 commits to supporting neighborhood reinvestment in existing public infrastructure, services, and facilities and designing diverse and distinct communities that promote walkability and convenient access to employment, retail, and entertainment options.
- 5. Connect Our Neighborhoods and Significant Places**—Plan 2035 commits to improving mobility and connectivity by investing in our transportation infrastructure (including sidewalks and trails), building on our underutilized transit network, and coordinating land use and growth management with transportation improvements.
- 6. Protect and Value Our Natural Resources**—Plan 2035 commits to proactively greening our built environment, restoring degraded resources, and promoting a more sustainable development pattern that reduces our reliance on driving and shifts development pressures away from our greenfields.

## Community Engagement

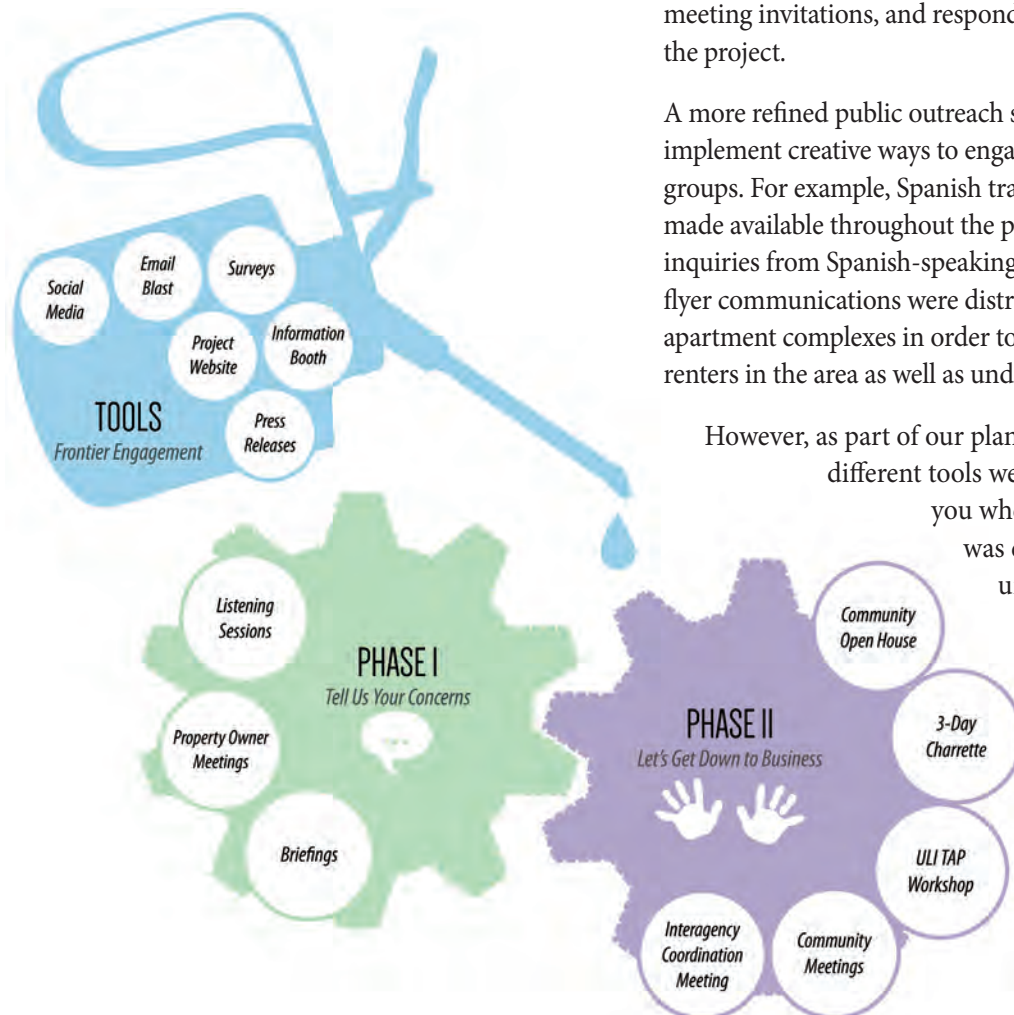
Community engagement is the way in which people come together to participate in the decision-making process that impacts them, their neighbors, and the places they cherish and frequent.

Effective community and stakeholder engagement is the key to the successful implementation of any community plan. To address this, the project team developed a community engagement program that was broad in scope, asked tough questions, dove into many issues, provided user-friendly information, maintained a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, and engaged a range of stakeholders to help develop a common vision and recommendations for the Transit District.

A variety of community outreach measures were conducted as part of this planning effort. The team used mailing lists to send letters to property owners identified in the County tax records. A project website was launched in spring 2013. A survey of Metro riders at the Prince George's Plaza Metrorail Station during weekday rush hour was conducted in fall 2014 to gain a better understanding of ridership preferences, habitats, and views of the area. The Prince George's Plaza TDDP project webpage was designed to engage multiple stakeholders with general information on the project, maps, presentations, schedule, contacts, and background resources. For each major meeting, copies were posted of the presentation and any other materials distributed. An ongoing email stakeholder list was used by the team to communicate plan updates, send meeting invitations, and respond to public inquiries on the project.

A more refined public outreach strategy was created to implement creative ways to engage underrepresented groups. For example, Spanish translation services were made available throughout the process to respond to inquiries from Spanish-speaking residents. Targeted flyer communications were distributed to several apartment complexes in order to better connect with renters in the area as well as underrepresented groups.

However, as part of our planning process, different tools were used and a “meet you where you are” approach was employed to engage underrepresented and traditionally “hard-to-reach” groups (such as students, renter





households and businesses, condo owners, Spanish-speaking residents, and commuters). The project team held information booth sessions at the Hyattsville Farmers Market, Hyattsville Arts Festival and the Mall at Prince Georges, and distributed an e-survey to capture feedback from residents and commuters about transportation needs in and around the Transit District.

The project team used a variety of media to engage new participants in the process. A Facebook and Twitter feed, project website, and email updates kept all stakeholders abreast of the latest news and information while flyers and postcards helped promote upcoming meetings. The team used Twitter during the planning charrette and community open house meetings to share photos and live updates from the meeting to the public. In addition, periodic updates and meeting invitations were posted on the

project Facebook page. A video was prepared for use at the planning charrette and subsequent community meetings that highlighted the existing conditions and history of the area as well as the Metro survey results. The video became an alternate tool to convey information to the public. These technologies were used to provoke thought and gather input from stakeholders, as well as to provide information to the public at various stages in the planning process.

A key question asked by stakeholders in our planning process was: “How will you ensure that my voice and our collective voices are heard and incorporated in the planning process?” To answer this, the community engagement program consisted of two distinct, but integrated phases.

## Community Engagement | Phase I: “It’s Been A While—Tell Us Your Concerns”

The character and priorities of the Transit District have changed since the approval of the 1998 TDDP. As a result, the first phase of our community engagement process focused on learning about community, municipal, and property owner concerns and ideas through a series of listening sessions, walking tours, interviews, and briefings. Major meetings throughout the plan process took place on the dates listed on the next page.



Stakeholders engaged in developing a vision and recommendations for the Transit District.

Name	Date	Location
Community Listening Session	February 20, 2014	Hyattsville
University Park Listening Session	June 12, 2014	University Park
Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (TAP)	September 4, 2014	Upper Marlboro
University Park and Town Council Briefing	September 8, 2014	University Park
Hyattsville Mayor and Council Briefing	September 15, 2014	Hyattsville
Charrette Kickoff Meeting	September 17, 2014	Hyattsville
Charrette Development Concept Meeting	September 20, 2014	Hyattsville
Plan Refinement Meeting	October 14, 2014	Hyattsville
Plan Briefing at The Seville	November 13, 2014	Hyattsville
Hyattsville Planning Committee	November 18, 2014	Hyattsville
Community Open House	April 28, 2015	Hyattsville
Hyattsville Planning Committee	July 21, 2015	Hyattsville
Planning Board Public Hearing	October 22, 2015	Upper Marlboro
District Council Public Hearing	February 16, 2016	Upper Marlboro

Briefings were formal opportunities for the team to provide updates to key stakeholders such as elected or municipal officials, developers, or advisory committees throughout the planning process. Listening sessions were often more informal opportunities to provide and receive input on areas of concern and to discuss pertinent issues with the community. Issues such as placemaking, community amenities, public safety, open space and natural environment, economic development, transportation and mobility, access, and neighborhood character were popular topics of discussion. Common themes from the community began to emerge during both briefings and listening sessions—the importance of multimodal (especially transit) access, strong neighborhood character, the need for additional open

### Community Engagement Goals

1. Engage various stakeholders (residents, property owners, businesses, public agencies, etc.) throughout the planning efforts.
2. Engage underrepresented groups or voices in the plan development process.
3. Offer multiple and customized opportunities to provide input and a role in the decision-making process.
4. Provide transparent and shared information to the public.

### Stakeholders Engaged:

- Residents
- Property Owners/Developers
- Nonprofits
- Municipal Governments
- Public Agencies
- Commuters
- Civic Associations

space, stormwater management issues, the desire for public amenities and facilities, and the need for more diverse uses in the Transit District. These meetings provided invaluable information.

A series of walking tours helped the project team focus on and better understand existing conditions, barriers, opportunities and operations of the Transit District. The team visited the University Town Center, The Mall at Prince Georges, Prince George's Plaza Metro Station, the pedestrian bridge located across MD 410 (East West Highway), and various commercial properties and multifamily developments. These tours were critical in the early stages of the planning process for context and understanding of the issues communicated by residents.

The team also evaluated which parts of the 1998 TDDP/TDOZMA have been effective and which could be modernized and streamlined. The project team met with other County agencies, such as the Department of the Environment; Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement; Public Works and



Transportation; and the Department of Parks and Recreation to discuss the 1998 TDDP and how it could be improved. The team also made a concerted effort to engage major property owners and developers of several large residential and commercial properties in the Transit District. Outreach efforts to developers

included briefings, invitations to community meetings, correspondence, and interactive Go-To Meeting conference calls. These groups were important stakeholders along with residents and public agency representatives.

## Community Engagement | Phase II: “Getting Down to Business”

Phase II of our community engagement process consisted of a four-day design workshop (commonly referred to as a planning charrette), follow-up community meeting, and final open house, held September 17-20, 2014. Nearly 200 people attended the planning charrette, including residents, property owners, municipal officials, and public agency representatives. Participants attended the planning charrette to:

- Learn about the plan and help influence it.
- View what effect it will have on their property or business.
- Understand the effects of stormwater management.
- Discuss public safety aspects of the plan (i.e. walkability, bikeability, etc.).
- Understand the timing of the plan process.

The team sought public feedback on major proposed land use and multimodal network concepts and new public facilities desired for the area. Attendees were actively engaged through keypad polling, questionnaires, facilitated discussions, presentations,

and video viewing of highlights of the existing conditions and plan analysis of the Transit District.

The following were some of the major themes identified by the public during the planning charrette:

- Importance of addressing MD 410 (East West Highway) as a barrier.
- Underutilization of the Prince George’s Plaza Metro Station.
- Need to create a regional destination.
- Lack of bicycle infrastructure.
- Stormwater management.
- Need for more complete streets.
- Desire for better safety.
- Placemaking.
- Green infrastructure.
- Concerns with impacting existing neighborhoods.

### Planning Charrette Timeline



The Prince George's County Planning Department hosted an Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP) roundtable discussion on September 3–4, 2014. (ULI TAPs are designed to deliver honest, unbiased answers to land use and real estate questions that defy easy solutions.) The purpose of the ULI TAP was to suggest ways to help create a walkable, attractive, transit-oriented community at the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station through strategic public and private investment.

The nine-member ULI TAP panel presented strategies to build on ongoing and planned development activity; help meld disconnected parts of the area into a compact, walkable, urban place; and leverage limited County and state fiscal resources to help realize a new downtown around the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station for the lowest cost. The ULI TAP also identified short- and long-term strategies for development and rebranding that could be phased in over time.

During the planning charrette process, a new vision for the Transit District emerged along with a more refined understanding of planning priorities.

The planning charrette, community meetings, listening sessions, and briefings were structured to provide different venues for the public to learn about the plan and provide input into the planning process. The purpose of these tailored events was to ensure stakeholders had an array of hands-on opportunities to help craft and refine the blueprint that would guide future growth and development in the Transit District

and identify solutions to critical land use, design, transportation, and environmental challenges.

By January 2015, the project team had gathered significant community input and had thoroughly evaluated existing conditions. At this time, the team began crafting the TDDP. While writing the plan, the team continued aggressive outreach to elected officials and implementing agencies at the County, state, and regional level for additional input on various development or plan concepts. Continuous feedback received during this time from multiple stakeholders shaped various plan elements, including transportation and mobility, natural environment, public facilities, parks and recreation, etc.

A community open house in April 2015 attracted more than 100 attendees in the Transit District. The team sought to obtain community input at this open house on elements developed as a result of briefings, listening sessions and the planning charrette on the following topics:

- Vision
- Preliminary framework for development
- Neighborhood versus Downtown Core
- Updated Illustrative Concept Plan
- Building Heights

Feedback at this community open house indicated a strong desire by residents of nearby communities for the team to modify some of the development concepts under consideration for inclusion in the plan.

## Community Engagement | Public Sector and Institutional Partners

Securing agency input and feedback at different stages of the planning process was also critical to identifying “deal-breakers” early on and to developing realistic recommendations, phasing plans, and implementation strategies.

Approximately 62 percent of the Prince George’s Plaza Transit District area lies within the municipal boundary of the City of Hyattsville. The City of Hyattsville helped to craft the Transit District Development Plan vision and recommendations, and provided guidance, feedback, and crucial meeting and working space. This plan assumes that the city’s involvement will continue through and beyond full buildout of the TDDP vision. That involvement is envisioned to include a critical role in infrastructure financing, construction, and maintenance, participation in the development review process, promoting economic development, and providing transportation services. The Town of University Park was also helpful in channeling community concerns and input regarding stormwater management issues and potential development impacts facing portions of the town.

The Office of the Prince George’s County Executive helped to facilitate critical interagency partnerships necessary to create a Regional Transit District at Prince George’s Plaza. County agencies with key implementation roles include the Department of the

Environment (DoE); the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), who will likely plan, design, and operate a complex regional stormwater management system for the Transit District to support the vision of the TDDP; and the Department of Permitting, Inspection, and Enforcement (DPIE) who will ultimately permit construction in the Transit District.

The TDDP team conducted two rounds of coordinated meetings with County agencies, in addition to individual meetings with the State Highway Administration (SHA) and small-group meetings to discuss topics of common interest. Continuing meetings and collaboration with key public-sector players such as the Office of the County Executive and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) resulted in SHA’s key decision to reclassify MD 410 (East West Highway) from a Major Arterial to a Minor Arterial and the joint County/M-NCPPC funding of stormwater management and parking studies. SHA also agreed to evaluate the concept of placing MD 410 (East West Highway) on a “road diet” in order to permit bicycle lanes in both directions. This collaborative, interjurisdictional and interagency approach to plan implementation will be essential to the development of the new Downtown at Prince George’s Plaza.

The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, Prince George’s County Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, and Prince George’s County Public Schools have opportunities to create new, transformative public facilities to provide cutting-edge public services and state-of-the-art amenities to residents, workers, and visitors. The County will need to work closely with the City of Hyattsville, the Town of University Park, and other partners to facilitate high-quality development and infrastructure improvements consistent with the TDDP vision.

With significant land holdings abutting the Transit District area, the Prince George’s County Department

Stakeholders shared the following concerns and ideas during the planning process:

- Single-family neighborhoods that abut the Transit District should be protected from new development.
- A mix of housing types is needed in the Transit District.
- Housing affordability for both renters and homeowners is an important issue.





The Prince George's Plaza community engagement process.



of Parks and Recreation (DPR) was integral in developing an innovative parks and recreation approach for the TDDP, adapting concepts and the vision espoused by *Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space* to the local context. DPR was very responsive to the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP) recommendation to colocate the replacement facility for the existing Prince George's Plaza Community Center with another new public facility. Continued coordination with DPR will be required to help create the sense of place necessary to achieve the transit-oriented, mixed-use vision for the Transit District area.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) worked closely with the planning team in coordinating preliminary planning for recommended public infrastructure improvements around the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station. WMATA also shared its views on potential future joint development activity at the station with M-NCPPC staff. The recommendations contained in this TDDP are intended to leverage the economic, social, and accessibility advantages offered by the Metro Green and Yellow Lines. These assets are the cornerstones of the plan and the foundation for the future of the Transit District.

## The Transit District Today: Regional Setting and Existing Conditions

The Prince George's Plaza Transit District consists of approximately 363 acres of land in northwestern Prince George's County approximately one and a half miles northeast of the District of Columbia. It is anchored by the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station, the Mall at Prince Georges, and University Town Center.

Four features have forged an identity for the Transit District—the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station, The Mall at Prince Georges, the University Town Center mixed-use complex, and MD 410 (East West Highway). Together, these assets have helped the Transit District to grow in importance as a significant development center and potential regional destination.

The Prince George's Plaza Metro Station opened for service in 1993. The Metro station provides access to much of the Washington metropolitan area through the regional Metrorail system.

The nearly one million square-foot, 1950s-era, suburban Mall at Prince Georges is a successful, if dated, regional shopping destination. Designed for vehicular traffic, the now-enclosed Mall is dominated by a parking lot containing approximately 3,700 spaces. A pedestrian overpass, an iconic landmark but underutilized path for pedestrians, links the Mall site to the Metropolitan Shops at Prince George's Station and the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station.

University Town Center is a mixed-use development anchored by five commercial office buildings containing 1.4 million square feet of office space. Most of this commercial space is contained in three office structures designed by Edward Durrell Stone and built between 1963 and 1971. The University Town Center development also includes 134 multifamily residential units, a 910-bed student tower, 55,000 square feet of in-line retail frontage, and a 67,500-square-foot movie theater complex. University Town Center has struggled with high vacancy rates (at least 10 percent) since 1994, peaking at more than 30 percent by 2014.

MD 410 (East West Highway) is the Transit District's principal thoroughfare, connecting Prince George's Plaza and the City of Hyattsville with New Carrollton to the east and Takoma Park in neighboring Montgomery County to the west. Immediately to the east runs Adelphi Road and MD 500 (Queens Chapel Road), important arterials that provide access to Washington, D.C. and the Capital Beltway, via MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue). Although MD 410 (East West Highway) provides vehicular access to other parts of Prince George's County, the six-lane highway is a major barrier and safety hazard to pedestrians and bicyclists in the Transit District. Wide traffic lanes and relatively high travel speeds impede easy and safe pedestrian/bicyclist access to the Metro station, University Town Center, Hyattsville Branch Library, the Mall at Prince Georges, and Prince George's Plaza Community Center.

Outside of these four primary features, the Transit District is home to a mix of 1950s and 1960s garden style apartments punctuated by new apartment buildings—Post Park, Mosaic at Metro, and 3350 at Alterra—and several retail centers—Metropolitan Shops at Prince George's Plaza, The Shoppes at Metro Station, and a standalone Home Depot.



## Planning Context

The Transit District is largely surrounded by established single-family communities, with the exception of the M-NCPPC-owned Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, which extends along its western edge. Several faith-based institutions and public facilities abut the Transit District to the east and south.

The 1992 *Approved Transit District Development Plan for the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone* established a vision for a mixed-use retail and employment center, complemented by residential development near the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station, to capitalize on the economic development opportunities created by the Metro Green Line. Easy pedestrian and bicycle circulation and accessibility, transportation demand management, and environmental preservation were key aspects of this plan.

The 1994 *Approved Master Plan for Planning Area 68* carried forward recommendations from the 1992 TDDP as well as preserving the existing multifamily developments and parks that were then outside the Transit District.

The 1998 *Approved Transit District Development Plan for the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone* replaced the 1992 TDDP, which was slated to expire July 1, 1998. The 1998 TDDP updated the design standards and guidelines and underlying zones to encourage development and sought to relax several of the more stringent requirements of the 1992 TDDP. While the plan was partially successful in encouraging new residential and retail development, several factors hindered its implementation:

- MD 410 (East West Highway), a six-lane state highway that cuts through the Transit District separating the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station from destinations north, has proven to be a major barrier to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and an impediment to walkable transit-oriented development.

- The 1998 TDDP is extremely complicated and at times overly prescriptive, including multistory height minimums, which has affected private sector willingness and ability to pursue redevelopment or infill opportunities.
- Momentum to enact several key recommendations wavered over time. For example, no steps were taken to implement the transportation demand management district (TDMD) envisioned by the 1992 and 1998 TDDPs

The Transit District has been shaped by a number of important legislative acts and planning initiatives which have cumulatively worked to concentrate development in walkable and transit-oriented communities, encourage economic growth, and protect natural resources.

- The 1992 *Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act*
- 1992 *Transit District Development Plan for the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone*
- 1994 *Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Planning Area 68*
- The 1997 Maryland "Smart Growth" and Neighborhood Conservation—"Smart Growth" Areas Act
- 1998 *Approved Transit District Development Plan for the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone*
- 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*
- 2009 *Smart and Sustainable Growth Act*
- 2011 *City of Hyattsville Community Sustainability Plan*
- 2013 *Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space*
- 2014 *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* (Plan 2035)



Although Plan 2035 was enacted in 2014, it has already reshaped the future of the Prince George's Plaza Transit District by elevating the Transit District as one of three new Downtowns for Prince George's County. The current administration has reinforced the new General Plan vision by designating the Transit District as one of its priority transit-oriented development (TOD) investment sites.

A major planning/zoning effort was underway as this TDDP was being written—the comprehensive rewriting of Prince George's County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations (see box below).

At the time this TDDP was approved, Prince George's County was in the process of replacing its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. Approval of new Zoning and Subdivision laws (anticipated in 2017) may impact the zoning of property located within the transit district and the Transit District Standards. The project team worked closely with staff and consultants working on the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations rewrite project to ensure consistency between goals, policies, and strategies, and to ensure the Transit District Standards were consistent in scope and nature to the regulations of zone districts within the new ordinance. In the event the 2017 Countywide Map Amendment process to implement the zones contained in the new Zoning Ordinance results in fundamental changes to, or the elimination of, the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone, Transit District Standards, and the underlying zones and use tables contained in the TDOZMA, this TDDP will be severable and will continue to stand as the master plan for the Prince George's Plaza area. Only the zoning (and not the plan's goals, policies, and strategies) will be impacted by the Countywide Map Amendment.

## Area Demographic and Economic Profile

To evaluate its market potential and associated opportunities and challenges, the Transit District must be viewed within its regional context—defined as a five-mile catchment area. The market area is benchmarked against Prince George's County to highlight the similarities and differences between the two geographies. Benchmarking is also used to measure the overall health of the Transit District compared to Prince George's County as a whole.

The Prince George's Plaza community numbered approximately 5,410 residents in 2010 with estimated five-year growth expected to outpace growth in the County. When compared to the region and the County as a whole, Transit District residents, on average, are younger, earn more moderate incomes, have lower rates of educational attainment, and are more likely to use transit and rent. According to 2015 Census estimates, approximately 26 percent of residents identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino and half speak a language other than English at home.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The Nielsen Company.

**Table 1. Demographic Snapshot**

POPULATION	Transit District	5-mile	County
Total population (2000 Census)	5,220	492,773	801,508
Total population (2010 Census)	5,410	517,735	863,420
Total population (2015 estimated)	5,721	550,198	902,303
Percentage change (2000-2010)	3.64%	5.07%	7.72%
Estimated percentage change (2010-2015)	5.75%	6.27%	4.50%
Projected percentage change (2015-2020)	5.55%	5.02%	4.49%
2015 Estimated population that is Hispanic or Latino	26.15%	28.24%	16.68%
2015 Estimated population that speaks language other than English at home	50.71%	33.31%	21.77%
2015 Estimated median age	31.8	34.3	36.3
2015 Estimated population 65 and older	6.08%	10.97%	11.54%
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>			
2015 Estimated total households	2,210	199,760	316,453
2015 Estimated average household size	2.47	2.64	2.79
2015 Estimate family households (of total households)	54.30%	56.34%	67.01%
2015 Estimate family households with own children (of total family households)	51.00%	45.11%	45.78%
<b>INCOME</b>			
2015 Estimated median household income	\$49,307	\$60,766	\$73,192
2015 Estimated mean household income	\$64,533	\$81,722	\$91,776
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
Population 25 and older with a high school degree or higher	73.61%	78.68%	85.60%
Population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher	29.16%	34.07%	30.00%
<b>POVERTY</b>			
2015 Estimated families below the poverty level	9.92%	11.40%	7.02%
2015 Estimated families below the poverty level with children	6.00%	8.67%	5.70%
<b>HOUSING</b>			
2015 Estimated occupied housing units by tenure			
Owner occupied	15.48%	46.78%	63.11%
Renter occupied	84.52%	53.22%	36.89%
2015 Estimated owner occupied housing unit: average length of residence	17	18	16
2015 Estimated renter occupied housing unit: average length of residence	7	8	8
2015 Estimated median owner-occupied housing value	\$267,402	\$348,019	\$282,164
2015 Estimated median year structure built	1965	1957	1975

**Table 1. Demographic Snapshot** (Continued)

POPULATION	Transit District	5-mile	County
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>			
2015 Estimated unemployed civilian population age 16+ in labor force	8.13%	8.20%	7.15%
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>			
2015 Estimated average number of vehicles	1.18	1.26	1.71
2015 Estimated average travel time to work in minutes	39	37	40
Drove alone	44.39%	48.48%	64.81%
Carpooled	14.42%	12.45%	12.28%
Public transportation	33.97%	29.16%	17.09%
Walked	5.16%	4.62%	2.33%
Bicycle	0.34%	1.56%	0.27%
Other means	0.18%	0.85%	0.68%
Worked at home	1.57%	2.88%	2.55%

Source: The Nielsen Companies, 2015.

## Area Demographic and Economic Profile | Current Trends

### Household Growth

- The market area is expected to see continued population growth between 2014 and 2019, outpacing population growth elsewhere in the County (6.5 percent versus 4.1 percent).
- Between 2000 and 2014, renter households in the market area grew at a faster pace than owner-occupied households in contrast with County trends (12.2 percent versus 5.8 percent).

### Changes In Household Type

- Between 2000 and 2014, non-family and single-person households in the market area grew substantially faster than family households. Similar trends were found in the County (21.2 percent and 2 percent versus 16.7 percent and 5.8 percent).
- Household patterns will continue to evolve in the market area; while non-family households are

projected to experience strong growth between 2014 and 2019 (8.5 percent), as millennial generation households age, they are likely to fuel the growth of households with children.

### Level of Household Income and Educational Attainment

- The market area saw stronger growth in median income between 2000 and 2014 than the County, suggesting that the net migration of households had higher income levels than the area's households in 2000 and/or that households remaining in the area were experiencing strong income growth (41 percent versus 31 percent).
- There has been a large net growth in new residents with a Bachelor's degree outperforming countywide trends (40.6 percent versus 27 percent).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> US Census 2010; Nielsen; BAE, 2014.



Recent information from Prince George's County Public Schools suggests that the millennials moving into the newer multifamily housing complexes are already generating a much lower pupil yield per unit than the residents of older 1960s-era apartment complexes in the Transit District. Much of this

difference may be attributable to the significantly higher incomes and educational attainment levels of the millennial households. As a result, these younger households are not only postponing parenthood, they are also having fewer children when they do raise families.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Land Use

The development pattern within, and surrounding, the Prince George's Plaza Transit District is characteristic of the suburban development that has driven the growth of Prince George's County since the 1950s. That pattern is one of low-density single-family detached homes, garden and mid-rise apartments, strip commercial retail, and an enclosed shopping mall surrounded by acres of surface parking. Wide streets and a six-lane state highway separate the existing low-density uses from each other even as they provide convenient access by automobile. Established single-family residential neighborhoods border the Transit District to the north and south. The Town of University Park lies east of Adelphi Road; it is also a single-family detached residential enclave.

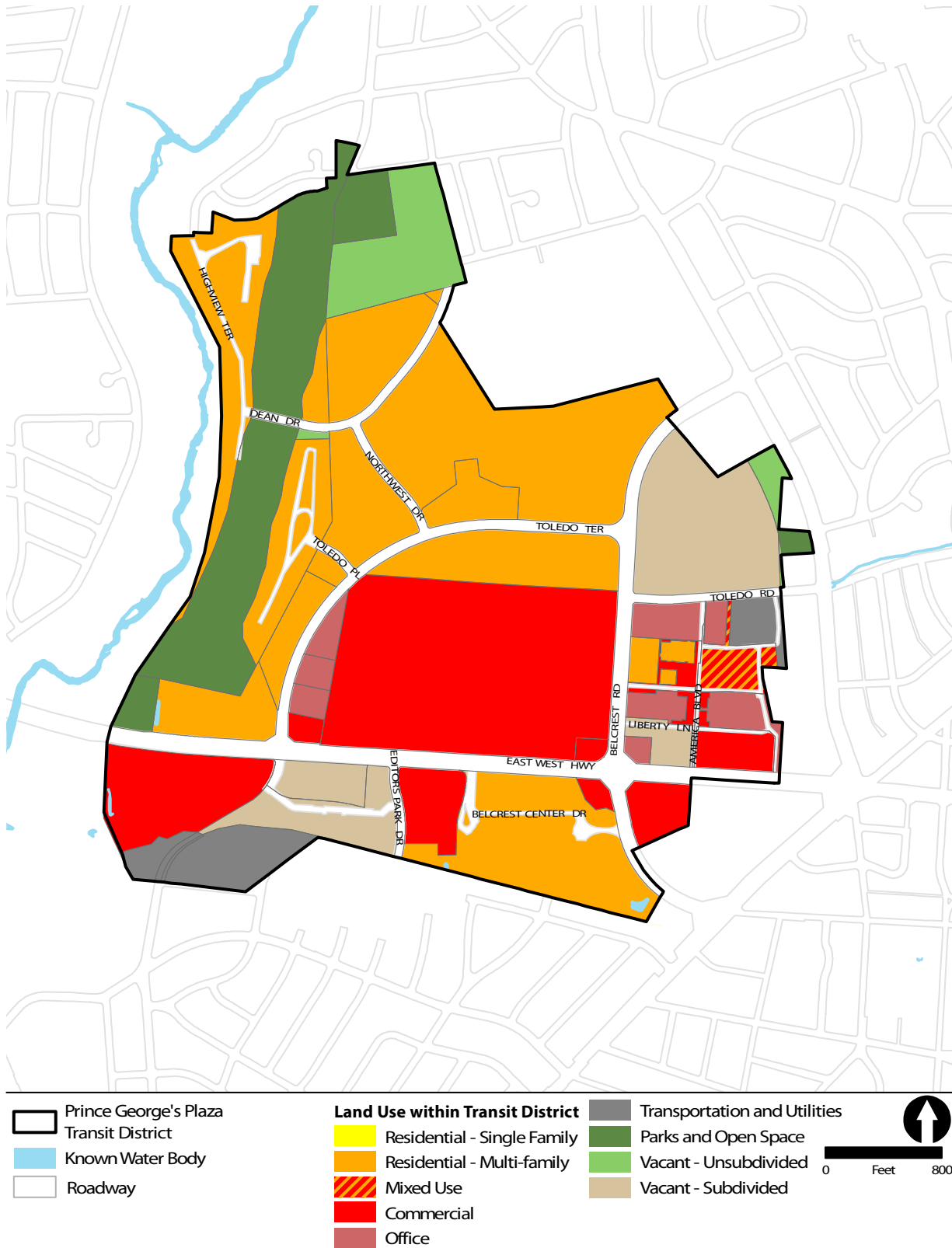
Two waves of development have produced the current pattern within the Transit District area since the mid-1950s (See Figure 2 for a detailed listing of projects, including the year each was completed).

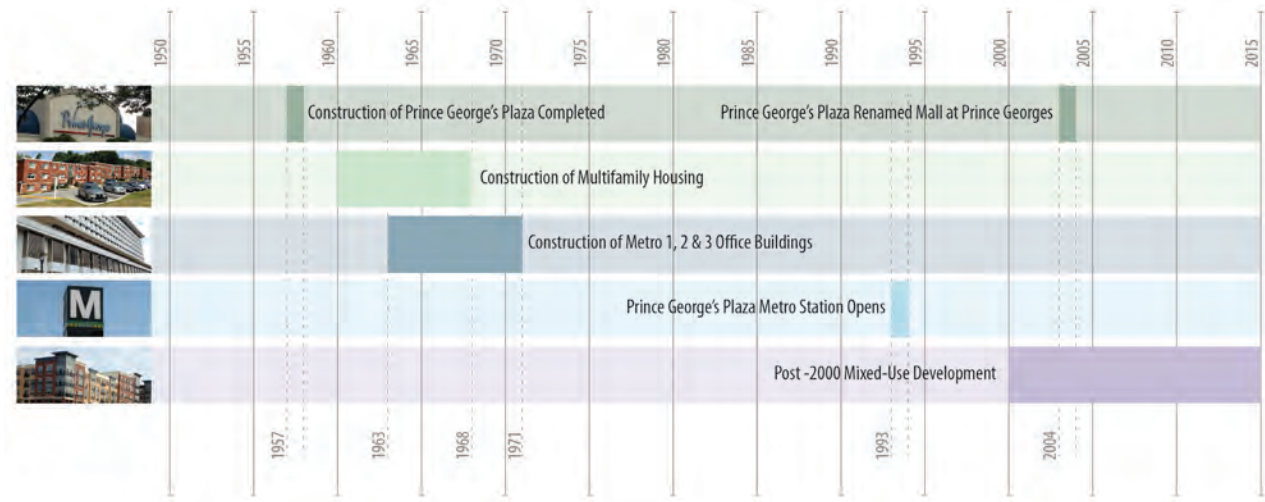
Plans to construct I-95 through Washington, D.C., including through what is now the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, served as a major catalyst for the development of Prince George's Plaza and University Town Center. The former Prince George's Plaza Shopping Center was built in 1959. Much of the multifamily residential development along Toledo Terrace, Dean Drive, and Northwest Drive was constructed between 1960 and 1968. The three signature federal office buildings (designed by Edward Durell Stone) at University Town Center were built between 1963 and 1971. Because no rail transit service was available and access to I-95 was promised, all three buildings were surrounded by large parking lots.

No additional development occurred in the Transit District area between 1971 and 1999. Plans to build I-95 through this area were cancelled in 1977. The Prince George's Plaza Metro Station opened for service in 1993. New commercial development was built between 1999 and 2004. The existing pedestrian bridge between the shopping mall and the Metro station was built between 2000 and 2005 to permit safer pedestrian access across East West Highway. In 2004, the Prince George's Plaza was renovated and renamed The Mall at Prince Georges.

Development momentum has accelerated in recent years with the construction of three new apartment buildings—Post Park, Mosaic at Metro, and 3350 at Alterra—with additional development in the pipeline (see Tables 2 and 3). Investors have also recently purchased the retail space at University Town Center, along with Metro 3, 4, and 5, which promises to inject new activity and vibrancy in the center. New multifamily residential development is under construction at the former Kiplinger property at MD 410 (East West Highway) and Editors Park Drive. In 2016, construction began on a new Safeway supermarket at University Town Center.

Today, retail, office, and residential land uses dominate the area. Institutional and public uses are clustered along the eastern and southern borders of the Transit District. Serving the Transit District, but located just outside its borders, are Northwestern High School, the Prince George's Plaza Community Center, the Hyattsville Public Library, the Hyattsville Fire/EMS Station, Nicholas Orem Middle School, Edward Felegy Elementary School, and several churches (mostly fronting along Adelphi Road and MD 500 [Queens Chapel Road]).

**Map 5. Existing Land Use**

**Figure 3. Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Activity Timeline, 1950-2015**

**Table 2. Recent Development in the Downtown Core**

Recently Completed Development (2009-2015)	MF	SFA	Commercial square feet (type)
Mosaic Apartments	260	0	0
Plaza Lofts 22	22	0	12,307 (retail)
Safeway	N/A	N/A	85,524 (retail/office)
Total	282	0	12,307
Pipeline (Approved Development, Not Constructed) (2009-2015)	MF	SFA	Commercial square feet (type)
Kiplinger	352	126	0
Total	352	126	0

MF-multifamily dwelling unit; SFA-single-family attached dwelling unit or townhouse.



The Mall at Prince Georges, c. 1959.



Metro 2.



**Table 3. Recent Development in the Neighborhood Edge**

Recently Completed Development (2009-2015)	MF	SFA	Commercial square feet (type)
3350 at Alterra	283	0	1,600 (retail)
Post Park Apartments	396	0	1,600 (retail)
Total	679	0	3,200
Pipeline (Approved Development, Not Constructed) (2009-2015)	MF	SFA	Commercial square feet (type)
Belcrest Apartments (Americana Parcel C)	356	57	0
Landy property	406	0	0
Total	762	57	0

MF-multifamily dwelling unit; SFA-single-family attached dwelling unit or townhouse.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Economic Prosperity

Economic prosperity is a vital part of what makes a community healthy and sustainable. Workers who are paid well to do meaningful work tend to have much lower stress-related medical bills than workers who are unemployed or in poorly paid, dead-end jobs. Well-paid workers also add to the tax base through income and property taxes while poorly paid or unemployed workers require higher expenditures for public assistance and other social

services. In neighborhoods that are severely distressed economically, social networks and support systems fall apart and higher public safety costs result from increased police, fire, and medical emergency calls.

In a highly competitive metropolitan job market like the Washington, D.C. region, a diverse and well-educated workforce is the key attraction for top-tier



employers looking to locate in the region. That workforce is also the primary—but not necessarily exclusive—seed bed for innovative entrepreneurs looking to start competitive businesses of their own.

Industry-leading employers are following the twenty-first century (millennial) workforce back into mixed-use urban places. Not all of these places are in downtown areas, but they have the functional look and feel of downtowns. The better-educated members of that workforce have developed an increasingly collaborative approach to getting things done formulated during their college experiences; hence the importance of colleges and universities as laboratories for collective innovation in a variety of manufacturing and service industries. This collaborative spirit is also the driving force behind the new twenty-first century workplaces with open floor plans and plentiful common meeting areas.

Economically successful mixed-use urban places also incorporate mixed-income housing in a variety of unit types. This allows residents of all ages and economic circumstances to interact with each other and enliven the public spaces that are at the heart of great urban places. Mixed-income residential communities are more efficient from a quality-of-life as well as economic standpoint. This is because drive-to-qualify residential choices in suburban neighborhoods not (well) served by transit burden less-affluent workers and their families with excessive transportation costs. These costs often nullify whatever savings may have resulted from renting or buying a cheaper housing unit in an outlying suburban area. The time and economic costs of long commutes also add to the stresses affecting Prince George's County workers and their families.

Finally, successful walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities can add to Prince George's County's overall economic prosperity by helping to substantially grow and diversify the County's tax base. Permitting higher-density mixed-use development at its Regional Transit Districts—including Prince George's Plaza—will enable the County to not only grow its tax base significantly but also provide the opportunity to shift a portion of its fiscal burden off the shoulders of its taxpaying homeowners and renters.

One reason that the Prince George's Plaza Transit District was designated as a Regional Transit District and new Downtown by Plan 2035 is its recent growth in residential housing and commercial office/retail space. The area contains 2,811 multifamily residential housing units plus 910 beds of student housing (located at University Town Center). Total retail space in the Transit District is more than 1.3 million square feet, some 70 percent of which is located in The Mall at Prince Georges. Total commercial office space in the area is more than 1.6 million square feet.

Recent residential and retail activity in the area indicates that the Prince George's Plaza Transit District has the market potential needed to become a region-serving, walkable, mixed-use community. The economic advantages of walkable, mixed-use communities are discussed on page 15.

For the five-mile radius market area around the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station, the following table shows the market indicators for office, retail, and residential development.

**Table 4. Prince George's Plaza Transit District Market Absorption**

Indicator	Office	Retail	Residential
4th Quarter 2014 Vacancy Rate, %	15.4	4.2	5.2
4th Quarter Average Rent, \$/sq. ft.	\$24.14	\$22.14	N/A
4th Quarter Net Absorption, sq. ft.	(97,104)*	128,404	N/A
2014 Net Absorption, No. of MF Rental Units	N/A	N/A	1,190
2014 Average MF Monthly Rent by Unit Type			
Studio			\$1,132
1-Bedroom			\$1,211
2-Bedrooms			\$1,440
3+ Bedrooms			\$1,997

\*Number in parentheses indicates a net loss or reduction in rented space for that category.

Source: M-NCPPC.

In 2014, the project team conducted a thorough market analysis, which informed the crafting of a market-driven implementation plan to guide the Transit District's transformation into a vibrant new downtown. This transformation will be shaped, in the short-term, by residential and commercial real estate trends and proposed low-cost, high-impact improvements (such as the replacement of curb right-turn lanes with bicycle lanes, full signalized control for the MD 410 (East West Highway)/Editors Park Drive intersection, and the closing of gaps between sidewalk segments) and, in the mid-to longer-term, by larger-scale public infrastructure investments in the Transit District.

The Transit District's market is influenced by the greater Washington metropolitan region. Highlights of the market analysis<sup>7</sup>:

- The residential market is rebounding and is anticipated to drive redevelopment and investment in the Transit District in the near-term. While the short-term market for condominium development

remains weak, townhouses could prove a welcome, lower-risk compromise, diversifying housing options in the Transit District and positioning the area to capture the anticipated growth in family households as the millennial generation ages (see Area Demographic and Economic Profile section).

- Retail analyses suggest the continued health of the Transit District's main retail draw—The Mall at Prince Georges—and support for a sustained or increased retail presence in the Transit District.\*
- The recovery of the office market has been slow, and recent performance does not suggest a substantial role for new office construction in the short-term. The College Park Class A office submarket remains strong, with vacancy rates hovering around 5.5 percent and asking rents exceeding \$28 per square foot.<sup>8</sup> However, existing office space in the Transit District is struggling with increasing vacancies due, in part, to the non-renewal and/or downsizing of existing General Services Administration (GSA) leases (39 percent of University Town Center leases in 2014 were attributed to the GSA). Office building

<sup>7</sup>Unless indicated otherwise, the market area is defined as a five-mile area centered around the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station.

<sup>8</sup>Colliers International Q4, 2013.

\*Future retail will cater to the needs of new Transit District residents, complement the Mall's offerings by filling targeted gaps in desired products and services, and provide new restaurant and entertainment options that extend the vitality of the Transit District into evening hours. The ultimate success of the retail market will depend upon creating a more walkable, attractive retail environment, a user-friendly wayfinding system, pedestrian-scaled signage, and effective marketing and branding.

Metro 5 was sold at auction in mid-June 2014; office buildings Metro 3 and Metro 4 were sold at auction in early 2015.

Overall, the regional office market has had to adjust to shrinking space requirements per employee due to evolving modern open office configurations and teleworking. The Transit District's proximity to the

University of Maryland, College Park could create opportunities for its office market, but the build-out potential of the nearby, high-profile, research park—M Square—creates a pipeline of competitive supply that is better suited under current conditions, particularly for office users in the science, technology, and engineering fields.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation and Mobility

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Transportation networks function as the bloodstream of all communities regardless of their size. They enable commerce and travel—the movement of goods and people. In urban areas, the movement of people takes precedence over the movement of goods, although both are essential. The development experience of the metropolitan Washington area and other urban regions throughout the country since the 1950s exposed the limitations of extensive and expensive transportation networks designed to accommodate a single mode of transportation—the automobile. The negative impacts of these overbuilt and overdesigned road networks have resulted in bulldozed and disrupted communities, increased levels of air pollution, and the increased levels of degenerative diseases such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, and cancer that afflict a U.S. urban/suburban population that walks much less, on average, than earlier generations. Studies conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, AARP, and other researchers have demonstrated the lower incidence of obesity and other degenerative diseases in transit-rich, walkable cities like New York compared to sprawling, transit-starved southern cities like Atlanta, Memphis, and Houston.

One of the keys to the success of walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities around the country is the fact that they offer their residents nonautomotive options for getting from place to place. They feature multimodal transportation systems that promote the

physically active lifestyles associated with walking, bicycling, and using public transit. These options are especially important for children and senior citizens who would otherwise be dependent on others for their mobility. Nonautomotive travel enables children to learn and be able to confidently navigate their neighborhoods. Independent mobility also enables older residents who no longer drive to remain active and connected to their communities. Together, these age groups help to put more “eyes on the streets.” This, in turn, helps to improve public safety and reinforce social connections.

Plan 2035 draws on the documented health and resource-conserving benefits of walkable, transit-oriented communities to focus its recommendations for future development at its Metro stations on the creation of walkable, transit-oriented communities knitted together by Complete and Green Streets that serve all users, whether on foot, riding a bicycle, taking public transit, or driving.

Prince George's Plaza is one of the most accessible locations in the County. This multimodal access is highlighted in the following analysis of existing transportation services and the TDDP's recommendations for an integrated multimodal system of services to meet the mobility needs of future residents, workers, and visitors to the Transit District.



## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation | *Complete and Green Streets* and Mobility



Bicycle Level of Stress, also referred to as Level of Traffic Stress, is a measure of how comfortable a street is for an “interested but concerned” cyclist. This measure can be used on streets with or without designated bicycling facilities. The methodology establishes four levels of stress. Level 1 is comfortable even for children. Level 2 is tolerable by most average cyclists (the “interested but concerned” group). Level 3 is satisfactory to more experienced and confident cyclists. Level 4 may only be comfortable for the “vehicular” cyclists—those who are confident, or even prefer, traveling in the street like an ordinary vehicle. Factors included in the calculation of stress level include street width, speed limit, traffic volumes, bicycle facility width, and buffer zone width and type (if any).

In assessing the level of stress for the main streets of the study area, most streets are comfortable only for the more experienced Level 3 and Level 4 cyclists. The speed and volumes on Toledo Road make it possible for interested and concerned cyclists to feel comfortable while Toledo Terrace, with a partial bike lane and lower speeds, is comfortable for more confident cyclists.

Complete Streets is an approach to street design that ensures that all users—whether in a car, on a bicycle, in a bus, or walking or wheeling—have the ability to safely travel from one place to another. The concept of Complete Streets does not mean that every street has a bicycle lane, a bus lane, and a lane for high-speed travel, but that the network as a whole provides a variety of accommodations to meet all of these travel needs. Green Streets include environmental site design features aimed at reducing the impacts of stormwater runoff.

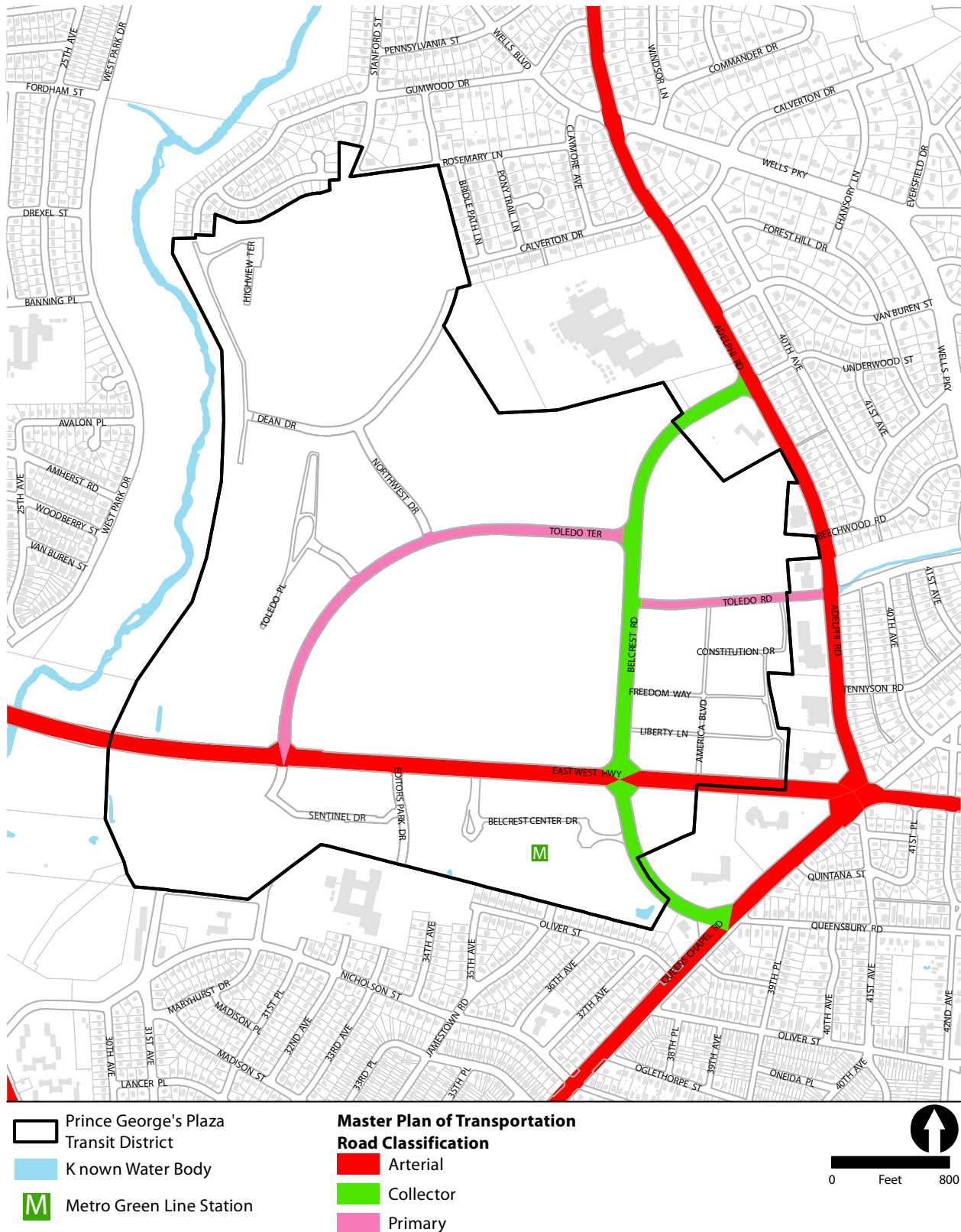
At the time this TDDP was developed, there were numerous streets that were incomplete—lacking sidewalk facilities adequate for persons with disabilities, lacking safe accommodations for bicycles, and/or lacking safe bus stops for transit riders to board, alight, and wait. None of the streets in the Transit District met any standard definition of Complete and Green Streets.

The County’s Complete and Green Streets Policy (Sec. 23-615 of the County Code), approved in 2012, requires all planned and approved road, sidewalk, trail, and transit-related construction and reconstruction projects to “include environmental site design and facilities for the combined use of motor, emergency and freight vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians” and that the “context and character of the surrounding built and natural environment of the neighborhood or area” shall be taken into consideration when approving such projects.

Prince George’s Plaza has a suburban road network that permits relatively easy automobile access to destinations throughout the Transit District. This network is anchored by MD 410 (East West Highway) and Belcrest Road. The two roads intersect to form a cross that divides the Transit District into four parts.

The existing annual average daily traffic volumes are shown in Map 38, in the Appendices. The most

**Map 6. Existing Streets**



obvious data point is the significant difference in existing traffic volume along MD 410 (East West Highway) on either side of MD 500 (Queens Chapel Road). To the west, MD 410 carries almost half of the traffic that it does to the east of MD 500. The dominant contributing traffic is the traffic along MD 500 that either originates, or is destined to, points east of the Transit District, and is oriented toward major north-south routes such as US 1 (Baltimore Avenue), MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue), and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

In 2014, MD 410 (East West Highway) carried 27,000 vehicles a day through the Transit District. The 2012 *Transportation Review Guidelines: Part 1* sets the upper capacity limit for a four-lane arterial at Level of



MD 410 (East West Highway)

Service (LOS) E, at 53,850 vehicles a day. This means that the current annual average daily traffic (AADT) for MD 410 (East West Highway) is just 50 percent of its recommended LOS E capacity limit. Therefore, for MD 410 (East West Highway) within the Transit District, both the traffic volume versus lane capacity and the level of service at key intersections can accommodate an increase in vehicular traffic without significantly eroding accessibility and mobility to and through the area.

The 44 percent reduction in traffic volumes along MD 410 (East West Highway) west of MD 500 provides an excellent opportunity for possible reconfiguration to a complete street with no more than two travel lanes in each direction and on-street bicycle lanes. In March

2015, in recognition of the significant excess capacity on future MD 410 (East West Highway) within the Transit District, SHA agreed to modify its Highway Needs Inventory (HNI) to reclassify MD 410 (East West Highway) as a Minor Urban Arterial and adjust its buildout from six lanes to four. SHA follows Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines for designating roads as Major Urban Arterials or Minor Urban Arterials. The distinction between the two types is one of function as well as design.

As shown in Maps 36, 37, and 38 in the Appendices, the traffic volumes along critical segments and at critical intersections are generally below capacity now and should function at an appropriate level of service even at the anticipated 2035 buildout.

Despite the success of the existing road network to serve cars, the current road and sidewalk network does not support the efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and goods envisioned by this TDDP. Bicycle facilities are currently limited to a one-block segment of on-street bicycle lanes on Toledo Terrace. Many sidewalks within the Transit District are four- or five-feet wide, barely wide enough for two pedestrians to pass each other. There are also gaps between sidewalk segments on Toledo Terrace and East West Highway. Despite the County's adoption of a Complete and Green Streets Policy, none of the existing streets are either complete or green.

MD 410 (East West Highway) is a major physical barrier separating residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors north of MD 410 (East West Highway) from the Metro station, shopping, and neighborhoods to the south. Commuter traffic on MD 410 (East West Highway) travels at or above the posted 40-mile-per-hour speed limit. The continuous right turn lanes in both directions contribute to high traffic speeds and greater hazards to pedestrians attempting to cross the road. The pedestrian bridge over MD 410 (East West Highway) at the Prince George's Plaza Metro station is not well utilized because of safety and other concerns and does little to improve pedestrian/bicyclist access across East West Highway.



## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation and Mobility | *Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility*

Map 7 shows existing bicycle facilities within the Transit District. The Transit District currently possesses a number of obstacles to bicycling, walking, and even public transit. They include:

- Missing sidewalk links and poorly marked park trail entrances.
- A general lack of bicycle infrastructure.
- Asphalt-covered superblocks created as part of previous large-scale suburban development.
- The inconvenient and poorly maintained pedestrian bridge over MD 410 (East West Highway).
- A lack of wayfinding signage.
- Poor lighting and visibility in some locations.
- Roads that are designed and signalized to facilitate high-speed vehicular traffic, thereby creating a hazardous environment for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

As transit-oriented development continues, automobile ownership and use shrinks, non-auto travel increases, and demand for safe, walkable neighborhoods continues to increase. The Transit District has many destinations within easy walking and bicycling distance of each other. In addition to being served by a Metro station, the Transit District is adjacent to attractive and stable residential

neighborhoods and within two miles of the University of Maryland-College Park, the Riverdale Park Town Center, and the commercial heart of the Gateway Arts District. Additionally, the nearby Anacostia River Trail Network is envisioned to serve as a major commuting route into Washington, D.C. and provide access to the regional trail network.

As the Transit District evolves into a more transit-oriented community, people who live in the surrounding communities will demand a range of travel options to access the area's broadened variety of amenities. These residents will find bicycling and walking to and within the District to be an attractive, affordable, and healthy alternative to driving.



## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation and Mobility | *Transit*

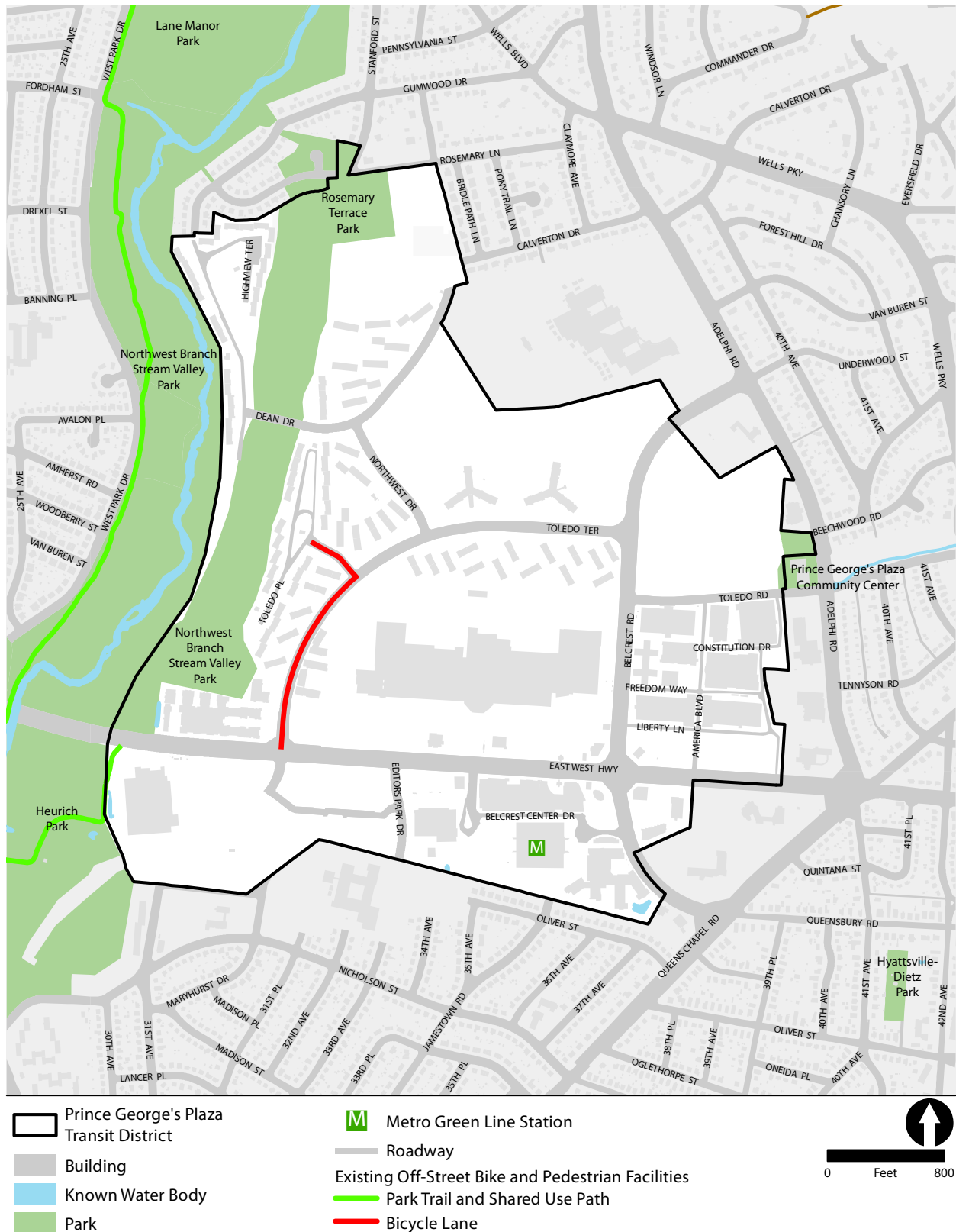
Transit is a primary mode of access and mobility for many within the Transit District. In a 2014 study of existing transportation conditions conducted as part of the development of this TDDP, it was found that within the broader study area encompassing the Transit District, 36 percent of travelers use transit to

commute to work. Transit is the dominant mode of travel for the majority of study area residents aged 54 and below. The study area's transit work trip mode share far exceeds the statewide transit mode share of 8.9 percent,<sup>8</sup> and demand for a variety of local and regional transit service is expected to increase.

<sup>8</sup>Based on 2012 National Bureau of Transportation Statistics figures.



### Map 7. Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities



## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation and Mobility | *Rail*

Rail transit (Metro) service to the Prince George's Plaza area is provided by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The Metro station anchors the Transit District and provides direct access to southern Prince George's County via downtown Washington, D.C. and north to Greenbelt. During peak hours, the station is also served by the Yellow Line, which also provides one-seat access to Washington Reagan National Airport, the Pentagon, Crystal City, and Alexandria. In 2012, the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station had an average weekday ridership of 5,120. Ridership has steadily increased since the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station opened in 1993, when it had a ridership of 2,257, and peaked at 5,374 in 2010.<sup>9</sup> Metro trains pass through the station every six minutes during rush hours. The time between trains (headways) increases to 12 minutes during weekday off-peak times

and weekend daytime hours. Trains run 20 minutes apart during weekday and weekend evenings. The Metropolitan Shops at Prince George's Station retail complex sits between the station entrance and MD 410 (East West Highway), and the Mosaic Apartments sit immediately southeast of the station and its parking garage.

Stakeholders identified the lack of visibility of the station from MD 410 (East West Highway) and The Mall at Prince Georges as a barrier to rail as a travel alternative. Commuters driving through the Transit District may not see the station. The station's location, behind the Metropolitan Shops at Prince George's Station, and its design, with the bus waiting area under the parking deck, may discourage casual riders who desire visibility as a reassurance of safety.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation and Mobility | *Bus*

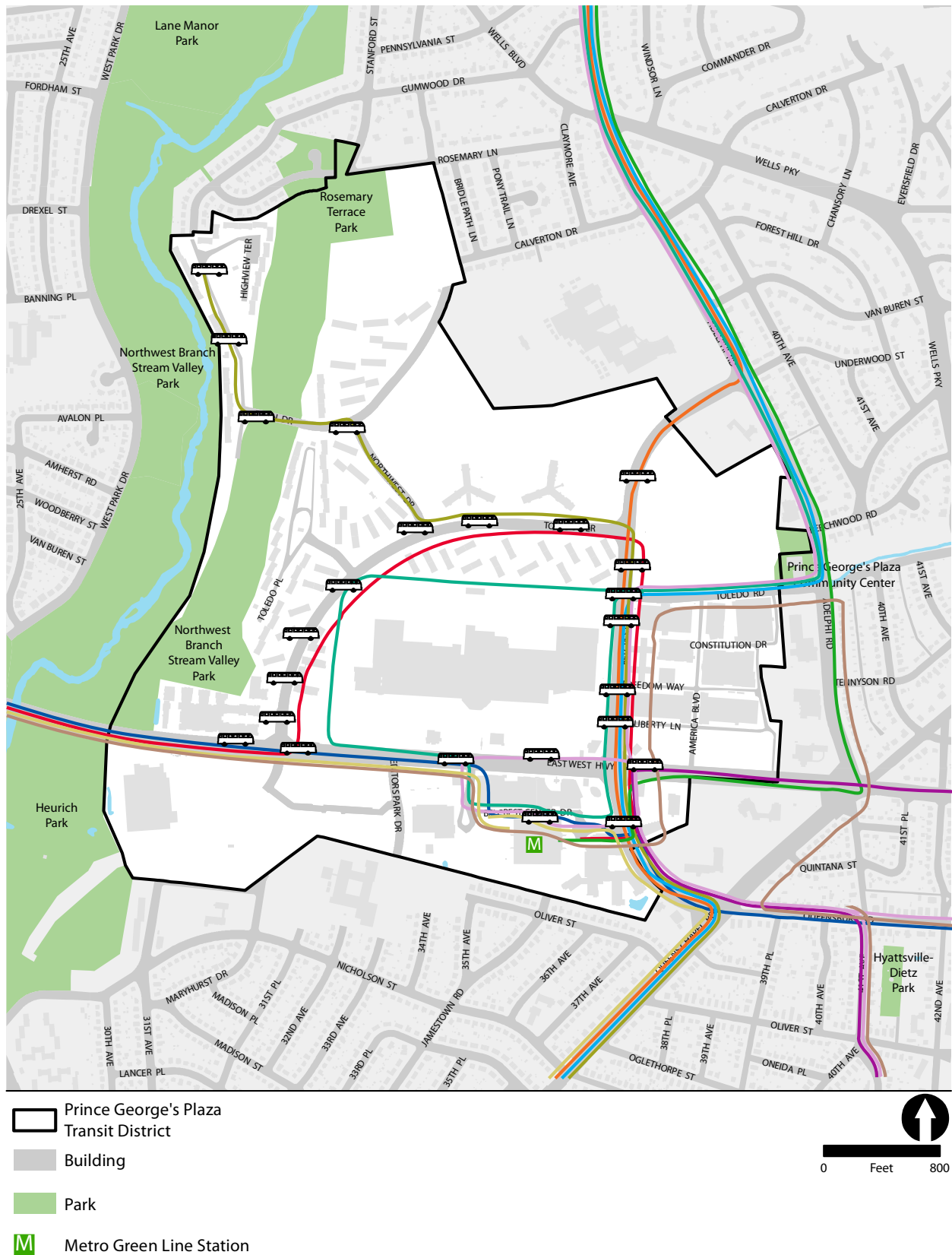
Map 8 shows bus services available within the Transit District. Bus service is provided by WMATA (Metrobus), Prince George's County (TheBus), and the University of Maryland (UM Shuttle).

**WMATA:** A total of seven Metrobus routes serve the study area including Route 86 (College Park), Route C4 (Prince George's Plaza-Twinbrook) and Route F4 (New Carrollton-Silver Spring). Route C4 and F4 are the busiest and third-busiest bus lines, respectively, in Maryland. All three bus routes are part of Metro's Priority Corridor Network and slated for improvements to bus comfort, speed, and reliability. The C4 Metrobus route connects both legs of the Metro Red Line (Twinbrook and Wheaton) along with the Green Line at Prince George's Plaza. This

route has an annual average daily ridership of 11,000 passengers. The F4 Metrobus route connects with the Metro Red (Silver Spring), Green (Prince George's Plaza), and Orange (new) lines. The F4 Metrobus route carries an annual average daily ridership of 7,600 passengers. Both routes were the subject of recent studies aimed at improving service (reducing the wait between buses and onboard crowding during rush hours).

**TheBus:** TheBus operates three routes within the study area: Route 13 (West Hyattsville), Route 14 (College Park), and Route 18 (Addison Road-Langley Park).

<sup>10</sup>WMATA, 2014.

**Map 8. Existing Bus and Shuttle Service**

## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation and Mobility | *Shuttle Service*

**UM Shuttle:** There are two UM (University of Maryland) shuttles that serve the study area—the 113 and 133 routes. Shuttles are available for University of Maryland students, faculty, staff, and their families with valid identification, as well as residents of the Cities of College Park and Greenbelt with a city-issued transportation pass.

**University Park Shuttle:** The Town of University Park has initiated a free shuttle service connecting the Town to the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station. This free service offers 30-minute headways during weekday morning and evening peak hours.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Transportation | *Parking Inventory and Mobility*

The dominant land use within the Prince George's Plaza Transit District is surface parking. Map 9 shows the location of existing parking facilities within the Transit District. At present, there are approximately 10,332 parking spaces within the area, of which approximately 9,300 are publicly accessible parking spaces (defined as spaces without entry barriers or use restrictions). When combined with dedicated parking serving the multiple residential complexes, there are a total of over 13,800 parking spaces in the TDDP area. Utilization of parking ranges from less than 50 percent in the Metro garage to approximately 75 percent at The Mall at Prince Georges, leaving a large number of spaces routinely unused.

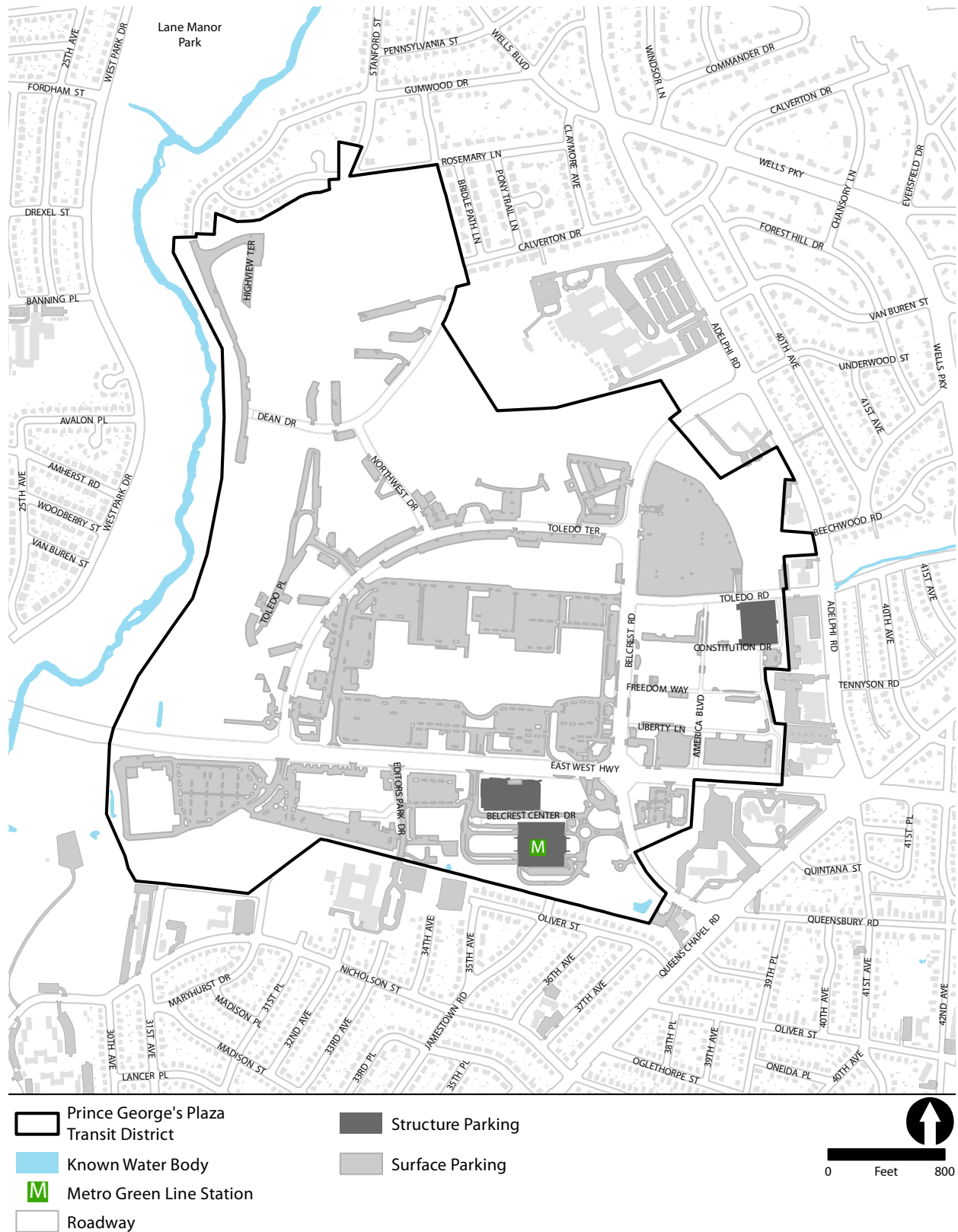
**Table 5. Parking Inventory**

Parking Facility	Type	Spaces
The Mall at Prince Georges	Surface	3700
Garage A at University Town Center	Structure	1455
Garage B at University Town Center	Structure	1150
WMATA	Structure	1068
UTC Surface Lot	Surface	1000
Metropolitan Shops at Prince George's Station	Structure	868
Home Depot	Surface	472
Giant	Surface	245
Other	Surface	374
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10,332</b>





### Map 9. Existing Parking Facilities



The availability of free parking is one of the main contributing factors to automobile use. The search for an available on-street parking spot is one of the leading causes of traffic congestion. Even residents who would prefer to walk, bike, or take transit will consider driving if they can be guaranteed a free parking spot at their destination. To encourage the use of non-auto forms of

travel, the supply of parking should be constrained to the level of actual demand, and priced based on its actual value. To reduce demand for parking, residents, visitors, shoppers, workers, and business owners need to feel confident that they can get to their destinations—or that customers can get to their businesses—easily and affordably without driving.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Natural Environment

The natural environment is the landscape—including its layered animal, plant, and other nonhuman communities—upon which the built environment is constructed. However, the natural environment is much more than a passive platform or container for human settlement and activity. The natural environment is also the ultimate source of food, clothing, and shelter for all human beings. The natural environment also provides essential ecological and environmental services that include breathable air, clean water, and the filtering and elimination of pollutants and waste.

Much of the Transit District was developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This period preceded the adoption of environmental regulations designed to promote woodland conservation, stormwater management, and stream, wetland, and floodplain protections. Not surprisingly, the development pattern in the Transit District has proven to be environmentally unsustainable. High rates of impervious cover, low tree canopy coverage, and traffic congestion have contributed to a range of environmental challenges including stream degradation, downstream flooding, and air pollution.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Natural Environment | *Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan*

Parts of the Transit District fall within the designated green infrastructure network of the 2005 *Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan*. This designation acknowledges existing forested areas and their connections to regulated areas (streams, wetlands, and floodplains) associated with the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River (see Map 10). Should the designated network be revised in the future, the network boundaries within this TDDP will be superseded. This TDDP does not amend the countywide green infrastructure network.

The designated green infrastructure network for Prince George's County is divided into three categories:

- Regulated areas that contain environmentally sensitive features—such as streams, wetlands, buffers, the 100-year floodplain, and steep slopes—that are currently regulated (i.e., protected) during the land development process.
- Evaluation areas that contain environmentally sensitive features—such as forests, colonial waterbird nesting sites, and unique habitats—that are not currently regulated (i.e., not protected) during the development process.
- Network gaps comprising areas that are critical to the connection of the regulated and evaluation areas and are targeted for restoration to support the overall functioning and connectivity of the green infrastructure network.

The 2005 *Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan* is a functional master plan that contains policies and strategies for protecting, restoring and enhancing the County's natural environment that must be addressed

when certain development applications are proposed and when other land use decisions are made such as public land acquisition.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Natural Environment | *Watersheds and Water Quality*

The Transit District is bisected by a ridgeline that diverts stormwater runoff into two watersheds within the Anacostia River basin: Northwest Branch to the west and Lower Northeast Branch to the east. Neither watershed is designated by the state as a Stronghold Watershed (a watershed critical to the protection of Maryland's aquatic biodiversity). Approximately 62 percent of the Transit District is within the Northwest Branch watershed and 38 percent is within the Lower Northeast Branch watershed.

Water quality monitoring conducted between 1999 and 2013 showed that the water quality and stream habitat of both watersheds were rated poor to very poor. The poor water quality and habitat health of both watersheds are a reflection of past development practices which resulted in high levels of impervious cover, limited tree canopy coverage, and a lack of on-site stormwater and pollution controls. A comprehensive stormwater management approach is needed to address the high volumes of run-off and poor water quality.

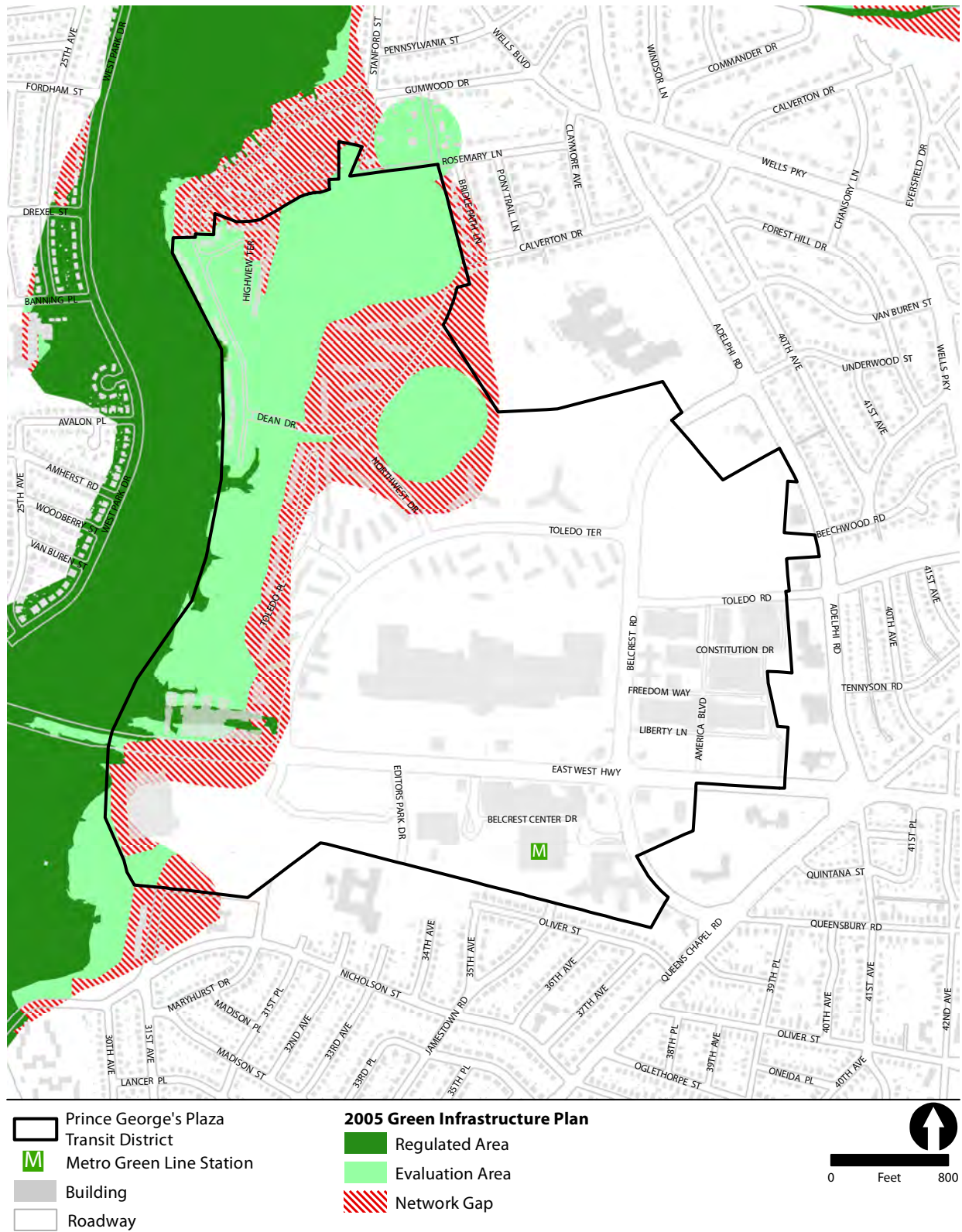
## Context and Existing Conditions | Natural Environment | *Impervious Surfaces*

As little as 10 percent imperviousness can lead to water quality degradation.<sup>11</sup> More than 52 percent of the Transit District is covered by impervious surfaces (primarily asphalt pavement and building roofs). Impervious surfaces comprise more than 90 percent of the Mall at Prince Georges property. Reducing the overall percentage of impervious surfaces and providing on-site infiltration areas can improve stormwater runoff quality and reduce the overall volume of water from developed sites.

The more impervious surfaces there are on a site the more runoff is generated by storm events. The stormwater runoff carries with it pollutants, such as oils and other toxins from vehicles, and debris, such as trash and loosened soil, that it deposits into stormdrains and streams.

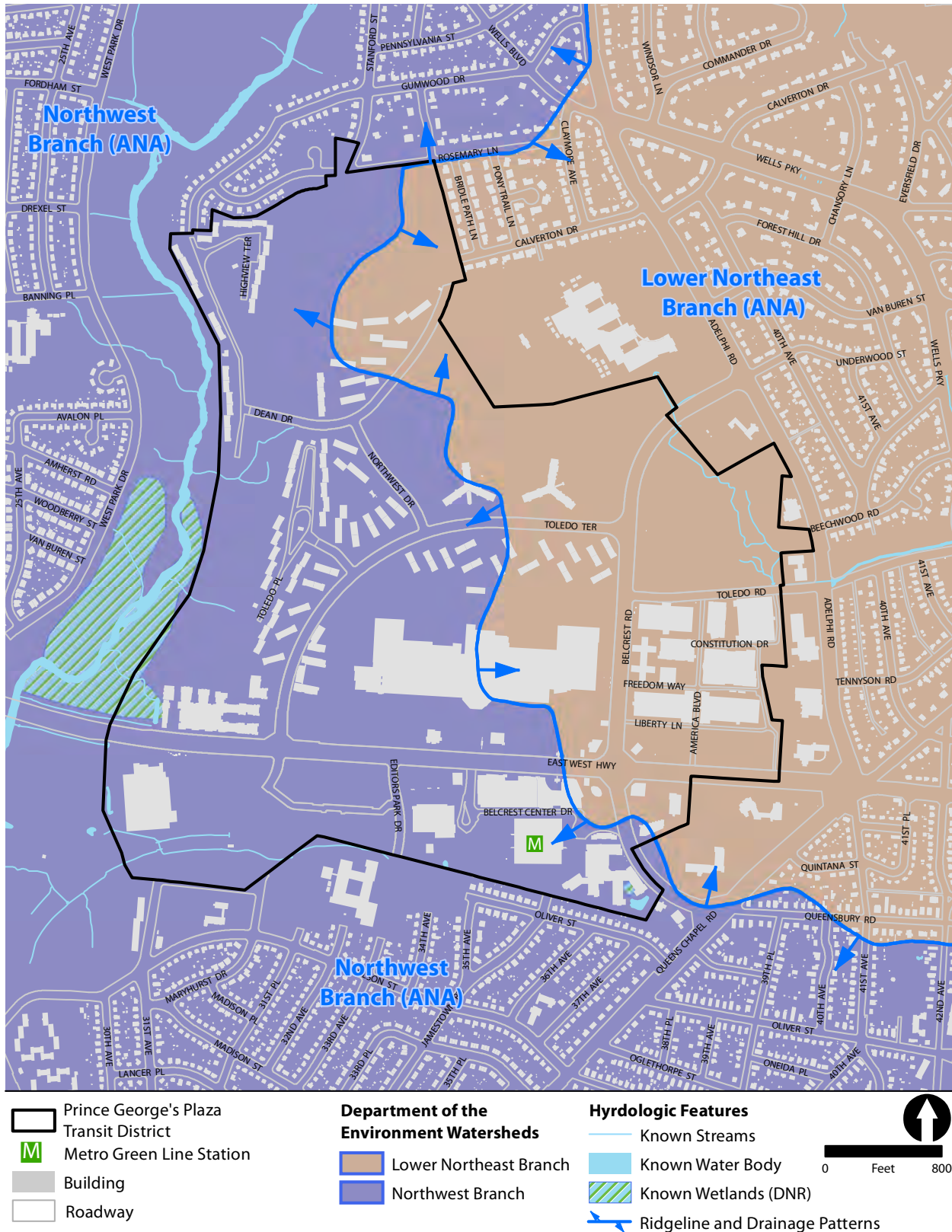
<sup>11</sup>United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Protecting Water Quality from Urban Runoff*, February 2003, found online at [https://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/files/NPS\\_Urban-facts\\_final.pdf](https://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/files/NPS_Urban-facts_final.pdf).

**Map 10. Green Infrastructure Network**





Map 11. Watershed



## Context and Existing Conditions | Natural Environment | *Forest and Tree Canopy*

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Forest and tree canopy coverage are vitally important to the livability of the Transit District. The canopies of trees intercept rainwater and clean the air. These are issues identified in many developed areas and are two of the top issues to be addressed in this plan.

Since 1938, the forest and tree canopy coverage in the Transit District has actually increased due in large

part to the reforestation of the buffers along the major stream valleys. Unfortunately, much of the remaining woodland cover in the developable portions of the Transit District has either been removed or is approved to be removed, leaving small patches of forests.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Natural Environment | *Regulated Environmental Features*

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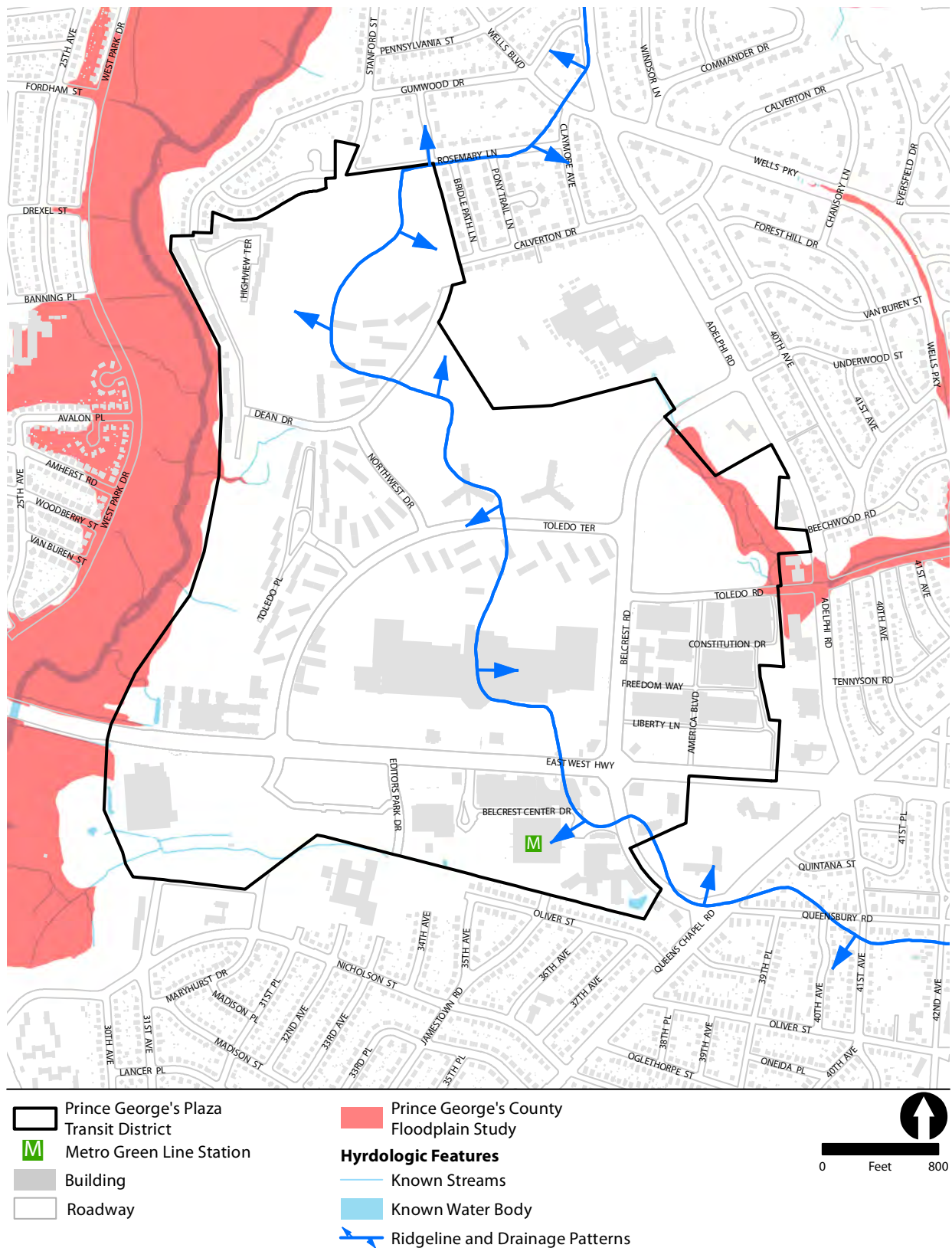
Streams, wetlands, and designated 100-year floodplains are all regulated in the Prince George's County Code. Streams and wetlands also have regulated buffers that are required to be preserved. The 100-year floodplain is an area that has a one percent chance of being flooded within a given year.

There are two types of floodplains that are mapped as part of the land planning and development review processes. The first is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain, which is mapped periodically based on the existing development within a watershed. The other type of floodplain delineation is one that considers existing development combined with projections of future development, mainly based on zoning. This is generally called the "development floodplain" that results from a floodplain study. Prince George's County commissioned a floodplain study for the Anacostia River basin in 1989. This floodplain study needs to be updated to reflect current conditions and the proposed development within the watershed.

There are two major streams in the Transit District. One of these is the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. It runs north to south along the western boundary of the Transit District. The other major stream is Wells Run, a major tributary within the Lower Northeast Branch watershed. Wells Run flows northwest to southeast and then east out of the Transit District, through a series of pipes at the intersection of Adelphi and Toledo Roads. Both streams have 100-year floodplains associated with them.

Map 12. 1989 County Floodplain Study shows the 1989 County floodplain study delineation.

There are no Wetlands of Special State Concern, nor are there Sensitive Species Project Review Areas (SSPRAs), located within or adjacent to the Transit District.

**Map 12. 1989 County Floodplain Study**

## Context and Existing | Natural Environment | *Air, Noise, and Light Pollution* Conditions

Ensuring the Transit District is livable and sustainable is contingent upon preserving natural infrastructure and limiting or reducing air pollution, noise pollution, and light pollution. Reduction or elimination of these impacts will contribute to improving the health and quality of life for Transit District residents, workers, and visitors.

### Air Pollution

While air quality is predominantly a regional issue and regulated at the federal level, localized efforts can help improve the quality of life of residents, workers, and visitors. The envisioned redevelopment of the Transit District can improve local air quality by reducing the dependence on single occupancy vehicles and planting and preserving trees to reduce urban heat islands and clean the air. Safe and efficient street and trail networks also minimize traffic congestion and vehicle emissions by encouraging the use of transit and other modes of transportation (see the Transportation and Mobility section under Plan Elements).

The Washington Metropolitan Area, which includes the Transit District, does not currently meet the federal standards for ground level ozone.

### Noise Pollution

Noise is often defined as unwanted sound from artificial sources and is usually the most obvious environmental concern for people who live and work near a noise source, such as a busy road, railroad, or subway. Noise issues related to transportation uses are

limited to roadways designated as arterial and greater, which produce enough noise to result in noise levels above the accepted standard. When sensitive land uses such as day care centers or hotels are planned within the 65 dBA Ldn<sup>12</sup> noise, measures must be taken to ensure that noise levels in outdoor activity areas are reduced to 65 dBA Ldn or less and interior noise levels are no more than 45 dBA Ldn. (The noise model assumes that the ground is flat and there are no intervening structures.)

MD 410 (East West Highway) and Adelphi Road are the only roadways within the Transit District that generate sufficient traffic to result in noise levels of 65 dBA Ldn outside of their rights-of-way. The noise model predicts that the 65 dBA Ldn noise contour for both roadways occurs approximately 106 feet from the centerline of both roadways.

### Light Pollution

Light pollution can be defined as unwanted light or intrusions caused by glare from natural or artificial light sources. Light intrusion into surrounding residential neighborhoods and environmentally-sensitive areas will need to be addressed within the Transit District. Although glare is often an important light-related impact, continuous street lighting has been shown to reduce crime because the human eye does not need to adjust to areas of differing light levels. In addition, downward-facing fixtures with appropriate shielding have been shown to help reduce light pollution near sensitive areas.

<sup>12</sup>The Federal Aviation Administration defines dBA Ldn as the 24-hour average sound level, in decibels, for the period from midnight to midnight, obtained after the addition of 10 decibels to sound levels for the periods between midnight and 7 a.m. and between 10 p.m. and midnight, local time, as averaged over a span of one year.



## Context and Existing Conditions | Housing and Neighborhoods

Housing is an essential part of community building, especially mixed-use, walkable communities. Housing is much more than a roof over one's head. Housing encompasses a bundle of essential services including refuge from the elements; a place for rest, relaxation, and play; utility services including electricity, telecommunications, gas, water, and sewer; and a foundation for wealth creation. In a nation where public resources for subsidized housing have historically been constrained or nonexistent, home ownership has been the key to future wealth for the vast majority of American households. Despite the national home mortgage market implosion of 2008-2010, home ownership remains the preferred end-state even for most renters.

Since the 1960s, Prince George's County has contained some of the most affordable housing stock in the Washington region. The recent recession helped the County's housing to remain more affordable than housing in other Washington region jurisdictions. On the negative side, lower housing and land prices have constrained growth of the County's tax base and its ability to provide the services needed by County residents and businesses. In addition, recent

immigrants to the County tend to be less affluent than most of its long-time homeowners.

Most baby boomers grew up in neighborhoods characterized by mixed-income housing in a variety of sizes and types. These neighborhoods were often segregated by race. Nevertheless, they enabled residents from different walks of life to develop social connections and networks to help improve and preserve their communities. The experience of successful new(er) walkable, mixed-use communities throughout the country indicates that mixed-income housing is just as essential to the success of those communities as it was decades ago. Unfortunately, increased housing costs and the limited financial resources of many recent immigrants to Prince George's County have combined to create a housing affordability gap, if not a crisis, in the County.

The Transit District's current housing stock is limited to multifamily units, the bulk of which are rental apartments. While approximately two-thirds of the Transit District's housing was built in the 1960s, there has been an upsurge in housing construction since 2005.

**Table 6. Existing Multifamily Developments**

Property	Address	Units	Type	Built
The Seville	3450 Toledo Terrace	176	High-rise condo	1965
Plaza Towers	6700 Belcrest Road	288	High-rise rental	1968
One Independence Plaza	6506 America Boulevard	112	High-rise condo	2008
Plaza Lofts 22	6500 America Boulevard	22	Mid-rise condo	2009
The Towers	6515 Belcrest Road	214*	High-rise student rental	2006
Post Park	3300 East West Highway	396	Mid-rise rental	2009
3350 at Alterra Apartments	3350 Toledo Terrace	283	Mid-rise rental	2014
Belcrest Plaza	Toledo Terrace	678	Garden rental	1961
Dean Manor Apartments	3404 Dean Drive	48	Garden rental	n/a
Highview Apartments	6800 Highview Terrace	306	Garden rental	1961
Mosaic at Metro Apartments	6210 Belcrest Road	260	Mid-rise rental	2009
Toledo Plaza	3215 Toledo Place	242	Garden rental	1961
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>		3,025		

\*910 beds of student housing

Source: M-NCPPC, Bay Area Economics, 2014.

The Transit District is surrounded by established single-family residential neighborhoods, including Lewisdale to the west, University Hills to the north, Queens Chapel Manor to the south, and the Town of University Park which extends east of Adelphi Road.

As discussed in the Area Demographic and Economic Profile section, the market area—defined as a five-mile area around the Transit District—is expected to see continued growth in population and in the share of nonfamily households. That growth will be driven, in great part, by the millennial generation. The housing preferences of this generation will drive demand for walkable, transit-oriented, and amenity-rich neighborhoods and, in particular for affordable/workforce housing options. Empty nesters and seniors looking to downsize to walkable communities

will also help fuel the demand for smaller—but more efficiently designed—units both rental and for sale.

While multifamily development will dominate the Transit District, household patterns will evolve over the next two decades in the market area. Millennials will age, form households, and have children. However, millennial households with children will likely be smaller, on average, than the families formed by earlier generations. Therefore, many millennial families will seek to remain in the areas in which they had been living. Their choice will stimulate demand for townhouses, small-lot single-family homes, and larger multifamily apartment units. To be competitive, the Transit District will need to be prepared to serve all of these demographics and their changing preferences along with those of existing residents.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Community Heritage, Culture, and Design

A sense of identity and continuity can all too easily morph into a resistance to all change. At this point, a community's resistance to change may hinder its ability to evolve gracefully with the times. This dynamic points out the paradox of a common cultural heritage. After all, the major charms of older U.S. and European cities is that a variety of building types from different eras of development have been preserved, yet adaptive reuse and the careful insertion of thoughtfully designed new buildings still takes place. Nevertheless, a community that is resistant to all change is, by definition, a less resilient, less sustainable community in these times of increasingly rapid, inevitable change within Prince George's County.

Communities are much more than a collection of buildings connected to other places by roads, rails, and waterways. More important than the built environment, communities are made up of people, social and cultural practices, and institutions. The history of a community is reflected in the built environment where that history has taken place. Together, the natural, built, and social and cultural elements of a community create a common historical identity. A community's identity, shaped over time, provides a sense of continuity that helps to

reinforce social ties—the social capital—of a community. This is why most communities are naturally resistant to, or skeptical about, change.

The commercial area of Hyattsville initially developed along the US 1 corridor and the city grew throughout the early twentieth century with more than 25 additions, subdivisions, and re-subdivisions by 1942. The end of streetcar service and the ever-increasing prominence of cars transformed the City of Hyattsville into an automobile suburb. Late-twentieth-century development in the City of Hyattsville occurred in the western edge of the community, in and around the Transit District. Isadore Gudelsky and his family purchased “Bellevue,” Christian Heurich's dairy farm, and envisioned a large suburban development. Three hundred seventy-six acres were rezoned in 1956 for commercial, medium density apartments, and high density apartments. Shortly after the rezoning, MD 410 (East West Highway) was extended from Ager Road to MD 500 (Queens Chapel Road) to serve the future development. The opening of the Prince George's Plaza Shopping Center in 1959 was widely heralded as an important moment in the region's suburbanization.

While the Prince George's Plaza mall was being developed, Herschel and Marvin Blumberg purchased farmland where University Town Center now stands. In their purchase, the Blumberg brothers envisioned a suburban town center, which they named "New Town Center." The Blumberg Brothers acted quickly and used the development of the mall as a catalyst for their development. They hoped for "an answer to the critics of suburban sprawl" and originally hoped to hire Mies van der Rohe. However, they found Mies' preliminary scheme problematic. Instead, they enlisted the services of Edward Durell Stone, designer of the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and the General Motors Building in New York City. Stone's designs called for the multi-use complex to be centered on federal buildings. Shopping would be placed underground and cars all but eliminated from the fabric of the complex. The site, in addition to the three office buildings constructed, was to include high-rise office and apartment buildings (not built), a large ice rink (not built), and a theater (not built).

In June 1962, the GSA awarded a contract for the construction of an office building at 6505 Belcrest Road. The building was to provide space for the Agriculture Department and to be ready for occupancy by May 15, 1963. This contract was part of the GSA's effort to lease 626,164 square feet of federal office space in eight buildings constructed within eight miles of the Ellipse. This first building is known as Metro 1.

In 1967, the office building located at 3700 MD 410 (East West Highway) was constructed. The impetus for its construction was the relocation of the 2000-employee Naval Ship Engineering Center from the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. Representative Hervey Machen said of the momentous move, "We believe that the Prince George's Center location is one of the best in the suburban area for federal employees and facilities because of the availability in Prince George's County of good schools, roads, and housing."<sup>13</sup> Today, this building is known as Metro 2.

In 1971, the third office building was constructed. Located at 6525 Belcrest Road, this building was originally known as the Presidential Building. Unlike the two previous buildings, this structure was constructed on a speculative basis. The building was occupied by the National Center for Health Statistics and is currently known as Metro 3.

Metro 1, Metro 2, and Metro 3 are similar in design, form, and materials. Although constructed years apart (1963-1971) and with slight variations, the three buildings are good examples of Stone's modernist interpretation of classical architecture. Although Metro 1 and Metro 2 have been altered slightly at their first stories by additions, overall, these three buildings present a high degree of integrity.

The Transit District includes three significant historic properties—Metro 1, Metro 2, and Metro 3—that reflect several important heritage themes identified in the 2010 *Approved Historic Sites and Districts Plan*: Community Planning, the Federal Presence, the Modern Movement, the International Style and Suburban Growth. The three iconic structures are listed below (the Historic Sites and Districts Plan identification number for each building is keyed to the Planning Area in which the structure is located, in this case, Planning Area 68):

**Metro 1 (68-104)**—6505 Belcrest Road

**Metro 2 (68-104)**—3700 East West Highway

**Metro 3 (68-104)**—6525 Belcrest Road

Fully documented for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties as the work of a master architect that expresses the final phase of his design aesthetic, the buildings are likely eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and for Historic Site designation.

University Town Center was described in 1964 as "a planned residential, commercial employment and social complex which, as yet, has no equal in the Baltimore-Washington area" and "a glimpse into the

<sup>13</sup>"Suburb and State: Navy Agency Moving." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (1959-1973), May 9, 1968.

future” (M-NCPPC). However, New Town Center never developed as envisioned by Stone and the Blumbergs. This project, in many ways, was simply ahead of its time. Metro 1, Metro 2, and Metro 3 ended up surrounded by surface parking lots. The chief problems the site faced were access from Interstate 95 (I-95) and the delay of rapid public transit. The Blumbergs purchased the site with the understanding that an access ramp would be constructed nearby to allow easy access to I-95, which was originally planned to run just west of the Transit District. The plan to run I-95 west of Prince George's Plaza and through downtown Washington, D.C. never materialized due to local opposition in Prince George's County and the District of Columbia.

While University Town Center did not originally achieve its full vision, the development of Prince George's Plaza and the surrounding medium- and high-density residential continued on schedule. The existing apartment buildings west of Belcrest Road were completed by 1965. No new residential construction occurred between 1968-2005. Between 2000-2010, both University Town Center south of Toledo Road and the retail frontage along the south side of MD 410 (East West Highway) were built out. The Prince George's Plaza mall underwent considerable internal renovation and was rebranded as The Mall at Prince Georges in 2004.

For the first 40 years of its existence, the Transit District developed as a typical suburban retail and business district. Surface parking remained the dominant land use. MD 410 (East West Highway) and Belcrest Road continued to expand in size, capacity, and travel speeds, with East West Highway ultimately becoming a barrier for pedestrian and bicyclist access.

The opening of the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station in 1993 heralded the construction of more urban and transit-friendly land uses. Additional office, retail, and residential development, including the 16-story student tower at University Town Center, filled in major gaps in the urban framework of the Transit District. The Metropolitan Shops at Prince George's Station joint development project between the Metro station and

MD 410 (East West Highway) attempted to create a more urban-style retail environment to serve commuters to the transit station.

Two new residential projects, Post Park and 3350 at Alterra, reflect the emergence of high-quality pedestrian-oriented multifamily development on the fringe of the Transit District. These developments include retail space, structured parking largely hidden from view, and public plazas adorned with civic art. Several similar projects were in the approval pipeline during the development of this TDDP.

The amount of development activity in the Transit District represents one of the strongest real estate markets in Prince George's County. The Transit District's amenities, including the widest array of retail options in Prince George's County, a Metro station, and employment and educational opportunities position this area for the intense redevelopment envisioned by this TDDP.

While elements of a walkable urban downtown exist within the Transit District, they are disconnected and underutilized. The Towers at University Town Center represent a density of residential development appropriate for a Regional Transit District, but residents have to cross both Belcrest Road and MD 410 (East West Highway) to reach other destinations or the Metro station. The Metropolitan Shops at Prince George's Station blocks the visibility of the Metro station; its plaza is dominated by the pedestrian bridge. Plazas that serve 3350 at Alterra and Post Park are at the fringe of the Transit District. Wide urban sidewalks on Belcrest Road are flanked by set-back buildings, many of which front other streets or parking lots. Bicycle lanes on Toledo Terrace do not connect to any bicycle or trail network. There are no public spaces for public art exhibits or cultural events within the Transit District. The Transit District has no sense of place in the context of being a desirable regional destination. The general perception of the Transit District is of a location where people travel for specific shopping needs, or because they live or work there. Few people travel to the Transit District just to experience it as a place.



## Context and Existing Conditions | Healthy Communities

The health of a community can be defined in a multitude of ways. Most of these aspects—physical, psychological, social, economic, environmental—have been covered in some detail in the discussions on the other elements of this plan. This element, however, deals explicitly with the impacts of the built environment—and access to healthy foods and healthcare—on public health and the quality of life for current and future residents of the Transit District.

The built and natural environments, particularly in locations well-suited for transit-oriented development, should foster health and prevent disease. The health and wellness of future residents, workers, and visitors to the Transit District should be a prime consideration for land use policies. Access to preventative health services, healthy foods, reliable and alternative modes of transportation, safe places to walk and exercise, and employment and housing options that empower individuals to make healthier lifestyle choices are paramount in ensuring the continued health and wellness of the County's population and to support a vibrant downtown.

The Transit District area has evolved primarily as a suburban retail and employment node that lacks sufficient pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity to the Prince George's Plaza Metro station, the University of Maryland, and surrounding residential communities. MD 410 (East West Highway), a six-lane state highway, is a major barrier in this regard.

Disconnected and isolated employment and retail areas, discontinuous sidewalks, and the virtual absence of bicycle facilities requires one to drive in order to go from place to place within the Transit District. In addition, large parking areas and other impervious surfaces have contributed to degraded streams and natural environments within and adjacent to the area.

The area's built-in hazards for pedestrians and bicyclists are all too typical of suburban areas in Prince George's County and elsewhere in suburban Maryland. Automobile-caused pedestrian/bicyclist injuries and deaths have direct negative impacts on a community. These impacts include medical and funeral expenses, lost economic productivity on the part of injured workers, property damage, and increased public infrastructure costs associated with after-the-fact safety improvements.

Not only are auto-dominated suburban areas such as present-day Prince George's Plaza unsafe, but their development pattern has direct public health implications. According to a pair of studies presented at the American Diabetes Association's 74th Scientific Sessions in 2014, people living in walkable neighborhoods experienced substantially lower rates of obesity, overweight, and diabetes than people living in less walkable neighborhoods. The studies compared walkable versus less-walkable neighborhoods in Toronto and Chicago. Walkability measures that played a significant role in these findings included more density, interconnectivity between streets (smaller blocks, few or no dead ends or culs-de sac), and a variety of services and amenities within walking distance of one's home.<sup>14</sup>

According to Plan 2035, Prince George's County is ranked 16 among Maryland's 24 counties in terms of its population's general state of health. The County's death rate from heart disease is 15 percent higher than the state average and 17 percent higher than the national average. More than 7 out of 10 adult County residents (71.4 percent) are obese or overweight, as are 64.1 percent of the County's youth. These daunting health indicators in part reflect suburban development patterns that discourage walking and bicycling and require the use of an automobile to get from place to place.

<sup>14</sup>American Diabetes Association, "Do 'Walkable' Neighborhoods Reduce Obesity, Diabetes?," Press Release, June 17, 2014, found online at <http://www.diabetes.org/newsroom/press-releases/2014/do-walkable-neighborhoods-reduce-obesity-and-diabetes.html>.

On October 6, 2014, the City of Hyattsville passed a resolution to be designated as a HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) City. Since that time the City of Hyattsville has been recognized at the gold level in the HEAL Leaders Club for implementation of four new policies. Those policies include nutrition education and transportation to the "Farmers Market," guidelines for hosting "Healthy Meetings And Events," the "Any Time Fitness Challenge" for city employees, and redevelopment and low impact design considerations for "Green Streets Initiatives".

By encouraging active communities, improving access to nutritious food and promoting a healthy municipal workplace, Hyattsville contributes to the physical well-being of its citizens, while aiming to improve overall quality of life and promote business investment in the city.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities

One feature of great places is the presence of iconic public buildings; within those buildings are the public services necessary to support a dynamic and diverse population of residents, workers, and visitors. Public facilities constitute the vital organs of a neighborhood or community. They provide educational and informational services that help to develop a competitive and well-educated workforce. They also provide essential public safety services designed to reduce crime, fire hazards, and deaths resulting from accidents and medical emergencies. Another important class of public facilities is parks and recreational facilities (covered in the following section). Public facilities are financed collectively through publicly levied taxes and user fees. This enables residents who would not otherwise be able to afford comparable privately offered services to ensure that their children receive a quality education and that they are reasonably safe in their homes and on their neighborhood streets. The success of a walkable, vibrant community is dependent upon the perception of safety. Residents, workers, and visitors must feel that they are personally safe, that their property is safe, and that first responders can reach them in a timely fashion should an emergency occur.

The Transit District and surrounding communities are currently served by three elementary schools, two middle schools, a high school, a fire/EMS station, a public library, a community center, a campus of Prince

George's Community College, and the County's District 1 Police Station, as well as the City of Hyattsville Police and The Maryland-National Capital Park Police.

Several of the public facilities in and around the Transit District were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s to serve the rapid suburban development of the Hyattsville/University Park area. Like much of the existing commercial and residential development in the Transit District, these facilities have become functionally obsolete.

The ongoing private-sector redevelopment of the Prince George's Plaza Transit District is not the only major change occurring in the area. County and regional agencies are upgrading and replacing antiquated facilities with new facilities that will serve the broader community in and around the Transit District. Edward M. Felegy Elementary School opened in 2014. A new Hyattsville Fire/EMS Station was under construction on Belcrest Road in 2015. A new branch of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) and a new regional, multi-generational recreation center for the Transit District were in the planning stages as this plan was being written.

Implementation of this TDDP will require coordinated efforts to ensure that public safety services are visible, accessible, and responsive. The urban design standards are based in part on Crime

Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, including allowing for more “eyes on the street” and a clearly defined public realm.

Despite the opening of Edward M. Felegy Elementary School, school overcrowding remains a major issue

for the Transit District and surrounding communities. Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS), the Board of Education, and M-NCPPC will need to continue to coordinate to ensure that adequate school facilities exist to serve the population within the Transit District.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities | *Public Schools*

High-quality educational opportunities are key to attracting new residents to, and keeping existing residents in, the Transit District. Planning for vibrant and sustainable communities demands ensuring that

residents have easy access to educational opportunities in facilities that are modern, in good repair, and within their design capacity.

**Table 7. Public Schools Serving the Transit District**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS				
Name	Address	City	Building Size (Square Feet)	Acreage
Edward M. Felegy	6110 Editors Park Drive	Hyattsville	92,391	16.3*
Lewisdale	2400 Banning Place	Hyattsville	54,103	9.6
Rosa L. Parks	6111 Ager Road	Hyattsville	81,705	8.1
University Park	4315 Underwood Street	Hyattsville	56,264	5.1
MIDDLE SCHOOLS				
Name	Address	City	Building Size (Square Feet)	Acreage
Hyattsville	6001 42nd Avenue	Hyattsville	119,597	9.8
Nicholas Orem	6100 Editors Park Drive	Hyattsville	105,697	16.3
HIGH SCHOOLS				
Name	Address	City	Building Size (Square Feet)	Acreage
Northwestern	7000 Adelphi Road	Hyattsville	377,000	39.1

\* Edward M. Felegy Elementary School and Nicholas Orem Middle School share a 16.3-acre campus.

Source: Prince George’s County Public Schools Educational Facilities Master Plan, 2015.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities | *School Facility Conditions*

Edward M. Felegy Elementary School is one of the newest schools in Prince George's County and reflects improved practices in school design, construction, and amenities. A renovated Northwestern High School opened, and Prince George's Community College moved into refurbished space in University Town Center in 2000. Nicholas Orem Middle School, on the other hand, is an older suburban-era facility exceeding 50 years of age and in need of renovation or replacement.

In May 2008, Parsons 3D/International completed an internal and external physical facilities condition assessment of public schools within the County. The assessment identified which schools required improvements based upon age and the cost of renovation versus the replacement of the facility; it measured schools based upon a facilities condition index (FCI), a reflection of "a facility's condition represented by the ratio of the cost to correct a school

facility's deficiencies to the current replacement value of the facility."

In June 2012, PGCPs engaged Parsons to conduct a desktop update of the 2008 assessment report by incorporating all repairs, renovations, and new construction. Table 8 identifies the FCI for each of the public schools that serve the Transit District and surrounding communities.

Schools with a FCI of 0-40 percent are considered to be in good condition. Schools with an FCI of 40-75 percent are considered to be in fair condition. Schools with a FCI greater than 75 percent are considered to be in poor condition. Schools constructed since 1993 were not evaluated.

One school was rated "Good" and three schools were rated "Fair"; three schools constructed after 1999 were not evaluated.

The PGCPs Master Plan Support Project recommends a full renovation or replacement with an addition of approximately 219 seats at Lewisdale Elementary School and a limited renovation at University Park Elementary School, which would address facility conditions and education adequacy concerns.

The FY 2017-FY 2022 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes funds for construction of a new high and middle school in this area. Additionally, Hyattsville Middle School is included in this CIP for a major renovation/replacement and addition project.

**Table 8. School Facility Conditions: 2012 Parsons 3DI Study**

Elementary Schools	2012 3DI FCI	2012 Facility Assessment	Year School Constructed
Edward M. Felegy	New	n/a	2014
Lewisdale	63.46%	Fair	1953
Rosa L. Parks	New	n/a	2006
University Park	40.55%	Fair	1978
Middle Schools	2012 3DI FCI	2012 Facility Assessment	Year School Constructed
Hyattsville	54.30%	Fair	1935
Nicholas Orem	43.27%	Good	1962
High Schools	2012 3DI FCI	2012 Facility Assessment	Year School Constructed
Northwestern	New	n/a	2000

Source: Parsons 3DI, 2012 and Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPs) 2015 Educational Facilities Master Plan.



## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities | *Current Enrollment*

PGCPS operates in a feeder school pattern, where a distinct set of elementary schools feeds into a distinct set of middle schools, which in turn feeds into a high school. There are six public schools serving the Transit District and surrounding communities. Of these schools, four schools have 2013 enrollments beyond their state-rated capacities (see Table 9).



Edward M. Felegy Elementary School.

**Table 9. School Enrollment and Capacity**

School Name	9/30/2014 Enrollment	State-Rated Capacity	Percent Of Capacity
Edward M. Felegy Elementary	686	790	86.8%
Lewisdale Elementary	704	471	149.4%
Rosa L. Parks Elementary	748	750	99.7%
University Park Elementary	572	562	101.8%
Hyattsville Middle	818	829	98.7%
Nicholas Orem Middle	868	829	104.7%
Northwestern High	2,262	2,053	110.2%

Source: PGCPS, July 2015.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities | *Projected Enrollment*

Table 10 shows the pupil yield rates—the estimated number of elementary, middle, and high school students per dwelling unit—used to determine future school needs for the Transit District. Pupil yield rates traditionally vary based on housing type and are

likely to change as the desire to raise families in an urban, walkable setting continues to increase. Meanwhile, single-family detached housing, long the province of families with children, is increasingly inhabited by empty-nesters.

**Table 10. Pupil Yield Rates (2014)**

Dwelling Unit Type	Elementary	Middle	High
Single-Family Detached	0.177	0.095	0.137
Single-Family Attached	0.145	0.076	0.108
Multifamily	0.119	0.054	0.074

Source: M-NCPPC and PGCPS, April 2014. Current pupil yield rates are based on 2010 decennial census, PGCPS' 2010 student file, and 2010 dwelling counts from M-NCPPC.

The northwestern section of Prince George's County is experiencing steady population growth. The estimated maximum development at buildout could

yield 8,433 additional dwelling units, resulting in all six schools exceeding current capacity.

**Table 11. 2035 Projected School Enrollment and Buildout Capacity (Total)**

Schools	State-Rated Capacity (Src)	2014 Enrollment	Existing Excess Seats/ Deficit	Projected Buildout Seats Needed	Enrollment At Buildout	Projected Buildout Excess/Deficit
ELEMENTARY	2,662	2,692	-30	1,011	3,703	-1011
MIDDLE	1,658	1,686	-28	462	2,148	-490
HIGH	2,053	2,262	-209	633	2,895	-842

The area surrounding the Transit District is mostly built out, with few if any locations available to support a traditional suburban elementary, middle, or high school campus. As an example of this phenomenon, PGCPs constructed Edward M. Felegy Elementary School on the campus of Nicholas Orem Middle School. Northwestern High School, despite being one of the largest high schools in the state, exceeds capacity. Building new schools to

accommodate the area's enrollment needs is a long-term strategy dependent on the combination of land becoming available and the construction of small-footprint urban school models appropriate for a downtown area. Hyattsville Elementary School and Suitland Elementary School are examples of PGCPs schools built in the context of walkable urban neighborhoods.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities | *Public Safety*

Implementation of the 2008 *Approved Public Safety Facilities Master Plan* is underway in the Transit District. The Transit District Standards incorporate the key principles of CPTED and are intended to provide a safe, well-lit, and visible environment for people to enjoy and travel through. The Prince George's County Police Department, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Police Department, The Maryland-National Capital Park Police Department, and the City of Hyattsville Police Department must

coordinate to enhance security and safety within the Transit District.

PGFD is constructing a new station on Belcrest Road adjacent to the Transit District. The new facility will house the crews and apparatus whose first due response area is the Transit District. It will also house the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department and the American Red Cross. This state-of-the-art facility is scheduled to open in 2017.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities | *Libraries*

The Hyattsville Public Library was the first public library constructed by the PGCMs in 1961. This facility houses the headquarters of the PGCMs and has served as a community institution for more than 50 years. However, the facility is functionally obsolete as a library, is located on the fringe of the Transit District, and lacks the technological capacity to

attract and serve new or existing residents. PGCMs recognizes the need to replace the existing Hyattsville Public Library with a new, state-of-the-art facility and has taken steps to design and construct the replacement library on its existing site on Adelphi Road.

## Context and Existing Conditions | Public Facilities | *Parks and Recreation*

Parks serve as the green lungs of a community; they offer a tree canopy that filters out air pollutants and helps to cool adjacent areas during hot weather. Park landscapes and green spaces are also psychologically beneficial for the calming effect that even a picture of a green natural scene has on human beings. Hospitals are designing small green spaces and even larger at-grade parks into their site plans in recognition of the documented accelerated healing of patients whose rooms have a view of a garden or other green space (as opposed to a window view of a blank wall or other unattractive architectural feature).

Parks enable people to engage in passive relaxation and low-impact recreational activities such as walking and running. Recreation centers, on the other hand, provide indoor and outdoor opportunities for more active recreation, including team sports. Parks and recreation centers provide spaces for leisurely relaxation and active play. These opportunities are increasingly necessary in urban(izing) communities whose residents live fast-paced and busy lives.

The higher density, mixed-use development envisioned in the Transit District provides an opportunity to introduce a range of urban park types. Pocket parks, squares, and plazas will complement the existing open space network and provide spaces for outdoor markets and performances, informal recreation, and pet play areas—amenities particularly attractive and important to millennials, families, and young professionals.

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation is the primary public provider of parks and recreation facilities and programs in the Transit District. The City of Hyattsville and the neighboring Town of University Park also provide parks, recreational facilities, and programs.

Built in 1968 adjacent to the eastern edge of the Transit District, the Prince George's Plaza Community Center was the first community center built by M-NCPPC in Prince George's County. Renovated in 2014, the community center delivers more than 100 programs per year geared toward patrons of all ages and is heavily utilized by residents in Hyattsville, University Park, and College Park and their vicinity.

The Northwest Branch Trail extends along the western border of the Transit District within the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. This shared-use trail is part of the 26-mile Anacostia Tributary Trail System that provides regional bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to Montgomery County and the District of Columbia. Other nearby recreational facilities include artificial and natural turf rectangular athletic fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, and a dog park at Heurich Park, which abuts the southwest corner of the Transit District.

In September 2013, M-NCPPC adopted Prince George's County's first comprehensive plan for parks, recreation and open space, *Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space*. Formula 2040 provides policies to guide the planning of future parks, recreational programs, and maintenance facilities as well as the rehabilitation and modernization of existing facilities. A key recommendation of the plan is to move from the current model of building neighborhood-oriented community centers to constructing larger, multi-neighborhood-serving community centers (referred to as “multigenerational community centers”).

## Challenges, Assets, and Opportunities | Challenges

Planning and implementing future transit-oriented development within the Transit District faces several significant challenges.

- 1. MD 410 (East West Highway):** The six-lane MD 410 (East West Highway) presents a major barrier to pedestrians and bicyclists attempting to access the Metro station from points to the north. The pedestrian overpass that crosses the highway between the Metro station and the Mall at Prince Georges was intended to provide a safer alternative to midblock jaywalking. Poor maintenance of interior lights and elevators makes the pedestrian overpass an unattractive, if not unsafe, choice.
- 2. Lack of Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity:** Signalized crossings in the Transit District are few and are spaced widely apart while pedestrian crossings remain unsignalized along Belcrest Road. Bicycle facilities are also virtually absent within the area.
- 3. Stormwater Management:** There is a need to develop a long-term regional approach to stormwater management in the Transit District.
- 4. Retail Visibility:** With the exception of the Mall at Prince Georges, retail areas within the Transit District suffer from very poor visibility.
- 5. Office Vacancy Rates:** The vacancy rate for commercial office space in the Transit District is growing.

## Challenges, Assets, and Opportunities | Assets

The Transit District's assets offer the means to begin addressing some of the identified challenges. However, significant fiscal and other resources will have to be identified and secured in order to fully capitalize on them.

- 1. Access:** MD 410 (East West Highway) and the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station provide excellent regional access. The opening of the Purple Line will provide two-seat connections between the Transit District and a variety of regional destinations.
- 2. Visibility:** The Mall at Prince Georges is Prince George's County's most successful shopping center inside the Capital Beltway. The Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park is a regional open space amenity that serves Hyattsville, University Park, and surrounding communities.
- 3. Desirability:** Residential development in the Transit District has surged since 2009 with the addition of more than 1,000 new multifamily dwelling units. The Transit District is served by quality schools and crime continues to decrease. More than 800 additional residential units (multifamily units and townhouses) have been approved for development. In addition, a new Safeway supermarket opened in 2015 at University Town Center.
- 4. Proximity:** The Transit District is approximately one mile south of the University of Maryland, College Park, the state's flagship university. This proximity makes the Transit District a desirable location for students to live, shop, and socialize, and opportunities abound for additional off-campus housing, classroom and flex space, and other associated operations.
- 5. Engaged Community:** Key stakeholders in the Transit District—major property owners, the City of Hyattsville, the Town of University Park, and community residents—have become fully engaged in the process of planning for future transit-oriented development around the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station.



## Challenges, Assets, and Opportunities | Opportunities

A number of potential opportunity sites are located within the Transit District. These include portions of the WMATA-owned joint development site surrounding the Metro station, potential infill development possibilities for the Mall at Prince Georges parking lot, the Home Depot parking lot, the section of the Belcrest apartment complex that borders the shopping mall parking lot on the north, and the University Town Center surface parking lot.

Progress is being made on the quest to transform MD 410 (East West Highway) into a true urban asset, rather than a barrier. However, developing and implementing effective stormwater management measures on an areawide scale, reducing the demand for parking, and rebranding the area—including renaming the Metro station—will require continued effort and funding.



