



Chapter III: The Vision

The vision of the Bowie State MARC Station Sector Plan is the result of a series of intensive and collaborative stakeholder workshops and meetings. The ideas, priorities, and concerns documented throughout this process were critical to the development of the plan's recommendations. Subsequent meetings with implementing agencies and key property owners helped to ensure the realism of the recommendations and their appropriate phasing. The vision reflects a commitment to those land uses desirable within the proposed community center, the efficient use of infrastructure, and the innovative and comprehensive protection of environmental resources.

Vision Statement

The retail and office component of the proposed community center creates economic opportunities for businesses to tap into unmet market demand driven by Bowie State University and provides economic generators to support the university's programs.

The community center is a set of vibrant neighborhoods with active, pedestrian-oriented streets and a small "college town" character at the heart of a broader picturesque, rural community. The center serves four inter-related functions. First, by providing neighborhood-oriented shopping, housing alternatives, and inviting public spaces within walking distance of Bowie State University (BSU) and the MARC Station, it becomes a social focal point for the university and the surrounding community. Second, it promotes alternative modes of transportation by encouraging the use of the MARC Station transit hub, interconnected local trails, and enhanced sidewalks. Third, the center furthers the educational mission of BSU by providing an opportunity for the university to expand its campus and accommodate new offices, classrooms, and public-private initiatives such as research, nursing, and laboratory school facilities. And fourth, its retail and office component creates economic opportunities for businesses to tap into unmet market demand driven by BSU and provides economic generators to support the university's programs.

The center serves as a model for sustainable cost-effective development in the county by protecting sensitive ecological habitat, employing natural systems and low impact methods to treat stormwater and wastewater, and using alternative sources of power.

Principal features of this plan include:

- Well-defined and designed public streets that provide equally for vehicular traffic, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Vibrant street-level retail that serves as a major attraction to university students/faculty/staff, residents, workers, and commuters.
- A fully integrated and accessible multi-modal transit system that promotes the use of Bowie State MARC Station and links its use to the university, Old Town Bowie, Bowie Town Center, and other points of interest.
- Traffic calming elements to enhance the safety of existing streets and improve connections between the university and adjacent neighborhoods.
- An enhanced trails network linking the university and the Bowie State MARC Station to Old Town Bowie, the Fran Uhler Natural Area, and the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis Trail (WB&A).
- Innovative and sustainable stormwater and wastewater management techniques.
- Preserved open space.
- A land use plan, design guidelines, and phasing and implementation strategies to carry the vision to fruition.

Within this vision, one could imagine university students walking from classes to the community center to sit down for a bite to eat with friends after dropping off a laptop for repairs at a local shop; or a commuter returning from Washington, D.C., on the MARC train, picking up dinner at a community center bistro before driving home; or a university professor meeting her husband for lunch at their new townhouse after picking up sandwiches at the deli. The center becomes a focus of community life for the university and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

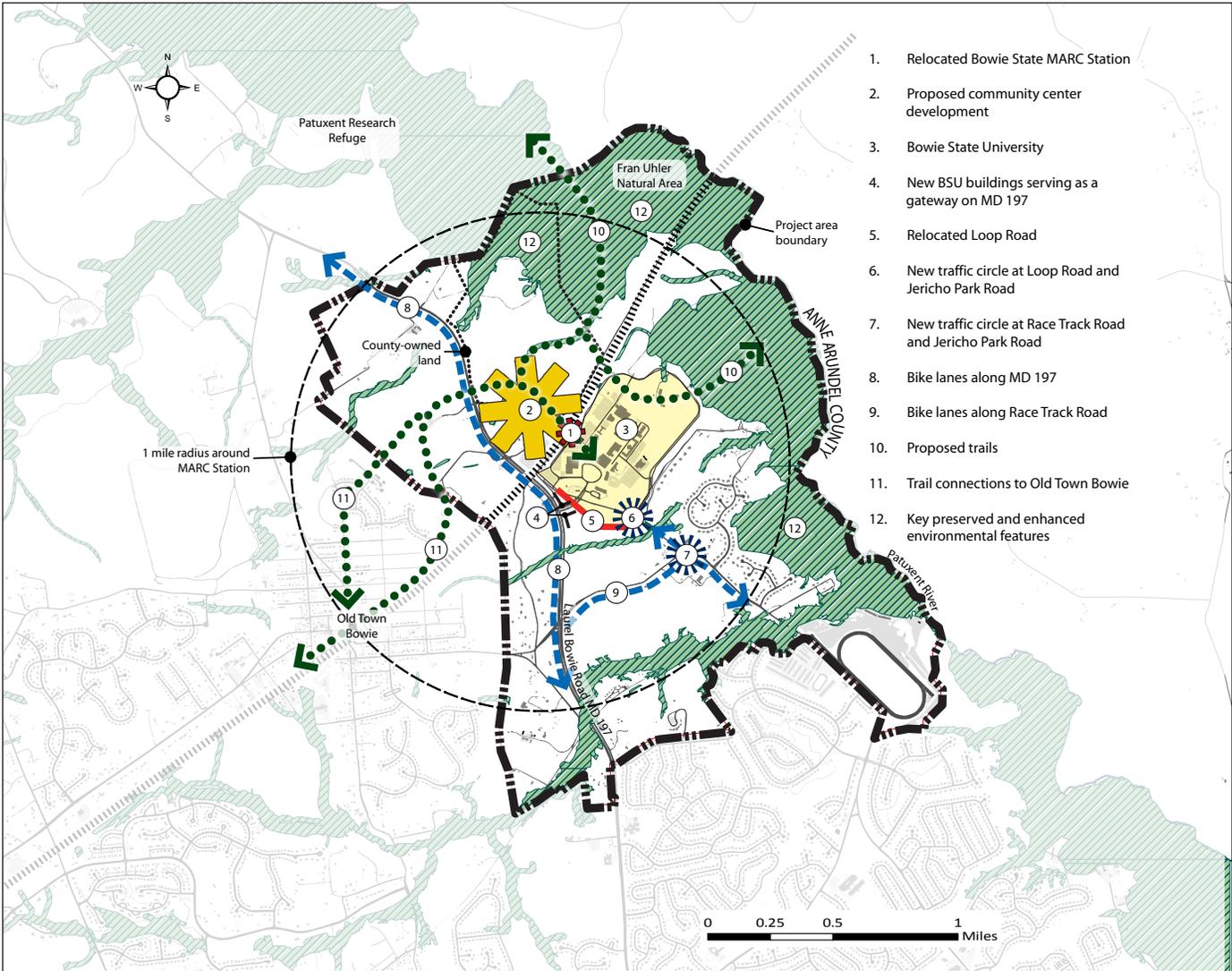
Map III-1: Vision Concept Diagram (facing page) illustrates how future development and enhancements—both environmental and infrastructural—will reflect the plan vision.

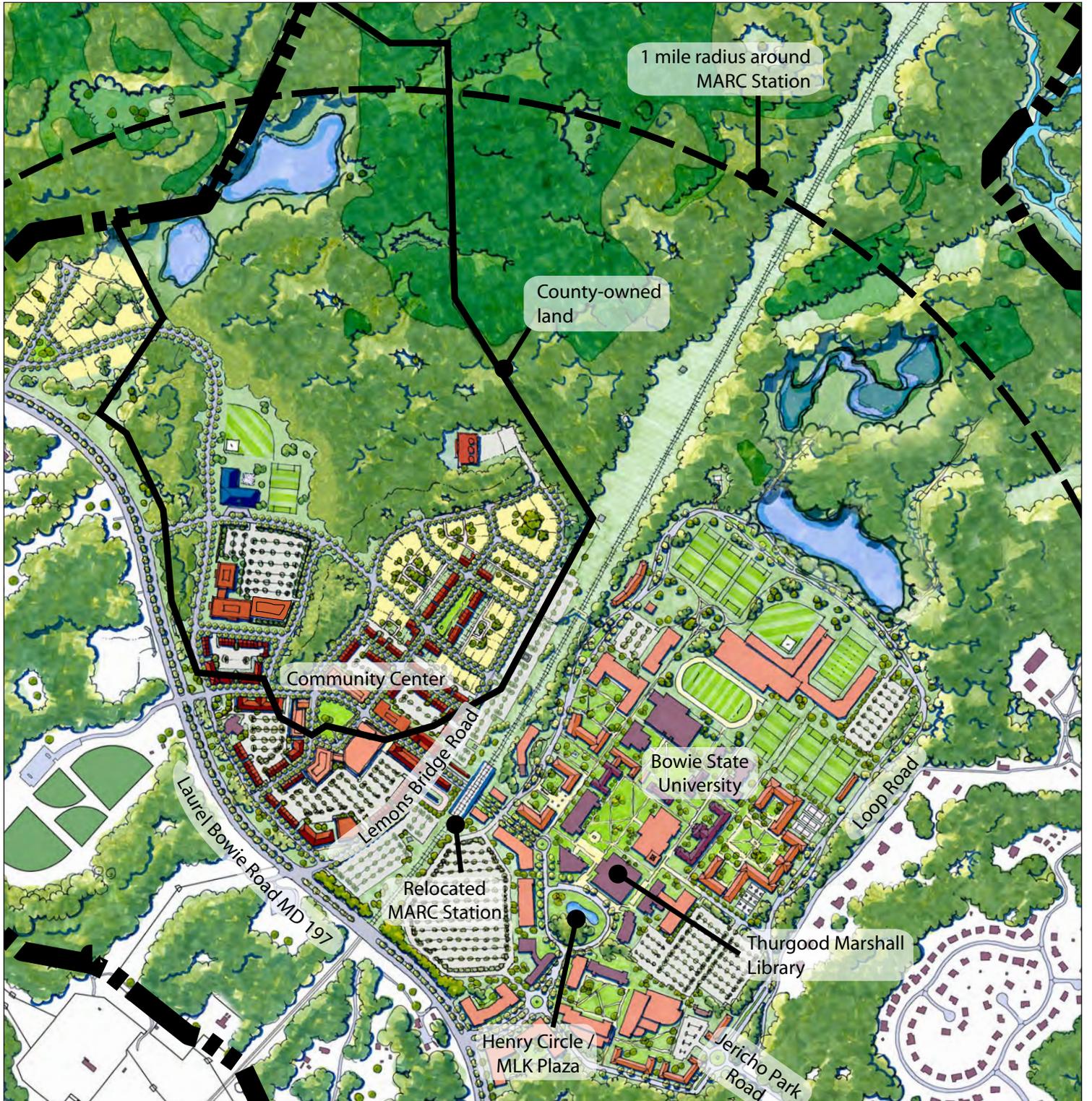
Vision Elements

Three elements form the vision of the Bowie State MARC Station plan area:

- Land Use and Economic Development
- Design and Appearance
- Infrastructure Elements

Map III-1: Vision Concept Diagram





The community center in relation to Bowie State University.

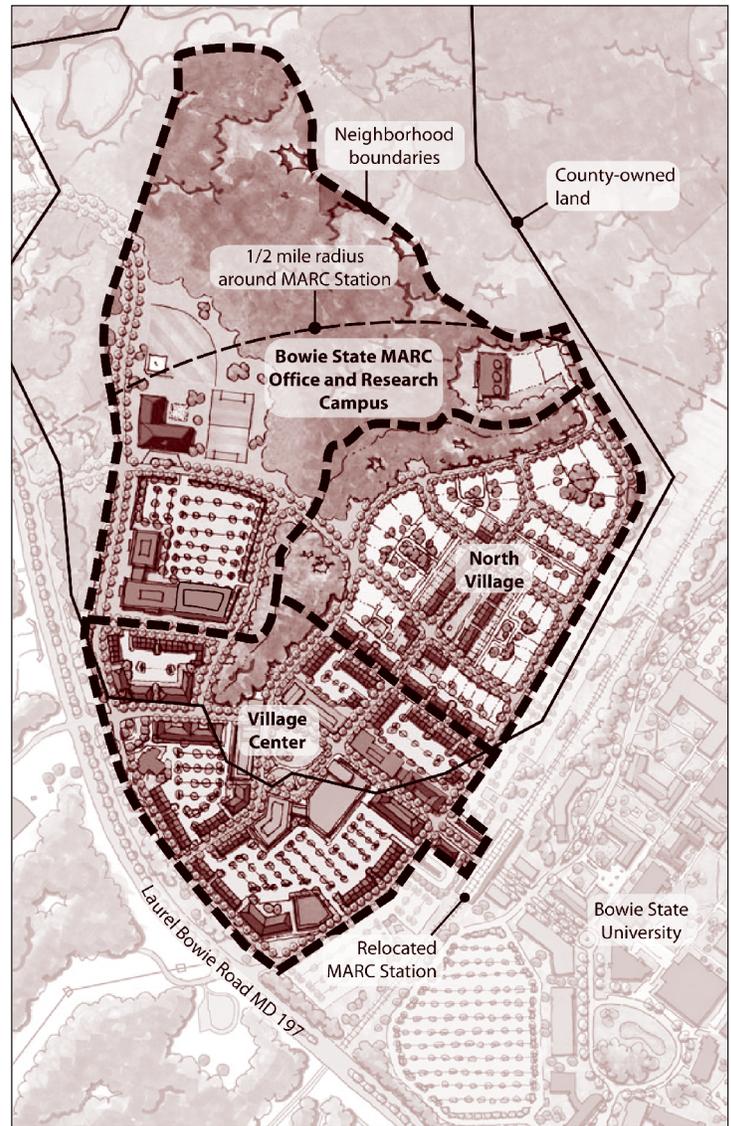
Land Use and Economic Development

This plan guides future land uses to promote sustainable, transit-oriented development concentrated at the MARC Station. While the plan area encompasses approximately 2,300 acres, its land use recommendations and zoning changes are limited to the community center site to protect the rural character of the broader community.

The 2006 Bowie and Vicinity Master Plan recommends a “community center” designation for the Bowie State MARC Station parking lot and surrounding properties. It further recommends that the area be developed as pedestrian- and transit-supportive with a vertical mix of uses. The community center consists of the land directly adjacent to the MARC Station and MD 197, the MARC Station, and the adjacent parking lot to the north. It includes 219 acres of county-owned land.

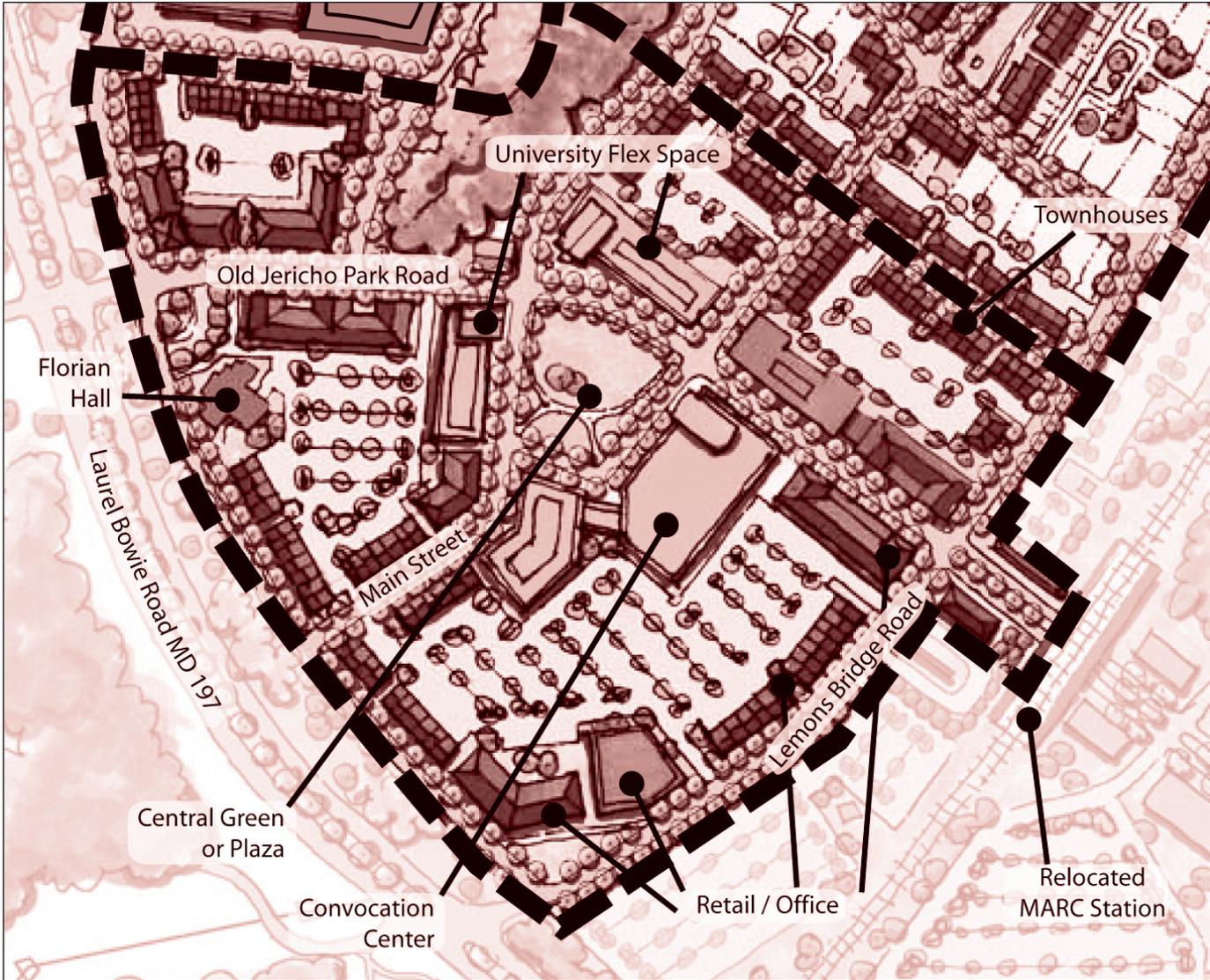
Village Center

The community center is organized into three areas: The Village Center, North Village and the Bowie State MARC Office and Research Campus. The Village Center, the core of the community center located adjacent to the MARC Station, is attractive to new businesses and suited to student needs. The center contains a small grocery store and a cluster of neighborhood-oriented retail to serve students and faculty, attract residents from the larger Bowie area, and provide a convenient retail amenity to MARC commuters. Old Jericho Park Road, which links the community center to the university, acts as the center’s “main street” and primary focus area. An extensive variety of residential options are provided in the Village Center, including townhomes, live-work units, age-qualified or assisted living facility, graduate/student family housing, as well as multifamily buildings, and apartments located over retail. BSU campus uses are integrated into the Village Center, providing for a convocation center, student and community fitness center, and range of academic or university office, classroom, or research uses. These uses remain flexible to accommodate the specific needs of the university



The community center’s three neighborhoods: The Village Center, North Village, and Bowie State MARC Office and Research Campus.

at a later time. Flexible office incubator space for start-up companies has been planned for the Village Center to promote university research and business opportunities in the open market. The plan also provides BSU with the opportunity to establish a small hotel and meeting center for university guests and conferences. The development program of the Village Center would produce a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.2.



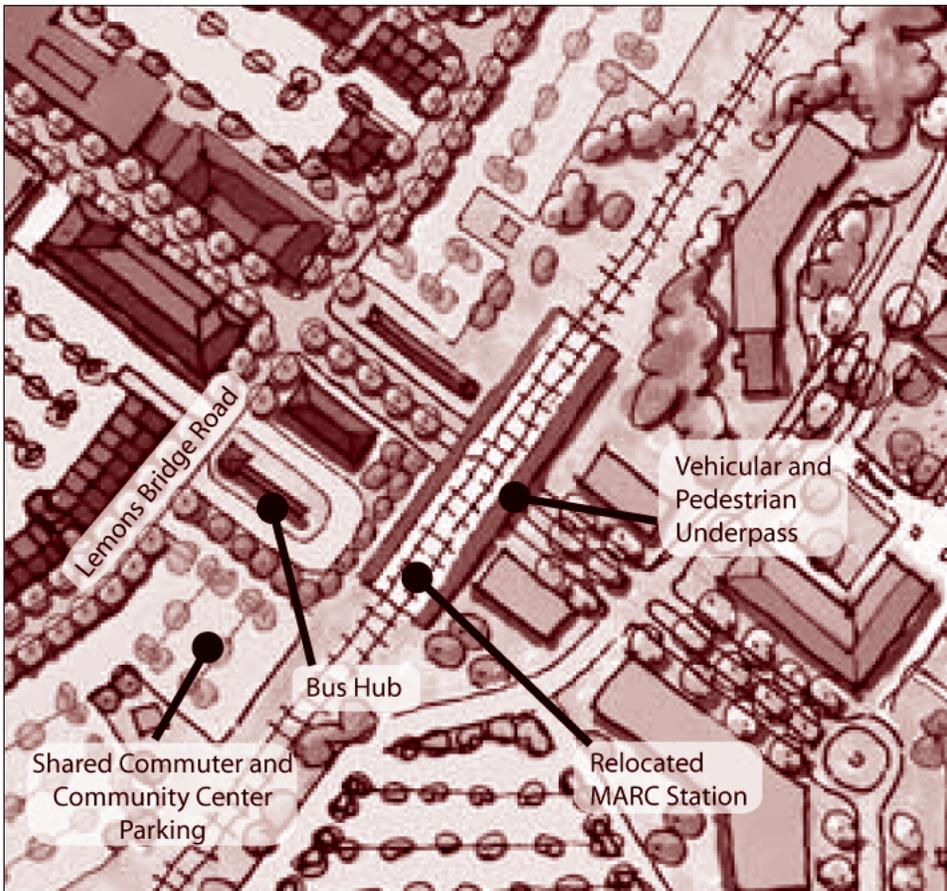
The illustrative site plan for the Village Center.

The program for the Village Center contains the following:

- 55,000 square feet of retail (includes 20,000 square-foot grocery store).
- 45,000 square feet of office.
- 75,000 square feet for the university convocation center (includes conference center and hotel).
- 65,000 square feet for a university fitness center.
- 200,000 square feet for university flex space (classrooms, academic offices, laboratories, etc.).
- 221,000 square feet (209 units) of multifamily residential (includes 46,000 square feet (54 units) of multifamily above retail).
- 157,500 square feet (175 units) for university graduate and student family housing.
- 106,250 square feet (125 units) for age-qualified/assisted-living facility.
- 12 live-work units.
- 106 townhouses.



A new consolidated transit center and commuter parking facility is located near the MARC Station entrance on the western side of the tracks at the Village Center. The enhanced MARC Station is relocated approximately 800 feet to the east of the current location and aligned with a new connector underpass street between the community center and the university. This new location allows the station to serve as a gateway to the “main street” and creates a direct physical connection to the university’s Loop Road and campus. It also positions the station in the middle of the proposed MARC surface parking area. A new consolidated transit center adjacent to the station services will expand local and regional bus services, encouraging university students, faculty, staff, and area residents to utilize mass transit.

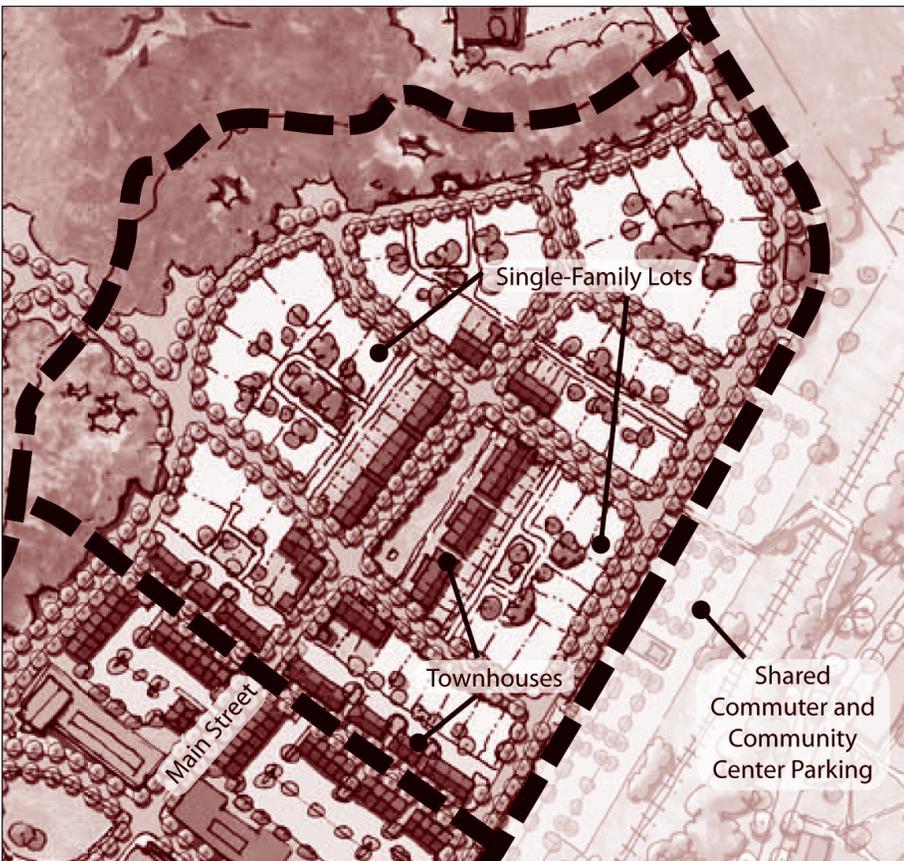


Transit Center

A transit center is a hub served by multiple bus and/or rail lines.

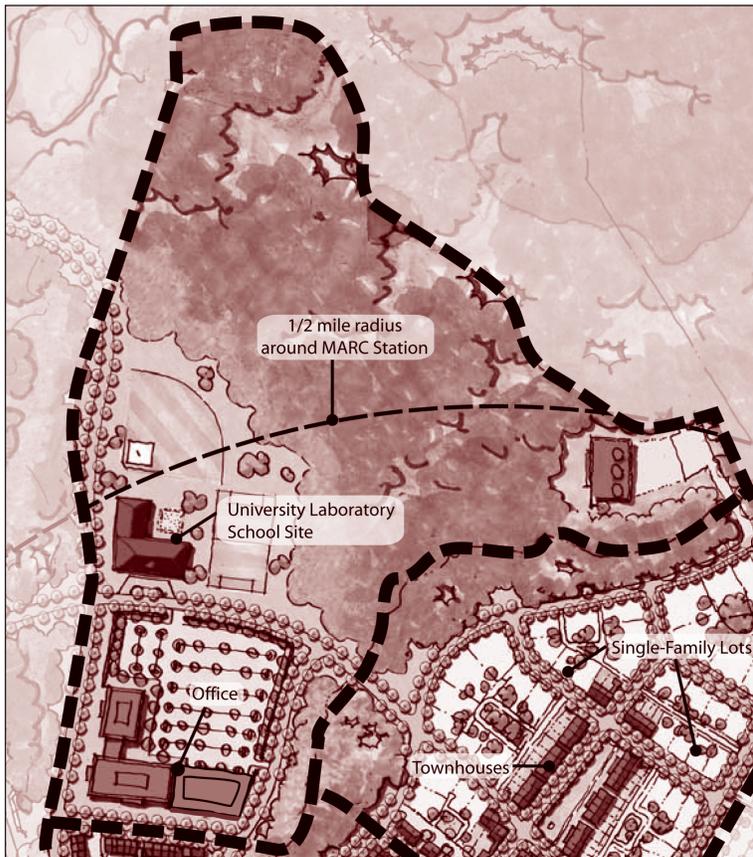
TOP: Example of a vibrant, mixed-use village center.

BOTTOM: Proposed transit center with bus hub at the Village Center.



North Village

North Village is a predominantly residential area supporting the mix of uses in the Village Center. It comprises townhouses and single-family homes with a majority of these residences available for faculty, staff, graduate, and married-student housing. Higher density townhomes and smaller single-family lots are located closer to the Village Center with progressively larger single-family lots at the periphery of the neighborhood. North Village features direct access to the university with a pedestrian bridge over the MARC tracks. Similar to the Village Center, it is expected that these buildings would frame a public realm and face towards streets with parking located to the rear.



The program for the North Village contains the following:

- 78 townhouses.
- 39 small single-family lots (42' average width).
- 31 large single-family lots (65' average width).

Bowie State MARC Office and Research Campus

The Bowie State MARC Office and Research Campus fulfills an objective of the sector plan to serve as a revenue generator for BSU and to provide superior educational opportunities for BSU students while enhancing the economic base of the county. The office and research campus, with a total employment of

TOP: The illustrative site plan for North Village.

BOTTOM: The illustrative site plan for the Bowie State MARC Office and Research Campus.

Note: Laboratory schools are university-affiliated educational and research facilities with strong teacher training and information dissemination capabilities.

approximately 500, is composed of a Class-A office facility and laboratory school with state-of-the-art architecture and sustainable building elements. The office component is suitable for one large or several moderately sized federal, state, or county government agencies that mandate secure facilities and whose missions prevent them from co-locating with other uses. Its proximity to the MARC Station and Village Center, which offer office workers a variety of transportation options and amenities, in conjunction with its relative proximity to the state capital in Annapolis and the nation's capital in the District of Columbia, make the campus a particularly attractive location for state or federal government agencies. All other office uses in the community center that do not require special security features are integrated into the Village Center, with the highest densities concentrated at the MARC Station. The laboratory school component provides an enhanced and accessible learning experience for BSU students enrolled in the Department of Education and Leadership program by providing hands-on training opportunities. The school also provides a specialized learning environment for Prince George's County students enrolled in K-12. Night classes are also offered at the laboratory school for Prince George's County adults with learning disabilities.

The program for the Bowie State MARC Office and Research Campus contains:

- 150,000 square feet of office space.
- 10,000 square feet for the laboratory school.

To realize this vision, the plan recommends the use of the Mixed-Use-Transportation Orientated (M-X-T) Zone for the entire community center. The M-X-T Zone is proposed as the closest mixed-use zoning technique currently available to the county to adequately implement the vision of the sector plan.

As a result of the three area programs, the following is a total program for the community center:

- 55,000 square feet of retail (includes 20,000 square-foot grocery store).
- 195,000 square feet of office space.
- 10,000 square-foot laboratory school.
- 75,000 square-foot university convocation center.
- 65,000 square-foot university fitness center.
- 200,000 square feet of university flexible space (classrooms, academic offices, laboratories, etc.).
- 221,000 square feet (260 units) of multifamily residential (includes 46,000 square feet—54 units—of multifamily above retail).
- 12 live-work townhouses.
- 157,500 square feet (175 units) for university graduate and student family housing.
- 106,250 square feet (125 units) for age qualified/assisted living facility.
- 290 townhouses.
- 136 small single-family lots (42' average width).
- 87 large single-family lots (65' average width).

To realize this vision, the plan recommends the use of the Mixed-Use-Transportation Orientated (M-X-T) Zone for the entire community center. The M-X-T Zone is imposed as the closest mixed-use zoning technique currently available to the county to adequately implement the vision of the sector plan. If more appropriate mixed-use zoning tools

and techniques are developed that will more adequately implement the goals and vision for this plan, consideration should be given to rezoning of the area identified for the future mixed-use zoning tool. Uses for the land outside the community center area—but located within the larger project boundary—will remain in its current land use and zoning classifications. New development in these areas should be subject to the design guidelines outlined in Chapter 5 of this plan. New development should be compatible with existing development and the significant natural features of the site. These are strong factors in the creation of this plan. Strategies are recommended to protect established residential neighborhoods, natural features, and landmarks within the larger project boundary, as well as to promote a thriving center at the MARC Station.

An attractive and lively streetscape with pedestrian amenities (see Design and Appearance section on facing page).



Design and Appearance

Use of design guidelines to facilitate site planning, building design, infill development, or redevelopment has improved the image, appearance and functionality of properties within the entire plan area and created a cohesive, visually appealing, and compatible environment for different types of land uses.

The overall appearance of the area is significantly enhanced through the definition of streetscape design elements that transform the major streets from car-dominated thoroughfares to tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly streets with inviting sidewalks.

The plan establishes an overall design framework that guides both new development and redevelopment efforts in ways that create accessible, attractive streetscapes, site plans and buildings; improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation; and encourage the general development pattern needed to attract new businesses, residents, shoppers, and workers. The overall appearance of the area is significantly enhanced through the definition of streetscape design elements that transform the major streets from car-dominated thoroughfares to tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly streets with inviting sidewalks. Within this design vision, a unified line of buildings and street trees have defined a public realm that is accessible to all while semi-public front yards of houses provide an inviting landscaped environment.

The design guidelines address features such as building setbacks, streetscape design, site design and parking, building height and massing, lighting, signage and street furnishings. They establish architectural design recommendations to help create a uniform and cohesive built environment which encourages pedestrian activity and improves the community center's aesthetics. They also help create neighborhoods that are inviting and encourage social interaction.



The guidelines underscore the importance of narrower streets to slow traffic and houses that are oriented to face the streets, generating safer neighborhoods through more “eyes on the street.” To help dissipate traffic, they encourage greater connectivity between streets—over cul-du-sacs that concentrate traffic to single points within neighborhoods, requiring wider streets and resulting in congestion.

A well-designed, well-placed public plaza creates a comfortable place where people can relax, and it discourages criminal behavior.

Infrastructure Elements

The plan envisions the necessary infrastructure to support improvements to roads, transit, pedestrian facilities, bikeways, the environment, schools, parks and open space resources.

The plan envisions improved connections between the area's neighborhoods, the university, and the new community center without widening major roadways.

To realize its vision, this plan institutes the infrastructure improvements necessary to support mixed-use development, increased residential densities, and commercial intensities. The plan envisions improved connections between the area's neighborhoods, the university, and the new community center without widening major roadways. MD 197, Race Track Road, and Jericho Park Road are redesigned with new signals at key intersections along MD 197 and improved pedestrian connections and crossings to increase safety while maintaining circulation.

Bicycle circulation is greatly improved by the addition of sidewalks, on-road bike lanes, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and linkages to adjacent residential neighborhoods through the use of trails.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation is greatly improved by the addition of sidewalks, on-road bike lanes, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and linkages to adjacent residential neighborhoods through the use of trails. Continuous sidewalks are implemented along both sides of most streets and include amenities and features such as pedestrian refuge islands, contrasting crosswalk treatments, in-pavement lighting reflectors at crosswalks, curb extensions, mid-block crossings, raised crosswalks, and other traffic-calming techniques. Trees are planted on both sides of streets, helping to clean the air, provide habitat for wildlife and shade for pedestrians, while maximizing evapotranspiration and reducing stormwater runoff. Existing multiuse trails are enhanced along the major drainage areas and stream corridors to connect the community center

with the Patuxent River and its trail networks and to connect with the WB&A trail. New interconnected trails link the BSU MARC Station, BSU Campus, and Old Town Bowie. These improved facilities help integrate physical activities into daily living, facilitating a more active living environment and improving the health of residents.

An enhanced M-NCPPC multi-use picnic area, new pocket and civic parks in the Village Center, and a new plaza at the transit facility provide improved recreational opportunities and venues for public gatherings and cultural and social events.



Sustainability

Sustainability is an over-arching category that describes how the plan will tread more lightly on the land, use fewer resources, and provide additional habitat to realize the vision of the plan while meeting the needs of its residents and workers.

A variety of vegetated open spaces—with native/adapted and non-invasive plant species established throughout the development—promote biodiversity and habitat. These spaces are sized to accommodate passive and active recreation as well as to offer outdoor learning environments for residents and visitors.

The plan recommends safe, comfortable, and unobstructed pedestrian routes and dedicated bike lanes provided within a connected street network. Secure bicycle racks and preferred parking for low-emission/fuel-efficient vehicles and carpools provide support for these practices. Sustainable on-site wastewater treatment systems, such as constructed wetlands, support the environmental integrity of the area. Constructed stormwater wetlands also help mitigate the impacts of runoff from the development, while at the same time they act as a natural buffer. A variety of vegetated open spaces—with native/adapted and non-invasive plant species established throughout the development—promote biodiversity and habitat. These spaces are sized to accommodate passive and active recreation as well as to offer outdoor learning environments for residents and visitors. Well-located plants and vegetation along MD 197 serve as noise barriers to enhance the acoustical quality of the development.

Lighting strategies for both interior and exterior lighting (as well as hardscape) and landscaping of buildings are designed to be energy efficient and to minimize light pollution while they increase night-sky access and support nocturnal habitats. Exterior lighting provides for comfort and safety only and is located in such a way as to minimize light trespass to adjacent properties.

Innovative waste and stormwater management strategies, solar and other renewable energy sources provide opportunities for funding, research, and education in partnership with Bowie State University and other institutions and organizations.

Map IV-1: Existing Development Pattern

