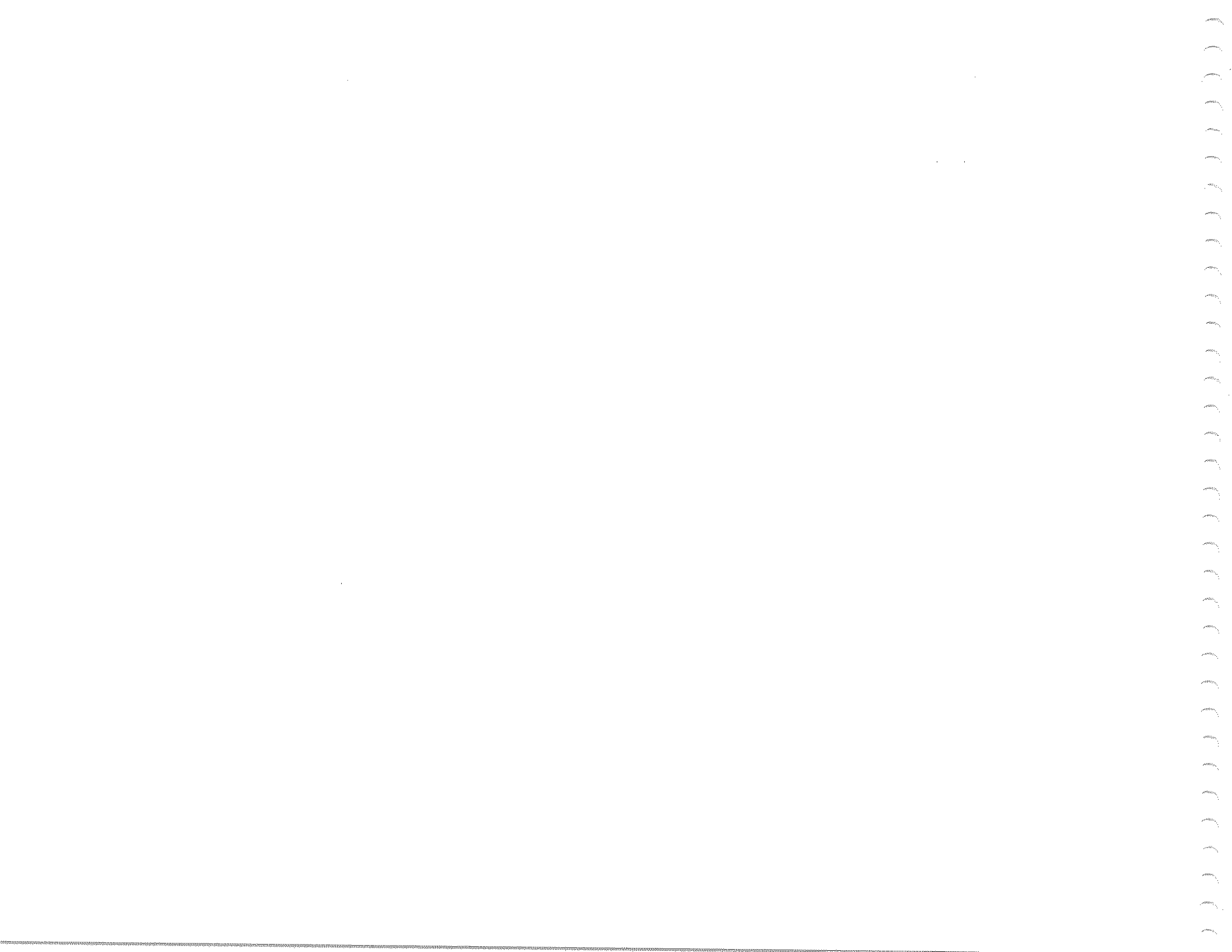


ABERDEEN TOD MASTER PLAN

ABERDEEN, MARYLAND

MARCH 2012





ABERDEEN TOD MASTER PLAN

Aberdeen, Maryland

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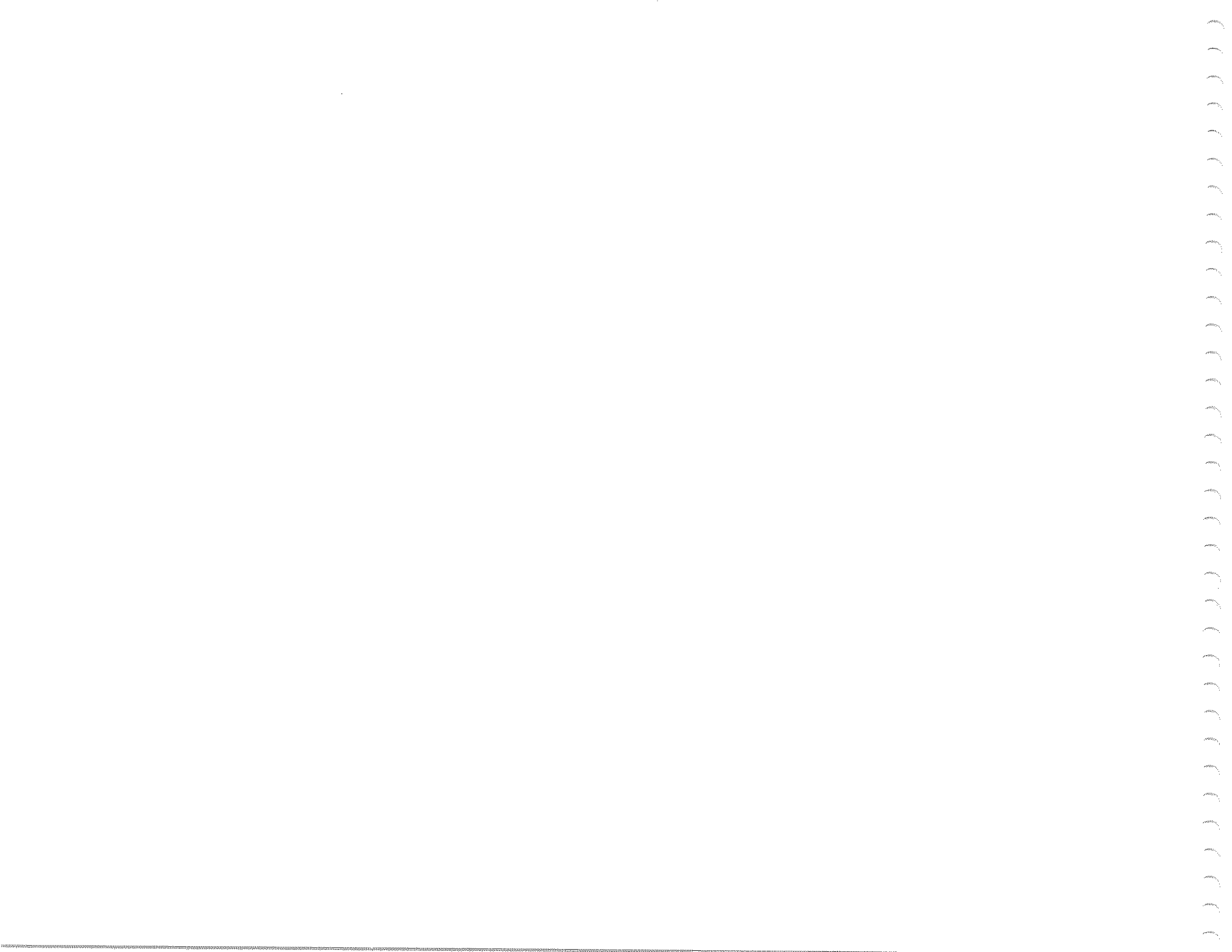
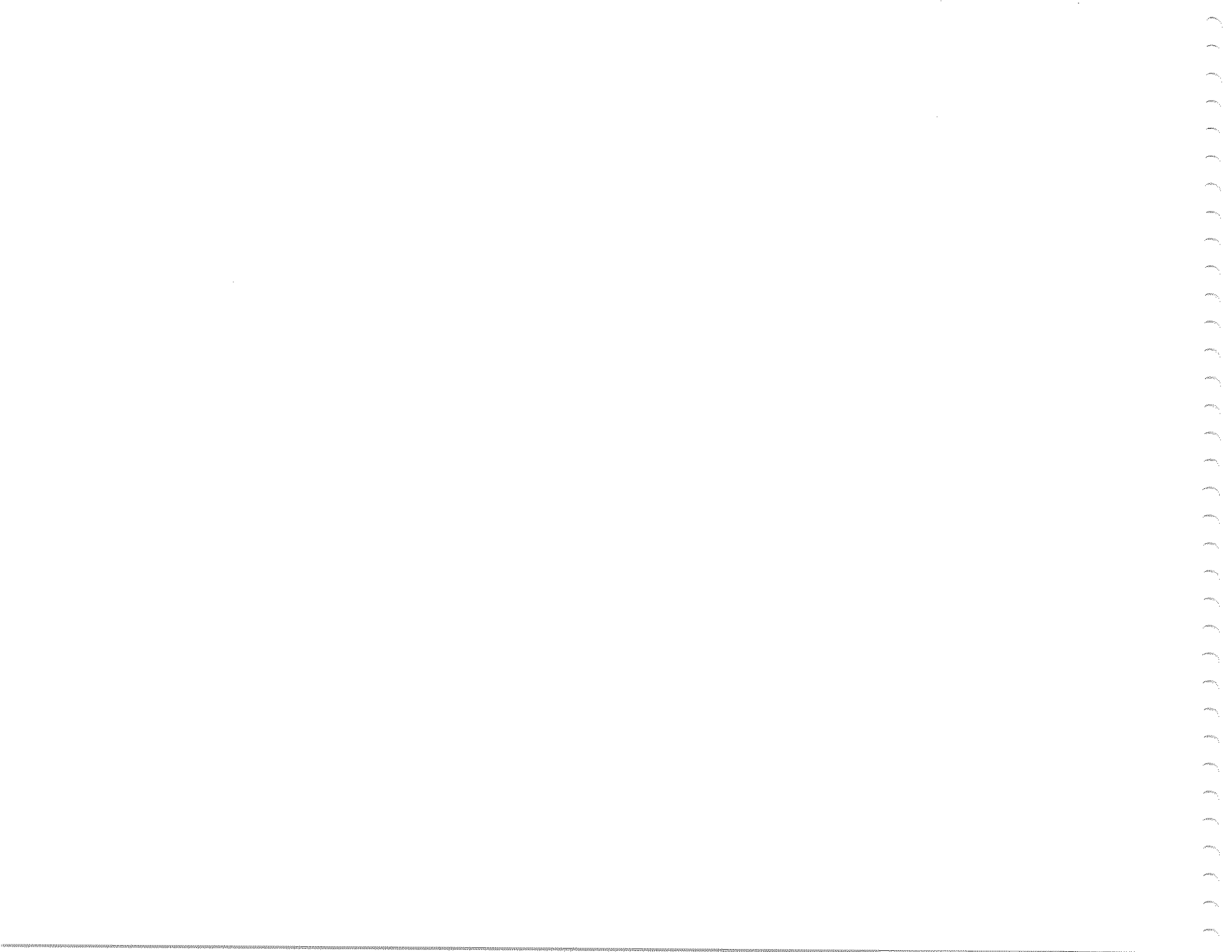


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most valuable assets in the City of Aberdeen, Maryland is its train station. Daily service on Amtrak and the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) MARC commuter rail connect the greater Aberdeen area to Baltimore; Washington, DC; and the much larger Northeast Corridor. Harford County's largest employer, Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), is located just beyond the station and is growing and changing as defense-related work brings more and better jobs as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) activities of the Department of Defense (DOD). Leveraging the value of land in the vicinity of this regional transportation hub, the station could also attract APG and DOD contractor employees and their families to live in and visit Aberdeen in the future.

While located in the heart of downtown, the station and its environs lack a strong identity and vibrancy. Today the character of the area is largely defined by a mix of auto-oriented uses along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and a small, underperforming commercial district in need of connection to the community at large.

The City of Aberdeen and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) have long recognized the potential of the station to be a catalyst for revitalization in Aberdeen, particularly with recent change and growth at APG. This Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan helps to give a tangible vision to a future that realizes this potential. It offers a

framework of land use and transportation changes and associated implementation strategies as a guide to public and private actions and investments. Given the need for public agency and private investment to offset the development advantage of "greenfield" over infill development, this Master Plan was prepared in consultation with partner state and county agencies, APG staff, and area land owners. Information from these sources helped the planning team more fully investigate market and program opportunities and what might be needed to stimulate investment. The draft vision and implementation guidance was presented to the public and both City of Aberdeen and Harford County councils to initiate the process of building sustained and broad-based local support.

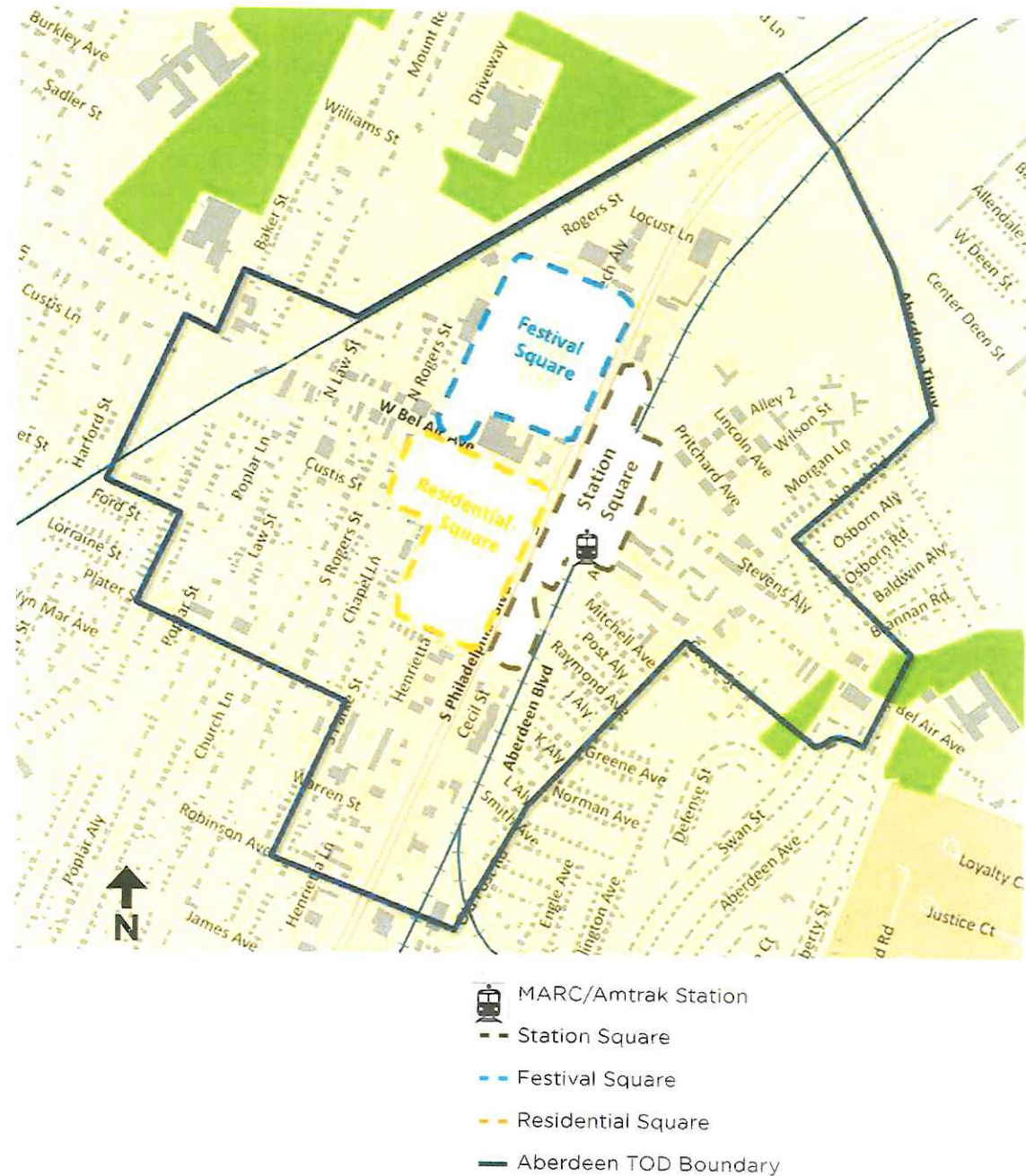


Project Context TOD Station Area

The Aberdeen station represents an excellent TOD opportunity, in part because unlike many other commuter rail stations in Maryland, it can build upon an existing urban grid and the area's tradition of using transit to influence town form. The historic Frank Furness-designed B&O Station, built in 1885, provided Aberdeen's early residents with rail access to Baltimore; Washington, DC; and New York. The original station, located where the CSX track crosses West Bel Air Avenue, helped to produce the town's grid of streets, and its mix of civic, commercial, and residential uses laid out in compact, walkable neighborhoods.

B&O passenger service ceased during the late 1950s and that rail corridor is now owned and operated by CSX and used exclusively to haul freight. However, Amtrak's Northeast Corridor station at Aberdeen still provides both daily Amtrak and MARC passenger service. The rail corridor lies to the east of downtown and across Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). Aberdeen's original station, its downtown, town hall, the library, a senior center, and blocks of residential housing on leafy streets are still within walking distance of daily rail service. It is this original fabric close to the station that this plan proposes as the framework for change and the inspiration for creating a reenergized transit-supportive community.

Figure 1 - TOD Designation Boundary



Development supporting transit typically occurs within 0.5 miles, or a 10-minute walking distance, of the station. This plan emphasizes the station itself and its immediately adjacent area to spur near-term development. Over time, TOD in Aberdeen may grow to include more of the area within 0.5-miles of the station, but it is the area immediately proximate to the station that will lay the foundation for TOD. This area will attract the market of businesses and households that value high quality transit and will begin to build a desirable place to live and work. Using the 10-minute walk-shed as its foundation, the Aberdeen Station Planning Team identified a Station Area Boundary to target the State's development incentives and the area immediately around the station for short term focus of capital improvement efforts related to redevelopment. Figure 1 illustrates the Station Area Boundary and the three designated focus areas.

Unlike light rail, streetcar, or metro service that stops more frequently, MARC and Amtrak service has more limited station activity. It serves daily commuters and regional travelers from within Harford County, and most passengers either drive to the station or are dropped off by local bus or private vehicle. The high demand for parking adjacent to the station presents design challenges as the roads that bring traffic to station parking lots and the lots themselves are designed to accommodate automobiles. This lies in direct conflict with the potential to better connect and attract pedestrians to

and through the station area. In spite of the station's physical condition, APG and BRAC have helped to increase passenger demand. Further increases in ridership and revitalization of Aberdeen's downtown are much more likely if transit logistics, area appearance, and non-auto connections are improved. This plan is designed to identify key actions that will lead to higher use of the train station, including establishing it as a civic or community space that will support the revitalization of Aberdeen's downtown core.

The area immediately around the station should help define its character and relationship to the community. To the west of the station, across Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), Aberdeen's downtown is characterized by a traditional grid network and relatively dense development. The east side of the station area, which is disconnected from downtown by Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and grade separations of the rail line, is a residential zone of modest, medium density housing. Parking areas and auto access to and around the station itself dominate that area's appearance and function. The rail station's proximity has been less influential on uses along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), which are predominantly built to accommodate automobile access at the expense of pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists. The highway is particularly inhospitable to non-motorized travelers as sidewalks are interrupted with driveways, offering convenient access to businesses. Surface parking dominates the setback between the street and the building.

Together, Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and the Amtrak/MARC rail line running parallel to it bisect the station area and the historic heart of Aberdeen. The only designated pedestrian crossing is the single signalized intersection at West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132). APG Road, which connects West Bel Air Avenue at Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), rises over the station area cutting off views, visibility, and the street connection to and from the station. Pedestrians today have two options for crossing the rail tracks: over a 1,000-foot switchback pedestrian bridge or through an unappealing tunnel beneath the tracks. Neither approach provides a convenient or comfortable option for pedestrians nor meets standards established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Moreover, many people perceive the tunnel and unattended station area as unsafe, reinforcing the tracks as a major barrier to downtown for people living on its east side.

Despite recent retail and hotel development activity in greater Aberdeen, new shops, restaurants, offices, dense housing, and hotels have largely eluded downtown and the station area. Except for a recent townhouse development east of the rail line, much of the city's new development is drawn to sites well beyond the station area and central business district. Commercial development in particular is drawn to areas where development barriers are minimal and street visibility and auto access are plentiful.

History and Background

Aberdeen originally developed around the train station, as people settled there and used the train to travel in and out of Baltimore. As automobiles became more popular and available, people moved to single-family homes on larger lots beyond downtown Aberdeen and in other Harford County communities. Business growth followed residential traffic, largely abandoning Aberdeen's traditional downtown. Over time, Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) was widened and became a major highway for travelers; development transformed its edges to serve motorists and provide convenient access. In the mid-1980s, Amtrak moved to reduce rail and road at-grade conflicts. At-grade crossings were removed up and down the northeast rail corridor. Bel Air Road, Aberdeen's main street, was disconnected in favor of a circuitous overcrossing for auto traffic and a 1,000-foot pedestrian bridge. By the end of the 20th-century, downtown Aberdeen was struggling and most public and private investment decisions supported the

trend toward greater auto mobility at the expense of walkability and livability.

The City of Aberdeen, with support from the State of Maryland, has studied the Aberdeen station area extensively since the mid-1990s with little resulting change to the area. Most recent studies have focused on anticipating and capitalizing on changes associated with the 2005 BRAC action, which consolidated some bases, brought 6,500 new military jobs, new office development to APG and the City of Aberdeen, and significant changes in the socio-demographic makeup of base-related personnel. APG lies just beyond the TOD area of the station and is a sprawling campus on 73,000 acres. APG's most direct access gate, the middle gate on APG Road, has been closed for daily access allowing only limited afternoon exits. Nevertheless, as a major employer and federal contracting agency, APG can have significant influence on the development in and around Aberdeen. A recent market study prepared for MDOT indicated that BRAC-related changes present a

strategic advantage for Aberdeen as the new military jobs bring increases in associated industries and an overall stability to local economic activity.

In 2008, at the request of Harford County, MTA evaluated relocating the station closer to APG's main gate near the interchange of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40)/Maryland Boulevard (MD 715). The study found that the current location of the Aberdeen station, its relationship to downtown, and its walkable infrastructure could promote higher ridership and would not require the additional outlay of an estimated \$26 million needed to relocate the station¹. More recently, when the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor Regional BRAC office and Harford County studied optimal locations for a future multi-modal transportation center in 2009, the current station location was rated highest of the three evaluated sites based on its access and connectivity, proximity to households and businesses, potential to attract transit-oriented development, and relative cost².



¹Aberdeen MARC Feasibility Study (Evaluation of Relocation to Catherine V. Mitchell Property). Maryland Transit Administration, February 2008.

²URS. Harford County Multi-Modal Transportation Center Feasibility Study. Prepared for Harford County and the Chesapeake Science & Security Corridor. August 2009.

In 2009, the O'Malley administration designated Aberdeen and Harford County as one of its BRAC Zones, which provides financial incentives to fund infrastructure improvements. Specific infrastructure investments identified for Aberdeen included water and wastewater management, transportation, a multi-modal transportation center, redevelopment of the Route 40 commercial corridor, and other public facility needs.

In 2010, the Aberdeen station area was one of 14 station areas officially designated for transit-oriented development support by the state. In keeping with statute, this designation allows the MDOT to partner with local leaders to become more active in advancing TOD. The support for the planning process that has informed this framework plan is one outcome of that designation process. The designation also allows local actors to pursue a broader range of grant and local financing mechanisms, which may be leveraged to help implement the plan's recommendations.

Guiding Principles

To accomplish the renaissance anticipated by Aberdeen TOD advocates and to ensure the long-term success of the Aberdeen station and station area, the design team was guided by a set of assumptions that included the following:

- Urban space and urban form in the area closest to the station can greatly influence a station's effectiveness to attract and leverage transit-oriented development.

- The mobility benefits offered by a good transit system are enhanced when riders are provided with an environment in which they can get to their destination comfortably and safely as a pedestrian.
- Successful TOD in the commuter rail station context requires a network of streets that permit a range of access options for use by transit patrons.
- Successful realization of TOD is more likely when it has broad-based community support and engaged political leadership.
- The challenges present at Aberdeen require a deliberate and coordinated agency collaboration to achieve TOD and will require endorsement and support from all levels of government and partner organizations.

One outcome of this process will be a steering committee of "Aberdeen Ambassadors" responsible for advancing this Master Plan into implementation.

The concepts developed in this Master Plan were guided by goals for redevelopment in downtown Aberdeen established during the Design Concept Workshop and became part of the planning process. Participants were asked to describe their three most important characteristics of a future TOD. The broad consensus recognized the value of the station area as:

- Walkable, accessible, and convenient
- Reinforcing a small town character
- Bringing added value
- Bringing about a sense of place
- Creating a safe place
- Providing green space for recreation

TOD Master Plan Concepts

The Master Plan identifies a vision for downtown Aberdeen that recognizes the value of the station and brings activity to the area. It specifically targets areas identified as Station Square, Festival Square, and Residential Square. The concept builds upon the train station and supporting structures as the heart of the TOD area, with the goal of positioning the station access and platforms so that they connect the two halves of Aberdeen along East and West Bel Air Avenues.

The immediate station area, which is depicted in Figure 2, will be transformed into Station Square, featuring a green terraced plaza/amphitheater leading to a under crossing beneath the rail tracks that is safe, well-lit, and inviting. This wide and highly visible crossing replaces both of the present-day pedestrian crossings.

The revitalized station area will attract commercial, educational, and shopping activity to Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) by leveraging the potential market opportunity of commuters and residents in the area. Frequent and reliable circulator transit service will conveniently connect APG workers, residents, and rail passengers between the station area and downtown, and APG and related employment zones. This Master Plan will establish the station area as APG's downtown, where employees live, dine, meet friends, take classes, and shop. Structured parking will allow for higher-density uses in the immediate station area and facilitate shared-use arrangements for downtown attractions during non-peak commute periods.

Additionally, Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) will be transformed into a true boulevard with a greater definition of place that comfortably accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists and provides curbside parking in support of retail at the street edge. The boulevard will be lined by trees and made more pedestrian-friendly by providing a landscaped median and more frequent safe pedestrian crossings. These elements will help

signify to motorists entering the TOD area that they have arrived in a more urban zone along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and should anticipate sharing road space and signal time with pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to and from the station and the variety of activities found on both sides of the street. Bicycle accommodation through "cycle tracks" to separate bicyclists from moving traffic should be evaluated in future designs

so that cyclists of different skill levels will feel comfortable along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). Most significantly, a re-envisioned Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) will provide strong identification for downtown Aberdeen and help repair the connection between East and West Bel Air Avenue.

As a way to reinforce Aberdeen's compact, walkable downtown neighborhoods, two additional primary TOD areas

Figure 2 - Station Square/US 40 Illustration



are proposed that will both feed and be supported by Station Square. The Festival Square and the Residential Square will act as catalysts and key elements of the Aberdeen TOD plan. See Figure 3 and Figure 4 for illustrative sketches of these areas. These investments will bridge TOD activity across Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) with targeted development which supports the overall goals of the Master Plan.

The Festival Square, in the area of the town hall, the library, and Festival Park, expands existing civic uses and government offices and proposes new four- to six-story residential, hotel, academic, and retail development.

The Residential Square south of West Bel Air Avenue reinforces the area's existing residential character by creating a new landscaped park surrounded by three- to six-story residential development with ground floor retail, a day care center, and possible hotel or academic uses.

This TOD Master Plan does not recommend major land use changes to the single-family neighborhoods within the TOD boundary (though higher density is generally desirable) because there are many redevelopment opportunities available that should be prioritized to reinforce the areas immediately adjacent to the station and downtown.

These concepts are described in greater detail in Section 3 - TOD Concept Areas, including plans and perspective renderings.

Figure 3 - Festival Square Illustration



Figure 4 - Residential Square Illustration



Key Recommendations and Findings

Many of the barriers to TOD in Aberdeen can be overcome by changes to policy and public infrastructure targeted to incentivize positive market conditions. Due to increased activity at APG, and its location on the Northeast Corridor, significant development demand exists in Aberdeen. However, most of the recent development activity is occurring around the periphery of Aberdeen on green-field sites where development does not require the removal of an existing building or site cleanup, and there is ample space for low-cost surface parking. Through restructuring of codes and policies and carefully optimizing Aberdeen's and Harford County's capital improvement programs, Aberdeen can leverage opportunities through existing market demand to better connect the station area and revitalize downtown.

Key recommendations from this Master Plan include:

Policy Changes

- Identify and work with the owners of key properties to entice the development community and create parcels that are more attractive for redevelopment.
- Amend City Code to envision, enable, and encourage development consistent with the concepts provided in this TOD Master Plan by developing and adopting a form-based development code for the Aberdeen TOD area.
- The Form-Based Code TOD designation should, at a minimum, address the

following code issues:

- Pedestrian-friendly design that reinforces key streets
- Building setback/build to lines
- Parking requirements
- Building height restrictions
- Allow and encourage mixed-use development
- TOD and pedestrian-friendly stormwater treatment strategies

Although not detailed in this study, changes and updates to landscaping, lighting, security features, and signs should also be considered.

Partner Coordination

- Strive for better and/or additional shuttle bus service to connect APG with the train station and downtown Aberdeen.
- Organize partner agencies and decision-makers around building TOD in Aberdeen.

Major Capital Projects

- Prioritize and advocate for immediate first steps focused on the preparation of plans for two catalytic public projects:
 - Transformation of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) into a green boulevard
 - Proposed station undercrossing improvements
- Undertake a series of small, affordable projects that support the overall vision for Station Square and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40); examples include:
 - Beautification and community greening projects around the station

- Pedestrian way-finding signs and street furniture
- Shelters for pedestrians and bus passengers
- Interim uses for the station and its parking lots
- Actively promoted transportation alternatives include the following:
 - More frequent and mid-day shuttle service between downtown, the station, and APG employment zones.
 - Bicycle-friendly measures including shared lane markings (known as sharrows) on local streets, bicycle lanes on important connector streets, and bicycle parking downtown.
 - Car-sharing at and around the station area and at APG.

Significant investment in infrastructure projects is also needed to attract development and create a thriving TOD environment. Implementation of the Station Square concept will require public and private funding, as will the transformation of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40).

Moving Forward...

Upon completion, this Master Plan will be presented to the Aberdeen City Council for official adoption and endorsement, which will empower the City to move forward with its recommendations. A collection of community members and agency representatives, the Aberdeen Ambassadors, will be tasked with moving this Master Plan into implementation. With the full support and endorsement of the City, County, and State, the Aberdeen Ambassadors will meet regularly to advance specific action items and follow up with responsible parties.

The Aberdeen Department of Planning and Community Development will work from within the City of Aberdeen to modify codes and policies and will conduct outreach to partner agencies, including Harford County, for the location of compatible new public and private buildings. State agencies (MDOT and modal administrations MTA, Maryland State Highway Administration [SHA], Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development [DBED], and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development [DHCD]) in partnership with Amtrak, local stakeholders, and private sector partners will work collaboratively with Aberdeen, Harford County, APG, and affected parties on short- and long-term opportunities to enhance the train station and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). Inclusion of an enhanced train station and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) as key transportation project priorities in the Harford County annual priority

letter submitted to MDOT is vital to initiating the collaboration.

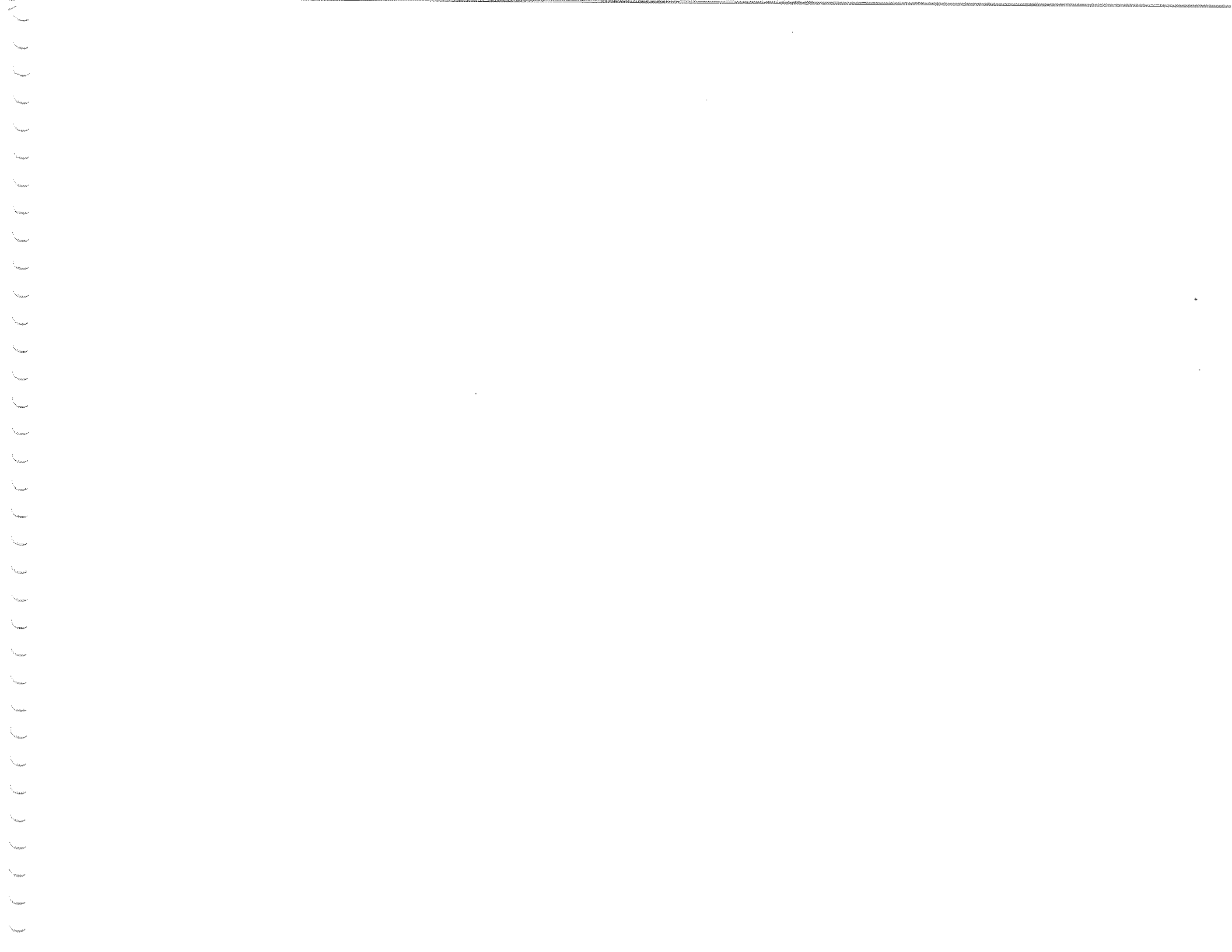
Realization of this Master Plan is neither easy nor unachievable. A combination of small and large, short- and long-term steps will help Aberdeen accomplish the vision of transit-oriented development, first set out over 15 years ago. Through this process, which brought together all of the involved agencies and organizations, the City of Aberdeen has a clear plan for reinvigorating the station area and downtown.

The details of actions to be taken and those needed to lead and support is provided in Section 4 - Implementation Strategies.



SECTION 1

EXISTING CONDITIONS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES



EXISTING CONDITIONS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

A review of the existing market, transportation, and land use conditions around the Aberdeen station framed the TOD planning process. The following sections identify the findings, including issues and opportunities moving forward.

Market Opportunities

The U.S. Defense Department's 2005 BRAC initiative directed 8,200 new military employees to the APG military base through 2011. The estimated impact of the increased military activity is another 7,500 to 10,000 direct jobs (e.g. contractors) and up to 28,000 indirect jobs in the region to support the new population³. This anticipated growth in economic activity in and around Aberdeen will also include increased housing and retail demand, some of which can be accommodated within the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak station area.

Many of the transplanted military employees have come to Aberdeen from Fort Monmouth in New Jersey and are familiar with the concept of historic transit villages and their ability to provide a walkable downtown environment. Indeed, APG staff report that, given the choice, many mid-career and newly hired employees have come to Maryland hoping to find a more convenient, walkable, and

transit-accessible lifestyle. Promoting a TOD approach for the Aberdeen station area would address many of these needs. The Aberdeen station area was also cited as "APG's downtown," as few dining and commercial facilities are provided on the base. Currently, many employees travel to shopping areas on the periphery of Aberdeen to shop and eat lunch. If dining and shopping opportunities were provided downtown, many would dine and shop there as it is more convenient than the Beard's Hill Road corridor. Frequent transit service between the base and downtown, particularly at mid-day, would further attract APG economic activity.

Representatives from the City of Aberdeen, Harford County, and APG recommended specific uses for downtown, including:

- Dining (such as a pub-style restaurant)
- Retail (including boutique shops)
- Professional services (such as real estate, medical, and law offices)
- Nightlife
- Senior center
- Live-work residential housing
- Senior housing
- Daycare and activities for children
- Higher education

These uses were recommended based on officials' understanding of the market and familiarity with the area. For instance, the Harford County Housing Agency, Office of Aging, and Army Alliance say demand

exists for live-work units, market-rate townhouses and apartments, and public housing.

In 2009, MDOT sponsored a study, conducted by Cambridge Systematics with Bay Area Economics, to understand the market potential for the Aberdeen station area. The study confirmed the commercial and residential future growth partially due to APG's influence. The study concluded that the realization of full TOD potential requires supportive zoning changes. There are few opportunities for residents seeking a mixed-use, high-density living environment, which presents development opportunities for the area. Market conditions indicate a strong desire for higher density "lifestyle" products. Market conditions indicate that:

- There is some potential for office development at the station.
- There are retail development opportunities including neighborhood and convenience oriented stores as opposed to regional attraction.
- A TOD strategy for Aberdeen needs to include residential stability as well as a variety of retail options hinged upon provided transit access.
- Mixed-use condominiums yield the highest residual land value/acre under TOD implementation.

³Aberdeen Station Area Transit Needs Assessment and Market Analysis: Task 2 Market Analysis. Prepared by Cambridge Systematics with Bay Area Economics, for Maryland Department of Transportation, March 2009.

The market study gave the following estimates for projected demand by use and their characteristics:

Retail Market

- Modest retail component around station (160,000 to 240,000 square feet of potential retail demand)
- Retail demand will be spread out and will follow housing

Housing Market

- Residential-based, mixed-use more likely
- Four-story multi-family with ground floor retail and possible office space
- 100 to 300 units per year demand
- Rental residential is a stronger market than for-sale

Office Market

- 70,000 square feet of office space over a six-year period
- Most of the county-wide demand will be built at APG

Hotel Market

- New hotel development is likely longer term
- More for business users than tourists and travelers
- County-wide hotel demand around 600 hotel rooms

The study acknowledged the realities of current economic conditions and concluded that growth is more plausible in the long-term versus short-term time table.

Market and Policy Barriers

Despite this wealth of opportunities, some market barriers exist and must be overcome to produce TOD in Aberdeen. Many of these challenges are related to perception issues, which are often unfounded. Downtown Aberdeen is perceived to be unsafe, which may be preventing investment and growth in the area. Likewise, misconception regarding the educational opportunities available at Aberdeen public schools does not reflect significant achievement in recent years. Since many families base housing location decisions on school performance, this likely reduces residential demand within Aberdeen. Working with the County's Economic Development Department and local real estate representatives can help begin to turn around perception challenges.

Aberdeen also faces the challenge of directing development and investment in Harford County to downtown. Demand for retail and hotel development in Aberdeen is healthy, as evidenced by recent and planned construction. However, most of this development is occurring on the periphery of Aberdeen, rather than downtown. Encouragement of greenfield development instead of development in downtown Aberdeen is one of the unintended consequences of current City development regulations, as many of the standards (such as minimum parking requirements and building height limits) make it more difficult to develop downtown. Similarly, County Economic Development projects are typically focused on investment and

development away from downtown, rather than promoting the possibilities of a central, transit-accessible location. With a more comprehensive vision and action agenda, the City can actively partner with Harford County to create a vibrant TOD in downtown Aberdeen.

Transportation and Transit Service

APG is the largest employment destination in Aberdeen and generates much of the commuter traffic. The base has three access gates, but only two are currently operating at full capacity. As a result, significant traffic demand from APG personnel to the two open gates on Aberdeen Thruway (MD 22) and Maryland Boulevard (MD 715) contributing to congestion in the peak travel periods. Public access is only permitted through the Maryland Boulevard entrance. Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) also accommodates much of the vehicle demand heading to or from the gates. SHA's 2008 Traffic and Intersection Improvement Studies for Base Realignment and Closure report recommends widening the road to eight lanes to serve growing traffic volumes. Numerous other intersection widenings are also under consideration along Aberdeen Thruway (MD 22).

The TOD designation and Master Plan process presents an opportunity for SHA to work with the City to ensure roadway development plans and resource priorities are consistent with the vision for TOD. For example, SHA has identified the need for safety improvements along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) through Aberdeen and has developed preliminary concept ideas for a boulevard streetscape through the TOD area. During this planning effort, SHA will work to ensure that development proposals consider and are consistent with TOD planning, including careful access management and strategic roadway improvements. The outcomes of this effort will be an important resource for SHA as it evaluates development proposals for transportation impacts and improvements.

APG employs a transportation demand management program to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips to and from the base during the peak travel periods. Programs include vanpools and off-site parking and shuttle services. An APG shuttle operates between the base and the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak station to serve employees arriving in Aberdeen by rail, but is only available to credentialed

military personnel. The shuttle only runs three times daily (once in the a.m. and twice in the p.m.), but APG cannot continue operating it in perpetuity. Harford County Transit operated a shuttle service previously, but cut the service due to funding shortfalls. Cambridge Systematics with KFH Group, Inc. conducted a 2009 Transit Needs Analysis that foresaw the challenges to providing high quality shuttle service between APG, Corporate Office Properties Trust (COPT), and the Aberdeen station in a 2009 Transit Needs Analysis prepared for MDOT. The dispersed nature of the destinations on base was identified as an issue to overcome for efficient convenient service. As noted in the analysis, because most base-related personnel will be higher-income, they are likely to have access to a personal vehicle and therefore will need to be persuaded to choose transit as a commute option.

Attracting choice riders requires higher convenience, greater time savings, cost savings, or a combination of these.

One significant factor affecting service delivery both for funding and operations is the issue of security clearance required for all destinations on post. Public shuttle

services between the Odenton Station and Fort George G. Meade have dealt with this issue by informing riders that they would have to present proper security clearance to enter secure areas of the route. These announcements are made at the stop prior to the post gate so non-secure passengers can alight rather than be stranded at the gate. This would work in Aberdeen if the shuttle service were to include additional locations downtown or to and from a remote park-and-ride site.

The station area itself is becoming a main transportation hub where improvements to MTA-sponsored regional express bus, more frequent local Harford Transit, longer span APG Shuttle, and existing MARC commuter and Amtrak northeast corridor services meet. The future multi-modal transportation center described in the 2009 Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC)/Harford County study will support all-day bicycle storage. It is also expected to attract significantly larger numbers of park-and-ride and drop off customers, from 375 spaces today to 500 in the future and 4 to 15 drop-off spaces. Over time, the station is also likely to have considerable demand for car-sharing and bicycle sharing stations.



The middle gate, which is closest to downtown, is only open for a few hours in the afternoon to permit exiting vehicular traffic. APG lacks the resources needed to maintain a security checkpoint at the middle gate. However, the recent development of the St. John Properties on the base is conditioned to fund the opening of the gate once the development leases 1.6 of its 2 million square feet. Full operation of the Middle Gate would provide the most direct access to downtown, particularly for bicyclists and transit vehicles, and could significantly enhance TOD activity. Likewise, it would make transit a more attractive option for choice and active transport riders.

APG employees are permitted to use bicycles to access the base, but provisions for cycling on the two primary access routes are poor. The middle gate would offer the most direct connection on more bicycle-friendly streets. MDOT recently launched its Maryland Bikeways Program to fund bicycle facilities on non-state facilities, which may be used to improve cycling conditions in the TOD area.

Station Issues

The Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Station faces many challenges for access and passenger comfort. Since the at-grade crossing was removed and replaced with an overcrossing, the east and west sides of Aberdeen are largely disconnected. Passengers arriving on one side must cross the station either on a circuitous

pedestrian bridge or through an unwelcoming tunnel. The station is unattended for most of the day, adding to perceptions of poor security in the vicinity of the tunnel.

Improvements and changes to the station must recognize that Amtrak plans to widen to four tracks in the future. Moreover, the station structure itself is recognized as historic. Physically moving the station to an offsite location with its platform and access infrastructure was estimated to cost \$26 million in 2008⁴ and between \$35 and \$38 million in 2009⁵.

Parking at the station is owned by Amtrak and includes 375 spaces. MTA has looked into expanding the station's parking supply and purchased a parcel on the east side of the station. However, due to environmental concerns, there is only enough space for ten parking spaces. Commuter parking needs pose an opportunity for any redevelopment of the station area and should be considered during the TOD implementation alternatives development.

Zoning and Land Use

Zoning

Current zoning in the TOD study area is primarily residential (R) and commercial (B). A small amount of land zoned for light industrial (M) lies to the north side of the freight line tracks, where the deteriorating historic train station is located. Both B-1 and B-2 districts occur within the TOD boundary, as well as R-1, R-2, and R-3. Figure 5 illustrates the zoning in the

station area.

The Central Commercial zoning code (B-2) permits residential uses as well as business. But most other zoning in the station area excludes a mix of land uses, especially along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and in residential neighborhoods.

Aberdeen's zoning code restricts building heights as follows:

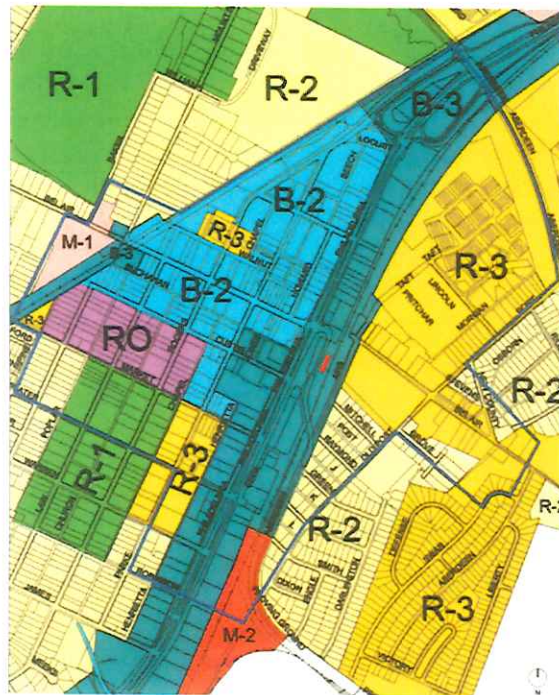
- Commercial Districts (B): 60 feet
- Residential Districts (R-1 and R-2): 40 feet
- Residential Districts (R-3): 50 feet

High density businesses and residential buildings flank the Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) Corridor. Contrary to the segregated land uses established by conventional zoning, a TOD approach encourages mixing land uses and creating a relatively dense node of development that makes more efficient use of rail and other transportation infrastructure. Creation of a new TOD form-based zoning designation will allow more flexibility in the application of zoning regulations such as land uses, height limits, and parking requirements. This form-based TOD zone would recognize the special needs of TOD around the station and afford developers more flexibility and opportunity to realize the value of the sites.

⁴2008 MTA Aberdeen MARC Feasibility Study.

⁵URS. Harford County Multi-Modal Transportation Center Feasibility Study. Prepared for Harford County and the Chesapeake Science & Security Corridor. August 2009.

Figure 5 - Zoning



- B-2: Central Commercial
- B-3: Highway Commercial
- M-1: Light Industrial
- M-2: General Industrial
- R-1: Low Density Residential
- R-2: Medium Density Residential
- R-3: High Density Residential
- RO: Residential Overlay

Land Use

Current land use is generally consistent with the zoning districts. Commercial (B) districts contain a variety of uses, including commercial (primarily small scale retail); civic, including City Hall, Library; and post office. Single-family residential dominates the Residential (R) districts on the west side of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), while the east side of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) is split between single-family residential and two- to three-story multi-family residential. See Figure 6 for a detailed map of land use in downtown Aberdeen.

Parcel sizes in the station area tend to be quite small; approximately 85% of parcels in study area are less than 0.5-acres. Assemblage of developable parcels will require effective political leadership and extensive coordination among property owners and developers. Figure 7 illustrates parcel size in the station area.

The opportunities for improved land use changes will require designating specific areas to accommodate mixed uses. These areas are primarily located along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) surrounding the train station and onto West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132), Aberdeen's primary downtown artery. Extending mixed use land uses along the spines of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) is a key priority for initiating transit oriented development. The City can also assist with development by acquiring and assembling small, adjacent parcels into larger, more easily developed sites.

Figure 6 - Land Use



- Institutional
- Commercial
- Rail
- Single-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Public/Government
- Mixed Use
- Military

Figure 7 – Parcel Size in Aberdeen Station Area



Transit Network

Aberdeen is served by very high-quality intercity passenger rail, including Amtrak and MARC. This service, which connects the City of Aberdeen to Baltimore and Washington, DC, is only frequent enough to serve commuter trip patterns. The station is also served by the local Harford County Transit network, which is primarily used by transit-dependent riders (e.g. low-income and elderly populations). Harford County Transit Link Service, a Circulator, is not frequent and does not connect all major destinations in Aberdeen. APG operates a shuttle bus which connects base employees between the station and APG.

The transit network in Aberdeen consists of:

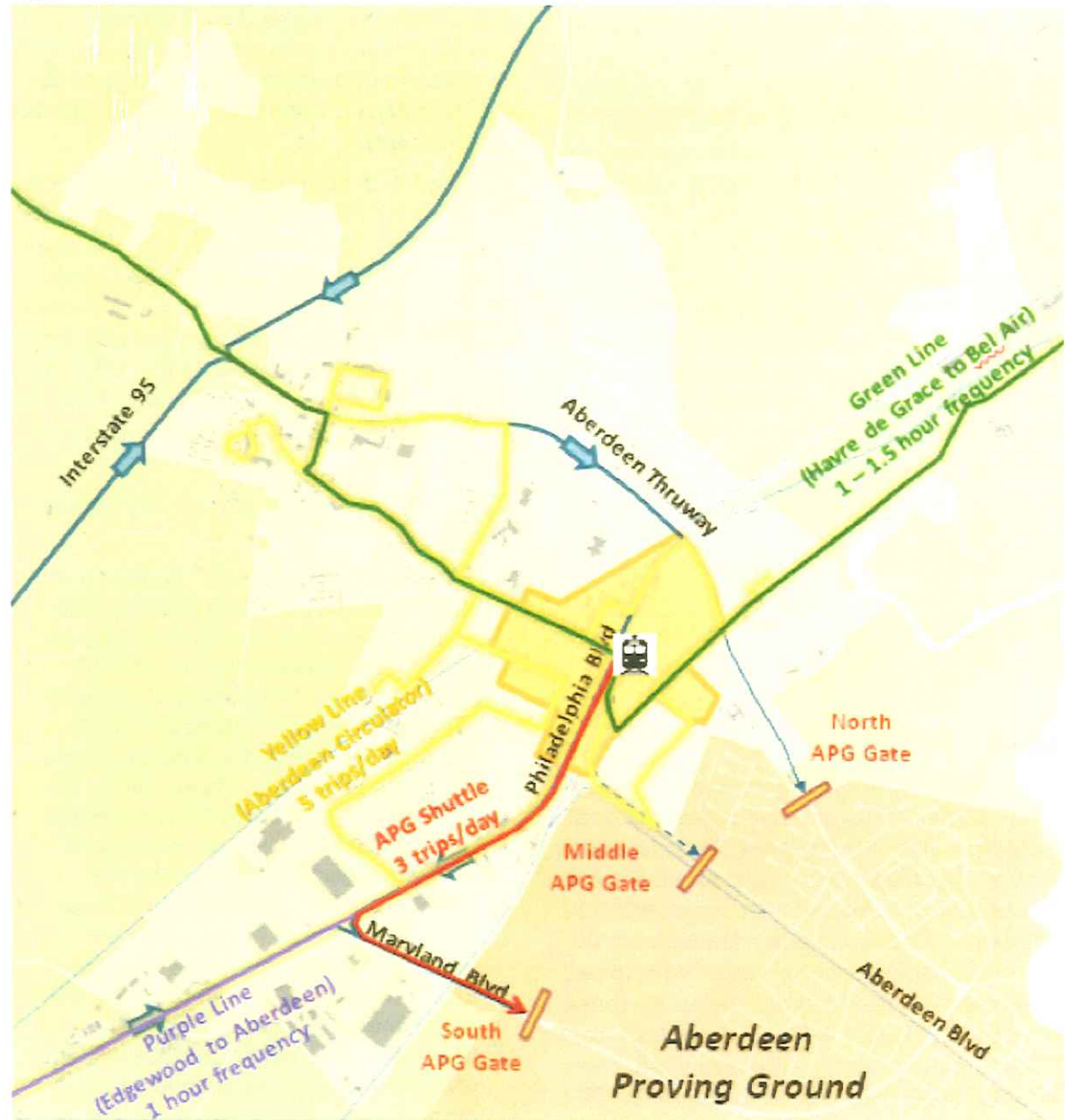
- Amtrak passenger rail line – Northeast Corridor service makes five stops in each direction at the Aberdeen station.
- MARC commuter rail line – Penn Line service to Aberdeen stops seven times per day northbound and six times southbound.
- Harford Transit Link operates three bus routes through Aberdeen, all of which stop at the Aberdeen station.
 - Green Line (Route 1/1A) – connects Havre de Grace and Bel Air through Aberdeen with service roughly every hour.
 - Purple Line (Route 6/6A) – connects Aberdeen to Edgewood with approximately 45 to 60 minute frequency.

- Yellow Line (Route 4) – also known as the Aberdeen Circulator, or Doodlebug, connects popular origins and destinations throughout Aberdeen, serving five trips daily.
- In addition to Aberdeen Station, transfers may also be made between the Green and Yellow Lines at Wal-Mart, and between the Purple and Yellow Lines at the Beard's Hill Shopping Center.
- APG Shuttle – connects APG employees between the Aberdeen station and the base with one trip in the a.m. and two in the p.m.

The current APG Shuttle schedule limits commuters' flexibility and travel choice and fails to encourage a large portion of employees to travel between APG and downtown Aberdeen on a continuous, daily basis.

Figure 8 illustrates the transit network.

Figure 8 - Transit Network



Parking

Aberdeen is a small town with many surface parking lots in the downtown area. Parking near the station area includes a major surface lot at the train station (with 375 spaces), metered parking along West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132), and a series of linear lots along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). Many of the businesses along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) are fronted by parking lots, which makes them less attractive and accessible to pedestrians. Pedestrians accessing these businesses must walk through parking lots to enter the buildings.

Parking at the station is free. In high-demand periods, overflow parking can spill onto the local streets to the east and south sides of the station. The surface parking lots surrounding the station discourage transit access via walking or bicycling.

Street Network

The roadway network around the Aberdeen station features a network of arterial, collector, and local streets. Two principal arterial roadways, Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and Aberdeen Thruway (MD 22), are designed to prioritize vehicular mobility with high-capacity and high-speed treatments. Other travel modes on these streets, such as walking, bicycling, and transit, are uncomfortable and potentially unsafe. West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132), which is a Minor Arterial, serves as the City's main street and represents a better balance of the travel modes. The Collector

and Local Street network supports and feeds the higher-order roadways. With lower travel speeds, less traffic, and high network connectivity, these streets tend to be more comfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The rail line runs parallel to Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) through downtown Aberdeen, but few streets connect across the railway. No at-grade crossings are available, and only three overcrossings exist within the four-mile city limits at Maryland Boulevard (MD 715), APG Road, and Aberdeen Thruway (MD 22). All other streets terminate on either side of the tracks.

The following describes the key streets in more detail:

- Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) - the main highway bisecting the Aberdeen TOD study area is wide (up to 8 lanes) and heavily traveled (about 25,000 vehicles daily). The posted speed limit through downtown Aberdeen is 30 miles per hour, but the wide lanes and set-back building frontages fail to cue motorists to slow down and speeding is prevalent. There is only one signal at the intersection of West Bel Air Avenue, which is the only point within Aberdeen where crossing the road is safe. Development along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), south of West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) is single story, primarily car-oriented (not pedestrian-friendly) with some commercial properties, though most are inactive or closed. Development north of West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) is generally

one- to two-story, light commercial, and single-family residential (most converted to commercial). In general, this type of development does not encourage stopping nor does it contribute positively to the image of Aberdeen as a place.

- Aberdeen Thruway (MD 22) - this is a multi-lane roadway that allows vehicles to bypass downtown Aberdeen between I-95 (west of Aberdeen) to the APG north gate.
- APG Road - this roadway connects APG's middle gate to East Bel Air Avenue and the residential area east of the rail lines. Unfortunately, the APG middle gate has been closed for daily access allowing only limited afternoon exits, but could reopen in foreseeable future based on development on base.
- Designated bike routes - Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) is currently signed as a designated bike route; however, the current experience of cycling along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) in Aberdeen is uncomfortable and unsafe, particularly on the southbound side where driveways and parallel parking are plentiful and the cartway is wide and undefined.

Figure 9 illustrates the Aberdeen street network.

Figure 9 - Transportation Network



The 2011 Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan introduced a new typology for city streets that outlines the needs of each mode based on land uses adjacent to the roadway. Arterial streets, for example, can be classified as Regional Connector, Commercial Primary, Village Center Mixed Use, and Residential. West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) in downtown should be classified as a Village Center Mixed Use Arterials, which would emphasize pedestrian, transit, and bicycle travel with adequate facilities within the street right-of-way. Comfortable and attractive bicycle connections to the station will encourage MARC/Amtrak riders to access the Aberdeen station by bike.

Pedestrian Network

The pedestrian environment near the Aberdeen MARC train station is limited by the street network. Crosswalks are present only at the West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) intersection and the scale of the roadway environment is large with wide setbacks. Pedestrian access is also extremely limited between the east and west side of the station. The only convenient crossings are a 1,100-foot overpass and a high maintenance tunnel linking these two areas. Both crossings are perceived to be unsafe, unpleasant, and inconvenient by residents, which effectively causes the east side of the tracks to be cut off from the rest of the city.

For TOD to be successful, steps must be taken to improve and encourage

pedestrian access across Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40); the current configuration results in incidences of jay-walking across the street. Inconsistent and infrequent crosswalk spacing, better crossing options across the tracks, as well as more pedestrian-oriented urban conditions along Philadelphia Boulevard must be present to attract TOD.

The combination of redevelopment of properties in the TOD area and strategic investment in public infrastructure would bring more activity and a sense of community ownership, creating a safer, more active, and more inviting public realm.

Open Space

The City of Aberdeen contains a limited amount of accessible public green space.

- Festival Park today is a 2.35-acre grassy area with trees and a playground located near City Hall and the public library. The park contains some historic markers and an accessible covered bandstand, and is used for civic events, market days, festivals, general recreation, etc.
- Wetlands and wooded areas surround Aberdeen at the north and east edges of the TOD boundary, primarily along the CSX freight line tracks and Aberdeen Thruway (MD 22). A small wooded/wetland area is located east of the rail lines and near the train station and will limit the amount of development that could occur there.
- Recreational space is primarily associated with public schools (and across the tracks from the downtown

TOD area) and private housing developments and is not immediately accessible to the public.

Figure 10 illustrates open space in the station area.

Underused properties in downtown present an opportunity for redevelopment as green open space. Surface parking lots, in particular, may be better used as parks, and redevelopment of Aberdeen Station could create a shared public space. Park space is also a viable option for those small or strangely shaped parcels to maximize their value to the community where development may be challenging.

Figure 10 - Open Space in the Station Area.



Barriers

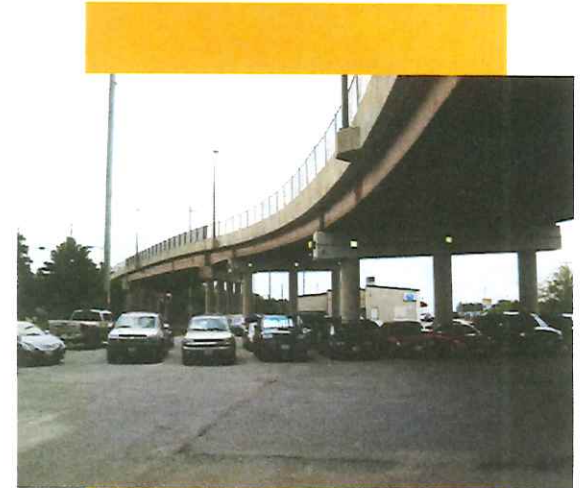
Existing rail lines and roadways in Aberdeen currently serve as barriers between the station and its greater context, including the east and west sides of the city.

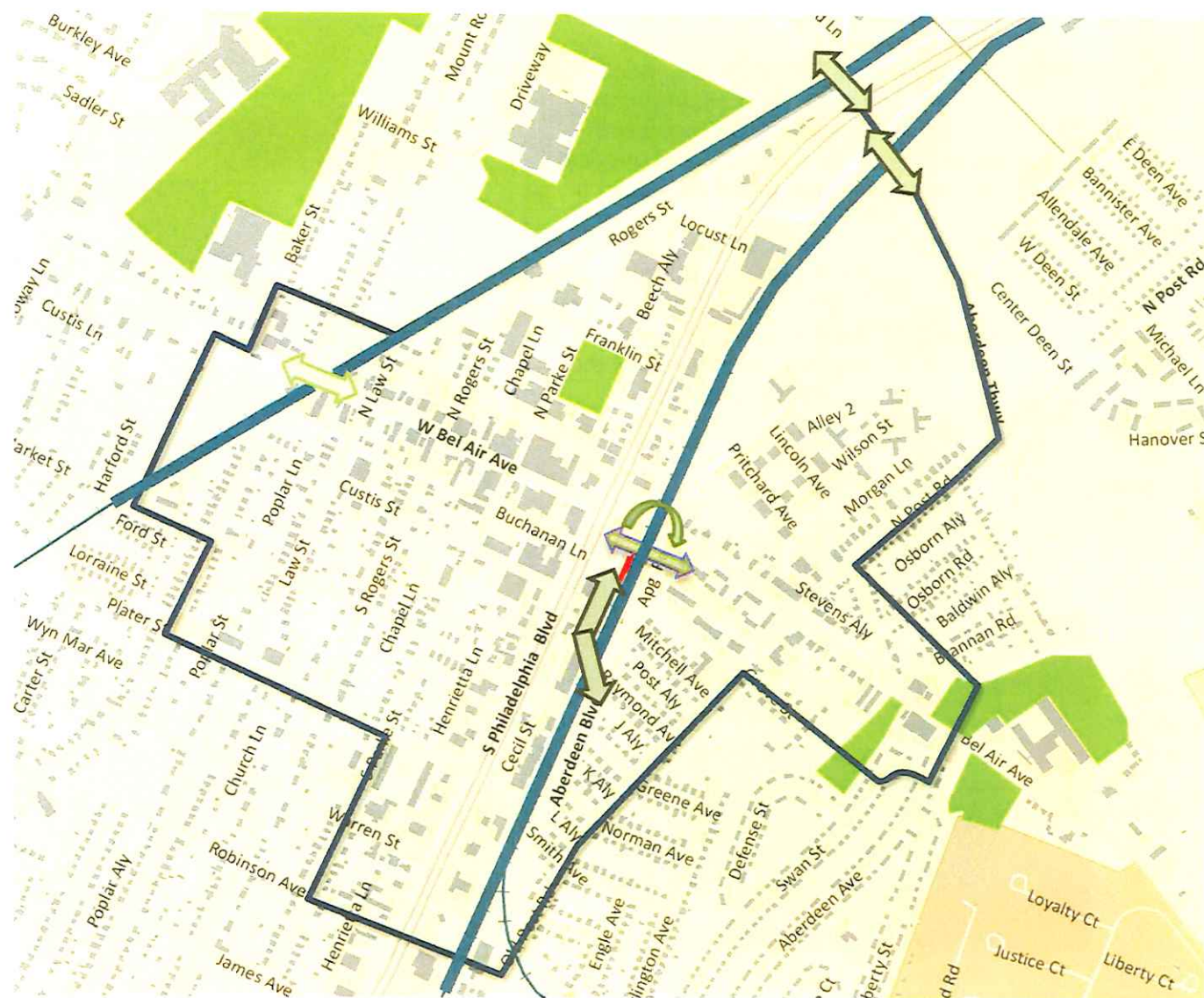
- Amtrak and MARC rail lines – The rail lines are a significant physical barrier between the east and west sides of Aberdeen, bisecting Aberdeen's main commercial street, Bel Air Avenue, and reinforcing very different communities on either side. Amtrak and MARC trains pass through Aberdeen at high speeds, making grade-level crossings unfeasible.
- Train station tunnel below rail lines – the tunnel is the quickest way to cross the tracks for an able pedestrian (it is not accessible for physically disabled persons); however, it is in poor condition, not well-lit, narrow and unsanitary. Traversing the tunnel is an unpleasant experience and feels unsafe at best.
- Overhead pedestrian bridge above rail lines – a circuitous set of steps and ramps allows crossing over the tracks. The ramp allows for strollers to be pushed along and for skateboarders to traverse, but is too steep for wheelchairs. Amtrak and MARC guidelines require a minimum of 35 feet of clear height for any structure built over the tracks, which would require a very long ramp and many stairs up and then down again. The current structure wrapped with chain link fencing is extremely uninviting.



- CSX freight line – the rail line is a physical barrier along the northwest edge of the Aberdeen TOD Boundary Area, though there are several at-grade crossings. The rail line separates the downtown area from the residential areas and public schools located north of it.
- Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) – this road runs north-south through downtown Aberdeen and parallel to the rail lines. It adds one more significant physical barrier for anyone wishing to travel from West Bel Air Avenue to East Bel Air Avenue, the APG, or even the train station/platform. The street is not pedestrian-friendly in terms of its scale and crossings. Most buildings along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) are one- or two-story with little or no landscaping separating them from the street. There is an access lane on the west side of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) with angled or parallel parking and a narrow median in parts of the roadway with some low plantings. Only one signalized crossing at the Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) intersection with West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) is available to pedestrians, and it includes vehicular access to the APG ramp, the gas station, and the train parking lot.
- Raised vehicular roadway above rail lines (APG ramp) – the roadway connects vehicles traveling to/from West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132)/Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) and APG Road. However, the roadway is awkwardly designed and located, serving as a visual and physical barrier to the train station. This road is not conducive to accessing the train station on the east side of the tracks. The arrival point after crossing over the tracks is several hundred yards south of the station, and the one-way streets and lack of way-finding signage east of the tracks exacerbates the problem.

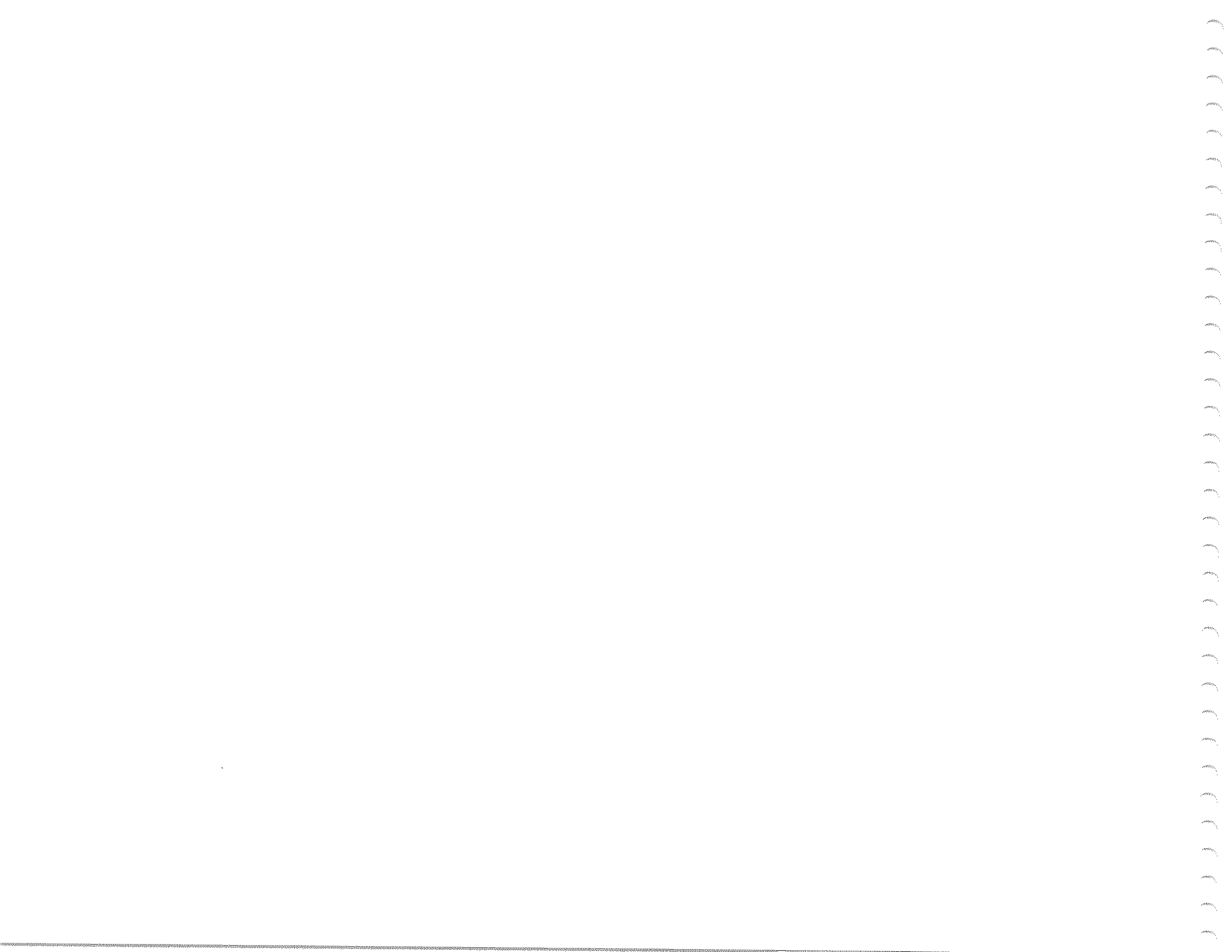
Barriers in the city are illustrated in Figure 11.





SECTION 2

DEVELOPING THE PLAN TOGETHER



DEVELOPING THE PLAN TOGETHER

The Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak station area has been the subject of numerous studies over the past two decades. City, County, and State agencies have explored options to enhance the area for revitalization, redevelopment, and transportation enhancement. Moreover, since it is located within or near other key facilities (e.g. APG) and infrastructure (US 40), ongoing projects interact directly with the area.

This Master Plan is different, primarily for two reasons. First, since Aberdeen is a designated TOD, MDOT and partner agencies can play a more active role in supporting TOD redevelopment of the area. Second, this effort concludes with specific, practical, and immediate implementation strategies designed to move the project forward.

This Master Plan builds on the extensive knowledge of area residents, businesses, and elected leaders as well as public agency staff with deep familiarity of the issues and opportunities for TOD. The TOD planning process was designed to take advantage of this institutional knowledge through a series of interviews and an interactive engagement process. The following agencies and organizations were involved during this planning process:

- City of Aberdeen
- Harford County
 - Department of Planning and Zoning
 - Office of Aging and Community Services
 - Housing Agency

- Harford County Transit
- Economic Development
- Aberdeen Proving Ground
- Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland State Highway Administration
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Army Alliance
- Amtrak
- CSX

Interviews

The planning team met with individuals and groups representing the partner agencies over the course of the first phase of the TOD planning process. Discussions were designed to engage agencies in the development of an implementation strategy for TOD in the station area. Questions to participants focused on market opportunities and barriers, transportation and transit, policy concerns, and issues related to the MARC/Amtrak station. Input provided during the agency interviews that guided this plan is incorporated into the Section 1 Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities.

Design Concept Workshop

The planning team used the information gathered through the interviews and visits to the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak station area to provide the basis for concept discussions held by city land owners and leaders as well as partner agencies at the Design Concept Workshop on August 2, 2011.

The workshop also included:

- Examples of TOD in other areas similar to Aberdeen.
- An exercise to determine vision priorities of participants.
- Group table exercises to discuss the desirability and feasibility of proposed concepts and any alternative ideas for consideration.

Precedent Examples

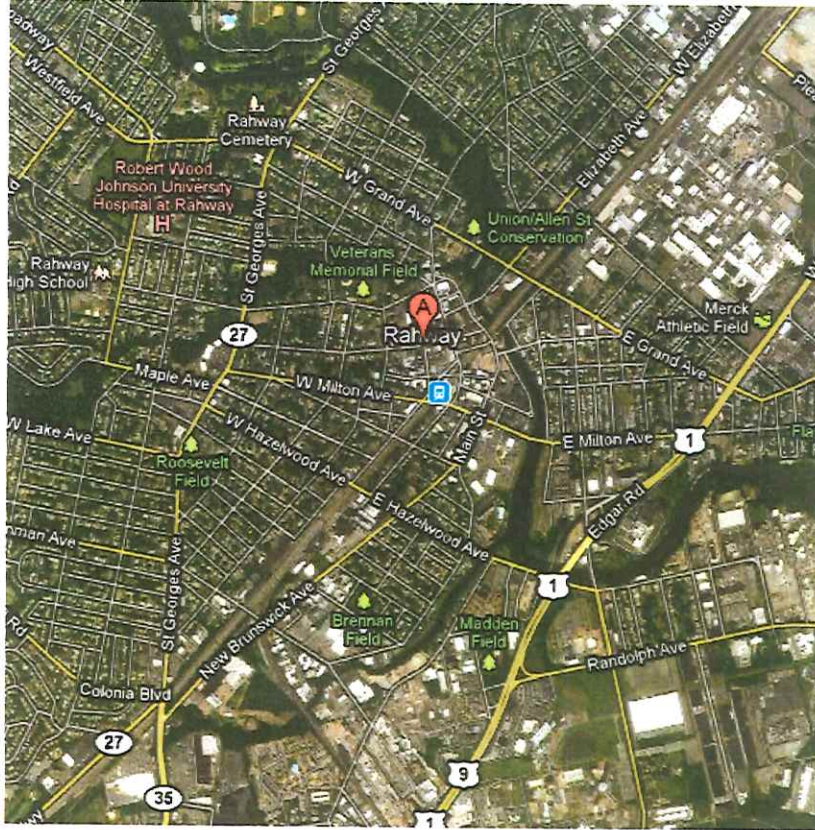
Numerous transit stations around the country exist with development oriented to the high capacity rail system. Some examples were used to both illustrate the concepts of TOD and to inspire ideas for development in Aberdeen. The following describes TOD in other locations that were presented to the participants at the Design Concept Workshop.

The results of the four group concepts are summarized in Figures 12 to 15 and the tables on pages 37 and 38.

RAHWAY, NEW JERSEY

NORTH JERSEY COAST LINE RAHWAY STATION

Figure 12 - Rahway, New Jersey



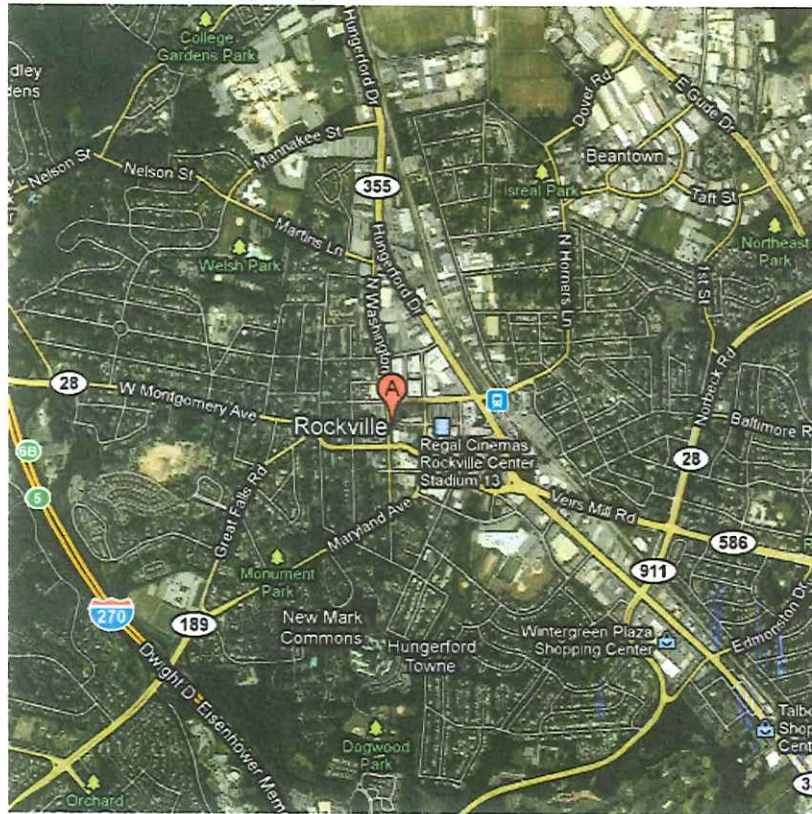
- Northeast Corridor commuter station – service between New York City and Trenton, New Jersey (NJ)
- Population of 27,000 in 4 square miles
- Median income of \$61,931
- Industrial working class community
- 4,500 employed by Merck pharmaceutical
- Strategic location close to NJ Turnpike, Garden State Parkway Walkable central core
- Modest housing stock
- 15 years of planning
- Designated Transit Village
- Façade improvements
- Renovation of train station
- Planned in 2008
- Institutional centers, a public library, and a central shopping district
- Multi-use public plaza



ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

WMATA RED LINE ROCKVILLE STATION

Figure 13 - Rockville, Maryland



Pre-TOD Conditions

- 12.5 acres of aging strip retail and shopping mall
- Shortage of multi-family housing
- Lacked appealing town center environment
- Modest housing stock
- 15 years of planning
- Designated Transit Village
- Façade improvements

TOD Strategies

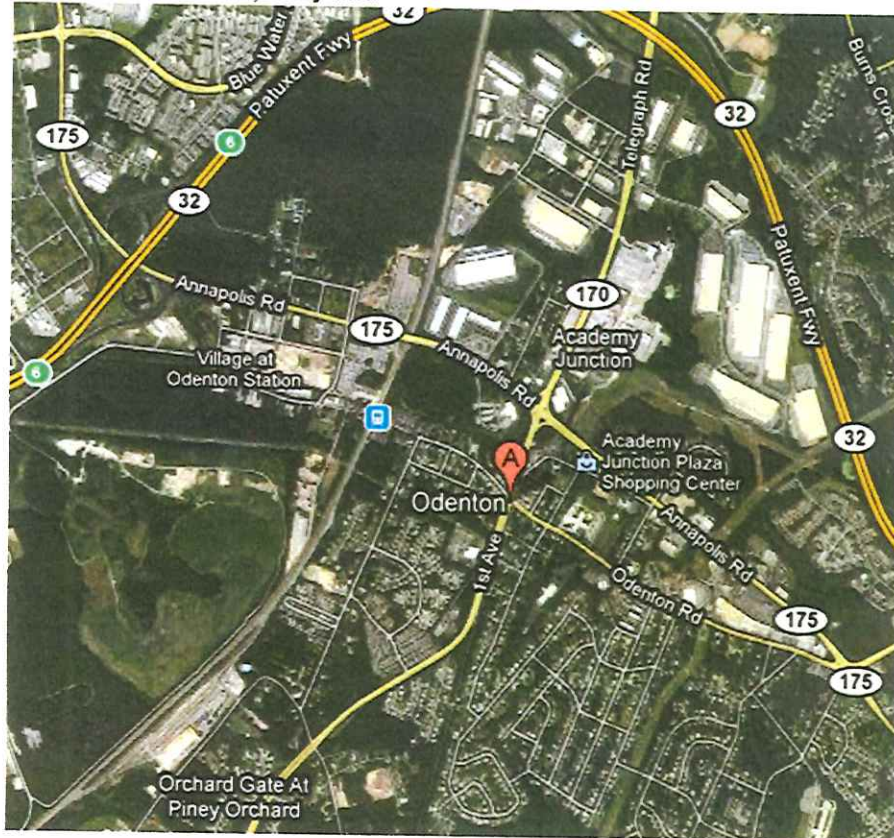
- Redevelopment plan
- Town center design guidelines
- Public-private partnership: parcel assembly and development
- Civic uses and public amenities: affordable housing, library, arts center, and landscaped plaza
- 644 Residential Units: low-rise flats, townhouse/rowhouse/maisonette

- Established a community's sense of place
- Well-integrated public spaces

ODENTON, MARYLAND

MARC LINE

Figure 14 - Odenton, Maryland



- Fort Mead's BRAC changes bringing new opportunities
- MDOT assisted in development of station concept
- Proposed mix of commercial, retail, and residential uses
- Plan consistent with the Odenton Town Center Master Plan
- Modest housing stock
- 15 years of planning

\$150 Million Development Program

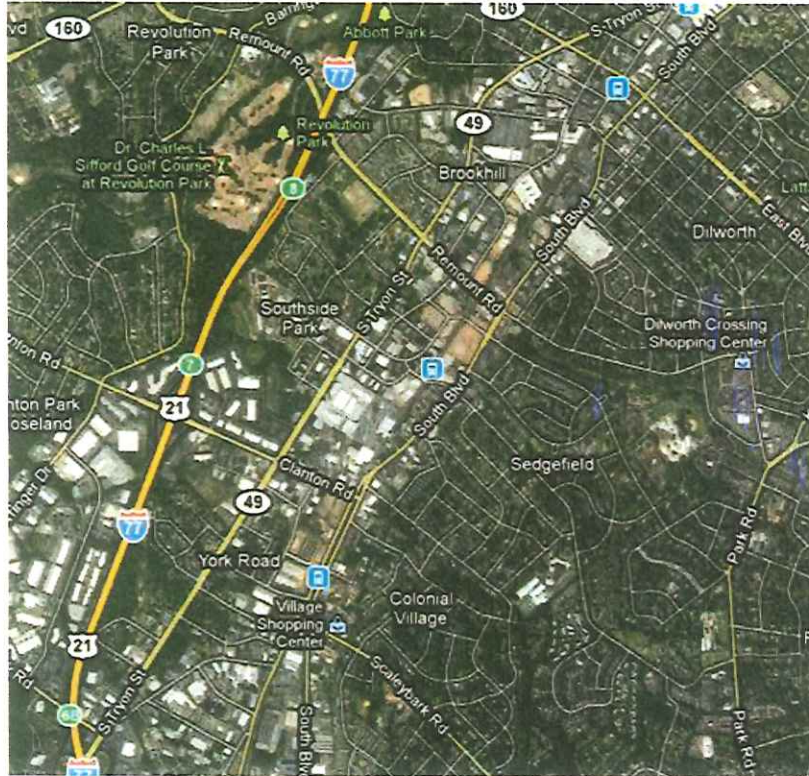
- 120-room hotel
- 74,000 square feet of retail space
- 572 apartment and condominiums
- 250 townhouses
- 3,500 MARC parking spaces
- 1,245 additional parking spaces



CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

BLUE LINE LRT- NEW BERN STATION

Figure 15 - Charlotte, North Carolina



Pre-TOD Conditions

- Old industrial uses and vacant properties
- Large blocks and disconnected streets

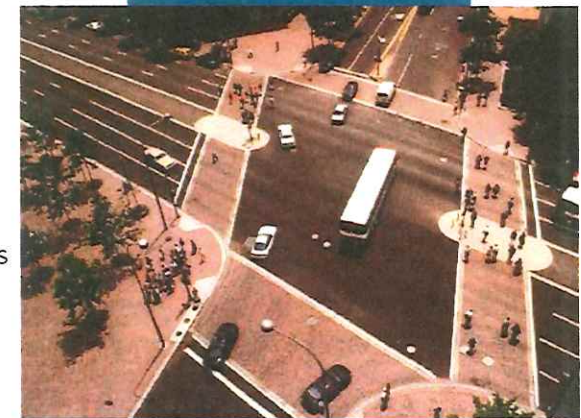
TOD Strategies Employed

- Integrated transit and land use planning
- City's commitment to build a community
- Clear guidelines and enabling land use regulations

- Close coordination among departments and agencies
- Communication of development expectations

\$50 million bond funding

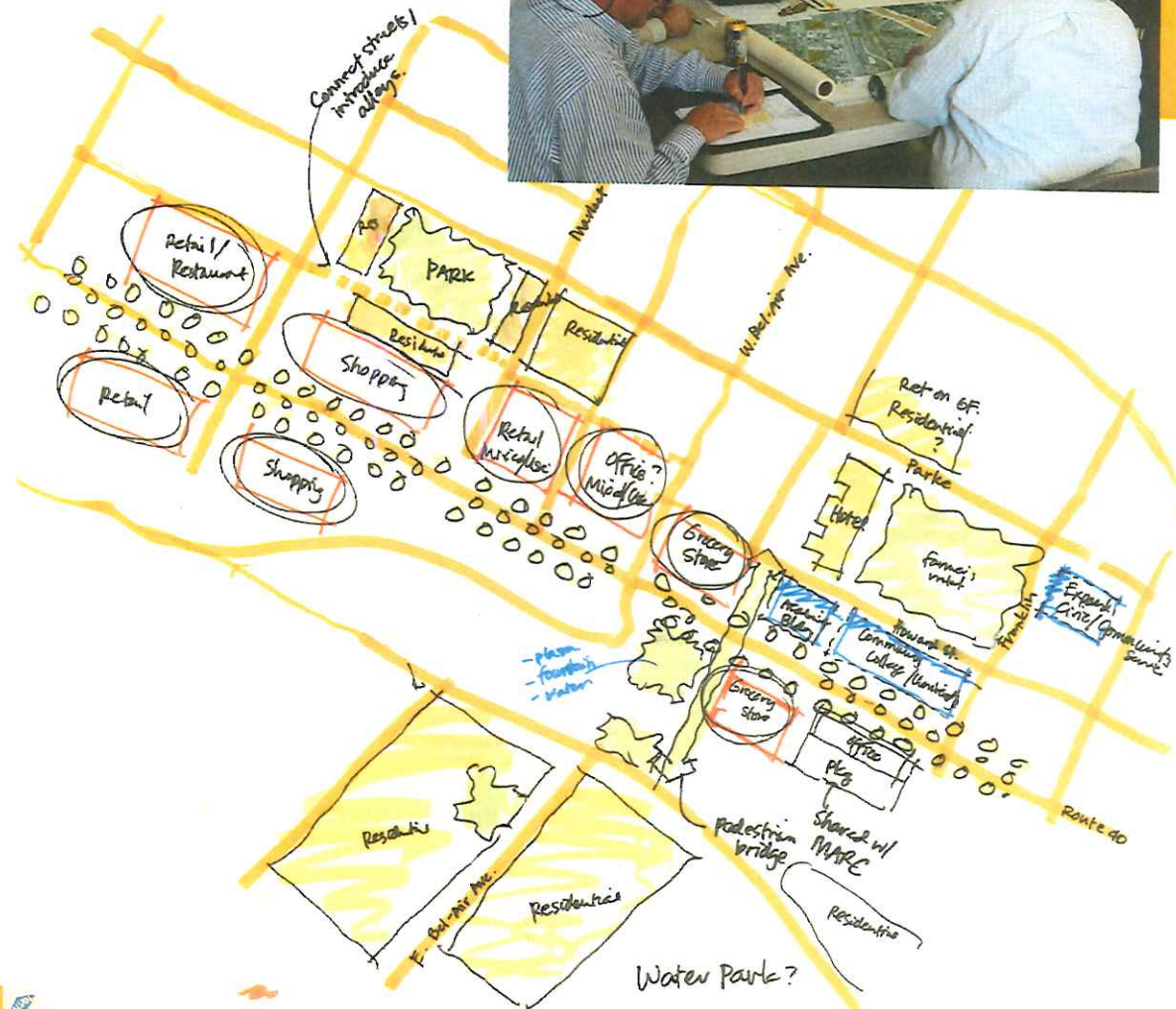
- 14 miles sidewalks
- 1.5 miles multi-use trail
- 10 miles bicycle lanes
- 8 miles street widening
- 7 streetscape projects



Concepts developed around three distinct TOD target areas organized around green spaces:

- TOD Area 1 – renovate Route 40 and the station. Construction of a terraced plaza or amphitheater descending below the tracks to replace the tunnel and overcrossing currently bridging the east and west sides of the station.
- TOD Area 2 – new development around Festival Park that builds on the civic and community assets already located there.
- TOD Area 3 – a reorganized neighborhood park with new townhomes in the vicinity of the bowling alley.

Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) was designed as a boulevard complete with bicycle “cycle tracks” and parallel parking. These illustrative designs were developed through input and discussion with a project planning team in preparation for presentation to the public. Each TOD strategy area is further described in the Section 3 TOD Strategy Area Concepts.



Aberdeen Design Concept Workshop - Supported Concepts & New Ideas

Table	Concepts - Agreed	Concepts - New	Other Comments
Table #1 Participants: City of Aberdeen, MDOT, HC Ec Development, APG/Resident Facilitator: Jane Lim-Yap, KAI	■ Increase downtown green space ■ Increase residential housing stock around new park space ■ Increase density/intensity of uses around Festival Park; locate hotel, institutional uses, and community center here ■ Traffic calm and improve streetscape along Route 40	■ Build Aberdeen's identity as a family destination ■ Increase activities in Downtown; program more activities for Festival Park; hire a program manager to develop weekly activities ■ Develop new parks and destinations, especially for families (e.g. Annie's Playground); retain Farmer's Market at Festival Park ■ Recruit a downtown grocery store (e.g. Trader Joe's) ■ Increase density/intensity immediately next to station; office uses with parking structure shared with station	■ Target facilities for continuing education course for seniors: community college classes (for technical skills needed at APG) ■ Conduct targeted marketing/outreach to potential residents at APG (e.g. "Do you want to live 5 minutes from where you work" campaign) ■ Potential to tap into urban forest conservation funds for Route 40 streetscaping ■ Explore policies and incentives to support redevelopment (e.g. TIF district)
Table #2 Amtrak, Landowner, APG, MDOT, SHA, Harford County P&Z/Transportation Facilitator: David Benn, CBH	■ Relocate station north closer to civic center activities ■ Make inviting underpass pedestrian connection and remove the overpass ■ Town Square (to include a community center) and possibly hotel with garage ■ Retail-based infill for West Bel Air Avenue ■ Three to four stories on the residential square; medium rise around Bel Air; higher on civic square ■ Parking structure with mixed uses adjoining station	■ New road to connect relocated station, parking, and Town Square ■ Make the residential square family-oriented with a day care center ■ Great shuttle service is fundamental to attracting people to and from the base ■ Encourage retail and with residential buildings between parks on Park Street with possible theater/movies (double duty with academic?) ■ Office along Route 40 with office type commercial	■ Renovate/add to old school retaining offices on town square

Aberdeen TOD Master Plan | Section 2: Developing the Plan Together

Aberdeen Design Concept Workshop - Supported Concepts & New Ideas

Table	Concepts - Agreed	Concepts - New	Other Comments
Table #3 Participants: Harford County Transit, MTA, SHA, MDOT, Habitat for Humanity, Developer Facilitator: Anath Ranon, CBH	▪ Slow traffic on Route 40 and conversion to "green" boulevard; on-street parking; raised intersections ▪ Relocate station ▪ Station amphitheater/plaza idea; important that this space is safe environment ▪ Community uses near Town Square	▪ Street level crossings (e.g. cobble stone, raised surface) ▪ Keep small town/community feel ▪ International Market located south, west of Route 40 ▪ Target affordable and mixed-income housing, especially for seniors ▪ Increase the amount of parking in parking decks near the station and shared with mixed-use development ▪ Increase residential uses on the east side of Route 40 to support businesses	▪ Less focus on hotel development (should be led by market); more local residential development ▪ Assembly of land can facilitate private development ▪ Explore accommodating Asian market (perhaps in an existing building)
Table #4 Participants: HC CSSC, MDOT/SHA, MTA, HC Ec Dev, Land owner/dev; Aberdeen Econ Dev Chair Facilitators: Conor Semler & Yolanda Takesian, KAI	▪ Develop amphitheater and new park along Park Street ▪ Farmers Market in Victory Park or Amphitheater ▪ Restaurants in downtown, including higher end fast food (e.g. Chipotle, Five Guys) ▪ Relocate station ▪ Develop building over Route 40	▪ Develop parking management plan for downtown Aberdeen ▪ Need more rental housing in Harford County; could be located in Aberdeen ▪ Need boutiques and service-oriented retail (e.g. law, real estate) in downtown	▪ Developers have interest providing city/state/federal support ▪ Tax credits/incentives for development ▪ Need to align minimum parking and impervious surface requirements ▪ Surface parking lot near church on West Bel Air Avenue already approved ▪ Too many competing higher education uses

Public Meeting

A Public Meeting was held on October 13, 2011. The design/planning team presented a review of issues and opportunities presented earlier, and then focused on the refined TOD Area Concept Plans that are described in Section 3 of this report. More information about the project, including the presentation provided at the public meeting, is provided on the Aberdeen TOD webpage: http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/Planning/TOD/Aberdeen_TOD.html.

A second presentation to the Mayor and City Council that same evening emphasized the leadership role required by the City, and the importance of building a collaborative relationship with the County. One of the resulting recommendations was that the Aberdeen TOD Master Plan be presented to the Harford County Council in December 2011.

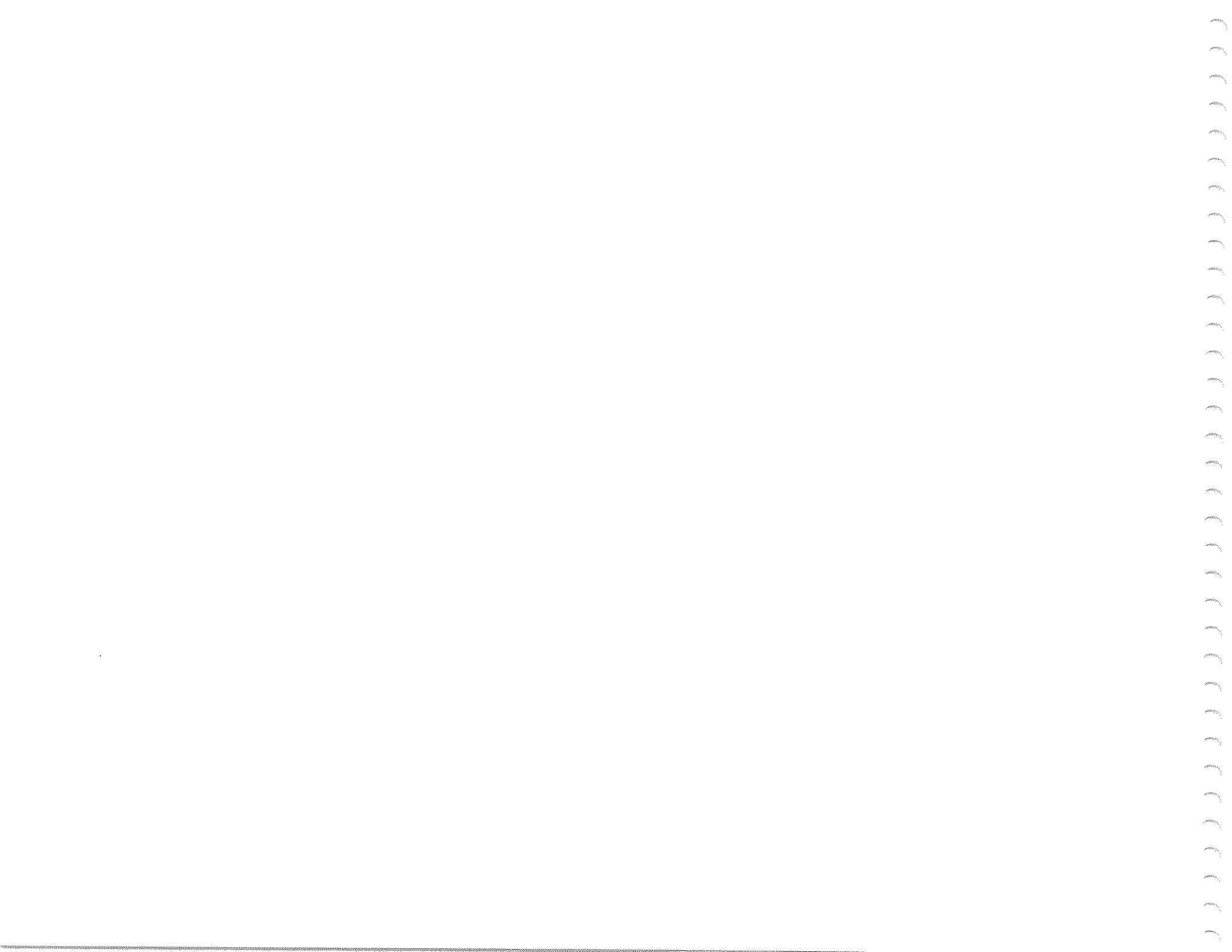
Both presentations were met with enthusiasm and support from the Mayor and City Council, as well as most public attendees. Implementation strategies, identified in Section 4 of this report, were discussed with the City Council. Next steps discussed with the Council included:

- Consideration of TOD boundary and geographic designation by applicable legal instrument such as a resolution.
- Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding and endorsement of the TOD Master Plan.
- TOD Master Plan Presentation to the Harford County Council.

Harford County Council Presentation

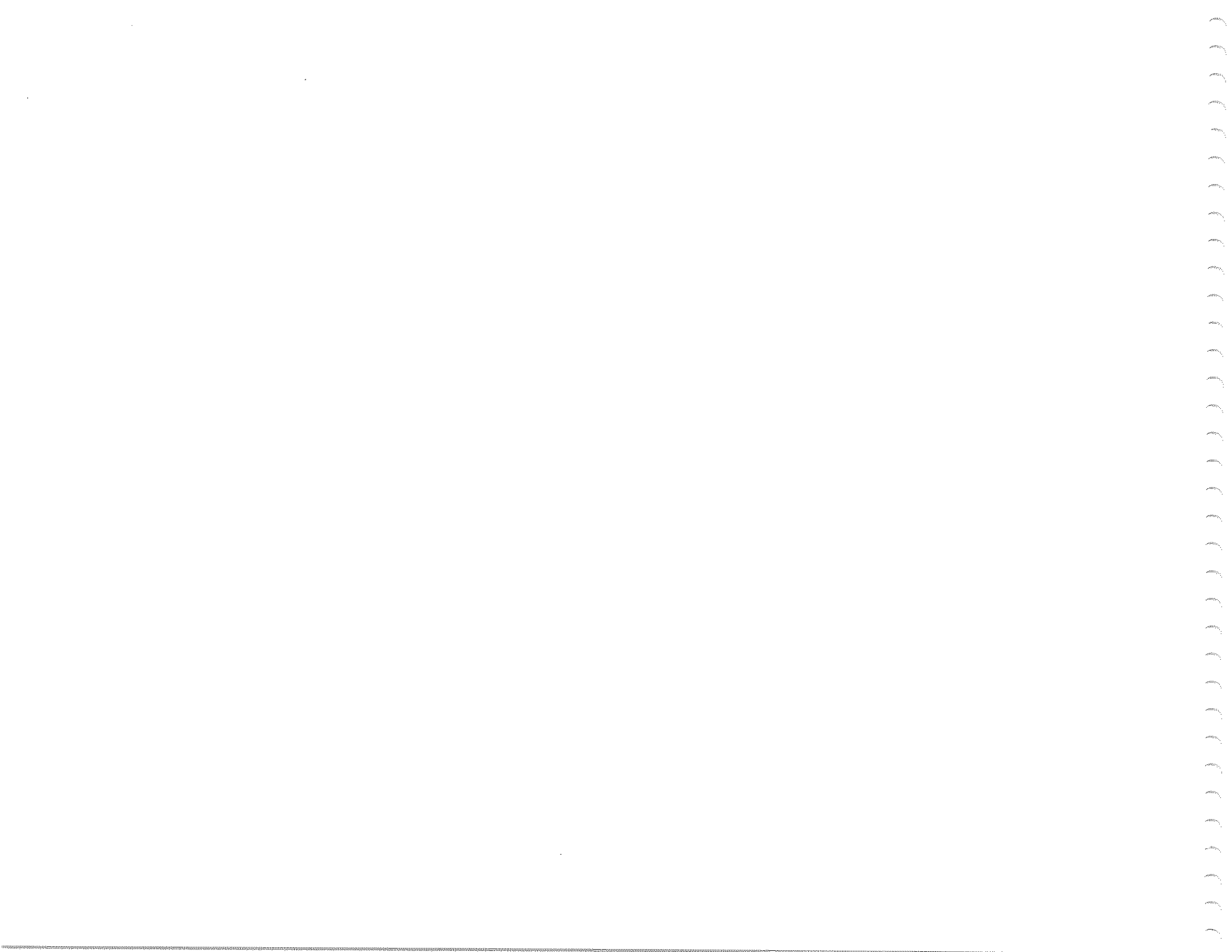
This TOD Master Plan was presented to the Harford County Council on December 13, 2011 and was met with broad support. While no official action was taken by the County Council, Councilmembers Richard Slutzky and Mary Ann Lisanti voiced strong support for the Plan and requested to be kept informed on its progress. Senaors Barry Glassman and Nancy Jacobs (represented by Mike Kalinski) of the Harford County delegation of the Maryland General Assembly were also in attendance and indicated support for the Plan.





SECTION 3

TOD TARGET AREA CONCEPTS



TOD CONCEPTS

Land Use Concepts Summary

The scope of this project investigates land use concepts for five TOD target areas within the 0.5-mile radius identified as the TOD boundary surrounding the train station.

Three of the priority TOD target areas are further illustrated on the following pages.

Overall, the distribution of land uses for all the TOD concept areas attempts to increase density and activity surrounding the train station, transform Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) into a green boulevard that is pedestrian-friendly (not the barrier it is today), and, in particular, support and enhance the existing activity nodes in Aberdeen, namely the commercial “downtown” along West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132), the civic heart located at/around City Hall, and the residential areas east and west of the rail lines.

An overview of proposed land use concepts for the various TOD target areas are described below. Further details are provided in each TOD target area section as noted below.

1. Station Square and US 40 – See page 49 for more detail.
 - a. Landscaped, terraced plaza provides access to both sides of rail lines and creates a public outdoor space for seasonal farmer’s market, outdoor café seating from adjacent retail, etc. This provides easy ramped access to cross under the tracks and makes the tunnel and whole area inviting and safe because it is highly visible and well lit.

- b. Retail, at ground floor, especially food market type uses.
 - c. Office and/or academic buildings.
 - d. Parking structures integrated with the above uses and also serve the train station.
 - e. Height and density is encouraged at five to six stories.
 - f. Residential development is *not* encouraged along Philadelphia Boulevard, along the green terraced plaza in Station Square.
2. Festival (Town) Square – See page 54 for more detail.
 - a. Expand civic uses including new café at existing Library.
 - b. Expand county offices.
 - c. Residential, including apartments, townhouses and Senior Housing adjacent to existing Senior Center (to be retained).
 - d. Hotel or academic use fronting the park
 - e. Retail, at ground floor, integral with above uses, especially along Parke Street.
 - f. Parking structure with ground floor community center.
 - g. Height and density is encouraged at four to six stories generally.
3. Residential Square – See page 58 for more detail.
 - a. Creates a new landscaped park surrounded by residential (apartment) uses.
 - b. Daycare center in or adjacent to park.
 - c. Retail, at ground floor, integral with residential building, especially along

- Parke Street and Philadelphia Boulevard frontages.
 - d. Hotel or academic use is also encouraged.
 - e. Height and density is encouraged at three to six stories.
4. West Bel Air Avenue Commercial Area: recommend commercial infill with the following characteristics:
 - a. Office/mixed use
 - b. Ground floor retail
 - c. Maintain street parking
 - d. Build out to property lines
 - e. Allow up to 12-story height
 - f. Increase density
 - g. Locate taller building(s) at intersection with Philadelphia Boulevard
5. East Bel Air Avenue Residential Area: recommend maintaining this area as residential, with the following characteristics:
 - a. Increase density.
 - b. Renovate historic buildings for reuse as small-scale commercial (hospitality/bed and breakfast) or small convenience retail.
 - c. Demolish existing 1970s apartments and build with greater density and stronger street presence.
 - d. Increase street trees.
 - e. Strengthen connection across train tracks to West Bel Air Avenue and train station.
 - f. With a possible future re-opening of the APG middle gate, APG Road could provide a better connection to/from the base, the station area, and downtown.

Figure 16 - Land Use Concepts

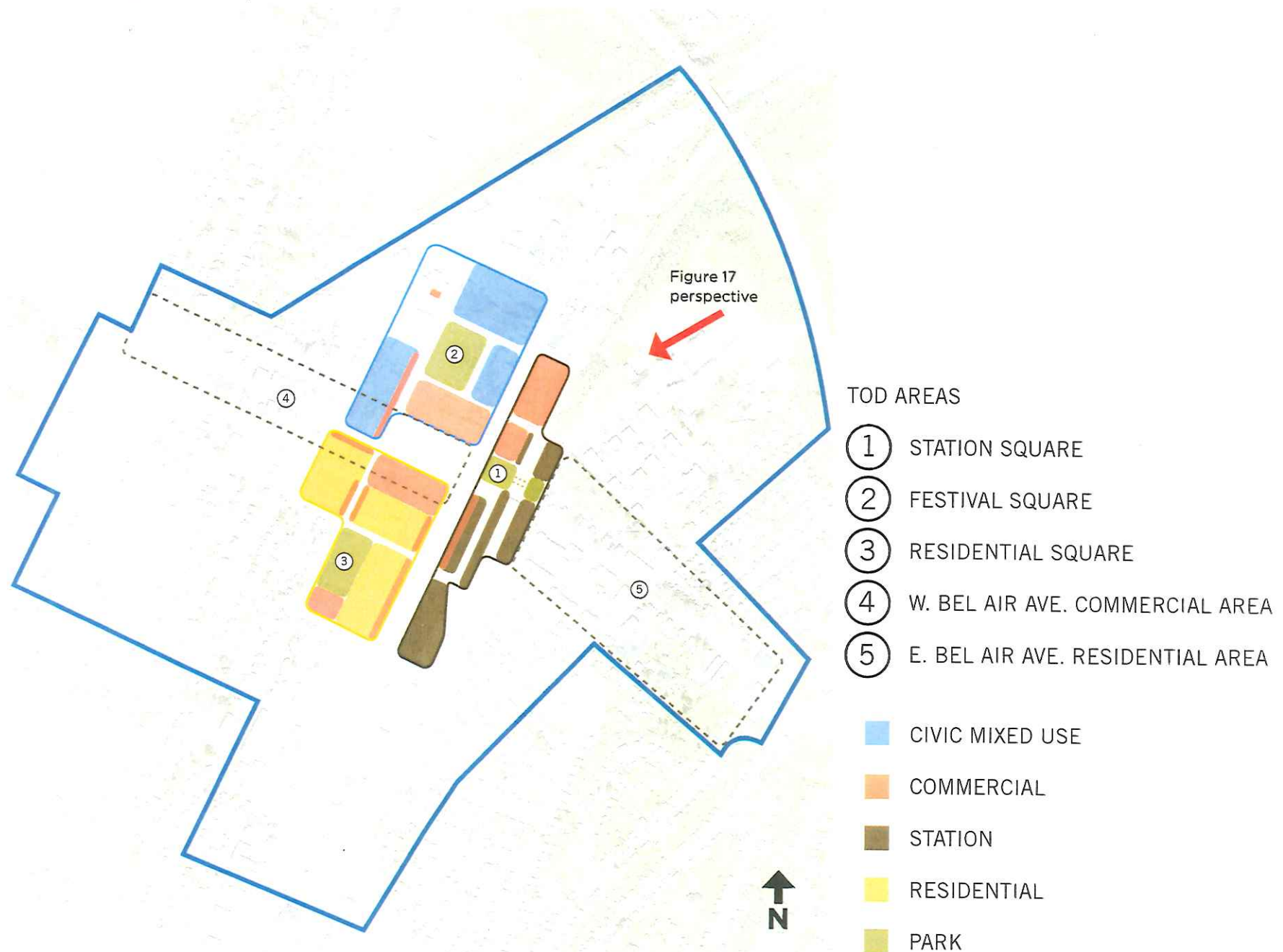
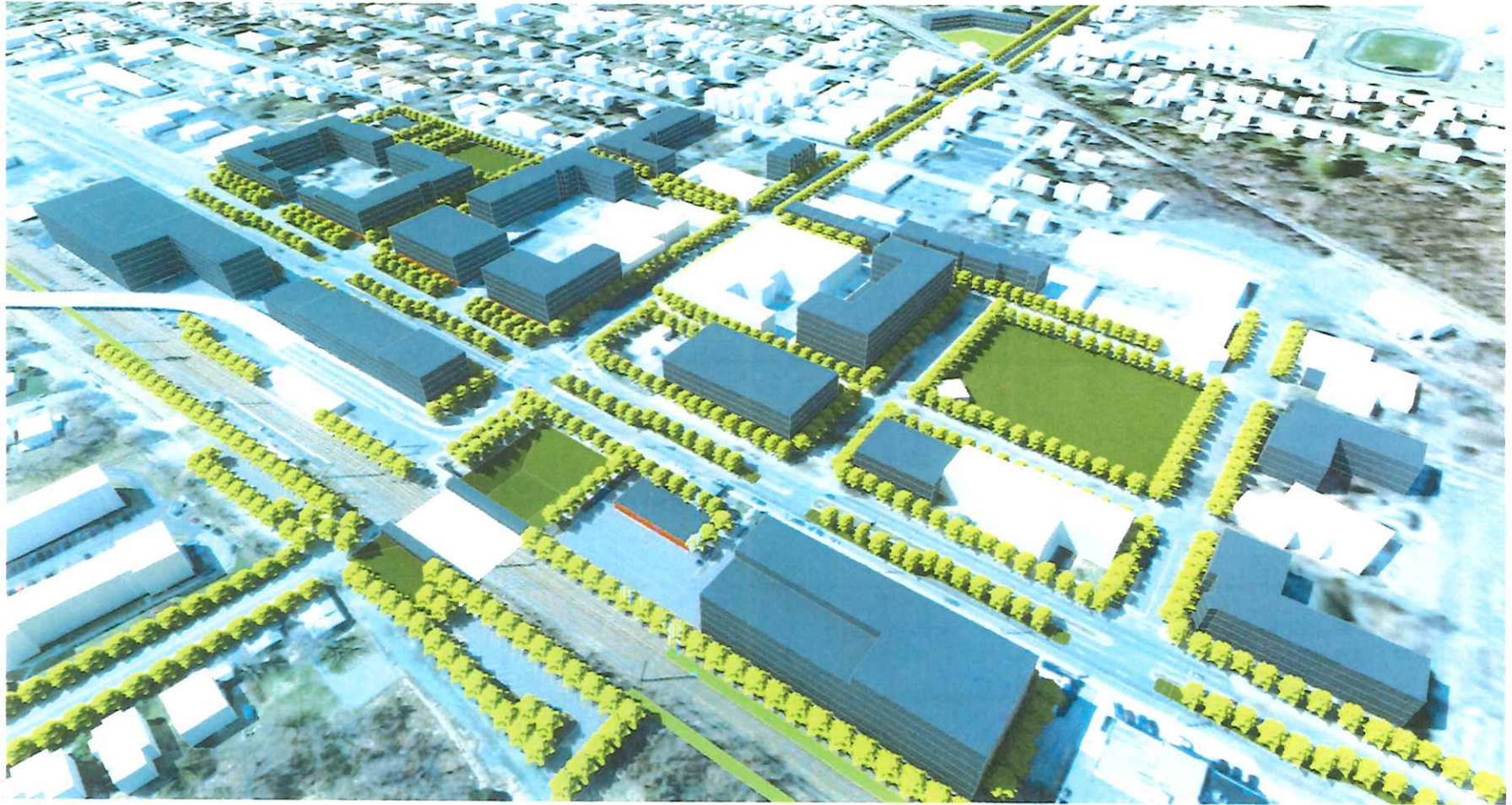


Figure 17-Sketch-up Model



The view in Figure 17 looks from north-east to southwest with the APG Ramp toward the left side of the page. Station Square is shown in center, left.

Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) is envisioned as a green, landscaped boulevard with street trees on both sides and in the median. A secondary system of trees lines the railroad tracks along the train

platforms, as well as secondary streets within the TOD boundary area.

West Bel Air Ave (MD 132) is shown with improved streetscape (including trees) and commercial/housing infill extending from Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) to the redeveloped historic train station across the tracks on the west (at top in sketch). Improvements also shown from

the station along East Bel Air Avenue with street-scaping and infill housing/commercial.

Table 1 - Comparative Summary

	SF or # UNITS	UNITS	PARKING REQUIRED # SPACES	PARKING PROVIDED # SPACES
STATION SQUARE				
SUBTOTAL OFFICE/ACADEMIC	246,600 SF			
SUBTOTAL RETAIL/COMMERCIAL	66,300 SF			
SUBTOTAL PARKING SPACES			1,406	1,705
			960	1,390
FESTIVAL SQUARE				
SUBTOTAL OFFICE/COMMUNITY CTR	87,000 SF			
SUBTOTAL RETAIL/COMMERCIAL	36,700 SF			
SUBTOTAL HOUSING	161 DU			
SUBTOTAL HOTEL RMS	200 RMS			
SUBTOTAL PARKING SPACES			487	540
RESIDENTIAL SQUARE				
SUBTOTAL OFFICE	66,000 SF			
SUBTOTAL RETAIL/COMMERCIAL	59,500 SF			
SUBTOTAL HOUSING	357 DU			
SUBTOTAL PARKING SPACES			630	693
			749	505
TOTALS				
SUBTOTAL OFFICE/ACADEMIC/COMMUNITY CTR	399,600 SF			
SUBTOTAL RETAIL/COMMERCIAL	162,500 SF			
SUBTOTAL HOUSING	518 DU			
SUBTOTAL HOTEL RMS	200 RMS			
SUBTOTAL PARKING SPACES			2,523	2,938
			2,196	2,435

option: Site for Bldg E is full surface parking only

option: Bldg O is retail/office only, with surface parking behind

TOD AREA 1: Station Square and US 40 Boulevard

The train station and supporting structures shown in Figure 19 are at the heart of this TOD project. The following notes provide additional details on this plan.

- The goal for Station Square is to position the train station and platforms so that they connect the two halves of Aberdeen along East and West Bel Air Avenue, to facilitate and encourage vehicular and pedestrian connections to/from APG and “downtown” and, most importantly, give a presence and identity to Aberdeen from Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40).
- The creation of Station Square will go a long way toward achieving these goals by providing easy pedestrian access (steps and ramps) to cross under the tracks and making the tunnel and whole area inviting and safe by making it highly visible and well lit. The variety of uses proposed directly adjacent to Station Square will encourage density and “eyes on the plaza.” This terraced green space becomes a focal point and amenity featuring amphitheater-like steps, space for food kiosks to spill-out from the Market/Retail building, etc.
- It is also important to bring commercial and shopping uses to Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), as well as parking for those uses and for the station. Grocery store and food-based retail located adjacent to Station Square will serve the rail commuters as well as those arriving via shuttle from APG.
- Station access is located slightly north of the current station and is designed as a pedestrian square/terraced plaza and underpass that is highly visible from West and East Bel Air Avenue and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). In addition, separate access is provided for buses, APG shuttle, taxi, and kiss and ride. The design is intended to allow for increasing the APG shuttle frequency so that it runs often and on a regular schedule. Further coordination will be required to ensure that additional services is provided to more effectively shuttle people back and forth between APG and the TOD area for lunch, before/after work, etc. It would enable potential hotel guests to shuttle to APG without renting a car and/or a quick lunchtime visit from APG to downtown with time to shop at the market, dine, and get back quickly. This is absolutely critical.
- The existing station building can be retained and rehabilitated for use as a comfort station, bike kiosk, specialty shop, etc.
- Parking needs will be met initially with surface parking on site of future parking garage (B), and existing lots south and east of the station. Additional parking will be provided in future phase, in parking garage (B).
- Currently there are three tracks for Amtrak and MARC. The illustrative plan shows a fourth track as proposed by Amtrak.
- Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) is narrowed down and landscaped on both sides to create a green boulevard. This should become a pleasant tree-lined street with rainwater gardens and other sustainable features along the sidewalks and edges, medians and access lanes. Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) includes two driving lanes in each direction, plus left-turning lanes at median with crosswalks at all intersections encouraging pedestrians.
- Additional signalized pedestrian crossings will be provided to connect people from downtown to the development at and around the station. Crossings at the future extension of Diamond Street and Franklin Street will provide connections to Festival Square (TOD Area 2); Custis Street and Market Street connect to Residential Square (TOD Area 3). The crossings will be well-lit to create a pleasant and inviting environment and to promote driver awareness of pedestrians.
- Bike lanes are proposed along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), with bike boxes for left turns.
- Hike and bike trails can be integrated along the east side of the railroad track and possibly the west side as well.
- To encourage increased bicycle access to the station, secure, visible, and weather-protected bicycle parking will be placed close as possible to the station platform. A direct route from Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) will bring cyclists from the street to the parking with minimal vehicle conflict points.
- Dedicated parking for car sharing vehicles will extend the reach of transit riders accessing Aberdeen on MARC/Amtrak. This will reduce demand for parking at the station and assist residents who wish to live a car-free or car-light lifestyle.

Figures 18a and 18b provide renderings of Station Square and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). Details regarding the sketches follow:

- View from intersection of West Bel Air Ave and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), looking northeast.
- Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) is maintained as 2 lanes in each direction, with left-turn lanes in median.
- Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) is transformed into green boulevard adding plantings, bio-swales, and trees.
- From right to left in view: six-story office/academic building (D); Covered train platform and graphic signage; Station Square plaza and amphitheater (A) with tents/kiosks at top left; one-story building/market(C) adjacent to kiss-and-ride; six-story parking garage/retail building (B) plus possible rooftop space.

Table 2, found on page 52, presents a Building Use and Parking Summary for the Station Square Master Plan.



Figure 18a - Station Square



Figure 18b - US 40 Perspective Sketch



Phasing Plan

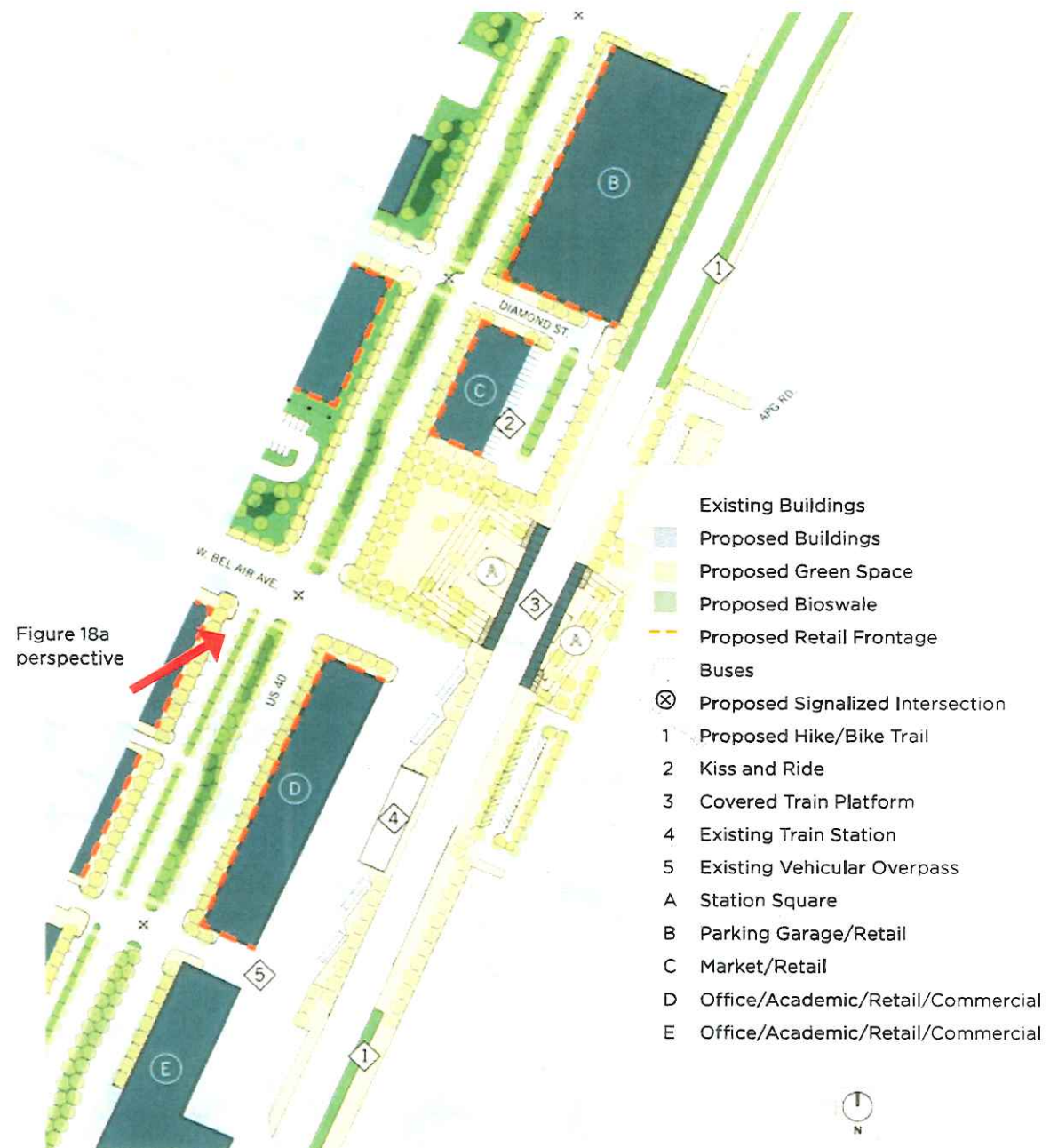
The following details are illustrated in Figure 19:

- Short-term – transform Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) into a green boulevard; build Station Square (A) and Retail Building (C).
- Mid-term – build surface parking and small retail building on site of future parking garage (B).
- Long-term – full build-out of parking garage (B); build surface parking on site of future office/academic building (E)*; build office/academic building/parking (D) and (E)**.

* Surface parking on the site of building (E) could eliminate the need for parking garage/building (B) as shown in the Residential Square illustrative plan

**Note that building (E) will need to provide its own parking

Figure 19 - Station Square and US 40 Illustrative Plan



Aberdeen TOD Master Plan | Section 3: TOD Concepts

Table 2 - Building Use and Parking Summary for Station Square

ABERDEEN TOD
CONCEPT MASTER PLAN

STATION SQUARE

BLDG	USE	SF or # UNITS	# FLOORS	PARKING REQUIRED # SPACES	PARKING PROVIDED # LOCATION
A	Station Square	na	na	[per MTA, Amtrak] 468	54 lots on east side, kiss & ride + parking garage adjacent
B	Parking Garage*	306,000 SF	5		
	Retail (Food Market)**	18,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 54]	[306,000 sf/320 sf=956] parking garage + on-street
			6	54	956
*future phase. Initial phase includes surface parking at 170 spaces + 375 existing spaces = 545 spaces provided					
**future phase. Initial phase = 8,500 sf Retail (Food Market)					
					existing surface parking near station 375
					170
SUBTOTAL A+B				522	545 interim phase subtotals
C	Retail (Market)	12,000 SF	1	[Retail: 3 per 1,000 sf = 36] 36	
D***	Office/Academic	117,000 SF	3	[Office/Acad: 3 per 1,000 sf = 351]	
	Retail/Commercial	16,800 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 51]	
			4	402	
***future phase. Initial phase = seasonal market over existing parking lot					
				960	1,010 interim phase subtotals
E****	Parking Garage	239,700 SF	3		
	Office/Academic	129,600 SF	+2	[Retail/Comm3 per 1,000 sf = 387]	[239,700 sf/ 320 sf = 749] parking garage
	Retail/Commercial	19,500 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 59]	
			6	446	749
****future phase. Interim phase could include surface parking for 380 cars, which would eliminate the need for Building (O) as shown in Residential Square Illustrative Site Plan					
SUBTOTAL OFFICE/ACADEMIC		246,600 SF			
SUBTOTAL RETAIL/COMMERCIAL		66,300 SF			
SUBTOTAL PARKING SPACES				1,406	1,705 + on-street spaces

9/26/2011

TOD AREA 2: Festival Square

The goal is to build on the existing civic uses around the green amenity of Festival Park, provide for mixed uses around the square, increase density, and provide adequate parking to entice such development. The following notes provide additional details on the plan illustrated in Figure 21.

- Mix of proposed uses includes expanded civic (new sidewalk café as part of existing library (F), new senior housing (G and H) adjacent to the existing senior center, expanded county offices adjacent to existing county office building in a renovated old Aberdeen High School building (I), new hotel with ground floor bar/dining, conference/reception space (K), apartments (L), and live/work townhouses (M), plus a new ground floor community center below a four-story parking garage adjacent to Philadelphia Boulevard/US 40 (J).
- The parking garage can serve shared parking needs, including commuter parking for the station during the day and restaurant/dining/entertainment uses in the evening.
- Parking is also proposed on surface lots behind the new senior housing and the apartments.
- Increased residential opportunities increase customer base for existing and proposed retail along Parke Street and West Bel Air Avenue.
- Street trees are added throughout Festival Square to make this a more pedestrian-friendly place.

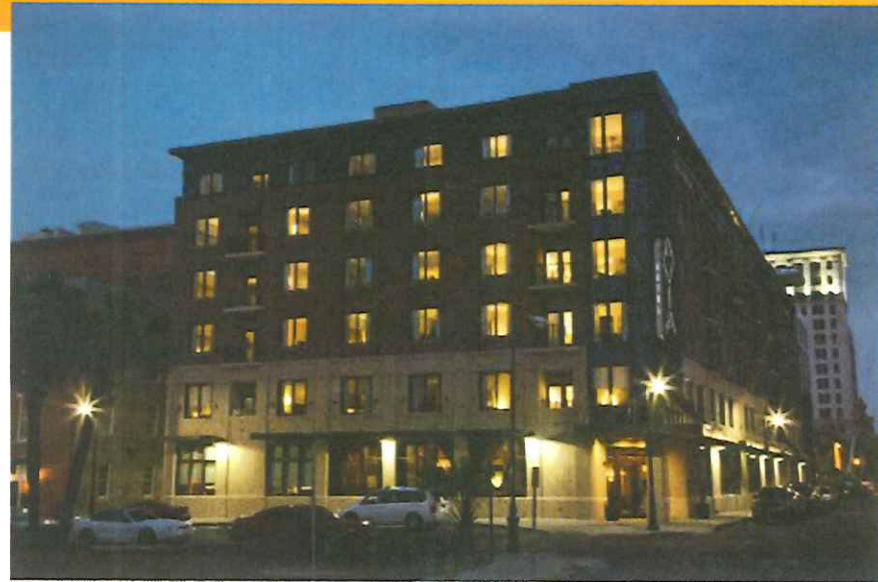


Figure 20 – Festival Square Perspective Sketch



Phasing Plan

The following details are illustrated in Figure 21:

- Short-term – build parking garage and ground floor community center (J). A parking garage will be key in encouraging developers to stake a claim on a revitalized Aberdeen.
- Mid-term – street tree planting after build-out of at least one site fronting Festival Park.
- Long-term – as determined by the market (hotel and/or old high school office).
- Senior housing can be built independent of other improvements.

Figure 20 provides a rendering of Festival Square. Details regarding the sketch follow:

- View is from corner of Parke Street and Franklin Street, looking south toward proposed hotel (K).
- From right to left in view: City Hall; American legion; new apartments (M); new hotel with ground floor reception dining (K); new parking garage with ground floor community center (J); existing band stand/kiosk.

Table 3, found on page 56, presents a Building Use and Parking Summary for the Festival Square Master Plan.

Figure 21 – Festival Square Illustrative Plan



Aberdeen TOD Master Plan | Section 3: TOD Concepts

Table 3 - Building Use and Parking Summary for Festival Square

ABERDEEN TOD
CONCEPT MASTER PLAN
FESTIVAL SQUARE

BLDG	USE	SF or # UNITS	# FLOORS	PARKING REQ'D/ # SPACES	PARKING PROVIDED # LOCATION
F	Library Café Addition	2,900 SF	1	[Café: 3 per 1,000 sf = 9] 9	on-street or expand lot behind Library
G/H	Senior Housing	105 DU	4	[Hsg: .75/unit=79] 79	82 surface parking + on-street or lot north
I	Offices Renovation + Addition	72,000 SF [42,000 + 30,000]	3	[Offices: 3 per 1,000 sf=216] 216	complimentary parking in Garage + on-street
J	Parking Garage Community Center	121,800 SF 15,000 SF	4 +1	[Comm Ctr: 1 per 1,000 sf = 15]	[121,800 sf/320 = 380] *complimentary parking in garage + on-street. set-asides for retail, train station, market, office, hotel
			5	15	380
K	Hotel [Conf Ctr, Receptions] Restaurant, Grill, Pub	200 RMS 20,000 SF	5 +1	[Hotel: .25/RM = 50] [Restaurant: 1 per 1,000 sf = 20]	complimentary parking in Garage w/Office
			6	70	
L	Live-work Townhouses Retail/Commercial	11 DU 8,800 SF	2 +1	[Townhouses: 1 per unit = 11] [Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 27]	on-street rent adjoining lot?
			3	38	
M	Housing Retail/Commercial	45 DU 5,000 SF	4 +1	[Hsg: 1/unit = 45] [Retail: 3 per 1,000 sf = 15]	surface parking + on-street
			5	60	78
SUBTOTAL OFFICE/COMMUNITY CTR		87,000 SF			
SUBTOTAL RETAIL/COMMERCIAL		36,700 SF			
SUBTOTAL HOUSING		161 DU			
SUBTOTAL HOTEL RMS		200 RMS			
SUBTOTAL PARKING SPACES				487	540 plus on-street spaces, minus 66 spaces lost to hotel construction

* Parking Assumptions: Complimentary parking in Garage (J) assumes lower parking requirement for Community Center (1 per 1,000 sf), Hotel (.25/room) and Restaurant (1 per 1,000 sf)

9/26/2011

TOD AREA 3: Residential Square

The goal is to add another large green space in the downtown area to attract a mix of uses though mostly medium density housing. The square can have amenities for the whole area and public functions, such as a day care center, that would also be desirable for the neighborhood at large. It can contribute to the town's sustainability. The following notes provide additional details on the plan illustrated in Figure 22.

- The mix of proposed uses includes some retail/ commercial on the ground floors along Parke Street (with residential above) and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) (with office above). The square is lined by new apartment buildings or possibly a boutique hotel. Increased residential opportunities improve the customer base for existing and proposed retail along West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132).
- Surface parking is proposed behind the housing and accessed by alleys. If structured parking is required for uses along Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), it should be on the upper floors of a mixed-use building with commercial uses on the ground level.
- Street trees are added throughout the square, especially along Parke Street, to reinforce it as a pedestrian-friendly place.



Figure 22 - Residential Square Perspective Sketch



Phasing Plan

The following details are illustrated in Figure 23:

- Short-term – build new park square and streetscaping.
- Long-term – as determined by the market.

Figure 22 provides a rendering of Residential Square. Details regarding the sketch follow:

- View is from the corner of Parke Street and Market Street, looking north over the park with the day care (R) in the foreground and apartments fronting it.
- From right to left in view: apartment building (Q); day care (R); apartment building (P); apartment building (S); Parke Street, looking toward West Bel Air Avenue.

Table 4 on page 60 introduces a Building Use and Parking Summary for the Residential Square Master Plan, while Table 1 on page 46 shows a comparative general summary for Station, Festival, and Residential Square.

Figure 23–Residential Square Illustrative Plan



Aberdeen TOD Master Plan | Section 3: TOD Concepts

Table 4 - Building Use and Parking Summary for Residential Square

ABERDEEN TOD CONCEPT MASTER PLAN
RESIDENTIAL SQUARE

BUILDING USE PARKING SUMMARY - draft

BLDG	USE	SF or # UNITS	# FLOORS	PARKING REQ'D/ # SPACES	PARKING PROVIDED #	LOCATION
N	Office	66,000 SF	5	[Office: 3 per 1,000 sf = 198]		
	Retail/Commercial	8,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 24]		
			6	222		parking garage adjacent + on-street
O	Parking Garage	106,000 SF	4			
	Retail/Commercial	8,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 24]		
			5	24	331	[106,000 sf/320 = 331] parking garage + on-street
P	Apartments	93 DU	4	[Hsg: .75/unit = 70]		
	Retail/Commercial	8,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 24]		
			5	94	75	surface parking + on-street
Q	Apartments	93 DU	4	[Hsg: .75/unit = 70]		
	Retail/Commercial	8,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 24]		
			5	78	75	surface parking + on-street
R	Daycare	7,000 SF	1			on-street
S	Apartments	84 DU	4	[Hsg: .75/unit = 63]		
	Retail/Commercial	10,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 30]		
			5	93	90	surface parking + on-street
T	Apartments	66 DU	3	[Hsg: .75/unit = 50]		
	Retail/Commercial	10,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 30]		
			4	80	78	surface parking + on-street
U	Apartments	21 DU	4	[Hsg: .75/unit = 16]		
	Retail/Commercial	6,000 SF	+1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 18]		
			5	34	44	surface parking + on-street
V	Retail/Commercial	1,500 SF	1	[Retail/Comm: 3 per 1,000 sf = 5]		on-street
				5		
SUBTOTAL OFFICE		66,000 SF				
SUBTOTAL RETAIL/COMMERCIAL		59,500 SF				
SUBTOTAL HOUSING		357 DU				
SUBTOTAL PARKING SPACES				630	693	+ on-street spaces

9/26/2011

SECTION 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Advancing the concepts presented in this Master Plan into implementation requires deliberate actions on the part of the City, County, State, and other partner agencies. Changes to agency policies and codes will encourage the station area to develop. Careful coordination and collaboration is needed to facilitate investment in downtown Aberdeen. Specific action items and responsibilities for advancing TOD in Aberdeen are presented below.

Implementation Strategies

To instill ownership and responsibility for implementing this TOD Master Plan, the mayor and city council should establish a team of Aberdeen Ambassadors to oversee and drive the realization of these concepts. The Aberdeen Ambassadors, which represent and support the guiding principles of this Master Plan, will include members of the Aberdeen community and partner jurisdictions (e.g. Harford County and APG). Their responsibility will be to track and advocate for the following Phase I actions.

City of Aberdeen Implementation Actions

1. Official adoption of TOD boundary by resolution or appropriate local legal action.
2. Facilitate property development within the 3 TOD Target Areas of the designated TOD.

3. Program activities on the weekends at the station, including farmer's markets, festivals, and special events.
4. Develop and adopt a form-based code TOD designation to encourage the type of development envisioned for the Aberdeen TOD area. The code should include provisions which allow a minimum of six stories with no setback from the street. Consolidate parcels to achieve a minimum of five acres of developable area. Further details are provided in the Code Evaluation section on page 68.
5. Reclassify West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) through downtown as Village Center Mixed Use Arterials, per the Comprehensive Plan.
6. Provide utilities and stormwater treatment options.
7. Initiate feasibility analysis of greenway trails along Amtrak and CSX lines.
8. Attract and incorporate unique business opportunities in redevelopment plans and projects to serve as a draw for Aberdeen as a destination.
9. Initiate public-private development of a downtown parking garage(s) with commercial/retail uses to entice further key development around the station and downtown.
10. Monitor implementation progress and facilitate communications among partners, land owners, and the community.

Harford County Coordination and Implementation Strategies

Obtain full support from Harford County government through regular meetings with the County Executive and Administration staff to assist with the implementation of the TOD concepts, including:

1. Retain, and possibly add, County facilities in downtown Aberdeen, including senior/community center, recreation/community center, and Social Services.
2. Initiate and maintain assertive discussions with hotel developers to build a unique/boutique hotel in downtown Aberdeen.
3. Enable a minor expansion of the Country Library to include a café or other public space that has direct connection to the street and entry.
4. Demonstrate local priority for the following key transportation projects in the annual County transportation priorities letter submitted to MDOT, specifically noting the Aberdeen station area's TOD designation status:
 - a. Program SHA streetscaping projects with a focus on developing Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) into a green boulevard as discussed in this Master Plan.
 - b. Replace the Amtrak pedestrian overcrossing with an enhanced pedestrian underpass and a green, terraced plaza.
5. Continue and enhance regular staff communications on private economic development opportunities to market Aberdeen station area sites.

State of Maryland Implementation Strategies

The following work will be completed in collaboration with the State, City, County, and affected parties:

1. Investigate the feasibility of implementing a green boulevard concept for Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) as discussed in this Master Plan.
2. Initiate the design of an Amtrak pedestrian undercrossing and with an enhanced pedestrian underpass and a green, terraced plaza.
3. Investigate potential to locate State service outlets that support continuing education, community development, public health, or economic opportunity in downtown Aberdeen.
4. Identify and tailor revitalization program support for the State's Sustainable Communities initiatives for affordable housing and small business development loans.
5. Identify potential State, County, City and private funding sources available for senior housing to be located in Festival Square.
6. Provide technical support for assessment and reuse/redevelopment of any brownfield sites.
7. Identify and work collaboratively on specific public-private partnerships for redeveloping the station area to build structured parking that can be shared with compatible, non-peak uses.
8. Coordinate an integrated shuttle service to APG that might also include an additional off-site park-and-ride location to reduce station area demand by non-MARC commuters.
9. Organize meetings with high-level state officials (notably the Secretaries of Transportation, Business and Economic Development, and Housing and Community Development) to garner support for the concepts and assignment of staff resources necessary to assist with the development of key actions. Prior to such meetings, articulate the overarching vision for the TOD Master Plan, and identify projects that could reasonably be implemented.



City, County, and State Implementation Strategy

Item	Strategy Description	Collaborators	Timeline
City of Aberdeen Implementation Actions			
TOD Boundary Adoption	Official adoption of TOD boundary by resolution or appropriate local legal action.	Aberdeen, MDOT	Short-term
Development Assistance	Facilitate property development within the three TOD Target Areas.	Aberdeen, Harford County Economic Development	Medium-term
Station Activity Programming	Program activities on the weekends at the station, including farmer's markets, festivals, and special events.	Aberdeen	Short-term
Form-Based Code Adoption	Develop and adopt a form-based code TOD designation to encourage the type of development envisioned for the Aberdeen TOD area. The code should include provisions which allow a minimum of six stories with no setback from the street. Consolidate parcels to achieve a minimum of five acres of developable area. Further details are provided in the Code Evaluation section on page 68.	Aberdeen	Short-term
US 40/MD 132 Street Reclassification	Reclassify West Bel Air Avenue (MD 132) and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) through downtown as Village Center Mixed Use Arterials, per the Comprehensive Plan.	Aberdeen, SHA	Short-term
Utilities and Stormwater Treatment	Provide utilities and stormwater treatment options.	Aberdeen	Medium-term
Greenway Trails	Initiate feasibility analysis of greenway trails along Amtrak and CSX lines.	Aberdeen, MDOT	Medium-term
Attract Business Opportunities	Attract and incorporate unique business opportunities in redevelopment plans and projects to serve as a draw for Aberdeen as a destination.	Aberdeen, Harford County Economic Development	Medium-term
Parking Garage Development	Initiate public-private development of a downtown parking garage(s) with commercial/retail uses to entice further key development around the station and downtown.	Aberdeen, MTA, SHA	Medium-term
Track Implementation	Monitor implementation progress and facilitate communications among partners, land owners, and the community.	Aberdeen	Ongoing

Aberdeen TOD Master Plan | Section 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

Item	Strategy Description	Collaborators	Timeline
Harford County Coordination and Implementation Strategies			
Support TOD Master Plan	Harford County should support TOD Master Plan Implementation through regular meetings between Aberdeen City Officials with the County Executive and Administration staff to assist with the implementation of the TOD concepts, including:	Harford County, Aberdeen	Short-term
Locate County Facilities Downtown	Retain, and possibly add, County facilities in downtown Aberdeen, including senior/community center, recreation/community center, and Social Services.	Harford County	Medium-term
Direct Hotel Development Downtown	Initiate and maintain assertive discussions with hotel developers to build a unique/boutique hotel in downtown Aberdeen.	Harford County, Office of Economic Development, Aberdeen	Medium-term
Library Expansion	Enable a minor expansion of the Country Library to include a café or other public space that has direct connection to the street and entry.	Harford County	Medium-term
Identify TOD Projects in Annual Priority Letter	Demonstrate local priority for key transportation projects in the annual County transportation priorities letter submitted to MDOT, specifically noting the Aberdeen station area's TOD designation status:	Harford County	Short-term
	SHA Community Safety and Enhancement and streetscaping projects with a focus on developing Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) into a green boulevard as discussed in this Master Plan.		
	Replace the Amtrak pedestrian overcrossing with an enhanced pedestrian underpass and a green, terraced plaza.		
Market Aberdeen Station	Continue and enhance regular staff communications on private economic development opportunities to market Aberdeen station area sites.	Harford County	Ongoing

Aberdeen TOD Master Plan | Section 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

Item	Strategy Description	Collaborators	Timeline
State of Maryland Implementation Strategies			
Implement Priority Transportation Projects	Work Collaboratively with Harford County, Aberdeen and Affected parties on key transportation TOD projects, upon inclusion in the Harford County Priority Letter:	MDOT, SHA, Harford County	Medium-term
	Investigate the feasibility of implementing a green boulevard concept for Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) as discussed in this Master Plan.		
	Initiate the design of an Amtrak pedestrian undercrossing and with an enhanced pedestrian underpass and a green, terraced plaza.		
Locate State Services Downtown	Investigate potential to locate State service outlets that support continuing education, community development, public health, or economic opportunity in downtown Aberdeen.	MDOT	Medium-term
Target Revitalization Downtown	Identify and tailor revitalization program support for the State's Sustainable Communities initiatives for affordable housing and small business development loans.	Maryland Department of Planning, MDOT	Short-term
Locate Senior Housing Downtown	Identify potential State, County, City and private funding sources available for senior housing to be located in Festival Square.	MDOT, Maryland Department of Aging, Harford County Office on Aging, Aberdeen	Medium-term
Brownfield Redevelopment Support	Provide technical support for assessment and reuse/ redevelopment of any brownfield sites.	Maryland Department of Planning, MDOT	Medium-term
Parking Garage Development	Identify and work collaboratively on specific public-private partnerships for redeveloping the station area to build structured parking that can be shared with compatible, non-peak uses.	MDOT, SHA, MTA	Medium-term
APG Shuttle Service Coordination	Coordinate an integrated shuttle service to APG that might also include an additional off-site park-and-ride location to reduce station area demand by non-MARC commuters.	MDOT, SHA, Harford County Transit, APG	Short-term
TOD Leadership	Organize meetings with high-level state officials (notably the Secretaries of Transportation, Business and Economic Development, and Housing and Community Development) to garner support for the concepts and assignment of staff resources necessary to assist with the development of key actions. Prior to such meetings, articulate the overarching vision for the TOD Master Plan, and identify projects that could reasonably be implemented.	MDOT, Maryland Department of Planning, Department of Business & Economic Development, Department of Housing & Community Development	Short-term

Code Evaluation

Some Aberdeen city codes inhibit transit-supportive development and should be changed to encourage investment downtown. The Department of Planning and Community Development should work with the City Council to develop and adopt a form-based development code. This approach would encourage the type of development that is envisioned for the Aberdeen TOD area. Rather than focusing on use and separations between uses, form-based codes are drafted to achieve a community vision based on principles that recognize that mixing certain types of uses often produces better places; building location and orientation emphasize important relationships; buildings help to define and organize space, create pathways and plazas; and provide a human presence on the street based on the environment they create along the street edge. It recognizes that thoughtful design that considers the public realm and the presence of pedestrians are fundamental characteristics of a successful built environment.

The form-based code TOD designation should, at a minimum, address the following code issues:

1. Adjust building height restrictions
 - a. The allowable height limits for Zoning Districts B-2 and B-3 should be increased to allow for a cluster of taller development (up to 12 stories) within a block of the intersection of West Bel Air Avenue and Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). In other areas within the B-2 and B-3 zoning districts, allowable heights should be increased modestly to 65 feet (from 60 feet currently) to allow for up to six stories of construction.
2. Evaluate parking requirements
 - a. A comprehensive parking study within the TOD area should be conducted to evaluate parking pricing, supply, and potential management practices. Also consider impacts and needs for MARC and Amtrak commuter parking. A parking plan should be developed as part of this study that addresses the following provisions:
 - i. Eliminate minimum parking requirements that add cost to development and encourage greenfield construction.
 - ii. Encourage shared and complimentary parking set-asides in surface lots or parking garages for nearby transient uses such as the train station, hotel, office, market, retail, etc.
 - iii. Encourage street parking for retail development.
 - iv. Surface parking is generally discouraged except behind buildings, in alleys, and parallel parking on streets, including Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40). If surface lots are necessary, restrict to a minimum 60-foot setback from any retail street frontage.
 - v. Require pedestrian-friendly design that encourages activity and liveliness in public places.
 - b. Setbacks in Zoning Districts B-2 and B-3 (currently 5 feet required for front yard depth) should be modified to allow retail frontages to be built to their front lot lines (build to lines). In cases where residential or commercial properties front onto Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40), a large enough setback from the street should be required to allow for landscaping and bio-swales that reinforce the concept of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) as a green boulevard.
 - c. Require buildings to front the street and prohibit surface parking lots at the front of the development.



3. Allow developers to aggregate open space to meet stormwater management requirements.
 - a. Minimum permeable surface requirements discourage development in higher density areas. Yet open space exists in downtown and should be banked to allow development to meet stormwater management requirements.
4. Mixed-use development and higher density is encouraged in the TOD boundary, with specific recommendations described below:
 - a. Amend City's LEED ordinance to include LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) as an incentive for locating future development in Master Plan Target Areas.
 - b. Zoning District M-1 (Light Industrial) at the historic station site along West Bel Air Ave and the freight train line should be changed to allow for commercial and/or retail use to develop on the site and adjacent properties, including necessary measures to protect the historic integrity and preservation of the station building.
 - c. The portion of Zoning District B-3 (Highway Commercial) that extends

along the west side of Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40) west to Parke Street, and west to Henrietta Street, should be changed to encourage multi-family housing and development more appropriate to the central commercial district of Aberdeen. Alternatively, the purpose of Zoning District B-3 could be modified to encourage development of multi-family housing and retail/commercial uses where the properties do not face directly onto Philadelphia Boulevard (US 40).

- d. Zoning District R-3 (High-Density Residential) should be modified to encourage ground floor retail to be developed as part of residential areas.
5. Impose design controls on surface parking lots to encourage "car gardens" with plenty of green areas, landscaping, stormwater drainage areas, etc.

References

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- *Traffic and Intersection Improvement Studies for Base Realignment and Closure: Aberdeen Proving Ground*. Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration Regional and Intermodal Planning Division, June 2008.
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