



ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR:  
A PLAN FOR WASHINGTON BOULEVARD



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This detailed plan for the Route 1 Corridor is based on a holistic assessment of its strengths, history, and opportunities for the future. This Plan integrates master plan elements that focus on the current economic, market, and transportation realities along Route 1, and provides strategies, policies, and implementing actions to maximize the economic and redevelopment potential of the Corridor. The Corridor also presents opportunities to target redevelopment within a variety of mixed-use activity centers where future infrastructure and investment can achieve the greatest impact. These activity centers are envisioned to be vibrant, livable, and walkable places that include a mix of uses characterized by improved pedestrian, bicycling, and transit mobility.

The Route 1 Corridor is expected to remain a significant employment corridor in the County for the next 20 years. Corridor-wide policies aim to support, retain, and grow the Corridor's industrial and manufacturing base through redevelopment and reinvestment. The Plan also promotes targeted residential, light industrial, and commercial development in strategic areas, with an emphasis on improving environmental health in the Corridor. The corridor-wide strategies outlined emphasize the uniqueness of the Corridor and the importance of placemaking to attract private investment, spur redevelopment, and highlight its historical assets, all of which enhance the attractiveness and economic value of the area. This Plan also prioritizes transportation connections, safety, and corridor-wide mobility as central to Route 1's health and redevelopment potential.

This Plan gives specific attention to the unique character, challenges, and opportunities of the Route 1 Corridor, and should be read as a supplement to the broader policies and implementing actions of HoCo By Design. Also, three Route 1 Corridor physical assessment reports were drafted in 2020 as products of an extensive master planning process conducted from 2018 to 2020. The assessments evaluated three general topics: market and demographic trends, transportation and transit, and land use and urban design. The assessments presented historical context, identified existing conditions and emerging trends, and listed topics for further study in the General Plan update. The combination of these assessments and the strategy presented in this Plan serve as a long-range plan for the Route 1 Corridor.

# INTRODUCTION

The Route 1 Corridor spans the entire length of Route 1, also known as Washington Boulevard, which extends nearly 12 miles through Howard County. Land east of Route 1 to Anne Arundel County and west to Interstate 95 is included in the Route 1 Corridor. The boundaries of the Corridor are depicted in Map RTE 1-1.

The Route 1 Corridor serves the easternmost part of Howard County. The 'Washington and Baltimore Turnpike' opened in the early 1800s, connecting the District of Columbia, Baltimore, and Philadelphia to the north. Once the interstate system was constructed, Route 1 served as the main north-south highway connecting the East Coast from Maine to Florida. The Route 1 Corridor also supported the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad, with multiple stations along the way. Before Columbia was built in the late 1960s, the Corridor was the epicenter of commercial activity for the County. Consequently, the area was historically zoned for both industrial and supporting commercial uses, and the roadway was designed to support the movement of goods and people regionally. The land use patterns were typically characterized by motels and hotels, roadside restaurants, trucking terminals, warehouses, and various other uses. Many long-standing industrial uses still exist today.

In 2018, the County launched a Route 1 Corridor master planning initiative to develop recommendations for revitalization strategies specific to Route 1. Since the HoCo By Design General Plan update was launched while the Route 1 Corridor master planning effort was underway, that initiative was woven into HoCo By Design, including reports and recommendations based on community input received and an evaluation of conditions along the Corridor. Data was incorporated into HoCo By Design's countywide analysis and modeling, allowing for a more comprehensive evaluation of the Corridor relative to Howard County as a whole.



B&O Railroad bridge construction in Elkridge on Route 1, photo circa 1931.

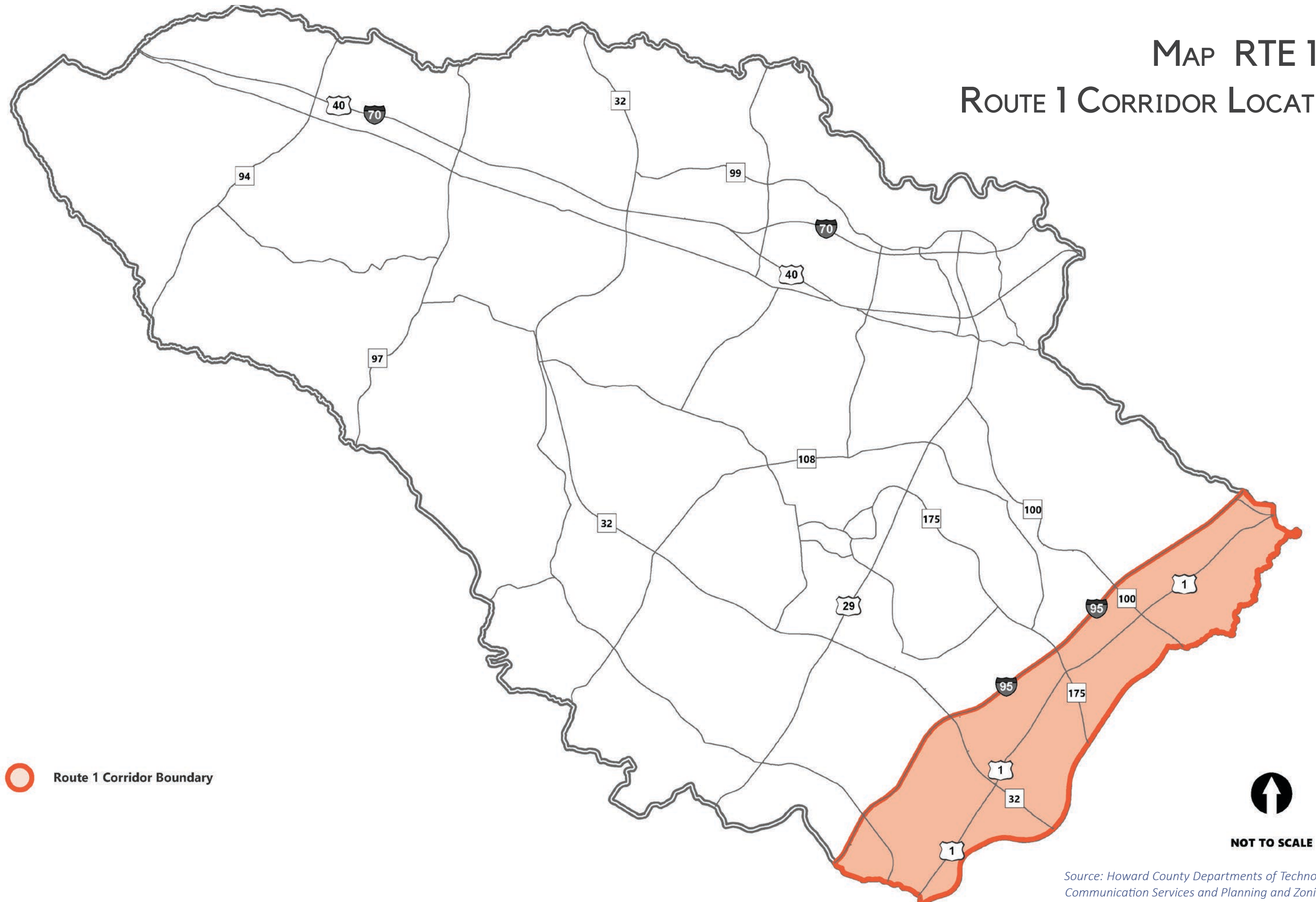


The 'Washington and Baltimore Turnpike' opened in the early 1800s, connecting the District of Columbia, Baltimore, and Philadelphia to the north. Photo circa 1940.




This portion of Route 1 was built in the 1920s to bypass Main Street Elkridge, photo circa 1940s.

# MAP RTE 1-1: ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR LOCATION



 Route 1 Corridor Boundary

  
**NOT TO SCALE**

Source: Howard County Departments of Technology and Communication Services and Planning and Zoning, 2023

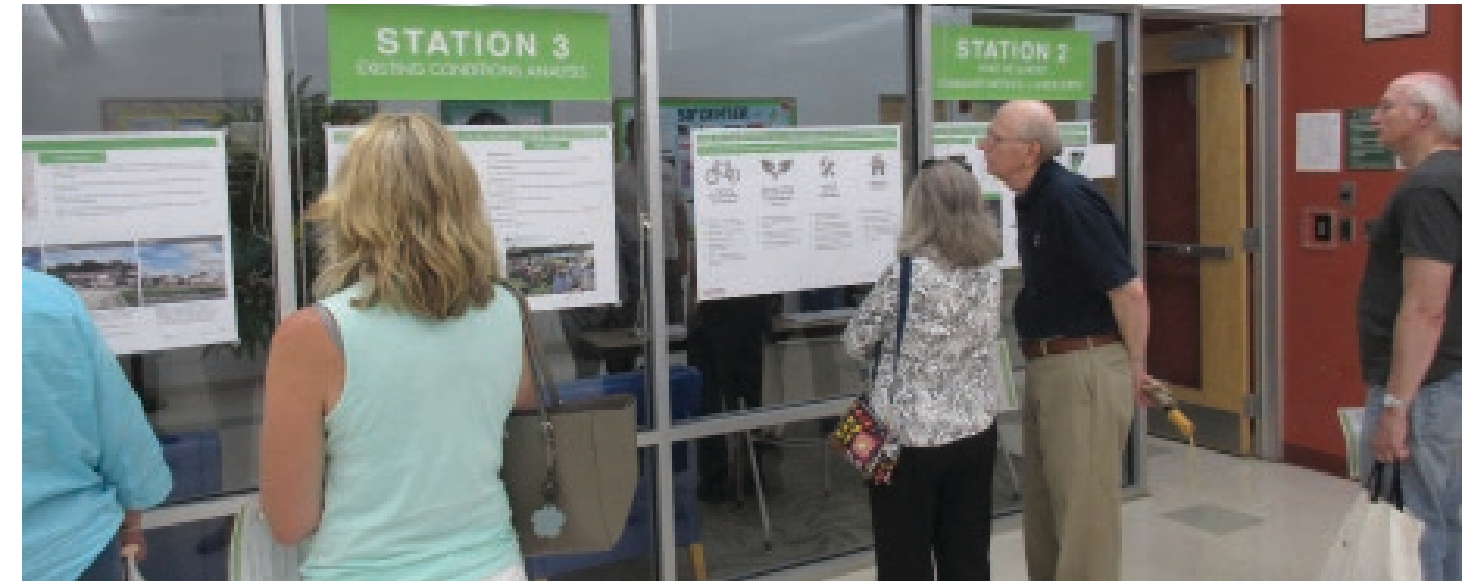
# WHAT WE HEARD

A public engagement process for the Route 1 planning initiative began in 2018 and used in-person meetings and online tools to share information, collect input, brainstorm new ideas, and provide feedback on early strategies for the Corridor. Community input demonstrated a strong desire to see elements of the Corridor redeveloped, with limited, targeted, new residential opportunities that feature integrated amenities, such as new coffee shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, and other retail stores. In an online survey over the summer of 2019, responders' top three descriptors for the future Route 1 Corridor were mixed-use, connected, and walkable. While safe, green, and affordable rounded off the top six descriptors, participants remained concerned about the adequacy of public infrastructure in the Corridor, such as parks, schools, and roads, that may be impacted by an influx of new residential units. Some participants noted that new residential development provided relatively affordable housing opportunities for the Corridor's workforce and first-time homebuyers. This sentiment is supported by data reflecting that housing costs in the Route 1 Corridor are generally lower than the county average.

Community members supported future incremental improvements to public transit to better serve existing users and provide enhanced transit services as future ridership demands grow. For instance, several neighborhoods along Washington Boulevard are within walking distance of one of the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) Camden Line train stations, but poor sidewalk connectivity and limited service impedes use. Traffic accident analyses and community input identified major safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists when traveling along Washington Boulevard and some of its connected roadways. Redeveloping portions of the Corridor to feature mixed-use activity centers could incorporate desired commercial uses, enhance public transit options, and prioritize bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements. Some participants acknowledged that additional growth is needed to justify the level of county and state investment required to make these improvements a reality. In some cases, this level of mixed-use redevelopment would change the character of existing areas and could conflict with the area's current and legacy industrial uses.

Community input was used to develop the Route 1 Corridor Market and Trends Assessment. The Assessment recognizes the strength of the Corridor's industrial nature, which is a key asset for the County. The Assessment supports efforts to retain as much of the area's industrial base as possible, especially as neighboring jurisdictions along Interstate 95 convert their industrial, warehousing, and manufacturing spaces to alternative uses—strengthening Howard County's market position. Small- to medium-sized facilities are in the greatest demand. The economic success of the Corridor is supported by trends across the economy, especially as e-commerce grows and the need for near-city distribution centers increases. Small businesses and locally-owned food processing, logistics, and manufacturing companies are seeking to purchase small- and medium-sized buildings to ensure long-term stability. This is particularly true for Route 1, given its strategic proximity to Baltimore/Washington International (BWI) Thurgood Marshall Airport, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. Additionally, Route 1 must accommodate new office and flex space, especially to serve the cybersecurity and information systems sectors that support nearby Fort Meade. It should also be noted that, just as the housing market in the Route 1 Corridor tends to be more affordable than the rest of the County, so are leases for office and commercial spaces, making it an area with a lower barrier for entry for new and growing businesses.

Information shared by the community was used to shape policies presented in this Plan. The community engagement process for the Plan can be found in the Route 1 Assessments: Executive Summary which is available from the Department of Planning and Zoning.



## ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR TERMS

**Flex Space:** Primarily a single-story building that can be used as both a warehouse space and an office, and can be modified to accommodate the individual needs of the tenant.

**Gateways:** Recognizable entrances that distinguish the Route 1 Corridor (or any area) from adjacent areas and communicate to visitors, residents, and others that they have entered a special place.

**Infill Development:** A form of new development occurring in an already developed area, such as within a parking lot of an existing commercial or office area, or within an existing neighborhood. Infill development can occur at different scales, such as a larger infill development in a commercial area versus a small-scale infill development of a new home or homes in an existing neighborhood.

**Maker Economy:** Small-scale manufacturing that is emerging as a potential powerhouse for building strong local economies. An example is a makerspace or a physical location where people gather to share resources, work on projects, network, and build.

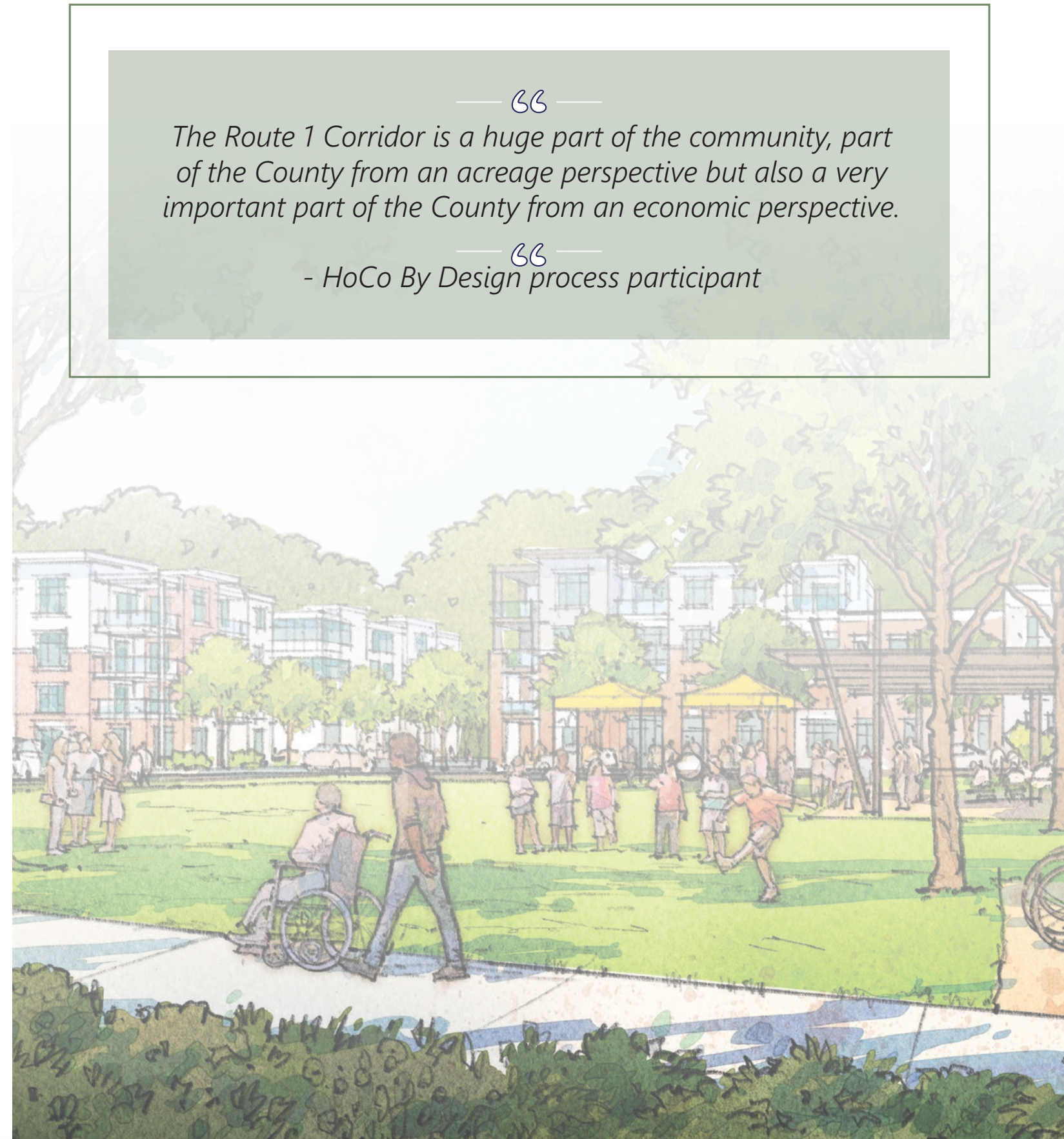
**Placemaking:** Refers to community design that prioritizes the human experience as a pedestrian at street level, emphasizing public spaces, building placement, and aesthetic that combine to impart a unique, inviting, and memorable feel.

**Redevelopment:** A form of new development that is comparable to infill development in that it occurs in an already developed area but also involves demolition of existing buildings.

**Revitalization:** A comprehensive rebuilding strategy that will lead to expanding and attracting employment, shopping, housing, healthcare and supportive services, community amenities, and transportation options.

— ☺ —  
*The Route 1 Corridor is a huge part of the community, part of the County from an acreage perspective but also a very important part of the County from an economic perspective.*

— ☺ —  
*- HoCo By Design process participant*



# VISION FOR THE CORRIDOR

The vision for the Route 1 Corridor in Howard County focuses on preserving Washington Boulevard as an industrial employment and transportation corridor. It would include a series of targeted and redeveloped activity centers with a mix of uses connected to regional transit. Throughout the Corridor, the existing employment base and residential communities will be strengthened through placemaking, historic resource preservation, strategic environmental health protections, new passive and active open spaces, economic development incentives, and multi-modal transportation and accessibility improvements. Within the targeted activity centers, redevelopment that allows a flexible mix of uses, including civic, residential, commercial, retail, entertainment, and light industrial that serves the community and offers opportunities for small businesses to thrive, is encouraged. Diverse employment uses, with a focus on non-automobile-oriented businesses fronting Washington Boulevard, will be encouraged along with new economic sectors such as a "Maker Economy," to create a sense of place unique to Route 1.

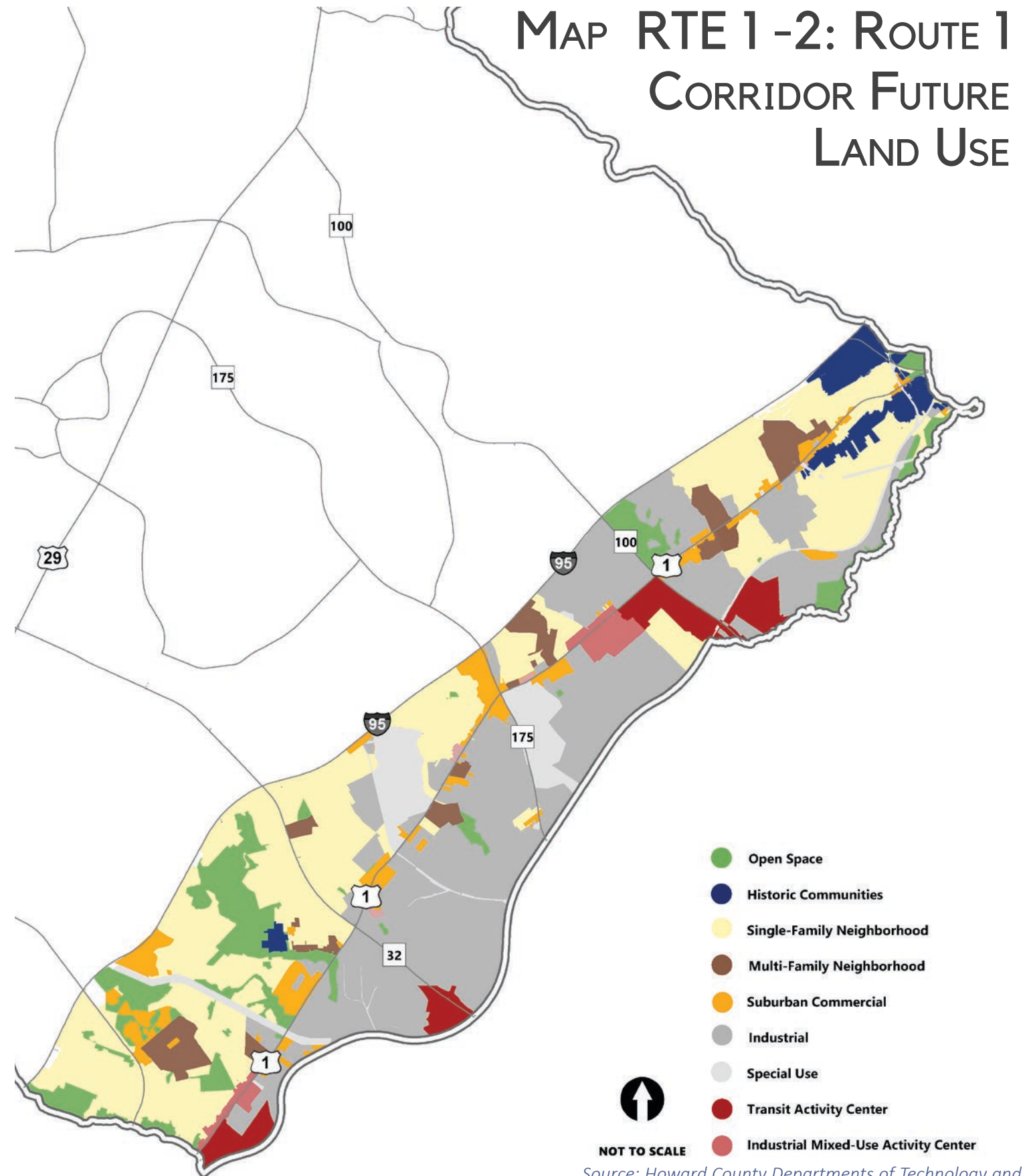
## Future Land Use Map and Zoning

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) supports the vision for the Corridor as it clearly identifies areas intended for future or continued industrial, residential, and commercial uses. This identification will provide greater predictability for the comprehensive rezoning process. The overall mix of land uses corridor-wide are envisioned to remain largely the same; however, within activity centers, most land uses are envisioned to change. Specifically, activity centers are envisioned to include a mix of residential, open space, and commercial uses and, in certain areas, will continue to allow light industrial, thus minimizing the loss of industrial land.

## Current Land Use and Zoning Overview

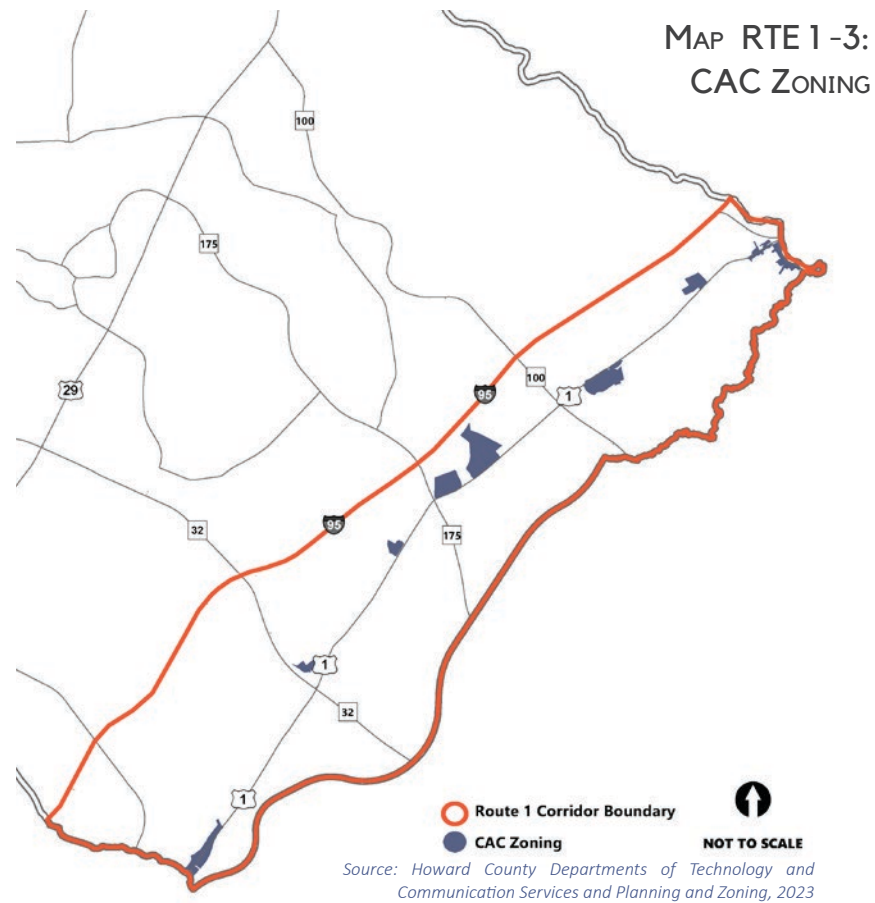
The Route 1 Corridor is approximately 14,000 acres in size and comprises 8% of Howard County's land area. Current land uses in the Route 1 Corridor include industrial (30%), residential (29%), open space (18%), governmental/institutional (13%), commercial (9%), and mixed-use (1%). Manufacturing zoning districts (M-1 and M-2) cover almost 38% of the Corridor.

Mixed-use employment zoning districts in the Route 1 Corridor include the following: Corridor Employment-Continuing Light Industrial (CE-CLI) at 7%, Corridor Activity Center-Continuing Light Industrial (CAC-CLI) at 3%, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at 3%, Planned Employment Center (PEC) at 2.6%, New Town (NT) at 0.13%, Planned Office Research (POR) at 0.10%, and a combination of commercial zoning districts (Business Local or B-1, Business Local-Commercial Redevelopment or B-1-CR, and Business General or B-2) at 2%. Chart RTE 1-1 presents information on the overall zoning in the Route 1 Corridor.



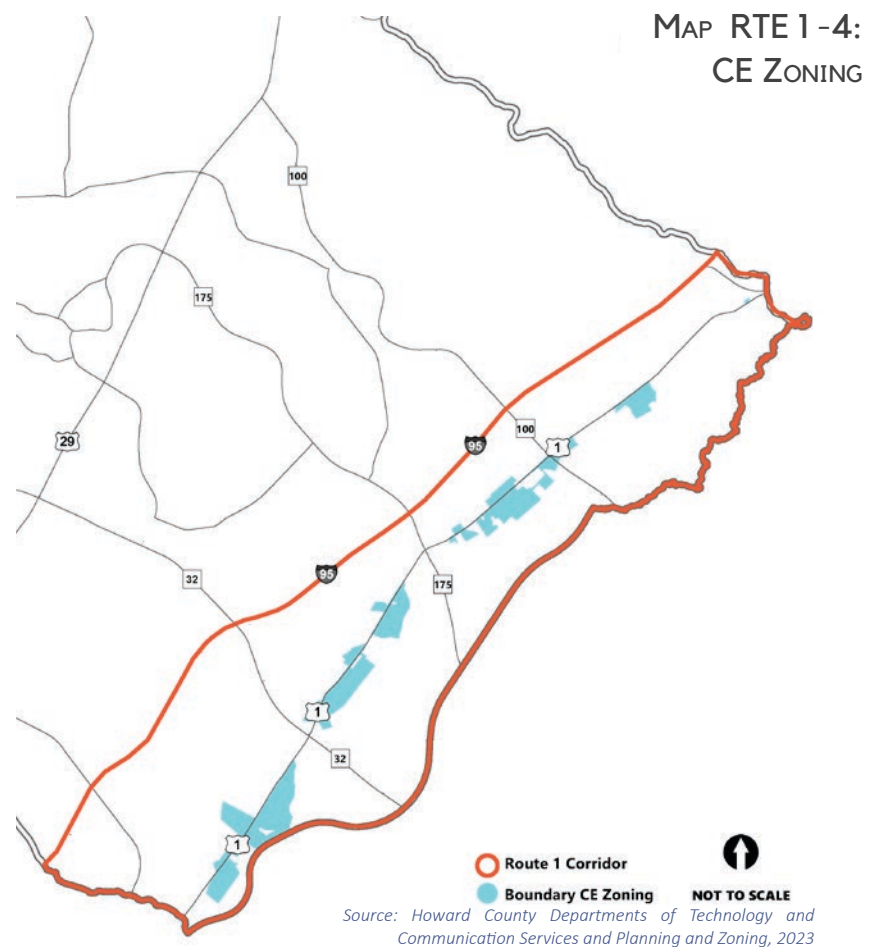
## Route 1 Corridor Activity Center Zone

As shown on Map RTE 1-3, the Route 1 Corridor includes 1,800 parcels—almost 400 acres—that are zoned Corridor Activity Center (CAC). While CAC is defined as a mixed-use zone with allowable uses such as live-work units, office, recreation/entertainment, cultural facilities, restaurants, and drinking establishments, the results have been predominately residential-only communities with limited retail.



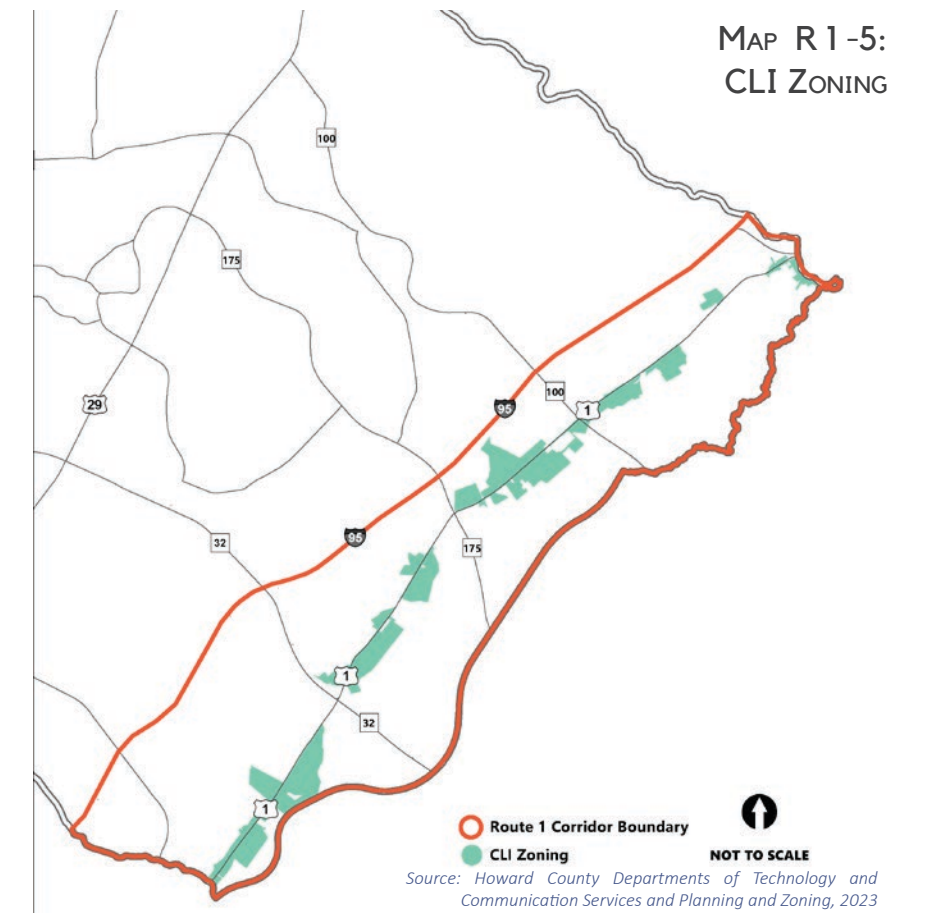
## Route 1 Corridor Employment District

The Corridor Employment (CE) Zoning District is intended to encourage office, flex, and light industrial development and redevelopment near Route 1 while improving the appearance of the Route 1 streetscape, enhancing traffic safety, and better accommodating public transit and pedestrian travel. As shown on Map RTE 1-4, nearly 900 acres have been mapped into this district.



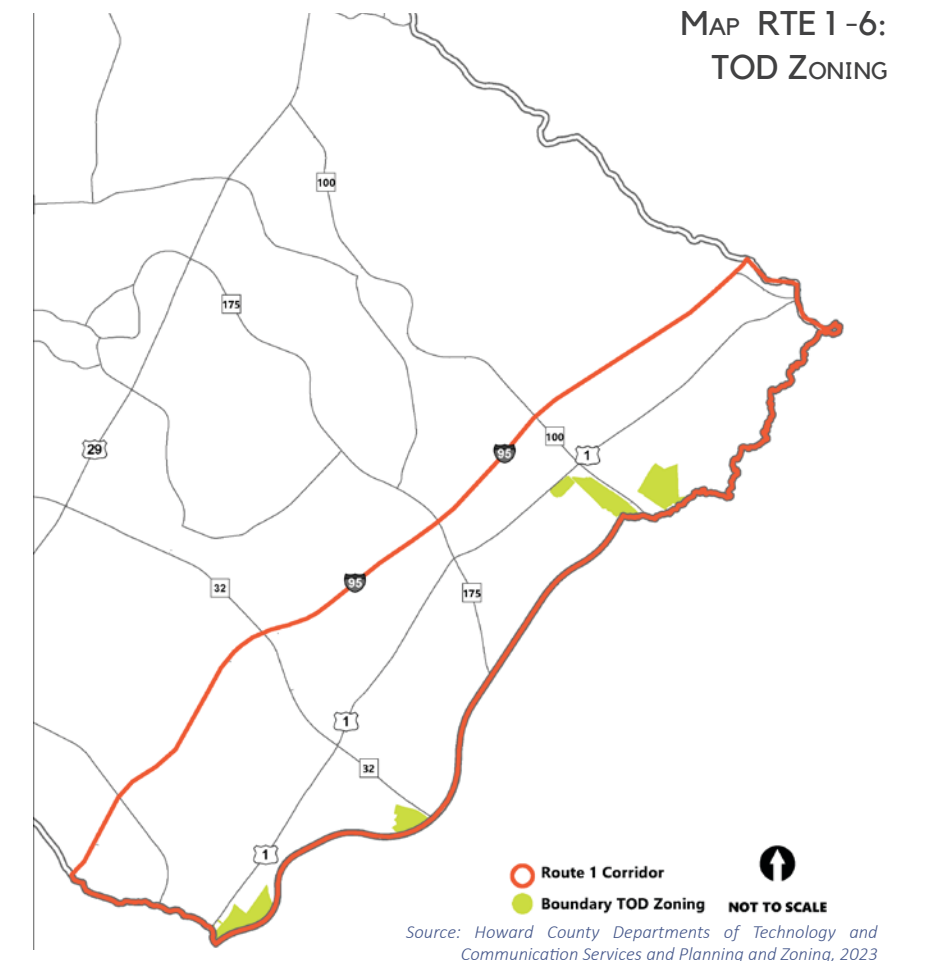
## Route 1 Corridor Continuing Light Industrial

The Continuing Light Industrial (CLI) is an overlay zoning district that was established to allow the continuing use of existing warehousing and light industrial buildings in the CE and CAC Zoning Districts. This use within this overlay district would only apply to buildings that were developed for these uses prior to the creation of these two zones. The CLI overlay district was intended to protect and promote owner investment in existing buildings and site improvements. Map RTE 1-5 shows the location of the CLI zone in the Corridor.



## Route 1 Corridor Transit Oriented Development

As shown in Map RTE 1-6, nearly 450 acres are zoned Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the Route 1 Corridor. The TOD district provides for the development and redevelopment of parcels of land within 3,500 feet of a MARC station. The TOD district is intended to encourage a mix of residential and nonresidential uses in a development that is located and designed for safe and convenient pedestrian access by commuters using MARC trains and other public transit links.

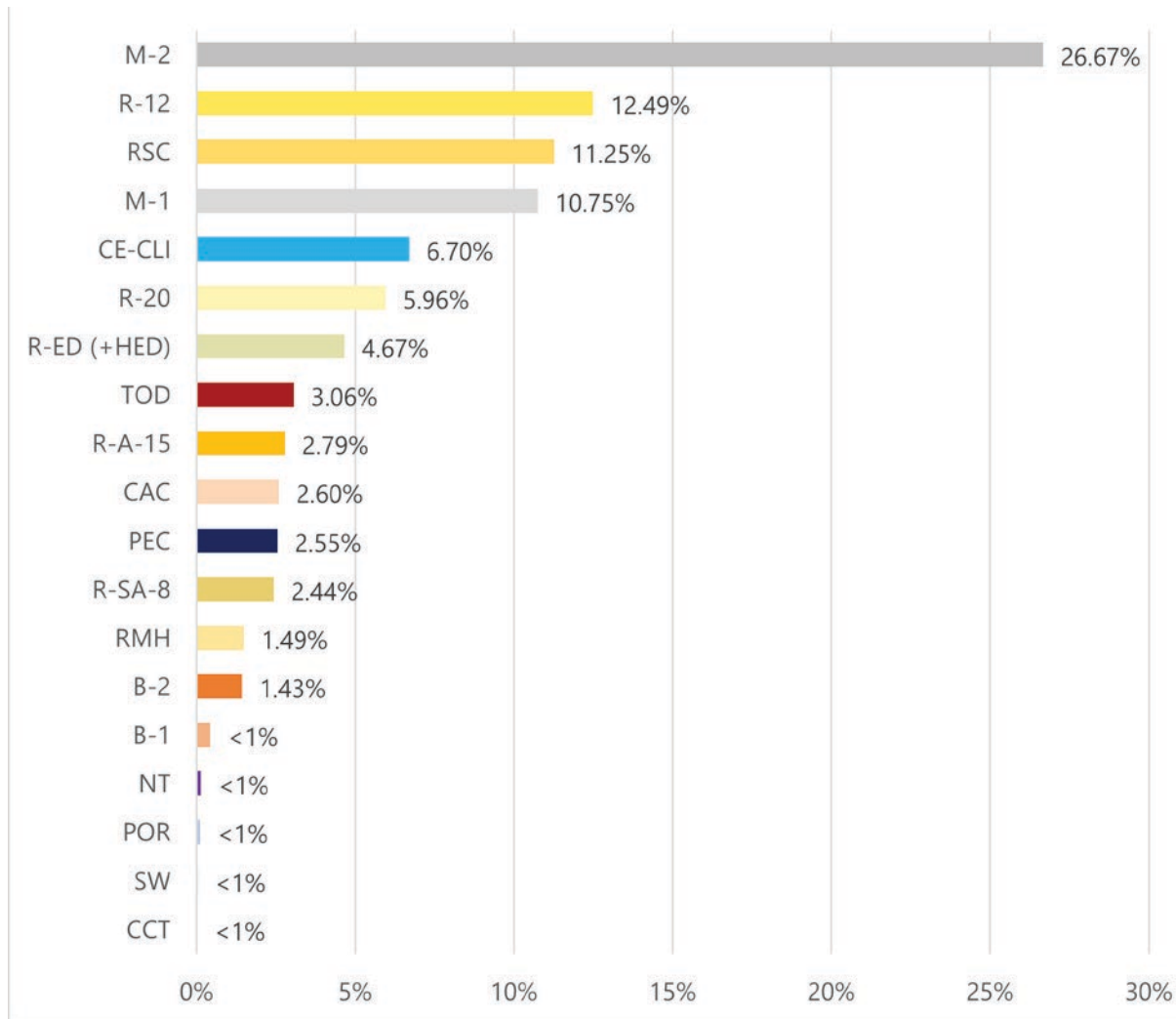


## Commercial

Less than 2% of the Corridor is zoned B-1 or B-2. These parcels host uses that meet the general and commercial service needs of corridor residents. Throughout the Route 1 Corridor, retail and service uses have largely been located on Washington Boulevard frontages and surrounding intersections. Sites are typically small-scale, with few moderate-scale sites located along the Corridor. A large part of retail and service uses in the Corridor are currently made up of a variety of automobile-related businesses, industrial uses, truck terminals, motels, junk yards, and underutilized properties. Redevelopment and infill potential for new neighborhood-serving retail and service uses has been limited by the scattered and small-scale nature of potential commercial parcels.

Commercial office uses are permitted in all Route 1 zones except for residential districts and the Solid Waste (SW) Zoning Overlay District. Office uses are principally found in the Corridor Employment (CE) Zoning District (7% of the total Corridor acreage), which is located primarily on the east side of Route 1, and the Planned Employment Center (PEC) Zoning District (3% of the total acreage), which is found on the west side of Route 1 and located in the more than 100-acre mixed-use Emerson community. Although the CE district is intended to encourage office, flex, and light industrial uses in the Route 1 Corridor, industrial is the main type of use found in this zoning district.

**Chart RTE 1-1: Zoning Makeup Route 1 Corridor**



Source: Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2023

## Industrial

Approximately one-third of the land in the Corridor is zoned M-1 or M-2, the County's industrial zoning districts. As mentioned above, the CE Zoning District adds another 7% of corridor acreage for industrial uses, however these site could be redeveloped to non-industrial uses under current zoning. Warehouse/distribution, industrial, and auto services have been the major types of new nonresidential developments, as the Corridor struggled to attract other nonresidential development types. Industrial and warehouse/distribution uses are concentrated in the areas east of Route 1 and in between Route 32 and Route 100.

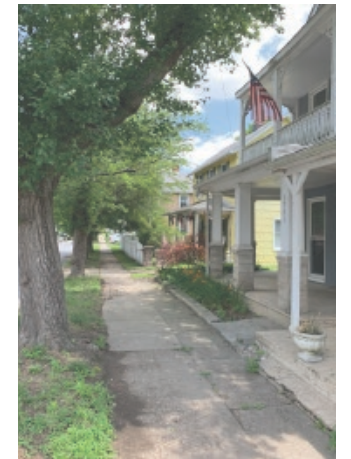


## Residential

The area's existing residential zoning includes R-12 (12.5%), R-20 (6%), R-SA-8 (2.4%), R-A-15 (2.8%), R-ED (4.7%), RMH (1.5%), and RSC (11.3%). Neighborhoods in the Corridor are grounded in the history of its gateway river's edge communities, such as the core and main street area of Elkridge, whose settlement dates to colonial times, and the mill town of Savage. The historic characters differentiate these communities from the rest of the land use patterns along Route 1.



Other older, stable, suburban communities and neighborhoods exist off Route 1, such as Harwood Park. Harwood Park, located off Loudon Avenue in Elkridge, is Howard County's first planned community, created in 1893. It features different housing styles and mature vegetation throughout the neighborhood. The streets are gridded and tree-lined, with a mix of attached and detached homes built over many decades. While some of the homes are quite old, many of the homes were built between 1970 and the present.



## SAVAGE

The Savage community retains much of its formative architecture and character, as exemplified by early American industrialist millworkers' brick duplexes, the Savage Mill Manor House built in the French Empire Style, the Italianate-style brick Free Mason's Solomon Lodge #121, and many factory town houses built between the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to original building uses, there are many adaptive reuse structures from the Industrial Revolution era (such as Savage Mill dating back to the 1820s, Savage Mill Company Store built in the Romanesque Revival style, and the Richardsonian Romanesque style Carroll Baldwin Memorial Hall built in the 1920s).



## LAWYERS HILL

Lawyers Hill, located on the northern end of the Corridor, is significant for its diverse collection of Victorian-era architecture and for its role as a 19th-century summer community and early commuter suburb for prominent Baltimoreans. While the houses vary in style, they are closely compatible in setting, scale, and materials. Houses were built into hillsides and natural landscapes. Most of the buildings have a deep setback from the narrow and winding roads. The houses are surrounded by mature trees that also provide leaf canopies over the roads. The Lawyers Hill Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.



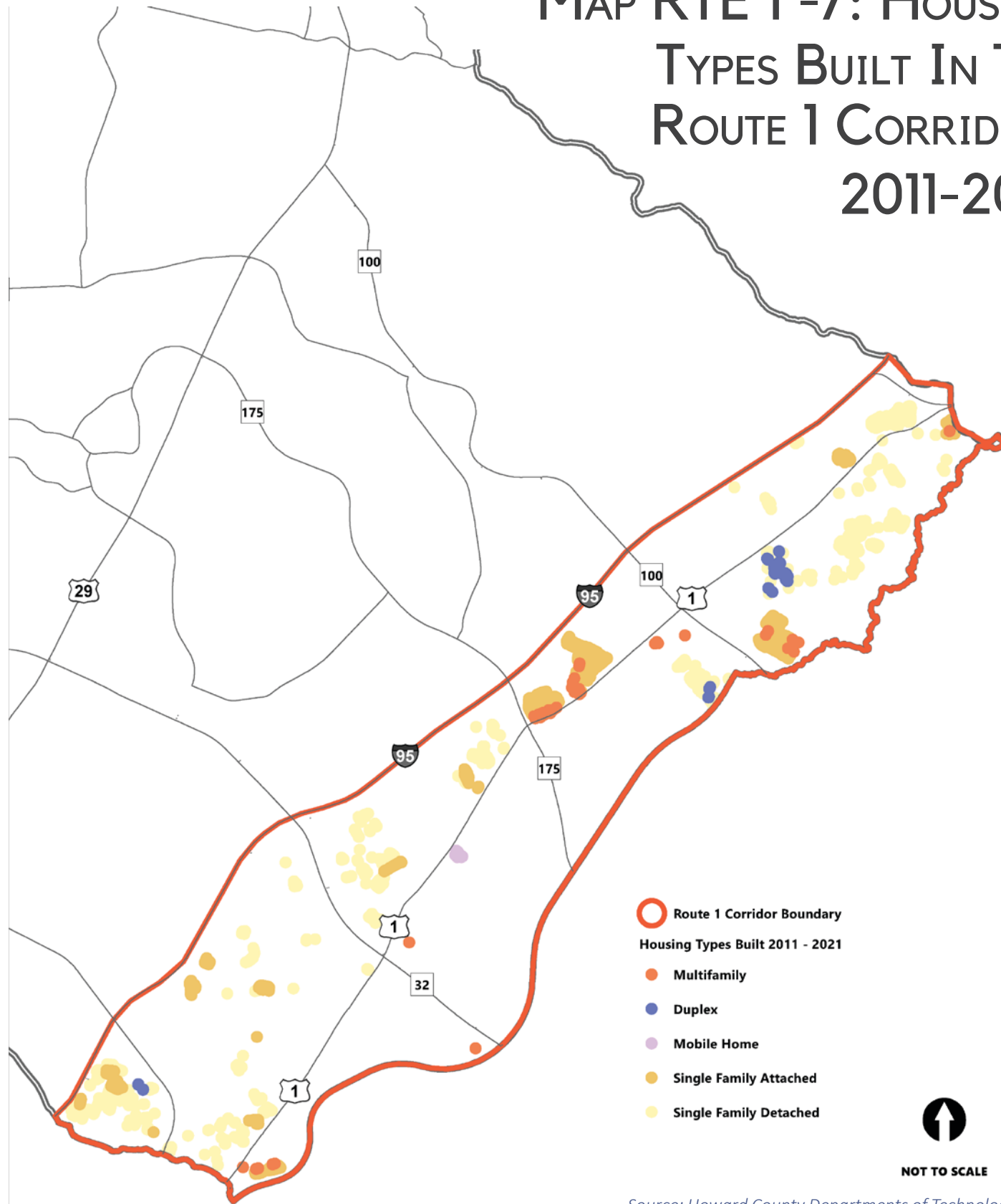
Newer residential development consists primarily of multi-family and single-family attached housing in mixed-use zoning districts, with some single-family detached homes in select locations. The CAC and TOD Zoning Districts, while intended to provide a mix of uses, have primarily yielded high-density residential development with limited nonresidential in some locations. Between 2006 and 2020, development activity (built and planned) along the Corridor has been predominantly residential, yielding 8,021 residential units in 34 projects (those larger than 10 units). Since the creation of the CAC and TOD Zoning Districts in 2004 to 2022, there have been 5,939 residential units built, all of which are multi-family (60%) and single-family attached (40%) units.

Corridor-wide, 3,016 residential units have been built between 2011 and 2021. The majority of units built in the last decade are multi-family (47%) but also include single-family attached (39%), single-family detached (13%), and duplexes (1%). As shown in Map RTE 1-7, multi-family housing is varied and spread across eight zoning districts, including CAC-CLI, R-A-15, TOD, and others. Multi-family is generally scattered amongst a variety of automobile-related businesses, industrial uses, truck terminals, motels, junkyards, and underutilized properties. Townhouses tend to be larger and include ground floor garages with rear entrances. Multi-family apartments are primarily located along Route 1 and are clustered closer to Laurel or in the center of the Corridor near Route 175. While many of these communities are placed on street grids and include structured and screened parking, the developments are rarely interconnected or include enough bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure to encourage biking or walking.



Three legacy mobile home parks remain along Washington Boulevard. They typically front the roadway, adjoin more industrial land uses, and have units that are densely placed.

# MAP RTE 1 -7: HOUSING TYPES BUILT IN THE ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR, 2011-2021



- Route 1 Corridor Boundary
- Housing Types Built 2011 - 2021**
- Multifamily
- Duplex
- Mobile Home
- Single Family Attached
- Single Family Detached



Source: Howard County Departments of Technology and Communication Services and Planning and Zoning, 2023

## MARKET DEMAND

The Route 1 Corridor plays a premier role in generating employment opportunities within the region. It contains approximately 25% of the jobs in the County and, given its logistical location and strong real estate market demand, it has a long history of serving as a primary distribution corridor for the Baltimore-Washington region and the East Coast.

### Residential Demand

Residential demand has been strong and will remain strong in the Route 1 Corridor. Because of the Corridor's designation as a Growth and Revitalization Area in PlanHoward 2030 and its subsequent comprehensive rezoning, residential development activity there has increased in recent decades. Since 2010, the Corridor has seen an average annual growth rate of 2.8%, primarily due to the recent rise in residential development. Population in the Corridor grew from 37,244 in 2000 to 57,139 in 2020, accounting for roughly one-quarter of Howard County's population growth. Larger-scale development activity in the Route 1 Corridor was predominantly residential between 2006 and 2020. During this time period, 8,021 residential units in 34 projects (those larger than 10 units) were either built, under construction, or in plan review. To achieve a greater balance between nonresidential and residential growth, the County should target the construction of new residential units in activity centers and encourage nonresidential opportunities everywhere else in the Corridor.

Residential development has yielded a greater value per square foot in the Corridor than nonresidential development. Of 180 nonresidential properties built between 1990 and 2015, the average building was valued at \$61.25 per square foot, almost half of the value (\$106.99) of the 6,187 residential properties developed during the same period. This difference suggests that Route 1 should seek to attract higher value-added nonresidential development types, such as office and retail, to better balance the resulting development mix.

— “ —

*I would like to see Route 1 be the opportunity to concentrate tax growth with commercial and manufacturing. We say it's our jobs corridor, but I continuously see manufacturing looked at as a place to put more housing. Think that's very damaging to County's economy and tax base.*

— “ —

- HoCo By Design process participant

## Nonresidential Market Demand

According to the Maryland Department of Labor 2nd Quarter 2019 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), businesses in the Route 1 Corridor employed a total of 43,239 employees in 2019. The wholesale trade industry is the largest employer in the Corridor. Other significant employment sectors include manufacturing, trucking, construction, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, storage facilities, food production, and accommodation and food services. These employers are anchored by industrial, manufacturing, and flex space offered along the Corridor. However, several underutilized properties in the area offer opportunities to support existing or attract new employers. Retaining industrial land and creating opportunities for expansion—while a chief goal—should be balanced with efforts to create a safer and more attractive Corridor.

Table RTE 1-1 - Estimated 2040 Demand, Square Feet and Units									
	Retail SF	Office SF	Industrial SF	Flex SF	Hotel SF	SFD Units	SFA Units	APT (Rental) Units	Condo Units
Elkridge East (Bounded by 95 to West, 175 to South)	237,000	787,746	2,831,817	232,160	188	1,004	1,356	2,067	257
Southeast (Bounded by 95 to West, 175 to North)	203,300	1,001,554	2,430,073	271,326	199	791	955	1,686	135
<b>Total Route 1</b>	<b>440,300</b>	<b>1,789,300</b>	<b>5,261,890</b>	<b>503,486</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>1,795</b>	<b>2,311</b>	<b>3,753</b>	<b>392</b>

*Source: RCLCO Market Assessment, 2020*

## Industrial and Manufacturing Base

Based on QCEW data, it is estimated that there were roughly 28,698 industrial/manufacturing/warehouse jobs located within the Route 1 Corridor in the second quarter of 2019. According to CoStar commercial reality data from 2022, the industrial building inventory in the Route 1 Corridor was 29,050,000 square feet. According to RCLCO's Market Research and Demand Forecast completed in 2020, the Corridor could expect demand for an additional 5,261,890 square feet of new building space through 2040 (See Table RTE 1-1 above). With the limited availability of large industrially-zoned properties, the County should closely manage how this limited resource is developed over time, including zoning for multi-story facilities to expand capacity.

Demand for warehouse and distribution space will continue, especially given the burgeoning e-commerce industry and regional opportunities to capture this sector. New distribution spaces have located within a 15-mile radius of the Route 1 Corridor, with international facilities at BWI Airport and over 15 million square feet of new warehouse/distribution slated for Tradepoint Atlantic, formerly the Sparrows Point steel mill. Regional distribution facilities for Under Armour, Home Depot, Floor & Décor, Federal Express, and Amazon are completed. As e-commerce continues to acquire market share from traditional retailers, Howard County should expect demand to increase. While limited land is available for large distribution facilities, opportunities exist to repurpose underutilized land for such facilities. One example of such opportunities is land used by vehicle remarketing service companies adjacent to Dorsey Run Road.

## Commercial: Office and Flex Space

Historically, the Route 1 Corridor has not been conducive to traditional office development even though it is positioned between, and benefits from, the economic activities generated by Baltimore, the District of Columbia, Fort Meade, other major employment cores in Montgomery County, and the BWI Airport area of Anne Arundel County. As discussed earlier, the Corridor is dominated by industrial, warehouse distribution, industrial flex, and other land uses not typically considered attractive, and it lacks a draw for office development. With this broad mix of uses, the Corridor has not produced a location with a concentration of the types of amenities that attract traditional office users—such as walking paths, nearby restaurants, and transit. Additionally, the Corridor competes with the office market in nearby Downtown Columbia and Gateway. However, the employment sectors most likely to generate demand for future office space include: 1) Information; 2) Finance & Insurance; 3) Real Estate, Rental & Leasing; 4) Professional, Scientific, & Tech Services; 5) Management of Companies & Enterprises; 6) Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services; and 7) Public Administration (Source: EMSI, US labor market analytics and economic data). According to the Maryland Department of Labor data from 2nd Quarter 2019, the total employment in office jobs along the Route 1 Corridor is 11,675.

The concentration of secure operation centers in the Baltimore-Washington corridor is one of the highest in the nation and is comparable to regions such as San Francisco, Seattle, and Boston. Fort Meade, in neighboring Anne Arundel County, is the nation's epicenter of national security. Fort Meade houses approximately 55,000 jobs on-site and another 110,000 jobs off the base. In 2019, over 13,000 County residents worked at the Fort Meade campus. Extensive growth is projected to continue at Fort Meade in support of the National Security Agency, Defense Cyber Command, and Service Cyber Headquarters. From 2010–2020, this growth added 10,000 jobs and is projected to add upwards of 10,000 more positions to the Fort Meade workforce. Many secure operation center jobs in the County are located within the Route 1 Corridor or nearby. As this office sector continues to grow, the County should capitalize on its expansion and encourage firms to make Howard County their home.

To support a diverse economic development strategy for Howard County, the Route 1 Corridor must sustain a thriving industrial and warehouse base. County regulations and guidelines should be updated to promote new light industrial, warehouse, and flex spaces. Strategies to protect, promote, and expand existing industrial uses must be developed and implemented in coordination with the County's Economic Development Authority (HCEDA) and Office of Workforce Development (HCOWD). The Howard County Workforce Development Area 2020–2024 Local Workforce Plan identifies manufacturing and wholesale trade as priority industries. HCOWD also acknowledges that manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and data center jobs are in-demand in the County. The HCOWD has sponsored job fairs and events, including an introductory workshop on artificial intelligence (AI) in manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, which many businesses attended.



## COVID-19 AND THE OFFICE MARKET

According to the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments, office space per worker (by square footage) will continue to decline due to hybrid/remote work policies that will decrease the demand, need, and space requirements for offices. Physical and programmatic office needs will vary by user, as some office sectors are more suitable to accommodate work at home while others require an office environment. Office users who require innovation, collaboration, and in-person knowledge sharing will continue to need space to facilitate that collaboration. Therefore, a healthy mix of office buildings distributed throughout the County is necessary for a strong economy. It will be necessary for Howard County to prioritize office development in the Route 1 Corridor post-Covid and to foster the types of amenity-rich activity centers that employees and companies demand.

Office brokerage firms like Cushman and Wakefield are forecasting that office vacancy globally will return to 2019 levels by 2025. Traditional office development should be targeted in the right locations, where placemaking and other amenities are present and adjacent land use impacts would not deter its development. Since the Route 1 Corridor is an important area that supports surrounding businesses and major employers, the County should ensure sufficient zoning for office and flex space is available to accommodate the growing cybersecurity industry throughout the Corridor in traditional office developments and mixed-use activity centers.



## Commercial: Retail

Route 1 has not yet been able to attract significant private investment beyond industrial, warehouse, and multi-family development. Despite population gains over the past several decades, the Route 1 area lacks the full variety of retail and service options that other parts of Howard and surrounding Counties enjoy.

While the Corridor's retail inventory has grown to over 1.6 million square feet over the last 10 years, it has not kept pace with residential growth. The future of retail along the Corridor is uncertain and will largely be driven by new household demand and availability of land for larger retail developments. New housing units projected through 2040 will generate increased demand for retail goods and services, along with the respective space to support these businesses. Based on the current project pipeline and available zoning, the County expects 5,721 new housing units could be constructed and occupied within the Route 1 Corridor over the next 10 years. These households are projected to support over 440,000 square feet of new retail space through 2040.

### RTE 1-1 Policy Statement

Support, retain, and grow the Route 1 Corridor's employment base.

### Implementing Actions

1. Focus development and redevelopment incentives for industrial and manufacturing uses within the Corridor.
2. Integrate the goals of protecting, promoting, and expanding existing industrial uses outside targeted activity centers when updating Corridor programs and policies, to the maximum extent possible.
3. Promote development of new light industrial and flex spaces along Route 1 through guidelines, zoning updates, and county incentives. Establish a clear definition of flex spaces in the updated Zoning Regulations and identify optimal locations for them in the Corridor.
4. Ensure zoning updates rely on the Future Land Use Map to determine the appropriate zoning district.
5. Evaluate opportunities to repurpose underutilized land outside activity centers for large industrial users.
6. Ensure programs and measures to support and retain industrial and manufacturing uses in the Corridor are adequately funded in county operating and capital budgets.
7. Support innovative workforce training, certification programs, and apprenticeship opportunities for in-demand jobs in the Corridor (manufacturing, warehousing, transportation and logistics, and data center operations).
8. Target new retail development in the mixed-use activity centers to support the needs of new and existing residents in the Corridor.
9. Continue to accommodate a variety of office types for a variety of users throughout the Corridor.
10. Target new residential development in the mixed-use activity centers to support opportunities for traditional office development and balance residential and nonresidential growth.
11. Locate traditional office development in and adjacent to amenity-rich activity centers.
12. Evaluate multi-story facilities to expand capacity and employment growth.



## CHALLENGES TO CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION

While the Route 1 Corridor is an important economic engine for the County, it hasn't generated significant private investment beyond industrial, warehouse, and multi-family residential. Attracting mixed-use redevelopment has been a challenge and large pockets of disinvestment remain along the entire length of the Corridor. The following are the primary challenges that are limiting economic growth and redevelopment in the Corridor:

1. Residential-commercial mix imbalance
2. Disconnected neighborhoods and inaccessible amenities
3. Conflicting and nonconforming uses
4. A need for land assemblage to foster redevelopment

### Residential-Commercial Imbalance

A principal challenge has been achieving a balanced residential-commercial mix, as proposed in PlanHoward 2030 and the subsequent 2013 comprehensive rezoning. While there has been significant residential development activity, commercial retail activity and office activity have not been at the anticipated (or desired) levels. There are limited retail-friendly parcels for shopping centers within the one-acre to five-acre range in the Corridor. There are also very few larger parcels (over 100 acres) along Route 1 that are suitable for large-scale retail developments. Additionally, the viability of retail along Route 1 is constrained by well-established shopping destinations within three to five miles of the Corridor that compete for market share.

As stated earlier, nonresidential development is valued lower than residential in the real estate market. However, commercial property pays a higher property tax rate than its residential counterpart. Businesses also generate personal property, spending, and payroll taxes, all of which amount to higher local tax revenue and added stimulus to the Howard County economy than residential property. A healthy mix of residential to commercial property is essential to a fiscally sustainable County.

As such, the Corridor Activity Center (CAC) Zoning District was established along Route 1 "to provide for the development of pedestrian-oriented, urban activity centers with a mix of uses which may include retail, service, office, and residential." To achieve this mix, the zoning district established a minimum commercial space requirement. This requirement has been reduced multiple times through Zoning Regulation Amendments and finally eliminated through an in-lieu fee option allowing full buy-down of the commercial requirement. As noted in the 2018 Land Development Regulation Assessment, many stakeholders indicated that the commercial requirement in the CAC district was difficult to meet, given retail market conditions along the Corridor. Many of the commercial spaces built in the CAC district have remained vacant, with property owners reporting difficulty attracting ground floor retail due to small retail space, low street visibility, lack of obvious parking options, and a lack of critical population density because of disconnected residential islands that limit walkable access. Given the challenges commercial properties face along the Corridor and the dispersed nature of CAC parcels, HoCo By Design seeks to focus future commercial development in specific activity center nodes that can provide critical mass to support viable commercial investment, as described further in "Activity Centers in the Route 1 Corridor."

## Disconnected Neighborhoods and Inaccessible Amenities

Decades of transportation and land use policies that prioritized the automobile and truck traffic along Route 1 have left many neighborhoods in the Corridor disconnected and isolated. Unlike Columbia and other parts of the County, sidewalks between neighborhoods and to destinations are missing. The Corridor has an absence of safe and well-designed travel options for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities. In addition, following comprehensive zoning changes in 2013, new residential development occurred along the Corridor, largely scattered amongst a variety of automobile-related businesses, industrial uses, truck terminals, motels, junk yards, and underutilized properties. While many Corridor businesses serve a variety of local and regional service needs, there are gaps in terms of meeting the daily retail service needs of the current and growing residential population.

The current commercial uses in the Corridor lack modern amenities that attract people and create a cohesive connected community, such as walking paths, open gathering places, restaurants, and proximity to public transit. Supporting new public places for special events in the Corridor would give people a “third place” (other than work or home) to connect and socialize.

Better integration of public gathering spaces and plazas are encouraged in any new development or redevelopment. These spaces should be usable and well-placed, and should include a combination of hardscape, landscaped plantings, and amenities such as public art. The formal gathering spaces need to have the right edges to create places that encourage community interaction in a shared environment.

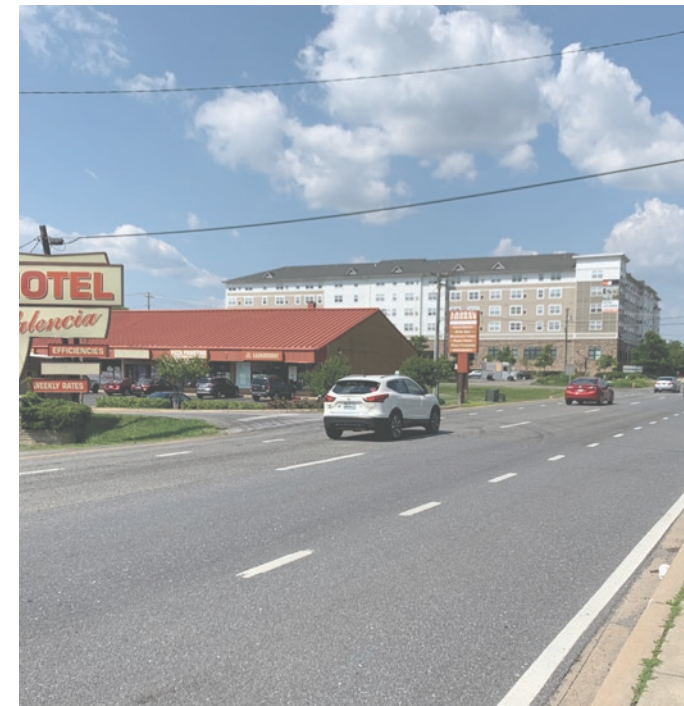


In addition, the absence of neighborhood-serving commercial uses, such as restaurants (fine dining, family style, and cafes), clothing stores, shoe stores, department stores, and electronics and appliance stores, requires

residents to travel outside the Corridor to meet daily needs. To function like a “complete community,” the Corridor needs a strong portfolio of these services and requires neighborhoods to be connected to nearby shopping, recreation, open space, and entertainment destinations.

## Conflicting and Nonconforming Uses

The County has struggled with balancing the goals of revitalizing the Corridor through elimination of auto-oriented uses and providing flexible zoning so existing businesses have opportunities to reinvest and improve site conditions. The Continuing Light Industrial (CLI) Overlay Zoning District is a zoning tool that was established to accommodate existing warehouse and industrial buildings on parcels that are now zoned Corridor Employment (CE), Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Corridor Activity Center (CAC). The CLI overlay provides an option for continued operation and investment without conferring nonconforming status. However, as CE, CAC, and TOD



### Definition of A Nonconforming Use

A nonconforming use is any lawful existing use, whether of a structure or a tract of land, that does not conform to the use regulations of the zoning district in which it is located. Zoning changes in the CAC and CE districts along the Corridor have resulted in a significant number of nonconforming uses, which can lend to the perception of blight and disinvestment. For a use to be legally considered nonconforming, a confirmation process and approval are required. Some businesses may not meet the requirements to qualify for this status and therefore are limited in their ability to use their land and expand or improve the existing conditions.

parcels redevelop and include residential or other non-industrial uses, maintaining adequate buffering between longstanding industrial uses remains a challenge.

Just as the CAC and CE zones created nonconforming uses upon adoption, the future rezoning within activity centers will inevitably do the same in some instances. However, instead of establishing an overlay district, such as CLI, that allows these uses to remain, the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area has been strategically located where light industrial uses currently exist. Light industrial uses that are compatible with residential and commercial uses are intended to be permitted. For the minimal number of heavy industrial and warehousing uses within the activity centers, HoCo By Design recommends that these businesses be relocated to more appropriate, heavy, single-use, industrial zoning districts, such as M-1 and M-2. Since retaining these businesses is a priority identified in the General Plan, the County should consider providing relocation assistance to these business owners so that these thriving industries and employers can remain in the County.

## Need for Land Assemblage

Finally, redevelopment economics is a challenge given the ownership structure and size of many parcels along Route 1. The Corridor consists of a patchwork of separately owned parcels, many of which are smaller in size. The majority of parcels in the Corridor (89%) are less than one acre in size, and 83% are less than one-half acre in size. As a result, development has been driven largely by individual property owners and new businesses seeking single-site redevelopment opportunities that contain limited amenity and open space requirements. Environmental features, right-of-way acquisition, and other site constraints further render single-site redevelopment cost prohibitive.

Parcel assemblage is necessary to achieve a sizable footprint that can accommodate meaningful development/redevelopment with appropriate densities, public spaces, parking, and other site amenities. As described in the next section, the public sector can facilitate comprehensive redevelopment efforts by engaging in long-term real estate activities that could otherwise be cost prohibitive to the private sector.

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*Route 1 needs to be our "economic revitalization corridor" in the future. Big items to address include under-utilized properties, residential encroachment, and land availability. It would be great to aggregate land in the corridor, if possible.*

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*- HoCo By Design process participant*

## ROUTE 1 REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

The County stands at an important juncture to help facilitate continued revitalization of the Route 1 Corridor. This Plan is organized around six topics that will guide future development of the Corridor and fulfill its vision. These six topic areas include the following:

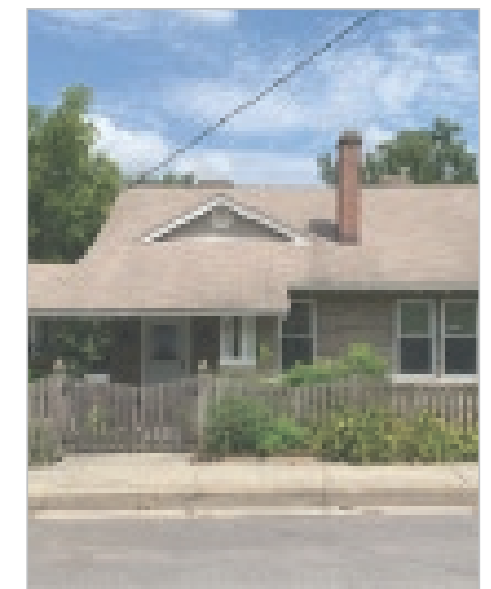
1. Attracting new public investment to the Corridor
2. Establishing activity centers to foster revitalization that promotes infill and protects existing neighborhoods
3. Encouraging private property reinvestment
4. Enhancing placemaking and design standards in the Corridor
5. Preserving corridor-wide landmarks and historical buildings
6. Protecting environmental health in the Corridor

### Prioritizing Public Investment in the Corridor

Given the market, economic, and zoning challenges outlined above, it is clear that the Corridor will not transform based on zoning alone. Rather, new tools and targeted strategies must be employed to "move the needle" and realize the type of development desired by the vision recommended in HoCo By Design.

### Redevelopment Authority

The best way to spur redevelopment that implements the recommendations of HoCo By Design is to institute a redevelopment authority. This quasi-governmental entity would serve as a single organization to represent the interests of business and property owners who could galvanize investment. Because of the challenging redevelopment economics of areas like Route 1, with many separately owned parcels and limited near-term potential for economic returns, public entities must often engage in long-term real estate activities that could



otherwise be cost prohibitive to the private sector. Increasingly, public sector stewards are engaging in land assemblage and land acquisition to aggregate parcels in groupings and amounts that justify future private sector investment. The private sector would not have sufficient resources to accomplish this assemblage on its own for redevelopment purposes. For Route 1, this type of activity would most likely be done by a well-funded redevelopment authority that would govern the redevelopment and revitalization of the Corridor. The authority could also lead branding, marketing, and placemaking efforts for the Corridor.

Allowing an entity to assemble and hold parcels enables the organization to bring in real estate partners who can help execute a redevelopment plan and achieve the vision for the Route 1 Corridor. Given its position as the landowner, such an entity could engage in a land transaction with an interested party as opportunities arise while retaining control over future uses.

Efforts by the authority could also include providing greater visibility and parking options for existing commercial spaces in multi-family communities, and supporting infill and redevelopment to connect isolated neighborhoods with new, large floorplate, commercial uses. Infill and redevelopment opportunities connecting existing neighborhoods could be further used to create a connected network of public green and open space between, within, and around residential neighborhoods.

If a redevelopment authority existed, the County could seek state-enabling legislation to create a right of first refusal that would give the County the first option to purchase when properties are presented for sale in the Corridor. The authority must be capitalized and authorized to issue debt so that it can conduct land acquisition and other property transactions. This long-term strategy could help prevent piecemeal redevelopment in the short-term and enhance the long-term development potential of sites integral to the County's redevelopment vision for the Corridor.

#### Property Tax Rate Adjustments

A reduction of the property tax rate on sites that redevelop in the Corridor could attract private investment by making the cost of doing business in Howard County more competitive. Such a tax credit program could be limited in duration and/or focused on certain types of development or renovation projects. There are multiple ways to structure a tax abatement program to ensure it is functional and flexible. The tax benefit could target sites with previous development for brownfield cleanup. It could also encourage a mix of uses, sustainable building materials, return on investment, location of investment, and the business segment of the tenant or project. Incentives should be targeted to generate economic activity in the places best suited for commercial development based on zoning, transportation access, and surrounding land use. In addition, incentives will be most effective if they are focused on key growing business segments.

— ☺ —  
*HoCo needs to do a better job preserving historical locations,  
including highlighting and respecting historical locations.  
Parts of Route 1 should be designated as historical.*

— ☺ —  
*- HoCo By Design process participant*

#### Historic Communities Designations

As shown on Map RTE 1-8, the northern and southern gateways of the Route 1 Corridor include two important communities with their own distinct historic character—Elkridge and Savage. Both Historic Communities (as identified on HoCo By Design's Future Land Use Map) include residential and nonresidential uses, with a variety of neighborhoods supported by a commercial area. There are several historic neighborhoods in Elkridge, including a commercial Main Street. These areas are listed on the Howard County Historic Sites Inventory (and explained in more detail in HoCo By Design's Quality by Design chapter). While the existing Route 1 tax credit has supported renovation of historic commercial structures, other tax credit programs, such as the property tax rate adjustment described above, could encourage further building renovation in Savage and for small businesses along Elkridge Main Street. Additional economic benefits could be derived from establishing a Main Street designation along this commercial area of Elkridge. Such benefits could include increased occupancy rates, new uses on upper floors, improvements to the area's image, increased tax base and property values, local jobs, a better business mix, building preservation, and pride in local heritage preservation.

The Savage Historic Community area is defined by the area's National Historic District boundaries and includes Savage Mill and historic Savage's commercial core. The 2019 North Laurel-Savage Sustainable Community designation also includes historic Savage Mill. The North Laurel-Savage Sustainable Community grants should continue to support the economic viability of the Mill. For more information on historic preservation efforts in Historic Communities, refer to the "Encouraging and Strengthening Historic Preservation" section in HoCo By Design's Quality By Design chapter.

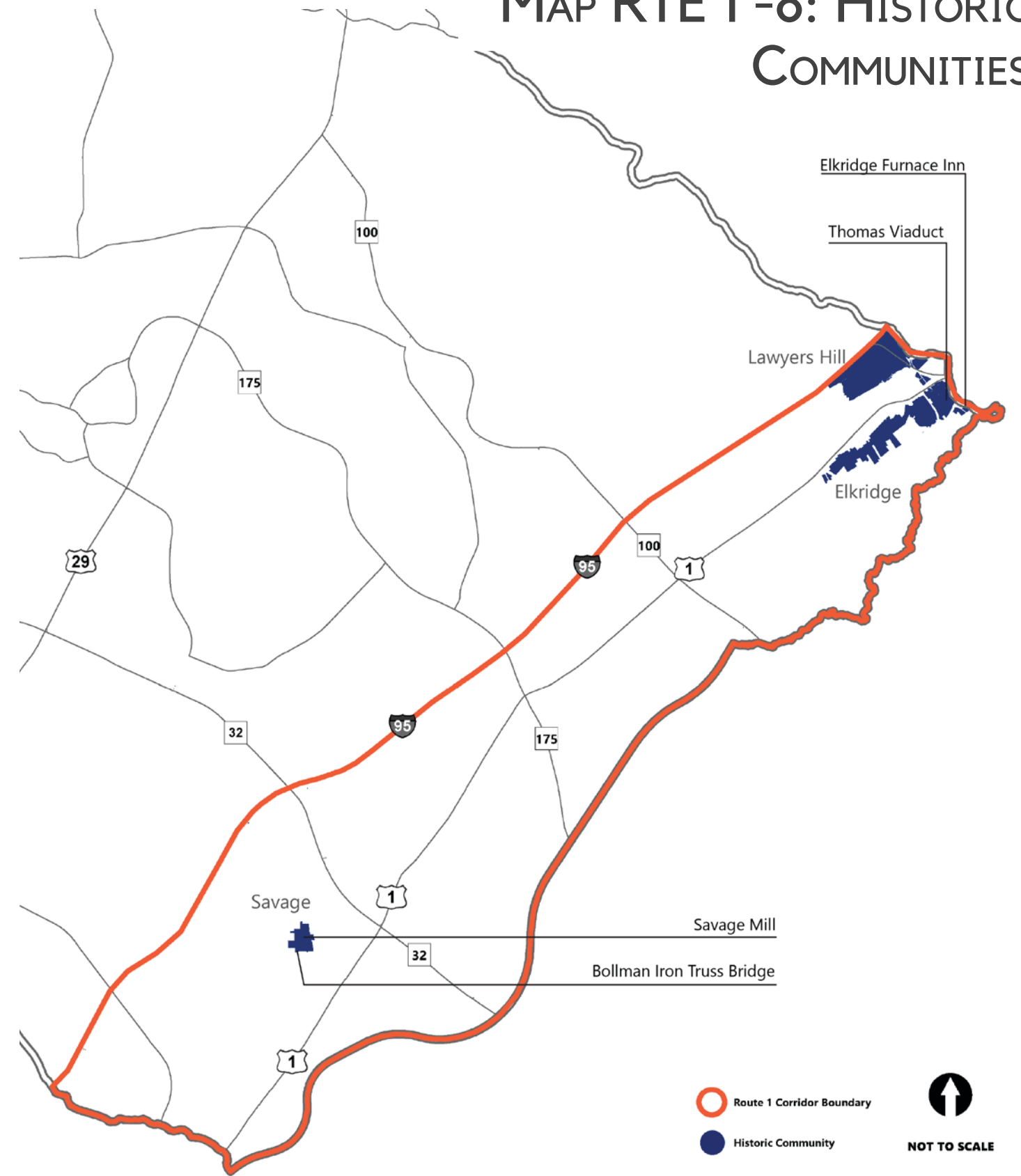


**BOLLMAN IRON TRUSS BRIDGE**  
1869  
— 0.73 MILE —  
SPANNING THE LITTLE PATUXENT RIVER IS THE SOLE SURVIVING EXAMPLE OF THE BRIDGING SYSTEM INVENTED, 1850, BY WENDEL BOLLMAN, BALTIMORE ENGINEER. IT WAS THE FIRST SYSTEM, ENTIRELY OF IRON, USED BY THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD AND THE FIRST IN AMERICA. THROUGH 1873 THE COMPANY BUILT ABOUT 100 SUCH BRIDGES.  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Beyond the Lawyers Hill historic district, the Corridor contains other Historic Communities, identified on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), that could also be eligible for a historic district designation. As stated in detail in the Quality By Design chapter, property owners may be reluctant to form a historic district if it means restrictions will be applied to their property. As an alternative to a traditional district, a conservation district program, sometimes referred to as “historic district-lite,” can also provide protection, preserve community character, and maintain sense of place. Such programs could provide a means to further protect historic structures across the County and could be explored for Historic Communities identified on the FLUM, such as historic Elkridge and the Savage Mill National Register Historic District.

See the Quality by Design chapter for the policies and actions that are specific to the Route 1 Corridor and are intended to protect and preserve its important historic resources and assets.

## MAP RTE 1 -8: HISTORIC COMMUNITIES



Source: Howard County Departments of Technology and Communication Services and Planning and Zoning, 2023

## Establishing Activity Centers to Foster Revitalization

The activity centers envisioned for Washington Boulevard in HoCo By Design are logical locations to concentrate new retail, service, and light industrial uses in the Corridor. These focal points for the community can foster the necessary conditions needed for retail success along Route 1 by providing high visibility from the road, strong vehicular traffic, and ease of access for target customers in the form of both walkability and parking. The Route 1 Corridor has younger population cohorts compared to Howard County as a whole—especially individuals 25 to 44 years old—and may provide different opportunities to create and capture new retail or service uses that support the needs of this demographic (which includes young professionals, recent graduates, and mid-level to management-level employees).

### RTE 1-2 Policy Statement

Attract public investment in the Route 1 Corridor.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Evaluate establishing a redevelopment authority that can acquire, hold, and assemble land to kick-start reinvestment, including in proposed activity centers. The redevelopment authority should facilitate the orderly development of the Corridor and consider the following strategies:
  - a. Provide financial and technical assistance and resources to the Corridor’s employment sectors to promote economic development and redevelopment.
  - b. Market the Corridor and focus on attracting growing business segments.
  - c. Serve as lead agency to eliminate blight in the corridor.
  - d. Facilitate revitalization in the Corridor, including accessing funding via state grants and other available tools.
  - e. Provide relocation assistance to heavy industrial businesses located in activity centers to be relocated to M-1 or M-2 Zoning Districts.
2. Evaluate property tax adjustments to attract private investment to the Corridor.
3. Consider tax reductions based on the added value resulting from a renovation.
4. Focus on providing tax benefit based on brownfield cleanup, a mix of uses, green building design, return on investment, location of investment, and the business segment of the tenant or project.
5. Pursue state grants to continue to fund investment opportunities in the North Laurel-Savage Sustainable Community.
6. Support new county and state designations for the Historic Communities in the Corridor for public investments, including a new Sustainable Communities designation for Elkridge.
7. Provide incentives for development that generates economic activity in locations that offer amenities and public transportation access.

### RTE 1-3 Policy Statement

Foster revitalization in the Route 1 Corridor.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Establish activity centers as identified on the Future Land Use Map that will concentrate future residential, commercial retail, light industrial, and traditional office development.
2. Implement zoning changes to achieve the vision of the Corridor:
  - a. Evaluate the efficacy of existing industrial zoning districts.
  - b. Consider more flexibility.
3. Improve access to neighborhood services by connecting neighborhoods to retail in the Corridor.
4. Encourage land assembly to prevent piecemeal redevelopment and facilitate projects that are integral to the County’s long-term development strategy.
5. Encourage property maintenance and the reduction of blight and consider the following:
  - a. Evaluate effective buffers between new and existing industrial/manufacturing sites and residential developments.
  - b. Evaluate nonconforming use processes and consider if a hearing is necessary to determine whether to grandfather a continuing pre-existing use.
  - c. Address nonconforming uses with relocation assistance or other types of assistance programs.

## Encouraging Private Property Reinvestment

The Route 1 Corridor has pockets of commercial and industrial legacy land uses, some of which have become blighted due to decades of disinvestment. There are also deteriorating, unsightly, and abandoned commercial and industrial properties in the Corridor that do not conform to the Zoning Regulations. The County should evaluate offering property assistance programs to address blight and facilitate rehabilitation. In addition, the County should consider the following options to encourage property reinvestment.

### Route 1 Tax Credit Program

The County should evaluate the Route 1 Tax Credit Program and potentially expand its reach, scope, and funding to encourage greater participation. Since existing buildings on redevelopment sites within proposed activity centers may be improved as an element of a larger investment, the Tax Credit Program should focus on visually-transformational projects outside of the activity centers. These smaller, more targeted investments would improve conditions for segments of Route 1 between areas anticipated to transform or redevelop in the future. The County should also evaluate the need for new geographic priority areas in specific portions of the Corridor outside of the activity centers.

Additionally, many commercial properties fronting Washington Boulevard have residential units in upper stories, making them ineligible for participation in the program as currently designed. The County should allow commercial properties that include a small number of residential units to participate in the Tax Credit Program.

The County currently allocates \$250,000 in tax credits per year. While historically this funding has been sufficient, the entire allocation was expended in 2022, as marketing efforts have generated substantial interest in the program. Should this level of interest continue, the County should consider increasing the total program appropriation per year to \$500,000, which was the original funding level prior to budget cutbacks. Robust outreach to eligible property owners must continue to sustain the current level of investment and maximize improvements to aesthetics along the Route 1 Corridor. The County should consider this type of program to encourage smaller, yet critical businesses to beautify and modernize properties where they can grow their operations in the Corridor.

### **Route 1 Tax Credit Program**

Launched in 2014, the Route 1 Tax Credit Program encourages revitalization along Route 1 by helping owners of commercial and industrial properties renovate and improve the appearance of their properties. Eligible façade and site improvements include exterior renovations, exterior painting, the installation of landscaping, the screening of trash enclosures, enhanced lighting, and other site improvements. This program targets renovations to commercial or industrial properties with frontage on Washington Boulevard, or within proximity to Elkridge. Eligible properties must be less than 15 acres in size, not include any residential component, and have no outstanding code violations. A credit of up to \$100,000 is available per property. In 2023, the Tax Credit Program was funded through June 2026, with an annual appropriation of \$250,000.

### Corridor Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program

To incentivize large-scale rehabilitation, the County could create a phased tax credit program for vacant or underutilized properties with projects above the threshold of the current tax credit program. This "Rehabilitation Tax Credit" could defer and phase in new real estate property taxes that will result from the increased property value due to the property renovations. Appropriate amounts and funding structure would be established as the program is developed. One potential structure for the tax credit could be established so the credit is 100% in the first year, 80% in year two, 60% in year three, 40% in year four, and 20% in year five. A tax credit program for site and building rehabilitation could spur private investment in the Corridor.

### Facade Improvement Grant Programs for Elkridge and Savage

Many local jurisdictions, including Howard County (for Ellicott City), successfully administer façade grant programs that provide matching funds for improvements made to industrial and commercial building exteriors. A façade improvement grant program could provide an incentive to older main street communities. The County should evaluate the impact of providing a matching grant of \$5,000 to \$25,000 for eligible façade and site improvements in Elkridge and Savage. Depending upon the program's design, up to 50% of the project cost could be covered through the grant. New construction generally would not qualify for funding. This program would encourage minor but impactful improvements to exteriors of existing buildings in Elkridge and Savage.

### Small Business Tools

The Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA) serves as a resource to assist businesses in the Corridor by offering small business grants and programs to targeted property owners. HCEDA could host a Howard County Procurement Technical Assistance Program that would counsel existing Route 1 businesses on how to compete for government contracts. A similar program is led by the Baltimore Development Corporation. HCEDA could also partner with the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) to bring new financing and business development tools to the Corridor.

The County could bolster small business programs with HCEDA, Howard Community College, and the Office of Workforce Development, and consider providing targeted programming tailored to businesses and industries along the Corridor. These programs could focus on business training programs, financing resources, redevelopment incentives, and community outreach to bolster the economic activity there. The County should continue to partner with MEDCO to bring new and innovative financing tools to the Route 1 Corridor.

The Howard County Office of Procurement and Contract Administration provides educational resources to advise and guide Howard County-based businesses and minority, women-owned and disabled-owned business enterprises through the County's procurement process, vendor registration, and certification in the Howard County Local Business Initiative and Equal Business Opportunity Programs.

## RTE 1-4 Policy Statement

Increase opportunities for reinvestment of commercial and industrial properties in the Route 1 Corridor to address blight through new and existing zoning tools and tax credits.

### Implementing Actions

1. Consider modifications to the existing Route 1 tax credit program such as eliminating the prohibition on properties with residential units, increasing the credit, and focusing on targeted areas and transformative projects along Route 1.
2. Evaluate a façade improvement grant program for Elkridge and Savage.
3. Evaluate the implementation of a rehabilitation tax credit for the Route 1 Corridor for projects over \$100,000 in scale.

## RTE 1-5 Policy Statement

Adopt new tools to enhance the Route 1 Corridor's competitiveness and attract new industries while working to retain existing businesses.

### Implementing Actions

1. Work with the Howard County Economic Development Authority to evaluate small business grants and technical assistance options for the Corridor and tailor programs (such as business training programs, financing resources, and redevelopment incentives) to businesses and industries along the Corridor.
2. Provide educational resources to advise and guide local Howard County based businesses and minority, women-owned and disabled-owned business enterprises through the procurement process, vendor registration, and certification in the Howard County Local Business Initiative and Equal Business Opportunity Programs.
3. Partner with the Maryland Economic Development Corporation to bring new and innovative financing tools to the Route 1 Corridor.
4. Prioritize investment in non-auto-related land uses that front Washington Boulevard to maintain the roadway's attractiveness.
5. Coordinate support and retention programs with the Howard County Economic Development Authority and Office of Workforce Development.

## Enhancing Placemaking and Design Standards in the Corridor

Though its definition varies, placemaking generally refers to community design that prioritizes the human experience as a pedestrian at street-level, with an emphasis on public spaces, building placement, and aesthetic that combine to impart a unique, inviting, and memorable feel. Great placemaking can be used to strategically shape the physical and social character of a place to spur economic development, promote social change, and improve the physical environment.

Historic resources are important contributors to the character of the Route 1 Corridor. In Elkridge, there is a juxtaposition of different transportation corridors representing evolving technology over time, including rail, secondary roads, and interstates. Historic landmarks and buildings in Savage, Elkridge, and Lawyers Hill help define a sense of place and special character (or brand) for parts of the Corridor. Historic Savage Mill and the employee housing immediately north of the complex are also a National Register Historic District (1975). The Lawyers Hill neighborhood is a designated National Register Historic District (1993) and Howard County Local Historic District (1994). The Elkridge Furnace Inn and the Thomas Viaduct are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to the gateway communities of Elkridge and North Laurel-Savage discussed earlier, there are several landmarks and destinations along the Route 1 Corridor that help create a sense of place and provide lasting memories that bring residents and visitors back to these destinations. Again, the Quality by Design chapter provides guidance on preservation recommendations for these communities and historic landmarks.

The County should leverage these historic assets within the broad vision for the Route 1 Corridor and build upon historic promotion and preservation efforts. Specific recommendations for Savage and Elkridge are outlined in the "Encouraging & Strengthening Historic Preservation" section of the Quality By Design chapter.

### Recognizable Gateways along the Corridor

The Route 1 Corridor is home to important cultural and historical resources. Preserving the gateway communities of Elkridge and North Laurel-Savage is important. Their historic characters differentiate these communities from the rest of the land use patterns along Washington Boulevard.

One of the first ways to establish a defined character for the Route 1 Corridor is to distinguish it from neighboring areas with visual cues that indicate a new and different area. Gateway treatments should reinforce the brand identified in the Route 1 Corridor and stimulate private investment. Elements of a gateway treatment may include signage, landscaping, public art, streetscape improvements, or distinct building architecture.

To implement an effective gateway treatment strategy, the County and stakeholders should identify appropriate locations for improvements, prepare design concepts, reach out to local property owners, and identify available funding sources. Gateway treatments at bridge crossings for the Patuxent River and Patapsco River on Washington Boulevard should be a high priority for implementation.

## Architecture as Placemaking in the Route 1 Corridor

The Route 1 Corridor includes several different context zones that, together, make the entire place feel authentic—somewhere different than the rest of Howard County. The historic core and main street of Elkridge, and the old mill and neighborhood character of Savage, highlight unique areas in the community that should be celebrated. Industrial and commercial uses that evolved over time create several legacy land uses that also represent the Corridor, such as junk yards, outdoor car storage areas, and automobile repair shops, body shops, and garages. These enterprises likely would not be “preferred land uses” today, but they nevertheless contribute to the sense of place.

Building architecture preferred for the planning area should reflect the brand and sense of place unique to the Route 1 Corridor. For example, more industrial-type building architecture and materials, such as glass, steel, and concrete, may be considered in new development—especially near existing industrial buildings. Brick and stone should be considered in Savage and Elkridge to reflect building materials used in those historic areas. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings should also be considered (as an alternative to demolition) during redevelopment efforts. Quality, cohesive building design helps enhance community character and improves quality of life. Promoting architectural compatibility on a site ensures quality projects, lends credibility and professionalism, and often promotes a unique brand identity in the area. Requiring architectural compatibility in large site developments allows developers and staff the opportunity to consider the interplay between buildings, ultimately reducing inconsistencies and the disjointed feel that arises from ad hoc development. All new development and redevelopment in the Route 1 Corridor consisting of more than one building on a single lot or parcel should be architecturally unified and use compatible quality and type of building materials. Updates to the Route 1 Manual are recommended to provide further design guidance along the Corridor.



## Branding the Corridor

A sense of place is typically introduced at gateways and carried throughout an area with a branding strategy. The strategy is implemented through design manuals and advisory boards, and often in partnership with organizations focused on business or destination promotion. A brand and marketing plan should be prepared for the Route 1 Corridor to instill a consistent, recognizable identity. The resulting plan should distinguish the area from the rest of Howard County. For example, branding the Route 1 Corridor as “Washington Boulevard Corridor” would broaden its identity beyond a numbered roadway and make the Howard County portion of the Corridor distinguishable from parts of Route 1 in neighboring jurisdictions. This would be akin to a recent strategy used by Montgomery County for Route 355, commonly referred to now as “Rockville Pike.”

The brand identity and marketing plan should highlight elements of the Route 1 Corridor that make it unique, including its proximity to historic communities, established neighborhoods, and regional destinations like BWI, Fort Meade, or the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab. The brand may want to recognize vintage signs along Route 1 as design assets that should be preserved when contemplating redevelopment. Many of the legacy land uses along the Route 1 Corridor as described earlier in this section also have historic, sometimes iconic signs that represent a different time in Howard County. Preserving the signs on the site (even if in a different location) could introduce a unique design feature/brand that makes a new development feel more authentic. Additionally, a sign that is removed from the property during redevelopment could be donated to Howard County for placement somewhere else in the Route 1 Corridor, such as in a new park or as mileposts along a greenway running through the Corridor.





Encouraging and allowing the use of vintage-style signage and materials on the facades for retail in mixed-use projects would help to define and highlight the amenities located in the Route 1 Corridor. In some cases, property owners may elect to bring in historic signs from outside the Route 1 Corridor if they are consistent with a legacy land use in the Corridor. For example, historic hot dog restaurant or ice cream shop signs may be appropriate in the Route 1 Corridor as an acknowledgment of popular destinations visited decades ago. Consideration to allow pole mounted signs on a case-by-case basis may be necessary as they are not consistent with the Route 1 Manual.

#### Development Standards and Review

Site design should accommodate features and architecture that create a unique sense of place. These efforts are needed, in part, to compete with nearby retail and office uses in Columbia, the City of Laurel, or Arundel Mills, and bring different markets to the Route 1 Corridor. Superior placemaking has the potential to attract private investment and well-designed development, and increase the value of properties in the Route 1 Corridor. The process of placemaking celebrates the uniqueness of the area and identifies the physical improvements or planning initiatives necessary to instill a brand or sense of place for the Route 1 Corridor.

The Route 1 Manual is a helpful resource for achieving desired design standards along the Route 1 Corridor. However, the Manual is organized according to the current zoning districts. Once the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations are updated, the Manual will need to be revised to reflect the vision and supporting recommendations of the General Plan or subsequent implementation plans, policies, or documents.

An updated Manual should provide guidelines on site layout, architectural character, parking configurations, landscaping, screening, lighting, and signage for the entire Route 1 Corridor. The 2018 Development Regulations Assessment identifies significant overlap between the contents of the Route 1 Manual and the requirements of the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. The Assessment suggested an update was necessary to consolidate text on nonconforming uses and noncomplying designs with other nonconformity provisions, to address new zoning districts outlined in HoCo By Design, and to clarify the following:

- When recommendations are advisory or mandatory
- How the streetscape and street furniture design standards and guidelines relate to the County's public works standards for streets and roads
- How the street tree standards and guidelines and landscape planting and screening materials relate to the provisions in the County's Landscape Manual
- How the building location and parking area location and design materials relate to bulk and dimensional standards in the Zoning Regulations
- How the stormwater management provisions relate to the County's stormwater management standards
- How sign standards and guidelines relate to general sign regulations

The County's Design Advisory Panel (DAP) should continue to provide oversight on new development and redevelopment in the Route 1 Corridor. DAP's responsibilities should be expanded to include review of development in activity center character areas. Panel members' experience as professional designers and associated recommendations will enhance these significant and complex development projects.

#### **RTE 1-6 Policy Statement**

Encourage building architecture in the Route 1 Corridor that is unique in Howard County.

#### **Implementing Actions**

1. Prioritize quality, cohesive building design and architecture in site development to enhance community character and improve quality of life.
2. Promote contextual architectural design near a historic site to ensure compatibility.
3. Encourage architecture that promotes a unique brand identity for the Route 1 Corridor.
4. Consider adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

### RTE 1-7 Policy Statement

Create recognizable entrances (gateways) that distinguish the Route 1 Corridor from adjacent areas.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Evaluate signage, landscaping, public art, and streetscape improvements at various gateways along the Corridor and explore Sustainable Communities funding for entrance gateway signage.
2. Work with property owners and the community to implement appropriate elements.
3. Prioritize gateways at bridge crossings for the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers and activity center areas.

### RTE 1-8 Policy Statement

Create a uniform brand, marketing, and signage plan for the Route 1 Corridor.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Encourage signage consistent with a branding plan.
2. Work with community and property owners on placement of branding elements along the Route 1 Corridor.
3. Evaluate the County's sign ordinance and Route 1 Manual to allow signage in the Corridor that implements the branding, signage, or marketing plan.

### RTE 1-9 Policy Statement

Revise the Route 1 Manual and County regulations to implement the HoCo By Design and Route 1 Corridor Plan development and redevelopment recommendations.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Revise the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to support corridor-wide new development and redevelopment.
2. Update the Route 1 Manual after County regulations are updated to implement recommendations and clarify inconsistencies outlined in the 2018 Development Regulations Assessment.
3. Update the Design Advisory Panel Rules of Procedures and County Code to include criteria for the Route 1 activity center areas.

## Protecting Environmental Health in the Corridor

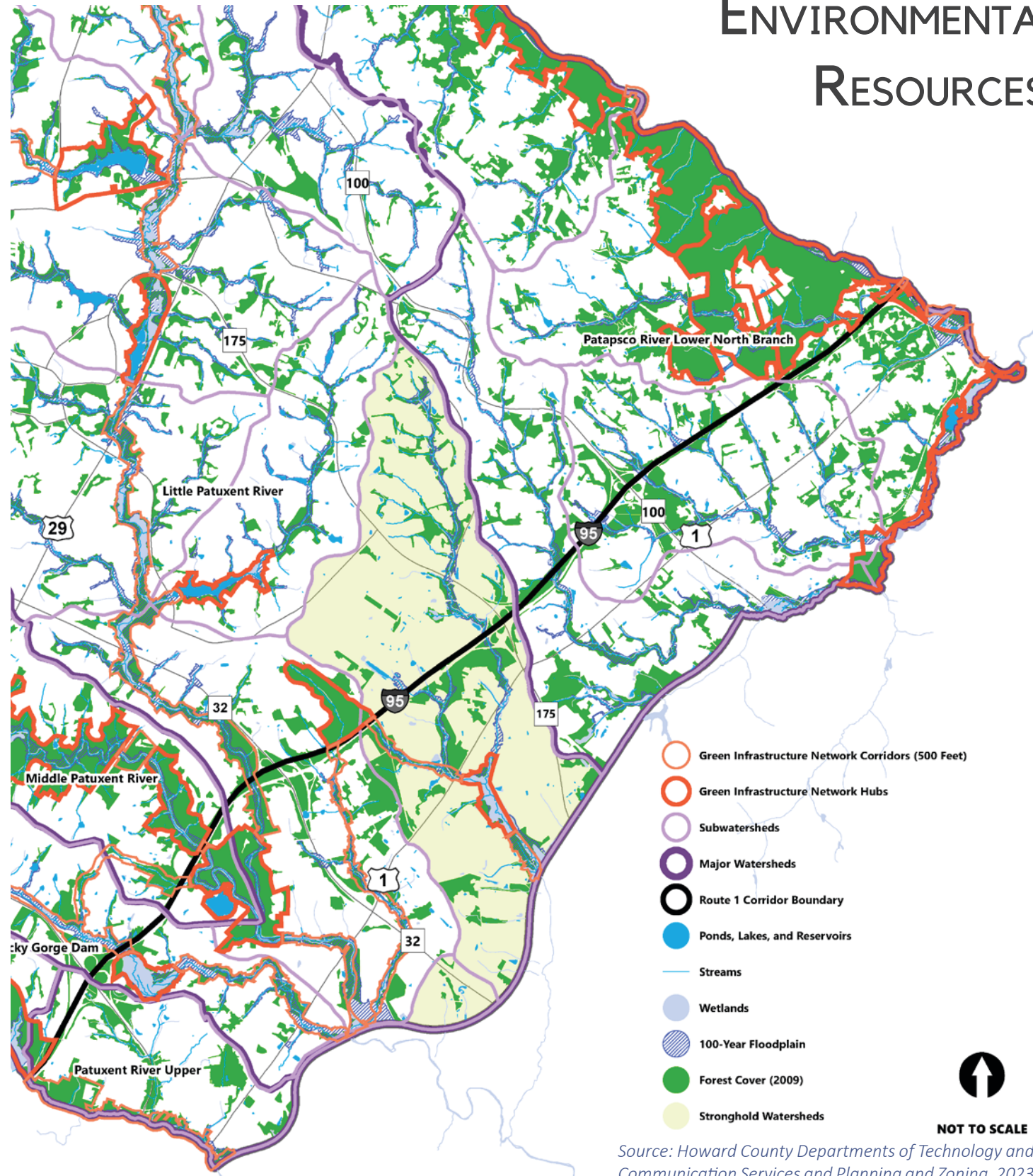
The Route 1 Corridor is located within and near significant natural resource areas. As shown in Map RTE 1-9, the Corridor contains portions of the Patapsco River Lower North Branch, Little Patuxent River, Middle Patuxent River, and Patuxent River Upper watersheds. Bookended by the Patapsco River at the northern boundary and the Patuxent River to the south, the 12-mile Corridor crosses numerous other streams that flow perpendicular to the alignment of Route 1. Many of these streams have forested or partially forested buffers, and larger streams have 100-year floodplains that may also contain wetlands. The Corridor has 18% open space and parkland, and approximately 25% forest cover.

The Corridor contains portions of the County's Green Infrastructure Network (GIN), including nine hubs with significant forest and wetland resources and nine stream-based corridors. Most of the land in the hubs is protected from development because it is located within parkland, open space, and/or the 100-year floodplain. The Corridor contains several sensitive species project review areas (SSPRAs) that are indicative of habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species. Two of these SSPRAs are located within the GIN. The Dorsey Run and Junction Industrial Park subwatersheds of the Little Patuxent River are designated as Stronghold Watersheds because they have high aquatic biodiversity. The Patuxent River watershed is a Tier II watershed because there is a Tier II segment of the river downstream in Anne Arundel County.

The County's current development regulations protect sensitive environmental resources, including 100-year floodplains, streams, wetlands, larger areas of steep slopes, and rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat. The Forest Conservation Act requires mitigation for forest clearing and stormwater management regulations require redevelopment to improve water quality management.

HoCo By Design's Ecological Health chapter contains policies and actions intended to protect and restore ecological health in the County. Protection and restoration measures that could be considered for the Route 1 Corridor as it redevelops include restoring forested stream and wetland buffers to meet current minimum width requirements, ensuring forest clearing mitigation is provided within the Corridor, exceeding minimum stormwater management requirements, increasing native tree canopy, protecting the GIN through an easement or land purchase program, and increasing private property owner stewardship.

# MAP RTE 1-9: ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES



Source: Howard County Departments of Technology and Communication Services and Planning and Zoning, 2023

# TRANSPORTATION IN THE ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR

The Route 1 Corridor features a wide mix of land uses and functions, including residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and lodging. Residential and industrial uses dominate the Corridor, with residential uses concentrated west of Route 1 and industrial uses concentrated east of Route 1. The Route 1 Corridor is bisected by major arterials (Routes 32, 175, and 100) that—together with industrial and commercial land uses—result in a transportation network primarily comprised of commercial vehicles and freight movements.

Route 1 serves both regional and local transportation needs and modes by providing access for residents' day-to-day travel while also serving as a linkage between regional transportation corridors for regional and national travel. A significant portion of this regional and national travel is associated with industrial uses along the Route 1 Corridor and is characterized by a wide variety of truck classes, from box trucks delivering goods to business in the region to tractor trailers serving national distribution centers in the Corridor. These vehicles have specific design demands and limitations, such as turning radii, stopping distances, and vertical clearances. These two roles are often in conflict with one another and balancing the needs of each is an important objective in HoCo By Design.

The Route 1 Corridor's rail and public transit infrastructure is an outcome of the Corridor's historic north-south alignment. The Corridor has strong freight rail connections and hubs, and peak-hour passenger rail to Baltimore and Washington, DC at Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) stations in Dorsey, Jessup, Savage, and Laurel Park (formally known as the Laurel Racetrack). Bus service is provided by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Regional Transportation Agency (RTA) systems, but service is limited with low frequency routes and few transit hubs. This service pattern, coupled with limited and scattered high-density development along the entire Corridor, has not created the conditions necessary for investment in more frequent transit service. Infrastructure for walking and biking in the Corridor is poor and disconnected, a reflection of the automobile-centric built environment. These conditions have impacted safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and made public transit a less useful and effective transportation option.



## Transportation Safety in the Corridor

Enhanced safety and connectivity are long-standing goals in the Route 1 Corridor. In 2009, Howard County updated the Route 1 Manual to include specific recommendations to increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, and to enhance accessibility and connectivity in the Corridor.

In 2018, in response to increases in pedestrian-related crashes and fatalities along Route 1, the Howard County Office of Transportation initiated a study of bicyclist and pedestrian safety, focusing on traffic hazard conflicts for pedestrians and bicyclists. The US 1 Safety Evaluation on Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety identified four focus areas based on historical crash trends and needs for improvement: the Laurel area (south of Whiskey Bottom Road), the Jessup area (around Guilford Road), the Elkridge area (north of Route 175), and the northern Elkridge area (around Montgomery Road).

The study found that 54 crashes along Route 1 involved a bicycle or pedestrian and that road and intersection designs contribute to unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. The study found that excessively wide travel lanes, large turning radii, long pedestrian crossing distances, inadequate pedestrian refuge in some intersections, and poor signal timing for pedestrian crossings are some of the primary factors that lead to unsafe conditions. The US 1 Safety Evaluation recommended five immediate mitigation measures for intersection improvements at four locations (which were completed in the summer of 2022), in addition to new bike lanes in North Laurel and reducing the speed limit along Route 1 in Elkridge and Laurel from 50 mph to 45 mph. In response to the study's recommendations, the Office of Transportation and the Department of Public Works shifted the County's approach to bicycle facilities, as articulated in the Route 1 Manual. The shift in approach to a shared-use path from an on-road bike lane allows the delivery of a safer facility with less cost.

A safe system approach is recommended along the entire Route 1 Corridor. This approach identifies the link between priority crash types and the roadway contexts in which they most frequently occur. The system then prioritizes countermeasures that provide a solution to those crash types at the identified location types. This approach is innovative because it can prioritize locations that have a high propensity for crashes to occur even if crashes have not occurred there in recent years. Overall, the system proactively targets road safety improvements in high-risk locations where the most frequent and severe crashes could occur.

### RTE 1-10 Policy Statement

Implement a safe system approach to transportation safety in the Route 1 Corridor.

### Implementing Actions

1. Implement a safe system approach along the entire Route 1 Corridor.
2. Provide a separated all-ages-and-abilities pedestrian and bicycle network in all new development and on Washington Boulevard. This network should include a system of separated bike lanes, shared-use paths, neighborhood routes, and safe intersections that allow everyone to feel comfortable and safe traveling in activity areas.
3. Conduct speed studies and evaluate opportunities to reduce posted and operating speeds.

## Walking and Cycling in the Corridor

Since the adoption of PlanHoward 2030 in 2012, Howard County has committed to enhancing pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and connectivity. In 2019, Howard County adopted a Complete Streets Policy that aims to accommodate multiple travel modes in single transportation corridors, including Route 1. Goals for the policy include improved safety, more travel options, reduced transportation costs, improved access to goods and services, enhanced equity and access to transportation, and healthier communities. Following adoption of the policy, updates to the County's Design Manual were approved on February 7, 2020, to reflect and meet the policy's goals. The Complete Streets Design Manual guides the development and design of streets to improve safety and accessibility for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders. To support the Design Manual, the County's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations will need to be updated so new development better supports the multi-modal transportation network.

Plans for targeted improvements to the Corridor's transportation system should consider the needs of walking and cycling for recreation and transportation in the Corridor. BikeHoward and WalkHoward recommend several Corridor improvements—such as separated bike lanes for the entire Corridor and multiple long-term crossing improvements—that can be accomplished as either capital projects completed by the public sector or capital projects completed by developers as a condition of zoning or site plan approval. Early focus should be placed on closing gaps in existing sidewalk or bicycle facilities that could easily expand the walkshed for important destinations in the Corridor. Improvements and expansions to the pathway and trail system in the Corridor, such as the Savage Mill Trail, Wincopin Trail, Patuxent Branch Trail, and Patapsco Regional Greenway, should be supported.

While BikeHoward and WalkHoward provide a path forward to advance new and upgraded infrastructure, a corridor-wide strategy and approach to accessibility that ensures safe access for everyone under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may also be helpful. The Maryland State Highway Administration's ADA Transition Plan provides a strategy for ensuring accessibility over time on state roads. Accessibility issues are found along the Corridor, such as noncompliant curb ramps and sidewalk gaps. Every project along the Corridor should be treated as an opportunity to improve accessibility.



## PATAPSCO REGIONAL GREENWAY

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Patapsco Regional Greenway Plan envisions a 40-mile system of natural surface trails, paved pathways, and bike lanes on low stress roads that link downtown Baltimore to Howard, Baltimore, and Carroll Counties. The Greenway will support bicyclists and pedestrians using the BWI Trail in Anne Arundel County, Patapsco State Park at the Avalon Entrance in Howard County, Elkridge Main Street, and Guinness Open Gate Brewery. Since the plan's completion in 2017, segments of the 10- to 12-foot-wide shared-use trail have been constructed in Carroll County, Baltimore County, and Baltimore City. Designs have been completed for a trail segment linking Guinness Open Gate Brewery to Elkridge and Patapsco Valley State Park with a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Patapsco River. Once constructed, this segment will provide pedestrians and bicyclists with a scenic recreational experience that includes Elkridge's Main Street and Levering Avenue.

### RTE 1-11 Policy Statement

Support the expansion and investment in walking and cycling facilities in the Route 1 Corridor.

### Implementing Actions

1. Make improvements to the connections within each activity center and link activity centers to parks, trails, and other resources in the region.
2. Support improvements and expansions to pathways and trails, such as the Savage Mill Trail, Wincopin Trail, Patuxent Branch Trail, and Patapsco Regional Greenway.
3. Partner with state and local agencies to fund transportation investments.
4. Coordinate Americans with Disabilities Act improvements with the State Highway Administration.
5. Partner with state and local agencies to update land use regulations to ensure private sector development projects deliver Americans with Disabilities Act compliant transportation systems.

## Public Transit in the Corridor

Transit service in the Corridor includes both bus and commuter rail. Existing service is limited to morning and evening peak periods to accommodate home to work trips. Lower densities in the Corridor compared to the region generally discourage investments in more frequent service (bus or commuter rail) at this time. Missing sidewalks and bicycle facilities throughout the Route 1 Corridor limit viable travel options between train stations or bus stops and final destinations for the transit trip in the Corridor (such as the first or last mile of a transit trip).

The Regional Transportation Agency (RTA), which is funded primarily by Howard County, provides local bus service within the Corridor and operates approximately every hour. The RTA provides important north-south coverage along the length of the Corridor, connecting the City of Laurel to Elkridge. It also provides numerous east-west connections to employment and commercial opportunities at Columbia Mall, Arundel Mills, and Fort Meade. Additional bus service is provided by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), which operates a commuter bus route from Columbia and Baltimore with stops in Jessup.

The MTA also operates the MARC Camden Line, which provides the Route 1 Corridor with direct access to downtown Baltimore and downtown Washington, DC. The MARC stations include regular stops at Savage and Dorsey, and flag stops at Laurel Park and Jessup, all located along the Howard/Anne Arundel County border. Regular service is also offered at the Laurel station in the City of Laurel, close to the Howard County boundary at the Patuxent River. Like the MTA bus routes, MARC train service caters to commuting needs, with no trips outside early or peak periods. However, the stations are significant transportation amenities that attract transit-oriented development to the area.

In October 2020, MTA completed the Regional Transit Plan, which is a 25-year plan for improving public transportation in Central Maryland (Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Harford County, and Howard County). The plan addresses traditional transit (buses and trains) and explores new mobility options and technology. This high-level plan is an additional element for advancing transit in the Corridor.

## MICRO-TRANSIT

According to the Federal Transit Administration, micro-transit is technology-enabled, multi-passenger transportation service that offers a smaller-scale alternative to typical bus service. Micro-transit vehicles may be large sport utility vehicles (SUVs), vans, or shuttle buses. They are often operated by private companies and offer flexible, dynamic, and on-demand service to pick-up and drop-off passengers. The Maryland Transit Administration has plans for a micro-transit pilot project between BWI Airport, Arundel Mills Mall, and Parkway Center.

The Maryland Department of Transportation/MTA's US 1 Corridor Small Area Plan recommends on-demand transit starting with a pilot program on Washington Boulevard to support and supplement transit in the Corridor. A micro-transit demonstration project has been proposed, which is particularly well-suited for Route 1's automobile-oriented environment. The strength of the micro-transit service model lies in its ability to provide effective local coverage and its potential as a feeder system that can provide first- and last-mile connections to other regional services. In addition, as there is no stop-level infrastructure required, the service can be implemented quickly.

The Camden Line's section of the MTA Cornerstone plan for MARC synthesizes plans, policies, and reports to develop targeted investment recommendations to maintain and expand service. For the Camden Line, these recommendations include station renovations and adding new track at different sections along the whole corridor between Washington, DC and Baltimore. New track is critical to enable increases in frequency along the Corridor.

The 2018 Central Maryland Transit Development Plan (TDP) serves as a roadmap for implementing service and organizational improvements, including potential service expansion. The TDP is specifically focused on local transit and the fixed-route plan has two phases. Phase I includes a comprehensive restructuring of the routes that currently provide coverage in the County, with a goal of shortening routes and increasing frequencies. Phase II builds upon the first phase by adding services and proposing four potential expansion routes. The TDP is updated every five years; the County initiated an update of the TDP in 2022.

The activity centers envisioned to grow as mixed-use, transit-oriented communities will generate future transit riders. Consideration should be given to increasing service so that it can match future demand associated with activity centers, using both traditional and innovative delivery models. Service should continue to connect existing developments in the Corridor and also continue planning and advocacy to enhance regional operations coordination and regional connections to high-quality transit.

### RTE 1-12 Policy Statement

Increase mobility options throughout the Route 1 Corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

### Implementing Actions

1. Prioritize multi-modal improvements and complete streets in the Route 1 Corridor, especially in activity centers.
2. Evaluate increasing transit service to match future demand associated with activity centers, connect developments along the Corridor, and improve transit connections to regional destinations.
3. Target pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements in existing or expanded transit service areas to support first- or last-mile service delivery.
4. Advance recommendations in the 2020 Regional Transit Plan, including innovative approaches to delivering public transit in the Corridor.
5. Continue to support the collaborative efforts of the Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission, and efforts to improve the Regional Transit Agency service.
6. Engage in regional transportation discussions to benefit corridor-wide access to Route 1 jobs.
7. Support efforts to expand service and improve the reliability of the Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) Camden Commuter Rail Line.

### Access for Vehicles in the Corridor

Accessing sites along a road should be guided by a consistent and methodical approach that balances competing needs. On Route 1 and other state roads in the Route 1 Corridor, access is managed by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA). A key design concept from the Route 1 Manual is to "reduce direct, private vehicular access to Route 1 and instead encourage access from local streets." This concept improves access management and promotes the use of the local road network for safe access to Route 1 land uses. The County should support efforts to increase connectivity within and between developments along the Corridor. Whenever possible, these options should favor access from secondary roads or shared-use driveways over direct access from Route 1/Washington Boulevard. Existing stub streets or driveways should accommodate future street extensions or driveway connections with adjacent parcels.

Future updates to regulations or the Route 1 Manual should review current standards and update recommendations to expand on site connectivity, access, shared parking, and curb cut reduction. A comprehensive assessment of the existing roadway width is recommended to identify locations where a "lane diet" and/or a "road diet" can reduce excess width. Reallocating this width can provide space within the existing right-of-way for things like new buffered bicycle facilities, pedestrian-crossing refuge islands, sidewalks, or landscape buffers while also improving safety for users.

### Managing Vehicle Congestion in the Corridor

Corridor-wide automobile traffic and freight truck congestion was a major issue identified by the community and in the Route 1 Transportation and Transit Assessment. There are multiple and varied approaches to addressing congestion for both modes.

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) is an integrated set of strategies focused on operations improvements to maximize the safety, mobility, and reliability of the transportation system using a "system of systems" approach. SHA has developed a TSMO master plan that identifies a series of strategies to manage congestion for different areas in the state. In addition to other systems, TSMO System Number Two will deliver active travel management on Interstate 95 and smart signals on Washington Boulevard.

Another element of the TSMO approach is managing demand on the transportation system by providing high-quality transportation alternatives, such as well-connected and safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, which can shift many short trips away from automobiles.

Congestion can also be managed by additional road capacity. As articulated in HoCo by Design's County in Motion chapter, the County has identified multiple projects on county and state roads, and is funding county projects and advocating for state funding for projects on state roads. In many cases, adding road capacity can, and does, take decades and can have significant negative environmental and quality of life impacts. Adding road capacity often offers only short-term relief since it induces additional transportation demand once a project is completed. Howard County should support a balanced and fiscally driven approach to managing congestion. This approach should incorporate TSMO strategies. It should also involve reassessing how and if proposed projects on the Corridor align with county goals. The approach could deliver a plan to provide systems-level recommendations and conceptual design plans for addressing different congestion and safety concerns along the roadway. It could also address street connectivity and network adjacency, access management, high-accident locations, and key nodal points.

### RTE 1-13 Policy Statement

Plan for transportation needs to maximize the economic potential of the Route 1 Corridor, including truck routes, sidewalks, bikeways, and trails.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Balance regional and local mobility when programming future capital projects and adopting new transportation policies and street design standards for Washington Boulevard.
2. Support policies, projects, and partnerships in the region that reinforce Interstate 95 as the primary corridor for travel between Baltimore and Washington, DC.
3. Provide sidewalks, bikeways, and trails to access job sites.

### RTE 1-14 Policy Statement

Manage access and reduce congestion levels on Washington Boulevard.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Promote access improvements and circulation designs that enhance traffic safety and accommodate transit and pedestrian travel.
2. Encourage shared-use driveways or cross-access agreements in all new development to reduce the number of direct access points along Washington Boulevard.
3. Provide systems-level recommendations and conceptual design plans for addressing different congestion and safety concerns along Route 1.
4. Encourage reductions to roadway width in targeted locations to enhance safety.
5. Ensure stub streets or driveways are provided, with connections to adjacent parcels.
6. Continue local and regional coordination to improve multi-modal travel alternatives to Route 1 for local trips within the Route 1 Corridor.



## Project Delivery in the Route 1 Corridor

Constructing new transportation infrastructure is complex no matter the scale. A small section of sidewalk or pathway may seem to be relatively simple; however, the design and construction require most of the same procedural steps and physical constraints as building a road or bridge. In 2022, the County initiated a study to develop recommendations for the prioritization and delivery of sidewalk and safety projects in the Route 1 Corridor. The study found that a significant amount of local and state funding has been allocated to the design and construction of sidewalks and pathways, but progress has been slow for the reasons identified above. The greatest gains in building out the sidewalk network in the Corridor have been through the private land development process or when major roadway construction or reconstruction occurs for traffic safety or capacity improvements. To achieve benefits more quickly, the County should consider revisiting the project delivery approach in the Route 1 Corridor using a programmatic approach in which the process of design, right-of-way acquisition, permitting, and construction is based on a performance-driven design-build contract.

### RTE 1-15 Policy Statement

Develop a faster project delivery approach to construct critical safety transportation infrastructure in the Route 1 Corridor using a programmatic approach.

### Implementing Actions

1. Consider entering into an agreement with the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration that defines the priority of all unconstructed safety infrastructure.
2. Consider the feasibility of a single program manager for all Route 1 Corridor improvements.
3. Consider entering into an agreement with the State of Maryland to use quick-take authority for prioritized right-of-way acquisition along the Route 1 Corridor.
4. Partner with state and county agencies to develop a single programmatic environmental permit process based on a total estimated impact, including advanced mitigation banking for reforestation.
5. Partner with state and county agencies to define and establish review timeframes and “deemed approved” status for segment-specific construction documents.
6. Develop a contracting mechanism to provide incentives for faster project delivery.
7. Partner with the Maryland Department of Transportation to define and articulate maintenance obligations.

## Regional Transportation Coordination

Interjurisdictional collaboration and coordination are critical to improving transportation conditions and achieving shared goals for the County overall, but especially in the Route 1 Corridor. The Corridor is bisected with major state roads, interstates, and railways that link the County to its neighbors and regional transportation networks. As a member of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, Howard County coordinates planning and funding activity with its regional partners and engages in discussions about specific projects. Two regional activities that have a direct impact on the Corridor should be highlighted.

Route 100, Route 32, Route 1, and Interstate 95 have been designated as Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFC) under the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration’s program to build out a national network of alternative fueling and charging infrastructure along national highway system corridors. To address emerging alternative fuel demand, AFCs include a series of alternative fuel distribution sites conveniently located for the traveling public. This effort is related to the development of the Maryland Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Plan, which will guide the funding and deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and integration of connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) into the transportation network.

Efforts to capitalize on CAVs and fueling infrastructure along the Route 1 Corridor should be a priority to safeguard the Corridor’s future and its ability to adapt to changing and disruptive market trends. From a mobility perspective, CAVs have the potential to reduce the number and severity of crashes, delay large and expensive capacity improvements with optimized traffic flows, and improve travel time dependability using real-time, predictive routing solutions. From a development perspective, CAVs may significantly reduce the need for, size of, or number of parking spaces that serve nearby land uses, which releases land for more productive uses or activities. However, the County should also recognize the negative impacts of siting large-scale fueling infrastructure directly on Washington Boulevard.

### RTE 1-16 Policy Statement

Continue to coordinate transportation planning efforts with the State of Maryland to advance transportation technology and achieve shared goals for the Route 1 Corridor.

### Implementing Actions

1. Evaluate new technologies to improve travel mode safety and decrease congestion.
2. Continue to support the inclusion of plug-in electric vehicle charging and hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling infrastructure along Route 1 and other regional highways in the Route 1 Corridor.
3. Continue to participate in regional and state planning and coordination activities to ensure the needs of freight and goods movements are considered and supported.
4. Support efforts to expand service and improve the reliability of the Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) Camden Commuter Rail Line.

# ACTIVITY CENTERS AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS IN THE ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR

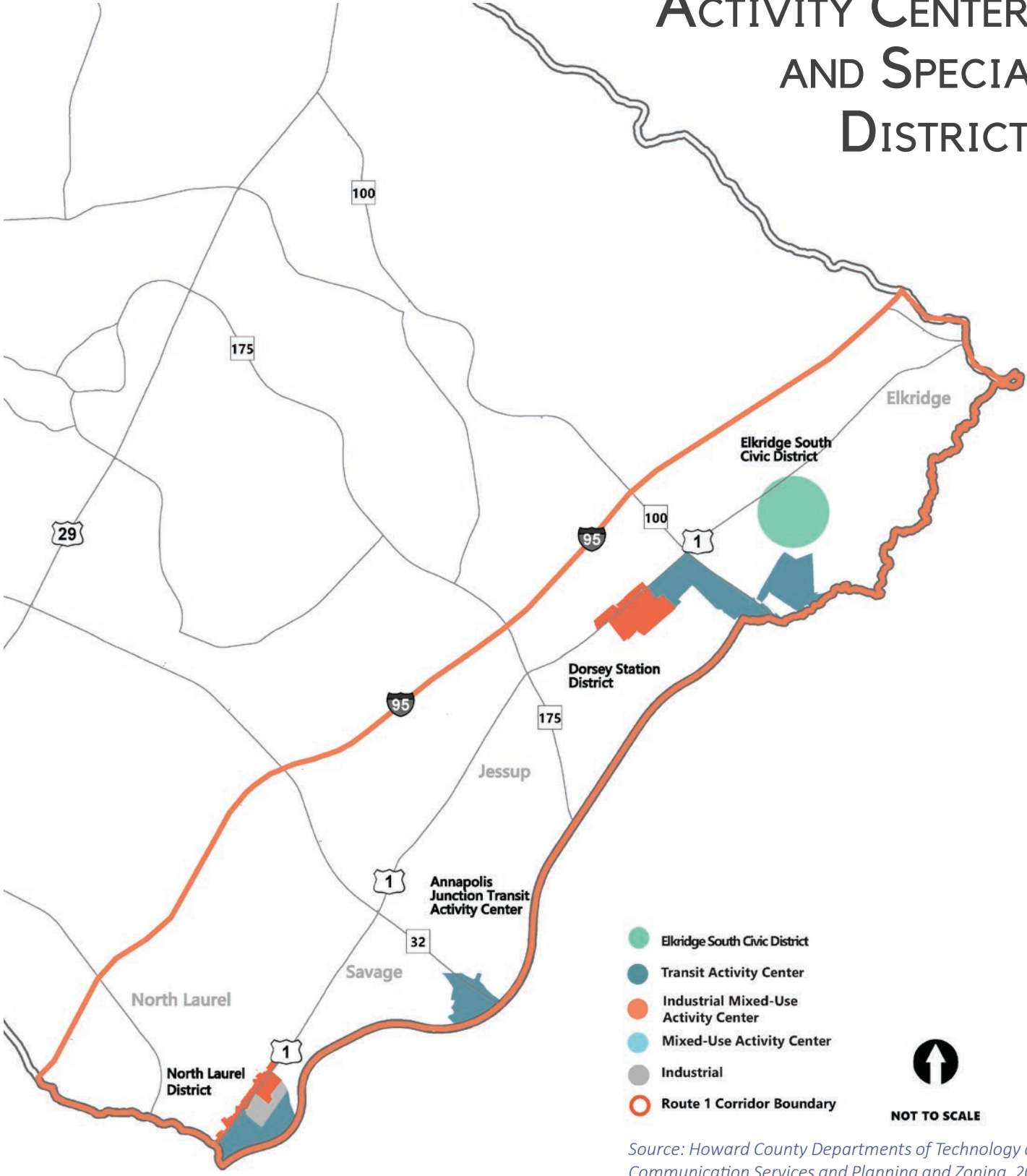
Activity centers are intended to be mixed-use, walkable places that serve the needs of current and future residents, and offer unique opportunities for a mix of businesses. They should become important “destinations” in the Corridor with a sense of character that is compatible with the industrial uses that surround them. With recommendations focused on redevelopment; placemaking; attracting a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses; and improving multi-modal transportation connections, these Route 1 Corridor activity centers will expand the vitality and sustainability of the area, the efficiency of the transportation system serving the location, and the sense of community experienced by residents, business owners, and visitors. The South Elkridge Civic District is anchored by civic uses and intended to be a unique, walkable, campus-like destination.

## Activity Center Character Areas

Based on the character areas found on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), two types of activity centers can be found in the Route 1 Corridor: Transit Activity Centers and Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Centers. They are similar, as they all promote a mix of residential and commercial uses, walkability, and open space. However, each differs in the uses that are prioritized and in the opportunities they offer for different nonresidential uses. For example, some activity centers allow light industrial uses that could attract eclectic, creative, or artistic/maker spaces that draw in residents, visitors, and small and large businesses. Others will continue to be residential hubs with proximity and connections to transit stops.



# MAP RTE 1 -10: ROUTE 1 ACTIVITY CENTERS AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS



### Transit Activity Centers

Transit Activity Centers are compact, mixed-use areas that maximize residential, commercial, and open space uses within walking distance to the three MARC stations in Howard County, including Laurel, Annapolis Junction, and Dorsey. Many of these activity centers are in various stages of development, with opportunities for growth ranging from limited expansion to large-scale redevelopment. Most of these areas already have transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning and are envisioned to maintain their zoning, except where there are opportunities for limited expansion to encourage walkable connections between neighboring activity centers or existing communities.

A grid network of walkable streets connects destinations within the activity center and surrounding neighborhoods or recreation areas. Parking should be satisfied using on-street parking, structured parking, and shared rear lot parking strategies. Provisions for pedestrian access between buildings should support a park-once, bus-once, or train-once mentality to access the site, and emphasize walking or biking between internal destinations.

The mix of land uses and development densities throughout a Transit Activity Center should maximize transit ridership.

#### **Transit Activity Center Character Area Description**

Land creating opportunities for compact, mixed-use development that maximizes residential, commercial, and open spaces within walking distance of premium public transit. Buildings will be tallest near the transit station, and the public spaces between buildings should be designed for active living, community gathering, and interesting street life. Residential units or office space may be found above storefronts. Homes in and surrounding the center of development may offer a variety of housing types—including, but not limited to, missing middle home choices. The design, scale, character, and intensity of development further from the transit station should be compatible with, and transition to, adjacent land uses.



### Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Centers

Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Centers provide a mix of uses, including industrial uses that are compatible with nearby residential. On the FLUM, these industrial mixed-use areas are located adjacent to other types of activity centers and within proximity to existing residential or other Corridor assets. These areas were identified based on industrial uses being present. This type of activity center is intended to support and retain the industrial base that exists within activity centers, minimize loss of industrial land, create neighborhood amenities and destination locations for residential communities, and provide other opportunities for commercial uses, including office space and retail. Future development in the industrial mixed-use areas should be sensitive to the “grit” of the Corridor’s industrial roots by creating eclectic, creative, and/or artistic/maker spaces. These activity centers are envisioned to have some of the greatest opportunities for redevelopment and will provide opportunities for commercial, light industrial, and residential uses to be integrated into a cohesive design.

Typical buildings are low-rise commercial, warehouse, office, and flex spaces. Retail storefronts feature attractive facades, awnings and porches, and outdoor seating. Buildings in this area may be vertically integrated (multiple uses on different floors of a single building); however, many are low-scale, single-use buildings. Since these areas are envisioned as active live/work centers with placemaking investments, they support restaurants, cafés, small-scale manufacturing, and commercial uses.

#### **Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Area Description**

Land that contributes to the County’s economic viability by providing places where people live, work, create, build, store goods, and distribute goods and services throughout the County and region. Land uses within Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Centers may include office, research, and laboratory; residential; neighborhood-serving retail; hotel; light manufacturing; transportation and trucking; wholesaling; processing; storage; e-commerce fulfillment operations; warehouses and logistics; and distribution. Some light industrial uses, like small commercial kitchens, bakeries, brewing, fitness and indoor sports facilities, and art studios, may be appropriate in contexts that allow them to integrate into a nearby neighborhood or Center. This character area recognizes the critical role of the “maker” economy in the Corridor and the importance of urban design in establishing mid- to high-density centers that foster vibrant areas of mixed-use activity.





### Current Zoning in Activity Centers

The predominate zoning districts within the activity centers include the Corridor Activity Center (CAC), Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Corridor Employment (CE), and the Continuing Light Industrial (CLI) Overlay Zoning Districts. While the pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use goals of these districts remain desirable, some of these zones have not produced the desired results of moderate-density, walkable, diversified developments that would serve multiple neighborhoods. The Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center is intended to have goals like those of the CAC zone. Additionally, the current TOD Zoning District lacks clarity regarding its desired mix of uses, such as commercial and open space goals. Therefore, the locations of these activity centers, and the incentives and zoning districts necessary to create them are being revisited in HoCo By Design.

### Environmental Health

The Route 1 Activity Center Districts (described in the “Activity Center Districts” section) are envisioned to provide opportunities for redevelopment, new development, and additional open space. These changes could improve environmental health if the districts incorporate green building materials and design, enhance stormwater management infrastructure, increase native tree canopy, and add diverse wildlife habitats such as pollinator gardens.

### Multi-Modal Transportation

As stated earlier in the Plan, mobility options for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders should be increased, and multi-modal improvements and complete streets prioritized, especially in activity centers. Howard County adopted a Complete Streets Policy in 2019. Goals for the policy include improved safety, more travel options, reduced transportation costs, improved access to goods and services, enhanced equity and access to transportation, and healthier communities. The Complete Streets Policy supports the County’s investments and partnerships in the Route 1 Corridor, which can support further investment in transportation infrastructure in activity centers, including pedestrian and bike infrastructure.

Redevelopment projects should provide the types of infrastructure improvements as detailed in county and national design manuals and guidelines. These improvements could include bicycle boxes at intersections, cycle tracks, shared lane markings, colored bicycle lanes, bicycle route wayfinding, or other state-of-the-art street design solutions to improve bicycle/pedestrian access, comfort, and safety. These improvements should also prioritize filling gaps in existing sidewalks and making the activity center more ADA accessible. Wayfinding could be incorporated to enhance connections to regional trail systems and transit. Spot improvements, such as crossing enhancements, trail connections, and neighborhood biking routes, could also be implemented. Pedestrian- and bicycle-focused plans could be completed by developers as a condition of zoning or site plan approval.

Dedicated routes for large truck travel are limited in and around activity centers. Goods will be brought into the activity center by a wide range of delivery vehicles and sizes. While it is recommended that trucks travel on designated routes, allowances should be made for trucks making deliveries, such as to commercial sites, light manufacturing businesses, and homes. Where overhead utilities are present, the placement of canopy trees should be considered within private property easements set back from the utilities or understory trees should be placed beneath the utilities.

As redevelopment occurs around the Dorsey and Laurel MARC stations, the County should support state capital investment and expansion in MARC service to match the demand that will result from planned transit-oriented developments. This train service should not only connect transit users residing inside the activity centers but should also improve transit connections to and from regional destinations.

### Gathering Spaces and Placemaking

Gathering places in activity centers should promote a variety of social events and activities, including summer concerts, children’s events, farmers markets, people-watching, or simply passive recreation. They should be intermixed throughout each development site as formal areas like parks, playgrounds, or amphitheaters, as well as informal areas such as cafes, plazas, benches, or sitting walls. These well-maintained spaces should accommodate varying crowds and interests, and connect to bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

Not only will placemaking and branding be important corridor-wide, they will also be critical in establishing the activity centers as unique destinations in the County. Placemaking efforts should be tailored to the vision for each activity center as they will help attract the types of investment desired in each area. Design guidelines and manuals, as well as strategic investments, are examples of tools that can be used for placemaking and gathering spaces.



### Residential and Commercial Uses

With a projected demand for employment and office uses within the Corridor, there is a corresponding need to provide housing and retail proximate to these future employment opportunities. With limited land available for redevelopment, most new housing in the Corridor is targeted in activity centers and should be a mix of multi-family and single-family attached homes. As discussed in the Dynamic Neighborhoods chapter, activity centers should also provide opportunities for missing middle housing types, especially those that can be built vertically within a smaller footprint. Activity centers will be priority locations for commercial uses, such as traditional office and retail developments, as they are intended to create a critical mass of residents, visitors, and employees that are necessary to support these uses.

### Implementing Partners

Zoning alone will not achieve the vision for these activity centers. Activity centers require strategic investments and implementing partners that can facilitate redevelopment consistent with the vision. As discussed earlier, various organizations and agencies—such as the Howard County Economic Development Authority, a possible redevelopment authority, the Design Advisory Panel, and others—will need to help implement these strategies to deliver on these visions.

### RTE 1-17 Policy Statement

Catalyze the redevelopment of activity centers in the Route 1 Corridor and ensure they allow a mix of uses.

### Implementing Actions

1. Empower and establish one or more entities to catalyze the redevelopment and revitalization of the activity centers and attract, retain, or relocate businesses to appropriate locations.
2. Develop a new industrial mixed-use zone (or combination of zones) that allows desired uses, including residential, commercial, and light industrial, in the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area.
3. Attract convenience commercial (including commercial pad sites) and eliminate auto-related uses on properties that front Route 1 in activity centers.
4. Ensure that the future zoning of the Mixed-Use Activity Center character area supports commercial uses.
5. Evaluate the Transit Oriented Development Zoning District to ensure that it is reflective of a mixed-use area that maximizes residential, commercial, and open space uses.
6. Allow sufficient residential densities in activity centers to make a wide range of uses economically viable, including convenience retail and other neighborhood-serving amenities.
7. Evaluate and revise the Corridor Activity Center (CAC), Corridor Employment (CE), and Continuing Light Industrial (CLI) Overlay Zoning Districts to ensure the zones are appropriately located within activity centers and the districts allow for a mix of uses that support the vision of each character area.
8. Encourage a mix of housing types available at different price points in activity centers to create more missing middle and affordable housing opportunities in the County.

### RTE 1-18 Policy Statement

Support retail development in activity centers and places in the Route 1 Corridor where there will be a “critical mass” of employees, residents, and visitors.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Cluster future retail in activity centers where there will be public spaces, parking, and other site amenities.
2. Provide public spaces for small or large gatherings and encourage foot traffic for local businesses in new mixed-use retail.
3. Evaluate a relocation assistance program that could be established to facilitate relocation of viable retail and commercial uses along the Corridor into activity centers.
4. Explore changes to the Zoning Regulations that support food trucks, food halls, and similar operations.

### RTE 1-19 Policy Statement

Ensure that activity centers in the Route 1 Corridor are vibrant and walkable through placemaking and open space design.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Ensure that future development plans incorporate new public plazas, parks, open spaces, and retail that serve community-wide needs. Gathering spaces will be realized through strategic investments and redevelopment.
2. Encourage future development in the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area to maintain the “grit” of an industrial corridor by creating eclectic, creative, or artistic/maker spaces that draw in residents, visitors, and employees.
3. Promote the vision of geographic clusters of activity centers as important “destinations” in the Corridor.
4. Improve the streetscape of Washington Boulevard within activity centers with street tree planting, lighting, and signage guidelines.
5. Connect properties through new internal streets or pathways to help achieve a sense of place and feeling of a community.
6. Review and update standards in the Route 1 Manual for sidewalks, crosswalks, and street reconfigurations to promote better internal and external pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

### RTE 1-20 Policy Statement

Provide efficient, safe, connected, and sustainable multi-modal travel facilities that promote greater linkages and livability in activity centers for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders in the Route 1 Corridor.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Prioritize a safe and convenient complete street network in activity centers that serves everyone. Include sidewalks, wayfinding, crossing elements, trail connections, and biking facilities to promote linkages to regional destinations.
2. Provide missing sidewalks and bus stops, and address Americans with Disabilities Act gaps inside activity centers.
3. Explore options to reroute regional truck traffic outside of activity centers.
4. Include infrastructure for bus and shuttle options, and bike and pedestrian facilities in redevelopment plans.
5. Work with the Maryland Department of Transportation and regional partners to support track and service improvements on the Camden Line that accommodate demand from current, planned, and proposed transit-oriented developments.
6. Review and update design guidelines that provide future transportation connections from nearby neighborhoods and a safe, comfortable public realm that supports walking, cycling, and transit use.

### RTE 1-21 Policy Statement

Ensure redevelopment of the activity centers improves environmental health in the Route 1 Corridor.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Ensure that redevelopment and new development provide improved stormwater management infrastructure by using green or nature-based stormwater management facilities and showcase them as part of the public realm.
2. Incorporate “green streets” using innovative environmental site design practices such as flow-through planters and permeable paving in parking lanes (where soil conditions allow).
3. Encourage green building design standards in all redevelopment and new development opportunities.
4. Design open space to protect, enhance, and connect existing natural resources and provide diverse wildlife habitats.
5. Enhance streetscapes with trees, planting native species where possible and ensuring that trees are properly located in relation to truck traffic.



## ACTIVITY CENTER DISTRICTS

Two Activity Center Districts have been identified in the Route 1 Corridor. Each District is comprised of two or more of the following activity center character areas: Transit and Industrial Mixed-Use. These Districts are targeted for redevelopment and include North Laurel and Dorsey Station. Various factors were considered as selection criteria in locating and designating each District. These criteria were informed by preceding studies, existing county policies, the community engagement process, and consultant analysis. Many of the parcels within each District meet multiple criteria listed below and have high potential for redevelopment.

### Underutilized Properties:

- Vacant or undeveloped properties
- Larger properties with small or ancillary buildings
- Publicly owned land and buildings
- Existing land uses that undervalue the highest and best use of the property, such as auto sales, truck terminals, and older motels

### Blighted Uses:

- Junk yards
- Auto storage yards
- Vacant and abandoned properties
- Properties used for general storage of materials, equipment, and the like
- Properties with extensive deferred maintenance and those that visually impact the Corridor or would discourage reinvestment in adjacent properties

### Other factors:

- Feasibility of relocating or renovating existing and operating businesses to achieve optimal use of the Route 1 Corridor's frontage lots.
- Proximity or connectivity to destinations and community assets, such as existing infrastructure, public facilities, and recent redevelopments.
- Limitations and opportunities presented by the existing character and connectivity of each District.
- Location and significance of natural resources and environmental features.
- Minimizing loss of industrially zoned land.

This section provides an in-depth overview of the existing conditions in each District. Design opportunities, land uses, and zoning changes are identified in the policies and implementing actions below, and should guide comprehensive rezoning, updates to design manuals, guidelines, and land development regulations, future master planning or functional planning efforts, capital budgeting, and operational planning within governmental and/or quasi-governmental agencies. Design concepts and supporting images are presented but are not prescriptive. Each illustration offers a depiction of one possible (re)development scenario to convey recommendations in more detail. The information presented communicates design intent, which provides an extra level of guidance to county officials and stakeholders as they update the Zoning Regulations. Elements of the design concepts and their recommendations were influenced by ideas and input generated by community feedback.

# NORTH LAUREL DISTRICT

## Existing Conditions

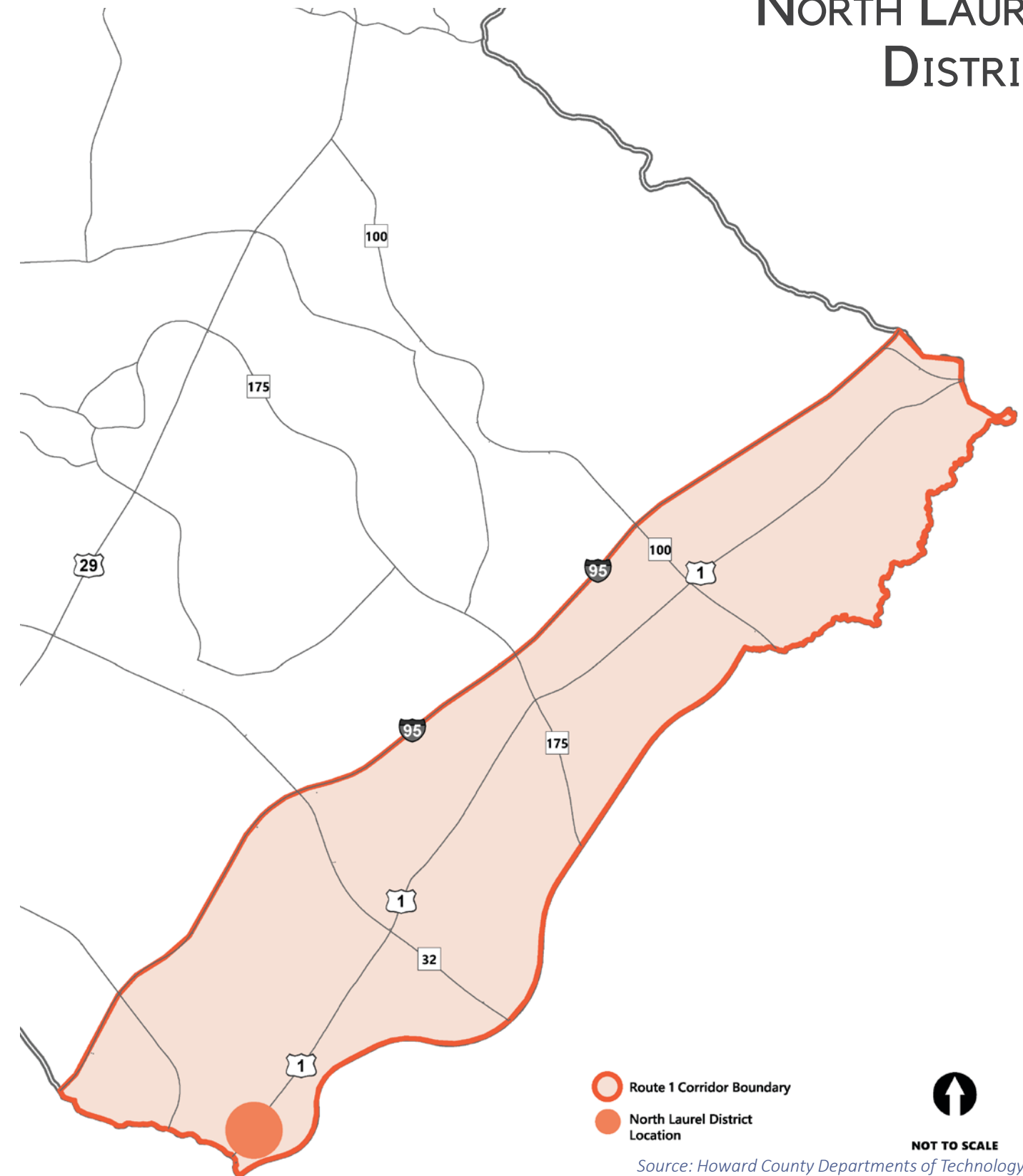
Located at the southeastern edge of Howard County, the North Laurel District defines the entry point to the County from the south along Route 1 as it crosses over the Patuxent River. The District is approximately 230 acres in size. Paddock Point, a transit-oriented development, accounts for about 72 acres. Current land use is predominantly industrial, with about a third of the District in industrial land use. Commercial and residential uses each make up nearly one quarter of the District. The remaining land uses are made up of government/institutional uses and rights-of-way. About half of the District is in the TOD Zoning District, about a third is within the CE-CLI Zoning District, and the remainder is within the CAC-CLI Zoning District.

The area reflects a suburban character on both sides of Route 1, which contrasts to the urban nature of the City of Laurel—the adjacent community to the south. Like other areas along Route 1, the east side consists of primarily industrial uses while strip commercial centers, multi-family, and single-family neighborhoods line the west side. Regional and local destinations, such as the Laurel Park (formally Laurel Race Course), the Laurel Park MARC station, the historic Laurel Railroad station (1884), and the North Laurel Community Center, provide tourism, recreation, and community amenities. The area also includes hotels, used car dealerships, auto/truck repair businesses, auto parts shops, a pawn shop, truck and equipment rental companies, large food distribution centers, a mobile home park, the Ashbury Courts Apartments, and the Paddock Pointe development.

Route 1 in this area is bifurcated into two separate roads—southbound Washington Boulevard and northbound North 2nd Street. These streets merge near Davis Avenue and continue northbound as one roadway through the rest of the County. While this area lacks continuous pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along Route 1, new sidewalks have been constructed, specifically in conjunction with new developments (such as the Ashbury Courts Apartments and the Paddock Pointe community). However, gaps in the area's sidewalk network remain. The parcels on the north side of Route 1 are quite shallow, with lot depth averaging around 300 feet.

Most of this District lies within the Patuxent River Upper watershed, while the remainder lies within the Little Patuxent River watershed and the Lower Hammond Branch subwatershed. The Patuxent River, which runs along the southern border of the District, has a wide, mostly forested, 100-year floodplain that contains several small wetlands. The Patuxent River watershed is a Tier II watershed, and a Green Infrastructure Network corridor follows the river. The Patuxent River is the focus of preservation and revitalization efforts, such as the City of Laurel's Riverfront Park, which integrates recreational facilities and scenic wetlands with the ruins of the City's historic dam. The District also contains portions of a small tributary stream to the Patuxent River and is approximately 15% forested, with a few forest patches. The largest forest patch contains a small wetland. Current development regulations require protection of streams, wetlands, and floodplains, as well as mitigation for any forest clearing.

# MAP RTE 1 -11: ROUTE 1 NORTH LAUREL DISTRICT





The North Laurel District includes land near the Laurel Park MARC station and Paddock Pointe. The FLUM proposes a mix of Transit Activity Center, Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center, and Industrial character areas. Source: Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2023

## Redevelopment Vision

The North Laurel District will build on the existing transit-oriented community with an entertainment focus that both serves the needs of existing and future residents and offers a destination for neighboring communities. Improved streetscape and buildings along street frontage together form the southern gateway to Howard County and support commercial and residential vitality.

Located four miles from Interstate 95 and nine miles from Fort Meade, the North Laurel District offers the potential for additional medium- to high-density mixed-use and residential redevelopment. Redevelopment would potentially increase public transit demand for the Laurel Park MARC station. Redevelopment and new development will also create opportunities to improve environmental health with “green” development that enhances energy efficiency, open space, and stormwater management. The potential exists to create a smaller retail and dining setting along North 2nd Street, anchored by family entertainment uses that would complement the Paddock Pointe development. Along the west side of Route 1 is a continuous line of narrow parcels that are currently commercial in nature and are recommended for industrial mixed-use, which can include a mix of commercial, residential, and light industrial uses. However, renovating or converting these commercial spaces into pedestrian-focused shops, restaurants, businesses, and public gathering spaces would greatly enhance a sense of place here.

The future character should complement the Paddock Pointe development and capitalize on its proximity to the Laurel Park MARC station. Enhanced streetscapes, gateway features, and wayfinding signage would also help promote a sense of place.

## Character Areas and the Future Land Use Map

In the North Laurel District, the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) proposes a mix of Transit Activity Center, Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center, and Industrial character areas.

The proposed Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area comprises approximately one-quarter of the District and is located within the western and northern portions. Current land uses in the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center area are largely commercial and industrial, with a very small number of residential, government, and institutional uses.

The Transit Activity Center character area accounts for a little over half of the District and is located within the southern and eastern portions. Land uses in this character area predominantly include commercial, industrial, and residential, of which Paddock Pointe is the largest community. The FLUM proposes an expansion of the current TOD Zoning District between Washington Boulevard (Route 1) and Second Street, transitioning from CAC-CLI to TOD and increasing the TOD Zoning District coverage of the District.

Additionally, the FLUM envisions the continued use of the northeastern portion of the District as an industrial area.

### Laurel Park MARC Station

The Laurel Park (previously known as the Laurel Racetrack) Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) station located on Laurel Racetrack Road in Laurel opened in 1910 and sits directly on the Howard County/Anne Arundel County line. The dated station has two platforms and 200 parking spaces. Currently a “flag” station (meaning the train only stops if passengers need to get on or off), the Laurel Park MARC station has limited service with three evening southbound trains to Washington, DC. The Laurel Park station is located one-half mile to the north of the Laurel station. The Laurel station, located at 22 Main Street in the City of Laurel, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The station has two side platforms, a station house, 10 bike lockers, and 396 parking spaces. It is the busiest non-terminal station, with an average weekday boarding of 621 passengers. However, this ridership is limited based on parking availability. In September 2021, a new sidewalk was built along northbound Route 1 between the City of Laurel and Prince George’s County and the entrance of the Paddock Pointe community in North Laurel. Prior to this sidewalk, there was no pedestrian connection from the City of Laurel to Howard County.

CSX and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) are reviewing plans to make the Laurel Park MARC station a full stop with a new platform. The station will be supported by the adjacent development of Paddock Pointe, which has a dense mix of residential, retail, and commercial uses. In 2020, state legislation was passed that will fund the redevelopment of the Maryland Jockey Club at Laurel Park. The \$150 million program will include a new clubhouse, new track surfaces, and redeveloped backstretch facilities.

This major redevelopment will spur additional improvements and growth in North Laurel along the Route 1 Corridor. A memorandum of understanding between CSX and the Maryland Transit Authority has been executed for renovations to the station and upgraded service. New capacity will result in added ridership and supplement the existing over-crowded station at the City of Laurel.

### RTE 1-22 Policy Statement

Support and expand transit-oriented development in the North Laurel District.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Expand the Transit Oriented Development Zoning District, as identified on the Future Land Use Map, to build on the redevelopment initiative underway adjacent to Laurel Park at Paddock Pointe.
2. Allow the development of high-rise residential and hotels within the Transit Activity Center character area to support nonresidential uses, such as office, retail, and entertainment, and increased MARC ridership.
3. Explore incentives and partnerships that encourage the creation of smaller retail, dining, and arts and entertainment uses within the North Laurel District.
4. Support state capital investment and expansion in MARC service to match demand that will result from planned transit-oriented developments.
5. Coordinate with Anne Arundel and Prince George’s Counties and the City of Laurel on transportation and transit enhancements that improve access to, service to, and usage of the MARC station.

### RTE 1-23 Policy Statement

Improve the walkability of the North Laurel District, as well as bike/pedestrian connections to the Laurel Park MARC station and connections to the City of Laurel MARC station.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Develop a transportation study focused on the North Laurel District.
2. Promote the development of a complete streets design, such as a shared use path or boulevard concept with separated bike and pedestrian lanes and street buffers, along the Route 1 frontage.
3. Extend the street network started by Paddock Pointe and ensure connectivity between development sites with walkable and bikeable infrastructure and attractive streetscapes. Create a new street grid with connections from Paddock Pointe to Center Street, Davis Avenue, and Wilbert Lane.
4. Provide internal pathway connections to the Patuxent River.
5. Add new pedestrian crosswalks with special paving at the intersections of Ruffian Way and Center Street, Center Street and Route 1, and Davis Avenue and Route 1 (northbound and southbound).
6. Evaluate the need for a shuttle bus to the Laurel MARC station.

## RTE 1-24 Policy Statement

Create a brand, identity, and sense of place in the North Laurel District.

### Implementing Actions

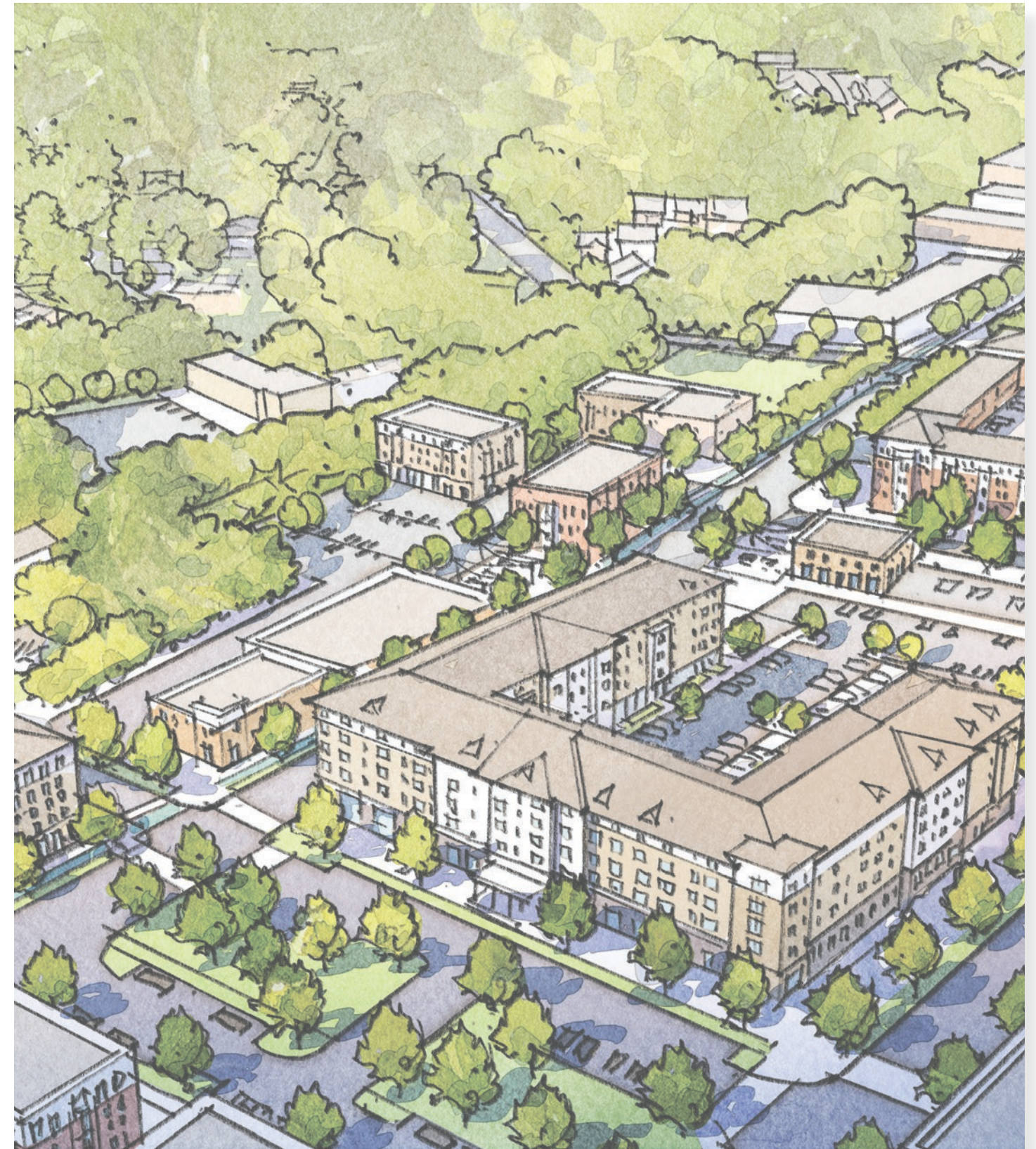
1. Develop design guidelines for the North Laurel District that allow high-quality, mixed-use residential development, support desirable neighborhood businesses, and encourage public gathering spaces. Direction should be outlined for alleys, crosswalks, and street reconfigurations to promote better pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
2. Better celebrate the Patuxent River crossing as a gateway to Howard County with additional tree planting and improved signage.
3. Locate buildings in new infill development so that they front Washington Avenue and anchor intersections, continuing recent redevelopment patterns in the area. Ensure that on-site parking is located behind, beside, or beneath buildings.
4. Create a network of useable open spaces with public street frontage and activate open spaces within surrounding development.
5. Renovate existing parking lots that have commercial uses so that they include landscaping and public gathering spaces, with a focus on lots that front Washington Boulevard.
6. Emphasize a sense of place by encouraging public art, fountains, gardens, and other amenities on private development and at gateway locations.
7. Create wayfinding signs to promote the brand of the North Laurel District and help safely direct pedestrians to area amenities.

## RTE 1-25 Policy Statement

Protect industrial areas while introducing complementary new land uses within the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area in the North Laurel District.

### Implementing Actions

1. Support indoor light industrial and small manufacturing uses and flex spaces in the North Laurel District and encourage the maker-space concept. These uses should complement and be compatible with storefronts and outdoor seating and residential uses.
2. Integrate indoor light industrial uses like small commercial kitchens, breweries, restaurants, fitness and indoor sports facilities, and art studios in this character area.
3. Focus employment uses and eliminate auto-related uses on properties that front Washington Boulevard.



*The illustration highlights one of many possible concepts for building a transit-oriented community around the Laurel Park MARC station. This visualization extends the concept of transit-oriented development beyond the typical quarter-mile walking shed for the station to include industrial and retail uses accessible via a new network of internal streets and walkable blocks. The area also serves as a gateway into Howard County from points south.*

# DORSEY STATION DISTRICT

## Existing Conditions

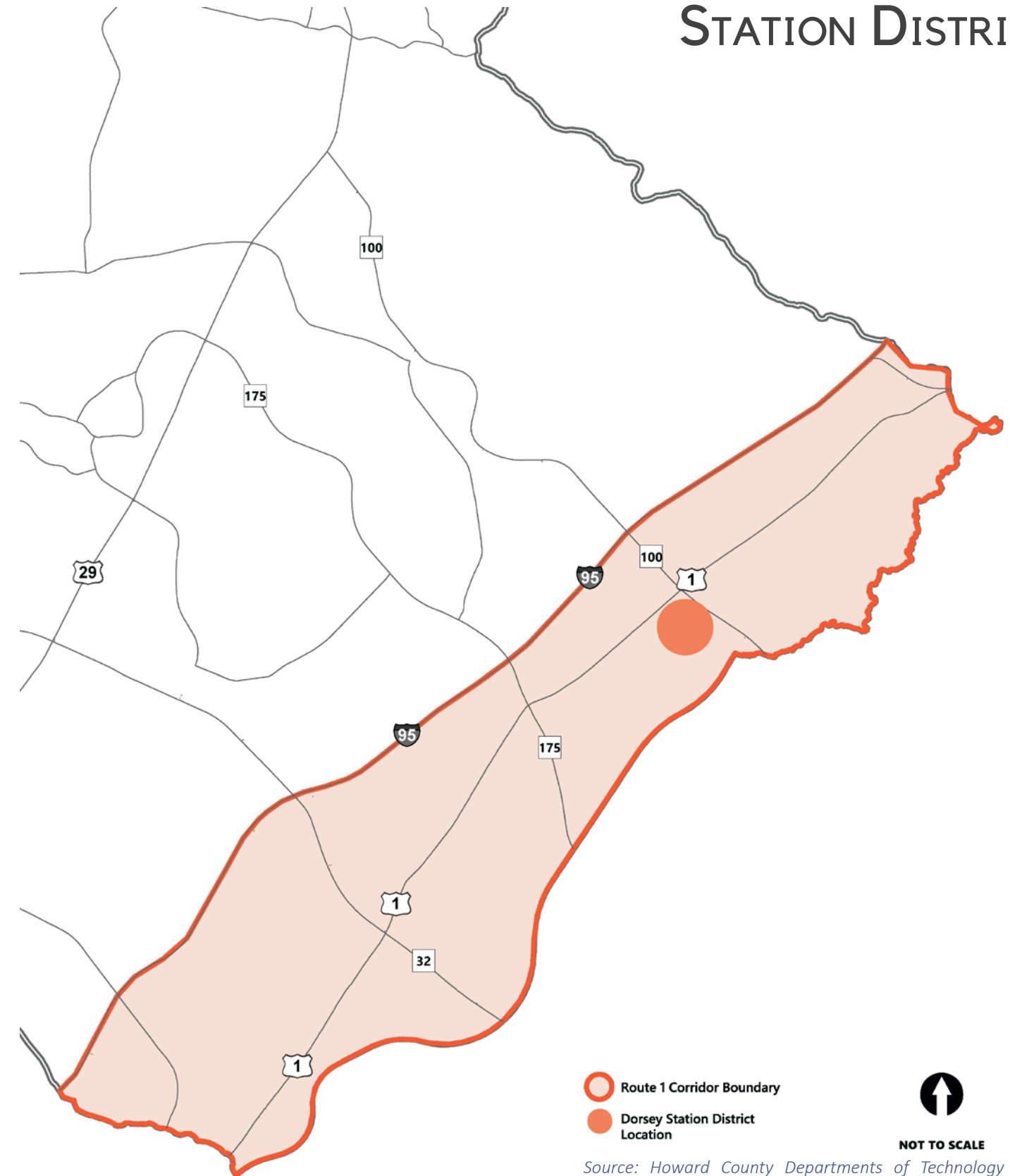
The Dorsey Station District is at the heart of the Corridor's light and heavy industrial areas, marked by flex uses, warehousing facilities, and the Dorsey MARC station. At the same time, the new residential communities of Blue Stream and Oxford Square that border this District to the southwest and northeast, respectively, are helping to transition the character of this area. When complete, these two developments combined are anticipated to generate approximately 2,250 residential units. The Dorsey Station District, as proposed, is a little more than 300 acres. Current land use is predominantly commercial and industrial, each covering approximately one-third of the District. Residential, mixed-use, and government and institutional uses each cover approximately one-tenth of the District. While open space is present, it covers a relatively small area, and rights-of-way comprise the remaining land use in the area. The current zoning in the District is just under half CE-CLI and about a third TOD. The remaining portion of the District is made up of M-1 and M-2 industrial zoning.

Food trucks, auto parts and sales, and car storage dot the underused surface parking lots along Route 1 in this area. The Dorsey Station District includes, but is not limited to, the Refinery Apartments, Baltimore Washington Commerce Park, Meadowridge Business Park Shopping Mall, Washington Boulevard Marketplace (Mexican Flea Market), the Dorsey Business Center, and satellite campuses for both Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland Global Campus.

The Dorsey Station District is located close to both Route 175 and Route 100, which provide excellent access to Interstate 95 and regional highways.

This District lies within the Lower North Branch Patapsco River watershed, with most of this District lying within the Lower Deep Run subwatershed while the remainder lies within the Deep Run Tributaries subwatershed. The District is bordered to the east by Deep Run and contains portions of four small tributary streams to Deep Run. Much of Deep Run has a forested 100-year floodplain that widens to contain a large, forested wetland on the northeastern boundary of the District. The District is approximately 16% forested, with several forest patches, and also contains a small Sensitive Species Project Review Area. Current development regulations require protection of streams, wetlands, floodplains, and habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species, as well as mitigation for any forest clearing.

# MAP RTE 1-12: DORSEY STATION DISTRICT



- Route 1 Corridor Boundary
- Dorsey Station District Location



NOT TO SCALE

Source: Howard County Departments of Technology and Communication Services and Planning and Zoning, 2023



The Dorsey Station District includes land near the Dorsey MARC station, which continues along Route 100 and Route 1. It includes the Transit Activity Center and Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character areas. Source: Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2023

## Redevelopment Vision

The Dorsey Station District is poised to become a destination that not only celebrates the Corridor’s industrial heritage but also uniquely blends that industrial character with residential and commercial uses. Future development will capitalize on the potential for transit-oriented development around the Dorsey MARC station and provide amenities for bordering residential developments by creating opportunities for a new mix of uses, including retail, residential, and light industrial, with walkable connections to the rail station. Redevelopment will also create opportunities to improve environmental health with “green” development that enhances energy efficiency, open space, and stormwater management. This area will also provide opportunities for small industrial users and industrial flex space. Food trucks and small-scale, convenience-oriented commercial development will be encouraged. Additionally, this area could be an ideal location for new industrial development concepts that blend commercial uses with industrial architectural elements, such as retail shipping container parks.

## Character Areas and the Future Land Use Map

In the Dorsey Station District, the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) proposes a mix of Transit Activity Center and Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character areas. The Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area makes up just under half of the District and is located in the western and southern portions. While just under half of the current land uses are industrial, many of these uses are nonconforming to current zoning. Additionally, another third of land uses are commercial. The remaining portions of the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center are made up of residential, government and institutional uses, and mixed-use. The CE-CLI Zoning District makes up nearly all of the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center portion of the District. Other zoning districts within the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center area of the Dorsey Station District include CAC-CLI, B-1 (Business Local), M-1, M-2, and POR (Planned Office Research).

The Transit Activity Center character area makes up nearly half of the District and is located in its northern and eastern portions. The FLUM proposes an expansion of the current TOD Zoning District southeast of Route 103, transitioning from CE-CLI and M-1 to TOD and increasing the TOD Zoning District coverage by about 20 acres. Land uses in the Transit Activity Center portion of the District currently include just over a quarter commercial uses; about one-fifth industrial, residential, and government and institutional uses; and a small area of mixed-use.

### Dorsey MARC Station

The Dorsey MARC station was once a postal stop that began operating in December 1881 on the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad and is now a MARC transit station on the Camden Line. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Camden Line served approximately 4,000 passengers daily, with service extending from Camden Station in Baltimore City to Union Station in Washington, DC. The transit commute is approximately 15 minutes to downtown Baltimore City and 30 minutes to Washington, DC. According to the 2019 Dorsey MARC Station Transit-Oriented Development Pre-Development Report, the station has 802 commuter parking spaces and three bus drop-off areas to support approximately 530 daily boardings.

### Dorsey MARC Station TOD

In 2019, the Dorsey MARC station became a state-designated transit oriented-development (TOD) area. The State of Maryland has defined TOD as a place of relatively higher density that includes a mix of residential, employment, shopping, and civic uses designed to encourage multi-modal access to the station area. MDOT has actively sought to promote TOD as a tool to support economic development, promote transit ridership, and maximize the efficient use of transportation infrastructure. TOD is a widely understood planning and real estate development concept nationally, and it is an important part of Maryland's strategy to address traffic congestion, environmental issues, and sprawl. The intent of this designation is to facilitate MDOT's more direct involvement in accomplishing TOD through activities such as pre-development planning, technical assistance, infrastructure investments, and coordination of public-private partnerships.



The Dorsey Station District is located close to both Route 175 and Route 100, which provide excellent access to Interstate 95 and regional highways. The Dorsey State Designated Transit Oriented Development boundary is shown in the map above. Source: State of Maryland and Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2023



A container park is a development that repurposes shipping containers into residential or commercial uses.

### RTE 1-26 Policy Statement

Capitalize on, support, and connect to future opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) around the Dorsey MARC station.

### Implementing Actions

1. Ensure future zoning supports TOD within the state-designated TOD area so that a mix of uses, such as residential, employment, open space, and commercial, are encouraged and permitted.
2. Expand TOD zoning in the eastern portion of the Dorsey Station Activity Center District and encourage a residential and commercial focus along Dorsey Road.
3. Encourage infill and selective redevelopment that incorporates residential and neighborhood-serving retail.
4. Connect station redevelopment to Dorsey Road to provide direct access to the station from Route 1 and other residential developments within walking distance.
5. Support a pedestrian/bicycle connection from Oxford Square to the MARC station.
6. Support mid- to high-rise residential and hotels in proximity to MARC stations.
7. Provide crosswalks for pedestrian access and safety at the intersections of Meadowridge Road and Dorsey Run Road, Dorsey Run Road and Dorsey Road, and Business Parkway and Washington Boulevard.
8. Support state capital investment and expansion in MARC service to match the demand that will result from planned transit-oriented developments.

## RTE 1-27 Policy Statement

Protect and promote industry in and around the Dorsey Station District while creating opportunities for residential, industrial, and commercial uses to coexist within the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area.

### Implementing Actions

1. Protect and support viable existing industrial and flex uses.
2. Redevelop underutilized properties with new industrial and flex uses, when possible.
3. Develop a new industrial mixed-use zone (or combination of zones) that allows for a mix of residential, light industrial, and commercial uses.
4. Maintain the mix of current employment uses and focus residential and mixed uses around the Dorsey MARC station.
5. Allow industry to remain and expand to include diverse land uses to enliven the area.
  - a. Land uses within this District may include office, research, residential, retail, hotel, and industrial. Indoor light industrial uses, like small commercial kitchens, breweries, fitness and indoor sports facilities, and art studios, should also be encouraged.
6. Develop a transportation study for the District to ensure that future roadway designs and improvements are context-driven and support multiple users, especially as uses shift from industrial to a mix of commercial and residential.
  - a. The Industrial Mixed-Use Character Area should prioritize road designs that support residential uses. Truck traffic to and from Industrial character areas should be routed around the District by way of Dorsey Run Road. Explore alternatives to re-route truck traffic away from residential areas.
7. Access to this District should be via collector and arterial roads, and/or freight rail.
  - a. Local street networks typically serve buildings directly to enable businesses to load and unload trucks. Service truck traffic should move goods and services on routes that minimize impacts on the District and adjacent neighborhoods.

## RTE 1-28 Policy Statement

Create opportunities for a mix of uses, gathering spaces, enhanced streetscapes, and placemaking that build on the Dorsey Station District's unique character.

### Implementing Actions

1. Provide a central gathering space that allows for seasonal entertainment or community events of varying sizes. Seek to celebrate the industrial heritage of the Corridor within this space when possible.
2. Consider creating a shipping container park in conjunction with an industrial or retail flex space, such as a brewery or distillery.
3. Provide opportunities for food trucks in a targeted area of the District.
4. Provide flex space and warehouse or light industrial uses that provide active streetscapes and placemaking opportunities along Route 1 that contribute to the District's character.
5. Convert existing buildings to support more active uses. Use creative building façade approaches to adapt more utilitarian buildings for new uses. Provide street trees along Dorsey Run Road, Dorsey Road, and Route 1 inside the District.
6. Develop design guidelines for the Dorsey Station District that allow for medium- to high-rise residential development north of Dorsey Run Road closer to the MARC station and emulate the industrial heritage within the Industrial Mixed-Use Activity Center character area.
7. Locate new buildings at prominent intersections in the area to infill vacant or under-utilized parcels and provide a more complete sense of place for residents, employees, or visitors.



The illustration highlights one of many possible concepts for building a transit-oriented development around the Dorsey MARC station, depicted in the lower-right corner of the image.

In this concept drawing, dense buildings for residential and office uses are located within walking distance of the commuter rail station. Large parking decks nearby provide commuter lots for transit riders outside the immediate area of the station. Small format retail uses serve some daily needs for residents, employees, and visitors. Walkable, tree-lined streets and different provisions for open space—a lakeside park, large plaza, and informal gathering green spaces—are accessible throughout the site.

The overall design of the TOD site and its buildings are sensitive to existing industrial uses in the area and their operational needs.



The illustration highlights one of many possible concepts for activating a community space in an existing industrial development. For example, a beer garden or restaurant incubator space in one of the industrial buildings may interact with the public using the common green, shipping container pop-up entertainment area, small amphitheater, or food truck row.

The active space typically requires a small footprint within a development, but it can quickly become one of the most desirable places to visit in the community. A built example of this concept includes "The Camp" in Huntsville, Alabama.

# ELKRIDGE SOUTH CIVIC DISTRICT

One Civic District is identified in the Route 1 Corridor. Although the area will predominantly retain its existing land use character designations, redevelopment opportunities should contribute to the creation of a campus-like destination anchored by civic, community-focused, and recreational uses. These uses may include opportunities for educational facilities, parks, fields, event space, a community center, indoor athletic facilities, and other community-serving amenities.

## Existing Conditions

The Elkrige South Civic District fronts Route 1 and is located to the east of the Howard County Library, Elkrige Branch and established residential communities located off Ambermann's Road, Hunt Club Road, and Rowanberry Drive. The newly renovated 35,000-square foot library, including the Do It Yourself Education Center and 10,000-square-foot 50+ Center, have become a civic focal point for the community and are the adjacent catalyst for this District. In addition to the modern architectural building materials (featuring steel and glass), the site amenities include an outdoor terrace, a living retaining wall planted with vegetation, pathways connecting to the community, and a stormwater retention pond.

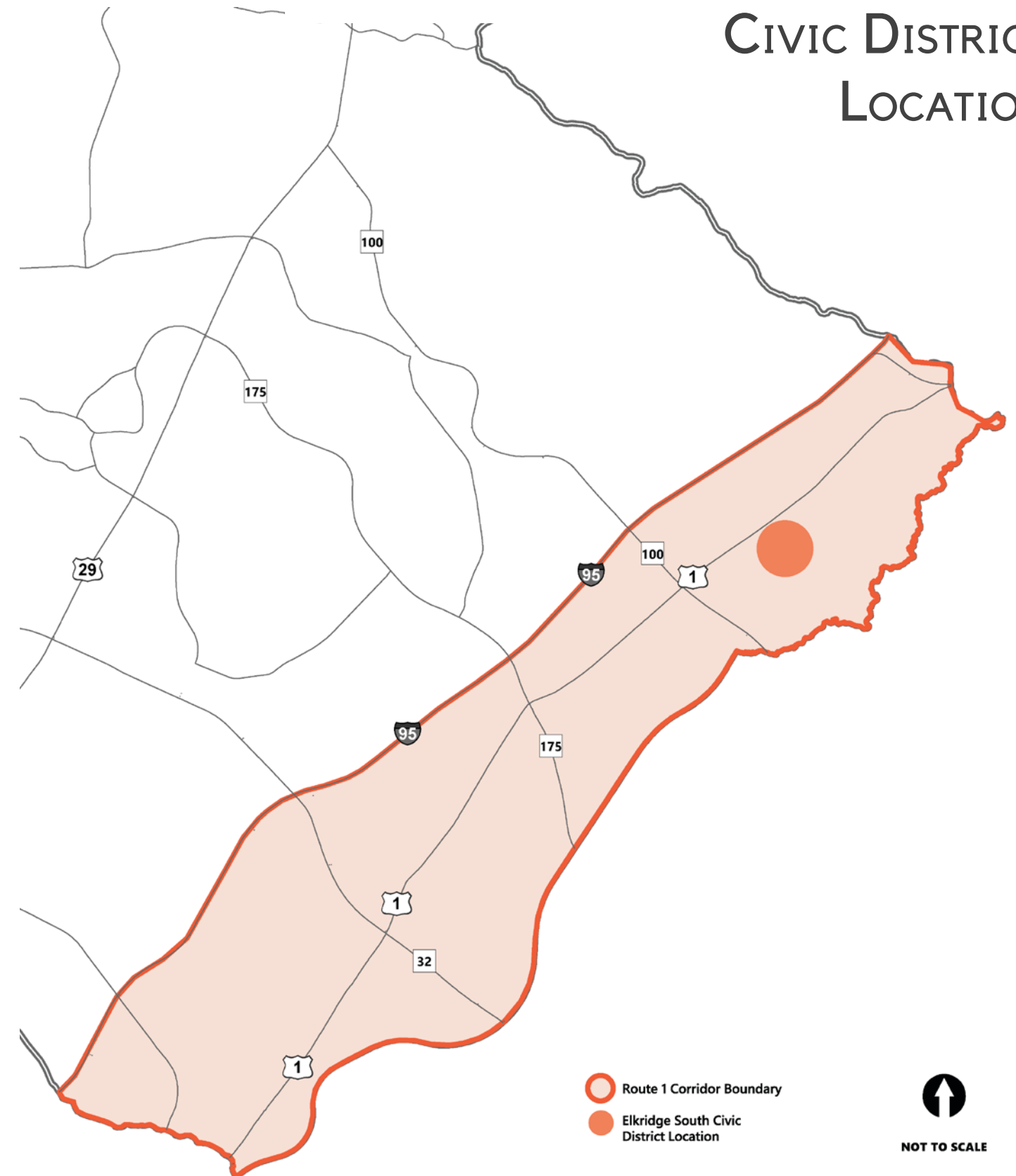
The District core is approximately 150 acres in size. Industrial and automobile-related uses predominate, including what was a large UPS Worldwide Express Freight Center, a used car dealership, auto repair businesses, construction companies, and large equipment rental businesses. Many of these uses are nonconforming to current zoning. Limited commercial uses are found to the south of the area along Route 1, including roadside food trucks, convenience stores, and liquor stores. Surrounding this core are residential neighborhoods, Harwood Park (a 1970s era planned residential community) to the south and Old Washington Road then historic Elkrige to the north.

While there are some roadway linkages within existing residential neighborhoods on the west side of Route 1, a more limited network exists on the east side. Harwood Park to the south of the District is the exception, as it has a true street grid. These residential neighborhoods are largely disconnected from one another. Additionally, community members have expressed concern with intersections along Route 1, including particularly where vehicular traffic on Old Washington Road turns left, southbound onto Route 1 at the District's northwestern corner.

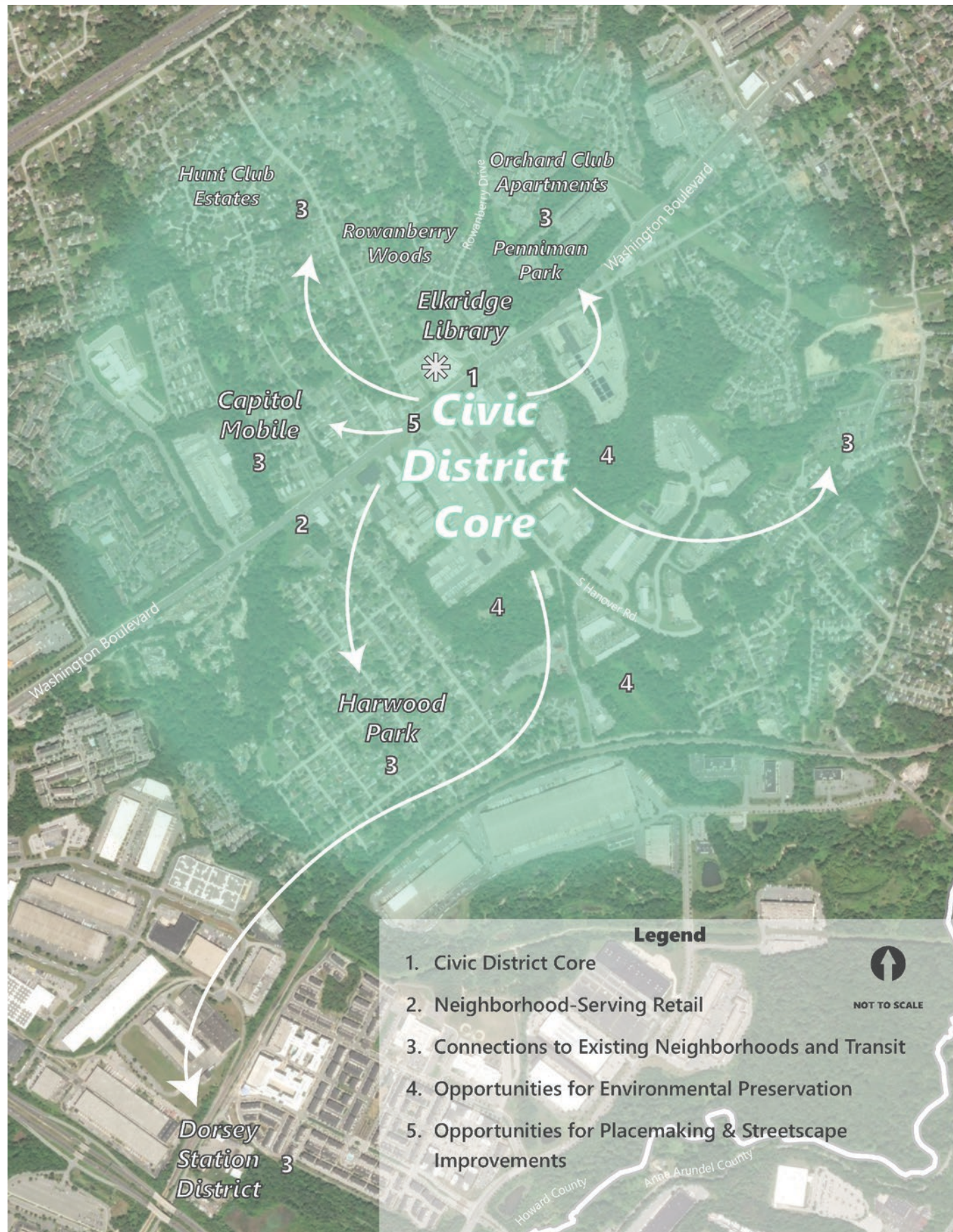
Safe passage for pedestrians is even more scant. Although continuous sidewalks exist along the west side of Route 1, there is a distinct lack of pedestrian connectivity to and along the east. No crosswalk currently connects the Elkrige branch library to the other side of Route 1. The two nearest crosswalks - at the signalized intersections at Rowanberry Drive and Loudon Avenue at the entrance to Harwood Park - lead to no receiving sidewalk on the east side of Route 1.

This District lies within the Lower North Branch Patapsco River watershed and the Deep Run Tributaries subwatershed. One major tributary stream runs through the District with forested 100-year floodplains varying in extent along its length. The District is approximately 25% forested, including the forest partially buffering the tributary stream. Although current regulations require protection of streams, wetlands, and floodplains, as well as mitigation of forest clearing, existing development which occurred prior to the current regulations may encroach into the stream buffer.

# MAP RTE 1-13: ELKRIDGE SOUTH CIVIC DISTRICT LOCATION



Howard County Departments of Technology and Communication Services and Planning and Zoning, 2023



Directly across Route 1 from the Elkrige South Civic District is the Howard County Library, Elkrige Branch. Source: Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2023

## Redevelopment Vision

Redevelopment of the Elkrige South Civic District will energize this portion of the Route 1 Corridor, providing a “town square” feel with opportunities for community gathering and public space, like parks, fields, event space, a community center, indoor athletic facilities, and a high school. The Elkrige Branch Library, 50+ Center, and DIY Education Center will serve as existing “civic anchors” in the District. Redevelopment should result in a unique campus-like, walkable district with enhanced streetscape to safely connect across and along Route 1 to link new and existing development in and around the district. The District will serve as a gathering point and provide connections between historic Elkrige Main Street to the north and the Dorsey Station Activity Center to the south.

The area currently hosts a number of smaller light-industrial businesses internal to the District and a loose collection of heavy trucking and automotive uses abutting Route 1. Redevelopment of this area will beautify the streetscape and create safe and accessible pathways to the residential neighborhoods that already touch three sides of the District, the Elkrige Branch Library directly across Route 1, and existing and planned neighborhood-serving commercial that surrounds the District to the north and south along Route 1. Redevelopment of the District will also create opportunities to improve environmental health in the area with enhanced open space, tree canopy, and stormwater management. Longstanding and locally owned businesses will be retained along the north side of South Hanover Road and McGaw Court.

## Character Areas and the Future Land Use Map

In the Elkrige South Civic District core, the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) proposes to retain the current industrial land use designations along the eastern and northern portions of the district’s core area. A new suburban commercial character area runs along the southern and central portions of the district core to achieve neighborhood-serving retail. Civic uses and connecting infrastructure is encouraged throughout the surrounding character areas within the wider Civic District. Opportunities for preservation of undeveloped areas and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods are identified. Property acquisition may be necessary to realize the “Civic District” vision.

### RTE 1-29 Policy Statement

Protect and promote industry and a compatible mix of uses within the Elkridge South Civic District, while facilitating new public placemaking.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Acquire and aggregate land within the Civic District area to provide public community facilities or other government uses.
2. Engage in visioning exercises with all members of the Elkridge South community, including local residents; businesses; and religious, cultural, and historic organizations to identify location opportunities, uses and layout, including access, for the District.
3. Protect and support the viability of existing industrial, commercial, and neighborhood-serving retail uses compatible with a potential civic use.
4. Redevelop or re-purpose underutilized properties and acquired and aggregated land for civic uses. New building materials and site design should be compatible with existing industrial uses.

### RTE 1-30 Policy Statement

Facilitate neighborhood-serving commercial redevelopment along the Route 1 Corridor to the north and south of the Elkridge South Civic District.

#### Implementing Actions

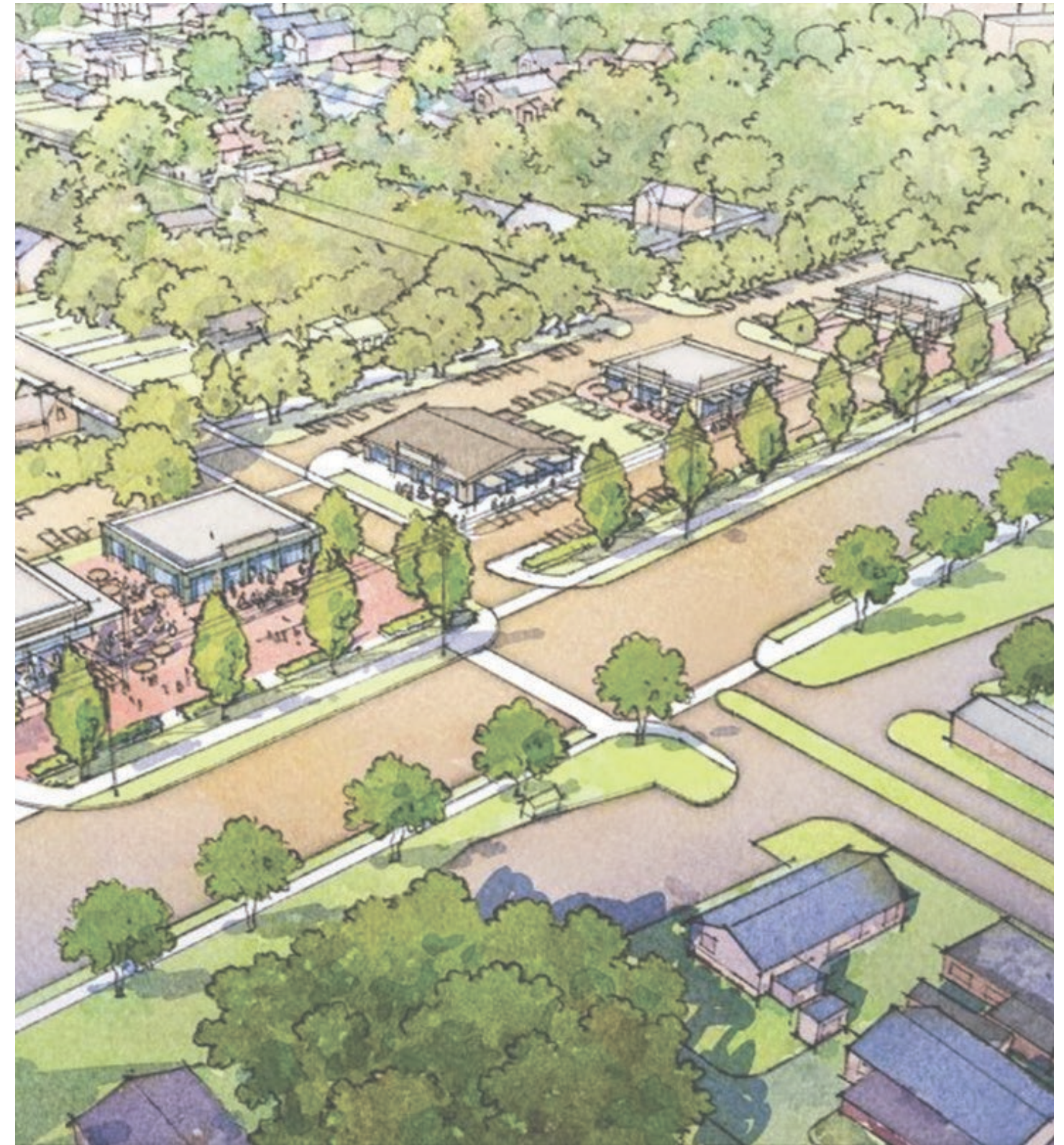
1. Develop design guidelines specific to the character of the Civic District to distinguish it from the wider Route 1 corridor. Green space and pathways interspersed throughout should connect residential uses further back from the roadway to the commercial and campus character areas that front Route 1.
2. Anchor major Route 1 intersections to the north and south with neighborhood-serving commercial uses to support existing and planned residential communities.
3. Incentivize replacing automobile-related uses on properties that front Route 1 with new neighborhood-serving retail and restaurants.

### RTE 1-31 Policy Statement

Minimize hazards posed to vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle travel along this portion of Route 1.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Develop a transportation study for the area including and surrounding the Elkridge South Civic District, particularly evaluating where community members have expressed concern with intersections along Route 1.
2. Incentivize pathway and mainline pathway connections off of Route 1 among open space corridors and residential neighborhoods.
3. Add a signalized intersection and crosswalk to connect the Elkridge Branch Library to the east side of Route 1.
4. Leverage partnerships and funding opportunities with local, regional, State and federal governments and nonprofit organizations to prioritize and implement additional safety improvements and expanded and more frequent public transit options, including the mainline pathway and critical crossings, along the Route 1 Corridor.



*The illustration highlights one of many possible concepts for modest infill development along Washington Boulevard. In this case, small format retail shops and restaurants that serve the needs of nearby residents are depicted. New single-story retail shops and restaurants are placed along Route 1 as a new "front door" to the existing neighborhood behind. A small community green between two buildings, and a hardscape plaza surrounding two other buildings, provide opportunities for activities like outdoor dining, music, and movies-on-the-green that bring community members together. The destination-minded uses in the buildings could be reached on foot or by bicycle from nearby homes.*