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View of station context.
Introduction

**USING THIS DOCUMENT**

This station area concept applies the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) TOD Design Guidelines to a specific station in the MDOT MTA system, providing an example of what transit-oriented development (TOD) could look like in the station area. This concept can be used in discussions with local jurisdictions, developers, and community members to work towards a shared vision for TOD. MDOT MTA has not allocated any funding for this concept, and in some cases concepts may not fit with existing local zoning.

**STATION CONTEXT**

Located approximately two miles northeast of Bowie’s historic village center and directly adjacent to Bowie State University, the Bowie State University MARC Station area has the potential to foster mixed-use development that encourages walking and the use of public transit.

The Bowie State University Station area includes all lands within a half-mile radius from the station on the MARC Penn Line. Laurel-Bowie Road (MD 197) is the major vehicular corridor through the station area, connecting to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD 295).

The station area is dominated by Bowie State University, with very little other development. In addition to the developed parcels, the station area has substantial natural features, including the Fran Uhler Natural Area to the north and the Patuxent Research Refuge to the west and north.

In addition to fostering mixed-used development around Bowie State University Station, MDOT MTA has identified several potential improvements to the station facility that could be funded through the development of a TOD project. These improvements include a potential additional fourth track, expanded platforms extending approximately 800 feet along the tracks with new accompanying shelters, stairs, and ramps, a new bus loop, and a kiss-and-ride dropoff area.
Map of existing conditions.
STREET NETWORK

Laurel-Bowie Road (MD-197) is the major vehicular corridor through the station area, connecting to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD-295).

MARC commuters use Jericho Park Road to connect to Laurel-Bowie Road. Besides Lemons Bridge Road and Bowie State University’s various campus drives, there are few other significant roads or streets in the area, and there is no established street grid.

TRANSIT

In addition to MARC Penn Line service, Bowie State University Station is served by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrobus Routes B21, B22, B27, and C29.

LAND USE AND ZONING

The station area is dominated by Bowie State University, with very little other development. Surrounding development consists only of a small grouping of houses and a church. Major development is occurring nearby, however: the Two Rivers housing development is currently underway two miles east of the station area.

Existing zoning categories within the station area include Mixed Use (M-X-T), Residential Agricultural (R-A), Residential Suburban (R-S), and Open Space (R-O-S and O-S). Of these categories, Mixed Use (M-X-T) can accommodate the potential transit-oriented development in this station area concept.

PARKING

Commuters have access to over 600 existing surface parking spaces on both the east and west sides of the tracks; the average utilization of these spaces is 80 percent according to 2015 MDOT MTA data.

NATURAL FEATURES

In addition to the developed parcels, the station area has substantial natural features, including the Fran Uhler Natural Area to the north, Jericho Park to the west, and the Patuxent Research Refuge to the west and north.

The Merkel Farm Equestrian Center and Patuxent River Park lie to the northeast beyond the half-mile station radius.

The Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis (WB&A) Trail passes by approximately one mile south of the station at Race Track Road and Kimberwick Drive. The currently-closed Bowie Race Track is another half-mile south of that point.

Because it is hemmed in by the Patuxent Research Refuge and other parkland, the Bowie State University station and campus enjoyed a quasi-rural setting until recently.

This quasi-rural setting is changing with the Two Rivers housing development and increased interest in other affordable tract housing close to the MARC Penn Line due to the high cost of housing closer to the Washington DC metropolitan area.
Concept view to south of Bowie State University Station with new mixed-use and campus buildings.
Applying the MDOT MTA TOD Design Guidelines, this station area concept seeks to encourage mixed-use development within walking distance of Bowie State University Station, and to transform the area into a multimodal live-work-learn-play destination.

The development of the Bowie State University Station area represents an opportunity to transform large surface parking lots and an auto-centric environment into a campus-oriented, sustainable, mixed-use development adjacent to the station, creating a feedback loop in which both support each other, and in which the station maximizes the use of transit, walking, and cycling.

MDOT MTA’s general objectives to create a lively, walkable transit-oriented development include:

- To strengthen connections between the surrounding university community and Bowie State University Station
- To build on existing assets
- To create a walkable street network
- To reinforce pedestrian and cyclist access to transit and to improve intermodal transit connections (particularly bus-to-rail connections)
- To create a mixed-use neighborhood

Street Network and Connectivity:
The station area’s current street network consists of one entrance on either side of the tracks; both entrances are hidden and uncelebrated. Stronger entrances and multiple connection points to the station would improve the street network and the arrival experience to both the station and university.

A successful interconnected street network should promote multiple points of access, multimodal accessibility, and an appropriate scale to promote a more walkable environment.

Land Use Mix:
While the western portion of the station area is zoned M-X-T Mixed Use, which could accommodate the TOD in this concept, most of the land is occupied by parking lots and wooded areas, or controlled by Bowie State University and other property owners.

- Accommodate a mix of uses, including retail, hotel, office, and residential (with a mix of student housing, senior housing, and general multifamily units); a future hotel on the western MDOT MTA parcel closest to the station could help serve Bowie State University visitors as the campus continues to expand.
- New development should not preclude the addition of a fourth track, which would depend on partnership and support from the railroad owner, Amtrak.
- Consolidate the existing station’s surface parking lots into shared-use, station-adjacent parking garages incorporated into new, mixed-use buildings on both sides of the tracks. These would serve MARC passengers, university visitors, and the new development’s residents, students, workers, and visitors.
- Create a public plaza adjacent to the station, along with other plazas, greens, and shared-use paths to provide meaningful, accessible recreational space.

OBJECTIVES

To use Complete Street strategies to ensure safe, equitable, and enhanced accommodations for all users.

To design streets with crosswalks, parallel parking where feasible, and bulbouts (where the crosswalk extends into the intersection to reduce pedestrian crossing distance).

West of the tracks, create small, walkable blocks with engaging ground-floor uses (such as retail and restaurants) to activate the sidewalks.

East of the tracks, realign and merge portions of Jericho Park Road and Loop Road to create a more direct campus approach to the station.

Construct a shared-use path west of the tracks to connect the station to the Fran Uhler Natural Area and Patuxent Research Refuge.
POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS

In keeping with Prince George’s County’s TOD goals, this station area concept shows how an interconnected street network could improve access to and improve the visibility of both the station and Bowie State University.

Based on the TOD Design Guidelines, MDOT MTA recommends incorporating an interconnected street and block pattern — designed to accommodate all users — as the station’s surface parking lots are redeveloped.

For pedestrians and cyclists, streets should be designed (or retrofitted where possible) as Complete Streets with tree-lined sidewalks and shared lanes.

On neighborhood streets where the posted speed is 25 mph or less, cyclists can safely travel with motor vehicles in shared lanes (add “Share the Road” signage). However, on streets where the posted speed is greater than 25 mph, bike lanes or shared-use paths should accommodate safe cyclist movement.

For broader pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, a shared-use path could be built on the west side of the tracks to connect the station to the Fran Uhler Natural Area and other destinations. While a tunnel crossing under the tracks already exists, a future added fourth track could accommodate an improved and widened crossing.

For practical bus access to the station, a new bus loop could be added to the east side of the tracks.

Above: Potential connections in and around the Bowie State University Station area.

Right: In the long-term future, development could expand to the northwest into the area north of Laurel-Bowie Road (MD-197) and west of Lemons Bridge Road, expanding the initial transit-oriented neighborhood onto land already designated and zoned for Mixed Use (M-X-T) development.
PROGRAM AND MASSING OPTIONS

The two blocks established by an interconnected street network on the developable parcels — including the station parking lots and surrounding parcels — could accommodate a variety of building programs and forms depending on market demand.

Rather than prescribing an overly precise development form, the concept for Bowie State University Station shows how a developer may apply transit-oriented urban design principles as referenced in the TOD Design Guidelines:

- Avoid blank walls and utility entrances/drives along primary building frontages.
- Push parking lots and garages to the centers or rears of blocks or to secondary streets or alleys that are expected to see less pedestrian activity.
- Incorporate a variety of uses, including residential, office, hotel, retail, and others, to foster the development of a mixed-use university-adjacent neighborhood.

The diagram at left is not definitive; it reflects merely one possible building massing and programming option for the station area. Depending on market demand, some other combination of low and midrise buildings (including garage-wrapped buildings) may prove practical.

APPROXIMATE TOTAL POTENTIAL PROGRAM YIELD:
Retail: 19,800 sq. ft.
Residential (Student Housing): 503,500 sq. ft.
Office: 61,500 sq. ft.
Hotel: 52,800 sq. ft.
Parking: 1,221 spaces (approx. 1,000 garage, 193 surface lot, and 28 on-street spaces, compared to 632 existing surface spaces.)

APPROXIMATE POTENTIAL PROGRAM YIELDS BY BUILDING:

Building A: Three-story office building
Office: 61,500 sq. ft. (20,500 sq. ft. per typical floor)

Building B: Four-story hotel with ground-floor retail
Hotel: 52,800 sq. ft. (approx. 150 keys; 15,000 sq. ft. per typical floor)
Retail: 7,200 sq. ft.

Building C: Five-story student housing residential / retail mixed-use building
Student Housing: 140,200 sq. ft. (approx. 448 beds; 29,400 sq. ft. per typical floor)
Retail: 12,600 sq. ft.

Building D: Five or six-story student housing residential building
Student Housing: 363,300 sq. ft. (approx. 1,162 beds; 63,700 sq. ft. per typical floor)

Future Blocks
To be determined; could be realized as a mix of midrise multifamily apartment buildings and/or attached single-family houses.
**CONCEPT ILLUSTRATIONS**

**Aerial View:**
The view above, looking northeast across Laurel-Bowie Road (MD 197), shows potential extended station platforms, potential infill mixed-use buildings and accompanying garages, and the Bowie State University campus in the background. Note the recommendation for orienting future academic buildings to the station.
Plan View:
This concept depicts the potential mixed-use, transit-oriented buildings arranged on a grid of walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets. A central green occupies the undevelopable high-voltage transmission line corridor, transforming what would otherwise be an unusable space into a focal point for the expanded station.