MONOCACY STATION

Station Area Concept

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Design Guidelines
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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 three miles south of downtown Frederick, with easy access to I-70 and within a designated Opportunity Zone, the Monocacy Station area has the potential to foster mixed-use development that encourages walking and the use of public transit.

The Monocacy Station area includes all lands within a half-mile radius from Monocacy Station on the MARC Brunswick Line’s branch to Frederick. Urbana Pike (MD-355) is the major vehicular corridor through the station area. MARC commuters use Genstar Drive to connect to Urbana Pike and I-70.

Existing area development includes a mix of retail, office, light industrial, and mineral mining uses. In addition to the developed parcels, the station area has natural features, including the meandering Monocacy River to the east and the Monocacy National Battlefield to the south.

In addition to fostering mixed-used development around Monocacy Station, MDOT MTA has identified several potential improvements to the station facility and station area that could be funded through the development of a TOD project. These improvements include a central square to serve as a focal point for both the station and any new development, and a shared-use path to connect the station to Monocacy National Battlefield and Visitor’s Center.
Map of existing conditions.
**STREET NETWORK**

Urbana Pike (MD-355) is the major vehicular corridor through the station area. MARC commuters use Genstar Drive to connect to Urbana Pike and I-70.

There is no established street grid in the station area; rather there are only a few service drives and disconnected secondary roads around which numerous big-box parcels are organized.

**TRANSIT**

In addition to MARC Brunswick Line service, Monocacy Station is served by MDOT MTA Commuter Bus Routes 204, 505, and 515, as well as Frederick County TransIT Routes 10, 20, and the Meet-the-MARC Shuttle.

**LAND USE AND ZONING**

Existing area development includes a mix of retail, office, light industrial, and mineral mining uses. Key commercial properties within the half-mile radius of the station area include Francis Scott Key Mall, Riverview Plaza Shopping Center, and Technology Park.

Existing zoning categories include General Commercial (GC), General Industrial (GI), Limited Industrial (LI), and Mineral Mining (MM). A floating zone for Mixed Use (pink on the map at left) was established in the 2010 Frederick County Comprehensive Plan to allow for a mixture of uses within identified growth areas such as the Monocacy Station area.

**PARKING**

Commuters have access to over 800 existing surface parking spaces west of the tracks; the average utilization of these spaces is 73 percent according to 2015 MDOT MTA data.

The parking is significant because, in addition to accommodating MARC commuters, it also — and even more significantly — accommodates Commuter Bus commuters.

Due to the limited number of MARC trains to Washington DC, Frederick-area commuters often take Commuter Buses 204, 505, or 515 to the Shady Grove Metrorail Station or to other points in the Washington DC area. Monocacy Station therefore functions as a significant Commuter Bus park-and-ride facility.

**NATURAL FEATURES**

Natural features in the station area include the meandering Monocacy River and its associated woods and farmland immediately east of the tracks, and the Monocacy National Battlefield to the south.

The station and adjacent Monocacy River form the east-west dividing line between the extensive suburban sprawl to the west, and the mostly rural setting to the east.

The Martin Marietta quarry immediately to the north of the station forms a significant barrier, but also poses a future opportunity as a redeveloped natural/recreational amenity.

*Diagram and view of area border vacuums:* The quarry forms the largest barrier, followed by the Monocacy River, the railroad tracks, and Urbana Pike. Land east of the Monocacy River is preserved as farmland. Google Street View
Concept view to east of Monocacy Station with new mixed-use buildings surrounding a central green.
OBJECTIVES
Applying the MDOT MTA TOD Design Guidelines, this station area concept seeks to improve connections to Monocacy Station, to encourage mixed-use development within walking distance of the station, and to transform the area into a multimodal live-work-shop-play destination.

The development of the Monocacy Station area represents an opportunity to transform large surface parking lots and auto-centric development into a dynamic, 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 bicycling.

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

- To strengthen connections between the larger surrounding community and Monocacy Station
- To build on existing assets
- To create a walkable street network
- To reinforce pedestrian 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 Genstar Drive, Urbana Pike (MD-355), and streets to the west of the Pike that lead to the mall and office park. Genstar Drive is the single point of entry to the station area.

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

- Use Complete Street strategies to ensure safe, equitable, and enhanced accommodations for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers.
- Create small, walkable blocks with engaging ground floor uses (such as retail and restaurants) on primary streets that activate the sidewalks.
- Design streets with crosswalks, parallel parking where feasible, and bulbouts (where the crosswalk extends into the intersection to reduce pedestrian crossing distance).
- Extend the southern edge of the MARC parking lot as a street connecting to Urbana Pike at the New Horizon Way intersection.
- Construct a shared-use path to connect the station to Monocacy National Battlefield and Visitor’s Center.

Land Use Mix:
While a majority of the developable land within a ten-minute walk of Monocacy Station falls within the floating zone for Mixed Use (MXD), most of the land is currently occupied by surface parking lots and is consequently underutilized.

The land use goal for the Monocacy Station area is to transform the existing auto-oriented parking lots and single-use developments into a mixed-use, transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood that takes advantage of its adjacency to Monocacy Station and to popular nearby destinations such as downtown Frederick, Francis Scott Key Mall, and Monocacy National Battlefield.

- Accommodate a mix of uses, including residential, retail, and office on the surface parking lots controlled by MDOT MTA adjacent to the station.
- Consolidate the existing station’s surface parking lots into shared-use, station-adjacent parking garages incorporated into new, mixed-use buildings. These could serve MARC passengers as well as the new developments’ residents, workers, and visitors.
- Create a public square adjacent to the station, along with other plazas, greens, and shared-use paths to provide meaningful, accessible recreational space.
POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS

In keeping with Frederick County’s TOD goals in the station area, this station area concept shows how an interconnected street network in the station vicinity could improve access to the station from local commercial establishments and various destinations in Frederick County.

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 Monocacy National Battlefield and Visitor’s Center, as well as to other regional destinations.

For practical bus access to the station, bus circulation could be provided via Genstar Drive and the potential streets “Road A” and “Road B,” with bus bays along the west side of the tracks.

Above: Potential connections in and around the Monocacy Station area.

Right: In the long-term future, development could expand to the north into the area of the quarry. Future development could be realized as a mix of midrise multifamily apartment buildings and/or single-family attached or detached houses, with ground-floor uses (such as retail) facing the primary pedestrian-oriented streets.
The three blocks established by the interconnected street network on the developable parcels, including the station parking lots, could accommodate a variety of programs and forms depending on market demand.

Rather than prescribing an overly precise development form, the concept for Monocacy 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 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.

In the long-term future, if further demand warrants, development could expand to the north into the area of the quarry.
Aerial View:
Aerial view looking south towards the Monocacy National Battlefield and Visitor’s Center, showing the potential midrise, mixed-use, transit-oriented development positioned between Monocacy Station on the MARC Brunswick Line’s branch to Frederick (at left) and the Riverview Plaza Shopping Center (at above right).
Plan View:
Concept view of the Monocacy Station area depicting potential mixed-use, transit-oriented buildings arranged on a grid of walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets, with a central green serving as a focal point directly adjacent to the existing station building.