

# Bi-County Transitway- International Corridor\*

## Planning Study

\*  
(formerly Purple Line)



December 2003



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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## Abstract

- Title:** Bi-County Transitway (formerly Purple Line)–International Corridor Planning Study
- Author:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Subject:** A planning study for a segment of University Boulevard (MD 193) in the Prince George’s County portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District.
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- Abstract:** The Bi-County Transitway–International Corridor Planning Study is a preliminary evaluation of the social, physical and economic development potential provided by the Bi-County Transitway (formerly Purple Line) in the International Corridor. The International Corridor is an area approximately one-half mile deep along University Boulevard (MD 193) from West Park Drive to the border with Montgomery County and Takoma Park. The planning study provides a demographic profile of the Corridor and summarizes a number of earlier studies and projects undertaken for this area. It provides an initial evaluation of the transit-oriented development (TOD) potential of three nodes and assesses the Corridor’s economic and physical characteristics opportunities and challenges. The study recommends the next planning actions that should be considered to advance General Plan goals for this area of Prince George’s County.

# Bi-County Transitway-<sup>\*</sup> International Corridor

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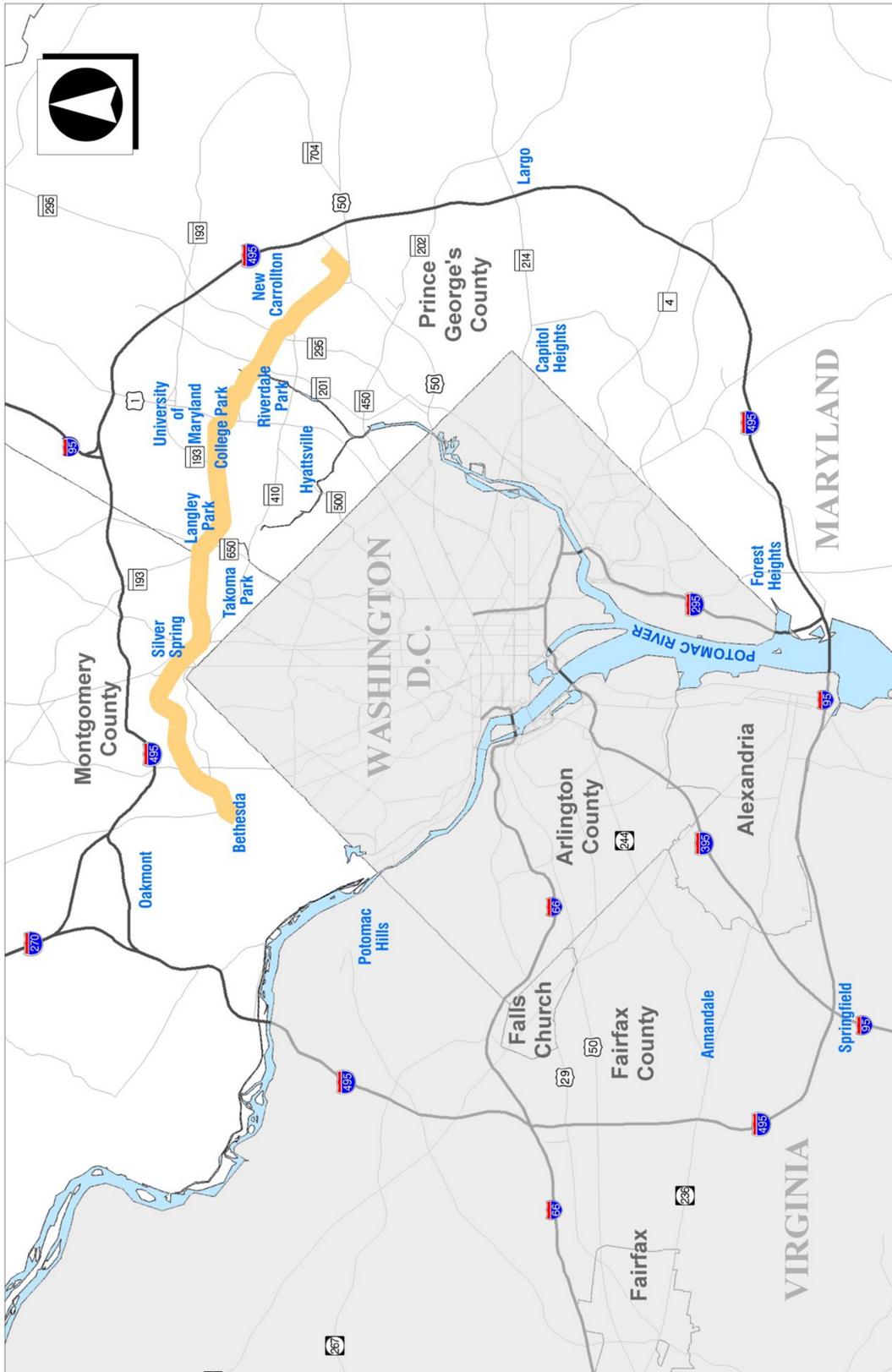
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**BI-COUNTY TRANSITWAY PROJECT**



- LEGEND**
- Interstate Highway
  - U.S. Highway
  - Maryland State Routes
  - Virginia State Routes
  - Local Road
  - Bi-County Transitway Study Area



## I. INTRODUCTION

### Study Purpose and Scope

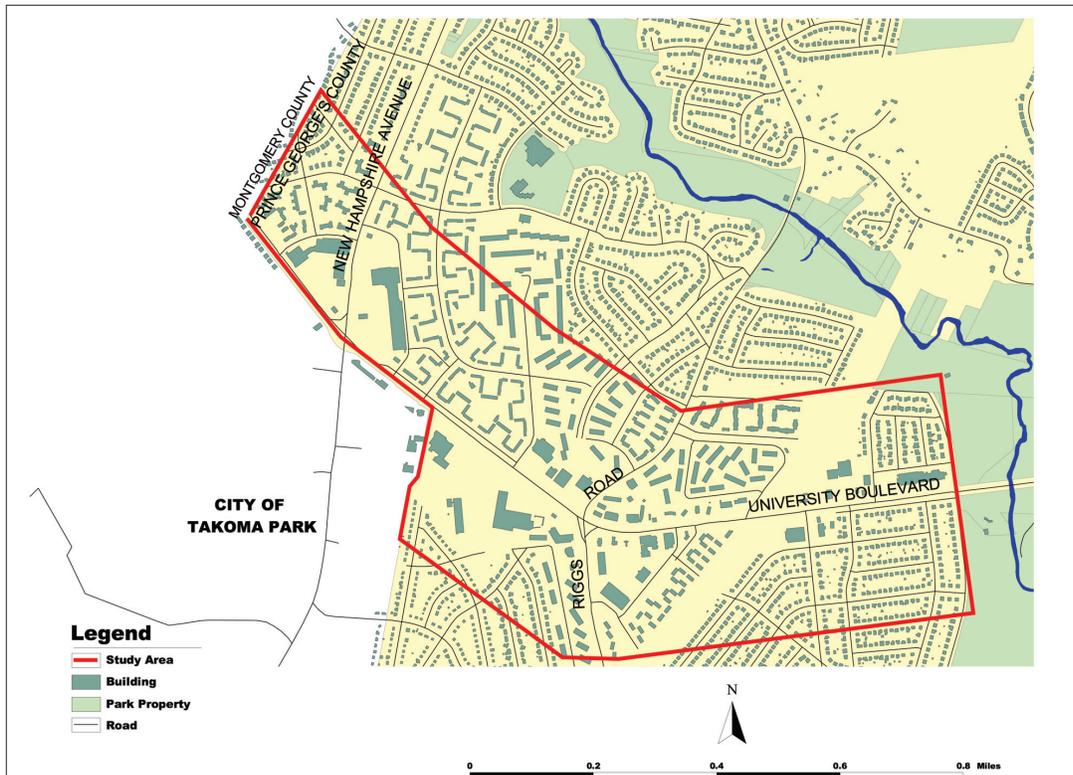
This study is an initial assessment of the potential for transit-oriented development of the Bi-County Transitway (formerly Purple Line)<sup>1</sup> along the International Corridor in northern Prince George's County. It focuses on corridor-specific physical, economic and social issues and opportunities at three recommended transit station areas. The study builds upon the *International Corridor Issues Identification Study*, a Planning Department study that was completed in 2002.

### Study Area

The International Corridor shown on Map 1 is approximately 0.5-mile wide and extends approximately 2.25 miles along University Boulevard (MD 193) from the border with the City of Takoma Park to West Park Drive. The corridor is in Planning Area 65 and County Council District 2.

The International Corridor is in the Developed Tier and the University Boulevard Corridor<sup>2</sup> as defined by the 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan* and has three potential development nodes. The vision for the Developed Tier is a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods. The vision for the University Boulevard Corridor is development and redevelopment of higher intensity residential and non-residential uses at appropriate nodes within one-quarter mile of major intersections or major transit stops. The three potential development nodes are:

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- 1 In May 2003 the Maryland Department of Transportation formally redesignated the Purple Line as the Bi-County Transitway. Although this document uses the term Bi-County Transitway, the term Purple Line is used in most previous documents and may still be encountered in other references and materials.
  - 2 The University Boulevard Corridor, as defined by the General Plan, extends from the District line to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.



Map 1. International Corridor Study Area

1. University Boulevard (MD 193)—New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650)
2. University Boulevard (MD 193)—Riggs Road (MD 212)
3. University Boulevard (MD 193)—West Park Drive

The node at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue is also designated as a Community Center in the General Plan. Community Centers are defined as concentrations of activities, services and land uses that serve the immediate community.

The International Corridor includes the alignment for the proposed Bi-County Transitway, a proposed light rail or bus rapid transit line<sup>3</sup> that would initially run from New Carrollton to Bethesda. The Bi-County Transitway is planned to open to the public in Prince George’s County by 2012.

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3 The Maryland Department of Transportation is evaluating bus rapid transit (BRT) for the Bi-County Transitway and for two other corridors in Prince George’s County. A BRT system usually consists of high-capacity, purpose-built buses that operate on physically separate (dedicated) rights-of-way, which provides reliable service at frequencies that are similar to those of light rail. Most BRT routes are designed from the outset to be cost-effectively upgraded to light rail once ridership increases sufficiently to justify light rail’s greater capital costs.



## II. BACKGROUND

### Introduction

The following profile of the International Corridor was prepared from original data sources.<sup>1</sup> The data summarized below are for the planning study area and are estimates from the original source material.

### Existing Conditions

#### *Demographics*

The Langley Park/Hyattsville area in the International Corridor is the third most popular destination for recent immigrants to this region as shown in Figure 1. According to the 2000 census, residents of the International Corridor represent 121 nationalities or ethnic groups and speak 47 different languages.

The corridor's ethnic composition shifted significantly between 1990 and 2000. While the African-American population decreased by 13 percent in this period, the Latino (Hispanic) population increased 106 percent to constitute about one-half of the study area population. The white population in the corridor increased slightly, from 29 percent to 34 percent, while the area's Asian population declined from 7 percent to 5 percent.

Approximately 34 percent of the housing in the corridor is owner-occupied. Nearly 62 percent of the corridor's residents earn at least \$37,500, the estimated minimum salary needed to rent quality, market-rate housing in Prince George's County.

The average household size is 3.37 persons. The average annual household income in the corridor is approximately \$56,821, which is lower than the \$66,547 average household income for Prince George's

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<sup>1</sup> 1990 and 2000 *United States Census of Population*. Economics Research Associates: *Market Study for the International Corridor Community Legacy Area*; Washington, D.C., May 2003.

Figure 1  
Immigrant Composition of the Top 10 Zip Codes in the  
Washington Metropolitan Area, 1990-1998

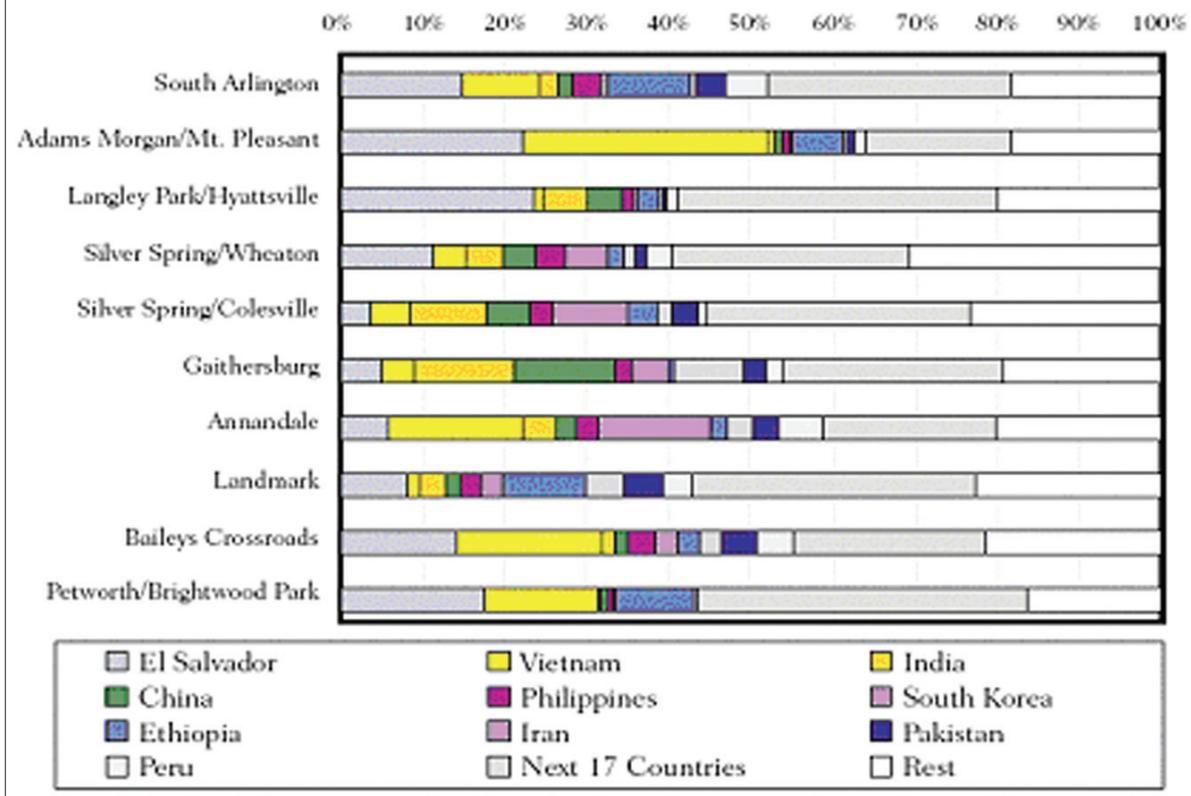


Figure 1. Printed with permission from the Brookings Institution, [www.brookings.edu/urban](http://www.brookings.edu/urban).

County overall. An estimated 20 percent, or 1,810 households of the corridor’s total households, is classified as in economic hardship, since these households do not earn enough to be able to allocate 30 percent of their income for the housing that is available in the corridor area.

Although a very diverse population characterizes the International Corridor, members of ethnic groups own only 110, or about 25 percent, of all businesses in the corridor. These businesses occupy about 22 percent (293,000 square feet) of the corridor’s commercial space. Of the ethnic-owned businesses, 53 (48 percent) are Latino, 24 (22 percent) are Asian, and 7 (6.4 percent) are Caribbean. The majority of the ethnic businesses are grocery or convenience stores (34 percent), restaurants (28 percent), or clothing or shoe stores (13 percent).

By the year 2012 (when the Bi-County Transitway is scheduled to open), the International Corridor’s population is projected to increase from 30,450 residents to 35,193. In this same time period, households in the corridor are projected to increase from 9,049 to approximately 10,208. The number of persons per household is projected to increase slightly from 3.37 to 3.45.

Average household incomes in the corridor are projected to decline very slightly, from \$56,821 a year to \$54,945, by 2012.<sup>2</sup> Both the current and projected household income averages are significantly lower than the average household income for Prince George’s County overall (\$66,547 in 2000 and a projected \$75,270 in 2012).

### Commercial Land Use

The International Corridor has an estimated 1.47 million square feet of retail, office and other commercial space. Office space makes up 167,400 square feet of this total; one-fifth of the corridor’s office space (31,800 square feet) is currently vacant. There are approximately 463 commercial tenants in the corridor as categorized on Figure 2.

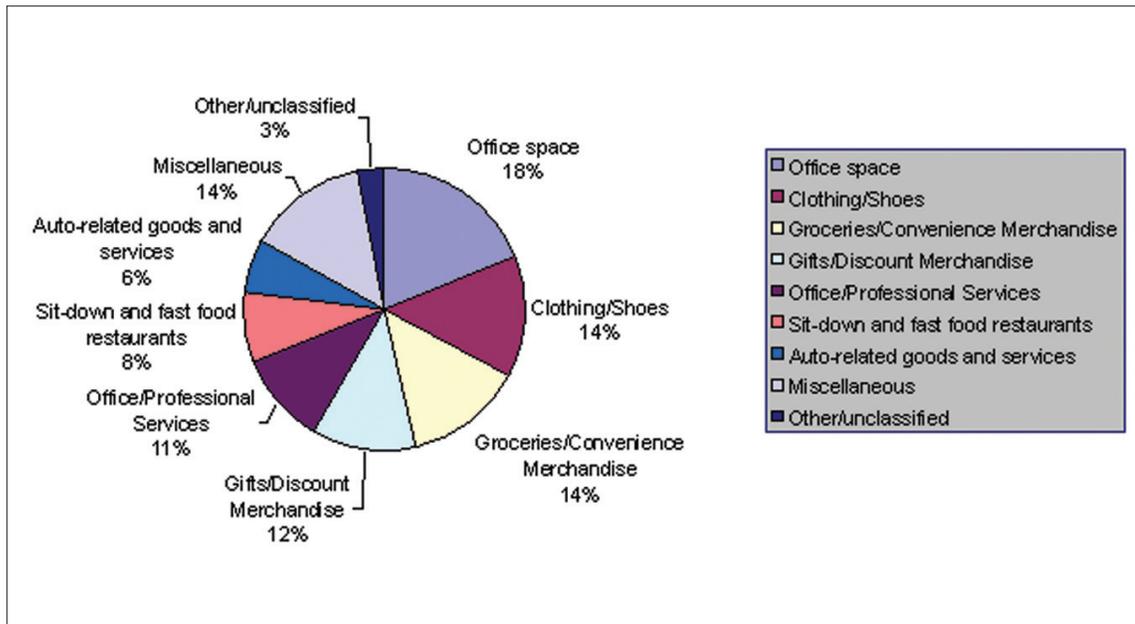


Figure 2. International Corridor Business Distribution by Type. Source: Economic Research Associates.

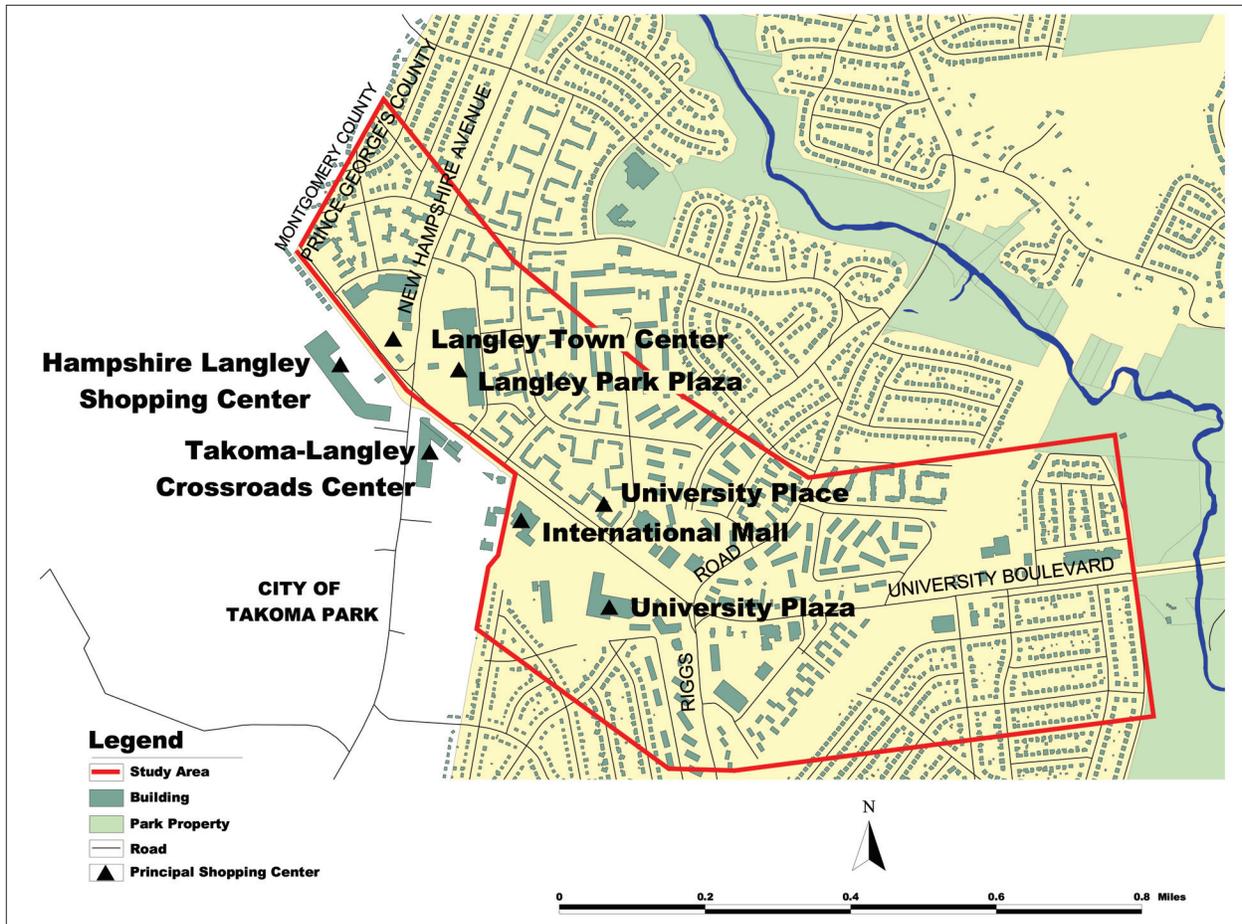
Four of the corridor’s shopping centers contain at least 100,000 square feet of leasable space:

Langley Park Plaza	169,400 square feet
Takoma Langley Crossroads Center	147,800 square feet
Hampshire Langley Shopping Center	109,000 square feet
Langley Town Center	104,800 square feet

Source: Economic Research Associates

All four centers are located at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue. Of the four, Langley Park Plaza and

<sup>2</sup> Economics Research Associates: *Market Study for the International Corridor Community Legacy Area*; Washington, D.C., May 2003. This income projection for 2012 is an estimate based on the 2010 data contained in Table 1 of the report.



Map 2. Principal International Corridor Shopping Centers.

Langley Town Center are located in Prince George’s County and are shown on Map 2. The corridor’s other principal shopping centers—University Place, International Mall and University Plaza—are also shown on Map 2.

## Planning Context

### *2002 General Plan*

The Prince George’s County Council approved the General Plan in October 2002. The General Plan places the study area in the Developed Tier, which is the most urbanized and densely populated part of the county. The General Plan designated University Boulevard (MD193) from the county line to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center as a Corridor, and designated the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue<sup>3</sup> as a Community Center.

<sup>3</sup> University Boulevard is one of three General Plan Corridors being studied by the state for future light rail or bus rapid transit alignments. The other two General Plan Corridors are Annapolis Road (MD 450) (Bi-County Transitway) and Branch Avenue (MD 5 Busway).

The General Plan proposed higher intensity residential and nonresidential development within one-quarter mile of the University Boulevard Corridor. The General Plan recommended high quality, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development at strategic nodes along the corridor to maximize the county's return on its investments in key infrastructure, particularly transportation. The strategies and design standards developed to attract this kind of infill development should be compatible with the prevailing character of the neighborhoods adjoining the corridor. Development should also reflect the long-term county policies of revitalizing and preserving other communities adjacent to the corridor.

*1989 Approved Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt  
Master Plan*

The 1989 *Approved Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan* comprises three planning areas—Planning Areas 65, 66 and 67—covering approximately 28 square miles. The International Corridor is located within Planning Area 65, which includes the Langley Park community.

The master plan described existing commercial centers in the corridor, which include the shopping centers located at the University Boulevard/ New Hampshire Avenue intersection, Adelphi Plaza, and along University Boulevard. While the master plan identified physical and aesthetic issues, it did not provide any specific recommendations on urban design or future redevelopment for this corridor. The master plan identified the Langley Park Shopping Center as a Major Community Activity Center and the Adelphi Plaza as a Village Activity Center, but the commercial area at the Riggs Road/University Boulevard intersection was not identified as a center. The 2002 General Plan amended this master plan.

*Strategic Framework for Transit-Oriented Development in  
Prince George's County*

The Prince George's County Planning Department completed this document in May 2003 as a countywide policy and planning framework for using transit-oriented development (TOD) to implement the 2002 General Plan. The framework defined TOD, discussed the theory, and identified local and national examples and the best practices of TOD planning.

The report found that, for a number of reasons, attracting TOD projects to Prince George's County is challenging. However, the report found that this metropolitan area has proven to be a viable market for TOD. Further, the significant success of other area jurisdictions, such as Arlington and Montgomery Counties, in attracting quality, mixed-use TOD provides useful examples of how to successfully plan and market such projects in this county.

### *Purple Line TOD Assessment*

In January 2003, the consulting firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff completed the *Purple Line TOD Assessment* for the Maryland Department of Transportation. This study evaluated the TOD potential of 11 possible Bi-County Transitway stations. This study used an investment-oriented approach to produce site-specific development concepts for these Bi-County Transitway station areas.

The final report included station area profiles and recommendations for coordinating the state's transit systems design and engineering with the county's TOD planning for Bi-County Transitway station areas.

The assessment assumed there will be at least two Bi-County Transitway stations in the International Corridor: the Takoma-Langley-Crossroads station at University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, and the University Boulevard-Riggs Road station. The transitway may include a West Campus station just east of the corridor, at University Boulevard and Adelphi Road, depending on how many transitway stations are built to serve The University of Maryland.

### *International Corridor Issues Identification Study*

The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission completed a staff study, the *International Corridor Issues Identification Study*, in March 2002. This study identified planning issues associated with the study area along University Boulevard from the county line to West Park Drive. The corridor study included both sides of University Boulevard to a depth of one-quarter to one-half mile, which is the generally accepted limit of walking distances for pedestrians.

The study analyzed existing conditions and identified the following key issues primarily based upon a stakeholder survey conducted in April 2001:

- Lack of physical and aesthetic improvements
- Problems with pedestrian safety
- Poor traffic circulation
- Inadequate community services for a multiethnic population
- Overcrowded apartments
- Lack of local jobs

The study recommended the following actions and future studies:

- An urban design plan for pedestrian environment, façade and site improvements, streetscape, landscaping, signage, and other aesthetic features.
- A land use plan based on the General Plan and the Bi-County Transitway proposal.

- An assessment of business and employment opportunities in this corridor to deal with large groups of day laborers.
- An analysis of an integrated social service delivery system to help local residents secure jobs and assistance.
- A multiagency and multijurisdictional group to provide coordination and advice on planning and ongoing implementation activities.

### *International Corridor Community Legacy Study*

The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George’s County completed the *International Corridor Community Legacy* study in July 2003. The Community Legacy study differed somewhat from this planning study in that it included more of Langley Park, as well as part of the City of Takoma Park.

Residents developed a vision of the International Corridor as a revitalized, vibrant, beautiful, memorable, safe, exciting and festive place. The neighborhoods surrounding the corridor were envisioned as safe, well-maintained, and improved through building code enforcement and civic pride to increase property values. To implement this vision, the study proposed an action plan based on public comments at several “Listening to Learn” community meetings about the corridor’s most immediate needs and pervasive unsolved problems.

The study made recommendations in five categories:

- Business Corridor Development
- Image and Identity
- Neighborhoods
- Programs and Services
- Public Safety

For each category, the plan identified:

- Needs
- Desired outcome
- Strategies
- Action steps for implementation
- Performance benchmarks
- Funding sources
- Lead partners

The Business Corridor Development recommendations included in this study are summarized in Chapter III, Planning Analysis, in the Socioeconomic Section.

## Summary of Key Findings

The data, information, analysis, and studies that have been reviewed contained the following key findings that bear on future planning steps for the International Corridor:

- A single, agreed-upon set of short- and long-term solutions that has widespread community support is needed.
- Physical renovation efforts, especially to redefine and improve the corridor's image and marketability, must reflect a long-term redevelopment vision.
- Marketing the corridor's development opportunities may require significant public sector initiative, and preserving and enhancing the ethnic and cultural diversity may be a challenge.
- Initial transit-oriented development planning should maximize pedestrian activity and reduce the automobile's domination.
- Strategic public investments, such as site control and land assembly, are key to successful redevelopment.
- The corridor should be planned and marketed on the assumption that the Bi-County Transitway stations proposed in the International Corridor will be built.



## III. PLANNING ANALYSIS

### Land Use and Development Patterns

#### *Potential Development Nodes*

The International Corridor's three potential development nodes are shown on Map 3. Two nodes—at New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Road—are also proposed as Bi-County Transitway stations. A third potential node is located at University Boulevard and West Park Drive near the eastern boundary of the planning study area.

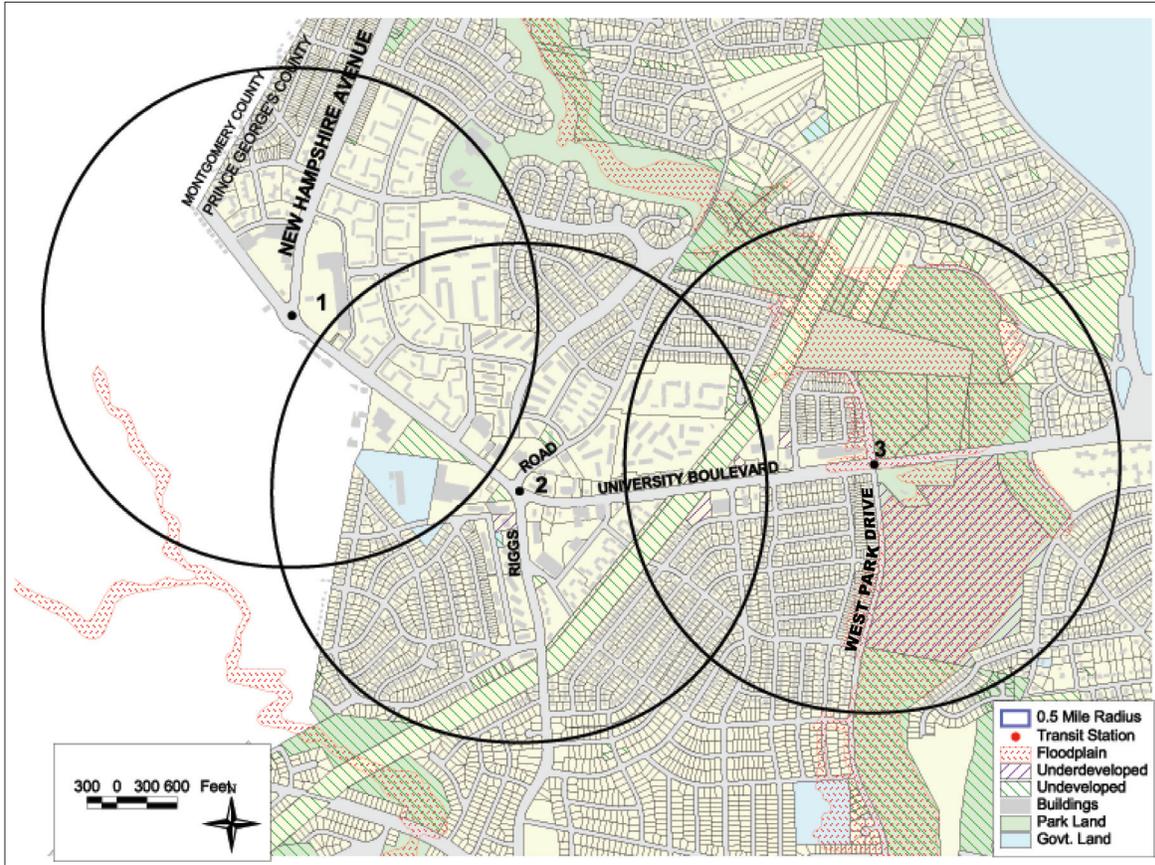
#### **New Hampshire Avenue**

University Boulevard (MD 193) and New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) are major commuter routes that carry 42,600 and 33,600 vehicles respectively each weekday. The International Corridor contains one of the highest concentrations of transit-dependent residents in this region. Daily bus ridership at this intersection often exceeds the off-peak boardings at all but four county Metrorail stations.<sup>1</sup> The built environment is characteristic of older, suburban strip commercial development.

The northwest and northeast quadrants of this node are within Prince George's County and are zoned C-S-C (Commercial Shopping Center) (see Map 4). There are large auto-oriented shopping centers at all four corners of this intersection and are set back from the sidewalks and streets by large surface parking lots. Sidewalks, where they exist, are narrow and frequently cut by driveways into the shopping centers or other commercial activities. There is considerable foot traffic in the vicinity of this intersection (see Figures 3 and 4). The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) classifies this intersection as one of the state's ten most dangerous intersections for pedestrians.

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1 Sources: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation (for The Bus) and Montgomery County Department of Public Works & Transportation (for RideOn).

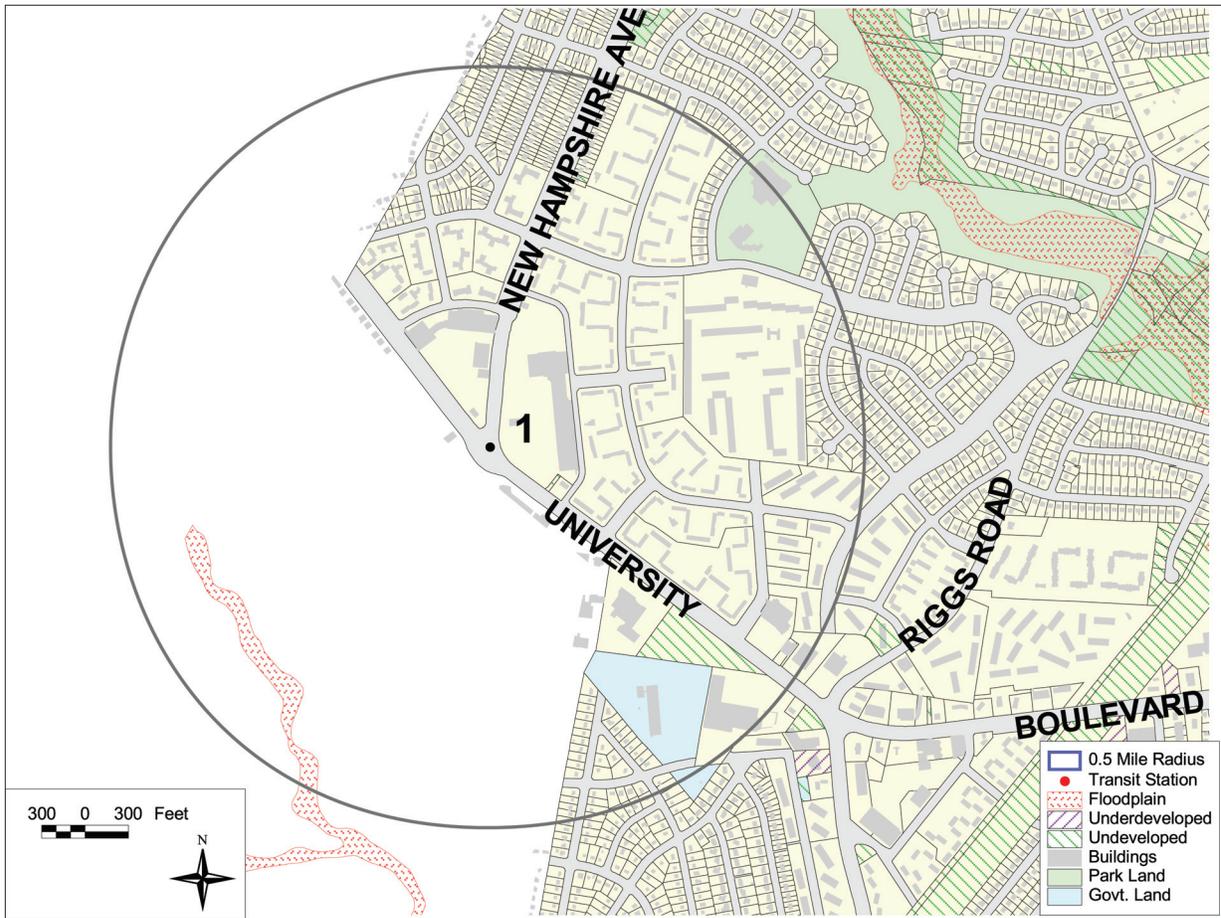


Map 3. International Corridor Potential Development Nodes.

Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties and the City of Takoma Park have requested that MDOT evaluate the feasibility of an underground Bi-County Transitway station at this intersection. The three jurisdictions are working with MDOT on a feasibility study for integrating a transit bus center into the transitway station proposed at that intersection.

### Riggs Road

Older, auto-oriented strip commercial development is the predominant land use at this node, which is approximately one-half mile east of the New Hampshire Avenue node (see Map 5 and Figures 5 and 6). Most of the parcels nearest this node are zoned C-S-C (Commercial Shopping Center). A small parcel zoned C-O (Commercial Office) is located at the southwest corner of the intersection. Residents, business owners, and consumers perceive some of the retail activities—particularly unlicensed street vending and day labor contracting—at this intersection to be major deterrents to successfully marketing the corridor as an attractive



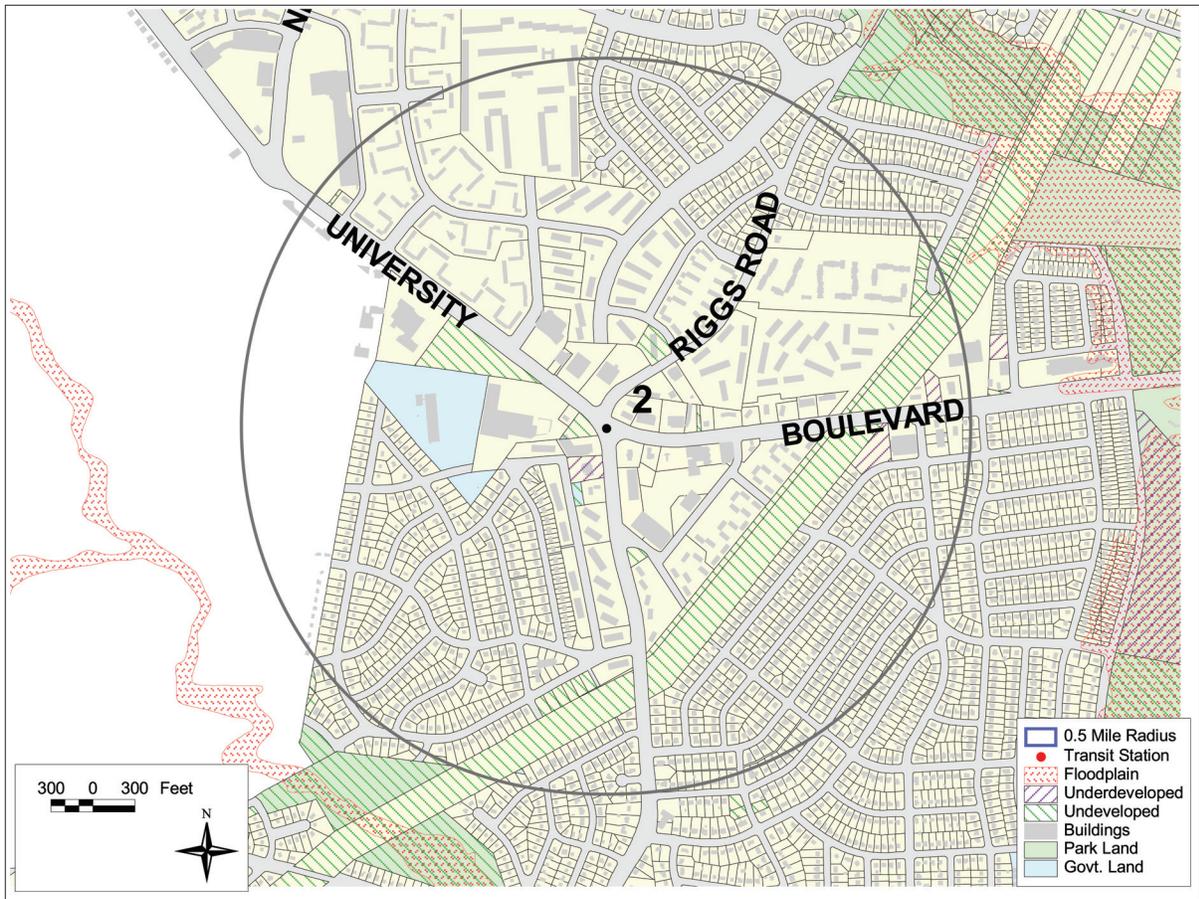
Map 4. New Hampshire Avenue Node and General Plan Community Center.



Figure 3. Pedestrian crossing at New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard.



Figure 4. Pedestrians crossing near the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue at University Boulevard.



Map 5. Potential Development Node at Riggs Road.



Figure 5. Shopping Center at University Boulevard and Riggs Road.



Figure 6. Shopping Center: Riggs Road and University Boulevard.



Figure 7. Pedestrians crossing University Boulevard between Riggs Road and West Park Drive.



Figure 8. Intersection of West Park Drive and University Boulevard.



Figure 9. Commercial Strip Development: University Boulevard at West Park Drive.

investment.<sup>2</sup> Multifamily residential developments with a large concentration of transit-dependent residents dominate the northern side of University Boulevard between Riggs Road and New Hampshire Avenue.

The street geometry (misaligned street crossing at the intersection), the traffic level of 32,700 vehicles a day, and vehicle speeds (35-40 miles an hour) through this intersection do not permit safe or efficient pedestrian movement (see Figure 7). Both traffic and pedestrian movements are further complicated by the high congestion created when Riggs Road is reduced from a four-lane to a two-lane road north of University Boulevard. The State Highway Administration (SHA) initiated a Neighborhood Conservation Streetscape Project to provide and improve pedestrian infrastructure and the appearance of this intersection. However, the timetable for completing this project is uncertain.

### West Park Drive

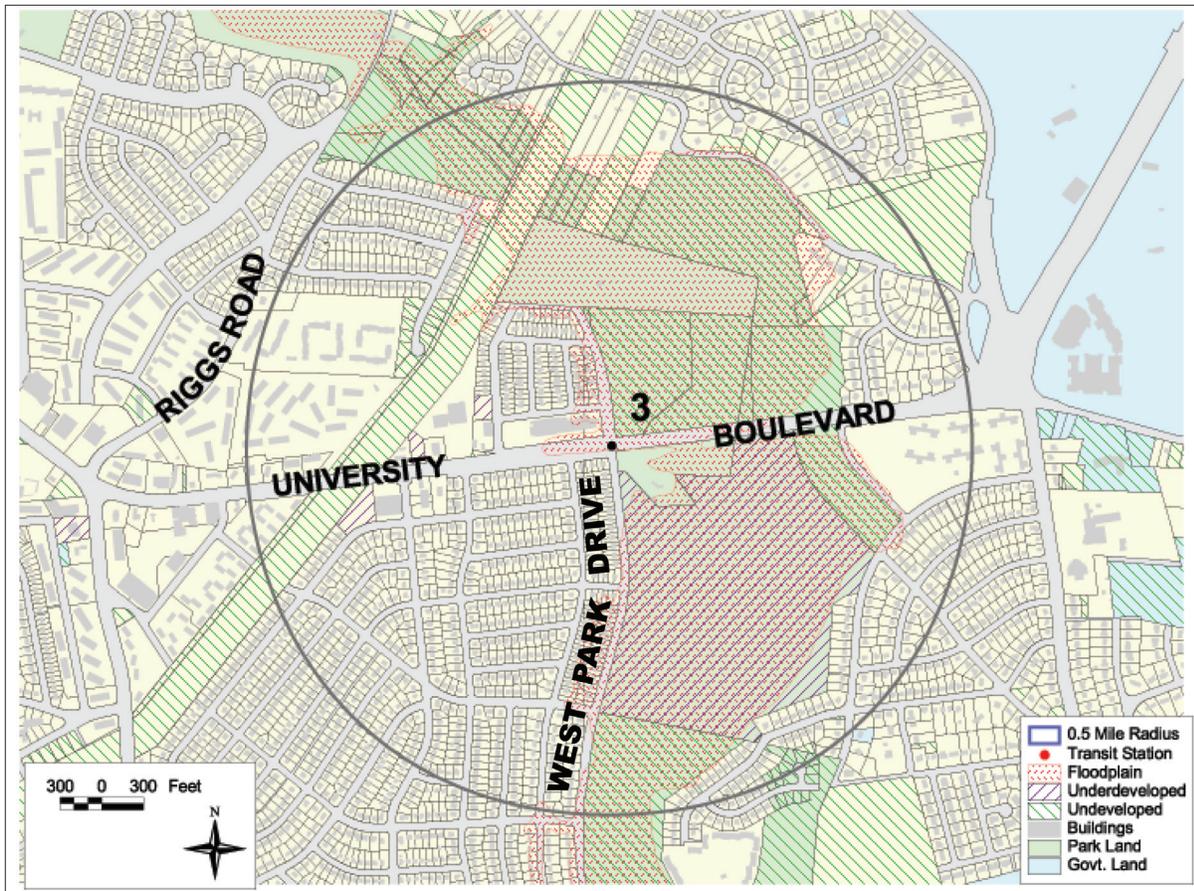
This node, shown on Map 6, is at the study area's eastern boundary and is approximately one-half mile from The University of Maryland campus. One of the transitway station options being considered is a West Campus station at University Boulevard and Adelphi Road. If it is built, this station would serve the University of Maryland's University College, the Visitor's Center and other facilities on this part of the campus and would be less than a half-mile from the West Park Drive node.

The north side of this segment of University Boulevard contains commercial strip development and is bordered by Adelphi Manor Park (see Figures 8 and 9). The south side of the corridor between Riggs Road and this node contains single-family and multifamily residential development and low-density strip commercial activity (see Figure 9). The Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park is to the east of West Park Drive.

This segment of University Boulevard (MD 193), between Riggs Road and West Park Drive, is about 1.7 miles in length and carries approximately 19,375 vehicles each weekday. There is high-speed automobile traffic and frequent turning movements into and out of the strip parking lots. This, together with the limited number of crosswalks and the very narrow median strip, makes it difficult or unsafe for pedestrians to cross University Boulevard.

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2 *International Corridor Issues Identification Study*; Prince George's County Planning Department staff study; March 2002



Map 6. Potential Development Node at West Park Drive.

### *Initial Transit-Oriented Development Assessment<sup>3</sup>*

The General Plan proposes to use TOD as a core strategy for achieving a variety of economic, social and environmental objectives. Although these objectives are countywide in scope, TOD is envisioned as particularly important in the Developed Tier, which is where both the International Corridor and the Bi-County Transitway are located.

These objectives include maximizing the public investment in the mass transit system, increasing property values and the county’s assessable base, and concentrating growth where infrastructure already exists, which reduces the fiscal stress of accommodating more auto-oriented low-density development outside the Developed Tier. Innovative infill TOD projects at the corridor’s Bi-County Transitway stations can serve as catalysts for comprehensive redevelopment that help achieve General Plan goals.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A and Prince George’s County Planning Department, M-NCPPC: *Strategic Framework for TOD in Prince George’s County*; May 2003.

Experience suggests that, to be both credible and economically feasible, TOD planning must integrate land use, density, site design, parking, and accessibility, especially pedestrian-friendliness, into a site-specific and marketable vision.<sup>4</sup> Further, when it is planned in conjunction with the transit facilities that serve it, transit-oriented development is often considered less risky, and therefore more marketable, by developers. Such integrated transit facility and land use planning also simplifies the effort needed to sustain community support, which is essential for successful TOD.

The International Corridor’s potential development nodes were evaluated using the TOD evaluation criteria that were developed in the strategic framework for TOD. The results are discussed and summarized in Table 1.

<p align="center"><b>Table 1</b>  <b>Initial Evaluation of TOD Potential</b>  <b>Bi-County Transitway Station Areas—International Corridor</b>  <b>October 2003</b></p>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Plan Consistency</b>	<b>Access &amp; Parking</b>	<b>Market Opportunities</b>	<b>Development Constraints</b>	<b>Pipeline</b>
<i>Potential Development Nodes</i>					
University Boulevard & Riggs Road	●	○	●	○	○
University Boulevard & New Hampshire Avenue	●	○	●	○	⊗
University Boulevard & West Park Drive	●	○	⊗	○	⊗
<p>Legend:      ○: May not favor TOD          ●: May support TOD          ⊗: Not applicable/not yet determined</p>					

### **Plan Consistency**

#### *New Hampshire Avenue*

The General Plan designated this node as the Langley Park Community Center. General Plan Centers are envisioned as a means of targeting growth where infrastructure such as transportation facilities can cost-effectively accommodate additional development. Centers are

<sup>4</sup> *Strategic Framework for TOD in Prince George’s County*; May 2003.

particularly significant in the Developed Tier, which is the part of the county that is most urbanized and best served by mass transit.<sup>5</sup>

According to the General Plan (pg. 48), development at Community Centers such as Langley Park should include:

... activities, services and land uses that serve the immediate community.... These typically include a variety of public facilities—integrated commercial, office and some residential development—and can include mixed-use and higher intensity redevelopment in some communities. Community Centers should also be served by mass transit.

The General Plan emphasizes attracting transit-oriented development to Community Centers to achieve growth and development objectives, particularly in Developed Tier communities such as the International Corridor. The optimum land uses and densities for parcels at this Center will be affected by the final design and operational details of the Bi-County Transitway station and the transit bus center that are planned for this intersection.

#### *Riggs Road and West Park Drive*

The 2002 General Plan amended the Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt master plan, which governs the International Corridor. The General Plan designation of University Boulevard as a corridor provides an up-to-date planning framework for the redevelopment of the International Corridor nodes.

### **Access and Parking**

#### *New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Road*

Both of these potential development nodes are major intersections and the University Boulevard corridor is a major bus service artery in the county. The Bi-County Transitway would trigger a restructuring of the bus service. What are now commuter routes to major destinations elsewhere in the region would be converted to more local feeder routes to connect the transitway stations with residential communities adjacent to the International Corridor.

MDOT is studying sites in the International Corridor for a major bus operations and transfer center. All three jurisdictions that share the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue have requested that the state design and plan this center as a permanent part of the transitway station.

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5 The Developed Tier contains all but one of the county's Metrorail stations, as well as the entire first segment of the proposed Bi-County Transitway.

Vehicular access on the principal arterials in both primary nodes is adequate to support TOD, if that development is built to front on the arterials: New Hampshire Avenue, University Boulevard, and Riggs Road. However, both nodes are largely isolated from the internal street networks of the residential communities near this corridor. Secondary intersections along University Boulevard are not well designed or sited to efficiently accommodate traffic entering and leaving the corridor.

The intersections within the potential development nodes do not promote or accommodate pedestrian movements to and from activities and land uses within the corridor. Building setbacks and commercial shopping center frontages are dominated by large surface parking lots. This creates long, arduous and circuitous journeys on foot within and between these commercial centers and does not provide a basis for introducing transit- and pedestrian-supportive mixes of land uses.

Surface parking exists at both nodes. There is no structured parking in or near the International Corridor, and the initial plans for the Bi-County Transitway do not propose parking facilities at either of these stations. There are opportunities near each station for consolidating—and rationing—parking in structures.

#### *West Park Drive*

The eastern end of the corridor is more auto-dominated than the other two nodes. All current destinations along this segment of University Boulevard are difficult to reach on foot. Most destinations are in buildings and structures that are separated from the street by surface parking lots. Bus service is reasonably frequent, but reaches fewer destinations outside the immediate area because this part of the corridor is not served by the Montgomery County RideOn bus system.

### **Market Opportunities**

#### *New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Road*

To capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the Bi-County Transitway, the development and investment communities will have to view the International Corridor as a significantly different investment opportunity than it is perceived now. Initial economic and community reinvestment analyses indicate that, although a viable market for the redevelopment of the International Corridor does not exist yet,<sup>6</sup> it could be created provided there is a sustained up front commitment by the county to revitalize this corridor.

A limited market exists for small- to moderate-scale replacement retailers and services that target existing residents or the same markets already being tapped by existing retailers at the potential development nodes.

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6 Economic Research Associates: Market Study for the International Corridor Community Legacy Area, May 2003; czb, LLC: *Maryland's International Corridor: Strategies for Repositioning*; June 2003.

Broadening this market to include countywide or regionally marketable retail, service and commercial activities should be integrated with a specific TOD strategy for each station area and with the overall strategy for comprehensive corridor redevelopment.<sup>7</sup>

Each node, particularly at Riggs Road, has some potential for attracting transit-oriented civic, university or institutional land uses that could become or anchor destinations for users of the Bi-County Transitway, such as commuters. In order to develop as transitway commuter destinations, these uses would require managed parking, a reconfiguration of the intersection, and a station design that is integrated with development to improve and encourage pedestrian accessibility.<sup>8</sup> Comparable sites for both primary nodes have been developed in other metropolitan area jurisdictions, particularly the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor in Arlington County, Virginia.

#### *West Park Drive*

Development opportunities at the secondary node are largely contingent on, first, the character, scope, and success of TOD undertaken at Riggs Road and New Hampshire Avenue, and second, the location of the transitway stations that serve The University of Maryland. This node's revitalization potential would improve appreciably if the university invests in corridor redevelopment.<sup>9</sup>

### **Development Constraints**

#### *New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Road*

Any corridor-wide plan for revitalization in this part of the county hinges on how the Bi-County Transitway is used to project an image of the International Corridor to the development and investment communities.<sup>10</sup> This reorientation in image depends in turn on the county's willingness to share the initial investment costs and risks. Therefore, site assembly is a critical first step toward successfully marketing the TOD opportunities that the Bi-County Transitway brings to this part of Prince George's County and may require public sector initiatives.

#### *West Park Drive*

The International Corridor is traversed by a north/south PEPCO utility easement that may affect the development potential of some parcels east of Riggs Road. Although there are no known floodplain or wetlands constraints on development at the primary nodes, West Park Drive, its

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7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*

9 czb, LLC: *Maryland's International Corridor: Strategies for Repositioning*, June 2003.

10 *Ibid.*

intersection with University Boulevard, and the parkland east of the PEPCO easement are in the floodplain.

## Pipeline

### *New Hampshire Avenue and West Park Drive*

No developer interest has been reported and no development applications have been submitted for properties near either of these potential development nodes in the International Corridor. As of September 2003, about one-fifth of all available office space in the corridor was vacant, although shopping center owners reported having little difficulty leasing space to tenants.<sup>11</sup>

### *Riggs Road*

A subdivision application was filed for development of a total of 56,000 square feet of retail and office space on a four-acre undeveloped tract, zoned R-10, located next to University Plaza (formerly Hechinger Plaza) at the southwestern corner of University Boulevard and Riggs Road. The application proposes a two-story main building with 48,000 square feet and two smaller buildings with an additional 8,000 square feet.

The initial assessment of the TOD potential of the three nodes is summarized in Table 1.

### *Built Environment*

The International Corridor's built environment has the following characteristics.<sup>12</sup>

- Obsolete building stock that is architecturally and, in some instances, structurally unsuited to the requirements of TOD.
- Inadequate building floor-plates in the larger shopping centers, which make it difficult to attract regionally competitive commercial tenants.
- Poor and sporadic property maintenance in the corridor, particularly of the multifamily residential developments and of public space.
- Poor or outdated urban design of the University Boulevard streetscape and in the commercial centers at New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Road.

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11 Economics Research Associates: *Market Study for the International Corridor Community Legacy Area*; Washington, D.C., May 2003.

12 See Appendix A: University of Maryland Urban Studies and Planning Program: *Creating Public Space for a Better Community—Langley Park, Maryland*, November 2002; Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration: *University Boulevard/International Corridor Streetscape Concept Project*; April 2002; Prince George's County Planning Department staff study: *International Corridor Needs Identification Study*; March 2002; czb, LLC: *Maryland's International Corridor: Strategies for Repositioning*; June 2003.

■ An incomplete street and sidewalk network in the neighborhoods adjoining the corridor, which results in unsafe pedestrian connections between these areas and the potential development nodes at New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Road.

■ Wide streets, limited crosswalks, and large surface parking lots, which were built in the past to ensure smooth automotive traffic flow, conflict with the need for the short, safe pedestrian movements within and between nodes that are a primary feature of other ethnic commercial and retail centers.

■ The corridor's commercial frontage is less than one block in depth from University Boulevard, which creates very abrupt transitions in uses and densities between retail and business areas and the abutting residential neighborhoods.

■ Residents and most businesses<sup>13</sup> in the corridor regard the low level and frequency of property and public space maintenance as a major unmet *short-term* problem that the county must solve before undertaking any *long-term* redevelopment, particularly if it is intended to make the corridor a competitive peer of similar districts elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

### Socioeconomic

Two economic studies of the International Corridor were undertaken as part of the *International Corridor Community Legacy Study*.<sup>14</sup> A review of these studies provides the following assessment:

■ Even the most attractive sites in the International Corridor can be successfully marketed only if developers, investors and consumers perceive this area as a priority of the public sector.

■ Prince George's County should be the lead jurisdiction in any program that seeks to improve the International Corridor's competitive position in the metropolitan area.

The county has the most at stake in the International Corridor's long-term development, or the lack of it.

The county is best positioned to undertake the needed near-term public actions to redefine and market the International Corridor as an attractive investment option.

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13 Prince George's County Planning Department staff study: *International Corridor Needs Identification Study*; March 2002; czb, LLC: *Maryland's International Corridor: Strategies for Repositioning*; June 2003; ERA: *International Corridor Community Legacy Market Study*; May 2003.

14 Economic Research Associates: *Market Study for the International Corridor Community Legacy Area*; May 2003; czb, LLC: *Maryland's International Corridor: Strategies for Repositioning*; June 2003 Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority: *International Corridor Community Legacy Study*; July 2003.

□ County policy-makers are perceived as in the best position to provide the leadership needed to realize a long-term vision for this corridor.<sup>15</sup>

■ Corridor-wide economic revitalization should be based from the outset to capitalize on the specific development opportunities that the Bi-County Transitway will attract. In particular, priority should be given to attracting transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development at and between the two transitway stations.

■ Particularly in the first stages, the corridor's revitalization would benefit from a major public, institutional or civic presence, such as University of Maryland housing, offices or research facility, or a government office facility in one of the transitway station areas.

■ The long-term marketability of a redeveloped International Corridor depends partly on reconstituting its consumer base. The neighboring residential communities have to provide more attractive investment options to middle- and upper-income homebuyers and tenants, who would form a core market for a more regionally competitive mix of businesses and services.

■ The International Corridor's image will have to be significantly improved for it to become a destination of choice for consumers other than ethnic shoppers for unique outlets for their preferred goods and services.

■ Ethnic businesses actually make up only about 25 percent of all the businesses in the International Corridor. How and where to preserve, attract or concentrate these unique commercial and retail activities is an important policy decision that should be made early in the planning process.

■ Economic revitalization of the International Corridor will have to reconcile the area's long-term vision with the following two concerns:

□ How to attract the development that catalyzes economic revitalization without triggering residential gentrification that, over time, will sap the corridor of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity that makes the area unique.

○ This consideration becomes a core planning challenge once a definite construction timetable for the Bi-County Transitway has been established. Rising real estate prices almost invariably accompany TOD strategies that seek to revitalize existing urbanized areas.

○ The perception that the International Corridor's economic revitalization will substantially displace the existing population could complicate, and may even prevent, achieving community consensus on a viable redevelopment strategy.

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15 czb, LLC: *Maryland's International Corridor: Strategies for Repositioning*, June 2003.

- The first stage of that strategy may, therefore, have to reconcile one long-term objective—making the corridor a better place to live and, ultimately, invest in—with the long-term consequence of making it unaffordable for the existing population.

- How to use the corridor’s ethnic character to attract a wider consumer market.

- The International Corridor business base, whether ethnic or not, is oriented almost entirely toward the immediate market.<sup>16</sup> Except when shopping for the comparatively small range of goods, services and eating experiences that are unique to the International Corridor, most consumers with other shopping choices are opting to go elsewhere. Others who are in the market for ethnic goods or services also are opting for other ethnic commercial areas, such as Adams-Morgan or South Arlington. Some consumers do this even when they live closer to the International Corridor than to the other ethnic commercial centers.

- The Bi-County Transitway improves the International Corridor’s marketability in at least three ways:

- The transitway provides a fast, reasonably convenient alternative to relying on an automobile to reach the International Corridor from a market area extending from Bethesda to New Carrollton.

- Transitway station areas in the corridor provide the opportunity for a mix of new commercial and retail uses that advance General Plan objectives for the corridor. These new uses could create regionally marketable destinations for consumers, as well as residents, in a manner similar to what Metrorail has made possible in Adams-Morgan and Mt. Pleasant, Bethesda, Old Town Alexandria, the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor, and U Street.

- The transitway is a major public sector commitment to the corridor that improves its marketability to transit-oriented developers and retail tenants who can help reposition the corridor as a more attractive end destination for up-market consumers.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Public Facilities*

The International Corridor is served by the following public facilities:

#### **Police**

County Police District One in Hyattsville serves the corridor. A community-oriented policing service (COPS) facility is located just north

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16 The International Corridor is estimated to draw 81.2 percent of its repeat business from an area with a radius of slightly less than five miles from the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue.

of International Mall at University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue; however, this facility is not staffed with police officers around the clock.

**Fire and Emergency Medical**

Fire Company 34, located just north of University Boulevard and Riggs Road, provides primary engine and secondary ladder service to the corridor. Company 12 on Baltimore Avenue in Hyattsville provides primary ladder and paramedic services.

**Library**

The Hyattsville branch on Adelphi Road is within a two-mile radius of the corridor.

**Hospital**

The closest full-service hospital to the corridor is Prince George’s Hospital, located in Cheverly.

**Public Schools**

The following public schools serve the corridor:

<b>Elementary Schools</b>	<b>Middle Schools</b>	<b>High Schools</b>
Carole Highlands	Buck Lodge	High Point
Cherokee Lane	Hyattsville	Northwestern
Cool Spring	Nicolas Orem	
Lewisdale		
University Park		

Northwestern High School is a replacement facility that opened in fall 2003. The county’s FY 2004-2009 Capital Improvement Plan does not propose replacements or improvements for public facilities that serve the International Corridor.

*Transportation*

University Boulevard (MD 193) and New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) are major arterials and the principal transportation facilities in the corridor. Riggs Road (MD 212), an arterial south of University Boulevard, becomes a minor collector north of this intersection. Both the current *Master Plan of Transportation* (1982)<sup>17</sup> and the *Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan* (1989) proposed realigning and upgrading Riggs Road between its intersections with University Boulevard and Powder Mill Road.

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17 In June 2003, the Prince George’s County Planning Department, M-NCPPC, commenced an update of the *Master Plan of Transportation*.

The General Plan amended the master plan for the corridor by recommending traffic level of service<sup>18</sup> (LOS) E as the minimum acceptable level of traffic operations for corridors in the Developed Tier. The Prince George's County Planning Board adopted this LOS standard for purposes of determining the adequacy of transportation facilities to serve new development in the Developed Tier.

The county Capital Improvement Plan and the Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program do not propose major highway or street improvements in the International Corridor. However, as noted in the node profiles, the corridor's development potential is affected by the traffic improvements proposed by the State and Montgomery County, particularly at University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue.

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18 Level of Service (LOS): The adequacy of the road and street network in the county transportation system is generally measured and expressed in terms of its LOS. Each level of service is one in a hierarchy of indices that evaluate the level and severity of automotive traffic congestion on a specific road segment or at specific intersections. The General Plan recommends the minimum acceptable LOS by Tier.



## IV. FINDINGS

This initial assessment of the International Corridor leads to the following findings:

### Demographic and Economic

- In the past decade, demographic changes transformed the International Corridor into one of the region's most ethnically and culturally diverse communities in the region, as well as one of the three most popular destinations for immigrants.
- The corridor's demographics create unique opportunities and challenges for attracting development that capitalizes on the Bi-County Transitway.

### Planning Context

- The General Plan, which amended the 1989 *Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan*, provides a framework for the next planning and development actions for the International Corridor by:
  - Establishing growth policies and objectives specifically for the county's Developed Tier, which includes the International Corridor.
  - Designating University Boulevard (MD193) to NASA Goddard Space Flight Center as one corridor.
  - Designating University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue as a Community Center.
- The Bi-County Transitway is on a timetable—to open in 2012—that makes it possible to employ TOD planning principles in this corridor. To be effective, this type of planning should be initiated four to six years before the associated transit facilities open to the public.
- The most recent studies of the corridor provide additional guidance that bears on the next planning actions:
  - The county should develop a single set of planning, infrastructure and public service solutions for addressing the corridor's short- and long-term economic, social and physical needs.

- The corridor's physical renovation, particularly if it is to be part of an effort to redefine and market its image throughout the region, should reflect a long-term development strategy for the transitway station areas.
- The initial TOD planning should be based on pedestrian-oriented design that reduces the automobile's domination of the corridor.
- Marketing the corridor's considerable redevelopment potential will require a significant up front public sector commitment.
- Preserving and enhancing the corridor's ethnic and cultural diversity, while marketing the area's development opportunities, will be a planning and public policy challenge.

## **Planning Analysis**

### *Potential Development Nodes*

■ A significant amount of the International Corridor's development potential is located at and between the two proposed Bi-County Transitway stations:

- University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue
- University Boulevard and Riggs Road

■ The West Park Drive node's development potential may depend on whether the West Campus transitway station is built at Adelphi Road, and on the scope, timing, and success of TOD at the other two nodes in the corridor.

### *Initial TOD Assessment*

■ Although a viable market for TOD in the International Corridor does not yet exist, it can be *created*, provided there is a sustained initial commitment and investment by the public sector, especially the State of Maryland and Prince George's County.

■ The built environment in the International Corridor is aging, not well-maintained, and typical of auto-dominated strip commercial developments in first tier suburban communities.

■ Vehicle access to the corridor via University Boulevard, Riggs Road and New Hampshire Avenue is adequate to support some forms of TOD.

■ The internal street network of the adjacent residential communities is incomplete and isolated from these major arterials. This poses a major challenge to encouraging the type of pedestrian traffic found in other successful ethnic commercial districts.

■ The existing parking within the corridor poses a major challenge to attracting quality pedestrian-sensitive, transit-oriented design. The development nodes are dominated by large surface parking lots that may need to be consolidated or reconfigured to create an appropriate pedestrian scale for TOD.

■ Site assembly and control, particularly at the potential development nodes, may require public sector initiatives to attract the first TOD projects.

■ A site-specific TOD planning sequence should be employed to determine the most appropriate development concepts and development strategies for the sites in each transitway station area.

### *Socioeconomic*

■ At a minimum, revitalizing and marketing the International Corridor to the development community will involve the following:

Strengthening the International Corridor's assets by eliminating the current adverse physical and socioeconomic attributes and creating as attractive a consumer destination and investment opportunity as possible.

Repositioning the corridor to market it as an investment alternative that can compete with other such districts in the region.

■ To be successful, redevelopment of the corridor should reflect policies regarding the ethnic business and residential base that should be retained after the Bi-County Transitway is built.

■ Once the corridor's long-term development strategy has been determined, the development plan should capitalize on the appreciable potential that exists at the two transitway station areas.

■ Even the most attractive sites in the International Corridor will be successfully marketed only if developers, investors and consumers perceive a long-term public sector, especially county, commitment.

■ The first stages of the corridor's revitalization would benefit from a major public, institutional or civic presence in one of the TOD project sites.

■ The Bi-County Transitway improves the International Corridor's development potential by:

Providing a fast and convenient alternative to driving to reach the International Corridor.

Providing the development and investor communities with a clear indication of the public sector's commitment to this area of Prince George's County.

Making it possible to plan development projects in the International Corridor that are viable end destinations for consumer and residents, similar to what Metrorail does for comparable transit-oriented commercial districts in the region.

■ The International Corridor's economic revitalization should reconcile a number of planning challenges, including the following:

Redeveloping the corridor without triggering residential gentrification that would diminish the ethnic and cultural diversity that makes it unique.

- ❑ Marketing the corridor's ethnic assets to a wider and more economically diverse market.
- ❑ Ensuring that programs to solve major near-term problems, such as infrequent and low-quality property and public space maintenance, are integrated with the long-term redevelopment strategy.
- ❑ Ensuring that transitway station planning and the corridor's long-term physical redesign complement each other.



## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This planning study sought to identify the next planning actions for the International Corridor. The findings indicate that the corridor has appreciable development potential provided:

- The county is committed to the corridor's comprehensive redevelopment and that there is a clear perception by transit-oriented developers of that commitment.
- Transit-oriented development planning is coordinated with the planning and design of the Bi-County Transitway.
- The county and the development community work together to capture the regional market for transit-oriented redevelopment that exists but has not been attracted to Prince George's County.

### Recommendations

The principal recommendations follow:

#### *Community Outreach*

The community and stakeholders in the International Corridor have already engaged in several continuing outreach efforts with the Redevelopment Authority, the Planning Department, and other county and state agencies. The next planning actions undertaken in this corridor should continue this ongoing outreach to the community. It is important that the community, developers, investors and other stakeholders recognize and actively participate in the county's—and state's—commitment to revitalizing this corridor.

#### *TOD Planning Sequence*

Once the corridor's Bi-County Transitway stations have been identified, the following TOD planning sequence should be employed at both station areas. At this writing, the state is expected to identify station locations by fall 2006. Once the locations are identified the county should move forward with the following planning steps in order to provide site-specific recommendations for the mixes, densities and locations of development that best advance the General Plan's goals.

## **Conduct Transitway Station Area Evaluations**

Both transitway station areas should undergo a detailed assessment of their TOD potential using the sequence summarized below. The Riggs Road station area should undergo the TOD planning sequence first, for the following reasons:

- The Riggs Road station area is completely within Prince George’s County, which simplifies development of a single, public-sector program that addresses the area’s short-term needs, produces a long-term development strategy, and is integrated with Bi-County Transitway planning and design.

- The corridor’s most urgent short-term physical and socioeconomic challenges are concentrated at and near this location.<sup>1</sup>

## **Prepare a Development Concept**

- Establish the broad vision for each station area and identify the development phasing for each station area.

- Undertake a market feasibility analysis of each station area to determine optimum development options.

## **Prepare a Development Strategy**

- Identify specific development options and undertake a financial feasibility analysis for those options.

- Identify planning, zoning and regulatory measures needed to attract the desired development.

- Estimate the costs and phasing of public sector infrastructure and community improvements that are needed to attract the desired TOD.

- Ensure that the required infrastructure requirements are included in state and county capital improvement and public facilities plans.

- Prepare site design guidelines that reflect the specific characteristics and assets of each transitway station area.<sup>2</sup>

## **Develop a Project Implementation Plan**

- Fully involve and engage the community and other corridor stakeholders in the preparation and refinement of the development concepts for both transitway stations areas.

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1 Prince George’s County Planning Department staff study: *International Corridor Needs Identification Study*; March 2002; czb, LLC: *Maryland’s International Corridor: Strategies for Repositioning*; June 2003. ERA: *International Corridor Community Legacy Market Study*; May 2003; Prince George’s County Redevelopment Authority: *International Corridor Community Legacy Study*; July 2003.

2 The guidelines should particularly address the need for a more integrated local street network, better connectivity within and between the two nodes, and a more pedestrian-sensitive streetscape throughout the corridor.

■ Ensure that the TOD planning sequence includes a continual effort to attract and sustain developer and investor interest in all of the corridor's TOD opportunities.

■ Stress the state's and county's commitments to significantly upgrading the International Corridor's image and regional market position and to helping provide the up front improvements that will attract TOD.





## Appendix

### Other Studies and Programs

#### *Strategic Framework for Transit-Oriented Development in Prince George's County*

The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission completed the *Strategic Framework for Transit-Oriented Development in Prince George's County* in May 2003 to provide a single countywide strategy for applying transit-oriented development (TOD) to implement the 2002 General Plan policies for the county's long-term growth and development.

#### *Purple Line TOD Assessment*

The consulting firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff completed the *Purple Line TOD Assessment* for the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) in January 2003. This study evaluated the TOD potential of 11 possible Bi-County Transitway stations. This study used an investment-oriented approach to produce site-specific development concepts for these Bi-County Transitway station areas.

The study methodology was as follows:

- Ten stations, modeled for the MDOT Capital Beltway transit study, were reviewed. Interviews with municipal and county officials produced an initial list of 19 candidate sites in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.
- Draft profiles were proposed for each station area and included initial recommendations for implementing TOD projects.
- Municipal and county officials reviewed station profiles before preparing the final station profiles.

The final report included station area profiles, a TOD guidebook, and recommendations for TOD as follows:

- TOD should be appropriate to the scale of development in the surrounding community.

- Provide a transit-operating environment to attract quality TOD.
- Ensure connectivity between the stations on the alignment and the areas between the stations.
- Increase Bi-County Transitway ridership.
- Stimulate economic development and the creation of a diverse, affordable mix of housing choices as follows:
  - Encourage state-of-the-art and cost-effective design.
  - Complement land uses with the development character of adjoining communities.
  - Capitalize on TOD opportunities between *transit systems* and *facilities planning*, and *station area* planning.
  - Promote Bi-County Transitway development and encourage environmental goals; provide for the mobility needs of transit-dependent populations; revitalize and strengthen existing communities; enhance public commitments to create, extend and improve nonmotorized transportation facilities; incorporate pedestrian-oriented design principles; and maximize opportunities for innovative shared and structured parking.

The MDOT TOD potential assessment recommended two Bi-County Transitway stations within the International Corridor: **Takoma/Langlely**, at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, and **University/Riggs**.

A third station, **West Campus**, is possible at University Boulevard and Adelphi Road. This station might not be built depending on the number of transitway stations that are built to serve The University of Maryland.

#### *International Corridor Issues Identification Study*

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission completed the *International Corridor Issues Identification Study* in March 2002. The study identified planning issues associated with the University Boulevard corridor and sets a foundation for a planning study in FY 2003. The study area covered a 1.6-mile corridor along University Boulevard within Prince George's County from the county line to West Park Drive. The corridor study included both sides of University Boulevard to a depth of one-quarter mile, a general walking distance for pedestrians.

The study analyzed existing conditions and identified the following key issues primarily based upon a stakeholder survey conducted in April 2001:

- Lack of physical and aesthetic improvements
- Problems with pedestrian safety
- Poor traffic circulation
- Inadequate community services for multiethnic population

- Overcrowded apartments
- Lack of local jobs

The study recommended the following actions and future studies:

- An urban design plan on pedestrian environment, façade and site improvements, streetscape, landscaping, signage, and other aesthetic features.
- A land use plan based on the General Plan and the Bi-County Transitway.
- An assessment of business and employment opportunities in this corridor to deal with large groups of day laborers.
- An analysis of an integrated social service delivery system to help local residents secure jobs and social services.
- A multiagency and multijurisdictional group to provide coordination and advice on planning and ongoing implementation activities.

#### *International Corridor Community Legacy Study*

The Redevelopment Authority completed the *International Corridor Community Legacy Study* in July 2003 for the citizens of Prince George’s County and the City of Takoma Park, Maryland. The study area encompassed Langley Park, Maryland, and the surrounding small neighborhoods in Prince George’s County and part of the City of Takoma Park in Montgomery County. Assessing the needs of the community is a goal of the International Corridor Community Legacy Plan.

As part of this study, the community residents identified a vision for the International Corridor. The vision entails a revitalized, vibrant, beautiful, memorable, safe, exciting, and festive place. The neighborhoods surrounding the corridor are envisioned to be safe, well maintained and be improved through building code enforcement and civic pride to increase property values. In order to implement the community vision for the corridor, the study provided an action plan from citizen input at several “Listening to Learn” community meetings where issues and needs were documented.

Recommendations for the study are filtered into five category areas:

- Business corridor
- Image and identity
- Neighborhoods
- Programs and services
- Public safety

Within each category, the action plan identified:

- Needs

- Desired outcome
- Strategies
- Action steps for implementation
- Performance benchmarks
- Funding sources
- Lead partners

### *Purple Line Transit-Oriented Development Studies*

The University of Maryland School of Architecture completed the *Purple Line Transit-Oriented Development Studies* in fall 2002. The University of Maryland design studio students prepared the study under the direction of professor Matthew Bell, AIA. This study provided an urban design analysis for three sites that typify the kinds of inside the Beltway places that will increasingly require design and planning attention for Smart Growth development. The three sites studied were:

- Chevy Chase Lake (Connecticut Avenue in Chevy Chase, MD)
- Takoma/Langley (University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue in Langley Park, MD)
- Riggs Road (University Boulevard and Riggs Road in Langley Park, MD)

These studies involved an analysis of older established communities inside the Capital Beltway that are experiencing rapid growth, vast changes in demographics, redevelopment pressures, and are in close proximity to mass transit resources. The University of Maryland fall 2002 graduate urban design studio typified these sites as places “inside the beltway” that require design and planning attention for Smart Growth to fulfill its promise.

This study reviewed the urban design potential for the proposed transit line at Chevy Chase Lake, Takoma/Langley and Riggs/University Boulevard. The studio investigated the potential for TOD with a focus on underdeveloped land that could be readily transformed with the arrival of transit. Each study maintained the existing single-family and garden apartment complexes that proliferate in the area and proposed more dense compact mixed-use communities centered on the arrival of the transit line.

The study provided potential urban design concepts for each site as follows:

- Chevy Chase Lake—the study reveals the potential for high-intensity, mixed-use development, efficiently organized on the west side of Connecticut Avenue using neighborhood center development models. The site offers the possibility to provide appropriate infill and makes a real place out of the suburban strip shopping center.

■ Takoma/Langley and Riggs Road—the study groups these two areas together and provides redevelopment concepts for the mile-long linear suburban strip. The concept proposes a multifunctional urban boulevard, complete with local nodes and centers to combat the separation that exists between these two community areas. This design concept proposes solutions for the high-traffic volumes and unsafe pedestrian environment that exists.

The work in these studies provided a potential transformation of current auto-oriented places by offering visually attractive, feasible design, community appropriateness, and transit-accessible settings for development.

#### *Langley Park Multicultural Service Center Needs Assessment*

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and Parker Rodriguez, Inc. prepared the *Langley Park Multicultural Service Center Needs Assessment* in March 2002 at the request of Councilman Peter Shapiro. The study identified and assessed the needs of the Langley Park community for input into a future multicultural service center to provide programs, recreation, and cultural activities for the residents and business people of Langley Park and adjoining communities in Prince George’s County. The community population is approximately 20,000 people. It is ethnically and culturally diverse and has a large number of Spanish-speaking residents and businesses.

The research for this service center identified community needs through interviews, surveys, community meetings, and meetings with stakeholders and an advisory group. The study provided a list of the community’s local service needs. As a comparative benchmark, the study provided an analysis of existing services within the community and other community centers in the region. The needs were turned into proposed services for the facility and were categorized as follows:

- Education
- Health
- Employment/immigration
- Housing
- Cultural programming and diversity
- Public safety
- Recreation

The study analyzed four potential locations for the multicultural service center as follows:

- The Langley Park Community Center
- The International Mall
- The McCormick Mansion

## ■ Riggs Shopping Center Bowling Facility

The study recommended the following actions:

■ Provide a 54,000 square-foot facility for the multicultural service center.

■ Provide a center for human services and education. Cultural and recreational elements are included but are supplementary to these two chronic areas of needs. A contingency program is recommended to include medical services.

■ Provide a facility that includes urgently needed services, celebrates different community cultures, and provides self-improvement programs to mentor youth and community leadership.

The study assumed that the facility will be staffed largely by volunteers, but stressed the need for the active and continual participation of county agencies, M-NCPPC, and the Board of Education, as well as nonprofits and churches that are already active in the community.

### *Langley Park—A Preliminary Needs Assessment*

The University of Maryland urban studies and planning program completed *Langley Park—A Preliminary Needs Assessment* in June 1995. The university studio team prepared this assessment under the direction of Professor William John Hanna. The study area focused on the Langley Park community. The assessment looks at the needs of this community.

The needs of the Langley Park community span nine areas, each of which involves multiple stakeholders, institutions, opportunities, constraints, and challenges. The challenges included:

- Poverty
- Fear of crime and deportation
- Social isolation
- Transience
- Negative external and internal area image
- Political weakness

The needs assessment identified nine categories of needs and issue highlights:

■ Family—Language and other cultural factors create intergenerational conflicts and domestic violence.

■ Language—Lack of English language is a barrier and there is a lack of Spanish-speaking people in government offices who can communicate with the community residents.

Education—Student mobility, therefore only a small percentage of students remain in school.

- Health—Access to health care is problematic. Rates of illness are high.
- Housing—Older housing community, maintenance is uneven. Overcrowding due to economic stress.
- Business and employment—Unemployment rate is high compared to county norms. Large retail stores are closed and multinational shops are abundant.
- Safety—Fear of violence and criminal activities.
- Transportation—High cost of public transportation and language barriers are negative factors.
- Community—Lacks community identity. Transience and lack of safety are inhibiting factors.

The study recommended the following programs to address the needs of the community:

- Family support programs
- Affordable English language classes
- Education counselors and teachers
- Affordable medical and dental care and drug prevention/rehabilitation programs
- Bilingual housing counselors
- Economic development advisors
- Youth programs and community police officers
- Affordable minibuses system
- Community center and activities

*Creating Public Space for a Better Community—  
Langley Park, Maryland*

The University of Maryland urban studies and planning program completed the *Creating Public Space for a Better Community—Langley Park, Maryland* project in fall 2002 under the direction of Professor William John Hanna. The project focused on providing a plaza for the crossroads area. The project provides a conceptual plan for a plaza that enhances development, the community, and safety.

A unifying element was proposed as a way to bring initiatives together and create a synergy that benefits users throughout the area. This plan addressed that need and proposed a public space that would include a public plaza. This public space will enhance the cultural identity of the area, facilitate social activity, and encourage a sense of community for the residents of Langley Park.

The plan addressed the following objectives:

- Create public space for multiple uses
- Create a distinctive core area or destination
- Encourage social network and exchange
- Foster economic development
- Improve pedestrian safety and circulation
- Enhance environmental beautification
- Support other planning initiatives in the region
- Connect the residents of Langley Park to the greater crossroads area

Five major issues were identified as concerns of stakeholders in the crossroads area:

- Spatial organization
- Economic development
- Safety
- Maintenance
- Funding

The study produced a design concept for a public plaza at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue. The plan envisioned this plaza as a public activity focal point for Latino culture, as well as a public space for community-related social and economic activities.

### *University Boulevard/International Corridor Streetscape Concept Project*

The State Highway Administration completed the *University Boulevard/International Corridor Streetscape Concept Project* in April 2002. The project focused on streetscape improvements to the corridor from Piney Branch Road to Adelphi Road and New Hampshire Avenue from Erskin Drive to Merrimac Drive. Task force, public, and coordination meetings served as a basis to the 19-month background research and analysis for this project.

An analysis of the corridor indicated that there are heavy volumes of traffic and pedestrian activity within this six-lane arterial roadway. This corridor also has substantial bus transit ridership. A potential for greater bicycle use was also identified within the corridor if better bicycle facilities were provided. Several of the inadequacies identified within the corridor were:

- Limited right-of-way width (100 feet) and narrow median.
- Six-through lanes of traffic.
- Pedestrian environment is less than desirable.

- Existing sidewalks are narrow and inadequate for the volume of pedestrian use.
- Bus stop locations contain undersized paved areas.
- Degradation of adjacent lawn and planting areas.
- Large parking lots with roadway frontage.
- Inadequate street trees and plantings to serve as a buffer or pedestrian scale.
- No unifying design element within the corridor.
- No sense of place.
- No continuity of land use improvements or streetscape treatment in terms of:
  - Architectural character
  - Construction materials
  - Landscaping
  - Street furnishings
  - No gateway elements

The general recommendations included:

- Roadway: 90 feet wide, curb to curb
- Dedicated bike lane: 5 feet wide in each direction
- Through lanes: Six 11-foot-wide through lanes
- Median: 14 feet wide
- Sidewalk: 8 feet wide desirable, a minimum of 5 feet wide

The task force provided the following site-specific recommendations for constructing or modifying several elements in order to would improve and increase pedestrian mobility along MD 193, particularly within the International Corridor:

- Crosswalks
- Bus stops (relocated and /or consolidated)
- Commercial entrances
- Service road parking and access
- Pedestrian/vehicular conflicts at service road entrances
- Special paving (4 inch by 8 inch unit paver to create unifying decorative design element)
- Gateway opportunities at Piney Branch Road, Carroll Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, Riggs Road, and West Park Drive.





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