



Chapter V: Transit

Introduction

The transit network recommendations of the *Countywide Master Plan of Transportation* (MPOT) are intended to help the county achieve the specific development patterns envisioned by the General Plan and subsequent master and area plans for each tier. This plan recommends that transit serve a defining role in attaining county growth and development priorities for the Developed and Developing Tiers and for General Plan centers and corridors.

Since the 1982 MPOT and 2002 General Plan were approved, a number of important transit system improvements have occurred:

- The Metrorail system has been completed and a variety of future extensions are under active consideration, including a possible Metrorail Green Line extension from Greenbelt to Fort Meade or Baltimore–Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.
- The first Metrorail expansion, the Blue Line extension to Largo Town Center, was completed and opened to the public in Prince George's County in 2004.
- The Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement project has been completed, and the new bridge includes provisions for fixed guideway⁸ transit service from Northern Virginia to Prince George's County, which the county has designated as a priority in the joint signature letter to the state.

⁸ Fixed guideway transit can be bus rapid transit (busway), streetcar, and light, heavy, or commuter rail transit service. The defining characteristic is that the transit vehicle operates in its own right-of-way, which can be physically demarcated or operationally controlled by traffic and roadway signage and enforcement. See the Technical Bulletin under separate cover.

- The Maryland Department of Transportation has designated the initial segment of the Purple Line—from Bethesda to an interim terminal at New Carrollton—as a priority transit project.
- The county's Department of Public Works and Transportation has undertaken a Five-Year Transit Service and Operations Plan (TSOP) that proposes Metrobus and TheBus service and service expansions in the county. TSOP thus serves as a medium-term, operational complement to the long term, strategic transit recommendations contained in the plan.

The county transportation network consists of rail and bus transit services and facilities that interact differently in different parts of the county. Further, county transit resources, and consequently the rail and bus mobility options that are available to county residents and workers, are not evenly distributed throughout the county transportation system. The Developed Tier has all but one of the county's 15 Metrorail stations⁹, four MARC stations, and most of the regional (Metrobus) and local (TheBus) bus service in the county. The Developing Tier, on the other hand, will continue to rely on bus transit as the principal alternative to the automobile through the near and medium-term future. This master plan recommends that, because the Rural Tier transportation system consists entirely of a road network, transit policy for that tier will emphasize access to (1) park-and-ride lots and (2) ultimately to fixed guideway transit facilities that are to be located in the outer Developing Tier.

Throughout the county, this plan recommends that the transit system play a more geographically comprehensive role in ensuring quality access and mobility options for all residents and workers. The quality of life that county growth policy envisions in the General Plan is often a matter of quality of access. Further, the available transit services and mobility options must be perceived by residents and developers as providing quality access, if the county is to attract the high-quality residential and commercial development and investment it seeks.

⁹ The Largo Town Center Metrorail station is located in the Developing Tier, as are the Bowie State, Seabrook, Laurel and Muirkirk MARC stations.

Transit is also envisioned as a linchpin of smart growth, particularly transit-oriented development (TOD), which is a long-term policy to which Prince George's County and the State of Maryland are committed. (See Chapter VII: Strategic Transportation Policy and Master Plan Implementation.) Unless development is sited at sufficient densities to capitalize on all of the county's transportation system assets, particularly the transit infrastructure, the preferred development pattern may never be achieved or may remain fiscally unattainable. Smart growth and TOD both require a strategic transportation policy that integrates transit facilities and systems with accompanying land use policies that are most appropriate to each tier and each center, particularly each metropolitan and regional center.

However, there is a parallel need to ensure the operational integrity of transit as a part of the countywide transportation network. It is, therefore, important to:

- Assess the capacity of the transit system segments to accommodate the development that is desired at each center.
- Ensure that the county's near- and medium-term transit system planning in the TSOP is coordinated with the longer term, strategic transit recommendations in the MPOT.
- Account for the impacts of development policies (especially land use densities and mixes) on the entire transit system.

Additional development in the Developed—and parts of the Developing—Tier will require significant investment in transit and pedestrian connectivity facilities, such as sidewalks and streetscape amenities, to complement existing and planned infrastructure. Future land use plans may, therefore, have to be reviewed or modified to ensure the optimum combination of land uses, mixes, and densities on the one hand and appropriate and adequate transportation infrastructure on the other. (See Chapter VII: Strategic Transportation Policy and Master Plan Implementation.)

Table 3: Transit Network Recommendations, describes the plan's transit recommendations for each General Plan tier, center, and corridor. The key characteristics that affect transit systems planning and the available mobility options for each General Plan area are summarized in the second and third columns, respectively. Existing rail and bus transit services are summarized in column three.

Table 3: Transit Network Recommendations

General Plan Policy Area	Transit Network Characteristics	Mobility and Accessibility Options	Transit Coverage	
			Existing	MPOT Recommendation
Developed Tier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very dense/dense • Grid street pattern provides most transit service options and service flexibility • Little unused road capacity • Rail transit already in place 	Auto Rail transit Bus transit Walking/biking Some park/ride	Bus: High (TheBus and Metrobus) Rail: High (Metrorail) Low (MARC)	Bus: High (TheBus) High (Metrobus) Rail: High (Metrorail) •Evaluate Hill Road Metrorail Station High (Purple Line) Medium (MARC)
Developed Tier Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very similar to Developed Tier as a whole • Very dense/dense • Grid street pattern • Little unused road capacity • Some centers with Metrorail stations are not optimally sited for transit-oriented development (TOD) 	Auto Walking/biking Rail: Metrorail MARC Bus: Metrobus TheBus	Bus: High (TheBus and Metrobus) Rail: High (Metrorail) Low (MARC)	Bus: High (TheBus and Metrobus service as recommended in the Five-Year Transit Service and Operations Plan (TSOP)) Rail: High (Metrorail) High (Purple Line initially serves: •Langley Park •College Park-UMD [Metrorail] •New Carrollton [Metrorail/MARC]) (Purple Line Extension from New Carrollton to serve: •Landover Gateway •Largo Town Center [Metrorail] •Prince George’s Community College •Westphalia Town Center •Andrews AFB (possible future) •Suitland [Metrorail] •Oxon Hill Regional Center •National Harbor [connect to future cross-river transit]) Medium (MARC) Priority Investment Districts (PIDs) recommended at Metropolitan Centers: •Branch Avenue •College Park—UMD •Greenbelt •National Harbor (future) •New Carrollton
Developing Tier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense • Lower densities outside this tier’s centers and corridors • Some unused road capacity, particularly throughout tier outside centers • Bus service options constrained by inconsistent arterial and collector road network outside Developing Tier Centers and Corridors 	Auto Bus transit Park/ride Rail transit Walking Biking	Bus: Low (Peak-hour line haul Metrobus, TheBus and some MTA commuter bus) Rail: Low (Metrorail Blue Line Bowie State, Lanham, Laurel and Muirkirk MARC)	Bus: Low-medium (TheBus and Metrobus as recommended in TSOP) Rail: Medium-high (Purple Line Extension) Green Line Extensions— •Greenbelt •Konterra-Brickyard •Laurel •Fort Meade •BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport BRT/LRT connecting planned nodes (on MD 5, from Branch Avenue Metrorail station)
Developing Tier Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Densities vary • Road capacity varies • Street and road networks at some Developing Tier Centers constrain bus transit service options 	Auto Bus transit Rail transit (Metrorail Blue Line only) Walk/bike	Bus: Low Rail: Low (Metrorail Blue Line extended to Largo Town Center in 2004. Metrorail Green Line extension from Greenbelt under study by MDOT).	Bus: Medium (TheBus and Metrobus service expansions as recommended in TSOP) Rail: Medium-High Purple Line would serve: Largo Town Center [Metrorail] Westphalia National Harbor) BRT/LRT on MD 5 would serve Brandywine Priority Investment Districts (PIDs) recommended at Metropolitan Centers: •Largo Town Center •National Harbor (future)

Table 3: Transit Network Recommendations

General Plan Policy Area	Transit Network Characteristics	Mobility and Accessibility Options	Transit Coverage	
			Existing	MPOT Recommendation
Rural Tier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very low density • Road network mostly agricultural and rural/scenic roads 	Auto Biking Limited walking	Bus: None Rail: None	Park and Ride lot access via arterials and major collectors from Rural Tier to expanded bus—and future rail—transit service in the outer Developing Tier Bus: None Rail: None
Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies widely by corridor • Developed Tier corridors very similar to rest of the tier • Developing Tier corridors vary by proximity to arterials and major collectors capable of supporting bus service or accommodating fixed guideway transit alignments 	Auto Bus transit Limited walk/bike	Bus: Medium Rail: MD 214—Metrorail Blue Line MD 5—Metrorail Green Line MD 450—Metrorail Orange Line (partial coverage from DC line to New Carrollton).	Bus: Medium (TheBus and Metrobus as recommended in TSOP) Rail: MD 193—Purple Line MD 5—Fixed guideway transit extension from Branch Avenue Metrorail Station US 1—Metrorail Green Line extension from Greenbelt to the county line via stations at Powder Mill Road, Muirkirk Road, and Laurel.

Transit Service Level Definitions

Mode	Service Level	Characteristics	Existing	Recommended
Fixed guideway:	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All day and weekend service available • Additional service during peak hours 	•Metrorail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Metrorail Green Line extension from Greenbelt •Purple Line •Fixed guideway National Harbor US 1 US 50 MD 5 MD 210
	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak-hour service • Some off-peak service 	None	•MARC commuter rail enhancements (MDOT)
	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak-hour service • Little or no off-peak service 	•MARC commuter rail	
Fixed guideway transit includes bus rapid transit (busway); streetcar (tram); light rail; heavy rail (Metrorail); and commuter rail (MARC)				
Bus:	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All day and some weekend service • Additional peak-hour service • Minimum 15-minute peak period headway* 		As recommended in TSOP
	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All day and some off-peak service • Little additional peak-hour service • Minimum 30-minute peak period headway* 		As recommended in TSOP
	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some off-peak service • No additional peak-hour service • Minimum 60-minute headway* 		As recommended in TSOP

* **Headway:** Frequency of transit service, expressed as the interval between bus arrivals at a given stop. A 15-minute headway translates into four buses serving the same stop during an hour.

Transit-Oriented Development in Prince George’s County

There is no one definition of “good” TOD. It varies greatly depending on the location, even within the same metropolitan area, or in this case, within the same county, and can be influenced or defined by the types of transit services that are available, or planned, to support the development. It is essentially compact, transit-supporting, mixed-use development that integrates land use and density, site design, parking, and accessibility into a development pattern that is consistent with the General Plan vision for a particular area of the county.

What is appropriate and desirable TOD at a General Plan metropolitan center such as New Carrollton may not be the optimum growth and development pattern for a regional center such as Naylor Road. For purposes of the strategic transportation systems and facilities planning on which this functional master plan is premised, TOD represents an opportunity to significantly increase transit use, reduce vehicle miles traveled and automobile trips, or divert more of the latter to transit.

The General Plan places a high growth and development priority on centers that are also Metrorail stations, which represent the most substantial county and state investment in the regional transit system. TOD at these centers presents both an opportunity and a challenge to maximize return on that extensive public investment by creating cost-effective and environmentally sustainable multimodal mobility options to the highest demand destinations in the county. TOD strategies and policies are discussed in detail in Chapter VII: Strategic Transportation Policy and Master Plan Implementation.

Goal:

Maximize benefits from public investment in the transit infrastructure to all users, while seizing opportunities for quality TOD and supporting the land use pattern prescribed in the General Plan.

Policy 1:

Provide for a transit system that supports the General Plan development pattern in the Developed and Developing Tiers and within each General Plan center and corridor.

- An organizational vehicle for TOD planning and coordination with DPW&T, MDOT, and WMATA for transit community partnering.
 - A process for identifying and recommending TOD priority sites in Prince George’s County.
7. Develop a single network of transit feeder park-and-ride lots for the Developing Tier, coordinated with the TSOP.

Policy 2:

Capitalize fully on the economic development and community revitalization potential of circumferential transit (Purple Line) alignments within and through Prince George’s County.

STRATEGIES:

1. Incorporate the Purple Line in its entirety as part of the Prince George’s County transit network. This plan explicitly endorses and recommends construction of the initial Purple Line segment in Prince George’s County as the Purple Line Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) designated by the governor on August 4, 2009.
 - Conduct a feasibility study of the Purple Line extension alignment to serve:
 - Largo Town Center Metrorail
 - Prince George’s Community College
 - Westphalia Town Center
 - Andrews Air Force Base (possible future station)
 - Suitland Metrorail and Federal Center or Branch Avenue Metrorail
 - Oxon Hill Regional Center
 - National Harbor
 - Transit operations and TOD potential of other sites along the recommended Purple Line extension.
 - Coordinate alternate alignments study for the Purple Line with MDOT, DPW&T, and WMATA.

STRATEGIES:

1. Coordinate with the Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to create an urban-scale, integrated rail and bus transit network for the Developed Tier, to take maximum operational advantage of all Metrorail and MARC commuter rail stations in that tier.
2. Develop a comprehensive development-oriented transit strategy (see the Technical Bulletin under separate cover) for the Developed Tier that ensures the planning, design, and operation of transit facilities that can be integrated as much as possible with mixed use, higher density, TOD within safe, all-weather walking distances of Metrorail and MARC stations.
3. Coordinate creation of a comprehensive bus transit network in the Developing Tier that reflects and builds on the operational priorities of the TSOP and capitalizes on opportunities for modal integration (particularly pedestrian, bicycle, and feeder bus) at General Plan centers and within General Plan corridors in the Developing Tier.
4. Ensure that future development projects in the Developing Tier include street and road cross-sections that are compatible with transit bus operations and requirements, particularly within and near Developing Tier centers and corridors.
5. Develop a comprehensive development-oriented transit strategy for Developing Tier centers and corridors that integrates future planning, design, and operation of transit facilities with TOD, particularly mixed use, higher-density development within safe all-weather walking distances of the Metrorail, Purple Line, MARC, and other fixed guideway transit stations in the Developing Tier.
6. Fully apply the concepts, guidance, and principles of the “Strategic Framework for Transit-Oriented Development in Prince George’s County” at all Metrorail and MARC stations in Prince George’s County, to include:

2. Ensure that all Purple Line stations that also serve Metrorail and MARC stations are fully integrated with those lines and systems.
3. Ensure that master and area planning for areas of the county that are served by Purple Line stations fully reflect the need to:
 - Capitalize on this expanded public sector investment in the county’s rail transit system.
 - Use the Purple Line to achieve county growth, development, and TOD goals and priorities, particularly in the Developed Tier and at Developing Tier centers.
4. Analyze the facility and service requirements for the transit alignment on the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge, with particular attention to:
 - The transit impacts on communities inside and outside the Capital Beltway (I-95/495), on development and growth opportunities at the Oxon Hill Regional Center, and along Indian Head Highway (MD 210) and Branch Avenue (MD 5).
 - The National Harbor and Oxon Hill Regional Center.

Priority Investment Districts (PIDs) are proposed as a means of managing the adverse impact of traffic congestion that may be caused by infill development or redevelopment that is otherwise desirable because it helps achieve the core goals of the 2002 Approved General Plan. These goals include concentrating development in the Developed and Developing Tiers, particularly in these tiers’ centers and corridors, and attracting quality TOD to Metrorail and commuter rail stations and other transit service nodes in Prince George’s County.

This master plan recognizes and assumes that, in some limited circumstances, county growth and development policy may require site-specific exceptions to adequate public facility (APF) requirements in very specifically defined areas of the county. PIDs are intended to provide for innovative and flexible transportation and traffic management, to attract—or at a minimum not to discourage—the development envisioned in the General Plan and the master and small area plans that will be undertaken to implement it.

Policy 3:

Integrate the countywide transit system with each tier, center, and corridor's land use policies and plans to ensure overall county growth and development goals as envisioned in the General Plan.

STRATEGIES:

1. Analyze the transportation system's capacity in transportation PIDs and the impacts of growth policies in these PIDs on the operational integrity of the countywide transportation system.
2. Review and, where necessary, revise transportation and land use integration policies and strategies for General Plan centers and corridors that are identified as PIDs.
3. Evaluate each General Plan metropolitan center, as well as designated General Plan regional centers, for their feasibility as PIDs (See Chapter VII: Strategic Transportation Policy and Master Plan Implementation and the Technical Bulletin [under separate cover]).
4. Develop a comprehensive PID policy to implement Strategy 3, immediately above.

Policy 4:

Develop a comprehensive rail transit network for Prince George's County.

STRATEGIES:

1. Consistent with the direction of the Maryland General Assembly, undertake systems and facilities engineering and corresponding TOD planning for a Metrorail Green Line extension from Greenbelt via US 1 and Laurel to Fort Meade or Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.
2. Coordinate the MARC Growth and Investment Plan with DPW&T, neighboring jurisdictions served by the MARC Camden and Penn rail lines, and MDOT. Consider the addition of MARC service along corridors where additional tracks are to be provided as an alternative to extension of Metrorail or new fixed guideway service.

3. Coordinate the following future interjurisdictional fixed guideway transit extensions from the District of Columbia with the District of Columbia's Department of Transportation, the county's DPW&T, and MDOT:
 - Extension of the DC Anacostia Streetcar to National Harbor.
 - Rhode Island Avenue/US 1 BRT extension to the Purple Line station at MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) and MD 410 (East West Highway).
 - Rhode Island Avenue/US 1 BRT extension to the Purple Line station at US 1/Paint Branch Parkway (University of Maryland East Campus).
4. Coordinate the recommendations of the Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility Washington Joint Land Use Study with the recommendations of the *Approved Westphalia Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*, recommending a Green Line Metrorail or other fixed guideway transit extension to the Westphalia Regional Center.
5. Undertake systems and facilities engineering and corresponding TOD planning for fixed guideway transit extensions:
 - Evaluate the following fixed guideway transit study alignment for the Purple Line extension:
 - Landover Gateway
 - Largo Town Center Metrorail Station
 - Prince George's Community College
 - Westphalia Town Center
 - Joint Base Andrews
 - Suitland-Federal Center Metrorail Station
 - (or) Branch Avenue Metrorail Station
 - Oxon Hill/Rivertowne Commons
 - National Harbor

-
- Evaluate the following fixed guideway transit study corridors:
 - From New Carrollton Metrorail Station via US 50 to Bowie Center
 - From Branch Avenue Metrorail Station via MD 5 to Waldorf
 - From National Harbor via MD 210 to Charles County

Policy 5:

Create a targeted marketing and public outreach strategy to attract transit riders by enhancing the image of transit services and collaborating with community leaders, employers, and residents of Prince George's County.

STRATEGIES:

1. Initiate a targeted marketing and outreach campaign to travelers with a high potential to use available transit services, including residents living nearby transit stations, long-distance commuters, and youth.
2. Develop a countywide strategy, especially within the transit districts, to raise awareness of the benefits of the transit facilities through radio interviews, local newspaper and magazine articles, and other communication media, as well as working with employers to promote transit use among their employees.
3. Improve the user friendliness and ease of access of TheBus, creating an image for the network that includes all potential user groups.
4. Enhance the web site presence of TheBus, making new information on expanded hours and improved service readily accessible.