

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT 2013



Abstract

TITLE:	Southern Green Line Station Area Plan, Existing Conditions Report		
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ABSTRACT:	The Southern Green Line Station Area Plan, Existing Conditions Report, comprises text, maps, illustrations, and photographs that investigate and analyze existing conditions along the southern portion of the Metrorail Green Line in Prince George's County. The analysis looks at the regional context of the project area, including an analysis of demographics and real estate market, land use and development pattern, and transportation system. The four Metro station areas, which are Southern Avenue, Naylor Road, Suitland, and Branch Avenue, are explored in detail with analysis of land use, topography, building typologies, rail ridership and mode of access, traffic issues and station parking, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and issues, land ownership pattern, and opportunities and challenges for creating transit-oriented development.		

Southern Green Line Station Area Plan

Existing Conditions Report

January 2013

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Executive Summary

Background

In 2010 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Prince George's County Planning Department applied for a Community Challenge Planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to prepare an action plan to create transit-oriented development around four stations on the southern segment of the Green Line in Prince George's County, Maryland. In October of 2010 HUD announced \$100 million in planning grants made to 43 planning agencies across the country, including an \$800,000 grant to M-NCPPC. A grant agreement was entered into between HUD and M-NCPPC on March 1, 2011, which began a three-year grant period that concludes at the end of February 2014.

This existing conditions report summarizes the findings of the project team during the inventory and discovery phase of the project. The analysis, undertaken by M-NCPPC and a multidisciplinary consultant team led by Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects (EE&K), a Perkins Eastman Company, during 2011 and 2012, considers the project area's natural features, land use, transportation system, demographics, regional market position, and current regulatory framework. The team's information gathering process included field visits, GIS mapping and analysis, traffic data collection, literature review, and interviews with key stakeholders and county officials.

The project area surrounds four stations on the southern end of the Metrorail Green Line, extending from Southern Avenue (the boundary between the District of Columbia and Prince George's County, Maryland), to Branch Avenue and the Capital Beltway, I-95/495. The four stations are:

- Southern Avenue
- Naylor Road
- Suitland
- Branch Avenue

These stations all opened in January 2001, part of a 6.5-mile extension of the Green Line from Anacostia Station in the District of Columbia. In the ten years since these stations opened in 2001 only limited new development has occurred within the immediate station area.

The area directly served is, like most of Prince George's County, unincorporated; however, the project area overlays or is adjacent to a number of named communities, including Hillcrest Heights, Marlow Heights, and Suitland. The swath of land included in the official project boundary is over 3,700 acres and home to over 23,000 residents. Much of the building stock in these communities dates from the 1950s and 1960s, with single-family rambler houses, duplexes, townhouses, and multifamily apartments. The Branch Avenue corridor in its heyday during the 1960s was a new, suburban shopping destination anchored by Marlow Heights Shopping Center and Iverson Mall, the first large indoor shopping mall in the Washington metropolitan area. Indeed when urbanization came to this part of the Washington metropolitan area during and after World War II it changed the project area landscape very quickly, then moved on past the Beltway, growing the county's population by more than 250 percent from 1950 to 1970.

Such rapid growth at the start of the automobile age created a hodgepodge mix of development types: rural roadway section subdivisions without sidewalks, curbs, or gutters; master planned subdivisions with sidewalks; garden apartment complexes, some more parking lot than garden; a variety of strip commercial and scattered small office buildings; state highway corridors that grew in width with traffic demand; and a notable lack of neighborhood scale land use mixing or community node formation. While some pockets of land in Hillcrest Heights or Suitland were passed by and remain undeveloped, for the most part, the project area is a mature community that saw the majority of its development half a century ago.

The current condition of the public infrastructure, housing stock, and commercial buildings is tired, showing its age and requiring new investment for revitalization. The Metrorail Green Line was perhaps the largest single new investment in the project area since the post war highway building era: costing \$900 million to extend the line from Anacostia, the Southern Green Line was a huge investment by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) partners and the federal government in the project area. The ultimate goal of the Southern Green Line Station Area Plan project is to position the project area to reap new economic development in the immediate station areas that is commensurate with this investment and maximize the value of each station to its local community and Prince George's County. This analysis of existing conditions shows where opportunities exist and where challenges to transit-oriented development, both physical and regulatory, need to be addressed.

General Findings

Considering the project area as a whole, opportunities and challenges emerge with regard to market demand, land use pattern and potential TOD sites, transit and the role of the stations, roadway and mobility network, open space amenities, and the zoning and development process.

Real Estate Market

Key findings in terms of the real estate market include:

- The Metrorail Green Line segment within the District of Columbia is emerging as the region's high-growth line in terms of household and job growth.
- Joint Base Andrews and the new Homeland Security headquarters in the District, along with the 10,000 federal employees at the Suitland Federal Center, constitute an important market generator along the Southern Green Line.
- Compared to other jurisdictions, Prince George's County has not captured the potential for growth near its Metrorail stations.
- Retail stock is aging with no new construction in the project area since 1990.
- New apartments near the Branch Avenue Metro Station are commanding high rents.
- County impact fees are making multifamily residential developments financially unfeasible.

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• The project area itself does not currently provide sufficient market development fundamentals to support reinvestment in the project area, especially for the asset classes (multifamily residential, professional office, lifestyle retail) that are crucial to successful transit-oriented development.

Given the above, there is a need to create demand drivers for asset classes of all types in order to achieve a more robust development environment and residential/office experience at the Southern Green Line station areas.

Land Use and TOD Sites

Major findings of the analysis of current land use patterns are:

- The project area is ripe with sites within walking distance of the four Metro stations that are currently available for new development and of sufficient scale to attract major developers.
- Major land holdings at each of the four stations are held by single entities, including the county Redevelopment Authority and private investors interested in transit-oriented development (TOD).
- The locations of the Southern Green Line stations present significant challenges to TOD, particularly in regard to steep slopes, stream corridors, National Park Service and M-NCPPC lands, and secured federal campuses.
- The existing land use pattern of low to medium density residential subdivisions bounded by state highways that also serve as commercial corridors has precluded the development of walkable neighborhoods or focused commercial nodes.
- The four stations act as separate entities in the landscape, and the project area does not function as a single, connected corridor.

Transit Service and the Role of Stations Findings in regard to the existing transit service include:

- The Southern Green Line has been operating as a very successful commuter rail since its opening in 2001, with high demand for over 8,000 parking spaces at the four stations.
- Each of the Metrorail stations also acts as a transit hub for Metrobus and other bus service providers including Prince George's County The Bus and Maryland Transit Administration

(MTA) commuter bus service, allowing for bus to rail and bus to bus transfers.

- The primary mode of access to the Metrorail stations is via automobile at 57 percent of users, and of those a majority at 57 percent are driving from locations more than five miles from the station. Bus to rail access accounts for 27 percent of riders.
- The infrastructure of the stations, with its emphasis on vehicular parking and bus movement, overwhelms and underserves pedestrian access. Pedestrian access is 14 percent, and although lower than cars or buses, is relatively high for stations configured and located to operate as suburban commuter rail stations.
- WMATA policies with regard to banning commercial uses, fencing, and favoring access by automobile have left the Southern Green Line stations isolated from their neighborhood contexts.
- There are few existing elements around which to organize new development in the station areas. These areas feel vast and unmanaged, and can challenge a sense of personal safety.

Roadway and Mobility Network

Analysis of traffic data, field observations, and the overall pattern of roads and paths led to the following findings:

- Mobility through the project area is functional, but mobility within it is limited. Specifically Branch Avenue (MD 5) and Suitland Parkway favor trips across the area but create real barriers to movement between local places that are proximate but lack connecting local streets.
- High volume and high speed traffic on project area state highways and Suitland Parkway significantly impact neighborhoods, creating barriers to pedestrian passage and bicycle use, and chopping communities into smaller, isolated enclaves.

Traffic flow in the project area is generally good. While there may be pockets of congestion at certain intersections at peak commuter times, the overall system-wide congestion levels are not high.





Open Space

A survey of open space led to the following conclusions: The project area has vast areas of land owned by the National Park Service and M-NCPPC; however, most of this land is either inaccessible, specifically Suitland Parkway, or undeveloped.

Nearly all of the open space owned by M-NCPPC is land that follows and buffers stream corridors or is protecting steep slopes from development. This open space provides little active recreation opportunities for area residents.

M-NCPPC community centers are located on the edges of neighborhoods. There is a dearth of neighborhood parks and no urban parks in the project area.

Zoning and Development Review Process Input was received from staff and local real estate developers about the county's Zoning Ordinance and the development review process, leading to the following conclusions:

- A lack of "by-right zoning" and the threat of a project review (of an application approved by the Planning Board) being "called up" to the County Council is a disincentive to developers working in the project area.
- There is a gap between the value of land, or potential profits from a development project, and the difficulty of the process.
- The mixed-use zoning district applied at the Naylor Road and Branch Avenue station areas is an impediment to new development because of requirements to include commercial uses in each project whether or not a market exists for the space. Two buildings at Branch Avenue station included retail space that remains empty.

Recurring Themes from Stakeholder Input

In addition to technical analysis of a variety of planning elements, the project team conducted a series of steps to garner local knowledge of the project area and receive direct input from key stakeholders and community members. This outreach included individual interviews with key landowners in the immediate station areas, interviews with leaders of neighborhood organizations, and workshops to garner input from the general public.

A summary of key findings from the community includes:

- Obstacles to change and reinvestment in the project area include crimes against persons and property and the perception of crime as an issue, which creates a poor image for local communities; a high percentage of low-income residents limits buying power to support new retail; the unattractive appearance of the commercial corridors, its public infrastructure and private businesses, detracts from the overall area.
- The isolated locations of the Green Line stations create a concern for personal safety when using Metro.
- Improved retail and housing opportunities and a quality community environment need to be part of the corridor's economic diversification.
- The need to maintain affordability needs to be balanced with market rate housing.
- The area needs public investments—in public infrastructure, enforcement, and business incentives—to succeed.





Executive Summary

The Southern Green Line stations are diverse in character and existing land use. Steep topography, stream corridors, and the presence of Suitland Parkway exert a powerful influence that separates the stations from each other so that they function as individual destinations, rather than along a contiguous corridor. Each station area has a different potential based on its particular physical characteristics and setting. These are summarized below.

Southern Avenue Metro Station

Southern Avenue Metro Station is located just across the boundary between the District of Columbia and Prince George's County on the Maryland side of Southern Avenue. The station is on the western edge of the Hillcrest Heights community in Prince George's County.

Key findings with regard to creating transit-oriented development in the Southern Avenue Metro Station area include the following:

- The station is in an isolated location framed by Oxon Run stream to the north and a steep bluff to the south, making connections to the nearby neighborhoods difficult.
- WMATA and two other entities own large amounts of undeveloped land directly south of the station; however, access to the station is severely constrained by a steep bluff, and additional steep slopes and small ravines complicate any potential development.
- WMATA's high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lot is little used and is a potential redevelopment site.
- The area on top of the bluff offers spectacular views of the monumental core of Washington, D.C.
- United Medical Center on the District side of Southern Avenue may generate some demand for medical office space, but the hospital struggles financially and is subsidized by the District.
- A local church has 100 acres of land for sale on Wheeler Hills Road.



Naylor Road Metro Station

The Naylor Road station is located at the northern end of the Hillcrest Heights neighborhood in a small valley carved by Oxon Run stream. Suitland Parkway frames the station area, but the expressway is a barrier to access from the north. Branch Avenue, a state highway designated MD 5, bisects the station area and creates additional impediments to station access given high volume and high speed traffic. Naylor Road (MD 637) too carries substantial traffic into the District and creates a triangle with MD 5 in front of the station.

Key findings for the Naylor Road station include the following:

- The station has the smallest commuter parking lot of the four in the project area, which could make a transition to TOD easier to implement.
- A large redevelopment site on the east side of Branch Avenue, primarily a former shopping center building but also including smaller parcels, has been assembled by a single landowner interested in redevelopment.
- Current business uses along Branch Avenue are primarily liquor stores, convenience retail and small restaurants; assembly of these properties could prove difficult.
- The block at the corner of Naylor Road and Oxon Run Drive is underutilized, with only a small nightclub, and offers a redevelopment opportunity.
- A whole block south of Curtis Drive and on the east side of Branch Avenue is undeveloped and for sale.
- Apartment blocks located on a bluff overlooking the station to the south of Naylor Road, include a two-building condominium with over 200 owners, who struggle with maintenance and homeowners association (HOA) issues, and a four-building rental complex, which appears to be in better condition. This high-density development, along with a large apartment building located north of the parkway and the apartment complex on Curtis Drive, represents an existing residential land use that is generating transit riders.
- Naylor Road station is designated a priority TOD location by the State of Maryland, and the State Highway Administration



Figure 3

is working on a streetscape redesign project to improve the pedestrian environment. This includes all of Naylor Road and Branch Avenue from the station south to Curtis Drive.

• The area does not have a well connected grid of streets, and access across the elevated bluff areas and Branch Avenue is constrained.

Suitland Metro Station

The Suitland Metro Station area is bisected by Suitland Parkway and by Silver Hill Road (MD 458). This creates four divided quadrants with the station roughly at the center. The northwest quadrant is federal property owned by the Smithsonian and the National Park Service. All of the northeast quadrant is the Suitland Federal Center, an important destination for Metrorail service with 10,000 employees. This center influenced the final alignment of the Green Line. The southwest quadrant is almost exclusively a mix of multifamily residential types, while the southeast quadrant has a mix of commercial uses along Silver Hill Road backed by garden apartments and single-family houses.

The Suitland neighborhood has historically been focused at the crossroads of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road, one-half mile east of the station. The former Suitland Manor site directly north of the crossroads is owned by the county's Redevelopment Authority; the cleared land behind struggling commercial frontage is the subject of continuing redevelopment efforts.

Key opportunities and issues for the Suitland station area include:

- Suitland Federal Center is a secure campus that has minimal interaction with the surrounding community. Issues of personal safety and the poor physical environment discourage employees from venturing outside the campus and its security fence.
- The lack of building frontage from the Smithsonian property across the parkway, all the way around the perimeter of the Federal Center increases the sense of isolation and inactivity on the sidewalks leading to the station.
- The Federal Center's large workforce, nearly 10,000 employees, has the potential to support improved retail amenities in the area, if the environment outside the fence can be improved.
- Silver Hill Road carries high volumes of traffic, which creates an opportunity for the retail market; however, a poor quality civic realm and lack of any high quality privately owned buildings present a tough environment for new investment.



- Redevelopment of the 21-acre former Suitland Manor is a county priority; but addressing the commercial frontage and finding the right market for the land has complicated and delayed the project. A half-mile walk down Silver Hill Road, this property's relationship with the station depends on improvements along the highway.
- Opportunities and needs to redevelop property for TOD near the station exist, for instance at the intersection of Navy Day Drive and Silver Hill Road. Bringing new development into the Metro station itself is also a possibility.

Branch Avenue Metro Station

Of the four station areas, Branch Avenue is the only one that has developable land in all directions around the station. The station area is effectively bounded by open space owned by M-NCPPC, homeowners associations, and Suitland Parkway, as well as by MD 5 and the Capital Beltway, creating a district set apart from surrounding communities. The station area enjoys easy access to the Beltway, but it lacks an internal grid of streets. Planned for light industrial uses prior to the siting of the Metro station, the roadway infrastructure is oversized and large plots of land are available next to the station for development. In the best example of development in response to the opening of the Southern Green Line in the county, three multifamily residential projects and hundreds of townhouses have been built near the station.

Key findings relating to the Branch Avenue station area include:

- WMATA owns over 30 acres of land that is currently surface parking surrounding the station. The agency is interested in joint development of this property, but accommodating over 3,000 commuter parking spaces in structured parking will be a challenge.
- Large parcels of vacant land just beyond the station parking lots are owned by a small number of investors interested in TOD. Recent new construction has shown both the potential of the station area and issues related to the existing zoning, which has required construction of retail space that sits empty.
- A planned State Highway Administration (SHA) access road from MD 5 to the station, to be named Woods Way, will help to form a grid of local streets and create new blocks and frontage if additional connections can be agreed on by SHA, the county, and affected landowners.
- The role of Auth Way and Auth Road can change once Woods Way is handling more of the station traffic.
- The sidewalk network in the station area remains incomplete due to policies that wait for developers to construct walks and also due to a legacy from the early period of urbanization that left the low density residential subdivisions to the southeast of the station without walks on critical routes to the station, such as Auth Road.



• The real estate market analysis considers the Branch Avenue station area the best location for any new private office development along the Southern Green Line.

Executive Summary



Southern Green Line stations are spaced roughly 1.5 miles apart; notice that the larger half-mile radius circles do not overlap and that the alignment is next to unbuildable parkway and environmental corridors.



Stations along the Orange Line in Arlington, VA, are spaced 0.75 miles apart. The half-mile walk circles overlap and the alignment in an urban corridor encourages dense development and walks between stations.



Red Line stations from Friendship Heights to Bethesda, MD are spaced apart in similar distances to the Green Line; however, the urban context allows for dense retail and office nodes around the stations.



Background and Purpose

The Southern Green Line Existing Conditions Report is an initial product of the Southern Green Line Station Area Plan project, which will develop a vision and an implementation plan for transforming the four Green Line stations in Prince George's County. The goal of the project is to transition the Green Line station areas from commuter parking lots to vibrant, mixeduse communities that offer high levels of livability, significant community amenities, and a balance of great places to live, work, and shop.

This report explores the existing conditions, assets, and opportunities in the Green Line project area through the lens of mobility infrastructure, economic conditions, natural characteristics, and the imprint of manmade patterns of uses and settlements. The report first considers the entire project area as a whole, and then provides a detailed survey of existing conditions at each of the four station areas.

The information gathering process included field visits and literature review of relevant planning studies, databases on demographic and market conditions, transit service data published by WMATA, and other data sources. The intent was to build on previous studies to draw attention to the most relevant information and discern significant relationships rather than update or replicate past efforts. Toward that end, interviews and meetings were conducted with residents, community leaders, business owners, and the development community to arrive at a picture of the project area. The analysis identifies significant issues, opportunities, and constraints to realizing a transit-oriented development (TOD) vision.

This report is organized into three main sections to highlight the most important characteristics of the Green Line project area. These sections are:

• Executive Summary: A brief description of the Green Line project area, its location and general characteristics, as well as a

summary of key issues at each of the individual Metro stations.

- Project Area Overview: An overview of the Green Line project area as a whole; including a review of the area's history, development patterns, and previous planning efforts; physical characteristics of the area's natural and manmade landscape, existing land use, zoning, public facilities; existing mobility infrastructure; as well as the project area's demographic, economic conditions and market potential within a regional market context. The analysis of the overall project area concludes with a summary of the stakeholder input gathered from individual and community meetings, as well as a review of corridor-level opportunities and constraints.
- Station Areas: A detailed analysis of the four station areas, including: land use and zoning; building typologies; vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian mobility and facilities; and rail and bus transit design, capacity, and infrastructure. The analysis of each station area concludes with a summary of stakeholder input gathered from individual and community meetings, as well as a review of station-specific opportunities and constraints.

Methodology

The Existing Conditions Report has been prepared to provide a portrait of the project area and to enable an initial understanding of the opportunities that exist and the constraints that challenge the creation of transit-oriented development at the four Green Line stations in southern Prince George's County. Our process has been to read, examine, ask questions and try to arrive at a clear understanding of what is on the ground today, the existing regulatory framework, what has been proposed in terms of projects and infrastructure, and how people live, work, recreate, and move within the project area.

To arrive at such a portrait, the project team has, in the period from December 2011 to April 2012, completed a number of research, data gathering, and initial outreach tasks. A review of relevant planning documents of the Prince George's County Planning Department focused on the 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*, 2008 *Approved Branch Avenue Corridor* Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment, and 2000 Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Heights and Vicinity (Planning Area 76A). Documents and data sets from WMATA were especially useful and important, including station access studies, ridership and mode-of-access data, parking counts, and bus ridership data, all of which provide a baseline for evaluating mobility scenarios and recommendations.

A variety of methods were used to receive community input and local knowledge on existing and past conditions in the station area neighborhoods. Individual interviews were conducted with key landowners and civic and neighborhood association leaders, which was followed by a stakeholder meeting held on February 11, 2012, in Suitland. Results and comments from this outreach are included in this report.

Our task has been to distill, through text and graphics, the vast amount of ideas, planning, and discussion into a focused and legible portrait of the project area. The team has also benefitted from the experience and insights of staff from WMATA, the State Highway Administration, the Prince George's County Planning Department and other departments of the county.

What is Transit-Oriented Development?

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is an approach to land-use planning and urban design that leverages the presence of transit by encouraging higher density development within walking distance to transit facilities and maximizing access to transit.

A typical TOD neighborhood is centered on a transit station or stop and is defined by higher-density development at the center, ringed by progressively lower-density development at its periphery. Best practice for transit-oriented development suggests that land within a radius of one-quarter to one-half mile be organized to encourage pedestrian activity and maximum access to transit. TOD communities are typically characterized by a compact

development pattern. They frequently include mixed-use projects that support transit use across a wider spectrum of daily activities, and feature a high-quality pedestrian environment. Typically, in recognition of higher rates of transit usage, TODs include reduced amounts of parking for personal vehicles, as transit usage is supported and encouraged.

Examples of transit-oriented development in the Washington metropolitan area include the recent mixed-use projects at the Columbia Heights Metro Station on the Green Line and new office, retail, and residential development at the Foggy Bottom Metro Station; in Montgomery County, MD, the planning around the White Flint Red Line Station; and in Arlington, VA, the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor. In the case of each of these examples, the local municipality took proactive steps to invest public infrastructure to attract private investments; establish a clear and predictable regulatory environment; and conduct focused planning and marketing efforts to attract the kind of development compatible with TOD principles.



A view of the high-density development surrounding the Ballston Metro Station in Arlington.



High-rise residential buildings seen from the White Flint Metro Station platform are a good example of recent transit-oriented development in Montgomery County, MD.



A variety of building types are located across from the Clarendon Metro Station in Arlington, including single-story retail, an eight-story office with ground floor retail, and a 12-story apartment building.



A new office building rises behind the entrance to the White Flint Metro Station, providing excellent access to the Metro system for future employees and businesses.

Project Area

The project area is located in southwest Prince George's County, approximately four miles in a straight line from the mall in downtown Washington. The project area is roughly bounded by Southern Avenue to the west, Suitland Road to the north, Branch Avenue to the south, and I-95/495 (Capital Beltway) to the east.

Regional Context

The Southern Green Line project area lies between the District of Columbia line and Joint Base Andrews. Three growing federal employment centers are served by the Green Line and lie within a few minutes drive, including the new Homeland Security campus at St. Elizabeth's in the District, the Suitland Federal Center, and Joint Base Andrews. The project area includes parts of five U.S. Census designated places: Suitland, Silver Hill, Camp Springs, Hillcrest Heights, and Temple Hills. While commuters access the Metro stations from additional surrounding neighborhoods, subdivisions, and even points much further south in Calvert and Charles Counties, it is the major employment centers and station area neighborhoods that constitute the local, market context for TOD planning.

The plan for the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) campus, which is being developed one Metro stop to the east of the Southern Avenue Metro Station, would consolidate a number of DHS agencies in 3.8 million square feet of new office space with roughly 14,000 employees. However, cuts to the GSA budget by Congress has delayed all but the first phase of construction, and the future of the project is unclear. If the project proceeds it may create significant impact in terms of demand for new housing along the Southern Green Line.

While much attention has been given to the potential of the DHS development, the Southern Green Line already has the Suitland Federal Center directly served by the Suitland station. In fact, the final alignment of the Green Line was to an extent determined by the desire to serve this federal employment center. The Suitland Federal Center consists of 2.8 million square feet of office space on 226 acres, of which 185 acres are owned by the GSA and 41



acres by the National Maritime Intelligence Center, which has an office structure on the middle part of the campus. The U.S. Census Bureau has the largest and most visible presence on the campus, with up to 6,000 employees working in a new building opened in 2007. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has a facility on the campus. The National Archives and Records Administration and Federal Protective Service are also present. Federal employees on the campus total 9,150.

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Joint Base Andrews bookends the project area to the east; its main gate is located less than two miles from the Branch Avenue station. Formerly named Andrews Air Force Base, the base is known around the world as the home of Air Force One, the president's official airplane, and as an international gateway to the nation's capital for diplomatic visits. Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility Washington (JBA) is a military installation, a residential and commercial center, and a major international airport. A complex covering approximately seven square miles at the intersections of I-95/495, MD 4, and MD 5, Joint Base Andrews is a largely selfcontained community of 16,697 civilian and military personnel. Over 50 individual units are stationed at the base, including the Air Force District of Washington and the 11th Wing as "host wing" at the base. Joint Base Andrews (JBA) is one of the largest employers in Prince George's County and has an estimated regional economic impact of \$1.1 billion. JBA supports 141,000 flights per year, including the 11th Wing's operations over the nation's capital and the 89th Airlift Wing's responsibilities to transport the president and senior officials. Air operations at JBA are also conducted by the Department of Energy, the Maryland State Police, and other units from various branches of the military.

The named neighborhoods are all part of unincorporated Prince George's County, and there are some disputes regarding their extent even though rather rigid barriers of roadway and topography do separate these communities from each other. In terms of the Washington region, Suitland is a well-recognized name, as is Camp Springs. The newest census designates Silver Hill as separate from Suitland but on the ground the two areas blend together. Hillcrest Heights is a large, mainly residential neighborhood within the Temple Hills zip code area. Southern Avenue Metro Station and Naylor Road Metro Station are both considered within Hillcrest Heights, though both are on the edges of the neighborhood. The Suitland station is clearly within the Suitland neighborhood, yet to call such large areas "neighborhoods" seems to stretch the concept, and smaller subdivision names are also used to identify specific locales. Camp Springs has perhaps the most difficult claim to being a single entity given that its designated area is divided by the Beltway and MD 5, with the Branch Avenue station nominally located in Camp Springs, but the area also being part of the Suitland zip code area.

Defining and naming places within the project area is a difficult task, compounded by the imprecise names of the stations themselves: Southern Avenue Metro Station is on Southern Avenue but the street itself is long; Naylor Road is a short span within the county and the station is actually elevated over Branch Avenue; and the Branch Avenue station is not located on Branch Avenue. All of these issues impacted the work of the project team in terms of developing an understanding and approach to the project area, and especially in terms of creating a marketing approach to branding the Green Line in southern Prince George's County. The team moved away from viewing the project as a corridor plan to one of individual station areas with limited connections to each other. And yet, the Southern Green Line is very well connected to the overall Washington metropolitan area with excellent access to downtown Washington, D.C., via Suitland Parkway and Metrorail. The MD 5 interchange at I-95/495 provides ready access to major regional centers such as county offices at Largo, National Harbor on the Potomac waterfront, and Alexandria, Virginia, across the Wilson Bridge.

As discussed further in the transportation sections of this report, major roadways play a determining role in how these four stations interact with the region and subregions. For instance, Indian Head Highway (MD 210) provides good access from Oxon Hill and Glassmanor to the Southern Avenue Metro Station, even though the station is somewhat isolated from its immediate surroundings. In a similar manner MD 5 provides good access to the Branch Avenue Metro Station and Naylor Road Metro Station. Suitland Parkway and Silver Hill Road (MD 458) provide direct access to the Suitland Metro Station, which is located where these two major roadways intersect.

Suitland Parkway is a limited access expressway owned and maintained by the National Park Service. The road was built during World War II to provide access from downtown Washington, D.C., to the airforce base. The road was also a factor in the location of the U.S. Census Bureau at Suitland in the same time period. The fact that the federal government owned the parkway was a factor in the alignment of the Green Line along it; however, the nature of the parkway, including its location along stream corridors with steep slopes and the naturalistic aesthetic enforced by the Park Service, greatly affects the development potential at the Naylor Road and Suitland station areas.

Suitland Parkway is also a factor in the future development of land at its eastern end: a large master planned community called Westphalia. Westphalia is a major center for development located immediately east of 195/495 at the current terminus of Suitland Parkway and MD 4. The 2007 *Approved Westphalia Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* establishes guidelines for development of the dozen major greenfield sites in the Westphalia area. Combined, the sites will contain an urban town center core surrounded by residential and commercial development. Buildout scenarios include 17,000 to 18,000 residential units, 4.5 million square feet of office development, and one million square feet of retail development. Population estimates approach 45,000 new residents. Development is anticipated to commence in 2013 with completion in phases through 2025.

A major central park project will anchor the new community. Police stations, fire stations, and seven new schools (five elementary, one middle, and one high school) are envisioned. Infrastructure projects surrounding the Westphalia development include four grade-separated interchanges along MD 4, a continuation of Suitland Parkway into the Westphalia site, as well as potential extensions of Metro or light rail service to the future town center. As fixed-guideway transit is a distant proposition, most development will be expected to impact MD 4 and Suitland Parkway, including increased usage of Suitland station, which is the most convenient Metro station to the Westphalia area.

Station area development in the District of Columbia

The Green Line has brought redevelopment and major new investment to southeast Washington, with the pace of new planning and implementation of projects increasing on both banks of the Anacostia River since stations at Waterfront-SEU, Navy Yard, and Anacostia opened twenty years ago in 1991. The decision to locate the new Department of Homeland Security near the Congress Heights Station continues this trend along the Green Line. Landowners, community leaders, and residents anticipate that this new investment in the District of Columbia will create opportunities for additional and related development at stations in Prince George's County.



Planning Context

General Plan

The 2002 General Plan divides Prince George's County into three policy tiers: Developed Tier, Developing Tier, and Rural Tier. The Developed Tier includes the entire county inside the Capital Beltway, and thus all four of the southern Metro Green Line stations are within the Developed Tier. The Developed Tier contains more than half the county's households and nearly half the employment. The General Plan vision for the Developed Tier is a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density communities. Policies for the Developed Tier emphasize quality infill and redevelopment, provision of adequate public facilities to serve existing and future residents, as well as preservation and enhancement of the environment.

The General Plan identifies the four Southern Green Line stations as "centers," making them "priorities for concentrations of medium to high intensity, mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development."

The Southern Avenue Metro Station area is designated a "community center" which is envisioned as having concentrations of activities, services, and land uses that serve the immediate surrounding neighborhoods.

Naylor Road Metro Station and Suitland Metro Station areas are both designated "regional centers." Regional centers are locations for regionally marketed retail destinations, office and employment areas, higher education facilities, and possibly sports and recreational complexes serving Prince George's County. High-density residential may be an option if the needed public facilities and services can be provided.

The Branch Avenue Metro Station is designated a "metropolitan center" which is the highest intensity development classification in the General Plan. Perhaps the best existing example in the county of the type of development sought at a metropolitan center is National Harbor, with plans for other areas such as New Carrollton also moving into implementation as a designated metropolitan center. These metropolitan centers are to have a concentration of economic activities that attract employers, workers, and customers from other parts of the Washington metropolitan area, such as large government offices and major private sector employers, major educational complexes, or high-intensity commercial uses. High-density residential development may also be located at a metropolitan center.

Master Plan, Development Plan, and Sector Plan

The 2000 Heights and Vicinity Master Plan and SMA recommends office development adjacent to the Southern Avenue Metro Station, including the use of air rights at the station site. This plan process changed the zoning to Commercial Office (C-O) at the station to enable this type of development; however, the area has significant topographical and soil condition challenges and no development has occurred. The Heights and Vicinity Master Plan and SMA predates creation of the current General Plan.

Two county planning efforts, guided by the General Plan, that set development policies for the Suitland and the Naylor Road Metro Station areas were completed in the last five years: the 2006 *Approved Suitland Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan* and the 2008 *Approved Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment.* These planning efforts established policies and zoning to encourage mixed-use TOD within a halfmile radius of the Metro stations.

The Prince George's County Council approved the Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan and zoning map amendment in 2006. The goal of the project was to determine the appropriate area for zoning that permits development of a new mixed-used town for Suitland, including retail, office, and new housing. The planning process focused on design standards and guidelines and a development plan to guide new mixed-use projects and enhance the commercial areas around the Suitland Federal Center, particularly at the intersection of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road.

The 2008 *Approved Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* recommends an urban mix of uses integrated with new office buildings within walking distance of the Naylor Road Metro Station. It also recommends mixeduse, medium- to high-intensity land uses with emphasis on commercial development at Iverson Mall and Marlow Heights Shopping Center. The plan provides design concepts, standards, and guidelines to ensure transit-oriented and pedestrian-oriented redevelopment in urban form. The plan process rezoned a 20-acre parcel at the southwestern quadrant of the intersection of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Parkway from R-18 (multifamily medium density residential) to R-10 (multifamily high density residential). This parcel is within a quarter mile distance of the Suitland Metro Station.

Other planning initiatives, studies and current plans underway that directly impact the Metro Green Line Corridor include:

- *Branch Avenue Station Access and Joint Development Study* completed by WMATA in 2010. This includes a development concept for the 33-acre WMATA station site and identifies station access and facility improvements needed to ensure efficient operation of the transit facility upon area buildout.
- *Naylor Road Metro Station Area Accessibility Study* completed in 2011 identifies hindrances to pedestrian accessibility and provides recommendations for improvement and associated costs for improvement options.
- Naylor Road Metro Station Access and Capacity Study currently underway, will identify access and facility improvements needed to efficiently operate the transit facility based on the Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan projected buildout estimates.
- Branch Avenue in Bloom is a revitalization program currently underway that uses a Main Street approach to improve the aesthetics, safety, and business operations within the Naylor Road Metro Station area.
- Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan currently underway, examines the economic, transportation, and land use relationships between communities along the central portion of Branch Avenue (MD 5) and in the vicinity of Joint Base Andrews.



An aerial photograph from 1938 shows the rural character of southern Prince George's County. The white to bright grey areas are generally cultivated fields, showing the small scale agricultural use of the land going back to first settlement by Europeans. The impediments to agriculture are also shown in the darker areas that are steep slopes with trees and stream valleys. A large forested area is shown to the south of the project area. Silver Hill Road can be seen with a concentration of fields and other uses and a hamlet at the crossroad with Suitland Road, this being the Suitland community.



Thirty years made an enormous difference to the project area; by the time of this photograph in 1965 massive roadway projects were complete, including the Capital Beltway, Suitland Parkway and MD 5. Agricultural uses are gone, replaced by subdivisions and gravel pits providing the necessary materials for building all the new roads. Perhaps most interesting is the view of the new Hillcrest Heights neighborhood where the large forest had stood in 1938. The U.S. Census Bureau buildings can be seen at Suitland, and gravel pits north of the Beltway where the Branch Avenue station is now located.

History

Prior to World War II, southern Prince George's County was primarily an agricultural area with tobacco cultivation a major cash crop. In the project area, small truck farms operated on level ground, where it could be found, growing a variety of produce for the city of Washington, D.C., only a few miles away. Rapid change to the landscape began during the war when the War Department moved quickly to construct the Fighter Command Station Access Parkway, later renamed Suitland Parkway in 1944 from Bolling Air Force Base to the Camp Springs Military Reservation, later renamed Andrews Air Force Base (now Joint Base Andrews). This road also made the connection to the new federal campus at Suitland where the U.S. Census Bureau constructed a headquarters.

Following World War II, the agrarian landscape gave way to rapid suburban development, supported by large roadway projects such as MD 5 and the Capital Beltway. While much of the suburbanization occurred in a piecemeal fashion, one subdivision at a time, the large master planned community of Hillcrest Heights was planned and constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. This community was organized around access by private automobile with a separation of land uses according to the plan, which included large swaths of residential in the form of ranch homes and duplexes and a commercial shopping center area at the intersection of Branch Avenue and Iverson Street. Iverson Mall was the anchor of the commercial center, opening as the first indoor shopping mall in the Washington metropolitan area in 1967.

This new style of commercial development at a key intersection along a new modern highway stood in contrast to the smaller retailing that fronts on Silver Hill Road up into Suitland. Yet, while Suitland was a much older rural hamlet, the new strip center drive up shopping also came to dominate just outside the federal center.

Beginning in 1941, the construction of the Suitland Federal Center at the intersection of Silver Hill and Suitland Roads brought a large

office development to the project area, a land use that was entirely new. The relocation of the Census Bureau out of downtown Washington, D.C., established a major federal presence in this part of the county on 437 acres of land bought by the government on both sides of the new parkway along the north side of Silver Hill Road. The area to the west of the parkway was transferred to the Smithsonian Institution beginning in 1951, with additional land transferred to the Silver Hill Volunteer Fire Department and the State Roads Commission for widening Silver Hill Road in 1964. The Smithsonian developed their land for storage and office facilities. This is separate from the Suitland Federal Campus that occupies 226 acres of land to the east of the parkway up to Suitland Road. Over the decades the federal campus has also developed to include a variety of federal agencies, with facilities for Naval Maritime Intelligence, the National Archives, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). A new NOAA Satellite Operations Facility Building was completed in 2005. The Census Bureau's website explains the deteriorating relationship with the surrounding community by saying that: "Through the mid-1980s, the grounds of the Suitland Federal Center were open to the public and the entrances to FOB 3 were left unguarded. However, in the late 1980s, car thefts in the parking lot and petty theft in various offices brought about the need for enhanced security.... A chain link fence, topped with barbed wire, was erected around the perimeter of the complex, but was replaced in January 2000 by the current, more neighborhood-friendly, black wrought-iron fence."

The design and site layout of a new 1.5 million square foot U.S. Census Bureau, which opened in 2007, also takes a defensive stance to the surrounding community. But a master plan for the campus developed in 2002 by the General Services Administration takes a different approach to future development with a grid of streets and blocks along Suitland Road that would re-engage the campus with the Suitland community.

The Auth Road area in Camp Springs has experienced a series of different land uses in the post-war era, from truck farms to gravel pits, to planned industrial uses. Gravel pits were scattered around



the whole project area, most likely in response to the large-scale road building which requires a gravel base. The pits in the Auth Road area were later filled and a wide horseshoe shaped road constructed to allow for truck traffic looping off MD 5 in what was planned to be a light industrial district. But, as the decades of lawsuits over the final alignment of the Green Line settled on a route roughly following Suitland Parkway, and serving the federal center, and a terminus station was constructed between the horseshoe of Auth Way and Auth Road, the planned industrial use never materialized. Instead real estate developers sought to construct large multifamily condominium and apartment buildings within walking distance of the Metro station. The new century and the new rail line brought the era of transit-oriented development to the southern Prince George's County. The real estate market crash of 2007 stalled further construction, providing a period of time for the Southern Green Line Station Area Plan process to consider the best way to maximize the value of the new Metro line.





Topography and Water System

Environmental Features

The geography of the Southern Green Line project area is a rolling, coastal plain with broad ridges that fall off to relatively steep slopes shaped by creeks and two main streams: Oxon Run Stream and Henson Creek. While these streams are sluggish in flow, their impact on the land form and the built environment is significant. Indeed, the Green Line follows the Oxon Run valley from the Southern Avenue Metro Station past Naylor Road and down a creek tributary most of the way to Suitland. Then the Green Line crosses the ridge topped by Silver Hill Road, goes down a slope to Henson Creek valley and back up to Branch Avenue Metro Station.

Oxon Run Valley: Southern Avenue to Naylor Road stations

Oxon Run Park protects the banks of Oxon Run from Southern Avenue up to Naylor Road. The station at Southern Avenue sits in a bowl shaped by the stream valley and steep slopes directly to the south leading up a hilltop that is more than 100 feet above the station parking lots.

Hillcrest Heights/Silver Hill Road: Suitland station

The community known as Hillcrest Heights is located along the broad ridge that divides the Oxon Run watershed from the Henson Creek watershed. Silver Hill Road runs along this ridge and watershed divide, passing between the tentacles of the creeks leading to the main streams. Suitland Metro Station is located on top of the ridge, but the pattern of long, dead-end streets leading south from Silver Hill Road, between the parkway and MD 5, was influenced by the slopes of a major tributary of Henson Creek.

Henson Creek: Branch Avenue station

The slopes of the Henson Creek valley and a shallow creek tributary flowing north, together with the manmade barriers of the Beltway and Branch Avenue, encircle the Branch Avenue station area. The rolling topography is most noticeable along Branch Avenue just west of Auth Way, while the actual station area is a flat plain surrounded by wetlands to the north and east. Suitland Parkway runs just north of Henson Creek, adding to the isolation of the station.

Constraints and Amenities

While this system of streams and associated wetlands, floodplains, and parks is a constraint to future development, in some areas the open lands, views across stream valleys, and presence of wildlife also constitute a real amenity to higher intensity land uses. Existing parks and lands conserved for future parks, along with plans for an extensive system of trails that follow these stream valleys, provide the open space capacity for future development. Parks can also be used to define neighborhoods and have proven value in attracting both residential and office development.

Watersheds and Stormwater Management

The Southern Green Line project area is located within the Middle Potomac River basin of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Efforts to reverse the degradation of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem include regulations that will affect redevelopment in the project area. Current Maryland law and regulations and the county's 2010 stormwater ordinance require that environmental site design (ESD) be used to control stormwater from new and redeveloped sites. The goal is to manage stormwater by using ESD to reduce stream channel erosion, pollution and nutrient loading, siltation, sedimentation, and local flooding, and to use appropriate structural practices, such as stormwater management ponds, only when necessary. Environmental site design objectives include:

- Reduction in impervious surfaces and runoff
- Storage and reuse of rainwater
- Increased groundwater recharge

The project area lies in the Henson Creek and Oxon Run watersheds. Silver Hill Road and St. Barnabas Road are aligned along a ridge top that divides the two watersheds. The area west of this dividing line drains to Oxon Run while lands to the east drain to the Henson Creek watershed. A GIS analysis of impervious surfaces was performed to understand how the development pattern is impacting stormwater runoff. The analysis of impervious surfaces included asphalt on road and parking lots; concrete on roads, sidewalks, and driveways; building footprints (roofs) and other structures. The results are provided in the table below.

Impervious surfaces cover 32 percent of the project area land. This result shows that even in an area with a suburban development pattern that includes yards and large undeveloped woods and stream valleys, nearly one third of the land surface is covered with

Watersheds, Impervious Surfaces and Water Quality

Watershed	Acres within Project Area	Acres of Impervious Surfaces	Percent Impervious	Water Quality Rating	Watershed Habitat Measure
Oxon Run	1598	550.0	34.4	Very poor	Very poor
Henson Creek	2132	666.2	31.2	Very poor	Poor
Project Area Total	3730	1216.2	32.8		

asphalt or concrete or rooftops. Levels of impervious surfaces above 10 percent can result in severe degradation of receiving streams if measures are not provided to slow the runoff and allow it to infiltrate into the ground, or to remove pollutants. The high level of impervious surfaces in the project area results in poor stream habitat conditions and very poor water quality.

When the area was developed, some streams that previously existed were removed or piped, and some wetlands were filled in order to create more dry land for development. The quality of water in the remaining streams is compromised when stormwater enters the receiving streams untreated. Currently there are few site features such as bioretention areas or stormwater ponds to manage stormwater coming from impervious surfaces (roads, parking, rooftops, sidewalks, etc.). The result of such land development is the structural degradation of the remaining streams, wetlands and floodplains (failing slopes, deep ravines and severe erosion).

Floodplains

Regulated areas of the county include the 100-year floodplain, as defined by FEMA, which is the land adjacent to a stream that has a one percent or greater probability of flooding in any given year. Building new structures within a floodplain is generally discouraged. Within the Green Line project area, floodplains are located along the main channels and primary tributaries of Oxon Run stream and Henson Creek, yet these are relatively narrow and are not likely to constrain future development beyond existing areas of wet soils.

Green Infrastructure Plan

The existing natural resources of a site are evaluated throughout the land development process. The 2010 update to the county's environmental regulations requires the submission of a natural resource inventory for all applications to ensure that regulated environmental features are identified as early in the process as possible. The *Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan* was approved in 2005. A portion of land within the boundary of the Green Line project area, primarily along stream corridors, has been designated as a part of the plan's green infrastructure network, which is categorized as:



- Regulated area
- Evaluation area
- Network gap

Regulated areas are protected when being considered in the development review process and contain environmentally sensitive features such as streams, wetlands, buffers, the 100-year floodplain, and steep slopes.

Evaluation areas include environmentally sensitive features such as interior forests, colonial waterbird nesting sites, and unique habitats that are not currently protected. Network gaps are adjacent to and within the other two areas and are targeted for restoration in order to enhance the overall function and connectivity of the green infrastructure network.

Woodland Conservation

It is the policy of the Prince George's County Government to conserve and protect trees, woodlands, and wildlife habitat by requiring site planning techniques and construction practices which prevent adverse affects on these sensitive environmental features. These efforts are coordinated with the implementation of the Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan and regulations regarding sensitive environmental features in the County Code.

Stream Corridor Assessments

M-NCPPC, in conjunction with the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources (DER), funds stream corridor assessments (SCAs) for all streams within the county, including Oxon Run and Henson Creek. The state Department of Natural Resources created the SCA protocol in order to rapidly assess the general physical condition of a stream system. This data can then be used to identify the location of a variety of common environmental problems within the corridors of these streams. Both M-NCPPC and DER utilize this data in regards to management decisions concerning stream preservation and restoration. Common physical problems identified during a SCA include:

- Erosion sites
- Inadequate stream buffers
- Fish migration blockages
- Exposed or discharging pipes
- Channelized (concrete) stream sections
- Trash dumping sites in or near stream construction



The bridge over the Oxon Run stream provides pedestrian access to the Southern Avenue Metro Station. In the distance the land rises above the stream valley floor.



A view looking down toward Naylor Road and the Metro station; notice the slight elevation provides views of development on the hills in Washington, D.C.



Silver Hill Road runs along the top of a plateau between two watersheds and is relatively flat in the study area. The U.S. Census Bureau reveals its girth stretching across the horizon in Suitland.



A Metrorail train on an embankment near Henson Creek rounds the curve approaching the Branch Avenue station. The pond is an artificial construction to manage stormwater.



Land Use

Land use in the Green Line project corridor reflects the underlying environmental features, as well as a market response to the framework set by the major roadway network, and unique uses brought by institutional landowners, in particular the federal government, but also land use devoted to the operation of the Green Line transit system itself. The map at left and tabulated analysis at right is based on land use classifications established by the Prince George's County Planning Department. Data in the table is for land within the project corridor only. Parcels that straddle the corridor boundary are included if the centroid of the parcel is within the boundary. Roadways are not included as a land use, rather they represent gaps in the data and on the map, the most prominent being the gap between parcels that touch Suitland Parkway. While in most cases this gap presents a good indication of the roadway surface as a land cover, for instance in terms of Branch Avenue or the Beltway, it does not show that most of the Suitland Parkway gap is in fact forested.

Residential uses are a third of the corridor—over 950 acres of the 3,020 acre total, or just under 32 percent. Low density residential in the form of single-family houses (low) on half-acre to two-acre lots is 11.5 percent of the corridor and one third of the residential. Singlefamily houses, detached and duplexes, on smaller lots (low medium) at a density of two to three dwelling units per acre (DU/acre) account for six percent of the total. Townhouses (medium high) make up just over six percent of the total, while another seven percent of the corridor is high density, at 20 DU/acre or more. The existing pattern of residential densities is favorable toward transit ridership, with medium and high density apartments clustered around the Naylor Road Metro Station, or on the east side of Silver Hill Road near Suitland Metro Station, and including a mixed-use residential component near the Branch Avenue Metro Station. The majority of the low-density residential lies to the northeast and southeast of the Branch Avenue Metro Station, in subdivisions next to the Beltway, yet other big lot subdivisions are scattered across the corridor.

The second biggest land use in the corridor is forests at 18 percent. This is a high amount for an urbanized area, with most of the forested area located on the steep ravines and low lands of the Oxon Run and Henson Creek streams, and a main tributary of Henson Creek south of Suitland Parkway and east of Silver Hill Road. Another section of large woods surrounds the Southern Avenue Metro Station. Parks and open space form another seven percent of the corridor and wetlands an additional one percent, bringing the total of lands in forest, parks, or wetlands to 26 percent of the corridor. M-NCPPC owns land in the parks and open space category, including undeveloped woodlands, but facilities such as the Hillcrest Heights Community Center located in the Oxon Run park is shown under the institutional category. The southern part of the Washington National Cemetery contributes to the parks and open space total. Common areas at some townhouse complexes are also shown as open space.

The Suitland Federal Center contributes the majority of land in the institutional classification, which is the third largest land use in the corridor. Other institutional uses include churches, temples, community centers, universities, union headquarters, and utility corridors.

The 340 acres of commercial uses include both retail and office, making up just over 11 percent of the corridor. Commercial uses present the strongest discernible pattern of uses across the corridor, with retail fronting on Branch Avenue from Suitland Parkway south to St. Barnabas Road, and more retail clustered around Silver Hill Road at Branch Avenue and its intersection with Suitland Road. Large commercial uses south of the Branch Avenue Metro Station area are primarily car dealerships, but also include office buildings.

Nearly seven percent of the corridor is classified as bare ground, with much of this land being future development sites, including land adjacent to the Branch Avenue Metro Station, the former Suitland Manor housing site northwest of the corner of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road, and on the high ground south of the Southern Avenue Metro Station.

The transportation category does not include roadways, rather it is primarily WMATA-owned land at the stations, including the station platforms and shelters and large surface parking lots at

LAND USE	ACRES	PERCENT
Total Acres	3019.8	100.0
Residential-ALL	954.8	31.6
– High Density	210.8	7.0
– Medium High	190.7	6.3
– Medium	21.4	0.7
– Low Medium	184.0	6.1
– Low	347.9	11.5
Forest	554.3	18.4
Institutional	504.7	16.7
Commercial	340.3	11.3
Parks and Open Space	210.3	7.0
Bare Ground	207.1	6.9
Transportation	181.8	6.0
Wetlands	26.2	0.9
Rural	16.6	0.5
Mixed Use Residential	14.0	0.5
Industrial	9.2	0.3

Branch Avenue and Naylor Road, and Southern Avenue; and also parking structures at Suitland and Southern Avenue. The fact that six percent of the corridor is devoted to WMATA facilities, primarily parking, shows the emphasis placed on using the Green Line stations as commuter stations. A small amount of land is currently used for mixed-use residential, with two of the three sites located at new development north and south of the Branch Avenue Metro Station. While the space exists for retail in these new buildings all of it is currently vacant.

The corridor has practically no industrial uses. The surrounding neighborhoods are primarily bedroom suburbs, providing relatively easy access to the District of Columbia. However, prior to the construction of the Branch Avenue Metro Station, that area was planned and zoned for industrial use, and the wide roads, large parcels, and limited connections to adjacent neighborhoods are still remnants of that time before the Metro.



Public Facilities

An inventory of public facilities was made to establish the existing base of schools, parks, community centers, and fire and police facilities that serve the project area. **Figure 13** on the facing page shows the locations of these public facilities. The schools inventory shows only facilities owned by the Prince George's County Board of Education; a small number of privately owned schools and academies also serve the area but those are not shown given that the purpose of the inventory is to establish that adequate *public* facilities are currently available as a precursor to analyzing the need for additional facilities if population increases near the station areas. All of the parks and community centers shown are owned and maintained by M-NCPPC.

Police and Fire

Fire stations in and near the project area are shown, but there are no police stations in the project area nor the larger area surrounding it. The District IV Police Station, located at 5135 Indian Head Highway in Oxon Hills, serves all of the project area south of Suitland Parkway. The project area north of Suitland Parkway is part of the District III patrol area, with the patrol headquarters located at 7600 Barlowe Road in Landover. In both cases the patrol is primarily based in patrol cars monitoring large areas, and there are no substations within the project area.

The Silver Hill Fire Station is located at the corner of Old Silver Hill Road and Silver Hill Road in the Silver Hill neighborhood. The station has three engines, one ambulance, and one medic. The 2008 *Approved Public Safety Facilities Master Plan* recommends renovation of the existing fire station in order to better accommodate newer vehicles and equipment. Morningside Fire Station, with two engines, one ambulance, and one rescue squad, is located just outside the project area on the east side of Suitland Road; the facilities master plan calls for replacing the station beyond the 2012–2017 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) period.

Schools

Three public schools are located within the study area and another handful just beyond the project area boundary. The three within the project area are: Overlook Elementary, Skyline Elementary, and William Beanes Elementary. Of these, Skyline Elementary is separated

Prince George's County Public Schools

Name	Address	Enrollment 2011-2012	State Rated Capacity	Capacity	Facility Condition Index	Year Built	CIP 2012- 2017
Overlook Elementary	3298 Curtis Dr.	276	542	51%	Fair	1969, 1993, 1997	None
Skyline Elementary	6311 Randolph Rd.	237	310	76%	Fair	1966	None
Villiam Beanes Elementary	5108 Dianna Dr.	387	584	66%	Fair	1972, 1994	None
Suitland Elementary	4650 Homer Ave.	526	790	67%	Good	1995, 2005	None
Panorama Elementary	2002 Callaway St.	404	766	53%	Good	1966, 2004	None
Drew-Freeman Middle	5100 Silver Hill Rd.	654	1050	62%	Fair	1960	None
G. Gardner Shugart Middle	2000 Callaway St.	418	Not available	Not available	Not available	1965	None
Jessie B. Mason Regional	2700 Iverson St.	Not available	Not available	Not available	Fair	Not available	None
Suitland High	5200 Silver Hill Rd.	2112	2635	80%	Fair/Poor	1951, 1956, 1964, 1982, 1984	New Construction

from the Branch Avenue Metro Station area by environmental features; it is unclear if growth near the Metro station would impact the school. William Beanes Elementary is in the Dianna Woods subdivision in the Suitland community; it is currently at 66 percent capacity with room for growth in the area. Overlook Elementary is in the immediate Naylor Road Metro Station area within a half mile of the station on Curtis Drive. Overlook Elementary seems to be underutilized, currently at 51 percent capacity.

Suitland Elementary is a new school constructed partially on property acquired as part of the Suitland Manor redevelopment project. The school also has capacity for enrollment growth. Panorama Elementary is near the Southern Avenue Metro Station, but separated from the station by steep slopes. Current enrollment is using only half of the capacity.

The most interesting result of the public facilities survey is the finding that Suitland High School, located on Silver Hill Road a few blocks to the east of the project area, is in the CIP for 2012–2017 for construction of a new annex building and the addition of new classrooms. Suitland High School is currently in three buildings,



some of them dating from the 1950s, with additions and renovations in the 1980s, which are themselves approaching 30 years old.

The high school has a large student body with an enrollment over 2,100 for the 2011–2012 school year. Suitland High is an arts magnet school offering gifted arts students a curriculum in its Center for Visual and Performing Arts. The campus also includes the Annabelle Ferguson Auditorium and a vocational center that houses a technical training program. Suitland High is also part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Magnet Program that offers students a rigorous course of study recognized through a UNESCO sponsored organization.

Libraries

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System has one facility serving the project area. The Hillcrest Heights branch is just outside the project area, one block south of Iverson Mall at 2398 Iverson Street. The library was closed for a \$750,000 renovation during the first half of 2012. The renovation brought the facility into compliance with ADA regulations and along with the volumes on the shelves provides 61 public computers, a group study room, a wireless laptop area, new customer service desks, enhanced children and teen areas, and new windows, carpeting, and paint. The next closest libraries in the system are in District Heights or Oxon Hill.



Overlook Elementary School is near the Naylor Road Metro Station.

Parks

Parks are an important amenity for attracting new residents and also for place-making and community identification. M-NCPPC owns and maintains six park facilities that are located all or partially within the project area, and a similar number of parks located on the project's boundaries. In the general project area, park facilities are of three basic types: stream corridor buffers, combined park and school facilities, and neighborhood parks.

At the southwest corner of the project area, the Barnaby Run Stream Valley Park protects the stream corridor on both sides of Wheeler Road. Panorama Elementary School is partially built on park land southeast of the Southern Avenue Metro Station and the project boundary. That parkland protects steep slopes and provides athletic fields for the school.

Oxon Run Stream Valley Park is an important amenity between the Southern Avenue Metro Station and Naylor Road Metro Station. The park is 80 acres in two parts, with an additional 30 acres in the middle where Hillcrest Heights Community Center is located. The community center, built in 1991 and recently renovated, is an important civic place providing meeting rooms, a gymnasium, fitness room, and recreational programming. The outdoor facilities include a tennis court, two playgrounds, and a softball/baseball field. At its northern end Oxon Run Neighborhood Park meets additional open space across from Naylor Road Metro Station that is part of Suitland Parkway owned by the National Park Service. Oxon Run is a tributary of the Potomac River and its watershed covers roughly half of the project area. A multi-use recreation trail is planned to run through Oxon Run Park.

Two undeveloped neighborhood parks are located in Hillcrest Heights west of Iverson Street, one along Branch Avenue and on 23rd Parkway. Marlow Heights Community Center is the other main facility serving the population in this area; its facilities are currently undergoing renovation. There are no park facilities east of Branch Avenue and west of Silver Hill Road in the Silver Hill neighborhood. Much of this area is taken for the federal campuses and cemeteries. Suitland Parkway is a large natural open space; however, pedestrians are not allowed on the parkway itself and no points of access are provided to the surrounding woods.

Part of Henson Creek Steam Valley Park is located west of the Branch Avenue Metro Station. This open space east of Branch Avenue is over 150 acres in size and it provides a buffer along Henson Creek and also protects steep slopes. An extension of the Henson Creek recreation trail is planned from its current terminus south of the Beltway, but significant barriers exist. Although undeveloped parkland, the park does provide passive recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat. It extends north to open space that is part of Suitland Parkway.

William Beanes Community Center is located within the elementary school of the same name, sharing its gymnasium and offering recreational programs to the Suitland community. M-NCPPC also owns a small, 0.7 acre undeveloped park near Suitland Elementary School just outside the project area north of Suitland Road.



Oxon Run Neighborhood Park is located on the edge of the Hillcrest Heights Neighborhood.



Hillcrest Heights Community Center is an important community asset with a gymnasium, meeting rooms, and outdoor playing fields.



S N S

Transportation

Major Roadways and Street Network

The project area is framed by MD 4 to the north, Wheeler Road to the south, Southern Avenue to the west, and the Capital Beltway to the east. This large area of suburban development has three major freeways and expressways leading to the District of Columbia: Suitland Parkway, Branch Avenue (MD 5), and Pennsylvania Avenue (MD 4). But Silver Hill Road (MD 458) is the only arterial connecting between MD 4, Suitland Parkway, and MD 5 between Southern Avenue and the Beltway. The Capital Beltway (I-95/495) is a major transportation resource providing access to the whole Washington metropolitan area.

Suitland Parkway is owned and maintained by the National Park Service and classified by the county as a freeway, it primarily serves trips passing through the area, with access points only at Naylor Road, Branch Avenue, Silver Hill Road, and Suitland Road. Indeed, given this limited access and its position between MD 4 and MD 5, Suitland Parkway is a significant barrier to a connected network of local roads. Subdivisions north and south of the parkway are served by a maze of streets, many leading to dead ends, which forces traffic out onto the main highways and hinders pedestrian connections.

The right-of-way of Southern Avenue lies completely within the District of Columbia. This major route is discontinuous between Naylor Road (MD 637) and Branch Avenue, forcing traffic into Prince George's County and the congested area around the Naylor Road Metro Station. Suitland Road (MD 218) is classified as a collector between Southern Avenue and Silver Hill Road (MD 458), but an arterial east of Silver Hill Road. Twenty-third Parkway is a collector between the Southern Avenue Metro Station and Silver Hill Road. Auth Road and Auth Way are collectors in the immediate vicinity of the Branch Avenue Metro Station and the Capital Beltway.

The system of residential streets serving the majority of the Green Line project area is haphazard and disconnected. The Hillcrest Heights neighborhood north of 23rd Parkway has the most connected system of streets. **Roadway Network Functional Classification and Connectivity** Within the project area, there are only 13 roadways that are functionally classified as collector level or higher facilities based on the 2009 *Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation*, as follows:

Major Roadways	Roadway Classification			
23rd Parkway	Collector			
Auth Place	Collector			
Auth Road	Collector			
Auth Way	Collector			
Branch Avenue	Arterial north of St. Barnabas Road and expressway south of St. Barnabas Road			
Iverson Street	Collector			
Naylor Road	Arterial			
Silver Hill Road	Arterial			
Southern Avenue	Minor arterial (DDOT) or collector			
Suitland Parkway	Freeway			
Suitland Road	Collector north of Silver Hill Road and arterial south of Silver Hill Road			
Suitland Parkway	Freeway			
St. Barnabas Road	Arterial			
Wheeler Road	Collector			

The areas surrounding the four Metro stations are heavily reliant on only a handful of roadways to facilitate traffic flow within the area. A count of collector and higher level roadways within a half mile of each station yields the following result:

- Southern Avenue Metro Station has four roads, three of which are within the District of Columbia.
- Naylor Road has four roads.
- Suitland has three roads.
- Branch Avenue has three roads.

As a result, these station area roadways are wide with high traffic volumes and do not provide welcoming or efficient environments

for bus transit service, pedestrians, or bicyclists. This sparse road network is challenged to provide the infrastructure typically required to support a successful transit-oriented development.

Ideally, arterial roadways should be spaced at no more than one-half mile intervals to ensure efficient traffic flow, multiple and direct routes to destinations, and ease of use for all modes, including transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Collector roadways can be spaced at one-quarter mile, or one-eighth mile intervals to ensure appropriate network connectivity and appropriate access to destinations. If arterials and collectors were spaced at these recommended distances to create a grid of streets, each of the stations would have up to ten of these classified roadways within its half-mile area, rather than the three or four they currently have.

Grid roadway networks with collector and arterial spacing, disperse traffic onto many roadways, rather than concentrating traffic on just a few roadways. The closer spacing of roadways allows for more compact roadways with fewer lanes and lower traffic volumes. Grid roadway networks are, therefore, typically more supportive to pedestrians and bicyclists and also transit-friendly, as they allow transit vehicles to avoid backtracking and offer users direct access to transit stops.

Planned Roadway Projects

The 2009 Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (MPOT) incorporated the street, road, and highway recommendations for this part of Prince George's County made by the 2000 Heights and Vicinity Master Plan. The principal recommendations relevant to the primary study area are the continuation of 23rd Parkway as a four-lane collector from the District of Columbia line to St Barnabas Road (MD 414), and continuation of Iverson Street as a four-lane collector in a 100-foot right-of-way from Branch Avenue (MD 5) to Owens Road.

A major project of the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), also included in the Countywide Master Plan of Transportation, is the MD 5 Branch Avenue Metro Access, Phase Two project, which is an approved, but unfunded project to create a new dedicated, grade separated access road from the Capital Beltway and Branch Avenue directly into the Branch Avenue Metro Station (shown in the turquoise blue in the graphic at right). The project proposes to depress northbound Branch Avenue and construct an overpass that will carry the southbound turn lanes over Branch Avenue to a new four-lane divided access road. The SHA expects this project to improve access and reduce traffic on Auth Way and Auth Road.

Following designation in 2010 of Branch Avenue Metro Station and Naylor Road Metro Station areas as priority TOD sites by Governor Martin O'Malley, the SHA funded a \$650,000 study of "complete street" improvements in the immediate vicinity of the Naylor Road Metro Station. This study, currently under way, will create preliminary engineering concepts for improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Naylor Road and Branch Avenue in keeping with the recommendations of the 2008 Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan.



The planned MD 5 Branch Avenue Metro Access project would create a new grade-separated overpass for southbound traffic on Branch Avenue going to the station.
Traffic Analysis Traffic Levels

Traffic flow in the study area is generally good, but directional by time of day. The existing traffic volumes are oriented to Washington, D.C., with heavy AM volumes and heavy PM volumes out of downtown. While there may be pockets of congestion at certain intersections and at certain times of the day, the overall system-wide congestion levels are not high. Off-peak direction travel is generally uncongested.

Initial screening identified which locations may have traffic issues that need further attention. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes were gathered for project area roadways from a variety of sources. The majority of these traffic counts are confined to the major roadways in the area, although some collector roadways also have counts.

Within the Beltway and the Developed Tier, Prince George's County's adopted LOS standard is "E." Three locations on Branch Avenue have a LOS of "E," these segments are northbound Branch Avenue between Colebrooke Drive and Naylor Road; Branch Avenue between Silver Hill Road and St. Barnabas Road; and Branch Avenue between Auth Way and Auth Road. While these counts may indicate the roadway is nearing capacity, they are still within the adopted LOS of "E."

Of the 28 locations with counts, four have a level of service (LOS) rating of "F." These are: Branch Avenue between Southern Avenue and Suitland Parkway; Southern Avenue from 23rd Parkway and the Suitland Parkway overpass; Suitland Road west of Silver Hill Road; and Wheeler Road east of Southern Avenue.

Further analysis of the congestion levels will be made during the analysis phase to more precisely identify problem areas and possible solutions. This additional analysis will confirm the initial findings presented here, and will evaluate peak hour conditions that arise from the heavily directional traffic flow into and out of the District.

Latest Traffic Counts and Roadway Capacity

Road	Location	No. of Lanes	Street Class	Capacity	AADT	Year	Count Source	LOS	AADT/ Capacity
23rd Pkwy	South of Southern Ave	4	COL	31,870	8,030	2009	DPW&T	В	25%
Auth Pl	South of Auth Way	2	COL	15,930	4,920	2011	DPW&T	В	31%
Auth Rd	East of Auth PI	4	COL	31,870	13,800	2011	DPW&T	В	43%
Auth Way	West of Auth PI	2	COL	15,930	9,790	2011	DPW&T	С	61%
Auth Way	East of Auth PI	4	COL	31,780	11,636	2009	DPW&T	В	37%
Branch Ave	Southern Ave to Suitland Pkwy	2	ART	26,920	28,381	2011	MDOT	F	105%
Branch Ave NB	Naylor to Colebrooke Dr	2	ART	26,920	26,290	2011	MDOT	Е	98%
Branch Ave SB	Naylor to Colebrooke Dr	3	ART	40,380	26,290	2011	MDOT	С	65%
Branch Ave	Silver Hill Rd to St. Barnabas	4	ART	53,850	51,341	2011	MDOT	Е	95%
Branch Ave	Auth Way to Auth Rd	6	EXP	102,200	69,351	2011	MDOT	D	68%
verson St	West of 28th Ave	4	COL	31,870	14,584	2011	DPW&T	С	46%
Naylor Rd	Oxon Run Dr to Branch Ave	2	ART	26,920	18,470	2011	MDOT	D	69%
Old Silver Hill Rd	Branch Ave to Silver Hill Rd	2	LOCAL	15,930	10,501	2011	MDOT	D	66%
Oxon Run Dr	West of Naylor Rd	2	LOCAL	15,930	5,872	2011	DPW&T	В	37%
Silver Hill Rd	St. Barnabas Rd. to Suitland Pkwy	6	ART	80,770	41,062	2011	MDOT	С	51%
Silver Hill Rd	Suitland Pkwy. to Suitland Rd	6	ART	80,770	46,700	2011	MDOT	С	58%
Silver Hill Rd	Suitland Rd. to Pennsylvania Ave	6	ART	80,770	37,492	2011	MDOT	С	46%
Southern Ave	Wheeler Rd. to 23rd Pkwy	4	COL	31,870	19,800	2009	DDOT	С	62%
Southern Ave	23rd Pkwy. to Suitland Pkwy	2	COL	15,930	17,900	2009	DDOT	F	112%
Southern Ave	Suitland Pkwy. to Naylor Rd	4	COL	31,870	10,500	2009	DDOT	В	33%
St. Barnabas Rd	Branch Ave. to Silver Hill Rd	4	ART	53,850	31,361	2011	MDOT	С	58%
Suitland Pkwy	District line to Branch Ave	4	FWY	91,100	46,709	2004	NPS	С	51%
Suitland Pkwy	Branch Ave. to Silver Hill Rd	4	FWY	91,100	34,126	2004	NPS	В	37%
Suitland Pkwy	Silver Hill Rd. to Suitland Rd	4	FWY	91,100	31,795	2004	NPS	В	35%
Suitland Rd	Southern Ave. to Shadyside Ave	2	COL	15,930	7,620	2011	MDOT	С	48%
Suitland Rd	Shadyside Ave. to Silver Hill Rd	2	COL	15,930	17,840	2011	DPW&T	F	112%
Suitland Rd	East of Silver Hill Rd	2	ART	26,920	16,926	2009	DPW&T	С	63%
Wheeler Rd	East of Southern Ave	2	COL	15,930	16,889	2009	DPW&T	F	106%

Preliminary planning-level screening evaluation of existing traffic operating conditions compared the existing AADTs to county defined daily service volume thresholds, which are based on procedures used by the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) and default traffic and roadway parameters.

Metrorail

Initiation of the Green Line

The Green Line was one of the original lines planned by WMATA in the 1960s. The line took decades to plan and construct with many social, political, environmental, funding, and legal challenges slowing implementation through the 1970s and 1980s. The first extension of the Southern Green Line from L'Enfant Plaza to Anacostia opened in December 1991, but disagreement over the alignment into Prince George's County continued to delay further extension. One proposed alignment followed Suitland Parkway to the general area where Branch Avenue meets the Capital Beltway, while a competing alignment would have followed Wheeler Road south to Rosecroft Raceway. After many years of controversy, construction of the Suitland Parkway to Branch Avenue alignment began in 1995. The extension added a station at Congress Heights in the District and four stations in Prince George's County at Southern Avenue, Naylor Road, Suitland, and Branch Avenue. The five new stations opened on January 13, 2001.

Ridership

Ridership of the Green Line in the project area has grown at a compounded annual growth rate of 2.8 percent, substantially higher than the 1.7 percent growth rate for the entire Metrorail system during the same time period. Ridership levels peaked in 2008, when 23,095 riders boarded on the four stations. Since that time, however, ridership has fallen five percent; far greater than the one percent decline in the overall Metrorail ridership during that period.

Ridership on the Green Line in the study area is heavily peakoriented, with major flows into Washington, D.C., in the morning and from Washington, D.C., in the evening. The rail line itself has some capacity for expanded inbound peak hour ridership at current operations. Moreover, the option exists to increase train lengths, and possibly frequency, to provide greater capacity.

Off-peak direction travel serves some major employment centers in the study area, most notably the Suitland Federal Center, but by and large, trains are running full into Washington, D.C., and empty on the return. A more efficient service would be possible if additional work destinations existed near the four rail stations.

Future Service Planning

No expansions of the Green Line are under consideration at this point, but two fixed guideway projects are at different stages of development. One potential project would provide a fixed guideway extension south from the Branch Avenue station, using bus rapid transit or light rail transit technologies. This extension would connect the Green Line to Joint Base Andrews and locations further south. The other notable project is the Purple Line light rail transit (LRT), which will provide direct cross-county travel between Prince George's County and Montgomery County to supplement existing Metrorail service, which requires traveling through Washington, D.C., as part of travel between the two counties. The initial phases of this project will not go through the project area, but later phases are being studied that would provide connections between New Carrollton and National Harbor. The Countywide Master Plan of Transportation shows a hypothetical alignment through the project area connecting to the Suitland station, but no study of alignment options has been done, and the Purple Line could also potentially connect through the Branch Avenue Metro Station. The addition of more fixed guideway transit could transform existing service at Branch Avenue Metro Station or Suitland Metro Station in the study area, depending upon the technology and routing selected.

Ridership for the Four Project Area Metro Stations Between 2001–2011



Station Access

Throughout the project area, the primary mode of access to the stations is via private automobile with 59 percent of the Metrorail riders for all four stations accessing the station by park and ride, drop off "kiss and ride," or carpooling. While this number is a majority it is not particularly high for what is functionally a commuter rail operating in a suburban setting. Large numbers of riders also ride Metrobus and other buses to the stations and, even with a very difficult pedestrian environment, one in seven riders (14 percent) walks to a station.

Mode of Accessing Project Area Stations All Four Stations

Mode of Access	Percentage of users
Automobile	59
Bus	27
Pedestrian	14

Source: WMATA 2007 Survey

The transportation network in the project area is largely focused on users from outside the project area. Of those users parking at the stations, the majority (57 percent) are coming from locations five or more miles away from the stations. Nearly one-third of parking customers are driving from 5 to 10 miles to access a station and an additional quarter are driving from 10 to 25 miles, which is a considerable distance, indicating both the distances that Metrorail riders are driving to get to the Green Line in Prince George's County and also the traffic congestion and parking costs in downtown Washington, D.C., that make a transfer to Metrorail worth the time and cost of transferring between modes.

Parking

The Southern Green Line Stations are designed to function as commuter rail stations, which encourage access via private automobile and generate revenues to WMATA for parking. Given this conceptual set up, it is necessary to provide substantial parking resources at the four stations and combined they provide a total of 8,079 parking spaces for transit users, including 7,310 all-day park and ride spaces. Among the project area's four stations, Naylor

Origin of Parking Customers All Four Stations

Distance	Percentage
0–1/4 Mile	0.5
1/4–1/2 Mile	1.5
1/2–1 Mile	5.0
1–3 Miles	22.8
3–5 Miles	13.5
5–10 Miles	31.8
10-25 Miles	22.5
25–50 Miles	2.4
50–100 Miles	0.0

Source: WMATA/M-NCPPC 2011

Road, with its 414 total spaces, has the smallest amount of parking. Southern Avenue and Suitland both have in excess of 2,000 spaces, and Branch Avenue station has in excess of 3,000 spaces.

All station lots are being used to capacity, at least for the all-day spaces. On the other hand, the dedicated high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lots at Southern, Suitland, and Branch Avenue Metro Stations are practically empty, and many of the reserved spaces are unused. By reallocating the spaces among users, and eliminating the dedicated HOV lots, additional general parking spaces could be provided at no additional cost. In addition to vehicular parking, the four stations also provide varying amounts of bike racks and lockers for bike-and-ride users.

Riders per Parking Space

Analysis of mode of access data compared to existing parking supply yielded some straightforward as well as surprising results. In terms of gross number of boardings, the Branch Avenue Metro Station has the biggest parking supply and also the largest number of riders. However, after that result things become more complicated. Suitland Metro Station has the second highest

Metrorail Riders per Station Parking Space

Station	Avg. Daily Riders 2011	Total Parking Spaces	Riders/ Space
Southern Avenue	5,776	2,226	2.6
Naylor Road	3,047	414	7.4
Suitland	6,417	2,065	3.1
Branch Avenue	6,660	3,374	2.0

Source: WMATA/M-NCPPC 2011

ridership with 6,417 boardings—only 243 fewer than Branch Avenue Metro Station—but with 1,309 fewer parking spaces; and in fact Southern Avenue Metro Station has the second highest number of parking spaces, but comes in a distant third in ridership.

Perhaps most surprising is the ridership for Naylor Road Metro Station, which is nearly half (46 percent) of that for Branch Avenue, but with only an eighth as many parking spaces. A calculation of riders per parking space shows that Naylor Road is generating 7.4 Metrorail riders per parking space, while Branch Avenue is generating just 2.0 riders per parking space. The lower rider per space at Branch Avenue and Southern Avenue indicated that land use context is an important factor in generating riders without providing a parking space. The Naylor Road station is better positioned in terms of land use to encourage walking to the station, despite the fact that with only 414 parking spaces the station has a smaller footprint, unlike Branch Avenue, which is currently surrounded by a large parking lot. The mode of access analysis is provided in more detail for each station in later chapters of this report.



Bus System Bus Facilities and Service

In addition to Metrorail service, the corridor is well-served by 32 public bus routes that connect with the four Green Line stations, and the stations also act as bus hub transfer points between routes. The majority of these routes are operated by WMATA; Prince George's County also operates its "The Bus" on five of the routes. In addition, one commuter route is operated by the Maryland Transit Administration. Additional private services, notably the Suitland Federal Center Shuttle, also provide connections.

All four of the Southern Green Line Metro stations offer plenty of space for bus circulation, bus shelters, and bus layovers. At Southern Avenue, Suitland, and Branch Avenue Metro Stations, more bus bay capacity is available than is currently needed or projected for any future need. Only the Naylor Road Metro Station has a good balance between bus bay capacity and projected demand.

Current bus expansion plans, as outlined in the county's Transit Service and Operations Plan, are modest. Southern Avenue Metro Station anticipates one new route that will connect to National Harbor; Suitland anticipates one new route that will connect to Largo Town Center; and the Branch Avenue Metro Station anticipates four new routes and increased frequency on a fifth route.

Bus Priority Corridors

In 2011, WMATA released the *Priority Corridor Network Plan*, a major service redesign focused on filling the gaps in the Metrorail Network. The plan includes six Metrobus Priority Corridors that run through the study area:

- Anacostia, serving the Southern Avenue Metro Station.
- Eastover, serving the Southern Avenue and Suitland Metro Stations.
- Wisconsin, serving the Southern Avenue and Naylor Road Metro Stations.
- Pennsylvania, serving the Naylor Road Metro Station.
- National, serving the Branch Avenue Metro Station.
- Harbor, also serving the Branch Avenue Metro Station.

According to the 2011 *Priority Corridor Network Plan*, the plan will include 24 corridors across the region and will impact half of all bus riders in the current Metrobus system. It is intended to be "implemented in stages, with immediate payoff."

The goal of Metrobus Priority Corridor Network is to improve bus service travel times, reliability, capacity, productivity and system access. According to the plan, bus services along these corridors will be made faster and more comfortable through the implementation of:

- Running way treatments such as removing on-street parking during peak service hours; providing signal priority to transit vehicles; providing left-hand turn lanes; and providing bus-only lanes or queue jumpers.
- Passenger facility amenities to provide passengers with a seamless transit system; increased mobility; improved access and circulation; and reliable service and good information.
- Intelligent transportation system (ITS) technology to enhance communications; provide better scheduling and real-time traveler information; and provide transit signal priority.
- New buses with low floors and hybrid technology.
- Special branding to indicate faster service on selected bus routes.
- Bus maintenance and storage garages to house and maintain the increased fleet of buses.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the study area are inadequate. While there are some pedestrian walkways within and around the station areas, significant shortcomings in the pedestrian network prevail throughout the area. Incomplete or inadequate sidewalks, barriers (fencing, transformer boxes), convoluted routing, and dangerous pedestrian/vehicular crossings are consistent factors impeding pedestrian access to all four station areas. Moreover, informal pathways and holes in fencing are clear indicators that, out of necessity, pedestrians are finding alternative access routes through the area in spite of these shortcomings.

Gaps in the sidewalk network exist along the project area's roadways. Many of the sidewalks that do exist are of substandard

width, and nearly all are located at the immediate back of curb, which does not foster a friendly or comfortable walking environment.

In addition, many sidewalks in the project area do not comply with proposed ADA guidelines requiring that sidewalks have a minimum width of four feet along their entire length, with five feet desirable. Many of the sidewalks in the project area are four feet wide for their entire length, with some even three feet wide. Further, a six-foot width is preferred for sidewalks that are placed at the back of the curb.

Dedicated bicycle facilities are even more limited in the project area. There are currently no off-road paths designed for bicycle use in the project area, nor are there any marked bicycle lanes on streets. This lack of facilities is reflected in the dearth of any riders counted in the Metro mode of access survey from 2007, and yet bicycles are seen locked to racks at the stations. The county's Master Plan of Transportation envisions a robust network of on-road and off-road facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists in the future. Included in the plan are:

- Bike lanes—on-road dedicated one-way bicycle facilities. Roads are signed and marked for bicycle use.
- Hard surface trails—recreational trails and other multiuse bidirectional trails.
- Sidepaths and multiuse pathways—off-road bidirectional multiuse facilities adjacent to major roads.

In summary, the non-motorized network is inadequate. Substantial improvements are needed in all areas to encourage greater use of these modes. Details about pedestrian facilities and specific pedestrian issues are included in the detailed description given for each station area.



Demographics

Demographic Profile for the Green Line Project Area

Block data from the 2010 Decennial Census shows the population within the Green Line project area to be 24,585 as of April 1, 2010. Between 2000 and 2010 the total population in the area grew four percent (918 people). This was less growth than witnessed in the county during the same period (eight percent). In terms of race, the project area was less diverse than the county. Ninety percent of the residents were Black, compared to 64 percent countywide. The percentage of Hispanics in the study area (four percent) was smaller compared to the percentage of Hispanics in the county (15 percent). Racial composition changed little in the corridor between 2000 and 2010, with the exception of the Branch Avenue Metro Station area, which saw a drop in the white population from 22 percent to

2000				Half Mil	e Radius	
	County	Green Line	Southern Ave	Naylor Road	Suitland	Branch Avenue
			2000 Ce	nsus (Block D	ata)1	
Total Population	801,515	23,667	2,954	5,779	4,056	1,015
Housing Units	302,378	10,678	1,204	2,779	1,967	357
Vacant Units	15,768	931	64	157	388	12
Vacancy Rate	5%	9%	5%	6%	20%	3%
Average Household Size	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.4	3.1
White	27%	6%	2%	2%	4%	22%
Black	63%	90%	96%	94%	92%	71%
Native American	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	4%	1%	0%	1%	1%	6%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Some Other Race	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Two Or More Races	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Hispanic	7%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
		2000	Census (Bloc	k Data Provid	ed by Esri) ²	
Median Household Income	\$55,222	\$45,028	\$32,299	\$35,785	\$43,225	\$53,141
Per Capita Income	\$23,360	\$21,752	\$16,206	\$20,139	\$19,254	\$25,261
Median Home Value	\$143,692	\$127,215	\$118,818	\$124,326	\$116,071	\$147,500
Unemployment	4%	6%	7%	6%	8%	6%
High School Diploma or Higher	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Professional Degree	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Median Age	33.2	33.4	29.0	33.3	30.5	41.3
¹ Note: Excludes the District of Colu at Southern Avenue and Navlor Ro	mbia; significan ad ² Note: Inc	t changes in g ludes the Dist	eography of ce rict of Columbia	nsus blocks bet	ween 2000 and	2010



10 percent. The Hispanic population grew from one percent in 2000 to four percent in 2010. The most notable growth of the Hispanic population was around the Suitland Metro Station where the population grew from two percent to eight percent. In 2010, there were 11,231 housing units, of which 923 were vacant. The dwelling unit vacancy rate in the study area (eight percent) is comparable to the Prince George's County's vacancy rate (seven percent). Vacancy in the corridor is highest within a half-mile radius of the Branch Avenue Metro Station, reflecting both the recent construction of new housing and the weak market for condominiums. A drop in the number of vacant units at Suitland from 388 in 2000 to 133 in 2010, is the result of the demolition of the Suitland Manor housing project. The study area showed smaller growth in housing units (five percent) than the county (nine percent) between 2000 and 2010. Residential vacancy rates in the study area; however, declined from nine percent to eight percent during this period, while they increased in the county from five percent to seven percent.

Esri's 2010 demographic estimates, based on 2000 Census data, show that areas within the Green Line corridor (especially around Southern Avenue, Naylor Road, and Suitland Metro Stations) are falling slightly behind the county economically. The project area's estimated median household income (\$54,960), per capita income (\$28,562), median home value (\$237,232), and percentage of persons with a professional degree or higher (six percent) were all below the county estimates. Also, the unemployment rate in the study area (13 percent) was higher than the county.

Growth Forecast for the Green Line Corridor

The most recent forecasts of growth for Prince George's County are contained in the Round 8.0 Cooperative Forecasts, prepared by the Prince George's County Planning Department in conjunction with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Forecasts are prepared at the COG transportation analysis zone

2010			Half Mile Radius			
	County	Green Line	Southern Ave	Naylor Road	Suitland	Branch Ave
				2010 Census ((Block Data) ¹	
Total Population	863,420	24,585	2,430	3,875	4,430	1,592
Housing Units	328,182	11,231	1,013	2,017	1,939	910
Vacant Units	24140	923	60	116	133	246
Vacancy Rate	7%	8%	6%	6%	7%	27%
Average Household Size	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.9
White	19%	4%	2%	3%	3%	10%
Black	64%	90%	95%	93%	89%	80%
Native American	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Asian	4%	1%	0%	1%	0%	4%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Some Other Race	9%	2%	1%	1%	5%	4%
Two Or More Races	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Hispanic	15%	4%	2%	3%	8%	4%
		2010	Esri Estimates	s (Based on 20	00 Census) ²	
Median Household Income	\$68,575	\$54,960	\$38,524	\$48,209	\$53,383	\$64,892
Per Capita Income	\$28,562	\$26,065	\$17,501	\$25,456	\$23,776	\$30,005
Median Home Value	\$270,668	\$237,232	\$231,648	\$236,896	\$218,889	\$274,839
Unemployment	9.4%	12.5%	16.4%	13.2%	14.0%	11.8%
High School Diploma or Higher	86.9%	87.9%	82.1%	88.6%	84.9%	87.4%
Professional Degree	12.7%	5.9%	3.2%	5.9%	7.5%	8.6%
Median Age	35	35.7	29.5	33.5	30.9	41.3
Note: Excludes the District of Colu Note: Includes the District of Colu	mbia (see Appei mbia	ndix A1 for tot	als including th	ne District of Co	lumbia)	

(TAZ) level, a geographic unit of analysis (see map on next page). These forecasts cover the time period from 2005 to 2040. Prepared in 2009, they are anticipated to be superseded by a Round 8.1 of Cooperative Forecasts in the fall of 2011. Round 8.1 will account for the recent release of the 2010 Decennial Census, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Between 2010 and 2020, growth within the Green Line project corridor is projected as follows: population 1.2 percent; dwelling units 1.8 percent; households 1.9 percent; employment 3.3 percent. The projected rate of growth within the Green Line corridor is currently lower than growth projected for the county; however, a goal of the project will be to substantially increase the population within walking distance of the four stations, and the plan recommendations will be a factor in future forecasts

Business Establishments

The U.S. Census Bureau provides annual detailed geographic, industry, and other information for business establishments down to the zip code level. The Zip Code Business Patterns (CBP)

GROWTH FORECAST FOR THE GREEN LINE CORRIDOR

	Population	Dwelling Units	Households	Employment
2015	32,017	13,741	12,811	14,879
2020	31,773	13,827	12,843	15,165
2025	31,536	13,969	12,844	15,424
2030	31,428	14,008	12,898	16,042
2035	31,347	14,078	12,939	16,766
2040	31,467	14,105	13,019	19,173

Source: Prince George's County Planning Department, Research Section, Round 8.0 Cooperative Forecast

PROJECTED GROWTH 2010 TO 2020

	Population	Dwelling Units	Households	Employment
Green Line	1.2%	1.8%	1.9%	3.3%
County	5.9%	7.3%	8.2%	7.0%

Source: Prince George's County Planning Department, Research Section, Round 8.0 Cooperative Forecast



covers all industries except crop and animal production; rail transportation; National Postal Service; pension, health, welfare, and vacation funds; trusts, estates, and agency accounts; private households; and public administration. The CBP also excludes most government employees. U.S. Census Bureau data show that as of 2008, there were a total of 12,090 jobs in the zip codes of Suitland (20746) and Temple Hills (20748). Of these jobs, 6,529 were in Temple Hills and 5,561 were in Suitland.

There were 914 business establishments in these zip codes. Sixty-one percent were in Temple Hills. Retail trade accounted for the largest share of business establishments in both zip codes (20 percent). Establishments specializing in other services (which may include personal, automotive, consultative services, etc.) and accommodation/food services comprised 18 and 10 percent of businesses in Suitland and Temple Hills.

BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS BY INDUSTRY FOR SUITLAND AND TEMPLE HILLS MD (2008)

Industries (excludes public administration)	Business Establishments	%
Total for all sectors	914	100.0%
Construction	49	5.4%
Manufacturing	15	1.6%
Wholesale trade	20	2.2%
Retail trade	191	20.9%
Transportation and warehousing	14	1.5%
Information	15	1.6%
Finance and insurance	55	6.0%
Real estate and rental and leasing	57	6.2%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	71	7.8%
Management of companies and enterprises	6	0.7%
Administrative, support, and waste management	47	5.1%
Educational services	18	2.0%
Health care and social assistance	93	10.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	6	0.7%
Accommodation and food services	91	10.0%
Other services (except public administration)	165	18.1%
Industries not classified	1	0.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2008¹ The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments.



Commercial Real Estate Market

According to data from CoStar, there is approximately 2.4 million square feet of commercial space within the Green Line project area. Statistics for commercial properties may not include small independent establishments under 20,000 square feet and publiclyowned or leased space. The average age for commercial buildings in the study area is 45 years, which is slightly older than the average age for those in the county (42 years). Retail development makes up 62 percent of this commercial space as well as a majority of the commercial establishments (79 percent) within the study area. Office space in the study area accounts for 21 percent of available commercial space.

There is approximately 141,866 square feet of vacant commercial space available within the corridor. The project area's total commercial vacancy rate (6 percent) is lower than the county's total commercial vacancy rate (11 percent). Still, retail vacancy in the study area (also 6 percent) is comparable to the county's rate.

GREEN LINE CORRIDOR

Building Type	Existing Buildings	Average Building Age(Years)	Rentable Building Area	Percent Total Commercial SF	Total Vacant Available SF	Vacancy Rate
Flex	1	81	2,403	0.1%	-	0.0%
Industrial	9	30	409,432	16.5%	-	0.0%
Office	21	50	518,700	20.9%	50,796	9.8%
Retail	116	45	1,550,070	62.5%	91,070	5.9%
Total	147	45	2,480,605	100.0%	141,866	5 7%

Source: CoStar (accessed May 2011)

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Building Type	Existing Buildings	Average Building Age(Years)	Rentable Building Area	Percent Total Commercia I SF	Total Vacant Available SF	Vacancy Rate
Flex	280	27	11,395,121	8.7%	2,252,123	19.8%
Industrial	1,497	38	52,190,609	39.8%	5,222,211	10.0%
Office	1,085	44	26,472,371	20.2%	4,773,721	18.0%
Retail	2,757	44	41,207,127	31.4%	2,608,366	6.3%
Total	5,619	42	131,265,228	100.0%	14,856,421	11.3%

Source: CoStar (accessed May 2011)



Shopping centers

There are seven shopping centers providing over 1.2 million square feet of retail space within the project area. Iverson Mall has fortytwo percent of retail space at shopping centers in the study area. Another 36 percent is at Marlow Heights Shopping Center. The Suitland Metro Station area has the most shopping centers (Silver Hill Shopping Center, Silver Hill Station, and Suitland Shopping Center) within a half-mile radius of the station totaling 113,353 square feet. The Naylor Road Metro Station has only one shopping center within a half-mile radius (Branch Metro Plaza). There are no shopping centers within a half-mile radius of the Southern Avenue or the Branch Avenue Metro Stations.

Home sales

There were 106 homes sold in the project area from January to May 2011 in the zip codes of Suitland and Temple Hills. Ninetynine percent of these sales were existing; only one percent of these sales were for new construction. A majority (53 percent) of homes sold in both zip codes were real estate owned (REO) properties. REO properties are often produced as a result of an unsuccessful foreclosure sale, in which a buyer for the property cannot be found, and so the mortgage lender repossesses the property to sell separately.

SUITLAND AND TEMPLE HILLS YTD HOME SALES (AS OF MAY 2011)

Sale Type	Suitland	Temple Hills	Total
Existing			
Foreclosure	3	7	10
Regular Resale	12	25	37
REO Sale	23	34	57
New Sale	-	2	2
Total	38	68	-

Source: Hanley Wood, Custom Report, Report Date: 5/13/2011

SUITLAND AND TEMPLE HILLS YTD MEDIAN HOME SALE PRICE (AS OF MAY 2011)

Sale Type	Suitland	Temple Hills	County
Existing	\$115,000	\$144,000	\$168,813
Foreclosure	\$131,500	\$267,000	\$210,345
Regular Resale	\$167,450	\$178,296	\$208,000
REO Sale	\$94,000	\$73,250	\$118,050
New Sale	n/a	\$424,250	\$391,838

Source: Hanley Wood, Custom Report, Report Date: 5/13/2011

SUITLAND AND TEMPLE HILLS HOME SALES BY PROPERTY TYPE (AS OF MAY 2011)

Property Type	Suitland/ Temple Hills	%	County	%
Attached	26	25%	459	23%
Townhouse	6	6%	236	12%
Condominium	20	19%	223	11%
Single Family	80	75%	1,539	76%
Other	-	-	30	1%
Total	106	100%	2,028	100%

Source: Hanley Wood, Custom Report, Report Date: 5/13/2011

Overall, existing homes in both zip codes sold at about \$25,000 less than existing homes in the county. On average, homes in Suitland (portion of study area east of MD 5), sold at prices lower than those in the Temple Hills zip code.

Single-family homes made up approximately 75 percent of the homes sold in both zip codes in 2011. This figure is comparable to the county. The share of homes sales in these zip codes that were condominiums (19 percent), was slightly higher than it was for the county (11 percent).

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Market and Economic Conditions

Recent Market Studies for the Branch Avenue Area

Real estate market analysis consulting firms Robert Charles Lesser and Company (RCLCO) and Green Door Advisors were retained by the Prince George's County Planning Department to provide market and economic development analysis for the Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan, a planning process that addresses the same general market area as the Green Line project. This analysis began in July of 2010 and a draft version of their final report was submitted in June of 2011.

Major findings and recommendations of this market analysis

- An imbalance exists between the amount of retail space in the Central Branch Avenue corridor and other land uses that generate demand for retail.
- There is an oversupply of retail square footage in the sector areas compared to the number of households and daytime employees.
- This oversupply of retail space has driven down the performance of existing retail centers, lowered property values, created challenges in tenanting, and limited the ability of owners to invest in upgrading facilities.
- A key recommendation, therefore, is the need to reduce the total amount of retail square feet and upgrade and concentrate the remaining retail space into distinct retail nodes.
- Other focus areas and intersections not designated as retail nodes should be redeveloped with new land uses including residential, medical office, production, distribution, and repair, as well as arts or civic-oriented uses.

Another key recommendation is to maximize opportunities to create strategic partnerships between local commercial landowners, businesses, Joint Base Andrews, and Southern Maryland Hospital Center. Creating strategic partnerships with these anchor institutions can bring additional economic activity into the area, increase employment, generate demand for both single-family and higher-density residential, and create opportunities for joint development projects at Metro stations. These opportunities would transform some of the study focus areas into strong employment or residential nodes. Facilitating these partnerships and identifying the specific land use opportunities that may come from these partnerships is a major component of the study recommendations. However, the study also states that the foundation of any successful strategy will rest upon the existing and new households in the submarket areas.

As a follow up to the Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan approved in 2008, the Prince George's County Planning Department commissioned a market feasibility study of the recommendations for the Naylor Road Metro Station area. The transformation envisioned in the plan is ambitious, with Naylor Road redeveloped to a mixed-use TOD employment center anchored by significant new office development. Therefore, in order to test the potential for this change, a team of real estate market consultants led by HR&A studied the prospects for this type of new development, specifically looking for a market niche to generate the hoped for office development.

The study found that only 12,600 square feet of new office was developed in the Branch Avenue market area between 1997 and 2006 and that commercial office development is challenged by:

- Negative perceptions of area and safety concerns.
- Lack of retail amenities or quality sit-down restaurants.
- Strong competing regional markets in the District CBD, Arlington, Fairfax and Montgomery County, Hyattsville, Largo and New Carrollton.
- Competing local markets at Anacostia, Laurel, and College Park.
- Lack of quality executive housing.

The study concluded that private Class A office development would not be feasible. However, the study also suggests that the Green Line is an emerging federal office corridor with the recent construction of a new U.S. Census Bureau headquarters at Suitland and with the 4.8 million square feet of new office space planned at the St. Elizabeth's campus near the Congress Heights Metro Station, primarily serving the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) headquarters. Future needs of DHS could add additional demand for 1.15 million square feet of federal office space, with a



Existing conditions at the intersection of Naylor Road and Branch Avenue.



Rendering from the Branch Ave. Sector Plan showing office development and new streetscape at Naylor Road.

connection to DHS headquarters via the Green Line transit service, an important selling point for the Naylor Road Metro Station area.

The study recommends a market niche focused on a pioneering public tenant such as a federal tenant, a Prince George's County office, or M-NCPPC office as another option. The study outlined several action steps to prepare the area for future redevelopment, and stressed the need for public investment as well as incentives in the area to help reduce the risk to private investors.



Summary of Market Findings

The market findings section addresses trends and projections for household and employment growth and analyzes historical development trends for residential, retail, and office space, with a focus on drivers of demand for transit-oriented locations. When complete, the analysis will benchmark total market-supportable demand and development potential in the project area vis-à-vis that in Prince George's County generally and the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as a whole.¹

The market findings are grouped into two tasks, as determined by the structure of the HUD contract. The findings included in this document summarize the work conducted in Task 1, which investigates existing conditions and an overview of current quantities and market performance of existing real property and land assets in the project area specifically, as well as the relationship between these assets and drivers of transit-oriented development demand in the county and the region. The forthcoming Task 2 analysis will provide detailed analysis of development opportunities as well as the specific market roles and niches that each station area can likely play in a reinvestment scenario; and it will propose a framework and strategy for investment that prioritizes transitoriented development and promotes future growth within the project area and the county as a whole.

Key overall findings include the following:

The Washington metropolitan area is growing and Metrorail adjacent locations are capturing more than their fair share of household and employment growth.

Prince George's County has a lower capture of households and jobs near Metro stations as compared to the other jurisdictions that have Metrorail.

The Green Line is demonstrating characteristics that suggest it may be the region's high-growth Metrorail line in terms of household and job growth.

¹ The Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Statistical Area with the names of its composite jurisdictions.

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Higher-density, TOD development products would generate significant tax revenues for Prince George's County. Prince George's County's COG projections illustrate that the county is planning for household and job growth to happen in areas that are far from transit.

The General Services Administration and the private sector will not lead new office development today, but they are committed to Prince George's and look to the county to signal partnership. There is no shortage of retail availability in the project area, but the retail stock is aging and nothing new has been built since 1990. Newer apartment stock in the project area commands high rents, but county impact fees make development costs infeasible.

In general, these market findings illustrate that real estate market conditions in the project area reflect an overall level of underinvestment relative to the potential market opportunity for residential, office, and retail development. More specifically, the analysis yielded the following observations:

 The project area itself does not currently provide sufficient market development fundamentals to support re-investment in the transit-oriented or adjacent areas of the project area, especially for the asset classes (multifamily residential, professional office, lifestyle retail) that are crucial to successful transit-oriented development. Given the above, there is a need to create demand drivers for asset classes of all types in order to achieve a more robust development environment and residential/ office experience at the Southern Green Line station areas.

With some exceptions, residential development in the project area overall is outdated and not appealing to the demographic cohorts that are driving demand for TOD-adjacent residential development. New housing in the Branch Avenue Metro Station area more appropriately defines the right product type for the market opportunity and, despite setbacks due to market conditions during the recession that began in 2008, these products have outperformed the market in terms of achieved prices/rents and sales/lease-up pace. Lack of appropriate producttype supply in the project area, in concert with challenging development fundamentals and permitting preferences for largelot single-family homes countywide, negatively affect housing fundamentals in the project area.

There is no Class-A private office product in the project area. With the notable exception of the Suitland Federal Center, and a handful of buildings near the Branch Avenue Metro Station, the office space in the general project area is located beyond one-half mile from a Metro station, and almost all of this office is physically configured in ways that make transit accessibility prohibitive at best. Without existing private or public office demand drivers at the Metro station areas today, there is limited opportunity for spin-off office demand to be harnessed in the local market or project area.

The retail products in the local market area and project area are dated and configured for auto-dependent access. As retail follows rooftops and daytime employment, retail development in the project area as a whole, and especially at Metro stations, is stymied by the two points above.

2. Economic and demographic analysis reveals a strong opportunity to harness regional growth patterns and development fundamentals to significantly improve the climate for investment in and around the four stations, as well as in the project area as a whole.

Office and residential growth in the region is coalescing along the Green Line, beginning in previously under-invested and challenged portions of Washington, D.C., and emanating southward and westward along this transit corridor towards Prince George's County.

Analysis of development patterns along this transit corridor reveal that regional investment is increasingly agnostic to historically perceived barriers to development—including blight, poverty, race, and class—and instead values travel time by transit to employment centers in Washington, D.C., as a more important determinant of development opportunity.

The region continues to create employment centers closer and closer to Prince George's County, suggesting that the county can and should begin to assess opportunities to capture this energy via complementary centers, which can be both employmentoriented and/or residentially-oriented.

Evidence from the developer community (gleaned through interviews), as well as examination of the asset performance of the new TOD product at Branch Avenue, confirms that the market wants to find opportunities to invest in quality development at or near Metro stations in Prince George's County along the Southern Green Line alignment in the near term (0–10 years at least).

Economic and Demographic Conditions Population Trends

According to the U.S. Census (2010), the Green Line project area currently has a population of approximately 23,418 people, distributed among 9,662 households. The project area added approximately 300 persons and 120 households during the period 2001–2010. Of the 9,662 households in the project area, there are 8,410 households within one-half mile of at least one of the four Metro stations, meaning that close to 90 percent of the project area's households are currently within one-half mile of a station. This figure is up from 7,782 in 2000, indicating that the entirety of the net household growth in the project area was contained within the land area within one-half mile of Metro.

Further examination of household trends reveals that the percentage of the population in the project area living within one-half mile of a Metro station has increased during the 2001–2010 period from 81.58 percent in 2000 to 87.04 percent in 2010, a trend for the project area as a whole that is quite consistent with regional growth trends, which are favoring TOD locations throughout the MSA. The corollary to this finding is that the remainder of the project area must have experienced population loss during the same time period—so much so that the net new 628 households in the transit-proximate areas were offset, by a nearly 5:1 margin, by household loss in areas further away from Metro.

Household Profile

Household sizes in the project area have remained relatively constant, hovering at around 2.4 persons per household over the past decade. As of 2010, median household age in the project area was 35.7 years old, slightly older than the median age of the county as a whole, which stood at 35 years old as of 2010. Forty-five percent of the population base has never been married, while 5.1 percent are widowed and 37.1 percent are currently married. Only 12.8 percent of the population is currently divorced, a figure that is below both regional and national averages.

Median Income Profile

The median income in the project area is approximately \$54,091, significantly lower than the median income for the county as a whole, which stands at \$71,260 as of the time of data-gathering for this document in 2012.

Householders in the vicinity of Branch Avenue commanded higher median incomes (approximately \$64,892), while householders in the vicinity of Southern Avenue had the lowest median incomes (approximately \$38,524). Median incomes in the Branch Avenue Metro Station area rose the most in the 2001–2010 time period (by almost \$12,000), while those in the Southern Avenue area rose the least (less than \$6,000 during the same time period).

Educational Profile

There are more women in the project area than men—54.4 percent of the population is female while only 45.6 percent is male—and approximately 90 percent of the total population in the study area is Black, while Hispanics have grown in proportion from 1.9 percent in 2000 to 4.2 percent in 2010. Approximately 30 percent of the population base is currently enrolled in school, with 14.8 percent of the entire population over three years in age enrolled in Grades 1–8. Less than 20 percent of the project area population holds a college degree or better (13.0 percent hold bachelor's degrees and 5.4 percent hold a graduate or professional degree), while 37.6 percent of the population has only a high school diploma and 13 percent of the population either did not graduate from high school or did not attend school beyond the 9th grade.

Employment Profile

Unemployment in the project area is remarkably low—only 6.0 percent are considered unemployed civilians and 63.8 percent of the population 16 years or older are currently employed. However, 29.4 percent of the 16+ population are considered "not in the labor force"—a very high figure—indicating that they are not seeking work currently.

Of the 11,027 persons who are currently working, 45.7 percent work in "services," which is a term usually reserved for support functions including janitorial, back office, or personal services. Twenty percent of the population works in some form of public administration. Only 3.6 percent work in construction, 1.6 percent in wholesale trade, and 9.6 percent in retail trade. Almost 20 percent of the employed consider themselves "professional" and another 13.6 percent consider themselves "management," while a full 25.7 percent consider themselves "administrative/support" workers.

Vehicle Ownership

There is a relatively low level of access to motor vehicles in the project area today. The average number of vehicles per household stood at 1.3 in 2000, the last year for which the U.S. Census Journey to Work data have been released at this geography. In the same data, 18.8 percent of households indicated that they had no vehicle at home, while 47.1 percent indicated that they had only one vehicle. Thus, only approximately one-third of the household base has access to more than one vehicle at home, a figure that is in line with the percentage of the household base that is married.

Commute Trends

The average travel time to work for householders in the project area was 37.6 minutes, higher than the regional average by almost five

minutes. Almost 16 percent of commuters have commutes of 45 to 59 minutes, and approximately 17 percent have commutes that are one hour or longer. Meanwhile, 61.9 percent of commuters drive to work alone, while only 15.6 percent indicate that they take public transportation of any type to work. The average expenditure on gasoline and motor oil in the project area is \$2,453 per household per year, while \$1,043 is spent on vehicle insurance and an additional \$831 is spent on vehicle maintenance and repairs.

Less than 10 percent of the housing stock in the project area was built after 1990, almost all of which is located at Branch Avenue Metro Station....

The percentage of the population in the project area living within one-half mile of a Metro station has increased during the 2001–2010 period, from 81.58 percent in 2000 to 87.04 percent in 2010....

Employment Trends

The project area is located within a large swath of federal employers that share proximity to the Green Line Metrorail stations, beginning in Washington, D.C., at Navy Yard (U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)) and extending all the way to Suitland Metro (U.S. Census Bureau, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA)). In addition, Joint Base Andrews is proximate to the Branch Avenue Metro Station, but it is not located within walking distance to the station. Employment data is not readily available for all of these entities, primarily due to security concerns. Based on available data, there are approximately 15,000 active duty employees at Joint Base Andrews, while the Suitland Federal Center employs 9,150 people, making it the largest office entity in the project area.

Within the project area, there are an estimated 614 private businesses and 5,554 private jobs. The largest private employer in the project area is Wackenhut Services, a firm that provides security services to commercial and government organizations. Macy's employs 250 persons at 4101 Branch Avenue, and McCullough Metro Motors employs 200 persons at 5001 Auth Way. By far the largest contributor to private sector employment in the study area is formed by automotive sales and services, which drive 1,116 private jobs. With respect to office-related employment, the average company size is four employees and the bulk of office-related employment is concentrated in travel services, personal financial services (accounting, bookkeeping), and educational support services. These and other office-oriented private employees have an average company size of between three to five employees.

Since 2004, the project area has gained 2,971 jobs overall, primarily driven by the major investments noted above. However, almost all of the jobs added to the project area are located beyond one-half mile distances from Metro stations. This trend is accounted for, in large part, by the addition of federal employment to the area, but it is also especially true of the non-retail, non-service jobs, those that are largely classified as office-using.

Within the context of the county's employment, the project area's private employment as a whole represents 2.2 percent. This is consistent with countywide trends in transit-oriented employment capture, as only 3.8 percent of the county's overall employment growth between 2001 and 2010 occurred in transit-proximate areas. The forthcoming Task 2 analysis will shed additional light on the comparison of employment trends vis-à-vis broader employment trends taking place in the county and in the region, and especially the extent to which the above figures represent relatively high or low levels of employment compared to market potential for the project area and the individual station areas.

Residential Real Estate Overview

There are 11,069 housing units in the project area as of 2010, of which 51.2 percent of the units are renter-occupied and 36.1 percent are owner-occupied; 12.7 percent of the units (1,407 units) are unoccupied. Approximately one half of the vacant units are rental units that are being offered for rent, while only 15.7 percent are homes that are being offered for sale. Almost 30 percent of the vacant units are classified as "other vacant," which is typically used to define housing units that are obsolete and not being marketed, bought, or sold. Of the 8,410 housing units within one-half mile of Metro, almost 40 percent are in the vicinity of the Naylor Road station and 35 percent are in the vicinity of Southern Avenue, while only 19 percent and 7.7 percent are at Suitland and Branch Avenue, respectively. The vast majority of the housing vacancy, either structural or permanent, occurs in the geographies beyond one-half mile from Metro.

There are 4,142 single-family residential units in the project area, of which 22.8 percent are single-family detached and 16.9 percent are single-family attached housing units (town homes, duplexes, etc.). Only 1,219 housing units are in large, multifamily buildings with 50 or more units per building (11.6 percent of total), while 27.2 percent of the housing units are in buildings with 10–19 units per structure. The median monthly owner costs for housing units with mortgages in the project area is \$1,257 (26 percent of median income) and the median monthly renter costs for units in the project area is \$646 (13.6 percent of median income). The median

home value of occupied housing is \$238,176, more than one-third below the county median home value of \$327,600.

Of the housing units mentioned above, 59.1 percent of the housing units were constructed prior to 1969, with the median age of the structure built in 1967. Notably, these housing units achieve average rents of \$1,750 (\$1.79/SF), a full 65 percent above older products in the Branch Avenue vicinity and 65 percent above the rents in the project area as a whole.

Average sales prices for single-family homes in the study area range from \$200,000 to \$300,000 for single-family detached homes and \$100,000 to \$150,000 for town homes (excluding the Metro Place town homes at Branch Avenue, which sell for \$200,000 to \$225,000). Average rents in the study area were \$1,083 in 2011. New town home products are also underwritable given current market conditions.

While the for-sale residential market in the project area lags behind the county as a whole, the success of two new rental apartment communities near the Branch Avenue Metro Station may reveal latent demand for Metro-adjacent housing in this location. These new communities increased overall submarket absorption during their lease-up, are well-occupied, and are achieving significant rent premiums compared to older communities nearby. This is consistent with statistical evidence of strong household growth and residential home value premiums in Metro station areas throughout the MSA.

> The achieved rents at Branch Avenue, as well as developer interest to date, confirm that new highend multifamily rental product is underwritable while new high-end single-family products are not.

Office Real Estate Overview

According to CoStar, there are 37 private office buildings in the study area, comprising approximately 962,000 SF of RBA (rentable building area). Thirty of the 37 buildings were constructed before 1980, and the newest private office building was constructed in 1989—a one story 11,340 SF building that is classified as Class B today. There are no Class A office buildings in the project area.

Only 11 buildings are within a 50-foot buffer of a halfmile radius from a Metro station, comprising 457,663 SF of NRA (net rentable area). Only two of these buildings were constructed after 1980 and six of these buildings are under five stories in height. These buildings command rents today of \$25/SF, far below rent levels that would justify new construction or asset repositioning. These buildings, some of which are physically configured as "retail office," house small, local-serving businesses and are not attractive to professional employment, which seeks highly amenitized Class A buildings.

Whereas private office occupants in the Washington, D.C., region seek out agglomerations of Class A office space in part because of the capacity of office concentrations to support service retail and restaurants—no such pattern exists in the project area or in the county as a whole (with the exception of the Greenbelt neighborhood).

MSA Class A Office Clusters



Office Stock in Submarket by Building Class

The newest private office building was constructed in 1989. There are no Class A office buildings in the project area.

Retail Real Estate Overview

There are 1.55 million SF of retail GLA (gross leasable area) in the project area today. Of that, none has been constructed after 1980 and almost all of that retail is located beyond one-half mile from Metro. Current retail rents average \$15-\$20/SF, which falls below rent levels that would substantiate underwriting for new retail construction.

There is an abundance of retail in Prince George's County. Retail space per household is a comparative measure of retail supply, and Prince George's County leads the region in terms of available retail space. For every Prince George's County household there are currently 74 square feet of retail, which is far greater than the 16 square feet of retail per household of Washington, D.C., or Arlington County's 36 square feet of retail per household.

The average building age in the project area is 45 years, and the newest shopping centers in the Corridor, Silver Hill Station and Silver Hill Shopping Center, were built in 1990. While there are some examples of newer lifestyle centers in Prince George's County, including Woodmore Town Center, Centre at Laurel, and Hyattsville Arts District, none are built near Metro.

The implication of the over-abundance of retail in the project area is that supply is out of line with demand. Too much supply spreads spending power too thin for any one retail center to command rents that allow for asset reinvestment. Instead, the overabundance drives a "race to the bottom," with individual retailers offering lower and lower rents simply to keep space occupied. This drives a pattern of disinvestment, as newer retailers that see a market opportunity to capture spending—there is in fact retail leakage taking place within the project area—are less inclined to invest in storefront locations in retail establishments that are visibly deteriorating and where they may be forced to co-locate with sub-optimal tenant neighbors. Select Retail Developments in Project area 2011

Good Hope Rd SE oto Pitte 25th St SE Cedar Hill 218^{Cemetery} NAYLOR ROAD rving St SE Suitland Shopping Center Built 1940; 45,000 SF SUITLAND Sam's Shopping Plaza Silver Hill Shopping Center Built 1985; 12,000 SF Built 1990; 32,000 SF SOUTHERN Silver Hill Station Suitland Rd Iverson Plaza Built 1990; 36,000 SF Oxon Ru Built 1967; 527,000 SF Park **Marlow Heights** Built 1960; 500,000 SF CH AVENUE BRAN Auth Ru (414) IS RONN 95 95 Puth D (414 (337)

Figure 17



While retail in the project area is abundant, it is also aging and the retail landscape is characterized by older building stock and out-dated retail configurations.

Regional Growth Patterns and Demand Drivers for Transit-Oriented Development

The Washington, D.C., MSA added 275,000 households and 295,000 jobs between 2004 and 2010. Of that growth, 6.4 percent of these households and 13.8 percent of these jobs are located within one-half mile of suburban and one-quarter mile of urban Metro stations.¹ This is despite the fact that the land area around these Metro stations comprised only 0.5 percent of the MSA land area, suggesting that TOD locations in the region are capturing 2.76 times their "fair share" of growth when normalizing for land area.

Household growth patterns from 2000 to 2010 illustrate that the number of households around almost all of the Metro stations grew, and Metro-proximate households grew at a faster rate than the MSA as a whole. While the Washington, D.C., MSA grew by 1.4 percent from 2000 to 2010, the number of households around Metro stations grew by 4.8 percent annually.

Employment growth patterns show that employment growth in suburban areas of the MSA has been most pronounced around Metro stations, with office-using employment demonstrating a particularly strong inclination to locate near Metro. From 2000–2010, 12 percent of MSA office employment growth located near transit, and three sectors: computer systems design and related services; management, scientific and technical consulting services; and other professional, scientific and technical services; represented 41 percent of office-using employment growth in Metro station areas.

This capture rate is a sharp departure from historical growth trends in the region. Until the 2000s, growth in households and employment had emanated due west from the epicenter of Washington, D.C., and some would argue that outside of growth adjacent to Metro stations in the historical path of growth—which could arguably include the Rosslyn Ballston corridor—growth was largely uncorrelated to transit proximity.

What is driving these shifts? At least two factors:

Regional and national trends indicate that much of the housing growth through 2030 will come from younger, smaller households that are increasingly choosing higher density product in transitaccessible, infill locations with easy access to employment and entertainment. These households have a built-in demand for walkable, urban environs that offer multiple opportunities for unplanned human interaction and what sociologist Robert Putnam calls "social capital." Almost half of all housing consumers express a desire to live in a walkable community, as evidenced by data compiled by the National Association of Realtors[®] in 2004 and again in 2011.

Employers seeking competitive advantages in an increasingly-tight market for high-quality labor are returning to urban locations where their employees want to be—in order to increase retention and attraction prospects. In addition, research conducted by the Brookings Institution confirms that urban, walkable communities exhibit calculable and significant value premiums that drive net operating income (NOI) and asset-level value for developers and investors.

The Metro stations in Prince George's County are a notable exception to this trend, with many of the areas around Metro experiencing household decline from 2000–2010. The county did add jobs during the period 2001–2010, but these jobs were added in places outside of TOD areas. In fact, the county shed jobs in its TOD areas during this time period—a facet that is unique among the jurisdictions that have Metro and even unique in comparison with previously under-invested parts of Washington, D.C., that continue to exhibit the aftereffects of the damage from urban riots in the 1960s.

As noted above, products to meet demand for this cohort of households or employers is in short supply in Prince George's County, putting it at a disadvantage to capture built-in demand for TOD product types that is emanating at a regional level. The county must create desirable office locations for the private sector; otherwise, potential tenants will continue to select other regional locations.

Total Household Growth in TOD Areas, 1990-2000



Total Household Growth in TOD Areas, 2000-2010



¹ Urban Metro stations include all Washington, D.C., stations, plus the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor, Alexandria, Braddock Road, and Pentagon City. All other Metro stations are classified as suburban.

The Project Area is Directly in the Path of Regional Growth While the assessment of local market conditions above suggests that endogenous market conditions for real property development are weaker than supporters of reinvestment would prefer, analysis by Robert Charles Lesser and Company (RCLCO) reveals an important regional existing condition which portends a powerful investment driver that can affect the project area.

Over the past decade, the pattern of regional growth has re-oriented from its historic westward trajectory and coalesced along portions of the Green Line in Washington, D.C. This shift in regional growth includes neighborhoods that have been previously designated as blighted, impoverished, or otherwise unattractive (both to existing residents and to developers of residential, office, and retail) such as Shaw, U Street, Columbia Heights, and Navy Yard.

Data show that between 2000 and 2010, more young households have moved to areas around the Green Line Corridor² stations than the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor (R-B Corridor) in Virginia, and more than all Northwest Washington, D.C., Red Line and Orange Line station areas combined.

These households are exactly the young professional households that drive economic growth. Between 2000 and 2010, Green Line Corridor stations in Washington, D.C., added more young households than the R-B Corridor. The R-B Corridor added 3,395 young households from 2000 to 2010, while the Northwest D.C. Red Line added 2,354 and the NW D.C. Orange Line added just 406. Meanwhile, the studied Green Line Corridor station areas added 3,466 households.

While the Green Line Corridor station areas studied evolved into magnets for affluent young professionals, they also emerged as job centers that are outcompeting areas in NW D.C. and Arlington County for high-paying professional jobs. Analysis of the employment patterns along the Green Line Corridor station areas indicates that professional services already comprise nearly 50 percent of the jobs currently located in these areas. In fact, finance, insurance, real estate, business services, and legal sectors drive a full 47 percent of the employment composition, meaning that private sector employment, not government or retail, is driving the microeconomics along the Green Line Corridor station areas.

Investment in Green Line station areas now includes Anacostia and Congress Heights (which, notably, will include a transit-oriented headquarters for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard, and FEMA), meaning that additional activity centers are being created in the direction of Prince George's County in general and towards this project area, in particular.

It is important to note that the path of growth is headed southward along the Green Line and directly for Prince George's County. As of the writing of this report, there are new regional jobs and housing centers being developed in nearby Anacostia, Navy Yard, and Congress Heights. These Metro station areas are now home to tens of thousands of jobs, which are within a 10-minute ride from many, if not all, of the project area Metro stations, and which are generating opportunities for both spillover demand as well as the creation of complementary office, residential, and retail activity centers along the Green Line in Prince George's County.

In short, the regional market drivers of demand are pointing directly at the project area, and the opportunity to harness this development energy to drive reinvestment in the project area's Metro stations is now. This existing opportunity cannot be overstated, for it provides the project area with a market-driven rationale for reinvestment that few places in the entire region can claim: the project area is directly in the crosshairs of regional growth; the area is connected to this regional growth not only in directionality but, more importantly, by an existing fixed-rail transit infrastructure; it has land development potential at the station areas which is suitable for new development; and it is fortunate to have a planning process and stewardship group interested in pursuing reinvestment. The regional market drivers of demand are pointing directly at the project area, and the opportunity to harness this development energy to drive reinvestment in the project area's Metro stations is now.



² For the purposes of this section, "Green Line Corridor" refers to a geography of analysis that includes Green Line station areas in Washington, D.C., beginning on the north end with Georgia Avenue Petworth and ending at Navy Yard. RCLCO's Task 2 analysis will extend this geography to include Anacostia and Congress Heights to build upon this analysis.

Stakeholder Input

A series of stakeholder outreach efforts were made in 2011 and 2012 to garner local knowledge about each of the four station areas, receive input on the obstacles to change and reinvestment, and hear about ideas for improving the community. At the initiation of the outreach process, the project team focused on identifying and contacting key stakeholders, which were defined as important landowners in the station area, elected officials and staff, representatives of neighborhood associations and homeowners associations, major institutions, developers and investors, and interested individuals.

Two early opportunities to engage with the community included an Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel, held on August 24 and 25, 2011, which included a public presentation of the panel's evaluation of the four station areas from the point of view of real estate professionals. A second event was a public charrette looking at the Suitland Metro Station area sponsored by the Rail-Volution national conference on October 16, 2011. This workshop brought dozens of community residents into the Census Bureau Building at Suitland for a day of interaction with national experts on transitoriented development. A list of names and e-mail addresses of citizens interested in the Southern Green Line planning project was started from these first public meetings.

A presentation of initial findings from the project team's exploration of existing conditions was made to an invited group of key stakeholders on February 11, 2012, at the Suitland Elementary School. Prior to this meeting, and as part of the outreach and invitation for the meeting, individual interviews were made with key landowners and civic leaders. These interviews helped to shape an overall impression of the physical, civic, economic, social, and regulatory conditions in the project area.

The key stakeholder workshop included a presentation of project scope, existing project area conditions, and the economic potential of transit-oriented development within the project area. Meeting participants engaged in an active question and answer session, and then organized into small station-specific discussion groups. Participants reviewed maps and analysis diagrams, asked questions of staff and consultants, and provided feedback regarding three specific question areas: obstacles to change, amenities needed to jump-start change, and reasons to invest in the station areas.

The following section summarizes overall project area findings from the stakeholder interviews and workshop. Station-specific findings are presented within each station analysis chapter later in the report.

Shared Vision for the Southern Green Line

Some stakeholders have lived in the project area for 40–50 years and remember a time of prosperity in the area's neighborhoods. Others have arrived more recently, but envision a safe and healthy environment for themselves and their children. Property and business owners anticipate the financial benefits of revitalization and reinvestment. Stakeholders shared a vision for the project area which included:

- Diverse shopping opportunities, such as medium priced sitdown restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, hardware stores, pharmacies, gift shops, and other "useful" stores.
- Safe pedestrian and bicycle accessibility between residential and commercial areas (mixed-use "town center" environment), and to the Metro stations.
- Attractive streetscapes and buildings.
- A variety of housing options for diverse household incomes and age groups.

Nearly all stakeholders expressed a desire to shop and find services within their own community and support local businesses. Many also voiced concerns about future development displacing existing residents.

Overall Obstacles to Change

Stakeholders along the Southern Green Line generally expressed a shared perception of the obstacles to revitalization and change within the overall project area. These can be summarized into the following categories: **Perception of Crime:** The Green Line Stations and surrounding areas have a reputation for being unsafe. This perception is based on actual criminal activity in recent years, but may also be exacerbated by the poor physical appearance of primary street corridors and the concentration of low-income populations near these stations. Some stakeholders suggested that excessive media reporting about area crime also perpetuates the perception.

High Percentage of Low-Incomes: Stakeholders identified several ways that the concentration of low-income populations, including fixed-income elderly, within the project area creates obstacles to change. These obstacles include limited buying power beyond basic needs, leading to the question of who will shop in new mixed-use developments; the perceived relationship between low-income populations and crime; and potential for resistance to new development due to fear of displacement.

Physical Appearance/Code Enforcement: The major streets leading through the study area generally lack appropriate pedestrian-scale amenities and attractive streetscapes and landscaping. In many cases, the roadway fixtures, signage, and curbing are in significant disrepair. This lack of public maintenance, combined with private property owners who disregard county codes and basic building maintenance, leads to an overall poor physical appearance on main commercial corridors. This unattractive appearance sends the message to shoppers and developers that neither the government nor the local residents/business owners care about their environment. Under these conditions, moderate- to high-income populations are unlikely to stop and shop, and developers are unwilling to invest.

County Political and Financial Priorities: Long-term change in the project area, according to stakeholders, will require commitment by elected officials to policies that promote development and new businesses in the area. This may include financial incentives and changes to the current development approval process. A commitment to building code enforcement is another way to invest in the project area. Some businesses regularly pay code enforcement fines, as a "cost of doing business," rather than making the required improvements.

Communication Barriers: Communication channels between county officials and residents are not always clear. Several long-term residents described unsuccessful campaigns for sidewalk construction on busy Metro access roads, and noted a lack of county responsiveness. Other stakeholders stated that they did not know how to contact county staff who would be knowledgeable about their interests. Several stakeholders noted that many residents do not understand how their actions can impact long-term community conditions.

The workshop also addressed each station area as a distinct place with its own issues, opportunities, and needs. Stakeholders were asked to respond to three questions:

- 1. What are the biggest challenges to creating change in this area and how can these be overcome?
- 2. What amenities are needed in order to jumpstart change in this area?
- 3. Why should someone want to invest in this area?

Their response is summarized below from the workshop notes provided for each station area.

Southern Avenue Metro Station Area

Area Challenges:

- No critical mass, feeling of isolation.
- Perception of crime—feeling of being unsafe on the street.
- Hard to cross Southern Avenue to get to the Metro—a lot of traffic.
- No retail.
- Two jurisdictions.
- Lack of sidewalks, "forced to get into your car."
- Vehicular access "too good."
- Off of the Branch Avenue Corridor.
- Southern Avenue—DC has jurisdiction.
- Currently acts as commuter lot.
- Deer.
- Topography.

Amenities Needed Are:

- Better pedestrian access to Metro.
- Retail.

- Bike to Metro.
- Capital Bikeshare Program.
- Telecommuting infrastructure.
- Better Metro headways.
- Marketing of parks infrastructure.
- Need something to draw people in, such as shops and restaurants.
- Better use of open space, once developed.
- Development along Southern Avenue.
- Cultural activities.

Invest here because:

- Access to Metro and bus service, close to DC riverfront development.
- Lots of land.
- Proximity to DC.
- Spillover development potential from St. Elizabeth's.
- Planned residential by the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- Parks.
- Makes sense for housing.
- Natural environment.

Naylor Road Metro Station Area

Area Challenges:

- No coffee shops, sit-down restaurants, family restaurants, large scale printing, book stores, and business services.
- Crime.
- Funding—limited county financial incentives.
- Cannot cross the street on foot/no crosswalks.
- No pedestrian access between Carriage Hill and Metro.
- No recreation facility.
- Narrow sidewalks (snow piled on them).
- Drive-through liquor stores.
- Need to control parking around stations.
- Image issue.
- No real destinations, or places for people to stop, so that the area is not just a pass-through. No reason to go there now.
- Speed enforcement is needed, especially in the circles. Drivers do not stop for pedestrians.



Stakeholders discussed reasons to invest in the area.



Community members shared their vision for the area

- Current businesses that impede safety and economic development (liquor stores, etc.).
- Code enforcement fines are too low. Businesses build this into their business costs and do not fix the problem.

Amenities needed are:

- Sidewalks.
- Swimming pool.
- Lighting on Branch Avenue—light bulbs are out. Lighting should be continuous along a state road (not just at intersections).
- Bikeways, Capital Bikeshare.
- If development takes place at the old shopping center across Branch Avenue from the station, a walkway will be needed over the road. This would connect shopping center visitors and residents safely on foot.
- Build on existing resources, e.g., the community center.
- A grocery store.
- Creation of a greenway system on Suitland Parkway.
- Training for technology and other jobs.
- A revamp of Iverson Mall.
- Parks/open spaces in neighborhoods near stations.
- Add retail at train station (rail is elevated, capture the space underneath).

Invest here because:

- An open slate exists for development.
- Quickest access to DC/gateway to the county.
- There is a train station.
- Proximity to Suitland Parkway.
- Stable residential neighborhoods around the station. (Note: property owners are older in general, so there will be a large turnover in the near future).
- This was a very child-friendly neighborhood in the past. The infrastructure is there to support one again—school, etc.
- Mixed housing types are there already, so people can be supported with a range of housing needs (apartments, townhouses, small houses, and large houses).

Suitland Metro Station Area Challenges:

- Shabby businesses and crime near the Metro.
- Poor lighting.
- Aging housing, not appropriate for elderly/physically challenged.
- Poor roads.
- No upscale retail.
- Not enough sit-down restaurants.
- No parks—beautification/landscaping.
- Activities for kids are lacking.
- Bike trails, community: dollars are already allocated—what happened?
- Job training and employment.
- Need for another civic organization building—currently using water tower.
- U.S. Census Bureau fence.
- Get employees out of the U.S. Census Bureau building; get them to buy/spend money in the community.
- Appearance of Suitland Road—the perception of danger.

Amenities needed are:

- Better usage of community (civic organization) clubhouse (Silver Hill Road).
- More full service sit-down restaurants and cafes, coffee shops, and retail (small scale).
- Improved public realm (could encourage federal employees to come into the neighborhood to spend money).
- Community center with health and fitness facilities (including pools).
- Better parks and bike trails.
- Include senior living (affordable).
- Sidewalks.
- Public art/arts center.
- Access to the Smithsonian buildings (partner to arts center).
- Rebuild high school, including arts and technology.
- Health facilities.
- Better street lighting (state roads).
- Usage of business improvement districts.

• No FBI; we want agencies to be part of the community.

Invest here because:

- It is close to everything and centrally located.
- High visibility along Silver Hill Road and Branch Avenue—and traffic counts.
- A lot of vacant/underutilized land.
- There is a large group of aging residents who still work and there are no housing products that meet their needs.
- Lower income people aged 55+ have fewer options.
- Aging garden apartments—will not work for older residents.

Branch Avenue Station Area

Challenges:

- This is the parking lot for the South County.
- Furthest out.
- Attracting people.
- Identity/name of the district is not clearly defined: the Metro station is not really on Branch Avenue.
- Lack of sidewalks.
- Lack of retail/restaurants.
- Few connections to the area.
- Setting priorities.
- No reason to go there except to use the Metro.

Amenities needed are:

- Grocery store.
- Bike paths/bike parking.
- Sidewalks.
- Weekend amenities—a soccer park?
- Sports; support other uses.
- Civic center; a multiuse facility.
- Concerts.
- Farmers market.
- Places to work/jobs.

Invest here because

- Convenient.
- Need for a "destination" restaurant.
- Close to residential.





Southern Avenue Metro Station

Steep slopes and the presence of Oxon Run isolate the station from both Hillcrest Heights and Congress Heights.



Southern Avenue Metro Station



Station Area Overview

Southern Avenue Metro Station is located on Southern Avenue on the Prince George's County side of the boundary with the District of Columbia. All of the right-of-way of Southern Avenue, including the south side curb and sidewalk, lies within the District, while all of the station is within the county. The station is located in the Oxon Run stream valley, with the current stream bed running only a few hundred yards to the north. Part of a large hill was removed to flatten the grade of the site for the parking lots and the upper and lower levels of the WMATA garage structure are actually built into the terraced remains of that slope. The grey band visible south of the parking in the aerial photograph from 2009 (**Figure 18**) is a huge pile of gravel used to secure the slope of the hill; above the gravel the remaining bluff climbs from 60 to 100 feet above the bus plaza elevation.

This location between the stream and the steep slope of the hill isolates the station at the edge of nearby neighborhoods on both sides of the District line. The huge commuter rail parking facility that WMATA owns and the station itself use roughly a quarter of the land within a quarter-mile radius of the station entrance. A small cluster of townhouses sits in an isolated location directly across the avenue from the station entrance. THEARC theatre and arts campus is quite close to the station on Mississippi Avenue in the District. Oxon Run Park in the Hillcrest Heights neighborhood buffers the stream from development where it runs to the southeast of Southern Avenue. Twenty-third Parkway has the only bridge over Oxon Run from the station to Naylor Road.

The Hillcrest Towne townhouse subdivision was built directly east of the station over a 20-year period from 1976 to 1996 at the southern end of Oxon Run Drive, but, like nearly all of the development in the station area, it was completed before the Metro opened and it lacks direct access to the station. The Metro access road connects from Oxon Run Drive into the station and continues up to an intersection with Southern Avenue. Three apartment complexes are located on Southern Avenue at the far edge of the half-mile walk circle. Northeast of the station the relatively shallow space between Southern Avenue and the Green Line track was developed as garden-style, walk up apartments. The Forest Hills Apartments complex is located a half mile southwest of the station with access from Southern Avenue.

Byrne Manor was a clubhouse owned by the Knights of Columbus on land between Forest Hills Apartments and the station, but the building burned down and the land is for sale. The large wooded area on the top of the bluff is owned by WMATA, and a church is selling over 100 acres of undeveloped land along Wheeler Hills Road.

United Medical Center is the only large employer in the vicinity of the station area. This hospital, formerly known as Greater Southeast Community Hospital, was acquired by the District in 2010 to stabilize its financial situation. As the only full service hospital in the District east of the Anacostia River the hospital struggles to provide services to a population that lacks adequate health insurance. According to reports in *The Washington Post* (November 23, 2011), consultants to the District recommended a shift to outpatient care.



The bluff above the Southern Avenue Metro Station is 70 feet higher than the station parking lot, with steep slopes.



United Medical Center, aka Greater Southeast Community Hospital, fronts on Southern Ave.



Land for sale along Wheeler Hills Road.



Southern Avenue Metro Station

Topography

The location of the Southern Avenue Metro Station presents a real challenge to creating transit-oriented development. Coming out of the District of Columbia as a subway, the Green Line emerges into an open cut, below-grade platform on a site where a significant hill rose above the Oxon Run stream valley. Part of this hill was removed to flatten the site for the station and its parking lots; the remainder of the hill is retained with a gravel face creating a bluff that rises 70 to 100 feet above the elevation of the station. Immediately to the north of the station is the Oxon Run stream valley where the main channel of this stream runs buffered by open space and parklands both in the District and in the county. This land along the stream, owned by M-NCPPC, cannot be developed; while the land to the south of the station is very difficult to access given the bluff. The station is essentially pinned between the stream and the bluff.

Land in the vicinity of Wheeler Hills Road flattens somewhat before it meets a buffer zone for the Barnaby Run stream, also owned by M-NCPPC. A knoll located at the corner of Wheeler Road and Wheeler Hills Road which rises up to 240 feet in elevation may also preclude development given its steep slopes on all sides. A very steep slope blocks extension of Oxon Run Drive to the south from its current terminus. The presence of these slopes and streams make planning for a more connected grid of local streets a difficult task. Access to the station is severely constrained from nearly all directions, for automobiles and pedestrians alike, making Southern Avenue itself a prime walking route especially for transit patrons coming from the District.

While the change in elevation presents difficulties for land development and access, the views from the higher points are enticing, particularly looking north and west toward Washington, D.C. Standing on top of the bluff south of the station it is possible to clearly see the Capitol dome, as well as the Washington Monument and the National Cathedral. Views like this can be marketed to potential residential developers and subsequently to future residents as a package of amenities including the parklands along the streams and access to Metro. The landform itself is interesting and unique, but development planning must carefully consider issues of slope, run off, habitat loss, and access.



The Washington Monument is visible from higher elevations above the station.



Oxon Run stream bed running north of the station.



Development opposite the station reveals the steep slope.



The bluff south of the station, lined with gravel and topped with woods, rises above the station parking lot.

Land Use

The area around the Southern Avenue Metro Station is largely undeveloped—there are large swaths of open space adjacent to the Metro station parking lot. A cluster of townhome developments lie to the east/southeast of the station and a near continuous line of single-family homes stretches beyond the townhome development. The townhomes are built at 19 DU/acre and the single-family homes are roughly half as dense as the townhomes, coming in at 9.7 DU/acre. The remainder of the single-family homes stretching beyond the half-mile walk circle are less dense at 5.9 DU/acre. Along Southern Avenue there are three garden apartments, two of which barely touch the half-mile walk circle. These garden apartments range in density from a low of 22 DU/acre to a high of 36 DU/acre. These garden apartments are rather isolated since they abut either an institutional use or open space.

The overall pattern of the area surrounding the Southern Avenue Metro Station consists of a large amount of open space within a half mile of the station. Townhomes are clustered to the east/southeast of the station along Oxon Run Drive. The density steps down from the townhomes to moderate density single-family homes then to less dense single-family homes in an almost continuous line of development east, northeast, and southeast of the station. The densest residential developments are located along Southern Avenue in the form of garden apartments, and commercial uses are also located on Southern Avenue by Wheeler Road. The area to the south/southwest is undeveloped.



Figure 20

Southern Avenue Metro Station

Zoning

The zoning on parcels near the Southern Avenue Metro Station is directly attributable to two features: open space zones are aligned along the Barnaby Run and the Oxon Run creeks, and a linear pattern of commercial and attached residential zoning along Southern Avenue. There is neither a focus on the Metro station nor appropriate zoning for transit-oriented development in the Metro station vicinity. Southern Avenue is not close enough to major roads, intersections, or any of the other stations to be impacted by zoning in those areas.

Open Space Zones—Reserved open space, or R-O-S, designation provides for the permanent maintenance of undeveloped land to protect scenic and environmentally sensitive areas. In this location, the open space is the Barnaby Run Park and the Oxon Run Park surrounding the Hillcrest Heights Community Center. Both of these zones buffer environmentally sensitive areas around the respective streams. Some of R-O-S zoned land is within the halfmile walk circle.

Residential Zones—The majority of residentially zoned land near the Southern Avenue Metro Station is zoned R-55 (one-family detached residential), which permits no more than 6.7 units per acre. R-18 (multifamily medium density residential) and R-30 (multifamily low density residential) zones are clustered along Southern Avenue. These zones permit 12–20 units per acre in garden apartment developments. Land to the east of the station is zoned R-T (townhouse) and R-35 (one family semi-detached and two-family detached residential). These zones permit 9 to 12.44 units per acre.

Commercial Zones—WMATA-owned property at the station is zoned C-O (commercial office), which allows uses of a predominantly non-retail commercial nature, such as business, professional and medical offices, or related administrative services. Most retail and food establishments are prohibited. At 82 acres, the WMATA property at Southern Avenue Metro Station comprises one-eighth of all C-O zoned land in the Developed Tier. Other



Figure 21

commercial zones in the area are small C-S-C (commercial shopping center) properties at the corner of Wheeler Road and Southern Avenue and the corner of Oxon Run Drive and 23rd Parkway. This is the county's most frequently used commercial zone, permitting most retail and service uses.

Industrial Zones—There are no industrial zones in the vicinity of Southern Avenue Metro Station.

Mixed-Use Zones—There are no mixed-use zones in the vicinity of Southern Avenue Metro Station.





Building Typology and Urban Form

Residential development at the Southern Avenue Metro Station is primarily single-family detached and attached types in Prince George's County. A small number of apartment buildings are also within walking distance of the station and a scattering of commercial, school, and church buildings interspersed along the residential streets.

According to the *Historic Sites and Districts Plan* (HSDP) from December 2009 (M-NCPPC), the basic plan for the Hillcrest Heights neighborhood was created in the immediate post-war period and its distinctive residential building types were constructed in the mid and late 1940s through the 1950s. One developer focused on building 300 all-brick ramblers, which is the dominant type of singlefamily detached house found to the east of the Southern Avenue Metro Station. However, in the early 1950s, perhaps in response to a more focused understanding of the demographic market, the report notes that "construction in the larger Hillcrest Heights area moved away from single-family detached houses, to 'semi-detached' twin dwellings.... The construction of twin dwellings continued throughout the 1950s. As a result, Hillcrest Heights has the largest concentration of twin houses in the county." (HSDP page 317.) The types of dwellings that are the closest to the station are townhouses and garden apartments. The Forest Hills Apartments and Oxon Park/Oxon Terrace Apartments are located on the south side of Southern Avenue. These are typical suburban style garden apartments, being three- and four-story walk-up buildings without elevators and with buildings fronting on surface parking lots and landscaping rather than public streets. These are medium density developments that offer easy access to the Metro station, with a walk straight down Southern Avenue, as one of their selling points to renters.

Immediately east of the station is the Hillcrest Towne townhouse development that straddles the terminal segment of Oxon Run Drive and has private road access on Anvil Lane North and South. The first part of this townhouse subdivision was constructed in 1976 and continued with just over 100 houses at buildout in 1996. This type of townhouse product is fairly common in the county. The rows are made up of five to seven houses sharing party walls and fronting on surface parking lots. The lack of internal garages saves on construction costs. Yet, while this subdivision is close to the station, its was designed more than 20 years before the station opened and the road layout does not provide particularly good access to the station, although some internal walks do provide helpful routes to the station access road.

Besides residential buildings there are a handful of school and church buildings in the station area in Prince George's County. One interesting anomaly is the reuse of a strip shopping center at the corner of Oxon Run Drive and 23rd Parkway as a church that uses the entire building for a variety of church-based services.



Twin homes, or duplexes, are common in Hillcrest Heights



Townhouse development immediately east of the station



Garden apartments accessed off Southern Avenue

Transportation System

The transportation system serving each of the Southern Green Line stations seeks to accommodate access to Metrorail via motorized and non-motorized modes, with varying degrees of success. While WMATA's stated policy goal is to favor pedestrian and bicycle access modes first, then buses, and lastly automobiles, in the case of the four project area stations the access pyramid is inverted, giving far more attention to access via cars and buses than by walking or riding bikes. To some extent this is due to the station locations in a suburban environment. Analysis of the transportation system for each station is organized and ordered by mode share, starting with a look at the roadway network and traffic issues near each station, looking at mode share data, travel patterns and parking data, then listing bus routes and facilities. The analysis concludes with a focused analysis of station circulation and facility issues.

Roadway Network and Traffic Analysis

Compared to the other three stations, the Southern Avenue station is relatively isolated: no expressways, highways, or primary arterials provide direct access to the station. Southern Avenue, which the District classifies as a collector, provides the only direct route to the station; a long access road owned by WMATA creates a back way into the station with a connection to Oxon Run Drive. Southern Avenue crosses over Suitland Parkway, which is the closest major roadway to the station, but the two roads do not directly connect.

Indeed, it is Indian Head Highway, which is 1.8 miles southwest of the station, that has the best connection to the regional roadway network, and this plays a big role in shaping the regional pattern of travel that drivers take to access the Southern Avenue Metro Station, as further discussed on page 62 and shown in **Figure 24**. It is telling that the highest traffic count in the immediate station area (19,800) is on Southern Avenue, south of the station where traffic coming up Indian Head Highway and Wheeler Road combine. Wheeler Road and 23rd Parkway bookend the station and provide a route for local traffic from the Glassmanor and Hillcrest Heights neighborhoods.



As previously noted in the Project Overview section on page 10, there are two road segments in the Southern Avenue Metro Station area that traffic counts indicate have capacity issues. The segment of Southern Avenue from 23rd Parkway to the Suitland Parkway overpass had a count of 17,900 vehicles but a two-lane capacity of 15,930 according to Prince George's County standards, which at 112 percent of capacity yields a level of service rating of "F." This section of Southern Avenue is striped as two lanes with on-street parking and four lanes but allowing off-peak parking; and the LOS uses the lower two-lane capacity measure. It must be noted that Southern Avenue lies completely within the District of Columbia and the District sets policy on acceptable LOS. In fact, DDOT is currently planning to reduce all of Southern Avenue in the station area to two drive lanes and new bicycle lanes, which would most likely reduce LOS for vehicles.

The second segment with capacity issues is Wheeler Road east of Southern Avenue, with the count at 16,889 AADT and a capacity of 15,930, which is 106 percent of capacity for a LOS of "F." Wheeler Road is an important collector in this area and it must carry traffic where few other streets connect due to topographic issues, including previously discussed steep slopes and streams.

Southern Avenue Metro Station



The focus of the Southern Green Line planning effort is the four Metrorail stations and a first part of understanding how they function within the local and regional community is to look at the rail service itself and how Metro riders are accessing the stations. To this end the project team has assembled data sets from WMATA that are reported in the following section.

Metrorail provides service to the Southern Avenue Metro Station between 5:08 a.m. and 12:24 a.m. weekdays. Weekend service begins two hours later in the morning and extends three hours later in the evening. Headways are between 5 and 20 minutes, depending on time of day.

In 2011, the average daily boardings on the Green Line at the Southern Avenue Metro Station were 5,776. Since opening in 2001, ridership from Southern Avenue Metro Station has increased annually at a rate of 3.1 percent, faster than the overall Metrorail growth of 1.7 percent annually over the same period. The peak level of ridership was in 2008 when average daily boardings reached 6,537. Since that time, ridership has fallen 12 percent, most likely due to a decrease in commutes related to the economic recession that deepened through 2008.

The Southern Avenue Metro Station has among the highest peak half-hour loading factors for rail ridership. In WMATA's 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study, the peak half-hour for entries at Southern Avenue Metro Station was 8:00–8:30 a.m. when 14.5 percent of the daily entries occurred. The peak half-hour for exits at Southern Avenue Metro Station was 5:30–6:00 p.m. when 13 percent of the daily exits occurred. This station is projected to have among the highest peak half-hour factors of 14 percent in 2030. This rush of transit riders all coming to the station at nearly the same time is perhaps related to the basic function of the Southern Avenue Metro Station as a commuter rail station. Metro riders converge on the station to access the available parking before the spaces are filled. Also, with very little surrounding development or destinations, the use of the station is focused on commute trips which all happen around the same time in the morning and evening. In keeping with its function as a commuter rail, it is noted that outbound trains through Southern Avenue Metro Station operate well below capacity in the morning, since few people are commuting from the District to work near the station. Inbound trains operate well below capacity in the afternoon and evening, in fact, observations are that once the parking lots are full in the morning ridership along the Southern Green Line drops significantly.

As the closest station to the District, travel times from Southern Avenue to downtown Washington, D.C., are quite short, which is a potential marketing point for any new development.

Travel times to other Metro stations are:Gallery Place14 minutesMetro Center23 minutes with transferNational Airport25 minutes with transfer

Mode of Access

WMATA surveyed Metrorail riders in 2007 to collect data on how their patrons were accessing stations. The survey divided riders into their access mode, including different bus services and methods for getting to the station by automobile, all of which are listed in the table at right. Somewhat surprising for a suburban station, access by Metrobus actually generated the most rail riders, with 39 percent of riders at Southern Avenue Metro Station arriving by Metrobus and an additional 5 percent by other bus service. Driving in a private car and parking and riding had the second highest total, at 36 percent. Walking to the station was the access mode for 10 percent of riders, which, considering the poor pedestrian environment, is a respectable number, and actually higher than patrons that were dropped off. The survey showed no riders had biked to the station, which is also the result at the other three stations; yet bicycles were seen at the station during field visits, so this survey snapshot may simply indicate that the bicycle mode share is very low rather than none at all.

Parking

When the Southern Green Line stations were constructed the design of the station sites emphasized vehicular parking and access by private automobile. In a real sense the current site layout can be thought Metrorail Ridership at Southern Avenue Station

Year	Average Weekday Boardings
2011	5776
2010	5931
2009	6263
2008	6537
2007	6356
2006	6278
2005	5916
2004	5770
2003	5543
2002	5139
2001	4258

Source: WMATA, revised data 6/2011

Southern Avenue Station Metrorail Rider Access Mode Share

Mode of Access	Number of Metrorail Riders	Percent of Metrorail Riders
Metrobus	2295	39
The Bus	203	3
Other Bus	107	2
Automobile SOV Park and Ride	2119	36
"Kiss and Ride" Drop Off	472	8
Carpool	60	1
Walk	600	10
Тахі	13	< 1
Bicycle	0	0
Total	5869	100

Source: WMATA, 2007 mode of access data



Southern Avenue Metro Station

of as a parking lot rather than transit-oriented development. The isolating location of the Southern Avenue Metro Station also favors parking over integration into the urbanized community; however, the vast area now used for surface lots can also be considered a land bank for future station area development. The role of WMATA policy in terms of parking resources, revenues, and replacement is an important consideration that will be addressed in the plan; this report provides basic data on the existing supply of parking.

Data from the WMATA web site and the web page for the Southern Avenue Metro Station shows that a generous amount of parking is provided at the Southern Avenue Metro Station. The available spaces by type are:

All-day spaces:	1,980	
Short-term metered spaces:	46	
Additional metered spaces:	200	
Total parking spaces:	2,226	

All-day spaces are provided in a two-level parking garage. Kiss and ride spaces are provided on the upper level of the garage. High occupancy vehicle (HOV) parking is provided in a surface lot near Southern Avenue. Pricing: All-day spaces are \$4.25 per day. Metered spaces are \$1.00 per hour. Reserved parking is available at a fee of \$65 per month. Car Sharing: Space is provided for Zipcars. A taxi stand is located at the upper level of the parking deck along the kiss and ride access lane.

Parking Customer Origin Data

WMATA provided the project team with data for each of the four Green Line stations that used the registered address of smart card users to pay for their station parking. This "parking shed" analysis provides a snapshot from a single day, October 4, 2011, of where Metrorail patrons may be coming from for each station. The data, while very useful, has some built in uncertainty: some of the origins were based on broad zip codes alone, rather than a street address, and some customers register their cards at their work addresses, not their homes, which may explain some origins in the downtown area of Washington, D.C. In order to protect the privacy of individuals, the data was aggregated to census block levels rather than street addresses. Even given these limitations on the level of accuracy, patterns of travel can be discerned for each station, as indicated in the travel distance bar chart below and the "parking shed" map on the opposite page.

The data shows that each of the four stations serves a different subregion and implies that the stations are associated with travel routes on major roadways. For instance, the map for Southern Avenue Metro Station shows that most of the patrons that park and ride are coming from an area in a line south of the station that corresponds with Indian Head Highway. The customer travel distance chart shows that one third of the patrons are coming from the neighborhoods closest to the station: from one to two miles away. But roughly another 40 percent are traveling from 5 to 25 miles to get to the station. These are long distances, showing the function of the station and line as a commuter rail serving far flung, lower density development. In the five- to ten-mile zone the census blocks with higher numbers of patrons are clearly grouped near to Indian Head Highway, and this result also shows the relative difficulty of accessing Southern Avenue Metro Station from other major roads such as MD 5.

The parking customer distribution shows 1,264 patrons per day. Assuming these patrons used the all-day spaces, this equals an occupancy rate of 64 percent. The high level of usage is somewhat surprising given the distance from this lot to the highway network. The next station located toward Washington, D.C., Congress Heights, does not provide any all-day parking, which likely results in District residents living north of Mississippi Avenue SE backtracking to the Southern Avenue Station to use the parking facilities.

Parking Customer Travel Distances for Southern Avenue Station



Southern Avenue Station Parking Customer Origin







Bus Routes

Twelve bus routes serve the Southern Avenue Metro Station. Bus route P12 operates in two directions from the station; the other bus routes serving Southern Avenue Metro Station terminate at the station. The Southern Avenue Metro Station Bus Routes map (opposite page) provides a general outline of where buses serving the station operate in the vicinity of the project area. Given the complexity of the WMATA bus routes map and the scale of the areas served it is difficult to show the extent of many of the routes, and it is likely that bus stops closer to the station generate the most riders. Some notes on route characteristics included:

- The P12 is the only bi-directional route and the only route in the project area that is classified by WMATA as a "major route." The P12 operates on the main arterials in the project area, Wheeler Road and Silver Hill Road, and it also stops at Iverson Mall and serves the Suitland station before continuing on to the Addison Road Station on the Blue Line.
- The D12, 13, and 14 routes connect the station to neighborhoods southwest of the station. The D13 and 14 operate on Indian Head Highway before making a large loop south of the Beltway to Allentown Road and Joint Base Andrews and then back up Suitland Road to the Suitland station. The D12 uses St. Barnabas Road to Iverson Mall before going to the Suitland station.
- The A2, A42, W2, and 32 routes operate in the District.
- The W19 is a long distance express down Indian Head Highway into Charles County, where a park and ride lot is provided.

Bus Bay Capacity

An inventory of facilities for buses and consideration of how buses operate at the station is important to planning for any potential reconfiguration of the site or vehicular circulation patterns. An initial impression by the project team was that the Southern Green Line stations devote a large amount of space to bus operations and therefore a detailed analysis of the utilization of bus bays was performed.

Southern Avenue Metro Station has 15 bus bays on two bus plazas along a busway loop that crosses over the depressed rail section (**see Figure 26 on page 66**). Bus circulation is clockwise. The Bus Bay Assignments table on this page shows which routes use which bay based upon field observations in April 2012.

Bus Transit Schedule

Route #	Route Name	Operator	AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Saturday	Sunday
32	Pennsylvania Avenue	Metro	8-20	30	15-30	30	30
A2	Anacostia-Congress Heights	Metro	10-12	20	14-20	24	30
A42	Anacostia-Congress Heights	Metro	2 trips	-	1 trip	26-30	35-36
D12	Oxonhill -Suitland	Metro	30	60	20-40	60	60
D13	Oxonhill -Suitland	Metro	-	-	20	-	-
D14	Oxonhill -Suitland	Metro	40	60	-	60	60
P12	Eastover-Addison Road	Metro	20	30	20	30	45
W2	United Medical Center-Anacostia	Metro	-	-	after 9 PM	after 9 PM	
W15	Camp Springs - Indian Head Hwy	Metro	-	-	25-30	-	-
W19	Indian Head Express	Metro	20-25	-	10-25	-	-
TB33	Camp Springs/ Owens Road	The Bus	40	40	40	-	-
TB35	Forest Heights	The Bus	2 trips	-	2 trips	-	-

Source: WMATA Station Bus Maps retrieved April 2012, updated from field observations

Bus Bay Assignments

Bay	Route	Notations	Peak Hour
А	32		7
В	A2, A42		7
С	P12	Westbound	3
D		"Alighting only"	
E	TB 33		2
F	TB 35	WMATA web map has Bay P	1
G		Used for layover	
Н		Used for layover	
J	W19		4
К	W15	Bus stop sign, but no indication on shelter	3
L	D12	WMATA web map has Bay M	3
М	D13, D14		3
Ν		Supervisor	
Р	P12	Eastbound; WMATA web map has Bay L	3
Q	W2	After 9:00 p.m.	2

Source: Field check April 2012 and bus schedules

Only 10 bus bays are currently used during the daytime by buses in service.


Southern Avenue Metro Station

An 11th bay is used after 9:00 p.m. Of the remaining four bays, one bay is designated for "alighting only"; one is designated for a WMATA supervisor; and two are used for layover purposes. WMATA's standard is that the capacity of a bus bay is six buses per hour. Because all routes except the P12 have a layover at the station, Southern Avenue Metro Station currently provides one bay for most routes, although the P12 has two bays.

Based upon existing frequencies, only 6 of the 15 bays are needed. WMATA's 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study projected a need for seven bus bays, indicating the station has a surplus of bus capacity. Additional service is anticipated in the 2008 Transit Service and Operations Plan. Only the new route designated N19 to National Harbor, envisioned to have a 15-minute peak frequency, would affect peak bay capacity needs. The other changes were to provide later service on W15 and The Bus route 33, which would not increase the bay requirement.

Station Circulation and Parking

The main station access points are two signalized intersections on Southern Avenue; one intersection serves the bus loop, the other is the entrance for cars via a wide access road on the perimeter of the station that provides access to the parking areas, two-level garage, and a connection to Oxon Run Drive. The kiss and ride circulation is a loop on top of the parking garage, with a drop off area next to a skywalk and escalator at the station entrance. A large high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lot appears unused.

Pedestrian Access at the Station

A sidewalk is provided along Southern Avenue, which is a primary pedestrian route to the station, and a sidewalk is provided on one side of the access road from Oxon Run Drive. However, pedestrian paths to the station entrance itself are not clear. Field observations showed that desired, informal pedestrian paths, i.e., "short cuts," that were visible on the ground where turf is worn down to bare dirt, seemed to be intentionally blocked by WMATA fencing. The sidewalk from Oxon Run Drive leads directly into the garage, but no path through the garage to the entrance is indicated. The sheer scale of the station parking lots and garage present some difficulties for pedestrians and the lack of landscaping or pedestrian facilities from the far edges of the lots to the entrance creates a harsh and insecure environment for pedestrians arriving via car as well as those walking to the station. The Metro fence along Southern Avenue acts as a barrier between the station and the adjacent neighborhood. It inhibits pedestrian access to the station from the northeast, requiring pedestrians approaching from this direction to walk to the far northwestern end of the site to access the station.

Pedestrians approaching the station from Valley Terrace (the neighborhood across Southern Avenue) can legally cross Southern Avenue at a controlled intersection at the vehicular entrance to the station. The informal dirt paths highlighted in this photograph, indicate that pedestrians approaching from the north are not crossing the street and bus lanes at the designated crosswalk, but are using a more direct route to the station and crossing the bus lanes in multiple locations.



There is no clear pedestrian linkage through the parking garage. Pedestrians approaching the station from the neighborhoods southeast of the Metro station have to walk through the parking garage to access the station. There is no designated or striped walkway to navigate through the garage, resulting in a dangerous environment for pedestrians and vehicles. Low lighting levels in the garage also contribute to an unsafe pedestrian environment.



The well-worn informal path highlighted in this photograph, depicts the amount of pedestrian activity generated from the neighborhoods to the east of Oxon Run Drive and the need for better pedestrian connections from this area.







Sidewalk Inventory and Pedestrian Access

An inventory of existing sidewalks and gaps in the sidewalk network was performed and a graphic created for the area within a half mile of each station and adjacent neighborhoods. This inventory was based on an impervious surfaces GIS layer maintained by M-NCPPC that showed where concrete sidewalks exist, and also checked against an aerial photograph and supplemented with limited field observations. The analysis of pedestrian access also indicates where significant topographical or other barriers exist that hinder pedestrian movement.

In the case of the Southern Avenue Metro Station, major barriers including the Oxon Run stream and steep slopes block pedestrian movement and development within a quarter mile of the station. Access from residential areas in the District is along Southern Avenue, which has sidewalks on both sides of the street. The only point of pedestrian access from neighborhoods on the county side of the station to the east of the station is from Oxon Run Drive leading to the station access road.

Notable gaps in the sidewalk network are present along 25th Avenue, 26th Avenue, Berkley Street and even a portion of Oxon Run Drive. Some blocks have a sidewalk on one side of the street but not the other. Field observations show that a pedestrian can be walking down a street, such as 25th Place and the sidewalk simply stops. Owners of lots without sidewalks have in some places created barriers to constructing sidewalks, such as low walls or landscaping.

Walk Distance Analysis

While TOD planning typically uses a half-mile radius walk circle to indicate the study focus area, actual walking distances are farther unless a public street is present in a direct path to the station, such as Southern Avenue itself in this area. The walk distance diagram shown on the opposite page seeks to represent this dichotomy by measuring walk distances down public streets or paths. The analysis shows that a direct path does exist down Southern Avenue to the edge of the quarter-mile and half-mile walk circles. However the analysis, primarily based on the distance from the station to individual parcels, is somewhat skewed due to the many very large parcels that extend back from Southern Avenue specifically southwest of the station; rather than arbitrarily marking a line the whole parcel is colored. The analysis is clearer northwest of the station where the half-mile walk extends up streets closer to the station but only touches parcels fronting on Southern Avenue near the edge of the walk circle. Of particular note is the lack of access to the townhouses directly east of the station due to private security fencing that fences these

townhouses off from the station access road. This fence forces transit patrons from this area to walk all the way out to Oxon Run Drive and then turn back down Anvil Lane, and therefore an area close to the station is not even within an actual half-mile walk. On the other hand, an off-street sidewalk is provided that provides access from the eastern end of the station access road into the townhouses on the other side of Oxon Run Drive, which extends the half-mile walk a bit further than taking a route along the private drives. In general due to barriers and lack of public right-of-way, more than half of the land within the walk circle lies beyond an actual half-mile walk distance, indicating a real challenge to TOD.

Bicycle Facilities

At present there are no off-street bicycle trails or striped on-street bicycle lanes in the project area. The Master Plan of Transportation calls for:

- Oxon Run Stream Valley Trail to run through parkland on an off-street path that parallels the stream and Oxon Run Drive.
- An on-street bicycle lane along 23rd Parkway.

Field observations noted a narrow right-of-way along 23rd Parkway, but a bike lane could replace a marked lane that seems to be for on-street parking.



Abrupt end to the sidewalk on 25th Place in Hillcrest Heights.



Berkely Street east of 24th Avenue lacks a sidewalk on either side



A pedestrian is forced to walk on the road along 23rd Parkway.



Pattern of Land Ownership

Land Ownership Data Analysis and Classification System

In order to consider the potential for new development and redevelopment at each station, a parcel-by-parcel analysis of land ownership was performed. Data from the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (December 31, 2011) was referenced to parcel data maintained by M-NCPPC, providing both a name of the current owner and a measurement of the size of each parcel in acres. The classification system used on the ownership pattern map (Figure 28) shows the type of ownership by government entity and private owners, with the private property divided into three types that provide an indication of the ease or difficulty of land use change from the perspective of ownership. "Investor," or real estate broker, ownership indicates that the current owner of the property is seeking to develop or sell the property as a commercial transaction. "For sale or vacant" property has similar potential for short-term change in ownership, but indicates that the current owner is not a real estate developer, or that the land is simply vacant and may have unrealized potential given its location near the station. The third type is "business or small holding," which indicates that an ongoing business use is most likely the primary consideration for the property owner, and any consideration of a land use change for TOD is a more difficult proposition. These three classifications are subjectively applied by the planning team, at times based on discussions with key landowners, and in other cases based only on current uses and available data.

Multifamily residential is in most, but not all cases, considered a stable land use, and one that contributes to the overall TOD goal, so those properties are not considered likely to change in the short and medium term. In general, but again with some exceptions, single-family dwelling types are not included in the classification system given that the small lots and stable land use make redevelopment unlikely.

Pattern of Land Ownership

The pattern of land use in the vicinity of the Southern Avenue station is straightforward, although the small number of large parcels disguises the actual complexity of the topography.

A—WMATA owns 77.1 acres at the station. The largest parcel is 35 acres stretching from the steep hilltop on the south of the property through the station and parking structure up to Southern Avenue. Flanking this are two parcels on relatively flat land that total 27

acres, and on the western part of the property are four additional parcels totalling 15 acres that are bisected by 2 acres of abandoned right-of-way. Development of WMATA property at Southern Avenue is constrained by WMATA's policy to maintain existing commuter parking supply, and by steep slopes, streams, and a pond. While the property presents many difficulties to TOD development, the available acres do provide some potential sites.

B—The former Byrne Manor property is southeast and adjacent to the WMATA property, and a small part provides access to Southern Avenue. The Byrne Manor house previously owned by the Knights of Columbus was damaged by a fire and the property is now owned by a real estate broker: SFC, LLC. The two parcels are 15.2 acres total, climbing up a hill from Southern Avenue and having an intermittent stream and steep slopes located on the smaller of the two parcels. The property appears to be for sale.

C—The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion Church is the largest landowner in the Southern Avenue station study area. Their property totals 101 acres in three groupings of parcels on both sides of Wheeler Hills Road. The largest parcel (labeled "C") is located at the end of Wheeler Hills Road, with 72 acres extending from the WMATA and SFC properties down to Barnaby Run stream corridor. The second property—D— is located on the south side of Wheeler Hills Road, consisting of 23 acres. A small 0.7 acre lot has a house on it with the ownership listed as the Full Gospel A.M.E. Zion Church, which is different than the shorter church name and may indicate a different owner. The third property—E—fronts on Southern Avenue and is five acres. All of the A.M.E. Zion Church property is for sale.

F—A seven acre parcel lies behind a gas station at the corner of Southern Avenue and Wheeler Hills Road, spanning the two roads with frontage on each. This property has a vacant and partially dismantled former grocery store. Lee & Seo Investment Company, Inc. owns the property and some interest has been shown in redeveloping the grocery store and additional retail.

G—The Prince George's County Housing Authority owns a four acre property fronting on Southern Avenue adjacent to the Forest Hills Apartments. A senior housing apartment was demolished on this property and the Housing Authority is working to redevelop the site.

H—M-NCPPC owns a number of properties in and adjacent to the study area, including two parcels south of Wheeler Hills Road

S B

between properties owned by A.M.E. Zion Church. A single-family dwelling seems to straddle a 0.4 acre lot and Commission property that provides access to Wheeler Hills Road on a 5.4 acre parcel. A portion of the Commission property south of Wheeler Hills Road (indicated with a "H") could be included in a development plan for the area, given that the northern part of the property is not needed for stream protection; however, the sale of any parkland owned by the Commission is a difficult process and the land may have restrictions on its sale due to the type of monies used to purchase the property or other deed restrictions. The Commission also owns a number of parcels to the east of the station providing a buffer along Oxon Run stream, and also a parcel southeast of the station at Panorama Elementary School, that land used for athletic fields and courts, stormwater maintenance, and protection of very steep slopes at the end of Oxon Run Drive.

I—North of the Commission property, at the current end of Wheeler Hills Road, is a rehabilitation center on property owned by the State of Maryland. The four structures on the property look to be in good condition.

Potential for Change

Between the WMATA, A.M.E. Zion Church, and SFC, LLC properties there is a large amount of undeveloped land available within the vicinity of the Southern Avenue Metro Station, and this land is held by only three owners. The real impediment to future development may be the steep topography that covers these sites. The SFC, LLC, and A.M.E. Zion Church parcel ("C") at the end of Wheeler Hills Road together total 87 acres, and the majority of this land looks developable, but connections down the bluff to the station would need to go through the steepest part of the WMATA property, otherwise access would be from Southern Avenue and Wheeler Hills Road.

Closer in to the station, relatively flat land south of the station, currently used for parking, could be redeveloped, but replacement parking must be provided according to current WMATA policies. The ten acre parcel to the east of the station has potential for infill development, excluding the portion used for a stormwater pond. This site has frontage on Oxon Run Drive and along the station access road, and it is relatively flat.



Opportunities and Challenges

Key Issues Summary:

- The station location on Southern Avenue is not well connected to the regional roadway system.
- The station site is isolated between steep slopes to the south and the Oxon Run stream corridor to the north.
- Large parcels of undeveloped land are available for development south of the station, but are cut off by a bluff.
- WMATA owns excess land on top of the bluff and there is potential for infill on underutilized station land.
- The A.M.E. Zion Church is selling 110 acres of land, in three sites, along Wheeler Hills Road.
- Department of Housing and Community Development will redevelop its vacant property along Southern Avenue.
- A former grocery site is available for renovation, redevelopment, and/or infill near the corner of Wheeler Road and Southern Avenue.
- The former Byrne Manor site is available for redevelopment.
- At an elevation of 270 feet, the top of the bluff offers outstanding views to the north and west, including views of the Washington Monument, National Cathedral, and Capitol dome.
- United Medical Center and other destinations in the District generate some transit riders, but the pedestrian environment along Southern Avenue is challenged by four lanes of traffic and the isolating lack of building frontage.
- There is only a single connection from the station to the Hillcrest Heights neighborhood, via the station access road and Oxon Run Drive.



Large parcels of land are available for development along Wheeler Hills Road on the bluff above the Southern Avenue Metro Station.



Surface parking lots at the Southern Avenue Metro Station present a security issue given the lack of surrounding development, but they also present potential for infill at the station.



Naylor Road Metro Station offers significant potential for place-driven development.



Station Area Overview

Naylor Road Metro Station is located at the northernmost corner of the Hillcrest Heights neighborhood between Naylor Road (MD 637), Branch Avenue (MD 5), and Suitland Parkway. The confluence of these three roadways carrying high volumes of traffic passing between the District and the county makes the Naylor Road Metro Station area an important gateway into Maryland and Prince George's County. But what is most striking about the area is how quickly the relatively urban environment of the District, with narrow two lane roads, changes to the wide open suburban highway environment that is MD 5.

The alignment of the Green Line parallels Oxon Run as it continues northeast from the Southern Avenue Metro Station, crossing into the Suitland Parkway corridor immediately west of Naylor Road. From there, the parkway and the Green Line both follow a tributary of Oxon Run to the east of the Naylor Road station, utilizing the topography of stream valleys for major transportation infrastructure, in areas that were too difficult to farm or parcel for development.

The land form and roadways create a unique location for the station with the parkway framing the station and separating it from neighborhoods to the north. The station itself is also different in that the guideway is elevated, crossing over Naylor Road and Branch Avenue, with an elevated center platform that is visible from a distance and that affords views from the platform of the surrounding area, unlike the below grade platforms at the other three Southern Green Line stations. The station spans the distance between Naylor Road and Branch Avenue. Its associated parking and bus bays occupy more than half of the triangle of land formed by the juncture of these two roads. Given this relatively small site, the Naylor Road station has by far the smallest number of parking spaces of any of the four stations.

Branch Avenue, or MD 5, is a dominant presence in the station area as it transitions from two lanes north of the parkway to six lanes at Curtis Drive. In fact the station might have been named Branch Avenue since the station sits directly adjacent to the road—much closer than at the station labeled Branch Avenue Metro Station two stops away, which is actually more than a half mile from MD 5 on Auth Way. But the commercial development along MD 5 leading to the Naylor Road station seems so highway oriented and the environment so hostile to pedestrians that the station seems curiously disconnected from the major roadway. The station site itself even has a tall berm that separates the short term parking from the backs of businesses that front on Branch Avenue. In this sense the station is clearly turned toward Naylor Road, and most pedestrians use Naylor to access the bus plaza leading to the station entrance. But Naylor Road is also cut off from the high density development immediately south of the station by a change in elevation and discontinuous street network.

To the east of the station, on the east side of Branch Avenue, is a shopping center that now houses a church and roller skating rink. This property is a prime redevelopment site for transit-oriented development. An investor has developed two different schemes for reusing the site, both of which have stalled out. Other key sites in the area include an undeveloped block on the southeast corner of Curtis Drive and MD 5 and an underutilized block that is mostly vacant save for a nightclub at Oxon Run Drive and Naylor Road.

With the big apartment buildings, night club, motel, and numerous liquor stores, the area surrounding the station is quite different than the quiet residential streets of the rest of Hillcrest Heights or Fleischmans Village east of Branch Avenue. As a gateway to the District, by car and Metro, the area has a transient feel to it, and in its current state is seen as a focus of problems and crime by many neighborhood residents. But the potential for change and improvement is also clear, given that a small number of redevelopment projects could quickly turn the area around.



View from the elevated station platform showing station parking and apartment buildings on a low bluff south of the station.



The difficult pedestrian environment along Branch Avenue, which is state highway MD 5.



Topography

Where the topography of the Southern Avenue Metro Station presents difficult challenges to creating transit-oriented development, the shape of the land near the Naylor Road station, while made of the same stream and slope elements, creates an interesting frame for new development. Oxon Run is a major feature, creating the little valley, and forms a factor in its current land use and transportation infrastructure. The stream passes under Naylor Road and bifurcates into two pipes: the main channel continues under Suitland Parkway and parallels Southern Avenue to the northeast past a cemetery, while a secondary channel forks immediately north of the station under Branch Avenue. Then the parkway and stream together run east to Suitland.

The action of the two streams over time carved out a valley floor leaving more elevated areas on either side of the channel. South of the parkway, the elevations can be thought of as three tiers: the lowest being where the stream runs at around 140 feet above sea level, then a terrace where the station parking lot sits at 170 to 180 feet, and a third level rising 240 to 250 feet at the top of the terrace. The Top of the Hill Apartments and Lynnhill Condominiums make the most of the view from this elevation, while on the east side of Branch Avenue, Overlook Elementary takes its name from the same hill, and an upper-level parking lot was created for the shopping center, now abandoned. The construction of the right-of-way for MD 5 appears to have cut through this hill to reduce its grade and in the process created sharp side slopes, especially evident on the east side of the highway where a handful of small commercial buildings back up to a retaining wall cliff cut out of the hill.

The big hill south of the station limits the number of roadway connections to Naylor Road; Oxon Run Drive meets Naylor at a roundabout and so does Good Hope Avenue, but there are no additional streets between Good Hope and Branch Avenue. This situation makes walking trips to the station from the apartments and other residential streets on the back side of the hill longer, many needing to first go out to Curtis Drive and then walk down MD 5, as shown on **Figure 39 on page 92**. However, while the topography presents some impediments in the Naylor Road station area, the way that the land use has already responded to the elevation changes, with high density apartment blocks on the higher ground near the station, is in keeping with principles of transit-oriented development that seek to place the highest density uses closest to the transit facility. Redevelopment projects can market views from the high ground, as well as the amenity value of all of the open space along the streams and parkway.



The Top of the Hill Apartments, as seen from MD 5, rise above the intersection of Naylor Road and Branch Avenue, at the top of a medium slope at an elevation roughly 240 feet above sea level affording views of the surrounding area.



A Metrorail train is pulling out of the elevated Naylor Station, which itself creates an interesting topographic feature as seen from the parking lot of the shopping center located to the east of Branch Avenue.

Land Use and Zoning

Land Use

The Naylor Road Metro Station is essentially an island since the station, along with its parking lot and a few commercial uses, is separated from the surrounding area by Branch Avenue, Naylor Road, and the Suitland Parkway. Besides a small portion of commercial to the northwest of the station area and two properties on Naylor Road, all of the commercial uses are located along Branch Avenue with a shopping center built at .3 floor area ratio (FAR) across from the station to the east and commercial properties of .1 FAR farther south along Branch Avenue.

Almost all of the high-density residential in this area is within the half-mile walk circle. The highest-density residential development is across Suitland Parkway to the northwest of the station and has 44 DU/acre. The other high-density residential developments are across Naylor Road to the south of the station and across Branch Avenue to the east. It should be noted that there are no residential uses located immediately adjacent to the station and that a large portion of the area in the quarter mile, and to some extent the half mile, is in the Suitland Parkway right-of-way along with, to a lesser extent, Branch Avenue and Naylor Road.

To the southwest there are two garden apartment buildings along with a large institutional use and open space. To the south of the station past the high-density developments there is a townhome development which has a density of 23 DU/acre. The remainder of the land beyond the high-density and townhome developments to the south of the station is used for single-family homes which go from a density of 8.3 DU/acre closer to the station and become less dense the farther from the station, with a density of 5.9 DU/acre. There is an extensive amount of open space across Suitland Parkway to the northeast of the station. In addition, there is a residential subdivision built at 5.9 DU/acre. These uses are cut off from the station area due to the size of the right-of-way for Suitland Parkway. The vast majority of development for the Naylor Road Metro Station Area is located to the south of the station due to the size



of the right-of-way for Suitland Parkway, the county border to the west/northwest, and the large amount of open space to the northeast. The densest development is largely to the southeast either adjacent to or following Branch Avenue. While there are moderate density residential developments to the west, for the most part the southwest/west are dominated by open space, an institutional use and single-family development that becomes less dense farther away from the station.

Zoning

Zoning surrounding Naylor Road station allows for increased density on property closer to the Metro station; however, this zoning and the multifamily residential in the area may pre-date the decision to site the station. In 2008, the Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan consolidated a hodge-podge of C-O, C-S-C, and R-10 (multifamily high-density residential) zoning around the station into areas zoned M-X-T, or mixed-use transportation. The M-X-T zone was identified as "the closest zoning technique available to the county to adequately implement the vision of the sector plan for mixed-use development at key locations," (page 106 of the plan) with the expectation that the zoning would be amended over time to improve its effectiveness.

Open Space Zones—The northern end of Oxon Run Park is within the vicinity of Naylor Road Metro Station. By far, the largest portion of open space zoning in the area is zoned O-S (open space) which allows for low-intensity residential (5 acre) development as well as conservation of land for agriculture, natural resource use, largelot residential estates, and nonintensive recreational use. Near the station, this includes National Cemetery and Overlook Elementary School. It should also be noted that Suitland Parkway may be viewed very similarly to the O-S zoned properties, presenting a wooded natural resource and very large barrier to development.

Residential Zones—Residential zoning around the Naylor Road station is pushed off the major arterials by the M-X-T zones. Few single-family detached properties are zoned within the half-mile walk circle from the station, with the exception of an R-55 (one-family detached residential) enclave located north of Suitland Parkway. A cluster of R-18 (multifamily medium density residential) and R-10 are located to the east of the station, allowing apartment complexes over 12 units per acre.

Commercial Zones—There are very few commercially zoned properties in the area, given the consolidation to M-X-T.

Industrial Zones—There are no industrial zones in the vicinity of Naylor Road station.



Mixed-Use Zones—M-X-T (mixed-use transportation oriented) zoning provides locations for a variety of residential, commercial, and employment uses by mandating that developments include at least two out of the following three use categories: retail businesses, office/research/industrial, and dwellings/hotel/motel. The zone encourages a 24-hour functional environment and must be located near a major intersection or major transit stop or station that will provide adequate transportation facilities for the anticipated traffic. There are no restrictions on lot size or dwelling types, instead the regulations utilize a maximum floor-to-area ratio (FAR) calculation. The intensity of use can be increased by the granting of bonuses, called an "optional method of development." Without bonuses, the development of the site is limited to FAR of 0.4; greater densities, up to a FAR of 8.0 are granted for additions such as theaters, enclosed pedestrian spaces, rooftop activities, and residential uses. A two-step development review process requires submittal and review of a conceptual site plan and detailed site plan. Most of the quarter-mile walk circle south of the station is zoned M-X-T, and this zoning continues south along Branch Avenue.

Figure 33





Building Typology and Urban Form

The Naylor Road station area includes the same mix of singlefamily residential building types found near to Southern Avenue Metro Station, the two station areas both including parts of the Hillcrest Heights neighborhood. South of the station there is a mix of single-family detached, twin houses, and townhouses. On some streets, like Oxon Run Drive, the detached and attached houses blend together so well that only a careful observer sees the difference. A cluster of ranch style and split-level, single-family detached houses is also found just beyond the half-mile circle south of Curtis Drive and east of MD 5 in an area known as Fleischmans Village; and also north of the parkway and east of Branch Avenue between Southern Avenue and the stream.

While the single-family types are near to the station but on the edges of the half-mile circle, it is the presence of larger, taller multifamily residential buildings that distinguishes the Naylor Road station area from the surrounding neighborhoods. The "high rise" apartments at Top of the Hill, Carriage Hill, and Marlborough House apartment complexes have concrete and steel frames with elevator service to climb up to nine stories. The buildings are in the "slab in the park style," meaning they are designed with long double-sided interior corridors in a rectangular plan. The Marlborough House Apartment building is a particularly long slab stretching between Naylor Road and Branch Avenue, in the gap where Southern Avenue should connect. All of these large apartment blocks use surface parking lots, which tend to dominate the site at ground level. The Carriage Hill apartment complex also mixes in walk up garden apartments with four taller buildings at the end of Curtis Drive.

Commercial structures are aligned along MD 5 with a mix of postwar site layouts to accommodate automobile access and parking. The shopping center east of the station is really an early version of the "big box" style layout, with a relatively large rectangular single-story structure arranged to the back of the site with a large parking lot in front. Curiously, the original construction included an upper level parking lot sitting on the terrace above the shopping center, but it is difficult to see how the amount of retail space could have ever required so much parking. What ever the original market response, this type of use and layout failed in this location.

Far more successful have been the strip retail centers and individual drive-in convenience stores south of the station along MD 5. The layout of these sites recognizes and responds to the open highway and accelerating traffic coming out of the District by placing the structure to the back of a relatively shallow site and a single or double bay of parking in front. This allows for very quick drive in access and short walks from the car to the commercial establishment, whether it is restaurant, motel, storefront, or convenience store. Unfortunately this style of building does not usually create an inviting shopping experience for pedestrians. The spaces between buildings are stretched and the parking lots separate pedestrians on the sidewalk, where there is one, from the storefronts and entrances, creating a feeling of isolation and vulnerability walking along a big highway.



Split level houses in the Fleischmans Village on Scottish Avenue



Four concrete and steel frame apartment buildings are part of the Carriage Hill complex on Curtis Drive.



Single-story brick commercial buildings on the east side of MD 5 with a site layout that allows vehicles to drive up to the door, but disallows a walk.

Transportation System

Roadway Network and Traffic Analysis

Naylor Road Metro Station is located at a junction of major traffic routes on the District of Columbia line, which is marked by the alignment of Southern Avenue. Suitland Parkway, a limited access expressway, runs just north of the station and is accessible from Branch Avenue and Naylor Road. Branch Avenue (MD 5) is classified as an arterial in the segment near the Naylor Road station, as is Naylor Road itself (MD 637). All three of these main roadways carry heavy traffic between Prince George's County and the nation's capital.

A segment of Southern Avenue between Naylor Road and Branch Avenue is missing. This gap forces traffic onto the parkway and creates additional turning movements in the general station area, which is already challenged by the amount of traffic moving into and out of the District. A developer that owns property in the District adjacent to and including a potential alignment has indicated interest in extending Southern Avenue; however, the Office of Planning and Development says there are no official plans to bridge this gap at this time.

While the station has good connections to three major roadways, the local street network has no local collector streets in the area on the county side of the parkway. Connections from the Hillcrest Heights neighborhood depend on Oxon Run Drive, with difficult routes from a number of directions. East of MD 5, the street network only connects at Curtis Drive. This system of roads dominated by state highways and an expressway owned by the National Park Service—can barely be thought of as a network or even a hierarchy of roads, since the crucial intermediate level roads are missing. Enhancing connections will be a real challenge necessary to fostering transit-oriented development.

The traffic count and capacity analysis showed at least two roadway segments in the station area that are near or over capacity. The northbound segment of MD 5 from Silver Hill Road to Naylor Road carries over 52,500 vehicles a day, which is 98 percent of its



rated capacity of 53,850 for a LOS of "E." However, county policy is that an LOS of "E" is acceptable in the Developed Tier. Not surprisingly, the two lane segment of Branch Avenue north of the parkway to Southern Avenue is rated as over capacity, with a count of 28,381 and a capacity of 26,920 for LOS "F." This is where the two concepts for Branch Avenue occupy the same space and must be resolved: the road is a two-lane arterial in the District but a multi-lane arterial/freeway in the State of Maryland. This is also where the gap in Southern Avenue forces more traffic onto Branch Avenue simply to get on the parkway, then onto Naylor Road, and then a left turn back onto Southern. A third location where traffic congestion is observed is on Naylor Road from Southern Avenue, across the parkway intersection, and on to Branch Avenue. Cars are always backed up in this segment during the weekday morning and evening peak periods, on the respective side of the road taking them into or out of the District. The count and capacity analysis only shows the LOS at "D" which may indicate that the peak congestion subsides quickly to an open flow the rest of the day and night; however, SHA in its study for the new streetscape has decided to build in the potential for new capacity on Naylor Road to expand it from two to four lanes if needed to meet projected traffic levels modeled for 2030.

Metrorail Service and Ridership

In 2011, the average daily boardings on the Green Line at the Naylor Road station were 3,047, the lowest of the four stations in the project area. Clearly, given the commuter rail function of the Southern Green Line, the fact that the Naylor Road station has only a fraction of the parking spaces of the other stations has lead to lower ridership; however, the station is generating more than seven riders for every parking space at the station, by far the highest rate of the four stations. This indicates other modes of access, as discussed below. However, the peak level of ridership at this station was in 2006 when average daily boardings were 3,402. Since that time, ridership has fallen 10 percent.

In the 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study, the peak half hour for entries was 7:30–8:00 a.m. when 12.5 percent of the daily entries occurred. The peak half hour for exits was 5:30–6:00 p.m. when 12.3 percent of the daily exits occurred. This morning peak is during the same half hour period as the Suitland station, and earlier than at Southern Avenue, but it is 1.5 to 2.0 percent more shallow a peak than those two stations, which are over 14 percent, indicating that boardings are more spread out in time, perhaps because a rush for parking spaces is not as big a factor at Naylor Road.

Travel times from Naylor Road station to other Metro stations are:Gallery Place17 minutesMetro Center24 minutes with transferNational Airport28 minutes with transfer

Mode of Access

Even though Naylor Road station has a relatively small parking lot, driving alone for park and ride access still came in a close second at 29 percent of mode share to riding the bus, which leads all modes at a combined Metrobus and The Bus total of 34 percent. Walking came in third at 21 percent, perhaps reflecting not only the low number of parking spaces but also land use pattern near the station, which places large numbers of potential riders in high-density apartment buildings within an easy walk of the station—an existing condition of transit-oriented development, even though these structures predate the opening of the Green Line. It may also be the case that a big percentage of renters in these apartments are transit dependant, unlike newer apartments at the Branch Avenue station that attract higher income renters that can afford a car.

The absolute number of Metrobus transfers at Naylor Road is only 40 percent of the Southern Avenue Metro Station, but more than double that of the Branch Avenue station.

Naylor Road has the highest percentage of drop-off access at 15 percent.



A Metrorail rider crosses the busway near the entrance to the Naylor Road station.

Metrorail Ridership at Naylor Road Metro Station

Average Weekday Boardings
3047
3165
3144
3260
3325
3402
3194
3092
2839
2637
2373

Source: WMATA, revised data 6/2011

Naylor Road Metro Station Metrorail Rider Access Mode Share

Mode of Access	Number of Metrorail Riders	Percent of Metrorail Riders
MetroBus	965	29
The Bus	174	5
Other Bus	-	0
Automobile SOV Park and Ride	951	29
"Kiss and Ride" Drop Off	490	15
Carpool	13	1
Walk	675	21
Тахі	9	< 1
Bicycle	0	0
Total	3277	100

Source: WMATA, 2007 mode of access data

Parking

The WMATA web site and web page for Naylor Road station provide the following count and breakdown for parking spaces:

- All-day spaces: 368
- Short-term metered spaces: 46
- Additional metered spaces: 0
- Total parking spaces: 414

All spaces are provided in a surface lot. Kiss and ride spaces are provided in a separate surface lot. No high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) parking is provided.

The WMATA Station Access and Capacity Study shows that, in October 2006, almost all of the all-day spaces were occupied. During the Monday–Thursday time period, an average of 110 percent of the spaces were occupied. This level drops to 107 percent on Fridays. An occupancy rate of more than 100 percent indicates either turnover of the spaces during the day, or users parking in non-designated locations. From field observations during April 2012, the high occupancy levels appear confined to the unreserved spaces.

Parking Customer Origin Data

According to the "parking shed" origin data and analysis provided by WMATA on the origin of patrons on October 4, 2011, and reflected in the chart at right, the majority of parking patrons at Naylor Road station are arriving from less than three miles away. This result alone shows a dramatically different pattern of travel for this station compared to the other three, very likely due to the tight parking supply that reduces the odds of finding a space and makes a stop at the station less worth the effort for long distance commuters. And yet, if the other lots are full at Branch Avenue and Suitland, some patrons still try and the number of cars parked at the station from 5 to 10 and 10 to 25 miles away is still roughly 25 percent each day.

Perhaps even more intriguing from the point of view of planning for TOD is the high percentage of people who drive from less than a mile away, comprising nearly 30 percent of the total. The question of why so many patrons chose to drive rather than walk or ride a bike is raised, and the answer may lie in the poor pedestrian environment and complete lack of any bicycle facilities. Metro riders coming from the north side of Suitland Parkway may find it too difficult to walk, and the "ped shed" map (opposite page) does show a grouping of park and ride customers coming from the District.

Other concentrations of riders come from areas to the south along Branch Avenue and connecting roads including Silver Hill Road and St. Barnabas Road, primarily within two miles of the station. Beyond three miles the origins are widely scattered and most Census blocks are generating only one or two riders, unlike the other three stations that show strong correlation between origins and travel along major roadways. The good access to Naylor Road from Suitland Parkway and Pennsylvania Road (MD 4) generates only a handful of riders that park at the station, with those coming from neighborhoods with direct access to the parkway at Suitland Road.

Parking Customer Travel Distances for Naylor Road Metro Station







Naylor Road station is served by 11 bus routes, 10 of them Metrobus and one The Bus route. All of these routes terminate at the station. The 34, 36, 39 and M2 routes all go north into the District, following Naylor Road or Southern Avenue. The 34 Naylor Road route and the 36 Pennsylvania Avenue route offer the most frequent service with 15 to 20 minute headways during the morning and evening peak and half hour service during the rest of the day.

Within the county, The Bus route 32 travels south of the Beltway along Temple Hills Road to the Clinton area south of the airforce base, and the F14 goes all the way north to the New Carrollton Metro Station. Otherwise the service is divided between the "C" Hillcrest Heights Line and "H" Marlow Heights-Temple Hills Line. The C12 and C14 routes both operate relatively short routes in the project area neighborhoods on the way to the Branch Avenue station. The C12 cuts through the heart of Hillcrest Heights on 23rd Parkway then up to Iverson Mall, while the C14 operates mostly on Branch Avenue.

The H11 and H12 follow Branch Avenue south to Colebrook Drive and Iverson Street, then wind back to Marlow Heights Shopping Center before proceeding south to Temple Hills. The H13 takes a more direct route down Branch Avenue to St. Barnabas Road.

Bus Bay Capacity

The station has eight bus bays arrayed in an "L" shape (**see Figure 38 on page 90**). Bus circulation is in a counter-clockwise direction. Three bays are located along the entrance driveway from Branch Avenue, and the remaining five bays are located on the bus plaza perpendicular to and heading away from the station entrance. A separate layover area large enough for four buses is located east of the kiss and ride lot.

Only seven bays are currently used. The remaining bay is designated for "alighting only" and is also used by the WMATA operator shuttle. The bus bay assignment table at right shows which routes use which bay based upon field observations in April 2012.

WMATA's standard is that the capacity of a bus bay is six buses per hour. At Naylor Road station there is one in each direction for most routes because all routes terminate and have a layover at the station.

Bus Transit Schedule

Route #	Route Name	Operator	Bus Headway in Minutes				
			AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Saturday	Sunday
34	Naylor Road	Metro	20 min.	30 min.	15 min.	30 min.	30 min.
36	Pennsylvania Avenue	Metro	15-30	30	15-30	30	30
39	Pennsylvania Avenue Limited	Metro	15	-	-	-	-
C12	Hillcrest Heights	Metro	-	-	25	-	-
C14	Hillcrest Heights	Metro	25-30	60	-	60	-
F14	Sheriff Road-Capitol Heights	Metro	30	50	30	50	-
H11	Marlow Heights-Temple Hills	Metro	-	-	15-30	-	-
H12	Marlow Heights-Temple Hills	Metro	18-35	60	-	60	60
H13	Marlow Heights-Temple Hills	Metro	20	-	-	-	-
M2	Fairfax Village-Naylor Road	Metro	20	-	20	-	-
TB32	Camp Springs/Iverson Mall	The Bus	30	30	30	-	-

Source: WMATA Station Bus Maps retrieved April 2012, updated from field observations

Bus Bay Assignments

Вау	Route	Notations	Peak Frequency
А	M2		3
В	F14		2
С		"alighting only"	
D	H11, H12, H13		4
E	C12, C14		3
F	36, 39		8
G	34		4
Н	TB 32		2
		Separate layover area for 4 buses	

Source: Field Check April 2012 and bus schedules



The 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study projected a need for eight bus bays, indicating the station has about the right bus capacity. Additional bus service to this station is anticipated in the 2008 Transit Service and Operations Plan (TSOP), but none of the changes will increase peak bus numbers. The TSOP changes call for adding earlier and later Saturday service on F14; earlier Sunday service on H11, H12, and H13; and later weekday service. Changes also include beginning Saturday service on The Bus route 32. Additionally, routes C12 and C14 would be taken over by The Bus from WMATA.

Station Circulation and Parking

The driveway to the all-day parking lot is from the Oxon Run Drive roundabout, which then twists, paralleling Naylor Road to a payment gate and into the lot. The circulation from this drive and lot is completely separate from the bus driveway and the smaller, short-term parking lot on the east side of the site. A third entrance to the station is from Branch Avenue just south of the elevated guideway.

Pedestrian Access at the Station

The most telling indication of the difficulties that pedestrians face getting to the Naylor Road station entrance is that WMATA has needed to reinforce its fence in the northwest corner of the main parking lot because its customers continued to cut a hole in the chain links to make a more direct route from the north. The walk from north of the parkway is difficult and crossing the intersection of Naylor Road with the parkway especially so. Vehicles are traveling at freeway speeds on the parkway and many pedestrians find themselves trapped on the parkway median unable to make it across in a single cycle of the lights. Both directions on the parkway have free right turns onto Naylor Road, and walkers can also get stuck on the triangle between the main drive lanes and the turn lanes. There is a sidewalk on the west side of Naylor Road north and south of the parkway, but not on the east side where the station is located. The first opening in the WMATA fence coming from the north or west is near the payment gate past the first roundabout, but this only leads into the parking lot.

Pedestrian facilities coming up Oxon Run Drive are also inadequate. There is no sidewalk on the north side of the street and the very narrow sidewalk on the south side is in a state of disrepair.

Field observations showed that a main walking route to the station is from Branch Avenue to Naylor Road; Naylor having sidewalks and a landscaped An informal pedestrian path is worn down the hill from the shopping center east of the station and Branch Avenue. This path is actually a short cut for residents of the Carriage Hills Apartments to the station. There is a signalized intersection, but no crosswalk at this location and no sidewalk along the east side of Branch Avenue.

Pedestrian connections from the north along Naylor Road are virtually non-existent. There is no sidewalk along the east side of Naylor Road and no pedestrian access to the station until the intersection of Naylor Road and Good Hope Avenue. A fence and hedge along Naylor Road further inhibit pedestrian connections from the north and west of the station.

An indirect pedestrian route at the intersection of Naylor Road and Good Hope Avenue makes accessing the site difficult on foot and is largely ignored by pedestrians. The informal path highlighted in this photograph is directly in line with the station entrance, indicating that pedestrians are choosing a more direct route to access the station, even though this path cuts across the vehicular entrance at an angle that reduces visibility.

This pedestrian entrance is not connected to any sidewalks within or outside the station, requiring pedestrians to cut across the parking lot and walk along/cut across the vehicular entrance/exit lanes from Naylor Road. This is a very dangerous pedestrian access point; however, it is the only connection for pedestrians arriving at the station from the north and west without walking up Naylor Road to Good Hope Avenue.









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buffer on both sides of the street. This walk is better than continuing on MD 5 and once the walker reaches the top of the Good Hope Avenue roundabout it is a straight line to the station entrance. An informal path indicates that many pedestrians cross the bus drive at an angle rather than using the marked crosswalks. The bus plaza itself is a good pedestrian facility, wide and protected from traffic.

The SHA streetscape project will go a long way to improving pedestrian facilities in the station area, including construction of a sidewalk on the east side of Branch Avenue, on the east side of Naylor Road. The project will also include full crosswalks on all four legs of its intersection with the parkway. This project, when funded and constructed, will solve a number of the pedestrian and bicycle facility deficiencies identified in the 2011 Naylor Road Metro Station Area Accessibility Study. The streetscape project will also stripe the first on-street bicycle lanes in the project area along Naylor Road and Branch Avenue; these lanes though will only go to the project limit, which is Curtis Drive. The 2009 Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (MPOT) calls for bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the station area, including a multi-use trail in the parkland along Oxon Run, a Suitland Parkway Trail, and shared-use paths or sidewalks with designated bike lanes along Branch Avenue.

Sidewalk Inventory and Pedestrian Access

The sidewalk inventory shows a general lack of sidewalks in the station area, particularly on the edges of the half-mile walk circle in Hillcrest Heights as wells as Fleischmans Village. The missing sidewalks segments in the vicinity of 25th Avenue and Berkley Street are described in the Southern Avenue analysis. The sidewalk network is more complete on and north of 28th Parkway, but unfortunately getting to the station from this area means walking out to Oxon Run Drive, Curtis Drive, and Branch Avenue. A more direct route is lacking.

Of particular note is the lack of sidewalks on either side of Scottish Avenue in Fleischmans Village, leading to Curtis Drive. This is a critical route of access to the station from this subdivision; however, the inventory also shows that only one of the side streets has a sidewalk.

Walk Distance Analysis

Actual walking distances come close to the quarter-mile circle south of the station. All of the triangle between Naylor and Branch is accessible on a public right-of-way as is most of the shopping center east of Branch Avenue. The lack of a pedestrian route up the hill on the south side of Naylor Road means that pedestrians must walk to Curtis Drive then up to the apartments. The twin house and townhouse development along Curtis Drive and on 31st Avenue is beyond an actual half-mile walk. But given its direct access to the station, all the properties south of the station fronting on Branch Avenue are within the half-mile walk, and nearly all of the parcels going north into the District. Suitland Parkway is a considerable barrier to pedestrian movements, yet it is the forced detour around the WMATA fence that shortens up the actual walking distance on the north part of Naylor Road, keeping it from extending into the District.



Naylor Road's existing sidewalk, buffer, and landscaping as well as a direct path to the station entrance make it a favored route for pedestrians.



A pedestrian trapped on the median in the middle of Suitland Parkway at its intersection with Naylor Road.



Barbed wire and a reinforced chain link fence show WMATA's determination to block an informal access point to the station from Naylor Road.





Pattern of Land Ownership

The pattern of land ownership is markedly different at Naylor Road than at the other three stations, with smaller parcels and more owners. This situation will complicate land assembly for redevelopment; however, in a few locations the land assembly is already complete.

A—The size of WMATA's holdings is a good indication of the overall pattern, with just under 11 acres it is a fraction of what WMATA owns at the Southern Avenue or Branch Avenue stations. Given this small amount of land to offer, WMATA has indicated that it will not seek joint development at Naylor Road station unless adjacent land can also be assembled on the remainder of the "triangle" between Branch Avenue and Naylor Road. These other properties—**B**—are owned by five separate entities, and each has an active business located on the site. A seafood restaurant and a small motel use a total of 2.5 acres fronting Branch Avenue south of the station, and liquor stores, personal service, and another restaurant occupy the tip of the triangle where Naylor Road meets Branch Avenue.

C—The biggest opportunity in the station area is on the east side of Branch Avenue where seven parcels have been assembled by Branch Avenue Partners, LLC. Together this property is 14.9 acres, the largest part being a former shopping center and two large parking lots. While the shopping center is currently used for a church and roller rink, these operations understand that the owner is working toward redevelopment. The assembled property also includes a small retail building immediately south of the entrance to the shopping center parking lot and two additional parcels further down the road that have structures but are vacant. Between the parcels owned by Branch Avenue Partners are two parcels each 0.3 acres. These are held by individual owners who operate businesses there: a restaurant and liquor store and small retailing business. During previous efforts to locate a large GSA-solicited office building on the shopping center site, the Branch Avenue Partners were unable to successfully negotiate with the owners of these parcels in the middle of the frontage to join the project.

D—Near the corner of Curtis Drive and Branch Avenue there are three businesses on five parcels totaling 3.2 acres, including a liquor

store/laundromat, a fast-food takeout, and a convenience store at the corner owned by Southland Corporation. Members of the Lewis family own two of these parcels and they also own a 4.3 acre parcel—E—to the south of Curtis Drive between Scottish Avenue and Branch Avenue. A broker is working with the Lewis family to sell the property south of Curtis Drive.

F—On the west side of Branch Avenue south of Curtis Drive is Sam's Car Wash, a business that has operated at the location for decades. Members of the Schiattareggia family own the car wash business and two strip retail centers fronting on Branch Avenue. While this property is within walking distance of the station, any change in the foreseeable future is unlikely.

G-The Lynnhill Condominiums located on Good Hope Avenue require special consideration due to the blighting influence that the property is having on surrounding properties in the Naylor Road station area and the complicated ownership of the two mid-rise buildings. The Lynnhill Condominiums have been the recipient of frequent citations from the Department of Environmental Resources in regard to building code violations and also the homeowners association has struggled to pay utility bills and maintain the basic upkeep of the property. There are 219 units in the two buildings. Some owners hold multiple units and an unknown number of owners do not live on the premises, but instead they rent their units. Local police officers note frequent trips to the buildings. At a number of points in recent years, Prince George's County has begun a process to condemn the buildings or deny occupancy. The difficult work of assembling these condominium units into a single ownership is unlikely to be undertaken by private investors.

H—North and down a steep slope from the Lynnhill Condominiums individual investors own an acre of land west of a gas station. These owners have explored the potential for a mixed-use residential building, but no formal site plan has been submitted for review.

I—The block bounded by Naylor Road, Good Hope Avenue, and Oxon Run Drive has a single use on the two parcels facing Naylor Road, which is the Visions Nightclub owned by 3225 Richer Road LLC. The parking lot on this property was recently used as informal paid parking for the station; however, this practice was halted by the county. A one-acre property fronting on Oxon Run Drive is owned by the Shamrock Apartment Motel Inc., but the property is vacant of any structure. Tamaqua Realty Co. Inc. owns the 1.9 acre parcel that wraps around Good Hope Avenue to Oxon Park Street. This parcel is vacant and forested, continuing the same slope that faces the station along Naylor Road.

J—Kendall Baptist Church owns property north of the station and the parkway. A church is located on this property; however, the 4.6-acre parcel is deep and could support some kind of development related to Metro users if the church was interested in development.

Potential for Change

Branch Avenue Partners has an approved site plan for redeveloping their shopping center property to 1.2 million square feet of leased office space for GSA tenants. The property is owned by a single investor for the purpose of redevelopment; so the potential for change on that property is high, but the GSA solicitation was cancelled in 2011, and the market for office in this location is weak. The owner has also considered a option that emphasizes residential uses. Consolidation of properties fronting on the east side of Branch Avenue may be necessary to maximize the value of any project on the properties owned by Branch Avenue Partners. The block south of Curtis Drive is currently for sale, so the potential for change is high.

Intervention by the county to address the redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Lynnhill Condominium property may be necessary to secure financing for other projects in the station area.

The relatively small amount of commuter parking at the station (less than 400 spaces) reduces the replacement cost to WMATA and its partners in any joint development project, but the perceived need to assemble adjacent projects could be an impediment to change, and in the end the total return in redeveloping less than ten acres of land to WMATA may also make the project harder to move.



Opportunities and Challenges

Key Issues Summary: ■ Investors purchased a shopping center in order to redevelop and market station access.

• Land assembly for existing properties and businesses along both sides of Branch Avenue is difficult. These properties and businesses include a small hotel, restaurants, and liquor stores.

■ WMATA will only consider joint development if the rest of the Naylor to Branch triangle can be assembled.

- A relatively small number of WMATA parking spaces are to be replaced or relocated.
- Property at Curtis Drive and Branch Avenue is for sale.
- The Legend Nightclub block is underutilized, with two-thirds of it vacant.



A former shopping center to the east of the Naylor Road station.



• Owners of property along Naylor Road, west of the gas station, are interested in mixed-use TOD.

- The missing segment of Southern Avenue forces traffic into Prince George's County and onto Suitland Parkway. It does not make the best use of the grade separated Branch Avenue passage under the parkway.
- Potential exists for excellent views of the parkway and other open space from elevated areas south of Naylor Road and north of Curtis Drive.
- Open space is underutilized and the stream corridor is interesting.
- The SHA streetscape project will improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Naylor Road and Branch Avenue north of Curtis Drive.

Main routes to the station are along Oxon Run Drive and Branch Avenue, but poor connections exist in elevated areas and to the local streets.



Lynnhill Condominiums, located to the south of Naylor Road station.



Suitland Metro Station



Suitland Metro Station

Station Area Overview

Of all the communities along the Southern Green Line, Suitland has perhaps the most recognized name. This is likely due to the history of Suitland as a settlement going back more than 130 years. The 1974 publication, *The Neighborhoods of Prince George's County*, says that "the name of Suitland first appears on a map of 1878 and was probably applied as the name of a distribution point for mail delivery, at the crossroads of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road." (Page 221.) The name comes from Mr. S. Taylor Suit who owned a 450-acre farm and established Suitland Road connecting the area to the District of Columbia. A small hamlet formed at the rural crossroads, which continues to be the conceptual focus of the community even though current land uses are not prominent destinations.

The Suitland Federal Center is the distinguishing feature in the station area, and along with Suitland Parkway and the Smithsonian Institution to the west of the parkway, federally owned property fills more than half of the half-mile circle station area. Silver Hill Road (MD 458) is a six-lane arterial that is the main spine of the community crossing over the four-lane, limited access Suitland Parkway. These large-scale elements dominate the Suitland station area, creating an uneasy juxtaposition with the surrounding residential community.

Construction of a new Census Bureau building and demolition of the older building (visible in the 2009 aerial photograph on the opposite page) pulled the federal buildings even further back from the crossroads intersection, leaving a void reinforced by a landscaped open space. Gas stations occupy two of the other corners at Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road, and a small parking lot the third.

A variety of small businesses occupy strip retail centers and individual buildings fronting on Silver Hill Road both east and west of the station. Directly across the street from the station these businesses include a tire store and automobile repair shop, a laundromat, and a small engine repair shop—none of which cater to the thousands of transit riders. A convenience store with adjacent takeout restaurant and liquor store may generate some sales from patrons walking to the station; however, the generally poor condition of these structures and operations stand in contrast to the station itself and the impressive architecture of the Census headquarters.

A security fence surrounding the federal campus is a point of contention between the federal presence and the community, yet this physical barrier is just one indication of deeper divisions that can also be said to include the function of the station for commuters driving to it. Some new investments have been made in recent years in the construction of new senior housing east of the crossroads, as well as renovations to the stock of garden apartments, yet there is no apparent investment in new commercial or mixeduse development in response to the opening of the station in 2001.

Prince George's County intervened to address the deteriorating condition of the Suitland Manor apartments north of the crossroads by acquiring and clearing 19 acres. Hoped for reinvestment is slow in coming, but this site is an opportunity just a half mile away from the station. The existing condition of the commercial frontage and the civic realm will continue to be challenges to future private investment.



The U.S. Census Bureau headquarters building in Suitland, designed by Skidmore Owens and Merrill Architects.



Across the highway from the Census Bureau and the station, a small store meets the convenience shopping needs of nearby residential areas.



The Suitland Corners block received a façade improvement in the late 1990s funded by the State of Maryland.


Topography

Silver Hill Road runs along the top of a ridge separating the Oxon Run and Henson Creek watersheds. The land to either side of the highway presents a relatively flat area for development. And yet the steep slope analysis shows that the tributaries of these bigger streams nearly meet at Suitland station, and their related steep slopes complicate the development pattern and encourage a disjointed roadway system in the area south of the station.

The topography of these streams played a major factor in the alignment of Suitland Parkway during World War II and the Metro Green Line 50 years later. Historical aerial photographs indicate that these two ravines were never bridged and slopes and wet soils made it impossible to till. Thus the corridor was undeveloped when the War Department was looking for a route to connect to the new airfield in Camp Springs. The 40 foot difference between the floor of the ravine and the adjacent upland also made it a good candidate for a limited access roadway. The relocation of the Census Bureau to Suitland was planned and implemented in the same years as construction of the parkway.

The fact that the federal government owned Suitland Parkway favored it as the final alignment of the Metro Green Line, since property acquisition could be held to a minimum compared to other alignments. However, this lower cost approach is problematic to the future potential for station area economic development, given that the environmental constraints and barriers in the station areas are substantial.



Suitland Parkway at the on-ramp from Silver Hill Road presents a bucolic aesthetic as it flows through a stream valley cut by a tributary to Oxon Run.



The tiered landscape at the Suitland station climbs from its low point at the parkway to the Metro parking garage and then the high elevation of the Census Bureau.

Land Use and Zoning

Land Use

The developed portion of the Suitland station area is dominated by three uses: institutional, commercial, and high-density residential. Suitland Parkway also takes a substantial amount of area within the half-mile walk circle. Silver Hill Road divides the institutional uses from the commercial and residential development to the south. The federal institutional uses of the Suitland Federal Center east of the parkway and the Smithsonian campus west of the parkway use roughly half of the station area walk circle. The transportation use of the Metro station itself uses a large amount of land north of Silver Hill Road.

Commercial uses front on the south side of Silver Hill Road across from the Federal Center, as well as the frontage along Suitland Road north of its intersection with Silver Hill Road. High-density residential developments, most in a range from 20 to 25 dwelling units per acre, are located behind the fronting commercial areas east of the parkway, except along the northern part of Suitland Road where the ground was cleared for the redevelopment of the former Suitland Manor site. Lower medium-density single-family residential is adjacent to the high-density residential uses, so that in much of the station area the land uses are layered: commercial frontage, high-density residential, then low-density residential.

Commercial uses are clustered at the intersection of St. Barnabas Road and Silver Hill Road where automobile traffic is concentrated, yet a group of low-density residential lots separate this commercial node from the bigger commercial shopping centers at Branch Avenue. Iverson Mall straddles Iverson Street with a development that has a 0.9 floor to area ratio (FAR), indicating its two-level mall, which is three times that of the single-story Marlow Heights Shopping Center at 0.3 FAR.

An area of forested land is located at the edge of the half-mile circle directly south of the station. Most of this land is steep slopes and is owned by M-NCPPC. A small settlement of single-family houses is located just north of this forested land, in a rural residential density that also includes substantial woods on the lots.



Suitland Zoning

Zoning

Two different planning efforts and their adopted plans set the zoning in the Suitland area. The Suitland M-U-TC Zone was recommended and approved by the 2006 *Approved Suitland Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan.* South and west of the station, Branch Avenue was rezoned to M-X-T by the 2008 *Approved Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment.* The area between the M-U-TC Zone and the M-X-T Zone is zoned for O-S (open space) at the Smithsonian archive property and high-density residential (R-10 and R-18) and commercial (C-S-C and C-O) along the south side of Silver Hill Road. The R-10 (multifamily highdensity residential) properties were zoned from R-18 by the Branch Avenue Corridor Plan in 2008.

Open Space Zones—There are two significant parcels zoned O-S in the vicinity of Suitland Metro Station: an area of forest preserve on the Federal Campus site, and the Smithsonian archives site. These are not utilized as open space, per se, but support and preserve green space around the federal facilities. These zones comprise approximately 20 percent of the area within the half-mile walk circle.

Residential Zones—Residential zones are located exclusively to the south of the station, with the majority of residentially zoned property located on the opposite corner of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Parkway from the station entrance. The permissible density in the residential zones does increase in proximity to the station, with R-55 and R-30C Zoning, permitting densities under 12 units per acre. These are located along the fringe of the walk circle. R-18 and R-10 Zones, permitting densities over 12 units per acre, are located closer to the station.

Commercial Zones—There are no commercial zones in the vicinity of Suitland Metro Station. A cluster of C-S-C (Commercial Shopping Center) and C-O (Commercial Office) Zones are located along Old Silver Hill Road, and separate the Suitland M-U-TC from the Branch Avenue M-X-T Zones.

Industrial Zones—There are no industrial zones in the vicinity of Suitland Avenue Metro Station.



Mixed-Use Zones—The M-U-TC (Mixed-Use Town Center) Zone provides for a mix of commercial and limited residential uses, which establishes a safe, vibrant, 24-hour environment. In this location, the zone is centered around the intersection of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road and covers the entire Suitland Federal Campus. This center is approximately half a mile from the entrance to the station. The M-U-TC Zone was designed to promote appropriate redevelopment, preservation, and adaptive reuse of selected buildings in older commercial areas. Under a development plan adopted by the County Council at the time the zoning was put in place, M-U-TC establishes a flexible regulatory framework that includes minimum and maximum development standards and guidelines. A Design Review Committee has been established to review conformance of new developments to the development plan. Existing buildings can stay without being nonconforming uses. Most non-industrial uses are permitted in this zone.

Figure 45

A second node of M-X-T (Mixed-Use Transit) Zoning is located approximately one mile west of the Suitland station, centered on Iverson Mall. This M-X-T is established along the commercial districts on Branch Avenue and bears very limited relationship to the Suitland Metro Station. See Naylor Road for a description of the M-X-T Zone.



Building Typology and Urban Form

The Suitland area has a longer history of concentrated settlement than the other three stations, with the intersection of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road the historic crossroads; but practically no remnant of the old settlement remains. Instead Suitland exhibits mostly mid 20th century highway commercial types repeated as strip retail buildings with little variation in height, depth, facade, or material. These strip retail buildings are set back from the street with parking bays in front of the building and to the side. Only one block in the walk circle has a public sidewalk directly in front of the building, this being the Suitland Corners area at the northeast corner of the crossroads, which also includes diagonal parking up to the curb and a side lot at the actual corner. This is the only part of Suitland that has the feel of a traditional small town center.

Opposite to the highway commercial along Suitland's main roads is federal property with a diverse collection of building types. The new U.S. Census Bureau headquarters is an eight-story office building with a unique design that fronts its narrowest façade toward Silver Hill Road with the rest of the curved structure bending 1,600 feet across the interior of the campus site, a distance equal to four downtown sized blocks. The building of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is also unique with an array of satellite dishes and other communication equipment covering its roof. Other more typical office buildings and parking structures are also found. West of the parkway, the Smithsonian property includes a high design building for the Museum of the American Indian, but most of the structures are bland warehouses with tilt up concrete walls.

Residential types in Suitland include a variety of garden apartments. The Parkway Terrace Apartments are three-story brick buildings and parking is in small side lots that allow the buildings to address the street, which has generous landscaping and medians. This contrasts to other complexes in the area that are organized around double-bay parking lots and minimal landscaping.

Single-family building types are less prevalent near the Suitland station than at the other three. A group of roughly one hundred townhouses are at the end of Silver Park Terrace, but there are no twin houses, or duplexes, in the general area. An eclectic collection of single-family detached houses line the street to the southeast of the station, apparently built by individuals over time, rather than by a master developer, given the mix of clapboard sided Cape Cod houses next to brick cottages, and even flat roofed Modernist styles.



A strip retail building with two storefronts and a single bay of parking. Notice the relatively wide grass strip and the position of the sidewalk at the curb.



The blank wall of a Smithsonian warehouse along Silver Hill Road.



A typical brick cottage on Huron Avenue built in 1945

Transportation System

Roadway Network and Traffic Analysis

Suitland Metro Station is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Suitland Parkway and Silver Hill Road. A state highway designated MD 458, Silver Hill Road, is the most important arterial in the study area providing the only direct connection between Pennsylvania Avenue (MD 4) and Branch Avenue (MD 5). Given these connections and its subregional position, Silver Hill Road carries a substantial amount of traffic, with its highest counts in the segment just east of the parkway where the Metro station and the Suitland Federal Center are located. The northbound exit ramp for the parkway is actually aligned at a signalized intersection with one of the entrances to the Metro station. Silver Hill Road's connection to St. Barnabas Road also provides good access to the station for that corridor continuing to the southeast of Branch Avenue and its adjacent neighborhoods.

It is telling that Silver Hill Road is the only road connecting into the station. The other three Southern Green Line stations all have at least two roads with entrances to the station, but Suitland station is pinned between the parkway and the federal campus, which does not allow a local connector street from the north. The roadway network in Suitland is very dependant on Silver Hill, lacking local street connections and having many long dead end streets, and this forces all traffic out to Silver Hill Road.

In response to high traffic levels, Silver Hill Road has been widened a number of times to its present lane configuration that includes three drive lanes in each direction and a center median with turn lanes at intersections. With this many lanes the capacity of the road is a staggering 80,770 vehicles per day, but all of the roadway segments in the project area are well below that, in the 46 percent to 51 percent range, for a LOS rating of "C." Despite observations of congestion at peak commute times for the Metro station and the federal campus, with nearly 10,000 employees, Silver Hill Road is operating at an acceptable level of service.



The only segment within the station area that has a capacity issue is Suitland Road where it meets Silver Hill Road from the north. That two-lane roadway segment is at 112 percent of capacity, carrying 17,840 vehicles per day with a rated capacity of 15,930 vehicles, for a LOS of "F."

Rail Transit

In 2011, the average daily ridership on the Green Line at Suitland was 6,417, which is just a few hundred less than the Branch Avenue Metro Station. The two stations are essentially tied, even though Branch Avenue has nearly 1500 more parking spaces, but Suitland has an adjacent federal campus with 10,000 employees and more nearby apartments. While Southern Avenue has lost over 750 riders per day during the economic downturn, Suitland has stayed relatively steady in the range of 6400 to 6600 riders per day since 2007.

In WMATA's 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study, the peak half-hour for entries was 7:30–8:00 a.m. when 14.1 percent of the daily entries occurred. The peak half-hour for exits was 5:30-6:00 p.m. when 12.2 percent of the daily exits occurred. The high percentage of riders arriving at the same time each morning, similar to Southern Avenue's peak, may indicate the rush to claim a limited number of parking spaces.

Mode of Access

Notable data from the mode of access survey shows a relatively high number of walk up customers at Suitland station, one out of five riders. Although the pedestrian environment in the station area is not pleasant, and the width of Silver Hill Road is difficult to cross, there are many hundreds of apartments with direct routes leading to Silver Hill Road that may be generating this result. Walk up access from the Federal Center may also add significant numbers to this mode.

Suitland has the highest number of patrons using a taxi to access the station, actually ten times the number at Naylor Road. While the station has a healthy bus to rail transfer at a combined 26 percent, it is the large parking garage that attracts the biggest number of Metro riders at 43 percent.



Suitland station also serves as a bus hub for bus to rail and bus to bus transfers.

Metrorail Ridership at Suitland Metro Station

Year	Average Weekday Boardings
2011	6417
2010	6668
2009	6453
2008	6631
2007	6510
2006	6214
2005	6039
2004	6122
2003	5859
2002	5636
2001	5182

Source: WMATA, revised data 6/2011

Suitland Station Metrorail Rider Access Mode

Mode of Access	Number of Metrorail Riders	Percent of Metrorail Riders
Metrobus	1414	22
The Bus	122	2
Other Bus	138	2
Automobile SOV Park and Ride	2817	43
"Kiss and Ride" Drop Off	581	9
Carpool	41	1
Walk	1368	21
Тахі	90	1
Bicycle	0	0
Total	6571	100

Parking

Suitland station's high number of drive up patrons is made possible by the provision of over 2000 parking spaces, most of them in a multi-level parking deck. The available spaces by type are:

All-day spaces:	1,890	
Short-term metered spaces:	61	
Additional metered spaces:	114	
Total parking spaces:	2,065	

A taxi stand is located one level up from the boarding platforms along the kiss and ride access lane. All-day spaces are provided in a three-level parking garage. Kiss and ride spaces are provided in a separate surface lot and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) parking is provided in another surface lot.

WMATA's Station Access and Capacity Study shows that in October 2006 all of the all-day spaces were occupied. During the Monday–Thursday time period, an average of 100 percent of the spaces were occupied. This level drops to 91 percent on Fridays. From field observations during April 2012, the high occupancy levels appear confined to the unreserved spaces. Designated reserved spaces were less often occupied, with lower occupancy of the metered spaces. The HOV lot was unused.

Parking Customer Origin Data

Data from WMATA shown in the chart at right shows that the majority of patrons parking at the station are traveling from 5 to 10 miles and 10 to 25 miles to access the station. The basic shape of the distribution is the same as for the Southern Avenue Metro Station (**see page 62**), with a small spike in the 1- to 2-mile range, then a much bigger spike in the 5- to 10-mile range. The reasons for this pattern are likely also similar: a large supply of parking spaces and connection to a major roadway. For Suitland the distribution map shows the strong correlation with Suitland Parkway and Pennsylvania Avenue (MD 4). The parkway only has one signalized intersection before meeting MD 4, and it leads right into Suitland station providing for fast commutes. The large cluster of riders coming from areas to the north and south of Pennsylvania

Avenue and areas east of the airforce base, shows how the Metro system serves low-density suburban subdivisions. Beyond the 10mile circle the origins decline in the areas where the census blocks grow larger.

The station captures most of the Metro trips north of the parkway in the Suitland community. Other areas that generate groups of riders are Morningside south of the parkway along Suitland Road to the Beltway and down St. Barnabas Road. The map also shows many riders coming from the area south of the Beltway between Indian Head Highway and Branch Avenue. Some of these riders may be parking at Suitland after finding full lots at the Branch Avenue station.

Parking Customer Travel Distances for Suitland Metro Station







Suitland Station Bus Routes



Bus Transit

Suitland station is served by nine bus routes; seven of them are Metrobus routes, one The Bus, and one Maryland Transit Administration commuter bus. The MTA 903 commuter bus operates from St. Mary's County in southern Maryland, stops once passing through Charles County, and then twice in Suitland—at the federal center and the Metro station. From Suitland the 903 proceeds into downtown Washington.

The P12 and D routes serve both Suitland and Southern Avenue stations, using the main arterial along Silver Hill Road. The D13 and D14 connect to the station via Suitland Road, which runs east to the main gate of the air force base at Allentown Road. The D12 operates down St. Barnabas Road. The station is also served by a number of short runs including:

- K13 to Penn Mar Shopping Center north of Pennsylvania Avenue.
- K12 to Joint Base Andrews and then to the Branch Avenue station.
- The Bus route 34 to White Hall Apartments and Capital Crossing Apartments along Suitland Road to Southern Avenue.

Finally, the V12 route serves the Suitland community on Shadyside Avenue then up to Marlboro Pike and on to the Addison Road Metro Station. This pattern of bus routes provides relatively good access to the station from surrounding neighborhoods and along major roads in the project area.

Bus Bay Capacity

The station has 13 bus bays arrayed around a center bus plaza (see Figure 50 on page 114). Bus circulation is in a clockwise fashion. Seven bays, A-G, are located on the northbound side of the platform, and the remaining six bays are located on the southbound side. There is sufficient room for an additional bus bay at the end of Bay G and another bay prior to Bay H. No passenger shelters are provided at these locations.

Only seven bays are currently used by buses in service. Of the remaining six bays, one bay is designated for "alighting only"; one is

designated for a WMATA supervisor; and two are used for layover purposes. The bus bays table shows which routes use which bays based on field observations in April 2012. Note there is no Bay I (too similar to J).

WMATA's standard is that the capacity of a bus bay is six buses per hour. Because all routes except the P12 have a layover at the station, Suitland station has one bay for most routes in each direction. The P12 has two bays while most other routes have one bay dedicated to their route. Route 903 operates through the station in two directions, but only northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon.

Based upon existing frequencies, only five bays are needed. WMATA's 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study projected a need for five bus bays, indicating the station has a surplus of bus capacity. Additional service is anticipated in the 2008 Transit Service and Operations Plan. Only the new route, designated Suitland–Westphalia Town Center–Largo Town Center, would increase peak service. This route is envisioned to have a 30-minute peak frequency. The other changes were to provide later service on The Bus route 34, which would not increase the number of bays required.

Bus Bay Assignments

Bay	Route	Notations	Peak Frequency
А			
В		Used as layover location	
С		Formerly D13, D14; map still up	
D	TB 34		4
Е			
F			
G			
Н	D12, MTA 903	WMATA web map has D12 in Bay B	6
J	D13, D14		3
K	K12, K13		4
L	V12	WMATA web map has Bay J	3
М	P12	Eastover	3
N	P12	Addison Road; WMATA web map has Bay L	3

Source: Field Check April 2012 and bus schedules

Bus Transit Schedule

Route #	Route Name	Bus Headway in Minutes					
		Operator	AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Saturday	Sunday
903	Charlotte Hall/Waldorf	MTA	20-30	-	20-30	-	-
D12	Oxonhill-Suitland	Metro	20	60	21-30	60	60
D13	Oxonhill-Suitland	Metro	20	-	-	-	-
D14	Oxonhill-Suitland	Metro	1 trip	60	20-60	60	60
K12	Forestville	Metro	30	60	30	50	50
K13	Forestville	Metro	-	-	30	-	-
P12	Eastover–Addison Road	Metro	20	30	20	30	45
TB34	Suitland/Capital Crossing Apartments	The Bus	15	15	15	-	-
V12	District Heights–Suitland	Metro	20	60	20	50	50

Source: WMATA Station Bus Maps retrieved April 2012, updated from field observations



Currently, there are discussions of a potential future Purple Line light rail transit (LRT) extension to Suitland from New Carrollton en route to National Harbor. The county's Master Plan of Transportation considers this possibility, but also considers connecting to the Branch Avenue station instead.

Circulation and Parking

Two signalized intersections allow for full turning movements into the station from Silver Hill Road. Vehicles can use either entrance to reach all areas; bus access is from the eastern driveway adjacent to the Suitland Federal Center. All-day parking is located in a three-level garage that stretches across the site between the station and the federal campus. A surface kiss and ride lot provides short-term metered spaces on the same level as the garage and along the edge of this lot is a long taxi stand. A steep slope falls off down to the bus service level, which is also the level of the station entrance. A covered walkway leads from the garage to a skywalk section that passes over the bus plaza to an escalator leading to the station entrance. A second covered walkway is provided next to the north side of the garage leading to a security gate to the Suitland Federal Center.

Pedestrian Access at the Station

Suitland residents can only access the station on foot from Silver Hill Road. Employees of the federal campus can exit the campus on foot and enter the station area through a security check point. The whole north side of Silver Hill Road is either federal property or the station itself and a sidewalk is provided with a small buffer. The south side of Silver Hill Road has an inadequate sidewalk facility located right next to the curb and fast moving traffic and is five feet or less in width. The two signalized intersections only have crosswalks on their west legs, while the vast majority of pedestrians approach the station from the east, which means they tend to cross the highway in a diagonal path from south to north before they reach the intersection. Many times they get stuck on the median and informal paths across the medians were noted in field observations. As at the other stations, WMATA attempts to force crossing at designated crosswalks with fencing. This is evident at the western entrance where worn paths indicate a short-cut route around the fence to the bus plaza. No crosswalks are provided to the bus plaza from any direction.

A curious response to pedestrian paths is noted on the east side of the garage where a cross walk is provided across the access road from an informal path along the federal campus fence to the garage, but there is no formal pedestrian facility connecting to the crosswalk on either end. On the other side of the garage the

The width of Silver Hill Road at the Metro station entrance creates a daunting pedestrian crossing. Note that only the near side of the intersection has a crosswalk.

A woman and child step onto Silver Hill Road to go around a WMATA fence blocking the informal path to the bus plaza and station entrance. Two men follow the same path across the entrance drive lanes rather than follow the longer route marked with crosswalks.

A covered walkway leading from the parking garage to the station entrance clearly designates a pedestrian zone through the short-term parking area. However, the walkway stops abruptly when it meets the garage and the interior of the garage does not clearly indicate a safe pedestrian route.

The long turn radius for this ramp exit from Suitland Parkway encourages high speed merges to Silver Hill Road that conflict with the pedestrian path to the station. Narrow sidewalks between ramps and on the bridge over the parkway create a difficult pedestrian environment.











covered walkway does not lead to a formal route through the garage, similar to the situation at Southern Avenue Metro Station.

Sidewalk Inventory and Pedestrian Access

The most important aspect of the community context is that the federal center blocks pedestrian routes for Suitland residents from the north and northeast. To reach the station from this direction all walkers must follow Suitland Road to Silver Hill Road; the campus has a security fence and only those with visitor clearance may enter. Compounding the problem is the lack of a sidewalk on Suitland Road along the federal property. Conversely, the access to the station from the federal campus for federal employees and authorized visitors is very good.

Access routes to the west of the station are also blocked by the parkway and the Smithsonian campus, so more than half of the walk circle does not allow for pedestrian paths to the station. Therefore, the role of Silver Hill Road and its pedestrian facilities is crucial. Silver Hill Road does have a sidewalk on its north and south sides. The sidewalk along the federal campus east of the station has a landscaped buffer between the curb and walk, but on the south side of the road the narrow walk is right next to the curb and fast moving traffic.

Streets connecting to the south side of Silver Hill Road have an incomplete system of sidewalks. The area of single-family houses



A woman walks as far from the curb as possible along the narrow sidewalk on Silver Hill Road, while two with children walk further back in parking lots

along Navy Day, Glenn and Randal Streets lacks any sidewalks, which means that pedestrians must walk on the road. Most of Swann Road, an important connecting route, lacks a sidewalk, which makes it very difficult for residents in this area to walk to the station. Missing street connections from Swann Road to other streets closer to the station mean that pedestrians must walk all the way out to Silver Hill Road instead of taking a more direct route. Indeed, none of the streets south of the station connect to each other in an east to west direction and barriers have been installed between apartment complexes, for instance on Covington Street, to block such connections.

The 2005 Suitland Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan provides detailed recommendations for improvements to the pedestrian realm, including a six-foot buffer strip between curb and walks and a minimum eight-foot walk width, yet the plan relies solely on the implementation by private property owners in conjunction with redevelopment, and in the absence of this new investment no new facilities have been constructed in the station area.

Walk Distance Analysis

The "ped shed" analysis for Parkway Terrace Drive, south of the station and parallel to the parkway, shows how a direct path extends the actual walking distance nearly to the half-mile walk circle, meaning that residents of the last garden apartment in this complex are still within an easy ten-minute walk of the station



Pedestrians, bicyclists, and buses mix in a very narrow space along with the clutter of poles, lamps, and signs on the south side of Silver Hill Road.

entrance. Parcels along Silver Hill Road also have a direct path to the station, so the actual walk extends most of the way to Suitland Road. A lack of even a rudimentary grid makes actual walking distances longer, evident west of the station where apartment buildings near the terminus of Maywood Lane and the quartermile circle lie beyond the half-mile circle given the need to go all the way to Silver Park Drive to access public right-of-way. In a small number of cases, informal paths may provide for short cuts, but cutting across private property is necessary.

Bicycle Facilities

The lack of any off-road bike trails or marked on-road bike lanes is a real problem in the Suitland station area. The station is boxed in by federal property and destinations such as residential subdivisions and shopping centers are beyond typical walking distances. Bicycle facilities would help to bridge some of these gaps. The 2009 Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (MPOT) calls for designated bike lanes on Silver Hill Road and Swann Road.



A walker outside the fence of the Suitland Federal Center uses the edge of the road because of the lack of a sidewalk along the federal property.



Pattern of Land Ownership

A—At Suitland the land ownership graphic reveals that the Metro station is surrounded by land owned by the federal government, including the Suitland Federal Center, Suitland Parkway, and the Smithsonian center. There are real opportunities for infill development on these federal lands, excluding the parkway; however, the security measures, fencing, and highway will continue to make transit-oriented development on federal property a difficult proposition.

B—WMATA owns an odd-shaped parcel at the station containing its large commuter parking structure. Some of the station is on land that remains part of Suitland Parkway.

C—The Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority owns the former Suitland Manor site northeast of the intersection of Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road. The property north of Huron Avenue is 20.9 acres including the street right-of-way, or 16.6 net acres on parcels. The authority also owns an 0.8-acre parcel south of Huron Avenue for a total of 21.7 acres. The county is actively working to solicit and partner with real estate developers on the redevelopment of this property.

D—Properties north of Homer Avenue include a U.S. Post Office that is scheduled to close. The small holdings in this area are in various states of vacancy and rehabilitation. A small service station is at the corner, and M-NCPPC owns 1.2 acres on Lacy Avenue.

E—In order to maximize the investment made by the county in the Suitland Manor site, redevelopment of the land fronting on Suitland Road is an important consideration. Three parcels at the north end of the frontage between Homer and Huron are owned by Mid-Atlantic Real Estate Investments Inc., which also owns a number of other parcels in this crossroads area. Adjacent frontage is owned by VHG Associates. The current use and state of these properties, totaling 3.9 acres, is aging strip center space, some of it vacant and some with restaurant and small shop businesses.

F—The Suitland Corners retail strip at the corner is owned by Mid-Atlantic Real Estate and a handful of other owners, with this pattern continuing up Silver Hill Road. Some of these parcels are currently vacant. Mid-Atlantic also owns nearly five acres across the street—**G**—on the south side of Silver Hill Road, excluding the gas station at the corner.

H—Moving back toward the station, the area near the southeast corner of Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road is owned by four different local churches, although the uses are strip center retail and a gas station, and

Mid-Atlantic. The Sheet Metal Works Local Union 100 owns a large parcel, over seven acres, that extends back from Silver Hill Road, with one of the parcels having shared ownership with the Suitland Civic Association.

I—Hunter Memorial A.M.E. Church, Inc. owns two parcels, both 1.4 acres, fronting on Silver Hill Road, currently used by the church and a drug store and in relatively good condition. The frontage between Swann Road and Randall Road includes a PEPCO electrical substation, shown as a "special consideration" given that relocation for redevelopment is highly unlikely, a carpet store on a third of an acre that presents a poor image adjacent to a well-maintained fast food restaurant, and two single-use retail buildings owned by United, Inc.

J—The frontage between Randall Road and Pearl Drive is owned by small investors and an apartment complex. The land under the Goodyear Tire store is owned by Renroc, LLC. The two parcels to the west are owned by Silver Hill Apartments and used only for a sign for the apartment complex accessed by Pearl Drive. United Investments Inc. owns a small retail strip center with a convenience and liquor store on 0.8 acres, next to a small engine repair business on 1.4 acres owned by three individuals.

K—Directly across from the station entrance is a laundromat on 0.9 acres owned by JHQ Properties II LLC. The adjacent parcel to the south, owned by an individual, appears to be vacant.

L—A key existing opportunity lies diagonal to the station fronting on Suitland Parkway and Silver Hill Road. The largest of the three parcels in this area is owned by a church, and this 6.2 acre site has been the subject of development interest, with a plan for an 84-unit condominium submitted to the Planning Board for review in 2007, but then withdrawn in 2010. The area is still of interest to developers.

M—A 1.2 acre parcel is for sale a half-mile west of the station fronting on the south side of Silver Hill Road. The land is owned by two individuals who also own the adjacent parcel to the west.

N—Perhaps one of the most interesting opportunities is the area south of the station with access from Suitland Parkway via Summer Road. The 18 parcels that make up this area are held by 17 different owners. The current development is very low-density residential, resembling a rural settlement with a loose cluster of half a dozen houses to the north end of the area and isolated houses and three vacant parcels to the south. Access to these 34 acres is limited to the ramps to the parkway; however, Maywood Drive and Silver Park Drive are possible connections to Silver Hill Road.

Potential for Change

The pattern of ownership in the Suitland station area presents a number of challenges to creating transit-oriented development. More than half of the half-mile walk circle is owned by the federal government, and the two federal campuses have been developed to accommodate automobile access for employees with limited access for pedestrians to the surrounding community and no provision for pedestrian trips to cross the federal land to access the station. National Park Service ownership of Suitland Parkway has also acted as an impediment to development in the station area, with NPS seeking to limit the visibility of structures from the parkway. Yet the potential for infill development on federal lands remains a key opportunity for revitalization at Suitland.

County efforts have focused on Suitland Manor, but this site lies just beyond the half-mile walk distance from the station, where the influence of the station's transit accessibility begins to diminish. The other issue for successful redevelopment in this area is inclusion of part or all of the frontage on Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road. Mid-Atlantic Real Estate is a key landowner in this regard.

Improving the frontage along the south side of Silver Hill Road is also crucial to extending the influence of the station down to the crossroads. Here the land ownership pattern is a mix of small investors and business owners. Current uses in the immediate station area—laundromat, engine repair, and tire sales—do not offer goods or services related to transit riders, and the condition of some of these properties presents a poor image for Suitland right at the station entrance. Policy for TOD should promote the need for change in this area.

Opportunities west of the parkway are limited by the Smithsonian lands and the existing apartment complexes, but this multifamily can be considered TOD itself given its relatively high-density and ease of access to the station. Renters are likely to choose to live there because of the station. The rural residential area off Suitland Parkway has potential for more intense development if better access can be provided, and if the existing property owners coordinate to interest developers. If there is no interest in redevelopment from these 17 owners, then change is unlikely to occur.



Opportunities and Challenges

Key Issues:

• Suitland Federal Center is a secure campus with internal retail and restaurants, so the 10,000 employees contribute little to the local economy.

- The perimeter fence around the Federal Center creates physical, visual, and psychological barriers to community integration.
- Federal property lacks any building frontage, creating long stretches devoid of interest to pedestrians.
- Businesses and uses directly across from the station do not relate to transit patrons.
- The former Suitland Manor site has been vacant and available for development since 2007.
- A single owner, Mid Atlantic, owns a majority of commercial frontage at the crossroads of Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road.
- Haphazard juxtaposition of uses and varying quality of property management detracts from the potential for new investment.
- The public realm along Silver Hill Road, including telephone poles, wires, and highway business signs, presents an unattractive street scene.
- Pedestrian facilities are inadequate for a transit station area, especially the narrow sidewalk on the south side of Silver Hill Road.
- Three streets intersect with Silver Hill Road within a 300 span near the Navy Day intersection.
- Alignments of private parking lot entrances and public streets are confused and redundant.
- National Park Service controls the design and management of Suitland Parkway and seeks to maintain natural views and limited access.



Land cleared by the Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority, where the Suitland Manor apartments stood, is an opportunity site just over a half mile from the station.



The fence surrounding the Suitland Federal Center displays the physical and social separation of the federal employment center from the Suitland community.





Of the four station areas, Branch Avenue is the only one surrounded on all sides by a contiguous station area.



Station Area Overview

The post war development boom in Prince George's County passed by the area that is now centered on the Branch Avenue Metro Station. Historical aerial photographs (**see page 16**) show that small-scale truck farms in the area called Woods Corner, north of Auth Road, gave way to large gravel pits after the war. Development to the north and northwest was blocked by Suitland Parkway, Henson Creek, and steep slopes. Land use for the majority of the area remained in flux at the end of the 20th century, even as access to the Beltway and MD 5 encouraged the development of a small number of office buildings and the location of car dealerships visible from MD 5.

The horseshoe shaped Auth Way was constructed to mirror and connect to Auth Road, while land use planning and zoning recommended development of an office/industrial park. Once the basic roadway pattern was established, with connections to surrounding areas only from Auth Road and Branch Avenue, the area could be understood as a district set apart, close to Suitland and Morningside, but not connected to them. A roadway extension from the north was included in master plans during the 1980s; however, the cost, environmental impact, and political opposition halted further planning. All of this was prior to the construction of the Green Line and its terminus station northeast of the intersection of the Beltway and Branch Avenue.

Fortunately, planning for the Green Line pulled the rail maintenance yard as far away from the station as possible, preserving vacant land immediately north of the station for future development. Unlike the Southern Avenue and Suitland stations, Branch Avenue station relies on surface parking; this is more land intensive, but less of a capital investment, leaving the 30 acres that WMATA owns around the station a key opportunity for TOD. In the heady days of the real estate boom which peaked in the years just after the station opened in 2001, private developers constructed a series of projects within the half-mile circle of the station, including:

- Tribeca Condominiums, which included 282 units and 21,000 square feet of retail space.
- Chelsea West Apartments 252 units and 25,000 square feet of retail and 34,500 square feet of office.
- MetroPlace with 397 apartment units, 86 condominiums, and 354 townhouses.

These developments represent a relatively fast response to the opening of the new station, and all of them promote the walkable proximity of their units to Metro. However, after the real estate market downturn, unsold condominiums were turned to rentals, and none of the commercial space has been leased. These empty storefronts expose a fundamental flaw in the current approach to zoning for mixed use at the Branch Avenue and Naylor Road stations, specifically requiring commercial space in locations that are not optimal to attracting customers and also before the necessary residential density is high enough to generate sufficient demand. Site plans for additional development have been approved for land north of the station, but these efforts have stalled due to the downturn and issues surrounding the zoning and entitlement process. And yet, the market has shown the potential for significant new investment at the Branch Avenue station area and the amount of land that is available for development makes this station the most promising of the four on the Southern Green Line.



The Branch Avenue station area is seen in the distance, to the left, from southbound MD 5.



MetroPlace apartments, seen from the Metro station entrance, represent new transitoriented development constructed after the opening of the Southern Green Line.



Branch Avenue Metro Station

Topography

One of the factors favoring Branch Avenue station is that nearly all of the land within the station area is level. While Henson Creek and its tributary surround the area, there are no streams running through it, and the water features that do exist are manmade, specifically two stormwater holding ponds near the Green Line track alignment. Indeed the open space around the edges of the walk circle help to frame the station area as a distinct place with boundaries; this should help make the case of a concentrated and relatively intense pattern of future land use. The separation provided will also limit impacts to existing low-density neighborhoods.

M-NCPPC owns land to the west of the station along Henson Creek and in an area of steep slopes that stretches northwest to Suitland. A homeowners association (HOA) owns and maintains open space to the north of the new residential development which abuts Suitland Parkway. Another HOA owns common lands to the east of the WMATA maintenance yards. This open space consists of the main stream channel for the creek as well as smaller side channels and wetlands. It is a passive recreational resource and a visual amenity for adjacent lands—one that will never be developed.



A heron and ducks utilize Henson Creek and the adjoining lands, which are protected by M-NCPPC parkland and local homeowner association covenants.

Branch Avenue Metro Station

Land Use and Zoning

Land Use

The land use pattern of the Branch Avenue station area is marked by lack of development within the most important part of the station area, the quarter-mile walk circle. While there is one residential development and a mixed-used development both with densities over 30 dwelling units per acre (DU/acre), the majority of the area is parking for the Metro and undeveloped land, save for a commercial property built at 0.3 FAR. Farther from the station to the west is a large concentration of commercial uses that starts at Branch Avenue and stretches eastward nearly continuously to the western portion of the Metro parking lot. The intensity of commercial development ranges from a high of 0.8 FAR to a low of 0.1 FAR. Some green space in this area touches the half-mile walk circle to the northwest and a bit farther beyond the walk circle.

The newer townhome development north of the station has a density of 23 DU/acre. Continuing eastward from the townhomes is the Metro repair and storage yard. To the east of this property there is a large amount of open space along with single-family residential built at 5.4 DU/acre. The areas to the east and south of the station roughly follow this pattern with a smaller portion of the Metro's property to the east that is abutted by single-family residential. Along Auth Road to the south of the station is an institutional use (a church) along with more single-family detached residential that has a density of around three to four DU/acre.

Henson Creek acts as the border for the commercial development to the north and west of the station area, just outside of the halfmile walk circle. The remainder of the area to the northeast, west, and southwest is either green space or single-family detached residential ranging from 1.7 DU/acre to 4.4 DU/acre.

The land use of the Branch Avenue station area is shaped both by development that predates opening of the station in 2001 and that which came afterwards. A large amount of commercial along Branch Avenue is auto-related along with a few institutional uses. Much of the land beyond the half-mile walk circle is devoted to single-family detached homes and there is ample open space because of Henson Creek. A sizable amount of development has not come to the area within a quarter mile of the station, instead it



is dominated by the Metro parking lot. Land use patterns around the station are organized by use, with areas to the northeast of the station devoted to residential and areas southwest of it dominated by commercial uses. In between sits an area of over 30 acres, which includes undeveloped land and the Metro's surface parking lot.

Branch Avenue at Auth Way hosts a cluster of automobile dealerships. The balance of commercial development in this area is comprised of stand-alone office buildings organized in suburbanstyle office parks. These buildings are likely located there because of the area's excellent access to regional traffic arteries, such as Branch Avenue and I-95/495. In general these uses offer few, if any, provisions to facilitate pedestrian access to the station. Residential development in the area ranges from multifamily housing in the new station area developments to single-family detached houses in the older Camp Springs neighborhood. Recent residential development is oriented to streets arrayed in radial pattern around Auth Way.

Retail uses are divided between auto-oriented strip retail, which aggregates toward Branch Avenue, and a few very small locations designated for retail in the new Tribeca and Chelsea West developments that are currently vacant.

Zoning

Zoning around the Branch Avenue station establishes an opportunity for a strong core of development. Of the four stations in the study area, Branch Avenue has the most concentrated collection of M-X-T zoning, as well as the only industrially zoned areas, both located immediately adjacent to the station. Moving west along Auth Road/Auth Way from the station, zoning steps down to general commercial zoning along Branch Avenue, allowing uses that are served by the highway. Residential and open space zones form a perimeter to the east of the station site.

Open Space Zones—There are no open space zones in close proximity to the Branch Avenue Metro Station. At the northern edge of the station site, R-O-S zones form a buffer around Henson Creek and establish a northern edge to the developable station area.

Residential Zones—Limited residential zoning exists in the vicinity of the station, predominantly R-80 (single-family properties) that are legacy residential subdivisions south of the station.

Commercial Zones—At the Branch Avenue station, C-S-C (commercial shopping center) and C-M (commercial miscellaneous) zoned properties form a buffer between Branch Avenue and the station. In many ways, the commercial is oriented to Branch Avenue rather than the station itself. C-S-C zoning is the county's dominant commercial zoning, permitting most retail and commercial uses. C-M zoning allows varied commercial uses, including office and highway-oriented uses that may be disruptive to the compactness and homogeneity of retail shopping centers. C-M is one of the few zones in the county to permit automobile sales and uses by right.

Industrial Zones—The only industrially zoned property in the study area is located around the Branch Avenue station. To the east of Auth Road, I-1 (light industrial) zoning permits light intensity manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses. This is the predominant industrial zoning in the county. In this location, the I-1 zoned land is WMATA land used for station approaches and a rail maintenance yard. More developable land in the vicinity of Branch Avenue is zoned I-3 (planned industrial/employment park) which allows for a mixture of industrial, research and office uses with compatible institutional, recreational, and service uses. Green space and tract size requirements dictate a campus or industrial park design to these developments.



Mixed-Use Zones—The predominant zoning around the Branch Avenue station is M-X-T: mixed-use transportation oriented zone. M-X-T allows a variety of uses; in fact the zone mandates a mix of uses. The intent of the M-X-T zone is appropriate for encouraging walkable, transit-oriented communities. In practice, however, the categorical stipulation for mixed-use, regardless of the context or market support, may be problematic as it reduces a developer's flexibility and forces construction of space for which there may not be demand, as has occurred with the new retail in two recent developments near the station, which struggle to find tenants.

M-X-T design standards and guidelines are established in locationspecific sector plans. As such, there is a lack of clarity as to what standards would apply here, since the M-X-T rules in the Zoning Ordinance are minimal. The number of parking spaces required in the M-X-T Zone is to be calculated by the applicant and submitted for Planning Board approval at the time of detailed site plan approval. Prior to approval, the applicant must submit the methodology, assumptions, and data used in performing the calculations. While the M-X-T Zone allows for reduced parking around station areas, the methodology for determining the parking requirement is complex.

Figure 57



Building Typology and Urban Form

With the exception of the single-family neighborhood to the southeast connecting to Auth Road, the buildings in the Branch Avenue station area are newer than those found at the other stations, some representing styles of design that did not exist in the mid-20th century. Of particular note is the relatively new multifamily building type known as the "Texas donut." All three of the multifamily developments—Tribeca, Chelsea West, and MetroPlace—include this new building type which wraps apartments around a central multiple level parking structure.

Another now common building type, but not found in other parts of the project area, is the podium-style apartment which tucks a fireproof concrete parking garage under three to five floors of apartments. Two of the buildings at Chelsea West have these podium parking garages. Regardless of the exterior finish, which might be brick or a stucco-style, the residential part of these structures is "stick built" meaning that the floors and wall studs are primarily made of wood, rather than more expensive concrete and steel. This construction type is in direct response to the perceived market and the possible rents versus costs of construction, and because there is a five-story height limit on wood frame buildings, this cost factor is limiting the height more than the Zoning Ordinance. Another newer residential type found on a block of the MetroPlace development fronting on Auth Way is the "two over two" condominium. These buildings look like urban rowhouses but they are configured as two, two-story townhouses stacked one on top of another, each with direct access to a private garage that faces a back alley. All of these parking designs are utilized to increase the density while hiding the parking from view. Older residential development in the project area invariably uses a surface parking lot, whether it is a garden apartment or townhouse which tends to dominate the site plan and interrupts frontage along streets. The new forms employed at the Branch Avenue station will create a more urban and active street scene and consistent sidewalk location.

The station area also has a number of concrete and steel office buildings pre-dating the arrival of the station. Five of these office buildings are in the range of six to eight stories. There are also three shorter office structures and two hotels that are three and four stories. There is also one relatively large warehouse structure with a concrete block type construction. But of the commercial structures it is car dealership show rooms and repair shops that are most numerous with a dozen structures of this type located in highly visible frontage along MD 5.



An eight-story office building at the corner of Auth Place and Auth Road includes retail space on the ground floor but is set back from the sidewalk.



The Tribeca apartment building is seen from the station; its interior parking garage hidden from view by the residential units.



The podium parked Chelsea West building to the left, are across the street from a long row of "two over two" condominiums.

Transportation System

Roadway Network and Traffic Analysis

The Southern Green Line terminates short of the Capital Beltway a little more than half a mile northeast of the Branch Avenue interchange with I-95/495. Traveling from the north on the inner loop of the Beltway, the exit to Auth Road aligns with Auth Place, from the outer loop the exit is to MD 5. Auth Road and Auth Way are the only connections from the station area to the outside. Auth Road has an intersection with MD 5 then continues east and southeast passing over the Beltway to Allentown Road and leading to the front gate of the military base. The State Highway Administration (SHA) has completed planning and design for a new access road, to be called Woods Way, from MD 5 to the station; however, this road will only add a third route from the same direction. Suitland Parkway and Suitland Road help to define the location of the Branch Avenue station, but the station area is not connected to those two major roads.

While the Auth Way to Auth Road loop establishes a basic framework, the roadway network in the station area is only partially developed. Auth Place connects between Auth Way and Auth Road, but Brittania Way is currently a cul-de-sac and Old Soper Road leads into the station parking lot. This situation forces traffic to drive around the horseshoe or back to Auth Place to get to Auth Road. Auth Place points to a northern route out of the area, but is blocked by Henson Creek, the Green Line guideway, and Suitland Parkway.

Besides the interstate, MD 5 carries the heaviest traffic in the general station area. Traffic analysis shows that the segment of Branch Avenue between Auth Way and Auth Road carries 69,351 vehicles a day, which is 68 percent of capacity for LOS "D" if the road is considered an expressway, or 86 percent LOS "E" if an arterial. The new Woods Way access road project will remove the signalized intersection at Auth Road, making this segment act more like an expressway. Either way the road is wide, with vehicles moving at high speeds in an area that is transitioning between a wide open expressway and an arterial. Besides Branch Avenue, the roads within the station area carry light traffic volumes.



Metrorail Service and Ridership

The Branch Avenue station is the terminal station for the Southern Green Line in Prince George's County. As a terminal station it plays a somewhat different role in the subregional transportation system, which is reflected in its ridership numbers, mode of access, and its bus routes. Since the opening of the line, the Branch Avenue station has maintained the highest ridership of the four stations. The station has the largest supply of parking spaces, which may be the main reason Branch Avenue station attracts the most riders, and yet other factors—including station area land use—also affect the ridership so that there is not a direct correlation between parking spaces and riders. Suitland, for instance, is just a few hundred riders less, but in fact Branch Avenue station has over 1,300 more spaces. Southern Avenue has more parking spaces than Suitland, yet a smaller ridership. Location in the regional road network, ease of access, and surrounding land use are also factors.

And yet, even with the highest ridership, Branch Avenue station has the lowest number of riders per space at 2.0.

Branch Avenue station is the farthest from downtown Washington, D.C.

Travel times to other Me	tro stations are:
Gallery Place	20 minutes
Metro Center	30 minutes with transfer
National Airport	32 minutes with transfer

In 2011, the average daily ridership on the Green Line at the Branch Avenue station was 6,660, the highest of the four stations in this study, but only about 250 riders more than Suitland station. Ridership has been increasing at an annual rate of 3.2 percent since the start of service in 2001, the highest of any of the four stations and a faster rate than the overall Metrorail growth of 1.7 percent over the same time period. However, the peak level of ridership was in 2010, when average daily ridership was 6,868. Since that time, ridership has fallen 3 percent.

Metrorail Riders per Station Parking Space

Station	Average Daily Riders 2011	Total Parking Spaces	Riders/ Space
Southern Avenue	5776	2226	2.6
Naylor Road	3047	414	7.4
Suitland	6417	2065	3.1
Branch Avenue	6660	3374	2.0

Source: WMATA/M-NCPPC 2011

The Branch Avenue station has the highest peak half-hour loading factors for rail ridership. In WMATA's 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study, the peak half hour for entries was 7:00–7:30 a.m., when 18 percent of the daily entries occurred. This morning peak is a half hour earlier than the peak at Suitland and a full hour earlier than the peak at Southern. The peak half hour for exits was 5:30–6:00 p.m., when 15 percent of the daily exits occurred. The station is projected to have among the highest peak half-hour factors of 14 percent in 2030.

Station Access Mode

Branch Avenue station has by far the highest percentage, at 69 percent, of its riders accessing the station by a single-occupant vehicle parking at the station. It also has the lowest walk up, at 7 percent, and the lowest bus ridership in percentage, 11 percent, and number, 607. All of this data on the exceptional results for the Branch Avenue station can be related to its position as the terminal station and the place where thousands of individuals coming from the lower-density subdivisions and exurbs south of the Green Line access the Metro system. These areas have less bus service, and the relatively isolated location of the station in relation to the surrounding matured communities also cuts ridership from the bus mode. But the station has the highest percentage and highest number of riders carpooling to the station, showing that transit patrons from the same neighborhoods may be pairing up for the long drive. The undeveloped land use pattern around the station reduces the number of riders walking to the station.

Metrorail Ridership at Southern Avenue Station

Year	Average Weekday Boardings
2011	6660
2010	6868
2009	6448
2008	6667
2007	6510
2006	6493
2005	6198
2004	6032
2003	5720
2002	5501
2001	4860

Source: WMATA, revised data 6/2011

Branch Avenue Metro Station Access Mode for Metrorail Riders

Mode of Access	Number of Metrorail Riders	Percent of Metrorail Riders
Metrobus	470	8
The Bus	98	2
Other Bus	39	1
Automobile SOV Park and Ride	4337	69
"Kiss and Ride" Drop Off	735	12
Carpool	99	2
Walk	463	7
Taxi	16	< 1
Bicycle	0	0
Total	6257	100

Branch Avenue Metro Station

Parking Supply

Branch Avenue station has the largest number of parking spaces of the four stations, with roughly 1,100 more spaces than Southern Avenue,1,300 more than Suitland, and a higher percentage of allday spaces rather than metered. The spaces by type are:

All-day spaces:	3,072
Short-term metered spaces:	132
Additional metered spaces:	170
Total parking spaces:	3,374

All of the parking spaces are in surface lots.

WMATA's Station Access and Capacity Study shows that, in October 2006, almost all of the all-day spaces were occupied. During the Monday through Thursday period, an average of 108 percent of the spaces were occupied. This level drops to 106 percent on Fridays. Usage can exceed 100 percent due to turnover of the spaces during the day or from cars parking in undesignated areas. From field observations during April 2012, the high occupancy levels appear confined to the unreserved spaces. Designated reserved spaces were less than half occupied, with lower occupancy of the metered spaces. The HOV lot was unused.

Parking Customer Origin Data

Data from WMATA shows that 68 percent of Metrorail parking customers are driving to the station from a distance of more than five miles: nearly 40 percent are coming from a distance of 5 to 10 miles and another 25 percent from 10 to 25 miles. Relatively few riders are driving from less than three miles from the station, which may be due to a lack of connections into the station from the surrounding neighborhoods, such as Suitland and Morningside.

The map (opposite page) shows the origin distribution is evenly spread out to the west and east of MD 5 deep into the southern parts of the county. Few riders back-track to reach the station, but the station does attract riders from the area west of MD 5 and east of St. Barnabas Road. The correlation of the station with Branch Avenue, or MD 5, is perhaps even stronger than Indian Head Highway with Southern Avenue and Suitland with Suitland Parkway. Indeed, the expressway operation of MD 5 provides uninterrupted driving from the southern part of the county without any stop lights; the first light being at Auth Road. The terminal Southern Green Line station at Branch Avenue displays its basic function as a commuter rail.

Parking Customer Travel Distances for Branch Avenue Metro Station



Parking Customer Travel Distance

Branch Avenue Station Parking Customer Origin







Bus Routes

Branch Avenue station is served by seven bus routes. Route characteristics include:

- The C12 and C14 Hillcrest Heights connect between the Branch Avenue station and the Naylor Road station operating primarily along Branch Avenue, with the C12 going down Iverson Street to 23rd Parkway.
- The C11 and C13 routes operate along Branch Avenue to the south of the Beltway, connecting to a park and ride lot in Clinton. The C11 is an express route to the Metro station.
- The Bus route 30 also goes to the Clinton park and ride lot at MD 5, but its route follows Auth Road to Allentown Road to Camp Springs and south on Temple Hill Road.
- The K12 route is the only one from the station that operates north of Suitland Parkway and it also terminates at Suitland station.
- The NH1 runs down the Beltway to National Harbor.

Bus Bay Capacity

The station has 15 bus bays, arrayed in a square on the west side of the rail station entrance, surrounding the kiss and ride lot. Bus circulation is in a counter-clockwise fashion. Four bays are located on the bus entrance driveway; four bays are located adjacent to the rail platform and station entrance; three bays are located perpendicular to the station entrance; and the remaining four bays are located away from the station along the exit driveway. Only five bays are currently used by buses in service. The remaining ten bays are undesignated, but buses were observed using them for layovers. The bus bay table shows which routes use which bay, based on field observations in April 2012.

WMATA's standard is that the capacity of a bus bay is six buses per hour. Because all routes have a layover at the Branch Avenue station, the station provides one bay for most routes in each direction. Based upon existing frequencies, only 3 of the 15 bays are needed. WMATA's 2008 Station Access and Capacity Study projected a need for three bus bays, indicating the station has a surplus of bus capacity.

Additional service is anticipated in the 2008 Transit Service and Operations Plan (TSOP). Several new routes are proposed for implementation. The National Harbor Express is proposed to have 20-minute headway; this need, however, may have been satisfied by the implementation of the NH1 bus route referred to above. Additional new routes are the South Clinton-Branch Avenue with

Bus Transit Schedule

Route #	Route Name	Bus Headway in Minutes					
		Operator	AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Saturday	Sunday
K12	Forestville	Metro	26-30	60	30	50	50
C12	Hillcrest Heights	Metro	26-28	-	-	-	-
C14	Hillcrest Heights	Metro	-	60	25	60	-
C11	Clinton	Metro	-	-	15	-	-
C13	Clinton	Metro	30	-	-	-	-
TB30	Camp Springs/Clinton	The Bus	40	80	40	-	-
NH1		Metro					

Bus Bay Assignments

Bay	Route	Notations	Peak Frequency
А			
В			
С			
D			
E	K12		3
F	C12, C14		3
G	C11, C13		4
Н	NH1	Not included in WMATA web map	2
J	TB 30	No bay designation on shelter; WMATA web map has Bay H	2
К			
L			
Μ		No bay designation on shelter	
Ν		No bay designation on shelter	
Р		No bay designation on shelter	
Q		No bay designation on shelter	

a 30-minute peak headway; the Upper Marlboro-Marlton-Branch Avenue with a 30-minute peak headway; the Branch Avenue Station-Westphalia Town Center-Upper Marlboro with a 30-minute peak headway; and the Branch Avenue Station-Piscataway via Clinton and Camp Springs with a 30-minute peak headway. The Bus Route 30 is proposed to have its peak frequency increased to every 30 minutes, and to 40 minutes midday.

Other changes envisioned would not affect peak hour service levels. These changes include The Bus route 30 gaining later service and having service added on Saturdays. Another change would be having Routes C12 and C14 taken over by The Bus system from WMATA. The implementation of these proposed changes would require an additional two bays based




Branch Avenue Metro Station

upon the service frequencies. The Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (MPOT) also recommends evaluating a fixed guideway transit south along MD 5/Branch Avenue, which would require its own bay at the Metro station. Together, the TSOP and MPOT recommendations would require 3 additional bays for a total of 6 of the 15 bays.

The MPOT (page 41) recommends studying an extension of the planned Purple Line LRT south to National Harbor, with an interface with the Green Line at either Suitland station or Branch Avenue station. An alignment to Suitland station is shown in the plan but how an LRT would access the Branch Avenue station is not explored.

Also under consideration in the October 2004 Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) MD 5/US 301 Transit Service Staging Plan is a fixed guideway transit extension from the Branch Avenue station. This was updated in the MDOT Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Preservation Study in August 2010, which considered bus rapid transit and light rail transit to White Plains in northern Charles County.

Station Circulation and Parking

The three all-day parking lots have vehicular access from Auth Way. The southernmost lot also has an entrance from Old Soper Road. All bus routes enter the station from Old Soper Road and circulate around the kiss and ride lot. The HOV lot at Branch Avenue station appears to get some use, primarily for parking private cars.

Pedestrian Access at the Station

Access for walkers is difficult because of the basic nature of the station as a very large parking lot. Approaching the station from Old Soper Road provides the best facilities, with a narrow sidewalk along the street that leads to the wide bus plaza and then the station entrance. There are no other pedestrian facilities within the station parking lots, and the vehicular entrances, where there are booths and gates, are particular points of conflict. Sidewalks along WMATA property are present then absent, with some unexpected gaps.

Informal pedestrian paths have been created at the vehicular entrance to the Branch Avenue station from the neighborhoods to the north of the station. No sidewalk is provided on this side of Auth Way.

Continuing the route from the path in the photo above, pedestrians have worn out a large area of grass from the parking booths toward the station entrance. This indicates that pedestrians are crossing directly in front of cars as they pass through the gates, creating a potentially dangerous mix of distracted drivers with visibility limited by the booths and pedestrians.

A pedestrian is dwarfed by the vast concrete apron that extends from Auth Way to the high occupancy vehicle parking lot and the station entrance. No clear pedestrian paths are provided from Auth Way or from the station parking lots to the entrance.

The sidewalk ends abruptly at the corner of Old Soper Road and Auth Way, but an informal path continues on, indicating that pedestrians are walking along Auth Way in areas without a sidewalk.

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Sidewalk Inventory and Pedestrian Access

County policy is to require developers to pay for and construct sidewalks at the time of development, rather than fund sidewalk construction through public works. The result of this policy is particularly evident in the Branch Avenue station area where more recent development has sidewalks, but long gaps are also found on important routes to the station for pedestrians. Of particular note is the lack of a sidewalk to the north of the station on the east side of Auth Way opposite the MetroPlace development, where land awaits development. There is a sidewalk on the west side in front of the new residential, but a worn path (see photo below) shows that many people walk along the east side to access the station. There are no crosswalks in this area. Most of the eastern half of the Auth Way horseshoe is undeveloped and lacks any sidewalks. Pedestrians are observed walking in the drive lanes. These are critical missing pieces of station area infrastructure.

Also of note is the lack of sidewalks along Auth Road east of the roundabout and on most of the side streets in older subdivisions that pre-date mandatory sidewalks for new development. Construction of sidewalks along Auth Road is important to provide access to the station and this project has been in the county's Capital Improvement Plan for more than 15 years; however, it remains unfunded. The rural section conditions along Auth Road are a challenge to design and construction of a sidewalk and bicycle lanes, and the project will be costly and may require some acquisition of private property; the Department of Public Works and Transportation continues to work on a feasible concept.

Besides gaps in the sidewalks, there are barriers to pedestrian routes surrounding the station area, including: the WMATA yard, MD 5, I-95/495, Henson Creek and its tributaries, and Suitland Parkway. A wetland area between the WMATA yard and the Morningside community east of the station is a barrier and no pedestrian facility links this area to the station.

Walk Distance Analysis

The "ped shed" analysis shows that actual walk distances for the Branch Avenue station are surprisingly good. Even with a very limited number of public streets, the Auth Way to Auth Road pair, with connections to Auth Place and Brittania Way, allow walks that met the edge of the quarter-mile and half-mile walk circles in a number of directions. North of the station all of the new residential blocks are within a halfmile walk of the station. The walk from the station entrance to Old Soper Road and out to Auth Road also provides a relatively direct route and the actual walk is near to the half-mile circle.

Bicycle Facilities

As is the case throughout the project area, at present there are no off-street bicycle trails nor any designated, striped on-street bicycle lanes. An extension of the Henson Creek Trail is included in the MPOT; however, the conceptual design of extension up to the station area is currently stymied by the difficulty of crossing under the interstate and under or over MD 5. These barriers are significant and would require major capital investment, not only in trail construction but also in tunnels or bridges. The utility of this trail extension though is that it could provide a bicycle connection to the station for neighborhoods south of the Beltway that are within an easy ride, but are cut off by these roads.



A path is worn on property immediately north of the station where there is no sidewalk.



A man walks in the drive lane along Auth Way where no sidewalk is provided on either side of the street.



The sidewalk along Auth Road turns into a stripped shoulder only one block east of the roundabout, just outside the quarter-mile walk circle.





Pattern of Land Ownership

A—WMATA is the key landowner at the Branch Avenue station, giving the transit agency direct control over the future shape of the station area. Unlike the WMATA lands at the Southern Avenue station, the 43 acres the agency owns between the Auth Way "horseshoe" is directly accessible to the station and the land is flat; unlike Southern Avenue or Suitland the existing parking is in surface lots rather than in an expensive garage structure. This station site design provides WMATA with a very valuable real estate asset in an area that shows potential to support market-rate housing development. WMATA also owns additional land along the Green Line alignment, including large parcels that contain the rail maintenance yard; this yard land is necessarily excluded from future development.

B—North of the station, an investment group called Town Center at Camp Springs, LLP, owns 19.4 acres stretching across the horseshoe. The property has an approved site plan for just over 800 dwelling units and 65,000 square feet of retail space on this property, which was to be developed by Archstone, but the project has stalled. The market for the proposed retail remains uncertain and this may present an opportunity for revised concepts. The 6.3 acre site at the top of the horseshoe owned by Branch Apartment LLC is also moving forward with the second phase of its "Chelsea" project, which will mirror the development to its west, without including retail and office space as originally approved.

C—Between the station and the yard, four parcels are cradled by the curving track: two are owned by WMATA and the other two by Prince Georgetown LLC, which is an investor that is the second largest landowner in the station area with an interest in a number of development projects. One of the WMATA parcels is largely taken for a stormwater maintenance pond. A proposal for a major office building on this site was under review by M-NCPPC staff during 2011, but the project was withdrawn due to the cancellation of a GSA solicitation. Yet the plan showed the potential of the site to contain a large office structure with over 1 million square feet. The dead end road right-of-way shown between the four parcels is a paper street that does not exist and was the subject of a request to vacate during planning for the office project.

D—The knot of seven parcels south of the track and east of the roundabout is held by three groups of owners. The 2.5-acre parcel fronting on Auth Way, and a very small parcel adjacent to it, are owned by an individual investor who also is part of the Prince Georgetown LLC group. The other five parcels are owned by the members of the Marescalco family. Two houses front onto Auth Road with deep yards to the back and side. One of these houses is recognized in an M-NCPPC survey as the Marescalco house and a potential historic property because

of the interesting Art Moderne architecture and construction; however, the property owner requested that the house not be designated. The amount of land in this area is small, but at an important location relative to the station and Auth Road; if there is interest from the landowners, infill development is possible without disturbing the existing houses.

E—WMATA owns an additional 16 acres where Auth Place intersects with the Green Line track, with a third of this land straddling the track and therefore not developable. Current uses include the WMATA maintenance vehicle yard, county dog kennel, and county shooting range. This property's proximity to the Henson Creek Stream Valley Park and its interesting and protected park landscape increases its value for certain types of development.

F—On the northeast corner of the intersection of Brittania Way and Auth Way there are two parcels, the smaller one currently used for a union headquarters building. The larger parcel that surrounds it is owned by Prince Georgetown LLC. Across Brittania Way is a vacant parcel—**G**—that a developer is working to make the new home for Strayer University in a new 30,000 square foot building. Strayer is currently located in one of two office buildings on the southeast corner of Auth Way and Auth Place. These buildings—**H**—are owned by the same church that owns the land at the Southern Avenue station; one of the buildings is vacant, the interior in poor condition, and the building is currently for sale.

I—Property on the southern segment of Brittania Way is owned by the Seafarer's Union, Brittania LLC, and an individual. The Seafarer's Union has its international headquarters located at the corner of Auth Way and Brittania Way. This six-story building is one of the anchors in the station area. The Seafarer's property has potential for infill on the southern portion of the larger of two parcels, where a records storage building is currently located, and also on a 4.6 acre parcel on the west side of Brittania Way that is vacant. One of the two remaining parcels on the west side of Brittania Way is used for a car dealership; the other at the corner is vacant.

J—The State Highway Administration's Metro access road project will affect the future of a number of parcels from Branch Avenue to the station. The State of Maryland owns a parcel fronting on MD 5 and Auth Place, and the parcel directly east will also be divided by the new road. While this road will take land from some of the properties between Auth Place and the WMATA property, it also has the potential to create new access and frontage for property, especially the Seafarer's Union. K—The Archdiocese of Washington owns a group of three parcels with frontage along Auth Road across from the Tribeca Apartments and a Mormon Temple. This land totals roughly three acres and is largely vacant, except for the old farmstead house set to the back of the property, which an M-NCPPC report identifies as the Darcey House dating from the 1920s with some potential for historical significance. The house was damaged by fire in 2011 and is boarded up. St. Phillips Church, located directly south, bought the property in order to control how it will be developed, according to church representatives; however, no plans have been developed for its future use.

L—An undeveloped 3.7-acre parcel of land is located west of the church, but with access off Mercedes Boulevard, a cul-de-sac connecting to Auth Road. Two hotels are also located on Mercedes Boulevard, one recently constructed and the other recently renovated. Besides the vacant parcel, no change is expected in this area. Two office buildings, one leasing space to NOAA and the other an eye clinic, are located on Auth Road north of Mercedes Boulevard. No redevelopment is anticipated on those properties; however, the construction of the SHA road may open new frontage with infill potential.

M—Back to the northern edge of the district: DMBK Enterprises LLC owns over 13 acres used for a food and drink warehouse and distribution center. The operation has good access to MD 5 and the Beltway from this location, and while change is unlikely in the short or even medium term, this property's location within walking distance of the station—and its long frontage facing the Henson Creek park—could make it a very attractive development site as the station area develops.

N—The entrance to the district at Auth Way is currently an automobile sales market that is a destination for car buyers in the subregion. A half dozen different landowners are currently operating automobile dealerships in this prominent location, which is visible from MD 5. Although some dealerships in the area have changed brands, in general the automobile sales business appears to be thriving in this location, and therefore any change due to growth extending out from the station area is a very long term proposition.

Potential for Change

The potential for infill in the Branch Avenue station area is high, with a number of market rate projects moving forward after a lull due to the downturn in the real estate market. Redevelopment of the Metro station parking lots is constrained only by the need to maintain over 3,000 commuter parking spaces at this terminal station.



Opportunities and Challenges

Key Issues:

Market rate residential construction is proceeding on the Chelsea East site, but development on the Archstone project has stopped.

- Vacant sites surround the station in all directions and are held by a small number of owners.
- WMATA has studied jointed development of its 33-acre surface parking lot, with accommodating over 3000 commuter parking spaces a key challenge.
- The street grid is undeveloped with dead end roads such as Brittania Way and Old Soper Road.
- There is potential for incremental buildout at lower than desired land use intensity.
- Key routes to the station lack sidewalks, including Auth Road in the single-family area and parts of Auth Way.
- The A.M.E. Zion Church seeks to sell an office building in poor condition on Auth Place.
- Strayer University is planning to move out of the adjacent office building on Auth Place to a new building on Auth Way.
- SHA's Metro access road project will create a new four-lane roadway from Branch Avenue to the station.
- There is potential for redevelopment of the automobile dealerships in the long-term after the existing available land is developed.
- Vacant Catholic Archdiocese-owned land on Auth Road has potential for development.
- Large sites owned by Prince Georgetown LLC to the east and west of the station have been considered for major office development.
- The area lacks a coherent and distinguishing place-name.



This view of Branch Avenue station from the Seafarer's Building shows the amount of land available for development.



From the station looking southwest, the Branch Avenue station area shows potential for infill as an office employment center.

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