Medical Innovation Campus Feasibility Study
Land Use, Zoning, and Site Analysis

Executive Summary

Prince George's County is seeking to improve the quality of life for the residents of Southern Prince George's County. One of the unique assets that can be leveraged is the MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital. This facility is not only one of the largest regional employers, but it is seeking to increase specialty care and training facilities. At the same time, residents desire to have a healthier lifestyle, improved dining options, accessible retail, and increased local high-quality jobs.

A Medical Innovation Campus is envisioned in Clinton, Maryland, centered around the MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital campus. The goals are to: facilitate an expanded hospital; create a vibrant mixed-use walkable district that supports healthcare innovation; attract a research institution to partner with MedStar; create jobs and economic development for southern Prince George's County; provide high-quality amenities and services for residents and workers; increase access to healthy food; provide opportunities for green space and recreation; and, to expand housing opportunities for current and future residents and workers. The Medical Innovation Campus envisions all of these within a pedestrian-friendly, transit-supported healthy community.

The study area currently consists of the hospital, medical offices, limited commercial, a skilled nursing facility, rental townhomes, and a few single-family homes. It is surrounded primarily by low density residential uses. However, the largest neighbor is the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), whose Burches Hill substation sits to the southeast side of the site on a large undeveloped property.

The study area is relatively narrow, stretching one-and-a-half miles from top to bottom and as narrow as 200 feet at its most constrained. Additionally, existing topography, slopes, and other natural features offer both challenges and opportunities.

Already-planned transportation improvements include a new interchange at Branch Avenue and Surratts Road, a planned realignment of Surratts Road to improve site access and safety, and the planned Southern Maryland Rapit Transit (SMRT) Line which will provide faster, more reliable transit options.

In order to facilitate the vision for a Medical Innovation District, key actions required include:

- A change in the proposed land uses that includes commercial, institutional, retail, and residential.
- A change in the zoning classification across the study area to allow for a mix of commercial, institutional, retail, and residential.
- A change in the permitted density to support the envisioned development.
- An increase in immediately-adjacent households to support retail, dining, and homes for employees. A market study found that up to 6,500 new households within a 10-minute drive are needed to attract and support the campus and its businesses.
- An enlarged boundary for the Innovation District in order to accommodate a program that will support the desired services.

This study recommends that several parcels be changed to a flexible commercial zone called "Commercial, General and Office" (CGO). This zoning will allow the mix of uses necessary to attract additional investment, research institutions, innovation incubators & accelerators, high-quality office, high-quality retail, and high-quality dining.

This document serves as a technical and policy guide for decision-makers and planners to determine and apply the most appropriate zoning classifications needed to implement the vision for the Medical Innovation Campus and ensure coordinated, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development.

Site Analysis

Context

The study area is located at the intersection of Branch Avenue (MD 5) and Surratts Road in Clinton, MD, comprising approximately 138 acres. The site is home to the MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, which plans to expand with a new Intensive Care tower and Medical Transportation Center. Immediately south of the hospital is a rental townhome community and two medical office buildings, associated with MedStar. The study area also includes a small commercial building, a skilled care nursing home, and a handful of single-family homes.

The overall site is relatively narrow: stretching approximately one-and-a-half miles from top to bottom and just 200' wide at its narrowest point. Site dimensions, environmental features, and site access make some areas of the site more suitable for development than others.

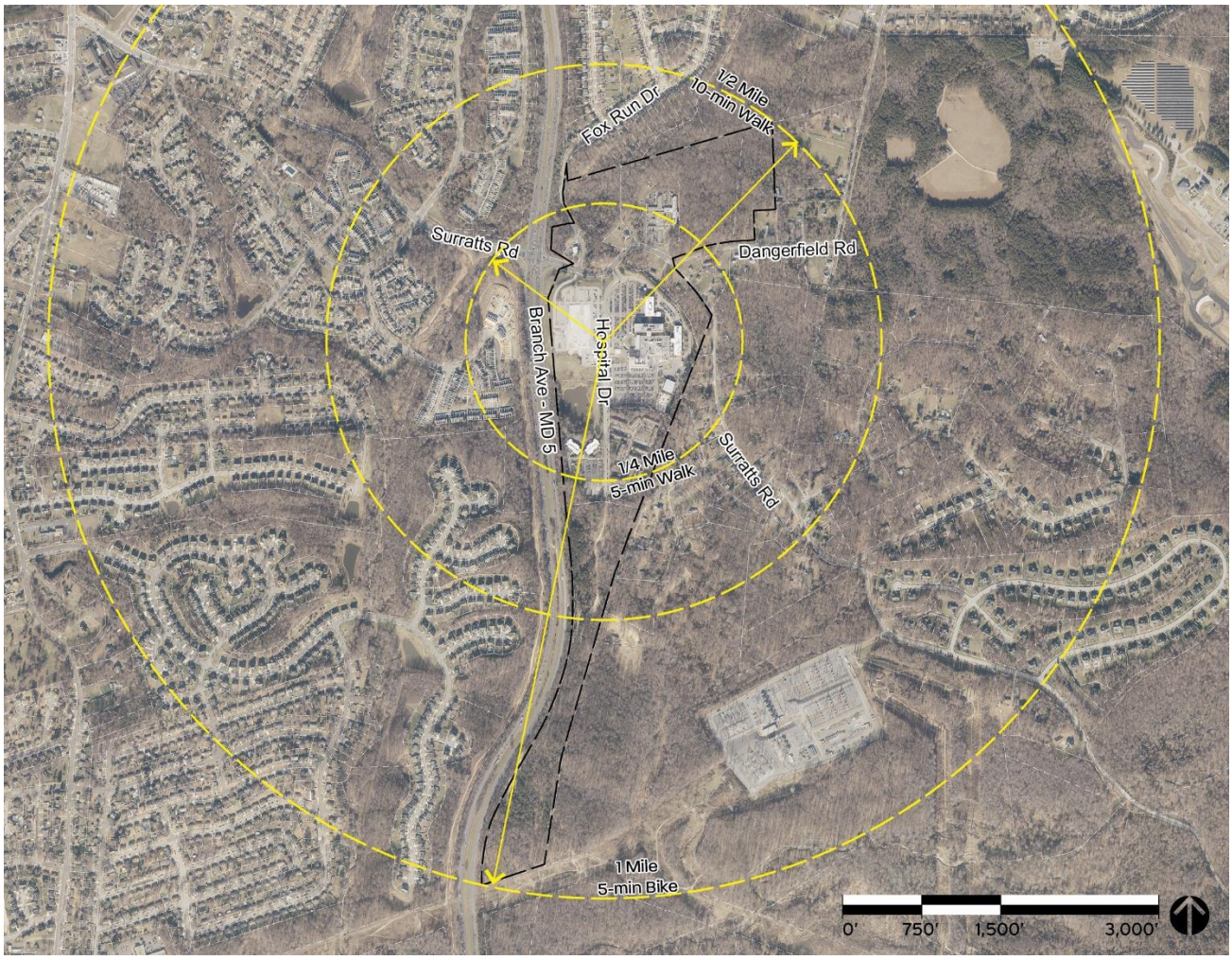

Figure 1 - Site Context

Site Analysis

There is significant topographic change at the corner of Branch Avenue and Surratts Road, offering both a challenge and potential opportunity for the site. While this difference in elevation can make the site feel physically removed from Branch Avenue, it also presents an opportunity for a building with increased visibility, serving as a prominent visual marker and symbol for the Medical Innovation Campus.

The far northern and southern tips of the study area overlap the floodplain, but most of the site remains outside the floodplain boundary. An analysis of topography and steep slopes (those between 15-to-25%, and greater than 25%) further reveals which areas of the site may be unsuitable (or impractical) for development. Most of the steep slopes are located outside the study area boundary.

Due to the narrow and elongated nature of the study area, it is beneficial to adjust the study area boundary to allow more development closer to the core of the Medical Innovation Campus and future Southern Maryland Rapit Transit (SMRT) station.

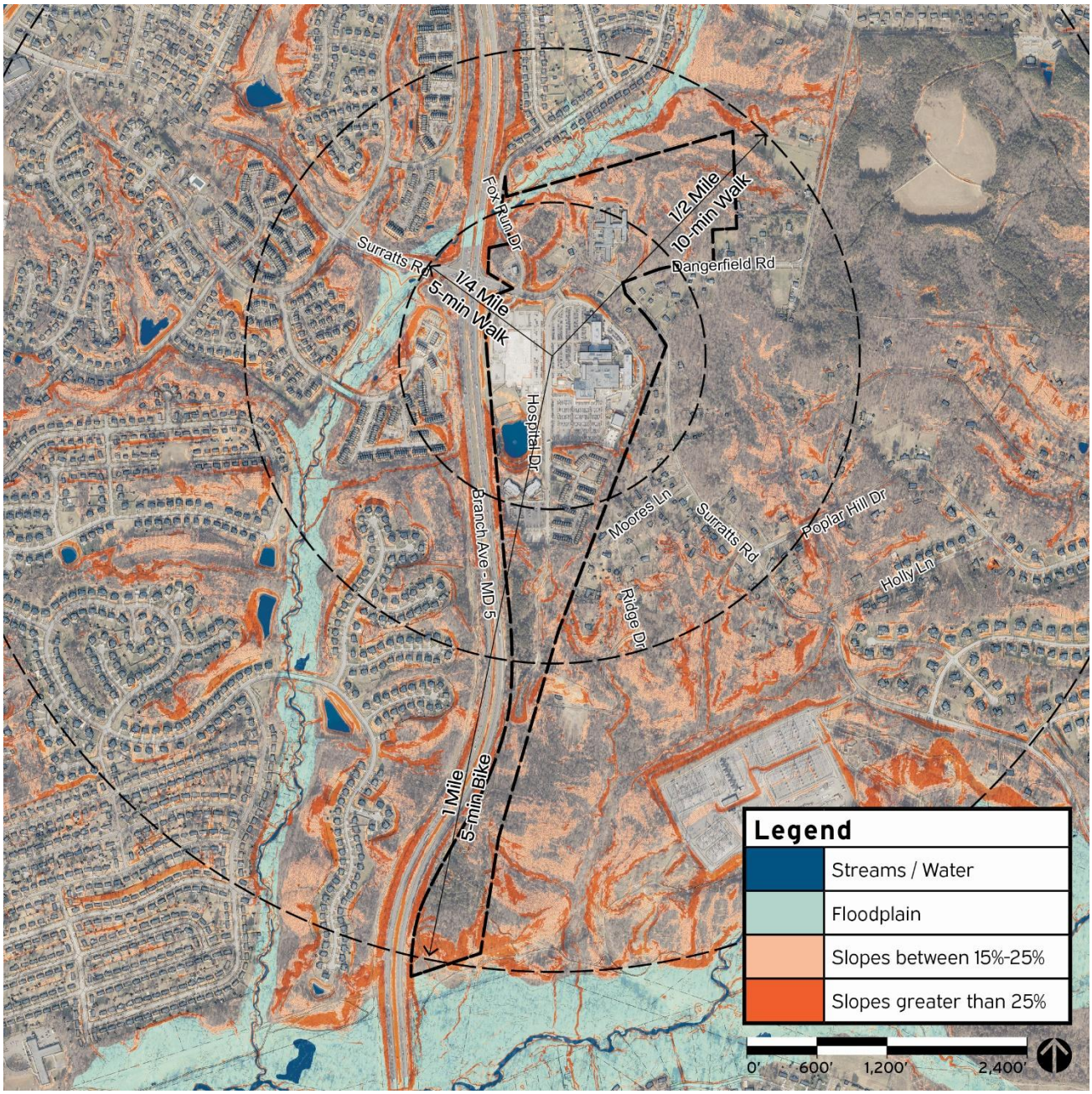

Figure 2 - Streams, Floodplains, and Slopes

Existing Streets and Transportation

Branch Avenue (MD 5) is classified as a "Primary – Limited Access" roadway north of Surratts Road and as "Primary – Separated" to the south. A short segment of Surratts Road to the west of Branch Avenue is classified as a "Secondary Street," but the remaining roads surrounding the project site are local streets that tend to be narrow, rural in character, and lack complete sidewalk infrastructure.

The site currently only has one point of access which limits connectivity and could pose a challenge for development potential. Public transportation is available via Prince George's County's "TheBus" Route P85, connecting to the Branch Avenue Metro station. There are two bus stops on the site: one in front of the hospital building and another near the medical office buildings (just south of the existing stormwater pond).

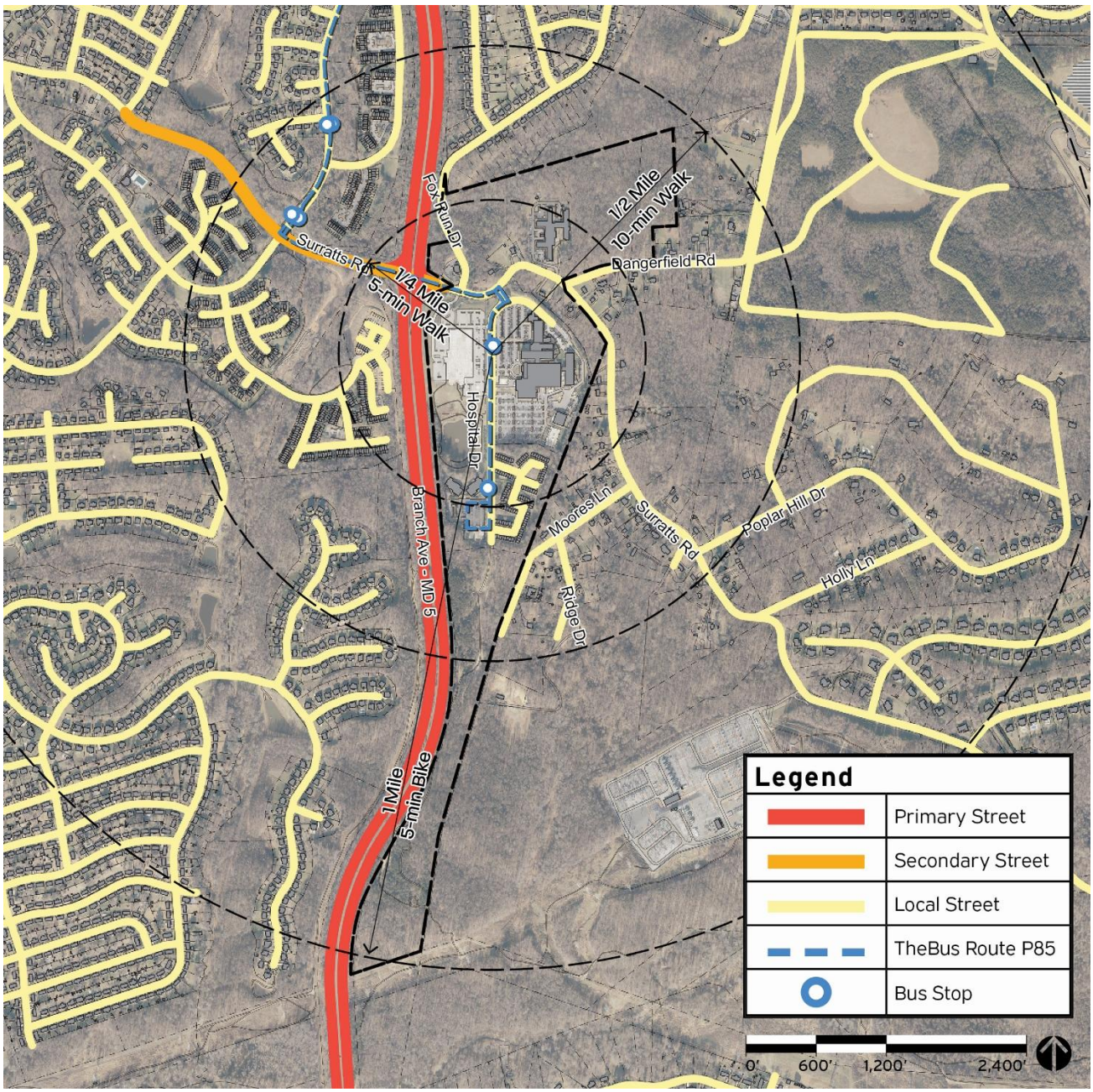

Figure 3 - Existing Streets and Transportation

Planned Transportation Improvements

Two major planned transportation improvements will affect development of the Medical Innovation Campus: one, a new grade-separated, diamond interchange at Branch Avenue/Surratts Road; and two, the future Southern Maryland Rapit Transit (SMRT) line.

The new interchange will re-align Surratts Road to the north, align Fox Run Drive with an extended Hospital Drive, and will create safer, more direct access into the site.

The planned SMRT Line will provide faster, more reliable transit options to the MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and for present and future residents and workers in this area.

Figure 4 - Planned Transportation Improvements

Vision and Framework

The Medical Innovation Campus is envisioned to create a transformative, mixed-use, transit-oriented, innovation district for southern Prince George's County. In addition to the goal of developing a Medical Innovation Campus, we have also heard a desire from community stakeholders for high-quality amenities and services, greater access to healthy food options, opportunities for employment, and increased access to housing arranged within a mixed-use and pedestrian friendly design.

One key to the success of achieving this vision is having a sufficient number of people in the immediate area to support and patronize retail establishments. Increased housing will also provide opportunities for hospital employees, researchers, local residents, and others who want to be a part of the Medical Innovation Campus. The market study undertaken for the feasibility study found that the desired vision would require up to 6,500 more households within a 10-minute drive of the site. While not all of these households can be accommodated on this site, maximizing the number of residences within a 10-minute walk will create a walkable environment, make the site more competitive for the desired users and uses, support a SMRT transit station, and reduce pressure for higher density elsewhere.

To accommodate this required density, the framework plan proposes expanding the boundary to the east, generally following Surratts Road north of Moores Lane and stepping back from Surratts Road south of Moores Lane. This expands the amount of developable land next to the existing hospital, expands developable land on the south side of the site where the existing dimensions and constraints limit opportunities, and preserves a buffer against established residential subdivisions. This would require partnering or coordinating with PEPCO for the development, disposition, and/or sale of necessary land.

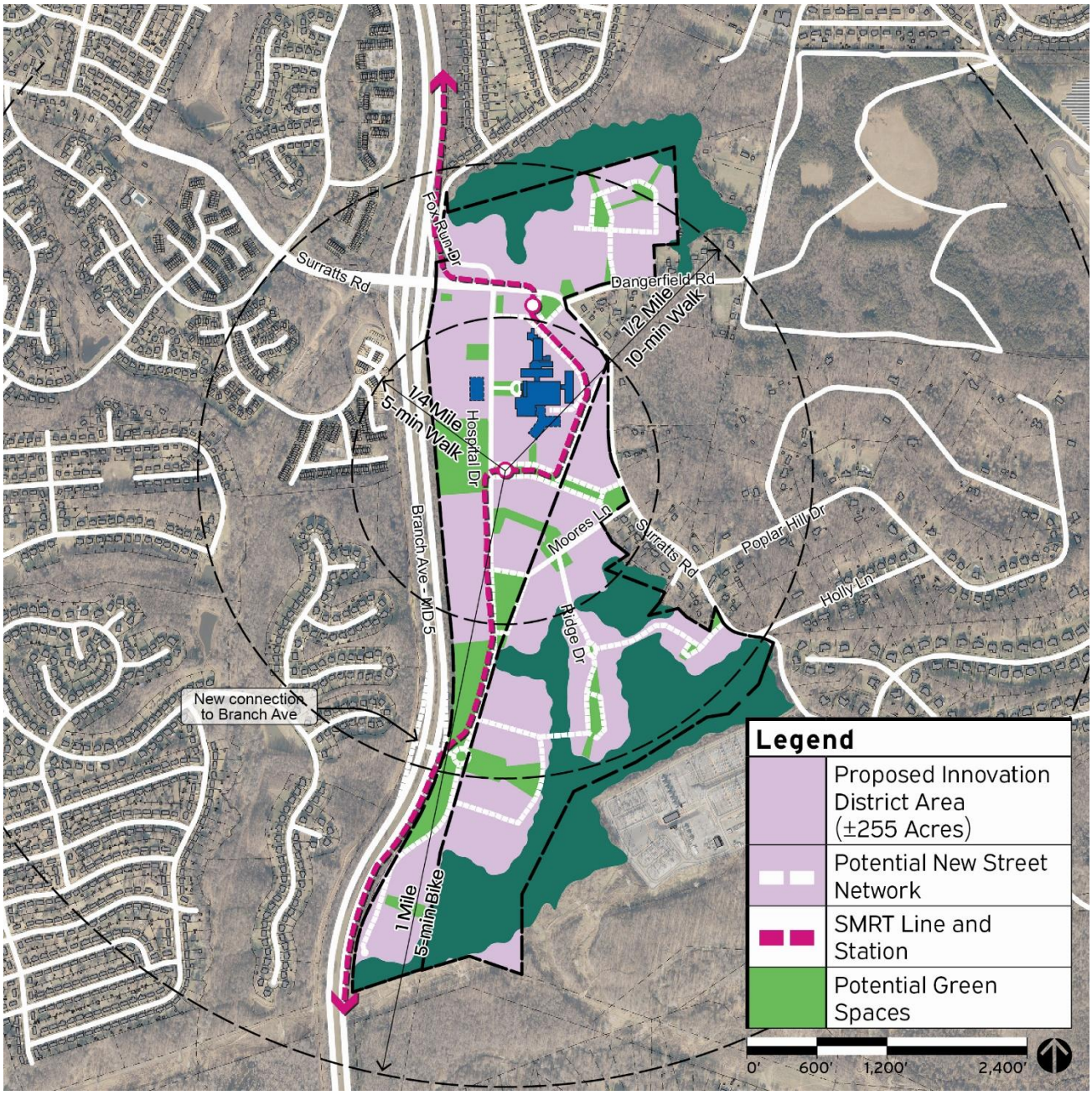

Figure 5 - Conceptual Framework Diagram

The framework plan illustrates the possible development of streets, blocks, parks, and urban design strategies in a walkable and health-promoting form. The pattern provides flexibility and can accommodate a diverse mix of uses.

Land Use

The 2014 *Approved Plan Prince Georges 2035 General Plan* (Plan 2035) sets policies and priorities for future development in the County, including locations to focus growth, preservation, and future land use. At a smaller scale, M-NCPPC oversees the creation and administration of plans with more specificity, such as subregion plans, sector plans, and corridor plans. These plans add details and goals for specific geographic locations. The Medical Innovation Campus feasibility study area is within both the *Approved Subregion 5 Master Plan* and the *Approved Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan*, both published in 2013.

Future Land Use is determined first as a policy and rezoning follows (mapping the most appropriate classification to implement the land use policy).

Existing Land Use

A mix of land uses and development patterns exist within the study area. North of Surratts Road the land is mainly vacant, with a small commercial node at the intersection of Surratts Road and Fox Run Drive. Adjacent to the intersection is a single-family detached home and skilled-nursing facility. South of Surratts Road, the site is anchored by MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, surrounded by surface parking lots. The site of a former hotel now serves as a surface parking lot and temporary helipad. Just south of the hospital on the east side of Hospital Drive is a rental townhome community. Two medical office buildings are found on the west side. Further to the south is a strip of vacant land owned by MedStar. Outside the project area, the surrounding land uses are predominantly single-family residential. Further to the east is the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), a large, secured parcel. Southeast of the site is the PEPCO Burches Hill Substation, the largest single parcel abutting the Medical Innovation Campus site.

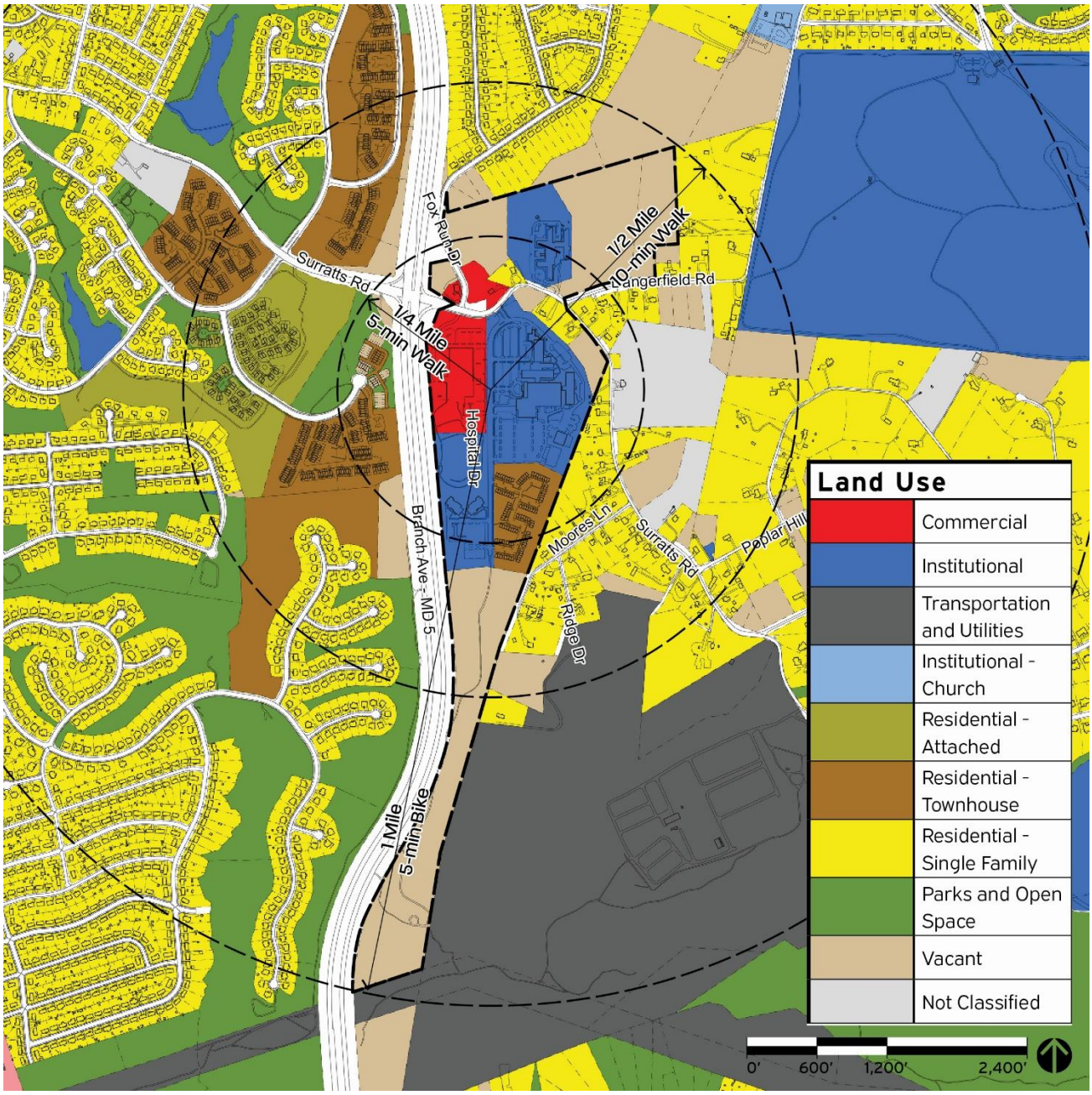

Figure 6 - Existing Land Use

Current Future Land Use

The *current* Future Land Use map below is a combination of both the Subregion 5 Master Plan and Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan future land use recommendations. The currently and/or previously developed property south of Surratts Road is designated as Institutional Mixed Use with the remaining lands designated Residential Low Density. The FLETC and PEPCO-owned land are both designated as Institutional.

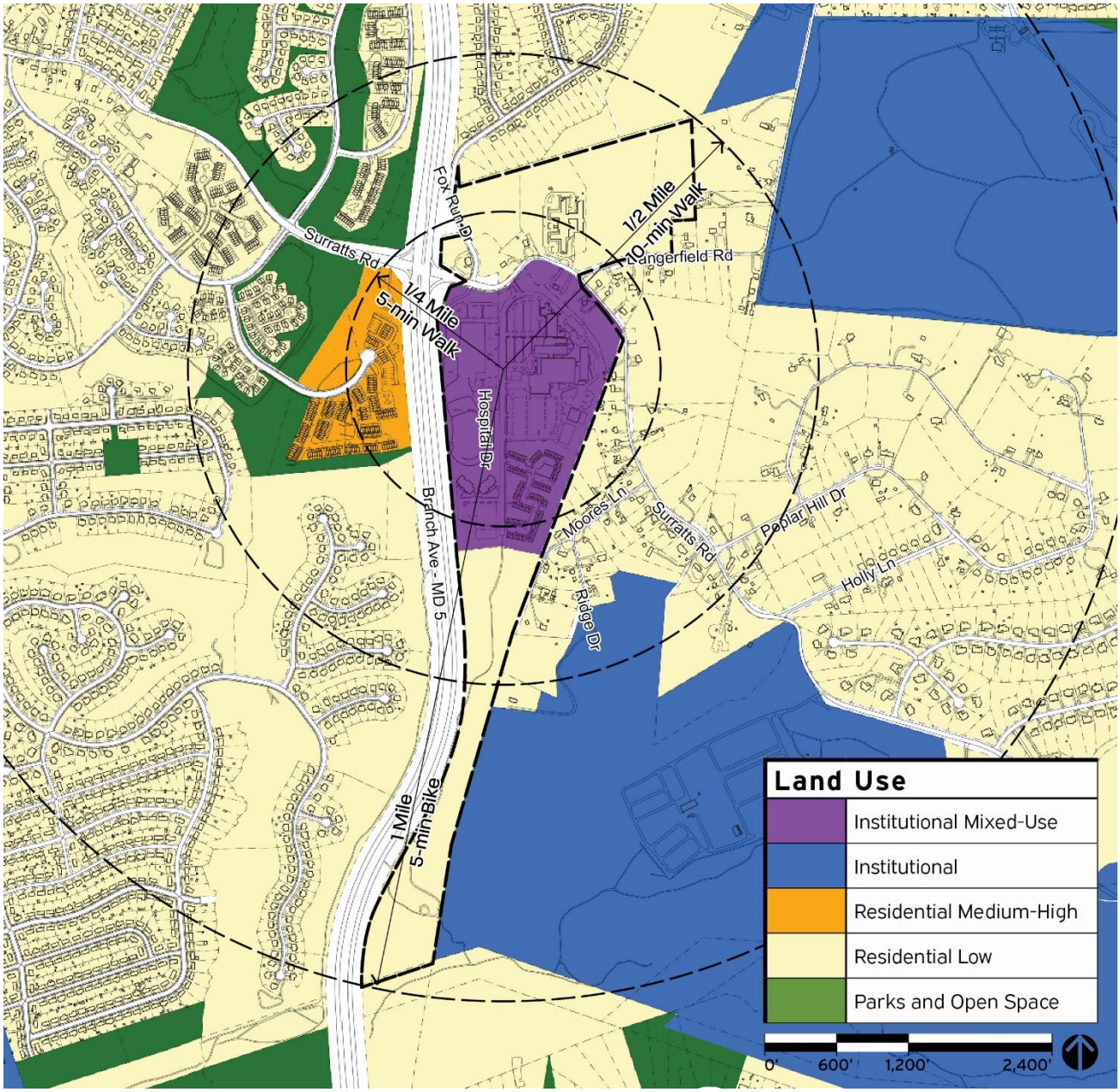

Figure 7 - Current Future Land Use

Proposed Future Land Use

The *proposed* Future Land Use map aligns with the vision of a world-class medical innovation campus in southern Prince George's County. It is proposed that the entire study area have a mixed-use development pattern in order to implement this vision. Mixed-use is a required designation for the entire study area, but a detailed planning and design of the ultimate development is necessary to ensure proper scale and compatibility with neighboring uses.

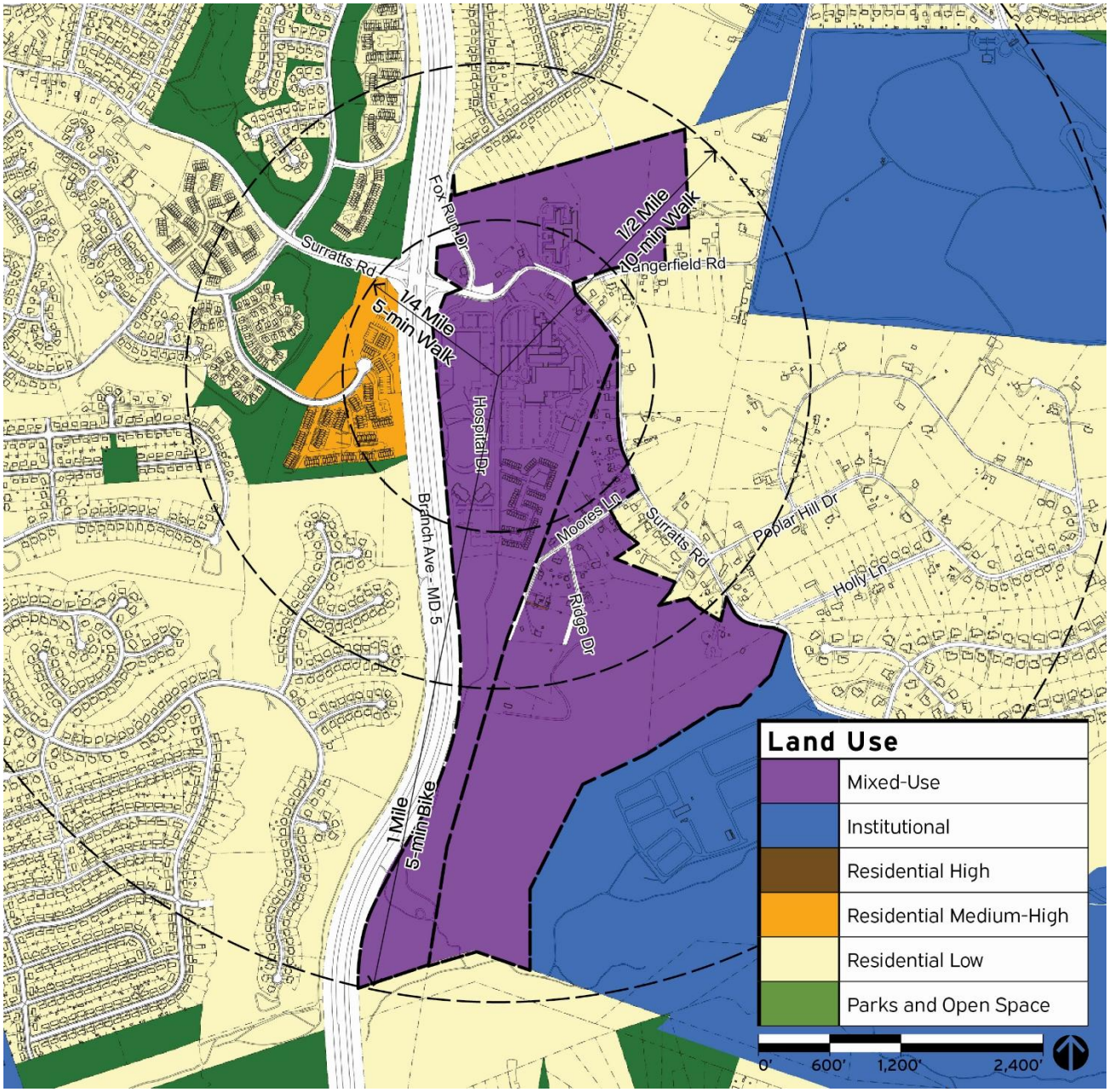

Figure 8 - Proposed Future Land Use

Zoning

Zoning is an integral part of community development; it is the underlying framework that allows a vision to come to life. It sets rules for what is allowed to be built and the dimensional standards that control how it is built. If zoning is not aligned with the development vision, it can prevent its implementation. Importantly, however, it does not control what, exactly, will be built; proper zoning alone cannot guarantee results. Therefore, additional regulations (e.g., design guidelines, overlay district, etc.) are recommended.

Zones define the intent, allowable uses, density, and other minimum and maximum dimensional criteria, such as building height, placement within a parcel, and distance between buildings. The Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance defines over 30 zones, but the summary below is only for zones which are mapped on the study area and in immediate proximity. They are: *Commercial, General and Office* (CGO); *Residential, Single-Family-65* (RSF-65); *Residential, Rural* (RR); *Residential Estate* (RE); and, *Agricultural-Residential* (AR). An overview of each, provided by M-NCPPC, follows below.

Commercial, General and Office (CGO)
The CGO zone provides for a broad and diverse range of retail, business, civic, and mixed-use development at major intersections and other highly visible and accessible locations. It supports connectivity and provides a balance between automobile access and pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendliness. It incorporates high-density residential development, including townhouses, multifamily dwellings, artists' studios, and live-work dwellings to complement nonresidential development. There are no minimum lot sizes, except for multifamily buildings (7,500 sq. ft.), and a range of residential densities are allowed: from 20 dwelling units per net acre for townhouses up to 48 dwelling units per net acre for multifamily buildings.

Residential, Single-Family-65 (RSF-65)
The RSF-65 zone provides for primarily small-lot, single-family detached communities reflective of traditional subdivisions patterns. The minimum lot size within the zone is 6,500 sq. ft. and a maximum of 6.7 dwelling units per net acre is allowed.

Residential, Rural (RR)
The RR zone provides for low-density, single-family detached dwellings on lots approximately one half-acre in size that incorporate a rural character. The minimum lot size is 20,000 sq. ft. and a maximum of 2.17 dwellings units per net acre is allowed.

Residential Estate (RE)
The RE zone provides for low-density, single-family detached dwellings in a rural estate setting. The zone is designed to respect natural land features and conserve open space. The minimum lot size is 40,000 sq. ft. and a maximum of 1.08 dwelling units per net acre is allowed.

Agricultural-Residential (AR)
The AR zone provides for agriculture as a primary use while supporting large-log single-family detached housing. It allows for limited nonresidential uses including animal care, recreation and entertainment, visitor accommodation, and resource extraction (under limited conditions). The minimum lot size is 2 acres with a maximum density of 0.5 dwelling units per net acre.

Existing Zoning

Most of the study area is zoned Residential, Rural (RR). The hospital, medical offices, and townhomes have prior special exceptions for their non-conforming uses. A small corner of the hospital site is zoned Commercial, General, and Office (CGO), as are two parcels to the north of Surratts Road. Outside of the study area to the east is more residential land, zoned Residential, Rural (RR) and Residential Estate (RE). Lands owned by PEPCO, to the east of the study area, and a few adjoining parcels are zoned Agricultural-Residential (AR).

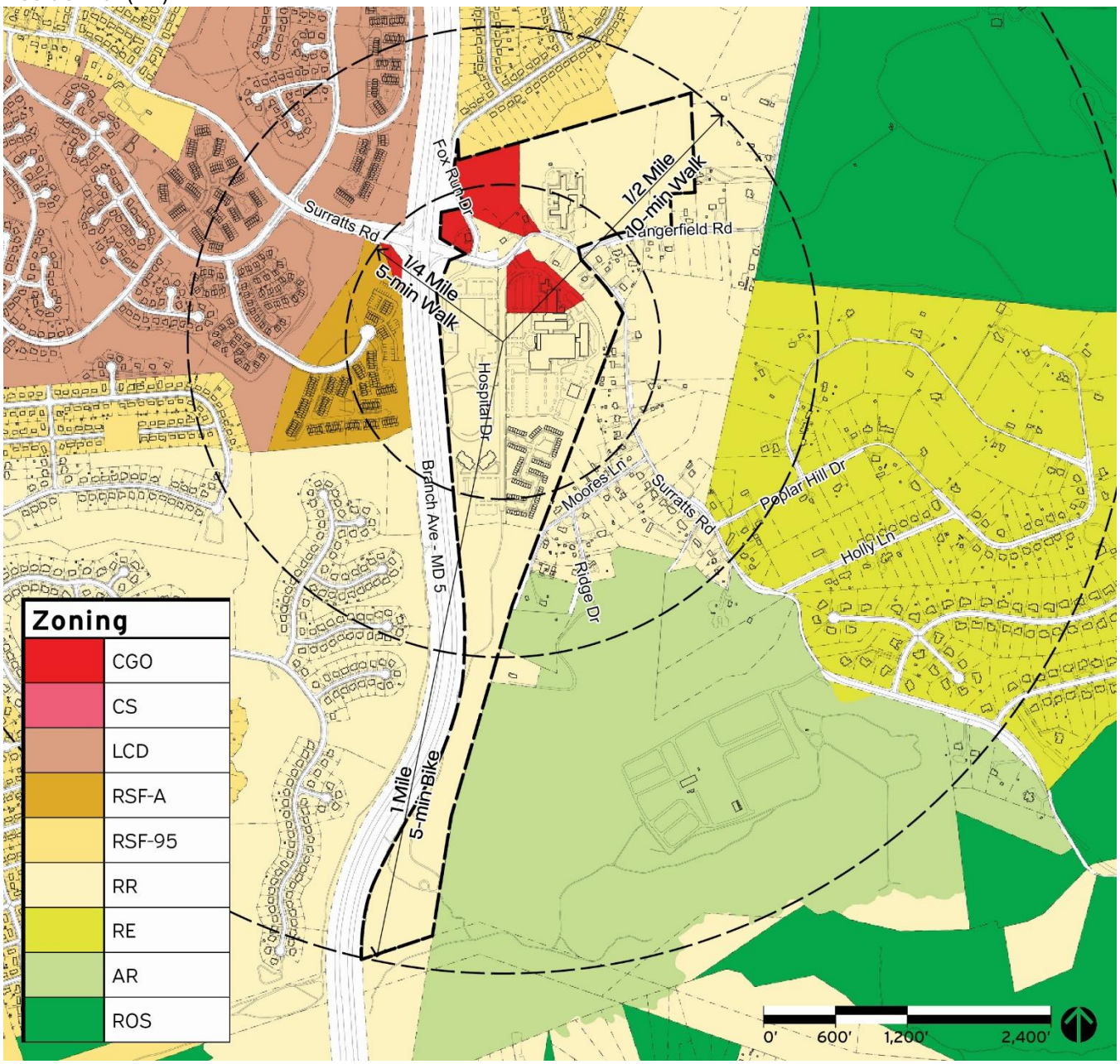

Figure 9 - Existing Zoning

A Medical Innovation Campus – a vibrant, innovation-focused, mixed-use, walkable center providing amenities, services, housing, and economic opportunity for the community – cannot be fully implemented with the current zoning designations. The zones currently mapped on site do not align with the overarching vision and proposal for future land use.

Proposed Zoning

The proposed zoning recommendation is that the entire study area be designated as CGO. A designation of CGO for the entire project boundary provides flexibility as the Medical Innovation Campus develops. CGO allows the greatest variety of uses, both commercial and residential, in an urban, mixed-use format, and is intended to support pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly design. Zoning should not hinder the inclusion of potential anchors, partners, or other opportunities necessary for the success of the Medical Innovation District, nor should it unnecessarily complicate the process requiring another rezoning.

We have also stated the importance of population density and housing needed to support the Medical Innovation Campus and desired high-quality retail and dining. Residential development is permitted within the CGO zone at the same or similar densities (expressed as dwelling units per net acre) as the residential base zones that might otherwise be proposed: RMF-48 in the core, and RSF-A in areas with more sensitive residential adjacencies. However, to offer the greatest flexibility and future potential success, it is recommended to apply CGO zoning to the entirety of the study area. This designation ensures that the Medical Innovation Campus can develop without discouraging innovation partners.

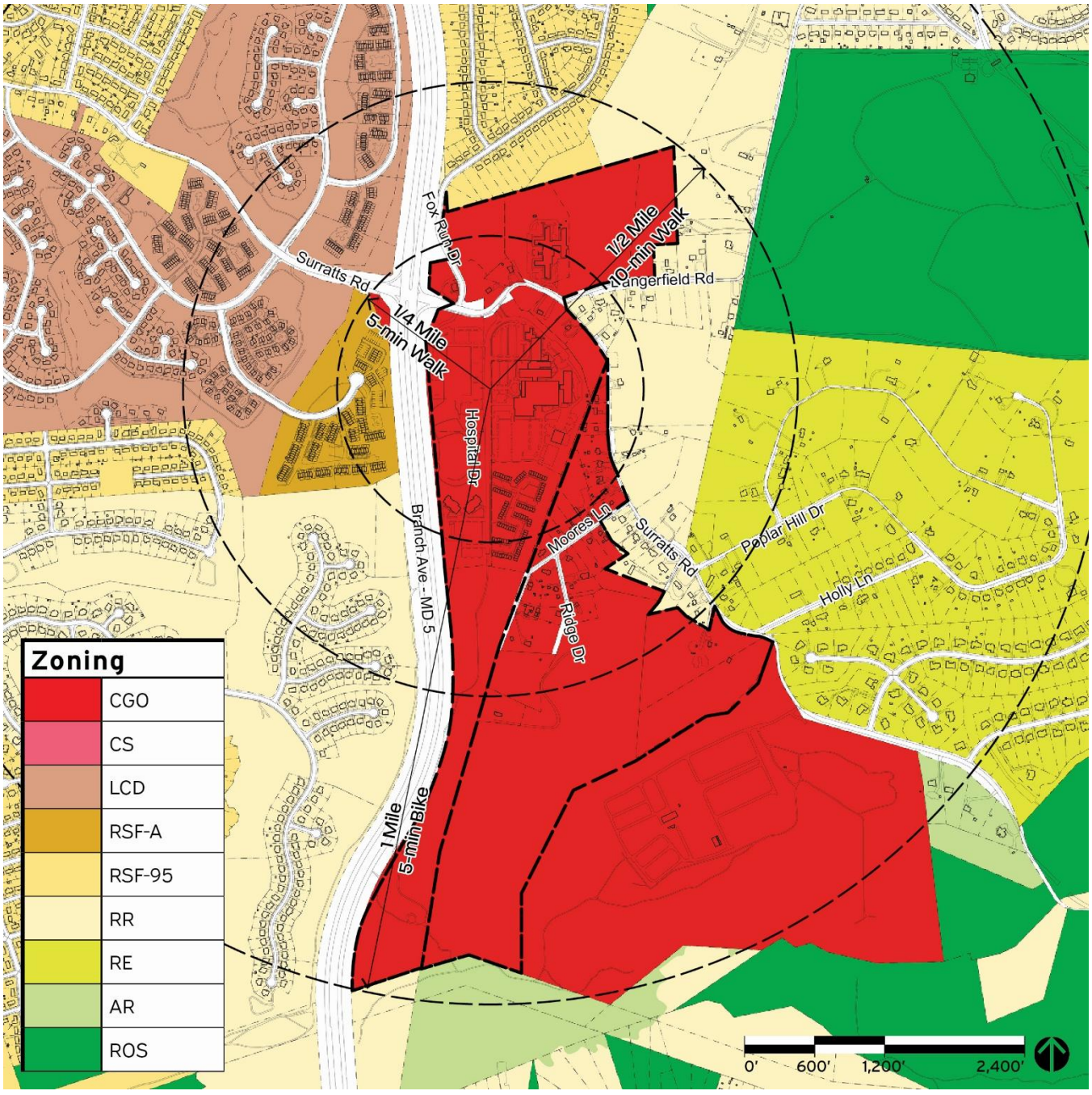

Figure 10 - Proposed Zoning

Potential Alternative Zoning Considerations

We are currently limited to the County's residential and nonresidential base zones by Plan 2035. However, Transit-Oriented Zones or Activity Center Base Zones may be more appropriate for the site. Transit Oriented/Activity Center zoning is available for use only where designated on Plan 2035's Growth Policy Map.

Part of what maximizes the potential for an Innovation District is the urban form and design of the place. Transit-Oriented/Activity Center zones are specifically intended for Local Centers, which are envisioned by Plan 2035 to be focal points for development and civic activity based on their access to transit or major highways. Transit-Oriented/Activity Center zones support transit and serve as economic engines for Prince George's County. Importantly, they have been created to implement walkable and bikeable places and require mixed-use development. These zones have additional regulations that require a higher level of design quality, better connectivity, reduced parking requirements, and sidewalk and street standards that ensure an urban character. While the base zones would not necessarily *prohibit* development of a compact, walkable, and integrated district, neither do they *require* mixed-use, compact, pedestrian focused development patterns.

While this recommendation is outside the scope of the current study, given the economic importance of the Medical Innovation Campus, the regional importance of the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project, and the high-quality vision for development, it is recommended that this be considered in order to align all the County policies in a comprehensive manner.