

Capitol Heights



Approved Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment

July 2008

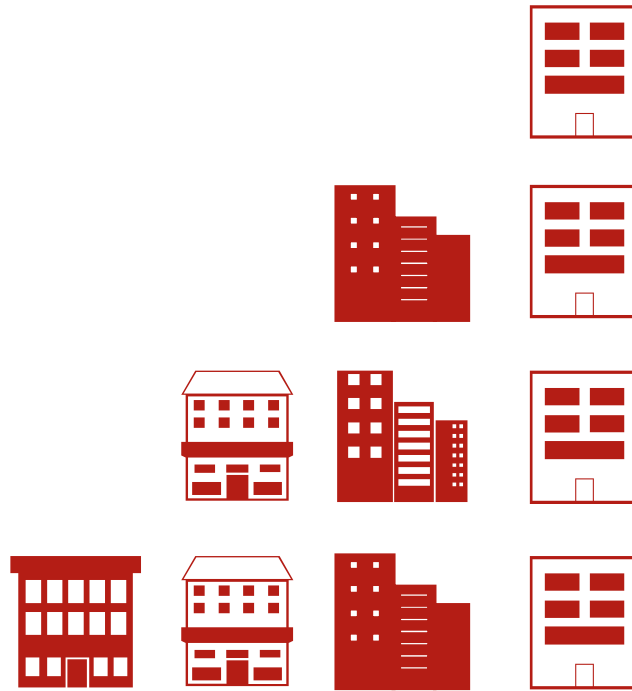




Abstract

- Title: Approved Capitol Heights Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment
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Prince George's County Planning Department
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- Subject: New Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zone for the Capitol Heights Metro Area
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- Abstract: This document contains text and maps of the approved transit district development plan (TDDP) and transit district overlay zoning map amendment for the Capitol Heights Metro Station and vicinity. This plan contains a new TDOZ and transit district overlay zone (TDOZ) and amends portions of the 1993 *Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Landover and Vicinity (Planning Area 72)* and the 1986 *Approved Master Plan for Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity, Planning Areas 75A and 75B*. Developed by M-NCPPC with the assistance of the community, this plan contains a comprehensive development vision, development review process requirements, and form-based development standards and guidelines. Together, these elements comprise the Capitol Heights Transit District Development Plan (TDDP). It controls and guides the use and development of all land within the Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ) from the initial submittal of plans to the issuance of permits. Together, the TDOZ and TDDP are intended to foster transit-oriented development that increases the use of public transit, maximizes return on investment in transit facilities and services, encourages appropriate development near transit stations with coordinated urban design elements, and increases local tax revenues.

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Department
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Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bicounty agency, created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District;
- The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire county public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

The Prince George's County Department of Planning (M-NCPPC):

- Our mission is to help preserve, protect and manage the county's resources by providing the highest quality planning services and growth management guidance and by facilitating effective intergovernmental and citizen involvement through education and technical assistance.
- Our vision is to be a model planning department comprised of responsive and respected staff who provide superior planning and technical services and work cooperatively with decision-makers, citizens and other agencies to continuously improve development quality and the environment and act as a catalyst for positive change.

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The County Council has three main responsibilities in the planning process: (1) setting policy, (2) plan approval, and (3) plan implementation. Applicable policies are incorporated into area plans, functional plans, and the general plan. The Council, after holding a hearing on the plan adopted by the Planning Board, may approve the plan as adopted, approve the plan with amendments based on the public record, or disapprove the plan and return it to the Planning Board for revision. Implementation is primarily through adoption of the annual Capital Improvement Program, the annual Budget, the water and sewer plan, and adoption of zoning map amendments.

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Letter from the Chairman *ix*

Plan Highlights *xi*

PART ONE: Introduction

Purpose 1

Background 2

Location 2

Demographic Profile 2

Development Pattern 2

Development Potential 5

Relationship to the Underlying Zones 5

Relationship to the Prince George’s County Zoning Ordinance 6

Relationship to Applicable Master Plans 6

Relationship to the General Plan 6

Relationship to the State Planning Act 6

Transportation Demand Management 7

Amendment Procedures 8

PART TWO: Vision of Transit-Oriented Development

Vision Statement 9

Plan Elements 11

Character Areas 12

Environmental Infrastructure 25

Transportation Systems 27

Low-Impact Development (LID) 34

PART THREE: The Transit District Development Plan

Administration and Applicability 37

Capitol Heights TDDP Components 37

Submittal Requirements 38

Applicability of Site Plan Requirements 39

Responsibility for Required Improvements 40

Permitted and Prohibited Uses Within the Capitol Heights Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ) 41

Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment 42

Introduction 42

Public Land Policy 44

Zoning in Public Rights-of-Way 44

Limitations on the Use of Zones 44

Guidelines for Commercial Zoning 44

Conditional Zoning 45

Transit District Overlay Zones 45

Comprehensive Rezoning Changes 45

Mixed-Use Zoning Recommendations 45

Proposed Map Amendments 48

Table of Contents

PART FOUR: Development Standards and Guidelines

General TDDP Standards and Guidelines.....	63
Building Envelope and Site Standards and Guidelines	65
Open Space and Streetscape Standards and Guidelines	79
Parking Facility Standards and Guidelines	92
Architectural Standards and Guidelines	101

PART FIVE: Appendices

A. TDDP/TDOZ Procedural Sequence Chart	110
B. Low-Impact Development (LID) Design Guidelines	111
C. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Guidelines	114

List of Maps

1. Capitol Heights TDOZ and Study Area Boundaries	3
2. Location of Capital Heights TDOZ Within Planning Areas 70, 75A, 75B	4
3. Illustrative Development Concept Plan	10
4. Capitol Heights Character Areas	13
5. Metro Station Core Locator	14
6. Metro Station Edge Locator	16
7. Main Street Locator	18
8. Medium-Density Residential Edge Locator	21
9. Urban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached Locator	22
10. Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached	24
11. Illustrative Open Space Plan	26
12. Street Classification Plan	28
13. Illustrative TDOZ Parking Plan	32
14. Illustrative Pedestrian and Transit Circulation Plan	33
15. Illustrative Stormwater Management Plan/LID Plan	36
16. Preferred Land Use Plan	43
17. Recommended Areas for Mixed-Use Rezoning Applications	47
18. Summary of Proposed Zoning Changes	49

Proposed Zoning Change Maps begin on page 50

List of Figures

1. Capitol Heights TDOZ Plan Elements	11
2. Metro Joint Development Site—Illustrative Development Concept	15
3. Capitol Heights Metro Plaza—Illustrative Development Concept	15
4. Capitol Heights Boulevard/Chamber Avenue Pocket Park—Illustrative Site Plan	17
5. Main Street Character Area	19
6. Illustrative View of Town Square Looking East	19
7. Illustrative Site Plan of Town Civic Center	20
8. Typical Development in Medium-Density Residential Edge	20
9. Typical Development—Urban Residential Neighborhood	23
10. Suburban Neighborhood—Single-Family Detached	23
11. Proposed Capitol Heights Boulevard/East Capitol Street Extended Intersection	29

List of Tables

1. Street Classification Matrix	30
2. Existing and Proposed Zoning Inventory (in acres)	46
3. Maximum Parking Ratios for Land Use	97
4. Shared Parking Percentage Requirements by Time Period	98



The Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is pleased to make available the 2008 *Approved Capitol Heights Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment*. The approved transit district overlay zoning map amendment creates a new transit district overlay zone (TDOZ) for the Capitol Heights Metro Station area. The approved transit district development plan contains recommendations for future land use and development in the new TDOZ.

Policy guidance for this plan came from the 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*, land use and transportation studies conducted by the Prince George's County Planning Department, and county functional area master plans, including the 2005 *Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan* and the 2008 *Approved Public Safety Facilities Master Plan*. The Capitol Heights Metro Station area is designated as a community center by the 2002 General Plan and represents an untapped opportunity to create a pedestrian- and transit-friendly, mixed-use community in central Prince George's County.

Three workshops, including a four-day planning charrette, were held October 2005 through January 2006 to provide the community with the opportunity to share visions and proffer feedback on planning issues. During the planning process, we asked area residents to envision how the Capitol Heights Metro area would develop over time into a more urban form while remaining sensitive to the existing single-family residential character of the Town of Capitol Heights. We are continuing this effort countywide through the *Envision Prince George's* initiative to engage a broad cross section of stakeholders in developing a shared vision for the county's future direction and growth. We invite you to visit the *Envision Prince George's* website at www.mnccppc.org/Envision to learn more about how to participate in this exciting initiative.

On October 9, 2007, the District Council and the Planning Board held a joint public hearing on the preliminary transit district development plan and transit district overlay zoning map amendment. The Planning Board adopted the plan with modifications per PGCPB Resolution No. 07-219 in December 2007. The District Council approved the plan with additional modifications per CR-66-2008 (DR-2) in July 2008.

The Planning Board appreciates the contributions of the community and stakeholders throughout the plan development phase and at the public hearing. We look forward to this plan providing the foundation for the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use, transit-oriented community around the Capitol Heights Metro Station that will benefit Capitol Heights and Prince George's County citizens and residents for years to come.

Sincerely,



Samuel J. Parker, Jr., AICP
Chairman

Prince George's County Planning Board



The goal of the Capitol Heights Transit District Development Plan (TDDP) is to provide for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) within the Capitol Heights Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ). The 2002 Prince George's County General Plan (page 44) defines TOD as development that actively seeks to increase transit use and decrease automobile dependency by:

- Locating homes, jobs, and shopping closer to transit services
- Locating the mix of critical land uses (live/work/shop) in closer proximity to one another
- Establishing land use/transit linkages that make it easier to use transit (rail and bus)

The Capitol Heights TDDP envisions a new community of up to 1,500 housing units; 290,000 square feet of retail/office space; an extensive system of civic, park, and open spaces; and an efficient street and circulation network. Within the TDOZ, pedestrians and vehicular traffic will share the public rights-of-way. Development in the community will be moderate- to medium-density and located within an easy walk of the Capitol Heights Metro Station.

TOD at Capitol Heights has four key elements: character areas, environmental infrastructure, transportation systems, and low impact development (LID) features.

- Character Areas are essential components of the plan. Their distinctive and attractive physical appearance is designed to encourage walkability. Walkability is an essential feature of the pedestrian-friendly environments that are characteristic of TOD. Definable character areas also encourage citizens to take responsibility for their maintenance and development. These areas, whether residential or mixed use, should be compact and pedestrian friendly so that many activities of daily living are within close proximity. They are safe, comfortable, and interesting; and are defined as much by the quality of their open spaces as by the quality of their buildings.
- Environmental Infrastructure consists of natural features and processes, wildlife, habitat, parks, recreation and open spaces. Well-designed environments combine natural and built elements in a manner that encourages people to experience them close-up; i.e., on foot or bicycle. This pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly orientation is an essential

feature of successful TOD. It also improves the quality of life for people and the other living creatures with which we share these spaces. Successful communities typically provide a range of natural areas, parks, and open spaces such as tot lots, ball fields, and gardens, as neighborhood amenities that define edges and provide connections.

- Transportation Systems elements, such as streets, pedestrian pathways, and rail transit rights-of-way, help organize community structure. When these elements are properly planned and designed, they promote the use of walking, bicycling, and public transit. This is the prime objective of TOD. A properly planned and balanced transportation system also allows all residents to enjoy independent mobility. Such independence is especially important for the young and the elderly, who are unable or unwilling to drive. The best streets are places of shared use that balance the needs of pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. Well-designed streets are beautiful as well as functional, and provide a graceful setting for a community's architecture.
- Low Impact Development (LID) Features mitigate potential environmental impacts associated with excess stormwater runoff from paved and other impervious surfaces. Well-designed LID features permit more compact development and minimize environmental impacts. Compact development is another essential feature of TOD. LID features include techniques such as green roofs, rain gardens, bioswales, and other creative uses of open space.

The development review process for the Capitol Heights TDOZ is the result of local communities and regulatory agencies working together to make it easier for interested developers to help implement the vision contained in the Capitol Heights TDDP. Following the TDDP can result in a streamlined approval process that takes approximately two to three months. Deviating from the TDDP will require a lengthier design review process that could take four to six months to complete.

The TDDP's development plan standards and guidelines are codified as design-based code. Design-based code shifts the focus of development controls from permitted uses to building form (heights, bulk, build-to lines) and streetscape. The design-based standards are broken down into four areas: building envelope and site standards and guidelines—open space and streetscape standards and guidelines—parking

Plan Highlights

facility standards and guideline—architecture standards and guidelines. Each set of development standards is accompanied by guidelines that further explain the plan’s vision for future development within the Capitol Heights TDOZ.

- **Building Envelope and Site Standards and Guidelines:** The Building Envelope and Site Standards govern the location of buildings on their sites, their bulk, their heights, and the location of required parking for all new development within the TDOZ. The Building Envelope and Site Standards are intended to ensure the development of attractive and lively urban places within the TDOZ.
- **Open Space and Streetscape Standards and Guidelines:** The Streetscape Standards control the functional design and visual appearance of open spaces and streetscapes within the TDOZ. These standards promote pedestrian activity at the street level by requiring primary building entrances to face public streets. The standards also encourage the creation of public open spaces that provide an appropriate and attractive transition between onsite uses and the adjacent public streetscape.
- **Parking Facility Standards and Guidelines:** The Parking Standards are intended to ensure on-street parking and off-street surface/structured parking facilities that are safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. The standards also ensure that off-street parking facilities will be well lit without subjecting neighboring residential areas to excessive glare; and visually integrated into the surrounding built environment.
- **Architecture Standards and Guidelines:** The Architecture Standards ensure that building architecture shall be attractive, durable, and supportive of the distinctive appearance of the character areas where buildings are located. The standards require building facades to be designed in a manner that provides visual interest while promoting a sense of public safety and security.