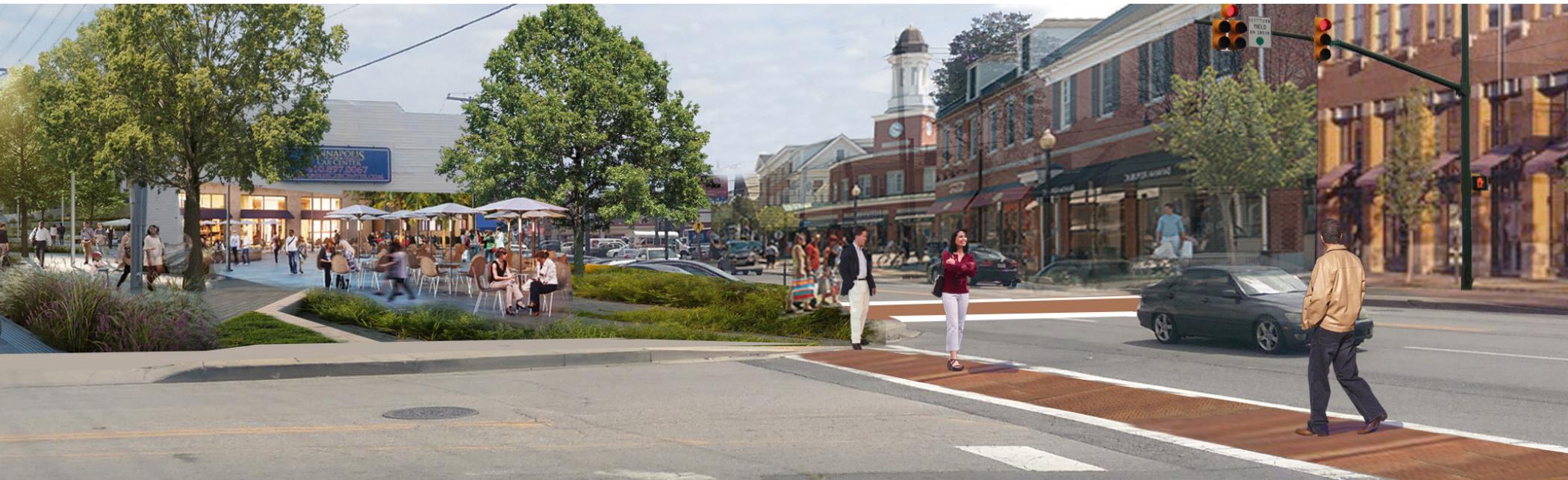


# Upper West Street Sector Study

City of Annapolis





# Acknowledgments

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Depiction of potential future condition along Upper West Street at Gibraltar Avenue. Corridor enhancements include mixed-use redevelopment, community gathering places, an extended and enhanced Poplar Trail connection, and new intersection improvements.

# Executive Summary

Upper West Street is one of the key entry routes into the City of Annapolis and provides a critical first impression of the city for many visitors. While Inner West Street to the east of Westgate Circle has seen tremendous improvement in the past 20 years, the segment of West Street between Westgate Circle and the City/County line is one of four Opportunity Areas targeted for additional growth by the City because it is in great need of physical and economic change.

Upper West Street has poor visual quality, is dominated by auto-oriented uses, and is plagued with high volumes of traffic. It has a higher than average vehicle crash rate and is perceived as a dangerous area for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Redevelopment in the area has been slow; land acquisition and redevelopment costs are high and are compounded by a limited amount of readily available undeveloped land, small parcels, and a complex development review process. Existing land use policies and regulations dissuade redevelopment efforts and are not explicit about the urban condition expected along the corridor.

The Upper West Street Sector Study outlines a series of actions that are intended to drive the incremental transformation of the corridor from a conventional, suburban, automobile-dominated experience to an urban, mixed-use environment more consistent with the ambitions expressed in the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Implementation of the plan removes existing barriers and allows the city to enhance the user experience, proactively position the corridor for future redevelopment and encourage growth even when market conditions are less than ideal.

The City of Annapolis has limited ability for physical expansion due to its geographic location. Recognizing this, the Proposed Development Framework Plan recommends aesthetic improvements and promotes land use patterns and efficiencies that include a range of development intensities and scales.

- More intense development is directed toward MD Route 2 and Old Solomons Island Road where larger redevelopment sites can allow for new roadway connections and block structure to handle high-intensity urban scale mixed-use development (office, residential, commercial) oriented to regional-serving commerce. Redevelopment in this area should provide a direct connection to Annapolis Towne Centre, include a multi-modal transit hub, and new parks and open space to serve new residents and those in the existing neighborhoods to the east. Careful attention must be placed on ensuring appropriate transition to adjacent residential land uses next to these areas.
- Moderate intensity development is directed along the West Street (MD 450) corridor to encourage a mix of residential, neighborhood retail and commercial uses and a reduction in auto-dominated uses over time. The disallowance of self-storage land use as a permitted use is also recommended to prevent additional future incongruent land uses. While under-utilized parcels exist, parcel size and configuration are challenges and parcel assemblage may be required. With the application of more urban streetscape design guidelines in this area, the corridor will become more vibrant, walkable, and will include new activities and public spaces for the community as redevelopment of parcels occurs.
- Adaptive reuse of former single family residential homes as commercial uses should be explored between Legion Avenue and Glen Avenue to preserve architectural character and scale.
- With over half of the city's industrial land area located in the study area, preservation of industrial and flex industrial space is an important objective of the plan. A large amount of surface parking exists in the industrial area and could present opportunities for infill redevelopment consistent with existing uses as well as innovative stormwater management techniques to reduce pavement.
- Neighborhoods adjacent to the study area should be enhanced with better access and connectivity to support walking and bicycling.

Several policy and regulatory changes are required to ensure that zoning and design guidelines in the study area are consistent with the proposed development framework plan. The most critical necessary modifications are summarized below:

- To achieve the desired urban streetscape condition and walkable environment, additional design guidelines similar to those used along Inner West Street should be extended along Upper West Street.
- The existing Mixed-use zoning district should be modified and expanded into the Upper West Street Corridor and modified to permit a greater intensity and a higher FAR than currently allowed. To ensure proper transition to single family residential areas, the lowest height district available in the MX District should be applied to those areas adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.
- The Business Corridor Enhancement (BCE) zoning district should be modified to allow stand-alone multi-family residential and non-residential uses greater than 25,000 SF as permitted uses. To prevent additional auto-dominated development and land uses inconsistent with an active street environment, self-storage should be removed as a permitted use and the deemed conforming provision should be reviewed and potentially removed. Additional design guidelines are needed for the BCE District to promote a more urban environment.
- The Industrial zoning district should be modified to allow the sale of goods produced on the premises as long as they are ancillary to the primary and permitted use. This would provide more options for business owners and help promote the Design District as a destination.
- The Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program should consider an increase in the density bonus provision to attract developers to build more affordable units.

Public realm improvements outlined in the plan seek to beautify the corridor, improve pedestrian safety, increase community space, strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and enhance the overall experience for corridor users. They respond to community priorities and concerns regarding safety, access and identity.



Proposed public realm improvements along Upper West Street.

- Recommended intersection improvements along the main corridors and in the neighborhoods are aimed at improving safety and visibility for pedestrians and bicyclists trying to cross the street.
- New bicycle trail connections eliminate major gaps in the system today and provide connections to future redevelopment areas. New sidewalks improve access to daily amenities such as schools and the library and help strengthen neighborhoods overall.
- Extension of Poplar Trail and additional on-street bike lanes aim to make cycling a more viable option within and through the study area.
- Enhance access to the existing Chambers Park and add additional people space in the heart of the redevelopment area. Establish a focal public space near Gibraltar Avenue to create gateway opportunities and eliminate walkability barriers between residential and commercial areas.
- New streets help create a walkable grid pattern and improve overall access for all modes of transit.
- A new bridge over MD Route 2 provides direct access to existing and emerging redevelopment areas and safely links neighborhoods to regional-serving destinations.

Overall the action plan includes 41 recommendations in the categories of policy, safety, community, trails, transit and environment. Together the actions are intended to provide consistency and alignment with the goals and objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan. To achieve the results outlined in the study, the city will need to partner with the Maryland State Highway Administration (MD SHA), the community, and work closely with private property owners, so that as each property redevelops it is in alignment with the aspirations of the overall plan.



Building murals in the Design District add visual appeal and help create a unique identity for the district.

# 1. Introduction

The Upper West Street study area, defined from Westgate Circle to the City/County line, has been subject to extensive study over the past 15 to 20 years. Despite this, only modest changes have occurred along the 1.3 mile corridor (see Figure 1.1) compared to significant redevelopment and investment at nearby Annapolis Towne Centre and in downtown Annapolis.

**Figure 1.1** Upper West Street Sector Study – Study Area Map



The Upper West Street Study Area is defined from Westgate Circle to the City/County line.

### 1.1 Purpose of Study

Primarily regarded as an automobile-focused corridor, the Upper West Street corridor, Figure 1.2, is one of four major entrances to the City of Annapolis. It provides a connection to the downtown and state capital but also exists as a destination in itself. Historically, West Street (MD 450) served as a main connection between Annapolis and Washington D.C. until US 50 was constructed. The Maryland State Highway Administration (MD SHA) is responsible for maintenance and construction activities on the corridor.

Upper West Street is one of four Opportunity Areas identified in the 2009 City of Annapolis Comprehensive Plan, underscoring the City’s desire to transform the corridor into a mix of residential and commercial uses that complement existing residential neighborhoods and sustain the unique industrial development in the area. This Sector Study is intended to translate high level goals of the Comprehensive Plan into ground-level recommendations that can be implemented for positive change.

### 1.2 Planning Process

The City of Annapolis Department of Planning and Zoning led the development of this study which was initiated in November, 2016. Final approval of the study was given by the Planning Commission in November 2015 after a public review and comment period. The process included four primary phases shown in Figure 1.3 and was strengthened by community engagement activities including interviews, a public workshop, and an online survey.

- Over 40 individuals participated in stakeholder interviews, helping to document corridor issues and opportunities, barriers to redevelopment and investment, desired amenities and corridor character.
- A three-day public design workshop was held March 29-31, 2016 at the Mt. Olive Community Life Center where participants identified likes and dislikes of the corridor and provided input through a series of stations around the topics of mobility, community, and investment. Input received helped guide the development of the study area. Attendance at the workshop presentations averaged around 36 people per day and included residents, business owners, developers, City Council members, and other local citizens with a vested interest in the community.

Figure 1.2 Location Map

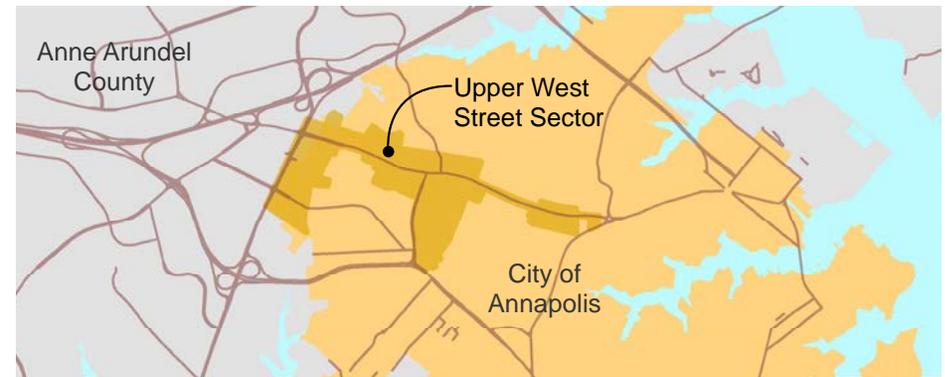
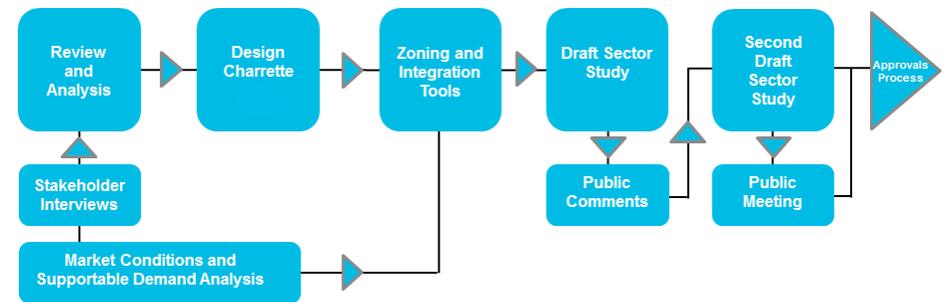


Figure 1.3 Planning Process



- An online survey (English and Spanish) was developed to mirror workshop activities and offer an additional means of input for citizens that were unable to attend the workshop. A total of 181 people participated in the survey which allowed users to respond via multiple choice questions or using an interactive mapping module. Raw survey data and a summary of the survey was provided to the city at conclusion of the survey.

### 1.3 Goals and Community Priorities

Input received from stakeholders, the public workshop, online survey, and city staff led to the creation of nine study area goals that reflect desired outcomes along the corridor. Each goal has a specific focus and relates to identified needs and priorities in the study area. These goals complement the vision and goals expressed in the Comprehensive Plan and led to the identification of infrastructure improvements, policy and regulatory recommendations, and other actions described in subsequent chapters.

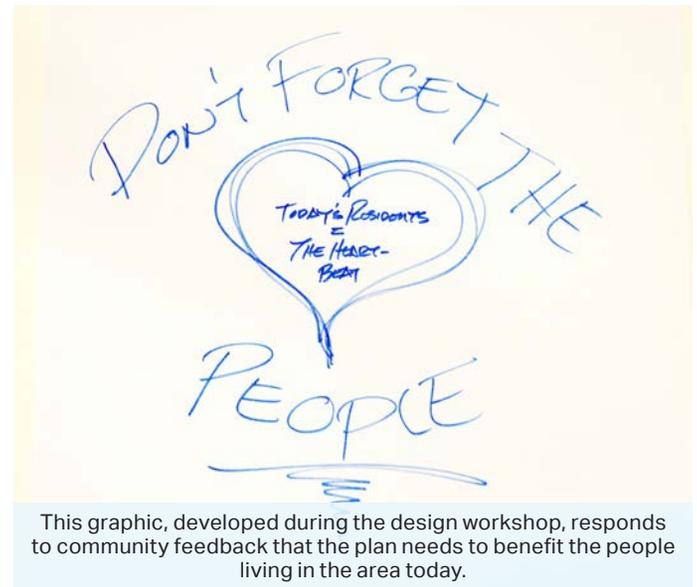
- Improve aesthetics and physical appearance
- Strengthen existing neighborhoods
- Promote residential redevelopment
- Facilitate economic development and job creation
- Incentivize private sector investment
- Improve safety and walkability
- Balance and connect transportation modes
- Improve access and connectivity
- Create a gateway, identity, and focal points



Upper West Street design workshop, March 2016.



Workshop participants were asked to identify their most (green) and least (red) favorite aspects about West Street. Words in the clouds that are the largest occurred more frequently.



This graphic, developed during the design workshop, responds to community feedback that the plan needs to benefit the people living in the area today.

### IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PEOPLE

During the public design workshop, participants emphasized the importance of community and that people are what makes Upper West Street special. Pedestrian and vehicle safety, neighborhood conservation, affordability, appropriately scaled development and a strong desire for action were critical priorities for those living and working in the corridor.

## 1.4 Guiding Principles

The Upper West Street Sector Study is intended to carry forward the policies and aspirations of the City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan which sets forth the city's desired land use pattern for the year 2030 and provides a guide for long-term development. Within the plan, growth is primarily directed to four Opportunity Areas where the character is expected or desired to change, including the Upper West Street Area Opportunity Area (referred to as Outer West Street in the plan). Three separate character types reflect expectations for development character, type, and intensity in each opportunity area, as described in Figure 1.4.

Recommendations within this study are intended to be consistent with the character types envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

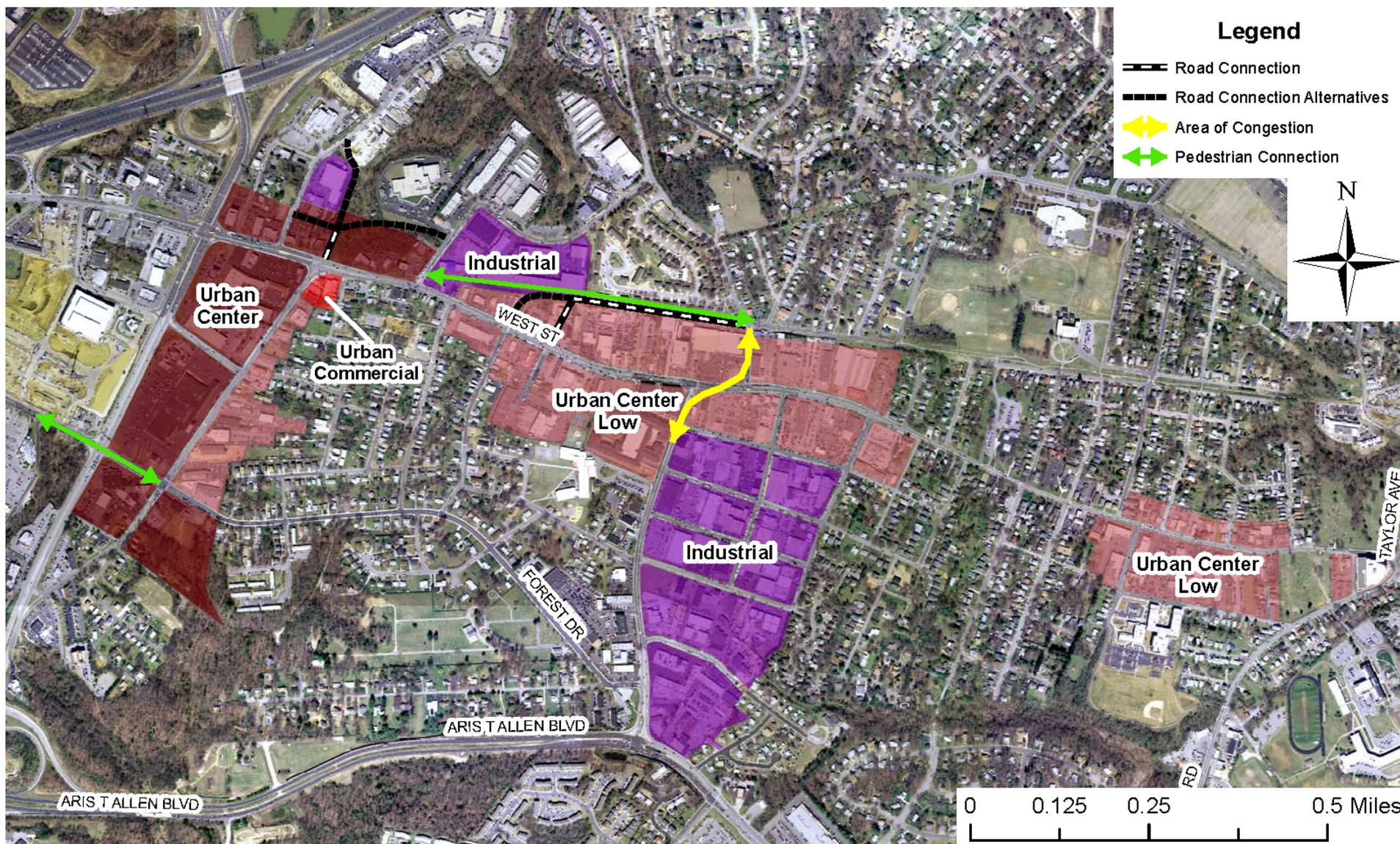
**Urban Center:** Urban Centers are large-scale mixed-use areas consisting of retail, office, entertainment, lodging and residential activities. They are often employment, entertainment, shopping, and dining destinations for the surrounding region and include a very balanced mix of residential and commercial uses where people can live, work and shop while relying less on the automobile. These areas are designed for a range in height from four to eight stories with residential densities ranging between 35 to 45 dwelling units per acre of land which can support local transit systems.

**Urban Commercial:** These sites consist of a mix of commercial uses including retail, offices, and service activities. Heights range from two stories to four stories tall and buildings typically have limited setbacks from the street. These areas are typically not intended for residential uses and are often more traditionally designed to have strong connections with surrounding residential neighborhoods. These areas are densely populated with buildings that may serve as employment, shopping, dining or tourist destinations.

**Urban Center Low:** Urban Center Low areas are similar to Urban Commercial areas in terms of character and building heights, but allow for a mix of land uses that is similar to Urban Center areas. They consist of a mix of uses that include retail, office, restaurants, and residences and typically range from two to four stories in height. Residential density ranges from ten to twenty dwelling units per acre of land depending on the intended character. These areas serve a smaller more localized population than Urban Center, and can function as a limited intensity, walkable destination for area residents.

*Source: Comprehensive Plan, 2009*

Figure 1.4 Upper West Street Opportunity Area



Source: City of Annapolis, Comprehensive Plan, 2009



Mid-block pedestrian crossing on Upper West Street at Parole Street. The crosswalk is hard to discern and pedestrians must cross four lanes of traffic.

## 2. Corridor Context

Upper West Street exhibits a wide range of characteristics that make it unlike other major arterials in the city. It provides a direct connection to the State Capital and other key destinations including major employment centers and transportation routes such as US 50. Despite these positive elements, major reinvestment and revitalization along the conventional corridor have been relatively slow and major safety concerns exist for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. This section reviews community and market characteristics and explores the underlying strengths and challenges facing the corridor's effort to unlock development potential and gain competitive market share. Moreover, it assesses the corridor's ability to create a place that serves, as well as celebrates, an increasingly socially and economically diverse community.



Residential development along Upper West Street

## 2.1 Community Characteristics

The study area used for the demographic and economic analyses is larger than the Upper West Street Sector Study area. It includes the adjacent neighborhoods along Forest Drive north of Aris T. Allen/665; the area between Spa Creek and West Street; and areas along West Street south of Parole Street. In 2015, the Upper West Street study area was home to 3,641 residents which represents about 1.4 percent of the city's overall population. Much of the growth within the last 15 years occurred between 2000 and 2010 when the area added 618 residents and 294 households. A similar bump in population and households occurred in the city during the same timeframe.

### Demographics

The population in the study area shows a trend of increasing diversity. Overall, there is a greater percentage of Black, Asian, and Hispanic origin population in the study area than in the rest of the city. One quarter of the population in the study area identifies themselves as Hispanic origin in comparison to 20% of the population in the City and 7.5 percent in Anne Arundel County. Projections suggest that all ethnicities except white alone will continue to increase through 2020.

In comparison with the surrounding areas, the study area has both the greatest number of people 25 years of age and older with graduate or professional degrees, and the greatest number of people with less than a high school degree (see Table 1.1). This socioeconomic dichotomy can inform and impact business location decisions in the corridor, depending on the types of workforce skills required.

The study area's households are fairly evenly distributed across income categories with 44.7 percent of households earning over \$75,000, an income benchmark commonly used by retailers to determine the economic viability of an area in terms of development or expansion. Findings show that the study area is comparable to surrounding areas such as the City of Annapolis, but falls below Anne Arundel County which has 59.7 percent of households earning over \$75,000. Interestingly, the median income (half of all households earn more and half earn less) of the study area, \$65,052, is lower than the other comparative geographies. Household income is an important measure to understand the buying power of area customers, the likely capacity of existing households to afford new residences, or likelihood of households to spend money in local retail space.

**Table 1.1** Demographics Characteristics

	Study Area	Annapolis	Anne Arundel Co.
Population	3,641	39,616	560,174
Households	1,395	16,620	208,660
Average Household Size	2.6	2.3	2.6
Median Age	36	37.4	39.1
Median Income	\$65,052	\$76,830	\$87,529
Average Household Income	\$95,199	\$103,944	\$93,905
Median Monthly Rent	\$1,379	\$1,209	\$1,265
Renter Occupied Housing Units	45.4%	46.2%	26.1%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	43.8%	43.0%	67.6%
Vacant Housing Units	10.9%	10.8%	6.3%
White	47.0%	58.5%	73.1%
Black	29.9%	25.8%	16.4%
American Indian, Eskimo	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian	2.4%	2.2%	3.8%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or More Races	2.7%	2.9%	3.4%
Other	17.6%	10.3%	2.9%
Hispanic*	25.6%	19.5%	7.5%
Grad./Professional Degree	25%	22%	16%
Less Than High School Diploma	22%	12%	9%

\* Hispanic origin is a subset of other race categories.

Source: ESRI; AECOM; January, 2016.

Demographic and economic characteristics were assessed based on data obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Business Analyst. ESRI data and projections are based on US Census data. A comprehensive Economic Analysis Technical Memorandum prepared as part of the study area is available from the City Department of Planning and Zoning.



### **A historic gateway to Annapolis and communities rich with cultural and historical heritage.**

The West Street Corridor is often referred to as the “historic gateway to the City” providing access from the Civil War era to the present. West Street’s prominence in the colonial capital city was solidified in the 1800s with the construction of the Annapolis and Elk Ridge Railroad (A&ER, and eventually Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis (WB&A)). The branch line followed the current day Poplar Road corridor north of West Street and from the time of construction (1838-1840) provided the only rail access to the city. During the Civil War, the railroad was used to transport soldiers and materials in and out of the Annapolis. As paved roads and automobiles grew in popularity the railroad was divested. However, portions of the corridor remain intact and still serve to connect neighborhoods located along the transportation corridor through resources like Poplar Trail.

Parole and the Annapolis Towne Centre (ATC) occupy the site of historic Camp Parole (c. 1863). Union Prisoners of War that were injured were often sent to Camp Parole for evaluation and release before returning home, or to rejoin the war. During this time, Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, was headquartered at Camp Parole where she succeeded in leading war relief efforts as well as registering and reconnecting missing soldiers with their families. In addition, the Annapolis National Cemetery (previously known as Ash Grove) at the east end of the corridor, is the final resting place for members of the Union Army as well as United States Armed Forces veterans of later wars.

At the conclusion of the Civil War, Camp Parole was settled by the African American community which still thrives there today. Community members are proud and embrace their cultural heritage and experiences from Civil War times through the Civil Rights movement. The community still bears the name “Parole”.

The Germantown and Homewood neighborhoods to the north and east of the study area developed along the railroad, growing progressively as the city expanded. Many of the original Sears and Roebuck mail-order kit houses in these neighborhoods are still occupied today.

## Housing

Of the 1,395 occupied households in the study area, approximately half (49 percent) are owner-occupied and the rest are rentals. This ratio is comparable to the city's owner versus renter ratio but is far less than the county's 74 percent owner-occupied households. Overall, home values in the study area are more modest than in the rest of the city; the median owner-occupied housing value in 2015 was \$404,104, lower than the city's median value of \$419,157 but higher than the county (\$388,562) and MSA (\$313,417). Median home values are projected to increase in coming years and by 2020 the county's median owner occupied housing value is expected to exceed that of the study area. This projected increase is likely partially influenced by the number of new high-end developments in surrounding areas, such as the condominium units at the Annapolis Towne Centre that had an average 2015 sale price of \$628,000. About one-third of the owner-occupied units in the study area fall in the over \$500,000 price range. The study area has a greater share of its homes valued \$200,000 to \$299,999—23 percent versus 21 percent in the city and 22 percent in the county. It also has twice the share of its homes valued at under \$100,000, when compared to the city (1.2 percent versus 0.6 percent).

Rental properties in the study area have a median monthly cost of \$1,379—higher than all other comparable jurisdictions (see Table 1.1). Additionally, there are fewer units available in the lower rents ranges (less than \$699 per month). A potential driver in rental cost differences may be the type of rental housing in the study area versus surrounding geographies. Single-family detached housing units account for more than half of rental units in the study area and 16 percent of housing units in the study area are located in buildings that have 50 or more units. These types of housing units typically rent at a higher monthly premium and can drive up average rental rates. Furthermore, new multi-unit rental properties such as The Point, built in the early-2000s, likely have higher rental rates than older rental units. Despite higher than average monthly rent costs, the study area experiences only a 2.4 percent vacancy rate. The data suggests that there is no correlation between this low vacancy (perceived as high demand) and the upward costs of monthly rents as increases average only 1 to 2 percent annually.

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It is estimated that the five-year potential residential demand in the study area could translate to 106 multifamily condominium units, 82 for-sale townhomes, and 161 multifamily rental units.

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A perceived lack of affordable housing was identified as a major challenge facing the study area and city as a whole. The majority of building permits approved in Annapolis have been for single family dwelling units. For example, in 2014, the city had 58 building permits approved, of which only two (three percent) were multifamily permits. In comparison, the county had 445 multifamily permits (25 percent) during the same year. Future demand for residential development analyzed as part of this study identified three primary future residential types desired in the study area: condominiums to own, townhouses to own, and multifamily rentals. It is estimated the five year potential demand could translate to 106 multifamily condominium units (or 21 units per year on average), 82 for-sale townhomes (16 per year on average), and 161 multifamily rental units (32 units annually).



Housing along N. Southwood Avenue



Housing along Parole Street

## 2.2 Land Use

The existing land use pattern of the study area is mostly low density development and is found in primarily suburban commercial strip developments. The pattern is dominated by commercial land uses followed by industrial type uses as shown in Figure 1.5 and Figure 1.6. The current pattern is inconsistent with the expressed land use goals of the Comprehensive Plan which call for a more urban mixed-use and residential development within a walkable and connected environment.

Parcel size and street frontage is a recognized factor in understanding land use and redevelopment opportunities in the study area. Opportunities exist to optimize land use on existing parcels, through intensification of land use and density and application of appropriate design standards. Clusters of small parcels in their current state, such as those near Gibraltar Avenue and east of Locust Avenue, offer limited transformative redevelopment capacity or street frontage and parcel assemblage would likely require coordination with multiple property owners to produce a viable redevelopment site. The largest concentration of potential mid-to-large size redevelopment parcels exists along Old Solomons Island Road and Chinguapin Round Road.

Figure 1.6 Existing Land Use

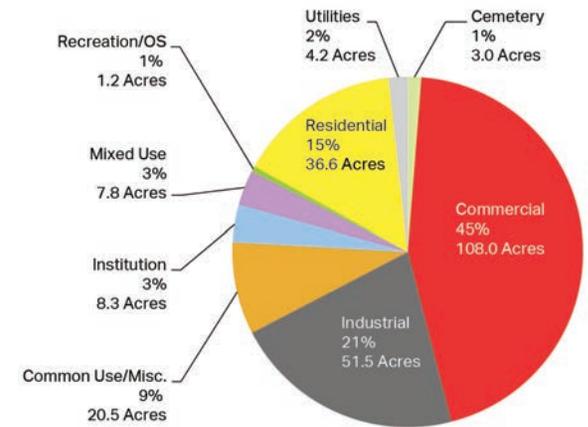


Figure 1.5 Existing Land Use



Source: City of Annapolis Department of Planning and Zoning

### Commercial/Retail Uses

Commercial uses in the study area include neighborhood and community retail (drug stores, fast food, supermarkets, garden centers), general retail (Kohl's), storage, car dealerships and rentals, automotive parts businesses, fast food restaurants, some specialty shops, and professional offices (law firms, medical services, etc.). The most intense commercial and retail uses occur closer to MD Route 2 and then generally transition down moving eastward along West Street. Some former single family homes have also been converted to retail or professional office space along the corridor. Several shopping centers exist along Forest Drive, just outside the study area and serve a growing Hispanic population.

Over time, Upper West Street has evolved as a destination for purchasing, repairing and servicing vehicles and a place to grab a quick bite to eat while on the way to another destination. The concentration of these types of uses reflects an economic efficiency for both the auto and fast food industries and makes the area attractive for additional businesses catering to the same customers.

### Industrial Uses

The study area boasts the highest concentration of industrial land in the city found east of Chinquapin Round Road in the Annapolis Design District and nearby along Moreland Parkway (just outside the study area). Accounting for 25 percent of the land area, uses include a variety of light industrial businesses such as general and specialized auto repair and service, home improvement and furnishing, as well as businesses serving Annapolis' rich sailing industry. Intermingled with these are businesses catering to the arts and entertainment trade including studio and gallery space that add charm to the District.

Industrial uses along Moreland Parkway include flex business space, heavy equipment storage, and warehousing space. It is also the location of the vacant Capital Gazette building.

Industrial uses are accompanied by large amounts of impervious areas such as parking lots, building footprints, and laydown areas. A large portion of the Design District lacks sidewalks which deters walking. Section 4 discusses opportunities related to reducing the high percentage paved surfaces through the implementation of low impact development stormwater management practices.



Conversion of former single-family homes to commercial and retail uses preserves character and provides a transition to adjacent single family homes.



Fast food restaurants are a common occurrence along Upper West Street.

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Land use policies in parts of the corridor advocate street-front buildings and higher densities within the realm of private development, while the street and sidewalk environment is oriented toward moving cars longer distances at higher speed. This sends mixed signals to residents, developers, drivers, and businesses about the urban condition expected along the corridor.

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### Institutional Land Uses

Institutional and community uses in the area include churches, schools (including playing fields), and community facilities including, Walter S. Mills-Parole Elementary School and the Regional Library. These two facilities generate high levels of pedestrian activity and concerns were raised about the need for improved safety and connectivity to these facilities as well as other nearby schools and activity areas. Other institutional facilities just outside the study area include the Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium; Lighthouse Shelter; Annapolis Police Department; Germantown Elementary School; Phoenix Academy; Annapolis Senior Center and Boys and Girls Club at the Wiley H. Bates Center; and the Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts.

### Residential Uses

The communities of Parole, Germantown, and Homewood surround the Upper West Street corridor. These established neighborhoods are primary stakeholders in the planning process and they have a vested interest in preserving their communities as a residential land use. This desire is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the recommendations of this study that seek to conserve neighborhoods and achieve appropriate transitions between future non-residential development. Residential uses include single family detached homes, single family attached homes, and multi-family housing (apartments).

### Mixed-use

Currently, The Point, located at the intersection of West Street and Chinquapin Round Road, is the only mixed-use development in the study area. It offers multifamily dwellings with ground-floor retail and is a direct outcome of an amendment to the zoning code.

### Parks and Open Space

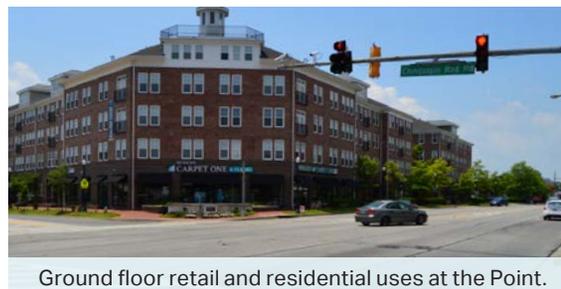
There is a limited amount of park and open space in the study area to support area residents and businesses. Only a single acre is defined in GIS data, excluding land associated with school playgrounds (which falls under institutional) but including smaller neighborhood parks and athletic fields. A major recreational asset in the area, the Poplar Trail, serves as a linear park extending from the Germantown community at Admiral Drive and along the Loews Access Road to W. Washington Street. Constructed as a Rails-to-Trails project along the historical WB&A Railroad corridor, this trail is an asset to the community and vicinity. Extending the trail to connect City Dock and the Annapolis Towne Centre and improving connections to the nearby Spa Creek Trail are desired outcomes of the Annapolis Bicycle Master Plan.



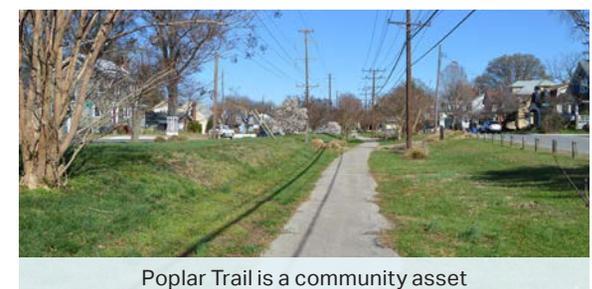
Industrial flex-type uses in the Design District



Chambers Park is one of a few city parks in the area



Ground floor retail and residential uses at the Point.



Poplar Trail is a community asset

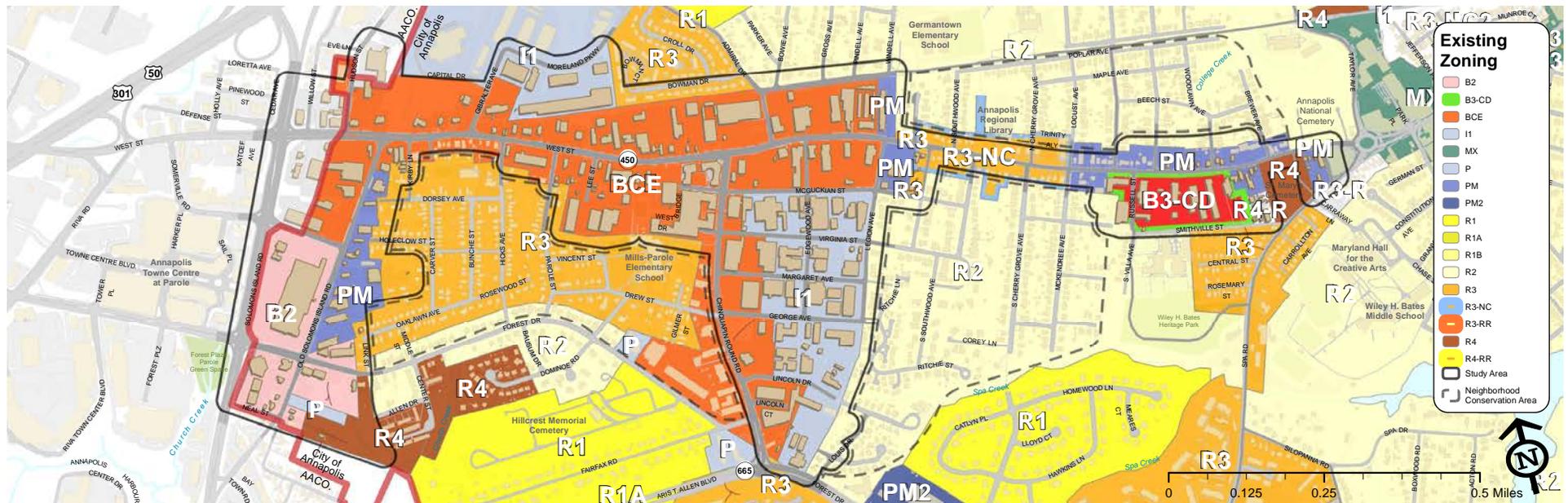
### 2.3 Zoning

An examination of current zoning in the study area was completed to identify barriers for implementing the development goals of this study and the Comprehensive Plan. Focus was intentionally placed on the zoning categories described. Table 1.2 and Figure 1.7 illustrates existing zoning.

**Table 1.2** Zoning Descriptions

Zoning District	Floor Area Ratio	Max Height (Ft)	Residential Allowances
B2 Community Shopping	2.0	Non specified	Multi-family only if ground floor non-residential use provided; not as stand alone; 1800 SF lot area per unit required (24 dwelling units per acre)
BCE Business Corridor Enhancement	2.0	65	Multi-family only if ground floor non-residential use provided; not as stand alone; 1,244 SF lot area per unit (35 units per acre).
B3-CD General Corridor Commercial Design	2.4	Non specified	Not permitted
PM Professional Mixed Office	.75	38	Multi-family permitted by Special Exception
MX Mixed-use	2.25	36 (MX1); 46 (MX2); 65 (MX3)	Stand-alone multi-family permitted with conditions
R3NC General Residence Neighborhood Conservation	Varies	35	Multi-family permitted by Special Exception
R2 Single Family Residence			Single family detached up to 8 dwelling units per acre; no multi-family
R3 General Residence			Multi-family permitted by Special Exception

**Figure 1.7** Existing Zoning



Source: City of Annapolis Department of Planning and Zoning

### Community Shopping (B2)

The B2 District, located along MD Route 2 and Forest Drive is “designed to accommodate the needs of a large consumer population; thus a wide range of uses is permitted for both daily and occasional shopping”. During stakeholder interviews developers expressed great interest in this area as there is tremendous potential to build upon the success of the adjacent Town Center. The area has good roadway access and visibility. However, current zoning regulations do not allow stand alone residential and the density necessary to achieve an “urban center” form. A higher degree of intensity, above an FAR of 2.0, is needed to encourage development that complements the adjacent Towne Center.

### Business Corridor Enhancement (BCE)

The BCE District includes all of the parcels fronting West Street from the city boundary to Legion Avenue and the entire length of Chinguapin Round Road. BCE is complex and the most progressive of all zoning districts in the area because it encourages forms of mixed-use and promotes multifamily dwellings above ground-floor non-residential. While the intention behind the BCE District was to create positive growth consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies, in some cases the quest to achieve this has been hindered. For example, “The Point” mixed-use building at 1901 West Street is a permitted use; however, the approvals process was lengthy and the required ground floor retail has not performed as expected. More flexibility in the residential regulation under BCE is needed along with adjustments to the design standards so they are conducive to an active urban street corridor. Currently non-residential uses greater than 25,000 SF require a special exception approval by the Board of Appeals. The reasoning for this zoning requirement is unclear as there are less intense zoning categories than the BCE that allow such uses as permitted uses and the special exception process is perceived to be unpredictable and arbitrary.

The BCE district abuts residential neighborhoods and the allowable FAR and heights in the BCE may not be compatible in portions of the BCE adjacent to these areas. The zone, similar to the B3-CD Zone described below, does limit height based on distance from residential zoned land.

Other allowable uses under BCE, such as self-storage are inconsistent with the desire for a more active, walkable and attractive street corridor. A unique provision of the BCE District is that uses existing as of 1993, even if currently not a permitted use, are deemed conforming for the purposes of expansion. As such, if public storage or car sales were removed as a permitted use in the BCE District, and such uses existed in 1993, they would be allowed to continue and even expand. New facilities would not be able to locate in the BCE District.

### Industrial (I)

The purpose of the I District is “to provide an environment suitable for industrial activities that do not create appreciable nuisances or hazard”. Allowable and existing uses include: food manufacture, packaging and processing, electronic instrument manufacturing, and exterminating shops, as well as masonry supply, automotive repair, interior design shops, and others. Some uses permitted are only permitted in the Industrial District and not in other districts. There were no identified regulatory conflicts associated with the Industrial District aside from those arising from parking overflow into nearby residential areas. However, given the proximity to existing and proposed higher density residential development, the Industrial district area may be ripe for zoning changes and design standards that allow for the sale of goods produced on the premises.

### General Corridor Commercial Design (B3-CD)

The B3-CD district is designed to protect the aesthetic and visual character of lands next to major business corridors through design guidelines. A small area of B3-CD exists east of Russell Street where a concentration of car dealerships is located. This area has some of the largest parcels in the study area with direct frontage on West Street and in close proximity to Westgate Circle.

### **General Residence Neighborhood Conservation district (R3-NC)**

The R3-NC district is designed to ensure the preservation of buildings, structures and areas that would disrupt the existing scale and architectural character of the neighborhood. Rehabilitation of buildings is encouraged as well as the preservation of architectural, historical, or cultural elements. A small area of R3-NC exists along West Street between Locust Avenue and N. Homeland Avenue comprised of many larger former residences now converted to other business uses. The character of the area has been favorably mentioned as an asset to the corridor and worthy of continued protection. Multi-family dwellings are permitted but those containing six or fewer units are subject to standards.

### **Professional Mixed Office (PM)**

The Professional Office district is a transitional zone between commercial and office uses and residential neighborhoods. A large portion of the study area falls under this district, including a large area between Old Solomons Island Road and the Parole neighborhood.

### **Mixed-use (MX)**

The study area currently does not have any Mixed-use Zoning. The district is currently tailored to inner West Street and is designed to encourage a mix of residential, office and retail uses with urban design guidelines that address commercial facades, window composition, screening of parking, design of open areas, and transitional devices for those areas adjacent to residential districts.

### **Residential (R2 and R3)**

The R2 Single-Family Residence district allows single-family detached dwellings at up to eight dwelling units per acre whereas the R3 General Residence district allows single-family and two-family detached dwellings up to eight dwelling units per acre and multi-family is permitted by Special Exception. Residents raised a concern about affordability and a desire for a provision in the code that would allow granny flats as an accessory use. Concerns were also raised about the efficacy of the existing Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MDPU) program administered by Arundel Community Development Services, Inc. (ACDS). The 2004 MDPU Law requires that 12 percent of all new housing developments of 10 or more units in the City are moderately priced.

In addition to specific code revisions, it is important to ensure that development consistent with the zoning regulations is not subject to arbitrary requirements. An evaluation of the city's administrative review and approval processes is needed, including an assessment of actual time needed to complete each step of the review process based on past experience. It may become evident that certain steps in the review process need less time or are unnecessary under certain conditions. The City should perform their due diligence to complete review steps according to schedule to eliminate delays on their end.

## 2.4 Market Conditions

Upper West Street competes with other areas in the city as well as nearby Anne Arundel County for development and attraction of residents, customers, and businesses. The economic success of the corridor is impacted by numerous factors, including land availability and development costs, availability of customers to support businesses, the regulatory environment, and proximity to similar businesses.

While the Upper West Street study area is not a major employment hub, it does appear to have more jobs (3,942) than residents (3,641) according to the *Census On the Map* (2013). Approximately half of the jobs (46 percent) are in retail, accommodation, and food service industries. Employment projections at the county level by Woods and Poole Economics (city and study area data is not available) indicate that the largest job growth will occur in the retail trade industry (19 percent), followed by the health care/social assistance industry (15 percent).



A variety of unique businesses are located in the Design District.

Car dealerships, auto parts and gas-type retail trades account for over one-quarter of all retail in the study area.

### Retail

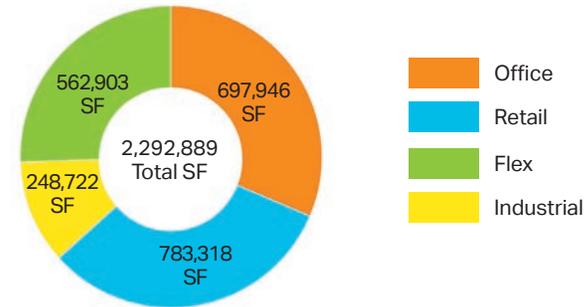
Retail uses account for the largest amount of workplace space in the study area see Figure 1.8 and are dominated by space attributed to the automobile industry, such as car dealerships, auto parts sales, but not services such as auto mechanic shops. The second largest retail type is design sales such as building materials and garden equipment shop space which correlates to the presence of the Design District. The study area has a higher concentration of this type retail space than elsewhere in the city (16 percent versus 7 percent). In contrast, the study area has a much lower percentage of clothing and accessory shops as compared with the city (5 percent versus 13 percent, respectively), see Figure 1.9.

Retail vacancy and rental rates are low (\$23/SF in the study area versus \$30/SF in city) and no retail space has been added to the study area in the last five years in comparison to development in adjacent areas like Annapolis Towne Centre and expansion in and around Annapolis Mall. A negative net absorption exists for retail in the study area.

Retail demand in the study area stems from residents, daytime workers, and passers-through located in the primary and secondary trade area defined in the economic analysis. The retail demand analysis assumed a future mixed-use environment consistent with the long-term goals of the study area - therefore auto-oriented sales were not included in the demand analysis. Overall households spent on average between \$20,900 and \$22,100 annually on retail-type expenditures. Based on existing sales, applied capture rates for new retail and inflow sales, the total estimated sales for the study area is \$33.3 million by 2020. Estimated supportable square footage by store type was then estimated for the year 2020 by applying a retail productivity rate (sales per square foot) based upon industry averages by store type, as shown in Table 1.3.

Even with such a large profit projection, it is unlikely that the area can transform into a major-retail hub based on the constraints described. However, additional small neighborhood-serving retail and specialty retail in targeted locations on West Street is potential with larger retail concentrated along MD Route 2 and Old Solomons Island Road.

**Figure 1.8** Type of Workspace in Study Area (Square Feet)



**Figure 1.9** Number and Percent of Retail Trade Types in Study Area



### Office

Office space represents almost 700,000 SF of workspace in the study area. In general, office space is not performing as well as that in the city or county. A slightly higher vacancy rate exists in the study area compared to the city (12.6 percent versus 10.2 percent, respectively per 1st quarter 2016 records) and monthly rental rates are lower (\$23.43 /SF) compared to the city (\$25.18) and county (\$24.65). A modest 31,000 SF of new office space was added in the last five years within the study area, which represents over three-quarters of the new office space development in the city.

### Industrial

More than half of the city’s total industrial space resides in the study area. Average monthly rental rates of \$8.12/SF are the same for the city and study area and higher than the county (\$6.35/SF). This type of space is well-utilized and no vacancy exists for this type of space in the city or study area. Other workplace uses in the study area include flex which rents at rates higher than elsewhere in the city and county (\$16.32/SF on average). Flex space is defined as a type of hybrid office-retail-industrial space with a higher level of finishes than industrial space.

Demand for office, flex, and industrial space would be generated by new employment ventures in an employment subsector (i.e. construction, manufacturing, education, real estate, etc.) that require those types of spaces. Projections for Anne Arundel County workplace demand were used as a basis to determine employment demand. Because office is not a major concentration in the study area, a capture rate of 3 percent was utilized resulting in an estimated demand of 62,300 SF of office by 2020 (approximately 250 jobs). Demand for new industrial or flex space in the study area was not projected since high land values and construction costs make the area less economically viable for new construction for these uses. However, potential for infill development does exist within the existing Design District and other under-utilized parcels.

**Table 1.3** Estimated Supportable Retail Square Feet by Store Type

	2020	2025
Food and Beverage	26,250	27,278
Health and Personal Care	7,574	7,791
Building Material, Garden Equipment & Supplies	8,978	9,351
Shoppers Goods	28,792	29,924
Full-Service Restaurants	11,041	11,492
Limited-Service Eating Places	16,183	16,725
Total	98,818	102,561

The store types considered were food and beverage stores (including supermarkets and convenience stores), health and personal care stores (e.g. drug stores), building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers, furniture and home furnishings stores, electronics and appliance stores, clothing and clothing accessories stores, sporting goods, hobby, book, music stores, general merchandise stores (includes department stores, dollar stores, general stores), miscellaneous store retailers (including stores such as florists, book stores, and gift stores), and restaurants.

*Source: Economic Census; ESRI Business Analyst; U.S. Census Bureau; ICSC Office Worker Retail Spending Patterns; ULI Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers 2008; AECOM, 2016*



Office building along Upper West Street near Woodlawn Avenue. Office space accounts for the second-highest amount of work space type in the corridor behind retail.

## 2.5 Vehicular Traffic Volumes and Movements

The appearance and function of Upper West Street varies and offers a different experience from one end of the corridor to the other. Traffic volumes and speeds fluctuate and can be correlated to the variation in rights-of-way width which ranges from 49 feet to 144 feet. Typical sections range from four lanes and 30 miles per hour (mph) to two lanes and 25 mph approaching Westgate Circle.

Traffic volumes are higher west of Admiral Drive in the four lane section as one approaches the MD Route 2 corridor. Based on data obtained from MD SHA, traffic volumes west of Admiral Drive generally exceed 1,000 vehicles per hour (vph) with the west bound PM peak registering slightly more (1,500 vph) than the eastbound PM peak (1,300 vph). East of Admiral Drive volumes are lower and rarely exceed 1,000 vph, even in peak hours.

Turning movements are dangerous for vehicles and pedestrians. Separate turning lanes are found at some intersections along the corridor, but overall, turning movements are contained within through lanes. A high number of 'curb cuts' or access points exist; some access points are well-defined while others lack curb or pavement markings. Four intersections have signalization: Old Solomons Island Road, Russell Street, Chinquapin Round Road, and Admiral Drive.

A review of SHA crash data from 2012 to 2014 (for an area from MD Route 2 to Taylor Avenue) indicates that the corridor has a higher than statewide average among similar type roadways for injury crashes and property damage crashes. A total of 252 crashes occurred between January 2012 and December 2014 – seven involved pedestrians. Rear-end crashes were the most common crash type (81) followed by angles (66). Several intersections along Upper West Street reported more than 10 crashes, as shown in Table 1.4. Historical West Street crash data prior to 2012 or crash data from other nearby roadways was not evaluated as part of this process. It is recognized that broader analysis may yield additional areas of concern beyond the primary corridor.



Two lanes in each direction with no center turn lane – near Parole Street.



Portions of the corridor have 2 lanes in each direction with a center turn lane – near Edgewood Avenue.



The corridor is one lane each direction east of N. Homeland Avenue with an occasional center turn lane.

**Table 1.4** Historical West Street  
Crash Data (2012-2014)

Location	# of Crashes
MD 2 Intersection	23
Hudson Street Intersection	6
Old Solomons Island Road Intersection	15
Kirby Lane	9
Gibraltar Avenue	10
Parole Street	11
Lee Street	14
Chinquapin Round Road	13
Admiral Drive	9
Legion Avenue	14
Taylor Avenue	10

Source: MD SHA, 2012-2014 crash data.

### Transit

Annapolis Transit provides bus service throughout the study area; however, operating hours were identified as insufficient to support service industry and restaurant workers who need access on weekends and later into the evening. As a result, taxis and services like Uber are typically used to meet their needs. Transit service includes:

- Green Route along West Street  
(Monday – Friday 6 am to 7 pm; Saturdays 8 am to 6 pm with longer headways; no Sunday service)
- Purple Route along West Street  
(Monday – Saturday 7 pm to 10 pm; Sunday 8 am to 7 pm with headways exceeding one hour)
- Red Route on Chinquapin Round Road  
(Monday – Saturdays 6 am to 7 pm; 8 am to 6 pm on weekends with longer headways; no Sunday service)
- Maryland Transit Route 220: Annapolis/Truman to Washington DC
- Maryland Transit Route 230: Severna Park/Annapolis/Truman to Washington DC

### Traffic Control Signals

Adding new traffic signals along West Street requires an evaluation and satisfaction of Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) requirements, including specific thresholds in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices along with SHA guidelines. Final determination on whether a traffic signal is justified and will be permitted rests with the SHA Office of Traffic and Safety.

A Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis evaluation was completed at two intersections along Upper West Street – Gibraltar Avenue and Parole Street as part of this study. The studies quantitatively evaluated nine warrants based on turning movement counts conducted in April of 2016 and results in Table 1.5 indicate which warrants were satisfied. While the intersection with Gibraltar Avenue met some of the required conditions for a signal, satisfying one or more warrants alone does not justify a signal. The results of the traffic impact analysis for the future redevelopment of the Capital Gazette site off of Gibraltar Avenue may change the findings of the warrant analysis. An updated warrant analysis that factors in additional traffic impacts should be pursued.

**Table 1.5** Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis

Warrant #	Description		MD 450 at Parole Street	MD 450 at Gibraltar Avenue
1A, 1B	Eight Hour Vehicular Volume	Requires a minimum volume on major (West Street) and minor street (Gibraltar Avenue or Parole Street) for at least eight hours a day – Minimum Vehicular Volume	Not Met	Not Met
		(Gibraltar Avenue or Parole Street) for at least eight hours a day – Interruption of Continuous Flow	Not Met	Met
2	Four Hour Vehicular Volume	Requires a minimum volume on major (West Street) and minor street (Gibraltar Avenue or Parole Street) for at least four hours a day.	Not Met	Met
3	Peak Hour Volume	Requires minimum volume for facilities that discharge or attract large number of vehicles over short period of time.	N/A	N/A
4	Pedestrian Volume	Requires that pedestrian volume for one hour falls above an established curve (volume).	Not Met	Not Met
5	School Crossing	Requires at least 20 children crossing per hour at established school crossing and insufficient gaps in traffic to allow crossing.	N/A	N/A
6	Coordinated Signal System	Qualitative assessment to determine if one of two criteria are met that relate to whether the distance between signals allows adequate degree of vehicle platooning (vehicles traveling as a group because of traffic signal controls).	Possibly Met	Possibly Met
7	Crash Experience	Requires satisfaction of three conditions including adequate trial of attempted alternatives has failed to reduce crash frequency; five or more crashes in a 12 month period; and satisfaction of 80 percent of the volume criteria in Warrants one and four.	Not Met	Not Met
8	Roadway Network	N/A (requires both roads to be major roads)	N/A	N/A
9	Intersection Near Railroad Grade	N/A (not near a railroad)	N/A	N/A

### Bicycle Trails

The network of bicycle trails in the study area is limited and what does exist is fragmented. Increased connectivity would provide more options for people to move about without using a vehicle. Poplar Trail offers the only off-road bicycle facility in the area and is part of the East Coast Greenway. While a valued asset, it lacks connectivity to key destinations and other nearby trails like Spa Creek Trail. Extension of the trail to Gibraltar Avenue via an on-street bike lane could connect the trail to the future redevelopment of the former Capital Gazette building. A connection between Poplar Trail and Spa Creek Trail does not exist, but could with the provision of an on-street lane along Russell Street and Glen Avenue. Both of these concepts are outlined in the City's Bicycle Master Plan, along with other recommended street connections.



Cyclist crossing West Street at Russell Street. This segment represents a gap in the overall bicycle network

## 2.6 Summary of Strengths and Challenges

The Upper West Street corridor has a number of intrinsic strengths and several identifiable weaknesses. It is a key transportation route in a central location, it has many viable businesses, and it serves proud and established neighborhoods. However, the area also suffers from indifferent neglect and a lack of investment to the extent that many people simply accept the status quo for the corridor. With focused attention and targeted interventions, Upper West Street could accentuate its positive qualities, minimize its negative characteristics, and incrementally transform itself into a dynamic, walkable, and beautiful place.

The documentation of strengths and challenges below was informed by the community and market assessment described in earlier sections, as well as input from stakeholders, workshop attendees, and survey participants. Figure 1.10 correlates strengths and weaknesses into five broad and representative categories. Strengths are shown in green icons and challenges shown in red icons for each category. Recommendations for building on strengths and rectifying challenges are further described in Sections 3 and 4 of this report and outlined in an action plan in Section 5.

Figure 1.10 Strengths and Challenges

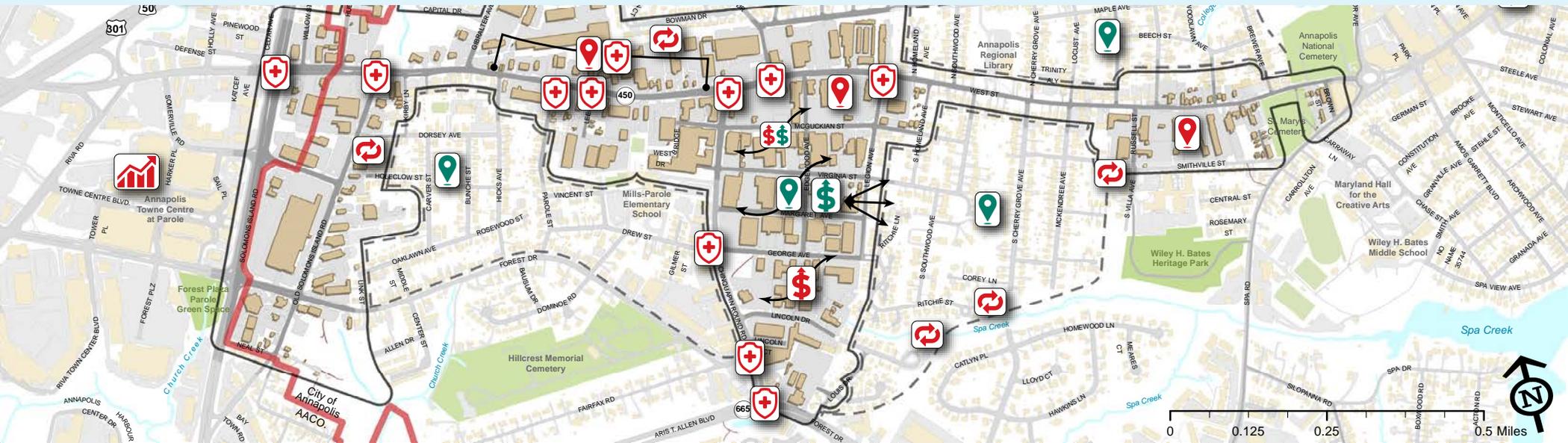


Figure 1.10 Strengths and Challenges (continued)

<b>Connectivity</b> 	 <b>Ideal location.</b> Access to Route 50, downtown Annapolis, and centers of employment make the study area an ideal location for residents and businesses.
	 <b>Fragmented bike network.</b> Bike facilities around and through the study area are fragmented, incomplete and/or lack direct and safe connections to other nearby trails such as Spa Creek and Poplar Avenue.
	 <b>Limited transit options for service workers.</b> While Maryland Transit Authority commuter buses (220, 230) and Annapolis Transit red and green routes serve the area, their limited hours of operation result in the use of taxi cabs to support service workers living in the area.
<b>Safety</b> 	 <b>Unsafe environment.</b> High volumes of traffic combined with multiple curb cuts, vehicle turning movements, and cut through traffic contribute to a dangerous environment for vehicles and pedestrians. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of crosswalks and traffic signals making it difficult to access community amenities.
	 <b>Higher than average vehicle crash rate.</b> Injury crashes and property damage related to crashes are common along Upper West Street corridor. Rear-ends are the most common crash and rear-ends sideswipes, left turns, angles, pedestrian, and "other" all occurred at frequencies higher than statewide average from 2012-2014.
<b>Identity</b> 	 <b>Diverse and caring community.</b> The neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor are reflective of the growing diversity in the city and are rich in history. While recognized socio-economic differences exist across the study area, the communities are united in a common purpose to preserve and conserve their neighborhoods and ensure that any corridor transformation also elevates their quality of life.
	 <b>Emerging Design District.</b> A character bright spot in the study area occurs in the Design District where the mix of businesses and building murals add vibrancy to the street and convey a unique authenticity to the area.
	 <b>Lack of identity.</b> Auto-oriented uses dominate the corridor, including an abundance of fast-food and storage facilities. The street corridors suffer from building edge and setback variation, inconsistent streetscape elements (landscaping, trees), and no apparent signage or design standard. These issues contribute to lack of identity and sense of place, and create visual disorder along with an inhospitable pedestrian environment.
<b>Development Costs</b> 	 <b>Green infrastructure.</b> Over 70% of the study area is impervious, including many large surface parking lots. Few applications of low impact development techniques that help address the city's pollutant loading requirements have occurred in the area. Targeted redevelopment opportunities may exist in under-utilized parking areas (or under-utilized buildings) which can also incorporate innovative stormwater techniques.
	 <b>Business collocation synergies.</b> Certain business types find synergy in collocation with other like-businesses in order to compete, but also complement each other as seen in the auto industry and Design District. Clustering of business types increases product and service exposure. However, the strength of these economic efficiencies can negatively affect the developable potential of an area if there is a desire for change.
	 <b>High land development costs.</b> Because most businesses along West Street are marginally successful, the cost and difficulty of parcel acquisition for redevelopment may outweigh the likelihood of a developer generating an adequate return on investment that is required for redevelopment or new construction to occur. There are no incentives in place to encourage businesses owners to sell and relocate - leading to a stagnant environment for development.
	 <b>Limited readily available developable parcels.</b> There is currently little readily available undeveloped land for expansion or redevelopment and many of the available or under-utilized parcels are small, shallow, or irregularly configured. Parcel assemblage and a lack of incentives for relocation add to already high development costs.
<b>Market Demand</b> 	 <b>High competition for customers.</b> There is minimal distance between major business competitors; the allure comes down to the availability and type of services, visibility, and ease of access. The area does very well in the automotive and fast food industries; however, it has a greater challenge competing in markets offering different retail options.
	 <b>Uncertain or demanding regulatory environment.</b> Uncertainty in the development review process dissuades redevelopment efforts. Additional permitting or administrative reviews create an undesirable risk in approaching real estate agreements and lengthy approvals can affect construction costs. In addition, certain zoning requirements in parts of the corridor are difficult to achieve, including the requirement for ground floor retail and parking (especially on small parcels). Developers desire more flexibility that recognizes market conditions.

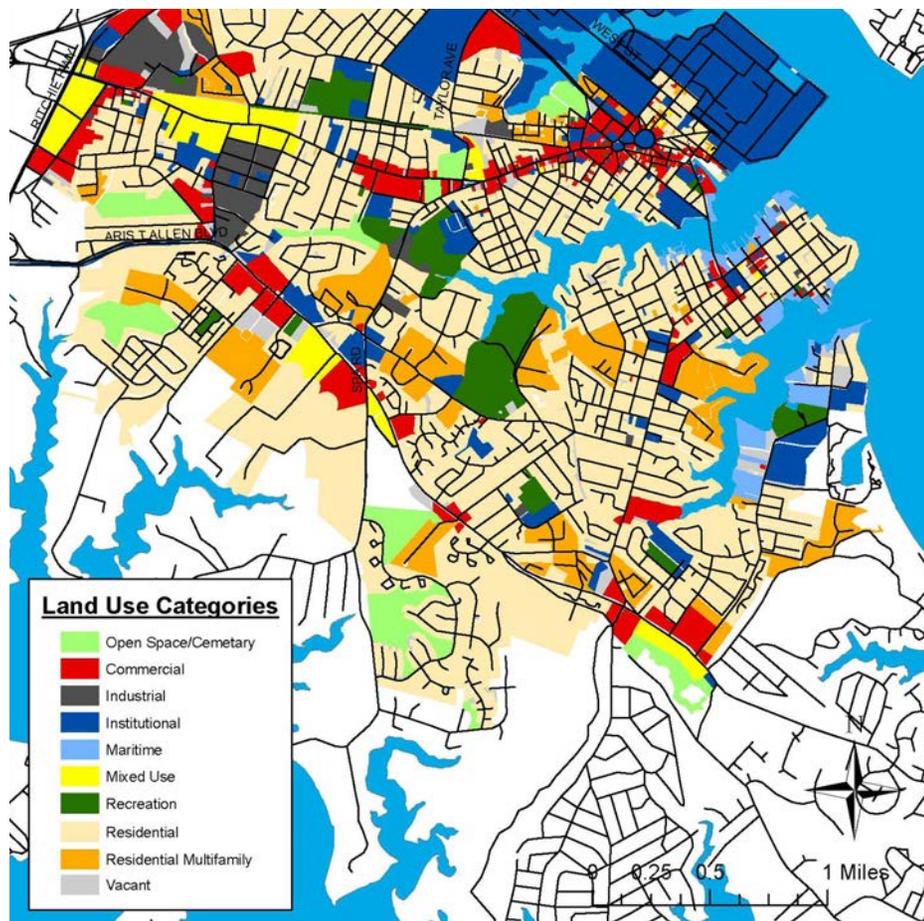
Strengths = **green** icons; Challenges = **red** icons



Annapolis Design District

## 3. Proposed Development Framework

Figure 1.11 Proposed Land Use



Source: City of Annapolis, 2016.

The City of Annapolis has limited ability for physical expansion due to its geographic location. Therefore, the majority of development will occur through redevelopment of existing under-utilized or vacant properties.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan proposed a mixed-use land use pattern for most of the Upper West Street corridor and along Old Solomons Island Road. As shown in Figure 1.11, these areas represent the largest concentration of mixed-use in the city.

The proposed development framework plan promotes land use patterns and efficiencies that include a range of development intensities and scales and represents a refinement of the proposed land use in the Comprehensive Plan.

### 3.1 Proposed Development Framework

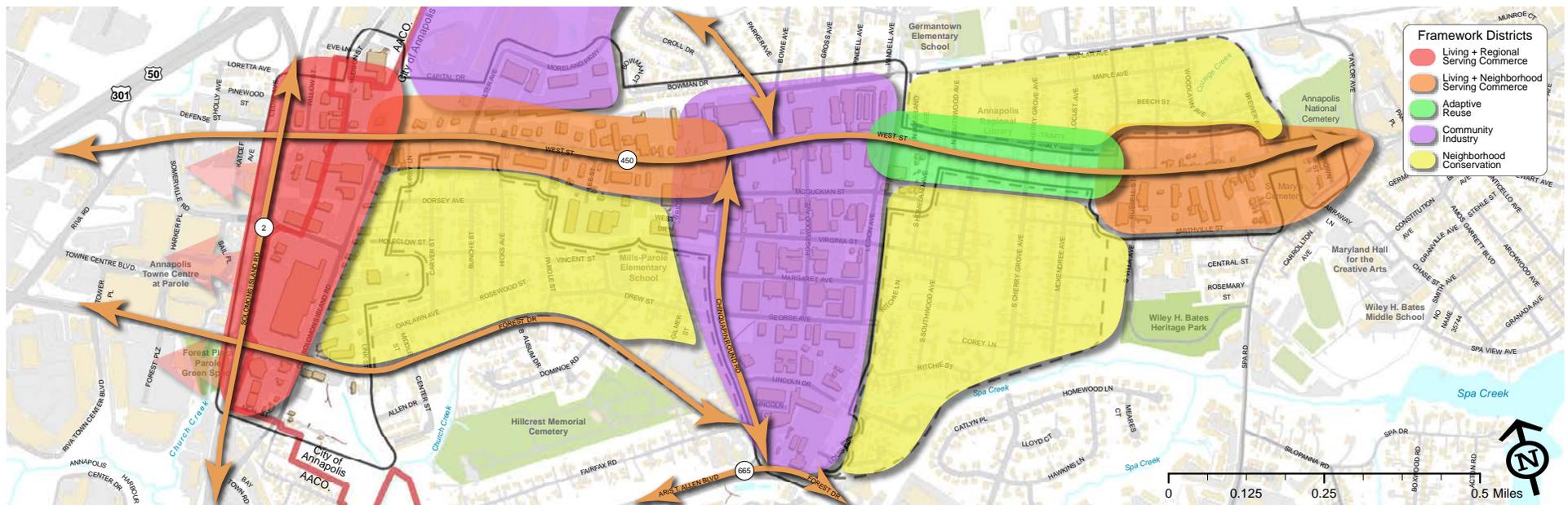
Redevelopment in the study area will occur over time and will be driven by market conditions and the flexibility of development regulations to respond to those conditions. The proposed Development Framework (see Figure 1.12), recognizes that one size does not fit all in the study area.

Different types and scales of development are reflected in the various sub-districts. Generally, the intensity of development increases closer to MD Route 2. The most intense development is directed toward the intersections of MD Route 2 and Old Solomons Island Road where larger redevelopment sites can allow for new roadway connections and block structure to handle high-intensity urban scale mixed-use development (office, residential,

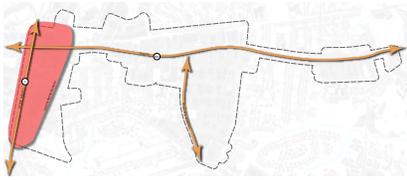
commercial). This type of development is envisioned as regional-serving commerce. Moderate intensity development is directed along the West Street frontage to encourage a mix of residential, neighborhood retail and commercial uses in a walkable environment.

Over time, a reduction in auto-dominated uses is desired along West Street to further the goals of creating an active and lively street. Proposed development in other districts is intended to reinforce existing uses, encourage infill development on under-utilized parcels and protect architectural character.

Figure 1.12 Proposed Development Framework Districts



**Living and Regional Serving Commerce**



**Desired Characteristics - Promote Growth**

- High intensity urban scale mixed-use development
- Regional-serving retail destinations
- Transition to lower permitted heights and densities east of Old Solomons Island Road
- Densities support transit
- Multi-modal transit hub
- Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods
- Park and open space

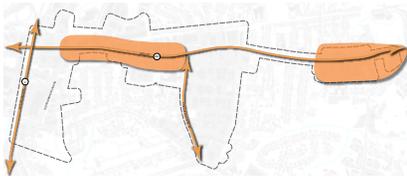


Existing



Potential

**Living and Neighborhood Serving Commerce**



**Desired Characteristics - Beautify the Corridor**

- Moderate intensity mixed-use development
- Multi-family and attached townhouses
- Neighborhood and convenience retail
- Promotes active lifestyle
- Dynamic sidewalk experience
- Safe, active and interesting public space
- Enhanced ecological features
- Access to transit



Existing



Potential

**Adaptive Reuse**



**Desired Characteristics - Protect Character**

- Building reuse and rehabilitation
- Retain architectural character
- Safe, active and interesting public space
- Enhanced ecological features
- Access to transit



Existing



Potential

**Community Industry**



**Desired Characteristics - Build on Identity**

- Retain and protect industrial uses
- Improved walkability
- Ensure compatible transitions with adjacent areas
- Retail sale of goods produced on the premises
- Reduce impervious surface areas
- Enhanced ecological features
- Parking management



Existing



Potential

**Neighborhood Conservation**

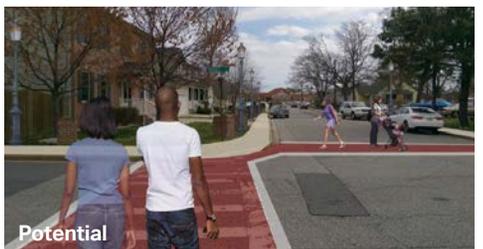


**Desired Characteristics - Strengthen Community**

- Improved lighting
- Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity
- Improved crosswalks
- Walkable access to retail and commercial areas
- Access to parks and open space



Existing



Potential

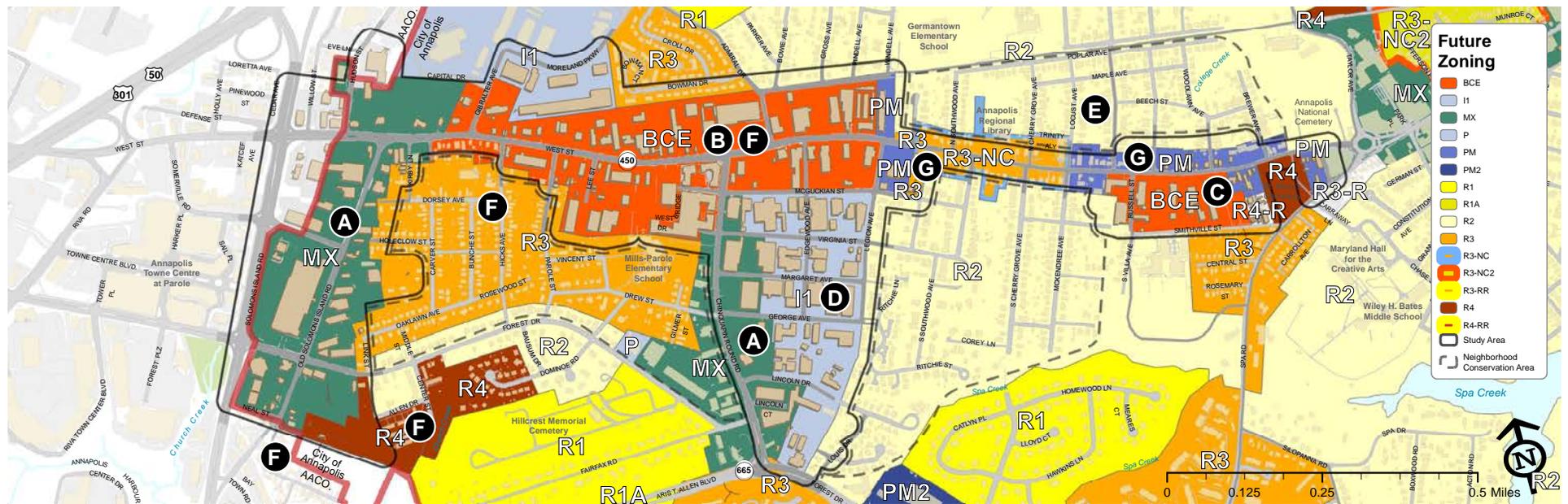
### 3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Several policy and regulatory changes will be required to ensure that zoning and design guidelines are consistent with the framework plan. Figure 1.13 depicts the proposed zoning modifications that are recommended and Section 5 outlines specific actions required.

A. The existing MX zoning district should be expanded into the study area and modified to include an additional height district and a higher FAR than currently allowed. The zone should be applied in areas expected to achieve the highest intensity of development including along Old Solomons Island Road and Chinquapin Round Road. Alternatively to increasing the FAR, the City could consider eliminating the maximum FAR requirement and regulate the intensity of development by height and required open space. In this case a maximum residential density would remain. To ensure proper transition to single family residential areas, the lowest height district available in the MX District should be applied to those areas adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.

- B. The BCE District should be modified to allow greater flexibility including stand-alone multi-family residential and non-residential uses greater than 25,000 SF as permitted uses. To prevent additional auto-dominated development and land uses inconsistent with an active street environment, self-storage facilities should be removed as a permitted use in the BCE and the deemed conforming provision of the BCE should be reviewed and potentially removed. Additional design guidelines are also needed for the BCE District to promote a more urban environment. In addition, buildings that are 45 feet high or have an FAR greater than 2 should be exempt from having to be considered a planned development, which carries more review requirements and a public hearing.
- C. The B3-CD District should be rezoned to BCE to allow for more intense mixed-use development that will cover some of the largest future redevelopment sites in the study area.

**Figure 1.13** Future Zoning



- D. The Industrial District should be modified to allow the sale of goods produced on the premises as long as they are ancillary to the primary and permitted use. A new use such as “Retail Sales” could be added and permitted by right in the other commercial zones and permitted “Subject to Standards” in the I District. Standards should address the required subordinate nature of retail sales and could also address parking. Alternatively, retail sales could be permitted by special exception approved by the Board of Appeals and subject to additional scrutiny, public input and special conditions.
- E. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan, the City should work with neighborhoods to consider allowing “mother-in-law apartments” or “granny flats” in owner-occupied houses in residential districts along Upper West Street. This provision would affect other similarly zoned areas of the city and therefore requires careful review. Standards for parking and access of such uses are needed.
- F. To increase the number of affordable housing units in the study area modifications to the MPDU program should consider an increase in the density bonus provision. In addition, the city should assess the effectiveness of the MPDU program to ensure that affordable units are allocated in an equitable and transparent manner consistent with program requirements.
- G. Permitted uses in the PM District should be expanded to allow dwellings above ground floor non-residential uses. Additionally, in the event that adaptive reuse is not feasible in the PM District, the district boundary should be extended to include the properties at 1601 and 1603 West Street, as well as 1602 and 1604 McGuckian Street.

**Table 1.6** Existing Projects in the Upper West Street Sector

Project Name	Description	Framework District	Align with Framework Plan
(1) Chick Fil-A	Construction of new restaurant to replace existing restaurant (4,800 SF)	Living + Regional Serving Commerce	○
(2) Monarch Academy	Building renovation for contract school (at former Gazette Building)	Community Industry	○
(3) Audi of Annapolis	Reconstruction of existing car dealership (28,327 SF)	Community Industry	○
(4) Acura Dealership	Construction of showroom addition, includes demolition of existing covered display area and overhang (2,920 SF)	Community Industry	○
(5) Chinguapin Self-Storage	Construction of storage facility (106,750 SF)	Community Industry	◐
(6) Chinguapin Round Road	Construction of commercial building for retail, office, and warehouse space (13,200 SF)	Community Industry	◐
(7) Parcel 63, Lot 53 Site Redevelopment	Demolition of former Pit Boys building, installation of a new parking lot, and renovation of the existing second building on site	Community Industry	◐
(8) Annapolis Towns at Neal Farm	Construction of 50 single family attached townhomes	Living + Regional Serving Commerce (Fringe)	●

Key: ○ = Weak Alignment, ◐ = Moderate Alignment, ● = Strong Alignment

Figure 1.14 Known Projects



### Alignment Check - Ongoing Projects

Several development projects are underway in or near the study area (see Figure 1.14 and Table 1.6). Not all projects are in alignment with the Proposed Development Framework Plan. However, projects early in the development process should be encouraged to incorporate design elements that are consistent with the goals and recommendations described herein.

## 4. The Public Realm Experience

Meeting the Comprehensive plan's mixed-use goals for the corridor will require an incremental transformation of the public realm along West Street, Old Solomons Island Road and Chinquapin Round Road. More than conduits for moving people—the streetscapes, sidewalks, parks, and plazas throughout the corridor are the social infrastructure where community-life happens. As density increases, the corridor public spaces will need to support more activity types than they do today. It is through these amenities that Upper West Street will become a more livable place, and evolve from commercial strip to an animated neighborhood that supports appealing lifestyles.



Proposed concept for new community open space and amenities at the intersection of Gibraltar Avenue and West Street, looking east. Extending the Poplar Trail (left) and implementing new urban design guidelines creates places for people.

#### 4. THE PUBLIC REALM EXPERIENCE



Aside from living and working in the study area, the most desired activities per the voting exercise included relaxing in the shade - including access to green space, attending a farmer's market, eating outdoors, and providing bicycling connections.

Even with substantial change in land use, density and urban form Upper West Street will remain an auto-oriented corridor by the nature of its location, access to Route 50 and relative lack of viable transit opportunities. An auto-oriented future; yes, but an auto-dominated one; no. Other Annapolis gateways like Rowe Boulevard and Forest Drive are better equipped to convey and distribute large volumes of traffic. In addition, those corridors do not hold the same potential for mixed-use redevelopment where existing and new residents can live, work, shop and play.

Overtime, investments can be made that improve livability through enhanced walkability. Unfortunately, many residents perceive the corridor as unsafe, inconvenient and unappealing. In response, this plan seeks to improve walkability and quality of life for existing and future residents and visitors in four ways: enhance pedestrian experience; increase community space; strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connectivity; and improve pedestrian safety.

### Enhance the Pedestrian Experience

Streetscapes along Old Solomon Island Road, Chinquapin Round Road and West Street can incrementally evolve to better meet the needs of a changing neighborhood. Starting with the intersections, crossings and signalization should be enhanced to improve safety and create a walkable appeal. Over time, utility poles should be relocated or undergrounded for greater power reliability and flexibility in providing for neighborhood amenities. As the corridor redevelops, the Inner West Street design standards should be utilized for continuity, providing additional space between the curb and face of building for cafes, display areas, seating amenities or pedestrian space. These standards also provide for a slight buffering between pedestrians and motorists that improves safety perceptions and community appeal.

Streetscape enhancements are still possible in locations that aren't redeveloping. In these cases redundant asphalt can be replaced with planting strips between a renovated sidewalk and the existing building. Removing the impervious surface has water quality benefits that could be used to offset installation costs.

Parking in the study area occurs in a somewhat disorganized and compartmentalized fashion. In some areas parking is limited, but in other locations, plentiful. The city should explore the potential for shared parking agreements, particularly in the Design District where spillover parking occurs into neighborhoods. A consolidated parking plan would also offer the opportunity to implement BMP features such as raingardens or microbioretention areas on a retrofit basis in accordance with MDE and City Code requirements.



Redevelopment of Upper West Street should result in the creation of additional community spaces and opportunities for defining a proper gateway to the corridor.



Existing roadway condition



Basic intersection improvements (traffic signal, crosswalk)



Enhanced intersection improvement

Depiction of existing corridor connections (top) and potential improvements that include crosswalks, landscaping, undergrounding of utilities and a build out of development sites that helps to activate the ground floor.

A majority of the Upper West Street corridor has sidewalks, although the width and condition of sidewalk pavement varies. Sidewalks are predominantly next to fast-moving vehicular traffic and walks between blocks can be long. In some instances utility poles limit pedestrians and cyclist maneuverability and in other areas the sidewalk is at grade with surface parking allowing vehicles to back out onto West Street and Chinquapin Round Road. Additional pedestrian amenities are specifically needed within existing neighborhoods and in the Design District. New crosswalks and sidewalks should be installed along prime walking routes to schools and existing public amenities

### Increase Community Space

The western end of the corridor currently lacks the community open spaces provided by school grounds and community parks further east. It is recommended that signature park spaces be integrated into redevelopment in this area which will also help address an overall lack of open space in the study area. In addition, Chambers Park, should be enhanced with new amenities and improved connections to West Street and Dorsey Avenue. Over time, as redevelopment occurs along West Street, a more prominent and direct connection to the park could be pursued.

Mechanisms to create more public greenspace should be explored. Increasing park and open space zoning requirements, instituting park impact fees, or park dedication in-lieu-of park impact fees are some potential options to consider.

### Strengthen Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity

The network of bicycle trails in the study area is incomplete. Today conditions for cyclists along Upper West Street are dangerous - most of the corridor lacks shoulders and frequent vehicle turning movements bring added challenges only experienced riders will test. A framework of pedestrian and bicycle corridors and trail enhancements should be implemented linking West Street destinations with those along Old Solomons Island Road and Forest Drive.

### Improve Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety is a priority issue for community residents and businesses. Crossing West Street is particularly intimidating. Intersection improvements at key locations can reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles through the use of high visibility crosswalks and advanced crosswalk technology. While current pedestrian volumes are somewhat low, this condition will change over time as redevelopment occurs. At a minimum, all crosswalks need new striping for improved visibility. In-roadway surface flashing warning lights, changes in pavement texture and color, signage with flashing lights, pelican crossings, and pedestrian-activated signal crossings should be considered for West Street in line with current industry practices. Priority emphasis should be placed on the intersections located between Old Solomons Island Road and Admiral Drive.



Pedestrian alert lighting  
(Greenbelt Road, Prince George's County, MD)



Depiction of sidewalk improvements near Parole Street that enhance the crosswalk and extend sidewalks for improved walkability and safety. Top image is current condition and bottom image is proposed condition.



Pedestrian lights and signage  
(Reedie Drive, Montgomery County, MD)

## Stormwater Management Opportunities

All new development and redevelopment within the city is required to comply with the stormwater management requirements provided in the Chapter 17.10 of the City Code. All new developments in the City are required to implement stormwater management to the maximum extent practicable following the Maryland Department of Environment's (MDE) Stormwater Management Design Manual. Any redevelopment that disturbs greater than 5,000 square feet (or 2,000 square feet for waterfront properties) must reduce the existing impervious area on-site by 50 percent or treat runoff from 50 percent of the existing impervious area (or a combination of the two).

The city has a Stormwater Utility Fee program that applies to residential and commercial properties. Depending on the level of stormwater management structures in place, properties may be eligible for a 50 percent reduction in the fee. For commercial properties to qualify for the credit the best management practices (BMPs) on site must also provide credit to the city that can be count towards the city's Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit requirements mandated by the State of Maryland.

The city could consider an alternative compliance program incentivizing (e.g. discount towards the grading permit fee) the private property owners and developers to treat

impervious area beyond the stated Stormwater management requirements as redevelopment occurs such that the City can take credit for those additional treated areas. Additional credit or the ability to transfer credits to other nearby projects (to help create a larger BMP treatment area) could be explored as potential incentive concepts.

Opportunities also exist to explore options for cost or benefit sharing related to the implementation of BMPs along West Street. State Agencies such as the State Highway Administration and the City have TMDL requirements that could be addressed in part by implementation of BMPs along the road corridor. Combined with private sector investment and incentives, improvements could help transform the public realm and streetscape condition. The City could develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SHA to start the process. The City could use a similar MOU developed between Anne Arundel County and SHA for BMP implementation and credit sharing as an example to develop a MOU suited to the City's water quality and stormwater management goals.

The City currently works with several non-profits and watershed groups such as the Back Creek Conservancy and Spa Creek Conservancy that are actively planning and implementing restoration projects. The City should continue to work with these groups to identify, promote, and document projects within the City to receive credits.



Depiction of a possible streetscape retrofit, including best management practices, in existing development. This enhancement improves walkability with sidewalks and helps meet stormwater management requirements.

Figure 1.15 identifies proposed public realm improvements for new open space, pedestrian and vehicular connections, bicycle trails, civic focal points and intersection improvements. These improvements respond to community priorities and concerns regarding safety, access, and a desire for a stronger community identity.



Examples of bio-retention application in parking lots

**Figure 1.15** Proposed Public Realm Improvements



- A. Intersection improvements at key locations will help people of all ages cross the street with greater safety.
- B. A central park space at the heart of the redevelopment area will become a neighborhood focal point east of Annapolis Towne Centre.
- C. A new public space should be created in the old railway easement at the intersection of Gibraltar Avenue and West Street. This space can be a gateway to the city, reinforce local businesses and help facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings at a critical intersection.
- D. A new bridge over Route 2 should connect Annapolis Towne Centre with redevelopment areas west of Old Solomons Island Road. The bridge can be built to connect vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles and take pressure off of adjacent intersections.
- E. The Poplar Avenue Trail should be extended westward to the intersection of West Street and Old Solomons Island Road. This will complete an important link between Western commercial destinations and central Annapolis.
- F. A framework of enhanced streetscapes including bike lanes and wayfinding signage can be established along Old Solomons Island Road, Forest Drive, Hicks Avenue, Dorsey Avenue (connecting to Chambers Park), Chinquapin Round Road, and following South Villa Avenue, Russell Street and Glen Avenue. These improvements will better connect new and existing neighborhoods.
- G. New street grid connections will be needed to create a walkable grid pattern and properly serve new development. These streets should connect existing intersections, to the extent possible, and connect all transportation modes with neighborhood amenities.
- H. Thoughtful connections to the existing neighborhoods to the east should allow access to new amenities while continuing to deter cut through traffic.
- I. Sidewalk improvements and crosswalks should enhance walkability and especially connectivity in neighborhoods to schools, and other community facilities. This includes the installation of Rectangular Rapidly Flashing Beacons (RRFB), or similar, along West Street in areas with high pedestrian volumes such as near the library and ZIPS Dry Cleaners.



**Table 1.7 Short-Term Actions (0 to 3 years)**

#	Action	Category
1	Modify the Mixed-use (MX) zoning district and apply as follows: <i>Modify the existing MX district so it is not specific to inner West Street, add a fourth height district, and remove the FAR requirement to support more concentrated regional-serving commerce with a substantial green space requirement</i>	Policy
	<i>Rezone the P and BCE zoning along Chinguapin Round Road to MX (up to McGuckian Street) and along Forest Drive up to 1922 Forest Drive.</i>	
	<i>Rezone the area along Old Solomons Island Road (B2, P, PM and BCE) to Mixed-use. Assign the lowest height district and intensity (MX1) to those areas adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.</i>	
2	Modify the Business Corridor Enhancement (BCE) zoning district: <i>Amend the permitted uses of the BCE to remove self-storage as a permitted or special exception use in the BCE.</i>	Policy
	<i>Evaluate the deemed conforming provision of the BCE for alignment with overall city-wide land use policies and objectives.</i>	
	<i>Add design standards to the BCE district consistent with the desired urban environment; use those in the MX district as a guide.</i>	
	<i>Allow multi-family as a permitted use in the BCE; subject to standards as in the MX District.</i>	
	<i>Allow non-residential uses greater than 25,000 SF as a permitted use in the BCE.</i>	
3	Apply the Inner West Street design guidelines (found within the MX district) along West Street, Chinguapin Round Road, and Old Solomons Island Road for continuity.	Policy
4	Evaluate the MPDU Ordinance for ways to provide additional incentives to developers to encourage more affordable units.	Policy
5	Modify the Industrial district to allow the sale of goods produced on the premises.	Policy
6	Rezone the B3-CD district to BCE.	Policy
7	Amend the permitted uses in the PM district to allow for dwellings above ground floor non-residential uses.	Policy
8	Implement shared lane bike facility along Russell Street and Glen Avenue.	Trails
9	Implement bike lane along Chinguapin Round Road from Forest Drive to West Street (portion of installation in progress).	Trails
10	Improve intersection and sidewalk conditions for pedestrians and cyclists at key locations (see Figure 1.15)	Safety
11	Conduct a Neighborhood Street Light Assessment to evaluate street lighting conditions and to improve safety and visibility in residential areas.	Safety
12	Complete a Property Ingress/Egress Assessment on West Street to identify properties that have excessive curb cut widths that hinder walkability and create uncertain and dangerous vehicular movements.	Safety
13	Complete a study of the Design District to identify opportunities for low-impact improvement. The study should include a review of parking utilization, requirements, and potential enforcement mechanisms.	Environment
14	Work with neighborhood organizations to promote existing programs for home repair and community improvements.	Community
15	Partner with the Annapolis Design District non-profit organization to reinforce marketing/branding promotion of the district.	Community

**Table 1.8** Mid-Term Actions (3 to 6 years)

#	Action	Category
1	Consider allowing granny flats as an accessory use in applicable residential zoning districts.	Policy
2	Work with the County to increase the effectiveness of the MPDU program.	Policy
3	Study bus demand in the corridor and evaluate data against current transit hours of operation. Conduct survey of residents to obtain preference data.	Transit
4	Upgrade bus shelters in study area to City standard (solar lights, etc.)	Transit
5	Identify a location for transit center along Old Solomons Island Road.	Transit
6	Extend Poplar Trail to Gibraltar Avenue and widen the path to 10-14 feet.	Trails
7	Implement bike lane along Gibraltar Avenue from West Street to connect to Moreland Parkway bike lane.	Trails
8	Implement shared lane bike facility along Forest Drive from Chinguapin Round Road to Annapolis Towne Centre (coordinate with County).	Trails
9	Evaluate options for adding sidewalks and a bike lane along Hicks Avenue and Holeclaw Street (future).	Safety
10	Approach SHA regarding the installation of Rectangular Rapidly Flashing Beacons (RRFB), or similar, in areas of high pedestrian volumes. Potential locations for installation along West Street include the library and ZIPS Dry Cleaners.	Safety
11	Provide improved pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding signage throughout study area (to key destinations and trails).	Safety
12	Conduct a Pedestrian Roadway Safety Audit on Upper West Street.	Safety
13	Conduct a Vehicle Road Safety Audit on Upper West Street.	Safety
14	Create a new people space in the study area.	Community
15	Conduct a feasibility study for undergrounding utilities on Upper West Street.	Community
16	Develop an enhancement plan for Chambers Park which includes improved access to West Street. Evaluate options for adding a sidewalk along Dorsey Avenue and providing a connection to Old Solomons Island Road	Community
17	Develop education campaign to private developers targeting tax benefits of stormwater improvements.	Environment
18	Develop a Stormwater Pilot Retrofit Program for Upper West Street and work with non-profits and watershed groups to identify 2-3 properties annually to pursue funding for stormwater retrofit enhancements (such as MD Department of Housing Community Development Sustainable Communities Program).	Environment
19	Provide additional incentive options for developers to exceed stormwater management requirements on commercial development (credits, transfers)	Environment
20	Explore options for an memorandum of understanding (MOU) with MD SHA to implement BMPs along West Street.	Environment
21	Develop an Upper West Street Beautification Campaign program to incentivize property owners along Upper West Street to implement streetscape improvements consistent with new urban design guidelines.	Community
22	Consider developing tax abatements, low interest loans, matching grants and other incentives to encourage commercial property owners to improve building facades, signage, parking management, and landscaping of properties, consistent with new urban design guidelines.	Community

**Table 1.9** Long-Term Actions (6 + years)

#	Action	Category
1	Provide bike and pedestrian access (sidewalks) along Old Solomons Island Road (including future connections to Annapolis Towne Centre).	Trails
2	Establish new street grid connections to serve new development and improve walkability (see Figure 1.15)	Safety
3	Develop a central community park space in the heart of the intense redevelopment area.	Community
4	Develop bridge over MD Route 2 to connect with Annapolis Town Centre.	Safety