

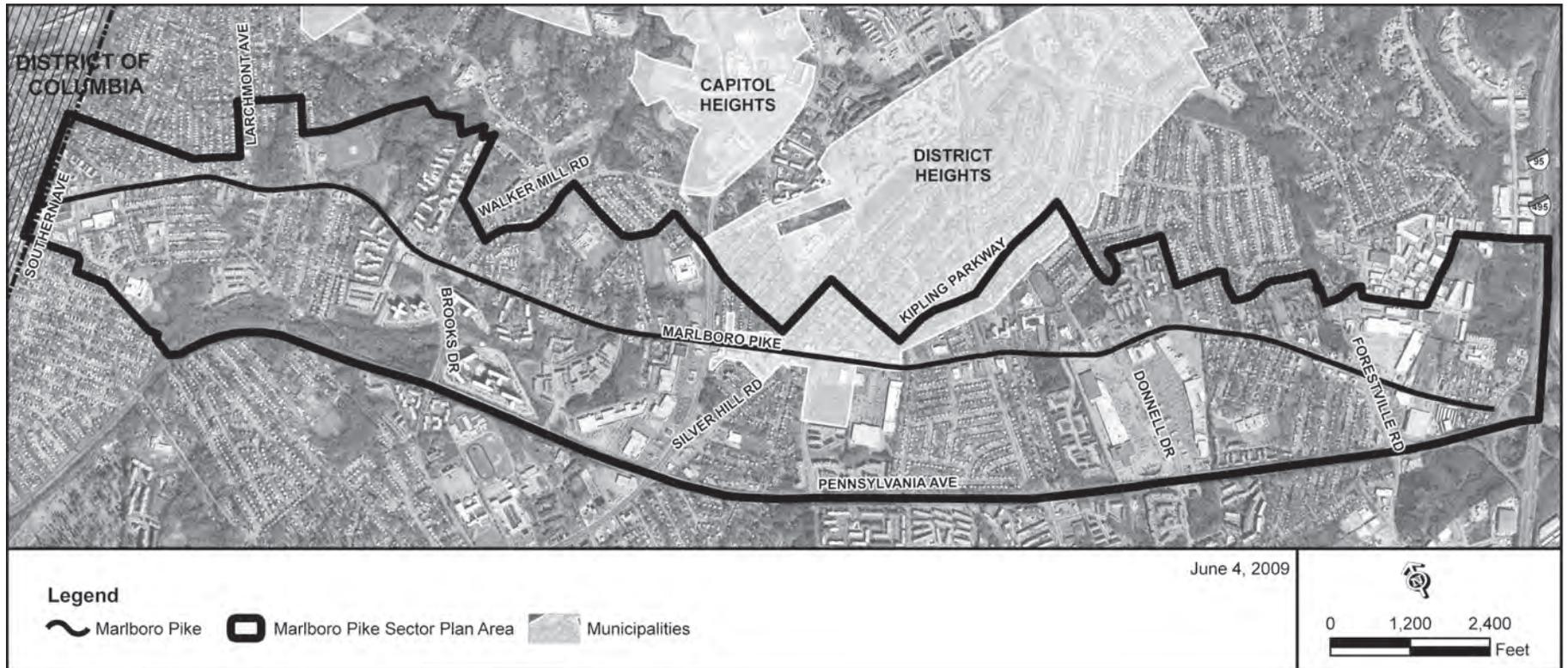
CHAPTER I—Introduction

I. INTRODUCTION

The Marlboro Pike Corridor is located in western Prince George’s County between the District of Columbia and the Capital Beltway. The sector plan area is about four miles long and half a mile wide, bounded by the District of Columbia (Washington D.C.) to the west, the Capital Beltway to the east, and Pennsylvania Avenue to the south (*Figure I-1 below*). The northern boundary of the sector plan area traverses side streets and property lines that are roughly one quarter mile from Marlboro Pike. The southernmost portion of the City of District Heights extends into the sector plan area and the City of Capitol Heights boundary lies to its north.

The Approved Marlboro Pike Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) updates the *Approved Master Plan and Adopted Sectional Map Amendment for Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity, Planning Areas 75A and 75B* (1985—master plan; 1986—sectional map amendment). This area encompasses a geographic location smaller than the Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity master plan area. Additional plans are either underway or have been completed that focus on other areas of interest within the Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity master plan area and include: the Subregion 4 master plan (currently underway); the *Approved Suitland Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan* (February 2006); and the *Approved Capitol Heights Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment* (2007). This plan also provides recommendations to implement the 2002 *Prince George’s County Approved General Plan* and to focus attention on the particular needs of the corridor.

Figure 1-1: Sector Plan Boundary



A. PLAN PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

Over the years, areas of disinvestment have led to deteriorated and what many residents perceive to be unsafe conditions along Marlboro Pike. Many of the surrounding communities appear to have disassociated themselves from Marlboro Pike. This prompted concern from elected officials, area business owners, and the surrounding communities.

To address these concerns, this plan has been developed through coordination with many key partners and stakeholders with a dedicated interest in revitalizing Marlboro Pike. These partners—including local residents, business owners, developers, faith-based organizations, educational leaders, and landowners, as well as local, county, and state agencies—were all involved in the planning process.

This sector plan is intended to assess existing conditions and recommend policies that will guide future investments, revitalization efforts, and development along the corridor. As a result, this plan will strengthen and unite existing neighborhoods surrounding Marlboro Pike. The plan contains a community vision to be used as a guide to pave the way for the future of Marlboro Pike. This vision is based on an assessment of existing conditions and future policies that includes the following elements: community development, transportation, the environment, public facilities, and economic development strategies.

Lastly this plan identifies implementation and design guidelines that propose strategies and actions for achieving the plan policies. Short, intermediate, and long term actions have been identified to help guide land use and development patterns over the next twenty years to achieve the proposed vision. The plan is a tool for residents, the general public, property owners, developers, business owners, government agencies, and elected officials and should be used as a guide in transforming the Marlboro Pike vision into a reality.

The plan recommendations are supported by nine substantive chapters. Chapter I—Introduction discusses the planning background and process, provides a historical overview, and presents the methodologies that the plan was based on. Chapter II—Vision states the overall plan ideals and identifies key elements required to achieve the vision. Chapters III through VI assess existing conditions and provide recommendations for four key elements that impact Marlboro Pike, including Community Development, Transportation,

the Natural Environment, and Public Facilities. Chapter VII—Economic Development presents marketing and branding recommendations, available financing programs and development regulations, as well as providing recommendations for priority development. Chapter VIII—Implementation identifies action steps, possible partnerships, and timeframes to achieve the vision. Chapter IX—Design Guidelines establishes the recommended physical character to be built with new development and redevelopment projects. Chapter X—Sectional Map Amendment identifies recommended zoning changes needed to achieve the plan’s vision.

B. PRIOR PLANS AND INITIATIVES

Prior plans include specific recommendations or guidelines for areas along the Marlboro Pike Corridor. These plans, which have played a valuable role in the area’s growth and development in recent years, include the following:

- The 1985 *Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity Approved Master Plan*.
- The 2002 *Prince George’s County General Plan*.
- The 2009 *Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility Washington Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)*.

The 1985 Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity master plan updated the earlier *Master Plan for Suitland and District Heights* that was adopted in 1970, and will remain in effect until the new Subregion 4 plan is adopted. This plan will upgrade that portion of the 1985 plan that pertains to the Marlboro Pike Corridor area. The 1985 plan recommends that land use along Marlboro Pike be predominantly commercial and that residential land uses should be oriented away from the corridor. This land use pattern is evident today, as the majority of properties fronting the corridor are commercial, and most residential properties are buffered from the corridor with setbacks, fencing, or other means to provide separation. The corridor offers a variety of retail choices, but the development patterns along the streetscape are inconsistent and options for community-oriented establishments are limited. The Approved Marlboro Pike Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment builds on and improves the recommendations set forth in the Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity plan, and will provide recommendations that seek to create a more community-oriented atmosphere that is supported by the neighborhoods surrounding and beyond Marlboro Pike. This concept

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also requires the evolution of a mixture of both commercial and residential properties fronting the corridor.

The 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan* provides broad visions, goals, policies, and strategies to guide future growth and development. The General Plan organizes the county into three policy Tiers: the Developed Tier, the Developing Tier and the Rural Tier. Marlboro Pike is within the designated Developed Tier. The policies for the Developed Tier emphasize a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods, quality infill and redevelopment, and the highest priority for the expenditure of public funds. Pennsylvania Avenue, which is the southern border of the Marlboro Pike project area, is designated as a Developed Tier Corridor in the General Plan. A Developed Tier Corridor is a highly traveled roadway that is surrounded by transit-oriented, higher intensity residential and non-residential uses. The recommendations set forth in this plan are consistent with the General Plan and were based on its goals.

The Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study was conducted by Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility Washington to analyze the effects of aircraft noise and aircraft accident potential, and to provide guidelines for land use development in affected areas. The eastern portion of Marlboro Pike in the vicinity of Forestville Road falls within the areas addressed by the AICUZ study as having noise intrusion and accident potential. Land use recommendations for these areas are sensitive to the AICUZ guidelines in order to protect public health and safety and maintain quality of life. This plan was developed with these guidelines in mind and they are reflected in the future land use plans.

Along with the published plans discussed above, the Prince George's County Planning Department is developing a proposed master plan focused on the growth and development of Subregion 4, which encompasses the Marlboro Pike sector plan area. Subregion 4 includes the area between the Washington D.C. boundary to the west, the Capital Beltway to the east, US Route 50 to the north, and Suitland Parkway to the south. Refer to *Figure I-3*, on page 6, which highlights the Subregion 4 master plan area in relation to the Marlboro Pike sector plan area. The Subregion 4 master plan will be a tool for balancing future growth and development in the subregion while

formalizing county policies as they relate to transportation, the environment, public facilities, economic development, housing, revitalization, urban design, and historic preservation. The Subregion 4 master plan, once approved, will supersede the Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity master plan. The Marlboro Pike plan considers these factors as they specifically relate to the Marlboro Pike Corridor, and the Subregion 4 master plan will incorporate the Marlboro Pike Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment as adopted.

The adoption of the Subregion 4 plan will not alter the legal status of the Marlboro Pike plan as the guiding policy for the area. The plans will mirror each other, and in certain locations the Subregion 4 plan will expand upon land use concepts recommended in the Marlboro Pike plan. All of the recommendations from the Marlboro Pike plan have been accepted as a foundation for the Subregion 4 plan. (In the event that there are any contradictions in the two documents, the 2009 Marlboro Pike Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment will supersede any information provided in the Subregion 4 Plan.) The Subregion 4 plan was approved on June 1, 2010.

In addition to prior and proposed plans, statewide initiatives and planning policies also influence the use of land along the Marlboro Pike Corridor. Three key statewide planning policies are: the Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992, the Smart Growth Priority Funding Areas Act of 1997, and the Maryland General Assembly's 2006 House Bill 1141 and House Bill 2.

The Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (1992 Planning Act) features provisions that county and municipal governments must follow when preparing comprehensive, master, or general plans. The 1992 Planning Act establishes eight visions that relate to economic growth and resource protection elements of plans. The eight visions include the following:

- Development is concentrated in suitable areas.
- Sensitive areas are protected.
- In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.
- Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.
- Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.

- To assure the achievement of the above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
- Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur.
- Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these elements.

Following the 1992 Planning Act, the state passed five pieces of legislation in 1997 related to smart growth, including priority funding areas (PFAs). The premise of smart growth legislation is to focus growth in established communities and locally designated growth areas, to preserve rural areas, and to increase the quality of life for all Marylanders. PFAs are locations where growth is targeted near existing population centers and infrastructure. The Marlboro Pike Corridor falls entirely within a PFA.

The Maryland General Assembly's 2006 House Bill 1141 and House Bill 2 also influence elements of county and municipality comprehensive plans. The bills list four new elements to be included, when appropriate, in local comprehensive plans: water resources, municipal growth, priority preservation, and work force housing. Inclusion of the elements depends on different factors, such as whether or not a county has a certified preservation program. However, the overall goal of Bills 1141 and 2, similar to smart growth legislation, is to preserve natural resources in suitable areas.

C. PLAN MAKING METHODOLOGY

The plan method involves a combination of project area analysis and stakeholder input. This involves conducting an inventory of the existing environment and community resources, identifying the strengths and weaknesses, and engaging local citizens for input on their community.

The project area analysis included inventorying and analyzing the existing physical conditions and land use, as well as conducting a market analysis. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis involves an assessment of existing conditions and a consideration of factors that influence opportunities within the area. The market analysis assesses business and existing supply and demand along the Marlboro Pike Corridor to determine market needs and recommendations. Extensive outreach to business and industry stakeholders was also conducted to supplement the analyses. In addition, active public participation from the residents, business

owners, and other interested citizens contributed to the identification of issues and potential resolution through meetings, surveys and hands on designing.

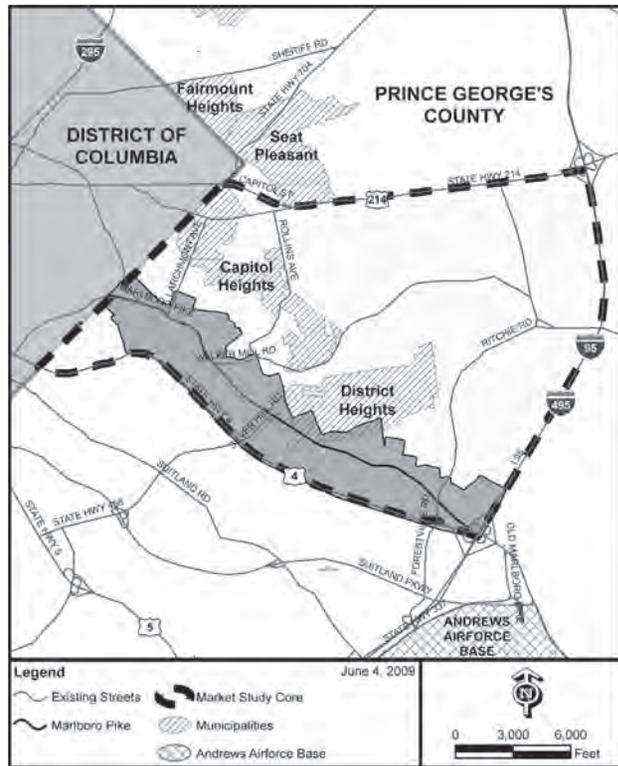
The existing land use and both environmental and community resources were identified through a combination of land use/land cover data research, field tours and surveys, and review of aerial photography. Though a majority of the corridor is an urban landscape, the natural environment is a key element of the sector plan. Field tours and surveys also aided in identifying the existing condition and location of community facilities, including parks, churches, schools, and community centers.

a. Market Analysis

The market analysis study focused on market conditions and trends in the Marlboro Pike sector plan area, and identified opportunities along the corridor. A larger core area was established to conduct the market analysis, which was made up of census tracts and encompasses the sector plan area. An area larger than that of the sector plan was used for the analysis because market demand is dependent on economic factors and influences outside the immediate corridor area. *Figure I-2* alongside depicts the core area, which is bounded by Washington, DC to the west, Central Avenue to the north, the Capital Beltway to the east and Pennsylvania Avenue to the south.

The market potential was evaluated for various uses in the corridor area, including retail and food services, office, residential, and mixed-use development. Potential retail demand was determined by comparing existing household expenditure potential to retail sales in order to project the extent to which household expenditure potential may be leaking out of the area, or is being spent outside the immediate corridor area. In determining retail demand the potential spending from travelers along the corridor was also taken into account. Office demand was determined primarily from trends in office vacancy and rents in the sector plan area, as compared to surrounding areas, taking into consideration nearby employment hubs, population centers, and transportation infrastructure. Assessment of the residential market potential included the use of demographic data collected at the start of the market study, and information from interviews with local residential real-estate brokers.

Figure I-2: Market Analysis Core Area



The market analysis also evaluated the economic viability of existing retail and service businesses in the area and recommended strategies to strengthen them, including simple physical improvements such as new facades, improved parking, and re-merchandising product lines to appeal to commuters as well as local residents.

citizens were actively involved in planning the revitalization of Marlboro Pike. A range of public activities encouraged stakeholder participation in planning, creation of a common vision, and promotion of a partnership to redevelop Marlboro Pike. These activities included stakeholder interviews, informational events, public meetings, project team attendance at association meetings, business open houses and events, a design charrette, a post charrette, and varied outreach opportunities.

The outreach process initiated—and continues to build upon—key relationships throughout the study area, creating strong partnerships that will benefit Marlboro Pike in the future.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with area residents, official and unofficial community leaders, faith communities, educational leaders, and other stakeholders with the purpose of identifying the following:

- Issues that need to be addressed
- Current challenges to Marlboro Pike
- Positive aspects that need to be preserved or enhanced
- How stakeholders would like to be involved in the process

Specific interviews were also conducted with business owners along the Marlboro Pike Corridor to determine:

- What attracted them to the area?
- Why they keep their businesses on or near Marlboro Pike?
- The challenges associated with being on Marlboro Pike
- Areas they would like to see addressed by the project
- How they would like to participate in the project

Stakeholder interviews proved useful, enabling one-on-one conversations with key stakeholders who possess a broad knowledge of the Marlboro Pike Corridor. These interviews helped determine:

- How the corridor has developed over the years
- Areas that stakeholders would like to see addressed by the project
- How they would like to participate in the project

b. SWOT Analysis

An analysis was conducted to ascertain the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

Strengths are positive characteristics of an area that enhance community cohesiveness and sustainability. Weaknesses are aspects of the community, such as blight, that put constraints on an area. Opportunities are aspects of and/or locations where improvements are likely to succeed in enhancing the community. Threats are potential hindrances in an area that could have a negative impact on the community. Once identified, the existing conditions and resources were assessed in the SWOT analysis.

c. Public Participation

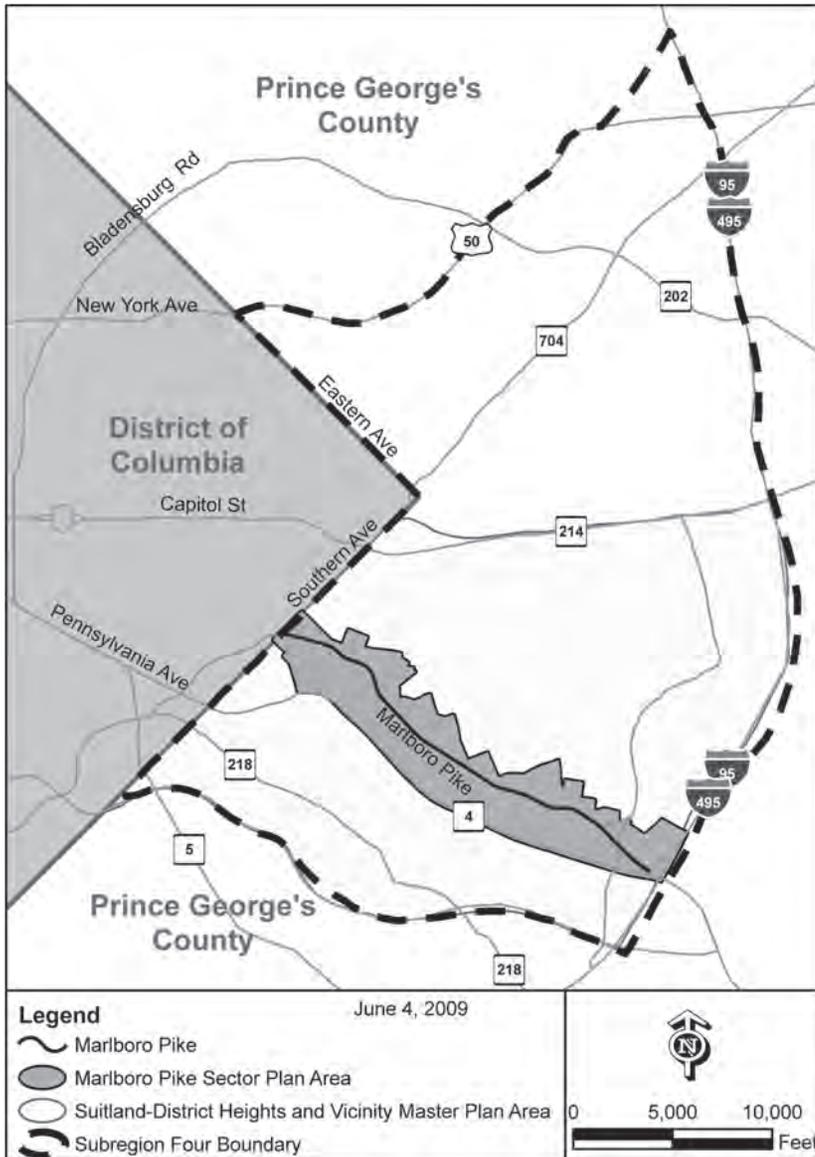
Input from the public is a key element in the development of the sector plan for the Marlboro Pike Corridor. Business owners, property owners, and

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Informational events were held to engage local government and citizen groups in the process. These groups included local government and public safety agencies, special interest groups, emergency response agencies, community associations and business associations. Project team members

also attended regularly scheduled community meetings to inform active civic group members about the project and to support their interest in the planning process.

Figure 1-3: Subregion IV Master Plan Area



Outreach events included public workshops. The team conducted two such workshops in November 2007 and January 2008, generating public dialogue regarding issues, concerns, and values that should be considered as part of the planning project. Objectives of the public workshops included:

- To invite all stakeholders to work together on identifying key values they wish to see incorporated into all future planning efforts.
- To create a community dialogue about Marlboro Pike and its future.
- To foster relationships and sharing among all project stakeholders.
- To focus on small-group dialogue around key questions for the public.
- To ensure that each stakeholder's voice would be heard and recorded, and that individuals related to one another to share their opinions.
- To encourage community members to establish a coalition to promote grass roots activities for the betterment of the corridor.

The workshops were designed to generate a community vision for the future of Marlboro Pike. Participants were asked to envision a design for Marlboro Pike that would meet the community's needs and desires. The detail of this vision was elaborated on at the project's design charrette.

The design charrette was held in winter 2008 and consisted of interactive public sessions that assessed all community perspectives and identified specific design elements. Building on the values and vision generated from previous public outreach activities, the charrettes focused on:

- Specific design characteristics (building form)
- Aesthetic choices (design details)
- Community connections
- Integration of existing and new uses
- Location preferences for different types of uses

Meeting facilitators conducted the design charrette to ensure maximum participation of stakeholders. The project team generated specific project designs based on the significant feedback provided by stakeholders at the charrette. These designs included incorporating pedestrian-friendly and

bicycle-friendly facilities along the Marlboro Pike Corridor. These concepts were presented to the public at the post design charrette which was held in March 2008.

The last public meeting was held in July 2008. Its purpose was to present the framework and major themes of the draft plan to the public. Overall, the themes were well received.

Additional outreach strategies, utilized to continually share project information, include a project website and project literature. The website continues to serve as a community resource for project updates, background, and schedules of the Approved Marlboro Pike Sector Plan and SMA.

Project literature is used to inform stakeholders about the project's purpose, status, and outcomes. Information sheets were developed and delivered to local businesses, organizations, schools, and churches to keep the public up to date on the project.

D. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

During colonial times this area was part of a thriving region with major plantations dating as far back as the 1670s. Tobacco and other agricultural production was the main economic activity. After the Revolutionary War, the District of Columbia was formally established in 1791 as the new nation's capital city in this thriving region. The District of Columbia was conveniently situated in the middle of the 13 original colonies and near the Chesapeake Bay, making it a prime, central location for a capital city.

Marlboro Pike originated as the Washington-Marlboro Turnpike linking the county seat of Upper Marlboro with the District of Columbia. This route served as a means to transport people and goods during the 1800s, first by stagecoach and later by automobile. Intersections along the road became landmarks and stopping points where communities began to cluster and formed the backbone of the land development patterns that still exist today. Walker Mill Road led to Charles Walker's Mill on Southwest Branch. Old Silver Hill Road connected to an adjacent stagecoach route along Branch Avenue. Forestville Road connected to Long Old Fields, which later became the town of Forestville, and to Central Avenue, a significant road that was originally part of Pierre L'Enfant and Benjamin Banneker's plan of Washington D.C. Originally, Central Avenue only accommodated eastbound

traffic out of Washington D.C., requiring westbound traffic to connect to the Washington-Marlboro Turnpike near where the Forestville Road intersection is today.

By the early 1900s, Washington had grown into a major city with growth extending beyond its established boundaries. Populations spread through subdivisions into Prince George's County. The earliest subdivisions include Capitol Heights, Bradbury Heights, Dupont Heights, Hillside, and Boulevard Heights, all of which are partially within or adjacent to the Marlboro Pike sector plan area and still exist today. Capitol Heights was subdivided in 1904 in a grid pattern with 2,000 square foot lots that are still evident in today's property lines. The City of Capitol Heights incorporated in 1910 as a means to improve services for the residents. District Heights, which is further east, subdivided in the 1920s and was incorporated as a municipality in 1936.

The area grew significantly from the 1930s through to the 1950s. The New Deal brought employment opportunities to Washington D.C. in the 1930s, and sewer lines became available in Prince George's County, connecting to the sanitary system of Washington D.C. Furthermore, the growing popularity of the automobile allowed people to move further out from urban centers without being reliant on established transit lines, such as street cars and trolleys. This increased demand for homes provided a market for increased suburban growth. In 1939, the area's first shopping center was built at Coral Hills to serve the growing population nearby. Soon after World War II, a housing boom further increased demand and spurred rapid growth for suburbanization in Prince George's County. Nearby major federal institutions, including the Census Bureau complex in Suitland and Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility Washington, further increased market demand for housing in the area. According to US Census data, the resident total increased by 150 percent in the 1940s and doubled again in the 1950s.

In the 1960s Pennsylvania Avenue was extended from central Washington to Upper Marlboro and beyond, effectively creating a bypass of the communities along Marlboro Pike. This was the start of a fundamental change in the character of Marlboro Pike, as it was no longer a main thoroughfare. Most traffic was rerouted, which helped to keep traffic volumes lower along Marlboro Pike. However, the economic benefits of through traffic were also being rerouted off the corridor. Large commercial

development, such as the Penn Station Center at Forestville and Penn Mar Plaza, were built to orient traffic from Pennsylvania Avenue rather than Marlboro Pike. The development patterns of the 1960s and 1970s also included many apartment complexes, which led to another population spike in the 1970s. Some of these complexes were constructed along Marlboro Pike, while others were oriented to Pennsylvania Avenue and the cross streets. The developments from this time period have all been auto-oriented, without corridor-wide continuity. As a result, developments became isolated and pedestrian linkages were lost.

In 1985 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) completed the Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity master plan. This plan proposed a new development pattern in the area, including the Marlboro Pike Corridor: to focus commercial development along Marlboro Pike and to place residential development behind the commercial. The plan also emphasized the environmental preservation, community conservation, and economic growth that is evident today. The existing conditions reflect the main patterns proposed in the Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity master plan because Marlboro Pike is predominantly lined with commercial land use and the historic communities have been preserved.

Neighborhoods have continued to grow through the 1980s to the 2000s, with most new developments being townhomes or multifamily housing as either condominium or apartment dwellings. Some new commercial developments continue to locate along Marlboro Pike as well. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Prince George's County's population grew by 20 percent from 1980 to 2000. The 2000 U.S. Census also reported that 49 percent of the county's population was living inside the Capital Beltway (I-95/495) in 2000. However, the focus of new growth in recent years has clearly shifted east. The continuing availability of vacant land and construction of the Capital Beltway has contributed to the decline of Marlboro Pike.

E. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Marlboro Pike Corridor is a mixture of many things without any single defining corridor-wide theme. The corridor includes residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Some of these developments date back to the early twentieth century while others are brand new. Older development tends to be located in the western portions of the corridor

near the District of Columbia, while newer development tends to be in the eastern portion near the Capital Beltway. Residential neighborhoods include old and new single family homes, townhomes, condominiums, garden apartments, and apartment towers. The communities along the corridor are mostly located behind properties that directly front Marlboro Pike, although some front onto Marlboro Pike. Most residential properties located directly on Marlboro Pike include setbacks, fences, or landscaping to buffer the homes from the roadway.

The demographic profile and residential market analysis point to a few significant trends in the Marlboro Pike study area. The area experienced little housing growth in an otherwise heated housing market from 2000 to 2007, although the low vacancy rates indicate a steady demand for housing. The number of multifamily units, which are medium density with 10–19 units, decreased by approximately 1,500. However, the total number of housing units increased, mostly in the townhouse section. Single-family attached (townhouse) development is the dominant new construction type in the area. Ownership share increased by eight percent. The area has also seen a significant increase in non-family households, most of them single householders.

The analysis shows that household size changed significantly between 1990 and 2000. A substantial change in household size typically has a direct impact on the demand for certain types of housing units, favoring smaller units (one- and two-bedroom units) over larger family-sized units. Recommendations, developed from the identified trends, range from focusing on transit-oriented development (TOD) to providing 60 percent ownership units and 40 percent rentals throughout the corridor.

The communities along Marlboro Pike show a lot of strength, with active neighborhood associations and well-maintained properties. Some of the residential properties, although not a majority, do show signs of blight. One example is the Chapel Wood Apartments site that is vacant and in disrepair. However, the communities surrounding this site are stable, and new development at this site would complement and capitalize on the strength of nearby communities. Redeveloping this site would also deter illicit activities that tend to occur in vacant and underutilized areas.

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Commercial land use dominates the areas lining Marlboro Pike. As with the residential character, the commercial character varies extensively. At one time Marlboro Pike was a main thoroughfare, and this is reflected in some of the older commercial properties, which are single buildings or small shopping centers. A section of the pike in District Heights shows a historic main-street type development pattern, with commercial buildings built up to or close to the road edge. But newer commercial developments include expansive parking lots between the buildings and the road. With an added emphasis on making the corridor more commercial in the 1985 Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity master plan, some single-family homes located directly on Marlboro Pike were converted into commercial properties that still house businesses today. Most commercial properties are retail, but some serve as office space.

The corridor includes a variety of businesses, including grocery stores, pharmacies, nail salons, mattress stores, fast-food outlets, restaurants, and other retail. A few thriving anchor stores located in the eastern half of the corridor include Marlo Furniture, Staples, Burlington Coat Factory, Target, JC Penney, and the Capital Sports Complex. A cluster of auto-oriented businesses in the western and central portions of the corridor include car washes, gas stations, mechanics, and used-car sales. Some businesses are considered undesirable by community members, such as liquor stores or pawn brokers, which are also prevalent along the corridor.

Portions of the corridor have been characterized by disinvestment in recent years. This disinvestment is evidenced by some poorly maintained, functionally obsolete strip shopping centers that line the corridor, some lightly tenanted. The general layout and limited footprint of these shopping centers lessens their attractiveness to travelers on Marlboro Pike and limits the potential for redevelopment or re-tenanting. The corridor also contains several large and defunct or nearly abandoned shopping centers. However, there are several thriving community-sized shopping centers, including the Centre at Forestville, the Penn-Mar Shopping Center, and Great Eastern Plaza. Some of the commercial properties are vacant or under-performing, such as the Forestville Plaza shopping center at the corridor's eastern gateway and the Green Hill Plaza shopping center at the western gateway. These deteriorating shopping centers detract from the overall corridor atmosphere. Although many of the existing, struggling shopping centers and vacant apartment complexes currently

deter investment in the area, some of them present substantial opportunities for redevelopment that could spur future revitalization in the area.

The corridor also includes some institutional and industrial properties. Churches are prevalent and located sporadically throughout the corridor. Some of the churches are in traditional, single buildings. Two of these churches are in historic structures, including Epiphany Church and Cemetery and the Forestville M.E. Church and Cemetery, both located off Ritchie Road. One other historic structure is located in this vicinity, which is the Forestville School nestled next to the Forestville Church. Some churches are prominent features along the corridor, including the Mt. Calvary Church, Bradburn Methodist Church, and the Free Gospel Church. Other churches are located in shopping centers or defunct commercial buildings that have been retrofit into churches.

The retail and office market analysis points to a few significant trends in the Marlboro Pike study area. A surplus in retail sales indicated that shoppers are being drawn from outside the area to shop in stores on Marlboro Pike. Prince George's County has two main retail clusters with very little centrally located retail. Shopping centers are clustered along Marlboro Pike, and to the southwest of the corridor along Suitland Parkway, including Iverson Mall, Iverson Plaza, Marlow Heights Shopping Center, and the Hillcrest Heights Shopping Center. Another shopping node exists along I-495 North, including Kingdom Square, Kettering Plaza Shopping Center, Largo Plaza, Boulevard at the Capital Centre, and Landover Crossing. There is little to no shopping between Marlboro Pike and Central Avenue, in areas east of the Beltway, and in the adjoining area within the District of Columbia. Sales data indicates that shoppers come from areas larger than the typical trade area to visit the shopping centers on Marlboro Pike. It is likely that shoppers are coming from Washington D.C. and east of the Capital Beltway during their commutes. The office analysis recognizes that the study area has a potential development site at the eastern gateway to the corridor that could attract Class A office space. Class A office space is typically characterized as high quality, visually appealing, and professionally managed office space that attracts high quality, professional tenants and lease space at higher rates. Several sites along Marlboro Pike, which are very close to important transportation routes, could be attractive locations if redeveloped with the right projects. An additional strategy for development sites along the

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corridor is to target medical office and related services as the anchor tenants supplemented by supporting and related uses.

Other institutional properties include public and private schools, county Fire and Emergency Medical Services (Fire/EMS) stations, a post office, and a library. In addition, the William Hall Elementary School and the Oakcrest Community Center is a community recreational space offering a fitness center, special interest classes, and other recreational amenities. Situated next to the community center is the Oakcrest Community Park. However, the park site is underutilized and offers limited recreational opportunities because it is not yet fully developed as a park. An additional community center, the John E. Howard Community Center, is located within the sector plan boundary, but is off Marlboro Pike in the Bradbury Heights neighborhood.

Transportation along the corridor is predominantly auto-oriented. Marlboro Pike between Forestville Road and Southern Avenue has two through lanes in each direction, and in some cases a central turning lane. Sidewalks are present along most of the corridor, although in some cases the sidewalks are broken or missing. Most businesses include driveways and parking lots in front of their buildings, which creates numerous curb cuts along the streetscape. These driveways also serve to greatly increase left turn movements and mid-block stopping points, which can interrupt traffic flow. Two bus lines also serve the corridor: Metro-Bus operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and TheBus operated by Prince George's County.

Through the SWOT analysis the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified. The Marlboro Pike Corridor has a range of strengths including: existence of strong neighborhoods; residents with a desire to improve their community; a wide-range of community resources including schools, community centers, churches, parks, and a public library; a location close to Washington D.C. and all that the metropolitan area has to offer; convenient access to the Capital Beltway; and close access to a number of shopping centers and community services.

Some of the weaknesses identified include: concerns about safety and security; low aesthetic value; a limited variety of commercial services;

predominance of underutilized or vacated space; insufficient opportunities for non-vehicle transportation; and a lack of cohesion where the corridorwide community is not organized or unified outside of smaller neighborhood groups.

Throughout the Marlboro Pike Corridor areas exist that are ideal for new development, revitalization, and streetscaping. New development has recently occurred and continues to occur sporadically along the corridor, showing that investment opportunities are still recognized. Several large parcels are either undeveloped, available for redevelopment, or prime for redevelopment. The existing community has the desire and the buying power to serve as a market base for new types of businesses and services in the area. Several parklands along the corridor could be upgraded to meet the wider recreational needs of the community.

Threats can sometimes be the most challenging aspect to address in a community. This often involves addressing public misperceptions. Threats to the Marlboro Pike Corridor involve the perceptions that it is not a safe place to live or work and that growth and economic opportunities are limited. Threats identified in the SWOT Analysis will be addressed through the goals and recommendations of the sector plan.

The public participation methods implemented for the sector plan generated a broad range of comments and concerns among stakeholders with an interest in the Marlboro Pike Corridor. These included the following issues:

- Physical appearance (aging infrastructure, deteriorating properties, need for aesthetic improvements).
- Safety and security: crime is prevalent, including petty theft and larceny. Perception of crime deters visitors to the corridor. There is a need for the presence of more police officers and a targeted public safety strategy.
- Traffic and accessibility: traffic congestion, pedestrian safety concerns, lack of continuous sidewalks, need for more transit accessibility.
- Business and economics: too many low-end retail shops, including liquor stores. A strong desire exists for higher end retail and better merchandise. The lack of family-oriented and higher-end restaurants is felt.

- Recreation: Not much usable open space is available. More recreational opportunities are needed for children. Bike trails would be an asset.
- Community assets: established community and active community groups exist. The area’s history should be preserved. Its location is convenient to many destinations.
- Housing: strong desire exists for more single-family housing and a reduction of multifamily housing.

F. KEY ISSUES

Based on the project area analyses and stakeholder involvement, the following key issues to be addressed in this sector plan have been identified:

- Preserving and improving the existing established communities to create thriving neighborhoods.
- Improving multi-modal mobility, with an emphasis on safety, pedestrian connectivity, bicycle accessibility, and transit ridership.
- Deterring crime and changing perceptions of crime in the area.
- Identifying priority development sites to serve as catalysts for investment and revitalization.
- Promoting infill development that will provide new amenities, and improve aesthetic appeal along the corridor.
- Promoting property clean up and maintenance to improve physical conditions and visual quality along the corridor.
- Promoting environmental stewardship measures to preserve and enhance the natural environment.
- Promoting a community coalition of concerned citizens to push a common agenda that will revitalize the Marlboro Pike Corridor.
- Concentrating commercial centers at strategic locations.

