

II. THE VISION

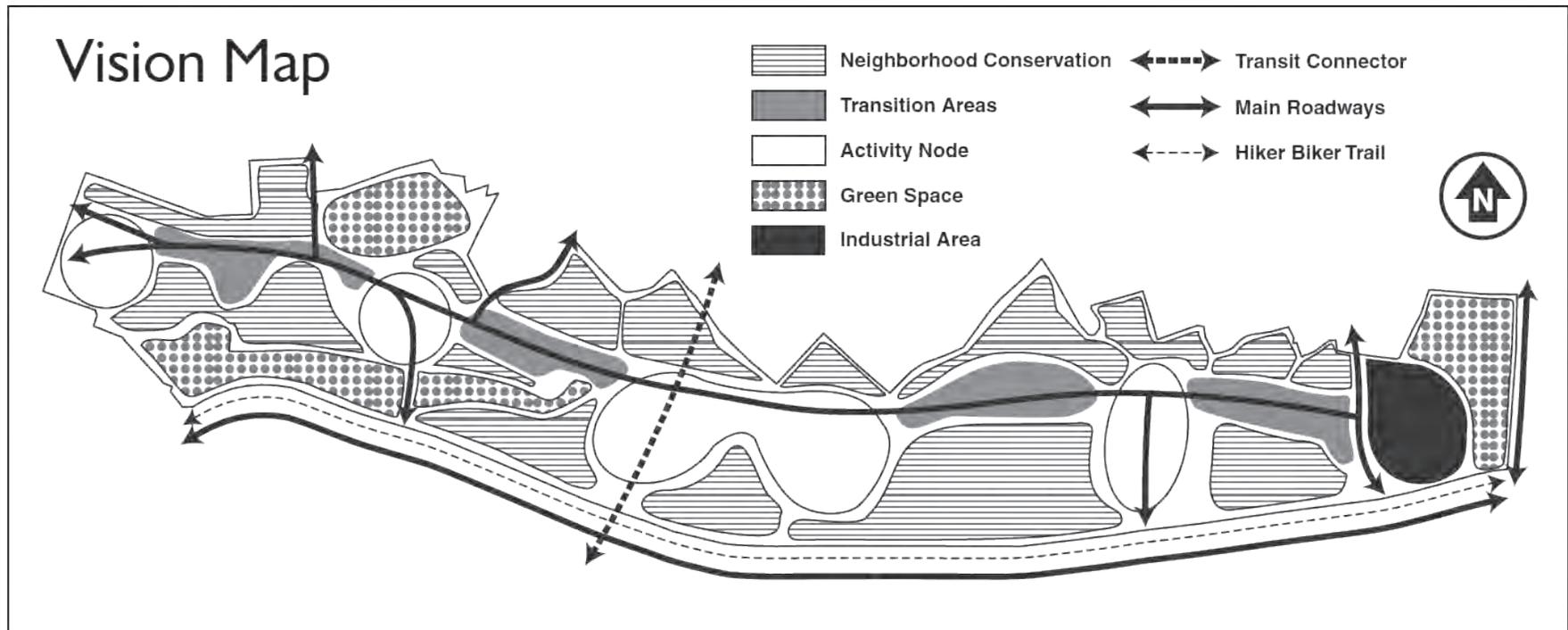
Presented in this chapter are the physical, social, economic, and cultural characteristics envisioned for the Marlboro Pike Corridor. This chapter outlines the future land use, community, economic and aesthetic vision for Marlboro Pike and the communities it serves. Also presented are the elements required to implement the Marlboro Pike vision. The vision reflects invaluable stakeholder input learned through public meetings, workshops, design charrettes, citizen surveys, and public comments conducted throughout the planning process that started in fall 2007.

A. Vision Statement

The Marlboro Pike Corridor is envisioned as a safe, attractive, walkable, and vibrant community where people live, work, shop, dine, and recreate. Neighborhoods are stable and livable, offering desirable and attractive housing choices. Old and new residential communities coexist harmoniously. Commercial properties are compatible with the neighborhoods, offering services catering to local needs and providing quality goods and services that cater to the larger region as well. Established businesses and new businesses thrive in thematic nodes that promote activity, socialization, and commerce. Multi-modal transportation is accessible, offering a variety of ways to get around. Pedestrian connectivity is safe, efficient and comfortable, offering unobstructed access along the entire corridor. Environmental sustainability practices are incorporated to promote sensitivity to and preservation of the natural environment. In all, the Marlboro Pike Corridor is a thriving pedestrian-scale and community-oriented place with a high quality of life.

Figure II-1 below depicts the conceptual vision for the future of the Marlboro Pike Corridor.

Figure II-1: Conceptual Vision



B. Vision Elements

The vision is focused on the conservation, enhancement and redevelopment measures designed to enhance the quality of life and sustainability for corridorwide neighborhoods and residents. Below are seven overarching elements identified to achieve this vision:

1. Community Development
2. Transportation
3. The Natural Environment
4. Public Facilities
5. Economic Development Strategies
6. Urban Design
7. Quality of Life

1. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LAND USE

Land use recommendations put forth in this plan are reflective of three entities: activity nodes, transition areas, and neighborhood conservation areas. The corridor should have more pedestrian-oriented clusters of denser development with predominantly residential areas in between. The denser areas would be supported by the well-established neighborhoods within the corridor.

Activity nodes translate to higher density land uses along the corridor and create centers that attract people to socialize, shop, dine, work, and in some cases to even reside. These nodes become Marlboro Pike's activity centers that are also the corridor focal points. Nodes serve to strengthen commercial activity by creating destinations offering a variety of services, all within walking distance. They are proposed as clusters of denser and more commercial development in sections along the corridor. These nodes incorporate existing and newly upgraded commercial development. Six activity nodes exist along the corridor. These general locations include the intersections of Boones Hill Drive, Brooks Drive, and Silver Hill Road. The other three locations are the Great Eastern Plaza, Penn-Mar Shopping Center, and Forestville Plaza/Marlow Shopping Center.

Transition areas translate to lower-density land uses between activity nodes and encourage more community-oriented development with mostly residential properties and a few neighborhood-scale businesses. This would require that some of the commercial areas between activity nodes be rezoned to residential uses.

Mixing uses along Marlboro Pike, such as residential, retail, and office, will reduce traffic congestion and foster more community interaction. Also, mixing residential areas with commercial areas makes shopping more convenient for residents and assures retailers of a market base from which to draw business. It also promotes non-vehicular travel, since mixed-use developments are inherently pedestrian oriented, and residents will be more likely to walk, travel by transit service, or bicycle.

Community conservation areas represent the established neighborhood areas located adjacent to Marlboro Pike. These residential areas should be preserved to maintain community stability.

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

The plan envisions a high quality of life for those individuals living and working along Marlboro Pike. Community revitalization efforts and conservation measures will ensure community stability and further strengthen existing communities.

Community revitalization focuses on initiating development within seven priority areas that have been identified along Marlboro Pike. These priority areas will serve as catalysts for overall corridor improvements, provide services that are currently lacking, and serve as models of desirable development that will characterize the future of the corridor. Efforts to recruit commercial investment should be focused in these areas, and mixing in residential uses is also desirable. Each priority area proposes a unique vision that meets the needs of the surrounding communities. These priority areas will also cater to the larger region by providing a wide range of quality services that encourage people from outside the area to frequent Marlboro Pike. An implementation plan has been developed that determines priority areas based on their economic feasibility.

Six of the seven priority areas are located within the activity nodes discussed above. A mix of residential uses is proposed for the seventh priority area (Neighborhood Hub), the vacant Chapelwood Apartments. This would complement the surrounding residential areas. The seventh priority area is not part of an activity node.

In addition to priority area development along the corridor, infill development or redevelopment—spurred by the marketplace—is expected

to naturally occur. Numerous vacant or underutilized parcels offer opportunities for infill development or redevelopment. All new development along Marlboro Pike should be in keeping with the land use and urban design standards established corridorwide—with commercial businesses focused into nodes and residential communities between the nodes. Some neighborhood-scale businesses would remain or locate in areas between nodes. New investments should offer housing and services catering to the community and in keeping with the neighborhood-oriented atmosphere. Non-conforming establishments are discouraged and should be phased out. New development sites should offer buildings that are constructed up to the sidewalk and are architecturally in keeping with the corridor themes.

To make this plan come to fruition a group of stakeholders should be encouraged to form a community coalition to serve the interests of the corridor. This group should foster a sense of community ownership and pride along the corridor. The individuals involved may be persons with political influence, business professionals with an interest in the corridor, county agency representatives, community members, major property owners, or other important stakeholders. The coalition should be an entity that serves as the voice of Marlboro Pike and converts the plan's vision into action.

HOUSING

A variety of housing options will exist along Marlboro Pike in order to strengthen and preserve existing communities, increase home ownership, and provide additional high quality housing choices in the area. Preservation efforts will also be employed for existing neighborhoods. These efforts deter large development projects outside community conservation areas. In addition, better access throughout the area, property upkeep, and aesthetic treatments are recommended in existing communities to positively affect quality of life for residents. New housing choices are also recommended in certain priority areas to provide new, high-quality housing that will complement the surrounding neighborhoods.

COMMERCE

The corridor should be transformed from a roadway that is almost entirely commercial to one with a mixture of residential and commercial nodes. Established businesses can either remain in their current locations or in new, upgraded commercial space in the activity nodes. Area merchants

are encouraged to come together and promote businesses. The creation of a business improvement district is also recommended. Activity nodes will concentrate commercial investment and become community focal points. Marginal and non-conforming businesses should be phased out as new development occurs along the corridor.

COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Additional retail and business services are proposed as part of the revitalization efforts along Marlboro Pike. Higher-end services focusing on health and wellness, arts, culture, and entertainment are proposed within certain priority areas. This will provide a larger variety of services for corridor residents and entice individuals outside the area to spend time along Marlboro Pike.

SAFETY

Improving safety corridorwide, as proposed in the strategies of this plan, will further unite and strengthen surrounding communities. Improved safety will be achieved by redeveloping areas that attract criminal activity, by revitalizing streetscapes to provide a safer and more attractive atmosphere, and by uniting community members, business owners, and the police department. Community members will advocate less tolerance and more collaborative efforts to reduce and deter crime.

2. TRANSPORTATION

The Marlboro Pike Corridor will become more accessible, with improved sidewalks, bicycle routes, transit connectivity, and vehicular safety.

TRANSIT

Transit services will better serve the surrounding communities. Bus stops will be accommodated with sidewalks, comfortable waiting areas, attractive shelters, and seating. Access to the larger Metro transit network will be provided with shuttle services running to the area's two closest Metro stations. The shuttle services would improve accessibility for local riders to points throughout the metropolitan area as well as for the regional population to reach destinations in the Marlboro Pike Corridor.

ROADS

Roadways will include traffic calming measures to control vehicle speeds, intersection improvements to reduce accident potential, consolidated driveways to reduce mid-block turning movements and pedestrian conflict

points, and medians to better control circulation patterns and provide pedestrian refuges in crosswalks. In addition, improved lighting, on-street parking, and a more attractive streetscape would enhance the overall character of the roadway and the experience of traveling through the corridor.

STREETSCAPE AESTHETICS

A visually appealing corridor is a cornerstone of revitalization efforts for Marlboro Pike. Aesthetic improvements will dramatically change the atmosphere. The corridor will be attractive and welcoming to leverage significant investment. Streetscaping elements will help visually unify the corridor. These elements include thematic landscaping with shade trees and ornamental plantings, wide and continuous sidewalks with appropriate street furnishings, and gateway features to welcome people into the community. Decorative features will be incorporated into the streetscape to help establish a visual theme, such as community banners, decorative light fixtures, hardscape patterns, and landscaping. An aesthetically-enhanced corridor reinforces the idea that this is a community-oriented and economically thriving area.

PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY

Continuous sidewalks will provide linkages and safe havens for the pedestrian along the corridor. Improved pedestrian mobility will also contribute to a reduction of vehicular trips. Given the opportunity to walk, fewer people will choose to drive to their destinations along the corridor. Pedestrian accessibility would also encourage people to park in one location and walk to their destinations, rather than drive to individual sites all along the corridor. Pedestrian activity plays a significant role in the revitalization effort and will help to capture a market base from nearby communities whose members might otherwise have driven elsewhere for their goods and services. Additionally, an increase in pedestrian activity will provide “eyes on the street” and informal surveillance that deters crime.

BICYCLE ACCESSIBILITY

Bicycling is currently an under-served mode of travel along Marlboro Pike. Bicycle connectivity offers opportunities for better mobility, recreation, and healthy lifestyles. As with increased pedestrian activity, bicycling can also reduce vehicle trips and traffic volumes, thereby helping to preserve the environment. Bicycling also offers a convenient mode of travel for school-aged

children and teens to get to school or social functions along Marlboro Pike. Bicycling should be encouraged with designated bike routes along Marlboro Pike, Pennsylvania Avenue, and connecting streets. Greenways through open space will also increase bicycle connectivity and recreational opportunities.

PARKING

On-street parking along Marlboro Pike is a means to use space more efficiently for parking and provide traffic calming and pedestrian buffers for safety. On-street parking encourages pedestrian activity where people can walk to several destinations along the corridor. Some parking lots can remain and some new development sites should include new parking lots, but these lots should be smaller and should not front directly onto Marlboro Pike. Smaller lots help to better manage stormwater runoff, and are perceived as safer and more comfortable for pedestrians. Some structured parking should also be used to help increase densities and reduce the overall footprint of development. Structured parking should include ground floor retail or office space to enhance the streetscape environment.

3. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment coexists with the communities of Marlboro Pike and serves as a positive amenity. The existing riparian greenways along Oxon Run and Ritchie Branch and around the Suitland Bog will remain undeveloped and protected, and the open space in Oakcrest Park will be preserved and enhanced. Smaller pockets of natural areas will remain, including smaller parks and undeveloped sensitive areas throughout the corridor. New development will be focused along Marlboro Pike with higher densities, and steered away from sensitive areas. Additionally, new development along the corridor will be constructed with green technologies where stormwater run-off is treated with best management practices and other low-impact development strategies are incorporated. These strategies include construction using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles and innovative stormwater management. Stormwater management should be in accordance with the Maryland Department of the Environment’s most recent standards utilizing low impact design that addresses both water quantity and quality at the site level and at a watershed level. Additional native landscaping and street trees should also be incorporated along the corridor to improve aesthetics, habitat, and microclimate.

4. PUBLIC FACILITIES

Strategies put forth in this plan seek to maintain and enhance existing public facilities, and ensure that they adequately service future development. Better connections to schools within the area through safer and continuous sidewalks are recommended. Enhancements and the establishment of partnerships are encouraged to increase community awareness of the services provided at the Spaulding Library. Promoting and enhancing parks and recreational facilities to encourage usage is also recommended. This includes developing the Oakcrest Community Park and providing trails in existing green spaces such as Oxon Run and Ritchie Branch. Ensuring that public safety services receive special attention throughout the area is also a recommendation in this plan.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Economic development strategies are formed to preserve and strengthen existing residential communities and focus commercial development into activity nodes along the corridor.

Priority area redevelopment or new development will contain higher-density land uses that will attract high-quality businesses, offices/services and residential development. Strategies for each priority area recommend specific programs that will best succeed in achieving development in each priority area. Corridorwide economic strategies have also been developed that will: generate interest for revitalization opportunities along the corridor; educate developers on financing options; guide revitalization efforts through appropriate zoning recommendations; and streamline the development plan review and approval process.

6. URBAN DESIGN

Design standards are developed that seek to visually tie the corridor together. These standards provide recommendations for each land use entity, including activity nodes, transition areas, and neighborhood areas. Overall they emphasize pedestrian accessibility and comfort with good connectivity and human-scale features. Buildings will be oriented toward the sidewalk to encourage pedestrian activity and interaction, which also promotes safety and security. Design details will include features that appeal to those walking through the site, such as accessible shops and restaurants, transparent store fronts, street furniture, decorative pavement, landscaping,

lighting, and screening of obtrusive views. Attractive and usable pedestrian gathering spaces will be incorporated throughout to add to the overall character and function of the area. Buildings will be between two and six stories, and will include architectural detailing to add visual interest. Street level buildings will have a high-level of transparency to visually connect the indoors with the outdoors as much as possible. Vertical mixed use is established, with ground floor retail and office or residential space above. In some cases retail can be multiple stories. In all, development throughout the sector plan area will be attractive and cohesively designed with the pedestrian in mind.

7. QUALITY OF LIFE

A high quality of life is envisioned for everyone who will live, work, shop, and recreate along Marlboro Pike. Public safety has been noted by community members as a key issue and is an important theme in all of the recommendations proposed in this plan. An important strategy to improve public safety is to create active centers where people congregate. This promotes community interaction and a greater sense of community identity. These centers will be attractive, busy places that satisfy the needs of the local community.

These areas should use “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” (CPTED) strategies to create attractive and safe communities where illegitimate behavior is not tolerated. CPTED strategies utilize physical design methods to make criminal behavior seem too risky by improving visibility, impeding escape routes, and evoking a sense of territory and ownership. If incorporated in a design in the forefront of the planning process, these strategies can be made compatible and seamless with the overall site development pattern.

Cultural activities such as recreation sites, educational facilities, and entertainment venues will further enhance these centers. The Marlboro Pike Corridor includes a variety of public and private services for area residents, including recreational centers, parks, open space, and sport activities. These areas are highlighted and targeted for enhancements, and additional areas are proposed.

A sense of community and place making is also dependent on historic preservation. Historic structures provide a sense of how past times evolved into what is here today and are an important component of establishing and maintaining a sense of place. Historic structures and development patterns are to be preserved for future generations to appreciate.

Health care and wellness services are also important components of a high quality of life. Access to preventive and diagnostic services as well as opportunities for active, healthy lifestyles help to maintain longevity. This plan promotes health and wellness by targeting opportunities for medical services and by providing resources for outdoor activities.