

# REISTERSTOWN PLAZA STATION

## Station Area Concept

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Transit-Oriented  
Development (TOD)  
Design Guidelines





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View of Station context.





# Introduction

## USING THIS DOCUMENT

This Station area concept applies the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) TOD Design Guidelines to a specific Station in the MDOT MTA system, providing an example of what transit-oriented development (TOD) could look like in the Station area. This concept is not prescriptive, and can be used in discussions with local jurisdictions, developers, and community members to work towards a shared vision for TOD. MDOT MTA has not allocated any funding for this concept, and in some cases concepts may not be consistent with existing local zoning.

## STATION CONTEXT

Located in Northwest Baltimore with easy access to downtown, the Reisterstown Plaza Metro SubwayLink Station (hereafter referred to simply as “Station”) has the potential to support mixed-used development that encourages walking and the use of public transit.

The Station area examined in this concept includes all lands within one half-mile radius from the Station. The Station area can be classified as a “Town, Suburban, or Employment Center” placetype as described in the TOD Design Guidelines.

Existing development includes a mix of single-family and multifamily residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. According to the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA), the Station is located within the Howard Park/West Arlington Community Statistical Area, which has roughly 70% owner occupancy rate and under 3% vacancy of residential property. Key commercial assets within the one half mile radius of the Station include the Reisterstown Road Plaza Shopping Center, the Patterson Village Shopping Center, Seton Business Park, and the Northwest Plaza Shopping Center. As shown at right, Seton Business Park contains an important branch of the Social Security Administration, which opened in 2014. The business park also contains the Wabash District Court for Baltimore City.

Located between Seton Business Park and Reisterstown Road Plaza, the Station is ideally situated to support mixed-use development that encourages walking and the use of public transit, and maximizes connections to local destinations and other surrounding assets.

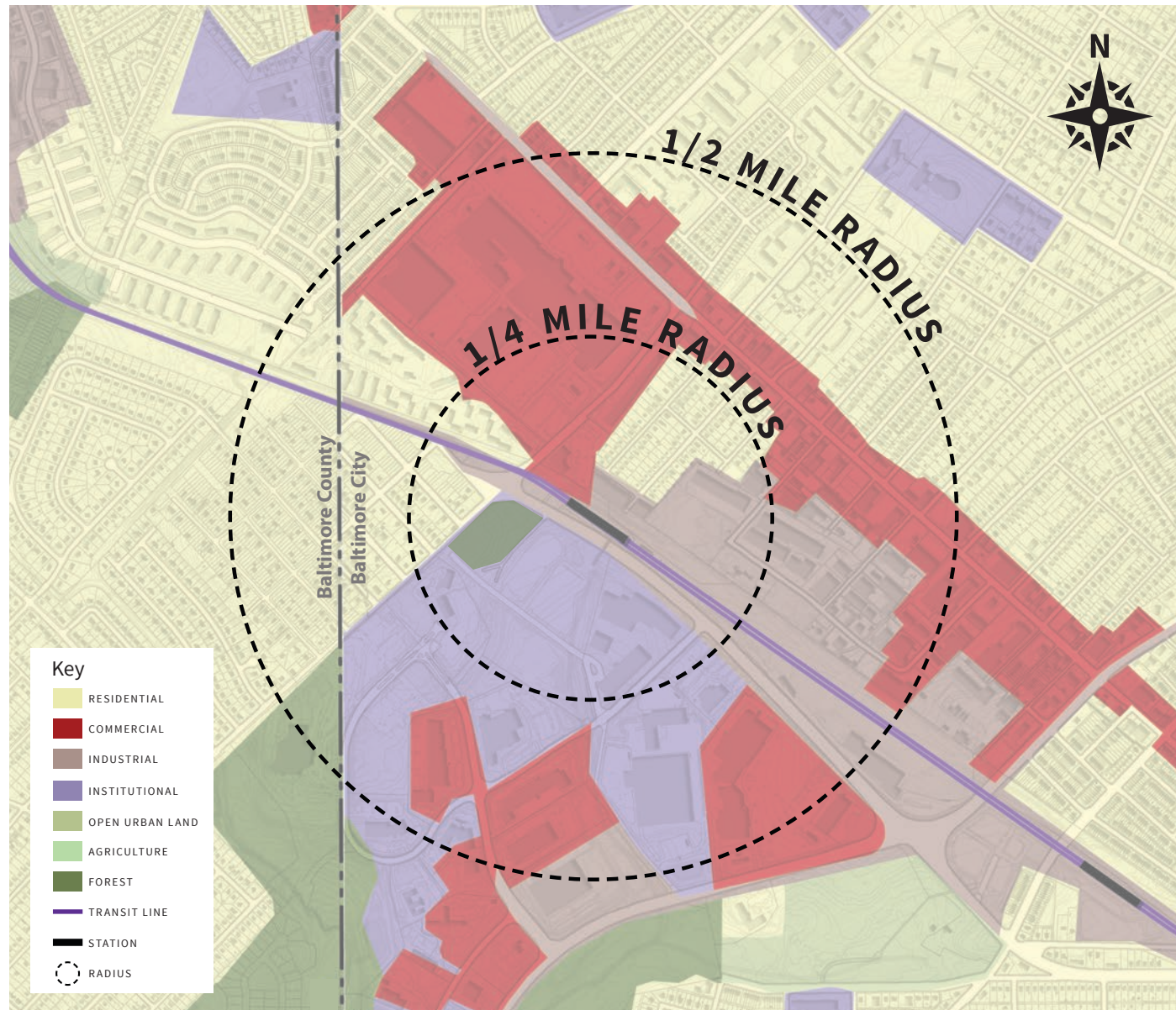


*View of the bus loop and pedestrian bridge entrance to the Station.*  
Design Collective



*View of the recently-completed Social Security Administration building near the Station.*  
Design Collective

## Analysis



Map of existing conditions.



## **TRANSIT STATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Metro SubwayLink line offers frequent service from Owings Mills in Baltimore County to Johns Hopkins Hospital, including stops at Reisterstown Plaza and Downtown Baltimore.

An existing bus loop on the parking lot south of Wabash Avenue provides spaces for a bus stop, layover for up to two buses, and pickup and dropoff of MobilityLink and rideshare services.

The existing bus stop is served by the LocalLink 82, which connects to destinations in northwest Baltimore City with approximately 30-minute frequencies.

LocalLinks 83 and 89 run on Reisterstown Road nearby, offering direct service to various commercial points of interest along the Reisterstown Road corridor.

## **NETWORK CONNECTIVITY**

The Station area is accessed from Reisterstown Road, Northern Parkway, Wabash Avenue, and Patterson Avenue.

Patterson Avenue is the only connection within the Station area that crosses the CSX freight tracks at grade.

Residential neighborhood streets are generally laid out in a regularized, walkable grid pattern, while the adjacent commercial blocks provide limited connectivity due to their reliance on large, irregular superblocks.

## **PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

There is a small plaza at the southern entry of the pedestrian bridge, centrally located to the Station, bus loop, dropoff area, and walkway to the Social Security Administration.

A small tributary to the Gwynns Falls runs through half of the Station area, daylighting near the Station's pedestrian bridge. This tributary requires a 50-foot stream buffer from development.

## **LAND USES**

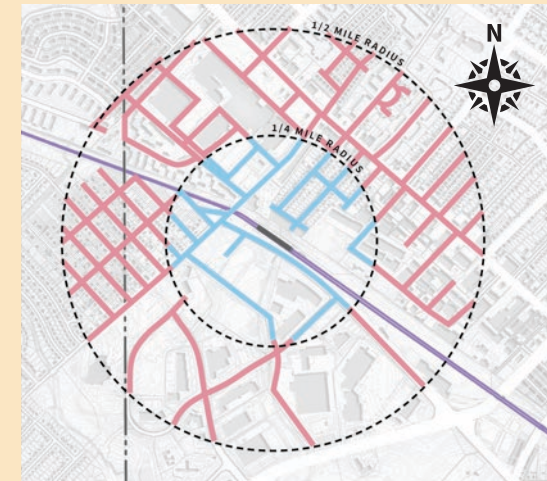
The area south of the Station is primarily occupied by Seton Business Park. North of the Station, Reisterstown Road acts as a commercial corridor with strip retail and a large shopping center. Most of the single-family neighborhoods are located west and north of the Station, with multifamily buildings mixed into the neighborhoods north of the CSX tracks.

## **PARKING FOR ALL MODES**

Metro SubwayLink commuters have access to nearly 700 parking spaces in two large, conjoined parking lots south of Wabash Avenue. The average utilization of these spaces is under 50 percent according to 2016 MDOT MTA data. Bike parking for the Station is located north of Wabash Avenue under the Station structure.

## **WAYFINDING**

Apart from the neighborhood map included on the Station pylon in the plaza, area wayfinding generally includes static directional signage directed towards motorists.

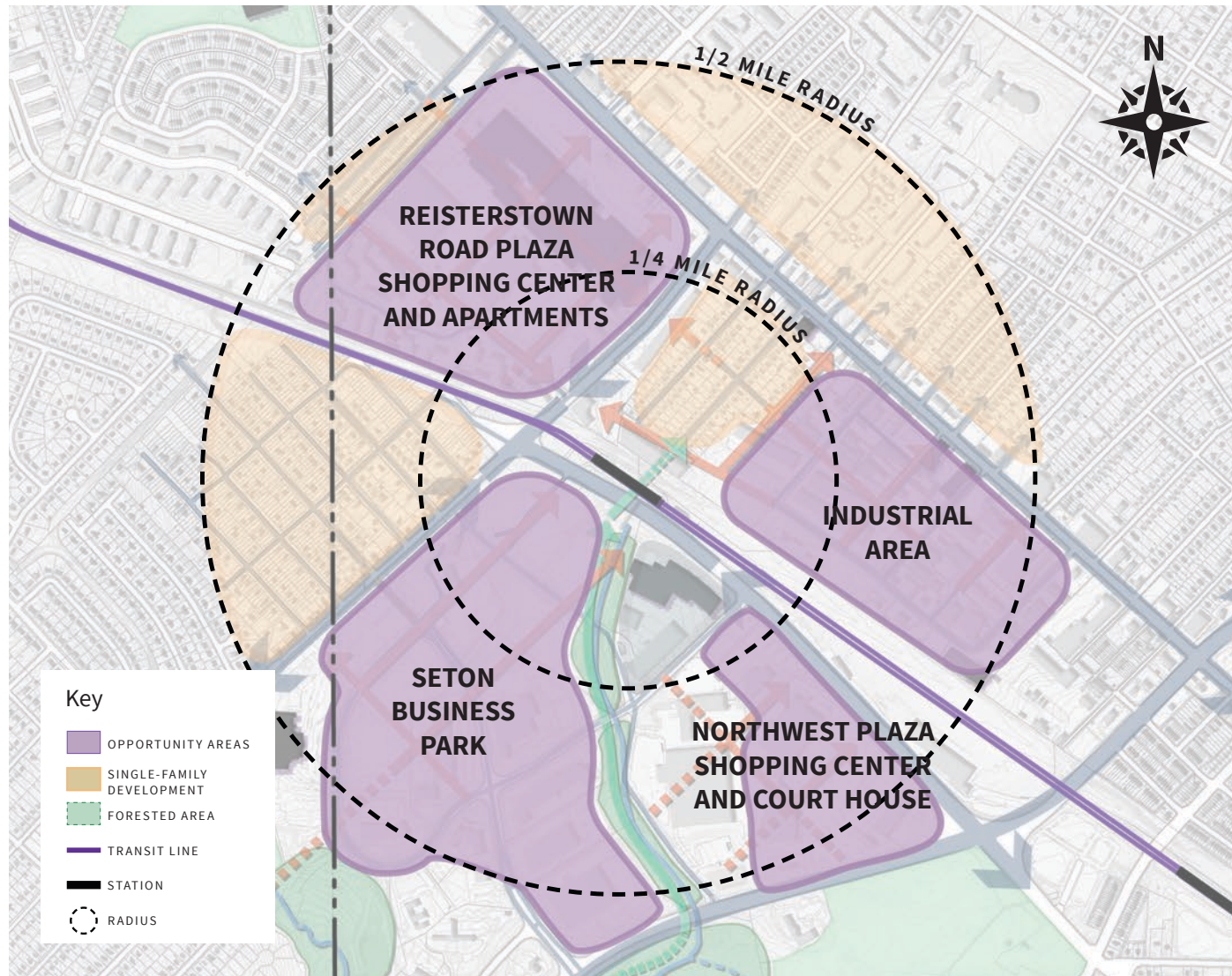


*Street network within the Station area: blue lines are streets within a 1/4 mile radius and red lines are streets within a 1/2 mile radius.*



*The highway-like nature of Wabash Avenue is an impediment to pedestrians, though the bridge from the Station over the street helps.*

# **Concept**



This plan view of the Station area concept depicts opportunity areas. Four development areas were identified from the preceding analysis: portions of Seton Business Park, Reisterstown Road Plaza Shopping Center, the industrial area south of Reisterstown Road, and Northwest Plaza Shopping Center.



## **CONCEPT OBJECTIVES**

Applying the MDOT MTA TOD Design Guidelines, this Station area concept seeks to improve the surrounding community's connection to the Station by encouraging mixed-use development and by creating a multi-modal destination.

Development of the Station area represents an opportunity to transform large surface parking lots into a dynamic mixed-use development adjacent to the Station, in which the Station maximizes the use of transit, walking, and bicycling.

MDOT MTA's general objectives to create a lively, walkable transit-oriented development include:

- To strengthen the connections between the Reisterstown Road corridor and surrounding neighborhoods to the Metro SubwayLink Station
- To complement and strengthen existing assets such as the existing single-family houses in the area, the Social Security Administration, Powder Mill Park, and the Reisterstown Road commercial corridor
- To reinforce and expand an urban street grid
- To reinforce and expand pedestrian connections to the transit network
- To create mixed-use nodes with a diversity of places and activities
- To establish an open space network

As shown on page 5, the Station area concept's four opportunity areas consist of the following amenities and assets:

### **SETON BUSINESS PARK**

This business park consists of approximately 140 acres of office, institutional, and light industrial uses. While some streets in the business park contain sidewalks, the circuitous, disconnected layout of the business park's street network discourages pedestrians and bicyclists. As a result, the LocalLink 82 bus route provides basic access throughout the business park (see page 4 for details).

Current tenants in the business park include the New Psalmist Baptist Church, The Arc of Baltimore, Lockheed Martin, the US Food and Drug Administration, the Maryland Parole and Probation Office, the American Red Cross, HASA, PB Health, the Baltimore Teachers Union, FutureCare Lochearn, the NAACP, Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, EBA Engineering, Chimes, Advanced Packaging, Advanced Defense Technologies, LifeBridge Health, Comcast, and many other smaller tenants in shared office and industrial buildings.

### **REISTERSTOWN ROAD PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER**

This shopping center consists of approximately 60 acres of mixed shopping and institutional uses. While it formerly functioned as a shopping mall, in recent decades Reisterstown Road Plaza has been rebuilt and renovated to function as a conventional shopping center, albeit one anchored by various state offices and services

such that this shopping center is much more of a community focal point than typical shopping centers.

Retail tenants in the shopping center include Home Depot, Big Lots, Planet Fitness, Shoppers World, Five Below, Giant Food, Petco, Modell's, and many other smaller retail stores and fast-food restaurants.

Institutional tenants in the shopping center include a branch of Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) and offices for the Maryland Division of Vital Records, Juvenile Justice, and Health Care Commission. Several healthcare providers and clinics are also present, such as the Injury Treatment Center of Maryland.

The sole light industrial use on the parcel is the Mid-Atlantic Store Fixtures warehouse.

### **NORTHWEST PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER**

Sometimes considered part of the broader Seton Business Park, the Northwest Plaza Shopping Center is approximately 25 acres and functions as the immediate area's secondary shopping destination after Reisterstown Road Plaza. Retail tenants include Roses, Harvest Fare, Dollar Tree, Rainbow, Rite Aid, Advance Auto Parts, and many other smaller retail stores and fast-food restaurants.

### **INDUSTRIAL AREA**

This industrial area of approximately 80 acres is sandwiched between Reisterstown Road and the CSX tracks, and is home to warehouses, manufacturers, auto body shops, and a branch of the Baltimore City Social Services Department.

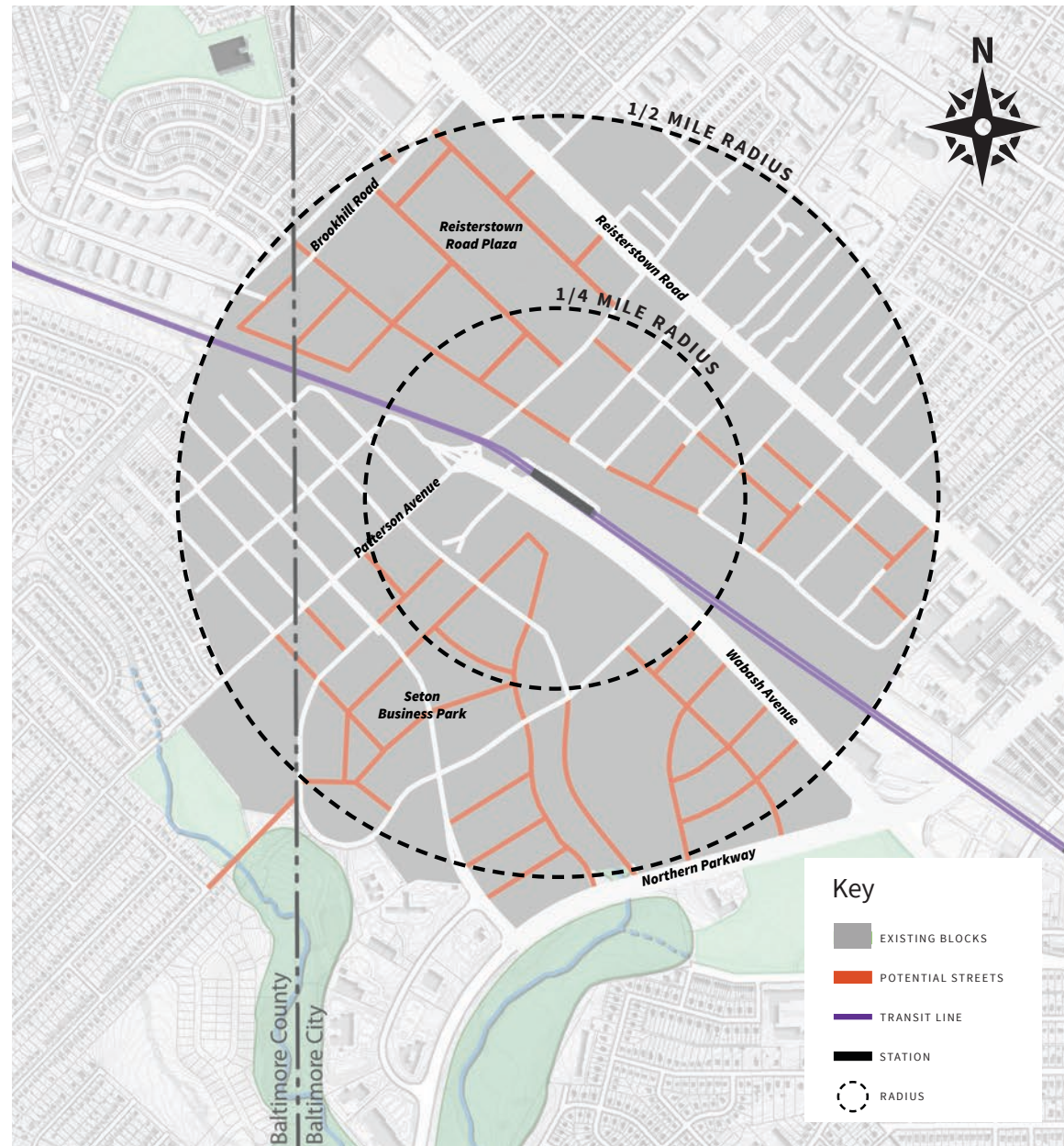
## POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS

A successful street network in the Station area could promote multi-modal accessibility through more appropriately scaled blocks with safe crossings at intersections. The street network could be comprised of commercial and neighborhood streets that create a more urban, walkable environment.

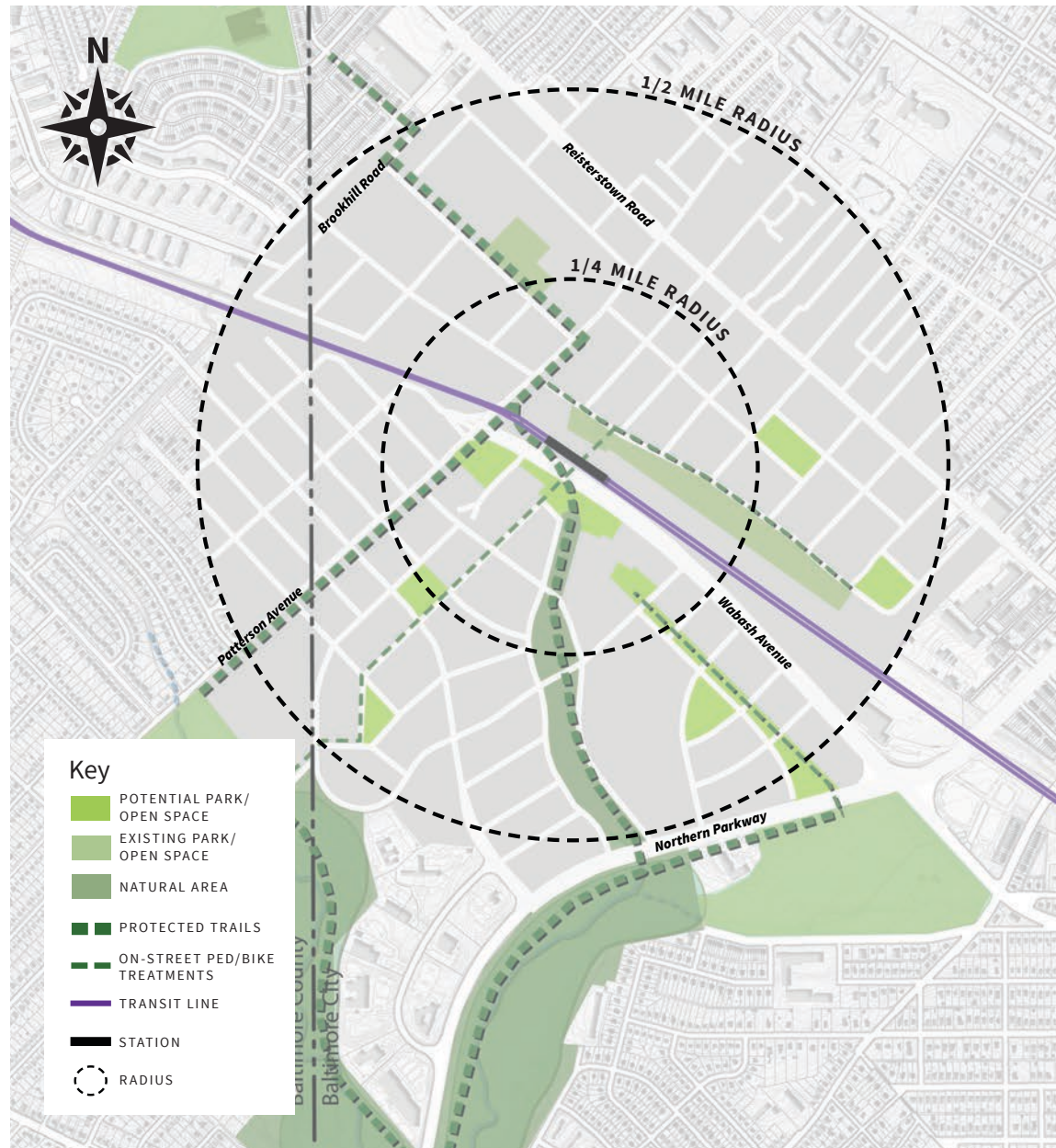
Commercial streets could include wide sidewalks with curb-to-building widths between 15 to 25 feet; minimal building setbacks; and tree pits and/or planters lining the street edge to provide shade, stormwater management, and a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.

Neighborhood streets in could be characterized by building setbacks that allowing for front yards; sidewalks with a minimum width of 5 feet; and tree planting strips lining the street edge to provide a continuous buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.

- Establish a connected street grid through Reisterstown Road Plaza and Seton Business Park, working around existing buildings as necessary.
- Redesign Wabash Avenue to reduce lane widths, improve pedestrian safety along and across the street, and allow development to occur closer to the street and Station.
- Improve the intersection of Patterson Avenue and Vertis Park Drive as well as the at-grade CSX crossing to create safer pedestrian and bicycle connections.







## REGIONAL TRAILS

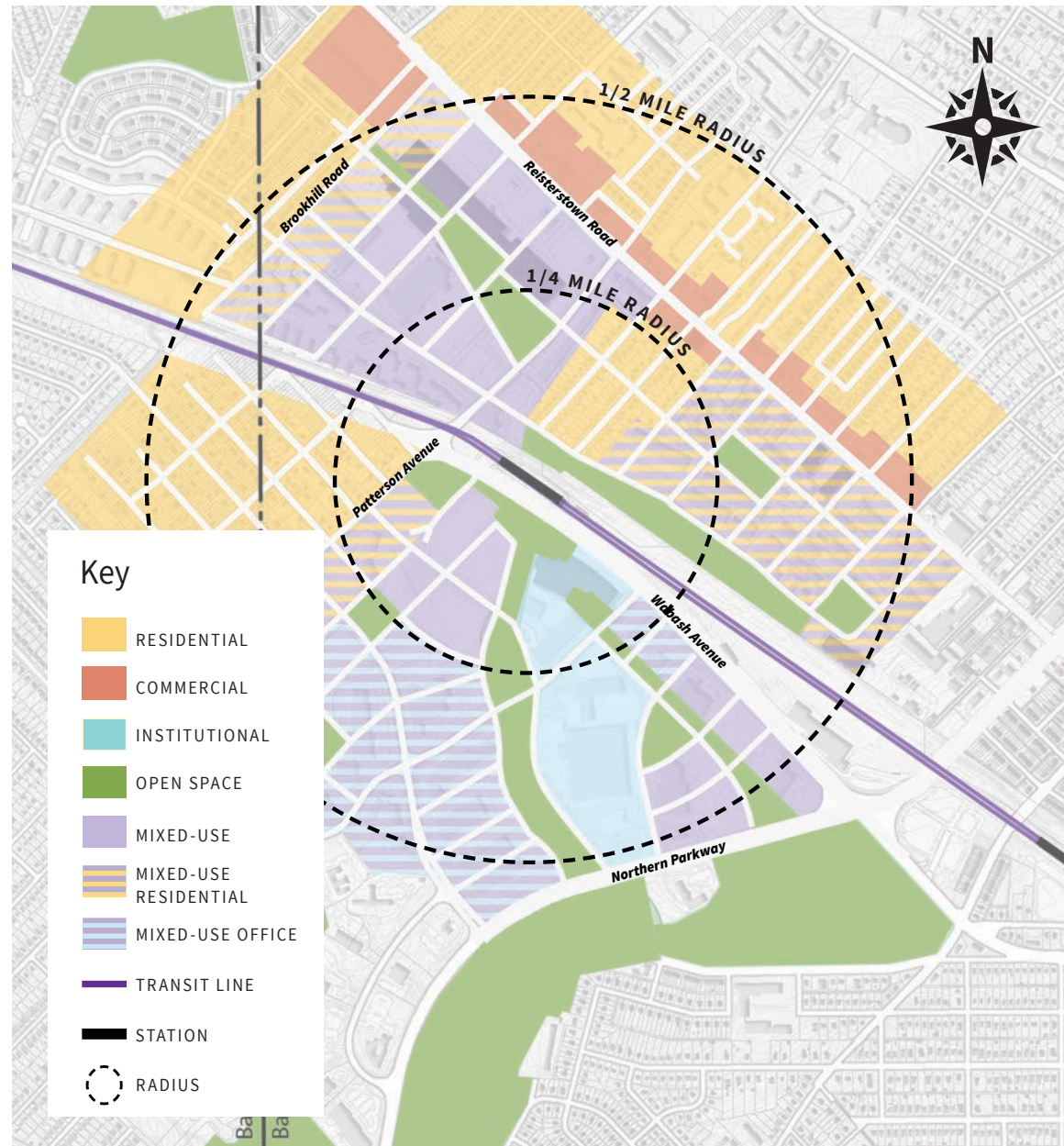
A successful open space network could incorporate various types of open spaces including plazas, squares, greens, greenways, and trails. Greenways and trails could be used to link the Station to local assets and natural amenities outside the half-mile radius. More specifically, ample casual connections to Powder Mill Park should be provided.

- Provide improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities on Patterson Avenue in order to connect to the nearby Powder Mill Run Park.
- Introduce a bicycle and pedestrian trail adjacent to Northern Parkway that connects to a trail along Powder Mill Stream.
- Create an open space adjacent to the Station that is highly programmable for use by the surrounding community.

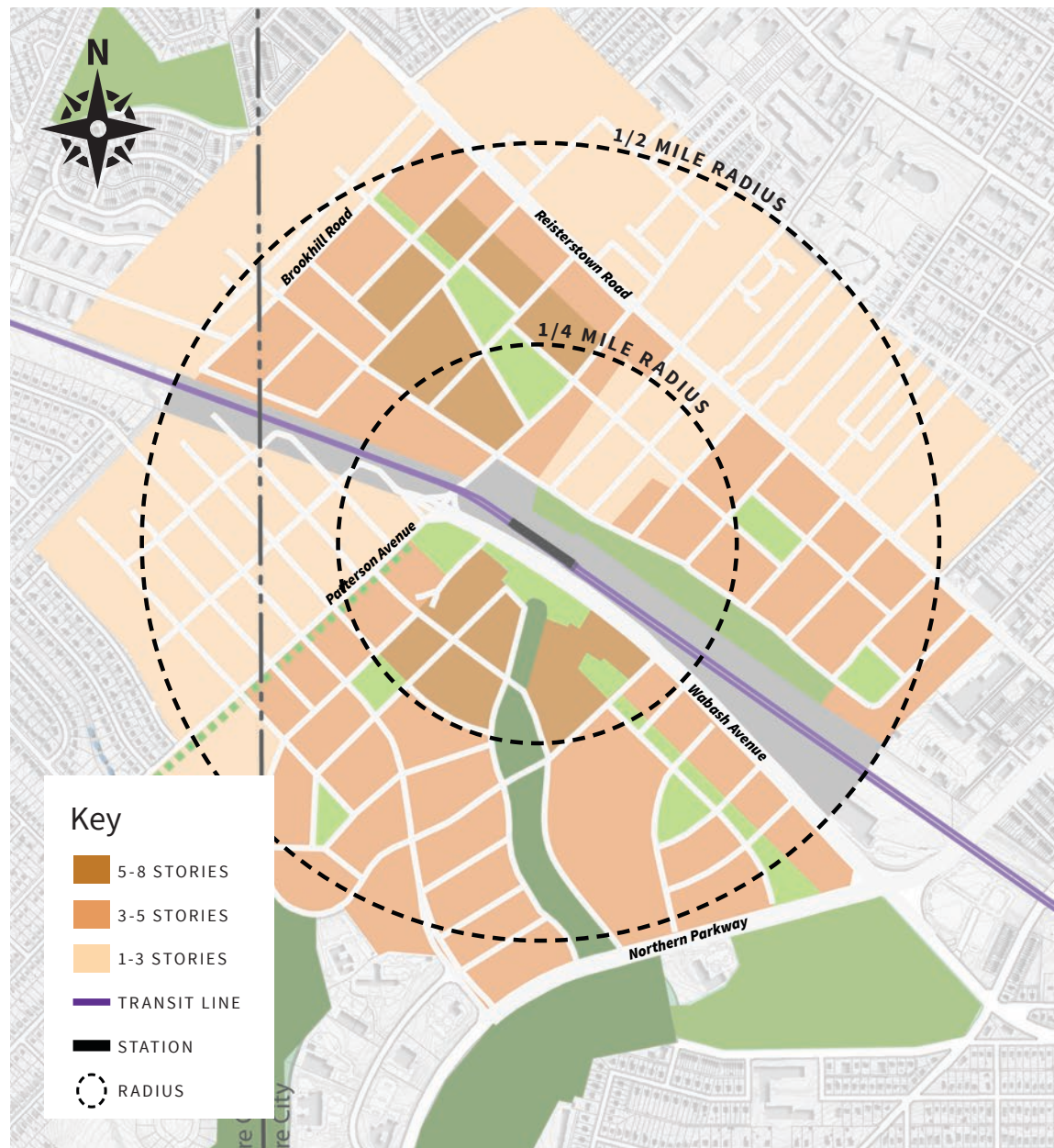
## LAND USE MIX

The primary goal for the Station area is to connect nearby residential and commercial areas in a way that transforms the auto-oriented environment into a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use node that offers affordability and accessibility while taking advantage of the proximity to regional transit options. Development that includes affordable homes and homes accessible to persons with disabilities makes sure there is a place near transit for those who need transit most.

- Designate the Reisterstown Road Plaza Shopping Center, the Northwest Plaza Shopping Center, and the surface parking lots south of the Station as mixed-use. Uses that could be developed on these parcels include residential, retail, office, institutional, hotel, civic, open space, and recreation.
- Target the industrial properties along Reisterstown Road and adjacent to Patterson Avenue and Brookhill Road as “Mixed-Use Predominately Residential.” Some uses that could be developed on these parcels include residential, retail, civic, open space, and recreation.
- Designate the remaining Seton Business Park properties as “Mixed-Use Predominately Office.” Some uses that could be developed on these parcels include office, institutional, retail, and civic.







## PROGRAM AND MASSING OPTIONS

Existing building heights within the Station area are typically 1 to 3 stories, with the exception of the Social Security Administration building at 7 stories.

Development sites between the quarter-mile and half-mile radius should be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhoods, which are typically 1 and 2 stories.

The potential building heights suggest a consistent, high-quality built environment that respects the context of the surrounding development while maximizing the development potential of sites near transit.

- Near the Station, buildings are at least 4 stories in height, but no greater than 8 stories. Pavilions (open air or enclosed) and civic buildings could be exempt from this recommendation.
- Height transitions allow buildings to minimize their impact on the public realm and ensure appropriate massing of new development adjacent to neighboring communities.

**State-  
Owned  
Development  
Site**



Contrary to previous diagrams and maps, this plan view of the Station area concept zooms in to focus only on the state-owned development site to show how the area around the station could be broken into smaller blocks. The numbers on the plan correspond to the objectives described on the facing page.



The state-owned development site to the immediate southwest of the Station is 25.6 acres and presents an opportunity for transit-oriented development. Any such development should accomplish the following objectives to the maximum extent possible:

### **TRANSIT STATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**1A:** Provide a bus loop and layover location adjacent to the Station that accommodates three buses.

**1B:** Introduce new bus stops throughout the site with amenities including, but not limited to, bus shelters, real-time information signs, and ticket vending machines. The spacing of new bus stops should be guided by the criteria in MDOT MTA's *Bus Stop Design Guide*.

**1C:** Create a signalized median break that allows vehicles and pedestrians to cross Wabash Avenue and for southbound buses on Wabash Avenue to access the Station.

### **NETWORK CONNECTIVITY**

**2A:** Provide a new pedestrian and bike connection from Vertis Park Drive to Metro Drive.

**2B:** Provide direct, ADA-compliant access from the site to the Station. Options include a new elevator(s) on the west side of the existing pedestrian bridge and/or a signalized crossing of Wabash Avenue.

**2C:** Provide an improved pedestrian connection from the Station (e.g. bridge and at-grade) to safely cross the CSX tracks north of the site to facilitate access to businesses and retail amenities closer to Patterson Avenue leading to the Reisterstown Road commercial corridor.

**2D:** Provide safe pedestrian crossings at key intersections and access points to the development site.

### **PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

**3A:** Retain a plaza at the entrance to the pedestrian bridge.

**3B:** Retain the original site entrance and 23 specimen trees where possible.

**3C:** Introduce a riparian buffer in the form of a tree line along Powder Mill Stream, and prohibit construction within 50 feet from the top of the stream's banks.

**3D:** Incorporate a protected bicycle and pedestrian trail along Powder Mill Stream that allows for future connection to regional trails.

### **LAND USES**

**4A:** Include a relatively dense mixture of uses that will increase transit ridership and facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access.

**4B:** Incorporate housing options that promote access to opportunity for low-income populations.

**4C:** Land uses should be pedestrian-oriented: new buildings should front onto streets and sidewalks for easy pedestrian accessibility, and "blank walls" and service infrastructure should be relegated to alleys and service lanes.

**4D:** Ensure that a portion of any new housing, as well as all streets and sidewalks, are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

### **PARKING FOR ALL MODES**

**5A:** Incorporate bike parking on the west end of the pedestrian walkway and additional bike parking areas or "mobility corrals" throughout the site.

**5B:** Dedicate parking spaces to, but not limited to, car-sharing services, electric vehicle charging stations, and carpooling.

**5C:** Retain at least 425 parking spaces for MDOT MTA commuters.

### **WAYFINDING**

**6A:** Upgrade Station amenities and services including, but not limited to, upgraded lighting, wayfinding, and real-time information signs.

**6B:** Include wayfinding signage designed for pedestrians throughout the site.

**6C:** Introduce real-time information signs inside buildings.





**MARYLAND TRANSIT  
ADMINISTRATION**

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