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Elkton, MD Transit Oriented Development Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, along the nearly 460 miles of commuter rail lines between Richmond, Virginia and New London, Connecticut, there is one major gap: the 20 miles between Perryville, MD and Newark, DE. WILMAPCO, the regional transportation planning agency for Cecil County, has completed two feasibility studies which confirmed the need for rail service across Cecil County. The WILMAPCO Council passed a resolution in January 2006 urging the State of Maryland to pursue commuter rail service to Elkton. The MTA MARC Growth & Investment Plan recommends completion of a new Elkton Station by 2015 to allow for extension of commuter rail in Cecil County.

Rail service is a critical component of Elkton's plans to further economic development and provide greater travel choices to this rapidly growing area. Currently, bus transit services exist in Elkton which could also serve this area and create connections with the proposed rail station: DART Route 65 provides weekday service between Elkton and Newark, DE and travels past the Amtrak Station on Bow Street; Cecil County Transit operates "THE BUS" within a block of the station area with service to Perryville and Glasgow. An intermodal transportation center, around the site of the Amtrak station on Bow Street in the Elkton Central Business District (CBD) would serve as a civic, commercial and institutional activity center and must be accessible via all modes of transportation, including bicycling, walking, and bus transit. Proper design of related facilities is needed to:

- Enhance community character in downtown Elkton
- Enhance regional accessibility, connectivity, and mobility
- Support Maryland Smart Growth policies
- Help improve regional ambient air quality through the reduction of vehicle travel and traffic congestion in downtown Elkton

SKILLS REQUIRED

The study team is requesting consultant qualifications to provide the leadership and technical assistance to develop a Transit Oriented Development Plan for Elkton, MD. Consultants must have extensive successful experience in land use master planning, zoning and urban design. Competency and experience in the following areas is necessary:

- Successful completion of similar transit oriented development planning work
- Innovative zoning and development regulations to achieve the adopted strategies
- Understanding of transportation planning and impact analysis

- Understanding of principles of urban design, as applied to historic communities
- Demonstrated ability to build consensus and to develop detailed plan implementation strategies

SCOPE OF WORK

Identify Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

This project seeks to contribute to the revitalization of the traditional and historic community of Elkton with the improvement of the community's Train Station. Elkton's compact mix of housing, businesses and institutions offers a unique opportunity to bring together all the characteristics that comprise a Transit-Oriented community. The potential sale and redevelopment of the Elk Lanes bowling alley site also offers opportunity to support TOD at an Elkton train station. Improved, convenient access by transit, walking and bicycling is essential, as is preparing for vehicular access needs and parking. Implementation of a train station improvement plan will strengthen Elkton's identity and focus attention on its function as a transit-oriented community.

Prepare Master Vision Plan

The feasibility study should result in a concept plan for an Elkton Train Station near or at the historic station site. The plan should include all necessary roadway improvements, upgraded pedestrian, bicycle and bus amenities, expanded automobile parking areas and new rail facilities. The landscaping component should also include the addition of station art. The plan should address the potential for Transit-Oriented Development at and around the selected train station site.

Develop Traffic Circulation, Transit Access and Parking Plan

The station also has the potential to serve as a transit hub for existing bus transit service. An internal circulation plan should be included that will limit automobile and bus interaction. The bus travel path should be designed to limit exposure to automobile parking areas. A parking plan which adds structured parking would have to consider a parking fee and the effect this may have on projected ridership.

Develop Transit Supportive Land Use Recommendations

The plan will include development scenarios for the station area to support the planned train station. The current inventory of infrastructure and land use will be assessed to determine how it supports a TOD development project. Land use recommendations should consider market demand for retail and higher-density housing and employment. Analysis should examine impacts of existing zoning such as lot coverage, setbacks and height limits which may make transit supportive land use difficult to achieve and recommend new land use policy as required. Land use recommendations should promote the location of key services near the planned station to accommodate transit users.

Implementation Policies

The plan should include recommendations for implementation priorities, estimated cost, potential funding partnerships and project phasing. Ridership estimates should be developed using and/or amending projections from previous studies based upon the planned station and land use recommendations. Updated demographics projections, including the anticipated impact of BRAC will be part of the analysis.

Public Participation

Work will include educating the community and seeking participation through community meetings, workshops, project web site, and media coverage. Partners will include:

Planning Team
WILMAPCO






Project Partners
Elkton Alliance



Town of Elkton	Cecil College
Cecil County Planning and Zoning	Union Hospital
Cecil County Community Transit	TMA Delaware
Cecil County Economic Development	Elkton Commissioners
Maryland Department of Transportation	Cecil Commissioners
Maryland Transit Administration	MD General Assembly
Delaware Transit Corporation	Other interested stakeholders

These partners are needed to develop a quality plan. They include the agencies needed to implement the Plan, those affected in the community, and local leadership.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

TASK	MONTH							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Refine scope of work								
Evaluate Existing Site								
Identify Issues, Opportunities and Constraints								
Prepare Master Vision Plan								
Develop Traffic Circulation, Access and Parking Plan								
Develop Transit Supportive Land Use Recommendations								
Implementation Policies								

 Public Workshop

FUNDING

This project will be funded from WILMAPCO’s FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), available at www.wilmapco.org/UPWP/UPWP_index.htm. Work will be managed by WILMAPCO with consultant assistance and support from the planning team. WILMAPCO will lead project management and public outreach activities. Consultant(s) services will be used for the development recommendations with guidance from the planning team and input from project partners.

Consultant deliverables include:

- Draft report in MS Word.
- 3-4 display boards for presentation purposes. Display will also be made available in PDF format.
- Attendance at 4-5 meetings in Elkton area to discuss project and assist in public outreach element.
- 3-4 renderings of recommended station and surrounding TOD draft reports as identified in the project schedule
- Final report produced as an MS Word document. Report should be concise and have the ability to serve as an aid in marketing implementation of the Plan.