

Central US 1 Corridor Sector Plan

College Park, MD

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area:	3.5 mile corridor 3,911 acres
Client:	The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Year Produced:	2008
Website:	mncppc.org/cpd/Central_US1/

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



Existing conditions in Downtown, shown above, include unappealing surface parking lots with wide curb cuts that interrupt the sidewalk. In the proposed evolution of Downtown, depicted on the top right, a parking garage lined with storefronts and offices and other infill buildings physically define the street.



In the Hollywood Commercial District, one- and two-story commercial uses set back far from the street and vast expanses of parking characterize the existing conditions.



The evolution of Hollywood Commercial District includes street-oriented, multi-story structures, appropriately scaled in relation to neighboring homes.



The Project

During most of its history, US 1 in College Park felt like a rural highway, passing through farmland, natural areas, and streetcar neighborhoods. In the 1950s, the character of US 1 changed dramatically when the land on either side was zoned for commercial, auto-oriented development. Since this change in zoning, fast-food restaurants, strip shopping centers, and car dealerships have sprung up along the length of the corridor, creating unanticipated levels of traffic congestion and degrading the character of College Park's main thoroughfare. Recent efforts to improve the character and transportation opportunities along US 1 through a Mixed-Use-Infill (MUI) Zone have failed to achieve the results desired by the community. The higher densities permitted under this zoning overlay have further strained the traffic load on US 1, while providing no incentive for transit-served, pedestrian-oriented development. The Central US 1 Corridor Sector Plan is both a physical plan to guide appropriate growth and development and a policy document to serve as a blueprint for action for elected officials, planning staff, residents, and investors. Dover, Kohl & Partners worked with Cunningham Quill Architects, Ronnie McGhee Associates, Hall Planning & Engineering, Bolan Smart Associates, and UrbanAdvantage to create this plan.

Process

Direct community input shaped the ideas and recommendations found in the Central US 1 Corridor Sector Plan. The project began with a Kick-Off Community Workshop in September 2008. Over the following two months, meetings were held between the planning team, Prince George's County council members, M-NCPCC staff, the Mayor and City Council of College Park, City staff, and transportation agencies working on the corridor. Following those initial meetings, the design team conducted a five-day open planning process in December 2008, combining hands-on community brainstorming with "designing in public." More than 200 residents and stakeholders participated.

Planning Foundations

The community identified six Planning Foundations at the onset of the design process. The first of these was to develop US 1 as a series of higher-intensity, walkable districts; the Plan was also to be fully integrated into any plan for multimodal transportation. A priority for citizens was to bring back neighborhood-oriented commerce, local agriculture, and architecture that respects community character. Creating sustainable urbanism was also paramount, with guidelines for using green-building principles, protecting natural resources and access to parks, improving water quality, and reducing energy consumption through sustainable infrastructure. Reform of the development process was called for, as was improved coordination among government agencies and with the University of Maryland.

Status

The Central US 1 Corridor Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment was approved by the Prince George's County Planning Board in December 2009, and is awaiting consideration by the County Council in January 2010.

Walkable Centers Connect the Corridor

The **Illustrative Master Plan** for the Central US 1 Corridor identifies key areas for future growth. These include Uptown, Autoville and Cherry Hill Road, Hollywood, Upper Midtown, Lower Midtown, University View, the University of Maryland, and Downtown College Park. To ensure that each of these areas combines to form a cohesive vision for the complete growth of College Park, transit-ready, walkable centers are designed at the heart of these neighborhoods.

This new configuration connects higher-intensity developments with lower-intensity parkway and boulevard sections through a balanced transportation network and a variety of tailored street designs. Walkable centers, spaced at about a half mile apart along the corridor, concentrate pedestrians and form excellent transit stops for a trolley, electric bus, or shuttle system. In between these centers, transit is able to move more rapidly, as development will be less intense and the corridor will take on a more rural, parkway character.

To create a natural variety along the length of the corridor, travel lanes within the walkable centers are designed to be narrow (10') with on-street parking and wide sidewalks located between street-fronting buildings and parallel parking spaces.

In contrast, those portions of US 1 that extend between two walkable centers have a more rural design. Travel lanes can be of a more conventional width (11'-12'), with no on-street parking and more organic landscaping that separates a wide shared-use path from the travel lanes.



The existing conditions on US 1 in Upper Midtown do not encourage walking or biking.



This illustration depicts how US 1 in Upper Midtown can develop over time as a walkable center served by transit.

