



**2024 RAISE Grant Application**

# **Opportunities for Access and Connectivity at Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station**

**Merit Criteria**



# 1. Merit Criteria Narrative

## 1.1 Safety

### 1.1.1 Protecting Nonmotorized Travelers from Safety Risks

The **Opportunities for Access and Connectivity at Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station** project (project) reimagines the vehicular and pedestrian transportation infrastructure adjacent to the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station (Station) to facilitate safe access to transit for travelers of all modes.

Currently, six-lane Wabash Avenue runs along the southwest side of the Station between an MTA Park and Ride lot and the Station entrance, which presents a safety barrier to transit service, and a barrier to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, pedestrian access, and micromobility access. Since 2019, there have been three pedestrian injuries and one cyclist injury on Wabash Avenue, concentrated around the Station. Originally designed to connect to the interchange of Interstate (I-) 795 and I-695, this section of Wabash Avenue is overbuilt for automobiles given the relatively low vehicular traffic volumes observed. The annual average daily traffic (AADT) on Wabash Avenue is 12,863, according to a traffic count database that the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) maintains. The highway-oriented design of the road, lacking sidewalks and crosswalks, is problematic for wheelchair users attempting to access transit and paratransit services. The existing pedestrian bridge that connects the Park and Ride lot and bus stops to the Station entrance is not wheelchair accessible, because it is accessed only by escalators.

By reimagining Wabash Avenue as a complete street that will prioritize pedestrian crossing and traffic calming improvements, the Project seeks to redesign Wabash Avenue to encourage lower vehicle speeds, reducing the crash risk and stress for all roadway users, especially the most vulnerable. The Project will reimagine Wabash Avenue, in accordance with Baltimore City’s [Complete Streets Manual](#), as an *Urban Center Connector*, positioned to accommodate traffic at low speeds (25 to 35 miles per hour) while providing safe and comfortable walking and cycling routes. The complete streets transformation is a vital link between the future mobility hub at Reisterstown Plaza and the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Before and After Conditions on Wabash Avenue**



Additionally, Patterson Avenue will be evaluated for lane reductions between Wabash Avenue and Vertis Park Drive. The intersections from Wabash Avenue to Parr Avenue will be considered for pedestrian safety and comfort solutions including sidewalks, crossing distance reductions, high-visibility crosswalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps, right-turn slip lane removal, curb radius reduction, and leading pedestrian intervals. The Patterson Avenue at Wabash Avenue intersection modifications will seek to make pedestrian crossings safer and more direct. The Project will also assess potential multimodal connections into the wider active transportation network to increase the opportunity for multimodal linkages beyond the immediate station area, including connections to surrounding activity centers and neighborhoods, in alignment with Baltimore City’s ongoing [Wabash Avenue Multimodal Improvements Study](#).

Lastly, the consolidation and right sizing of an overbuilt Metro Park and Ride lot into a structured parking garage will unlock the development potential for the property. In alignment with Baltimore City’s Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning, MDOT is intending to competitively select a private developer to construct a dense mixed-use TOD on the property. Not only will this increase ridership and access to affordable housing and public amenities, but it will also provide a safer environment for walking and biking. The structured parking facility will also feature ground floor uses, such as micromobility options and businesses, which will maximize the impact of the TOD, and accommodate not only drivers but also people walking, biking, and using transit. Nonmotorized users can use sidewalks and lower streets rather than a vast, underused parking lot that can invite higher speeds and illegal crossing of parking stalls. Furthermore, a TOD would provide “eyes on the street” to enhance public safety. The village-like environment, combined with the adjacent complete streets transformations, will provide a friendly environment for active modes.

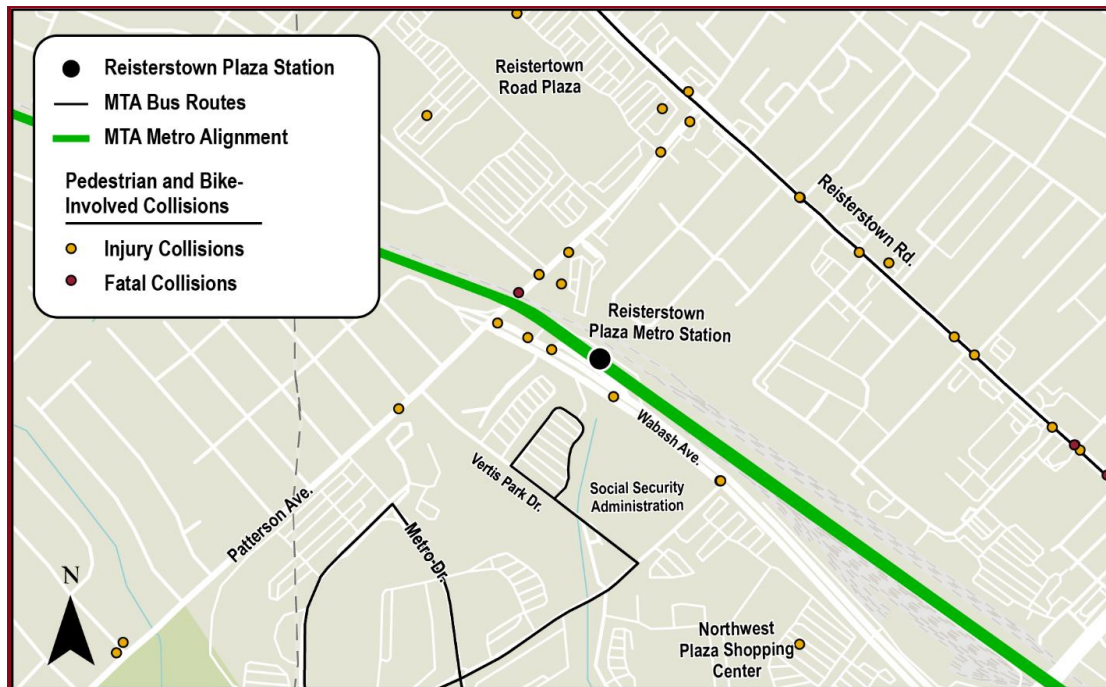
### 1.1.2 Reduces Fatalities and Serious Injuries in Underserved Communities

The proposed Project is located within Baltimore City Census Tract 2801.02, designated as a Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC) according to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). As shown on Figure 2, within the Project area, there have been nine injury collisions since 2019, one of which was fatal, and two of which involved bicyclists. As shown on Figure 2, the majority of injury collisions have occurred on Wabash Avenue and Patterson Avenue, both of which are roadways where the Project seeks to redesign for complete street enhancements and traffic calming. [BCDOT’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#) identified Patterson Avenue near the Station as a hot spot for crashes and specifically pedestrian and cyclist crashes (Table 1). The proposed improvements will seek to dramatically reduce collision risk involving pedestrians and make the environment comfortable by reducing vehicular speeds.

**Table 1. Pedestrian and Cyclist Involved Collisions (2019 to 2023)**

Project Roadway	AADT	Pedestrian Injury Collisions	Cyclist Injury Collisions	Fatal Pedestrian Collisions
Wabash Avenue	12,863	3	1	0
Patterson Avenue	19,261	3	1	1

Figure 2: Fatal and Injury Collisions in Project Area (2019 - 2023)



### 1.1.3 Specific Actions and Activities Identified in the Department’s National Roadway Safety Strategy Plan

The Project would support two objectives from the United States Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) [National Roadway Safety Strategy Plan: Safer Roads and Safer Speeds](#). Safer Roads emphasizes complete streets, which is core to this project. Wabash and Patterson Avenues would undergo complete streets transformations. A RAISE grant for this effort would be consistent with the second key Departmental action in this objective, which begins with “Support the planning, design and implementation of safer roads and streets in all communities using all available and applicable federal funding resources.” Safer Speeds calls for design treatments that would be “self-enforcing” of lower speeds. Such treatments are fundamental to this project and include reducing turn radii, lane reduction, streetscaping, on-street parking, and a new raised intersection. The project would be consistent with the third key Departmental action for this objective, encouraging the creation of roadways that “self-enforce” speed limits. Additionally, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is a designated Ally in Action in implementing NRSS goals across its network and in conjunction with partner agencies like Baltimore City Department of Transportation.

Specific project elements that meet NRSS goals and will be considered for implementation include the following [Proven Safety Countermeasures](#):

- [High-visibility crosswalks](#), which can reduce pedestrian injury crashes up to 40%
- [Leading Pedestrian Intervals \(LPIs\)](#), which can reduce pedestrian-vehicle crashes at intersections by 13%
- [Road Diets/Reconfiguration](#), which can reduce total crashes by at least 19% to 47%

The Project is consistent with the [Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit](#) guide from the Federal Highway and Transit Administration. Section 5 of this guide, titled “Design and Operational Measures,” contains several elements incorporated into this project. The complete streets transformations would include generous sidewalk widths and buffers. Pedestrian facilities will follow the strictest tenets of [Universal Design](#). The planned greenspace along Wabash Avenue and trail connecting



Vertis Park Drive and Metro Drive would provide a higher class of separated bicycle facility than that listed in the guide.

**1.1.4 Incorporates Specific Safety Improvements that are Part of a Documented Risk Reduction Mitigation Strategy**

In 2018, the City of Baltimore adopted its current Complete Streets Ordinance, from which it published a [Complete Streets Manual](#) in 2021. The street designs in this project will be consistent with this manual.

Baltimore City also published a [Strategic Highway Safety Plan for 2022-2026](#). The Project will be consistent with two emphasis areas identified in the plan: Right-Sizing Driving Space and Speeding. The former involves identifying oversized roads and replacing excess asphalt with pedestrian facilities, traffic calming infrastructure, and green space. This is a primary goal of the project, with Wabash Avenue serving as the signature street. The Speeding emphasis area calls for implementing traffic calming measures such as road diets, which this project will do on both Wabash and Patterson Avenues.

Furthermore, the project is consistent with State policy and planning goals. The State Highway Administration’s (SHA’s) [Complete Streets Policy](#) calls for “achieving an interconnected, multi-modal transportation network throughout Maryland that supports access and travel for all users.” The SHA [Pedestrian Safety Action Plan \(PSAP\)](#) shows Baltimore City as an Area of Need.

**1.2 Environmental Sustainability**

**1.2.1 Reducing transportation-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in disadvantaged communities**

Disadvantaged communities within a half mile of the project area face higher levels of pollution as compared to the national and state average, as indicated by high environmental justice (EJ) scores for particulate matter 2.5 (ozone, diesel particulate matter, air toxics cancer risk, air toxics respiratory impacts, toxics released in the air, and traffic proximity, as seen in Table 2 (EJScreen).

**Table 2. EJ Indicators for Project Block Group (EJScreen)**

Environmental Justice Indicator (EJ Index)	Percentile (National Average)	Percentile (State Average)
Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	85th	94th
Diesel Particulate Matter	90th	76th
Ozone	98th	93rd
Air Toxins Cancer Risk	94th	97th
Traffic Proximity	90th	87th

A primary benefit of this project will be reducing air pollution emissions, as well as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in neighboring disadvantaged communities through a modal shift from carbon intensive- single-occupancy auto trips to zero or low-carbon transit, bicycling, and walking trips by improving walking and cycling access to the station throughout the Project area, resulting in meaningful access to the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station and future transit oriented- development. The Project will plan improved connections to local bus routes with the installation of a mobility hub and a redesigned Metro station.

### 1.2.2 *Aligns with the U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization and Local Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan*

In 2023, the United States Departments of Energy, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and the US Environmental Protection Agency jointly released a framework of strategies and actions to remove all emissions from the transportation sector by 2050 in their [U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization](#). The proposed project aligns with multiple research and investment strategies outlined in the blueprint, including:

- Work with partners to identify solutions to ensure current and future transportation systems are more equitable and benefit underserved and disadvantaged communities;
- Support land-use, street design, and development policies that make walking, biking, and rolling easier, safer, and more convenient;
- Work with public and private sector partners to identify and advance solutions for a more equitable and healthier transportation system including support for transit-oriented development;
- Improve reliability, frequency, accessibility, and affordability and expand service for rail and public transportation, and invest in active transportation infrastructure to provide options to safely use more energy-efficient forms of transportation
- Continue to strengthen standards to improve vehicle efficiency; and
- Fully leverage the potential for efficient travel modes like rail, transit, shared multimodal mobility, and maximize vehicle efficiency.

At the state level, MDOT's most recent 2023 carbon reduction plan, the [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan](#), outlines committed strategies and policies to support the statewide goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent by 2031 from a 2006 baseline. The current project supports the Transit Oriented Development Build-Out strategy outlined in this MDOT plan. Further, the State released the 2050 Maryland Transportation Plan, or [the Playbook](#), which outlines many strategies to advance complete streets, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote transit-oriented development and transportation demand management across the State. As a companion document to the Playbook, the State also released the 2050 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan ([BPMP](#)), which includes many recommendations to advance safe non-motorized trail and roadway connections.

At the local level, Baltimore City has established goals of 30 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2025, a 60 percent reduction by 2030, and full carbon neutrality - or 100 percent reduction in net emissions by 2045 (relative to 2007). The draft 2023 update to the [Baltimore City Climate Action Plan](#) outlines a variety of strategies which this project supports including to Support Transit-Oriented Communities, Improve Transit for Low-Income Neighborhoods, and Improve Public Transit Options and Service.

### 1.2.3 *Implements Transportation-Efficient Land Use and Design*

Effective as of 2017, the Project area is zoned for transit-oriented development by Baltimore City (approximately three acres zones TOD-4 and 22 acres zoned TOD-3). This Project will support the implementation of this transportation-efficient land use and design by providing active transportation and transit accessible improvements. Environmental sustainability is a primary project goal and as such incorporates the creation of new accessible greenspaces with implementation of the pedestrian access, greenspaces, and traffic calming on Wabash Avenue. Greenspace will provide multiple benefits to surrounding disadvantaged communities, including reducing the urban heat island effect in addition to providing natural stormwater management. These features, both accessibility and connections to active transport and transit facilities, will enhance convenience by allowing shorter and fewer trips for the local community. A paved trail along Wabash Avenue is intended to serve as a connection to not only the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station transit-oriented development, but also surrounding communities, the Reisterstown Metro Plaza Shopping Center, the Northwest Plaza Shopping Center, and centers of employment such as the Social Security Administration and the Baltimore City District Court.

#### **1.2.4** *Reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled through Modal Shift*

The Project will seek to enhance pedestrian and cycling routes to an integral station along Baltimore's only existing heavy rail corridor. The station area is primarily designed to serve as a park and ride facility, including a large surface parking lot that is physically separated from Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station by Wabash Avenue, a six-lane divided roadway, which people walking to and from the station must navigate to access nearby Reisterstown Road Plaza Shopping Center and Social Security Administration.

The station area is also bordered by Patterson Avenue to the northwest, which serves as the primary route between the Reisterstown Plaza Station and Reisterstown Road. Neither Wabash Avenue nor Patterson Avenue were designed to facilitate active transportation as both roadways feature limited marked crossing and lack any dedicated bicycle infrastructure. To expand community access to mass transit and improve pedestrian safety, this grant would be used to design new pedestrian crossings improvements at the intersection of Vertis Park Drive and Patterson Ave and seek to identify improvements to reimagine Wabash Avenue, an originally planned six-lane arterial, and the ADA-compliant improvements to the existing station. Additionally, funds would be used to design a continuation of a multiuse path from the TOD site to the adjacent Seton Business Park, creating a more direct active transportation access route between significant employment, religious, and transit centers. The improved active transportation facilities and transit access for existing communities, as well as the planned Reisterstown Plaza Station transit-oriented development, will encourage modal shift away from automobiles and a reduction in vehicle miles traveled. Additionally, the proposed project will benefit transferring bus and rail transit riders by providing safe multimodal connections to essential services and employment near the station area.

### **1.3** **Quality of Life (QoL)**

#### **1.3.1** *Increases Affordable Transportation Choices*

The Project will substantially improve multimodal connections to and from the station. Its current design favors automobile access, given the six-lane configuration of Wabash Avenue without designated pedestrian crossings and the large surface parking lot across the road from the station. The lot, which is also where the bus stop serving the station is located, is currently connected to the station via a pedestrian bridge, which is not ADA compliant. By transforming Wabash and Patterson Avenues into complete streets, analyzing the feasibility of new trail connections, and facilitating at-grade access to the station, the surrounding neighborhoods will be able to travel to and from the station via affordable, non-motorized transportation modes. Furthermore, the mobility hub will facilitate ADA-compliant access to the station from buses and ridesharing vehicles, as well as provide low-cost mobility options such as scooters for users to make critical first-and-last-mile connections to transit. Finally, the proposed TOD will increase jobs and housing that can be accessed via the MTA Metro. Providing new opportunities for residents to live and work near a high-frequency transit hub will reduce vehicle miles travelled and the household cost of commuting.

#### **1.3.2** *Reduces Transportation and Housing Cost Burdens by Integrating Mixed-Use Development and a Diversity of Housing Types*

Much of the surface parking lot will be converted to a privately developed, mixed use TOD with diverse housing types, including affordable units and senior housing. Workers living on the site will be able to access jobs by walking within the development. Additionally, those living in existing low-income neighborhoods nearby will be able to access jobs in the development via non-motorized modes on the new complete street infrastructure. By creating an accessible area that encourages walking and biking, residents and commuters will also enjoy safer and more reliable access to heavy rail and bus transit services, increasing opportunities for the utilization of more affordable transportation options.

### 1.3.3 *Coordinates and Integrates Land Use, Affordable Housing, and Transportation Planning*

One of the primary purposes of the Project is to integrate land use, affordable housing, and transit options, as well as to incorporate the community into the transportation planning process, in preparation of planned TOD in the station area. The City of Baltimore is updating its [Inclusionary Housing and Eligibility](#) policy, which expired in 2022. This policy requires a given share (10 percent minimum) of new construction to be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes. The overall TOD project will consist of a mixture of land uses, including affordable housing, and complete street infrastructure connecting to a Metro station. It promotes the use of transit and non-motorized transportation modes to access jobs and other activities. The trip patterns served would include those living on site who can walk to work or to other activities on site, those living on site who can walk to the Metro station to access jobs or other activities, those living off site who can utilize the Metro to access jobs or other activities on site, and those living in nearby, low-income neighborhoods who can access jobs or other activities on site via non-motorized transportation modes. Providing affordable housing on site would allow service workers to live and walk to work on site, in addition to higher-income professionals. The coordination of land use, affordable housing, and complete streets infrastructure to form a development oriented to the Metro station would facilitate sustainable and equitable travel patterns.

### 1.3.4 *Improves Access to Daily Destinations*

The planned TOD will be located along a heavy rail line directly serving Downtown Baltimore, whose Census Tract (401) contains nearly 36,000 jobs<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, the TOD itself will be adjacent to a Social Security Administration (SSA) campus, and the proposed trail connecting it to Metro Drive will provide access to other employers and activities. These include the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the American Red Cross, a parole and probation office, a church, and healthcare services. Furthermore, the new TOD would be a daily destination itself with a diverse set of land uses that provide for essential services and places to live, work, and play. These land uses can include office, commercial, medical, educational, religious, and recreational establishments.

The Project will design infrastructure able to provide non-motorized access to these uses from both the Metro station and from the surrounding neighborhoods, which are identified as disadvantaged. Because the TOD would be replacing a surface parking lot and vacant, grassy land, with no direct residential displacement required to construct the improvements. Additionally, with most adjacent land uses being nonresidential, any increases in existing residential rents are expected to be limited to the neighborhood west of Patterson Avenue and south of the Baltimore Metro. Seamless multimodal connections to the Station will also impact neighboring communities access to jobs throughout the City, as there are over 140,000 jobs located within a half mile of Metro stations in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, most of which are located in the downtown business district.

The complete streets infrastructure, new green space along Wabash Avenue, and trail between Vertis Park and Metro Drives would improve public health by promoting walking, bicycling, micromobility, and other forms of active transportation.

### 1.3.5 *Mitigates Urban Heat Islands*

The project would remove or repurpose a significant amount of asphalt, mainly on Wabash Avenue and the existing surface park-and-ride lot, into more sustainable uses, including streetscaping and public greenspace. As a result, there would be less impervious surface to add to the urban heat island effect and more vegetation to provide shade and absorb any remaining carbon dioxide and heat. Additionally, with an environment catering more to active transportation and transit, there would be fewer greenhouse gas emissions to trap heat within the city.

<sup>1</sup> Source: OnTheMap, 2021 data.



### 1.3.6 *Proactively Addressing Equity*

The infrastructure surrounding the station was designed almost exclusively for users in automobiles residing outside of the community, which does not reflect the needs of local community members in surrounding historically disadvantaged communities. Wabash Avenue was originally intended to connect to the interchange of I-795 and I-695, which explains its six-lane width, and the station was designed to serve primarily park-and-ride customers. With the planned interstate highway never constructed, Wabash Avenue remains overbuilt, and the infrastructure makes station access inhospitable to the surrounding communities. The Project would correct the inequitable actions of the past, allowing nearby residents to access the station and daily activities via infrastructure that is safe and comfortable for non-motorized transportation. Additionally, disadvantaged residents living along other parts of the Metro subway line can use it to travel to this station and then access jobs, services, and other activities via accommodating infrastructure.

The Project has begun proactively addressing equity by engaging the community. In January 2024, MDOT held an open house to discuss the TOD Vision Plan effort underway in the Station area. The public engagement enabled MDOT to learn about the local community's needs, which included the significant barriers to transit access in the Station area. Attendees, comprised of community members, primarily residents of the surround historically disadvantaged communities, expressed the need for safer and more direct multimodal connections to Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station, in addition to the desire for direct transit connections between the MTA Metro and local bus routes. The Project will continue to engage local residents and community organizations throughout the design of multimodal improvements.

The City of Baltimore is updating its Inclusionary Housing and Eligibility policy, which expired in 2022. This policy requires a given share of new construction to be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes. The Project would provide this as well as diverse housing types. White-collared professionals, workers of the neighborhood's retail stores, and senior citizens would all be able to reside in this community.

## 1.4 **Mobility & Community Connectivity**

### 1.4.1 *Improves System-Wide Connectivity by Addressing Gaps in the Existing Network*

The project is vital for providing access to the Metro station for those who live and work nearby without driving. The planned mobility hub would connect not only to the Metro but also to local bus and micromobility options. Furthermore, the project is consistent with plans in the area that are based on community participation and data.

The Northwest Community Planning Forum is comprised of Presidents of the area's community associations. Based on meetings with the residents, community stakeholders, and City agencies, it published a [Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan \(SNAP\)](#), last updated in 2012. The SNAP draws attention to the inferior sidewalk network and high pedestrian demand. It calls for improvements for all non-vehicular modes of transportation, particularly around major destinations such as transit stations. Additional recommendations include adding sidewalks to highly traveled streets where they do not exist or are inconsistent, making sidewalks ADA compliant, and increasing pedestrian safety features such as crosswalks. Furthermore, it specifically calls for transit-oriented development at the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station, in which pedestrian access improvements are incorporated into the development. The project would implement all of these recommendations.

The [Baltimore City Bike Master Plan](#), published in 2015, sought public and stakeholder input via an online survey, public meetings, neighborhood association meetings, and a steering committee. It reviewed bicycle crashes and the existing bicycle network, citing disparities between affluent and disadvantaged neighborhoods. A 2017 addendum to this plan, [Baltimore City Separated Bike Lane](#)

[Network](#), calls for a separated bicycle facility on Wabash Avenue from Patterson Avenue to Hilton Road. The proposed linear park as part of this project would provide this. Further, the State 2050 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan supports safe non-motorized connections to transit.

In 2020, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) produced a [Reisterstown Plaza Station Area Concept Plan](#) that assesses existing conditions and provides recommendations to turn the area into a TOD. It calls for new streets to break up the superblock on the south side of the station and create a walkable street grid. Additionally, it recommends narrowing Wabash Avenue and improving pedestrian safety along across the street, providing a new pedestrian and bicycle connection between Vertis Park Drive and Metro Drive, and providing safe pedestrian crossings at key intersections and site access points.

These plans recognize that Wabash Avenue provides an important connection to the station yet is inhospitable to non-motorized transportation modes. Furthermore, existing bus facilities and services could be enhanced in response to development and site improvements. The TOD project is consistent with these plans to close critical gaps.

#### **1.4.2** *Reconnects Communities to Affordable Transportation*

The Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station was designed to serve primarily park-and-ride customers. The infrastructure surrounding the station was designed for users in automobiles residing outside of the area, disconnecting nearby communities from affordable transportation. Wabash Avenue was intended to connect to the interchange of I-795 and I-695, which motivated the six-lane width. With no interstate highway connection having since been completed, Wabash Avenue remains overbuilt, and the infrastructure makes station access inhospitable to the surrounding communities. The Project would correct the inequitable actions of the past, allowing nearby residents transportation choices in accessing daily activities.

#### **1.4.3** *Transportation Features to Increase Accessibility through Universal Design*

Transforming Wabash and Patterson Avenues into complete streets, as consistent with the City of Baltimore's Complete Street Ordinance, provides transportation features that increase accessibility. These include continuous sidewalks and shared use paths with landscaped buffers, high-visibility crosswalks with ADA-compliant curb ramps, a potential linear park, and raised intersections. The proposed trail from Metro Drive to Vertis Park Drive provides a non-motorized connection to jobs and services across the present superblock depending on the feasibility.

Complete streets transformations and the new trail would be implemented to the strictest tenants of Universal Design. The most notable element is the potential for new raised intersections on Wabash Avenue outside of the station. This goes beyond ADA requirements in that it facilitates the crossing of the street without needing to navigate slopes. Additionally, raised intersections signal vehicle traffic to slow down to a stop, thereby making the crossing experience safer.

### **1.5** *Economic Competitiveness & Opportunity*

#### **1.5.1** *Promotes Long-Term Economic Growth*

The Project seeks to create sustainable, community-responsive change in accessing the Baltimore Metro line and local bus routes at the Reisterstown Plaza Station. The Project intends to plan the transformation of the frontage of the Reisterstown Plaza Station (on Wabash Avenue) into an inclusive pedestrian plaza, complete with mobility hubs and provide invaluable public space for the disadvantaged communities that surround the Station. Initial concept-level plans also include multiple shared-use pathways and new public greenspace, which, in conjunction with the existing nearby Powdermill Run Park, will substantially add to the amount of publicly accessible greenspace for disadvantaged communities in Northwest Baltimore. The Baltimore Metro facilitates over 48,000 trips

every weekday (APTA Ridership Report 2023/Q2), which reinforces that improvements such as new public spaces and multimodal enhancements will benefit economic growth far beyond the communities within walking distance of the Station. Additionally, new residents or businesses that may reside in the eventual TOD will help to promote ridership gains for the MTA Metro. In 2023 alone, there were over 85,000 boardings at the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station, which constitutes a 75% decrease from 2019 when annual boardings exceeded 300,000. In alignment with Maryland's stated TOD objective of increasing transit ridership, and supporting broader transportation network efficiencies, and reducing congestion, the proposed Project seeks to spur ridership at an underutilized transit hub.

The improvements are expected to not only increase transit ridership, but also to serve as the initial building block for the planned TOD. MDOT anticipates the planned TOD will introduce hundreds of new residential units to the Station area, including affordable housing units, along with new businesses and essential services. The mixed-use TOD is planned to include both senior and affordable housing units, a vital step in ensuring that transportation disadvantaged community members have safe and reliable access to the Baltimore Metro, and other local bus routes. An analysis of [Baltimore City's Residential Market Potential](#) (2020) found that between 1,353 and 1,808 new or renovated homes could attract new buyers annually, suggesting new affordable housing units created by the TOD will fill a gap in the current housing market of Baltimore City.

There are over 7,400 jobs located within a half-mile of the Project's study area, with nearly 50% located at the nearby Reisterstown Road Plaza Shopping Center. Through the improvement of car-free transportation options in the Station area, the Project will connect workers seamlessly to major employment hubs, not limited to the Station area. With more convenient and safe transportation options, the surrounding communities will also be enabled to take full advantage of Baltimore's Metro system, which includes fourteen stations throughout Baltimore County and Baltimore City. There are over 140,000 jobs located within a half mile of MTA Metro stations, stretching between Owings Mills in Baltimore County, through Downtown Baltimore, and terminating at the Johns Hopkins Medical Campus in East Baltimore City (2021, [Census On the Map](#)).

### *1.5.2 Promote Public and Private Investment in Land-Use Productivity*

The Opportunities for Access and Connectivity at Reisterstown Project is in direct coordination with existing plans to leverage public and private partnerships to leverage the development of a mixed-use TOD. The Project will serve as a building block in redeveloping the Station area into a walkable, bikeable, and ADA-accessible community, with direct links to Baltimore's only heavy rail transit corridor. In 2022, MDOT entered into an exclusive negotiating privilege agreement with Wabash Development Partners to develop the 25.6-acre site into a mixed-use TOD. The planned TOD at Reisterstown Plaza Station is currently in the vision planning phase. The MDOT Office of Real Estate and Economic Development works in close coordination with the MTA Office of Real Estate to develop public private partnerships that will result in high-quality TOD projects that accomplish the agencies primary goals of supporting economic development, growing transit ridership, and maximizing the efficient use of transportation infrastructure. These efforts are closely coordinated with and supported by the Baltimore City Departments of Planning and Transportation. The State of Maryland has recommitted to TOD efforts, in partnership with local units of government, including the Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD). Baltimore City DHCD is updating its [Inclusionary Housing and Eligibility](#) policy, which requires a given share (10 percent minimum) of new construction to be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes.



## 1.6 State of Good Repair

### 1.6.1 Restores and Modernizes Existing Core Infrastructure Assets

Originally designed as a high-capacity connector to I-795, Wabash Avenue runs parallel to the Baltimore Metro, serving as the primary route to access the station. Metro riders currently traverse the roadway using a pedestrian bridge that does not provide an accessible route. Due to the footprint of the six-lane arterial, Wabash Avenue presents a significant obstacle to pedestrian connectivity (Figure 3), which the Project seeks to address through redistributing the roadway width according to user group demand. The Project will reimagine Wabash Avenue in accordance with Baltimore City’s [Complete Streets Manual](#), which will entail traffic calming elements such as roadway narrowing, repurposing curb lanes, and the consideration of a greenway.

**Figure 3. Inaccessible Sidewalk Conditions on Wabash Avenue**



The Project will analyze key intersections of safety concern based on crash risk. Wabash Avenue and Patterson Avenue, and Vertis Park Drive and Patterson Avenue require substantial reduction to prioritize walking and biking to the Station, a primary mode for the surrounding disadvantaged communities.

The current bus facility at the station is not designed to accommodate additional transit capacity and does not directly connect to the station. By advancing feasibility efforts to transform this facility into a layover area, including accessing the feasibility of installing new zero-emission charging technology and operator facilities, the project will modernize the bus facility to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century service and operational needs.

### 1.6.2 Efficient and Well-Integrated Design

Preliminary planning for the Project has considered the longevity and maintenance burdens associated with the proposed multimodal improvements. As an aging roadway, Wabash Avenue presents an inclusive and community-focused redesign opportunity that will increase its moving of all modes and transferring between modes by centrally locating them at the Metro station, which will serve as the core of the new TOD. The Project will add visible stormwater management infrastructure elements along the roadway and shared-use trail to incentivize zero-emission modes such as walking and cycling, reducing stress on the roadway. Additionally, there is currently a pedestrian bridge connecting the exiting park and ride facilities with the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station, which is not accessible to wheelchair users. As the Project will utilize a complete streets approach, focusing on safe and accessible pedestrian crossings on Wabash Avenue, the study will also examine the removal of the pedestrian bridge.

In addition to revitalizing Wabash Avenue, the Project will also involve the redesign of other roadways and intersections throughout the Project site. The Project aims to improve both sides of the existing roadways connecting to the Project site, including Patterson Avenue. The redesigned roadways will include more convenient and safer pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, with a shared-use path also planned to connect Vertis Park Drive with Metro Drive.

### 1.6.3 Improves Transportation Infrastructure Within the Existing Footprint

In total, the Project site comprises over 26 acres which includes the Station area, and an existing park and ride lot. As MDOT plans to repurpose the existing park and ride lot with a TOD, the majority of transportation infrastructure improvements will be located within the existing footprint. A notable improvement within the existing footprint is the intersection redesign at Wabash Avenue and Patterson Avenue. The current configuration of the intersection includes four slip lanes allowing right turns, which have proved difficult and unsafe for pedestrians to navigate (Figure 4). The Project plans to potentially eliminate the slip lanes, consider reducing the number of lanes on Wabash Avenue, all of which will occur within the existing footprint and reduce the size of the intersection.

Figure 3. Existing Slip Lanes at Wabash Avenue and Patterson Avenue



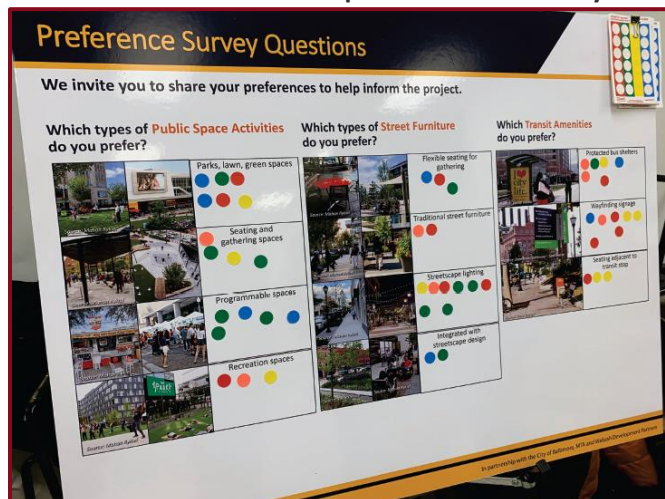
## 1.7 Partnerships and Collaboration

### 1.7.1 Engaging Residents and Community-Based Organizations

The Project is an ongoing partnership with several government agencies and key stakeholders. A stakeholder charette was held by MDOT December 15, 2023, with both in person and virtual attendees, where a variety of project aspects were discussed such as bus stop design, the at grade connection across Wabash Avenue, and the public park in front of the metro station.

Community engagement continues to be a priority for the proposed Project to ensure diverse engagement. MDOT, in partnership with Baltimore City and Wabash Development Partners, hosted a public engagement Open House Thursday, January 18, 2024, regarding the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station Transit Oriented Development Vision Plan (Figure 5). This Open House was held to share ideas with the community, local organizations, elected officials, and area businesses related to work done as part of a vision plan for the future Reisterstown Plaza Transit-Oriented Development. Staff members shared potential features, ideas, and concepts; engaged with attendees; and asked for feedback from the community regarding what improvements are needed to improve connections and

Figure 4. Visual Preference Survey Conducted During MDOT Reisterstown TOD Open House in January 2024



accessibility in the area. The meeting location was accessible for people with disabilities, and special accommodations included translated survey materials, and interpreting services for people with limited hearing. Notification of the public meeting was mailed to all households within a half-mile of the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station, in addition to advertisements of the event in local newspapers, social

media, MTA Radio (which is audible for passengers on MTA vehicles and stations), and door to door engagement with local businesses near the project site.

In close collaboration with stakeholders, including the local community, MTA has incorporated several of their recommendations into the project, including the desire for more public greenspace, direct transit connections between local bus routes and subway station, additional walking paths, and bike lanes.

MTA is developing a Public Involvement Plan on how to best continue connecting with the local community, including mailers, meetings, and surveys to be conducted throughout the project development process. The MTA Public Involvement Plan will be consistent with the US DOT [Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making Guide](#) and will provide a framework for community collaboration and outreach throughout the span of the project. In preparation of public engagement MTA plans to utilize multiple distribution and advertisement methods to make the community aware of the planning project, including mailing post cards to nearby residents, community associations, and faith-based organizations within a half mile of the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station. MTA will also host and maintain a dedicated project information webpage, which will include a platform for the public to ask questions and submit feedback. Throughout the public engagement process, MTA will:

- Secure a conveniently located meeting space to host public engagement activities;
- Develop informational materials to include design boards for the presentation at in-person engagement events, and for the project webpage;
- Develop and conduct in-person and online surveys to collect community feedback;
- Organize community input and publish feedback on the project website in order to increase transparency and build trust with the community;
- Continually follow-up with stakeholders and community participants throughout the project

MTA has also developed a comprehensive list of community organizations to continue engaging and involving in the project, including the Glen Neighborhood Improvement Association, the Cross Country-Cheswolde Neighborhood Association, the Northwest Baltimore Partnership (including stakeholders from neighboring Baltimore County), and other proximate community groups, associations, and improvement associations.

### *1.7.2 Coordination with Other Types of Projects*

Coordination is ongoing with private development plans to install mixed use facilities within the project area to provide transit-oriented development near public transportation and active transport facilities. The Project is in direct coordination with MDOT's ultimate goal of transforming the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station area into a thriving economic hub, where residents have direct and easy access to transit, through a public private partnership with station area developers. As a component of the overall Reisterstown TOD project, funding received to increase safety and accessibility in the Station area will have a dramatic impact on the daily lives of both the existing disadvantaged communities surrounding the Station area, and new TOD residents alike.

The Project is aligned with the Maryland Department of Transportation's goal of stimulating private investment, creating jobs, and establishing transit-focused communities throughout the state. Since 2008, MDOT has designated (or designation is pending for) 19 sites throughout the state, including Reisterstown Plaza Station. The Project will enable MDOT to plan multimodal connections to the station area, in coordination with the departments [TOD Design Guidelines](#). Knowledge gained through the course of the Project will also aid in future transit-oriented developments not only in Baltimore City, but throughout the state of Maryland.



Figure 5: Conceptual TOD Design at Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station



### 1.7.3 Partnering with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

MDOT partners with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) to deliver projects like the Reisterstown Plaza Station. MTA examines each contract based on the exact contract bid items, quantities, and other factors and then compares that information to the available DBE subcontractors in the geographic area of the state for each bid item. This information is used along with other factors to determine the DBE goal for each specific contract. Recent community enhancement contracts have yielded DBE goals in the range of 12 percent to 25 percent, and MDOT is targeting 30 percent DBE usage on the contract being used for preliminary design for this project.

## 1.8 Innovation: Technology, Delivery, Financing

### 1.8.1 Innovative Technologies: Electric, Connected, or Automated Vehicles and Safety

The Project will study the feasibility of battery-electric bus charging at the Reisterstown Station to maximize the potential benefits of the site, and further support the Maryland Transit Administration’s transition from traditional diesel buses to battery-electric vehicles. Beginning in 2023, the [Zero-Emissions Bus Transition Act](#) mandates all new buses procured for MTA’s fleet be emission-free. Substantial facility upgrades, such as on-route charging facilities, will be required to prevent service disruptions and improve system reliability through the agencies conversion to a zero-emissions fleet.

While the project site is currently served by one MTA local bus route (LocalLink 82), two additional local bus routes (LocalLink 83 and 89) serve Reisterstown Road, operating less than half a mile from Reisterstown Plaza Station. The Rogers Avenue Station, which is approximately half a mile south of planned TOD at Reisterstown Plaza Station, is directly served by six MTA bus routes. The Project will study the feasibility of both installing electric bus charging facilities within the project site, in addition to analyzing potential changes to transit operations in the area to ensure the installation of charging facilities can be utilized multiple MTA bus routes.

### 1.8.2 Innovative Technologies: Curb Management

Recognizing that demand and traffic volumes in the Project area will increase during and after the planned TOD construction, MDOT will study and plan to deploy innovative curb management systems and technologies on Wabash Avenue. Presently, curb space on Wabash Avenue, directly adjacent to the Reisterstown Station, is comprised of an off-street pick-up and drop-off service road previously restricted to transit vehicles (Figure 6). While dedicated passenger pick-up and drop-off areas exist at the station, the current configuration and design lacks direct and accessible routes across Wabash Avenue, and often leads to conflict between modes as MTA’s paratransit service, MobilityLink, also utilizes the space. In compliance with Baltimore City’s [Complete Streets Manual](#), the Project include a comprehensive analysis and redesign of curb space at the Reisterstown Plaza Station, by assessing the needs of each mode while ensuring safe and comfortable walking and cycling routes.

Throughout the Project, MDOT will plan the deployment of digital curb management technologies to facilitate the separation of modes in the station area. As the Project plans to realign local bus routes to directly serve the station, it’s vital that both MTA and MDOT manage access mode. The Project will plan the implementation of ADA-accessible pickup and drop-off areas, curbside micromobility hubs, bike storage and lockers, and designated transportation network company (TNC) (rideshare) areas where companies provide pre-arranged paid transportation services using an online or mobile application.

As the planned TOD project will both increase demand and traffic volumes in the station and replace the existing surface parking lot which currently operates as a park and ride facility, MDOT will explore technologies for adaptive, demand-responsive, garage pricing for the proposed parking facility.

Figure 6. Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station Entrance



### 1.8.3 Innovative Financing

MDOT has already begun exploring options for innovative financing strategies for the planned Reisterstown Station TOD Project, which the proposed improvements will support. MDOT has conducted peer-research into the development and financing structures utilized by other notable TOD projects nationwide, finding that funding instruments such as TIFIA loans, and local tax instruments should be utilized in the future development. Additionally, the agency plans to work in coordination with existing homeownership programs in Baltimore City to ensure the local community can benefit from the new housing stock.