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*Town of Bel Air*
VISION:

The Route 1 Corridor between Tollgate Road/Route 24 and downtown Bel Air is transformed into an urban street that is attractive, pedestrian-friendly and an extension of downtown, as a foundation to the Route 1 Corridor's economic resurgence.
BACKGROUND

The Route 1 Corridor Study Area (Corridor/Project Study Area) along historic Route 1 in the Town of Bel Air (Town) is a major gateway to Bel Air's Main Street and transportation connector in the Town of Bel Air. Once a major north-south road corridor along the Eastern seaboard, regional and inter-state traffic now use I-95 instead of Route 1. I-95 is only a short distance from the Project Study Area and a primary access to shopping along Route 1 and Route 24. Route 1 in Bel Air is a regional commercial hub and is dominated by retail uses in freestanding buildings with newer strip shopping centers and a regional shopping mall.

The Project Study Area is a typical suburban retail strip in which the buildings, signs and landscape are designed for the automobile. The Corridor reflects very little of the history or culture of the Town of Bel Air although some of the new buildings use materials, such as brick and architecture that is compatible with historic features. There is little hierarchy of space or form and the pedestrian environment disappears within a sea of asphalt and cars. Sidewalks along Route 1 are neither safe nor attractive and discourage walking.

Five major shopping centers along the Route 1 Corridor in Bel Air makes retail the primary land use in the Project Study Area and creates traffic congestion when everyone is trying to get to and from the Project Study Area at the same time. A regional shopping mall, the Harford Mall, is located at the gateway and main intersection of Route 24 and Route 1. Businesses along Route 1, with the exception of the shopping centers are generally divided 50% auto-related businesses and 50% retail businesses.

Traffic patterns in recent years have been of a more local nature, since inter-state traffic now uses I-95 instead of Route 1. This local traffic is mostly to access shopping along the Corridor and creates traffic congestion, particularly on Saturdays - a busy shopping day. Although the road pattern is functionally classified, access management requires attention. A management focus, that gets people to the Corridor,
provides them with a good system within it, including access to and from parking, and gets them out of the Project Study Area, is imperative for the Corridor.

Providing a mix of uses including lodging, office and residential has various benefits and are permitted in the existing General Business District (B-3) zone. A mix of uses can provide a balance of day and night time use, which can help to alleviate congested traffic as well as help to transform the way the Corridor is perceived and used so that a sense of place is created.
Planning Process

In 2003, the Economic and Community Development Commission (ECDC) and Town Officials decided to develop a physical and economic revitalization strategy for its primary commercial area, the Route 1 Corridor. The functional and aesthetic deficiencies of the Corridor, including heavy traffic, underutilized properties and haphazard development were the main motivating factors in the envisioning of an improved, user-friendly retail corridor for the community. Moreover, the success of the Main Street efforts encouraged the ECDC and the Town to expand their horizons and direct their attention to the Route 1 Corridor.

The Town of Bel Air initialized the process by assembling and researching background data. Between March and July 2004, nine (9) community meetings were conducted by the Town with the area’s property/businesses owners and other stakeholder groups. A July, 2004 report summarizes the key issues identified and recommendations made by those who attended the Route 1 meetings.

The Town of Bel Air hired a Consultant Team in December 2004 to develop the strategy described in this document. Using the summary report as a starting point, the Consultant Team conducted two workshops and explored options with the Town’s businesses and residents. The Consultant Team presented an analysis of the Project Study Area, possible development scenarios, optional recommendations and sketches of potential redevelopment sites. Input from the individuals who attended the workshops set the blueprint for this Strategy’s implementation actions.
Opportunities, Assets, Challenges and Actions

The opportunities, assets, challenges and actions to be taken as identified in the Bel Air Route 1 community meetings were classified under the following four subject areas:

1. Visual Enhancement
   Opportunities and Assets
   - Historic architectural features
   Challenges and Actions
   - Reinforce gateway
   - Address overhead utilities
   - Address inadequate landscaping and street trees
   - Address inadequate lighting (pedestrian)
   - Improve inappropriate signage
   - Clean-up graffiti

2. Pedestrian Environment
   Opportunities and Assets
   - Proximity of neighborhood and school
   - Proximity of downtown
   - Businesses to patronize
   Challenges and Actions
   - Provide safe sidewalks along Route 1
   - Provide safe crosswalks across Route 1 and at other major pedestrian access points
   - Create buffer between traffic and pedestrian travel
   - Improve pedestrian connections between Route 1 and the downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, and school, and between businesses
   - Increase landscape areas
   - Add street trees
   - Provide attractive and effecting lighting and other street elements
   - Provide attractive signage
3. **Transportation Mitigation/Traffic Calming**  
   **Opportunities and Assets**  
   - Traffic counts to support business  
   **Challenges and Actions**  
   - Reduce the number of curb cuts  
   - Improve traffic flow and access to businesses  
   - Evaluate option of a service road  
   - Reconfigure existing parking lots  
   - Explore expanding the trolley between downtown and Route 1

4. **Business Retention and Redevelopment**  
   **Opportunities and Assets**  
   - Overall stability of the business environment  
   - Strong presence of owner-occupied businesses  
   - Commercial anchors  
   - Diverse mix of businesses  
   **Challenges and Actions**  
   - Create a parking district for Route 1 as an incentive to redevelop smaller parcels  
   - Include Route 1 in the downtown-parking district  
   - Locate an appropriate site for a public parking structure

```
Many businesses along Route 1 are auto-oriented with parking in front
```
INTERIM REDEVELOPMENT
SCENARIO

The Interim Redevelopment Scenario outlines the potential
development along the Route 1 Corridor for infill development,
and other place-making strategies, which includes retaining
existing shopping centers and many buildings. Some of the
strategies are mentioned below:

- Develop mixed-use structures where the parking lots
  and other underutilized land adjoining the retail sites
  currently exist.
  - Ground floor retail with offices and residential
    above is preferable to best support pedestrian
    activity along the street.
  - The Town has identified the need for hotels, and
    being a permitted use along the Route 1 Corridor,
    could be located in any of these redevelopment
    sites.
  - Develop a public parking structure between
    Eastern Alley and Hays Street at George Street.

- Encourage land assemblage to create larger parcels
  for greater continuity and uniformity along the
  Corridor, such as the two sites at the south-west
  intersection of Route 1 and Atwood Road that belong
  to a single owner, could be redeveloped as a mixed-
  use site.

- Expand Bel Air High School and develop a Performing
  Arts Center southeast of Archer Street and Route 1.
  This could be used for community events and by the
  Bel Air High School as well.

- The Town has also identified the need for a movie
  theater, which could be located within an existing
  structure, as infill or redevelopment of any site within
  the Corridor. Locating a movie theater near the
  proposed performing arts center is preferred to
  encourage an entertainment node.

- Extend Market Place Drive north to Archer and Hays
  Street.

- Create internal vehicular connections between sites to
  reduce curb cuts and congestion on Route 1 and
  Route 24.

- Create pedestrian linkages between adjoining sites to
  create a sense of place and facilitate spin-off retail
  activity.
- Create public plazas to encourage public gathering, community activities and events.

- Redevelop the residential area between Route 1 mixed use and the Howard Park neighborhood as high-density residential.

- Retain the single-family zoning and character of the Howard Park neighborhood.

Conceptual Master Plan

The Conceptual Master Plan takes a more sweeping approach of land assemblage and redevelopment. While most of the place-making strategies are similar to the ones in the Interim Redevelopment Scenario, redevelopment in all four quadrants around the Route 1 and Route 24 intersection could be as shown in the two southern quadrants. This scenario proposes development assuming a clean slate for the southern quadrant, and could be extended as far north as land assemblage is possible.

The strategies in the quadrants south of Route 24 along Route 1 are as follows:

- Build new mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail and offices, residential and hotels above. The new development will have the appearance of a single cohesive development, although it may belong to different owners, or as a public-private partnership with the Town.

- Create a grid system to establish smaller blocks typical of a downtown with extensive vehicular and pedestrian connections between adjoining lots and streets.

- Create gateway elements that announce the entrance into Bel Air with public plazas, a pedestrian overpass over Route 1 and gateway buildings at the intersection of Route 1 and Route 24.
**Priority Actions**

The recommendations of the Route 1 Corridor Economic Revitalization Strategy outline an aggressive implementation schedule to accomplish the Town's overall goal for the Project. These implementation items will assist the Town in developing projects and policies, and administering programs to bring about appropriate change within the Route 1 Corridor. While any of these recommendations could be implemented at any time, some of them are considered as priority actions that should be implemented immediately to visibly affect change. The other actions are also integral to the success of transforming Route 1 and have been described in detail in the following section.

**Short Term Actions:**

- Modify the Route 1 Overlay District in the Town of Bel Air Zoning Ordinance to eliminate the proportional staggered setback for upper floors on proposed development with Route 1 frontage. When the proposed development is adjacent to existing single-family development, the staggered setback on that side of the building shall remain in place.
- Rezone the area between George Street and Route 1 as a transitional area that could be redeveloped with higher density residential, such as townhouses/row houses, 2 over 2 residential units and multifamily housing above commercial on Route 1.
- Construct a pedestrian link from George Street to Route 1 along the creek through the existing site of the car wash.
- Stripe bicycle lane on Thomas Street to connect the Courthouse and downtown with the Ma and Pa Trail and the Route 24 underpass to the shopping centers.

**Ongoing Actions:**

- Provide design assistance and loans to existing business owners to improve or upgrade facades, signs, buildings or sites. Expanding the Main Street boundary to include the Route 1 Overlay District will provide additional resources for this effort.
The Route 1 Economic Revitalization Strategy recommends implementation actions that will revitalize the Project Study Area into an attractive destination with a pedestrian friendly environment. It offers strategies that will enhance the existing strip development along the Corridor while reversing some of the negative effects of its existing suburban strip development character. Four major areas of concentration have been identified to address the critical issues impacting the Project Study Area.

I. Route 1 Corridor Redevelopment
   This section describes the strategies that will be undertaken by the Town of Bel Air to pursue the Interim Redevelopment Scenario and the Conceptual Master Plan for Route 1 and attract new infill development, redevelopment, and land assemblage.

II. Streetscape Design and Identity
    Strategies are outlined in this section to construct an overall streetscape design plan to enhance the urban setting and promote pedestrian activities in the Project Study Area.

III. Transportation and Traffic Management
    Strategies for developing a system that will improve access, reduce congestion and generally improve traffic management in the Route 1 Corridor are illustrated in this section.

IV. Connectivity
    Ensuring that people can easily and safely move within the Study Area and connect to other adjacent destinations through a multi-modal transportation system is integral to the success of the vision for the Route 1 Corridor. This section addresses this vital need.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS AND STEPS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</th>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<th>2010</th>
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<td>Work with property owners on redevelopment, development and infill development projects</td>
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<td>Pursue land assembly and lot consolidation</td>
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<td>Encourage redevelopment, development and infill development using the Optional Method</td>
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<td>Amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance</td>
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<td>Maintain the existing zoning and residential character in the Howard Park neighborhood</td>
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<td>Implement incentives for land assembly</td>
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<td>Work with loan officers and stakeholders to assist property owners</td>
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<td>Make tax credit information available to property owners</td>
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<td>4.1 Develop Streetscape Improvements on Route 1</td>
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<td>Install banners</td>
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<td>Develop a marketing package</td>
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<td>4.2 Develop Streetscape Improvements on George and Thomas Streets</td>
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<td>Study feasibility of adding landscape medians on Route 1</td>
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<td>Replace the medians near the McDonald's and under market to reduce landscape medians</td>
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<td>Work with MDSHA to develop the Right-of-Way for streetscape improvements</td>
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<td>Design and implement the streetscape plan and details</td>
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<td>Work with property owners on locating sidewalks based on future design</td>
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<td>Place utilities underground</td>
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<td>Work with the Harford Mall and Maryland State Highway Administration to improve access</td>
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<td>Examine transportation management solutions</td>
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<td>5.2 Improve Internal Parcel Connections</td>
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<td>Work through zoning and development review process and with existing property owners</td>
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<td>5.3 Roland Market Place Drive to Amber and Hays Streets</td>
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<td>Work toward extending Market Place Drive</td>
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<td>6.1 Develop Parking Solutions to Support Redevelopment</td>
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<td>Expand the parking district to include the Route 1 Overlay District</td>
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<td>Stripe the curbsides through lanes for on-street parking during limited time periods</td>
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<td>Identify locations for parking structures</td>
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<td>Place the Right-of-Way for on-street parking</td>
<td>Town, MDSHA</td>
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<td>7.1 Create Destinations for Community Interactions</td>
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<td>Introduce a movie theater in the Town</td>
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<td>Develop a civic square at Route 1 and Main Street that fits in with redevelopment at this critical intersection</td>
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<td>Create a performing arts center</td>
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<td>7.2 Develop Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections/Town Walks</td>
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<td>Construct a pedestrian link from George Street to Route 1 along the creek</td>
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<td>Develop town walks connecting Route 1 to adjacent neighborhoods and downtown</td>
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<td>Move pedestrian connections between the English Country Manor Apartments and the Project Study Area</td>
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<td>Develop a pedestrian gateway overhead on Route 1 at the western edge of the Project Study Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve pedestrian connections on Route 1 and along George and Thomas streets</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Replace traffic signal at Main Street connecting old Main Street and downtown with 6th and Park</td>
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<td>7.3 Improve Transit-Oriented Development to Support Route 1 Businesses</td>
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<td>Evaluate existing service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map major destinations and establish bus stops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand service during peak shopping times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand or modify service</td>
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<td>Explore using a trolley or other alternative vehicle</td>
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I. ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT

Goal:
Work toward a commitment to pursue the long term Master Plan for Route 1 to attract new infill development, redevelopment, and land assemblage.

1.1 Encourage redevelopment, development and infill projects

The Town of Bel Air will need to work with willing property owners and interested developers to create a Corridor that encourages pedestrian activities and helps create an attractive place for the Town's residents to live, work and play. To achieve this, a concept Master Plan illustrating the vision for redevelopment is proposed in this Route 1 Corridor Economic Revitalization Strategy. However, additional studies are needed to fully examine the transportation and design elements to accomplish the vision that will guide all future development activities. New development could be guided by the Town through interaction with parcel owners and developers. The Town can also take an additional step toward achieving the vision of the Route 1 Strategy by undertaking a Comprehensive Master Plan and Transportation Management Plan.

The lack of large enough parcels to make economically feasible projects is one of the greatest barriers to urban development as envisioned in the strategy. In the Town are a few undeveloped parcels and potential opportunities for land assemblage into larger mixed-use projects. Combining smaller adjacent parcels of land to create larger parcels is one strategy that will help to attract developers and begin the process of redevelopment. In addition, undeveloped and underdeveloped lots break up the visual and spatial connectivity along the Corridor. As envisioned in the Conceptual Master Plan, infill development and redevelopment can transform this highway commercial corridor into a vibrant mixed-use extension of downtown.

Following are some of the required steps for implementing the Town's vision.

Implementation Steps

Ongoing Actions:
- Work towards developing the Conceptual Master Plan for the Route 1 Corridor to visually guide potential development projects in a layout that is historically
similar to the existing downtown pattern of development.

- Work with willing property owners on redevelopment, development and infill projects, such as, among others:
  - Harford Mall
  - Pontiac car dealer site at the intersection of Route 1 and Atwood Road.
  - Main Street and Route 1 redevelopment (Plaza)
  - All Shopping Centers
  - Properties at the intersection of Atwood Street and Route 1

- Work toward land assemblage and lot consolidation to create larger redevelopment sites.

- Encourage infill development and redevelopment of parcels through the optional method of development process.

**Long Term Actions:**

- Develop a Comprehensive Master Plan to further design and detail the various planning layouts.
I.2 Modify and encourage urban design development standards

Existing zoning along Route 1 allows for the density and type of development that can meet the vision and goals of the Study Area. However, some modifications are recommended to encourage and strengthen the desired outcome. In the optional method of development, the Route 1 Overlay District recommends a proportional staggered setback for upper floors on proposed development with Route 1 frontage. This stepback, in effect, diminishes the ability to establish a street wall that can create a human scale and sense of place along the Corridor, working counter to the vision.

The area between George Street and Route 1 is currently designated as R-1 and R-2 (low and medium density single family residential), and R-3 in the section along Route-24. This area would be ideal to develop as a transitional area between the quiet single family residential neighborhood beyond George Street, and given the demand for housing in the Town, this area should be rezoned to high density housing (R-3) to include apartments and condominiums with appropriate open space provisions and buffering. This would encourage a young rental demographic in addition to other age groups in the Project Study Area that is critical to support the businesses along the Route 1 Corridor. Close proximity of residents adds to the spirit and vitality of the street life. Higher density residential development also creates a buffer between the Route 1 Corridor and the Howard Park neighborhood.

Implementation Steps

Priority Actions:

- Modify the Route 1 Overlay District in the Town of Bel Air Zoning Ordinance to eliminate the proportional staggered setback for upper floors on proposed development with Route 1 frontage. When the proposed development is adjacent to existing single-family development, the staggered setback on that side of the building shall remain in place.
- Rezone the area between George Street and Route 1 as a transitional area that could be redeveloped with higher density residential, such as high-end townhouses/row houses, 2 over 2 units and condominiums. Multifamily above commercial should be encouraged on Route 1.
Short Term Actions:

- Maintain the existing residential zoning and character of the Howard Park neighborhood.

I.3 Implement incentives for redevelopment

Market forces alone may not be adequate to drive redevelopment along the Route 1 Corridor in the fashion envisioned by the Town and its residents. To achieve the desired extent of change, the Town may need to undertake capital improvements, and offer additional benefits and incentives to developers.

Creating a Tax Increment Financing District, will allow the Town to acquire land, where necessary and make the much needed public improvements. The Town could use the taxes generated by the increase in assessed valuation (the tax increment) to repay the bonds that financed the public improvement costs.

Implementing incentives such as tax-abatements, tax credits and streamlining the development approval process might encourage land assemblage and infill development. In addition, expanding the Main Street boundary to include the Route 1 Overlay District offer additional benefits, including loans and design assistance. A Business Improvement District (BID) could be established by the businesses in the Project Study Area to focus on beautifying the corridor, marketing and promoting the businesses, and possibly funding the expanded Town-Go-Round service.

Implementation Steps

Priority Action:

- Provide design assistance and loans to existing business owners to improve or upgrade facades, signs, buildings or sites.

Short Term Actions:

- Create a Tax Increment Financing District for the Route 1 Overlay District.
- Provide information to business and property owners as well as developers on various new market tax credits and State programs, such as community investment tax credits.
Ongoing Actions:

- Encourage infill development and redevelopment of parcels through the optional method of development process.
- Offer incentives for land assemblage, such as:
  - Publicly funded infrastructure or site improvements (streets, parks, utilities).
  - Density bonuses.
  - Reduced development fees.
  - Land acquisition write-downs and loans.
  - Letter of credit to enhance developer’s ability to get a loan.
- Work with loans officers and other stakeholders to provide property owners benefits such as:
  - Advance loans against committed, but not funded, equity or debt.
  - Funding of developer reserves.
  - Loan guarantees.
II. Streetscape Design and Identity

Goal:
Construct an overall streetscape design plan to enhance the urban setting and foster pedestrian related activities towards creating a sense of place for the Route 1 Corridor.

II.1 Create a strong sense of identity throughout the Route 1 Corridor

A strong marketing and promotion theme is essential to give the Route 1 Corridor in Bel Air a distinct identity that will set it apart from the rest of Route 1. This will help not only in creating a sense of place within the Town for residents, but will also announce the arrival into the Town of Bel Air for visitors using Route 1. An attractive Corridor with banners and gateways will encourage people passing along the Corridor to stop for a while to eat and shop, resulting in a significant increase in sales and business opportunities for retailers. This can eventually help convert the Bel Air Route 1 Corridor into a mixed-use destination with day and night time activities. The Local Government Infrastructure Financing Program would be an important resource to tap for financing these improvements.

Implementation Steps

Short Term Actions:
- Design a marketing theme and logo that defines a new image for the Route 1 Corridor. This design can effectively be used to promote the Corridor to investors, developers and the public. It can also help to market existing businesses.

Ongoing Actions:
- Install banners on street using identity logo.
- Develop and implement a marketing package for the Route 1 Corridor that will attract customers as well as new retail, residential, office and theater users into the Project Study Area.

Long Term Actions:
- Install a three-dimensional gateway feature in the median of Route 24 and Route 1.
II.2 Develop streetscape improvements for Route 1

Streetscape improvements such as a widened right-of-way, sidewalks, street furniture and landscaping will in due course increase the property values adjoining the Route 1 Corridor, and the money that is dedicated to these improvements by the Town can be recovered during the operation of the TIF District, as described earlier. Some of the steps involved in making these streetscape improvements to the Route 1 Corridor are described below.

A comprehensive approach for a “new look” for Route 1 offers a number of benefits:
- A unified design.
- A coordinated look that links individual sites and businesses.
- A dramatic impact since the effort is undertaken as one project, rather than parcel-by-parcel improvements that can take a longer period of time for completion.
- A commitment to change.

Implementation Steps

Short Term Actions:
- Replace the bollards near the McDonald’s, Wendy’s and Harford Mall with raised concrete or landscape medians.

Ongoing Actions:
- Work with Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) to widen right-of-way to allow for streetscape improvements including street trees and sidewalks.
- For any new redevelopment that occurs prior to the implementation of the new streetscape, move sidewalks to a location beyond the future right-of-way so that the sidewalk is located in its final proposed location.
- Place utilities underground as redevelopment occurs or as streetscape improvements are made.

Long Term Actions:
- Study the feasibility of adding a landscape median along the Route 1 Corridor, and the locations it can occur at while allowing for left turns at key intersections of businesses.
- Using the concept design as a model, design the streetscape elements such as banners, street trees,
landscape enhancements, street furniture and pedestrian scale lights along Route 1. This will determine the extent to which an additional right-of-way is required along the Route 1 Corridor.
- Create a strong visual uniformity for the corridor through a coordinated design, color and style scheme for all streetscape elements.
- Ensure that design solutions are emergency vehicle compliant.

II.3 Implement streetscape improvements along George Street, Tollgate Street and Boulton Street

Sidewalks, landscaping and signage are an essential part of the vision for a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood and mixed-use corridor. Unlike in the Route 1 Corridor, sidewalks along George Street, Tollgate Street and Boulton Street are in relatively good condition. However, there are a few gaps in the sidewalk and areas without street trees. Installing new signs linking the Route 1 Study Area and downtown will encourage pedestrians and bicyclists. A detailed assessment of the condition and design changes required is essential to determine recommendations for streetscape elements along George, Tollgate and Boulton Streets. These improvements should reinforce the proposed connections and the Project Study Area’s identity.

Implementation Steps

Short Term/Ongoing Actions:
- Undertake a study to evaluate in detail the existing streetscape conditions and make recommendations for improvements, including sidewalks, street trees, signs and bicycle connections.
III. Transportation and Traffic Management

Goal:
Develop a system to improve access, reduce congestion and generally improve traffic management in the Route 1 Corridor.

III.1 Prepare and implement a Transportation Management Plan for the Route 1 Study Area

A Transportation Master Plan (TMP) will guide the traffic patterns and transit solutions for the Town of Bel Air over the next decade as it strives to balance the social, economic and environmental values of local residents and commuters using the Route 1 Corridor. The TMP will take into consideration the existing vision for the Town so that the Town can work with the Maryland State Highway Administration and other stakeholders to re-examine existing conditions and offer transportation management solutions. Additional streets such as the extension of Market Place Drive, as illustrated on the Interim Redevelopment Scenario and Conceptual Master Plan, can help to alleviate traffic by giving residents and commuters more options and thus distributing traffic on multiple streets.

Implementation Steps

Short Term Actions:
• Work with the Harford Mall and Maryland State Highway Administration to improve access to the Mall and minimize left turn lanes at the intersection of Route 1 and Route 24. This can be accomplished by installing new signs that lead traffic through this intersection to Boulton Street where left turns should be encouraged.

Long Term Actions:
• Examine transportation management solutions for the Project Study Area to include:
  - Installing a landscape median on Route 1.
  - Extending Market Place Drive.
  - Examining one-way traffic.
  - Linking Route 24 and Route 924.
III.2 Undertake a study to improve the internal parcel road connections

A critical need in the Study Area is to find pedestrian and vehicular connections between the parcels adjoining the Route 1 Corridor to minimize curb cuts and improve the traffic flow. The topography of the Project Study Area, however, may not permit vehicular connections in some areas.

**Implementation Steps**

**Ongoing Actions:**
- Work through the Town's zoning and development review process on inter-parcel connections to encourage travel between parcels, minimize curb cuts on Route 1 and improve pedestrian and vehicular connections.

III.3 Extend Market Place Drive north to Archer and Hays Street

Congestion at the intersection of Route 1 and Route 24 can be minimized significantly by extending Market Place Drive north to meet Route 1 at Archer Street and Hays Street. This will help divert a large segment of the traffic that needs to get to Route 1 from Route 24 and will open up additional redevelopment opportunities along Market Place Drive for mixed-use development.

**Implementation Steps**

**Ongoing Actions:**
- Extend Market Place Drive north to Hays Street
  - Work with the Harford County School Board to support Market Place Drive extension.
  - Work with MDSHA and the Department of Public Works to design and construct the Market Place Drive extension.
III.4 Develop parking solutions to support redevelopment

Changes in the development pattern and increased mixed-uses along the Route 1 Corridor will require additional parking facilities. Expanding the Town's parking district to include the Route 1 Overlay District, building parking structures and providing on street parking during non-peak hours are some solutions that would help bridge the gap between supply and demand. The Interim Redevelopment Scenario and the Conceptual Master Plan illustrate a few solutions.

Implementation Steps

Short Term Actions:
- Expand the parking district to include the Route 1 Overlay District.
- Identify locations for parking structures as part of the current parking study.

Ongoing Actions:
- Widen the right-of-way as appropriate to accommodate on-street parking in front of future buildings.

Long Term Actions:
- Stripe the curbside through-lanes on Route 1 for on street parking and examine the time periods that parking can occur.
IV. CONNECTIVITY

GOAL:
Ensure that people can easily and safely move within the Study Area and connect to other adjacent destinations through a multi-modal transportation system.

IV.1 Create destinations for community interactions

The Town of Bel Air would benefit tremendously from the creation of community gathering spaces that foster greater interaction and camaraderie among the Town’s residents. These public gathering spaces are integral to reinforcing community identity. The most successful civic squares and plazas are usually small park-like settings supported with retail such as corner stores, bookstores, cafes, restaurants and the like in the vicinity. In addition, movie theaters, museums and art galleries act as great destinations and spur more community interaction than public spaces with no surrounding activities.

Implementation Steps

Short Term Actions:
- Work with stakeholders to develop a movie theater at the Harford Mall, the restaurant row redevelopment site, or any other site that can meet this need. Linking a movie theater with the proposed performing arts center will bolster the creation of an entertainment node on Route 1.

Ongoing Actions:
- Work towards locating a performing arts center along Route 1 that compliments the Bel Air High School’s expansion, creates a destination and provides a gathering place to nurture community cultural activities.

Long Term Actions:
- Develop a civic square/plaza at the terminus of Main Street at Route 1 that ties in with redevelopment at this critical intersection.
IV.2 Develop bicycle and pedestrian connections/ town walks

Distances are actually not that great between downtown Bel Air and the Project Study Area although they are perceived fairly far apart. Developing a system of bicycle and pedestrian connections between these two destinations will enhance the redevelopment of the Route 1 Overlay District. Increased pedestrian activity and a thriving street life promote the feeling of stewardship and pride in the community, while putting activity on the street.

Implementation Steps

Priority Actions:
- Construct a pedestrian link from George Street to Route 1 along the creek through the existing site of the car wash. This can simply be a trail of earth, sand or pea gravel, which is less costly and permanent, while it provides an attractive pedestrian connection to Route 1. Any substantial connection may impact potential future development on this parcel.
- Stripe a bicycle lane on Thomas Street to connect the Courthouse and downtown, with the Ma and Pa Trail and the Route 24 underpass to the shopping centers and Route 1.

Ongoing Actions:
- Develop town walks connecting Route 1 to adjacent neighborhoods, schools and downtown. The marketing logo for the Route 1 Strategy can be painted on the sidewalks or installed along the town walks. Several town walks are illustrated on the Interim Redevelopment Scenario and the Conceptual Master Plan.
- Make pedestrian connections between the English Country Manor Apartments and the Project Study Area.
- Improve pedestrian connections where possible including between parcels on Route 1, on streets connecting to Route 1 and along George and Thomas Streets.

Long Term Actions:
- Develop a pedestrian gateway overpass over Route 1 at the western edge of the Project Study Area.
IV.3 Improve Town-Go-Round services to support Route 1 businesses and provide an alternative method of transportation

A low-cost or free shuttle service is often used to encourage transit and local business use. They are sometimes partially funded by local businesses in a DID, as is the case of the trolley in Bethesda, Maryland. The Town of Bel Air has an existing low-cost Town-Go-Round, which could be expanded or the route modified to support the changes and the new development along the Route 1 Corridor. This bus service, if transferred to a trolley or other attractive bus, could also be used as an effective marketing tool to reinforce the identity and logo for the Town.

Linking destinations, such as the hospital and schools with shops and restaurants could increase usage during lunch hours, while not adding traffic to the roadways.

Implementation Steps

Short Term Actions:
- Evaluate the Town-Go-Round service to expand the route that reaches all destinations.
- Map major destinations and existing Town-Go-Round stops to identify future potential routes and stops.

Ongoing Actions:
- Expand service during peak shopping seasons with promotional tickets to establishments or a one-day pass.
- Expand or modify the Town-Go-Round service to encourage usage.

Long Term Actions:
- Explore the option to use a trolley or other attractive vehicle for the Town-Go-Round that gives a unique identity to the Town.