



PURPLE LINE

EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



PREPARED BY:





The Purple Line represents Maryland's largest transit investment in the 21st century. Historically, transit investments of this scale have been transformative for the people and places that surround them, but these transformations have often been at the expense of residents and businesses with less economic and political power. This report highlights transportation, development and housing, and economic development strategies to make sure the benefits of the Purple Line are equitably shared.

THE PURPLE LINE, a new light rail line in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties outside of Washington, D.C. that is expected to open by 2026, will connect numerous distinct suburban communities; existing business districts; the main campus of the University of Maryland, College Park; and the existing public transit network. The communities that surround the Purple Line include affluent low-density neighborhoods, suburban downtowns, and neighborhoods with strong Latinx/e, immigrant, and African American communities. The **Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)/Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)** and the other agencies, jurisdictions, and organizations responsible for land use, transportation, housing, and economic development along the Purple Line corridor have been working hard to prepare for the Purple Line for over a decade. There is still more to do, however, to align policies, plans, and resources to complement the transit investment, particularly in areas that will have fixed-route transit for the first time. Many of these efforts have been championed by the **Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC)**, which has been working with partners for years to organize around equitable outcomes for the Purple Line corridor, and the **National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG)**, an urban planning and policy research center at **University of Maryland (UMD), College Park** that provides administrative and technical support for the PLCC. This report, executed in partnership with MDOT/MTA, was supported by a grant from the **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** and led by NCSG in partnership with economic consulting firm **ECONorthwest**. It is the culmination of several years of effort toward the goal of advancing **equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD)** planning ahead of the line's opening.

CORE PRIORITIES

PEOPLE-FIRST TRANSIT ACCESS



The Purple Line introduces new opportunities to many places that currently lack access to rail transit. These locations are disproportionately home to the Purple Line Corridor's lowest-income residents, especially in Langley Park and greater Riverdale. However, planned improvements to the built environment around Purple Line stations are insufficient to deliver safe access to transit for all corridor residents. Achieving the Purple Line's full potential to address existing inequities and to spur economic development through improved transit access will require strategic and coordinated improvements to pedestrian, bike, and bus accessibility throughout the corridor.



FROM TRANSIT-ORIENTED DISPLACEMENT TO EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



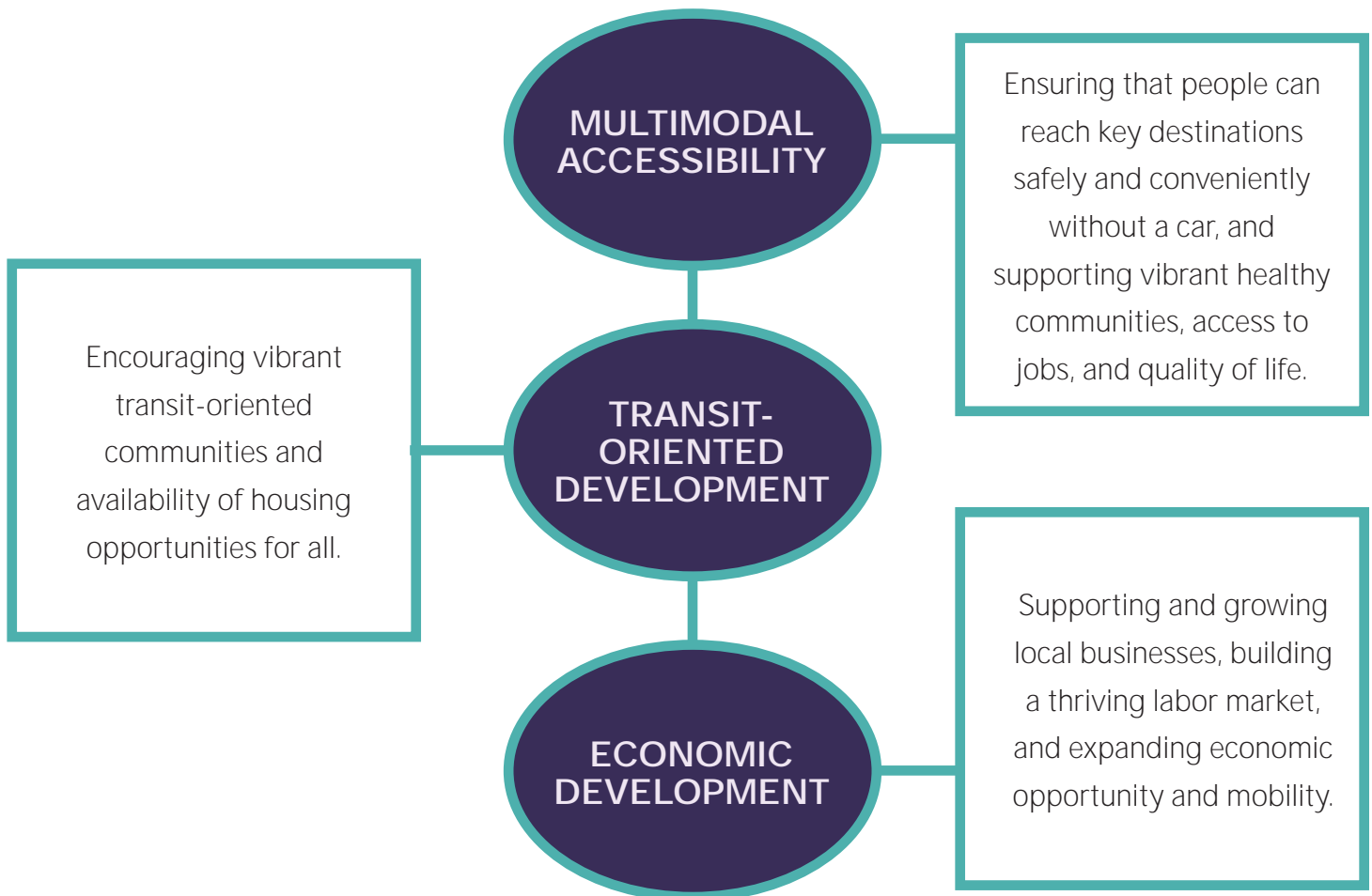
Completion of the Purple Line is expected to attract new residential and commercial developments due to improved transit access. While transit-oriented development (TOD) will create new opportunities for housing options and growth in jobs and businesses, it is likely to accelerate the rate of displacement already occurring in the Corridor. Planning and TOD strategies that center the needs of residents and small businesses can help more of them partake in the economic benefits associated with the Purple Line.

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH



There are pronounced economic inequities along racial lines within the Corridor. The Purple Line will bring closer communities with very different identities, employment opportunities, and industry strengths. Lower-income households, renters, and people of color face a greater risk of displacement from redevelopment and rising rents. To ensure historically disadvantaged populations benefit from increased accessibility to quality jobs and other amenities associated with a new transit line, efforts to grow key industries in the Purple Line Corridor should be paired with interventions to support small businesses, a diverse group of entrepreneurs, and residents looking to build skills and obtain quality jobs.

STRATEGY TOPICS





SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES



MULTIMODAL ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES

- **Manage automobile traffic to reduce conflicts and risks for pedestrians** through reduced traffic speeds, safer intersection design and operations, and reducing the impact of driveways on pedestrian safety
- **Improve pedestrian infrastructure on public streets**, including additional safe pedestrian crossing opportunities on major roads and improved sidewalks
- **Improve pedestrian connections on private property**, including connections between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas and pedestrian-oriented design for commercial and mixed-use development
- **Coordinate and expand bus service** connecting to the Purple Line to expand community access to the line
- **Optimize Purple Line service**, including headways, fare structure, and integration assumptions with other forms of transit
- **Improve bicycle routes connecting to the Purple Line**, including safe routes near stations that link to an integrated network and Purple-Line-parallel long-distance bicycle routes that connect to existing trails

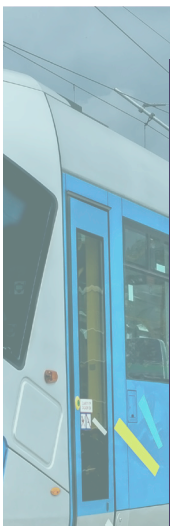
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- **Expand affordable housing resources**, seeking external funding and opportunities for use of public and tax-exempt land
- **Leverage market-rate development to deliver mixed-income housing** by linking affordability requirements and incentive programs in Prince George's County (potentially including a broader inclusionary housing program) and calibrating Montgomery County's long-standing Moderately-Priced Dwelling Unit requirements to reflect changing market conditions and housing goals
- **Protect existing low-cost housing and vulnerable residents** by expanding measures to improve housing stability for existing households at greatest risk of displacement and preserving and improving existing lower-cost housing in the corridor
- **Increase transit-supportive housing production** through allowing greater housing density in appropriate locations within key station areas and placemaking investments to improve livability, walkability, and vibrancy for areas targeted for new development
- **Expand housing choice in Purple Line neighborhoods** through potential changes to zoning/development regulations to expand opportunities for middle housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, and small multifamily buildings, in low-density areas near the Purple Line



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- **Protect and nurture existing small businesses** through support adapting to changing marketing conditions and a growing customer base and preserving businesses and cultural institutions that have particular importance to existing residents or meet the needs of specific subpopulations within the corridor
- **Attract and grow new small businesses** through support for diverse small retail, restaurant, and service businesses to locate in new mixed-use, transit-oriented development; foster entrepreneurship and small business growth in existing business clusters
- **Grow existing industry clusters** with a focus on increasing employment and equitable access to opportunities, including the information technology and quantum computing sector in the Discovery District near UMD; professional services, media and communications, and hospitality administration around Bethesda and Silver Spring CBDs; strong industrial districts in the New Carrollton area; and opportunities to attract federal government facilities and leasing in key locations
- **Leverage growth in education and healthcare industries to meet residents' needs**, including community-serving medical and health-care offices and expanding UMD centers and initiatives that serve the broader community
- **Expand opportunities for residents to enhance their skills and career paths** through training and skill-building opportunities for residents, focusing on residents of color and immigrants
- **Address barriers to workforce participation and advancement** including barriers to job qualification, job placement, and career advancement in the workplace and wrap-around support for residents to fully participate in the workforce



THESE EFFORTS WILL REQUIRE PARTICIPATION, COLLABORATION, AND COMMITMENT

from many partners in the public and private sectors. As the strategies in this report are advanced toward implementation, it will also be essential to center the voices of impacted people and collaborate with the community to refine the recommendations and align new programs and investments with community needs and goals. The PLCC, as a broad coalition with a strong track record of delivering coordinated action, is well-positioned to help bring partners together around a shared agenda and advance a range of strategies to support equitable TOD in the Corridor.