

ITEM #3: MD 355 SOUTH

Staff Recommendation: Revise the recommendation for an overlay zone and support the Plan's recommendation to retain the existing I-1 Zone. Amend the zone to permit additional residential and limited commercial uses.

Property owners, in public testimony, are concerned that an overlay zone would be restrictive and harmful to their businesses. Community associations and interest groups have advocated that MD 355 become the County's Main Street with street-oriented mixed-use development.

The Plan recommends:

- Encouraging redevelopment including housing. Car dealerships do not necessarily require relocation if their surface lots are reconfigured to create development opportunities for other uses. Land use changes along MD 355 South are envisioned as a long-term potential.
- Maintaining the I-1 Zone and allowing application of a mixed-use overlay zone that permits housing, offices, and limited supporting commercial uses.

The MD 355 South corridor lies south of Paramount Drive and runs to the end of the planning area south of Gude Drive. This area is primarily composed of several car dealerships and auto related uses, including a gas station and strip commercial uses. All of the MD 355 South Corridor is developed under the I-1 (Light Industrial) Zone.

The Plan does not anticipate significant land use changes in this corridor in the short-term. In the long-term, some mixed-use infill redevelopment could occur under the existing I-1 Zone. Industrial and commercial zones are in the process of being revised and there is an opportunity to create new uses and standards, which would be appropriate for this area of the Sector Plan. This corridor can become a mixed-use corridor as envisioned in the Plan.

Short and Long-Term Redevelopment Potential for MD 355 South Corridor

Under the current I-1 Zone, all automobile-related uses are permitted by right. Automobile-related uses are governed by site plan review as well as special regulations found in the Zoning Ordinance. The zone also allows dwellings through special exception at 21.5 du/ac, if 35 percent of the units are dedicated to productivity housing.

In the short-term, the existing automobile-related uses will continue. Several car dealerships have long-term leases and property owners are either building new facilities, such as the new Nissan dealership on Indianola Drive, or have plans to redevelop existing properties.

In the long-term, beyond ten years, development surrounding the Metro station could increase the value of properties in the Corridor, creating opportunities for infill redevelopment. Properties, such as Lexis/Audi and Hersons Honda, which are each more than three acres in size, could be reconfigured with office or residential uses fronting MD 355 with the first level dedicated to an automobile showroom. Car storage and service areas could be built behind mixed-uses that front MD 355 and close to CSX/Metro tracks.

Redevelopment of the MD 355 South Corridor is constrained by MD 355, the CSX/Metro tracks, and future road improvements, including an interchange at MD 355 and East Gude Drive.

Redevelopment Potential

Given the long-term redevelopment potential of this area, staff recommends retaining the I-1 Zone. If properties took advantage of existing housing opportunities of the I-1 Zone, approximately 250 new dwelling units could be achieved. More housing units would require assembly of three or more properties which is unlikely. The Sector Plan could also encourage housing by recommending residential uses such as life care facility, housing and related facilities for the elderly and handicapped persons, live work units and commercial uses, including drug stores and grocery stores, could be appropriate for the Corridor.

The vision of the Plan also includes streetscape recommendations that currently cannot be achieved under the I-1 Zone's development standards for car dealerships. A text amendment to Section 59-D-4.367 will be submitted for the Planning Board approval in Worksession #5 for the purpose of achieving compliance with the Sector Plan's streetscape recommendations.