TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

The area’s transportation system is one of the most critical elements of infrastructure needed to sustain the City’s quality of life as well as to accommodate growth and development both within the City and in the region. The transportation needs of the Planning Area are multi-modal. Regional access must be facilitated, but not to the detriment of existing or planned neighborhoods. Overall, transportation systems planning and adherence to sound engineering principles should guide the review of development proposals to ensure safe and efficient access and circulation. Any disruptive impacts of future improvements to the existing transportation network and quality of life should be minimized. The integrity of non-highway transportation facilities must be protected and enhanced. Walkability, biking and public transportation are key components of a truly integrated transportation system.

Regional Approach

1. A comprehensive ongoing review of a balanced transportation network for the City and its Planning Area, the Washington Metropolitan region, as well as the Statewide system is supported. This review should include not only an analysis of the operational capabilities of the existing and anticipated road network, but also the need to ensure that a multi-modal approach is taken in providing for current and future transportation needs. All modes of transportation, including, but not limited to rail, bus, High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV), bicycling and walking should be included in any analysis.

2. The City should support the study of new ways to fund all modes of transportation on a region-wide basis. This study should focus on such issues as advanced protection of right-of-way for not only highways, but also transit lines.

3. A feasibility assessment of a new roadway linking MD 197 near Bowie State University with MD 3 in Anne Arundel County should be undertaken as part of the Bowie, Mitchellville and Vicinity Master Plan update.

Bikes, Trails and Pedestrians

4. Implementation of the Complete Streets Policy and City Trails Master Plan should proceed as quickly as possible. The installation of on-road bike route signage (including “Bikes May Use Full Lane” signs, where applicable) should be used as an interim means of identifying streets for an on-road bike route system on City streets until those roads have been permanently improved to include either a wide shoulder for use by cyclists or the construction of an adjacent off-road, multi-use trail.

NEW Development of The Bowie Byway trail system as described in the Trails Master Plan is a priority, and it represents an important goal for connecting major destination points in the City along a north-south transect that crosses major highways.

5. A new trail within the alignment of the former PT-1 corridor should be constructed to connect Church Road to Northview Drive, in order to link residential areas within the Church Road corridor with the new Northview Elementary School and Bowie Local Center.

6. The development of an uninterrupted linear trail network (including a bridge to Anne Arundel County in the vicinity of the WB & A Trail) for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians along the Patuxent River corridor should be a priority.

NEW A route for a new Patuxent River footpath trail should be identified. This trail will serve as a recreational and educational resource highlighting this important natural watershed defining the eastern boundary of the City.

7. As part of the expansion of the trail system throughout the County, the development of service/rest areas and enhanced access to existing communities should be provided along the network.

8. The planned Bowie Heritage Trail system, including construction of trails from the WB & A Spur Trail to the Bowie State MARC Station and connections to the main WB & A Trail, should be
completed as soon as possible. An on-road trail should be identified between Tanglewood Park and the Bowie Heritage Trail trailhead at 12th Street and connect with new, the proposed trails between Old Town Bowie and Bowie State University/MARC Station.

9. Construction of a pedestrian crossing of US 50 (bridge or underpass) connecting Melford to Governor Bridge Road should be evaluated in the next Master Plan update.

NEW Construction of an elevated pedestrian crossing of MD 214 should be completed in order to connect The Bowie Byway trail into the South Lake development and County Master Plan Trail extending to Upper Marlboro.

10. Interim use of existing, but unimproved, rights-of-way for trails is encouraged where links to major trail systems can be provided to enhance access to these systems.

11. Planning for alternative uses for the publicly owned portions of the former A-44 right-of-way, such as for preservation of wildlife corridors and installation of needed trails and recreational facilities, should begin immediately. Use of this right-of-way for hiker-biker trails is recommended as per the Trails Master Plan.

12. The overall non-motorized transportation goal of the City shall be to make it possible for residents to walk or bike anywhere in the City, safely separated from vehicular traffic, where possible. The City will be a pedestrian- and bike-friendly community. Generally, all new development will be designed as such.

Transit

13. The City should work to increase use of available public transportation facilities, such as the Northview Drive Park-and-Ride Lot, Metrobus, and MARC train service. To provide better transit options for City residents, consideration should also be given to enhancing public transportation service within the City, including either alteration of existing bus routes or creation of new ones, or both. In addition, the City should increase its advocacy for more on-demand transit service providers and paratransit service for City residents.

The following specific improvements and enhancements be made to the transit systems serving the City:

1. Initiate County bus (TheBus) transit service in Old Town Bowie to connect it to other cultural and business attractions, including Bowie State University. (Short Term)

2. Ensure the establishment of a regional transit route from Annapolis to Laurel via the Northview Park-and-Ride lot in the next several years. (Mid-Term)

3. Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between the 450 Mainstreet area and the City of Greenbelt. (Long Term)

4. Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between Bowie Town Center and Largo Town Center, including service along Woodmore, Mount Oak and Mitchellville Roads. (Long Term)

5. Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between Fairwood and Upper Marlboro, via Fairwood Parkway, Church Road, Leeland Road and US 301. (Long Term)

6. Designate the US 50 corridor as a Priority Transit Corridor on all future County plans. (Long Term)

7. Continue to advocate for efficiency improvements to WMATA bus service. (Ongoing)

Future Road Expansion

14. Any improvements to the transportation network in and around the City and its Planning Area should maximize traffic flow and operational efficiency, while minimizing disruptive impacts on public transit users, pedestrians and safe cycling operations.
15. To the greatest extent possible, no new highways should be constructed. Continued highway expansion should not be the sole means of accommodating new growth. The City supports a system of multi-modal radial corridors consisting of such alternatives as rail; exclusive bus service; High Occupancy Vehicle lanes; bikeways, etc. Innovative techniques such as Transportation Systems Management (TSM) should be used to improve the efficiency of existing and future transportation improvements. These corridors include the WB&A trail system, Amtrak Line, US Route 50, and MD Route 214, and a specific transit corridor serving the Bowie area, along with, and supplemented by, the establishment of a circumferential transit corridor. The preferred transit corridor would extend Metrorail from New Carrollton to Bowie and Annapolis via the right-of-way of US Route 50.

16. With the exception of US Route 50, MD Route 214, US Route 301, and the portion of Mitchellville Road north of Northview Drive, the City opposes the upgrading of all major roadways to six (6) “through” lanes.

17. All upgrades to the above roads should include HOV lanes/exclusive bus lanes (within the same lane).

18. With the exception of those roads identified herein, finite highway capacity limits of a four-lane road network should be used as the basis for setting the residential density and commercial intensity levels in the planning area.

19. The City should continue to work toward finding a means, such as the existing pedestrian/bicycle bridge over US Route 50 that was actively sought by the City, to minimize the physical separation of residential communities caused by major roadways such as US Route 50, US Route 301, MD Route 450, MD Route 214 and MD Route 197.

MD 197 Policy

20. MD Route 197 should be designed to accommodate a maximum of four (4) lanes for that portion of MD Route 197 between Kenhill Drive and relocated MD Route 450. Except where added width is needed at intersections, a continuous 8- to 12-foot wide median should run between the northbound and southbound lanes of MD Route 197 between the intersection of MD Route 197 with Tulip Grove Drive, and the intersection of MD Route 197 and Lerner Place. The alignment of the road should be configured for minimal roadbed and minimum disturbance of foliage on both sides of the new roadway, and minimal disturbance of the bike trail on the east side of the existing road. Safe pedestrian crossing from the Long Ridge Section to Foxhill Park is also a goal.

MD 450 Policy

21. Between High Bridge Road and MD Route 3, MD Route 450 shall have no more than four (4) through lanes of traffic. Breakdown lanes not to exceed seven (7) feet in width may be placed on the outside of the through lanes. Medians shall not exceed 16 feet within the City limits, except at intersections where the width of the median may be adjusted to accommodate left turn lanes. An eight (8) foot wide path shall be located along the entire northern side of the road to accommodate non-motorized travel. In general, left- and right-turn lanes shall be provided as required. Traffic signals shall remain at all intersections currently signalized. MD Route 450 between Highbridge Road and MD Route 3 shall be landscaped based on a design plan agreed to by the City, SHA and impacted residents.

-Additional focus should be placed on redevelopment in the MD Route 450 Mainstreet area that converts this area from a through arterial to a true main street design, with narrower streets and on-street parking. Appropriate design standards should be adopted in conjunction with the update of the Bowie, Mitchellville and Vicinity Area Master Plan. The roadway design should slow vehicular traffic, be bicycle-compatible and include upgraded pedestrian crossings.

US 301 Policy

22. The City supports the ongoing efforts by the Maryland State Highway Administration to develop acceptable alternates for the upgrade of US Route 301 in Bowie. The continued growth and development of this corridor, combined with increased volumes of regional through traffic, has substantially increased the degree of traffic congestion and accidents and will continue to do so in the future.
• Advanced land acquisition for all Master Plan roads is encouraged to protect the integrity of the local and regional transportation networks.

• The State should budget added funds for advanced land acquisition and access controls to protect future right-of-way and median properties from development.

• Growth should occur in compact locations adjacent to major interchanges to promote reduced burdens on public infrastructure, conserve farmland, and to preserve existing woodlands and wetlands.

• Interchanges on US Route 301 in the Bowie and Vicinity Planning Area should be limited to the Collington Corporate Center and at MD Routes 214 and 197.

• Frontage roads should be located on the east and west sides of US Route 301, where necessary, to provide access to existing roads and to maintain the viability of local business areas. (e.g. MD Route 450/3 intersection design).

The grade-separated interchange should provide options and/or a reasonable alternative path for bicycle access through the interchange.

**MD 3 Policy**

23. The City supports a completely grade separated interchange (Option A) at the intersection of MD Route 450 and MD Route 3 to encourage drivers destined for points west of Bowie to use US Route 50 as opposed to MD Route 450. Regarding the upgrading of MD Route 3, the City supports the Boulevard Concept (Alternate #3) with the following modifications:

- Eliminate proposed right-in, right-out at Columbian Way.
- Eliminate proposed cul-de-sac from Sylvan Drive to median residence.
- Lower roadbed for upgraded MD Route 3 between existing Columbian Way connection points.
- Connect Columbian Way to Forest Drive using bridge over MD 3.
- Construct half diamond for access to MD Route 3 on the south side of Columbian Way/Forest Drive bridge.
- Install 2-way stop on service road at Forest Drive and install stop signs at Sylvan Drive and Whitemarsh Park.

The grade-separated interchange should also accommodate east/west and north/south bicycle traffic through the interchange.

**New Interchange on US 50/MD 193**

24. In order to prevent the expansion of MD Routes 450 and 197 beyond four (4) lanes through the City, and to provide another north-south connection to MD Route 450, an interchange should be provided on US Route 50 between MD Route 197 and MD Route 704.

25. An interchange should be constructed at US Route 50 and MD Route 193. MD Route 193 should be upgraded to a multi-lane divided roadway with an enhanced landscape package similar to that developed for MD Route 450 between MD Route 193 and Stonybrook Drive. An off-road, hiker-biker trail, with connections to existing and future planned multi-use trails, should be provided for the entire length of MD Route 193.

**Rural and Scenic Roads**
26. Preservation of existing rural and scenic roads should be supported whenever feasible. Rural and scenic roads should not be designed as main arterials. A list of scenic roads shall be developed and used during review of development proposals. These roads should also be classified by their function, i.e., local, collector, etc. The number of lanes should be minimized. Open section designs are acceptable for these roads. If designed as a rural collector, these roads may need to be designed to have a wider right-of-way and a landscaped median.

Traffic Management Techniques
27. Alternatives such as traffic calming techniques will be considered to slow traffic speeds where speeding has been documented to be a problem. The City’s petitioning process should be further refined.

28. The use of state-of-the-art technological devices, such as speed cameras and red light cameras, is encouraged to enhance safety on area roads.

29. An inter-jurisdictional corridor congestion management system should be investigated as soon as possible, as a means to eventually alleviate heavy regional traffic on certain highways, such as US 50, US 301, MD 3 and the segment of MD 450 between MD 3 and Race Track Road.

30. New subdivision lots with individual or shared driveway access directly to Church Road should be prohibited.
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment is one of our most precious resources. Without proper guidance and management, development sprawl can overcome and destroy the community’s irreplaceable natural assets. Monitoring natural ecosystems, such as 100-year floodplain, steep slopes, wetlands, wooded areas and critical habitat areas on a watershed wide basis, creation of a sustainable approach to development, establishment of performance standards, and preservation of significant open space and forested lands through conservation efforts and pollution prevention measures demonstrate a commitment to the long-term protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Climate change has become a critical challenge to the health of the natural and man-made environment and all decisions on land use and development should be considered according to their potential impact on climate. Will the actions improve, maintain or degrade elements of the natural environment?

Overall Policy
1. The local environment comprising the City of Bowie and surrounding community is worthy of preservation, protection and enhancement for the benefit of current residents and future generations. The City is committed to preserving and creating green space, habitat corridors, “green” parks, tree planting areas, etc.

2. The Patuxent River is recognized as being a valuable environmental resource within close proximity to the City of Bowie. This resource has a rich heritage dating back to pre-historic and Colonial times and is worthy of protection efforts from local government, residents and the business community. The network of environmental assets related to the Patuxent ecosystem includes “Sensitive Areas”, such as 100-year floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes, and other natural characteristics.

3. The protection and enhancement of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are endorsed. Furthermore, it is recognized that efforts to preserve and protect the local environment are essential in the successful joint restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Preservation
4. The Belt Woods should be preserved, protected and restored to perpetuate natural old growth forest habitat with its indigenous ecological community and aboriginal/native species.

5. The protection and preservation of open space to protect environmentally sensitive areas are strongly encouraged.

6. The Residential Agriculture (R-A), Open Space (O-S) and Reserved Open Space (R-O-S) zones (or any equivalent new zoning districts) should be expanded where possible to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

7. The preservation and protection of stream valleys, tracts of land with pristine environmental characteristics and a system of interconnecting greenways are primary objectives.

Woodland and Water Conservation
8. Recognition is given to the value of forested lands and wooded areas in the local environment. Trees play a vital role in the infrastructure of our community, contributing to the scenic beauty, the landscape and the overall quality of the natural as well as built environment. Trees support numerous ecosystems, including songbirds, small forest animals, wildflowers and smaller understory trees, improve air quality by removing pollutants and particulates and releasing oxygen. Trees reduce the amount of stormwater runoff at a development site and save thousands of dollars that would have been spent on drainage ditches and other solutions. Trees also play an important role in deadening noise pollution, contributing to overall energy conservation efforts and enhancing property values throughout our community. Woodland conservation/tree preservation efforts and corresponding Tree Conservation Plans (TCPs) that exceed County and State thresholds are encouraged within the Planning Area. The City supports a “no net loss” approach to Woodland Conservation reviews associated with development projects.
9. Conservation landscaping methods are encouraged in all new development and renovation/restoration projects. Water conservation techniques that reduce water consumption and re-use harvested rainwater are encouraged.

Sustainable Actions
10. Broad-based efforts, including public education and awareness programs, should be conducted regarding sustainable land use practices and pollution prevention measures to enhance the protection, preservation and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

11. The City encourages the use of native, non-invasive plants by residents, businesses and the development community and endorses BayScapes, a regional, environmentally sound landscape program promoted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Chesapeake Bay Field Office).

12. Development proposals are encouraged to incorporate Green Building and Environmental Design techniques to the fullest extent possible as the Federal, State and City governments have all adopted Green Building policies. In order to prevent pollution and increase energy efficiency in buildings, the State of Maryland created tax incentives that benefit developers who build “green”.

NEW The City recognizes the importance of protecting the climate as well as the natural terrestrial environment. Decisions related to land use, transportation, housing and urban design can significantly impact greenhouse gas emissions with long-term impacts on climate change. The City advocates for development policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance climate resilience as described in the City Climate Action Plan.