



Station Area Advisory Committees

# VISION PLAN

## Social Security Administration



# INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the first phase of the Station Area Advisory Committees (SAAC). The SAAC process is part of the Red Line's public involvement program.

## What role did the SAACs fulfill?

SAACs are advisory to the MTA. Each SAAC was extremely helpful and provided input about their community and how the proposed station location would "behave" in their community. The SAACs functioned as a focus group. The SAACs have three major responsibilities:

- Vision Planning
- Station Design and Goals
- Sharing Information

This document summarizes the SAAC's activities regarding Vision Planning and Station Location. The Vision Plans for each SAAC summarize the first half of the SAAC efforts. The second half of the effort will focus on Station Design and Goals. The meetings for this effort started in October of 2010 and concluded in early spring of 2011. The documentation of the Station Design and Goals efforts will be an addendum to the Vision Plans.



*Light Rail Rendering*

During the Vision Planning process, each SAAC decided on their station area's boundaries; examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for their areas; and reviewed the connectivity elements for the proposed station locations. The SAACs not only examined what existed, but also thought about the potential for their areas. They also reviewed the station locations in relation to the Vision Plan for their station area. In some of the SAAC areas, it was confirmed that the station location was in keeping with the community goals and in other instances station locations were modified. Each Vision Plan explains the elements of the Visioning Process and the Station Location.

Once the SAACs completed their Vision Plan and confirmed their desired Station Location, Open Houses were held for the general public. These Open Houses were extensively advertised and over 400 citizens attended. There were four Open House sessions; each one focused on a different portion of the Red Line corridor. The areas were West – Baltimore County, Route 40 West, Downtown and the Eastside. At these Open Houses, the draft Vision Plans were discussed with the community and feedback was obtained. After this public feedback, the SAAC members revisited their Vision Plans to ensure, "Did we get it right?" The Vision Plans are the result of this effort.



# STATION AREA VISION PLAN

## Station Area Defined (analysis):

## What do we see? What do we know? What is our Vision Area?

### Analysis

#### a) Physical Boundaries

The Social Security Station catchment area is bounded on the West by I-695 (the Beltway) and its associated ramps.

- To the north, the catchment area has been defined by Woodlawn High School and the business park situated west of Woodlawn Drive.
- To the east, the catchment area extends just beyond Gwynn Oak Avenue, to incorporate adjacent business and retail properties, which are adjacent to Security Boulevard and Gwynn Oak Avenue. To the east, the catchment area is bounded by the GSA Social Security Administration (SSA) campus, with Perimeter Drive and Randolph Road. The catchment area is then segmented by Parallel Drive and I-70, and continues to the south to include Walden Circle Townhomes, Southwest Academy, and Westview Park.
- South of I-70 and west of Woodlawn drive, the catchment area extends to cover the existing residential community between I-695 and Woodlawn Drive, which becomes Crosby Road to the south.



Station location along Parallel Drive

As part of the planning exercise in determining the boundaries of the catchment area, the group identified the potential to service the community west of I-695, through Crosby road, since it was expected the community, with proper sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes, could access the proposed station. The result of the physical boundaries of the Vision Area are based on the capacity to navigate Woodlawn Drive, the limitations of I-695 and I-70, the footprint of the Social Security campus, and the ability to safely navigate the streets to access the station by the surrounding residential community.

#### b) Existing Conditions/Context

Land use is divided into various components:

- To the south of I-70, the properties are mostly composed of single-family housing and apartment complexes, with Southwest Academy as a dedicated educational zone.
- To the north of I-70 and east of Woodlawn Drive, the land is used by multiple SSA office buildings and supporting facilities with surface lots, and minimal open space.
- To the north of I-70 and west of Woodlawn Drive, the land is occupied by SSA West building, Morning Star Baptist Church properties, and multiple retail, car sales, and hospitality properties.
- To the north of Security Boulevard and west of Woodlawn Drive, the catchment area is comprised of older warehouse facilities of light industrial use, where some have been converted to office space.

In addition, there are multiple retail and surface parking lots which support the local community. To the north of I-70, there are multiple job opportunities in various fields; south of I-70 is predominantly a residential area with the Southwest Academy as a school anchor. The area is seen by the community as being a safe neighborhood, but it has been noted the character has changed significantly since the 60's and 70's.

There are safety concerns around some of the motels in the catchment area. There is also a concern regarding an increase in an unsafe pedestrian environment.



*Woodlawn Drive under I-695*

The group did not identify any significant landmarks, open space, or specific components to preserve or reinforce. No elements were identified as having current "green" principles in place.

Woodlawn Drive is an important artery to the community. It is a four-lane undivided state road. Parallel Drive and the drive to the Security West Building are two-lane undivided county roads.

As described by the group, pedestrian safety is a concern for this particular station. The SAAC recognizes that there is a need to address traffic calming measures to ensure the success of the project.

Currently, the site is serviced by MTA Local Route Bus #s 15, 40, 44, 57 and 77. No buses currently navigate Parallel Drive. Instead, Parallel Drive is an important access road for Social Security employees who use it to get westbound access to I-70 and I-695, from the campus parking areas.

### **c) Stabilization Area vs. Redevelopment Area**

The area is considered a stable area for the most part. North of I-70, it is the goal of the group to do away with the motels, to deter crime and prostitution. In addition, there is a long term goal to replace the car dealerships located on Security Boulevard with more medium to upscale retail.

The Morning Star Baptist Church has been a positive for the community. They have been purchasing available space and have several on-going remodeling efforts for their current facilities. It is expected this will help improve the northwest quadrant of the station catchment area.

South of I-70, although the residential community is considered stable, there are multiple properties in foreclosure. The community is concerned about the neighborhood retaining its stable environment given what is happening nationally with the housing market.

The quadrant northwest of I-70 and Woodlawn Drive is considered to be an opportunity for redevelopment as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Although in the margins of the 15-minute walking distance, this is the only area expected to be capable of supporting higher density development.



## Station Area Vision: What changes? What stays the same? What do we value?

### Values

The community has emphasized the importance of making access to the station a pedestrian-friendly environment. The community cares about the school age children who currently walk to and from Southwest Academy, as well as to Woodlawn High School. The sidewalks and the overall experience are considered inadequate to support the needs of a future pedestrian station. Through various meetings and a site visit, the SAAC identified the need to do away with one lane of traffic on Woodlawn Drive and turn it into wider sidewalks, with a dedicated bike lane.



*Social Security Administration Building*

## Goals : What are our Vision Area Goals? What do we want to see for the future?

### Guiding Principles

The most important Guiding Principle outlined by the group has been safety and security. Lighting and visibility are important components that have been discussed in multiple meetings. For this reason, it is the goal of the SAAC to have the platform situated as a bridge condition on I-70, crossing Woodlawn Drive. This will allow those using the station to be seen from the south of Woodlawn Drive, as well as from properties to the north, without being obstructed by tree lines.

The Guiding Principles for the SSA SAAC are as follows:

#### Intermodalism

- Identifying the modes of transportation and support facilities (such as parking and bus layover) in the station area and how they are connected: bus, taxi, shuttle, park-and-ride, kiss & ride, light rail, subway or heavy rail.
- Establish a vision for future connection of intermodalism with the Red Line in place.

#### Connectivity (Complete Streets)

- Accessibility: Providing an understanding of the surrounding circulation network for pedestrians, cyclists, patrons with disabilities (ADA) and general traffic circulation routes.
- Service providers/users: Identify the people who will use the station and access the vision area (i.e., residents, working commuters, students, patients, visitors, and event commuters).
- Areas Served/Anchor Uses: Identify station area activities and community establishments that will be served by the station such as institutions, employers and event attractions, and residents.
- Open Space: Identify existing open space within the Vision Area (parks, trails, historic and wetlands preservation). Establish the community vision for preservation of the existing open space or desire for development/redevelopment. Establish the Guiding Principles for adding or enhancing open space within the vision area and the connection to the station.
- Infrastructure/Streetscape: Provide a well-maintained aesthetically pleasing streetscape: Sidewalks, street lighting, street trees, bus stops, benches, services (garbage/recycling pickup, snow removal, utilities, trash/recycling receptacles, trash pickup).

## Land Use

- Evaluate current and future zoning opportunities for future development.
- Establish preference and availability for new development and redevelopment in the Vision Area. Principles should include preferred use (i.e., restaurants, shops, retail, etc.), scale, and infrastructure support (i.e., parking). Also, establish what is not preferred.
- Evaluate current housing stock and conditions.
- Establish residential preferences for the Vision Area. For example, stabilizing of a particular housing stock, development of new housing (single family, multi-family and senior housing).



*Retail along Security Blvd.*

## Economic Development

- Establish goals for job creation both for construction of the Red Line and future development.

## Safety and Security

- General lighting, passive surveillance, street activity, traffic calming, way finding signage (both system-wide and community specific).

## Neighborhood Identity

- Evaluate/provide visual connection (corridors) to link and promote activities, neighborhoods and uses.
- Acknowledge physical separations used to set area boundaries and define neighborhoods.
- Establish and celebrate key features of neighborhoods that foster community identity.
- Integrate art and art programs into the station area.
- Develop a marketing slogan, graphic design (signage), and promotion graphics for the neighborhood.

## Sustainability

- Establish and incorporate sustainability goals for the Vision Area and station design incorporating system-wide and station specific opportunities. Some examples include the use/increased use of pervious surfaces, use of indigenous landscape plants and materials where possible, promote recycling, utilize solar technology where practical, promote car sharing, and encourage use of mass transit by providing a safe, aesthetically pleasing and convenient transit system that connects communities.

## Vision Statement

The vision of the SSA Station is to create a safe and secure station environment where users can be seen while waiting at the platform, and have the safe means to walk and bike to and from the station.

The establishment of the station in this location is not likely to change zoning or type of land use; however, the availability of transit would bolster the attractiveness of more intensive use of some of the underutilized property and make homeownership attractive because of the ease of commuting.



This station is considered to bring value, safety, and mobility to the neighborhood through TOD. This station serves the schools, the residential community, the mixed-use retail and offices, light industrial, and Social Security Administration.

This is a walk up station with no associated parking space, the needs for bike racks to service the community, and clearly organized and designed vertical circulation elements to help guide the end user to the platform over Woodlawn Drive.



Walden Circle Townhouses

# STATION CONCEPT

## Station Location

### Platform Location/Behavior

Woodlawn Drive acts as the spine that connects both north and south of I-70. For this reason, the SAAC recognizes it is imperative to have Woodlawn Drive reconfigured to behave more like a boulevard than a high speed artery. Through various exercises and individual discussions, the SAAC has identified the station location as being centered above Woodlawn Drive, sitting on I-70. This is due to the goal of having passive safety design methods, where the user will be clearly seen from both sides of I-70, without any visual obstructions. This station platform is considered a Bridge Platform, as it bridges over and connects both sides of Woodlawn Drive.

The group also studied having the platform just west of Woodlawn Drive, and just east of Woodlawn Drive, both on I-70 and just off of I-70 (adjacent to I-70, as an elevated bridge alignment). Both of these were seen as undesirable and as less than optimal solutions. All the SAAC members concurred that the best alternative is to have the station platform be situated as a bridge condition on I-70 and immediately over Woodlawn Drive.



Woodlawn High School

Sidewalks and crosswalks will need to be altered to accommodate the desired station location. Currently, the sidewalks under I-70 are considered pedestrian unfriendly, if not hostile, and inadequate to support a safe means of passage. The group has discussed opportunities to change the paving patterns at the crossing of Woodlawn and Parallel Drives, in order to help drivers understand the importance of slowing down at this intersection. This change in paving/paver design is desired for the full length of the underpass, to the crossing of Parallel Drive.

### Platform Type

The SAAC members concurred that a Center Platform configuration was optimal for this station. The desire is to have those waiting at the station on the same platform. The concept is that the more people that are standing together, irrespective of whether they are traveling east or west, the safer those people will be. This platform configuration desire is in response to the Guiding Principles of safety and security through passive design.

## Alignment Issues

The SSA Station is not expected to have any associated parking, and is instead a walk-to station. The community sees the adjacent I-70 park-and-ride facility as the station to support parking demands for commuters.

As discussed previously, Woodlawn is the main feeder road which connects north and south of the catchment area. In addition, Security Boulevard is an important road which connects the community with the county and city at large. I-70 bisects the station's catchment area in two quadrants, separating the uses into residential and mixed-use retail, with GSA-SSA as a campus anchor.



*West View Place*

## Station Performance & Station Image – Neighborhood Identity

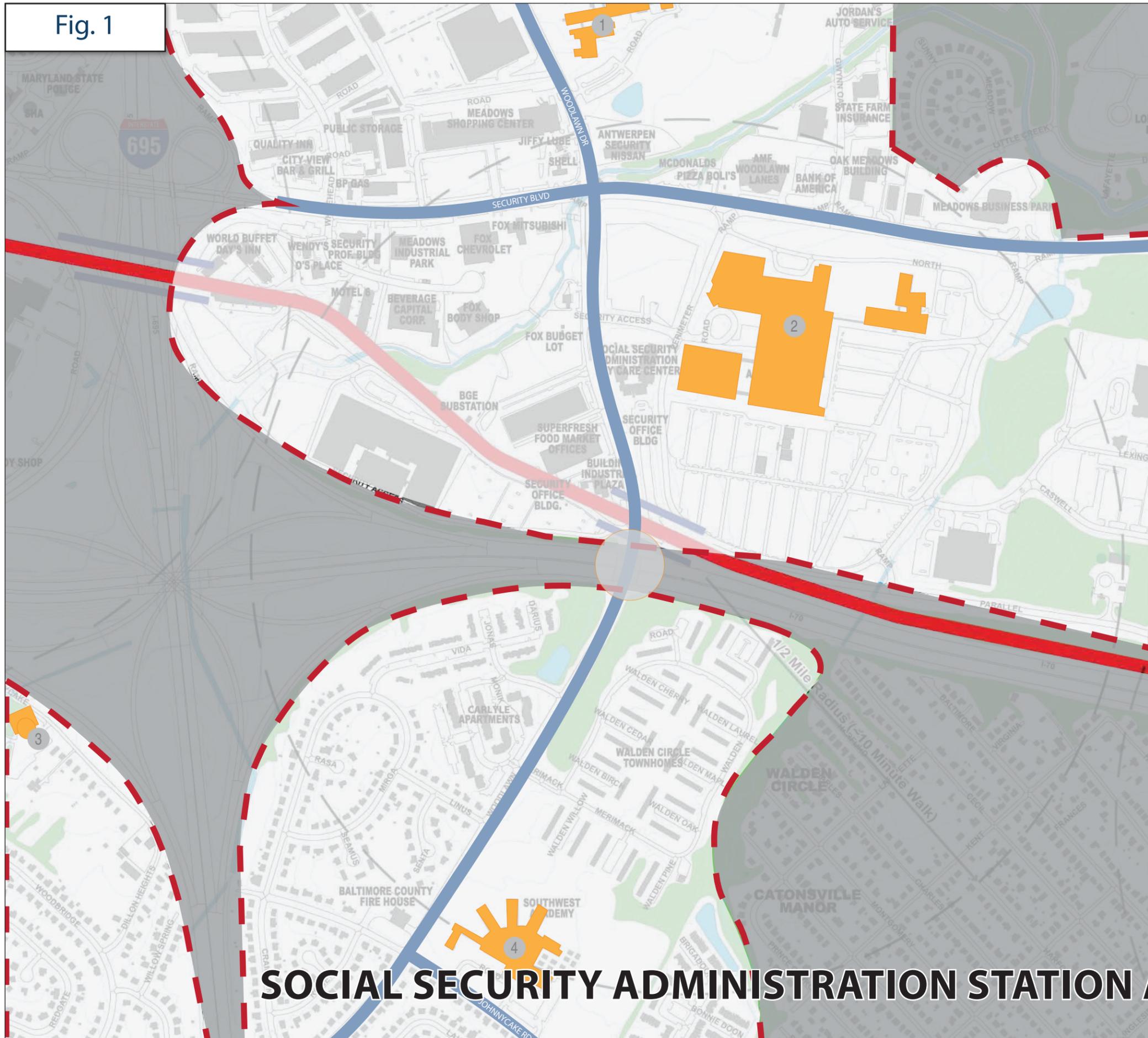
This document summarizes the Vision Plan and Station Location efforts of the SAAC. This concludes the first phase of the SAAC efforts.

The second phase of the efforts begins in October 2011 and is anticipated to run through early Spring 2012. During the second phase, the SAACs will focus on Station Performance and Station Image. The discussions will include elements such as:

- **Urban Design and Site Planning:** This will cover the functional relationship of the station to the neighborhood. The SAAC will review station orientation, accessibility, landscape/hardscape opportunities, and visual and physical connectivity (pedestrian, bicycle and auto – intermodal).
- **Station Programming:** This will include discussions on system-wide standard elements and elements that may be “customized” per neighborhood station.
- **Station Image-Neighborhood Identity:** The SAAC will discuss special neighborhood features, art in transit and recommend station names.

**The outcome of the second phase of SAAC efforts will be documented as an addendum to the Vision Plan.**

Fig. 1



Social Security Administration  
Station #3  
Rail Station Design Open House

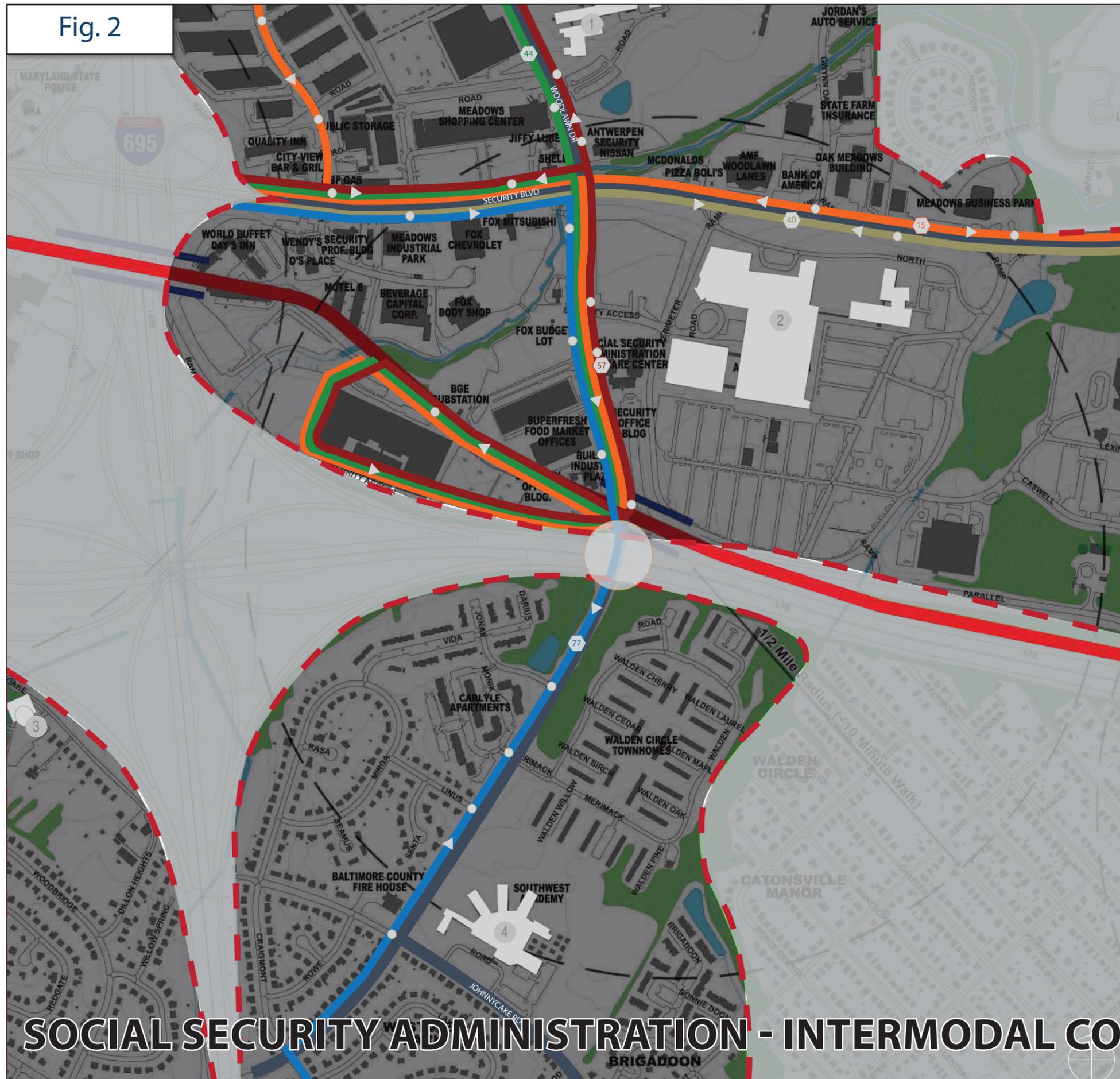
- Red Line Surface Alignment
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment
- Approx. Station Location
- Station Area Boundary
- Primary Corridors
- Peripheral Station Area

Key Landmarks

- 1 Woodlawn High School
- 2 SSA Campus
- 3 Islamic Society of Balt.
- 4 Southwest Academy

**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION STATION AREA**

Fig. 2



### Social Security Administration Station #3 Rail Station Design Open House

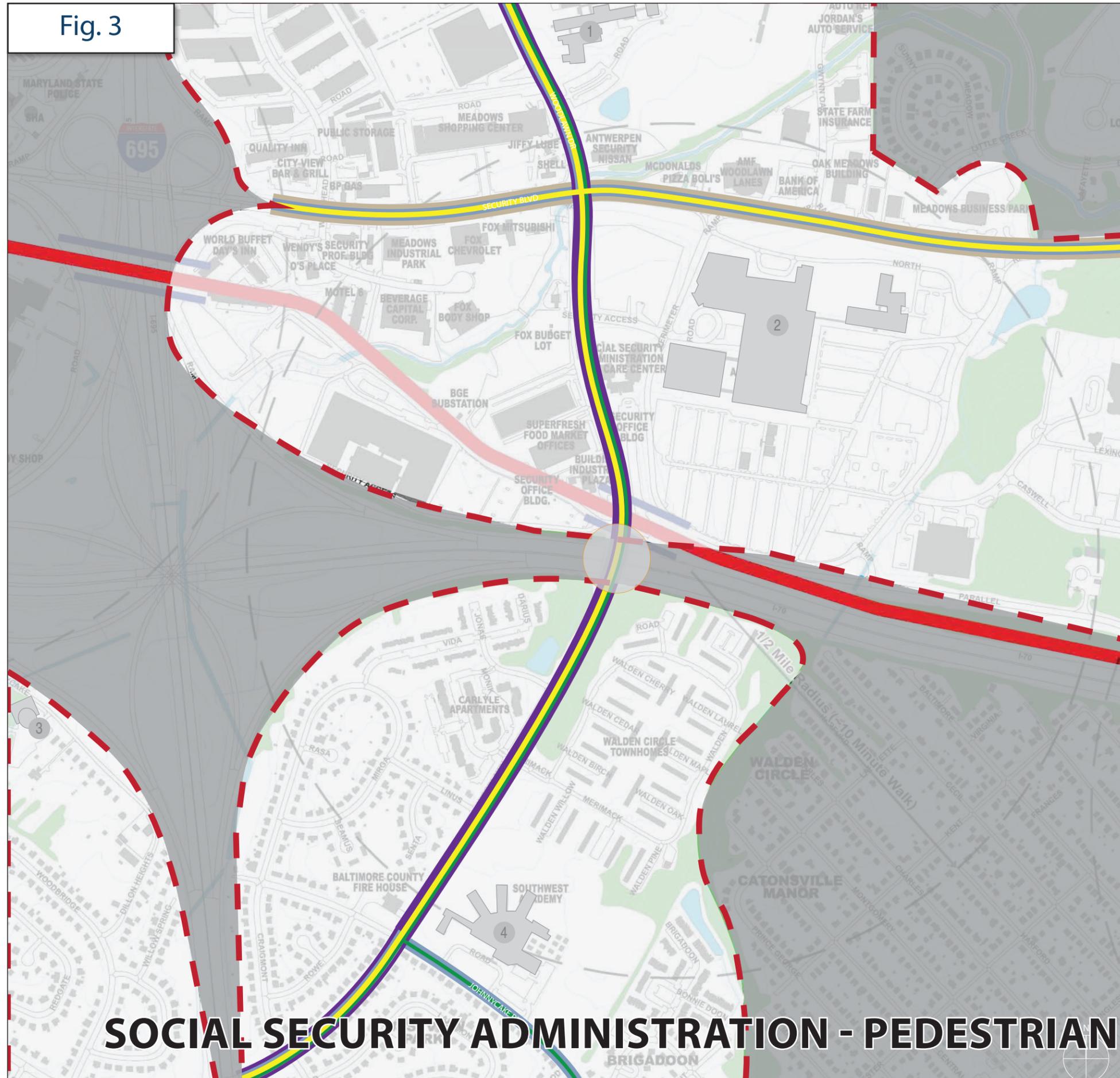
- Red Line Surface Alignment
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment
- Approx. Station Location
- Station Area Boundary
- Primary Corridors
- Peripheral Station Area
- MTA Local Bus Route #15
- MTA Quick Bus Route #40
- MTA Local Bus Route #44
- MTA Local Bus Route #57
- MTA Local Bus Route #77
- Bus Stop
- Bus Number

### Key Landmarks

- 1 Woodlawn High School
- 2 SSA Campus
- 3 Islamic Society of Balt.
- 4 Southwest Academy

# SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION - INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS

Fig. 3



### Social Security Administration Station #3 Rail Station Design Open House

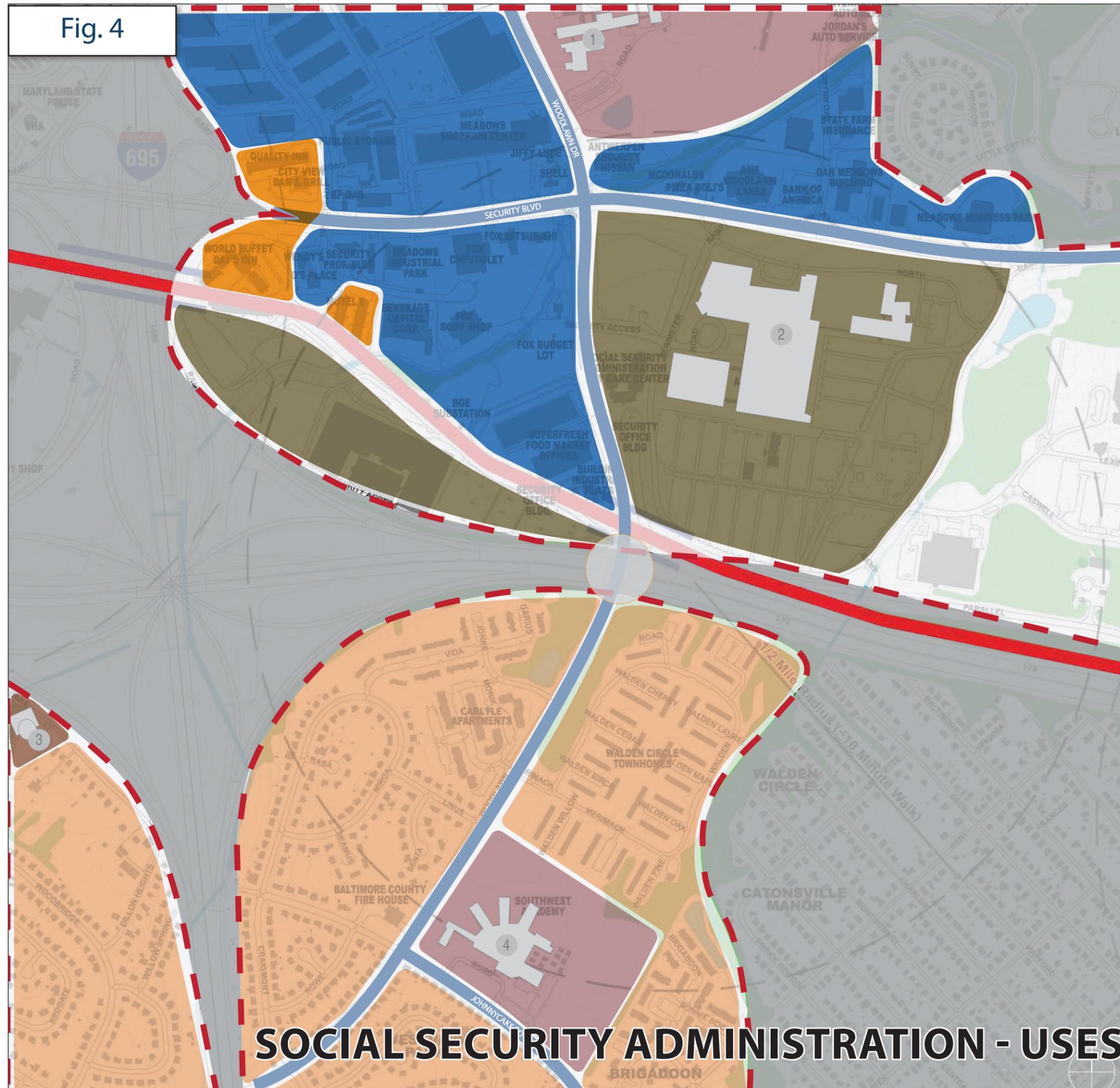
- Red Line Surface Alignment
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment
- Approx. Station Location
- Station Area Boundary
- Primary Corridors
- Peripheral Station Area
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Bikeway Improvements
- On Street Bikeway
- Commonly Used Bikeway
- Future Promenades
- New Pedestrian Enhancements

### Key Landmarks

- 1 Woodlawn High School
- 2 SSA Campus
- 3 Islamic Society of Balt.
- 4 Southwest Academy

# SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION - PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Fig. 4



Social Security Administration  
Station #3  
Rail Station Design Open House

- Red Line Surface Alignment
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment
- Approx. Station Location
- Station Area Boundary
- Primary Corridors
- Peripheral Station Area
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Religious
- Civic / Governmental
- Hospitality
- Mixed Use Residential
- Cultural / Entertainment
- Residential

Key Landmarks

- 1 Woodlawn High School
- 2 SSA Campus
- 3 Islamic Society of Balt.
- 4 Southwest Academy

**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION - USES**

Fig. 5



Social Security Administration  
Station #3  
Rail Station Design Open House

- Red Line Surface Alignment
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment
- Approx. Station Location
- Station Area Boundary
- Primary Corridors
- Peripheral Station Area
- Area to Reinforce : enhanced business uses, storefront revitalization, facade improvements
- Area of Stability
- Future Development Opportunities
- Major Development Planned
- Newly Developed

Key Landmarks

- 1 Woodlawn High School
- 2 SSA Campus
- 3 Islamic Society of Balt.
- 4 Southwest Academy

**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION STATION AREA**