



Station Area Advisory Committees

# VISION PLAN

## Edmondson Village





# 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.

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.



Light Rail Rendering

# 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

This station area is located in the western side of Baltimore City along the US 40 corridor, Edmondson Avenue, just east of the western boundary of Baltimore City.

Recognizing that most persons are willing to walk about 5-minutes, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile, to transit and some persons will extend that to a 10-minute walk of approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile, the SAAC identified boundaries for their Vision Area. While maps capture a general walking zone depicted as a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile or  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile radius, the group determined that physical barriers, such as natural landscape features, more accurately determine the outer limits from which persons will consider walking, and the actual travel paths taken would vary from the assumed straight line measured by a superimposed radius. The group agreed to consider these natural features in the landscape and neighborhoods even though the path of travel may not be very direct to the station.

As a result, the SAAC determined that the physical boundaries are defined as follows:

- To the west by Cooks Lane;
- To the southwest by the Ten Hills approximately to Rock Glen Road;
- To the north by Leakin and Gwynns Falls Parks;
- To the north east by Rognel Heights and Edmondson Village. This boundary extends just east of Wildwood Parkway to Mt. Holly and overlaps slightly with the Allendale SAAC boundary.
- To the southeast by the New Cathedral Cemetery; and
- To the south by the Uplands residential development extending approximately to Mountview Road.

When these boundaries are defined by neighborhoods, their limits extend to the far side of these communities. A portion of Edmondson Village overlaps with the Allendale Station area.



Edmondson Village Shopping Center

#### b) Existing Conditions/Context

This station area is primarily of a residential character, consisting predominantly of historic single-family homes to the west of the station location, with some detached, semi-attached and row house type dwellings in the neighborhoods east of the station. The overall population and housing densities range between low to medium density. The new Uplands residential development to the south side of Edmondson is underway and projected to be one of the largest public-private housing development partnerships in the city. The main access into this development is at Swann Avenue.



Although the surrounding area is predominantly residential, the station platform sits in the median along a commercial pocket on Edmondson Avenue between Athol and Swann Avenues. This commercial zone extends west of Swann one block to Glen Allen Drive and includes the Giant grocery store with the potential to expand north; Advanced Auto Parts, an auto parts sales center and a wholesale party supply store. The historic Edmondson Village Shopping Center lies to the north side of the station platform on Edmondson Avenue and is configured as a two-story strip mall, wrapping a large parking lot fronting onto Edmondson Avenue between Athol and Swann Avenues.

The Westside Skills Center is located on the south side of Edmondson Avenue opposite the station platform. It is an underutilized vocational facility with the potential for future redevelopment including Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) to support the existing communities, and the new Uplands development. This structure used to be a department store. See *Figure 1*.

There are several churches serving the communities in this station area that also attract participants from the county and other areas of Baltimore City. Some churches provide on-site parking while others' parking spills over onto the public streets. Patrons at Central Church of Christ and some other churches utilize the parking lot at the Edmondson Village Shopping Center.

The Edmondson Westside High School, located along Athol Avenue, has the capacity for up to 1000 students. The community expressed concern for the safety of students crossing Edmondson Avenue. The students often travel in large groups, disembarking the MTA busses and crossing Edmondson Avenue to get to the school. The students usually disregard crosswalks on Athol and Edmondson Avenues. They also use the shopping area.

Leakin and Gwynn Falls parks account for the largest expanses of continuous open space in this community. The Gwynns Falls Trail runs through this parkland with a fourteen-mile hiker/biker trail that extends from the City line to downtown. The New Cathedral Cemetery is another green space.

The area is served by bus networks with several key lines having bus stops near to or in front of the shopping center. Routes include the 23, 40, and 150 on Edmondson Avenue and the 20 and 30 on Athol Avenue. The network includes buses that circulate through the city and buses on a loop from the county. The community has suggested that if the Westside Skills Center site is redeveloped, the site can be designed to accommodate bus stops in pull-off lanes. Currently, most residents of the established neighborhoods prefer driving over using public transportation, although some felt that having the Red Line may change that preference. See *Figure 3*.

It isn't readily apparent that the neighborhoods are connected, mainly because of the barriers that define each neighborhood. However, with the newly completed Enoch Pratt Library at Athol and Edmondson Avenues, along with the development of Uplands and having the Red Line station as a central hub that reinforces the uses of the shopping center and potentially creates opportunities for the Westside Skill Center, the community believes that connectivity will be strengthened overall by allowing this node to develop as a local destination highlighted by the presence of a transit stop. See *Figure 2*.



Giant Super Market near site of station location

The community acknowledged that these neighborhoods suffer from aging infrastructure and requested that improvements such as lighting and pavement resurfacing be made in areas behind the shopping center.

The station area is relatively safe; however, some of the businesses within the shopping center attract less than desirable clientele. Traffic patterns need to be better managed to deter spill over from Edmondson Avenue into the back street network during peak periods. The desire is also to improve access to and from the shopping center and improve the intersections of Edmondson Avenue at Athol Avenue, Swann Avenue and Cooks Lane.

### c) Stabilization Area vs. Redevelopment Area

This station area is considered to be stable with established residential neighborhoods of Ten Hills, Westgate, Rognel Heights, Hunting Ridge and Edmondson Village. These residences are generally well-maintained and the area experiences comparatively very low vacancy rates. They are occupied by families who have lived in the community for a long time – in some instances up to 80 years, although younger families are moving back into the area.

Additionally, the new Uplands residential development will provide added stability to the area upon completion, by introducing in five phases, 1100 units of mixed-income housing, with a mix of rentals and home ownership. These residences are planned to offer the modern conveniences of urban living with the amenities of new suburban designs. Its location is expected to attract commuters to Washington, DC, as well as downtown Baltimore. As the phasing is advanced, higher densities may be realized at portions of the site closer to the station location.



Uplands existing rowhouses

The Edmondson Village Shopping Center is a notable landmark in the area that seems to have great potential for redevelopment. It was identified in a master plan, previously done for the area, as a potential for TOD. The community has expressed a preference to see the shopping center revitalized in the spirit of its historical context and suggested that new tenants with more competitive retail opportunities are sought. TOD options can include new retail with sidewalk cafes and potentially a civic plaza adjacent to the Enoch Pratt library. Parking may be underground.

The Westside Skills Center has also been identified by the community and in the master plan as a potential TOD site with new civic facilities closer to Swann Avenue and some educational facility redevelopment near Athol Avenue, with consideration for the Edmondson Westside High School and its athletic fields on Athol Avenue.

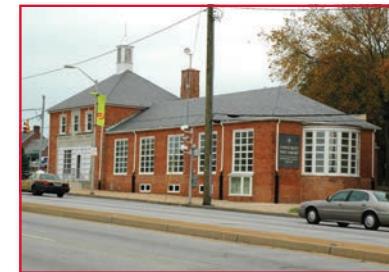
The SAAC recommended that a station location closer to mid-block of Swann and Athol Avenues would better facilitate future redevelopment of the Westside Skills Center and Edmondson Village Shopping Center sites, while maintaining the gateway to the Uplands development.



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

### Values

The character of the existing neighborhoods is important to community stability. Any changes that will significantly alter the existing neighborhood character would not be welcomed. The community has expressed strongly their concern for the impact of a surface running alignment on the character of Edmondson Avenue and the spill over into their stable neighborhoods. Although they recognize that buildings and neighborhood scales may not be affected, the SAAC is concerned that the street network could be impacted considerably if travel lanes are being lost on Edmondson Avenue to accommodate the dedicated light rail transit (LRT) way. Currently, SAAC members are concerned that traffic spill over into the neighborhood streets during rush hour is mainly from county commuters. The community expressed that although the LRT may reduce traffic volume, they are not convinced that the Red Line will relieve traffic on Edmondson Avenue because the LRT being at surface will further reduce the number of traffic lanes available for through traffic.



Enoch Pratt Free Library

### Within the Vision Area, the strengths include:

- Residential stability of the established neighborhoods and the new Uplands Development, including the historic context of these neighborhoods;
- The area has convenient access to major arterial corridors, I-695, I-70, I-95;
- The area has many amenities including the commercial pocket along Edmondson Avenue including the Giant Grocery, the Enoch Pratt Library, and the proximity to Leakin and Gwynn Falls parks;
- The streets are framed with mature tree lines along Edmondson Avenue and throughout the neighborhoods.

### Weaknesses and threats include:

- Existing Edmondson Shopping Center has a retail mix that isn't family oriented. The facility has a poorly maintained parking lot, and the area behind the shopping center is seen as desolate, unsafe and a threat to the community;
- Infrastructure in older communities behind the shopping center is seen as having poor lighting and rough paving; and
- The traffic along Edmondson Avenue, both volume and speed, creates unsafe intersections at Athol Avenue, Swann Avenue and Cooks Lane. This is particularly acute at Athol Avenue where the crosswalk capacity does not properly serve the high volumes of students crossing from the Edmondson -Westside High School.

### Opportunities include:

There are numerous opportunities around this station. The Edmondson Village Shopping Center site could be revitalized or could become a TOD site; the Westside Skills Center could be redeveloped or could become a TOD site; the Uplands development, upon completion, will become part of the fabric of the existing neighborhoods and the station area.

Specific endeavors could include:

- Expanding the Giant Grocery into a larger facility;
- Extending bike trails through the community to meet Leakin and Gwynn Falls parks;
- Providing a wider right-of-way from Athol Avenue to Cooks Lane to allow for traffic patterns and left turns at main intersections such as Athol and Swann Avenues. The goal is to maintain good connectivity between communities, including connecting the neighborhoods on the north and south sides of Edmondson Avenue; and
- Enhancing and extending the tree line along Edmondson Avenue between Athol and Swann Avenues, and west of Swann Avenue to frame the station area and strengthen the character of the Edmondson Avenue corridor near this station area.



Rognel Heights neighborhood

The development of a destination centered around the Edmondson Village station and anchored by a revitalized/TOD shopping center site retail expansion, a civic plaza near the new Enoch Pratt library, the Westside Skills Center site, civic and educational TOD and the Uplands residential development would create a strong village center for the surrounding stable neighborhoods.

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

### Guiding Principles

Based upon analysis and goals/values exercise, the SAAC established Guiding Principles for the Vision Area to help guide the Red Line process and future development of the vision area: A suggested list of general categories for Guiding Principles is attached: Intermodalism, Connectivity, Land Use, Economic Development, Safety and Security, Neighborhood Identity and Sustainability.

### Vision Statement

The Edmondson Village station is planned as a walk-up station sitting in the median of the Edmondson Avenue (US 40) corridor. It is a destination stop along the Red Line in a location that offers convenient access to the greater Baltimore-Washington area, that's integrated within the fabric of a very stable community having a mix of older established residences and new modern urban dwellings with a suburban feel, yet supported by a historic shopping /retail center and anchored by civic and educational services.

The Edmondson Village Station Area vision aims to harness all the benefits of the surrounding neighborhoods and package them at the scale of a neighborhood TOD to serve as the western land use anchor on the important visual and arterial Edmondson Avenue corridor. The desire is that, in time, the assets of the existing community and the implementation of the Red Line will support and spur improvements to the corridor, enhance its connectivity and further stabilize the more economically stressed areas to the east.



# STATION CONCEPT

## Station Location

### Platform Location/Behavior

This Station is planned with a center platform located near mid-block at the traffic signal, allowing access from the Edmondson Village Shopping Center.



Edmondson High School

This SAAC was presented with a series of station location options of which the first option located the platform at the Swann and Edmondson Avenues intersection, closer to the larger commercial uses – Giant Grocery. This location was selected to capture a larger catchment area (Uplands, Hunting Ridge, Ten Hills, and Rognel Heights). The SAAC felt that this location was too close to the Uplands development gateway entrance and it would add further complexity to the intersection that already serves as the main access to the neighborhoods and the local fire house on Swann Avenue.

The second option located the platform at the Athol Avenue intersection as an alternative to Swann Avenue. The station was seen as enhancing service to the high school students, many of whom use transit. The station would also act as a barrier, and through design, would guide large volumes of students to a safe crossing location close to the high school and within appropriately-sized crosswalks. The community felt that there was not much benefit considering that students would still likely cross Edmondson Avenue diagonally and full mitigation would not be realized. In addition, the confluence of locating bus stops, providing left turns at Athol Avenue, along with allowing a right turn from Edmondson onto Athol Avenue, was not seen as convenient or successful. Also, this platform location moved closer to the next station to the east, Allendale.

The SAAC evaluated the two options presented by the Red Line engineering team then suggested another option, a mid-block option. This option was seen as beneficial because a centrally located platform provides the greatest opportunities for community access and would support development on both sides of the station along Edmondson Avenue. The shift in the station location was not seen as significantly reducing the catchment from the west; it provided better spacing from the next station to the east and moved the platform far enough east, away from the busy Swann/Edmondson intersection and the gateway entrance to the Uplands development.

### Platform Type

Center platform located in the median of Edmondson Avenue.

### Alignment Issues

Consideration included:

- Allowing dedicated turning lanes at Swann and Athol Avenues;
- Providing pull-off lanes for buses to avoid in-line bus stops;
- Transitioning from surface to underground at Cooks Lane;
- Maintaining as much street parking as possible while maintaining two dedicated through lanes; and
- Transitioning to a narrower right-of-way east of Wildwood Parkway also impacted consideration near the Edmondson Avenue station area.

## 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 begin in October 2011 and are anticipated to run through early Spring of 2012. During this 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, and vision and physical connectivity (pedestrian, bicycle and auto – intermodal).
- **Station Programming:** This will include discussions on system-wide standard elements and elements that may become “customized” per neighborhood station.
- **Station Image-Neighborhood Identity:** The SAAC will discuss special neighborhood features, art in transit and recommend station names.



Historic fire station on Swann Avenue.

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



## Guiding Principles

### 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-and-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:** Provide 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, 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, and services (garbage/recycling pickup, snow removal, utilities, trash/recycling receptacles, trash pickup).



Hunting Ridge homes

### 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, infrastructure support (i.e. parking). Also establish what is not preferred;
- Evaluate current housing stock and conditions; and
- Establish residential preferences for the vision area. For example stabilizing of a particular housing stock, development of new housing (single family, multi-family, elderly).

### Economic Development

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

### Safety and Security

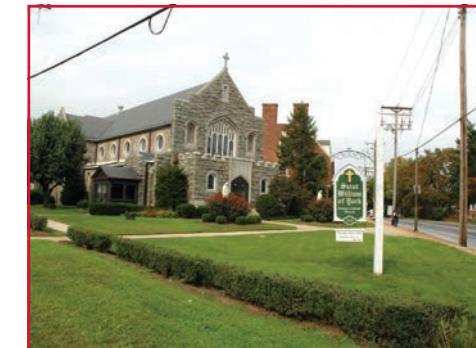
- Identify general lighting, passive surveillance, street activity, traffic calming, way finding signage (both system-wide and community specific).

### 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;
- Art-in-Transit: Integrate art and art programs into the station area; and
- 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. (Use/increase pervious surfaces, use indigenous landscape plants and materials where possible, promote recycling, utilize solar technology where practical, promote car sharing, encourage use of mass transit by providing a safe, aesthetically pleasing and convenient transit system that connects communities).



St. William of York Church

**Fig. 1**



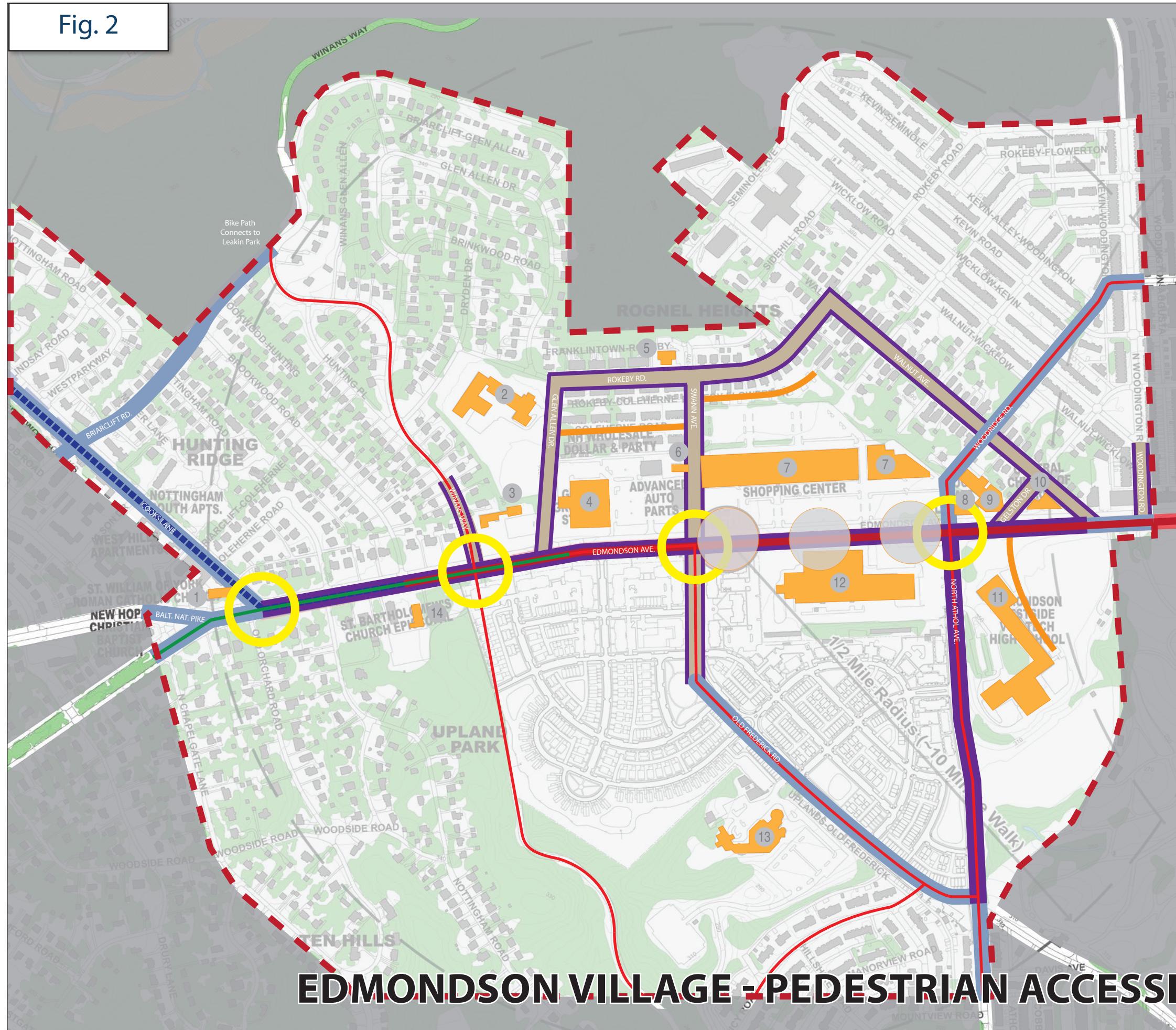
**Edmondson Village  
Station #05  
Rail Station Design Open House**

- Red Line Surface Alignment
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment
- Potential Station Location
- Station Area Boundary
- Primary Corridors
- Peripheral Station Area
- Area to Reinforce
- Area of Stability
- Future Development Opportunities
- Major Development Planned

**Key Landmarks**

- |   |                                   |    |                                |
|---|-----------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | St. William of York Church        | 8  | Enoch Pratt Library            |
| 2 | T. Jefferson Elementary           | 9  | Central Church of Christ       |
| 3 | Hunting Ridge Church              | 10 | Church of God                  |
| 4 | Giant Grocery                     | 11 | Edmondson Westside High School |
| 5 | Kingdom Hall                      | 12 | Westside Skills Center         |
| 6 | Fire Station No. 53               | 13 | Church (Vacant)                |
| 7 | Edmondson Village Shopping Center | 14 | St. Bartholomew's Church       |

Fig. 2



Edmondson Village  
Station #05  
Rail Station Design Open House

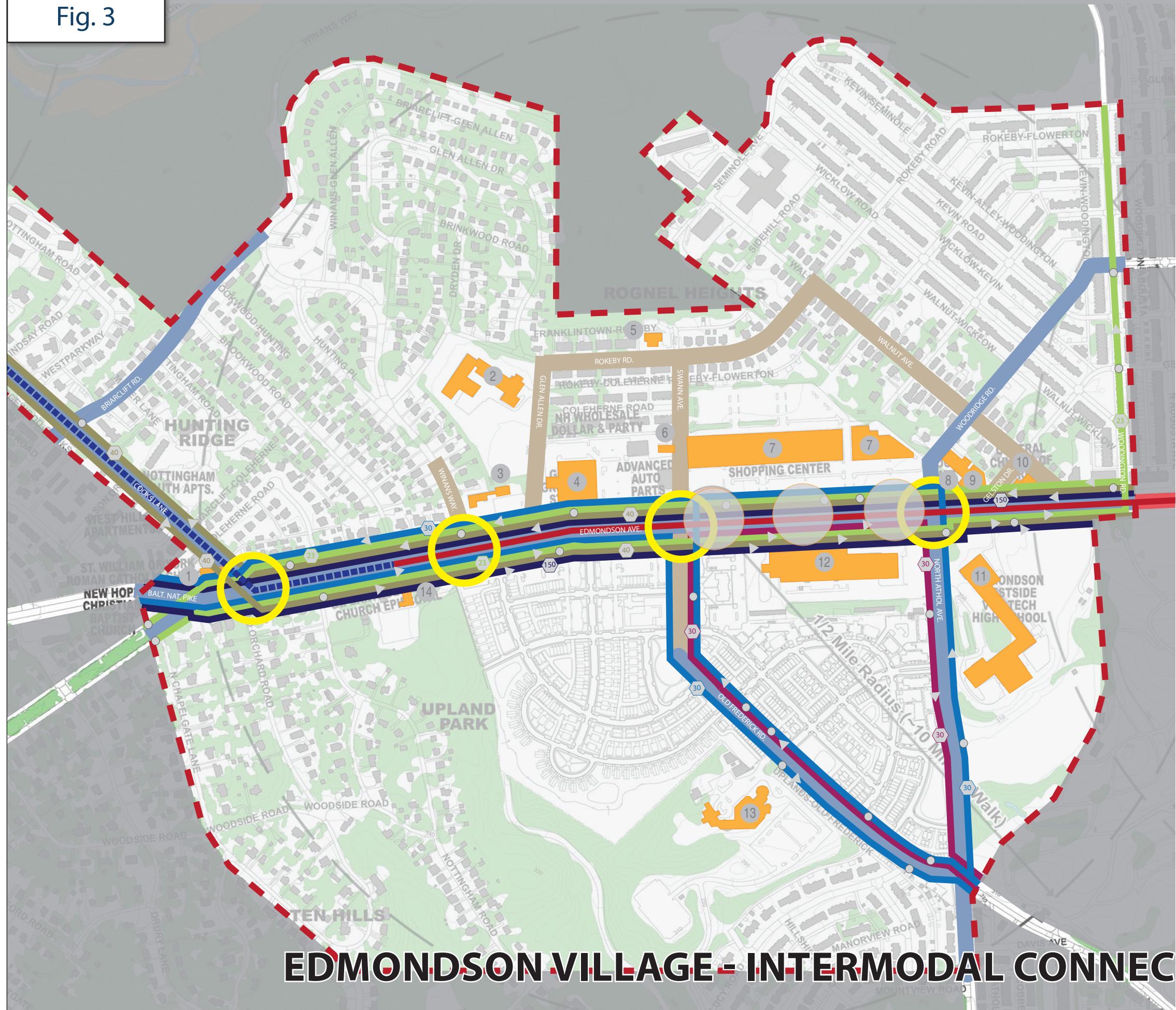
- Intersection Improvements:** Yellow circle
- Red Line Surface Alignment:** Red dashed line
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment:** Blue dashed line
- Potential Station Location:** Grey circle
- Station Area Boundary:** Red dashed line
- Primary Corridors:** Blue line
- Peripheral Station Area:** Grey shading
- Sidewalk Improvements:** Brown line
- Preserved Road:** Orange line
- On Street Bikeway:** Green line
- Commonly Used Bikeway:** Red line
- Future Promenades:** Purple line
- New Pedestrian Enhancements:** Purple line

Key Landmarks

- |   |                                   |    |                                |
|---|-----------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|
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Fig. 3

Edmondson Village  
Station #05  
Rail Station Design Open House

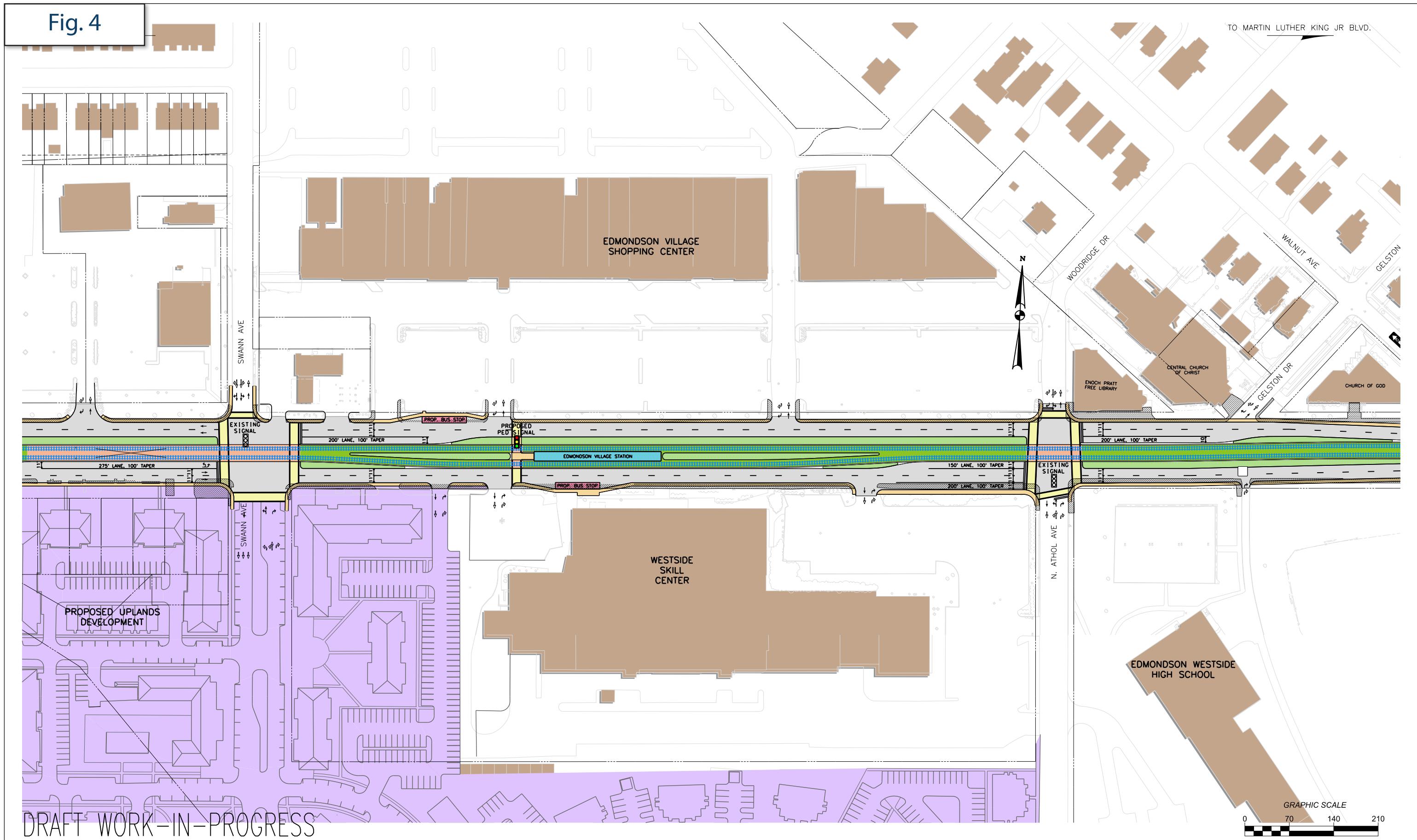


- Intersection Improvements
- Red Line Surface Alignment
- Red Line Tunnel Alignment
- Potential Station Location
- - - Station Area Boundary
- Primary Corridors
- Peripheral Station Area
- Sidewalk Improvements
- MTA Local Bus Route #20
- MTA Local Bus Route #23
- MTA Local Bus Route #30
- MTA Quick Bus Route #40
- MTA Express Bus Route #150
- Bus Stop
- Bus Number

Key Landmarks

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 St. William of York Church        | 8 Enoch Pratt Library             |
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Fig. 4



## EDMONDSON VILLAGE - CENTER BLOCK STATION DESIGN