VISION PLAN
Canton Crossing
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.
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 Canton Crossing Station Vision Area is located in the southeast portion of Baltimore City, just north of a large waterfront industrial area. The Canton Crossing SAAC defined the borders of the Vision Area to be Foster Avenue to the north, the railroad tracks to the east, Danville Avenue and the industrial area to the south, and Ellwood Avenue to the west (Figure 1).

The northern boundary was chosen because SAAC members feel that the area north is considered Highlandtown, and that users north of Foster Avenue would likely use the Highlandtown/Greektown station. The eastern boundary was chosen because the existing tracks create a physical barrier to the area, and the southern boundary was chosen because there are no current plans to redevelop the industrial area and it was not viewed as a significant source for transit ridership. The western boundary was chosen because the SAAC felt that the area west of the border would be more readily associated with the Canton station.

b) Existing Conditions/Context

Intermodalism

The primary automobile routes in the area are Boston Street, O’Donnell Street, and Eastern Avenue, which all run east-west, and Conkling Street which runs north-south. There is a high volume of car and truck traffic, which travel at relatively high speeds on Boston Street. There is also significant truck traffic on Conkling Street, Haven Street and O’Donnell Street.

There is a planned road connection between Boston Street and O’Donnell Street, which will give drivers the opportunity to avoid the railroad crossing on Boston Street at the eastern border of the Vision Area.

There is no transit rail service to this area; however, there are several bus routes. Bus lines 11 and 13 run along Boston Street and serve the southern portion of the Vision Area. Line 13 also runs north-south on South East Avenue. Bus line 7 runs east-west along Hudson Street and north-south along Conkling Street serving the middle of the Vision Area (Figure 2). Each route has several bus stops in the neighborhood and a few stops provide covered bus shelters. Many buses also park along Clinton Street south of Boston Street for layovers. To accommodate these layovers, new bus layover bays are planned near the Canton Crossing station. The SAAC members indicated that buses in the area do not run frequently, making it difficult to access the area by transit and resulting in low bus ridership.
Bicycles are accommodated with on-street facilities on Conkling Street and Fait Avenue; however, bike facilities are considered to be inadequate for the growing number of cyclists in the area. There is bike access allowed on the waterfront promenade to the southwest of the Vision Area, but only during certain hours (Figure 3).

**Land Use**

Approximately half of the Vision Area consists of single-family residential properties with some distributed retail. This area is northeast of the proposed station. The remaining half of the Vision Area contains large undeveloped former industrial sites and a mix of retail properties, multi-family residential, office and a substantial amount of associated surface parking (Figure 4).

The primary retail and office areas are north of Boston Street in the Brewers Hill development and south of Boston Street in the Canton Crossing development. These former industrial sites are located north and south of Boston Street between Haven Street (eastern boundary) and Bayliss Street (western boundary). Both of these sites are Planned Unit Developments (PUD): the master plans call for dense urban redevelopment. The Brewer's Hill PUD has completed renovations of the buildings north of O'Donnell Street, and of the Barrel/Logger Buildings for offices and a storage facility. The Shoppes has also been renovated for retail. The overall PUD allows for 1,982,250 square feet, with a maximum of 1,126 residential units. To date the Domain was constructed (180 units); the Ale/Pilsner/Stout buildings' historic renovation plans are being reviewed as of the date of this Vision Plan, for approximately 160 units and retail. Hanover is obtaining approval for a new construction to be located between Toone and O'Donnell Streets and proposed approximately 440 units.

Canton Crossing, on the south side of Boston Street, has a similar dense development master plan. The First Mariner Office town is complete, as is retail and office along Boston Street. A major retail center is currently under review for the parcel between Bayliss Street and Haven Street. This retail center is proposed to include a Target, a grocery store and additional medium box and small retail. This portion of the Canton Crossing PUD may not be used for residential per Remediation Action Plans.

Open space in the Vision Area exists on Boston Street adjacent to the Du Burns Arena recreational facility, which includes the Bonvegna Play Field and dog park (Figure 5). In addition, the waterfront portion of the Canton Crossing PUD is proposed to be the terminus of the Promenade. The Promenade is a hardscape walking path (a minimum of 20 feet wide) which runs from Harborview around the Inner Harbor, along Harbor East, Fells Point and Canton.

The current zoning of the Vision Area includes a rowhouse residential district, small pockets of business zoning and overlay PUD. To the south is an industrial area, which is also part of the Maritime Industrial Overlay Zoning District. As part of Transform Baltimore, the master plan areas (Brewer's Hill and Canton Crossing) are being considered for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Districts.
Economic Development

The Vision Area is not a major employment center, but there are established employers in the existing developments along Boston Street and Conkling Street. There is a large office tower, 1st Mariner Bank Tower, on Clinton Street south of Boston Street, and there are additional planned and existing offices and several retail and service industry employers in the Brewers Hill and Canton Crossing Developments. There is potential to increase employment opportunities with new development of the former industrial sites (Figure 6).

Safety and Security

The SAAC members generally consider the Vision Area to be a safe and secure area for residents, employees and visitors. Portions of the Vision Area that are surrounded by the former industrial sites feel less secure to pedestrians because of the lack of street activity.

Pedestrian safety, in the area, is also affected by automobiles and traffic. Boston Street, in particular, is perceived as dangerous to cross and feels unsafe to walk along because of high volumes of car and truck traffic traveling at relatively high speeds. The intersection of Boston Street and Conkling Street is of special concern because both Conkling and Boston Streets are truck routes and there are numerous tractor-trailers turning at this intersection. Similarly, the intersection of Conkling Street and O’Donnell Street feels unsafe because of trucks and numerous truck turning movements (Figure 7).

Connectivity

Most residents and visitors access the Vision Area by automobile, which puts street parking and private commercial lots in high demand. Most residents do not have off-street parking and there are no public parking lots or structures.

Primary access points for residents and visitors in vehicles are Boston Street from the west, Conkling Street from the north, Clinton Street from the south, and Boston Street and O’Donnell Street from the east. Some of these vehicles distribute among the neighborhood streets to their destinations, but many remain on the primary routes to access developments on Boston Street and Conkling Street.

There are also many people that pass through the area in automobiles as they come and go from downtown Baltimore. These vehicles have the same east and west access points, but do not distribute through neighborhood streets, which have many four-way stops and slower speeds. Most of these vehicles remain on Boston Street as they travel through the Vision Area. Because of the proximity of the Vision Area to interstate highways, the Canton Crossing Station will include a park-and-ride facility. SAAC members agree that the park-and-ride should be managed and designed appropriately to encourage people to leave their vehicles and ride transit, which will reduce the number of cars on Boston Street.

Cyclists accessing the Vision Area can arrive from several points, including those mentioned above, as well as Fait Avenue to the north and the promenade to the southwest. For cyclists, on-street facilities are limited and do not reflect desired paths, one of which is Boston Street.
Pedestrians access the Vision Area from many points, and distribute throughout the neighborhood to residences, offices and retail destinations. Overall, the Vision Area north of Boston Street is considered walkable, but Boston Street itself and the areas to the south do not encourage pedestrian traffic. The SAAC members expressed a desire to improve pedestrian options. For example, redevelopment at the former industrials site should reintroduce the city grid to create good pedestrian connections. For example, Brewers Hill plans include an extension of Eaton Street from O’Donnell to Boston Street, and Toone Street has been extended (as a private street) to the proposed Eaton Street extension. Also, pedestrian crossings for access across Boston Street should be improved to safely accommodate the many pedestrians traveling between the Canton Crossing and Brewers Hill developments, and from the area to the station platform (Figures 8, 9). Accommodations should be made for trucks that minimize truck traffic around the new station.

**Neighborhood Identity**

The Canton Crossing Vision Area is a unique neighborhood because it has several historic structures, an established residential area with proximity to the harbor, active new developments, and potential for even more development.

Preservation and reinforcement of the historic character of Canton Crossing is very important to SAAC members. Some historic properties have already been restored and repurposed with office space, including the National Brewing Company building and one of the Gunther Brewing Company buildings. The SAAC members want to see historic properties continue to be restored and see new construction that compliments the historic character of the place.

New development should also preserve and reinforce views and access to the Harbor, and create new pedestrian and bicycle connections to the existing Promenade. Because so much of the Vision Area is former industrial sites, and existing developments are fairly new, a strong identity and sense of place needs to be developed. New development and the introduction of a Red Line station is an opportunity to better define Canton Crossing. Specifically, SAAC members envision a pedestrian and transit-oriented place with a mix of uses and a network of open space that attracts visitors to entertainment, retail and restaurant destinations while also providing services to residents and employees. To create this environment, new development should preserve and reintroduce the city grid with new streets and create active street frontages and safe connections (Figure 10). Similarly, the station should be located adjacent to active retail destinations and should be easy to access for pedestrians and cyclists. SAAC members also envision a new gateway into Canton Crossing that clearly distinguishes it from the surrounding neighborhoods of Canton and Highlandtown.

**Sustainability**

Sustainable practices and principles are currently in place in the Brewers Hill development, specifically in the renovation of the National Brewing Company Building. The building was renovated to reduce energy consumption, and all tenants are expected to design and finish their space following sustainable guidelines that are consistent with the building design. In addition, development of the former industrial site exemplifies sustainable design concepts by implementing remediation and reuse strategies.
c) Stabilization Area vs. Redevelopment Area

Canton Crossing is both a stable area and an area that requires land use change and redevelopment. The residential housing stock, retail properties, and offices are occupied and well maintained. However, the former industrial sites make up a large portion of the Vision Area and portions of these areas are currently void of activity. Additionally, there are some large historic buildings that are awaiting renovation and occupancy. Both the industrial site and historic buildings are planned for redevelopment, which should be planned and implemented to transition the Vision Area into an even more desirable location for residents and visitors by ensuring that such development does not focus on automobile access at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists.

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

Values

The SAAC members value the historic character of their Vision Area, walkable and bike-friendly streets, and views and access to the waterfront. All of these should be improved where necessary and reinforced. For example, street trees and landscaping should be increased along Boston Street and Conkling Street, and introduced along all new streets. They also value the mix of stable residential properties and new retail, recreational, and office properties. However, these can be improved through better connections and reinforced through integrated new development. Connections through new development should be made through active street frontages that follow the city grid and offer pedestrians safe and comfortable signaled crossings at appropriate places. Open outdoor spaces should also be included in new developments to enhance the pedestrian environment and provide a network of public spaces.

Based on the values of the SAAC, the conditions of Boston Street should be rethought. The street should be reconfigured to have one travel lane in each direction, as much full time street parking as possible, more crossings, and a separated bike lane or cycle track (Figure 11). The SAAC members believe that these changes would reduce the number of cars on Boston Street, slow traffic, increase accessibility for pedestrians and bikes, and increase connectivity across Boston Street. The SAAC feels that if Boston Street retains two travel lanes in each direction, there will be no improvement in traffic calming or parking, there will not be room for a bike lane, and pedestrian crossings will remain unsafe or be worse than current conditions. The SAAC understands that the one lane/two lane options will need further study, including traffic studies and possible discussions with a wider audience.

In addition, trucks should be rerouted away from Boston Street and Conkling Street where pedestrian activity is increasing. Trucks should stay along the south and east borders of the Vision Area. One suggestion is to extend Danville Avenue to points further east to allow the maritime related truck traffic to circumnavigate the portion of Boston Street that is more neighborhood and pedestrian oriented.
a) Strengths

The Vision Area’s strengths include the historic character of the area, the proximity to the waterfront and promenade, and attractive and comfortable neighborhood streets. The area also has many well-established and well-maintained residential and retail properties, as well as several recreational facilities. Another strength of the Vision Area is the potential for redevelopment and the introduction of TOD.

b) Weaknesses

Weaknesses in the Vision Area include Boston Street in its existing condition and a lack of transit options. Boston Street has heavy car and truck traffic and few crossings that feel safe to pedestrians. For these reasons, the north and south sides of Boston Street are disconnected. In addition to lacking public transit options, the area also lacks adequate bicycle lanes and facilities. SAAC members also identified the lack of a neighborhood identity as a weakness of the Vision Area.

c) Opportunities

The Vision Area has many opportunities to improve the pedestrian quality of the neighborhood and create more multi-modal connections. By reconfiguring the traffic lanes of Boston Street, and improving the pedestrian zone along the street, Canton Crossing can become more walkable and have better connections across Boston Street. Active street frontages, new TOD, and multi-modal connections can help transform the Vision Area and create a neighborhood identity. SAAC members identified the opportunity for a gateway to help define the neighborhood. The new transit station also presents opportunities for a public-private partnership at the location of the park-and-ride facility.

d) Threats

 Threats in the Vision Area include traffic on Boston Street, truck routes along Boston Street and Conkling Street, and automobile oriented development. The SAAC also expresses concern over the proposed connection from Boston Street to O’Donnell Street and how that connection might affect development in the Vision Area. The concern is that it could create the potential for greater traffic levels on Boston Street.

The existing bus stop generates a significant amount of trash, much of which is blown into residents’ yards. There is concern over an increase in trash in and around the Red Line station.
Goals: What are our Vision Area Goals? What do we want to see for the future?

Guiding Principles

Access and Connectivity
- The Red Line should open connections throughout the station area and provide better pedestrian crossings.

Design
- The station design should be attractive and modern, and should enhance the surrounding area.
- Design of the station and of new development should respect the historic character of the area.

Development
- High density, TOD should be encouraged and supported in the station area.
- New development should provide more active street frontages.

Sustainability
- The Red Line should improve the environment by using renewable or solar energy for lighting.
- New impervious surfaces should be minimized by using pervious materials for new pathways.
- Street trees and landscaping should be provided along the alignment and in public spaces.

Public Space
- Design and develop the station area so that public space is active and incorporated into new development.
- There should be pedestrian connections between new and existing public spaces.

Safety
- Traffic lane configuration and street treatment should be used to calm traffic, increase pedestrian and bicycle safety, and increase pedestrian crossings.
- The station area should be well-lit and feel safe to users.

Implementation
- Construction impacts should be mitigated to reduce disruption.
Vision Statement

By describing the existing conditions of the Vision Area and establishing areas for improvement, the Canton Crossing SAAC identified core values to guide their planning process. These values became tools the SAAC used to determine how to create better connections for a neighborhood TOD and to integrate a walk-up transit station and park-and-ride facility. Specifically, the SAAC vision for Canton Crossing is an active and walkable outdoor retail center that is connected by safe, comfortable and attractive paths for all modes. The vision includes a new identity for Canton Crossing that is integrated with the existing neighborhood and its historic character. All transit facilities should also be integrated, including park-and-ride lots and bus layover bays, and should not take the place of street frontages or detract from the pedestrian environment. The station should be located near active retail areas, and should provide easy and direct access to these destinations (Figure 12).

STATION CONCEPT

Station Location

Platform Location/Behavior

The SAAC determined that the Canton Crossing station should be located in the median of Boston Street on the west side of the intersection of Boston Street and the future extension of Eaton Street (Figure 13). The SAAC preferred configuration of Boston Street associated with this station location includes one travel lane in each direction west of Clinton Street, with full time parking lanes where possible and a continuous bike lane.

The Red Line alignment will cross Boston Street east of the station at the intersection of old Boston Street and the new Boston-O’Donnell connection, and continue north adjacent to the east side of the new street.

The park-and-ride lot shown by the Red Line engineering team, located north of Boston Street and east of the future Brewers Hill Street, was considered to be adequate as a temporary solution; however, it should be replaced in time with a parking structure combined with commercial development around the parking to create active street frontages.

Bus layover bays should be located away from the station and primary pedestrian routes along the future Toone Street extension.

This station location, associated facilities and alignment satisfy the SAAC Vision Plan goals and guiding principles, and include many positive impacts on the area. The station location is adjacent to future development sites and will provide easy access to destinations north and south of Boston Street, and the alignment minimizes and distributes impacts on future developable land. The park-and-ride facility introduces an opportunity for a public-private partnership and should not create a barrier between the station and retail and commercial destinations. Embellishing this facility with active uses, especially along the extended Eaton Street, will also enhance the pedestrian connection between the dense residential uses being developed at Brewers Hill and the station. Reconfiguring Boston Street is seen as having positive impacts on the Vision Area, including a reduction in traffic volumes and vehicle speed, a new bike lane on Boston Street, increased street parking and more opportunities for landscaping. All of this will improve the pedestrian quality of Boston Street, allow for more and safer connections across Boston Street, and create a walkable neighborhood.
Platform Type

The Canton Crossing Station will have a center platform. The station platform will be located in the median of Boston Street, and will provide access to trains moving in both directions. Pedestrians will access the platform from a signaled intersection, where they will follow a crosswalk to the center of the street. At the center of the street, a low ramp will take users up to the platform level.

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 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 opportunities, 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 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. 3

CANTON CROSSING STATION - EXISTING BIKE ROUTES

- Red Line alignment
- Routes commonly used by cyclists
- On street bike facilities: lanes, sharrows & signed routes
- Promenade: restricted biking hours
- Sidewalk

Data: Baltimore City Department of Transportation, 2010
Fig. 4

LEGEND

- Industrial area
- Former industrial site, requires remediation
- Surface parking lots
- Commercial, retail, and office
- Higher density residential
- Lower density residential, single-family rowhouse is typical

EXISTING LAND USE

STATION # 17 - CANTON CROSSING

Prepared for SAAC Meeting #18
April 13, 2011

Baltimore Red Line

CANTON CROSSING FIGURE 4
DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

STATION # 17 - CANTON CROSSING

Prepared for SAAC Meeting #48
April 13 2011

Baltimore Red-Line

Fig. 6
STATION # 17 - CANTON CROSSING

Prepared for SAAC Meeting #68.
April 13, 2011

LEGEND
- Primary auto route, not pedestrian friendly
- Primary auto route, more pedestrian friendly
- Designated truck through route, consider rerouting trucks around station area
- With new development, new pedestrian routes can be created and improved to connect activities and create a walkable station area
- Potential gateway or main entry point into new development
- Improved pedestrian crossings are needed to connect new developments across Boston Street and to encourage pedestrian traffic

STREET NETWORK
SAAC PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

STATION # 17 - CANTON CROSSING

Prepared for SAAC Meeting #49
April 13, 2011

LEGEND
- New or Improved Bicycle Route
- Improved Pedestrian Environment
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- New or Improved Bicycle Parking Facilities
As it exists, Boston Street acts as a barrier that separates the neighborhood from the activity to the south and on the waterfront. Heavy traffic at high speeds, unfriendly sidewalks, and truck traffic contribute to this disconnection.

LEGEND
- Thru lane
- Shared median and left turn lane
- Full-time street parking
- Street tree

The vision plan goals intend to reduce traffic, improve the pedestrian connection across Boston Street and to unify the neighborhood with existing activities and new development. The new development should improve the pedestrian experience along and across Boston Street.

LEGEND
- Reduce thru lanes to calm and reduce traffic
- Incorporate landscaping into median strips
- Increase full-time street parking or provide dedicated cycle track
- Increase tree canopy on Boston Street

Fig. 11

EXISTING CONDITIONS

OPPORTUNITIES AND GOALS

BOSTON STREET

STATION # 17 - CANTON CROSSING
Prepared for SAAC Meeting #6
April 13 2011
WHAT IS OUR VISION?

STATION #17 - CANTON CROSSING STATION