



City of Bowie

Memorandum

Thursday, August 15, 2024
Alfred D. Lott, ICMA-CM, CPM,
City Manager

STATUS REPORT

1. Recycling Carts Purchase

The Public Works Department has identified a Contract to purchase 35 & 65 gallon recycling carts with lids with U.S. Communities/Miami-Dade County Florida Contract# 00254 through Rehrig Pacific Company, upon which we will be able to piggyback. These carts are for Public Works stock to use as needed for new residents and/or damaged carts replacement. We will issue a Purchase Order to Rehrig Pacific Company in the amount of \$31,152.00. This is within the amount budgeted in FY25 Solid Waste Material, Supplies & Minor Equipment Budget.

As provided in Section 62 of the City Charter, this will serve as the required seven (7) day notice of intent to purchase.

2. Transportation Priority Letters

Staff prepared the draft letters per the August 5th City Council meeting presentation and comments received from City Council members. Staff will move forward with distributing the letters, provided there are no objections from City Council.

3. Retail Store Closings - Increasing

U.S. store closings have surpassed openings for the first time this year, the result of a surge of bankruptcy filings by struggling retailers that has extended into the back half of 2024. The full story is attached.

4. Covington Oaks Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting (PANM)

On August 1st, Mr. Andy Colevas, the developer of the proposed Covington Oaks residential project at 3610 Elder Oaks Boulevard, conducted a Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting (PANM) regarding a proposed Preliminary Plan of subdivision (PPS) and Detailed Site Plan (DET). The proposal includes 48 two-over-two condominium units on the vacant, two-acre parcel located between the Pin Oak Village Senior Apartments and the Altavista Apartments. A residential builder has not yet been selected, but NVR (now building similar units at South Lake) and Stanley Martin Homes (building in Westphalia) are the current candidates. A total of ten residents attended the meeting, including HOA representatives from Covington Condos and the Covington Recreation Association. Attorney Matt Tedesco explained that the concept of residential use was discussed with the residents during the Bowie Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) review process. Earlier this year, the Prince George's County District

Council downzoned the property from the CGO (Commercial General Office) Zone to the RMF-20 (Residential Multi-Family-20) Zone and eliminated the potential for a three-story, 115,500 square foot consolidated storage facility with 959 storage units at the site. Stakeholder questions included a need to better understand the details of the two-over-two product, whether any trees will be cleared, the traffic impact on the neighborhood and how residents can participate in the upcoming review. The official PANM meeting summary is attached. Once a builder is selected, the project will start moving through the formal review process, but not likely until 2025. Mr. Colevas committed to another community meeting to share the builder information, once it is known, and participating in City hearings.

August 20, 2024

The Honorable Angela D. Alsobrooks
Prince George's County Executive
County Administration Building
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

RE: Bowie City Council 2024-2025 Transportation Priority List

Dear County Executive Alsobrooks:

On August 5, 2024, the Bowie City Council reviewed the City's Transportation Priority List. We wish to provide you with this letter to highlight our priorities for State and County transportation facilities. Below are the City's transportation priorities and recommendations:

1. State Transportation Priorities

The City Council's top objectives for projects that might receive State funding are outlined in the letter that is attached and addressed to Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld. **The rehabilitation of MD 197 (Collington Road) between Kenhill Drive and Relocated MD 450 (now County Priority #6) remains the City's top priority for State roadway facilities.** The project's preliminary engineering blueprints are being redesigned by the State Highway Administration. The engineering phase of the FY 2024–2029 CTP is presently underway. \$1.0 million from the County went toward planning. The goal of this project is to widen and upgrade the current MD 197 to a multi-lane divided highway, spanning 1.4 miles from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated. The average daily traffic in 2023 was 31,000 vehicles, and by 2043, it is expected to reach 44,300. During peak hours on weekdays, the two-lane stretch that is now in place is extremely crowded, especially in the morning and evening. The Maryland Open Transportation Investment Decision Act - Application and Evaluation (Chapter 30) mandates that the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) use a project-based scoring approach for evaluating large transportation projects. Highway and transit capacity improvements costing more than \$5 million are considered major transportation projects. MDOT uses a variety of techniques in its project appraisal and selection process, however the project prioritizing approach mandated by Chapter 30 does not choose significant transportation projects for financing. MD 197 (MD 450 to Kenhill Drive) is currently ranked #22 with a score of 14.04. The City asks that you amend the County's Transportation Priority List to make expediting MD 197 one of the County's highest priorities for construction.

The City's other major priorities for State facilities include:

- Reconstruction of MD 450 (Annapolis Road) between Stonybrook Drive and MD 3 (County Priority #9), with immediate emphasis on the segment between Stonybrook Drive and Race Track Road (known as Bowie Mainstreet);
- Construction of an interchange at the US 301/MD 197 intersection (removed, older corridor-level project in need of reevaluation.).
- US 301 capacity and safety improvements between Excalibur Road and MD 214 (removed, Older corridor-level project in need of reevaluation.). The City Council would like to pursue and re-emphasize the importance of this project to the State. As of now, the

study that was done regarding the improvements to US 301 severely outdated. If we can't see a revision of these studies in the near future, requesting some interim or provisional capacity improvements to ease the burden on our residents.

- Design and engineering, as well as right-of-way acquisition, for MD 3, between US 50 and MD 32; Acquiring vacant parcels in a similar manner to the right-of-way acquisitions for US 301 would be a cost-effective way to assemble right-of-way for lane widening and construction of the future interchange at MD 450/MD 3. (removed, Older corridor-level project in need of reevaluation.)

2. County Capital Improvement Program

Church Road - Church Road is the County roadway that the City values most. An enhancement project has been in the CIP for a long time, but there hasn't been any significant attempt to advance it. Regretfully, Church Road's \$9.7 million upgrade project is still listed as "to be determined" and falls under the CIP's "Beyond 6 Years" category. Between Woodmore Road and MD 214 (Central Avenue), Church Road will receive geometric and safety improvements as part of the referenced project. These improvements will include local realignment of the roadway (horizontal and vertical), the addition of shoulders where needed, and roadside drainage. This road improvement would contribute to increased security and reduced traffic south of Woodmore Road. Enhancements to the northernmost portion of Church Road, beyond Fairwood Parkway to Old Annapolis Road, are also suggested by our City Council. Instead of changing to a 2-lane divided road, our Council would want to see Church Road remain a 4-lane split road and advise traffic calming treatments. Fairwood, which is located immediately west of Church Road, will see the construction of a new elementary school, which provides more rationale for the County to finish that northern portion.

A significant section of the estate-home neighborhood in Prince George's County is serviced by Church Road. The Church Road section between Mount Oak Road and MD 214 should get full construction funding during the first years of the CIP due to the pressing need for a safer route with sufficient carrying capacity for traffic. In order to provide Prince George's County with the necessary property for a roadway realignment at this site, the City is willing to offer six acres of land.

We urge you to support a feasibility study for the Church Road corridor in the DPW&T budget for FY 2025 and consider placing funding for design of improvements between MD 214 and Mount Oak Road in Year 2 of the FY 2025 CIP and funding for construction in Years 2-3, so that this critical safety project can move forward soon.

Race Track Road - The City Council supports a continuation of funding for pedestrian safety and aesthetic landscaping improvements to Race Track Road. There is avid community support for the project. The design status is about 40% complete and includes a full road layout plan, profiles, and cross sections, as well as maintenance of traffic/signing and pavement marking plans. In May 2018, a public information session was held at Yorktown Elementary School. We understand that the County is still funding this project and informed the City that they have officially restarted the project as they will need to re-engage the consultant. The County's schedule is to complete design in 2025, with construction in early to mid-2026. The Race Track Task Force recommends a complete street cross section and extend the limits of the project past the Race Track. The City appreciates your helping to address the many safety challenges on Race Track Road.

Governor's Bridge Replacement - Governor Bridge Road is an important vehicular route connecting Prince George's County with Anne Arundel County and construction of a replacement bridge is called for in the approved Bowie, Mitchellville and Vicinity Area Master Plan. The road provides a second point of

Letter to County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks
City Council Transportation Priority List

access for the 240 single family dwellings in the Longleaf community, 478 multi-family apartment units at Governor's Green, the Prince George's Stadium North Parking Lot, several automobile dealerships and other properties. The City has always understood that the bridge would be repaired or replaced, so that vehicular access could be restored. The City would like to see a bridge improvement that enhances safety and preserves access (especially for emergency vehicles).

US 301 Improvements (south of MD 214) – The goal of this project is to enlarge US 301 as needed at Trade Zone Avenue, MD 214 and MD 725, and to add a third through lane, both north and south, between MD 214 and MD 4. There will also be related intersection upgrades at Village Drive West, Trade Zone Avenue, and Old Central Avenue. This project is required in case the State Highway Administration's planned improvements are delayed, in order to maintain adequate service levels at the intersections along US 301 during peak hours. It offers better safety for public transportation users as well as more capacity to support future development in this area. In Year 1 of the present CIP, \$8,260,000 in construction money is scheduled. \$4.13 million in construction financing allotments are made in every CIP year, from Year 2 to Year 6. The County should specifically request action by SHA to add lanes and eliminate the accordion effect of funneling traffic from three lanes to two lanes at multiple locations and we urge you to consider contributing some of this CIP funding to a future State construction project aimed to resolving these issues.

In several sections of the southbound lanes of US 301, south of MD 214, developers have added a third through lane; however, no projects or financing seem to be available to build a third northbound lane. This was noted by the City Council. We would like to advocate for these projects even though the State has removed the majority of the US 301 projects from the State's Consolidated Transportation Program. US 301 is a major corridor in the County, and many residents and users of 301 have been waiting impatiently for the State to make significant safety improvements. As time goes on, more traffic will be generated, which will only lead to further safety concerns.

Public Transit

Planned mixed-use development, such as at Bowie Town Center, Melford Village, South Lake and Mill Branch Crossing strengthens the case for better and more frequent transit service within our City. In addition, some of the more remote portions of the City are sorely underserved by public transit or have no service at all. The establishment of a new Transit Oriented Development at the Bowie State MARC Station will help with this, but it won't address many of our needs. Also, the Council identified several concerns with the existing bus facilities and routes. At certain stops there are no bus shelters forcing people to stand in the street or the grass, making them susceptible to inclement weather. Council also indicated improving the wait time and efficiency on our already low frequency routes along with requesting better bus shelters.

Expansion of the County transit service to the Bowie area will go a long way toward addressing the priority transit needs identified by the City Council, as follows:

1. *Establish a downtown circulator route (The Bus) serving the Bowie Center, including Covington and Melford.*
2. *Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between the 450 Mainstreet area and the City of Greenbelt.*
3. *Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between Bowie Town Center and Largo Town Center, including service along Woodmore, Mount Oak and Mitchellville Roads.*

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4. *Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between Fairwood and Upper Marlboro, via Fairwood Parkway, Church Road, Leeland Road and US 301.*
5. *Establish a Microtransit service that serves key locations throughout the City.*
6. *Ensure the establishment of a regional transit route from Annapolis to Laurel via the Northview Park-and-Ride lot in the next several years.*
7. *Continue to advocate for efficiency improvements to WMATA bus service and the Better Bus Network Design initiative regarding Bowie.*
8. *Initiate County bus (TheBus) transit service in Old Town Bowie to connect it to other cultural and business attractions, including Bowie State University*

3. **Trails**

Pedestrian Bridge over MD 214 – Funding should be included to the M-NCPPC CIP to help construct a new pedestrian bridge over MD 214 (outside the City limits). In 2021, the City completed a feasibility study, working with the Maryland State Highway Administration, that confirmed the potential for a grade-separated pedestrian bridge over MD 214 in the vicinity of Hall Road. A recommended location for a future bridge is on M-NCPPC land situated between Hall Road East and Pennsbury Drive, on the north side of MD 214, and County owned land in the South Lake (Karrington) development, on the south side of MD 214. The City is willing to take the lead in project management and future maintenance of this very important pedestrian facility.

Bowie Heritage Trail - The County's assistance, through the M-NCPPC CIP, is requested for construction of a pedestrian underpass of MD 197 (outside the City limits) to connect Lemon's Bridge Road near the D.S.S. Goodloe House to the MARC Train Station at Bowie State University. A feasibility study and preliminary engineering plan, funded by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Transportation-Land Use Connections program, was completed in 2014. Also, this fiscal year, the City will complete a 2,200 linear foot extension of The Bowie Heritage Trail, from Old Town Bowie to Jericho Park/Lemon's Bridge Road.

A-44 Greenway Trail - The City is also interested in a partnership with M-NCPPC to design and build a north-south trail system in the Church Road corridor (mostly outside the City limits), using lands dedicated to public use from the now-obsolete Inter-County Connector (A-44). The City would like to explore the possibility of trail construction on M-NCPPC property between Dolphin Way in Woodmore Estates and Dunwood Crossing Drive in Woodmore Highlands.

Acquisition of the CSX Railroad tracks from Morgantown on the Potomac River all the way to Bowie - There is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to establish a regional hiker-biker trail amenity in place of the CSX railroad tracks, since the coal fired power plants at Morgantown on the Potomac River and Chalk Point on the Patuxent River will be shutting down operations soon. The railroad corridors could be repurposed to a Rails-to-Trails concept, enhancing multi-modal travel opportunities within Prince George's and Charles Counties. State and County leadership are essential in this regard, and we implore you to work at the highest levels to ensure that the opportunity for non-vehicular travel is preserved and eventually realized.

As always, City will keep working to make the community a better place for all. The City Council appreciates your time and dedication to responsible transportation planning and for your

Letter to County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks
City Council Transportation Priority List

uninterrupted commitment to serving the residents of Prince George's County. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our recommendations

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
Timothy J. Adams
Mayor

Attachment #1: Letter to Paul Wiedefeld dated August 19, 2024

cc: The Honorable Ronald L. Watson, Ph.D., State Senator
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Delegate
The Honorable Adrian Bofo, Delegate
The Honorable Kym Taylor, Delegate
The Honorable Jolene Ivey, County Council Chair
The Honorable Ingrid Watson, County Council Member
The Honorable Wala Blegay, County Council Member
The Honorable Peter Shapiro, Prince George's County Planning Board Chairman
Mr. William Pines, SHA Administrator
Mr. Derek L. Gunn, P.E., SHA District Engineer
Mr. Randy Clarke, WMATA General Manager/CEO
Mr. Michael Johnson, Director of Prince George's County DPW&T

August 19, 2024

The Honorable Paul Wiedefeld, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: City of Bowie 2024-2025 Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

The Bowie City Council is pleased to present the City's Transportation Priority List for 2024-2025, which was the subject of a briefing at City Hall on August 5, 2024. We acknowledge that the CTP reflects the tough funding choices that are necessary to present a balanced six-year budget. It includes departmentwide reductions made to the operating and capital programs to match available resources. While these reductions are difficult, they are targeted to limit the overall impact on Marylanders and will not jeopardize safety or key economic investments. The City's priorities for State transportation facilities are unchanged from last year; however, this year we wish to add some additional justification and updated background for several projects on our list.

The City's Transportation Priorities for 2024-2025 include:

1. Local Road Improvement Priorities

The City's highest transportation priorities for roadway construction include the following five projects. **MD 197 is the City Council's highest transportation priority.**

- **MD 197 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 19):**
FULLY FUND RIGHT-OF-WAY AND CONSTRUCTION

The State Highway Administration is moving ahead with a re-design of Preliminary Engineering plans for the project. The engineering phase of the FY 2024–2029 CTP is presently underway. \$1.0 million from the county went toward planning. The goal of this project is to widen and upgrade the current MD 197 to a multi-lane divided highway, spanning 1.4 miles from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated. The average daily traffic in 2023 was 31,000 vehicles, and by 2043, it is expected to reach 44,300.

The existing, two-lane section is already severely congested in the morning and evening peak periods and at all hours on the weekends. The lack of roadway capacity has resulted in ever-increasing diversion of traffic from MD 197 onto the City's local street system. In addition, there are continuing concerns voiced by residents about pedestrian safety and access from the side streets. In response to numerous safety incidents, a mid-block crossing was installed recently near the Foxhill Park entrance. State Highway Administration held a public open house to show the design plans and details to attendees on July 22nd, 2024. Maps and displays highlighted the proposed improvements. MD 197 is ready for the State's investment of right-of-way and construction funding in the next CTP. As you may know, City residents have been waiting for relief from this harmful congestion bottleneck for more than three decades. The MD 197 project is currently Construction Priority #6 for Prince George's County.

Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

- **MD 450 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 27):**
FULLY FUND RIGHT-OF-WAY AND CONSTRUCTION

This project completes a multi-segment renovation of Maryland 450 from MD 3 to Whitfield Chapel Road, which is close to the Capital Beltway. For the whole alignment, project planning was finished in 1991. The design must be finished, and construction and right-of-way acquisition are required between Stonybrook Drive and MD 3. The objective of this project is to improve the stretch of MD Route 450 to a multi-lane divided highway (1.4 miles) by redesigning it from a location approximately 1,000 feet east of its intersection with Stonybrook Drive to MD Route 3. Engineering is around 95% finished. In 2023, the average daily traffic range was 24,900 – 31,000 vehicles per day and is projected to grow to 32,400 – 40,300 vehicles per day in the Year 2043. Due to its primary access to the Bowie Mainstreet business district, this project is extremely important to the City's economic development. The imperative need to build a safer road is more significant.

Since Administrator Tim Smith agreed in 2021 to revisit the current MD 450 design as soon as financing resources have been discovered, the City Council appreciates your consideration of reexamining the roadway design idea for Bowie Mainstreet. The City Council has repeatedly approached SHA to revamp the Bowie Mainstreet portion of this corridor, thus we would like to see some progress made on this project. We humbly ask that the State allocate funds to the CTP so that, over the course of the next few years, the Bowie Mainstreet section of MD 450's design and engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction can be completed.

- **US 301, from Excalibur Road to Leeland Road (Project Removed):**
FUND PROJECT PLANNING OR INTERIM CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH DISTRICT 3

From August to December of 2022, the amount of traffic on US 301 increased from 62,400 to 64,200 (AADT), representing an almost 3% increase in just five months. Access and safety concerns are accentuated by the volume of traffic congestion and the significant amount of approved further development in the corridor. The current road should be expanded to three travel lanes in each direction as soon as possible in order to keep up with other road improvement projects scheduled for construction north and south of this segment, since it is likely that the ultimate, controlled access improvements planned for US 301 will not occur for many years to come. If a separate Project Planning study is not possible, we would respectfully request that a study be funded at the District level. As of now, the study that was done regarding the improvements to US 301 severely outdated. If we can't see a revision of these studies in the near future, requesting some interim or provisional capacity improvements to ease the burden on our residents.

When fully constructed, the South Lake development plan will include 380,000 square feet of retail use, 220,000 square feet of office use, two hotels and 1,360 dwelling units, including 325 multi-family apartment units, 126 multi-family condominium (two-over-two) units, 567 townhouse units and 342 single-family detached units. In addition, a major County sports complex recently opened just south of South Lake. Liberty Sports Park features multiple fields for a variety of youth sports, including lacrosse, football, soccer, field hockey and rugby. This complex will draw visitors from throughout the country and will have a significant economic impact on Prince George's County and the surrounding area. The tremendous amount of new development in this area deserves a comprehensive approach to improving US 301 and placing this back on the CTP.

- **MD 3 (Project Removed):**
FUND DESIGN, ENGINEERING AND RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

This project will upgrade MD Route 3 from US Route 50 to MD Route 32 (8.89 miles) to address safety and capacity concerns. The project will improve safety and relieve traffic congestion in this heavily traveled corridor. In 2022, the average daily traffic range was 66,500 – 84,600 vehicles per day and is projected to grow to 88,600 – 137,400 vehicles per day in the Year 2042. The forecast for 2042 represents about a 63% increase in growth of the traffic volume, and it demonstrates that a need to move ahead with design and engineering now exists.

The mixed-use development at Melford Village, which is situated at the MD 3 junction with Belair Drive, will increase traffic in the corridor. Up to 100,000 square feet of retail space, 260,000 square feet of office space, 126,520 square feet of research space, and up to 2,500 residential units (including up to 1,000 senior adult multi-family units, 1,000 non-senior multi-family units, and 500 townhome units) are all part of the approved plan for Melford Village. The first multi-family building on the property, consisting of 388 units, recently opened and is partially occupied. The adjacent parcels are now under development. The 1.4 million square feet of employment use that are already permitted or present at the same location are supplemented by the new increase. To their credit, St. John Properties, the developer of Melford, has made a substantial contribution by completing traffic capacity upgrades at the MD 3/MD 450 intersection ahead of schedule. Given that the MD 3 project's Project Planning is finished, it is advised that financing be given to start Design and Engineering and pursue advanced right-of-way acquisition.

The City Council greatly appreciates SHA's recently completed interim safety improvements and signalization along the southbound lanes of MD 3, south of MD 450. The City Council also notes that \$45 million has been expended in right-of-way acquisition for the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study along US 301 (**Project Removed**). The City Council believes that acquiring vacant parcels in the MD 3 corridor in a similar manner would be a cost-effective way to assemble right-of-way for lane widening and construction of the future interchange at MD 450/MD 3.

2. Other Immediate Transportation Priorities

Two remaining local priorities for State transportation facilities are identified below.

1. MD 978 (Hall Road) – District 3 completed construction of a sidewalk between Hall Station Drive and the CSX railroad tracks in 2017. We ask that you continue to support improvements to MD 978, as this roadway is part of the City's master planned trail network, known as The Bowie Byway. A concept development plan was completed and is awaiting design funds for the segment between the CSX railroad and MD 214. Both the City and County are committed to partnering with SHA to complete pedestrian improvements that will ensure safe access to the new South Bowie Library. In 2021, the City completed a feasibility study, working with District 3, that confirmed the potential for a grade-separated pedestrian bridge over MD 214 in the vicinity of Hall Road.
2. MD 197 North Landscaping Retrofit – Twenty years ago, SHA's Office of Environmental Design prepared a concept plan for landscaping of the median areas between relocated MD 450 and Rockledge Elementary School. We would like to see this plan implemented. The retrofit design was achieved with broad community consensus, and the City feels the promised work is long overdue and should be initiated as soon as possible. We believe the State would eliminate an unsafe situation by eliminating the "suicide lane" and qualify for stormwater credit by reducing impervious surfaces in this part of the MD 197 corridor. The City Council asks that you provide a current cost estimate for this project so that it might be implemented by SHA District 3 as soon as possible.

Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

3. Long-Range Transportation Priorities

In addition to the above, the City Council wishes to highlight several other extremely important improvements to the State transportation system. These projects are not currently listed in the State Consolidated Transportation Program but have regional significance:

- Acquisition of the CSX Railroad tracks from Morgantown on the Potomac River all the way to Bowie – There is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to establish a regional hiker-biker trail amenity in place of the CSX railroad tracks, since the coal fired power plants at Morgantown on the Potomac River and Chalk Point on the Patuxent River will be shutting down operations soon. The railroad corridors could be repurposed to a Rails-to-Trails concept, enhancing multi-modal travel opportunities within Prince George's and Charles Counties. MDOT leadership is essential in this regard, and we implore you to work at the highest levels to ensure that the opportunity for non-vehicular travel is preserved and eventually realized.
- Public Transit Via the US 50 Corridor – The City Council requests that you accelerate project development of the US 50 Transit Corridor, referred to as Corridor 28 in the MTA Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland. The City concurs with the plan's recommendation for a new, regional bus route from Annapolis to Union Station via US 50, with a stop at the Northview Park-and-Ride lot in Bowie, within the next several years to provide transit service that integrates with existing WMATA bus routes and national and regional rail systems at Union Station. The City also requests the examination of the current conditions of the bus shelter and routes here in Bowie. At certain stops there are no bus shelters forcing people to stand in the street or the grass making the susceptible to inclement weather, and the improving the wait time and efficiency on our already low frequency routes are just some of the conditions we would like to improve along with requesting better bus shelters.
- A New Interchange on US 50 (I-595) at MD 193 - The City Council is very concerned that traffic levels on MD 197, which are continuing to increase, may even be made worse unless MD 197 is upgraded and a new interchange is constructed on US 50 at MD 193. The current Prince George's County Transportation Priority List recommends a Project Planning study for an additional interchange on US 50, at some location between MD 197 and MD 704 (County Project Planning Priority #6), and the project's stated purpose is to relieve congestion and improve safety on MD 197 and MD 450.
- A New Roadway Connecting MD 197 near Bowie State University with MD 3 in Anne Arundel County – There is a need to conduct a feasibility study to further examine regional traffic congestion in the MD 450 corridor, east of Race Track Road, and the heavy volume of motorists who are projected to use MD 450, Race Track Road and Jericho Park Road in order to travel between Laurel and Crofton. Please note that this need to evaluate the operational and environmental feasibility of this roadway connection is recommended in both the Approved Prince George's County Master Plan of Transportation and the Approved Bowie State/MARC Station Sector Plan. This facility will greatly enhance access to the planned, mixed-use Transit Oriented Development community charted for the Bowie State MARC Station area. State leadership is key to realizing this future transportation concept

Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

As always, City will keep working to make the community a better place for all. The City Council appreciates your time and dedication to responsible transportation planning and for the state's uninterrupted commitment to serving the residents of Maryland. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
Timothy J. Adams
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Ronald L. Watson, Ph.D., State Senator
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Delegate
The Honorable Adrian Boafo, Delegate
The Honorable Kym Taylor, Delegate
The Honorable Jolene Ivey, County Council Chair
The Honorable Ingrid Watson, County Council Member
The Honorable Wala Blegay, County Council Member
The Honorable Angela D. Alsobrooks, County Executive
The Honorable Peter Shapiro, Prince George's County Planning Board Chairman
Mr. William Pines, SHA Administrator
Mr. Derek L. Gunn, P.E., SHA District Engineer
Mr. Randy Clarke, WMATA General Manager/CEO
Mr. Michael Johnson, Director of Prince George's County DPW&T

US Store Closings Outstrip Openings in Break From Past Two Years

Shift Comes As Retailer Bankruptcies, Financial Woes Surge



So far this year there will be 122 net U.S. store closings, according to Coresight Research. (Getty Images)

By [Linda Moss](#)
CoStar News

August 13, 2024 | 8:33 P.M.

U.S. store closings have surpassed openings for the first time this year, the result of a surge of bankruptcy filings by struggling retailers that has extended into the back half of 2024.

Year to date, the 4,548 stores shutting their doors have outpaced the 4,426 announced openings, resulting in 122 net store closings, according to a Coresight Research report

dated Aug. 9. The data marks a shift from the previous two years' annual totals where openings edged closings.

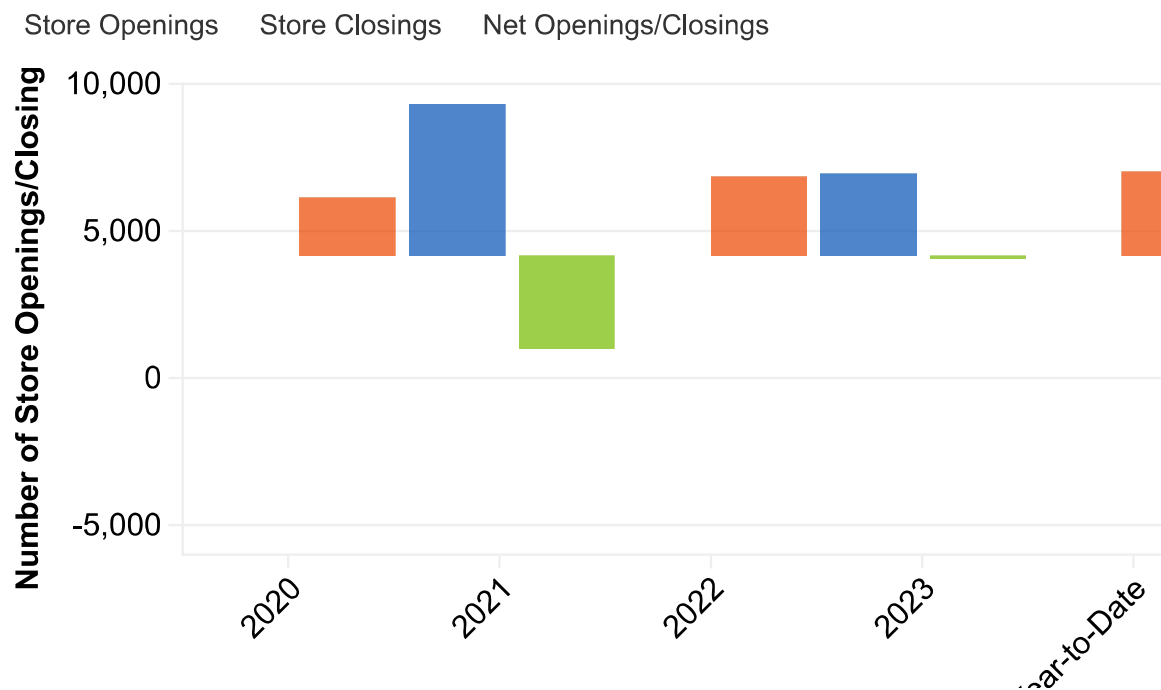
One of the reasons closings are now outpacing debuts is because furniture and home goods seller Big Lots, based in Columbus, Ohio, has significantly increased the number of locations it plans to shut, by 258, John Harmon, managing director of technology research at Coresight, a data-driven retail analytics firm, told CoStar News on Tuesday.

"Until two weeks ago, the lines [of closings and openings] were just tracking each other as expected," he said.

Around the time of the [ICSC national retail real estate conference in May](#), there had been wave of retail Chapter 11 filings and store closings. In the past few months there's been another spurt of bankruptcy filings, with more vacant retail space being thrown onto the market. But at least one retail analyst said there hasn't been any tipping point now — that despite the new round of closings the demand for retail space will continue to outstrip the supply. The national retail vacancy rate is 4.1%, according to CoStar data, making that sector very tight in terms of available space.

"It's not, in my opinion, a resumption of the retail apocalypse that we saw in 2018, 2019, 2020 where we were seeing so many stores closed," Brandon Svec, national director of U.S. retail analytics for CoStar Group, told CoStar News. "There are still a substantial amount of tenants from a broad range of sectors looking for space. And the longer-term imbalance between the space needed in retail and the space that we have, I don't think has shifted."

US Store Closings Now Surpass Openings



Source: Coresight Research
Chart: Parker Leipzig



Of course, it remains to be seen how many more retailers shake out this year and what effect that will have on retail leasing. Several analysts said they expect more stores to be shuttered and more Chapter 11 filings.

Closing Up Shop

In recent weeks, in addition to Big Lots, the flock of retailers and chains shuttering locations has grown to include [Conn's HomePlus](#), Badcock's Home Furniture & More, [LL Flooring Holdings](#), [Buca di Beppo](#), Rubio's, and World of Beer. The LL Flooring closings, 94 stores, just happened this week so aren't included in Coresight's report.

Coresight said that department store chain J.C. Penney had closed 12 stores year to date. The retailer plans to close three more stores in 2024: one in the Shoppes at Bel Air shopping mall in Mobile, Alabama; one in the Sikes Senter shopping mall in Wichita Falls, Texas; and one in the Elm Plaza shopping mall in Waterville, Maine. J.C. Penney also plans to close one store in the Westfield Annapolis shopping mall in Annapolis, Maryland, at some point in 2025, according to Coresight. It now operates 660 stores.

Discount giant Target plans to close one store in East Palo Alto, California, on Sept. 28, taking the company's U.S. store count to 1,965, according to Coresight. And Party supplies retailer Party City has opened one store and closed 18 year to date, with plans to close one store in Albany, Georgia, later in this year, according to Coresight's report.

Still, this year's store closings pale compared to prior years. In 2020, the peak of the pandemic, there were only 3,704 openings compared with 9,698 closings, for a net of 5,994 closings, according to Coresight. In 2021, there were only 180 net store closings, with a total of 5,228. In 2022, store openings soared, to 5,394 openings compared with 3,819 closings, for a net 1,575 openings. And last year, there were 5,843 openings versus 5,548 closings, for a net 295 openings.



Gucci debuted a store in the luxury wing of the American Dream megamall this month in New Jersey. (American Dream)

Barrie Scardina, president of Americas Retail Services, Agency Leasing and Alliances for the brokerage Cushman & Wakefield, in an email said it's important to note that the square footage of the store openings is still ahead of that for closings, citing Coresight data. As of Aug. 2, announced store openings will result in an estimated 79.5 million square feet of new retail space, she said, compared with an estimated 67 million square feet of closed retail space.

Home Improvement in Trouble

Svec and Daniel Gielchinsky, a partner at DGIM Law and a bankruptcy attorney, both said that retailers selling goods relating to homes and home improvements have been hit hard by high inflation and high interest rates that are putting a break on consumer spending in that sector.

On Tuesday, Home Depot, the world's largest home improvement retailer, [reported fiscal second-quarter earnings](#) and said it expects full-year, same-store sales to drop 3% to 4%

in 2024.

"When people are unable to go out to the market and buy a house or invest in their house, it affects everything else," Gielchinsky told CoStar News. "Studies show that people who spend the most or invest the most in their newly purchased home in the first three years of their home ownership. But if home ownership is out of people's grasps, then they're never going to have that opportunity to invest."

He predicted that smaller home improvement retailers will be filing for Chapter 11.

The rise in store closings is a reflection of retail sector specific weakness, especially related to the slowdown in home sales, according to Svec.

"And it does reflect a true rotation and slowdown in sales growth that we're seeing amongst a lot of retailers," he said.

'Paying the Piper'

From an operational side, retailers are feeling the impact of slowing sales growth, higher costs, and fewer accommodating debt markets, according to Svec.

"All of those things are combining to reduce retailer profitability, to lead to this uptick in closures," he said. "But most of the closures we're seeing still can be classified really into a couple buckets. First and foremost, sector-specific weakness due to outside macro factors, and that's really your housing market, your furniture market, your appliance market. All of those sectors are are really still struggling, but that's really nothing to do with the overall macro environment."

Second, companies that were already standing in weak financial positions were thrown a temporary lifeline by the pandemic, according to Svec.

"Once sales normalized, once operations normalize, their poor merchandising, poor location strategies, what have you came back to roost," he said. "And we're now paying

the piper that we should have and would have probably paid in 2021 had it not been for those tailwinds that they got from the pandemic."

Some retailers are relocating out of malls, resulting in store closings, he said.

There are plenty of bright spots in terms of store openings, with retailers such as Dollar General, Burlington Stores, and TJX Cos. debuting hundreds of new locations. And in an unusual turn of events, the new owner of teen apparel chain Rue21 that filed for Chapter 11 and closed more than 500 store, is [reopening dozens](#) of those shuttered locations.

In its recent report, Coresight cited 30 additional announced store openings were led by: Havertys, seven; Publix, five; Sleep Number's, four; and Daiso, Murphy USA and Rag & Bone, three each. In addition, luxury retailer Gucci opened up shop at the [American Dream](#) megamall in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

"We have too much retail space in certain locations," Svec said. "We have too much space in certain formats. But overall, I think we are still in a very tight space-balance position across most of the sector. And that's not changed by these more recent store closure announcements."

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Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting Summary

Project Name: Covington Oaks

Project Application Numbers: PPS-2024-010 and DET-2024-005

Project Address: 3610 Elder Oaks Boulevard, Bowie, Maryland 20716

Meeting Date: August 01, 2024

Meeting Time: 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
(Doors opened at 6:00 PM)

Meeting Address/Location: Covington Community Center
3750 Oaks Boulevard, Bowie MD, 20716

Applicant Name: Collington Place, LLC

Attendees on Behalf of the Applicant: Andy Colevas

Nicholas Conte, Jr.

Collington Place, LLC

Mike Lenhart, PTOE
Lenhart Traffic Consulting, Inc.

Matthew Tedesco, Esq.
McNamee Hosea, P.A.

Dominique Lockhart, AICP
McNamee Hosea, P.A.

Jackie Brown
G.S. Proctor & Associates

Topics Discussed/Raised:

- Summary of the project was provided that generally included:
 - Property location
 - Property zoning (pre and post County-wide Sectional Map Amendment (CMA) and pre and post adoption of the Bowie-Mitchellville and Vicinity Sectional Map Amendment (SMA))
 - Size of the project
 - Proposed number of dwelling units and types of dwelling units

- Proposed density of the project
 - School Facility Surcharge and Public Safety Surcharge
 - Master Plan recommendations for the property and SMA rezoning of the property to RSF-20, as supported by the City of Bowie and community stakeholders
 - Entitlement process – Neighborhood meetings, PPS and ADQ, DET.
- Discussion on the recently approved Bowie-Mitchellville and Vicinity Master Plan and SMA.
- Project amenities and if the new HOA would annex into the larger HOA for Covington.
- Definition of two-family dwelling (2 over 2) unit type (number of families in each unit, number of buildings).
- Floorplan/layout of dwelling units (soundproofing, garages, stairs, rooftop decks, etc.).
- Approximate square footages and number of bedrooms in dwelling units.
- Location of example townhouse product for residents to visit and see potential layouts/floorplans.
- Approximate pricing for the dwelling units.
- Expected timing of the project including entitlements and groundbreaking.
- Woodland conservation and preservation requirements.
- Current traffic concerns (speeding and safety of pedestrians) in the general area.
- Desired traffic calming devices (crosswalks, stop signs, light similar to the blinking light along Northview Drive) to be addressed by the City and not necessarily the applicant.
- Notification (becoming a party of record for individuals and also HOAs to register with MNCPPC).
- Displacement of wildlife.