Titles

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The Extensive Transit Center that’s Struggling to be a Walkable Neighborhood
The Extensive Transit Center that’s Struggling to be a Downtown
How this Extensive Transit Center is Struggling to become a Downtown

History

Welcome to New Carrollton Station, 10 miles from downtown DC. It’s the easternmost station on the dc metros orange line.

NC station is the third train station to serve the area, in the 1870s a small station served the small community of Lanham just north of the current station, the stop consisted of a small shelter and an asphalt platform served by a few Penn Central and later Conrail commuter trains between Washington and Baltimore. In 1970 not far from Lanham station Capital Beltway Station opened and made Lanham station redundant so it closed in 1982. After the completion of the mainline station at NC in october 1983, capital beltway station became redundant and met the same fate as Lanham station, CB station only saw 13 years of service, closing its doors the same day that the marc and amtrak nc station opened.

Running on completely new and separate tracks than the mainline rail, the metro station opened for service in 1978 along with the Minnesota Avenue, Deanwood, Cheverly and Landover stations. This completed the final section of the metro’s orange line east of the city.

Amtrak’s premium Acela service started in Dec 2000 and served this station until 2003, now that's…a fun fact. However only slower trains like the NER, Palmetto and Vermonter stop here.

“Quick” Facts

The metro part of the station is owned by wmata while the mainline part of the station is owned by amtrak.
The station features a center platform like all terminus stations and dawns the original 70s brown and red vibe that still holds up to this day as long as it's maintained. The mainline rail station is a bit more dank and utilitarian but it's also in the process of being redone so lets not judge it too harshly.

There is one main entrance for both the east and west of this station

Location and Surroundings

There's a decent amount of things near this station, especially for terminus stations which often have little near them. Directly across the station there's an IRS building, Maryland state government offices and WMATA New Carrollton office, completed in 2033. The new Metro office building, along with the Kaiser Permanente mid Atlantic headquarters hope to be cornerstone employers for a new urban center in NC complete with housing, workplaces and entertainment spaces. As you can see some of these apartments are complete and others are still under construction. Most of the area around the station is low density housing, offices or warehouse style development found in most suburbs. On the more operational side of things the NCR Metro yard is NE of the station, having trainyards near terminus stations is pretty normal for the metro.

Connections

If you haven't already noticed, the area is a major transfer hub for transferring between various modes of transportation. Amtrak and MARC run on the mainline, the Metro provides every 12 minute service to DC, while local buses connect the surrounding areas to this hub with 10 routes run by metrobus and 6 routes operated by Prince george's county's "the bus'.
You may have noticed a lot of construction in this video, a major part of that construction is Maryland's new purple line. In a few years the Purple line will connect the busiest parts of Montgomery and Prince George's county together with local suburban light rail, NCR will be the eastern terminus of this new line. For now you have to deal with construction and the relocation of the north side bus bay.

Orange line

Metro's orange line runs the most frequent service around here running every 10 - 15 minutes to downtown washington dc, arlington virginia and then further out into Fairfax county ultimately terminating in vienna.

MARC/Amtrak

The mainline rail station serves 4 different train services, MARC's Penn Line to Baltimore along with Amtrak's NER with connections as far as Boston, Roanoke and the VA beach area. Amtrak's Palmetto and Vermonter to Savannah and St Albans respectively also stop here.

Time from Landmark

Walking from the capitol building at 5pm on a weekday it would take around
Around 30 minutes taking the metro or walking to union station and taking a MARC train.
Around 40 mins by car
I'd take around to arrive here at the station.

Service and fares

Average headways on the metro is, 10 during rush hour 12 off peak and 15 during late nights
First and last trains are on screen right now

One way trip will cost $5.50
Monthly pass from NC to metro center plus unlimited equivalent or shorter trips will cost $176

Ridership and Stats

In its first full year of operation the station got around 5,715 entries per weekday.
2008 was the busiest year for this station at 10,625 EPWD.
Between 2012 - 2019 the station had 7408 EPWD
In 2025 there were 3749 entries on weekdays, 2,210 on Saturdays and 1,365 on Sundays and on busy RTO days in April the station got as high as 4500 EPWD.

Busiest day since 2012 was the women's march at 19,952 entries

The station has 2,613 parking spots and in April of 2025 80% of those were used on an average weekday.

That was metro station ridership, the mainline station received 664 Amtrak passengers passing through the station per day, on the other hand MARC trains saw 1,205 entries for their services in Nov 2018, the last time data was collected.

Respond to title question

NCR is currently struggling to become a downtown but the whole process is still a work in progress. PGC has identified the following as barriers to New Carrollton thriving as a walkable mixed use neighborhood, disconnected streets, the absence of bicycle facilities, inhospitable pedestrian environments, and wide, auto-oriented roadways. I noticed some of these issues when I was there, the sun was shining hard and there was little shade, so the reflection from the very lightly colored surfaces made it very bright and hard to see. Another issue that may be rectified as more housing gets constructed is that I saw one place for leisure in the entire area, it was this bar on the ground floor of the Stella Apartments.

The 2024 New Carrollton Downtown Access and Connectivity Strategy document outlines ways to improve the area for pedestrians and cyclists by recommending existing and new ideas for pedestrian and bicycle connections, crosswalk enhancements,placemaking interventions, potential redevelopment, and street connections. These additions would really improve the area for pedestrians and people on bikes as it's not the best environment for them right now.

Hopefully these recommendations can be implemented, because without them the area will continue to just be apartments near a metro station.

Future

Depending on how things go NC could be the next area to get more walkable with a dense town center area connecting lots of housing and amenities. But it wouldn't surprise me if it gets halfway done and the economy goes bad or some other factor keeps it in limbo as kinda dense but still completely car dependent for 90 something % of people. The apartments going up aren't cheap with 1 bed after 1500 and requiring a slavery of around 60,00 or more to be able to rent. Let's hope enough housing can be built that it can reduce costs locally but I wouldn't hold my breath.

outro

Prince George's County wants NCR to become a more walkable environment with housing, commercial and lots of employment opportunities but factors such as development regulation and costs, an uncertain local and national economy and most Americans being unfamiliar with the pros of more urban living leaves new Carrollton in a sort of urban / suburban limbo at least for now. But I hope to make an update to this video in 5-10 years highlighting the massive change..only time will tell.

Acela Video
Title: **Acela hustling through New Carrollton station at about 101 MPH**
By Stephen Little

Link: https://tinyurl.com/5n6bk4zb

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