



# SILVER SPRING

DOWNTOWN AND ADJACENT COMMUNITIES PLAN



FALL  
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 **Montgomery Planning**  
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WORKING DRAFT



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Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department  
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# 1. Silver Spring Tomorrow





# 2. Introduction

## 2.1. A VISION FOR SILVER SPRING 2040

Downtown Silver Spring is a vibrant urban area that has undergone a significant transformation over the last twenty years. Today it is a center for arts, retail, entertainment, and business that draws visitors and consumers from across the county and the region. Silver Spring is renowned for its uniqueness and diversity, as well as for its wealth of local and ethnically diverse food and drink venues.

The revitalization of Silver Spring was spurred by the 2000 *Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan*. That plan encouraged the public and private investment that set the downtown on the path to becoming a thriving urban area. In the last decade, numerous high-rise apartment buildings have been completed, adding over 5,000 housing units, 20% of which are affordable, to the downtown Silver Spring area bringing many new residents to this growing urban center. This Sector Plan builds upon the previous plan by strengthening and celebrating the existing successful components of Silver Spring, while setting forth a vision and recommendations for the emerging areas of the downtown that will help Silver Spring continue to be a regional destination for the next 20 years.

In 2019, the Montgomery County Council passed the Racial Equity and Social Justice act which challenged the Planning Board to “consider the racial equity and social justice impact of a master plan.” This Plan endeavors to understand the historic advantages and disadvantages that have affected residents in Silver Spring, reach those who have been excluded from planning processes in the past, and study how Plan recommendations can encourage more equitable access to civic resources and investment.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic posed unexpected challenges for engagement, the unusual circumstances allowed the planning team the opportunity to engage stakeholders in new and different ways, with an emphasis on transparency throughout the planning process. Staff connected with residents, community organizations, property owners, civic associations, condo boards, employers, business owners, students at Montgomery College and County agency partners. Engagement was conducted primarily online, and included seven live, large virtual meetings, many small group online chats and a web-based survey in several languages.

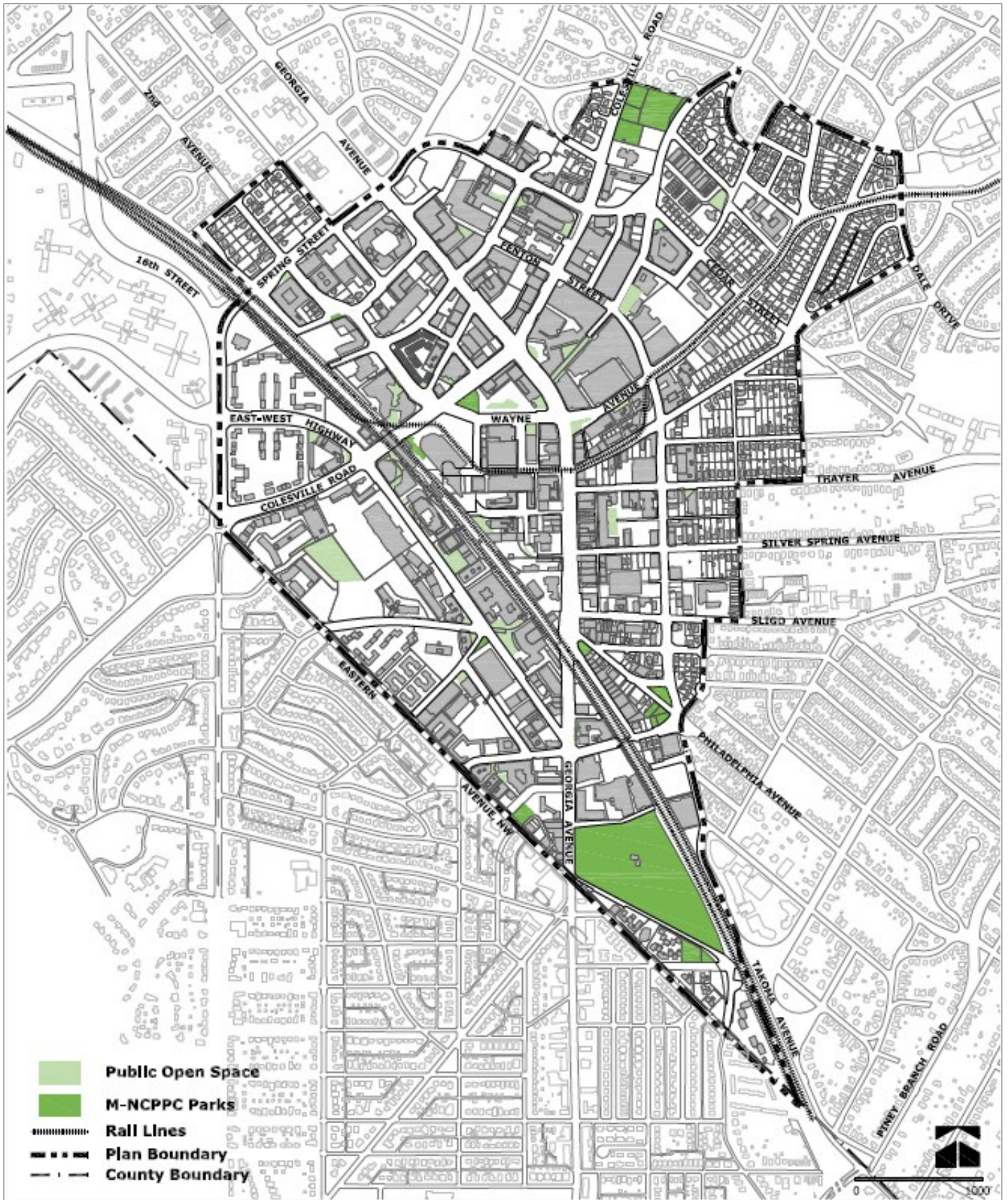
Plan visioning events included a series of interactive online workshops using virtual whiteboards and smaller focused virtual chats with individual planners from the team. For those who were unable to attend the live sessions, recordings and notes were made available on the website, along with an interactive, online mapping tool, ReactMap, where community members could submit comments anywhere within the plan area. Over 150 community members participated in the Visioning events and ReactMap received over 500 comments. In the spring of 2021 the team also met with several stakeholders in-person for site visits or walking tours.

Several of the highlights of the engagement effort included attracting a mix of age ranges that reflected the plan area demographics, a series of meetings with local Ethiopian community leaders; and the new experience of conducting an inclusive engagement process almost entirely online. Partnerships with existing community leaders proved valuable when reaching out to new groups that had not previously participated in a planning process.



Building on this engagement, the plan imagines a Silver Spring of the future that is diverse, distinctive and thriving. Downtown Silver Spring will continue to be a great place to work, do business, and enjoy the arts; a downtown that is home to small independent businesses, cutting-edge tech companies, hubs for science and research, educational institutions, and arts organizations that draw patrons from around the region. Downtown Silver Spring will maintain its uniqueness while remaining an affordable and attractive place to live for people of all ages and backgrounds. New open spaces will promote a healthier community for all who spend time in the downtown. The plan envisions an urban area that is better connected and characterized by green, climate-resilient, walkable streets that are safe and comfortable for everyone – pedestrians, bikers, transit riders and drivers.





Map 1. Plan Boundary

## 2.2. PLAN CONTEXT

Downtown Silver Spring is located just north of the Washington, D.C. border, and centered at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. Downtown Silver Spring is surrounded by residential neighborhoods that are comprised primarily of single-family homes. The neighborhoods to the north, east and west are all considered part of Silver Spring and are included within the *East Silver Spring Master Plan* and the *North and West Silver Spring Master Plan*, both from 2000.

This Plan expands the boundary from the previous Sector Plan for downtown Silver Spring from the area formerly known as the Central Business District to include “Adjacent Communities”: blocks from several residential neighborhoods primarily to the north and east of the downtown, located within a 10-minute / half-mile walkshed from either the Silver Spring Transit Center or the Purple Line station at the Silver Spring Library. The Plan Area covers approximately 505 acres and is generally bound by Eastern Avenue to the south, 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the west, Spring Street to the north, and portions of the East Silver Spring and Woodside neighborhoods to the east.

## 2.3. HISTORY OF SILVER SPRING<sup>1</sup>

Indigenous peoples have lived in Montgomery County and the surrounding region for over 10,000 years. The Piscataway and Nacotchtank appear to have used the river valleys mostly for occupation and relied on the adjacent uplands for temporary camps associated with hunting and obtaining materials such as workable stone, until European colonization

In the 1800s, Silver Spring consisted of a crossroads community and plantations, including that of Francis Preston Blair, built upon an enslaved Black labor force. The opening of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (1873) and the Washington, Woodside, and Forest Glen Railway & Power Company (1897) allowed for more housing and commercial opportunities in the area, limited primarily to whites. At the start of the twentieth century, developers of residential neighborhoods in Silver Spring often included racial restrictive covenants to bar Blacks (and people of other nationalities, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds) from the housing market. De jure and de facto segregation permitted Blacks to work in the plan area but excluded them from owning or renting property within its boundaries.

The opening of the Silver Spring Shopping Center and Silver Theatre (1938) and Hecht’s Store (1947), along with associated infrastructure improvements, transformed Silver Spring from a bedroom community to a regional retail center with offices, shops, hotels, and other businesses, and a successful manufacturing and light industrial area near the train station. Segregation and discrimination in various forms continued to exclude non-white residents from many of the benefits of this growth.

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<sup>1</sup> This narrative collates and builds upon on the works of the Silver Spring Historical Society, historian David Rotenstein who explored and shed light on issues of equity in Silver Spring for the last decade, and EHT Traceries (a cultural resource management firm) who conducted a select architectural survey in 2020 and 2021 with the benefit of a Certified Local Government grant from the Maryland Historical Trust.



During the Civil Rights movement, County residents, Black and white, fought for fair access to housing and public accommodations. Notable individuals during this period include: Mary Betters who served as President of the local branch of the NAACP, J. Charles Jones who directed the Action Coordinating Committee to End Segregation in the Suburbs (ACCESS), David Scull who led the County Council to pass the Fair Housing Ordinance, Morris Milgram who built the first integrated apartment housing in greater Silver Spring, and Roscoe Nix who challenged business owners and held the County accountable for upholding its public accommodations law.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Silver Spring's dominance as a regional shopping center waned with the opening of suburban malls. However, the arrival of new industries (such as financial institutions), increased federal services and reliance on contractors, and the shift of federal office space away from Washington, D.C. led to the rebranding of the plan area as a regional office destination, with several federal agencies establishing office buildings downtown. This office space, along with ample county-owned parking, and accommodating zoning led to the construction of several high-rise apartment buildings in the downtown. The Silver Spring Metrorail station opened in 1978, but its location away from the historic center of downtown limited additional development in the surrounding blocks.

The closing of major and mid-sized white-owned retailers in the 1980s and 1990s created commercial vacancies that began to be filled by the establishment of a rich, ethnically diverse, local-business community that continues today. While there are many immigrant communities in the plan area, the Ethiopian community has had particular success in Silver Spring and regards this urban area as a center for Ethiopian life and culture in the region.

Since 2000, revitalization efforts envisioned by the Sector Plan have seen the redevelopment of the Downtown Silver Spring retail core, the promotion of an arts and entertainment district and the reopening of the historic Silver Theatre, and the opening of the Discovery corporate headquarters. With this, the former light industrial areas west of Georgia Avenue have been redeveloped with multi-family housing and the Paul Sarbanes Transit Center has been completed at the Silver Spring Metro station. Planning and initial construction for the Purple Line light-rail system connecting Bethesda to New Carrollton in Prince George's County has created new opportunities.

## **2.4. THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050**

As one of the county's most urban areas, Silver Spring is uniquely positioned to embody Thrive Montgomery 2050's organizing principle of urbanism, which emphasizes "compact forms of development, diverse uses and building types and transportation networks that take advantage and complement these two land use strategies at all densities and scales." While Silver Spring already offers compact development with a robust transportation network which will be further enhanced by the completion of the Purple Line, the plan's recommendations also support Thrive's aim for Complete Communities that offer a diverse mix of uses and form along with a strong open space network. The plan advances Thrive's goal to integrate parks and public spaces along with economic development strategies and land use planning in order to "attract employers and workers, build social connections, encourage healthy lifestyles, and create vibrant places."

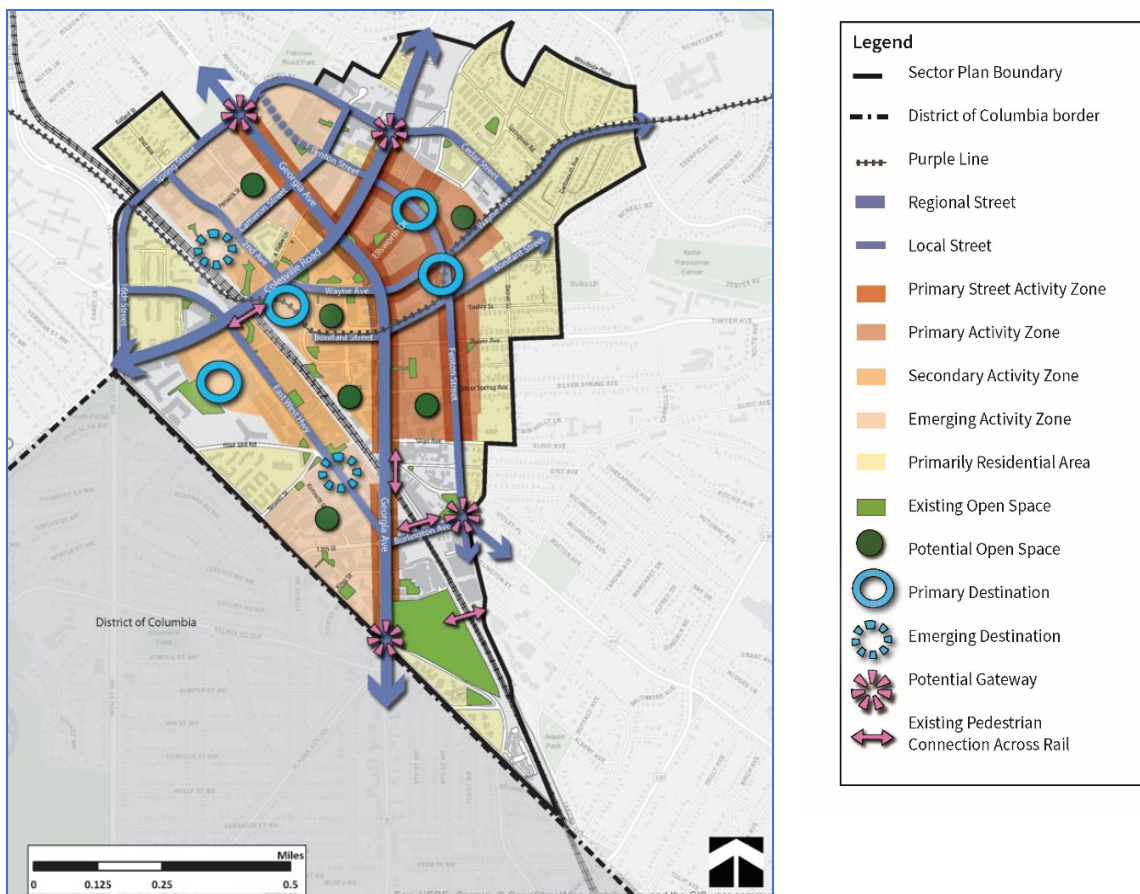


## 2.5. CONCEPT FRAMEWORK

At the close of the year-long engagement and visioning effort with stakeholders, the Concept Framework Plan was developed to identify the basic components of the present-day urban fabric in downtown Silver Spring along with initial concepts for the future including:

- Activity zones
- Residential areas
- Destinations
- Parks and open spaces

The Concept Framework Plan identifies the primary activity zone in downtown Silver Spring centered on Ellsworth Street, Fenton Street and Fenton Village. Even though the transit center and the mixed-use development at the Blairs are identified as existing destinations, the areas surrounding these nodes are not as vibrant as the primary zone. In addition, the Concept Framework Plan addresses the challenge of improving existing connections across the Metrorail, and the opportunity to create gateway experiences into Silver Spring, particularly at the border with Washington D.C. The recommendations in this plan strive to address these challenges and support the emerging areas of the plan in meeting their full potential.



Map 2. Concept Framework Plan

## 2.6. PLAN GOALS

The Plan is focused on strengthening the existing success of Silver Spring and supporting growth and development in the emerging areas of the downtown. The themes of Diversity, Connectivity, Resiliency and Community Health emerged as key values of the plan, and all plan goals and recommendations pursue equitable economic and civic outcomes by supporting one or more of these themes:

### Diversity:

- Strengthen the unique retail market in Silver Spring with its diverse mix of independent stores, restaurants, and arts and entertainment experiences.
- Provide more diverse housing types and preserve existing affordable units to serve individuals and families of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds.
- Celebrate the past, present and future of the diverse cultures that are part of the Silver Spring community.

### Connectivity:

- Enhance and reinforce the pedestrian and bicycle networks throughout the plan area to reduce automobile dependence.
- Create a green network of priority streets and public open spaces that connects neighborhoods and meets the needs of both people and the environment.
- Safely connect communities across the Metrorail tracks to increase accessibility to all downtown neighborhoods.

### Resiliency:

- Support sustainable economic growth and resiliency through flexible zoning, development incentives and public realm improvements.
- Reduce impacts of climate change through sustainable strategies for buildings and streetscapes.

### Community Health:

- Create more active recreation opportunities through parks and public spaces, as well as opportunities for social gathering and enjoyment of nature.
- Provide a healthier, cooler, more comfortable pedestrian experience along streets and in open spaces.

## 2.7. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Silver Spring Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ) & the Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund (CIF) to focus height/density in the appropriate location in the downtown, to support a world-class arrival experience at the Transit Center, build a new bridge connection across the rail tracks, and support strategic utility and streetscape infrastructure improvements.
- A vision and recommendations for each district to redevelop key sites and build on its unique character and assets.
- A Green Loop to increase connectivity by expanding and unifying access for all residents to green, safe, and inviting sidewalks, bikeways, parks and open spaces.
- Create numerous new and enhanced parks and open spaces, including Jesup Blair Park.
- Support expansion of bio-science, technology, and education uses to increase employment opportunities in the downtown.
- Update the Zoning Code to create flexibility for future development, to increase affordable housing, support small business growth, and realize Sector Plan goals.



# 3. Districts

Silver Spring is home to several distinct neighborhoods within the downtown and the surrounding residential area. Each neighborhood, or district, has its own unique characteristics that contribute to the diversity of Silver Spring. The plan has an individual vision for each district that, when linked together, comprise the overarching vision for Silver Spring in 2040 described in Section 2.1.



Map 3. Plan Districts

### 3.1. DISTRICT VISIONS

#### Ellsworth District

The Ellsworth District is the heart of Silver Spring. It is the primary activity center where people from all over the downtown, the county, and even the region come to shop, eat, enjoy entertainment, and just hang out. Veterans Plaza and Ellsworth Place are some of the most successful public spaces in the area; festivals, music events and a farmers' market regularly take place here.

*The Ellsworth District will continue to be the active heart of Downtown Silver Spring, with a greener public realm and exciting flexible public spaces that connect Georgia Avenue to Cedar Street.*

#### Fenton Village

Fenton Village is a much-loved destination in Silver Spring - it is the place in the downtown that best celebrates the diversity that is one of the hallmarks of this urban area. It is characterized by smaller scale retail, a mix of residential types and a strong streetscape.

*Fenton Village will build on and sustain its diversity with new community open spaces, new development at an appropriate scale to support small businesses, and an expanded presence for the arts.*

#### Metro Center

The area around the Paul G. Sarbanes Transit Center is the commercial center of Silver Spring and will continue to host some of the tallest buildings and the densest development in the downtown.

*The Metro Center District will welcome visitors with a reimagined hub of activity with the highest-intensity commercial development in the Downtown, world-class public space, and safe and inviting connections to surrounding districts.*

#### Ripley District

Over the last decade the Ripley area has emerged as a micro-neighborhood within the downtown. This is where people live to be close to everything, with parcels under development today and several more key opportunity sites.

*Ripley will be a vibrant complete multi-family residential district steps from the Metro, Purple Line, and Metropolitan Branch Trail, with a new central open space and a pedestrian connection to South Silver Spring across the Metrorail/CSX tracks.*

#### South Silver Spring

South Silver Spring is a large district with a great diversity of housing types, commercial and educational uses, and public spaces, including Jesup Blair Park. The rail tracks separate this district from the rest of Downtown.

*South Silver Spring will leverage its unique array of assets to become a destination for mixed-use development to serve its diverse community, and an enhanced connector between the developing centers along Georgia Avenue, from the Walter Reed Campus in DC to the core of Downtown Silver Spring. South Silver Spring will become a destination within the downtown, with the renovation of Jesup Blair Park and the opportunity for Montgomery College to expand its presence in this neighborhood.*

## Downtown North

The area north of Colesville Road includes a mix of housing types, commercial, institutional, and civic uses, as well as retail and entertainment uses including the Fillmore concert venue.

*Downtown North will build on the connection between the state-of-the-art South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center and the world-renown United Therapeutics campus to create a unique health- and health-sciences- focused district.*

## Falklands District

The historic Falklands apartments hold a foundational place in the development of Silver Spring and have provided first homes to generations of residents.

*The Falklands District will retain its historic fabric of affordable housing south of East-West Highway while embracing the opportunity for higher-density mixed-use development north of East-West Highway.*

## Adjacent Communities

These blocks include portions from four distinct established neighborhoods: Woodside, Woodside Park, Seven Oaks-Evanswood and East Silver Spring.

*Consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative, the Adjacent Communities can include a greater variety of housing types, fully integrated into the existing fabric, to allow a wider range of residents to enjoy the valued proximity to the downtown.*

## 3.2. CONNECTING THE DISTRICTS

While each district has its own distinct vision and features, together they form the thriving urban area of downtown Silver Spring. As each district offers different opportunities to experience Silver Spring, a strong, well-connected, green, comfortable and safe public space network that connects the districts is essential to the success of this downtown.

### 3.2.1. Goal

Connect the different neighborhoods of Silver Spring via a green, resilient, comfortable, consistent multi-modal network focused primarily on the local streets that will improve quality of life, offer opportunities for building community, create an attractive environment for businesses and employers, and improve the environmental resiliency of a dense urban area and support walking and biking around the downtown. Pursue opportunities to provide connections across the Metrorail/CSX tracks.

### 3.2.2. The Green Loop

#### Recommendation:

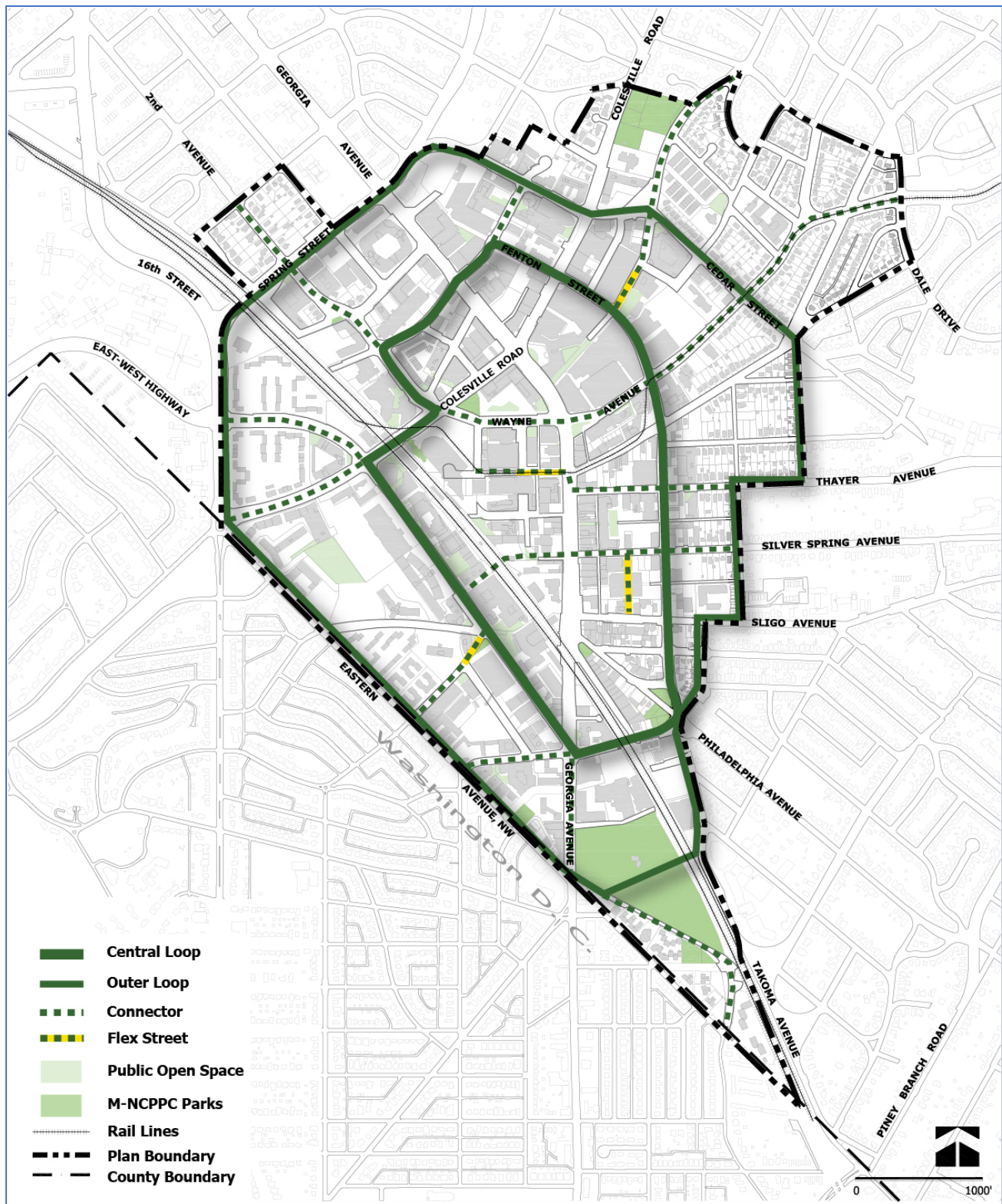
The Green Loop is comprised of a Central Loop, an Outer Loop, and “connectors” that bridge between the two loops. The Central Loop is the primary component of the Green Loop. It connects Fenton Street, Cameron Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, East West Highway and Burlington Ave in a “loop” that moves through and around the central districts in the plan. Many of the primary public spaces in Silver Spring are located along the Central Loop.

At the periphery of the Plan area there is a secondary Outer Loop. This loop will primarily serve those who are coming to the downtown from the surrounding neighborhoods and is connected to the majority of the peripheral parks and open spaces of Silver Spring.

Linking the Central and Outer Loops are Connectors that allow a smooth transition between the two loops by providing multi-modal streets that are shaded and comfortable for residents, workers and visitors to access parks and public spaces in downtown Silver Spring.

The Green Loop supports the Plan themes of diversity, connectivity, resiliency and community health. This system will bring the unique neighborhoods of the downtown together, while providing connections between existing and proposed parks and open spaces, promoting healthy choices and making it easier to access the amenities of Silver Spring. The green infrastructure within the right-of-way will help mitigate impacts of climate change while strengthening the public realm adjacent to numerous key opportunity sites located along the Green Loop.





Map 4. Proposed Green Loop

## Elements

The Plan recommends the following elements for incorporation into the Green Loop. As not all rights-of-way will be able to accommodate all of the elements listed below, elements should be prioritized consistent with the recommendations for streets found in the Section 4.6 and the environmental recommendations in Section 4.7.

- Sidewalks
- Bicycle lanes
- Canopy trees with deep soil panels
- Stormwater management within the right-of-way
- Cool surfaces
- Native, stratified and drought-tolerant plant vegetation
- Wayfinding
- Smart street elements including but not limited to:
  - Electric vehicle charging stations
  - Solar metering and lighting

The Design Guidelines that will accompany this Sector Plan will include Cool Streets Recommendations for several elements above, including cool surfaces and stormwater management practices within a right-of-way.



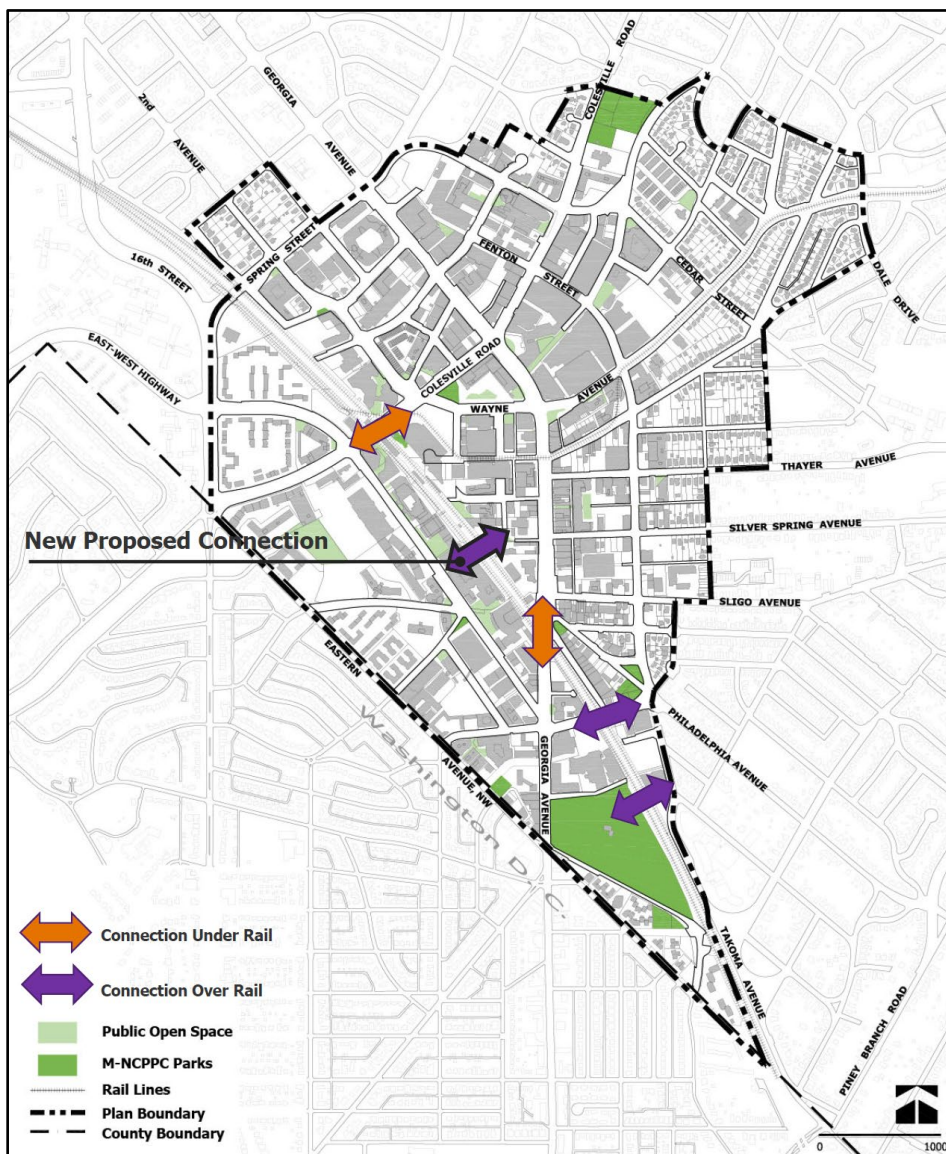
**Figure 2. Key Components of the Green Loop** (including stormwater treatment, cool surfaces, separated bike lanes and canopy trees). Image credits from top to bottom: SSFM International, SF Bicycle Coalition, Paul Kreuger.



### 3.2.3. Connecting Across the Rail

The Silver Spring Metrorail stop is one of the busiest on the Red Line. The CSX tracks remain actively used to transport goods through the region. However, while the Metrorail stop is integral to the success of this downtown, the rail tracks are a barrier that divides Silver Spring, making it difficult to connect South Silver Spring to the rest of the districts via a pedestrian network.

Currently there are four points where a pedestrian can cross over or under the rail, but those points are either at the Transit Center at Colesville Road, or at the southern end of the downtown, and include existing connections that many users experience as unsafe. To truly connect the different neighborhoods of Silver Spring, connecting across the railroad must be easier and safer. The Plan recommends both new connections and improvements to existing connections.



Map 5. New and Existing Connections Across the Rail

## New Connection

### Recommendation:

- Provide a pedestrian and bicycle connection from East-West Highway to the western terminus of Silver Spring Avenue in the Ripley District.

The Plan proposes this new connection be located between 1215 East-West Highway (The Bennington) and 1201 East-West Highway (The Silverton), crossing the rail and connecting on the east side of the rail at the intersection of Dixon Street and Silver Spring Avenue in the Ripley District. The plan envisions a landscaped bridge connection with adequate shade and views to the north and south. The bridge would land at an open space in the Ripley District that connects to Silver Spring Avenue. This connection would provide easy and safe access from South Silver Spring to the Metro Center area or Fenton Village. This bridge would also provide a connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail, which provides a bicycle connection to Union Station in Washington DC to the south and will connect with the Capital Crescent Trail at the Transit Center to the north of this connection.

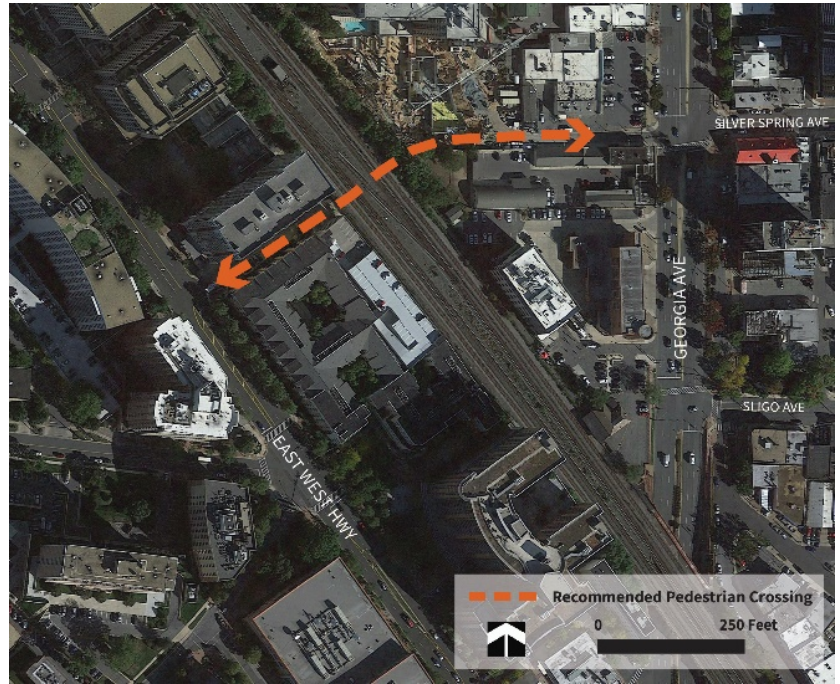


Figure 3. Recommended Ripley Connection



Figure 4. Landscape Bridge Precedents

11th Street Bridge Park, DC (L) and Rainier Vista Bridge (Seattle)



## Existing Connections

### Recommendations:

- *Georgia Avenue underpass:*
  - Provide additional lighting in the pedestrian tunnel so that pedestrians can see all the way to the end of the tunnel even after dark.
  - Consider additional engaging contributions from local artists along the wall of the tunnel.
  - Evaluate the tunnel for other safety improvements, such as rear-view mirrors or other visual aides.
- *Burlington Avenue bridge:*
  - Provide a wider sidewalk on both the north and south sides of the street to increase pedestrian safety at this crossing.
- *Colesville Avenue underpass:*
  - Provide additional lighting on both the north and south sides of the Colesville underpass to increase safety and visibility.
  - Enhance the underpasses with art from local artists and/or wayfinding concepts that will transform these tunnel-like connections into key components of the Metro Center district pedestrian network and the arrival experience at the Transit Center.
- *Pedestrian bridge at Montgomery College/Jesup Blair Park*
  - Study ways to widen this bridge/ramp to allow bicycle access across the bridge.

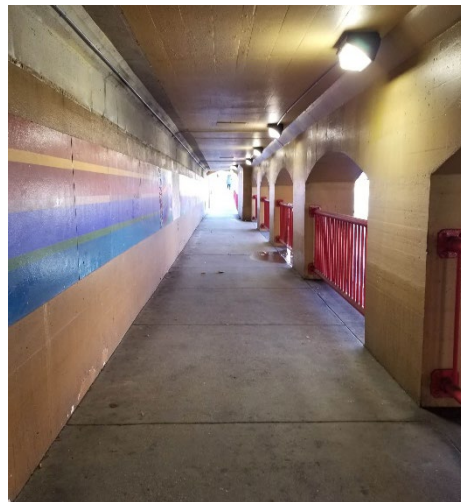


Figure 5. Colesville Avenue Underpass (L); Georgia Avenue Underpass (R)

### 3.3. DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.3.1. Ellsworth District

##### Vision

The Ellsworth District will continue to be the active heart of Downtown Silver Spring, with a greener public realm and exciting flexible public spaces that connect Georgia Avenue to Cedar Street.

##### Goals

- New development should strengthen the Civic Building and Veterans Plaza as a primary center of activity and gathering for residents and visitors to Silver Spring.
- Improve the pedestrian connection to Ellsworth Place from the intersection of Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue.
- Improve the existing public spaces and pedestrian realm by expanding the area where vehicle access is limited.
- Provide additional green public space through new development opportunities.
- Redevelop remaining opportunity sites in the district maintaining the predominant retail and commercial development pattern.

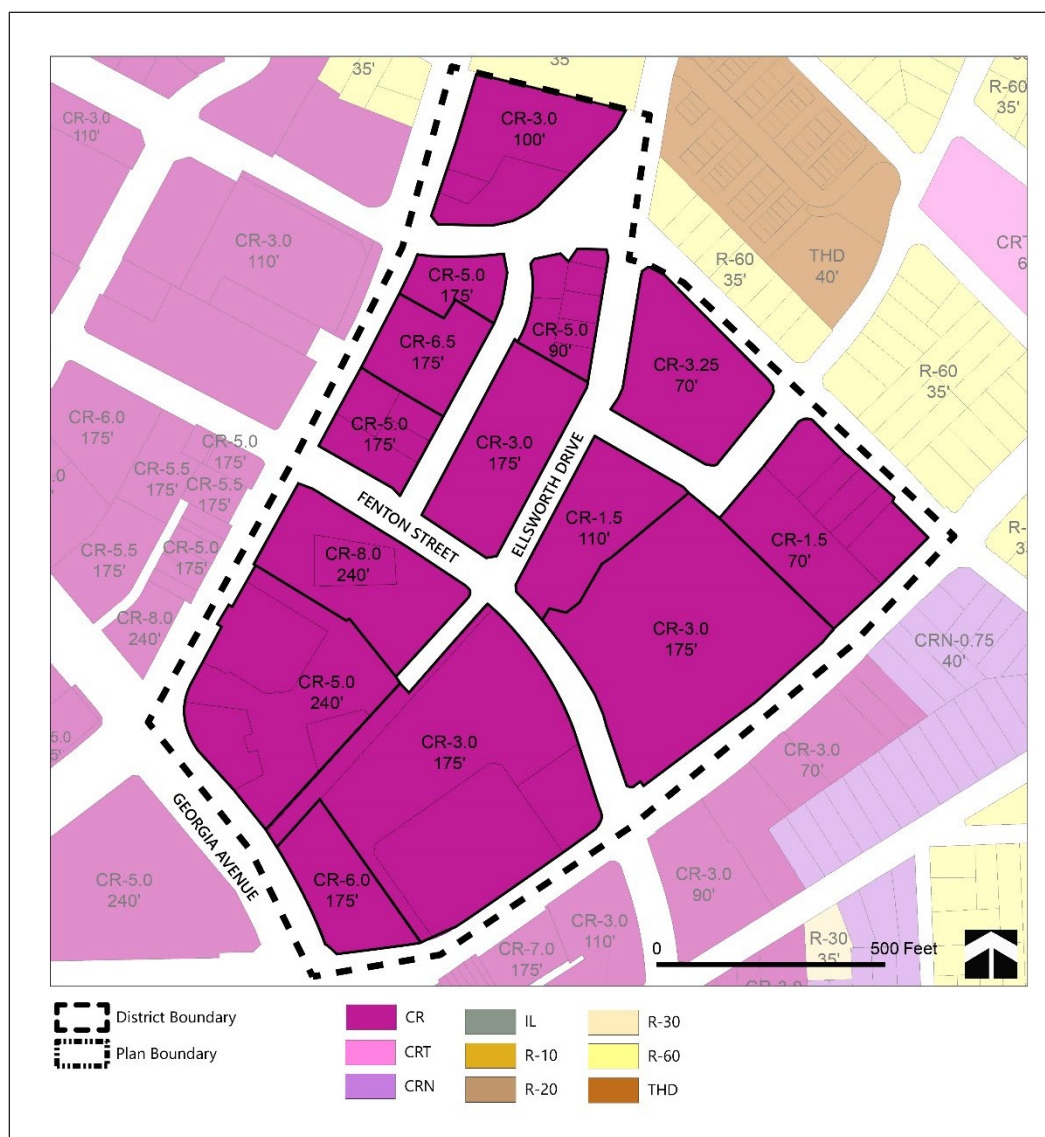
##### Recommendations

- **Urban Design:**
  - New buildings along Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue should include a tower setback above the second floor to continue the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk of a low- to mid-rise building form.
  - Establish Ellsworth Drive between Fenton Street and the exit from the Towne Square Garage as a “flexible street” that can be closed for a farmer’s market and other festivals and outdoor events as an expansion of Veterans Plaza. Vehicle traffic would be limited to loading and emergency vehicles, and street parking could be removed or limited.
- **Parks and Public Spaces:**
  - Support continued work with the Maryland Historical Trust on appropriate improvements to the parking lot at the Silver Spring Shopping Center to better draw pedestrians through the lot into the Ellsworth Place pedestrian mall.
  - Provide a Neighborhood Green with the redevelopment of the parking lot at the Whole Foods/Ace Hardware retail development.
- **Opportunity Sites:**
  - Parking Lot at Whole Foods/Ace Hardware: The plan recommends redeveloping this surface parking lot with a mix of uses, structured parking, and a green open space connecting Veterans Plaza to Wayne Avenue.

- 8807 Colesville Road: The plan recommends redevelopment of this gateway site with the greatest height along Colesville Road and stepping down along Spring Street towards Ellsworth Drive. Redevelopment of this site should consider the views of this site from Colesville Road and Spring Street.
- Ellsworth Drive and Spring Street: The former home of the National Ready Mix Concrete Association, this now-vacant site will partner with the Citron multi-family development as the residential gateway for the district. The scale of the development should respond to both the taller buildings on the west side of Spring Street as well as the single-family buildings across the intersection.
- **Zoning:**
  - Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
  - Rezone existing EOF properties to CR.
  - Parcels in the Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights above the maximum mapped height per the proposed recommendations in Section 4.1.



Figure 6. Ellsworth District Illustrative Diagram





## Fenton Village District

### Vision

Fenton Village will build on and sustain its diversity with new community open space, new development at an appropriate scale to support small businesses, and an expanded presence for the arts.

### Goals

- Maintain zoning that provides low-rise development on Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street, and taller development in the middle of the block.
- Provide a compatible transition in building form and height from Fenton Village to East Silver Spring.
- Redevelop opportunity sites with mixed-use development with retail or commercial spaces on the ground floor appropriate for local and independent retailers.
- Enhance Fenton Street as the main street for the district by preserving and improving opportunities for active retail
- Retain a full-service grocery store in the district.
- Promote the redevelopment of public parking lots and garages in collaboration with the Parking Lot District's goals.
- Encourage residential development that provides a mix of unit types and sizes for people of all ages, levels of income and household size.
- Provide new outdoor community gathering space in Fenton Village, and link this new open space to the Green Loop segment along Fenton Street.
- Build on relationships with nearby Sligo ArtSpace and Montgomery College to further expand opportunities for public art and arts-related uses.

### Recommendations

- **Urban Design**
  - Consistent with the Fenton Village Overlay Zone, buildings should step back above the base to maintain a low-rise character along the street.
  - Retail bays should be small enough to house small local retailers to preserve the economic diversity typical of Fenton Village.
  - New development interior to the blocks between Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue should be composed of buildings that are divided into smaller components, instead of one large, monolithic structure.
  - Transform Bonifant Street into a pedestrian-friendly retail corridor along the Purple Line, with sidewalk cafes and street trees.
  - Implement the Green Loop on Fenton Street.

- Provide public through-block connections throughout the district to enhance walkability and connectivity within long or large blocks.
- **Parks and Public Spaces**
  - Expand the existing Fenton Street Urban Park into a cohesive neighborhood gateway park that is directly connected to the Green Loop.
  - Provide a ½-acre green public space along Fenton Street with any redevelopment of Public Parking Garage 4.
- **Opportunity Sites**
  - Public Garage 4: Encourage the redevelopment of Parking Garage 4 and surrounding properties through a public-private partnership with the Parking Lot District. The plan recommends that this large block be divided via a new north-south connection that aligns with the north-south connection at the block to the north. This connection could provide loading and service connections for the new development. In addition, the plan recommends an east-west through-block pedestrian connection as part of any redevelopment of the garage parcel. A ½-acre green community-focused open space should be located at this site, fronting on Fenton Street. This open space could be an opportunity to celebrate local artists and the diversity of Fenton Village. This site is also large enough that it may provide a unique opportunity to consider urban agriculture facilities, either at the ground or as part of a green roof concept.
  - County Parking Lot 29: The plan recommends redevelopment of this surface parking lot with a mix of uses compatible with the adjacent residential development.
  - Safeway grocery site and adjacent parcels: The plan recommends the redevelopment of the existing Safeway grocery site and the adjoining sites including County Parking Lot 38 for mixed-use development. Maintaining a full-size grocery store in Fenton Village is very important for access to food. For any redevelopment, vehicular access to the site for parking and/or loading should not be from Fenton Street; the frontage along Fenton Street should have active ground-floor uses. A new north-south mid-block connection that aligns with the north-south connection at the block to the south could be considered at this site as well.
- **Zoning**
  - Revise the Fenton Village Overlay Zone with minor updates as presented in the Implementation section. These include zoning text changes proposed to support small businesses.
  - Maintain zoning pattern that allows for a transition between the commercial corridor of Fenton Street and the residential neighborhood of East Silver Spring.
  - Adjust parcels currently with a height limit of 60' to a height limit of 65' to align with current construction types per International Building Code.

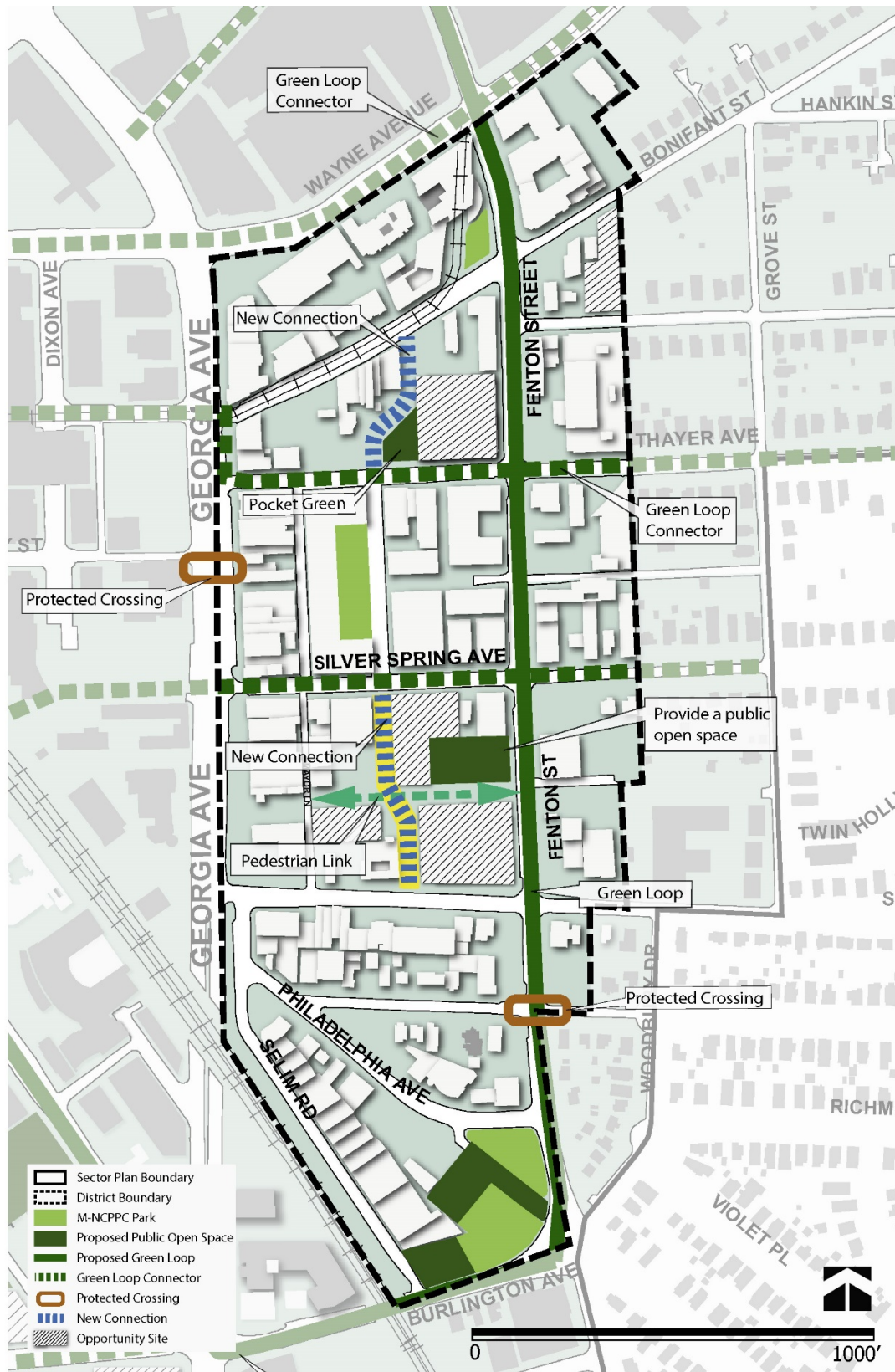
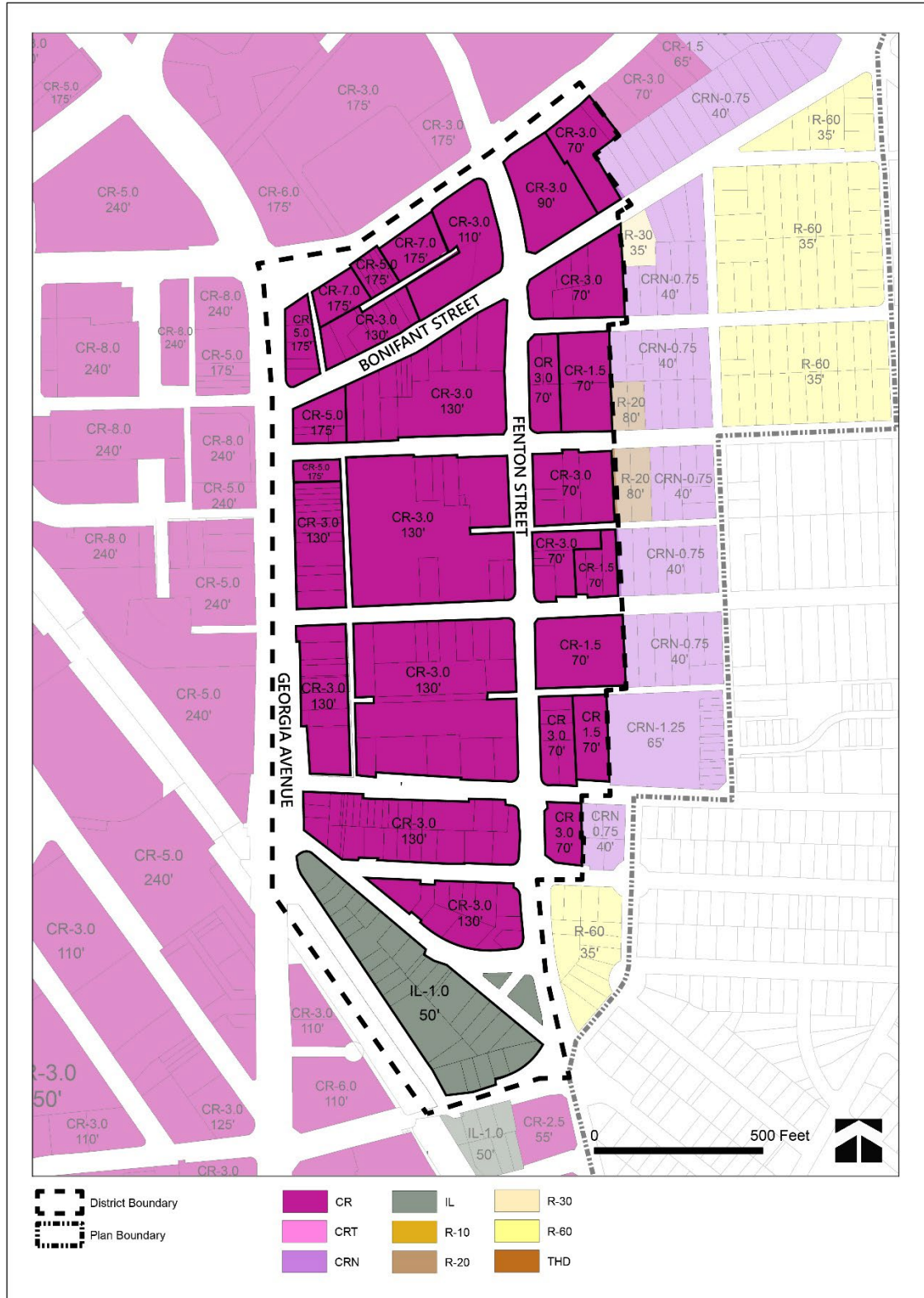


Figure 7. Fenton Village: Illustrative Diagram



Map 7. Proposed Fenton Village Zoning



## Metro Center District

### Vision:

*The Metro Center District will welcome visitors with a reimagined hub of activity with the highest-intensity commercial development in the Downtown, world-class public space, and safe and inviting connections to surrounding districts.*

### Goals

- Confirm the Metro Center District as the commercial center of Silver Spring by encouraging redevelopment of opportunity sites, including County parking garages and surface lots, with spaces for a diversity of tenants.
- Create a world-class destination arrival experience for all users of the Transit Center.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience from the Transit Center to the Ellsworth and surrounding Districts.

### Recommendations

- **Urban Design**
  - For building massing, comply with the Design Guidelines that will accompany this Plan to address the street-level pedestrian experience for the taller buildings allowed in this district.
  - Sponsor an invited charrette and design competition for the creation of a world-class arrival experience at the Transit Center.
  - Improve the Metrorail and Purple Line underpasses with art, lighting, wayfinding and other interventions to make the pedestrian environment safer and more inviting.
  - Enhance pedestrian connections via the Green Loop from the transit center to surrounding districts.
- **Parks and Public Spaces**
  - Expand and reinforce the open space connection between the arrival experience at the Transit Center, the recently redeveloped spaces along Wayne Avenue to Ellsworth Drive, and beyond to the Civic Building.
- **Opportunity Sites:**
  - Transit Center Development Site: Design a signature building or buildings at the intersection of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue and consider integrating the development with the Transit Center. The new development should activate the corner at Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue with a ground-floor use appropriate to the center of an urban area. This building should be architecturally significant and a landmark for Silver Spring. As this site is constrained, consider providing no parking or developing this site along with part of the Bonifant/Dixon garage site.

- County Parking Garages 5/55 (Bonifant/Dixon Garage): In alignment with the Parking Lot District's goals for this site, redevelop this garage that is located in both the Metro Center district and the Ripley District. The plan recommends that the upper level connections over Bonifant Street and Dixon Avenue be removed which will create two large redevelopment sites and a small site that may be appropriate for an open space (see Ripley District recommendations). The redevelopment of the parcel located in the Metro Center district (north side of Bonifant Street) could maintain a large parking garage that could provide both public and private parking or could provide additional support for bus operations at the Transit Center as needed. This site is a prominent, visible site from Colesville Road and the Transit Center and would be appropriate for a low base of several stories with an articulated tower set back above the base. The ground floor experience on this site should respond appropriately to the Purple Line tracks that will occupy all of Bonifant Street in this location.
- Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue gas station and retail site: The gas station currently has approvals for a hotel on this key site. The Plan recommends expanding the development site to include the adjacent two-story commercial property for a signature mixed-use development.
- Colesville Road & East-West Highway: This site is located immediately adjacent to the northern Metro Station entrance but is significantly constrained by WMATA substation central to the site. The Plan recommends continuing to pursue relocation of the substation to promote a signature development at this location. The Plan recommends incorporating or connecting this site to the Arrival Experience at the Transit Station.
- **Zoning**
  - Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment
  - Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights and/or FAR above the maximum mapped zoning per the proposed recommendations in Section 4.1.

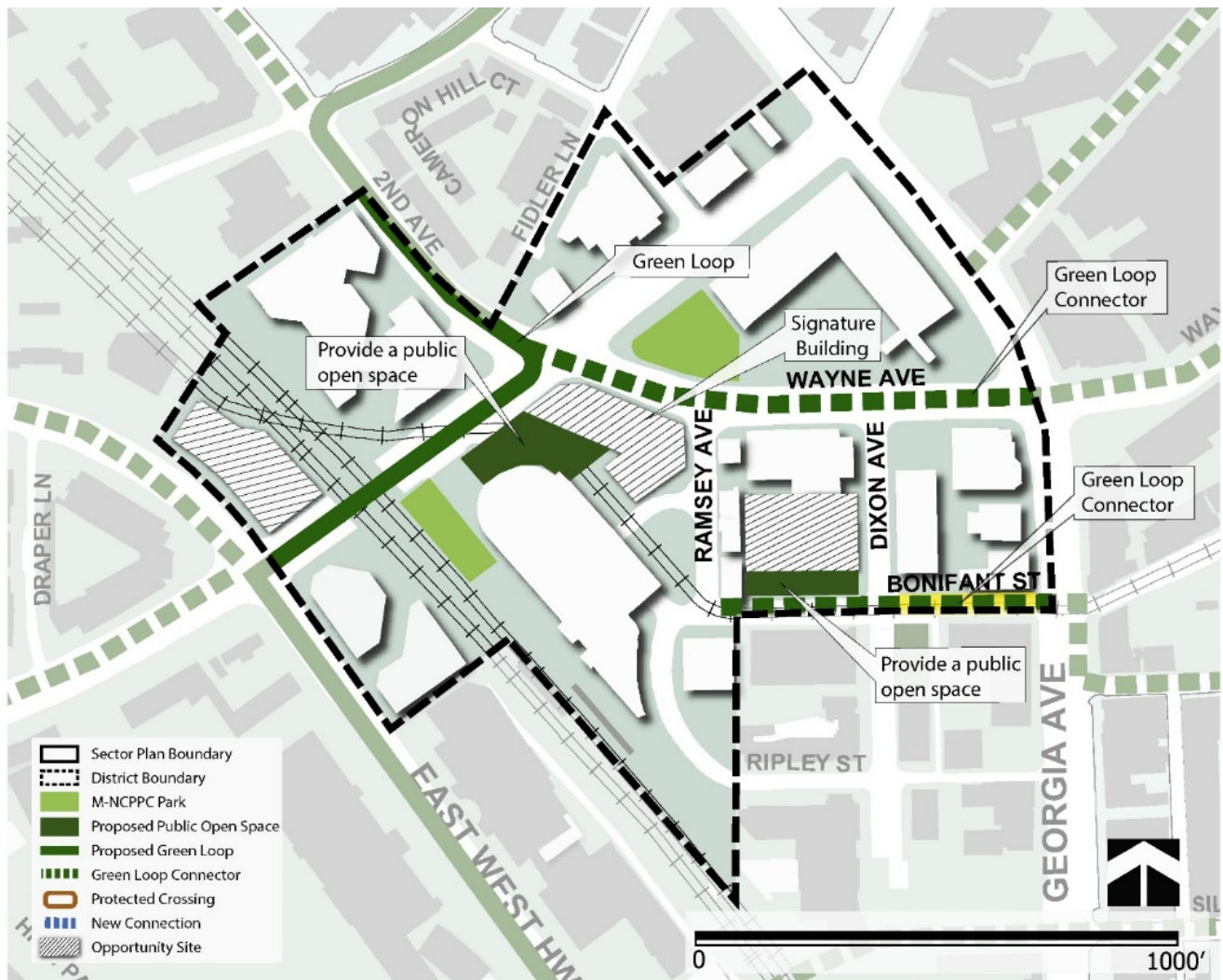
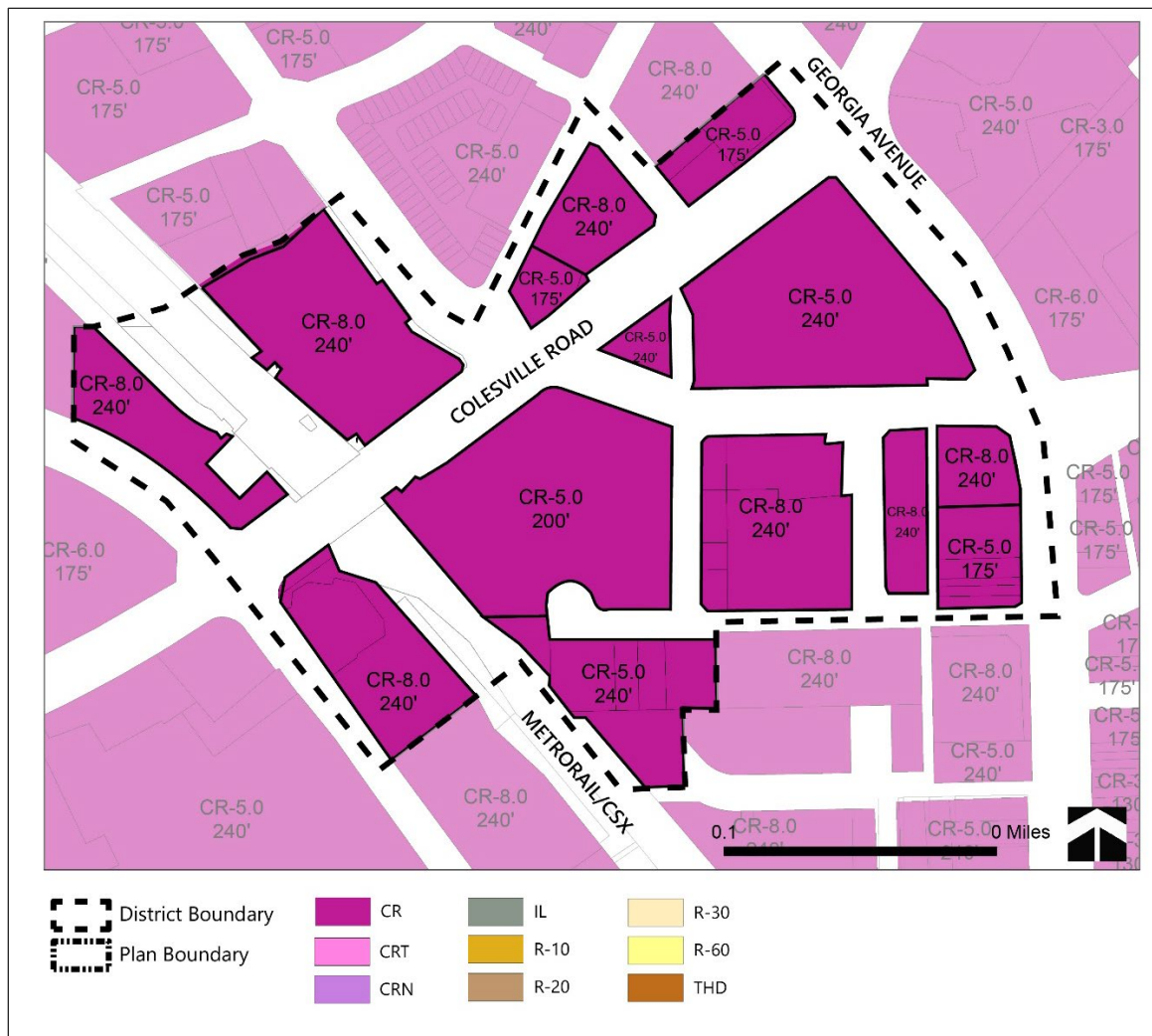


Figure 8. Metro Center: Illustrative Diagram



Map 8. Proposed Metro Center Zoning



### 3.3.2. Ripley District

#### Vision:

*Ripley will be a vibrant complete multi-family residential district steps from the Metro, Purple Line, and Metropolitan Branch Trail, with a new central open space and a pedestrian connection to South Silver Spring across the Metrorail.*

#### Goals:

- Encourage redevelopment of under-utilized sites including sites on Georgia Avenue, and existing public parking garages sites into mixed-use projects with active ground floors uses.
- Increase the housing stock in this primarily residential district with a diverse mix of multi-family unit sizes at all levels of affordability.
- Improve the pedestrian connection and visitor arrival experience at the Purple Line station at Bonifant Street and Ramsey Street at the upper level of the Transit Center.
- Create a new open space in the Ripley District for active recreation and social gathering opportunities.
- Connect the Ripley District across the Metrorail/CSX tracks to South Silver Spring.

#### Recommendations

- **Urban Design**
  - At redevelopment sites along Georgia Avenue, design buildings with a low-rise two-story base that relates to the scale of the commercial development across the street. Setback upper floors by a minimum of 15 feet so that there is a clear articulation between base and tower.
  - Create a sense of arrival with a clear pedestrian connection along Bonifant Street from Georgia Avenue at the Purple Line station at the upper level of the Transit Center.
  - Connect the Ripley District to South Silver Spring via a landscaped pedestrian bridge over the train tracks, with infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - Introduce a mid-block crossing at Georgia Avenue and Mayor's Lane to connect the Ripley District with Fenton Village.
  - Implement the Green Loop concept along Silver Spring Avenue so that street, along with the proposed pedestrian bridge, will function as a Connector to the Central Loop.
- **Parks and Public Spaces**
  - Create a Civic Green at the center of the Ripley District per the recommendations of the 2010 *Green Space Plan Guidelines* for Silver Spring that will be an important focal point and social gathering space for this neighborhood. It will connect to the

proposed pedestrian bridge connector between the South Silver Spring District and the Ripley District.

- Create an Urban Recreational Parklet/POPS at the parcel currently occupied by the stair tower of Parking Garage 5/55 on the south side of Bonifant Street to the east of Dixon Avenue, adjacent to an existing alley. This parklet can have small scale recreation activities to serve the residents of the Ripley District.

- **Opportunity Sites:**

- Parking Garages 5/55 (Bonifant/Dixon Garage): In alignment with the Parking Lot District's goals for this site, redevelop this garage that is located in both the Metro Center district and the Ripley District (refer to Metro Center District recommendations above). Provide a linear green space with a continuous pedestrian connection from the Purple Line station at the Transit Center to Georgia Avenue and the center of the downtown. This green space will also serve as a buffer from the rail tracks that will occupy all of Bonifant Street between the station and Dixon Avenue. Currently the garage bridges over Bonifant Street and an alley to the east of Bonifant Street. The Plan recommends that the redevelopment of this garage eliminate these bridges. The development site in the Ripley District should respond to both the need for a safe, green, inviting pedestrian connection along Bonifant Street to Georgia Avenue for commuters and visitors, and the opportunity for a tall, architecturally distinctive tower in such a prominent location proximate to the Transit Center.
- Block of Ripley Street, Dixon Avenue, and Georgia Avenue: This is a large potential development site along Georgia Avenue. The Plan recommends redevelopment of this site to include a central open space, potentially connected across Ripley Street to the 8230 Georgia Avenue site.
- 8126 Georgia Avenue: This long narrow site has frontage on Dixon Avenue Extended and Georgia Avenue. The Plan recommends mixed-use redevelopment of the site with access from Dixon Avenue.
- 8230 Georgia Avenue (Sherwin Williams site): This site is significantly constrained by the Master-Planned right-of-way for Ripley Street between Dixon Avenue and Georgia Avenue, the dedication of which would significantly reduce the developable area. Previous efforts to incorporate this site into adjacent developments were unsuccessful. Staff recommends coordinating redevelopment of this site with the property across Ripley Street.

- **Zoning:**

- Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
- Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights and/or FAR above the maximum mapped zoning per the proposed recommendations in Section 4.1.

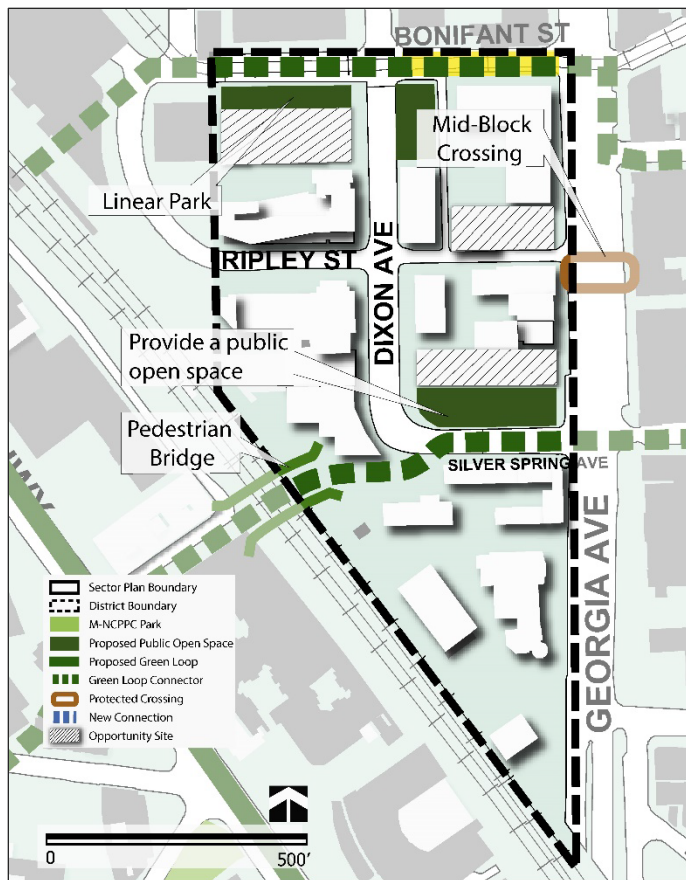
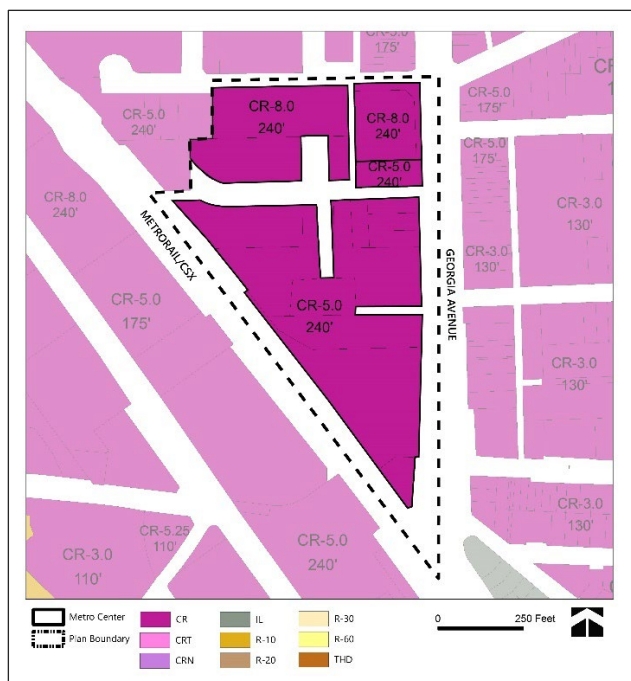


Figure 9. Ripley District: Illustrative Diagram



Map 9. Proposed Ripley District Zoning



### 3.3.3. South Silver Spring District

#### Vision:

*South Silver Spring will leverage its unique array of assets to become a destination for mixed-use development to serve its diverse community, and an enhanced connector between the developing centers along Georgia Avenue, from the Walter Reed Campus in DC to the core of Downtown Silver Spring.*

#### Goals

- Encourage redevelopment of under-utilized parcels throughout South Silver Spring by adjusting the existing zoning for increased flexibility of uses.
- Support redevelopment of opportunity sites to provide a mix of housing options for people of all ages, income levels and household size.
- Preserve existing market-rate affordable housing.
- Collaborate with the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus of Montgomery College to expand educational and science and technology programs in the district.
- Provide new public open space in South Silver Spring to support existing and future residents of this neighborhood.
- Reconnect and reimagine Jesup Blair Park to the downtown via a visionary renovation of the park. This park should be both a gateway to Silver Spring from Washington DC and a unique destination in the downtown.
- Support the redevelopment of the Blairs per the approved preliminary master plan for the site.

#### Recommendations:

- **Urban Design**
  - At redevelopment sites along Georgia Avenue, design buildings with a low-rise two-story base that relates to the scale of the existing retail development along Georgia Avenue south of East West Highway. Setback upper floors by a minimum of 15 feet so that there is a clear articulation between base and tower.
  - Redevelopment sites along or near to Eastern Avenue should step down towards the residential neighborhood across Eastern Avenue in Washington D.C.
  - Redevelopment sites along East-West Highway and 13<sup>th</sup> Street should provide some active ground-floor uses such as retail or other community amenities.
  - Implement the Green Loop concept along East-West Highway as a key component of the Central Loop.
  - Create a new mid-block crossing on Georgia Avenue at Montgomery College for improved access to the campus.

- **Parks and Public Spaces**

- Provide a new Urban Recreational Park in South Silver Spring per the recommendations of the 2010 *Green Space Plan Guidelines for Silver Spring*. The plan recommends this park be located between Kennett Street and East-West Highway and will serve as both a park and a through-block connection between those streets. The vision for this park is an active recreation space that can serve as a complement to the historic, contemplative setting of Acorn Park just up the street. This park will also provide a green space that can support the retail and food services establishments along East-West Highway.
- Renovate Jesup Blair Park to create a unique open place that includes social, active and contemplative experiences throughout its 14 acres. The new Jesup Blair Park will be a gateway and a destination that promotes an active lifestyle and offers the unique historical and cultural setting of a special park designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Increasing transit connections to this park should be studied further. For a full vision of the program of this proposed renovation, see Parks and Public Spaces Recommendations in Section 5.2.

- **Opportunity Sites:**

- 7980 Georgia Avenue: The plan recommends considering the redevelopment as a mixed-use development on the portion of the parcel that fronts on Georgia Avenue, while preserving the existing community garden at the western end of the parcel. Improve connections in this area of South Silver Spring by creating a through-block connection at this site from King Street to Georgia Avenue that aligns with the mid-block connection adjacent to the Galaxy Apartments. The plan recommends retaining the community garden as part of any redevelopment.
- 8040 13<sup>th</sup> Street / Days Inn: This is a key opportunity site in South Silver Spring and a strong site for mixed-use development with active ground floor uses along 13<sup>th</sup> street, including retail. This site should include a through-block connection providing pedestrian access through the site and connecting to the proposed Urban Recreational Park along Kennett Street. Heights should step down towards Eastern Avenue as identified in the existing zoning. This Plan further recommends coordination with the Parking Lot District regarding the potential use of the existing surface lot and parking garage as a parking resource for any redevelopment.
- Montgomery College: The Plan recommends working with the College to explore and develop opportunities to expand the campus program in the South Silver Spring district.
- 8045 Kennett Street (Caldor Building): The plan recommends the adaptive re-use of this building, possibly as an educational facility or for future employment.
- 8001 Newell Street (Self-Storage): The plan recommends that redevelopment of this site transition in height to the garden apartment buildings across Newell Street and the single-family homes across Eastern Avenue, NW in DC.

- 7996 Georgia Avenue: The plan recommends redevelopment of this key site at Georgia Avenue and East-West Highway for institutional/educational uses to support Montgomery College across Georgia Avenue, or other mixed-use development.
- **Zoning**
  - Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
  - Correct zoning to bring existing non-compliant parcels into compliance.
  - Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights and/or FAR above the maximum mapped zoning per the proposed recommendations in Section 4.1.



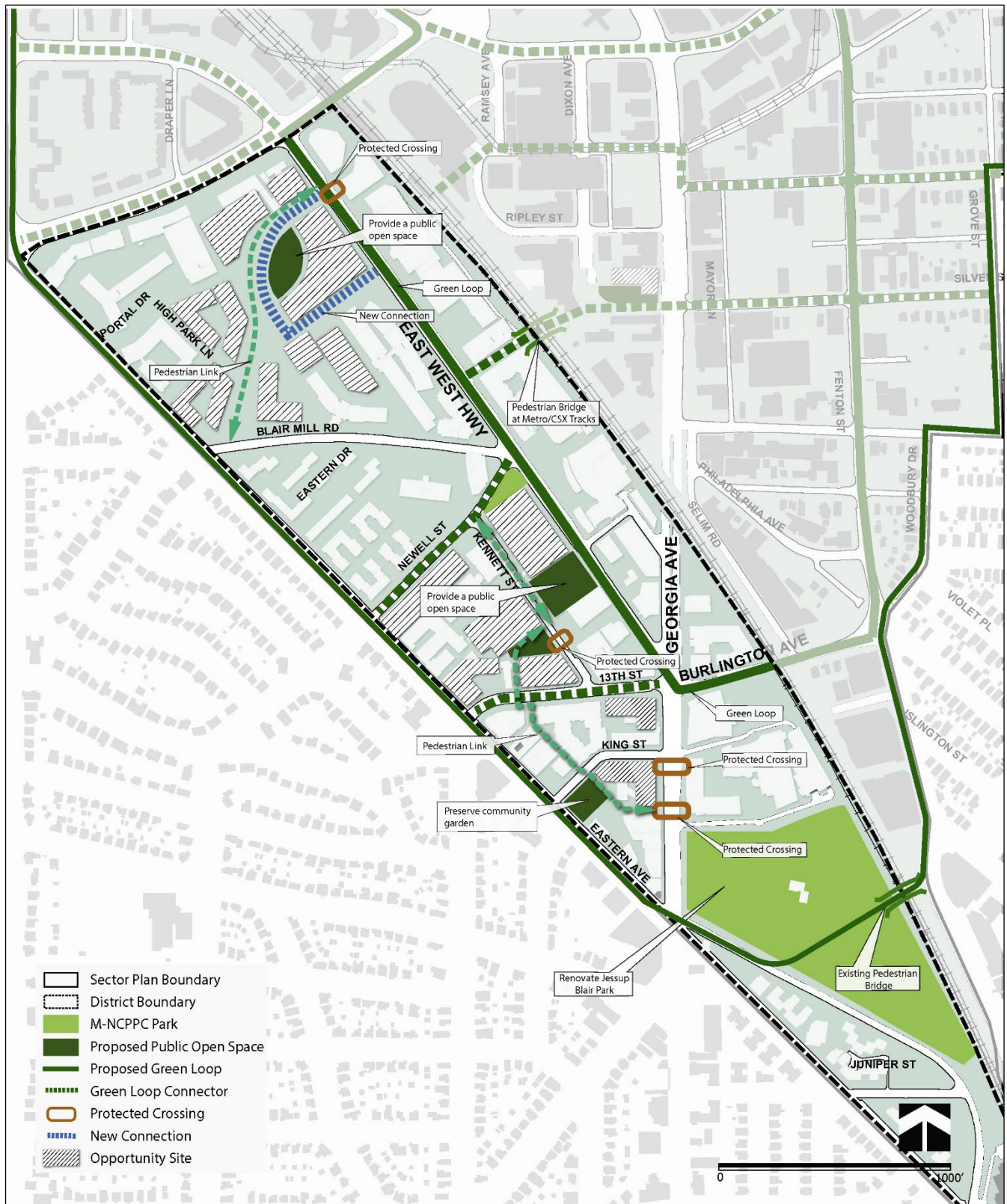
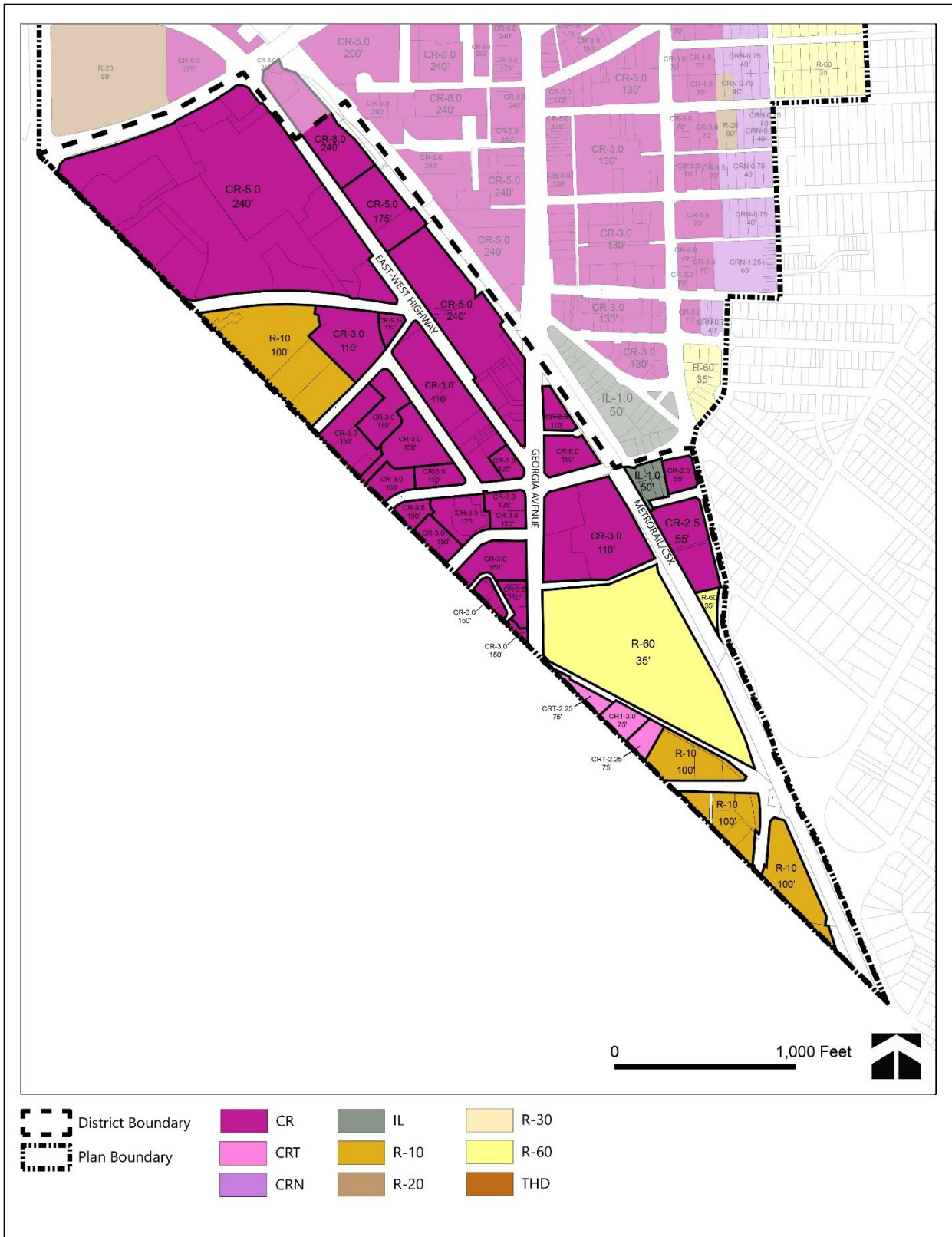


Figure 10. South Silver Spring Illustrative Diagram



Map 10. Proposed South Silver Spring Zoning

### 3.3.6. Downtown North District

#### Vision

Downtown North will build on the connection between the state-of-the-art South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center and the world-renown United Therapeutics campus to create a unique health- and health-sciences- focused district.

#### Goals

- Encourage redevelopment of under-utilized parcels including existing public parking garages and surface lots by increasing zoning flexibility and incentivizing additional height and FAR where appropriate.
- Connect the east and west sides of the Downtown North District via Cameron Street. The plan envisions Cameron Street as a new Complete Street, with neighborhood supporting retail and community amenities.
- Promote infill development on either side of Georgia Avenue north of Colesville Road.
- Improve the connectivity of the road network in this District by extending existing connections or creating new connections to divide super blocks and create a more cohesive urban fabric.
- Support the expansion of life-sciences or other bio-tech related industry facilities in the District.
- Promote active ground floor uses in all redevelopment projects, whether retail, community use or arts focused.

#### Recommendations

- **Urban Design**
  - At infill redevelopment sites along Georgia Avenue provide active ground floor uses.
  - Implement the Green Loop concept along Cameron Street between Fenton Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue as a key component of the Central Green Loop. Cameron Street between Fenton Street and Spring Street should be a Green Loop connector with some elements of the Green Loop implemented as feasible.
  - Implement Green Loop elements along Spring Street as part of the secondary Outer Loop.
  - Increase public open spaces and community gathering opportunities in this district through development projects on existing opportunity sites.
  - Improve pedestrian crossings of Georgia Avenue north of Colesville Road.
  - Provide public through-block connections throughout the district to enhance walkability and connectivity between long or super blocks.
- **Parks and Public Spaces**



- Create an Urban Recreational Park proximate to Cameron Street / 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to support the increased level of activity and number of occupants in this area as a result of the new mixed-use project that includes residential towers over a new County Recreation Center. This park's direction connection to the Green Loop via Cameron Street will complement other active facilities in the plan, including the Recreation and Aquatic Center across the street.
- **Opportunity Sites**
  - Parking Garage 7: Redevelop this existing garage in collaboration with the Parking Lot District. Extend 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue south through the site to align with Ramsey Avenue where it intersects with Cameron Street. The Plan recommends that any new development at this location should include neighborhood-serving retail on the ground floor and incorporate a public open space that is accessible to all (see Urban Recreational Park recommendation above).
  - Parking Garage 2: This garage can also be redeveloped in collaboration with the Parking Lot District. The plan recommends continuing Fenton Street north through the site as a pedestrian and bicycle connection to align with the through-block connection under construction at the 8787 Georgia Avenue site. Active ground floor uses should front on both Cameron Street and Spring Street.
- **Zoning**
  - Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
  - Correct zoning to bring existing non-compliant parcels into compliance.
  - Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights and/or FAR above the maximum mapped zoning per the proposed recommendations in Section 4.1

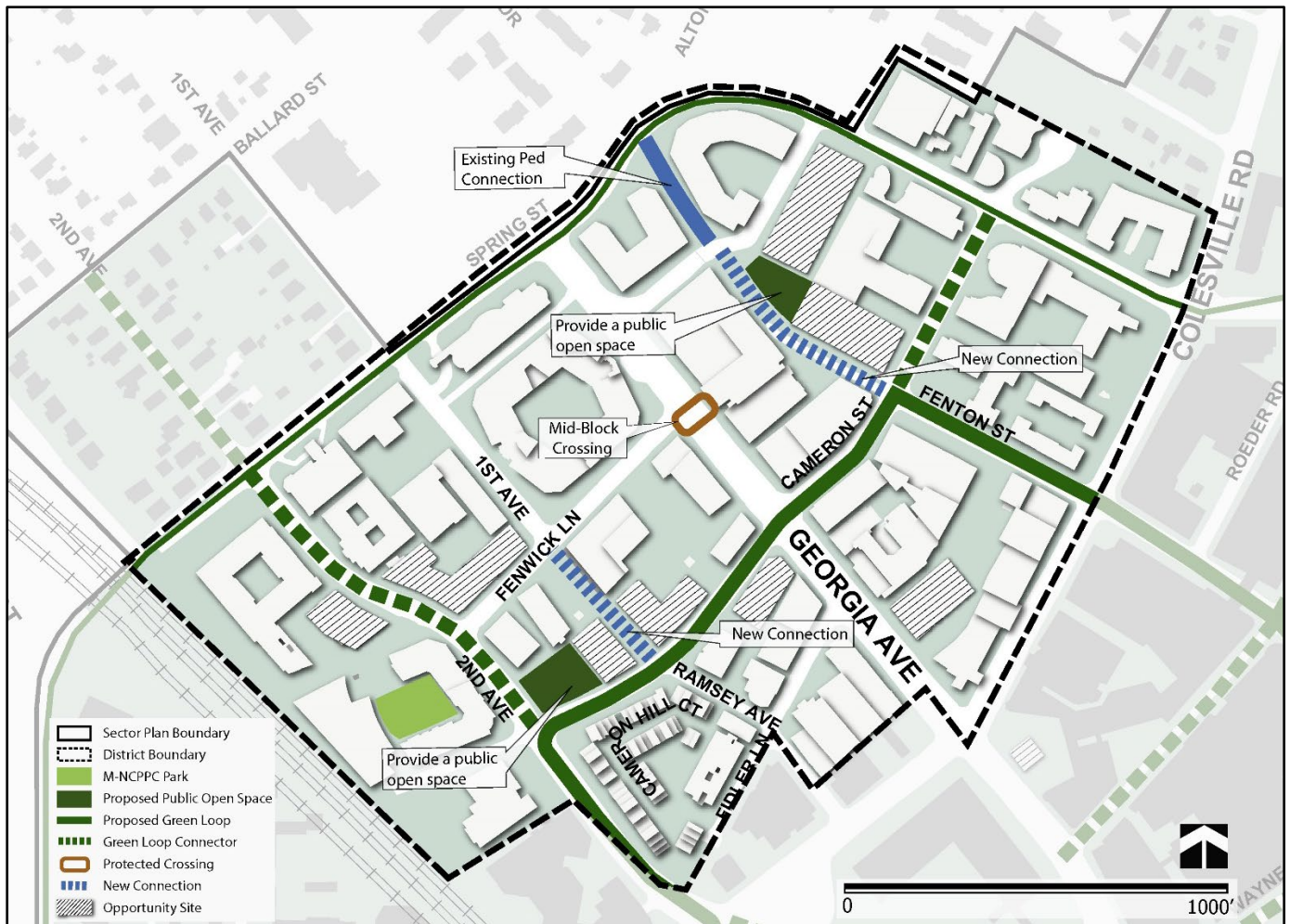
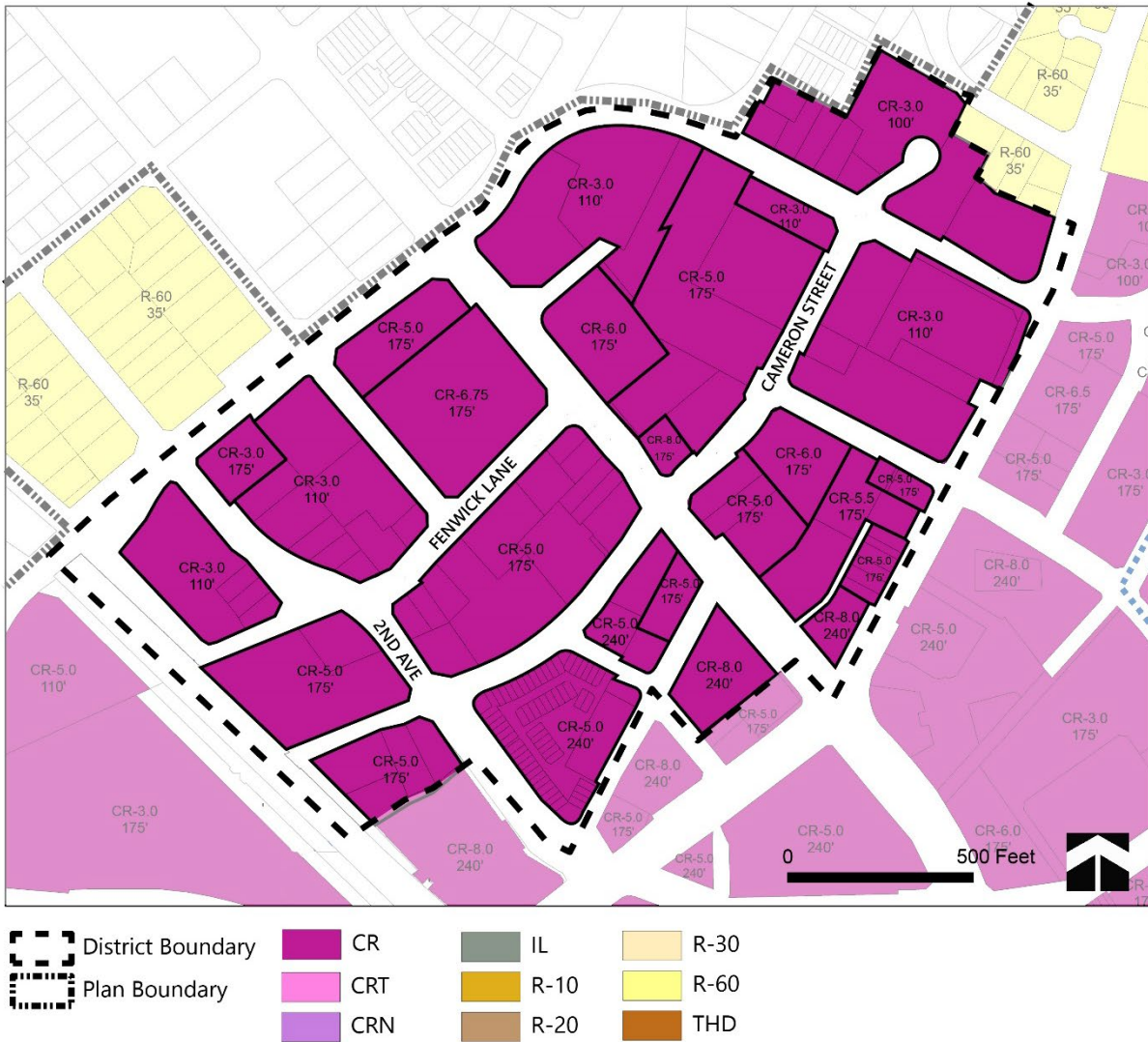


Figure 11. Downtown North: Illustrative Diagram



Map 11. Proposed Downtown North Zoning



### 3.3.4. Falklands District

#### Vision

*The Falklands District will retain its historic fabric of affordable housing south of East-West Highway while embracing the opportunity for higher-density mixed-use development north of East-West Highway.*

#### Goals

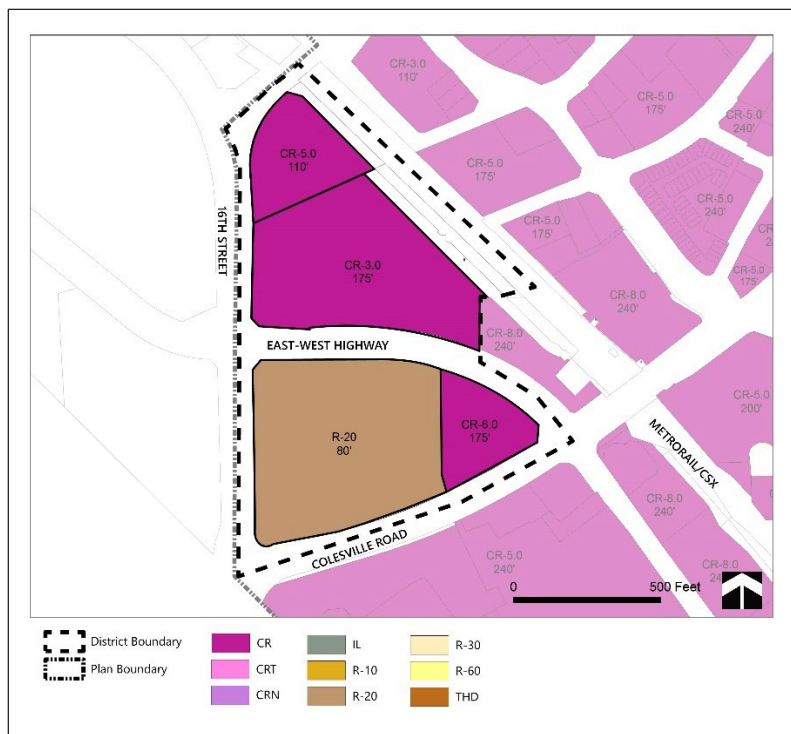
- Preserve the historically significant Falklands South parcel just south of East-West Highway as a sylvan retreat of market rate affordable housing in middle of a dense urban environment.
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment of the northern portion of the Falklands while striving for no net loss of market rate affordable housing on this site to support the plan goal of housing diversity.
- Maintain and protect the existing public realm of the Falklands, including significant green cover, a mature tree canopy and an existing stream
- Provide public open space and access to existing stream valley in southern parcel of the Falklands.

#### Recommendations

- **Urban Design**
  - Redevelop the Falkland property on the north side of East West Highway. The redevelopment should be designed with a variety of building heights, with an internal circulation pattern that honors and retains the existing landscaped character of the site.
  - Include a large public open space fronting onto East West Highway as part of the redevelopment plan.
  - Implement the recommendation from the 2010 *Greenspace* Guidelines for a renovated stream valley in the southern portion of the Falklands parcel between East West Highway and Colesville Road.
- **Zoning**
  - Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.



Figure 12. Falklands District Illustrative Diagram



### 3.3.5. Adjacent Communities

#### Vision

*Consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative, the Adjacent Communities can include a greater variety of housing types, fully integrated into the existing fabric, to allow a wider range of residents to enjoy the valued proximity to the downtown.*

#### Goals

- Preserve the residential nature of these neighborhoods and maintain the mature tree canopy found along many streets.
- Encourage a greater diversity of housing types as recommended by the proposed Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative.
- Preserve existing market-rate affordable housing in this District.

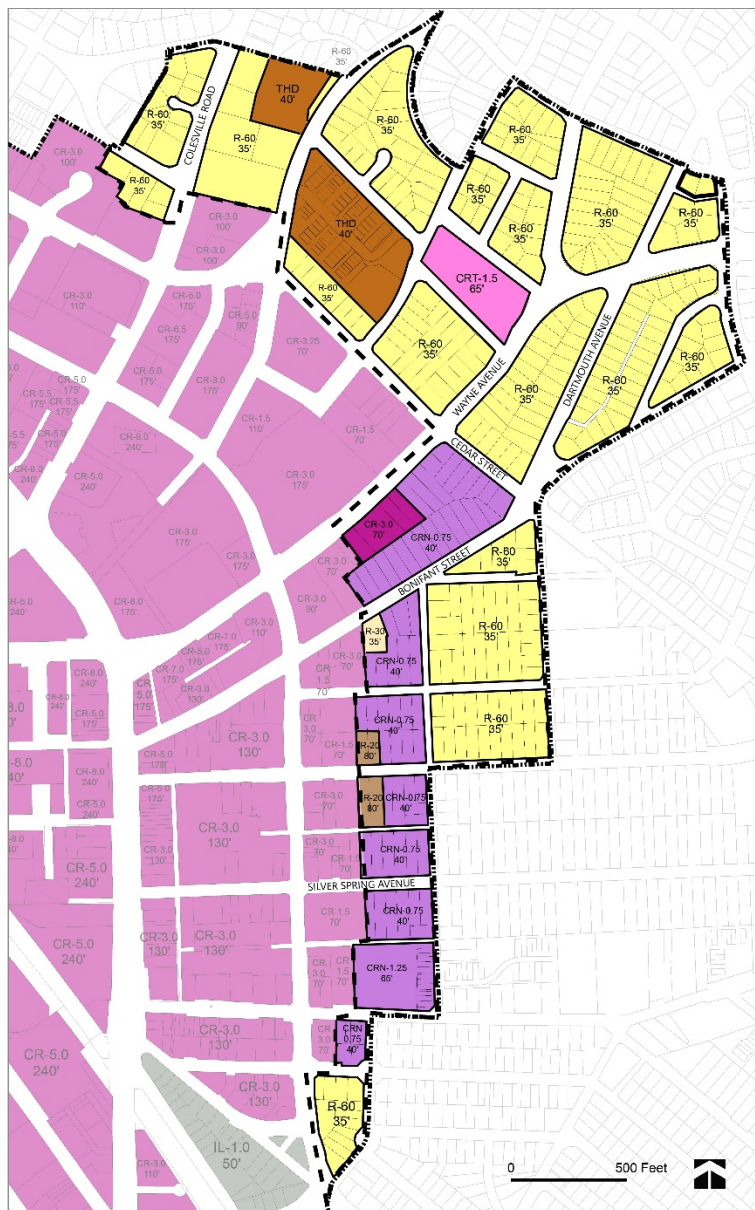
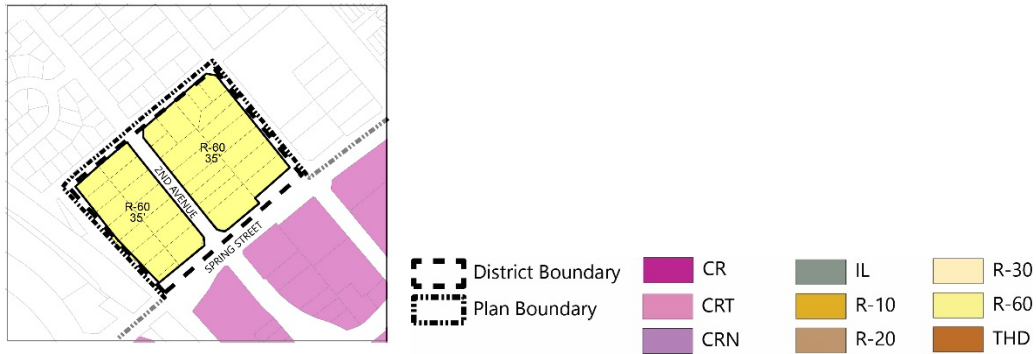
#### Recommendations

- **Urban Design**
  - Refer to Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative for guidelines on building form and relationship to street for new permitted housing types.
  - All new buildings in these neighborhoods should be compatible with the surrounding development; regardless of building type.
  - Maintain mature tree canopy by continuing to plant and replace street trees as needed.
  - Implement as many Green Loop elements as possible along the following streets that will be Green Loop Connectors into the downtown:
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue
    - Ellsworth Drive
    - Bonifant Street
- **Parks and Public Spaces**
  - Ellsworth Urban Park will continue to serve as a key destination in this district; the plan recommends renovating this park, particularly along the frontage on Colesville Avenue.
- **Zoning**
  - Confirm all zoning with the exception of the mapped areas shown and described in the table below.
  - Convert parcels zoned EOF to CR as shown in the map and the table.
  - Convert parcels zoned RT-12.5 to THD as shown in the map and the table.
  - Rezone R-60 parcels on blocks in East Silver Spring that include CR parcels in Fenton Village to CRN as shown in the map and described in the table. This includes the block south of Wayne Avenue and north of Bonifant Street.



Figure 13. Adjacent Communities Illustrative Diagram





Map 13. Proposed Adjacent Communities Zoning

# 4. Plan-Wide Recommendations

## 4.1. LAND USE AND ZONING

This Plan envisions Silver Spring in 2040 as a thriving, mixed-use downtown that continues to be a regional center where people of all ages and stages in life want and can afford to live, work and play. The recommendations in the sections below support and reinforce the themes of the plan: diversity, connectivity, resiliency, community health, and equity.

The sector plan land use recommendations:

- promote a diverse mix of housing types throughout the Plan area, with an estimated 11,000 new multifamily residential units in the downtown;
- incentivize approximately 44,000 jobs in downtown Silver Spring, a 50% increase from what is currently existing; and
- forecast up to 46,300 people, double the existing population within the Plan area.

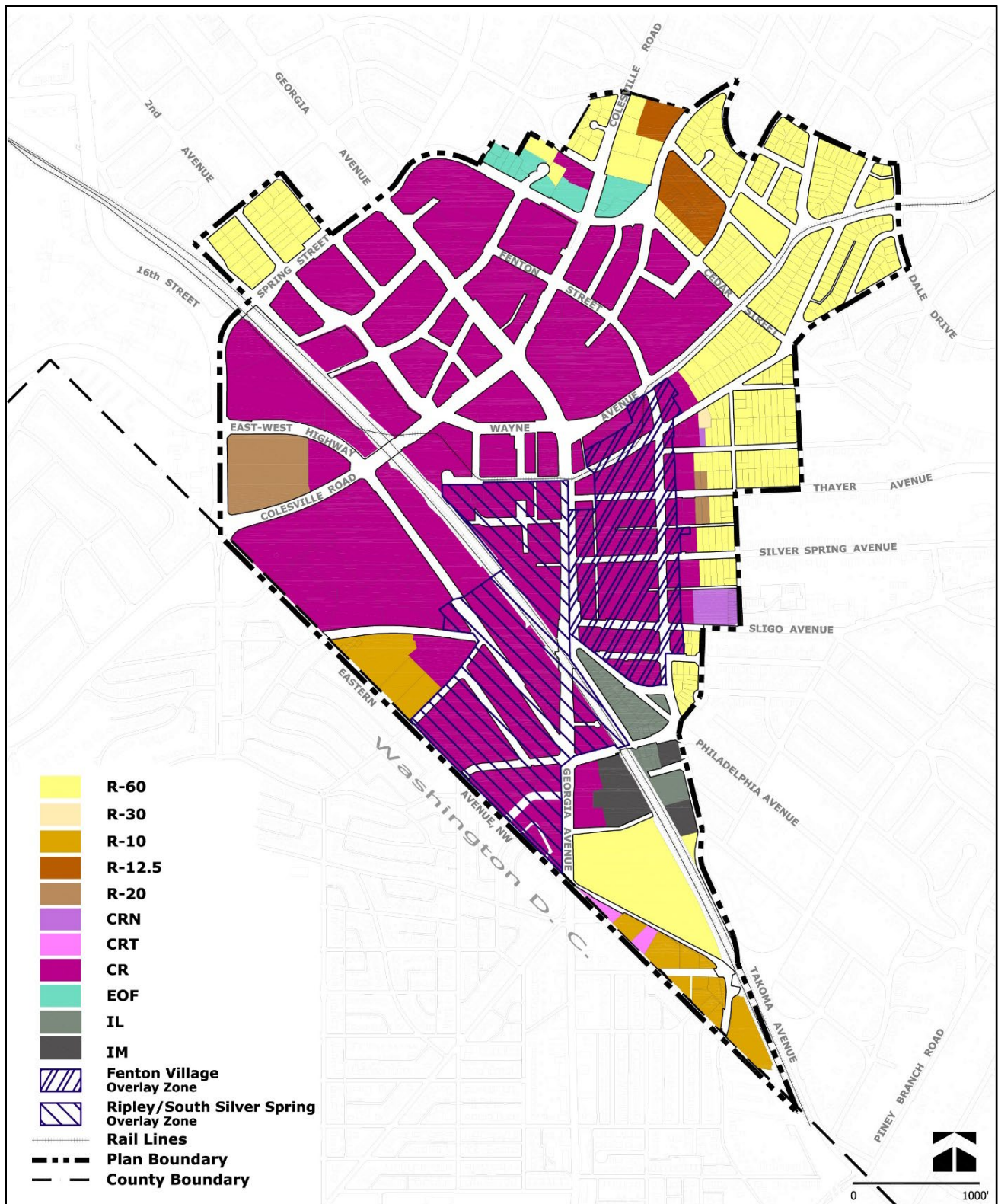
### 4.1.1. Goals

- Encourage redevelopment of under-utilized sites throughout the plan area.
- Increase flexibility in CR zoning so future development can respond to market conditions.
- Create new parks to address current deficit of places for community gathering and active recreation.
- Strive for no net loss of affordable housing throughout the plan area.
- Preserve existing light industrial zoning to support community-serving auto-repair and related small businesses.
- Encourage growth of existing retail nodes and corridors.
- Encourage the development of diverse housing types in the adjacent communities blocks as recommended by this plan (and the ongoing Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative).
- Encourage preservation of identified historical and cultural resources.
- Support upgrades to the current utilities and infrastructure that support the plan, including water and sewer.

#### 4.1.2. Recommendations

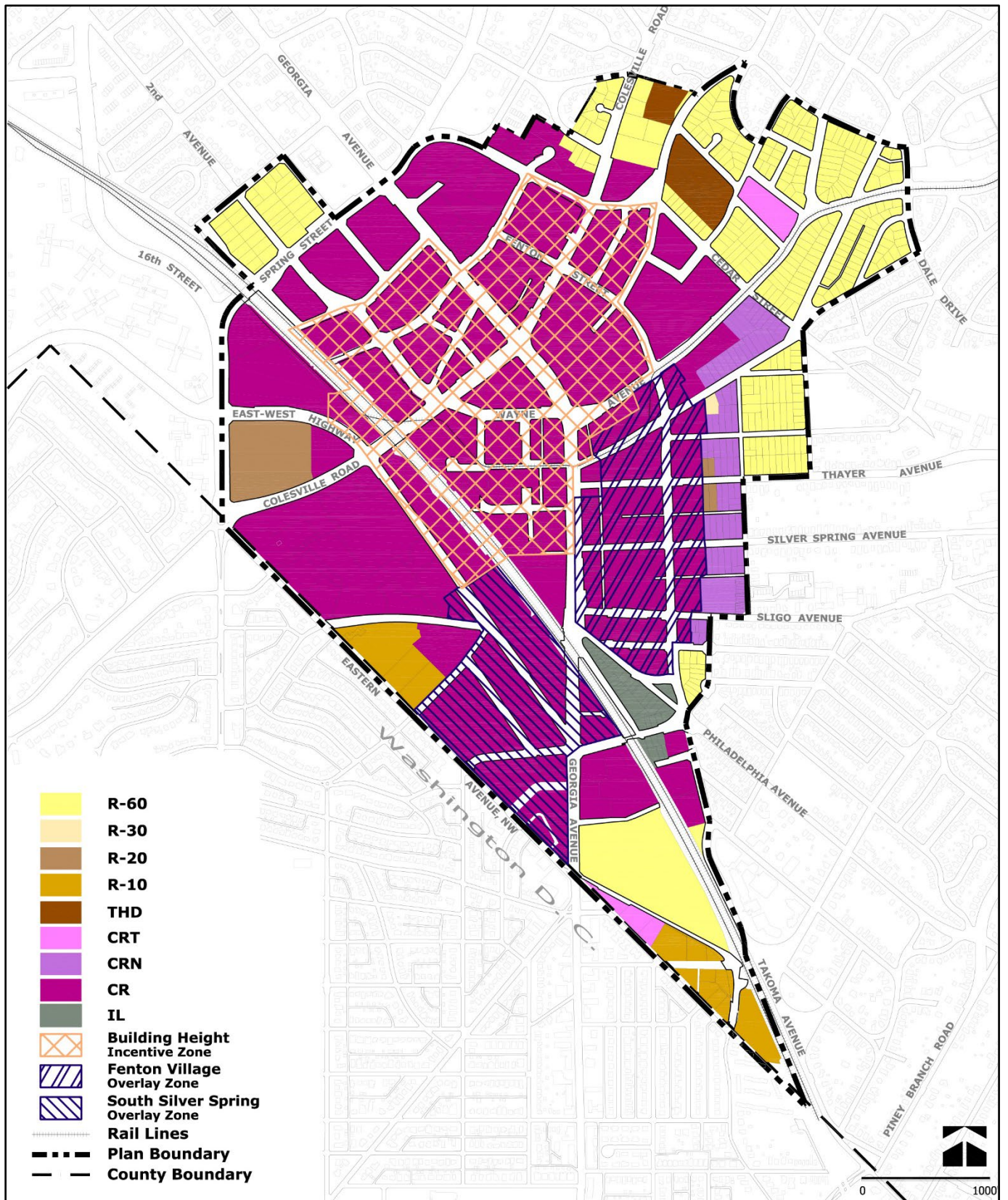
- Create a Silver Spring Downtown Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ) as shown in Map 15 to allow CR-zoned properties to increase building heights up to 150% of the mapped height up to 300 feet (except projects that achieve additional height by providing more than 15% MPDUs) by:
  - contributing to a Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund through Optional Method Development, discussed further in Section 5.1, Implementation;
  - undergoing a design review process at a Design Advisory Panel.
- Update the Fenton Village Overlay zone to, as described further in Section 5.1, Implementation, to adjust the boundary, better meet its goals and provide clarity.
- Revise the Ripley/South Silver Spring Overlay Zone to include only the parcels in South Silver Spring. This zone will be called the South Silver Spring Overlay Zone. The provisions of the zone should be revised to apply only to South Silver Spring.
- Rezone all parcels in the Plan area as shown in the zoning maps included in this document.
- On any Optional Method development project required to provide public open space on a site not recommended for a new public space in the Sector Plan, the Plan recommends contribution to a recommended off-site public open space, preferably in the same district. This contribution will be based on the cost/sf of constructing an equivalent area of the recommended public space.
- Rezone R-60 properties within the plan boundary between Fenton Street and Grove Street to CRN with a "C" value of zero.
- Rezone R-60 properties on the block bounded by Fenton Street, Wayne Avenue, Cedar Street and Bonifant Street to CRN with a "C" value of zero.
- Rezone R-12.5 properties to THD.
- The Plan recommends confirming the existing zoning within the Sector Plan boundary except where zoning changes are proposed as shown on Map 15 Proposed Zoning and in the Proposed Zoning Maps in the Districts sections above.





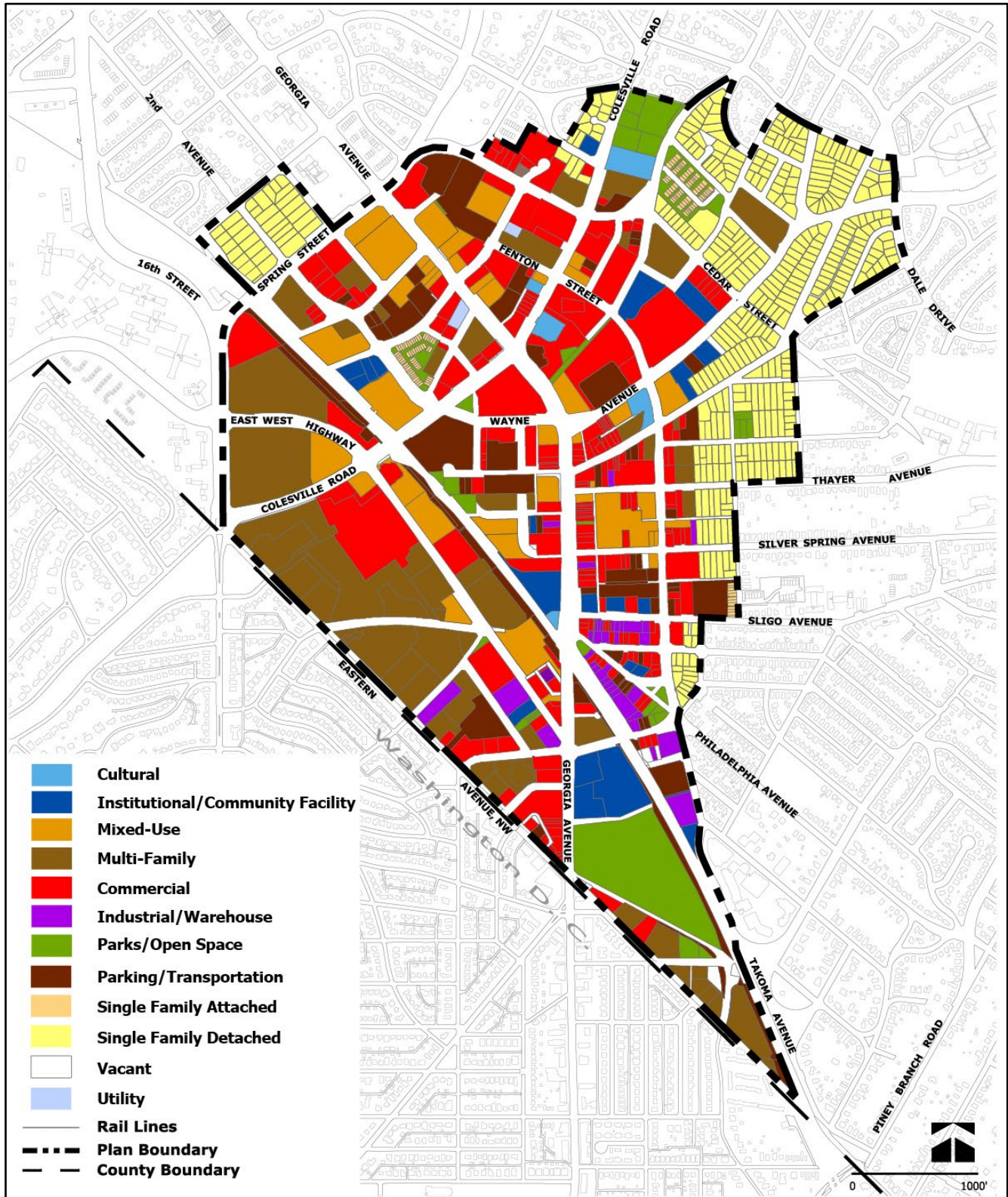
Map 14. Existing Zoning





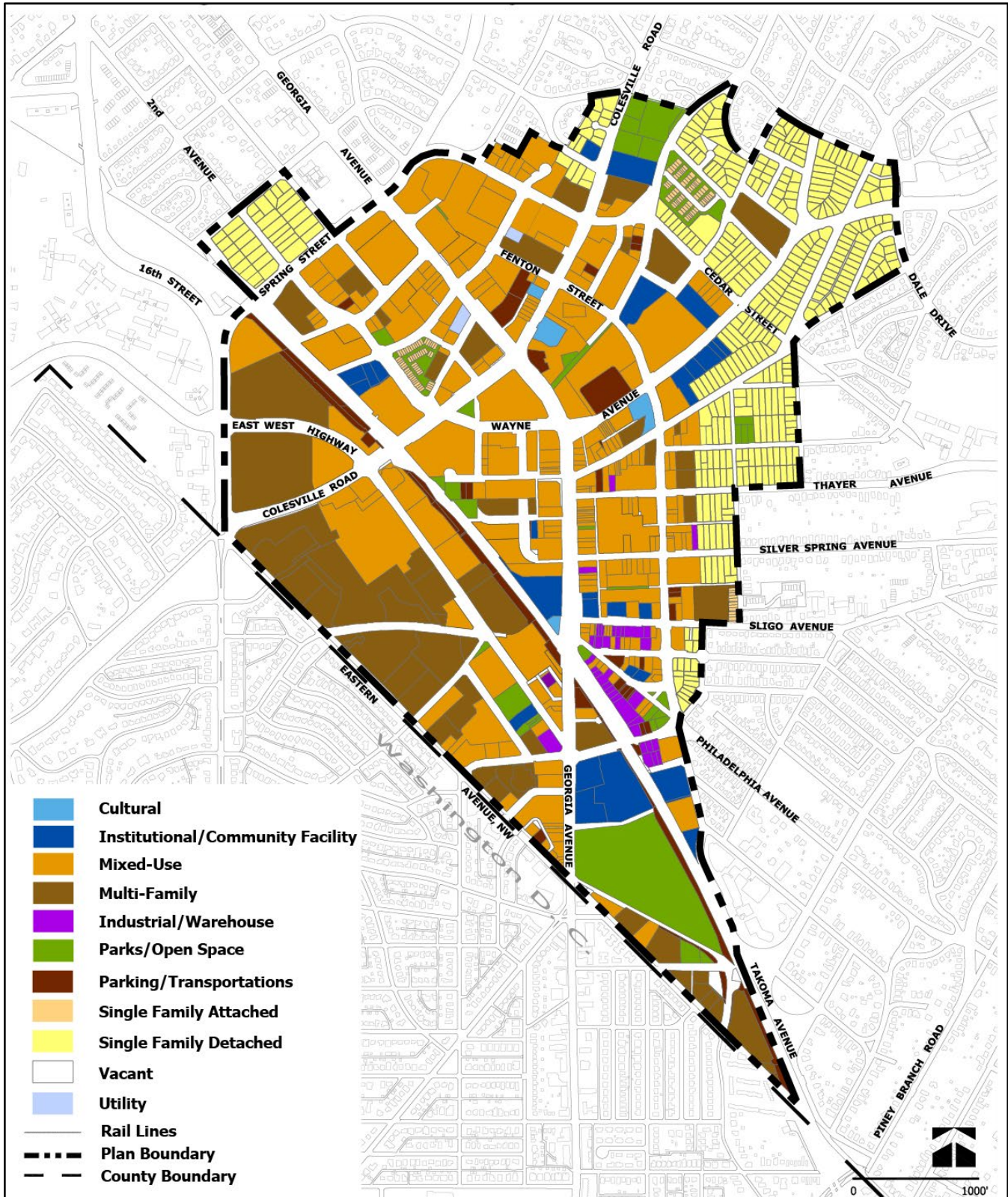
Map 15. Proposed Zoning





Map 16. Existing Land Use





Map 17. Proposed Land Use

## 4.2. HOUSING

In 2019, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments established regional housing targets to address a growing supply gap and affordability issues in the region. To meet our housing goals and obligations, the county needs an additional 10,000 housing units by 2030 to meet future housing demand from population and job growth. This is beyond the existing 31,000 housing units already forecasted through the most recently completed MWCOG forecast process, Round 9.1. In this context, this Sector Plan allows for the creation of approximately 11,000 new multifamily units in the downtown. This Plan specifically builds upon the recommendations of the 2000 Plan that emphasized high density housing in the downtown and the importance of a thriving residential community in a successful mixed-use urban area.

This Plan represents the first opportunity to implement the vision for housing laid out in [Thrive Montgomery](#), the 2021 update to the county's General Plan that lays out a long-range policy framework that will guide future land use and growth. Thrive Montgomery's housing recommendations, found in the Housing For All chapter has wide ranging policies to help make housing more attainable, including increasing housing production and preserving existing affordable and attainable housing.

In implementing the recommendations of Thrive Montgomery 2050 in the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, this Plan becomes the first Sector Plan to acknowledge and begin to address the deep disparities in wealth and homeownership that were shaped by a legacy of discriminatory lending practices, restrictive covenants and single-family zoning and its secondary impacts on neighborhoods that is still being felt today.

This Plan supports strategic alignment with the recommendations in the Attainable Housing Strategies to begin to address decades of inequities to create more equitable, mixed-income neighborhoods and ensure that exclusively single-family zoning is not a barrier to development in an area like Silver Spring, with its many amenities and transit and employment accessibility. This alignment with Attainable Housing Strategies also helps to provide a transition from the downtown commercial uses to the surrounding residential neighborhoods and introduces the potential for new housing typologies in the adjacent communities in the plan area. These parcels would be appropriate for housing types like duplexes and triplexes.

This Plan also recommends prioritizing providing a range of unit types for a diversity of households, including families, seniors, and persons with disabilities to allow more diverse households to take advantage of Silver Spring's amenities. The existing rental units in the downtown are predominately smaller bedroom units.

Within the downtown area are over thirty-five multi-unit residential buildings containing over 12,000 units. Approximately 43 percent of all units in multi-unit residential buildings are currently market-rate affordable, meaning they are affordable to households earning incomes below 80 percent of the Washington, DC metropolitan region's area median income (AMI). At 80 percent AMI in 2020, these units would be affordable to households of three earning around \$90,720 a year.



This Plan aims to balance the preservation of existing market-rate affordable housing with the production of new housing, which will result in the production of MPDUs. This preservation and production strategy seeks to retain the existing zoning on many existing market-rate properties, and rezone select properties to maximize density near transit.



Figure 15. Missing Middle Housing Example A



Figure 14. Missing Middle Housing Example B



Figure 16: Multifamily Housing Example

### 4.2.1. Goals

The housing goals for the plan are guided by the following policies found in the Planning Board draft [Thrive Montgomery 2050](#).<sup>2</sup>

- Expand opportunities to increase residential density, especially along major corridors and in locations where additional housing can assist in the development of Complete Communities.
- Facilitate the development of a variety of housing types in every part of the county but especially in areas near transit, employment, and educational opportunities.
- Support creative housing options including single-room occupancy units (SROs); “missing middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing, cohousing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), social housing and cooperative housing to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options.
- Increase the number of income-restricted affordable housing units, especially for low-income households.
- Prioritize use of public land for co-location of housing and other uses, particularly where government agencies design new facilities or dispose of real property.
- Calibrate the applicability of the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program and other affordable housing programs to provide price-regulated units appropriate for income levels ranging from deeply affordable to workforce.

### 4.2.2. Recommendations

- Require all Optional Method of Development projects to provide a minimum of 15 percent moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs) or other DHCA-equivalent affordable housing.
- Preserve existing, market-rate affordable housing where possible, striving for no net loss of affordable housing.
- Publicly owned properties should be encouraged to provide up to 30 percent MPDUs, with 15 percent affordable to households earning at the standard MPDU level of 65-70 percent or less of Area Median Income (AMI) and 15 percent affordable to households earning less than 50 percent of AMI.
- Provide a range of unit types for a diversity of households, including families, seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Support partnerships among public, private and philanthropic institutions, when possible, to assist in the development of affordable housing.
- Increase infill housing opportunities in office buildings with high vacancy rates and other underused properties by setting Commercial and Residential densities the same in CR zones.

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<sup>2</sup> Thrive Montgomery 2050, Planning Board Draft. <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Thrive-Planning-Board-Draft-web.pdf>

- The Plan also recognizes the need and supports development of permanent supportive housing for the homeless in the Plan Area.

### 4.3. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCY

Recent global events have demonstrated that resiliency is key to economic growth and success. The ability to flexibly adapt and respond to changing conditions will continue to be important in the coming decades. Over the last 20 years, downtown Silver Spring has become a key economic engine for the eastern half of Montgomery County and the Plan envisions that in the future it will grow into a premier location to start and maintain a business, to launch an exciting start-up, or to open a new independent restaurant or shop.

Silver Spring is an important office market, but has had difficulty leveraging its access to Metrorail, high quality urban form, and amenities to attract office using firms in the past decade. Retailers in Downtown Silver Spring depend on the office market for daytime sales, accentuating the need for policies and interventions that attract additional jobs to fill the empty office space throughout Downtown.

Downtown Silver Spring boasts a vibrant retail market with a sizeable cluster of diverse and independent retailers, with a number of shops owned by members of or serving minority/migrant communities. Most community members that engaged in the development of this Plan cited the vibrant and diverse mix of retail as a key component of downtown Silver Spring's unique character and a major reason why consumers continue coming to Silver Spring.

A parallel study by Montgomery Planning, *Retail in Diverse Communities*, documented these retailers and proposed several interventions and policies to strengthen and support the cluster. Key findings include that most small retail businesses in Silver Spring rent their space and are vulnerable to increases of already high rents, and that many retailers reported property owners and absentee landlords who make little to no investment in their properties.

This sector plan envisions a future in which downtown Silver Spring is among the region's premier office markets, has continued to grow its profile as a unique retail destination, and has a diverse base of high-quality jobs in numerous industries making it resilient to evolving economic conditions and an attractive place to work and do business in Montgomery County.

#### 4.3.1. Goals

- Improve the public realm to make downtown Silver Spring more attractive for businesses, retailers and consumers.
- Strengthen the unique retail market in Silver Spring with its diverse mix of independent stores and restaurants.
- Make Silver Spring into a premier office market, with a special focus on start-ups, associations, and government agencies.
- Encourage economic growth that will be sustainable into the future.



### 4.3.2. Recommendations

In addition to the zoning recommendations to encourage the development of under-utilized property, and the recommendations to improve the public realm, the plan recommends:

- Encourage the conversion of obsolete office space to other uses (short-term or long-term), including residential (condominiums or rentals), hotels/hospitality centers, healthcare facilities, laboratory/research facilities, education facilities, and non-profit service centers.
- Limit new ground-floor retail to established retail nodes or corridors where there is already existing retail and significant pedestrian activity. For those locations that are not adjacent to or on a block with existing retail consider alternative strategies for activating the ground floor.
- Consider an incentive for property owners with underutilized street level retail spaces to build and fit out the space for a retail incubator managed by a mission-oriented non-profit organization in which entrepreneurs can try new retail concepts.
- Create an incentive that provides a subsidy for new retail businesses to complete the fit-out of 2,000 square foot or smaller retail spaces.

## 4.4. URBAN DESIGN

The Concept Framework Plan in Section 2 lays the groundwork for the overall urban design approach which includes recommendations on building form and the public realm.

### 4.4.1. Building Form

Downtown Silver Spring contains a diversity of building form, from one- and two-story retail along Colesville Road, Georgia Avenue, and throughout Fenton Village, to mid- and high-rise office and apartment buildings, as well as the house-scale buildings of the Adjacent Communities. New development in each of the districts should respond to these varied conditions.

#### Goals

- Encourage future growth in downtown Silver Spring that takes advantage of additional allowable height while considering street-level experience, views and building form.
- New development should be compatible with the urban form and scale of the immediate surrounding neighborhood context.
- Design tall buildings with bases appropriate for active ground floor uses and architecturally interesting towers.
- Create a walkable environment where buildings frame the public realm and the lower floors of the building respond to the pedestrian environment at the ground floor.
- Maintain the residential character of the Adjacent Communities neighborhoods.

#### Recommendations

- Prepare Design Guidelines to define Design Excellence for new development throughout the plan area.
- Create a Design Advisory Panel (DAP) for Optional Method of Development Projects. The DAP will determine additional height permitted for projects in the Building Height Incentive Zone.
- Encourage innovative building form and allow flexibility in design. Vary tower heights, setbacks and building materials.
- Limit bulky towers and consider architectural features, building articulation, solar building orientation and access to light and air.
- In the Adjacent Communities, new development should be compatible in massing and form to the surrounding context.

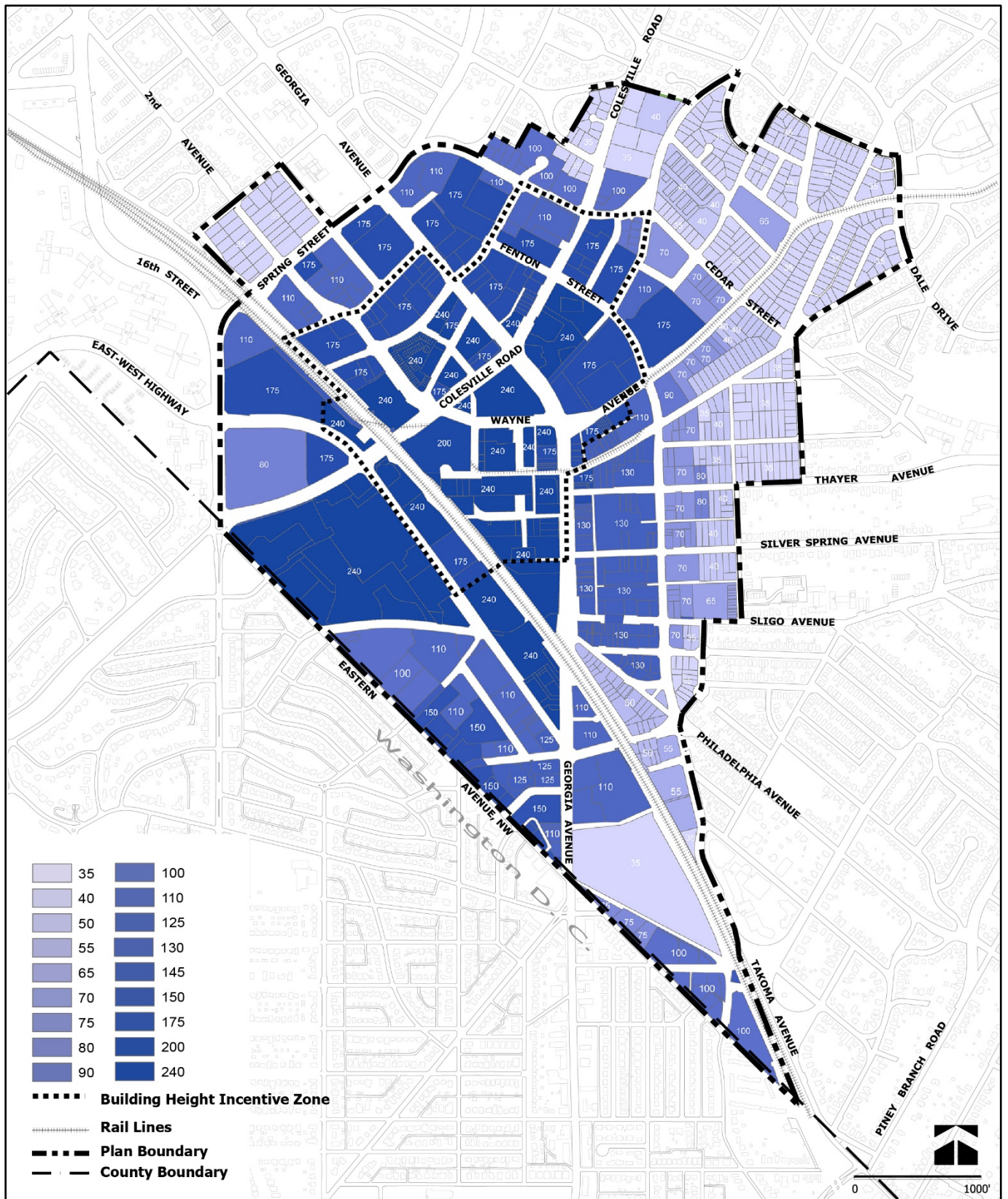


Figure 17. Recommended Maximum Heights Map

## Public Realm

The public realm includes all outdoor space that is publicly accessible. This includes streets, parks, open space, sidewalks, alleys and plazas. A green, maintained, well-connected, walkable, safe, multi-modal public realm is essential to the success of an urban area.

### Goals

- Introduce new public spaces in downtown Silver Spring that strengthen each district and improve access to public spaces for all.
- Improve existing public spaces to contribute to community health and connectivity.
- Focus on the existing local streets as neighborhood “spines” and convert these to resilient complete streets that will improve the pedestrian and bicycle network, help to cool the downtown and manage stormwater runoff.
- Activate under-utilized spaces (both publicly and privately owned) through temporary placemaking strategies. These tactical moves can help spur long-term public realm transformation and improve public life.

### Recommendations

- Implement the Green Loop concept on the streets indicated in Section 3.2.
- Encourage public and private property owners to consider tactical urbanism as a form of placemaking, including, but not limited to, the following activation strategies:
  - *Temporary Plazas* are public open spaces that are created out of underutilized space on or adjacent to existing streets or open spaces. They can transform empty pavement into lively gathering spaces. These plazas can host events, pop-up retail kiosks or local food trucks.
  - *Temporary Parks* use a part of the street, usually one or two parallel parking spaces, as public space in which people can gather and socialize. They are composed of seating, planters, tables and at times, platforms that separates the people from the surrounding pavement. They can be very temporary and experimental or seasonal
  - *Outdoor Eateries* typically take place in front of storefronts either directly adjacent to the building wall, or along the curb. This intervention is feasible where the sidewalk is wide enough to accommodate both the eating area and adequate pedestrian access. Outdoor eating areas can also occupy a closed parking or travel lane; this was successfully implemented throughout Montgomery County, including along the east side of Georgia Avenue in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.





Figure 18. Outdoor Eating in Bethesda, MD



Figure 19. Temporary Park in Silver Spring, MD

## 4.5. PARKS, TRAILS AND PUBLIC SPACES

The plan envisions a community where all residents and workers have access to a welcoming and integrated network of parks and public spaces that enhance social engagement and promote active lifestyles. As an urban area, downtown Silver Spring must balance urban development with places for active, contemplative, and social recreation. As participants noted during the public engagement process, Silver Spring needs more parks and green spaces, especially spaces for active recreation. The recommendations of this plan create an active and healthy community for all, and will strengthen the role of parks and recreation with regard to economic competitiveness, racial equity, and environmental sustainability.

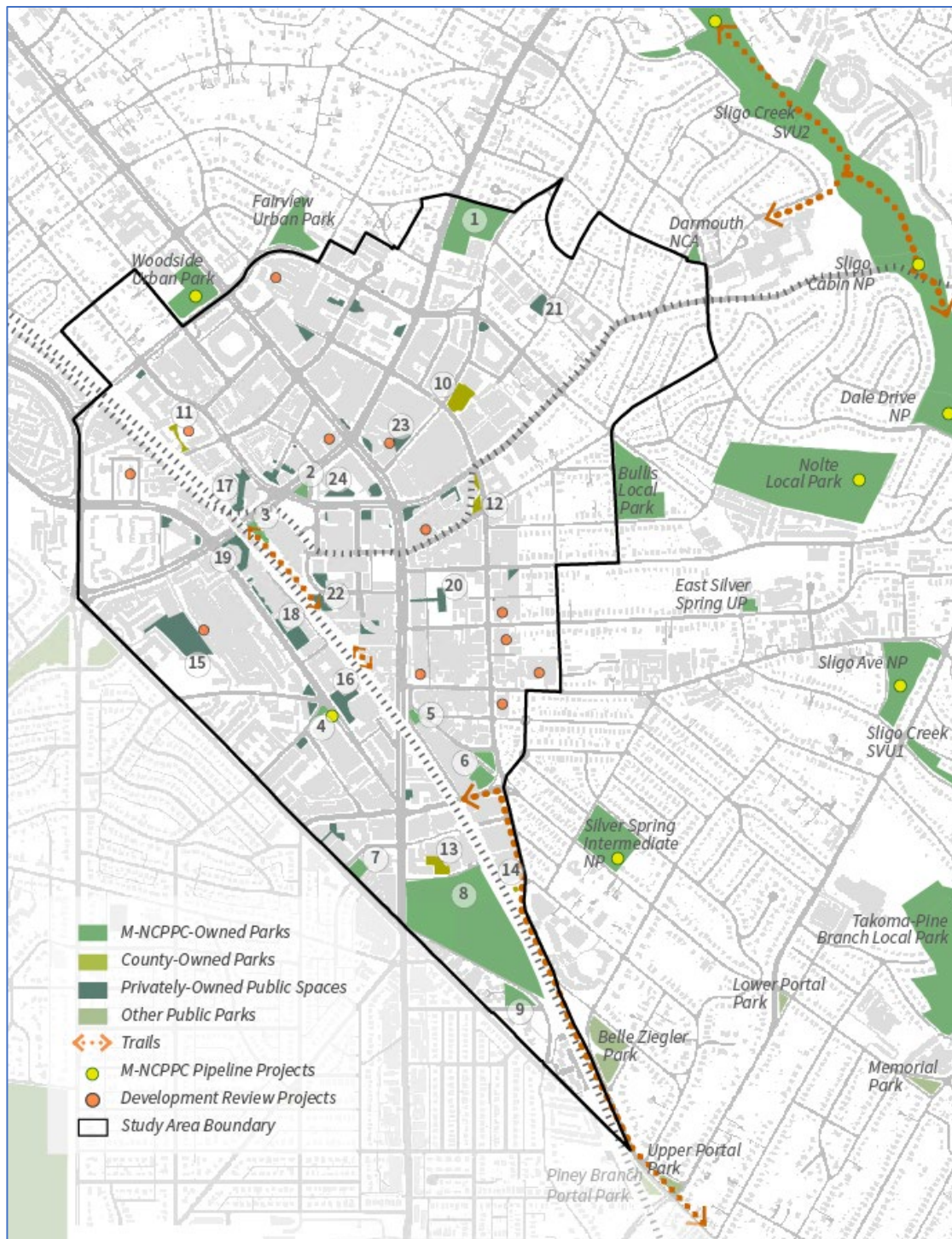
The goals and recommendations for this plan were developed in concert with policy guidance from previous and ongoing plans including the *2010 Silver Spring CBD Green Space Guidelines*, the *2017 PROS Plan*, the *2018 Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*, and *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, in addition to community input received during the planning process.

The goals and recommendations below support the plans overall themes of diversity, connectivity, resiliency and community health.

### 4.5.1. Goals:

- Provide an integrated, comfortable, and walkable network of parks, public spaces and trails connecting residents to jobs, centers of activity and nature among the different districts.
- Promote and diversify the balance of recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities - places for active, contemplative, and social gathering experiences, including the creation of settings and resources to bring biodiversity into the design of these open spaces.
- Enhance the character and sense of community of each district and promote economic prosperity by integrating welcoming parks and public spaces into economic development strategies and land use planning to attract employers and workers and build social connections -places where people can gather as a community.
- Make parks and public spaces the physical, social, cultural, and environmental “heart” of this Plan’s communities.
- Maintain high standards of environmental stewardship in park planning, design, management, and operations – improve the ability of park facilities and natural resources to withstand the effects of climate change.
- Promote human and environment health by providing attractive and sustainable spaces that encourage active lifestyles promoting physical, mental, and social activities and programs.





#### M-NCPPC-Owned Parks

1. Ellsworth Urban Park
2. Gene Lynch Urban Park\*
3. Silver Spring Transit Plaza
4. Acorn Urban Park
5. Philadelphia Ave Urban Park
6. Fenton Street Urban Park
7. King Farm Community Garden
8. Jesup Blair Local Park
9. Juniper Blair

#### County-Owned Parks

10. Veterans Plaza
11. South Region Aquatic & Recreation Center
12. Silver Spring Public Library Plaza
13. Montgomery College Plaza
14. Montgomery College Community Garden

#### Privately-Owned Public Spaces (10 out of 42 > than 1/4 acre)

15. The Blairs
16. The Silverton/Silver Spring Gateway
17. Silver Spring Metro Plaza
18. NOAA/Metro Center
19. Silver Spring Metro Center
20. Studio Plaza
21. Chelsea Court
22. 1050 Ripley Street
23. Silver Plaza
24. Discovery Civic Green

\*WMATA owns the property; M-NCPPC has an easement on the property

Map 18. Existing Parks and Open Spaces



#### 4.5.2. Recommendations:

- Implement the Green Loop as described above to connect existing and proposed parks and public spaces, including the new South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center (under construction) inside and at the periphery of the Plan; encourage regional connections to trails and parks beyond the boundary of the plan.
- Consider the Green Loop streets as amenities that contribute to the range of active and contemplative experiences available in the downtown by providing a comfortable way to walk to places and appreciate the tree canopy.
- Promote an integrated system of parks and public spaces including privately-owned public spaces (POPS) to supplement publicly owned and managed gathering spaces and active facilities within the districts.
- Apply the park hierarchy system to balance the types of parks and park experiences in the network. The results of the EPS analysis show that the plan area particularly lacks active recreation experiences. Add additional park types that promote active experiences.
- Consider how simultaneous uses can be encouraged in parks. This approach fosters interactive opportunities for social connection. In addition, encourage the use of multi-use spaces to attract a diverse number of park users.
- Design parks and public spaces using a diverse palette of plant and tree species that provide different colors, form, and textures throughout all the seasons.
- Expand the urban tree canopy coverage and pervious surfaces in parks and public spaces, both publicly and privately owned.
- Promote watershed connectivity through education and best stormwater management practices. See more info on this recommendation at the environmental planning section
- Promote internal walking loops inside public spaces to encourage physical activity, people watching, social connections and integration of amenities: parents can exercise while watching kids in the play areas or teens playing in the courts or relaxing under a tree. Trails are ranked as the most wanted and used facility in many parks and recreation master plans' surveys.
- Engage the community early in the planning, programming and design of parks and public spaces to ensure the resulting place is meaningful and reflective of community identity. Engage stakeholders such as property owners, developers, non-profit groups, community members, artists, and public agencies to collaborate in delivering creative solutions and development strategies. Work with the community and schools to develop early advocacy programs and activities to encourage nature appreciation, education, and stewardship.
- Promote facilities that celebrate cultural aspects of the community and contribute to the sense of pride and ownership of parks.
- Consider short-term/temporary solutions, such as temporary/interim parks, that reflect community identity in empty lots or other opportunity sites adjacent to the Green Loop.
- Wayfinding – Improve signage and wayfinding of parks, public spaces and trails; consider partnering with future commercial/businesses organizations to create a public space map and signage for the Green Loop and the open space network in Silver Spring.

### 4.5.3. Equity in Parks and Public Spaces

Silver Spring was identified as an implementation priority area through the mapping of *Experience Improvement Areas (EIAs) of the Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Plan* with the overlay of the *Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)* from the *Thrive 2050*. Recommendations described in this Plan will help prioritize where and how to spend limited public funds where the highest need is identified.

**Experience Improvement Areas:** This map shows clusters of high and low levels of accessible public space amenities based on the types of experiences offered relative to the population of the area within the EPS Study Area.

**Equity Focus Areas:** The EFA map identifies census tracts that have high concentrations of lower-income people of color, and those residents who also have limited English language skills.

#### Goal

- Address park resources distribution in the County's urbanizing areas. Give a voice to underserved communities and contribute to the efforts initiated by the Council on Social Equity.

#### Recommendations

- Prioritize and identify opportunity sites and test scenarios to measure the impact of additional development on park facilities to better address distribution of parks resources.
- Utilize EFAs and EIAs as tools to prioritize funding and implementation for parks and public spaces projects.

### 4.5.4. Proposed Park Hierarchy

The *2017 PROS Plan* and the *2018 EPS Plan* recommend that "each area master plan should include a system of open spaces based on the roles of each type of open space. The amount and size of open spaces may vary from plan to plan and should be directly proportional to the projected density and adjusted to the pattern of existing open space and other factors such as community-specific needs."

The following hierarchy should be applied to all urbanized areas:

#### For the Sector Plan Area:

- Active recreation destinations
- A Central Civic Green
- Interconnected system of sidewalks and trails to connect parks and open spaces
- Wooded areas that will provide a sense of contact with nature

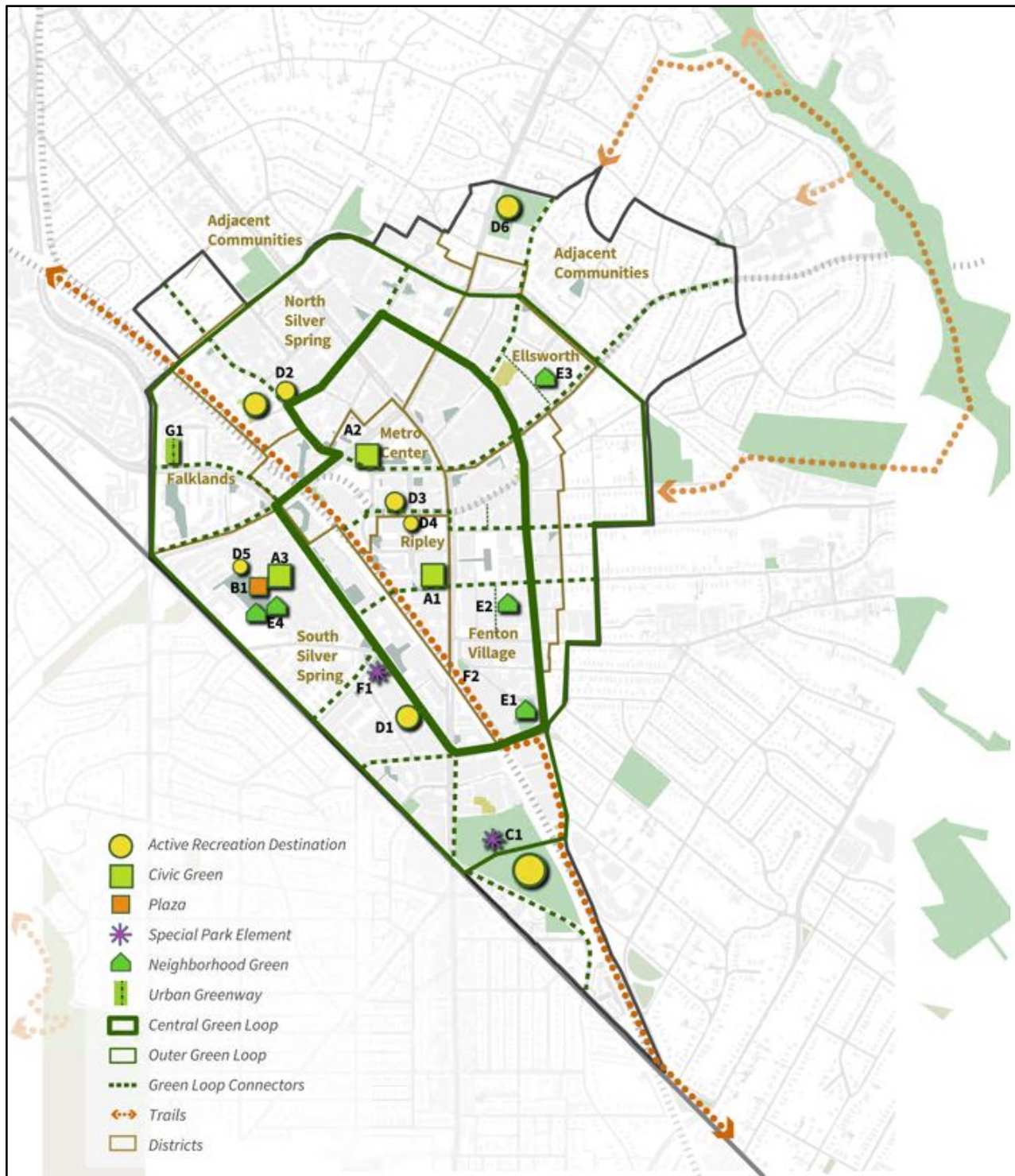
**For each Urban Neighborhood:** a neighborhood green and walk to recreational amenities

**For each Block:** space for an urban square, plaza, or green area

**For each Building:** space for outdoor recreation space

**For each Residence:** private outdoor space

The recommendations for specific park locations utilize the park hierarchy above in conjunction with community input, previous studies, location of parks shortages (EPS Plan methodology) and equity filters (Thrive 2050) to ensure that the appropriate park typologies are recommended for each location.



Map 19. Park Hierarchy Diagram



The Plan identifies key park types within the new proposed parks and also existing parks that will be undergoing renovation and/or expansion.

**A - Civic Green:** Formally planned, flexible, and programmed open spaces that serve as places for informal gathering, quiet contemplation, or large special events. Depending on size, they may support open air markets, concerts, festivals, and/or special events but are not often used for programmed recreational purposes. A large central lawn is often the focus, sometimes with a complementary plaza space, with adjacent spaces providing complementary uses such as gardens, water features and/or shade structures.

### **A1 - Create: Ripley District Civic Green**

**Location:** Ripley District

**Likely ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** This civic green space will be an important focal point and social gathering space for the Ripley District and the rest of the Plan. Its centralized location within the Plan's area and the proposed Central Green Loop will serve the highest density commercial and residential areas. It will connect Georgia Avenue and East-West Highway with improved pedestrian routes and bike trails. With the proposed Silver Spring Bridge Connector, it will work as a gateway between the South Silver Spring and the Ripley districts connecting opposite sides of the proposed Central Green Loop: East-West Highway to Fenton Street through Silver Spring Avenue. The main programming of this space will be flexible to accommodate community events, unstructured recreation in a central lawn and places for nature interaction and contemplation. Provide a balance of sunny and shaded areas. Explore interactive installations with education component and visitor amenities.

**Recommended Size:** 0.5 acre minimum; 1.5 acres ideal



**Figure 20. Bryant Park, NYC**  
(example of Civic Green park typology)

Source: Wikipedia

## A2 - Create: Gene Lynch Civic Green (currently under-construction)

**Location:** Metro Center District

**Ownership:** DOT/M-NCPPC

**Vision:** This civic green space will be an important focal point and social gathering space for the Metro Center District. Its location across from the metro and purple line stations will function as a gateway to the central core of Silver Spring along Colesville Road. The main programming of this space will be flexible to accommodate community events and unstructured recreation with a central lawn area enclosed by lush plantings and trees. An informal amphitheater space with a large programmable digital display and playful bench swings will serve as a focal point within the park. A variety of seating options will be provided in both sunny and shaded areas.

**Size:** 0.25 acres



Figure 21. Illustrative Rendering of Proposed Gene Lynch Civic Green  
(currently under construction)

## A3 - Create: Blair Park/The Terrace Civic Green (currently approved under The Blairs Master Plan)

**Location:** South Silver Spring District

**Likely ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** This civic green space will be an important focal point and social gathering space for the South Silver Spring District. The Blairs Master Plan describes this central space as the heart of the Blairs full buildout development defined by retail storefronts, outdoor dining, and buildings entrances. The main programming of this space will be flexible to accommodate community events, unstructured recreation in a central lawn and places for nature contemplation. It will have a balance of sunny and shaded areas and will connect to proposed Sonny's Park through a pedestrian path designed in a switchback pattern to provide maximum accessibility. Explore interactive installations with education component and visitor amenities.

**Size:** ~ 0.95 acre



**B - Plaza:** These spaces align with and complement the Civic Green park type. Plazas are formally planned, predominantly hardscaped open spaces for pedestrian traffic near transit stops and/or commercial and higher density residential areas. Depending on size, plazas may support activities including open air markets, concerts, festivals, and special events, but are not often used for active recreational purposes. They should face streets and building frontages to maximize pedestrian use and exposure and have access to sunlight.

**B1 - Create: Sonny’s Park Plaza (currently approved under The Blairs Master Plan)**

**Location:** South Silver Spring District

**Likely ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** This plaza space will be located at the southern end of the proposed Blair Park/The Terrace Civic Green and will be the primary social gathering space for the lower escarpment of the development. A pavilion

**Size:** ~ 0.4 acre

**Urban Recreational Park:** Oriented to the recreational needs of surrounding neighborhoods and districts, this type of park provides space for many activities. Athletic fields, playing courts, picnic areas, dog parks, sitting areas and flexible grassy open spaces can all be common in this park type. Temporary programming can include farmer’s markets, outdoor exercise classes, and/or community yard sales, etc. There should be space for safe drop-offs and integrated accessible parking for those who cannot walk to the park.



Figure 23. Veterans Plaza, MD (example of Plaza)

Source: Silver Spring Civic Building



Figure 22. Mission Dolores Park, SF (example of Urban Recreational Park)



C - Special Park: These parks include areas that contain features of historic and cultural significance.

## C1/D1 - Renovate/Repurpose: Jesup Blair Urban Recreational/Special Park

**Location:** South Silver Spring District

**Ownership:** M-NCPPC

**Vision:** Regional gateway urban park to downtown Silver Spring. This renovated park will be a countywide destination place that promotes an active lifestyle and opportunities to gather to parks users and offers the unique historical and cultural setting of a special park designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

**Current Size:** ~ 15 acres

At 14.2 acres, Jesup Blair Local Park is the largest park within the Sector Plan area and is designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Community members have stated that this park is underutilized and that it needs facilities and landscape improvements and additional recreational experiences. Access to the park presents additional challenges, as it is located away from downtown Silver Spring and separated by physical barriers, including railroad tracks, fences, and both Georgia Avenue and Blair Road.

**Concept Plan** – In response to community input, the Parks Department is developing a concept plan for this park concurrent with the sector plan process in order to coordinate its analysis and design to capitalize on the synergies that the planning process can bring to the future redesign and implementation of improvements to this site.





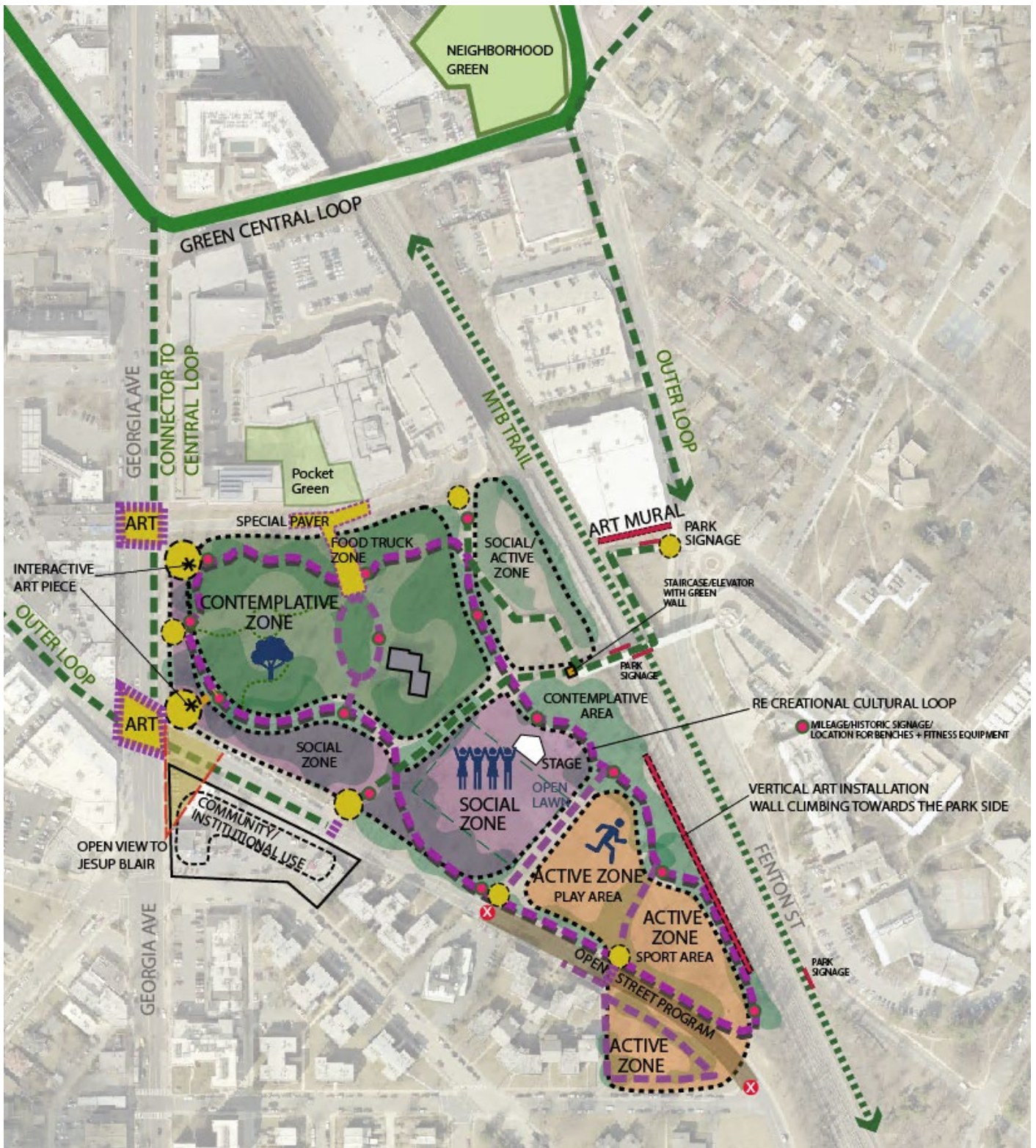


Figure 24. Illustrative Concept for Jesup Blair Urban Recreational Park

### **Improve physical and visual access to the park by:**

- Working with SHA/DOT to add new and renovate existing pedestrian crossings: (1) at both ends of the park along Georgia Avenue to improve the pedestrian walking access and experience across this busy road and connect to the many small retail businesses along that stretch of the road as well as north of Georgia Avenue at the intersection with Burlington Avenue and 13<sup>th</sup> Street; along (2) Blair Road at the edge of the park boundary to allow residents safe crossing to the entrances along Blair Road – see proposed location on the illustrative concept.
- Consider art treatment of the two pedestrian crossings along Georgia Avenue as well as improvements on links to the POPS along Jesup Blair Drive to mark the park entrances and transition to other pedestrian destinations.
- Consider removal and/or reduction of the fenced area to add a welcoming feeling to the perimeter of the park.
- **Implement Green Loop Connections** – at the southern tip of the proposed outer loop within the green loop system and in the border of DC, this park will be an important anchor to bring people from MD and DC together, and can be a great model for partnership in edge locations. The outer loop connects to the central loop through Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue.
- **Expand connectivity/visibility and presence of the park along Georgia Ave** - Pursue future partnership with DC Office of Planning to discuss opportunities to develop the corner sites along Blair Road and Georgia Avenue with community facility development with active building frontage along the park and open viewsheds to the park along Georgia Avenue.
- **Wayfinding: Signage and Public Art along Fenton Street** – Pursue partnership with Montgomery College to improve visibility of the only entrance to the park along Fenton Street: pedestrian bridge. Install signages along Metropolitan Branch Trail with distances to the park and below the bridge to direct users to this entrance. Consider partnering with storage facility property owner to install a public art mural to provide more visibility to the entrance ramp area and instigate people to explore what is across the rails. Consider a partnership with MCDOT and Montgomery College to expand the use of the pedestrian bridge to connect bike users to and from the Metropolitan Branch Trail along Fenton Street. Consider partnering with organizations to create additional art installations across the rail track to attract attention to the location of the park from Fenton Street.
- **Connecting Juniper Blair Neighborhood Park** – consider working with MCDOT to temporarily close Blair Road along the perimeter of Juniper Blair park on weekends to expand space for the proposed active zone located south the Jesup Blair park.
- **Closing Blair Road along the perimeter of the park** – work with MCDOT to consider potential closure of Blair Road along the perimeter of the park on weekends or permanently as part of MCDOT's street closure initiative if traffic flow can be redirect to other locations allowing expansion of the area of the park facing future commercial and existing residential development. This project can become a great example of investment in an area inside the Equity Focus Areas of the County, with shortages in recreational experiences compared to the population served and at the perimeter of the DC Enterprise Zone.



- **Connection to a potential future transit stop** – if development patterns change in the long term and the Plan gets updated zoning that would allow higher density near this location increasing potential ridership and justifying a return of investment of that scale, consider locating a public transit stop near the park.

#### **Promote diversity, community health, identity and sense of ownership**

- **Promote internal walking loops: Cultural Recreational Loop** – create a signature internal active, recreational and cultural trail loop with mileage marks, historic signage, benches, a mix of shaded and sunny areas and fitness equipment along its path inside Jesup Blair park to integrate the existing and future proposed recreational facilities.
- Create a **variety of experience zones** inside this large park by making the park a destination place with many things to do for different age groups, interests, and abilities. Balance the amount of active, contemplative, and social experiences offered by the existing and new park facilities. Inside the contemplative zone consider going beyond the traditional passive uses by introducing active programs such as yoga, tai-chi, and other activities that can benefit of the natural settings of this zone including its beautiful restored historic building. The social zone can accommodate a variety of uses such as café, lawn area, stage/amphitheater, dog park, etc. The active zone can accommodate multi-age play areas, multi-use courts, zip line, skate park, and other activities that will keep the community physically active.
- **Multi-Use Spaces** – encourage multi-use spaces such as lawn, play areas and courts instead of specialized uses. The existing central soccer field will be converted to a central lawn space (that will still hold a good size for informal soccer games) and multi-age play area. The transformation of this local park into an urban recreational park will allow its facilities and spaces to serve a much larger and diverse audience. Consider including space for community-scale events such as performances and farmer's markets. Allow space for kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vendors.
- **Diverse scale of events** – consider space for programming and events at different scales to attract diverse users.
- **Historic setting** – improve connectivity of the historic house and surrounding setting to the rest of park through the implementation of the cultural recreational loop, and other improvements to this portion of the park to activate the frontage along Georgia Avenue, Blair Road and Jesup Blair Drive to invite people to get inside the park and enjoy its many experiences. Especially in the contemplative zone, promote **human and nature synergies** – consider interactive design solutions to enhance the relationship between people and elements of the natural environment. Partner with a future tenant who will help activate the contemplative zone potential to attract users to the park and gain community support to steward its unique historic setting and enjoy the many activities inside the park.
- **Diversify natural features** – consider the use of a diverse palette of plant and tree species that provide different colors, form, and textures throughout all the seasons. Apply a diverse range of plants to minimize potential expansive destruction from pests or harsh climate conditions.
- **Introduce opportunities for public art in the park** – promote partnerships that celebrate cultural aspects of the community through public art. Explore temporary installations

(especially along Georgia Ave) and permanent pieces of art in the park. A great example to consider is the synergy between a café in the park and a sculpture area.

- **Park operating hours** – Consider extending the operating hours of this park beyond sunset. Lighting at this park will be a very important item to keep the extended use of the park safe.
- **Friends of Jesup Blair Park** - engage the community to activate this park. Create a framework for an inclusive and collaborative approach to promote recreational opportunities to all.

**D - Urban Recreational Parklets:** These parks serve the immediate neighborhood with active recreation. Typical facilities include smaller sport courts, skating spots, and may include lawns, playgrounds, or similar neighborhood recreation facilities. Sizes vary considerably depending on the land available and community size served with a minimum of 1/10 acre for centralized urban areas.

#### **D1 – Create: South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Parklet**

**Ownership:** M-NCPPC

**Vision:** Key active recreation destination in the South Silver Spring District. Different from Jesup Blair park, this urban recreational parklet will be a local destination. Its direct connection to the central green loop will promote complementary active facilities to other recreational parks/parklets being proposed in this Plan. Montgomery Parks is under contract on this property and expects to own the property by the end of 2021.

Its proximity to Acorn Urban Park can promote a synergy of park users experiences: from the historic and contemplative setting of Acorn Urban Park (pocket green) to the more active and social-driven space on the new proposed recreational urban parklet. Consider working with SHA and DOT to implement a potential outer loop connection using existing sidewalks between these two parks to allow park users to enjoy this location with different options where to meet as a community to enjoy each other and also benefit the local businesses surrounding these two parks.

Public façades along Kenneth Street and East-West Highway – due to location of commercial businesses along East-West Highway and a public parking lot right across the potential new parkland, the park will likely be used as a through block connection. Plan for picnic tables locations on this park visible from an internal and external loop systems to capture the pedestrian flow generated by other surrounding land uses. Recreational amenities that could be considered for this park may include multi-use court, small open lawn, picnic area, multi-age play area, dog run, exercise stations. Considering partnering with adjacent property owner to create a community art mural on adjacent Caldor/Discovery Channel building blind façade facing the proposed site.

**Size: 0.96 acre**



**Figure 25. South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Parklet Concept Diagram**

## D2 – Create: North Silver Spring Urban Recreational Parklet

**Location: South Silver Spring District**

**Likely Ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** Key active outdoor recreation destination in the North Silver Spring District. Create a park during redevelopment of the site with focus on active recreation. Its direct connection to the central green loop will promote complementary active facilities to other recreational parks being proposed in this Plan, and complement the indoor active recreational experiences offered by the South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center at the opposite corner (currently under construction).

**Recommended Size: minimum 0.5 acre**



### D3 – Create: Metro Center Urban Recreational Parklet

**Location: Metro Center District**

**Likely Ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** Key active recreation destination in the Metro Center District. Its direct connection to the central green loop will promote complementary active facilities to other recreational parks being proposed in this Plan. Create park space on proposed roof or create park during redevelopment of site. Amenities including multi-use courts and play areas are encouraged.

**Recommended Size: minimum 0.5 acre**

### D4 - Bonifant Urban Recreational Parklet

**Location: Metro Center District**

**Likely Ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** Create park space on entrance of residential development. Focus on alternative active recreation in small scale: game tables, basketball hoops, and others surrounding with landscape features to add nature as well. Local destination for active experiences in the center of downtown. This parklet can be a great model of introducing active play in smaller spaces.

**Recommended Size: 1/10 acre minimum**

### D5 – Create: Fitness Park Urban Recreational Parklet (currently approved under The Blairs Master Plan)

**Location: South Silver Spring**

**Likely Ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** Active place inside the Blairs Development full build-out. Located off of Portal Drive and alongside an existing surface parking lot this park will have outdoor fitness equipment for adults and children as well as a sitting area for rest.

**Proposed Size: ~ 0.22 acre**

### D6 - Renovate/Repurpose: Ellsworth Urban Recreational Parklet

**Location: South Silver Spring**

**Ownership:** M-NCCPC

**Vision:** Key active recreation destination in the Adjacent Communities District. Renovate reclaimed space from brick house to expand awareness of the presence of the park along Colesville Road. Activate existing public park as part of comprehensive, year-round park activation program. Currently, the presence of a dog park in this place makes it a regional destination. As we develop more dog run/parks in this sector plan, this park will more likely serve as a local destination. Improve pedestrian crossing across Colesville Road at the north edge of the park.

**Size: 3.6 acres**



**Figure 26. Ellsworth Urban Park - Dog Park, Urban Recreational Parklet**

**E - Neighborhood Green:** This park type is formally planned, yet flexible to serve informal gatherings, lunchtime relaxation, or small special event gatherings. A major lawn area, shaded seating and pathways are typical facilities, with additional play areas, skating and/or community gardens also encouraged.

#### **E1 – Renovate/Expand: Fenton Street Neighborhood Green**

**Location: Fenton Village District**

**Ownership: M-NCPPC**

**Vision:** Gateway to Fenton Village District. The expansion of this park to consolidate parkland into a cohesive neighborhood park will promote and preserve the character of this District with its diverse local shops and smaller scale retailers and attract new park users to this location. Direct connection to the central green loop will enhance the synergy of this park with other locations. Keep the community garden function already on site and expand its size. Add active and social gathering experiences that will complement each other and serve this community better.

**Size: ~ 1.3 acres**

#### **E2 – Create: Fenton Village Neighborhood Green**

**Location: Fenton Village District**

**Likely ownership: POPS**

**Vision:** Hanging out space for the community along Fenton Street, this park in conjunction with the Fenton Street Neighborhood Green will activate and serve the district commercial corridors and residents. The community has asked for a place to gather and celebrate their diverse identity and character.

**Recommended Size: 0.25 minimum**

#### **E3 – Create: Ellsworth Neighborhood Green**

**Location:** *Ellsworth District*

**Likely ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** Green space to complement and expand Veterans Plaza activities at existing Whole Foods parking lot. Create open space or park during any future significant redevelopment of existing surface parking lot to meet open space requirements of the zoning code. Provide green space and/or recreational amenities to complement Veterans Plaza. Provide a mix of shaded and sunny areas with an alley of tree canopies facing the main entries and facades of proposed development.

**Recommended Size:** 0.5 acre minimum

E4 – Create: Rachel Carson, Blair Stomping, The Mew’s and Lucy’s Landing Neighborhood Green Spaces inside the Blairs Development (currently approved under The Blairs Master Plan)

**Location:** *South Silver Spring District*

**Likely ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** Connected system of green open spaces focus on contemplative and social experiences inside the Blairs development full build-out. “Rachel Carson Park makes the final through connection to the intersection of Blair Mill Road and Eastern Avenue, completing an open space axis that bisects the site to provide a clear pedestrian network for residents and patrons within both escarpments to the core of the CBD and Metrorail station. Rachel Carson Park is designed to have unique landscape elements including linear bioswales for stormwater management, an architecturally interesting pedestrian bridge, and terraces designed as sitting areas. North of Rachel Carson Park along Blair Mill Road, Blair Stomping Ground is a publicly accessible dog park with clear visibility from Blair Mill Road. It is intended to provide a social space for dogs and their owners. West of Rachel Carson Park along Eastern Avenue, The Mews is a linear space designed to connect Eastern Avenue to the Private Street C. The Mews will provide an additional connection for pedestrians through the site and enhance the accessibility for the public into interior spaces and the upper escarpment. Lucy’s Landing is a second, smaller dog park also intended for residents and the public, to ease any overcrowding that might occur at Blair Stomping Ground.”

**Proposed Size:** 1 acre (all 4 parks together)

**F - Pocket Green:** Also typically referred to as Pocket Park, Pocket Greens will play an important role in the formation of a public space network through higher density areas. These smaller park types will allow for “pauses” with a landscaped setting along the streets between larger open spaces within the open space network.

Pocket Greens are particularly important in areas where commercial activities are taking place. They are highly visible and allow workers to take a lunch or coffee break while enjoying a contemplative environment with pedestrians strolling by. They can provide seating, areas to eat or read, and small play areas or game areas. This park type will serve residents, workers and visitors from the nearby blocks.



Research has suggested that smaller breaks during the work schedule increases productivity and health, especially mental health. Due to its small scale, the space should be highly visible from the street and include protection from the wind, traffic and noise.

## F1 – Renovate: Acorn Pocket Green

**Location:** South Silver Spring District

**Ownership:** M-NCPPC

**Vision:** Activate public park, possibly in partnership with nearby POPS. Summer 2020 – temporary closure of Newell Street – Shared Streets Program + Fall 2020 - Picnic in the Park program. Renovation design underway to preserve and interpret historic resources and provide new open space and play amenities through the Park Refresher Facility Plan. In Summer 2020, as part of the Shared Street program, DOT closed this street to expand recreational opportunities to residents and businesses. The street closure allows users of Acorn Urban Parks to enjoy a larger play area increasing park usage and stewardship of its historic asset.

Work with DOT to consider the continuation of the street closure. This stretch of Newell Street can function as a **temporary park** until the proposed South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Parklet project gets implemented.

## F2 – Develop: Philadelphia Pocket Green

**Location:** Fenton Village District

**Ownership:** M-NCPPC

**Vision:** Develop a pocket green space connected to the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

Size: 0.18 acre

**G – Urban Greenway:** This is a linear park that provides trails or wide landscaped walkways and bikeways that may include other recreational and natural amenities such as playgrounds, seating and other furnishings, fitness stations and large trees. This type should specifically link to other green spaces, trails, natural systems, walkways, and bikeways, with extra space for vegetative ground cover and trees. Amenities may occur along road rights-of-way or public easements.

#### **G1 – Expand/Renovate: Falkland North Stream Restoration**

**Location:** Falklands District

**Ownership:** POPS

**Vision:** Expand the stream valley renovation into the north parcel that will include and additional large green space.

**Size:** Preserve and/or expand existing size of stream valley bed.

**H - Temporary/Interim Park:** A Temporary park is a type of park created for a certain period of time in a location that is not currently planned as future public space. There is generally a beginning and an end time established. An Interim park is a type of park created to bridge the time gap between design, funding and construction of a permanent public space and can accommodate temporary uses until resources for permanent uses become available. Owners and/or County staff can use these temporary facilities to collect information on programming and functions that will serve a future permanent public space. Temporary parks can also provide opportunities to partner with local businesses and non-profits to engage with the community in creative ways to deliver places for social gathering, active or contemplative recreation while building a sense of community and belonging.

#### **4.5.5. Parkland Ownership**

As the major parkland stakeholder in the County, Montgomery Parks is committed to increase parks and open spaces to secure public access, especially in urban areas such as Silver Spring. However, beyond the higher cost in acquiring land, maintenance and operation of these urban spaces with active programming comes with a high price tag. Montgomery Parks will be strategic in determining parks and open spaces ownership. Below are some parameters that will be considered but not limited to define parkland ownership:

- If acquisition is the only way to create a cohesive public space when the parcel is less likely be part of a development proposal,
- If the recommended facilities most likely requires user permits, such as athletic courts or
- If the surrounding parcels are individually owned, therefore, unreasonable to expect common management of the space, unless another entity is available to manage the space.

#### 4.5.6. Evaluating the Proposed Parks and Public Spaces System

In 2018 the Parks Department completed the *2018 Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS Plan)*. This Plan's methodology identifies areas with the highest need for parks and open spaces and recommends opportunities to increase the amount and quality of parks and open space in those communities. The EPS Plan methodology brings a data-based approach to the sector plan process by providing a method of measuring whether the proposed new park facilities will meet the demand – i.e. are the identified park opportunities sufficient for the population growth projected by the sector plan land use vision.

##### Existing Conditions Baseline vs. Scenario Testing Results

Silver Spring, along with other downtown areas, has a high supply of walkable recreational experiences. However, due to the physical character/size/location of most of the public spaces, social gathering experiences inside the Plan's boundary are higher, but active experiences, are lower. Access to active experiences increases out of the center of downtown since most of the larger parks that contain traditional active facilities are located at the periphery of the Plan. That index – experience points per person – in a downtown area has a different context than in suburban and/rural areas. In downtown areas such as Silver Spring, access to parks also means walkable access to shops, restaurants, and schools. One experience point per person can mean access to multiple experiences which are shared with more people than a similar experience would be in a more suburban area. This is expected since public spaces are platforms for social connection, especially in urban areas. This index allows us to check a balance of supply and demand as development continue to happen in this area.

**Results** – When the proposed recommendations for Silver Spring were tested against the existing conditions, there was a significant improvement in the overall park needs, and an increase on the supply of much-needed active recreational experiences. Overall, the plan recommendations will improve the distribution of active, contemplative, and social gathering experiences across the downtown.



## 4.6. TRANSPORTATION

As an urban area, Downtown Silver Spring is well-connected with continuous sidewalks and a growing network of bike lanes. The area also offers a robust transit network with access to the WMATA Metrorail Red Line Station, WMATA Metrobus, MARC Train, Montgomery County Ride-On bus, VanGo Circulator and FLASH Bus Rapid Transit, and the upcoming Purple Line Light Rail. The community is accessible by three major highways: East-West Highway (MD 410), Colesville Road (US 29), and Georgia Avenue (MD 97). This Plan identifies remaining gaps in the transportation network and next steps.

### 4.6.1. Goals

- Expand connectivity within and between the districts by crossing the rail tracks, implementing the Green Loop, and advancing the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*.
- Implement new transit alternatives through dedicated bus lanes for Bus Rapid Transit.
- Enhance roadway accommodation for all users and eliminate conflict points.
- Support a constrained parking policy for a downtown well-served by transit.
- Increase the use of non-auto driver mode share.

### 4.6.2. Bicycle Network Recommendations

The 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* established bicycle and pedestrian priority areas (BiPPAs), which are geographic areas where bicycle and pedestrian traffic enhancements are prioritized over other transportation modes. Downtown Silver Spring is designated as a BiPPA and this plan supports the recommendations outlined in the Functional Master Plan.

This plan recommends new bikeways and reconfirms the bikeways recommendations of the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*. Protected intersections are the preferred treatment at all intersections (except very minor intersections) where at least one street is recommended to have a side path, separated bike lane, buffered bike lane, or conventional bike lane. Any section of bikeway that could be achieved by a road diet will require a more detailed interagency operational analysis before implementation.

#### Silver Spring Avenue

- Provide one-way separated bike lanes OR conventional bike lanes along Silver Spring Avenue between Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street.

#### Blair Mill Road

- Provide separated bike lanes along Blair Mill Road between Eastern Avenue and East-West Highway (MD 410)

## King Street

- Provide separated bike lanes along Blair Mill Road between Eastern Avenue and Georgia Avenue

## Fenton Street Breezeway

- Connect the Fenton Street Breezeway to the Capital Crescent Trail. This will provide a direct and efficient route between the two areas.

## Montgomery College Bridge

- The Montgomery College bridge should be expanded or improved to allow the use of bicycles for adequate access to the Metropolitan Branch Trail and upcoming Fenton Street Cycle Track. Bicyclist should also be permitted to use existing trails like the outer loop of Jesup Blair Park to cycle.

Bicycle network recommendations are summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Bikeway Network Recommendations				
Street	From	To	Facility Type	Bikeway Type
<b>Burtonsville to Silver Spring Breezeway</b>				
Ellsworth Drive	Cedar Street	Fenton Street	Shared Road	Shared Street
<b>Capital Crescent Trail Breezeway</b>				
Capital Crescent Trail	Spring Street	Silver Spring Transit Center	Trail	Off-Street Trail
<b>Glenmount to Silver Spring Breezeway</b>				
Fenton St Extended	Spring St	Cameron St	Trail	Off-Street Trail
Fenton St	Cameron St	Ellsworth Dr	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, West Side)
<b>Metropolitan Branch Trail Breezeway</b>				
Metropolitan Branch Trail	Silver Spring Transit Center	Silver Spring/Takoma Park (East) Policy Area	Trail	Off-Street Trail
<b>Additional Recommendations</b>				
13th St	District of Columbia	Georgia Ave (MD 97)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (One-Way, Both Sides)
16th St (MD 390)	Spring St	District of Columbia	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, East Side)
2nd/Wayne Ave	Spring St	Colesville Road (MD 384)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, East Side)
	Colesville Road (MD 384)	Cedar Street	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, North Side)

Burlington Ave (MD 410)	Georgia Ave (MD 97)	Fenton Street	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (One-Way, Both Sides)
Cameron Street	Spring Street	2nd Ave	Separated Bikeway	Soon Decide
Colesville Rd (MD 384)	16th St (MD 390)	East West Hwy (MD 410)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, North Side) and Sidepath (South Side)
Colesville Rd (MD 384)	East West Hwy (MD 410)	Wayne Ave	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, Both Sides)
Colesville Rd (MD 384)	Wayne Ave	Georgia Ave (MD 97)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, South Side)
Dixon Ave	Wayne Ave	Georgia Ave (MD 97)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (One-Way, Both Sides)
East-West Hwy (MD 410)	16th St (MD 390)	Colesville Road (MD 384)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, North Side)
	Colesville Road (MD 384)	Georgia Ave (US 29)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Side TBD)
Fenton Street	Ellsworth Drive	King Street	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, West Side)
Metropolitan Branch Trail/ King St (Interim)	Railroad Tracks	Fenton Street	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (Southside)
Metropolitan Branch Trail/ Fenton St (Interim)	King St	New York Ave	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (Westside)
Newell Street	District of Columbia	East West Hwy (MD 410)	Striped Bikeway	Conventional Bike Lanes
Philadelphia Ave/Gist Ave	Selim Rd	Silver Spring/Takoma Park (East) Policy Area	Shared Road	
Selim Rd	Philadelphia Ave	Metropolitan Branch Trail	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (West Side)
Silver Spring Ave	Georgia Ave (MD 97)	Silver Spring/Takoma Park (East) Policy Area	Shared Road	Priority Shared Lane Markings
Spring St/Cedar St	16th St (MD 390)	Wayne Ave (MD 594-A)	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (One-Way, Both Sides)



## Bicycle Parking

This Sector Plan reaffirms the recommendation of short term and long-term bicycle parking in the *Bicycle Master Plan*. To keep pace with the emerging network of trail and separated bike lanes in Downtown Silver Spring, investments are needed in short-term and long-term bicycle parking.

Long-term bicycle parking is recommended at all WMATA Metrorail Red Line stations and at the higher demand MARC, future Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) stations to increase the numbers of bicyclists traveling to these transit hubs. The recommended amount of bicycle parking spaces to be provided directly adjacent to each transit station in Downtown Silver Spring are as follows:

### Silver Spring Transit Center

- Long-term Spaces: 600 (0 provided today)
- Short-term Spaces: 170 (158 provided today)

### Silver Spring Library Purple Line Station

- Long-term Spaces: 40 (0 provided today)
- Short-term Spaces: 170 (42 provided today)

## Bikeshare

Bikeshare is intended to provide a convenient way to bicycle for short trips (one to three miles). Therefore, the success of docked bikeshare systems is tied directly to the proximity of its stations. The County's bikeshare system is well-established within downtown Silver Spring. Expanding the system in the plan area would serve both the residents and the visitors from nearby neighborhoods. An expansion of bikeshare should be directly tied to new development, within an overall network of stations distributed throughout the Downtown. Bikeshare stations should also be timed to open with the bikeway recommendations in the sector plan.

## Micromobility

In 2019, the County expanded its micromobility, dockless e-bikes and e-scooters, pilot program. Downtown Silver Spring currently has locations for corrals along Fenton Street, Ellsworth Drive, and Thayer Avenue to support the dockless program. Micromobility continues to grow within the plan area. More corrals should be provided so they are widely and conveniently available and riders begin to see them as an easy way to park the devices safely.



### 4.6.3. Pedestrian Network

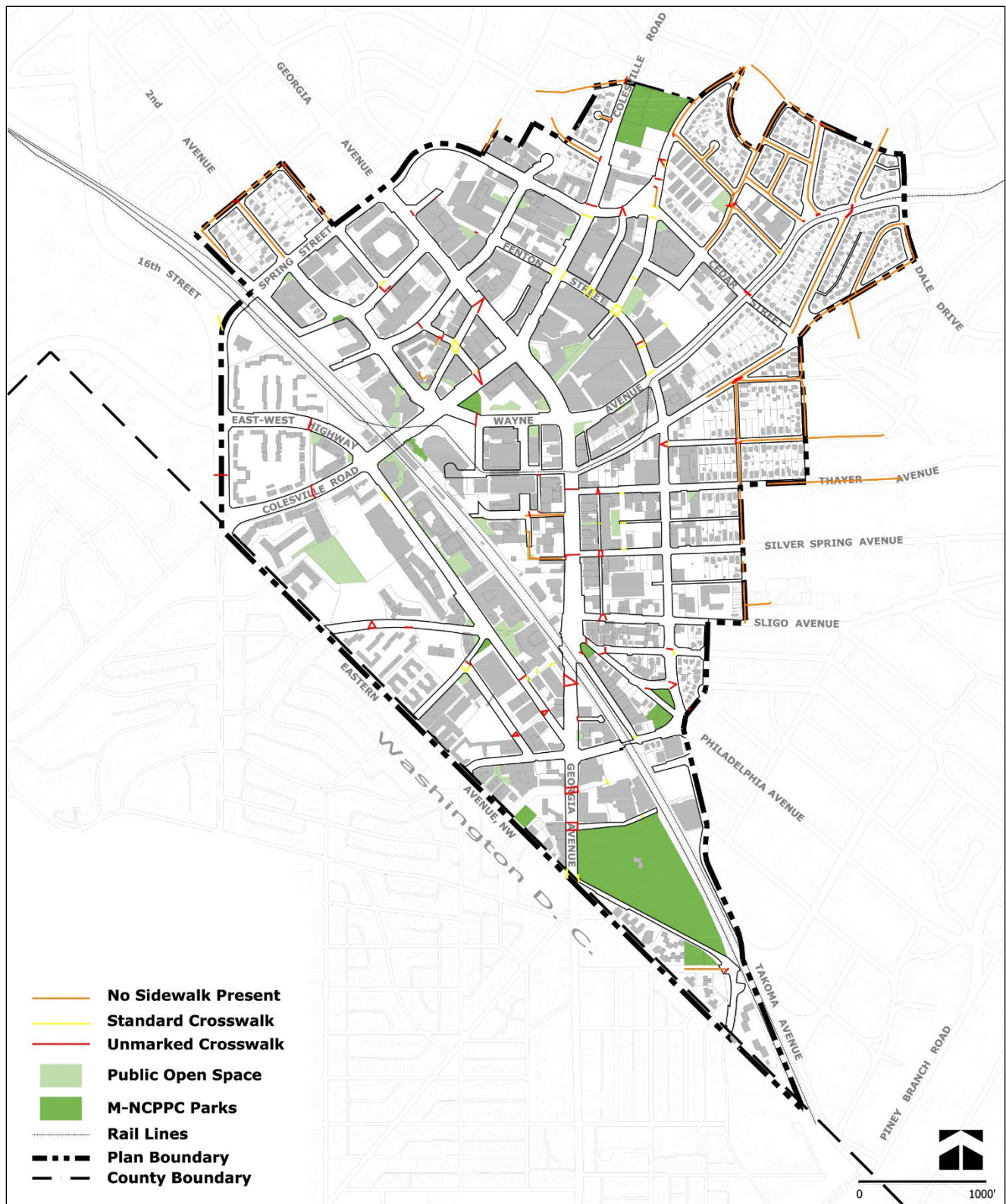
This plan is focused on a safe and walkable downtown Silver Spring. Pedestrian facilities should be designed for all users, so families, children, and persons with disabilities would be capable of safely and comfortably navigating them. Pavement and utility materials should not be tripping hazards, crosswalks should be visible, and signals and audios at crosswalks should be consistent throughout the plan area.

The draft report for Planning and Designing Streets to be Safer and More Accessible for People with Vision Disabilities and the Draft Complete Streets Design Guide emphasize the importance of high-visibility crosswalks at all intersections. Per the Draft Complete Streets Design Guide, “Continental crosswalks are the primary type of marking used at intersections and uncontrolled crossings in Montgomery County.” All crosswalks in Downtown Silver Spring should be high visibility continental crosswalks. The “Continental pattern” consists of a series of wide stripes parallel to the curb for the length of the crossing. The continental marking significantly increases the visibility of a crosswalk to oncoming traffic thus, making crossing the street safer and comfortable for all users.

#### Recommendations:

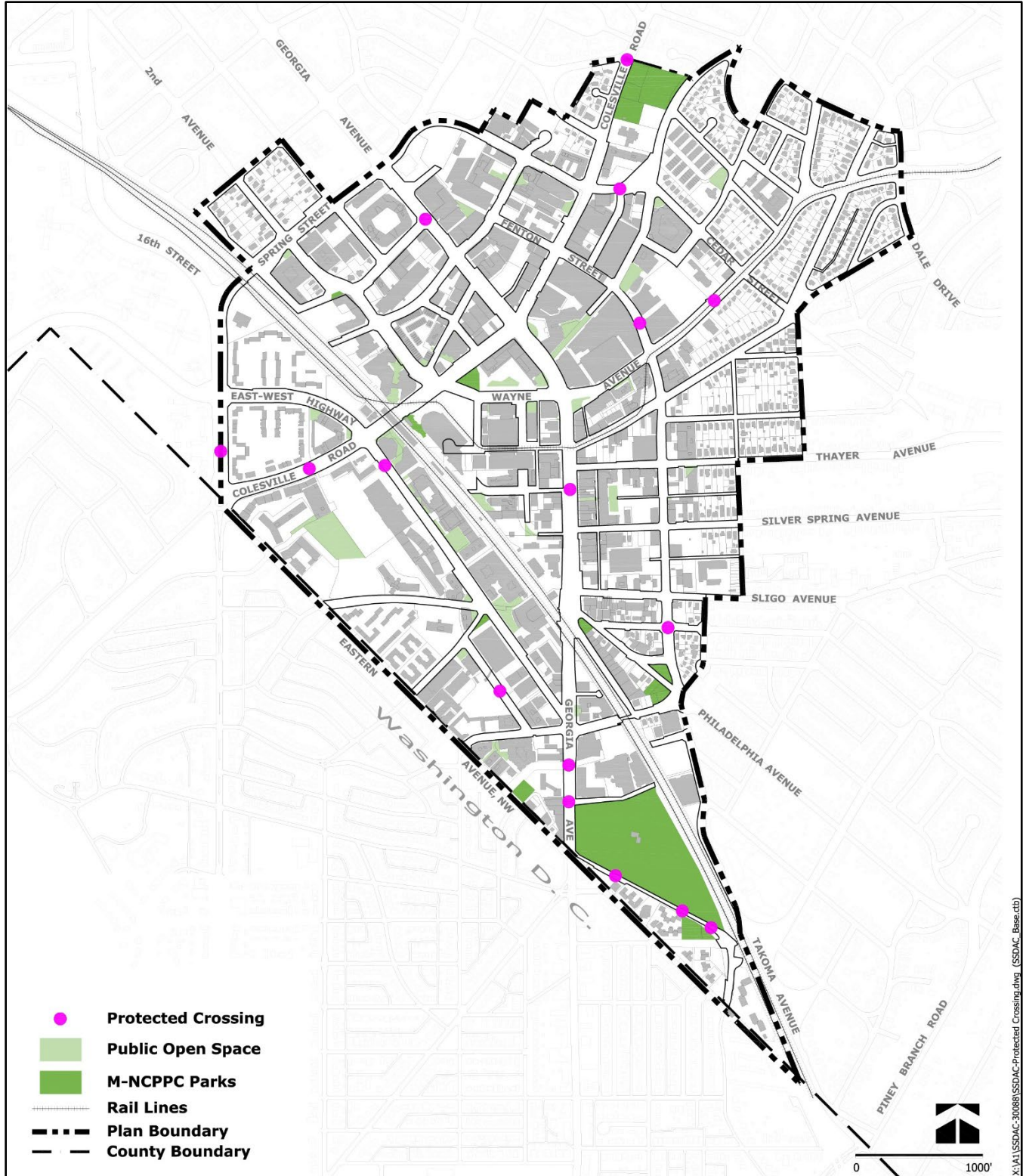
- All intersections should be upgraded with high-visibility continental crosswalks.
- Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the road to allow better pedestrian connection throughout the adjacent communities and downtown Silver Spring. The design of sidewalks should be consistent with the Silver Spring Streetscape Standards. Options for cool sidewalk materials will be studied during the development of the Cool Streets Recommendations that will be included in the Design Guidelines that will accompany this Plan.
- To maximize safety, increased pedestrian-scale lighting should be provided along roadways, walkways, bicycle facilities, crosswalks, and pedestrian underpasses.
- This plan recommends locations for new protected crossings to provide safer crossing conditions closer together and where pedestrians and bicyclists naturally want to cross. The intersections identified for new protected crossings are noted in Map 21. Future study is required to determine the most appropriate traffic control device. Possible treatments include a full traffic signal, a high activity walk signal (HAWK), a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB), a stop sign and other measures
- As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the plan recommends two landscaped pedestrian and bicycle crossings of the Metrorail/CSX tracks.
- Along with the redevelopment of the northern Falklands parcel, evaluate the opportunity to provide a pedestrian crossing connecting Apple Avenue N Falkland Lane. This could provide more pedestrian accessibility between the Falkland Lane community to developments closer to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (See Figure X).





Map 21. Recommended Sidewalks and Crosswalks





Map 22. Recommended Protected Crossings

#### 4.6.4. Transit

The plan area offers a robust transit network for people to get to and from work, home, school and other activities.

##### Recommendations:

- Pursue the long-range plan to provide dedicated bus lanes along Colesville Road from the Silver Spring Transit Center. This plan also supports BRT stations and routes for the Georgia Avenue South Bus Rapid Transit Route (Corridor 2) in the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridor Functional Master Plan*. Dedicated bus lanes should be provided along Georgia Avenue and space for dedicated bus lanes should come from repurposing existing general-purpose traffic lanes.
- Upgrade existing and future bus stops within downtown Silver Spring to include shelters at all stops with real-time bus arrival displays.
- Consider expanding the VanGo Circulator service to include Jesup Blair Park and Woodside Urban Park.
- At the completion of the Walter Reed development, Montgomery County Ride-On, the VanGo Circulator, and the proposed Walter Reed Shuttle should consider ways for service to be coordinated between the various systems to provide a seamless connection between that development and downtown Silver Spring.

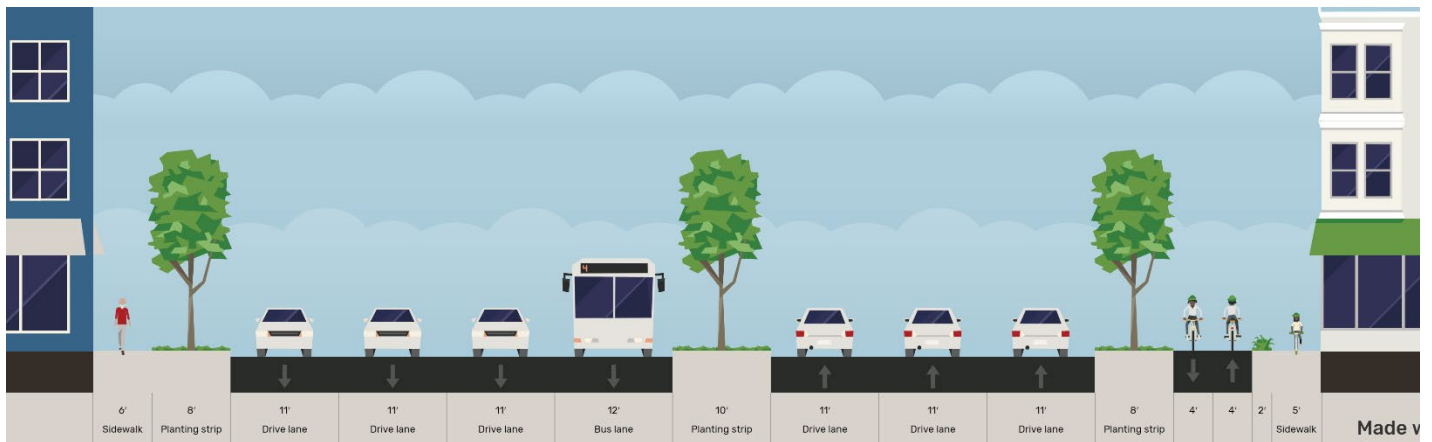


Figure 27. Colesville Road Between East-West Highway and Georgia Avenue

#### 4.6.5. Roadways

The plan area has a very connected road network with a variety of street types available to access this vibrant community. This plan focuses on ensuring the streets remain safe for all users and improving connectivity and circulation throughout the road network.

#### Recommendations

- Extend 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue south to connect to Ramsey Avenue to improve connectivity within the local street network and increase local circulation throughout the corridor. An alley is also recommended to consolidate and better manage loading for development within this block.
- Create a new road connecting Bonifant Street to Thayer Avenue. This connection will improve connectivity within the corridor from Bonifant Avenue to Sligo Avenue. This road is envisioned to be a flexible street that would be created when the Safeway site and adjacent parcels are redeveloped.
- As part of the redevelopment of the Parking Lot 4 site and adjacent parcels, create a flexible street through the existing block from Sligo Avenue to Silver Spring Avenue that aligns with the north-south mid-block connection to the north. The plan also recommends an east-west through-block connection from Fenton Street to Mayor Lane that will be only for pedestrians and bicycles. The connection from Silver Spring Avenue to Sligo Avenue is envisioned to be a flexible street.
- Designate the street segments listed below as flexible streets. A flexible street would make pedestrians a priority and better balance the roadway for all users by providing safe and efficient access for pedestrians and bicyclists:
  - Bonifant Street (Ramsey Street to Georgia Avenue)
  - Ellsworth Drive (Fenton Street to Veterans Plaza)
  - Newell Street (Kennett Street to East West Highway)
  - Silver Spring Avenue to Sligo Avenue Connection
- Along with the redevelopment of Jesup Blair Park, Blair Road should be further evaluated for possible closure and only accessible to residents in the area and users of the park. If the redevelopment of the park spurs an increase in density in the surrounding blocks, an evaluation for a new metro station and/or increase in transit services to Jesup Blair Park should be considered.



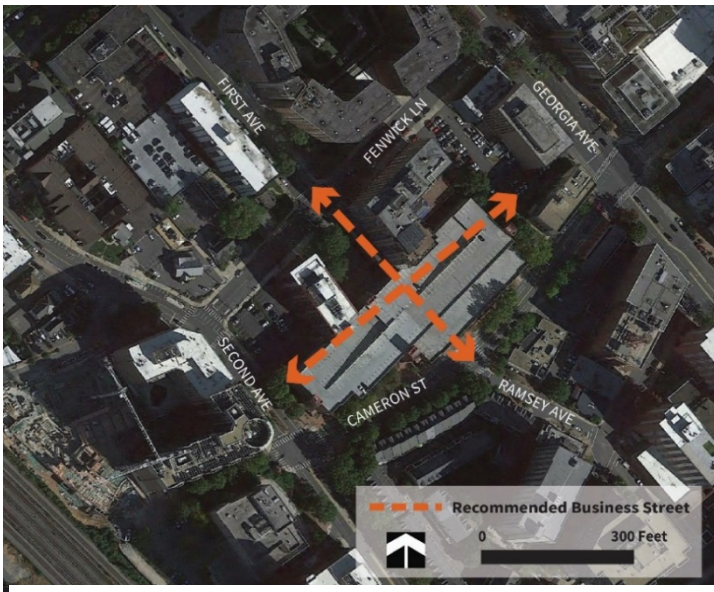


Figure 29. 1st Ave Road Connection Diagram

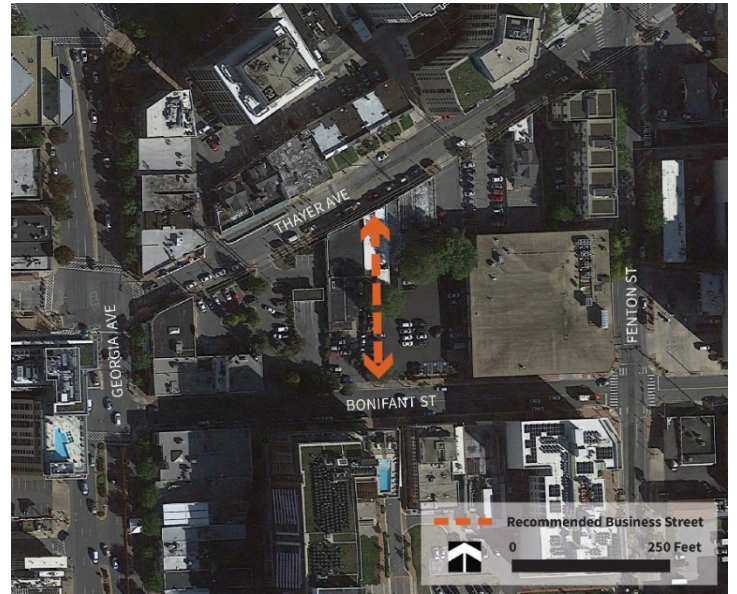


Figure 28. Bonifant-Thayer Road Connection Diagram

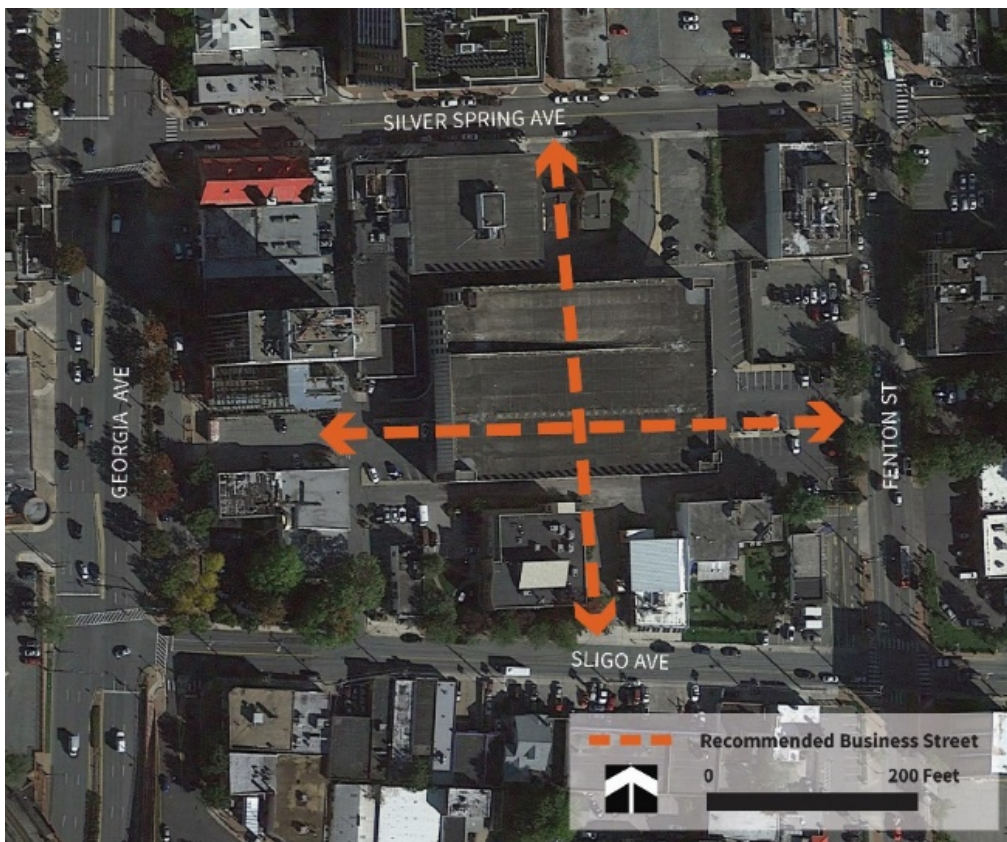
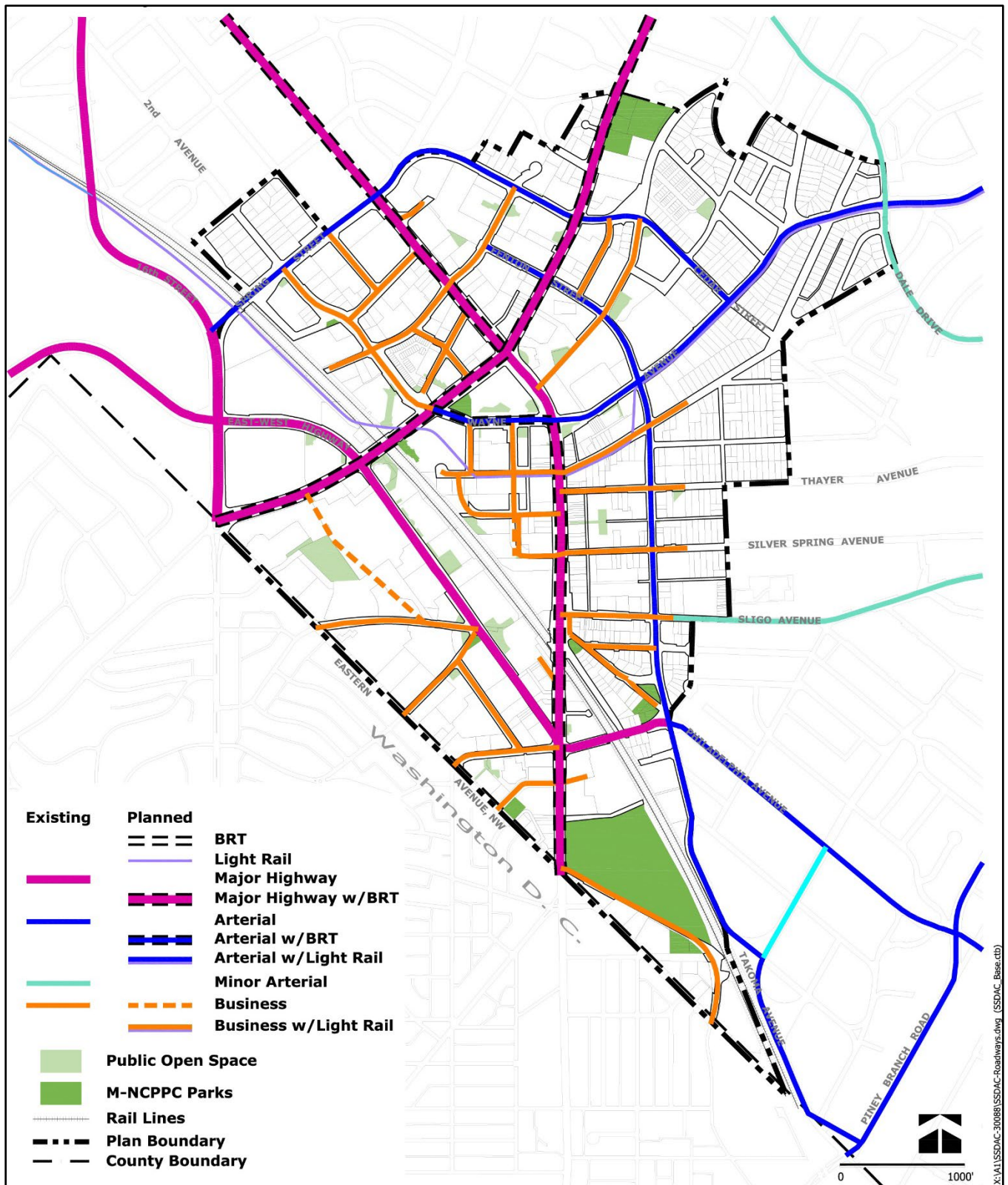


Figure 30. Fenton Village Road Connection Diagram





Map 23. Roadway Classifications

In the table below, **bold** reflects streets that have recommended changes proposed.

Table 2. Street Classifications and ROW Recommendations								
Roadway	From	To	Functional Classification	Complete Streets Design Guidelines Street Type	Master Planned ROW	Existing Lanes	Planned Lanes	BRT Type
<b>Major Highway</b>								
Georgia Ave (M-8)	Spring Street	Colesville Road	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	126'	6D	6D + 0T	Dedicated
Georgia Ave (M-8)	Colesville Road	Wayne Avenue	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	120'	6-6D	6-6D	None
Georgia Ave (M-8)	Wayne Avenue	Blair Mill Road	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	125'-140'	6-6D	6-6D + 0T	Dedicated
Georgia Ave (M-8)	Blair Mill Road	Eastern Avenue	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	125'	6-6D	6-6D + 0T	Dedicated
East-West Highway (M-20)	16th Street	300' East of 16th Street	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	118'	4	4	None
East-West Highway (M-20)	300' East of 16th Street	Blair Mill Road	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	110'	4	4	None
East-West Highway (M-20)	Blair Mill Road	Georgia Avenue	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	90'	4-Feb	4	None
Colesville Road (M-10)	East-West Highway	Eastern Avenue/16th Street	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	125'	6	6 + 0T	Dedicated
Colesville Road (M-10)	Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	East-West Highway (MD 410)	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	125'	6	6 + 0T	Dedicated
Colesville Road (M-10)	Fenton Street	Georgia Avenue	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	100'	five-six	5-6 + 0T	Dedicated
Colesville Road (M-10)	Sligo Creek Parkway	Fenton Street	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	120'	five-six	5-6 + 0T	Dedicated
16th Street (M-9)	Colesville Road	East-West Highway (MD 410)	Major Highway	Downtown Boulevard	120'	6D	6D	None
16th Street (M-9)	East-West Highway	630' South of Lyttonsville Road	Major Highway	Town Center Boulevard	120'	6D	4	None
Burlington Ave (M-20)	Georgia Ave	Fenton St	Major Highway	Downtown Street	80	3	3	None
<b>Arterial</b>								
Spring St (A-263)	630' west of Second Ave	First Ave	Arterial	Downtown Street	100	2D	4	None
Spring St (A-263)	First Ave	Georgia Ave	Arterial	Downtown Street	100	2D	2D	None
Spring St (A-263)	Georgia Ave	Fairview Rd	Arterial	Downtown Street	100	2D	2D	None

Spring St	Fairview Rd	Cameron St	Arterial	Downtown Street	80	2	4	
Spring St (A-263)	Cameron St	Colesville Rd	Arterial	Downtown Street	100	2	4	None
Spring St (A-263)	Colesville Rd	Ellsworth Dr	Arterial	Downtown Street	80	4-4D	4	None
Spring St (A-263)	Ellsworth Dr	Wayne Ave (MD 594-A)	Arterial	Downtown Street	80	2	2	None
Spring St (A-263)	16th St (MD 390)	630' west of Second Ave	Arterial	Downtown Street	100	4D	4	None
Fenton St (A-264)	Cameron St	Takoma Avenue	Arterial	Downtown Street	80	2+Parking	2	None
Wayne Ave (A-76)	Colesville Rd (MD 384)	Georgia Ave (MD 97)	Arterial	Downtown Street	120	4D	4	Mixed Traffic
Wayne Ave (A-76)	Georgia Ave (US 29)	Fenton St	Arterial	Downtown Street	80-110	4-4D	4	None
Wayne Ave (A-76)	Fenton St	Cedar St	Arterial with planned light rail	Downtown Street	70 - 100	4	2 + 2T	None
Wayne Ave (A-76)	Cedar St	Sligo Creek Pkwy	Arterial with planned light rail	Neighborhood Connector	70 - 100	4	2 + 2T	None
<b>Minor Arterial</b>								
Dale Dr (MA-16)	Wayne Ave	Piney Branch Rd	Minor Arterial	Neighborhood Connector	70	2	2	None
Sligo Ave (MA-35)	Approx. 149' east of Fenton St	Piney Branch Rd	Minor Arterial	Neighborhood Connector	50	2	2	None
<b>Business</b>								
Blair Mill Rd (B-5)	Blair Mill Way	Georgia Ave	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
Kennett St (B-16)	Newell St	13th St	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
Philadelphia Ave (B-20)	Selim Rd	Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Planning Pl (B-19)	Georgia Ave	Silver Spring Parking Lot # 2	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
Dixon Ave Extended (B-10)	Ripley St	Silver Spring Ave	Business (Planned)	Downtown Street	80	N/A	4	None
King St (B-17)	Eastern Ave (D.C. Line)	50' east of Georgia Ave and From B & O Railroad to Albany Av	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
Newell St (B-18)	Eastern Ave (D.C. Line)	East-West Hwy (MD 410)	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None



Bonifant St (B-7)	CSX Railroad	Purple Line	Business with planned light rail	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Bonifant St (B-7)	Purple Line	Fenton St	Business with planned light rail	Downtown Street	40	2	2	None
Fenwick Ln (B-13)	Georgia Ave	Second Ave	Business	Downtown Street	80	2	2	None
Apple Ave (B-4)	CSX Railroad	Second Ave	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
Fidler Ln (B-14)	Second Ave	Georgia Ave	Business	Downtown Street	Varies	2	2	None
1st Ave (B-1)	Spring St	Fenwick Ln	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Thayer Ave (B-27)	Fenton St	Approx. 288' east of Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Sligo Ave (B-26)	Fenton St	Approx. 149' east of Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	80	2	2	None
Ramsey Ave (B-21)	Cameron St	Colesville Rd (MD 384)	Business	Downtown Street	54	2	2	None
Colonial Ln (B-9)	Ripley St	Georgia Ave	Business	Downtown Street	80	N/A	N/A	None
Sligo Ave (B-26)	Georgia Ave	Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Blair Mill Rd (B-25)	Eastern Ave (D.C. Line)	East-West Hwy (MD 410)	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Thayer Ave (B-27)	Georgia Ave	Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
13th St (B-3)	Georgia Ave	Eastern Ave (D.C. Line)	Business	Downtown Street	80	2	2	None
Bonifant St (B-7)	Purple Line	Fenton St	Business with planned light rail	Downtown Street	40-70	2	2 + 2T	None
Bonifant St (B-7)	Fenton St	Approx. 488' east of Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	80	2	2	None
Blair Rd (B-6)	Georgia Ave (MD 97)	CSX Railroad	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
Draper Ln (Proposed) (B-11)	Colesville Rd	Blair Mill Rd	Business (Planned)	Downtown Street	60	N/A	2	None
2nd Ave (B-2)	Spring St	Cameron St	Business	Downtown Street	80	2	2	None
2nd Ave (B-2)	Cameron St	Colesville Rd (MD 384)	Business	Downtown Street	105	4	4	None
Selim Rd (B-24)	Sligo Ave	Philadelphia Ave	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None

Ripley St (B-22)	Georgia Ave	CSX Railroad	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Roeder Rd (B-23)	Fenton St	Cedar St	Business	Downtown Street	60	2	2	None
Ramsey Ave (B-21)	Wayne Ave	Bonifant St	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Ripley St (B-22)	end of existing St	Bonifant St	Business	Downtown Street	70	N/A	2	None
Dixon Ave (B-29)	Wayne Ave	Ripley St	Business	Downtown Street	80	2	2	None
Cameron St (B-28)	Georgia Ave	Spring St	Business	Downtown Street	75	2	2	None
Cameron St (B-28)	Second Ave	Georgia Ave	Business	Downtown Street	74	2	2	None
Gist Ave (B-15)	Philadelphia Ave	Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Silver Spring Ave (B-25)	Georgia Ave	Approx. 280' east of Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
Ellsworth Dr (B-12)	Cedar St	450' west of Fenton St	Business	Downtown Street	70	2	2	None
<b>1st Ave Extension</b>	<b>1st Avenue</b>	<b>Ramsey Avenue</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Downtown Street</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>1st Ave Extension Alley</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>Alley</b>	<b>Alley</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>New street name TBD</b>	<b>Bonifant Street</b>	<b>Thayer Avenue</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Downtown Street</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>New street name TBD</b>	<b>Silver Spring</b>	<b>Sligo Avenue</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Downtown Street</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>New street name TBD</b>	<b>Mayor Lane</b>	<b>Fenton Street</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Downtown Street</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>None</b>

## Street Sections

Below are several street sections that reflect the proposed condition:

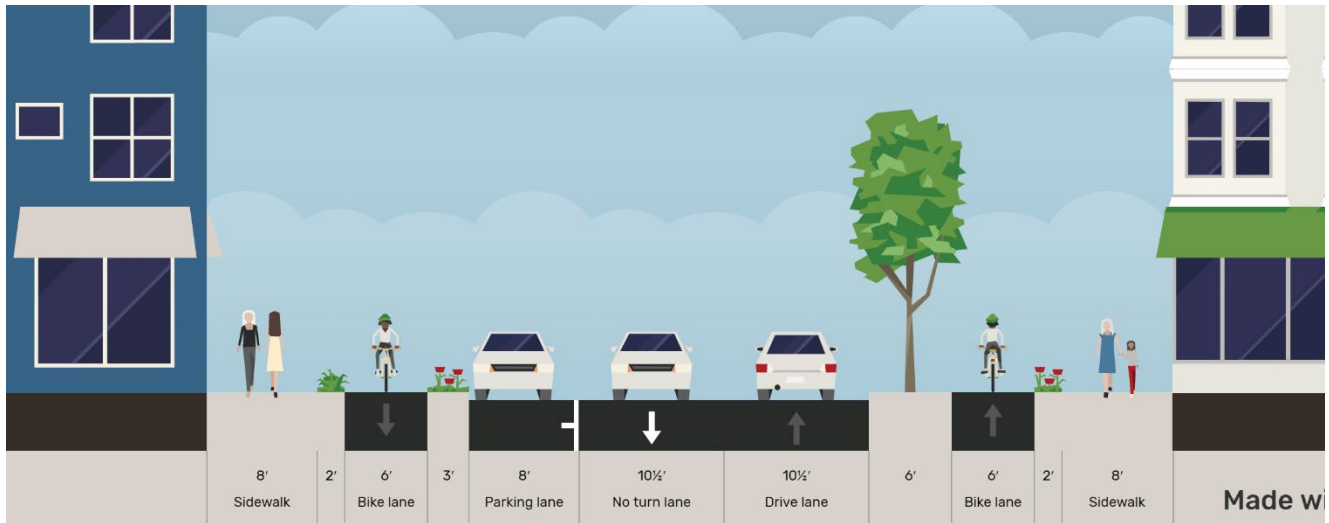


Figure 31. Silver Spring Avenue Between Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street

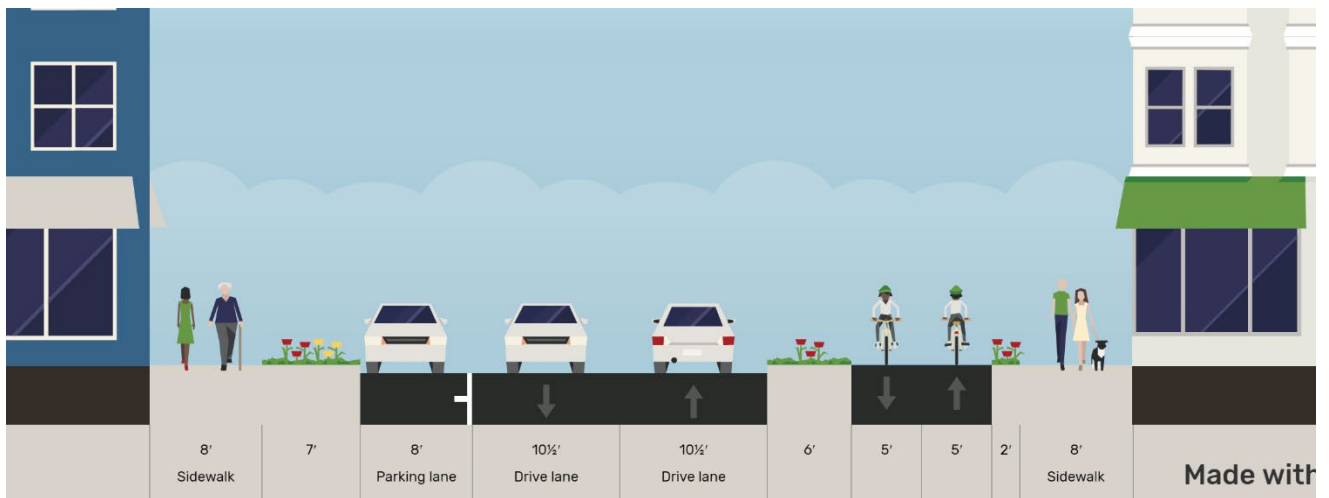


Figure 32. Blair Mill Road Between East-West Highway and Eastern Avenue



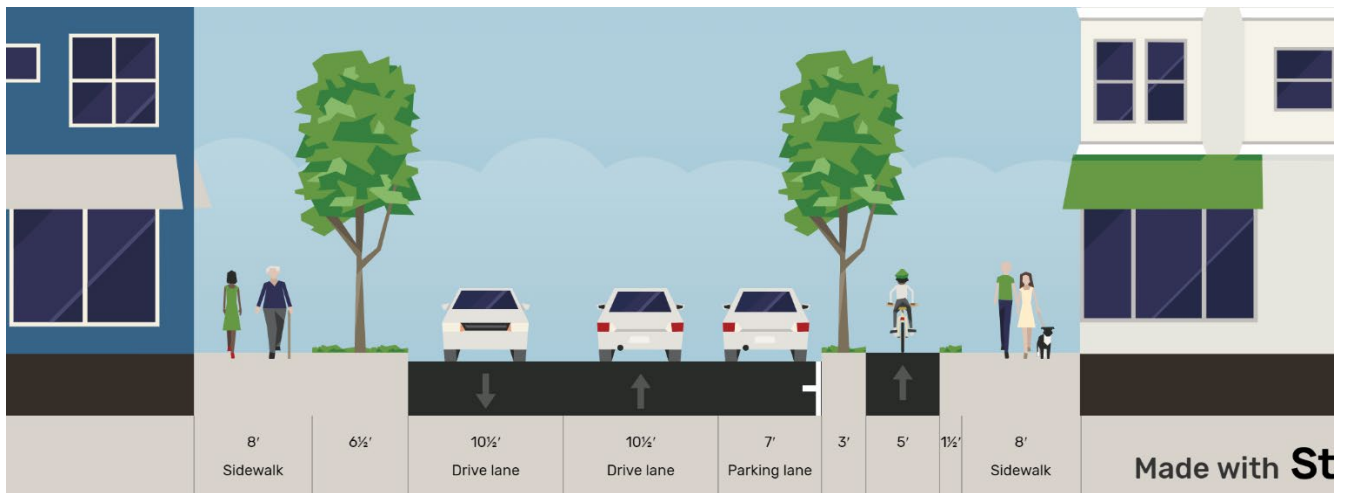


Figure 33. King Street Between Georgia Avenue and Eastern Avenue

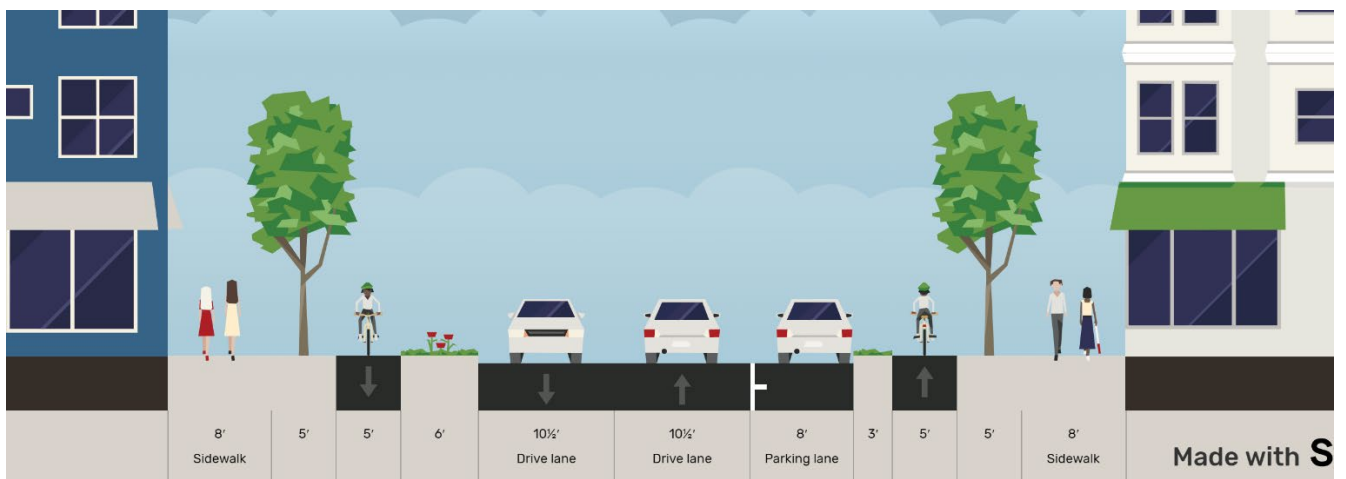


Figure 34. Cameron Street Between 2nd Avenue and Georgia Avenue

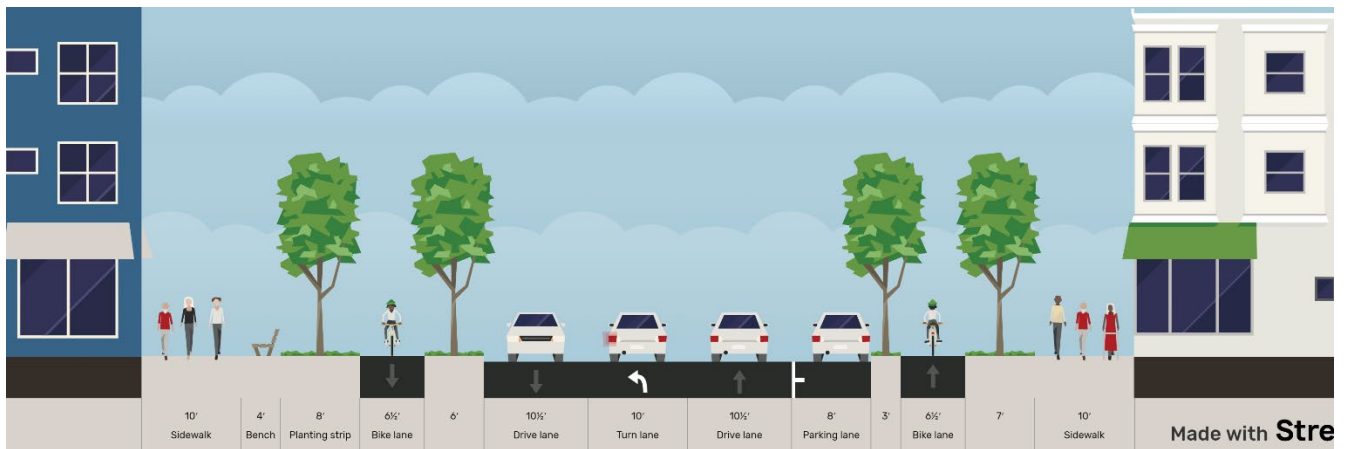


Figure 35. East-West Highway Between 16th Street and Blair Mill Road, Looking East

## Transportation Analysis

In Fall of 2020, The County Council adopted a new Growth and Infrastructure Policy that focuses on two primary tasks:

- Identify opportunities to incorporate the county's Vision Zero travel safety objectives into the Local Area Transportation Review process
- Reintroduce a policy area-level review to evaluate a master plan's balance between transportation capacity and land use travel demand

The policy area-level metrics to evaluate the transportation adequacy of master plans are composed of five (5) transportation system performance metrics. These metrics and how they are derived and interpreted are briefly described below.

*Accessibility* is defined as the number of jobs that can be reached in the Washington DC metropolitan region within 45 minutes by auto and by transit, at the time of buildout. Adequacy is achieved if the master plan improves average accessibility<sup>3</sup> for the plan area relative to the currently adopted master plan

*Travel time* is defined as the average time by auto and by transit, considering all trip purposes during all times on a weekday at time of buildout. Adequacy is achieved if the master plan improves average travel time for the plan area relative to the currently adopted master plan.

*Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita* is defined as the sum of the weekday VMT from trips that both start and end within the plan area and half the weekday VMT from trips that either start or end within the plan area. Adequacy is achieved if the plan improves (i.e., reduces) average VMT per capita for the plan area relative to the currently adopted plan.

*Non-auto-driver mode share (NADMS)*, is defined as the non-auto-driver mode share for the journey to work in the plan area. This is the meaning of the measure in current master plans, the 2020-2024 Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP)<sup>4</sup> and the goals used by the County regulating transportation demand management. Adequacy is achieved if the plan confirms the relevant pre-established journey-to-work NADMS goal for the plan area.

*Low-stress bicycle accessibility* is defined as the percentage of potential bicycle trips that can be accommodated on a low-stress (LTS-2)<sup>5</sup> bikeway network. Adequacy is achieved if the plan meets or improves the average for the percentage for the county at the time of buildout.

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<sup>3</sup> Traffic analysis zone-level, population-weighted average

<sup>4</sup> <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/20210101-Text-of-the-2020-2024-Growth-and-Infrastructure-Policy-with-Maps.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> LTS-2 is defined as bicycle travel network "appropriate for most adults" or "appropriate for most children". (consistent with the approach for Objective 2.1 of Bicycle Master Plan – "Countywide Connectivity".)

At the writing of this Working Draft the transportation analysis is still ongoing and will be completed in the near future.

#### 4.6.6. Parking and Loading

Downtown Silver Spring is part of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Parking Lot District (PLD). MCDOT manages, maintains, and operates 10 garages and 5 lots with a total capacity of 9,692 and 1,100 metered parking spaces within Downtown Silver Spring. There are also twelve (12) private garages that provide parking for the public. The communities adjacent to downtown Silver Spring are not included in the PLD but are considered Residential Parking Permit Areas (RPPA's).

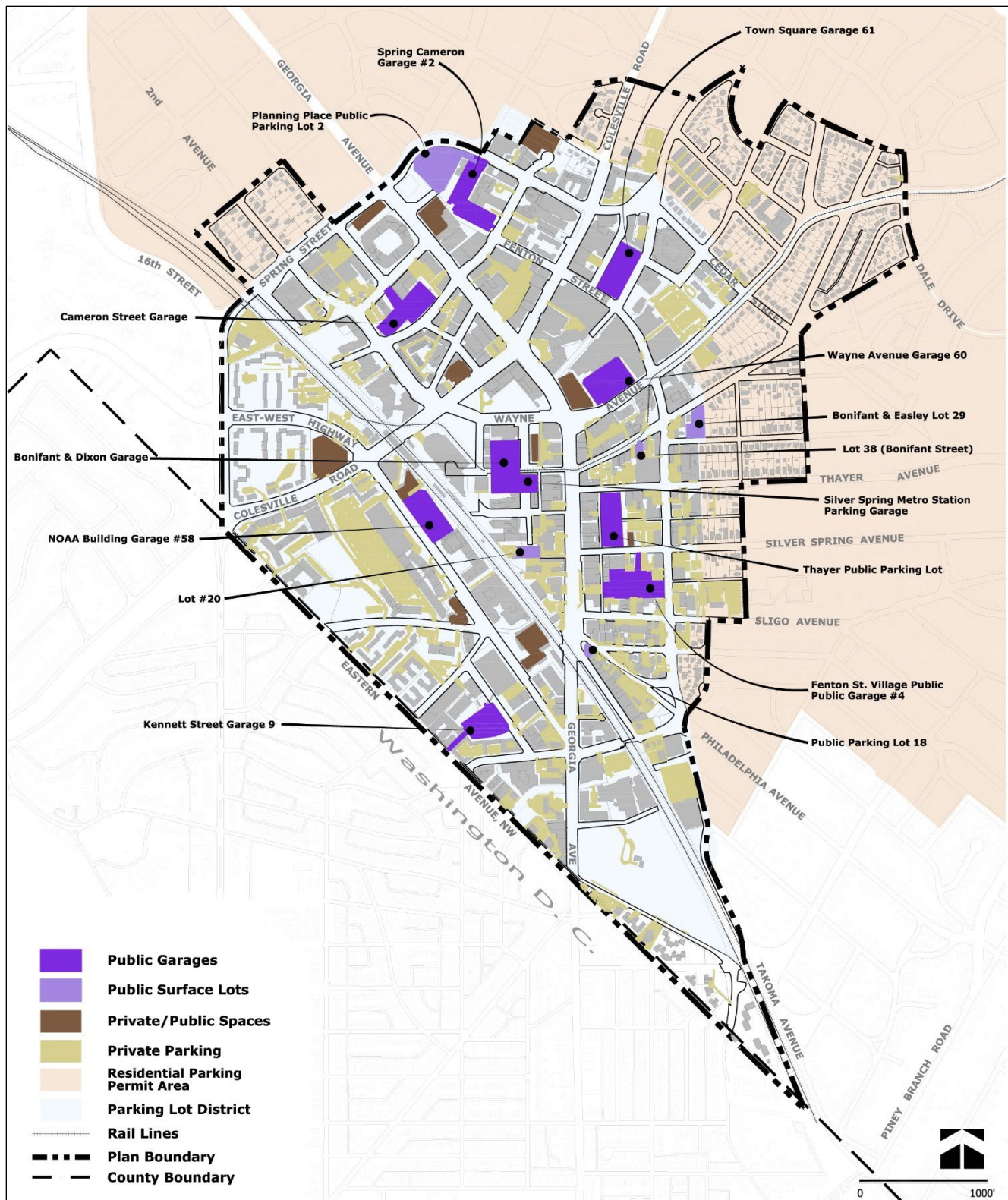
#### Recommendations:

- This plan recommends promoting a constrained parking policy that supports an urban area that is well served by transit and is easily traversed on foot or by bicycle.
- Existing and future underutilized garages should be explored as redevelopment opportunities while ensuring adequate public parking is provided
- The plan supports redevelopment projects providing less than the required minimum parking for all areas of the plan.

This plan also supports the following recommendations from Montgomery Planning's Draft Urban and Loading Management Study which recommends the following:

- Consolidate loading zones on streets with high-density.
- Utilize and implement specific loading signage rather than "no parking" restrictions.
- Create an interagency/community partnership task force to identify location-specific loading strategies within the plan area.
- Reallocate a small portion of the ground floor of underutilized parking garages to serve as micro-distribution hubs.
- Improve education of enforcement and increase compliance.

A further analysis should be conducted to identify specific locations within the Plan area to assign pick-up and drop-off zones. Additional pick-up and drop-off zones should be considered along Fenton Street to support the cycle track.



Map 24. Existing Parking Facilities



#### 4.6.7. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is designed to encourage the use of travel modes other than single occupancy vehicles, including walking, bicycling, transit, and telework. TDM's are an important strategy in managing intersection congestion within the area and will be continued through the horizon year of this Sector Plan. Currently, most of downtown Silver Spring is located within a TDM boundary that is monitored. Success in implementing TDM strategies is determined by establishing and monitoring the Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS). The Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) measures the percentage of non-drivers arriving at a destination within a defined area during the peak period.

Under the prior sector plan, the NADMS goal in Downtown Silver Spring was 46 percent. Over the previous years, downtown Silver Spring has been exceeding the goal by eight (8) percent, which indicated that approximately 54 percent of commuters arrive to work by means other than single occupancy vehicles. Downtown Silver Spring is expected to continue exceeding the current NADMS goal once the recommendations outlined in this plan are implemented, the Purple Line opens, and the increase of teleworking opportunities within the plan area continues.

##### **Recommendation:**

- Expand the NADMS goal to apply to both commuters and residents and increased to a combined average of 55 percent for both groups.
- This plan recommends that the TDM boundary be expanded to align with the Parking Lot District (PLD) boundary.

## 4.7. RESILIENT DOWNTOWN

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments identifies the region's most direct climate hazards as extreme temperatures, continued rising overall temperatures, increased precipitation, and drought<sup>6</sup>. In response to a growing climate crisis and the reality of increased natural hazards, extreme weather and temperatures, and species loss, the objectives of the environmental recommendations are to bolster resiliency: the "overall capacity of a city to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses or acute shocks experienced." While this plan cannot address all climate impacts, it aims to address those that directly intersect with urban planning. The goals and recommendations in this Plan support and reinforce the concepts put forth in both Thrive 2050, and the ongoing Montgomery County Climate Action Plan.

### 4.7.1. Goals:

- Reduce surface and heat island temperatures.
- Support goals of net zero carbon emissions by 2035 as outlined in the County's Climate Action Plan.
- Implement the Green Loop concept to create shaded, performance-based complete streets to serve the plan area.
- Increase tree canopy cover, green cover, and native plantings throughout the plan area.
- Improve air and water quality, and mental and physical health.
- Support the growth of urban agriculture and local food production and processing in the downtown.

### 4.7.2. Environmental Equity & Health

The effects of climate and environmental inequity are often most acutely felt in lower income, elderly, and minority areas of a community. Historically they are known to have distant or inaccessible parks, and open space for rejuvenation and recreation, fewer shade trees and vegetation, poorer quality housing and insulation, lower energy efficiencies, reduced access to affordable nutritious food, and more. These conditions create chronic physical, mental, and economic stress, and illness. Environmental equity is the protection from environmental hazards as well as equitable access to environmental resources such as parks, open green space, trees and vegetation, community gardens, and energy-efficient buildings.

#### Goals

- Provide equitable access to quality natural resources such as parks, green space, community gardens, and the Green Loop.
- Provide equitable access to cool areas with native tree and vegetation cover.

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<sup>6</sup> Summary of Potential Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerabilities, and Adaptation Strategies in the Metropolitan Washington Region: A synopsis of lessons learned from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' climate adaptation planning initiatives from 2010 – 2012.

- Encourage all new construction to exceed County minimum standards for energy efficiency.

## Recommendations

- Expand vegetated parks, open space, and amenities within a 5-minute walk for all residents.
- Implement the Green Loop throughout the districts.
- Design parks and open spaces with native canopy trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers.

### 4.7.3. Nature-Based Solutions for Urban Environmental Needs

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are sustainable planning, design, and engineering practices that weave natural features and processes to mimic nature in the built environment. They aim to tackle climate change, food security, water resources, natural disaster risks, and lost ecological performance. Several NbS are included in the Green Loop concept including cool surfaces, canopy tree and vegetation planting, shading strategies, and stormwater management. Architectural applications of NbS may include solar orientation, green roofs, gardens, water catchment, and vegetated landscapes. These elements improve human and ecological well-being, increase long-term economic prosperity, community desirability, rental retention rates, property value and more.

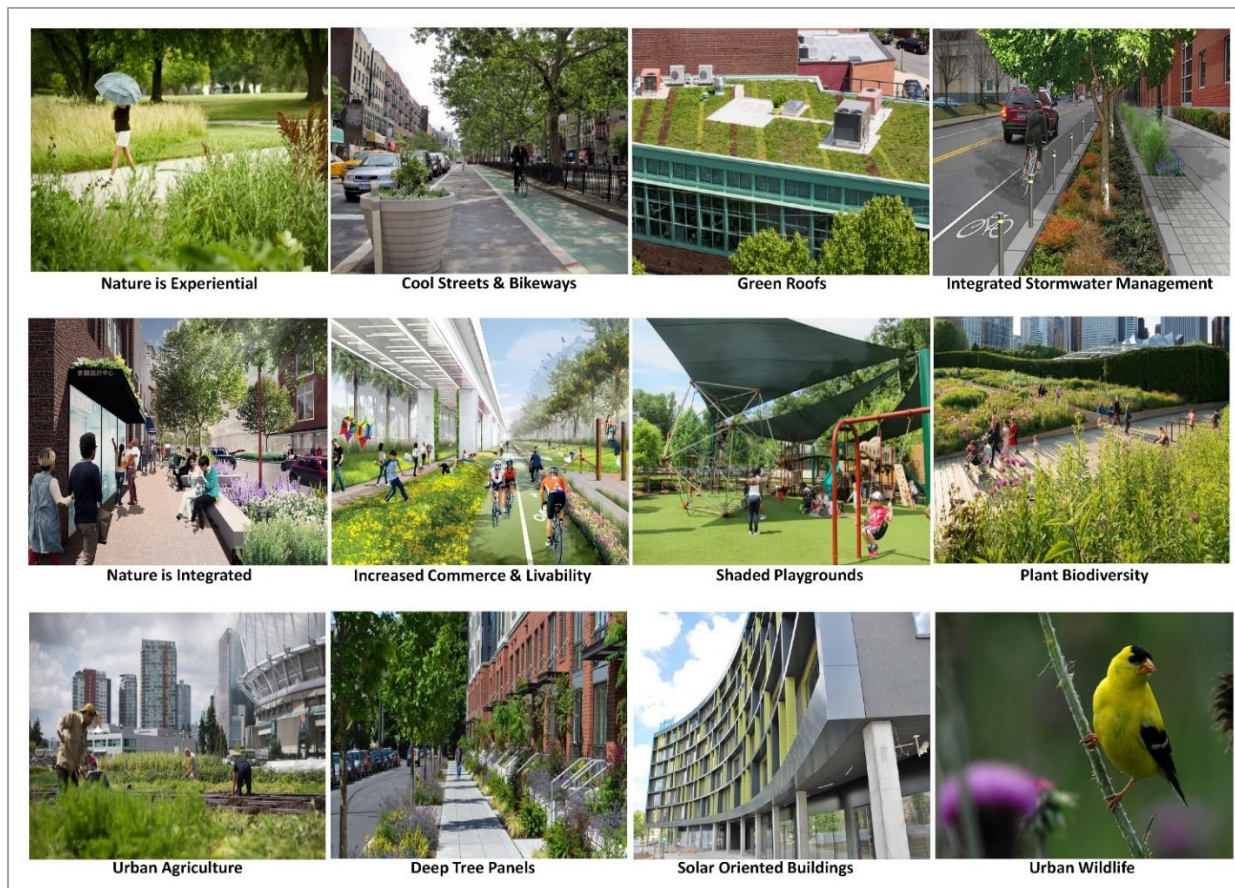


Figure 36. Nature Based Solution Examples

#### 4.7.4. Urban Heat Islands and Tree Canopy

Urban heat islands occur when urban areas have substantially warmer air temperatures than the suburban surroundings, due to increased impervious surface, surface color, vehicle and building heat emissions. Silver Spring is particularly susceptible to trapped heat and elevated temperatures due a high impervious cover (77%) and low mature tree cover (8.6%). In the summer of 2020 street surface temperatures reached as high as 155 degrees Fahrenheit. Global trends indicate that temperatures will only increase in coming years.

##### Goals

- Reduce urban surface and air temperatures through the application of Nature Based Solutions throughout Silver Spring.
- Increase biodiversity and urban beautification.

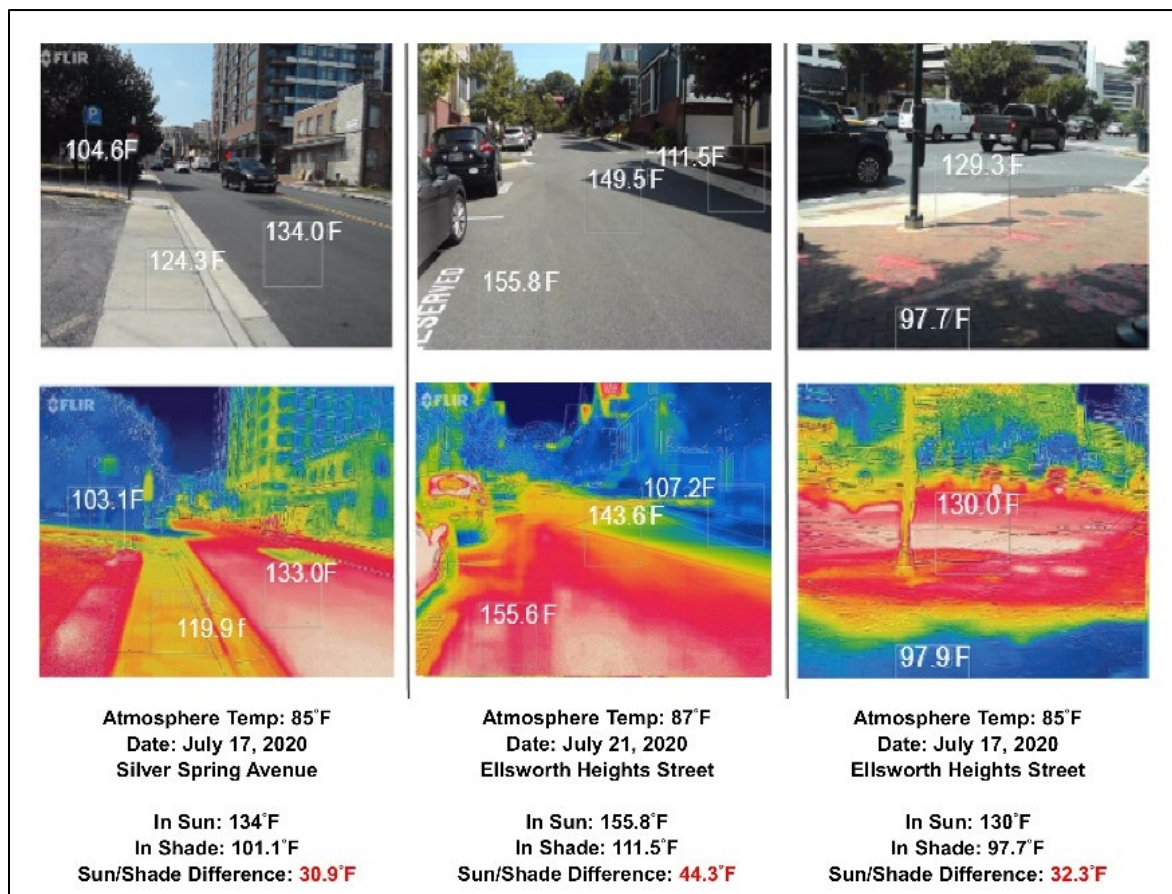
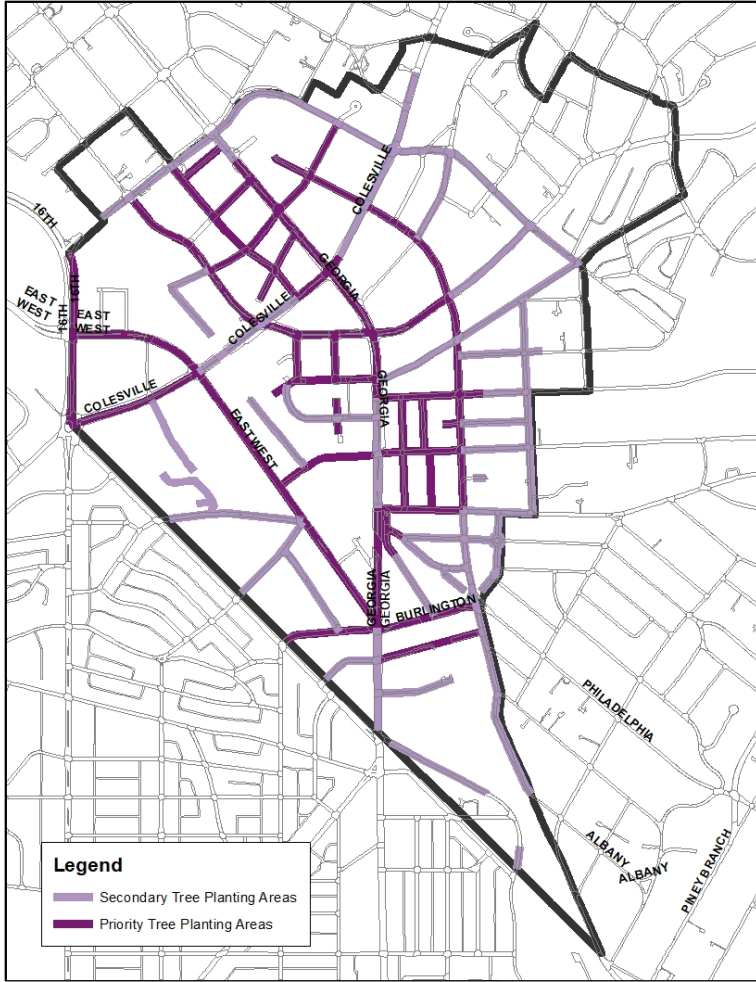


Figure 37. Rising Urban Temperatures

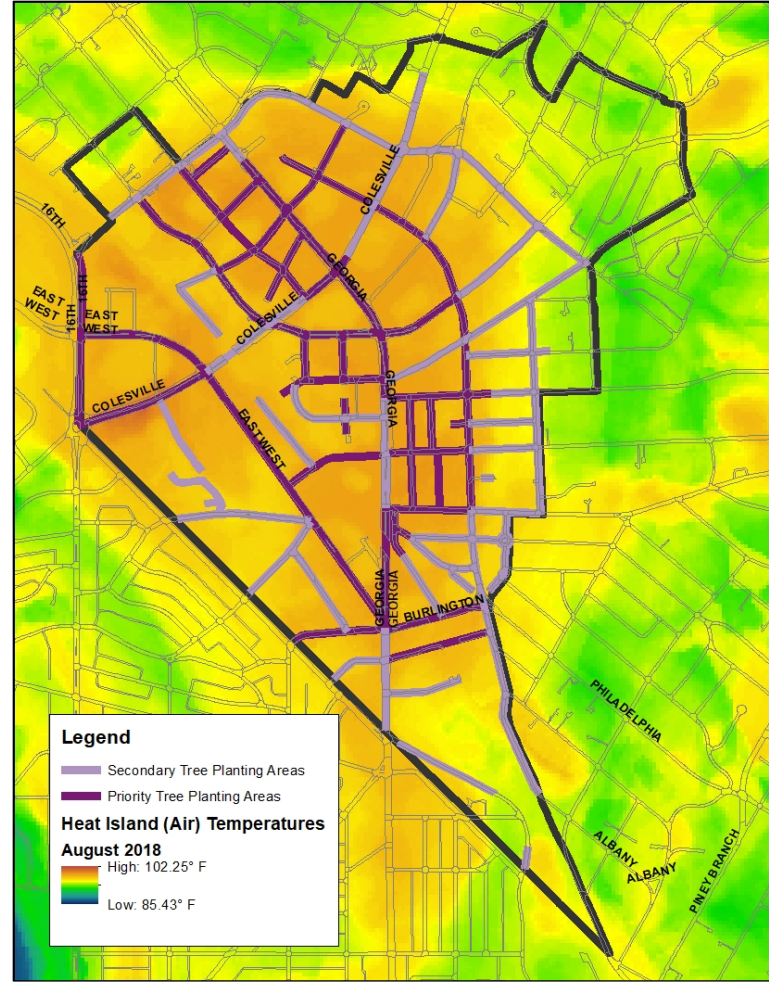


## Recommendations

- Implement the principles of the Cool Streets Recommendations that will be included in the Design Guidelines into new site development and street renovations on public and private property.
- Plant diverse, stratified, and climate- and region-appropriate native tree species to reduce vulnerabilities, diseases, and improve their ability to thrive in a changing climate. Update Silver Spring Streetscape Standards, Forest Conservation, and other environmental guidelines as necessary.
- Prioritize urban tree canopy and green infrastructure in targeting the hottest streets and where tree canopy is deficient (see Map 25).
- Encourage a minimum of 35% green cover on Optional Method Development projects. A project may achieve the 35% green cover requirement by:
  - Providing an intensive green roof (6 inches or deeper) on the rooftop of the buildings;
  - Providing native canopy tree cover on the landscape of the project site area at ground level; and/or
  - Providing a combination of tree canopy cover and intensive green roof for a total of 35% or greater on the total site.
  - May be reduced for on-site energy generation.
- All new rooftops not covered in green roofs or alternative energy generation should be cool roofs with low-albedo surfaces.
- Consider a Cool Roof Initiative that encourages existing property owners to paint their roofs with reflective surfaces which can reduce the effects of heat island by as much as [33 percent](#).
- Encourage all property owners to take advantage of MNCPPC's free [Tree Montgomery](#) program.
- Apply Sustainable Sites Initiatives (SITES) principals to new construction projects.



Map 25. Cool Streets, ROW Priority Planting Areas



Map 26. Heat Island Effect, ROW Priority Planting Areas

#### 4.7.5. Energy and Carbon Emissions

Burning fossil fuels, including their extraction and refinement, is the leading cause of climate change. In Montgomery County, over 55% of the county's total carbon emissions comes from building inefficiencies, with another 30% from transportation. Reducing building energy demand, increasing on-site energy production, reducing reliance on non-electric automobiles, and sequestering carbon through NbS are essential to meeting the County's Net Zero Carbon Emissions goals by 2035.

##### Goals

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.
- Increase carbon sequestration capacities on public and private property.
- Support the County's Net Zero Carbon Emissions goals.
- Reduce vehicle miles travelled per capita.
- Support and encourage maximizing energy efficiency on all sites.
- Support and encourage the use of regenerative, renewable energy.

##### Recommendations

- Optimize building and site orientation to maximize passive and active solar energy.
- Support and encourage onsite alternative energy such as solar, geothermal, and/or future renewable resource energy technologies.
- Support proposed and future affordable housing development projects that incorporate emergency Energy Hubs. Onsite Energy Hubs provides equitable backup solar and battery storage during local and regional energy outages.
- Encourage exceeding the County's minimum energy standards and striving for net-zero, net positive, and/or Living Building standards.
- For public<sup>7</sup> and large properties or/and consolidated land parcels with more than one building encourage the use and installation of decentralized and renewable/clean energy systems such as micro-grids and other dependable electricity sources thereby reducing reliance on distant power networks, non-renewable resources, and susceptible powerlines.

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<sup>7</sup> Montgomery County is embracing microgrids to improve the resiliency of public facilities, reduce their environmental impact and reduce operational costs to taxpayers. Microgrids are local power systems that use clean and renewable energy sources

#### 4.7.6. Water Quality

Impervious surfaces cover 77% of the Plan's commercial and industrial area. They prevent stormwater from infiltrating into the ground, causing runoff to transport debris, oils, and contaminants into nearby inlets and waterways. Consequently, the receiving streams of Sligo and Rock Creek have fair to poor water quality and degraded aquatic habitats. Predicted increases in precipitation and extreme storm events will further compromise the streams, water quality, and the infrastructure associated with it. As properties redevelop, creative and innovative stormwater design is essential to maximize treatment volumes and minimize untreated stormwater.

##### Goals

- Reduce untreated stormwater runoff and runoff rates.
- Improve water quality.



Figure 38. Ways to Build Resiliency

##### Recommendations

- Fully comply with the Chapter 19 of the County's Erosion, Sediment Control, and Stormwater Management Code.
- Maximize green roof stormwater credit using an 8-inch soil medium or approved equivalent. This simultaneously increases building insulation, reduces urban Heat Island Effect, and increases opportunity for native plant, insect and other species biodiversity.



- Consider using rainwater catchment cisterns for irrigation or other allowable uses within the zone.
- Minimize the impacts of development through the installation of green infrastructure such as bioretention areas, stormwater swales and trenches, structured cells, stormwater planters, permeable pavements, or other future green technologies.
- Design stormwater facilities separate from street tree panels for easier maintenance.
- Where surface parking is retained, integrate vegetative stormwater management systems and/or solar systems covering a minimum of 35% of the surface parking area.
- Integrate environmental site design (ESD) into the right-of-way of all new and proposed roads and retrofits.
- Provide decking over linear stormwater treatments to maximize treatment size while not inhibiting pedestrian use.



**Figure 39. Integrated Green Infrastructure**

#### 4.7.7. Transportation

Vehicles with combustible fuel engines account for 41% of carbon emissions in the county. Reducing vehicle demand and use will reduce the county's carbon and other greenhouse gases. The right-of-way contains planting zones where vegetation can perform biological services such as sequestration, stormwater management, temperature reduction, and wildlife habitat.

##### Goals

- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel within the Plan Area for local trips to reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.
- Enhance ecological performance of public rights-of-way.

## Recommendations

- Provide a healthier, cooler, more comfortable pedestrian experience along streets and open space through the planting of native canopy trees prioritizing lower income areas, the Green Loop, and the hottest streetscape areas (see map below).
- During street renovations and routine replacements consider installing smart street elements such as: solar lighting, solar metering, solar crosswalks, LED lighting, electric vehicle charging portals, and/or other technologies that emerge.
- Implement cooling strategies into all streetscape plans during the site planning process, and street renovation and improvement projects. Cool Streets Recommendations will be included in the Design Guidelines.
- Encourage car-free, flexible, and car-lite streets through flexible streets, road diets, alternative modes of transportation, and bike/vehicle sharing programs.
- Encourage more vehicle charging stations than currently required on private property and within the right-of-way (ROW) where appropriate to support a growing electric vehicle demand.

### 4.7.8. Food Security

The Montgomery County Food Council's 2017 Montgomery County Food Security Plan envisions all people having access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food. The Plan estimates that between 6 and 22% of families in the Plan Area experience food insecurity due to a variety of factors, including access to affordable, local food. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the County's food supply chains, exacerbating inequities in reliable, affordable, and sufficient food.

## Goals

- Support affordable retail and food-service rental space.
- Encourage local food processing, storage, and kitchen space.
- Support food distribution and aggregation hubs.
- Support access to affordable, walkable, and healthy food retail for all residents.
- Support access to reliable long-term urban agricultural opportunities.

## Recommendations

- Allow as accessory commercial uses in the Plan Area CR zones commercial food kitchens, food processing, and rooftop farms.
- Increase local capacity for the production of culturally appropriate foods, through increased opportunities for community gardening and agriculture efforts.
- Support the establishment of healthy corner stores, farmers markets, and other access points for federal benefits usage.
- Support onsite community composting and education hubs to bring us closer to meeting the County's Zero Waste goals.

## 4.8. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The 2000 *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* included many recommendations to improve the Community Facilities for the downtown area. Over the last two decades, most of these recommendations have been realized. These include:

- The construction of new community facilities to support the growing population of downtown Silver Spring, such as the Silver Spring Library, District Courthouse, Fire Station and Civic Building.
- The restoration of cultural facilities, such as the Silver Theatre, which is now operated by the American Film Institute and the former Fire Station, which is now a restaurant.
- A year-round, weekly Farmer's Market, organized by FRESHFARM, established in 2005.
- Facilities for seniors, such as the affordable senior housing adjacent to the Silver Spring Library, and an eldercare facility operated by Easter Seals.

The County is also currently constructing the South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center as part of the Elizabeth Square development in the Downtown North district, which will offer new recreation facilities such as exercise and weight room equipment, movement and dance studios and multipurpose activity rooms; public use spaces for gathering; an Olympic-size indoor pool; and a senior wellness center.

As a result of the success of these efforts over the past twenty years, few new community facilities are being recommended in this plan.

### 4.8.1. Safety and Security

In all urban areas, creating a street network where all people feel safe is of paramount importance. This Plan recognizes the efforts of numerous County agencies, including the County Police Department and the Urban District in their coordinated efforts towards making the streets of Silver Spring safe for all.

#### Goal:

Maintain a downtown where streets feel safe for pedestrians throughout all districts, during the day and into the evening. Silver Spring has a nighttime economy, and it is important for the continued success of businesses that attract patrons at night for pedestrians to feel comfortable visiting those establishments after sunset.

#### Recommendations:

- Ensure consistent street lighting to provide a greater level of safety and comfort for pedestrians, particularly when walking at night. The plan strongly recommends additional lighting at underpasses such as the pedestrian tunnel under the Metrorail at Georgia Avenue, and under the Metrorail at Colesville Road.

- In addition, this plan recommends a comprehensive wayfinding study for all of downtown Silver Spring. During engagement it was often noted that there is a lack of clear wayfinding and signage in Silver Spring and that arrival via the Transit Center can be disorienting.

#### 4.8.2. Homelessness and Housing Insecurity Services

Silver Spring is an important hub for services for the homeless and housing-insecure. The recently completed Progress Place, located behind the new fire station on Georgia Avenue, provides many services, while organizations like MHP, HOCCMC, and others strive to provide more deeply affordable units in the Downtown.

##### Goal:

Continue to provide enhanced and expanded housing and support facilities and services for all residents of the Plan Area.

##### Recommendations:

- Support ongoing partnerships between Montgomery County, service providers, and civic organizations that manage Downtown Silver Spring to address the needs of the housing-insecure.
- Promote the development of additional affordable, including deeply affordable, housing units within the Plan Area.
- Work with service providers to provide sufficient places that are welcoming and supportive of the housing insecure.
- Consider installation of and improved wayfinding for restrooms at public facilities in the Plan Area.

#### 4.8.3 Montgomery College

Established on the site in 1950, the Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus of Montgomery College covers over 100 disciplines for more than 7,800 students from over 140 countries, and is the headquarters of the College's Health Sciences program and the School of Art+Design.

##### Goal:

Expand the College's presence in South Silver Spring, integrating its services and spaces into the redevelopment of the district.

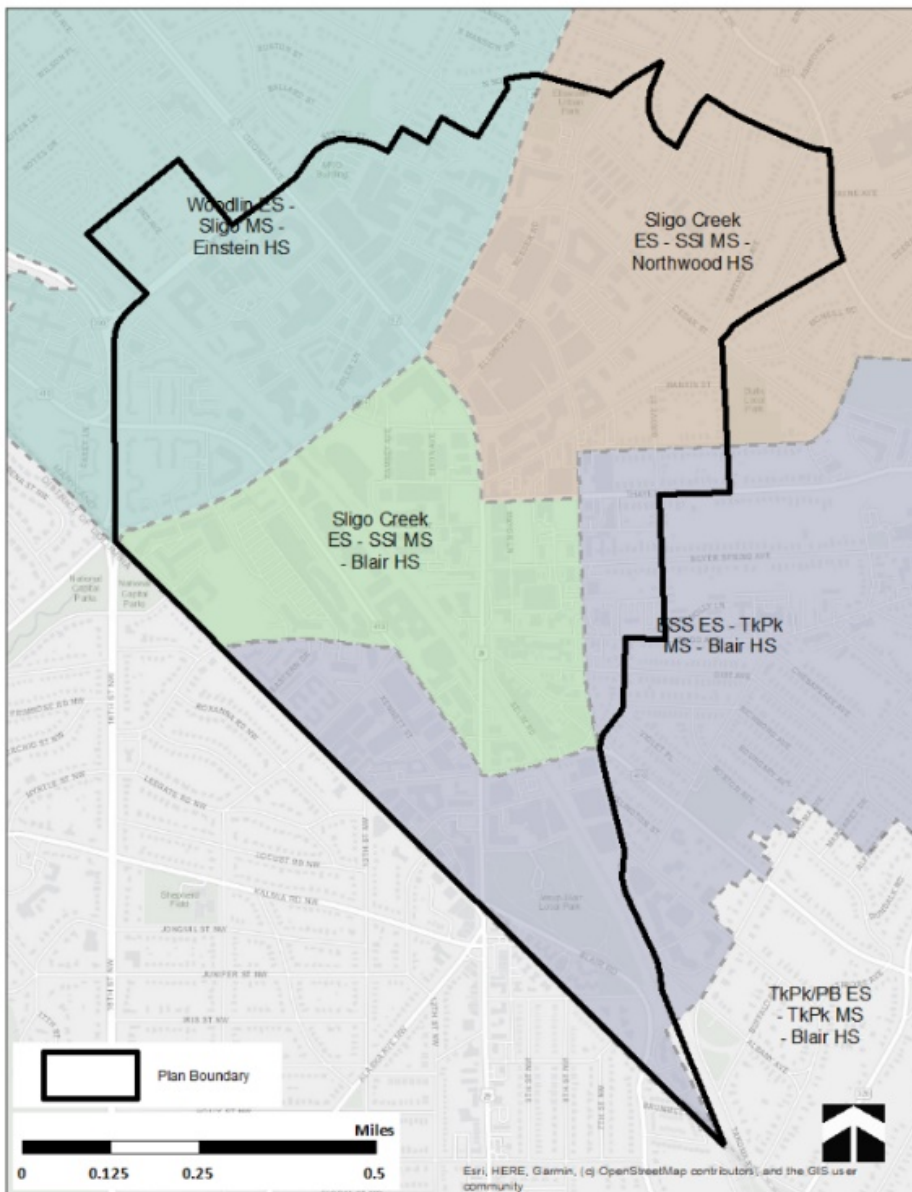
##### Recommendations:

- The Plan recommends working with the College to explore and develop opportunities to expand the campus program in the district.



#### 4.8.4. Schools

At the time of this Plan, the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan area is being served by Albert Einstein, Northwood and Montgomery Blair High Schools as part of the Downcounty Consortium. At the middle school level, the area is being served by Sligo, Silver Spring International and Takoma Park Middle Schools, and at the elementary school level by Woodlin, Sligo Creek and East Silver Spring Elementary Schools. The service areas of the schools are subject to change in the near future when the scheduled reopening of Woodward High School is complete and students are reassigned to relieve the overutilization in the Downcounty Consortium and Walter Johnson clusters.



Map 27. School Service Area Map, 2021-2022 School Year

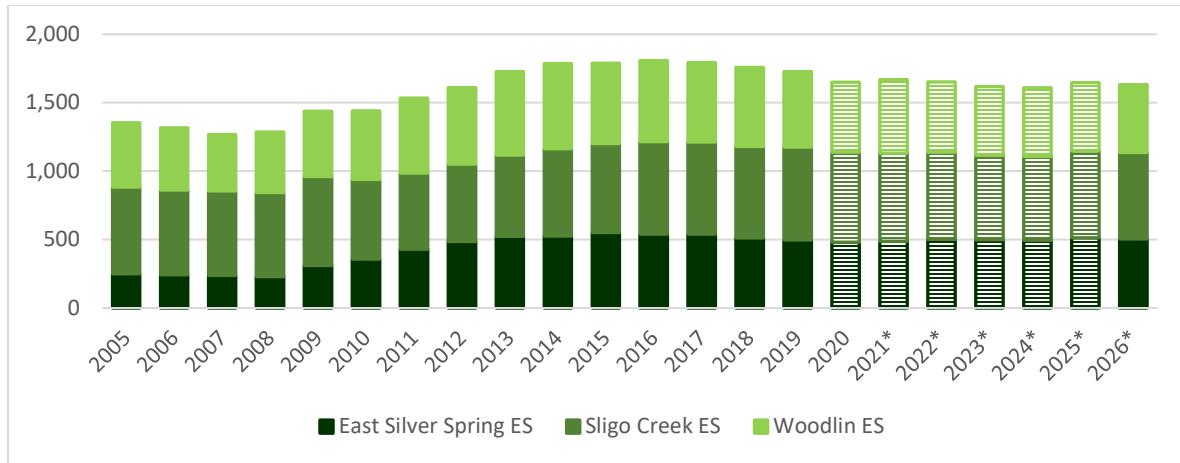
## Enrollment Trends and Scheduled Capital Projects

Enrollment growth in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has been particularly strong since 2008. Due to a decade of large increases in elementary student enrollment, the county is now experiencing a period of growth at many secondary schools. Similar to the countywide trend, there has been significant enrollment growth in the Downcounty Consortium, including the Plan area, that began at the elementary schools and has now approached the secondary school levels. To address the space needs in the area, several capital projects have been approved and are awaiting completion within the FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) time frame. The following are projects invested directly into relieving overutilization at schools currently serving the Plan area.

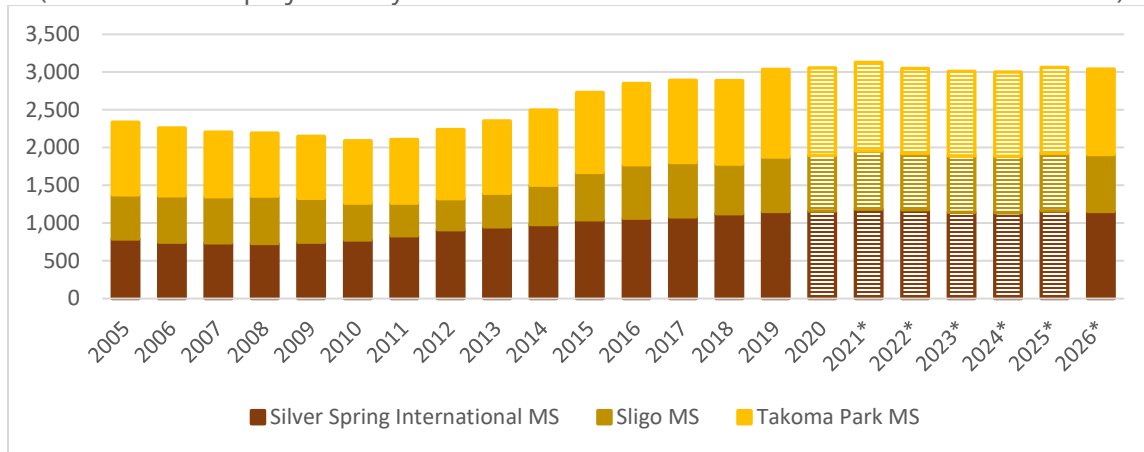
- Northwood HS Addition/Facility Upgrades: 990 seat increase to the existing 1,500 seat capacity by the 2025-2026 school year.
- Charles W. Woodward HS Reopening: 2,700 seats available for the Downcounty Consortium and Walter Johnson High Schools by the 2025-2026 school year.
- Takoma Park MS Addition: 380 seat increase to the previous 940 seat capacity will be completed for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Silver Spring International MS Addition: 90 seat increase to the existing 1100 seat capacity by the 2024-2025 school year.
- Woodlin ES Major Capital Project: new building with 650 seat capacity will replace the existing 460 seat facility by the 2023-2024 school year.

The school system experienced lower enrollment in the 2020-2021 school year, particularly in the lower grades, due to the effect of the COVID-19 health pandemic and switch to virtual learning. While it is anticipated that enrollment will return to its normal level in a few years, MCPS projects an overall slowdown in growth due to a continually declining trend in resident births, which in general leads to lower kindergarten classes, and a subsequent ripple effect into upper grades as those classes progress through the system each year.

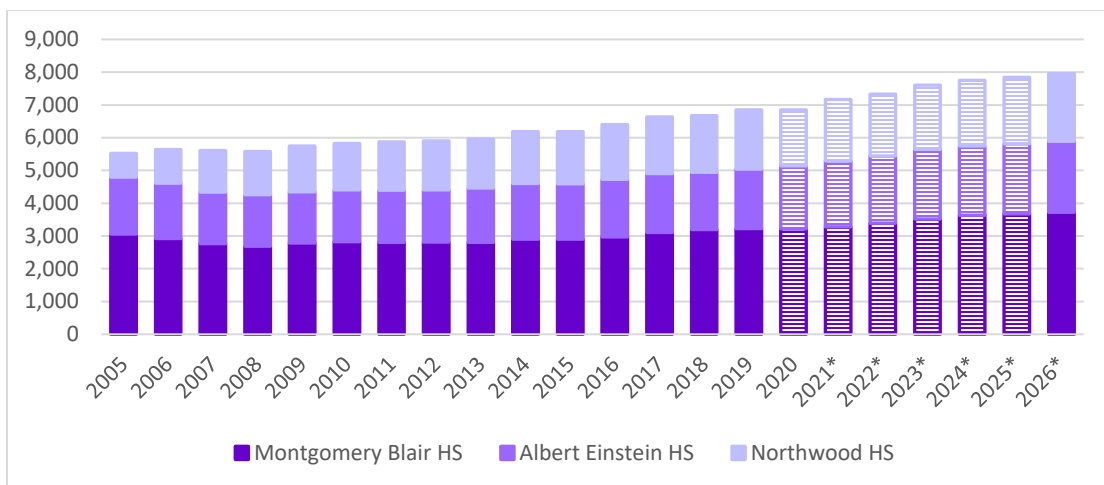
The following graphs illustrate enrollment trends of the schools serving the Plan area for the past 15 years, and the next 6 years as projected by MCPS.



**Figure 40. Plan Area Elementary Schools Enrollment Trend and Projection**  
 (\*enrollment as projected by MCPS in the FY 2022 Educational Facilities Master Plan)



**Figure 41. Plan Area Middle Schools Enrollment Trend and Projection**  
 (\*enrollment as projected by MCPS in the FY 2022 Educational Facilities Master Plan)



**Figure 42. Plan Area High Schools Enrollment Trend and Projection**  
 (\*enrollment as projected by MCPS in the FY 2022 Educational Facilities Master Plan)

## Plan Impact Estimate

Downtown Silver Spring and the adjacent communities are mostly classified as Infill Impact Areas by the 2020 Growth and Infrastructure Policy, except for the Woodside Park neighborhood which is classified as a Turnover Impact Area. This indicates that the growth context of the Plan area and vicinity is predominantly multi-family housing that exhibits low impact on enrollment growth on a per unit basis.

To estimate the number of students generated by residential units proposed in a project or plan, student generation rates, which are the average number of students residing in a certain housing type within a specific area, are typically used. Following the adoption of the new Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP) in 2020, Montgomery Planning uses the student generation rate of residential unit types by School Impact Area uniformly for master plan and development review purposes.

### Potential Impact from Multi-Family High-Rise Units

The land use vision of this Plan allows the Silver Spring Downtown area to accommodate up to an additional 11,000 new multi-family high-rise units. If the vision of this Plan were to be realized in a full residential build-out scenario, the new units may produce the following number of students at each school level approximately, based on the average student generation rates of multi-family high-rise units built in Infill Impact Areas since 1990.:

- 374 elementary school students
- 165 middle school students
- 176 high school students

A full build-out scenario of the residential visions of this Plan, however, is not a guaranteed outcome as it requires the redevelopment of numerous properties that are privately owned and driven by the market. Some properties identified by the Plan as potential sites for additional housing units may take up to 20 or 30 years to realize, and others may not even be redeveloped at all during the life of the Plan.

### Potential Impact from Attainable Housing Units

While student generation rates are not analyzed for attainable housing unit types specifically, existing units located around the Silver Spring and Takoma Park vicinity generally exhibit a rate similar to that of low-rise multi-family units (0.114 for Infill Impact Areas, 0.235 for Turnover Impact Areas in 2020), which tend to be approximately one quarter or one half of the rate of a single family detached unit (0.430 for Infill Impact Areas, 0.447 for Turnover Impact Areas in 2020). When a single family detached structure is replaced or converted into a duplex, triplex or quadruplex structure as a result of this Plan, the net impact on enrollment is therefore expected to be minimal.

Multi-family residential units, once fully occupied, generally maintain a consistent student generation rate throughout the life of the structure. Single-family units, on the other hand, will repeat a cycle of rise and fall for a period following a sales transaction. Therefore, when an existing single-family neighborhood experiences a particularly active real estate market, a surge of enrollment growth can happen as a result of the turnover activity alone without any additional



housing units being developed. Conversely, enrollment can also decline at a certain point once the turnover of existing single-family units in the area start slowing down.

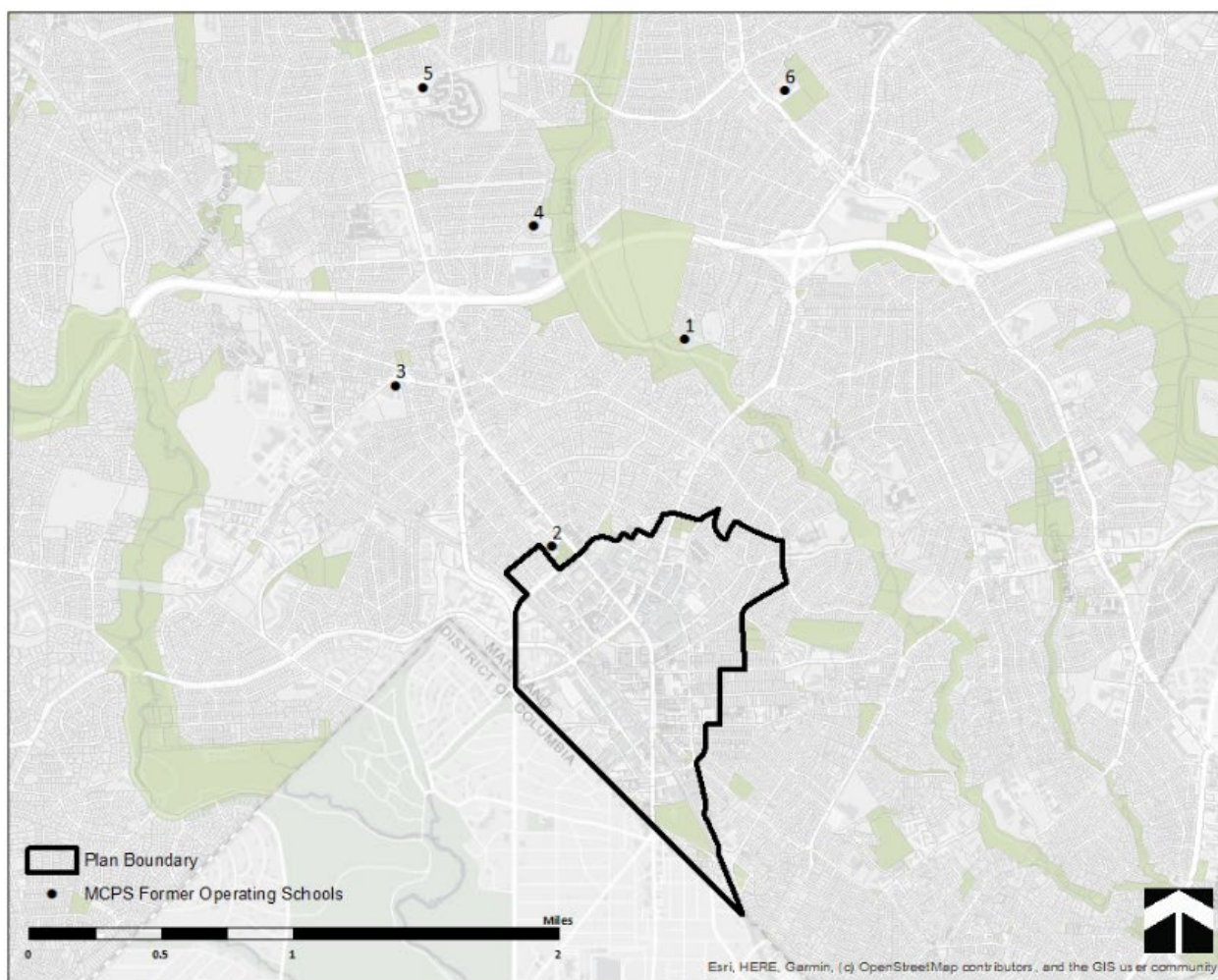
The estimated enrollment impact of this Plan therefore does not translate into an immediate demand for additional school capacity. It is possible for existing school facilities to have surplus capacity to accommodate an increased enrollment demand when the housing visions of this Plan are being realized. Therefore, evaluations on the net effect of students from new residential development on the school system occurs by each project individually at the time of approval.

## School Facility Planning

### MCPS' Capacity Planning Strategies

The Division of Capital Planning and Real Estate at Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) develops strategies and long-range facility plans to meet the needs of public school capacity and programs. While they collaborate with the Planning Department regarding a master plan's impact on public school enrollment, their forecasts and capital projects focus on the six-year time frame of a Capital Improvements Program period rather than the longer-range vision typical of a master plan. MCPS planners review the space available at schools annually by comparing the enrollment projections with program capacity in the sixth year of the CIP planning period. In the case of overutilization, an effort to judge the long-term need for permanent space is made. If deemed necessary, MCPS would then explore a range of options to address the needs appropriately. All approaches will require approval by the Board of Education before being considered for implementation. The strategies that MCPS would typically pursue are:

- Determine if space is available at adjacent or nearby schools and reassign students where adequate space is available.
- Consider classroom additions to accommodate continual enrollment increases. Additions can be considered at nearby schools, to be followed by student assignments after completion of the capital project. For a classroom addition to be considered for funding, the sixth year projection of the Capital Improvements Program period of an individual school needs to exceed the following thresholds:
  - Elementary schools – minimum 92 seat (4 classrooms) capacity deficit
  - Middle schools – minimum 150 seat (6 classrooms) capacity deficit
  - High schools – minimum 200 seat (8 classrooms) capacity deficit
- If reassigning students or increasing capacity at existing schools is not sufficient to address the projected demand, consider the opening of a new school, or reopening of a previously closed school (see Figure 43 for former operating schools in the Plan area and vicinity). For a new school to be considered, the sixth year projection of the CIP period would have to exceed the following thresholds. An evaluation of each site will be conducted if and when a new elementary school is being considered:
  - Elementary schools – 500-600 seat capacity deficit cluster-wide
  - Middle schools – 800 seat capacity deficit in one or more clusters
  - High schools – 1600 seat capacity deficit in one or more clusters



	Former School	Site Size (acres)	Current Use	Ownership
1	Parkside ES	6.19	TBD	BOE
2	Woodside ES	2.70	DHHS Silver Spring Center	County
3	Montgomery Hills Junior HS	8.67	Private school	County
4	Forest Grove ES	6.16	Holy Cross Hospital	County
5	Dennis Avenue ES	6.97	Dennis Avenue Health Center	County
6	Four Corners ES	5.66	HOC retirement home	County

Figure 43. Former Operating Schools

### Innovative School Facilities Initiative

Downtown Silver Spring provides an opportune setting for an innovative school site that may not have been considered as an option for a school facility previously. While the possibility of acquiring land for traditional school sites are scarce in the immediate area, the prevalence of existing office buildings and various businesses, and the proximity to Montgomery College Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus offer a unique opportunity to initiate a non-traditional school facility.

As many school districts continue to seek additional space to serve their growing communities, some are turning to converting non-educational properties into innovative school environments. Through careful planning and implementation, this type of adaptive re-use strategy can be a viable option in the Plan area, where there is a short supply of available land, to efficiently utilize available properties while also activating vacant office space.

In addition, some land uses such as health care, housing or office space can be co-located with a school facility on the same site. Depending on the purpose and compatibility of the use, the spatial configurations of the site can be designed to either integrate the different uses closely, or to separate them without direct connection to each other. Such mixed-use school developments have been increasing in charter school facilities that are often less constrained legally and more open to creative solutions, and can lead to successful learning environments and vibrant communities.

### **Recommendations**

Montgomery Planning produces a School Utilization Report that tracks the enrollment and housing trends of school service areas annually in accordance with the Growth and Infrastructure Policy. As an extension of that effort:

- Monitor the capacity needs of the schools serving the Plan area
- Impose an appropriate level of Utilization Premium Payment to residential development applications if the estimated enrollment impact is expected to burden the capacity utilization of any school(s) serving the site, as defined by the Growth and Infrastructure Policy.
- Collaborate with MCPS to ensure that potential options to provide additional capacity are available when necessary.
- Continue to discuss and promote the viability of an innovative school facility option in the Downtown Silver Spring area with MCPS Division of Capital Planning and Real Estate

## 4.9. HISTORIC RESOURCES

The preservation of select historic resources is critical if downtown is to develop in way that reflects the authenticity and unique qualities of Silver Spring. The community's sense of place relies upon several historic buildings such as the Silver Spring Shopping Center and Theatre, the Fillmore, Hecht's Building, Canada Dry Building, Dyers and Cleaners Building, and the North Washington Shopping Center. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings provides texture and depth to the architectural character of the plan area. The resources are thoughtfully designed, often focus on the pedestrian-level, and stand out in the urban landscape. They are manifestations of the community's collective identity. Concurrently, interpretation of these spaces will allow the community to explore, recognize, and discuss historical inequities. Silver Spring has a rich civil rights history that remains largely unrecognized in the current landscape. Recognition of sites of exclusion and resistance will permit a fuller understanding of development trends, engage new communities, and provide opportunities for important dialogues. Historic preservation is consistent with other values and goals recognized in this plan. This includes the support of legacy businesses, sustainability, retention of existing market rate affordable housing, preservation of green space, and steps towards racial equity and social justice.

Protection of Montgomery County's historic resources are guided by the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*, the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, and the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code).

### Building Preservation Opportunities in Downtown Silver Spring

Silver Spring's historic buildings are critical to the community's character, collective memory, offer tangible connections to the past, opportunities for education and interpretation, and create a diversity of building types within the plan area. The *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan* will encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of designated historic properties

#### 4.9.1. Master Plan for Historic Preservation

##### Goals

- Protect and preserve resources listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.
- Educate property owners of historic properties on the benefits of the historic preservation tax credit program.
- Promote the adaptive reuse of historic properties while retaining their character defining features.
- Assist property owners with National Register nominations to promote the use of state and federal tax credits.

The County Council adopted the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* in 1979. The plan includes all officially designated historic sites and districts. These sites or districts have met at least one criterion for historical, cultural, or architectural significance and merit protection under the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is charged with



the identification, designation, and regulation of historic sites or districts in Montgomery County. To ensure the rehabilitation of historic properties, the County Council adopted legislation to create a historic preservation tax credit program for properties listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Owners of properties are eligible to receive a 25 percent tax credit for qualified expenses related to maintenance, restoration, or preservation of exterior features.

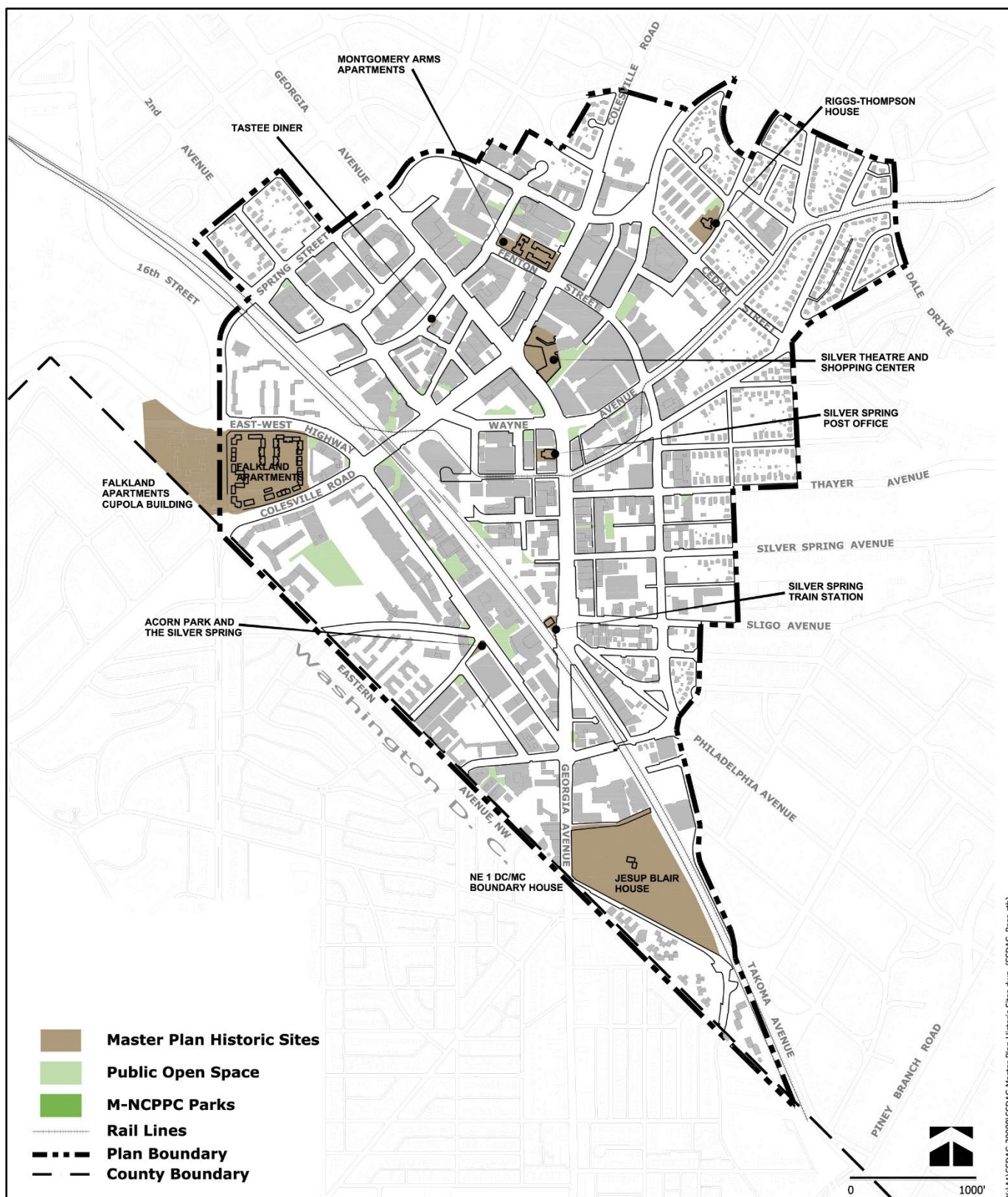
Silver Spring features numerous resources listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. These resources have architectural and historical significance, but more importantly, provide material and tangible benefits to the community. The historic sites and districts shall continue to be preserved as they contribute to the vitality of downtown Silver Spring. Interpretation of these places, however, should be re-evaluated to ensure analysis of segregation, discrimination, underrepresented communities, and other histories insufficiently documented in previous surveys of Silver Spring.

In addition to local designation, historic preservation staff would assist owners with listing properties in the National Register of Historic Places. The register is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation and part of the program to identify, evaluate, and protect the county's historic and archaeological resources. Properties listed in the National Register are eligible for federal and state preservation tax credits that can be paired with the county's local preservation tax credit.

The Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan encourages continued adaptive reuse of the parking lot at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Maryland Historical Trust (who holds an easement on the property) approved sensitively-designed modifications to this space in 2020. Alterations included decking, outdoor seating, reduction of parking spaces, landscaping changes, and public art. Further reimagining and activation of the space while retaining its character defining shape and access points from the major roadways would be appropriate with respect to the ongoing preservation of the site. In addition, proposals could explore the addition of a small-scaled, one-story building that is compatible with the architecture of the shopping center and respects the relationship between the shopping center and streets. Historically, a section of the parking lot once included a gas station which provides justification for the addition of a small structure. All proposed alterations would require review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission and the Maryland Historical Trust.

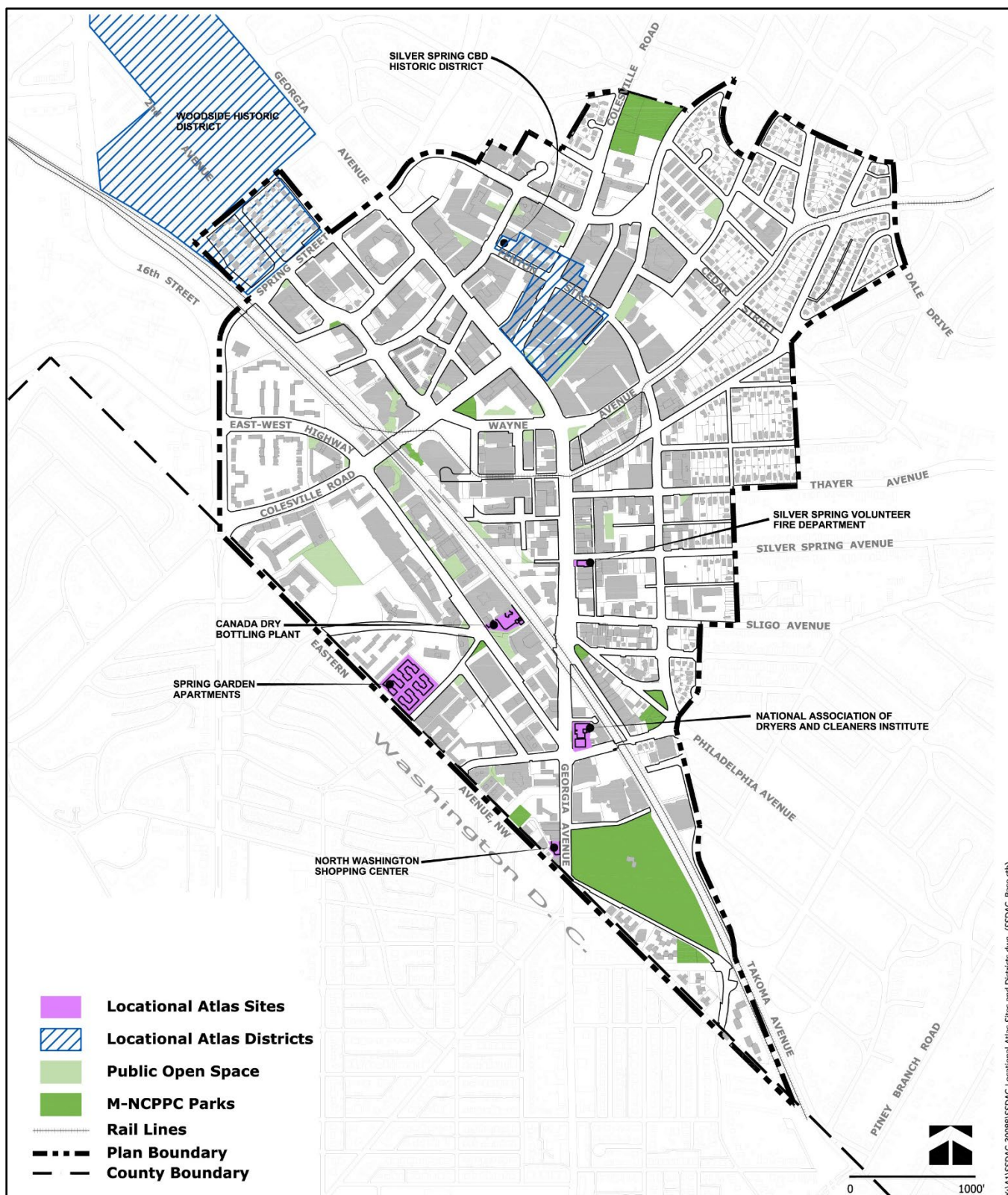
#### 4.9.2. Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites

Established in 1976, the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* identifies resources that are potentially historically significant. Resources listed on the atlas are protected from demolition or substantial alteration under Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. This designation is meant to be temporary until analysis for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* can be completed.



Map 28. Historic Sites Listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation Sites





Map 29. Sites and Districts Listed in the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites

### 4.9.3. New Sites or Districts to be Studied as future Historic Preservation Master Plan Amendment(s)

#### Weller's Dry-Cleaning Building (M:36-86)

8237 Fenton Street

The Weller's Dry-Cleaning Building is a one-story commercial building at the intersection of Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue. Charles Weller, the original owner, constructed the building in 1961 to house his dry-cleaning business. He died in 2016 at the age of 101, after owning and operating Weller's Dry Cleaners for over fifty-five years. He hired prominent local architect Ted Englehardt to design the building. Englehardt founded his own firm (Englehardt & Associates) in 1949. He later founded and served as the first president of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

The Weller's Dry-Cleaning Building represents a rare example of a mid-twentieth century, Googie-styled commercial building in downtown Silver Spring. Googie architecture is considered a stylistic subset of the Modern Movement and often featured dramatic acute angles, boomerang and amoeba shapes, upswept cantilevered roofs and architectural elements, exposed steel, and prominent use of glazing. The large amount of glass allowed pedestrians and passing vehicles to catch a glimpse of the commercial activities within. Most Googie-styled stores were accompanied by parking lots to facilitate ease of customer and staff access. Bold commercial signage, use of bright colors, and neon, attracted the attention of passing vehicles. The style continued to rise in popularity throughout the 1950s and 1960s, spreading from California across the American landscape. Owners of roadside buildings including diners, drive-ins, motels, bowling alleys, arcades, and dry cleaners embraced the style.

Recommendation: Study the Weller's Dry-Cleaning Building for the potential future listing in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.



**Figure 44. Weller's Dry Cleaning – 8237 Fenton Street.**



#### 4.9.4. National Register of Historic Places

##### Goals:

- Conduct outreach with property owners who own resources potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- Educate property owners and the public on the benefits and limitations of the National Register.
- Provide technical assistance to property owners interested in pursuing designation.
- Explore future evaluation of these properties for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties have significance to the history of their community, state, or the nation. Historic Preservation Program staff will coordinate with property owners and study the designation of these sites. The honorific listing in the National Register places no restrictions on what a non-governmental owner may do with their property up to and including demolition unless the project receives Federal assistance. The following properties are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

- Medical Office Building (1111 Spring Street);
- Metropolitan Building (8720 Georgia Avenue);
- Montgomery Center (8630 Fenton Street);
- Operations Research, Inc., Building (1400 Spring Street);
- Perpetual Bank Building (8700 Georgia Avenue); and
- U.S. Industries Building (949 Bonifant Street).
- American National Bank Building (8701 Georgia Avenue)
- Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment District

##### American National Bank Building (M:36-107)

8701 Georgia Avenue

The American National Bank Building is significant due to its architecture and association with the Civil Rights Movement. The American National Bank Building, designed by local architect Edwin Weihe, is an outstanding mid-century example of the International Style. During his career, Weihe was recognized as an innovator in high-rise office and apartment building design.

Between 1962 and 1965, employees of the U.S. Department of Labor who worked in the building mounted a challenge to Montgomery County's newly enacted public accommodations ordinance that is today recognized as a watershed moment in the history of the local civil rights movement. Refused service at a Silver Spring restaurant, Roscoe Nix and his colleagues filed a formal protest with the

county's Human Relations Commission. This initial action led to a series of lawsuits and protests that furthered the Civil Rights movement in Montgomery County.



**Figure 45. View of the American National Bank Building / 8701 Georgia Avenue**

## **Proposed Silver Spring Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment Complex Historic District**

The proposed Silver Spring Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment Historic District consists of seven (7) apartment complexes constructed between 1936 and 1943 in response to the mid-to-late twentieth century suburban growth of Silver Spring. The district reflects the importance and proliferation of the ideals of the Garden City movement and the nationwide response for the creation of humane housing conditions for the working and middle class. Planners, architects, and landscape architects recognized the importance of permanent building materials and fostering the relationship between interior and exterior spaces. They included landscaped courtyards with paths and trees, open spaces, and other amenities to its residents. Many of these complexes continue to provide market-rate affordable housing in a bucolic setting of mature trees and green spaces. Some of these sites or adjacent to the proposed Green Loop and other Park amenities, providing public benefits from shading and cooling the streetscape and absorption of stormwater runoff in private areas that are nevertheless highly visible from public rights of way.

The complexes consist of two to six-story apartment buildings that respond to the burgeoning population growth driven by the New Deal and expansion of the Federal government. The Colonial Revival design implemented at most of the apartments including The Falkland (the third FHA-insured garden apartment complex in the nation) reflects the dominance of the style. Architects use of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles at Montgomery Arms and Spring Gardens, however, represented a departure from this trend and correlated to the design of the commercial core.

Research efforts and future interpretation must consider and analyze the effects and legacy of racial segregation at these apartment complexes. The history of racism in the community manifested itself in both commercial and residential development practices. Property owners and managers implemented segregation at all subject apartment complexes, thereby excluding African Americans opportunities for upward mobility. Historical records indicate that integration occurred at most properties in Silver Spring only after the passage of the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act) of 1968.

The apartments are not clustered in a single geographic area but are spread throughout Silver Spring's downtown. The proposed district includes:

- Falkland Gardens (1936-1938)
  - Bound by East West Highway to the north, Draper Lane to the east, Colesville Road to the south, and single-family dwellings and townhouses to the west
- Blair Park Apartments (1937)
  - 7701-7705 Eastern Avenue, 805-809 Juniper Street, 7700-7705 Blair Road
- Eastern Avenue Apartments (ca.1937)
  - 7603-7615 Eastern Ave
- Blair Park Gardens (1938)
  - 7701-7705 Eastern Avenue, 805-809 Juniper Street, 7700-7705 Blair Road
- Montgomery Arms (1941)
  - 8700-8722 Colesville Road; 8615-8627 Fenton Street
- Spring Garden Apartments (1941)
  - 8001-8031 Eastern Avenue
- Rock Creek Springs (1943)
  - 8000-812 Eastern Drive; 8001-8009 Eastern Drive; 8033-8039 Eastern Avenue; 8000-8004 Blair Mill Road; 1300-1302 Blair Mill Road

Falkland Gardens and Montgomery Arms are listed individually in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and Spring Garden Apartments is listed in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*.

Staff recommends listing the district to the National Register of Historic Places, which would open state and federal historic preservation tax credit opportunities to property owners.

#### 4.9.5. Archaeological Resources

##### Goal:

- Advocate for archaeological investigations in areas with minimal land disturbance (primarily located at Jesup Blair Park) when projects are undertaken.

Archaeologists have conducted few investigations in downtown Silver Spring. Some artifacts related to the indigenous people of Maryland have been found in Silver Spring, but they are not associated with any known archaeological sites. At Jesup Blair Park, fieldwork conducted in a section of the property yielded a few nineteenth and twentieth century artifacts (bottle glass, bricks, mortar, transfer-printed whiteware, etc.) but none were associated with the occupation of the house or the Civil War. Future archaeological investigations at the park may provide additional information or unrecorded sites relating to the history of the enslaved people associated with the Blair family's tenure. The potential for archaeological sites throughout the plan area, however, remains limited due to extensive land disturbance in the twentieth century.

#### 4.9.6. Cultural and Heritage Resources

The preservation and recognition of cultural heritage and history can be achieved through other means than just physical preservation of buildings and sites. To nurture the plan area's diverse histories and support local businesses, several new and expanded cultural preservation initiatives should be explored.

##### Goals:

- Establish a legacy business registry to recognize the economic, cultural, and social contributions of long-standing businesses to the fabric of Silver Spring.
- Study potential incentives to preserve local, independently owned businesses.
- Partner with existing and new local partners to add interpretation of histories absent from our present narratives. Interpretation may include physical (historic markers and panels, public art, etc.) and digital or other ephemeral media (websites, story maps, virtual walking tours, etc.).
- Celebrate the diversity, heritage, and history of the plan area.
- Support any future recommendations of the Streets and Parks Facilities Renaming Review Project.



## A. Legacy Business Registry

Small, local businesses make critical economic, cultural, and social contributions to downtown Silver Spring. These businesses support community identity, foster stability through their long-term occupancy, increase the tax base, and create job opportunities.

The *Plan* supports the creation of the Silver Spring Legacy Businesses Registry. The recommendation is supported by the *Retail in Diverse Communities Study (2021)* that listed “Legacy Business Designation” to incentivize the preservation of local businesses.

The proposed registry would identify businesses that: 1) have been open in the community for more than 15 years; 2) contribute to the streetscape, identity, and historical development of Silver Spring; and 3) are independently owned. Historic Preservation staff would refine eligibility criteria as needed (based on the recommendations established in the *Retail in Diverse Communities Study*), research and document qualifying businesses, and present the findings to the Planning Board.

Establishment and completion of the registry will allow future analysis and recommendations for potential interventions to support these places. This second phase of the project will explore established legacy business programs in other jurisdictions, the types of incentives (financial, protections, promotional, and technical assistance) provided to business and property owners, and the recommendations outlined in the *Retail in Diverse Communities Study (2021)*. The study recommended providing legacy and minority businesses easier access to capital by means of loan pools that support re-tenanting space through subsidized tenant improvement loans. Other potential tools could include tax credits for building improvements, including bonus credits for improvements undertaken within designated historic structures, or building called out for future historic preservation study. Historic Preservation and Research planning staff will coordinate with Silver Spring businesses owners to discuss areas of greatest need before recommendations are presented to the Planning Board and Council.

## B. Interpretation of Historic Sites

The cultural, social, and developmental histories of Silver Spring provide the opportunity to explore and celebrate the accomplishments of its populace and recognize how racial discrimination and other discriminatory behavior shaped the community. Interpretation is an important means to share, celebrate, and reflect upon collective history. Downtown Silver Spring has historic markers designed, created, and installed by multiple parties including the Silver Spring Historical Society, Montgomery Parks, and private developers. As historical interpretation develops, markers should be reevaluated on a periodic basis, not to exceed 15 years, to determine if the content remains relevant and accurate, or if new markers could be installed to develop a narrative that is meaningful to residents and visitors.

The Historic Preservation Program will collaborate with all local partners and engage the broader community on future interpretation. The first goal will be to address themes and topics noted in the historic context such as, but not limited to:

- How de jure and de facto segregation shaped the development of Silver Spring;
- The Civil Rights movement and the actions of the Action Coordinating Committee to End Segregation in the Suburbs, NAACP, and other activist organizations;
- The life and accomplishments of Roscoe Nix;
- The first women's fire brigade at the Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department;
- Silver Spring in WWII, American Instruments Company Building, and architect Katherine Cutler Ficken; and,
- The establishment of diverse communities in Silver Spring with a focus on the development of the Ethiopian community.

Interpretation of historical events, people, and trends should be explored in a multitude of mediums beyond historic markers. The Historic Preservation Program will explore partnerships to determine the feasibility of creating public art (temporary and permanent exhibitions) that creates connections between people and historic sites. These exhibits have the potential to explore our collective past and create distinct places within the public landscape. Social practice art—collaborative, community-drive works that engage with people on social issues—could provide the opportunity to explore historical injustices and confront current challenges.

### C. Montgomery County Street and Parks Facilities Renaming Review Project

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) continues to review all streets and Montgomery county-owned and maintained park facilities to identify those named after Confederates or those who otherwise do not reflect Montgomery County's values. This task is a joint effort of M-NCPPC's Montgomery County Planning Department and Montgomery County Parks Department.

As part of that effort in 2020 and 2021, M-NCPPC identified three county streets and one park that had full name matches with Confederate soldiers. In June 2021, Montgomery Planning renamed J.E.B. Stuart Road and J.E.B. Stuart Court to Geneva Mason Road and Geneva Mason Court, respectively. The street previously known as Jubal Early Court was renamed to William Dove Court. New street signs were installed in July 2021.

Research and analysis of streets with a preliminary match with the last names of Confederates and local slaveholders is ongoing. The *Plan* supports future recommendations from the Streets and Parks Facilities Renaming Review Project regarding the renaming of streets as staff continues to address, mitigate, and eliminate historical inequities.

# 5. Implementation

## 5.1. ZONING

### 5.1.1. Silver Spring Downtown Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ)

- This plan recommends the establishment of a Silver Spring Downtown Building Height Incentive Zone as shown in Map 30 to allow CR-zoned properties pursuing Optional Method Development to increase building heights by up to 150% of the mapped height to a maximum of 300' (except projects that achieve additional height via providing more than 15% MPDUs) through contributions to a Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund (CIF).
- A Design Advisory Panel (DAP) will advise on the determination for each development. The Design Guidelines will identify urban-design-based criteria for determining the maximum height for a particular site within the BHIZ.
- The CIF will be used to fund implementation of specific projects within downtown Silver Spring, including:
  - Transit Center Arrival Experience;
  - Bridge connection over Metrorail/CSX tracks;
  - Public bicycle parking facilities;
  - Green Loop improvements beyond the frontage of a redeveloped site.
- The CIF contribution amount for each development will be tied to the additional height and/or density requested.

### 5.1.2. Fenton Village Overlay Zone (FVOZ)

The plan recommends updating the FVOZ to align with the goals of the plan, while the overall goals of the zone remain the same.

- Revise the boundary to remove some parcels at the north edge of the Zone and add parcels zoned CR at the eastern edge adjacent to East Silver Spring. Map 30.
- Allow properties required to provide Public Open Space (POS) on-site to instead contribute financially to new open spaces recommended within the district. Coordinate with Montgomery Parks to determine a new off-site open space contribution formula to better realize the goals of the Plan.
- Consistent with the 2020 *Retail in Diverse Communities Study*:
  - Limit the frontage of any storefront bay to 60 feet in façade width for large and combination retailers (with the exception of grocery stores). Allow for locating larger anchors on the basement level with a street-level entrance space.

- Developments with ground-floor retail (except grocery stores) should provide at least one 1,200 square foot or smaller retail bay and another retail bay of 2,000 square feet or less.

### 5.1.3. South Silver Spring Overlay Zone (SSSOZ)

Update the Ripley/South Silver Spring Overlay Zone to create an overlay zone with only the parcels that are in South Silver Spring, on the southwest side of the Metrorail/CSX tracks. Update the existing language to reflect changes in the overall Zoning Code since 2000, and remove provisions for the Ripley District. The goals and general provisions will remain unchanged.

- Identify additional uses to be permitted in the SSSOZ.
- Address compatibility requirements.
- Allow properties required to provide Public Open Space (POS) on-site to instead contribute financially to new open spaces recommended within the district. Coordinate with Montgomery Parks to determine a new off-site open space contribution formula to better realize the goals of the Plan.
- Consistent with the 2020 *Retail in Diverse Communities Study*:
- Limit the frontage of any storefront bay to 60 feet in façade width for large and combination retailers (with the exception of grocery stores). Allow for locating larger anchors on the basement level with a street-level entrance space.
- Developments with ground-floor retail (except grocery stores) should provide at least one 1,200 square foot or smaller retail bay and another retail bay of 2,000 square feet or less.

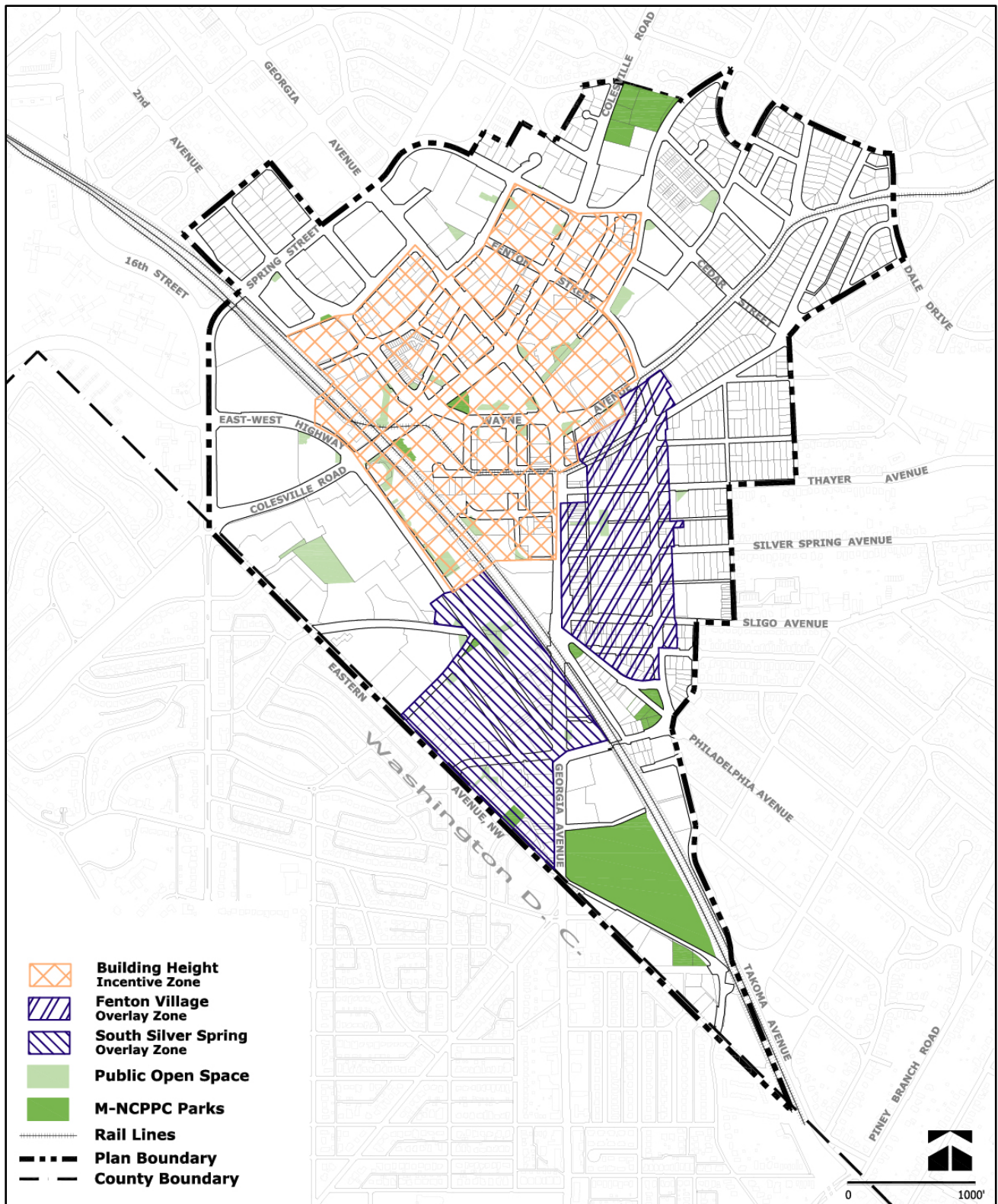
### 5.1.4. CR, CRT, CRN Zoning

CR, CRT and CRN zones are designed to encourage mixed-use development. Parcels zoned CR are given an overall FAR, and then that is broken down into maximum commercial density allowed ( C ) and maximum residential development allowed ( R ) followed by the maximum allowable height. Typically, the C and R limits are designated in such a way that the maximum allowable density cannot be achieved without a mix of commercial and residential uses. To better respond to fluctuating market conditions, on most parcels, the C and R values have been equalized (compliant with Section 4.5.2 in the zoning ordinance) to provide as much flexibility as possible for future development.

Properties inside the BHIZ are confirmed at the existing height maximums. Maximum heights on properties throughout the plan have been adjusted per urban design goals of each district, with at least a 20% increase to eliminate the existing “T” designation.

In the Design Guidelines that will accompany this Plan it will be indicated where heights should step down at the edges of the BHIZ.





Map 30. Proposed Incentive Zone and Modified Overlay Zones

### 5.1.6. MPDU Minimum Percentage

The Sector Plan recommends requiring all development in the Plan Area subject to Chapter 25A, Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit, to provide a minimum of 15% of the units as MPDUs.

### 5.1.7. Public Benefits in CR Zones

- CR, CRT and CRN zones in the Plan area allow for higher density under the County's optional method of development but require public amenities to support the additional density. Ensuring the right mix of public benefits is key to realizing the Plan's goals of a stronger, more connected public realm that will help bring people and businesses to Silver Spring.
- The plan recommends certain public benefits as priorities for all CR parcels within the plan boundary. The plan also recommends disallowing certain public benefits to be used in optional method development for projects within the boundary of the Plan.
- The Plan requires that all Optional Method Development include Exceptional Design Public Benefit Category.
- The Plan proposes that "Transit Proximity" and "Structured Parking" (under Connectivity and Mobility) be excluded from the list of potential public benefits for projects within the Plan Area.
- The plan prioritizes the following public benefits:
  - Major Public Facilities
  - Affordable Housing
  - Small Business Opportunity
  - Streetscape Improvement
  - Design Excellence
  - Dwelling Unit Mix
  - Public Open Space
  - Tree Canopy
  - Habitat Restoration
  - Historic Preservation

### 5.1.8. Design Advisory Panel

The Sector Plan recommends establishment of a Design Advisory Panel (DAP), similar in structure and function to the Bethesda DAP, for all Optional Method projects to assess the number of Design Excellence Public Benefit Points and for maximum height within the BHIZ.

### 5.1.9. Accessory Uses in the CR Zone

The Sector Plan recommends updating the Zoning Code Use Table to allow as accessory uses in the CR zone commercial food kitchens, food processing, rooftop farms and other uses not included in “Artisanal Manufacturing and Production”.

#### 5.1.10. Green Loop

The Green Loop will be primarily implemented through frontage improvements required for each development, through the Streetscape Improvement Public Benefit, or through CIP improvements.

#### 5.1.11. On-Site Public Open Space

Adequate public open space is critical to meeting this Sector Plan’s goal of making Silver Spring a better place to live, work and play. While downtown Silver Spring has a reasonable amount of open space, many of these spaces are small “postage stamp” spaces that do not truly enhance the public realm. In order to ensure the right amount and quality of public open space, this Sector Plan recommends off-site improvements or contributions, instead of public open space that is too small, fails to enhance the public realm and prevents a building from activating the street. For any Optional Method development project required to provide public open space on a site not recommended for a new public space in the Sector Plan, the Plan recommends contribution to a recommended off-site public open space, preferably in the same district. This contribution will be based on the cost/sf of constructing an equivalent area of the recommended public space.

## 5.2. PARKS

The first step in creating actionable results for implementation of the proposed network of parks and public spaces is to organize, evaluate and prioritize the identified opportunities. The EPS Plan established five implementation strategies (Activate, Connect, Renovate and Repurpose, Develop and Create) that can be used to increase the service provide by parks and public spaces.

**Activate:** serve as an interim solution for park spaces that are planned for new construction or redevelopment in the future. In addition, activation can also help us identify barriers to public accessibility to programs and facilities.

**Connect:** By improving walkable connections to the entire public space network, service levels can be increased at lower cost and in shorter timeframes than necessary to renovate existing or build new parks.

**Redevelop:** If countywide trends and detailed usage data for a specific park indicate that a facility is underutilized, then the facility platform may be considered for additional or alternate uses.

**Develop:** Some opportunities for increasing park service rely upon developing new facilities on existing parkland.

**Create:** If the previous four tools are not adequate to expand the supply of parks and public spaces to meet a community's needs, then creation of new open spaces must be considered to provide a platform for outdoor experiences.

See the implementation chapter for a [list of the proposed parks and public spaces](#) and associated lead agency and partners.



### 5.3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Table 3. Capital Improvements Program			
Project Name	Category	Lead Agency	Coordinating Agencies
Renovate/Repurpose Jesup Blair Urban Recreational Park/Special Park	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC*	SHA, DOT, Montgomery College, Private Organizations
Create Ripley District Civic Green	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Create Blair Park Civic Green	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Create Sonny's Park Plaza (Blairs Development)	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Create South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Parklet	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC*	
Create Metro Center Urban Recreational Parklet	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Renovate Acorn Urban Park	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC*	
Renovate Ellsworth Urban Recreational Parklet	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC*	
Create Fitness Park Urban Recreational Parklet (Blairs Development)	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Develop Philadelphia Avenue Urban Park	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC*	
Expand/Renovate Fenton Street Neighborhood Green	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC*	
Create Fenton Village Neighborhood Green	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Create North Silver Spring Recreational Parklet	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Create Ellsworth Neighborhood Green (WF Site)	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Create Bonifant-Dixon Urban Recreational Parklet	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
Create Rachel Carson, Blair Stomping, The Mews and Lucy's Landing Neighborhood Green Spaces	Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC	Private
New Pedestrian Bridge Connection (South Silver Spring to Ripley District)	Transportation, Parks and Open Space	M-NCPPC, MCDOT, CSX	
Green Loop Streets	Transportation, Parks and Open Space	MCDOT, SHA M-NCPPC	Private
Separated Bike Lanes on Silver Spring Avenue	Transportation	M-NCPPC	MCDOT, Private
Separated Bike Lanes on Blair Mill Road	Transportation	M-NCPPC	MCDOT, Private
Separated Bike Lanes on King Street	Transportation	M-NCPPC	MCDOT, Private
Fenton Street Breezeway		M-NCPPC	MCDOT, Private
1st Ave Extension	Transportation	MCDOT	Private
1st Ave Alley	Transportation	MCDOT	Private
Thayer Ave to Bonifant St Extension	Transportation	MCDOT	Private
Silver Spring Ave to Sligo Ave Extension	Transportation	MCDOT	Private
Mayor Lane to Fenton Street Extension	Transportation	MCDOT	Private

## 5.4. HISTORIC PRESERVATION IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Table 4. Historic Preservation Implementation Summary			
	Description	Time Frame	Category
1	Study and evaluate the Weller's Dry-Cleaning Building (8237 Fenton Street) for future listing in the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i> or recordation of a Historic Preservation Easement.	Long Term	Historic Preservation
2	Phase One: Create a Silver Spring Legacy Business Registry that documents all retail and service-orientated businesses in the plan area.  Phase Two: Study potential incentives to preserve local, independently owned businesses.	Short Term	Historic Preservation/DHCA/Research
3	Collaborate with local partners and engage the broader community to discuss potential interpretation opportunities in Silver Spring.	Short Term	Historic Preservation
4	Study the following properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Medical Office Building (1111 Spring Street)</li> <li>○ Metropolitan Building (8720 Georgia Avenue)</li> <li>○ Montgomery Center (8630 Fenton Street)</li> <li>○ Operations Research, Inc., (1400 Spring Street)</li> <li>○ Perpetual Bank Building (8700 Georgia Avenue)</li> <li>○ U.S. Industries Building (949 Bonifant Avenue)</li> <li>○ American National Bank Building (8701 Georgia Avenue)</li> <li>○ Garden and Mid-Rise Garden Apartment District</li> </ul>	Long Term	Historic Preservation
5	Support the recommendations of the Montgomery County Street and Parks Facilities Renaming Review Project on the renaming of county streets and park facilities.	Long Term	Historic Preservation/IRC Division

## 5.5. PARTNERSHIPS

The Sector Plan supports continued cooperation between the public and private sectors to coordinate and implement initiatives and services in downtown Silver Spring.

Established by County legislation, the Silver Spring Urban District provides enhanced services within downtown Silver Spring to ensure that the downtown area is maintained, clean, safe and attractive to support the economic viability of the area. Services include security, streetscape and tree maintenance, marketing and hosting special events to bring people to downtown Silver Spring. The Silver Spring Urban District operates under the auspices of the Regional Service Center.

This Sector Plan supports the priorities of the Silver Spring Urban District, the Regional Service Center and the Arts and Entertainment District in their common mission to provide public services and amenities to the members of the downtown Silver Spring communities.

This Plan recommends pursuing partnerships that:

- Increase the strength and resources of civic organizations championing Downtown Silver Spring
- Strengthen the resilience of Silver Spring by increasing capacity improve the public realm and support independent businesses, encouraging continued economic growth;
- Use arts and culture to celebrate the past, present, and future diverse cultures that are part of the Silver Spring community.
- Strengthen partnerships between Montgomery County, civic organizations, service providers, property owners, and businesses to address complex social challenges;

The creation of a vibrant downtown requires enhanced economic activity to generate demand for Silver Spring's physical spaces. Programs and initiatives in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders are needed to realize the plan's vision of economic growth and resiliency in Silver Spring.

### 5.5.1. Partnerships for Economic Growth

- Partner with the Montgomery County Economic Development Council (MCEDC) and the champion for downtown to create a market incentive to invest in speculative office suites in office space that has been vacant for an extended period. Have MCEDC fund the program and the champion for downtown market and help property owners secure funds. Create a plan for the incentive that caps the amount at a reasonable cost to the county while also providing a meaningful incentive to building owners.
- Analyze the feasibility of a fund operated by MCEDC to invest in office-using start-ups that locate in Silver Spring. Have the champion for downtown market the fund and use the fund to attract additional business to Silver Spring. Create a plan for the fund that establishes accepted levels of risk that is consistent with purchasing equity positions in start-up firms.

- Partner with the Executive’s Business Advancement Team to reinvigorate the Silver Spring Innovation Center to meet the needs of and to support women and minority entrepreneurs, In alignment with the recommendations of the Business Incubator Review and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem study prepared by Axcel Innovation LLC and presented to the PHED committee on 7/26/2021. Create a business plan to define how the incubator can add value to start-up firms to guide operations and to enable evaluation of whether the incubator is achieving its objectives.
- Encourage activation of underutilized space: Partner with MCEDC, the County Executive’s Business Advancement Team, and the champion for downtown to study a vacancy tax on empty retail frontage to encourage property owners to lease and activate vacant spaces. The funds generated by this tax should be returned to the Silver Spring area. The moneys should be provided to the new champion for Downtown Silver Spring into the funds this sector plan recommends creating to advance placemaking.
- Create capacity to support small retailers: Form a partnership between the Montgomery County Office of the County Executive Small Business Navigator and mission oriented non-profit stakeholders to fund a diverse retail liaison position to support diverse retailers in Silver Spring. See the Retail in Diverse Communities Report published in March 2021 for additional details of this recommendation.
- Encourage property owners with underutilized and vacant street level retail space to donate that space to mission-oriented non-profits to run retail incubators in which entrepreneurs can try new retail concepts.

### 5.5.2. Arts and Entertainment District

The Silver Spring Arts and Entertainment District, which was designated on December 31, 2001 as an Arts and Entertainment District by the State of Maryland, includes over 50 arts and humanities organizations from the regionally important AFI Theater to local dance companies and art galleries. The Arts and Entertainment District offers tax incentives to both arts-related businesses and individual artists located within a district. The diverse arts organizations and public art installations in Silver Spring draw visitors from all over the County and the region.

The Plan supports the following recommendations that could enhance and grow the Arts and Entertainment District in Silver Spring and contribute significantly to the economic growth of the downtown. Many of these recommendations encourage partnership between the Arts and Entertainment District and the “champion for downtown” described above.

- Create an Arts & Entertainment Plan that identifies sustained resources for an arts & entertainment management entity of the size and capacity commensurate with Silver Spring’s potential. The plan should include actionable items to grow the arts and entertainment district’s offerings, programming, activities, and marketing.
- Partner with property owners to capture under-utilized street level retail spaces to create an arts incubator managed by a mission-oriented non-profit. Allow developers of property to



create the space when constructing new developments as part of the optional method of development point system.

- New public art in Silver Spring, whether through public process or through optional development should support the representation of the diverse communities of Silver Spring.

### 5.5.3. Parking Lot District

Montgomery County Department of Transportation administers, operates and maintains and enforces the Silver Spring Parking Lot District (PLD). The PLD is an independent taxing district with obligations to bond holders who finance PLD facilities. Today, downtown Silver Spring has ten public parking garages and five surface lots. This Sector Plan supports the redevelopment of County parking facilities along with replacement of parking and supports the priorities of the PLD and the recommendations as outlined in Section 4.6 Transportation.

### 5.5.4. Partnerships with the Community

As discussed in Section 2.6 Parks and Public Spaces, this Sector Plan supports the goal of providing sufficient open space for active recreation, social gathering and contemplative activities. The Sector Plan supports the following recommendation to achieve that goal:

- Increase placemaking efforts; Create a fund to support placemaking throughout Silver Spring and have the new champion for Downtown Silver Spring manage the fund. Prioritize improvements that make the public realm and street network more connected and safer for non-motorized transport, as well as more attractive as places to gather.
- Work with civic stakeholders to form a non-profit that raises funds for, invests in, manages, and activates Jesup Blair Park. This could be a cross-jurisdictional enterprise coordinated with stakeholders and park users from the adjacent DC neighborhoods as well.