

Montgomery Planning
University Boulevard Corridor Plan



Description

Staff will brief the Planning Board on emerging land use, urban design, transportation and environmental sustainability ideas for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan.



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SUMMARY

Staff will present the emerging ideas for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan. This briefing will focus on emerging ideas that pertain to land use, urban design, transportation and environmental sustainability. The Planning Board approved the Scope of Work for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan on February 16, 2023, and received a briefing on existing conditions on October 5, 2023.

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Draft
Emerging Ideas

Date
6-21-2024

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Planning Board Information
MCPB
Item No. 8
6-27-2024

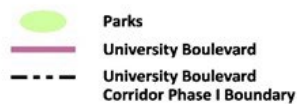
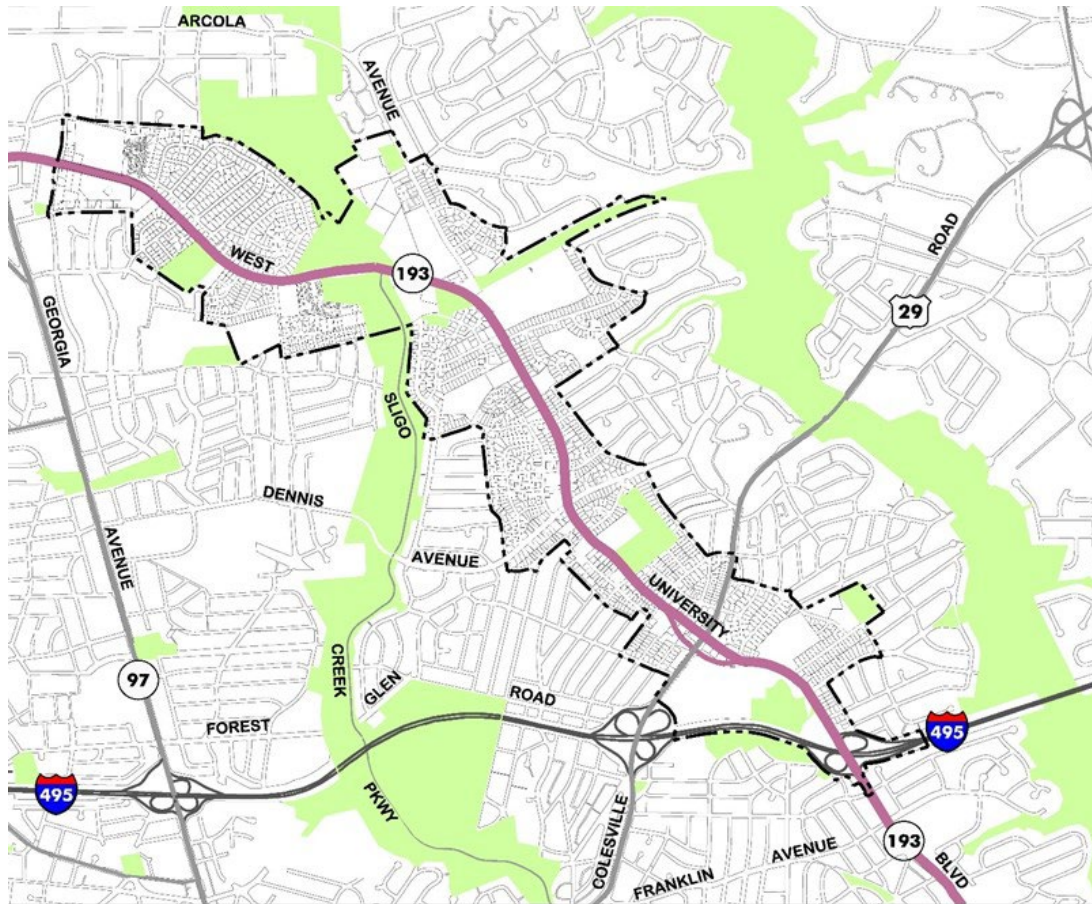


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BACKGROUND

OVERVIEW

The University Boulevard Corridor Plan is a comprehensive corridor plan between the Capital Beltway (I-495) and Amherst Avenue in Wheaton (Figure 1). The Plan will amend several existing plans, including the 2012 *Wheaton Central Business District and Vicinity Sector Plan*, the 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton*, the 1996 *Four Corners Master Plan*, and the 2001 *Kemp Mill Master Plan*. University Boulevard (MD 193) is identified as a future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor in the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*.

The Planning Board approved the Scope of Work for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan in February 2023. Since the approval of the Scope of Work, staff have evaluated existing conditions, initiated detailed analyses of market conditions and transportation, and advanced community outreach and engagement.

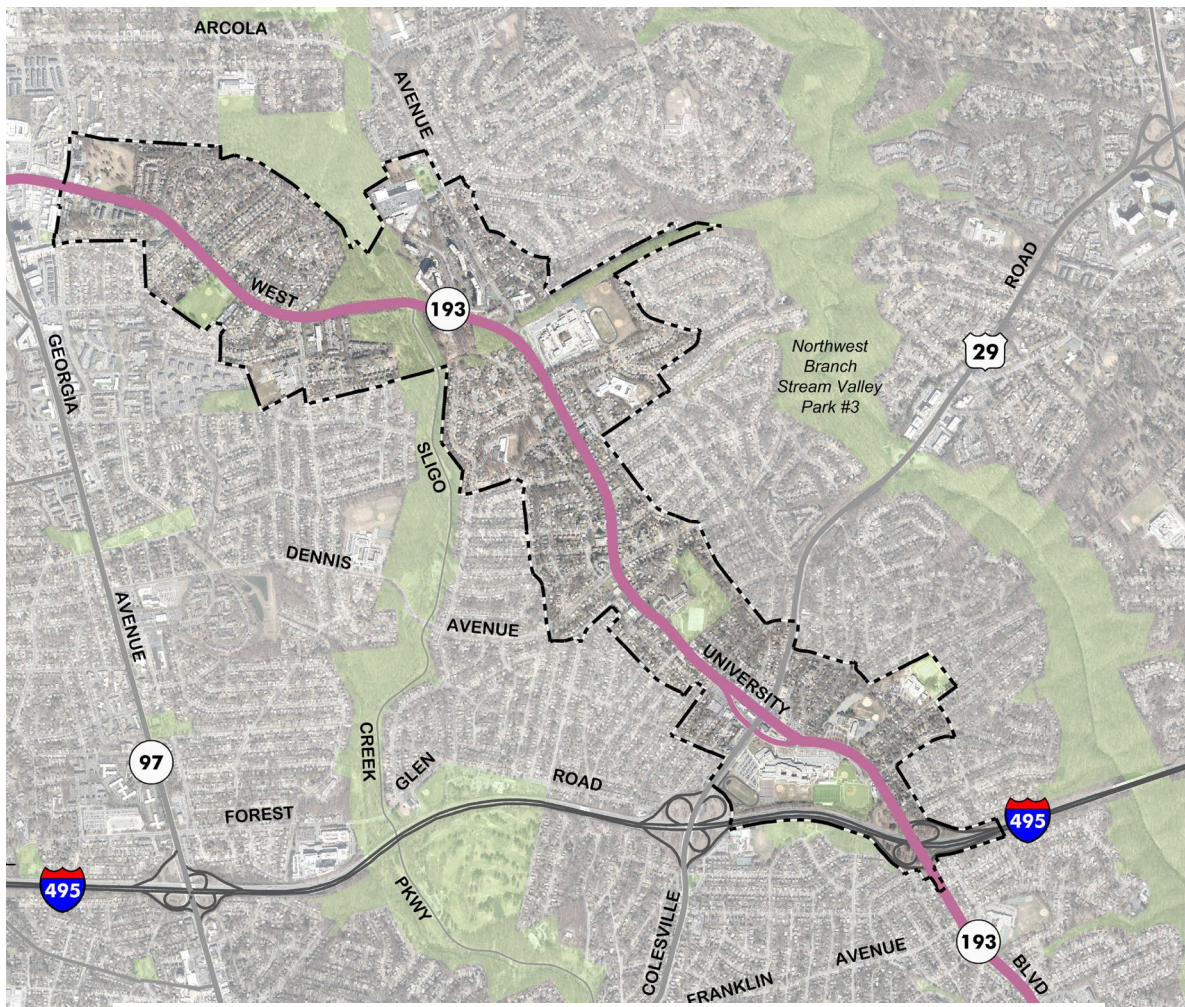


Figure 1: University Boulevard Corridor Plan Area

EMERGING IDEAS

OVERVIEW

The University Boulevard Corridor Plan team has developed a concept plan for the Corridor Plan (Figure 2) and several emerging ideas on land use, urban design, transportation, and environmental sustainability.



Figure 2: University Boulevard Corridor Plan Emerging Concept Plan

The Concept Plan shown in Figure 2 provides an overview of the Plan’s emerging ideas related to land use and scale of potential development in relation to future BRT stations, parkland, and properties with the potential to accommodate additional housing through infill or redevelopment, including properties owned by the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) and religious institutions. While the Concept Plan identifies different scales of development, ranging from large to small, the Plan’s emerging ideas suggest that corridor-focused growth along University Boulevard generally aligns with a modest growth segment typology, a typology that anticipates moderate-to-high density, mixed-use development within nodes along the corridor, and low-to-moderate predominantly residential density between the nodes.

EMERGING IDEAS BY TOPIC AREA

The following emerging ideas for land use, urban design, transportation, and environmental sustainability are the result of robust outreach and engagement, existing conditions analysis, and consultant expertise. These ideas, particularly for land use and urban design, align with and support the general framework illustrated in the Concept Plan (Figure 2).

LAND USE

- Promote mixed-use growth in the Four Corners area, at the Kemp Mill shopping center, and on properties along Amherst Avenue and the WTOP Transmission property.
- Encourage new residential and non-residential growth at the recommended BRT stops, including at Inwood Avenue, Arcola Avenue, and at Four Corners.
- Promote new infill growth on religious institutional properties along the corridor.
- Encourage new residential typologies for existing detached residential properties along the corridor.

URBAN DESIGN

- Improve walking, biking, and rolling along the corridor with enhanced streetscape that includes wider sidewalks with landscaped buffers, lighting and seating, and expands access to existing public facilities and neighborhood retail.
- Provide design guidance for University Boulevard that builds on the unique residential, institutional, and commercial context.
- Locate higher densities and mixed uses at locations near BRT station areas with existing commercial uses like Four Corners, the Kemp Mill Shopping Center, and the WTOP site, and ensure new development transitions in scale to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- Utilize placemaking strategies to enhance and promote local character and history, and identify locations for art in parks and other public spaces and at new residential and non-residential developments.

TRANSPORTATION

- Develop University Boulevard West and East (MD 193) as a multimodal corridor with BRT primarily in dedicated lanes.
- Advance complete streets for a walkable and safe roadway.
- Utilize the Four Corners Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area (BiPPA).
- Promote Vision Zero principles and new protected crossings.
- Advance a network of low-stress bicycle facilities.
- Support new opportunities for micro-mobility.
- Explore alternative ways to navigate the Four Corners area in the long-term.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Establish University Boulevard as a multimodal transportation spine that protects people who walk, bike and take transit from extreme heat and air pollution along sidewalks and bike paths and at bus/BRT stops.
 - Incorporate tree canopy, shaded bus stops, stormwater management, and landscaped strips into the University Boulevard cross-section.
- Protect and increase forests and tree canopy along road rights-of-way and on public properties.
- Coordinate with large property owners, including Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and commercial and institutional landowners with significant impervious cover and limited tree canopy to reduce heat islands.
- Promote the use of RainScapes type programs on private property.

TRANSPORTATION

FORECASTING

The University Boulevard Corridor Plan team is working to evaluate the transportation impacts associated with growth for the Plan area. The transportation results will be evaluated by the metrics established by the County Council in 2020, including accessibility to jobs (auto and transit) and travel time (auto and transit). Staff is working with VHB, a transportation consultant, to explore alternative access throughout the Four Corners area, including changes that improve pedestrian safety and bicycle accommodation. A focused public workshop on Four Corners will occur in the coming months.

BUS ONLY LANES

In February 2024, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) opened the University Boulevard Bus Only Lanes, which are between Amherst Avenue and Dennis Avenue (Figure 3). These dedicated lanes, which are painted red in color, are located adjacent to existing curbs and permit buses, bicycles and vehicles that turn onto perpendicular streets. During the proposed 12 month to 18-month pilot period, MCDOT will evaluate bus lane operations, travel times, service reliability and motorist compliance.



Figure 3: Existing University Boulevard West Bus Only Lanes

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A broad range of public engagement events have occurred since the start of this project to inform the public about this Plan. Prior public engagement events included in-person public and virtual workshops, canvassing commercial businesses and multi-family residential developments and attendance at public festivals, such as the Taste of Wheaton and Sligo Creek Fest. Staff provided an overview on the outreach and engagement efforts completed in support of this Plan, as well as the feedback received, during the October 5, 2023, briefing.

Since that time, staff has continued to engage the community. Most recently, in May 2024, Staff held four public meetings, including in-person and virtual meetings, to present emerging land use, transportation, urban design, and sustainability ideas. During in-person and online meetings, Staff utilized polling software on Zoom, SurveyMonkey, and PollEverywhere to gauge public opinions. Nearly 170 people attended these meetings.

Participants expressed a broad spectrum of views on potential infill development on institutional and religious sites, ranging from “strong support” to “strong opposition,” with some opting for neutrality or moderate positions (Figure 4: Poll responses for infill development). Poll responders were less supportive of residing in the proposed new housing types, such as duplexes, and a sizable portion of attendees indicated that neither they nor their family members were inclined to consider these options. However, approximately 25 percent of participants could envision themselves or their relatives living in such housing (Figure 5: Poll responses about housing typologies). The consolidated land use responses from the four public meetings are shown below:

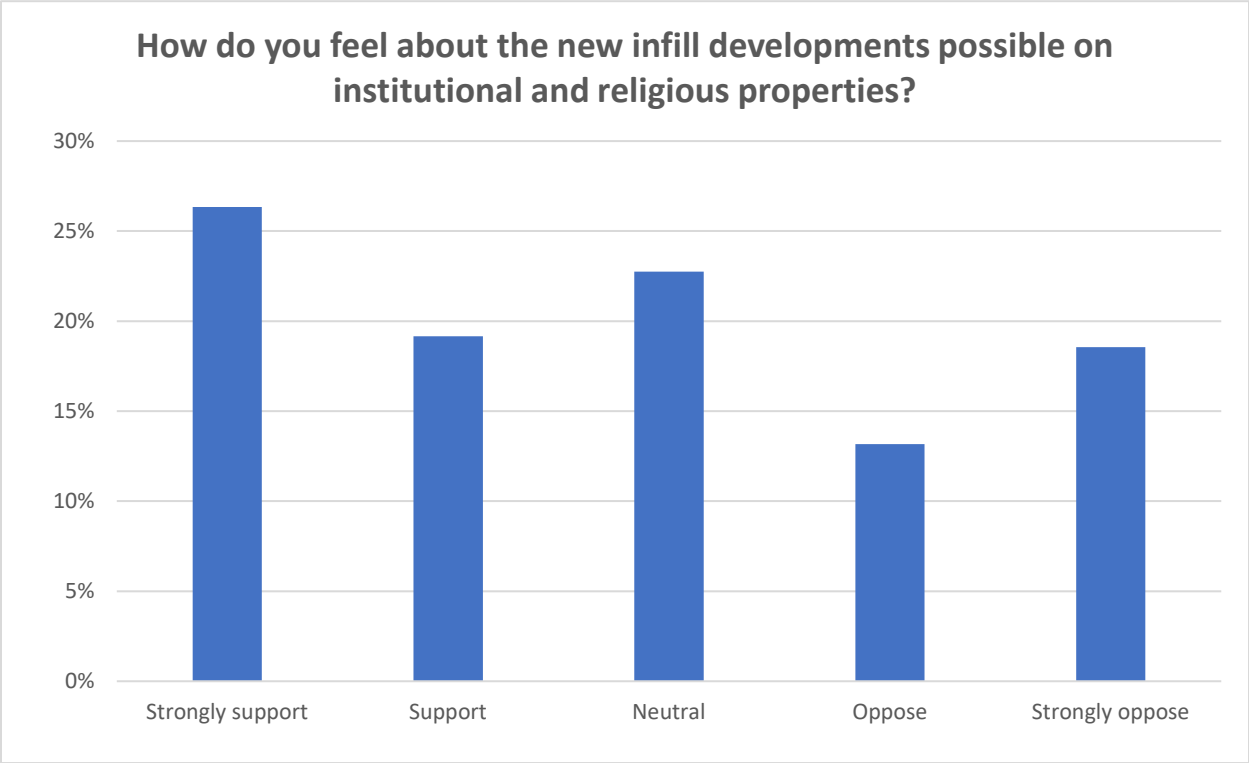


Figure 4: Poll Responses for infill development

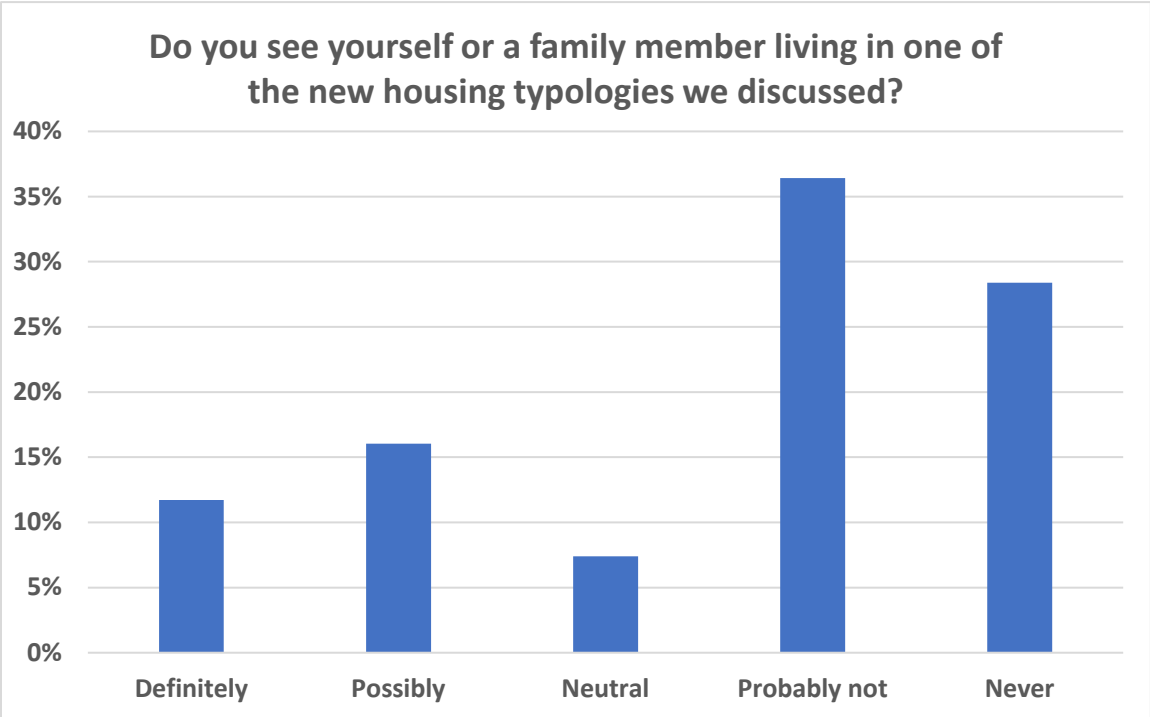


Figure 5: Poll responses about housing typologies

Transportation ideas, particularly those enhancing pedestrian safety and walkability, were met with substantial approval (Figure 6: Poll about transportation ideas). However, the concept of establishing a street grid in the Four Corners area received considerable disapproval during the meetings. Meetings attendees also expressed a desire for additional information on traffic conditions and implications for the proposed rights-of-way. A future transportation workshop will be held to address the Four Corners area.

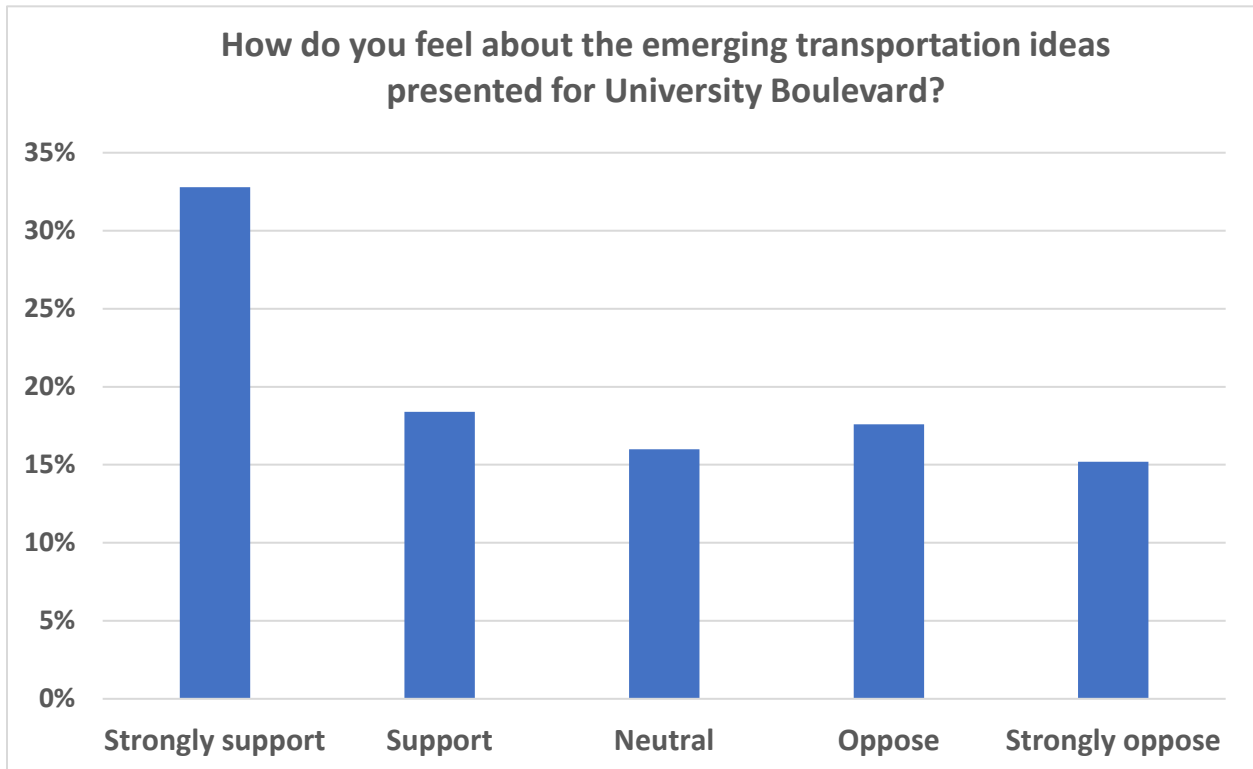


Figure 6: Poll about emerging transportation ideas on University Boulevard

Regarding environmental issues, most respondents were at least a little concerned about local flooding (Figure 7: Concerns about local flooding). Responders conveyed moderate preparation to face emerging climate challenges (Figure 8: Climate change preparedness). Also, there was a strong consensus in favor of incorporating additional trees within the planning area and along the corridor (Figure 9: Poll responses about the number of trees).

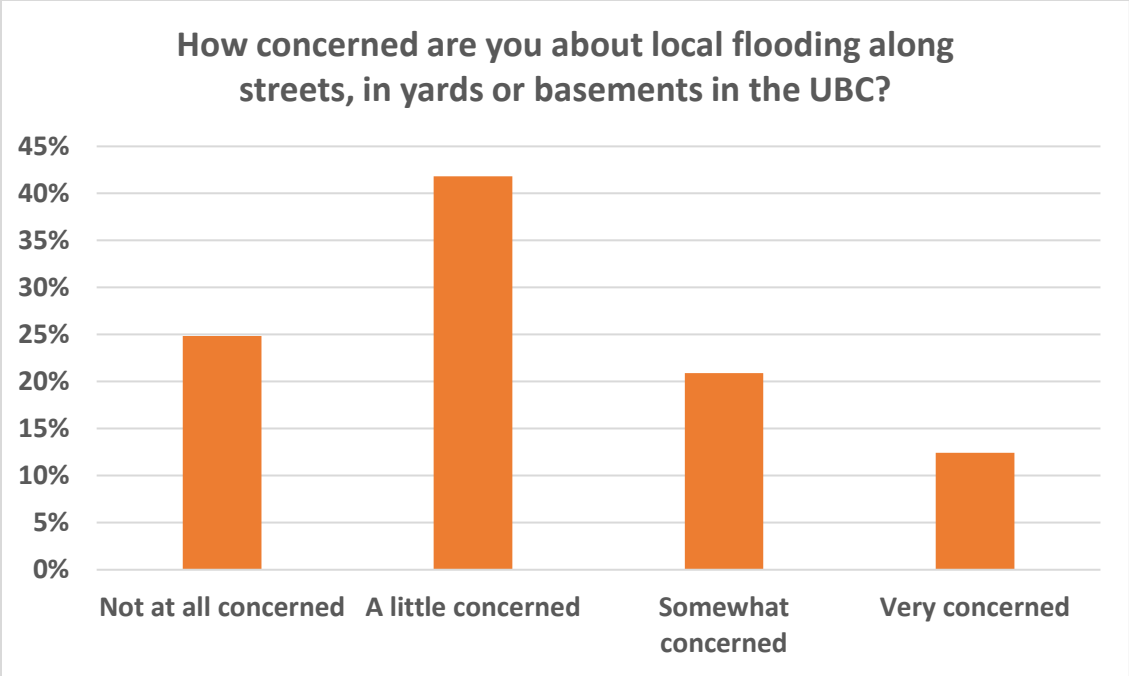


Figure 7: Concerns about local flooding

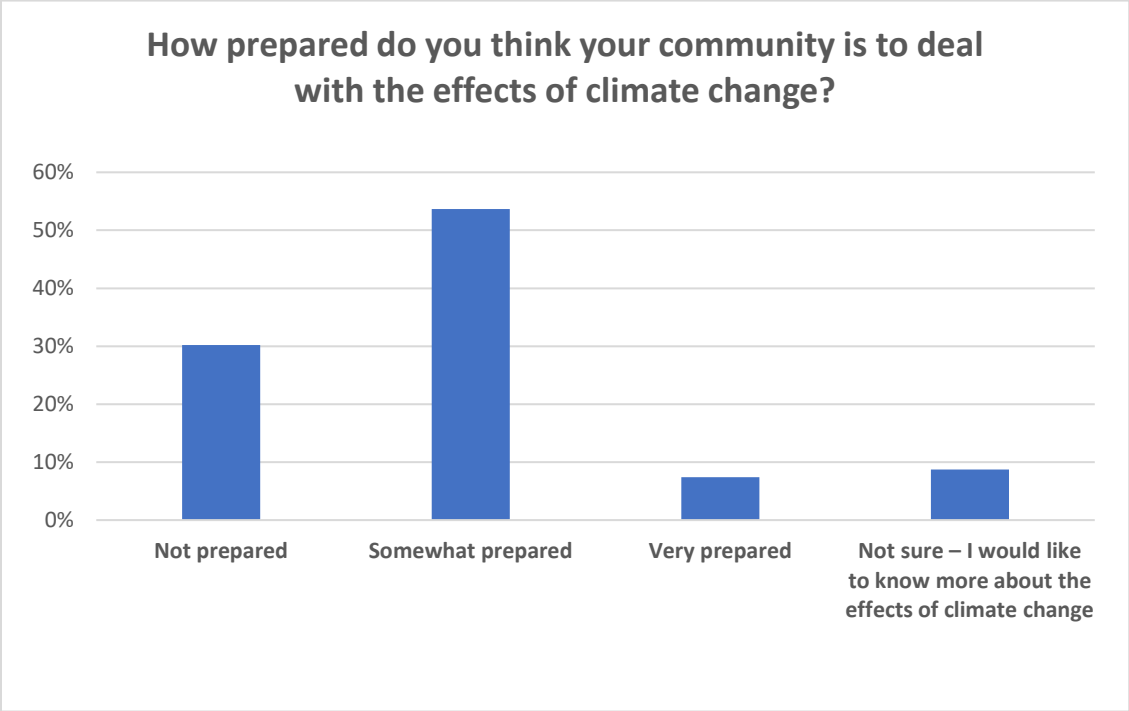


Figure 8: Climate change preparedness

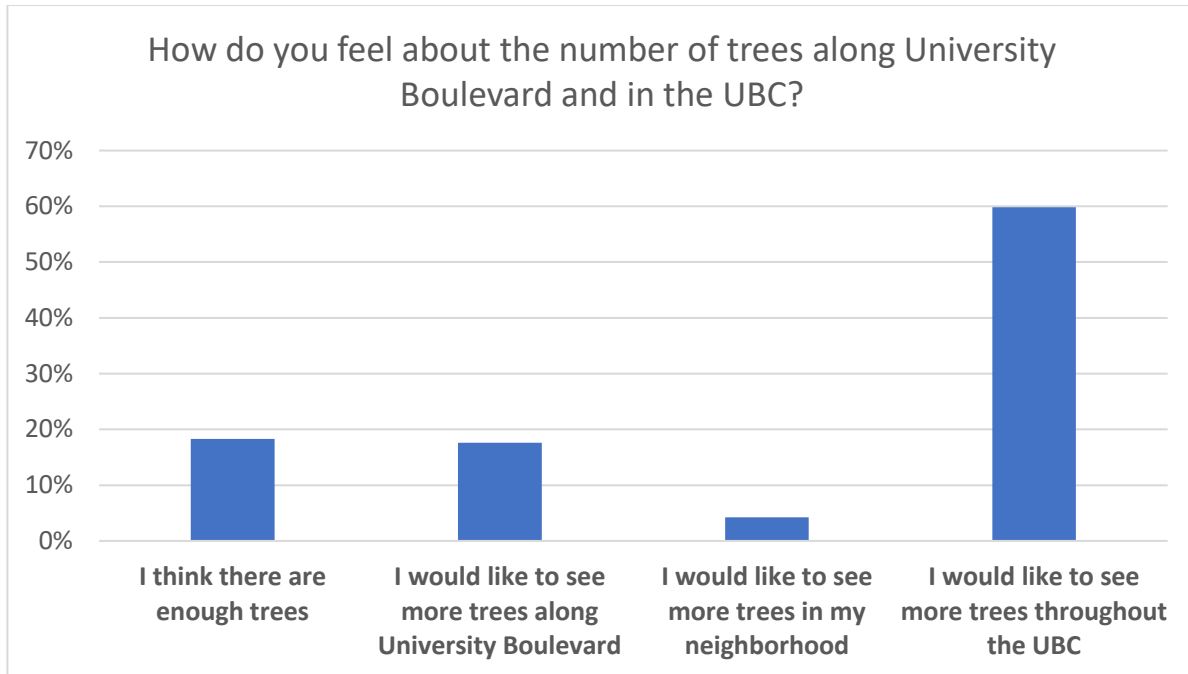


Figure 9: Poll responses about the number of trees

NEXT STEPS

The University Boulevard Corridor Plan team is working towards developing preliminary plan recommendations for later this summer or early fall. After conducting an in-depth analysis for the Four Corners area along with a public meeting for the area, the Staff will present the preliminary plan recommendations to the public and Planning Board later this fall. The Working Draft and Planning Board's Public Hearing are also anticipated this fall and winter.

Attachment: Planning Board October Briefing Presentation



Montgomery Planning Midcounty

10/05/2023
Agenda item 5

University Boulevard

Corridor Plan Briefing



Plan Area

Length of the Plan Area: Approximately 3.5 miles

Number of Lanes: 6 travel lanes, a turning lane at most intersections and a median.

Posted Speed Limit: 35 MPH

Available Transit:

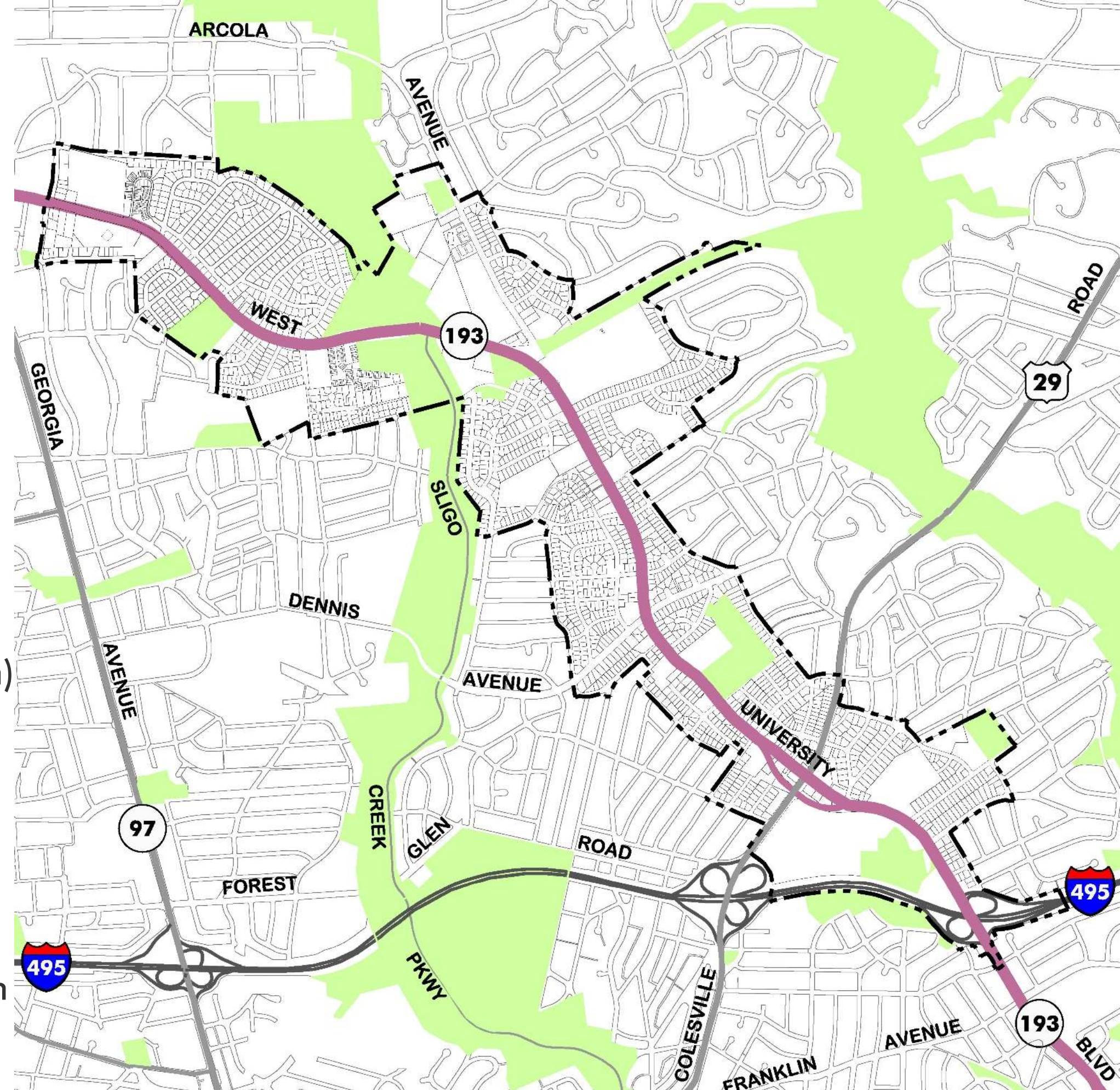
- Montgomery County Ride On: 7, 8, 9, 14 and 19
- Metro Bus: C2 and C4

Future Transit: Planned BRT Corridor (2013 Functional Plan)

Existing Bike Lanes: None.

Sidewalks: Adjacent to the roadway.

Roadway Control: Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA)

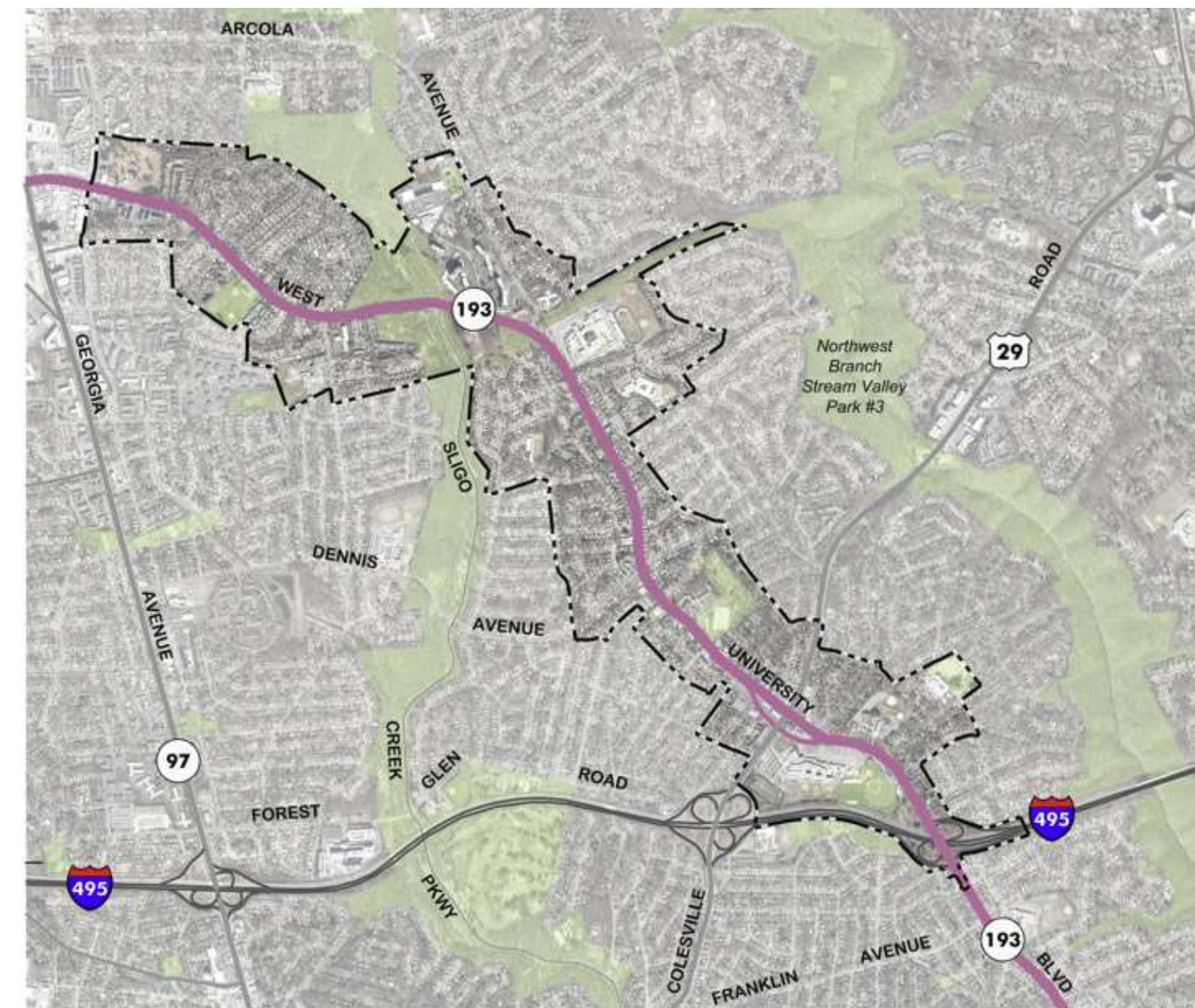


Demographic Profile

University Boulevard Plan Area

2022

Total Population	9,733
Median Age	40.2
Race and Ethnicity	
Hispanic/Latino	27%
Not Hispanic/Latino	73%
White	33%
Black/African American	24%
Native American	0%
Asian	10%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%
Other	1%
Two or More Races	4%
Total Households	3,573
% Owner Households	69%
% Family Households	59%
Median Household Income	\$103,116



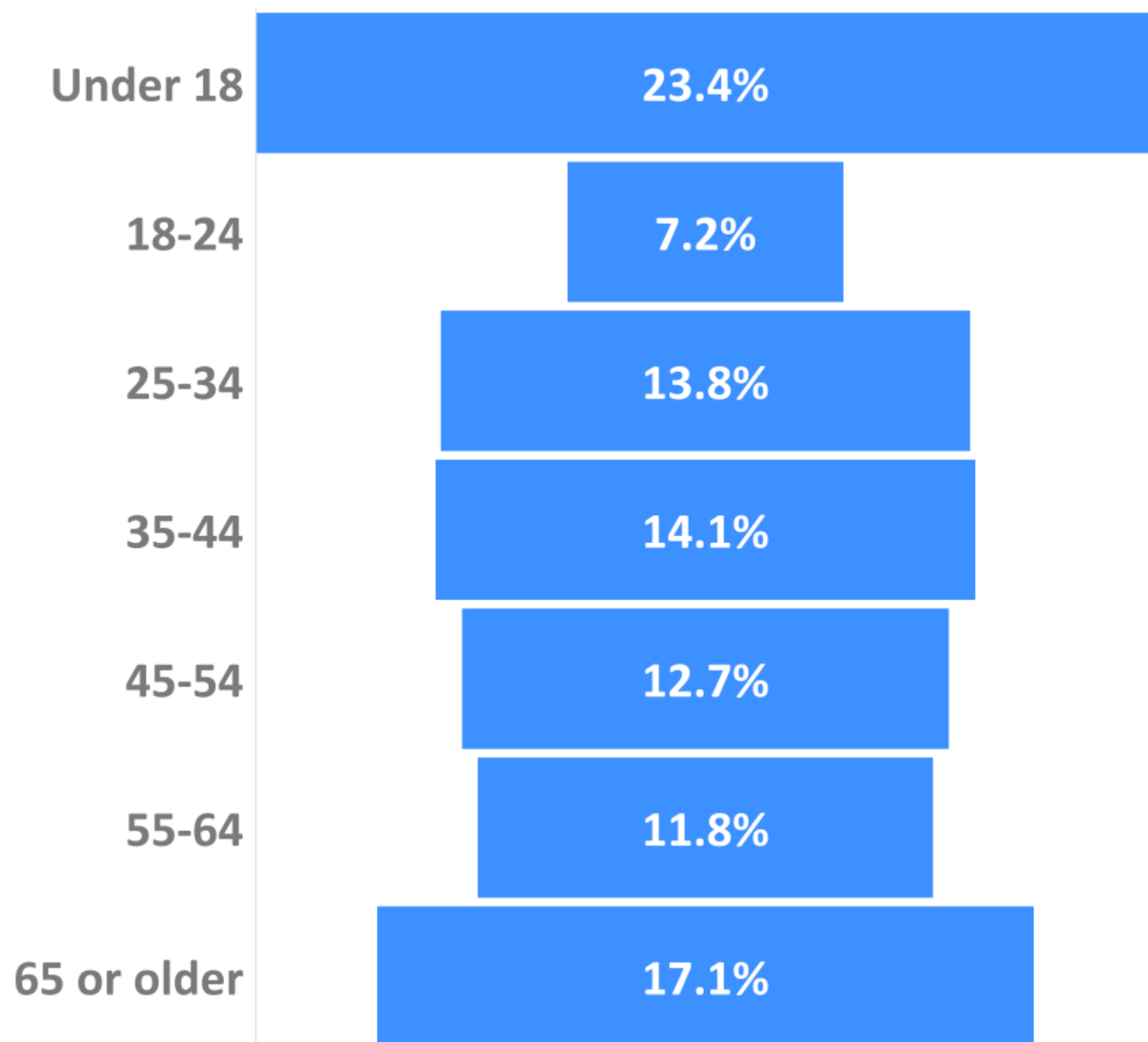
-  Parks
-  University Boulevard
-  University Boulevard Corridor Boundary



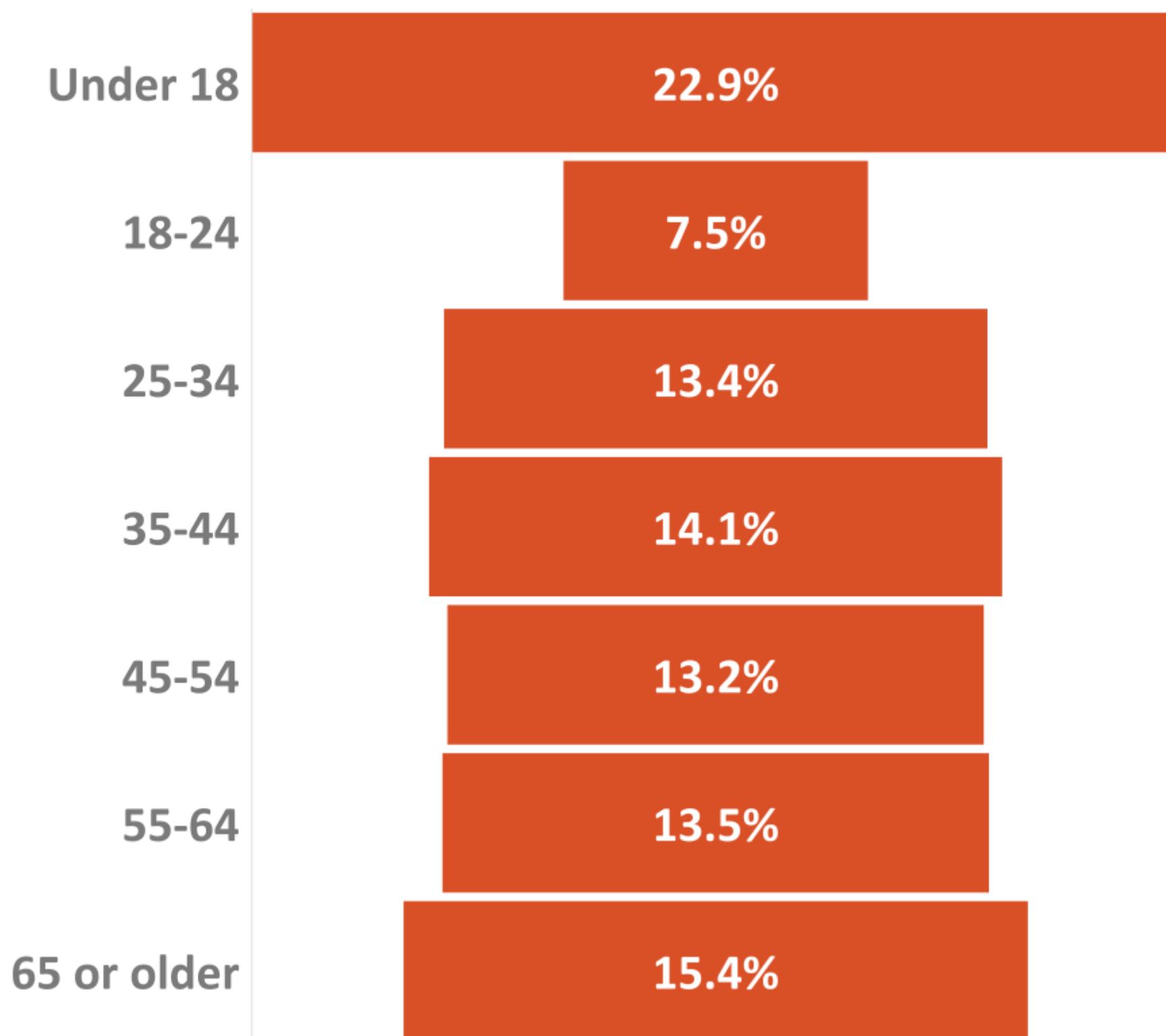
Languages Spoken (other than English): Spanish, Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese)

Age Distribution

UBC Plan Area



Montgomery County





Canvassing

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



Public Transit Outreach



Public Events



Online Engagement



Civic Association Meetings

Engagement Methods



- 10 in-Person or Virtual Meetings & Workshops



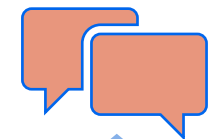
- 13 In-Community Events



- Over 1,000 doors knocked for canvassing



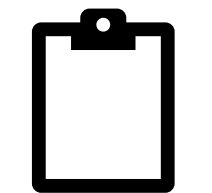
- Conversations in 6 languages



- 239 One-on-one conversations logged



- 2,454+ Mailers Sent



- 166 Questionnaire Responses Collected



- 20,000 + words of text analyzed

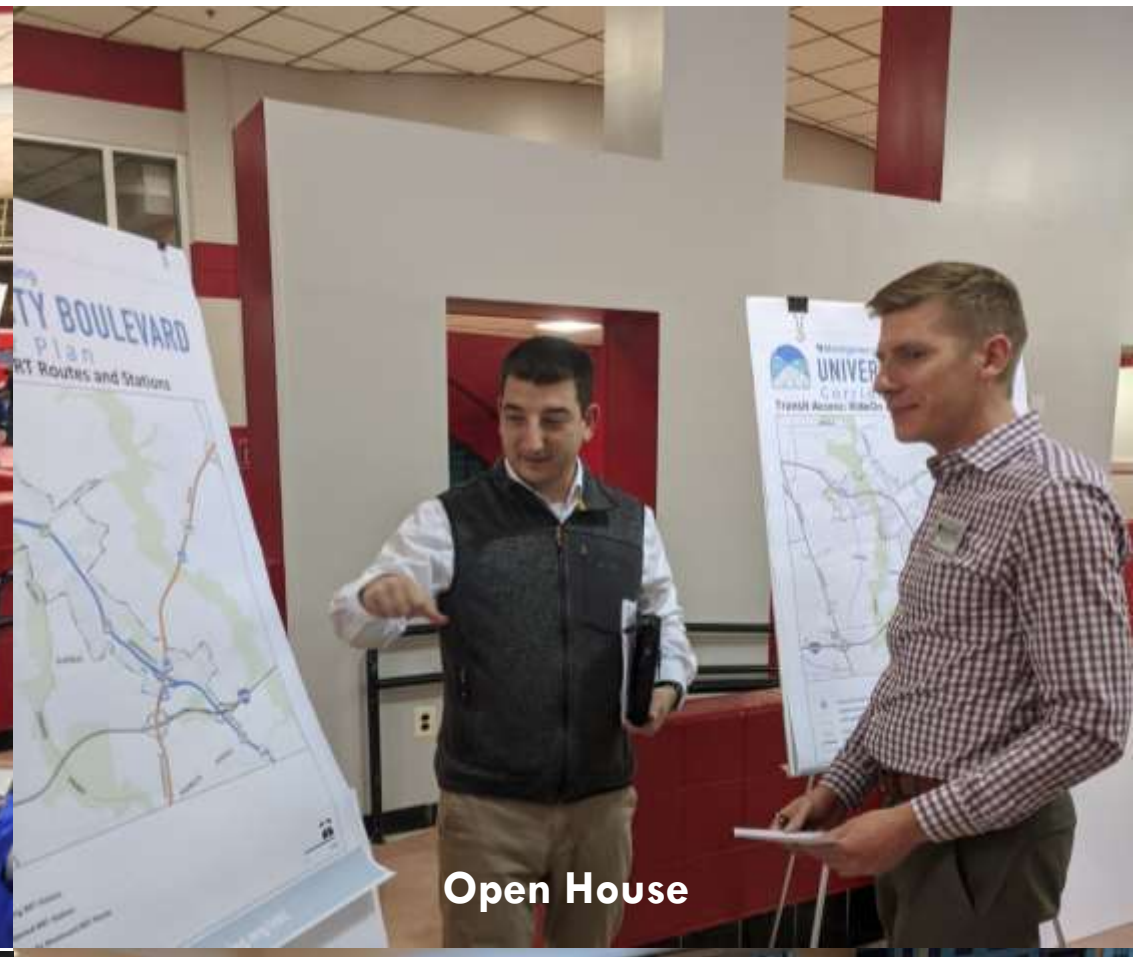
Outreach: In-Person and Virtual Community Meetings



Public Meeting



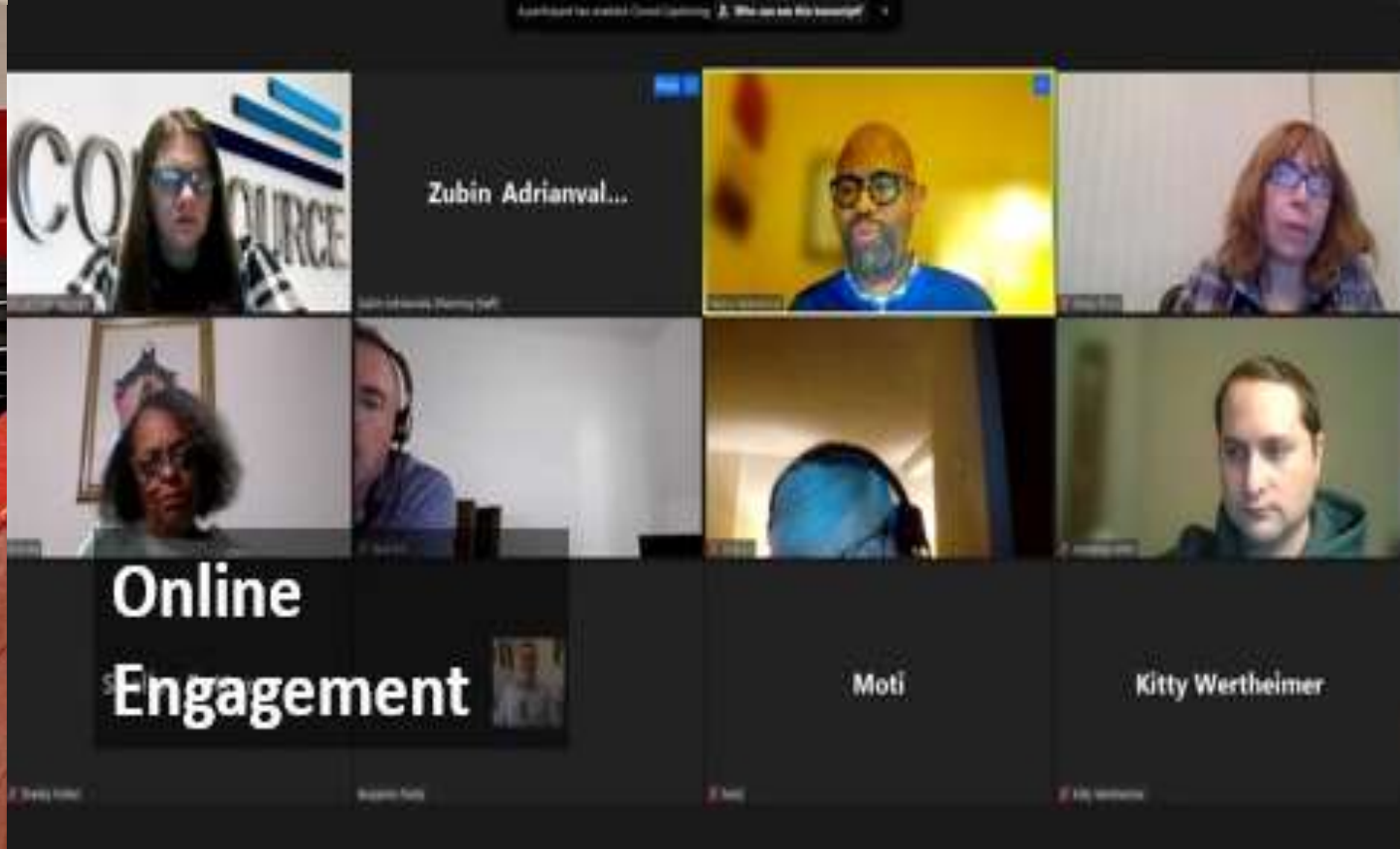
Open House



Open House



Public Workshop



Online Engagement



Public Workshop

Outreach: Civic Associations, Pop-Up Events and Business Canvassing



Outreach: Door to Door Canvassing and Transit Users



Everyday Canvassing



Everyday Canvassing

Outreach: Online

University Blvd Map Results

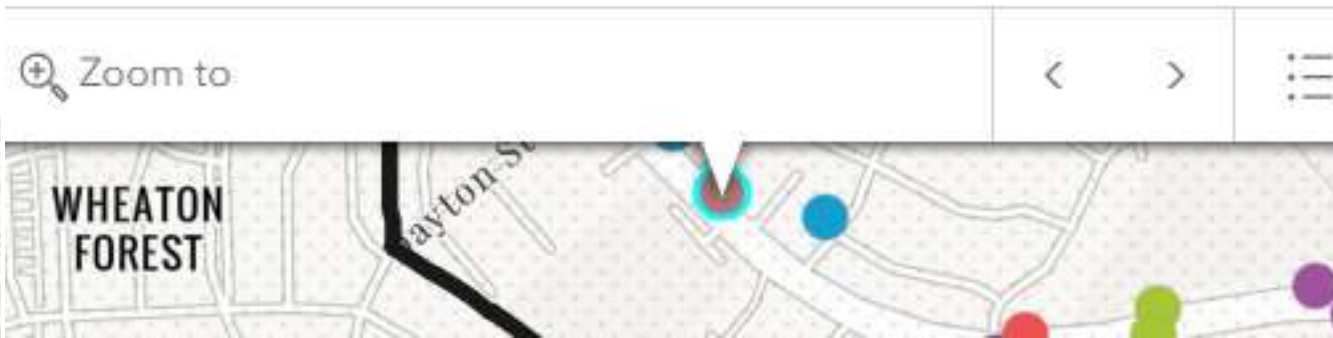
- bike connections
- other
- roads
- sidewalks
- trails
- transit



Submitted mobility online comments

Comments

There is a bus stop at this intersection and across the street a large park and an apartment community. People often cross University Blvd mid block after getting off the bus, or to access/leave park on weekends. Park is often very busy on weekends, and sometimes see

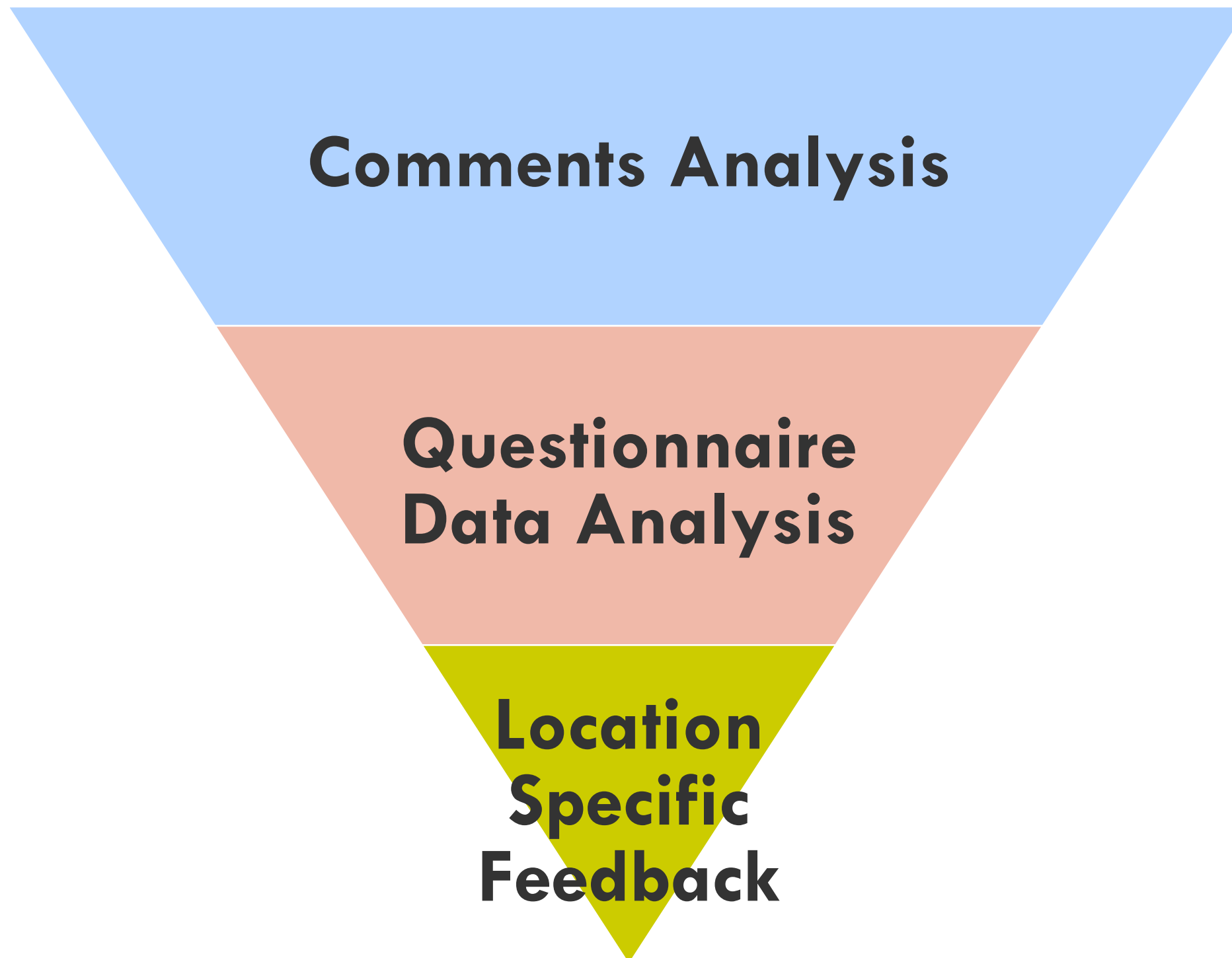


Comments

Would like to see increased transit frequency by reducing headways on the Metrobus C busses and the Ride On route 9. Ride On recently increased headways from every 20 minutes to 25 minutes. May not seem like much of a difference but it does make me sometimes look for



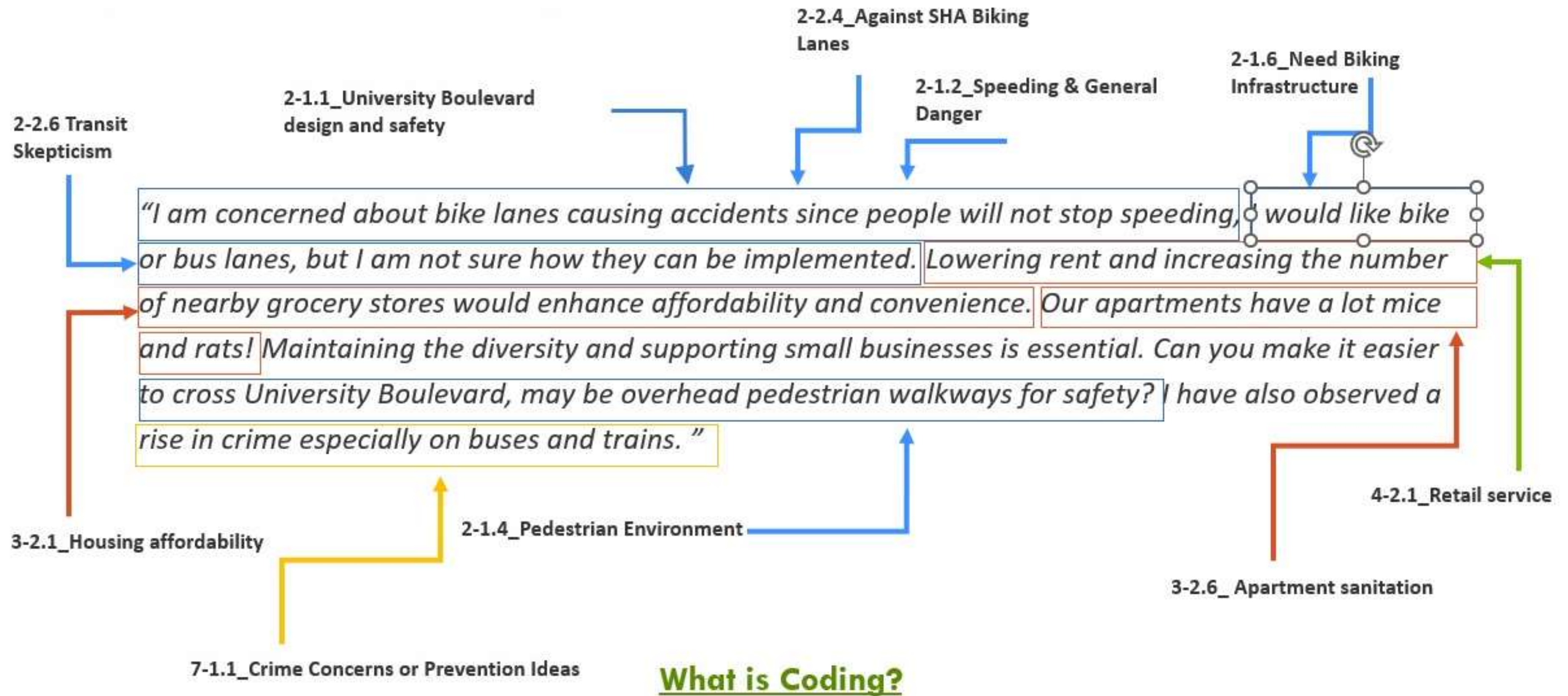
Analyzing the Feedback



Qualitative Data Analysis

- Examines non-numerical data
- Explores human experiences and opinions
- Involves coding to identify meaningful patterns
- Captures diverse perspectives, and generates nuanced insights

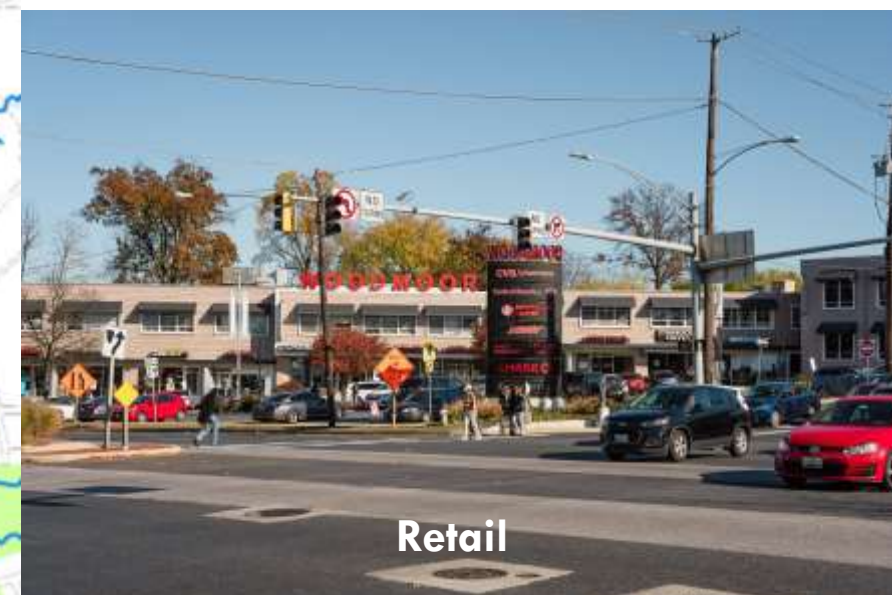
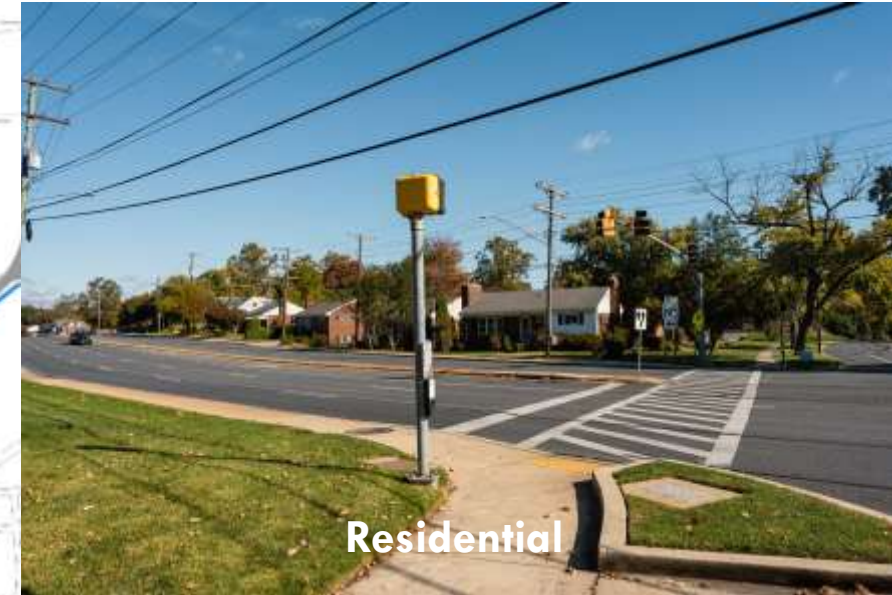
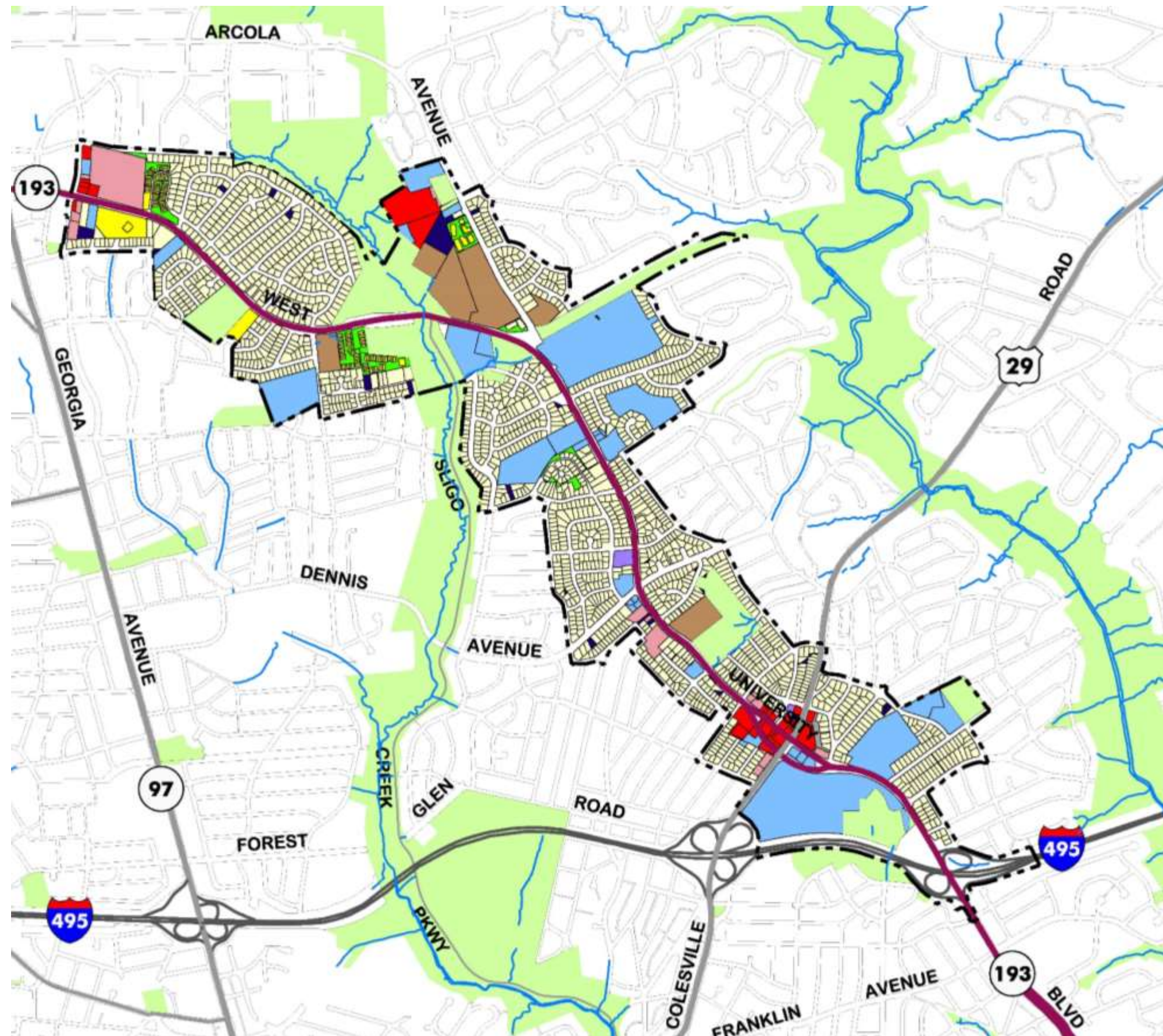
Qualitative Data Analysis



Community Feedback Themes

- Appreciation for neighborhood diversity
- Concerns: Pedestrian safety & need for better biking infrastructure
- Housing: Quality, affordability, availability
- Transport: Desire for signaled intersections, wider sidewalks, real-time bus arrival info at well-lit shelters

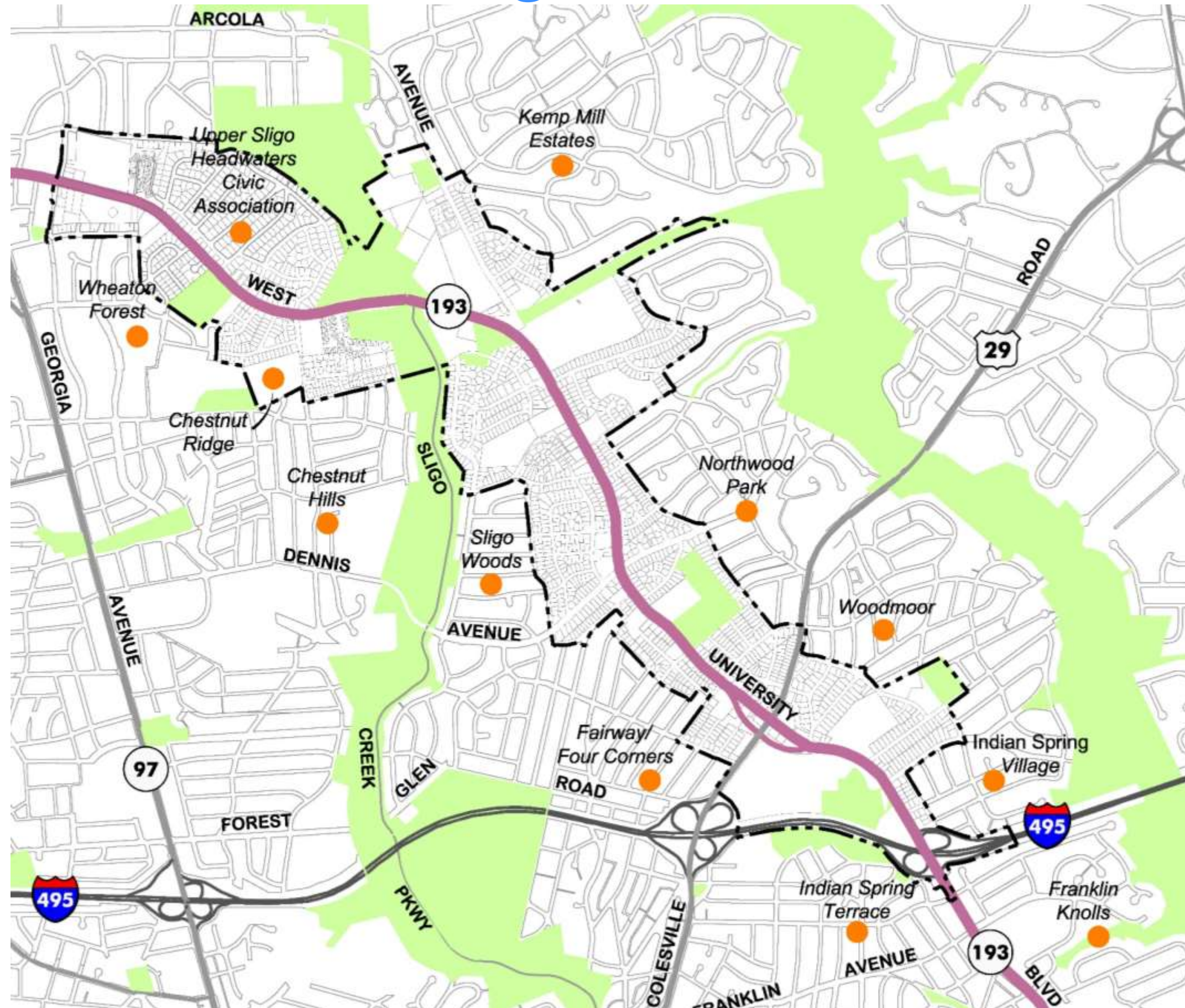
Land Use



- | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| | Multi-Unit Residential | | Office |
| | Single-Unit Attached | | Retail |
| | Single-Unit Detached | | Institutional/Community Facility |
| | Open Space | | Utility |
| | Parks | | Parking/Transportation |
| | University Boulevard | | Vacant |
| | University Boulevard Corridor Boundary | | |

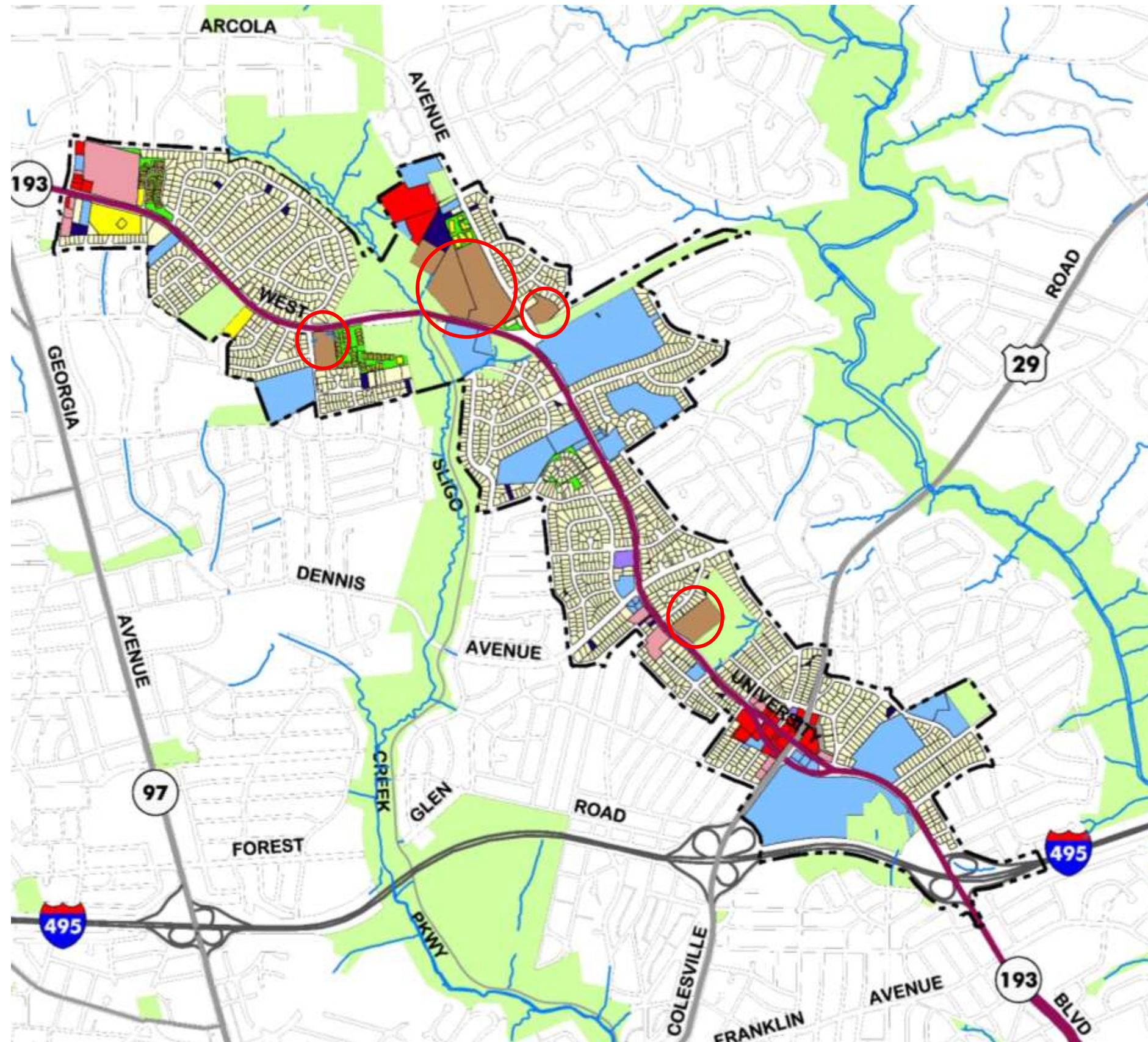


Residential Neighborhoods



Land Use

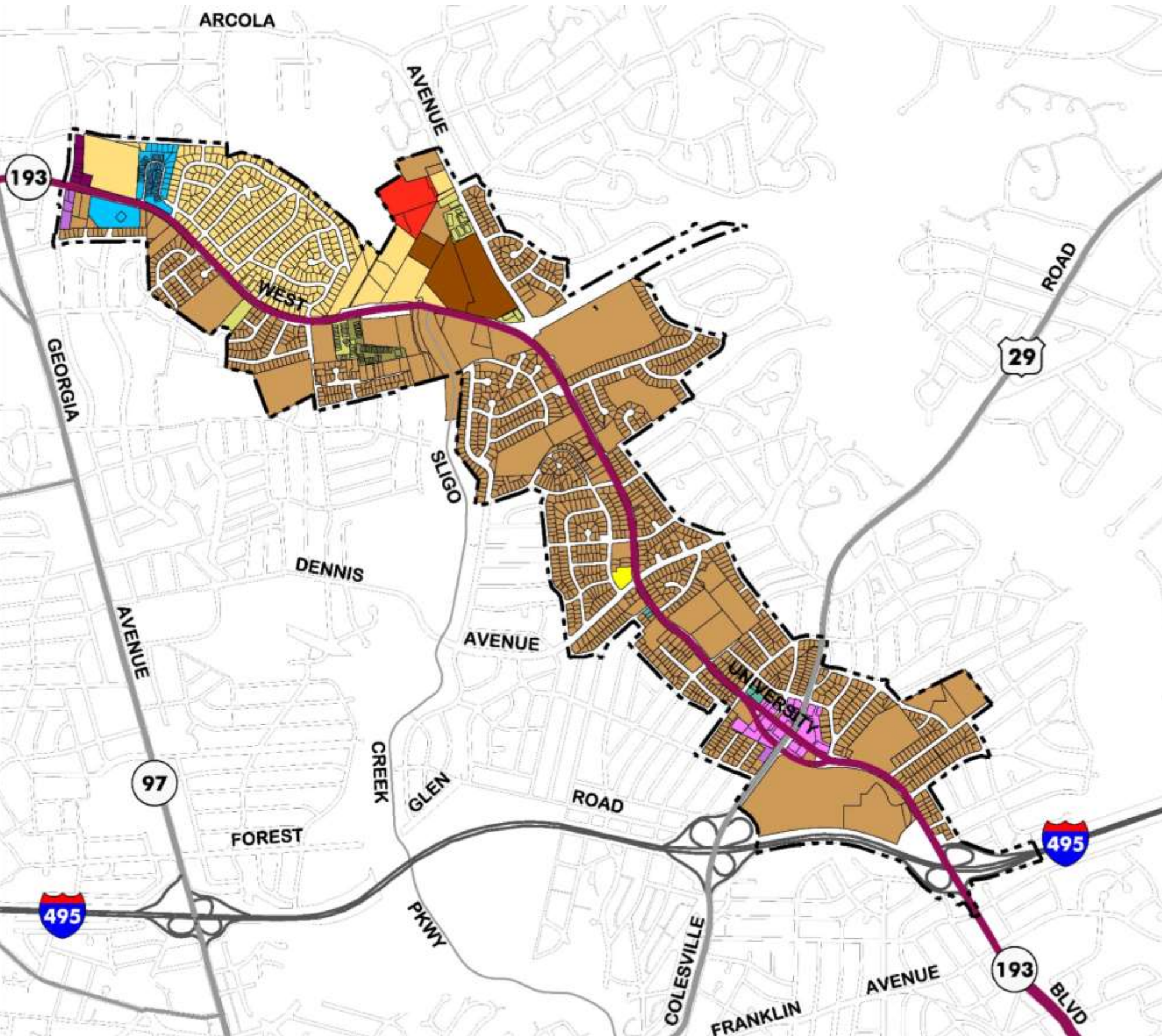
Residential: Senior Housing and Multifamily



- | | |
|--|--|
|  Multi-Unit Residential |  Office |
|  Single-Unit Attached |  Retail |
|  Single-Unit Detached |  Institutional/Community Facility |
|  Open Space |  Utility |
|  Parks |  Parking/Transportation |
|  University Boulevard |  Vacant |
|  University Boulevard Corridor Boundary | |



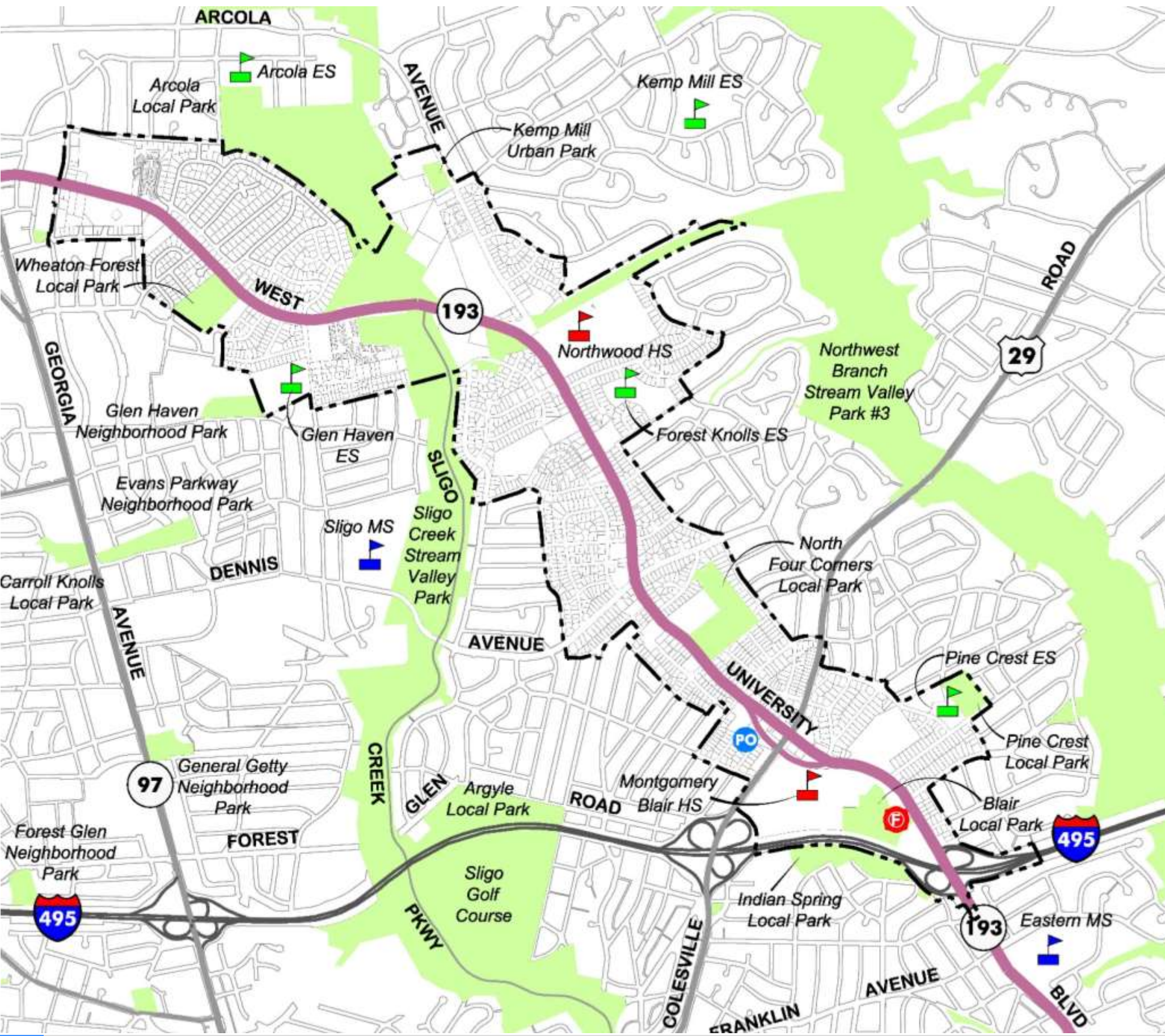
Existing Zoning



- Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN)
- Commercial Residential Town (CRT)
- Planned Development (PD)
- Residential Zone (R - 200)
- Residential Zone (R - 90)
- Residential Zone (R - 60)
- University Boulevard
- University Boulevard Corridor Boundary
- Commercial Residential (CR)
- Employment Office (EOF)
- Neighborhood Retail (NR)
- Residential Townhouse (RT - 12.5)
- Residential Townhouse (RT - 10)
- Multiple-Unit, high rise planned residential (RH)



Public Facilities



Northwood High School











Fire Station



U.S. Postal Office

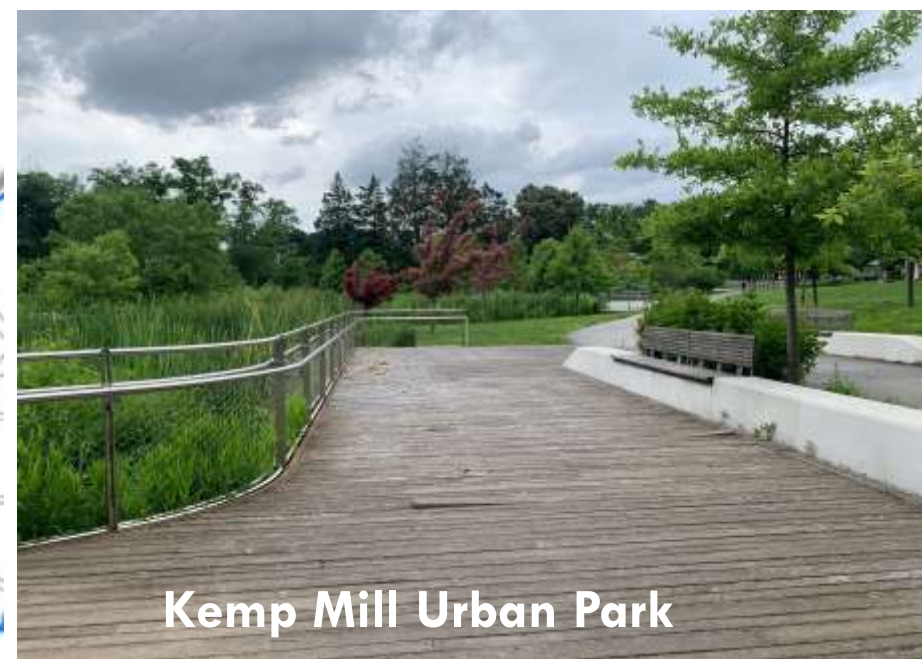
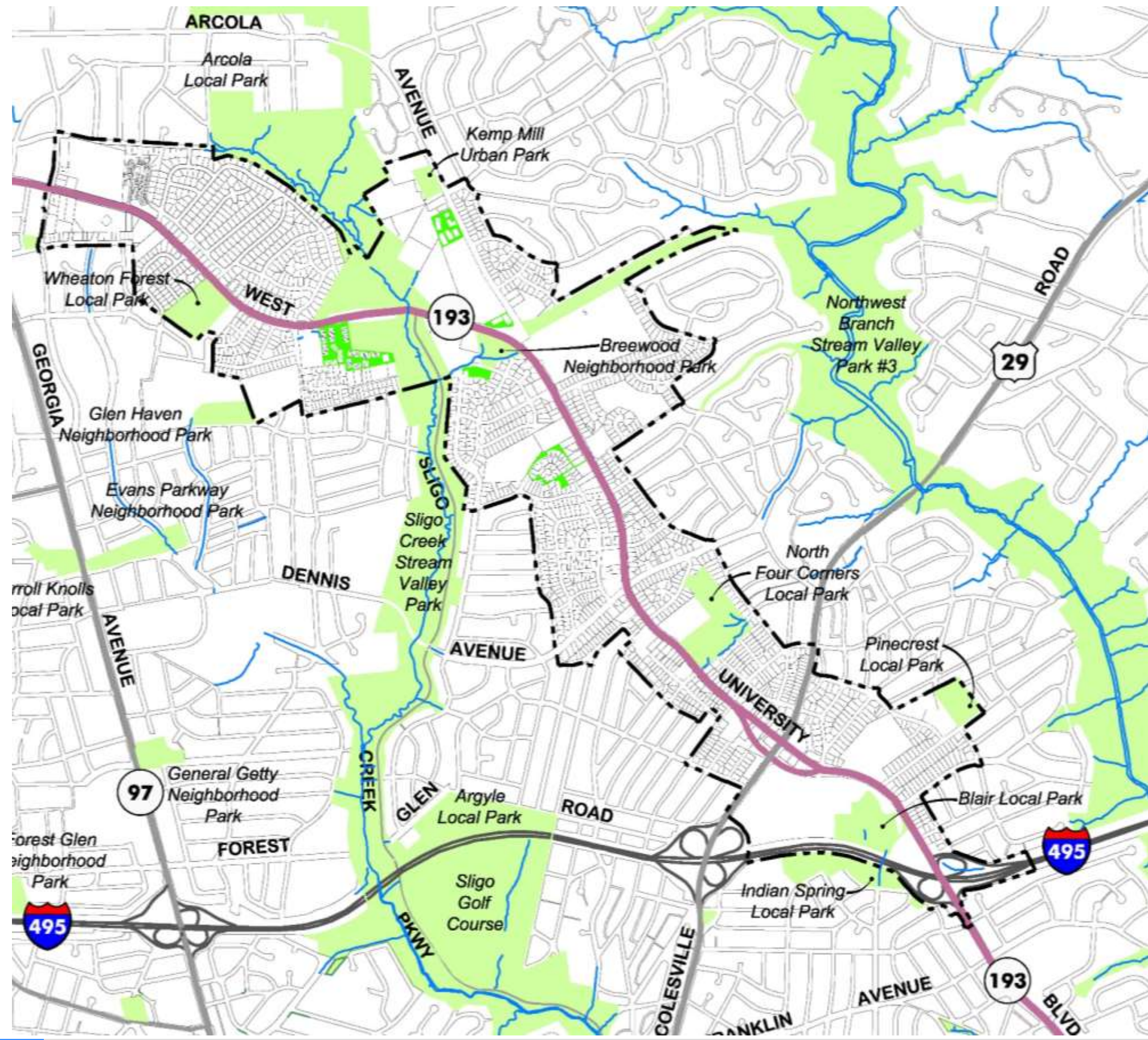


Blair High School

-  High School
-  Middle School
-  Elementary School
-  Woodmoor Post Office
-  Fire Station
-  Parks
-  University Boulevard
-  University Boulevard Corridor Boundary



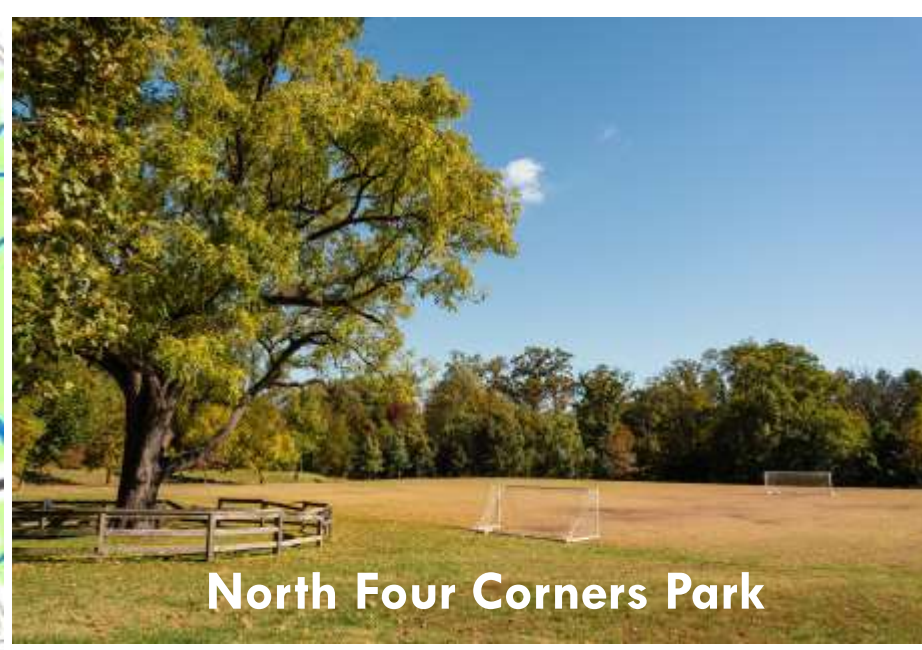
Parks and Open Spaces



Kemp Mill Urban Park



Wheaton Forest Local Park



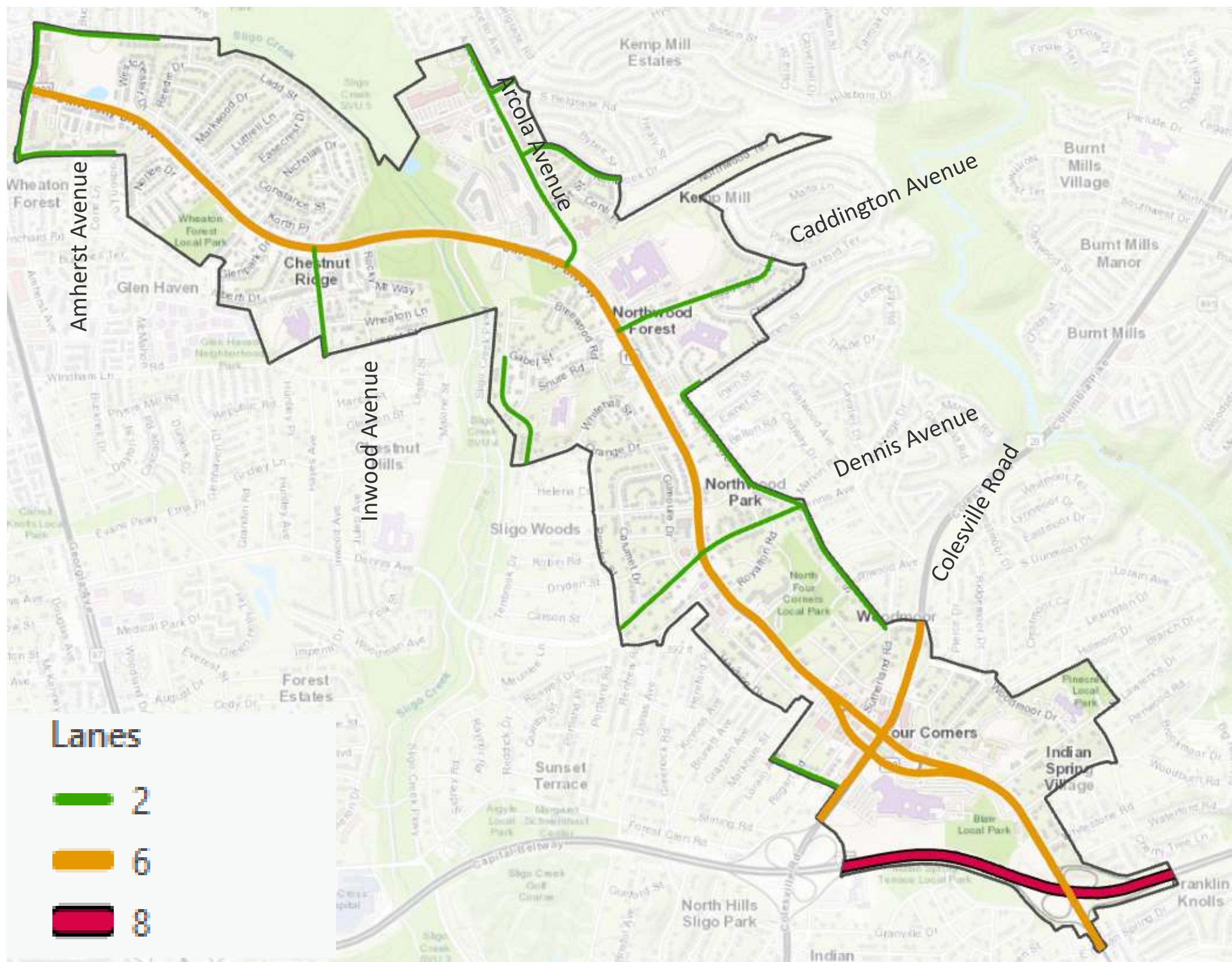
North Four Corners Park



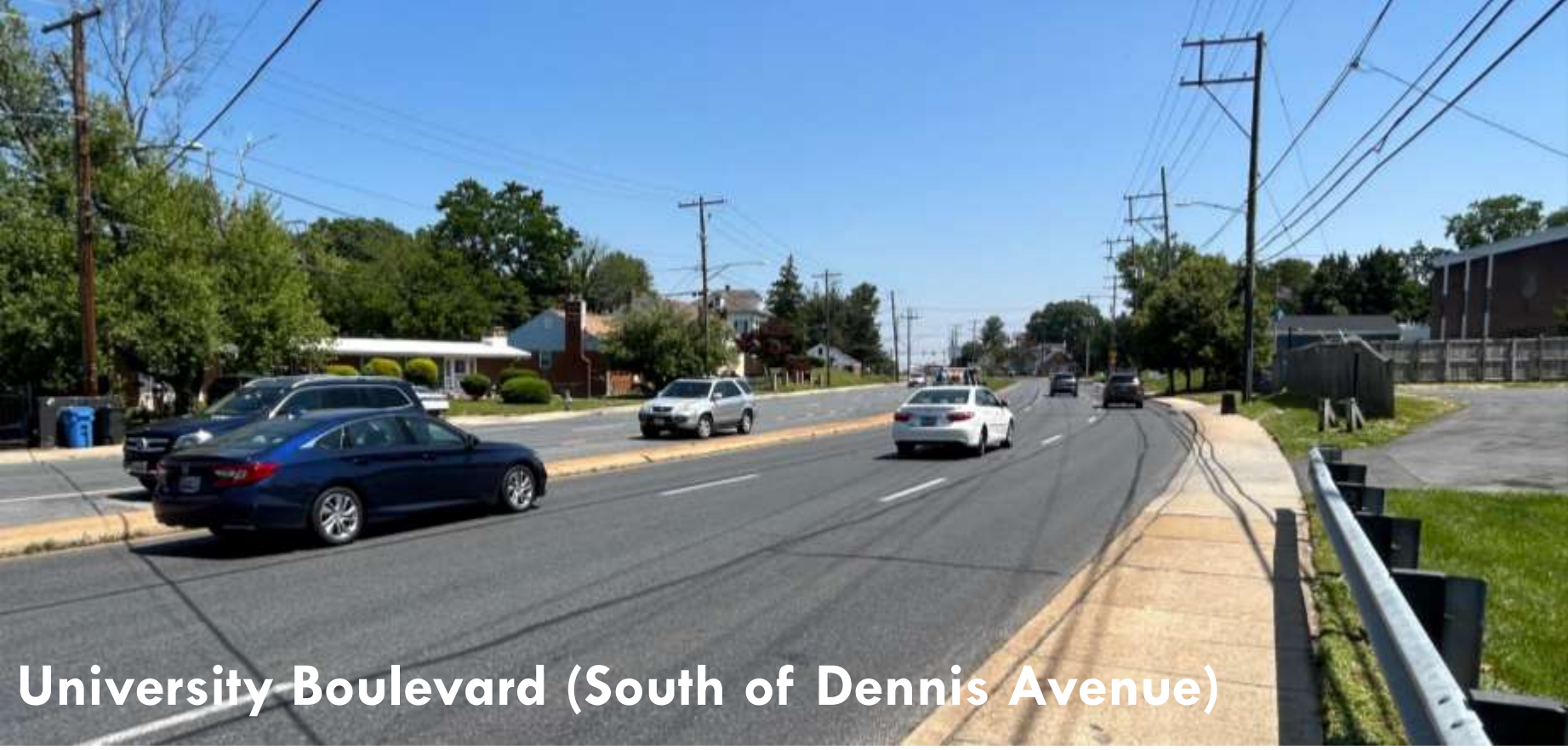
Sligo Creek Parkway Entrance

Existing Roadways

- University Boulevard Corridor – 6 through lanes
- Intersects with I-495, ramps north of East Indian Spring Drive
- One-way Couplet between Lexington Dive and Lorain Avenue
- Major Cross Street Number of Lanes
 - Colesville Road – 6 lanes
 - Dennis Avenue – 2 lanes
 - Caddington Avenue – 2 lanes
 - Arcola Avenue – 2 lanes
 - Inwood Avenue – 2 lanes
 - Amherst - 2 lanes



Existing Roadways



University Boulevard (South of Dennis Avenue)



University Boulevard (North of Dennis Avenue)



Colesville Road (U.S. 29)

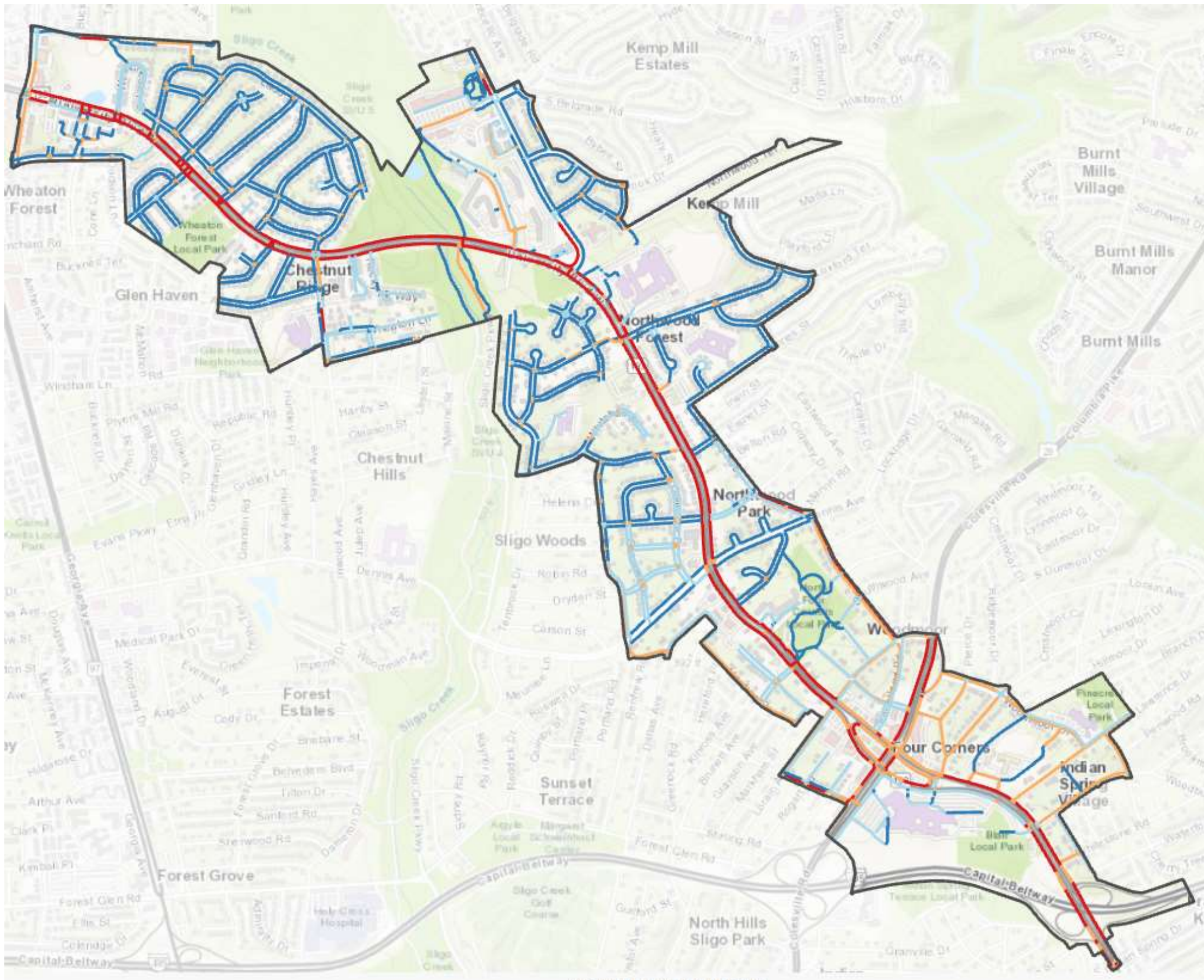


Dennis Avenue

Pedestrian Conditions

Pedestrian Level of Comfort

- Undesirable sidewalk/path
- Uncomfortable sidewalk/path
- Somewhat comfortable sidewalk/path
- Very comfortable sidewalk/path



Pedestrian Conditions

Undesirable/Uncomfortable Sidewalks

- Almost all of University Boulevard in study area is classified as “undesirable”
- Colesville Road is also classified as undesirable or uncomfortable
- Narrow sidewalks
- Some side streets have no existing sidewalk
- Most sections have no landscape or tree buffer
- High speed corridor



Pedestrian Conditions

Undesirable/Uncomfortable Crossings

- Long crossing distances / more lanes
- High speeds
- Unmarked crossing or marked without high-visibility treatment
- No median refuge island
- Right-turn slip lanes



Pedestrian Conditions

Protected Crossings

- Signalized
- All-Way Stop Controlled (AWSC)
- Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)
(aka HAWK)



AWSC – Dennis Avenue at Edgewood Avenue



Signalized - University Boulevard at Dennis Avenue

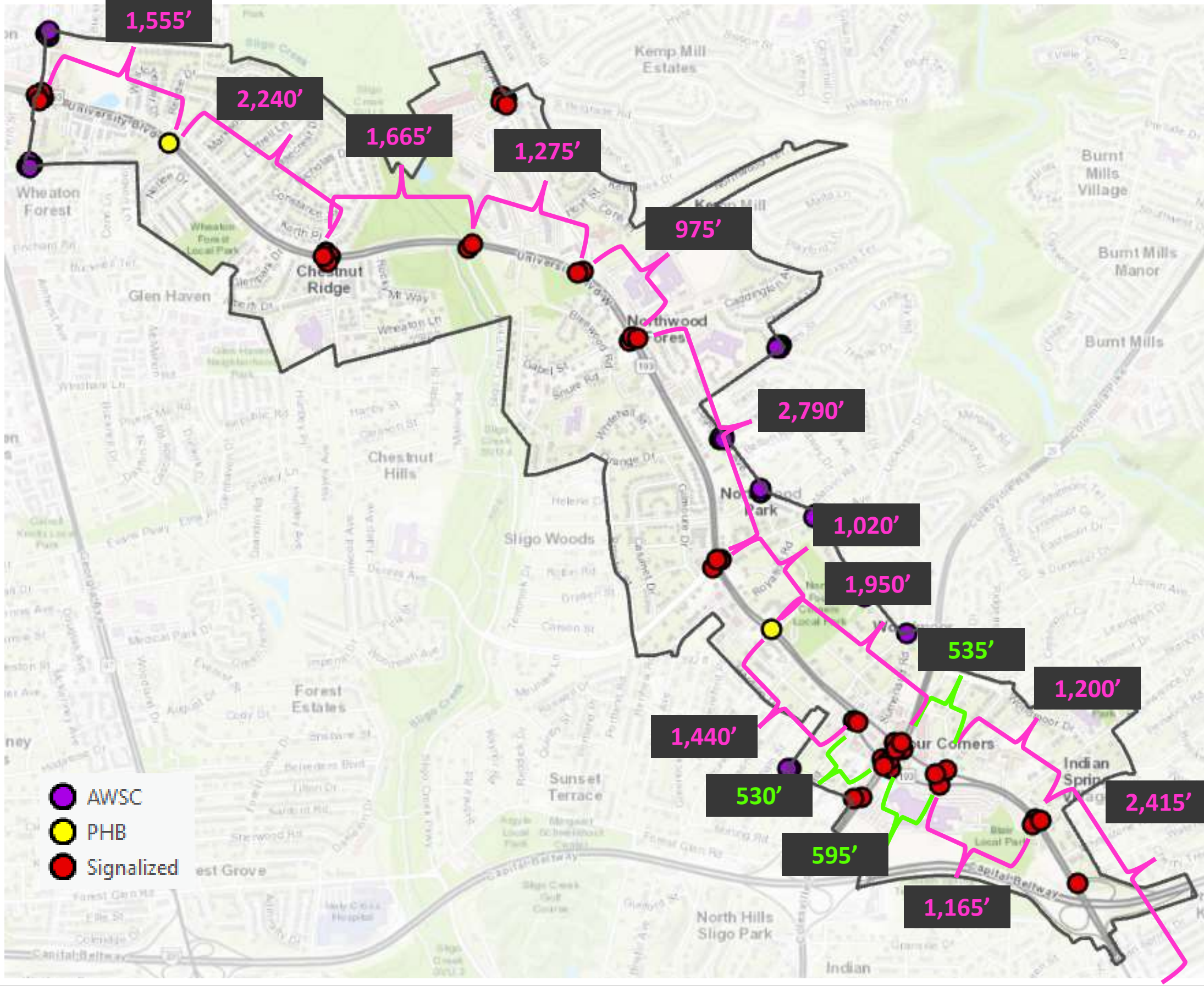


PHB – University Boulevard near Royalton Road

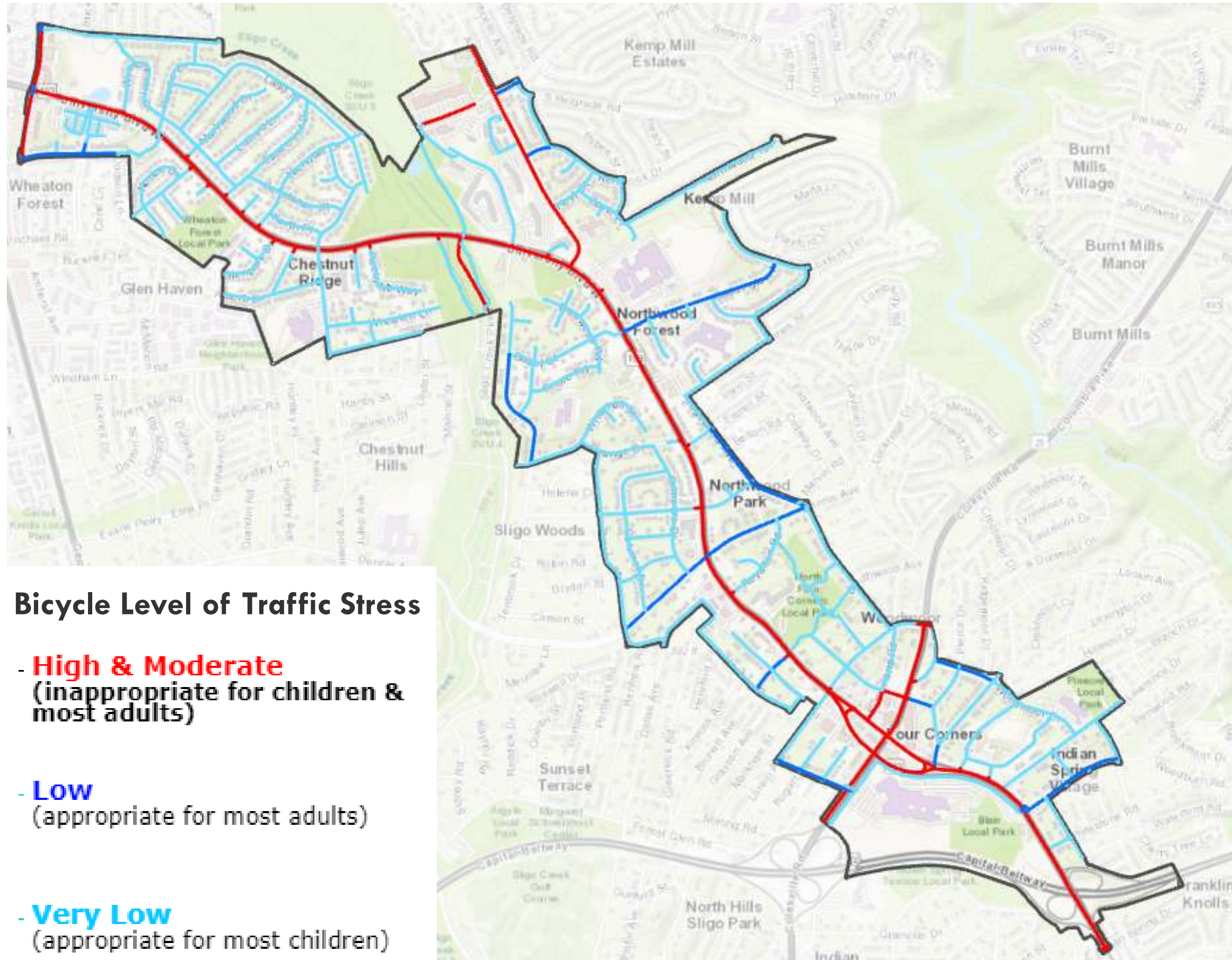
Pedestrian Conditions

Pedestrian Protected Crossing Spacing

- Most of University Boulevard Corridor exceeds the desired maximum protected crossing spacing of 800’.
- Longest distance between protected crossings is 2,790’ between Dennis Avenue and Caddington Avenue.
- Colesville Road does not have adequate protected crossings both to the north and south of University Boulevard within the desired maximum protected crossing spacing.
- Three segments are adequately spaced; all other protected crossings exceed the desired maximum protected crossing spacing.



Bikeways



Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

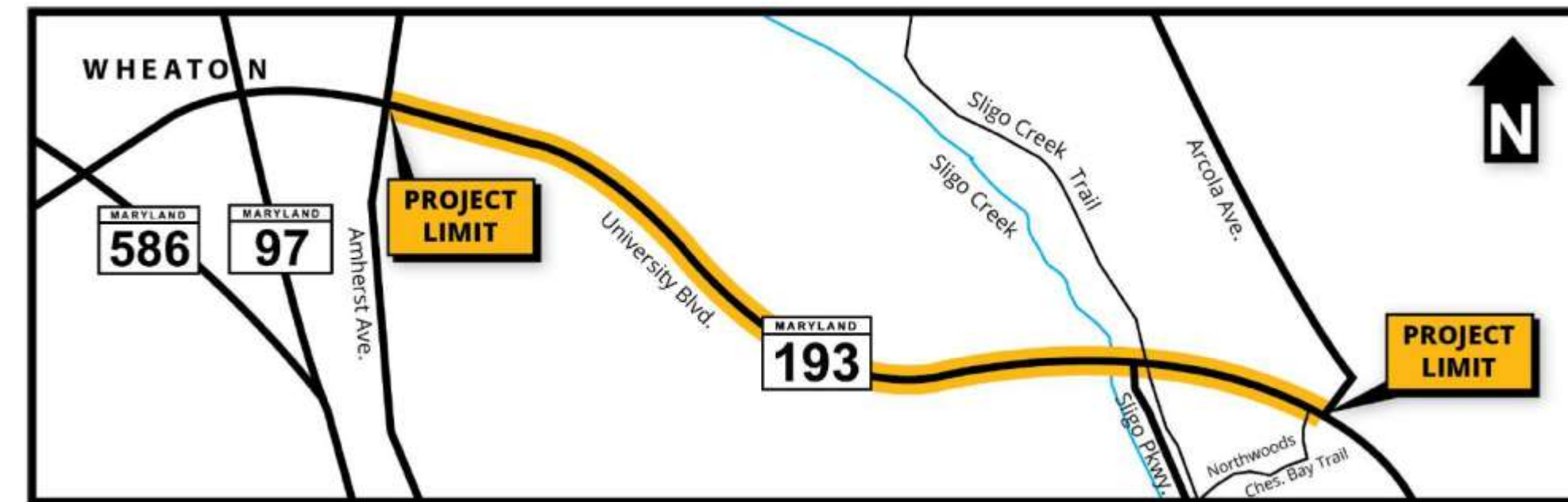
- **High & Moderate**
(inappropriate for children & most adults)
- **Low**
(appropriate for most adults)
- **Very Low**
(appropriate for most children)

- University Boulevard corridor is inappropriate for most children and adults.
- Lack of alternative very low or low stress routes due to disconnected street pattern.

Bikeways

SHA Multimodal Shared Streets Pilot Project

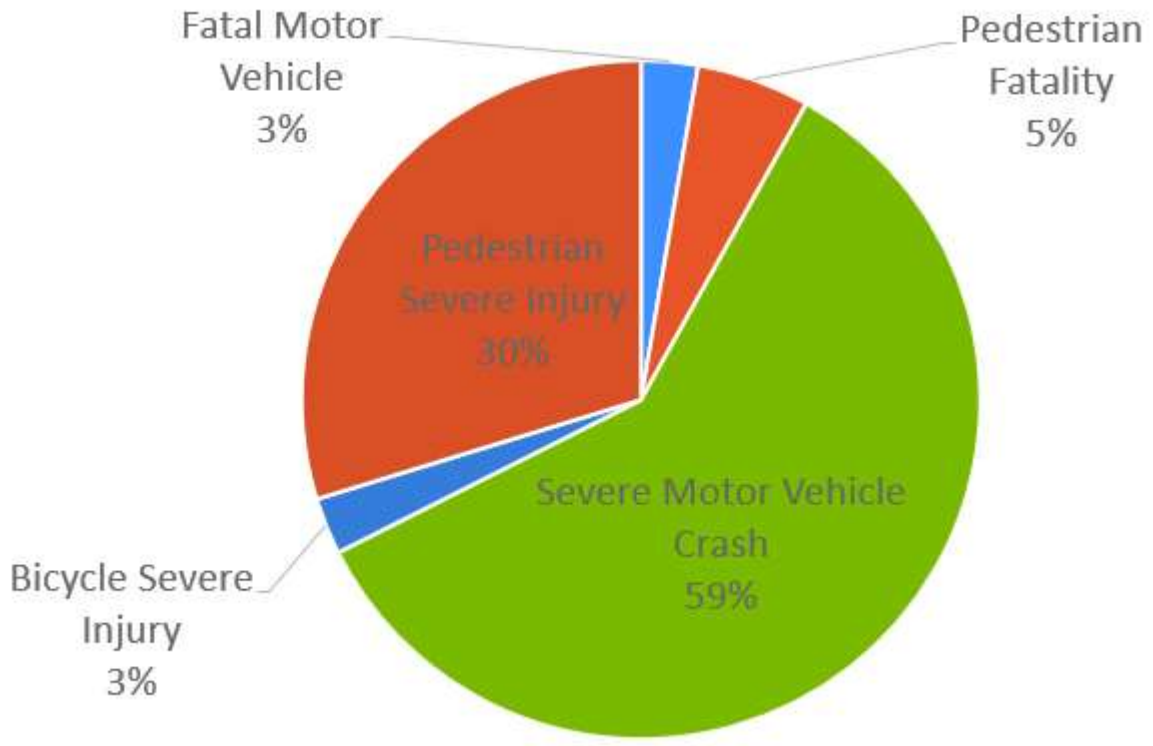
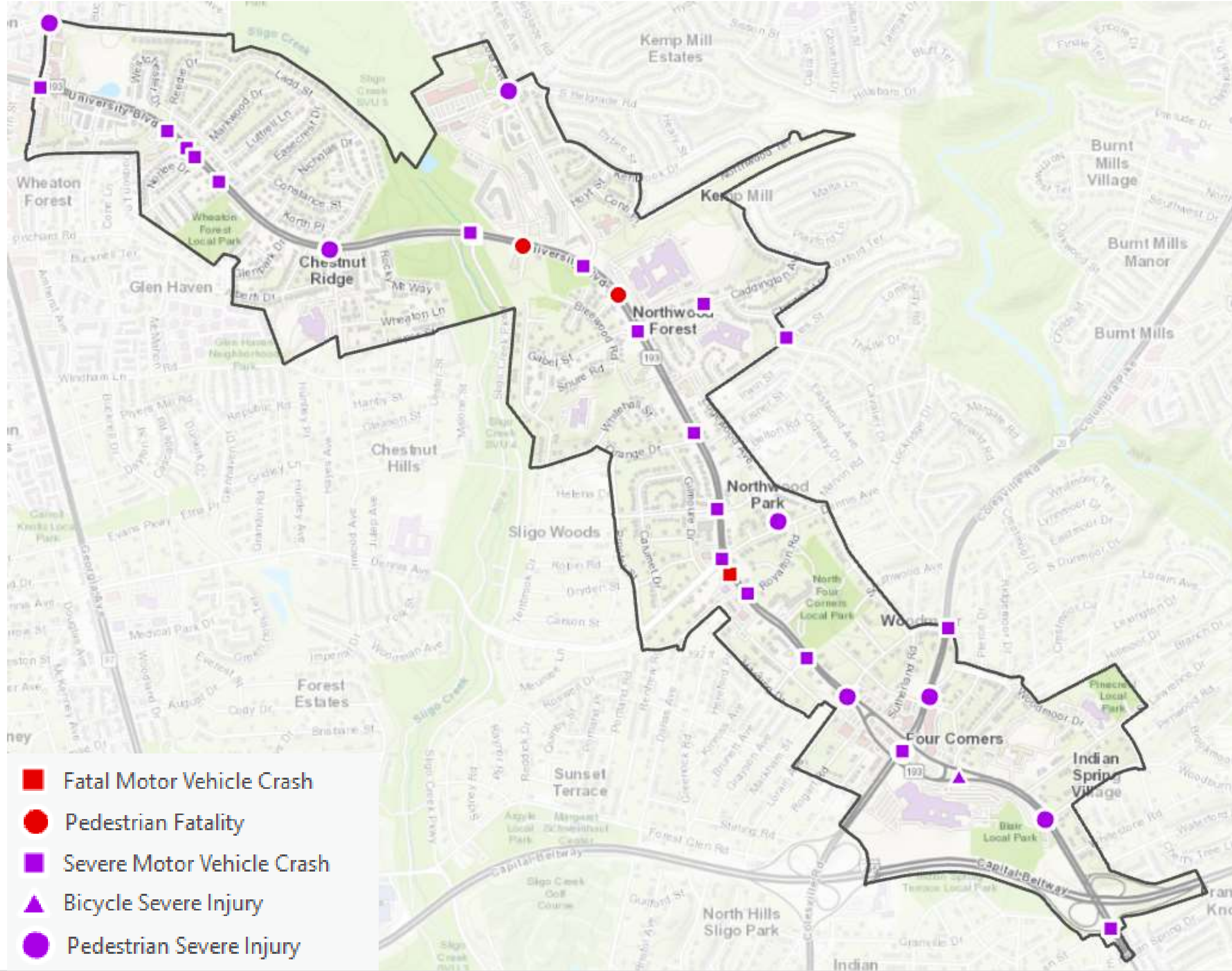
- Installed between June 2021-December 2021
- Amherst Avenue to Arcola Avenue
- One flex post delineated bike lane per direction



Crashes

University Blvd is on the County's Vision Zero High Injury Network

From 2015 to 2022, motor vehicle crashes resulted in **34 severe injuries** and **three fatalities** within the plan area.



Existing Transit Service

Montgomery County Ride On Routes

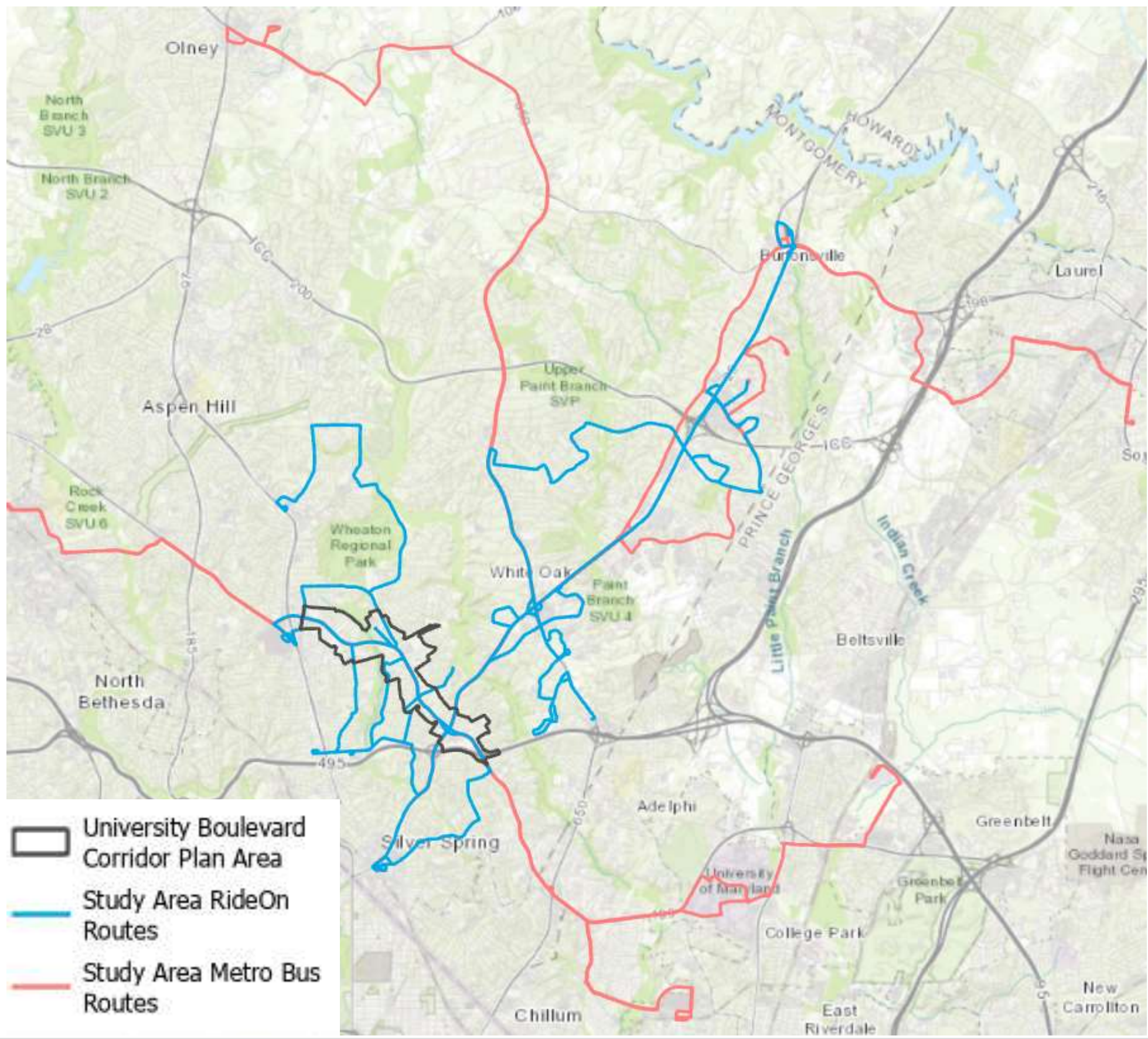
- 7 – Wheaton Station-Forest Glen Station
- 8 – Wheaton Station-Silver Spring Station
- 9 – Wheaton Station to Silver Spring Station
- 19 – Silver Spring Station-Forest Glen Rd at Brunett Avenue
- 21 – Briggs Chaney to Silver Spring Station
- 22 – Silver Spring Station to Hillandale
- 31 – Glenmont Station to Wheaton Station

Metrobus Routes

- C2 – Wheaton Station to Greenbelt Station
- C4 – Twinbrook Station to Hyattsville Crossing Station

Flash Routes

Blue & Orange – Silver Spring Station to Burtonsville/
Briggs Chaney



Existing Transit Service

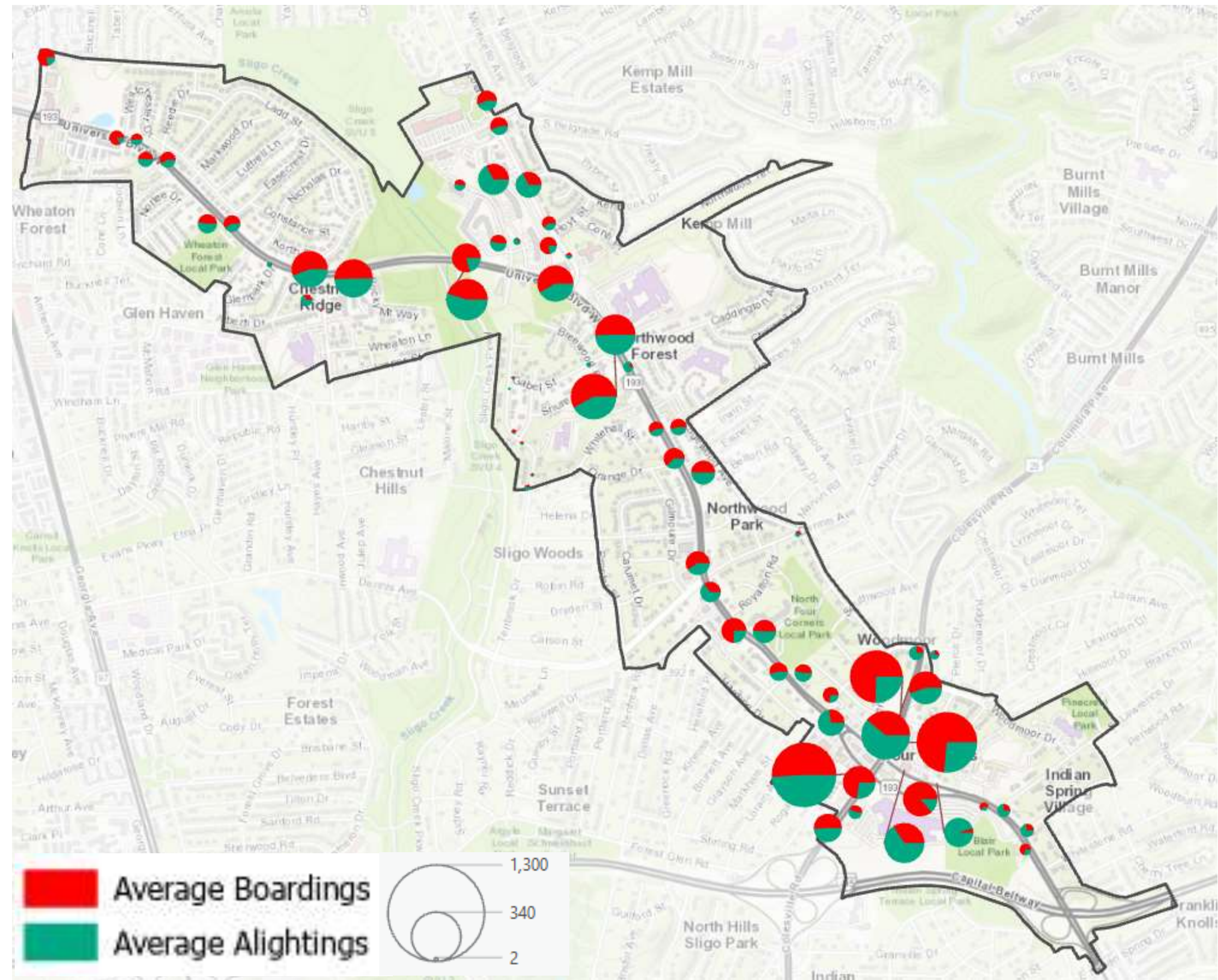
Total Stop Ridership

Top Boarding Locations

- University Boulevard and Sutherland Road (westbound)
- University Boulevard and Colesville Road (eastbound)
- Colesville Road and University Boulevard (northbound)
- **University Boulevard and Gabel Street (eastbound)**
- University Boulevard and Lexington Drive (eastbound)

Top Alighting Locations

- University Boulevard and Colesville Road (eastbound)
- Colesville Road and University Boulevard (southbound)
- University Boulevard and Colesville Road (westbound)
- University Boulevard and Sutherland Road (westbound)
- **University Boulevard and Sligo Creek Parkway (eastbound)**



*Based on Fall 2022 Ridership Data

Proposed Transit Service

MCDOT Proposed Pilot Bus Lanes

Project Goals

- Improved overall service, reduced congestion delays and more consistent travel times.

Location: Between Amherst Avenue and Dennis Avenue

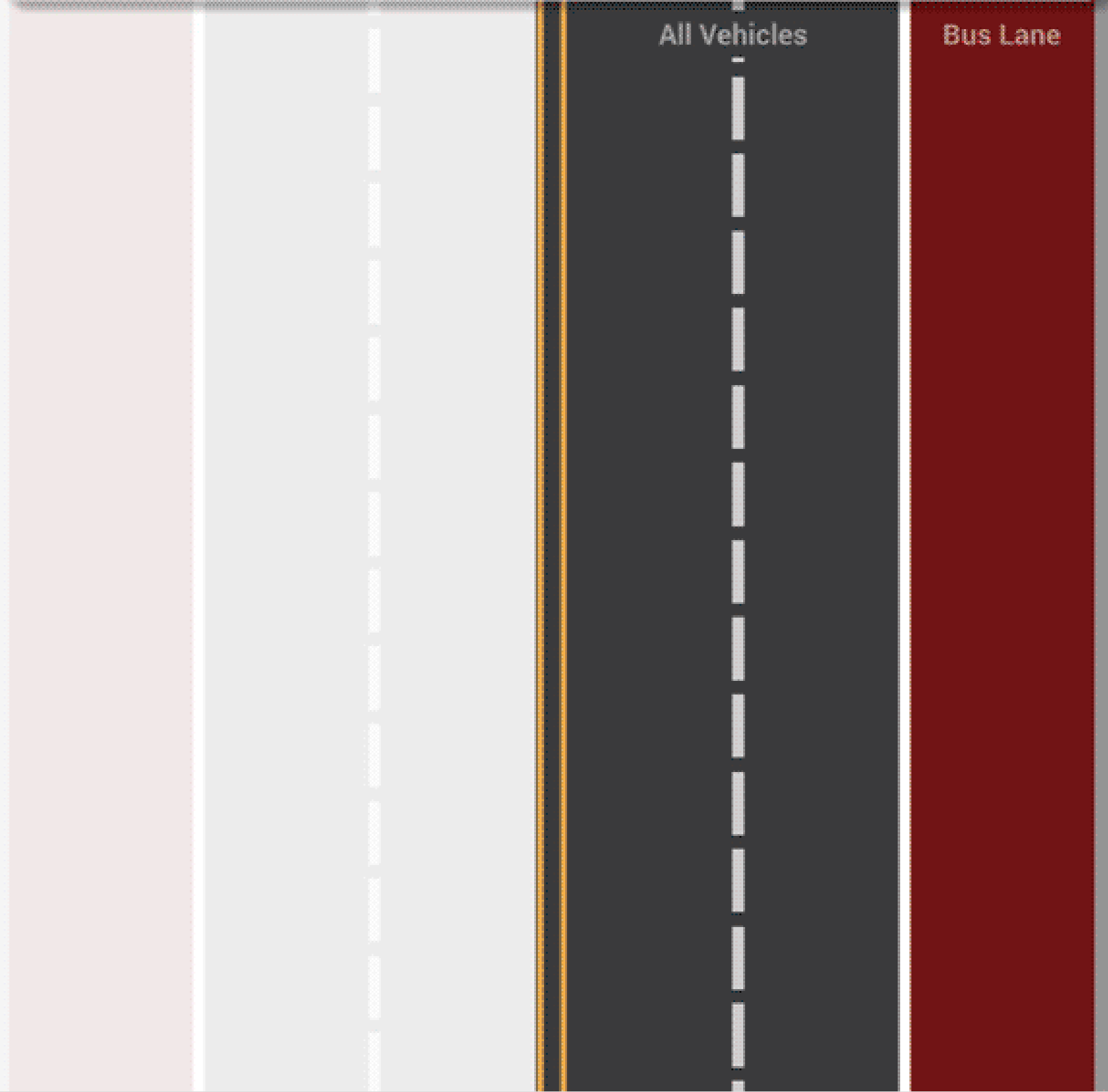
Background

- WMATA C2 and C4 Routes
- Highest ridership in the state
- More than 6,000 daily riders



Illustrative MCDOT Bus Pilot image

University Blvd (MD 193)



Market Analysis Overview

- Residential Market
- Retail Market
- Office Market
- Key Findings

Residential Inventory



- 3,400 residential housing units

- 6.3% rental vacancy rate

- 50% single-family detached units; 30% multi-family units in buildings of 50 or more units

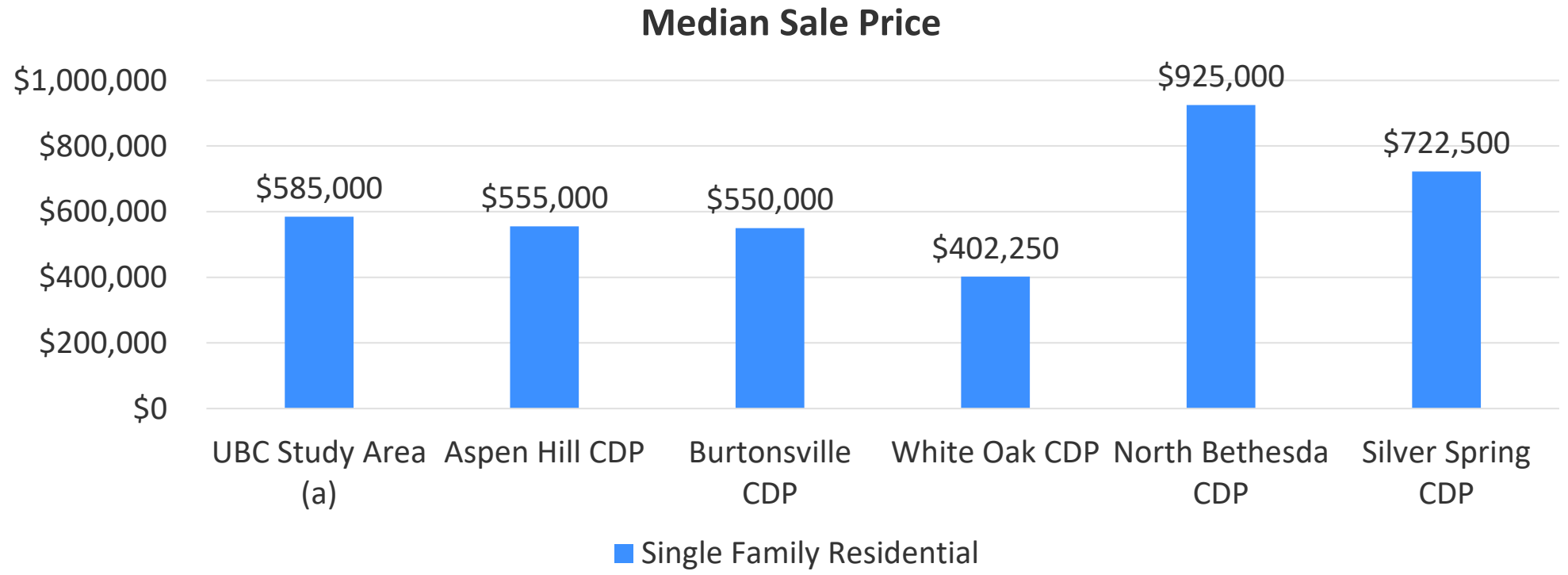
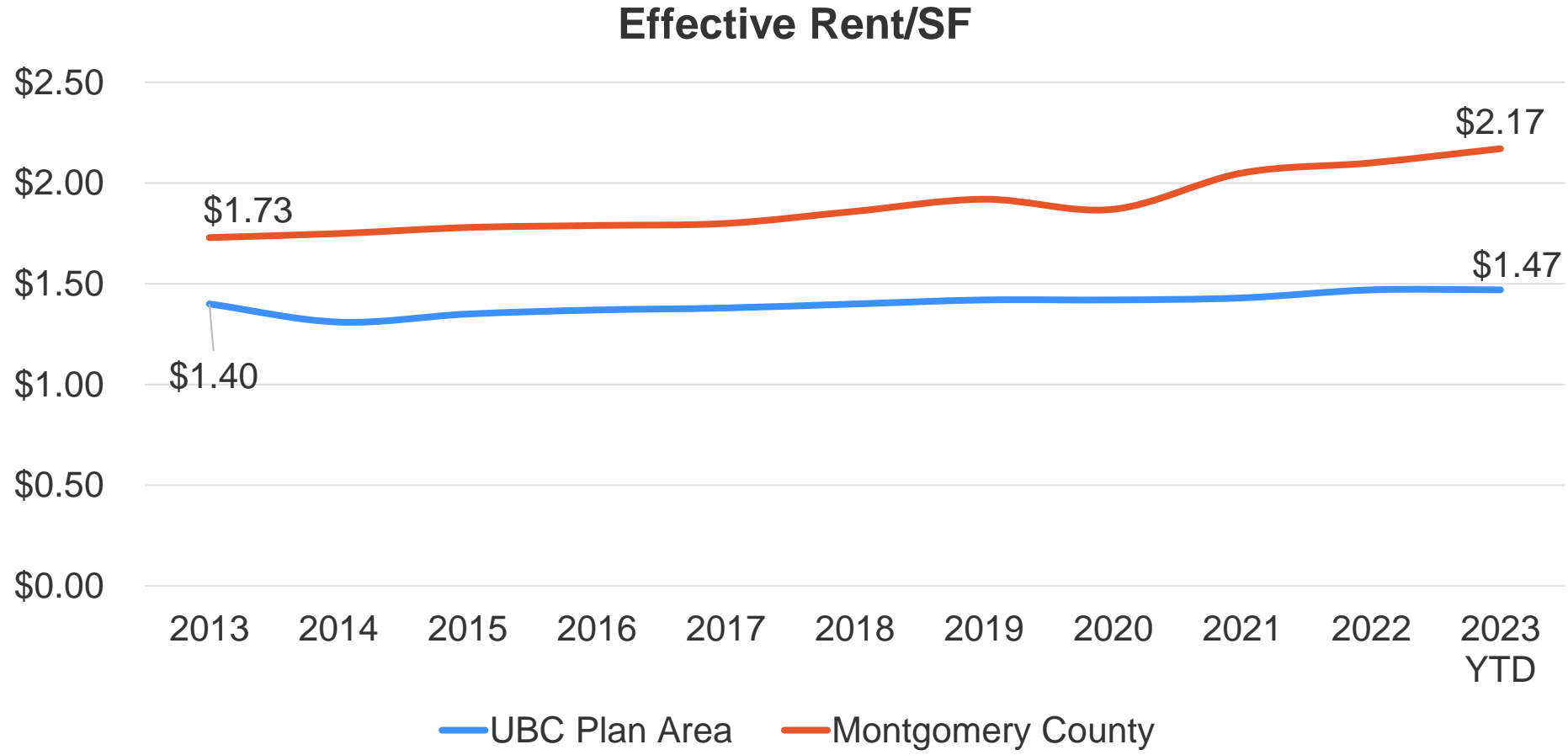
- Median year of construction: 1963.



Residential Market Overview

- Median sales prices:
 - Single-Family Detached: \$585,000
 - Townhomes: \$453,000

- Average monthly rent: \$1,682 at \$1.47/square feet.

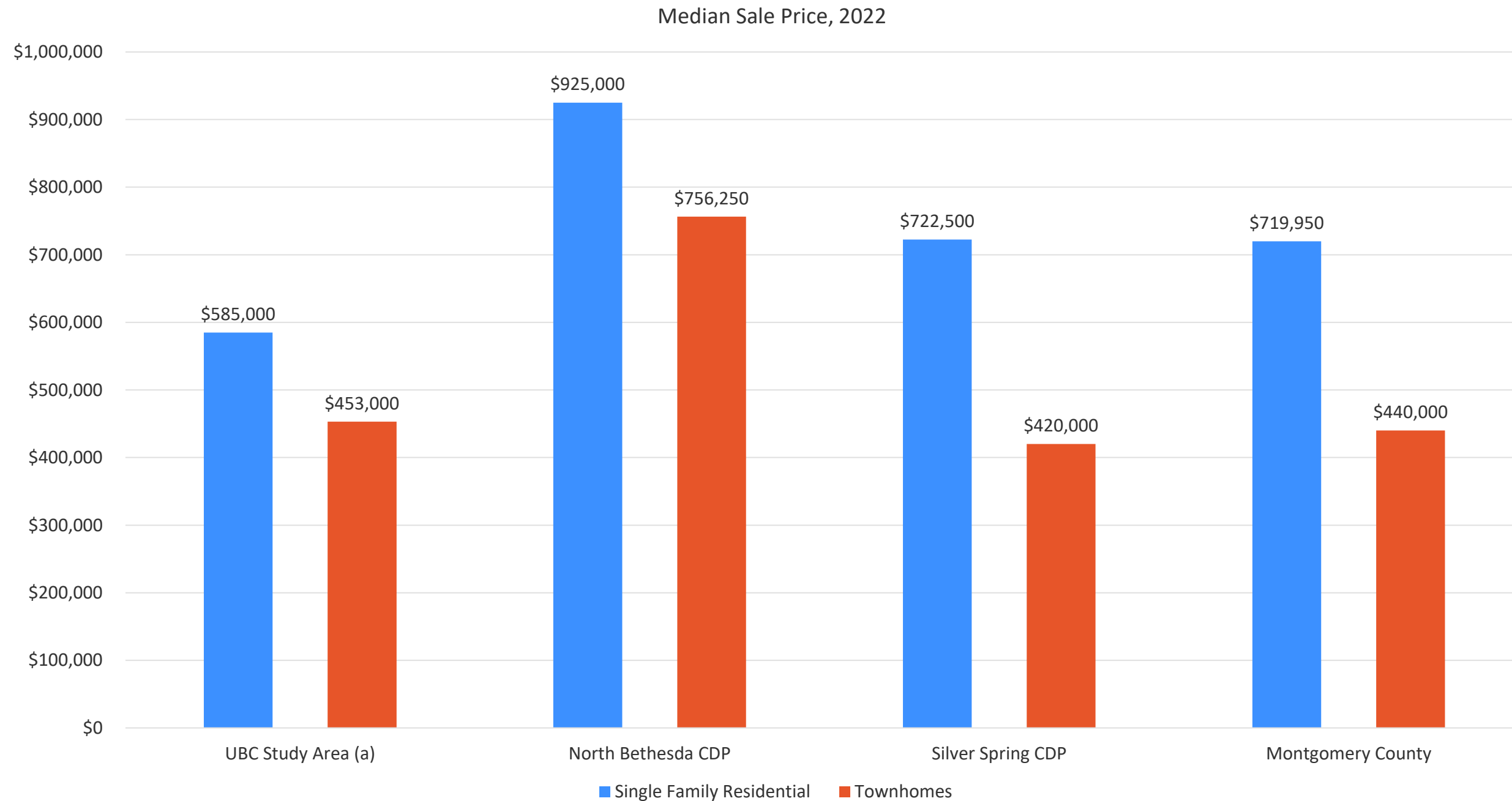


Source: CoStar, 2023; Redfin, 2023.

Housing Price

The Plan Area has a relatively affordable housing stock, which helps to explain the shift towards owner households

The median sale prices of \$585,000 for a single-family home would be unaffordable to a household earning the median income for the plan area (\$103,116)



Notes:

(a) Defined as the combination of the Four Corners and Kemp Mill CDPs

(b) Silver Spring is defined as parts of the CDP below the beltway. This area roughly extends from Rock Creek Park to New Hampshire Avenue, below the beltway.

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2023; Montgomery Planning, 2023.

Retail Market



- 246,000 square feet retail inventory
- Average rent: \$31.48/square feet.
 - Consistent with countywide average
- Vacancy Rate: 1.9%
 - Countywide Retail Vacancy Rate: 3.5%



Office Market

- Office space: 129,700 Square Feet, including second floor at Woodmoor Shopping Center.
- Converted residential properties into office spaces.
- Office tenants are limited to local-serving businesses, including medical uses, legal services, and accounting.
- This is not a significant office employment node in the County.



Market Analysis

Key Findings

- The Plan Area is predominantly residential.
- The most significant non-residential use is institutional, followed by retail.
- The Plan Area is bookended by two significant retail and office nodes (Silver Spring and Wheaton).
- Growth opportunities lie in supporting more residential development, which will help spur more retail development.

Next Steps

Fall 2023 – Winter 2024: Outreach, Plan Analysis and Staff Review

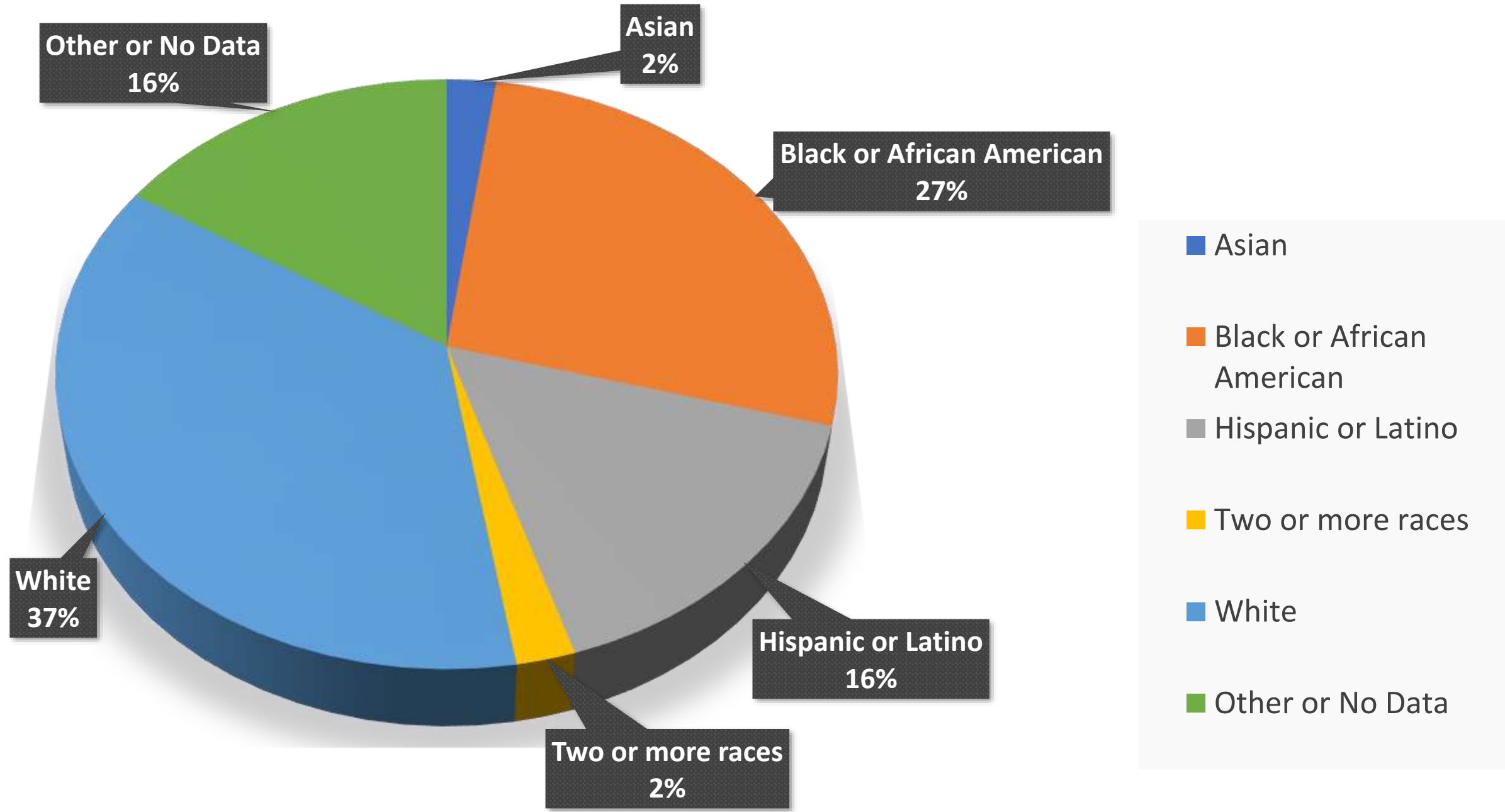
Spring - Summer 2024: Planning Board Review

Spring 2024: County Executive Review

Fall 2024: County Executive and County Council Review



Respondent Demographics



Asian	9
Black or African American	109
Hispanic or Latino	64
Two or more races	9
White	148
Other or No Data	64
Total	403

Next Steps

Upcoming

- Planning staff will continue to work toward developing preliminary recommendations for this plan during the upcoming fall and will continue to engage the public, including property owners, residents, and other stakeholders.
- Staff anticipates presenting preliminary recommendations to the Planning Board in winter 2024 and a working draft plan in spring 2024.