

GERMANTOWN SECTOR PLAN AMENDMENT DRAFT VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

DRAFT PLAN VISION

The following is the overall vision for the Plan:

Germantown is envisioned as a connected, inclusive, and resilient community that celebrates its rich diversity and provides a strong sense of belonging. Anchored by vibrant activity centers and a welcoming Town Center, a central pedestrian-oriented corridor organizes movement and public life, linking key destinations with walkable streets, safe crossings, and accessible transit. Neighborhoods are well connected for walking, biking, and transit, enabling residents to easily reach parks, services, and neighboring areas.

Through intentional design, flexible land use, and green infrastructure, Germantown supports complete, convenient living and offers a wide range of housing, recreation, and cultural experiences. Parks are active and inviting, public spaces reflect community identity, and the built environment promotes sustainability, equity, and safety for all.

DRAFT GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Vibrant Neighborhood Hubs

Germantown is a network of walkable, mixed-use activity centers that serve as everyday destinations for living, working, and gathering.

Strategies:

- **Establish and Strengthen Activity Centers as the Framework for Community Life**
Define and enhance a network of walkable, mixed-use activity centers that serve as focal points for daily needs, services, and social interaction. These centers should support 15-minute living and complete communities by integrating housing, retail, public spaces, and mobility options.
- **Establish or Enhance Central Gathering Spaces**
Design a public plaza or park in each activity center for social interaction and leisure. Promote and enhance the existing Town Commons in the Town Center as the central meeting place for Germantown.
- **Encourage Public Art**
Incorporate public art, such as murals, sculptures, and interactive installations, into the design of buildings, streets and other infrastructure, and public spaces.

- **Enhance Parking Design**
Integrate shared parking strategies and incentivize structured parking options.

A Civic Heart in the Town Center

Germantown’s Town Center is the symbolic and functional heart of public life—home to civic events, cultural institutions, and shared community spaces.

Strategies:

- **Link Town Center Activity Centers through a Central Corridor**
Develop a continuous “Multimodal Priority Corridor” that links the Town Center activity centers, serving as the organizing framework for movement, placemaking, and public life. This corridor, from the MARC Rail station to Father Hurley Boulevard—mostly along Century Boulevard, should prioritize walkability, bikeability, transit access, and green infrastructure, and act as a unifying element for the activity centers.
- **Focus on Century Boulevard**
Identify the central segment of Century Boulevard as the initial focus for pedestrian-oriented placemaking, beginning with the blocks between Middlebrook Road and Crystal Rock Drive. This corridor should serve as a focal point for enhanced streetscape design, pedestrian safety improvements, active ground-floor uses, and public realm investments, with the intent to extend it incrementally as development and community needs evolve. Consolidate incompatible uses and expand downtown-oriented development, especially near the transit center and police station.
- **Create Town Center Gateways**
Develop one or more gateway landmark features along Germantown Road to notify arrival in the Town Center and to enhance community identity.
- **Reclaim a Portion of the CCT Right-of-Way**
Reclaim a portion of the right-of-way previously dedicated along Century Boulevard for the Corridor Cities Transitway to be used for bikeways, wider sidewalks, or small-scale, nature-based community facilities, such as pocket parks, community gardens, exercise equipment, and increased tree canopy.
- **Organize an Urban Service District**
Establish a sustainable and responsive urban service district to enhance public realm maintenance, safety, and identity in the Town Center and surrounding activity centers.

Connected Mobility for All

Germantown offers safe, accessible, and seamless transportation options that connect people to places by foot, bike, transit, car, or micromobility options.

Strategies:

- **Link Outlying Districts to the Town Center**
Strengthen connections between peripheral activity centers and the core.

- **Repurpose Excess Roadway Space**
 Reevaluate 6-lane rights-of-way to support bike lanes, wider sidewalks, or transit lanes and to ensure that the community is not divided by oversized roads.
- **Upgrade Street Crossings**
 Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists at intersections, with an initial focus on crossings critical to the success of the Town Center activity centers. Provide additional street crossings where existing crossings are far apart. Use raised crosswalks along the Multimodal Priority Corridor in the Town Center and in other areas with lots of foot traffic.
- **Improve Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure**
 Fill gaps in the network to make non-motorized travel more attractive everywhere. Create clearly marked, safe pedestrian and bicycle routes for trips within the Town Center and between the outer plan neighborhoods and the Town Center. Ensure new and retrofit development prioritizes direct pedestrian and bicycle access to sidewalks, trails, and bikeways. Build high-quality routes for regional bicycling trips.
- **Develop a Robust Transit System**
 Ensure Germantown residents have safe, direct, and reliable transit connections within the Town Center, from surrounding neighborhoods into the Town Center, between activity centers, and to key regional destinations. Increase transit frequency and extend operating hours to make transit a more viable and appealing option. Introduce microtransit options and micromobility services to complement fixed-route transit and improve first-mile/last-mile connectivity.
- **Enhance Connectivity Across I-270**
 Improve pedestrian, bike, and transit connections across the interstate.
- **Complete the Street Grid**
 Maintain total roadway capacity but reallocate it to create a more efficient and resilient roadway network that provides multiple route options. Break up super blocks with a grid of smaller streets to enhance connectivity, provide more direct and intuitive site access to reduce traffic on major roads, improve walkability and bikeability, support transit, and encourage neighborhood-scale development within activity centers.
- **Create Greenway Connections to Parks**
 Use greenways and the reclaimed CCT right-of-way to connect neighborhoods and parks.
- **Provide Wayfinding**
 Add wayfinding signage within the activity centers to help people easily navigate around the district. Install additional wayfinding signs throughout Germantown to direct people to other activity centers and places of interest. Use signage to designate suggested walking and bicycling loops; prioritize infrastructure improvements to support these loops.

Inclusive and Context-Sensitive Growth

Germantown supports diverse development that reflects the character of its neighborhoods and responds to evolving community needs. Germantown provides a wide range of housing options that are affordable, accessible, and adaptable to different life stages and household types.

Strategies:

- **Encourage Infill Development**
Remove regulatory barriers and incentivize redevelopment of underutilized parcels. Promote development in Germantown to prevent urban sprawl into more remote parts of the county.
- **Promote Zoning Flexibility**
Apply zoning designations that provide for development flexibility. Explore form-based codes or design guidelines to support mixed-use and context-sensitive development. Support and build on Germantown's success as a regional research and development and manufacturing hub.
- **Provide a Range of Housing Types**
Encourage development of a wide range of housing types and sizes at varying price points, especially near transit stations, to suit different family sizes, income levels, and life stages. Incentivize the construction of affordable family-sized units.
- **Reinforce the Supply of Land for the County's Innovation and Production Ecosystem**
Position the I-270 corridor from Germantown to Clarksburg as the center of the county's satellite and advanced communications industry. Strengthen its role as a hub for life sciences R&D and manufacturing, and grow high value-added, exporting industries that create foundational 21st-century technologies. Provide large sites and modern facilities to meet these sectors' needs and ensure remaining appropriately sized sites are zoned to support sustainable economic growth and long-term competitiveness.

Parks, Recreation, and Public Spaces for Community Wellbeing

Germantown's parks and public spaces strengthen community connections, encourage physical activity, and protect greenspaces and natural resources in a major growth center of the county.

Strategies:

- **Fill Gaps in Park Service**
Seek locations for new parks, amenities, and green spaces that fill existing gaps in service, serve diverse demographic groups, and guarantee equitable access to nature in one of the county's major growth corridors. Design these parks to function as central gathering spaces for activity centers where appropriate.
- **Integrate Green Space into Development**
Require or incentivize green space as part of new construction where appropriate to ensure access to nature as Germantown grows.
- **Expand Recreational Opportunities**
Enhance existing parks and green spaces by adding a variety of amenities such as picnic areas,

playgrounds, sports courts, community gardens, and other facilities that support active and passive use. Reflect community needs in these improvements to promote social interaction, health, and year-round enjoyment. Explore partnerships to formalize public use of Montgomery College's green spaces.

- **Improve Transportation Access to Parks**

Expand safe and accessible transportation connections to parks and recreation amenities by expanding transit and active transportation options and ensuring routes are direct and comfortable for all users.

- **Manage Natural and Cultural Resources**

Expand parkland and protected natural areas to manage critical natural resources. Promote community involvement in maintaining and enhancing parks and cultural assets to encourage a shared sense of responsibility and identity. Balance public access with preservation to ensure that natural habitats, water resources, and cultural heritage are protected for future generations.

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience

Germantown is committed to environmental protection and is prepared for the challenges of climate change through resilient infrastructure and green practices.

Strategies:

- **Protect Water Quality**

Protect and enhance water quality in new and existing developments through more robust stormwater management utilizing facilities such as bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable pavements.

- **Reduce Urban Heat Island Effect**

Increase tree canopy, vegetated areas, cool roofs, and green roofs; reduce impervious surfaces; use lighter-colored pavement surfaces; and employ other strategies to cool the area.

- **Enhance Streetscape Greening**

Incorporate landscaping and shade elements into streets and public spaces.

- **Support Clean Energy**

Support clean energy solutions, adaptive reuse, and sustainable building practices.

- **Protect and Improve Air Quality**

Promote and improve non-auto transportation infrastructure and public transit options, create a mix of uses to reduce vehicle miles traveled, and use vegetated buffers to improve air quality.