

# SILVER SPRING

DOWNTOWN AND ADJACENT COMMUNITIES PLAN



# Visioning Briefing



# PLAN TIMELINE



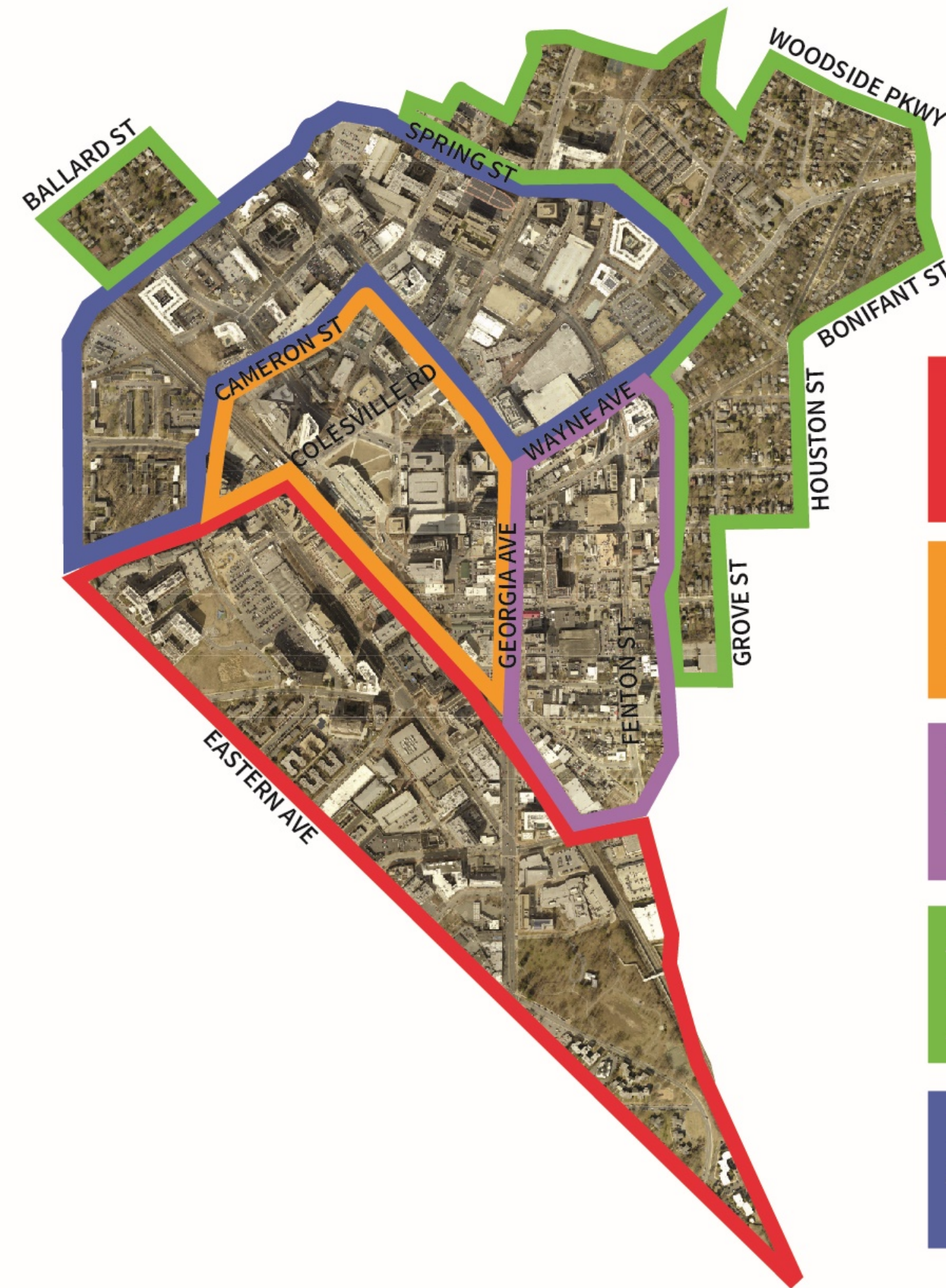
# STAKEHOLDER VISIONING GOALS

Allow community members to:

- Contribute thoughts and ideas to the vision in a tactile way.
- Talk to other participants at the table/group – share ideas and discuss with other community members.
- Meet planners one-on-one and engage them on their subject matter.
- Allow stakeholders to engage directly with the team, or on their own time.

# VISIONING

- Six (6) interactive online visioning sessions by area
- “Chat with a Planner” series in May
- Web-based visioning:
  - ReactMap  
<https://mc.reactmap.com>
  - On-demand videos of workshops



**South Silver Spring**  
March 23

**Metro Center/  
Ripley District**  
March 30

**Fenton Village**  
April 6

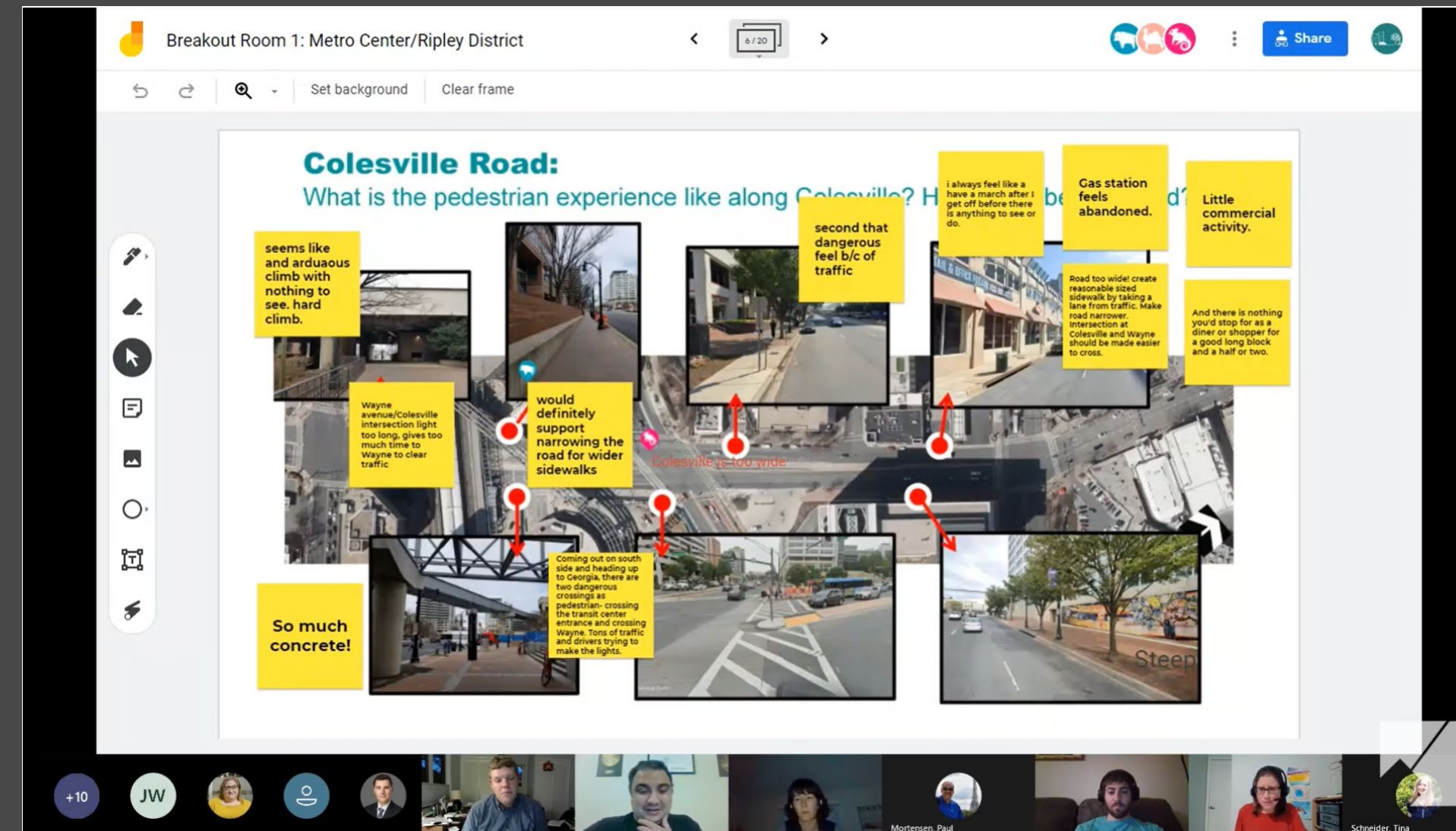
**Adjacent  
Communities**  
April 13 + April 27

**North Silver Spring**  
April 20



# VISIONING WORKSHOPS: STRUCTURE

- Intro to plan and visioning
- Breakout into two groups
- Groups facilitated by four staff members
- Guided visioning activities using a digital whiteboard where ideas, thoughts and comments were recorded by staff.
- Come back together in main session to share and reflect.





# WHO PARTICIPATED?

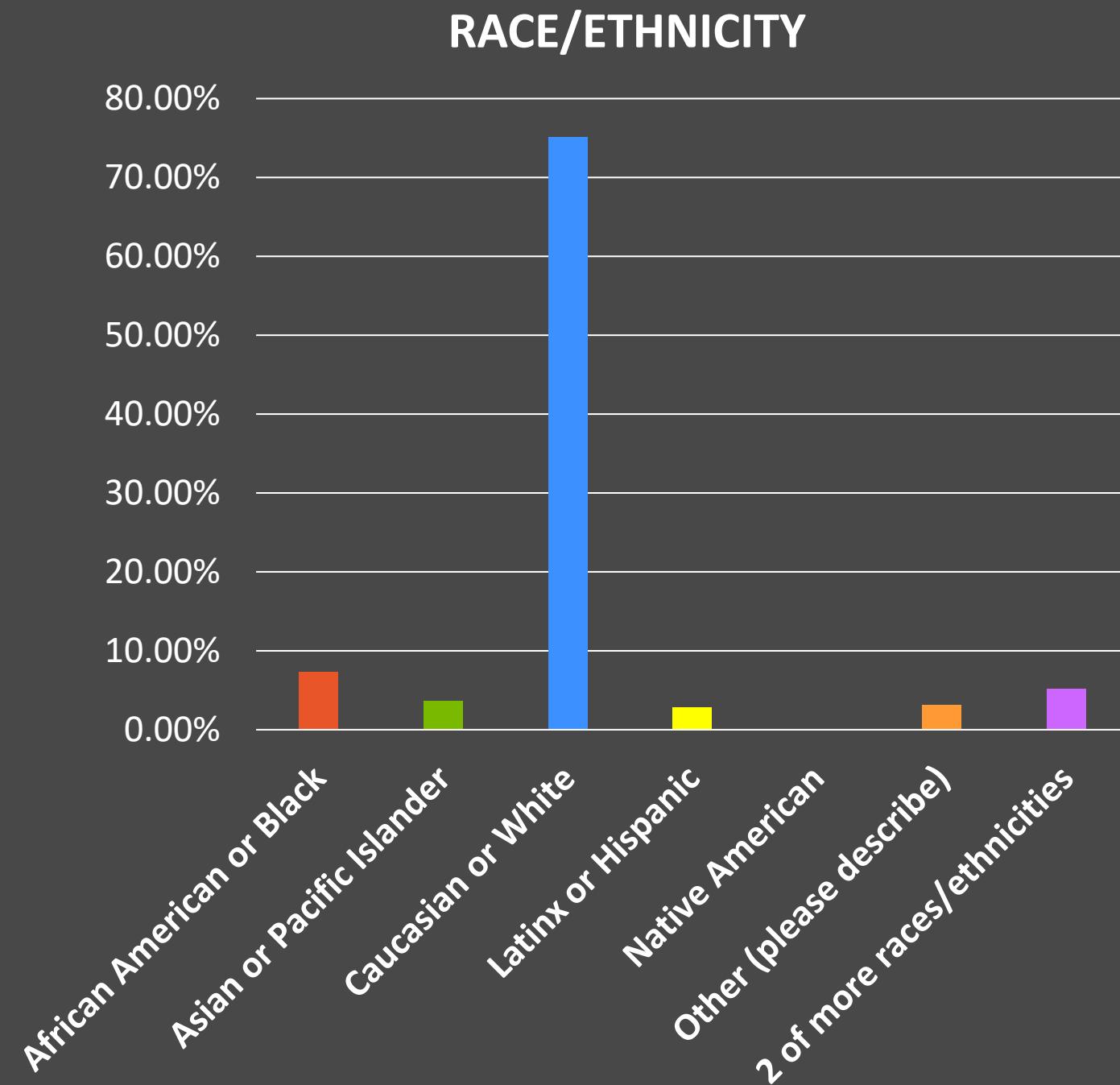
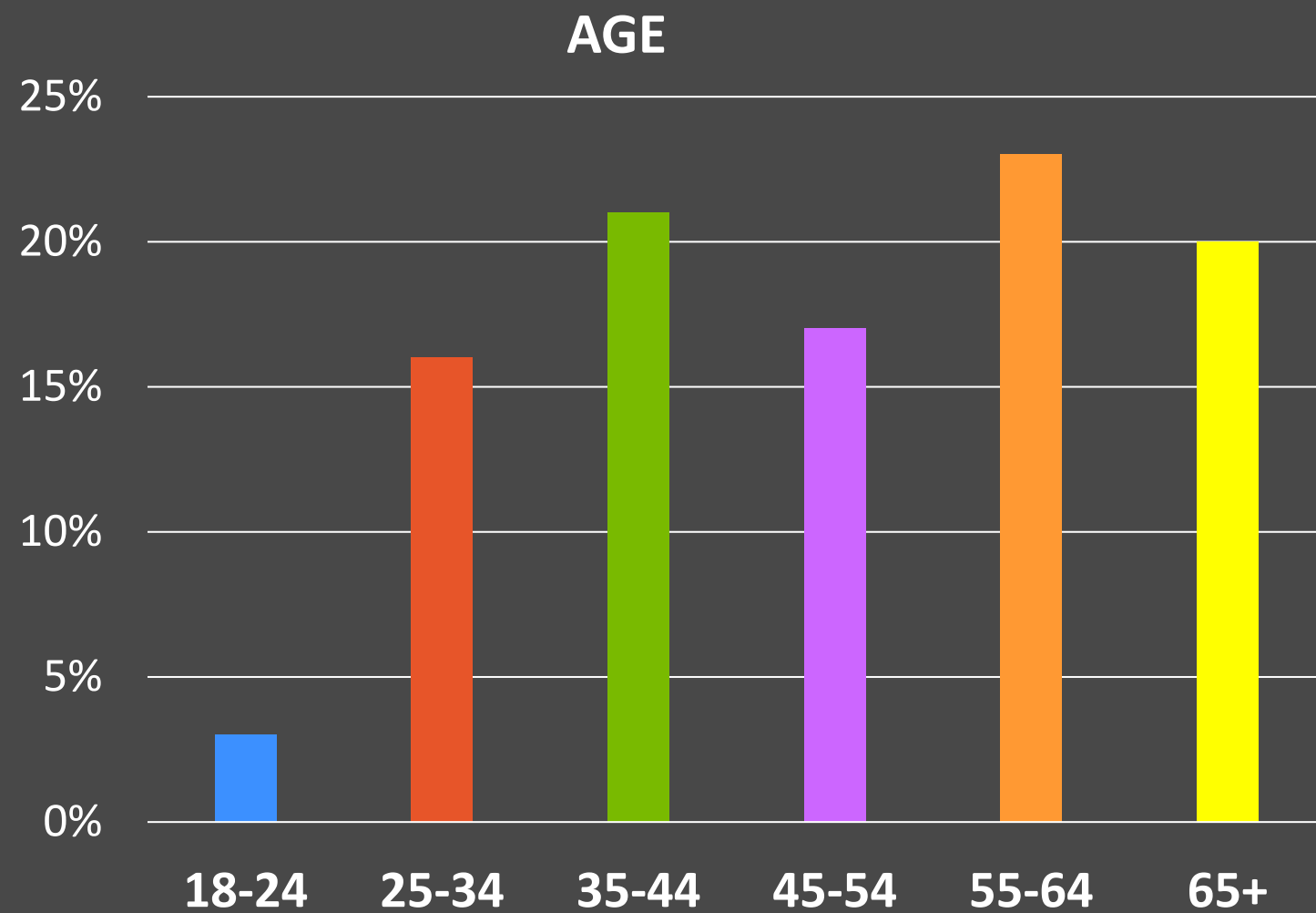
- 151 unique participants in live virtual Visioning events; many participated in multiple sessions
  - 74 responses to post-event survey
  - 47% responded that a Visioning event was their first SSDAC event
- Before Visioning, we had approximately 700 subscribers to the eLetter, and as of this week we have 847.
- Over 500 comments on ReactMap

Visioning Session Attendance	
South Silver Spring	26
Metro Center/Ripley District	21
Fenton Village	27
North Silver Spring	35
Adjacent Communities (1)	40
Adjacent Communities (2)	55



# WHO PARTICIPATED?

*These charts reflect ONLY the participation in the live online visioning events based on survey responses.*





# INCREASING PARTICIPATION

Alongside the online visioning events, we have continued to meet with smaller groups to increase participation and awareness among groups who have not previously been involved with the plan:

- Group of local Ethiopian community leaders
- Office of Community Partnerships community liaisons
- Silver Spring small business owners
- Maryland Black Chamber of Commerce
- Civic Building Users (through partnership w/Eric Rasch)

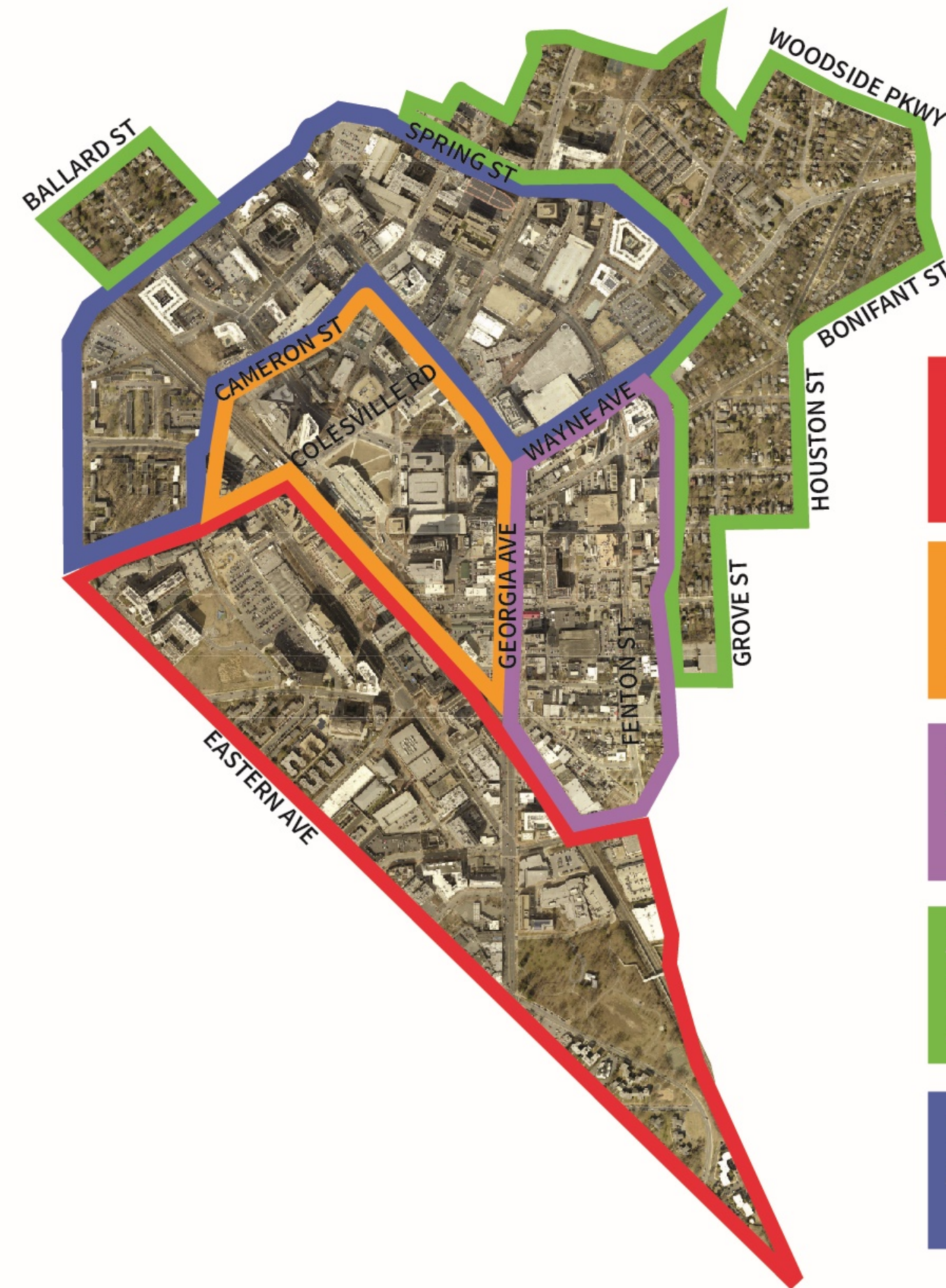




# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Downtown area was divided into four sessions:

- South Silver Spring
- Metro Center/Ripley District
- Fenton Village
- North Silver Spring



**South Silver Spring**  
March 23

**Metro Center/  
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March 30

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April 6

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**North Silver Spring**  
April 20



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

South Silver Spring takeaways:

- More open space
- Affordable housing on under-utilized sites
- E-W Hwy as more of a retail spine than it is today
- Improve the connection across / under the rail – feel cut off
- Georgia Ave pedestrian challenge is more about crossing Georgia than walking along it
- Community in favor of improving JBP and making it a destination





# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Metro Center/Ripley District takeaways:

- Walk from transit center to Georgia is challenging, uncomfortable pedestrian environment
- Upon arrival at the transit center “you have no idea where you are, or where to go”
- While people appreciate the multi-modal transit center, lack of enthusiasm for arrival experience.
- Purple Line along Bonifant will be transformative; needs to be well-designed; welcoming
- Excitement about short-term and long-term potential for WMATA site at transit center





# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## Fenton Village takeaways:

- Enthusiasm around diverse, unique atmosphere that exists today, with a strong desire to preserve it
- Fenton Street is a key pedestrian spine but could benefit from improvements; including places to sit down/relax along the way
- Lack of open space/gathering space in Fenton Village
- Consensus that east side of Georgia Ave is more comfortable than west side, but many opinions about increasing density/height along Georgia
- Parking Garage 4 is key opportunity site for this area





# KEY TAKEAWAYS

North Silver Spring takeaways:

- Colesville/Georgia intersection is for cars; not the center of downtown SS
- Ellsworth Place/Civic Building/Plaza = “heart of downtown SS”
- Garages in North SS key to support destinations on Colesville but also may be redevelopment sites
- Considerable enthusiasm around new rec/aquatic center at Elizabeth Square; potential for that area to become new center of activity

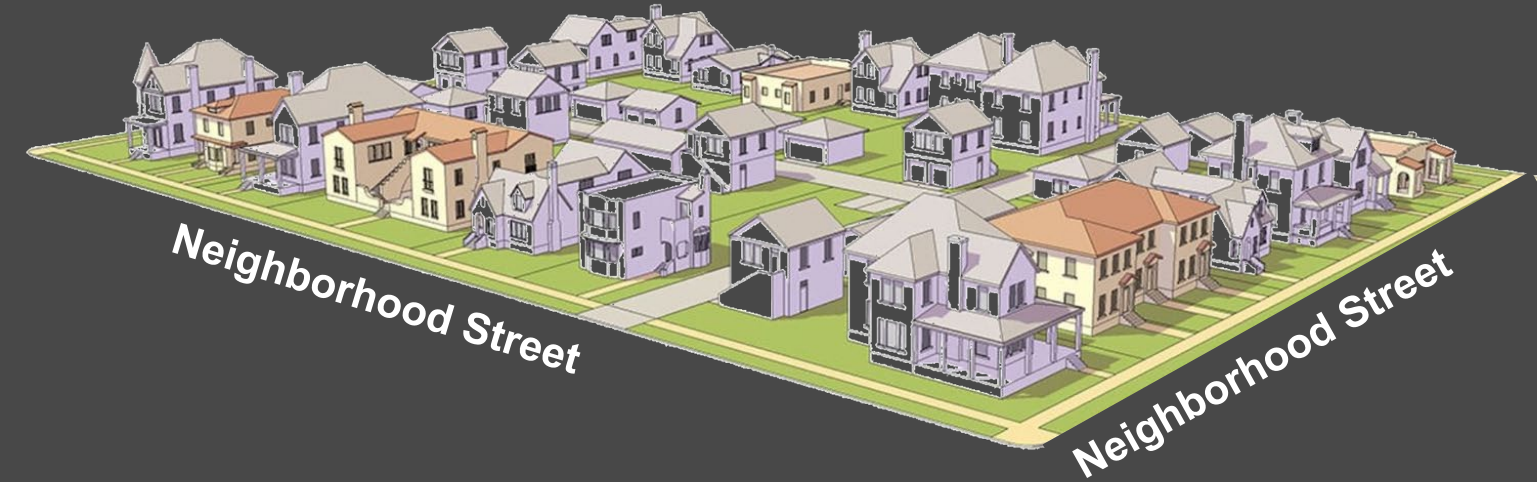




# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Adjacent Communities takeaways:

- Concerns about Missing Middle Housing:
  - Community losing opportunity to provide input on proposed development projects
  - Potential lot aggregations
  - Concern about maintaining “house-look” not just “house-scale”
  - Concern about on-site parking and loss of green space / trees
  - Increase in people results in more congestion/traffic
  - Concern that developers would see this as an opening to build tall apartment buildings, even if that is not permitted in the zoning





# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Adjacent Communities takeaways:

- Support for Missing Middle Housing:
  - Support for maintaining the diversity of the neighborhood
  - Desire to see more housing types and units sizes in the adjacent neighborhoods
  - 2, 3, and 4 unit “house-scale” buildings that fit within current zoning envelope would be appropriate





# VISIONING: THEMES





# VISIONING: 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.



# VISIONING: THEMES

## RESILIENCY

- Develop tools for the downtown core to be more adaptable and responsive to climate-related challenges.
- Through public realm improvements and support of independent businesses, encourage economic growth that will be resilient into the future.



# VISIONING: THEMES

## CONNECTIVITY

- Improve access to a welcoming, public open space network that meets the needs of both people and the environment.
- Enhance and reinforce the pedestrian and bike networks to encourage reduction of cars in the plan area.
- Safely connect across the Metrorail to increase accessibility to all downtown neighborhoods



# VISIONING: THEMES

## COMMUNITY HEALTH

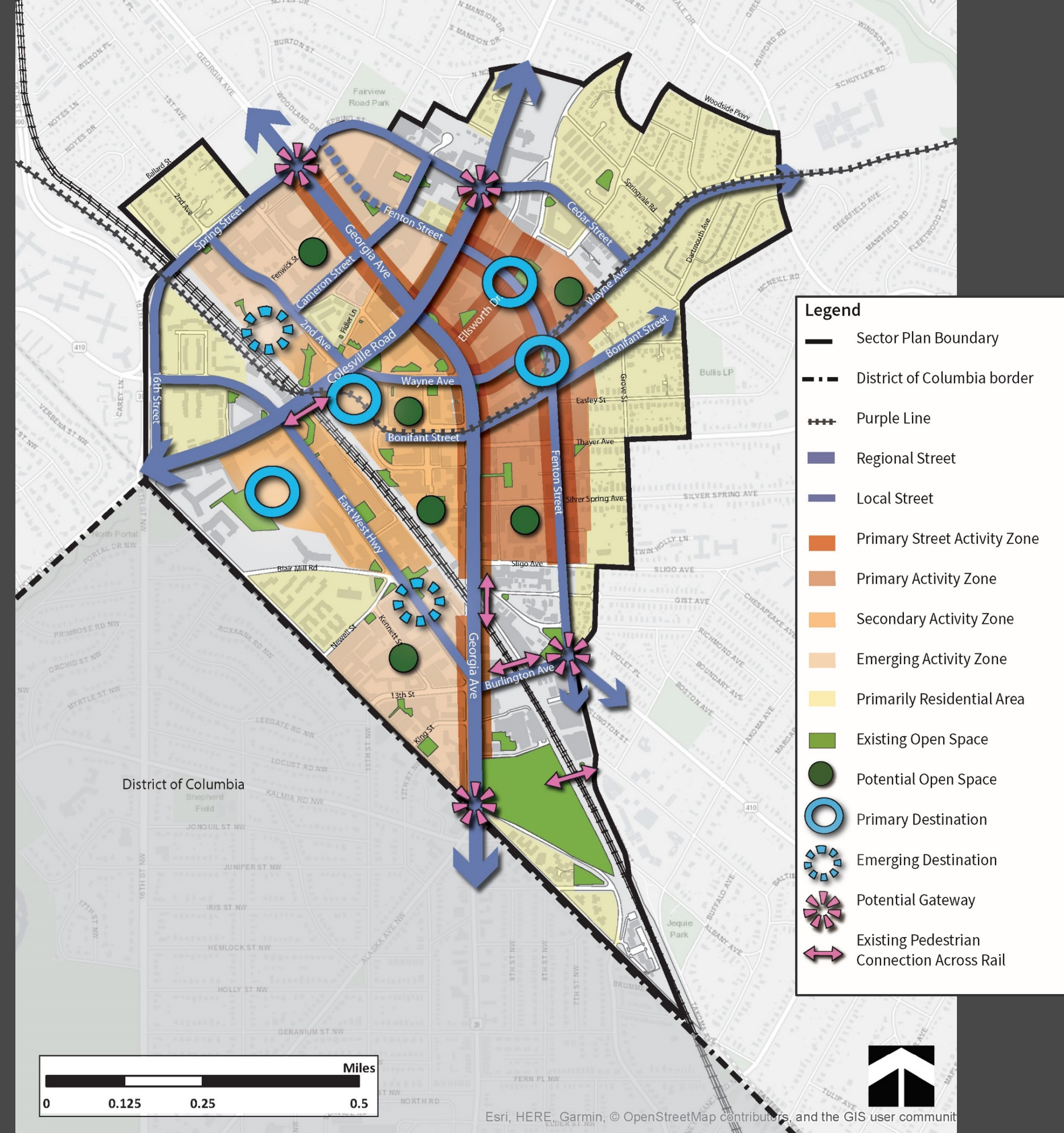
- Ensure safe access to a diversity of green spaces, active recreation opportunities, food sources and community amenities.
- Provide a healthier, cooler, more comfortable pedestrian experience along streets and open spaces.



# DRAFT CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN

The Concept Framework Plan aims to identify key components of the existing urban fabric, overlaid with issues that emerged during Visioning.

The goal of the Sector Plan is to build upon this structure and lay the groundwork for a more cohesive urban fabric for the next 20 years.

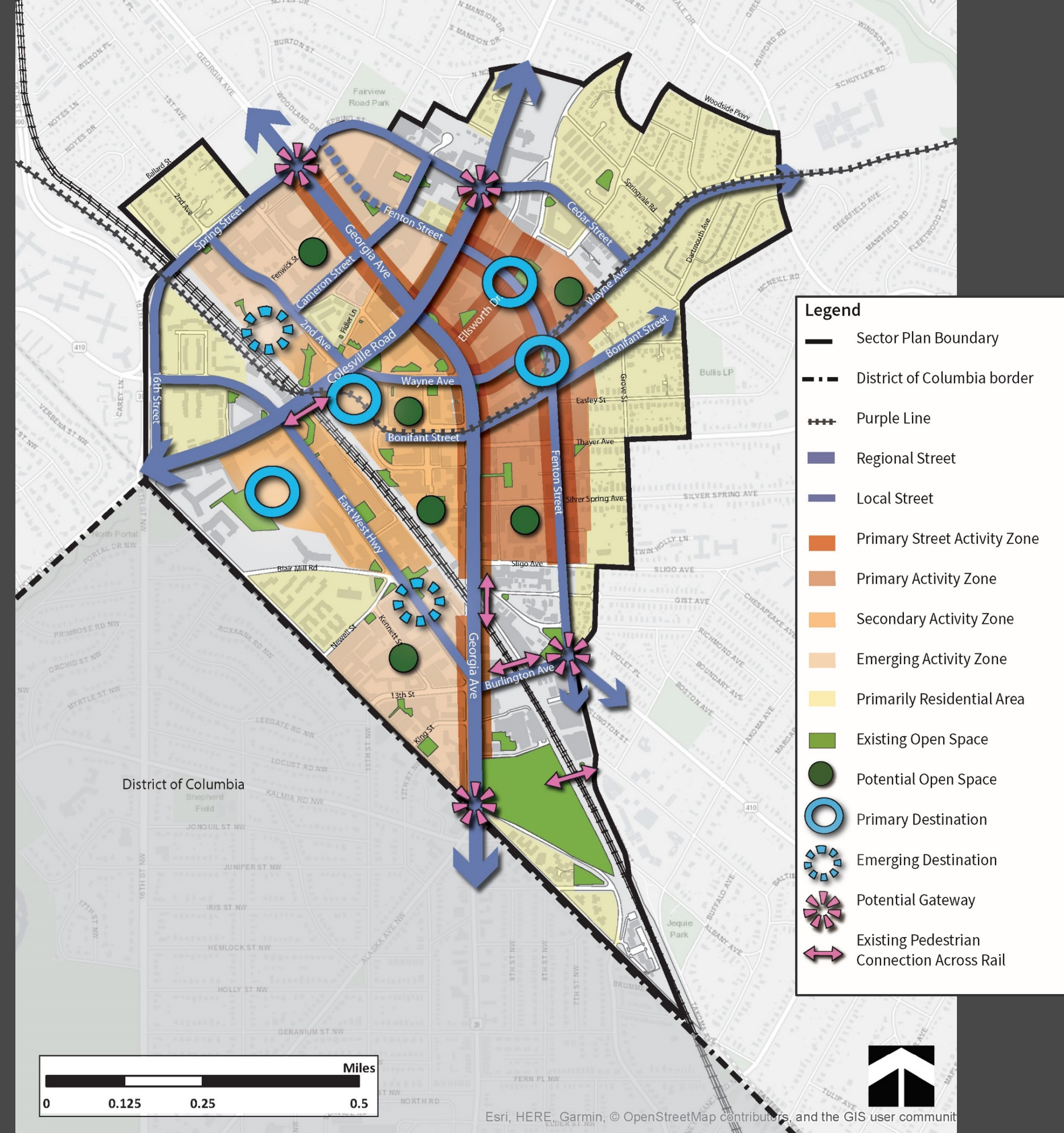




# DRAFT CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN

This diagram highlights:

- Existing activity areas
- Emerging activity areas
- Areas that are mostly residential (not mixed-use)
- Key destinations in the downtown
- General locations where potential new open spaces were discussed
- Connections/transitions into the downtown and over/under rail





# NEXT STEPS

- Staff will be working on writing draft recommendations over the summer
- July 29<sup>th</sup> presentation to the Planning Board on Key Preliminary Ideas for Planning Board input
- Draft recommendations to be presented to the community in the fall
- Working Draft to Planning Board in late October





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