

SILVER SPRING

DOWNTOWN AND ADJACENT COMMUNITIES PLAN



What is the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan?

Over the last 20 years, Silver Spring has transformed into a uniquely diverse and vibrant destination for retail, restaurants, offices, arts, and entertainment. This evolution was set in motion by the 2000 *Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan*, which envisioned a transit-oriented, green, and pedestrian-friendly downtown with a strong commercial and residential development market.

Now, Montgomery Planning is building upon this success with the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan* to help Silver Spring continue to be a regional destination for the next 20 years. Staff created the Plan's recommendations using feedback from over 500 stakeholders who live, work, or play in the community. This new Sector Plan will strengthen and celebrate what has made Silver Spring successful while setting forth a vision for its emerging areas. The Plan envisions:

- an affordable and attractive place to live for people of all ages and backgrounds
- a downtown that is home to small independent businesses, educational institutions, cutting-edge tech companies, hubs for science and research, and arts organizations that draw patrons from around the region
- an urban area characterized by green, climate-resilient, walkable streets that are safe and comfortable for everyone – pedestrians, bikers, transit riders, and drivers
- new and renovated parks and open spaces that will promote a healthier downtown community.

To view all of the Plan's recommendations, visit: montgomeryplanning.org/silverspringdowntown



Plan Boundary



What does this Plan hope to accomplish?

The Plan is focused on strengthening the existing success of Silver Spring and supporting growth and development in the emerging areas of the downtown. As the first Sector Plan to follow the passage of Montgomery County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Act, equity is woven throughout the Plan and the four overarching themes that emerged after engaging with stakeholders: diversity, resiliency, connectivity and community health.



Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle networks



Create a green network of priority streets and public open spaces that connect neighborhoods



Safely connect communities across Metrorail tracks



Support sustainable economic growth and resiliency



Reduce impacts of climate change



Create more active recreation opportunities through parks and public spaces



Provide a more comfortable pedestrian experience along streets and open spaces



Celebrate history of diverse cultures in Silver Spring



Provide more diverse housing types and preserve existing affordable units



Strengthen diverse mix of stores, restaurants, arts and entertainment

CONNECTIVITY

DIVERSITY

EQUITY

RESILIENCY

COMMUNITY HEALTH



How will these desired outcomes be achieved?

This Plan contains both plan-wide recommendations and district-specific recommendations that will add to the area's unique character.

Key plan-wide recommendations

- Establish the Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund (CIF) to allow all Commercial/Residential (CR) properties to obtain additional density if needed to meet maximum building heights. The fund would support a world-class arrival experience at the transit center, a new bridge connection across the rail tracks, and strategic utility and streetscape infrastructure improvements.
- Create a Silver Spring Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ) to allow properties in the commercial core of the downtown to obtain additional height up to 150 percent of the mapped maximum height for flexibility.
- Incentivize the redevelopment of key opportunity sites to realize the district-specific visions presented in the Plan.
- Establish a Green Loop to expand and unify access for all residents to green, safe, and inviting sidewalks, bikeways, and parks and open spaces.
- Create new and enhance existing parks and open spaces, including a major renovation of Jesup Blair Park.
- Support the expansion of bioscience, technology, and education uses to increase employment opportunities in the plan area.
- Update the Zoning Code to provide more flexibility of development, increase affordable housing, support small business growth, and realize Sector Plan goals.
- Encourage the development of diverse housing types in the adjacent communities blocks as recommended by this Plan and the ongoing Attainable Housing Strategies initiative.
- Increase the minimum Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) requirement from 12.5 percent to 15 percent for all Optional Method of Development projects.

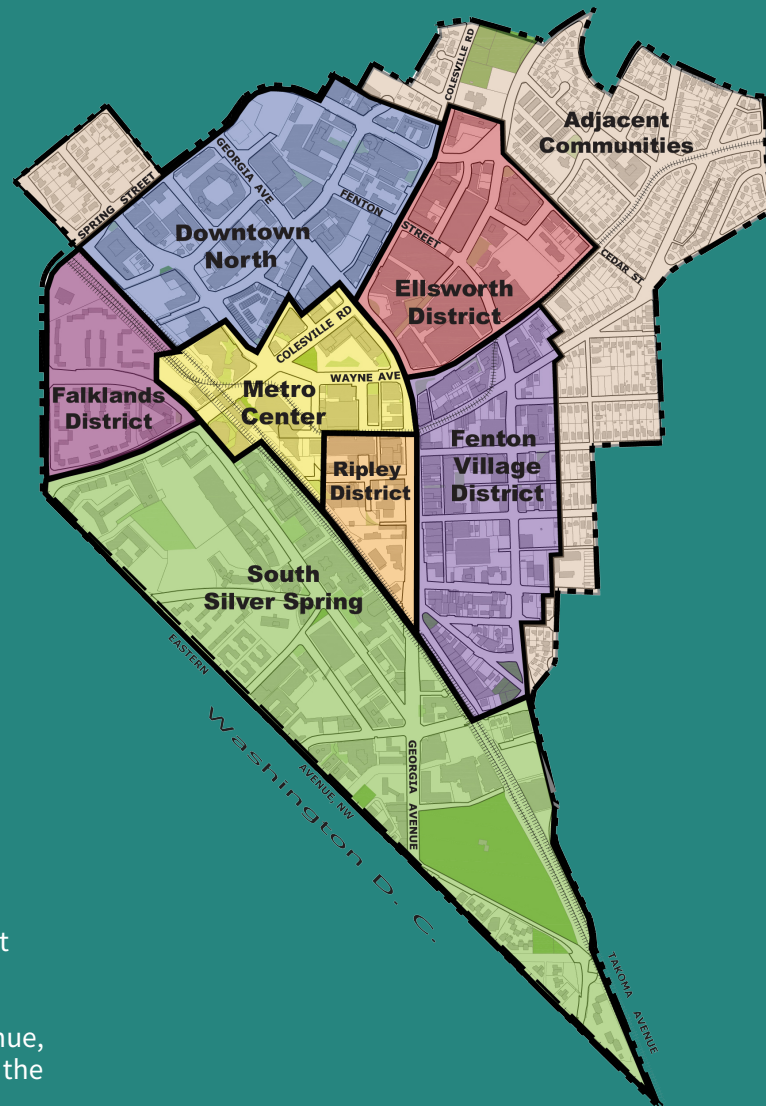
Envisioning the future of Silver Spring by district

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.

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.

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.

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.



The Ripley District 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.

The Metro Center District will welcome visitors to 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.

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.

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. This will be consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative.

The Fenton District 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.

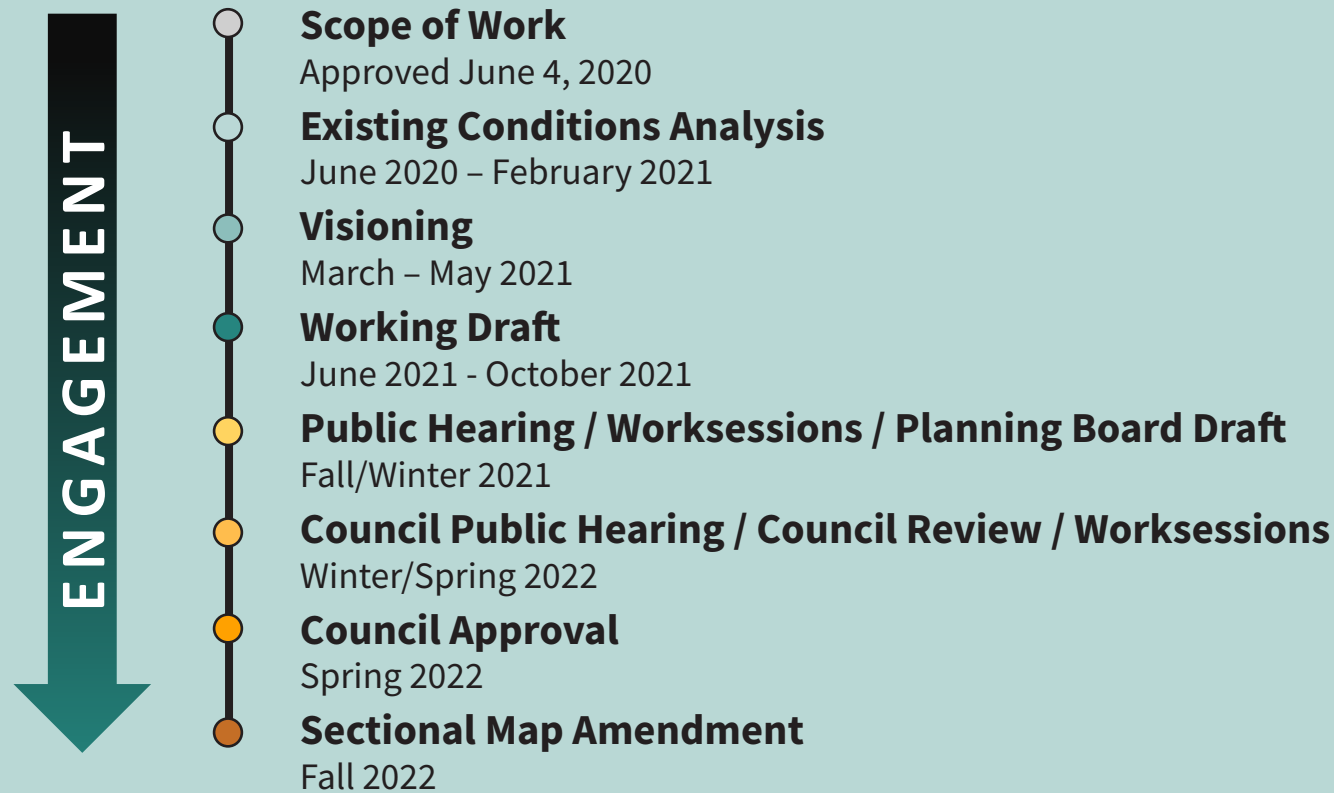
How did we reach these recommendations? By engaging with community members, like you!

Since kicking off this Plan in July 2020, Planning staff have received input from residents, community organizations, property owners, civic associations, condo boards, employers, business owners, students at Montgomery College, and county agency partners. During the Plan's Listening Phase, staff heard what community members want Silver Spring to look like over the next 20 years.



Then during the Plan's Visioning Phase, staff held a series of online workshops 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 the ReactMap received over 500 comments. After Listening and Visioning with the community, staff developed the recommendations for the Plan, which address all of the topics staff heard about most from the community.

What's next for the Plan?



Ways you can still get involved!

Sign up for our eLetter to stay up to date on the Plan and all of the ways you can get involved on our website:

montgomeryplanning.org/silverspringdowntown

How to get in touch:

Atara Margolies, Lead Planner

301-495-4558

atara.margolies@montgomeryplanning.org