



Montgomery Planning

May 2025

Friendship Heights Sector Plan

Friendship Heights Today: Existing Conditions Analysis Summary



INTRODUCTION

Plan Schedule

- Pre-scope engagement - Fall 2024
- Scope of Work + Boundary – Winter 2025
- ➔ • Existing Conditions – Spring 2025
- Visioning – Spring-Fall 2025
- Preliminary Recommendations – Fall 2025
- Working Draft – Winter 2026
- Transmit to Council – Spring 2026



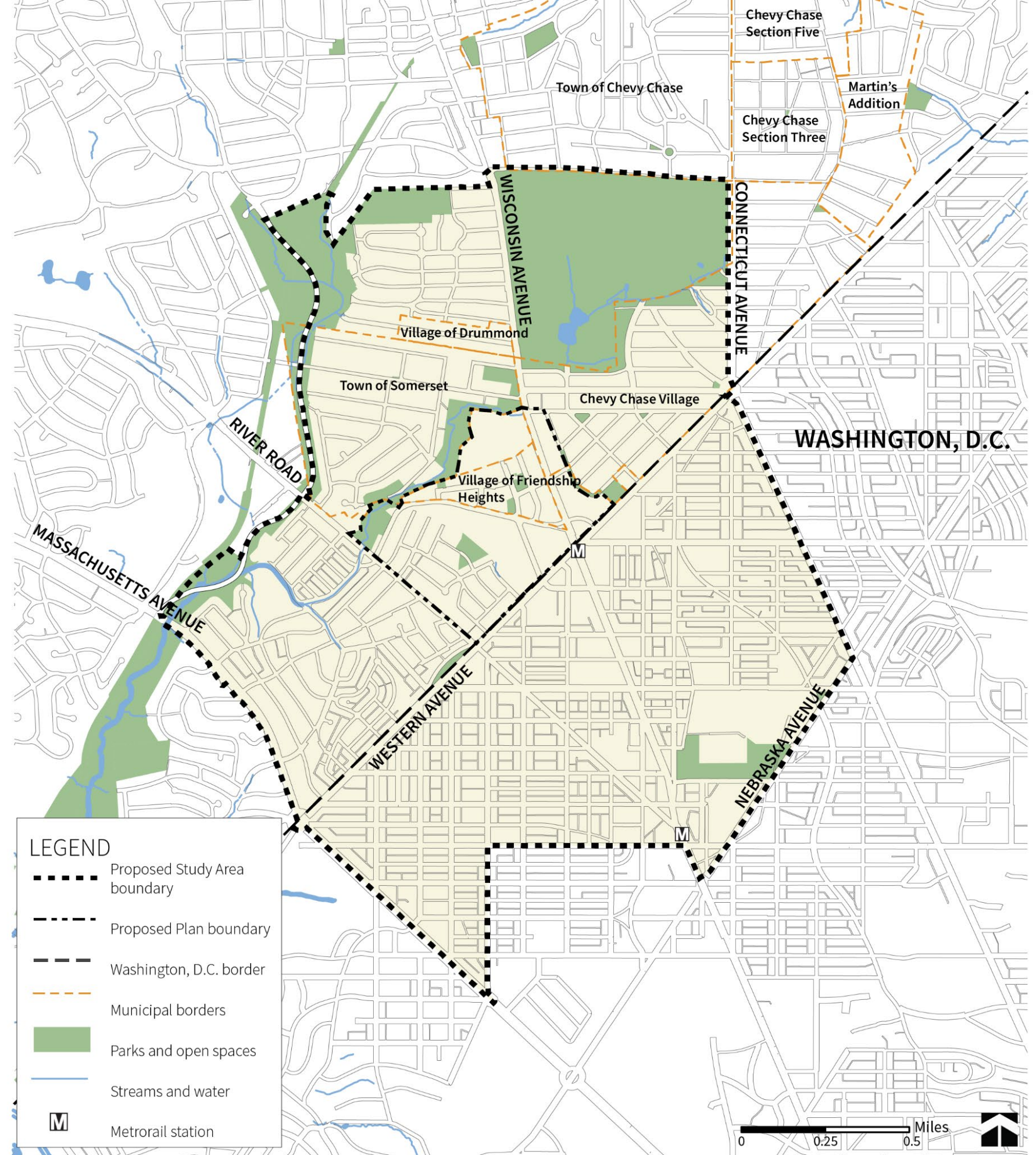
Plan Boundary

- Includes “downtown” Friendship Heights
- Extends to River Road including part of Brookdale



Plan Study Area

- Extends into Washington, D.C. as this is key context for Friendship Heights





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Sector Plan Engagement

- Reach a wide range of stakeholders
- Deliver clear and straightforward messaging
- Provide a variety of opportunities so that people of all ages and stages can participate
- Collaborate with community partners and agencies
- Meet people where they are



Engagement Update



We've been talking to.....

Sept 2024 – April 2025

- Village of Friendship Heights
- Chevy Chase Village
- Town of Somerset
- Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
- West Friendship Association
- Friendship Heights Neighbors Network
- Somerset House (condos)
- Friendship Heights Transportation Management District
- Friendship Heights Alliance + Youth Advisory Council
- Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board
- Friendship Heights Urban District Advisory Committee
- Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce
- 4620 North Park Avenue
- NAIOP
- Group of major property owners



FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS TODAY

Existing Conditions Analysis

- Planning History
- Demographics
- Land Use and Zoning
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Urban Design
- Parks and Public Spaces
- Environment
- Transportation
- Community Amenities
- Schools
- Historic Resources

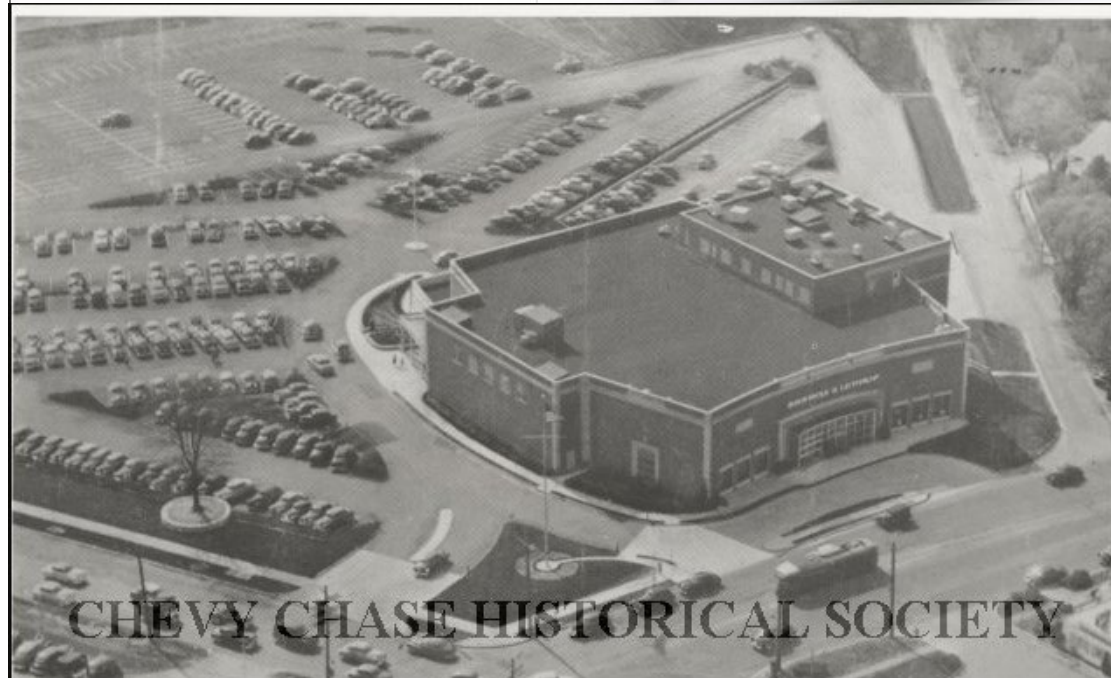


HISTORY

Context



History



History

- Thelma “Tim” Edwards (1917-2011)
- Became a realtor; realized zoning changes would create opportunity in Friendship Heights
- Negotiated deals between homeowners and developers



History



1951



1979



2023

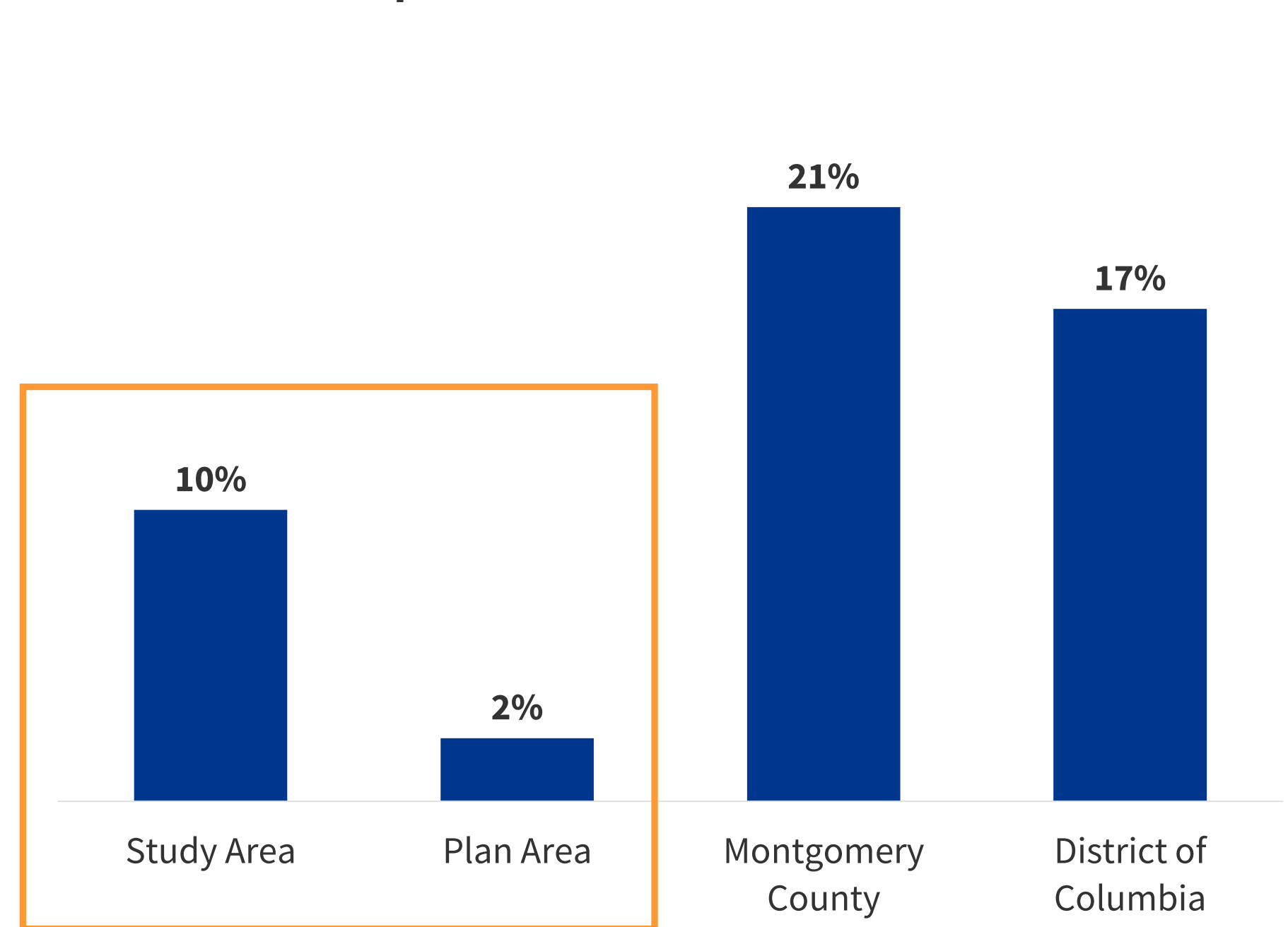


DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Growth

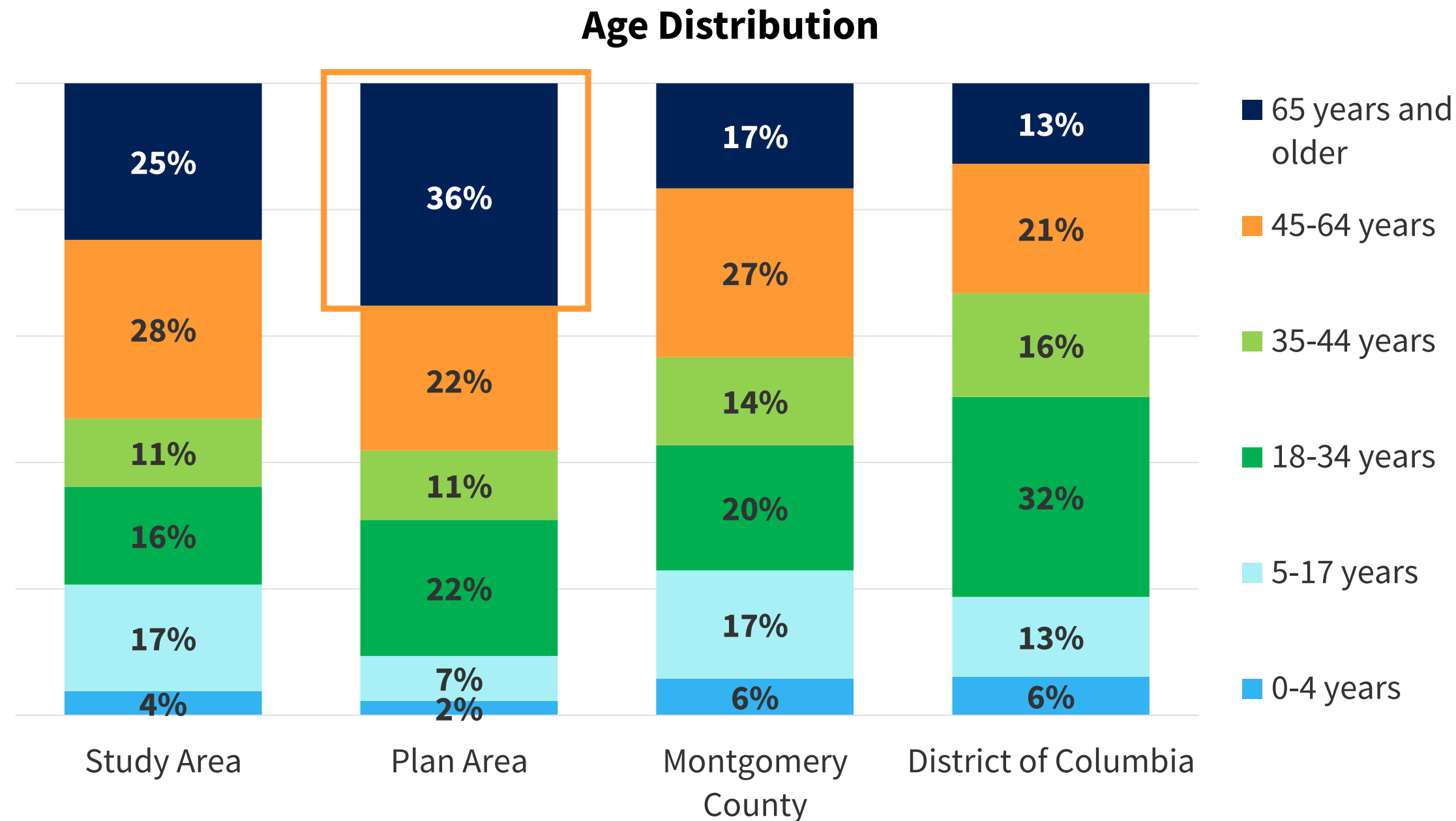
- Study Area current population: ~24,000
 - 58% on Maryland side
- Plan Area current population: ~ 6,000
- Study Area and Plan Area had lower growth rates than Montgomery County or DC

Population Growth 2000-2023



Source: 2000 Decennial Census and 2023 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Age Distribution



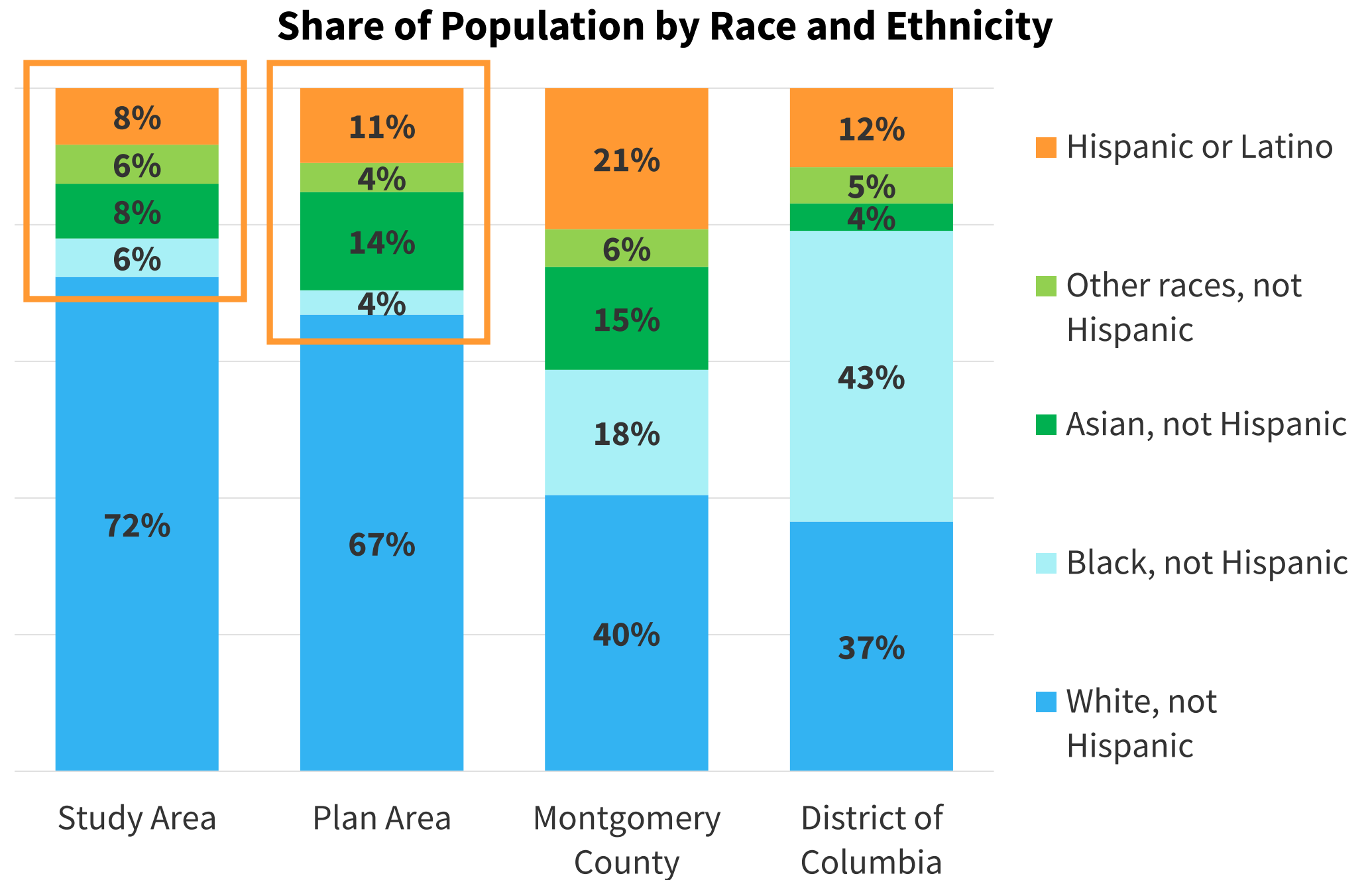
- Study Area population is older than Montgomery County's or DC's population
- Much older population in Plan Area



Source: 2023 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

Racial Diversity

- Study Area is less racially diverse compared to Montgomery County or DC
- Plan Area is slightly more diverse than Study Area as a whole

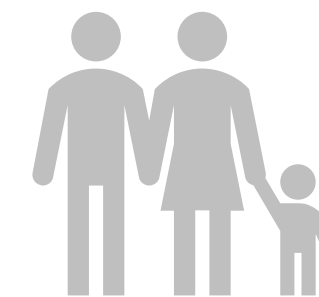


Source: 2023 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau



Household type

- Study Area and Plan Area have different household characteristics
 - 56% of Study Area households are families
 - 56% of Plan Area households are people living alone
- Differences likely related to age distribution and housing type



Educational Attainment

- Study Area is highly educated and more educated than Montgomery County or DC
- Among residents ages 25+:
 - 85% have at least a bachelor's degree
(vs. Montgomery County – 60% and DC – 63%)
 - 59% have a graduate or professional degree
(vs. Montgomery County – 33% and DC – 37%)
- Plan Area is similar to Study Area in terms of education attainment



Income and Wealth

- Study Area has higher income than Montgomery County or DC
- Plan Area's income is lower than Study Area
 - Likely related to age distribution
 - Older households are more likely to have:
 - **Lower income** due to retirement
 - **More wealth** from savings, retirement accounts, homeownership, other assets

Average Household Income:

Study Area: \$268,665

Plan Area: \$204,695

Montgomery County: \$177,086

District of Columbia: \$157,604

Source: 2023 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau



LAND USE AND ZONING

Montgomery County Downtowns

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS = 113 AC



WHEATON = 83 ACRES



SILVER SPRING = 376 ACRES



BETHESDA = 156 AC (CBD) 450 AC (PLAN)

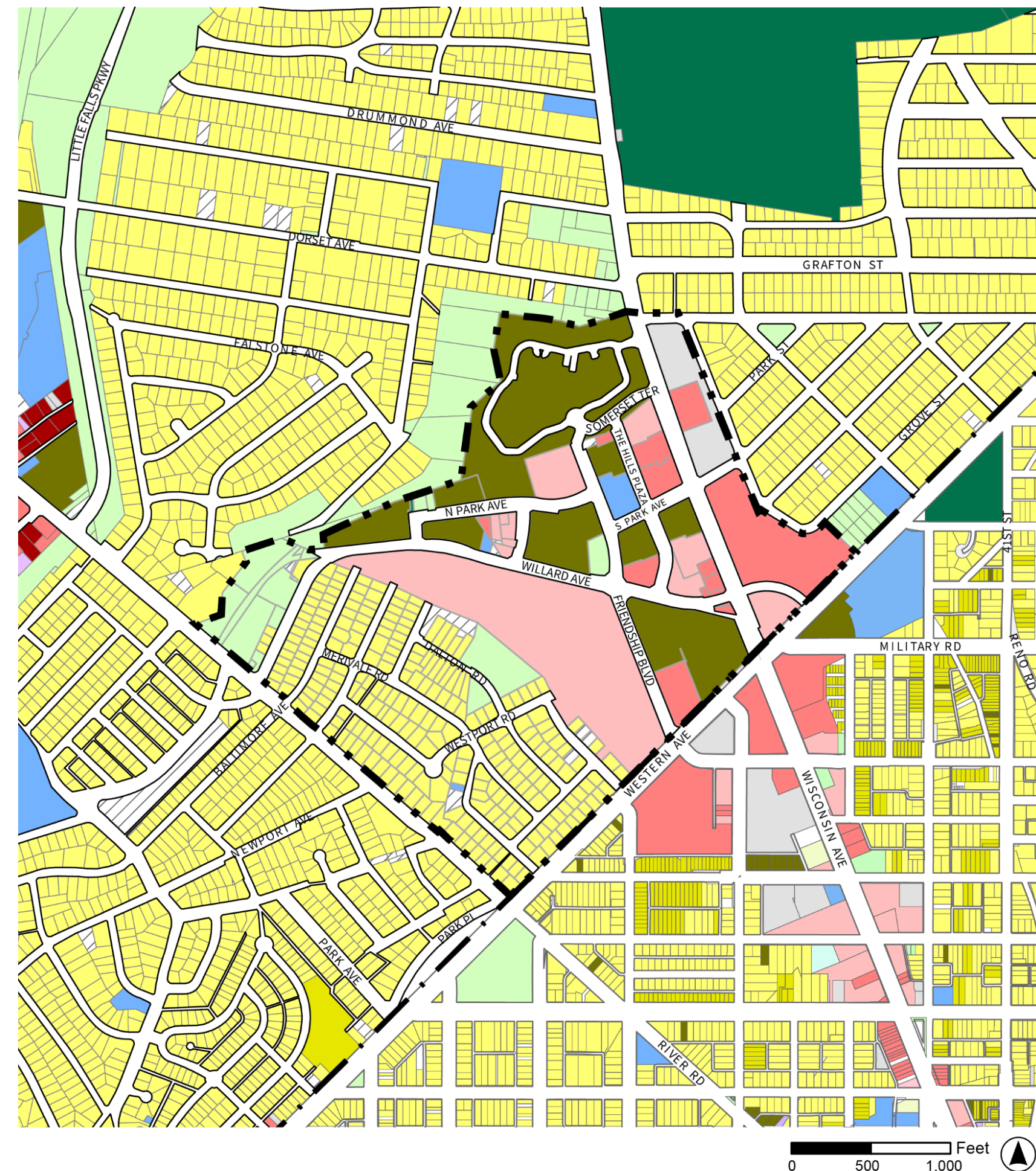


Existing Land Use

- Commercial corridor along Wisconsin Ave
- Surrounded on MD side by single-family homes
- Housing context on DC side is more varied

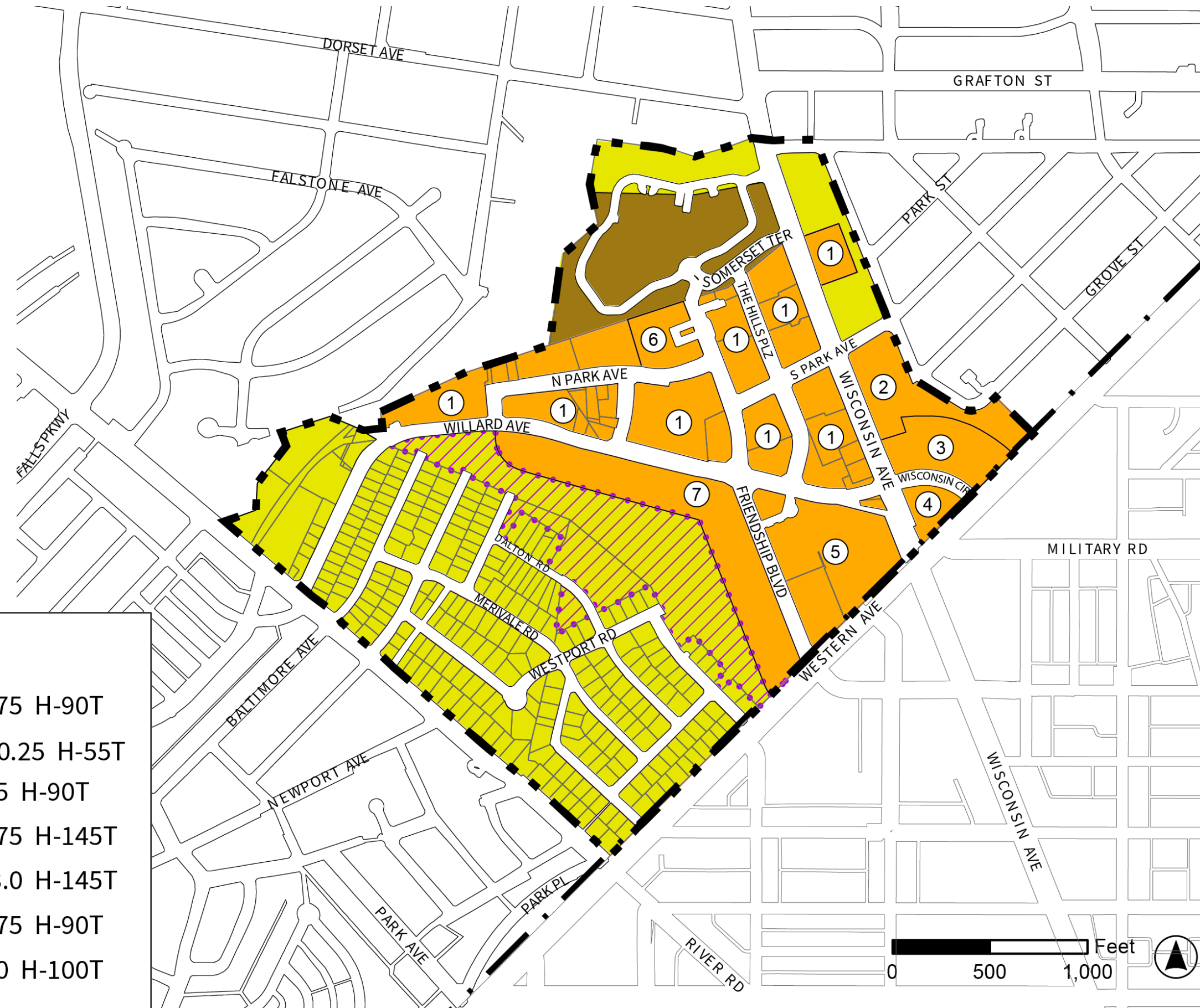
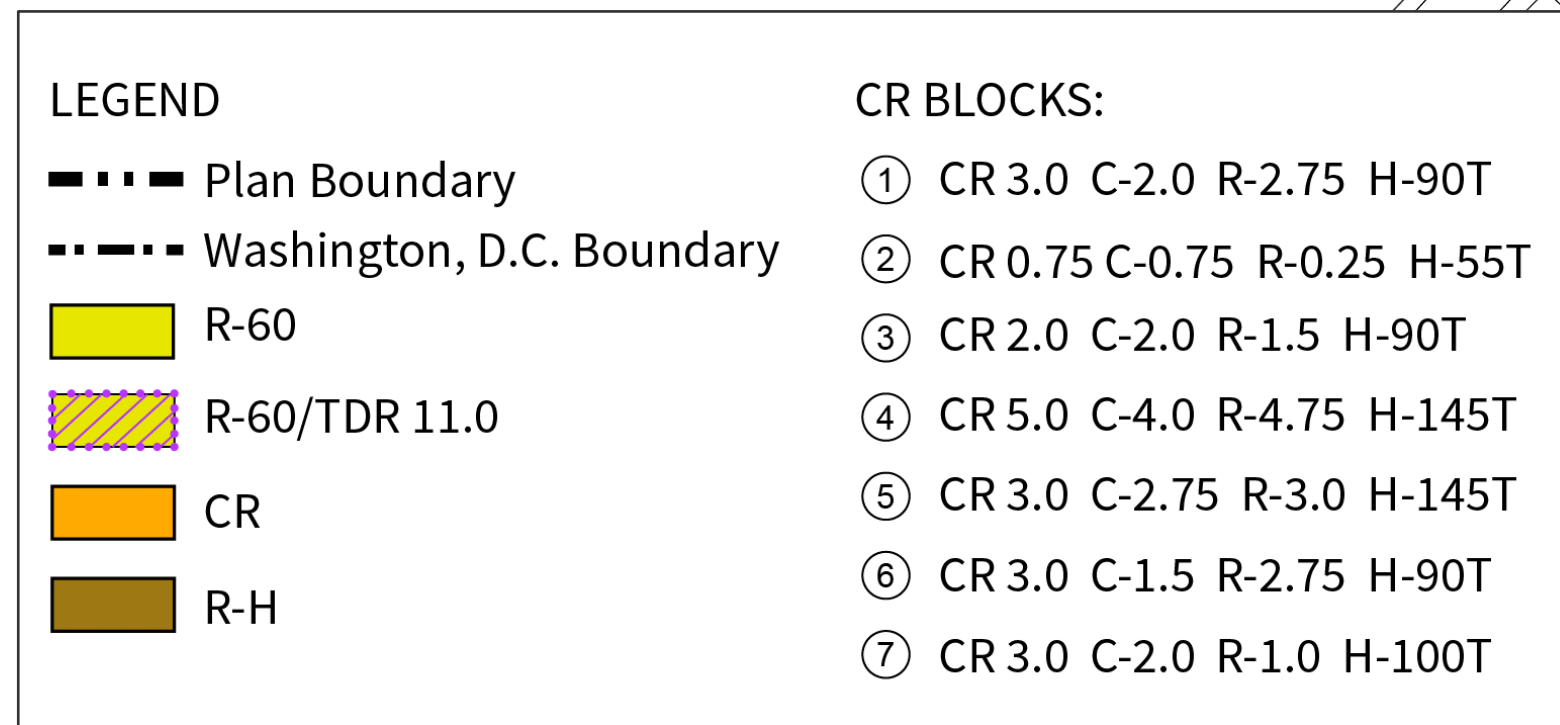
LEGEND

■■■■ Plan Boundary	■ Institutional/Comm. Facility	■ Cooperative
■■■■ Washington, D.C. Boundary	■ Office	■ Single Family - Attached
■ Parks	■ Parking and Transportation	■ Single Family - Detached
■ Open Space/Recreation	■ Research and Development	■ Utility
■ Cultural	■ Retail	■ Warehouse
■ Industrial	■ Multi-Family	■ Vacant



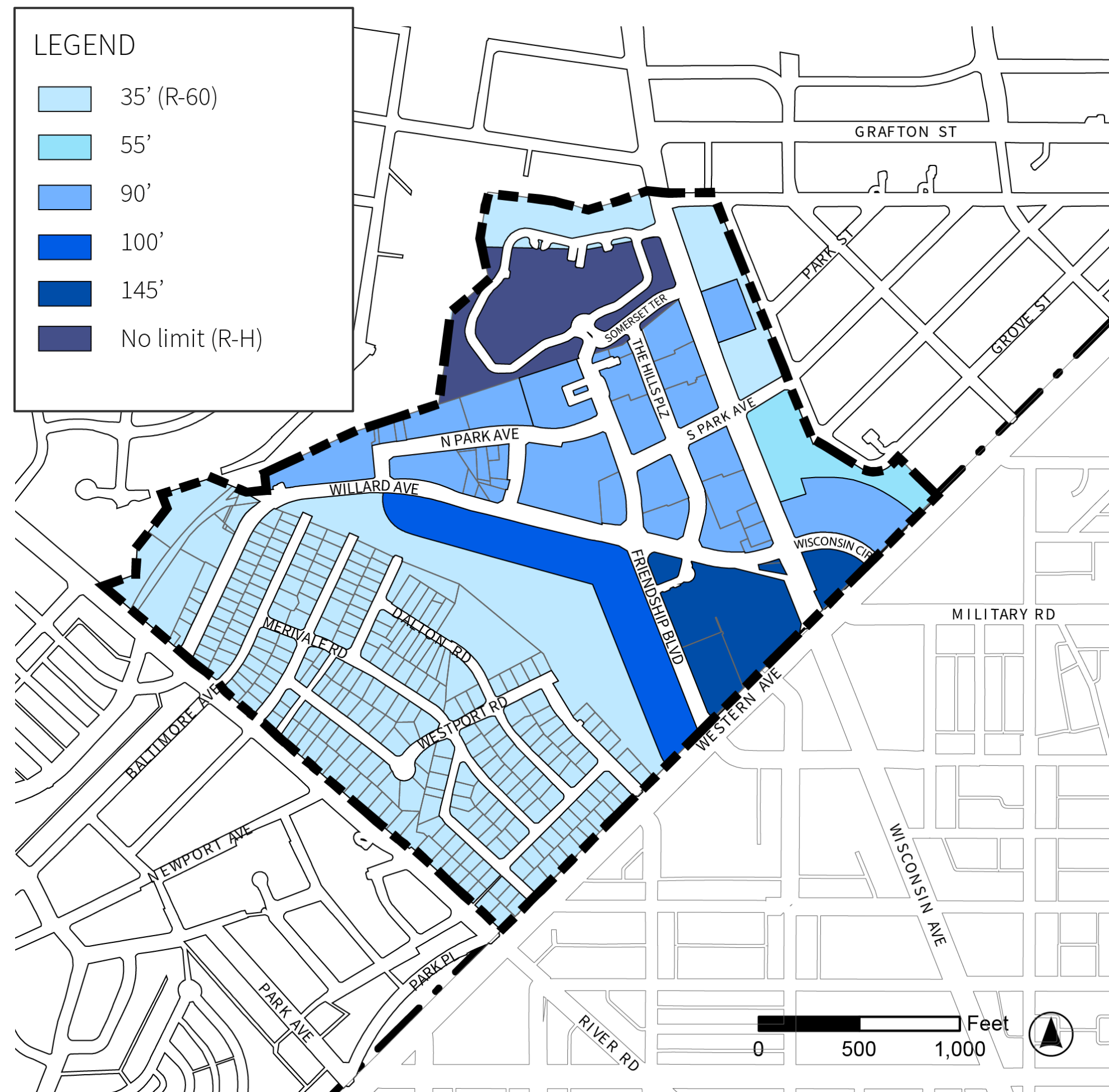
Existing Zoning

- CR zones are more prescriptive than current approach to zoning
- R-60 buffer zoner on Saks parking lot
- GEICO has an unusual TDR zone over the underlying R-60 zoning



Existing Zoning Heights

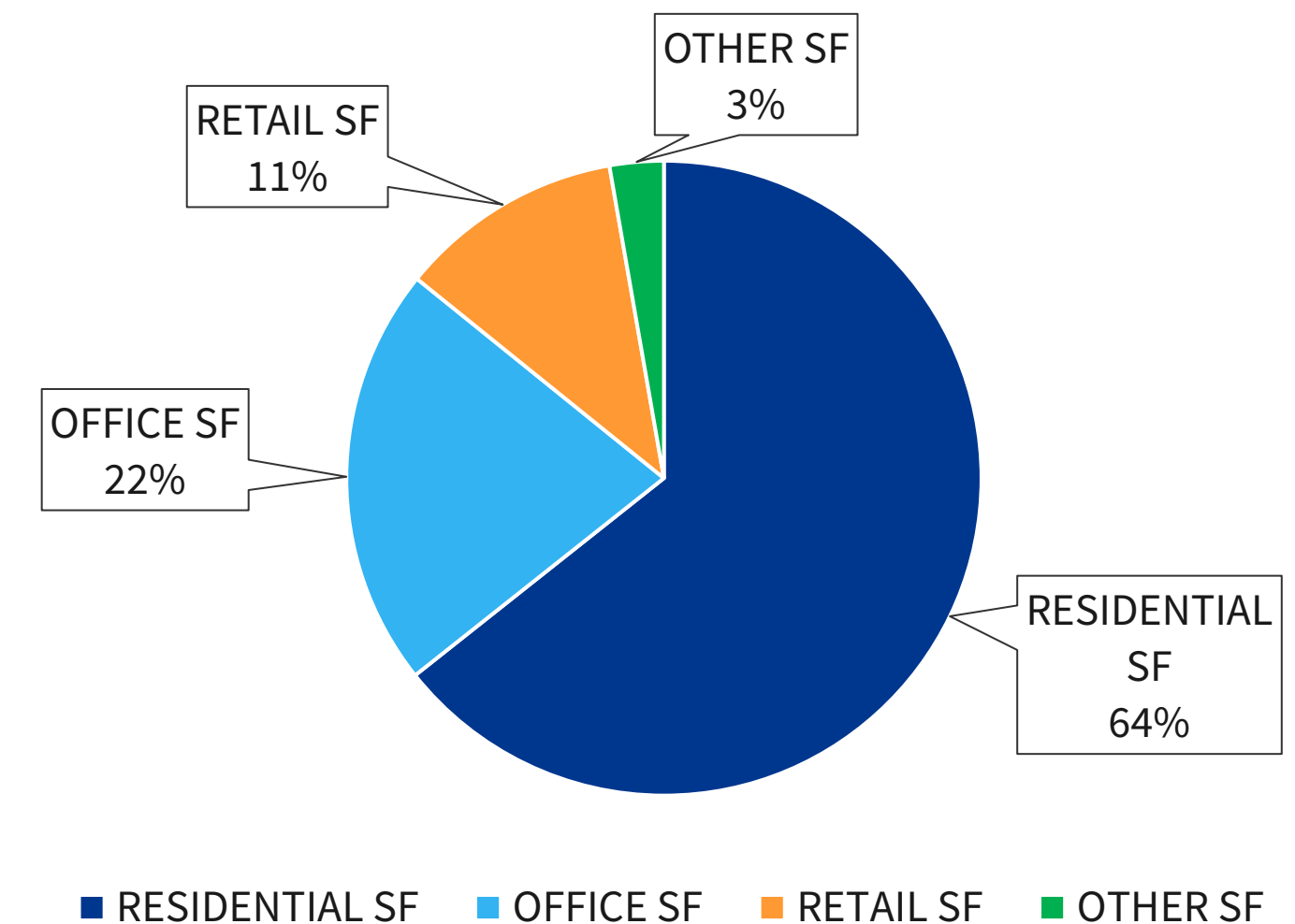
- Tallest buildings are the Somerset Condos at the north. R-H has no hard height limit. Existing buildings are ~200' tall.
- Majority of the downtown is set at 90' with some exceptions near Metro.
- Along Wisconsin Avenue in DC buildings are proposed at the height limit of 130'



Existing Development

RESIDENTIAL SF	OFFICE SF	RETAIL SF	OTHER SF	INDUSTRIAL SF	DWELLING UNITS	TOTAL SF
6,062,002	2,024,309	1,077,880	259,157	0	4,251	9,423,348

- Total existing development: 9.4 M sf
- Plan Area: 173 ac
- Nearly 70% of the development in the downtown was built before 2000. The most recent development is Wisconsin Place, completed in 2009
- In Brookdale all dwelling units are single-family homes; there are no single-family units in the downtown



Existing Zoning Capacity

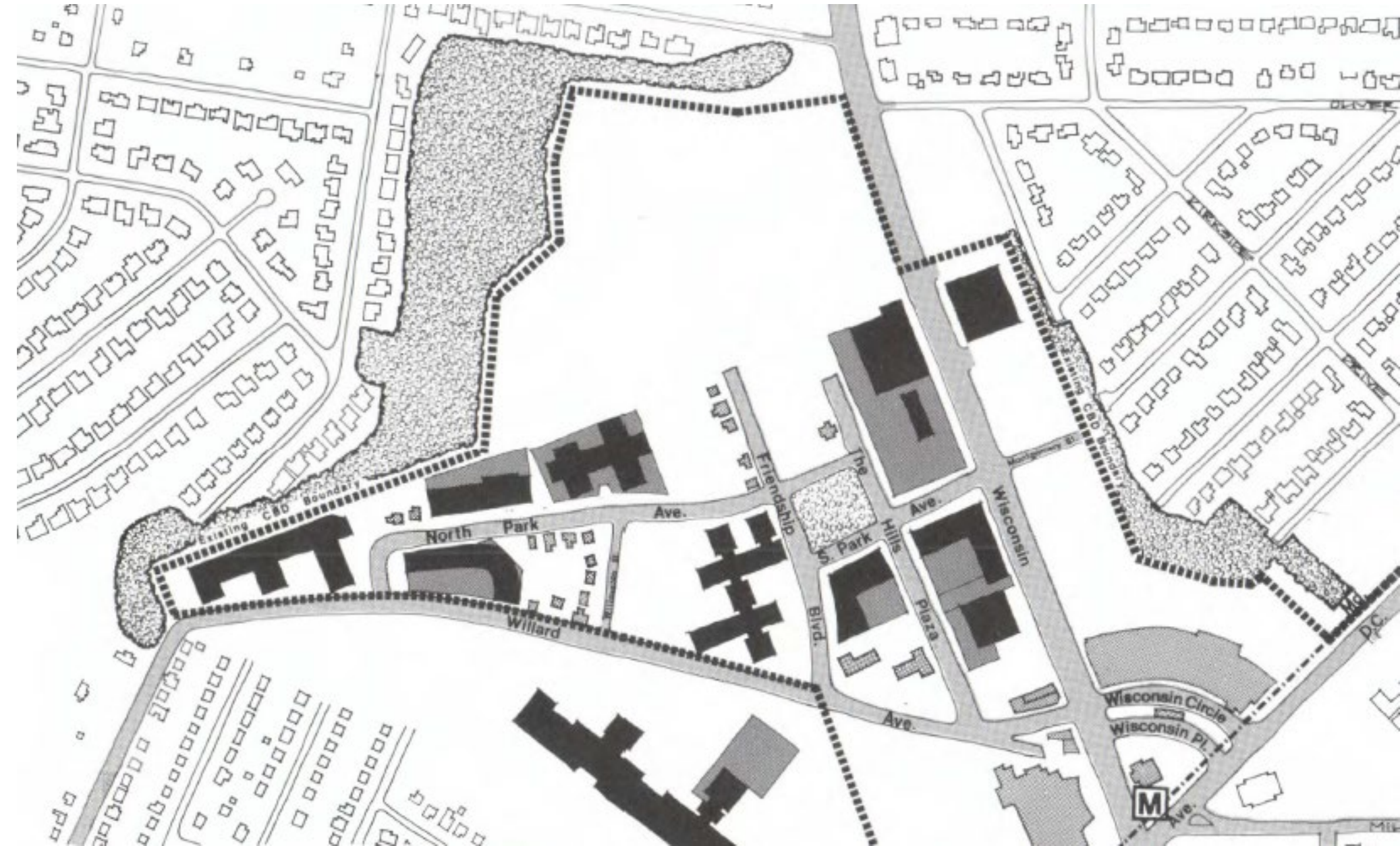
- Early 1960s, zoning changes made to parcels near future Metro stations to allow for dense development
- 1964 Master Plan continued that trend



1964

Existing Zoning Capacity

- By 1974 Plan concerns about too much development too fast; traffic concerns were limiting factor. Limited CBD and started to “downzone”
- 1998 Plan preserved the CBD-1 zoning on most residential properties
- This was converted to CR 3.0 in the zoning update



1974

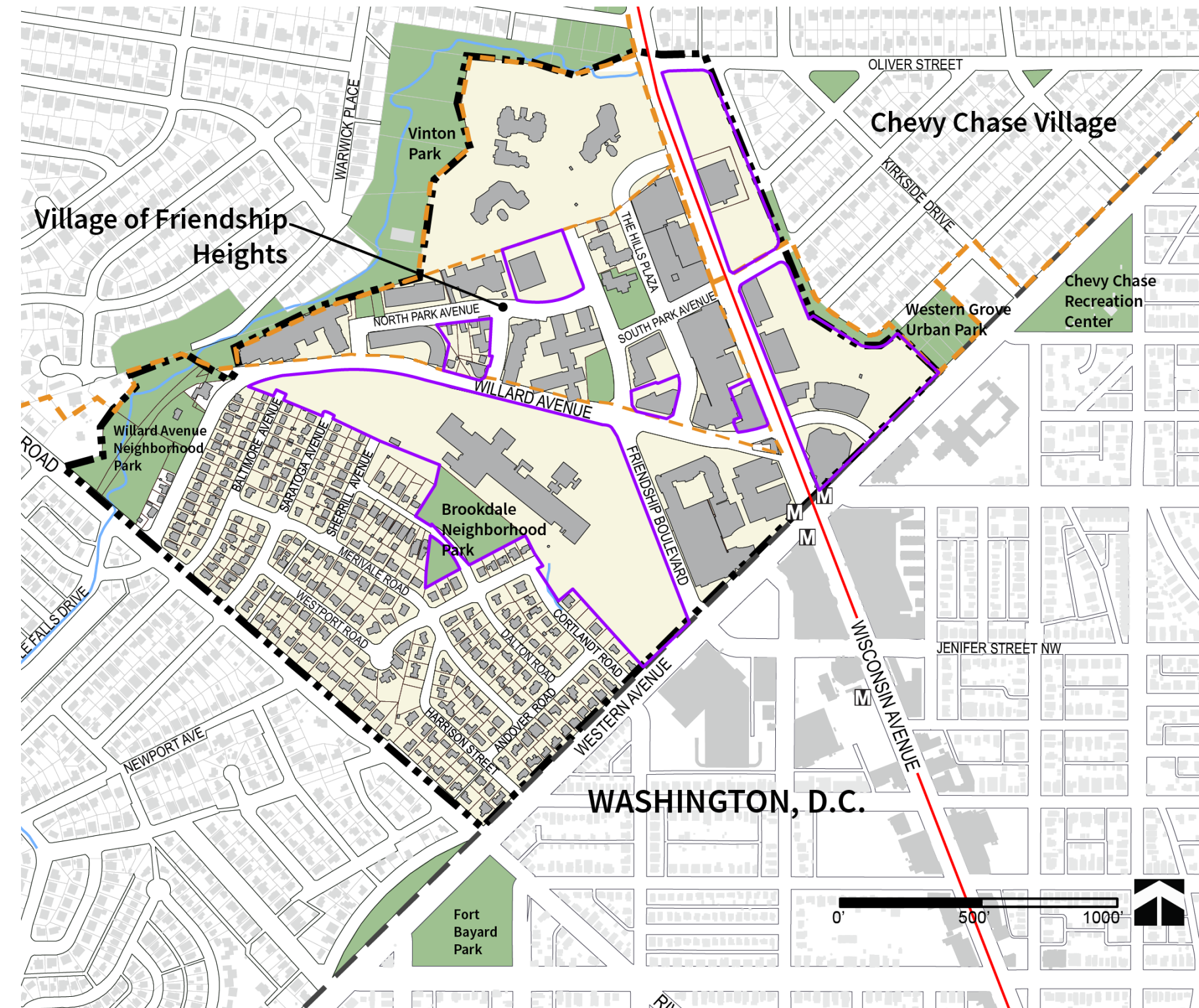
Existing Zoning Capacity

Existing Max Zoning on All Sites: 7,896,461 SF
Existing GSF in Plan Area: 9,395,940 SF

Existing Max Zoning on Underutilized Sites: 3,470,611 SF

Existing Built on Underutilized Sites: 1,423,836 SF

Existing Potential: 2,046,775 SF

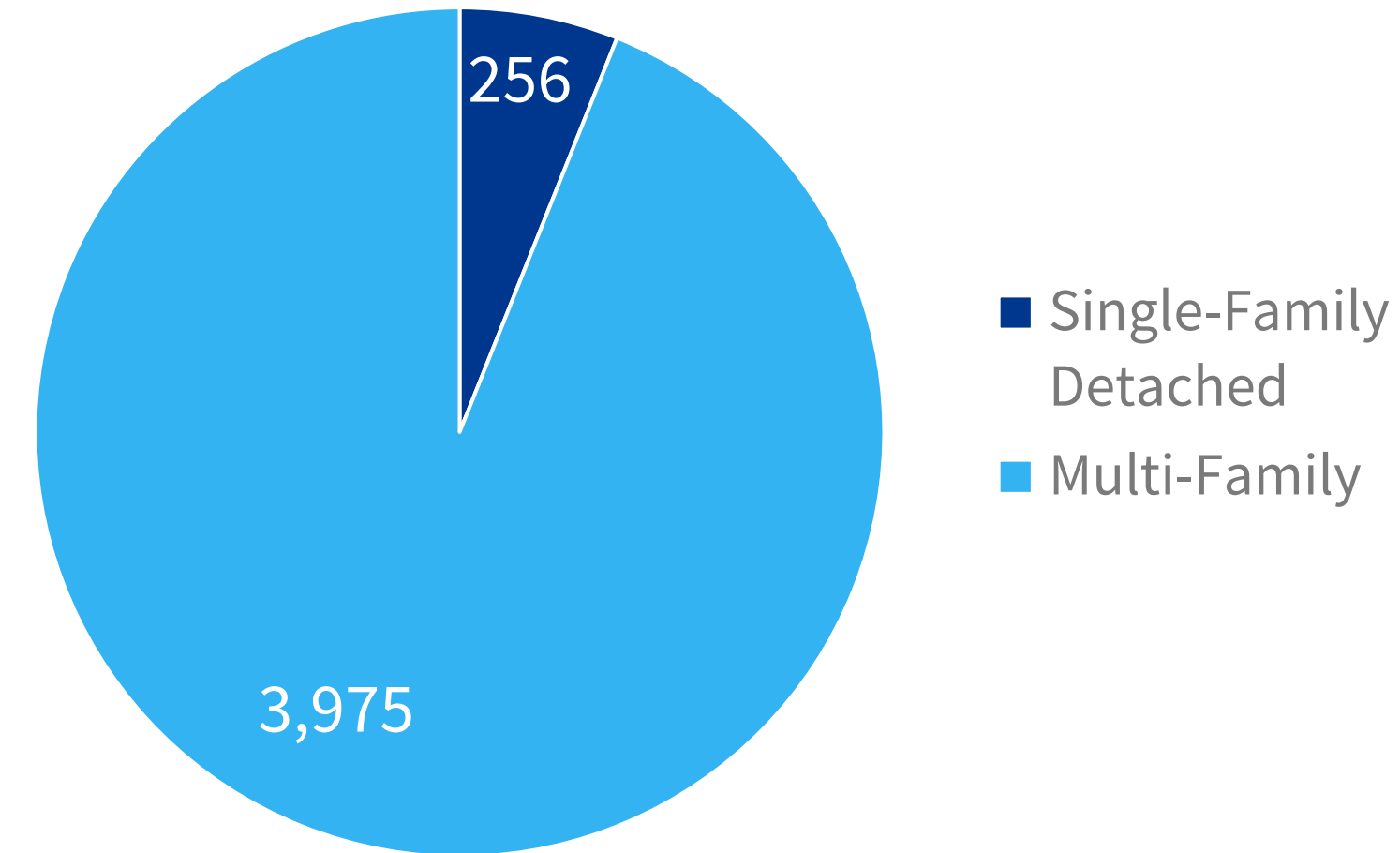




HOUSING / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Housing Type and Tenure

- There are 4,231 units in the Plan Area
- 94% of units are in large multi-family structures, 6% are single-family detached
- Plan Area homeownership rate reflects DC levels more than Montgomery County levels

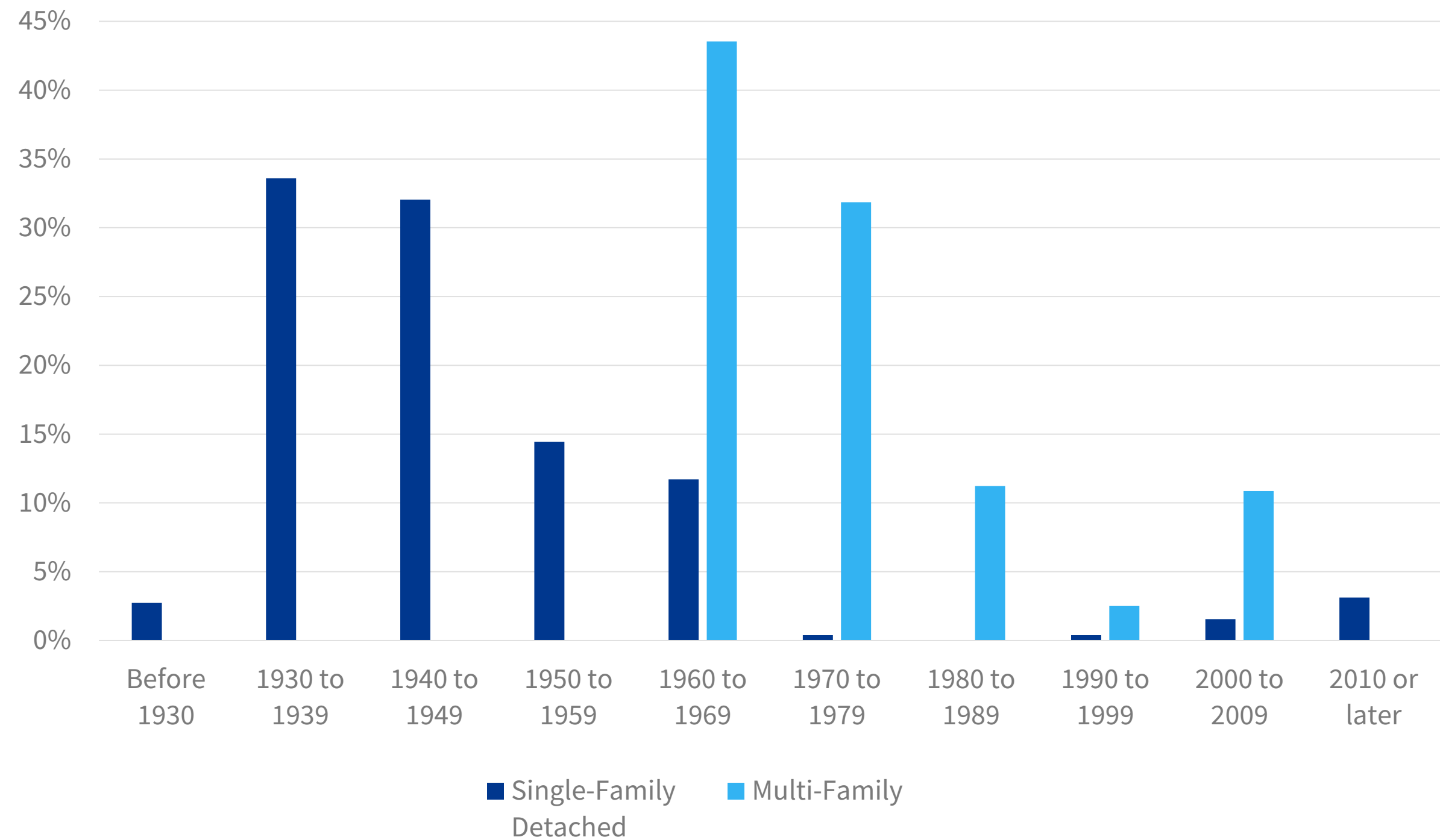


% Owner-Occupied

Plan Area: 43%
Study Area: 66%
Montgomery County: 65%
District of Columbia: 41%

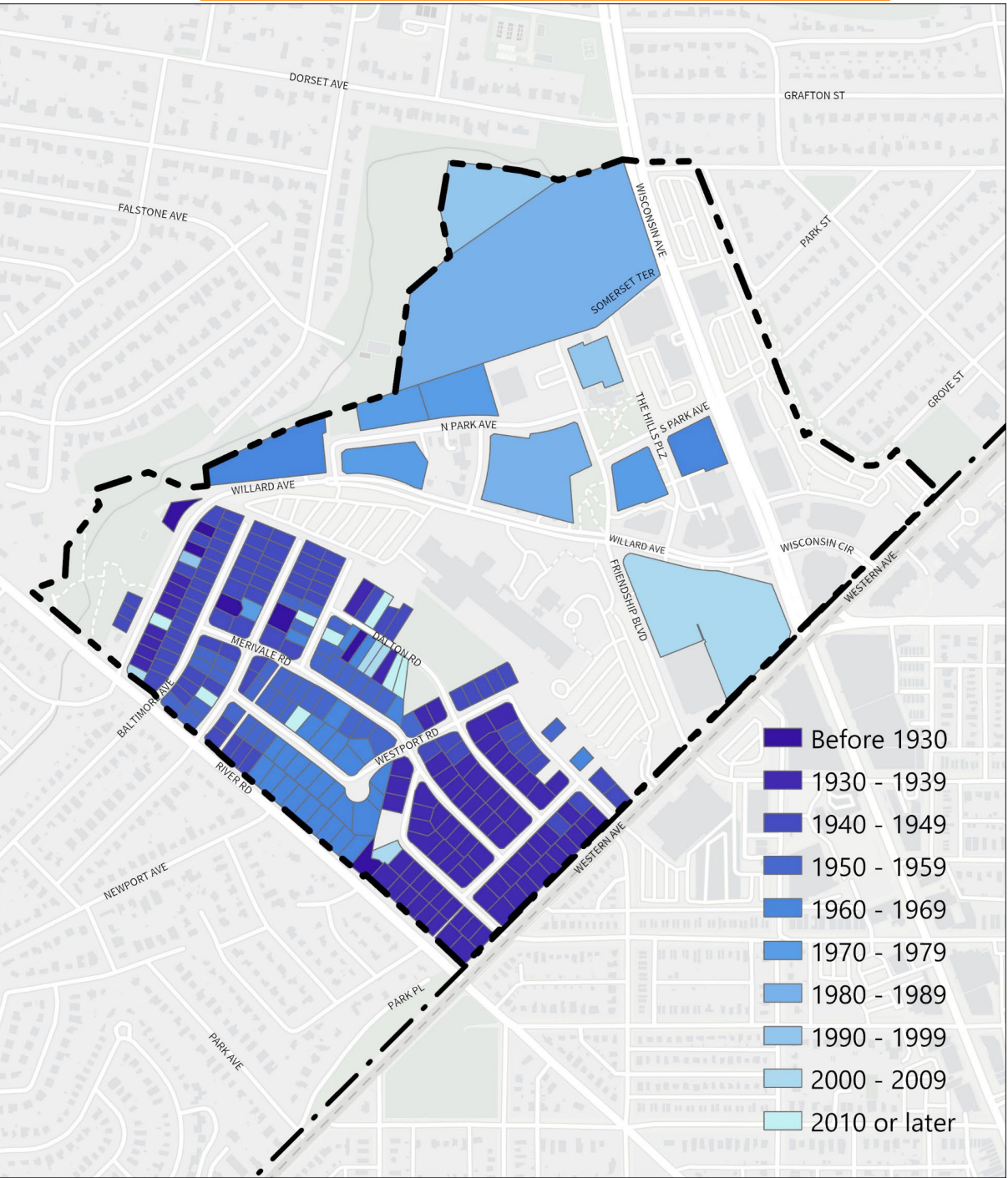
Source: 2023 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau; Maryland Department of Taxation and Assessments 2025; compiled by Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects.

Year Built

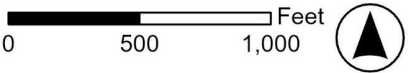


Source: Maryland Department of Taxation and Assessments 2025; compiled by Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects.

Average age:
Single-family buildings – 76
Multi-family buildings – 44



*shows only residential properties

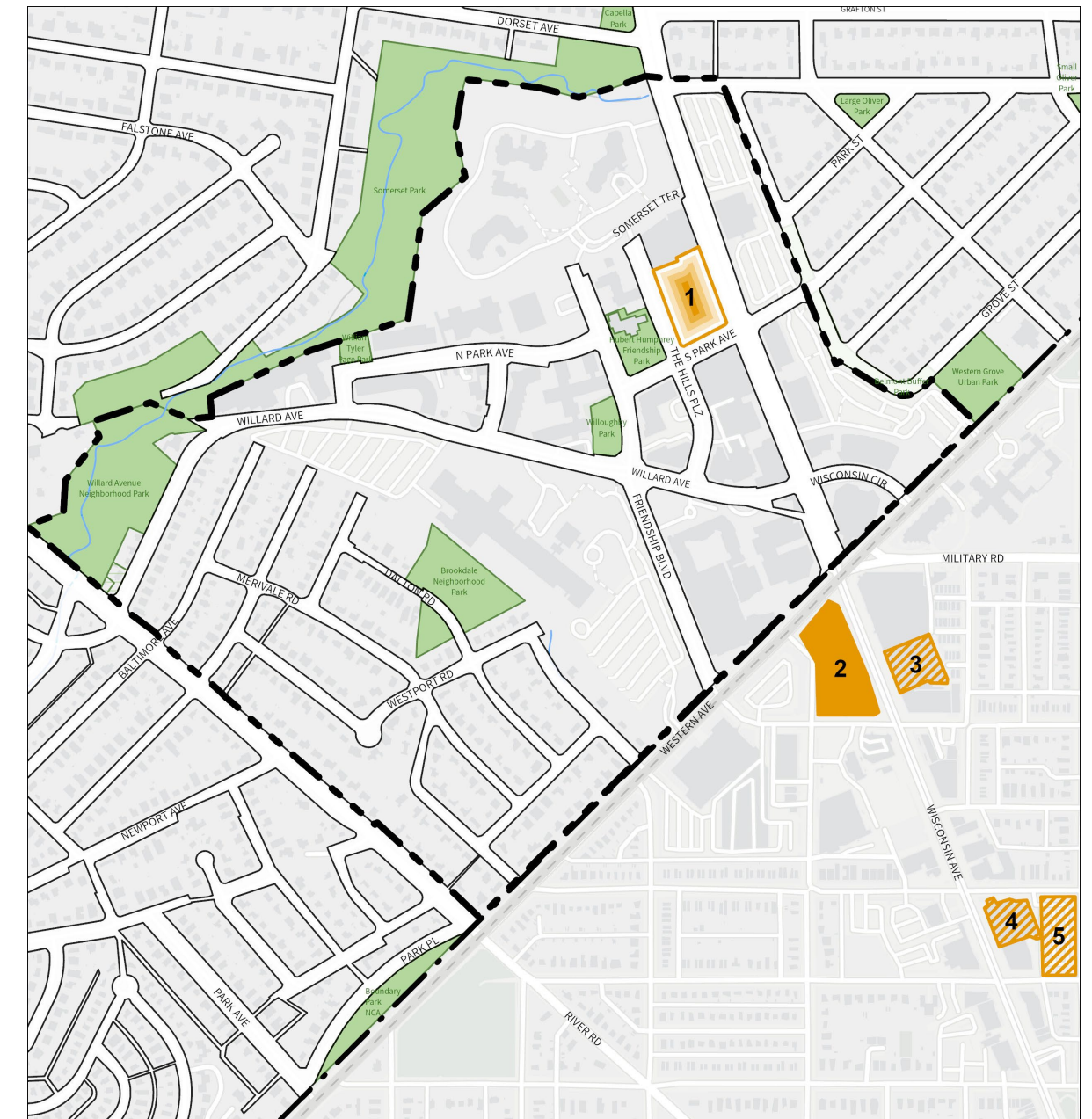


Development Since 1998 Sector Plan

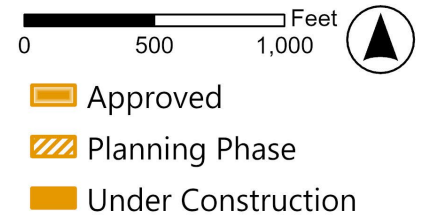
Plan Recommendation (1998)	Reality (2025)
Add 800 to 1,000 dwelling units.	444 units have been built since 1998 – 432 multi-family and 12 single-family detached
Include 100 to 300 townhouses at the GEICO site.	No activity on the GEICO site.
Provide affordable housing through MPDUs.	28 MPDUs were provided at Wisconsin Place.
Alternatives to this requirement, such as contributions to the County's Housing Initiative Fund, should be avoided if at all possible in Friendship Heights.	MPDUs at Wisconsin Place are only half of the requirement. An alternative compliance agreement was made for the other half in the form of payments to the County Housing Initiative Fund.

Multi-Family Pipeline Development

- 1) *5500 Wisconsin Ave*
 - Redevelopment with up to **300 residential units (including 15% MPDUs)** and up to 11,015 square feet of ground-floor commercial use
- 2) *Former Mazza-Gallerie at 5300 Wisconsin Ave NW*
 - **325 rental units** and 70,000 sf of retail (by Spring 2025)
- 3) *Friendship Center Redevelopment at 5333 Wisconsin Ave NW*
 - **310-unit** residential development above 12,000 square feet of retail
- 4) *Fox 5 Headquarters Redevelopment at 5151 Wisconsin Ave NW*
 - **210-unit** project with 1,700 sf of retail or restaurant space and car and bicycle parking (approved and submitted for permit)
- 5) *4201 Garrison Street NW*
 - 4 to 6-story building with **~130 residential units** (very early stages)



1. 5500 Wisconsin Avenue
2. 5300 Wisconsin Avenue NW
3. 5333 Wisconsin Avenue NW
4. 5151 Wisconsin Avenue NW
5. 4201 Garrison Street NW



Owner-Occupied Housing Value and Costs

Average housing costs:

Plan Area – \$5,147

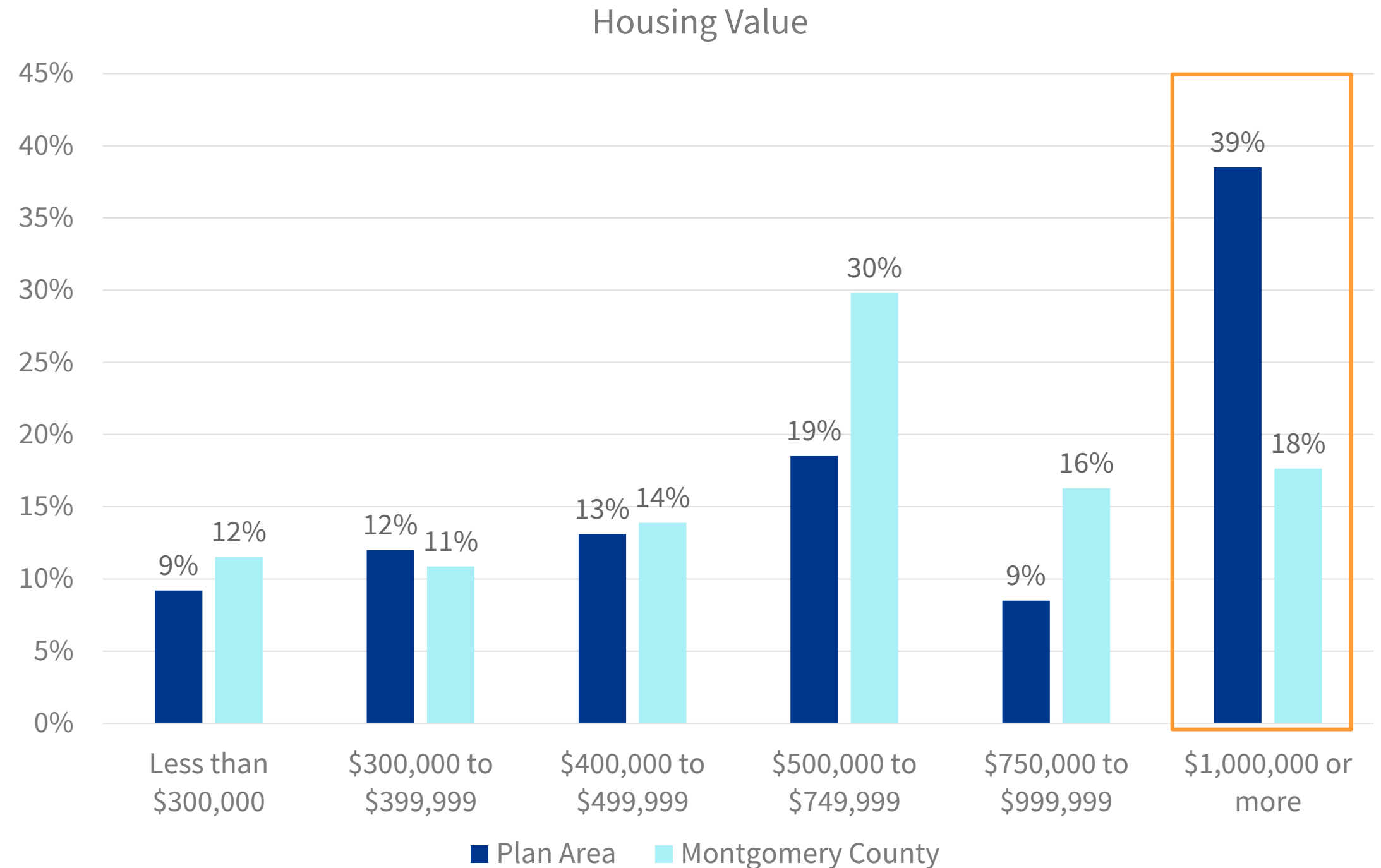
Study Area – \$4,997

Montgomery County - \$3,271

District of Columbia - \$3,430

30%

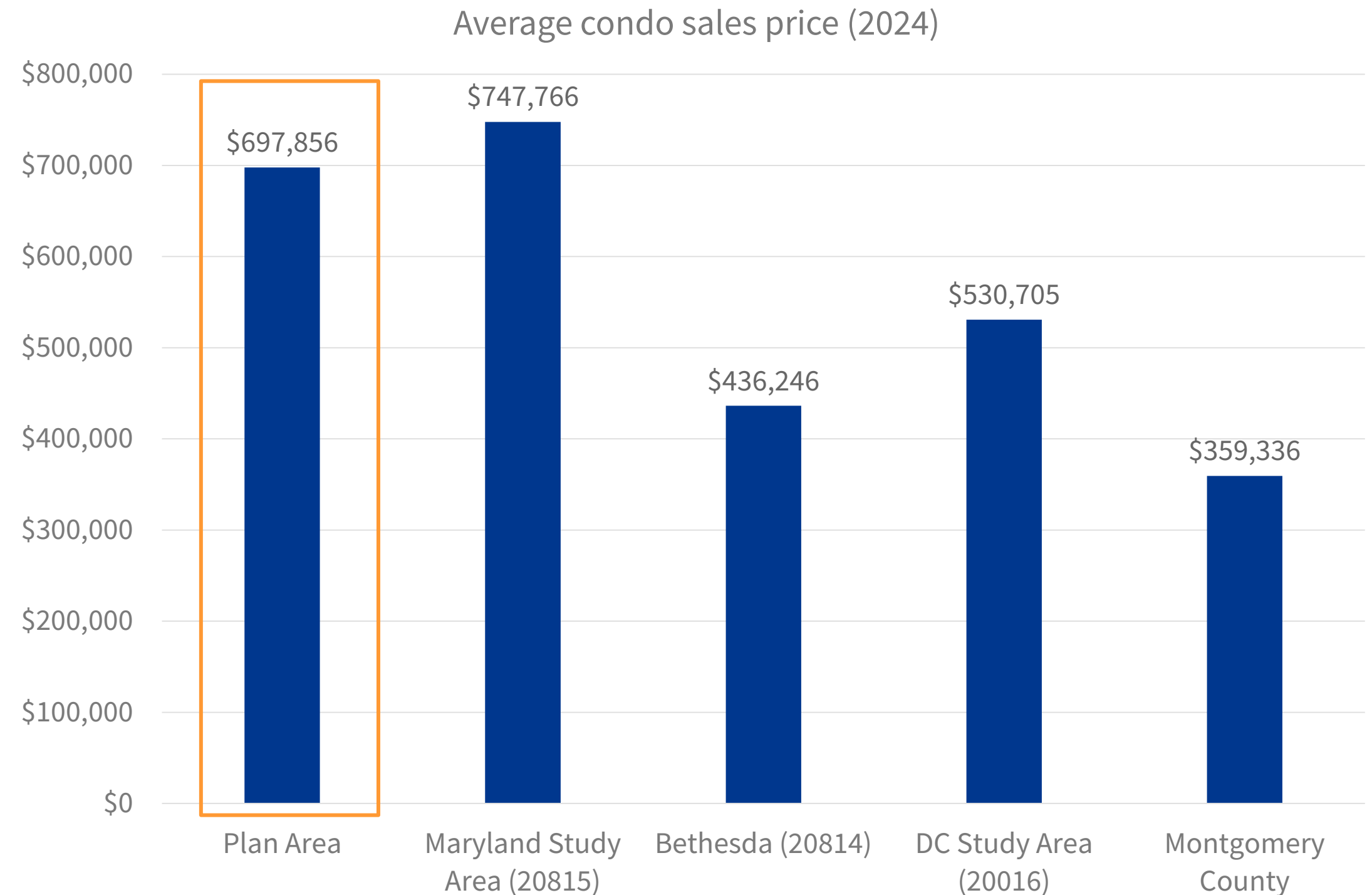
of owner-occupied households
in the plan area are cost-
burdened



Source: 2023 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau; compiled by Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects.

For-Sale Market

- In 2024, there were 2 single-family detached sales and 87 multi-family sales in the Plan Area
- Plan Area has had higher condo sale prices than most comparative markets
- Since 2023, condo sale prices increased 8.1% in the Plan Area (19.6% in Bethesda)



Source: Redfin 2025, MRIS 2025; compiled by Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects.

Renter-Occupied Housing Costs

Average gross rent:

Plan Area – \$2,789

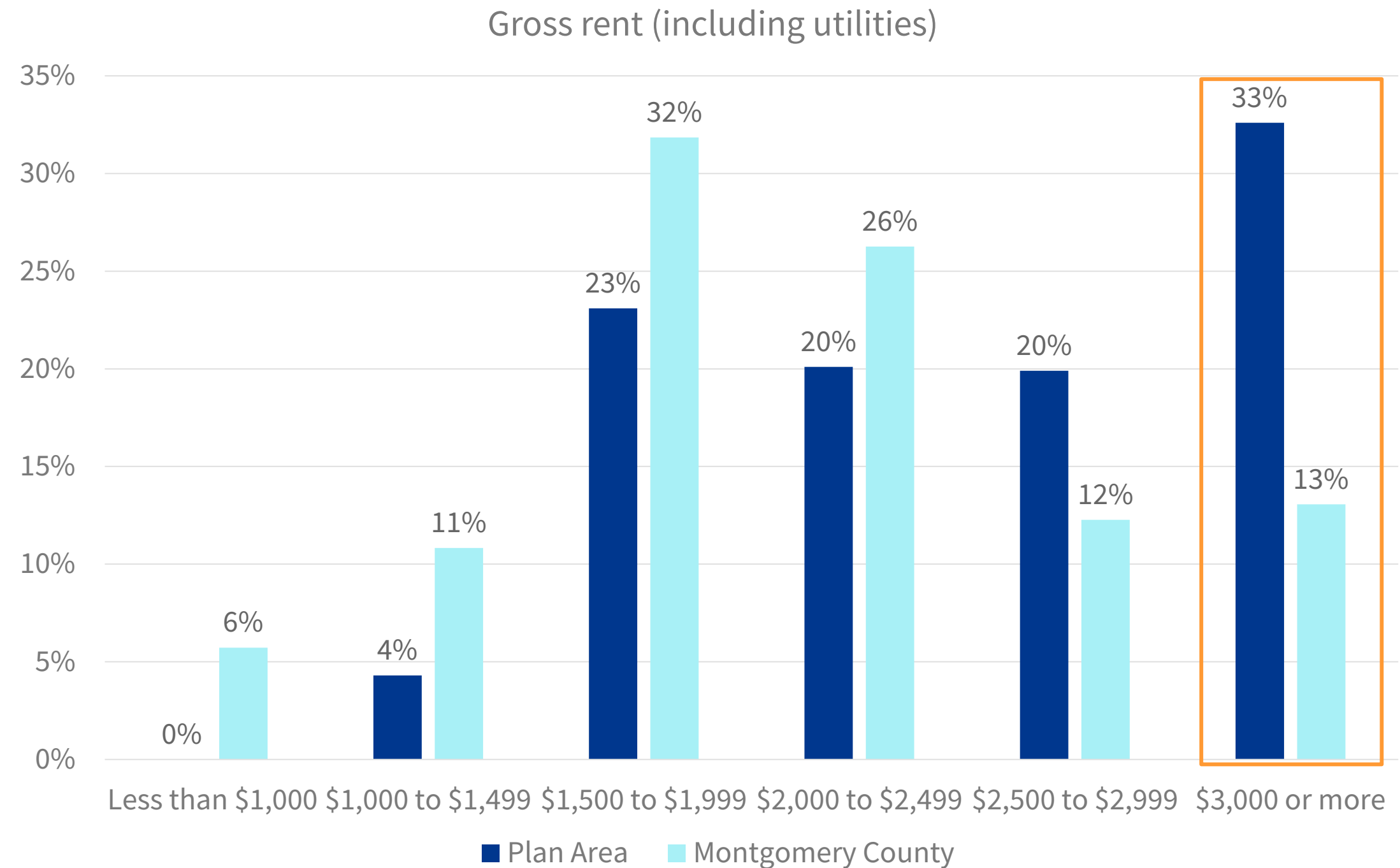
Study Area – \$2,775

Montgomery County - \$2,182

District of Columbia - \$2,058

36%

of renter-occupied households
in the plan area are cost-
burdened



Source: 2023 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau; compiled by Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects.

Relatively strong rents, but challenges persist

- Overall rents in the study area are substantially higher than the regional average
- Rents in the study area have recovered from the pandemic dip
- Current market conditions have challenged new development

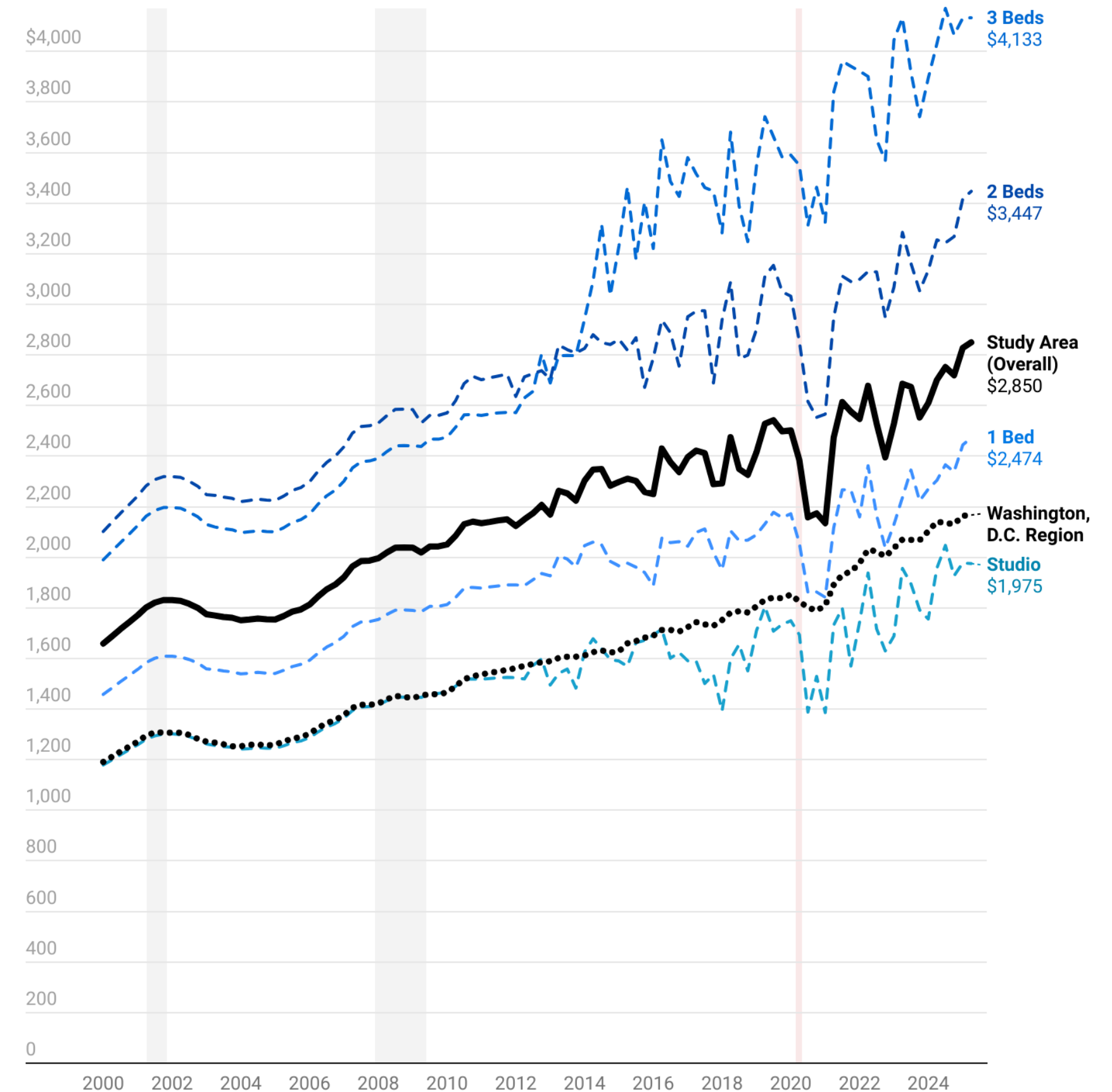


Chart: Research & Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper

Residences at Mazza | 5300 Wisconsin Ave.

- New construction on D.C. side
- Wood-over-Concrete construction
- Started prior to interest rate rise, cap rate expansion
- Strong rents, anecdotal strong interest
- Current market conditions may not support the increased cost of high-rise construction types



New Developments & Trends | Multifamily

Positive

- Strong rents, low vacancies
- Compelling amenities
 - Metro access
 - Proximity to job centers
 - Improving daily needs retail

Negative

- Market conditions pose challenges to new construction
- Little diversity in unit types
- Declining office sector may threaten retail amenities

Employment & Commercial Users

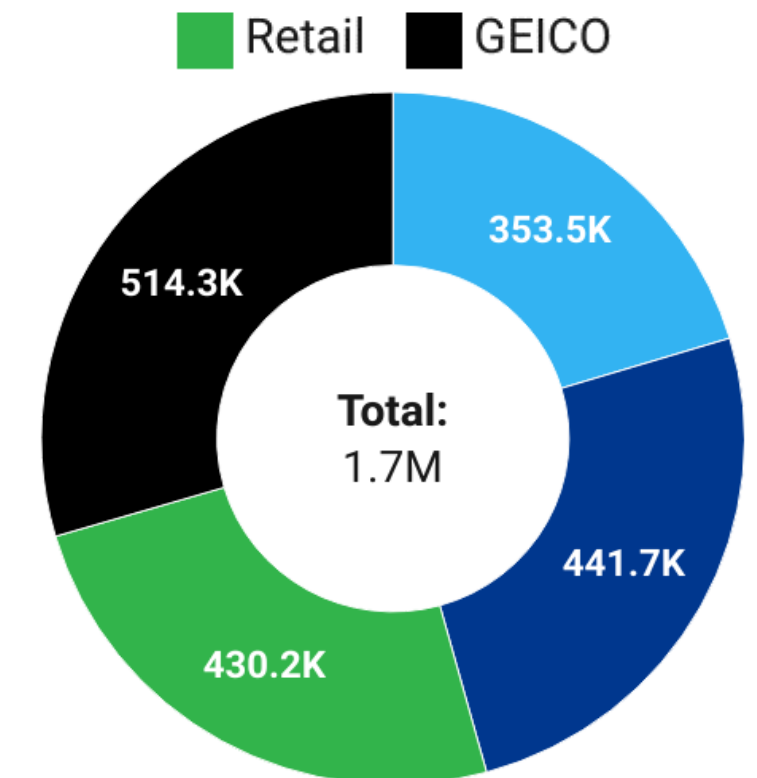
- Approx. 1,600 businesses and ~11,400 jobs in the Plan Area
- Top Employers: GEICO, JBGR Retail, Artery Group LLC, Microsoft Corporation, and Saks Fifth Avenue
- Balanced mix of commercial real estate occupants

Businesses & Employment in the Friendship Heights Sector Plan Area

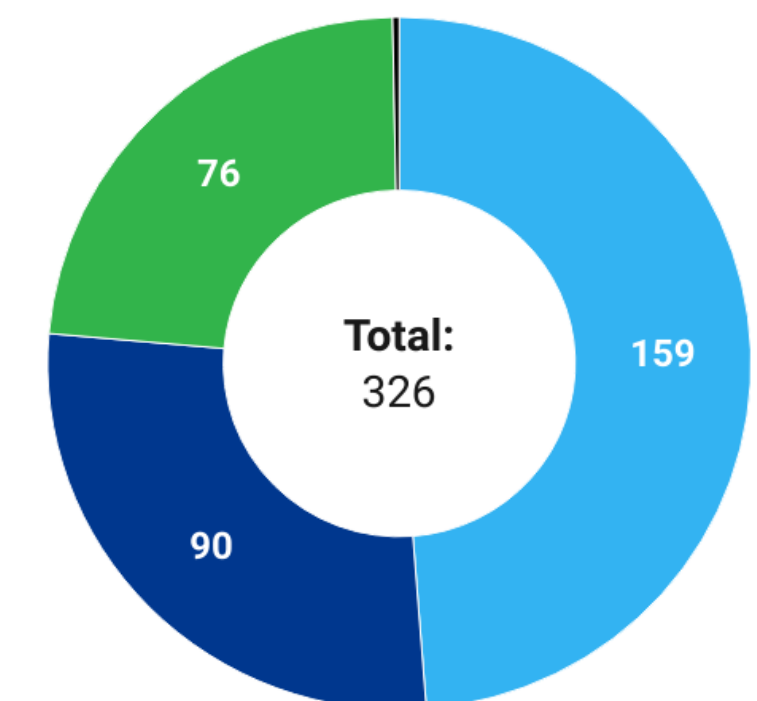
Industry	# of Businesses	% of All Businesses	# of Employees	% of All Employees
Health Care and Social Assistance	947	59.9%	3,115	27.7%
Finance and Insurance	126	8.0%	2,553	22.4%
Retail	52	3.3%	1,172	10.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	77	4.9%	971	8.5%
Construction	21	1.3%	930	8.2%

Table: Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects • Source: Data Axle, 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Medical Traditional Office



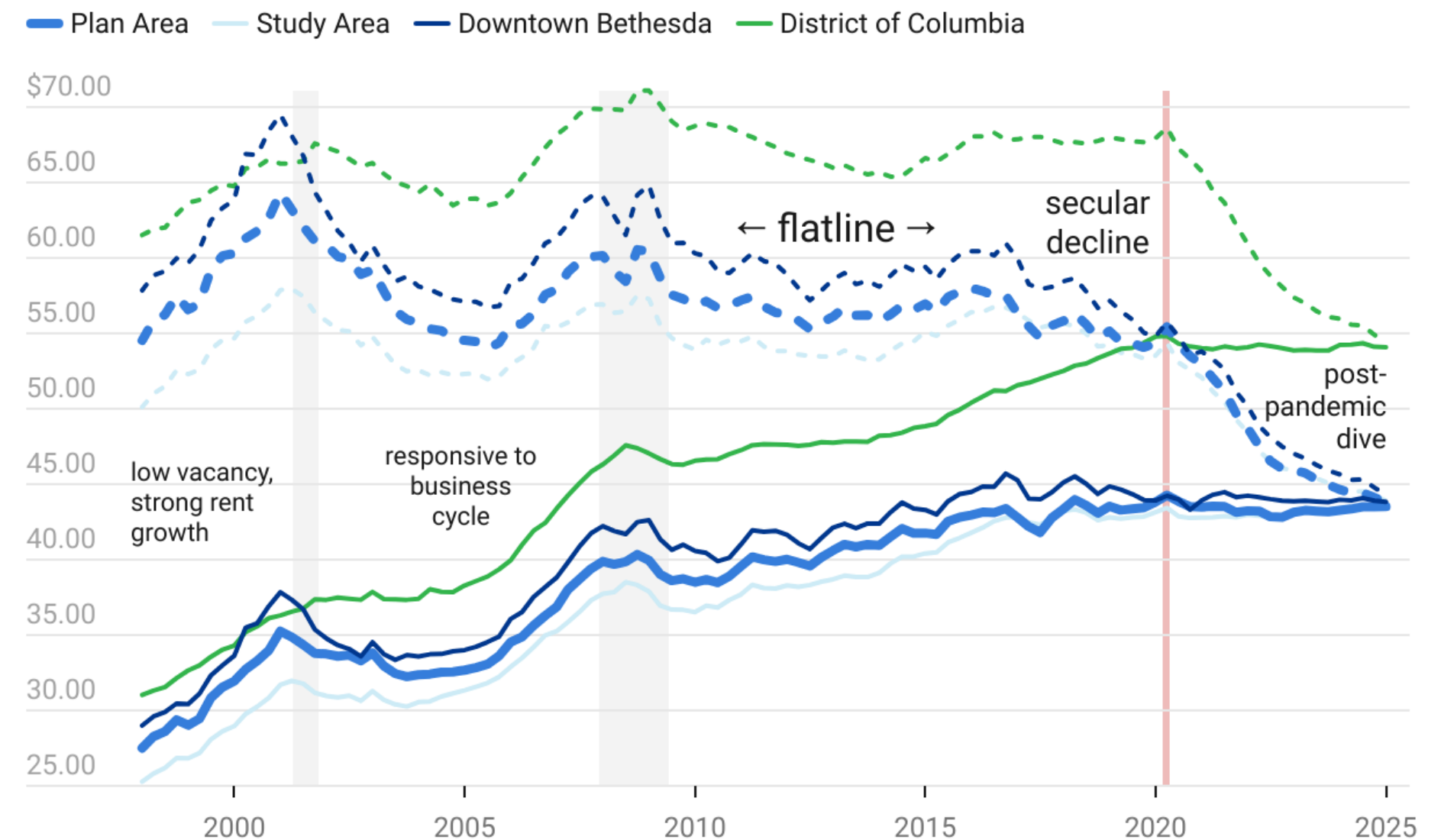
Square Feet Occupied



Number of Tenants

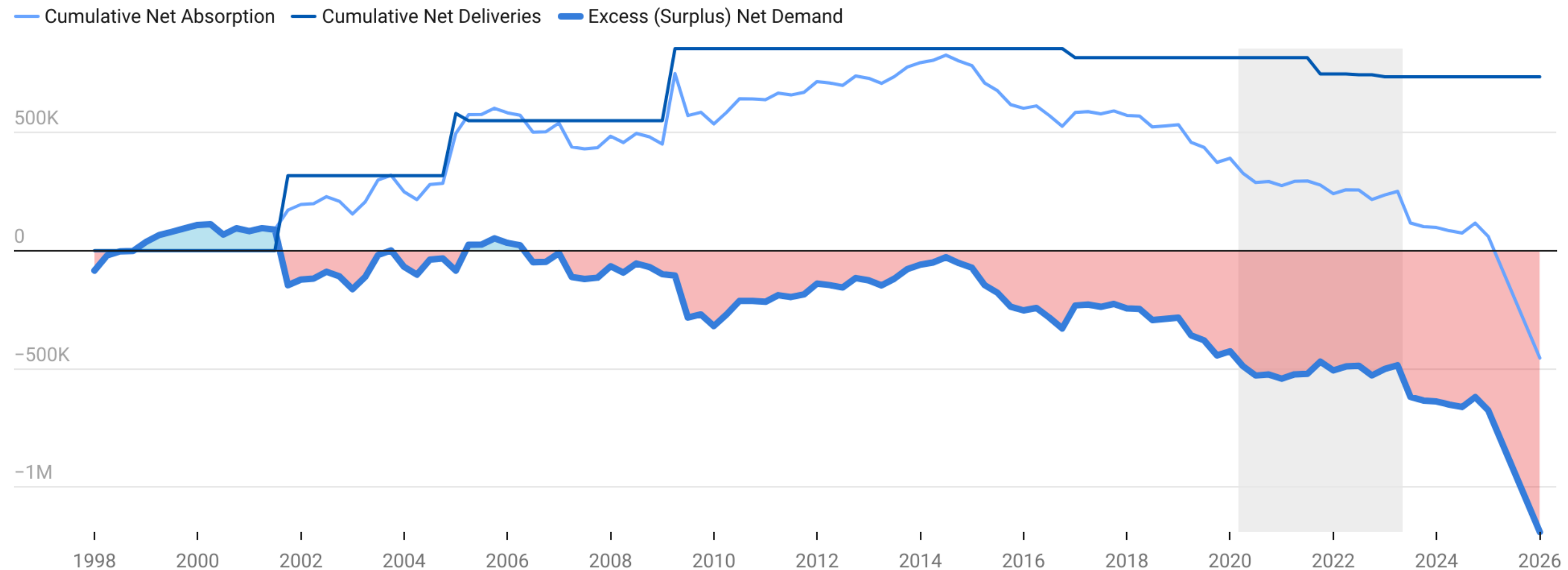
Office Market Challenges: What we've heard

- Friendship Heights struggles to compete with value options in Bethesda and “flight-to-quality” in the District/Bethesda
- Perception of a lack of area amenities reduces office demand → fewer daytime consumers → retail amenities struggle
- Existing office space is obsolete, but market conditions do not support speculative development



Rents are shown on a per-square-foot, Full Service basis. Dashed lines are inflation-adjusted equivalents.
Chart: Research and Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper

Office market in long-term decline

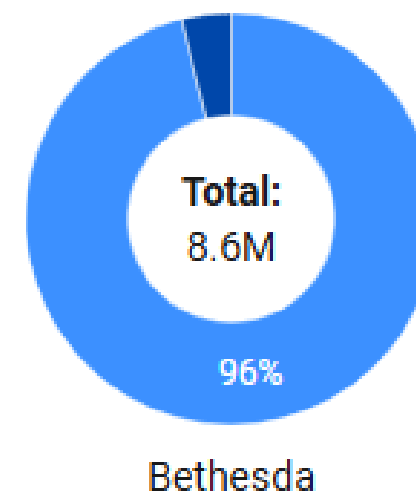
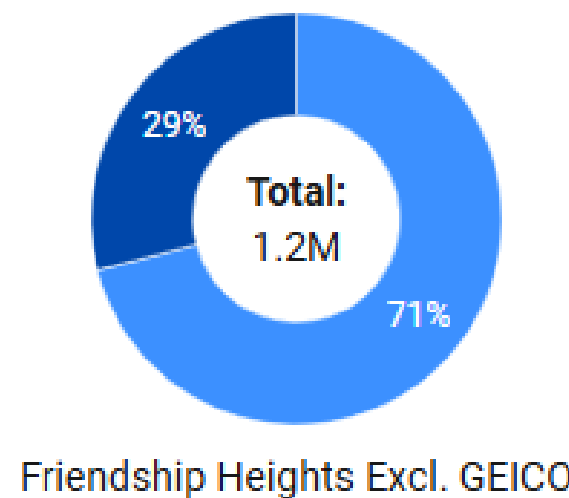


Absorption and Supply numbers are cumulative from the beginning of 1998. COVID-19 public health emergency is highlighted.

Chart: Research & Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper

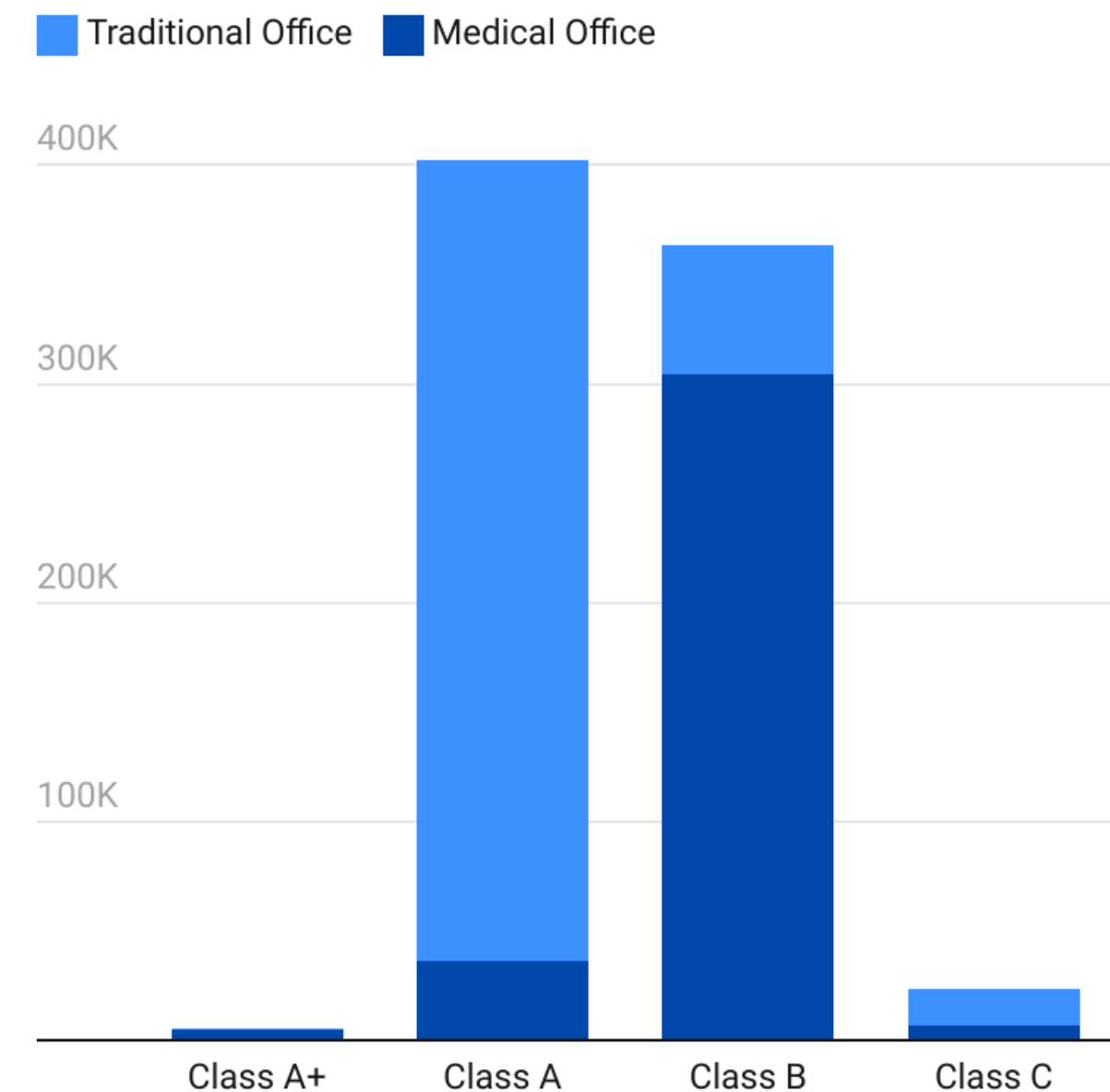
Medical Office backfills lower-quality space

- Growing medical cluster extends the life of buildings and helps maintain vitality
- Lease rates for Medical Office space are higher than traditional office in Class B buildings
- Medical Office is employee-dense and draws foot traffic to support retail amenities



■ Office Space Occupied by Non-Medical Users ■ Office Space Occupied by Medical Users

Chart: Research & Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper



GEICO excluded.

Chart: Research & Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper

New Developments & Trends | Office

Positive

- Medical Office cluster plays a critical role in backfilling space
- Strong existing amenities provide a floor

Negative

- Long-term decline, pre-pandemic
- Traditional Office departures → decline in daytime population
- Lack of critical mass of amenities

Retail Market

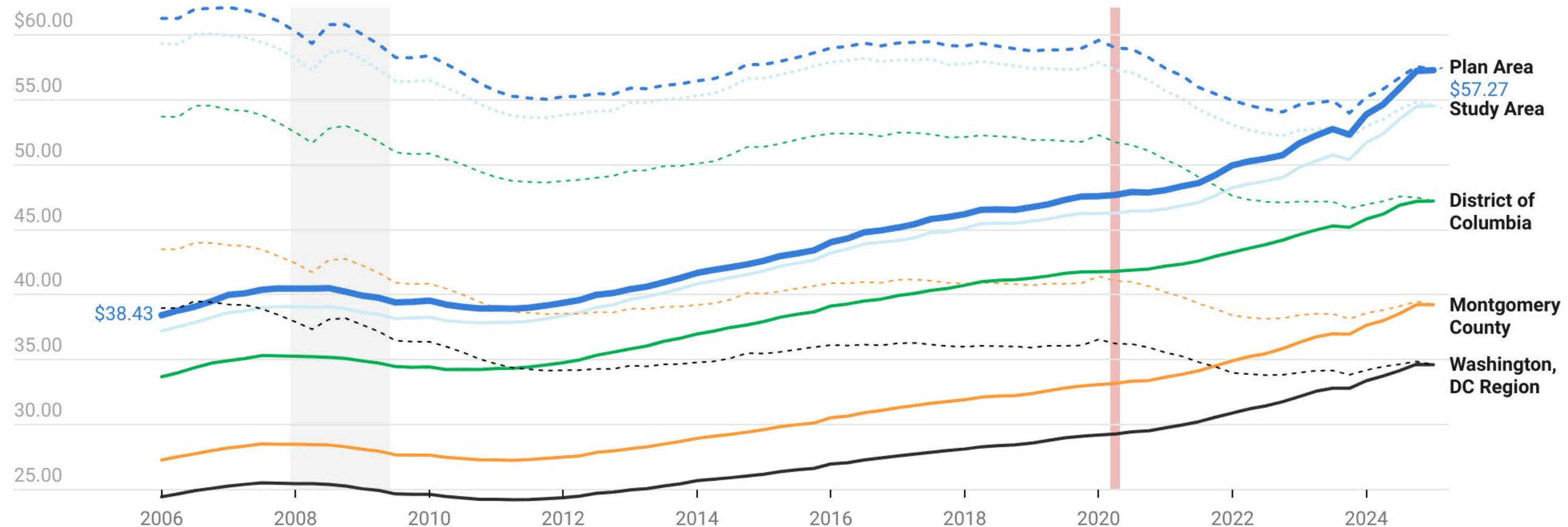
The Friendship Heights Sector Plan area has maintained strong rents and occupancy, even as its historical identity as a high-end retail hub has been challenged by market/consumer trends.

Geography	Inventory	Vacant SF	Vacancy Rate	Market Asking Rent
Plan Area	555,698	24,916	4.5%	\$56.42
Study Area	1,626,555	72,800	4.5%	\$54.23
Downtown Bethesda	1,968,372	51,746	2.6%	\$52.73
Montgomery County	37,805,708	2,377,681	6.3%	\$39.23
District of Columbia	25,460,080	1,545,941	6.1%	\$47.21
Washington, D.C. MSA	63,176,345	3,071,228	4.9%	\$34.62

Table: Research & Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper

Retail market rents lead the pack

Asking rents remain strong in the Friendship Heights Sector Plan area and have recently begun to show signs of a reversal of post-pandemic decline.

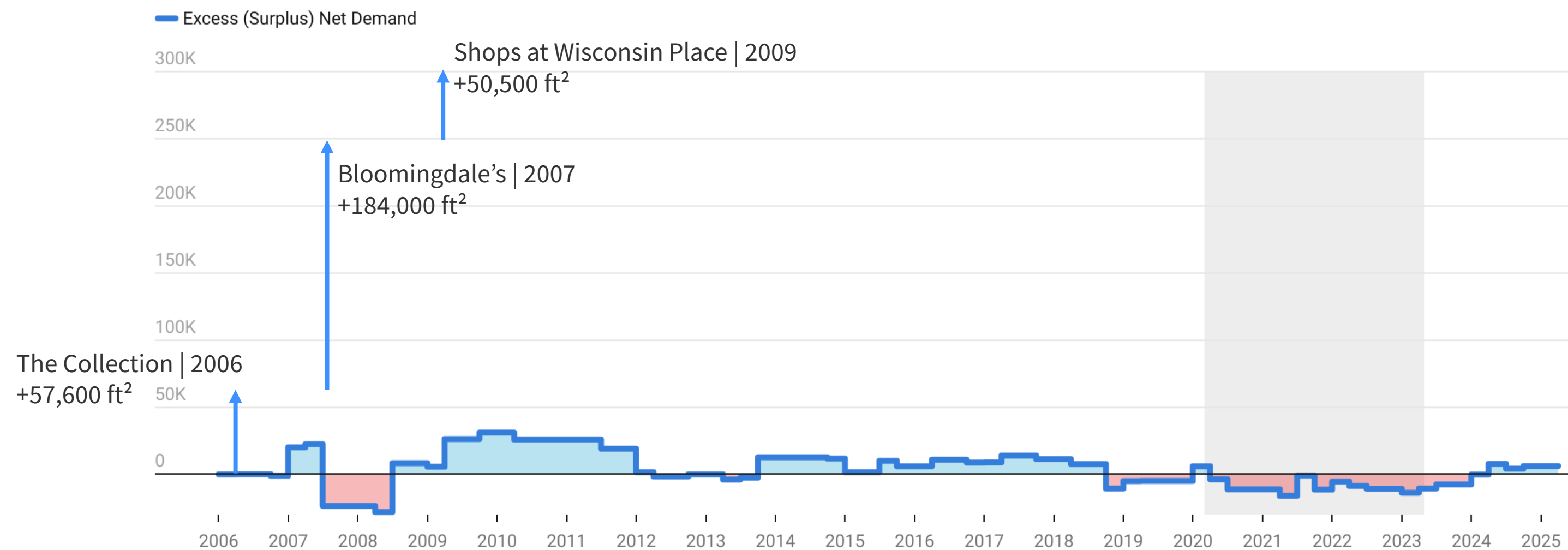


Rents are shown on a per-square-foot, Full Service basis. Dashed lines are inflation-adjusted equivalents.

Chart: Research and Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper

Little new space, but few empty storefronts

No new retail space has been delivered to the Friendship Heights Sector Plan area since 2009, but existing spaces have remained well occupied.



Absorption and Supply numbers are cumulative from the beginning of 1998. COVID-19 public health emergency is highlighted.

Chart: Research & Strategic Projects, Montgomery Planning • Source: CoStar • Created with Datawrapper

New Developments & Trends | Retail

Positive

- Trader Joe's to open Winter '25
- Submarket has proven its ability to recover from pandemic
- Few vacant storefronts

Negative

- Retail types are shifting
- FH struggles to compete with larger, modern shopping districts
- Lack of lower-quality space to enable downscaling, creative uses



URBAN DESIGN

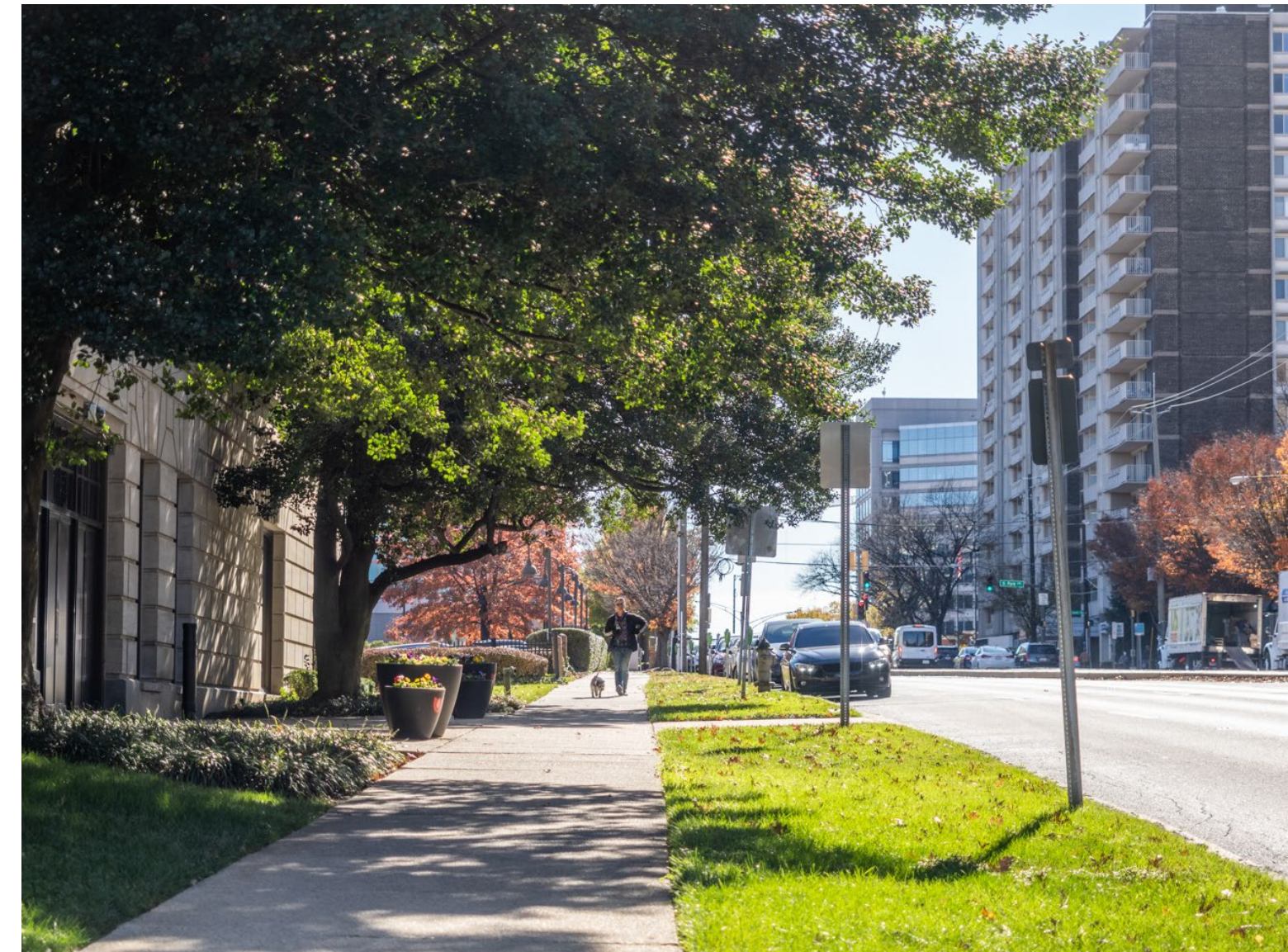
Urban Design Terminology

What is urban design?

Urban design is the shaping of the physical form of a place so that the buildings, streets, parks, and public spaces work in harmony to create a dynamic, welcoming place that supports a thriving public life.

Successful urban design creates a strong public realm.

The **public realm** is any space or built environment that is open and accessible for public use, regardless of ownership. It includes streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, and open spaces.



Public realm along Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights

Key Takeaways from the Urban Design Study

1. Wisconsin Avenue is the primary retail corridor and provides lively pedestrian activity
2. Strong pedestrian network that is comfortable within the urban core.
3. Pedestrian connection to the neighboring communities is challenging
4. Vehicular entrances and circular entrance driveways often interrupt the pedestrian network.



Retail along Wisconsin Avenue



Sidewalk with canopy trees on Wisconsin Avenue



Fence along Belmont Buffer Park



Vehicle entrance along North Park Avenue

What we've heard: Urban Design

Friendship Heights has not seen much change recently

Some feel that the downtown is very walkable

There is a unique mix of high-rise and single-family buildings

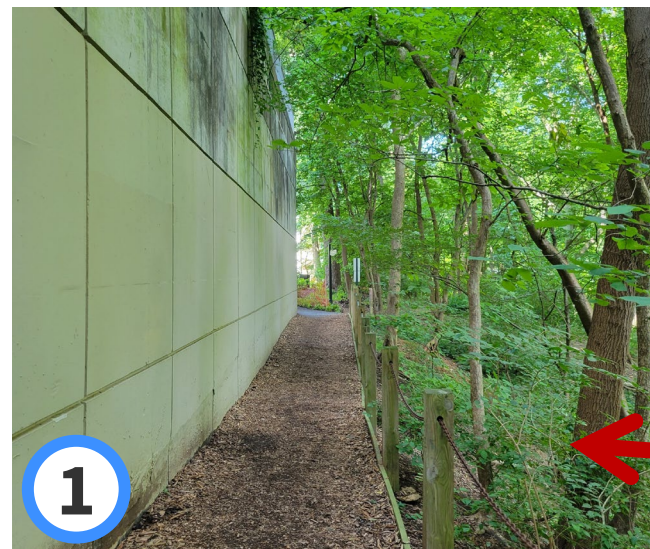
Many public spaces are not as utilized as they could be

Would like to see more neighborhood serving retail

Desire to raise the level of design

Pedestrian Network

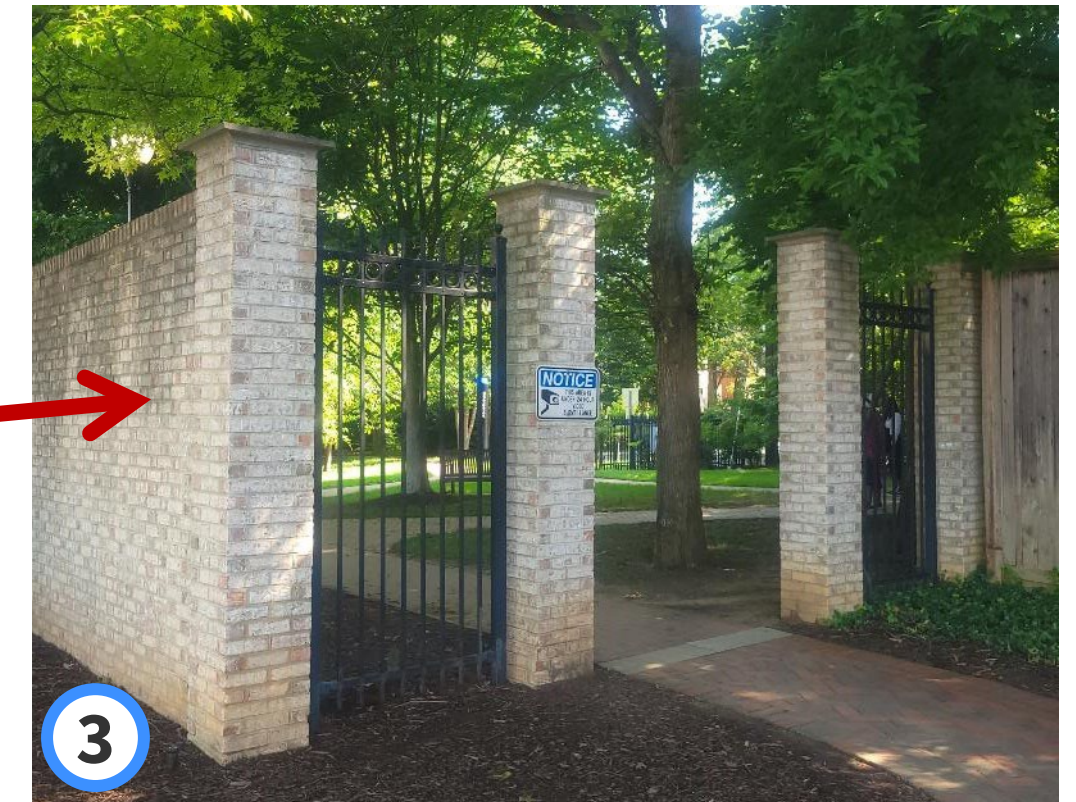
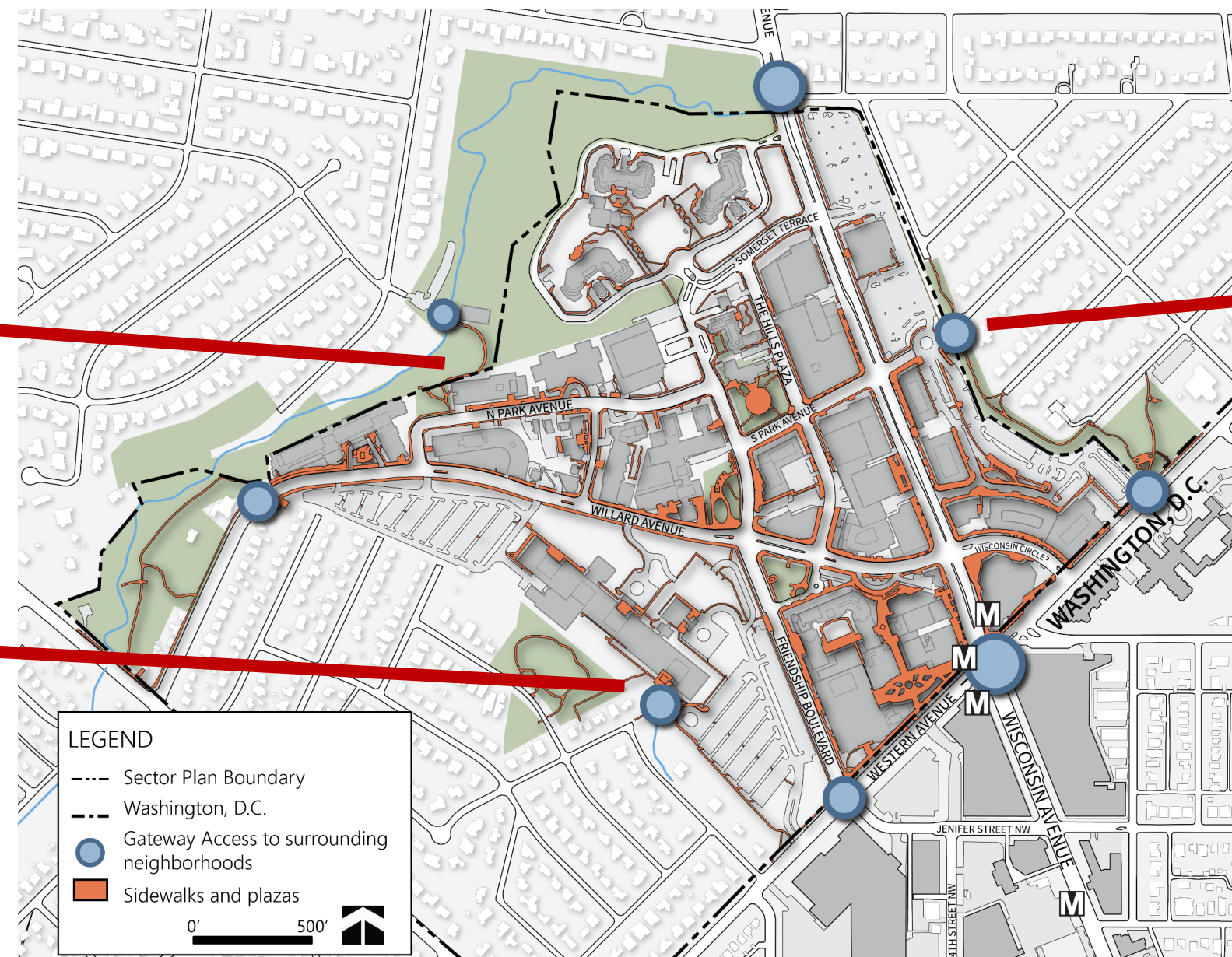
There are limited connections between the urban core and the surrounding neighborhoods



Access trail from Somerset



Access from Brookdale



Entrance to Belmont Buffer Park

Street Activation

Street activation is the creation of a pedestrian friendly environment that is physically and visually engaging.

Windows, building entrances, shops, cafes, public amenities, seating, trees, and other elements that inspire activity all contribute.



Café seating along Wisconsin Avenue



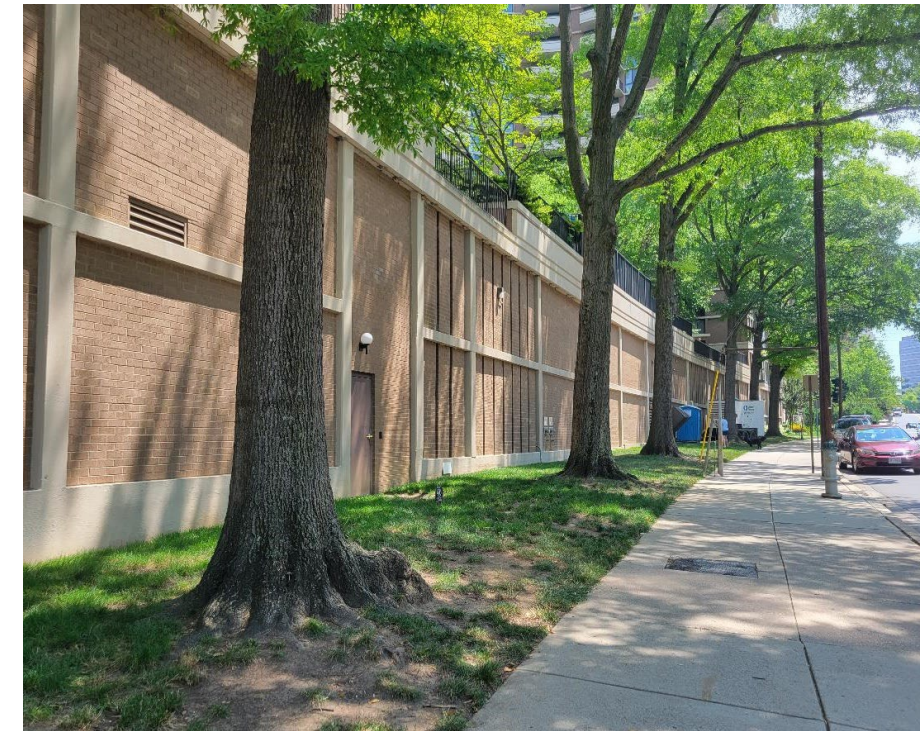
Residential entrance on North Park



Open shop windows at Whole Foods along Willard Avenue

Streets Lacking Activation

- Streets dominated by service entrances and blank walls. Primarily along Willard and The Hills Plaza
- Driveway loops frequently interrupt the pedestrian network and give priority to vehicles.



Parking podium along Willard Avenue



Car entrance interrupting pedestrian network

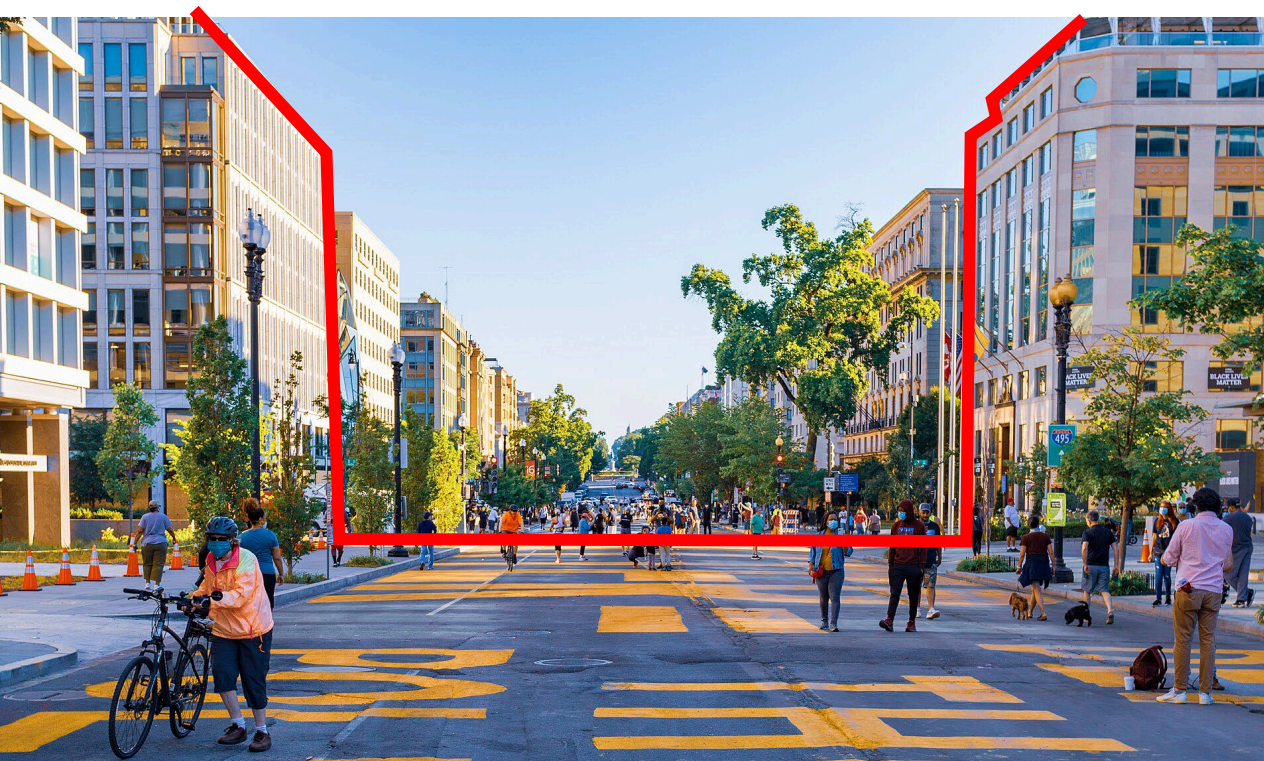


Parking podium and service entrances along the Hills Plaza

Buildings and Public Realm Today

Spatial enclosure is when an outdoor room is formed by buildings and trees. Great outdoor rooms are comfortable, inviting and provide access to light and air.

- Existing buildings are 1-2 stories or 10+ stories in height
- Few examples of mid-rise buildings
- Reducing the transition from surrounding low-rise neighborhoods to a high-rise urban core
- Limited spatial enclosure and unbalanced height variety



A great outdoor room on 16th street in Washington D.C.



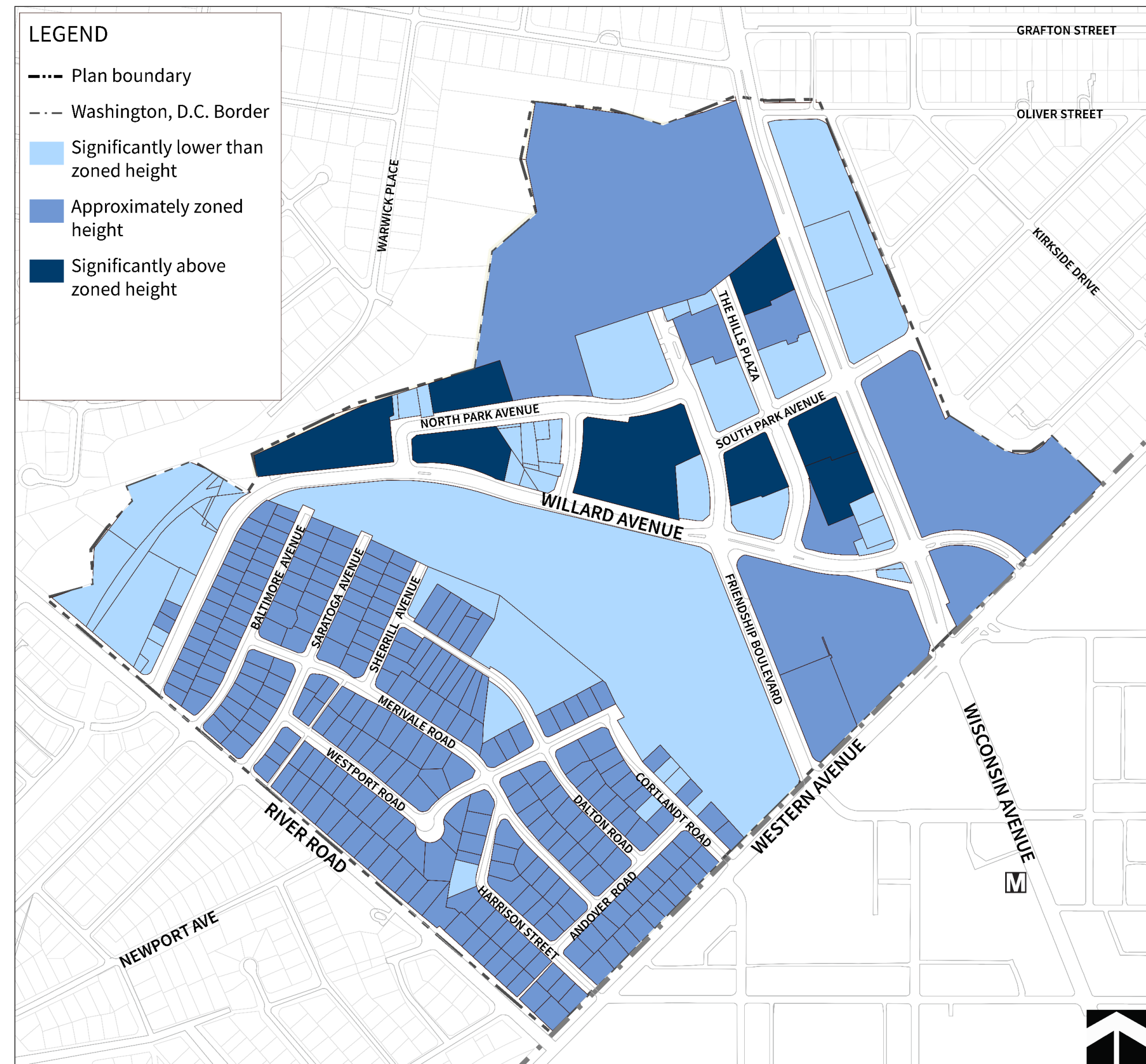
Spatial enclosure at Bloomingdales in Friendship Heights



Lack of spatial enclosure along Friendship Boulevard

Building Heights

While most parcels in the plan area are close to the allowed building height, many within the downtown are either significantly over or under the zoned height limit.



Built height - existing

Architecture

Multi-family and Commercial

- Multi-family buildings are from the 1960-80s with strong horizontal lines, flat roofs, ribbon windows, balconies, with brick and concrete materials
- Many office buildings were built in the 60s-70s with visible structure grids and large windows
- Retail is typically 1-2 stories and have a variety of styles, many include traditional design elements
- Retail construction ranges from the 1960-2000s



Low-rise commercial on Willard Avenue with multi-family buildings behind



Low-rise retail on Wisconsin Avenue with a typical office building in the background

Architecture

Single Family Neighborhoods

- No single-family buildings are in the downtown core
- Brookdale displays cottage-style architecture primarily English in origin
 - Primarily built in the 1930-40s as a planned neighborhood.
 - Some examples of newer construction and contemporary styles



Examples of housing styles in Brookdale

A person wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, a yellow headband, and sunglasses is jogging on a paved path covered with fallen autumn leaves. The path is surrounded by tall trees with green and yellow foliage. A dark blue arrow-shaped banner is overlaid on the image, pointing to the right.

PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Parks and Public Spaces

Urban Design Study Report Takeaways



LIKES

- access to nature
- green
- landscaped
- shaded
- peaceful
- dog-friendly
- favorite place to walk



DISLIKES

- hidden park entries
- inconveniently located
- too far to walk
- unfamiliar with
- unwelcome, uninviting



COMMUNITY NEEDS

- lighting, better signage
- organized activities
- furniture & benches
- social spaces
- active recreation, play spaces
- ADA accessibility

Parks and Public Spaces

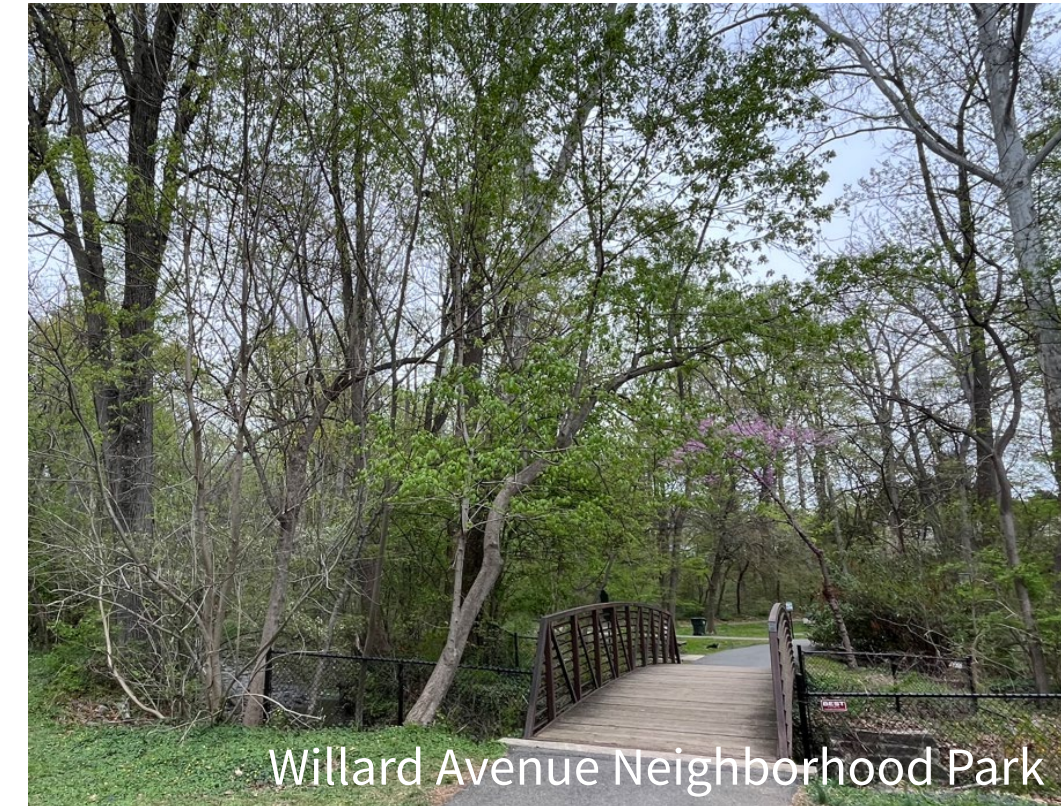
Urban Design Study Report Takeaways



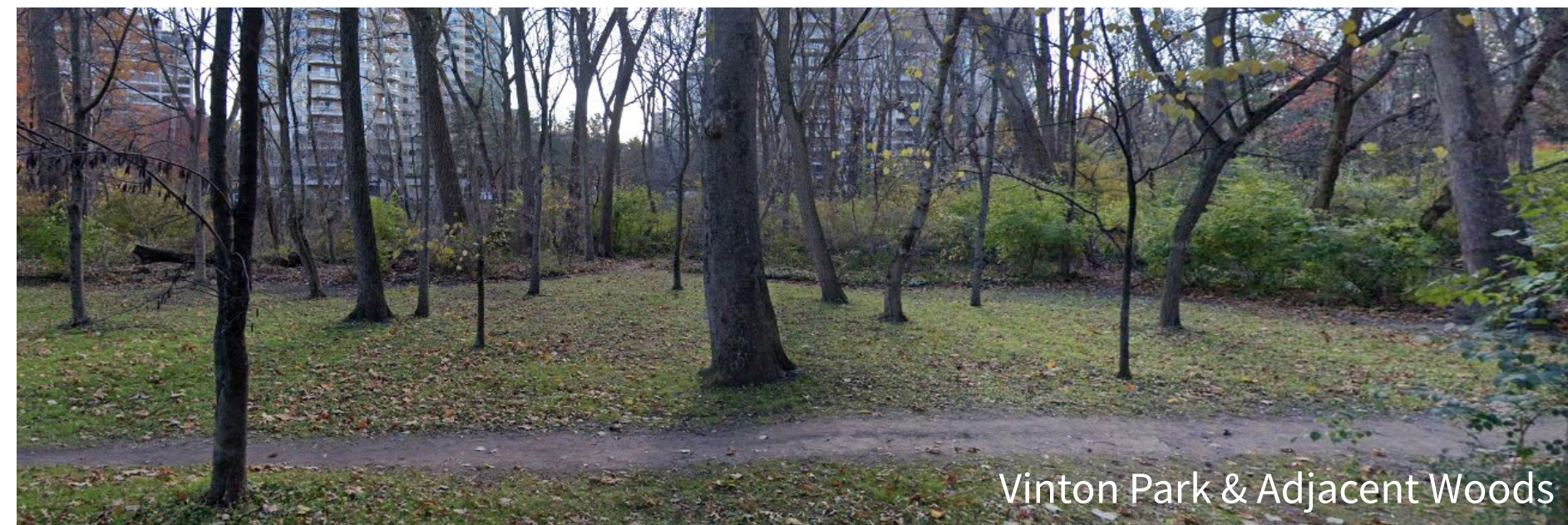
1. Hubert Humphrey Park
2. Willard Ave Neighborhood Park
3. Vinton Park
4. GEICO lawn
5. Western Grove Urban Park
6. Brookdale Neighborhood Park
7. Willoughby Plaza



Hubert Humphrey Park



Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park



Vinton Park & Adjacent Woods

What we've heard: Parks and Public Spaces

Lack of active recreational activities

Increasing numbers of children in high rises need place to play → playing in GEICO parking lot

Preserve parks but also connect and create green links

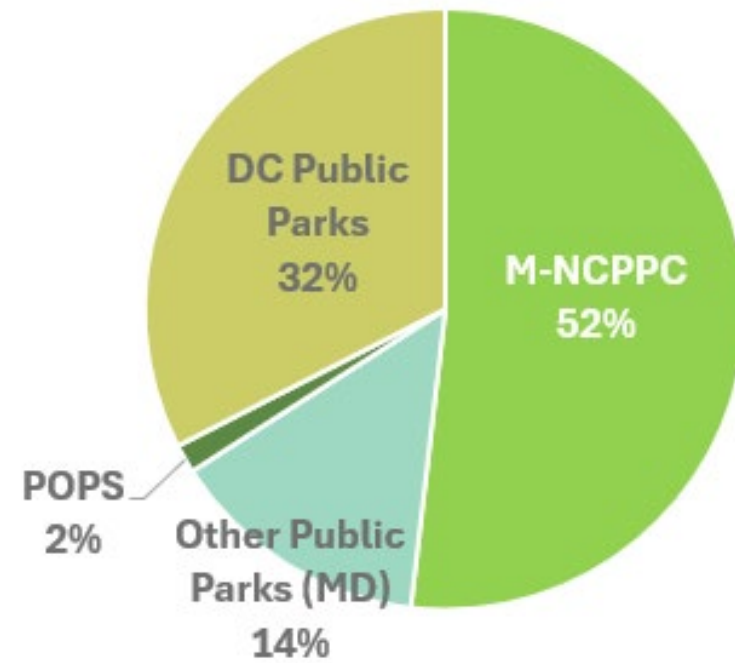
Existing dog parks are not within walking distance

Want gathering areas to be increased and preserved

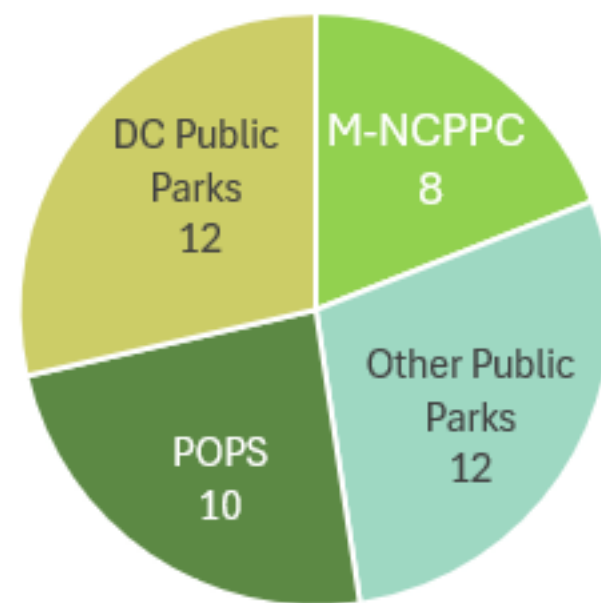
Signage issues (ex. At the Collection back side of building unnoticed, lost businesses) May help activate open space

Parks & Public Space

Study Area

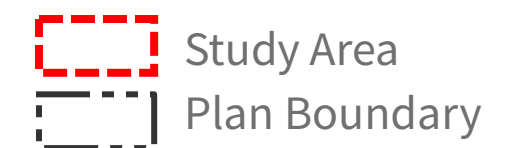
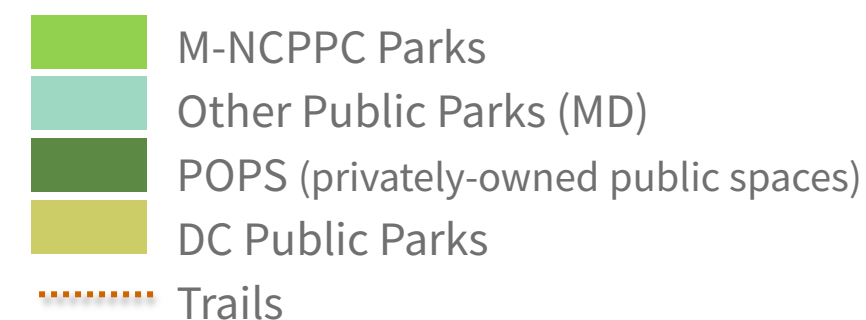
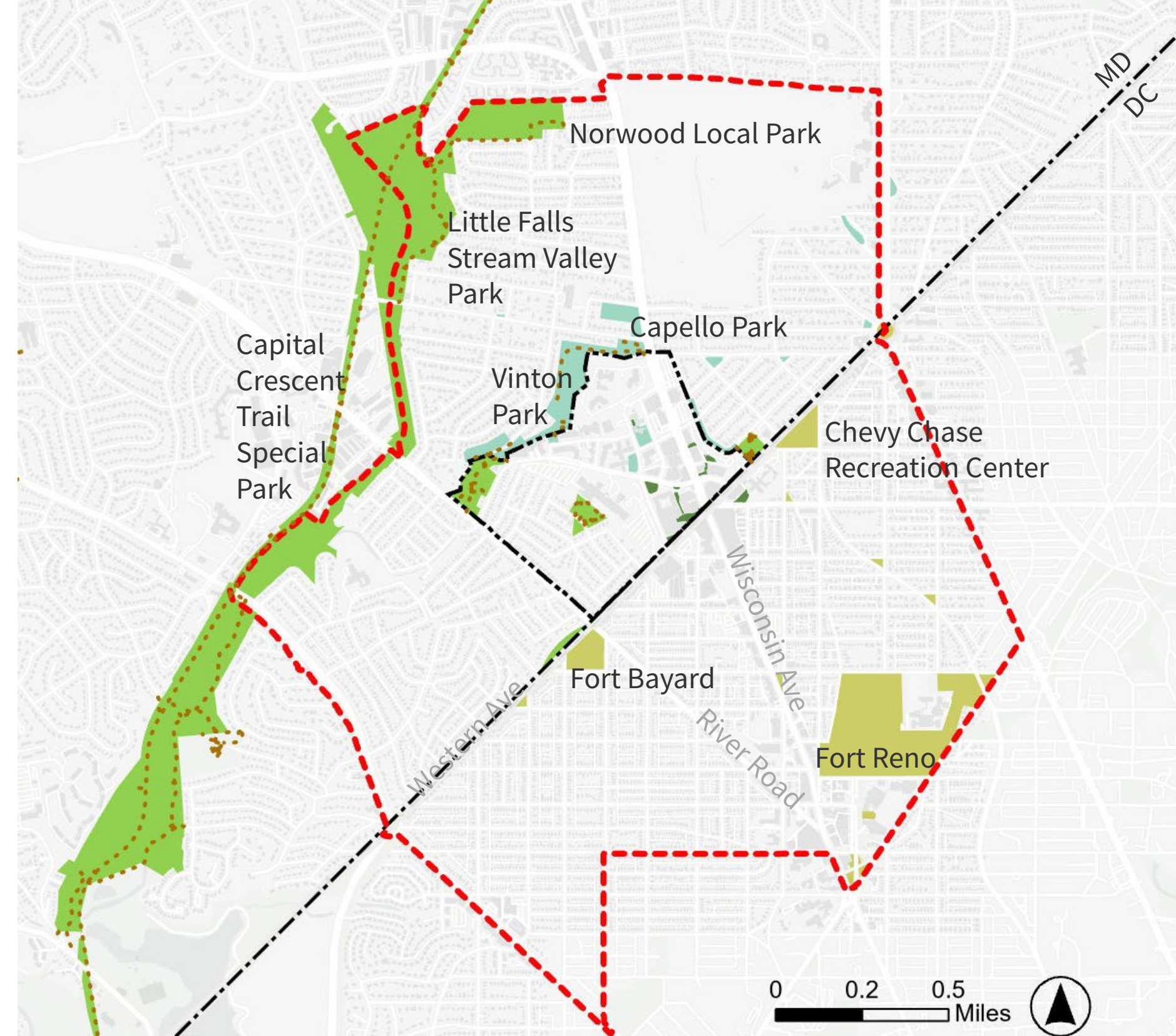


**% of parkland
(~178 acres)**



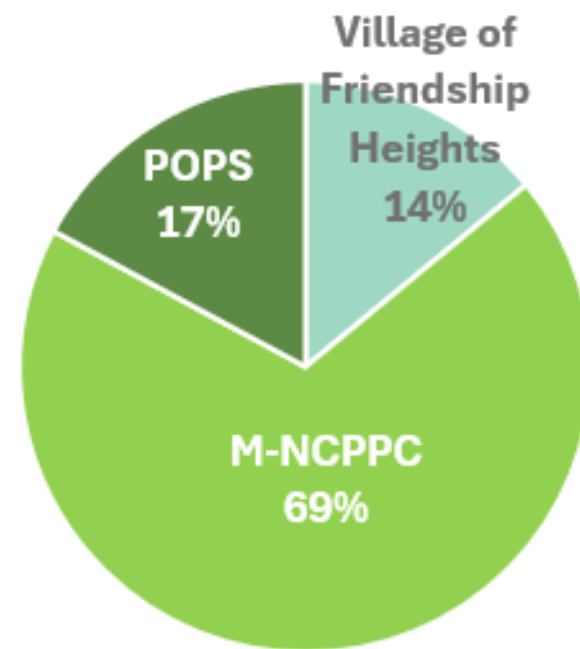
**Number of parks
(42)**

- 99% of population have access to a park and/or public space within the Study Area
- Access to Capital Crescent Trail is a major regional asset for the community

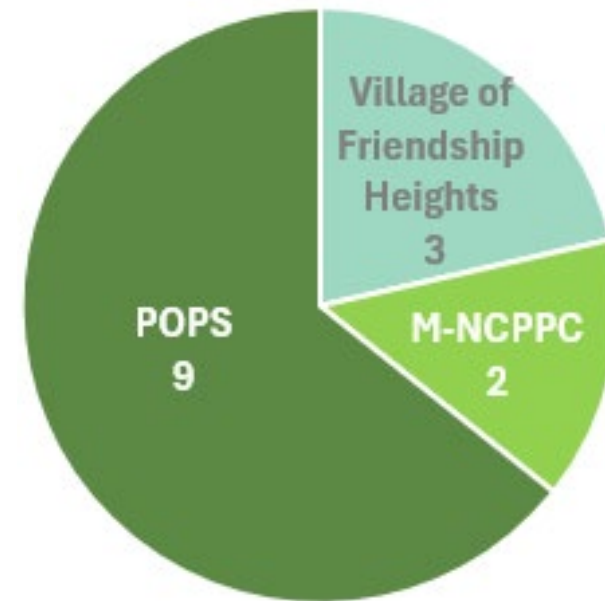


Parks & Public Space

Plan Boundary

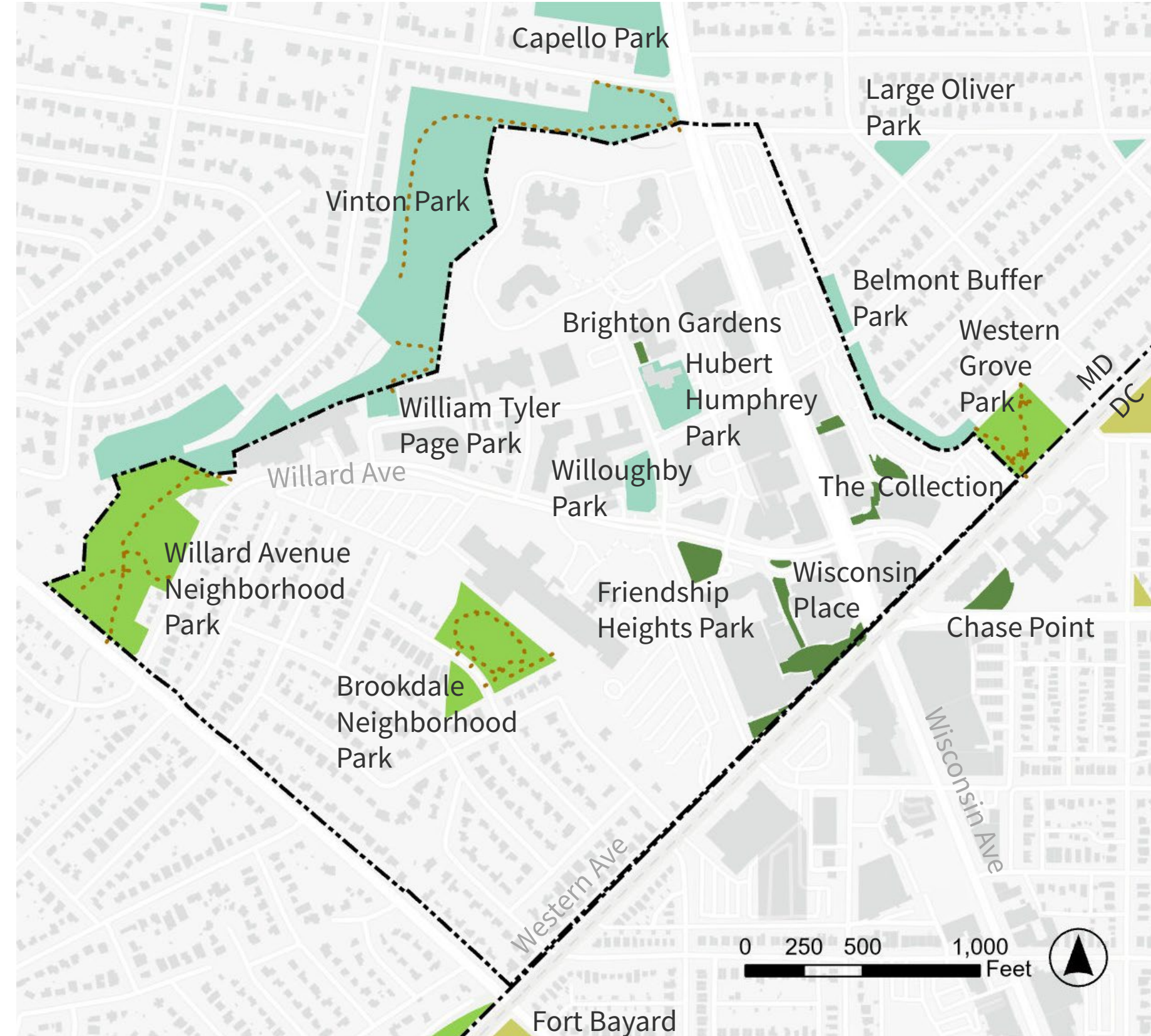


**% of parkland
(~13.5 acres)**



**Number of parks
(14)**

- 100% of population have access to a park and/or public space
- Plan Area = 7% of Study Area's parkland & 33% of the number of parks and public spaces
- M-NCPPC Parks are located at the edges, while POPS & other Public Parks are located within the core of this Plan area.



- M-NCPPC Parks
- Other Public Parks (MD)
- POPS (privately-owned public spaces)
- DC Public Parks
- Trails & Internal Paths

Plan Boundary

Parks & Public Spaces Recreational Needs

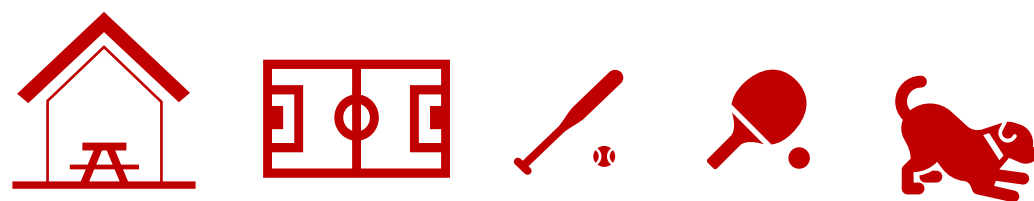
Factors such as community input, number of facilities per capita, density, type of facility and coverage area are considered to determine recreational needs within a specific community.

Study Area has a balanced number of these facilities

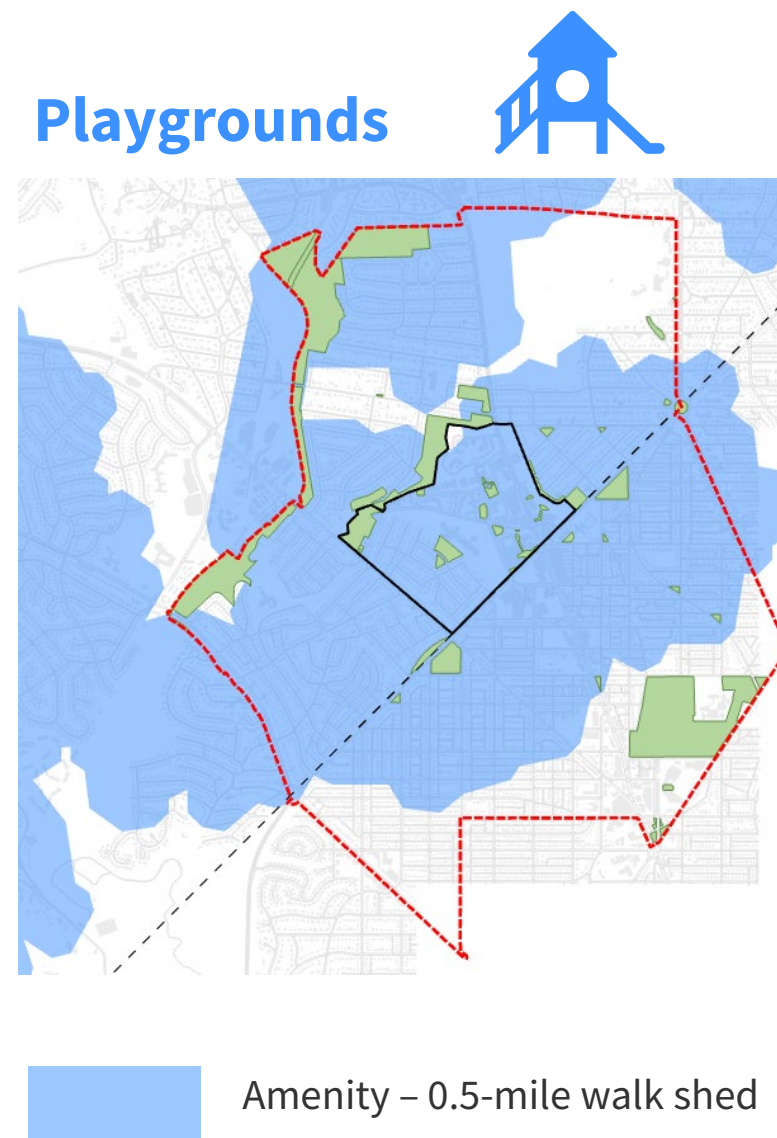


Playgrounds, Basketball Courts, Trails,
Tennis Courts

Study Area can use more of these facilities



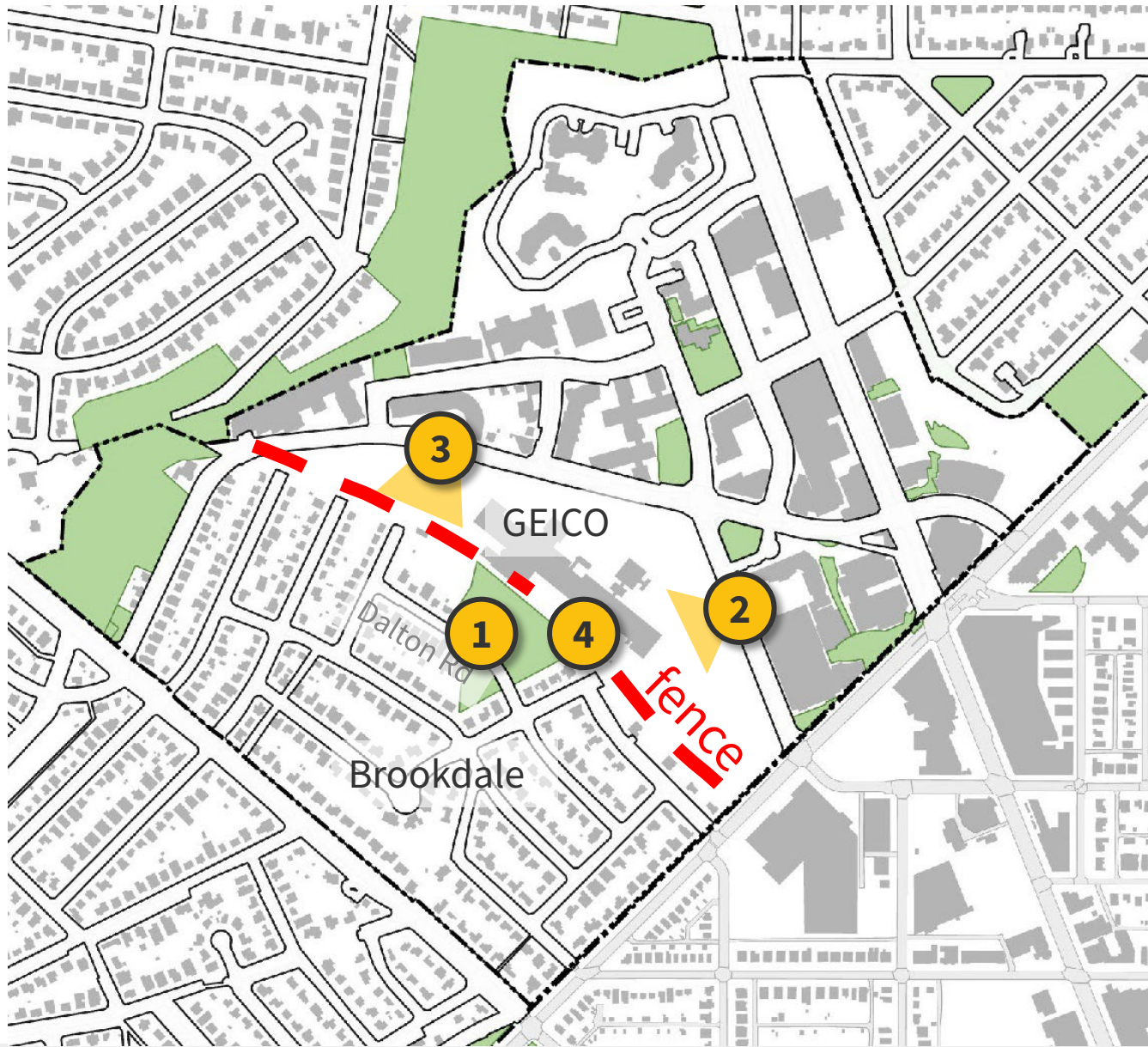
Picnic Shelters, Rectangular/Diamond Fields,
Pickleball Courts (outdoor), Dog Parks



Brookdale Neighborhood Park

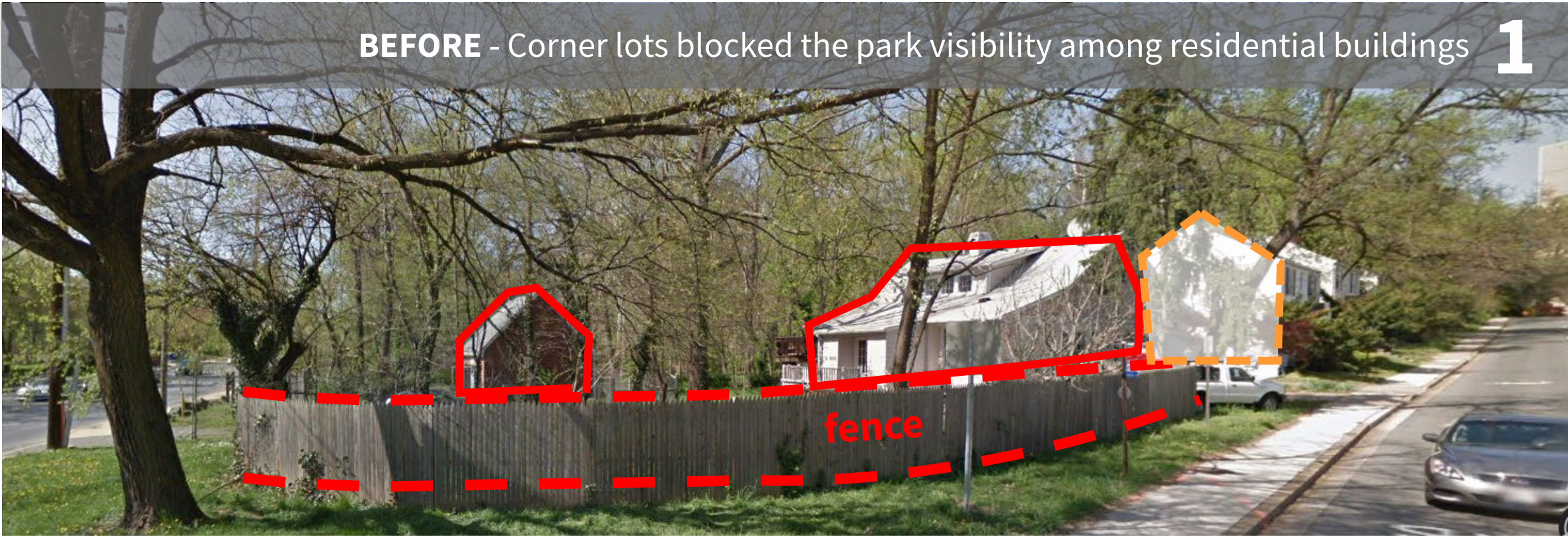


- Lack of visual and physical accessibility to Brookdale Park from the downtown core & multi-family buildings.

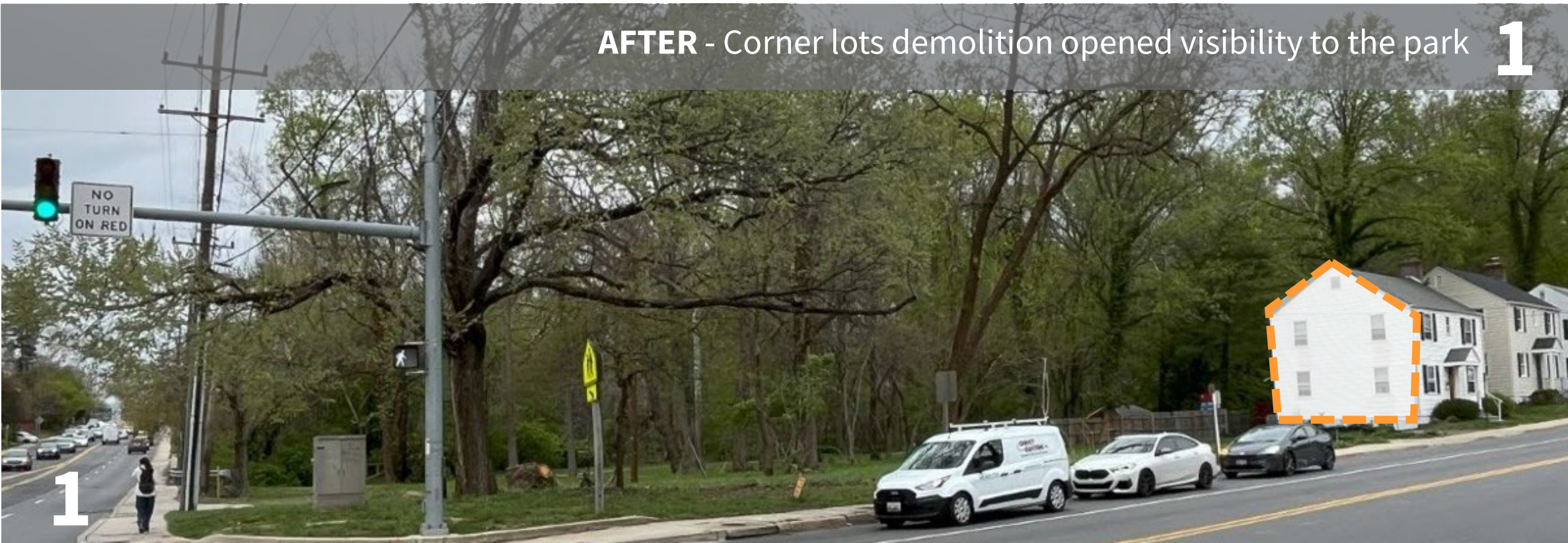


Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park

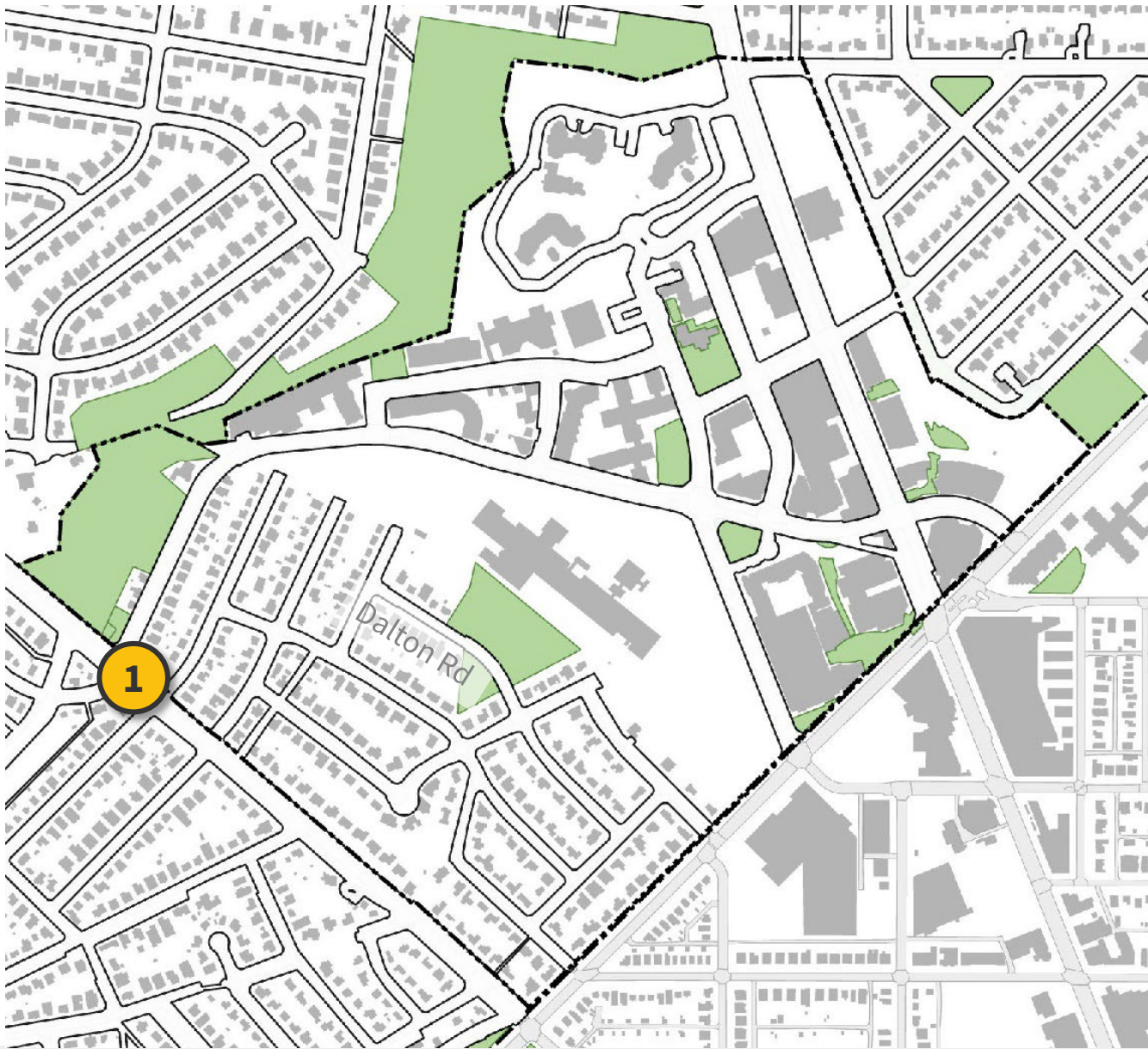
BEFORE - Corner lots blocked the park visibility among residential buildings **1**



AFTER - Corner lots demolition opened visibility to the park **1**



- Demolition of buildings at corner lots improved visibility to the park
- Planned improvements to pedestrian entry and maintenance access are coming soon



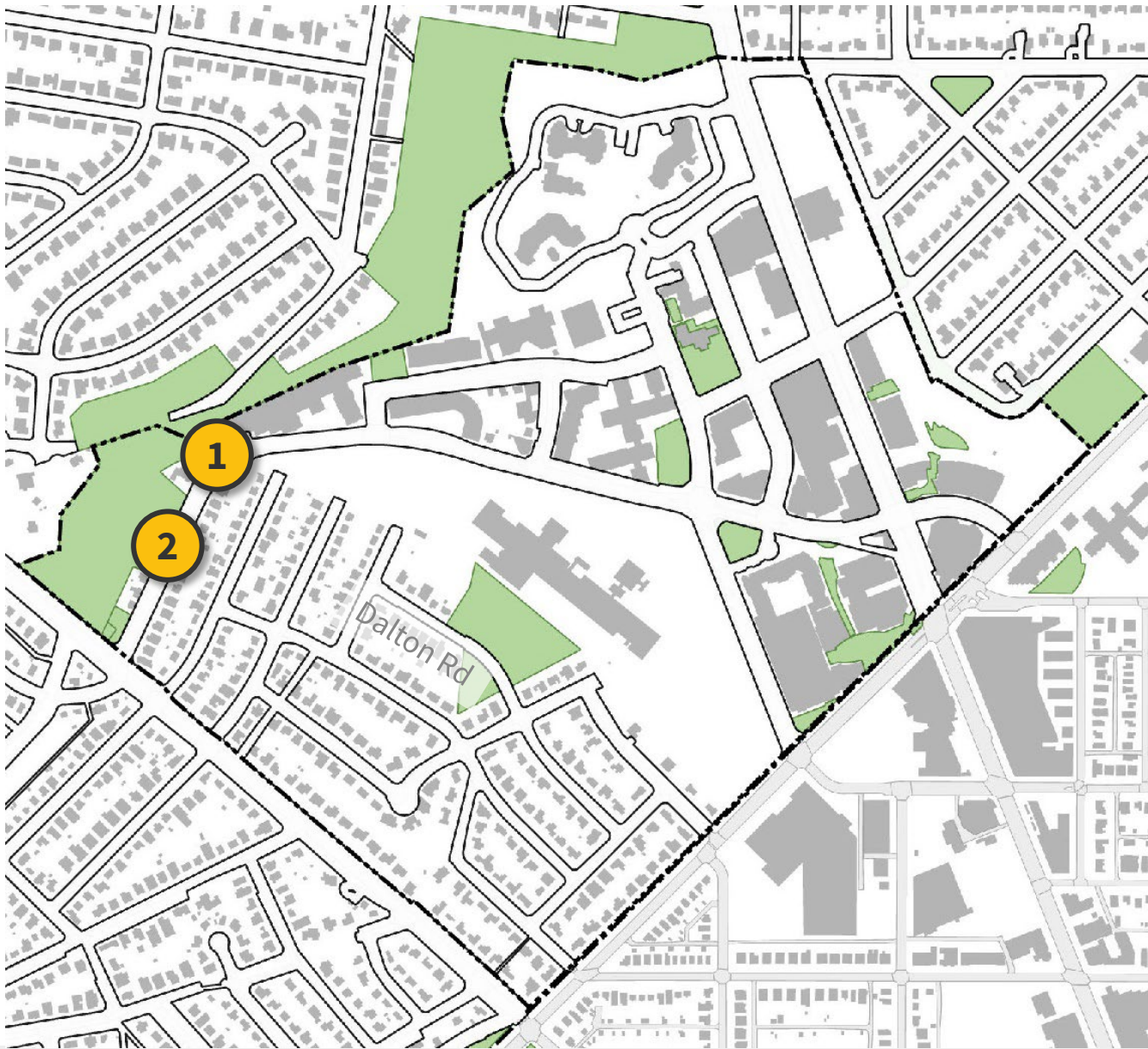
Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park

ENTRY – signage faces the street, not the pedestrian walking along the sidewalk **1**



- Park entries are hidden and mixed within residential entries and curb cuts
- Signage needs improvements to be more visible

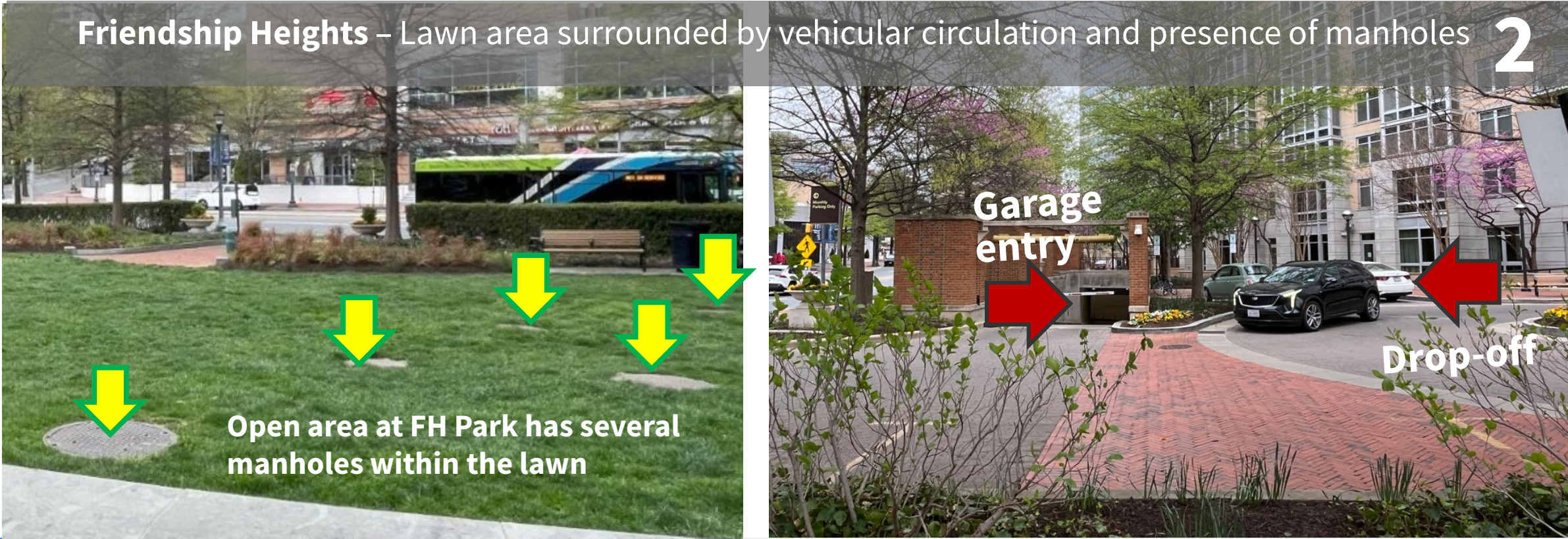
ENTRY – signage faces the pedestrian **2**



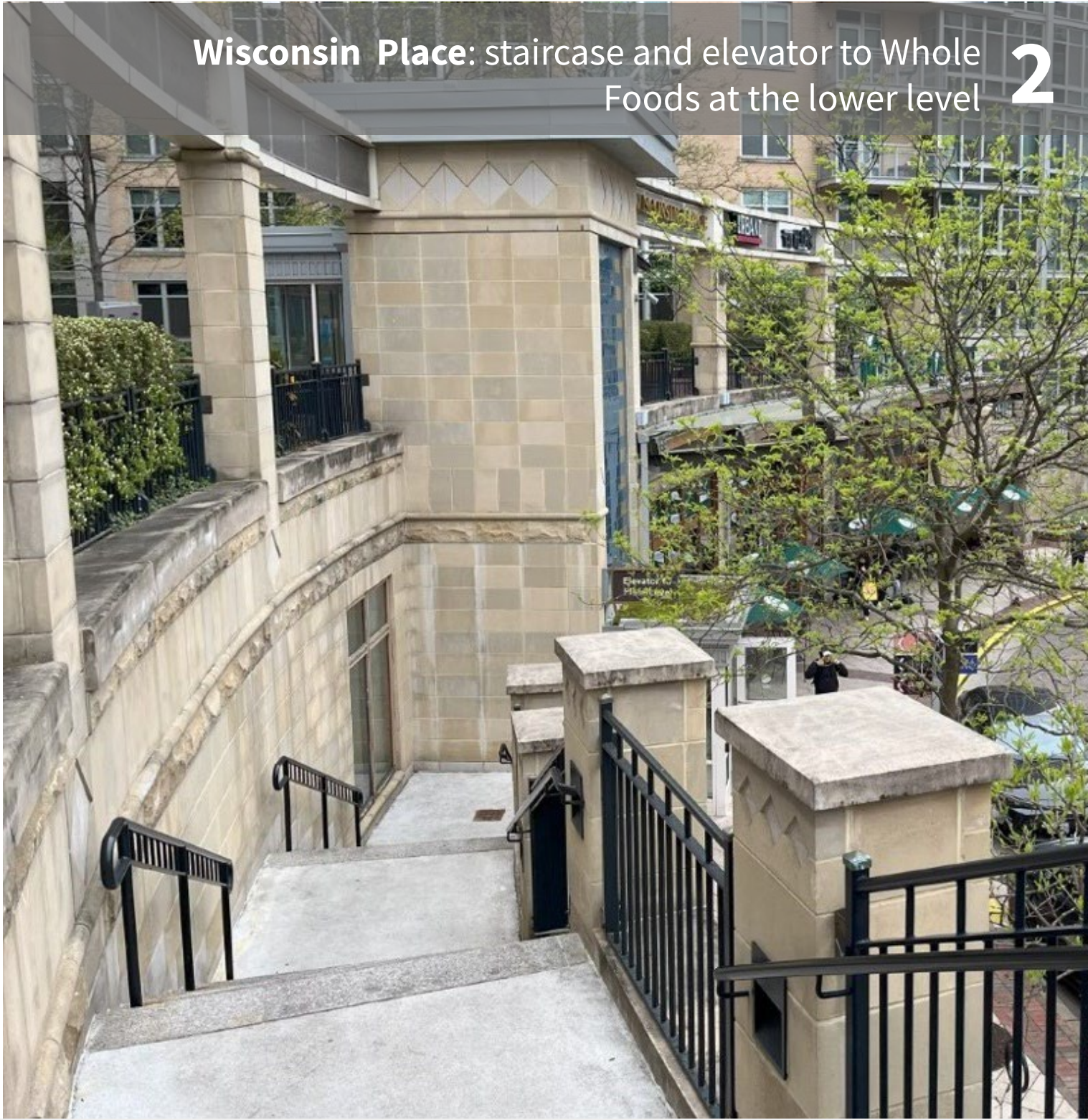
Willoughby Park & Friendship Heights Park



- Willoughby Park: lack of enclosure and “eyes” on the park
- Friendship Heights Park: “island” surrounded by vehicular traffic



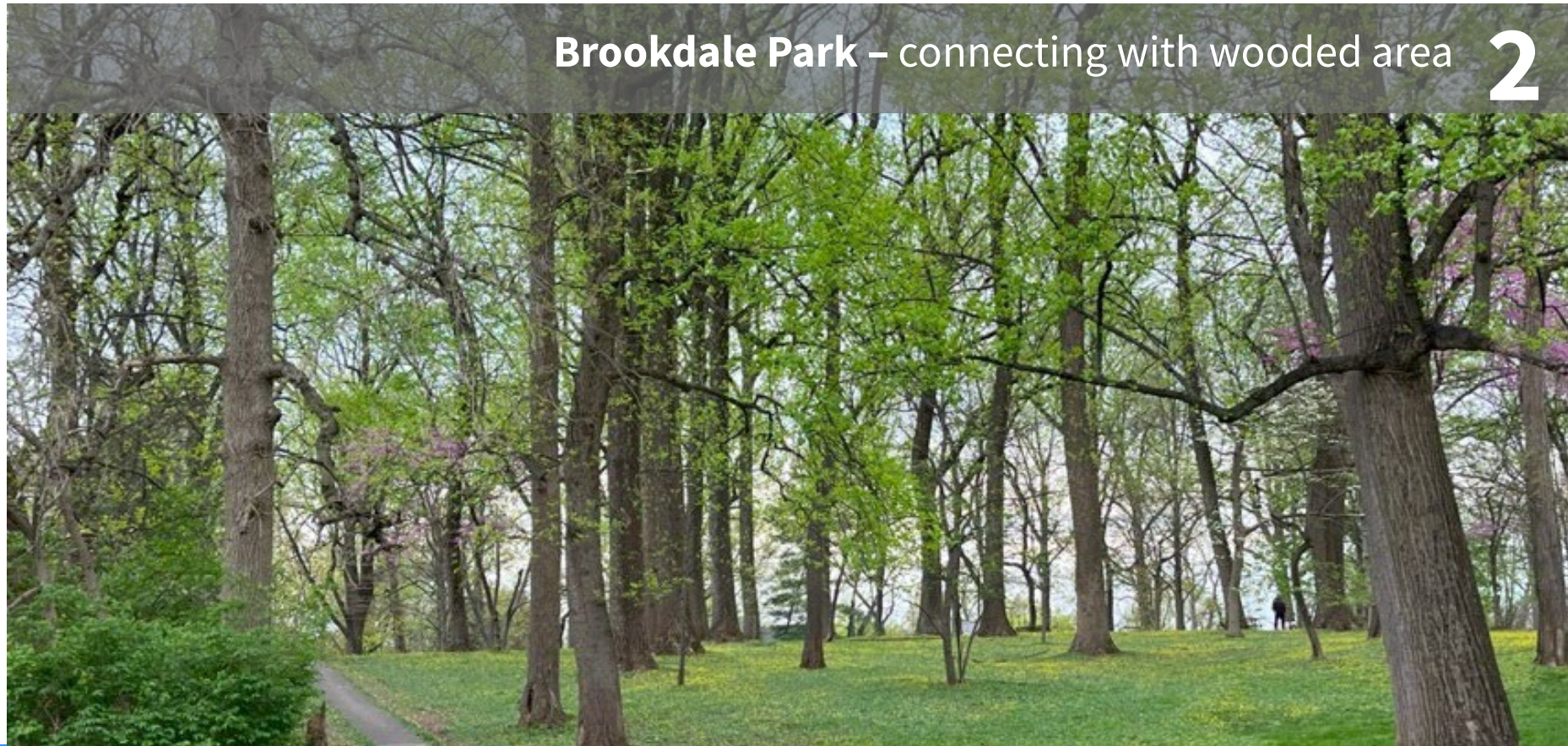
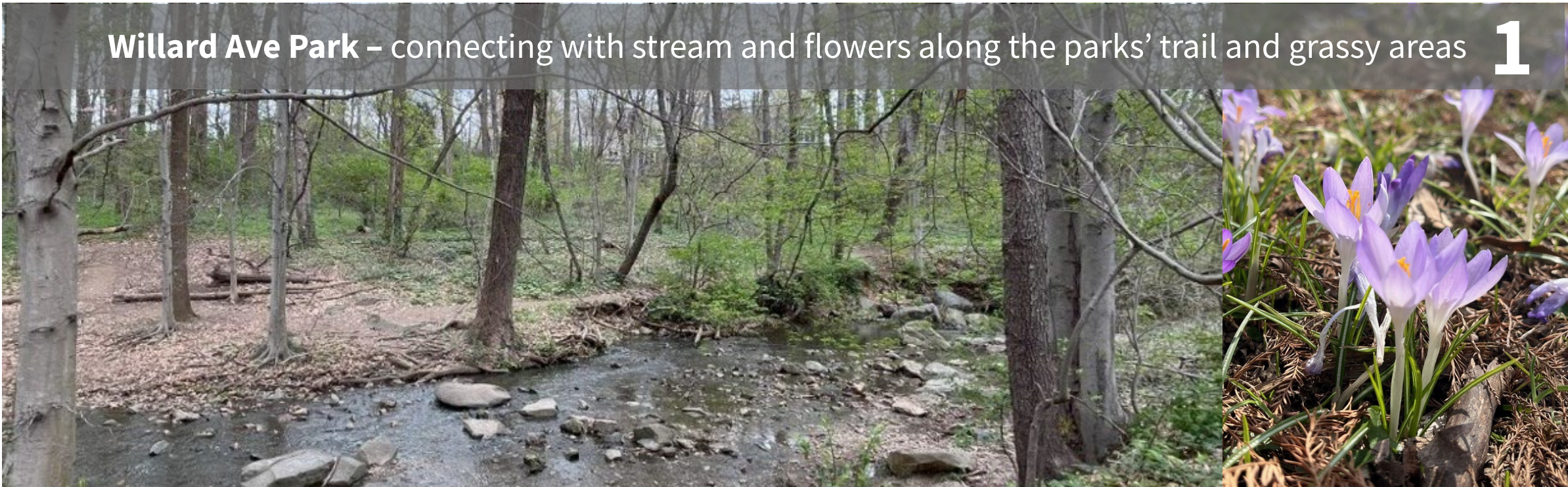
Hubert Humphrey Park & The Wisconsin Place



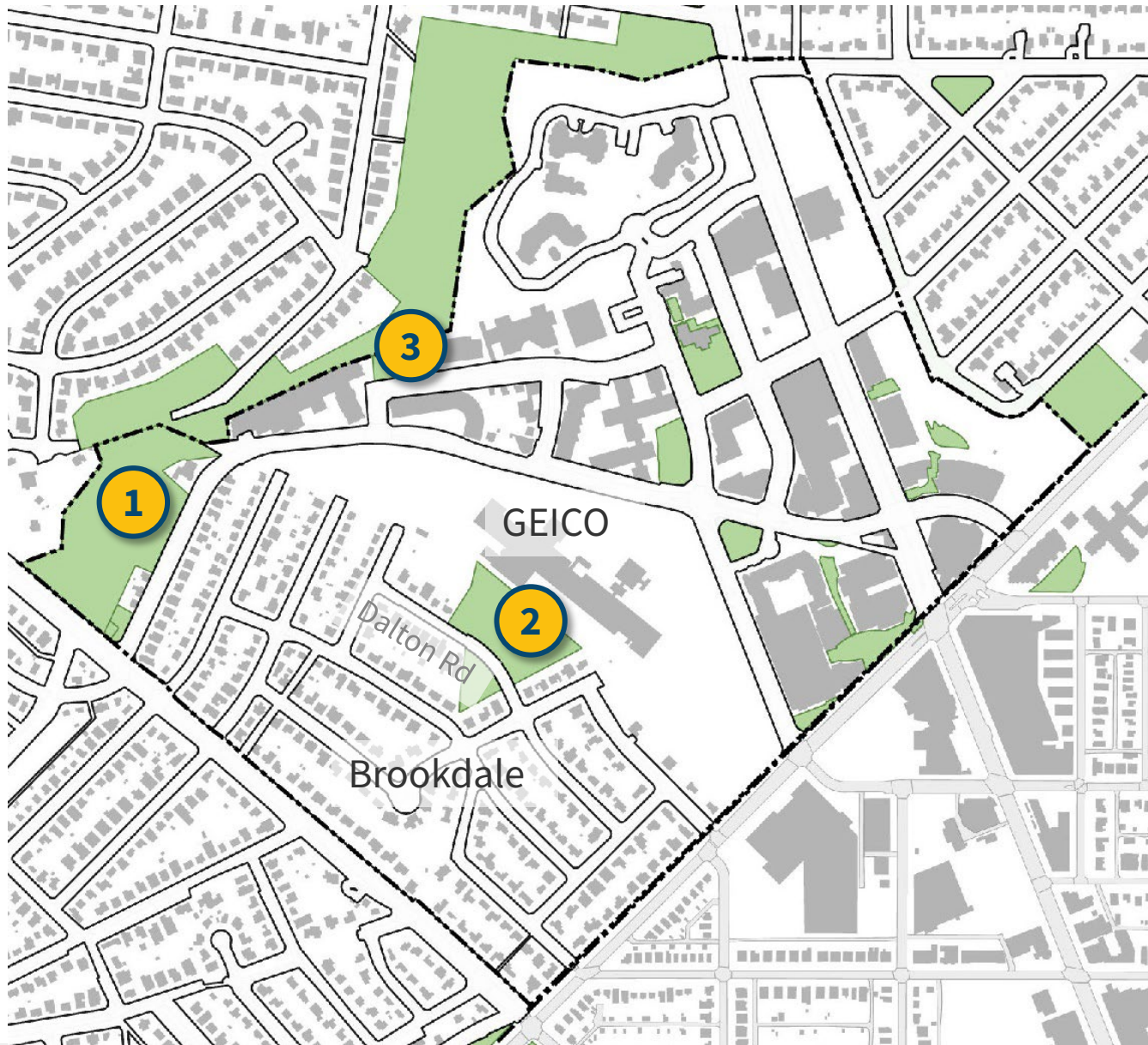
- Hubert Humphrey Park: building entries face the park on three sides
- The Wisconsin Place: the plaza above Whole Foods is not very visible from this popular destination – wayfinding needed



What the community likes: Urban Oasis...



- Many opportunities to connect with nature within the Plan’s area



Parks & Public Spaces Recap



Good access to
nature: urban oasis
with trees and green
spaces



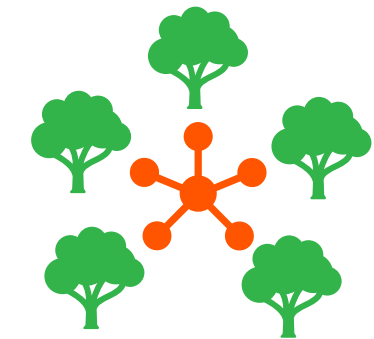
Lack of diversity of
park amenities for
social gathering &
active recreation



Lack of visual and
physical access to
existing parks and
public spaces



Poor design quality
of existing parks and
public spaces



Lack of
connectivity of
network of parks
and public spaces

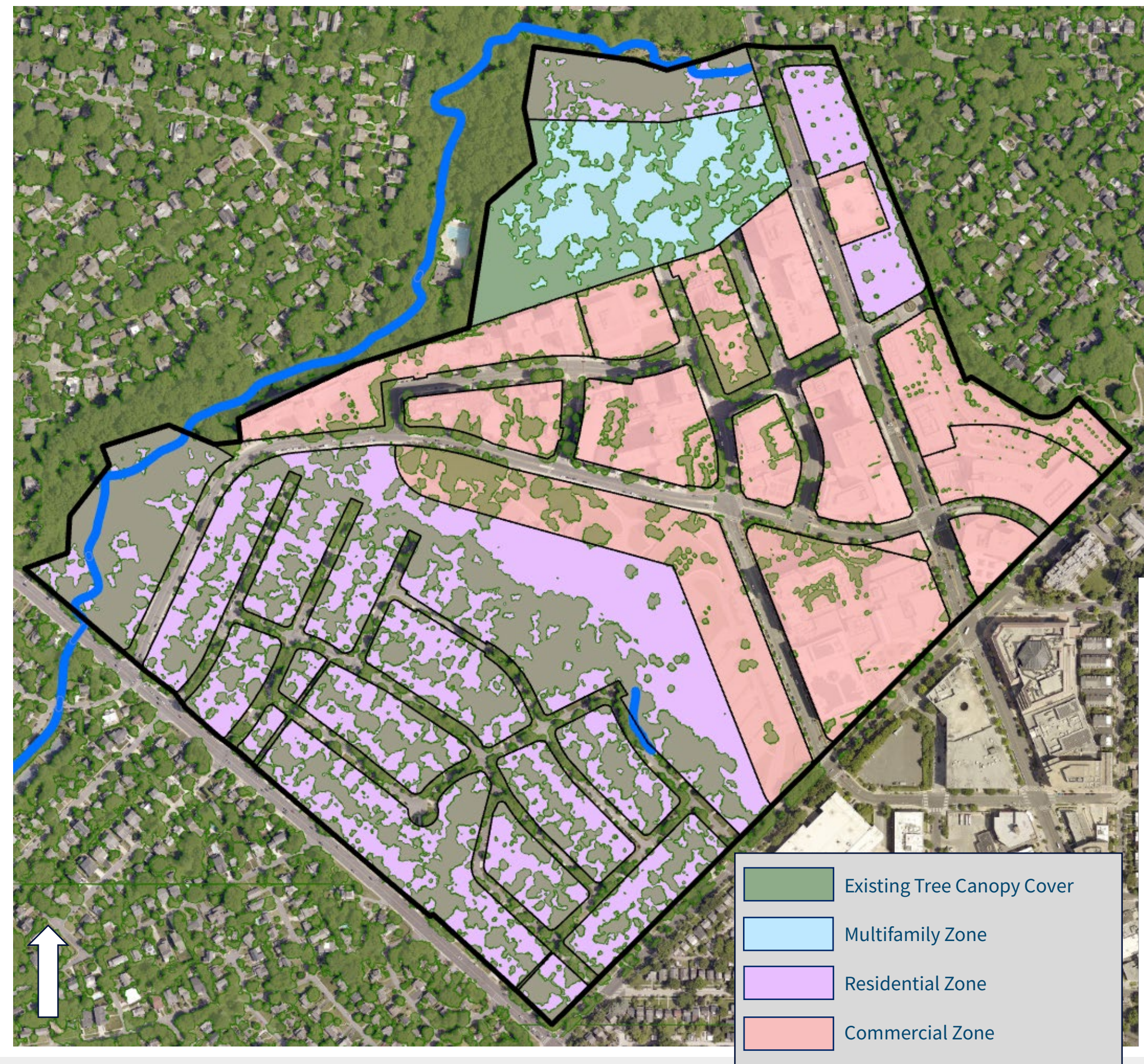


36% or 62 Acres Has Tree Canopy Cover

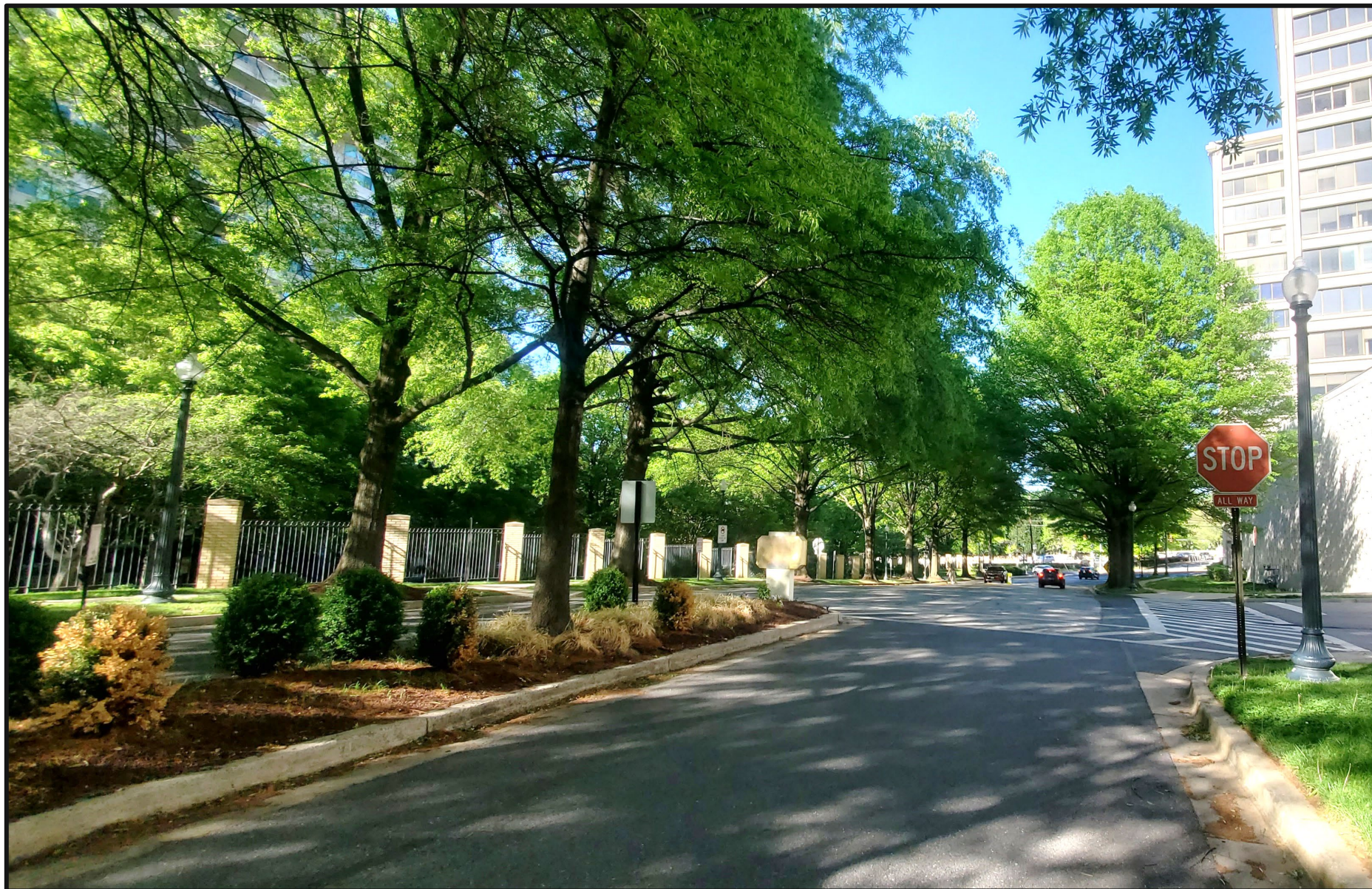
69.5% of Tree Cover is in Residential & Multifamily Residential Zones

13.7% of Tree Cover is in Commercial Zones

15% is Forest Cover



Mature Tree Canopy Cover in Residential Zones



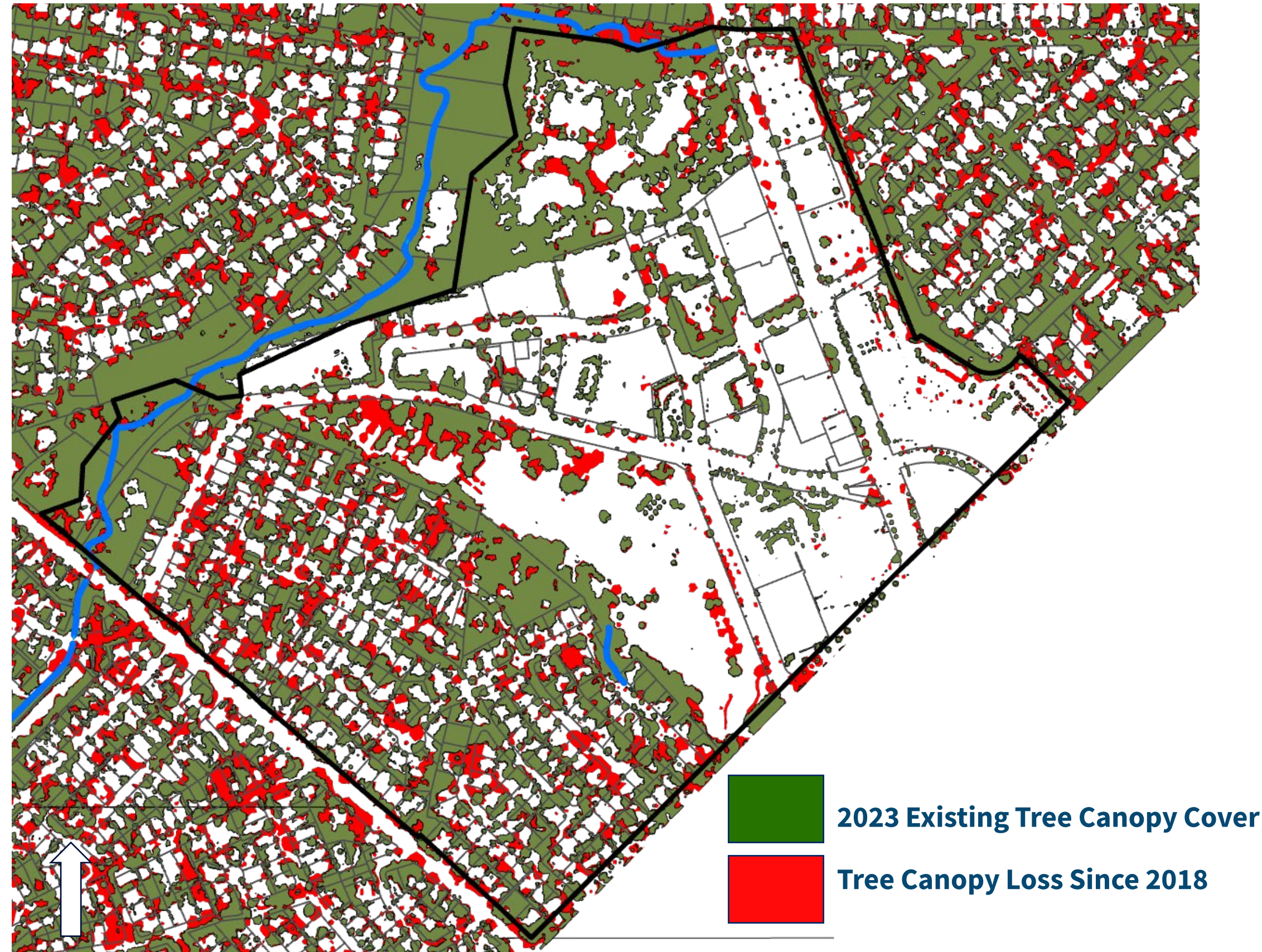
6.5% or 4 Acres of Tree Canopy Loss 2009-2023

Reasons for Tree Loss

- Diseases
- Invasive Species & Insects
- Poor Maintenance
- Climate Change
- Development

Consequences

- Loss of Character and Quality of Place
- Pedestrian Stress
- Loss of Habitat
- Decreased Real-Estate Value



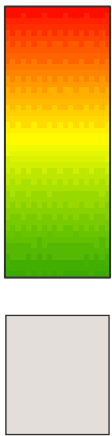
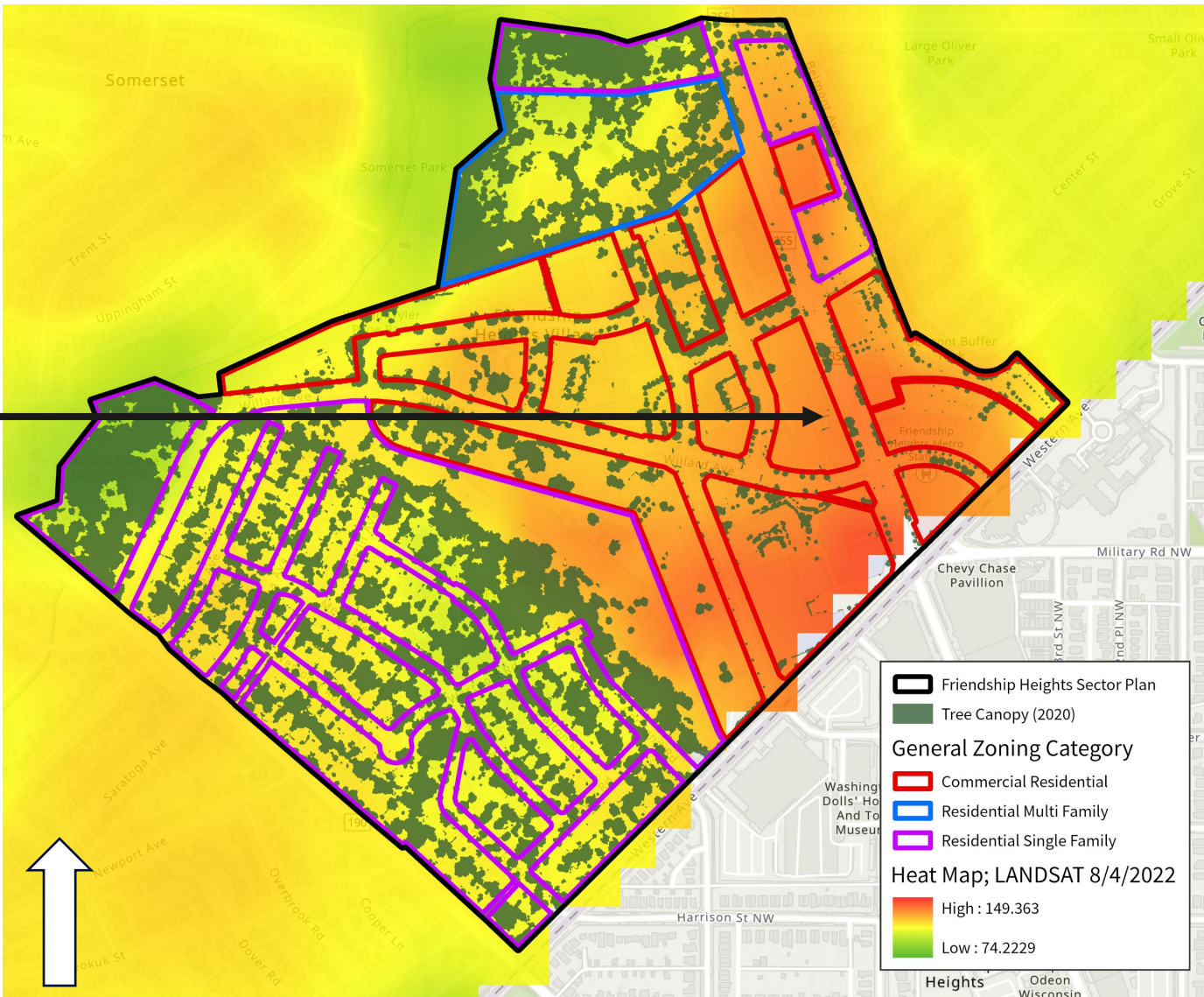
Air Temperature at 6' Above Surface

Conditions

- Impervious Cover: **56%**
- Weather: **87°**: 8/7/22
- Extreme Heat: Human thermal comfort levels are between 48°F and 79°F.

Causes of Extreme Heat

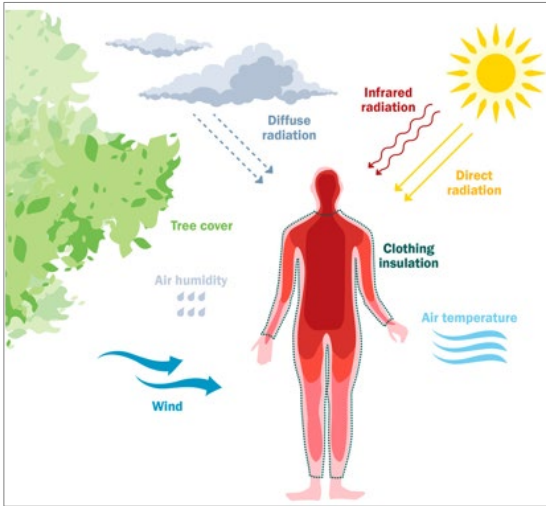
- High Impervious Cover
- Climate Change
- Surface Materials
- Color of Surface Materials
- Presence or absence of Tree Canopy & Green Cover



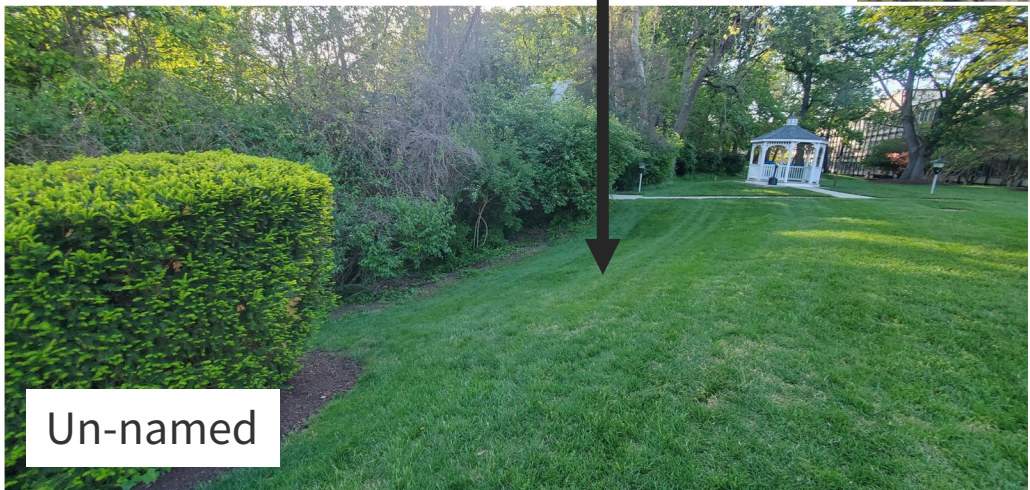
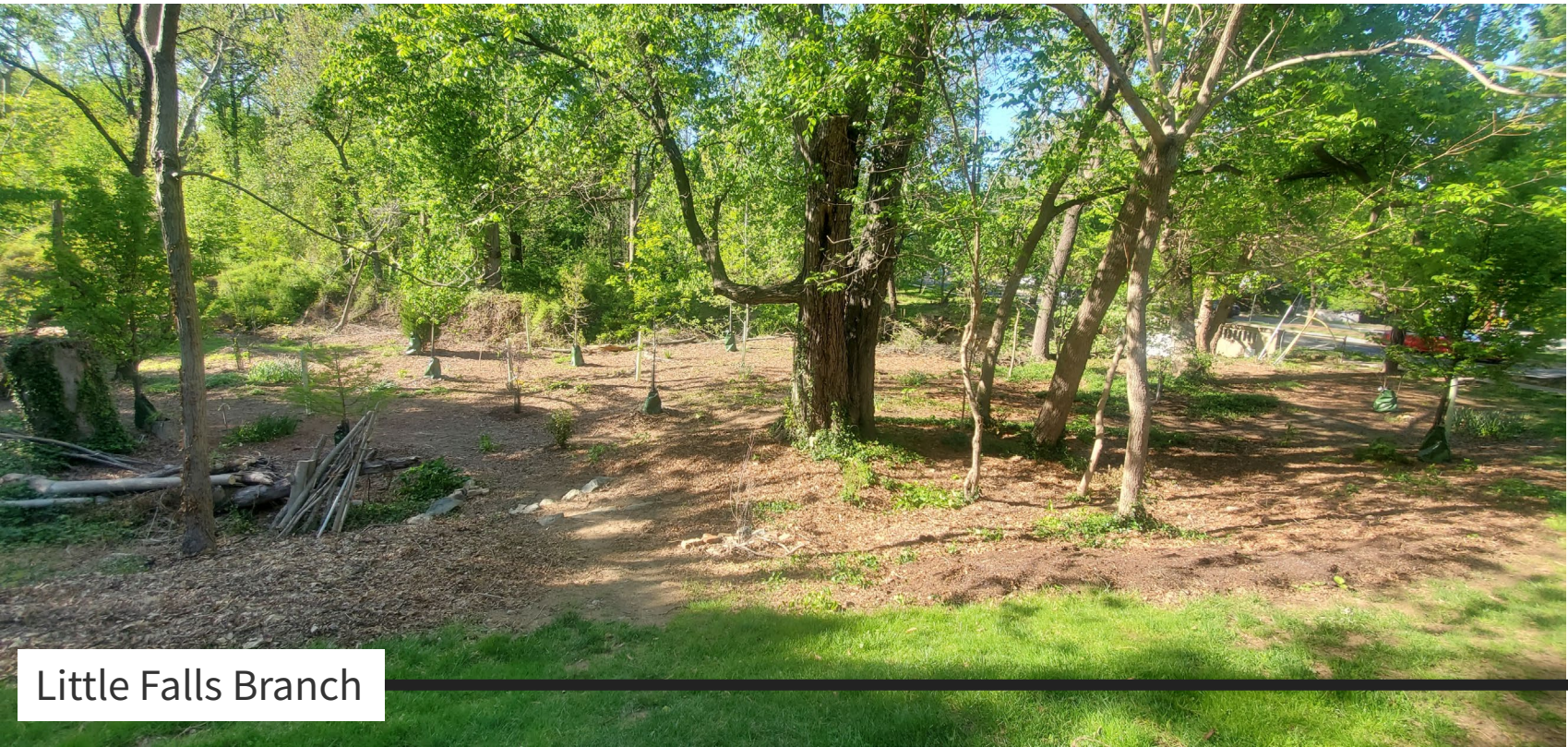
Atmospheric High.: **91+°F**

Atmospheric Low: **81.26°**

Impervious Cover



Streams & Hydrology



Watershed & Stormwater Flow

Watershed

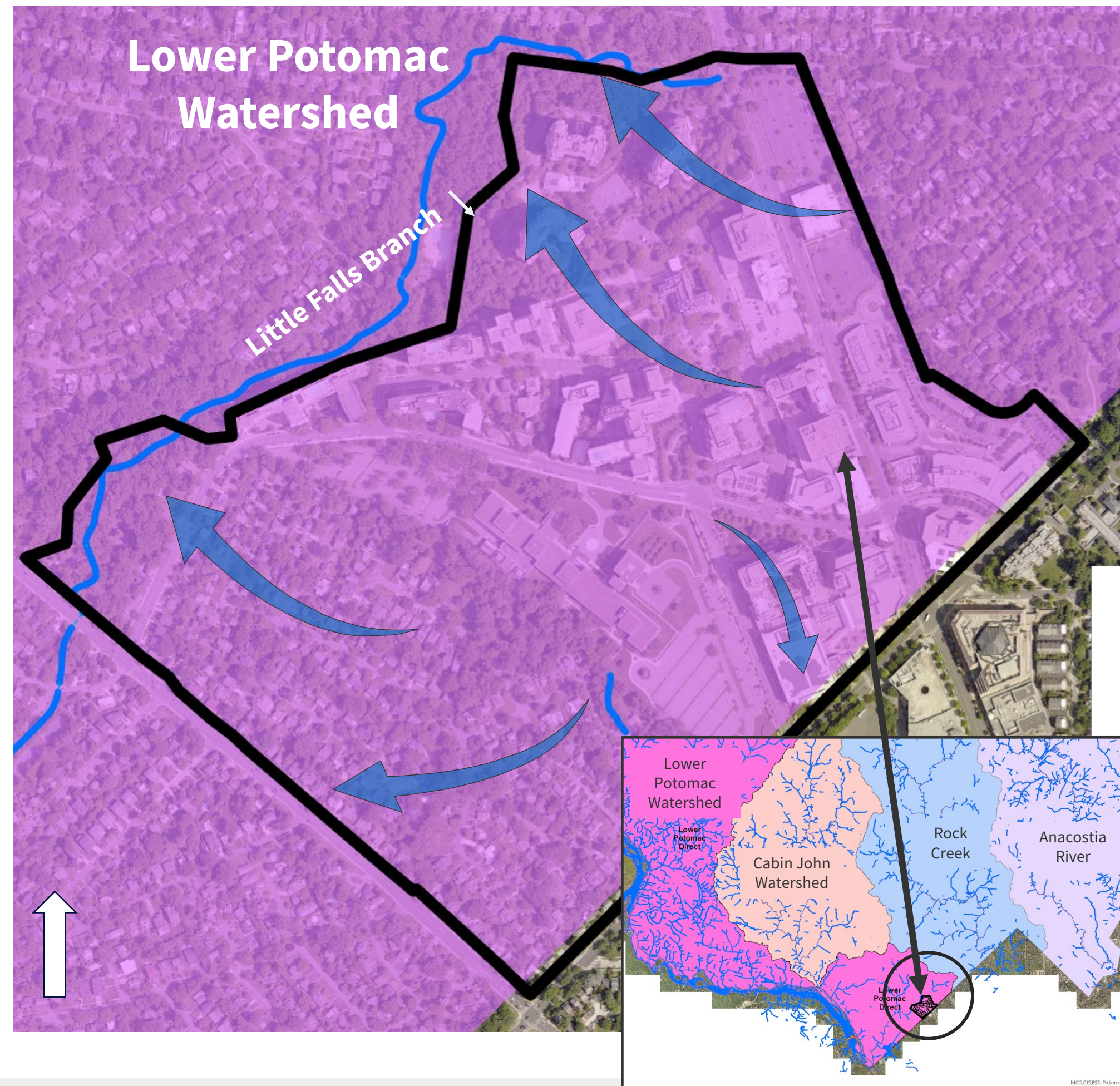
- Lower Potomac Watershed

Stream

- Little Falls Branch

Direction of Stormwater Runoff

- All runoff flows into Little Falls Branch



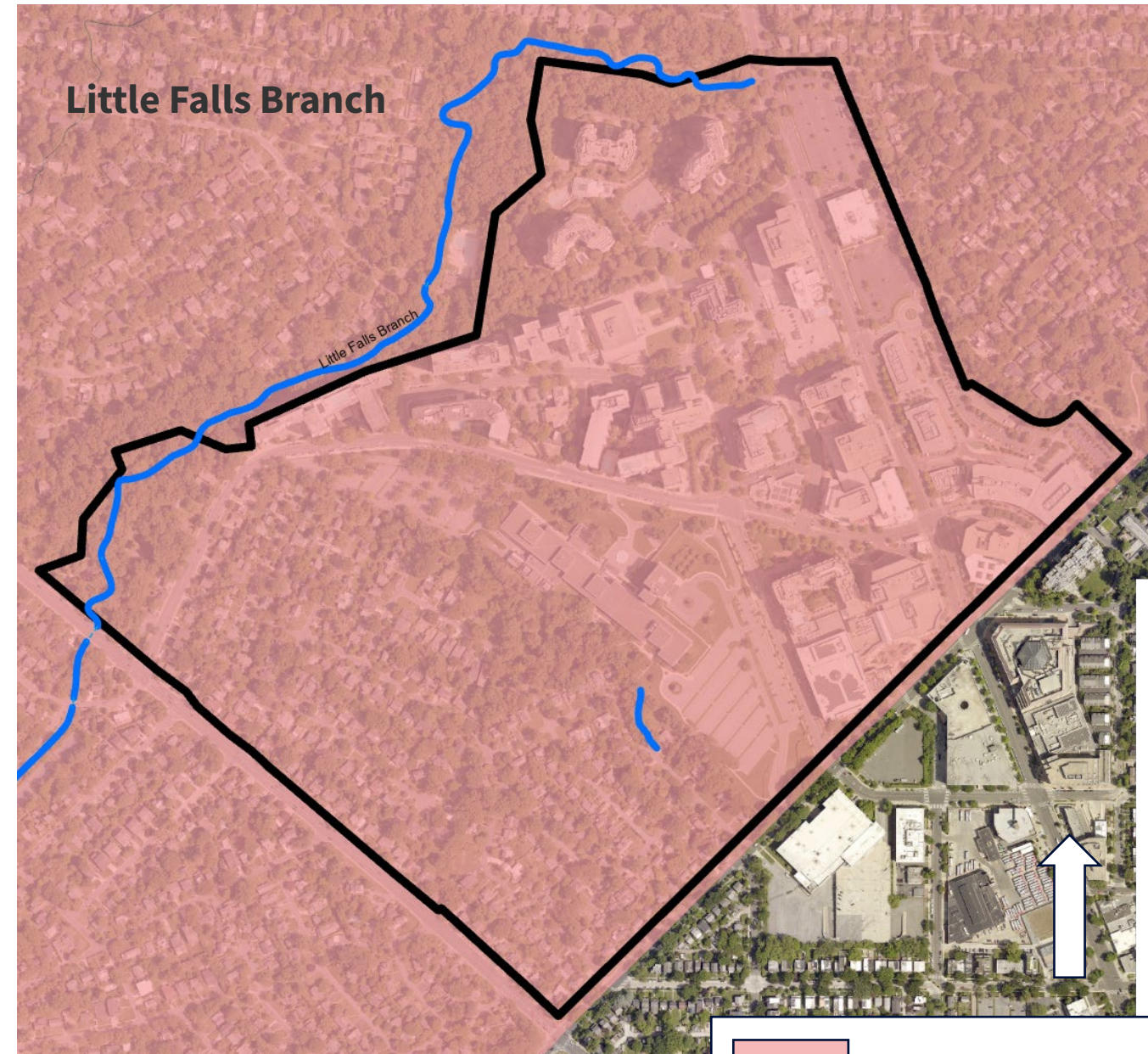
Water Quality

Stream Water Quality

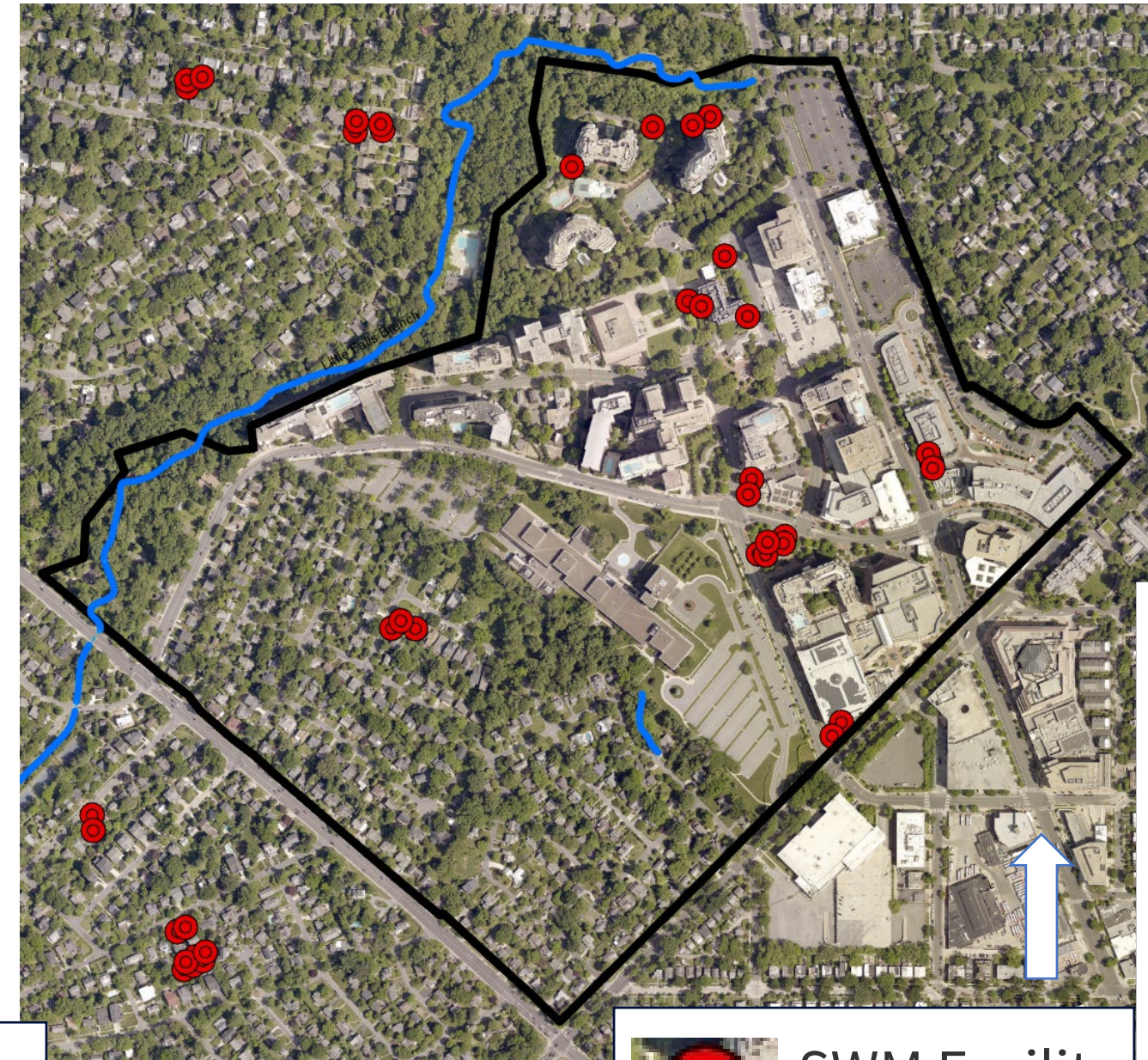
- Poor

Causes

- Few Stormwater Management Systems
- High Impervious Cover
- Minimal Green and Tree Cover
- Loss of Naturalized Landscapes



Poor Water Quality



SWM Facility

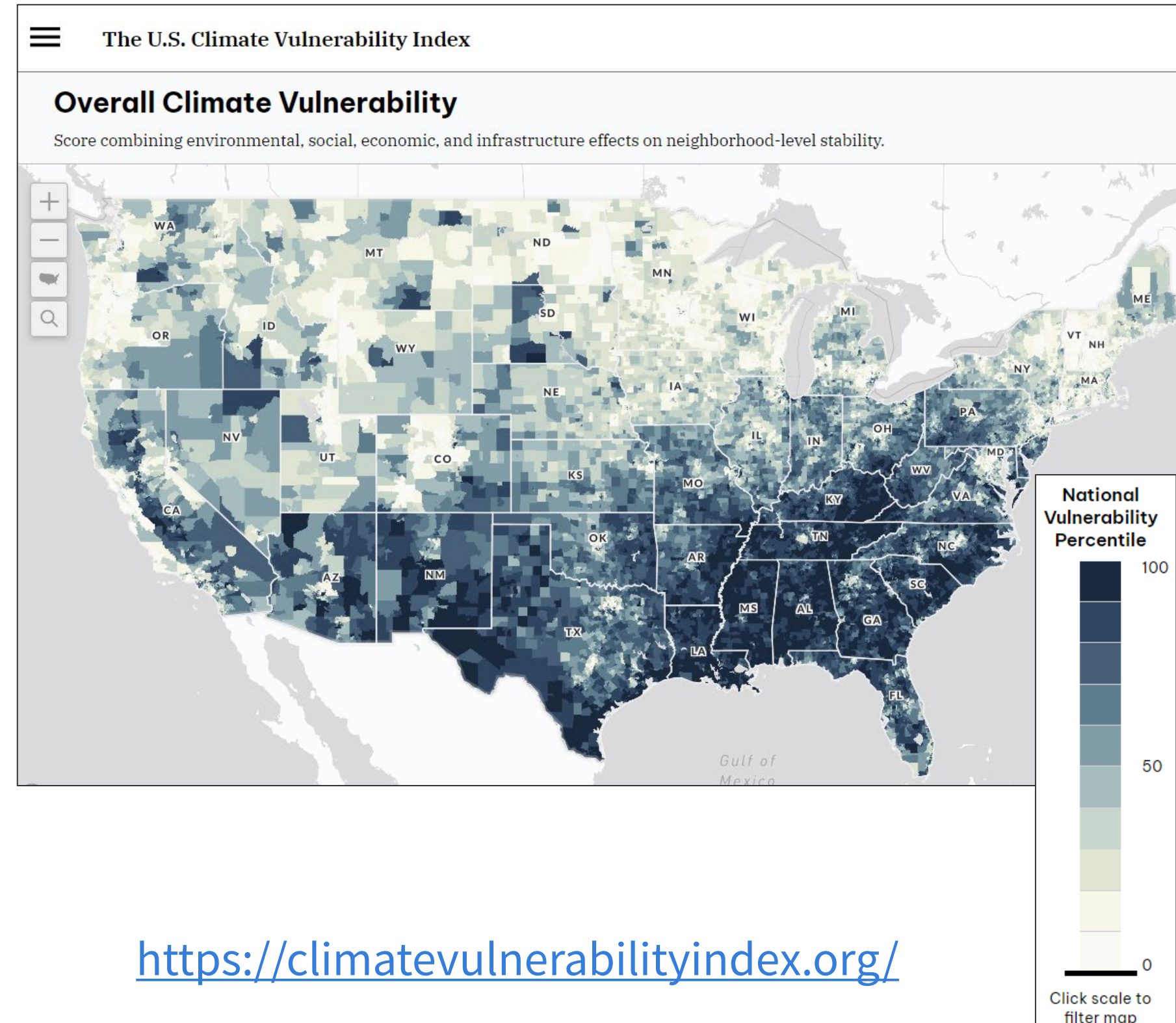
Climate Vulnerability Index

What it is:

The most comprehensive national compellation of climate vulnerabilities relative to the rest of the country

Purpose is to Identify:

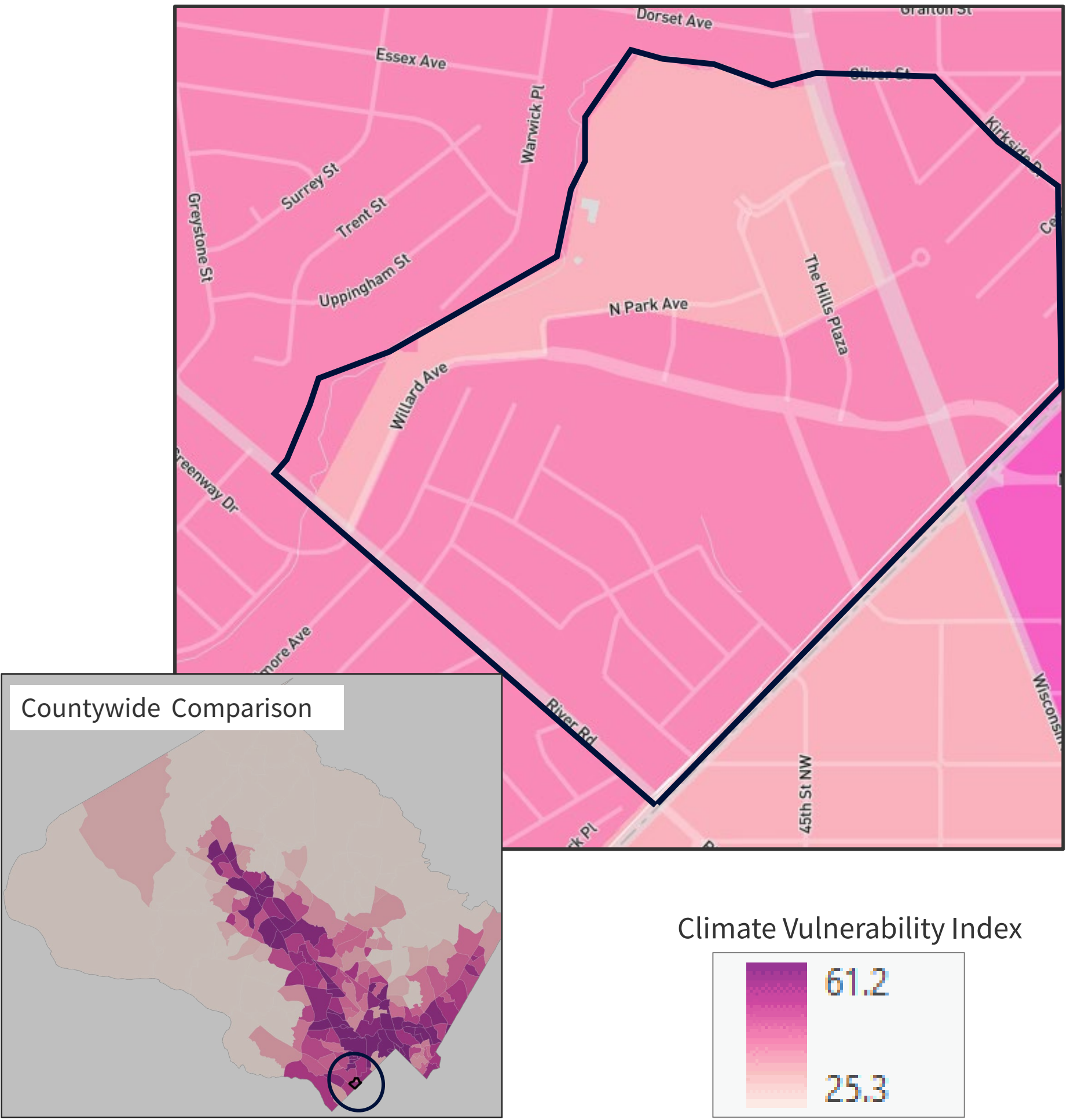
- Disparities & vulnerabilities
- Communities of greatest needs
- Where to prioritize action for policy makers
- Bolsters rationale for investment, planning recommendations, grants, etc.



Overall Environmental Climate Vulnerability

The top environmental impacts come from transportation.

- 1. Impacts: Criteria Air Pollutants
 - Nitrogen dioxide & ozone
 - Black carbon & diesel particulates (PM2.5)
- 2. Exposure & Health Risk Stressors
 - Air Pollutants: Effects on respiratory, growth, reproductive concerns





TRANSPORTATION

What We've Heard: Transportation

Terrifying to bike on Wisconsin Ave—feels like a highway, pedestrian safety issue

Super transit-friendly, good network of buses, good metro connection

Safer school crossings over River Road

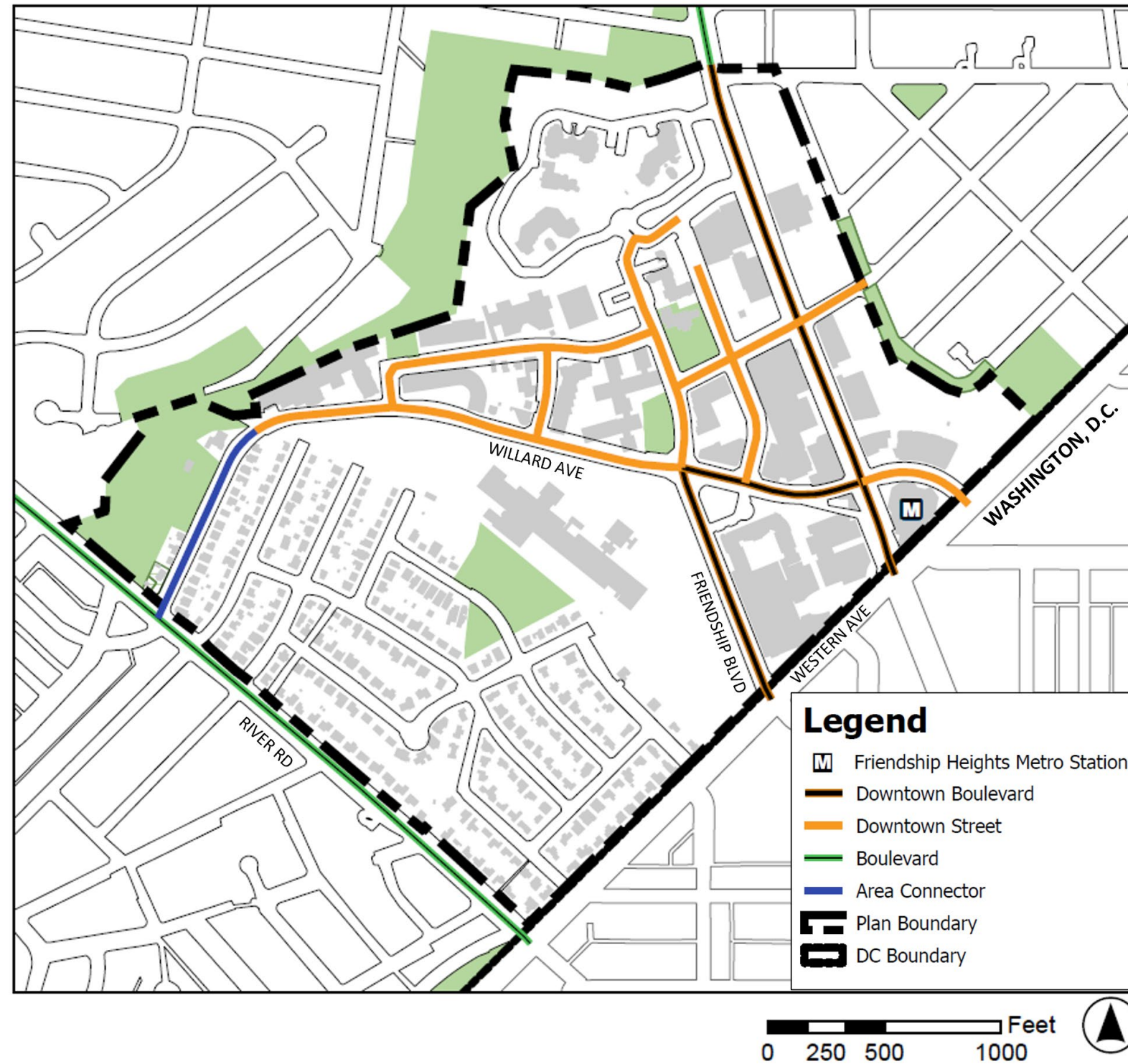
We need trail to connect Friendship Heights to Capital Crescent Trail

Cars and buses have control of streets—we want the pedestrians to have the right of way...

More service on Bus 34 to Bethesda - express bus to downtown DC

Walkable, don't have to have a car

Road Network



Wisconsin Avenue & Western Avenue



Willard Avenue



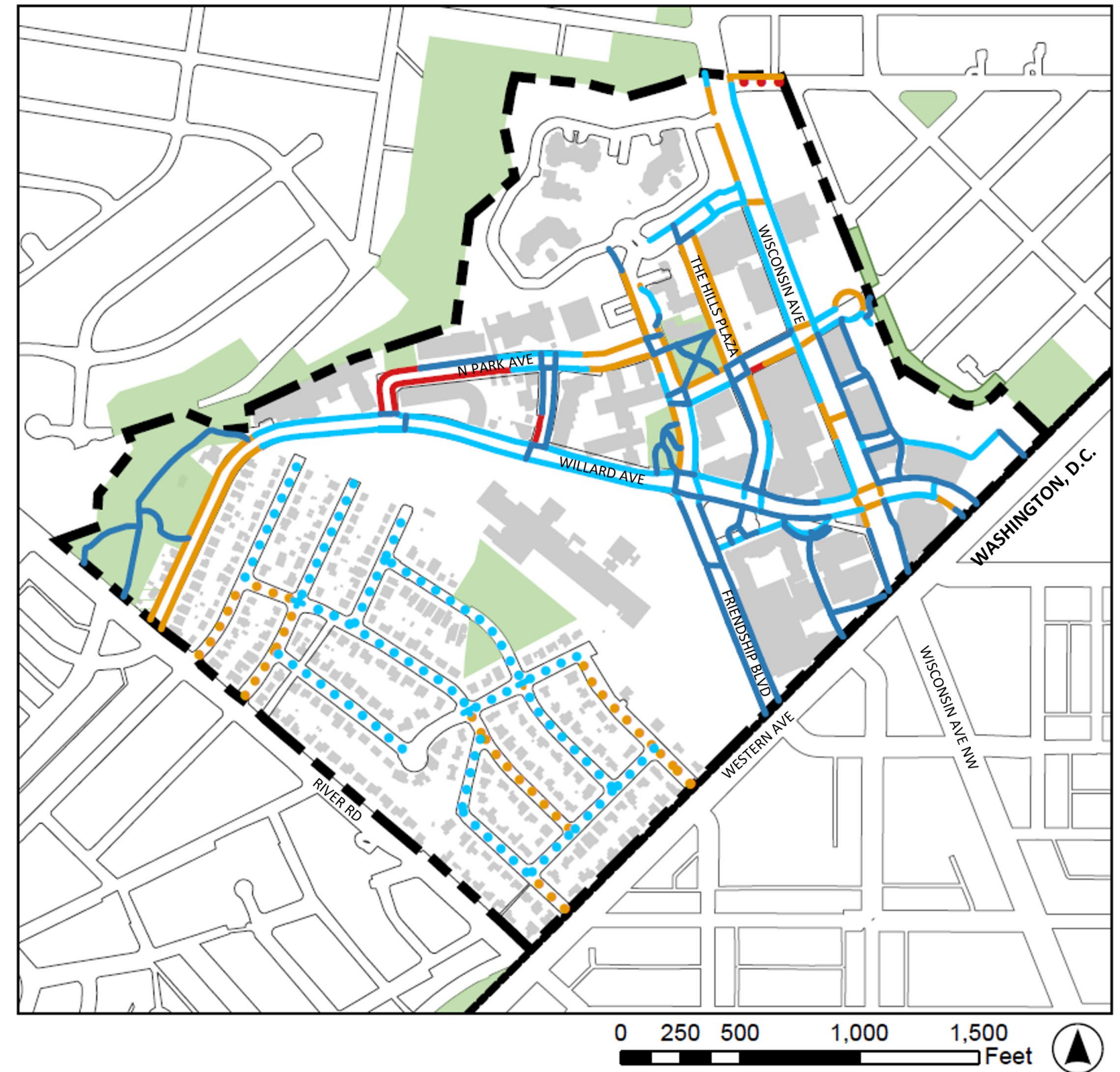
Friendship Boulevard



Wisconsin Avenue

Pedestrian Conditions

Pedestrian Level of Comfort



Comfortable Sidewalks/Crossings

Sidewalks and crossings in the plan area that are comfortable for pedestrians include these features:

- Wide sidewalks
- Street buffer with trees
- High visible crossing
- Pedestrian refuge island



Pedestrians crossing Willard Avenue



Western Avenue



Pedestrian walking along Wisconsin Avenue



Pedestrian crossing along Wisconsin Avenue

Uncomfortable Sidewalks

Sidewalks and crossings in the plan area that are uncomfortable for pedestrians include these features:

- Obstructions like signposts and light poles
- Missing street buffer
- Long, continuous curb cut/multiple curb cuts



North Park Avenue



The Hills Plaza



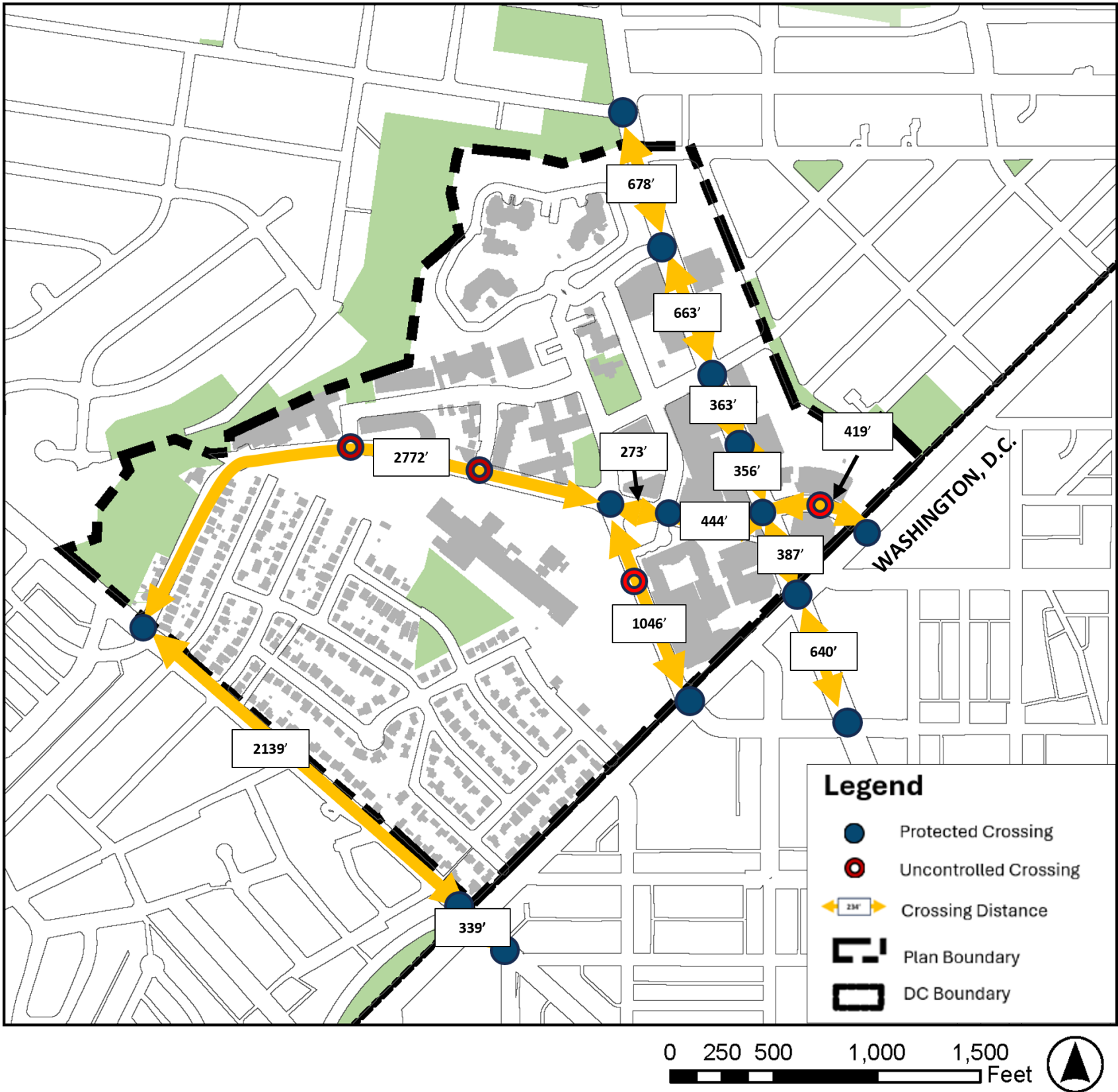
River Road



North Park Avenue

Protected Crossing Spacing

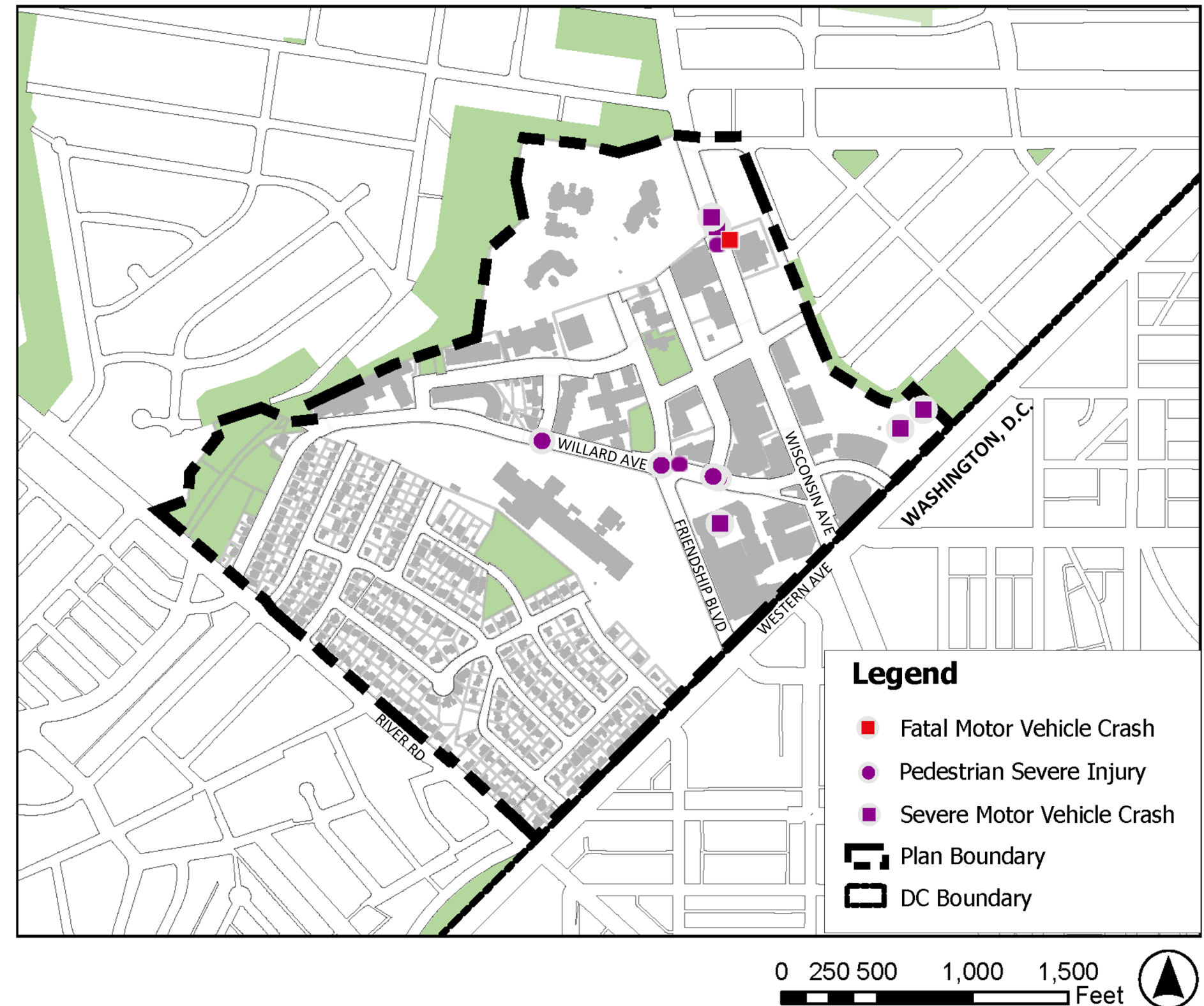
Plan Area Street	Street Classification	Maximum Spacing for Protected Crossings
Wisconsin Avenue	Downtown Boulevard/Street	400'
Wisconsin Circle		
Willard Avenue		
Friendship Boulevard		
Willard Avenue	Area Connector	600'-1200'
River Road	Boulevard	1600'



Severe and Fatal Crashes of All Modes

From 2015 to 2023, there were 12 severe and fatal crashes within the Friendship Heights Plan Area.

- Six Severe Pedestrian Crashes
- Five Severe Motor Vehicles crashes
- One Fatal Motor Vehicle Crash



Existing/Proposed Bikeways

Legend



Friendship Heights Metro Station



Bicycle Parking Station



Capital Bikeshare Station

Trails (existing)

Trails (planned)

Separated Bikeways (proposed)

Separated Bikeways - Sidepath (proposed)

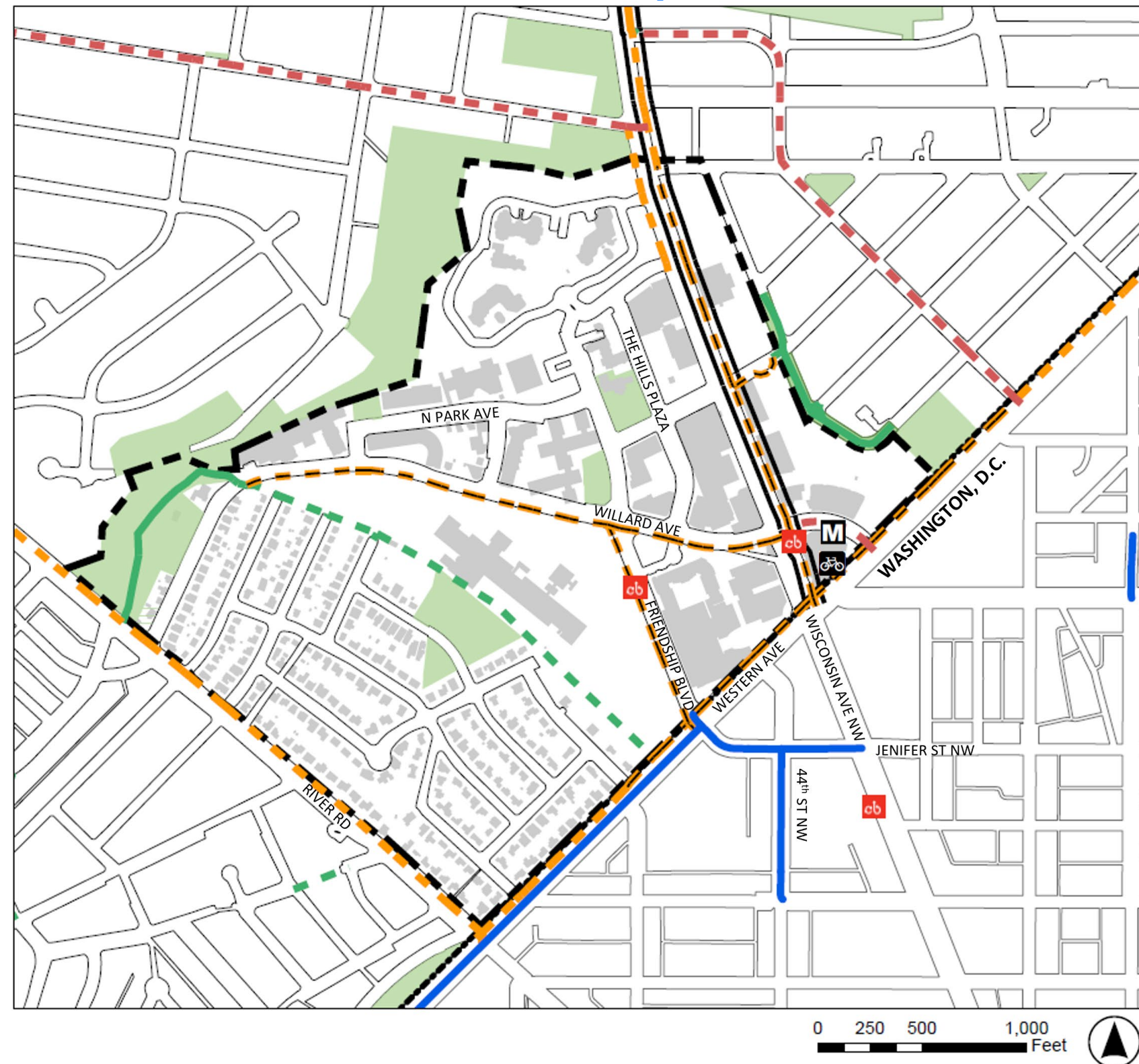
Shared Roads (proposed)

Breezeway Network

DC Bike Lanes/Projects

Plan Boundary

DC Boundary



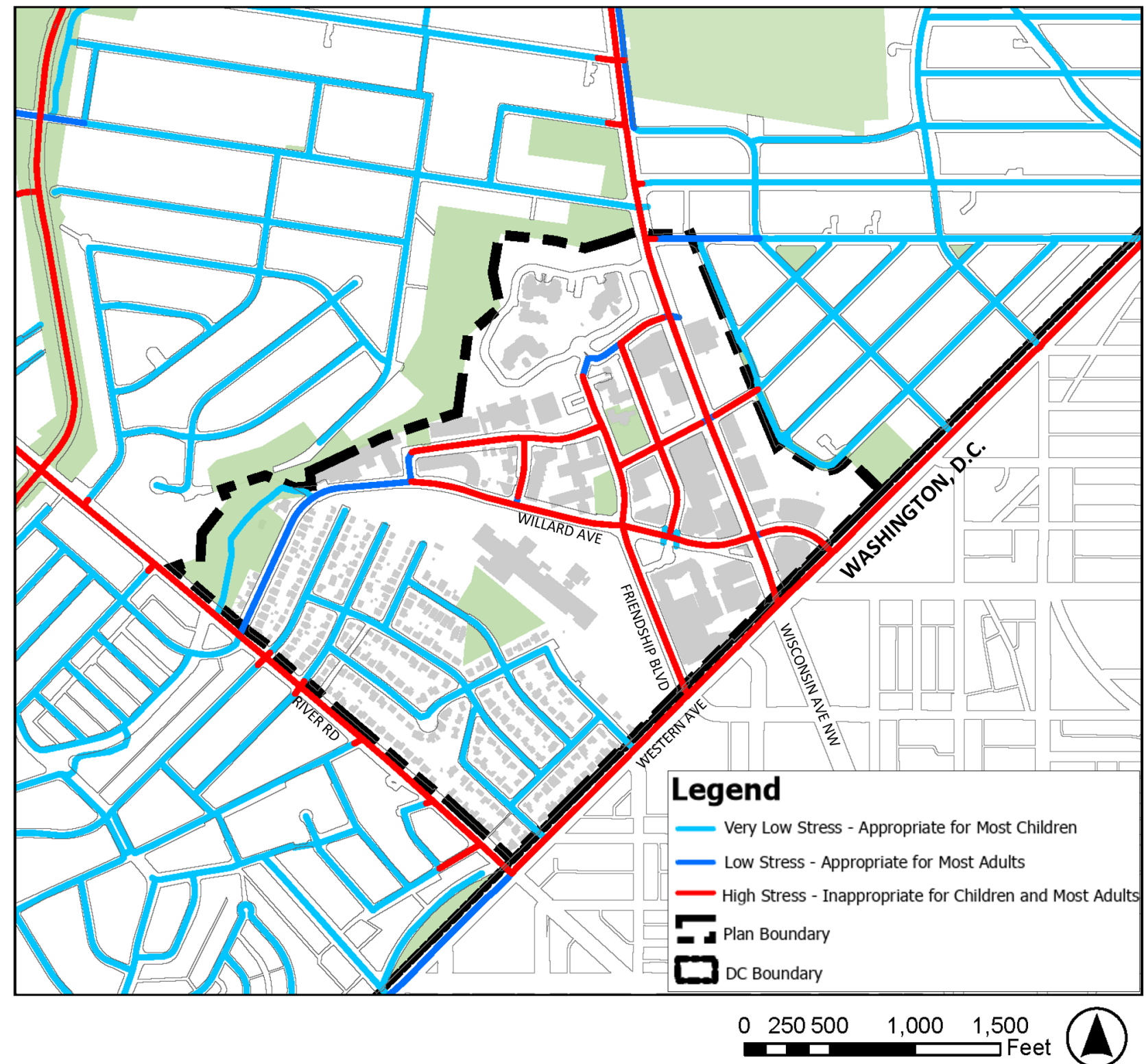
Bikeway Conditions

The **Bicycle Level of Stress** determines the amount of discomfort that people feel when they bike close to traffic.

- The downtown streets/boulevards in the plan area are high stress
- Residential streets within the plan area are very low stress



Bicyclist on sidewalk along Wisconsin Avenue



Micromobility

There are two Capital Bikeshare stations in the Friendship Heights Plan Area:

- Friendship Heights Metro Station
- Friendship Boulevard & Willard Avenue

In 2024, over **5,100 trips** originated at the two stations. The top destinations where trips ended outside the plan area include:

- Chevy Chase, DC
- Kenwood Station/Westbard Square
- Downtown Bethesda



Capital Bikeshare Station
at Friendship Boulevard
& Willard Avenue

Existing Transit

Rail Service

- Metrorail (Red Line)

Bus Service

- Metrobus (8 Routes)
- Ride On (5 routes)

Shuttle

- Village of Friendship Heights (2 routes)



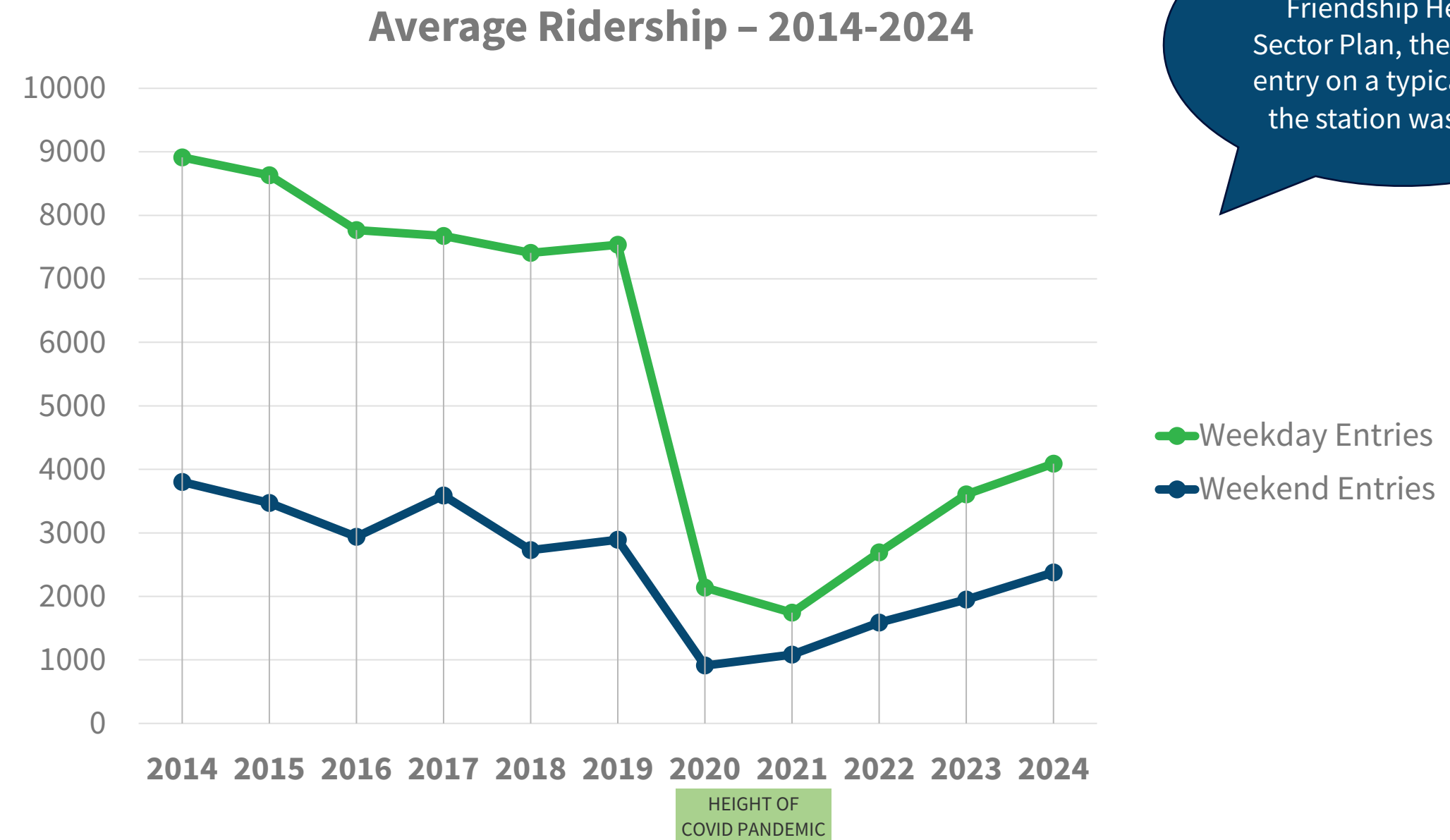
Bus Network Redesign

- In 2022, Metro launched on the Better Bus Network Redesign, which is a redesign of the Metrobus service network.
- Simultaneously, MCDOT began work on the Ride On Reimagined Study, which assessed the bus network in Montgomery County and prepared recommended changes to Ride On's service area.
- The new bus network will go into effect **June 29, 2025.**

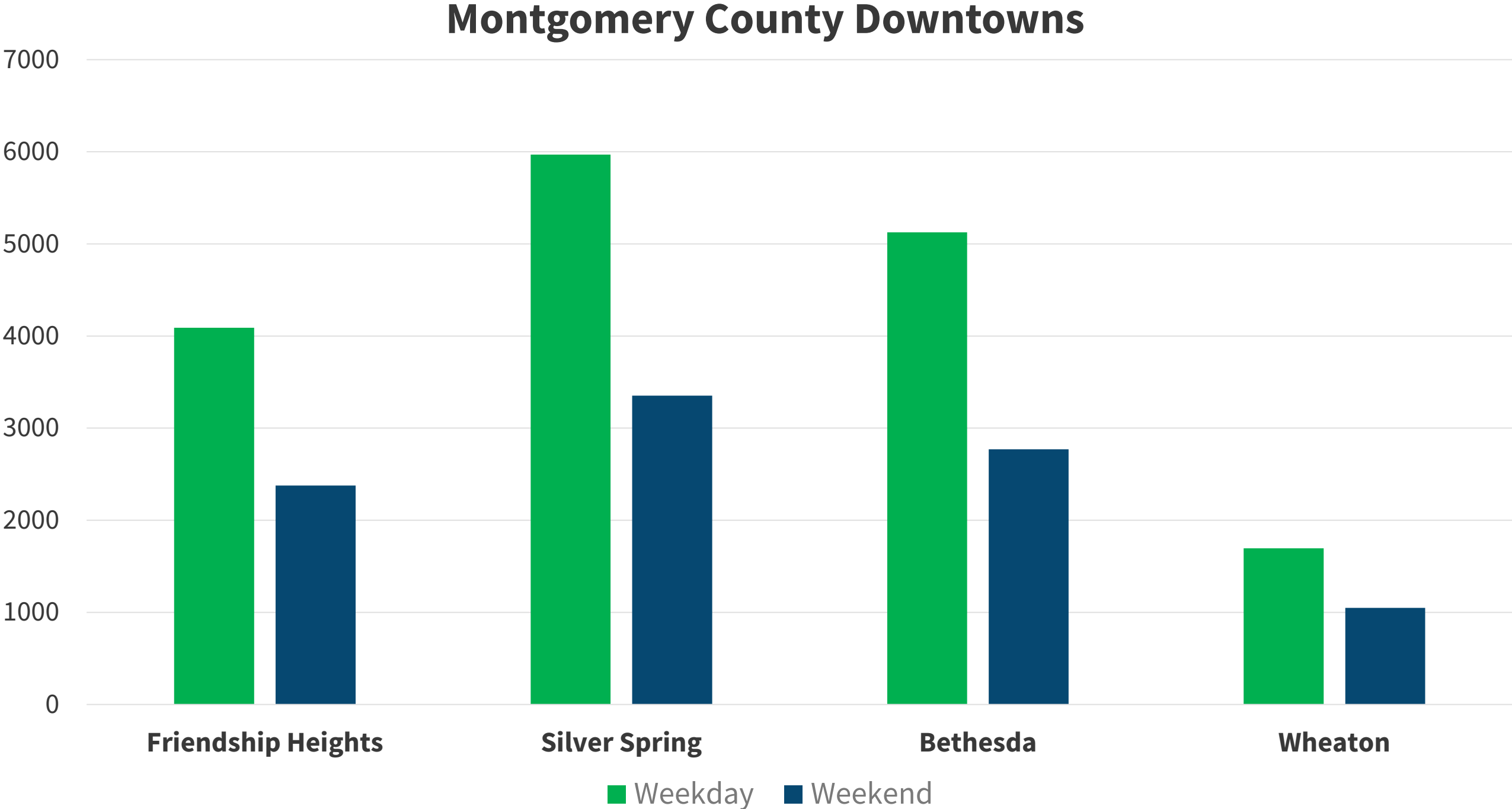


Friendship Heights Metrorail Ridership

- Ridership dipped slightly between 2014-2016 but remained fairly consistent through 2019.
- Ridership reduced by 70% between 2019 and 2020.
- Ridership is steadily increasing as we move from the pandemic and aligns with regional trends in the greater Washington region.

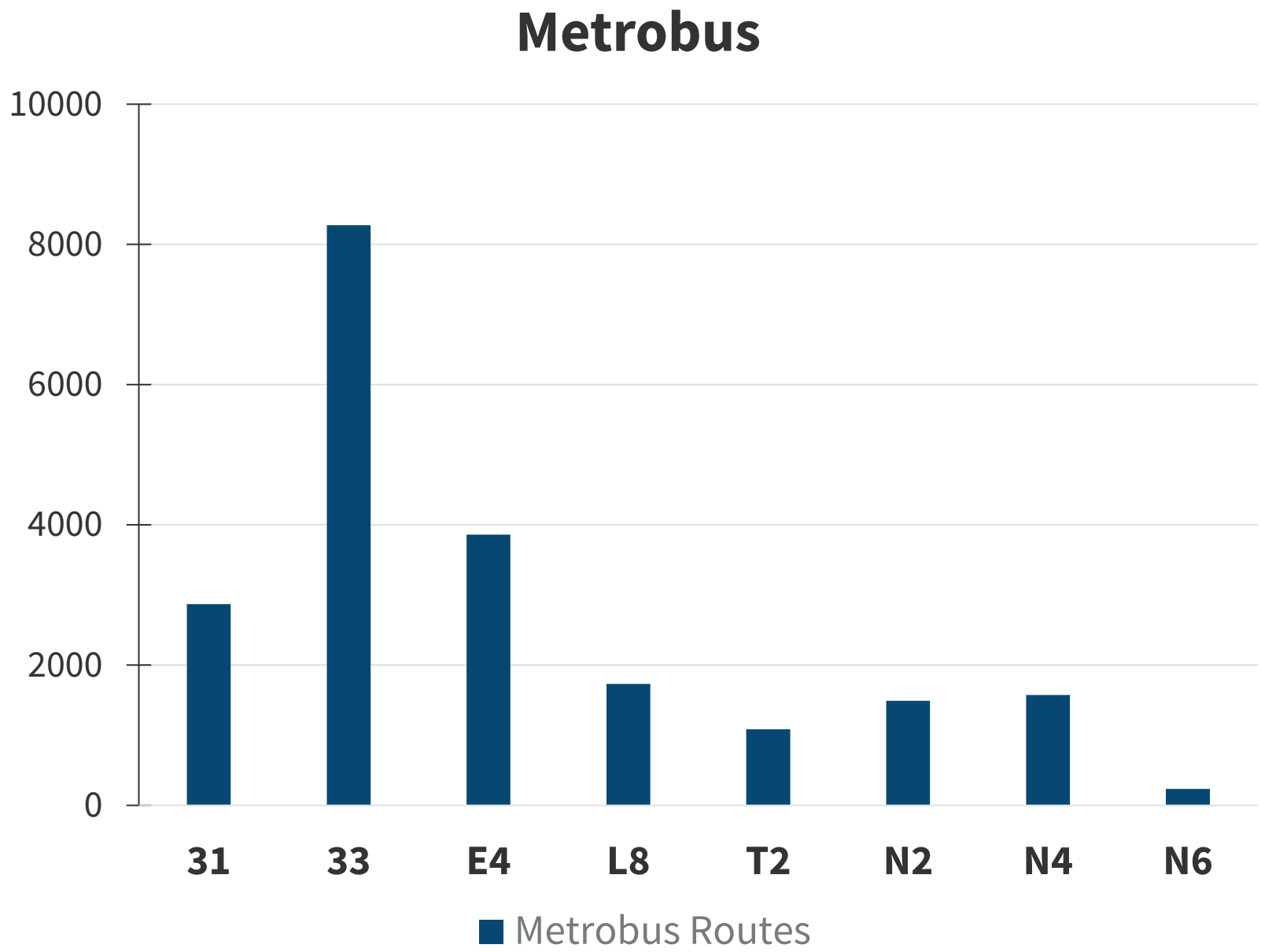
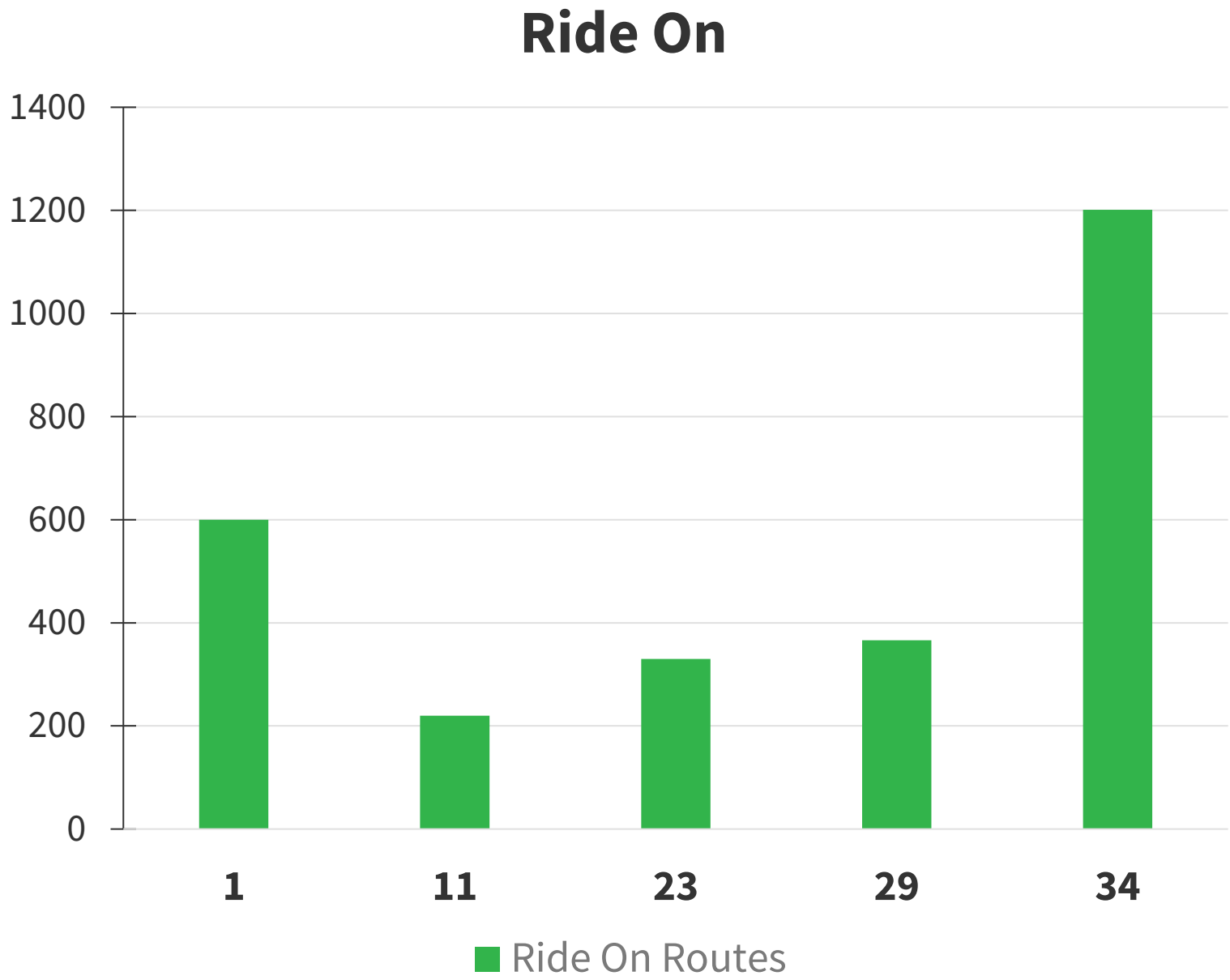


Metrorail Ridership



* Average Weekday and Weekend Entries in 2024

Bus Ridership

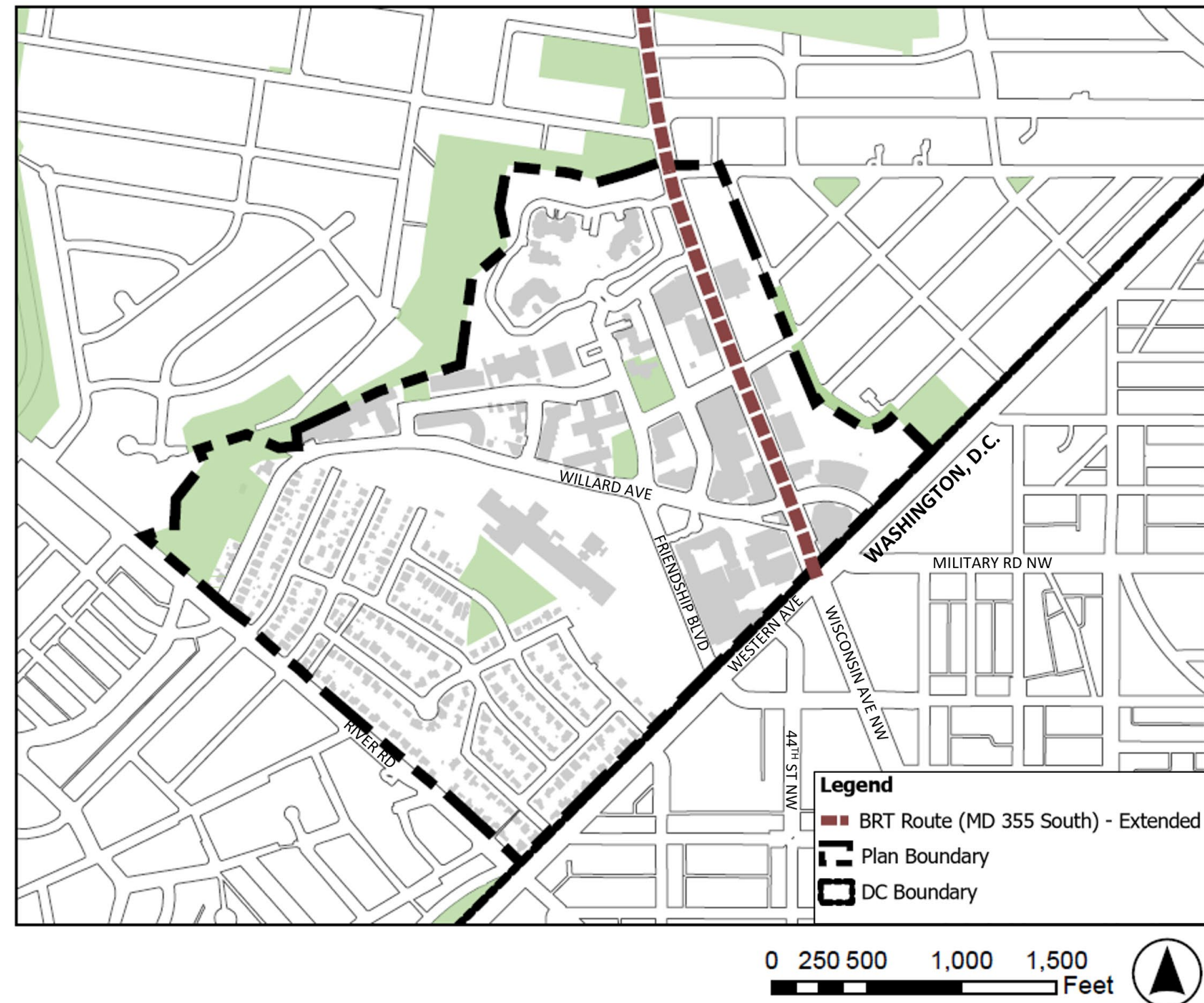


* Average Daily Boardings - Based on Fall 2024 Ridership Data

Planned Transit

MCDOT – FLASH (Bus Rapid Transit)

- There is an option to extend the planned MD 355 South BRT route further south on Wisconsin Avenue into the Plan Area.



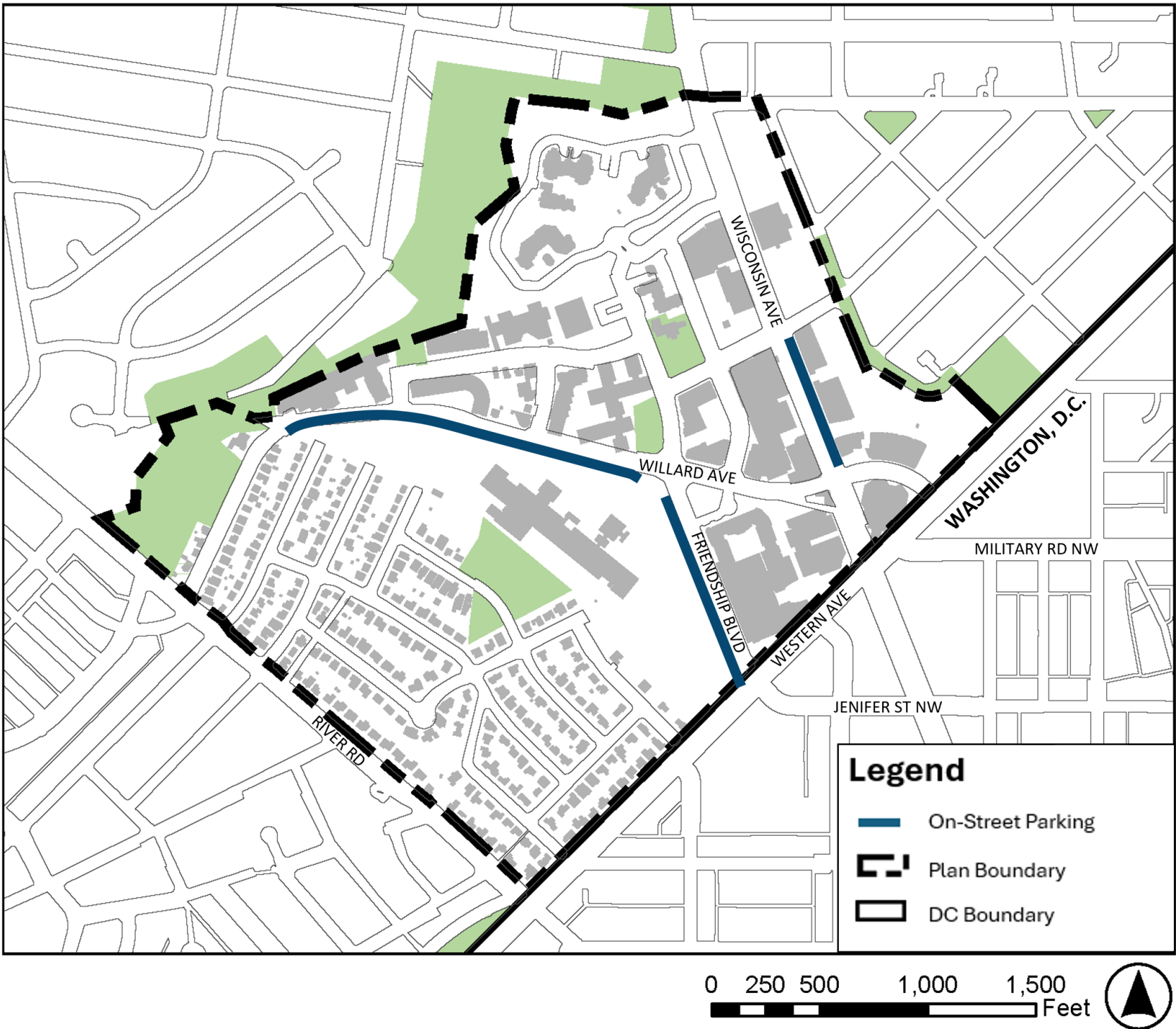
Parking Lots and Garages

Privately Owned, Publicly Accessible Garages	
Location	Spaces
1. Barlow Building 5454 Wisconsin Avenue	500
2. Chevy Chase Building 5530 Wisconsin Avenue	110
3. Chevy Chase Center/The Collection 5425 Wisconsin Avenue	1373
4. Chevy Chase Metro Building 2 Wisconsin Circle	500
5. Highland House 5480 Wisconsin Avenue	355
6. Chase Tower 4445 Willard Avenue	444
7. Saks Fifth Avenue 5555 Wisconsin Avenue	470
8. The Shops at Wisconsin Place 5310 Western Avenue	1455



On-Street Parking Inventory

On-Street Parking	
Location	Spaces
Friendship Boulevard (West)	35
Willard Avenue (South)	47
Wisconsin Avenue (East)	23





COMMUNITY AMENITIES

What We've Heard: Community Amenities

More amenities that people stay for such as movie theaters, coffee shops and more restaurants

Recreation facilities to supplement the recreation center, specifically a pool

Looking for more local retail

Want greater opportunities for entertainment

Strong desire for a full branch of the Montgomery County Library

Facility Summary

- Although the Plan Area is small, there are many amenities within the Plan boundary
- Facilities that are not within the Plan Area can be found within the Study Area
- The only facility not present within either the Plan Area or Study Area is a Hospital

Facility	Plan Area	Study Area
Public Safety		
Police Station	X	X
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical		X
Health and Wellness		
Medical Services	X	X
Hospital		
Recreation Center	X	X
Places of Worship		X
Food Access		
Grocery Store	X	X
Art and Culture		
Theater		X
Library		X
Museum and Gallery	X	
Other Services		
Child Daycare	X	X
Senior Services	X	X
Post Office	X	X
Regional Services Center		X

Plan Area

- Satellite police station
- Medical offices are a major draw to the plan area and offer a wide range of services
- County recreation center located in Wisconsin Place
- Whole foods is another major draw to the plan area

LEGEND

	Plan boundary		Police station		Child daycare
	Washington, D.C. border		Medical services		Senior services
	Parks and open spaces		Recreation center		Post office
	Water features		Grocery store		
	Metro station entrance		Museum and gallery		

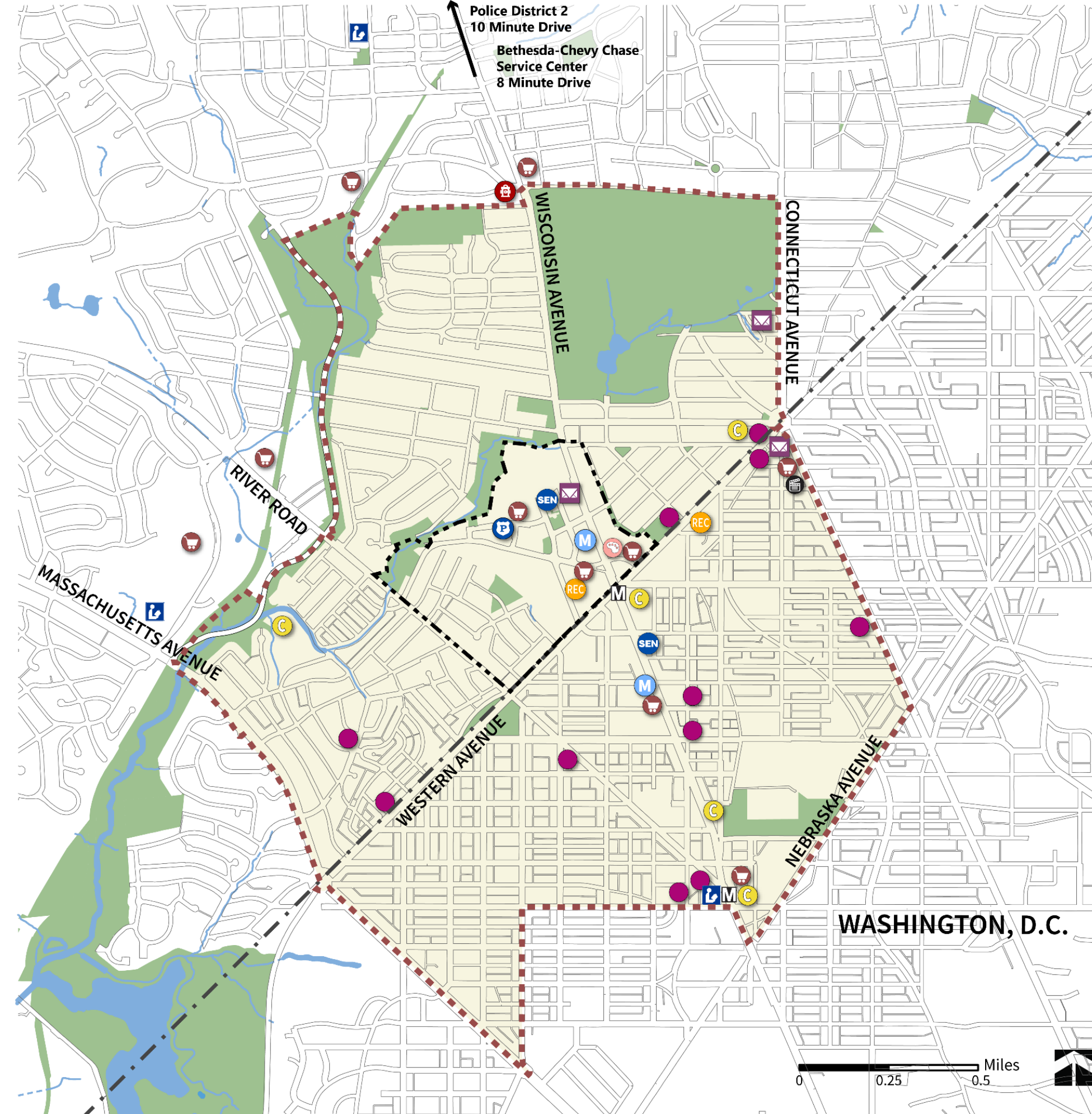


Study Area

- Several libraries within a 10-minute drive
- Avalon movie theater on Connecticut Avenue
- The Plan Area is served by the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Service Center
- Many places of worship
- Primarily located along Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue

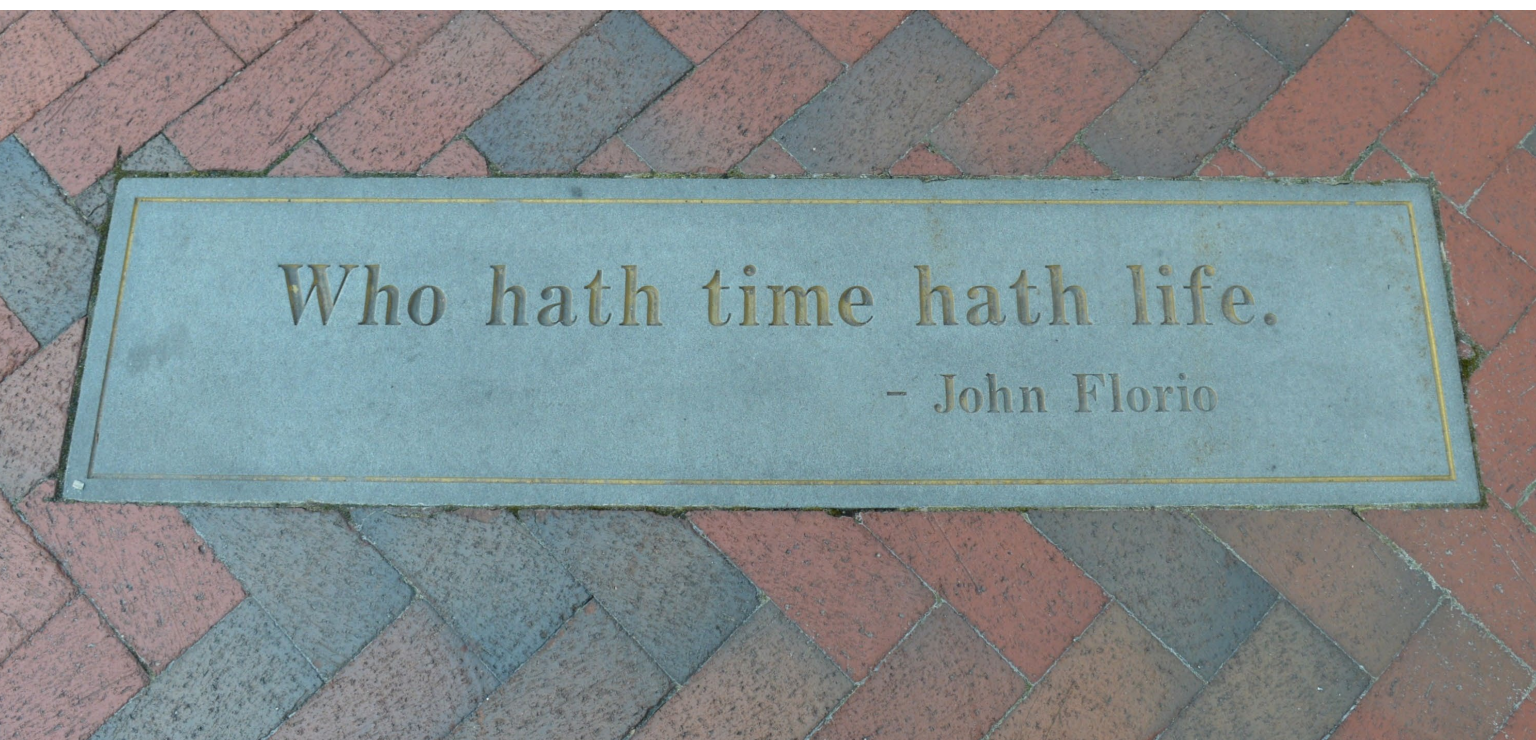
LEGEND

----- Study Area boundary	M Metrorail station	REC Recreation Center	Museum and gallery
----- Plan boundary	P Police station	Places of worship	Child daycare
- - - Washington, D.C. border	Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical	Grocery store	Senior services
Parks and open spaces	M Medical Services	Theater	Post office
Water features	Library	Bethesda-Chevy Chase Service Center	



Arts and Culture – Public Art

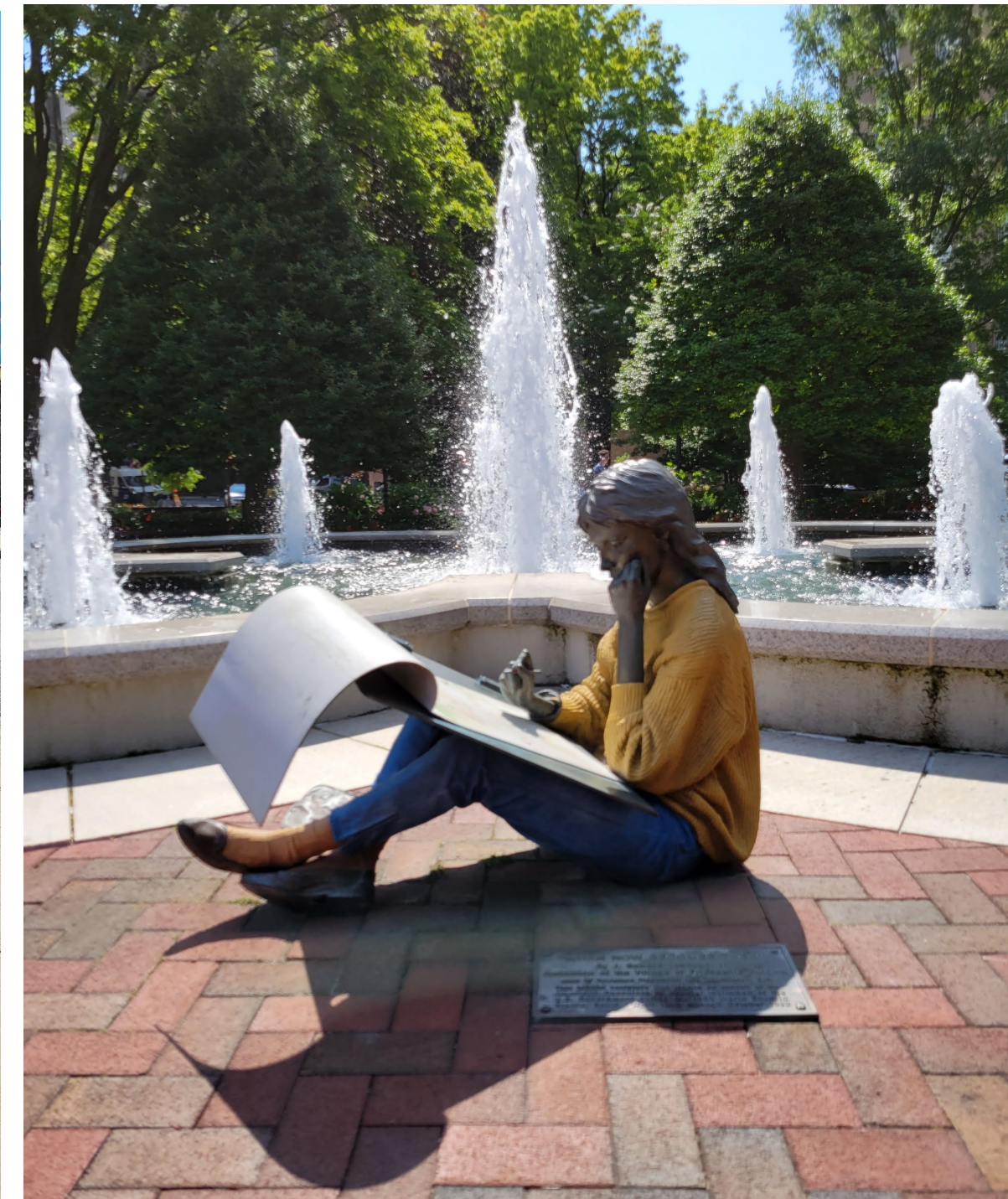
Friendship Heights has a strong tradition of incorporating public art.



Part of an installation in the sidewalk



Statue of Colonel James S. McAuliffe Sr



Statue of an artist by J. Seward Johnson

Arts and Culture – Public Art

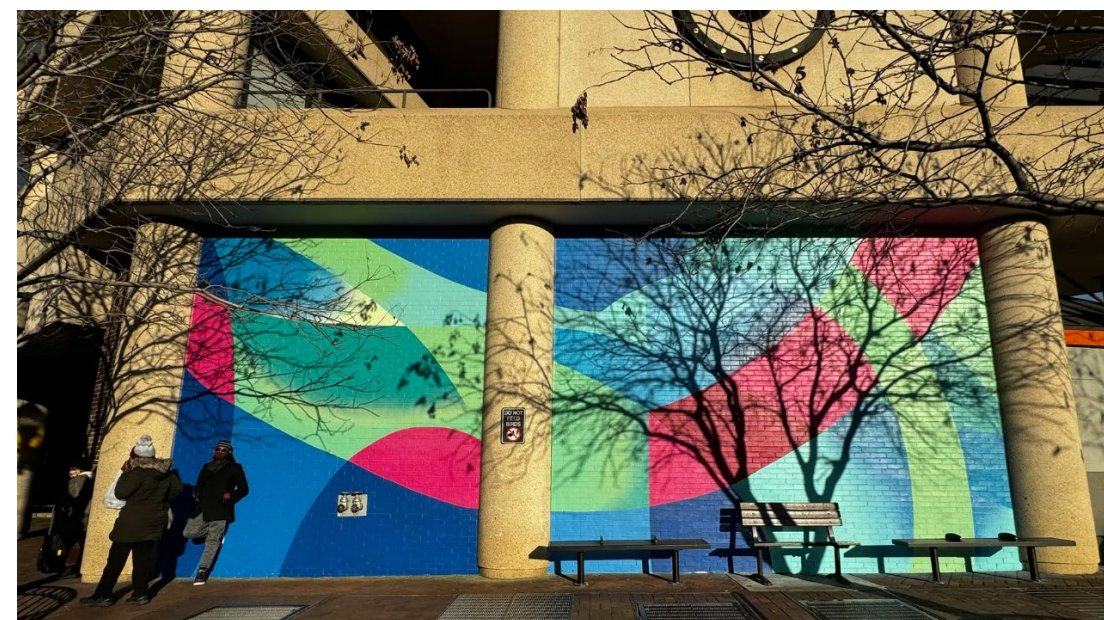
The Friendship Heights Alliance has worked with local artist and property owners to add several new murals



“Splitting Light” at 5255 Western Avenue NW



EPepco Wall, 5210 Wisconsin Ave. NW



Two Facades at 2 Wisconsin Circle






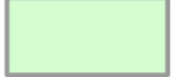

Dog Coop, 5205 Wisconsin Ave. NW

Images courtesy of the
Friendship Heights Alliance

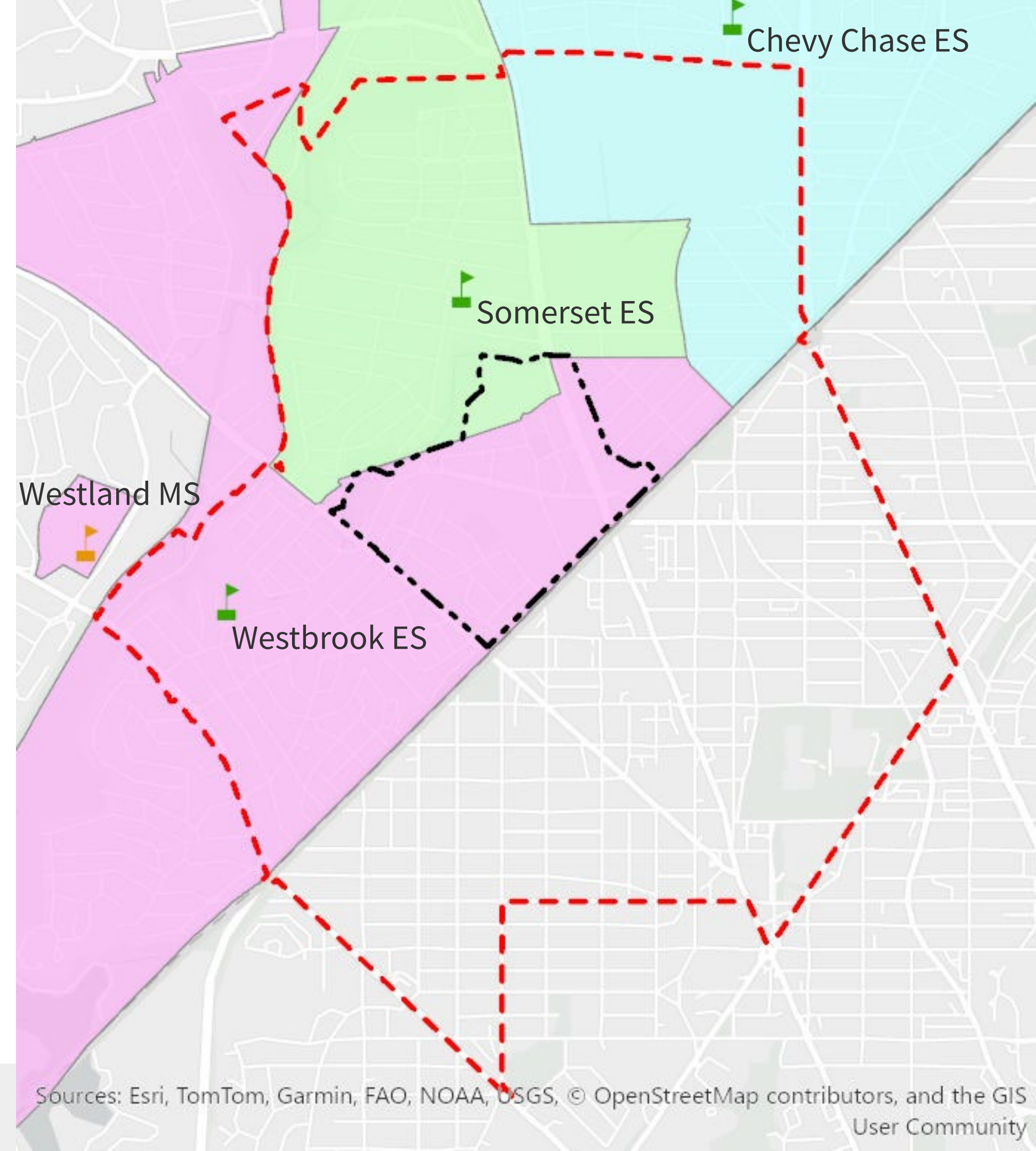


SCHOOLS

School Feeder Pattern

-  Plan Area Boundary
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Rosemary Hills/Chevy Chase ES – Silver Creek MS* – BCC HS*
-  Somerset ES – Westland MS* – BCC HS*
-  Westbrook ES – Westland MS* – BCC HS*

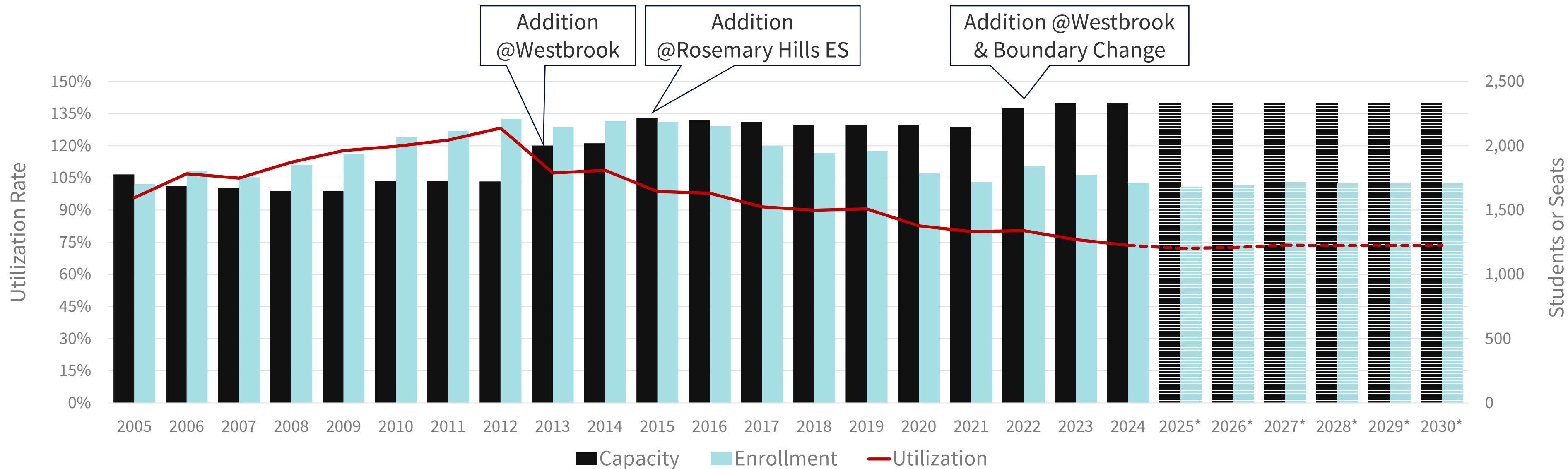
* The middle school and high school service area boundaries are currently under review and subject to change for the reopening of Charles Woodward High School in 2027.



Elementary Schools Enrollment Trend

Westbrook ES, Somerset ES, Rosemary Hills/Chevy Chase ES

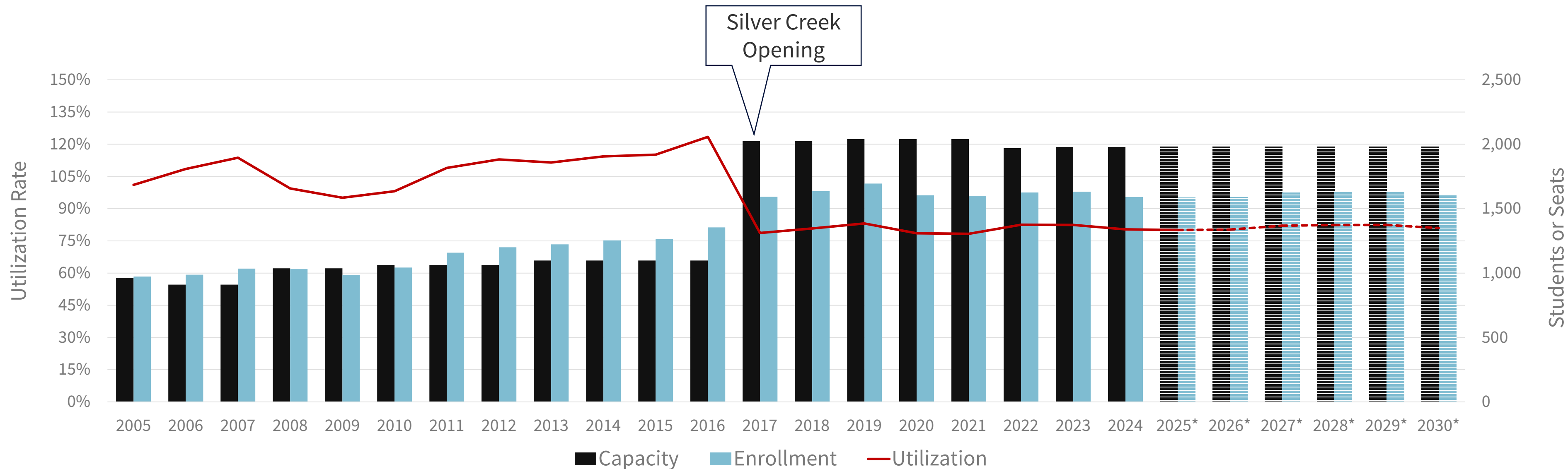
- Enrollment peaked/plateaued between 2012-2015 and has been declining since.
- Over 600 surplus seats projected in 2030.



Middle Schools Enrollment Trend

Westland MS, Silver Creek MS

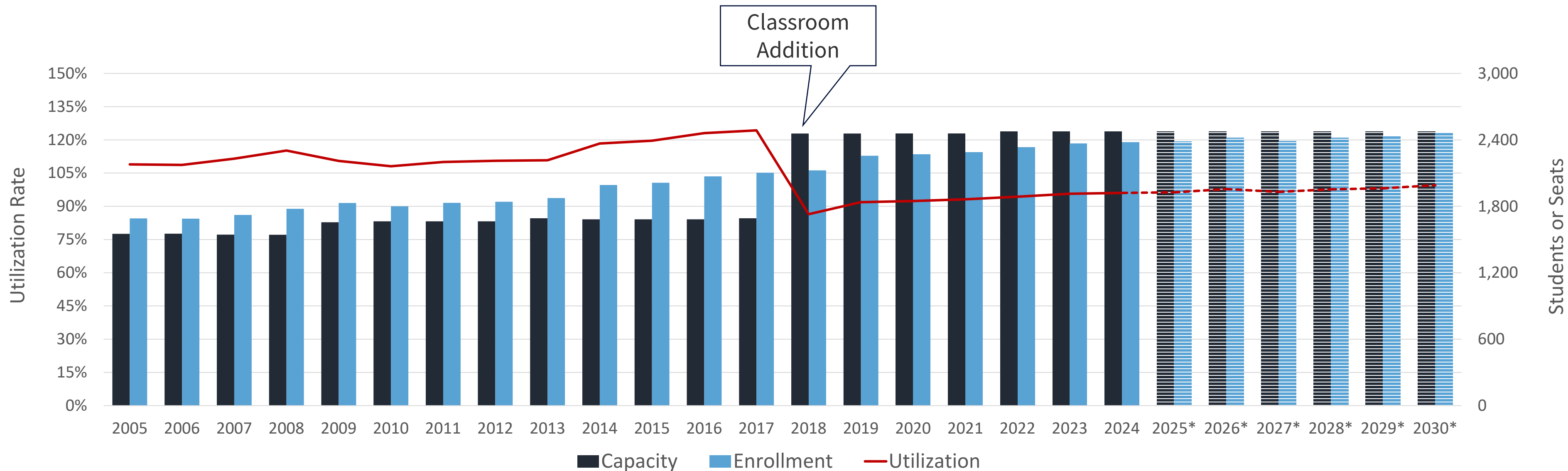
- Enrollment peaked in 2019 and declined since.
- 350+ surplus seats projected in 2030.



High School Enrollment Trend

Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS

- Enrollment has started plateauing around 2023.



BOE Approved Boundary Study Scope

Woodward HS Reopening, 2027

- Bethesda – Chevy Chase HS
 - Montgomery Blair HS
 - Albert Einstein HS
 - Walter Johnson HS
 - John F. Kennedy HS
 - Northwood HS
 - Wheaton HS
 - Walt Whitman HS
- (+ all feeder middle schools)

❖ 2030 projection

- HS: more than 750 surplus seats
- MS: more than 1,300 surplus seats



Student Generation Rate Analysis

- Single family units have relatively less public school students partially due to a smaller percentage having turned over in the past 15 years.
- Multi-family units in Plan Area have significantly less public school students than other similar areas, regardless of the year the structure was built.
- Number of students living in plan area increased slightly overall, but declined at elementary school level.

	Friendship Heights Sector Plan		Montgomery County
	Plan Area	Study Area	
All Single-Family Units	0.354	0.321	0.427 (Turnover)
% of SF units sold in last 15 years	39%	41%	43%
Multi-Family High-Rise Units Built Since 1990	0.042	(same as Plan Area)	0.076 (Infill)
All MFH Units	0.072	(same as Plan Area)	0.137

Data source: 2024-2025 student enrollment, MCPS Division of Capital Planning; 2024 residential parcel data, Montgomery Planning



HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic Resources

- Currently no buildings or sites on the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* or included in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.
- No resources listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*.
- The 1998 Plan envisioned the redevelopment of the GEICO parcel, and the Planning Board approved a plan that included demolition of the parcel.

Montgomery County Burial Sites Inventory

- Shoemaker (Isaac) Family Cemetery
- Established in 1853
- On Murray Road in Brookdale



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Burial Sites of Montgomery County

Planning Web Link

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Zoom to

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Burial Sites Inventory: Shoemaker (Isaac) Family Cemetery

Name	Shoemaker (Isaac) Family Cemetery
Earliest Burial	1,853.00
Latest Burial	
Location Confirmed	Yes
GIS Source	2006 inventory
GIS Confidence	Known
Number of Burials	approx 5
Source Data Date	10/15/18
Source Data Datum	
Revision Date	12/14/2018, 7:00 PM
Boundary Type	Point
Extant	Yes
Horizontal Accuracy	
Originator	Montgomery Preservation, Inc.
Sensitive Location	NO
Restrictions	
Maximum Public Display Scale	0
Sensitivity Contacts	

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Find address or place

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WESTPORT RD

MURRAY RD

MERVALE RD

HARRISON ST

RIVER RD

5298

4694

4698

5208

4608

299 ft

Reynolds House

- Edwin and Julia Reynolds
House – 5230 Willard Avenue
- Built in 1899
- Reynolds was an engineer
with the US Patent Office



Photo credit: Friends of Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park

Reynolds House

- Parks obtained the property in order to expand Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park in the mid 1990s. At the time the property was not considered historic.
- During a comprehensive review of Parks properties in 2009, a consultant found that the house met several criteria for historic designation.
- The community has since expressed concern over the potential future demolition of the house
- The house has not yet been formally evaluated by Planning staff



Photo credit: Friends of Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park



NEXT STEPS

Next Steps

- Visioning to begin in June:
 - ★ June 11: in-person workshop at Wisconsin Place Rec Center
 - ★ June 24: virtual workshop
- Survey and focus groups to come over the summer
- Additional workshop(s) in September

