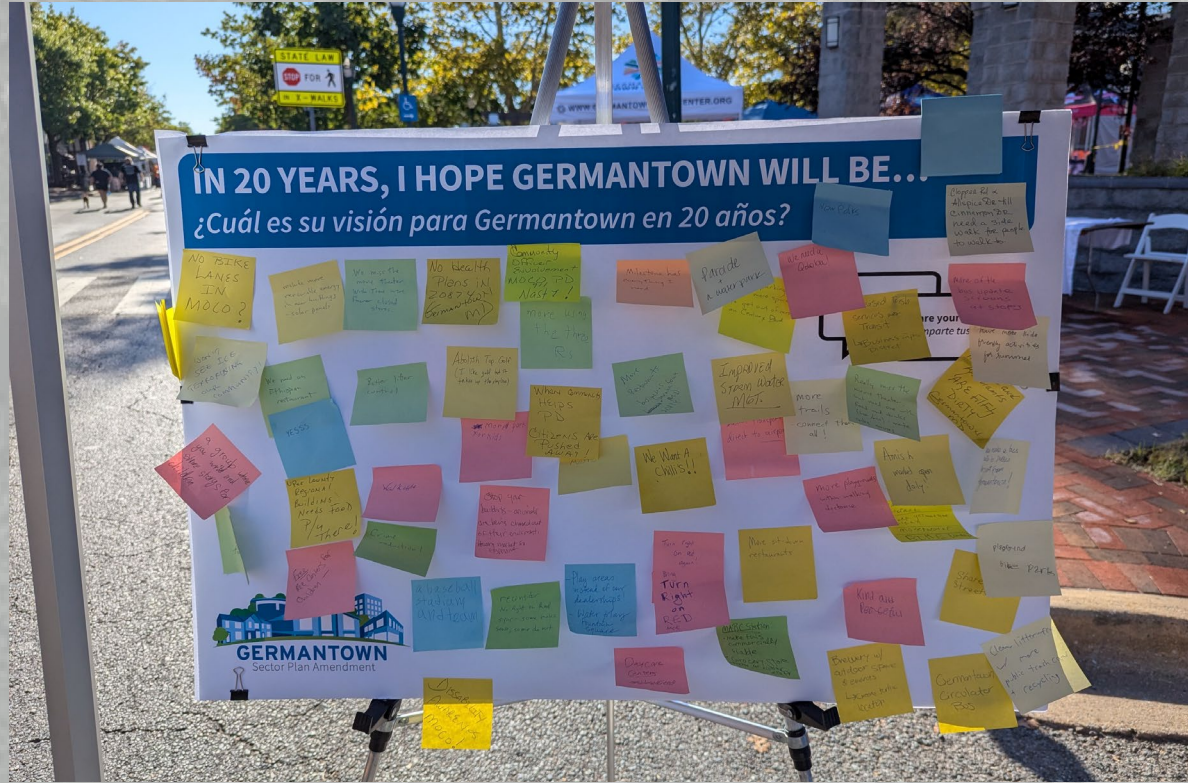




Montgomery Planning Upcounty Division

11/13/2025
Agenda Item 10

Germantown Sector Plan Amendment

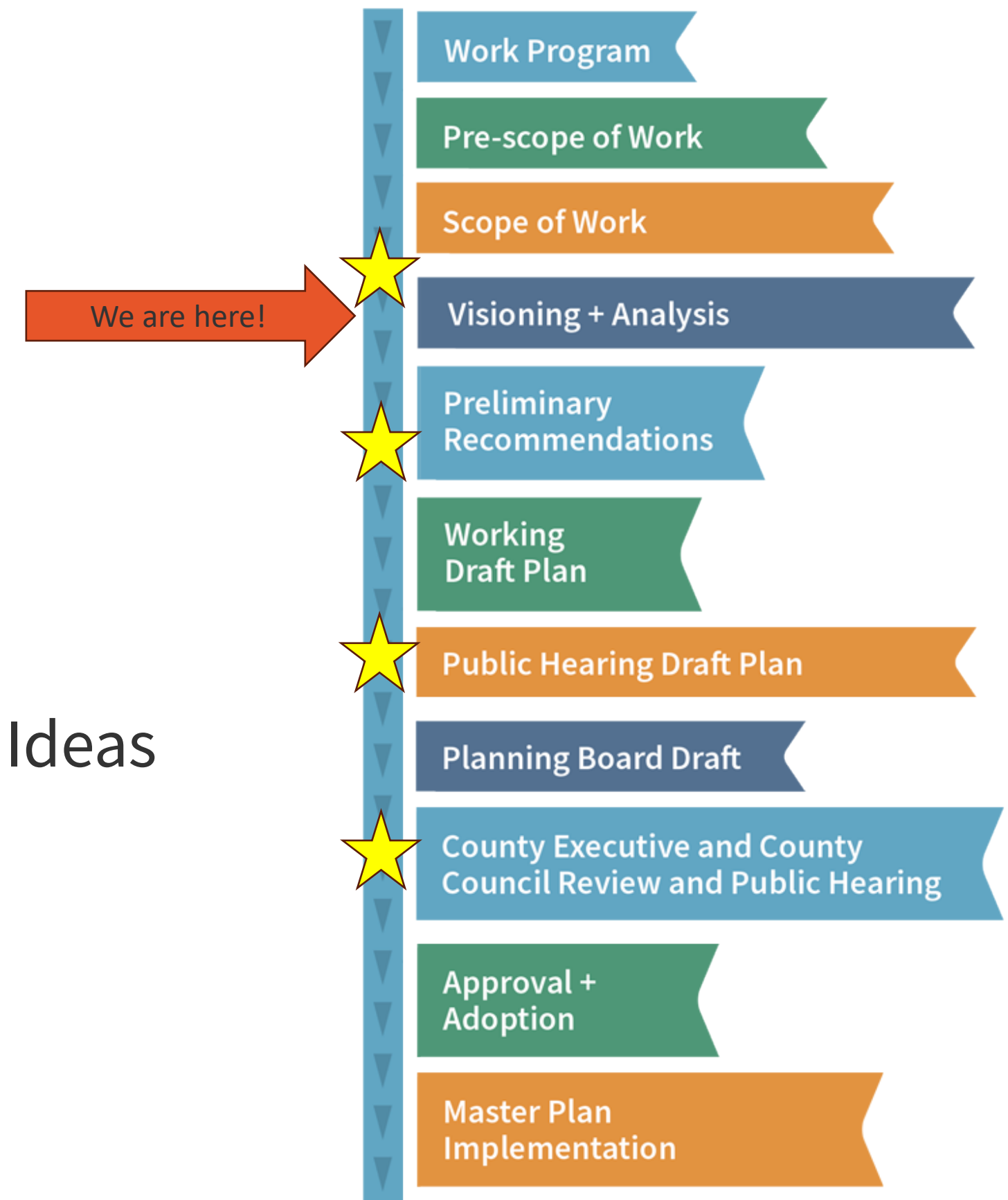
Community Engagement Report





Plan Timeline

- **Summer/Fall 2025**
Community Engagement, Analysis, and Emerging Ideas
- **Winter 2026**
Preliminary Recommendations
- **Spring/Summer 2026**
Working Draft
Public Hearing



★ Community engagement opportunities

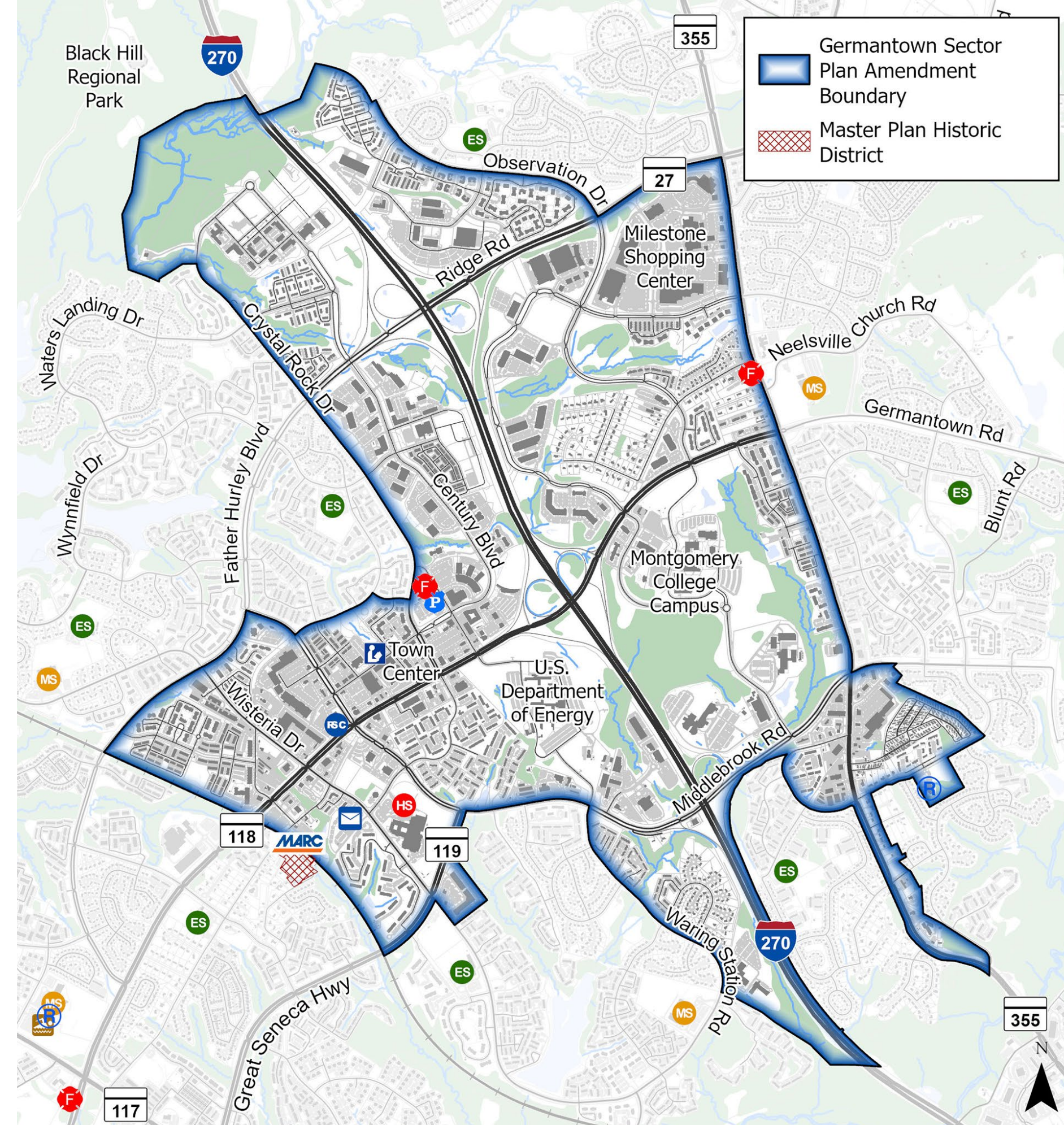
Agenda

1. Plan Area
2. Events and Participation
3. Demographics
4. Feedback
5. Findings

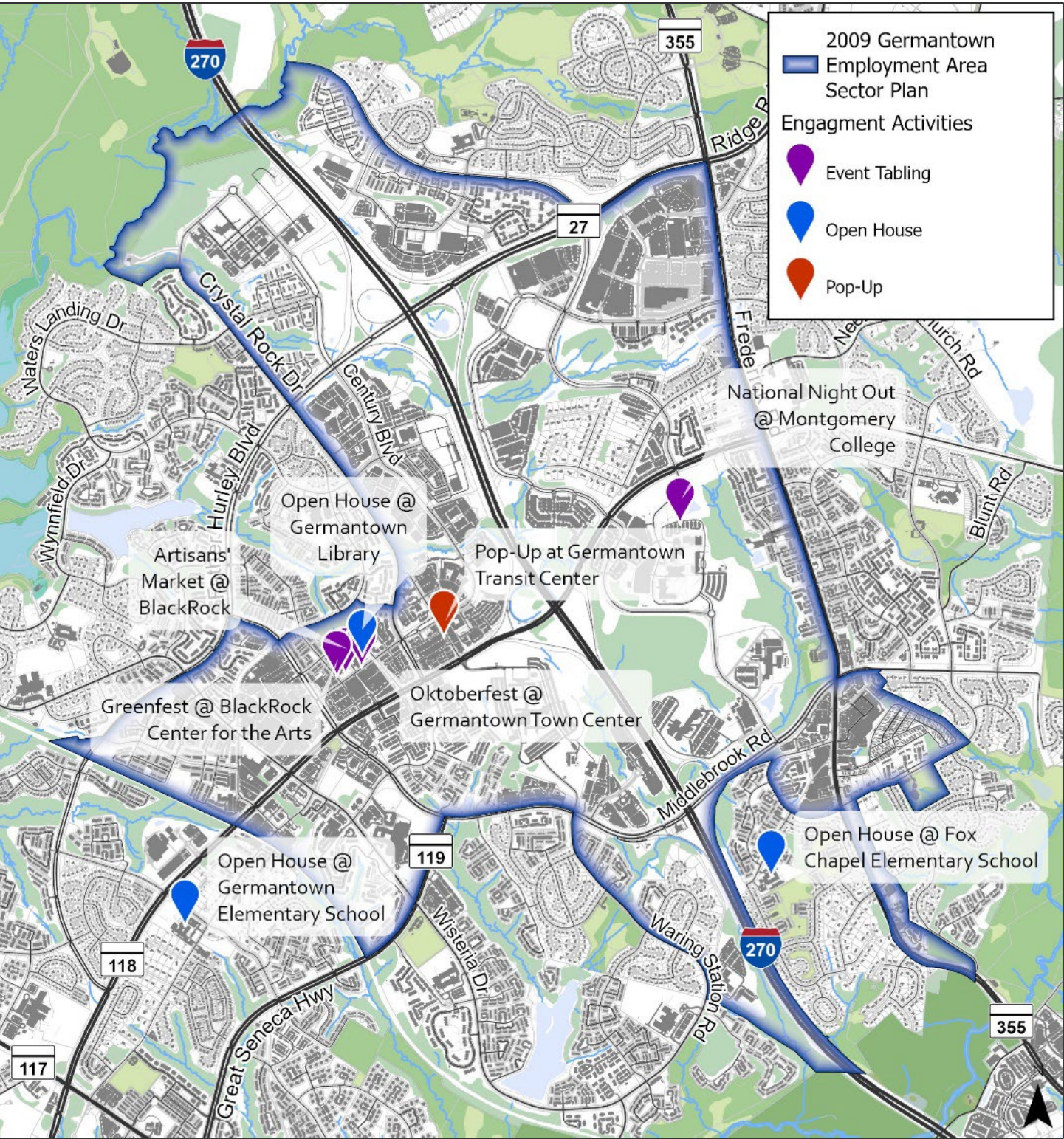


Plan Area

- Central portion of larger Germantown area
- Shopping centers
- Office parks
- Department of Energy
- Montgomery College



Community Outreach Events: 2024 Study



Date	Activity or Event
April 15, 2024	Presented at Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) meeting
April 27, 2024	Community Event at Montgomery County GreenFest at Blackrock Center for the Arts
May 8, 2024	Pop-Up at Germantown Transit Center
May 11, 2024	Pop-Up at BlackRock Artisan's Market
May 15, 2024	Community Open House Kick-Off Meeting at Germantown Library
June 21, 2024	Flyer Distribution at area businesses
June 24, 2024	Community Open House #2 at Germantown Elementary School
June 26, 2024	Community Open House #3 at Fox Chapel Elementary School
August 6, 2024	Community Event at National Night Out
October 5, 2024	Community Event at Germantown Oktoberfest
March-July 2024	Online questionnaire

Engagement Partner: Brick & Story

- Build on previously completed outreach (surveys, in-person events)
- Help us reach underrepresented groups
- Multilingual outreach
- Identification of community organizations
- A mix of approaches

Targeted Demographic Groups

Pop-Ups

- *Food and Diaper Distributions* - Spanish speakers, renters, lower-income individuals, parents
- *Mobile Market* – Spanish speakers, renters, lower-income individuals
- *Transit Center* - commuters
- *End of year block party* - parents, Non-English speakers

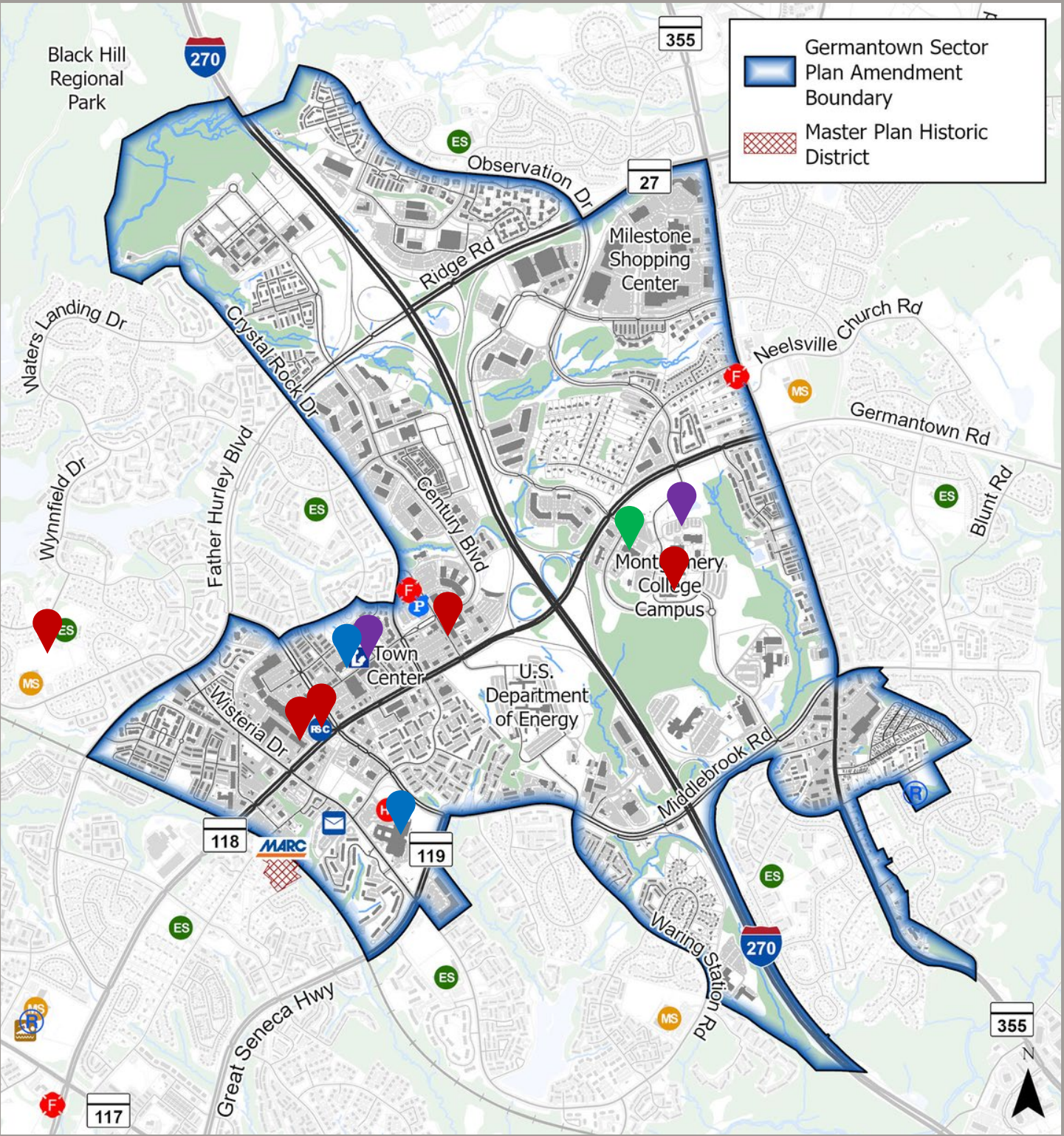
Workshops

- *General Population with broad outreach*
- Attendees were mostly homeowners, with diverse racial and ethnic representation and a variety of languages spoken at home, including Chinese, French, Spanish, Somali, and Bengali

E-Letters, Mailers, Newsletters

- Faith-Based Community
- PTAs
- Small Businesses
- Renters
- HOAs
- Public Agencies
- Community-Based Organizations

Community Outreach Events: 2025 GSPA



Date	Activity or Event
May 7, 2025	Mini-Focus Group at Montgomery College 📍
May 12, 2025	Pop-Up at Upcounty Hub food distribution 📍
May 15, 2025	Pop-Up at Germantown Transit Center 📍
June 4, 2025	Pop-Up at Montgomery College Mobile Market 📍
June 8, 2025	Pop-Up at Upcounty Hub food distribution 📍
June 12, 2025	Pop-Up at Lake Seneca Elementary School's end-of-year block party 📍
June 16, 2025	Workshop at Germantown Library 📍
June 25, 2025	Workshop at Seneca Valley High School 📍
August 5, 2025	Community Event at National Night Out 📍
October 4, 2025	Community Event at Germantown Oktoberfest 📍
May-June 2025	Online questionnaire

GSPA Engagement by the Numbers

333 Questionnaire Responses

3200 Mailers sent to Renters

67 Attendees at 2 Community Workshops

366 E-Letter Recipients

230 People reached at 5 Pop-up Events

170 Community Stakeholders contacted

Pop-Ups: Spring/Summer 2025

- Allowed us to meet community members where they are (where they work, commute, play, and study)
- Provided an opportunity to people who might never attend a planning meeting to share their priorities
- We reached about 230 people at these pop-up events, most of whom filled out our questionnaire or provided comments on interactive pop-up boards



Workshops: June 2025

- Provide more structured opportunities to elicit feedback and engage with Planning staff
- Workshops were attended by 67 participants in total
- Attendees engaged with interactive boards focused on their future vision for Germantown, housing, parks/places, getting around Germantown, and the environment



Questionnaire: May/June 2025

- Refinement of questionnaire from Study
- Distributed via
 - Community events
 - Online and paper formats
 - Germantown eLetter
 - Email to 170 community groups and stakeholders
 - Cross-promotion from GGCC, Upcounty RSC, Councilmember Balcombe's office, BlackRock Center for the Arts
 - 3200 postcard mailing to renters
- 333 respondents

 **Germantown Sector Plan Amendment**
Community Visioning Questionnaire

Montgomery Planning

1. What should Germantown prioritize as the area grows? (choose up to 3)

- ☐ Maintaining and celebrating a multicultural identity
- ☐ Improving safety/decreasing crime
- ☐ Providing better access to public transportation
- ☐ Improving pedestrian safety and access
- ☐ Expanding bicycle facilities (bike lanes, bike parking, bike trails, etc.)
- ☐ Increasing options for arts, entertainment, and leisure for all ages
- ☐ Enhancing community resources such as libraries, parks, and recreational facilities
- ☐ Providing more housing options for people with a range of incomes and family types and sizes
- ☐ Encouraging economic growth through more vibrant commercial areas

2. Do you currently live in Germantown?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. How long have you lived, worked, or spent time in Germantown?

☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1 to 5 years
☐ 6 to 10 years
☐ 11 to 15 years
☐ 16 to 20 years
☐ More than 20 years
☐ I do not live, work, or spend time in Germantown

4. If you live in Germantown, what neighborhood or village do you live in? (Example: Waters Landing, Churchill Village, Town Center, etc.)

5. If you live in Germantown, what do you like about your neighborhood/village? (choose up to 3)

- ☐ Sense of community
- ☐ Unique sense of character
- ☐ Easy to walk around
- ☐ Access to parks and green spaces
- ☐ Close to amenities, shopping, and services
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Access to public transportation
- ☐ Racial and/or ethnic diversity of residents
- ☐ Residents with a range of incomes
- ☐ Quality of schools
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ I don't live in Germantown

6. What is your connection to the Germantown Sector Plan Area specifically (see map)? (select all that apply)

- ☐ I live in or near the plan area
- ☐ I work in the plan area
- ☐ I attend school/take classes in the plan area
- ☐ I own a business in the plan area
- ☐ I own commercial property in the plan area
- ☐ I shop or socialize in the plan area
- ☐ I travel through the plan area
- ☐ I do not regularly spend time in the plan area

7. What buildings, parks, and places are important to you and your community? (Example: specific locations where you gather, where important events have taken place, or places that contribute to the character of your community.)

8. What parks and community resources do you regularly visit? (select all that apply)

- ☐ BlackRock Center for the Arts
- ☐ Germantown Public Library
- ☐ Germantown Community Recreation Center
- ☐ Plumgar Local Park and Plum Gar Community Center
- ☐ Germantown Town Center Urban Park
- ☐ Germantown Square Urban Park
- ☐ Black Hill Regional Park
- ☐ South Germantown Recreational Park
- ☐ Maryland SoccerPlex
- ☐ Other _____

9. What are the barriers, if any, that prevent you from visiting the places listed above more often? (select all that apply)

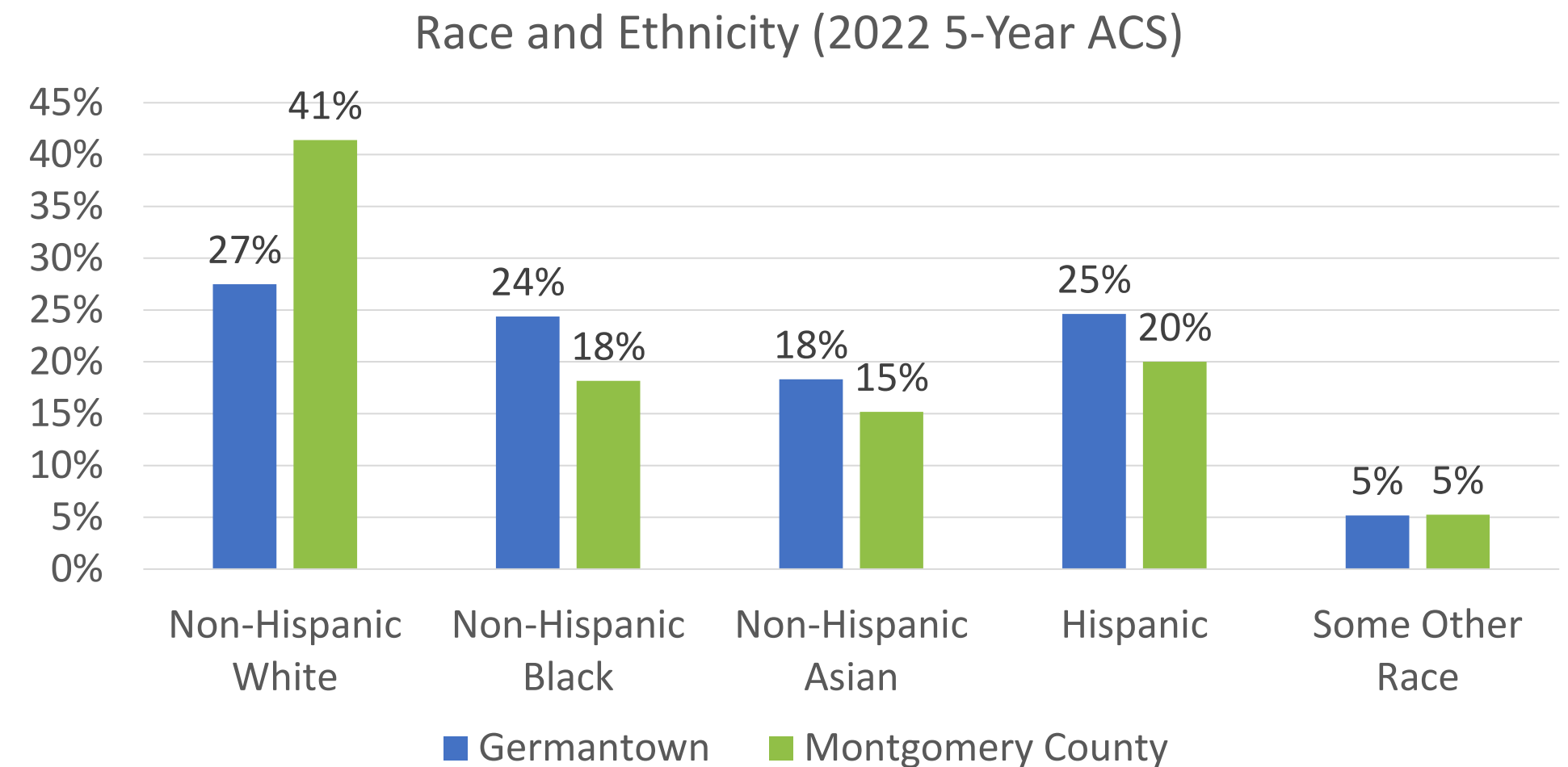
- ☐ They are difficult to get to
- ☐ They don't offer the programs, activities, or amenities I'd like to use
- ☐ I don't feel welcome
- ☐ I am not aware of them
- ☐ I have not experienced any barriers to visiting those places
- ☐ Other _____



Participants

Race and Ethnicity

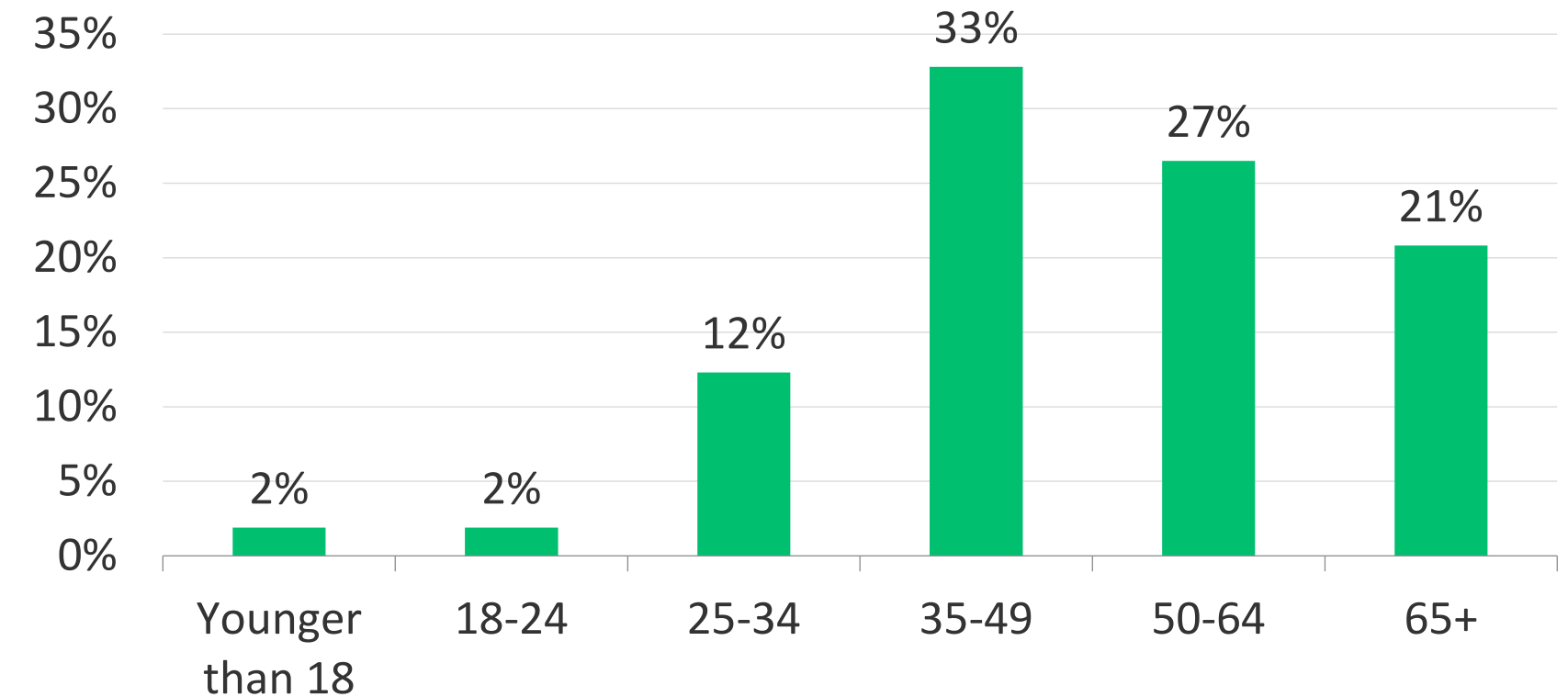
- Study area population is very diverse, with about a quarter of the population falling into the racial/ethnic categories of Black, Asian, White, or Hispanic
- Pop-ups and community events reached many underrepresented groups



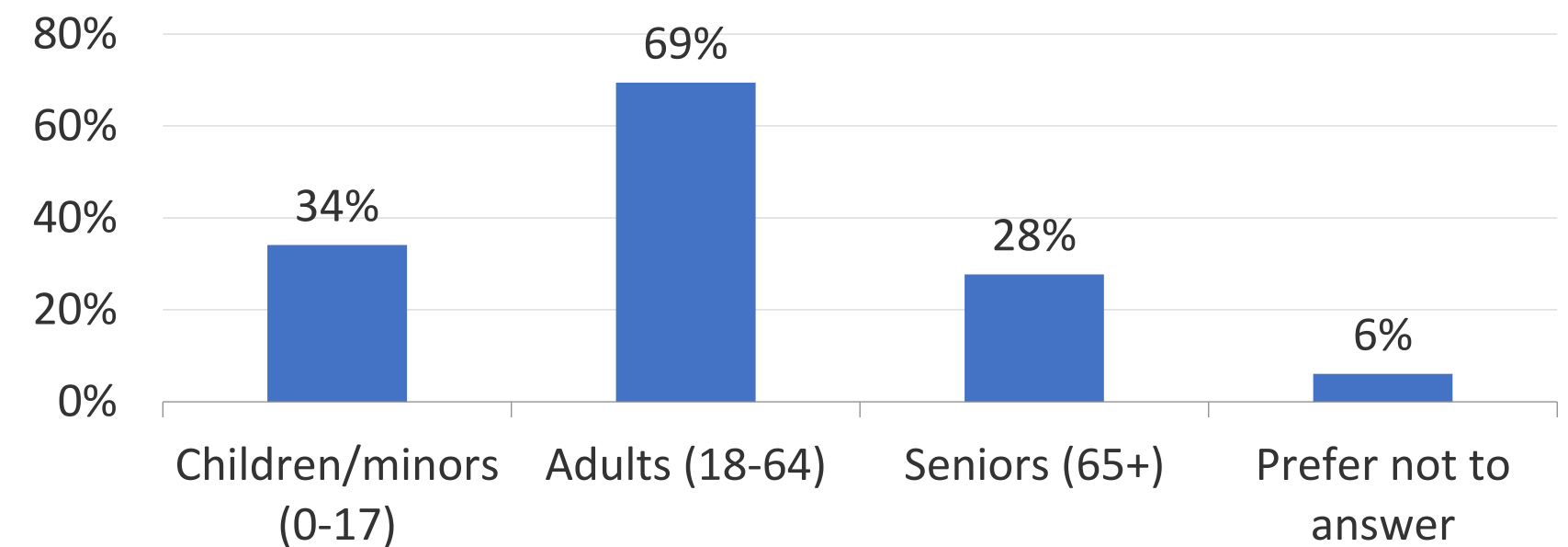
Age of Respondents

- Questionnaire respondents are generally representative of the age breakdown in Germantown for adults
- 34% of new questionnaire respondents have children living at home
- Most pop-up participants were parents of young children

2025 Plan Amendment Questionnaire Age



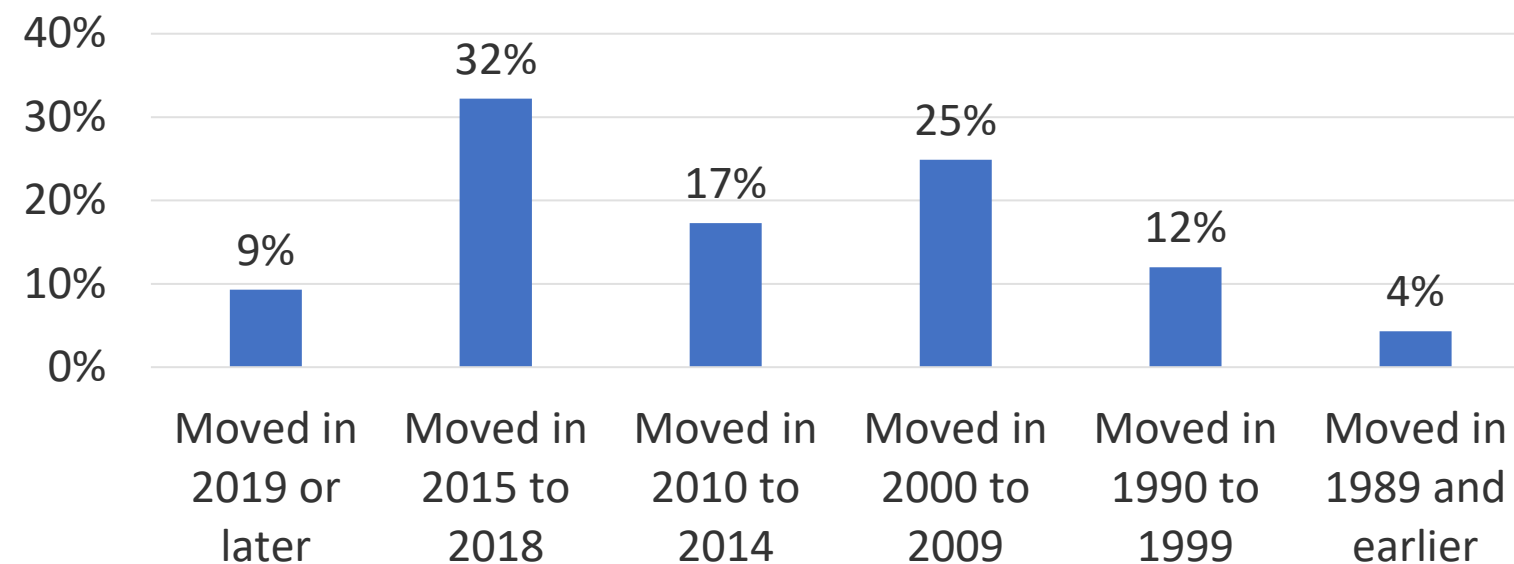
Which of the following live in your household? (select all that apply)



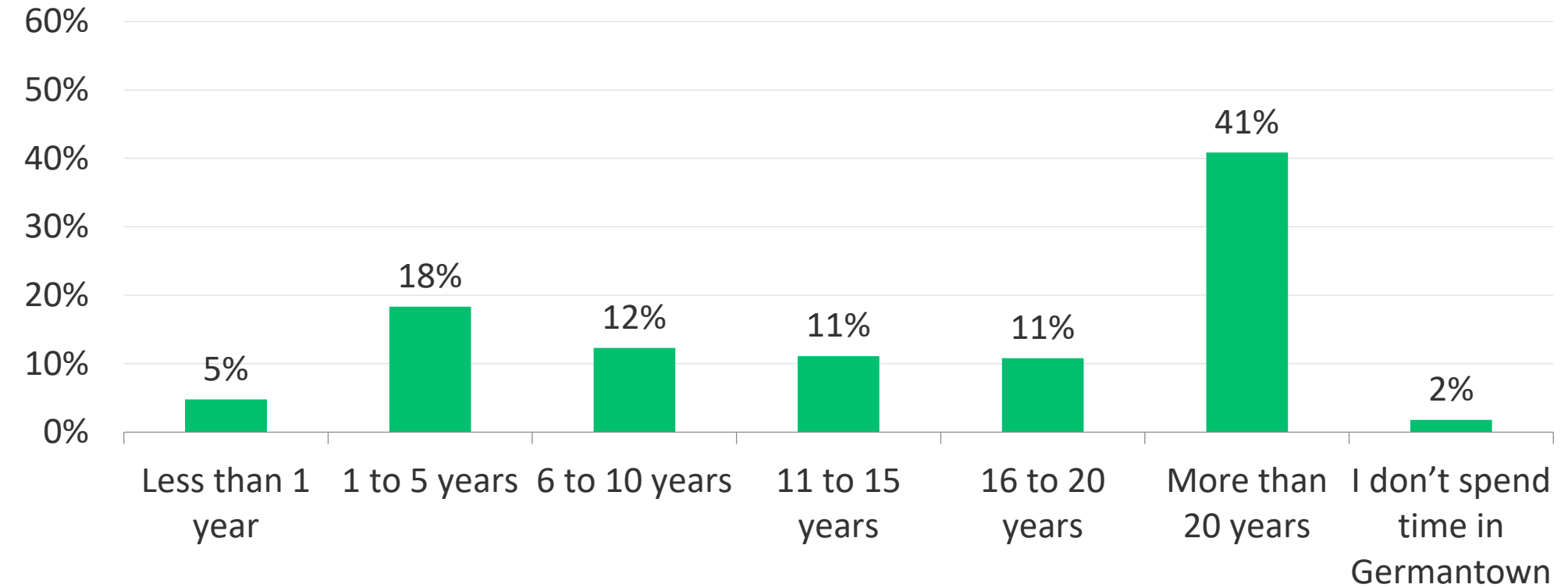
How Long in Germantown?

- Most of the people we engaged with have lived, worked, or spent longer than 16 years in Germantown
- Slightly higher than Census figures

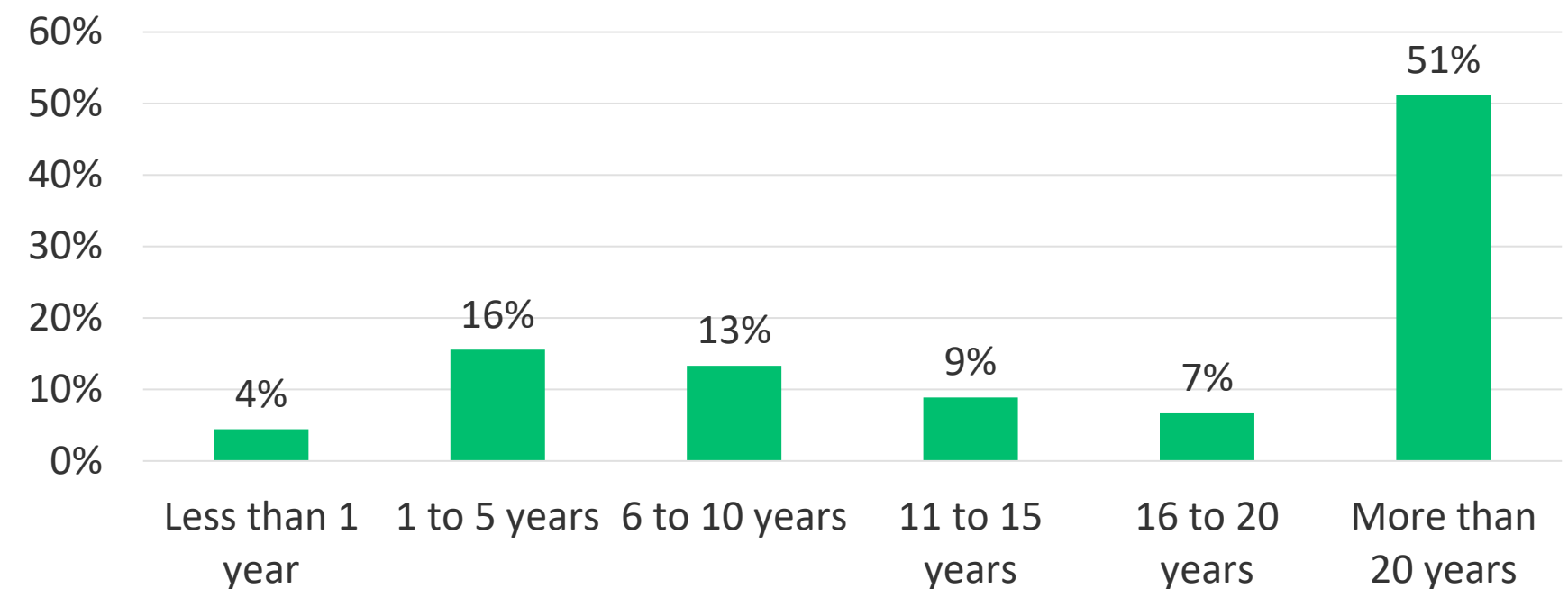
Year householder moved into unit in Germantown
CDP (2021 5-Year ACS)



Time in Germantown (from 333 questionnaire responses)

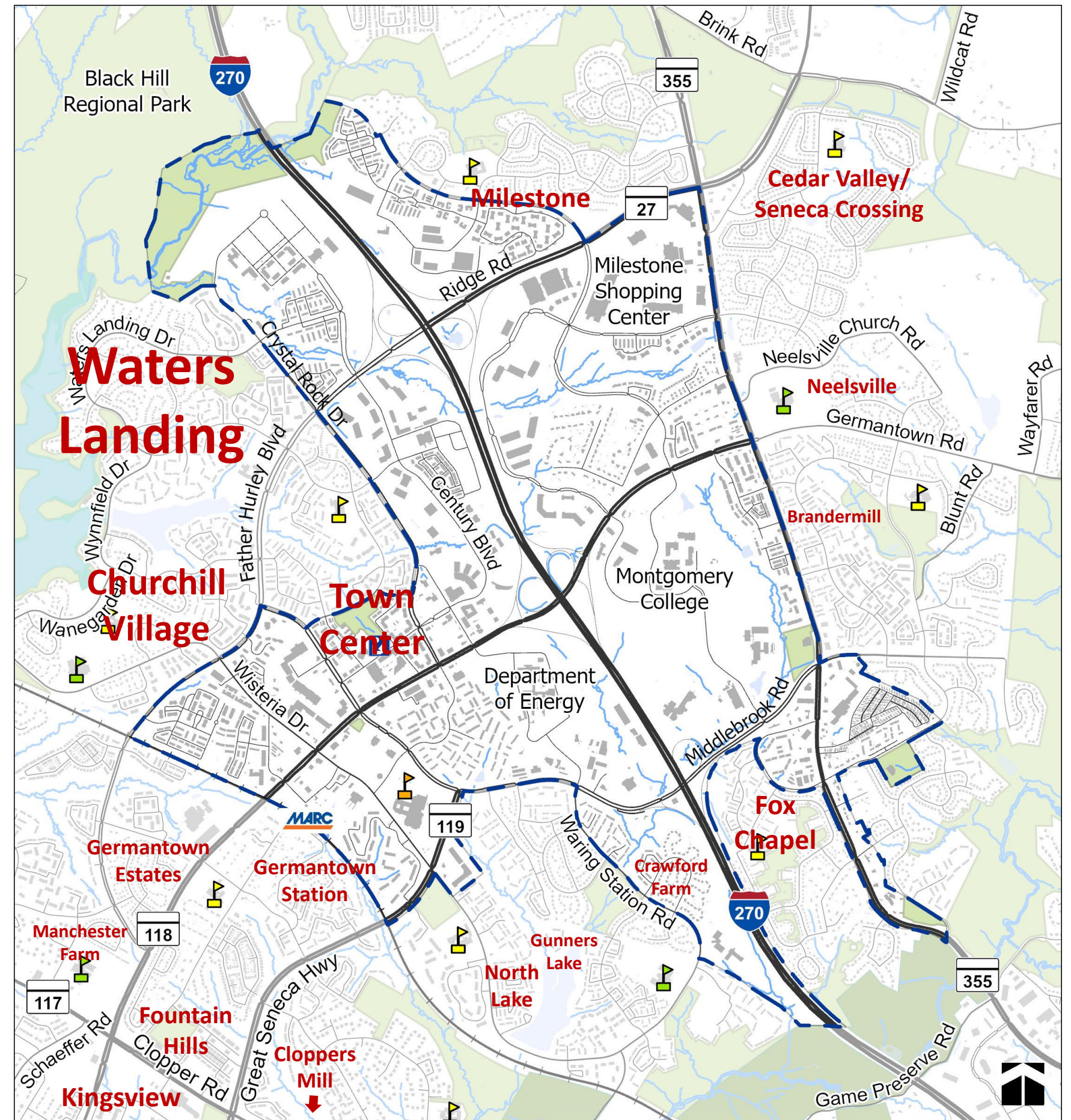


Time in Germantown (from 45 workshop exit surveys)



Neighborhoods

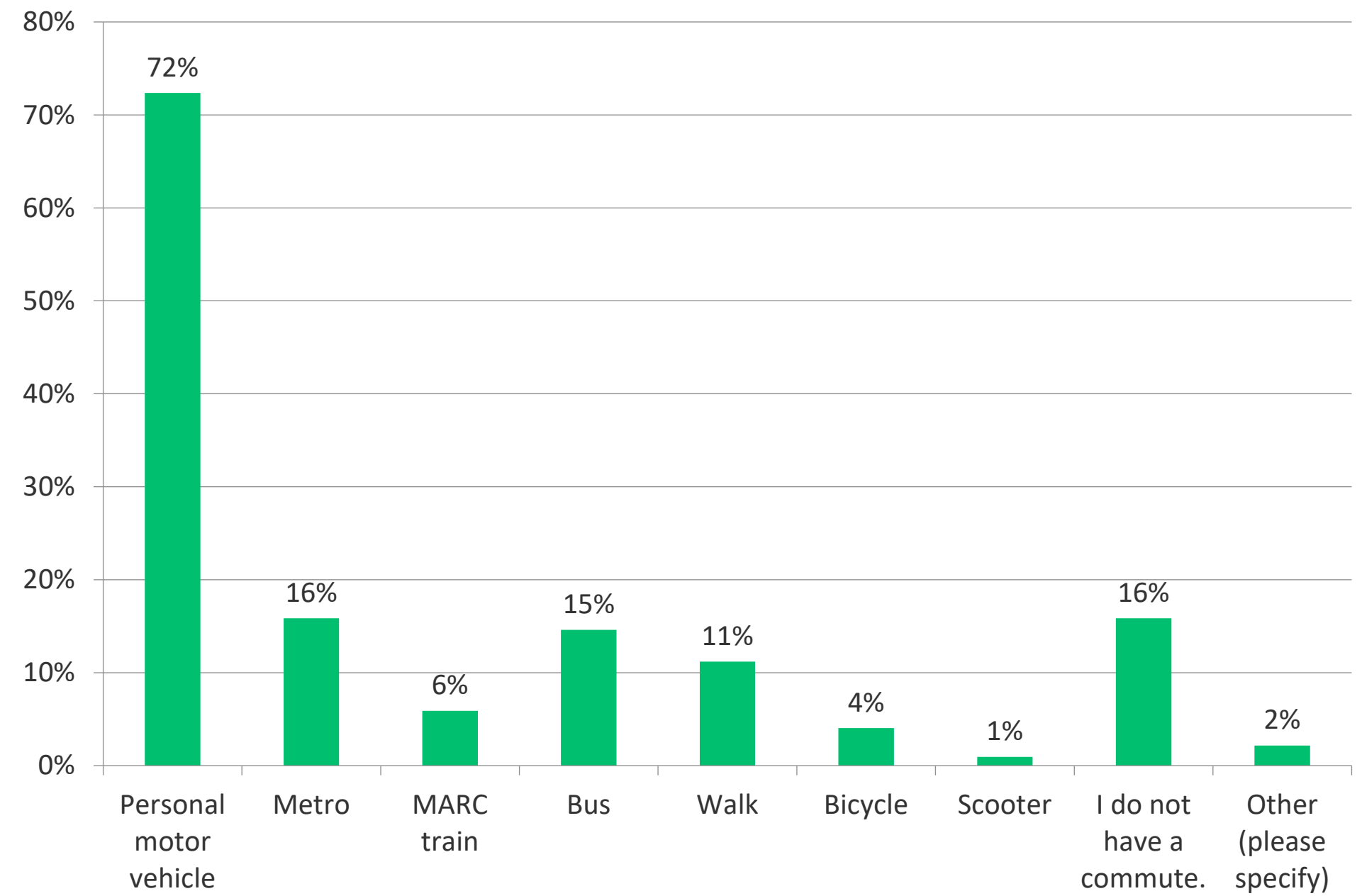
- Questionnaire respondents listed living in **66** neighborhoods
- Neighborhoods with three or more responses shown on map (larger font = more responses)



Commuting

- Most people commute via personal motor vehicle
- 16% do not have a commute
- Between 10 and 15% of respondents ride Metro, take the bus, or walk as a part of their commute
- The most common commutes are along the I-270 corridor, including to Clarksburg, Gaithersburg, Rockville (27%), and within Germantown (24.7%)

What forms of transportation does your commute include?
(select all that apply)



Respondents could select multiple answers, so totals do not add to 100%.

Feedback

What Makes Germantown Special?

- **Diversity and community spirit** are highly valued, with many praising the area's **cultural richness and inclusivity**
- Access to **green space, arts, and amenities** like BlackRock Center, parks, and shopping areas contribute to Germantown's appeal
- **Proximity and convenience**—to DC, Baltimore, schools, and services—make it a well-connected and livable place



From 49 workshop comments

Important Places

The most important places to questionnaire respondents:

- Parks [any mention] (102)
- Library (83)
- BlackRock Center for the Arts (60)
- Black Hill Regional Park (57)
- Town Center/Century Boulevard (43)

Other important places:

- Stores/shopping [any mention] (40)
- Milestone (25)
- Montgomery College (20)
- SoccerPlex (19)
- Trails/paths/walking (17)



From 240 questionnaire responses

Preserve | Enhance | Transform

Preserve

- What should remain the same? (29 comments)

Enhance

- Where should we make improvements? (62 comments)

Transform

- What should be fully re-envisioned? (31 comments)



In 20 Years... (Part 1)

Transportation & Connectivity (40 mentions)

- Walkability/bikeability, transit (bus/Metro/airport connections), less congestion, better roads, sidewalks, better traffic control

Culture & Activities (30 mentions)

- Movie theater, festivals, events, playgrounds, rec spaces, museums, arts

Town Center & Mixed Use (26 mentions)

- A cohesive, inviting, and vibrant town center with restaurants, markets, and mixed-use development

Safety & Cleanliness (20 mentions)

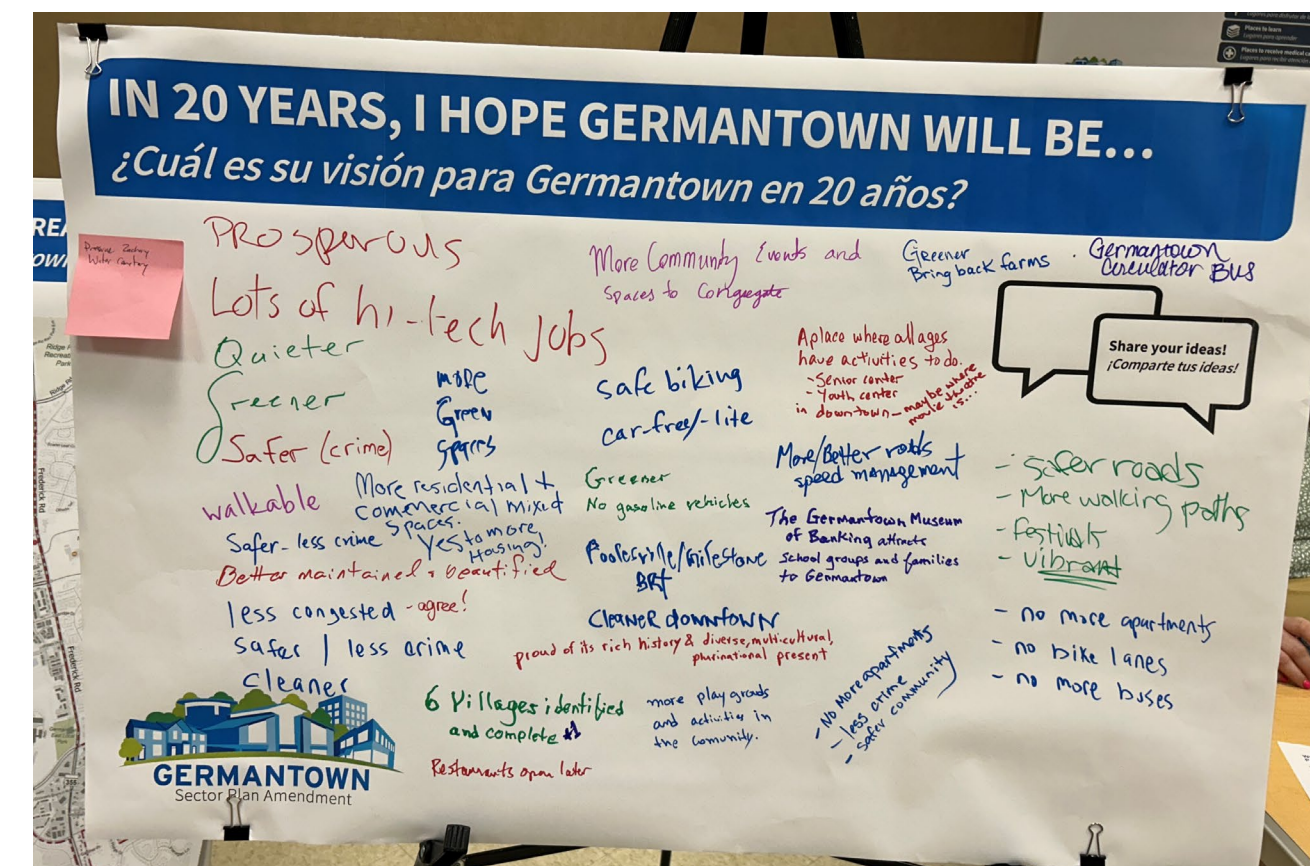
- Crime reduction, improved public safety, better litter control, cleaner public spaces

Less congestion
and better
connectivity and
access to places

Really miss the
movie theater but
we need one with
food and drinks

A cohesive
and inviting
town center

Clean litter free
/ More public
trash cans and
recycling



From 135 comments.

In 20 Years... (Part 2)

Housing & Community (17 mentions)

- Affordable/mixed housing, senior living, family-oriented neighborhoods, family-centered services, community identity

Quality of Life (15 mentions)

- Peaceful/quiet atmosphere and overall livability sentiments

Green & Sustainable (14 mention)

- More green spaces, renewable energy, recycling, and environmental sustainability

Jobs & Economy (8 mentions)

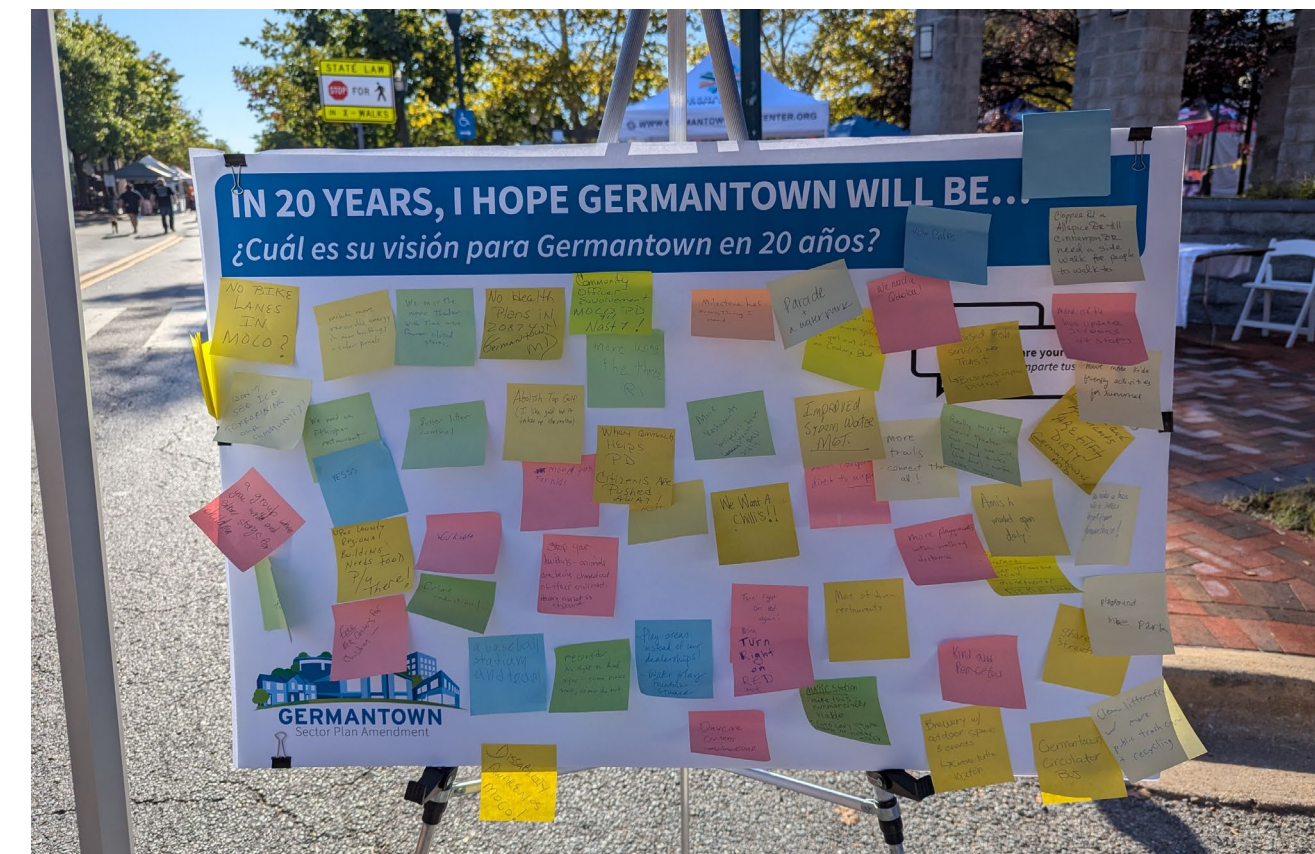
- High-paying jobs, tech employment, and local economic development

More affordable and mixed housing including more senior living homes

Kind and peaceful

Include more renewable energy in new buildings – solar panels

Will have high paying jobs (\$150–200k) so people won't have to commute to DC/VA for an hour each way



From 135 comments.

What Does Your Community Need to Thrive?

Top priorities:

- Public Facilities and Community Services that Meet My Needs (19 stickers)
- Safe Streets for All Users (16 stickers)
- More Shopping, Dining, and Entertainment (16 stickers)

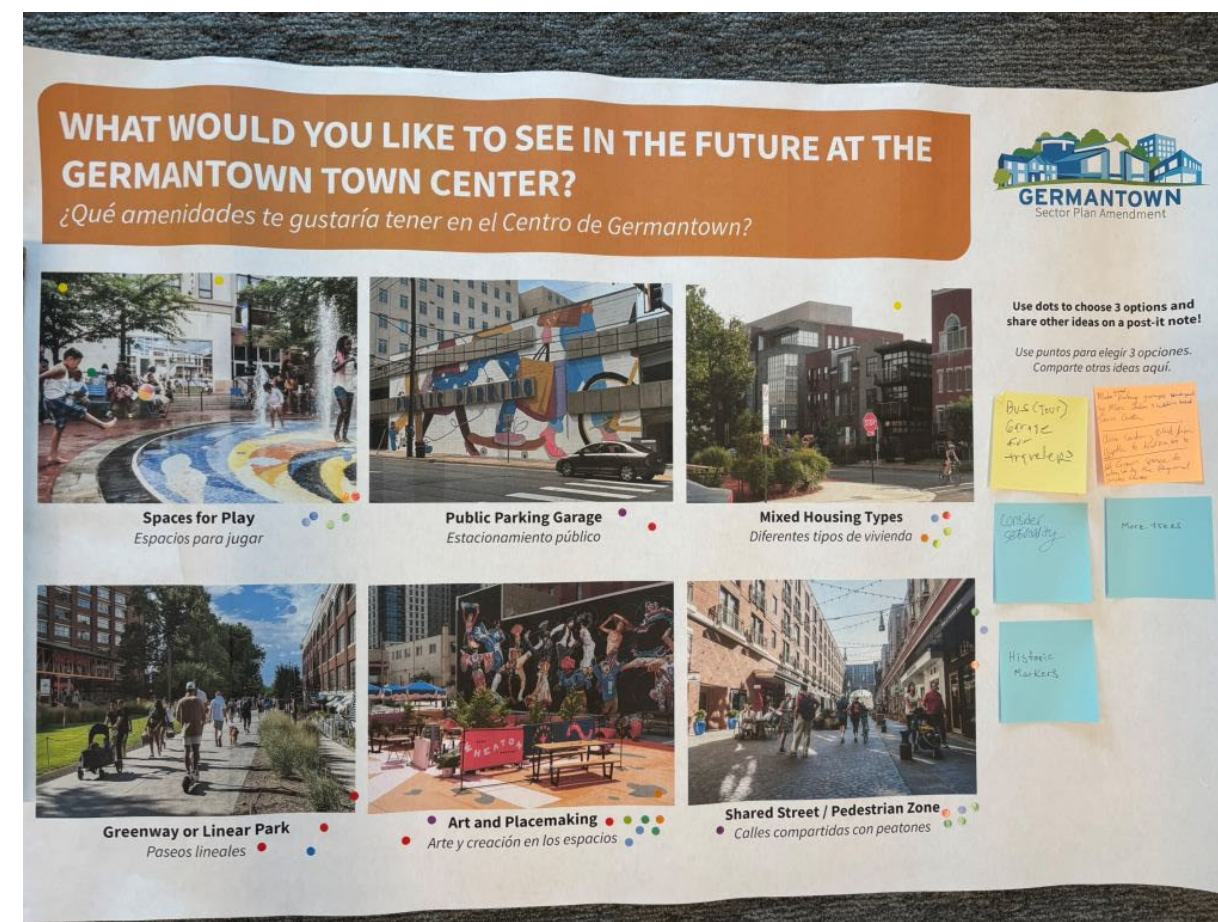


From 119 stickers and two comments from workshop attendees.

What Would You Like to See in the Town Center?

Top priorities:

- Shared Street/Pedestrian Zone (23 stickers)
- Art and Placemaking (21 stickers)
- Spaces for Play (16 stickers)
- Greenway or Linear Park (16 stickers)



More integrated urban center.
More pedestrian friendly store fronts not offices.

Close off Century Blvd. from Chipotle to & pizza to traffic

Make underground parking garages by MARC station and hidden behind town center

From 94 stickers and 12 comments from workshop attendees.

Housing Priorities

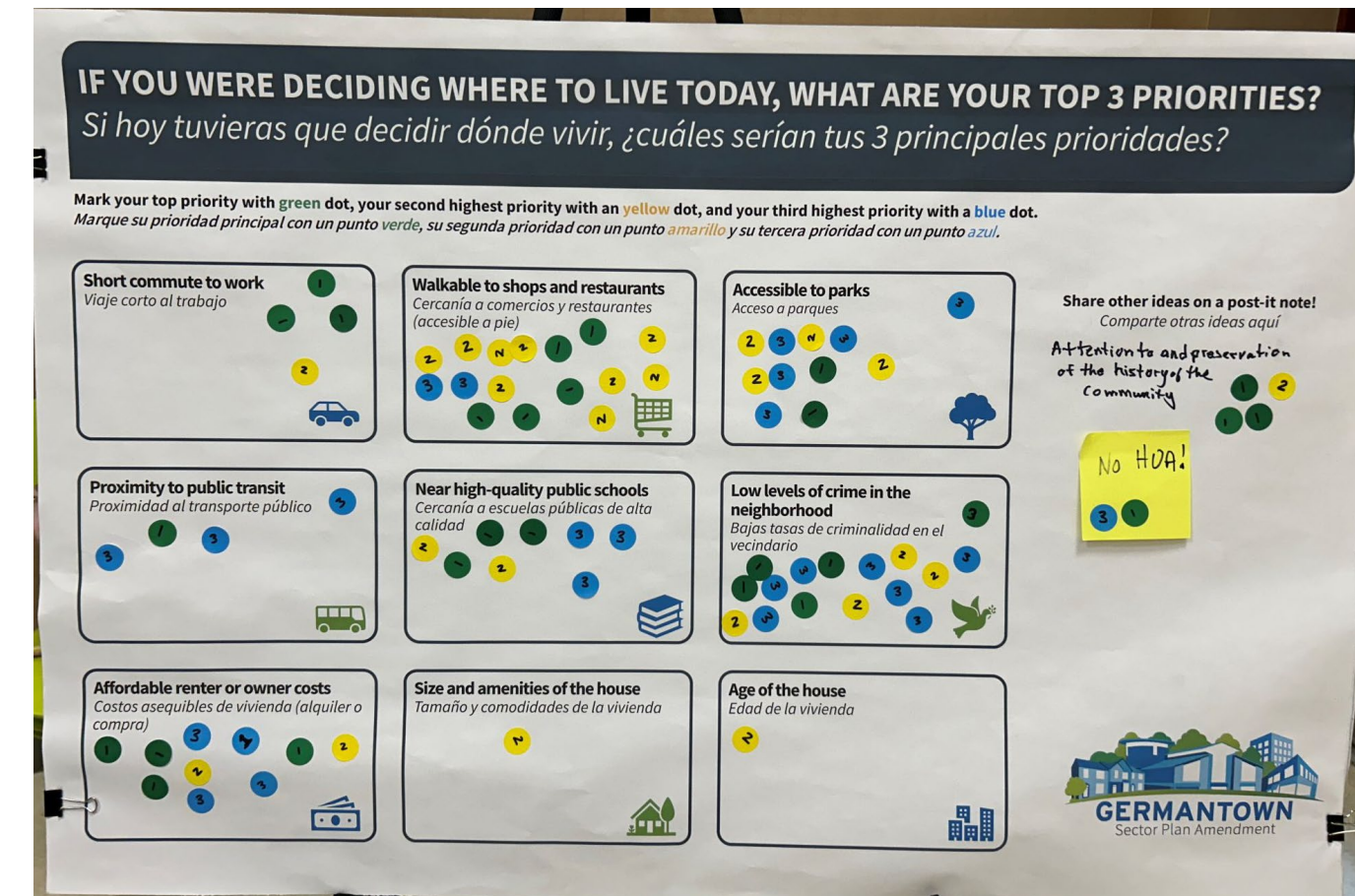
Top priorities:

- Low levels of crime in the neighborhood (57 points)
- Walkable to shops and restaurants (54 points)**
- Accessible to parks (45 points)***
- Affordable renter or owner costs (45 points)*
- Near high-quality public schools (41 points)

*greatest number of #1 stickers

**greatest number of #2 stickers by far

***greatest number of #3 stickers



Green= 1st Priority (3 points)

Yellow = 2nd Priority (2 points)

Blue = 3rd Priority (1 point)

From 149 stickers and 6 comments from workshop attendees.

Nature and Sustainability

Top priorities:

- Walking and Biking Paths (28 stickers)
- Spaces to Enjoy Nature (24 stickers)
- Community Gardens (16 stickers)
- Green Stormwater Management (16 stickers)
- Native Plants and Landscaping (15 stickers)



From 121 stickers and 11 comments from workshop attendees.

Most Loved Park and Recreation Features

- **Natural Spaces:** green spaces, open areas, lakes, creeks
- **Variety:** trails, playgrounds, sports fields and courts, pools, free gym
- **Accessibility:** easy to walk to, close to home, good existing locations for parks and centers
- **Quality:** well-maintained and updated facilities (e.g. right-sized restrooms)
- **Community:** family-friendly, neighbors using facilities together, rentals for gatherings

Kids and toddler play spaces within walking distance

Living near Black Hill trails

South Germantown and SoccerPlex: my kids learned to do everything there!

Going out on the lake in a canoe or kayak (rental)



From 19 workshop comments.

How People Get to Parks and Rec Centers

- **Driving:** most people access by car, especially for major destinations (e.g. Black Hill)
- **Walking:** common for nearby parks and playgrounds (e.g. Town Center Urban Park), not always safe
- **Biking:** some use, especially on trails, but not safe
- **Transit:** some use, but not convenient

Common concerns:

- Safety when accessing parks
- Distance to Black Hill RP amenities

Who did people go with:

Many people visited parks alone or with their family or dogs.

From 19 workshop comments.

Top Park and Rec Improvement Requests

- More trails and better park access
- Safer walking and biking routes
- Cleaner parks and better maintenance
- New amenities (e.g. picnic shelters, restrooms, skate parks)
- Improved transit, such as a seasonal shuttle
- Youth and elder programs and activities
- Protect water quality and wildlife

Trash removal
and clean up at
our local parks!

Connection
over/under I-270
for Great Seneca
Greenway trail

Love to have more
shelters for family
cookout, gathering,
and other social
activities

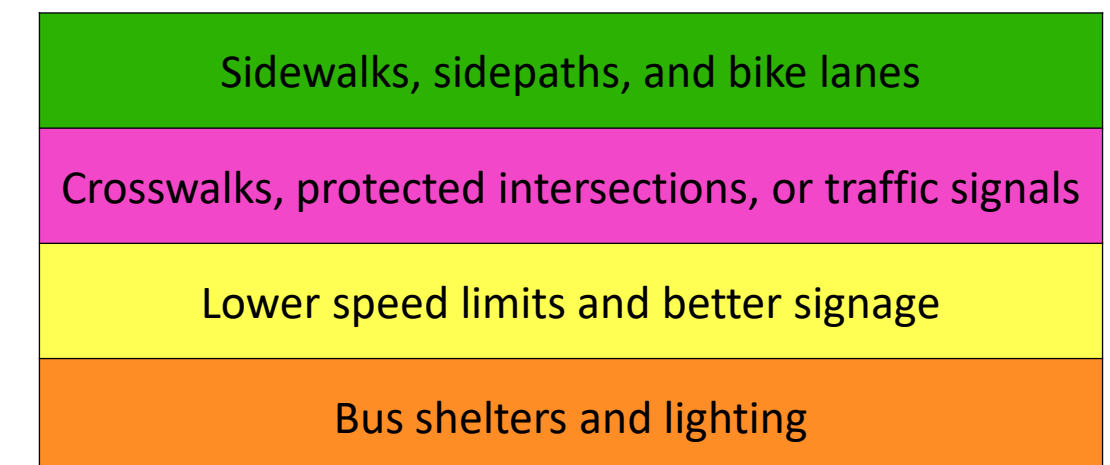
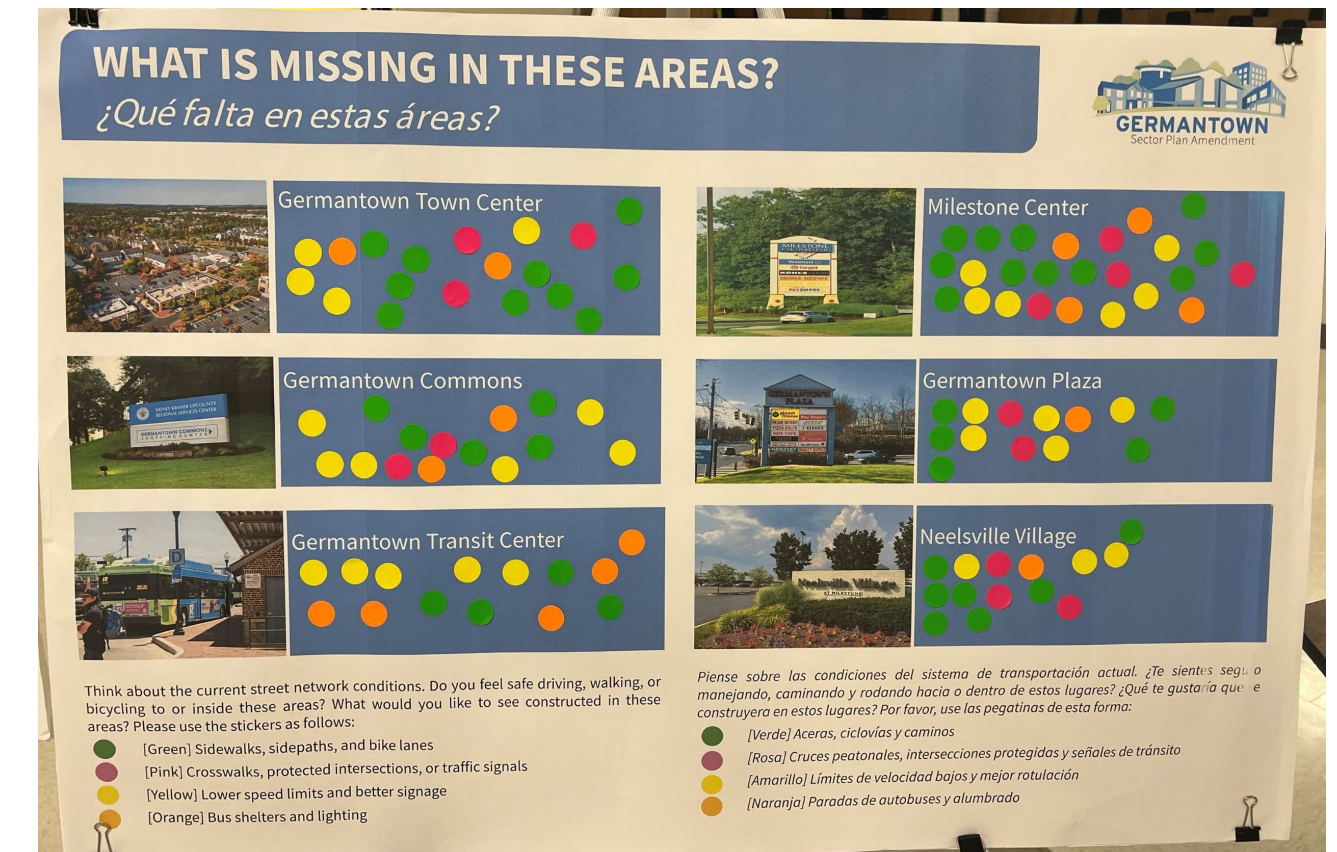
Trim trees and
bushes to
maintain clear
paths

Seasonal
shuttle to parks
from the transit
center

From 34 workshop comments.

Missing Connectivity

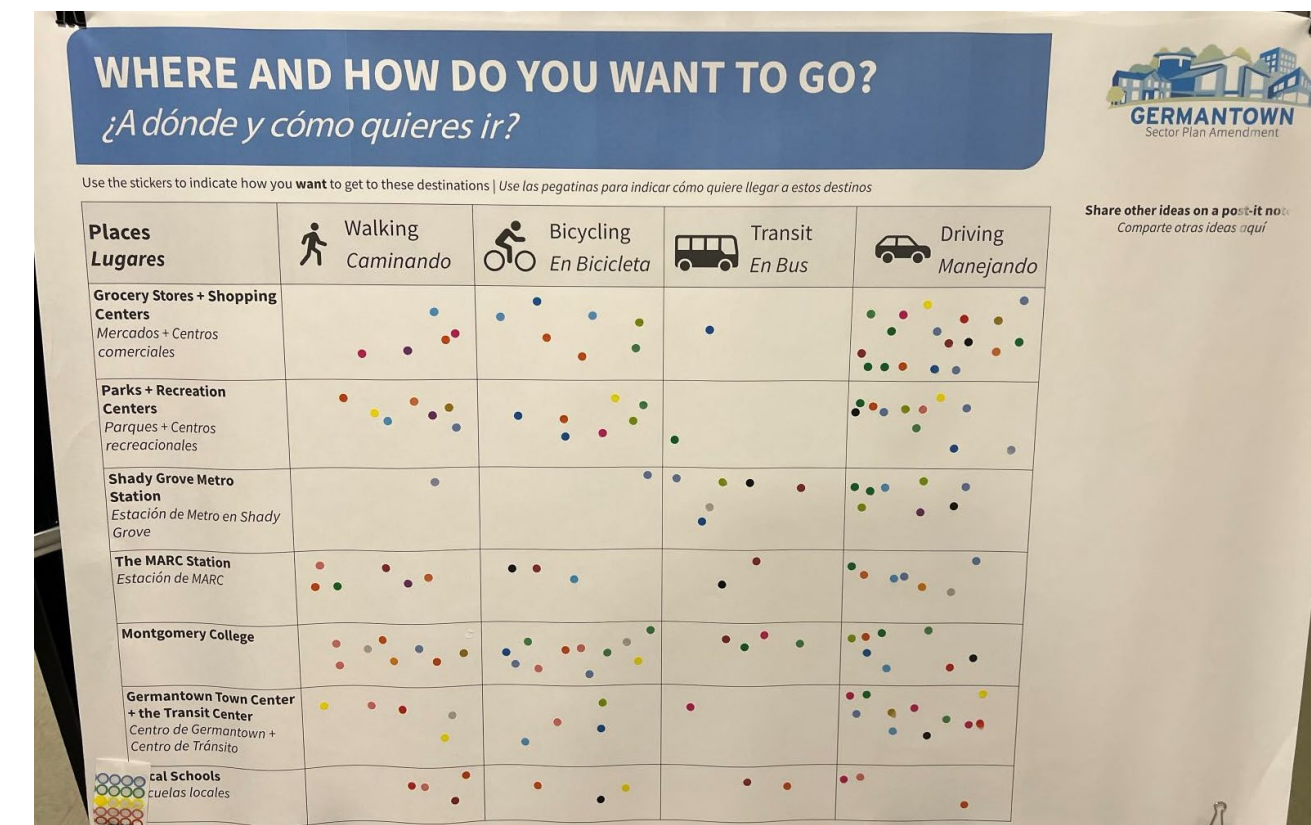
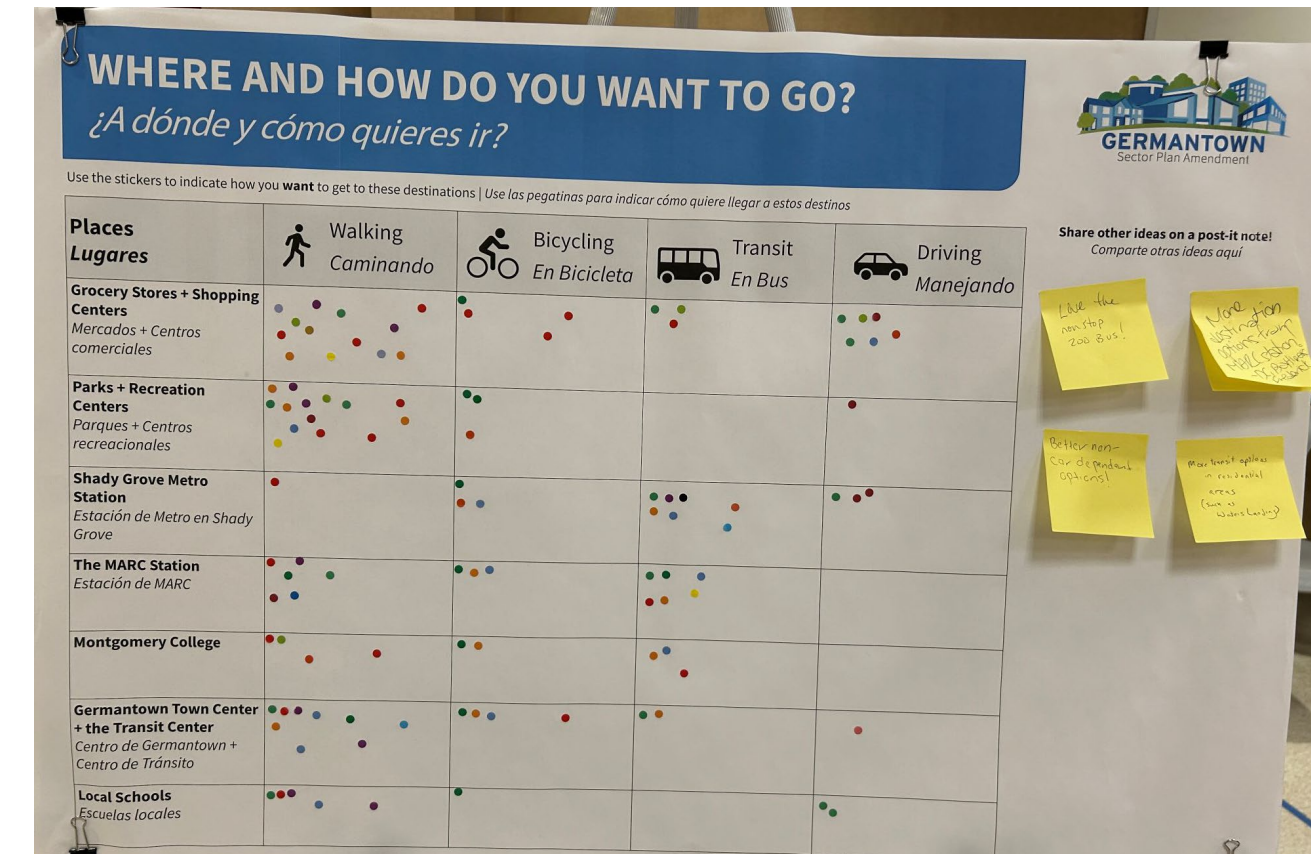
- Sidewalks, sidepaths, and bike lanes
 - Top areas: Milestone Center, Neelsville Village
- Lower speed limits and better signage
 - Top areas: Transit Center, Germantown Commons, Milestone Center, Germantown Plaza
- Crosswalks, protected intersections, or traffic signals
- Bus shelters and lighting
 - Top areas: Transit Center, Milestone Center



From 159 stickers and one comment from workshop attendees.

Transportation Preferences

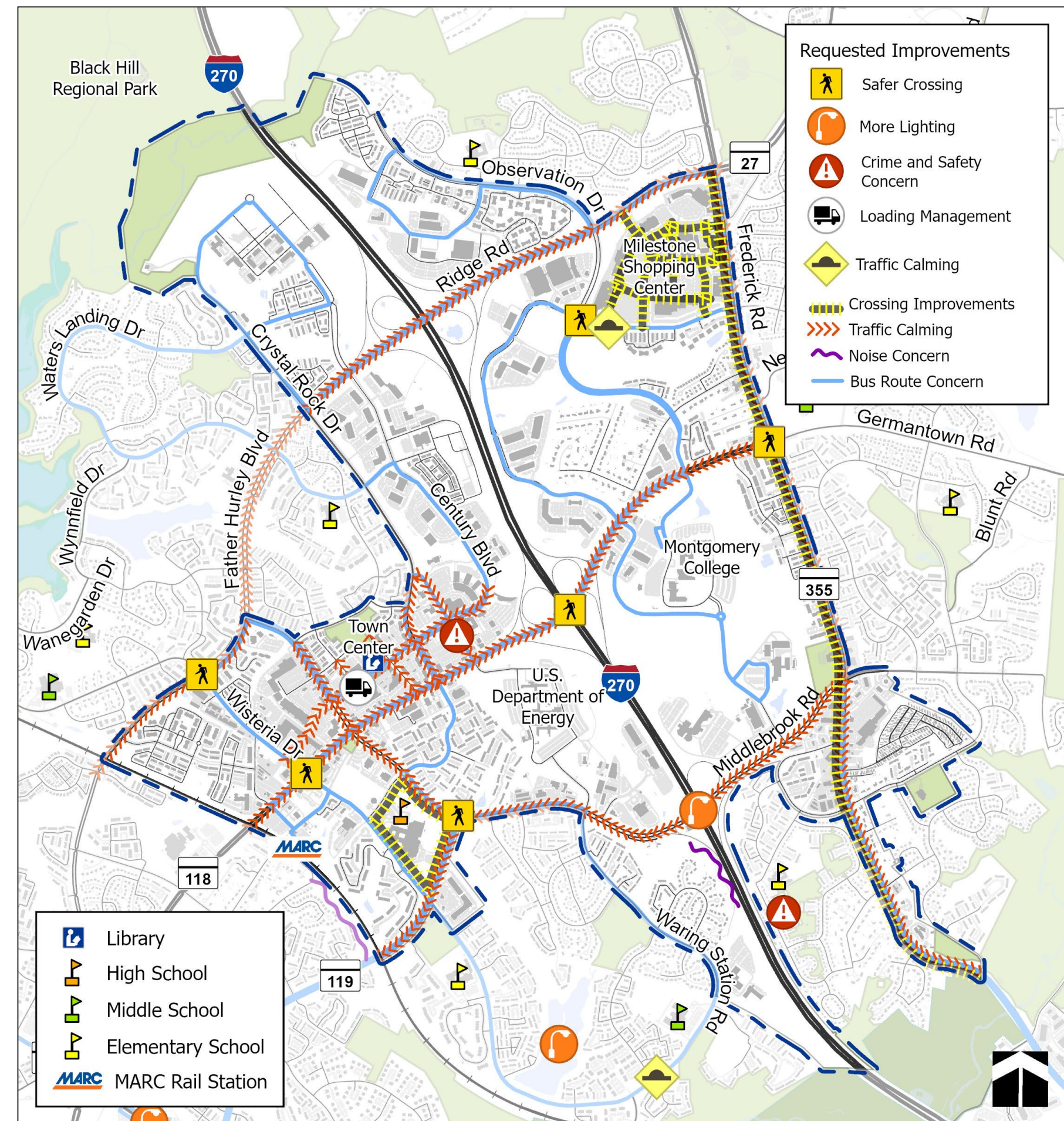
- Most people prefer driving to stores, but many would like to get there on foot or by bike
- People prefer getting to parks and rec centers on foot
- There is a lot of interest in reaching Montgomery College by bike
- Most people would prefer taking transit to the Shady Grove Metro Station



From 261 stickers and 7 comments from workshop attendees.

Requested Connectivity Improvements

- Better Crossings
- More Lighting
- Noise Concerns
- Safety/Crime Concerns
- Traffic Calming
- Bus Route Concerns
- Loading Management



Findings

Community Top Priorities



Increase Safety and Decrease Crime

- 59% of questionnaire respondents ranked **safety and crime reduction** as top priorities

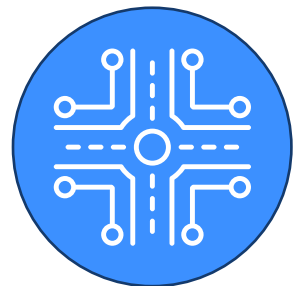
More police presence in our neighborhood



Expand Options and Access to Amenities

- Germantown residents desire **economic vibrancy** and **access to amenities**, such as arts, entertainment, libraries, dining, parks, recreation activities, and children's activities

Community engagement, community growth, community transformation, social & economic opportunity



Improve Transportation and Connectivity

- Reduce congestion (especially near the Town Center)
- **More transit options** (including to parks)
- Better bike and pedestrian **pedestrian access/safety**.

Roads that are easy to drive and get places with sufficient parking

Housing

What People Value Most

- Location over physical house
- Neighborhoods with:
 - Low crime
 - High-quality schools
 - Access to shops and parks



Top Concerns

- Affordability
 - Cost of homeownership
 - Cost of renting
- Family-sized housing at affordable prices

Housing is really expensive and in short supply in the county -- we need more housing!

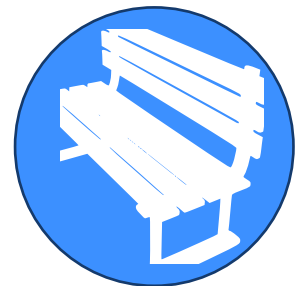
Affordable, smaller, denser housing units – for single people, smaller households, empty nesters

Environment and Sustainability



Top Concerns

- Loss of biodiversity
- Tree loss and lack of shade
- Extreme heat



Top Sustainability Priorities

- Spaces to enjoy nature
- Walking and biking
- More tree canopy

Solar energy
generation for
public facilities/
buildings

Continued
maintenance
of plants and
trees

Water quality
protection/
improvements for
Little Seneca Creek
subwatershed

Parks and Places



Values

- Parks, green spaces, and walkable recreation (Town Center, playgrounds)
- Variety and quality of recreation amenities and places for people to gather
- Recreation destinations: South Germantown Recreational Park, Maryland SoccerPlex, Black Hill Regional Park
- Community hubs: Germantown Library and BlackRock Center for the Arts



Concerns

- Access to Black Hill Regional Park and more trail connections to key places
- Cleanliness, maintenance, and safety in low-traffic parks
- Safer walking and biking routes and improved transit
- New amenities (e.g. picnic shelters, restrooms, skate parks)

Transportation Insights



Driving

- Most commute by personal vehicle
- Driving dominates grocery/shopping trips
- Concern: traffic congestion near Town Center



Transit

- Requests: safer buses, more routes, better hours, improved accessibility



Walking and Biking



- Walking common to parks, MARC, Town Center, schools
- Issues: aggressive driving, trail/sidepath maintenance
- Desire: separate bike/pedestrian facilities

Walkable,
multiuse, density,
human oriented,
equitable,
human-oriented

Better
connected,
grid-like

Buses don't
run on
weekends or
at bad times

Interconnected
neighborhood and
commercial areas,
pedestrian and
bicycle oriented

Conclusion

- Germantown residents take great pride in their community and highly value:
 - **Cultural diversity**
 - **Parks, cultural institutions, and proximity the DC Metro area**
- Residents and visitors want to **preserve what they have**, but want Germantown to be **safer, better connected**, and to have **more amenities**, such as **gathering spaces, arts, entertainment options, recreation opportunities, nicer restaurants**, and **activities for all ages**
- Residents want **easier access** to places they frequently visit, especially as a **pedestrian or bicyclist**
- They hope to see:
 - **Improved pedestrian crossings**
 - **Traffic calming**
 - **Better transit options**
- **Affordable housing options** for both renters and owners is a top priority for those with large families and for those downsizing or living alone

Questions or Comments?

Stay Connected



Follow the plan's progress and subscribe to e-letter updates:

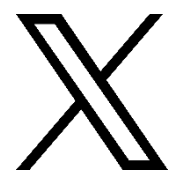
<https://montgomeryplanning.org/germantown-sector-plan-amendment/>

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