



EXPLAINER | Preliminary Recommendations

Plan Overview

The Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan will set a vision for neighborhoods that will soon be poised for change. With the Purple Line expected to open in 2027 and plans for faster, more reliable bus service along corridors, the Plan responds to these changes by recommending ways to maintain affordability, add more types of housing, support small businesses and improve transportation safety.

Community Engagement

Since October 2023, Montgomery Planning staff have engaged more than 1,200 community members through surveys, events, meetings, focus groups, and interviews with local businesses. Key themes from these conversations include:

- Strong appreciation for the area’s diversity, parks, community facilities, and wide range of shops and restaurants
- A clear need for safer ways to get around without a car, especially for people walking or rolling
- Excitement about the Purple Line, paired with concerns about rising housing costs and rents for local businesses

Planning staff combined this community input with county policies and best planning practices to develop these preliminary recommendations. These early ideas will continue to be shaped by community and Planning Board feedback and will inform the first draft of the plan, expected in fall 2026.



Long Branch Festival September 2025



New Hampshire Avenue community conversation April 2025

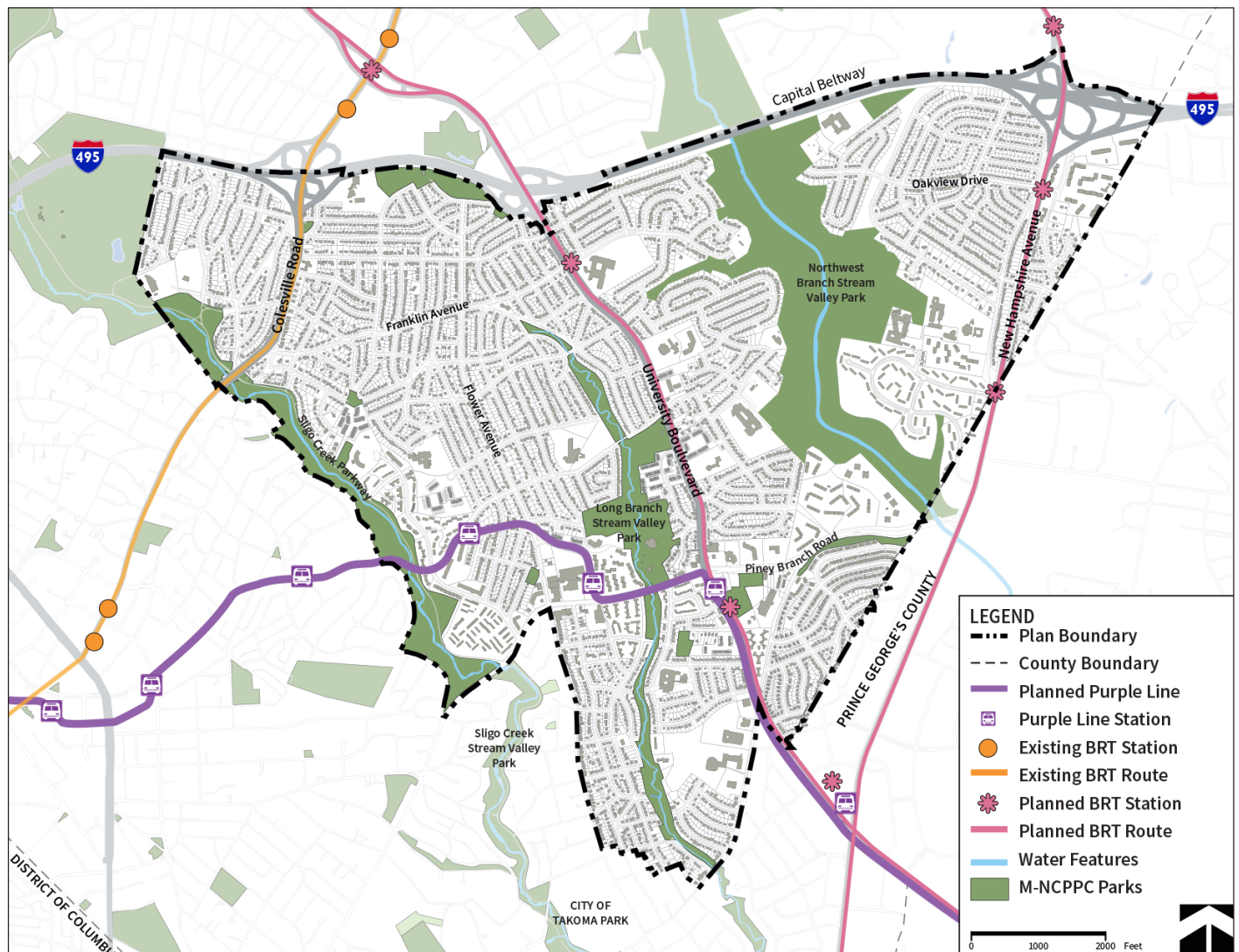


Plan Vision and Goals

The plan envisions better-connected, thriving, welcoming, resilient communities that offer residents more choices in how they live, work, shop, play, and travel. The plan strives to achieve the following goals:

- Strengthening Long Branch as a vibrant mixed-use center that celebrates the community's diversity, preserves affordability, uplifts small businesses, and offers better access to transit, with two Purple Line stations
- Ensuring that current and future residents alike benefit from the investment and opportunities offered by the Purple Line and Bus Rapid Transit
- Creating safer ways to get around and more options, especially for those walking, biking, rolling and taking transit
- Creating opportunities for more and different types of housing near transit
- Preserving and expanding the amount of safe, subsidized, and affordable housing
- Ensuring a high quality of life for all residents, through great parks, community facilities, and safe places to gather
- Increasing our capacity to address climate resiliency, adaptation, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Plan Area





■ Land Use and Zoning

Zoning establishes local regulations that determine what types of buildings and uses are allowed on each property. A zoning change does not remove existing buildings, alter current uses, or require property owners to redevelop. It simply updates the rules for what could be built in the future if a property owner chooses to pursue redevelopment. No physical changes occur unless and until a property owner decides to act.

Key preliminary recommendations include:

- More flexibility for places of worship, community institutions and senior housing sites to update buildings, expand services or add housing, by rezoning these properties to mixed-use Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zone or Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zone
- Allowing more housing and neighborhood retail near Purple Line stations and most Bus Rapid Transit stations by rezoning properties with larger apartment buildings and some properties with smaller apartment buildings to mixed use zones (CRN, CRT or Commercial Residential, CR).
- Allowing more types of housing—like duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, or small apartment buildings, along major roads and near Purple Line stations, by rezoning properties that are within a quarter-mile of a Purple Line station and in blocks that front Colesville Road, University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue to the CRN zone, limiting commercial uses, along with an overlay zone that adds extra rules to make sure new buildings fit in with the neighborhood.
- Keep existing zoning for commercial properties in Long Branch that were rezoned as part of the 2013 *Long Branch Sector Plan* to continue supporting housing, small businesses and community spaces in Long Branch.

For property-specific preliminary zoning recommendations, please visit the interactive map on our website: montgomeryplanning.org/esscp.

■ Transportation

The plan's transportation goals focus on improving safety, connectivity, and the overall experience of getting around. It prioritizes reducing crashes and eliminating serious injuries and fatalities, creating a well-connected network that supports walking, biking, and transit, and transforming streets and corridors into people-centered places that strengthen community life.

Key preliminary recommendations include:

- Improve access and transportation safety for people walking, biking, and rolling to Purple Line stations planned Bus Rapid Transit stations, and schools.
- Add dedicated bus lanes through re-purposing existing vehicle lanes on University Boulevard between I-495 and Piney Branch Road.
- Improve east-west travel for people walking and biking with a new bicycle and pedestrian connection over the Northwest Branch Trail attached to the I-495/ Capital Beltway bridge.
- Redesign Hartwell Road into a low-speed shared street for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles, better connecting the Manchester Place Purple Line Station and Flower Avenue Urban Park.
- Provide more frequent protected pedestrian crossings along major roads through transportation improvements that stop vehicles to allow people to cross the road safely.
- Install sidewalks on neighborhood streets - prioritizing areas near transit, parks and schools.





Housing

- Expand housing choices with more family sized homes, senior friendly and accessible units, and a mix of housing types near transit.
- Protect and grow affordable housing by striving to keep existing levels of affordability whenever redevelopment happens and add more income restricted units, to create options for residents with the lowest incomes.
- Improve housing quality without raising rents by exploring the use of incentives, loans, and rehabilitation programs to fix older buildings while keeping rents stable.
- Reduce displacement by striving for no net loss of affordable housing in this area and helping residents stay, including encouraging the right to return after redevelopment.



Parks

- Make public spaces safer and easier for everyone to use.
- Create more opportunities for people to enjoy parks, gather outdoors, and protect nature and wildlife.



Economic Development and Small Businesses

- Support local small businesses, by offering incentives whenever redevelopment occurs to keep existing local businesses, help them relocate, and provide affordable retail spaces.
- Create community ownership of commercial spaces through supporting the establishment a commercial land trust that can purchase properties and offer affordable spaces for businesses.
- Showcase and maintain Long Branch's unique character by promoting legacy and international businesses and supporting the Long Branch Business League.



Environment

- Protect and restore natural areas, including forests and streams.
- Use nature-based design strategies, like shade trees, green roofs, permeable surfaces, and stormwater features that reduce heat and flooding.
- Encourage sustainable buildings with clean energy, energy efficient buildings, EV charging, and birdsafe design.



Please Share Your Feedback

To learn more about these preliminary recommendations and provide feedback, please visit the Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan website at:
www.montgomeryplanning.org/esscp



or contact the Planning Team at
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 **Montgomery Planning**