



Germantown Sector Plan Amendment Preliminary Recommendations



BlackRock Center for the Arts



Century Boulevard in the Town Center



Plum Gar Community Center



Historic Pumphrey-Matney House

June 4, 2026

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Introduction

Background

The Germantown Sector Plan Amendment (“GSPA” or “Plan”) is a comprehensive update to the 2009 *Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan*. It also amends a portion of the 2019 *MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan* that overlaps the area of the 2009 Plan. This amendment reassesses Germantown’s land use, zoning, housing, transportation, urban design, environmental systems, public facilities, and economic development framework. Its purpose is to guide future growth with updated data, current countywide policies, and a stronger understanding of market conditions and community needs.

The 2009 Plan envisioned transforming Germantown’s central employment district into a vibrant, mixed-use town center along the I-270 corridor. It emphasized attracting employers, reinforcing the town center structure first outlined in the 1964 General Plan, supporting transit-oriented development, improving access to parks and green corridors, and elevating design quality and sustainability. While the vision was compelling, several key assumptions—particularly regarding office demand, real estate markets, and major transit investments—did not materialize.

Planning Staff conducted a study throughout much of 2024 to analyze existing conditions in the Plan area and evaluate how well the 2009 *Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan* was responding to current economic, market, and transportation realities. The

Germantown Employment Area Study examined employment trends, land use and zoning, and development capacity within Germantown’s activity centers along the I-270 corridor and included community outreach, economic and employment analysis, and scenario modeling of potential alternative futures. Early in the process, the Study made clear that many of the assumptions underlying the 2009 Plan, especially sustained growth in office development supported by new transit investment, no longer reflected on-the-ground conditions, limiting reinvestment and constraining the area’s ability to adapt to change.

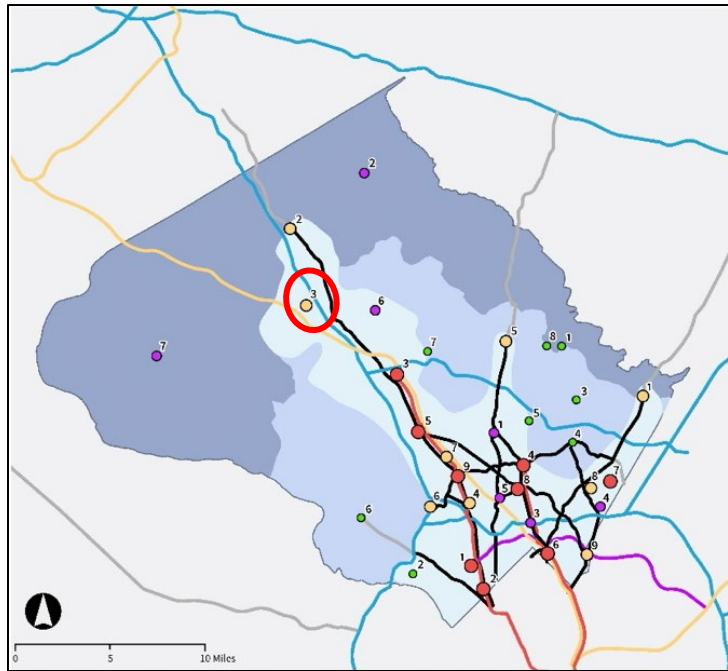
Among its key findings, the Study identified shifting office market dynamics, high vacancy rates, and reduced demand for new office space, alongside continued interest in housing, especially in walkable, amenity-rich communities. Parcel-specific land use caps and zoning requirements carried over from the 2009 Plan—particularly the high BLT purchase requirement for optional method projects—were found to limit flexibility and increase costs for property owners seeking to respond to these market conditions, including redevelopment opportunities that could support housing or mixed-use development. The Study also confirmed that the never-built Corridor Cities Transitway, which was central to the 2009 Plan’s vision for transit-oriented development, further undermined key plan assumptions. Together, these findings illustrated the need for updated land use, zoning, and transportation policies to better reflect current conditions and guide Germantown’s future. In response, the County Council approved an update to the Planning Department’s work program in November 2024 to transition the Study into the Germantown Sector Plan Amendment, with the Planning Board approving the Plan’s Scope of Work in February 2025.

The GSPA addresses the challenges identified in the Study by proposing a more flexible, market-responsive, and community-oriented approach to guiding Germantown’s future. It evaluates existing development patterns, economic trends, and public feedback to create a more realistic, flexible, and community-focused strategy for the next generation of growth. The amendment draws from staff research, ongoing engagement with residents and stakeholders, and coordination with partner agencies and property owners.

Together, these inputs point toward a future Germantown that is more complete, connected, and resilient. The updated Plan prioritizes walkable neighborhoods, safer streets, expanded recreation and gathering opportunities, and improved access to daily destinations—all while strengthening environmental resilience and supporting more equitable development.

Context

Germantown is located in Montgomery County's Upcounty region and is one of the county's largest and most diverse population centers. As a designated "medium center" in *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, Germantown is part of the Corridor-Focused Growth area and is served by the MD 355, I-270, and future Observation Drive corridors, along with MARC's Brunswick Line. Germantown links established employment clusters along the interstate with surrounding neighborhoods and natural areas. Germantown combines substantial open space, a strong network of parks and stream valleys, and a varied mix of housing types, making it both a gateway to the Agricultural Reserve and a vital connector to the county's core economic centers to the south.



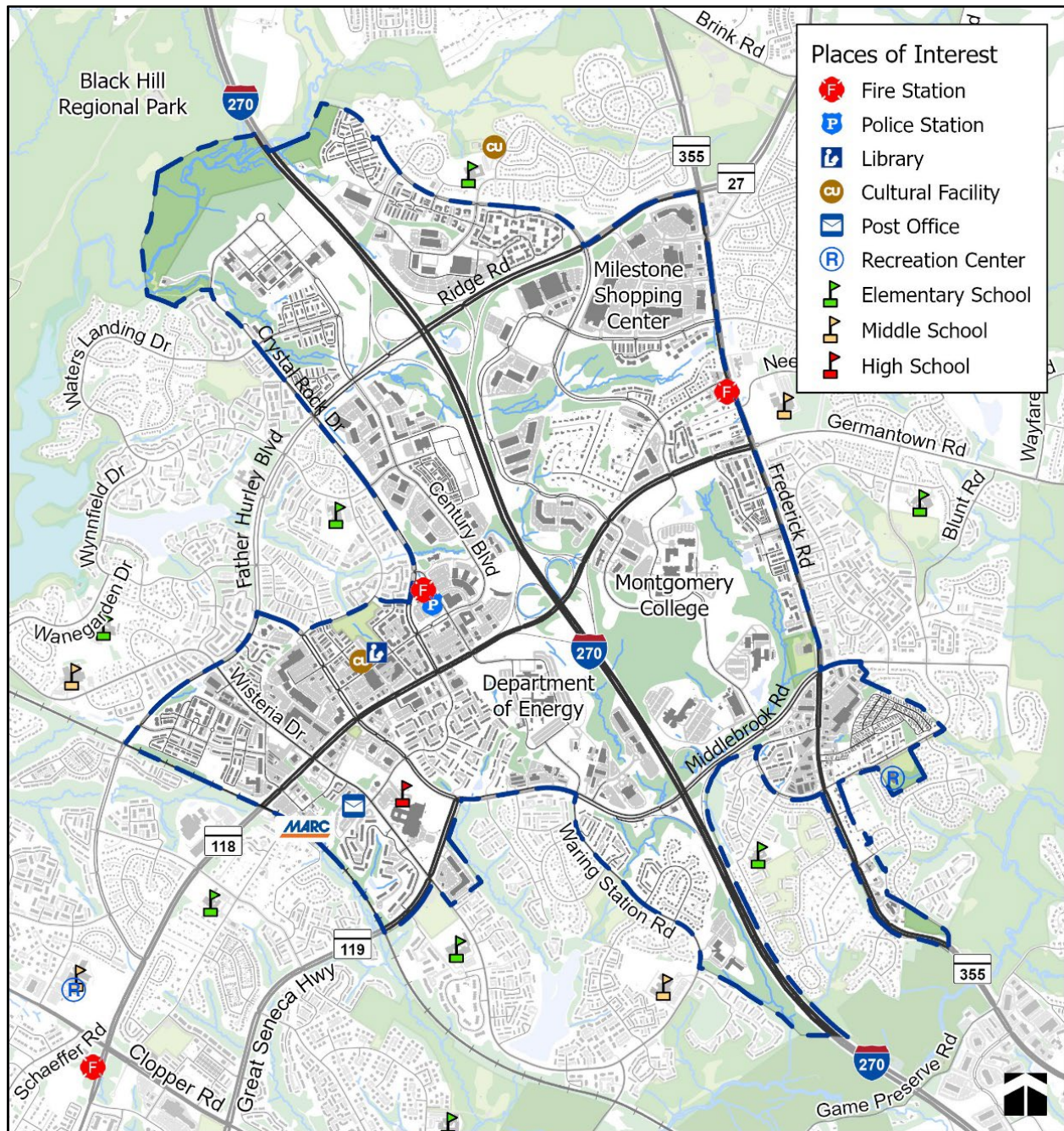
The Plan area boundary largely mirrors that of the 2009 Plan, with the addition of the Germantown Square Shopping Center on Great Seneca Highway. See Map 2.

Community Engagement and Equity

The preliminary recommendations that follow are rooted in an extensive, multi-year community engagement process that informed the Plan from its earliest stages through the development of these recommendations. Engagement draws directly from the 2024 Germantown Employment Area Study, which included questionnaires, stakeholder meetings, pop-up events, and in-person outreach. Key themes, particularly around safety, connectivity, economic opportunity, and housing affordability, established a shared foundation for the Plan and ensured continuity with earlier community input.

As the Sector Plan Amendment advanced, the planning team broadened and deepened outreach through additional engagement events, a new questionnaire, public meetings, and targeted efforts to meet people where they are and elevate underrepresented voices.

Map 2. Plan Area



Engagement summaries and findings were shared with the Planning Board in February 2026, providing early direction as the Plan moved toward more detailed development.

Community input gathered through this process translates directly into the preliminary recommendations. Residents and stakeholders consistently emphasized the need for safer and more comfortable walking, biking, and driving conditions; reduced crime; better access to parks, services, and everyday amenities; and stronger, more connected

neighborhood centers. People also expressed a desire to preserve Germantown’s diversity and valued places while improving walkability, public spaces, transit service, environmental resilience, and housing affordability, particularly in locations that offer access to schools, amenities, and community life.

The preliminary recommendations reflect these priorities through strategies that improve safety and connectivity, reinforce activity centers, expand housing choices, enhance parks and public spaces, and integrate sustainability and climate resilience into future growth. While individual recommendations address specific topics and geographies, together they reflect the community’s shared aspirations for a more connected, inclusive, and resilient Germantown.

In addition to reflecting community input, the planning team has considered equity in developing the preliminary recommendations. This builds on the Community Equity Index (CEI) analysis and community engagement efforts and will continue as the Plan moves toward a final document, consistent with the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act. Much of the Plan area is identified through the CEI as moderately or slightly disproportionate, indicating that residents are, on average, more socioeconomically disadvantaged than the county overall, driven in part by lower per capita incomes and lower homeownership rates.

These findings have helped shape the preliminary recommendations by highlighting where additional focus is needed to reduce disparities, particularly in expanding housing opportunities, improving access to services and amenities, and supporting existing residents. Together with targeted engagement efforts to reach underrepresented populations, this approach helps ensure that both the planning process and resulting recommendations respond to the needs of the full Germantown community.

Foundational Policies and Programs

In addition to feedback from the community and other Plan stakeholders, the *Germantown Sector Plan Amendment* builds on a set of adopted state and county policies, programs, and initiatives that establish clear direction for land use, transportation, housing, equity, and environmental stewardship. Together, these foundational policies guide the Plan’s recommendations and ensure alignment with broader approved goals for Montgomery County and the State of Maryland. These policies and programs will be described in the draft and final Plan document.

- Maryland’s Sustainable Growth Policy and Planning Principles (2025)
- *Thrive Montgomery 2050* (2022)
- *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* (2025)
- Complete Streets Design Guide (2024)

- Local Housing Targets (2024)
- Placemaking Strategic Plan (2024)
- *Pedestrian Master Plan* (2023)
- *Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan* (2022)
- Climate Action Plan (2021)
- Racial Equity and Social Justice Act (2019)
- *Bicycle Master Plan* (2018)
- Vision Zero (2016)

Plan Vision

Germantown is envisioned as a connected, inclusive, and resilient community that celebrates its rich diversity and provides a strong sense of belonging. Anchored by vibrant activity centers and a welcoming Town Center, a central pedestrian-oriented corridor will organize movement and public life, linking key destinations with safe crossings, walkable streets, and accessible transit. Neighborhoods will be designed for easy travel by foot, bike, and transit, ensuring that residents can reach parks, services, and essential destinations close to home.

Through intentional design, flexible land use, and green infrastructure, Germantown will support complete, convenient living and offer a broad range of housing, recreation, and cultural experiences, with public spaces that reflect community identity, and parks that are active and inviting.

Sector Plan Goals

The following are the main goals of the Plan. Together, these goals support a Germantown that is economically resilient and adaptable over time, balancing housing, employment, and community needs while remaining responsive to changing market conditions.

- **Vibrant Neighborhood Hubs**

Germantown is a network of walkable, mixed-use activity centers that serve as everyday destinations for living, working, shopping, and gathering, supporting a balanced mix of housing, jobs, and services close to where people live.

- **A Civic Heart in the Town Center**

Germantown’s Town Center is the symbolic and functional heart of public life—home to civic events, cultural institutions, employment opportunities, and shared community spaces that support both economic activity and community identity.

- **Connected Mobility for All**

Germantown provides safe, comfortable, and seamless transportation options that are accessible to all residents, workers, and visitors, connecting them to jobs,

services, schools, and community destinations by foot, bike, transit, car, and micromobility.

- **Inclusive, Flexible, and Context-Sensitive Growth**

Germantown supports diverse development that reflects the character of its neighborhoods and responds to evolving community needs and market conditions. A balanced mix of housing and employment uses supports economic resilience and expands housing options that are affordable, accessible, and adaptable to a range of life stages and household types, while removing barriers to reinvestment.

- **Parks, Recreation, and Public Spaces for Community Wellbeing**

Germantown’s parks and public spaces connect residents across all communities, support physical activity, and create inviting places for community life, while maintaining the area’s greenspaces and natural character.

- **Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience**

Germantown protects natural resources and prepares for climate change through resilient infrastructure, green practices, and environmental health.

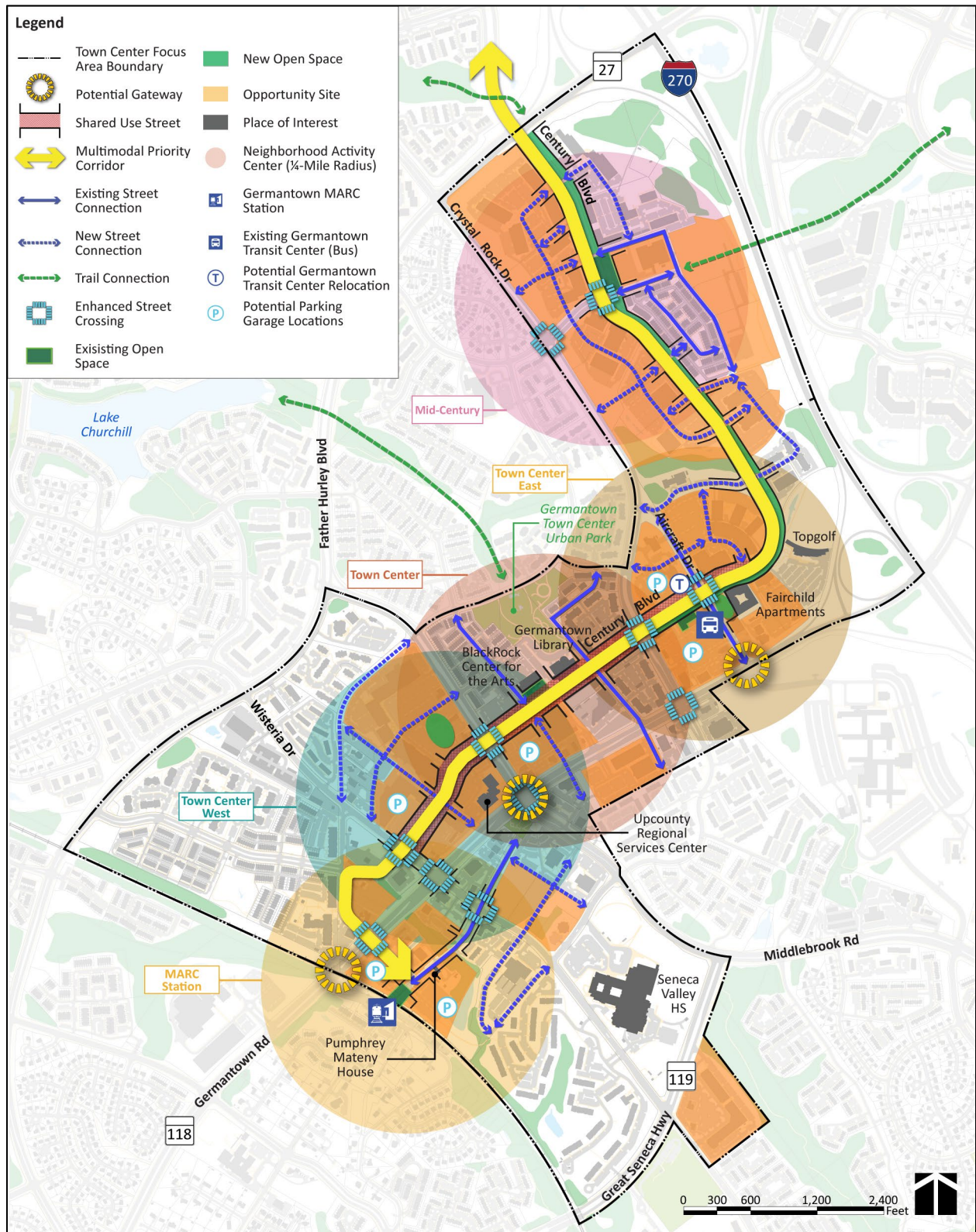
Plan Framework

Planning staff developed a framework to guide the physical evolution of Germantown at two scales: the entire Plan area and the Town Center and its immediately adjacent neighborhoods. This framework illustrates how land use, mobility, urban design, parks, and public spaces can work together to achieve the Plan’s vision and goals. Framework strategies serve as the backbone for the recommendations that follow and establish a clear structure for creating a complete, connected, and resilient community.

Town Center Focus Area

The Town Center is envisioned as a series of vibrant, walkable neighborhood activity centers linked by a central pedestrian-oriented spine. This corridor, extending from the Germantown MARC Station along Century Boulevard to Father Hurley Boulevard, organizes movement, public life, and future redevelopment. See Map 3.

Map 3. Town Center Focus Area Framework Diagram



Within this area, the framework emphasizes:

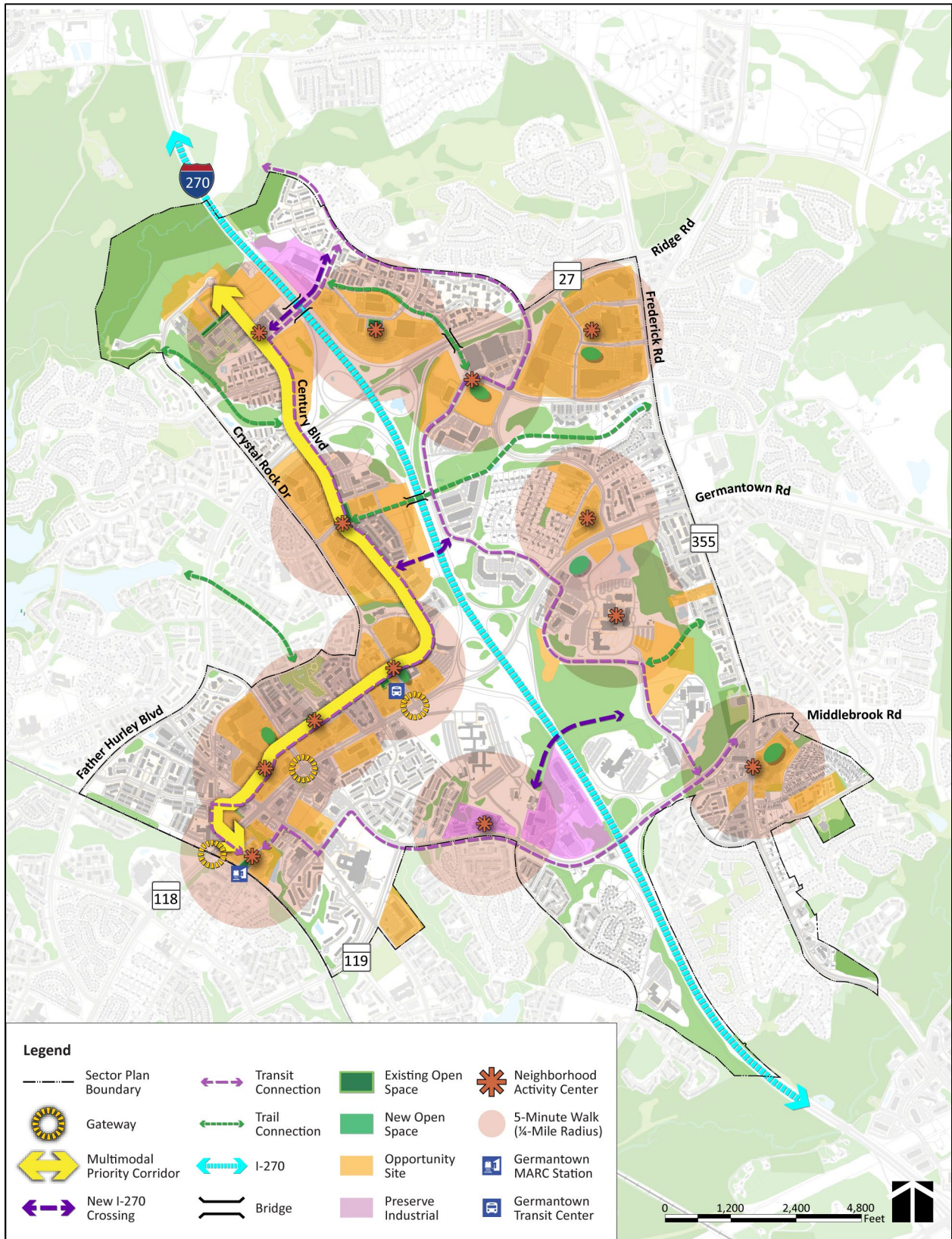
- **A Network of Neighborhood Activity Centers**
The Plan organizes the Town Center into multiple walkable activity centers, each with a mix of uses, a distinct identity, and a central public space. These centers anchor neighborhoods and create complete, compact places where daily needs are within a short walk.
- **Walkable Blocks and Street Connectivity**
Smaller blocks, an expanded street network, and the strategic redevelopment of large superblocks will improve walkability, create more intuitive multimodal routes, support active public spaces, and establish a more human-scaled environment.
- **Multiple Mobility Options**
Safer crossings, enhanced transit access, and dedicated bike facilities will make it easy to get around the Town Center without relying on a car, supported by a “park once” environment with shared structured parking.
- **Infill Development and Redevelopment**
Underutilized properties and large surface parking lots will be transformed through infill development and redevelopment, supported by removing regulatory barriers that limit flexible, mixed-use development.
- **A Unified Identity Through Placemaking**
Wayfinding, landmark features, and coordinated streetscape and public space design will strengthen Germantown’s sense of place and promote a cohesive Town Center identity.
- **Green Spaces and Public Realm Enhancements**
Each neighborhood activity center will include new or improved parks, plazas, and open spaces that support recreation, social interaction, and ecological function.

This framework sets the stage for transforming the Town Center into Germantown’s civic heart—a welcoming, active, and memorable destination that reflects community identity and supports daily life.

Full Plan Area

At the scale of the larger Plan area, the framework reinforces the core concepts applied to the Town Center and extends them across Germantown: strengthening connections between districts, guiding future growth, and linking its diverse commercial areas, residential neighborhoods, and natural systems into a cohesive whole. See Map 4.

Map 4. Framework Diagram for the Full Plan Area



Key elements of the full-area framework include:

- **Multi-Modal Connections Between Districts**
Strengthened pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks will connect activity centers to one another and to surrounding communities. Improving east–west connections—especially across I-270—will reduce barriers, expand travel options, and enhance community cohesion.
- **Development Focused in Activity Centers and Corridors**
Future growth will be concentrated in activity centers and along Germantown’s primary corridors, where transit access, infrastructure, and services can support compact, mixed-use development and reinforce connections across the community.
- **Repurposing Excess Roadway Space**
Reevaluating wide rights-of-way will allow excess roadway space to be repurposed for bicycle facilities, wider sidewalks, and transit lanes, helping reconnect neighborhoods and improve safety along major corridors divided by oversized roads.
- **Retention of Industrial Land for Employment Growth**
Strategically located industrial, R&D, and institutional areas will be preserved to support life science, research, and advanced manufacturing uses to the regional economy, providing long-term opportunities for employment growth along the I-270 corridor.
- **Green Infrastructure and Connected Open Spaces**
Parks, green spaces, and natural resource areas will be linked through trails, green streets and corridors, and stream valley systems to form a connected ecological and recreational network across Germantown.

Through this multi-scaled approach, the framework provides a cohesive structure for Germantown’s long-term growth: a connected community shaped by walkable centers, integrated mobility networks, strong environmental systems, and a resilient public realm.

Community Design

Context

The design of a community shapes how people experience its neighborhoods, streets, public spaces, and buildings. As Germantown evolves, thoughtful design will be essential to creating walkable, human-scaled activity centers, strengthening community identity, supporting multimodal mobility, and improving the quality and comfort of the public realm. The community design framework emphasizes connected street networks, high-quality

public spaces, coherent building form, and stronger integration between development and open space to ensure that new growth contributes to complete, connected, and vibrant places across the Plan area.

Vision

Germantown's community design will support a cohesive network of mixed-use neighborhoods anchored by activity centers, connected by safe and appealing streets, enriched by accessible open spaces, and defined by buildings and landscapes that foster community life. A consistent and human-scaled built environment will reinforce Germantown's identity and contribute to long-term sustainability and livability.

Goals

These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly Vibrant Neighborhood Hubs and Connected Mobility for All, by focusing on how site design, block structure, and the public realm shape walkable and functional places.

- Organize development around clearly defined activity centers with structured block patterns, active edges, and a strong relationship between buildings and public spaces.
- Establish a connected street network with block sizes and spacing that support direct, intuitive travel and a comfortable pedestrian experience, while providing the necessary buildable areas to support a variety of land uses.
- Shape buildings to reinforce a pedestrian-oriented environment through thoughtful scale, orientation, and architectural character. Buildings should define street edges, frame open spaces, and create visually engaging, memorable places that support daily life.
- Provide a well-distributed network of accessible, visible, and usable open spaces that support recreation, social interaction, and environmental function.
- Integrate parking, utilities, and service functions into development in ways that minimize visual impacts and reinforce a high-quality public realm.

Recommendations

Neighborhoods

Walkable neighborhoods are the foundation of Germantown's complete-community strategy. Each neighborhood should be organized around a clearly defined activity center that offers daily destinations and a strong sense of identity. These centers vary in scale and character, but all should support safe and convenient walking, rolling, and transit access. Typically, neighborhood activity centers extend in a roughly ¼-mile radius from their cores,

creating about a 10-minute walk from edge to edge. Within this distance, residents, visitors, and workers should be able to meet many of their daily needs without relying on a personal vehicle.

The five neighborhood activity centers in and around the Town Center, located within a 20-minute walk of either the Germantown MARC Station or the Germantown Transit Center, form the civic and commercial heart of Germantown. This proximity to transit provides a strong foundation for transit-oriented development, improved multimodal connections, and a more cohesive public realm across the Town Center. Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle networks, strengthening neighborhood identities, and creating a more active mix of uses will help shape the Town Center into a vibrant and welcoming place that serves both residents and visitors.

Recommendations:

1. Establish and strengthen neighborhood activity centers throughout the Sector Plan area centered around places of interest.
2. Reinforce the core area of each neighborhood activity center with a variety of uses and ensure that development reflects its distinctive cultural, environmental, or historic features.
3. Provide at least one significant, contiguous open space within each neighborhood activity center.
4. Strengthen connections between open spaces, development, and surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Install artwork, signage, and branding elements at key Germantown Road intersections, such as Bowman Mill Drive, Middlebrook Road, and Crystal Rock Drive, to reinforce neighborhood identity and create gateway features.
6. Develop Century Boulevard as the primary mixed-use “main street” corridor connecting the five Town Center neighborhood activity centers and linking the Germantown MARC Station to Father Hurley Boulevard.
7. Extend and activate the segment of Century Boulevard between Wisteria Drive and Middlebrook Road with ground-floor retail, enhanced streetscapes, and pedestrian-focused improvements to support a vibrant mixed-use environment with shops, services, and housing.
8. Support transit-oriented development on blocks adjacent to the MARC Station, the transit center, and the Milestone/Neelsville Village shopping centers, encouraging vertically mixed uses and shared structured parking.



Figure 1. A sketch showing Century Boulevard extended to Wisteria Drive through the two large shopping centers in the Town Center West End to strengthen the connection to the Town Center to the northeast. Infill development begins to frame the streetscape even as portions of the shopping center remain in use.

Streets

Streets are central to Germantown’s walkability, safety, and character, and a more connected, multimodal network with improved crossings will expand travel options and better connect neighborhoods. Within the Town Center, Century Boulevard can be strengthened as the primary “main street” by improving streetscapes, activating key segments, and enhancing wayfinding and placemaking to create a stronger sense of identity. Streets in Montgomery County are guided by the Complete Streets Design Guide, which links street design to land use context and multimodal needs; detailed street type recommendations are provided in the Transportation section.

Recommendations:

9. Expand the street grid to create more route options, reduce block size, improve access, and support redevelopment on key opportunity sites.
10. Encourage inter-parcel connectivity and avoid cul-de-sacs.
11. Design streets to accommodate on-street parking where appropriate to provide short-term access to nearby businesses and residences while maintaining pedestrian comfort and safety.

12. Provide enhanced pedestrian crossings at key locations to shorten crossing distances, improve visibility, and calm traffic using curb extensions, raised intersections, or distinctive paving.
13. Improve pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure along all streets. Include upgraded facilities, wayfinding, and connections to parks and transit.

Blocks

Block structure plays a key role in walkability. Smaller blocks create more direct routes, support active ground floor uses, and make neighborhoods feel more accessible and connected. Where large blocks already exist, midblock connections can shorten travel distances and open opportunities for public spaces, paseos, or pedestrian paths.

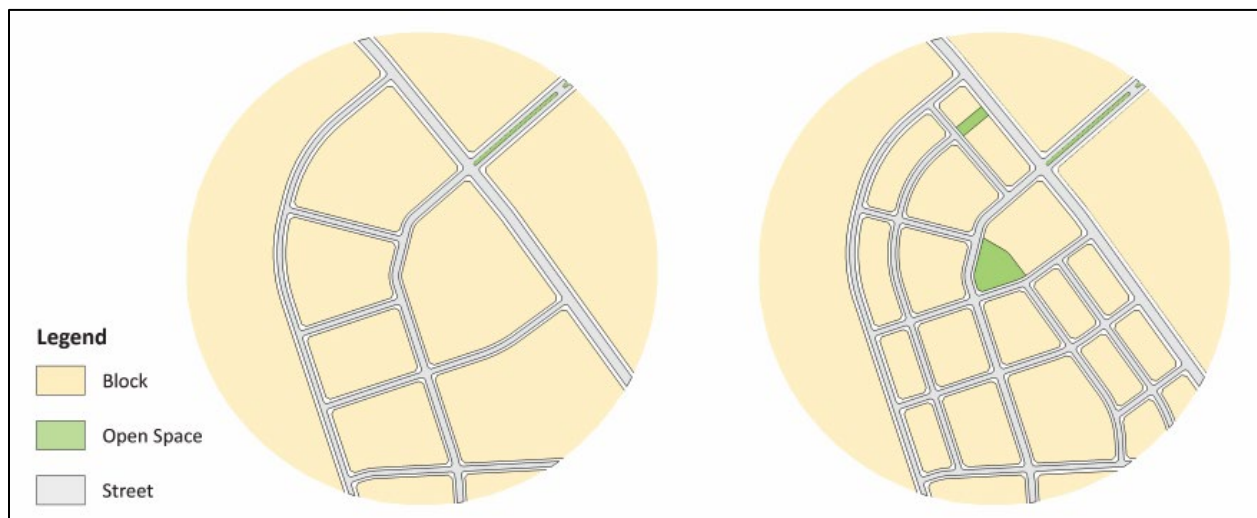


Figure 2. Intersection Spacing Diagram. The diagram on the right provides greater connectivity with multiple ways to walk, roll, and drive within the community and offers more potential for on-street parking in the neighborhood.

Alleys can help keep frontages active by locating parking and services away from primary streets, strengthening the pedestrian environment and reducing visual clutter.

Recommendations:

14. Maintain compact blocks to support walkability.
15. Add mid-block connections where larger block configurations are unavoidable. Mid-block connections may include paseos, mews, linear plazas, or shared use paths with landscaping.



Figure 3. The perceived width of an alley is narrowed through several design elements: the pavement material changes between the driveways and alley, parking spaces are concealed by walls and dense landscaping along the street edge, and the building colors within the alley work harmoniously together.



Figure 4. Sketch showing a redeveloped portion of the Milestone Center adjacent to the Walmart in the rear left background reimagined as a vibrant, complete community that blends active and passive gathering spaces with a diverse mix of housing options, while strengthening both existing and future retail. Driveways have been turned into streets to help define existing parking lots as blocks for future development sites.

Open Space

A well-designed open space network supports recreation, social interaction, and environmental functions. Open spaces should be strategically located, highly visible, and

accessible from surrounding development, with larger parks anchoring activity centers and smaller spaces providing additional recreation opportunities. Integrating features such as stormwater management, shade, and active edges helps these spaces function as comfortable extensions of the public realm (see Figure 5). Residents in the Plan area have less access to parks and recreational amenities than other growth areas, creating an opportunity for redevelopment to help deliver needed public gathering and recreation spaces.



Figure 5. Examples of a stormwater management facility in a public open space and buildings fronting a public open space.

Recommendations:

16. Establish a hierarchy of public open spaces of varied sizes and functions.
17. Encourage consolidated, usable open spaces on large redevelopment sites, supported by smaller complementary spaces that contribute to the broader parks and public realm network.
 - a. Provide a large civic green with active, walk-focused uses—such as event spaces, community gardens, or playgrounds—as part of any redevelopment of the Milestone/Neelsville Village shopping center.
 - b. New development on the MARC station parking lots should create a minimum one-half acre “Station Square” that visually connects the Pumphrey-Mateny House to the station entrance and is lined with active uses.
 - c. Near the Upcounty Regional Services Center, incorporate active uses such as a community garden, playground, sports courts, or dog park with redevelopment.
18. On smaller sites where on-site open space is impractical, encourage contributions toward larger public open space enhancements.
19. Design open spaces that are visible from at least one street, accessible, and framed by active ground floor uses where possible. Design and program these open spaces

to be inclusive and beneficial to the public and provide active recreation and multi-generational amenities.

20. Make publicly accessible open spaces and residential common areas central features of new development. Frame open spaces with active frontages and incorporate shade, landscaping, and stormwater elements to create comfortable, functional, and welcoming places.
21. Repurpose portions of the former Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) right-of-way north of Crystal Rock Drive for multimodal streetscape improvements and new open spaces, such as bikeways, transit facilities, pocket parks, fitness areas, or expanded tree canopy.
22. Integrate building frontages and pedestrian access with adjoining open spaces using lead walks, low fencing, landscape edges, and high-quality paving to create visual interest and seamlessly connect private development and public open spaces.
23. Expand on placemaking strategies utilized in the Germantown Placemaking initiative at key locations along streets and open spaces with wayfinding, amenities, and identity features on both public and private land.



Figure 6. Sketch of a redesigned Town Commons that will serve as an enhanced open space with a dynamic outdoor entertainment venue for the BlackRock Center for the Arts. New curbsless streets surrounding the Commons—echoing the design of the existing library entry drive—will clearly signal that this area prioritizes pedestrians.

Buildings

Buildings shape the character and comfort of Germantown's streets and public spaces. Proper building placement, massing, and orientation can reinforce pedestrian-friendly environments and create vibrant neighborhood centers. Buildings should frame streets and open spaces, create visual interest, and use architectural elements to break down bulk and maintain human scale. Active ground floors, especially in mixed-use areas, are essential for creating inviting and dynamic public realms.

Recommendations:

24. Locate buildings close to the street to reinforce pedestrian orientation.
25. Break up large building volumes using architectural elements, such as porches, stoops, recessed entries, projections, and massing step downs to create rhythm and visual interest along façades.
26. Prioritize rear loaded garage access for residential development, where appropriate. If front-load access is required, recess garage doors and provide shared access points to maintain street tree planting opportunities.
27. Activate streets with ground floor commercial, mixed-use, or residential entries. Engage the street through large windows, tall ground floor heights, and inviting entries.
28. Use transparent ground floor windows in commercial areas to enhance streetscape interest and strengthen indoor outdoor connections.



Figure 7. Sketch of a potential new central gathering space near the MARC station looking toward the historic Pumphrey Mateny House. Context-sensitive redevelopment here can help connect the area’s history with its future. Enhancing the surroundings of the Germantown MARC Station with a vibrant open space and mixed-use activity center will encourage and support a district where people can comfortably live, work, and play.

Services, Utilities, and Parking

Functional components, such as parking, utilities, loading, and service areas, must be carefully integrated so they do not detract from Germantown’s public realm. Efficient, compact parking solutions reduce land consumption and allow more space for buildings and open areas. Proper screening, rear-of-site placement, and long-term adaptability of surface lots ensure that today’s parking facilities can evolve into future development opportunities. Utilities should be located and designed to minimize visual impacts and maintain comfortable, walkable streetscapes and open spaces.

Recommendations:

29. Reduce surface parking by prioritizing structured parking, tuck-under parking, and shared parking during redevelopment, minimizing land consumption, reducing stormwater runoff and heat island effects, and supporting more street-oriented development and community amenities.

30. Locate parking away from primary streets and internally on sites, and line parking areas with buildings or buffers to reduce their prominence. Place parking and service areas behind or within buildings (see Figure 8).

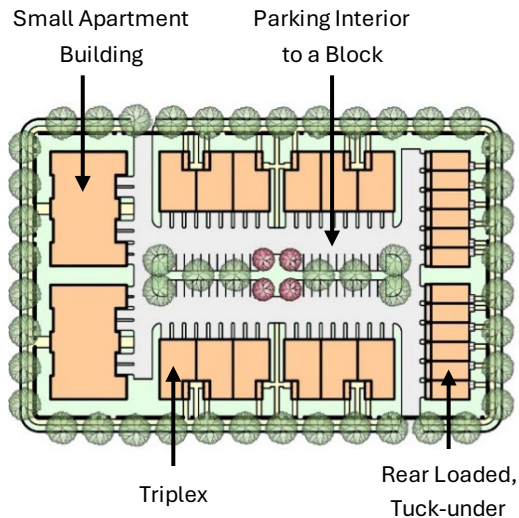


Figure 8. Example of a Residential Block

31. Provide safe, well-marked pedestrian routes through parking areas. Include clear walkways, lighting, and crossings within parking lots and structures.
32. Design surface parking for potential redevelopment and long-term adaptability. Configure drive aisles as potential future streets with trees, landscaping, lighting and pedestrian facilities, and ensure surface lots can transition to structured parking or new development.
33. Incorporate sustainable materials, tree canopy, and shade in parking areas. Use light-colored pervious materials where feasible.
34. Use landscaping, decorative walls, or artistic treatments to screen service areas, structured parking, surface parking, access points, and utilities to minimize visual impacts and maintain an attractive streetscape.
35. In residential developments, use alley systems to locate parking and services away from primary streets. Incorporate landscaping and screening in alleys to enhance the public realm.
36. Place individual building utilities, such as HVAC units and water and gas meters, internally on the site, preferably within alleys. Screen them with landscaping, fences, decorative walls, or artistic treatments, especially utilities that may be visible from the public realm.
37. Design off-street parking and alley entrances to be as narrow and compact as feasible to minimize their visual impact.

Land Use and Zoning

Context

Land use and zoning decisions shape how Germantown grows, how people move, and how neighborhoods function. The updated land use and zoning recommendations reflect changing market conditions, evolving community needs, and countywide goals established in Thrive Montgomery 2050, shifting away from the employment-centric model of the 2009 Plan toward flexible mixed-use development that supports complete communities and walkability and helps achieve a local housing target of 3,500 new dwelling units by 2050 in the Plan area. Organized around neighborhood activity centers, the framework aligns zoning with intended land uses, removes outdated regulatory constraints, and enables appropriate increases in height and density in key locations to provide a clear, consistent, and adaptable foundation for future redevelopment across the Plan area.

Vision

Germantown will grow as a connected network of mixed-use neighborhoods anchored by activity centers, each providing an appropriate mix of housing, employment, services, and public spaces within a walkable environment. While not every activity center will include all types of uses, each will contribute essential elements that together support complete communities. A flexible and modern zoning framework will guide redevelopment and support long-term resilience.

Goals

These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly Inclusive, Flexible, and Context-Sensitive Growth and Vibrant Neighborhood Hubs, by focusing on how land use and zoning enable redevelopment, support market responsiveness, and align regulations with the Plan's intended development pattern.

- Enable mixed-use activity centers by aligning land use and zoning with the Plan's focus on concentrating growth in walkable centers and near transit, including appropriate increases in density and height in key locations.
- Provide flexibility for property owners to respond to changing market conditions while ensuring development supports complete, walkable communities.
- Remove regulatory barriers that limit reinvestment and redevelopment, particularly in areas with strong potential for mixed-use and transit-oriented development.
- Align zoning with existing land uses and development patterns in areas where change is not anticipated.

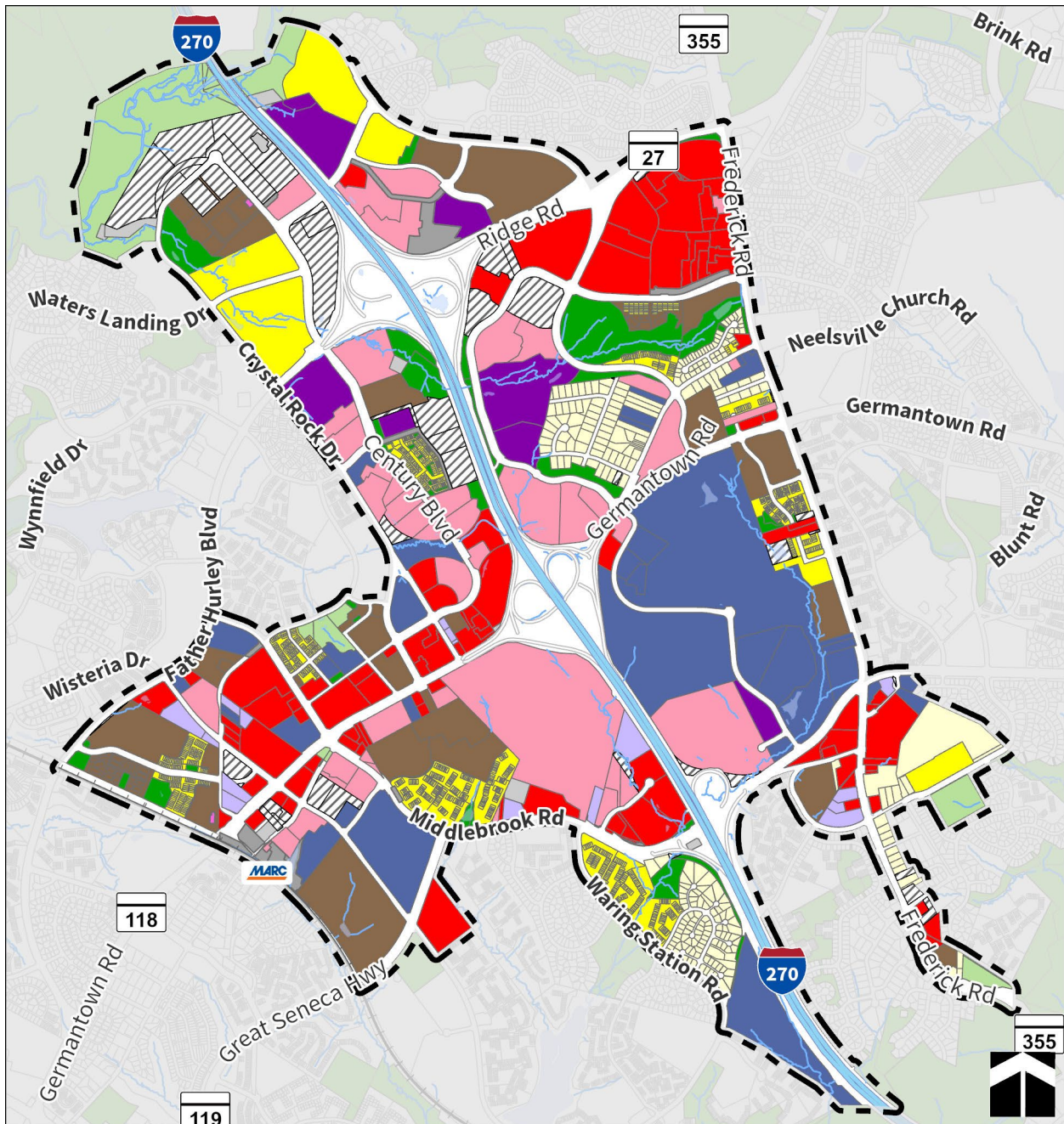
- Expand housing opportunities by allowing a broader range of housing types and densities while preserving land for key employment uses.
- Simplify and modernize the zoning framework by eliminating outdated or redundant regulations and improving clarity and consistency across the Plan area.

Recommendations

Proposed Land Use

Existing land uses in the Plan area are shown in Map 5 and proposed land uses are shown in Map 6. The existing land uses reflect on-the-ground development for each parcel in the Plan area, while the proposed land uses reinforce the Plan’s vision by organizing Germantown around a network of neighborhood activity centers. Approximately half the Plan area is designated for mixed-use development to support vibrant centers with a variety of commercial and residential uses. The intent of the mixed-use designation is not to require each parcel to include multiple uses, but to ensure that collectively, and based upon market demand, that the activity centers evolve into complete neighborhoods where people can access essential destinations within a short walk or transit ride.

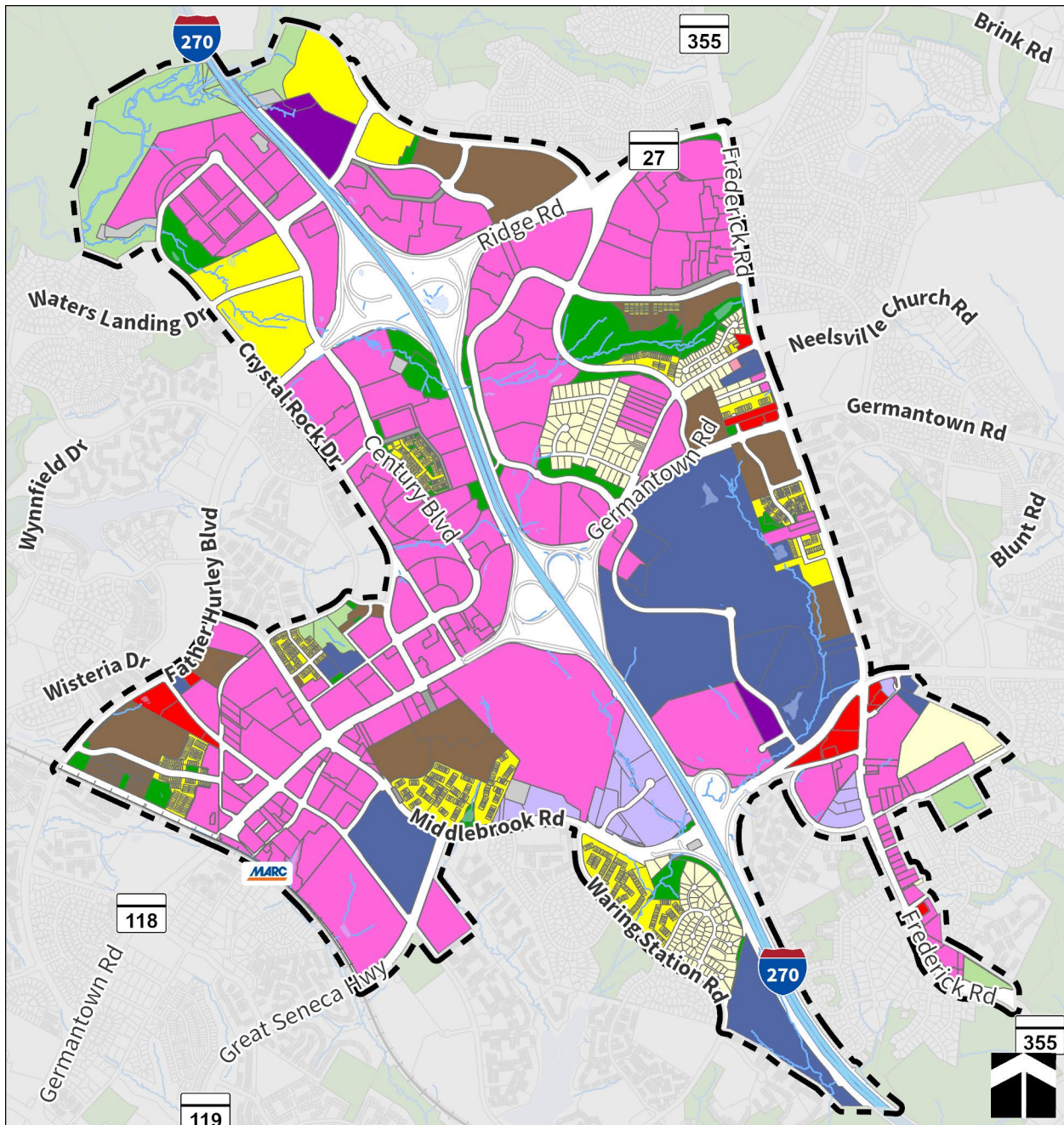
Map 5. Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Parkland | Institutional or Community Facility | Research and Development |
| Private Open Space | Office | Parking and Transportation |
| Residential Single Family Detached | Retail | Utility |
| Residential Single Family Attached | Mixed Use (Residential and/or Commercial) | Vacant |
| Residential Multi-Family | Industrial or Warehouse | |

Map 6. Proposed Land Use



Proposed Land Use



Land Use Area Types

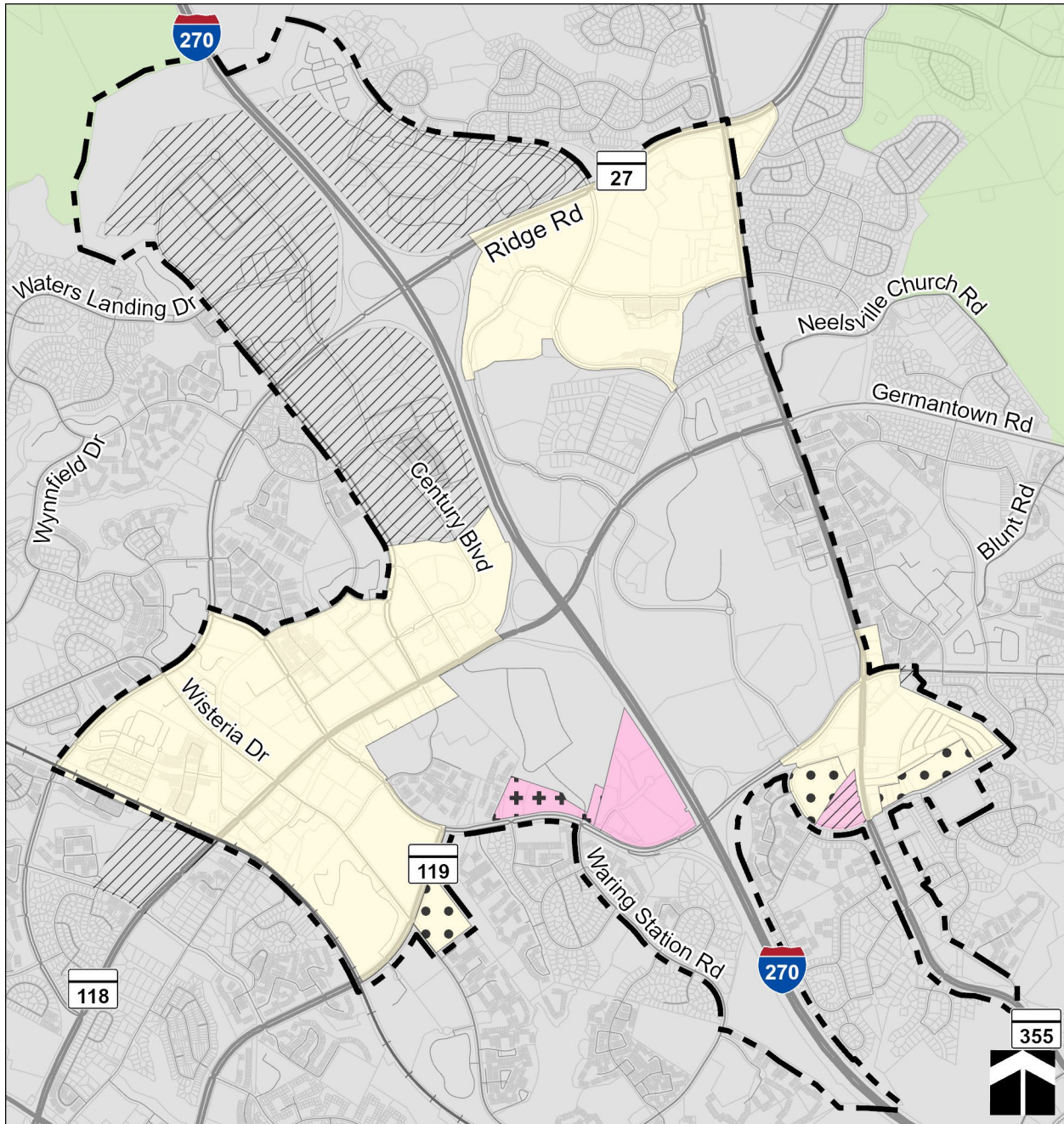
Land use area types characterize the land use intensity of locations within Montgomery County. How a specific area is classified is based on the land use vision for the area. Because transportation serves land use, a location's area type, in addition to street function, determines its appropriate street types, bikeways, intersection spacing, and other transportation elements. Formerly called Complete Streets Design Guide area types, these area types have become integrated into the County Code, and it is important that how an area is classified is consistent with its likely future form.

There are five county land use area types are:

1. A **downtown** area consists of areas with the highest intensity of development.
2. A **town center** area consists of areas with moderate to high development intensity.
3. A **country** area is located within the designated Rural area.
4. An **industrial** area is an area with predominantly industrial zoning.
5. A **suburban** area is an area with predominantly residential zoning that is not already a downtown, town center, industrial, or country area.

There are three of these area types in the GSPA area: town center, industrial, and suburban. The three town center areas in the Plan area are the Germantown, Milestone, and Fox Chapel town centers (these area type definitions are distinct from the more general use of the term "Town Center" elsewhere in this document). The recommended county area type changes, shown in Map 7, better align mapped designations with actual and anticipated development patterns, rather than relying on zoning alone. Areas are scaled back where development is primarily residential, physically disconnected, or unlikely to support the level of pedestrian, retail, and transit activity expected in a town center. At the same time, boundaries are expanded or adjusted to include locations with strong potential for mixed-use or transit-oriented development, and certain areas are reclassified as industrial where existing or planned uses are better served by that designation. Together, these updates ensure area types reflect how places function today and are likely to evolve, supporting more appropriate transportation design and street classification decisions.

Map 7. Area Type



Potential Area Types

- Country
- Downtown
- Industrial
- ++ Industrial (from Suburban)
- Suburban
- / Suburban (from Town Center)
- Town Center
- / Industrial (from Town Center)
- Town Center (from Suburban)

Recommendations:

1. Revise the Germantown town center area type as follows:
 - a. Remove the properties starting approximately 350 feet north of the Crystal Rock Drive/Aircraft Drive intersection.
 - b. Remove the Qiagen parcels.
 - c. Add the Germantown Square Shopping Center property.
2. Remove the area north of Ridge Road from the Milestone town center area type.
3. Revise the Fox Chapel town center area type as follows:
 - a. Add the properties in the Plan area north of Scenery Drive and parcels to be zoned for a mix of uses bounded by Gunners Branch Road and MD 355.
 - b. Remove the R-60-zoned Germantown Islamic Society property east of Blunt Road.
4. Add the properties currently zoned or recommended for the IM zone on the north side of Middlebrook Road to the industrial area type.
5. Update street classifications to reflect updated area types.

Proposed Zoning

The zoning recommendations update land-use and development regulations to allow greater flexibility for mixed-use development, support a balanced mix of housing and employment, and respond to current market conditions and community priorities. Very few parcels in the Plan area are not recommended for at least a minor zone change, and some parcels are recommended for changes for several reasons. A map showing all proposed zoning is at the end of this section (Map 16). See the attached zoning maps for a more detailed view of the recommended zoning changes by Plan district.

Update/Remove Overlay Zones

The Plan recommends updating the Germantown Transit Mixed Use Overlay Zone and removing the Germantown Churchill Village and the TDR overlay zones currently mapped in the area.

Germantown Transit Mixed Use (GTMU) Overlay Zone

The existing GTMU overlay requires significantly higher BLT purchases than elsewhere in the County, which has discouraged development in Germantown. This Plan recommends revising the overlay to better align with its original intent: encouraging compact, mixed-use development near transit while improving flexibility and feasibility.

The updated overlay would focus on properties near major transit investments, including the MARC Station, Germantown Transit Center, and the currently planned MD 355 BRT terminus at the Milestone Park and Ride. Lower-density residential development is

discouraged in these locations because it does not fully leverage these assets or support walkability and transit use.

If lower-density development is proposed, additional BLT purchases or equivalent public benefits should be required to ensure consistency with the Plan's land use and transportation goals. See the Economic Development section for discussion of BLT requirements.

The revised overlay should also work in tandem with the Plan's housing recommendations, including the targeted MPDU requirement for development within the GTMU area, to help ensure that transit-oriented growth expands housing opportunity and affordability.

Germantown Churchill Village (GCV) Overlay Zone

The GCV overlay zone can be removed from these properties because the conditions it was intended to address—reconciling development standards following the rezoning of the Town Sector zone, protecting open space and conservation areas, and allowing certain existing uses to continue as conforming—do not apply in this portion of the Plan area, and the underlying zoning and Plan recommendations already provide sufficient guidance while allowing for a simpler regulatory framework.

Transferable Development Rights Overlay Zone

Many residential properties along the MD 355 corridor are within Transferable Development Rights (TDR) overlay zones. These overlay zones have mapped densities from 8 to 15 units per acre as recommended in the 1989 *Germantown Master Plan*. All these properties have since been developed using TDRs with no further development expected. The TDR overlay zone has served its purpose on these properties and should be removed.

Two other areas in the Plan area in the CRT zone currently have TDR overlay zones: the Milestone Shopping Center and other properties that were part of the original development, mapped at a TDR density of 1.29, and a large part of the Fox Chapel neighborhood on the east side of MD 355, mapped at a TDR density of 0.71. The Milestone Shopping Center is recommended for the CR zone, where the purchase of Building Lot Termination (BLT) easements or a payment to the Agricultural Land Preservation Fund (ALPF) is required. The rest of the area covered by this TDR overlay zone has already been built out using TDRs, and the remaining residential areas are not expected to redevelop, so the overlay is no longer needed here.

The TDR overlay zone in the Fox Chapel neighborhood covers properties in the CRT zone, which does not have a BLT purchase requirement. The TDR overlay zone can be removed here because most of the area is either not expected to redevelop or is unlikely to use

TDRs, and increased density in other CR-zoned properties will still meet overall policy goals through the BLT requirement.

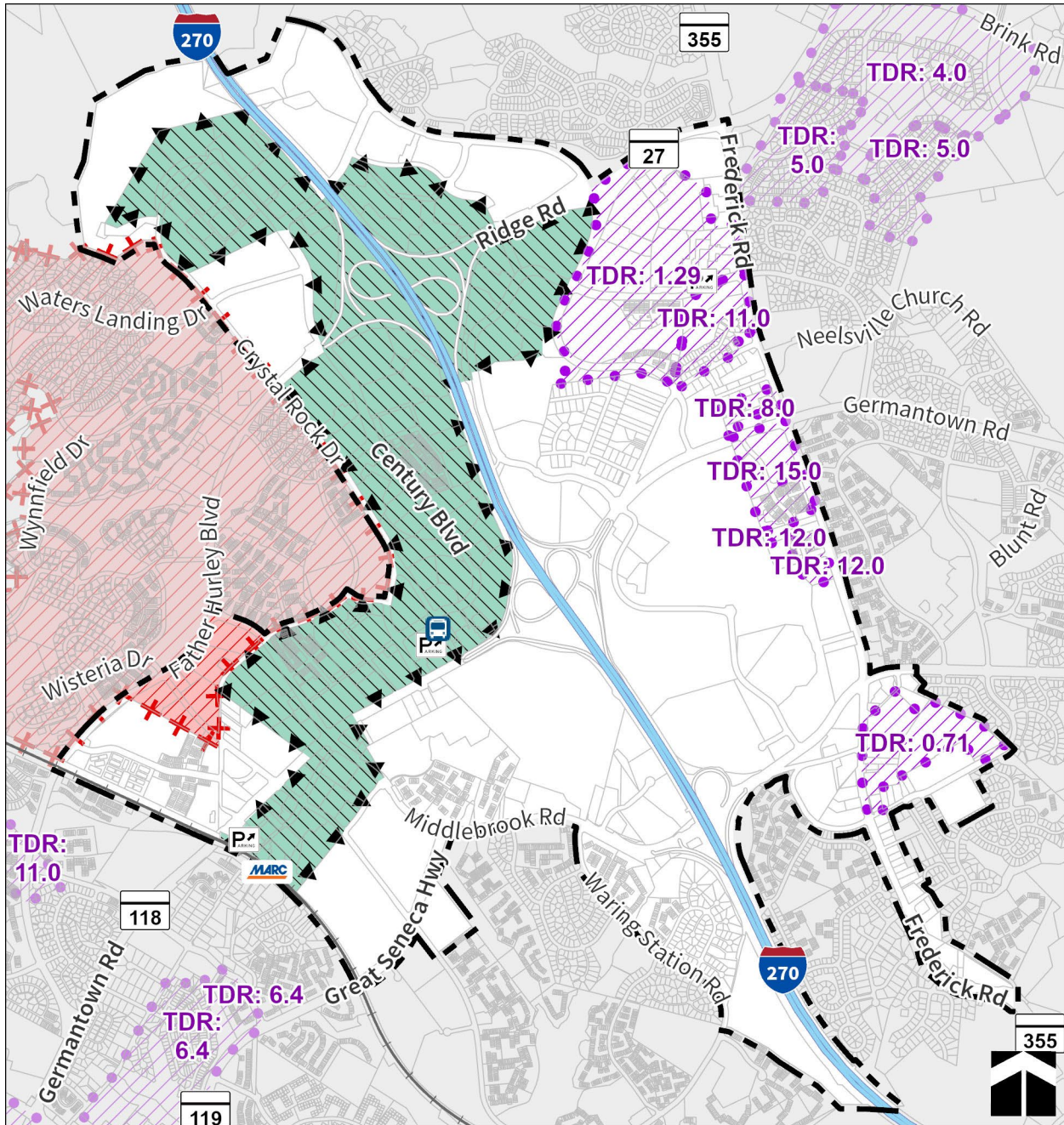
Public Benefits and Optional Method Development

The Incentive Zoning Update establishes a new countywide public benefits framework for optional method development. This document does not prescribe a specific set of public benefits for Germantown at this time; however, Planning staff are continuing to refine public benefit incentives for the plan area and potentially for individual districts or neighborhoods. This work may include evaluating whether the countywide public benefit menu should be selectively applied, supplemented, or modified through the Germantown Transit Mixed Use (GTMU) overlay zone; assessing whether different public benefits should be prioritized at different FAR tiers; and identifying public benefit strategies that encourage full utilization of allowable density, particularly on properties located closest to transit. Final recommendations for incentive zoning may result in changes to the GTMU overlay boundary.







Recommendations:

1. Revise the Germantown Transit Mixed Use (GTMU) overlay zone to require additional public benefits (which may include BLTs). Update the overlay zone's boundary to only include properties within proximity to transit.
2. Remove the Germantown Churchill Village Overlay (GCV) zone from all properties in the Plan area.
3. Remove all TDR overlay zones from the Plan area.
4. Create a package of public benefit incentives for the Plan area and possibly for each neighborhood.

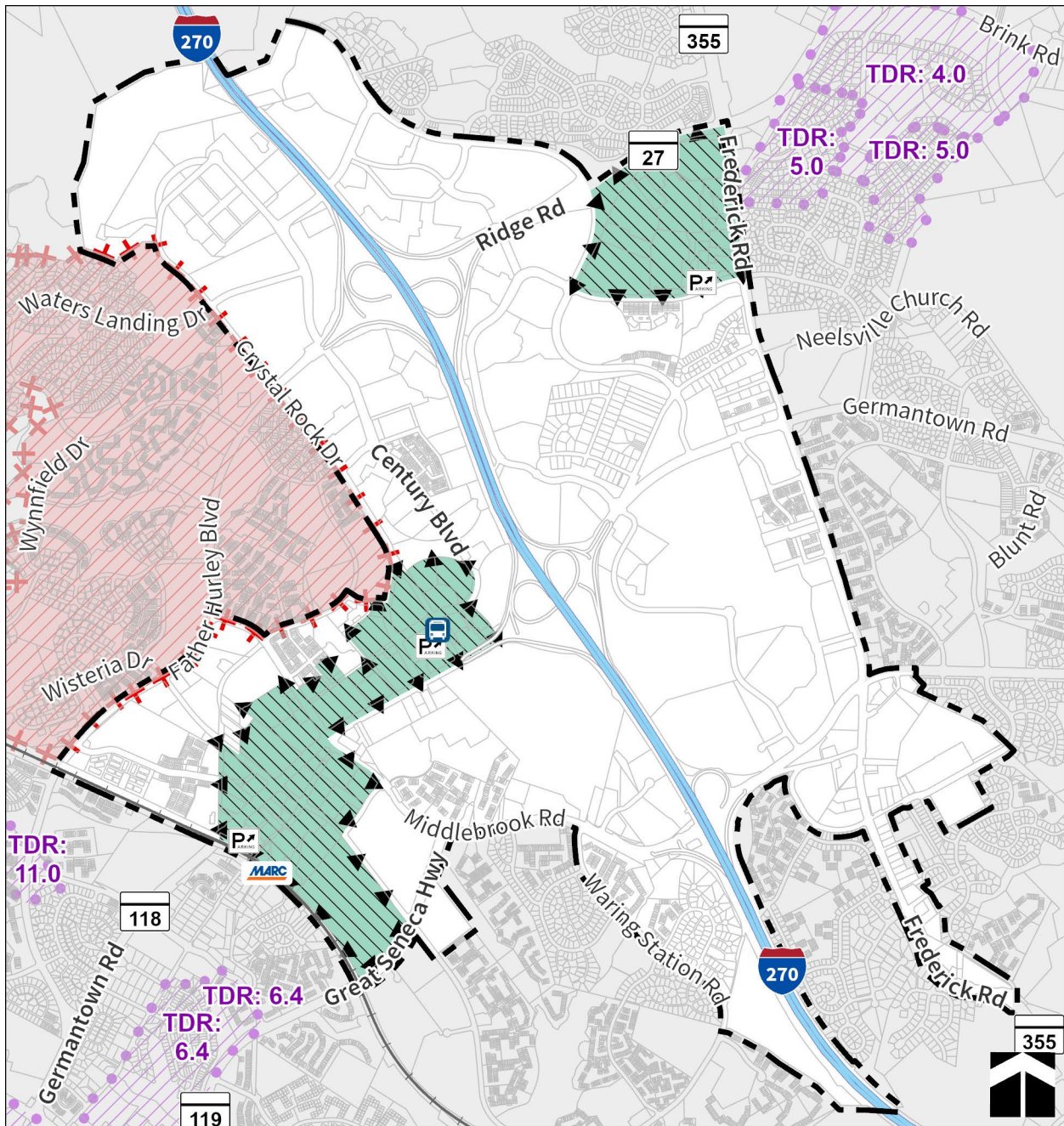
Map 8. Existing Overlay Zones









Overlay Zone

-  Germantown Churchill Village Overlay Zone
 -  Germantown Transit Mixed Use Overlay Zone
 -  TDR Overlay Zone
-  Germantown Transit Center
 -  MARC Station
 -  Park and Ride Lot

Map 9. Recommended Overlay Zones



Recommended Overlay Zone

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Germantown Churchill Village Overlay Zone |  Germantown Transit Center |
|  Germantown Transit Mixed Use Overlay Zone |  MARC Station |
|  TDR Overlay Zone |  Park and Ride Lot |

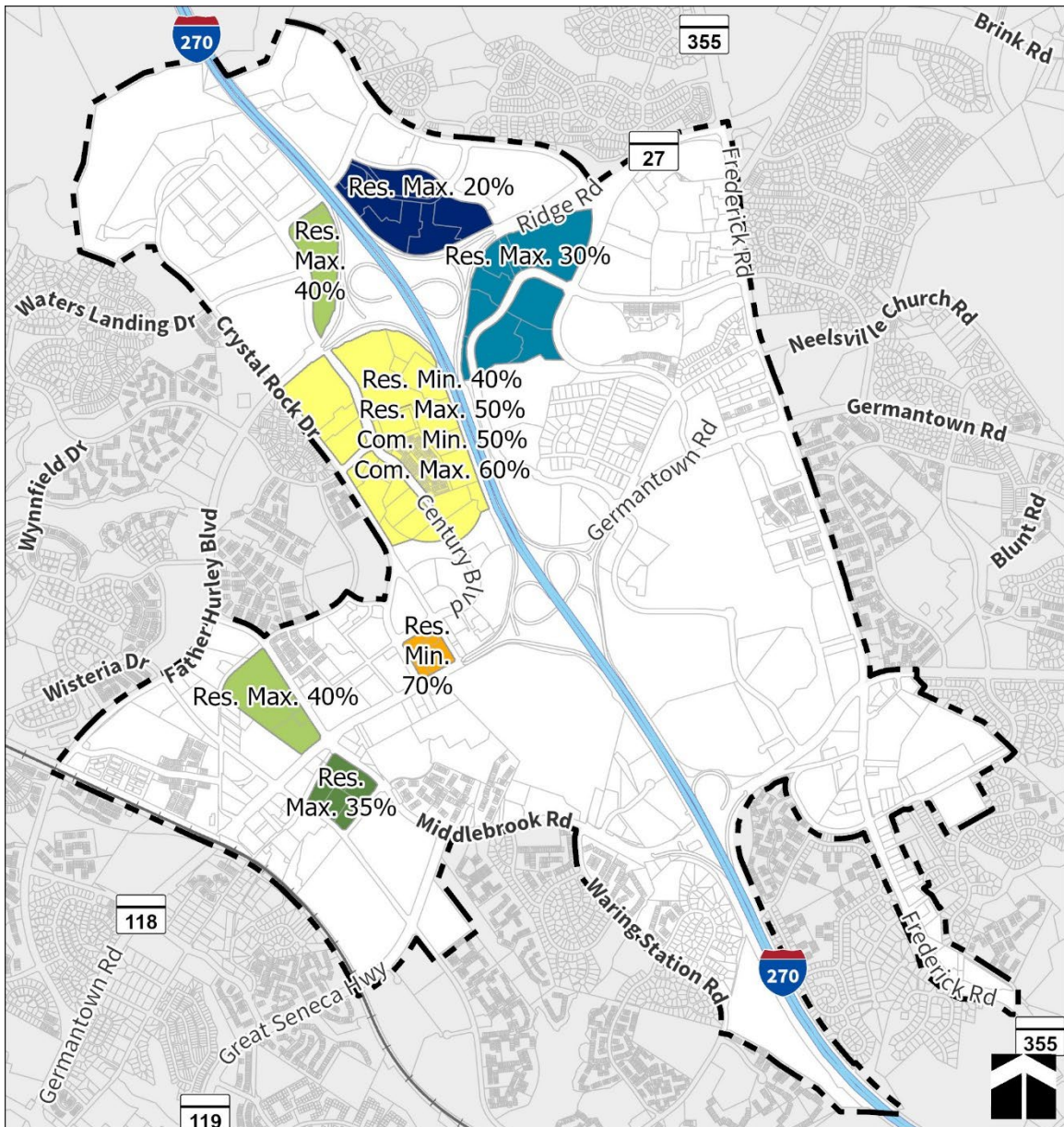
Provide Maximum Development Flexibility in Mixed-Use Areas

The 2009 Plan emphasized employment uses and included site-specific recommendations that favored commercial over residential development; however, shifts in the economy, office market preferences, and the ongoing housing shortage have made this approach less relevant. This Plan instead promotes greater flexibility, allowing properties to develop at full density as commercial, residential, or mixed-use. To support vibrant activity centers, many properties are recommended for modest to substantial density increases, while others are rezoned from EOF to CRT to better respond to market conditions and allow more housing. Activity centers are envisioned with the greatest height and intensity at their core, stepping down toward the edges to create a distinct and cohesive urban form.

Recommendations:

5. Remove site- or neighborhood-specific development caps that limit commercial or residential capacity beyond what is allowed by the zone (see Map 10).
6. For properties in the Commercial/Residential family of zones, equalize total, residential, and commercial FARs to allow flexible development responses to market demand.
7. Rezone all EOF-zoned properties (except the EOF-zoned property owned by Montgomery College) to CRT with equal total, commercial, and residential components of density.
8. Increase total density on targeted sites within activity centers to support complete communities.
9. Adjust height limits on certain properties to allow taller buildings within activity center cores while stepping down toward neighborhood edges.

Map 10. Site-Specific Development Restrictions from 2009 Plan

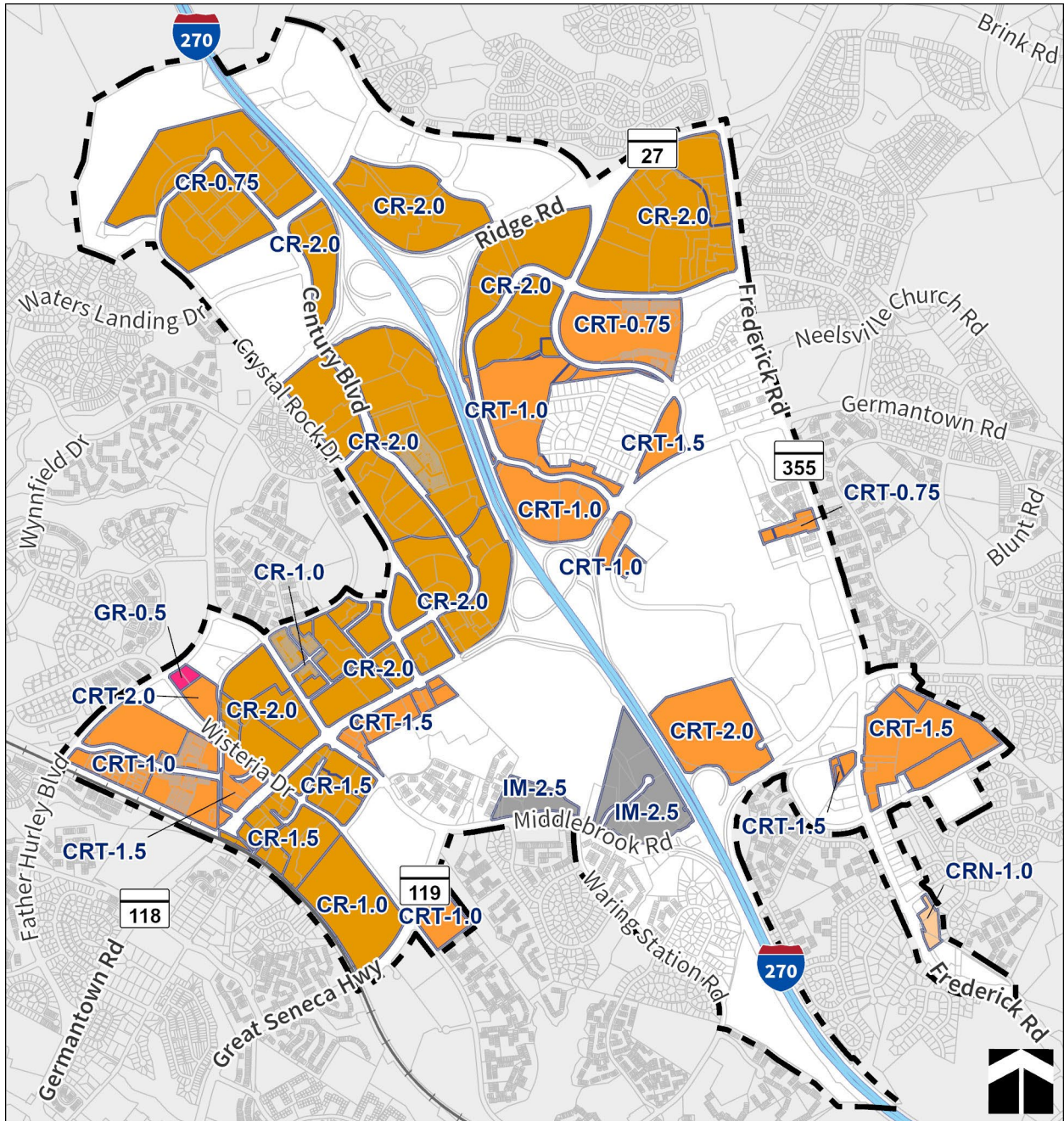


Development Restrictions from 2009 Plan

- 70% Minimum Residential
- 20% Maximum Residential
- 30% Maximum Residential
- 35% Maximum Residential
- 40% Maximum Residential
- 50% Maximum Residential

Note: the 35% maximum residential shown on the map was removed as part of the 2019 *MARC Rail Communities Plan*.

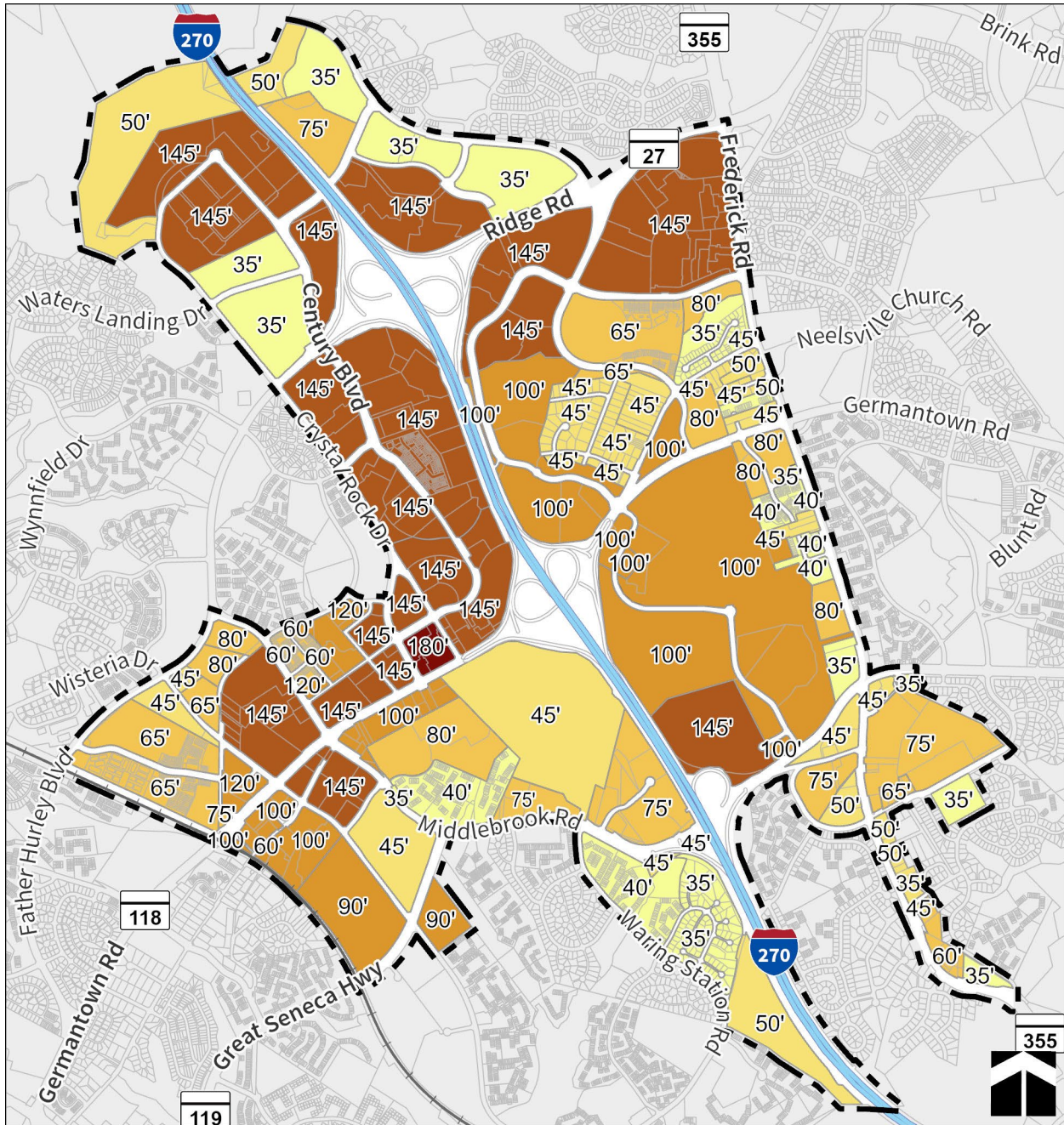
Map 11. Properties Recommended for a Zoning Change to Provide Additional Flexibility



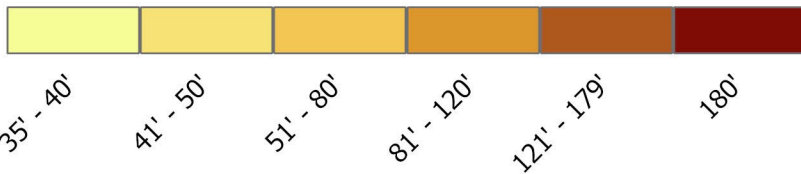
Recommended Zone

- General Retail
- Industrial Medium
- Commercial Residential Neighborhood
- Commercial Residential Town
- Commercial Residential

Map 12. Maximum Height in Recommended Zone Without Bonus Height



Maximum Height in Recommended Zone



Change Underlying Zone to Support Envisioned Development

Several properties in the Plan area should be rezoned to support the development pattern recommended in the Plan or to better match uses that exist today that are suitable existing uses. On some properties, this is a change from Commercial/Residential Town (CRT) to Commercial/Residential (CR). The difference between these zones is that the CR zones are for larger downtown areas in close proximity to transit options and where retail tenant gross floor area is not restricted, whereas the CRT zones are for smaller downtowns and edges of larger downtowns where retail tenant ground floor footprints are more limited to preserve the town center scale. In other areas, a zone change is recommended to enable the desired land uses and form.

One notable site included in this section is the U.S. Department of Energy (“DOE”) property at Germantown Road and I-270 in the Southern Gateway plan neighborhood. DOE has not indicated an interest in redeveloping their property, but given the typical 20- to 30-year timeframe of a sector plan, this Plan wants to set the stage should redevelopment occur. If redevelopment is ever contemplated for this site, the Plan supports a future zone change to either the Life Sciences (LSC-1.5 H-145) or the Commercial Residential – Floating (CRF-1.5 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-145) zone to enable development that creates a new neighborhood activity center and support the Town Center much better than could be accomplished in the existing R-200 zone. This approach prepares for long-term possibilities without assuming immediate change.

The surface parking lots near the MARC station offer an opportunity for significant new development. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has recently released their MARC Growth and Transformation Plan, which includes additional support for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at certain sites along the MARC Rail system. Planning Staff in partnership with MCDOT have been encouraged to pursue TOD designation for the area surrounding the MARC Rail Station. The designation provides more financing and housing opportunities within the Plan area and would highlight the publicly owned land available for partnerships. The recommended density and height in this area should be increased to support TOD.

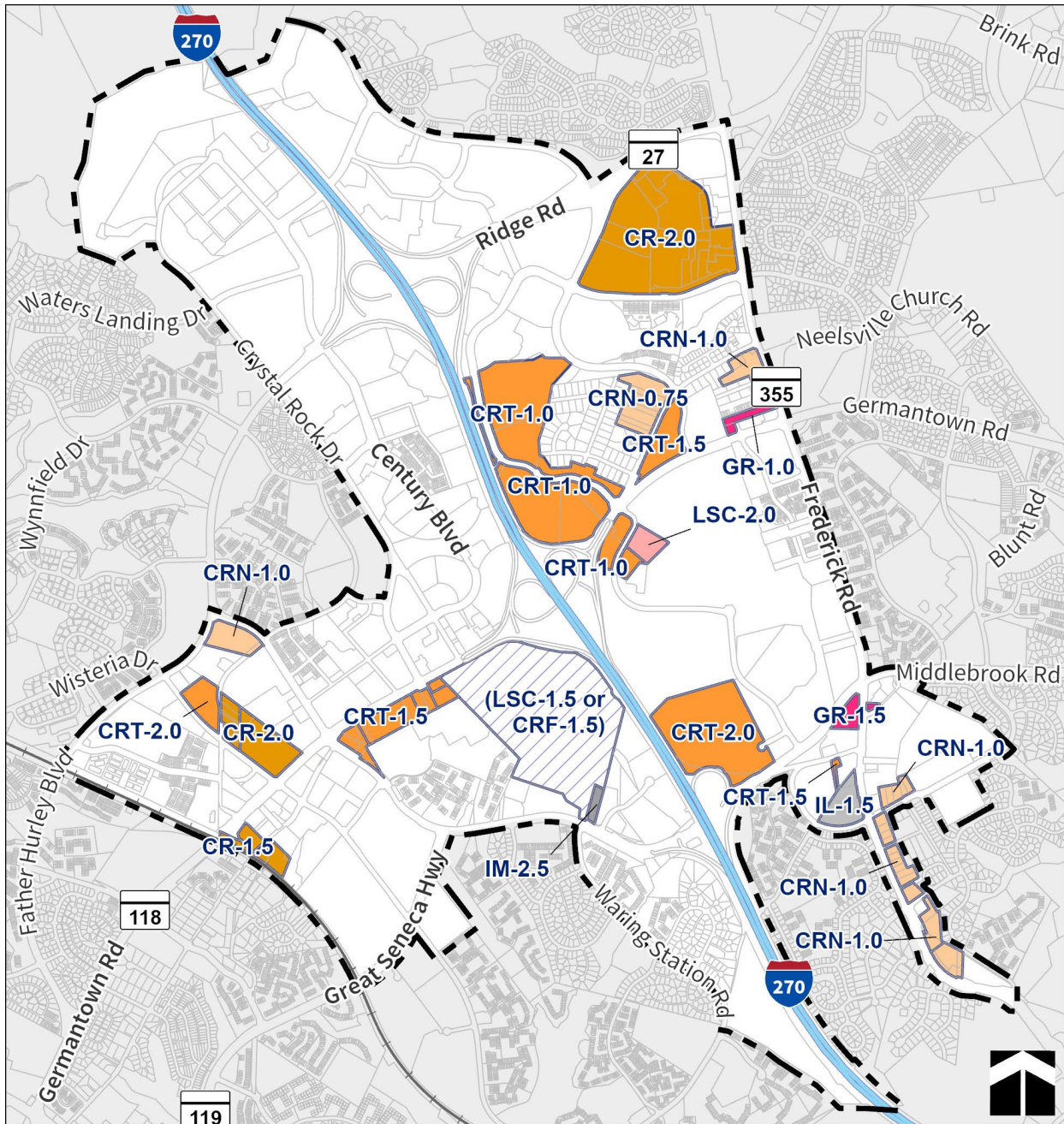
In the Seneca Meadows/Milestone plan neighborhood, the properties along both sides of Boland Farm Road west of Observation Drive present an opportunity to create a new neighborhood activity center. Along the northwest side of the road are a medical office building, a Masonic Lodge, single-family detached homes with deep back yards containing various outbuildings and vehicles, and two former houses now owned by a mosque. On the southeast side, between Boland Farm Road and Germantown Road, is a property with two office buildings: a medical office building and a building recently renovated with space for

research and development uses, but which is mostly vacant due to shifting demand for that kind of space. The properties on the northwest side are in a transitional state from residential to institutional and commercial uses. This Plan recommends a change from R-200 to CRN to support neighborhood-serving retail uses and a more efficient use of land for residential uses. The Plan also recommends a change from EOF to CRT for the large parcel between Boland Farm and Germantown roads to support redevelopment of the site. With appropriate changes in land uses, this area could become a new neighborhood activity center to serve residents living nearby.









Recommendations:

10. Rezone selected properties to a new FAR-based zone to support a greater intensity of development in the Town Center activity centers and the Milestone/Neelsville Village shopping centers.
11. Rezone selected properties in the Fox Chapel neighborhood from CRT to GR or from GR to IL to reflect the existing uses in those areas to support the recommended land uses and development pattern.
12. Rezone a strip of R-200-zoned properties along Boland Farm Road in the Seneca Meadows/Milestone neighborhood to CRN to reflect the nature of the area as a transition between existing single-family detached homes and more intense uses across Boland Farm Road.
13. Rezone a strip of R-200-zoned properties on Scenery Drive in the Fox Chapel neighborhood to CRT to match the recommended zone for the surrounding properties and to allow for eventual redevelopment similar to what is envisioned for the neighborhood.
14. Rezone a small strip of NR-zoned properties on the east side of MD 355 in the Fox Chapel neighborhood to the CRN zone.
15. Rezone the GR-zoned properties on the south side of MD 118 in the Town Center neighborhood to the CRT zone.
16. Rezone the Department of Energy property from R-200 to CRT to allow future redevelopment of the site that supports the Town Center.
17. Rezone the Mother Seton Parish property from R-200 to CRN to allow a housing component to be added to the property while maintaining a transition from the Town Center to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
18. Rezone several R-200 and R-90 properties along MD 355 to CRN or GR to support corridor-focused development.
19. Rezone the EOF-zoned property that is part of the Montgomery College campus from EOF to LSC to match the zoning of the rest of the campus.

Map 13. Properties with Recommended Change to Underlying Zone to Support Existing and Future Development



Recommended Zone

- | | |
|---|---|
|  General Retail |  Life Sciences |
|  Commercial Residential Neighborhood |  Industrial Light |
|  Commercial Residential Town |  Industrial Medium |
|  Commercial Residential |  Support for Life Sciences or CR Floating Zone |

Other Zoning Changes

The proposed zoning changes in this section are a response to more technical issues and are not intended to spur a change in development on the affected properties other than on properties or parts of properties included in the sections above.

Designate New Zone for Outdated Zoning Designation

Several properties in the Plan area have zones that were superseded by new zones in the Zoning Ordinance that was approved in 2014. When these properties are included in a master plan area, the properties must be rezoned with a modern zone. In the Plan area, this includes properties zoned R-H, RT, and PD.

Align Zone with Existing Development

Several parts of Germantown were built decades ago based on Development Plans or using Transferable Development Rights (TDR) easements. These areas today contain single-family detached houses, townhouses, low-rise apartment buildings, a few duplex units, and one triplex. They are essentially fully developed, mature neighborhoods; no new development is expected in these areas.

For these properties, the Plan recommends assigning the zone that best matches the on-the-ground development. In some cases, this may result in a lot that does not completely conform to the standards of the zone—for example, a 5,800-square-foot lot in a zone with a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet—but provisions in the Zoning Ordinance allow building permits without regard to the street frontage and lot size requirements of its zoning if it is not in compliance merely because of a zoning change. In most cases, the primary benefit of the zoning change is simply to clean up the zoning map in a few areas, especially in areas near Waring Station Road that are split-zoned.

For the properties that were developed with TDRs, the TDR overlay zone serves no further purpose and should be removed from those properties.

The 2009 Plan rezoned a property with a self-storage facility from an industrial zone to R-200. The zoning change was shown in the 2009 Plan, but there was no discussion of the change in the text, and the result was a non-conforming use in the zone. This property should be rezoned to the industrial zone recommended for the neighboring property.

Address Zoning Inconsistency

There are two properties that were rezoned from the former RMX zone to CR during the 2014 Zoning Ordinance update. According to the standard zone translation table, RMX-2 properties were to be rezoned CRT-2.0 C-0.5 R-1.5 H-65 T, but these two properties were inadvertently rezoned CR-2.0 C-0.5 R-1.5 H-65 T. (The color coding of the entry matches the other CRT recommendations, so this was likely a typo in the table.)

Resolve Split Zoning

Properties that include more than one zone can add unnecessary complications to development calculations. In the Plan area, properties that are split-zoned have most of the property in one zone and a smaller remainder in a different zone. The smaller part of these properties should be rezoned to match the zone of the larger part.

Remove “T” Designation from Zone

When the Zoning Ordinance was rewritten in 2014, some zones received a “T” designation following the zoning classification to indicate special provisions that allowed for bonus density and height when providing MPDUs or workforce housing. The T designation is temporary and is only to remain in place until a property has been included in a master plan. Most of the T-designated properties in the Plan area are recommended for zoning changes, which removes the T designation from the zoning classification, but the LSC-zoned properties that comprise the Montgomery College campus are not recommended for any other zone change. These properties should be rezoned to the same zone but with the T designation removed.

Recommendations:

20. Designate new zones to replace the outdated R-H, RT, and PD zones.
21. Rezone developed residential properties to the zone that best fits the existing development.
22. Rezone the self-storage facility at 12211 Middlebrook Road from R-200 to IM-2.5 H-75.
23. Rezone the two CR-zoned properties in the Waterford Hills community from CR-2.0 C-0.5 R-1.5 H-65 T to CRT-1.0 C-1.0 R-1.0 H-65.
24. Rezone split-zoned properties to the zone recommended for the larger part of the property.
25. Rezone any property with a T designation to remove the T from the zoning classification.

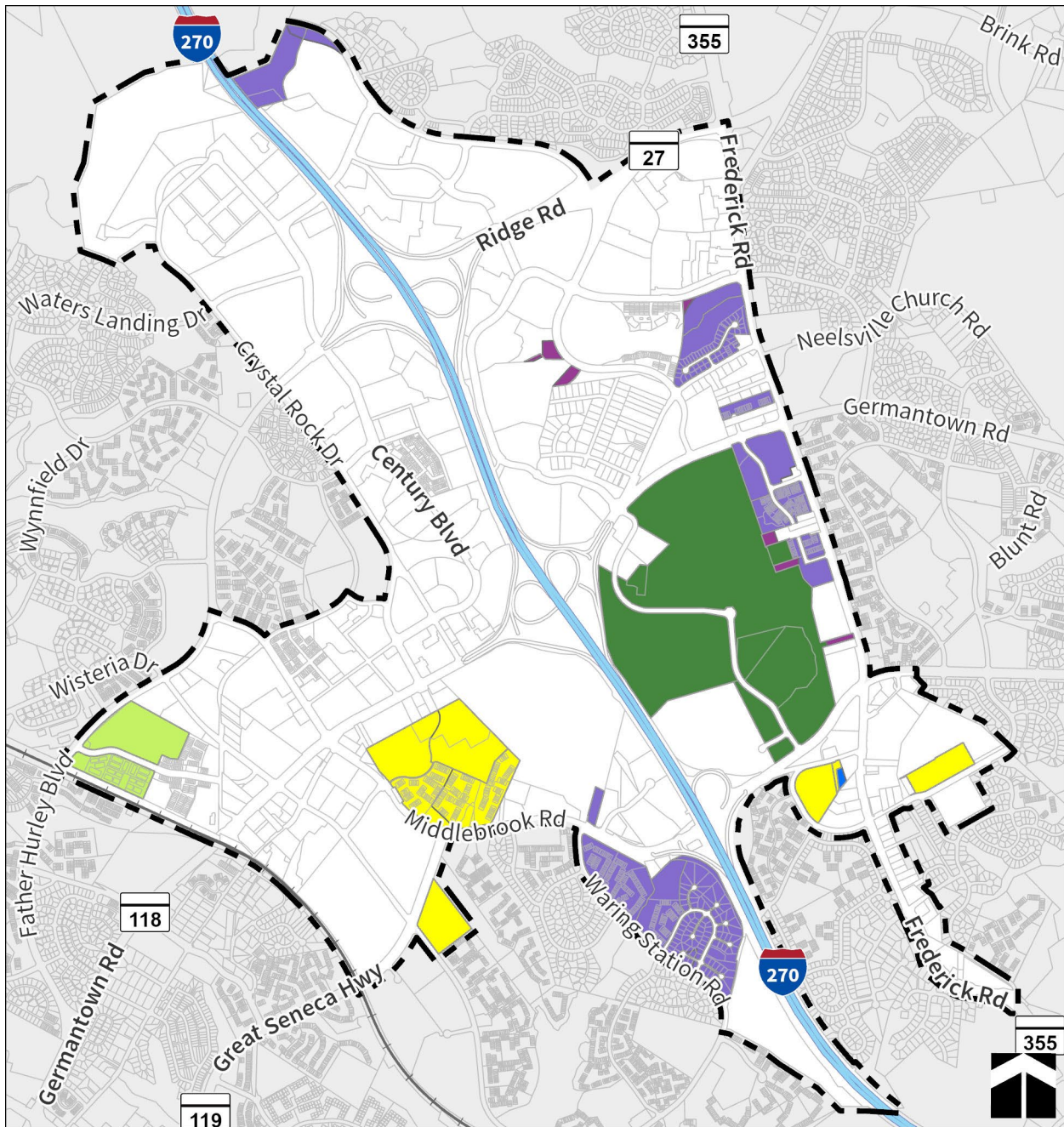
No Zone Change

Many properties in the Plan area are already in a suitable zone and do not require a zone change.

Recommendation:

26. Retain existing zone for all other properties in the Plan area.

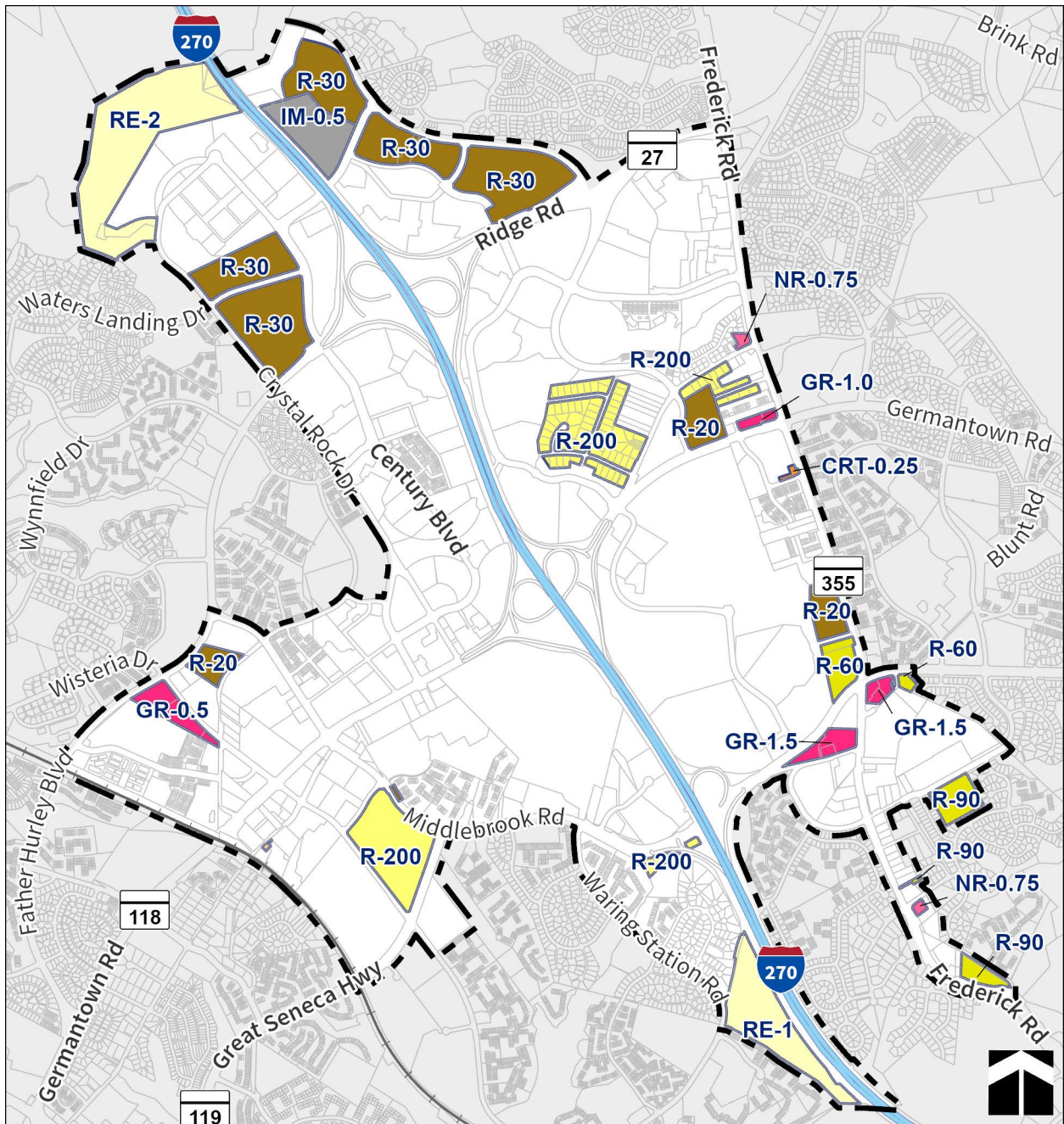
Map 14. Properties Recommended for Zoning Changes for Other Reasons












Primary Zoning Change Reason

- Align zone with existing development
- Remove "T" zone
- Address zoning inconsistency
- Resolve split zoning
- Designate new zone for outdated zone
- Resolve split zoning; designate new zone for outdated zone

Map 15. Properties with No Recommend Zone Change



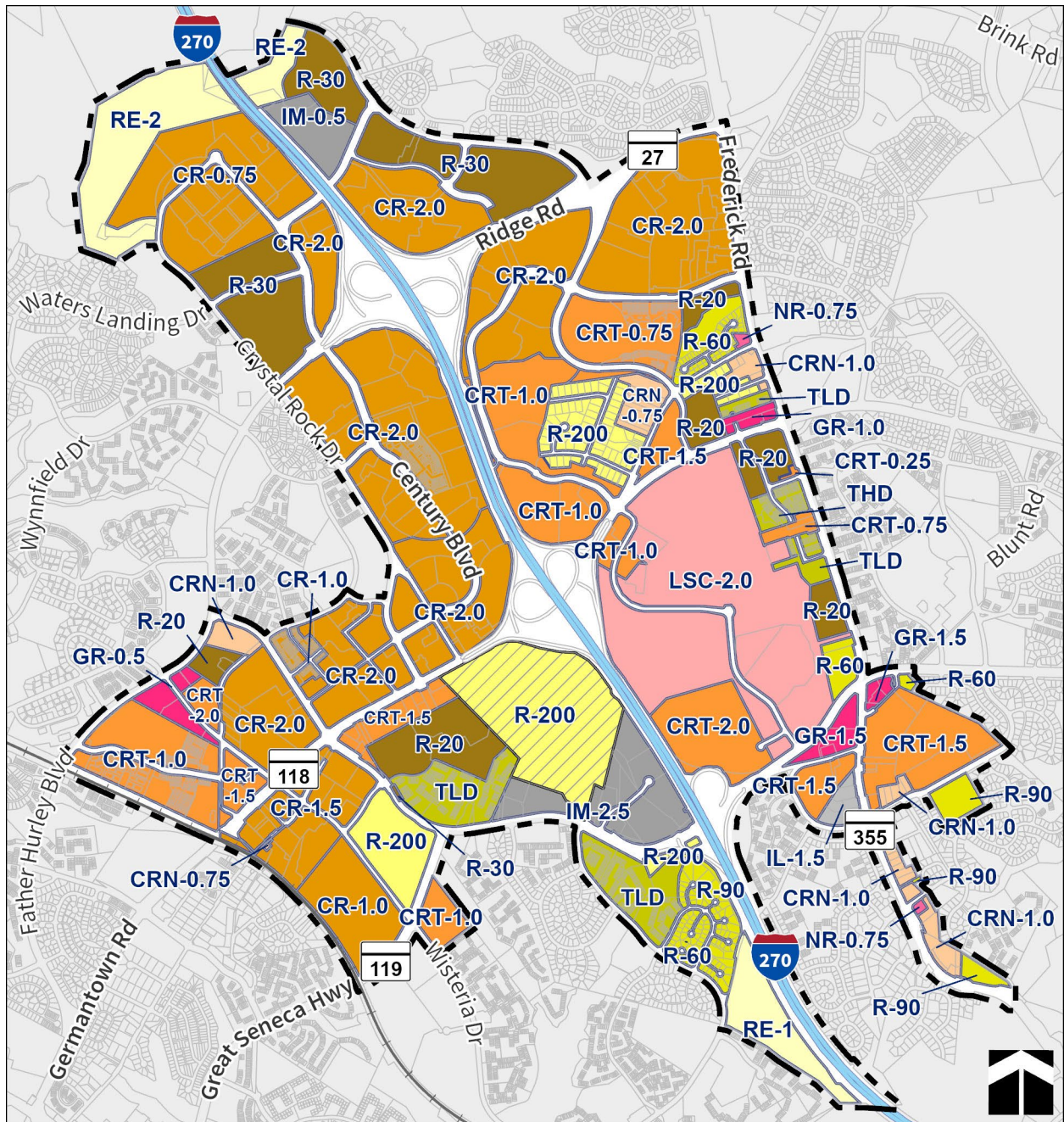
Recommended Zone

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Residential Estate |  General Retail |
|  Residential - Low Density |  Commercial Residential Neighborhood |
|  Residential - Medium Density |  Commercial Residential Town |
|  Multi-Family |  Industrial Medium |
|  Neighborhood Retail | |

All Proposed Zoning

Map 16 shows all proposed zoning for the Plan area. Because it is a small scale map, only the abbreviated “short” zones are shown, whereas the full zone designation often includes additional components, such as commercial or residential density or building height. See the zoning maps by neighborhood in the appendix for full zoning designation.

Map 16. All Recommended Zoning



Recommended Zone

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
|  Residential Estate |  Neighborhood Retail |  Life Sciences |
|  Residential - Low Density |  General Retail |  Industrial Light |
|  Residential - Medium Density |  Commercial Residential Neighborhood |  Industrial Medium |
|  Townhouse |  Commercial Residential Town |  Future Zone Change |
|  Multi-Family |  Commercial Residential |  LSC-1.5 or CRF-1.5 |

Transportation

Context

Transportation decisions have a strong influence on travel behavior, the success of proposed development, and how safely and conveniently residents can access daily needs. The updated transportation framework reflects changing attitudes toward mobility, evolving land use patterns, and countywide priorities established in *Thrive Montgomery 2050*. In response, the Plan moves away from the 2009 Plan's emphasis on accommodating regional auto travel and long-range roadway expansion toward a more balanced, multimodal approach that prioritizes safety, walkability, transit access, and local connectivity.

This chapter outlines a transportation network organized around complete streets, a connected local street grid, and enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities that support neighborhood activity centers. Street designs are rebalanced to better serve everyone, offering a wider range of reliable travel choices while continuing to accommodate drivers through targeted roadway improvements and new connections. Together, these strategies support shorter trips, reduce barriers between neighborhoods, improve access to daily destinations, and reinforce a transportation system that supports complete communities and future growth in the right locations.

Vision

Germantown will evolve into a walkable, bikeable, and transit-supportive community where the majority of daily needs, such as education, recreation, shopping, and dining, are accessible without relying on a car.

Goals

These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly Connected Mobility for All and Vibrant Neighborhood Hubs, by focusing on how the transportation system improves safety, expands travel options, and strengthens connections between people, places, and activity centers.

- Improve safety for all users by designing streets and crossings that reduce speeds, minimize conflicts, and support predictable, comfortable travel.
- Establish a connected pedestrian network that provides direct, continuous, and convenient routes between neighborhoods, activity centers, and transit for people of all ages and abilities.
- Expand and enhance the bicycling network to support safe and efficient travel for local and regional trips.

- Improve east–west and north–south connectivity to better link neighborhoods and reduce barriers created by high-speed, multi-lane roadways and other infrastructure.
- Provide reliable and convenient transit options that directly connect Germantown to local and regional destinations.
- Manage roadway capacity to support a more efficient, resilient, and balanced transportation system that prioritizes safety, access, and multimodal travel.

Recommendations

Master-Planned Streets

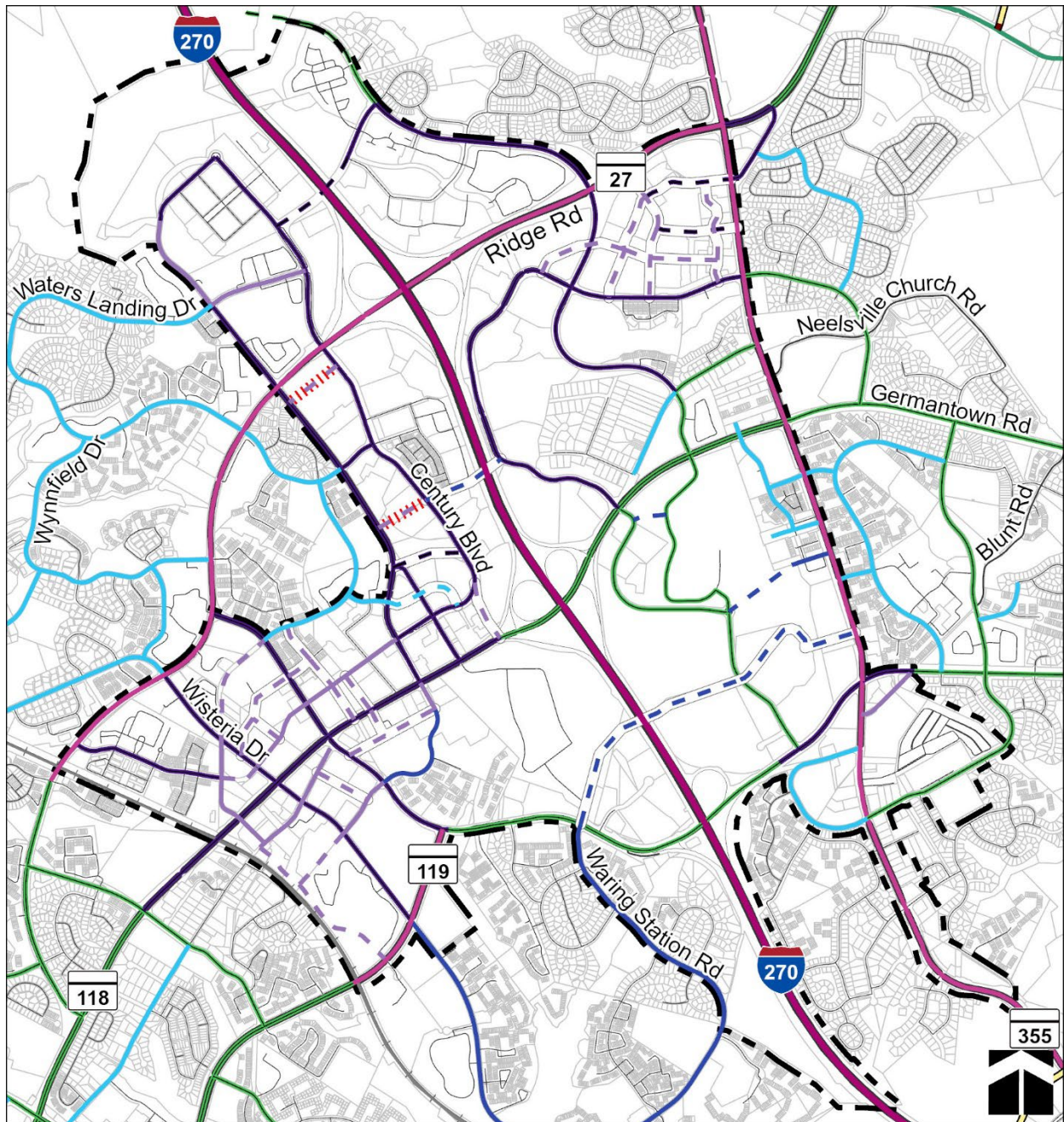
The Plan area includes several previously master-planned but unbuilt streets that remain important components of the transportation network, including a few that have significant value. The Dorsey Mill Road bridge across I-270 connecting Century Boulevard with Observation Drive provides more direct routing options for people traveling between the Germantown Town Center and Clarksburg or other points north, in tandem with the extension of Observation Drive to Gateway Center Drive. This connection helps make Century Boulevard an integral part of the regional roadway network and makes north-south trips more feasible without traveling on I-270.

Further west, the extensions of Waters Road and Century Boulevard west of Middlebrook Road provide for a denser street grid in the Germantown Town Center, better connecting the Germantown MARC station with the civic core and providing routing alternatives to Germantown Road and Father Hurley Boulevard, particularly for trips within Germantown itself.

Planning staff recommend a curbless street treatment for the portion of Century Boulevard between Town Commons Drive and Pinnacle Drive, which includes the BlackRock Center for the Arts, the Germantown Library, the Town Commons, and retail shops (see Figure 6 above). This segment functions as a civic and cultural space as much as a transportation corridor, supporting high pedestrian activity, events, and flexible use of the public right-of-way. Coordination with MCDOT for design and implementation could be considered at the appropriate review stage.

Street recommendations are shown in Map 17 and expanded upon below.

Map 17: Streets



Streets	Downtown Street (Planned)	Area Connector (Planned)	Parkway (Planned)
Recommendation	Boulevard	Neighborhood Connector	Controlled Major Highway
Add	Boulevard (Planned)	Neighborhood Connector (Planned)	Freeway
Remove	Town Center Boulevard	Industrial Street	Freeway with HOV Lanes
Street Type	Town Center Boulevard (Planned)	Country Connector	Freeway with planned HOV Lanes
Downtown Boulevard	Town Center Street	Country Connector (Planned)	Rustic Road
Downtown Boulevard (Planned)	Town Center Street (Planned)	Country Road	Exceptional Rustic Road
Downtown Street	Area Connector	Parkway	Commercial Shared Street

The following streets recommended for removal are impractical due to intervening development, topography, and stormwater management facilities.

Recommendations:

1. Remove the master-planned street between Crystal Rock Drive and Century Boulevard south of Cloverleaf Center Drive and north of Aircraft Drive.
2. Remove the master-planned street between Crystal Rock Drive and Century Boulevard south of Father Hurley Boulevard and north of Cloverleaf Center Drive.

Recommended New Master-Planned Streets

Staff recommends two new sets of master planned streets: those that provide significant value within the Town Centers; and those that help connect different parts of the overall Plan area. The former are most likely to be built through redevelopment as part of a project's frontage or off-site requirements, while the latter will likely require standalone capital improvements funding.

Expand the Local Street Network

Expanding the local street network supports safer and more convenient multimodal travel by shortening trip distances, improving east-west connectivity, and reducing the barrier created by wide arterial roadways. It also increases the resiliency of the street grid by reducing dependence on individual roadway links. Requiring loading, service, and parking access off-street allows streets to function as safe, comfortable, pedestrian-oriented public spaces.

Recommendations:

3. Add new master-planned streets as envisioned in Map 17. These streets would emerge from reconfiguring internal circulation roads and parking lot drive aisles especially within the Germantown and Milestone Town Centers. The intent is to create a more connected, fine-grained network that improves routing options and provides more direct travel paths for all modes.
4. Ensure future development provides additional non-master-planned streets where needed to achieve appropriate protected crossing spacing. Beyond master-planned streets, the plan encourages the creation of new local streets wherever possible to build out a more complete street network and a block structure that meets or exceeds crossing spacing requirements in Section 50-4.3 of the county code.
5. Construct a network of alleys or through-block service connections. Where feasible, all on-site parking, loading, and service functions should be accessed solely through these locations.

6. Implement a curbless street treatment for the portion of Century Boulevard between Town Commons Drive and Pinnacle Drive.

Improve Local Connectivity Across I-270

With few alternatives, local trips and regional interstate-bound traffic share the same corridors, creating congestion and dividing communities to the east and west of I-270. To address this, staff recommends adding two new crossings over I-270 to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways. In combination with other master-planned street connections, these new links would improve local connectivity between the Germantown Town Center and the eastern side of I-270. By providing alternative routes, they would reduce the need for local vehicle trips to use Germantown Road, Middlebrook Road, and Father Hurley Boulevard / Ridge Road. The extension of Waring Station Road is shown crossing through the southern edge of the DOE campus. As discussed earlier, there are no imminent plans for ownership or access to this site to change, but this recommendation exists to be implemented if the opportunity arises.

Recommendations:

7. Extend Waring Station Road across I-270 to Frederick Road.
8. Connect Century Boulevard across I-270 to Seneca Meadows Parkway south of Fairchild Drive.

Town Center East End Block Reconfiguration

The Town Center East End neighborhood activity center is home to the Germantown Transit Center and contains many important north-south and east-west connections. But block lengths here are sometimes long and crossings don't always feel safe. Establishing a uniform, compact urban block layout in the heart of Germantown Town Center in both north-south and east-west directions will benefit all travelers and the vitality of the Town Center by:

- Breaking up large blocks to improve walkability;
- Creating a finer-grained street network to disperse traffic and reduce the need for wider roads, improving walkability, and eliminating multimodal barriers within the Town Center; and
- Creating a definitive entry point and eastern gateway for the core of Century Boulevard at the T-intersection, setting expectations for a pedestrian-focused environment.

Figure 9 shows a reconfigured street grid in the Town Center East End. The recommended change to Crystal Rock Drive/Aircraft Drive (circle A in the figure) would create a strong north-south spine through a major portion of the Plan area and reduce traffic on the portion

of Crystal Rock Drive west of Aircraft Drive as Germantown I-270-originating/destined traffic stays on Crystal Rock Drive/Aircraft Drive instead of traveling through the Crystal Rock/Germantown Road intersection. The recommendation to reconfigure Century Boulevard near Topgolf (circle B) provides another strong north-south connection through the Plan area and adds an additional block to the Town Center East End street grid.

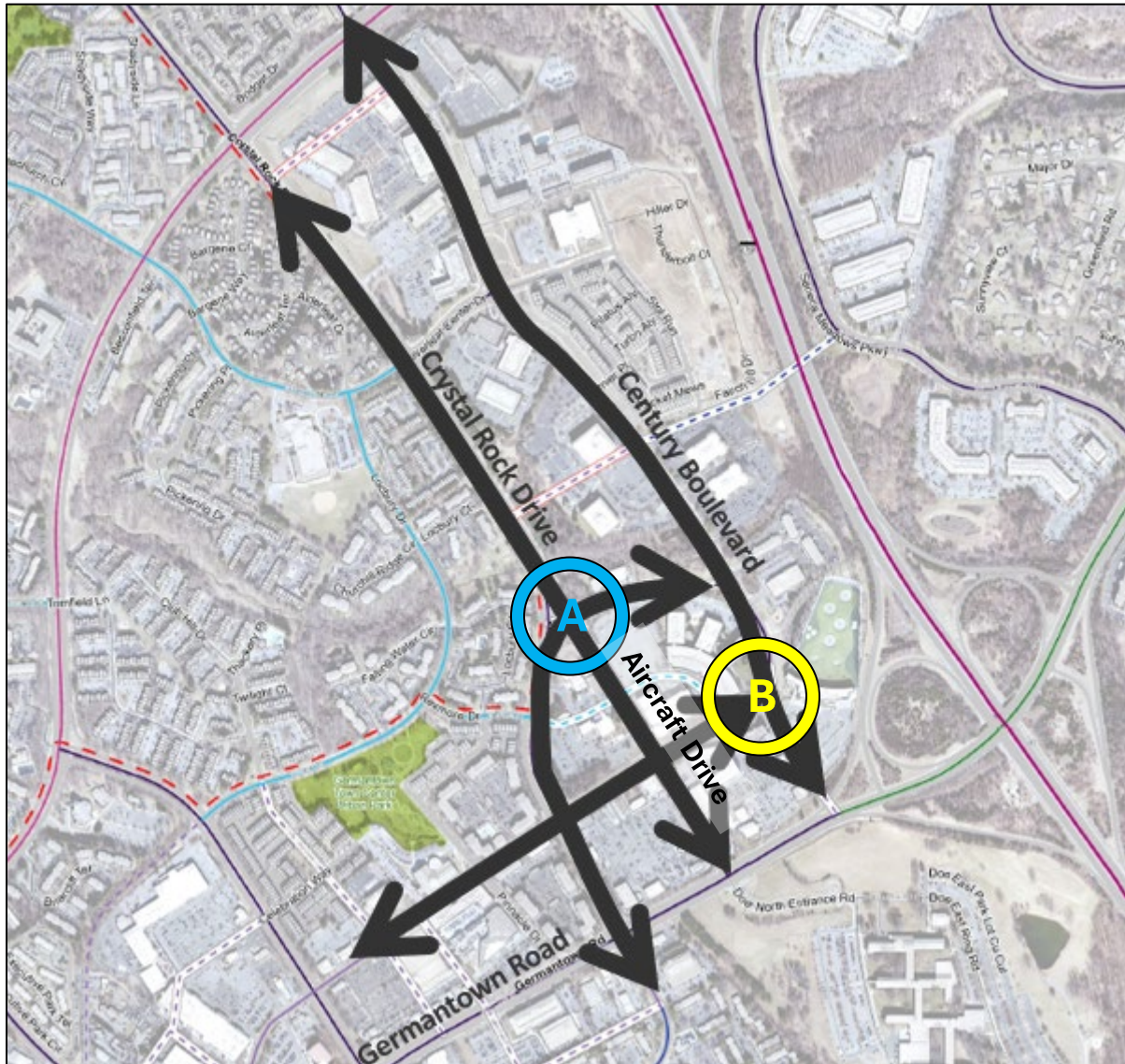


Figure 9. New North-South and East-West Connections

Recommendations:

9. Reconfigure the intersection of Crystal Rock Drive and Aircraft Drive (circle “A” in Figure 9) so Crystal Rock Drive north of Aircraft Drive flows directly into Aircraft Drive. The southern portion of Crystal Rock Drive would then continue east from the

Crystal Rock Drive/Aircraft Drive intersection south of the Salvation Army property to form a T-intersection with the north-south portion of Century Boulevard.

10. Extend Century Boulevard north-south to Germantown Road. The east-west portion of Century Boulevard would form a T-intersection with the north-south portion (circle “B” in Figure 9). To provide appropriate intersection spacing along Germantown Road, the southbound ramps at the I-270 / Germantown Road interchange would be shifted to the east.

Existing Streets

Germantown’s street network was built for a different era, with many roads designed to move traffic quickly and at high volumes. Today, some of these roads are underused, and their design encourages speeds above posted limits. Addressing this mismatch will require a mix of strategies, including lane repurposing, reducing planned but unbuilt lanes, lowering target speeds, and updating street classifications.

Planning Staff are analyzing intersections and corridors to understand potential 2045 conditions and identify where lane reductions may be feasible. Final recommendations will be refined after this analysis is complete, but several roadways have already been identified as candidates for change. Repurposing travel lanes offers multiple benefits: it creates space for transit, sidewalks, and bikeways without widening roads; supports lower speeds through design; and reduces barriers that make it difficult to walk, bike, or cross streets.

Key corridors present different opportunities:

- **Century Boulevard and Crystal Rock Drive:** With the changes recommended for these roads and a future Dorsey Mill Road bridge in place, traffic volumes on both streets will likely increase. One corridor should function as a higher-capacity boulevard and the other as a lower-scale, local-serving street.
- **Crystal Rock Drive (south of Aircraft Drive):** With the recommended changes, Crystal Rock Drive is expected to carry less traffic, creating an opportunity to narrow the roadway and improve east–west multimodal connections.
- **Middlebrook Road and Wisteria Drive:** Important north–south links where lane repurposing could help manage speeds and improve connections to the Town Center. Planned bikeways south of Germantown Road could be extended north. Middlebrook Road south of Germantown Road may have more limited opportunities due to its I-270 interchange.

- **Germantown Road:** A major barrier to north–south multimodal travel in the Town Center; repurposing lanes where feasible would strengthen connections between the Town Center core and surrounding areas.

Planning Staff are also working with MCDOT on placemaking initiatives to test short-term changes in County-owned rights-of-way. These pilot projects can help evaluate lane repurposing and other design changes before permanent implementation, while expanding walkable, people-oriented spaces beyond the Town Center core.

Placemaking projects can include temporary design installations that test ideas for longer term improvements to public spaces such as rights-of-way, public parks, and other open spaces. The placemaking initiative will focus on county-owned rights-of-way within the Plan area to determine how to improve these spaces for nonmotorized users such as pedestrians and bicyclists and encourage an extension of the more walkable areas of Germantown’s town center to the surrounding areas. Utilizing placemaking to pilot repurposing lanes or segments of lanes for a period of time should be considered for the roads recommended below to determine feasibility prior to full scale implementation.

Recommendation:

11. Repurpose existing travel lanes and reduce planned but unbuilt lanes on the following roads:

- Century Boulevard or Crystal Rock Drive/Aircraft Drive
- Crystal Rock Drive (South)
- Middlebrook Road or Wisteria Drive
- Germantown Road

Speeding

Transportation safety is a key community concern in the Plan area, and speed and crash data confirm this issue. Many corridors are part of the county and state High Injury Networks (HINs), where severe crashes are most common. This Plan supports Vision Zero by addressing excessive speeds and improving safety.

Target speeds are based on roadway function and surrounding context and help guide safer street design. Planning Staff are reviewing HIN corridors where existing speed limits exceed appropriate conditions, identifying opportunities to lower target speeds and better align design with how streets should operate.

This Plan will recommend context-sensitive speed management strategies to reduce crashes, improve safety, and make it easier and safer to walk, bike, and travel throughout Germantown.

Recommendations:

12. Lower posted speed limits to reflect master-planned target speeds.
13. Use roadway changes and enforcement approaches to reduce rampant speeding along corridors across the Plan area.

Interchanges

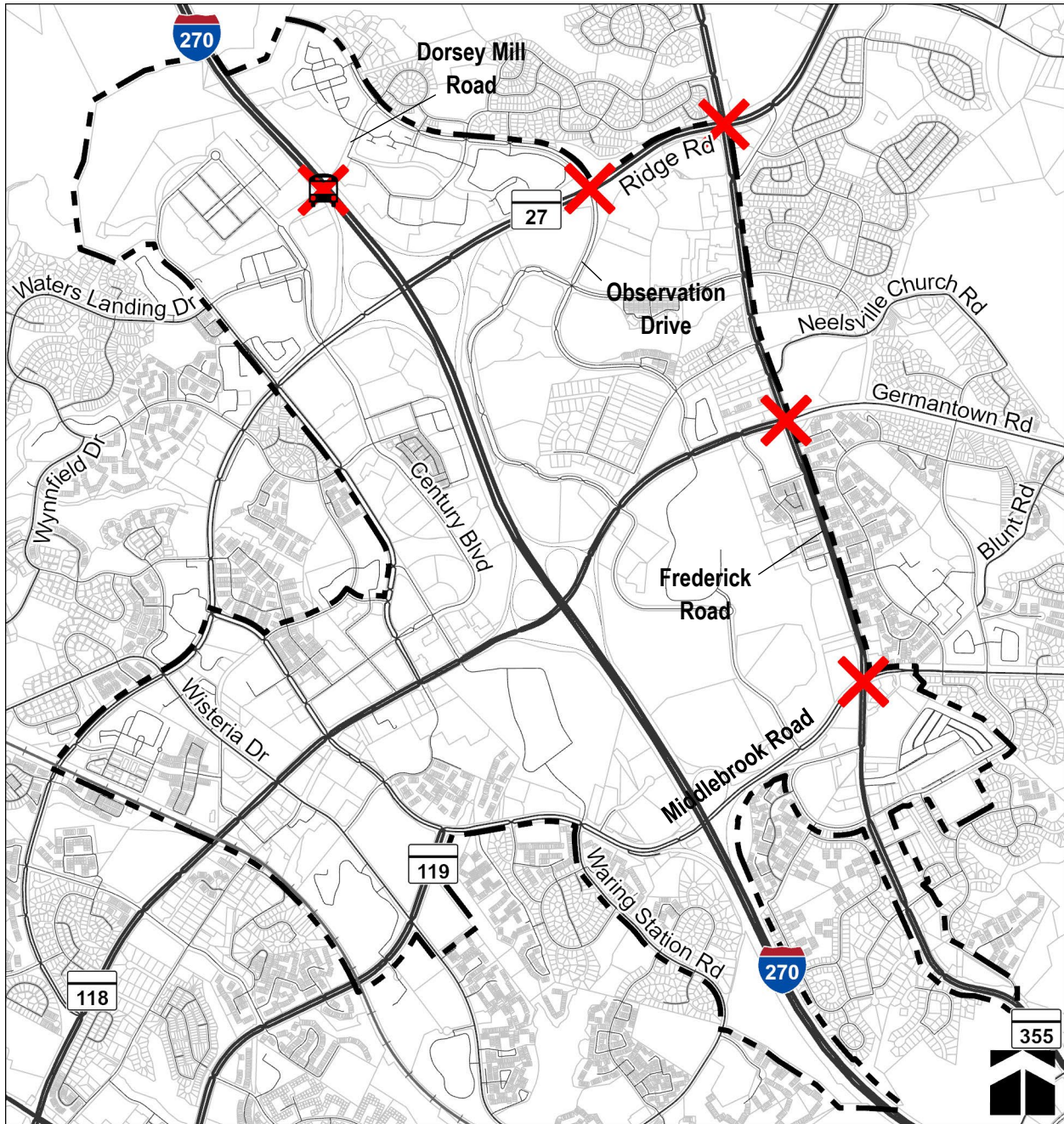
The 2009 Germantown Master Plan recommends the construction of four general purpose interchanges in anticipation of projected traffic volumes for the year 2030 (Map 18). These locations include Ridge Road at Frederick Road, Ridge Road at Observation Drive, Frederick Road at Germantown Road, and Frederick Road at Middlebrook Road, in addition to an HOV/Transit interchange at I-270 and Dorsey Mill Road. At the time, these projects were viewed as necessary expansions of roadway capacity to manage future congestion, support anticipated growth, and connect to the Corridor Cities Transitway.

With the adoption of *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, the county has moved away from policies that expand roadway capacity and toward approaches that emphasize multimodal access, safety, environmental sustainability, and compact development patterns. This new policy direction places less priority on large-scale roadway expansions such as interchanges.



Additionally, the traffic volumes once expected to necessitate these interchanges have not materialized. Updated analysis shows that the conditions predicted in 2009 did not occur, and the anticipated demand that would have required such major infrastructure investments has not been borne out.

There are three existing interchanges in the Plan area (I-270 at Father Hurley Boulevard, I-270 at Germantown Road, and I-270 at Middlebrook Road) that are composed of various combinations of cloverleaf and large-radius directional ramps. Reconstructing these interchanges as tight urban diamond interchanges is in-line with [MDOT SHA's Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidelines](#). Doing so would improve visibility and multimodal safety. Interchange ramps are significant multimodal crash locations in the Plan area, and given the high motor vehicle speeds common at these locations, crash severity is also very high. The HOV/Transit interchange at Dorsey Mill Road will be discussed in the Transit section below.

Map 18. Planned Interchanges in the 2009 Plan



Interchanges

-  Planned
-  Transit/HOV (Planned)

Recommendations:

- 14. Remove all four planned but unbuilt general-purpose interchanges in the Plan area.
- 15. Reconstruct existing I-270 interchange ramps as tight urban diamond interchanges instead of the suburban cloverleaf design.

Pedestrians

Protected Crossings

The Plan builds on County design guidance by identifying additional protected crossing locations and improving connections along key pedestrian routes. Protected crossings—such as signals, HAWK signals, all-way stops, or grade-separated options—reduce conflicts and make crossings safer and more predictable.

Staff evaluated existing crossings and identified gaps where spacing exceeds recommended standards, focusing on intersections and key destinations. New crossings are recommended to close these gaps, improve safety, and support more direct, comfortable walking and biking routes across the Plan area.

Recommendation:

- 16. Construct the protected crossings identified in Map 19.

Pedestrian Shortcuts

Pedestrian shortcuts are informal off-street connections that provide more direct routes than the existing sidewalk or trail network. The Pedestrian Master Plan identified several within the Plan area to improve connectivity without adding new streets.

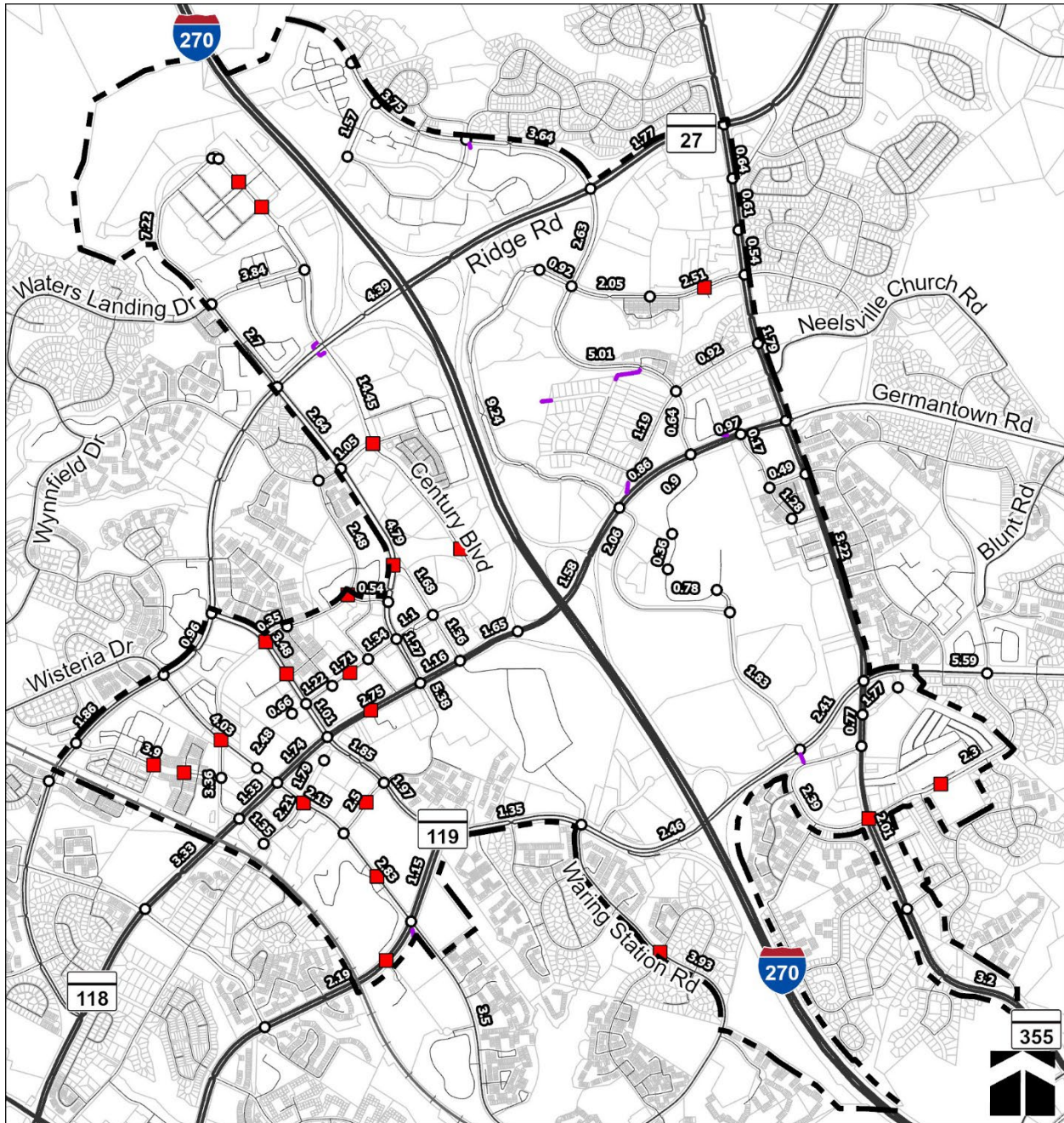
Planning Staff reviewed these locations and refined the list to avoid duplicating future planned streets, focusing instead on shortcuts that meaningfully improve access. Prioritized shortcuts shorten walking distances, reduce travel time, and make walking a more practical option.

Recommended shortcuts are shown on Map 19 and Table 1.

Table 1: Pedestrian Shortcuts

Origin	Destination	Tier
Father Hurley Boulevard (EB)	Century Boulevard	1
Father Hurley Boulevard (WB)	Century Boulevard	1
Germantown Road	Boland Farm Road	2
Middlebrook Road	Gunners Branch Road	2
Greenfield Road	Observation Drive	3
Observation Drive	Great Park Circle	4
Observation Court	Germantown Road	4
Major Drive	Seneca Meadows Parkway	4

Map 19. Pedestrian Recommendations



- Pedestrian Shortcuts
- Potential Protected Crossing Locations
- Existing Protected Crossing Locations
- ### Ratio of Existing Protected Crossing Spacing to Maximum Protected Crossing Spacing for Street Class

Recommendation:

17. Construct pedestrian shortcuts identified in Map 19 and Table 1.

Bikeways

The 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* established a robust network of local and regional bikeways across Montgomery County, and Staff recommends continuing to support these facilities—with limited exceptions—to ensure Germantown’s network remains aligned with the countywide vision for bicycle mobility. This includes maintaining the master-planned routes that form the backbone of Germantown’s bicycle infrastructure and reinforcing multimodal travel options throughout the area.

One recommended change is the removal of the trail planned to run parallel to the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). Because the CCT project is no longer advancing, the associated trail is no longer viable and should be removed from the plan.

Bikeways are a core component of street design in Montgomery County, and ensuring that new streets include facilities appropriate to their context and role in the broader network is essential. In most cases, the recommended bikeways follow the *Complete Streets Design Guide*'s default bicycle facility for each street classification, typically one-way or two-way separated bike lanes. Where roadway extensions are proposed, existing bikeway types are continued to avoid unnecessary transitions.

Transportation staff also coordinated with Montgomery Parks to explore additional opportunities for bicycle connectivity, especially around the Germantown Town Center. These discussions identified potential trail links outside park boundaries that could strengthen connections between parks and improve overall network cohesion. One such opportunity, though located outside the Plan area, is a potential trail connection between the Germantown Town Center Urban Park and Lake Churchill.

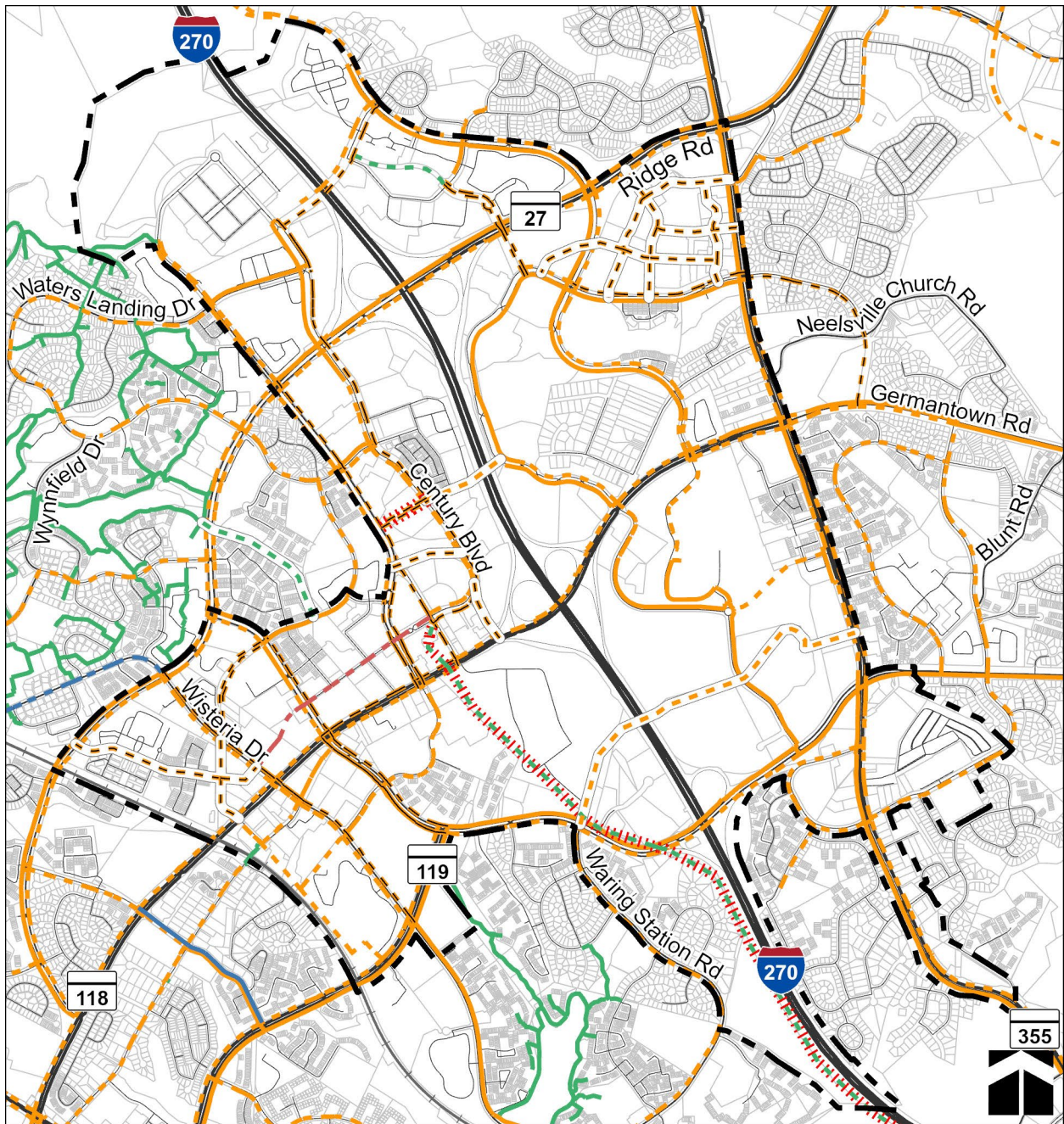
By proactively identifying these opportunities, staff aim to expand recreational access, increase route options for bicyclists, better integrate parks into everyday travel patterns, and enhance connections to the area’s abundant recreational spaces from the Town Center.

Bikeway recommendations are shown in Map 20.

Recommendations:

18. Remove recommended Corridor Cities Transitway trail.
19. Include recommended bikeways as part of new master-planned streets.
20. Connect to natural resources using off-street trails.

Map 20: Existing and Planned Bikeways



Bikeways

Recommendation

○ Add

|||| Remove

Bikeway Type

— Trails (existing)

- - - Trail (planned)

— Separated Bikeways - Sidepath (existing)

- - - Separated Bikeways - Sidepath (proposed)

— Separated Bikeways (existing)

- - - Separated Bikeways (proposed)

— Striped Bikeways (existing)

- - - Striped Bikeway (proposed)

— Bikeable Shoulders (existing)

- - - Bikeable Shoulders (proposed)

— Shared Roads (existing)

- - - Shared Roads (proposed)

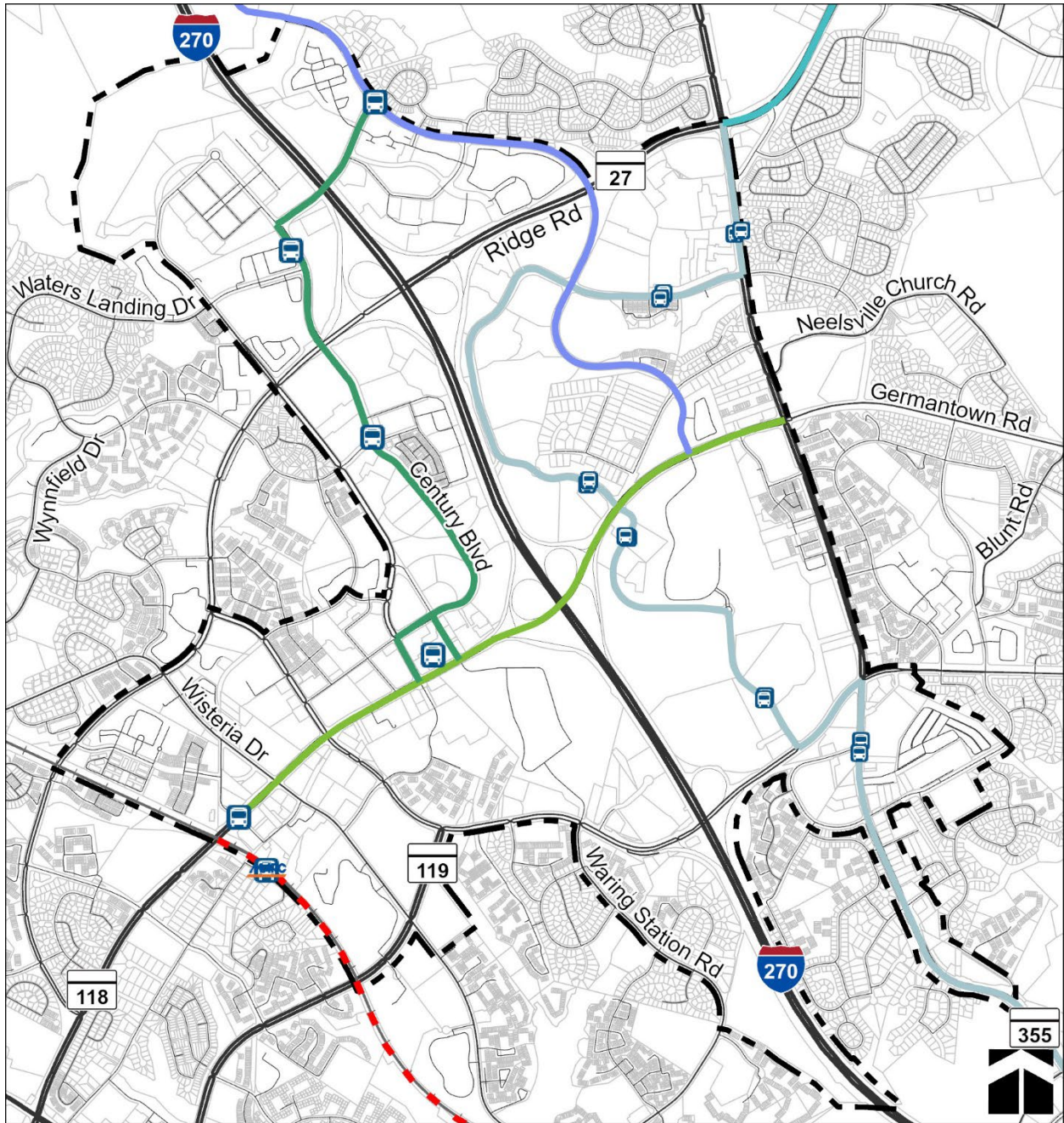
Transit

High-quality transit has long been central to the county's vision for the I-270 corridor, dating back to the *Wedges and Corridors Plan*, which imagined strong transit service as a defining feature of Corridor Cities such as Germantown. Despite this intent, the area has faced ongoing challenges in delivering reliable, well-connected transit, including delays and the cancellation of major projects like the Corridor Cities Transitway.




This Plan supports the recommendations in *2022 Corridor Forward: I-270 Transit Plan*, which provides a coordinated vision for improving service along the corridor. The Plan also updates earlier assumptions about needed infrastructure. This direction supports near-term implementation priorities, such as dedicated transit lanes, and clarifies where past recommendations, including the Dorsey Mill Road HOV/transit interchange, are no longer warranted. As redevelopment continues, evaluating the role and location of the Germantown Transit Center will also help ensure that transit facilities evolve to meet the community's changing needs.

Transit recommendations are shown in Map 21.


Map 21: Transit



Transit

-  Commuter Rail
-  Bus Rapid Transit
-  Enhanced Bus

Transitways

-  Red Line (extension)
-  MD 355 North
-  MD 355 BRT – Ultimate Segment 7 Alignment
-  Germantown Connector
-  Manekin West Connector
-  Milestone/ COMSAT East Clarksburg Connector

Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan

The *Corridor Forward plan* considered the entire I-270 corridor when making transit operations and routing recommendations. *Corridor Forward* identified an approach and a suite of recommendations to advance the transit vision for Germantown and the rest of the I-270 corridor. With that planning effort being so recent and design for some of the planned corridors in progress, it makes the most sense to continue to advance what *Corridor Forward* identified.

Recommendations:

21. Reconfirm the 2022 *Corridor Forward plan*'s recommendations for transit in Germantown. Specifically, support the 2022 plan's focus on:
 - MD 355 BRT as the transit spine to replace the CCT;
 - the associated Manekin West, Milestone/COMSAT East Clarksburg Connector, and the Germantown Connector transit corridors;
 - a future WMATA Red Line extension to the Germantown Town Center; and
 - the potential benefits of improvements to MARC Brunswick Line service.
22. Formalize the *Corridor Forward* transitways with master-planned dedicated transit lanes along the following roadways within the Plan area:
 - Germantown Road from Bowman Mill Drive to Frederick Road (2 dedicated lanes)
 - Aircraft Drive from Germantown Road to Century Boulevard (2 dedicated lanes)
 - Crystal Rock Drive from Century Boulevard to Aircraft Drive (2 dedicated lanes)
 - Century Boulevard from Aircraft Drive to Dorsey Mill Road (2 dedicated lanes)
 - Dorsey Mill Road from Century Boulevard to Observation Drive (2 dedicated lanes)
 - Observation Drive from Germantown Road to the northern plan boundary (2 dedicated lanes)

MD 355 North BRT

MD 355 is intended to be the north-south transit spine the Corridor Connectors feed into. Providing dedicated lanes in these segments will allow transit users to bypass future congestion and make MD 355 BRT a priority.

Recommendation:

23. Reconfirm dedicated transit lanes for portions of MD 355 BRT identified in the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* and the 2025 *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*. Specifically, dedicated transit lanes are master-planned for the following roadways:

- MD 355 from Shakespeare Boulevard to the southern limit of the Plan area (1-2 dedicated lanes)
- Shakespeare Boulevard from Observation Drive to MD 355 (1-2 dedicated lanes)
- Seneca Meadows Parkway from MD 118 to Observation Drive (1-2 dedicated lanes)
- Observation Drive from Middlebrook Road to Goldenrod Lane (1-2 dedicated lanes)
- Middlebrook Road from MD 355 to Observation Drive (1-2 dedicated lanes)
- Goldenrod Lane from Observation Drive to MD 118 (1-2 dedicated lanes)

Dorsey Mill Road HOV/Transit Interchange

The 2009 Germantown Plan recommended an HOV/transit interchange at Dorsey Mill Road based on assumptions of substantial employment growth and the construction of the CCT (see Map 18 above).

Since adoption of that plan, *Corridor Forward* has replaced the CCT with a transit vision focused on MD 355, and the substantial employment envisioned in the area around Dorsey Mill Road has not materialized. A new interchange at Dorsey Mill Road was not discussed in *Corridor Forward* at all. Furthermore, this new interchange would be difficult to implement given the proximity of the Ridge Road/Father Hurley Boulevard interchange. This planned interchange should be removed.

Recommendation:

24. Remove the recommended Dorsey Mill Road HOV/Transit Interchange.

Transit Center Relocation

The Germantown Transit Center is located west of Aircraft Drive, just north of Germantown Road in the Town Center. A 2015 MCDOT study identified potential expansion or relocation due to limited bus capacity and commuter parking.

Since then, travel patterns have shifted. Recent discussions with MCDOT indicate that ridership has declined since COVID-19, reducing the urgency for relocation from a transit operations perspective. However, relocating the transit center could support redevelopment of the block next to the Transit Center, help the Town Center expand east, and maintain effective transit service in Germantown.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to provide a local-serving transit center and a commuter-focused park and ride transit center in different locations in the Plan area. A follow-on study will help determine what is possible and beneficial.

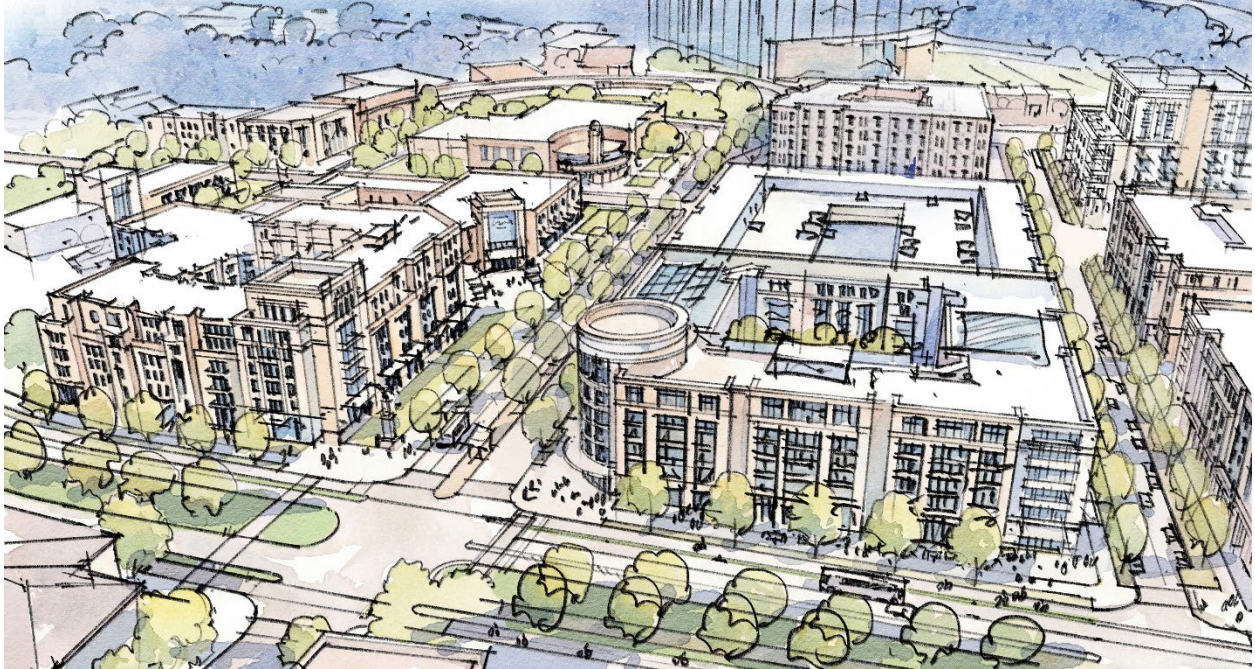


Figure 10. A redesigned Century Boulevard, with Topgolf in the background, strengthens the Town Center experience by extending its streetscape and introducing a linear park that invites people to gather, relax, and move comfortably through the area. The new design also supports a relocated transit center, improving access and connectivity, while opening up strategic opportunity sites for future redevelopment, including the police and fire stations shown on the left side of the perspective. Crystal Rock Drive is in the foreground.

Recommendation:

- 25. Study a potential transit center relocation to support redevelopment along Aircraft Drive while considering budget feasibility, coordinating with the property owners of potential relocation sites, and ensuring that transit operations in Germantown are not degraded.

Parks

Context

Parks in the Plan area improve quality of life for residents in Germantown by supporting regional water quality and biodiversity and serving as important community gathering spaces where people can connect, recreate, and be active.

There are portions of seven M-NCPPC parks within the Plan Area, covering 107 acres. The available recreation amenities within these parks are very limited. Within two miles of the Plan Area, there are an additional 55 parks (over 6,000 acres), 39 miles of trail, and a wide range of recreation amenities in major regional and recreational parks, such as South

Germantown Recreational Park. However, Plan Area residents are not easily able to walk to these parks and rely on personal vehicles for access.

Compared with other corridor-focused growth areas in the county, there are fewer M-NCPPC park amenities per capita in the Plan Area, making this area particularly underserved (see Appendix: Park Amenity Access Levels of Service). At the same time, there are limited opportunities to create new parkland within the Plan area as Germantown continues to evolve and accommodate growth.

Recommendations in this section focus on strengthening Germantown's network of public spaces by enhancing amenities within existing parks and improving residents' access to active recreation as activity centers grow. These strategies work alongside recommendations elsewhere in this document to improve walkability, roadway safety, and connections to existing parks and open spaces. Additional guidance for transportation access to parks is included in the Transportation chapter, and recommendations for consolidated active public space on privately owned land are included in the Urban Design section.

Vision

Germantown's parks should support residents' wellbeing by strengthening diverse community connections, encouraging physical activity across all demographic groups, and protecting green spaces and natural resources.

Goals

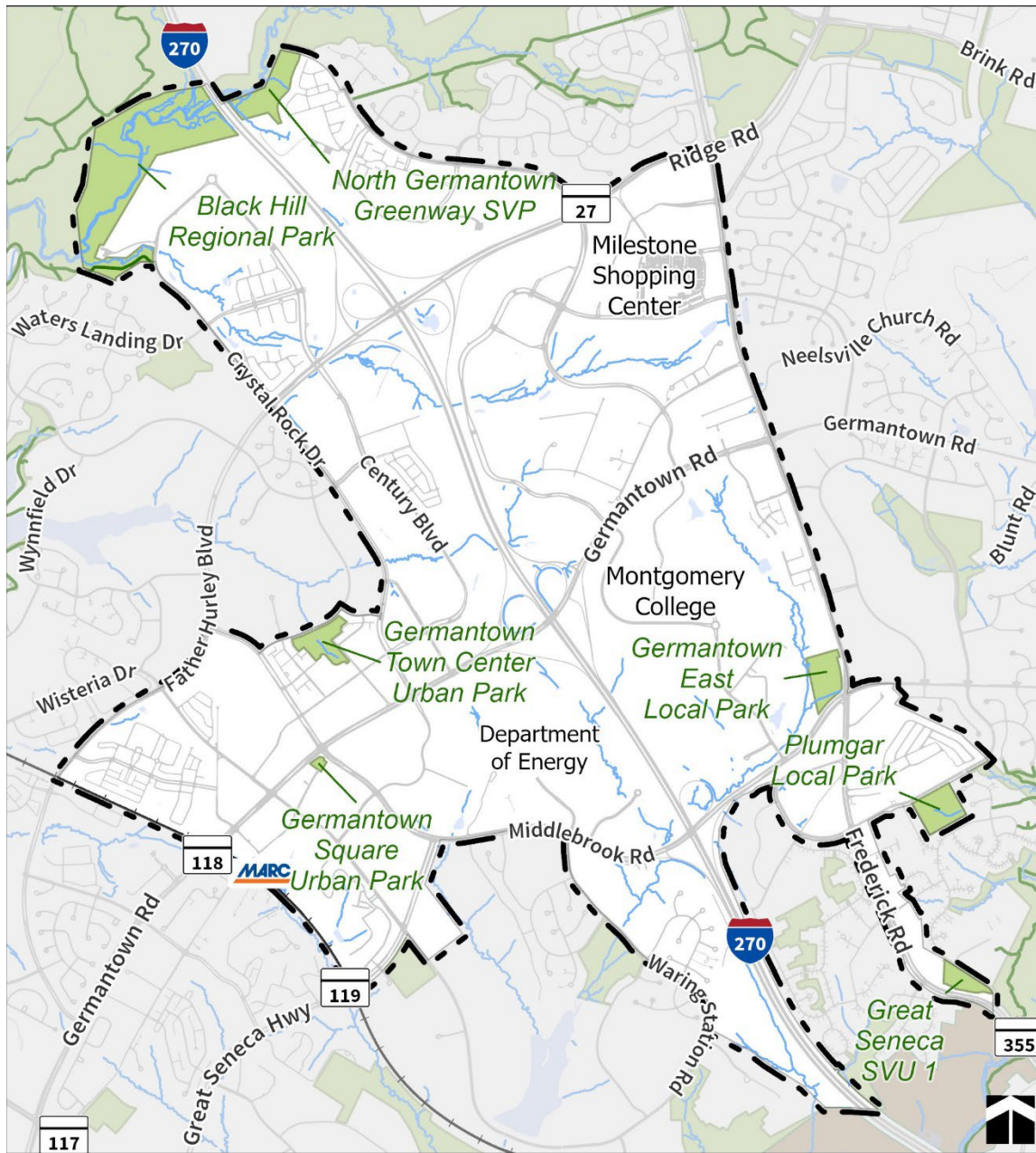
These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly Parks, Recreation, and Public Spaces for Community Wellbeing and Connected Mobility for All, by focusing on how parks and recreation facilities expand access, improve health and wellness, and strengthen community connections.

- Expand active recreation opportunities to better meet the needs of a growing, diverse population.
- Improve safe, convenient, and equitable access to parks, particularly by walking, biking, and transit.
- Steward natural and cultural resources within parks to support ecological function and long-term sustainability.
- Support spaces and community relationships that increase social connections and park activation.

Recommendations

Map 22 shows the location of existing parks. The map is followed by descriptions of each park and specific recommendations for that park.

Map 22. Existing M-NCPPC Parkland



Germantown Town Center Urban Park

In an area surrounded by large regional and recreational parks, Germantown Town Center Urban Park provides a unique urban park experience for residents in the Upcountry. The park is within walking distance of surrounding neighborhoods and Town Center businesses. Its plantings, walking paths, and flexible open spaces support community

programming and activation by the Black Hill Discovery Center, Parks Activation, and partners like BlackRock Center for the Arts and the Germantown Library. Despite the park's strengths, there is limited visibility and a lack of signage that affects both access and safety. These challenges also constrain the park's potential as a convenient and active event space.

Recommendations:

1. Improve visibility at park entrances and add additional signage directing users to the park from Century Boulevard. Seek opportunities to visually and physically connect surrounding public space and rights-of-way to the park. (See the Transportation section for walking, biking, rolling, and transportation safety recommendations to improve access to this park.)
2. Improve the ease and access of regular programming through improvements like signage and other navigation aids, lighting, shade, and accessible multi-use spaces—such as concrete pads that can be used for stages, vendors, and accessible seating. Consider additional active amenities such as a play area or other play features that make use of the natural terrain.

Germantown Square Urban Park

Germantown Square Urban Park is less than an acre and located at the busy intersection of Middlebrook Road and Germantown Road. It's within walking distance of the Upcounty Regional Service Center and Seneca Valley High School. With only a sidewalk and scattered seating, the park is underused. There is also no parking on-site, which makes it difficult to provide high-use amenities. The park's most active use today is as a civic gathering space for rallies and protests. There is an existing two-way bike lane on Middlebrook Road and a planned shared-use path to the MARC station that could improve bicycle connectivity, roadway safety, and access to this parkland.

Recommendations:

3. Activate the park by adding a walkable recreational amenity to serve surrounding residents and students, such as a skate park, dog park, or a soccer court.
4. Incorporate planned bicycling connections as a major feature of the park, and consider creative parking solutions. (See the Transportation chapter for walking, biking, rolling, and transportation safety recommendations to improve access to this park.)

Plumgar Local Park

Plumgar Local Park is home to the Plum Gar Recreation Center, operated by the Department of Recreation. The recreation center offers fitness, arts, and community programs for all ages, making it an important social and recreational hub for nearby residents. All the outdoor facilities on this eight-acre site are maintained by the Parks Department, including three basketball courts, a playground, a multi-use field, walking paths, and parking areas. The site and recreation center are severely limited by lack of parking.

Recommendation:

5. Explore possible parking solutions, including additional on-site parking or street parking spaces. Coordinate any future park renovations with the Department of Recreation to sustain relevant recreational programming.

Germantown East Local Park

Germantown East Local Park is under a long-term lease to the Germantown Club of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, which is a unique use of M-NCPPC parkland. The Club is responsible for improvements on-site, and they constructed the facilities that are in the park today, including the main building, basketball court, and multipurpose field. The Club provides before and after school programming at a low cost and is an important community facility. The eight-acre park is located at the intersection of Middlebrook Road and Frederick Road; the single entrance to the park from Frederick Road is not designed for pedestrian access. The park is not easily visible or accessible to the public, aside from direct participation in the Club's programming.

Recommendation:

6. Support the leased uses of this park through expanded outdoor programming, and improve Parks' communication about the use and access of this park.

Black Hill Regional Park and North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park

The Plan Area includes small portions of Black Hill Regional Park and North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park. Little Seneca Creek flows under I-270 between these parks and into Little Seneca Reservoir, which serves as an emergency raw-water source for county residents during droughts.

This portion of Black Hill Regional Park is designated as one of the county's Best Natural Areas, which represent the best examples of natural resources in Montgomery County parks. The Plan Area includes a small segment of the Crystal Rock Trail, which can be

accessed from Crystal Rock Drive. The Crystal Rock Trail connects to the larger trail system within the park and provides indirect walk access to the main activity centers of the park. There is no vehicular access from the southern side of the park, which would degrade the Best Natural Area. Drivers must use the main entrance on West Old Baltimore Road in Clarksburg.

Within the larger North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park and just east of the Plan Area, the North Germantown Greenway Trail provides a paved trail connection from Observation Drive to Ridge Road Recreational Park and future bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Frederick Road (MD 355), which will connect Germantown and Clarksburg.

The master-planned Observation Drive Extended between Germantown and Clarksburg and Dorsey Mill Bridge connecting the east and west sides of I-270 between these parks would improve residents' park access. (See the Transportation section for more details about these transportation improvements.)

Recommendation:

7. Improve trailhead signage and safe bicycling and pedestrian connections to the Crystal Rock Trail. (See the Transportation chapter for walking, biking, rolling, and transportation safety recommendations to improve access to this park.)

Great Seneca Stream Valley Park

A small portion of Great Seneca Stream Valley Park is included in the Plan Area. This section of parkland is part of a much larger park that includes the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail, which spans almost eight miles from MD 355 north to Watkins Road, where it connects to the Magruder Trail. The lower section of the trail, located in Seneca Creek State Park, south of MD 355, is about 16 miles in length. While the section of parkland within the Plan area is forested and not accessible to the public, a trailhead for the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail is located immediately south of the Plan boundary.

Recommendation:

8. Improve safe bicycling and pedestrian connections to the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail. (See the Transportation chapter for walking, biking, rolling, and transportation safety recommendations to improve access to this park.)

Historic Resources

Context

Historic preservation recommendations support the continued identification, designation, preservation, and use of historic sites and districts in order to enhance quality of life in the

Plan area. These recommendations safeguard the community’s cultural heritage, honor Germantown’s past, and help strengthen a shared sense of identity and continuity for residents.

Protection of Montgomery County’s historic resources is guided by the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*, the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, and the Historic Resources Preservation provisions of the Montgomery County Code (Chapter 24A). Within the Plan area, the recommendations focus on recognizing and maintaining key historic sites while ensuring that new development respects their character and setting. Together, these strategies provide a practical framework for appropriate stewardship, reuse, and long-term preservation of the historic elements that contribute to Germantown’s identity.

The Land Use and Zoning section of this report recommends a future zoning change for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) site. The main building on the DOE campus was constructed in the late 1950s as the headquarters of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, and several associated buildings and site features, such as the pond and water tower, have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 2016.

Vision

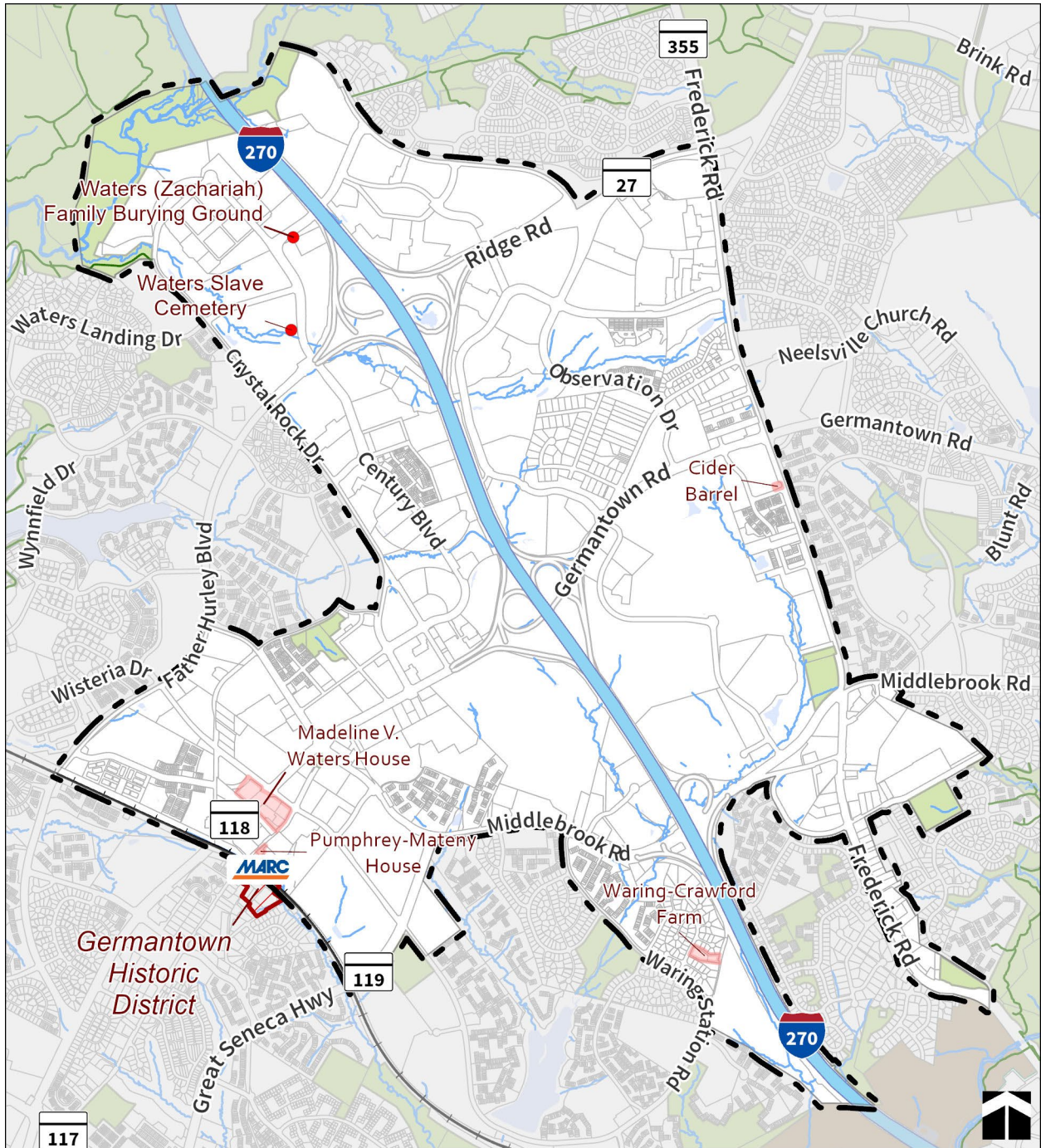
By safeguarding historic sites, this Plan cultivates a deep connection to the community’s cultural heritage while supporting responsible growth, ensuring that Germantown’s past remains a vibrant part of its future.

Goals

These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly A Civic Heart in the Town Center and Vibrant Neighborhood Hubs, by focusing on how historic resources contribute to community identity and guide compatible growth.

- Recognize and celebrate the diversity, heritage, and history of the Plan area as part of community identity.
- Protect significant historic resources through designation, documentation, and other preservation measures.
- Support stewardship, interpretation, and adaptive reuse to keep historic sites active, visible, and relevant.
- Ensure new development respects the character, scale, and context of adjacent historic resources.

Map 23. Historic Resources in the Plan Area



-  Plan Boundary
-  Master Plan Historic Site
-  Master Plan Historic District
-  Burial Site

Recommendations

General Recommendations

1. Educate owners of historic properties on the benefits of local, state, and federal historic preservation tax credit programs.
2. Collaborate with and support local partners to explore interpretation of sites and areas that recognize the diversity, heritage, and history of the Germantown community.
3. Promote the adaptive reuse of historic properties while retaining their character-defining features.
4. Consider possible impacts to the Waters (Zachariah) Burying Ground (HP-219) and Waters Slave Cemetery (HP-330) as warranted during development review. Per §50.2 and §50.4 of the County Code, preserve and protect burial sites during the subdivision review and approval process.
5. Evaluate the status of the Madeline Waters House Master Plan Historic Site (M: 19-13-1) listed on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation per Policy 23-01 Adopted Policy for the Regulatory Review of Demolished/Destroyed Master Plan Sites.

MARC Station District

The MARC Station District is home to the Pumphrey-Mateny House Master Plan Historic Site (M: 19-13-5), a distinctive historic resource that enriches the community's sense of place. Any large-scale development on adjacent lots should be designed to respect the pedestrian-oriented scale established by the Pumphrey-Mateny House. See rendering of potential redevelopment in this area in Figure 7 above.

The Germantown Master Plan Historic District (M: 19-13) is adjacent to the plan boundary and across the railroad tracks from properties with proposed amended zoning to allow for higher-density development. Any large-scale development across the railroad tracks from the Germantown Historic District should be designed to respect its pedestrian-oriented scale.

Recommendations:

6. Retain the Pumphrey-Mateny House site's existing zoning of CRN-0.75 C-0.5 R-0.75 H-60 to preserve its historic scale and setting while continuing to provide flexibility in how the property is used.
7. For the properties surrounding the Pumphrey-Mateny House Master Plan Historic Site, provide a one- to two-story base along the street frontage, with any taller tower elements stepped back 15 to 20 feet to reduce visual effects and meet urban design standards.

8. Provide a one- to two-story base along the railway frontage opposite the Germantown Historic District, with any taller tower elements stepped back 15 to 20 feet to reduce visual effects and meet urban design standards.

Economic Development

Context

Germantown's economy has undergone significant changes since the adoption of the 2009 *Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan*. The robust employment growth anticipated in that plan did not occur, due in part to national economic shifts, changing preferences for office locations, the post-COVID contraction of the commercial real estate market, and major federal workforce reductions in 2025. At the same time, Germantown has emerged as one of Montgomery County's most diverse communities, with strong residential neighborhoods, a growing demand for local services, and several key assets that can support future economic activity.

This Plan recognizes that Germantown's economic future will not be defined by a single employment sector or a large influx of traditional office development. Instead, long-term success will depend on a balanced strategy that strengthens the Town Center as a mixed-use commercial destination, supports flexible spaces for innovation-driven and emerging industries, enhances digital connectivity, and leverages Germantown's location within the I270 life sciences and manufacturing corridor.

The recommendations build on Germantown's two key economic assets: (1) the structure and potential for a vibrant town center along Century Boulevard, and (2) several large opportunity sites within an established R&D and manufacturing cluster along I-270. While the amount of commercial growth forecasted in the 2009 Plan is no longer realistic, these strategies position Germantown to support Montgomery County's innovation ecosystem and evolve into a dynamic economic center and primary commercial destination for the Upcounty.

Vision

Germantown will be a dynamic center of commerce and innovation for the Upcounty area, anchored by a vibrant mixed-use Town Center and supported by strategic employment clusters along I270. A resilient economy will offer diverse job opportunities, foster entrepreneurship, and provide goods and services that support daily life for residents and workers.

Goals

These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly Inclusive, Flexible, and Context-Sensitive Growth and A Civic Heart in the Town Center, by focusing on how land use, infrastructure, and targeted investments strengthen Germantown's economic base and support long-term competitiveness.

- Strengthen the Town Center as the primary Upcounty destination for commerce, services, and community activity.
- Align land use and redevelopment strategies with placemaking goals to support active, economically viable mixed-use environments.
- Support the growth of research, development, and advanced manufacturing sectors by preserving and enhancing strategic employment areas.
- Improve the readiness of key opportunity sites through targeted infrastructure, site planning, and coordination to attract private investment.
- Remove regulatory and financial barriers that limit reinvestment and the development of high-impact employment uses.
- Expand digital infrastructure to improve connectivity and support business activity, innovation, and access to economic opportunity.

Recommendations

Town Center Development

The Town Center has the greatest potential to emerge as Germantown's primary Upcounty destination for commerce, culture, and community life. Increasing residential density, improving the public realm, and creating more flexible ground-floor spaces will help attract new businesses, support existing ones, and generate the foot traffic needed for a vibrant mixed-use environment.

The 2009 *Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan* recommended establishing an urban service district for the Town Center to support enhanced maintenance, programming, safety, and public realm investments as development activity increases. While such a district was not implemented at that time, interest in a place-based organization, such as a Business Improvement District (BID) or an Urban District, has continued, and the Gaithersburg Germantown Upcounty Chamber of Commerce is currently evaluating options for a district or similar entity. As Germantown continues to grow and evolve, a coordinated place-management approach would help implement master plan recommendations, align public and private investments, and support a vibrant, well-maintained Town Center. Such an organization could support functions related to

activation, maintenance, safety, branding, placemaking, and ongoing stewardship of the public realm.

Recommendations:

1. Increase residential population in and around the Town Center to support retail, dining, and community-serving uses.
2. Reposition key parcels, such as sites with large surface parking lots, to align land uses with placemaking goals and strengthen the public realm.
3. Improve Century Boulevard's streetscape and function to reinforce its role as the Town Center's main commercial corridor.
4. Establish a place-management organization to support implementation of the Sector Plan and provide coordinated services and programming for the Germantown Town Center.

Employment

Germantown's location within the I-270 technology corridor presents strong opportunities to support research, development, and advanced manufacturing. Targeted reinvestment, site preparation, and strategic positioning can make underutilized employment areas more competitive and attractive for firms in these sectors.

The Montgomery College District includes a neighborhood activity center that encompasses the Germantown campus of Montgomery College. The Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology (PIC MC) on the campus serves as an integrated academic, business, and research hub designed to support collaboration between Montgomery College and private-sector partners. The campus includes major partners such as Holy Cross Germantown Hospital and Hughes Network Systems, which provide opportunities for hands-on learning, research, and interaction between students, faculty, and employers.

Montgomery College serves as a major civic anchor within the Plan area, shaping its identity while supporting educational, health, cultural, and community-serving uses. The campus has significant potential to strengthen its connections to surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers. Improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access across I-270 and along key corridors would help connect the campus to the Town Center and nearby neighborhoods. As redevelopment or campus expansion occurs, new buildings and site design should reinforce a civic character, create a welcoming public realm, and enhance multimodal access for students, employees, and visitors.

Montgomery College’s [Facilities Master Plan](#) supports these recommendations; Planning staff should work together with Montgomery College administrators to revise the Facilities Master Plan if necessary to incorporate revised recommendations in this Plan.

Recommendations:

5. Market key opportunity sites to firms in target industries, emphasizing Germantown’s strategic advantages.
6. Encourage development and redevelopment on key sites that create employment in industries that export physical or digital products, services, or knowledge.
 - a. Invest in predevelopment steps, such as infrastructure upgrades or site planning, to make employment sites more market-ready.
 - b. Reduce impact fees and other pre-development costs such as TDR/BLT purchases for employment-generating uses.
7. Support Montgomery College, the Pinkney Innovation Center (PIC-MC), and Holy Cross Germantown Hospital as major Upcounty economic and employment anchors by advancing campus and healthcare development that improves access, strengthens connections, and supports long-term job growth.

Building Lot Termination (BLT) Purchase Requirement

The Germantown Transit Mixed Use (GTMU) overlay zone currently requires BLT purchases at a rate significantly higher than elsewhere in the County, increasing development costs and discouraging higher-density projects. In combination with other public benefit requirements, this added cost burden can reduce project feasibility and slow redevelopment in transit-accessible areas.

To better support the Plan’s goals for density, mobility, and economic activity, the BLT framework should be modified to reduce barriers to development while continuing to support farmland preservation. The role of the GTMU overlay in shaping development patterns near transit is discussed in the Land Use and Zoning section.

Recommendation:

8. Modify the BLT framework in the GTMU overlay zone through adjustments to ratios or coordination with other public benefit requirements to improve development feasibility and promote higher-density development near transit.

Digital Connectivity

Digital connectivity is a foundational component of modern economic competitiveness. Improved broadband access supports business operations, educational success, telework, and innovation across Germantown’s neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Recommendations:

9. Work with the Montgomery County Office of Broadband Programs and service providers to expand broadband, cellular coverage, and public wireless access, prioritizing infrastructure upgrades in areas with limited service or high demand.

Housing

Context

Housing is foundational to Germantown’s future as a complete, inclusive, and resilient community. While the Plan area contains a diverse mix of housing types, production has not kept pace with demand, and affordability pressures have increased. Changing household structures, such as higher birth rates, multigenerational living, and shared housing, have contributed to rising population-to-unit ratios. Germantown’s strong rental market, combined with a lower homeownership rate than the county overall, underscores the need for both increased housing opportunities and long-term housing stability.

Germantown’s housing stock includes single-family detached homes (21 percent), townhomes (38 percent), small multifamily buildings (12 percent), and large multifamily buildings (29 percent). Between 2009 and 2022, housing unit growth was 8 percent, below the countywide growth rate of 12 percent, despite comparable population growth, suggesting increasing household sizes. Germantown is also one of the county’s most racially and ethnically diverse communities, with multiple groups each representing significant portions of the population, reinforcing the need for housing that serves a wide range of incomes, household types, life stages, and cultural backgrounds.

Affordability is a major concern identified by residents. Average non-subsidized multifamily rents typically require household incomes between approximately 57 and 69 percent of area median income (AMI), meaning that many existing units qualify as market-rate affordable housing (MRAH). Preserving this MRAH supply is essential to maintaining affordability and preventing displacement as Germantown continues to grow.

In response, the Plan advances a balanced housing strategy that emphasizes production, preservation, diversification, affordability, and equity. By enabling more housing near activity centers, protecting existing affordable homes, expanding deeply affordable and supportive housing options, and strengthening pathways to homeownership, the Plan supports equitable growth while ensuring that current and future residents can remain, thrive, and build stable lives in Germantown across generations.

Vision

Germantown will be a community where residents can find a variety of safe, healthy, affordable, and well-located homes that meet changing needs over time. Housing will be integrated with walkable activity centers, parks, transit options, and daily services, ensuring that all households can thrive in a complete community.

Goals

These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly Inclusive, Flexible, and Context-Sensitive Growth and Vibrant Neighborhood Hubs, by focusing on how housing supply, affordability, and access support complete communities and long-term stability for residents.

- Increase the supply of housing to meet demand, support growth in activity centers, and help achieve the county's housing targets, particularly along key corridors and near transit.
- Expand the range of housing types and unit sizes to serve diverse households, life stages, and needs.
- Preserve existing market-rate affordable housing and mitigate displacement for low-income renters and other vulnerable households as redevelopment occurs.
- Increase the availability of affordable housing across a range of income levels, including deeply affordable units.
- Promote equitable access to housing opportunities in all neighborhoods, supporting racial and economic diversity.

Recommendations

Housing Production and Diversification

To meet countywide housing goals and support a range of household types, Germantown must increase supply and expand the variety of available housing.

Recommendations:

1. Add more units and a mix of housing types and unit sizes to meet a diversity of incomes and household types including young families with children, first-time homeowners, and multi-generational families.
2. Strive to increase the quality and quantity of housing units in new housing developments that are accessible to people with disabilities and older adults.
3. Provide financial and other incentives to boost housing production for market rate and affordable housing, especially near transit and in Complete Communities.

4. Coordinate with the State of Maryland to incentivize transit-oriented development at the MARC station site and adjoining parcels. Pursue designation of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the County Council.
5. Incentivize family-sized market rate units and MPDUs for rent and sale in new developments and redevelopments.

Preservation of Market-Rate Affordable Housing

Market-rate affordable units make up a significant portion of Germantown’s attainable housing stock. Preserving these homes helps stabilize neighborhoods and reduce displacement.

Recommendations:

6. Preserve existing market rate affordable housing where practicable, striving for no net loss of market rate affordable housing in the event of redevelopment.
7. In the event of redevelopment, priority should be given to existing eligible residents for the right to return. Property owners should work with the DHCA and tenants to minimize displacement and to ensure that eligible residents receive support and assistance to mitigate impacts of temporary relocation.
8. Explore and leverage partnerships with public, private, non-profit, philanthropic, and religious institutions to preserve and expand housing affordability in the Plan area.
9. Promote the use of County incentives to make preservation of market-rate affordable housing financially viable for owners through programs such as:
 - Low-interest financing
 - Low or zero interest predevelopment loans
 - Access to Housing Initiative Fund (HIF) dollars
 - Payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements
 - Rehabilitation program funding

Expansion of Affordable Housing

To serve households across income levels, including deeply affordable units, Germantown must expand its supply of regulated affordable housing. Within the revised Germantown Transit Mixed Use Overlay Zone, the Plan recommends a targeted MPDU requirement that reflects the overlay’s broader role in supporting feasible transit-oriented development while still requiring meaningful affordable housing production.

Recommendations:

10. Provide at least 12.5% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) in new developments and redevelopments with 20 or more units in the revised Germantown Transit Mixed Use Overlay Zone; provide at least 15% MPDUs in all other parts of the Plan area.
11. Coordinate with the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA), Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), and nonprofit and for-profit developers to prioritize deeply affordable units (below 50% of Area Median Income, AMI) in new development and redevelopment.
12. When public properties are redeveloped with a residential component, strive to provide a minimum of 30% MPDUs, with 15% affordable to households earning the standard MPDU level of 65-70% or less of AMI and 15% affordable to households at or below 50% of AMI.
13. Support the development of permanent and temporary supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness in the Plan area.

Housing Equity

Supporting equitable access to housing requires tools that expand homeownership and long-term affordability.

Recommendations:

14. Expand existing programs designed to increase access to homeownership, especially among low-income residents, people of color, and young adults.
15. Support new programs and entities such as community land trusts to maintain long-term affordable homeownership opportunities.

Environment and Sustainability

Context

The Germantown Sector Plan Amendment's sustainability recommendations respond to guidance from *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, community outreach, and the Existing Conditions analysis. *Thrive* identifies sustainability and resilience as core priorities, calling for strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, preserve biological diversity, protect air and water quality, advance environmental justice, and improve human health. These priorities emphasize reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon, adapting to worsening climate impacts, and strengthening community resilience.

Community outreach highlighted concerns about declining biodiversity, loss of tree canopy, and extreme heat. Residents expressed interest in expanding natural areas and

improving walking and bicycling opportunities, reinforcing the link between environmental quality, health, and daily life in Germantown.

The Plan area includes extensive surface parking, limited tree canopy, and significant impervious cover. These conditions contribute to urban heat islands, increased runoff, reduced water quality, and higher risks of localized flooding. Analysis using the U.S. Climate Vulnerability Index also shows elevated exposure to air pollution near major highways, underscoring environmental health concerns for nearby communities.

At the same time, the Plan area contains important ecological resources, including the Germantown Bog and high-quality forest areas on the Montgomery College campus and adjacent to Black Hill Regional Park. Protecting these assets is critical to long-term ecological health and resilience.

Together, these conditions and community priorities inform recommendations focused on reducing heat impacts, managing stormwater, preserving natural resources, and addressing environmental health concerns near major transportation corridors. These strategies support a healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable Germantown as the community grows.

Vision

Germantown will become a healthier, more resilient community where natural systems, green infrastructure, and thoughtful design work together to reduce environmental impacts, support biodiversity, and improve quality of life for all residents. By protecting sensitive resources, promoting cleaner air and water, reducing energy use, and investing in areas facing the greatest environmental burdens, the Plan envisions an environment that strengthens community wellbeing and helps Germantown adapt to a changing climate.

Goals

These goals support the Plan-wide vision, particularly Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience, by focusing on how growth, redevelopment, and resource management improve environmental performance and long-term resilience.

- Reduce urban heat island impacts by increasing shade, expanding tree canopy, and encouraging site and building design that moderates temperature.
- Improve stormwater management and water quality by promoting practices and development patterns that reduce runoff and support healthy stream systems.
- Protect biological diversity by conserving sensitive natural areas and supporting landscapes that sustain native species and habitats.

- Protect and improve human health by reducing exposure to air pollution, excessive noise, and extreme heat, particularly near major transportation corridors.
- Reduce energy consumption by encouraging cleaner energy sources, improving efficiency, and supporting sustainable building and site design.
- Address environmental justice by directing attention and resources to communities disproportionately affected by environmental burdens.
- Strengthen climate adaptation and resilience by integrating nature-based solutions and expanding green cover to better withstand climate-related impacts.

Recommendations

Reduce Heat Island Impacts

Heat islands increase the risk of heat-related illnesses and require greater energy expenditures for cooling. Increasing shade and reducing heat absorption are essential treatments to reduce heat island impacts in areas with large parking lots, wide roadways, and limited vegetation.

Recommendations:

1. Increase shade in parking lots, along roadways, at transit stops.
 - a. Establish 50% shade cover over parking lots.
 - b. Strive for maximum shade cover from tree canopy.
 - c. Supplement native tree canopy as needed with solar canopies or shade structures.
2. Create continuous shade along roadways, especially over sidewalks, shared use paths, bicycle lanes and at transit stops.
 - a. Plant native shade trees close enough together for mature tree canopies to create continuous shade without compromising tree canopy health.
 - b. Provide sufficient soil volume for trees to grow and maintain a healthy canopy and support tree longevity.
 - i. Size tree planting panels to provide adequate soil volume.
 - ii. Where space is constrained, use alternative approaches to provide adequate soil volume, such as structural soil cells (e.g. Silva cells), structural soils, or other means for allowing roots to access sufficient soil.
 - iii. 1000 cubic feet of soil is recommended for large shade trees; 600 cubic feet should be the minimum provided where practicable.
 - iv. Underground utilities where practicable.

3. Reduce Heat Absorption in Developed Areas.
 - a. Use heat-reflective pavement materials.
 - b. Use lighter colored pavement for sidewalks, plazas and hardscaping.
 - c. Use porous pavements where practicable.
 - d. Incorporate green areas in developed areas featuring lawns, landscaping and trees.
 - e. Top buildings with green roofs or cool roofs.
 - f. Create cooling centers.
4. Craft site designs to maximize retention and protection of mature trees and forest stands.

Address Increased Runoff and Protect and Improve Water Quality

Runoff from more frequent and intense storms threatens both life and property. In addition, much of Germantown drains to Little Seneca Lake, which is a regional backup water supply in times of drought. Stormwater management is central to improving water quality, reducing flooding risk, and supporting healthier stream systems.

Recommendations:

5. Maximize stormwater management practices and minimize deviation from Chapter 19 of the County's Stormwater Management Requirements.
6. Minimize new pavement in developing and redeveloping areas. Reduce pavement cover where practicable.
 - a. Consider road diets and repurposing paved areas.
 - b. Increase walking and bicycle access to reduce pavement needed for automobiles.
7. Use porous pavement materials where practicable.
8. Incorporate vegetated areas and trees into site designs.
9. Design landscaping to help catch and infiltrate runoff.
10. Top buildings with intensive green roofs where practicable.

Protect and Support Biological Diversity

Climate change is accelerating the loss of native species and degradation of habitats. These changes undermine the stability of the ecosystem that supports our lives and livelihoods. Germantown contains notable ecological resources that contribute to countywide biodiversity. Protecting these resources improves the resilience of the natural systems that sustain us.

Recommendations:

11. Protect the Germantown Bog.
12. Use native plantings in landscaping that support native pollinators and birds.
13. When practicable, provide bird-safe building, lighting, and landscape design using “Bird Collision Deterrence” standards of the USGBC (United States Green Building Council), LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), and/or other Sustainable Green Building programs to minimize bird collisions.

Protect and Improve Human Health

Environmental conditions, such as air pollution, noise exposure, and extreme heat, directly affect residents’ health and quality of life. Recent research has shown strong links between transportation-related air pollution and a wide range of health conditions, including premature mortality, while excessive noise exposure has been shown to pose greater health risks than previously understood. Reducing air and noise pollution, mitigating extreme heat, and improving access to fresh, nutritious food will help create a healthier and more resilient Germantown.

Proximity to I-270 and other major transportation corridors reinforces the need to address air-quality and noise impacts. Appropriate buffering and mitigation strategies can help ensure that new development provides healthy, comfortable environments for residents and workers.

Recommendations:

14. Protect and improve air quality.
 - a. Plant native trees and other vegetation in traffic corridors to filter air pollution.
 - b. Provide a network of safe, attractive facilities for walking, biking and rolling.
15. Increase shade cover
 - a. Create and maintain shade at transit stops and along walking routes to schools.
16. Increase access to fresh local food sources.
 - a. Encourage farmers markets.
 - b. Encourage urban farming.
17. Avoid placing sensitive land uses adjacent to major highways.

18. Implement noise mitigation for sensitive land uses near major transportation noise sources.
 - a. Implement noise mitigation techniques such as constructed noise barriers and using topography and buildings to shield outdoor gathering and recreation areas from excessive noise.
 - b. Use building materials that reduce interior noise to levels at or below 45 dbA Ldn.

Reduce Energy Consumption and Promote Renewable Energy Generation

Addressing climate change and reducing negative health impacts requires more than adapting to the changing climate. We must also try to mitigate worsening impacts by reducing the use of fossil fuels by and generating more clean, renewable energy. This can be accomplished both by conserving energy and by promoting and facilitating more local renewable energy generation. The benefits include long-term cost savings.

Recommendations:

19. Encourage adaptive reuse of buildings where practicable.
20. Increase use of clean renewable energy.
21. Prioritize clean energy and energy conservation public benefits to incentivize green buildings and sustainable site designs.
22. Wherever practicable, orient street grids, blocks and buildings to take advantage of passive solar heat and lighting and solar power generation.
23. Improve accessibility to, and efficiency of, public transportation systems and non-auto transportation facilities.
24. Encourage more vehicle charging stations than currently required on private property to support the growing demand.

Address Environmental Justice Issues

Parts of the Plan area are identified as moderately disproportionate- disadvantaged and slightly disproportionate- disadvantaged in the Planning Department's Community Equity Index. Some areas are categorized as proportionate- neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Disadvantaged communities are typically more affected by environmental hazards and impacts.

The U.S. Climate Vulnerability Index identifies several impacts that could disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities, including noise and air pollution impacts from transportation systems and heat island effects.

Recommendation:

25. Disadvantaged areas should be prioritized when implementing the sustainability recommendations identified in this section of the Plan.

Adaptation and Resilience

Nature-Based Design Solutions (NBS) are systems and actions that use, protect, and restore natural or modified ecosystems by introducing green cover elements into the landscape to address challenges like urban heat, air pollution, water quality, habitat loss, and biodiversity decline. Introducing green cover elements into urban development improves overall climate resiliency by reducing streetscape temperatures and heat island effect, while increasing sequestration capacity and human well-being.

Recommendations:

26. Look for opportunities to establish a resilience hub in the Plan area.
27. Incorporate nature-based design solutions to address environmental impacts and promote community resilience throughout the Plan area.
28. New construction projects must provide a minimum of 35% green cover, excluding any existing forested areas already on the property or areas within stream buffers. The percentage of green cover may exceed the minimum of 35-40% for a higher green cover.
 - a. On private property, provide a minimum of 35% green cover on impervious surfaces which may include the following either singly or in combination:
 - i. Intensive green roof (6 inches or deeper) (no vegetative tray systems)
 - ii. Tree canopy cover
 - iii. Vegetative cover or landscaped areas deeper than 6 inches
 - iv. Bioretention areas with green cover.

Solar energy generation on rooftops may reduce green cover requirements if/when exceeding 35%. New rooftop areas not covered in green roof or renewable energy generation should be a cool roof.

Summary

The preliminary recommendations for the Germantown Sector Plan Amendment provide a comprehensive framework to guide the community's evolution over the coming decades. Together, the recommendations across land use, zoning, transportation, urban design, parks, environment, housing, economic development, and historic resources establish a coordinated strategy for shaping a more connected, adaptable, and complete Germantown. The Plan emphasizes creating walkable neighborhood activity centers,

supporting flexible development patterns, improving mobility options for all travelers, and expanding access to parks and natural areas. It also addresses key challenges, such as changing market conditions, limited transit infrastructure, environmental stresses, and the need for more housing choices, through targeted, practical policy updates.

By modernizing zoning, prioritizing multimodal connectivity, enhancing public spaces, strengthening environmental resilience, and supporting both residents and local businesses, the Plan aims to ensure that future growth contributes positively to the community's character and quality of life. While not every recommendation will be implemented immediately, the Plan establishes a clear direction that can adapt over time as conditions change. Ultimately, the Germantown Sector Plan Amendment offers a balanced and forward-looking roadmap that supports a thriving, inclusive, and resilient future for Germantown.