Master Planning in Montgomery County

Montgomery for All briefing

Jessica McVary | Melissa Williams | Clark Larson

Montgomery Planning

10/5/2026

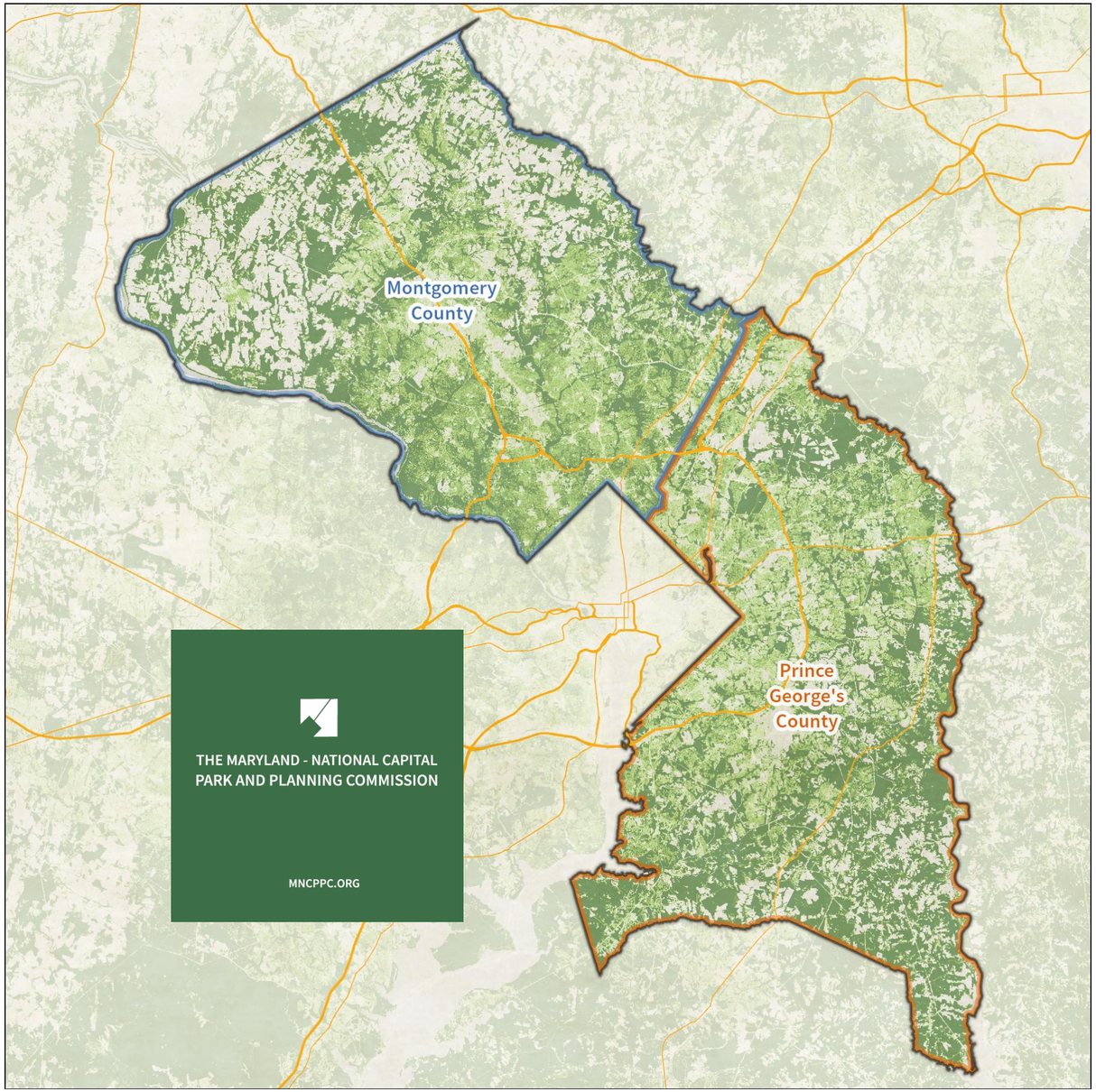


Who We Are

Montgomery Planning, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)

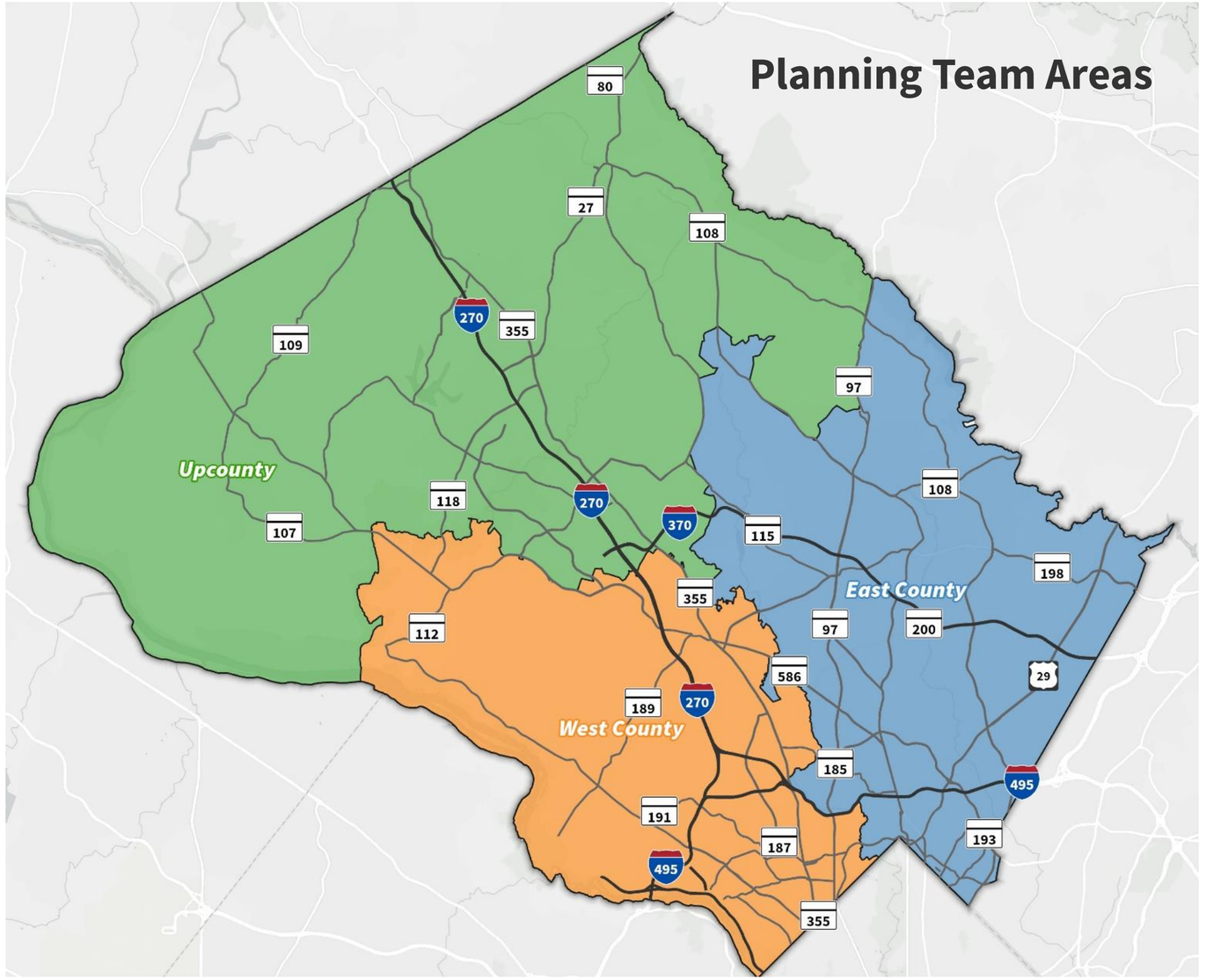
- Bi-county agency celebrating 100 years in 2027
- Tasked with:
  - managing physical growth
  - planning communities
  - protecting and stewarding natural, cultural and historic resources
- Reports to five-member, Council-appointed Montgomery Planning Board





What We Do

- Develop long-range plans, policies, guidelines, and studies
- Review applications for development, historic preservation, and forest conservation
- Engage in community placemaking, research, and education



What We Focus On

- Accelerating **housing production** and facilitating diverse housing options
- Improving **accessibility** through safe, multimodal transportation options
- Advancing **equity**
- Supporting **economic competitiveness**
- Promoting **environmental resilience**
- Strengthening **partnerships**



Thrive Montgomery 2050

- Montgomery County's General Plan
- Long-range vision for future growth, community character, and preservation in the county
- *Thrive Montgomery 2050* guides:
  - Countywide policies
  - Future master plans
  - Infrastructure planning
  - Community amenities
  - Private development



Thrive Montgomery 2050's Priorities



Focus growth in downtowns, activity centers, and along major corridors



Prioritize racial equity and social justice



Increase the County's economic competitiveness



Emphasize walking, biking, rolling, and transit



Embed social connections and public health into planning



Enhance public and private spaces through design



County-wide environmental sustainability



Build more housing

What is a Master Plan?

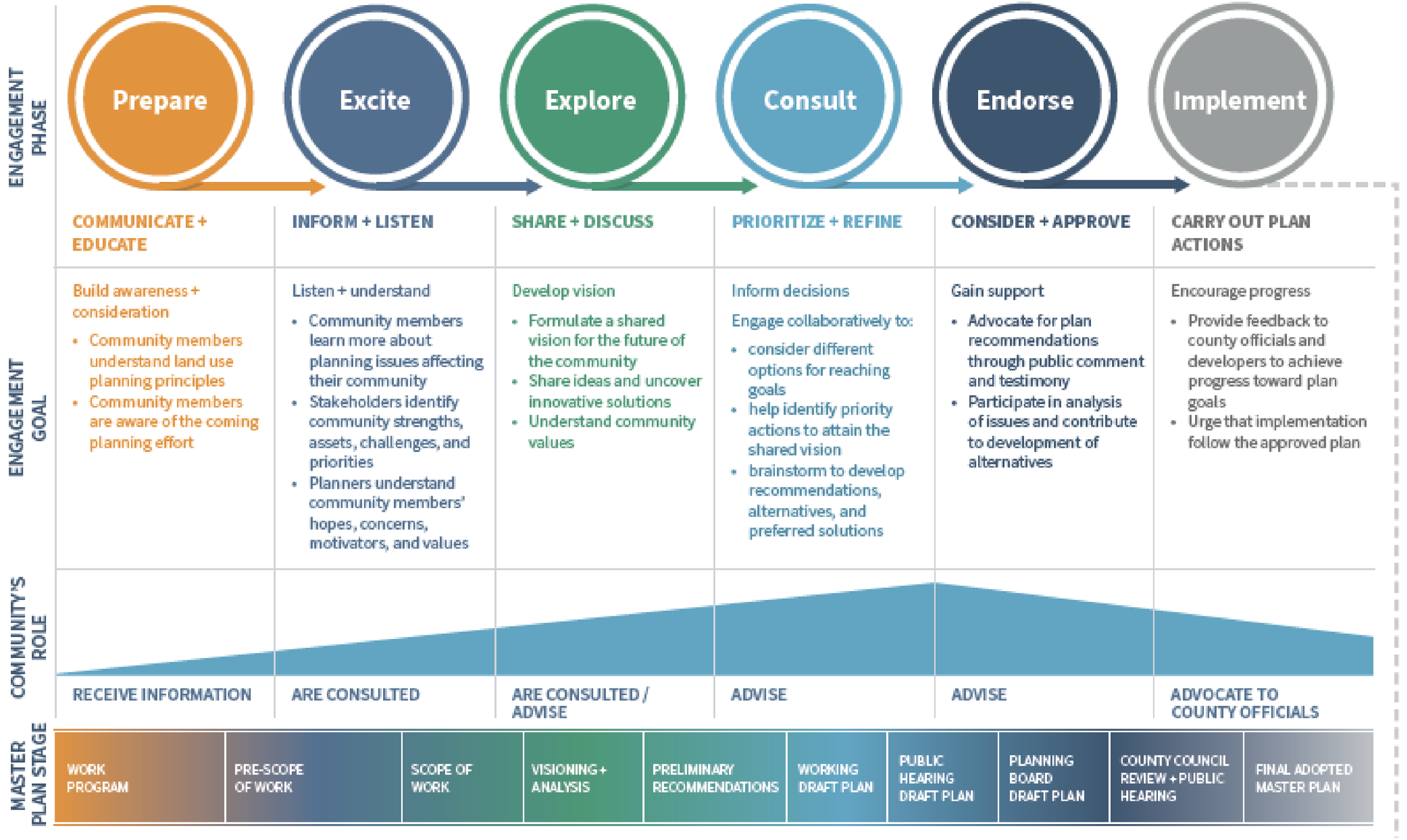
- A master plan guides private development and public investment for 20+ years in an area
- Planning staff work with community stakeholders to create a long-term vision for the future and recommendations to achieve vision



Master Plan Process and Milestones

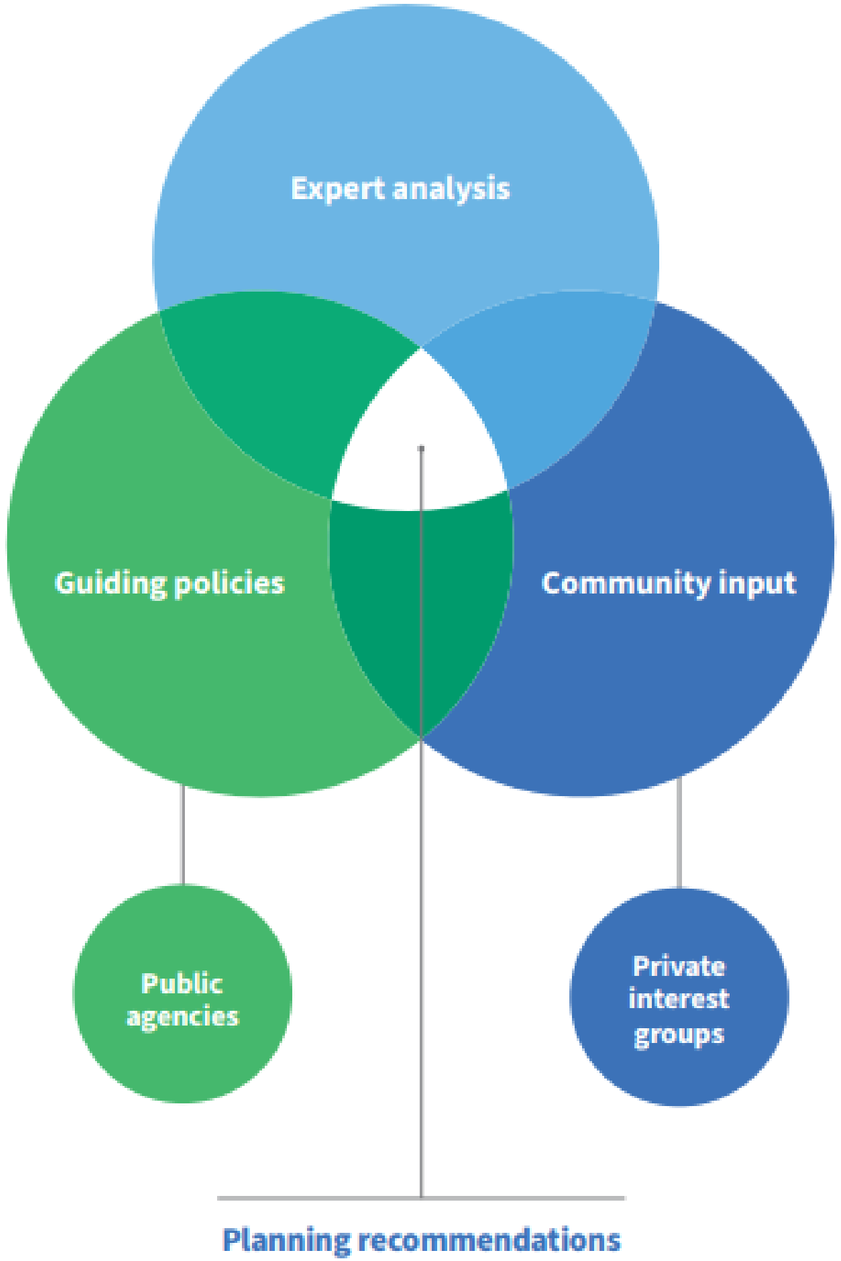
Master Plan Phase	Milestones and Activities
Prepare	❑ Plan added to the Work Program
Excite	❑ Plan Kickoff, initial outreach and research
Explore	❑ Scope of Work review and approval ❑ Planning Staff research and preparation ❑ Community Listening and Visioning Workshops
Consult	❑ Emerging Ideas for public comment ❑ Draft Recommendations for public comment
Endorse	❑ Public Hearing Draft Plan out for public testimony ❑ Planning Board review and recommendation ❑ County Council public hearing and review
Implement	❑ Plan approval and adoption ❑ Sectional Map Amendment approved

Engagement opportunities during a master plan process



What influences master plan recommendations?





How are Master Plans Implemented?

- Public investment (County's capital improvement program, or CIP)
- Private investment (through the development review process)
- Development projects must comply with goals and recommendations outlined in the Plan for each community.
- Planning staff review development applications against master plans and provide an analysis through staff reports regarding conformance with the master plan/sector plan in question.
- Plans set up opportunity for private and public investment, but do not effect immediate change.



Friendship Heights Sector Plan

Friendship Heights Sector Plan Amendment

Current stage: *Endorse – Planning Board Work Session*

- Update to 1998 *Friendship Heights Sector Plan*
- County Council and County Executive review likely in early 2027

www.montgomeryplanning.org/fhsp



Key Recommendations:

- Provide **flexibility for redevelopment** of opportunity sites in the Plan Area and incentivize much-desired neighborhood amenities.
- Incentivize **additional affordable housing**, including larger family-size units and those with deeper affordability.
- Provide **new public spaces** as part of future development projects and **improve visibility and access** to all open spaces.
- Prioritize safety by **improving pedestrian and bicycle connections** between Friendship Heights and the surrounding communities, including Washington, D.C.
- **Improve transit access** by extending recommending dedicated transit lanes down Wisconsin Avenue to the Metrorail station.
- **Protect natural resources** such as canopy trees, wooded areas, and streams, and incentivize sustainable, high-performance buildings.

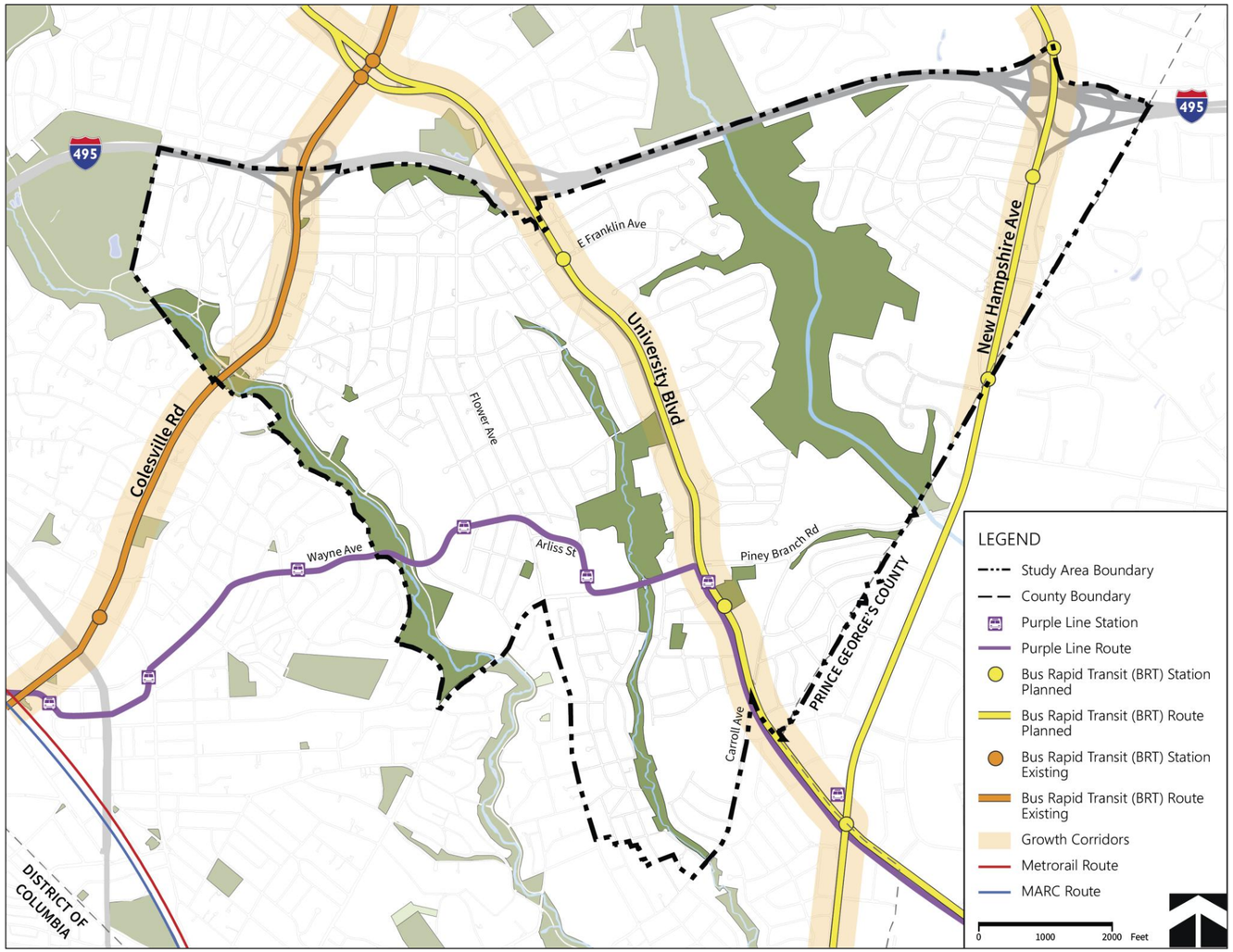
Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan

Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan

Current stage: *Endorse - Public Hearing Draft*

Why now?

- **Transit improvements coming:**
  - **Bus Rapid Transit** already in operation on Colesville Road, planned for University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue
  - **Purple Line** scheduled to open late 2027
- **Need for more housing & more affordable housing**
- Thrive Montgomery 2050, County's General Plan (adopted in 2022), focuses growth and housing along these BRT corridors and near activity centers



Key Recommendations

- **Allow for more housing and more types of housing** near new and planned transit.
- **Prioritize deeper levels of affordability and retention of locally owned and legacy small businesses** in new development.
- **Add dedicated bus lanes on University Boulevard** between I-495 and Piney Branch Road by re-purposing existing vehicle lanes.
- **Add new protected crossings,** and safer walking and biking connections.
- **Invest in an updated, modernized community center in Long Branch.**
- **Create new parks and recreation amenities** while improving access to existing parks and trails.
- **Expand tree canopy** and implement Healthy Corridor strategies to **reduce heat and air pollution**.





Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan

Review the Public Hearing Draft Plan online!

www.montgomeryplanning.org/easternsilverspring

Share your thoughts at upcoming Public Hearings:

- January 7 at 2 pm, Wheaton Headquarters
- January 14 at 6 pm, Long Branch Community Recreation and Senior Center
- Sign-ups will open December 7; public record will remain open through January 15

Contact the planning team at

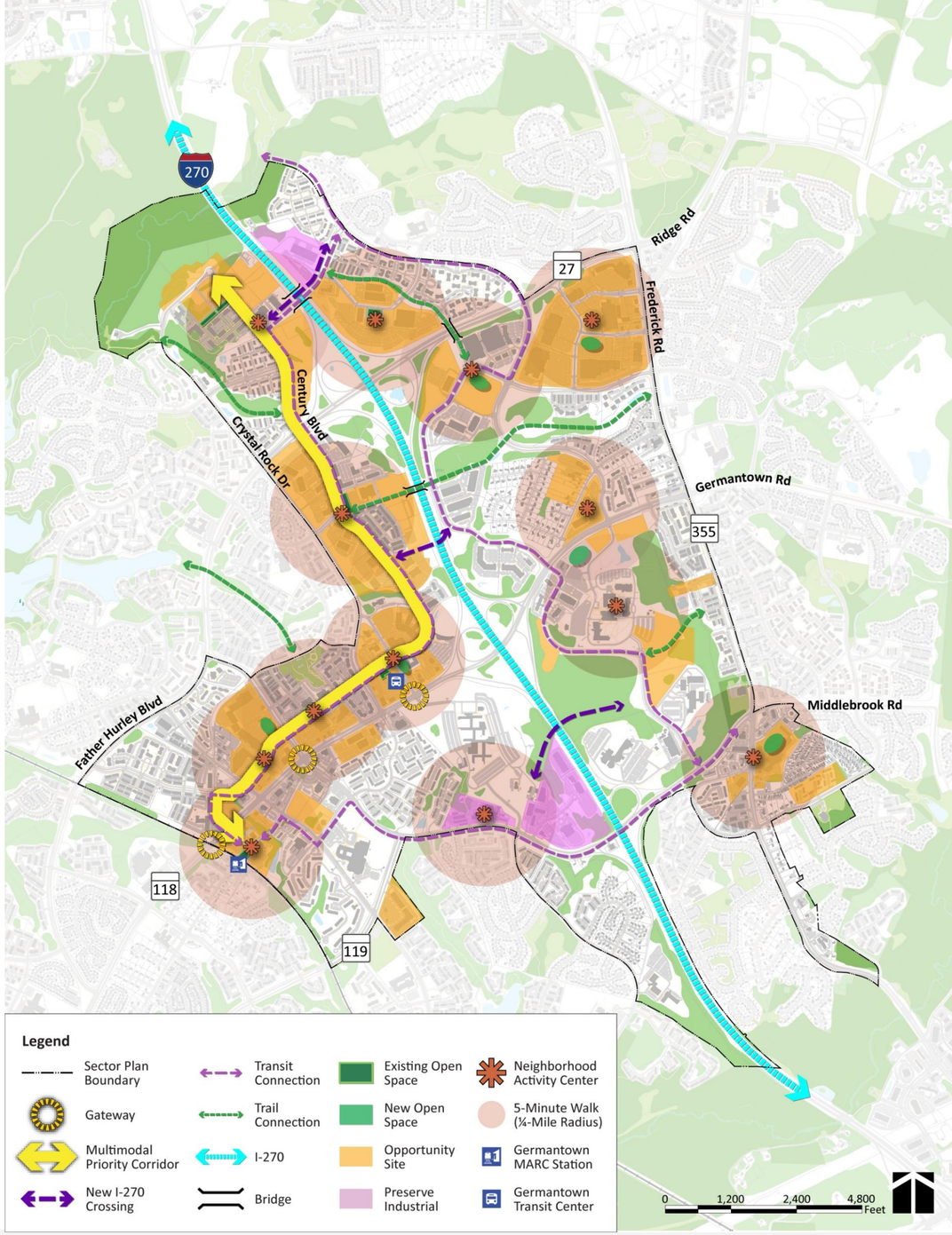
easternsilverspring@montgomeryplanning.org

Germantown Sector Plan Amendment

Key Plan Recommendations

Current stage: *Consult – Developing the Working draft*

- Transform Germantown into a network of walkable mixed-use centers
- Create more housing and encourage redevelopment
- Modernize land use and zoning regulations
- Improve connectivity across Germantown
- Build a safer multimodal transportation network
- Strengthen parks, public spaces, and community gathering places
- Advance environmental sustainability and resilience
- Support economic vitality in a changing economy



Connect with Us

Jamey Pratt

Jamey.Pratt@montgomeryplanning.org

301.495.4588

GERMANTOWN
Sector Plan Amendment

- Check out the interactive zoning map on our website
- Sign up for our email list to stay informed about upcoming events
- Read the Public Hearing Draft (when available) and provide feedback

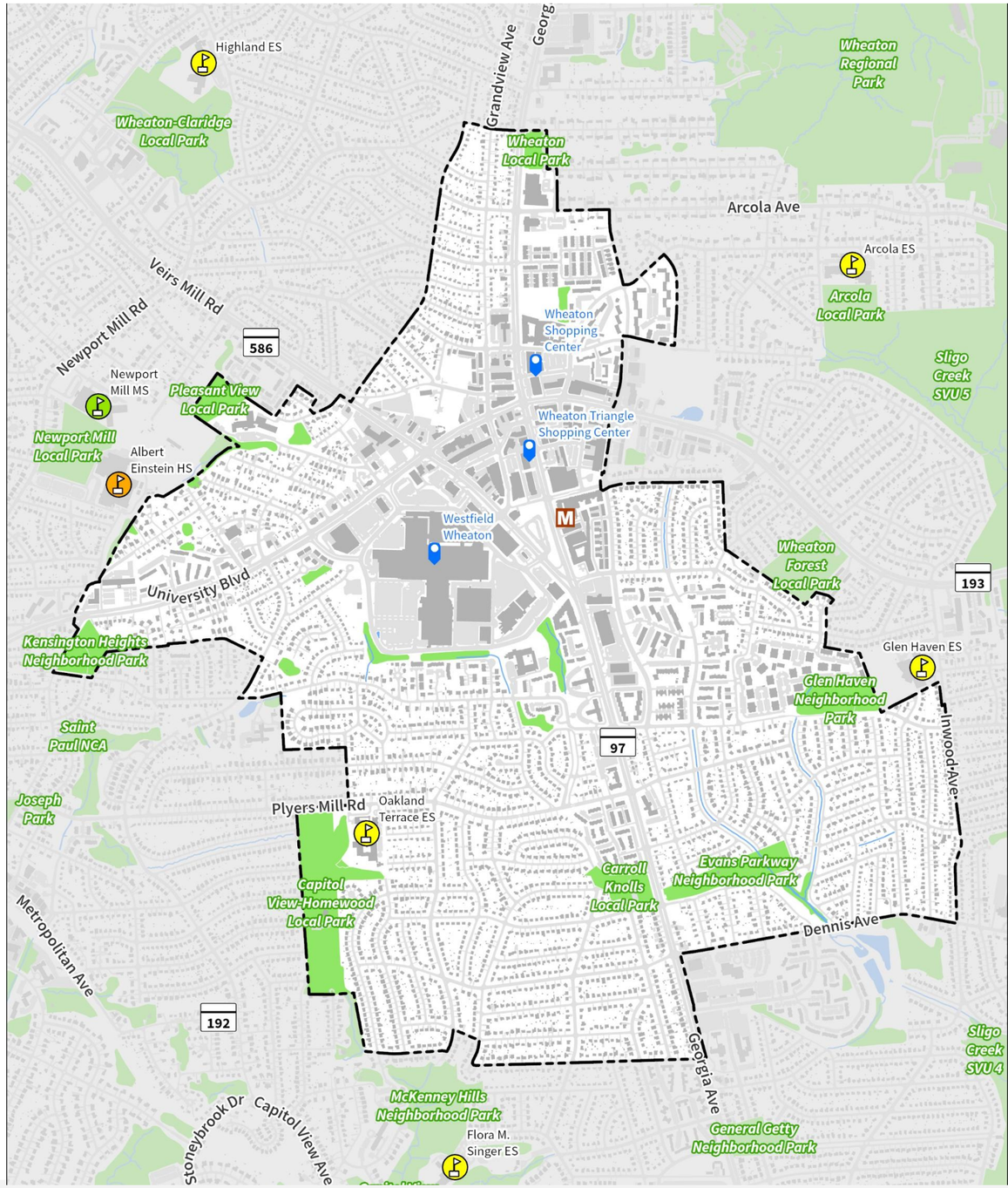
https://montgomeryplanning.org/gspa

The Wheaton Plan: A Georgia Avenue Community Plan

Why we're doing the plan

Current stage: *Explore – Visioning, research and analysis*

- Sustain what makes Wheaton a unique place
- Seek creative solutions to support small businesses
- Create safer, better transportation options
- Leverage public investments
- Examine transformational opportunities on large sites
- Enhance public spaces and identify new ones
- Identify ways to incrementally grow housing opportunities
- Promote Wheaton as an arts and entertainment hub



How you can get involved today

- Join our November 5 workshop
- Take our questionnaire
- Sign up for a #WeAreWheaton interview at www.wearewheaton.com



Visit our website for more information and sign up for updates or email wheatonplan@montgomeryplanning.org

Visit Our Webpage



Damascus Main Street Sector Plan

Damascus Town Center & Vicinity



Damascus Placemaking Festival – October 2024











Damascus Main Street Sector Plan

Current stage: *Prepare - Scope of Work*

What questions will we ask?

- How can the plan support existing and new businesses in downtown Damascus?
- How can new development be accommodated while preserving the small-town character of Damascus?
- Should new housing be accommodated in the Town Center?
- How can a cohesive and connected pedestrian and bike network be completed in Damascus?
- How can downtown streets be improved while maintaining traffic flow and safety?



DAMASCUS
MAIN STREET SECTOR PLAN

Connect with us!

Visit: **www.montgomeryplanning.org/damascus**

Contact: **Clark Larson**

clark.larson@montgomeryplanning.org

(301) 495-1331

Montgomery Planning

Sign up for the Damascus e-Letter

- and/or -

Sign up for text update for Damascus

Kensington Plan

Kensington Sector Plan Amendment

Current stage: *Prepare – Set to begin in 2027*

Purpose

- The Sector Plan Amendment seeks to refine the vision and recommendations of the 2012 Sector Plan in alignment with *Thrive* and other recent policies, such as the Vision Zero Action Plan
- The Sector Plan will:
  - Evaluate opportunities for increased housing diversity through compact corridor-focused growth within the Town Center and near the MARC Rail Station
  - Explore options to improve longstanding stormwater management issues and further environmental resilience, evaluate multimodal connectivity and safety
  - Explore the opportunities and limitations of compact growth in proximity to Kensington's historic resources.

Why now?

- The Sector Plan seeks to integrate recent policy guidance
- Responds to Town of Kensington's interests in pursuing additional amenities and services, including improved connections across the CSX Rail tracks, publicly accessible open space, and opportunities for consolidated or shared parking

Connect with Us

Community Planning Academy

MontgomeryPlanning.org/PlanningAcademy

Current Modules:

1. Introduction to Planning
2. Master Plans
3. Zoning
4. Development Review
5. Permitting and Construction
6. Environment and Climate Change
7. Participating in the Planning Process
8. Transportation Planning
9. Planning for Schools
10. Putting It All Together

Future Modules:

11. Historic Preservation
12. Park Planning

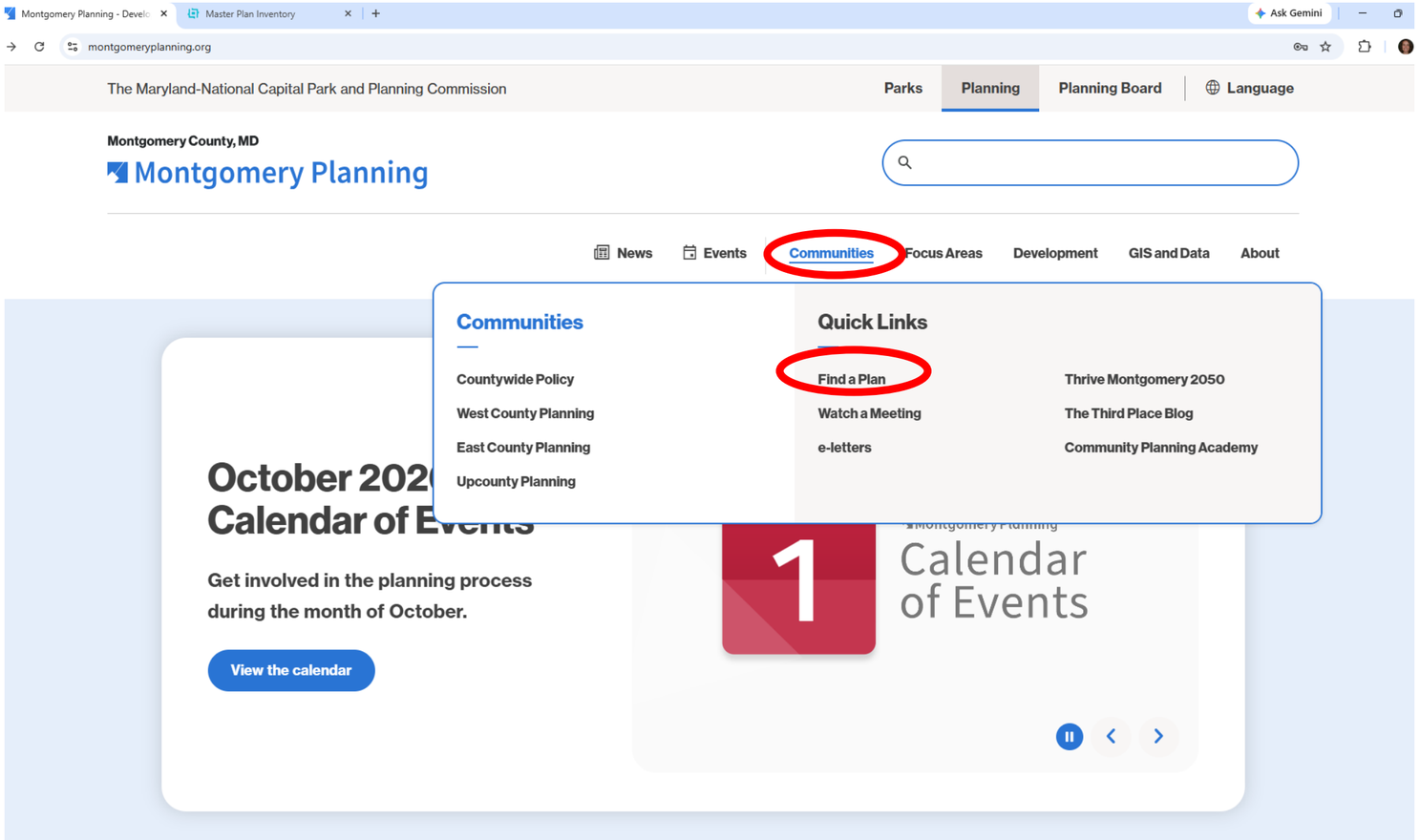






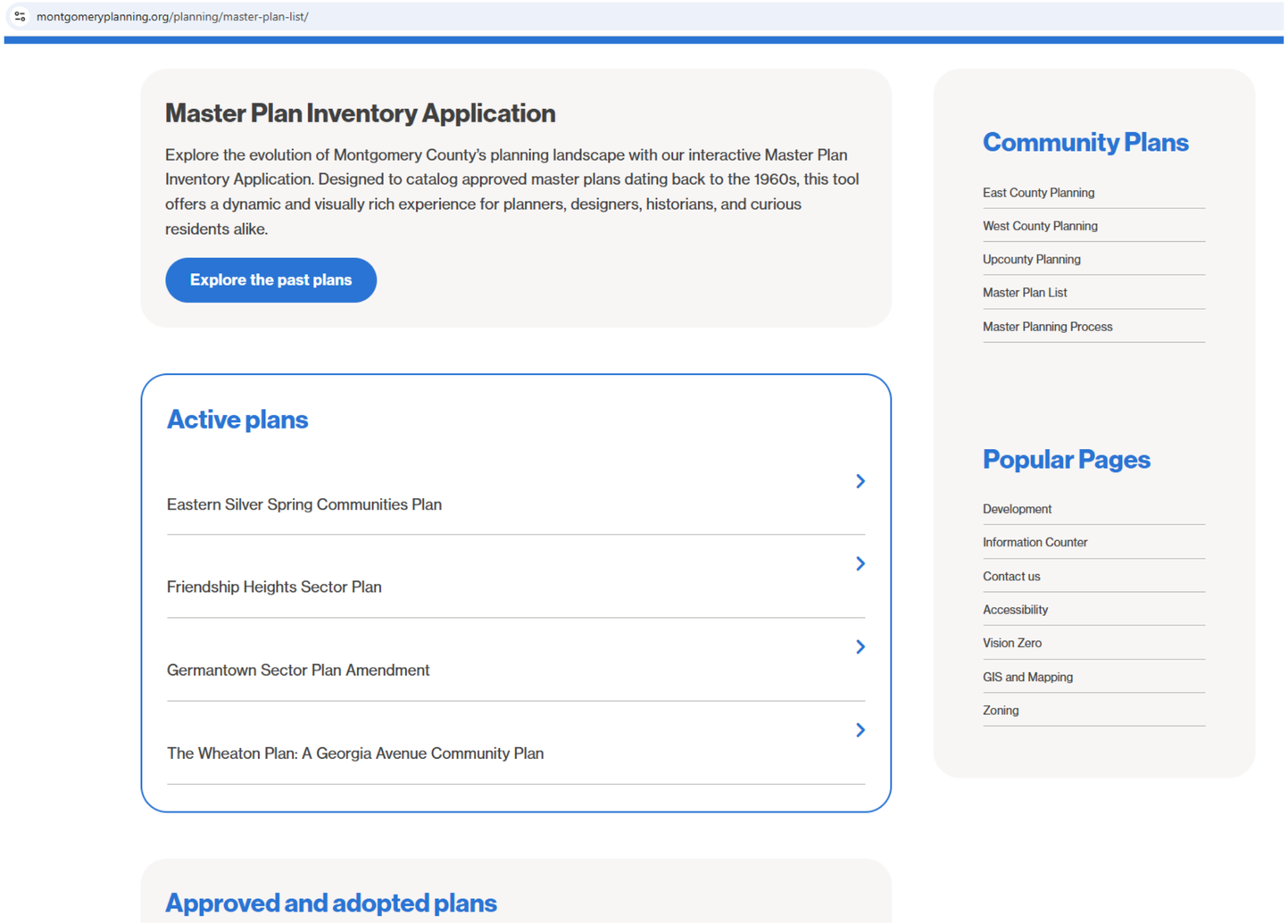
Find the Master Plan you're looking for

- Visit www.montgomeryplanning.org
- Click on "Communities"
- Select "Find a Plan"



Find the Master Plan you're looking for

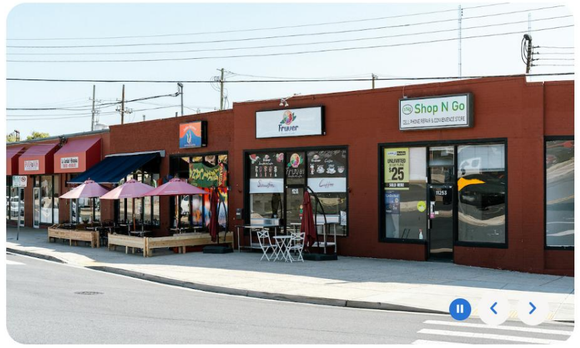
- A list of active plans that are currently underway and you can select for more information.
- A "Master Plan Inventory Application" has links to historic plans dating back to the 1960s
- A list of all the approved and adopted plans that currently govern the county



Finding Key Master Plan Info

On the plan page, you will find:

- In the right-side bar:
  - Plan contact info (top right)
  - Sign up for text/email updates
  - Upcoming events
  - Timeline of the entire plan
- In the center:
  - Plan boundary
  - Current actions you can take (ie: sign-up to testify, complete a questionnaire)
  - the most current draft or recommendations
  - FAQs



We want to hear from you!

We want to hear about how you experience Wheaton day to day and what you see as challenges and opportunities for the future. Learn about upcoming events and engagement opportunities, including our Community Walkshop on October 6, and tell your story online to become part of the #WeAreWheaton dialogue!

Wheaton sits at the crossroads of Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard, and Veirs Mill Road – a vibrant, diverse community of nearly 36,000 residents with locally owned restaurants, shops, and businesses that reflect its unique character. Recent initiatives, including the 2012 Wheaton Central Business District and Vicinity Sector Plan, the 2023 Wheaton Downtown Study, and 2023 Streetscape Standards, and the 2025 Wheels in Wheaton Placemaking project, have shaped a vision for the future founded in community participation.

Current phase: Visioning

We want to hear from you! Now is the best time to get involved in the Planning process. **Now through the Summer of 2027, the planning team will be working with community members to create a shared vision for Wheaton's future**. Throughout the visioning process, planners will hold conversations with the community, partner agencies, and organizations while also analyzing existing conditions. As the process moves forward, we'll use what we've heard – along with what we've learned through data collection and analysis – to develop emerging ideas in early 2027, leading to draft recommendations that fall.

Planners will engage with community members by attending local events, partnering with organizations, and hosting conversations and activities. These efforts will create more opportunities to learn about the plan and share your ideas. To stay informed, sign up for the e-letter and visit this webpage for updates.

Complete our Visioning Questionnaire

Plan goals | Plan boundary | Community engagement

FAQs

Staff contact

Maren Hill
(speaks English and Spanish)
301-650-5613
Email

Upcoming events

Wheaton Plan Walkshop
October 6, 2026 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Wheaton Farmers Market
October 8, 2026
2:00 pm – 6:00 pm

The Wheaton Plan Community Tour: Carroll Knolls Park
October 21, 2026 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Wheaton Urban District movie night
November 1, 2026 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Sign up for our e-letter

Sign up for the latest planning news and information for Wheaton.

Sign up

Sign up for texts

Sign up for text updates for The Wheaton Plan.

Phone *
(XXX) XXX-XXXX
Contact first name
John
Contact last name
Smith
Terms and conditions
I agree to receive promotional messages from Montgomery Planning up to 4 Msgs/Month. This agreement isn't a condition of any purchase. I also agree to the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy. Msg & Data rates may apply.
By submitting this form, I agree that my mobile information will not be shared with third parties/affiliates for marketing/promotional purposes. All the above categories exclude my text messaging originator opt-in data and consent; this information will not be shared with any third parties, except for the necessary opt-in data required to facilitate the SMS service.
Text STOP to opt-out. Text HELP for assistance.
digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org.

Connect with Montgomery Planning

- Sign up for the **Community Planning Academy**
- Visit **MontgomeryPlanning.org**
- Watch or testify at Planning Board meetings: **MontgomeryPlanningBoard.org**
- Read our blog, **The Third Place**
- Sign up for Eletters (see QR code)
  - Parks + Plans eletter
  - Housing
  - Development
  - Placemaking
  - Master plans
- Explore Data Tools
  - Community Trends Report
  - Economic Indicators
  - Online Maps
  - Development Dashboard
  - Development Tracker

Sign up for eletters

