




OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

February 16, 2024

TO: Andrew Friedson, Council President

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive 

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Comments on the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendments

Pursuant to Sec. 33A-7 of the County Code and my memorandum of January 2, 2024, I am submitting Executive comments on the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment (the Plan).¹ Following are my overall comments and highlights from the departmental comments and recommendations found in the attachments: the Fiscal Impact Statement (Attachment A); DHCA (Attachment B); County Stat (Attachment C); MCDOT (Attachments D and E); and DEP (Attachment F). Representatives from the departments are available to respond to questions and attend meetings.

Overall Comments:

The Plan proposes recommendations that exceed the definition and scope of minor master plan amendments.

Rather than a limited, short-term review that addresses a pressing planning issue in a community, this “minor amendment” recommends significant zoning changes that include not

¹ Section 33A-7 of the County Code gives the Executive 60 days from the date of transmittal of the Planning Board draft—here February 19th to “transmit a fiscal impact analysis to the District Council with any other comments and recommendations the Executive makes.” In the future, I respectfully request that the District Council schedule the Public Hearing and any Committee work sessions after it has received the Executive’s required submissions, in accord with the Code’s 60-day requirement. I am submitting comments and recommendations in advance of the February 19th deadline so that the District Council will have the benefit of the detailed comments from the Executive departments.

only the Washington Adventist site but also multifamily areas along Maple and Lee Avenues. Discussions at the first two PHP committee worksessions indicate that these changes are intended to encourage redevelopment that will help meet COG housing targets while addressing what is seen as a concentration of poverty in the area.

The proposed changes include the following major issues:

- The proposed zoning changes would allow for as much as a three-fold increase in the number of housing units in the Plan Area, adversely affecting one of the County's most affordable, diverse communities. While some may justify the dramatic increase in density and housing proposed in the plan as needed to meet the Council of Governments (COG) housing targets, that is inaccurate. Those targets already anticipate the fact that major portions of the county were upzoned over the last 15 years, creating the zoning capacity needed to achieve the housing targets. Because the Takoma Park plan is based on the mistaken assumption that upzoning is essential to meet the targets, it proposes to increase the number of housing units through redevelopment that will replace existing deeply affordable housing, leading to the displacement of current residents who cannot afford to live elsewhere in the County. And it fails to meet COG's other major stated priority of building affordable units that are within a half-mile of high-capacity transit.
- Despite the potential effects of the significant zoning changes, the Plan does not include a racial equity analysis. My staff is working with a consultant to provide a racial equity analysis. While it would have been preferable to have it incorporated from the beginning, it is important to include one before consideration of this plan is complete. How can we plan for the future without a racial equity analysis? To rezone an area with one of the largest concentrations of minority populations in the county, and to do so without a racial equity analysis is a major disconnect. The Plan itself references the 2019 Racial Equity and Social Justice Act and notes: "The Act requires the Planning Board to consider racial equity and social justice impacts when preparing a Master Plan, including a Minor Master Plan Amendment." (pg. 12); and yet the impacts are not analyzed for this Plan.
- Despite the potential for a 65% increase in traffic volume in the area, the plan does not include a traffic study for the area nor a solution to address the increased traffic volume.
- Even though the Sligo Creek watershed has been chosen as the first one in the County to warrant a study of flood risks, there is only a brief review of environmental issues in the Plan itself, with most of the discussion and potential action items relegated to an appendix.

Additionally, as pointed out in the departmental memos, many of the recommendations throughout the Plan are only suggestions, not clear requirements that would achieve the stated goals of the Plan – most notably improved equity, transportation access, environmental protection and housing affordability.

This proposed plan is counter to Thrive stated goals

With its mix of apartments and single-family homes on virtually every block and a population that is racially and economically diverse, Takoma Park appears to be a model Thrive Montgomery 2050 community. Yet the Plan, one of the first to be considered after the adoption of Thrive, proposes changes to the balance achieved in Takoma Park over the years, reducing rather than increasing affordable housing options.

Thrive's stated principles are to address past inequities, create more options for housing that is affordable for current and future residents at all income levels, and concentrate development within a half mile of transit, on a major transportation corridor or where there is robust transit service in place.

Regarding equity, page 8 of Thrive states the following:

“Advancing racial equity through just planning policies and public investments in underserved communities, promoting the racial and economic integration of neighborhoods, and focusing on the potential for the design of communities to help build social trust and inclusion while encouraging civic participation and participation in the planning process are among the most significant elements of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Thrive Montgomery 2050 strives to create racially integrated and just communities. Like economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability, policies designed to advance racial and social equity are integrated into every part of this Plan.”

The Plan, however, falls short of these goals and would decrease access to affordable housing, thereby disproportionately impacting lower income residents. The City's Rent Stabilization law has been essential to providing stability and long-term affordability for many residents, allowing them to be active members of the community. At the Council's public hearing on January 25th, people described the sense of community; they talked about a thriving community, places to walk, rest, and play, and local resources for many lower-income residents in the multifamily apartment buildings. Appendix 1, page 7 of the Plan lists comments received from residents of those buildings who responded to a community outreach effort. The most frequent comments heard were:

- Maple Avenue is generally a safe, quiet place to live.
- Maple Avenue/Takoma Park is a good community.
- Residents are pleased with the quality of the schools but need additional resources for the community.
- Some residents reported satisfaction with the transportation service in the area, especially the walkability, although a few mentioned that the bus service schedule is limiting.
- Regarding the Washington Adventist campus, residents were disappointed in the loss of the hospital and eager to see the services replaced and the urgent care center kept.

Overwhelmingly, residents expressed a need for a grocery store on the campus, and interest in a new community center or gathering space, a recreation center, a playground, and more housing.

- Residents mentioned maintenance issues in many of the residential buildings ranging from mold, hot water and elevator problems, and cleanliness.
- Residents also reported issues with the security of the residential buildings and challenges with landlords and property management.

It is essential to ask how the Plan's recommendations will affect these residents, who by and large expressed satisfaction with where they are living. With its focus on upzoning the multifamily apartments, the Plan emphasizes redevelopment over reinvestment. And as explained in the memorandum from DHCA (Attachment B), this will inevitably lead to displacement of tenants who are predominantly of color and low income.²

As for who will be displaced, CountyStat has provided a demographic profile of Plan Area (Attachment C), which includes portions of several census blocks. Based on the full census blocks, CountyStat developed a methodology for estimating the proportional makeup of households within the Plan Area. This yielded the following results:

- Since 2017, the population of the area has increased by 12%; the number of occupied housing units has increased by 20%.
- The Black or African population is almost 37% higher than the County; the Hispanic or Latino and the Asian populations are about 10% lower than the County.
- The number of households earning less than \$60,000 is significantly higher than the County overall. In this area, 50% of households earn less than \$60,000 as compared to 23% countywide.

Preventing displacement of low-income tenants needs to be a priority

Even though housing for those in the lowest income brackets would be disrupted by the Plan's recommendations, PHP's February 5th worksession focused on supporting zoning changes that would significantly increase land values to encourage redevelopment rather than reinvestment in buildings whose useful life could and should be extended. There was no discernable interest in encouraging reinvestment – in fact, the worksession packet quotes from the Planning Department's 2019 Neighborhood Study, saying that it is "useful to recall" that the study's conclusion is as follows:

"Though displacement occurs and needs to be addressed, our research finds that in Montgomery County it is a secondary concern to the concentration of poverty within neighborhoods, and this finding has major racial and equity and social justice implications. For example, focusing affordable housing construction only

² See attachment C "Maple Ave Demographic Profile". In this area, 55% of the residents are Black and 50% of households earn less than \$60,000. Countywide, 18% of residents are Black, and 23% of households earn less than \$60,000.

in neighborhoods where poverty is already concentrated exacerbates the problem. A better approach is to balance affordable housing across the county to facilitate equitable access to resources.”

The Council packet asserts that diluting concentrations of poverty is a higher priority than mitigating displacement. There is no plan for a “better balance” for those who would be displaced; their lost affordable housing is not replaced elsewhere in the county. Furthermore, they will lose their access to resources they count on, including close proximity to neighborhood schools, Montgomery College, and jobs. This approach would also add to the already large number of people earning less than 50% of AMI who cannot find affordable housing.

The CRT upzoning recommended in the Maple Avenue District with heights up to 150’ would adversely affect what is one of the densest neighborhoods of affordable housing in the County. Currently, it is an area with a mix of high-rises, medium-rises, and garden apartments in the R-10 zone (maximum height 100’), R-20 zone (maximum height 80’) and R-30 zone (maximum height 40’). One resident described the area as “a thriving community of East African, West African, Latino, Black American and other residents who benefit from a local school, community center, and Sligo Creek, with some of the lowest rents in the County” (see testimony of Sue Miller, January 25, 2024). The focus on high-rise construction, which is very expensive, on Maple Avenue and on the Washington Adventist property, essentially guarantees that most of the new units will be unaffordable to the County’s low-income population, who are disproportionately minority.

The Plan recommends a height of 150’ for 11 of the 14 properties in the district. According to the Plan, these zoning changes are to “allow for potential future development flexibility” – i.e., redevelopment. Shockingly, it was explained during the committee discussion that “no net loss”³ would be a “plan-wide goal,” not a site-by-site goal – a concept that seems incapable of assuring no net loss of naturally occurring affordable units. How would current residents respond to the suggestion that the way to address their maintenance issues is to tear down, rebuild, and replace their current homes with new ones they likely will not be able to afford (and if they could afford it, they’d have to live somewhere else while that redevelopment is happening)? Does this suggest that they might be happier in another part of the county where there isn’t a “concentration of poverty,” even if they like where they live now? We know that Takoma Park offers rents lower than anywhere else in Montgomery County – where do we expect these tenants to go?

A Minor Master Plan should be limited – focus on the Washington Adventist site

The Washington Adventist site (Site 23) in the Flower Avenue District offers the real opportunity to create more housing and incorporate other community resources cited by residents who responded to community outreach. However, the recommendation to rezone from R-60 to CR-1.25 C-1.25 R-1.25 H-120 is not consistent with the definition of a CR Zone, which is “intended for larger downtown, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented areas in

³ No net loss is generally defined to mean that redevelopment will not result in displacement of existing tenants.

close proximity to transit options such as Metro, light rail, and bus.” Site 23 is not located in a “larger downtown area” – it is not even adjacent to the Plan’s Municipal District. It is one mile from the Takoma Metro Station and about a mile from each of the three Purple Line stations (Piney Branch/Arliss, New Hampshire Avenue/University Boulevard, Dale Drive). The recommended height is significantly taller than the current hospital building in every area (except for the helicopter pad and tower), allowing for residential densities more appropriately placed near rail transit, like Forest Glen, Long Branch, and Glenmont. In addition, it is unclear from the recommendations on page 101 how much of the open space would be lost. Here, again, the text of the Plan is vague and open to wide interpretation.

Takoma Park would be better served with a CRT zoning, height of 70’ on this site.

Although properties along Maplewood and Erie Avenues in the Flower Avenue District are now occupied by small apartment buildings, a small commercial center, and some single-family houses, the Plan recommends increasing heights to allow “flexibility for future development” – i.e. redevelopment. It is difficult to understand why these changes are recommended for a neighborhood so well integrated with the mix of housing types and commercial resources that Thrive says it strives for. In fact, the existing neighborhood has exactly the diversity of housing stock that Thrive says it wants, and this plan moves the goal posts, asking for bigger and incompatible new buildings.

Following are highlights from each department’s report and important recommendations to assure the goals of this Plan can be realized.

Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA):

The memo from DHCA (Attachment B) provides a wealth of information on the current affordability of each residential building in the Plan Area and discusses the loss of affordability that would result if properties were redeveloped.

- Although full build-out is unlikely, the hypothetical maximum of proposed zoning changes would be more than three times the number of housing units currently permitted: the maximum capacity under current zoning is 1,592 dwelling units; the maximum capacity under proposed zoning would be 4,851 dwelling units.
- Rent restrictions for nine rent-stabilized properties (485 units) would be lost if those sites redevelop. They would be replaced by up to 872 units, generating a maximum of 108 MPDUs at 12.5%. The MPDUs would serve residents with significantly higher income levels than current residents, who could not afford them. Conversely, if the properties are rehabilitated and preserved, they would remain under rent stabilization.
- The language recommending no net loss lacks sufficient clarity to allow enforcement when properties redevelop. DHCA proposes amending that language to achieve no net loss so that all units lost through demolition be replaced at existing affordability levels.

Recommendations:

- Add language to the Plan that encourages preservation of buildings.
- If redevelopment occurs, then the plan should require MPDUs as the public benefit.
- If redevelopment occurs, to prevent displacement of vulnerable populations, require no net loss of affordable housing lost through redevelopment/demolition on a one-to-one basis and at pre-construction affordability levels.
- Reduce heights along Lee Avenue to 50' to maintain a garden apartment character and lower MPDU rents.

Department of Transportation (DOT):

The Plan concludes that transportation in the Plan Area is adequate at buildout, based not on a traffic study but on the adequacy in the performance analysis of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan. In other words, there is no traffic analysis, but the growth may result in a 66% increase in traffic volumes per the DOT analysis. The memos from DOT (Attachments D and E) point out that increased residential densities as proposed in the Minor Master Plan Area will increase congestion. DOT concludes the following:

- Existing transportation infrastructure will not support the additional growth, nor does the Plan recommend any means of capturing the value of the expanded growth and applying it to infrastructure.
- While the area is “generally close” to larger transit hubs, they are too far to be convenient for pedestrians. It relies on regular Ride-On and Metrobus service.
- There is a lack of area-wide low-stress bikeway connectivity.
- Language on rights-of-way on Carroll, Flower, and Maple Avenues lack clarity. The proposed expanded right of ways for bike/pedestrians paths would likely require front yard takings on some of the roads.
- New growth without improvements to transit or bike access will be heavily car-dependent, leading to worsening traffic. This would also make it difficult for new development to achieve 48% NADMS goals.

Recommendations:

- Identify additional infrastructure and services to support proposed growth, such as transit service enhancements and bikeways meeting target Levels of Traffic Stress metrics. And/or:
- Reduce densities as needed to fit within existing and currently proposed infrastructure

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP):

In its memo (Appendix F), DEP supports the Plan’s stated environmental goals but points out that the Plan does not say how the goals will be achieved, and most of the environmental

information and recommendations are relegated to an appendix, rather than included in the Plan itself.

- Referencing the Plan's Appendix D/Environment, DEP points out that while it outlines environmental concerns, without specific actions in the actual draft plan there will likely be no effort to address them.
- The Plan's water quality goals are to reduce untreated stormwater runoff and potential flood rates; reduce impervious surface cover on existing and new development; increase onsite stormwater management; and improve runoff water quality. There are no details on how these goals will be accomplished or who is responsible for ensuring they are achieved.
- Although one of the plan's goals is to reduce imperviousness, its zoning recommendations will likely increase impervious cover. DEP recommends identifying specific impervious surface target percentages for each redevelopment and infill development parcel.
- DEP points out that the expansion of public facilities, i.e. schools, park amenities, bike and walking paths, etc. may be exempt from stormwater management.
- There is no discussion on the condition and replacement of aging sewer infrastructure. To improve water quality, DEP recommends assessing, repairing, and /or replacing sewer infrastructure during redevelopment.
- DEP offers a list of specific comments on tree canopy, green cover, and the lack of stormwater management on street cross-sections. DEP notes the Plan's goal of 60 percent tree canopy but cautions that without more specific requirements, it is possible that tree canopy cover may decrease rather than increase
- Regarding the Washington Adventist site, DEP points out that this is the most important and iconic site in the Plan Area, with the largest non-forested open space (more than 3 acres). Despite the Plan's goal of reducing imperviousness, only about ½-acre of central open space is recommended for retention and would require the removal of large native canopy trees. DEP recommends a cap on imperviousness and a broader open space requirement.

Recommendations:

- Improve and/or add language in the Plan to achieve the Plan's goals for tree canopy, green cover, and stormwater management.
- Move specific recommendations included in Appendix D to the Plan itself, outlining specific practices, locations, and opportunities for reducing impervious surface coverage.
- Support the plan for upgrading Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park, the outfall restoration to Brashear's Run, and improvement of the fish passage through the historic Sligo Waterworks property.

I was disappointed that the committee chose to move forward with Committee worksessions without the benefit of executive comments (which by law needed to be submitted by Feb. 19). However, it is not too late to consider these issues, and my staff and I are available to discuss the Plan and the concerns outlined above and in the attachments.

I will close with a quote from the testimony of Jessica Landman, who lives two blocks from Maple Avenue: “Recognize a unicorn when you see it. Takoma Park has a unique pocket of dense, deeply affordable rent-stabilized housing, which is already consistent with the principles of Thrive and needs to be preserved, not undermined. Don’t spoil it.”

ME:ds

Enclosures: Attachment A – Fiscal Impact Statement – OMB
Attachment B – DHCA Comments
Attachment C – Demographics by CountyStat
Attachment D – DOT 1st Memo
Attachment E – DOT 2nd Memo
Attachment F – DEP Memo

cc: Jennifer R. Bryant, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Scott Bruton, Director, Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Christopher R. Conklin, Director, Department of Transportation
Jon Monger, Director, Department of Environmental Protection
Greg Ossont, Deputy Director, Department of General Services
Thomas Tippet, CountyStat Manager, Office of Management and Budget
Claire Iseli, Special Assistant to the County Executive, Office of the County Executive
Debbie Spielberg, Special Assistant to the County Executive, Office of the County Executive
Meredith Wellington, Land Use Planning Policy Analyst, Office of the County Executive
Ken Hartman, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Jennifer Bryant
Director

MEMORANDUM

January 23, 2024

TO: Andrew Friedson, President, County Council

FROM: Jennifer R. Bryant, Director, Office of Management and Budget

SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Takoma Park Minor Master Plan

Please find attached the fiscal impact statement for the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan.

The Fiscal Impact Statement for this Master Plan indicates that plan components will likely add almost \$10 million in County capital/one-time costs for the proposed plan lifetime of 2050, as well as approximately \$50,000 in annual operating costs. This estimate does not include any land acquisition that may be needed. Given the County's fiscal resources and an already constrained Capital Improvements Program (CIP), I would urge the Council to consider the cost-benefit of the recommended components compared to other competing CIP needs. It may also be useful to prioritize the various Master Plan components and to clearly indicate the likely length of time to accomplish these goals to avoid creating unrealistic community expectations.

On the whole, the plan includes more broadly based recommendations and projects rather than specific recommendations, which makes it difficult to estimate the full fiscal impact. For example, there are recommendations related to improving the water quality and ecological functions of Sligo Creek which would likely include capital improvement projects, but the recommendation is too general and the number and type of potential projects too broad to be able to provide any cost estimates. Additionally, the majority of the recommendations would come under the purview of the City of Takoma Park, which would impact their capital improvement program rather than the County's and which could potentially include the estimated \$8.5 million in parks related costs depending on how redevelopment proceeds.

I urge the Council to consider these factors as it reviews the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan.

JRB:gp

cc: Marlene Michaelson, County Council

Ken Hartman, Office of the County Executive
Chris Conklin, Department of Transportation
Mary Beck, Office of Management and Budget
Rachel Silberman, Office of Management and Budget
Greg Bruno, Office of Management and Budget

Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Fiscal Impact Statement

Department/ Agency	Subcategory	Recommendations	Notes/Estimate Basis	Capital/One-Time				Annual/Recurring				
				County	State/Federal	Private	Others	County	State/Federal	Private	Others	
	Transit	Bus Shelters & Seating Upgrades	50% estimate for LATR requirements for developers.	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
		SUBTOTAL:			\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Ped/Bikes	Neighborhood Greenway	Division Street between Flower Avenue & Greenwood Avenue		\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
		Neighborhood Greenway	Greenwood Avenue between Kennebec Avenue & Division Street		\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
		Sidewalks	Both sides along Greenwood Avenue		\$ 900,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 47,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
SUBTOTAL:			\$ 1,200,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 47,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
M-NCPPC-Parks	Parks	-Add lighting to portions of Takoma-Piney Branch Local Park -Add a neighborhood serving community garden in Opal A. Daniels Neighborhood Park -Potential projects in Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park: 1. Food forest/orchard park 2. Restoring fish passage at the historic Sligo Waterworks 3. Brashear's Run projects 4. Placemaking under Carroll Avenue bridge 5. Replacement of Maple Avenue bridge over Sligo Creek, including related intersection improvements and separated pedestrian trail bridge 6. Wayfinding signage for Sligo Creek Trail		\$ 8,500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
		SUBTOTAL:			\$ 8,500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL:			\$ 9,800,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 49,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

NOTES:
 1. Additional departments provided feedback regarding the recommendations included in the Master Plan, but weren't included above as they didn't cause any fiscal impact, including DGS, DPL, DPS, RC-BCC, MCPD, FRS and M-NCPPC Planning. M-NCPPC Parks stated that there are recommendations related to improving the water quality and ecological functions of Sligo Creek which would likely include capital improvement projects but the recommendations are too general and the number and type of potential projects too broad to be able to provide any cost estimates.



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Marc Elrich
County Executive


Scott Bruton
Director Executive

MEMORANDUM

February 5, 2024

To: Marc Elrich, County Executive

CC: Ken Hartman-Espada, Director of Strategic Partnership
Claire Iseli, Special Assistant to the County Executive

VIA: Scott Bruton, Director DHCA 

FROM: Somer T. Cross, Chief of Housing *STC*

Subject: Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment

Pursuant to Sec. 33-A-7 of the Md. Code, the County Executive asked DHCA to analyze the housing inventory in Takoma Park, in terms of affordability and equity, currently and under the Public Hearing draft of the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment.

Our review reveals that under current zoning there are 17 all-rental properties in the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan area with a total of 1,041 units, of which **1,041** units, or **100%** are affordable. Nine (9) of the properties—with 485 units—are subject to Takoma Park’s Rent Stabilization law. The other eight (8) properties have 556 units that are subject to a regulatory agreement that creates rent stabilization through deed restrictions. Of note, 4 of those properties are owned by Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP). From rent reports, we see that the affordability of these units average between 30% to 50% of AMI and lower. We also know that the majority of the residents in the 1,041 housing units are people of color.¹

If the new zoning proposal of the Minor Master Plan is implemented, as currently written, redevelopment of the rent-stabilized properties would trigger a substantial reduction in the

¹ According to the Takoma Park Interactive Demographic Map (<https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/planning-and-community-development/takoma-park-interactive-demographic-map/>), the largest rental properties within the Plan Area, located along Maple Avenue, are in Census Block Groups 1 and 3. The overwhelming majority of the population in both of those blocks identify as Black and more than a third of each Block’s residents are classified as 2X under the poverty line, making less than \$60,000 for a family of 4 in 2022. In Block Group 1, 64% identify as Black. That area includes Maple View Apartments and Parkview Apartments. In Block Group 3, 83% identify as Black, which includes Park Ritchie and Deauville.

Office of the Director

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amount of affordable housing. While redevelopment of all 17 properties under the proposed rezoning could generate a **maximum of 1751 units** (879 units in buildings with restrictive covenants + 872 units in buildings with no current restrictive covenants) in the 17 buildings, only **664** units (556 current affordable units in buildings with restrictive covenants + 108 future MPDUs required with the new development in non-restricted buildings). While 100% of the units are deeply affordable now, with the loss of rent stabilization and new construction, only 38% of the units will remain affordable unless language is added to the Plan to require retention of the units at existing affordability levels.

The 62% reduction in deeply affordable units is due to the loss of the 485 rent stabilized units, because of a five-year exemption of new construction from the City's Rental Stabilization law. Any new development will be market rate units with 12.5% MPDUs.² The result would be that the 485 rent stabilized units could be reduced to 108 MPDUs. With respect to the properties under deed restrictions, new development would retain the existing number of affordable units, as well as the same level of affordability, until the covenants expire. The Plan encourages redevelopment through a general upzoning in height and density of the Plan's 17 rental properties. The Plan relies on the market to create a large supply of housing to maintain affordability, without considering possible substitutes for the City's Rent Stabilization law to assure one-to-one replacement of the lost units at the same levels of affordability.

DHCA has a list of recommendations at the end of the memo designed to preserve existing affordable housing units, and to encourage new affordable housing.

1. The Plan recommends increased density to permit 3X as many dwelling units within the Plan area as exist today.

As proposed, only 30% of the total Minor Master Plan Area will be *zoned* residential according to a zoning yield study that Park and Planning completed for the Minor Master Plan Amendment. The remaining 70% of the Plan's area will be mixed-use Commercial Residential zones. Assuming certain sites will not be redeveloped such as the Piney Branch Elementary School site; the four (4) park sites of Piney Branch Local Park, Heffner Park, Opal A Daniels Neighborhood Park, and Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park, as well as the PEPCO substation property, there is a total 3,699,706 sf remaining within the Plan area that could be redeveloped. That includes sites that would require shared uses like the Takoma Park Community Center and Library (162,070 sf), the City Public Works Department (11,398 sf), and the Washington Adventist University buildings and athletic fields (1,856,670sf). All these properties are recommended for additional density.

² Unless the development is proposed on a public property. Per page 78 of the Plan, when public properties are redeveloped with a residential component, a minimum of 30% MPDUs must be provided with 15% at 50% of AMI.

	Maximum Capacity under Current Zoning	Maximum Capacity under Proposed Zoning	% Difference
Total SF (removing sites unlikely for redevelopment)	3,699,706 SF	3,699,706 SF	0
Total Maximum Residential FAR	3,699.706 SF	6,276,782 SF	70%
Total Maximum Density	1,592 Dwelling Units	4,851 Dwelling Units	205%

The above chart compares the maximum building envelope under the current zoning and the maximum envelope under the proposed zoning. These are maximums and unlikely to develop to full capacity, however, they would be permitted. The proposed zoning would equate to 205% more development than currently allowed, or 3X as many housing units as currently permitted.

2. Housing in Takoma Park has achieved deep affordability through rent stabilization, restricted deeds, and naturally occurring affordable housing.

- a. **Rent Stabilized Units--485 housing units are subject to Takoma Park’s Rent Stabilization Law in nine separate buildings on Maple and Lee Avenues.** Chapter 6.20 of the Takoma Park Municipal Code is the City’s Rent Stabilization law. The Rent Stabilization law has many exemptions, but none apply to the nine (9) buildings listed in the chart below. If these buildings were completely redeveloped, the new buildings would be exempt from the Rent Stabilization for five (5) years. The rents for units in the new buildings would be market rate, except for the MPDUs at 70% of AMI (if the buildings are considered high rises with 5 or more stories) or 65% of AMI (if the buildings are 4 stories or less).

If renovated or reconfigured, the rent stabilization law would still apply. All existing deeply affordable rents would be maintained.

In the chart below, the rent stabilized buildings are shown on the left. On the right side, the chart shows the number of market rate and MPDU units that could be built on the same property based on the proposed new zoning. Applying the standard MPDU requirement on new development, at least 12.5% of all new units will be affordable to 70% of AMI. There are several properties, however, that will not generate any MPDUs. Those properties that have fewer than 20 units would be exempt from the MPDU requirement under Chapter 25A of the Code but would be required to pay a fee to the Housing Initiative Fund (HIF). In total, new development of all nine properties would result in 872 new housing units of which 108 would be MPDUs.

Rental Properties with No Restrictive Covenants but Currently Subject to Takoma Park Rent Stabilization Law									
Address	Area SF	Current Zoning	Total # units	Current # affordable units	Average Rent	AMI affordable (assuming 2 person HH rounded)	Proposed Zoning	Possible # units that could be developed with new zoning	# of affordable unit to remain (would become MPDUs)
7515 Maple Avenue	8,947	R-20	7	7	\$ 1,228	40%	CRT-2.5 H-150	17	3
7519-7521 Maple Avenue	16,722	R-20	10	10	\$ 1,472	50%	CRT-2.5 H-150	33	5
127 Lee Avenue	7,982	R-20	6	6	Not Available		CRT-2.5 H-150	15	0
7523 Maple Avenue	8,201	R-20	6	6	\$ 1,157	35%	CRT-2.5 H-150	16	0
125 Lee Avenue	9,000	R-10	9	9	\$ 1,048	35%	CRT-1.5 H-65	10	0
117-123 Lee Avenue	22,308	R-10	37	37	\$ 1,121	40%	CRT-1.5 H-65	26	4
7520 Maple Avenue	78,128	R-10	101	101	\$ 1,220	40%	CRT-2.5 H-150	156	20
7600 Maple Avenue	186,872	R-10	189	189	\$ 1,375	45%	CRT-2.5 H-150	373	47
7710 Maple Avenue	113,485	R-10	120	120	\$ 965	30%	CRT-2.5 H-150	226	29
TOTAL:	451,645		485	485				872	108

As noted above, the proposal in the Minor Master Plan draft is that increased density, i.e., increased supply, will maintain affordability. Currently, market rate rents in Takoma Park are generally lower than in other parts of the County. According to Takoma Park’s 2023 Annual Housing Report, the median monthly rent throughout the City is \$1,198. Based on the City’s existing rent rates, it is likely that market rate rents for new apartments will be around 80% of AMI, while MPDUs will be at 65% or 70% of AMI. The dilemma is that the rents of the regulated units are between 35% and 50% of AMI for all 485 housing units. Even if the Plan gives priority to current occupants for the new MPDU units, the cost differential renders the units unaffordable to renters who are currently paying as little as \$965 a month, since the rent for new MPDUs would be around \$1600 a month. With a maximum of 108 MPDUs to be created, there will be a displacement of at least 377 tenants (485 currently affordable units – 108 MPDUs).

- b. Deed restricted properties--**There are eight (8) properties with 556 apartments with deed restrictions. Deed restricted properties are exempt from Takoma Park’s Rent Stabilization law.

Of the eight (8) Deed Restricted properties shown below, the covenants will ensure that the same number of affordable units at the same affordability levels will remain on the property—until the expiration of the covenants. Four of these properties, Edinburgh House, 108 Lee Avenue, Parkview Towers, and Franklin Apartments are owned by MHP. Parkview and Franklin have recently requested additional rehabilitation assistance.

For all units subject to the state affordability restrictions, the MPDU program would not apply to any redevelopment, as long as the existing affordability covenants are in effect. Covenants with deeper affordability than the MPDU program (like LIHTC), take precedence over the MPDUs during their control period in accordance with Chapter 25A of the Code. On expiration of the affordability agreement (generally 30 years) and for the remainder of the MPDU 99-year control period, the properties would once again be subject to the MPDU regulations. At 12.5% of newly generated units, no development, even one built to the maximum allowed under the proposed zoning, would generate as many MPDUs as the current number of restricted affordable units. Once the deeper affordability covenants expire, the only remaining affordability requirement will be the 12.5% MPDUs with the 99-year control period.

Rental Properties with Existing Restrictive Covenants								
Address	Area SF	Current Zoning	Total # units	Current # affordable units	Proposed Zoning	Possible # units that could be developed with new zoning	# MPDUs new development could generate	# of affordable units to remain and year they expire
7513 Maple Avenue	48,639	R-20	45	45	CRT-2.5 H-150	97	13	45 units until 2051
128 Lee Avenue	6,600	R-20	6	6	CRT-2.5 H-150	13	0	6 units until 2057
126 Lee Avenue	6,600	R-20	6	6	CRT-2.5 H-150	13	0	6 units until 2057
108 Lee Avenue	25,474	R-10	25	25	CRT-1.5 H-65	30	4	25 units until 2043
7610 Maple Avenue	42,886	R-10	36	36	CRT-2.5 H-150	85	11	36 units until 2050
7667 Maple Avenue	122,438	R-10	118	118	CRT-2.5 H-150	244	31	118 units until 2053
7620 Maple Avenue	65,419	R-20	185	185	CRT-2.5 H-150	130	17	185 units until 2052
7777 Maple Avenue	133,729	R-10	135	135	CRT-2.5 H-150	267	34	135 units until 2053
TOTAL:	451,785		556	556		879	110	556

- c. There is naturally occurring affordable housing within the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan area in 6 condominiums that include rentals. Where rented, the units have remained affordable. See the chart below.

Ownership Properties with Rentals within Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Area							
Property Name	Address	Total # Units	Bedrooms	Average Rent	Median Rent	AMI Served by average rent (assuming 2 person HH and rounded)	Affordability Restriction
The Sherwood Condominium	116 Lee Avenue	56		\$ 1,371	\$ 1,371	45%	Condominium
The Leeland	112 Lee Avenue	15		\$ 847	\$ 879	30%	Tenant Co-Op
Braeton Place	7525-7527 Maple Avenue	8		\$ 1,463	\$ 1,463	50%	Condominium
The Wedgewood Apartments	111 Lee Avenue	46	1 – 3BR	\$ 1,550	\$ 1,565	50%	Condominium
Takoma Phoenix Condominiums	7611 Maple Avenue	74	1 – 3BR	\$ 1,594	\$ 1,581	50%	Condominium
Hilltop Condominiums	7716-7738 Maple Avenue	20		\$ 1,499	\$ 1,499	50%	Condominium

Recommendations

1. **Revise 3.3.2.2, bullet 3: Public Benefit for MPDUs and two and three-bedroom units**--Prioritization of MPDU benefit points has not been successfully implemented in other County Master Plans. If MPDUs and two- and three-bedroom units are to be the top benefit category, the Plan must make this a requirement.

Require ~~Prioritize~~ MPDUs and two-and three-bedroom units for residential development projects as the a-top public benefit for the **Optional Development Method in the Commercial / Residential family of zones (C/R) to provide additional affordable housing that is needed within the Plan Area.**

2. **Revise Sec. 3.3.2.3., bullet 5, to require no net loss, to prevent displacement of vulnerable populations**—This recommendation is based on DHCA’s experience with the Bethesda Downtown and Forest Glen Plans where the Plan’s no net loss language lacks sufficient clarity, that has made it difficult to apply on sites proposed for redevelopment.

No net loss of affordable housing requires that all affordable housing units (both naturally occurring and income-restricted units) lost through demolition be replaced or rebuilt on a one-to-one basis at pre-construction affordability levels.

3. Building heights to encourage affordability.

To maintain a garden apartment character along Lee Avenue, and to maintain lower MPDU rents, DHCA would recommend that heights along Lee Avenue be reduced to 50'. By reducing the height to 4-stories, if more than 20 units are provided, the MPDU rent rate would be at 65% of AMI, rather than the high-rise MPDU rent rate of 70% of AMI.

4. Adaptive reuse is not sufficiently supported by the Plan. See the recommended new language below.

At p. 76, the Plan states that there is a need for reinvestment in older buildings to ensure quality, safe, affordable housing, but there is no recommendation in the Plan for reinvestment. The Plan recommends striving toward no net loss of affordable housing but fails to provide a recommendation that will preserve and rehabilitate existing housing stock. In Section 3.3.2.1, Bullet 2, p. 78, the Plan recommends that the City and County should work with property owners to obtain “financial and other incentives”. This recommendation is to “boost housing production” rather than to facilitate preservation. A recommendation similar to Section 3.3.2.1’s encouragement of production should be provided in Section 3.3.2.3, Preservation of Housing and Affordability. That whole section recommends preservation of the affordability levels but does not speak to preservation of the existing structures. DHCA suggests adding a bullet recommendation, after the first bullet on displacement, to encourage rehabilitation of existing development.

Work with property owners to preserve existing housing stock and rehabilitate buildings to maintain existing affordability. Explore partnerships with public, private, non-profit, philanthropic, and religious institutions and pursue incentives to preserve existing affordability as well as development.

DHCA is available to answer any questions.

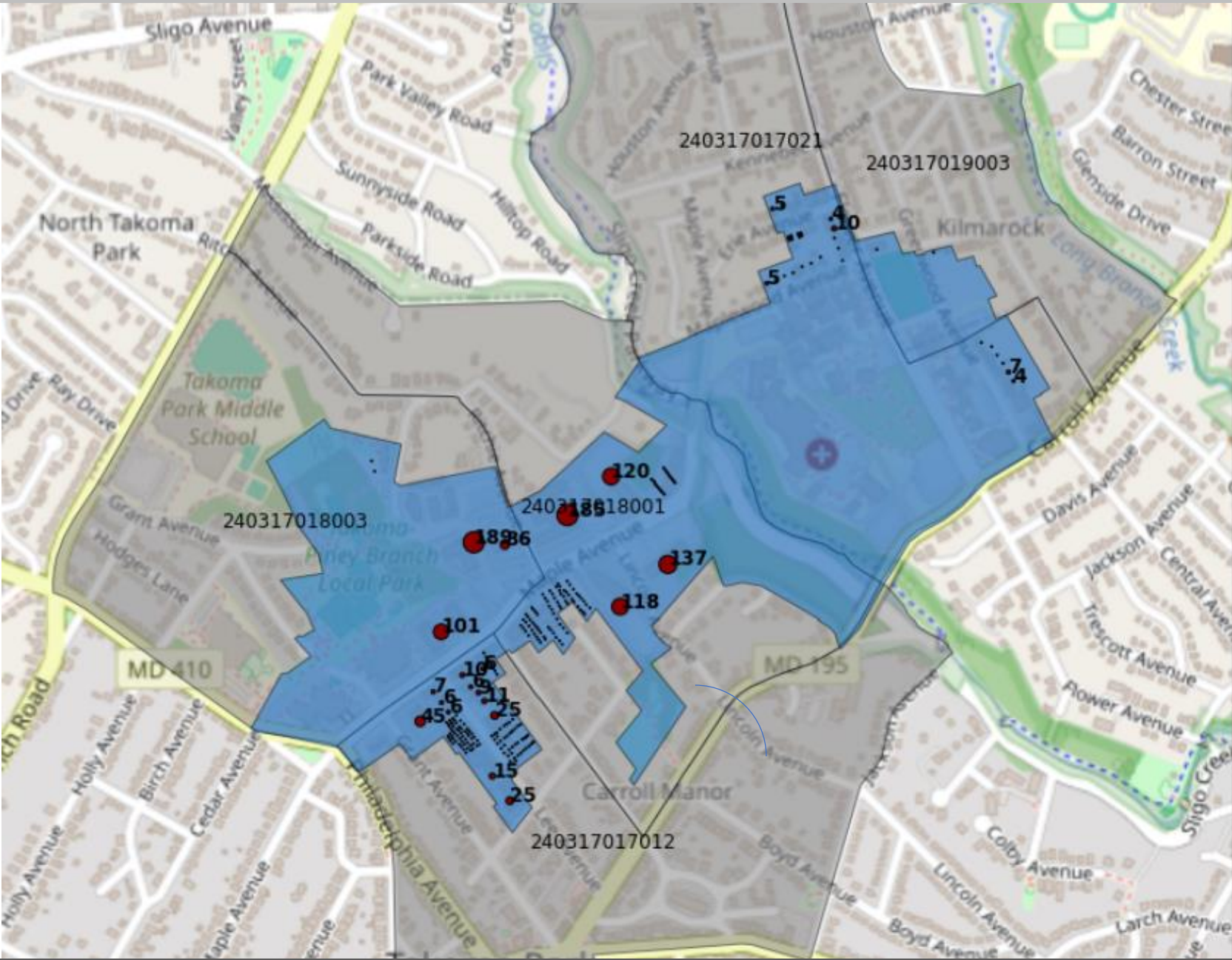


Maple Ave Demographic Profile

January 29, 2024

CountyStat has identified what seems like sampling error at the census block group level (block group 240317018003). This Census error causes some stark differences across the comparison period 2017-2022. Consider this when reviewing this information.

Analysis Area

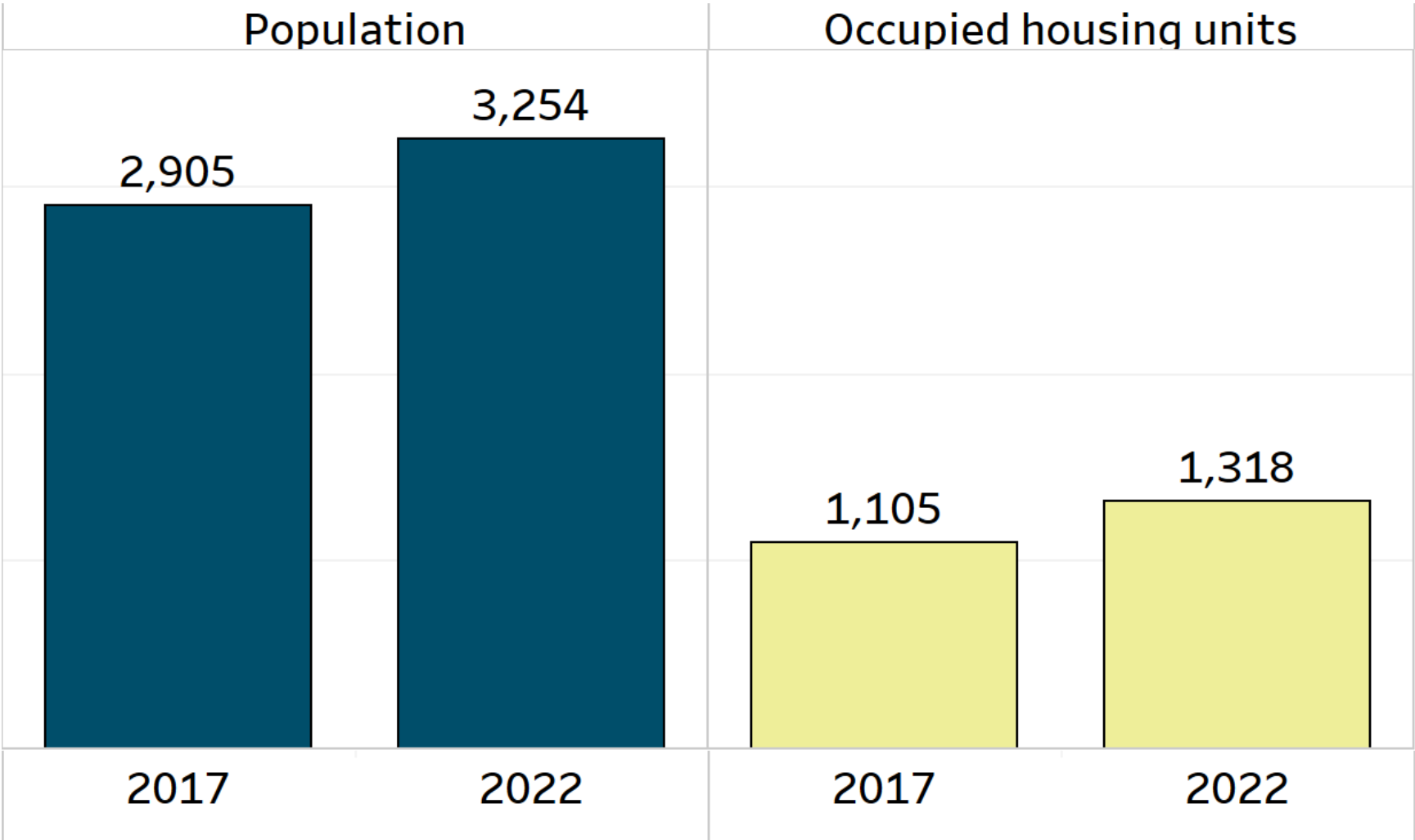


Methodology: Using a unit distributive method we have estimated the proportional make up of households within the smaller planning area (shown in blue), utilizing Census block group data (shown in grey). This chart also shows the residential properties within the planning area (in red) larger dots represent multi-family properties, small dots with no labels represent condos (220) or residential single-family attached/detected properties (18). Based on this data, **CountyStat estimates that 82%-90% of units are occupied by renters in this planning area.**

Zoning Category	Parcels	Residential Units	Percent of Residential Units
Apartments	29	1,092	82%
Residential	35	18	1%
Residential Condominium	220	220	17%
Total	284	1,330	100%

Source: Property Data

Unit Distributive Method: Population and Households

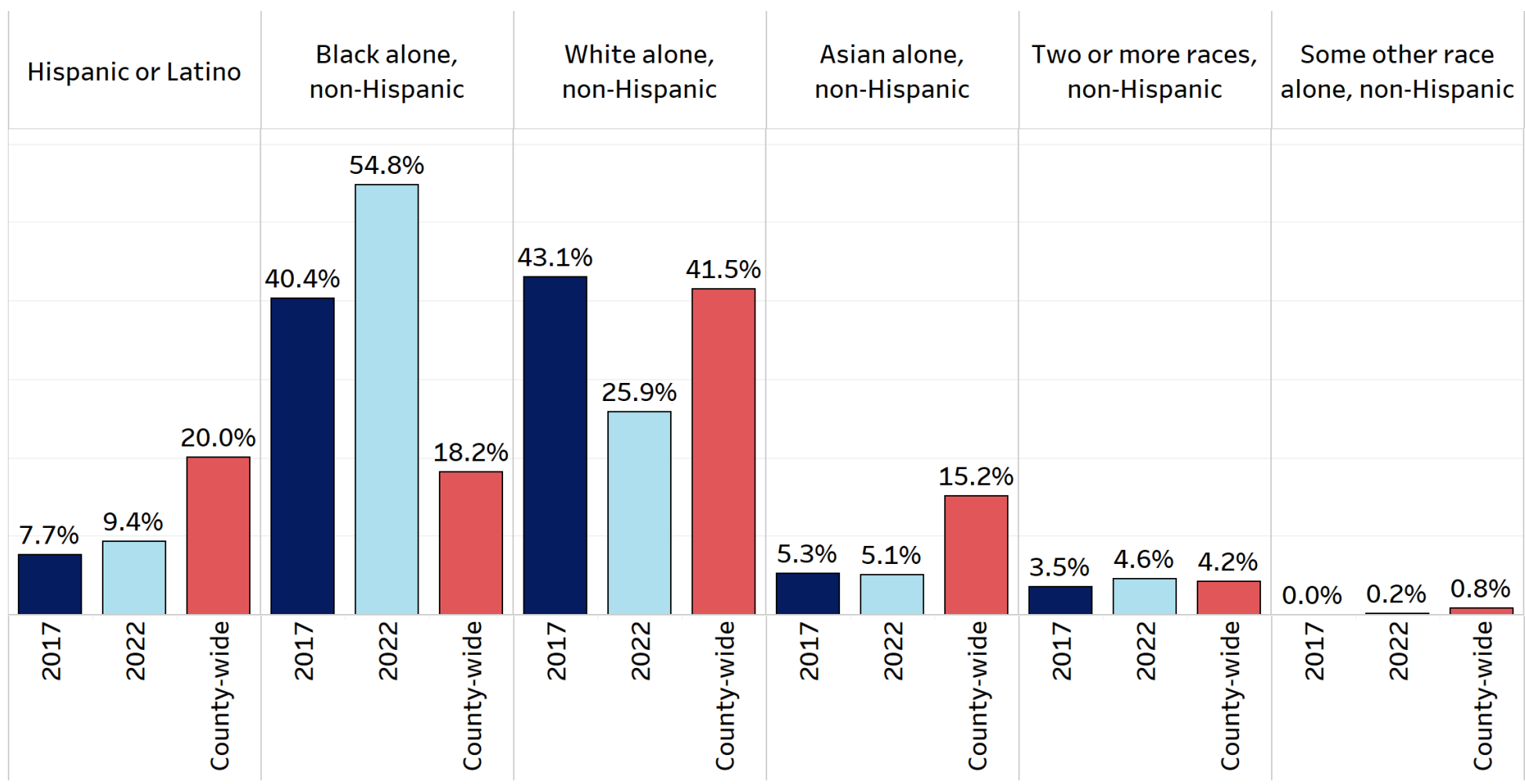


Since 2017, the **population** of the study area has **increased by 12%**.

The number of **occupied housing units** has **increased by 20%**.

Source: 2017 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Unit Distributive Method: Race and Ethnicity



The percent of individuals who identify as non-Hispanic **Black or African American** is **36.6 percentage points higher** than the County.

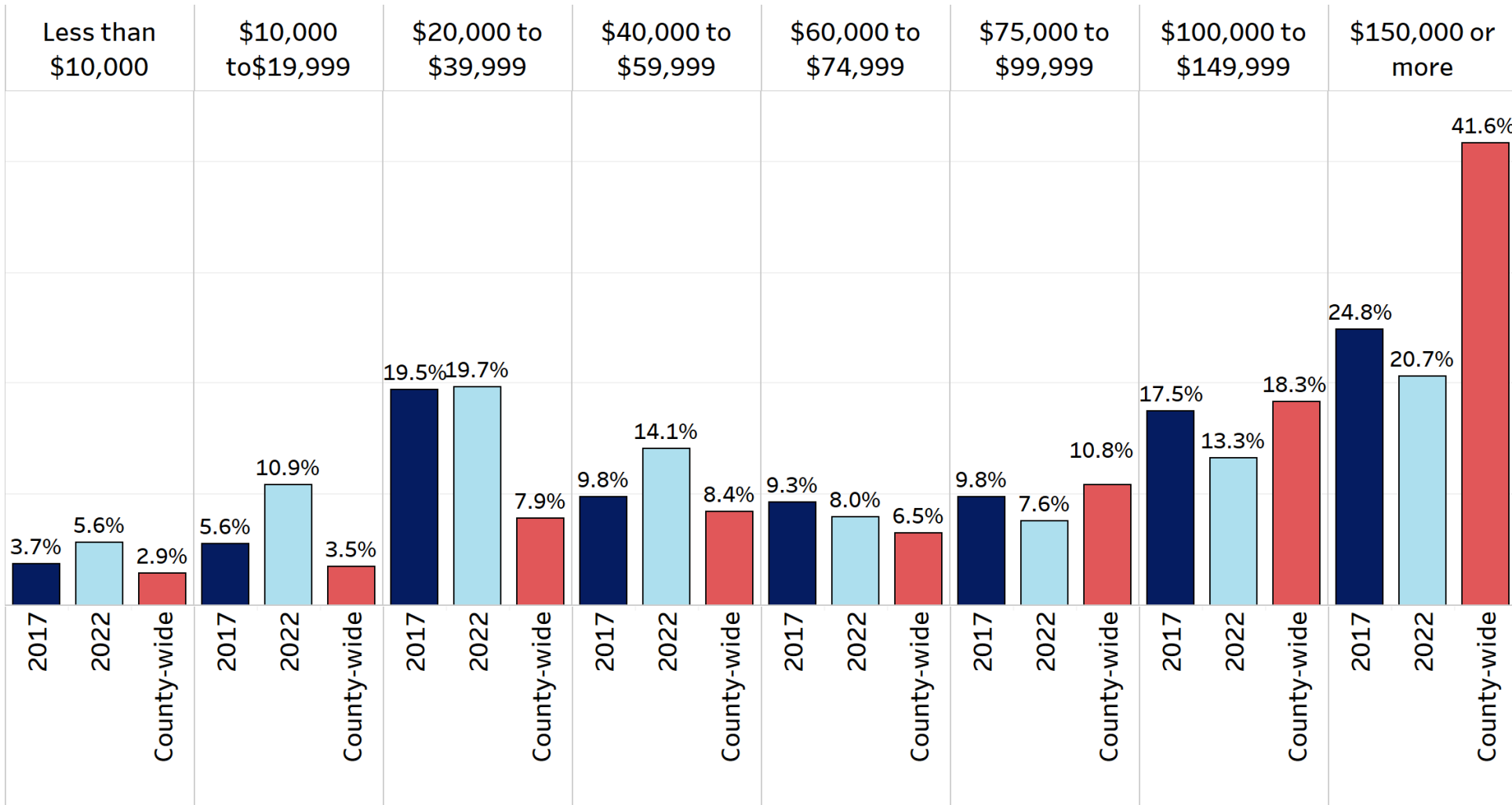
The percent of individuals who identify as **Hispanic or Latino** is **10.6 percentage points lower** than the County overall.

The percent of individuals who identify as non-Hispanic **Asian** is **10 percentage points lower** than the County.

Read This: The slide's data reflects the relative composition of the neighborhoods around the planning area, predominantly consisting of single-family homes. The unit distributive method employed is CountyStat's most reliable approach for approximating census figures across different census geographies. When interpreting this data, **please be aware that it may suggest a higher/different socioeconomic demographic than what is actually present on the ground.**

Source: 2017 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates
County-wide data: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Income Distribution

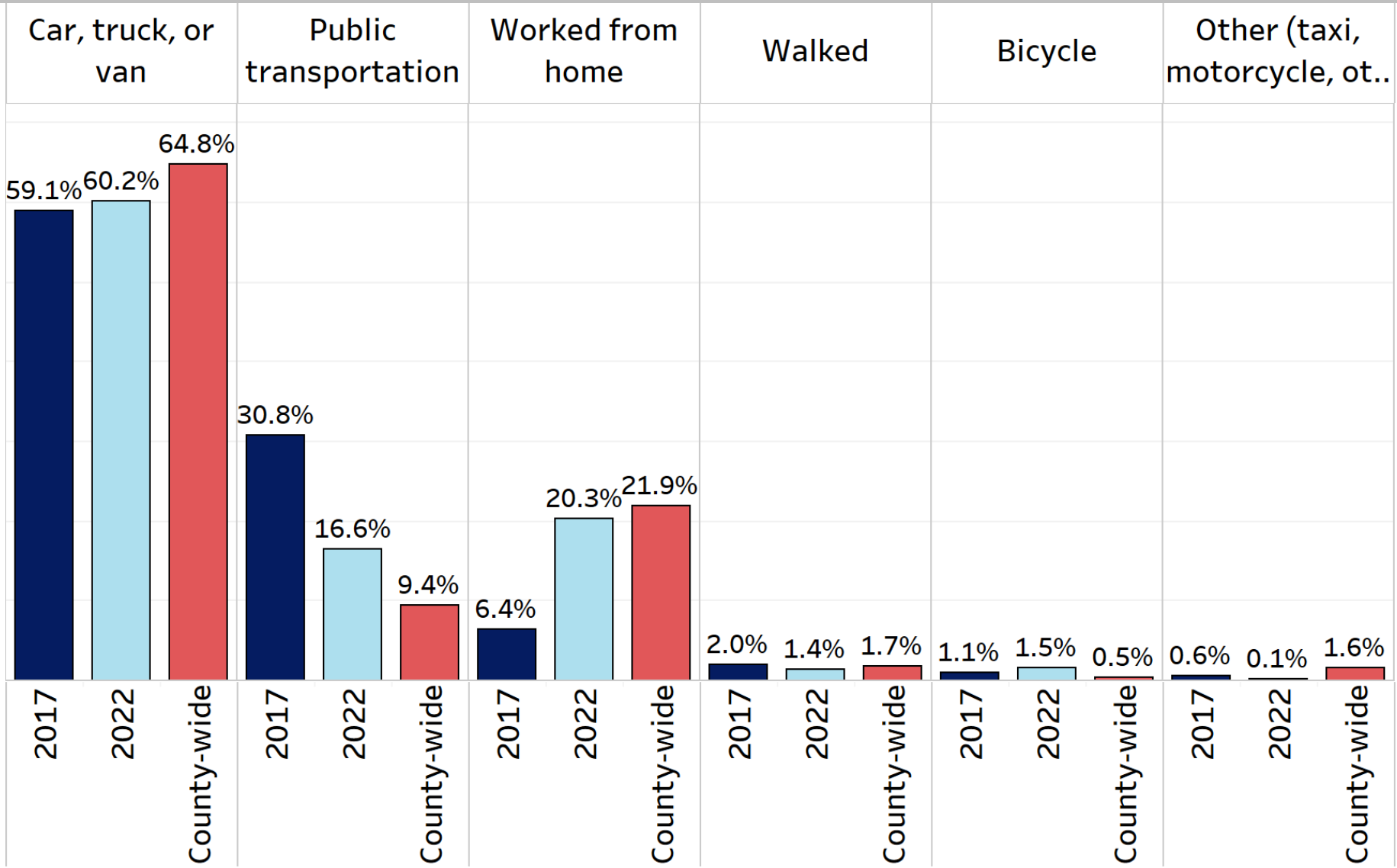


The number of households earning less than \$60,000 is **28 percentage points higher** than the County overall.

Read This: The slide's data reflects the relative composition of the neighborhoods around the planning area, predominantly consisting of single-family homes. The unit distributive method employed is CountyStat's most reliable approach for approximating census figures across different census geographies. When interpreting this data, please be aware that it may suggest a higher/different socioeconomic demographic than what is actually present on the ground.

Source: 2017 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates
County-wide data: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Unit Distributive Method: Mode of Transportation

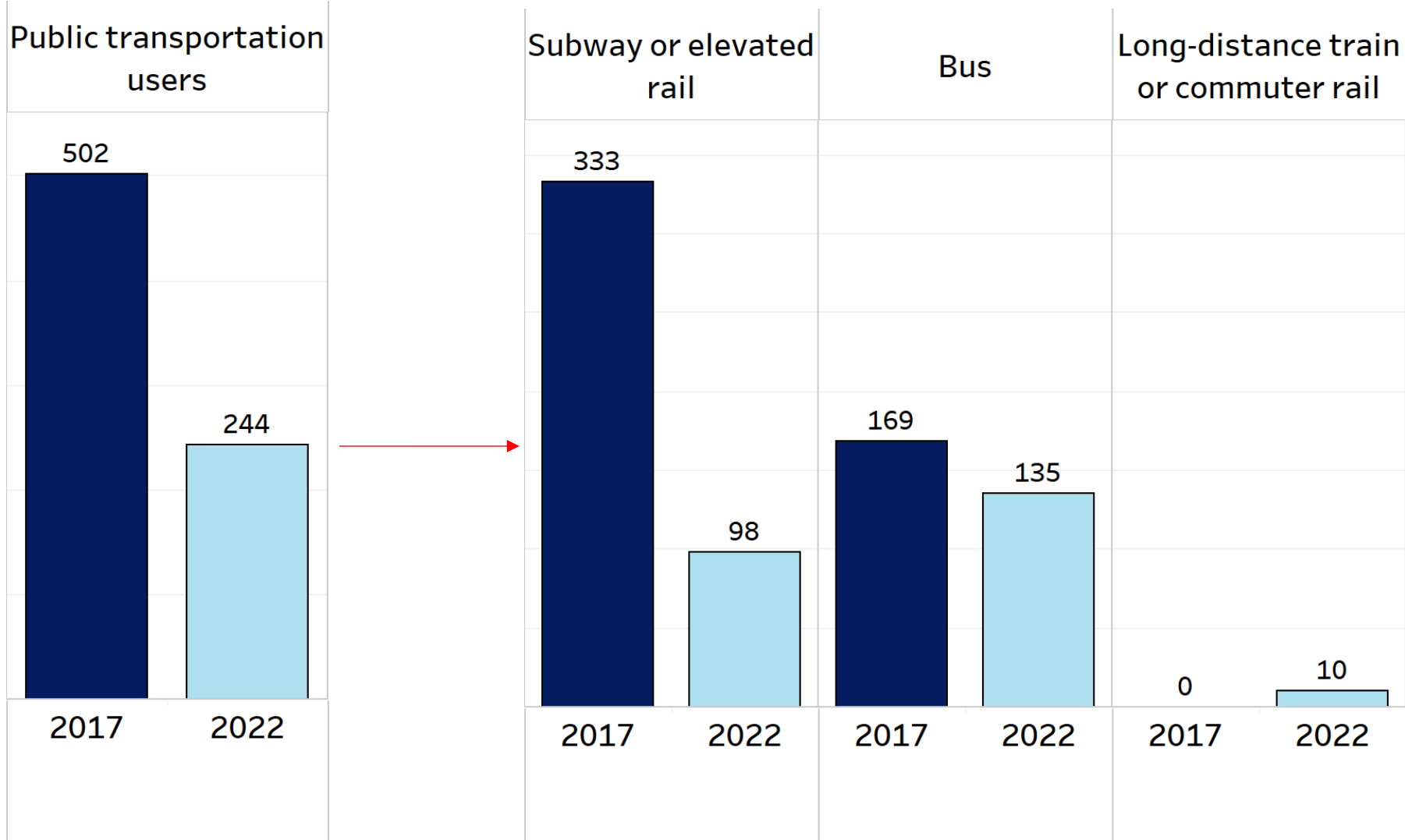


The percent of workers aged 16 and older who commute by **public transportation is 7.2 percentage points higher** than the County overall.

In 2022, there were 1,421 workers aged 16 and older, comprising 45.2% of the population of this area, **7 percentage points lower** than the County overall.

Read This: The slide's data reflects the relative composition of the neighborhoods around the planning area, predominantly consisting of single-family homes. The unit distributive method employed is CountyStat's most reliable approach for approximating census figures across different census geographies. When interpreting this data, **please be aware that it may suggest a higher/different socioeconomic demographic than what is present on the ground.**

Unit Distributive Method: Public Transportation

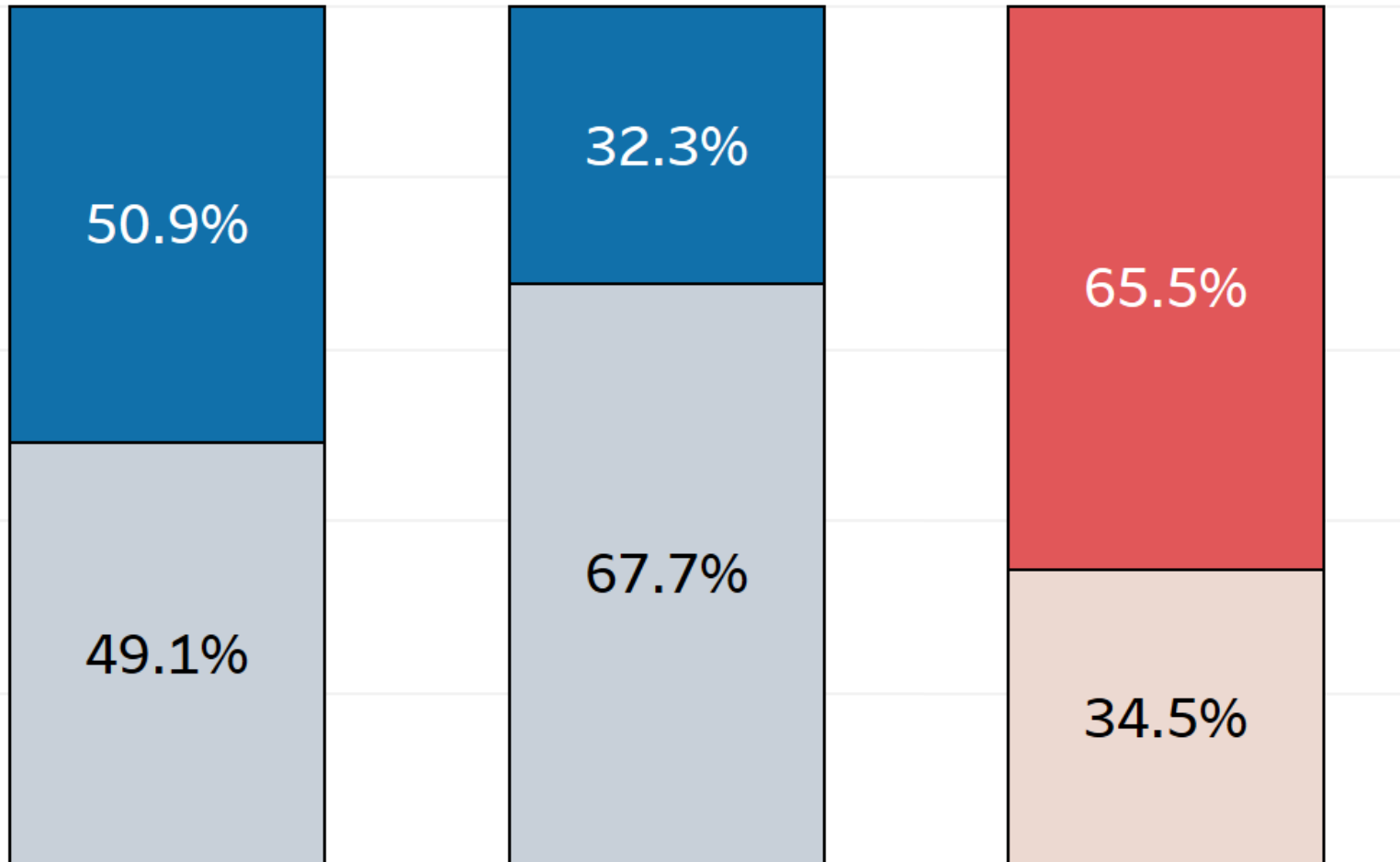


Read This: The slide's data reflects the relative composition of the neighborhoods around the planning area, predominantly consisting of single-family homes. The unit distributive method employed is CountyStat's most reliable approach for approximating census figures across different census geographies. When interpreting this data, please be aware that it may suggest a higher/different socioeconomic demographic than what is present on the ground.

Unit Distributive Method: Workers by Means of Transportation to Work (B08301)

	Census Tract 7017.01 Block Group 2	Census Tract 7017.02 Block Group 1	Census Tract 7018 Block Group 1	Census Tract 7018 Block Group 3	Census Tract 7019 Block Group 3	Total	Percent of Workers 16 Years or Older
Total:	1,014	1,452	762	559	541	4,328	
Car, truck, or van:	489	743	521	339	356	2,448	57%
Drove alone	414	632	490	331	348	2,215	51%
Carpooled	75	111	31	8	8	233	5%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab):	212	301	62	135	98	808	19%
Bus	73	202	18	111	18	422	10%
Subway or elevated rail	110	99	44	24	80	357	8%
Long-distance train or commuter rail	29	0	0	0	0	29	1%
Light rail, streetcar or trolley (carro público in Puerto Rico)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Ferryboat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Bicycle	39	0	11	0	9	59	1%
Walked	22	63	10	0	12	107	2%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	0	28	0	0	0	28	1%
Worked from home	252	317	158	85	66	878	20%

Unit Distributive Method: Housing Tenure



■ Owner-occupied
■ Renter-occupied

■ Owner-occupied
■ Renter-occupied

The slide's data reflects the relative composition of the neighborhoods around the planning area, predominantly consisting of single-family homes. The unit distributive method employed is CountyStat's most reliable approach for approximating census figures across different census geographies. When interpreting this data, please be aware that it may suggest a higher/different socioeconomic demographic than what is present on the ground.

The percent of owner-occupied units is **33.2 percentage points lower** than the County overall.

Source: 2017 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates
County-wide data: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Marc Elrich
County Executive



Attachment D

Christopher R. Conklin
Director

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

January 25, 2024

TO: Marc Elrich, County Executive

FROM: Christopher R. Conklin, Director

SUBJECT: Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment
Transportation Impacts

As requested, the Department of Transportation has reviewed elements of the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment (the Plan). The Plan proposes increased intensity of use in three areas along Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue in Takoma Park identified as the “Municipal District”, the “Maple Avenue District”, and the “Flower Avenue District”. The Plan identifies that as many as 3,500 additional housing units could be delivered in the plan area, and an unspecified number of non-residential uses.

The Planning Department asserts that detailed transportation analysis is not required of the plan area per County Council Direction. Therefore, the transportation assessment includes recommendations for a Green Promenade along Maple Avenue, Non-Auto Drive Mode Share (NADMS) targets, limited bicycle facilities, sidewalk enhancements, and transit stop amenities. The Plan does not include recommendations to improve transit service and does not explicitly assess traffic conditions within the plan area, but rather relies on larger-area performance metrics.

For context, the American Community Survey has shown very little change in population and housing units over the past five years, with approximately 5,800 occupied housing units in the Census Block Groups that encompass the plan area. The area represented by the block groups is larger than the plan area, but nonetheless, the Plan recommendations are a 60-percent increase in the number of housing units in the area.

Rough Estimate of Trip Generation

3,500 housing units can be expected to generate roughly 25,564 daily person-trips and 1,729 person-trips per peak hour.¹ Adjusting for mode shares results² in the trip generation estimates shown in Table 1 below. This notably includes only residential uses, as no information appears to be in the plan clearly detailing the scale of non-residential uses.³

Table 1 – New Trips by Mode

Mode	Mode Share*	Daily Trips	Peak Hour Trips
Auto Driver	52.1%	13,319	901
Auto Passenger	19.9%	5,087	344
Transit	11.9%	3,042	206
Non-Motorized	16.2%	4,141	280
Total	100%	25,564	1,729

Transit Characteristics and Potential Implications

Current ridership along Flower and Maple for the five Ride On routes serving this area is 700 boarding per day. About 40% of this boarding occur during the PM peak period with about 27% happening during the AM peak period, and the remaining boarding occurs during midday and evening.

The five routes (12, 13, 17, 18 and 25) serving Flower and Maple provide connectivity to Silver Spring, Takoma Langley and Takoma Metro Station. All operate weekday service with the 12, 17 and 18 operating 7 days per week. In this area, there is Ride On service provided for 20 hours per day between 4:30am and 12:30am. The highest frequency of service appears at the combination of the 12-13, which operates every 15 minutes during the peak periods. The other routes operate headways between 20-40 minutes during the peak periods. Currently, the routes in this corridor are operating with some available capacity during the peak periods as they are continuing to return to pre-pandemic ridership levels.

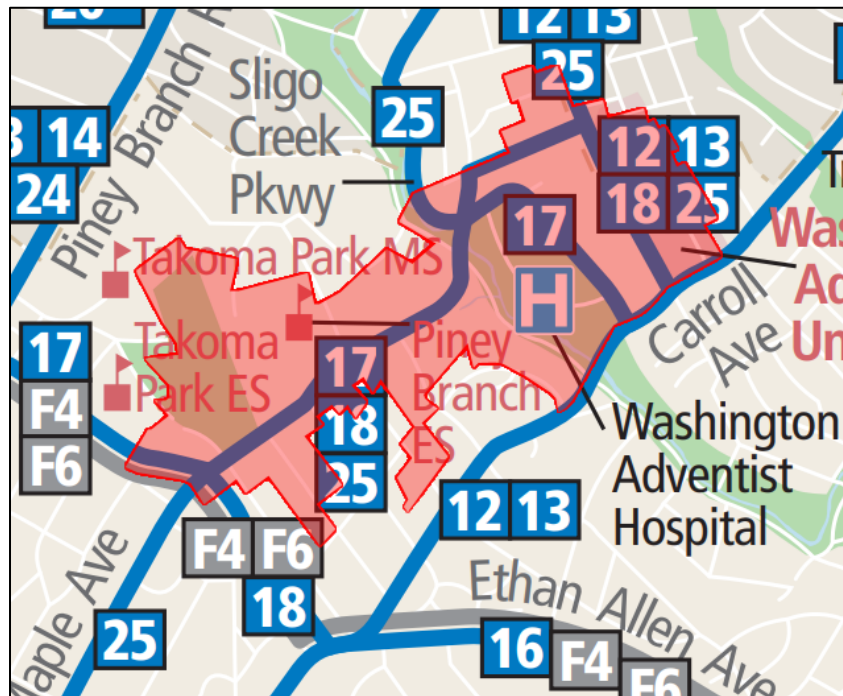
With the current level of service on these routes, additional frequency will be required to provide the anticipated capacity for new transit usage to serve the approximately 3,042 expected new daily transit riders, including an estimated 206 additional peak hour riders. The Plan does not

¹ Based on the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition, using Mid-Rise Apartment (#221) as the presumed use. This value is then adjusted by Table 1a of the 2021 Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines Appendix, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-LATR-Guidelines-Update.pdf#page=53>

² Based on Table 1b of the Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines Appendix.

³ Due to limited available data, estimates similarly do not discount for the removal of existing uses, such as those relating to Washington Adventist Hospital.

appear to propose any mechanisms to utilize new growth in improving transit access and services.



WMATA (grey lines) and Ride-On (blue lines) buses serving the Plan area (red polygon)

Roadway Characteristics and Potential Implications

Both Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue are two-lane, two-way roadways. Not all the new traffic will use these roads, but the growth may result in a 66% increase in traffic volumes, raising the average daily traffic from about 6,400 vehicles per day per road to 10,800 vehicles per day per road on Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue. This additional traffic volume will reduce the quality of motor vehicle operation of both roads. This may be understood in terms of level of service (LOS), where the LOS associated with the added volumes will be reduced from LOS B to LOS E. The additional congestion/reduced operation will result in longer delays for vehicles seeking to enter mainline Maple and Flower Avenues, as well as delays for buses serving the area. The increased congestion will likely increase vehicle-related noise and pollutants.

Sidewalk and Bikeway Characteristics and Potential Implications

We estimate that new growth will generate approximately 4,141 daily non-motorized trips and 280 peak hour non-motorized trips.⁴ The area is generally close to larger transit hubs at

⁴ The 16.2% non-motorized mode share includes pedestrians, bicycles, telecommute, and other non-motorized trips. Telecommuting notably does not necessarily equate to pedestrian and bicycle trips, but particularly in residential areas can correlate with additional pedestrian and bicycle trips throughout the day.

Downtown Silver Spring, Takoma Park Metro Station, Long Branch, and Langley Park, but too far to be convenient for most pedestrians. These distances are well within the bikesheds for the area, but area master plans consist only of shared roads leading to each destination. Given likely increased auto use, shared roads are not anticipated to provide levels of traffic stress (LTS) consistent with the provision of a low-stress environment, as called for in the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan and reaffirmed with the recent approval of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Recommendations to Consider

The proposed zoning appears to allow substantial growth without addressing accompanying infrastructure needs, nor any means of capturing the value of this expanded growth and applying it toward infrastructure.

Limited transit services, the lack of areawide low-stress bikeway connectivity, and the walking distance to surrounding destinations are likely to encourage many new trips to be auto-based. However, the road network has limited capability to support such additional trips, and this congestion will only reinforce the lack of low-stress bicycling options while also worsening transit options.

This negative feedback cycle may also hamper the ability for new development to achieve the target 48% NADMS goal as the comfort of bicycle facilities and convenience of transit services are eroded.

The Plan should do one of the following, or a combination of the two:

- Identify additional infrastructure and services to support proposed growth, such as transit service enhancements, and bikeways meeting target Levels of Traffic Stress metrics.
- Reduce densities as needed to fit within the existing and currently proposed infrastructure.

Marc Elrich
County Executive



Christopher R. Conklin
Director

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

January 8, 2024

TO: Greg Ossont, Director
Department of General Services

FROM: Maricela Cordova, Acting Deputy Director, Transportation Policy
Department of Transportation *MCG*

SUBJECT: Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment
Planning Board Draft – Executive Branch Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to review the December 2023 Planning Board Draft of the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment (the Plan). In addition to the attached detailed technical comments, we would like to highlight several more significant issues. In the items below, footnotes identify the associated comment number in the attached detailed technical comments.

- 1) **LAND USE & INFRASTRUCTURE:**¹ The proposed zoning appears to allow substantial growth without substantial new infrastructure, and no apparent value capture mechanisms to apply that newly created growth opportunities more directly to any needed infrastructure.

The area is near, but not conveniently walkable by most, to surrounding transit hubs at Downtown Silver Spring, Takoma Park Metro Station, Long Branch, and Langley Park. The plan area is served only by local bus, and proposed bikeways do not appear to provide low-stress access to these surrounding areas.

We are concerned that new growth, without improvements to transit or bike access, will be heavily car-dependent, worsening the experiences of those who do take transit or might use bicycles. This may also put the burden primarily on new development to achieve potentially difficult 48% NADMS goals.

Consider either reaffirming that the infrastructure is adequate for the proposed densities, or more clearly capturing new value and applying it to additional infrastructure needs such as new bikeways or increased bus service, or reducing densities as needed for the proposed infrastructure.

- 2) **MAPLE AVE BIKEWAY:**² The Plan gives three different recommendations for Maple Avenue, with the bike map showing conventional bike lanes, the bike table showing one-way separated bike lanes, and the cross-section showing a single one-way buffered bike lane and a sidepath. It is unclear which bikeway is intended nor what is necessary to achieve acceptable Levels of Traffic Stress.
- 3) **BIKE LTS:** Flower Avenue³ and Carroll Avenue⁴ both propose on-street conventional bike lanes. No information is provided on Levels of Traffic Stress and, noting our first comment regarding densities and adequate infrastructure and the risk of high auto usage among new trips, we ask that Planning reaffirm that conventional bike lanes meet Level of Traffic Stress goals along these important corridors.
- 4) **MAPLE AVE CROSS-SECTION:** The cross-section for Maple Avenue shows 5 ft Street Buffers, which may not be capable of providing large trees as shown.¹⁵ Additionally, the two Street Buffers amount to 14% of the total right-of-way, which may be inadequate to provide stormwater management within the right-of-way.¹⁶ We only raise both issues for awareness; both can be accepted as-written provided Planning and Council are comfortable with their implications.
- 5) **ROW:** We seek clarity in the Plan as to what side the additional rights-of-way are intended to be situated upon along Carroll Avenue,¹⁰ Flower Avenue,¹¹ and Maple Avenue.¹²

Attachments: Detailed Comments

cc: Andrew Bossi, MCDOT
Kara Olsen-Salazar, MCDGS
Claire Iseli, CEX
Meredith Wellington, CEX

0	Team	Commenter	Page	Section	Summary	Comment
1	Policy	ADB	24, 59, 108	3.1.1, 3.2.6, 5.1.3	Zoning, Transpo Analysis	<p>The proposed zoning predominantly includes 120-150' building heights and FARs between 1.25-2.5. (recognizing that there are some existing buildings of approx 120')</p> <p>For comparison, the Fairland/Briggs Chaney Plan generally has heights up to 85' (with limited 120') and FARs of 1.5 to 2.0, and are all located immediately at existing or planned BRT stations.</p> <p>Need to ensure that the densities proposed by the zoning are supported by accompanying infrastructure. The Plan Area is only serviced by local bus; it is not located near any Metro, light rail, nor BRT services, and bicycle connections to these facilities do not appear to be master planned to be low-stress bikeways.</p> <p>The limited non-auto connectivity proposed for the area may result result in many new trips being car-based, and without a transportation analysis for this plan on how to mitigate or accommodate these trips, we are unable to affirm whether the transportation options in the area are capable of supporting these densities. It may be difficult to achieve the target 48% NADMS goal & may place excessive burden on developments to achieve the NADMS goal.</p> <p>We also risk giving away too much new value without capturing it & applying to the public good, including new infrastructure such as bikeways or transit services. These new developments should be partners in increasing transit service linking the area with downtown Silver Spring, the Takoma Park Metro, Long Branch, and Langley Park.</p> <p>Consider either...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) affirm that the proposed infrastructure can support these densities - (2) more clearly capture new value & apply it to additional infrastructure needs, such as new bikeways or increased transit service - (3) reduce densities as needed per proposed infrastructure.

0	Team	Commenter	Page	Section	Summary	Comment
2	Policy	ADB	43-45, 57	3.2.2	Maple Ave Bikeway	<p>p43, 2nd Bullet - This states that the 2018 Bike Master Plan recommended Maple Ave between Philadelphia Ave & Sligo Creek Pkwy as a Neighborhood Greenway.</p> <p>This appears to be incorrect. The 2018 Plan calls for this segment (between Hilltop Rd Philadelphia Ave; Hilltop is approximately the same location as Sligo Creek Pkwy) calls for a pair of one-way separated bike lanes:</p> <p>https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Bicycle-Master-Plan-Web-Version.pdf#page=329</p> <p>On p44 this plan shows conventional bike lanes, which would be a downgrade from what is currently master planned, and considering the growth proposed for the area I do not believe this would meet Bicycle Level of Traffic Street targets. (Bike LTS information appears to not be included in neither the plan nor appendix)</p> <p>However, on p45 the plan also calls for a pair of one-way Separated Bike Lanes along this same stretch. This p45 recommendation would be our preference. While Maple Ave is not a County roadway, it nonetheless connects the activity center directly to the Takoma Park Metro Station & provides the potential for important connectivity.</p> <p>And on p57 the cross-section shows yet a third option, with a single buffered bike lane on on side, and a sidepath on the other side.</p>
3	Policy	ADB	43-45	3.2.2	Flower Ave Bikeway	<p>Are conventional on-street bike lanes adequate along Flower Avenue? What Bike Level of Traffic Stress does this achieve? This corridor provides important connectivity to Long Branch and its Purple Line Station.</p> <p>(Bike LTS information appears to not be included in neither the plan nor appendix)</p>
4	Policy	ADB	44-45	3.2.2	Carroll Ave Bikeway	<p>Are conventional on-street bike lanes and shared lane markings adequate along Carroll Avenue? What Bike Level of Traffic Stress does this achieve? This corridor provides important connectivity toward Langley Park and its Purple Line Stations.</p> <p>(Bike LTS information appears to not be included in neither the plan nor appendix)</p>
5	Policy	ADB	44-45	3.2.2	Carroll Ave Bikeway	<p>Map 7 on p44 shows the Carroll Ave bikeway west of Flower as a Separated Bikeway, but Table 2 on p45 lists it as Conventional Bike Lanes.</p>
6	Policy	ADB	44	3.2.2	Colorblind Accessibility	<p>Consider reviewing graphics for colorblind accessibility.</p> <p>Map 7's Off-Street Trail and Separated Bikeways may pose some issues with Achromatopsia, Deuteranopia, and Protanopia.</p>
7	Policy	ADB	46	3.2.3	Crosswalk Type	<p>Add "or ladder" so that it reads: "upgrading all intersections with high-visibility continental or ladder crosswalk markings for all pedestrian approaches"</p>

0	Team	Commenter	Page	Section	Summary	Comment
8	Policy	ADB	50-51	3.2.4	Carroll Ave ROW	<p>Table 3 (p51) shows an additional +10' of ROW along Carroll Ave between Jefferson Ave and Flower Ave. On p50 the 2nd bullet (or 3rd, as the first is missing a bullet) states that additional ROW is to be dedicated on the north side. Just to confirm: is *all* +10' to come from the North side?</p> <p>The North side would make sense, considering its redevelopment potential. But it should be clearer to ensure dedication proceeds smoothly. Consider clarifying the 2nd/3rd bullet to read:</p> <p>"dedication of 10' of additional right-of-way on the north side..."</p>
9	Policy	ADB	51	3.2.4	Carroll Ave ROW Bolding	<p>The portion of Carroll Ave between Flower Ave and Central Ave is currently planned at 50', but this table shows 80'. The table should be bolded to reflect this change.</p> <p>The portion of Carroll Ave between Flower Ave and Central Ave is currently planned at 50', but this table shows 80'.</p>
10	Policy	ADB	51	3.2.4	Carroll Ave ROW Side	<p>Is there a side that this additional +30' of ROW would come from? Or is it presumed ot be split 15' on each side?</p> <p>(if it's presumed to be split evenly from each side then the phrasing is OK as-is)</p>
11	Policy	ADB	51	3.2.4	Flower Ave ROW Side	<p>The portion of Flower Ave between Maplewood Ave and Carroll Ave is proposed to expand from 70' to 80' ROW. Is there a side that this additional +10' should come from? Or is it presumed to be split 5' on each side?</p> <p>(if it's presumed to be split evenly from each side then the phrasing is OK as-is)</p>
12	Policy	ADB	51	3.2.4	Maple Ave ROW Side	<p>The portion of Maple Ave between Philadelphia Ave and Hilltop Rd is proposed to expand from 60' to 70' ROW. Is there a side that this additional +10' should come from? Or is it presumed to be split 5' on each side?</p> <p>(if it's presumed to be split evenly from each side then the phrasing is OK as-is)</p>
13	Policy	ADB	51	3.2.4	Minimum ROW Footnote	<p>Add a footnote applicable to the Master Planned Minimum ROW column on each page with the following footnoted text:</p> <p>"Minimum rights-of-way do not include lanes for turning, parking, acceleration, deceleration, or other purposes auxiliary to through travel. Additional rights-of-way may also be needed to accommodate master planned bicycle and transit facilities, including Protected Intersections, the envelopes of transit stations, and pedestrian crossing refuges."</p>
14	Policy	ADB	53-57	3.2.4.1	Cross-Sections Feasibility	<p>The Plan does not necessarily need to change, but be mindful that it may take a long time to implement some cross-sections due to limited redevelopment & ROW availability.</p>
15	Policy	ADB	57	3.2.4.1	Maple Ave Trees	<p>Large trees, as shown, may be difficult to fit within 5' width areas. Large trees generally require a minimum of 6' Street Buffers.</p>
16	Policy	ADB	57	3.2.4.1	Maple Ave SWM	<p>The two 5' Street Buffers, amounting to 14% of the total ROW, may be inadequate to meet in situ SWM needs as recommended on p69.</p>
17	Policy	ADB	58	3.2.5	Colorblind Accessibility	<p>Consider reviewing graphics for colorblind accessibility.</p> <p>Map 10 may pose issues with Achromatopsia, Deuteranopia, Protanomaly, and Protanopia.</p>
18	Policy	ADB	111-113	5.3	CIP Page Numbers	<p>Consider adding a column that includes page references to where the project is substantially referenced.</p>
19	Policy	ADB	113	5.3	Crosswalk Type	<p>Add "or ladder" so that it reads: "Upgrade crosswalks to continental or ladder pavement markings"</p>



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Jon Monger
Director

MEMORANDUM

January 30, 2024

TO: Marc Elrich, County Executive

FROM: Jon Monger, Director *Jon Monger*

SUBJECT: Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment: Environmental Impacts

As requested, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has reviewed the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment and are submitting the following comments and recommendations from the Watershed Restoration Division.

Overall comments and recommendations:

The Plan's water quality goals, as stated in Appendix D Environment, are:

- Reduce untreated stormwater runoff and potential flood rates.
- Reduce impervious surface cover on existing and new development.
- Increase onsite stormwater management.
- Improve runoff water quality.

While we agree with the stated goals, the Plan does not provide details on how to accomplish them or who is responsible for ensuring they are achieved. Regarding imperviousness, page 68 of the Plan notes that the overall impervious surface cover within the Plan Area is 47% "with minimal associated stormwater management requirements." Appendix D, Section 3.d.i Impervious Cover, notes, "Research has shown that when impervious cover reaches 10-25%, major alterations in stream morphology occur that can significantly reduce habitat quality. At greater than 25% impervious cover, streams suffer from loss of habitat, floodplain connectivity, bank stability, and decreased water quality." It is unclear how the Plan can achieve the stated water quality goal of reduced impervious surface cover on existing and new development when it recommends rezoning much of the Plan area to allow for higher densities, likely resulting in increased impervious cover. Likewise, recommendations to expand public facilities – schools, park amenities, public service facilities, bike



Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment: Environmental Impacts
January 30, 2024
Page 2

and walking paths – will increase imperviousness. In addition to treating stormwater from new development or redevelopment, this plan should include recommendations on how to treat existing impervious surfaces that do not currently have stormwater management.

To reduce the impacts of imperviousness as redevelopment occurs, Chapter 4: District Recommendations should identify specific impervious surface target percentages (caps) for each redevelopment and infill development parcel. Impervious footprints of public and private properties should be minimized with pervious surfaces and/or soil decompaction utilized where possible. Also, attention should be given to the appropriate sizing and types of stormwater management essential to maintaining and improving existing water quality and flow conditions.

We note that there is no discussion of the condition and replacement of aging sewer infrastructure. This is a significant issue in this part of the County and is likely a leading source of fecal bacteria, nitrogen, and other pollution. During redevelopment, sewer infrastructure should be assessed, repaired, and replaced as necessary to improve water quality.

The City of Takoma Park and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) are primarily responsible for carrying out improvements in water quality. At the same time, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is responsible for improvements to County rights-of-way, and WSSC has a critical role in improving the aging sewer system. DEP does not have Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) jurisdiction because the City of Takoma Park and M-NCPPC are covered by their own MS4 permits.

Specific comments and recommendations:

1. The tree canopy goal on page 62 of the Plan is to “achieve 60 percent tree canopy coverage for the overall plan area.” This goal may be challenging to achieve because of the Plan’s recommendations for increased densities and exceptions to “green cover” requirements to allow for green roofs and on-site energy generation. Unless there are more specific site requirements and details for increasing canopy cover, it is possible that tree canopy cover will decrease rather than increase.
2. The intent of the bulleted list on pages 64-65 regarding “green cover” is unclear. It states that “new construction projects over 5,000 square feet should provide a minimum of 35 percent of the site’s impervious area as green cover.” This language does not prevent the entire site from being 100 percent impervious. If this requirement intends to reduce thermal impacts, then reducing impervious surfaces should also be required, along with the requirement to include 35 percent green cover by providing tree canopy and/or green roofs.
3. Page 69 states “integrate vegetated stormwater management into street renovation and construction.” However, none of the street cross sections on pages 53-57 show stormwater management.

Vegetated stormwater management should be integrated into the street cross-section and required to the maximum extent possible.

4. Washington Adventist University property is probably the Plan's most important and iconic site. It also has the largest non-forested open space in the Plan area and one of the largest in Takoma Park. The main part of this open space is over 3 acres. Although impervious reduction is a stated goal of the Plan, it recommends retaining only about a half-acre of central open space for the site. This would result in a substantial increase in imperviousness and the removal of the existing iconic central open space, including large native canopy trees. If the site is redeveloped, the Plan should require the preservation of more of the existing open space, expand the existing tree canopy, and set an impervious surface cap.
5. There are improvements recommended in the Plan that could be beneficial if done correctly:
 - Page 83 details feedback from the community for restoration of and improvements to Sligo Creek; pages 96-97 identify several ways to upgrade the Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park, including improved ecological function and water quality.
 - Page 97 cites the need to restore the outfall of Brashear's Run tributary near Sligo Creek. This would involve M-NCPPC and the City of Takoma Park. MCDOT may also be involved in this outfall restoration if it is under a county easement.
 - Pages 97-98 mention the improvement of fish passage through the historic Sligo Waterworks property.

Appendix D. Environment

Overall, this section outlines the environmental concerns. However, without specific recommendations for action in the Plan itself, these concerns are unlikely to be addressed.

Section 3. d.i does not outline how to accomplish the goal of reducing impervious surface coverage. Specific practices, locations, and opportunities should be outlined in mapped areas in the Plan itself to accomplish the stated goal.

Section 3.d.ii states, "The classified Sligo Creek watershed as having poor water quality." "The" at the beginning of the sentence should be "They" because it refers to DEP's water quality monitoring.