

Freedom Plan Small Area Amendment and Overlay Zoning District

PZC Presentation

August 5, 2026



Freedom Community
Comprehensive Plan

2027 Small Area Amendment



Purpose of the Project

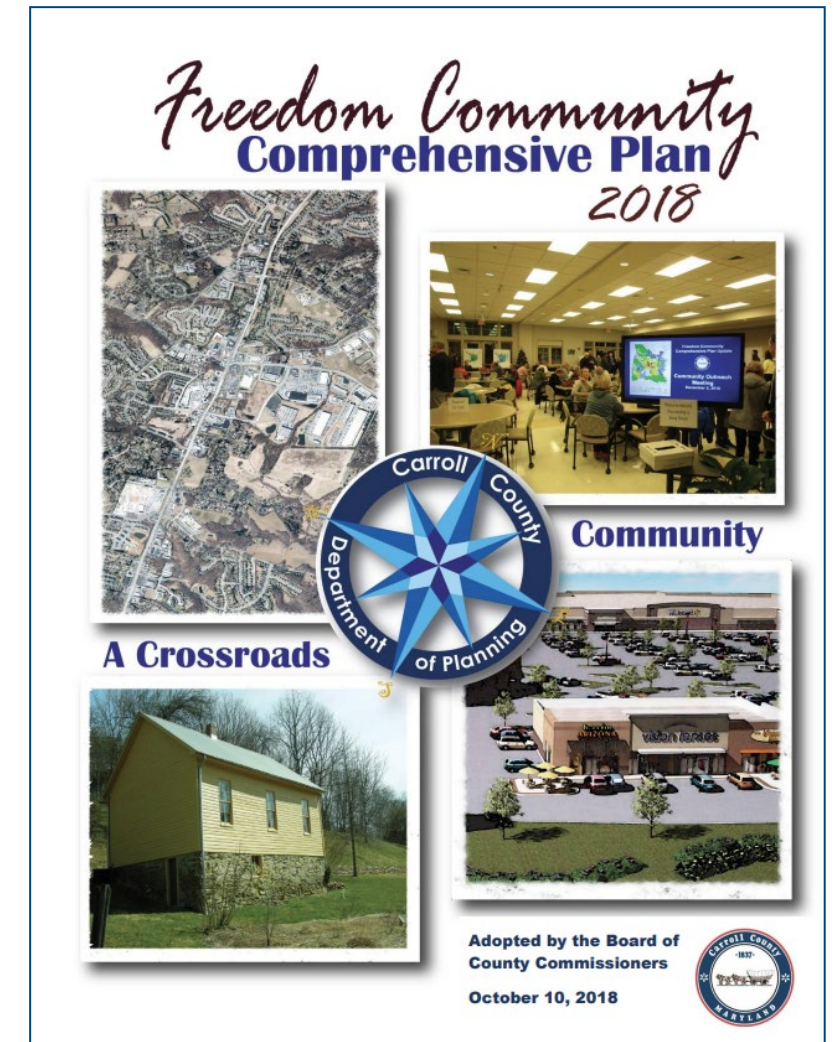
Amend the 2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan for the MD (Liberty Road) and MD -32 (Sykesville Road) commercial corridor.

-26

Evaluate how the corridor has changed and identify priorities for future growth and redevelopment.

Identify where redevelopment should occur while protecting established neighborhoods and community assets.

Prepare an Overlay Zoning District that guides future development, building design, landscaping, access, and streetscapes.

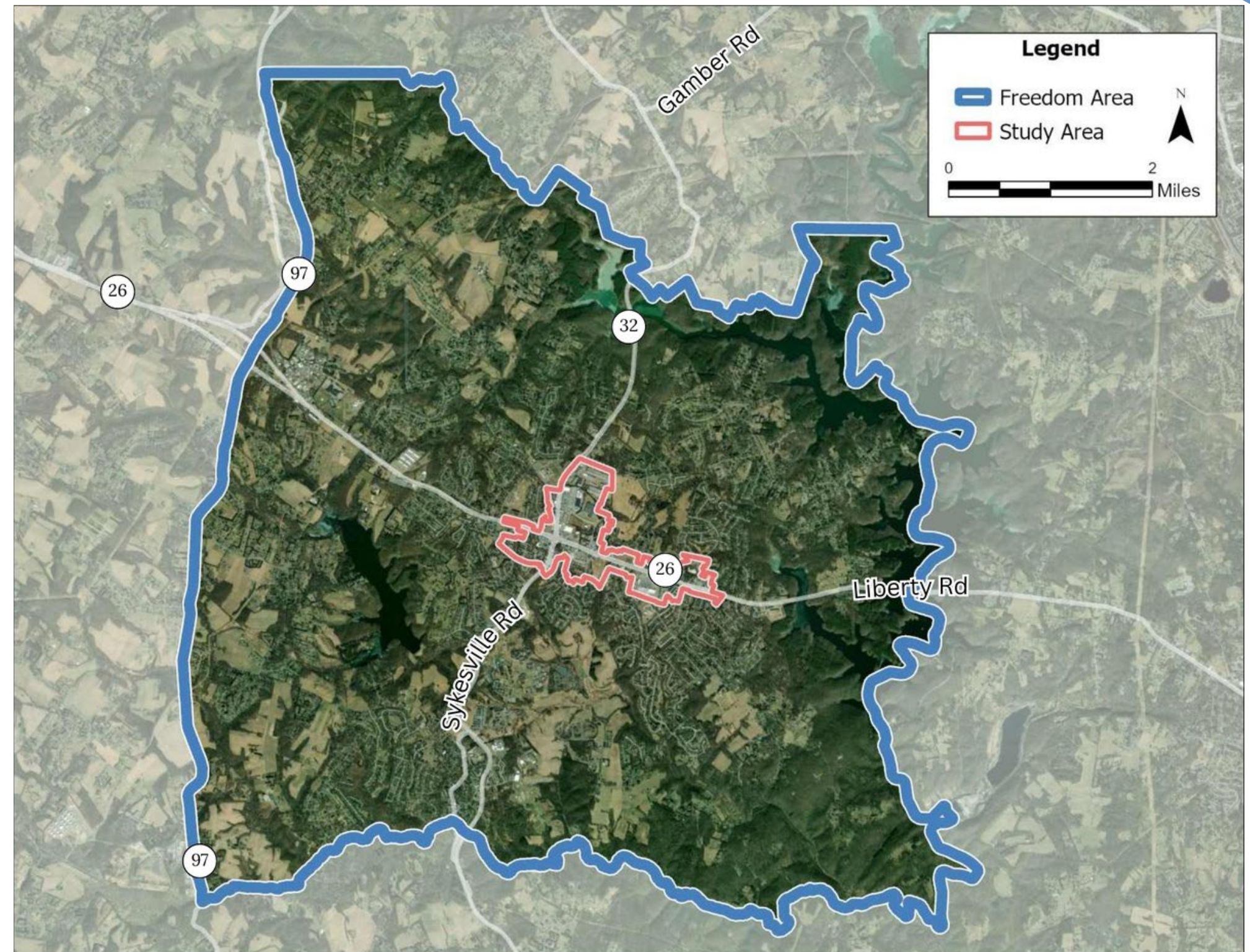


Tonight's Workshop Purpose: Gather direction from the Planning and Zoning Commission before developing future land use scenarios.

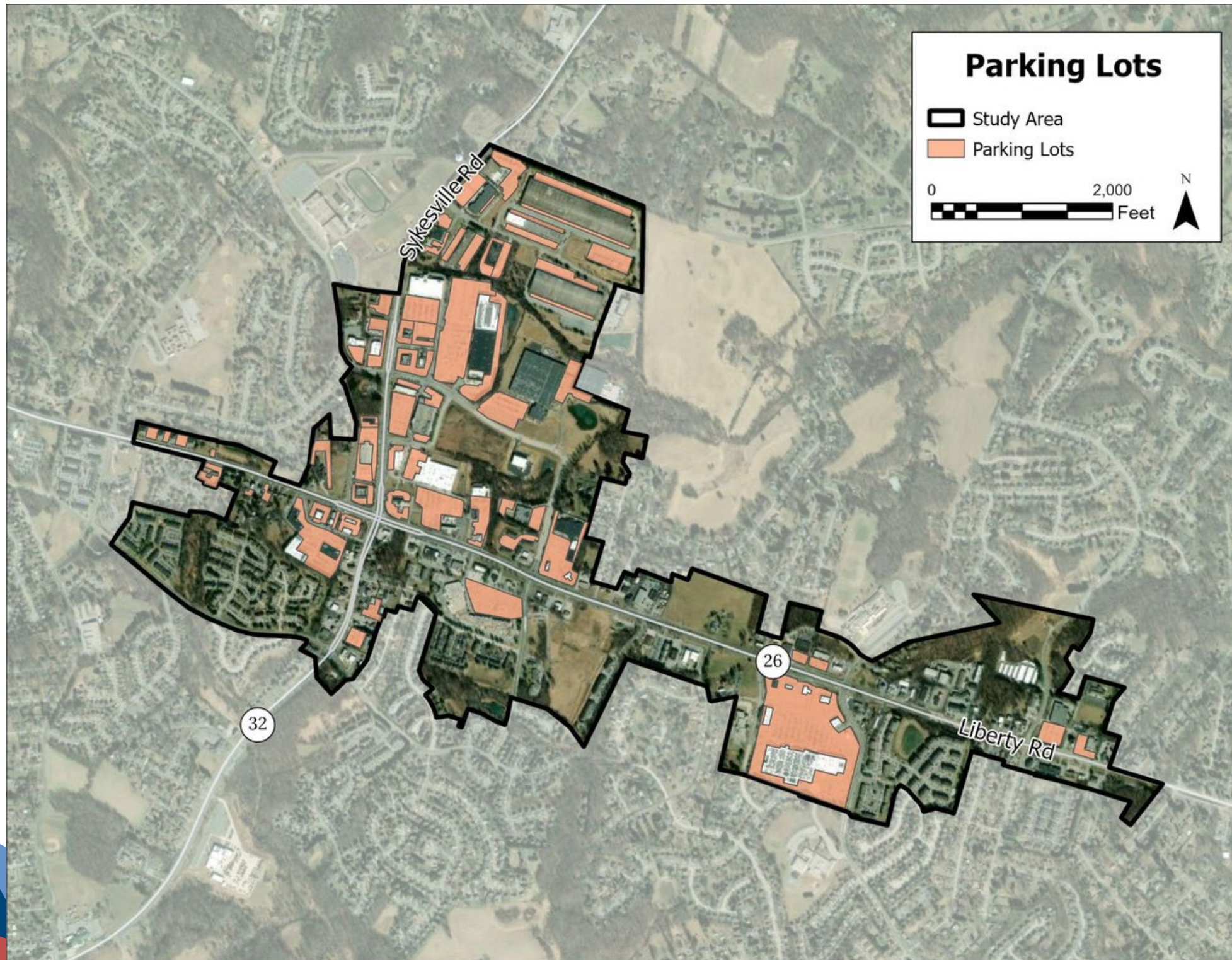
Freedom Study Area

The study area is a focused area within the Freedom DGA that serves as the primary commercial center for the area.

Surrounded by established residential neighborhoods, future growth will primarily occur through redevelopment and infill rather than greenfield development.



Existing Conditions Highlights



Household incomes in Freedom are 20% higher than the County's, supporting commercial investment.

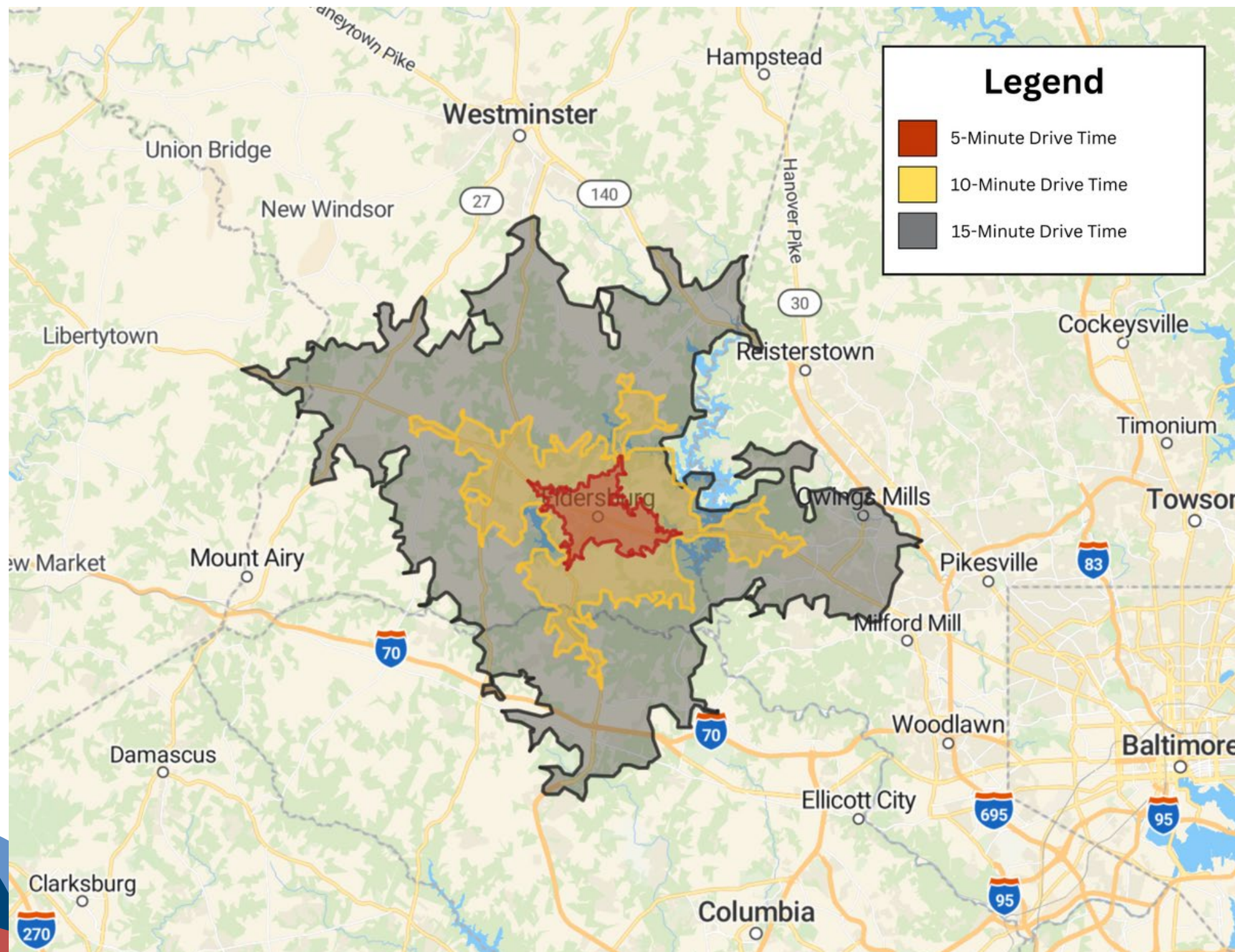
Most buildings were constructed between 1960 and 1999, creating redevelopment opportunities.

Traffic has increased on all corridors, reinforcing the need for improved access and circulation.

The area is largely built out, so future growth will occur primarily through redevelopment and infill.

Limited housing diversity reduces options for residents at different life stages and income levels.

Market Conditions Highlights



Population is projected to continue growing, supported by high incomes across all trade areas.

The trade area includes 23,039 units, 22,327 households, and an 83.8% homeownership rate.

The apartment market includes 1,273 units, 4.0% vacancy, and \$1,775 average monthly rent, indicating stable demand despite limited supply.

Median home prices reached \$579,653, with homes selling in a median of 20 days.

Retail vacancy is just 2.8%, restaurant vacancy is 0%, and office vacancy is 4.6%, while rents continue to increase across all sectors.

The Freedom Area supports 1,909 businesses and 16,686 jobs, reinforcing its role as a regional commercial and employment center.

What Will Influence Redevelopment?

Redevelopment opportunities vary across the corridor and will depend on several factors.

Property Ownership

Property ownership can influence whether sites are ready for redevelopment.

Infrastructure Capacity

Existing roads, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure may affect what can be built.

Access & Circulation

Access, traffic, and site circulation will influence how properties can be redeveloped.

Neighborhood Compatibility

Adjacent neighborhoods should be considered when determining the scale and type of future development.

Redevelopment Feasibility

Market conditions will determine when redevelopment becomes financially feasible.

What Has Changed Since 2018?

Economic Development

- The 2018 Plan focused on business growth, investment, and stronger commercial areas.
- The corridor is now more built out, making redevelopment a higher priority than new development.
- Retail, restaurants, and services continue to experience strong demand.
- Many commercial buildings and shopping centers are aging and will require reinvestment over time.

In your worksheet, answer the following questions:

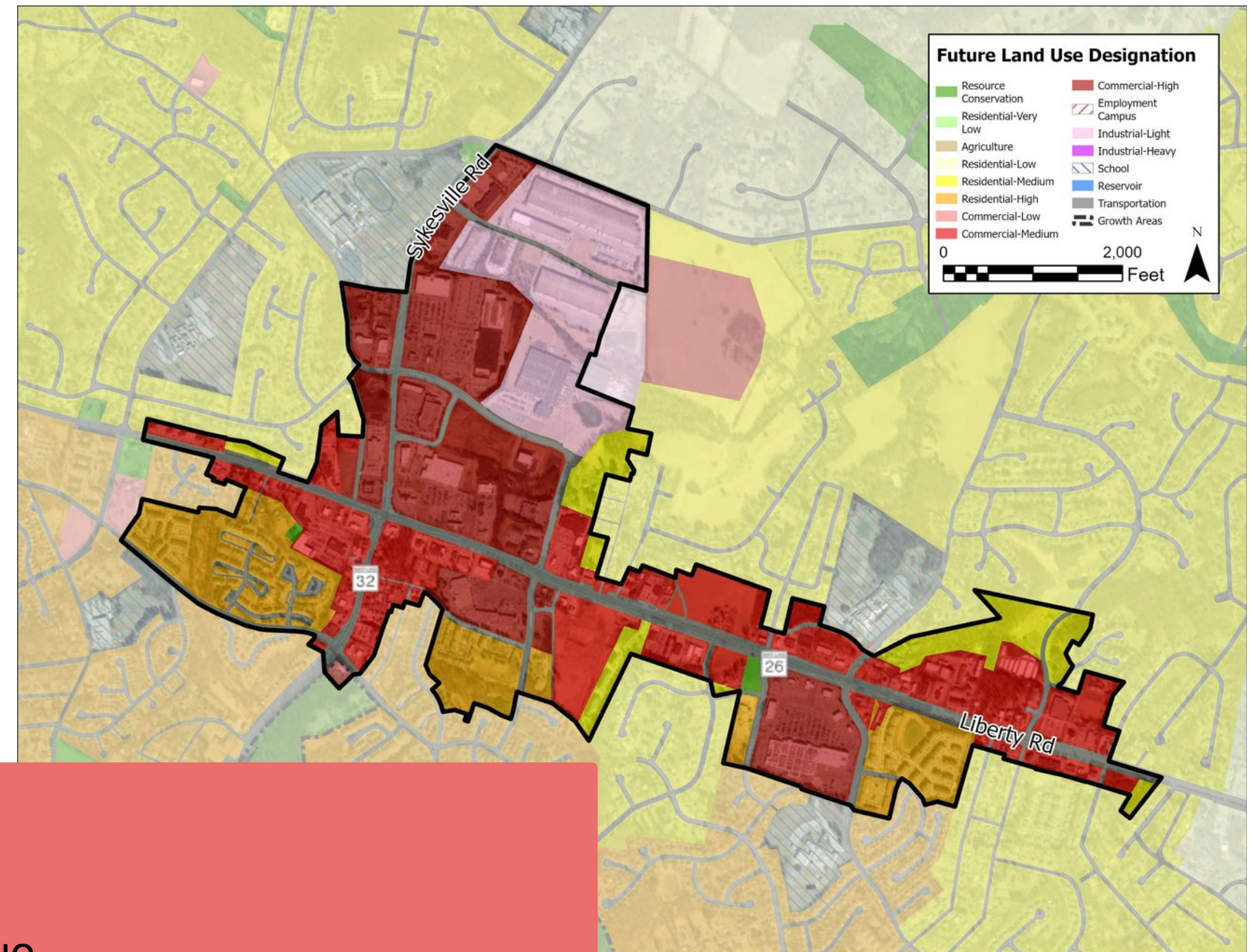
Which economic development priorities from the 2018 Plan should remain unchanged?

Are there new barriers or opportunities that should be addressed?

What Has Changed Since 2018?

Land Use

- The 2018 Plan emphasized protecting neighborhoods while supporting commercial.
- Most future growth is expected through redevelopment of existing properties.
- Large parking lots and underused sites provide opportunities for redevelopment.
- New housing should be located where it complements neighborhoods and existing commercial.



In your worksheet, answer the following questions:

Should the plan encourage more redevelopment and infill?

Where, if anywhere, should additional housing be considered?

Are there areas where the current land use pattern should remain unchanged?

What Has Changed Since 2018?



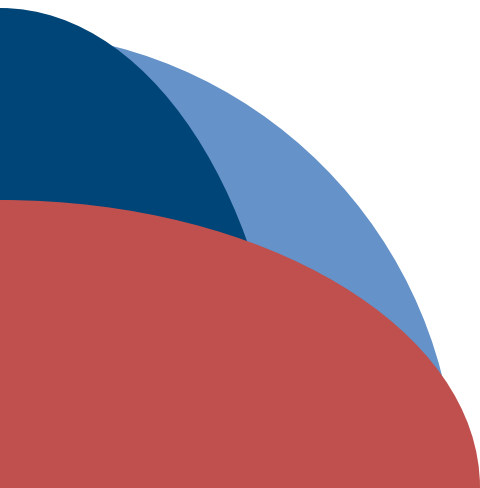
Transportation and Public Improvements

- Traffic congestion continues to affect travel along MD -26 and MD -32.
- Access management has become increasingly important as redevelopment occurs.
- Sidewalk gaps and limited site connections make walking between businesses difficult.
- Streetscape improvements can enhance safety, appearance, and the customer experience.

In your worksheet, answer the following questions:

Which transportation improvements should receive the highest priority?

What improvements would have the greatest impact on the area?



Development Typologies



Over the next two slides, we will review market -supported development types for the study area.
In the worksheet provided, please provide feedback on each of the development types.

On your worksheet, please answer the following questions.

Which development types
do you believe are
appropriate and where?



Which development intensities
are most appropriate for each
development typology?



What transitions should
be implemented?



Development Typologies

Big Box Commercial

- Large-format commercial with one or more anchors
- Prominent buildings with high visibility
- Smaller businesses located next to anchors
- Parking located between buildings and the street



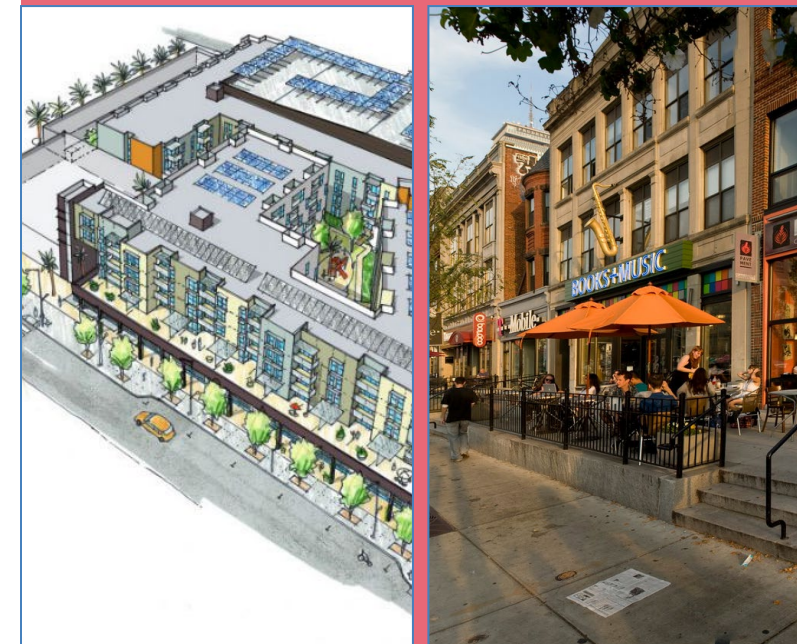
Strip Commercial

- Multi-tenant buildings with various businesses
- Smaller building footprints than big-box
- Prominent storefronts and signage for tenants
- Parking lots in front of or beside buildings



Residential / Commercial Mixed-Use

- Walkable mix of commercial and housing
- Active storefronts and businesses located along streets and sidewalks.
- Designed around walkable streets and public spaces



Commercial Mixed-Use

- Walkable mix of commercial and office
- Active storefronts and businesses located along streets and sidewalks.
- Designed around walkable streets and public spaces.



Development Typologies

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Multi-Family Residential

- Apartment or condominium buildings up to 4 stories tall
- Provide housing for a variety of households
- May include shared open space, parking, and pedestrian connections.



Townhome Residential

- Townhomes are typically 2–3 stories tall.
- Upper floors may be stepped back to reduce building scale.
- Designed to create an attractive and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.



Small Lot Detached Residential

- Detached homes on smaller lots
- A variety of home styles and architectural designs
- Private yards with public parks nearby
- May also include senior housing developments



Low Density Warehouse

- Single-story warehouse and industrial buildings
- Accommodates access and deliveries
- Large setbacks with loading and storage areas
- Sites are often enclosed by fencing or landscaping



Where are the Redevelopment Opportunities

The Small Area Amendment will identify where redevelopment should be encouraged and what should be preserved.

Using the map provided in your worksheet:

- Draw an X on parcels where redevelopment should be encouraged.
- Draw a circle around the areas that should remain largely unchanged.



Which Tools Should Be Considered?

The Small Area Amendment can recommend a variety of regulatory and infrastructure improvements.

On your worksheet, indicate which tools you would support exploring further.

Transition standards
adjacent to neighborhoods

New public access roads

Shared driveways and
cross -access

Streetscape improvements

New sidewalks and
pedestrian connections

Parking lot redevelopment

Mixed -use development in
appropriate locations

Enhanced architectural or
design standards

What Should The Amendment Prioritize?

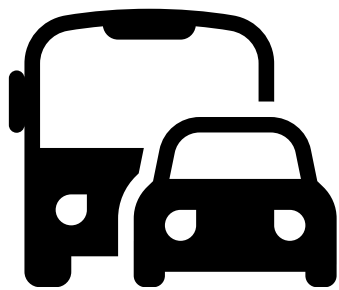
As the project moves into the recommendations phase, it is important to understand which topics should receive the greatest emphasis.

On your worksheet, please check off the initiatives that should be the county’s highest priority.

Redevelopment & Reinvestment



Transportation Improvements



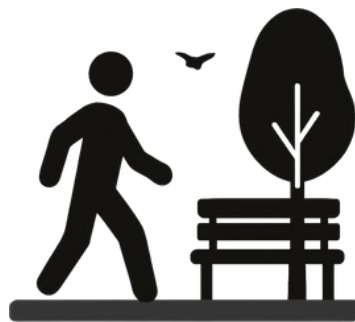
Housing Choices



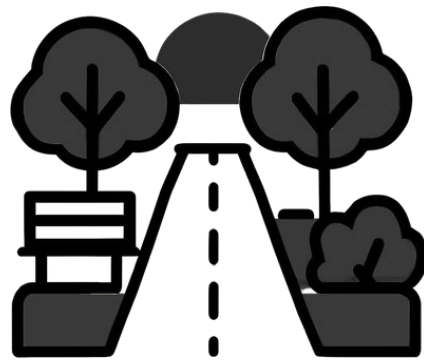
Economic Development



Walkability and Public Space



Corridor Appearance & Landscaping



Implementation Priorities

Many recommendations will require public investment or policy changes.

On your worksheet, please check off where the County should focus its resources?

Updating Zoning
Regulations



Capital
Improvements



Transportation
Improvements



Streetscape and
Beautification



Incentives for
Redevelopment



Public -Private
Partnerships

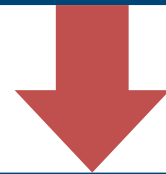


Next Steps

Develop a nd evaluate redevelopment scenarios.



Prepare draft la nd use and overlay zoning concepts.



Present a preferred approach for review.



Release the dra ft plan for public review.



QUESTIONS?

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