

Freedom Area Small Area Plan Amendment and Overlay Zoning District

BOCC Presentation

August 6, 2026



Freedom Community
Comprehensive Plan

2027 Small Area Amendment



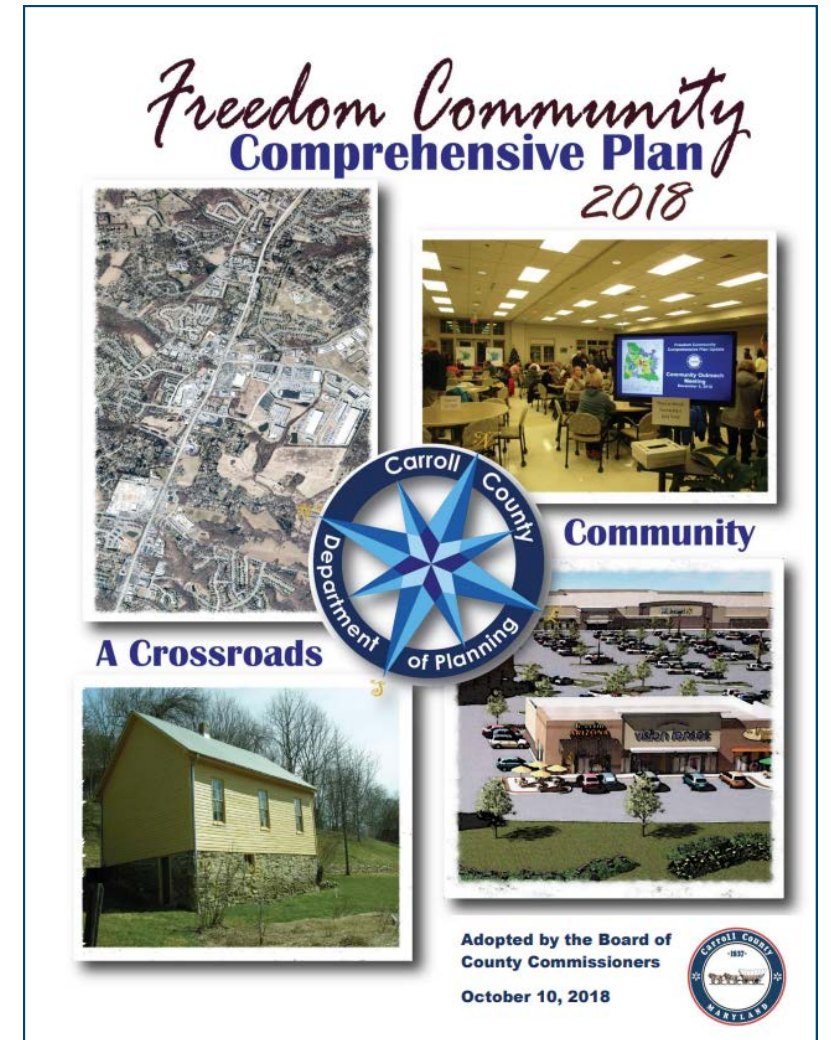
Purpose of the Project

Amend the 2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan for the MD-26 (Liberty Road) and MD-32 (Sykesville Road) commercial corridor.

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.

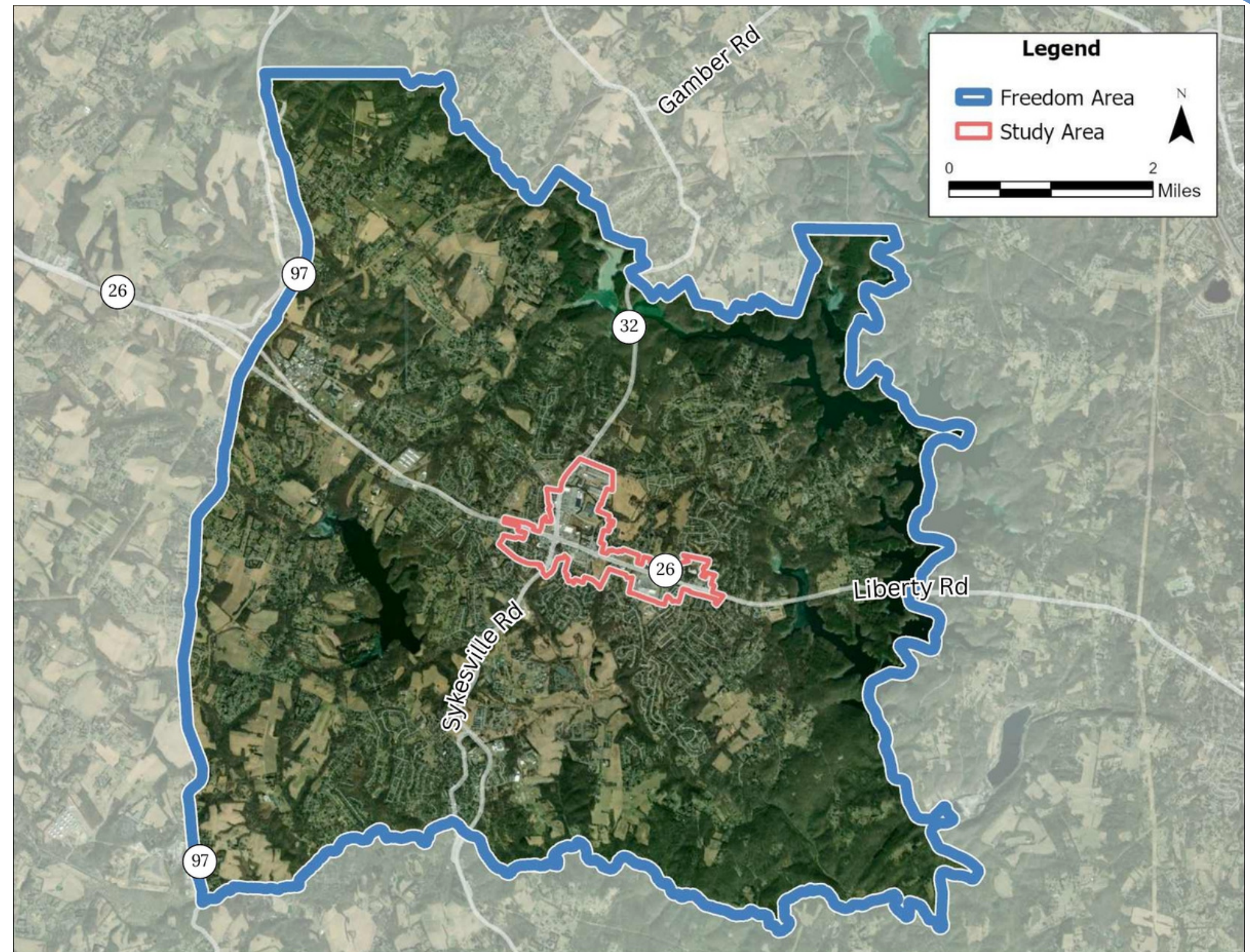


Tonight's Workshop Purpose: Gather direction from the Board of County Commissioners before developing future land use scenarios.

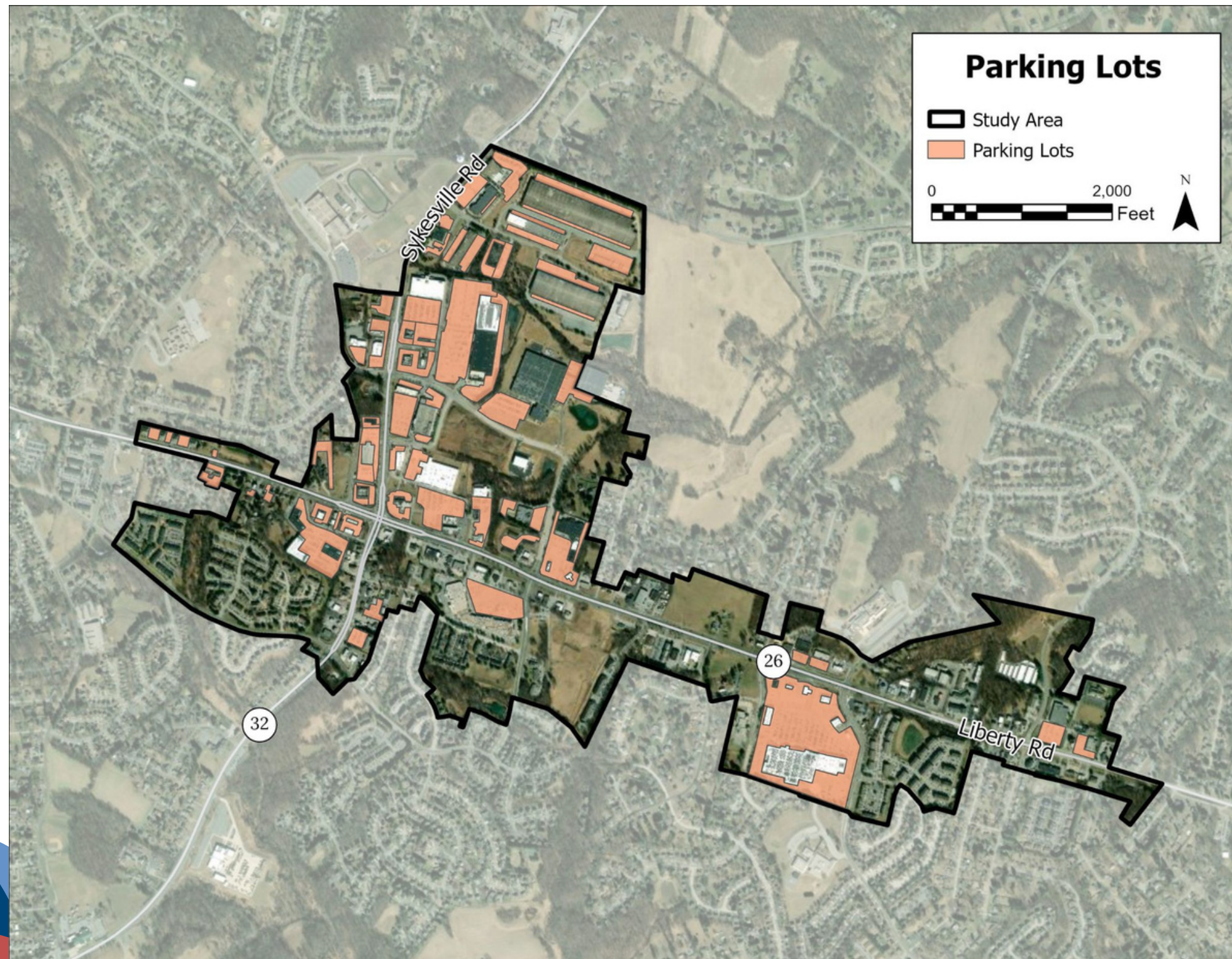
Freedom Study Area

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.

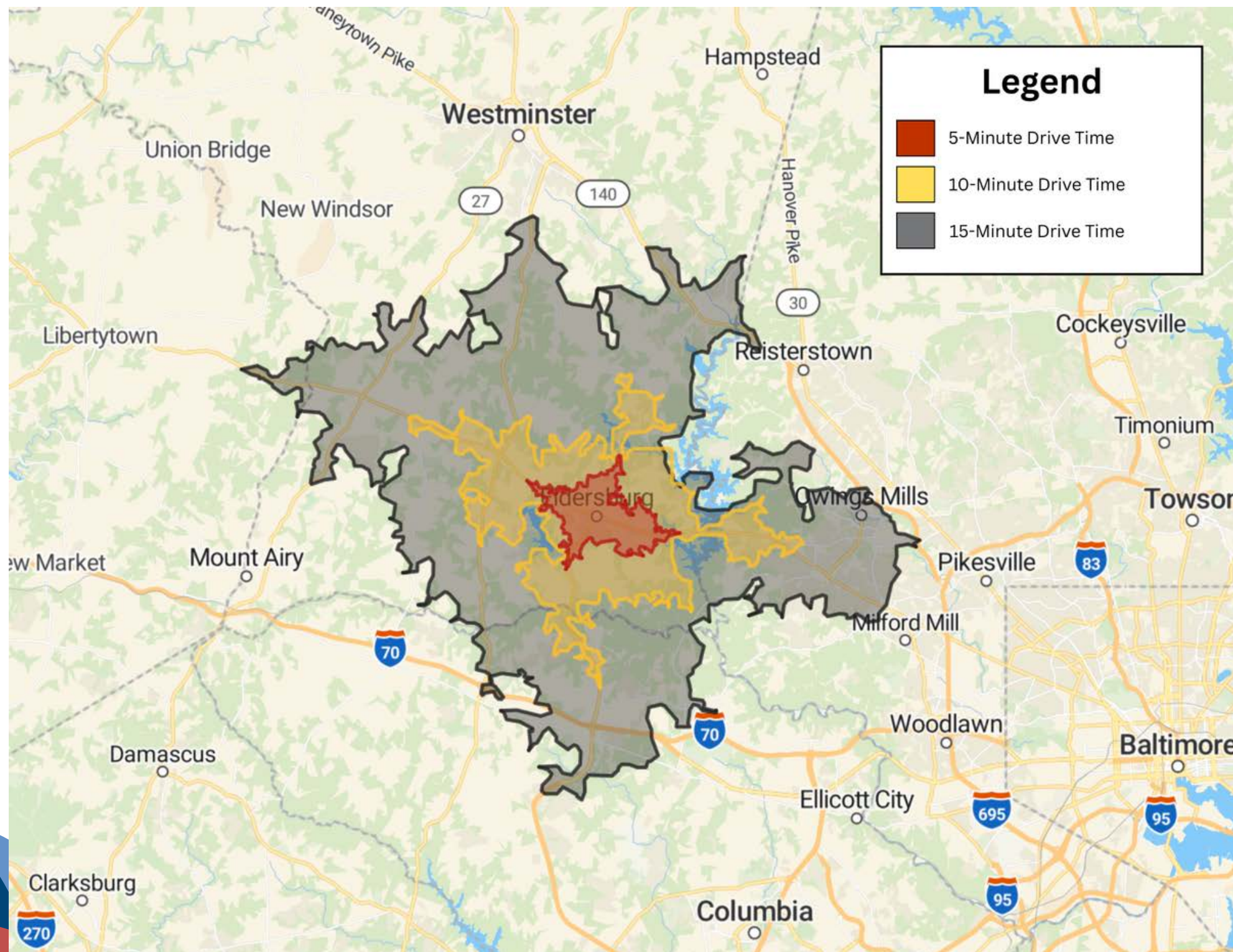
Most buildings were constructed between 1960 and 1999, creating redevelopment opportunities.

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.

Development Typologies

Over the next 9 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.

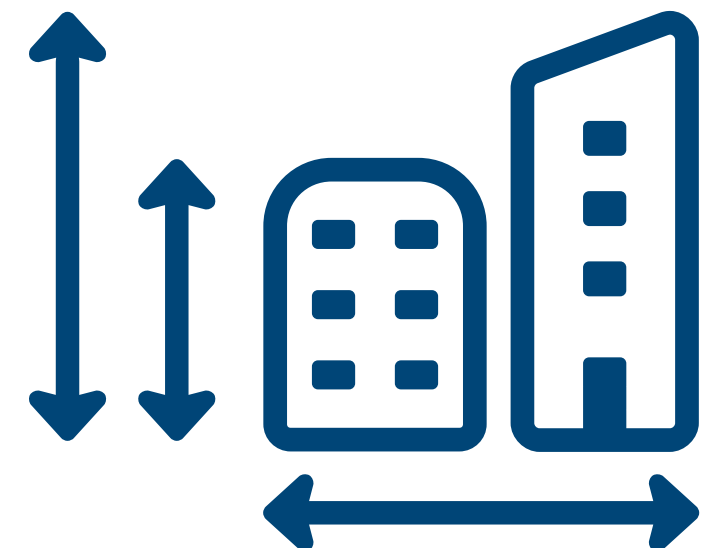
Which development types do you believe are appropriate and where?



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



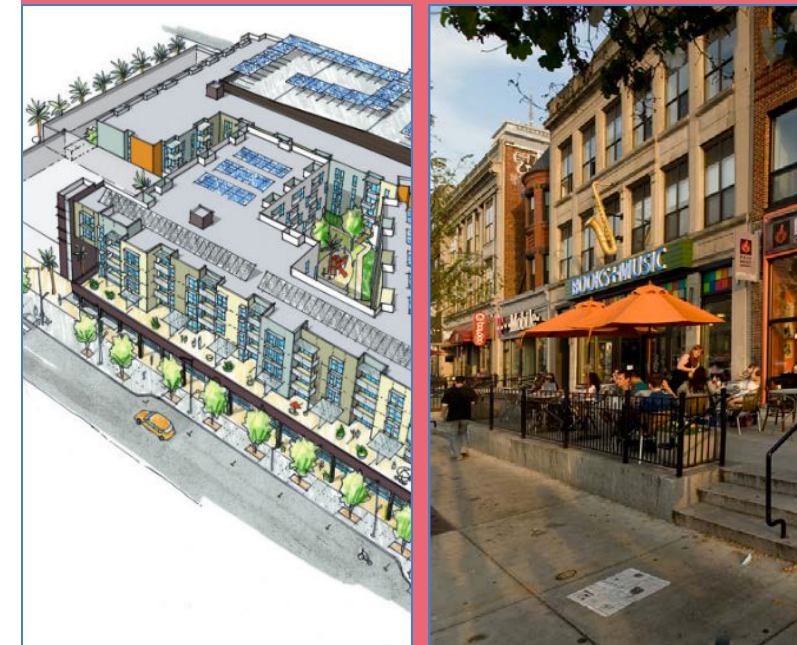
Strip Commercial

- 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

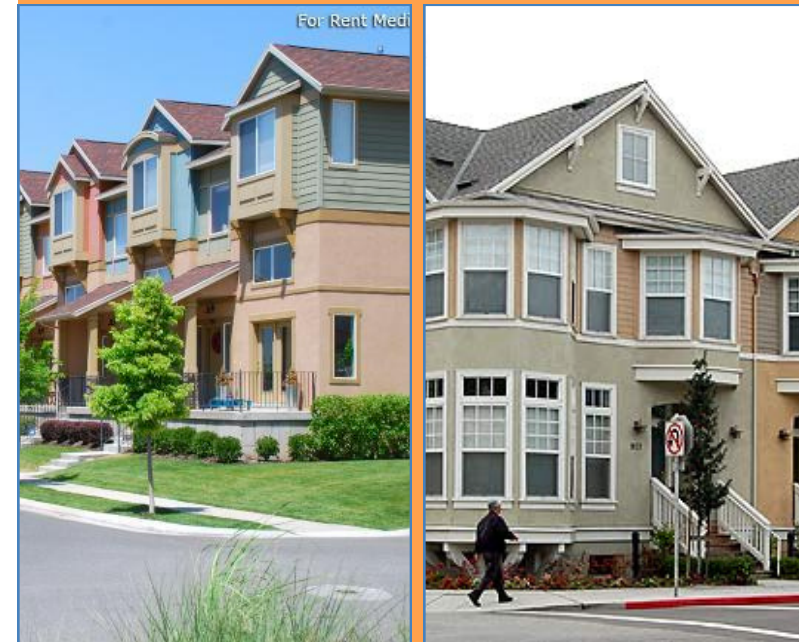
Multi-Family Residential

- 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



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?

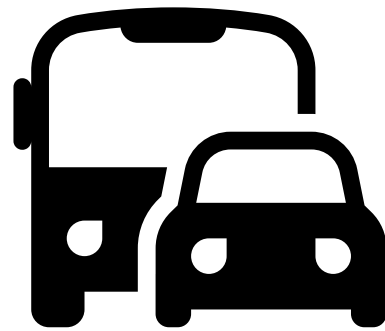
As the project moves into the recommendations phase, it is important to understand which topics should receive the greatest emphasis.

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

**Redevelopment
& Reinvestment**



**Transportation
Improvements**



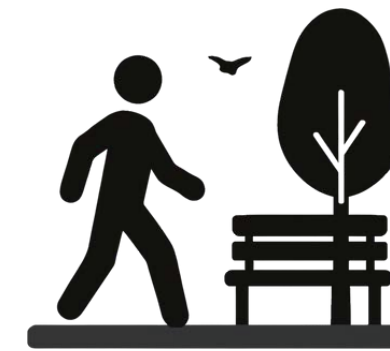
Housing Choices



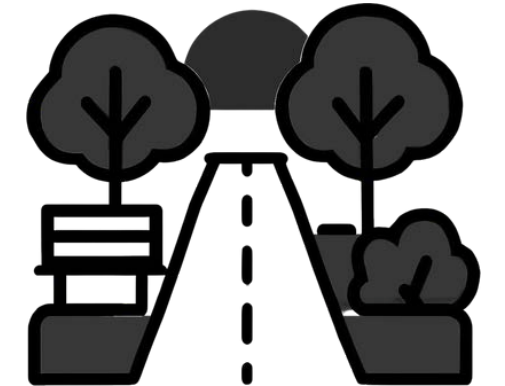
**Economic
Development**



**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



QUESTIONS?

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