



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ELEMENTS + PLANNING AREAS



APPROVED AND ADOPTED AUGUST 2, 2021



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ELEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Vision

Rockville will be a vibrant, multicultural, and socio-economically inclusive city with distinct neighborhoods that are supported by a strong local economy, a healthy natural environment, and a desirable quality of life founded on a responsive government.

What will Rockville be like in 2040? Our kick-off for the update of the City's Comprehensive Plan in May of 2015 started with this question. It is simple enough to ask, though contemplation by each of the participants yielded different visions, hopes, and dreams. Some would like to see Rockville stay much the same as they experience it now; others, both long-time residents and newcomers, would like to see some change. A wide variety of issues were raised on how to address the city's needs over the short and long term. This Comprehensive Plan seeks to balance the many differing points of view to express a shared set of visions for guiding and shaping the community over the next 20 years.

This document is the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Rockville. It supersedes the last overall plan, which was the *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan*. It incorporates some previously approved neighborhood plans and supersedes others, as detailed in the Planning Areas section of this Plan.

This Plan's visions, principles, policies, and recommended actions were developed through an extensive community engagement process in which various ideas were discussed and some emerged as priorities. The goal of this Plan is that it reflects the wishes of the community, and that they are achievable, even if sometimes aspirational.

The principles of Rockville are to:

- Invite active community involvement in planning and other aspects of City government.
- Welcome and celebrate our diverse population.
- Remain fiscally fit in order to provide excellent City services, infrastructure, and facilities.
- Maintain and promote safe, attractive, welcoming, and amenity-rich neighborhoods.
- Encourage a variety of housing types that are accessible to a wide range of household needs and incomes.
- Support safe, efficient, and integrated multi-modal transportation choices.
- Provide accessible parks, open spaces, and community centers.
- Promote recreational and cultural opportunities.
- Proudly display our historic identity and character.
- Protect and enhance our natural environment and sensitive environmental areas.
- Steer the most-dense development to mixed-use, transit-served locations.
- Create the conditions necessary for equitable economic growth and opportunities.
- Support employment and businesses in a thriving local economy tied to the broader metropolitan region.
- Foster a vibrant, multicultural, and successful downtown and growing activity centers.
- Conduct our activities and planning in consideration of these inter-related principles in order to optimize their coordinated success and avoid long-term deficiencies.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

There are two central purposes for a comprehensive plan: (1) Establishing visions and goals for the future of the community with a set of policies and recommendations to achieve them, and (2) to fulfill State requirements for community planning.

Managing change and preserving what is important to the community is of particular importance in a comprehensive plan and is a core reason that communities choose to update their plans. Where change is already happening, this Plan attempts to ensure that the change will be beneficial to the community. Where change is desired but not yet occurring, a plan can help to bring about desired change. In areas where preservation is the highest priority to the community, this Plan establishes policies and recommends actions that will achieve such preservation. Throughout this Plan, Rockville's community is understood to include its residents, property owners, employers, business owners, employees, visitors, and all other stakeholders who have an interest in Rockville's future.

Comprehensive plans are implemented through various tools deployed by local governments. A primary set of tools are regulations, which include zoning, and rules/ordinances in such areas as environment and traffic. Plans are also implemented through a Capital Improvements Program (CIP), in which a government expends funds on such physical items as parks, roads, water infrastructure, and community centers. This Comprehensive Plan is the guide that is followed by implementing actions.

Government has had, and continues to have, a significant role in the creation of racial and ethnic inequities, as reflected, for example, in zoning and land uses laws, policies, and practices of many jurisdictions that have led to the perpetuation of institutional and structural racism and bias in our society. During the drafting of this Comprehensive Plan, the nation witnessed social and political unrest and a cultural shift leading to wider participation in the fight against inequity and injustices. For its part, the City of Rockville launched work, including the adoption of a Resolution on July 12, 2021, geared towards addressing racial and ethnic inequities and social injustice. This Comprehensive Plan reflects the City's commitment to incorporating racial equity and social justice in the following ways:

- The City commits itself to systematically and deliberately applying a racial and ethnic equity lens in its decision-

making process to build a community that is inclusive, equitable, prosperous, and healthy for all; and

- The City commits to review existing policies and practices that may contribute to racial and ethnic inequities, and to make changes to eliminate the disparities in the areas of health, economic enrichment, education, housing, and justice within the municipal code; and
- The City will develop policies that effectively reduces and eradicates implicit bias, and advances diversity, cultural competency, fairness, and equity in all City government operations and regulated activities.

The second purpose of a comprehensive plan is to fulfill the State of Maryland requirement that all jurisdictions have a comprehensive plan. The power to regulate how land is used or occupied is granted by the State in exchange for compliance with Title 1 of the Land Use Article, Code of Maryland, which governs land use matters in municipalities. The comprehensive plan must be consistent with all State requirements, which include incorporating state visions, covering required elements, and following procedural requirements, such as soliciting public input, and reviewing and updating the plan on a regular basis. Rockville has full planning and zoning powers and is not governed by Montgomery County government planning or zoning regulations.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The policies in this Comprehensive Plan are the result of extensive community input that was gathered over a multi-year period, a process known as "Rockville 2040." In fact, community input began years before the official kick-off of the comprehensive plan process. Feedback provided by citizen survey results and the work accomplished during the 2011-2012 Rockville Summits, for instance, contributed early on toward the development of a shared community vision for Rockville. These summits included extensive research and discussion on topics related to the Comprehensive Plan, including housing, jobs, transportation, and the preservation of Rockville's unique character.

Public meetings since the plan update process formally commenced in 2015 were informed by data and analysis prepared by staff and consultants covering many of the topics included in the citywide plan elements. Reports were completed



on Community Facilities (which included Recreation and Parks as well as other civic facilities), Economic Development, Environment, Historic Preservation, Housing, Land Use, and Transportation. These reports were made available to the public during the community process to develop plan policies.

Comments received from residents and other stakeholders provided valuable insight into what the community thinks and feels are the most significant issues facing the city today and what issues may arise over the next 20 to 25 years. Overall, the community provided positive impressions of the City's policies and programs, and many participants identified a need for a collaborative approach that includes actions by the City and Montgomery County government, as well as by city residents and businesses, to achieve collective goals.

Listening sessions were the primary initial venue for individual input on the planning areas. At least one listening session was held in each planning area, as they were defined in the *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan*, during the Rockville 2040 effort. Listening sessions were also held for special focus groups, including students from the city's three public high schools; Montgomery College students, staff, and faculty; the Rockville business community; and numerous social and cultural groups that have been under-represented in Rockville policy discussions in the past. In some planning areas, multiple meetings were held, often to focus on particular issues of interest.

The core approach of the listening sessions was to ask participants for input on what they wished to see change and what they wished remained the same in their neighborhoods, and throughout Rockville, over the next 20 to 25 years. Participants were also provided with language from their respective planning area as adopted in the *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan* (2002 CMP) and asked to review it and provide comments. Existing neighborhood plans were also reviewed, where applicable.

Given the breadth of the topics covered, the community acknowledged the challenges and complexity of reconciling various issues and competing goals. As in

most cities, complex issues are not easily solved quickly and independently, but require long-term, sustained, interdisciplinary action. These concerns underscore the importance of the Comprehensive Plan in setting clear goals for future growth, and for City projects and programs.

The opportunity to provide input on citywide elements and planning areas of the Comprehensive Plan remained available on-line and through in-person meetings throughout the Rockville 2040 planning process. Receiving official public testimony began with the release of the drafts for the Planning Commission public hearings in 2019 and 2020 for the Elements and Planning Areas sections, respectively.

It should be noted that this Comprehensive Plan was completed during a period that spanned the COVID-19 global pandemic. The pandemic changed many aspects of the daily lives of the Rockville community--how we travel, where we work, how and where we shop and, in some cases, where we choose to live and the types of housing in which we want to live. However, living through the pandemic has also highlighted the continuing importance of Rockville's



(clockwise, from top left): Listening sessions gathered community input through surveys and notes on maps; Public outreach for the Comprehensive Plan included listening sessions at Rockville's high schools, where students were engaged to think about the shape of Rockville over the next 20 years; Open house format meetings used display boards and informational hand-outs to communicate draft policy statements and planning concepts prior to writing the draft plan document; Citywide forums garnered detailed input on Element topics through small group exercises to draft policy statements and action items.

Rockville 2040 by the numbers:

1 Kick-off meeting started the public process on May 9, 2015. More than 50 members of the community attended, along with members of the Mayor and Council, Planning Commission, and City staff. Participants reviewed the 2002 plan vision and principles and offered suggestions for the new plan.

7 Background trend reports were developed by City staff and presented to the Planning Commission and to the community in preparation for the draft plan.

35 Listening sessions were held in 2015-2016 in each of the planning areas and with community groups, including students at the three high schools, Montgomery College, the Senior Center, the business community, and several ethnic and cultural advocacy organizations. The results of the Listening Sessions were compiled into two booklets: “What you Said” and “What you Wrote” and were presented to the Planning Commission in 2016 for reference during the crafting of the draft plan.

4 City-wide forums were held in the spring of 2016, featuring more than 120 participants. Participants developed policy statements to help guide plan drafting. The results of the citywide forums were presented to the Planning Commission.

3 Open houses were held in January 2018 to present draft policy statements and plan concepts. More than 100 citizens interacted with staff and gave feedback. Results of the Open Houses were presented to the Planning Commission.

6 Public hearing dates to accept testimony on the draft Comprehensive Plan (four with the Planning Commission and two with the Mayor and Council).

430 Total days were available to accept written testimony on the draft Comprehensive Plan, including both the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council public comment periods.

55 Meetings and work sessions were held in total by both the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council to prepare and revise the draft Comprehensive Plan.

... and many additional meetings were held with neighborhood groups, property owners, and other interested parties to gain input and explain the process.

community priorities: providing dynamic and high quality outdoor spaces; ensuring that everyone can safely walk, bike, roll, drive, and use transit; and offering a variety of housing types and commercial spaces to suit different needs and wants. These are priorities that the City will continue to pursue even after the immediate effects of the pandemic have passed. While it is too early to know whether trends resulting from the pandemic will continue into the future as this Plan is implemented, it is key that they are monitored so that they can be appropriately addressed.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

A comprehensive plan must include certain defined elements or topics (Annotated Code of Maryland Land Use Article, Section 3-102). The State of Maryland has established required elements that must be included in a comprehensive plan and optional elements that advance the purpose of comprehensive plans. There is no prescribed way these elements must be addressed. They may be covered in one document or in multiple documents; and chapters are not required to have titles that match the required elements. Rockville's Comprehensive Plan covers all applicable state-required elements and some optional additional elements, including Recreation and Parks and Historic Preservation.

Although this Comprehensive Plan presents the elements separately by chapter, many of the topics within them are integrated with other elements and many have overlapping themes. It is difficult to discuss land use, for instance, without housing and transportation since housing is a form of land use. Transportation investments have significant impacts on surrounding land uses. Similarly, land use patterns affect the demand for and utilization of transportation facilities. Where people live is influenced by the location of transportation facilities, and vice versa. The reader will find that a topic addressed in one element may also be included in another, perhaps with different emphasis.

Required Procedures for Plan Development

State law places planning commissions at the center of plan development whereby the planning commission develops the plan and forwards its recommendation to the legislative body (the Mayor and Council, in Rockville). The State Land Use Article establishes procedural requirements for plan adoption, as well. A draft plan must be submitted to the State (through its "clearinghouse" at the Maryland Department of

Planning) and adjacent jurisdictions for review at least sixty (60) days prior to a planning commission public hearing. At least one public hearing is required, with notice being placed in the local newspaper of record.

Rockville's consistent practice has been to exceed State requirements in terms of both public notification and public engagement. This document continues in that tradition and has included intensive engagement with the community, from kick-off to adoption.

Regional Goals and State Planning Visions

Although the City of Rockville has its own planning and zoning authority, it recognizes and supports the goals and visions of the other levels of government in the plan development process. The City's Planning and Development Services Department works closely with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) to analyze growth trends and development, and often seeks technical assistance from the Maryland Department of Planning. These and other partnerships result in coordinated regional planning efforts. Below are examples of such efforts that have an impact on the plan.

Smart Growth

The State of Maryland is committed to the concept of Smart Growth, an urban planning and transportation theory that concentrates growth in compact walkable urban centers to avoid sprawl. Since 1992, the State has adopted a series of laws and policies aimed at promoting its four prime goals:

- Support existing communities by targeting resources to areas where infrastructure exists;
- Save our most valuable natural resources before they are forever lost;
- Save taxpayers from the high cost of building infrastructure to serve development that has spread far from our traditional population centers; and
- Provide Marylanders with a high quality of life, whether they choose to live in a rural community, suburb, small town, or city.

These goals are implemented through a system of designating areas of the state for differing levels of future growth, depending upon their natural resources and proximity to existing infrastructure. All Maryland municipalities, including Rockville, are designated as Priority Funding Areas within

the Smart Growth framework and are expected to absorb most of the projected future growth in the state and allow the state’s more rural areas to be conserved. To support its goals, the State is committed to targeting funding to the designated growth areas. Rockville will need its Comprehensive Plan to help position itself for its fair share of State funding, and to manage the growth that the plan anticipates.

Region Forward

In 2010, the Mayor and Council endorsed “Region Forward,” which is the MWCOG “vision for a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous and livable region.” Region Forward lays out a series of goals that will guide growth in the region over the next thirty to forty years.

Implementation of Region Forward is progressing. In 2013, a number of Activity Centers were identified throughout the region that will be targeted for accommodating future growth and/or redevelopment. These centers tend to be compact, walkable, and aligned with the region’s transportation network. Rockville has five Activity Centers within its municipal borders: King Farm, Research Center/Shady Grove, Montgomery College, Rockville Town Center, the Twinbrook transit station area, and Tower Oaks.

State of Maryland’s Twelve Planning Visions

Maryland’s Planning Visions Law of 2009 created twelve visions which reflect the State’s ongoing aspiration to develop and implement sound growth and development policy. Local jurisdictions are required to include them in their local comprehensive plan and implement them through zoning ordinances and regulations. These visions are:

1. Quality of life and sustainability
2. Public participation
3. Growth areas
4. Community design
5. Infrastructure
6. Transportation
7. Housing
8. Economic development
9. Environmental protection
10. Resource conservation
11. Stewardship
12. Implementation

These visions are hereby adopted by the City of Rockville upon approval and adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.

A History of Planning in Rockville

The City of Rockville adopted its first master plan in 1960, the second in Maryland after the City of Baltimore. A new plan was adopted in 1970. Amendments to the 1970 Plan were adopted in 1981 and 1982. Seven area/neighborhood plans were also adopted as master plan amendments in the 1980s.

New comprehensive master plans were subsequently adopted in 1993 and 2002. In 2001, a year before the *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan* was completed, a new Town Center Master Plan was approved and adopted. When the 2002 Plan was adopted, it adopted the Town Center Master Plan by reference, along with all area/neighborhood plans to date. Since 2002, a new series of neighborhood plans were adopted, along with functional plans covering municipal growth, water resources, and bicycling; as well as an amendment to the Historic Preservation Element permitting Rockville to become part of the Montgomery County Heritage Area.

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is organized into two sections: Elements and Planning Areas. The elements contains policies and recommendations for ten topic areas, or ‘Elements’ as described by the State of Maryland Land Use Article, that generally apply citywide. The planning areas focus on policies and recommendations specific to neighborhood-scale geographic areas of the city.

Recommendations in each Planning Area are aligned with broader City policies, and all citywide policies in the Elements section also apply to all the Planning Areas, unless superseded by any overriding Planning Area policy(ies). Both the Elements and Planning Areas sections carry the same weight and make up one Comprehensive Plan for the City. Each section should be referenced to understand the full extent of City policy or recommended actions and projects for specific areas.

The Elements are divided into ten (10) chapters, each beginning with a big-picture guiding vision statement followed by an introduction to the topic, a summary of community input that was received about the Element during

the plan development process, and a summary of high-level goals for the Element. Each Element chapter is then organized by goals, and each goal includes policies and the actions steps required to implement each policy.

The Element of this Comprehensive Plan are:

- 1. Land Use
- 2. Transportation
- 3. Recreation and Parks
- 4. Community Facilities
- 5. Environment
- 6. Water Resources
- 7. Economic Development
- 8. Housing
- 9. Historic Preservation
- 10. Municipal Growth

The Planning Areas section includes information about seventeen (17) unique neighborhoods and districts that make up the city. For each planning area, a summary is provided of its distinctive characteristics and key issues and area-specific policies and recommendations for zoning changes, City projects, and topics are identified for additional study. Focusing on smaller parts of the city allows a finer-grained examination of topics than is possible in the citywide Element chapters.

The planning areas (PA) of this Comprehensive Plan are:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| PA 1 | Rockville Town Center |
| PA 2 | East Rockville |
| PA 3 | Hungerford, New Mark Commons, Lynfield and Fireside Park |
| PA 4 | West End and Woodley Gardens East-West |
| PA 5 | Woodley Gardens and College Gardens |
| PA 6 | Lincoln Park |
| PA 7 | Montgomery College Area |
| PA 8 | Twinbrook and Twinbrook Forest |
| PA 9 | Rockville Pike |
| PA 10 | Montrose and North Farm |
| PA 11 | Woodmont |
| PA 12 | Tower Oaks |
| PA 13 | Potomac Woods, Potomac Springs, Falls Ridge and Orchard Ridge |
| PA 14 | Rockshire and Fallsmead |
| PA 15 | Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard |
| PA 16 | King Farm and Shady Grove |
| PA 17 | Southlawn and RedGate |

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan contains many recommendations that call for implementation once the Plan is adopted. It is a recommendation of the Plan that, immediately following its adoption, the City develop a strategy to implement every action item recommended in the Plan, with estimated time frames, key partners, and the resources necessary to accomplish them. Implementation items that require a Zoning Map amendment or adoption of new or revised regulations in the Zoning Ordinance should be given priority. Other Plan recommendations may also call for priority, upon adoption of the Plan.

UPDATING THE PLAN

The State of Maryland requires that jurisdictions with an adopted comprehensive plan review and, if necessary, update its comprehensive plan every ten years and complete a mid-cycle report of its comprehensive plan five years after its adoption date. The City’s most recent comprehensive plan ten-year review occurred in 2010 with the adoption of the new Water and Municipal Growth Elements. This Plan continues the review cycle by replacing in its entirety the City’s comprehensive plan that was last adopted in 2002.

In addition to State requirements to review and update the plan, the City recognizes that this Plan’s visions, goals, policies, and recommendations may need to be updated or revised to achieve new policy goals or to address emergent trends in a rapidly changing world on a more frequent or regular basis. While this Comprehensive Plan is adopted as the long-term vision of the City and a guiding document for many City policies and regulations, the City should consider amendments to the Plan as new information emerges or needs arise.

Additionally, the City should recognize the potential need for short-term flexibility or deviation from this Plan in the face of urgent events that affect the city’s residents, businesses, visitors, and municipal operations. Examples may include natural disasters, extreme weather events, or public health emergencies. With a focus on the long-term vision and evolution of Rockville, this Plan is not likely to impede immediate action. However, nothing in this Plan should be considered a limitation or hindrance to urgent, temporary action to address short-term crises.

While not necessarily requiring a change in comprehensive plan policies, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic of 2020-21

presented significant challenges for the Rockville community. The City responded to this community-wide public health emergency by changing how it serves its customers at Rockville City Hall and other City facilities, how it utilizes its public rights-of-way, parks, and recreation centers, and how it supports its businesses and organizations. The pandemic served to show how interconnected the Rockville community is, and also how resilient and adaptable it can be. It also underscored the need for flexibility and to establish alternate means of communication to ensure that residents have multiple options to stay engaged and updated on City projects and initiatives.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Rockville is both a geographic place and the community of people who live, work, and visit in our city. Demographic analysis of the characteristics of the Rockville community is important to planning for the city’s future, with particular attention given to trends and projections for future growth in residents, housing units, and number of employees in Rockville.

Regional Context

The City of Rockville is located within Montgomery County, Maryland. The southern boundary of the city is approximately 7 miles from the Washington D.C. boundary line and 12.5 miles from the Washington Monument in downtown D.C.

As Table 1 shows, for more than 50 years Rockville’s population has consistently stayed between five and eight percent of the total population of Montgomery County, as both jurisdictions have grown. The maps in Figure 1 illustrate that Rockville is well within the urbanized areas of the region and Montgomery County. Consequently, there is little undeveloped land remaining in Rockville and in those portions of the county that are not preserved for agriculture or environmental purposes. As a result, accommodation of projected population growth in Rockville will be primarily through redevelopment to higher densities.

Demographic Trends

Rockville is a U.S. Census Bureau-designated ‘place’ and the population living within the city’s boundaries is counted and recorded as part of the nationwide decennial census every ten years. As of this writing, the most recently reported decennial

Table 1: Historical Population in the City of Rockville and Montgomery County			
	City of Rockville	Montgomery County	City share of total County
1950	6,934	164,401	4.2%
1960	26,090	340,928	7.6%
1970	42,739	522,809	8.2%
1980	43,811	579,053	7.6%
1990	44,835	757,027	5.9%
2000	47,388	873,341	5.4%
2010	61,209	971,777	6.3%
2020	67,117	1,062,061	6.3%

Table 2: Population Projections in the City of Rockville and Montgomery County			
	City of Rockville	Montgomery County	City share of total County
2030	83,300	1,128,800	7.4%
2040	91,800	1,197,100	7.7%

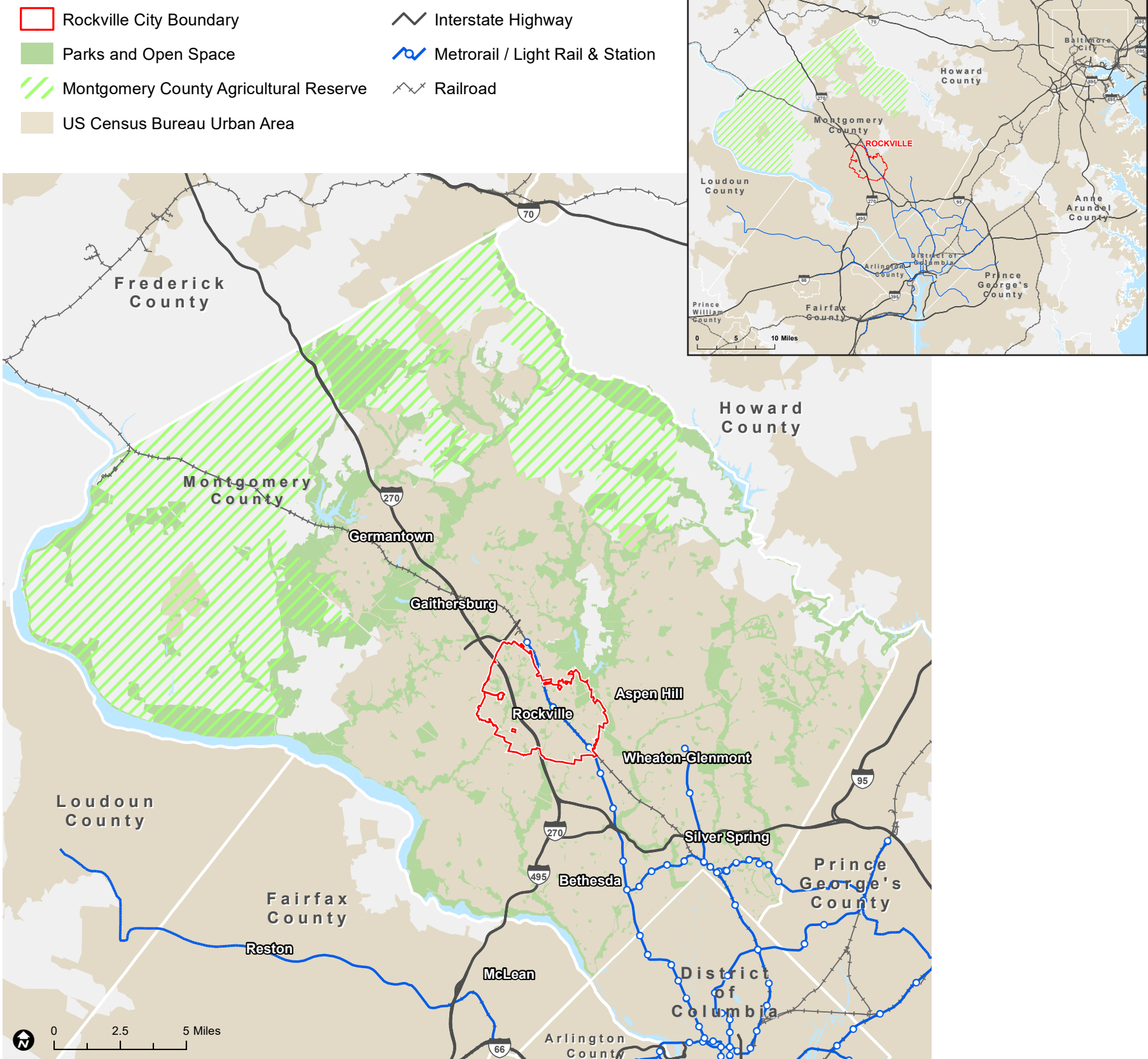
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950 to 2020 Decennial Census; 2030 and 2040 population projections from MWCOG Round 9.1 regional projections, October 2018.

census count of the entire city population is from the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census Redistricting Data (PL 94-171), which found a total Rockville population of 67,117.

Population Projections

In order to plan for the future, the City of Rockville works closely with Montgomery County government and the Metropolitan

Figure 1: Rockville in the Washington, D.C. Region



Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) to estimate population, housing unit, and employment projections for the city. The projections included in this Plan are from Round 9.1, adopted in 2018. As of October 2021, MWCOG jurisdictions were reviewing the latest population and housing unit projections to compare with data released from the 2020 decennial census and to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment; a new Round of regional forecasts is expected to be developed in 2022. More information about this process can be found by contacting City of Rockville staff.

Future population projections for the City of Rockville are provided in Tables 2 and 3. The population of the city is forecast to increase from 67,117 residents in 2020 to about 91,800 residents by 2040. This is a 37 percent increase in resident population over a 20-year period. Population growth in Rockville can result from a combination of in-migration, when people move into new and existing housing units, and when there are more births than deaths in the existing city population.

Housing Unit Projections

Housing projections are calculated in concert with population projections. The long-term trend in Rockville with regard to households, which are occupied housing units, is toward smaller households. In 1950, the average household in Rockville was 3.7 persons per household, in 1970 the average was 3.6, yet by 1980, household occupancy had dropped to an average of 2.9 persons per household. By 2020, U.S. Census Bureau data indicated a further drop to 2.5 persons per household, likely due to the increase in apartment and condominium units in Rockville that tend to have smaller household sizes. Table 3 shows the recent and projected housing units in Rockville from 2010 through 2040.

Employment Projections

Steady growth in the number of jobs in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region is a key driver of population growth in Rockville, as people move to the region for those jobs. Jobs attract people to the region, and in turn, jobs are created by the fact that an increased population demands increased goods and services. Job growth within the city itself is expected to continue into the future. However, it is important to keep in mind that these projections are based on current assumptions. The policies that are adopted, both in this Plan and in others, can affect the amount and nature of the employment in the city. The Economic Development Element addresses this Plan’s policies with respect to the economy and employment. Table 3 shows the projected employment growth in Rockville through 2040.

Population Characteristics

Age

The U.S. Census Bureau provides data on Rockville’s population by age cohorts, corresponding to basic stages of life. The latest data on the age of Rockville’s population available at the time of this writing was from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimate, which showed that 16 percent of residents were aged 65 years and over in 2019, an increase from about 5 percent for that age group in 1960. In contrast, the number of children 19 years and under decreased from a high of 48 percent in 1960 to 23 percent by 2019 (see Chart 1).

Rockville’s median age has increased since 1960, from 21.5 to 38.7 years old in 2019, as the postwar ‘baby boom’ generation aged and as families, on average, had fewer

Table 3: City of Rockville Population, Housing Unit, and Employment Counts and Projections					
	2010	2020	2030	2040	Percent Change, 2020 to 2040
Population	61,209	67,117	83,300	91,800	+37%
Housing units	25,199	27,953	33,500	37,400	+34%
Employment	74,500	78,400	82,400	90,900	+16%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census [2010 and 2020 Population and Housing Units]; MWCOG. Round 9.1 projections, 2018 [2010-2040 Employment, 2030-2040 Population and Housing Units].

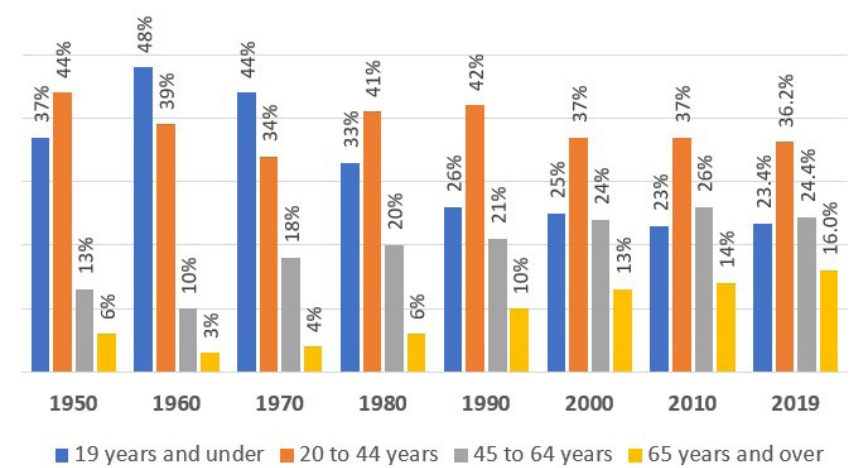
children (see Chart 2). These changes have created demands for different types of housing in the city, as discussed in detail in the Housing Element.

Racial Classification and Foreign Born Residents

The U.S. Census Bureau gathers data on the racial background of populations, recognizing in the most recently available decennial census that a growing percentage of the population self-identifies as two or more races (12 percent in 2020). The remaining 88 percent identify as one race alone. The terms ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino’ are self-identified categories, as well, and people identifying as ‘Hispanic’ may also consider themselves as White, Black, or Asian in racial categorization. Census demographic surveys allow respondents to select an ethnic identity of ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Non-Hispanic’ in addition to any racial identities of White, Black, Asian, etc.

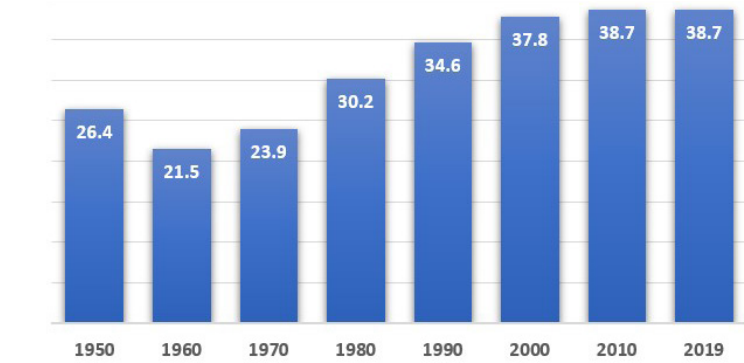
Among those who identify as one race alone, the majority of Rockville’s population identifies as White, yet that percentage has dropped significantly over the years as Rockville has become one of the most diverse cities in the country. According to U.S. Census Bureau surveys, the percentage of persons who identify as Black or African American is approximately 12 percent, while the percentage identifying as Hispanic increased from under 5 percent in 1980, to just under 17 percent in 2020. Roughly 24 percent of the city’s population identified as Asian in 2020, today the largest minority racial group in the city, up from only 5 percent in 1980. (See Chart 3)

Chart 1: Age Distribution in Rockville by Age Cohort



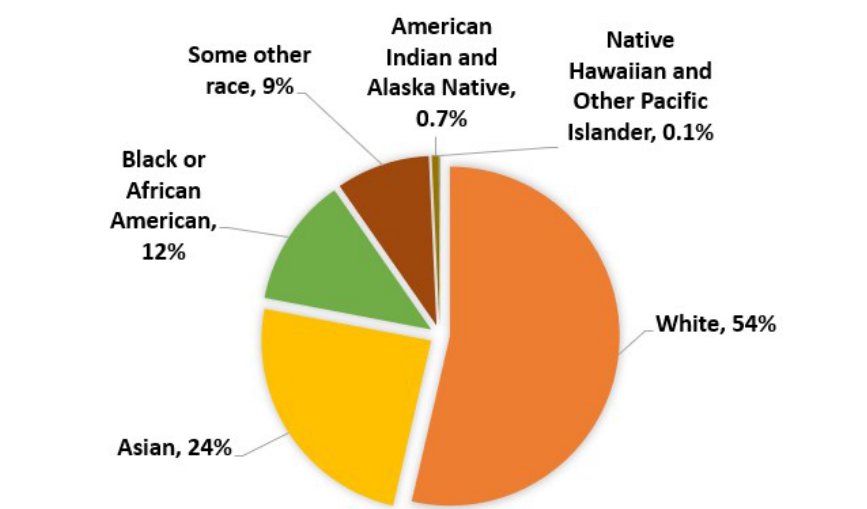
Source : U.S. Census Bureau. 1950 to 2010 Decennial Census. 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

Chart 2: Median Age of Rockville Residents (years)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950 to 2010 Decennial Census. 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates.

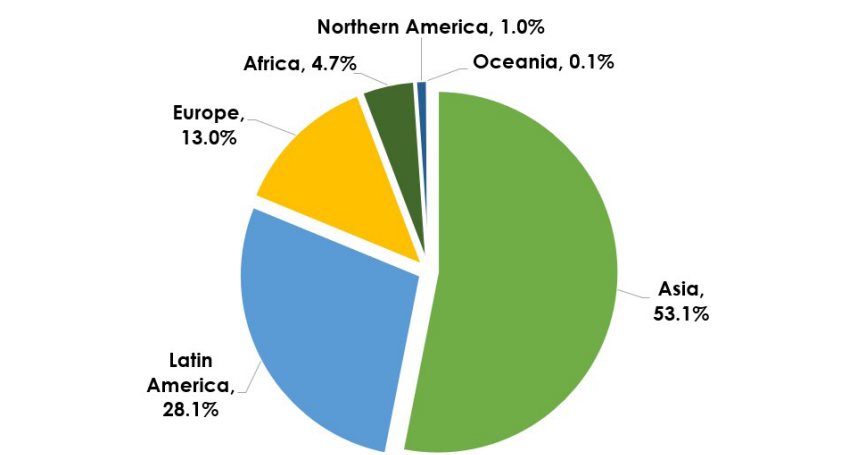
Chart 3: City Residents by Census Racial Classification



Note: Hispanic/Latino is considered to be an ethnicity by the U.S. Census Bureau. Those identifying as Hispanic/Latino can be of any race and are therefore included within each category in the chart above.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.

Chart 4: Origins of Foreign Born Rockville Residents



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Approximately 66 percent of Rockville’s 2019 population was born in the United States, while 34 percent was born abroad. A little over half of those living in Rockville who were born in a country other than the United States were born in Asia and just over one quarter in Latin America. (See Chart 4)

Income, Education, and Poverty

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the median household income in Rockville in 2019 was \$106,576. This number is well above the median for all households in the United States, at \$62,843, and above Maryland’s median household income of \$84,805.

Rockville’s high median income reflects the strength of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area’s economy and relatively high educational attainment. A very high level of Rockville residents have a high school diploma (93 percent), and nearly two thirds (65 percent) of residents have at least a bachelor’s degree. However, the cost of living, particularly housing, is correspondingly high in the city and Montgomery County.

A high cost of living, combined with stagnant wages for those employed at the low end of the wage scale, places increased stress on Rockville residents living at the lower income levels and those in poverty. The poverty rate in Rockville varies for individuals by household, family status, age, and sex. More women and seniors live below the poverty line in the city compared to other demographic groups and children are the most likely age group to live in poverty. As of 2019, the poverty rate for the City of Rockville’s overall population was 6.3 percent, with the rate for families at 3.5 percent. The poverty rate for families with a female head of household was even higher, at 8.5 percent. Among seniors (ages 65 and over), the poverty rate was 8.6 percent. (U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.)

Employment and Commuting to Work

As of 2019, the majority of Rockville’s population (60 percent) was employed in three industry sectors:

- 1. Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (25%);
- 2. Educational services, health care and social assistance (22%);
- 3. Public administration (13%).

Table 4: Employment Status of Rockville Residents	
Population 16 Years and Over	54,518
In Labor Force	70.6%
Civilian Labor Force (38,013)	69.7%
Employed	66.6%
Unemployed	3.1%
Armed Forces	0.8%
Not in Labor Force	29.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Table 5: Work Commutes for Rockville Residents	
Car, Truck, or Van - Drove Alone	62.2%
Car, Truck, or Van - Carpooled	7.7%
Public Transportation (not taxi)	19.0%
Walked	3.2%
Other means	1.7%
Worked at Home	6.2%
Mean Travel Time to Work	32.4 minutes

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

These dominant sectors are a reflection of Rockville residents’ overall high educational attainment, as well as the city’s location for Montgomery County government offices, the Montgomery County Public Schools headquarters, and the largest campus of Montgomery College -- all major employers.

As shown in Table 4, of the Rockville population 16 years and over, an estimated 70.6 percent of the civilian labor force was employed in 2019 while 3.1 percent were unemployed, and about 29 percent were not in the labor force.

In terms of work commutes, approximately 62 percent of Rockville workers drove alone in 2019 and 7.7 percent carpooled. Transit use was 19 percent and nearly 3 percent walked to work. Among those who commuted to work, it took them an average 32.4 minutes to get to work. (See Table 5)

EXISTING LAND USE

The land use pattern in Rockville is shaped by natural topography and a transportation infrastructure of interstate and State highways, major arterials, and railroads (see Figure 2). The basic layout of the city can be described as divided into three sections: one to the west of I-270, a middle portion between I-270 and Rockville Pike/MD 355, and a portion to the east of Rockville Pike and the railroad corridor. Each of these three sections is roughly a mile in width.

While the land use surrounding the city’s historic crossroads, now the Town Center, is diverse and mixed, the overall pattern elsewhere is painted in broad brush strokes. Large areas of detached single-unit residential uses are divided by the relatively narrow commercial corridor flanking MD 355 (along its Rockville Pike and Hungerford Drive segments) and by the office uses on either side of the I-270 corridor. Open space serving as conservation parks follow and protect steep slopes and streams, most prominently along Watts Branch—its tendrils of green open space stretching across I-270 in a roughly north-south direction.

Expanses of additional green space are created by two large, private country clubs and city-owned open space at Rockville Civic Center and RedGate Park. The Woodmont Country Club is so large that it stretches across the middle section of the city. Service industrial uses, which are oriented more to distribution and repair than production, lie along the east side of the railroad tracks and on the northern edge of the city accessed by Gude Drive. Multiple unit residential uses are distributed around the city, in most cases proximate to larger roadways and Metrorail stations. Small commercial areas are also found along major roadways in a limited number of locations, nearly all on the edges of neighborhoods.

Within this overall pattern, new mixed-use development is emerging in the Town Center and near the Twinbrook transit station at the south end of Rockville Pike. These developments are creating a new pattern within the narrow commercial corridor that is vertically mixed, with commercial uses on the ground level and residential uses on upper floors.

EXISTING LAND USES BY PARCELED AREA (2021)		
Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Residential (only), All	3,097	43.6%
Residential, Single-Unit Detached	2,433	34.2%
Residential, Single-Unit Attached	332	4.7%
Residential, Multiple Unit	331	4.7%
Mixed-Use (Residential and Commercial)	39	0.5%
Residential, All (subtotal)	3,136	44.1%
Commercial and Retail	266	3.7%
Commercial Lodging	41	0.6%
Office and Employment	594	8.4%
Civic and Public Institution	498	7.0%
Private Institution	112	1.6%
Service Industrial	211	3.0%
Non-Residential, All (subtotal)	1,722	24.3%
Public Park and Open Space	1,121	15.8%
Private Open Space and Recreation	898	12.6%
Cemetery	35	0.5%
Park and Open Space, All (subtotal)	2,053	28.9%
Parking and Transportation	142	2.0%
Vacant	56	0.7%
Grand Total	7,109	100%

Land Area	Acres	Percent
Area within City Boundary	8,669	100%
Area within Parcels	7,109	82.0%
Area of Right-of-Way	1,560	18.0%

Source: City of Rockville GIS, based on State property assessment classifications, June 2021

Figure 2: Existing Land Use Map (2021)

