

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision

Rockville will proactively adapt to the changing business environment and strategically leverage its assets and position as the County seat within a dynamic region to enable an innovative and thriving local economy. It will do so to advance equitable economic development, creative and diverse jobs creation, the quality of life for its residents and workforce, and to enhance the long-term fiscal standing of the city.

Downtown Rockville contains a range of commercial and residential development as seen from the multi-modal Rockville transit station in this view of the former Rockville Mall (now occupied by several Montgomery County government agencies), two recently built office buildings (home to the Choice Hotels corporate headquarters), and Rockville Town Square.



Rockville’s core economic strengths are rooted in its strategic location within the greater Washington Metropolitan area and forward-thinking policy decisions made throughout past decades. The 1960 and 1970 comprehensive plans identified an opportunity to grow the fiscal base of the city by planning for a technology corridor along U.S. Interstate 270 (I-270), partly related to the increasing regional presence of federal contractors and high-technology industries. Today, Rockville is at the core of the I-270 technology corridor, a major economic hub for Maryland. With a high concentration of biotechnology, life sciences, information technology and advanced research companies, Rockville maintains a solid presence in the regional, state, and global economies.

As the seat of Montgomery County, Rockville is also home to multiple local, county, and state government offices and educational institutions, which attract thousands of employees and students to Rockville every day. New buildings for the State of Maryland District Court and Montgomery County Circuit Court were completed at the corner of Maryland Avenue and East Jefferson Street in 2011 and 2014, respectively, expanding the government district presence within Rockville’s Town Center core.

Situated just north of Town Center is the Montgomery College Rockville campus, drawing approximately 16,000 students, faculty, and staff to its campus. The Universities at Shady Grove, just north of the city limits, offer more than

eighty undergraduate and graduate degree programs at one centralized location. The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) headquarters rounds out this key cluster, further adding to a strong employee base within the city.

At the regional scale, Rockville Pike (MD-355) is a well-known commercial shopping destination. Traditionally, the Pike’s land use pattern has been designed for, and dependent on, automobile access; however, as market and consumer preferences have changed, so too has its commercial retail market. A shift to capture the desire for more-walkable and bikable, experiential shopping has begun to take shape along the Pike, as well as around the city’s transit stations and neighborhood-scaled shopping areas.

In addition the city’s highway and local street network are two multi-modal WMATA Metrorail Red Line Stations, Rockville and Twinbrook, with a third, Shady Grove, just beyond the city limits and accessible to city residents. Each station provides extensive local bus service and Rockville Station includes MARC and Amtrak train stops. The city’s mass transit and highway accessibility provide broad mobility options to its workforce, residents, students, and visitors both at the local and regional level.

This chapter brings together, for the first time in a Rockville comprehensive plan, policies focused specifically on the city’s local economy and its role in the broader region.

Goals for Rockville’s economic development efforts include:

1. Capitalize on Rockville’s competitive advantages, including its accessible location, cluster of advanced technology industries, educated workforce, and position as the seat of Montgomery County, to continue to grow and diversify its economy.
2. Promote a positive business climate that supports local and small businesses.
3. Activate, promote, and grow Rockville’s commercial destinations and urban mixed-use centers.
4. Participate in and encourage cooperative public-private partnerships that strengthen both the local and regional economy.

ROCKVILLE DELIVERS...



Supportive Business Environment

Wide-range of incentives and assistance; local and regional partnerships.



Multi-modal Transportation Hub

Metro and commuter rail; express and regional buses; three major airports within 30 miles; regional highway access; extensive bicycle network.



Highly Prepared Workforce

Three times the national average of professional degrees.



Range of Housing Options

From established residential neighborhoods to new mixed-use activity centers.



Superior Quality of Life

Walkable and bikable neighborhoods and activity centers; extensive parks and recreation system; highly rated schools; emerging arts and culture scene.

Previous plans have woven economic development recommendations into related chapters. This Plan recognizes shifting dynamics, evolving markets, and the need for Rockville to strategically tend to its economic development in the coming decades. The COVID-19 pandemic further revealed the importance of establishing nimble responses to changes, both short- and long-term, in commuter patterns, retail owner and consumer needs and preferences, office space needs, etc.

Recognizing rapidly changing market trends and technologies, it is recommended that the policies and actions contained in this Element be continuously monitored and that appropriate adjustments be made to ensure that the City considers the most relevant economic development tools for implementing policies. Adjustments to policies that take into account changes in the long-term view of Rockville's economic advantages and opportunities would be consistent with this Plan.

Summary of Community Input

Overall, residents, business owners, and economic development professionals voiced optimism about Rockville's local economy and its status within the region. Pride was expressed about the history and future of Rockville Pike as a commercial retail destination, and there was enthusiasm for new development around the city's transit stations. Participants commented that the transit station areas should be the focus of more concentrated mixed-use development, although some cautioned that the development should not be at the expense of established residential neighborhoods.

The city's suburban office areas were also discussed, including the need for more amenities in those locations to attract and retain employees. Opportunities to work more closely with Montgomery College on economic development issues were identified, both in terms of development around the campus and in workforce preparation. From a process standpoint, it was echoed by multiple groups that certain regulations, including signage and parking, needed updating to reflect a more business-friendly environment.



It is a short walk between the Rockville Metro Station and the government facilities, office buildings, and retail shops in Town Center.

GOAL 1

Capitalize on Rockville's competitive advantages, including its accessible location, cluster of advanced technology industries, educated workforce, and position as the seat of Montgomery County, to continue to grow and diversify its economy.

Policy 1

Develop an equitable economic development strategy and marketing plan that capitalizes on Rockville's competitive advantages.

Marketing Rockville's advantages to businesses as a city at the center of the region's I-270 technology corridor (with a highly talented workforce, a superior quality of life, and an extensive transportation network) has been an important component of Rockville's strong economy. As commercial and office markets evolve and new development at the city's borders adds market competition, Rockville will require more proactive, creative, and data-focused marketing, branding, and economic development strategies for the future. These strategies should capitalize on the unique qualities of the Rockville community and establish a stronger sense of place. Rockville Economic Development, Inc. (REDI), the City's non-profit economic development entity, is committed to bolstering its strategic marketing initiatives.

Actions

1.1 In partnership with REDI, maintain and regularly refine an economic development strategy and marketing plan that is equitable and keeps pace with changing needs, technologies and market trends to promote the city as a desirable location in which to start, locate, and grow a business.

1.2 Collect and analyze data that informs Rockville's economic development strategy and marketing plan.



To formally guide economic development efforts, in 1997 the City established the Greater Rockville Partnership, a nonprofit economic development corporation. In 2004, the corporation's name was changed to Rockville Economic Development, Inc. (REDI).

Today, REDI, a public-private partnership, works to strengthen the city's economic base through programs geared toward business entrepreneurship, expansion, retention, and recruitment. As part of its core services and resources, the Maryland Women's Business Center was created in 2010 as a special initiative of REDI to help meet the needs of entrepreneurs, especially women-owned businesses, at every stage of building their business.

1.3 Proactively identify and market Rockville's tourism and recreational opportunities in addition to its strengths and assets to emerging industries, for which support may add value and provide additional local employment opportunities.

1.4 Coordinate with REDI, the Rockville Chamber of Commerce, and other partners to implement Rockville's economic development strategy and marketing plan.

Policy 2

Actively support Rockville as a center for innovative technologies, creative industries life sciences, advanced research, and cybersecurity.

One of Rockville's greatest economic strengths is that it is home to many companies and organizations that focus on advanced technologies. The I-270 corridor in the northern part of the city is the center of this activity. The area retains

a robust cluster of biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and advanced research companies, as well as growing activity in cybersecurity and other new industries, together drawing roughly 9,000 employees.

Rockville's 1960 and 1970 master plans identified a potential to capture the growing demand for space from the federal government and high-tech industries. Research Boulevard and Piccard Drive were designated to accommodate this demand and developed as modern research and office parks on spacious lots. The area thrived for decades as an industry attractor and employment center. In recent years, however, demand for office space has softened as market trends shifted, the federal government shrunk its building footprint, and older buildings became functionally obsolete.

The City has begun to rethink ways in which to accommodate new and expanding businesses and the changing wants of their employees. In 2017, the City partnered with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to better understand Research Boulevard's market position and to outline options for future land use, urban design, and economic development actions. The ULI Technical Assistance Panel report was largely optimistic about the area's continued potential, with some re-imagining and targeted investment, to remain a strategic employment center for the city. This Plan endorses that vision.

Actions

2.1 Strengthen public-private partnerships with Montgomery County, the State, non-profit organizations, entrepreneurs, and technology companies currently located in the area.

2.2 Work with area academic institutions with life sciences, cybersecurity, and major STEM programs to maintain and enhance a skilled local workforce.

2.3 Identify potential City and REDI actions or programs for bridging the financing gap for wet laboratory space and other industry-specific infrastructure.

2.4 Develop an action plan for the Research Boulevard and Piccard Drive corridors, with a focus on the retention and growth of office uses and businesses.

2.5 Support alternative transportation options, such as shuttle buses, adjusted Ride On bus routes, and bus rapid

transit (BRT), for isolated office areas to provide greater options to connect employees and goods to job centers. (See *also the Land Use & Transportation Elements*)

Policy 3 Work with Montgomery College to maximize the economic development potential of the campus and its programs for Rockville residents and businesses.

The Rockville 2040 process identified opportunities to work more closely with Montgomery College on economic development and connectivity issues, both in terms of the area around the campus and in workforce development and access. Although just outside of Rockville's city limits, The Universities at Shady Grove, which is part of the University of Maryland system, was also recognized as an important resource for the city's business community and workforce.

South of Montgomery College is the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) headquarters. Both of these institutions are employment centers for the city. They also have tremendous commercial purchasing power from an operational perspective as well as directly from the thousands of faculty, staff, and students.

Actions

3.1 Plan space for new commercial and service businesses on land adjacent to the Montgomery College campus to more efficiently meet the existing demand generated by faculty, staff, and students.

3.2 Strengthen links between programs at Montgomery College, The Universities at Shady Grove, local workforce development agencies, and the business community to leverage internships and facilitate job placement for graduates and transitioning workers.

3.3 Collaborate with Montgomery College, The Universities at Shady Grove, and other institutions to attract and retain businesses in Rockville.

Policy 4

Ensure that Rockville has first-class infrastructure (transit, roads, fiber, broadband, water, sewer, etc.) to meet evolving business needs, maintain competitiveness, and improve regional access to employment centers.

Infrastructure for the 21st century is paramount to Rockville's continued economic development. Much of Rockville's economic success is based on its strategically beneficial location and its roadway and transit infrastructure that provides relatively quick connections to other nearby activity centers and the nation's capital. The two Metrorail stations, Ride On, Metrobus, and I-270 are real assets for the business community in Rockville. Business owners have said that Rockville is in a "sweet spot" for reasonable commute times. The City supports efforts to maintain and improve regional transportation systems.

Rockville's sidewalks, trails, parks, and water systems also enable private investment in the city, which must be continually improved and maintained to enable further economic development. Fast Internet service is a new backbone for many businesses, and the City seeks to ensure that its Internet infrastructure meets the highest global standards.

Actions

4.1 Support customized local-serving transportation initiatives that will improve access (people and goods) to and from employment centers.

4.2 In coordination with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), support Capital Improvement Program (CIP) items that target upgrades to water and sewer capacity needed for economic development. (*See also the Water Resources Element*)

4.3 Partner with Montgomery County government, service providers, and other partners to enhance, market, and leverage the city's high-speed Internet connectivity for the city's business community.

4.4 Use City information technology (IT) resources and expertise to anticipate and plan for continuous advancements in IT.

GOAL 2

Promote a positive business climate that supports local and small businesses.

Policy 5

Foster a positive business climate that supports business startups, retention, expansion, and the attraction of innovative and diverse industries.

Rockville strives for a business climate that supports local and small businesses so that they can thrive in a diversifying local economy. Entrepreneurs, inventors, restaurateurs, small-shop owners, and office owners all form the bedrock of innovative economic activity and diverse job growth. Small businesses are nimble and their workforces are diverse and adaptable. They provide important services to the city, add unique character, are a key source of local employment, and sometimes grow to become large businesses.

As with office and commercial markets, the shape of small and entrepreneurial businesses is also changing. In Rockville, like many other cities, an increasing number of small startup businesses operate out of shared work spaces or home offices, supported by Internet communications, home delivery, and pickup services. As the small business community grows and evolves, the City is committed to keeping pace with new and strategic support initiatives.

Actions

5.1 Partner with REDI to expand support for commercial business development and recruitment, with a focus on supporting Rockville Town Center and neighborhood shopping areas.

5.2 Align public investment policies with the needs of startups, existing businesses, and businesses relocating from other areas.

5.3 Ensure that policies are in place to facilitate small business incubator space, such as the Rockville Innovation Center, pilot project testing, and industry-specific infrastructure.

5.4 Establish performance standards to measure the effectiveness of business incentive programs that are funded and managed by the City and REDI.

5.5 Connect Rockville businesses with the resources and services offered by Montgomery County and State workforce development agencies.

5.6 Seek periodic input from economic development and related professionals on City regulations and policies with respect to the business environment. A task force and surveys are potential approaches.

5.7 Review the City's regulatory standards and practices for impact on business needs and City development goals.

5.8 Achieve an efficient, rapid, and transparent development review and permitting process.

Policy 6

Celebrate a culture of entrepreneurship and small business ownership to help retain existing small and local businesses as they grow and foster new opportunities.

Actions

6.1 Encourage entrepreneurship by fostering links between employers, students, unions, investors, innovators, educational institutions, incubators, and financial institutions.

6.2 Develop programs that promote, highlight and celebrate equitable economic development and support both new and existing women- and minority-owned businesses in the Rockville market.

6.3 Monitor issues regarding home-based and other small business startups, in such areas as new delivery technologies, to ensure City regulations evolve with updated business technologies.

Policy 7

Support neighborhood and local shopping centers where there is market opportunity.

Neighborhood shopping centers and smaller commercial centers directly serve the shopping needs of their immediate areas. King Farm and Falls Grove both include 'village center' shopping areas anchored by major grocers. Twinbrook's shopping centers on Veirs Mill Road provide important neighborhood commercial uses, but also serve a broad area beyond the city's Twinbrook neighborhood. Rockshire Village Center was a successful indoor retail mall when it



A Maryland Women's Business Center (MWBC) event.

opened in 1978 and remained viable for several decades, until market conditions in its vicinity changed and the center’s grocery store anchor closed in 2012. Rockshire is currently vacant, though is being considered for redevelopment as a residential development with community amenities (*for more about Rockshire Village Center, see Planning Area 14*).

Similar to Rockshire Village Center, Rockville’s smaller commercial centers are challenged by low residential densities nearby, aging structures, competition from newer commercial areas, and City parking regulations that may limit new use potential by requiring more vehicle parking than there is space available in these otherwise walkable and bikable areas.

The City is committed to taking action to support its primary shopping areas and maintain its walkable and bikable, neighborhood-serving commercial centers as outlined in the following policies. The adopted neighborhood plans also provide guidance on neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and the Land Use Element of this Plan is a further resource.

Actions

7.1 Provide resources and support to small, minority, and entrepreneurial businesses, especially encouraging the establishment of small-scale uses in less-served areas.

7.2 Implement place-branding campaigns to promote local businesses and economic districts.



Twinbrook Shopping Center on Veirs Mill Road.



North Washington Street businesses.

7.3 Plan for residential density as part of shopping center revitalization to support commercial businesses by building in a customer base and allowing for site-specific mixed-use projects. Shopping center revitalization should not be at the expense of displacing small businesses, unless efforts include providing assistance to return to the same shopping center or in another area within the city. (*See also the Land Use Element*)

Policy 8
Preserve light and service industrial land and uses to ensure that productive businesses thrive and provide employment and services to area residents.

Industry is an important component of a city’s economy, providing jobs, key services to the community, and relatively affordable spaces for small businesses and entrepreneurs. In recent years, growing market pressure for mixed-use and residential land uses has resulted in a loss of industrially zoned land in many municipalities. In Rockville, light and service industrial uses are clustered primarily in the Southlawn Lane and Stonestreet Avenue areas, with some also on Lewis Avenue. These areas are further discussed in the Land Use Element of this Plan, and guidance may also be found in the applicable neighborhood plans and planning areas.

The city’s light and service industrial areas serve the local, regional and, to a certain degree, national market. This Plan

recommends retaining the light and service industrial land, particularly in the Southlawn Lane area, while recognizing that there may be complementary uses that could support the existing light or service industrial businesses.

Actions

8.1 Ensure that City policies and regulations are supportive of the retention and growth of light and service industrial uses, where suitable.

8.2 Consider allowing other compatible uses in light and service industrial areas if those uses are supportive of and a benefit to the existing industrial areas.

8.3 Consider targeting, as part of the Economic Development Strategy, specific industry clusters within light and service industrial areas. (*See also Policy 1 of the Economic Development Element*)

GOAL 3

Activate, promote, and grow Rockville's commercial destinations and urban mixed-use centers.

Policy 9

Maintain Rockville Pike's market position as a regional shopping destination, supported by residential uses.

Rockville has over 4 million square feet of non-office commercial space, broadly discussed as 'commercial' in this Plan. This classification covers all types of businesses with over-the-counter sales, including restaurants, gas stations, hotels, and a myriad of other types of businesses providing services directly to customers.

The city's most regionally well-known shopping area is Rockville Pike, or 'the Pike' for short. In addition to daily needs, the Pike is a place to buy durable goods, including furniture and automobiles. It is the city's main economic engine for commercial sales and a major employment area. The "power of the Pike" in terms of sales volume relates directly to the tens of thousands of vehicles that

use the road every day and a land use pattern that has favored commercial uses. The Pike has 2.5 million square feet of space in a variety of development forms, primarily commercial centers with large surface parking lots.

New, urban-style mixed use developments are also planned along the Pike, which will further elevate its position as a destination for 21st century experiential shopping. Promotion and enhancement of the Pike is a continuous goal of the City.



Historic view of Rockville Pike and Congressional Plaza (top). Source: Peerless Rockville. Congressional Plaza today (bottom). Source: Federal Realty.

Actions

- 9.1 Work with property owners to improve the function and aesthetics of the Pike, as outlined in the Rockville Pike Neighborhood Plan and Planning Area 9.
- 9.2 Encourage the formation of a local business organization and promotional strategies for Rockville Pike businesses.
- 9.3 Capitalize on the cluster of diverse restaurants and shops, with foods and goods from around the globe, through a coordinated marketing and positioning strategy and activities.
- 9.4 Enhance and extend connections between both sides of Rockville Pike, Metro Stations, and future fixed stations for high capacity buses, capitalizing on the increased demand for transit-oriented development, creative placemaking, and amenities in these areas.
- 9.5 Improve wayfinding, signage and safety on Rockville Pike, for people walking, biking, rolling, and driving.
- 9.6 Continue a transition from highway-oriented commercial forms to a more urban Rockville Pike, based on a mix of uses, including residential, employment, and retail uses, in places oriented to bicyclists and pedestrians. (*See also Policy 10 of the Land Use Element*)

Policy 10

Promote Town Center as a business and administrative center supported by a lively mix of, restaurants, hotels, small shops, business headquarters, residential and service providers.

Rockville Town Center is a highly important commercial area, imagined and developed as a mixed-use urban area with an emphasis on capturing surrounding foot traffic and transit users. The mix of uses includes eating establishments, small shops with unique goods, offices, cultural and arts attractions, and multi-unit residential buildings.

Boutique shops and restaurants rely on the ‘draw’ of Town Center to bring foot traffic, but the lack of an urban-scaled anchor and arts and culture experiences is a concern. Growth in residential population in new mixed-use and multi-unit buildings, and growth of office employment, is crucial to the future of this area. Additional ground-level commercial or office space will add to the overall experience that shoppers, employees, and visitors find downtown.



View of outdoor seating and street parking on East Montgomery Avenue

Actions

10.1 Establish a coordinated public-private management approach, such as a Town Center Business Improvement District (BID), to maintain common areas, coordinate events and programming, and promote area businesses.

10.2 Improve the customer experience of parking in Town Center to make it competitive and attractive. Potential areas of action may include, among other options, coordinating among public- and privately-owned garages, adjusting the number of parking spaces required for new development, and adjusting parking fees and times. [Note: In July 2021, the City advocated for free two-hour parking in Town Square, without the need for validation.] *(See also Actions 12.4 and 14.7 of the Transportation Element, Actions 1.4 and 10.5 of the Housing Element, and Action 22.1 of the Land Use Element)*

10.3 Improve wayfinding and signage in the Town Center, for people walking, rolling, biking, and driving.

10.4 Examine the City's development regulations to ensure that they are aligned with Rockville's goal to promote further development that supports a vibrant Town Center.

10.5 Attract and retain activity generators to Town Center, such as corporate headquarters and offices.

Policy 11

Cultivate a richer arts, entertainment, and social scene in Rockville.

Arts and entertainment experiences contribute to the growth of the local economy and have the potential to generate value beyond the event itself. Artists tend to cluster, and a solid art "scene" can lead to a network of new venues, businesses, and employment opportunities.

Placemaking is an integral component of successful arts and entertainment spaces. Rockville Town Center, with its walkable blocks, outdoor areas, and mix of commercial spaces, is equipped to further grow as an entertainment district, as are some of the city's eclectic corridors near transit. Closely aligned with this aspiration is the desire by many Rockville residents, as was heard during the citywide Rockville 2040 forums and listening sessions, for more entertainment, educational, and cultural experiences.

Actions

11.1 Produce an arts and entertainment strategic plan, in coordination with economic development providers and arts and culture representatives, which provides details on City actions and results.



Hometown Holidays Memorial Day celebration in Rockville

11.2 Review City and County codes to identify and address potential impediments to creating more nightlife, specifically in regard to live music in restaurants, cafes, or other venues, while still balancing, and taking into account, impacts on residents, including noise levels and hours of operation.

11.3 Work with theater, dance, and music organizations, and private developers, to investigate potential locations for a ‘black box’ theater in Rockville, with special focus on Town Center.

11.4 Seek opportunities to work with arts programs at Montgomery College and promote coordination between college staff and individual artists, galleries, and performing groups in the city.

11.5 Evaluate the potential for an industrial arts or “maker” district in the city, with potential locations in or near the city’s existing industrial and commercial corridors, including Stonestreet Avenue, Southlawn Lane, East Gude Drive, and Lewis Avenue. *(See also Action 16.6 of the Land Use Element, Action 3.4 of the Municipal Growth Element, and Planning Area 17)*

11.6 Explore potential public investments, or incentivized private investment, in venues for popular social activities, which may include programs supported by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

GOAL 4
Participate in and encourage cooperative public-private partnerships that strengthen both the local and regional economy.

Policy 12
Strengthen coordination between the City, County, State, and Federal government on economic development issues at the staff and elected officials levels.

While Rockville’s position as a city within the much larger Montgomery County can at times be challenging to navigate,

City and County goals are more frequently aligned than not. For example, a successful partnership effort between the City of Rockville and Montgomery County led to the relocation of Choice Hotels International headquarters to downtown Rockville. Rockville is committed to continuing to build partnerships and strengthening its economic development coordination with all levels of government and applicable agencies.

Policy 13
Celebrate and capitalize on Rockville’s position as the seat of Montgomery County.

The governmental functions of Montgomery County located within the City of Rockville are a critical component of the city’s economy. Montgomery County government employs roughly 4,700 people in Rockville offices, most of them concentrated in the Town Center. Town Center is also host to the Montgomery County Circuit and State of Maryland District courthouses, both of which underwent new construction and expansion within the past decade. Although the county government and court systems are tax exempt, the thousands they employ and the ‘spin-off’ businesses they create and support, contribute significantly to Rockville’s economy.



County office and court buildings are group together on East Jefferson Street, between Maryland Avenue and Monroe Street.

Actions

- 13.1 Seek opportunities to further coordinate with Montgomery County to pursue major businesses to locate in Rockville.
- 13.2 Seek to retain and attract Montgomery County departments and county employees in Rockville, especially in Rockville Town Center.
- 13.3 Seek to retain the Montgomery County Public Schools headquarters in Rockville.

Policy 14
Work to attract and maintain government contractors and federal agencies within Rockville city limits.

While federally-owned property in Rockville is relatively limited, and the federal mandate to shrink its footprint has had less of an impact in the city than in other areas, private industries with long-term federal contracts are among the city’s top ten largest employers. These include Westat and Lockheed Martin Information Systems. The City and REDI should monitor federal leases and align policies toward the attraction and retention of federal agencies and contractors, as they impact overall demand for office and lab space. Consideration should be given to expanding efforts toward international institutions, non-profit organizations, and future industries to further diversity the city’s employment potential.

Actions

- 14.1 Monitor the state of GSA-leased office space in the city, report changes to Mayor and Council on a regular basis, and promote Rockville as a place to locate federal agencies.
- 14.2 Promote Rockville as a strategic location for high-employment domestic and international government contractors.
- 14.3 Consider how the loss of federally-leased space may impact the viability of Rockville’s office parks and plan accordingly for new uses.

Rockville’s Largest Employers (2021)

Employer	Employees
Montgomery County Government	5,165
Montgomery County Public Schools	2,500
Montgomery College	1,950
Westat, Inc.	1,750
City of Rockville	518
Choice Hotels International	500
Pharmavene, Inc.	500
Meso Scale Diagnostics, LLC	496
The EMMES Corporation	475
Otsuka Pharmaceutical	471
BAE Systems	440
Client Network Services, LLC	400
Turning Point Global Solutions, LLC	385
Lockheed Martin	370
Woodmont Country Club	350

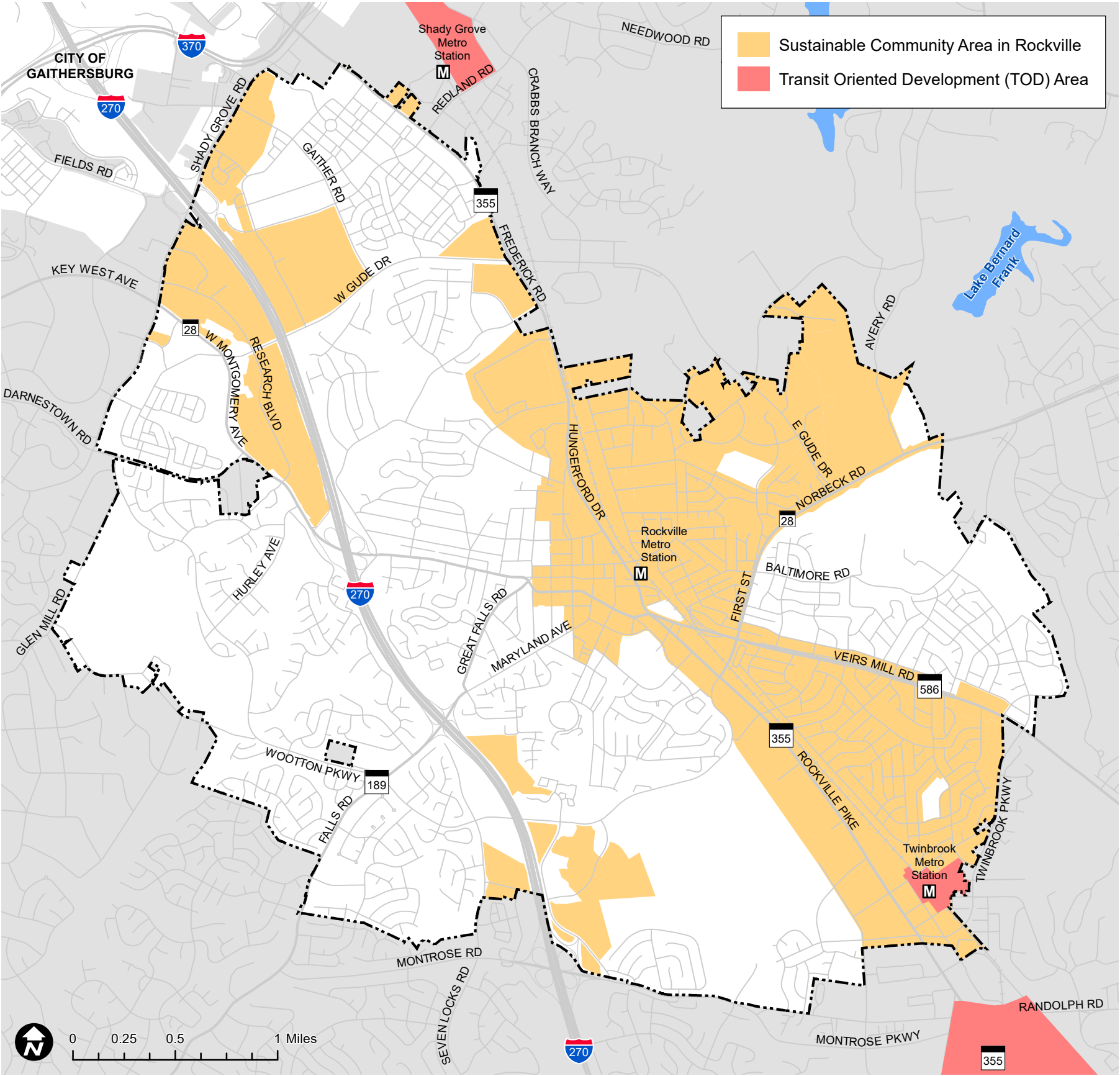
Source: CoStar, InfoUSA, Rockville Economic Development, Inc. (REDI)

Policy 15
Improve workforce housing options for employees at a range of incomes.

Expanding workforce housing options, from an economic development lens, is a critical element of remaining competitive and sustainable. To relocate or expand, businesses want to know there is a range of nearby housing for their employees. As a community, keeping employees as local as possible also adds to economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Workforce housing is generally defined as housing that is affordable to persons who are gainfully employed in professions that do not pay a sufficient wage to afford market-rate housing, but whose income may not qualify for affordable housing programs, such as teachers, fire-fighters, day care workers, nurses, etc.

The gap between employee incomes and house prices, particularly for middle- and lower-wage earners, continues to grow in Rockville. For lower-paid workers, this gap often results in commuting long distances from places with lower housing costs, which limits time and investment in Rockville. A key challenge for the City, and many other communities, is to identify and designate appropriate strategies to accommodate a continuum of housing for a spectrum of employee income levels. This subject is explored further in the Land Use and Housing Elements of this Plan, and the

Figure 30: Sustainable Communities Areas within the City of Rockville (2020)



land use policy map includes designated areas appropriate for different housing types. The following actions target partnership building, including with private developers and government agencies, geared toward expanding housing choices and decreasing the affordability gap.

Actions

15.1 Build partnerships with applicable county, state, and federal agencies and with private developers to develop and implement programs geared toward increasing workforce housing within the city.

15.1.a At the local level, collaborate with Rockville Housing Enterprises and representatives from Montgomery College.

15.2 Support Montgomery County government and State of Maryland efforts to make the mandated minimum wage a living wage for Rockville's workforce.

Policy 16 Leverage Rockville's Sustainable Communities Designation to Support Economic Development in targeted areas.

The Maryland Sustainable Communities program, established in 2010 and administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, encourages interagency and cross-governmental collaboration by providing designated Sustainable Communities areas with access to a toolbox of State-sponsored financing programs and tax credit incentives, including the Community Legacy Program, Strategic Demolition Fund, Neighborhood BusinessWorks Program, Enhanced Local Tax Increment Financing Authority, Job Creation Tax Credit, and Sustainable Maryland. Figure 30 shows the areas within the city that are designated as Sustainable Communities areas as of 2020.

Also included in Figure 30 are State-designated Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Areas. The State of Maryland defines a TOD area as a place of relatively higher density that includes a mix of residential, employment, shopping,

and civic uses designed to encourage multi-modal access to the station area.

More information and updates on these programs and Rockville's Sustainable Communities areas can be found at the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's program web page.