

HR&A +



# City of College Park Five to Ten-Year Economic Development Strategy

November 2023

# Agenda

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Introduction

Existing Conditions

Strategy Recommendations

## CITY OF COLLEGE PARK STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2021-2025 *City of College Park Strategic Plan* (“*Strategic Plan*”) defines a community vision for City of College Park, and details major objectives to help realize this vision.

### Vision

***“College Park is a vibrant, forward-thinking City with a welcoming community that celebrates our history and diversity and strives for innovation, connectivity, and sustainability.”***

- City of College Park Strategic Plan, 2021-2025

## CITY OF COLLEGE PARK STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 5 of 2021-2025 *City of College Park Strategic Plan* frames the overarching economic development goals for the City moving forward.

### Objective 5

***"Plan and facilitate strategic economic development and smart growth to support a variety of businesses that can thrive and serve the diverse needs of our community."***

## PURPOSE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In support of Objective 5 from the Strategic Plan, this City of College Park Five to Ten-Year Economic Development Strategy (“Strategy” or “Economic Development Strategy”) provides actionable pathways to achieve the City’s goal of creating a thriving, well-connected, and diverse community.

### Background

The City of College Park’s **Office of Economic Development is the principal steward of the City’s economic well-being** and growth. After adoption of the *2021-2025 City of College Park Strategic Plan*, the **City set out to create a blueprint to guide the next five and ten-years of growth**. To this end, the **Office engaged HR&A** to analyze the City’s current state of development and identify actions to advance economic prosperity and inclusivity.

The Economic Development Strategy provides a **toolkit of program initiatives and policy recommendations** to close identified gaps in the City’s economy and create opportunities to elevate the quality of life for all College Park residents.

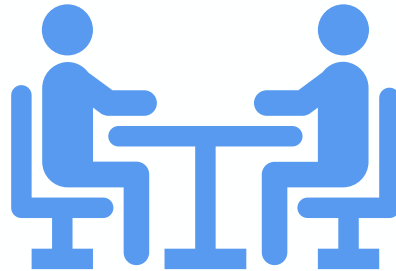


## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS

Creating the Economic Development Strategy included four major components.



### 1. Existing Conditions and Subarea Analyses



### 2. Stakeholder Engagement



### 3. Review of Best Practices

- *Incentives and Tools Benchmarking*
- *Case Studies of College Town Best Practices*

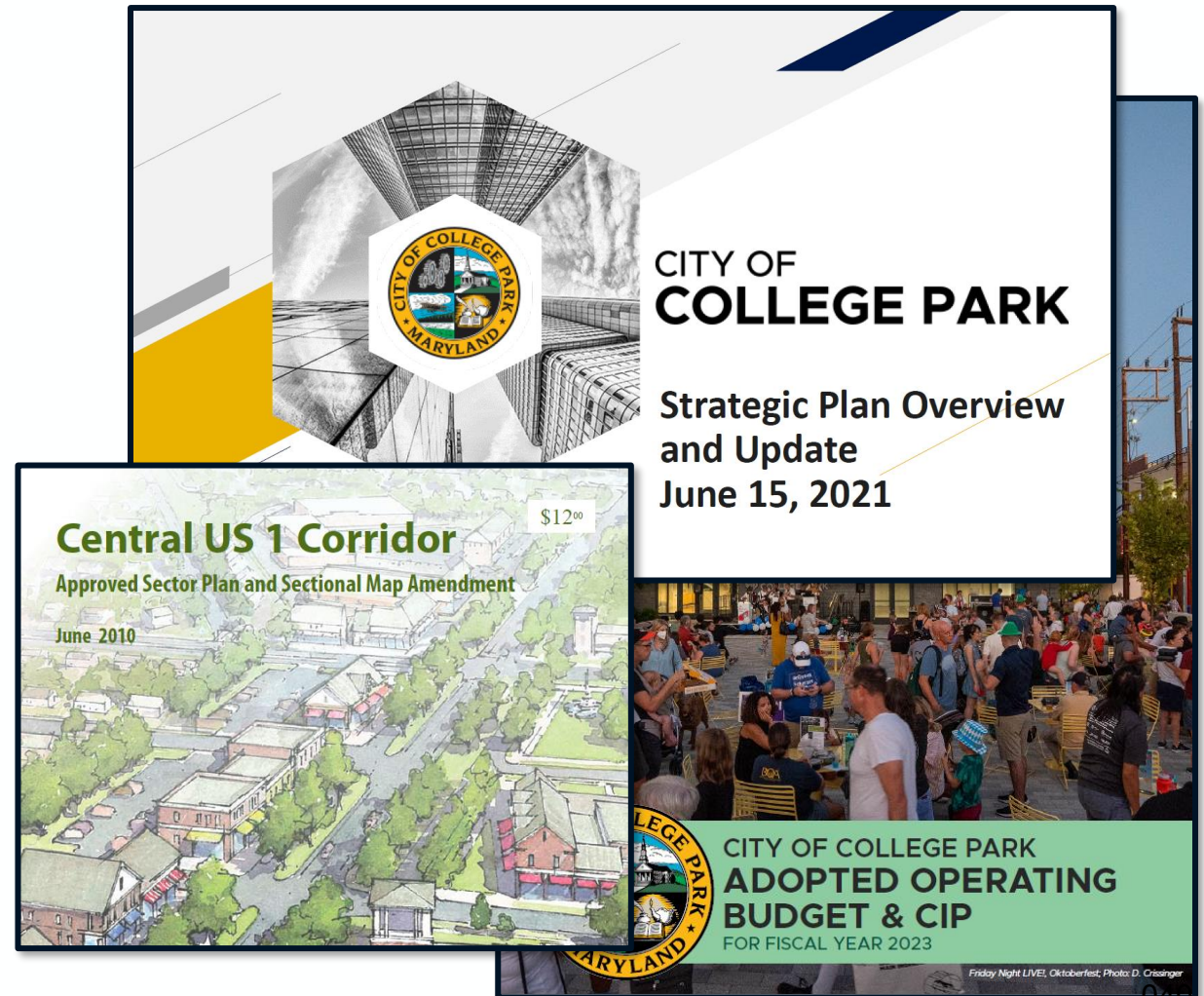


### 4. Plan Development

## PRECEDENT PLANS

Additionally, the Economic Development Strategy builds upon previously conducted plans and studies and is a complement to many initiatives underway in the City.

- 2010 Route 1 Corridor Sector Plan
- 2021 Building Code Feasibility Study
- 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan
- FY2015 – FY2023 Operating Budget
- City of College Park Age-Friendly Action Plan
- Lakeland 2025 Vision
- Lakeland Urban Design Study
- University-Community Vision 2030 Report

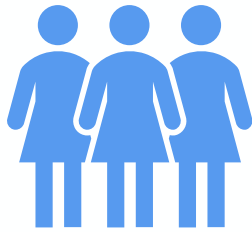


# Existing Conditions



## EXISTING CONDITIONS | DEMOGRAPHICS

College Park is a diverse, mid-sized city with a population of young, educated residents and families earning modest incomes.



**Population:** 35,000+

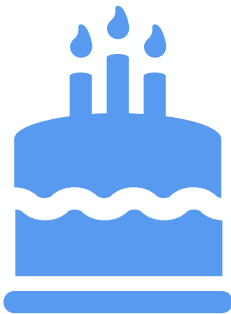


**Number of Households:** 8,673



**Bachelor's Degree or Higher\*:** 48.8%

\*Population Aged 25 or older



**Median Age:** 22



**Median Income:** \$69,736

### Racial/Ethnic Demographics

**Asian:** 14.7% | **Black:** 20.5%  
**Hispanic (any origin):** 18%  
**Other\*\*:** 3.6% | **White:** 43.2%

\*\* Other includes American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial individuals

## EXISTING CONDITIONS | RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Recent residential development in College Park is heavily concentrated in multifamily housing; housing diversity is needed to create options for young professionals and seniors.

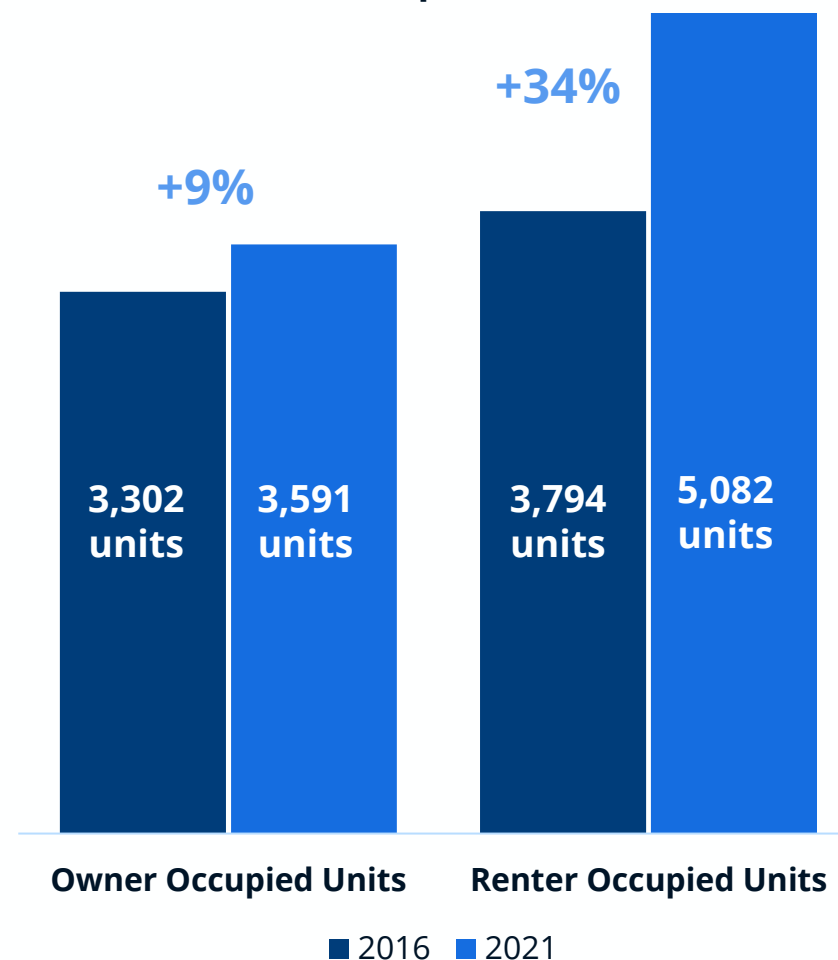
### Findings

Prior to 2016, the mix of rental vs owner-occupied housing was relatively balanced – with nearly the same number of rental vs. owner-occupied homes.

**Residential unit growth since 2015 has increased 31%** but deliveries are skewed in favor of rental properties.

Growth in **renter-occupied units is almost 4 times higher than owner-occupied growth**, with a lack of for-sale homes in the City constraining potential growth of homeownership.

Owner v. Renter-Occupied Units (2016 - 2021)



## EXISTING CONDITIONS | EMPLOYMENT BASE & OFFICE SPACE

Many employees in the City are connected to the University of Maryland however, the City can leverage its talent pipeline and research strengths to attract additional employers.

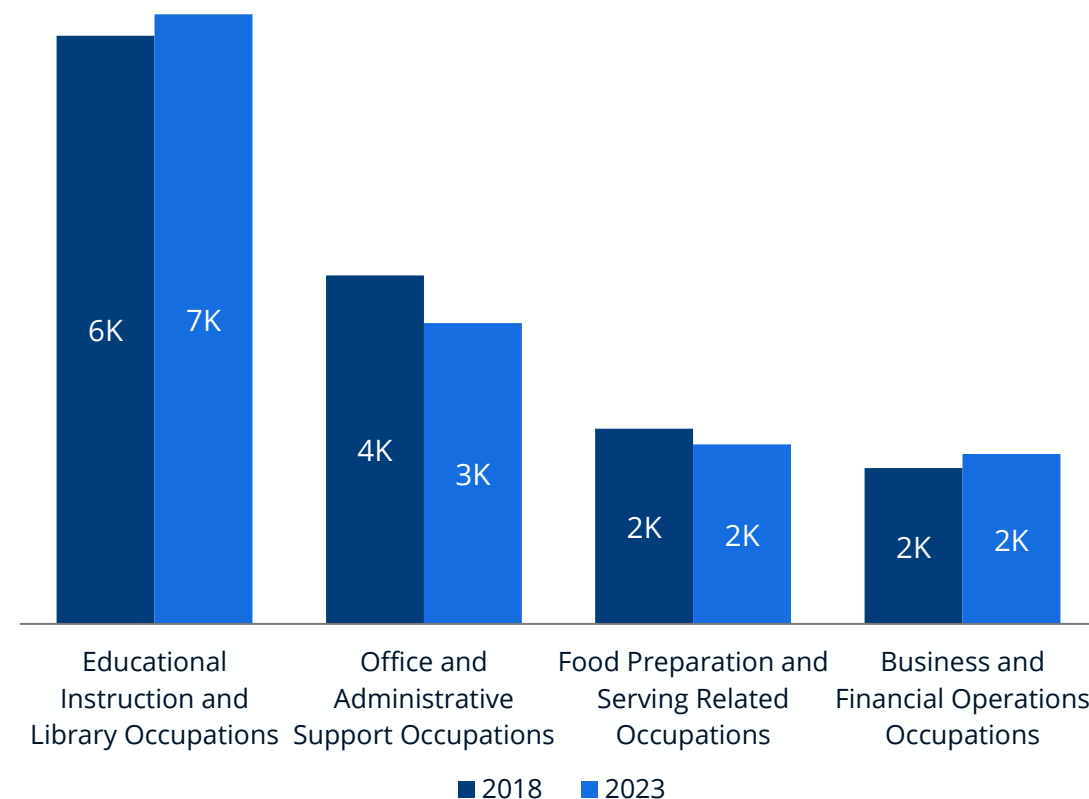
### Findings

College Park's employment base is concentrated in state government, primarily due to The University of Maryland.

The most **prominent occupations are those in educational instruction and office administration**, providing an estimated 10,000 jobs to the City in 2023.

With office occupancy at 95%, College Park's office market thrives relative to the County and peer markets. Existing quality office space, and future office development can **attract new employers from small startups to larger companies** to diversify tenant mix and the employment base.

Total Jobs, by Occupation (2018 - 2023)



## EXISTING CONDITIONS | RETAIL CHARACTER

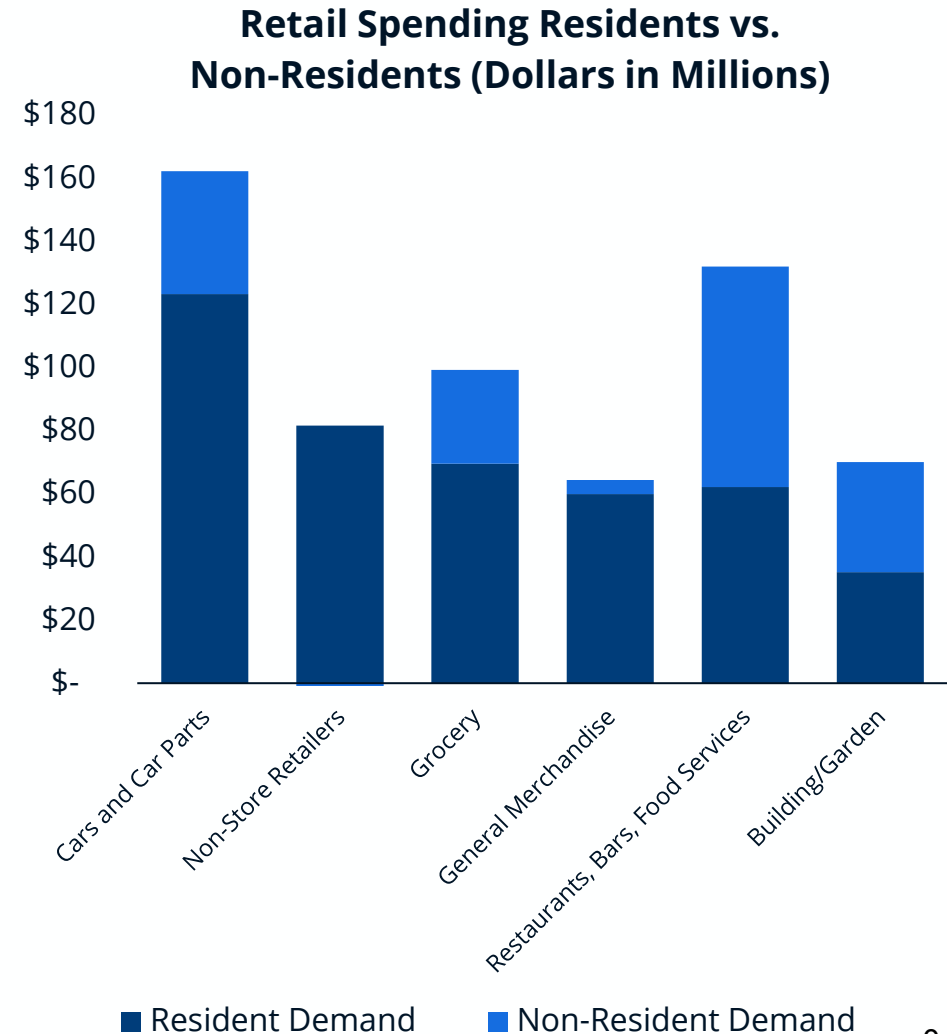
Greater retail diversity in College Park would help to meet existing consumer demand.

### Findings

The City has experienced several retail destination closures, such as Target and the Campus Village Shoppes. These closures limit the options of College Park residents whose **total retail spending exceeds \$558 million** as of 2023.

The City has roughly 5,000 square feet of retail space under construction, but this additional inventory will **only grow the City's existing 1.7 million square feet of retail space by less than 1%.**

**Increasing market rents and commercial vacancy** place additional pressure on the health of the retail market.



## EXISTING CONDITIONS | CITY IDENTITY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Creating a city with family-friendly amenities, diverse businesses, and a distinct identity were common sentiments voiced by interviewed stakeholders.

### Findings

The **perception of College Park** was a commonly raised concern during stakeholder interviews. There is strong desire to **make the City a regional destination** with ample amenities and vibrant third spaces.

It is important to advance this **development without inducing displacement**, particularly in historic communities like Lakeland.

Additionally, **city connectivity** is a priority. Once online, the **Purple Line** will expand public transportation options which may improve currently low levels of ridership. Residents also voiced a need for **greater walkability and bikeability**.



## EXISTING CONDITIONS | PROPERTY TAX ANALYSIS

Changes to City's property tax approach can increase revenues from development and improve fiscal transparency.

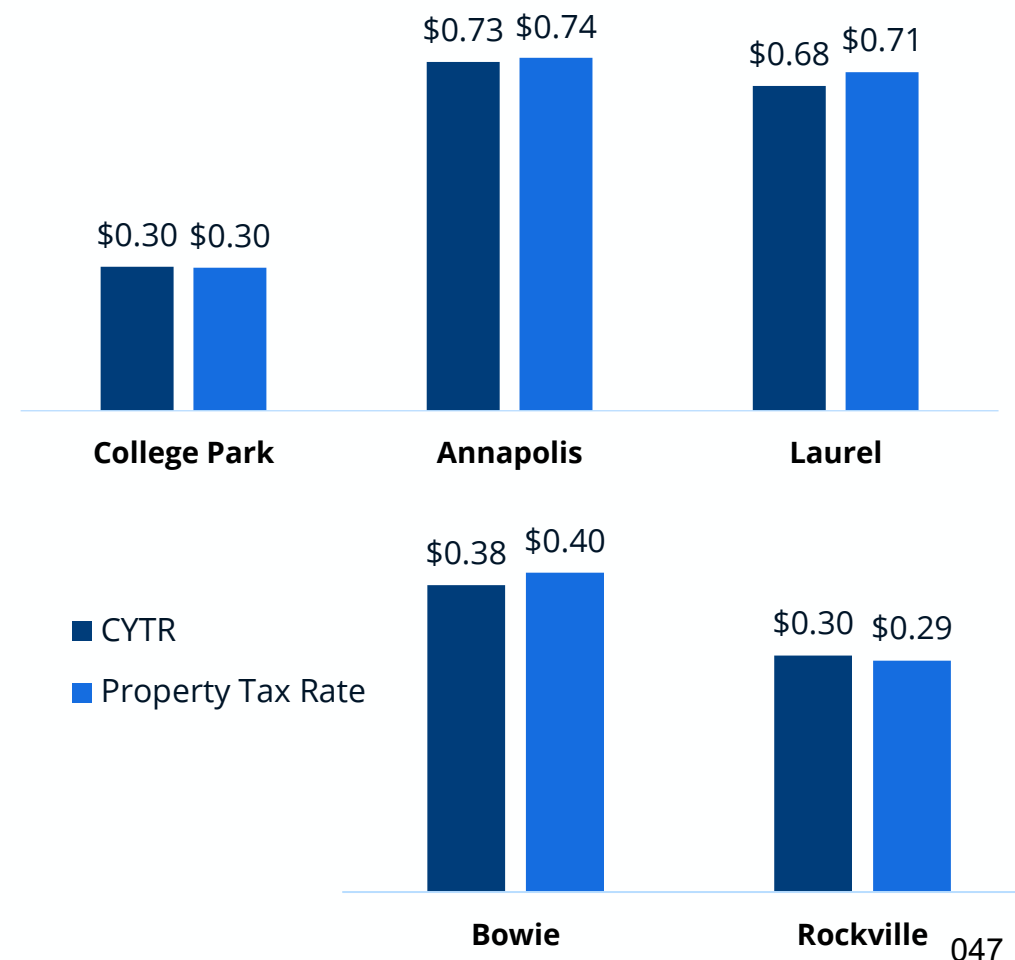
### Findings

Multifamily and mixed-used developments have significantly contributed to the **76% increase in College Park's assessable tax base**. Yet, the City's **property tax revenues only increased by 52%** between 2015 and 2023. In this same period, the City's real property tax rate declined by 10%.

In FY2023, College Park set its **real property tax rate equal to the state's Constant Yield Tax Rate (CYTR)**, contributing to a lag in property tax revenue growth.

A **high-level assessment of the potential fiscal and employment impacts** of development receiving the Revitalization Tax Credit **helps to under score the need for establishing benchmarks and metrics** to define success under the program.

Constant Yield Tax Rate and Real Property Tax Rate (2023)



## EXISTING CONDITIONS | SUBAREA ANALYSIS

College Park's five main commercial cores serve different populations, facing unique challenges due to physical and human geography.



### North College Park

Primarily box-box retail and car dealerships. Some smaller scale office and retail.



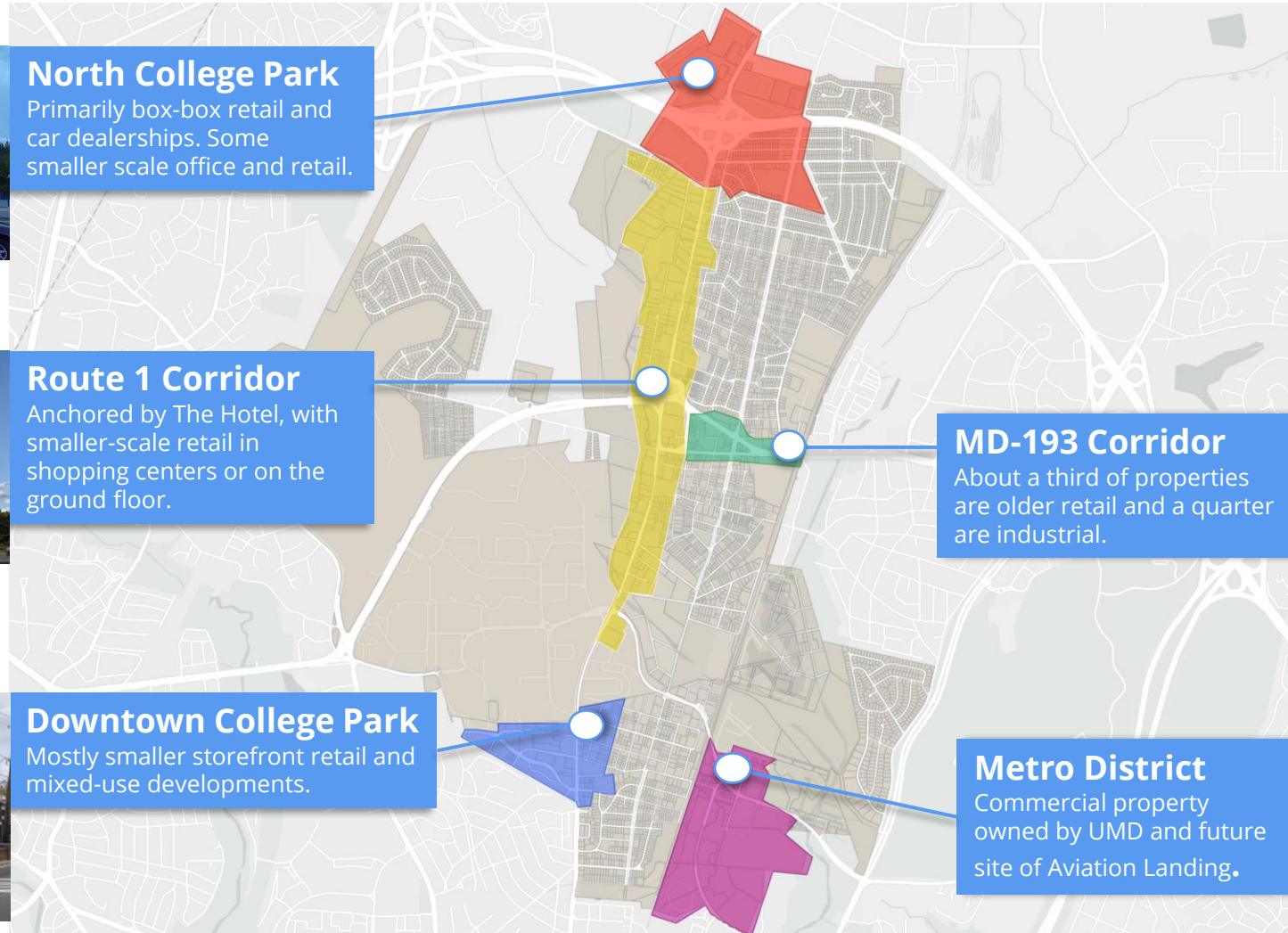
### Route 1 Corridor

Anchored by The Hotel, with smaller-scale retail in shopping centers or on the ground floor.



### Downtown College Park

Mostly smaller storefront retail and mixed-use developments.



### MD-193 Corridor

About a third of properties are older retail and a quarter are industrial.



### Metro District

Commercial property owned by UMD and future site of Aviation Landing.



A photograph of the College Park Aviation Museum building, a two-story structure with brick and large glass windows. A sign on the building reads "COLLEGE PARK AVIATION MUSEUM" and features an illustration of an airplane. A tall brick chimney is visible behind the building. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue rectangle containing the title text.

# Strategy Recommendations

## EXISTING CONDITIONS | AREAS OF FOCUS

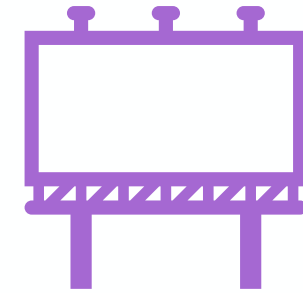
The City should focus on the following areas to support continued economic growth and vitality - with special attention on how to implement new programs and initiatives.



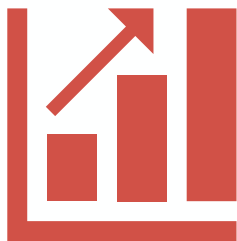
**Attract and Retain Employers**



**Retain Talent**



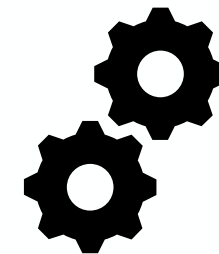
**Define the City's Identity**



**Cultivate Diverse,  
Local Retailers**



**Grow and Preserve  
Housing Stock**



**Implementation  
Considerations**

## EXISTING CONDITIONS | AREAS OF FOCUS

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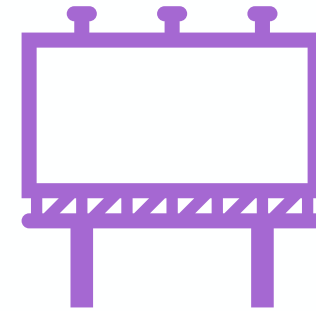
### Attract and Retain Employers

*Focus on identifying quality employers who can bring jobs to the City and diversify the employment base*



### Retain Talent

*Focus on expanding opportunities for local talent and creating a welcoming, engaging environment for residents*

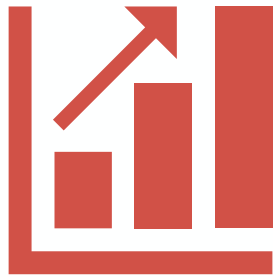


### Define the City's Identity

*Focus on placemaking, marketing, and programming in the City for locals and visitors*

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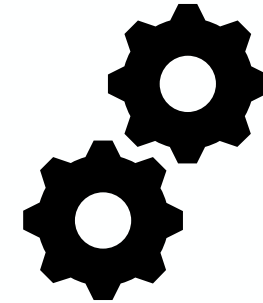
### **Cultivate Diverse, Local Retailers**

*Focus on providing incentives and business development opportunities to local entrepreneurs*



### **Grow and Preserve Housing Stock**

*Focus on improving housing affordability and options for different demographics*



### **Implementation Considerations**

*Focus on building City capacity and resources to tangibly advance economic development*

## STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS | OVERVIEW

Attraction and retention of employers and talent, as well as local placemaking, works in service of economic growth and enhanced quality of life in College Park.



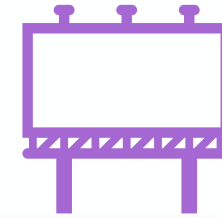
### Attract and Retain Employers

- Establish a **Small Business Incubator/Accelerator**;
- Engage **Site Selectors**;
- Develop **marketing materials**;
- Convene **local business leaders** with regularity; and
- Develop workplan with **Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation**



### Retain Talent

- Diversify **housing options**;
- Expand **social and leisure amenities geared towards** young adults and families;
- Partner with UMD to create a **local talent pipeline** to connect recent graduates with local employment opportunities; and
- Establish a **public transit program** for Downtown and Metro District employees.



### Define the City's Identity

- Launch a **node-based marketing campaign**;
- Expand and promote **City programming**;
- Create **walkable and bikeable corridors**;
- Establish a **place-based organization**; and
- Integrate **interactive art** into public spaces

## STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS | OVERVIEW

Diversifying local retailers and housing options further enables the City to meet the varying needs of its residents.



### Cultivate Diverse, Local Retailers

- Establish **Neighborhood Business Associations**;
- **Expedite permitting processes** for small and locally-owned businesses;
- Create a **home-based business registry**;
- Develop a suite of **small business funding tools**; and
- Explore feasibility of a **Business Improvement District (BID)** along Baltimore Avenue



### Grow and Preserve Housing Stock

- **Expand housing stock** – particularly for market rate and affordable multifamily construction and seniors housing;
- Advocate for production of **Accessory Dwelling Units**;
- Continue investments in **existing housing initiatives**; and
- Establish **Aging-in-Place programs**.

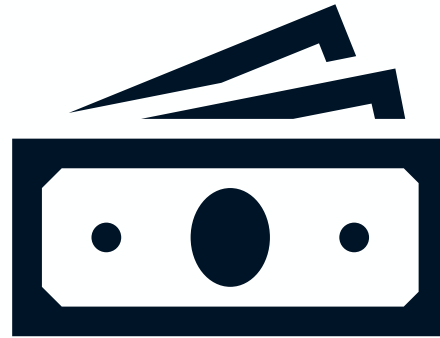
## STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS | IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Successful implementation of recommended strategies requires the City to equip itself with the staff, knowledge, and fiscal means to carry out recommendations with fidelity.



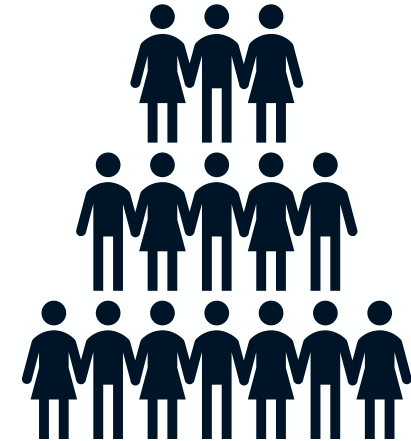
### Establish Evaluation Metrics

*Focus on clearly defining measurable, desired outcomes*



### Increase City Revenues

*Focus on improving strategic public investments*



### Evaluate Staff Capacity

*Focus on team building and staff expertise*