



New Town Task Force

Final Recommendations Report Presentation

Presented to: Howard County Planning Board
July 9, 2026

Context

HoCo By Design (2023)

- Sets a 20-year framework for **equitable, predictable, sustainable, and achievable** growth
- Recognizes Columbia, with its **14,000+ acres and 28,000 parcels**, for its **distinctive planned community character**
- Calls for a **focused evaluation of the New Town (NT) zoning district** to ensure it continues to support contemporary needs

“The New Town Task Force is a vital component to ensuring the Columbia of tomorrow is informed by a community-first approach.”

*- County Executive
Calvin Ball*

Evaluation

Why Evaluate New Town Zoning?

- NT zoning **defines land use requirements and processes for the majority of Columbia**
- Originally crafted for a 1960s planned community model
- Community feedback shows strong desire to **preserve, enhance, and strengthen** Columbia's identity
- Need to ensure the zoning framework supports **current and future conditions**, including growth, equity, and flexibility



Task Force Purpose

Executive Order 2025-09, 2025-10, 2026-06

County Executive OF Howard County, Maryland

Executive Order: 2025-09
Date: May 14, 2025
Subject: Creating a New Town Task Force

WHEREAS, the County's General Plan, HoCo By Design, was adopted in October of 2023 and took effect December of 2023; and

WHEREAS, to date, the Department of Planning and Zoning has worked to implement several aspects of HoCo By Design since its adoption, to include: convening an Affordable Housing Working Group to develop recommendations related to growth management strategies for this component of housing; convening the Adequate Public Facilities Act Review Committee to develop recommendations for revisions to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO); advancing a comprehensive master planning effort for the future of the 1,100 acre Columbia Gateway office park; progressing updates to the Howard County Landscape Manual; and will soon commence projects to update the Route 1 and Route 40 Design Manuals; and

WHEREAS, HoCo By Design describes the New Town (NT) zoning district in Columbia of over 14,000 acres and 28,000 parcels as having a unique sense of place that its residents want to preserve, enhance, and strengthen; and

WHEREAS, the General Plan identifies that a review of the New Town (NT) zoning district and its character-defining elements by a task force would provide an opportunity to ensure that the regulatory structure is calibrated to successfully carry forward New Town (NT) zoning; and

WHEREAS, the General Plan calls for the establishment of a task force to evaluate and make recommendations on how to carry forward New Town's planned community framework; and

WHEREAS, the General Plan specifies that the Task Force shall consist of members appointed by the County Council and the County Executive; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive received recommendations from the County Council for members to be appointed by this executive order.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, that the New Town Task Force is established.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the duties and responsibilities of the Task Force are to evaluate and make recommendations on how to carry forward New Town's planned community framework, including but not limited to, modifications to zoning regulations and development processes.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the following individuals are appointed to serve as voting members on the New Town Task Force:

1. Matt Abrams
2. Nina Basu
3. Judelle Campbell
4. Nicole Campbell
5. David Costello
6. Sharon Cooper-Kerr
7. Greg DesRoches
8. Rene DuBois
9. Karin Emery
10. Brian England
11. Michael Golibersuch
12. Robbyn Harris
13. Ryan Hermann
14. Ian Kennedy
15. Joan Lanco
16. Tim May
17. Kristi Smith
18. Stacy Spann
19. Collin Sullivan
20. Ashley Vaughan

WHEREAS, on May 14, 2025, I issued Executive Order No. 2025-09 that established the New Town Task Force; and

WHEREAS, I wish to alter the membership of the Task Force to add a member.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, that Fran LoPresti is added as a voting member of the New Town Task Force.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that all other provisions of Executive Order No. 2025-09 shall remain in effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Calvin Ball, as County Executive of Howard County, Maryland have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Howard County to be affixed this 14th day of June 2025.


Calvin Ball
County Executive

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force shall issue a written report by May 31, 2026.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force's report shall be provided to the County Executive and County Council and shall be considered as zoning changes are developed for the New Town (NT) zoning district.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the New Town Task Force and the terms of its members shall cease to exist on or about September 30, 2026.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Calvin Ball, as County Executive of Howard County, Maryland have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Howard County to be affixed this 14th day of May 2025.


Calvin Ball
County Executive

WHEREAS, on May 14, 2025, I issued Executive Order No. 2025-09 that established the New Town Task Force; and

WHEREAS, on June 3, 2025, I issued Executive Order No. 2025-10 to add a member to the Task Force.

WHEREAS, I wish to alter the membership of the Task Force to add a member.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, that Brady Greer, or another designee of the Columbia Association, is added as a voting member of the New Town Task Force.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that all other provisions of Executive Order No. 2025-09 and 2025-10 shall remain in effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Calvin Ball, as County Executive of Howard County, Maryland have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Howard County to be affixed this 17th day of May, 2026


Calvin Ball
County Executive

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, that the New Town Task Force is established.

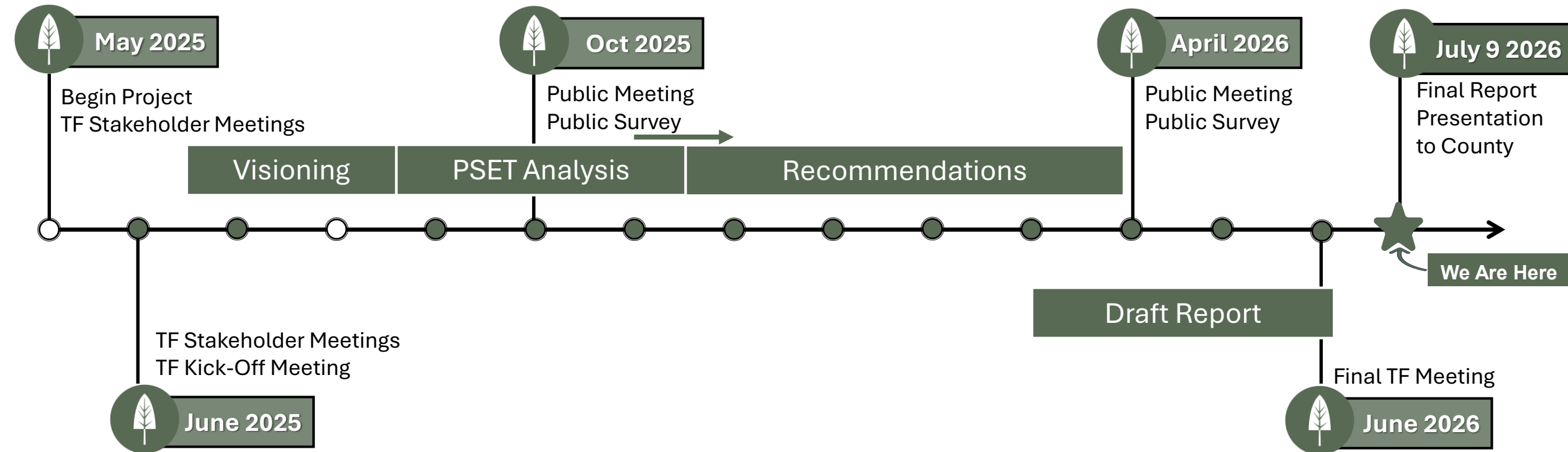
AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that the duties and responsibilities of the Task Force are to *evaluate and make recommendations* on how to carry forward New Town's planned community framework, including but not limited to, *modifications to zoning regulations and development processes.*

Task Force Process



Anticipated Milestones

● Task Force Meeting



Stakeholder Information

Major Themes

- Strong affirmation of Columbia's core strengths
 - **Diversity, Open Space, Access to Amenities**
- Recognition that legacy policies should be **reexamined for relevance**
- Desire for a zoning framework that supports:
 - **Clarity**
 - **Consistency**
 - **Adaptability**
 - **Long-term community needs**



25
Interviews
Conducted



Task Force Vision

- *People and Community, Diversity and Inclusivity, Open Space and green space aid in maintaining the spirit of Columbia.*
- *Embrace the future while honoring the values that Columbia was based upon.*
- *Columbia is a place that needs to value its uniqueness / based on its history.*

The Vision for New Town Recommendations

Evaluation Framework

Preserve – Strengthen – Enhance – Transform (PSET)

- Provided a structured method to evaluate NT zoning elements identified during stakeholder interviews and visioning discussions
- Helped distinguish:
 - What should **remain unchanged**
 - What needs **clarification or improvement**
 - What requires **significant transformation**
- Ensured recommendations were **balanced, thoughtful, and aligned** with Task Force vision.



Areas to
PRESERVE



Areas to
STRENGTHEN



Residential / Non-Residential



Areas to
ENHANCE



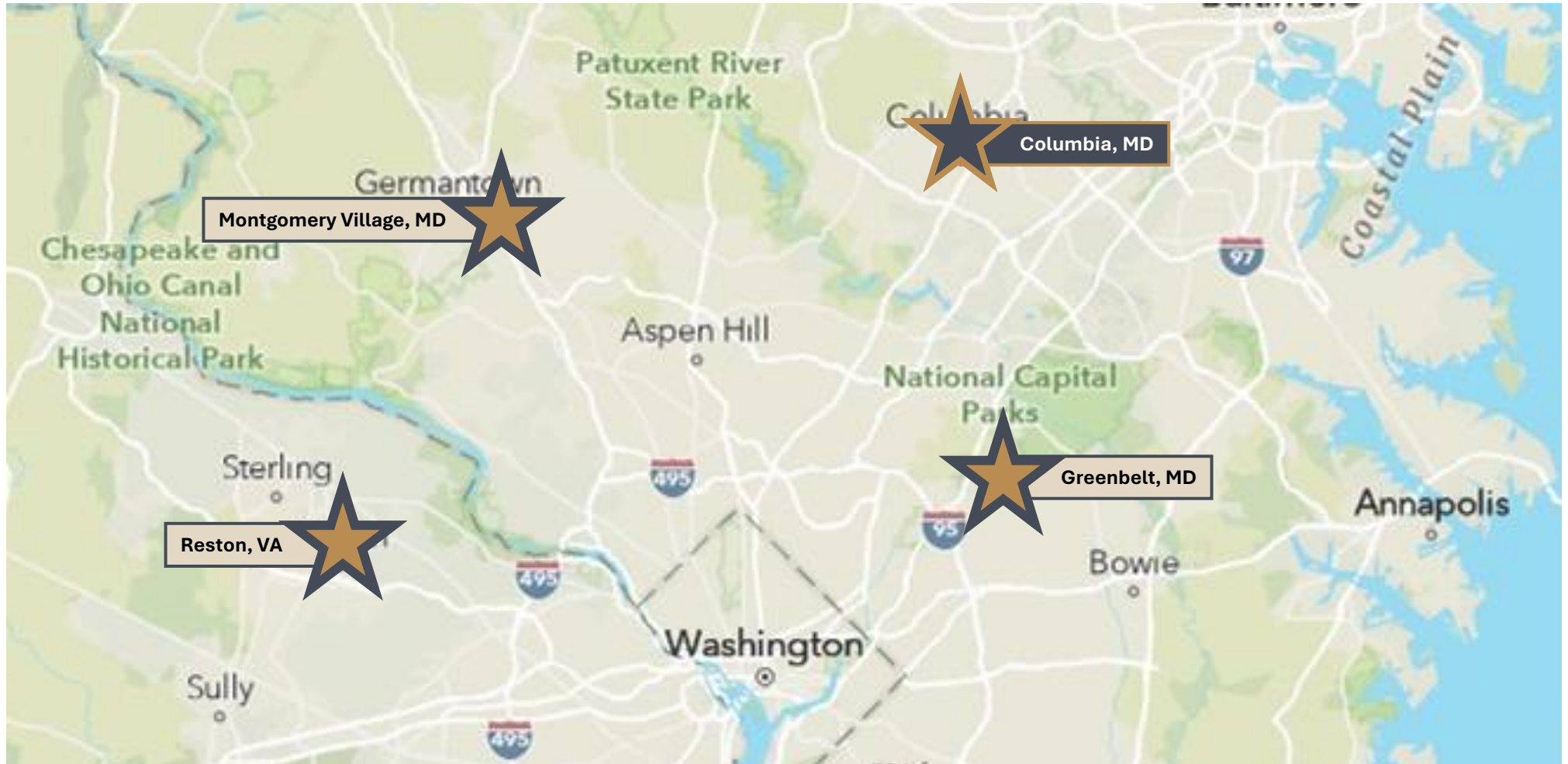
Areas to
TRANSFORM

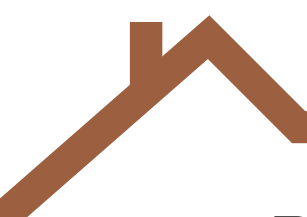
Less change / lower intensity

More change / greater intensity

Preserve, Enhance, Strengthen, Enhance Analysis

Case Study Comparison





Recommendations Process

Recommendation Development Process

- 42 Potential Recommendations identified from:
 - 2 Task Force Visions Discussions
 - 4 Task Force PSET discussions
 - 399 Responses to October – November 2025 Online Public Survey
- New Town Task Force Recommendations Meetings (January 2026 – March 2026)
 - 28 Recommendations identified to move forward to Technical Survey for review and input
 - Verified with additional community feedback from Spring 2026 Technical Survey

Recommendations

Final Recommendation Review

- 28 initial recommendations were identified from early discussions and public engagement
- 32 recommendations were created, splitting several of the initial recommendations into components
- **27 Recommendations were voted to advance** to the County for further research and evaluation

Recommendations
reflect a
**thoughtful and
pragmatic
approach to carry
New Town into
the future
and fulfill the
objectives of the
Executive Order.**

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Creating Another New Town District*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
1	Maintain an original petitioner's ability to create a New Town district.	Renee DuBois	Greg DesRoches	8	4	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *PDP / CSP / FDP Structure*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
2	Seek to simplify the approval and development process within New Town district	Tim May	Brian England	11	2	Passes
3	Standardize requirements by land use types across the FDPs.	Nicole Campbell	Fran LoPresti	13	1	Passes
4	Remove CSPs as a step in the development process.	Nicole Campbell	Tim May	8	5	Passes
5A	Consolidate similar FDPs and their requirements.	Nicole Campbell	Fran LoPresti	10	3	Passes
5B	Create a table of permitted uses by area for the FDPs.	Nicole Campbell	Brian England	11	2	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *PDP / CSP / FDP Structure (Continued)*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
6	Expand the types of uses that can be approved administratively by DPZ.	Ryan Hermann	Michael Golibersuch	7	4	Passes
7	Identify most effective opportunities for public engagement and maintain them as a priority throughout the development process.	Nicole Campbell	Sharon Cooper-Kerr	13	0	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Defining Credited Open Space (Continued)*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
8A	Define open space in the New Town Zoning District to provide greater clarity of uses.	Nicole Campbell	Tim May	9	1	Passes
8A; Defining Language	Additional Defining Language: It is further recommended to ensure the 36% open space requirement includes a definition of open space which recognizes the full range of recreational, environmental, cultural, and community-serving functions currently allowed including membership-based facilities and services which are found to promote the social welfare of the community.	Brady Greer	Joan Lancos	11	0	Passes

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Defining Credited Open Space (Continued)*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
8A; Defining Language	Additional Defining Language: It is further recommended that for the purposes of defined open space, including all sites considered environmentally sensitive or deemed conservation areas, installation of pedestrian and bicycle pathways, boardwalks, and linear parks shall be permitted as long as they are integrated into an open space master plan and meet applicable environmental standards	Renee DuBois	Karin Emery	11	0	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Defining Credited Open Space (Continued)*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
8B	Align credited open space definition with other county zoning district definitions.	-	-	-	-	Fails because no motion was made
9	Maintain the current definition of open space in Section 125.0.A.8.e	Ryan Hermann	Fran LoPresti	3	6	Fails
10	Maintain required 36% open space.	Fran LoPresti	Renee DuBois	10	0	Passes
11	Ensure permanent protection of currently established credited open space areas.	-	-	-	-	Fails because no motion was made

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Apartments Definition*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
12	Adjust the definition of apartments to align with other county zoning district definitions.	Tim May	Ryan Hermann	7	3	Passes
13	Create a new land use category for single family attached housing types.	Fran LoPresti	Nicole Campbell	8	3	Passes
14	Create a new land use category for diverse housing types, including missing middle housing types.	Fran LoPresti	Sharon Cooper-Kerr	8	1	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Original Petitioner*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
15	Remove the role of the original petitioner to amend commercial FDPs.	Nicole Campbell	Michael Golibersuch	11	1	Passes
16	If the role of the Original Petitioner is retained, then the County should review the potential for the Planning Board or another neutral entity to take up the role of the Original Petitioner. It is further recommended that there is a review of prior reports in identifying the neutral entity for this role	Michael Golibersuch	Sharon Cooper-Kerr	10	3	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Downtown and Village Center Simplification*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
17	Simplify the development process for Village Center redevelopment.	Ryan Hermann	Nicole Campbell	12	1	Passes
18	Simplify the development process for Downtown Columbia redevelopment.	Nicole Campbell	Ryan Hermann	12	1	Passes
19	Reduce the number of public meetings required for redevelopment processes. It is further recommended that public meetings are made more useful and informative for the public. Also, evaluate technology use for more efficiency.	Nicole Campbell	Fran LoPresti	12	1	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Density Cap Requirements*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
20	Maintain the density cap of 2.5 dwelling units per acre as is.	Fran LoPresti	Karin Emery	6	9	Fails
20A	It is recommended that the density cap for New Town should be evaluated to allow for new denser types of housing)as envisioned in “the General Plan”), for its conformance with covenants, and to identify the impacts to the residents of New Town Columbia.	Fran LoPresti	Karin Emery	9	3	Passes
21	Consider excluding village centers from the New Town wide density cap	Joan Lancos	Ian Kennedy	11	2	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Land Use Percentage Requirements*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
22	Evaluate and consider adjusting the land use percentage requirements, outside of open space uses, in order to accommodate more diverse housing types.	Joan Lancos	Sharon Cooper-Kerr	10	3	Passes

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Moderate Income Housing Requirements (MIHU)*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
23	Encourage diversity of housing types throughout the New Town district	Ryan Hermann	Brady Greer	10	2	Passes
24	Incentivize, rather than require, the provision of MIHUs.	Ryan Hermann	Brady Greer	9	2	Passes
25	Maintain the existing exemption from MIHUs in New Town.	Ryan Hermann	Fran LoPresti	6	6	Fails because there is not a majority to pass

Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report

Final Recommendations

New Town Task Force Final Recommendations *Expansion of Uses, Materials, and Design Guidance*

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Motion Made By	Motion Seconded By	In Favor	Opposed	Motion Passes or Fails
26	Evaluate the expansion of the Design Advisory Panel role to review projects in New Town.	Michael Golibersuch	Nicole Campbell	8	4	Passes
27	Explore the creation of pattern books to incentivize the use of modern and sustainable materials. It is further recommended to consider fast track of approvals if pattern book is followed to allow for a more simplified process.	Tim May	Nicole Campbell	11	1	Passes
28A	Incentivize and encourage universal design in New Town zoning.	Fran LoPresti	Greg DesRoches	12	0	Passes
28B	Incentivize and encourage accessibility in New Town zoning.	Fran LoPresti	Greg DesRoches	11	0	Passes

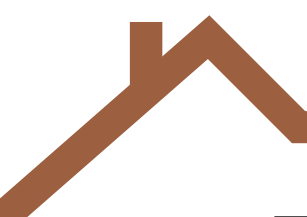
Final Recommendations Summary Table; Appendix H in Draft Report



Task Force Vision

- *People and Community, Diversity and Inclusivity, Open Space and green space aid in maintaining the spirit of Columbia.*
- *Embrace the future while honoring the values that Columbia was based upon.*
- *Columbia is a place that needs to value its uniqueness / based on its history.*

The Vision for New Town Recommendations



What Happens Next

Final Report is published with Recommendations

- Recommendations will inform **future updates to the NT zoning code**
- Any zoning change will require **formal County Council action** following a public hearing and would include a Planning Board recommendation
- The Task Force's work provides:
 - A **research-based** foundation for policy decisions
 - A **clear roadmap** for modernizing NT zoning

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Closing

Vision for the future

- The New Town Task Force's work delivers a **forward-looking, community-grounded vision** for Columbia's future
- The recommendations ensure that NT zoning continues to:
 - Reflect the **original planned community vision**,
 - Align with the policies and implementing actions established in *HoCo By Design*,
 - Guide Columbia's evolution for the next generation
- With discussion, 32 recommendations were created, splitting several of the initial recommendations into components
- **27 Recommendations were voted to advance** to the County for further research and evaluation

Thank you

