



WELCOME

New Town Task Force Feedback
Zoning in Columbia

Public Meeting

October 20, 2025; In-Person

October 21, 2025; WebEx

PLEASE SIGN IN



Task Force Purpose

HoCo by Design

“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

CHARACTER-BASED ELEMENTS

Character-based code elements emphasize context of development and may apply to a designated area or more generally within the overall land use regulations and zoning codes. They could be used to regulate a number of factors, including building height and placement, parking locations, street frontage, sidewalks, planting areas, drainage, density, and the street itself. This information is conveyed with specific instructions and often includes easy-to-understand diagrams or other graphic illustrations.

While character-based concepts can be applied anywhere, they are most successful in areas that have a mix of uses, historic communities, and Rural Crossroad areas. A character-based approach to land use regulation in Howard County may yield more walkable, compact, and diverse mixed-use environments.

Character-based code elements are used to achieve the following:

1. Create neighborhoods where development is appropriately scaled to the public realm.
2. Encourage active transportation (e.g. walking, biking, etc.).
3. Foster social cohesion.

Columbia's original master plan contained a focus on open space in preserved over the decades and results in a wooded suburban community representing an earlier era, is also part of the community's signature feel. was to provide a full-spectrum of housing that still exists today and provides options in the County. Older parts of Columbia have some of the County's multi-family units and more affordable older single-family homes and acknowledged and considered when determining locations for new affordable housing.

The New Town Zoning District represents more than 14,000 acres and is a planned community by a visionary developer over 50 years ago. It is the place to live in the country. Columbia has a unique sense of place that and strengthen. As a complement to character-based or hybrid zoning manuals can serve as a framework for preferred architectural patterns. It can provide guidelines and standards for building types, building components, roof types and details, windows, doors, porches, and other architectural elements for landscaping, lighting, fences, walls, signage, and other outdoor elements specific districts, neighborhoods, or activity centers in the community. challenging to develop, form-based elements can be used to support new hybrid approaches to further achieve desired character outcomes.

The HoCo By Design Character Areas technical appendix provides additional code updates.

The regulatory framework of New Town zoning establishes minimum and maximum proportions of open space, residential, commercial, industrial, and other land uses in addition to an overall density cap. Past General Plans evaluated and recommended updates to this framework resulting in the 2009 Village Center Revitalization zoning process update and the 2010 Downtown Columbia Master Plan which added residential units above this cap and established different land use percentages for Downtown. The New Town District is comprised of 268 approved Final Development Plans (FDPs) that enumerate parcel-specific regulations and cross-reference use and bulk provisions of non-New Town zoning districts. The FDP structure was designed to provide significant flexibility to the master developer and majority land owner of this planned community as it was developing. This regulatory structure and associated processes could be evaluated to ensure more efficient administration of the New Town Zone.

A review of the New Town 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 zoning.

Chapter 7: Quality by Design, QBD - 30 Implementing Actions

4. Create a taskforce that is appointed by County Council and the County Executive to evaluate and make recommendations on how to carry forward New Town's planned community framework.

Task Force Purpose

Executive Order 2025-09 and 2025-10

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 14 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 14 day of May 2025.


Calvin Ball
County Executive

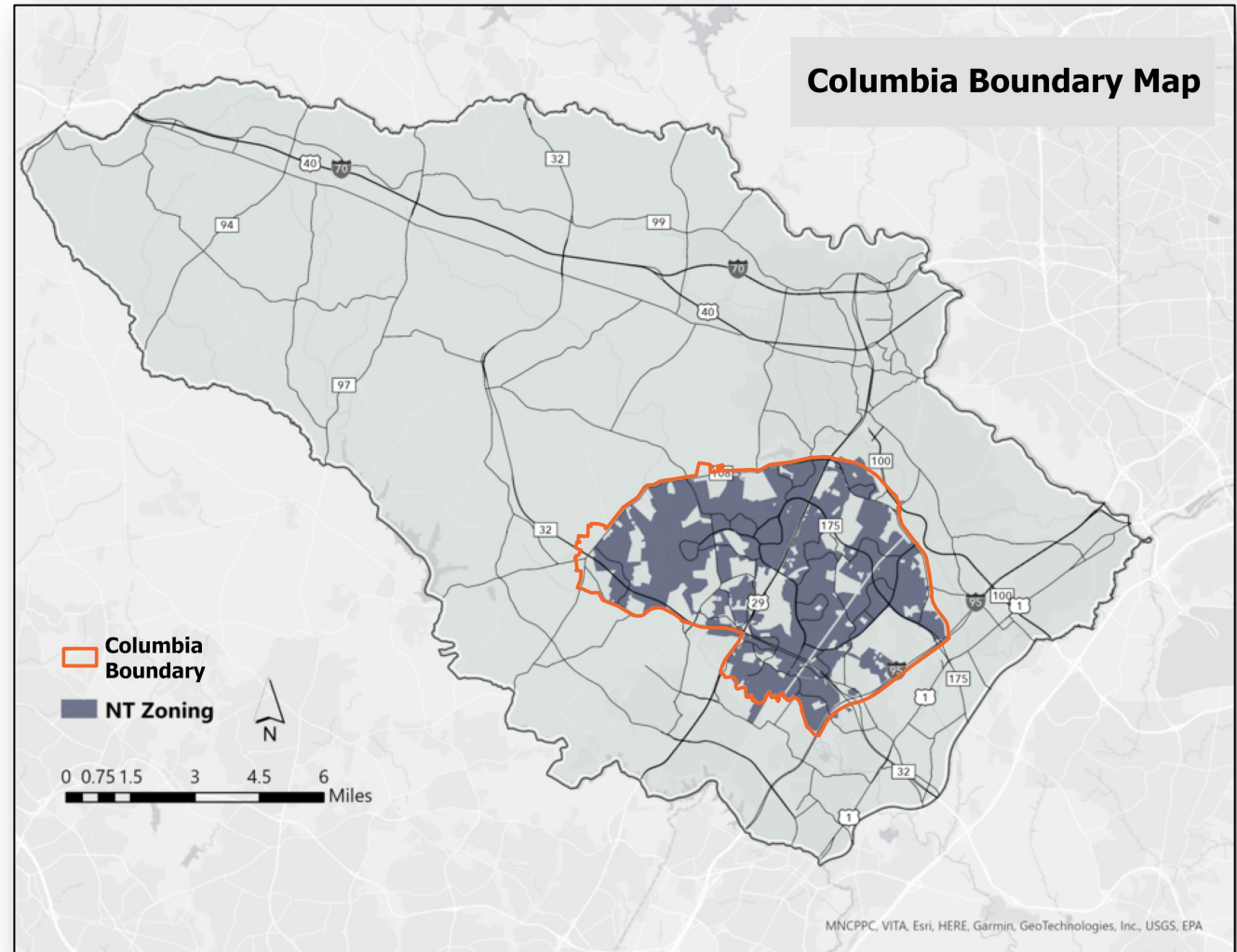
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, that the New Town Task Force is established.

*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.***

Location Map

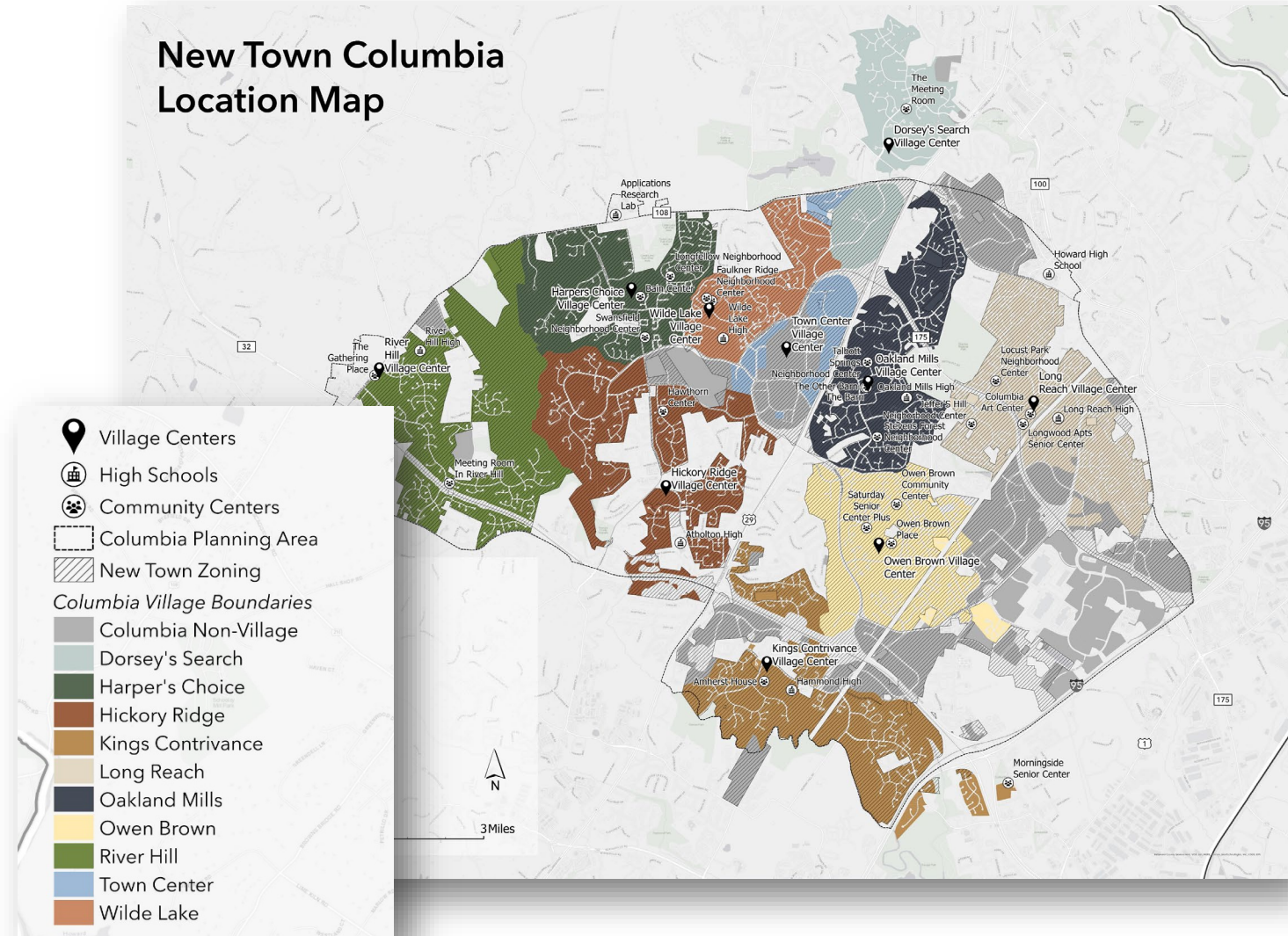
Columbia Boundary Map

The boundary map outlines the area known as “New Town” and serves as a reference for the area.



New Town Columbia Boundary Map

The boundary map outlines the different villages and points of interest within the New Town area.

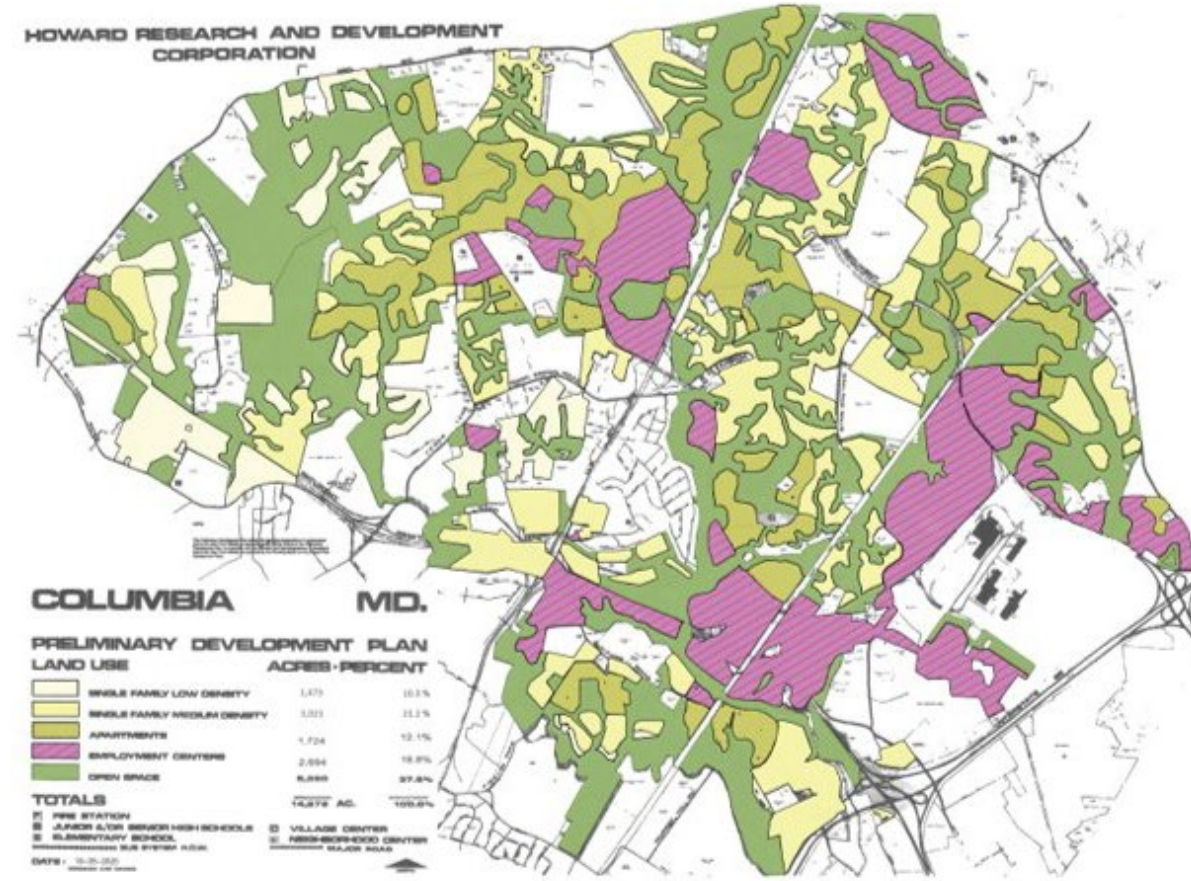


NT District Density



Map Legend	Land Use	Acres	Dwelling Units Approved	Max Density*	Approved Density
	Single Family Low Density	1,473	2,711	2	1.8404
	Single Family Medium Density	3,021	8,689	4	2.8762
	Apartments – Single Family Attached	757	7,254	10	9.5825
	Apartment – Multifamily	967	14,463	15	14.9565
	Employment	2,694	1,477	N/A	0.5482
	Open Space	5,360	0	N/A	0
	Total NT District	14,272	34,594	2.5	2.4239

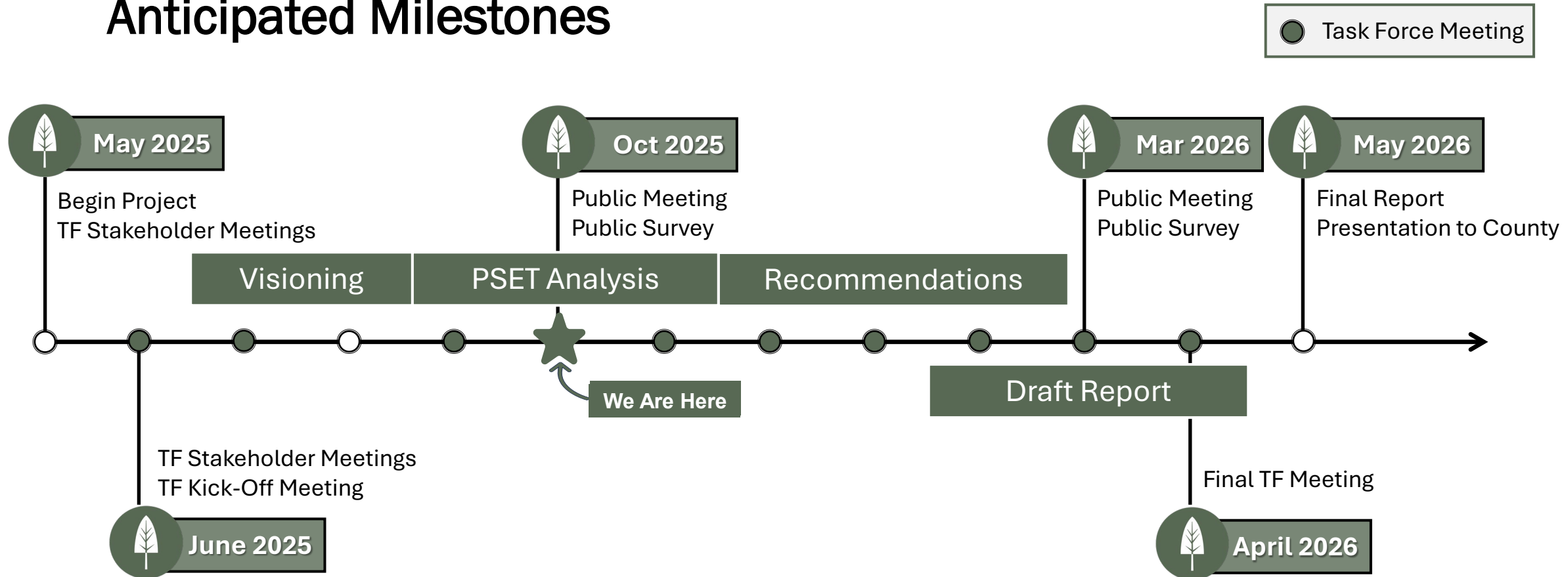
* Pursuant to Section 125.0.A.4 and 5 of the Howard County Zoning Regulations



Overall Schedule



Anticipated Milestones



Background Information

James W. Rouse established four goals for Columbia

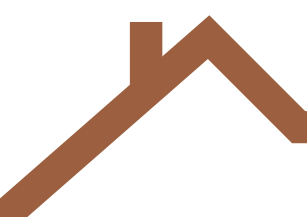
1. To Build a Complete City.
2. To Respect the Land.
3. To Provide for the Growth of the People.
4. To Make a Profit.

"We must believe, because it is true, that people are affected by their environment...scale, by color and texture, by nature and beauty, that they can be uplifted, made comfortable, made important."

- Jim Rouse



Display at American Visionary Arts Museum



Background Information

New Town Zoning District Code 125.0

New Town Zoning District is the classification for Columbia, an unincorporated, planned community in Howard County, MD.

- Created in 1965
- Initially created with 13,690 acres, currently 14,272 acres
- Unlike traditional zoning districts, New Town Zoning includes plans that regulate land use mixes at the neighborhood level

Background Information

Case Studies

- Review of nearby New Town Developments to understand benefits and challenges they have faced:
 - Montgomery Village, MD
 - Greenbelt, MD
 - Reston, VA

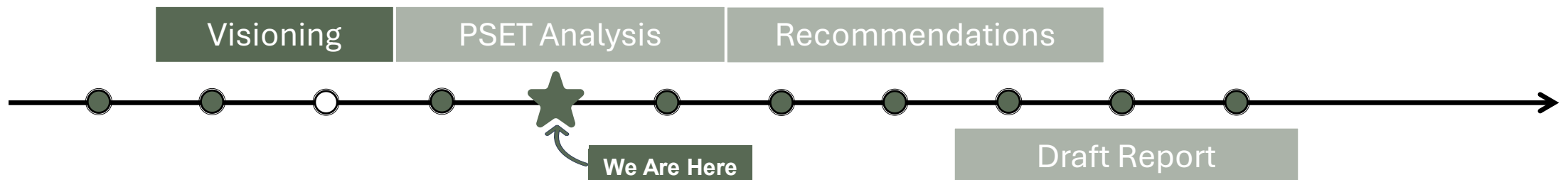


Expectations for Visioning Meetings

Visioning Meetings

June and July Meetings

- Review outcome from all stakeholder meet and greet sessions
 - Review the top things that people appreciate about Columbia
 - Review the top concerns people have for Columbia
 - Identify the vision for Columbia for the future
- Develop a vision by which all recommendations from the Task Force can be reviewed and measured against





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.*

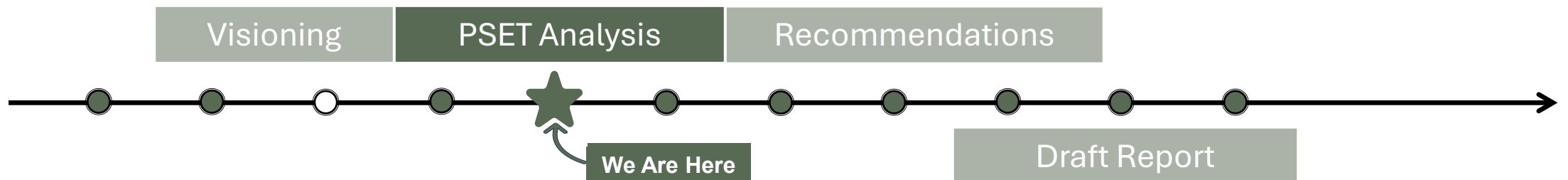
The Vision for New Town Recommendations

Expectations for PSET Meetings

Preserve, Strengthen, Enhance, and Transform Meetings

September, October, and November Meetings

- Review Major Elements of Zoning Code (Section 125.0)
 - Major discussion elements will be presented at NTTF No. 3 (September)
 - Major elements will be reviewed individually with relevant case study information pertaining to that element
 - NTTF will discuss each elements to identify the recommendation to preserve, strengthen, enhance, or transform element
- Elements will be further refined during the Recommendations Meetings



PSET Principles

Preserve, Strengthen, Enhance, and Transform Principles

Areas to
PRESERVE



Areas to
STRENGTHEN



Areas to
ENHANCE



Residential / Non-Residential

Areas to
TRANSFORM



Less change / lower intensity

More change / greater intensity

Preserve

Protect and Maintain

*Preserving what
matters most*

Strengthen

Strengthen existing
communities and
infrastructure

*Strengthening what
already works*

Enhance

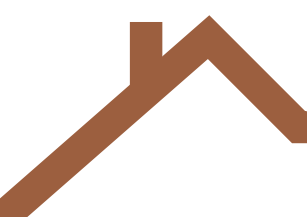
Adding into what is
already working to
be more robust

*Enhancing what
already exists*

Transform

Transforming areas
that are
underutilized or
poised for change

*Transforming what
needs to evolve*



PSET Discussion

Key Elements for Discussion during PSET Meetings

- **Creating another New Town District**
- **Defining Credited Open Space**
- **Reviewing Original Petitioner Role**
- **Incorporating Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) Regulations**
- **Managing Density Caps**
- **Evaluating New Town District Structure**
- **Redefining Apartment Land Use**
- **Expansion of uses and materials, and design guidance in New Town Zoning**
- **Simplification of Regulations & Processes**

Next Steps

We want to hear from YOU!

- Take the survey!
- Share the survey with your friends and neighbors!
- Share your comments about Section 125.00 with the project team

Results from the survey will be used during the PSET discussions and development of Recommendations

Join us at the Recommendations Public Meeting in Spring 2026!

Scan here:



Thank you

