



TRENDS REPORT: EVOLVING WITH PURPOSE

*Findings Informed by data
beginning in 2010*

Published September 2026

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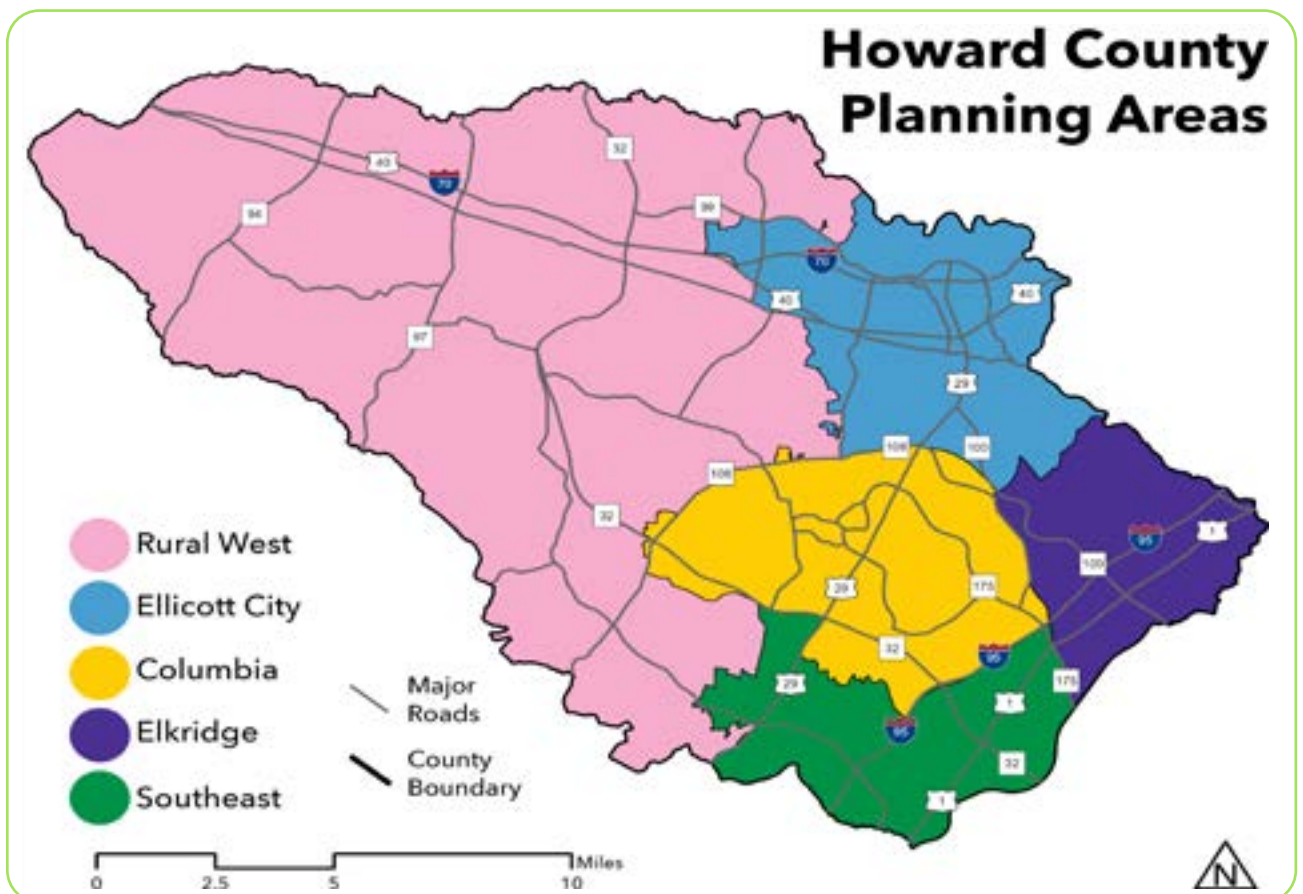
Introduction

Howard County is renowned as one of the most affluent, educated and desirable places to live in the United States. It has a top-ranked school system and high quality of life. Centrally located between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., Howard County is known for the planned community of Columbia, the historic towns of Ellicott City, Elkridge, and Savage; scenic parkland; and large swaths of preserved agricultural and environmental land.



Howard County is uniquely placed in Maryland, the only jurisdiction that does not share a border with another state or the Chesapeake Bay or the Atlantic Ocean. Its central location in Maryland, surrounded by other vibrant and environmentally rich counties, plays a role in its success, building upon a strong regional economy with a vast array of job opportunities for its growing population.

Each year Howard County's Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) publishes a Development Monitoring System Report (DMS). This annual report summarizes residential and non-residential development as required by the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). Other development-related trends and policies are also reported as required by State law.



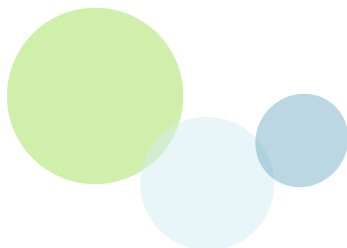
This current report is intended to supplement the County's annual reporting to show more broad historic trends in population and housing, as well as highlighting the unique characteristics and land use for each of the five Planning Areas (Columbia, ElkrIDGE, Ellicott City, Rural West, Southeast). These Planning Areas were initially defined in the 2000 General Plan and continue to be used for planning purposes. It is the hope that this report highlights the special place that is Howard County, its vibrant and diverse population, its rich array of resources, how it has changed over the last fifteen years, and where it stands today.

Aligning with the Maryland Department of Planning's new Sustainable Growth Policy and Planning Principles – Land, Transportation, Economy, Housing, Ecology, Place, Equity, and Resilience, this report is organized around four themes: 1) Place, 2) People, 3) Housing, and 4) Ecology.

Place provides the physical setting of the area, notable places of interest, and land use. Places of interest include public infrastructure such as schools, libraries, and roads, and also private amenities such as places of worship and grocery stores. Land use describes the amount and location of major land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, and open space. The purpose of this theme is to develop a broad overview of the areas described, showing their unique physical characteristics, features, and amenities that serve Howard County residents, visitors, and workers.



People provides an overview of estimated population growth and changes in population characteristics as reported in the 2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year datasets from the U.S. Census Bureau. Howard County has grown increasingly diverse over these three five-year time periods. Changes in race, age, education, and various other household characteristics are described for Howard County as a whole and for each of the five Planning Areas. The purpose of this theme is to develop a picture of the changing demographic characteristics in Howard County.

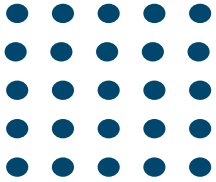


Housing takes a look at the housing conditions in the County, including the age and type of housing, homeownership rates, and home values. Whereas the DMS report, discussed earlier, provides a detailed review of *new* construction and plans for new homes, this theme provides an overview of the current housing stock and its associated characteristics beginning with the 2014 five-year ACS. Each area of the County has a unique mix of housing, accommodating new and longer-term residents alike.

Ecology provides an overview of the parks, open space and preserved land in Howard County, and each of the five Planning Areas. Howard County has a rich history of preserving and dedicating land for agricultural, environmental, and recreational purposes. Both active and passive county and state parkland is described as well as open space owned and maintained by homeowner associations and other entities. Agricultural, environmental, and preservation easements are also included in this theme.

This report should serve as a useful resource for residents, workers, businesses and other stakeholders to gain further understanding of Howard County, its diverse population and housing characteristics, land use, and unique places of interest.





CHAPTER 1

HOWARD

COUNTY

PLACE

Howard County is a welcoming and inclusive community that residents are proud to call home. People are drawn here by a top-tier school system, thriving neighborhoods, an abundance of open space, innovative and prosperous businesses, and quality recreational, cultural, and housing opportunities accessible to all.



Howard County offers “a little of everything” from the old to the new—historic crossroad hamlets and rural landscapes, working farms and natural open space, thriving suburbs and walkable neighborhoods, community-serving village centers, and a growing urban downtown. The eclectic mix of environments offers access to shopping, restaurants, and a wide range of activities. In less than thirty minutes, residents can pick produce in an orchard, drive through rolling pastoral hills, visit local small businesses on a quaint, historic main street, view a concert in a large outdoor amphitheater, enjoy a world-class library, or visit a well-maintained public park.

Howard County’s distinct character comes from its prime location in the heart of Maryland. Just 18 miles from Baltimore and 27 miles from Washington, D.C., the County sits at the center of one of the nation’s most dynamic regions—offering residents access to a wide range of jobs, cultural experiences, recreation, and community life.

Although Howard County covers only about 251 square miles—making it the second smallest of Maryland’s 23 counties—it is one of the state’s most populous. With an estimated 336,000 residents, Howard County ranks 6th in Maryland by population. The five jurisdictions with larger populations—Montgomery, Prince George’s, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore City—are all neighboring central Maryland communities.

Together with Frederick and Carroll Counties, central Maryland is home to roughly 4.9 million people, representing 78% of Maryland’s total population of 6.3 million. Howard County alone accounts for 5.34% of the state’s residents, highlighting its significant role within the region.





HOWARD COUNTY

Land Use Characteristics	Value
Total area (acres)	162,035
Key environmental indicators	
Parkland (acres)	31,440
Tree canopy cover (percent)	48.3
Non-Residential Development	
Industrial use (square feet)	45,234,964
Office use (square feet)	24,337,838
Other use (square feet)	22,005,404
Retail/Service use (square feet)	22,684,407
Total (square feet)	114,262,613
Residential use (dwelling units)	127,493
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database, Chesapeake Bay Trust Land Cover 2024, Maryland Department of Assessments	



Howard County sits within Maryland's Piedmont Plateau, a landscape defined by rolling hills and tree-lined valleys. The county is bordered by three major waterways—the Patapsco River to the north and northeast, the Patuxent River to the southwest, and Deep Run along the southeast edge—along with the CSX rail line. Much of the Patapsco and Patuxent River corridors is publicly accessible parkland, offering scenic natural spaces right at the county's borders.

The Patuxent River boundary also includes the Triadelphia and Rocky Gorge reservoirs, key drinking-water sources for residents in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties as well as a portion of southern Howard County.

HOWARD COUNTY

Places of Interest	Number
50+ Center	9
Fire Station	14
Grocery	42
Hospital	1
Library	6
Police Station	6
Public School - Elementary	42
Public School - Middle	20
Public School - High	13
Worship	195
Source: Howard County DPZ	



Howard County is home to two major watersheds, the Patapsco and the Patuxent. The majority of the County is in the Patuxent watershed, draining nearly 75% of the County's land area; whereas the Patapsco drains nearly 25%. The county contains nearly 1,000 miles of rivers and streams and several manmade lakes, including Centennial Lake and Lake Kittamaquindi, both integral parts of the county's stormwater management network as they capture water runoff and settle out pollutants before relasing water into the watersheds. Non-residential land uses remain a major part of the county's profile, totaling more than 114 million square feet. Industrial uses represent the largest share, complemented by extensive public infrastructure—75 public schools, nearly 200 places of worship, numerous libraries and 50+ centers, fire and police stations, and a centrally located hospital.



With less than two percent of its land still undeveloped, Howard County's future growth will rely heavily on infill and redevelopment. The county's latest General Plan, HoCo By Design (adopted in fall 2023), charts this path forward with policies that support growth and conservation; encouraging the production of diverse housing types, such as accessory dwelling units and duplexes, and promoting major redevelopment opportunities; while emphasizing the importance of agricultural and environmental land preservation. The recently adopted Gateway Master Plan—the county's largest redevelopment opportunity—lays the foundation for transformative growth.

HOWARD COUNTY

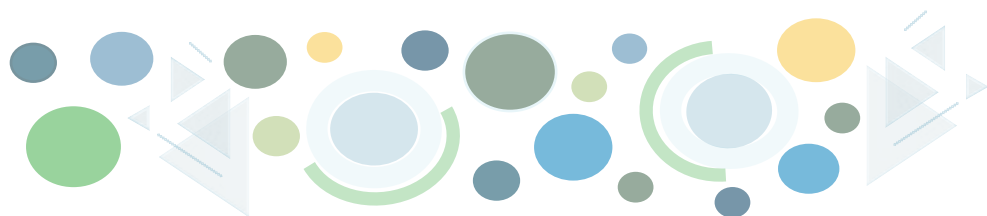
Land Use Category	Percent of Land Area
Age-Restricted Residential	0.6%
Apartment	1.1%
Commercial	3.0%
Government & Institutional	4.7%
Industrial	2.5%
Mixed-Use	0.03%
Mobile Home	0.1%
Other Transportation & Utilities	0.9%
Parks & Open Space	19.4%
Roadway & Parking	8.5%
Single-Family Attached	1.0%
Single-Family Detached	56.6%
Undeveloped Commercial	0.2%
Undeveloped Government & Institutional	0.03%
Undeveloped Industrial	0.2%
Undeveloped Residential	1.1%
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database	100.0%



ONE VISION

Our collective vision is to accommodate future growth in a manner that retains and improves upon the unique and diverse community character of Howard County.

We will continue to support, promote, and act toward creating a community grounded in civility, sustainable development patterns, environmental stewardship, and well-maintained supporting infrastructure.



People

According to the 2014 and 2024 five-year ACS estimates, Howard County's population expanded from about 299,000 to more than 336,000—an increase of roughly 12.4%. Much of this growth reflects rising numbers of residents identifying as Asian, Black, Hispanic, or Other Races, along with greater use of languages other than English at home.

Economically, the county's nominal average household income grew by 39% from \$132,666 to \$184,243 between the two five-year time periods, outpacing the inflation rate of 31%. While the number of households in the lower three income brackets decreased, the number of households in the two highest income groups making more than \$150,000 increased between the two time periods. In particular, the number of households with household incomes greater than \$200,000 per year increased substantially by 114%. Please note, the incomes collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Educational attainment has also risen, with 34% of residents holding graduate and professional degrees. The county's workforce has undergone significant changes, marked by a shift toward remote work from 6% to 26% and a corresponding decrease in vehicle commuting as principal mode of transportation to work from 88% to 70%.

Howard County is also aging. While only about 15% of the county's total population was 65 years or older during 2020-2024, this senior age group increased by 53%, more rapidly than any other age group over the age of four.

Together, these demographic, economic, and social shifts point to a county in motion: growing, diversifying, and adapting to new ways of living and working while also facing the realities of an aging population. These trends provide a valuable foundation for planning, ensuring the county is prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges of its changing community.



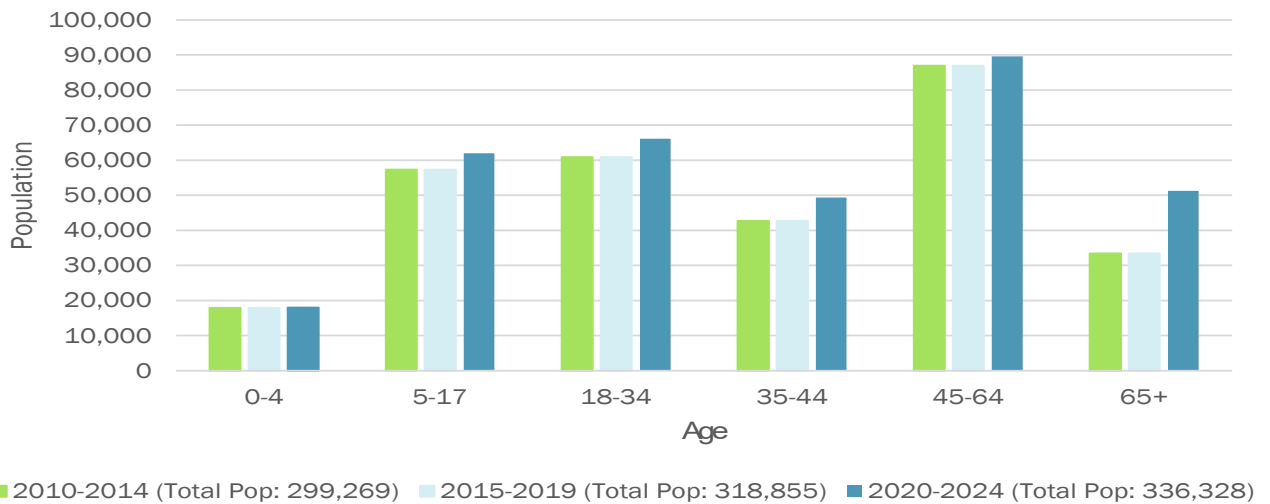
HOWARD COUNTY

Age	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	299,269	100%	318,855	100%	336,328	100%
0 to 4 years	17,917	6%	18,938	6%	17,958	5%
5 to 17 years	57,331	19%	59,009	19%	61,959	18%
18 to 34 years	60,895	20%	64,400	20%	66,164	20%
35 to 44 years	42,691	14%	44,836	14%	49,371	15%
45 to 64 years	86,985	29%	88,917	28%	89,601	27%
65 years and older	33,450	11%	42,755	13%	51,275	15%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Howard County Population Characteristics



Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding of selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

HOWARD COUNTY

Race and Hispanic Ethnicity	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	299,269	100%	318,855	100%	336,328	100%
White, non-Hispanic	170,896	57%	165,862	52%	154,383	46%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	52,792	18%	58,978	18%	66,160	20%
Asian, non-Hispanic	46,405	16%	57,531	18%	64,689	19%
Other races, non-Hispanic**	10,832	4%	14,472	5%	21,961	7%
Hispanic or Latino	18,344	6%	22,012	7%	29,135	9%

**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic. Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

HOWARD COUNTY

English Language Usage and Ability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 5 years and over	281,352	100%	299,917	100%	318,370	100%
Speak non-English language at home	64,314	23%	76,208	25%	90,056	28%
Speak English less than "very well"	21,824	8%	22,134	7%	28,091	9%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

HOWARD COUNTY

Educational Attainment	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 25 years and over	200,717	100%	215,300	100%	229,908	100%
No high school diploma	9,632	5%	9,716	5%	11,572	5%
High school diploma or some college	69,889	35%	70,886	33%	70,142	31%
Bachelor's degree only	61,974	31%	66,899	31%	69,723	30%
Graduate or professional degree	59,222	30%	67,799	31%	78,471	34%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



HOWARD COUNTY

Household Type	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Number of households	107,516	100%	114,170	100%	121,065	100%
Family households	79,606	74%	83,831	73%	87,962	73%
Families with children	42,390	39%	43,092	38%	43,721	36%
Single-parent families with children	9,306	9%	9,226	8%	9,831	8%
Nonfamily multi-person households	5,252	5%	5,840	5%	6,945	6%
Nonfamily single-person households	22,658	21%	24,499	21%	26,158	22%
Average household size	2.78	N/A	2.79	N/A	2.78	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

HOWARD COUNTY

Household Income	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total number of households	107,516	100%	114,170	100%	121,065	100%
Less than \$50,000	19,823	18%	18,913	17%	16,592	14%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	28,185	26%	26,721	23%	21,777	18%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	24,117	22%	23,695	21%	22,241	18%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	15,713	15%	17,189	15%	18,386	15%
\$200,000 or more	19,678	18%	27,652	24%	42,069	35%
Average household income	\$132,666	N/A	\$150,203	N/A	\$184,243	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

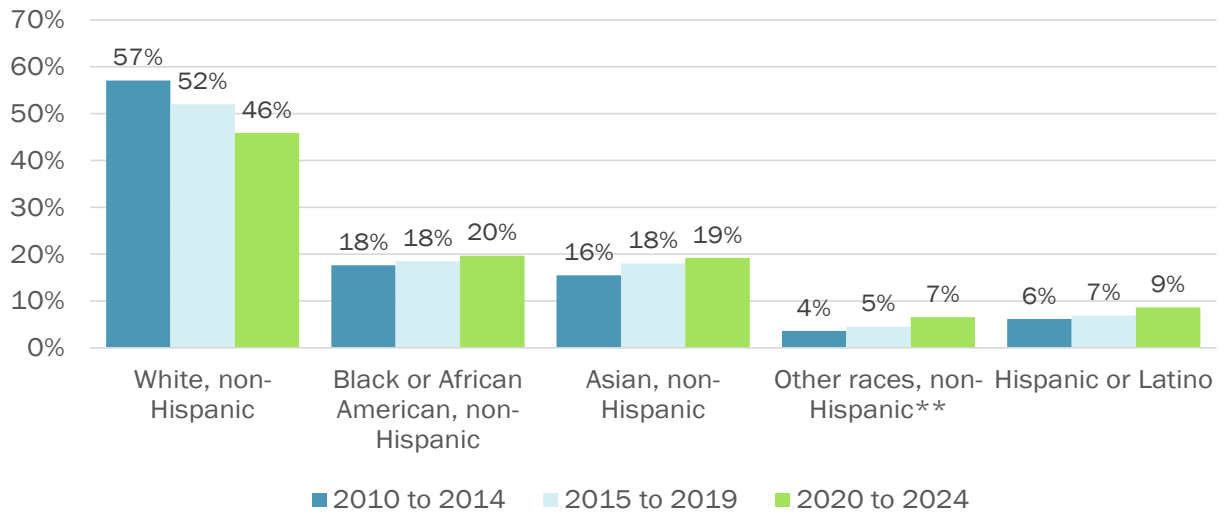
HOWARD COUNTY

Commuting Mode and Household Vehicle Availability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Workers ages 16 years and over	158,989	100%	169,339	100%	175,433	100%
Commuted by driving	140,585	88%	148,996	88%	123,299	70%
Car-free commute	9,217	6%	9,784	6%	6,560	4%
Worked from home	9,187	6%	10,559	6%	45,574	26%
Households with no vehicles	3,697	3%	4,335	4%	4,391	4%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

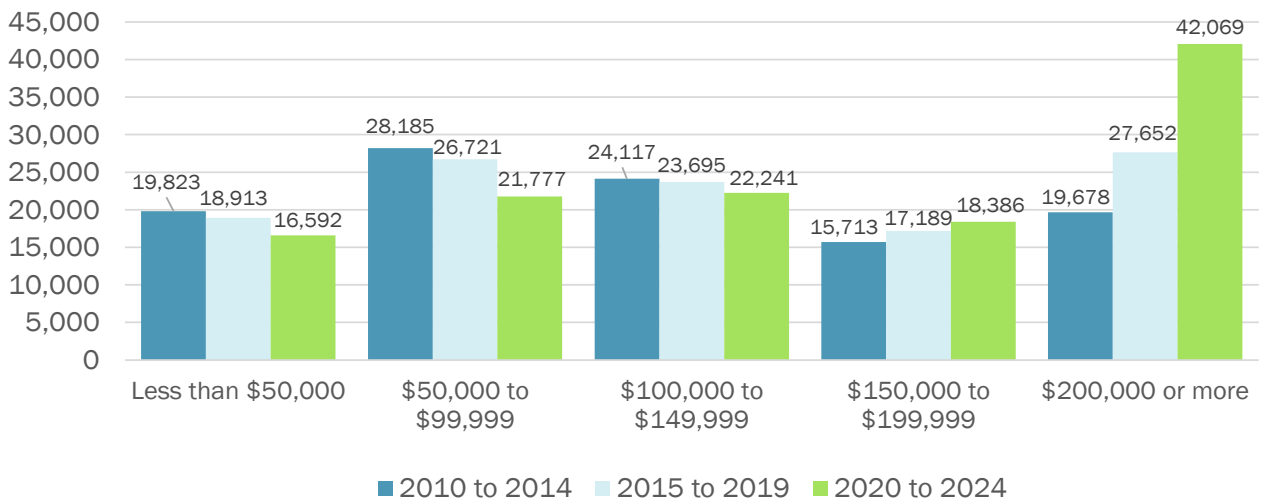
Howard County, Population by Race and Ethnicity



**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic. Percentages may not equal totals due to rounding. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Howard County, Number of Households By Income



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



Housing

Howard County's landscape is shaped by a blend of residential neighborhoods and permanently preserved land. About 40% of the county is devoted to housing, while roughly 39% is protected as parks, open space, or agricultural and environmental land. Most preserved land is located in the western portion of the county, while most residential development is concentrated in the east.



The Planned Service Area (PSA) boundary marks the transition between these two distinct areas. West of the PSA, homes rely on wells and septic systems, conditions that generally limit higher-density development. East of the line, public water and sewer service support a more traditional suburban pattern.

Much of the county's residential land has been built at low density. East of the PSA, the housing mix includes about 40% low-density single-family detached homes, 22% medium-density attached homes such as townhouses, and 22% higher-density multi-family housing. The Rural West accounts for another 12% of the county's low-density housing. About 4% of all homes are age-restricted for residents 55 and older.

Low-density residential land offers limited choices for living in Howard County. According to the Land Use Assessment prepared for HoCo By Design, the lowest densities are in the Rural West, approximately one home per three acres, while the eastern part of the county averages 2.35 homes per acre (a little more than one home per half acre). The distribution of low-density residential development, with large blocks and limited street connections, generally favors travel by automobile to meet residents' daily needs.



Housing

As of 2025, Howard County has about 127,500 housing units with an average age of 36 years. Most of the county's homes were built between 1970 and 1999, a period that produced nearly 60% of today's housing stock. The 1980s were the peak building decade, averaging roughly 3,000 new homes per year. In response to this rapid growth, the County adopted its 1990 General Plan and later the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) to pace development and ensure schools, roads, public safety, parks, and other infrastructure kept up with demand. These policies reduced new construction to about 2,000 homes per year in the 1990s and around 1,500 after 2000. Today, with very limited land remaining, annual production has slowed to under 1,000 units.

Recognizing this constraint, the County's latest General Plan, HoCo By Design, expands opportunities for redevelopment and infill housing. Recent updates to subdivision, land development, and zoning regulations now allow accessory dwelling units and higher-density cluster development, with comprehensive zoning anticipated in the near future to support additional mixed-use and higher-density growth in key activity centers.

When comparing the 2010 to 2014 five-year ACS to the 2020 to 2024 five-year ACS estimates, housing and renting changes varied throughout the County. Though the number of households grew, the homeownership rate dipped slightly from 73% to 71%. The percentage of homeowner cost-burdened households also decreased by 17% during the same time. These changes are likely to be due to various factors such as limited availability of lower to moderately priced housing. While the 21% increase in nominal average homeowner monthly housing costs for homes with mortgages from \$2,690 in 2010-2014 to \$3,258 in 2020-2024 did not outpace the 31% rate of inflation for previous and current homeowners, the County's average homeowner monthly costs with mortgage were still higher than Maryland's average of \$2,597 during 2020-2024. According to the Census, many counties throughout the country experienced lower mortgage homeowner monthly costs (after adjusting for inflation) because of low interest rates throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



Housing

In contrast, potential homebuyers in Howard County have faced pricier homes with nominal average housing values for homeowners increasing by 45% from \$452,330 during 2010-2014 to \$656,867 during 2020-2024, outpacing the 31% inflation rate. In addition, Howard County's average housing value for homeowners was 27% higher than the Maryland State average of \$500,271 during 2020-2024.

The number of renter households in Howard County grew by 20%. Nominal average monthly rental costs have increased by 37% from \$1,577 in 2010-2014 to \$2,155 in 2020-2024, outpacing the inflation rate of 31%. Thus, rent affordability remains a challenge: according to the 2020 to 2024 five year ACS, nearly half of all renter households (48%) were considered rent burdened, returning to levels last seen in 2010-2014.

While Single-Family Detached housing remains the core of the inventory (50% of all homes), there has been a historical shift toward higher-density options (Single-Family Attached and Multi-family) starting in the 1970s and 1980s, a trend that continues to influence inventory additions.

Please note, the housing costs, home values, and renting costs collected during the 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.

In conclusion, Howard County continues to experience an increase in population, demonstrating its desirability as a place to live. It has experienced slight decreases in homeownership rates and increases in the percentage of renter households. With the average cost of buying a home increasing at a rate greater than inflation, homeownership is unattainable for many due to continued affordability challenges.

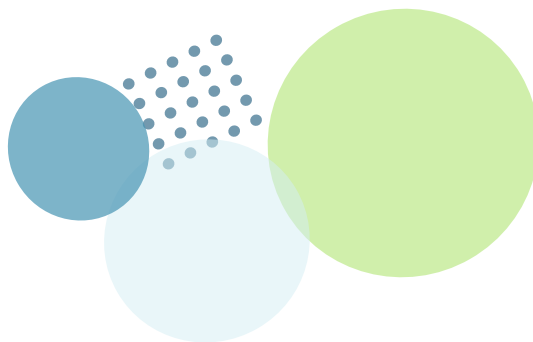


HOWARD COUNTY

Year Built	Total Units	%	Single-Family Detached	%	Single-Family Attached	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%
Before 1960	5,353	4%	5,159	8%	53	0%	72	0%	69	5%
1960 to 1969	7,455	6%	5,907	9%	560	2%	988	3%	0	0%
1970 to 1979	23,769	19%	11,209	18%	5,317	18%	7,063	21%	180	14%
1980 to 1989	29,444	23%	13,004	21%	7,209	25%	9,004	27%	227	18%
1990 to 1999	21,860	17%	12,787	20%	5,326	18%	3,744	11%	3	0%
2000 to 2009	15,747	12%	7,982	13%	3,993	14%	3,771	11%	1	0%
2010 to 2019	16,398	13%	5,186	8%	4,833	17%	6,374	19%	5	0%
2020 or Later	4,902	4%	1,652	3%	1,308	4%	1,942	6%	0	0%
Unknown Year	2,565	2%	534	1%	648	2%	580	2%	803	62%
Total	127,493	100%	63,420	100%	29,247	100%	33,538	100%	1,288	100%
Average Age*	36 Years		49.7%		22.9%		26.3%			

Percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding. *Excludes housing units for which the year built is unknown.

Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)



HOWARD COUNTY

Homeownership and Housing Affordability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Homeowner households	78,764	73%	83,520	73%	86,533	71%
Homeowner cost-burdened households	19,094	24%	17,588	21%	15,813	18%
Average homeowner monthly costs (with mortgage)	\$2,690	N/A	\$2,808	N/A	\$3,258	N/A
Average housing value (for homeowners)	\$452,330	N/A	\$488,957	N/A	\$656,867	N/A
Renter households	28,752	27%	30,650	27%	34,532	29%
Rent-burdened households	13,264	48%	12,734	43%	15,981	48%
Average gross rent	\$1,577	N/A	\$1,721	N/A	\$2,155	N/A

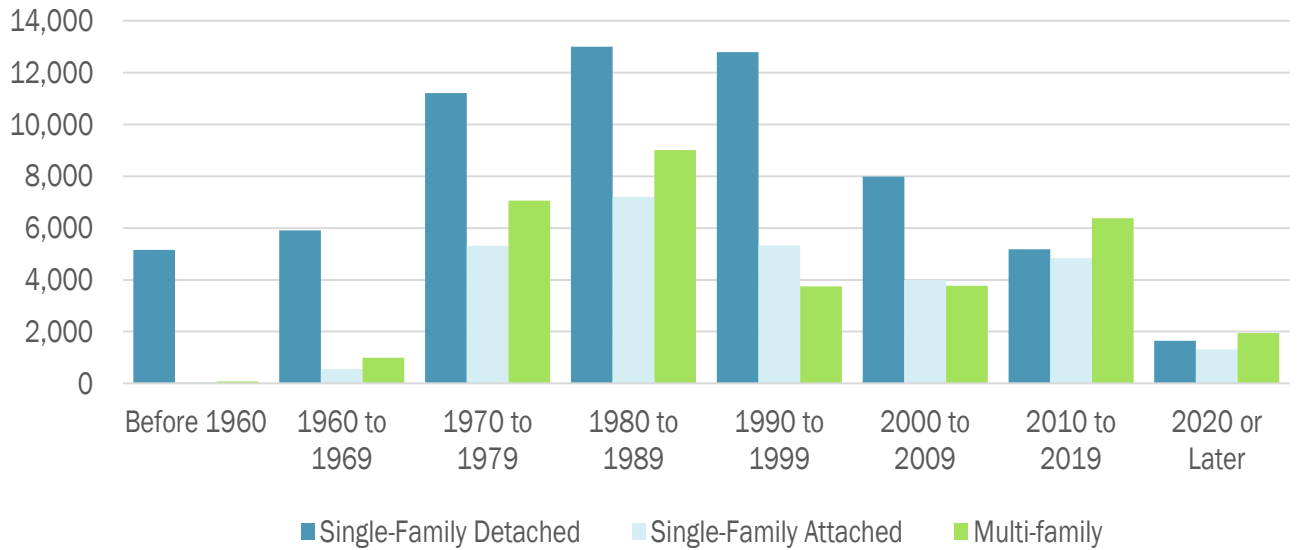
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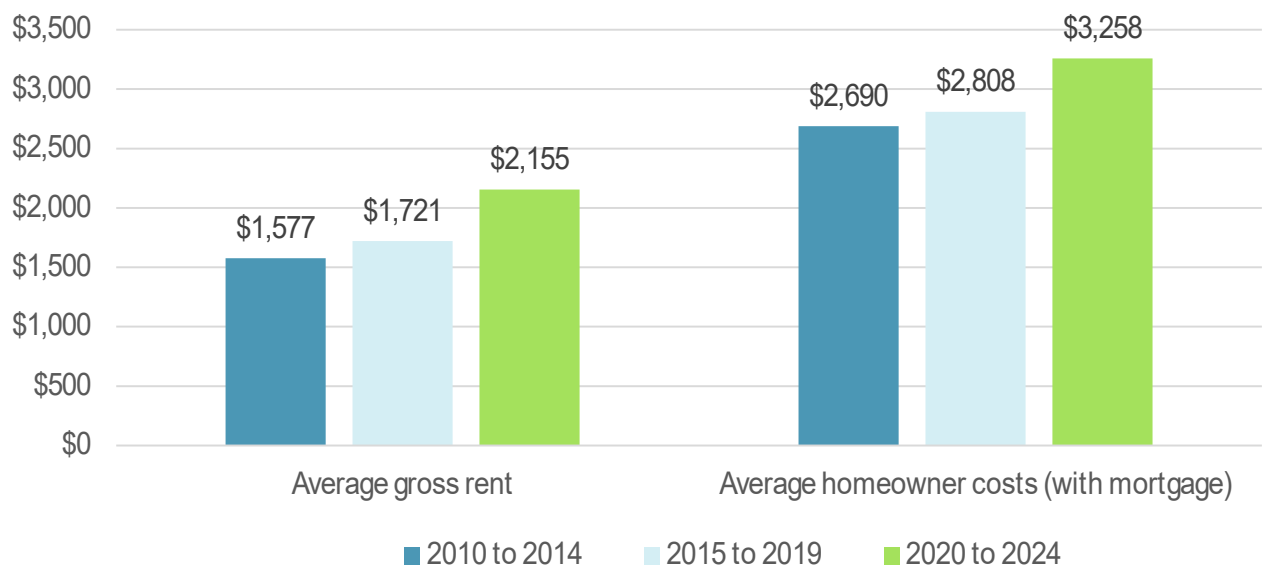
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Howard County, Number of Housing Units by Year Built and Type



Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)

Howard County, Average Monthly Renter and Homeowner Costs



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



Ecology

Howard County's land use strategy reflects a deliberate balance between growth and preservation, supported by an extensive and well-protected network of natural lands. More than 40% of the county, about 65,000 acres, is permanently safeguarded through parks, open space, and agricultural or environmental easements, including many of the county's most valuable ecological and farmland areas. The State agriculture preservation program is called the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and the local farmland program in Howard County is called Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP). Both have been successful in preserving many acres of land in the Rural West where over 23,000 acres of farmland have been protected.

These preservation efforts play a vital role in protecting natural resources and wildlife habitats, supporting local agriculture, and ensuring residents have lasting access to outdoor recreation. The county's Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) knits together major parks and open spaces through stream valleys and natural corridors, reducing habitat fragmentation. Today, more than 84% of this network is protected from future development.

The Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) helps support native plant and animal species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources, and contribute to the health and quality of life of Howard County's communities.

Across the county's five Planning Areas, diverse natural and agricultural resources are being preserved for future generations—reflecting Howard County's long-standing commitment to conservation and thoughtful growth.

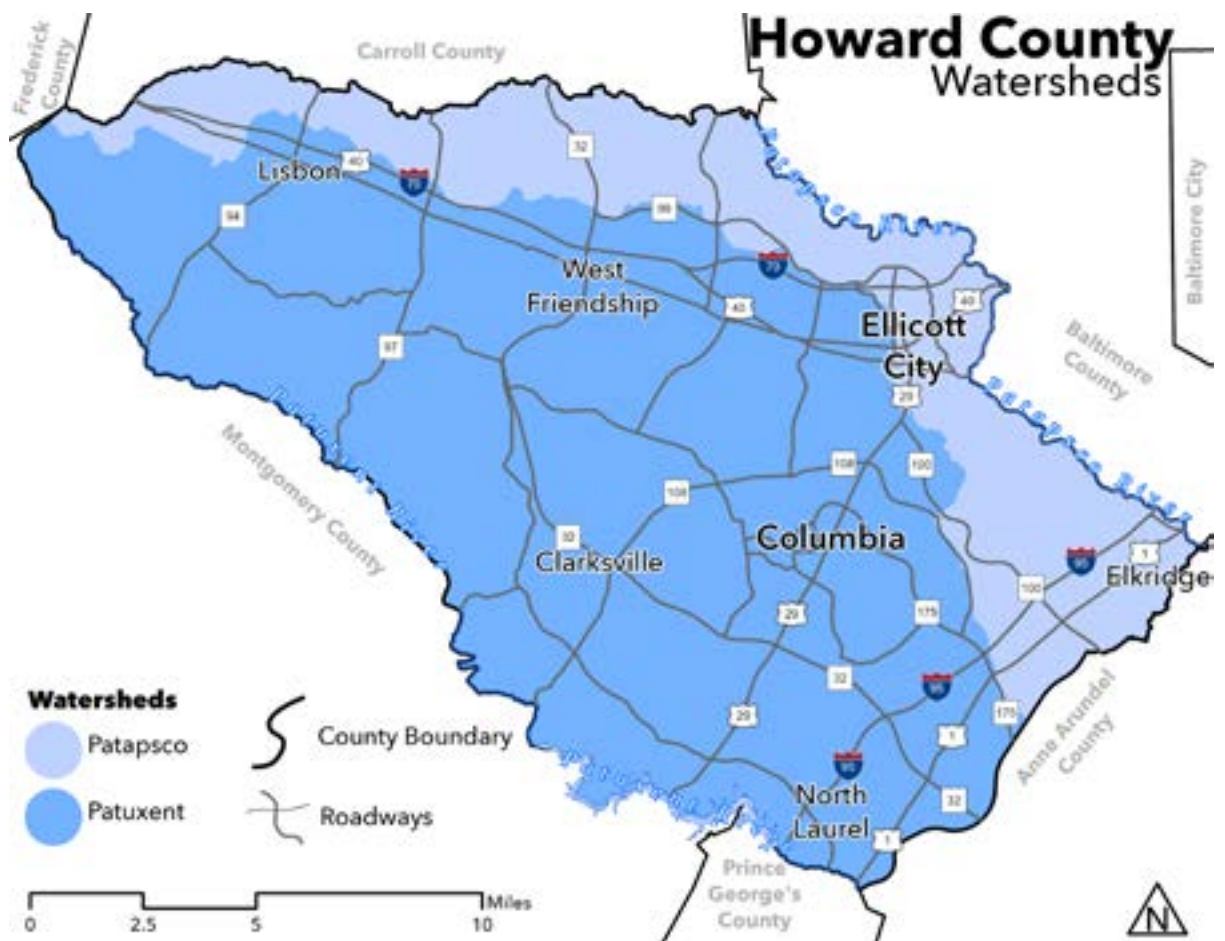


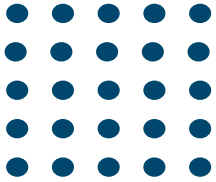
HOWARD COUNTY

Green Infrastructure Network (GIN)	Acres	%
Hubs	22,829	
% of County with Hubs		14%
Corridors (500')	5,916	
% of County with Corridors		4%
Total GIN	28,744	18%
Preservation Easements in GIN	5,567	
% of GIN Preserved		19%
Parks & OS in GIN	18,718	
% of GIN Parks & OS		65%
Total GIN Protected	24,285	84%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Green Infrastructure Network, Land Use		

HOWARD COUNTY

Protected Lands	Acres	% of Area
Preservation Easements		
Environmental Easement	11,221	6.9%
Agricultural Easement, Dedicated	3,151	1.9%
Agricultural Easement, Purchased, ALPP/MALPF	20,263	12.5%
Neighborhood Preservation Easement	80	0.0%
Parks & Open Space		
County Parks & Open Space	10,265	6.3%
State Parks	9,241	5.7%
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)	3,202	2.0%
Columbia & HOA Open Space	7,525	4.6%
Total Protected	64,948	40.1%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Preservation Easements, & Land Use Database. *Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.		





CHAPTER 2

COLUMBIA

PLACE

Columbia is located in the heart of Howard County. Its borders are broadly defined by MD-108 on the west and north, US-95 on the east, and MD-32 on the South. This Planning Area comprises Downtown Columbia and the other nine Columbia villages. Downtown Columbia is the mixed-use urban center of Howard County. With a master plan guiding its redevelopment, it continues to grow as a vibrant, inclusive community with high-end and affordable apartments, pedestrian pathways and numerous amenities, like Merriweather Post Pavillion, a new library, and an arts and cultural center, attracting a diverse demographic.

Columbia also includes pockets of other residential and commercial zones interspersed within and around its edges. It is the largest of the four Planning Areas in eastern Howard County containing close to 21,000 acres. It also has the most housing of all Planning Areas with more than 43,000 dwelling units, and includes a significant array of industrial, office and retail establishments. Its large number of worship centers, 53 in total, comprise a large diversity of faiths and denominations.

COLUMBIA	
Places of Interest	Number
50+ Center	4
Fire Station	4
Grocery Store	16
Hospital	1
Library	2
Police Station	1
Public School - Elementary	16
Public School - Middle	5
Public School - High	8
Worship	53
Source: Howard County DPZ	

Columbia's New Town zoning was established by James Rouse to guide development within the planned community. Many of the defining characteristics of this zoning framework remain in place today, contributing to Columbia's generous open spaces, extensive pathways, and diverse range of housing options.



COLUMBIA

Land Use Characteristics	Value
Total area (acres)	20,860
Key environmental indicators	
Parkland (acres)	6,233
Tree canopy cover (percent)	52.7
Non-Residential Development	
Industrial use (square feet)	11,717,182
Office use (square feet)	14,479,312
Other use (square feet)	8,188,562
Retail/Service use (square feet)	11,956,003
Total (square feet)	46,341,059
Residential use (dwelling units)	43,387
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database, Chesapeake Bay	
Trust Land Cover 2024, Maryland Department of Assessments	

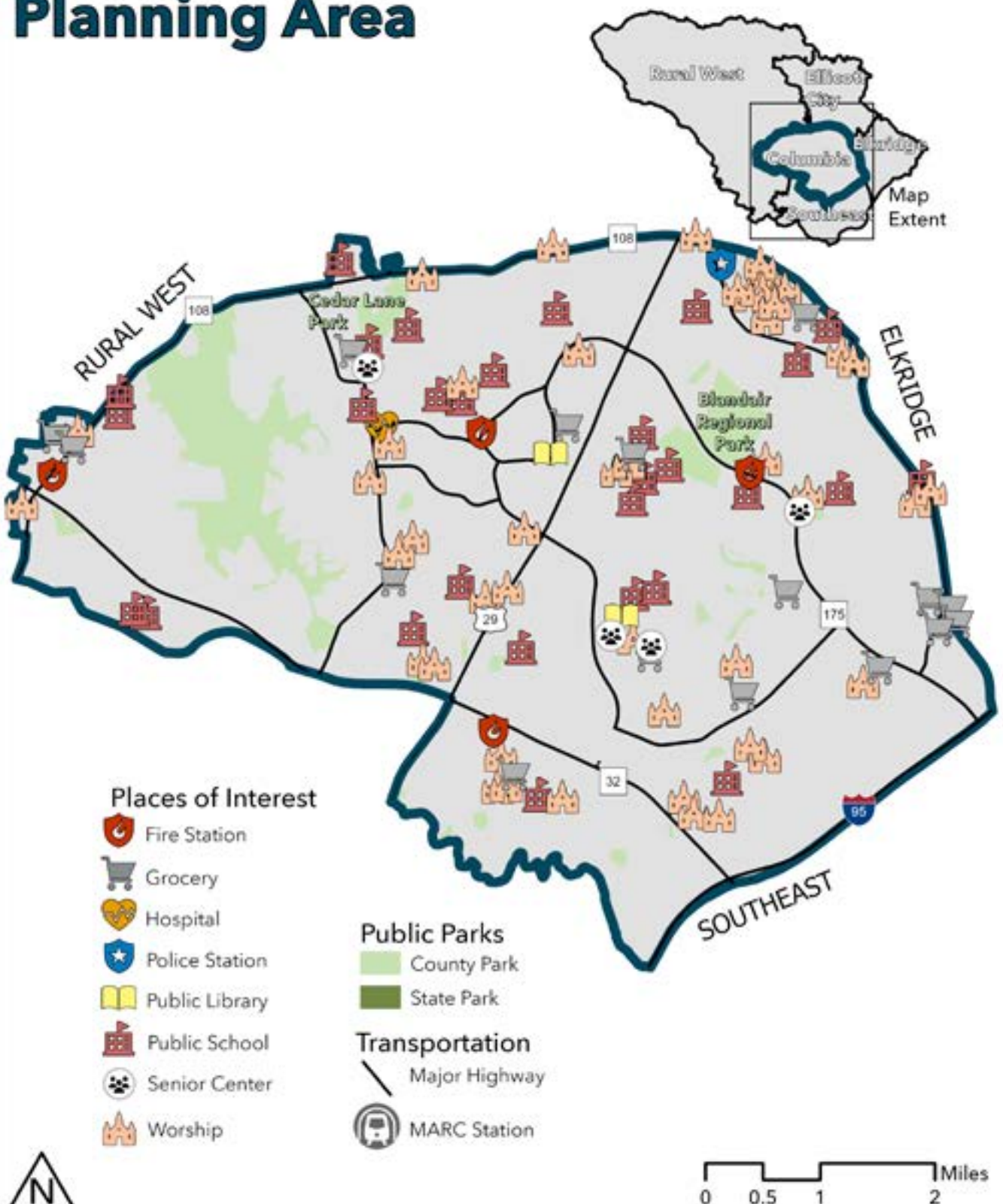
COLUMBIA

Land Use Category	Percent of Land Area
Age-Restricted Residential	0.7%
Apartment	3.8%
Commercial	9.7%
Government & Institutional	7.5%
Industrial	1.9%
Mixed-Use	0.1%
Other Transportation & Utilities	0.9%
Parks & Open Space	29.9%
Roadway & Parking	16.1%
Single-Family Attached	2.7%
Single-Family Detached	25.2%
Vacant, Undeveloped Land	1.4%
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database	



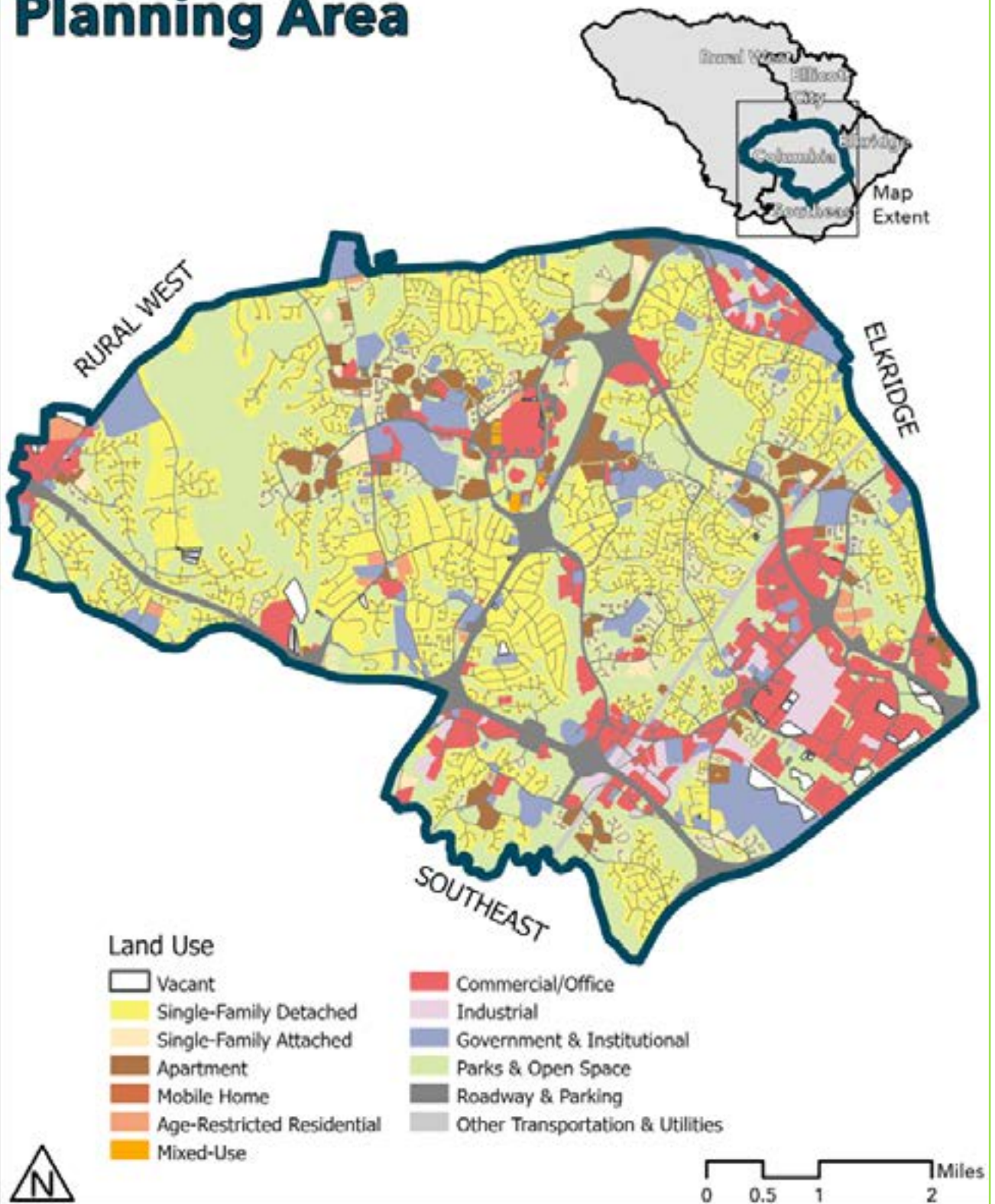
Columbia Planning Area

Places of Interest



Columbia Planning Area

Land Use



PEOPLE

With close to 105,000 residents, as indicated in the 2020 to 2024 five-year ACS estimates, Columbia is the most populous Planning Area in Howard County. About one of every three Howard County residents live in Columbia. While the estimated population total of Columbia did not experience a statistically significant change between 2010-2014 and 2020-2024, the composition of the population has changed profoundly. Key trends include a rapidly aging population and a diversifying racial and ethnic composition.

Most notably, the population of residents aged 65 and older grew from around 12% to 17% of the estimated total population, while the White, non-Hispanic population decreased from 50% to 42% and the Black, Hispanic, and Other Race groups increased. With the number of households earning \$200,000 or more doubling, Columbia's nominal average household income increased by 33% from \$199,150 to \$158,521 between the two reporting periods, slightly outpacing the 31% inflation rate. Please note, the household incomes collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Furthermore, the workforce underwent a structural transformation, with the percentage of residents working from home increasing from 5% to 25% between the two five-year periods. Like Howard County as a whole, Columbia residents are highly educated with more than a third of its residents 25 years and older having a graduate or professional degree in 2020-2024.



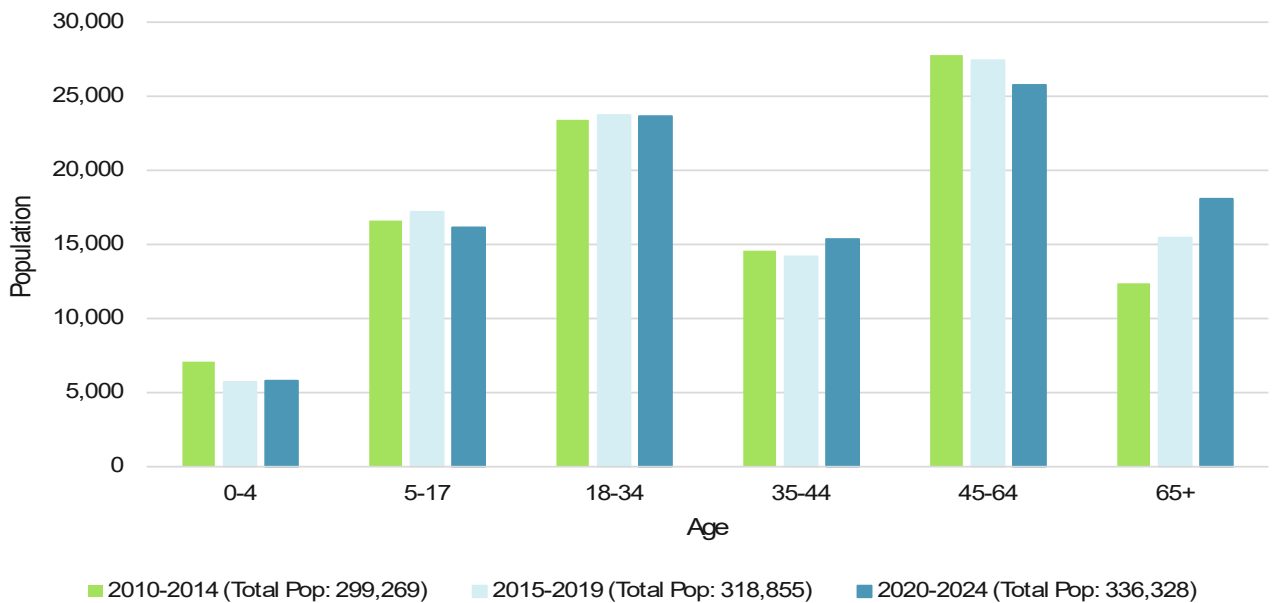
COLUMBIA

Age	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	101,808	100%	103,732	100%	104,805	100%
0 to 4 years	7,081	7%	5,729	6%	5,806	6%
5 to 17 years	16,602	16%	17,202	17%	16,147	15%
18 to 34 years	23,403	23%	23,720	23%	23,649	23%
35 to 44 years	14,581	14%	14,190	14%	15,356	15%
45 to 64 years	27,767	27%	27,432	26%	25,763	25%
65 years and older	12,374	12%	15,459	15%	18,084	17%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding of selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Columbia Population Characteristics



Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed tables.

COLUMBIA

Race and Hispanic Ethnicity	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	101,808	100%	103,732	100%	104,805	100%
White, non-Hispanic	51,107	50%	48,387	47%	44,260	42%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	25,698	25%	27,090	26%	29,382	28%
Asian, non-Hispanic	12,261	12%	13,099	13%	12,532	12%
Other races, non-Hispanic**	4,142	4%	5,417	5%	8,022	8%
Hispanic or Latino	8,600	8%	9,739	9%	10,609	10%

**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

COLUMBIA

English Language Usage and Ability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 5 years and over	94,727	100%	98,003	100%	98,999	100%
Speak non-English language at home	21,741	23%	22,343	23%	25,535	26%
Speak English less than "very well"	7,461	8%	6,983	7%	8,721	9%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

COLUMBIA

Educational Attainment	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 25 years and over	70,201	100%	71,828	100%	73,772	100%
No high school diploma	3,568	5%	3,295	5%	3,211	4%
High school diploma or some college	22,484	32%	23,556	33%	23,710	32%
Bachelor's degree only	22,065	31%	22,714	32%	21,219	29%
Graduate or professional degree	22,084	31%	22,263	31%	25,632	35%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

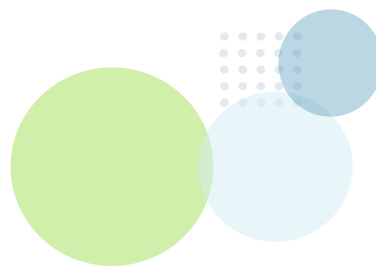
COLUMBIA

Household Type	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Number of households	39,858	100%	40,300	100%	41,385	100%
Family households	26,660	67%	26,794	66%	27,528	67%
Families with children	13,125	33%	12,669	31%	12,241	30%
Single-parent families with children	3,756	9%	3,887	10%	4,073	10%
Nonfamily multi-person households	2,284	6%	2,909	7%	2,632	6%
Nonfamily single-person households	10,914	27%	10,597	26%	11,225	27%
Average household size	2.55	N/A	2.57	N/A	2.53	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



COLUMBIA

Household Income	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total number of households	39,858	100%	40,300	100%	41,385	100%
Less than \$50,000	8,606	22%	7,457	19%	6,519	16%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	11,236	28%	10,718	27%	8,064	19%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9,170	23%	9,339	23%	9,047	22%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5,364	13%	5,810	14%	6,518	16%
\$200,000 or more	5,482	14%	6,976	17%	11,237	27%
Average household income	\$119,150	N/A	\$128,639	N/A	\$158,521	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

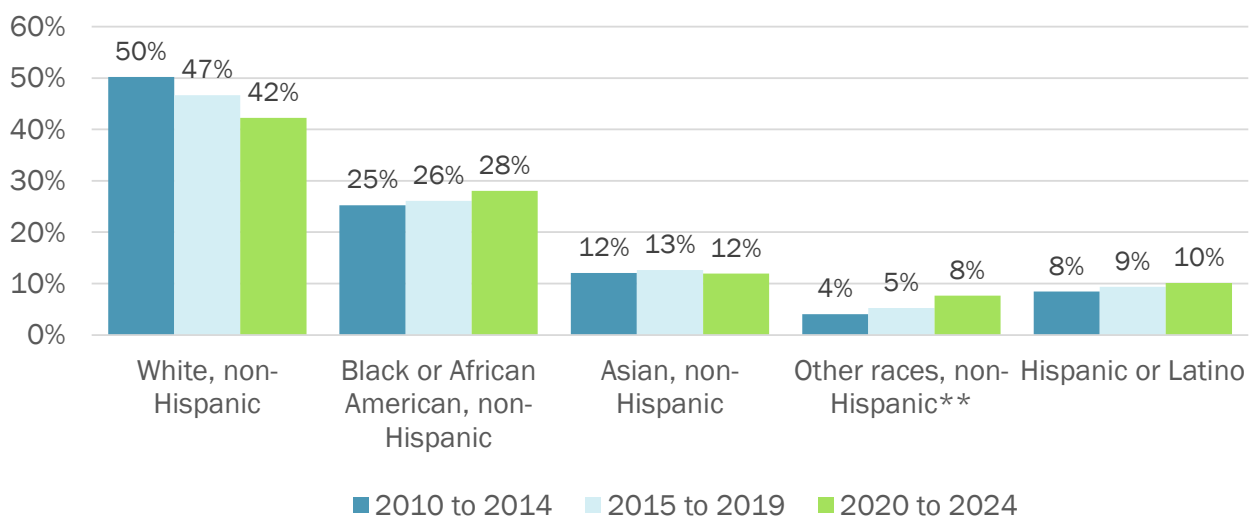
COLUMBIA

Commuting Mode and Household Vehicle Availability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Workers ages 16 years and over	55,648	100%	56,400	100%	56,146	100%
Commuted by driving	49,312	89%	48,995	87%	39,665	71%
Car-free commute	3,784	7%	4,489	8%	2,573	5%
Worked from home	2,552	5%	2,916	5%	13,908	25%
Households with no vehicles	1,798	5%	2,308	6%	2,396	6%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Columbia, Population by Race and Ethnicity



**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

HOUSING

Columbia has a vast diversity of housing, with ample amounts of both single-family and multi-family homes. Development began in earnest in the 1960s with James Rouse's vision of this New Town, the first of its kind. Multifamily housing and townhomes were intentionally concentrated near village centers, while single-family detached homes were placed farther out, creating distinct yet interconnected neighborhoods. An extensive network of pedestrian and bicycle paths links these areas to the village centers, reducing reliance on vehicle travel for shorter distances. The peak of residential growth in Columbia occurred during the decade from 1970 to 1979. During this period, 14,502 total units were constructed, accounting for a third of the entire housing stock. Most housing was built in the decades before 2000, with generally even percentages of housing types constructed over time. The average age of a home in Columbia is now 40 years old.



Columbia had the highest rental rate in the County at around 36% according to the 2020-2024 five-year ACS estimates, with about 45% of households being rent-burdened. The nominal average monthly rent increased by 32% to \$1,997 in 2020-2024, close to the 31% inflation rate. The nominal average housing value of owner-occupied households in Columbia increased by 49% from \$344,589 to \$512,395 across the two reporting periods, surpassing the 31% rate of inflation.

Though the nominal percent increase of 24% in average homeowner monthly costs with mortgage to \$2,717 in Columbia was lower than the 31% inflation rate, Columbia's average homeowner monthly costs during 2020-2024 were still \$120 higher than Maryland's State average. Please note, the housing costs, home values, and renting costs collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.



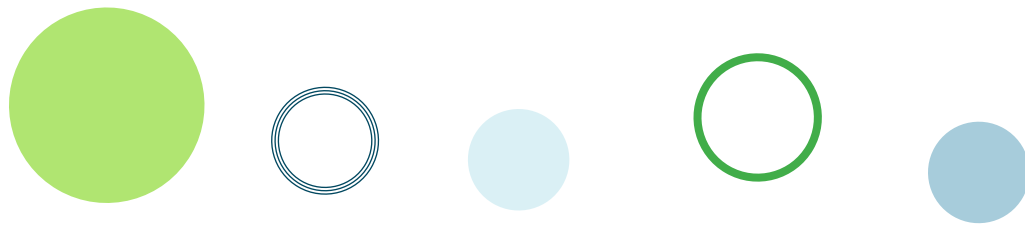
COLUMBIA

Year Built	Total Units	%	Single-Family Detached	%	Single-Family Attached	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%
Before 1960	434	1%	434	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
1960 to 1969	2,688	6%	1,680	10%	464	4%	544	3%	0	0%
1970 to 1979	14,502	33%	6,399	39%	3,982	35%	4,121	26%	0	0%
1980 to 1989	12,057	28%	3,492	21%	3,454	31%	5,111	32%	0	0%
1990 to 1999	6,816	16%	2,866	18%	2,030	18%	1,920	12%	0	0%
2000 to 2009	3,016	7%	904	6%	1,007	9%	1,105	7%	0	0%
2010 to 2019	2,270	5%	273	2%	201	2%	1,796	11%	0	0%
2020 or Later	1,245	3%	214	1%	129	1%	902	6%	0	0%
Unknown Year	359	1%	36	0%	4	0%	319	2%	0	0%
Total	43,387	100%	16,298	100%	11,271	100%	15,818	100%	0	0%

Average Age* 40 years

Percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding. *Excludes housing units for which the year built is unknown.

Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)



COLUMBIA

Homeownership and Housing Affordability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Homeowner households	26,449	66%	26,384	65%	26,665	64%
Average homeowner monthly costs (with mortgage)	\$2,195	N/A	\$2,253	N/A	\$2,717	N/A
Average housing value (for homeowners)	\$344,589	N/A	\$364,961	N/A	\$512,395	N/A
Renter households	13,409	34%	13,916	35%	14,720	36%
Rent-burdened households	6,176	48%	5,781	43%	6,484	45%
Average gross rent	\$1,512	N/A	\$1,651	N/A	\$1,997	N/A

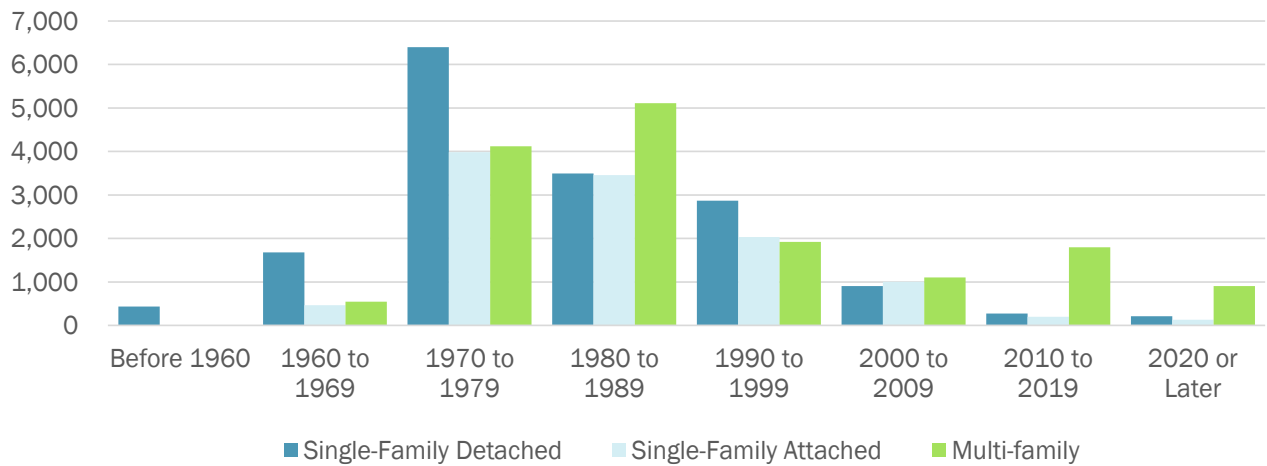
N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

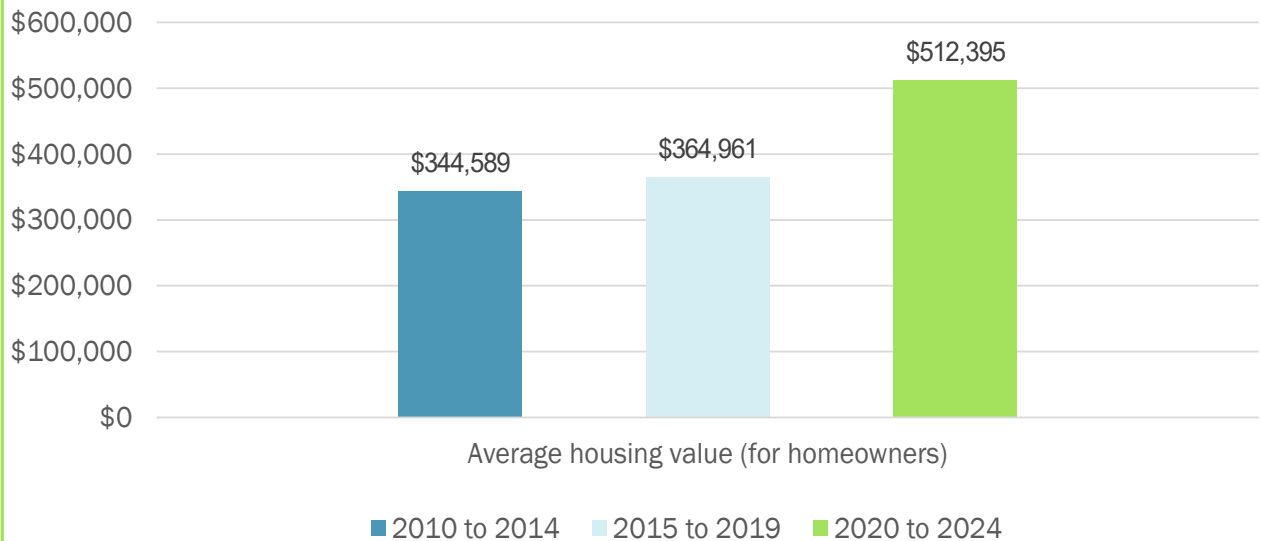
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Columbia, Number of Housing Units by Year Built and Type



Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)

Columbia, Average Housing Value (for homeowners)



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



ECOLOGY

The Little Patuxent and Middle Patuxent Rivers flow north-to-south across the center and western end of the Columbia Planning Area, providing a framework of hubs and corridors in the County's Green Infrastructure Network. The Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) and the Gorman Stream Valley are major hubs, connected by a forested corridor along the Middle Patuxent River. Major natural areas such as the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) and the Gorman Stream Valley anchor this network, connected by a continuous forested corridor along the Middle Patuxent River. Columbia is also home to three well-known lakes: Wilde Lake, Lake Kittamaqundi, and Lake Elkhorn, popular destinations for birdwatching and outdoor recreation. Forested areas around Lake Kittamaqundi and Lake Elkhorn are linked by wooded stream valleys that follow the Little Patuxent River, strengthening habitat connections throughout the area.

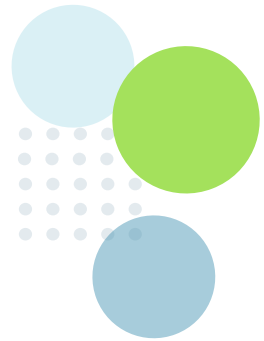


More than 30% of the Columbia Planning Area is protected land, most of it managed as open space by the Columbia Association or Howard County. A comprehensive pathway system connects villages, neighborhoods, parks, and natural areas, giving residents easy access to outdoor recreation and offering alternatives to driving. Local parks like Cedar Lane Park and Blandair Regional Park provide a variety of amenities, while the Robinson Nature Center serves as a hub for learning about local ecosystems and environmental stewardship.



COLUMBIA

Green Infrastructure Network	Acres	%
Hubs	1,879	
% of Planning Area with Hubs		9%
Corridors (500')	627	
% of Planning Area with Corridors		3%
Total GIN	2,506	12%
Preservation Easements in GIN	8	
% of GIN Preserved		0%
Parks & Open Space in GIN	2,133	
% of GIN Parks & Open Space		85%
Total GIN Protected	2,142	85%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Green Infrastructure Network, Land Use		



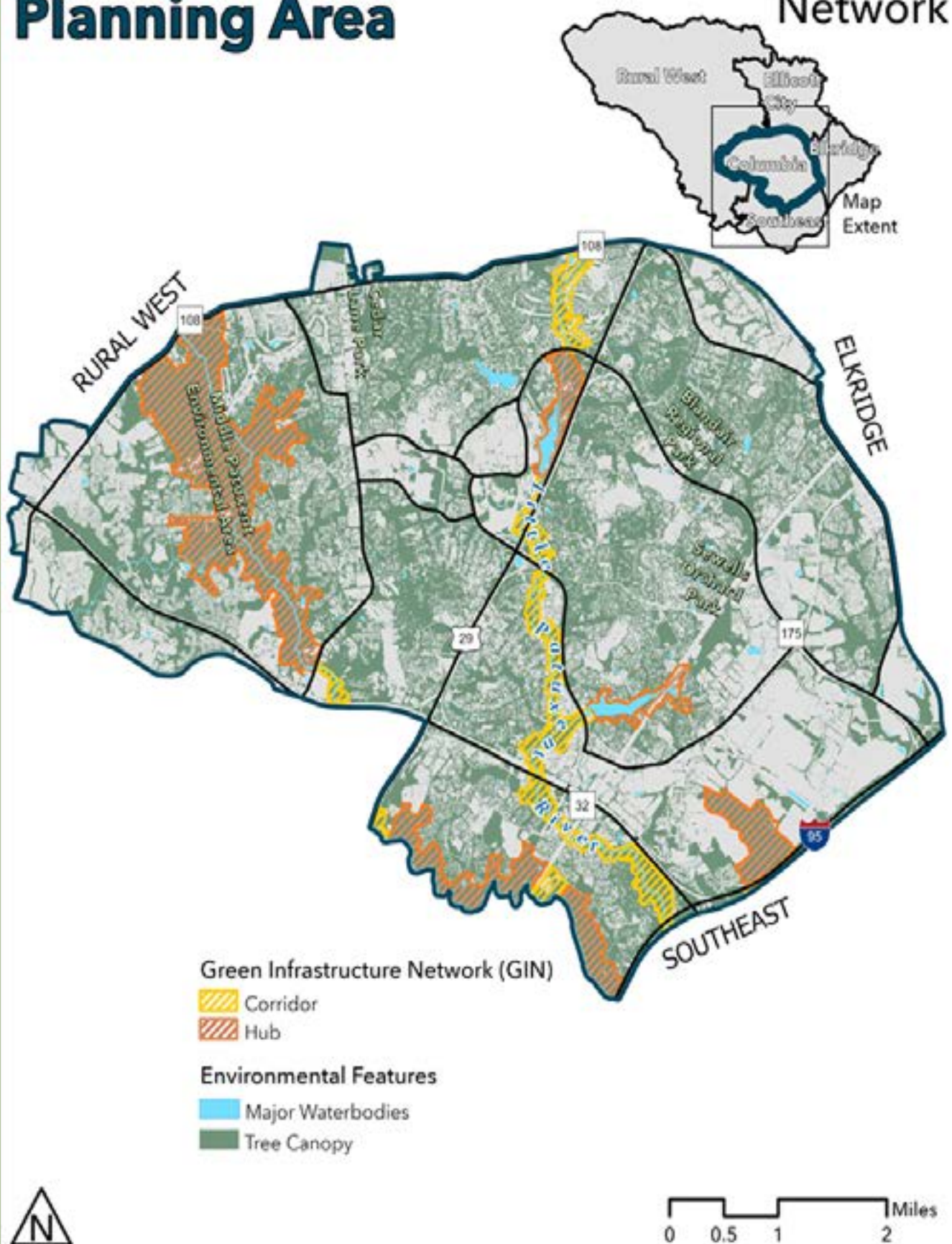
COLUMBIA

Protected Lands	Acres	% of Area
Preservation Easements		
Environmental Easement	99	0.5%
Agricultural Easement, Dedicated	0	0.0%
Agricultural Easement, Purchased, ALPP/MALPF	0	0.0%
Neighborhood Preservation Easement	1	0.0%
Parks & Open Space		
County Parks & Open Space	1,804	8.6%
State Parks	0	0.0%
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)	0	0.0%
Columbia & Home Owner's Association Open Space	4,415	21.2%
Total Protected	6,319	30.3%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Preservation Easements, & Land Use Database		



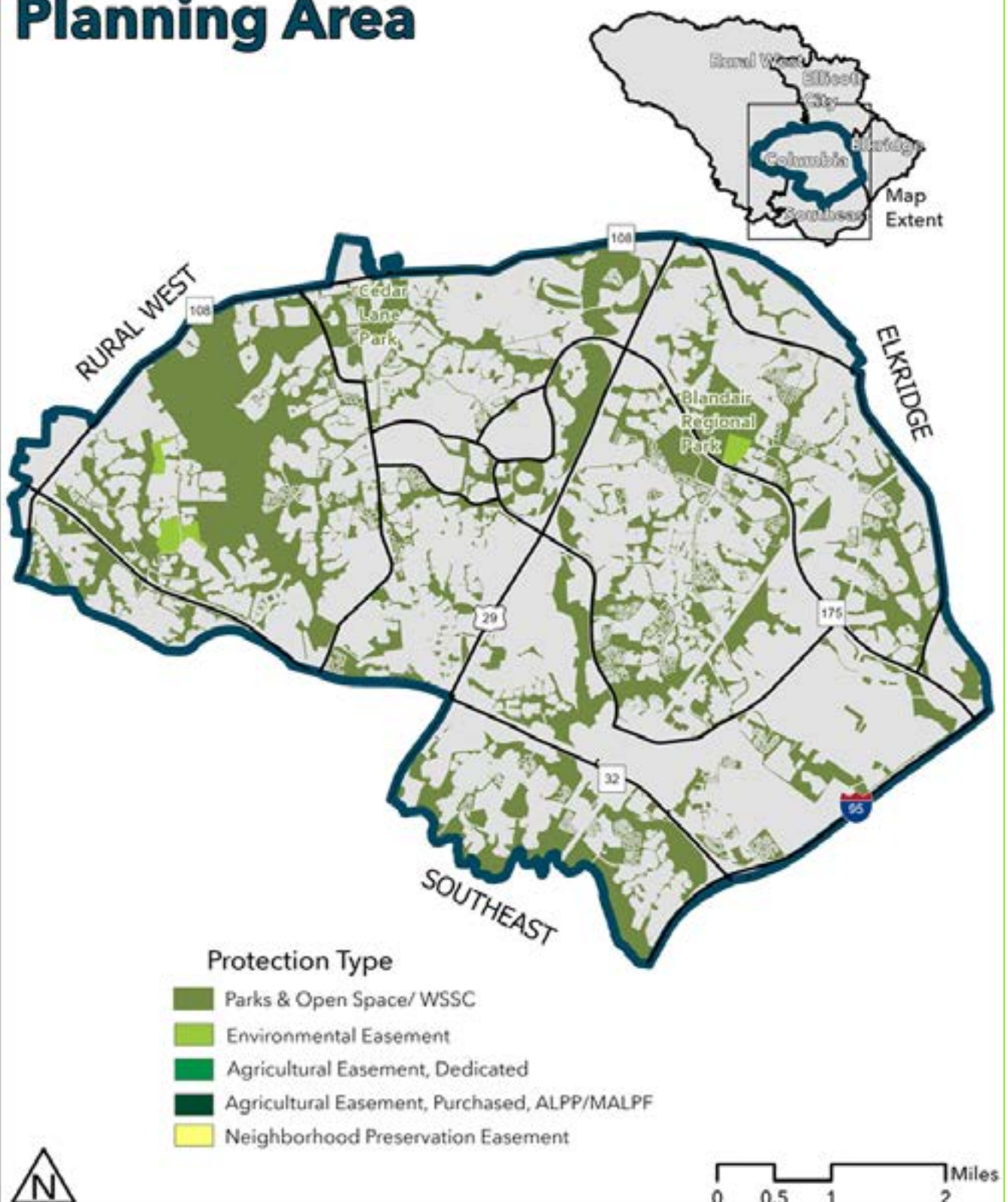
Columbia Planning Area

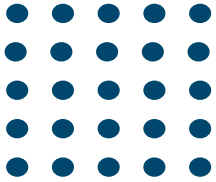
Green Infrastructure Network



Columbia Planning Area

Protected Lands





CHAPTER 3 ELKRIDGE



PLACE

Elkridge is located in the northeast part of Howard County. It borders Baltimore County to the North and Anne Arundel County to the east, and MD-175 to the south. MD-104, MD-100 and Bonnie Branch Road define its northwest corner. Founded in the early 18th century, Elkridge, known to the early settlers as Elk Ridge, lies on the banks of the Patapsco River. US Route 1/Washington Boulevard cuts through the Planning Area which served as the main north-south highway long before the interstate system (specifically I-95) was constructed.

Elkridge is the smallest of the five Planning Areas at close to 13,000 acres but has a significant amount of parkland, including the Patapsco State Park along its northern edge, and Rockburn Branch and Troy Parks resting in its center. Elkridge, whose settlement dates back to colonial times, includes a mix of older neighborhoods and newer residential developments alongside industrial, manufacturing and commercial uses. Elkridge includes close to 21,000 dwelling units, and most of the non-residential development are for industrial uses located along the Route 1 Corridor with close proximity to major highway and rail access. As a significant employment corridor in the County, the Route 1 Corridor portion in Elkridge also has many legacy land uses such as hotels, motels, roadside restaurants, trucking terminals, and warehouses. Many longstanding industrial uses still exist today.



ELKRIDGE

Land Use Characteristics	Value
Total area (acres)	12,696
Key environmental indicators	
Parkland (acres)	3,496
Tree canopy cover (percent)	47.9
Non-Residential Development	
Industrial use (square feet)	11,915,050
Office use (square feet)	1,832,564
Other use (square feet)	3,357,601
Retail/Service use (square feet)	2,617,823
Total (square feet)	19,723,038
Residential use (dwelling units)	20,840
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database, Chesapeake Bay Trust Land Cover 2024, Maryland Department of Assessments	

ELKRIDGE

Places of Interest	Number
50+ Center	1
Fire Station	2
Grocery Store	3
Library	1
Police Station	1
Public School - Elementary	7
Public School - Middle	4
Worship	26

Source: Howard County DPZ

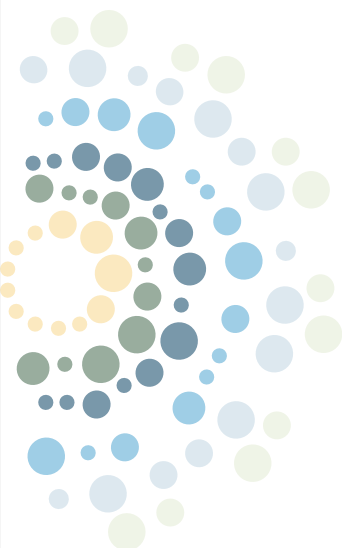
ELKRIDGE

Land Use Category	Percent of Land Area
Age-Restricted Residential	0.4%
Apartment	2.8%
Commercial	3.9%
Government & Institutional	8.9%
Industrial	10.8%
Mixed-Use	0.1%
Mobile Home	1.1%
Other Transportation & Utilities	1.5%
Parks & Open Space	27.5%
Roadway & Parking	12.4%
Single-Family Attached	2.5%
Single-Family Detached	26.1%
Vacant, Undeveloped Land	1.9%

Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database

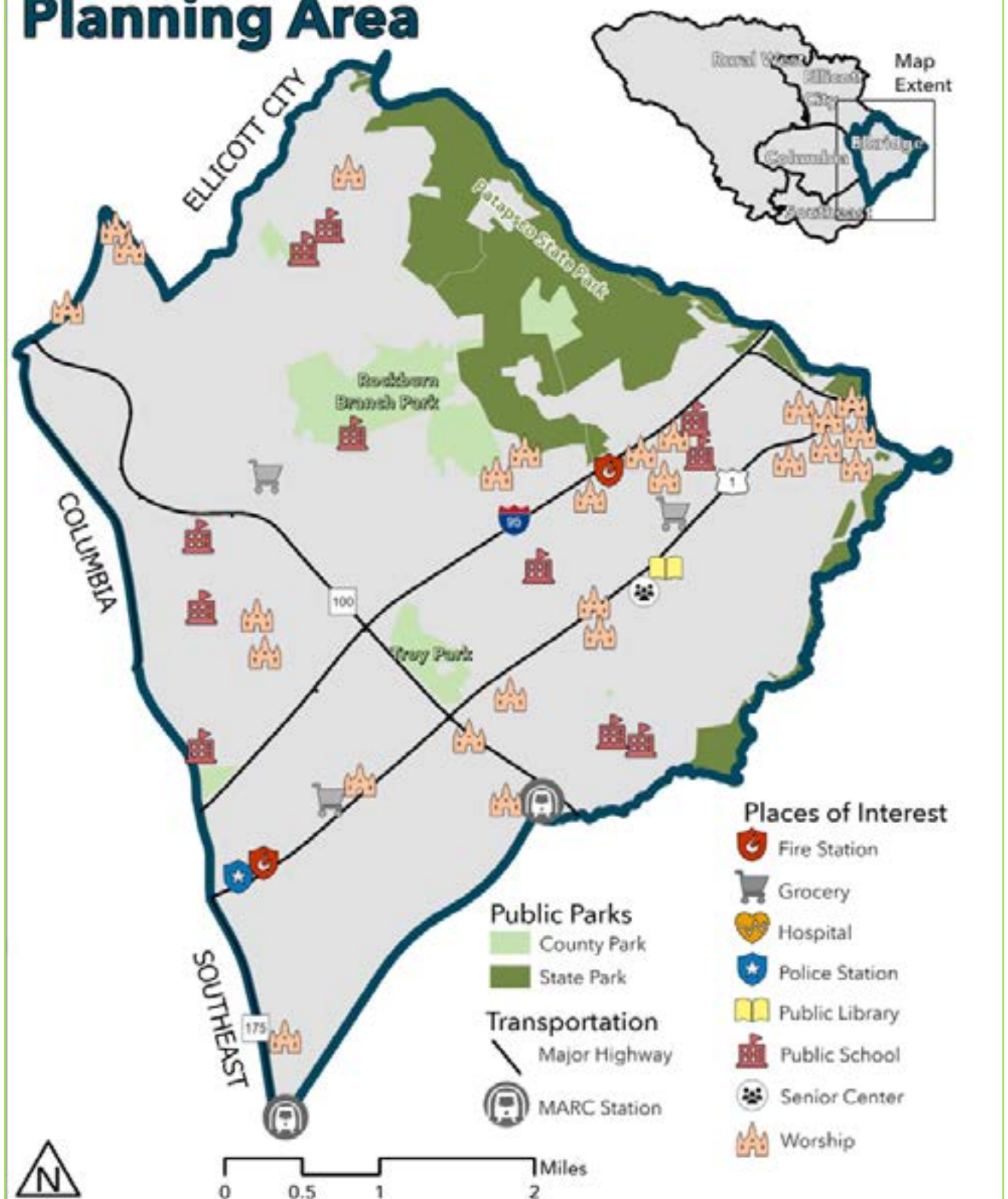
The town of Elkridge is the oldest settlement in Howard County, and its development ebbed and flowed in direct relation to the transportation and economic trends of American history. Elkridge is significant not merely for its eighteenth century history as a tobacco shipping hub, nor solely for its nineteenth century development relating to the railroad, but for its exemplification of the historical process of change encompassing over 200 years of building.

— Maryland Historical Trust, 2013



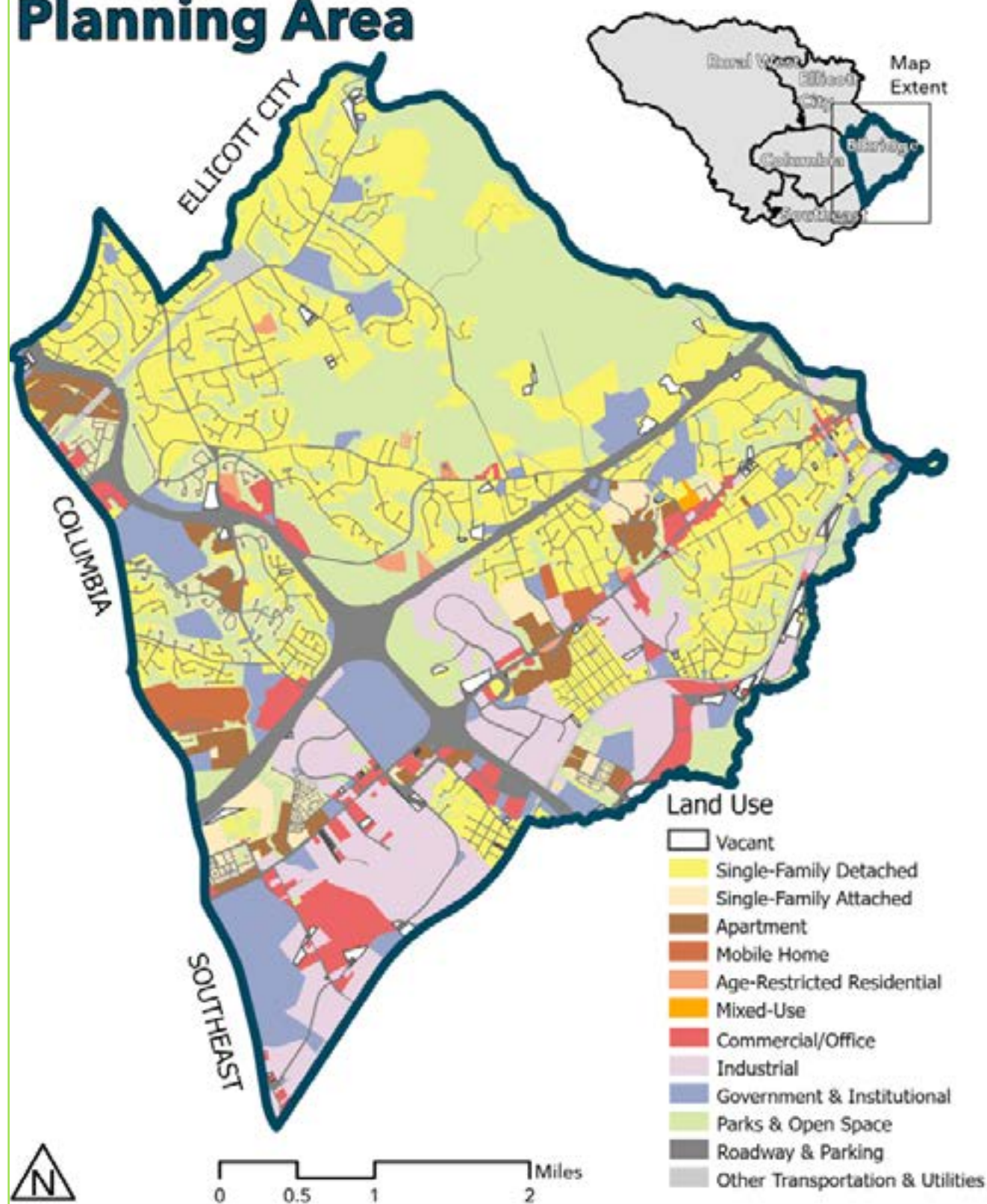
Elkridge Planning Area

Places of Interest



Elkridge Planning Area

Land Use



PEOPLE

According to the 2020–2024 five-year ACS estimates, the Elkridge Planning Area had approximately 55,000 residents, reflecting an increase of about 30% from the 2010–2014 ACS estimate of roughly 42,500 residents. This is more than twice the 12% population increase of Howard County as a whole during this time period and the greatest growth rate of all Planning Areas. The data highlights this significant rise in total population alongside shifting racial demographics, with increases in the Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Other Races communities.

Financial trends indicate a substantial increase in the number of households earning over \$200,000 annually in household income, increasing from 13% to 32% of all households across the two reporting periods. Please note, the household incomes collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Educational findings show a highly skilled workforce, as the majority of adults, approximately 60%, hold a bachelor's degree, graduate, or professional degree. Additionally, demographic trends reflect evolving lifestyle patterns, such as a large shift toward working from home and an increase in those who speak non-English languages at home.

While the population in Elkridge had the second highest increase in people 65 years and older, Elkridge has the smallest population overall of this age group. In 2020-2024, around nine percent of Elkridge residents were 65 years and older, less than the 15% 65 years and older population in Howard County as a whole. Families with children in Elkridge have changed from 44% (or around 6,476) of all households in 2010-2014 to 39% (or around 7,502) by 2020-2024.

Like the other Planning Areas, the population in Elkridge is aging. Comparing the 2010-2014 to the 2020-2024 5-year ACS estimates, those 65 years and older in Elkridge increased by 89%. However, only 9% of Elkridge residents were 65 and older in 2020-2024, less than all other Planning Areas.



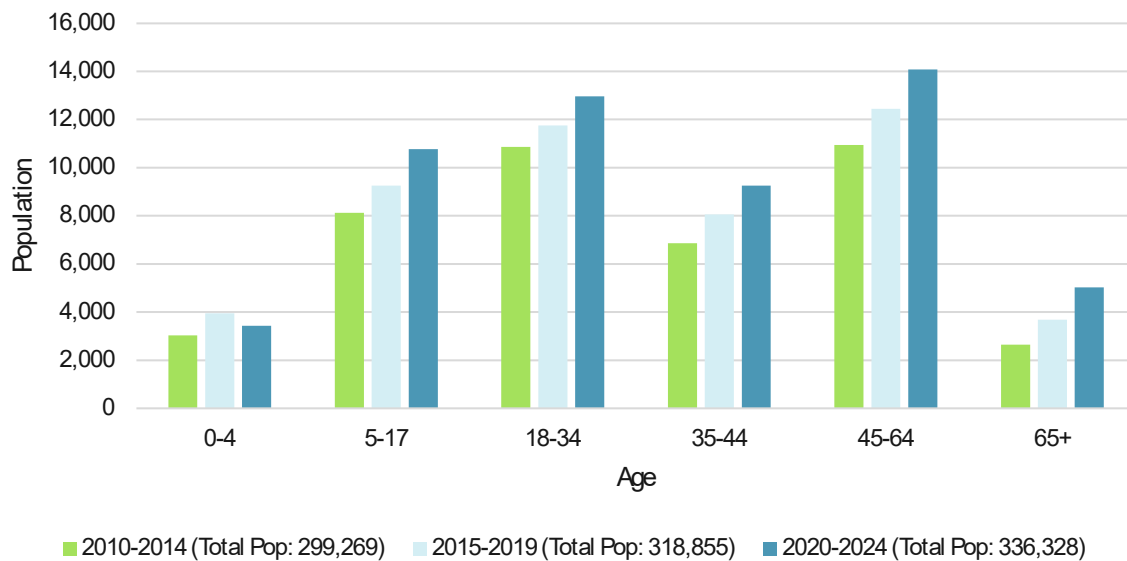
ELKRIDGE

Age	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	42,475	100%	49,137	100%	55,514	100%
0 to 4 years	3,028	7%	3,943	8%	3,431	6%
5 to 17 years	8,124	19%	9,259	19%	10,767	19%
18 to 34 years	10,864	26%	11,752	24%	12,964	23%
35 to 44 years	6,867	16%	8,052	16%	9,251	17%
45 to 64 years	10,940	26%	12,447	25%	14,076	25%
65 years and older	2,652	6%	3,684	7%	5,025	9%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Elkridge Population Characteristics



Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed tables.



ELKRIDGE

Race and Hispanic Ethnicity	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	42,475	100%	49,137	100%	55,514	100%
White, non-Hispanic	23,325	55%	25,631	52%	23,150	42%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	7,835	18%	8,760	18%	12,038	22%
Asian, non-Hispanic	6,657	16%	8,161	17%	11,320	20%
Other races, non-Hispanic**	1,628	4%	2,131	4%	3,690	7%
Hispanic or Latino	3,030	7%	4,454	9%	5,316	10%

**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELKRIDGE

English Language Usage and Ability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 5 years and over	39,447	100%	45,194	100%	52,083	100%
Speak non-English language at home	8,834	22%	11,372	25%	14,091	27%
Speak English less than "very well"	2,842	7%	3,315	7%	4,008	8%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELKRIDGE

Educational Attainment	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 25 years and over	27,662	100%	31,631	100%	36,917	100%
No high school diploma	1,653	6%	1,910	6%	2,075	6%
High school diploma or some college	10,689	39%	10,901	34%	12,729	34%
Bachelor's degree only	8,139	29%	9,899	31%	11,765	32%
Graduate or professional degree	7,181	26%	8,921	28%	10,348	28%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELKRIDGE

Household Type	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Number of households	14,724	100%	17,197	100%	19,367	100%
Family households	10,664	72%	12,546	73%	13,488	70%
Families with children	6,476	44%	7,416	43%	7,502	39%
Single-parent families with children	1,579	11%	1,787	10%	1,742	9%
Nonfamily multi-person households	1,007	7%	847	5%	1,658	9%
Nonfamily single-person households	3,053	21%	3,804	22%	4,221	22%
Average household size	2.88	N/A	2.86	N/A	2.87	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELKRIDGE

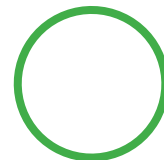
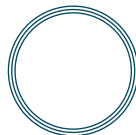
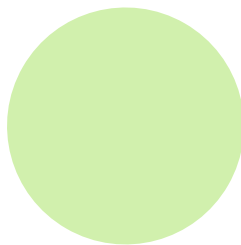
Household Income	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total number of households	14,724	100%	17,197	100%	19,367	100%
Less than \$50,000	2,441	17%	2,782	16%	2,916	15%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	4,421	30%	4,616	27%	3,723	19%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3,820	26%	3,767	22%	3,417	18%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2,138	15%	2,541	15%	3,061	16%
\$200,000 or more	1,904	13%	3,491	20%	6,250	32%
Average household income	\$119,838	N/A	\$136,631	N/A	\$164,646	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



ELKRIDGE

Commuting Mode and Household Vehicle Availability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Workers ages 16 years and over	23,264	100%	27,072	100%	29,787	100%
Commuted by driving	21,002	90%	24,574	91%	21,075	71%
Car-free commute	1,109	5%	1,163	4%	1,160	4%
Worked from home	1,153	5%	1,335	5%	7,552	25%
Households with no vehicles	382	3%	*	*	549	3%

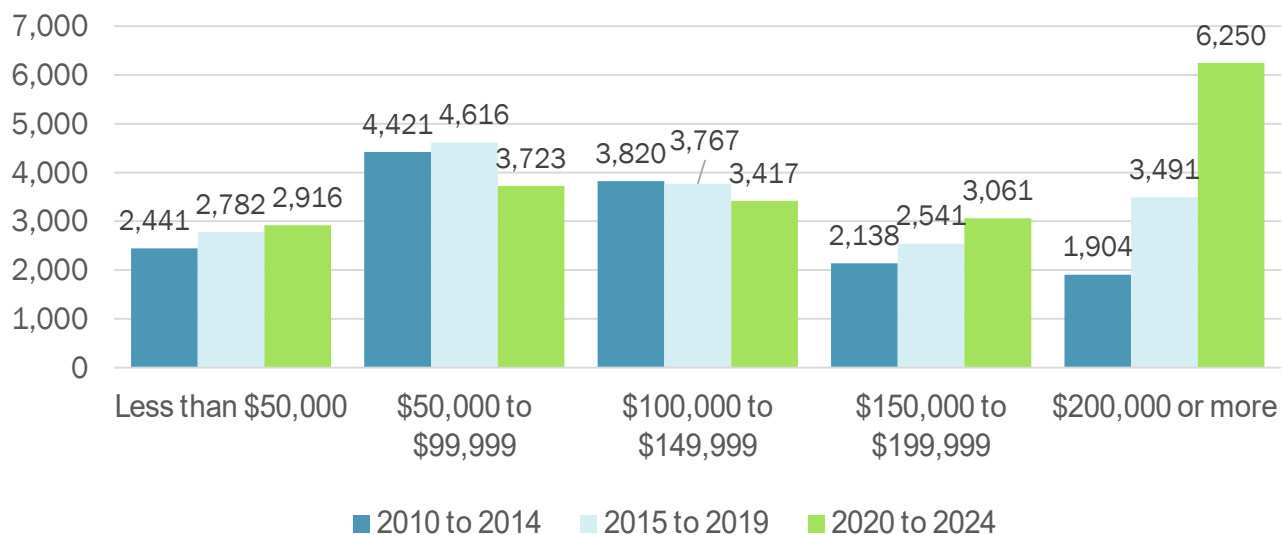
*Estimate is unreliable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



Elkridge, Number of Households By Income



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

HOUSING

Housing in Elkridge has evolved over time, reflecting broader regional shifts in land-use policy, land availability, and market demand. As of 2025, the housing stock consists of 20,840 total units, with an average age of 27 years. This maturation of the inventory highlights a transition from late 20th-century suburban expansion to modern infill development.

The 1990s represented the peak of residential construction for all housing types in Elkridge with 4,989 units built, accounting for 24% of the units now in the community.

During this decade 56% of all homes built were single family detached, 24% single family attached, and 20% multifamily. The period between 2010 and 2019 served as the peak era for single-family attached units (2,110 units, 44% of the total). In the current decade, the majority of units built have been multifamily (976 multifamily units compared to 414 single family attached and 153 single family detached). Overall in Elkridge, about two-thirds of the units built to date have been single family detached and attached units and one-third multifamily units, offering ample homeownership opportunities in the community.

Between the 2010-2014 and 2020-2024 five-year ACS estimates, Elkridge has experienced shifts in residential occupancy and financial accessibility. While the estimated number of total households has increased, the proportion of homeowners declined from 76% to 70% as the percentage of renter households expanded to nearly a third of the market, or 30%. During these two five-year time periods, the nominal average property values increased by 62% from \$315,443 to around \$512,470 across the two reporting periods, exceeding the 31% inflation rate. The nominal increase in average monthly mortgage costs from about \$2,074 in 2010-2014 and \$2,732 in 2020-2024 was closely similar to the 31% inflation rate.

Simultaneously, tenants faced escalating costs, with average monthly rents of close to \$2,186 during 2020-2024, 54% nominally higher compared to about \$1,420 during 2010-2014 which surpassed the 31% inflation rate. In 2020-2024, about half of all renters were classified as rent-burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on rent. This is not unique in central Maryland, reflecting the need for more affordable housing in the region. The homeowner costs, housing values, and gross rent values collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.



ELKRIDGE

Year Built	Total Units	%	Single-Family Detached	%	Single-Family Attached	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%
Before 1960	1,034	5%	932	12%	16	0%	17	0%	69	8%
1960 to 1969	304	1%	304	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
1970 to 1979	428	2%	213	3%	129	2%	84	1%	2	0%
1980 to 1989	3,690	18%	941	12%	1,108	19%	1,589	25%	52	6%
1990 to 1999	4,989	24%	2,770	36%	1,202	20%	1,014	16%	3	0%
2000 to 2009	3,130	15%	1,446	19%	795	13%	888	14%	1	0%
2010 to 2019	4,785	23%	804	11%	2,110	36%	1,866	29%	5	1%
2020 or Later	1,543	7%	153	2%	414	7%	976	15%	0	0%
Unknown Year	937	4%	51	1%	152	3%	6	0%	728	85%
Total	20,840	100%	7,614	100%	5,926	100%	6,440	100%	860	100%
Average Age*	27 years									

Percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding. *Excludes housing units for which the year built is unknown.

Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)



ELKRIDGE

Homeownership and Housing Affordability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Homeowner households	11,147	76%	12,433	72%	13,479	70%
Average homeowner monthly costs (with mortgage)	\$2,074	N/A	\$2,262	N/A	\$2,732	N/A
Average housing value (for homeowners)	\$315,443	N/A	\$361,474	N/A	\$512,470	N/A
Renter households	3,577	24%	4,764	28%	5,888	30%
Rent-burdened households	1,513	44%	2,112	46%	2,912	51%
Average gross rent	\$1,420	N/A	\$1,725	N/A	\$2,186	N/A

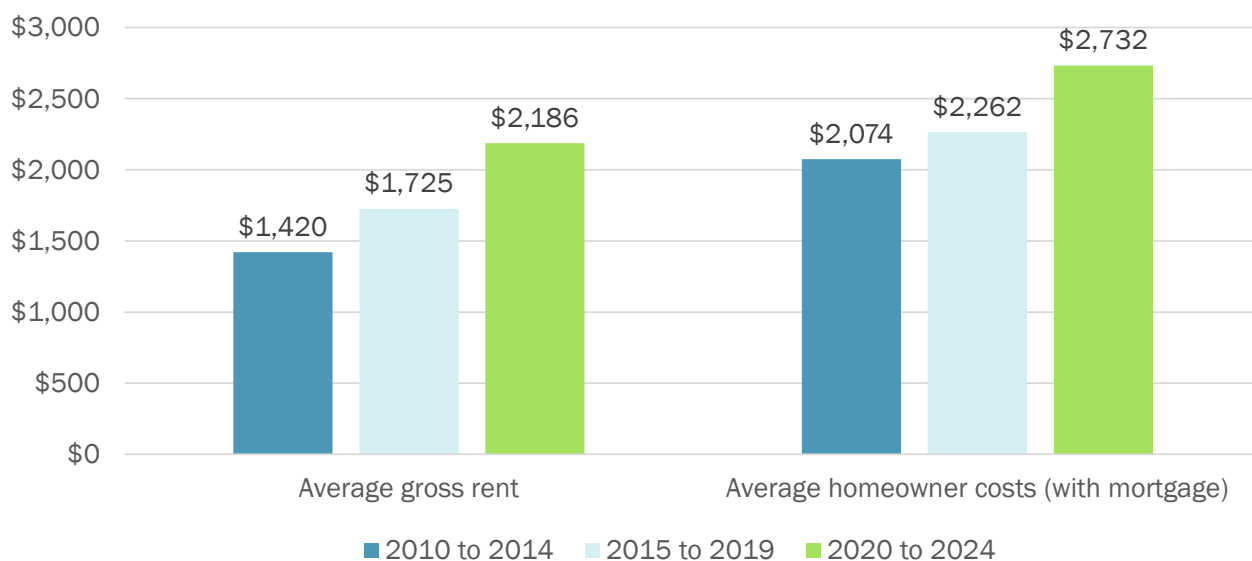
N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

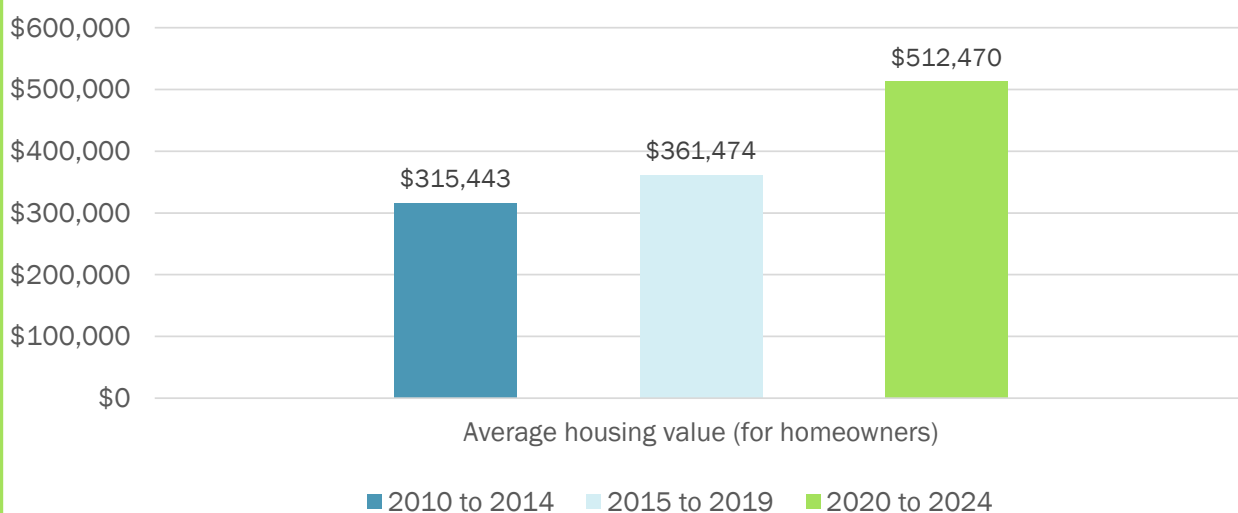
Elkridge, Average Monthly Renter and Homeowner Costs



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



Elkridge, Average Housing Value (for homeowners)



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ECOLOGY

About 30% of the land in the Elkridge Planning Area is permanently protected, safeguarded through state and county parks, designated open space, and a range of environmental, historic, and neighborhood preservation easements held by partners such as the Howard County Conservancy, Rockburn Land Trust, Maryland Environmental Trust, and Maryland Historic Trust.

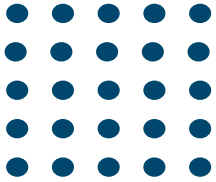
The northern portion of the planning area encompasses the forested Patapsco River Valley, a designated Maryland Heritage Area and one of the most significant natural hubs in Howard County's Green Infrastructure Network. Much of the valley is preserved as public parkland, including Rockburn Branch Park, Belmont Manor & Historic Park, and key areas of Patapsco Valley State Park—home to popular destinations like Cascade Falls.

Overall, 92% of the Green Infrastructure Network within the Elkridge Planning Area is protected, ensuring strong habitat connections and long-term conservation of the area's natural and cultural resources.

ELKRIDGE		
Green Infrastructure Network	Acres	%
Hubs	1,900	
% of Planning Area with Hubs		15%
Corridors (500')	51	
% of Planning Area with Corridors		0%
Total GIN	1,951	15%
Preservation Easements in GIN	329	
% of GIN Preserved		17%
Parks & OS in GIN	1,473	
% of GIN Parks & Open Space		75%
Total GIN Protected	1,802	92%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Green Infrastructure Network, Land Use		



ELKRIDGE		
Protected Lands	Acres	% of Area
Preservation Easements		
Environmental Easement	460	3.6%
Agricultural Easement, Dedicated	0	0.0%
Agricultural Easement, Purchased, ALPP/MALPF	0	0.0%
Neighborhood Preservation Easement		
Parks & Open Space	51	0.4%
County Parks & Open Space	1,219	9.6%
State Parks	1,469	11.6%
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)	0	0.0%
Columbia & HOA Open Space	585	4.6%
Total Protected	3,783	29.8%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Preservation Easements, & Land Use Database		



CHAPTER 4

ELLICOTT CITY

PLACE

Ellicott City is located in the north central part of Howard County, bordering MD-100 and MD-108 to the south, Baltimore County to the north, MD 103 and Bonnie Branch Road to the east, and the Planned Service Area line to the west. At close to 20,000 acres, Ellicott City is about the same size as the Columbia Planning Area, which is only 1,000 acres larger. However, Ellicott City has only about two-thirds the number of homes compared to Columbia (about 28,700 homes in Ellicott City versus close to 43,400 homes in Columbia). Ellicott City has about 10.9 million square feet of non-residential building space, the smallest amount of the four eastern Planning Areas.

Old Ellicott City is nestled in a small valley where the Tiber River and other tributaries join the Patapsco River. Founded in 1772 by Quaker brothers John, Andrew and Joseph, the historic mill town is considered a jewel of Howard County, offering many shopping and dining opportunities for locals and tourists alike. It is known for its connections to the National Road, the original B&O Railroad line, and rich mill heritage. Today, Old Ellicott City is a regional tourism destination, a center for entrepreneurial endeavors, and a nationally recognized historic district.

The Ellicott City of today is a testament to resilience, history, and community spirit. In response to the devastating effects of two floods in 2016 and 2018, the County has launched its Safe and Sound initiative through which state-of-the-art flood mitigation measures have been implemented to prevent future floods. These actions ensure that the unique and rich history of Ellicott City will continue to be celebrated and promoted well into the future.

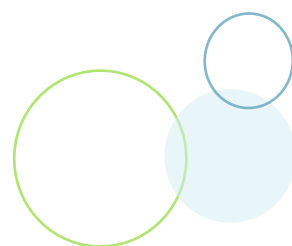
ELLICOTT CITY

Land Use Characteristics	Value
Total area (acres)	19,966
Key environmental indicators	
Parkland (acres)	5,964
Tree canopy cover (percent)	53.0
Non-Residential Development	
Industrial use (square feet)	742,028
Office use (square feet)	1,867,637
Other use (square feet)	4,411,150
Retail/Service use (square feet)	3,829,735
Total (square feet)	10,850,550
Residential use (dwelling units)	28,743
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database, Chesapeake Bay Trust Land Cover 2024, Maryland Department of Assessments	



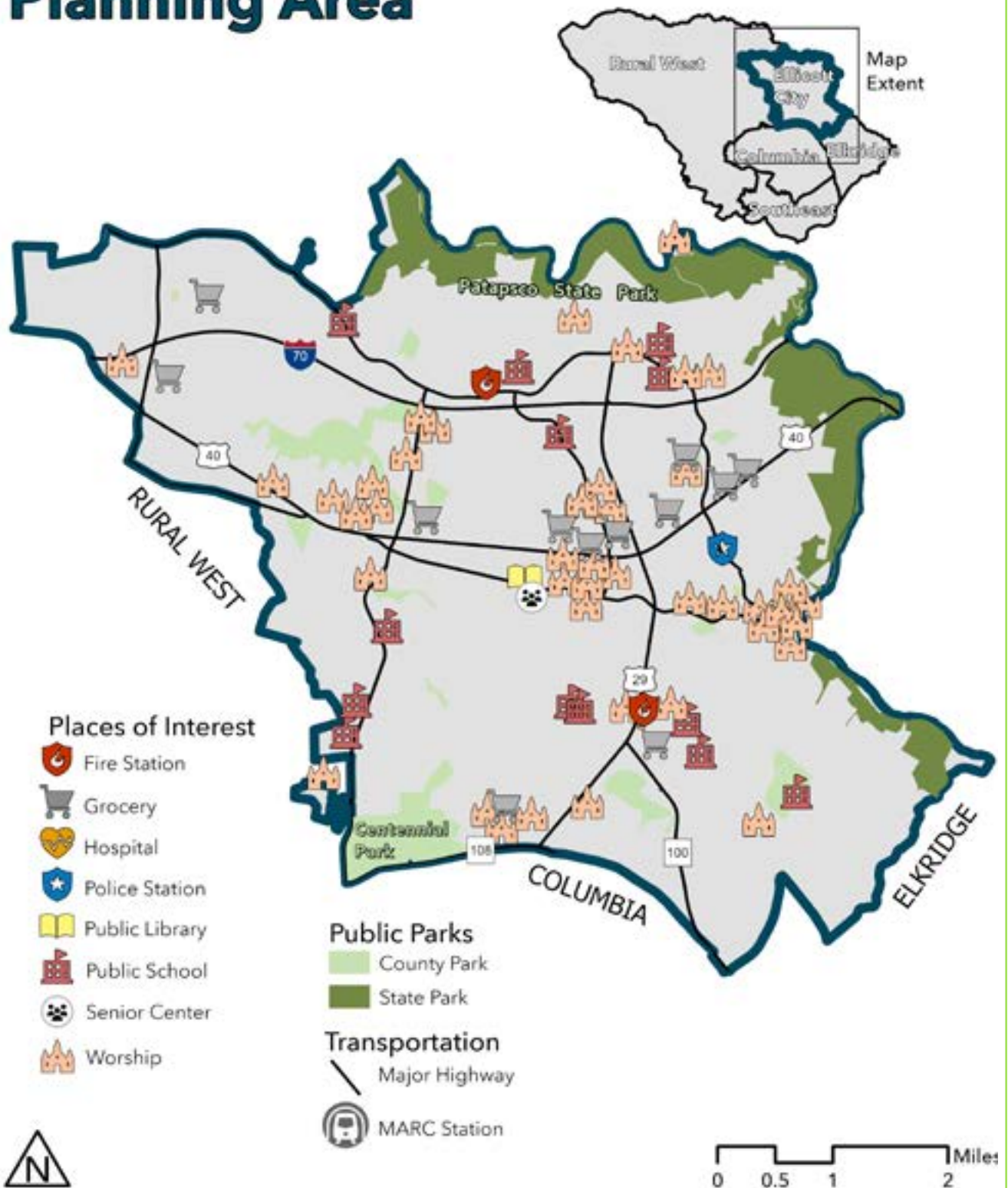
ELLICOTT CITY

Places of Interest	Number
50+ Center	1
Fire Station	2
Grocery Store	12
Library	1
Police Station	1
Public School - Elementary	7
Public School - Middle	4
Public School - High	2
Worship	44
Source: Howard County DPZ	



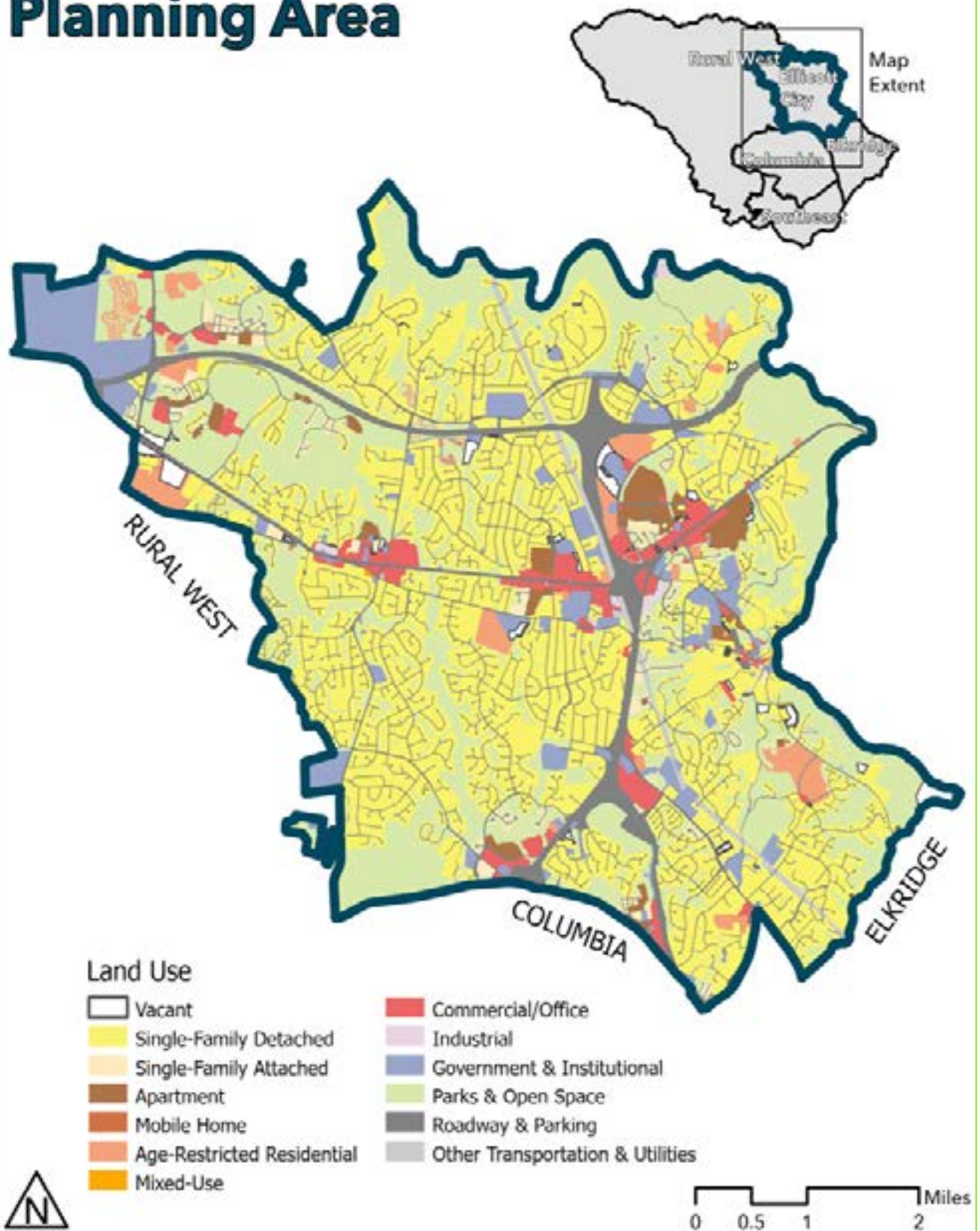
Ellicott City Planning Area

Places of Interest



Ellicott City Planning Area

Land Use



ELLICOTT CITY

Land Use Category	Percent of Land Area
Age-Restricted Residential	2.7%
Apartment	1.9%
Commercial	2.8%
Government & Institutional	6.2%
Industrial	0.2%
Mixed-Use	0.0%
Other Transportation & Utilities	1.3%
Parks & Open Space	29.9%
Roadway & Parking	12.9%
Single-Family Attached	1.5%
Single-Family Detached	39.3%
Vacant, Undeveloped Land	1.3%

Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database



PEOPLE

Ellicott City has experienced steady population growth, increasing by 5.7% from just over 68,900 residents as estimated by the 2010 to 2014 five-year ACS estimates, to close to 72,900 according to the 2020-2024 five-year ACS estimates. The share of the older population age 65 years and greater has increased by 44%, from about 9,100 residents to over 13,000 during the same time period. By 2020-2024, the younger age cohorts (less than 35 years old) were approximately 40% of the population.

As of 2020-2024, the economic landscape in Ellicott City has shifted with an increase in households earning \$200,000 or more compared to 2010-2014. Across the two reporting periods, the nominal average household income increased by 39% from \$137,401 to \$190,942, surpassing the 31% inflation rate. The household incomes collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Simultaneously, the social fabric is diversifying. The Asian population now comprises 30% of the total population, up from 24% in the 2010-2014 ACS estimate, while more than one-third of residents speak a non-English language at home, both figures exceed those of all other Planning Areas. Similar to other Planning Areas, work-from-home has increased significantly between 2010-2014 and 2020-2024, fundamentally altering the traditional workforce model.

Ellicott City residents are highly educated, with approximately 69% of all residents over the age of 25 possessing a bachelor's degree only or a graduate or professional degree based on the 2024 ACS five-year estimates.

ELLICOTT CITY

Age	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	68,914	100%	71,658	100%	72,860	100%
0 to 4 years	3,524	5%	3,795	5%	3,043	4%
5 to 17 years	14,360	21%	14,273	20%	15,251	21%
18 to 34 years	11,599	17%	11,613	16%	10,855	15%
35 to 44 years	9,417	14%	10,372	14%	10,227	14%
45 to 64 years	20,930	30%	20,635	29%	20,423	28%
65 years and older	9,084	13%	10,970	15%	13,061	18%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELLICOTT CITY

Race and Hispanic Ethnicity	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	68,914	100%	71,658	100%	72,860	100%
White, non-Hispanic	41,307	60%	38,933	54%	36,825	51%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	6,550	10%	6,264	9%	6,540	9%
Asian, non-Hispanic	16,341	24%	21,257	30%	21,876	30%
Other races, non-Hispanic**	1,867	3%	2,823	4%	4,350	6%
Hispanic or Latino	2,849	4%	2,381	3%	3,269	4%

**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic. Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELLICOTT CITY

English Language Usage and Ability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 5 years and over	65,390	100%	67,863	100%	69,817	100%
Speak non-English language at home	18,042	28%	21,706	32%	23,395	34%
Speak English less than "very well"	6,509	10%	6,329	9%	7,195	10%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELLICOTT CITY

Educational Attainment	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 25 years and over	46,117	100%	48,777	100%	49,530	100%
No high school diploma	1,885	4%	1,827	4%	2,129	4%
High school diploma or some college	14,047	30%	13,989	29%	13,310	27%
Bachelor's degree only	15,032	33%	15,608	32%	15,382	31%
Graduate or professional degree	15,153	33%	17,353	36%	18,709	38%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELLICOTT CITY

Household Type	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Number of households	24,465	100%	25,363	100%	25,819	100%
Family households	19,454	80%	19,571	77%	19,991	77%
Families with children	10,461	43%	10,542	42%	10,382	40%
Single-parent families with children	1,610	7%	1,452	6%	1,805	7%
Nonfamily multi-person households	741	3%	781	3%	944	4%
Nonfamily single-person households	4,270	17%	5,011	20%	4,884	19%
Average household size	2.82	N/A	2.83	N/A	2.82	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELLICOTT CITY

Household Income	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total number of households	24,465	100%	25,363	100%	25,819	100%
Less than \$50,000	4,393	18%	4,397	17%	3,746	15%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	5,890	24%	5,172	20%	4,516	17%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,096	21%	4,371	17%	3,875	15%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,925	16%	4,291	17%	4,091	16%
\$200,000 or more	5,161	21%	7,132	28%	9,591	37%
Average household income	\$137,401	N/A	\$157,102	N/A	\$190,942	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

ELLICOTT CITY

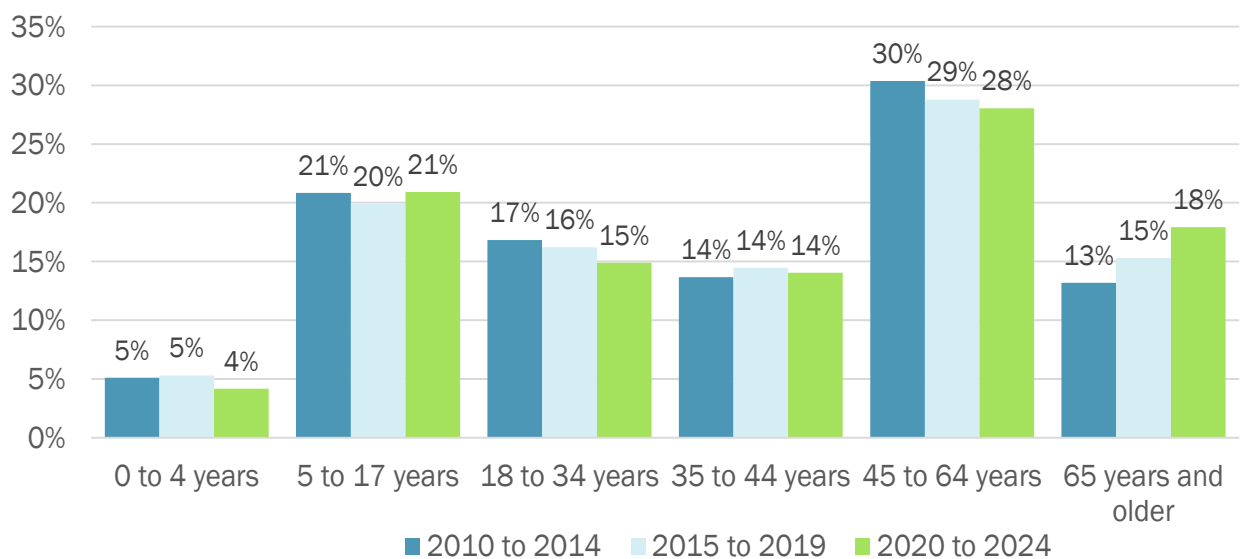
Commuting Mode and Household Vehicle Availability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Workers ages 16 years and over	34,721	100%	36,778	100%	35,257	100%
Commuting by driving	31,164	90%	32,846	89%	24,719	70%
Car-free commute	1,357	4%	1,291	4%	968	3%
Worked from home	2,200	6%	2,641	7%	9,570	27%
Households with no vehicles	854	3%	1,125	4%	636	2%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



Ellicott City, Percent of Population by Age Cohort



Percentages may not equal totals due to rounding.

Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

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

HOUSING

The housing landscape of Ellicott City represents a diverse inventory of 28,743 units (including a mix of single-family and multifamily housing options). Development reached its peak during the 1980s, the most prolific decade of construction in the area's history when more than 20% of all homes had been built. While most residential development in Ellicott City consisted of single family detached homes before the 1960s, there has been a clear evolution toward housing diversification. Beginning in the 1970s, there was a shift toward single family attached and multifamily units, which now constitutes nearly half of the total housing stock. As of 2025, there are over 7,400 multi-family units and close to 5,300 single family attached units in Ellicott City, however single-family detached units remain the greatest type with just over 16,000 homes.

Between 2010-2014 and 2020-2024, housing in Ellicott City remained predominantly owner-occupied. Simultaneously, nominal average home values increased by 37% from \$502,012 to \$688,797 between the two five-year time periods, greater than the 31% inflation rate. Though nominal monthly average homeowner costs with mortgages increased by 20% from \$2,787 to \$3,338 and did not outpace the 31% inflation rate, Ellicott City's monthly average homeowner costs were still higher than the Maryland State monthly average of \$2,597 during 2020-2024.

For renters, nominal average gross rent rose by 33% from \$1,552 to \$2,067 between the two five-year time periods. Despite average gross rent only increasing slightly higher than the 31% rate of inflation, Ellicott City still had a concerning estimated 52% of rent-burdened households based on the 2024 ACS five-year estimates.

The average housing values, average monthly housing costs, and average gross rent collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.



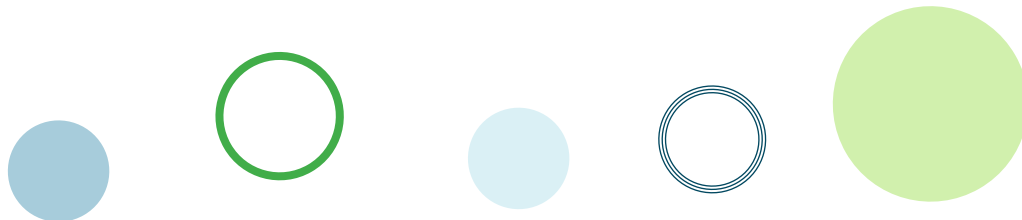
ELLICOTT CITY

Year Built	Total Units	%	Single-Family Detached	%	Single-Family Attached	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%
Before 1960	1,726	6%	1,643	10%	37	1%	46	1%	0	0%
1960 to 1969	2,347	8%	2,325	15%	0	0%	22	0%	0	0%
1970 to 1979	3,914	14%	1,548	10%	104	2%	2,262	30%	0	0%
1980 to 1989	6,194	22%	3,991	25%	1,061	20%	1,142	15%	0	0%
1990 to 1999	4,486	16%	2,777	17%	959	18%	750	10%	0	0%
2000 to 2009	4,746	17%	1,859	12%	1,345	25%	1,542	21%	0	0%
2010 to 2019	3,897	14%	1,337	8%	1,133	21%	1,427	19%	0	0%
2020 or Later	857	3%	434	3%	423	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Unknown Year	576	2%	108	1%	213	4%	255	3%	0	0%
Total	28,743	100%	16,022	100%	5,275	100%	7,446	100%	0	0%

Average Age* 36 years

Percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding. *Excludes housing units for which the year built is unknown.

Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)



ELLICOTT CITY

Homeownership and Housing Affordability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Homeowner households	18,393	75%	18,802	74%	18,848	73%
Average homeowner monthly costs (with mortgage)	\$2,787	N/A	\$2,866	N/A	\$3,338	N/A
Average housing value (for homeowners)	\$502,012	N/A	\$533,325	N/A	\$688,797	N/A
Renter households	6,072	25%	6,561	26%	6,971	27%
Rent-burdened households	2,983	50%	2,768	45%	3,515	52%
Average gross rent	\$1,552	N/A	\$1,630	N/A	\$2,067	N/A

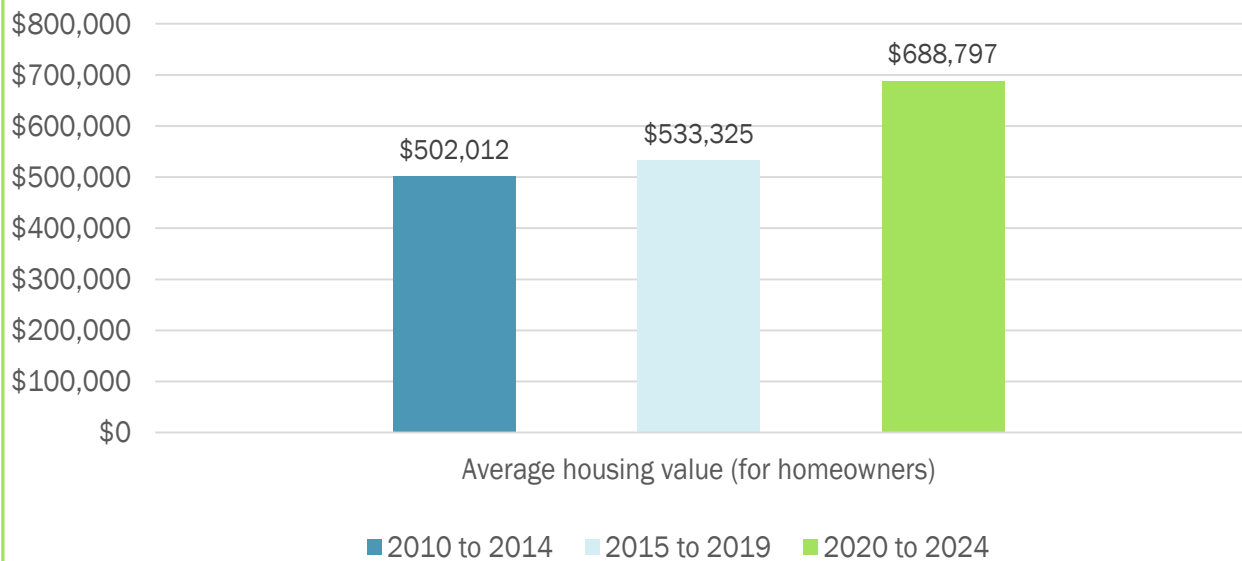
N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Ellicott City, Average Housing Value (for homeowners)



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



ECOLOGY

The lower north branch of the Patapsco River is located at the northern and eastern ends of the Ellicott City Planning Area. The river valley contains large tracts of protected forest, including the Hollofield, Daniels, and Woodstock areas of Patapsco Valley State Park. The eastern end of the Planning Area contains several forested stream valleys which converge near Main Street in Ellicott City prior to entering the Patapsco River. The western end of the Planning Area contains multiple county parks which function as hubs in the Green Infrastructure Network. These include the David Force Natural Resource Area and Centennial Park, which are connected by a forested corridor along the Little Patuxent River. The stream valleys and parks provide recreational opportunities for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. Almost 30% of the Planning Area is protected land, mostly in the form of county parks and open space, state parks, or open space managed by local homeowners' associations.

ELLICOTT CITY

Green Infrastructure Network	Acres	%
Hubs	2,803	
% of Plan Area in Hubs		14%
Corridors (500')	505	
% of Plan Area in Corridors		3%
Total GIN	3,308	17%
Preservation Easements in GIN	22	
% of GIN Preserved		1%
Parks & OS in GIN	2,956	
% of GIN Parks & OS		89%
Total GIN Protected	2,978	90%

Sources: Howard County DPZ Green Infrastructure Network, Land Use

ELLICOTT CITY

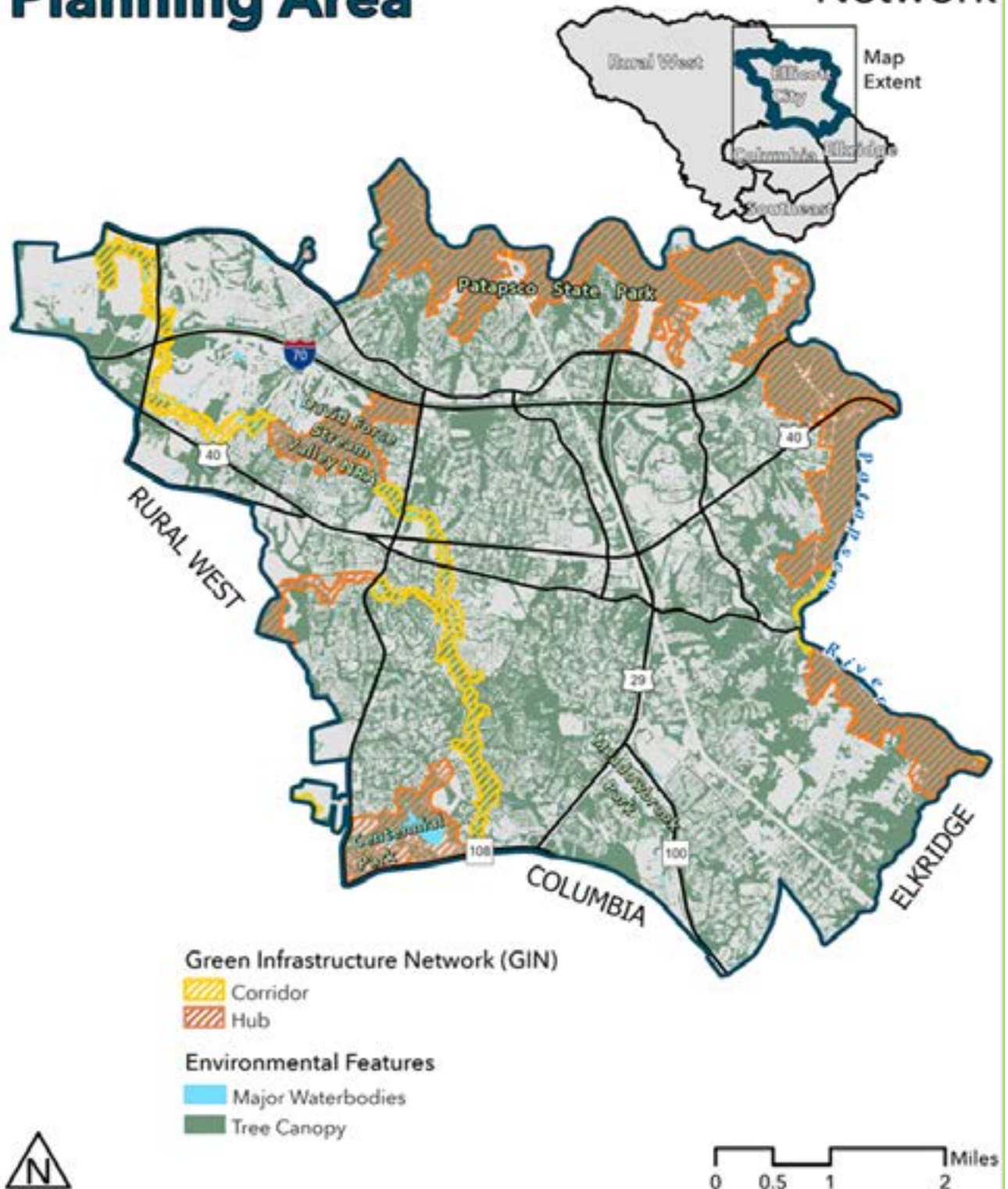
Protected Lands	Acres	% of Area
Preservation Easements		
Environmental Easement	131	0.7%
Agricultural Easement, Dedicated	63	0.3%
Agricultural Easement, Purchased, ALPP/MALPF	0	0.0%
Neighborhood Preservation Easement	27	0.1%
Parks & Open Space		
County Parks & Open Space	2,755	13.8%
State Parks	1,551	7.8%
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)	0	0.0%
Columbia & HOA Open Space	1,022	5.1%
Total Protected	5,550	27.8%

Sources: Howard County DPZ Preservation Easements, & Land Use Database



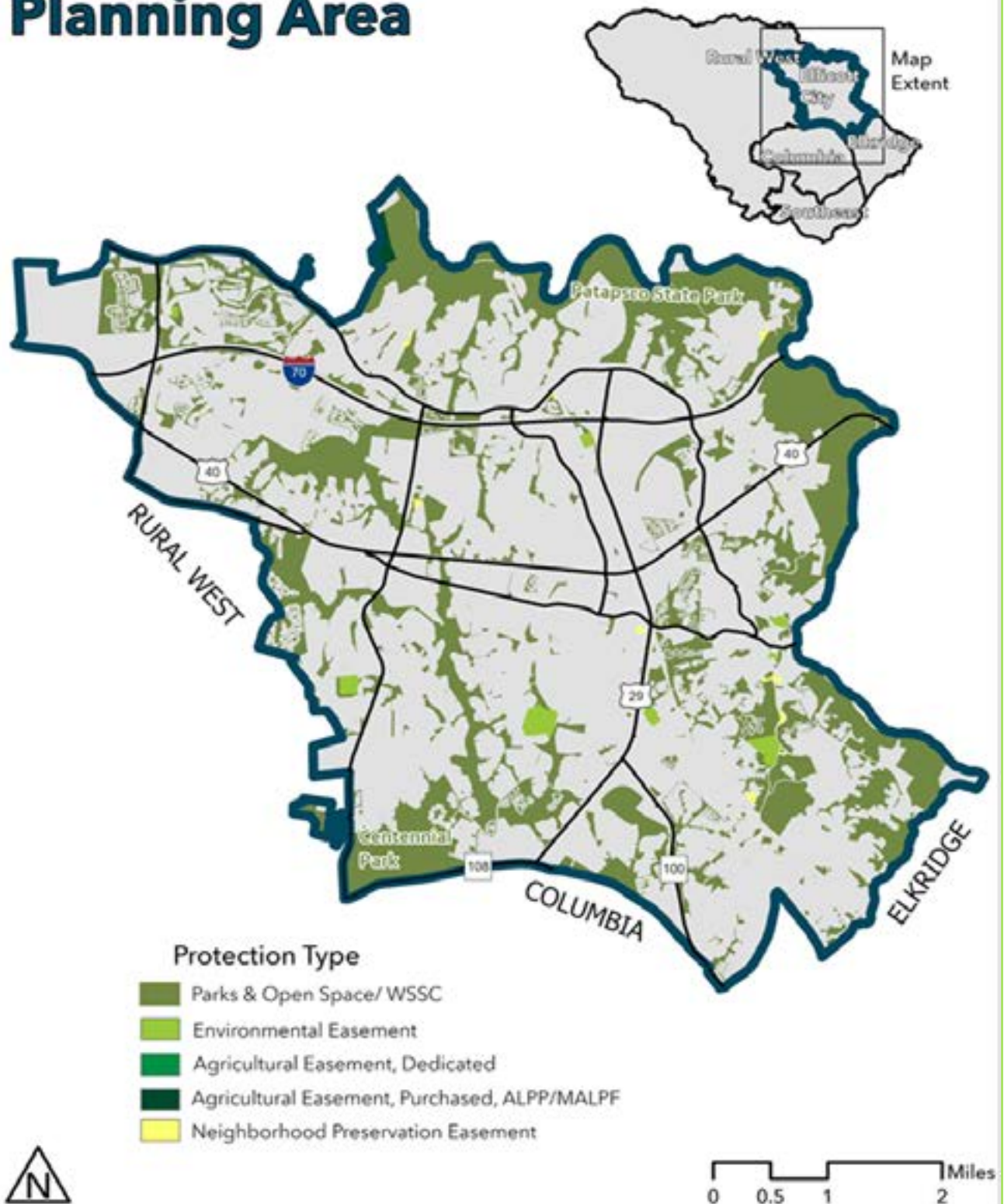
Ellicott City Planning Area

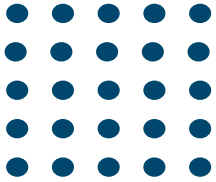
Green Infrastructure Network



Ellicott City Planning Area

Protected Lands





CHAPTER 5

RURAL WEST

PLACE

The Rural West is an area rich with agricultural and environmental resources. It lies outside of the Planned Service Area (PSA) of Howard County and makes up close to 60% of the entire County land area. The area is not served by public water and sewer and relies on well and septic systems. The Rural West is home to most of the County's farming community, with significant land permanently preserved through agricultural and environmental easements acquired through State and County preservation programs first initiated in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The Planned Service Area (PSA) was first adopted in the 1987 Master Plan for Water & Sewerage, later incorporated into the 1990 General Plan (and others since), outlines the areas of the County served by public water and sewer services. The PSA is also important because it serves as Howard County's designated growth boundary, or Priority Funding Area, per the State's Smart Growth Act.

Residential development in the Rural West is primarily low-density single-family homes. Only about 12% of the more than 127,000 homes in Howard County are located in the Rural West, and the area contains only 3% of the total County non-residential building space (about 3.5 million square feet of the total 114.3 million square feet). Small nodes of mixed-use areas focusing on commercial activity along rural crossroads are located at important intersections in older farming communities in the Rural West. Small-scale, compact businesses in the crossroads are oriented toward main roads, streets, intersections, parking areas, or green spaces, and serve as gathering places for the community or as nearby destinations to meet some of the daily needs of the surrounding rural population. The Rural West has several designated scenic roads and waterways that are within preserved parkland and farms.

Howard County Government's new Office of Agriculture (OoA) is located near the Howard County Fairgrounds, in West Friendship Park's historic Hebb House. The OoA is dedicated to preserving Agriculture in Howard County as a viable industry and provides business support, technical assistance, promotion and acts as a liaison between farmers and county agencies.



RURAL WEST

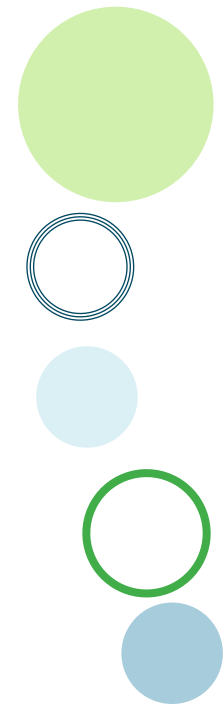
Land Use Characteristics	Value
Total area (acres)	93,516
Key environmental indicators	
Parkland (acres)	12,291
Tree canopy cover (percent)	47.2
Non-Residential Development	
Industrial use (square feet)	262,379
Office use (square feet)	226,850
Other use (square feet)	2,567,149
Retail/Service use (square feet)	430,036
Total (square feet)	3,486,414
Residential use (dwelling units)	15,035
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database, Chesapeake Bay Trust Land Cover 2024, Maryland Department of Assessments	

RURAL WEST

Places of Interest	Number
50+ Center	1
Fire Station	3
Grocery Store	3
Library	1
Police Station	1
Public School - Elementary	6
Public School - Middle	3
Public School - High	2
Worship	52
Source: Howard County DPZ	

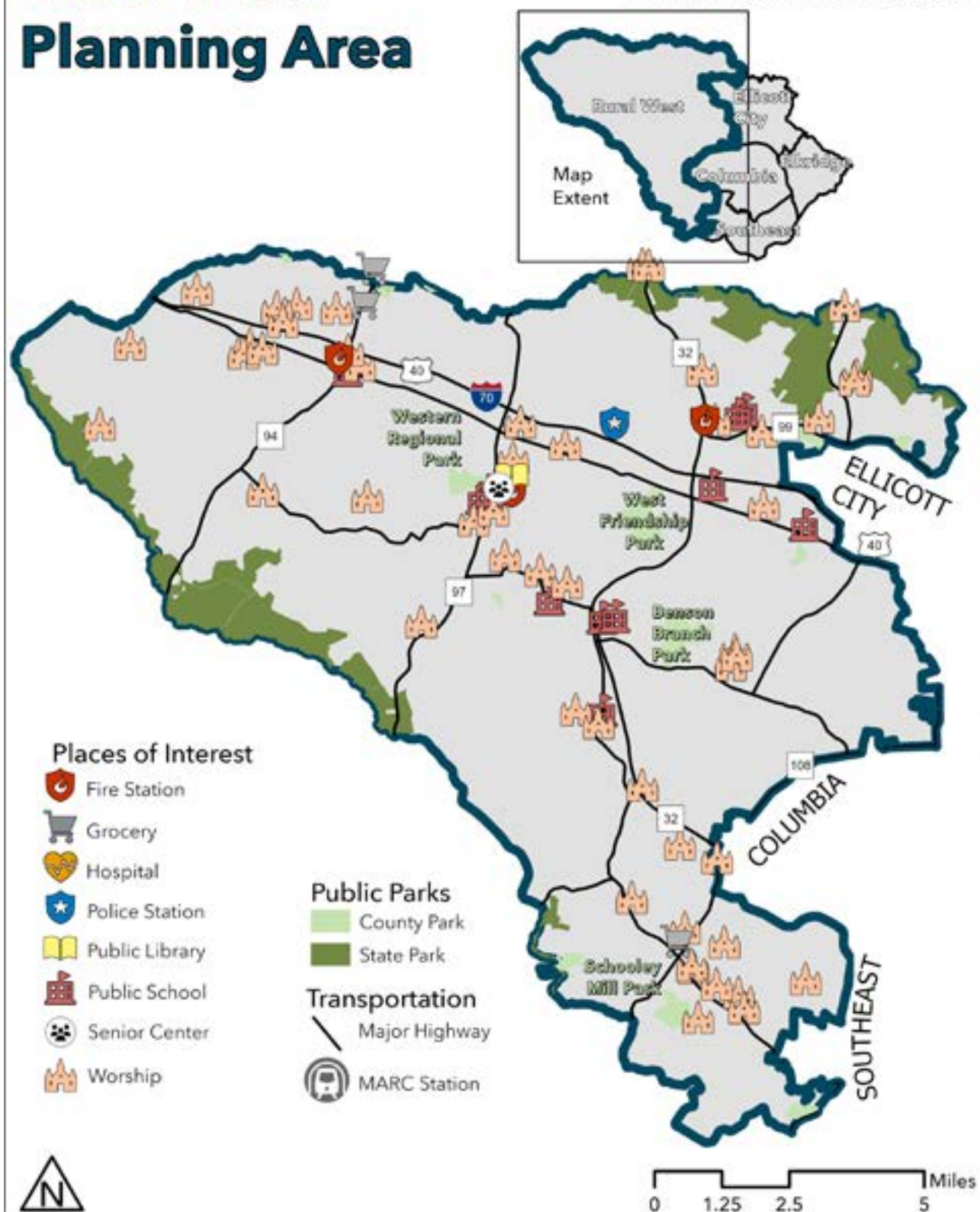
RURAL WEST

Land Use Category	Percent of Land Area
Age-Restricted Residential	0.2%
Commercial	0.8%
Government & Institutional	3.1%
Industrial	0.1%
Other Transportation & Utilities	0.3%
Parks & Open Space	13.2%
Roadway & Parking	4.2%
Single-Family Detached	76.9%
Vacant, Undeveloped Land	1.5%
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database	

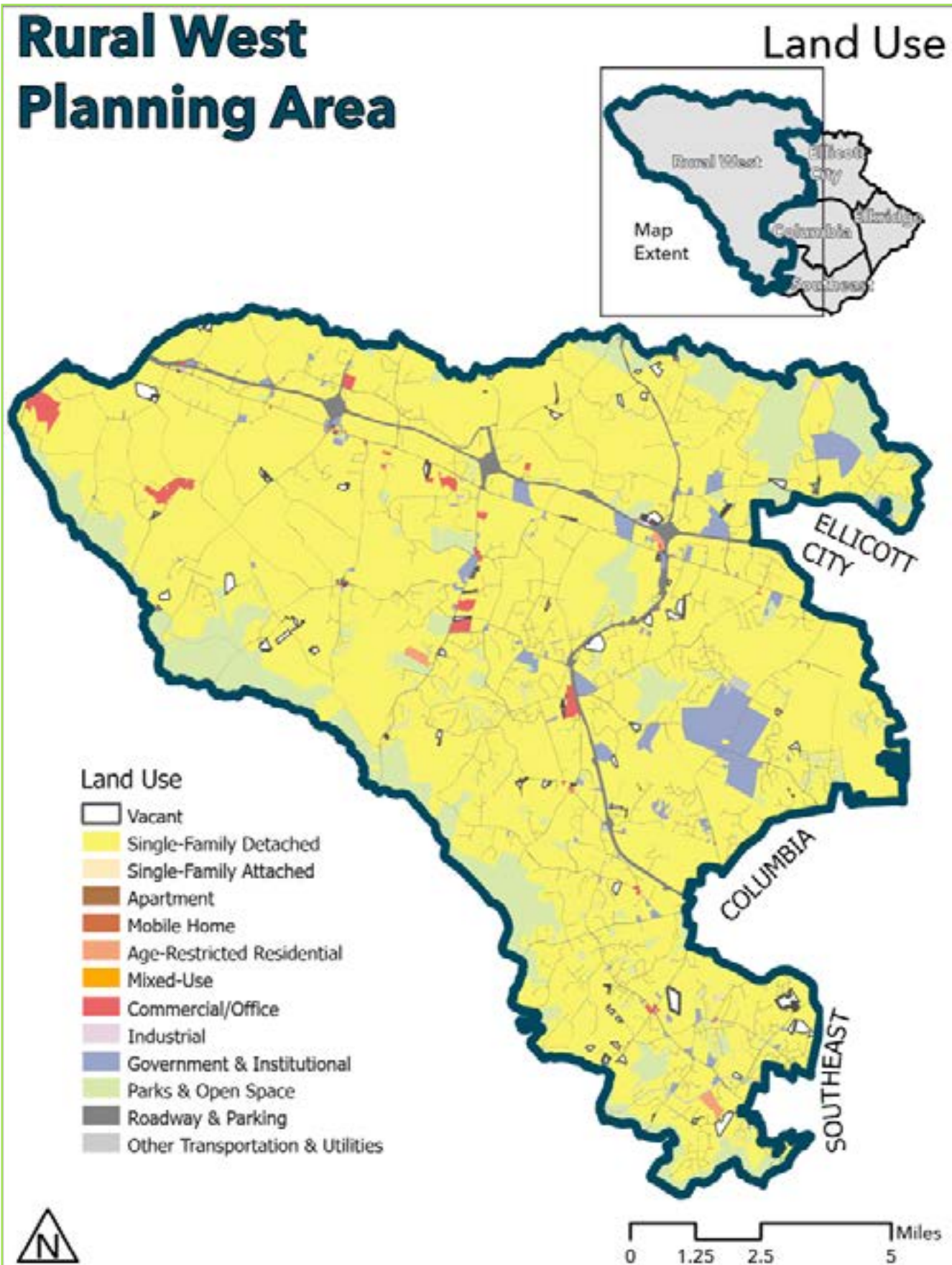


Rural West Planning Area

Places of Interest



Rural West Planning Area



PEOPLE

Like other areas of Howard County, the Rural West has experienced a growing and diversifying population, characterized by a significant rise in Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Other Races residents alongside a growing aging community (65 years and older). Educational attainment shifted dramatically during this period, with a substantial surge in the number of residents 25 years and older holding advanced professional degrees, from approximately 29% in 2010-2014 to 39% by 2020-2024.

Economically, 55% of the households earned over \$200,000 during 2020-2024 compared to 36% in 2010-2014. In particular, the nominal average household income in Rural West increased by 42% from \$190,855 to \$271,538, greatly surpassing the inflation rate of 31%. The income bracket groups collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Additionally, the labor force underwent a notable transition in commuting habits, showing a sharp increase in remote work. Overall, the figures reflect a region becoming more educated and more ethnically diverse between the two five-year time periods. Households with families made up an estimated 87% of all households in the Rural West in 2020-2024, significantly more than the 73% in the County as a whole, and the highest statistically significant rate compared to Columbia and Ellicott City. Conversely, about 11% of households in the Rural West were single-person households, half the 22% Countywide percentage. These household configurations result in an average of 3.1 persons per household in the Rural West compared to a smaller countywide average of 2.8.

The majority of households in the Rural West have incomes over \$200,000, estimated at 55% in 2020-2024 compared to only 36% during 2010-2014 (based on 2014 dollars). This is greater than the latest Countywide rate of 35%.

RURAL WEST

Age	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	42,134	100%	43,318	100%	47,540	100%
0 to 4 years	1,376	3%	1,625	4%	2,262	5%
5 to 17 years	9,508	23%	8,664	20%	9,824	21%
18 to 34 years	5,777	14%	6,412	15%	6,301	13%
35 to 44 years	4,439	11%	4,135	10%	5,974	13%
45 to 64 years	14,985	36%	14,950	35%	14,601	31%
65 years and older	6,049	14%	7,532	17%	8,578	18%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

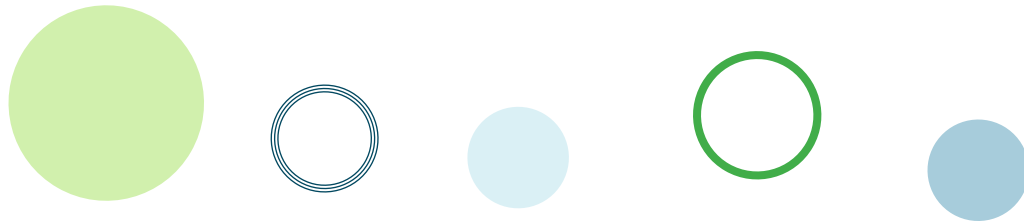
RURAL WEST

Race and Hispanic Ethnicity	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	42,134	100%	43,318	100%	47,540	100%
White, non-Hispanic	34,017	81%	32,014	74%	30,192	64%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	1,423	3%	2,322	5%	2,694	6%
Asian, non-Hispanic	4,586	11%	5,808	13%	9,122	19%
Other races, non-Hispanic**	1,148	3%	1,958	5%	2,525	5%
Hispanic or Latino	960	2%	1,216	3%	3,007	6%

**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



RURAL WEST

English Language Usage and Ability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 5 years and over	40,758	100%	41,693	100%	45,278	100%
Speak non-English language at home	5,638	14%	5,994	14%	10,552	23%
Speak English less than "very well"	1,726	4%	1,401	3%	2,375	5%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

RURAL WEST

Educational Attainment	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 25 years and over	27,872	100%	29,433	100%	31,893	100%
No high school diploma	828	3%	787	3%	1,100	3%
High school diploma or some college	9,943	36%	9,627	33%	7,986	25%
Bachelor's degree only	9,005	32%	9,171	31%	10,489	33%
Graduate or professional degree	8,096	29%	9,848	33%	12,318	39%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

RURAL WEST

Household Type	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Number of households	13,256	100%	14,094	100%	15,346	100%
Family households	11,533	87%	11,926	85%	13,284	87%
Families with children	5,728	43%	5,187	37%	6,340	41%
Single-parent families with children	774	6%	454	3%	601	4%
Nonfamily multi-person households	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nonfamily single-person households	1,384	10%	1,845	13%	1,620	11%
Average household size	3.18	N/A	3.07	N/A	3.10	N/A

*Estimate is unreliable.

N/A - Not applicable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

RURAL WEST

Household Income	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total number of households	13,256	100%	14,094	100%	15,346	100%
Less than \$50,000	1,511	11%	1,522	11%	1,067	7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	2,473	19%	1,927	14%	1,626	11%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2,452	18%	2,370	17%	1,992	13%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2,113	16%	2,180	15%	2,210	14%
\$200,000 or more	4,707	36%	6,095	43%	8,451	55%
Average household income	\$190,855	N/A	\$220,521	N/A	\$271,538	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

RURAL WEST

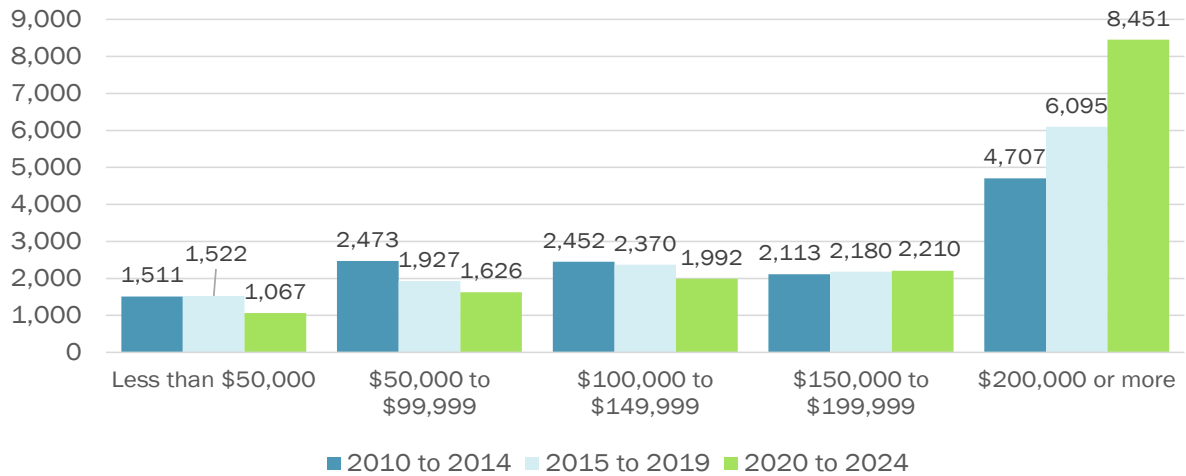
Commuting Mode and Household Vehicle Availability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Workers ages 16 years and over	21,099	100%	21,680	100%	23,929	100%
Commuted by driving	18,055	86%	19,093	88%	16,430	69%
Car-free commute	785	4%	642	3%	524	2%
Worked from home	2,259	11%	1,945	9%	6,975	29%
Households with no vehicles	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Estimate is unreliable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Rural West, Number of Households By Income



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

HOUSING

The Rural West Planning Area is defined by farmland, forests, and large lot residential neighborhoods on well and septic systems. The area makes up about 60% of Howard County's land and has been extensively preserved through agricultural and environmental easements. East of the Public Service Area line, where public water and sewer service is available, development is more suburban and denser—about 3.2 residents per acre compared to 0.6 residents per acre in the west.

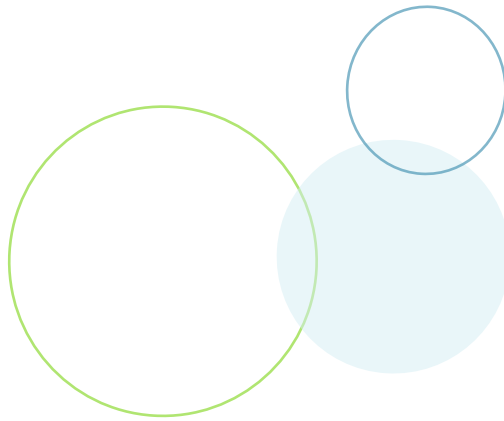
The Rural West has 15,035 housing units, and unlike the other planning areas in Howard County, most homes are single-family detached. The housing inventory in the Rural West is relatively mature, with an average age of 39 years and approximately 61 percent of units constructed before 1990. Residential development was most active during the 1960s through 1980s, with the largest share of homes (20%) built between 1980 and 1989. Construction activity slowed considerably between 2000 and 2019 but has increased in recent years, with 1,301 units (9% of the housing stock) built since 2020. The predominance of detached homes reflects the area's low-density rural character surrounded by preserved agricultural and environmental land.

An estimated 93% of homes in the Rural West are owner-occupied, considerably statistically significantly higher than Columbia, Ellicott City, and Southeast as of 2020-2024. The nominal average value of owner-occupied homes increased by 48% from approximately \$637,460 in 2010-2014 to \$945,595 in 2020-2024, surpassing the 31% inflation rate.

HOUSING

The Rural West's nominal average monthly homeowner costs for households with a mortgage increased by 31%, from \$3,282 in 2010-2014 to \$4,291 in 2020-2024, matching the rate of inflation during this time period. The average cost of owning a home in Maryland in the latest 2020-2024 period was 49% less than in Howard County's Rural West.

The nominal average gross rent for the few homes that were rented grew by 114% from \$855 in 2010-2014 to \$1,832 in 2020-2024, substantially outpacing the 31% inflation rate. The housing values, housing costs, and gross rent values collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.



RURAL WEST

Year Built	Total Units	%	Single-Family Detached	%	Single-Family Attached	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%
Before 1960	998	7%	998	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
1960 to 1969	2,587	17%	2,583	17%	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%
1970 to 1979	2,575	17%	2,575	17%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
1980 to 1989	3,002	20%	3,002	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
1990 to 1999	2,418	16%	2,350	16%	68	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2000 to 2009	1,492	10%	1,492	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2010 to 2019	451	3%	451	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2020 or Later	1,301	9%	1,301	9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Unknown Year	211	1%	211	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	15,035	100%	14,963	100%	68	100%	4	100%	0	0%
Average Age*	39 Years									

Percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding. *Excludes housing units for which the year built is unknown.

Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)

RURAL WEST

Homeownership and Housing Affordability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Homeowner households	12,275	93%	13,430	95%	14,333	93%
Average homeowner monthly costs (with mortgage)	\$3,282	N/A	\$3,788	N/A	\$4,291	N/A
Average housing value (for homeowners)	\$637,460	N/A	\$737,669	N/A	\$945,595	N/A
Renter households	981	7%	664	5%	1,013	7%
Rent-burdened households	*	*	*	*	*	*
Average gross rent	\$855	N/A	\$1,014	N/A	\$1,832	N/A

*Estimate is unreliable.

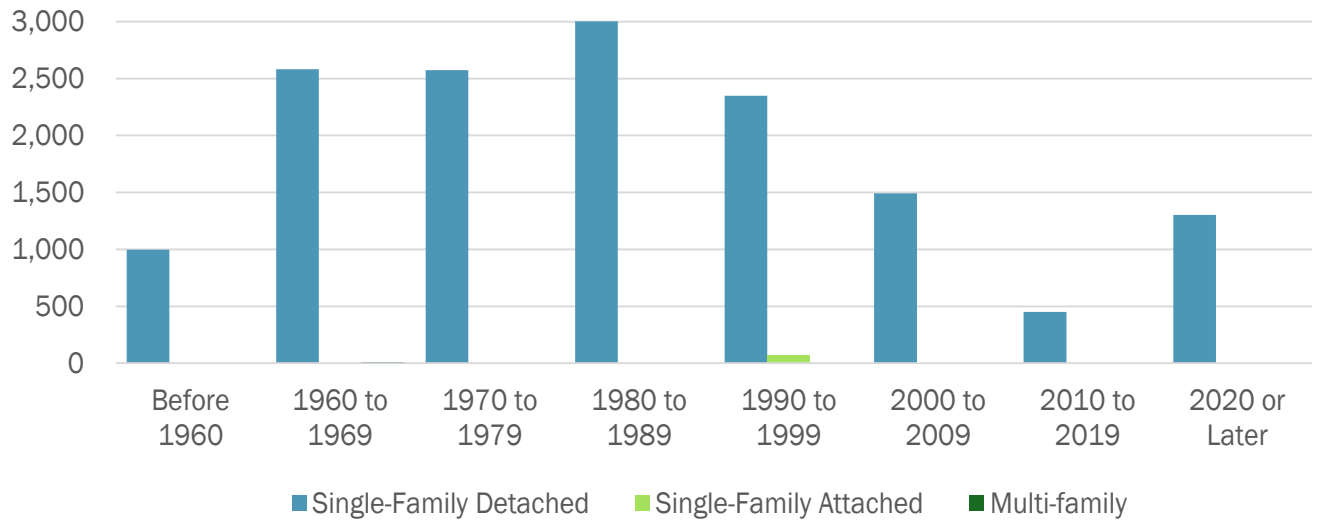
N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

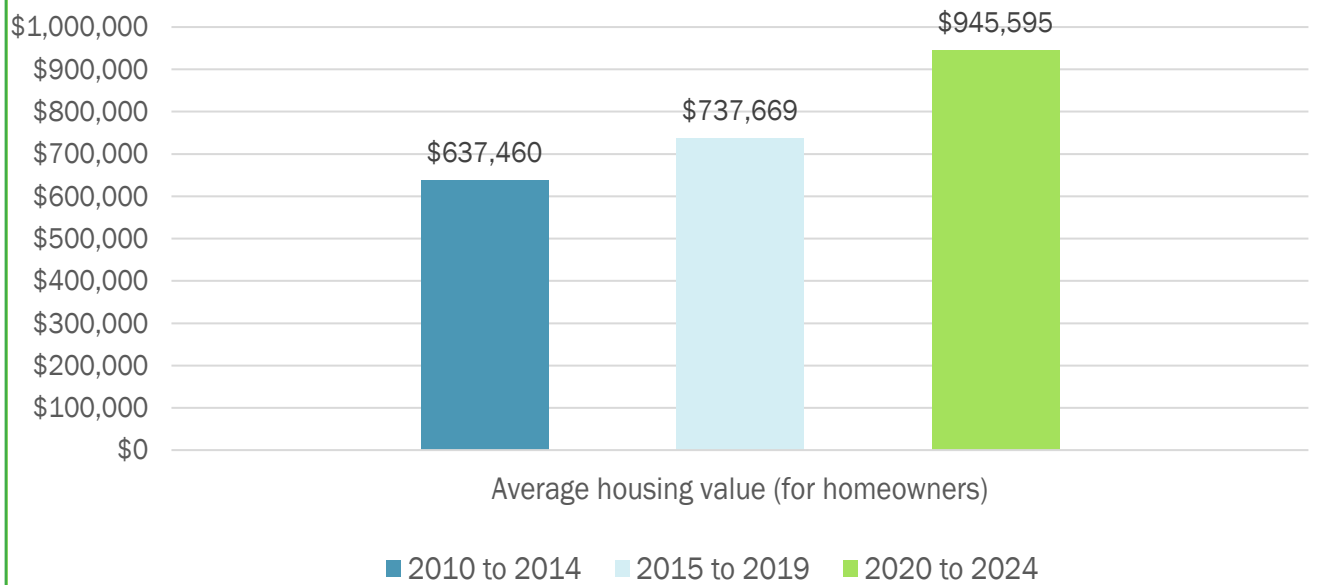
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

Rural West, Number of Housing Units by Year Built and Type

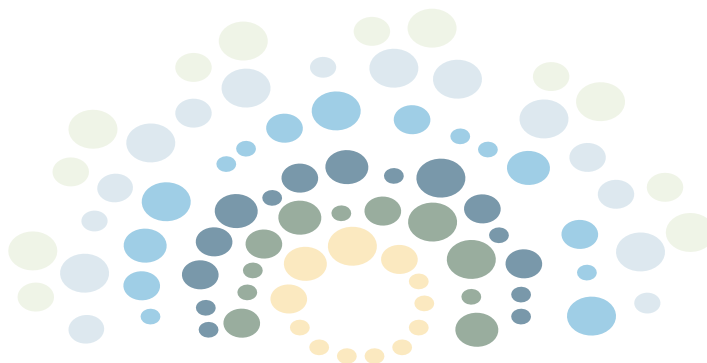


Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)

Rural West, Average Housing Value (for homeowners)



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

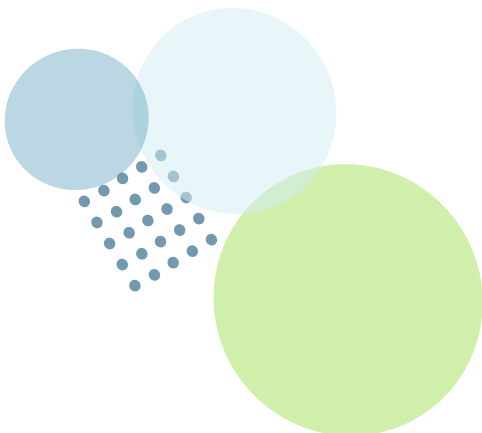


ECOLOGY

Of the five Planning Areas, the Rural West contains the largest percentage of protected land, with 49% of the Planning Area protected from future development in the form of park land, open space, and preservation easements. This area of the County is a priority for agricultural preservation easement programs, which preserve over 36% of the land within the Rural West Planning Area. An additional 13% is protected by State or County Park land, open space, or the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), which owns and manages land surrounding the Triadelphia and T. Howard Duckett (Rocky Gorge) reservoirs for the purpose of protecting the public water supply. The Planning Area includes a variety of parks that offer residents opportunities to connect with nature, such as the McKeldin and Woodstock areas of Patapsco Valley State Park, West Friendship Park, Patuxent River State Park, and Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area. Recreational opportunities are also plentiful at parks such as Western Regional Park, South Branch Park, and Schooley Mill Park.

The Rural West Planning Area contains over 45,000 acres of protected land, forming a foundation for the County's Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) and helping to protect the headwaters of the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers. Several of the headwater streams are designated as "Tier II" by Maryland Department of the Environment due to their significantly higher water quality. The Patuxent watershed contains many cold-water streams, offering residents opportunities for recreational trout fishing in addition to a variety of other outdoor activities.

Several large, forested hubs in the County's GIN are located at the northern and western ends of the Planning Area along the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers. Smaller hubs such as West Friendship Park and Benson Branch Park are located within the interior of the Planning Area, connected to the larger hubs by natural corridors that follow stream valleys such as Cattail Creek, Cabin Branch, and the Middle Patuxent River.



RURAL WEST

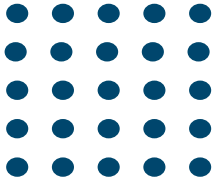
Green Infrastructure Network	Acres	%
Hubs	14,445	
% of Plan Area with Hubs		15%
Corridors (500')	3,422	
% of Plan Area with Corridors		4%
Total GIN	17,867	19%
Preservation Easements in GIN	5,199	
% of GIN Preserved		29%
Parks & OS in GIN	9,943	
% of GIN Parks & OS		56%
Total GIN Protected	15,142	85%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Green Infrastructure Network (GIN), Land Use		



RURAL WEST

Protected Lands	Acres	% of Area
Preservation Easements		
Environmental Easement	10,473	11.2%
Agricultural Easement, Dedicated	3,088	3.3%
Agricultural Easement, Purchased, ALPP/MALPF	20,263	21.7%
Neighborhood Preservation Easement	0	0.0%
Parks & Open Space		
County Parks & Open Space	2,600	2.8%
State Parks	6,202	6.6%
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)	2,514	2.7%
Columbia & HOA Open Space	664	0.7%
Total Protected	45,805	49.0%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Preservation Easements, & Land Use Database		





CHAPTER 6

SOUTHEAST

PLACE

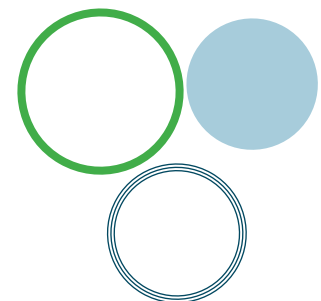
The Southeast Planning Area is located to the south of Elkridge and Columbia and east of the Rural West's southern portion. It also has the distinction of bordering three Maryland counties to the south and east—Montgomery, Prince George's, and Anne Arundel. It is the second smallest Planning Area (after Elkridge) at 15,000 acres. Yet it contains many unique and active communities—Laurel, Maple Lawn, Jessup, Savage, Annapolis Junction, among others.

The Southeast contains a robust amount of industrial building square footage (20,600 square feet), the most of all Planning Areas, located primarily in the Route 1 Corridor. The Southeast also contains significant amounts of office and retail/service use space, both in the Route 1 Corridor and further west in the Maple Lawn, Johns Hopkins APL, and Montpelier neighborhoods.

Within the Southeast Planning Area are 19,500 housing units in close proximity to local and regional jobs with quick access to major north-south and east-west highways— I-95 and US-1, MD-32, and MD-216. The area's rich historic district includes 19th-century brick duplexes and multifamily units built to house mill workers, Carroll Baldwin Hall, Savage Mill Manor House, and the Bollman Truss Bridge.

SOUTHEAST	
Land Use Characteristics	Value
Total area (acres)	14,999
Key environmental indicators	
Parkland (acres)	3,455
Tree canopy cover (percent)	42.4
Non-Residential Development	
Industrial use (square feet)	20,598,325
Office use (square feet)	5,931,475
Other use (square feet)	3,480,942
Retail/Service use (square feet)	3,850,810
Total (square feet)	33,861,552
Residential use (dwelling units)	19,488
Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database, Chesapeake Bay	
Trust Land Cover 2024, Maryland Department of Assessments	

SOUTHEAST	
Places of Interest	Number
50+ Center	2
Fire Station	3
Grocery Store	8
Library	1
Police Station	2
Public School - Elementary	6
Public School - Middle	4
Public School - High	1
Worship	20
Source: Howard County DPZ	





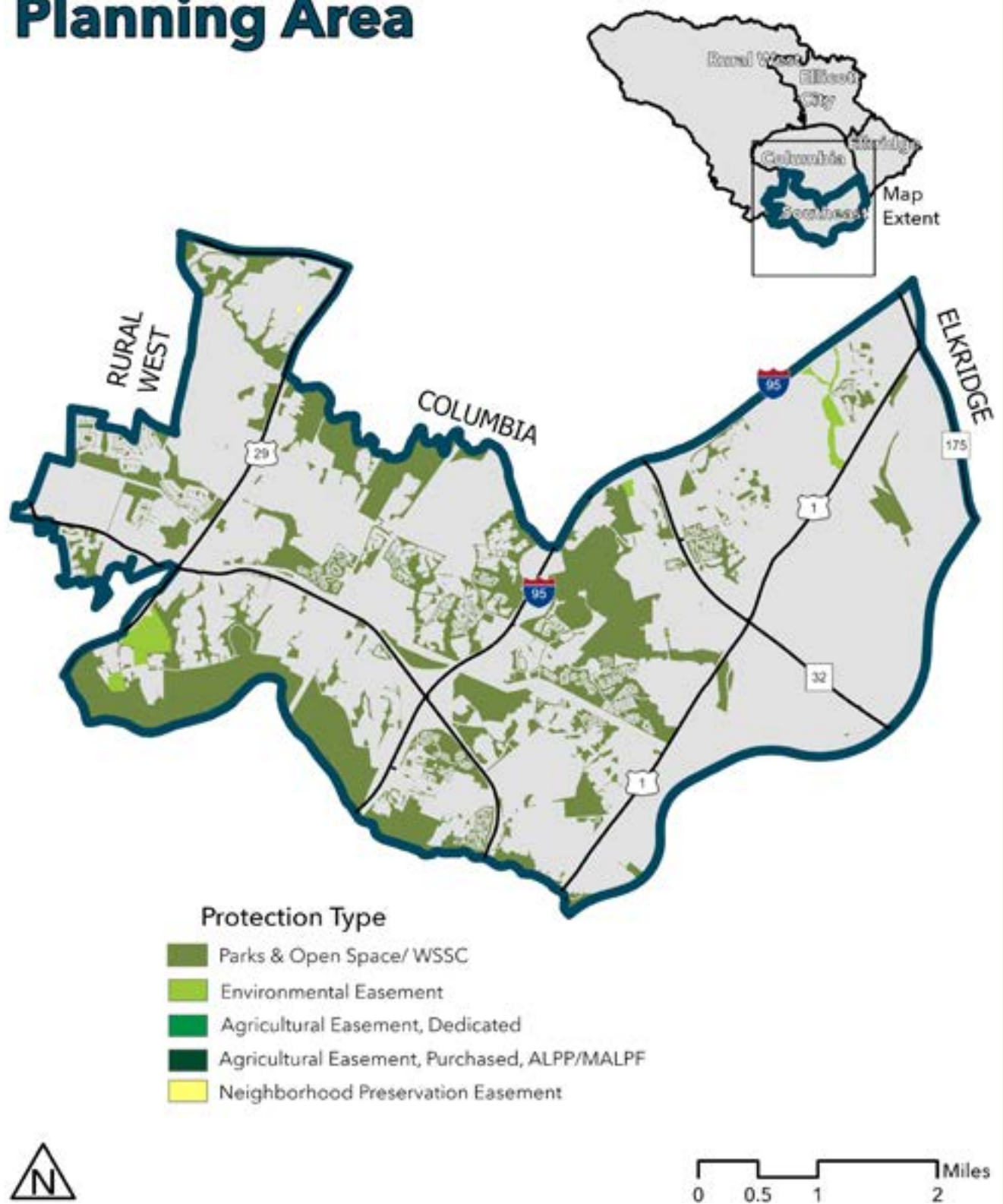
SOUTHEAST

Land Use Category	Percent of Land Area
<i>Age-Restricted Residential</i>	0.4%
<i>Apartment</i>	1.5%
<i>Commercial</i>	6.6%
<i>Government & Institutional</i>	5.5%
<i>Industrial</i>	15.1%
<i>Mixed-Use</i>	0.1%
<i>Mobile Home</i>	0.5%
<i>Other Transportation & Utilities</i>	3.3%
<i>Parks & Open Space</i>	23.1%
<i>Roadway & Parking</i>	15.3%
<i>Single-Family Attached</i>	2.6%
<i>Single-Family Detached</i>	23.1%
<i>Vacant, Undeveloped Land</i>	2.9%

Source: Howard County DPZ Land Use Database

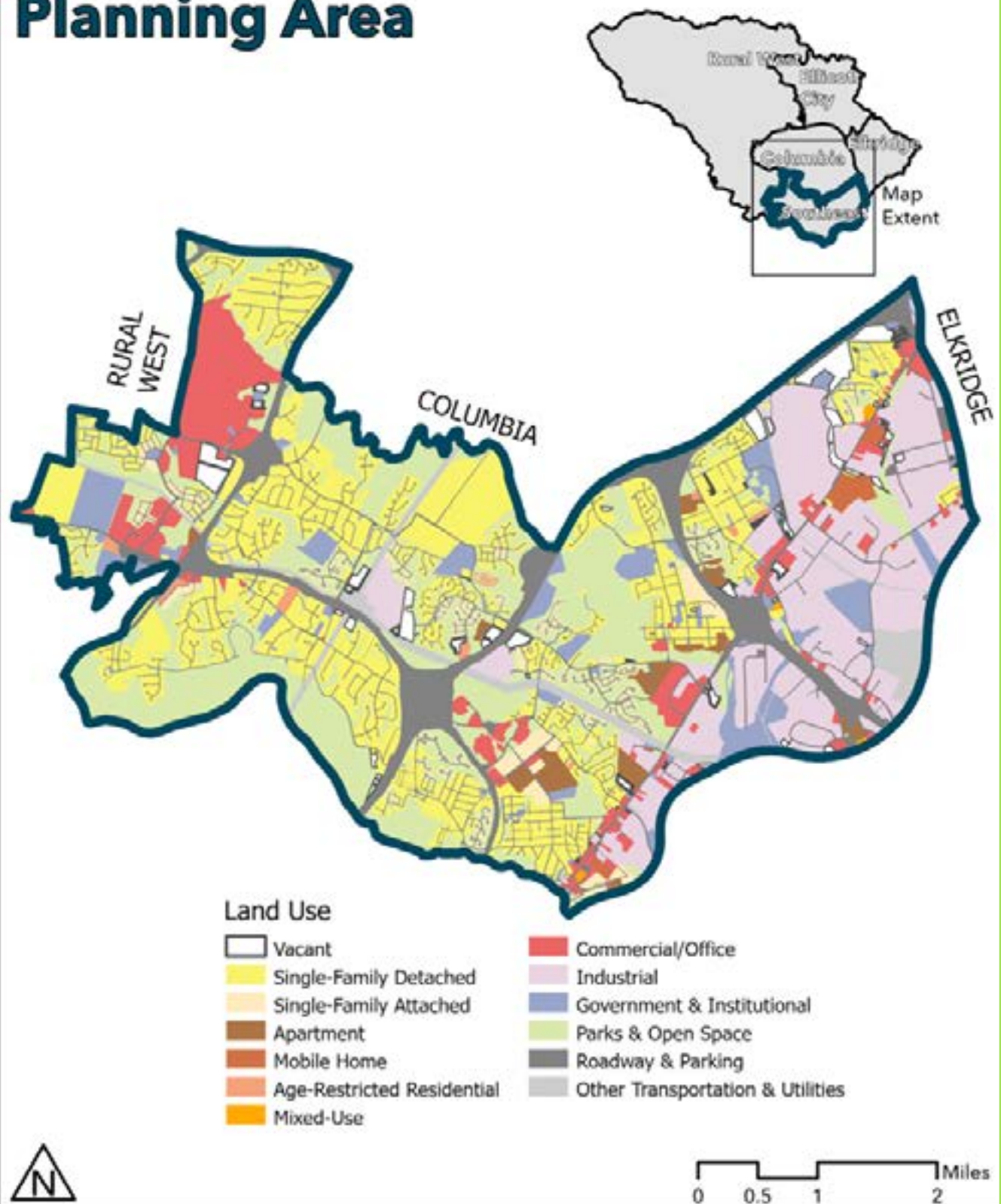
Southeast Planning Area

Protected Lands



Southeast Planning Area

Land Use



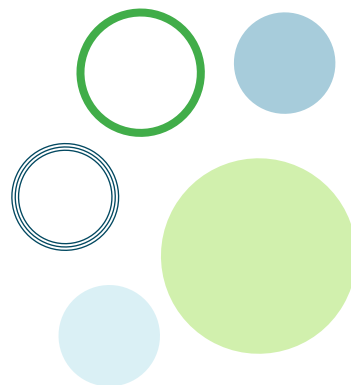
PEOPLE

Similar to other areas of Howard County, the Southeast Planning Area has undergone significant demographic transformation. Between the 2010-2014 and 2020-2024 ACS five-year estimates, the Southeast experienced an estimated 27% increase in total population, second only to ElkrIDGE's growth of 31%, and more than double the Countywide growth rate of 12% during this time period.

The nominal average household income increased by 48% from \$122,178 to \$180,665 between the two five-year periods, greater than the 31% inflation rate. The household incomes surveyed during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted-dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars. The proportion of residents holding graduate or professional degrees increased by seven percentage points.

Other key trends include a diversifying ethnic landscape as of 2020-2024 marked by an increase in the Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Other Races populations. A shift in labor dynamics is indicated as characterized by a 640% increase in the "work from home" population. Similar to other Planning Areas, the Southeast is experiencing an aging population (65 years and older) and a rise in residents who speak languages other than English. The estimated average household size in the Southeast has remained relatively stable at 2.9 persons, slightly higher than the Countywide average of 2.8.

In 2010-2014, about 50% of the population held a bachelor's degree or higher. By 2020-2024, this figure rose to 59%. Specifically, those with graduate or professional degrees increased from 23% to 30%.



SOUTHEAST

Age	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	43,938	100%	51,010	100%	55,609	100%
0 to 4 years	2,908	7%	3,846	8%	3,416	6%
5 to 17 years	8,737	20%	9,611	19%	9,970	18%
18 to 34 years	9,252	21%	10,903	21%	12,395	22%
35 to 44 years	7,387	17%	8,087	16%	8,563	15%
45 to 64 years	12,363	28%	13,453	26%	14,738	27%
65 years and older	3,291	7%	5,110	10%	6,527	12%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

SOUTHEAST

Race and Hispanic Ethnicity	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Population	43,938	100%	51,010	100%	55,609	100%
White, non-Hispanic	21,140	48%	20,897	41%	19,956	36%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	11,286	26%	14,542	29%	15,506	28%
Asian, non-Hispanic	6,560	15%	9,206	18%	9,839	18%
Other races, non-Hispanic**	2,047	5%	2,143	4%	3,374	6%
Hispanic or Latino	2,905	7%	4,222	8%	6,934	12%

**The "Other races, non-Hispanic" subgroup also includes: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

SOUTHEAST

English Language Usage and Ability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 5 years and over	41,030	100%	47,164	100%	52,193	100%
Speak non-English language at home	10,059	25%	14,793	31%	16,483	32%
Speak English less than "very well"	3,286	8%	4,106	9%	5,792	11%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

SOUTHEAST

Educational Attainment	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Population ages 25 years and over	28,865	100%	33,631	100%	37,796	100%
No high school diploma	1,698	6%	1,897	6%	3,057	8%
High school diploma or some college	12,726	44%	12,813	38%	12,407	33%
Bachelor's degree only	7,733	27%	9,507	28%	10,868	29%
Graduate or professional degree	6,708	23%	9,414	28%	11,464	30%

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

SOUTHEAST

Household Type	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Number of households	15,213	100%	17,216	100%	19,148	100%
Family households	11,295	74%	12,994	75%	13,671	71%
Families with children	6,600	43%	7,278	42%	7,256	38%
Single-parent families with children	1,587	10%	1,646	10%	1,610	8%
Nonfamily multi-person households	881	6%	980	6%	1,269	7%
Nonfamily single-person households	3,037	20%	3,242	19%	4,208	22%
Average household size	2.89	N/A	2.96	N/A	2.90	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

SOUTHEAST

Household Income	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total number of households	15,213	100%	17,216	100%	19,148	100%
Less than \$50,000	2,872	19%	2,755	16%	2,344	12%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	4,165	27%	4,288	25%	3,848	20%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3,579	24%	3,848	22%	3,910	20%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2,173	14%	2,367	14%	2,506	13%
\$200,000 or more	2,424	16%	3,958	23%	6,540	34%
Average household income	\$122,178	N/A	\$146,510	N/A	\$180,665	N/A

N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



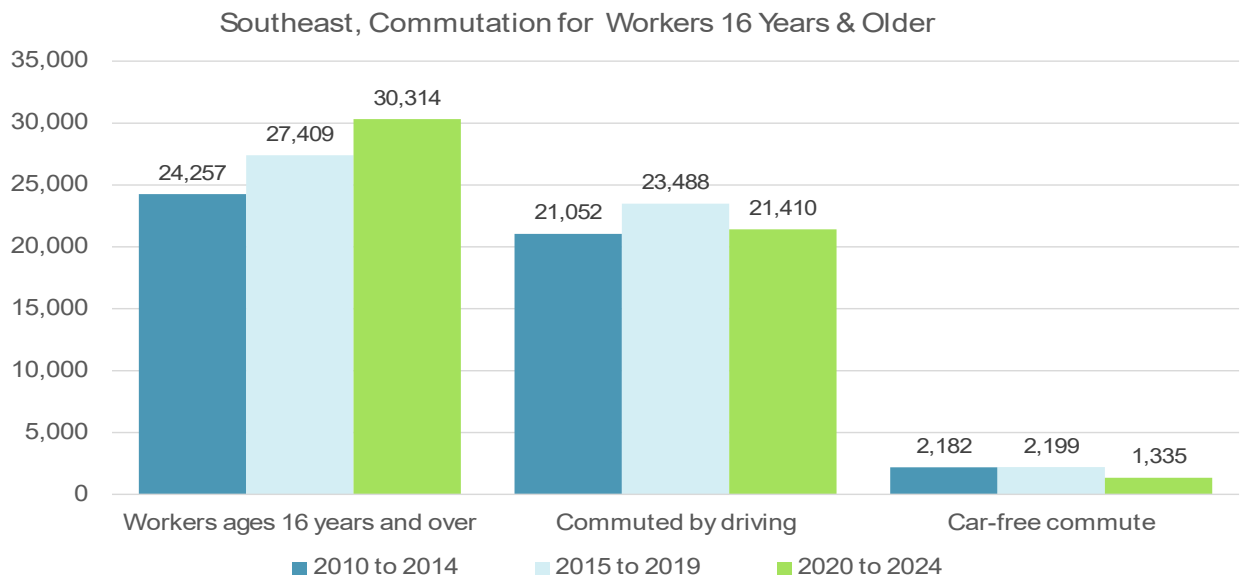
SOUTHEAST

Commuting Mode and Household Vehicle Availability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Workers ages 16 years and over	24,257	100%	27,409	100%	30,314	100%
Commuted by driving	21,052	87%	23,488	86%	21,410	71%
Car-free commute	2,182	9%	2,199	8%	1,335	4%
Worked from home	1,023	4%	1,722	6%	7,569	25%
Households with no vehicles	446	3%	397	2%	*	*

*Estimate is unreliable.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.



Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



HOUSING

The housing landscape in the Southeast region is characterized by an inventory of 19,488 units. Development activity has experienced significant fluctuations over the past six decades, peaking during the 1970s and 2000s. While single-family detached units remain the most prevalent housing type (44% of total inventory), the region has seen distinct eras of diversification into single-family attached and multi-family dwellings. Notably, recent development data from 2010 onwards indicates a significant slowdown in new units built and a pivot toward single-family housing.

The housing landscape in the Southeast has shifted slightly among 2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 time periods. While the homeownership rate increased to approximately 72% in 2015-2019 compared to 69% during 2010-2014, the differences in homeownership between 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 were not statistically significant.

The nominal average housing value for homeowners increased by 69% from \$381,740 during 2010-2014 to \$643,380 during 2020-2024, greatly surpassing the 31% rate of inflation.

The nominal average homeowner monthly costs for Southeast households increased from \$2,435 to \$2,980 between the 2010-2014 and 2020-2024 ACS reporting periods. Although this was a 22% increase, it did not outpace the 31% inflation rate. However, the average monthly homeowner costs for those with a mortgage in Southeast were still higher than the Maryland State average of \$2,597 during 2020-2024.

As of 2020-2024, Southeast's renters were about 31% of the population. While the increase in nominal average gross rent of 24% from \$1,554 in 2010-2014 to \$1,930 during 2020-2024 did not surpass the 31% inflation rate like other Planning Areas, the Southeast average monthly gross rent was still higher than the Maryland State average of \$1,776 during 2020-2024. The homeowner costs, housing values, and gross rent values collected during 2010-2014 were based on 2014 inflation adjusted dollars and not adjusted to 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.



SOUTHEAST

Year Built	Total Units	%	Single-Family Detached	%	Single-Family Attached	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%
Before 1960	1,118	6%	600	7%	96	1%	422	11%	0	0%
1960 to 1969	2,338	12%	466	5%	1,102	16%	592	15%	178	42%
1970 to 1979	4,927	25%	2,005	24%	1,586	24%	1,162	30%	174	41%
1980 to 1989	2,566	13%	1,371	16%	1,135	17%	60	2%	0	0%
1990 to 1999	2,437	13%	1,423	17%	778	12%	236	6%	0	0%
2000 to 2009	3,954	20%	1,280	15%	1,389	21%	1,285	34%	0	0%
2010 to 2019	806	4%	400	5%	342	5%	64	2%	0	0%
2020 or Later	860	4%	851	10%	0	0%	9	0%	0	0%
Unknown Year	482	2%	128	2%	279	4%	0	0%	75	18%
Total	19,488	100%	8,524	100%	6,707	100%	3,830	100%	427	100%
Average Age*	33 years									

Percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding. *Excludes housing units for which the year built is unknown.

Source: Howard County DPZ, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (2025)



SOUTHEAST

Homeownership and Housing Affordability	2010 to 2014		2015 to 2019		2020 to 2024	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Homeowner households	10,500	69%	12,471	72%	13,208	69%
Average homeowner monthly costs (with mortgage)	\$2,435	N/A	\$2,326	N/A	\$2,980	N/A
Average housing value (for homeowners)	\$381,740	N/A	\$396,205	N/A	\$643,380	N/A
Renter households	4,713	31%	4,745	28%	5,940	31%
Rent-burdened households	2,180	48%	1,898	41%	2,501	43%
Average gross rent	\$1,554	N/A	\$1,731	N/A	\$1,930	N/A

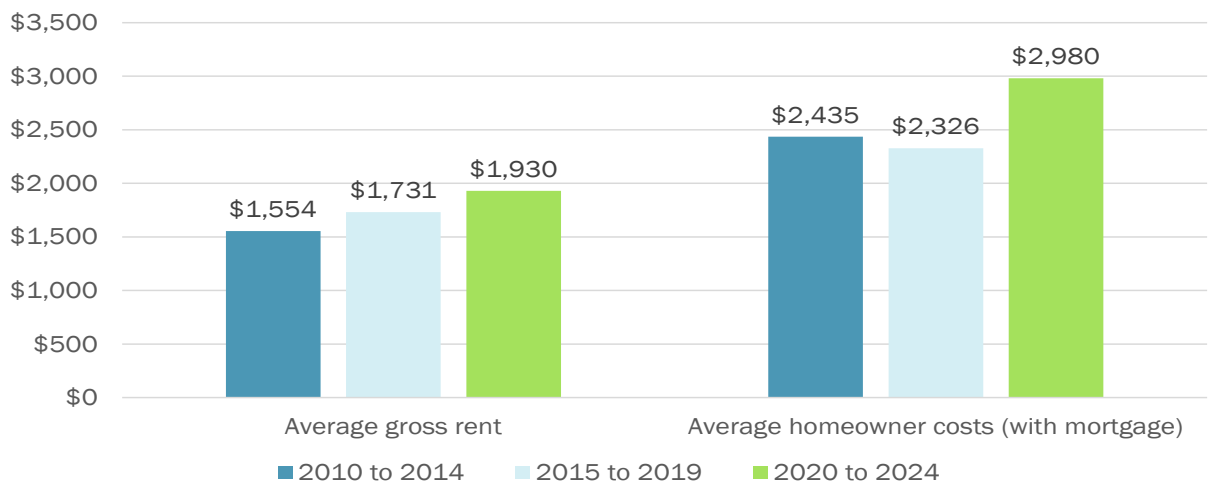
N/A - Not applicable.

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively.

Estimates and percentages may not equal totals due to rounding or selected subgroups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS five-year Estimates Detailed Tables.

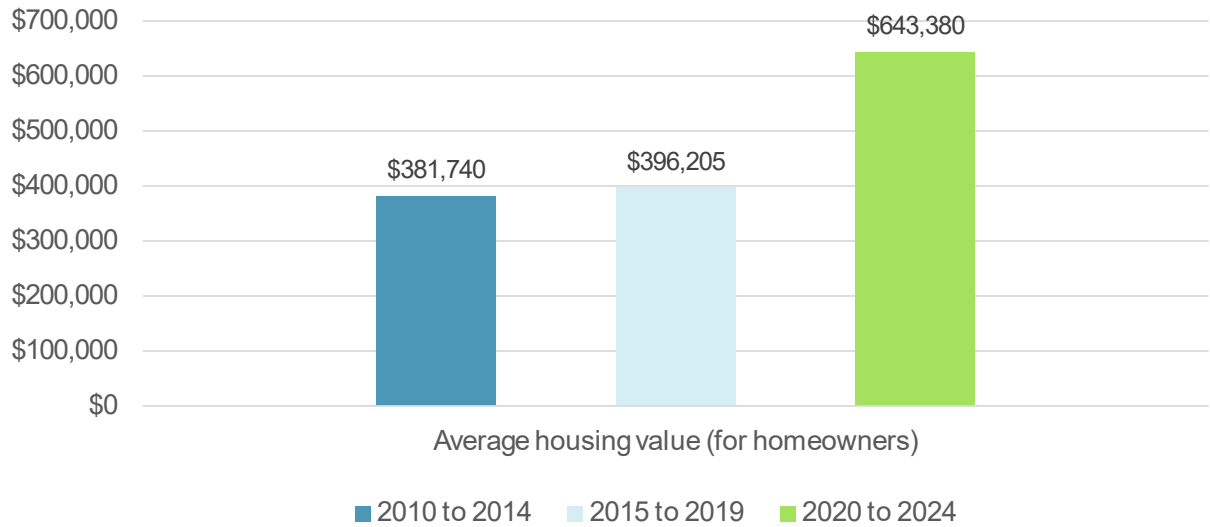
Southeast, Average Monthly Renter and Homeowner Costs



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



Southeast, Average Housing Value (for homeowners)



2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024 dollars in past 12 months reported in 2014, 2019, or 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars, respectively. Some estimates show no statistically significant differences when comparing.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.



ECOLOGY

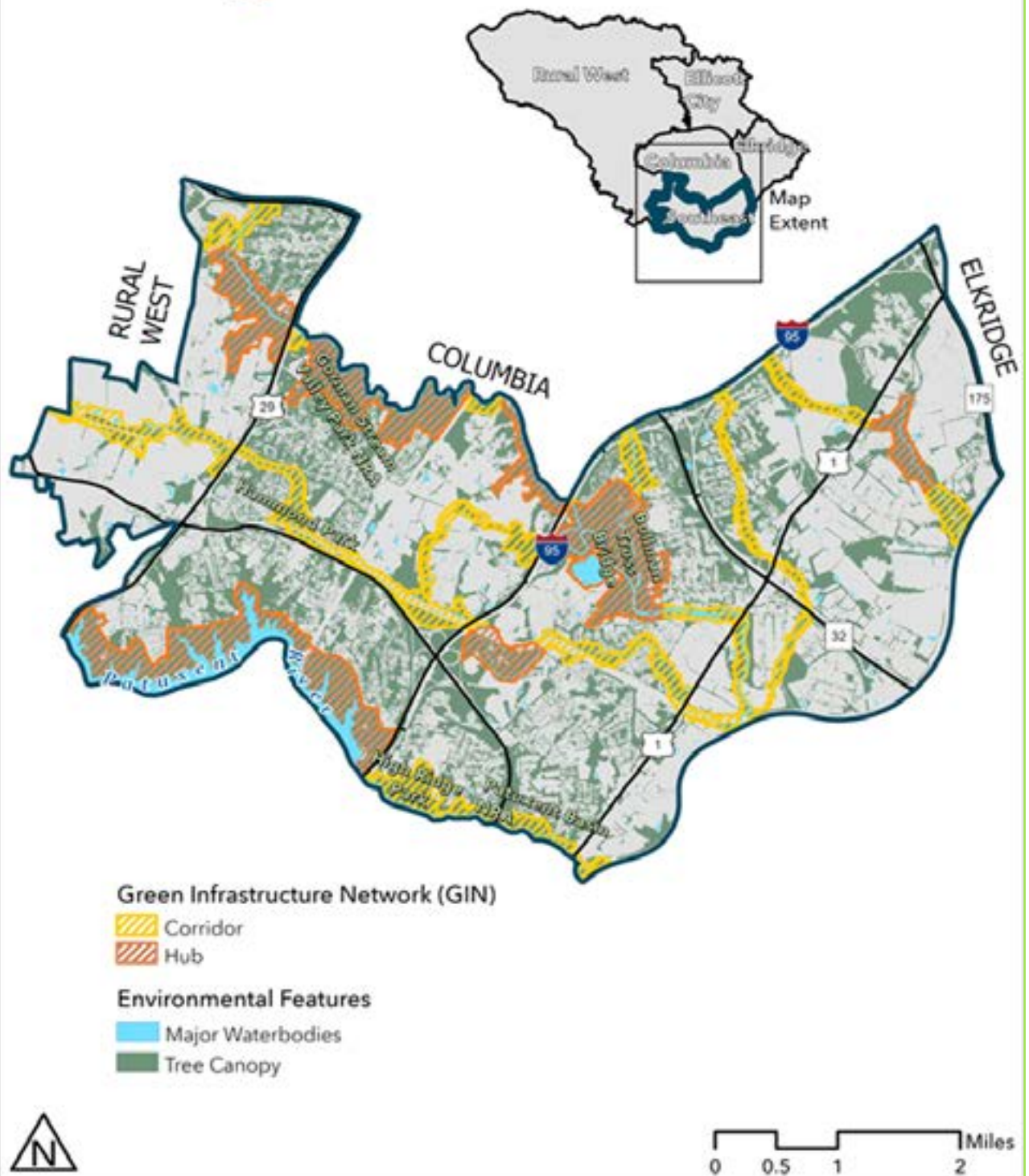
The Southeast Planning Area contains a variety of county parks, open space, and natural areas. Land along the T. Howard Duckett (Rocky Gorge) Reservoir is protected by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), providing residents opportunities for hiking, trail riding, boating, and fishing. The area offers an abundance of trails to explore at the Gorman Stream Valley, Murray Hill Stream Valley, High Ridge Park, Wincopin Trails, and Patuxent Branch Trail. Forested land along the Patuxent River, Middle Patuxent River, and Dorsey Run function as hubs in the county's Green Infrastructure Network. This area of the GIN is connected by stream valleys such as Hammond's Branch and Pickett's Branch that allow wildlife to navigate the urban landscape through natural wooded corridors.

SOUTHEAST		
Green Infrastructure Network	Acres	%
Hubs	1,802	
% of Plan Area with Hubs		9%
Corridors (500')	1,232	
% of Plan Area with Corridors		6%
Total GIN	3,034	15%
Preservation Easements in GIN	8	
% of GIN Preserved		0%
Parks & OS in GIN	2,213	
% of GIN Parks & OS		73%
Total GIN Protected	2,221	73%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Green Infrastructure Network, Land Use		

SOUTHEAST		
Protected Lands	Acres	% of Area
Preservation Easements		
Environmental Easement	58	0.4%
Agricultural Easement, Dedicated	0	0.0%
Agricultural Easement, Purchased, ALPP/MALPF	0	0.0%
Neighborhood Preservation Easement	1	0.0%
Parks & Open Space		
County Parks & Open Space	1,886	12.6%
State Parks	18	0.1%
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)	688	4.6%
Columbia & HOA Open Space	839	5.6%
Total Protected	3,490	23.3%
Sources: Howard County DPZ Preservation Easements, & Land Use Database		

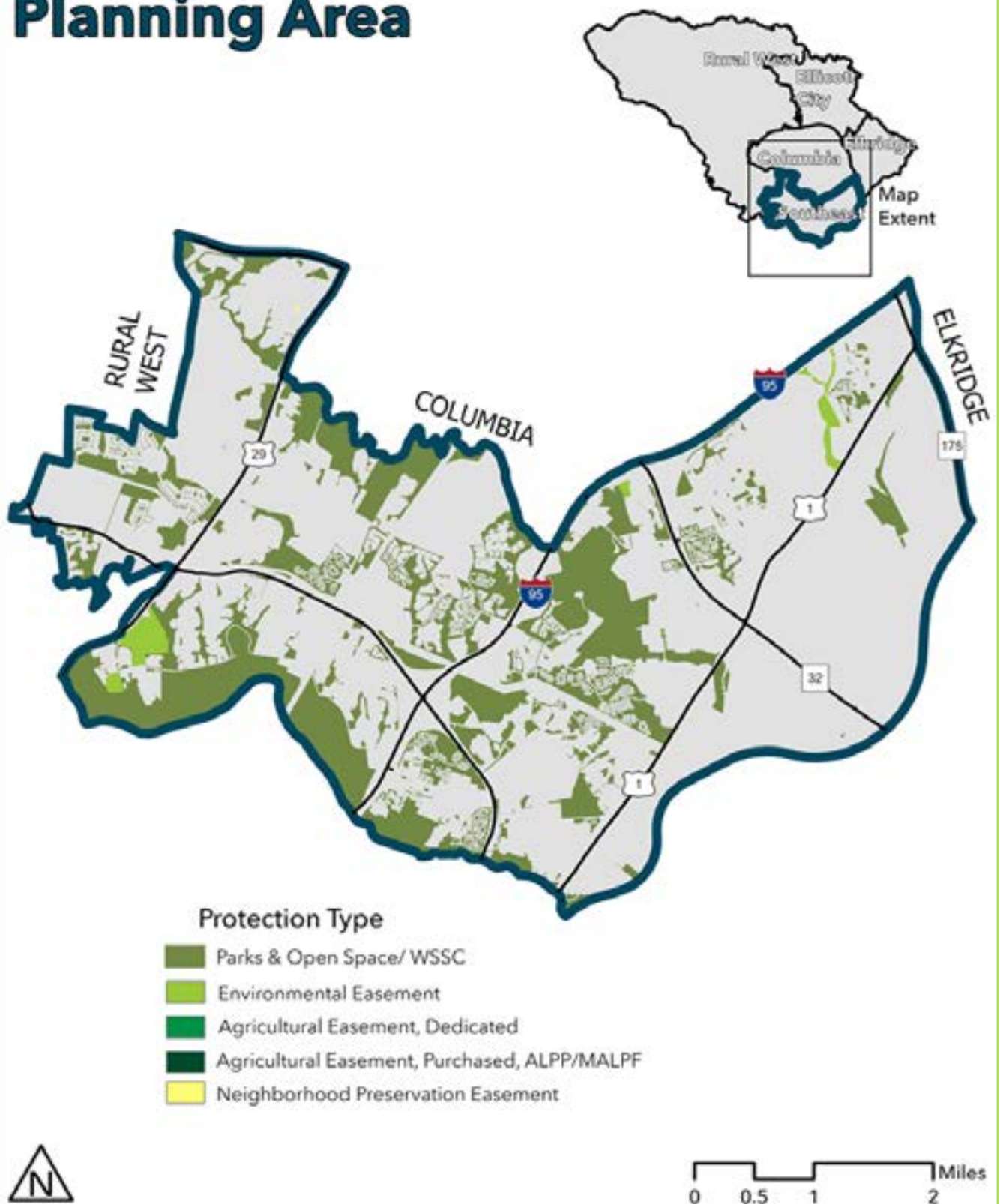
Southeast Planning Area

Green Infrastructure Network



Southeast Planning Area

Protected Lands



CONCLUSION

Howard County has remained a desirable place to live and work for many throughout its recent evolution. For both existing residents and newcomers alike, the County offers a rich array of housing options, jobs opportunities, and recreational amenities, all anchored by robust and well-maintained infrastructure and ecological preservation. The demographic trends outlined in this report show that as the County has grown it has also diversified in a significant way. People from all over the world want to make Howard County their home.

Howard County remains renowned as one of the most affluent and educated jurisdictions in the United States, offering a superior quality of life rooted in a top-ranked school system, rich natural amenities, and a central and economically vibrant location.

Today, as guided by the State's sustainable growth principles and the County's latest General Plan (HoCo By Design), the County's collective vision is to accommodate future growth while preserving its unique community character, environmental stewardship, and well-maintained supporting infrastructure.

The County's demographic landscape is characterized by rapid diversification and an aging population. Between the 2010–2014 and 2020–2024 American Community Survey (ACS) collection periods, the County's population grew by 12.4%, from approximately 299,000 to over 336,000 residents. This growth has been driven primarily by rising numbers of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Other Races residents, with the proportion of non-English languages spoken at home increasing to 28% countywide. Concurrently, the County has become increasingly wealthy and highly educated. Households earning \$200,000 or more annually rose to 35% (unadjusted for inflation), and 34% of adults now hold graduate or professional degrees. This socioeconomic evolution is accompanied by a dramatic transition in labor dynamics, with the share of residents working from home surging from 6% to 26% countywide.

Since the 2010-2014 ACS reporting period, the number of households grew by more than 13,500, with 57% of this growth new homeowners and 43% new renters. According to the 2024 5-year ACS estimates, there are now more than 121,000 households in the County, 71% owner-occupied and 29% renter-occupied.

As pointed out in this report, the housing market faces significant affordability challenges. Although single-family detached homes represent 50% of the overall inventory, recent construction activity has steadily shifted toward attached and multi-family options. Peak residential construction occurred in the 1980s, averaging 3,000 units annually, but production has since slowed to under 1,000 units per year today. This supply constraint has driven average monthly mortgage costs up 21% to \$3,258 and average gross rents up 37% to \$2,155 (both unadjusted for inflation). An estimated 48% of renter households in Howard County are considered rent-burdened, spending

CONCLUSION

30% or more of household income on rent. With less than two percent of its total land remaining undeveloped, Howard County's future growth will rely on strategic infill and redevelopment, spearheaded by transformative projects like the Gateway Master Plan.

Underpinning Howard County's high quality of life is an exceptional commitment to environmental conservation. Over 40% of the County's total area (approximately 65,000 acres) is permanently protected through public parkland, Columbia and other homeowners' association open spaces, and environmental and agricultural easements. Preservation efforts have successfully protected over 23,000 acres of farmland in the Rural West through successful state (MALPF) and local (ALPP) easement programs. Moreover, the County's Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) covers 18% of the county, and 84% of this network is protected from development, maintaining critical headwaters and stream valleys.

Across the County's five Planning Areas, distinct trends emerge. A few highlights include:

- Columbia is the County's urban heart, not only geographically but also holding the largest population with about 105,000 residents, close to a third of all County residents. This heart of Howard County continues to be guided by Jim Rouse's master-planned New Town zoning initiative.
- ElkrIDGE is the smallest and fastest-growing area, beginning with a smaller base and experiencing a 30% population increase since the 2010-2014 ACS reporting period. Its population now stands at close to 56,000 residents. It offers a rich array of historical heritage and industrial uses along the Route 1 corridor, while maintaining a significant amount preserved land, the third most of the five Planning Areas.
- Ellicott City has the second largest population in the county with close to 73,000 residents and maintains the County's highest levels of non-English language usage. The historic mill town bordering the Patapsco continues to provide an important tourism destination.
- The Rural West, defined by its rural and agricultural heritage, is the largest of the five Planning Areas, representing 60% of the county's land area but only 12% of its homes. It has the highest average household incomes and homeownership rates and contains a significant amount of protected land (49% of its total land area).
- The Southeast is the second smallest Planning Area after ElkrIDGE to its north and has about the same number of residents (56,000). It has experienced the second fastest population growth rate in the County and operates as a critical employment corridor, holding over 20.5 million square feet of industrial space, about 45% of the countywide total. It also maintains an exceptional concentration of popular recreational trail networks.



CONCLUSION

Overall, Howard County's recent evolution is defined by a growing and diversifying population all while maintaining its standing as one of the nation's most affluent, educated, and desirable communities. As the County navigates current challenges like housing affordability and a scarce supply of undeveloped land, its future will depend on strategic redevelopment and sustainable growth guided by the General Plan, HoCo By Design. By balancing the unique economic and cultural strengths of its five Planning Areas with an exceptional commitment to environmental and agricultural conservation, Howard County is well-positioned to accommodate future progress without losing its unique community character, historical heritage, and warm hospitality.

APPENDIX

Demographic Methodology

The American Community Survey (ACS) was the data source used in some of the tables to explore the demographic and socioeconomic changes throughout Howard County. Rather than using the whole population, ACS data represents estimates from a sample survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. While the ACS is a vital resource in understanding the people that live in Howard County, the ACS data must be tested for reliability due to margins of error in the survey results and tested for statistical uncertainty when comparing estimates. As a result, the demographic methodology consisted of several steps involving data collection, data aggregation, data analysis, reliability testing, and statistical significance testing.

Demographic Data Collection

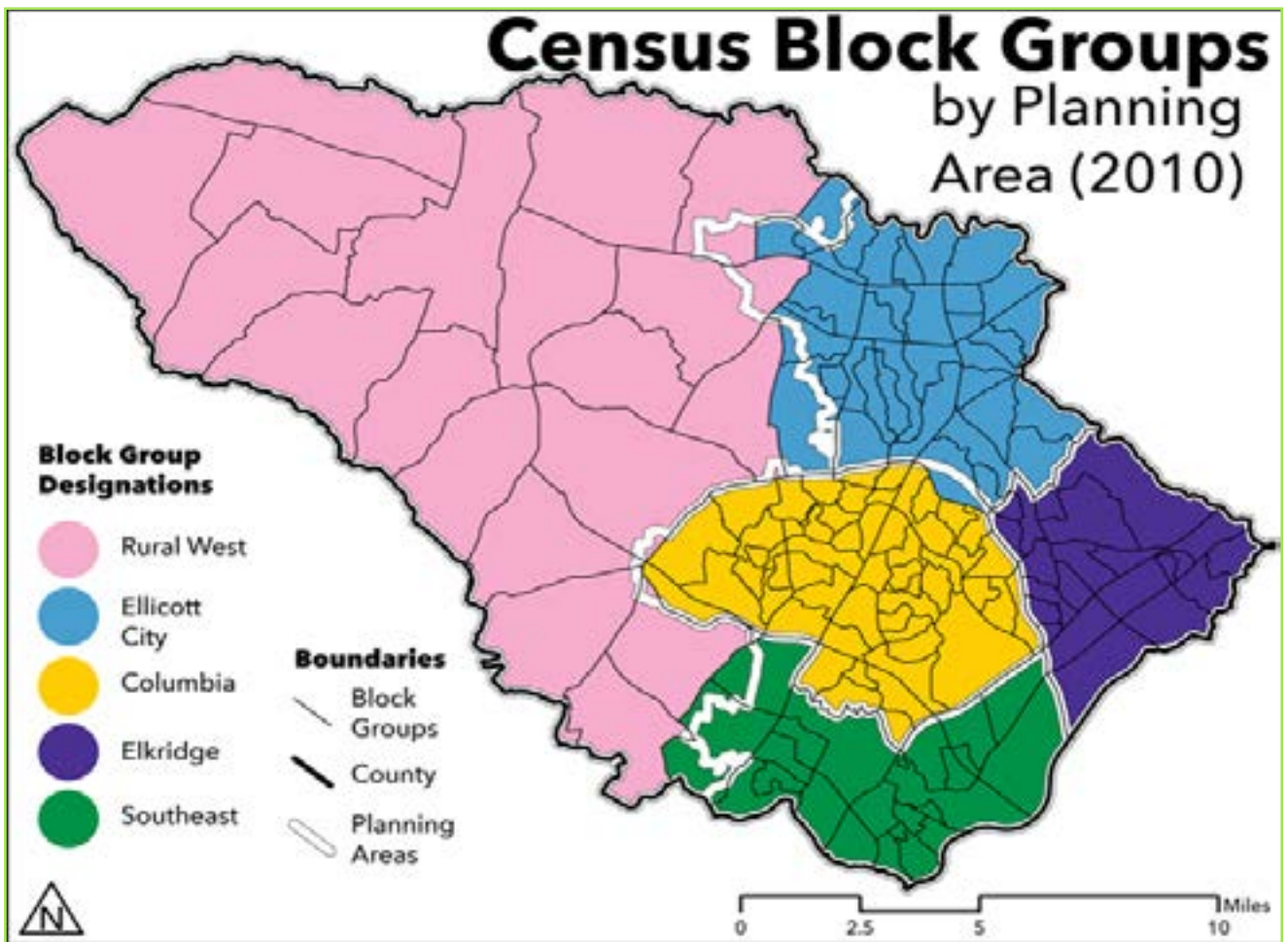
Using the [U.S. Census Bureau website](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2014/acs/5-year/tables.html)¹, the data downloaded for 2014, 2019, and 2024 from the ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables represented conditions throughout the respective full five-year time period: 2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024. Thus, the spatial analysis explored data collection based on multiyear estimates of three five-year time periods covering 15 continuous years. With a focus on Howard County wide level data and all Block Groups data within Howard County, the 18 tables downloaded for each time period covered various topics related to age, race, commute, household type, homeownership, income, housing affordability, education, and English language usage. The downloaded zip folders contained CSV files that included both estimates and Margin of Errors (MOE) for the demographic and housing data.

Demographic Data Analysis

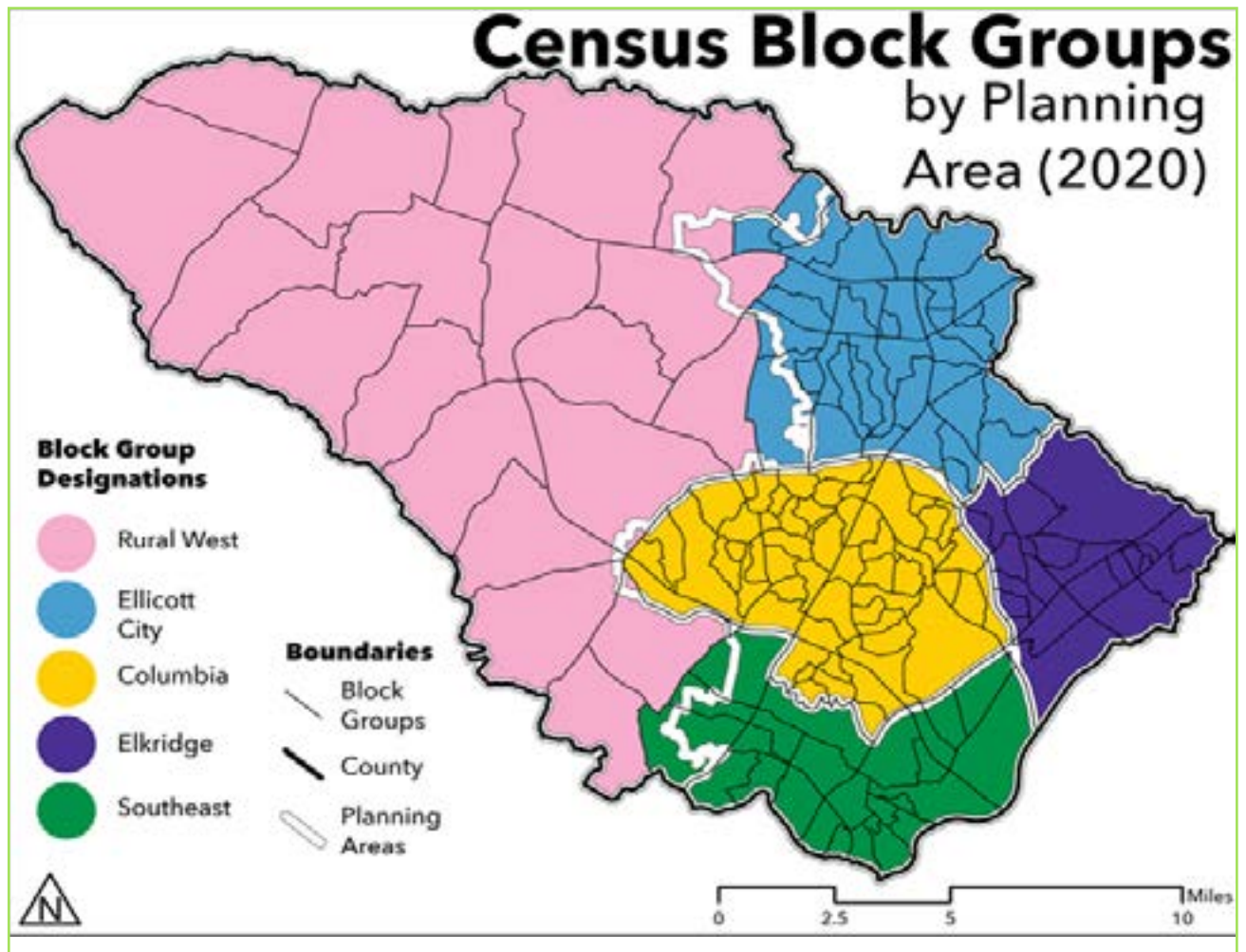
DPZ created Howard County Planning Areas as an internal geography used for longitudinal data analysis and tracking. Since the downloaded ACS data did not include Planning Area information, DPZ spatial data containing Census Tracts and Block Group numbers within the Planning Area boundaries for Columbia, Elkridge, Ellicott City, Rural West, and Southeast were joined to the matching geographic identifiers in the ACS data. Each block group was assigned a Planning Area based on physical location, with most block groups falling completely within individual Planning Areas. For Block Groups overlapped by multiple Planning Areas, Planning Areas were assigned based on which Planning Area the majority of housing for the Block Group was located within.

The Census geographies in the ACS 5-year tables for 2014 and 2019 were based on the 2010 Block Groups and the ACS 5-year table for 2024 used 2020 Block Groups. Please note, data normalization techniques were not used to adjust for these changes in administrative boundaries when making comparisons between older and newer geographies.

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Single ACS Estimates

For single estimates in every dataset, new columns were created to calculate Standard Error (SE), Coefficient of Variation (CV), and reliability based on the corresponding ACS estimate and ACS MOE (if it existed). Based on a 90 percent confidence level, the MOE provides values that include the sampling error range when added to the ACS estimate.

SE measures how much sample estimates may differ from the actual population value. For a single estimate, SE was calculated by dividing the MOE by 1.645.

CV shows the sampling error percentage that is found in the corresponding estimate. The CV of a single estimate was calculated by dividing the SE by the single estimate and multiplying by 100.

The CV was then used to test the reliability of the estimate. If the CV was less than or equal to 15%, the estimate was considered to have high reliability. For CVs higher than 30%, the estimate had low reliability and was marked with an asterisk. Estimates with medium reliability were shown in the report though caution is advised when using them.

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Aggregated ACS Estimates

Customized ACS estimates were created to aggregate single ACS estimates to meet the specific needs of this report. First, for the Planning Area level analysis, the total estimate for each topic was a sum of all values geographically within each Planning Area based on their corresponding Block Groups to create an aggregate estimate. Secondly, for many categories within some of the tables, customized ACS estimates were also created based on merged population subgroups. Thus, single non-customized ACS estimates were only used for some of the Howard County wide analysis.

Since ACS only provided MOEs for single estimates in the Detailed Tables, MOEs for customized aggregated ACS estimates had to be calculated. The formula for MOE of aggregate data is the square root of the sum of each squared single MOE. The SE of the aggregated data was calculated by using the square root of the sum of the squared SE for each single estimate. Calculations for CVs and reliability assessments mentioned previously for the single estimates were implemented for the aggregated estimates.

Creating customized ACS estimates had both advantages and disadvantages. In addition to meeting needs of the report, aggregated estimates helped to improve reliability, increase sample size, and decrease SEs. However, please note that these user-derived MOEs and SEs from the aggregated estimates are approximations. The more estimates that are used in an aggregated estimate (see examples below), the higher the chance that the derived SE is either underestimated or overestimated.

Estimate Calculations

Single estimates and population subgroups from aggregated estimates that were used for this report are described in more detail below. Unless otherwise stated, the percentages were calculated by dividing the total estimate by the total population in the table.

Age

The “Sex by Age” ACS table [\[Table B01001\]](#)² provided estimates for the Age table. The first estimate shows the total population for the geographic area. Next, male and female population ACS estimates were combined to create customized age groups based on the following ACS age ranges:

- **0 to 4 years**
- **5 to 17 years:** 5 to 9 years, 10 to 14 years, 15 to 17 years
- **18 to 34 years:** 18 to 19 years, 20 years, 21 years, 22 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years
- **35 to 44 years:** 35 to 39 years, 40 to 44 years
- **45 to 64 years:** 45 to 49 years, 50 to 54 years, 55 to 59 years, 60 to 61 years, 62 to 64 years
- **65 years and older:** 65 to 66 years, 67 to 69 years, 70 to 74 years, 75 to 79 years, 80 to 84 years, 85+ years

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Commuting Mode and Household Vehicle Availability

The Commuting table used two ACS tables: “Means of Transportation to Work” [\[Table B08301\]](#)³ and “Tenure by Vehicles Available” [\[Table B25044\]](#)⁴. For the first estimate, the working population aged 16 and over is shown for the geographic area. The “Commuted by driving” category is one ACS estimate that included car, truck, and van transportation. The “Worked from home” category was also based on one ACS estimate. Within the “Car-free commute” category, the following 6 ACS estimates were combined: public transportation, taxi or ride-hailing services, motorcycle, bicycle, walked, and other means. The “Households with no vehicles” category was calculated by combining these two ACS estimates: owner-occupied households with no vehicles and renter-occupied households with no vehicles. To calculate the “Households with no vehicles” percentage, the estimate was divided by the total number of households in the region.

Educational Attainment

The “Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over” ACS table [\[Table B15003\]](#)⁵ provided the numbers for the Educational Attainment section. For the “No high school diploma” category, 15 ACS estimates were combined: no schooling completed, nursery school, and kindergarten through 12th grade with no diploma. The following five ACS estimates were added to the “High school diploma or some college” category: regular high school diploma, GED or alternative credential, less one year of college, more than one year of college with no degree, and associate’s degree. The “Bachelor’s degree only” category was just one ACS estimate. Within the “Graduate or professional degree” category, the three ACS estimates included master’s degree, professional degree, and doctorate degree.

English Language Usage and Ability

The English Language Usage and Ability section was based on the “Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over” ACS table [\[Table B16004\]](#)⁶. The “Speak non-English language at home” category utilized 12 ACS estimates for speaking Spanish, Indo-European languages, Asian and Pacific Island languages, and other languages combined.

Next, within the “Speak non-English language at home” category, the “Speak English less than ‘very well’” section used 36 ACS estimates for the languages listed previously to rank English speaking ability with these labels: speak English well, speak English not well, and speak English not at all. Both categories were also split into three age groups: 5 to 17 years, 18 to 64 years, and 65 years and over.

When comparing estimates in ACS spoken language and English-speaking ability five-year tables (2014 vs. 2019 and 2019 vs. 2024), the U.S. Census recommends using caution due to changes in specific language coding (individual and aggregated language categories) starting in 2016.

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Homeownership and Housing Affordability

The following nine ACS tables were used to create the “Homeownership and Housing Affordability” section:

- “Aggregate Gross Rent (Dollars)” [\[Table B25065\]](#)⁷
- “Aggregate Selected Monthly Owner Costs (Dollars) by Mortgage Status” [\[Table B25089\]](#)⁸
- “Aggregate Value (Dollars) by Mortgage Status” [\[Table B25082\]](#)⁹
- “Contract Rent” [\[Table B25056\]](#)¹⁰
- “Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months” [\[Table B25070\]](#)¹¹
- “Household Type by Household Size” [\[Table B11016\]](#)¹²
- “Mortgage Status and Selected Monthly Owner Costs” [\[Table B25087\]](#)¹³
- “Tenure by Household Size” [\[Table B25009\]](#)¹⁴
- “Mortgage Status by Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months” [\[Table B25091\]](#)¹⁵

While the “Homeowner households” category represents the total number of owner occupied households, the “Renter households” category represents the total number of renter-occupied households.

For the “Homeowner cost-burdened households” category, the following 8 ACS estimates were summed to calculate the number of owner-occupied households where homeowners pay 30% or more of selected monthly owner costs (both housing units with and without mortgages) as a percentage of household income (SMOCAPI): 30.0 to 34.9 percent, 35.0 to 39.9 percent, 40.0 to 49.9 percent, and 50.0 percent or more. The “Homeowner cost burdened households” percentage was calculated by dividing the number of homeowners paying 30% or more their income by the subtraction of homeowners not computed from the total number of owner-occupied households.

The “Average homeowner monthly costs (with mortgage)” category was calculated by dividing the aggregate selected monthly owner costs (dollars) for housing units with a mortgage by total number of housing units with a mortgage. To calculate “Average housing value (for homeowners)”, the aggregate housing value (dollars) was divided by the total number of owner-occupied households. Selected monthly owner costs include items such as mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, utilities, fuel, condominium fees, and mobile home costs. The selected monthly owner costs do not include housing maintenance fees.

For the “Rent-burdened households” category, the following four ACS estimates were summed to calculate the number of renter-occupied households where renters pay 30% or more of gross rent as a percentage of household income (GRAPI): 30.0 to 34.9 percent, 35.0 to 39.9 percent, 40.0 to 49.9 percent, and 50.0 percent or more.

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The “Rent-burdened households” percentage was calculated by dividing the number of renters paying 30% or more their income by the subtraction of renters not computed from the total number of renter-occupied households. “The Average gross rent” category equals the aggregate gross rent divided by the renter-occupied households with cash rent. Gross rent costs include items such as contract rent, utilities, and fuel.

Since the dollar amounts are only inflation-adjusted for the most recent year in the five-year time period, the U.S. Census recommends caution when comparing housing values, homeowner-ship costs, and renting data due to inflation. The 2010-2014 and 2015-2019 housing affordability datasets would need to be inflation-adjusted to 2024 dollars for more accurate assessments. In addition, caution should also be used when comparing the mortgage status between the 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 5-year ACS datasets because households with home equity loans could be categorized without having primary mortgages starting in 2020.

Household Income

The following two ACS tables provided the data for the “Household Income” section: “Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2014, 2019, or 2024 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)” [\[Table B19001\]](#)¹⁵ and “Aggregate Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2014, 2019, or 2024 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)” [\[Table B19025\]](#)¹⁶. For the “Less than \$50,000” category, these nine ACS estimates were combined: less than \$10,000, \$10,000 to \$14,999, \$15,000 to \$19,999, \$20,000 to \$24,999, \$25,000 to \$29,999, \$30,000 to \$34,999, \$35,000 to \$39,999, \$40,000 to \$44,999, and \$45,000 to \$49,999. The “\$50,000 to \$99,999” category consisted of these three ACS estimates: \$50,000 to \$59,999, \$60,000 to \$74,999, and \$75,000 to \$99,999. Within the “\$100,000 to \$149,999” category, two ACS estimates were combined: \$100,000 to \$124,999 and \$125,000 to \$149,999. Both the “\$150,000 to \$199,999” and “\$200,000 or more” categories just contained one ACS estimate. The “Average household income” is the aggregate household income in the past 12 months (in inflation-adjusted dollars for the most recent year in the five-year time period) divided by the total number of households in the region.

Since the dollar amounts are only inflation-adjusted for the most recent year in the five-year time period, the U.S. Census recommends caution when comparing income data due to inflation. The 2010-2014 and 2015-2019 household income datasets would need to be inflation-adjusted to 2024 dollars for more accurate assessments.

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Household Type

The “Household by Type” section is based on two ACS tables: “Households by Presence of People Under 18 Years by Household Type” [\[Table B11005\]](#)¹⁷ and “Household Type by Household Size” [\[Table B11016\]](#)¹⁸. Based on one ACS estimate, the total number of households equals the sum of family households, nonfamily multi-person households, and nonfamily single-person households. The “Family households”, “Families with children”, and “Single-parent families with children” categories use one ACS estimate each. “Families with children” is defined as households with at least one person younger than 18 years. “Single-parent families with children” is described as other family households with one or more people under 18 years, either a female householder or male householder, and no spouse present.

While the “Nonfamily single-person households” category contains just one ACS estimate representing a 1-person household, the “Nonfamily multi-person households” category contains the following 6 ACS estimates: 2-person household, 3-person household, 4-person household, 5-person household, 6-person household, and 7-or-more person household. The “Average household size” is the total population divided by the number of households in the area.

When comparing the ACS household type estimates for 2010-2014 and 2015-2019, the U.S. Census recommends using caution because the 2019 five-year survey separated partner categories for opposite-sex and same-sex couples.

Race and Hispanic Ethnicity

Within the “Race and Hispanic Ethnicity” table, the following racial groups were based on just one ACS estimate: White alone, non-Hispanic or Latino; Black or African American alone, non-Hispanic or Latino; Asian alone; non-Hispanic or Latino; and Hispanic or Latino. However, the “Other races, non-Hispanic” category combined these four non-Hispanic or Latino ACS estimates: American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, some other race alone, and two or more races. These estimates were provided by the “Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race” ACS table [\[Table B03002\]](#)¹⁹. When comparing the ACS racial and ethnicity five-year tables for 2019 and 2024, the U.S. Census recommends caution due to differences in how race reporting, Hispanic origin reporting, and other question wording may have appeared in the survey.

APPENDIX

Estimate Comparisons

There are other factors to keep in mind when comparing multiple ACS estimates. First, the U.S. Census Bureau surveyed a sample of the Howard County population to produce the ACS estimates. As a result, the Research Division team conducted statistical significance testing for the written section of the report to assess if the calculated differences among the samples reflect real differences inside the whole Howard County population using the [Census Bureau's Statistical Testing Tool](#). Readers will need to conduct their own statistical testing to compare the differences in the ACS estimates shown in tables and graphs. In addition, the ACS 5-year tables for 2014 and 2019 used different Block Group boundaries than the ACS 5-year table for 2024. Please note, U.S. Census documentation providing cautions when comparing ACS 5-year tables for 2014 and ACS 5-year tables for 2024 could not be found.

As stated in the topic sections above, the U.S. Census recommends using caution when comparing the 5-year time periods within the English language usage and ability, homeownership and housing affordability, household income, household type, and race and Hispanic ethnicity tables. In particular, inflation needs to be considered when comparing years within the household income and homeownership and housing affordability tables. To adjust the 2010-2014 data and 2015-2019 data from 2014 or 2019 to 2024 dollars for inflation when comparing dollars to the 2020-2024 data, the Census used the national Consumer Price Index retroactive series using current methods ([R-CPI-U-RS](#)) tool created by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

For this report, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the [Baltimore-Columbia-Towson area](#) for “All items” was used to adjust 2014 and 2019 dollars to 2024 dollars based on local inflation. In addition to Howard County, the Baltimore Columbia-Towson Metropolitan Statistical Area also includes the following Maryland jurisdictions: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, and Queen Anne’s County.

Calculated inflation rates were 31% for 2014 to 2024 and 22.5% for 2019 to 2024. Please note, the calculated inflation rates come with some cautions. While the BLS provided annual average CPIs for 2019 and 2024 for the Baltimore area, DPZ manually calculated the annual average CPI for 2014 using the 6 provided bimonthly local indexes. In addition, local indexes have higher chances of sampling and measurement errors compared to the national index. Despite these limitations, using local indexes is consistent with the tools that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) uses for their housing affordability programs. At the time of this report, the Baltimore CPI-U was last updated as of July 14, 2026.

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The majority of GIS analysis utilized simple spatial selections of data falling within the Planning Areas. With much of the analysis focused on land area, records that fell within multiple Planning Areas were physically split along Planning Area boundaries and areas recalculated. For example, if a preservation easement was located within three Planning Areas, it would be split into three individual pieces, one for each Planning Area, and the land area would be recalculated to reflect the individual piece.

For more complex analysis, including Average Age of Housing and Tree Canopy, detailed methodologies are provided. Otherwise, if not detailed, the analysis followed the simple spatial intersection and join method of how much land area of a given data fell within each Planning Area and the county. County totals are aggregates of the individual Planning Areas and not unique analysis of the county geography.

Land areas were often divided by the total land within the Planning Area/county to assess percentages.

All data sources come from the Department of Planning & Zoning unless otherwise noted. For DPZ data, the specific division responsible is the source cited.

Common Data (present in multiple analyses)

Planning Areas, Division of Research

Parks & Open Space (OS), Division of Research

Preservation Easements, Division of Research

Property, Department of Technology & Communications Services (DTCS)

Green Infrastructure Network (GIN)

Green Infrastructure Hubs & Corridors, Resource Conservation Division

Preservation Easements, Division of Research

Green Infrastructure Network (GIN)

Green Infrastructure Hubs & Corridors, Resource Conservation Division

Preservation Easements, Division of Research

For analyzing the GIN, both the amount of GIN (acres) within the Planning Areas was calculated via spatial analysis, as was the amount of Preservation Easements and Parks and Open Space within the GIN for the Planning Areas. This was done via a series of intersections and aggregations of resulting data based on Planning Area and protected land type (Parks & OS vs Preservation Easement).

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Protected Lands

Preservation Easements and Protected Lands were intersected with Planning Areas and aggregated based on program/protection type.

Land Use

Land Use, Research Division

Tree Canopy, Research Division via Chesapeake Bay Conservancy

Land Use data is maintained by the Research Division and incorporates the latest development plan, permit, and property data to discern development activity, stages of development, and statistical values like acres and housing unit totals on a per-parcel level of detail.

For the Land Use % analysis, Land Use was intersected with Planning Areas and the resulting data aggregated based on Generalized Land Use descriptions.

Tree canopy cover was created using the [Chesapeake Bay Conservancy's 2024 Land Use/Land Cover data](#). The raster data was filtered to include only returns associated with Tree Canopy. The Research Division worked with the Resource Conservation Division to determine eligible values. The resulting filtered data was converted from raster to vector, aggregated into a single value of "Tree Canopy", and spatially intersected with Planning Areas before calculating the new geometric area in acres.

For the Land Use Characteristics analysis, property data was utilized to identify building square footages for records qualifying as Industrial, Office, Retail/Service, or other use types. While maintained by DTCS, this data heavily incorporates attribute information from the Maryland Department of Assessment & Taxation. This data was spatially joined to Planning Areas and aggregated based on the building use types identified by Maryland. Residential unit counts came from Land Use.

Places of Interest

Points of Interest, Department of Technology & Communications Services (DTCS)

Analysis performed via spatial join of Points of Interest data, represented by address centroids, to the Planning Areas layer, followed by a count aggregation based on place type.

APPENDIX

Housing Units by Age

CAMA Detailed Building Characteristics, Maryland Department of Assessment & Taxation

This State data contains attribution for Year Built as well as Structure Type. The Structure Type field was used to filter only residential building types and the Year Built field utilized as the field by which data was aggregated. Points representing buildings were spatially joined to the Planning Areas. The resulting table was then given a new column representing year-built ranges, versus individual years, and each building was given a designation based on the year built and the respective range that value fell within. The data was then aggregated based on the year-built range and Planning Area to arrive at total units by type and year built.

Average age of housing was calculated with the following formula: $2025 - (y * n) / t$

y = Year Built (individual year, not range)

n = Number of units

t = Total units

2025 = Latest year-built value

With year-built data being available as of 2025 and not including 2026 constructions, the average year of structures was determined and then subtracted from 2025 to arrive at the age value.

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- [2] U.S. Census Bureau. "Sex by Age." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B01001* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [3] U.S. Census Bureau. "Means of Transportation to Work." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08301* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [4] U.S. Census Bureau. "Tenure by Vehicles Available." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25044* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [5] U.S. Census Bureau. "Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B15003* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [6] U.S. Census Bureau. "Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B16004* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [7] U.S. Census Bureau. "Aggregate Gross Rent (Dollars)." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25065* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [8] U.S. Census Bureau. "Aggregate Selected Monthly Owner Costs (Dollars) by Mortgage Status." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25089* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [9] U.S. Census Bureau. "Aggregate Value (Dollars) by Mortgage Status." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25082* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
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- [14] U.S. Census Bureau. "Tenure by Household Size." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25009* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [15] U.S. Census Bureau. "Mortgage Status by Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25091* for 2014, 2019, 2024.

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- [17] U.S. Census Bureau. "Households by Presence of People Under 18 Years by Household Type." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B11005* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
- [18] U.S. Census Bureau. "Household Type by Household Size." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B11016* for 2014, 2019, 2024.
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- [20] U.S. Census Bureau. "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B03002* for 2014, 2019, 2024.