



Montgomery Planning | Countywide Planning & Policy

07/21/2021

# Attainable Housing Strategies

## COG Housing Directors Advisory Committee



Attainable Housing Strategies

# Council Request

- The initiative is the result of a [County Council request](#) for the Planning Board to consider and recommend “zoning reforms that would allow greater opportunities for Missing Middle housing in Montgomery County.”
- Attainable Housing Strategies is the resulting effort, through which Planning has **prepared recommendations to allow the development of more diverse types of housing**, including [Missing Middle Housing](#), in Montgomery County.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Casey Anderson, Chair  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
Gwen Wright, Director  
Montgomery County Planning Department  
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902

March 4, 2021

Dear Chair Anderson and Director Wright:

On behalf of the Council, we write to request that the Planning Board consider zoning reforms that would allow greater opportunities for Missing Middle housing in Montgomery County, provide opportunity for public input, and transmit to us a Zoning Text Amendment with your recommendations. This process was suggested by PHED Chair Riemer in the attached memo to colleagues and a majority of Councilmembers have agreed. Councilmember Riemer attached a draft ZTA and fact sheet for your consideration, and we hope you will consider the concepts in ZTA 20-07, introduced by Councilmember Jawando.

If we can receive your recommendations shortly after we receive the Thrive 2050 plan, we could hear from the community and complete our work by the end of the year.

We look forward to engaging in this important discussion.

Regards,

Handwritten signature of Tom Hucker in black ink.

Tom Hucker  
Council President

Handwritten signature of Hans Riemer in black ink.

Hans Riemer  
Chair  
Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee



# Our terms have evolved

## Missing Middle Housing

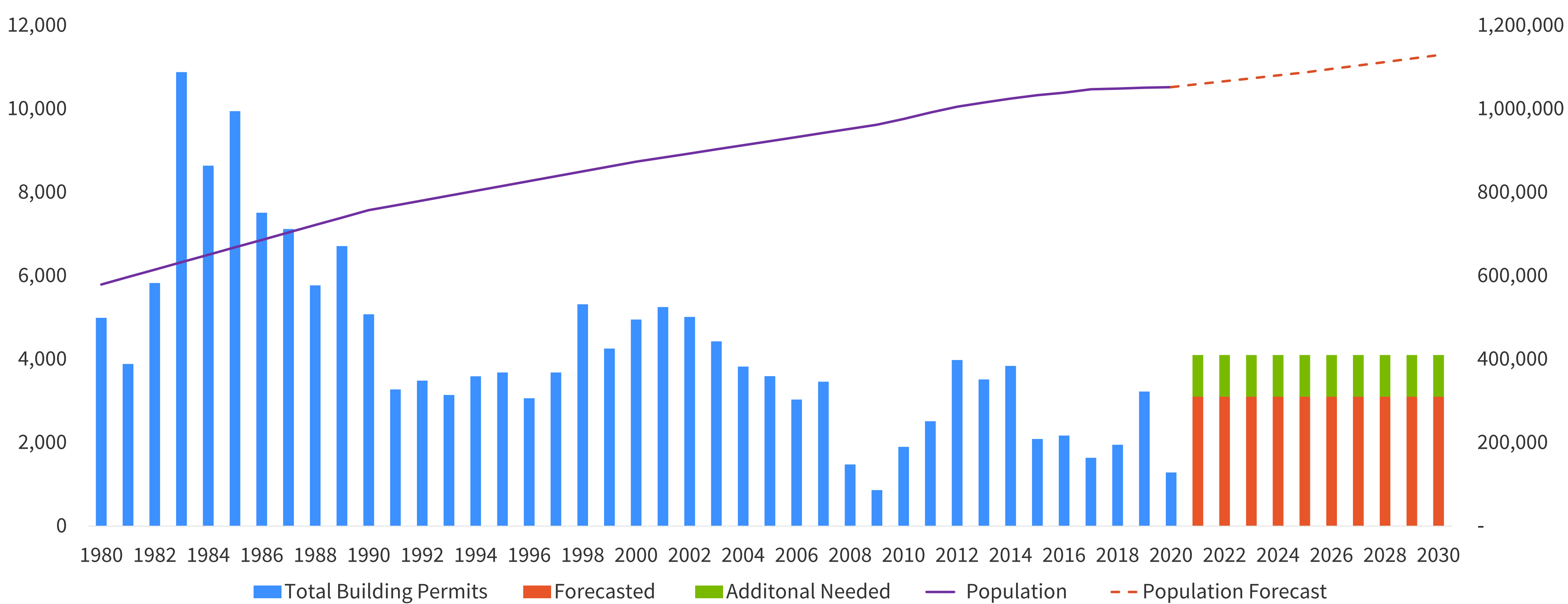
- A term coined by Opticos Design to describe a range of house-scale multi-unit structures that are compatible in scale with detached single-family homes.

## Attainable Housing

- Attainable housing offers more diverse types of housing beyond house-scale Missing Middle housing types.
- Attainable housing incorporates building types described as Missing Middle but also adds a focus on households of various incomes being able to obtain housing that is suitable for their needs.

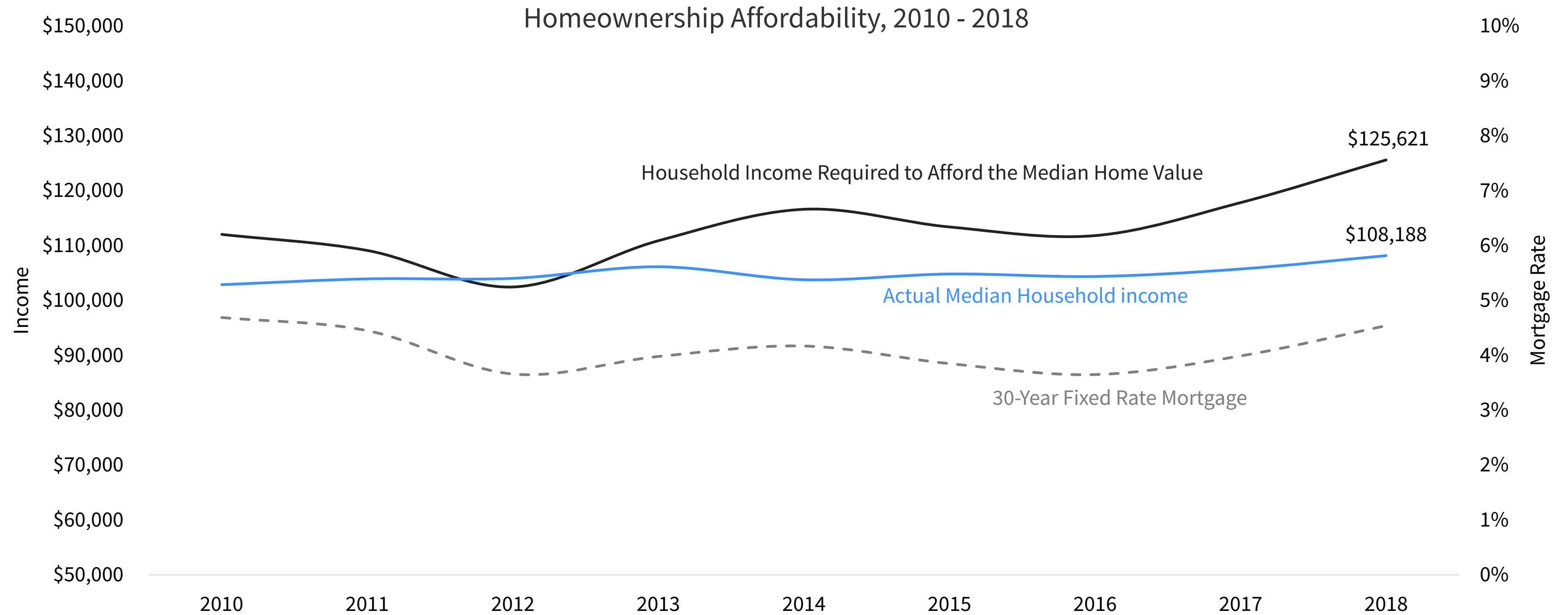


# Housing Units Permitted, Forecasted and Additional Needed



Source: Census Bureau (data includes the municipalities of Rockville and Gaithersburg)

# Homeownership one of the biggest ways to build wealth, but owning unaffordable to median HH



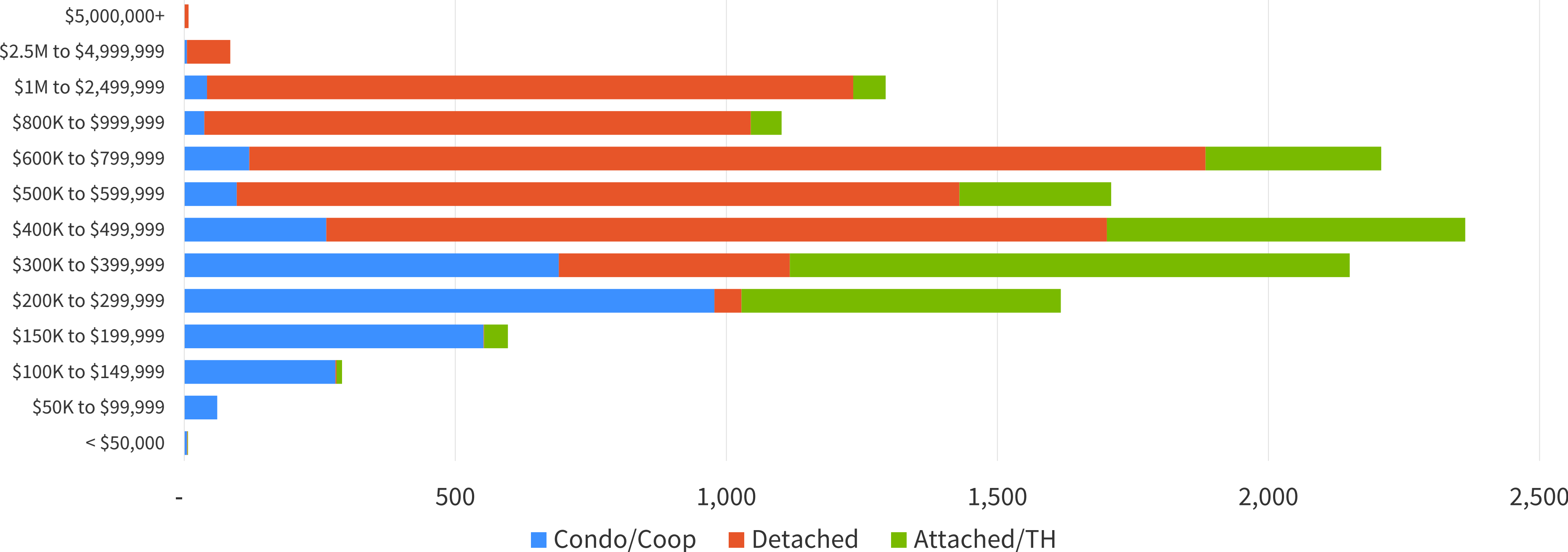
*\*2018 inflation-adjusted dollars*

Source: Montgomery County Housing Needs Assessment, Zillow, Federal Reserve Economic Data

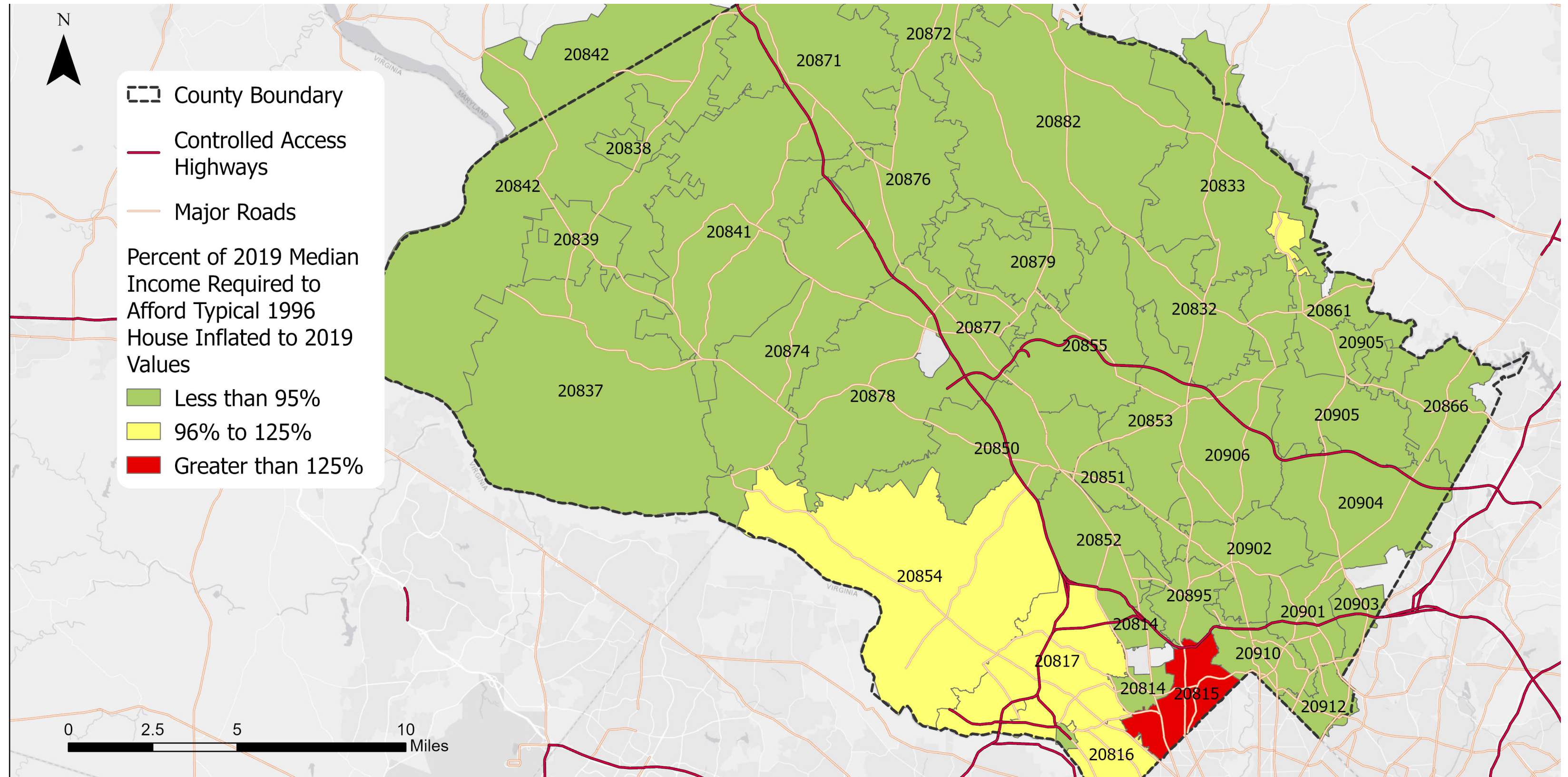


# In 2020, the average detached home was sold for \$775,000 compared to \$370,000 for attached

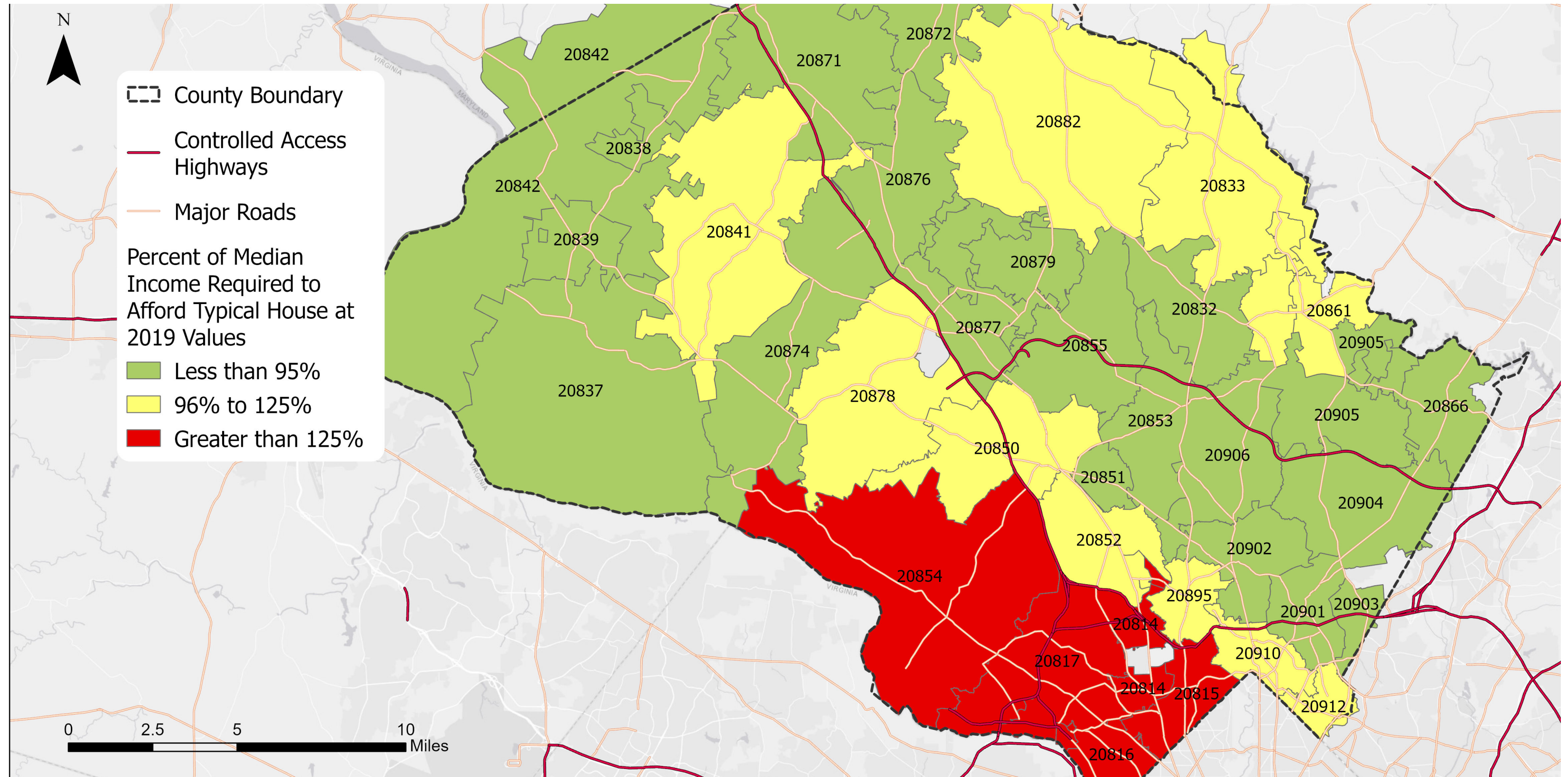
Sales Range by Type



# Housing Attainability in 2019 if Home Values Increased at the Rate of Inflation from 1996-2019



# Actual Housing Attainability in 2019





# Our Neighborhoods have become less Attainable and more Exclusive

**\$108K**

Median Income in 1996  
(inflated to 2019 dollars)

**\$110K**

Median Income in 2019

Assumptions: 4% interest rate, 5% down payment, 30-year mortgage, escrow/insurance is 20% of primary principal/interest payment, debt cannot exceed 35% of income, borrower has no additional debt

Sources: Zillow Single-Family ZHVI Value for June 1996 and June 2019, US Census

Typical 1996 house value (inflated to 2019 dollars) and estimated income required to afford that house

Typical 2019 house value (and estimated income required to afford that house)

**Zip Code 20852  
North Bethesda**

**\$415K**  
**\$77K**



**\$650K**  
**\$120K**

**Zip Code 20910  
Silver Spring**

**\$360K**  
**\$67K**



**\$630K**  
**\$117K**

**Zip Code 20817  
Bethesda**

**\$665K**  
**\$125K**



**\$1.01M**  
**\$190K**



# Our Neighborhoods have become less Attainable and more Exclusive

**\$108K**

Median Income in 1996  
(inflated to 2019 dollars)

**\$110K**

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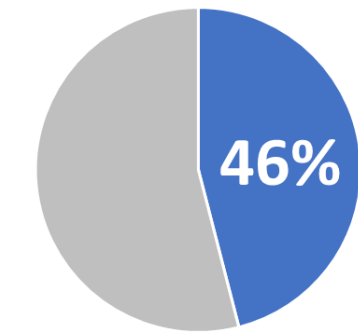
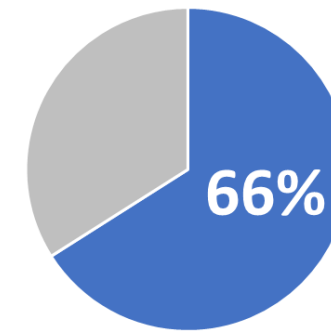
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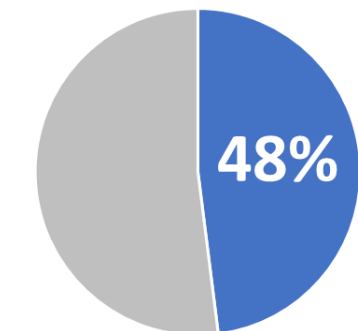
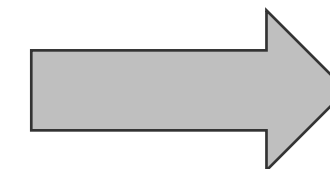
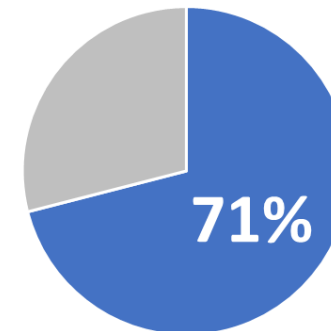
Typical 1996 house value (inflated to 2019 dollars) and estimated income required to afford that house

Typical 2019 house value (and estimated income required to afford that house)

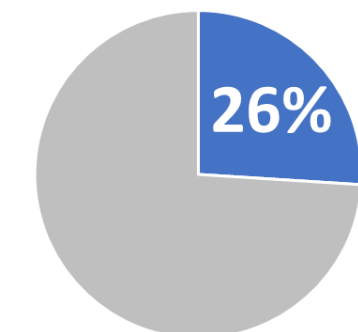
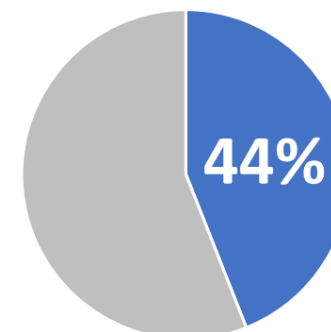
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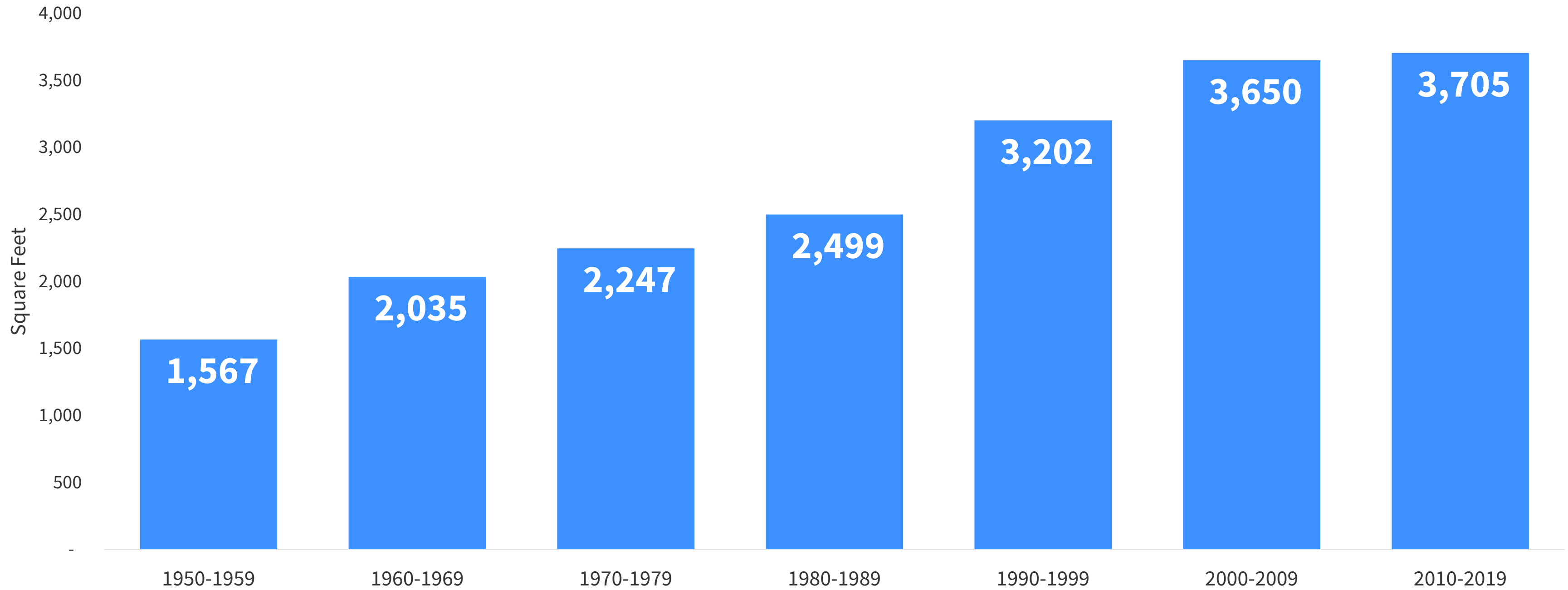


**Zip Code 20817  
Bethesda**



# New single-family housing units are getting larger

Single Family Detached Housing Units  
Average Gross Floor Area by Year Built



- Household size has decreased from 3.65 people/household in 1960 to 2.77 people/household in 2016

Source: SDAT



# 3 Scales Recommended Tools Geographic Targets

SMALL SCALE	MEDIUM SCALE	LARGE SCALE
Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, accessory dwelling units 2-2.5 stories	Stacked flats, cottage courts, small apartment buildings (three stories), townhouses 3-4 stories	Mixed-use Live/work buildings, stacked flats, small apartment buildings (four stories) 4-5 stories



# General Recommendations

- In the R-40, R-60, R-90, & R-200 zones, allow varying intensities of **small, house-scale attainable housing by-right** depending on location and the underlying zone.

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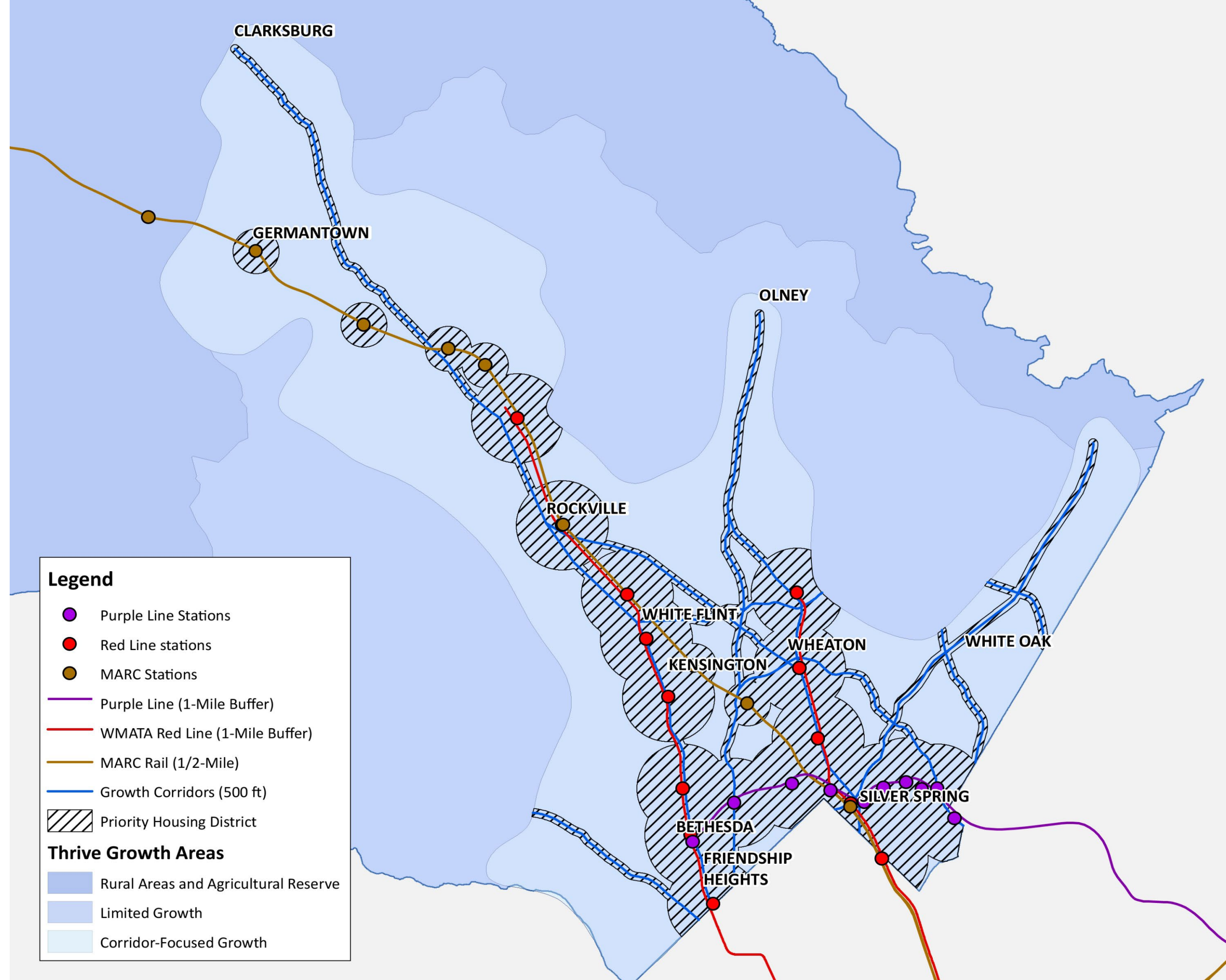
- For all small-scale dwellings, **require conformance with a Planning Board-approved pattern book**, which will give guidance on massing, scale, and design to ensure these housing types blend in among single-family homes.
- Create a **new optional method of development** to encourage consolidation and development of duplexes, cottage courts, townhouses, and small multiplexes and apartments near transit, along our Thrive Growth Corridors, and near the county's centers of activity.
- Support more **corridor-focused master plans** to identify locations ideal for larger scale attainable housing, including townhouses, stacked flats, and apartments along select growth corridors.



# Priority Housing District

## Defined Geography:

Areas within 1 mile of a Metrorail or a lighttrail station, ½ mile of a MARC station, or 500 feet of a Growth Corridor identified in Thrive Montgomery 2050.



# Optional Method of Development

Optional methods of development allow flexibility in the project design, in exchange for a public benefit and design review with the Planning Board

- MPDU & Cluster

## New “Attainable Housing” optional method

- Eligibility:
  - Properties within the Priority Housing District that have frontage along one of our Growth Corridors
  - Properties adjacent to certain centers of activity.
- Increased density and more flexible standards in exchange for a Planning Board Site Plan review, and limits on average unit size to achieve more attainable price points.



# Attainable Housing Strategies Next Steps



Major Events/Milestones	
March 24	HEAT Meeting #1
March 29	Community Meeting #1
April 9	Virtual Office Hours
April 14	HEAT Meeting #2
April 21	Community Meeting #2
April 27	Virtual Office Hours
April 28	HEAT Meeting #3
May 13	Planning Board Briefing
May 19	HEAT Meeting #4
June 2	Community Meeting #3
June 3	Virtual Office Hours
June 14	#HousingDay on Twitter
June 24	Planning Board Briefing and Public Comments
July 8	Planning Board Work session #1
July 22	Planning Board Work session #2
September	Work sessions continue
Fall/Winter	Potential Council Action





# Contact us...

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Countywide Planning and Policy Division Chief

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301-650-5624

