



Briefing on the Master Plan Reality Check Study

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Completed: 4/26/17

Description

Staff from the Research & Special Projects Division will provide a final summary of key findings from the Master Plan Reality Check study.

Overview

The Master Plan Reality Check study was funded in the FY2017 work program to analyze the degree to which select master plans have realized the vision, densities, land uses, infrastructure, and amenities called upon in their respective recommendations. By assessing the difference between a plan’s aspirations and the on-the-ground reality among a broad set of planning criteria, the study aims to shed light on why some plan aspects materialized as envisioned and others didn’t.

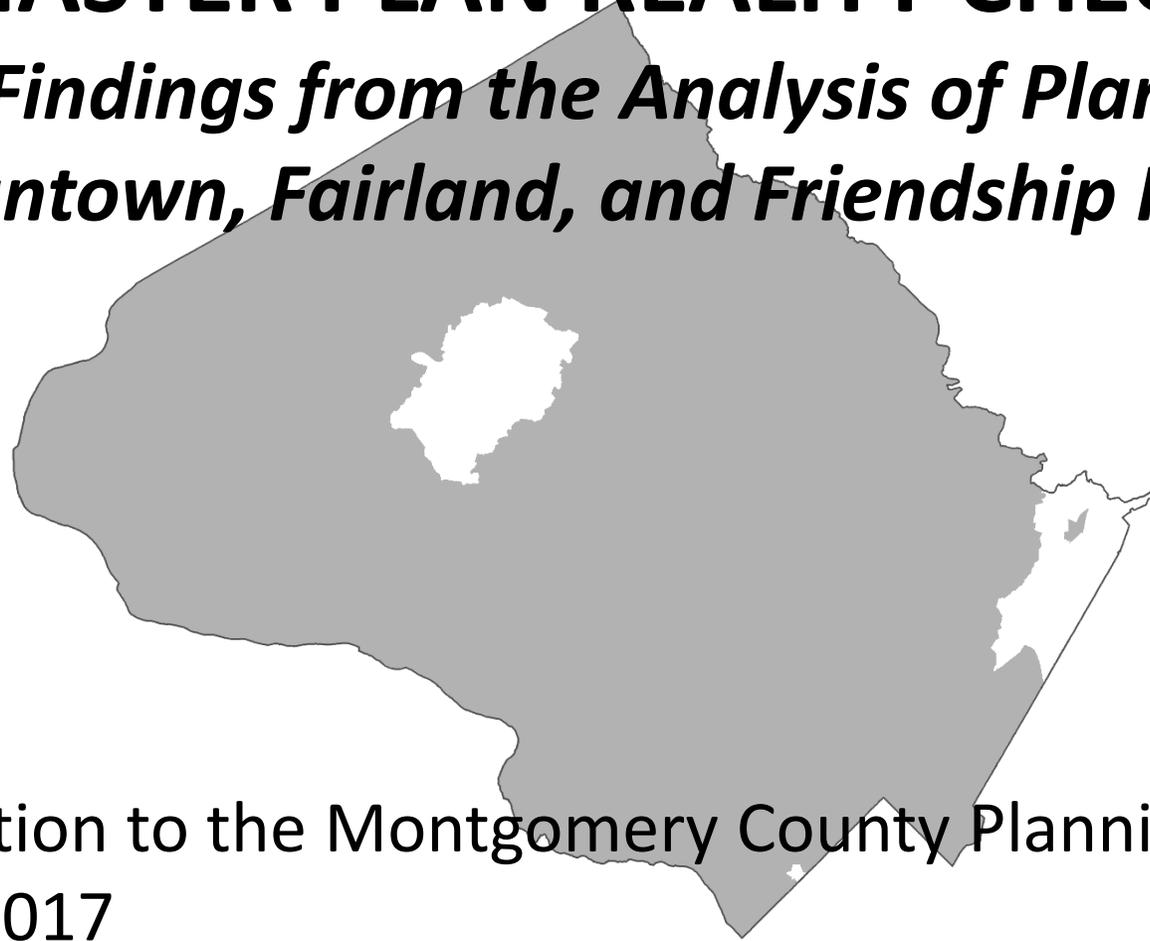
Over the past year, the research team has conducted in-depth analyses of three plans:

- 1989 Germantown Master Plan,
- 1998 Friendship Heights Sector Plan, and
- 1997 Fairland Master Plan

Detailed findings from the analysis of each plan were presented to the Planning Board at two previous sessions. The goal of this presentation is to summarize cross-cutting findings and our key takeaways from the overall project.

MASTER PLAN REALITY CHECK

Key Findings from the Analysis of Plans for Germantown, Fairland, and Friendship Heights

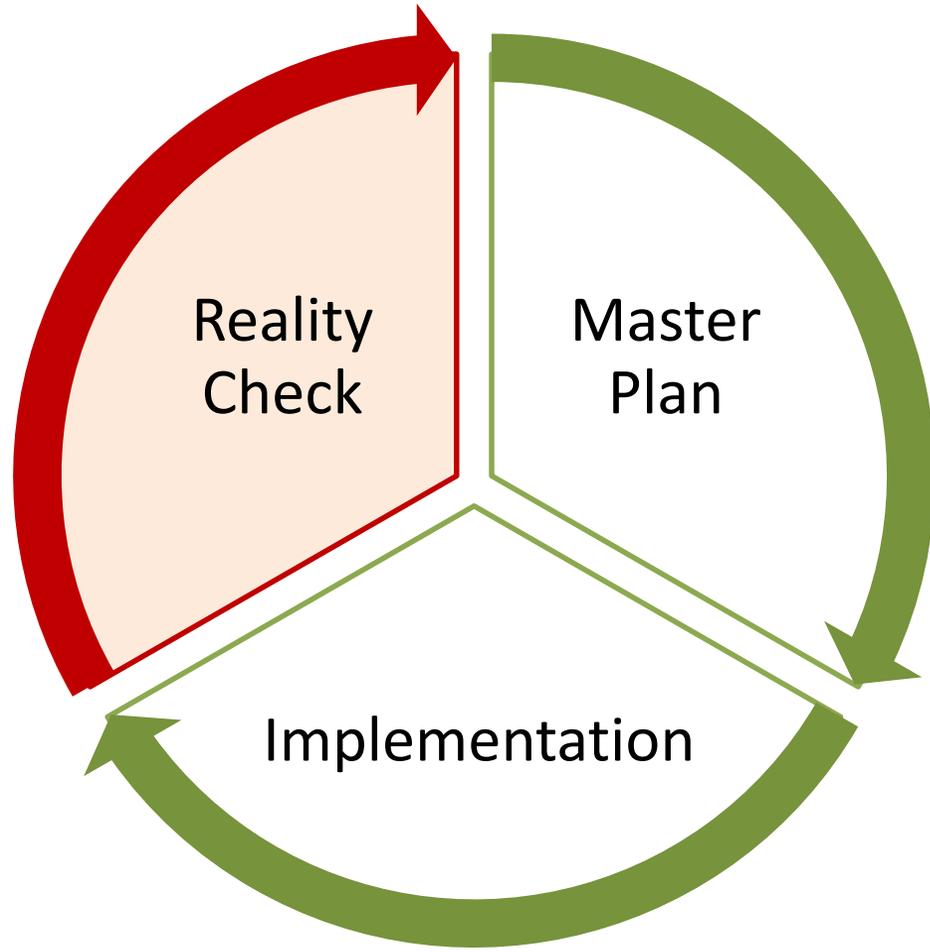


Presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board
May 4, 2017

Research and Special Projects Division

- **Recap of the Master Plan Reality Check Project**
- Key Findings and Observations
 - Residential Development
 - Non-Residential Development
 - Community Facilities
 - Urban Design
 - Transportation
 - Environment
- Summary and Implications

❖ What is the purpose of the Master Plan Reality Check?



Gauge how master plan goals and vision have been implemented



Evaluate why expected outcomes were and were not met



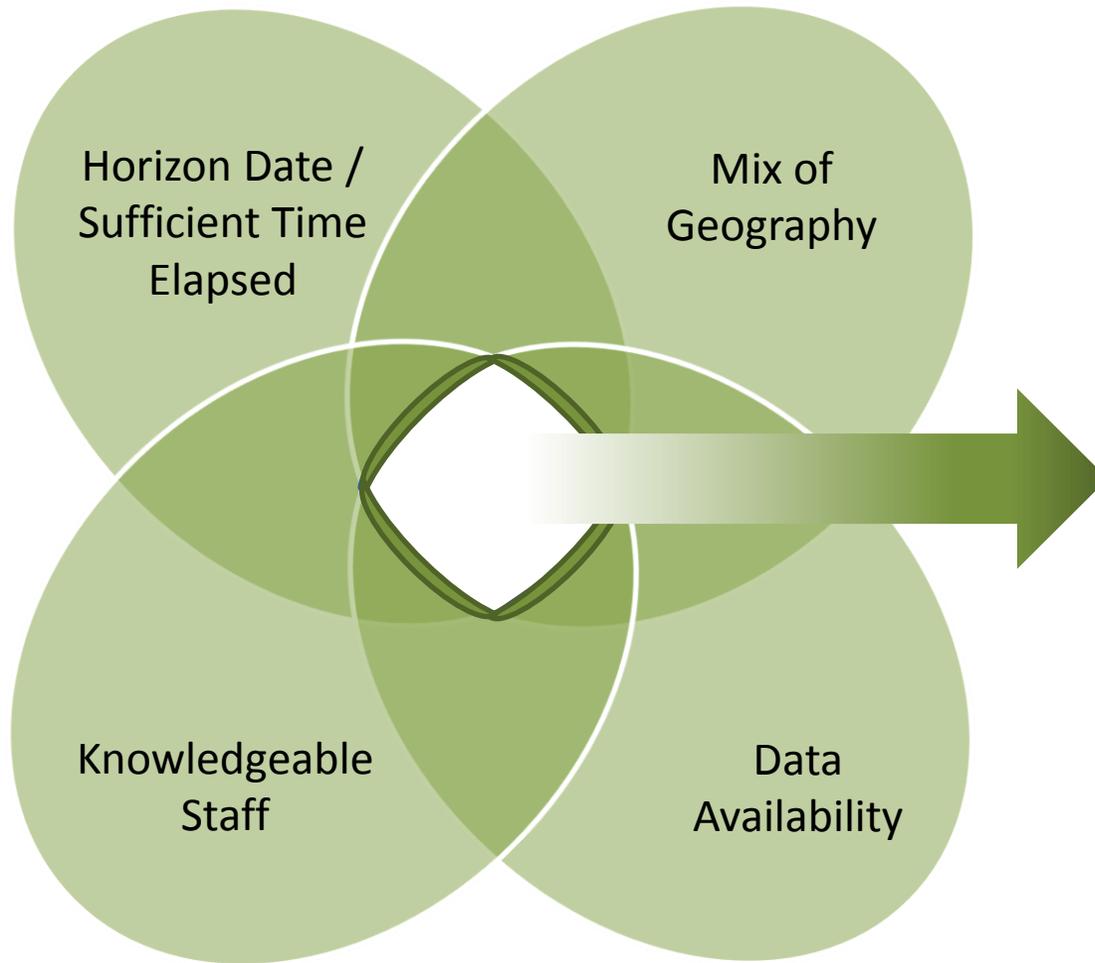
Recommend changes to the development of master plans, based on indicators

❖ Literature Findings

- Why are 'Reality Checks' so rarely done in planning?
 - Resource constraints
 - Unsupportive political or organizational culture
 - Challenges of the task itself

*Source: Journal of the American Planning Association
Monitoring and Evaluation in Municipal Planning: Considering the Realities, Mark Seasons (2003)*

❖ Selection criteria for plans studied in the Master Plan Reality Check



1989
Germantown
Master Plan

1998
Friendship
Heights
Sector Plan

1997
Fairland
Master Plan

❖ The three plans demonstrated a range of plan and geography types.

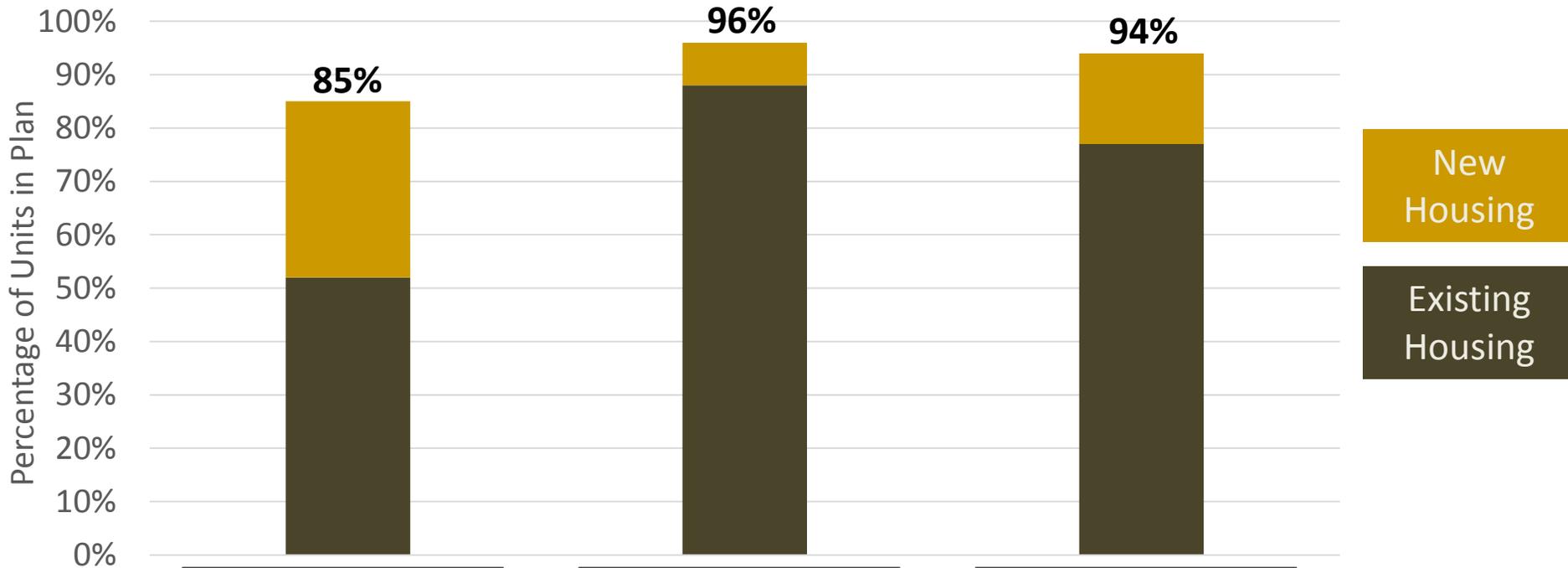
	1989 Germantown Master Plan	1997 Fairland Master Plan	1998 Friendship Heights Sector Plan
Plan Area Size	11,000 Acres	8,100 Acres	110 Acres
Geography Type	I-270 New Corridor City	Suburban Corridor	Metro-proximate Urban CBD
Development Type	Greenfield	Suburban Infill	Urban Infill
Focus of Plan	Vision/Identity of Sub-Communities (Employment Corridor, Town Center, Residential Villages)	Preservation of Suburban Residential Density, Street Connectivity	Specific Recommendations for Major Parcels (Chevy Chase Land Company, Hecht's, GEICO)
Economic Goals	Strengthen Office and Retail Market	Diversify Office and Retail Markets; Increase Housing Market	Maintain Office, Retail and Housing Market
Public Space Funding	Public	Public and Private	Private
Number of Indicators	24	19	14

❖ Agenda

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 - **Environment**
- Summary and Implications

1. Residential Development: While all three areas had significant residential bases, plans supported additional growth.

RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT RATE
BY PLAN AREA

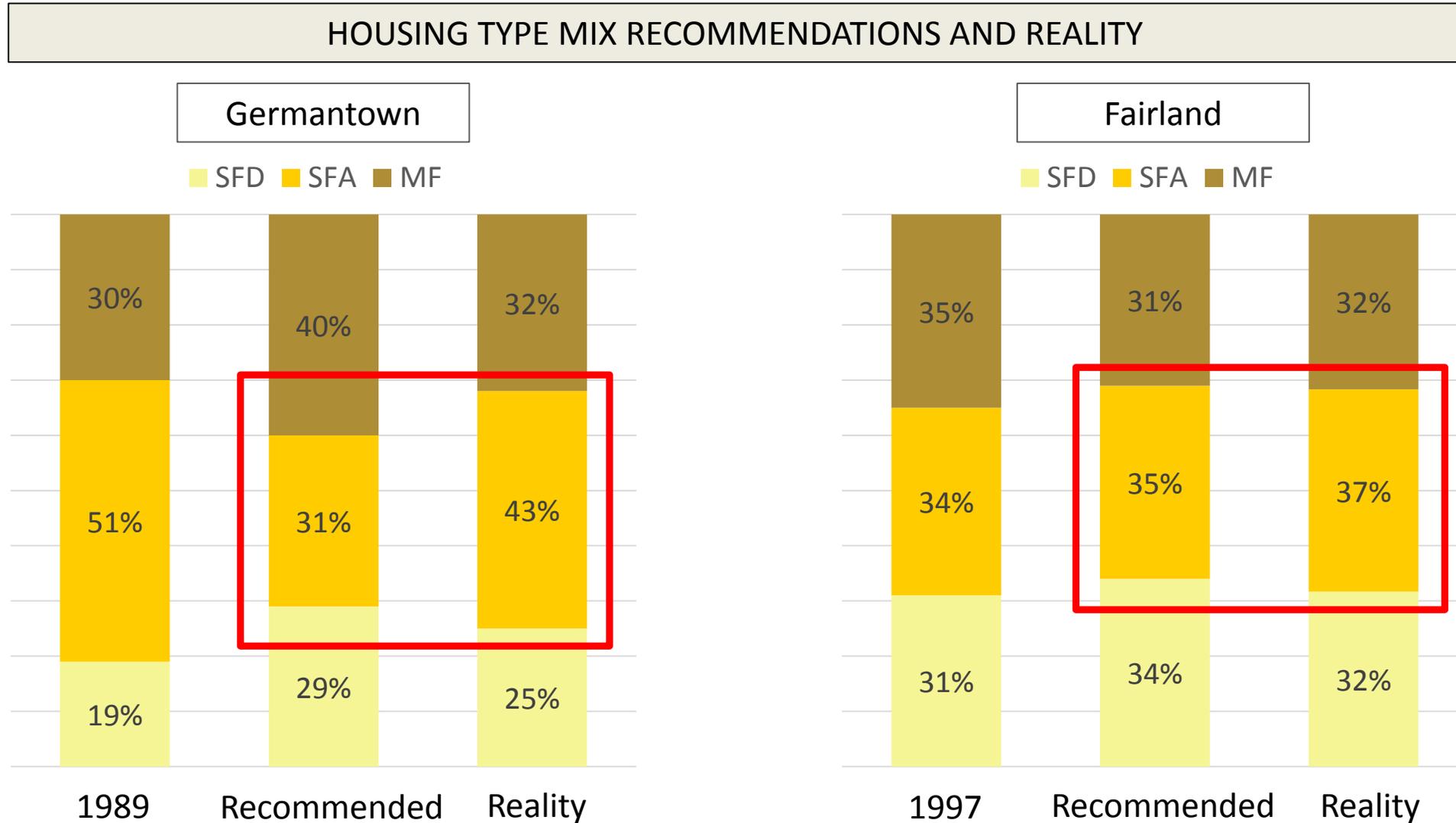


Plan Projection:	37,000 Units
Reality:	31,400 Units

Plan Projection:	16,000 Units
Reality:	15,400 Units

Plan Projection:	4,450 Units
Reality:	4,200 Units

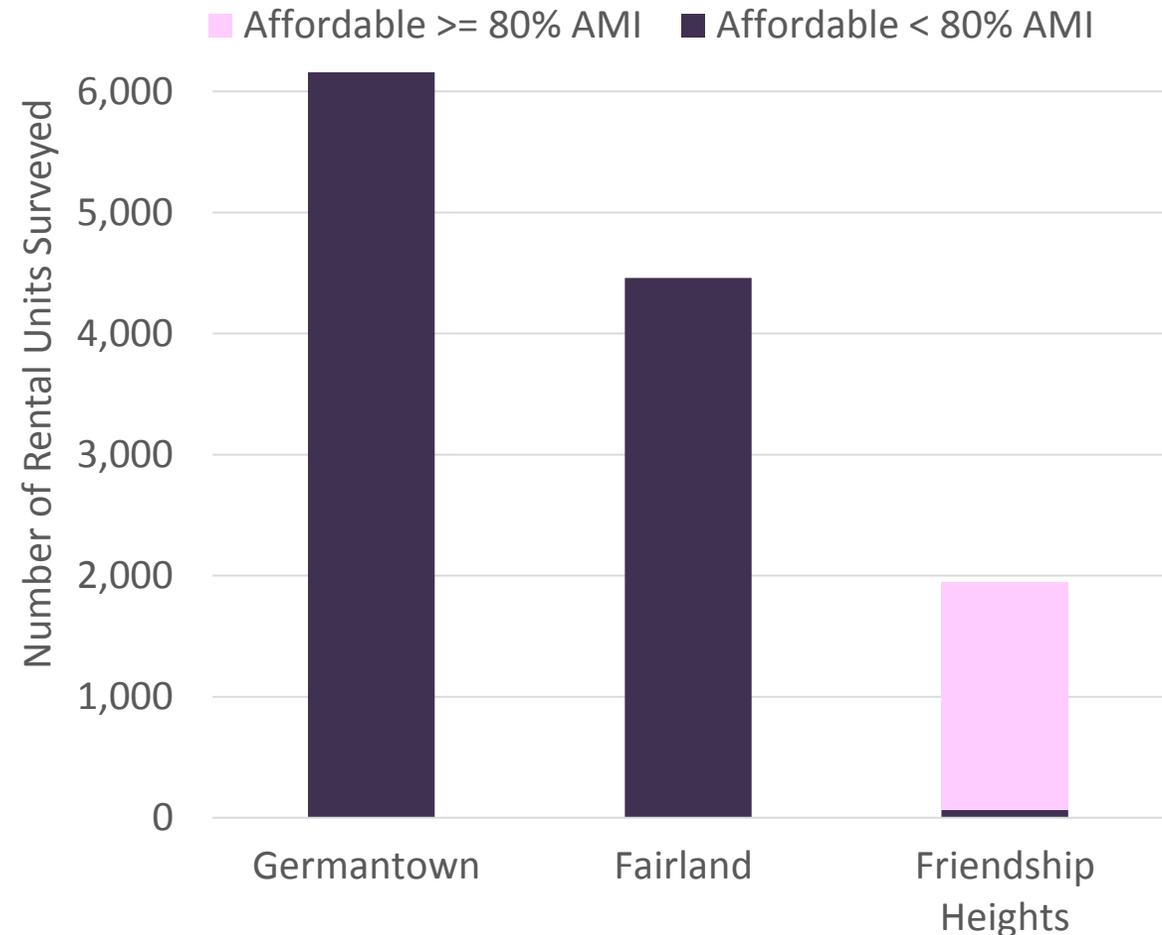
1. Residential Development: Townhouse growth in Germantown and Fairland was stronger than recommended.



1. Residential Development: Plans did not provide quantifiable goals for affordable housing.

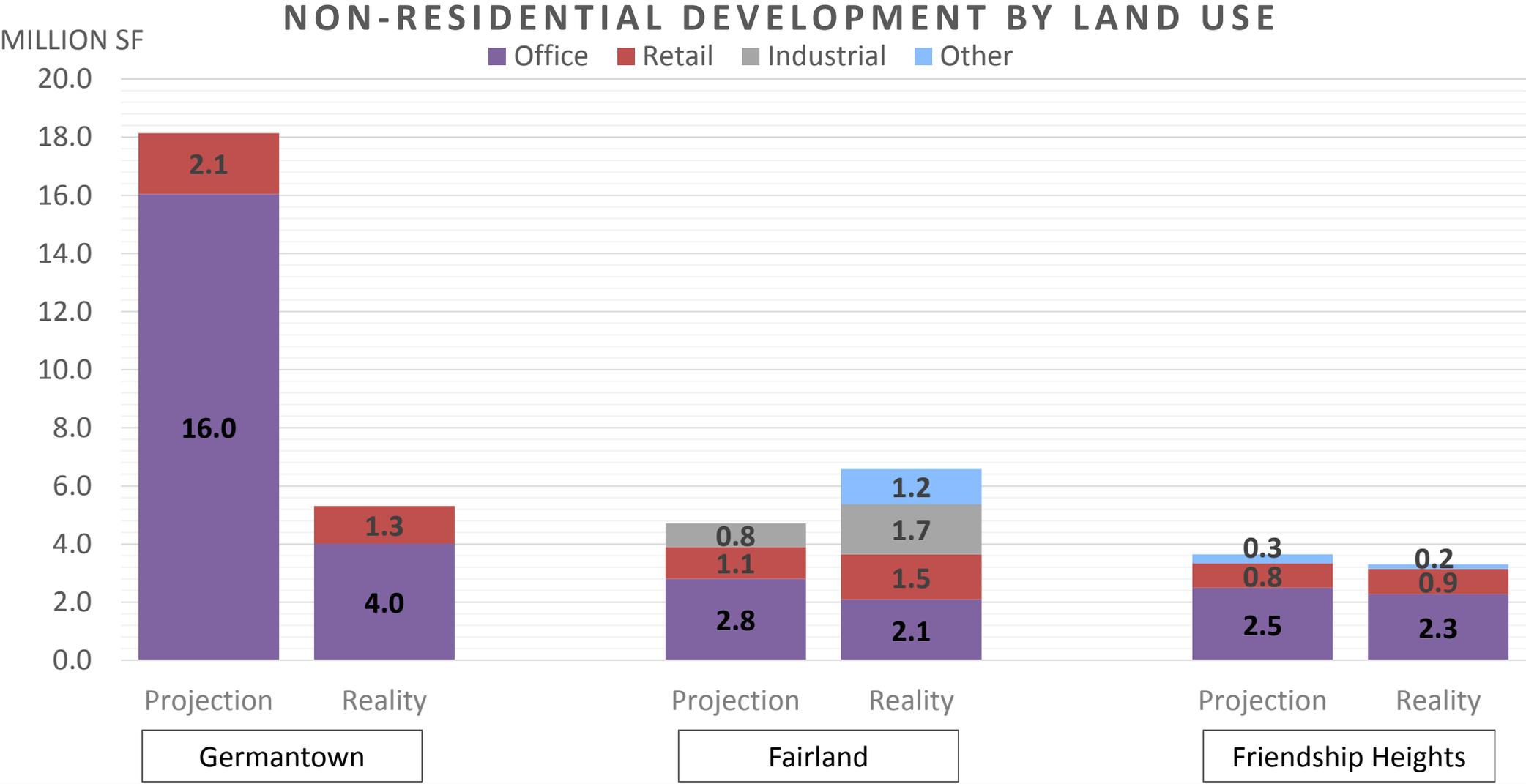
- Affordable housing was not an emphasized issue in any of the plans.
- Affordable housing implementation relies on inter-agency partnerships.
- Multi-family rental housing is 'naturally affordable' today in 2 plan areas.

MULTIFAMILY RENTAL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



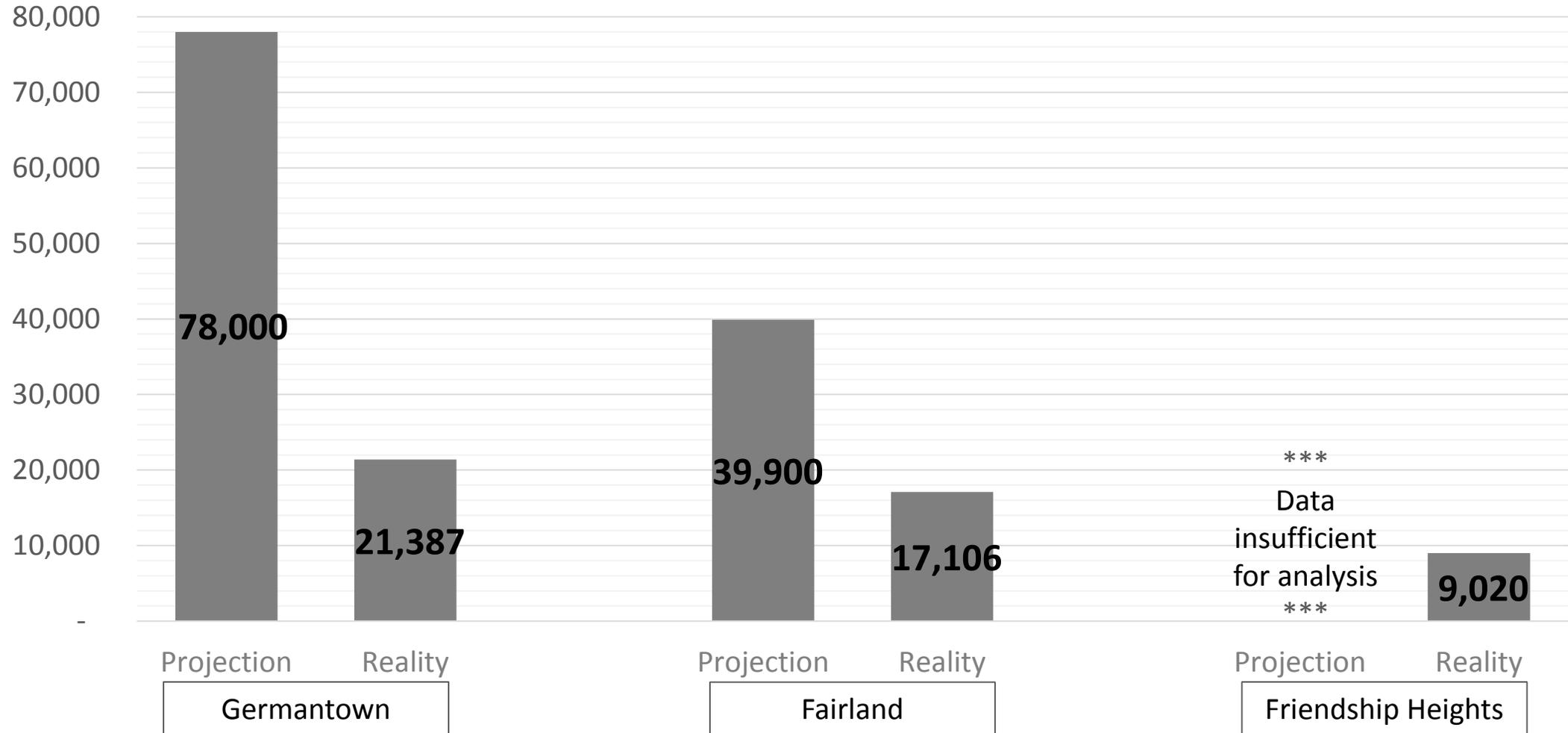
Source: DHCA Rental Housing Survey, 2014

2. Non-Residential Development: Commercial development meets SF projections in 2 of 3 plans.



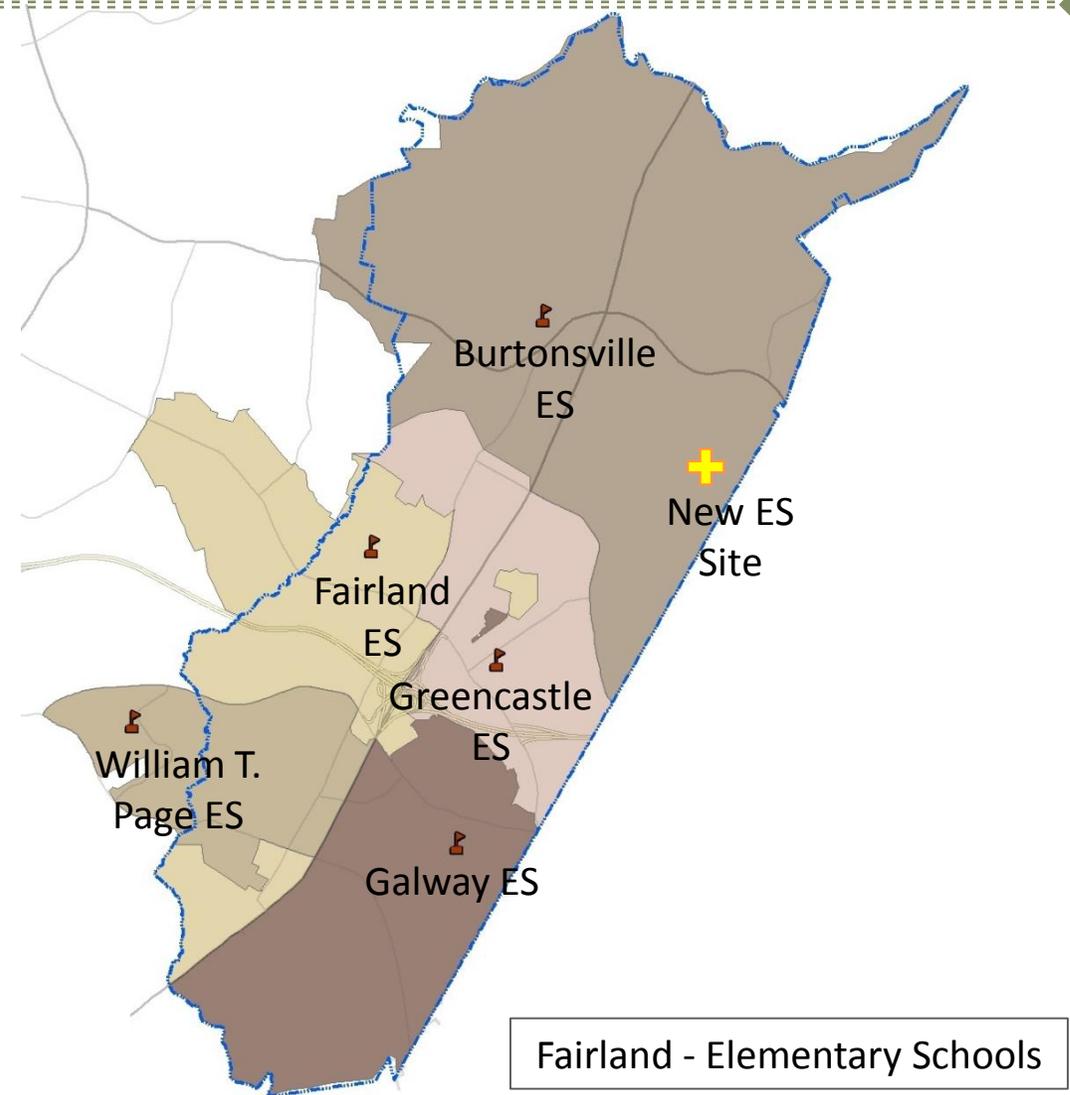
2. Non-Residential Development: Employment falls short of projections. *Reasons unclear due to lack of sourced data.*

NUMBER OF JOBS BY PLAN AREA

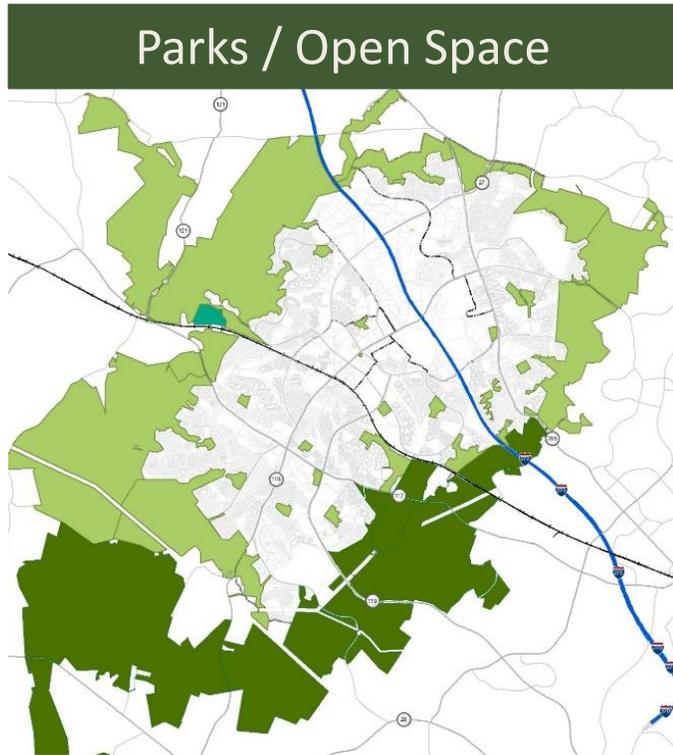


3. Community Facilities: School sites were delivered when included in plans.

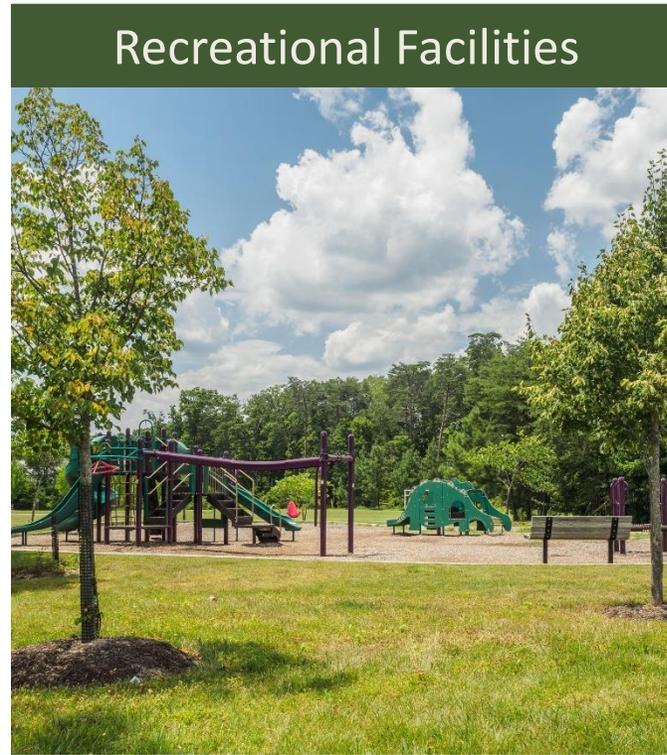
- New sites were delivered as planned in Germantown and Fairland.
- Friendship Heights Plan did not mention schools (and no existing schools were in plan area).
- School capacity utilization was not an issue of concern at time plans were adopted.



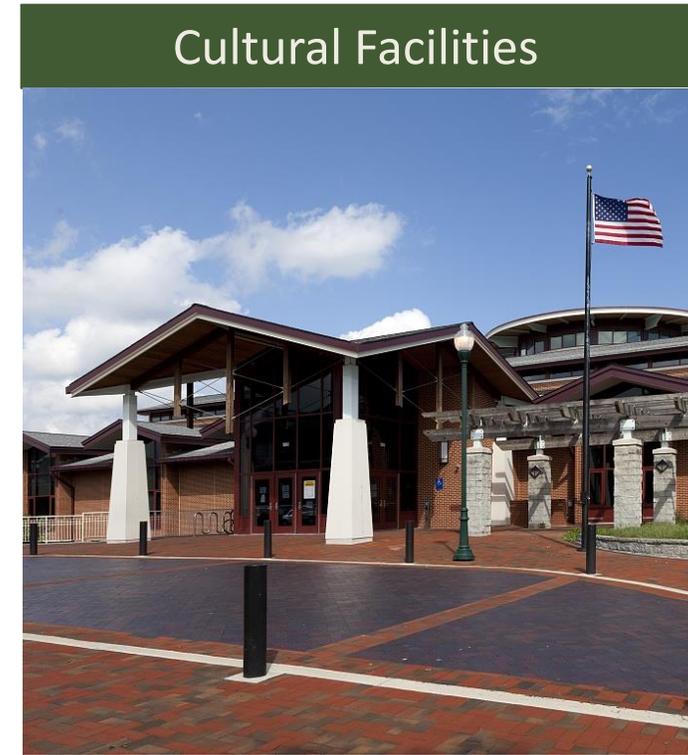
3. Community Facilities: Public sector consistently delivered on community facilities.



✓ Greenbelt completion, Germantown



✓ Playground at Cross Creek Club Local Park, Fairland



✓ Germantown Library

3. Community Facilities: The provision of community amenities by the private sector in Friendship Heights produced mixed results.

Urban Park / Plaza



Community Center



Major Public Park

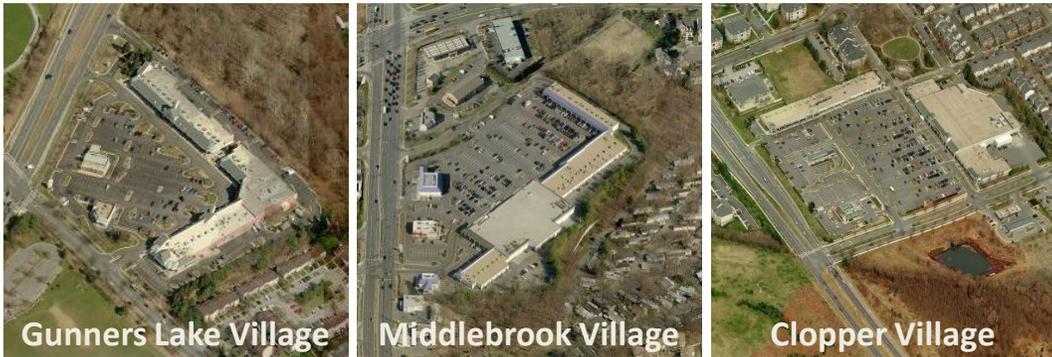


Unrealized Park Site



4. Urban Design: Concrete urban design guidelines resulted in development more consistent with plan visions.

1989 GERMANTOWN MASTER PLAN



- Vague guidelines for Village Centers.
- Architectural detail given proper attention, but site design unreflective of Plan vision.

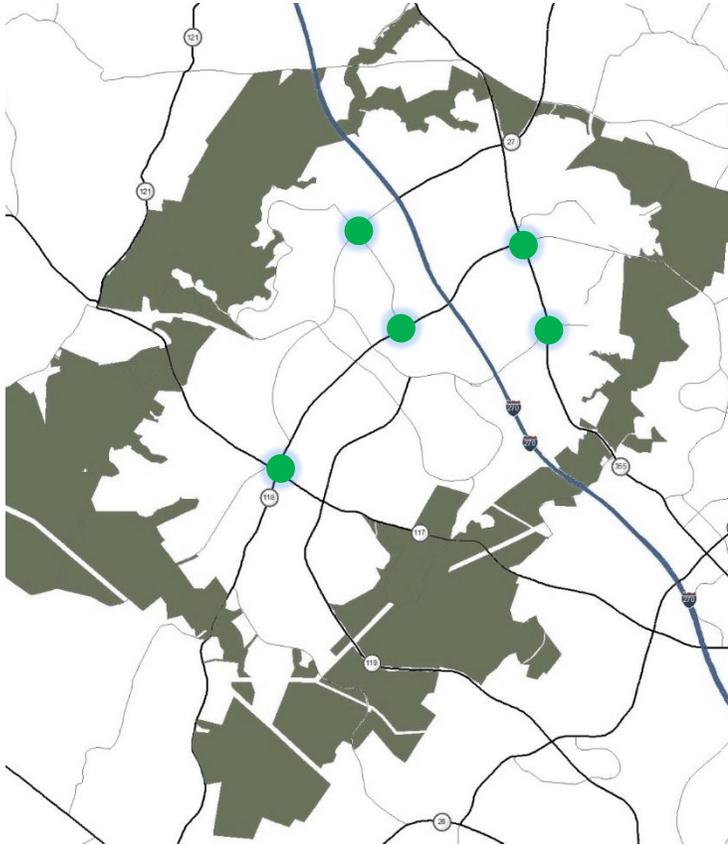
2009 GERMANTOWN SECTOR PLAN



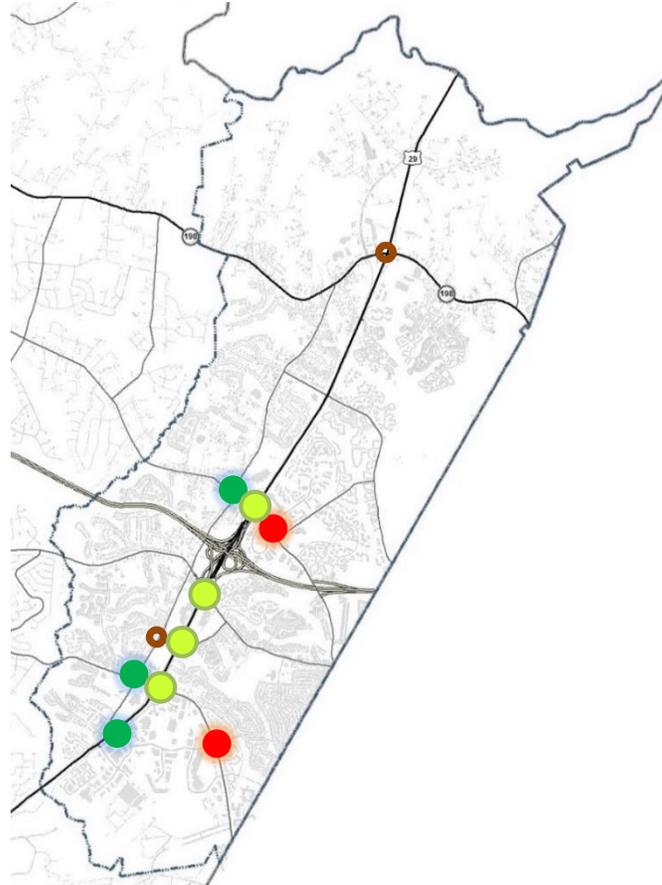
- Design guidelines strengthened.
- Newer development forming urban streetscape representative of Plan vision.

5. Transportation: Traffic flow is as projected or better at a majority of intersections.

GERMANTOWN



FAIRLAND



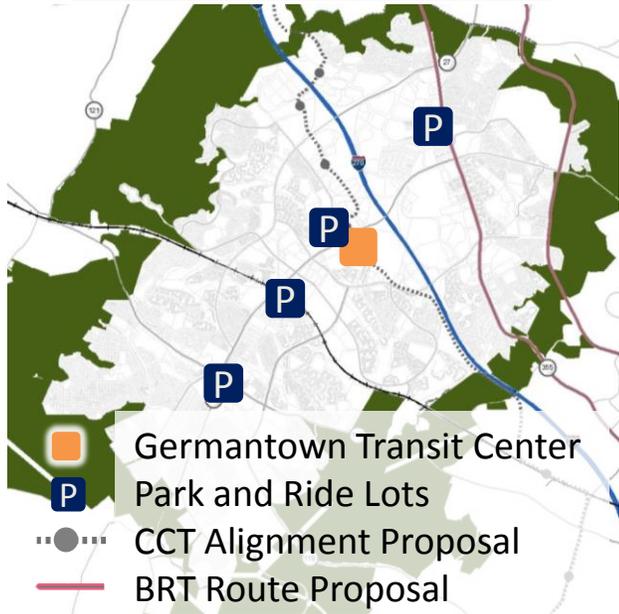
FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS



- Traffic lighter than projected
- Traffic as projected
- Traffic worse than projected
- Insufficient Data

5. Transportation: Transit serviceability has improved, but progress in implementing full transit goals slower than anticipated.

GERMANTOWN



- CCT is still in planning stage.
- BRT, not discussed in '89, is now in planning stage.

FAIRLAND



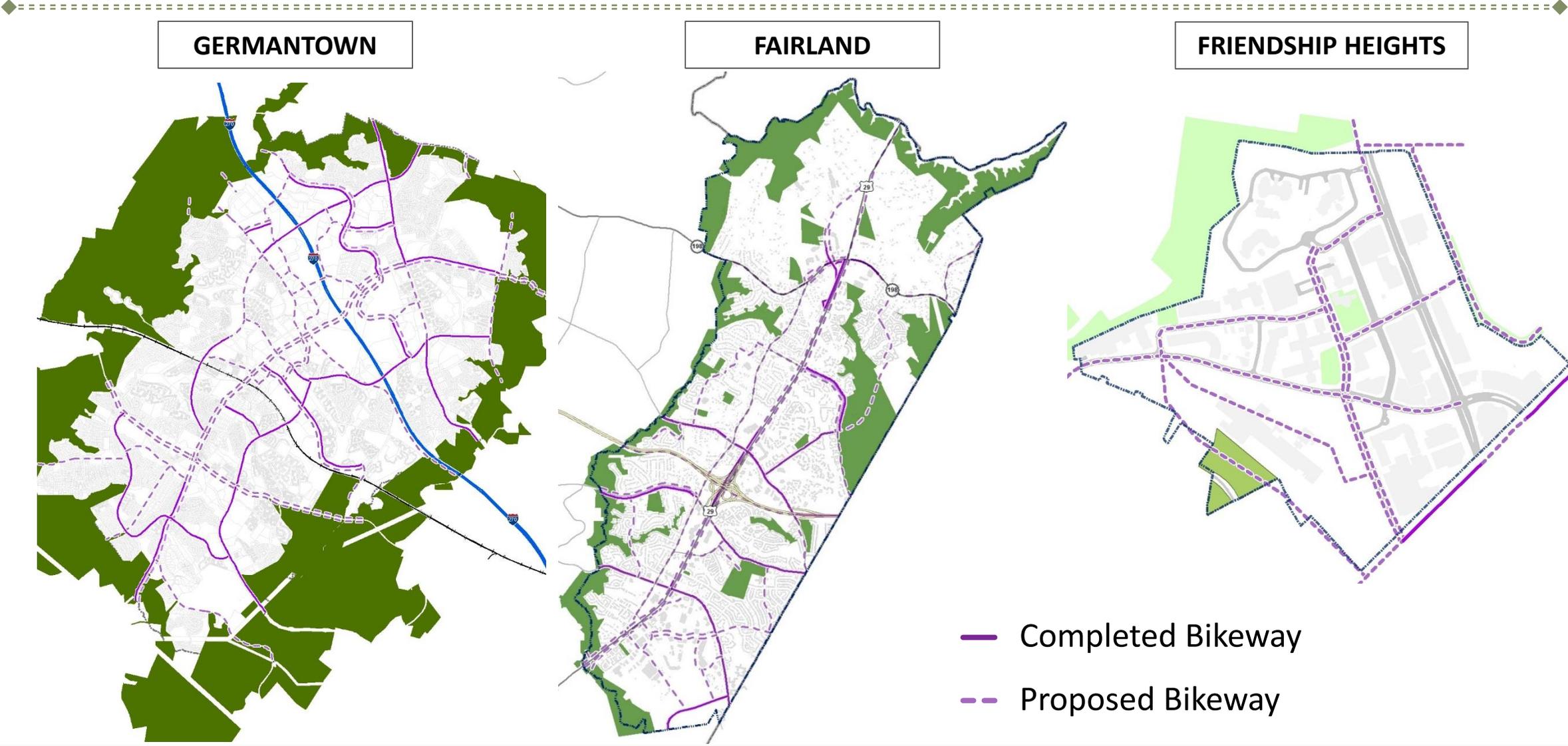
- Plan focused on US 29 grade-separated interchanges and several have been built.
- BRT was not discussed in '97, but is now in planning stage.

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS



- Infill development around existing Metro station has realized as planned.

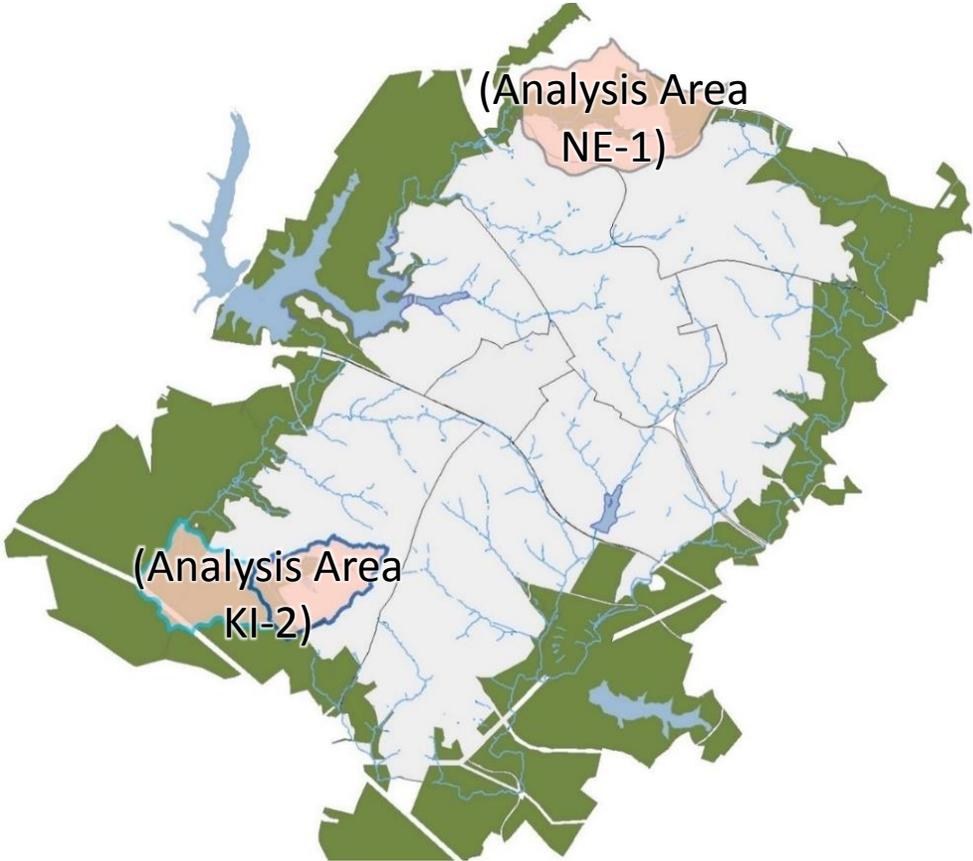
5. Transportation: Improvements have been made to bike and pedestrian networks, but plan goals are not yet fully implemented.



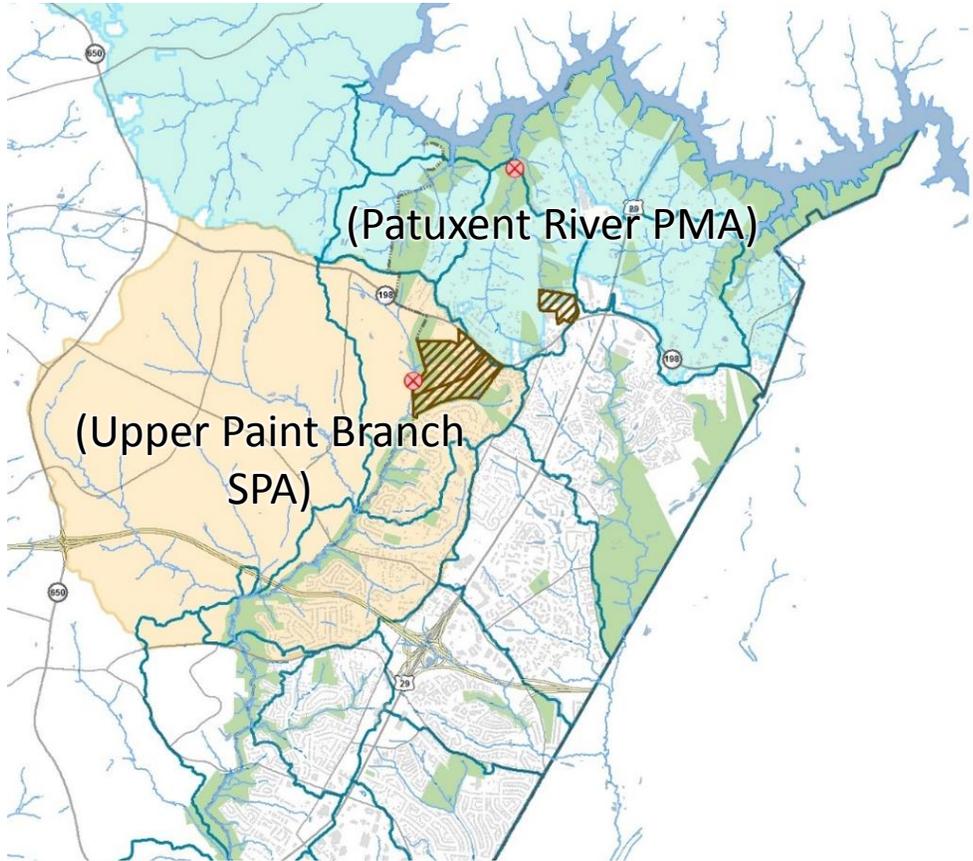
6. Environment: Plans took different approaches to setting goals.

AREAS WITH IMPERVIOUS SURFACE LIMITS

GERMANTOWN



FAIRLAND



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❖ Summary of Key Findings

- Residential development achieved overall unit goals, but was less effective in altering unit mix in Germantown and Fairland.
- Commercial build out depends on the market and, on an FAR basis, differs for plans in urban vs. suburban areas.
- The public sector delivered most of its capital commitments – parks, recreation facilities, schools, and road investments.
- None of the plans indicated any concerns about school overcrowding.
- Public benefits contingent on private sector investment, didn't always materialize.
- Investment in transit and bikeways has not progressed as quickly as hoped.
- Stronger design standards help with the implementation of higher quality developments.

❖ What does this mean for how we plan?

- **Data Documentation:** Preserve data used at time of master plan analysis for documentation of baseline assumptions.
- **Understand Economic Conditions:** More detailed market analysis as part of a master plan would provide more quantitative data on baseline conditions and support for recommendations.
- **Flexibility:** Plans reflect the time and place in which they are completed as well as the unique plan area characteristics.
- **Monitoring:** Performing master plan reality check before the horizon date could be useful to determine if incentives or other interventions should be considered to stimulate development.

❖ Potential indicators for more frequent master plan monitoring. Selected based on readily available data.

Preliminary Monitoring Indicators	
Indicator Category	Metric
1. Non-residential Development	Build out breakdown, by ORIO*
	FAR, by ORIO
	Commercial building permits issued
2. Residential Development	Dwelling units, by count and type
	MPDUs , by count and type
	Residential building permits issued
3. Community Facilities	School capacity
	Park acreage
4. Transportation	Traffic intersection metric**

* ORIO is defined as Office, Retail, Industrial and Other

** Level of Service (LOS) or Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT), depending on what metric was used in the master plan

- ❖ Additional indicators of area conditions that could be measured every 5 years.

Neighborhood Wellness Indicators
Population
Median Household Income
Poverty (as defined by Census Bureau)
Educational Attainment
Median Home Value and Change

- Data requires third party surveys (such as the U.S. Census ACS).
- Data availability is variable and requires a statistically significant sample size.

❖ The Reality of the Master Plan Reality Check

