

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
POLICY PLAN COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence District, Chairman  
Timothy J. Sargeant, Commissioner At-Large, Vice Chairman  
Candice Bennett, Commissioner At-Large  
Mary D. Cortina, Braddock District  
John C. Ulfelder, Dranesville District  
Daniel G. Lagana, Franconia District  
John A. Carter, Hunter Mill District  
Daren Shumate, Mason District  
Walter C. Clarke, Mount Vernon District  
Evelyn S. Spain, Sully District

**ABSENT:** Peter Murphy, Springfield District  
Andres Jimenez, Commissioner At-Large

**OTHERS:** Tracy Strunk, Director, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)  
Andrea Dorlester, Planner IV, Planning Division (PD), DPD  
Clara Johnson, Branch Chief, PD, DPD  
Sarah Godfrey, Community Engagement Specialist, DPD  
Scott Sizer, P3/Joint Ventures Policy Coordinator, Department of Economic  
Initiatives (DEI)  
Kevin Jackson, Senior Deputy Clerk, Planning Commission

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POWERPOINT PRESENTATION
- B. OFFICE REPURPOSING RESEARCH FINDINGS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION
- C. STATE OF THE PLAN FINDINGS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

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Chairman Niedzielski-Eichner called the Policy Plan Committee to order at 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 11 of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chairman Niedzielski-Eichner stated that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to hear updates from staff regarding Phase 1 of the Policy Plan update effort. Chairman Niedzielski-Eichner set the agenda to hear from the Director of the Department of Planning and Development, followed by several staff presentations.

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Tracey Strunk, Director, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) gave remarks, which covered the following topics:

- Staff's eagerness to engage with the Planning Commission on this work and the opportunity for collaboration throughout the plan development process;
- Announcement that Andrea Dorlester was retiring from the County to take another position with the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission in Prince George's County, Maryland; and,
- DPD Leadership would communicate the new Project Manager for the Policy Plan update effort to the Planning Commission once they were named.

There was a discussion between Ms. Strunk and multiple Committee members on the following issues:

- Laudatory remarks on behalf of Andrea Dorlester's service to the County and contributions to the Parks Authority and the Department of Planning and Development. It was noted that her efforts led to the creation of the County's Urban Design Guidelines.

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The following Commissioner attended the meeting from the following location and for the following reason:

- Timothy J. Sargeant participated from his home in Southern Fairfax County due to illness

Following verification of Commissioner Sargeant's location, reason, and that his voice was audible in the meeting room, Commissioner BENNETT MOVED THAT COMMISSIONER SARGEANT'S VOICE WAS ADEQUATELY HEARD AND THAT HIS REMOTE PARTICIPATION COMPORTS WITH THE COMMISSION'S POLICY FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS. Commissioner Cortina seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 9-0. Commissioner Sargeant did not participate in the vote. Commissioners Murphy and Jimenez were absent from the meeting.

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Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner gave remarks and opened a discussion on the PC Liaison effort. There was a discussion between Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner; Tracy Strunk, Department of Planning and Development (DPD); and multiple Committee members on the following issues:

- Updates from each Commissioner Liaison and an overview of upcoming Committee meetings;
- Discussions and introductory conversations that Commissioner Liaisons had with their staff counterparts;
- Discussions on holding joint Committee meetings with the staff liaison and the corresponding Boards, Authorities, or Commissions (BACs); and,
- Discussion on staff expectations for Commissioners in terms of both outreach, work products/deliverables, and the timeframe.

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Sarah Godfrey, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the Community Engagement Framework, a copy of which is included in Attachment A, which covered the following topics:

- Overview of the Inclusive Community Engagement framework
- Explanation of the goals that guided staff as they formulated the community engagement strategy; and,
- Explanation that the effort would be branded as Plan Forward, similar to how the effort to rewrite the parking ordinance was known as Parking Reimagined. It was noted that this branding aligns with the Strategic Plan and would link efforts from various County agencies.

There was a discussion between Ms. Godfrey and multiple Committee members on the following issues:

- Clarification on the factors used to determine the type and level of engagement effort for specific policies;
- Clarification as to what level of outreach would be exerted for surveys and other data collecting/mining attempts;
- Explanation that the approach would be Countywide and staff intended to primarily focus on digital outreach efforts;
- Discussion on how different communities, particularly marginalized and underrepresented, used different mediums of social media than the traditional applications;
- Discussion on whether efforts were made to build a platform that allowed for the public to contribute their feedback. Noted that other jurisdictions were having success engaging young people to share feedback through pop-up events;
- Concerns that the general public wouldn't be as engaged in this effort as staff would like;
- Emphasized the importance of identifying and engaging stakeholders and advocates across the spectrum of issues;
- Emphasized the need to be strategic in deploying various community engagement strategies/efforts and particularly focus on outreach to marginalized communities;
- Clarification that the branding/reframing effort provided an opportunity to reintroduce the County's work to the public through an approach that provided clarity and invited feedback and engagement;
- Discussion on the importance of involving interest groups/organizations as their subject matter experts provide significant expertise on the issues that the County was addressing;
- Encouraged importance of outreach efforts through the Supervisors office as they could coordinate with citizens who have already been involved in land use cases in their districts who could be interested in being a part of the policy process from the outset;

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Andrea Dorlester, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Development (DPD) gave a PowerPoint Presentation on Office Building Repurposing Research Findings, a copy of which is included in Attachment B, which covered the following topics:

- Recognized DPD colleagues and Department of Economic Initiatives (DEI) colleagues Scott Sizer and Laura Baker for their contributions to the research on this issue;
- Overview that office rebuilding repurposing was a popular trend in local jurisdictions and across the country as governments have adapted to the reality of remote work;
- Explanation that the building industry and associations were focused on repurposing efforts and office-to-housing conversions;
- Explanation that the potential for success varied greatly from project to project;
- Identification of the factors and associated features DPD used to determine the success of these developments, including: location and land use, architectural features, and financial conditions;
- Further explanation that developers who already owned properties were in a better condition to retrofit buildings than those who needed to both pay for a development and to retrofit it;
- Explanation that office vacancy rates in the County were at an all-time high, particularly in suburban areas without access to metro or public transit options;
- Overview of how various County plans/policies supported repurposing efforts and provided a framework for facilitating approval of these developments;
- Overview of how repurposing activity had provided increased housing stock across the County through both rezoning applications and the Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) process;
- Explanation that the research process followed for office building repurposing could be used as a model for other topics including: self storage, industrial uses, data centers, and the future of retail; and
- Next steps in the process, including the publication of a white paper by July 31, 2023.

There was a discussion between Ms. Dorlester and multiple Committee members on the following issues:

- Clarification on the differentiation between repurposing efforts and replanning efforts;
- Concerns regarding the balance between residential and commercial development as the County approves more repurposing applications. Further clarification regarding whether the Policy Plan or another County policy could address this or limit residential repurposing in the event too much residential development was being approved;
- Concerns regarding whether the County was favoring residential repurposing over consideration of other uses such as medical and biometric facilities;
- Noted that the appeal of County made the need for affordable housing much greater;
- Discussion on how the County differentiated from the national economy due to factors such as prospective industries and growth opportunities;
- Clarification on how mixed use developments were approved under current/proposed County policies;
- Clarification on how this effort relating to the research efforts for datacenter developments;
- Clarification on the staff posture towards integration of datacenters within areas across the County;
- Clarification on whether repurposed buildings were redesigned for residential communities in a way that made them communal and sociable?

- Clarification on whether residential repurposing gave the County enough Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) at the level needed for the county's workforce, and how was that measured;
- Discussion on how communities could have a role in directing the growth of facilities in their neighborhoods;
- Clarification on how the development community has responded to the repurposing policy and changing development conditions; and
- Concerns regarding historic preservation and environmental issues when considering repurposing of historic developments in the County.

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Andrea Dorlester, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and Clara Johnson, PD, DPD gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the State of the Plan Findings, a copy of which is included in Attachment C, which covered the following topics:

- Overview of the information covered in the State of the Plan Findings (SOTPF) report, including the timeframe, examination of comprehensive planning activities, major themes of approved Plan amendments, quantification of net changes in development potential; and measurement of how planning activities met the goals of the Concept for Future Development;
- Summary of planning activity across plan amendment categories including: areawide studies, site-specific, countywide, and Policy Plan;
- Overview of geographic distribution of adopted plan amendments from 2011-2022 excluding editorial amendments; Policy Plan amendments; and other non-mappable plan changes;
- Explanation of three key takeaways from the last decade of approved plan amendment activity from 2011-2022 (as covered in the SOTPF report) including flexibility, transit-oriented, and housing in-demand;
- Explanation of key themes from the last decade of Policy Plan amendment activity from 2011-2022 (as covered in the SOTPF report) including infrastructure and flexibility;
- Explanation of key theme from the last decade of Areawide Plan amendment activity from 2011-2022 (as covered in the SOTPF report) including mixed use development;
- Explanation of key theme from the last decade of Site-Specific Plan amendment activity from 2011-2022 (as covered in the SOTPF report) including more housing;
- Comparison between existing and planned development to how much development potential had been implemented and how much remained;
- Comparison between existing residential units within activity centers and outside of activity centers;
- Overview of residential growth in the County across detached units, attached units, and multifamily units;
- Comparison between existing non-residential square footage within activity centers and outside of activity centers;
- Overview of remaining maximum residential development potential in the County across detached units, attached units, and multifamily units;
- Overview of remaining non-residential development potential in the County across office, retail, institutional, industrial, and hotel uses;

- Explanation of remaining Comprehensive Plan development potential;
- Comparison between the County's maximum development potential and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) forecast of development needs; and
- Next steps in the process, including the publication of the SOTPF report by August 31, 2023.

There was a discussion between Ms. Dorlester, Ms. Johnson, and multiple Committee members on the following issues:

- Clarification as to the land area for detached dwelling units versus attached dwelling units;
- Clarification as to how the County could expand area for additional residential units to help address the housing needs/demands;
- Clarification as to how the County could strategically address how to utilize the MWCOG forecast to increase the affordable housing stock; and
- Further concerns that the current process to address affordable housing stock through plan amendments was not working.

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Chairman Niedzielski-Eichner outlined the process for the Commission's consideration of the Reston Comprehensive Plan Amendment at the July 19<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

Chairman Niedzielski-Eichner thanked staff and adjourned the meeting.

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.  
Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office,  
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: Kevin Jackson

Approved: November 16, 2023

*Jacob Caporaletti*

Jacob Caporaletti, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission

County of Fairfax  
Commonwealth of Virginia

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 1 day of December 20 23, by

*[Signature]*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Notary

Notary registration number: 7114113

Commission expiration: January 31, 2024







**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

# POLICY PLAN UPDATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

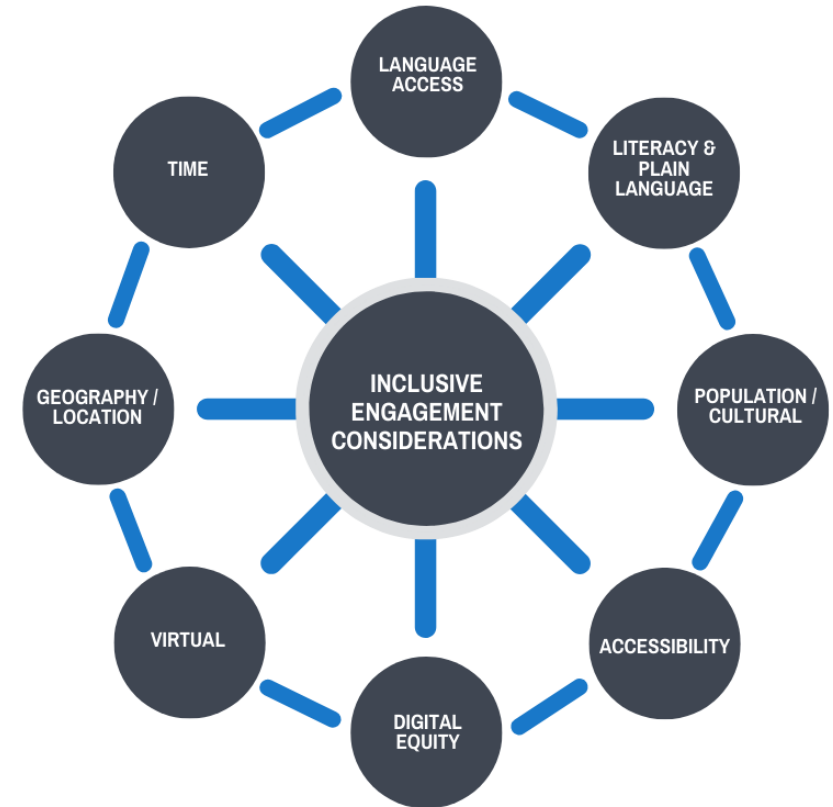
Planning Commission  
Policy Plan Committee  
July 13, 2023





# Policy Plan Update

## Inclusive Community Engagement



### Goals:

1. Create clear messages
2. Maximize existing county resources
3. Employ a variety of tools and techniques
4. Provide engagement opportunities in multiple formats
5. Strive to reach as many community members as possible



# Policy Plan Update Project Branding

- **Plan Forward**

- Future Focused
- Aligns with Strategic Plan branding (Fairfax Forward)
- Will clearly link efforts from different agencies (DPD, FCDOT, etc.)





PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

# OFFICE BUILDING REPURPOSING

Planning Commission  
Policy Plan Committee  
July 13, 2023



# Office repurposing is a hot topic

**The Washington Post**  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

## D.C. officials offer tax relief to turn downtown offices into housing

By [Karina Elwood](#)  
December 15, 2022 at 7:09 p.m. EST

**URBANLAND**

[Urban Land](#) > [Planning & Design](#) > How to Make Office-to-Residential Conversions Work

## How to Make Office-to-Residential Conversions Work

By [Patrick J. Kiger](#)  
December 1, 2022

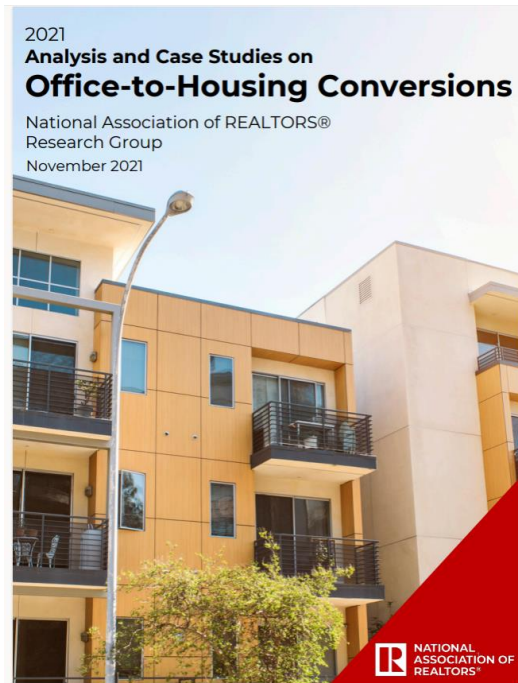
**The New York Times**

## So You Want to Turn an Office Building Into a Home?

Cities are eager to do this amid rising remote work. But it's harder than you might think.

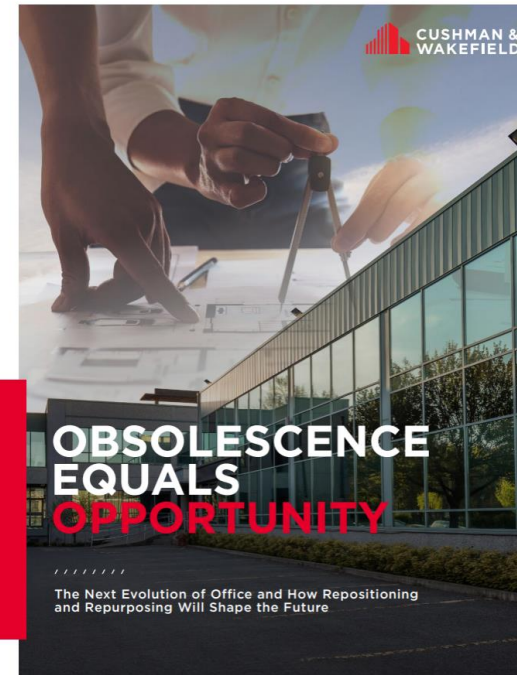
# Building industry is focused on repurposing

National Association  
of Realtors  
November 2021



Urban Land Institute  
2023

Cushman & Wakefield  
2023



Streetsense  
2023

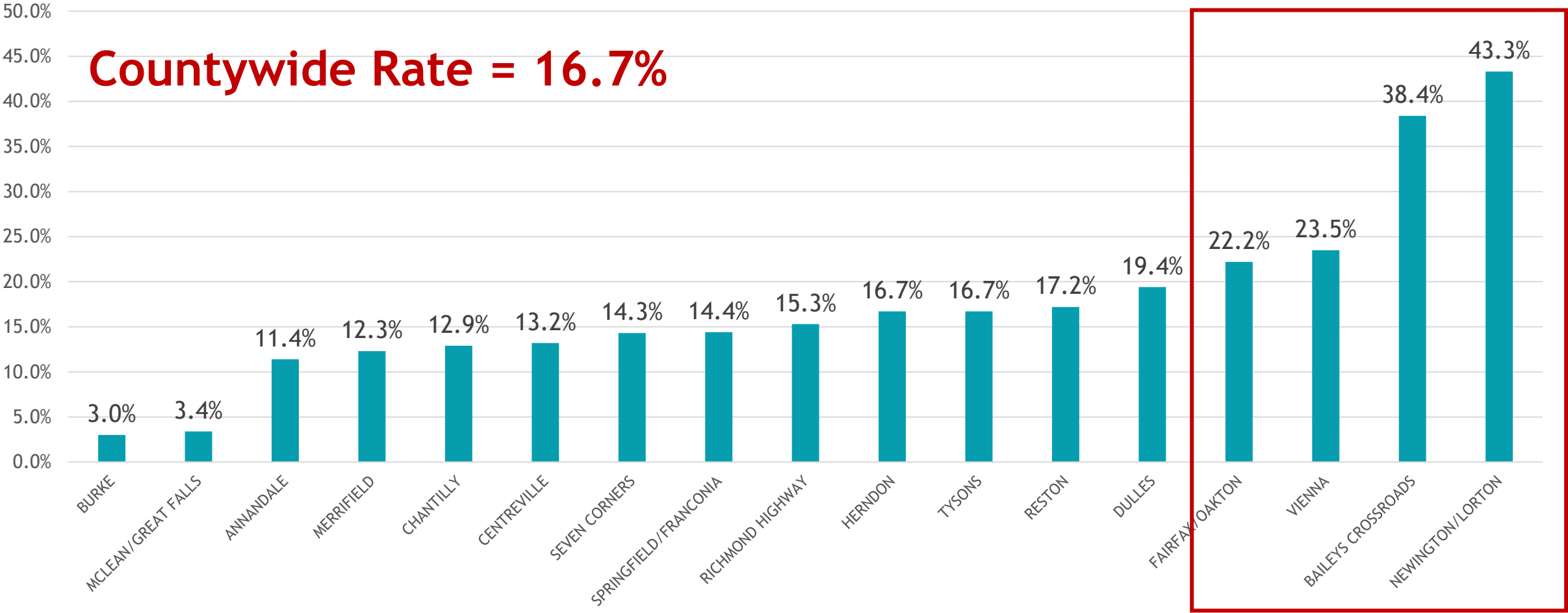


# Success factors are varied



# Office vacancy rates are at an all-time high

## Office Vacancy Rates in Fairfax County by Submarket



Source: Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, December 2022



# County plans support repurposing

## **Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County**

Adopted by the Board in 2015

## **Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP)**

Adopted by the Board in 2021

CECAP Implementation Plan, published December 2022

## **Countywide Strategic Plan**

Adopted October 2021 and revised May 2023

# County policy was updated to facilitate repurposing

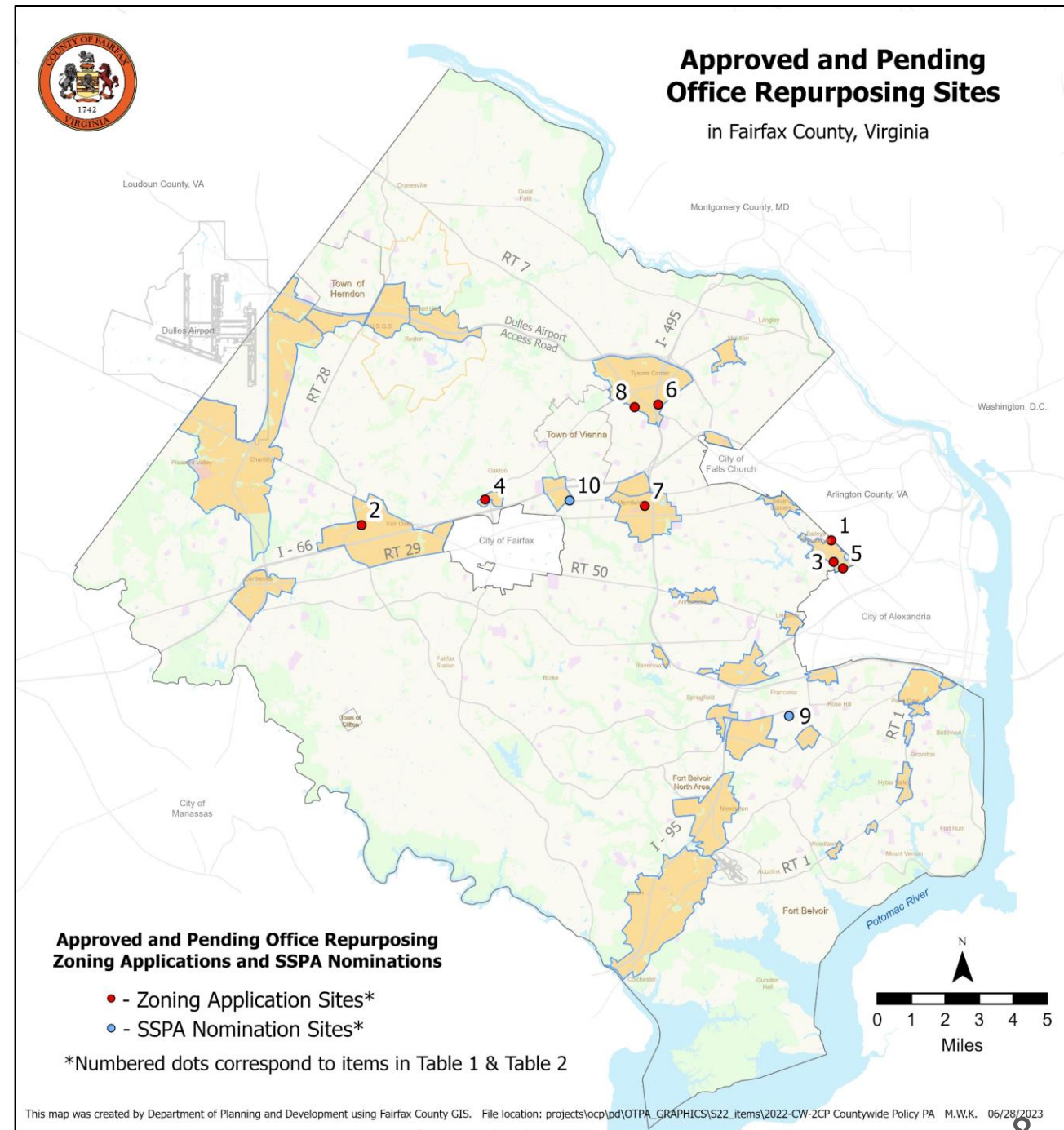
“Guidelines for Commercial Building Repurposing”  
(Land Use Appendix 13)

Policy Plan Amendments:

1. 2018 – Office buildings in mixed-use centers
2. 2019 – Office buildings outside mixed-use centers;  
other commercial uses countywide

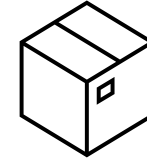
# Repurposing activity has increased housing options

- Zoning applications
  - 8 locations
  - 10 buildings approved (1,889 units)
  - 2 buildings pending (305 units)
  - 1 building deferred (149 units)
- SSPA nominations
  - 2 locations
  - 3 buildings
  - 1,144 possible units

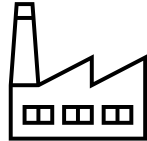


# Repurposing research is a model for other topics

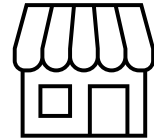
Self storage



Industrial uses



The future of retail



Data centers



# White paper to be published

- Result of collaborative work
  - Department of Economic Initiatives
  - Economic Development Authority
- Expected later this month



## OFFICE BUILDING REPURPOSING

A Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development White Paper  
July 2023



# OFFICE BUILDING REPURPOSING

## DISCUSSION



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

# STATE OF THE PLAN

Planning Commission  
Policy Plan Committee  
July 13, 2023





# State of the Plan

## What information does it provide?

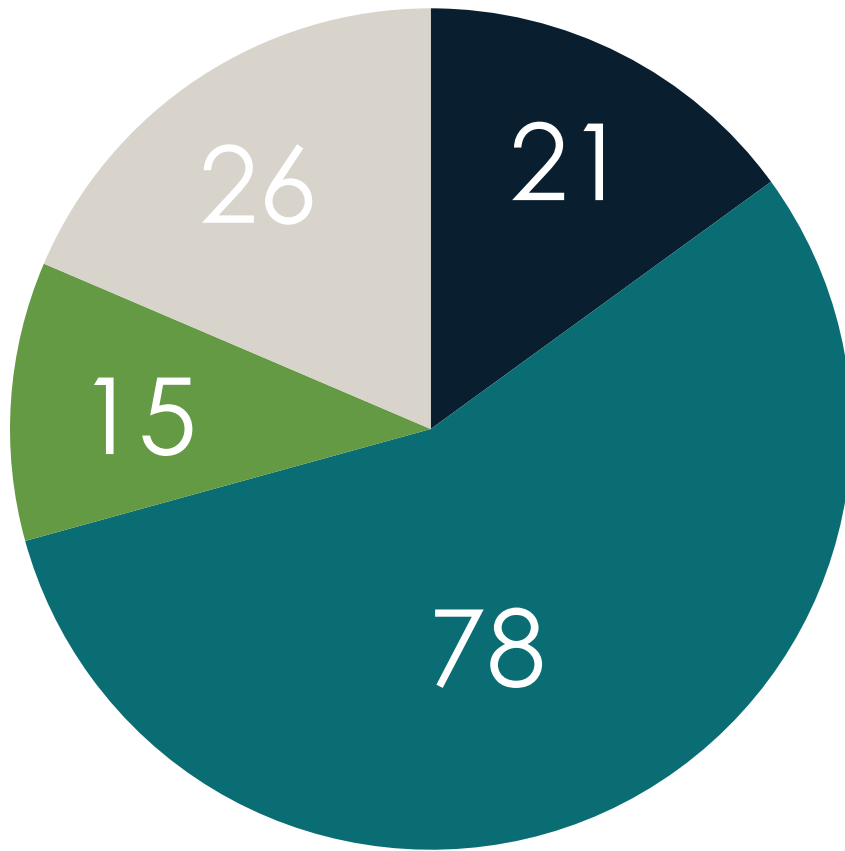
1. Timeframe: **January 2011 – December 2022**
2. Examines comprehensive planning activities across the county and evaluates how planning objectives are being met
3. Highlights major themes of approved Plan Amendments
4. Quantifies net changes in development potential both countywide and within activity centers
5. Examines how Plan Amendments and growth are meeting the goals of the Concept for Future Development

# State of the Plan

## Summary of planning activity

**186**  
Amendments Authorized

**140**  
Amendments Approved



- Areawide Studies
- Site-Specific
- Countywide
- Policy Plan

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS  
2011 - 2022

# State of the Plan

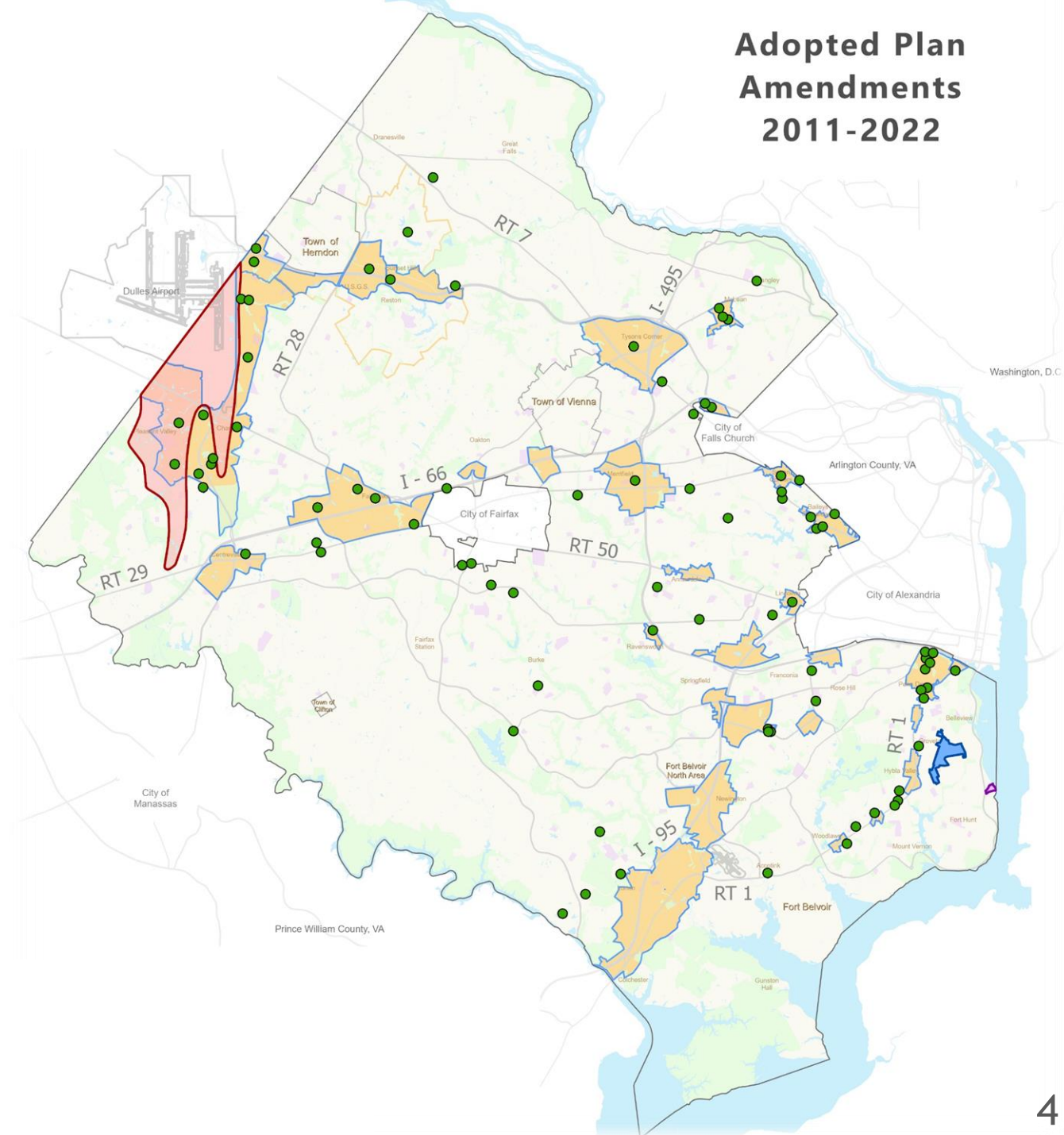
## Location of amendments

Adopted Plan  
Amendments  
2011-2022

- Adopted Plan Amendments
- Airport Noise Policy
- Hollin Hills HOD
- Wellington at River Farm HOD
- Mixed-use Centers

### NOT SHOWN:

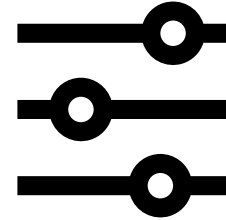
- Editorial amendments
- Policy Plan Amendments
- Other non-mappable Plan changes



# State of the Plan

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### 1. FLEXIBILITY

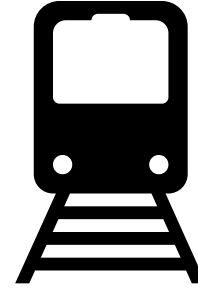


Policy Plan Amendments focused on targeted amendments to provide flexibility as market forces or economic factors change.

# State of the Plan

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

## 2. TRANSIT ORIENTED



Adopted Plan changes reflect the county's goal of orienting higher-intensity mixed uses around key transportation nodes and promoting:

- (1) a better balance of housing to jobs,
- (2) increased housing availability,
- (3) increased use of transit, and
- (4) the creation of vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.

# State of the Plan

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### 3. HOUSING IN DEMAND



Introducing options for a variety of residential and residential mixed uses is an overriding theme among both site-specific Plan amendments and area-wide amendments.

# State of the Plan

## Plan Amendment Themes

### POLICY PLAN



#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Amendments to the Policy Plan during the first half of the reporting period focused on updates to various elements of **infrastructure policy**.



#### FLEXIBILITY

During the second half of the reporting period, amendments were targeted, with the goal of **increasing flexibility** with consideration to changing market forces and economic factors.



# State of the Plan

## Plan Amendment Themes

### AREAWIDE



#### MIXED USE

Half of all adopted areawide amendments during the reporting period concerned large-scale planning efforts that focused on mixed-use activity centers – in areas with existing, funded, and/or planned transit options.

# State of the Plan

## Plan Amendment Themes

### SITE-SPECIFIC



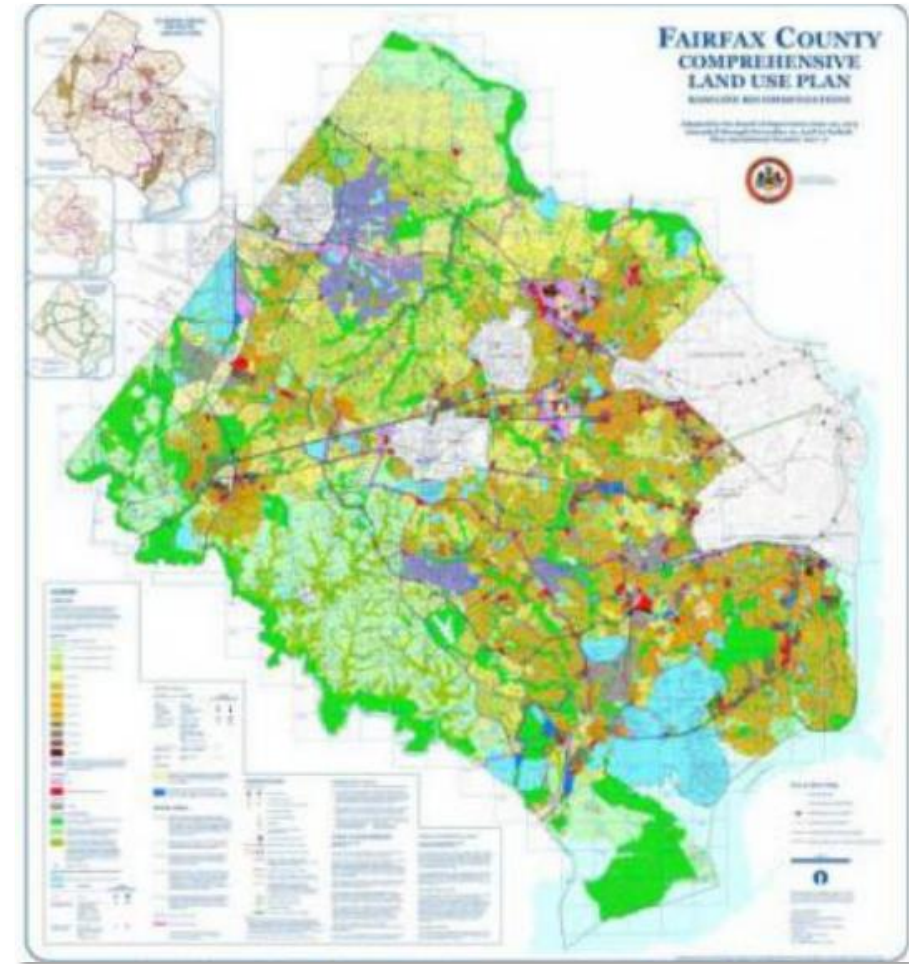
#### MORE HOUSING

Half of all adopted site-specific amendments (59%) during the reporting period were for the purpose of adding either residential or residential mixed-use options.

77% percent of amendments adding residential mixed-use options were in activity centers.

# State of the Plan

## Existing and Planned Development

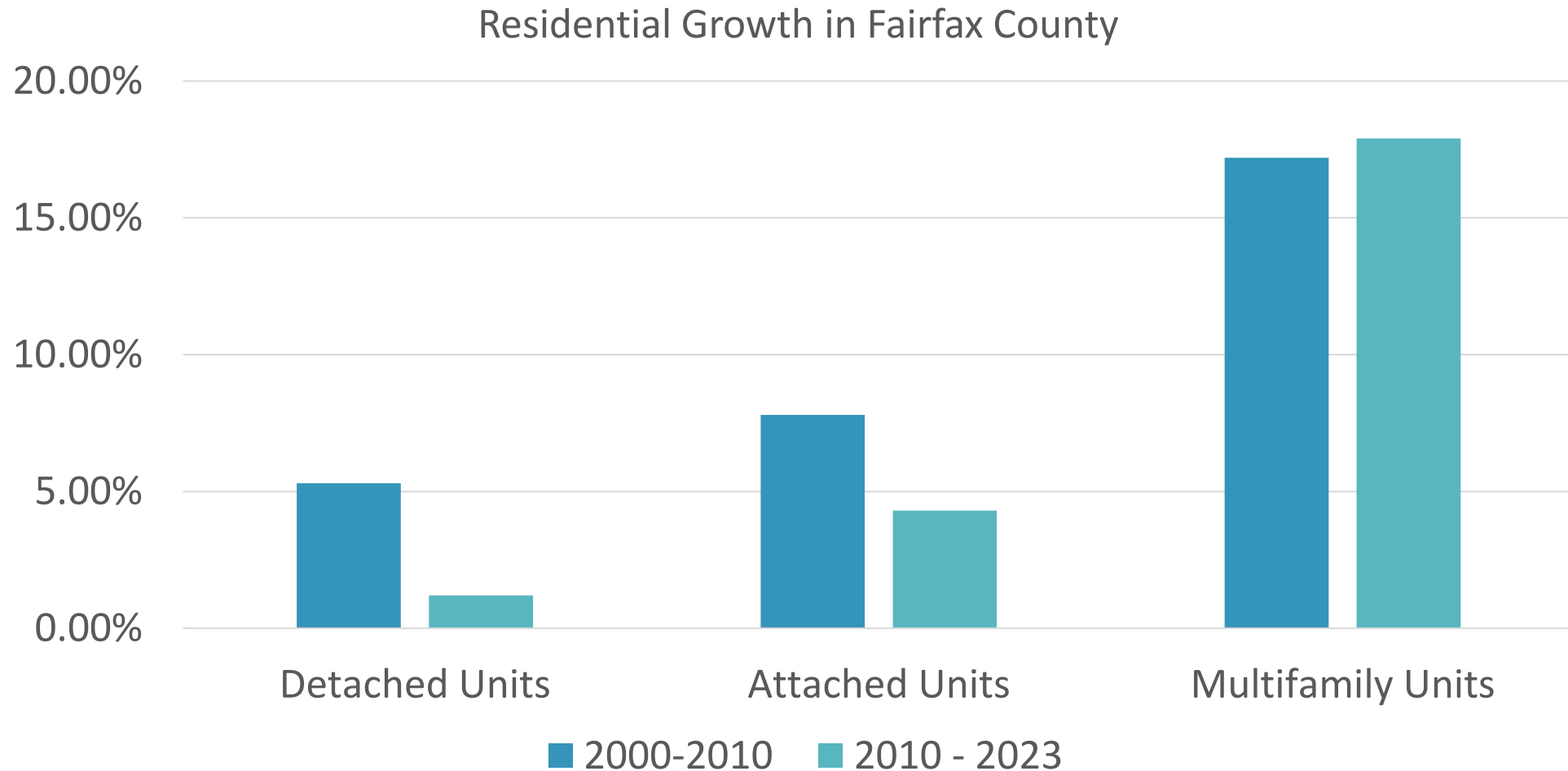


Comparing existing development levels to the estimated Plan buildout potential shows how much development potential has been implemented, and generally, how much remains.

# State of the Plan

## Residential Development

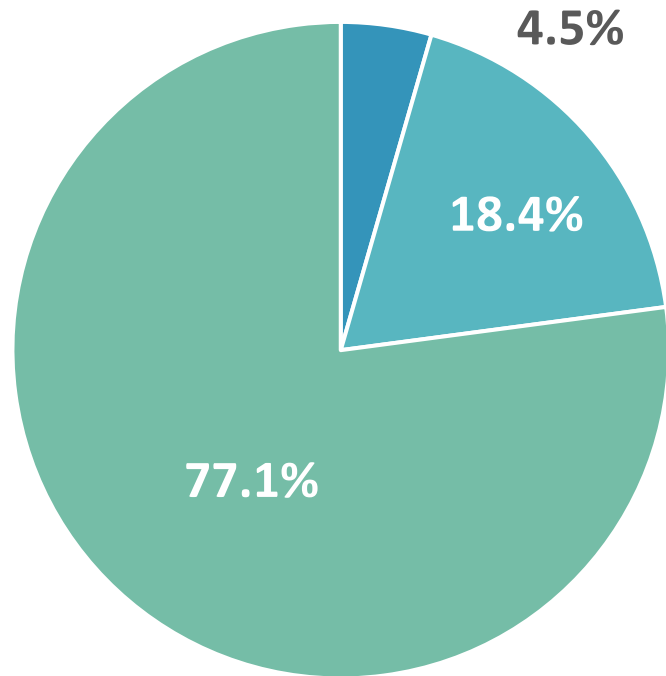
Multifamily residential units grew more than detached and attached residential units.



# State of the Plan

## Existing Residential Units

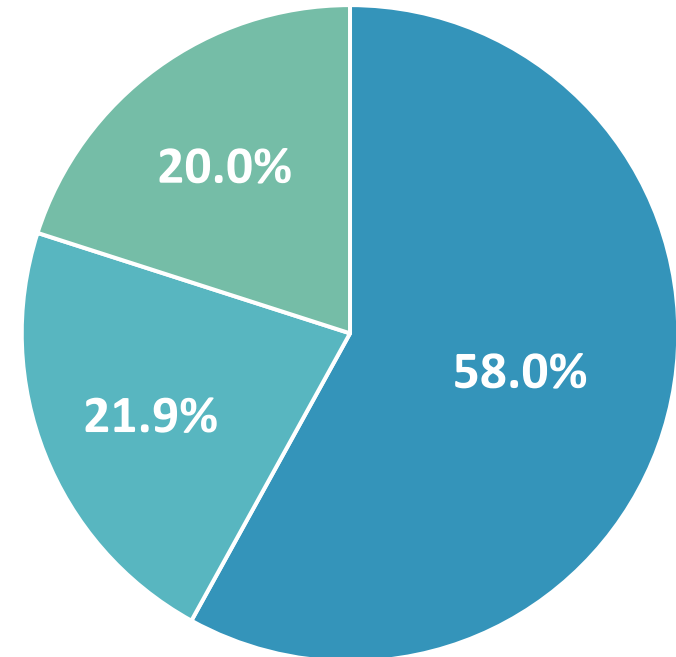
Residential Units  
Within Activity Centers (2023)



**101**

THOUSAND UNITS

Residential Units  
Outside Activity Centers (2023)



**324**

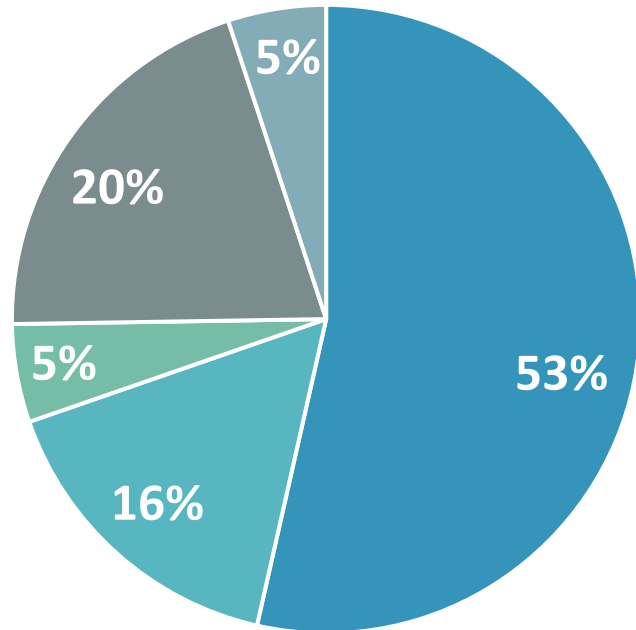
THOUSAND UNITS

- Detached
- Attached
- Multifamily

# State of the Plan

## Existing Non-residential Square Footage

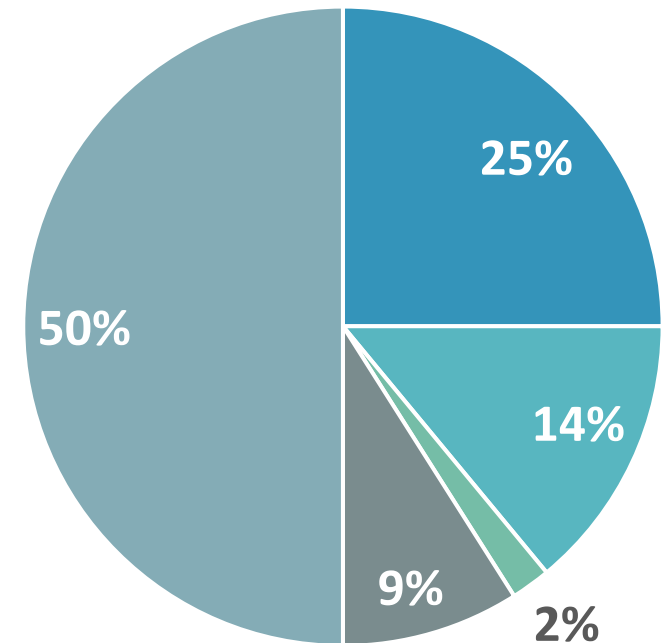
Non-Residential Development  
Within Activity Centers (2023)



**201**  
MILLION SQ FT

Non-Residential Development  
Outside Activity Centers (2023)

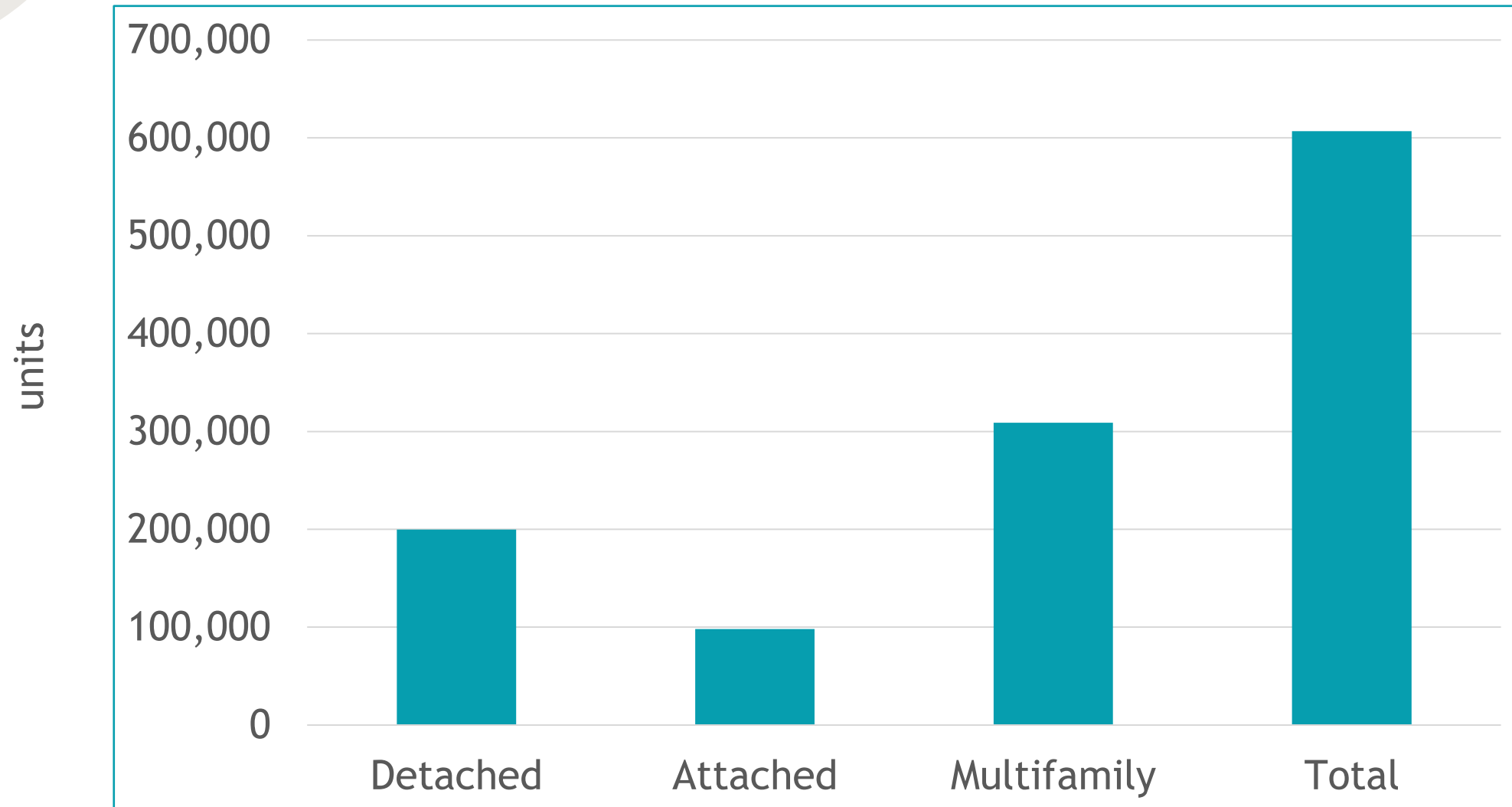
- Office
- Retail
- Hotel
- Industrial
- Institutional



**85**  
MILLION SQ FT

# State of the Plan

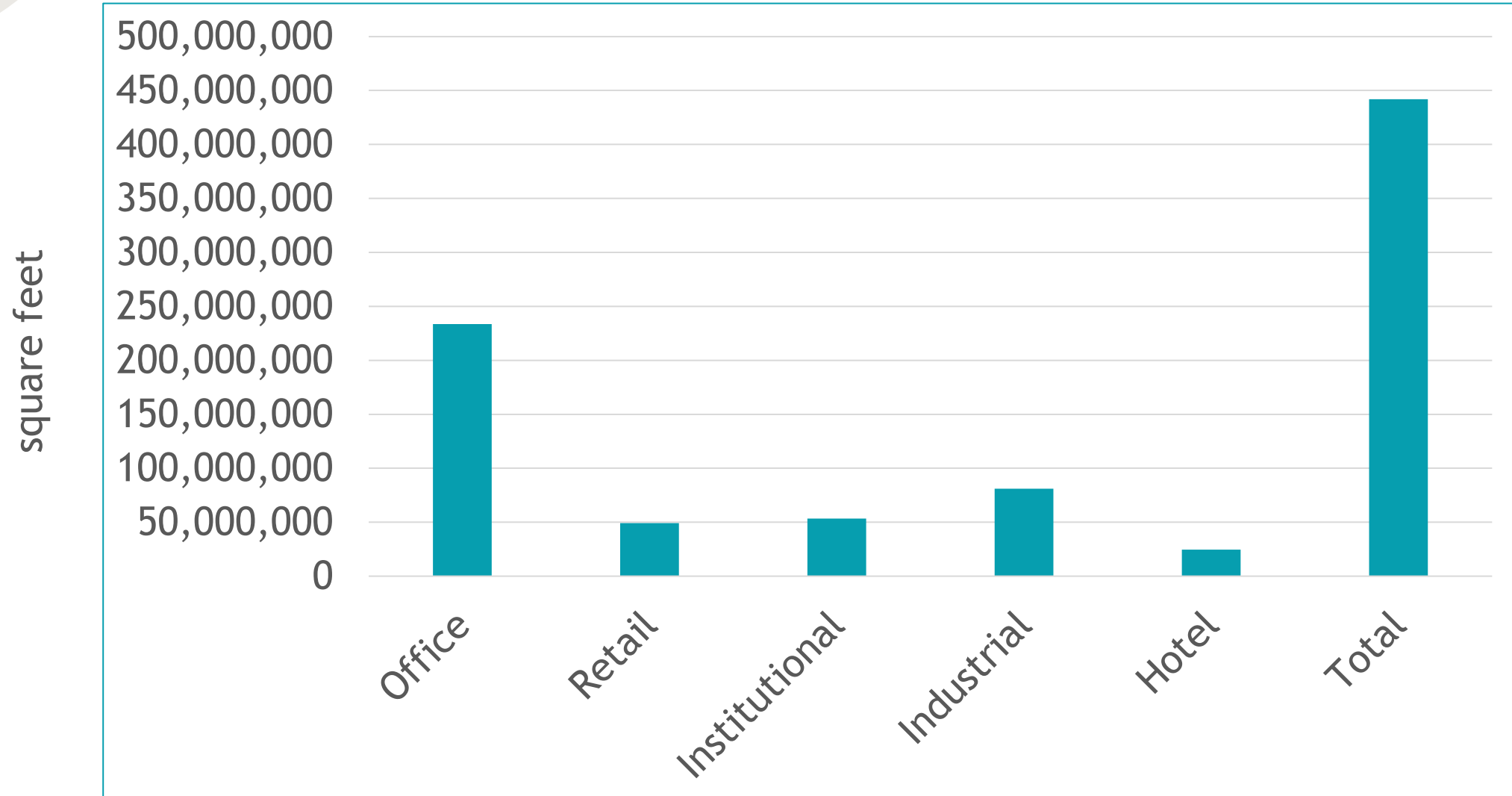
## Maximum Development Potential - Residential





# State of the Plan

## Maximum Development Potential - Non-Residential



# State of the Plan

## Remaining Comprehensive Plan Potential

Total number of housing units planned to increase by nearly

**200**  
THOUSAND



**91%**  
MULTIFAMILY

The majority of multifamily housing is planned within mixed-use activity centers

Total number of non-residential square feet is planned to increase by nearly

**156**  
MILLION



**67%**  
OFFICE

21% Industrial  
8% Hotel  
3% Retail  
1% Institutional

# State of the Plan

## Forecast vs. Maximum Development Potential

The net Comprehensive Plan growth potential compared to the net growth estimated by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG)

	Remaining Plan Potential	Forecast Increase by 2045	Difference
Dwelling Units	182 THOUSAND	80 THOUSAND	101 THOUSAND
Jobs	446 THOUSAND	135 THOUSAND	311 THOUSAND

# State of the Plan Report to be published

- Expected by the end of Summer 2023



PLAN  
FORWARD



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



STATE OF THE PLAN 2023



# STATE OF THE PLAN

Planning Commission  
Policy Plan Committee  
July 13, 2023



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

