VISION 2030

TOWN OF SYKESVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Town of Sykesville
7547 Main Street
Sykesville, MD 21784

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Acknowledgements

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Anna Carter, Town Council President
Mark Dyer, Town Council
Alan Grasley, Town Council
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Stephen Enslow, Chairperson
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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Rachael Beck, Downtown Sykesville Connection
Julia Betz, Planning Commission
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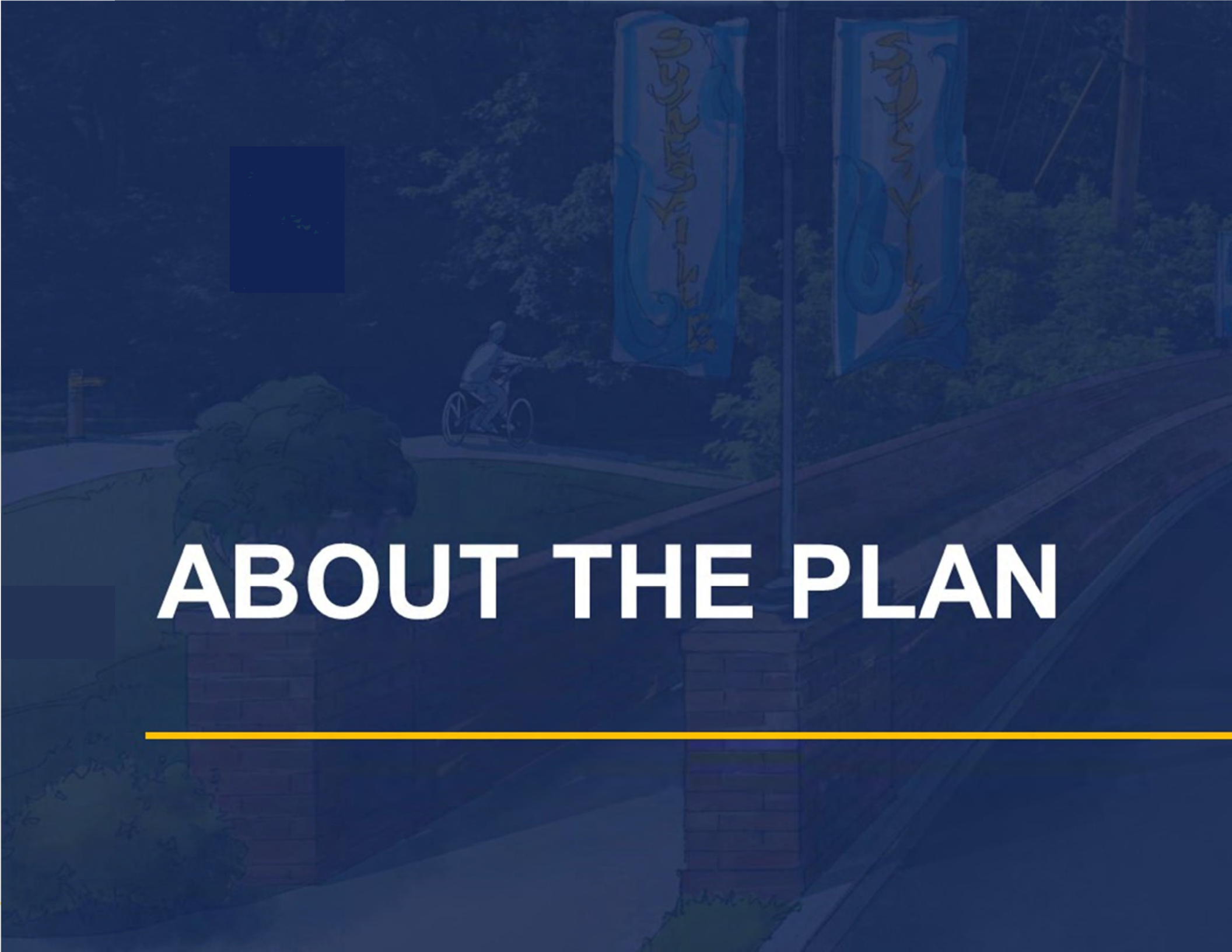
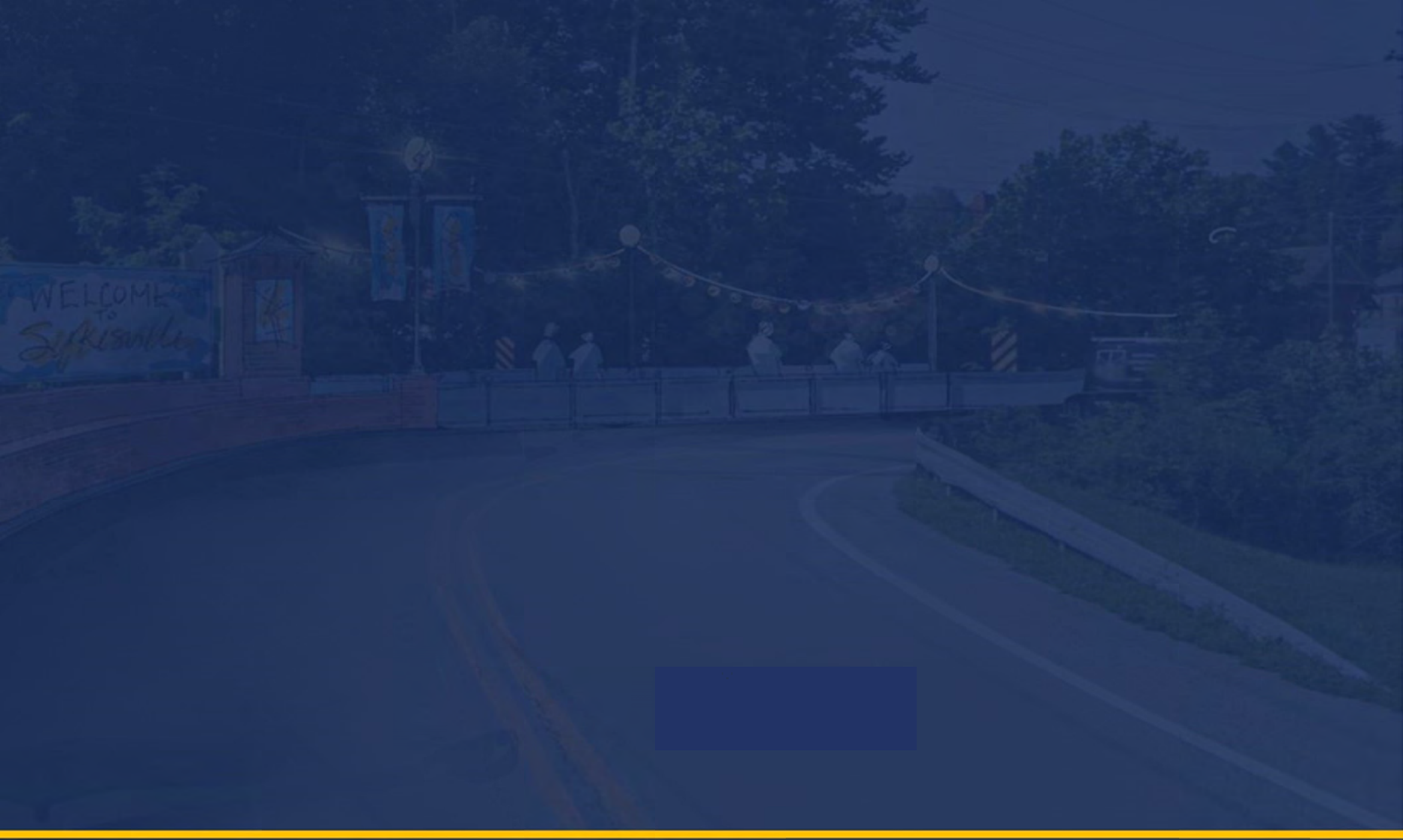
CONSULTANT TEAM

Michael Baker International



ABOUT THE PLAN


WELCOME

THE VINE

Introduction to the Plan

OUR COMMUNITY

The Town of Sykesville is a small community located in the southern portion of Carroll County, Maryland. While largely a bedroom community comprised of many residential neighborhoods, Sykesville is best known for its thriving Downtown, nationally distinguished as the “Best Main Street of America” and “Coolest Small Town in America.”

Main Street, which historically was part of Route 32, is home to a vibrant group of merchants and businesses that offer a wide range of retail and commercial services. The Town is also a popular visitor destination in Maryland and draws thousands of visitors each year through its annual events, including the Craft Beer Festival, Fine Art and Wine Festival, and many others.

Dating back to the 18th century, the Town has a designated Historic District in the Downtown to preserve its historic buildings and rich history. Extending beyond Main Street, newer residential development constructed within the past 40 years is the prominent land use along with conservation lands dedicated as public park space.

Encompassing only 1.6 square miles in size, the Town is home to 4,209 residents and is projected to have limited growth through 2025.

SYKESVILLE VISION 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Sykesville Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan serves as the official policy guide for short-term and long-term decision making relative to priority investments in the Town of Sykesville over the next 10 years. As its core purpose, a comprehensive plan is intended to answer the question, “What is our game plan moving forward?”. Throughout the planning process, comprehensive plans allow public officials, staff, and residents to take a step back and look at the big picture to form a strategic plan for local initiatives and investments.

For this Plan, the Town of Sykesville convened an Advisory Committee of local residents to oversee and help facilitate the planning process in close coordination with Town staff. This approach has provided strong local buy-in and support for the Plan’s Vision and Goal Statements and corresponding action items for implementation. The plan was developed over the course of 2020 and 2021 with extensive public outreach and engagement, largely facilitated in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on public input, four prominent areas of focus, or “issues,” were identified as local community priorities and validated throughout plan development. The issues are stated as goals with action items for each and are not listed in any priority order.

OVERVIEW OF PLAN FOCUS

The goal statements and implementation action items as presented in this plan are based on public input including input from businesses and community and economic development partners engaged during the planning process.

Public input demonstrated high resident satisfaction with the Town’s residential neighborhoods, parks and recreational amenities, public services, and the overall high quality of life. Largely, Plan recommendations are focused on Downtown Sykesville as a priority. While public input demonstrated high resident satisfaction with the Downtown, input also revealed opportunities to help continue the overall momentum of Main Street as a vibrant core spine of the Town and important location for public gatherings.

In the State of Maryland, Counties and local jurisdictions are required to update a comprehensive plan every ten years. Comprehensive plans, in combination with zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations, are a primary tool used to direct how land is developed in a community. Maryland’s Local Government Article and Land Use Article in the Annotated Code of Maryland are the sources of State law that govern the administration of these three important land use powers.

VISION 2030

The Town of Sykesville offers an exceptional quality of life for all residents by:

- Enhancing the Downtown as a high-quality, small-town center with a strong sense of place, and maintaining a business-friendly culture that supports the vibrancy of our Main Street.
- Preserving and promoting Sykesville's unique history and small-town character for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.
- Connecting residential neighborhoods, parks, and Downtown through an accessible network of trails and sidewalks.
- Protecting the natural environment through continued commitment to conservation and stormwater management.
- Continuing to deliver high quality public services.

GOAL STATEMENTS

GROWTH & FUTURE LAND USE

Promoting a Sustainable Future
Sykesville will support the continued investment in and preservation of its historic Main Street and promote the successful successful mixed-use redevelopment of Warfield.

ACCESSIBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Connecting Destinations
Sykesville will be accessible for all citizens by improving its trail and sidewalk network connecting neighborhoods and parks with Main Street.

IMAGE & IDENTITY

Building our Brand
Sykesville will protect and enhance the visual qualities of the Town's streetscapes and public spaces and continue to support policies and programs that preserve and promote the unique heritage and qualities of Sykesville.

ENVIROMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Conservation and Stormwater
Sykesville will promote the conservation of its natural environment and invest in stormwater management improvements to protect the South Branch Patapsco River and its watersheds.

Planning Process

To guide the 2020 update, the Town of Sykesville selected Michael Baker International through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) solicitation process. The project team guided the overall planning effort, which was based on robust public engagement, to understand the desires of the community and visions for the future. Under the Town's direction, the planning process also reflected an "implementable" comprehensive plan approach, focusing on a select number of highly relevant community issues.

The planning process commenced in June 2020 and was concluded with formal adoption of the new plan, the Sykesville Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan, on June 14, 2021. A summary of the planning process is highlighted below.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Through the leadership of Town Staff, an Advisory Committee was convened to help guide the planning process. The 11-member committee consisted of Town residents and a diverse range of community leaders and stakeholders to provide a strong grassroots foundation and champions for the plan's successful implementation. At the onset of the planning process, the Advisory Committee was critical in identifying relevant issues affecting the Town and supporting public input efforts. In addition, the Advisory Committee helped analyze the public input received and was responsible for finalizing the list of goals that serve as the guiding framework for the Plan.

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A document officially adopted by a local governing body to plan for future land use, development, and public infrastructure needs including transportation.

Based on public input and consensus, provides a vision statement and corresponding goal statements for a community to achieve over a 10-year period.

Serves as a guidebook for elected officials, the Planning Commission, and Town staff to help the Town achieve the community's visions and goals.

PLAN PROMOTION

To ensure all community members and residents had the opportunity to actively participate and help shape the Sykesville Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the Town undertook a proactive promotional campaign throughout the summer and fall of 2020.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

The project team facilitated focus groups early in the planning process to gather initial public input regarding the top issues in the Town and surrounding community. In total, 25 individuals participated in four focus groups presenting a broad range of interests. The list of attendees invited to participate was developed in close coordination with the Town of Sykesville as well as the Advisory Committee, and included residents, merchants, businesses, faith organizations, county representatives, and members of the Planning Commission. In addition, the Town Mayor and Council members were individually interviewed by the project team during August and September 2020.

Through the focus groups and interviews, participants identified specific opportunities and challenges in Sykesville and provided local knowledge and insight surrounding socioeconomic and industry trends.

WEBPAGE & PROMOTIONAL HANDOUT

- Up-to-date Comprehensive Plan webpage on Town website
- Promotional postcard mailed to all property owners and an additional 3,000 distributed through local businesses
- Promotional postcards and online survey fliers distributed at the Sykesville Farmers Markets on October 4 and 25

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL MEDIA

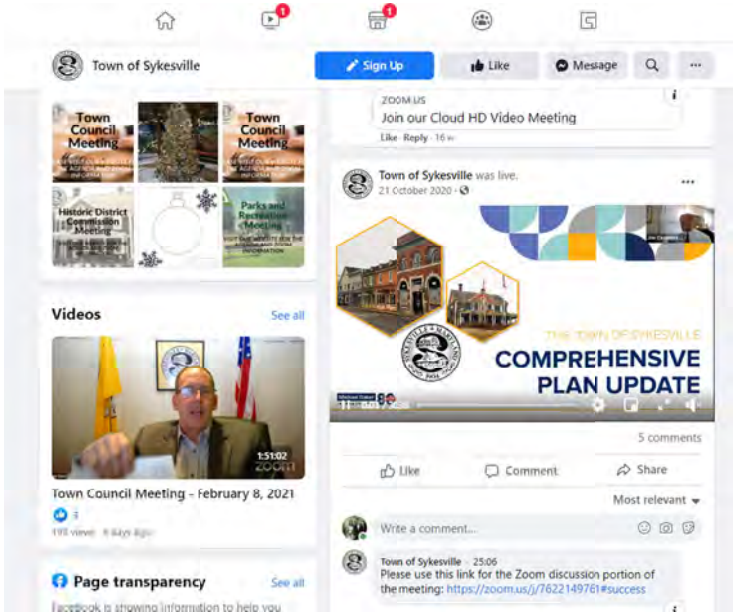
- Advisory Committee grassroots promotions
- Direct e-mail distribution
- Promotional slide at the Sykesville Cinema community event on August 3
- Articles in the Town's summer and winter 2020 newsletters
- Traditional news media and social media:
  - Town Press Releases
  - News Articles
  - Social Media Posts – including video

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

An online survey was open during the month of October 2020 to provide residents, visitors, and the Sykesville community at large the opportunity to provide input on the Comprehensive Plan. This survey was developed to highlight and expand upon the top issues identified through the Advisory Committee meetings, focus groups, interviews, and community profile findings. In total, 416 individuals completed the survey, offering valuable information on the top issues and opportunities within the Town and validating overall public opinion on a number of topics.

PUBLIC INPUT EVENTS

Two virtual public meeting events were held to collect public input for Sykesville's Comprehensive Plan: Comprehensive Plan Overview and Town Hall Listening Session. These public events were conducted via videoconference and broadcasted live through Sykesville's Facebook page.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW EVENT

October 14, 2020

- Provided a summary of comprehensive planning and its importance to the Town of Sykesville.
- Outlined the plan milestone schedule and shared ways for the public to participate throughout the planning process.

TOWN HALL LISTENING SESSION

October 21, 2020

- Shared existing condition findings with the public and described historical and projected trends in the Town.
- Facilitated a meaningful dialogue with members of the public to collect public input on the core themes and topics emerging during the planning process.

DOWNTOWN SYKESVILLE DESIGN WORKSHOP

On October 28 and 29, 2020, the Town hosted a two-day community workshop to vision for the future of the Town's Downtown area. A total of 27 participants attended the design workshop over the two-day event. The primary goals and objectives of the workshop were to:

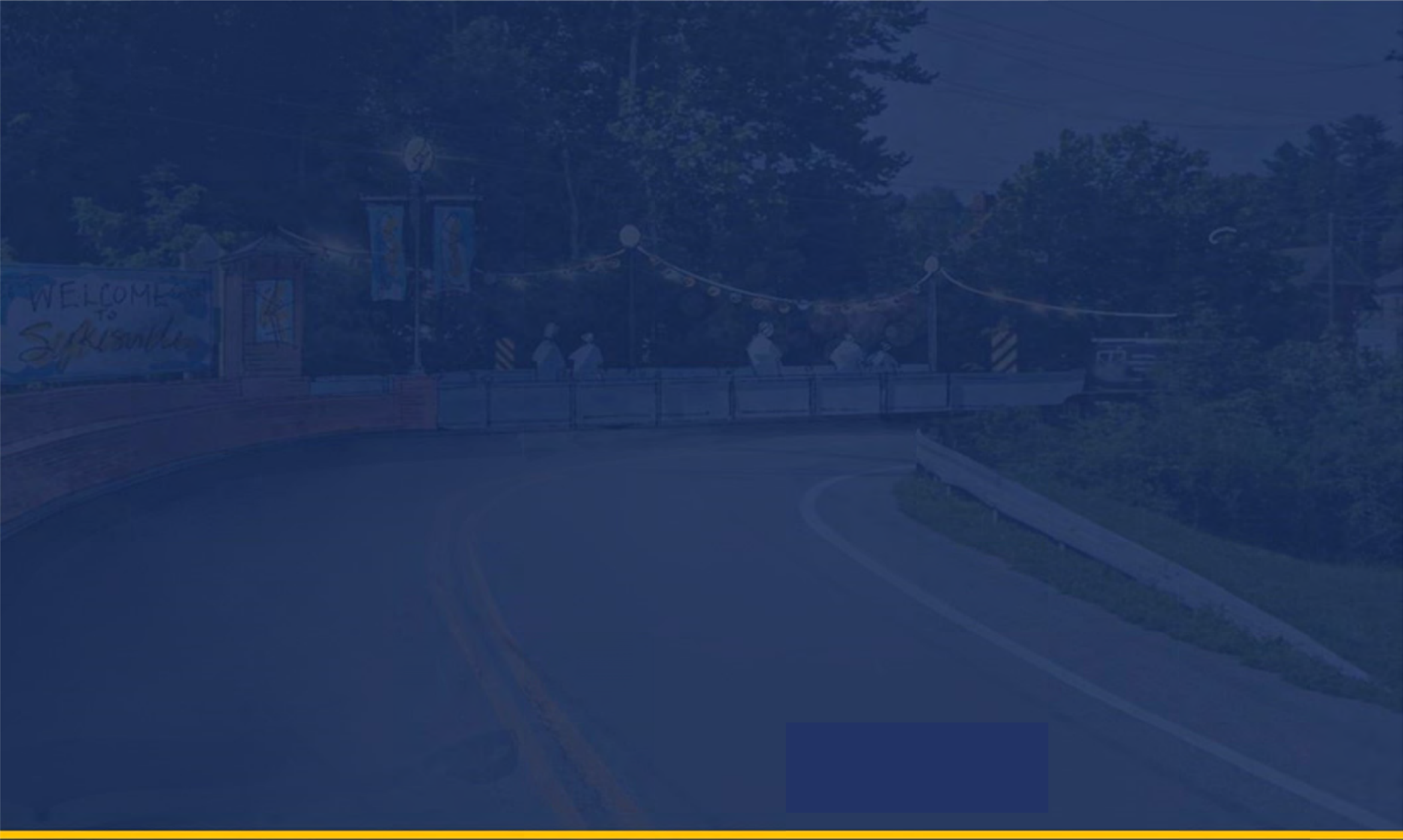
- Explore opportunities for growing Downtown;
- Refine and visualize the details of residents' ideas for Sykesville;
- Connect and coordinate preferred ideas to create a cohesive vision; and
- Produce design renderings that will be used to visually display elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Following the design workshop event, a public presentation of the design concepts was conducted via Zoom and broadcasted over Facebook Live during the evening of October 29, 2020. Approximately 50 people were engaged during the live broadcast.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

To showcase the Sykesville Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan draft elements and solicit additional public input, the Town hosted a Virtual Open House through Sykesville's website in December 2020. The Virtual Open House was made available through a virtual meeting room, an online platform that allows participants to "walk" through the room and read various display boards and offer feedback. Unlike a traditional in-person open house event, the virtual platform was available for a several week period.

VISION 2030
GOAL STATEMENTS


WELCOME
TO

GROWTH AND FUTURE LAND USE

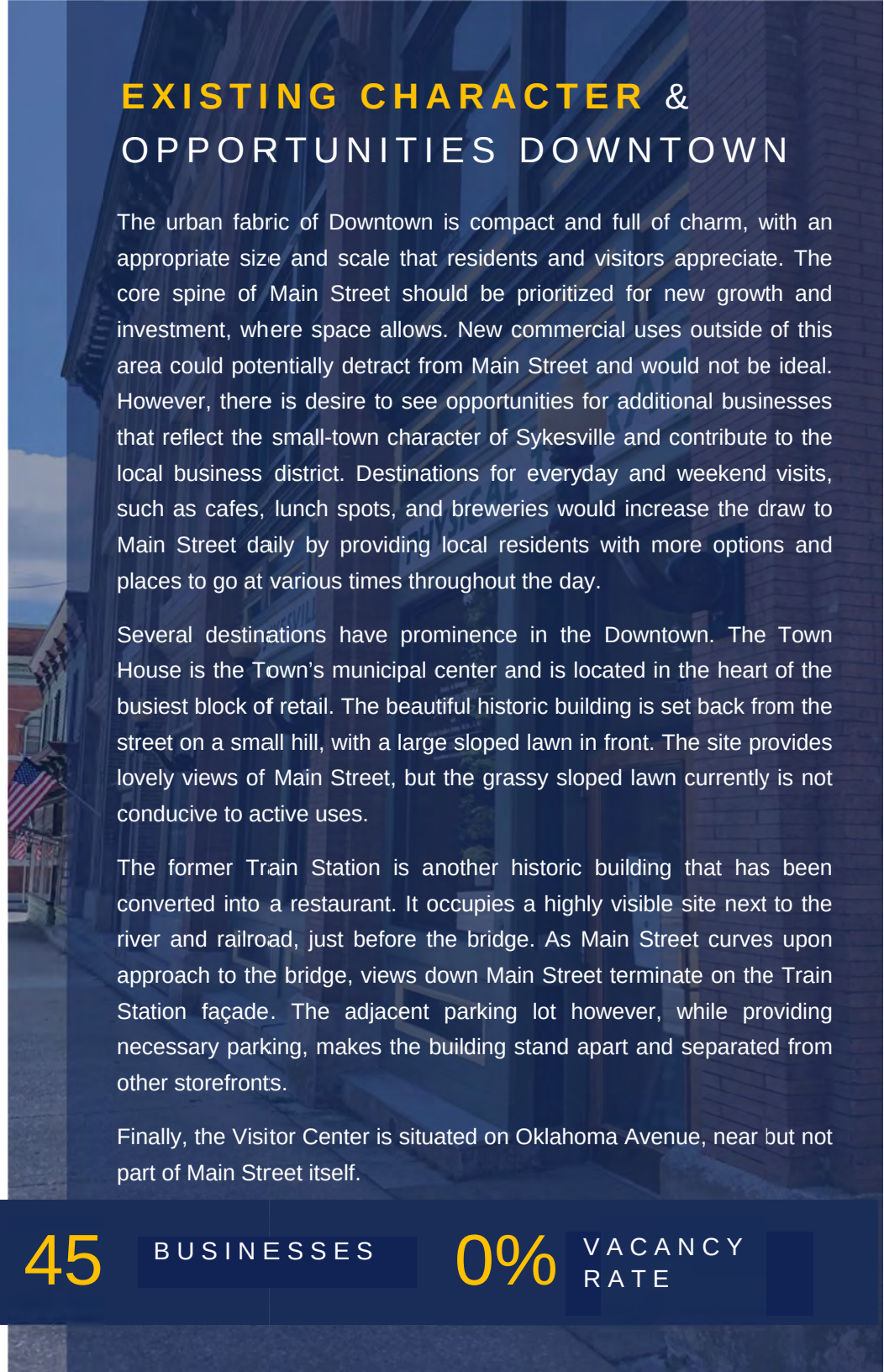
Sykesville will support the continued investment in and preservation of its historic Main Street and promote the successful mixed-use redevelopment of Warfield.

Growth and Future Land Use

THE ISSUE

Across Carroll and Howard counties and the greater region, Sykesville is well known for its thriving historic Downtown. Main Street, which historically was part of Route 32, is home to a vibrant group of merchants and businesses that offer a wide range of commercial retail and services. While small in size stretching from the South Branch Patapsco River to the intersection of Spout Hill Road and Springfield Avenue, Main Street continues its legacy as a charming small-town center where residents can gather, shop local, and stroll the historic street.

Throughout the public engagement process, community members have described Main Street as Sykesville's crown jewel, greatest asset, and significant contributor to the community's sense of place and small-town charm. Stakeholders acknowledged the intentional investment in Downtown over the past decade by property owners and merchants which through the leadership of the Downtown Sykesville Connection Main Street Program and with Town support, have transformed what was generally underutilized commercial storefronts into the vibrant center it is today.



EXISTING CHARACTER & OPPORTUNITIES DOWNTOWN

The urban fabric of Downtown is compact and full of charm, with an appropriate size and scale that residents and visitors appreciate. The core spine of Main Street should be prioritized for new growth and investment, where space allows. New commercial uses outside of this area could potentially detract from Main Street and would not be ideal. However, there is desire to see opportunities for additional businesses that reflect the small-town character of Sykesville and contribute to the local business district. Destinations for everyday and weekend visits, such as cafes, lunch spots, and breweries would increase the draw to Main Street daily by providing local residents with more options and places to go at various times throughout the day.

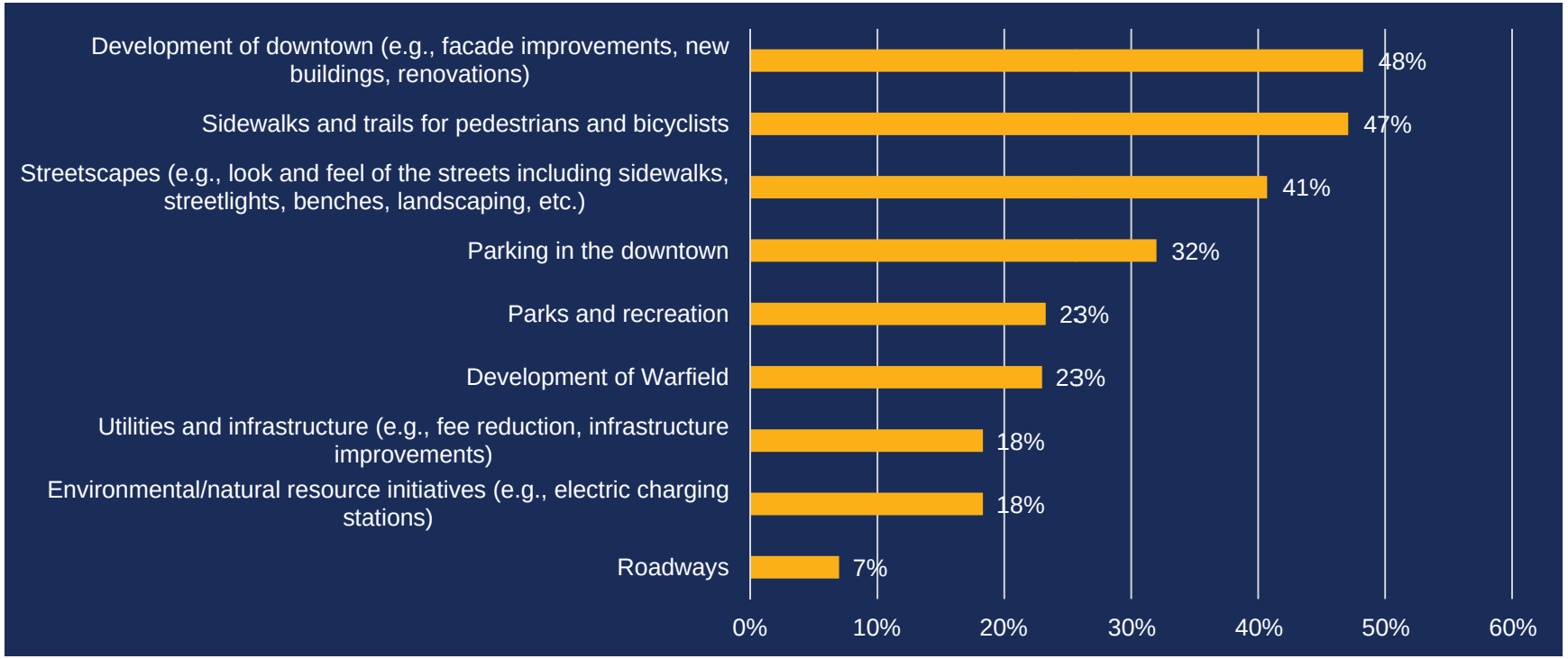
Several destinations have prominence in the Downtown. The Town House is the Town's municipal center and is located in the heart of the busiest block of retail. The beautiful historic building is set back from the street on a small hill, with a large sloped lawn in front. The site provides lovely views of Main Street, but the grassy sloped lawn currently is not conducive to active uses.

The former Train Station is another historic building that has been converted into a restaurant. It occupies a highly visible site next to the river and railroad, just before the bridge. As Main Street curves upon approach to the bridge, views down Main Street terminate on the Train Station façade. The adjacent parking lot however, while providing necessary parking, makes the building stand apart and separated from other storefronts.

Finally, the Visitor Center is situated on Oklahoma Avenue, near but not part of Main Street itself.

45 BUSINESSES **0%** VACANCY RATE

Public Input on Future Town Investment



Survey Question: Where should the Town use its resources to support the initiatives in the future (select top 3)?

Sykesville's comprehensive planning process has confirmed a unified consensus that the Town should continue to invest in its Downtown to protect the historic character while creating new opportunity for the ongoing success and growth of merchants and businesses. Given the natural topography for Sykesville and the built-out nature of the community, the Town does not have greenspace available to accommodate new growth. Creative infill development and redevelopment of underutilized space, such as new mixed-use buildings, public spaces, and maximization of surface parking opportunities, are explored in this chapter. As discussed in the Accessibility and Connectivity Chapter, improving walkability to the Downtown and the experience and safety of pedestrians is also a priority outcome of the planning process.

The Growth and Future Land Use chapter also explores the future land use of Warfield. Public input received during the planning process, particularly during the focus group discussions, revealed residents desire to see the property developed and value the potential economic impact of future development.

PRIMARY GOALS FOR GROWTH AND FUTURE LAND USE

Sykesville will support the continued investment in and preservation of its historic Main Street and promote the successful mixed-use redevelopment of Warfield.

- Infill and expand Downtown.
- Consider a hybrid form-based zoning policy.
- Explore annexation options for expansion south of Oklahoma Avenue, south of the South Branch Patapsco River, and northeast of the Town municipal boundary.
- Support mixed-use redevelopment of the Warfield Complex.

Tiered infill and growth around the Town House strengthens the retail core and can provide a series of outdoor gathering spaces.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROWTH AND FUTURE LAND USE

Infill and expand Downtown.

The natural topography of Sykesville creates clear natural end points to Downtown. The railroad and river terminate the south end, just before the Town border with Howard County. Towards the northern end of Main Street, there is limited available space for new development and the slope of the hill becomes challenging for pedestrians to navigate comfortably. For these reasons, the Comprehensive Plan focuses on expanding retail opportunities extending along Sandosky Road and to the rear of the Town House.

Behind the Town House, the current building at 714 Sandosky Road is accessed via a parking lane from Sandosky Road. Owned by the Town and used solely for parking at this time, the building is aging and has limited potential for redevelopment. This building, the access lane, and the surrounding parking lots are in close proximity to the core of Main Street and offer an opportunity to develop more urban and compact land use patterns in the future. Although parking will continue to be needed, Downtown functions and shops should be prioritized, with parking placed at ends and in the rear. The existing public works facility located up on the hill behind the Police Department is a potential location to relocate surface parking. Recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan visioning process include the following to infill and expand Downtown:

- Position Town-owned parcel(s) for redevelopment.
- Relocate a portion of the existing public parking to the Public Works lot at the top of the hillside and evaluate the relocation of the existing Public Works building.
- Improve pedestrian access to the hilltop to encourage use of the proposed relocated parking.
- Create a simple “loop” of pathways navigating Main Street to Sandosky Road and north to the proposed location for additional parking.
- Maintain the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan and associated budget to include the applicable Downtown improvements.

As new retail storefronts and second floor efficiency housing units expand along Sandosky Road, the distance between the hilltop and Downtown becomes much shorter. In addition, a hillside path could offer lookouts with the potential to maximize views over Downtown while also facilitating the relocation of parking up the hill. This strategy will create more occupiable retail space and housing in the Downtown and increase the Town’s ratable tax base by redeveloping underutilized space in Downtown Sykesville.

Additional Town-owned parcels, particularly located near the riverfront, were also discussed for potential redevelopment. However, due to existing long-term lease agreements, these properties were not prioritized during the Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan. These areas could be identified for future growth and redevelopment during future Town planning initiatives.

Rendering depicting infill development along Sandosky Road and improved pedestrian access to the hilltop

Consider a hybrid form-based zoning policy.

As new development and new uses of existing buildings inevitably occur over time, maintaining the small-town character can be achieved through thoughtful zoning updates. Form-based zoning uses an approach of prioritizing the form of a building and scale (e.g., number of stories) over the specific use (e.g., laundromat, retail, etc.). It allows places like Sykesville to increase their economic viability by allowing flexibility in uses while focusing regulations on preserving the desired look and local character of buildings.

This Plan recommends that the Town may consider a hybrid form-based approach for a future update to its current Zoning Ordinance. The hybrid approach means retaining traditional zoning district designations but incorporating building form and function design standards based on the Town's current urban development patterns and densities, and future land use recommendations for Downtown and Warfield. Hybrid form-based zoning would be especially valuable in guiding new growth in the Downtown area, such as potential new development along Sandosky Road and uphill from the Town House as previously described. Any expansion of the Downtown into side streets and additional blocks should emphasize maintaining and matching the urban and historic architectural form of existing buildings. New businesses, no matter how desirable the use, will not be consistent with Downtown Sykesville's form if buildings do not match the existing Main Street. Form-based zoning would ensure any new construction meets the following:

- Close to the street, with ground floor heights that align with the existing shopfronts;
- Zero front setback;
- Two to three-story height maximums determined by block;
- High ground floor transparency, shopfront design standards, and minimum ground floor height regulations; and
- Parking delegated to the rear of buildings.

A "Downtown First" focus for development should be oriented around establishing clear bookends to downtown and strengthening the spine of Main Street in between. The bookends are entrance points where the Main Street character should begin. New retail and community uses should be prioritized along the existing spine and not move beyond the bookends, to ensure that pedestrian activity remains focused within the walkable core. Peripheral parking around the end points can support Downtown activity while continuing to point pedestrians towards the historic center.

When applied alongside Sykesville's Design Guidelines, properties seeking to expand will have a clear site layout and design framework that ensures new construction fits the image and character of Downtown.

Explore annexation options for expansion south of Oklahoma Avenue, south of the South Branch Patapsco River, and northeast of the Town municipal boundary.

For future growth, this Plan recommends exploring the potential annexation of three areas:

- South of Oklahoma Avenue and west of Schoolhouse Road, where a vertical shaped section of unincorporated Carroll County is located, surrounded by incorporated Sykesville to the north, east, and west, and Howard County to the south.
- South of the South Branch Patapsco River at the location of South Branch Park, a park that the Town leases from Howard County.
- Northeast of the Town's municipal boundary located adjacent to Warfield and the Raincliffe development.

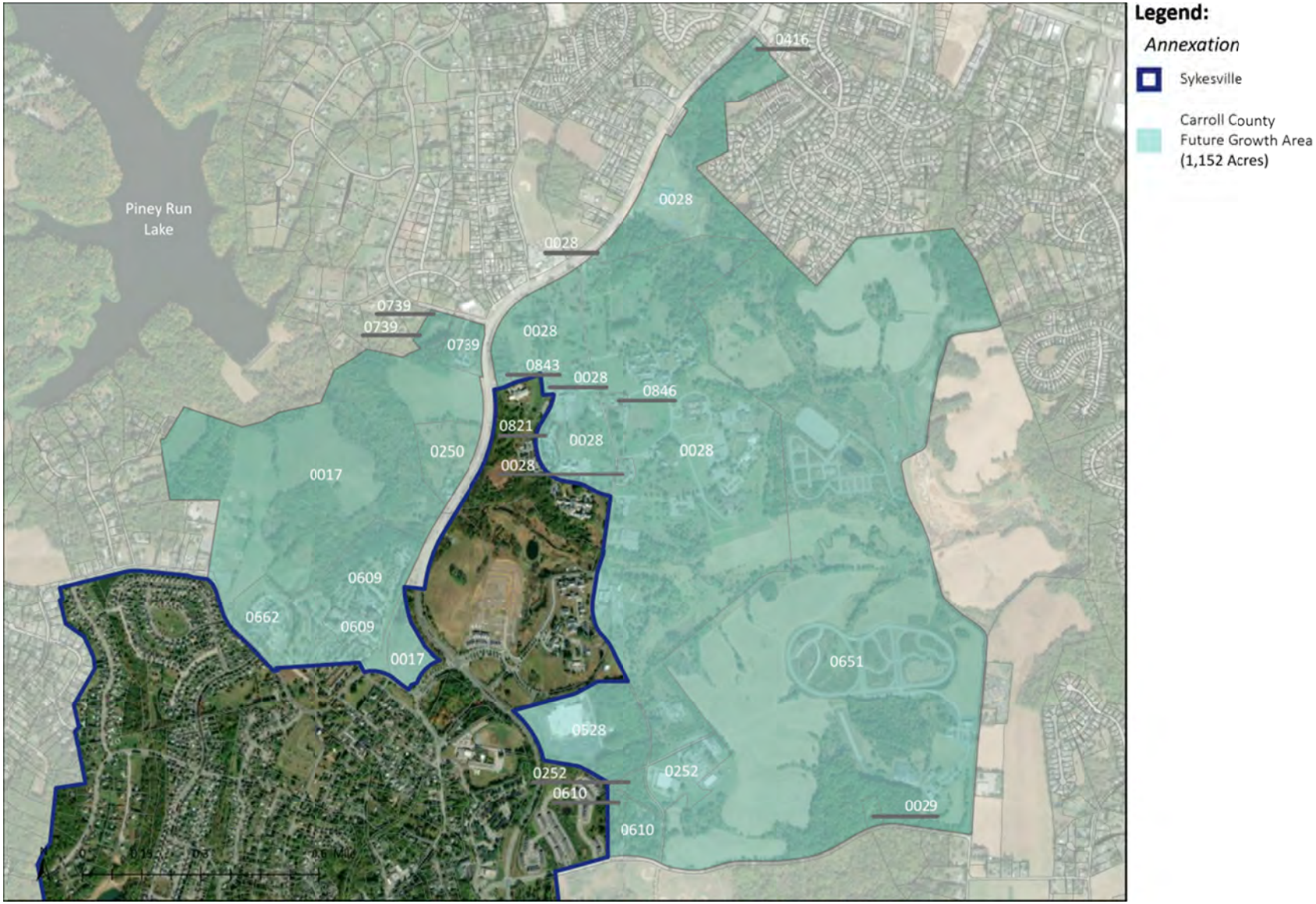
The small area of unincorporated Carroll County land is an opportunity to expand Sykesville's trail network, connecting residential neighborhoods along the Sykesville Linear Trail with Downtown. Land south of the river falls within Howard County, including the Apple Butter Factory and riverfront area, which may be available for Sykesville to expand new community-oriented uses. While the Town already has a vested interest in this land with the park and new surface parking that was installed by Howard County, it is not owned by the Town and, therefore, hinders Town investment in what could be an enhanced gateway and natural extension of the Downtown. Additionally, the Town owns an adjacent parcel in this area. Strengthening pedestrian connectivity and establishing clear visual integration between these parcels and Downtown Sykesville will be critical if this land is to be used in support of Downtown activities. The Accessibility and Connectivity chapter has more on recommended approaches to achieve this.

The land located adjacent to and northeast of Warfield and the Raincliffe development was identified for annexation in the 2010 Master Plan as a future growth area for the Town. This area continues to be an identified growth area for Sykesville and, accordingly, should be explored for annexation.

Parcels for Annexation, Sykesville Future Municipal Boundary Growth Area

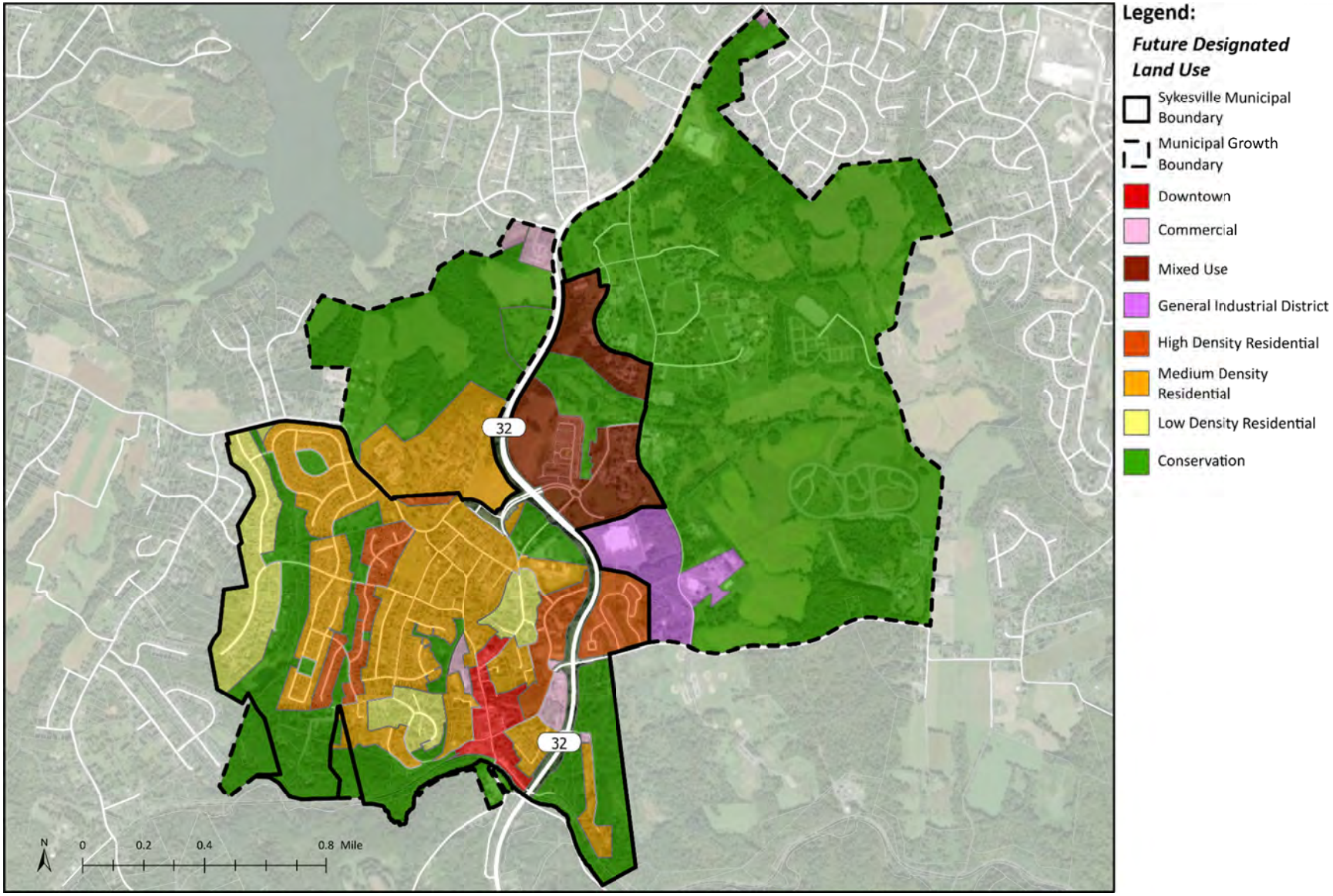
Source: Michael Baker International

Parcels for Annexation, Sykesville Future Municipal Boundary Growth Area (continued)



Source: Michael Baker International

Future Designated Land Use Map



Source: Carroll County Department of Planning, Carroll County GIS Open Data, Michael Baker International

Support mixed-use redevelopment of the Warfield Complex.

Given the existing approved Master Plan for the tract of property and ongoing market feasibility studies for the project, specific recommendations for revising the Master Plan for Warfield are not included in this Comprehensive Plan. Generally, however, this Plan recognizes that the Town should consider flexibility on future land development submissions to ultimately achieve a mixed-use development which can be defined more specifically during the Town's potential zoning rewrite. Timing is important; the vacant historic buildings will continue to deteriorate and may render them unsavable in the future. While the community and state desire preservation at a broad brush stroke, realistic cost benefit analyses and case studies from other former state hospital campuses across the Mid-Atlantic suggest the importance of embracing financially viable redevelopment strategies.

A mixed-use zoning designation for Warfield will enable developers to respond to market conditions and work with the Town on amending the existing Master Plan that was agreed to when the sale of the property happened. While some progress was achieved during the Town's ownership, there remains challenging regional market conditions and costly historic building restoration work. This Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town work collaboratively with the developers of Warfield to engage in an urban design workshop to develop a new vision for the mixed-use development. The outcomes of which may be used to inform future zoning.

The need for mixed-use development is supported by a Town commissioned economic and fiscal impact study of the Warfield development. The 2020 Sage Policy Group study shows demand for market-rate housing, driven by the Millennial generation that is shifting from apartments to owner-occupied housing as they begin to form families. In terms of retail, the study notes the proposed 35,000 square feet of retail space is relatively small but would require residential development to be built-out first to provide local demand. The study finds the proposed office space challenging, estimating complete absorption may require two decades or longer, and would require aggressive marketing and incentives. The Sage study also notes the overall market downturn for office space, at least in the short-term, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

FUTURE ZONING RECOMMENDATION

A mixed-use zoning designation for Warfield would enable the current or future developers to respond to market conditions and not be locked into the existing Master Plan (shown above) that has made little progress since the property was sold in 2018 due to regional market conditions and the cost of historic building restoration.

If rezoning does occur, the Town's approval processes would still be required, including approvals through the Historic District Commission, Planning Commission, and Town Council. Any new development, regardless of use, will need to conform to the overall vision and architectural integrity of the Warfield complex.

EMBRACING MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AT WARFIELD

Warfield has seven parcels, Parcels A-F and H, in the northwest portion of the Town. The approved Master Plan outlines the following uses:

PARCEL A-B

- **35,000** SF of retail with **183** parking spaces
- **125** room extended stay hotel with **117** parking spaces

PARCEL C,D&H

- **103,000** SF of new office
- **183,000** SF of renovated office space (historic buildings)
- **955** parking spaces

PARCEL E-F

- **145** townhomes with parking

Townhome development of Parcels E-F has been successful in recent years. However, challenges associated with retail development of Parcels A-B and office development for Parcels C, D, and H are considered difficult in terms of the Carroll County sub-market to the larger Baltimore market and the substantial cost associated with building restoration, driven by the cost of historic preservation and asbestos and lead paint remediation commonly found with buildings dating back to the early twentieth century. Market conditions alone demonstrate the challenge of the current Master Plan. The plan calls for the construction and renovation of 286,000 square feet of office space, which would increase Carroll County's office inventory by 10 percent on a single tract of land surrounded predominantly by agricultural and residential uses.

Carroll County is a mid-size market with 2.9 million square feet today and generally considered stagnate; net absorption has posted a negligible average annual change over the past five years and rents per square foot have also remained generally unchanged. Based on CoStar 2021 data, Carroll County's net absorption of office space over the most recent 10-year period (2010-2019) averaged 7,475 square feet per year. At that pace, assuming Warfield would absorb all of Carroll County's demand, it would take 38 years to absorb the amount of office space proposed. On the retail side, Eldersburg is the major commercial center for retail in southern Carroll County. Located just 3.5 miles north of Sykesville, commercial big box retail is already established in Eldersburg and will continue to serve as the retail hub for the area.

Given the fluid dynamics in the real estate market, future zoning policies for Warfield should consider a form-based mixed-use approach that is more focused on the development's urban form and function than stipulating specific uses. This approach accommodates changes in the real estate markets but reinforces the need for new development to uphold and strengthen Sykesville's historic character and small-town charm.

ACCESSIBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Sykesville will be accessible for all citizens by improving its trail and sidewalk network connecting neighborhoods and parks with Main Street.

Accessibility and Connectivity

THE ISSUE

Sykesville is a very walkable community in terms of size and scale, and numerous trails and sidewalks are available to support pedestrian movement between neighborhoods and the Downtown. However, the natural topography is a challenge and limits accessibility for all users. In addition, there are existing challenges in the condition and availability of the sidewalk network. Improving sidewalks and trails for pedestrians and bicyclists was the number two priority issue identified in the online survey, and a primary topic during the public engagement events.

The street network plays a large role in supporting connectivity. Many streets prioritize car traffic, which can impede pedestrian comfort and safety in crossing areas where higher walkability is desired. Sykesville is nestled next to a river, rail line, and Route 32, which leaves limited access points to the Town; all modes of transportation and types of users must share Main Street and other roads in the Town. Improved accessibility and connectivity through Sykesville calls for a comprehensive approach to provide a better balance of space for vehicle movement, pedestrian movement, event gathering areas, and parking.

Maintaining and expanding multimodal connections, while finding ways to increase comfort and accessibility, is a key issue for Sykesville to address and is explored in this chapter. The chapter also recommends improvements to the trail network to connect neighborhoods to Downtown in parallel with recommendations in the 2019 Sykesville Connectivity Study.

Sykesville also recognizes that accessibility and connectivity, as a goal, also includes access to broadband. The Town supports the investment of 5G and broadband initiatives in the Town and Carroll County.

BALANCING VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENTS

In the heart of Downtown, Main Street is a two-lane road with intermittent parallel parking. The width is sufficient to move car traffic through, but the sidewalk is quite narrow and leaves minimal space for people to walk together or gather. The limited sidewalk space also means that retail stores often don't have room to place outdoor seating, planters, canopies or other shade elements, or similar pedestrian amenities. In a community with so many events and activities, the relative lack of pedestrian space is not ideal. In promoting the continued success and growth of Downtown businesses and programs, it is important to balance vehicular and pedestrian movement and provide more space for pedestrian activity.

PRIMARY GOALS FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

Sykesville will be accessible for all citizens by improving its trail and sidewalk network connecting neighborhoods and parks with Main Street.

- Implement Sykesville Connectivity Study recommendations.
- Implement Complete Street design improvements.
- Pursue innovative partnerships to support greater accessibility.

The goals and recommendations, as described below, are in alignment of the goals identified by the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Curb extensions and midblock crossings prioritize pedestrian movement in Downtown.

Complete S
all modes.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Implement Sykesville Connectivity Study recommendations.

The 2019 Carroll County Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan and the 2019 Sykesville Connectivity Study previously studied and proposed a number of enhancements and extensions to the bicycle and pedestrian networks through Sykesville and to several adjacent destinations.

The Carroll County Plan envisions:

- Multimodal connections from Sykesville to Howard County, Patapsco Valley State Park, Freedom Park, and Piney Run Park.
- Connections to Eldersburg and the neighboring Town of Mount Airy.

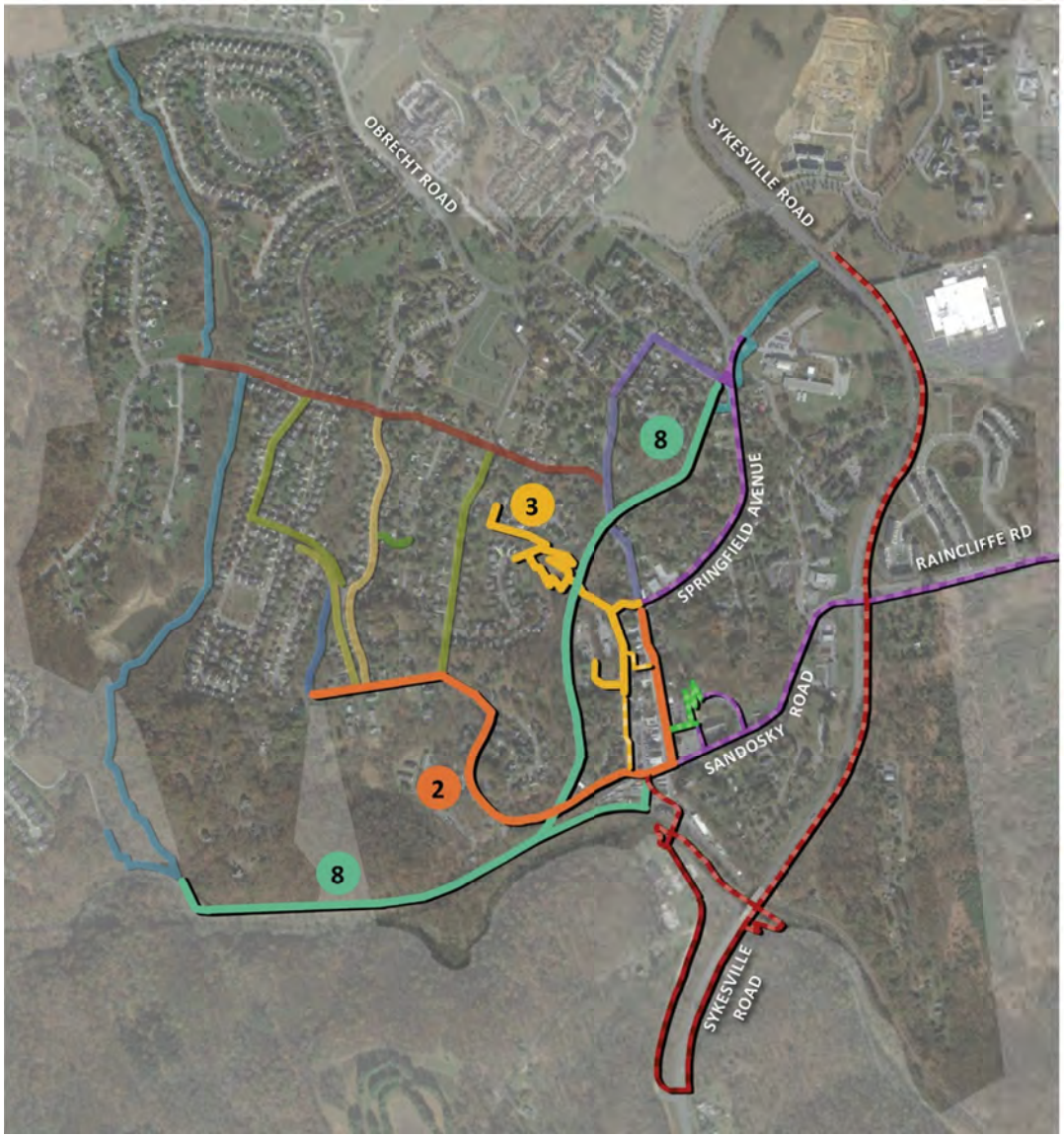
The 2019 Sykesville Connectivity Study:

- Identified 13 specific projects to improve and extend the sidewalk network, construct additional trails, and improve existing trails. In total, the estimated cost to complete all 13 projects is $25.9 million to $34.4 million.
- In addition, the study confirms and reemphasizes the desire for and value in expanding paths as indicated in the Carroll County BikePed Plan.

For a small community like Sykesville, a $25-$35 million connectivity capital improvement plan is financially unattainable in the near term. For the next 10-year horizon, accordingly, the Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town prioritize the following trail and sidewalk projects, summarized below and depicted on the following page.

- The Railroad Trail is a planned multimodal path that will lead into Main Street and connect to an off-road bike-ped path that heads northeast behind residential properties and mediates the topography. A western branch following the rail alignment is also planned and will connect to the Linear Trail. All segments of these paths are planned and adopted but not yet built (refer to Project ID 8 on page 30).
- The Oklahoma Road/Main Street Corridor is identified as a location for a planned bike boulevard with public art into and through Downtown (refer to Project ID 2 on page 30).
- The Autumn Sky Court & Springfield Avenue Corridor is a relatively short trail segment that will connect residential neighborhoods directly to Downtown and to the Railroad Trail (refer to Project ID 3 on page 30).
- The planning process identified additional trail priorities. Key connections include a trail across the river and over Route 32, as well as a bike path along Sandosky Road that leads to Raincliffe and to Freedom Park. Downtown expansion may also support a new trail leading uphill and overlooking Main Street.

2019 Connectivity Study Project Recommendations Prioritized and Refined



2019 CONNECTIVITY STUDY PRIORITY PROJECTS

- 2 Oklahoma Road/Main Street Corridor
- 3 Autumn Sky Court & Springfield Avenue Corridor
- 8 Railroad Trail

PROJECT EXTENSIONS

- Trail 3: Extend trail to Main Street and Visitor Center

NEW TRAIL PROJECTS

- Route 32 Connector: Alignment 1
- Route 32 Connector: Alignment 2
- Potential Future Hilltop Trail as Downtown expands
- On-street improvements along Sandosky Road and Springfield Avenue with demarcated bike lanes.

Note: Please refer to the 2019 Connectivity Study for more information on the projects. This map image is for illustrative purposes only.

Source: 2019 Sykesville Connectivity Study, Michael Baker International

2019 Connectivity Study Project Key and Recommended Refinements

ID	LOCATION	SUMMARY	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDED REFINEMENTS
1	Kalorama Rd Corridor	Bike Boulevard, Sidewalks, Shared-Use Path	
2	Oklahoma Rd/Main St Corridor	Bike Boulevard, Artwork, Sidewalks	Oklahoma Road and the Main Street Corridor are a priority. Provide continuous sidewalks and wide paths to support multimodal use. Target this trail for public art throughout, and pedestrian amenities such as benches and lighting especially on sloped areas.
3	Autumn Sky Court & Springfield Ave Corridor	Off-Road Trail, Connection to Existing Paths	This neighborhood connection will link residential areas to Main Street and to the proposed Railroad Trail alignment. The proximity to Downtown makes this a high priority to substantially improve connectivity. The planning process also identified how this trail can be extended along Norwood Avenue and Church Street to ensure safe and clear connection all the way into Main Street.
4	Jennifer Way & Norris Ave Corridor	Bike Boulevards	
5	Norris Ave Corridor	Sidewalks	
6	2nd Ave & Norris Ave Corridor	Bike Boulevards	
7	West Trail	Trail Improvements	
8	Railroad Trail	Off-Road Trail, Bridge Rehabilitation	The alignment extending from the railroad to Warfield is a priority. This segment will intersect several other trails and connect many neighborhoods to Main Street. It can also incorporate stormwater management and retention to improve flooding issues in the surrounding neighborhood. The western portion of this trail is a further priority to pursue after annexation of a key parcel that it will cross.
9	North Trail	Off-Road Trail	
10	Kalorama Rd Trail	Trail Improvements	
11	Norris Ave Trail	Trail Improvements	
12	Spout Hill Rd Corridor	Bike Boulevard	
13	Spout Hill Rd Corridor	Sidewalks	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY PROJECTS

In addition to the connectivity improvements prioritized for the Town of Sykesville as part of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town also acknowledges and supports the planned Carroll County connectivity projects that offer connections to Town projects, which include:

- Governor Frank Brown Trail, a priority alternative transportation project for the County planned to connect to the Town in several areas
- Obrecht Road, Linear Park Trail to Wimmer Road
- Piney Run Park to Carrie Dorsey Park, from Obrecht Road to Piney Run to Warfield
- Southern Border Trail, an east-west trail along the southern border of the County
- MD 32 north towards Eldersburg
- Carrie Dorsey Park Trails to include the completion of loops of the existing trail
- Eastward extension of the Carrie Dorsey Park Trail from Warfield east following the stream branch

Improvements to MD 32 and adjacent facilities should take into consideration the recommendations identified in the MDOT SHA 2018 MD 32 Planning Study.

Implement Complete Street design improvements.

Complete Streets is a term used to describe roads that are designed to accommodate safe use and support mobility for all users. This includes people of all ages and abilities and all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The Main Street as a central spine of pedestrian, commercial, and vehicular connectivity requires upgrades to further protect and provide safe usage. The recommended width for sidewalks is 10 feet, which allows two people to walk side by side and space for street furniture like dining tables and infrastructure including fire hydrants and utility poles. However, Main Street has a narrow footprint and does not allow for a standard 10-foot sidewalk. Accordingly, this Plan recommends primarily repaving the parking lane as flex space. Doing so will add 8 feet to the current sidewalk space while preserving the Town's ability to use the flex space for either parking or for pedestrian use. Additionally, a limited number of curb extensions are recommended at specific intervals. Here, the permanent sidewalk would be 10 feet in width and would be positioned at crosswalks to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings. Recommended improvements include:

- **Main Street Improvements:** The existing narrow sidewalk space can be expanded at periodic intervals by reallocating select parking spaces as pedestrian space. These curb extensions provide space for planters or outdoor seating and should be paired with midblock crosswalks. The narrower street and clear prioritization of pedestrian movement will encourage safer walkability along and across Main Street. Between the curb extensions, the parking lane can be repaved with a different material that allows flexible pedestrian flow.

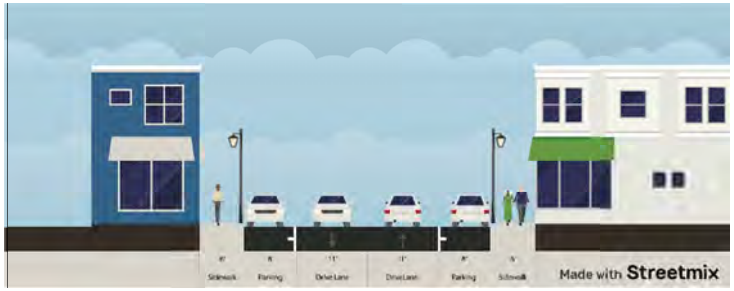
Through the use of a rolled curb, the parking lane is raised toward sidewalk level and can be used for parking and/or filled with outdoor seating as needed.

- **Baldwin Drive Improvements:** Along Baldwin Drive, the street is minimally separated from the parking lot. Complete Street improvements would add a sidewalk and street trees on each side to delineate a clear path for pedestrians separated from cars. Parallel parking is included on one side, and curbs are extended at corners to cap parking lanes and provide more pedestrian space.
- **Intersection Improvements at Spout Hill Road and Springfield Avenue:** Narrowing the intersection will slow cars down upon approach to the intersection, and will make the pedestrian crossing distance shorter and safer. The reclaimed space can accommodate a sidewalk as well as seating, lighting, and gateway design elements. This is the northern entrance to the heart of Main Street and can include design features and wayfinding starting at this intersection to reinforce the identity of the Downtown.

Sketch of Baldwin Drive Improvements

Within Maryland's Context Driving Guide, Sykesville most aligns with a Traditional Town Center. This Plan's recommendations incorporate many design elements (curb extensions and mid-block crossings) which are in keeping with design elements for a traditional town center.

Complete Street Improvements, Typical Cross Sections



COMPLETE STREET IMPROVEMENTS IN SYKESVILLE

1. Parking lanes: The base condition will be relatively unchanged from the existing condition. There is parking on one or both sides of the street, as space permits. The suggested improvement will use a decorative or permeable paving type in the parking lanes.

2. Pedestrian space: The decorative pavers in the parking lane will be slightly raised with a rolled curb, mountable for parked cars while also noticeably distinct from the driving lane. The paving should be sufficiently smooth to allow accessible pedestrian use. Businesses can repurpose this space for outdoor seating and other pedestrian use. The repaved surface can be further protected by placing moveable planters near the edge.

3. Curb extensions and midblock crossings: Regularly spaced curb extensions convert a small part of the parking lane permanently into an extension of the sidewalk. Where these occur, they narrow the street noticeably, which slows traffic and instills visual cues that pedestrians are welcome and protected along the street. Curb extensions are an ideal place to further add midblock crossings: the wider sidewalk on either side of the street means that pedestrians have a much shorter space to cross.

Pursue innovative partnerships to support greater accessibility.

Topography substantially limits accessibility for those with limited mobility. Sykesville should explore partnerships with mobility providers that offer services to supplement personal mobility. Some options may be an e-bike share service with bike stations Downtown and at Warfield, or a shuttle system that operates between the neighborhoods, Warfield, and Downtown. A small shuttle or other micromobility service could potentially operate at limited times of high activity such as festivals and would ease the need for parking during these times, thus allowing Downtown to further accommodate and expand outdoor pedestrian-oriented programming. Carroll County's transit system, operated by the non-profit Ride With Us, may also be one resource to also evaluate.

Another partnership opportunity is with county stakeholders to advance the Patapsco Regional Greenway, a proposed 58-mile shared-use trail running through the Patapsco Valley from the City of Baltimore to the Town of Sykesville. Parts of the trail are constructed and generally feature a 10-12-foot-wide shared-use trail, including a 1.6-mile segment at Freedom Park.

New trail connection to the southern side of the river.

Both the river and Route 32 currently act as barriers between Downtown and adjacent destinations, including South Branch Park and Freedom Park. The tight pathway along the existing bridge that crosses the river is uncomfortable for pedestrians and unnavigable for those in wheelchairs, with strollers, or on bikes, and an upgraded pathway system is needed. To successfully expand parking and community activities to the south, the south parcel and the river crossing must feel visibly and aesthetically integrated into the Downtown. Parking lots located a few blocks from shops are still physically very close but will feel distant and undesirable if the path towards shops does not feel like a part of Downtown.

A trail alignment that crosses the bridge and leads to new parking will enable land south of the river to directly support Downtown uses. A new trail could continue along the river and pass below the bridge supports to connect users to the Patapsco Regional Greenway (Alignment 1). There is an opportunity to rehabilitate the abandoned bridge next to Route 32 into a bicycle and pedestrian walkway. By lining it with lighting and signage to indicate a multimodal trailhead heading into Sykesville, this trail can join the Greenway at a highly visible point along Route 32 and include a trailhead with a small parking area. This trail will strengthen bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across Route 32 and to recreational destinations, and will increase the visibility of Downtown Sykesville along Route 32.

PROPOSED TRAIL: ROUTE 32 CONNECTOR

The Route 32 Connector is a proposed new trail from this planning process that leads from Downtown across the bridge and Route 32. In Downtown, it starts at the junction between the planned Railroad and Oklahoma/Main Street Corridor trails and includes an upgrade to the bridge over the river that will widen the path to allow more accessible crossing.

On the south side of the river, **two alignments** were explored. Alignment 1 weaves down the slope toward the river, crossing underneath the Route 32 bridge. Alignment 2 follows West Friendship Road and crosses Route 32 at the intersection. This second option has potential safety concerns and would require more substantial intersection upgrades and signalization outside the Sykesville municipal boundary, recommended to facilitate safer flow of truck traffic. With either alignment, the trail reaches the east side of Route 32 and can follow Route 32 north to connect to Freedom Park and Warfield.

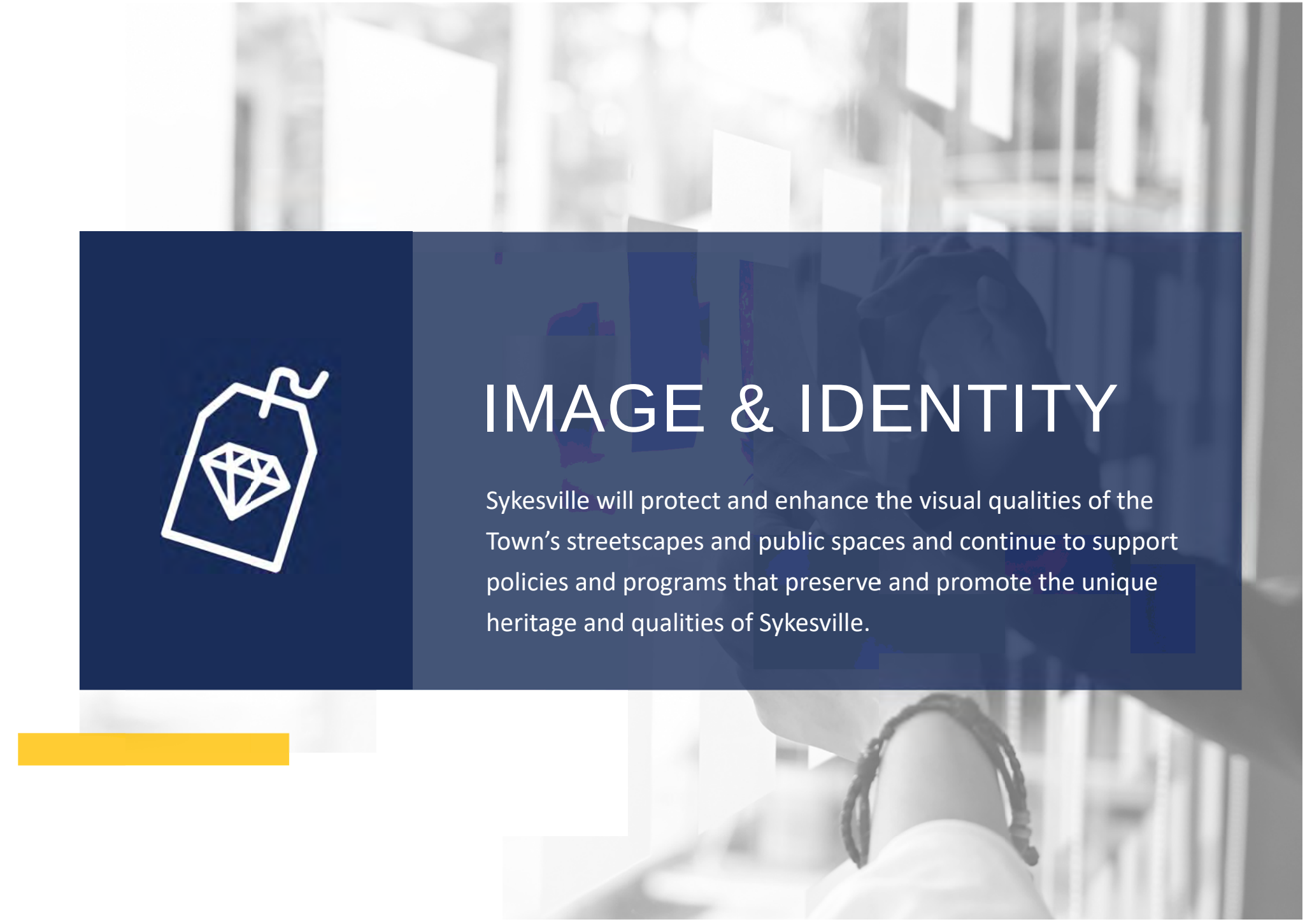


IMAGE & IDENTITY

Sykesville will protect and enhance the visual qualities of the Town's streetscapes and public spaces and continue to support policies and programs that preserve and promote the unique heritage and qualities of Sykesville.

Image & Identity

THE ISSUE

The Town of Sykesville is one of just 33 designated Main Street communities by the Main Street Maryland Program and also boasts a national Main Street designation under the Main Street America program. These designations are well deserved; Sykesville and its partners – the Downtown Sykesville Connection, property owners, and merchants – have significantly invested in the Downtown over the past 10 years and offer residents and visitors everything a traditional Main Street promises: locally-owned and operated shops, regional events and festivals, and restaurants all within the quaint and charming historic Downtown.

To continue to build its Main Street image and identity, the Comprehensive Plan identifies several opportunities to improve branding synergies along with thoughtful wayfinding, the addition of new public gathering spaces, and a continued commitment to historic preservation.

PRIMARY GOALS FOR IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Sykesville will protect and enhance the visual qualities of the Town's streetscapes and public spaces and continue to support policies and programs that preserve and promote the unique heritage and qualities of Sykesville.

- Continue to support the preservation of historic buildings throughout the Town.
- Promote branding synergies between the Town and Downtown Sykesville Connection.
- Install wayfinding signage and banners that promote the Town's assets and character.
- Invest in new or improved public spaces to accommodate gatherings and active pedestrian use.

MAIN STREET DESIGNATIONS

The Town of Sykesville is one of just 33 designated Main Street communities by the Main Street Maryland Program under the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Main Street Maryland communities feature traditional main streets and neighborhoods and are renowned for historic architecture, locally owned shops, and an array of events and festivals.

The Town is also designated under the National Main Street Center's Main Street America program. Affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the program was established to help traditional main streets enhance the economic vitality of communities.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to support the preservation of historic buildings throughout the Town.

The Town of Sykesville established a Historic District Commission in 2001 in the interest of preserving the Town's rich history and architectural integrity for future generations. To achieve this goal, the Historic District Commission developed Historic Guidelines and is responsible for reviewing applications for the renovation or construction of buildings in the historic districts. The Commission meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month to review permit applications in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 93 of the Town's municipal code. Signs and advertisements within the Town of Sykesville are also subject to review by the Commission, who ensure signs within the Town comply with Chapter 180-89 of the zoning code.

In addition to the permit application process, the Town of Sykesville's Historic Guidelines provide property owners with a comprehensive guide on how to retain the historic image and significance of buildings. The Historic Guidelines were drafted based upon the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, with additions and adaptations to reflect the unique historic character of the Town of Sykesville. In addition, the Historic District Commission created the "Warfield Preservation Guidelines" to serve as the rulebook for the preservation of historic buildings located on the former Springfield State Hospital grounds. Both the Town Historic Guidelines and the Warfield Preservation Guidelines include an overview of the site's history, material recommendations, and building guidelines.

Sykesville has a strong foundation in place to continue to support the preservation of the historic character of the Town. Additionally, Sykesville is part of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area. The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan was adopted and made a part of the comprehensive plan of the Town of Sykesville in 2006. This update of the comprehensive plan, when adopted by the Town, incorporates by reference all portions of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan, as part of the comprehensive plan.

In 2005, a local development partnership constructed a 7,644 square foot mixed-use infill development on north Main Street. The developer utilized the Town's historic guidelines during design and construction to create a project that maintains the historic character of Sykesville's Main Street, while also allowing for expansion of businesses and parking. The building serves as an excellent example of how thoughtful infill development can occur without impacting the historic fabric of Sykesville.

Promote branding synergies between the Town and Downtown Sykesville Connection.

In September 2020, the Downtown Sykesville Connection (DSC) began a branding and marketing strategy to develop a new branding scheme for the DSC in conjunction with the Town. The study process has shown the DSC and the Town can improve branding synergies to reduce confusion between the DSC, formally the Sykesville Main Street Association, and Town government. The DSC is a stand-alone community non-profit that is a member of the Main Street Maryland Program. The organization is incredibly important to the Sykesville community, overseeing economic development, events, promotion, design, and green initiatives for Sykesville. As it relates to branding, implementation of the study recommendations will help the Town and the DSC promote the Town with a single, cohesive branding scheme.

Additionally, the Town should continue to participate in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Sustainable Communities Program, a place-based designation offering a comprehensive package of resources for community development, revitalization and sustainability. Resources through the Sustainable Communities Program will continue to help both the DSC and the Town achieve the mutual vision for continued economic development, beautification, and preservation.

Install wayfinding signage and banners that promote the Town's assets and character.

Signage, banners, and wayfinding are simple and effective ways to enhance connectivity and aesthetic character throughout Downtown and into surrounding neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the use of consistent visual design features to promote the Town and aid in brand recognition.

- Use consistent signage, banners, and light fixtures along the entire spine of Main Street, between the intersection of Springfield and the river crossing.
- Extend clear directional signage, also termed wayfinding, along paths and trails. Prioritize trailheads and junction points that lead to and from Downtown, including signage that is visible to drivers along Route 32.
- Include major destinations and connection points on directional signage to clearly indicate where people can find the Visitor Center, Town House, parking lots, trailheads, and more.

Invest in public gathering spaces.

A desire for more gathering spaces was repeatedly mentioned throughout the community input process. Through infill, trail extensions, and street improvements, the Town should consider all opportunities to create pedestrian spaces both large and small. Recommendations include:

- **Town House Terrace.** By constructing tiered terraces in front of the Town House's existing sloped lawn, the space will become more occupiable for community gatherings, events, and other Downtown programming.
- **Rooftops**: Private businesses can also pursue maximizing gathering space within their footprints by activating their rooftops as usable rooftop terraces. The Town should support rooftop uses and ensure that zoning updates allow for this use in the Downtown.
- **Oklahoma Avenue:** As depicted in the image below, Oklahoma Avenue has high potential to be used for temporary street closures during events. With minimal investment, repaving this block as a slightly raised and curbless street will discourage heavy trucks from utilizing the street. These changes will enhance pedestrian connectivity to the Visitor Center and will enable the area to become a sizable gathering space during events.

The Town can pursue grant funding to help offset the cost of the above identified opportunities.

TARGETED GATEWAY AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

The activation and programming of Downtown Sykesville depends heavily on pedestrian access and comfort. Outdoor events that temporarily close the street to allow more pedestrian movement have been very successful. Investing in the gateways to Downtown will help make motorists aware that they are entering the Downtown and should slow down. In addition, new streetscapes throughout the downtown can help support flexible use on different blocks and street closure for events.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the south side of the river as a future investment area for the Town. If necessary, annexation can be considered to support investment in gateway and connectivity improvements to South Branch Park. These are opportunities to announce downtown while improving pedestrian connectivity to the park and new surface parking lot.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Sykesville will promote the conservation of its natural environment and invest in stormwater management improvements to protect the South Branch Patapsco River and its watersheds.

Environmental Stewardship

THE ISSUE

The Town of Sykesville is located within the South Branch Patapsco Watershed in the southern portion of Carroll County, Maryland, situated within the gentle to steep rolling topography, low hills, and ridges of the Piedmont Plateau Province. The Watershed drains to the Patapsco River Lower North Branch, which is a tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. Stormwater runoff in the Town of Sykesville, accordingly, contributes to stormwater pollution of the Piney Run [Creek] and Patapsco River and, ultimately, to the Chesapeake Bay. Piney Run [Creek], which is located in the Town, is designated by Clean Water Act 303(d) as an Impaired Stream; the stream is too polluted or otherwise degraded to meet the relevant water quality standards. The Town is part of the Carroll County Water Resource Coordination Council (WRCC), a non-binding group that was established in 2007 to foster communications between jurisdictions with the purpose of promoting a wholistic, county-wide approach to water resource development and protection.

Stormwater consists of runoff generated from rain and snow that is unable to infiltrate into the ground due to impervious surfaces, such as buildings, surfacing parking, and roadways. As the runoff flows across a surface, it accumulates debris, chemicals, sediment, and other pollutants that adversely affect the water quality. Another challenge with stormwater runoff is the potential for stormwater flooding events.

To improve water quality, states and counties require stormwater management facilities, such as stormwater retention ponds, swales, and underground structures, as part of land development permits. In Maryland, the state began requiring stormwater management in the mid 1980's for new development to manage the quantity of runoff. In total, there are 224 existing stormwater management facilities within the South Branch Patapsco Watershed, with the majority being in the Piney Run Tributary and South Branch Patapsco subwatersheds. In Sykesville, there are 27 facilities. The historic portion of Sykesville, however, only features one stormwater facility since the area was constructed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, the natural topography of the Town and urban build-out created stormwater management challenges.

PRIMARY GOALS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Sykesville will promote the conservation of the Town's natural environment and invest in stormwater management improvements to protect the South Branch Patapsco River and its watersheds.

- Partner with Carroll County and Maryland State agencies to maintain and improve stormwater management facilities.
- Integrate green infrastructure into the Downtown streetscape and infill development projects.
- Remain committed to conservation and environmental stewardship through the Town's ordinances.

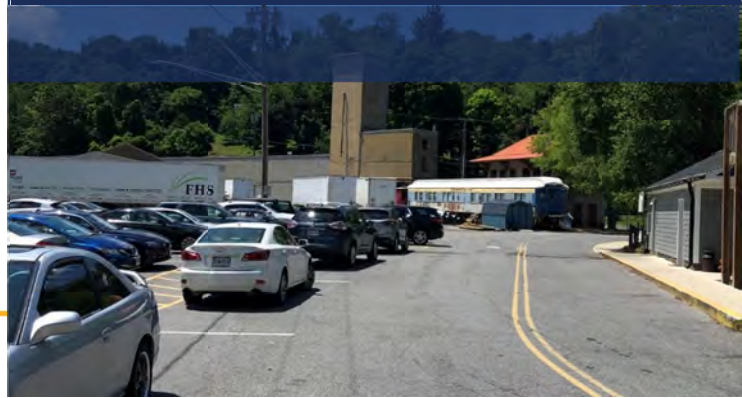
PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Partner with Carroll County and Maryland State agencies to maintain and improve stormwater management facilities.

Stormwater management facilities are owned by Carroll County. In addition, the MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) is also responsible for stormwater management within the Rights-of-Ways of state-owned transportation routes. Since approximately 2013, the Town has been assisting the County in locating and mapping its 330 storm drains and developing an operation and maintenance plan for the storm drain network. Partnership strategies include:

- Continue to partner with Carroll County to achieve compliance with the County's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and associated stormwater discharges from its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). Additionally, evaluate compliance requirements and provide secondary benefits as it relates to proposed projects. For example, this may include expanding water quality treatment projects to address flooding concerns or designing retrofit projects to integrate public use as amenities to the community.

Integrating planters, bump-outs with trees and plantings, and other green infrastructure with future capital improvement projects is a cost-effective way to better manage stormwater where no stormwater management facilities exist today.



- Continue to work with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to identify and advance stormwater management solutions that mitigate flooding impacts to Springfield Road and affected properties.
- Actively participate in Carroll County's five-year update to the County's Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and ensure the Town's priority flood and stormwater mitigation projects are included in the plan to make them eligible for hazard mitigation assistance funding. Adopt the plan upon its approval from FEMA.

In addition to stormwater partnership opportunities, Sykesville should seek designation as a Sustainable Maryland community. Sustainable Maryland is a certification program for municipalities in the state that are dedicated to green and sustainability practices. The program is offered through the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland and the Maryland Municipal League.

Integrate green Infrastructure as part of Downtown streetscape and infill development projects.

The Sykesville Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan identifies several capital improvement opportunities for the Town of Sykesville, including streetscape enhancement projects and infill development in the Downtown. As part of future capital investment undertaken by the Town or by private landowners, the Town should integrate green infrastructure elements as a way to help reduce the quantity and improve the water quality of stormwater runoff. Particularly in the Downtown, Green infrastructure improvements can assist in managing stormwater challenges. Green infrastructure is gaining popularity for its aesthetic appeal and ability to improve water quality. Green infrastructure encompasses a variety of stormwater design techniques, including:

- **Curbside Green Infrastructure** – Incorporating stormwater planters, stormwater bumpouts, and trees within the sidewalk and pedestrian network will help to intercept rainwater and provide additional benefits such as improved property value.
- **Green Walls** - Walls covered in vegetation with a growing media (e.g. soil) supported on the wall face. These walls can reduce stormwater runoff from buildings and absorb additional precipitation.
- **Bioswales** - A gently sloped drainage course that supports vegetation. They are designed to maximize water storage, increase water absorption, and trap pollutants.
- **Rain Gardens** - A vegetated depression that gives stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces the opportunity to be absorbed.
- **Planters Boxes** - A space with maintained plants and vertical walls. These boxes absorb runoff from impervious urban surfaces and are ideal in dense urban areas or as streetscaping features.
- **Permeable Pavement -** Paved surface that allows infiltration of, stores, and/or treats rainwater.

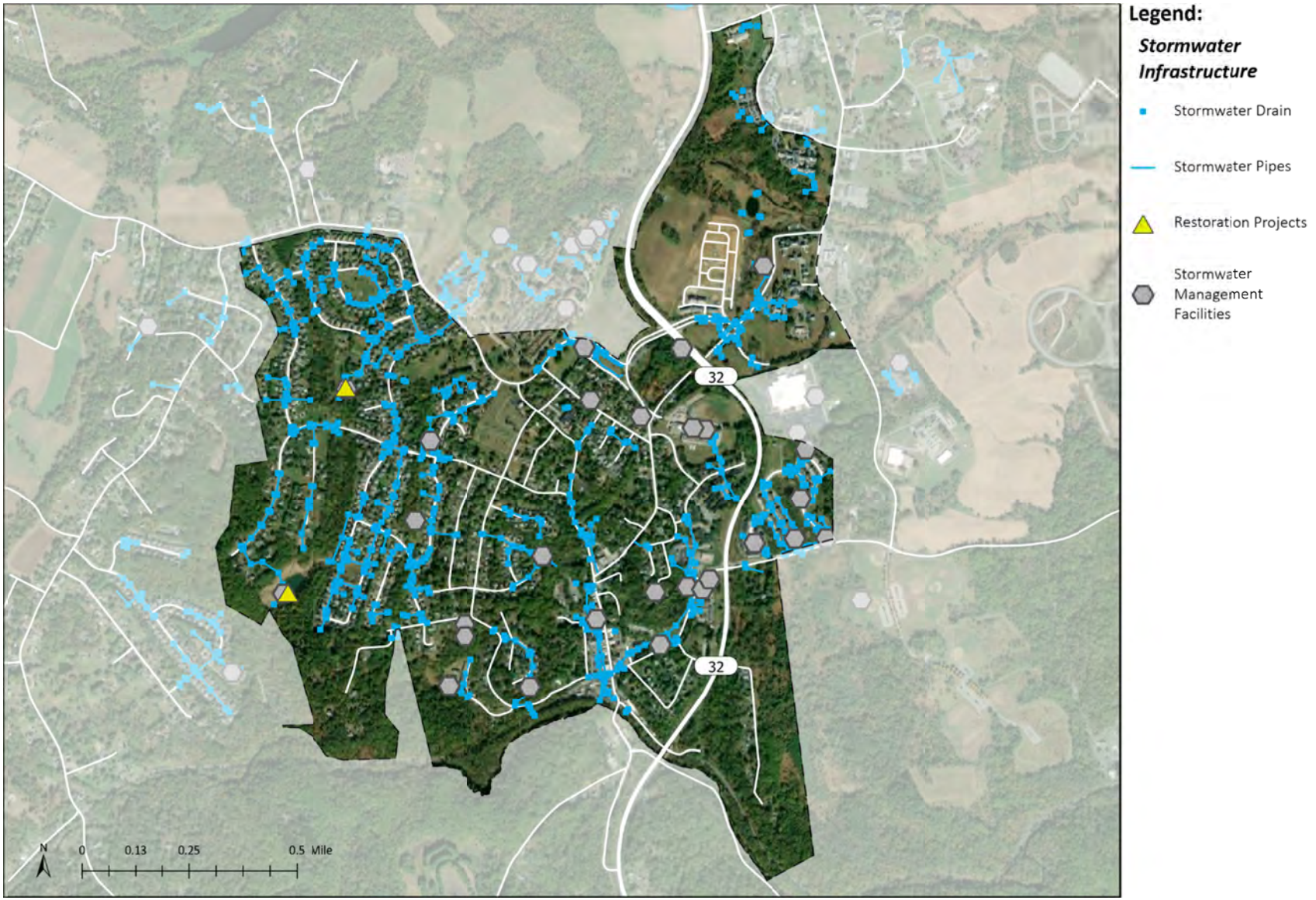
As part of this objective, the Town should consider establishing a policy to evaluate and prioritize green infrastructure, where feasible, for all Town related projects.

Remain committed to conservation and environmental stewardship through the Town's ordinances.

Recommended updates to the Town's ordinances include:

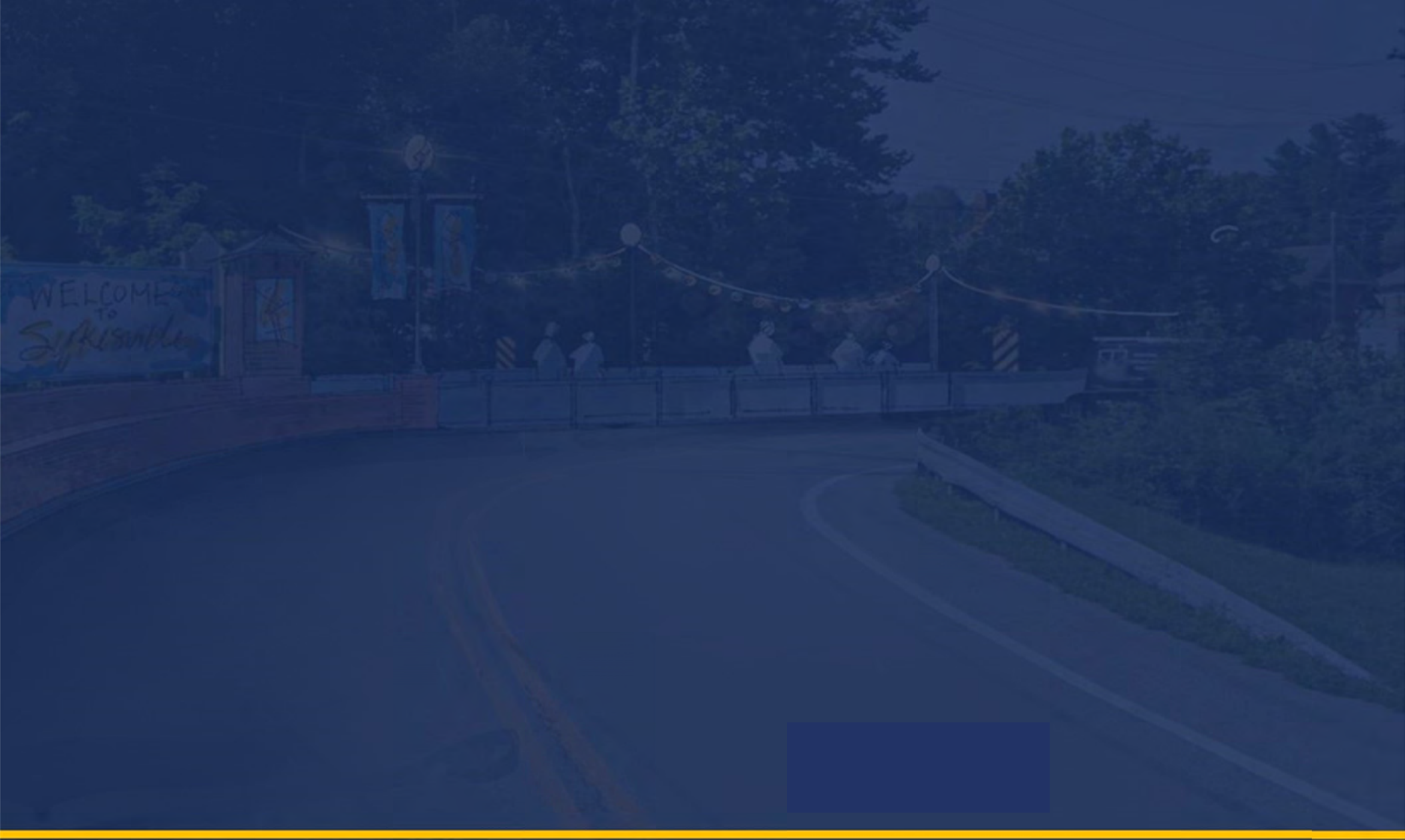
- Ensure Sykesville's continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by adopting and enforcing floodplain management regulations that meet or exceed the minimum NFIP standards and requirements. These standards are intended to prevent loss of life and property, as well as economic and social hardships that result from flooding. Update Sykesville's zoning regulations to incorporate these regulations as a floodplain overlay district.
- Update Sykesville's zoning and subdivision and land development regulations to include riparian buffer and stormwater management regulations that include best management practices and low impact development (LID) design. Ensure such regulations are designed to advance Maryland Chesapeake Bay Phase 2 Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP).

Sykesville Stormwater Infrastructure



Source: Carroll County Bureau of Resource Management, Carroll County GIS Open Data

BACKGROUND CHAPTERS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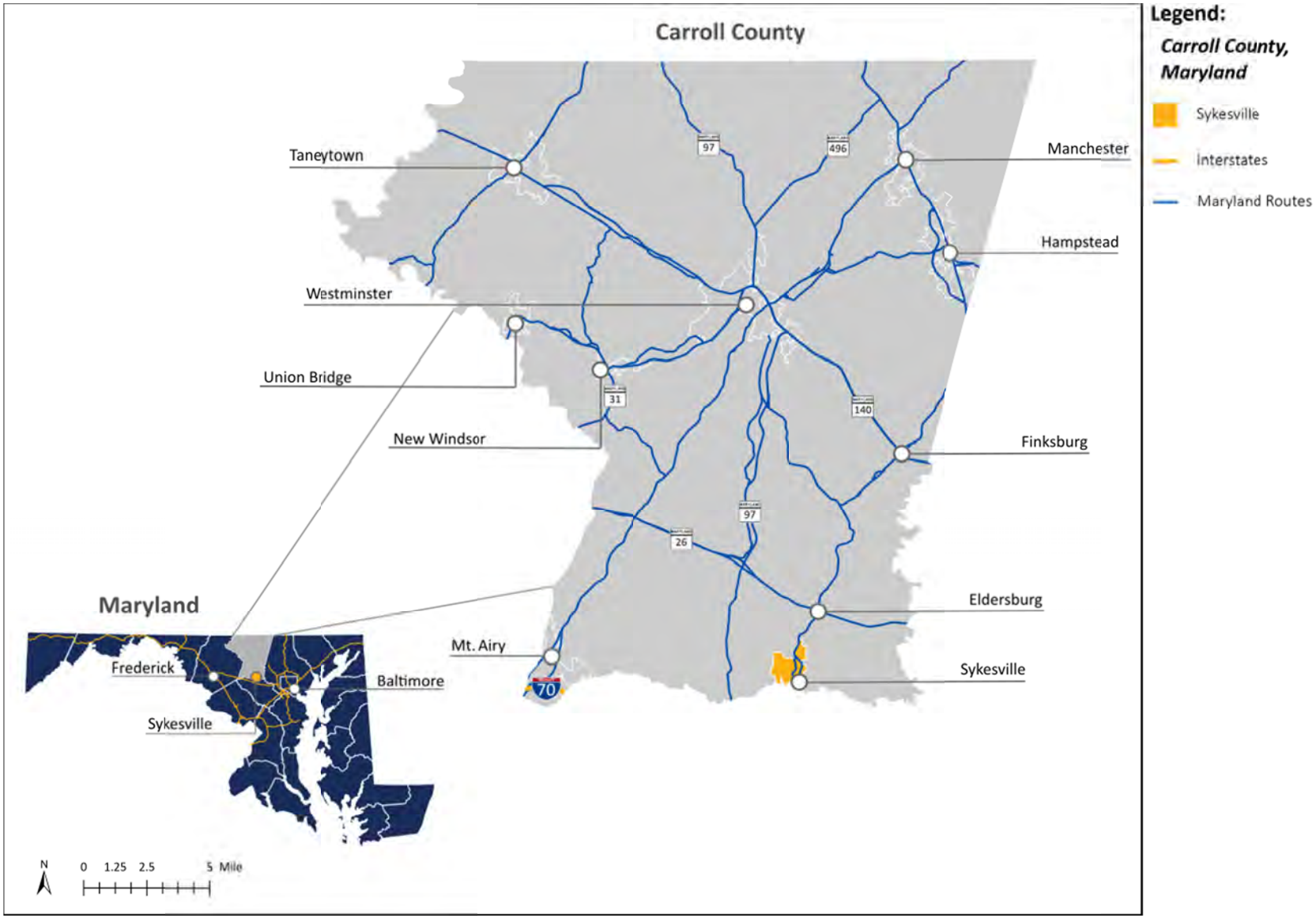
Regional Location Map, Town of Sykesville, Carroll County, Maryland

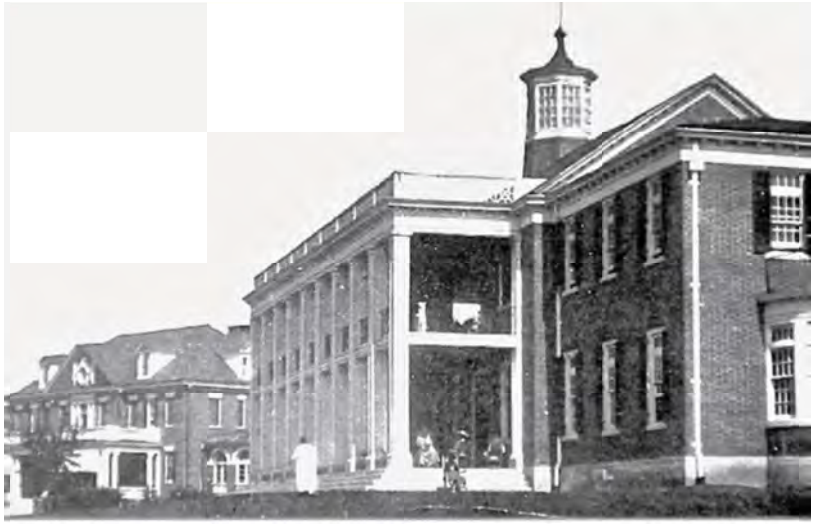


Source: Carroll County GIS Open Data and Maryland's GIS Data Catalog

Socioeconomic Trends

HISTORICAL GROWTH

With its roots dating back to the late 1700s, Sykesville began to grow as a small community throughout the nineteenth century. The extension of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1831 helped support the development of Sykesville's small thriving commercial center on the southern side of the South Branch Patapsco River. A historical flood event in July 1868, however, washed away most of the area's land development, leading to the rebuilding of Sykesville on the Carroll County side of the river. Rebuilding was slow, but by 1896, Sykesville recovered from its losses and became home to the Springfield State Hospital, the largest mental health hospital located along the eastern seaboard at the time.



The Town was formally incorporated in 1904 and was home to approximately 565 residents. The Town grew slowly during the first quarter of the twentieth century before beginning to experience population growth attributable to World War II. Stable growth continued and, by 1980, Sykesville was home to 1,712 residents.

Between 1980 and 2000, Sykesville grew by an unprecedented 145%, more than doubling its population in 20 years. Part of this growth may have been due to the out migration of the nation's cities, including the City of Baltimore. Anecdotally, as shared through stakeholder focus groups, citizens report that private investment in and revitalization of Sykesville's downtown helped the community create its reputation as a vibrant location to live and visit. In the mid-1990s, new residential developments were constructed in the western portion of the Town as well, along with several adjoining recreational spaces.

POPULATION TRENDS

Since 2000, population growth in the Town of Sykesville has remained relatively flat, having grown by 10.8%, or 412 residents, over the past 20 years. Between 2020 and 2025, the Town is estimated to have nominal to no growth. The limited growth is due in part to the built-out nature of the Town. In comparison, Carroll County and Howard County grew by 14.1% and 33.1%, respectively, between 2000 and 2020, and both are estimated to experience gains in population through 2025. The Baltimore-Columbia-Towson Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) grew by 11.4% between 2000 and 2020, and is estimated to grow by 2.3% over the next five years.

Note: Demographic and socioeconomic data trends are primarily sourced from ESRI Business Analyst, which provides current year estimates and 5-year projections. The data may vary slightly from American Community Survey (ACS) 2018 5-year Estimates. ESRI is an ArcGIS platform and is a nationally recognized, leading provider in GIS mapping software and market analysis data. Please also note that, due to whole number rounding, not all sums may total 100%.

Population Trends, 2000-2025

	2000	2010	2020	2025	2000-2020 Change
Town of Sykesville	**3,797**	**3,848**	**4,209**	**4,217**	**10.9%**
Carroll County	150,897	167,134	172,218	174,865	14.1%
Howard County	247,842	287,085	329,952	353,278	33.1%
MSA	2,552,994	2,710,489	2,844,291	2,908,745	11.4%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020. Please note the 2000 and 2010 numbers may vary slightly from the Decennial Censuses and ACS Estimates. ACS Estimates were reviewed first, and were found to be inaccurate. For example, ACS Estimates show Sykesville's population declined between 2010 and 2019 by approximately 500 residents. It was determined ESRI data was most accurate and therefore used as the primary data source for this Comprehensive Plan.

While most of Sykesville is largely built out, the area comprising part of the former Springfield State Hospital site is slated for development. This area, containing approximately 138 acres, was annexed into the Town from the late 1990s through 2007. The potential reuse of the property has been the subject of numerous discussions dating back to its annexation into Sykesville.

Two parcels of the site were sold to a residential developer who is constructing Parkside at Warfield, a new townhome development that will feature 145 market-rate townhomes upon completion. With the addition of the 145 market-rate townhomes, the 2025 population may reach 4,577 (average household size of 2.48 multiplied by 145 new housing units equates to a population increase of 360). However, with an aging population, Sykesville's average household size may decrease over the next several years.

The remaining acreage owned by the developer, Warfield Investment, Inc., which features the historic hospital buildings, is currently approved to construct up to 600,000 square feet of office, light industrial and retail space, and a full-service hotel. Warfield represents the last large remaining tract of land available for development within the Town's incorporated borders. As part of land development planning, a capacity analysis should be completed to ensure a strain isn't placed on water and sewer resources and community facilities such as education facilities and emergency services.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Within the Town, 79.1% of residents are estimated to live in family households and 16.1% in non-family households. In comparison, 87.2% of Carroll County residents live in family households and 10.2% in non-family households. In addition, an estimated 4.8% of the Town's residents are living in group quarters, compared to 2.0% for Carroll County as a whole.

Population by Household Type, 2010

	Town of Sykesville	Carroll County
Total Households	**1,514**	**61,760**
Family Households	79.1%	87.2%
Non-family Households	16.1%	10.2%
In Group Quarters	4.8%	2.0%

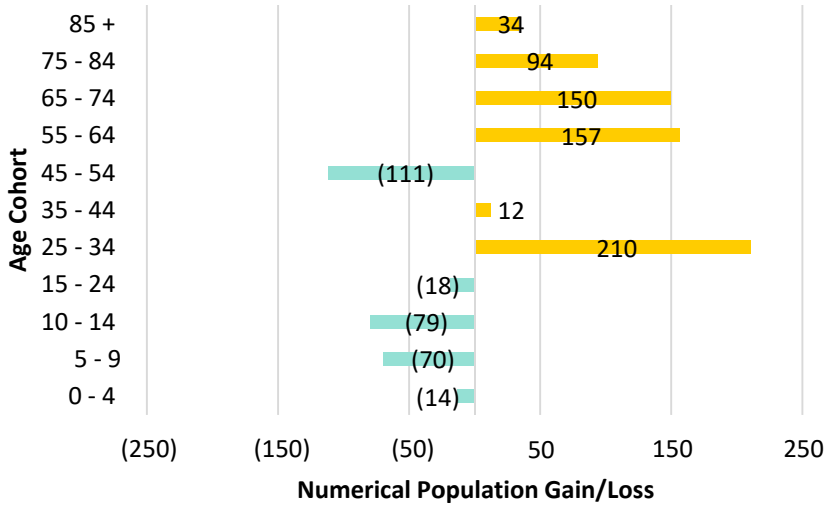
Source: 2018 American Community Survey U.S. Census Bureau

Family households, with or without children, include married couples, singles living alone, and other families such as single parent households. Non-family households represent households where unrelated persons are living together. Group quarters are places where people live or stay in a group living arrangement, including institutional and non-institutional settings. Examples include long-term care facilities, college dormitories, and military barracks.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The Town's age composition is generally consistent with the Carroll County trends. The median age of the population residing in Sykesville is 41.2, which is slightly below the median age in Carroll County (42.7). The statewide median age is 39.2. Between 2010 and 2025, Sykesville is estimated to lose approximately 181 children and young adults aged 0-24. At the same time, the Town's 65+ age cohort is estimated to increase by 277 individuals. This type of age distribution trend is not isolated to Sykesville but is rather a trend occurring across the country as America's baby boomer generation is in retirement or reaching retirement age. New housing options for elderly households could be explored as part of the future development at Warfield.

Town of Sykesville Age Distribution by Numerical Change, 2010-2025



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020

RACE

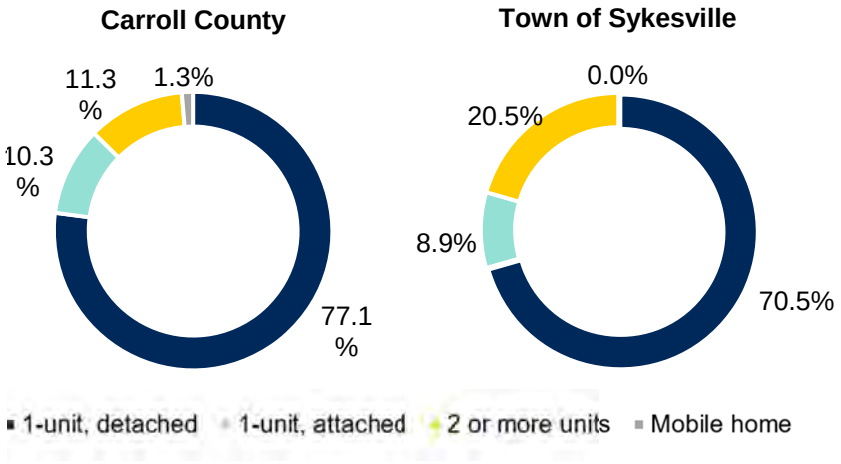
The U.S. Census Bureau collects data on the self-identification by people according to the race or races with which they most closely identify. Racial diversity in the Town has increased since 2010, however, has less diversity when compared with the county and state.

Housing

HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE

In 2020, the Town of Sykesville housing inventory included 1,608 housing units. Based on 2018 estimates, 70.5% of all housing in the Town is 1-unit detached homes and is the primary housing type in the Town. Compared to Maryland, Carroll County and Sykesville have a higher percentage of 1-unit detached dwellings.

Housing Units by Type, 2018



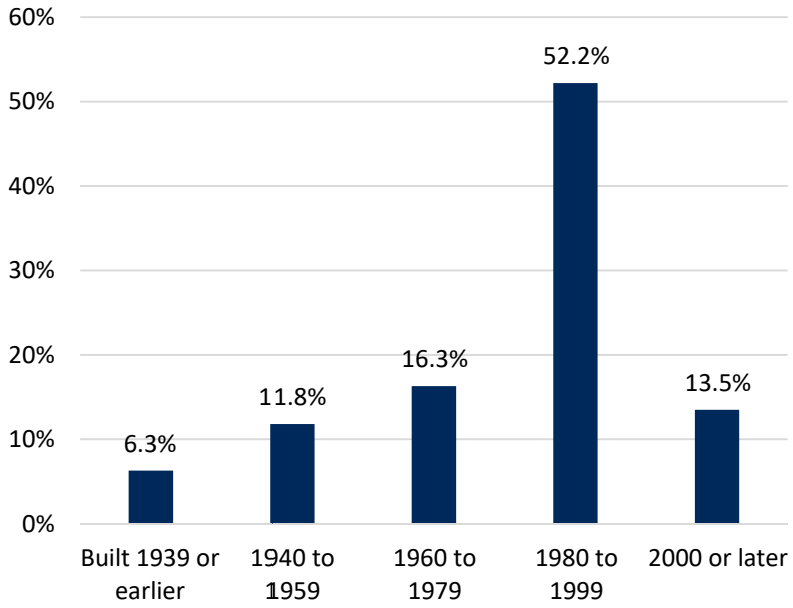
Source: 2018 American Community Survey U.S. Census Bureau

HOUSING TENURE AND HOUSING AGE

Based on 2018 American Community Survey data, an estimated 75.2% of Sykesville dwellings are owner-occupied and 24.8% are rented. This trend is comparable to housing tenure in Carroll County, where owner-occupied housing is estimated at 74.7%.

As shown in the table below, more than half of the Town's housing units were constructed between 1980 and 1999, which aligns with the population growth that was experienced during the 1980s and 1990s. Only 13.5% of housing in the Town of Sykesville was constructed after the year 2000.

Town of Sykesville Housing Units by Year Built



Source: 2018 American Community Survey U.S. Census Bureau

HOUSING VALUE

Given the Town of Sykesville's location outside some of the largest U.S. markets of Baltimore and Washington, D.C., home values are increasing. In 2020, the median home value was estimated at $372,284 and is projected to increase to $383,245 by 2025. Home values are similar to Carroll County, which had a median home value of $347,730 in 2020 and is projected to increase to $375,051 by 2025. Howard County's median home value exceeds Carroll County by more than $100,000, with a median home value of $460,170 in 2020 and $484,793 estimated by 2025.

Median Home Value, 2020-2025

2020	2020	2025	2020-2025 Change
Town of Sykesville	$372,284	$383,245	2.9%
Carroll County	$347,730	$375,051	7.9%
Howard County	$460,170	$484,793	5.4%
MSA	$314,887	$351,815	11.7%
Maryland	$325,338	$360,882	10.9%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

House Bill (HB) 1045 of 2019, in amending Sections 1-406 (Charter Counties) and 3-102 (Non-Charter Counties and Municipalities) of the Land Use Article and adding sections 1-407.1 and 3-114, requires including a housing element in comprehensive plans for all Maryland jurisdictions. This change to the law requires that jurisdictions include a housing element when developing a new, or updated, comprehensive plan after June 1, 2020.

Maryland law ensures that municipalities appropriately plan for both workforce housing and low-income housing for households earning 60 percent (Maryland defined threshold for "low-income") and 50-120 percent (Maryland defined threshold for "workforce") of the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development's (HUD) Area Median Income (AMI) levels. The Maryland law defines workforce housing as rental housing affordable for a household income between 50% and 100% of the AMI or homeownership housing between 60% and 120% of AMI. For purposes of this analysis, workforce housing is considered 60% to 120% of AMI.

The Town of Sykesville's AMI is $104,000, based on HUD's current estimates. Accordingly, based on Maryland's definitions, households earning less than $62,400 per year are considered low income. Households earning between $62,400 and $124,800 are considered workforce. The table on the next page shows the estimated number of households by income bracket, based on 2020 data.

Data Note: Given Sykesville's relatively small population size, statistical errors in estimating income by household are possible and would skew numbers. Esri Business Analyst data is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1, which is then forecasted for 2020 and 2025. Income represents the preceding year, expressed in current dollars. Household income includes wage and salary earnings, interest dividends, net rents, pensions, SSI and welfare payments, child support, and alimony.

Sykesville Households by Annual Income, 2020

2020	Percent of Households	Number of Households
<$15,000	8.2%	124
$15,000 - $24,999	4.2%	64
$25,000 - $34,999	6.9%	104
$35,000 - $49,999	6.7%	101
$50,000 - $74,999	11.0%	167
$75,000 - $86,999*	5.8%	88
$87,000 - $99,999*	5.8%	88
$100,000 - $124,999**	13.7%	207
$125,000 - $149,999**	13.7%	207
$150,000 - $199,999	13.9%	210
$200,000+	10.2%	154

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020
** Data extrapolated; Original data: $75,000-$99,999 at 11.6% and 176 households.*
*** Data extrapolated; Original data: $100,000-$149,999 at 27.3% and 413 households*

The above table suggests there are approximately 393 households that are low income (based on the income brackets, this analysis assumes <$15,000 to $49,999 as low income). The data also shows there are 550 households that are considered workforce (this analysis assumes $50,000 to $124,999 as workforce). Similarly, the table below compares Sykesville's household incomes to HUD's income limits.

Sykesville Households by Income Compared to HUD Income Limits based on AMI, 2020

	Low Range	High Range	Approximate Number of Sykesville Households
Extremely Low Income (0-30% of AMI)	$0.00	$31,200	292
Very Low Income (30-50% of AMI)	$31,200	$52,000	101
Lower Income (50-80% of AMI)	$52,000	$83,200	255
Moderate Income (80-120% of AMI)	$83,200	$124,800	295

**Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020; Michael Baker International Calculations*

HOUSING DATA CONCLUSIONS

The number of low income and workforce households located in the Town may seem high given its position as a relatively affluent community. That is, Sykesville's median household income of $101,477 (2020) is higher than the County, MSA, and statewide averages. However, even at a broad-brush stroke, the data demonstrate there are low income households residing in Sykesville. Whether there is 1 low income household or 393, the purpose of this required housing element, pursuant Maryland law, is to raise awareness that all communities need to appropriately plan for both workforce housing and low-income housing for households earning up to 120% of AMI.

In the following sections, this Plan reviews Carroll County's administration of federal subsidized housing programs as well as the existing affordable housing that is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of Sykesville. Finally, broad recommendations for how the Town can expand housing choice are provided.

COUNTY HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Carroll County Bureau of Housing and Community Development is the primary organization providing housing assistance for the Town of Sykesville and the county at large. Assistance is offered through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program providing rental assistance to income-eligible applicants. The program helps eligible households afford a better place to live or assists with paying a portion of the monthly rent where the family currently is living. In general, the family's income may not exceed 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live, and by law the County must provide 75 percent of its vouchers to applicants whose incomes do not exceed 30 percent of the AMI. As a demonstration of demand, the current wait time listed on the County's website for the HCV program is 30-36 months. Families in most need may be moved up the list (e.g., homeless households, etc.). Based on data provided by the Department, there are currently 24 households living in Sykesville that are participating in the HCV Program.

EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SYKESVILLE

In addition to the County's HCV Program, there are currently two affordable multi-family housing properties offering a combined 80 units located in the Town of Sykesville. These properties are supported through HUD programs.

- **Village House Apartments**. The Village House Apartments by Humphrey Management, located at 7426 Village Road, is a senior, income-restricted property that offers one- and two-bedroom units to individuals age 62 and older. The property was funded through low income housing tax credit financing and must provide affordable rents to residents who qualify based on income guidelines. The property offers 24 one-bedroom units and 30 two-bedroom units.

- **Schoolhouse Road Community**. The Schoolhouse Road property is multifamily housing funded through HUD. Tenants pay approximately 30 percent of their adjusted income on rent and utilities. The property is managed by J.E.F. Management Co, Inc., and offers 26 three-bedroom units.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDING HOUSING CHOICE

Potential opportunities for expanding housing choice for all income levels, to ensure all households can find housing within their means (spending less than 30% of income on housing), include the following:

- The data provided in this section is quantitative in nature. Qualitative data, collected through interviews with housing providers, members of the public, HUD representatives and others, is an important element of any needs assessment process to help tell the story of what is occurring in a community. Accordingly, a primary recommendation is for the Town to engage the Carroll County Bureau of Housing and Community Development to review this information and gather the County's input on potential housing needs in Sykesville.

- As a second recommendation, the Town should explore the provision of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) in the Town. An ADU is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a single-family home. An ADU can be located internal within an existing home structure, attached through an addition, or located as a stand-alone structure. Given the built-out nature of Sykesville, allowing ADUs offers an opportunity for the addition of smaller efficiency units that are more affordable in nature than detached single family homes. The American Planning Association reports that data suggests ADUs increase the supply of affordable housing and make significant economic contributions to communities through construction activity and property taxes.

- The Town may also consider adopting an inclusionary housing approach through zoning, as described on page 62. Inclusionary housing policies are most applicable for communities that have greenfield available for new residential construction and typically work by offering density bonuses to developers in exchange for the inclusion of some affordable housing units. This policy creates integrated communities, where houses of varying value are collocated to create a more inclusive, integrated community. Mixing housing types and price points is a growing national best practice to steer away from the residential development patterns that emerged over the previous decades: 1) concentrating low income housing, and 2) concentrating market-rate housing on expansive lots in suburban America. Local policies and programs, such as inclusionary housing, should encourage economically and socially diverse mixed income neighborhoods as the foundation for a healthy community.

- Finally, single family housing is the predominate housing unit type found in the Town at 70.5 percent. Promoting the construction and conversion of housing to 1-unit attached and 2 or more units would provide more housing selection by offering smaller efficiency units

that may be offered at a lower price point. While the Town has absorbed hundreds of townhomes in recent years (Raincliffe in 2007-2008 and Warfield currently), stakeholder interviews suggest there is market demand for efficiency one- and two-bedroom apartments that are smaller in size. Sykesville is largely built-out, however, infill development in the Downtown as well as the future development offer an opportunity to include a range of housing types.

- Maryland, as part of its review of this Comprehensive Plan, indicates that establishing density bonuses for developers along with exploring options for conversions of existing single-family dwellings to two-family dwellings are potential strategies to assist in expanding affordable housing in the Town.

INCLUSIONARY HOUSING POLICIES

Inclusionary housing policies are methods of expanding affordable housing ownership and rental opportunities within a community by incentivizing or otherwise requiring developers to provide a share of units at below-market prices as part of market-rate housing developments. Inclusionary housing policies can use a variety of methods to achieve this goal. The effectiveness of inclusionary housing policies generally depends on the following elements:

- SIZE OF DEVELOPMENTS SUBJECT TO THE POLICY
- SHARE OF UNITS TO BE MADE AFFORDABLE
- INCOMES SERVED BY THE AFFORDABLE UNITS
- REQUIRED AFFORDABILITY DURATION

Some common inclusionary housing strategies involve density bonuses, where a developer is permitted to develop a greater number of dwellings per acre if a portion of the dwellings are designated as low-income housing. Other policies offer partial or full waivers of planning, permitting, or impact fees to projects that include affordable units. Conversely, rather than incentivizing affordable housing development, some policies require the provision of low-income housing as a requirement for plan approval.

Providing affordable housing in addition to market rate housing helps maintain housing options for people of all incomes and circumstances. To facilitate the development of a diverse housing stock, new or redeveloped residential projects should include low-income housing – defined as housing units in which the sale or lease of the dwelling is limited to households earning up to 120% of median income. An inclusionary housing policy is an effective strategy that the Town could use to increase affordable housing within the Town.

Income and Employment Trends

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income in the Town of Sykesville was $101,477 in 2020 and is projected to increase to $104,862 by 2025. The Town's median household income is higher than the County, MSA, and statewide average, but is less than neighboring Howard County which boasted a median household income of $113,456 in 2020. Situated within commuting distance of the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. metro areas, residents in Sykesville have access to the region's top employment hubs. According to U.S. Census data, the poverty rate in the Town is 2.0%.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Based on 2018 U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap Work Area Profile Analysis data, there are 1,326 employed individuals working in the Town of Sykesville. Major employment sectors include Professional, Scientific, and Management (447 jobs), Health Care and Social Assistance (253 jobs), and Public Administration (130 jobs). Anecdotally, it is presumed the 1,326 employees listed in the data incorporates areas listed with a Sykesville mailing address and may include locations outside of the Town borders.

The Sykesville area is home to three of the County's top employers. Northrop Grumman is located just outside the municipal border of Sykesville and is a major employer providing electronic manufacturing and testing capabilities. In addition, the Springfield Hospital Center continues its legacy of providing health services for those with mental health challenges. In addition, the Fairhaven senior living facility owned by Acts Retirement-Life Communities offers independent living cottages and villas, as well as assisted living and skilled nursing care. Just north in Eldersburg, GES Systems is another major employer providing scientific research and development services.

At the county level, Health Care and Social Assistance serves as Carroll County's largest industry segment, followed by the Retail Trade and Construction segments. The County also has strong Manufacturing and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industries. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services has boasted 20% growth, or the addition of 517 jobs, since 2010. Overall, the County's economy in terms of jobs has seen steady growth, increasing by approximately 5,000 jobs since 2010 with total growth of 9%. Situated immediately south of Sykesville, Howard County employment is nearly three times greater than Carroll County. There, employment has increased by 19% since 2010 with gains in nearly every industry. The top two industries, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services and Health Care and Social Assistance, expanded by 19% and 48%, respectively.

Residents of the Town of Sykesville benefit from a large job market in north central Maryland. Commuting pattern data indicates residents primarily work in Carroll, Baltimore, and Howard counties, as well as the City of Baltimore.

Carroll County Industries by Employment, 2010-2019

Industry	2010	2019	% Change 2010-2019
Health Care and Social Assistance	9,223	9,740	6%
Retail Trade	7,813	7,694	-2%
Construction	5,038	6,188	23%
Accommodation and Food Services	5,220	6,163	18%
Educational Services	4,973	5,837	17%
Manufacturing	4,208	3,937	-6%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3,309	3,321	0%
Wholesale Trade	2,533	3,316	31%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,562	3,079	20%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,128	2,223	4%
Public Administration	1,723	1,975	15%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	849	1,141	34%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,023	1,112	9%
Finance and Insurance	985	1,086	10%
Information	843	757	-10%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	425	476	12%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	316	470	49%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	461	118	-74%
Utilities	20	35	75%
Total	**53,652**	**58,668**	**9%**

Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, LED Extraction Tool – Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census.
Data Parameters Used:

- *NAICS Sectors*
- *All Firms (All Firm Ages and All Firm Sizes)*
- *All Workers (Male and Female, All Ages)*
- *Beginning of Quarter Employment Counts*
- *Third Quarter Employment Data in 2010 and 2019*
- *Michael Baker International Calculations for Percent Change*

Existing Designated Land Use and Zoning

EXISTING DESIGNATED LAND USE

Land use refers to the physical use of land in a given area based on the types and intensities of the uses. Traditional land use classifications are often defined through broad categories such as agriculture and open space, residential, commercial, and industrial. These categories are often further defined based on their levels of density and intensity.

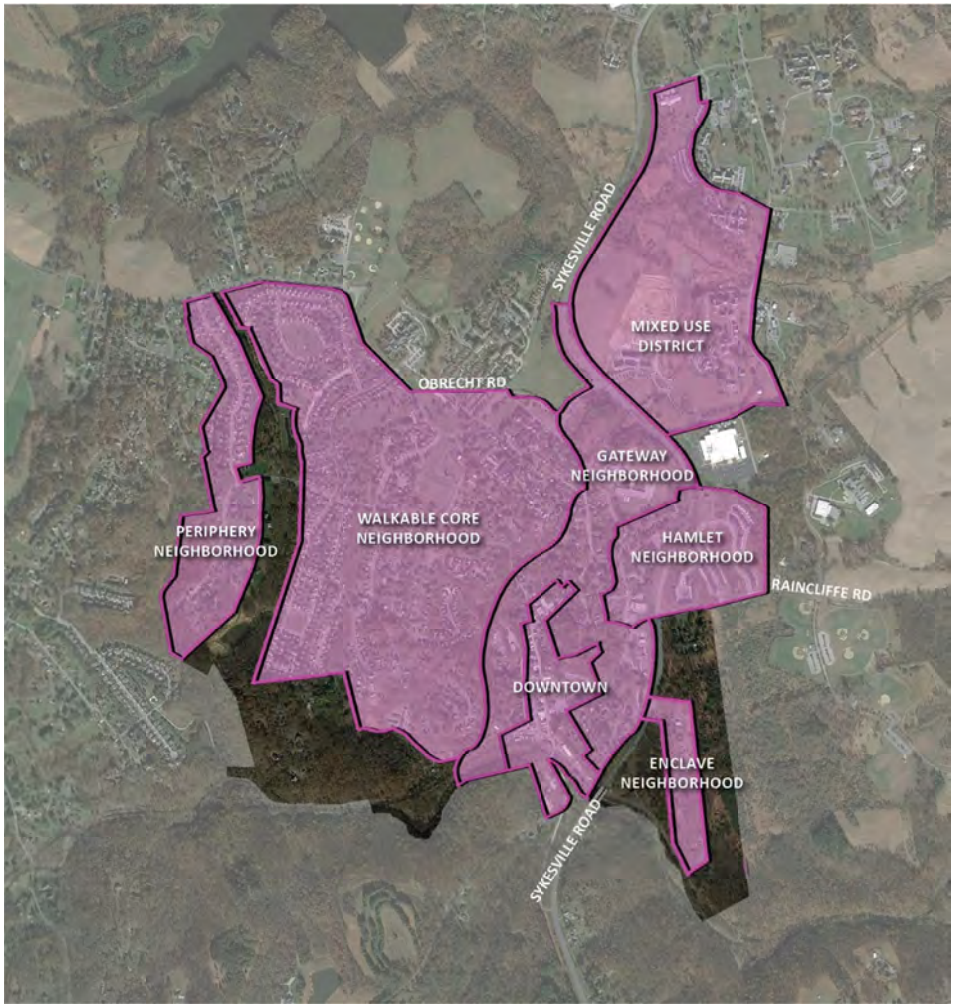
Based on the Town's 2010 Master Plan (amended in 2014), the most common designated land use in the Town is medium-density residential, which makes up 30.5% of the Town. Predominant designated land uses in the Town include residential (52.8%) and undeveloped conservation land (29.7%). Additional designated land uses include the Central Business District (2.5%), Neighborhood Business (2.1%), and Employment Campus (12.9%).

Town of Sykesville Land Use Classifications, 2020

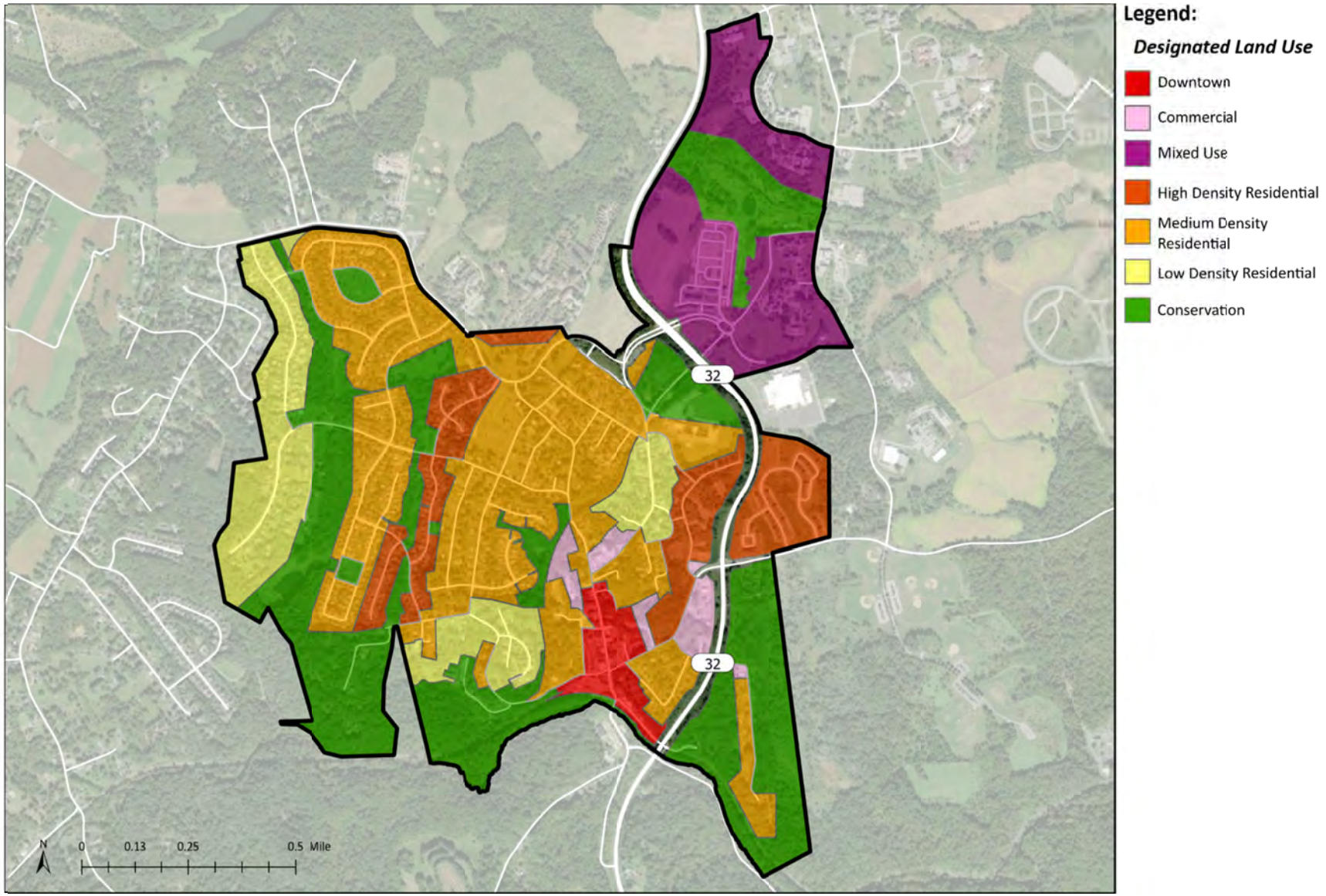
Existing Land Use Classification	Acres	Percent
C - Conservation	286	29.7%
CBD - Central Business District	25	2.5%
HDR - High Density Residential	101	10.4%
LDR - Low Density Residential	114	11.9%
MDR - Medium Density Residential	294	30.5%
MUEC - Employment Campus	124	12.9%
NB - Neighborhood Business	20	2.1%

Source: 2010 Town of Sykesville Master Plan; Michael Baker International

Land Use Characterization at a Glance



Town of Sykesville Existing Designated Land Use Map, 2020



Source: 2010 Town of Sykesville Master Plan; Carroll County Department of Planning, Carroll County GIS Open Data

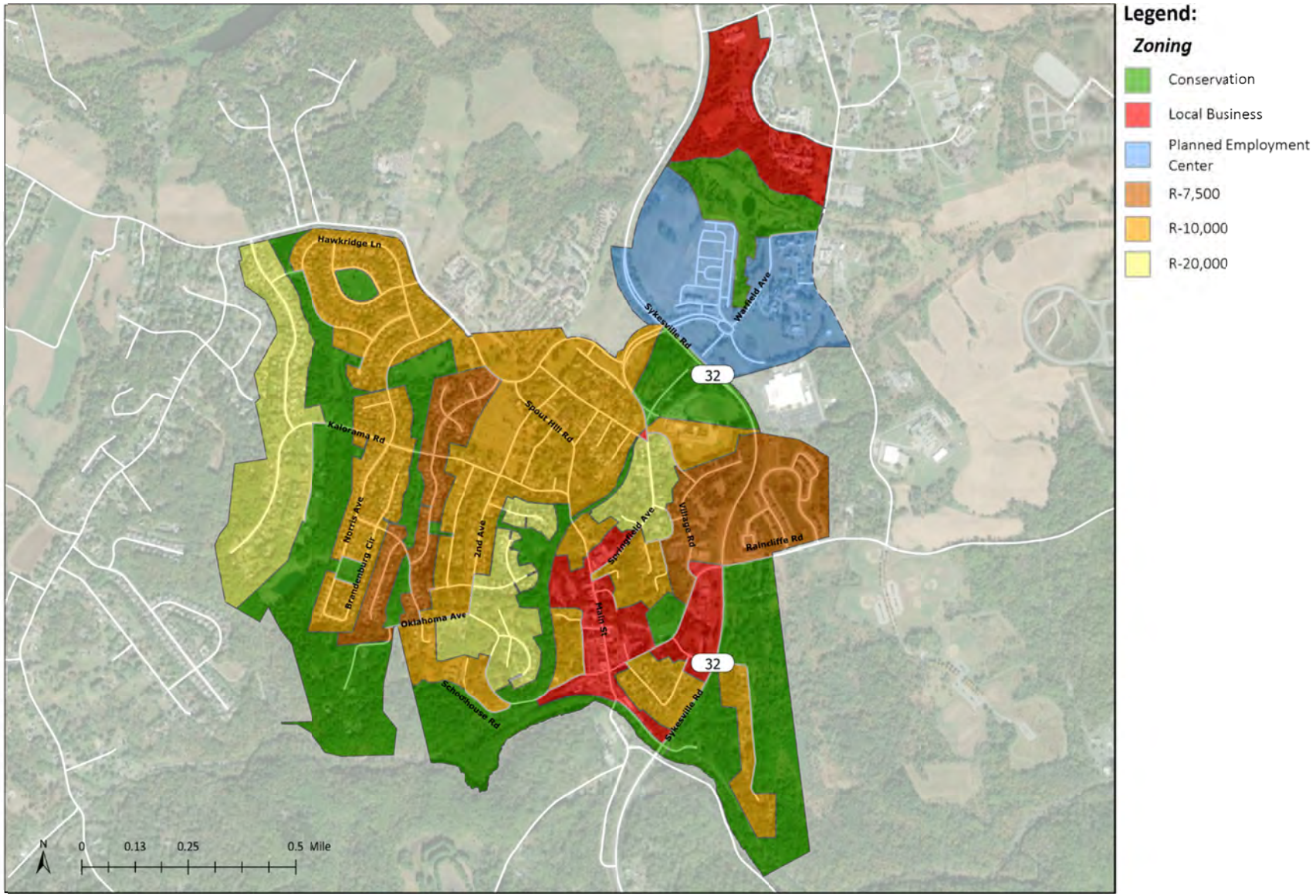
ZONING

The Sykesville Zoning Map (adopted in 2018) illustrates the current zoning of the Town of Sykesville, which is comprised of nine zoning districts. The current zoning has its foundation under the Town's first Zoning Ordinance enacted on July 19, 1976. Under the ordinance, the Town's zoning was predominantly residential along with some restricted industrial uses and local business. The Downtown Business District overlay and Planned Employment Campus District were added in 2000 and 2006, respectively, in response to Downtown growth and the Warfield complex annexation. Additionally, an amendment of the zoning ordinance in 1996 established a Cluster Subdivision Overlay District for the purpose of implementing small town planning guidelines.

Each zoning district has a unique purpose, allows distinct permitted and conditional uses for a parcel of land, and ensures that development within the Town of Sykesville is moderated in a way which preserves the Town's long-term vision and goals. The zoning districts established by the Town's zoning ordinance are summarized below:

- **C - Conservation District** is the zoning category for those areas where, because of natural geographic factors and existing land uses, it is considered desirable to conserve open spaces, water supply sources, woodland areas, wildlife, and other natural resources.
- **R-20,000 - Residence District** provides a location for single-family residential development with lots containing a minimum of 20,000 square feet or approximately two dwellings per acre. Residential developments within this residential district are considered low density.
- **R-10,000 - Suburban Residence District** provides for relatively smaller lot sizes (minimum 10,000 square feet) for residential dwellings, based on availability of public water and sewerage facilities. Residential developments within this residential district are considered medium density.
- **R-7,500 - Urban Residence District** enables urban areas of the Town. The minimum lot size for a single-family dwelling is 7,500 square feet. Residential developments within this district are considered high density.
- **B-L - Local Business District** provides logical locations where the retail services needed by the Town population can be made available.
- **B-G - General Business District** provides logical locations for businesses of a more general nature.
- **I-R - Restricted Industrial District** provides locations for the lighter manufacturing processes. For the most part, the manufacturing is composed of processing or assembly of previously processed materials.
- **PEC - Planned Employment Center District** was created to facilitate the planning of high-quality mixed use developments which will occur in harmony with surrounding land uses and support Sykesville's goals of growing the employment base, providing housing for existing and future residents, and offering retail services that complement the existing businesses within the Town.
- **H - Historic District** was created to identify, protect, and preserve the public interest in the community's heritage for its cultural, educational, and economic value, as well as for its general welfare.

Sykesville Zoning Map



Source: Carroll County Department of Planning, Carroll County GIS Open

Parks and Recreation

Parks are a foundational element of a healthy community and support the health of families, the local economy, and the environment. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), public parks contribute to healthy living by offering a location for physical activity and serving as a gathering place for all individuals regardless of age, economic status, or ability to pay for access. In addition, parks and open space increase the value of surrounding property, positively contribute to property selection for businesses and homeowners, and preserve the natural environment.

As an important part of creating livable communities, municipalities should strive to provide accessible parks and recreational facilities near all neighborhoods.

Based on NRPA standards, parks are generally categorized into three types:

- **Neighborhood parks** provide access to basic recreation opportunities for residents of a neighborhood. This type of park is generally within walking and bicycling distance of most residents and is small, typically five or fewer acres.
- **Community parks** are larger and serve a one to five-mile area. Generally, community parks are 20 to 100 acres in size and provide a large mix of amenities, which often include active recreation facilities (e.g., fields, playgrounds, picnic pavilions, etc.) and natural areas for passive recreation.
- **Regional Parks** may be managed by a special park district and serve multiple jurisdictions. County parks are a good example, as well as state owned recreational areas, such as Patapsco Valley State Park near Ellicott City, Maryland.

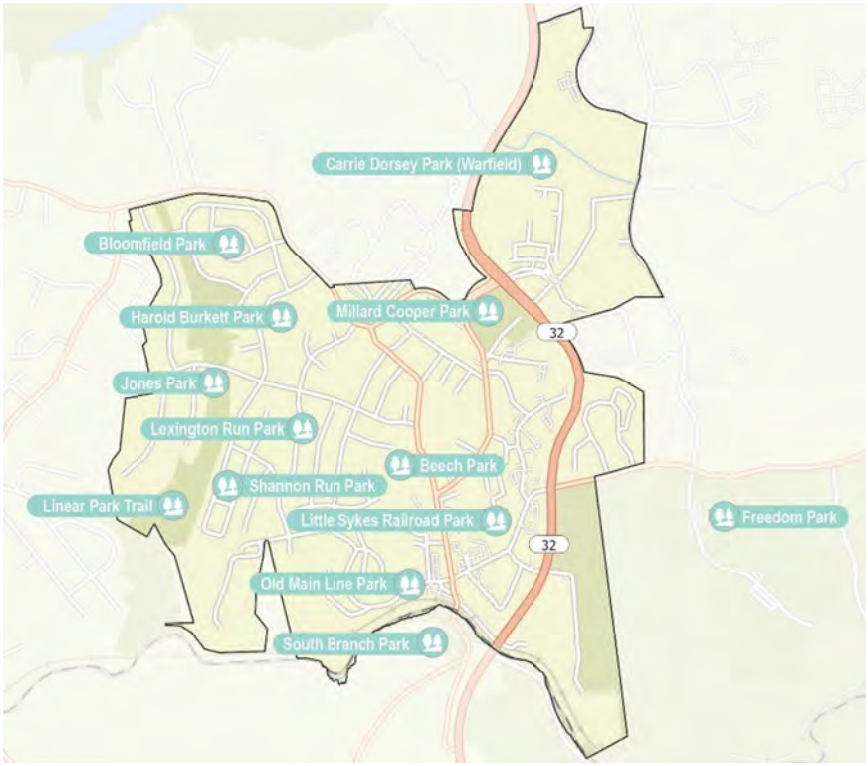
PUBLIC PARKS IN SYKESVILLE

The Town of Sykesville has 12 public parks which can be broadly categorized into 10 neighborhood parks and 2 community parks. Parks in the Town of Sykesville include the following:

- **Beach Park** is located about two blocks from Sykesville's first school, opened in 1883 and operated by members of the Springfield Presbyterian Church. Today, the park features amenities including picnic areas and a playground with a seesaw and spring riders.
- **Bloomfield Park** is a walking park located at Talon Lane and Wimmer Lane in the northwestern neighborhoods of the Town of Sykesville. Historically, the park was a part of Bloomfield Manor Farm and was established to provide open space to surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Carrie Dorsey Park (Warfield)** is located at the Warfield Complex north of Maryland Route 32 and includes a trail. At 27 acres in size, Carrie Dorsey Park is considered a community park for passive recreation.
- **Harold Burkett Park**, named after Harold Burkett, who assisted the Carroll County Food Bank in the 1980s, provides residents with open fields for recreation, tetherball poles, and a playground with swings and slides.
- **Jones Park** is one of the Town's smallest parks but includes a playground for children to use. The Park was named after the Jones sisters, who contributed to the Town's expansive photo records using their photographic expertise.
- **Lexington Run Park** was created as part of a subdivision by the same name in the 1980s and was created so that residents in the neighborhood would have a walkable park for their children.
- **Linear Park Trail** is a trail which extends approximately 1 mile from Obrecht Road to the Patapsco River. The wooded trail includes multiple resting areas and views of the Patapsco River at its southern extent. At 43 acres in size, Linear Park Trail is considered a community park.

Sykesville's Public Parks (as well as Carroll County's Freedom Park)



- **Little Sykes Railway Park** is one of the Town of Sykesville's most unique parks due to the 12-gauge miniature train which young kids may ride. The train was acquired by the Town in 1999, and by 2004 the Town established Little Sykes Train Station.
- **Millard Cooper Park** is the third largest park in the Town of Sykesville, and includes a snack-shack, pavilions, picnic areas, and a nature trail. Numerous community events are held at the Park in the summer months. Planned improvements for the park include a splash pad and an additional playground.
- **Old Main Line Park** is a commemoration of the Town's early railroad heritage, with train tracks dating back to the 1830s.
- **Shannon Run Park** was established in the 1980s during the development of the Shannon Run Subdivision, which utilized the Town's innovative Small-Town Planning Guidelines to provide neighborhoods with a local park. Amenities at the park include a pavilion, picnic areas, and walking paths.

- **South Branch Park** is a Howard County park which the Town of Sykesville leases for resident use. The park is home to a skate park, playground, picnic shelter, and a pavilion which is available for rent. Recently, the park underwent improvements which include the addition of parking and new seating and sidewalks.

PLANNED PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Recently, the Town of Sykesville has taken steps to improve the amenities provided within its parks. The Town began planning the addition of a splash pad at Millard Cooper Park in 2019. The pad is planned to be 2,500 square feet in size and will be funded in part by a $150,000 grant which the Town received from the Community Parks and Playgrounds grant program in the summer of 2019. Construction of the splash pad is expected to be complete in the summer of 2021. In addition to the splash pad, the Town constructed new playgrounds at Millard Cooper Park located next to the planned splash pad. The construction of the playgrounds was also funded through the Program Open Space grant. The addition of natural habitat wetlands is planned for Carrie Dorsey Park in the summer of 2022.

The Howard County Department of Parks and Recreation funded the construction of improvements at South Branch Park in the summer and fall of 2020. The Department financed road, sidewalk, and stormwater infrastructure improvements including bioretention ponds, 56 permeable parking spaces, and new concrete sidewalks and benches. In the future, the Apple Butter Factory building may be explored for potential reuse.

PARKLAND STANDARDS

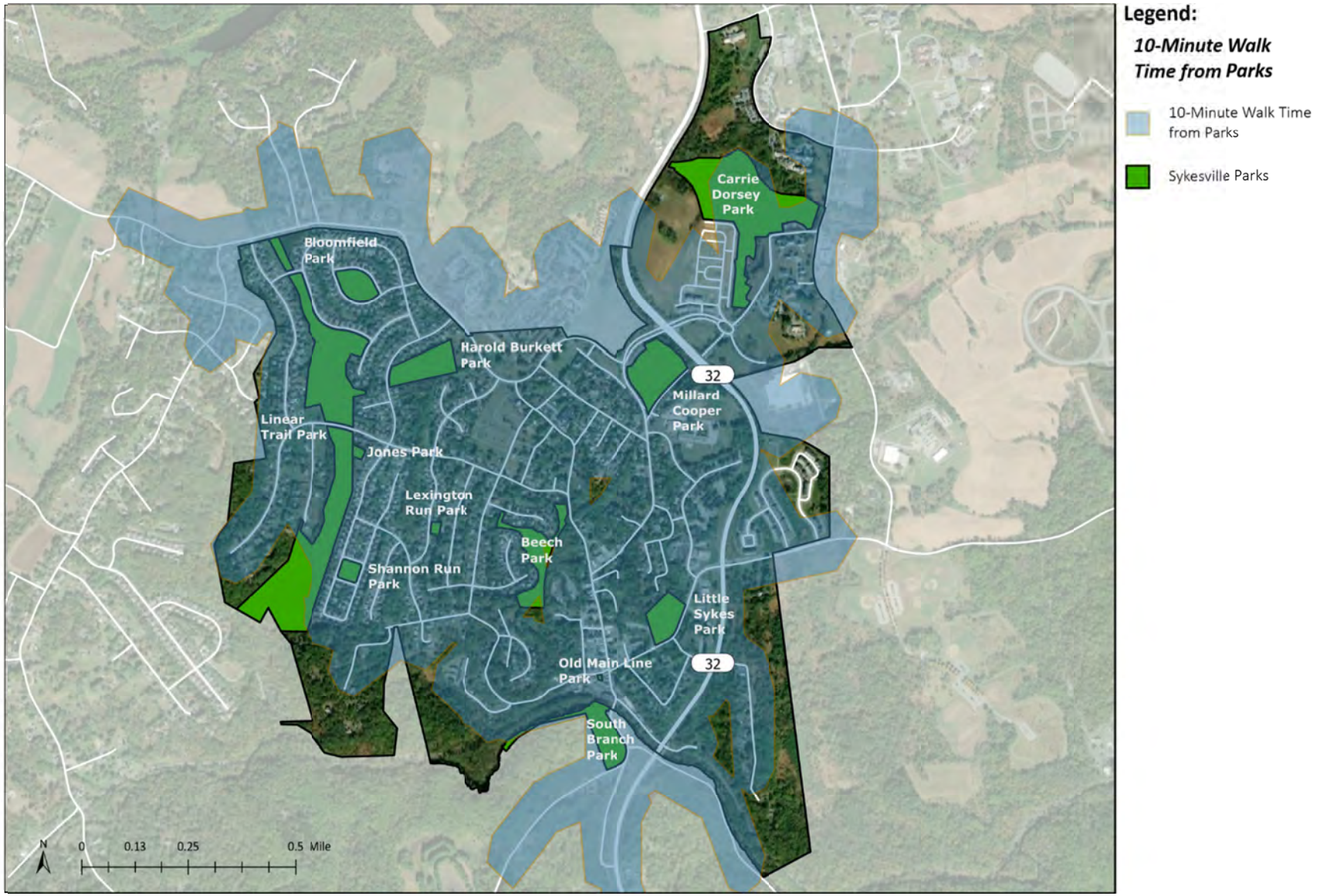
Parkland guidelines established by NRPA encourage municipalities to provide a minimum acreage of local active parkland per 1,000 residents. Reflecting NRPA, the consulting team identified 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents as the Town goal based on previous work. With 109 acres of Town-owned parkland and a current population of 4,209 the Town of Sykesville has a park ratio of 25.9 acres per 1,000 residents, which exceeds the NRPA parkland standards. There are 15.4 more acres of park per 1,000 residents in the Town than the amount needed to achieve the 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents goal. The Town of Sykesville is rich in parks and recreation opportunities and has no immediate need for additional parkland now through 2025 based on population trends.

Town of Sykesville Parkland Standards Analysis, 2020-2025

Year	Residents	Existing Parkland (acres)	Acres per 1,000 Residents	Goal	Surplus	Additional Acres Needed
2020	4,209	109	25.9	10.5	15.4	0
2025	4,217	109	25.9	10.5	15.4	0

Perhaps more important than total acreage is the proximity of Sykesville's parks to its residential neighborhoods. On the following page, a 10-minute walkshed from each park is visually depicted and demonstrates that nearly all Town neighborhoods are within walking distance to a park. The walkshed analysis used the distance to walk from a park entrance using road infrastructure.

10-Minute Walking Buffer from Town-Owned Parks



Source: Carroll County GIS Open Data, Esri Business Analyst

REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS

In addition to the parks owned and maintained by the Town, residents benefit from living approximately one mile from several regional parks and trails.

- **Piney Run Park** (shown in photo below sourced from Carroll County's website), approximately one mile north of Sykesville, is owned and maintained by Carroll County and contains a 330-acre lake, 550 acres of fields and forest, and over 5 miles of hiking trails. Currently, in 2020, the Piney Run entry fee for one vehicle is $5 for County residents and $10 dollars for non-residents, with additional fees for utilization of Piney Run Lake.
- **Freedom Park** is smaller than Piney Run Park but closer to the Town, located less than one mile east on Raincliffe Road. Freedom Park is owned and operated by the County and the park features public parking, numerous sports fields including baseball and soccer, and walking paths throughout.
- **Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area** (top photo) is a wildlife refuge and game land managed by the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service. Located in Howard County just south of Sykesville, the Park can be used by hunters during hunting season and is available for hiking, fishing, and other non-hunting uses on Sundays during hunting season and any day Sunday to Saturday during the off-season (February-August).
- **The South Branch Patapsco River Trail** is located approximately 1 mile southeast of Sykesville and extends east along the South Branch Patapsco River, then circles back on itself to create a circle. The trail is 4.8 miles in length with moderate topography and offers hikers and walkers views of the Patapsco Valley State Park across the River.
- **The Patapsco Regional Greenway** is an ongoing trail alignment project which started in 2016. The Greenway trail will extend 58 miles from the Town of Sykesville to the Inner Harbor of Baltimore and will include multiple surface types which lead hikers and bikers through the Patapsco River Valley's rich history and natural beauty.

Sykesville's overall access to parks and recreation is supported through Carroll County's current planning efforts as outlined in the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). The LPPRP is a resource for the Town as it continues to manage its local park assets particularly as it relates to trail connections.

Transportation

ROADWAY NETWORK AND CRASH DATA

Sykesville has 17 linear miles of roadway throughout the jurisdiction. Maryland 32, also known locally as Sykesville Road, is a state-owned route and is the primary corridor through Sykesville, connecting Eldersburg to the north, and I-70 to the south, towards Baltimore. This 52-mile long road provides access to commercial and residential development in Sykesville and throughout Carroll and Howard counties and has an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) total of 19,711 to 25,691 depending on the section. Maryland Route 851 also travels approximately 1 mile through Sykesville and connects to Route 32 on the north and south ends. Locally, this road is known as Springfield Avenue to the north and Main Street on the southern portion. Additional major collectors include Obrecht Road, 3rd Avenue, Spout Hill Road, and Sandosky Road, and Raincliffe Road.

All roadways are maintained locally with the exceptions of Route 32 and Route 851/Springfield Avenue/Main Street, each maintained by MDOT SHA. Additionally, Buttercup Road and 5th Street, on the eastern edge of Sykesville and located next to the Springfield Hospital Center, are maintained by the Maryland Department of Health.

Between 2017 and 2019, 71 total accidents occurred in Sykesville. Overall, public input gathered throughout the public input process did not yield any significant areas of concern or recommendations for the Town's locally owned road network. As one safety consideration, the Town should take appropriate safety measures near the railroad track while implementing the proposed connectivity projects in the southern portion of the Town.

ADDITIONAL TRANPORTATION ASSETS

- **Rail and Truck Freight:** CSX Transportation operates along the rail line on the southern edge of the Town, just north of the Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area. Truck traffic makes up approximately 8% of all traffic travelling along Route 32/Sykesville Road and almost 4% of traffic along Route 851/Springfield Avenue/Main Street.
- **Public Transit:** Carroll County offers a transit system called Carroll Transit System (CTS), operated by the non-profit Ride With Us, with demand response and deviated fixed routes open to the public.
    - The demand response "Anyone Can Ride" service is a shared-ride, door-to-door service, requiring reservations a day in advance.

  - Deviated-fixed routes do not require an appointment and operate on a set schedule. Riders can request a deviation within ¾ of a mile of a stop if scheduled at least three hours prior to the scheduled time for an additional $1. The Red Trailblazer services Sykesville.
- **Park and Ride:** There is one park and ride location in Sykesville located at 7225 Springfield Avenue at the Millard Cooper Park. There are 39 vehicle spaces and on average, it is 46% occupied based on fall 2019 and spring 2020 counts. This site is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has a bicycle rack, lighting, and overnight parking available.
- **Commuter Transportation Services:** Commuter Choice Maryland is MDOT's Travel Demand Management (TDM) program and offers an extensive menu of commuter transportation services, such as ridesharing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY PROJECTS

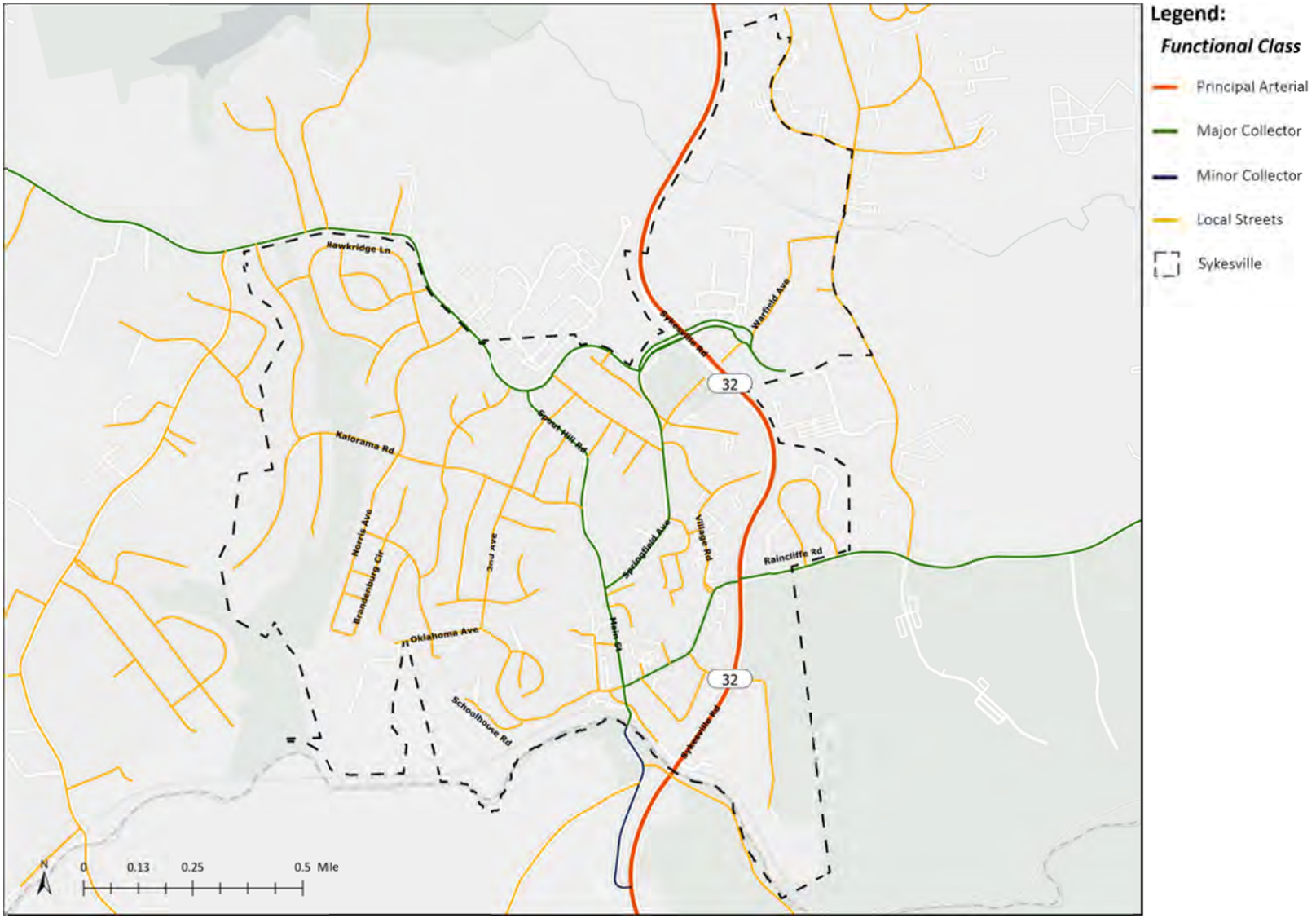
Based on the FY 2022-2027 Consolidated Transportation Program for Carroll County, Maryland, the County has the current transportation project priorities for consideration and possible including in MDOT's FY2022-2027 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The following represents Carroll County's top transportation project priorities located in or near the Town of Sykesville.

- MD 32 (MD 26 south to Carroll County line). The project will widen the roadway from two to four lanes, including pedestrian facilities and other amenities at appropriate locations within the corridor. The project will also support economic development projects throughout the corridor, including the future redevelopment of Warfield.
  - The project includes Piney Ridge Parkway/Macbeth Way to North of Springfield Avenue (MD 851).
  - The project also includes 2nd Street to Main Street.
- MD 851 – Sykesville Main Street/Springfield Avenue (Cooper Drive to South Branch of the Patapsco River). In accordance with many of the recommendations as outlined in this Comprehensive Plan, the County is proposing to restore the Town's historic Main Street as an attractive and pedestrian-friendly urban local roadway. The Town of Sykesville supports this project and desires to be involved in future planning discussions at the county and state levels to ensure the project reflects the recommendations as outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.

Additionally, an inventory of Planned Major Streets is listed in the 2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan which includes a realignment of Obrecht Road around the Fairhaven senior living facility. The extension of Obrecht Road/Hollenberry Road to MD 32 (County portion) will increase the roadway's function and connectivity to MD 32.

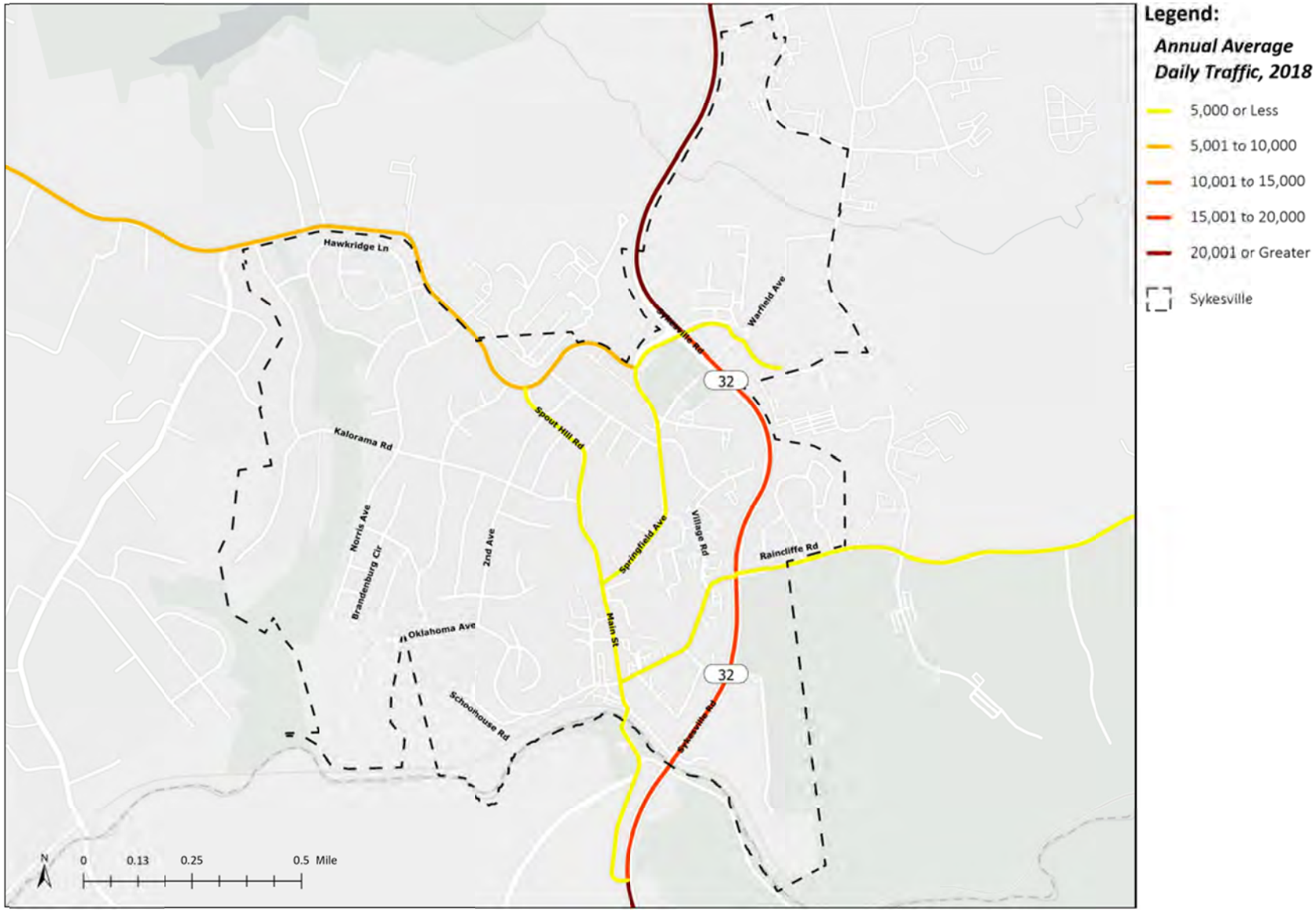
The Town of Sykesville is supportive of these County transportation projects.

Functional Classification of Major Corridors within the Town of Sykesville



Source: Maryland Department of Transportation, Carroll County GIS Open Data

Annual Average Daily Traffic on Major Corridors within the Town of Sykesville



Source: Maryland Department of Transportation, Carroll County GIS Open Data

Community Facilities and Areas of Critical State Concern

Community facilities are essential services and facilities within a community which promote health, safety, education, and the quality of life of residents. Examples include educational institutions, emergency services, and medical services. Warfield represents the last large remaining tract of land available for development within the Town's incorporated borders. As part of land development planning, a capacity analysis should be completed to ensure a strain isn't placed on community facilities such as education facilities and emergency services.

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

The Town of Sykesville is served by Station 12 of the Sykesville-Freedom District Fire Department. The Department operates out of its headquarters at 6680 Sykesville Road, and maintains and operates two fire engines, one tower ladder, one rescue squad, three ambulances, one brush truck, one utility vehicle, two chiefs vehicles, and one all-terrain vehicle. The Department retains a minimum amount of career staff who are paid by the Carroll County Government, most of which are EMS professionals. Other than paid staff, the Carroll County Fire Department is serviced by volunteers. According to the Sykesville-Freedom District Fire Department website, Station 12 is the second-busiest station in Carroll County.

The Sykesville Police Department is located behind Town Hall at 7547 Main Street and has served the Town of Sykesville since 1904. The Department maintains records of all accidents and incidents within the Town, which are accessible to residents with a $15 fee. The Department also maintains a medical waste disposal drop box and used cell phone drop box for residents. Police in Sykesville regularly patrol the Town to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents. Additionally, the Town has an agreement for coverage with the Carroll County Sheriff's Office.

Other public safety facilities near the Town include the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission, which is located near Springfield Hospital Center to the northeast of the Town. This facility provides training and regulatory services to Maryland's certified police and correctional professionals and provides the community with safety services such as: fingerprinting, victim services, background checks, open parole hearings and firearm safety training. In addition to this training location, the Town of Sykesville borders the Central Maryland Correctional Facility to the east. The Facility is a minimum-security institution which houses 495 male inmates.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The Town of Sykesville is served by the Carroll County Public School System, which employs approximately 3,300 teachers and faculty members across 22 elementary schools, eight middle schools, seven high schools, one career and technology center, one special education center, and Gateway School/Crossroads Middle, which houses alternative programs for students. The school system serves all of Carroll County and is the 10th largest school system in Maryland, with more than 25,300 children enrolled in 2019-2020. The Board of Education, which steers the Carroll County Public School System, is made up of five elected board members who serve four-year terms and one student representative who is elected annually by the Carroll County Student Government Association.

Elementary age children within the Town of Sykesville attend Piney Ridge Elementary, which is located in Eldersburg. Upon completing elementary school, students attend Sykesville Middle School, which is the only school within the Town of Sykesville. Upon completing middle school, children residing in the Town of Sykesville attend Century High School in Eldersburg. Piney Ridge Elementary, Sykesville Middle School, and Century High School are all affiliated with the Carroll County Public School System. In 2019, 527 students were enrolled at Piney Ridge Elementary, 792 students at Sykesville Middle School, and 1,139 students at Century High School.

In addition to public schools within the Carroll County Public School System, the Town of Sykesville is served by the Immanuel and Ava Wanas Montessori School, located at 7590 College Road. The school specializes in kindergarten and infant care by actively facilitating a learning environment that nurtures children's innate ability to learn both emotionally and academically at an early age.

Further educational opportunities available to residents of the Town of Sykesville include historical learning facilities such as the Colored Schoolhouse on Schoolhouse Road and the Gatehouse Museum near Millard Cooper Park. There are no libraries located within the Town. However, the Town is served by a satellite branch of the Carroll County Library, Eldersburg Branch Library, which is located approximately two and a half miles north of the Town and is free to use for all Maryland residents with a library card.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Nearby medical facilities to the Town of Sykesville include the following:

- **Carroll Hospital**, operated by LifeBridge Health, is the Town of Sykesville's closest full-service medical center. The Hospital was originally established by resident donations and began as a single-story community hospital. It has since grown to a five-story medical center which offers various levels and types of care including emergency services, outpatient services, rehabilitation services, and cancer care, among others.

- **Carroll County Department of Health** provides residents of Carroll County with health services including flu and other vaccinations, dental care, reproductive health care, help for pregnant teens and women, and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) services. There is a clinic located in Westminster as well as other locations in Carroll County.
- **ExpressCare Urgent Care Center,** located in Eldersburg, is the closest urgent care center to Sykesville. The Center offers patients urgent medical care services including medical treatment for illnesses and injuries, flu shots, and work-related injury services. The location is open seven days a week, including evening and weekend hours. As an urgent care facility, no appointment is necessary to receive care.
- **Springfield Hospital Center** is the closest operating psychiatric hospital to the Town of Sykesville and is operated by the Maryland Department of Health. The Center cares for mentally ill patients in its psychiatric facilities through direct referrals from hospital emergency rooms, inpatient units in general hospitals, or from state and local courts.

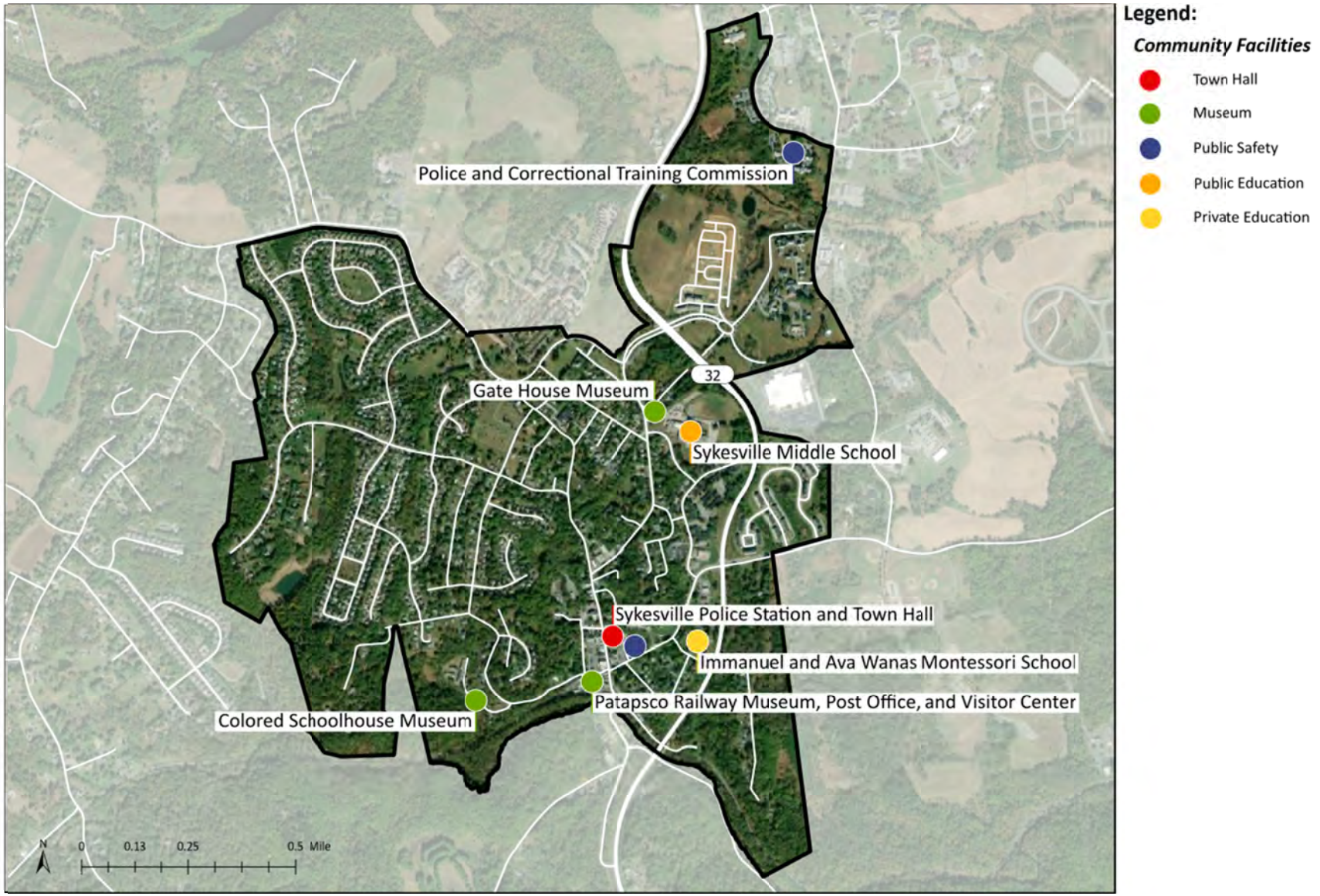
AREAS OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN

Maryland's Department of Planning has identified "areas of critical state concern" that local jurisdictions may consider in their comprehensive plans as they deem appropriate. A list of spatially designated areas, plans and studies, and programs that the state deems to be of critical concern are outlined on the Department's website. In accordance with the list of areas of critical state concern, the Town of Sykesville has several, which are discussed throughout this Comprehensive Plan. They include:

- Sykesville is part of the **Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area**.
- The Town of Sykesville is one of just 33 designated Main Street communities by the **Main Street Maryland Program.**
- Sykesville has National Register/State Designation Historic Buildings/Sites.
- The Town participates in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's **Sustainable Communities Program**.

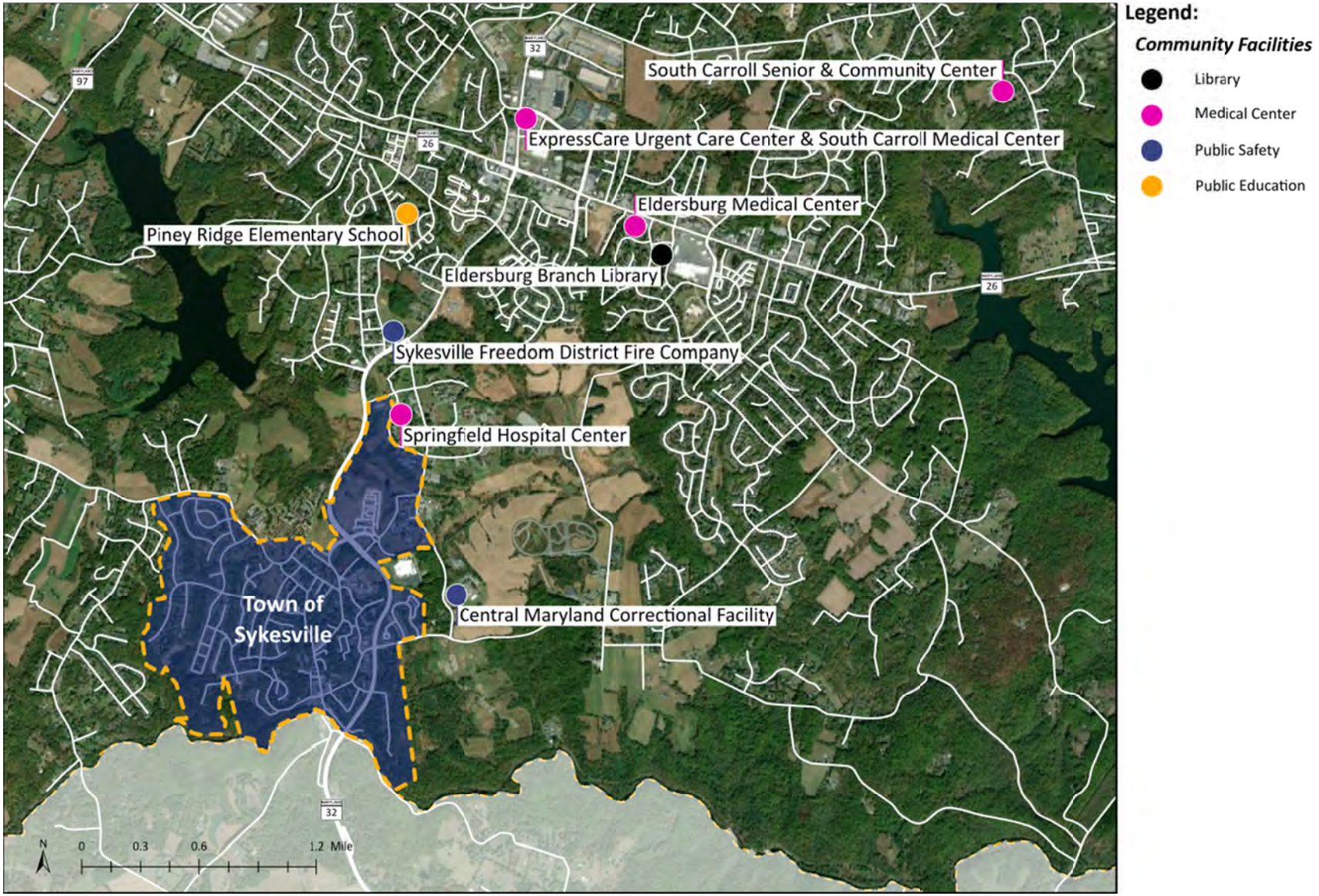
Sykesville remains committed to participation in the Main Street Maryland and Sustainable Communities Programs and preserving its historic cultural resources through the Historic District Commission and Historic District Design Guidelines. Discussion of Sykesville's areas of critical state concern are interwoven throughout this Comprehensive Plan.

Community Facilities Serving the Town of Sykesville



Source: Carroll County GIS Open Data, Michael Baker International

Community Facilities Serving the Town of Sykesville (continued)



Source: Carroll County GIS Open Data, Michael Baker International

Environmental Resources

WATER RESOURCES

The Town of Sykesville does not own or operate its own water or wastewater facilities. The Carroll County 2010 Comprehensive Plan's Water Resources Element (WRE) addresses Sykesville's water resources, along with several other towns, each of which have adopted the 2010 WRE. The WRE provides an analysis of existing and future residential demand. Please refer to the 2010 WRE for a more detailed discussion of water resources in Sykesville, which covers this required element, and is available on the Carroll County website.

The Town of Sykesville is within the Freedom District water system's public service area. Carroll County owns and operates the Freedom District Water Treatment Plant which serves approximately 10,000 customers. The Freedom District water system's primary raw water source is the Liberty Reservoir, located northeast of Sykesville. Carroll County also operates the wastewater collection system and sewer pumping stations which ultimately feed the Freedom District Wastewater Treatment Plant, operated by the Maryland Environmental Service.

Additionally, eight municipal wells are located within the Freedom District service area, three of which are located within the boundaries of Sykesville. The associated wellhead protection area encompasses the majority of the western half of the Town. These areas are protected by Maryland's Wellhead Protection Program. Earth disturbance within the wellhead protection area may require further analysis of potential impacts on the public water supply.

To prepare for future land development that may occur in Warfield, the Town will review the 2010 WRE to determine potential impacts on water quality and ecological resources and on water and sewer demand. As part of this due diligence analysis, the Town should require a water and sewer capacity analysis to appropriately plan for future development in conjunction with private landowners and Carroll County. Please note Sykesville's Vision 2030 Future Designated Land Use Plan remains largely consistent with the Future Designated Land Use Plan that was adopted as part of Sykesville's 2010 Master [Comprehensive] Plan.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The South Branch Patapsco River borders the southern limits of the Town of Sykesville. The entirety of the Town is within the South Branch Patapsco River watershed, with Piney Run [Creek] and a few unnamed tributaries also located within the town boundaries. Piney Run [Creek] is designated by Clean Water Act 303(d) as an Impaired Stream which means the stream is too polluted or otherwise degraded to meet the relevant water quality standards. The South Branch Patapsco River ultimately drains to the Chesapeake Bay. None of the identified waterways are designated as wild and scenic rivers and the area is not located within a sole source aquifer.

In addition, the Town of Sykesville has the following water and environmental resources:

- Residential and commercial groundwater wells are located within the town boundaries.
- One federally threatened species has been identified within Carroll County and may exist within Sykesville: The Northern Long-eared Bat. The Town does not include any United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)-designated critical habitat which are areas essential to the conservation of threatened and endangered species.
- Habitat required for Forest Interior Dwelling Species has been identified within the town boundaries.
- Eight hazardous waste facilities and two brownfields were identified under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) program.
- The Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area is partially located within the southern region of Sykesville (6 out of a total of 274 acres are located within the town boundaries). The management objectives are focused on wildlife enhancement activities and low intensity wildlife-related recreation, so no public recreation, support buildings and structures, paved trails, or developed picnic areas may be constructed within the WMA.

Due to the watersheds, habitat designations, and presence of a wellhead protection area, future development will require coordination with jurisdictional agencies to ensure potential mitigation measures are followed.

Urbanized municipalities within the U.S. are required by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to hold a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit when treating stormwater and municipal wastewater separately from one another. MS4 systems are a network of drains and conveyance pipes that collect and discharge stormwater to local bodies of water, separate from sewer wastewater that is treated before discharge.

Carroll County is one of 10 jurisdictions within the State of Maryland that holds a NPDES Phase I MS4 permit. As part of permit requirements, the County is required to limit pollutant discharges to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) as determined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to preserve the ecological integrity of the Chesapeake Bay. To adequately limit discharges and maintain its permit, the County depends on municipal-level stormwater improvements such as swales, rain gardens, and forest buffers that improve the quality of water. The Town of Sykesville can limit pollutant discharge by installing green infrastructure throughout the Town and improving stormwater conveyance systems to limit wastewater discharge directly into the South Branch Patapsco River.

In addition, EPA requires that all states within the Chesapeake Bay watershed develop a 3-phase Watershed Implementation Plan to ensure that surface waters that are discharged into the Bay are of an acceptable quality. Counties and local municipalities all have a role in helping the State of Maryland with its WIP.

This topic is explored in the Environmental Stewardship chapter.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Forty-two cultural resources are located within the Town of Sykesville. Of significance, this includes the Sykesville Historic District, Springfield Presbyterian Church, and the Warfield Complex, all listed within the National Register of Historic Places as well as the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. The Town's Historic District Commission and Historic District Design Guidelines help preserve the Town's cultural resources.

The Sykesville Historic District is significant for its architecture and comprises 85 contributing resources. The district includes a cohesive group of houses, churches, and commercial buildings constructed between c. 1850 and c. 1925. The focus of the district is a two-block commercial area extending north along Main Street from the South Branch Patapsco River. Residential development characterizes the hillsides to the north, northeast, west, and southeast of the business district. The houses are generally of frame construction and reflect a variety of turn-of-the-20th-century architectural influences signifying Sykesville's importance as an early stop on the Baltimore and Ohio main line.

The Springfield Presbyterian Church (located at 7300 Spout Hill Road) is a significant landmark of community history and religion in Sykesville. The structure served as the area's first school as well as the building of worship for the Presbyterian congregation. The church has had a number of influential Marylanders associated with it including George Patterson, renowned for his agricultural experimentation at his estate "Springfield," who donated the land for the church, and Frank Brown, past Governor of Maryland. The church is also one of the best examples of the rural interpretation of early 19th century Classicism in Carroll County. Despite its widespread popularity, this style was not employed widely in the county; its influence is most apparent in major public buildings such as Springfield Presbyterian Church and the County Courthouse.

The Historic Colored Schoolhouse is located at 518 Schoolhouse Road, where it was built in 1903 and operated as a segregated schoolhouse until it was closed in 1938. Following the school's closure, the Schoolhouse building was used as a residence from 1939 to 1982, after which it was repeatedly slated for demolition. The building has been preserved through local advocacy. Today, the Historic Colored Schoolhouse stands as an ongoing historic restoration project, museum, and educational resource for the Town of Sykesville's residents.

The Warfield Complex comprises the historic core of the women's facility at Springfield State Hospital, a public mental health institution in Sykesville. Developed over the period between 1898-1939, the complex comprises 16 contributing resources with architectural significance and which retain a high level of integrity. The Warfield Complex derives additional significance from its association with the development of mental health treatment and its transition toward treating mental illness as a medical condition rather than a social condition. In addition to the Warfield Complex is the Gate House Museum. Opened at its present location in 1997, the Sykesville Gate House Museum of History strives to preserve and interpret the abundant history of the Town of Sykesville and its surrounding communities through its collections, exhibits, and special events. The Gate House Museum facility was originally part of the Springfield Hospital Center.

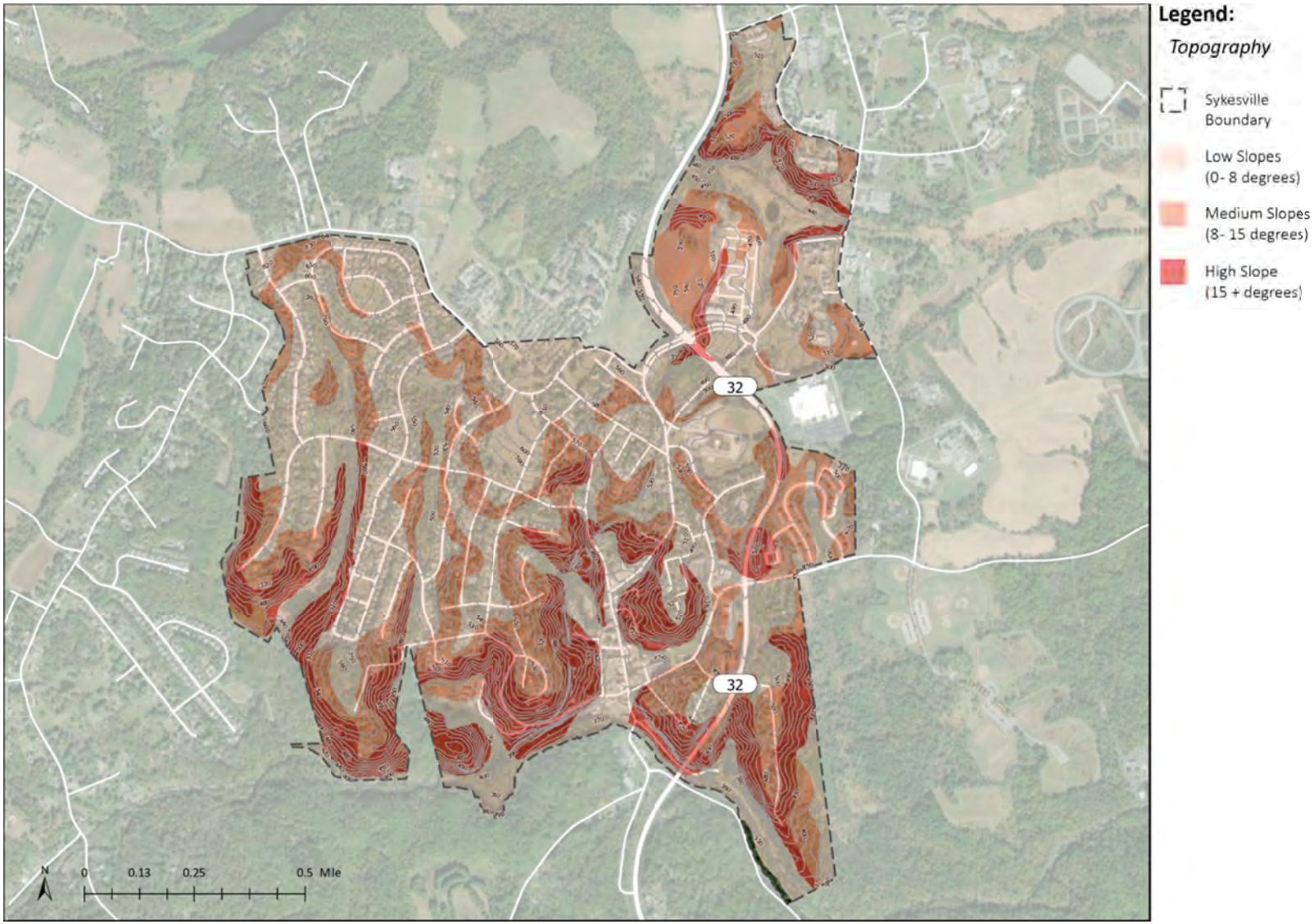
FLOODPLAINS

Flooding is a common natural disaster in Maryland and developed land within floodplains is the most vulnerable to riverine flooding. The Town of Sykesville is located on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) 24013C0313D (dated October 2, 2015), FEMA FIRM 24013C0314D (dated October 2, 2015), FEMA FIRM 24013C0401D (dated October 2, 2015), and FEMA FIRM 24013C0401D (dated October 2, 2015). Although the majority of Sykesville is not located within any FEMA flood hazard area, the 1-percent-annual-chance and 0.2-percent-annual-chance flood hazard areas can be found within the Town boundaries. The southern half of the Downtown is located within this 0.2-percent-annual-chance flood hazard area (Zone X). Affected businesses include restaurants, retail stores, and the Sykesville Visitor Center. The South Branch Patapsco River 1-percent-annual-chance flood hazard area (Zone AE) encompasses only one residential parcel (Parcel 4486) and uninhabited forest land throughout the southern border of the Town. The 1-percent-annual-chance flood hazard area of Piney Run [Creek] can also be found within the Town boundaries; however, no structures are located within this hazard area (Zone A). No critical facilities are located within flood hazard areas within the boundaries of the Town. When considering climate change or future revisions to the FEMA FIRMs, more of the Town could be vulnerable to flooding than is currently shown within the one percent annual chance flood boundary.

National Flood Hazard Layer FIRMettes, Sykesville

Source: FEMA Flood Map Service Center

Topography



Source: KCI Technologies Inc., National Cooperative Soil Survey, Carroll County GIS Open Data

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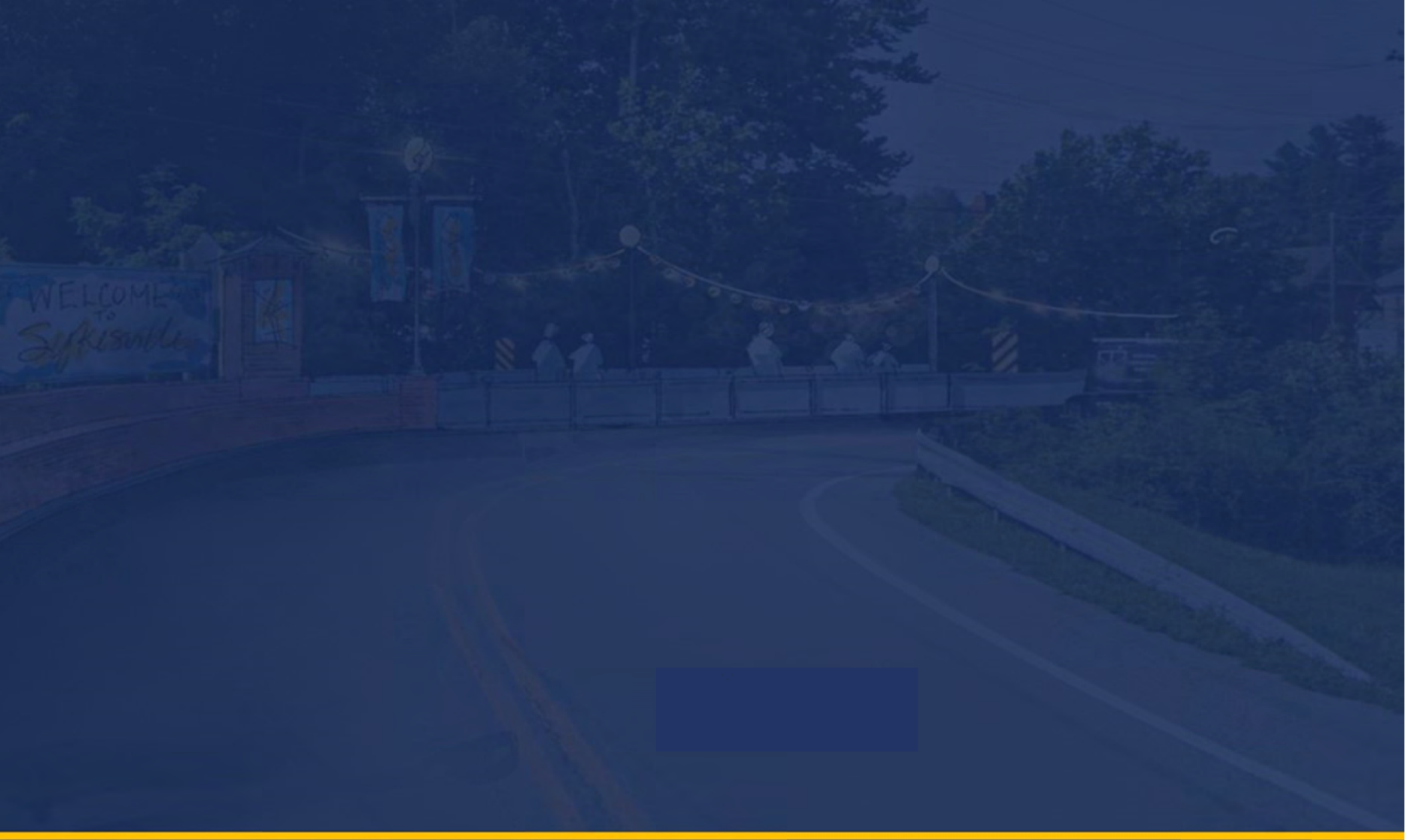
IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN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TO

Implementation Action Plan

OVERVIEW

To support the implementation of the comprehensive plan goals, this chapter provides a complete list of implementation strategies and corresponding action items. These strategies outline a tactical approach for advancing Sykesville's 2030 vision by specifying tangible action steps that can be taken to ensure progress over the next 10 years. In addition to implementation strategies, this chapter also identifies key partners that the Town may collaborate with to support implementation, as well as timeframe, estimated cost, and potential funding opportunities.

Cost estimate information is presented with a dollar symbol as follows:

N/A Staff Time

$ <$50,000

$$ $50,001 to $250,000

$$$ $250,0001 to $1,000,000

$$$$ $1 million or more

The numerical ordering of the action items (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, etc.) does not infer any prioritization for implementation plan. Priority will be set by Town Council factoring in any potential fiscal constraints.

Growth and Land Use

1

Sykesville will support the continued investment in and preservation of its historic Main Street and promote the successful mixed-use redevelopment of Warfield.

- Infill and expand Downtown.
- Consider a hybrid form-based zoning policy.
- Explore annexation options for expansion south of Oklahoma Avenue, south of the South Branch Patapsco River, and northeast of the Town municipal boundary.
- Support mixed-use redevelopment of the Warfield Complex.

	Action	Lead/Partner(s)	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Funding
1.1	Conduct a feasibility study for advancing the proposed mixed-use development approach for the Town-owned properties located Downtown. This includes determining if the parcels should be subdivided and sold at fair market value to a third party for development or if the Town should retain ownership of the real estate and permit a third party developer to construct the building improvements. The study would also consider options for the Public Works Building for its potential relocation and adaptive reuse of the property for public parking.	Sykesville; Downtown Sykesville Connection (DSC)	$	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Annual Operating Budget

	Action	Lead/Partner(s)	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Funding
1.2	Prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a qualified consultant to assist the Town with preparing a new zoning ordinance and map, considering the use of a hybrid form-based zoning approach.	Sykesville	$	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Annual Operating Budget
1.3	Work collaboratively with the developers of Warfield to engage in an urban design workshop to develop a new vision and new Master Plan for mixed-use development.	Sykesville; Warfield Development Team	$$	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Annual Operating Budget
1.4	Complete the annexation process for the Schoolhouse Road property parcels to facilitate increased connectivity in the Town.	Sykesville; Carroll County	N/A	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Annual Operating Budget
1.5	Initiate discussions with Howard County on the potential annexation of the South Branch Park into the Town's jurisdiction and continued improvement as a public park asset.	Sykesville; Howard County	N/A	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Maryland Department of Natural Resources Local Open Space Grants
1.6	Update and maintain the Town's Capital Improvement Plan and Budget to include the capital improvements identified in this plan.	Sykesville	N/A	Ongoing	Annual Operating Budget
1.7	Coordinate with property developers to complete a capacity analysis for future land development projects as part of Town requirements. Capacity analysis includes water/sewer and community facilities.	Sykesville; Carroll County; Warfield Development Team; Other Developers	N/A	Ongoing	N/A

	Action	Lead/Partner(s)	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Funding
1.8	Begin discussions with Town Lessees on properties located near the riverfront regarding future redevelopment.	Sykesville; Lessees	N/A	Long-Term	N/A

Accessibility & Connectivity

2

Sykesville will be accessible for all citizens by improving its trail and sidewalk network connecting neighborhoods and parks with Main Street.

- Implement Sykesville Connectivity Study recommendations.
- Implement Complete Street design improvements.
- Pursue innovative partnerships to support greater accessibility.

	Action	Lead/Partner(s)	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Funding
2.1	Partner with MDOT SHA to proceed with designing and constructing Main Street using a Complete Streets design approach with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle safety, as well as stormwater management improvements.	Sykesville; MDOT SHA	$$$	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	Annual Operating Budget
2.2	Partner with the SHA to reexamine the feasibility of replacing or widening the South Branch Patapsco River bridge to increase pedestrian safety and accessibility.	Sykesville; MDOT SHA	$$$$	Long-Term (7 – 10 years)	Annual Operating Budget

	Action	Lead/Partner(s)	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Funding
2.3	Prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to select an engineering consultant to assist the Town with preparing the plans, specifications and engineering cost estimates for the priority trail connections that promote greater accessibility and connectivity to Downtown.	Sykesville; MDOT SHA; Baltimore Metropolitan Council	$	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Annual Operating Budget
2.4	Explore discussions with micro-mobility providers/brokers (e.g., bike-share and/or motorized scooter providers) to increase mobility options for Sykesville residents and visitors.	Sykesville; DSC; Micro-mobility Partner(s) (e.g., Zagster)	N/A	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	Annual Operating Budget AARP Community Challenge Grant
2.5	Explore the two alternatives for the proposed Route 32 Trail Connector to connect users to the Patapsco Regional Greenway. Based on the preferred alternative, advance design.	Sykesville	$$	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	Annual Operating Budget
2.6	Coordinate with Carroll County to include the proposed Route 32 Trail Connector project into the Capital Improvement Plan for the upcoming county LPPRP.	Sykesville; Carroll County	N/A	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	N/A

Image & Identity

3

The Town will protect and enhance the visual qualities of the Town's streetscapes and public spaces and continue to support policies and programs that preserve and promote the unique heritage and qualities of Sykesville.

- Continue to support the preservation of historic buildings throughout the Town.
- Install wayfinding signage and banners that promote the Town's assets and character.
- Invest in new or improved public spaces to accommodate gatherings and active pedestrian use.
- Promote branding synergies between the Town and Downtown Sykesville Connection.

	Action	Lead/Partner	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Funding
3.1	Evaluate the Town's Historic Design Guidelines as part of the potential hybrid zoning ordinance rewrite recommendation (1.2) and ensure it continues to protect the Town's Historic District assets while providing flexibility and cost feasibility in the application of historic building materials and treatments.	Sykesville	N/A	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Annual Operating Budget
3.2	Prepare an RFP to engage a qualified consultant to assist the Town with preparing the plans, specifications and engineering cost estimates for the proposed Town House terraces plaza adjacent to Main Street.	Sykesville; DSC	$	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	Annual Operating Budget

	Action	Lead/Partner(s)	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Funding
3.3	Support and coordinate with the DSC to implement the recommendations of its Downtown Branding and Marketing Study and deconflict branding and messaging approaches between the DSC and the Town.	Sykesville; DSC	$	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Main Street America's The HartBeat of Main Street Grant Program
3.4	Partner with the DSC to create a wayfinding and signage plan that is based on the DSC's Downtown Branding and Marketing Study . The plan should identify locations for the wayfinding and gateway signage and the design templates for the various sign types and applications that should also be consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines and applicable sign standards/regulations.	Sykesville; DSC	$	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	Annual Operating Budget
3.5	Prepare an RFP to engage a qualified consultant to assist the Town with preparing the plans, specifications and engineering cost estimates for the proposed Oklahoma Avenue and Baldwin Drive Complete Street improvements.	Sykesville	$	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	Annual Operating Budget
3.6	Continue to participate in the Banner City/Town program administered by the Maryland Municipal League.	Sykesville	N/A	Ongoing	Annual Operating Budget

Environmental Stewardship

4

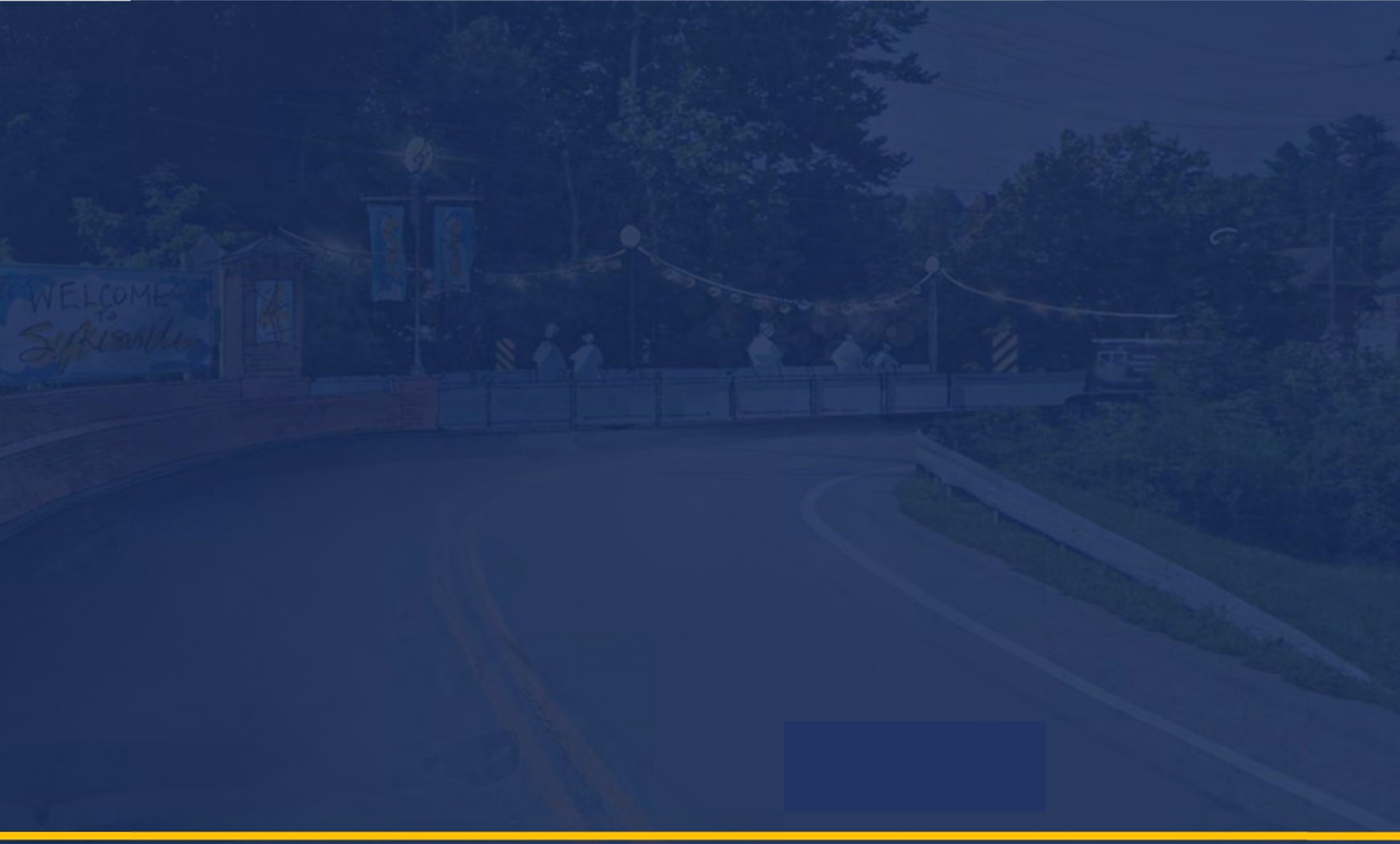
The Town will promote the conservation of its natural environment and invest in stormwater management improvements to protect the South Branch Patapsco River and its watersheds.

- Partner with Carroll County and Maryland State agencies to maintain and improve stormwater management facilities.
- Integrate in green Infrastructure as part of Downtown streetscape and infill development projects.
- Remain committed to conservation and environmental stewardship through the Town's ordinances.

	Action	Lead/Partner	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Funding
4.1	Ensure Sykesville's continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by adopting and enforcing floodplain management regulations that meet or exceed the minimum NFIP standards and requirements. These standards are intended to prevent loss of life and property, as well as economic and social hardships that result from flooding. Update Sykesville's zoning regulations to incorporate these regulations as a floodplain overlay district.	Carroll County; Sykesville; FEMA	$	Mid-Term (4 – 6 Years)	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program

	Action	Lead/Partner(s)	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Funding
4.2	Coordinate with Carroll County on stormwater management regulations and standards to consider additional best practices and low impact development (LID) design.	Sykesville; Carroll County; Water Management Department	$	Short-Term (0 – 3 years)	Maryland Department of Natural Resources Community Resilience Grants
4.3	Continue to partner with Carroll County to achieve compliance with the County's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and associated stormwater discharges from its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4).	Sykesville; Carroll County	$	Ongoing	Annual Operating Budget Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant Program
4.4	Continue to work with the SHA to identify and advance stormwater management solutions that mitigate flooding impacts to Springfield Avenue and affected properties.	Sykesville; MDOT SHA	$$$	Long-Term (7 – 10 years)	Maryland Department of Natural Resources Community Resilience Grants
4.5	Actively participate in Carroll County's five-year update to the County's Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and ensure the Town's priority flood and stormwater mitigation projects are included in the plan to make them eligible for hazard mitigation assistance funding. Adopt the plan upon its approval from FEMA.	Carroll County; Sykesville	$$	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program Build Resilience in Our Communities (BRIC) – google. Building Resilience Infrastructure in our Communities
4.6	Seek designation through the Sustainable Maryland program through the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland and the Maryland Municipal League.	Sykesville	N/A	Ongoing	N/A

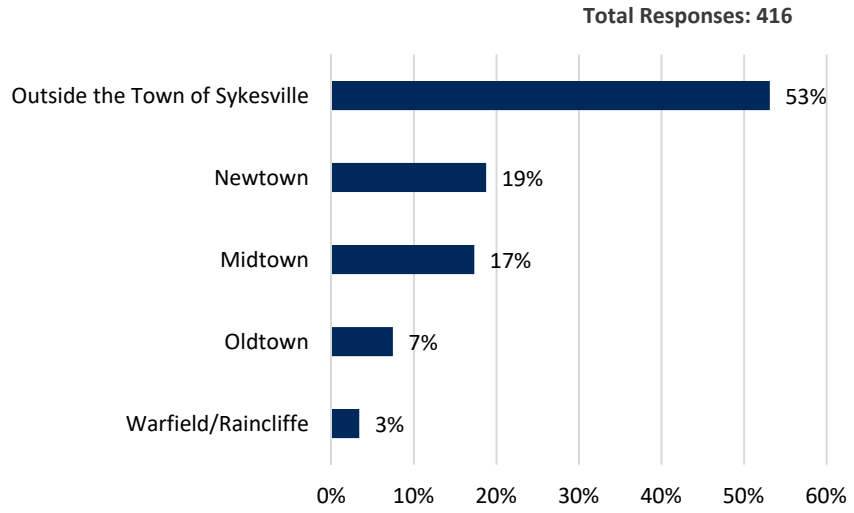
APPENDIX A –
ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS


WELCOME
to

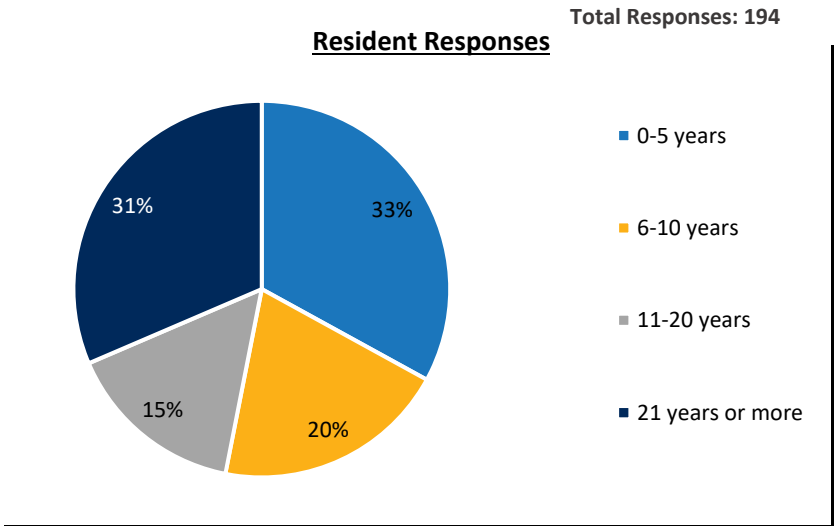
Survey Results

COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

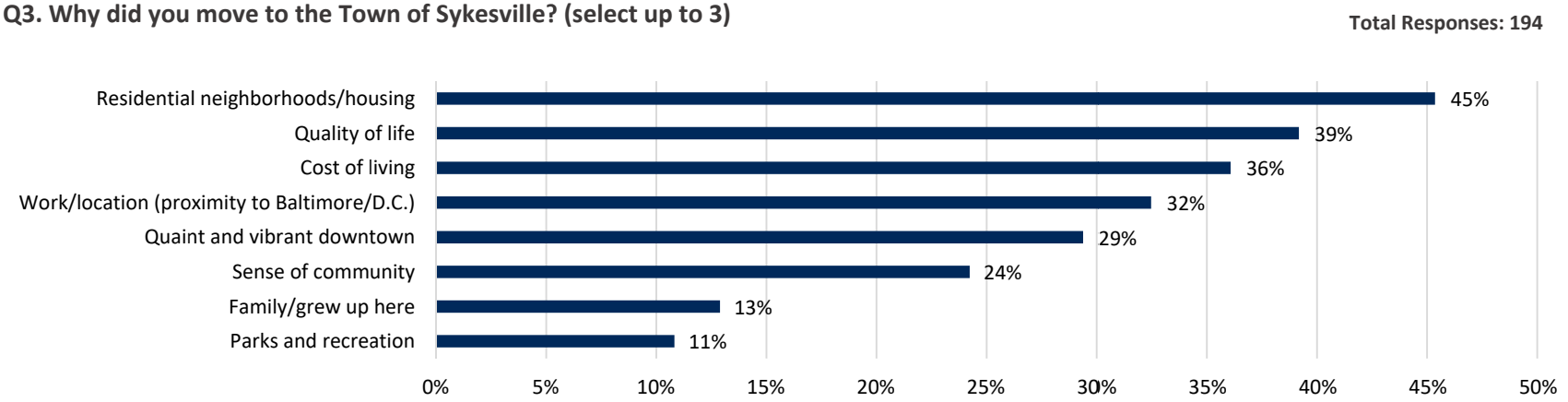
Q1. Where do you live in the Town of Sykesville?



Q2. How long have you lived in the Town of Sykesville?



Q3. Why did you move to the Town of Sykesville? (select up to 3)

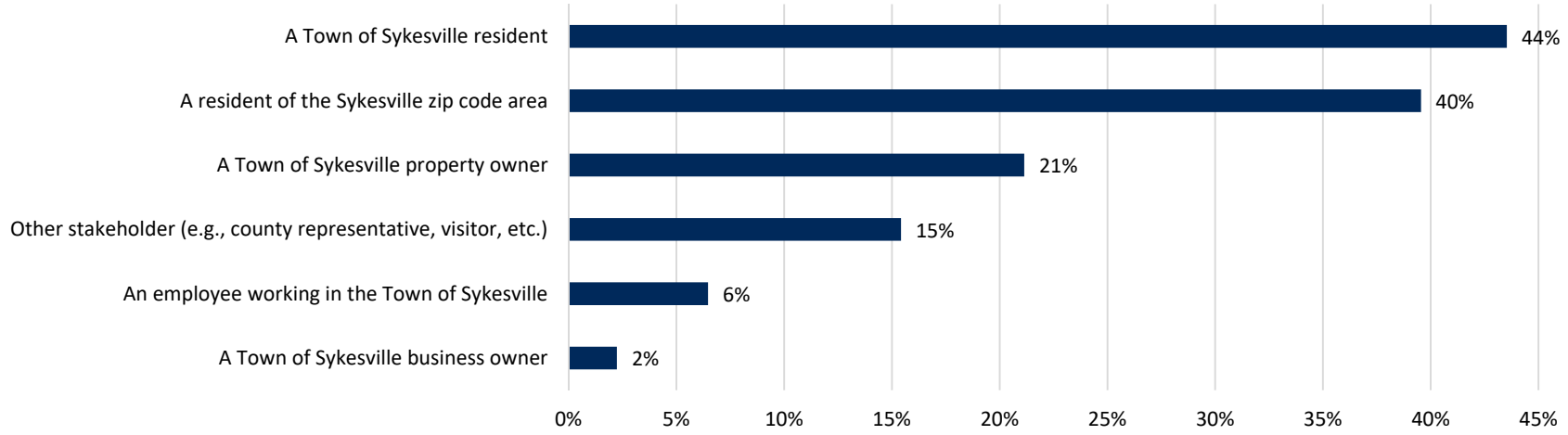


Q4. Please rate the Town's overall communications to residents and ability to find Town-related information (e.g., events, roadwork scheduling, etc.)

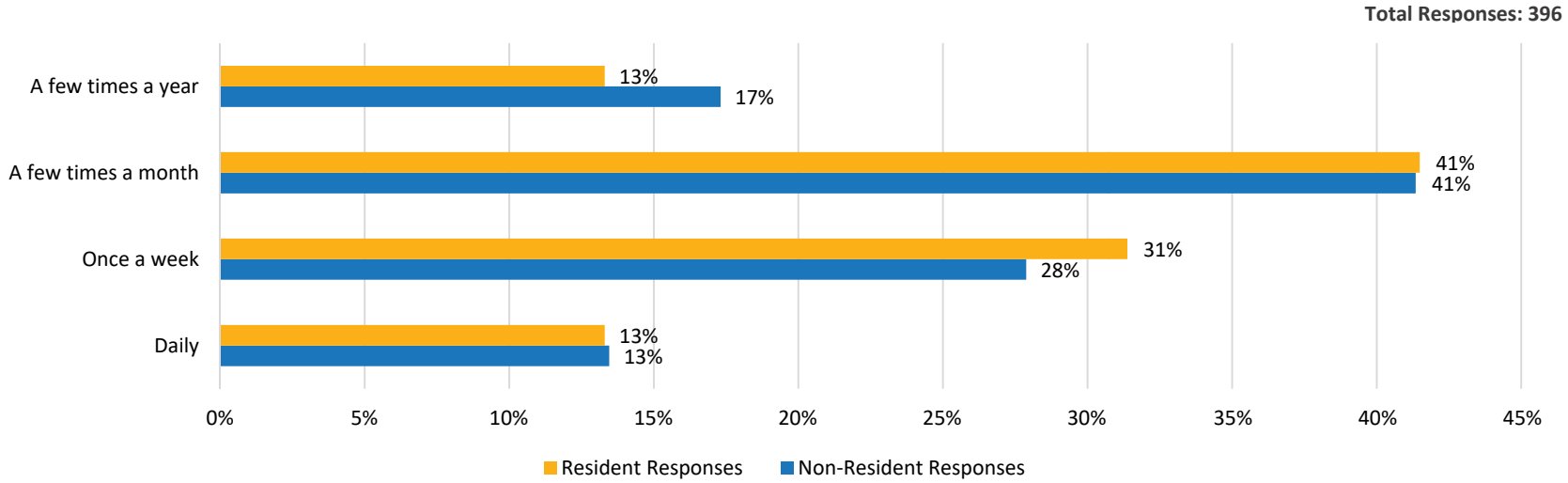
Total Responses: 192

Q5. Are you (check all that apply):

Total Responses: 402

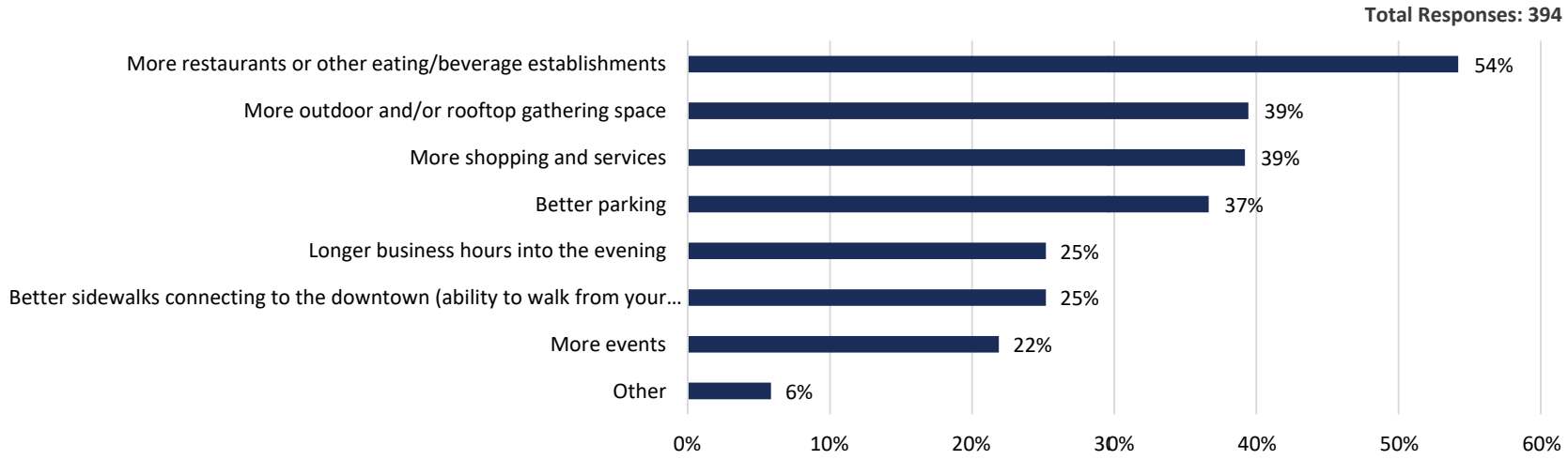


Q6. How often do you visit downtown Sykesville (Main Street)?



DOWNTOWN AND EVENTS

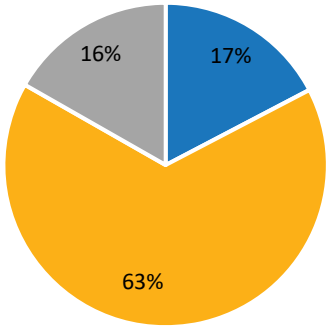
Q7. Would you be more likely to visit downtown Sykesville if there were (select up to 3):



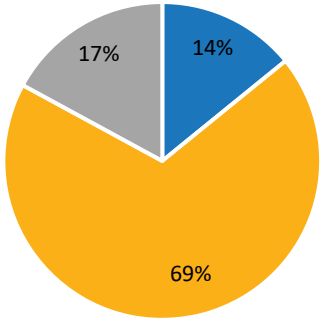
Q8. Please rate public parking in downtown Sykesville.

Total Responses: 386

Resident Responses

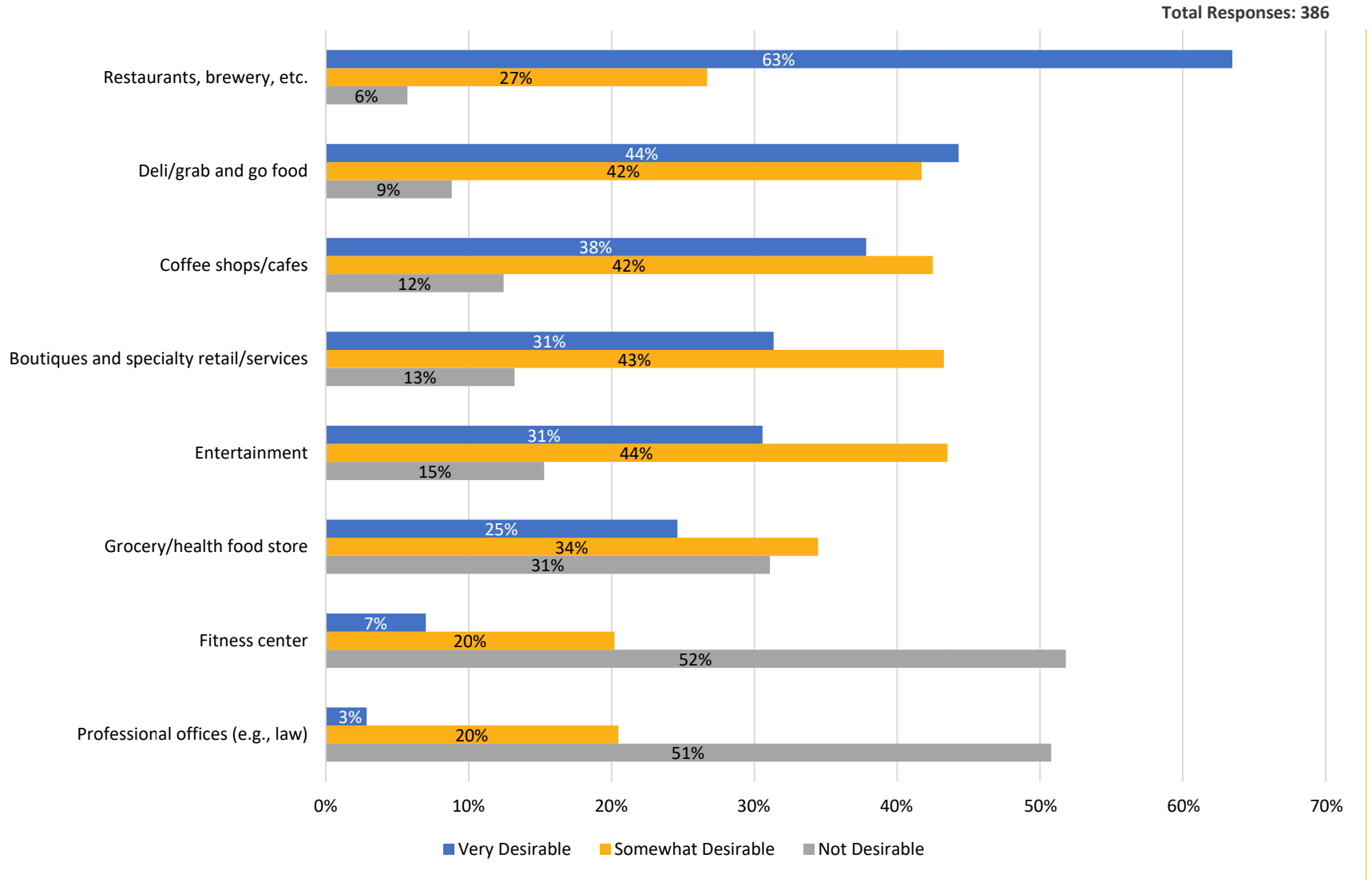


Non-Resident Responses



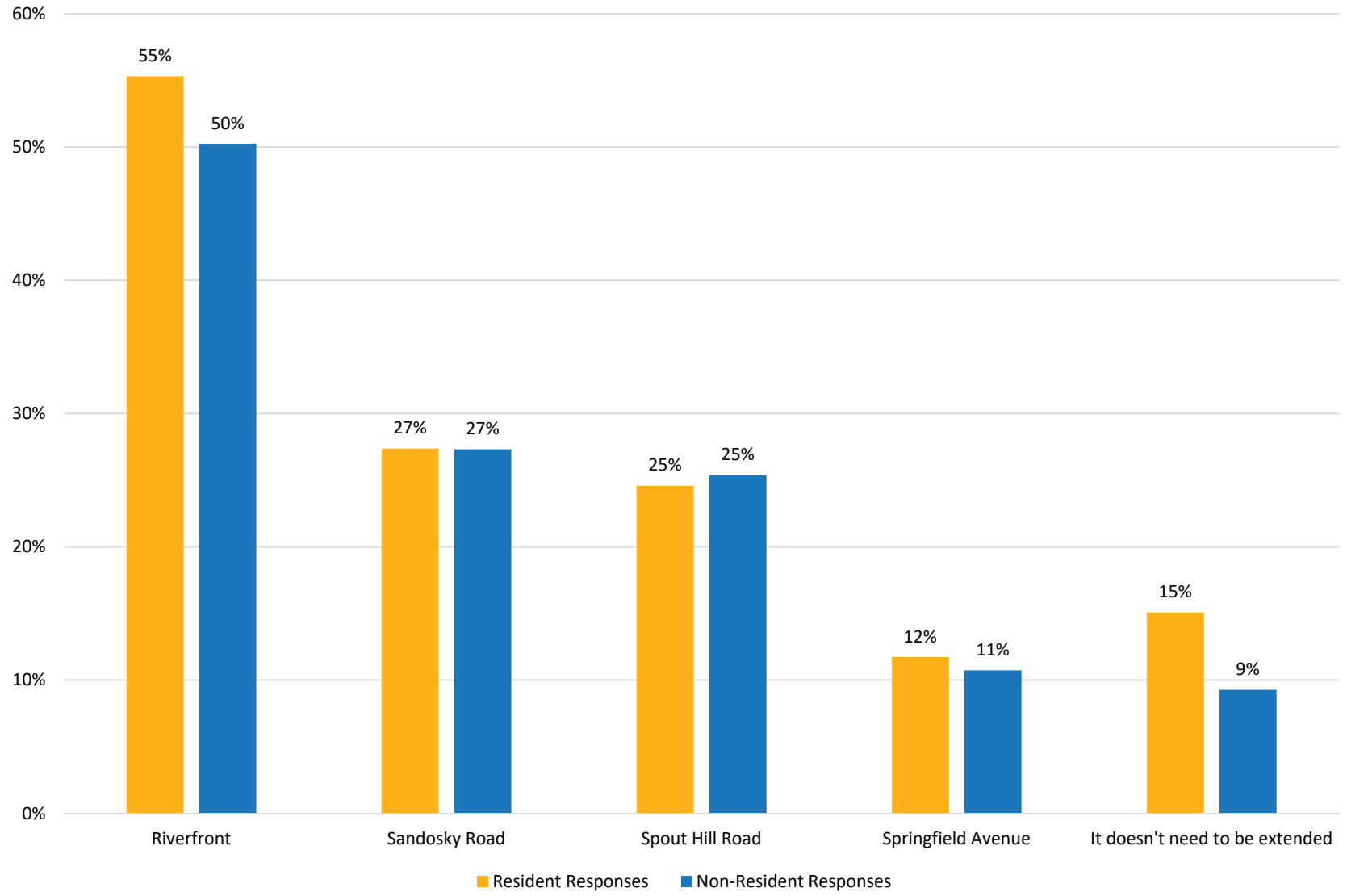
- It's Great: I can find parking with no problem
- It's Okay: During certain times parking can be difficult to find
- Needs Improvement: There is not enough parking and its usually hard to find

Q9. What kinds of businesses would you like to see more of in the downtown?



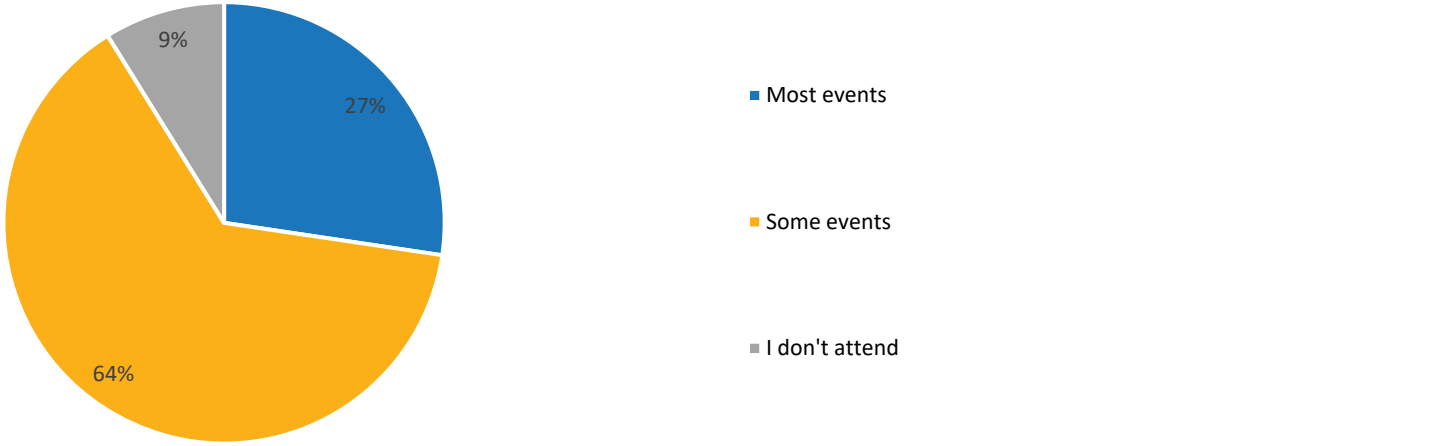
Q10. If downtown Sykesville were to expand to accommodate new growth or more businesses, where would you like to see it expanded? (select up to 2).

Total Responses: 384



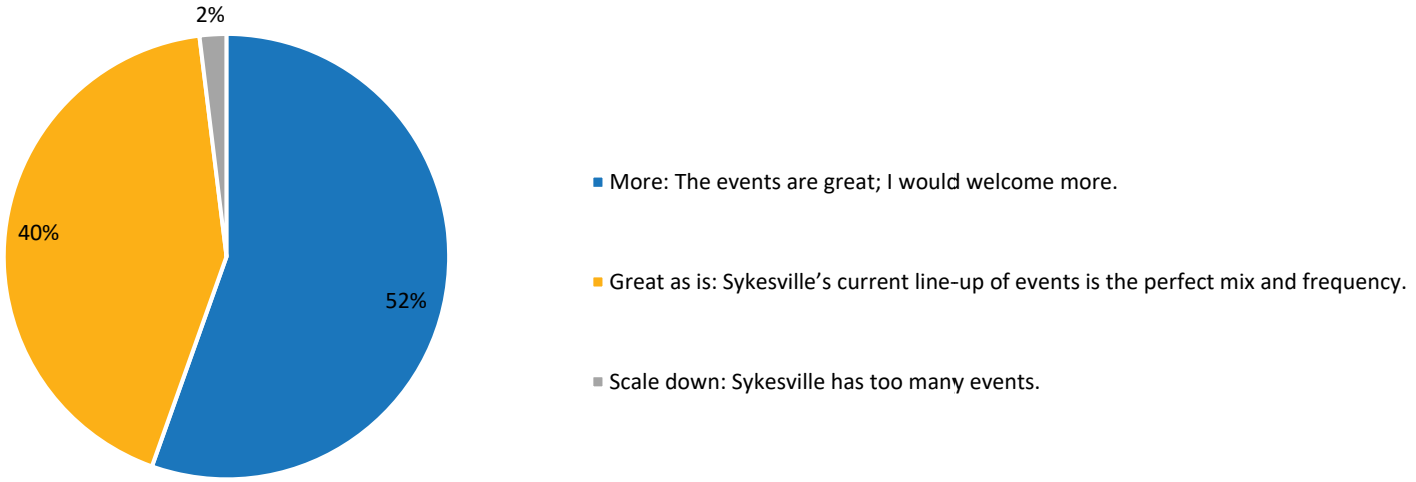
Q11. How often do you attend the Town of Sykesville's downtown community events, including the farmers market and festivals?

Total Responses: 384



Q12. Please tell us your perspectives on the Town of Sykesville's downtown community events (check all that apply):

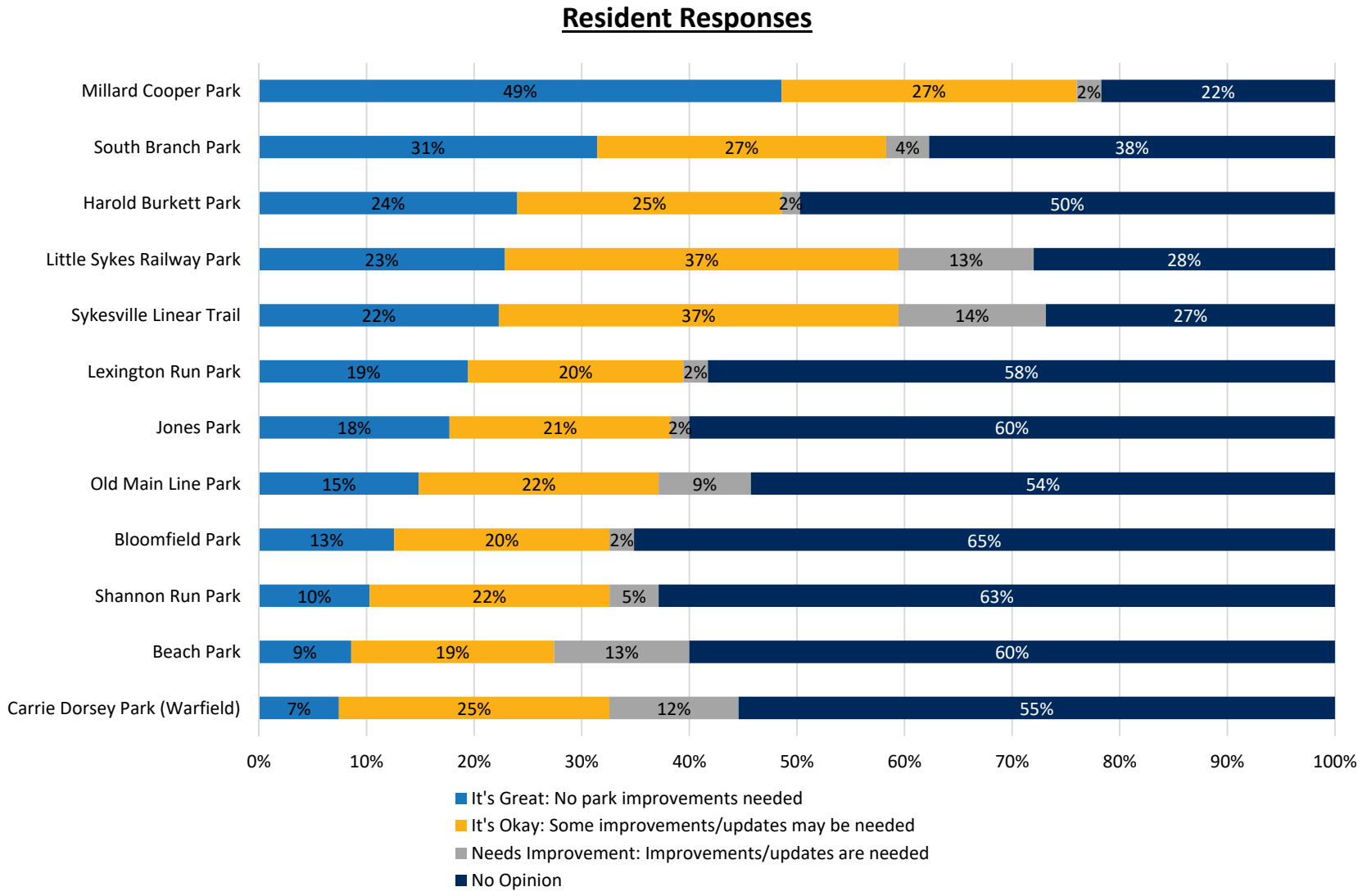
Total Responses: 384



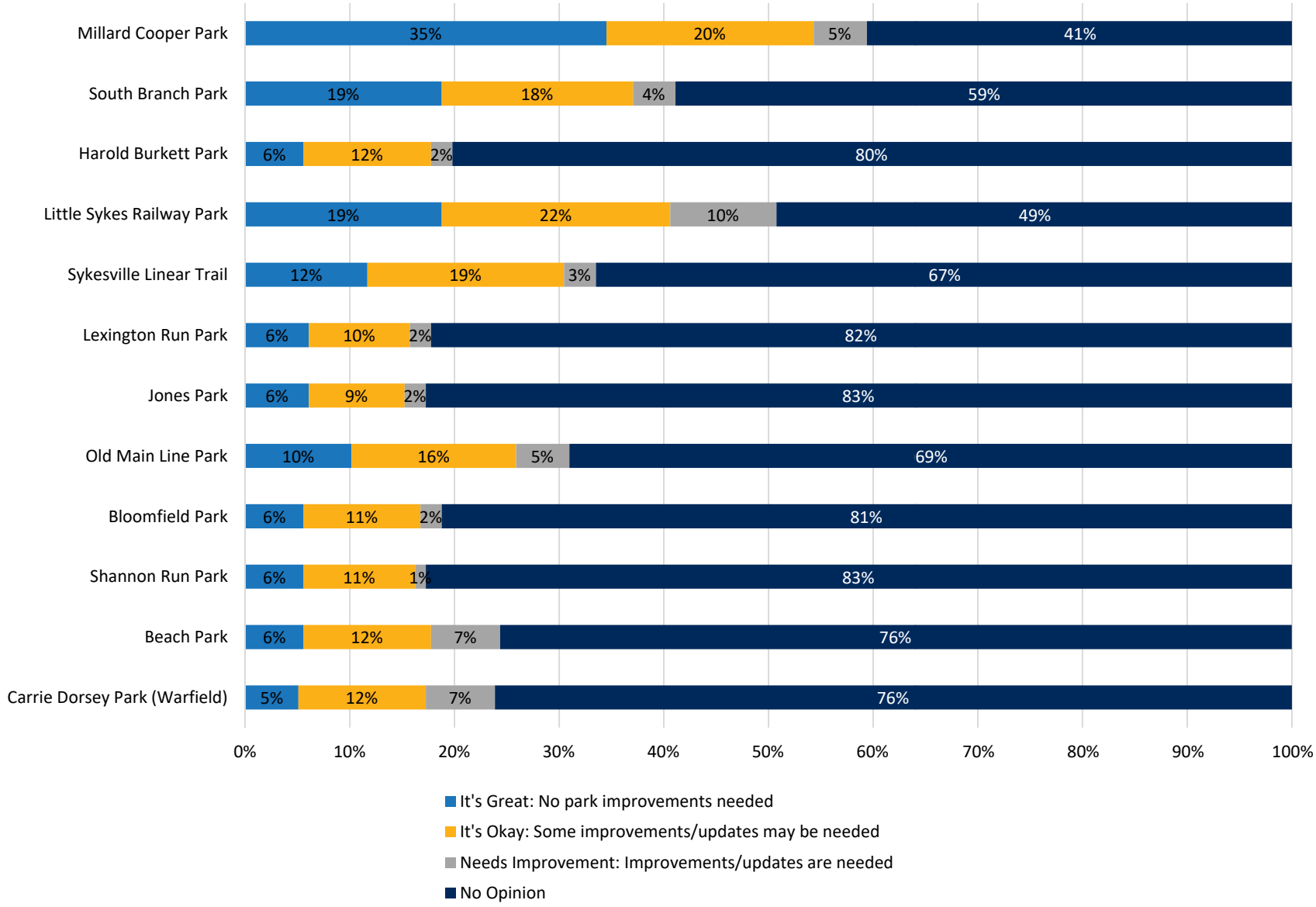
PARKS AND RECREATION

Q13. Please rate the following recreation facilities owned and managed by the Town of Sykesville.

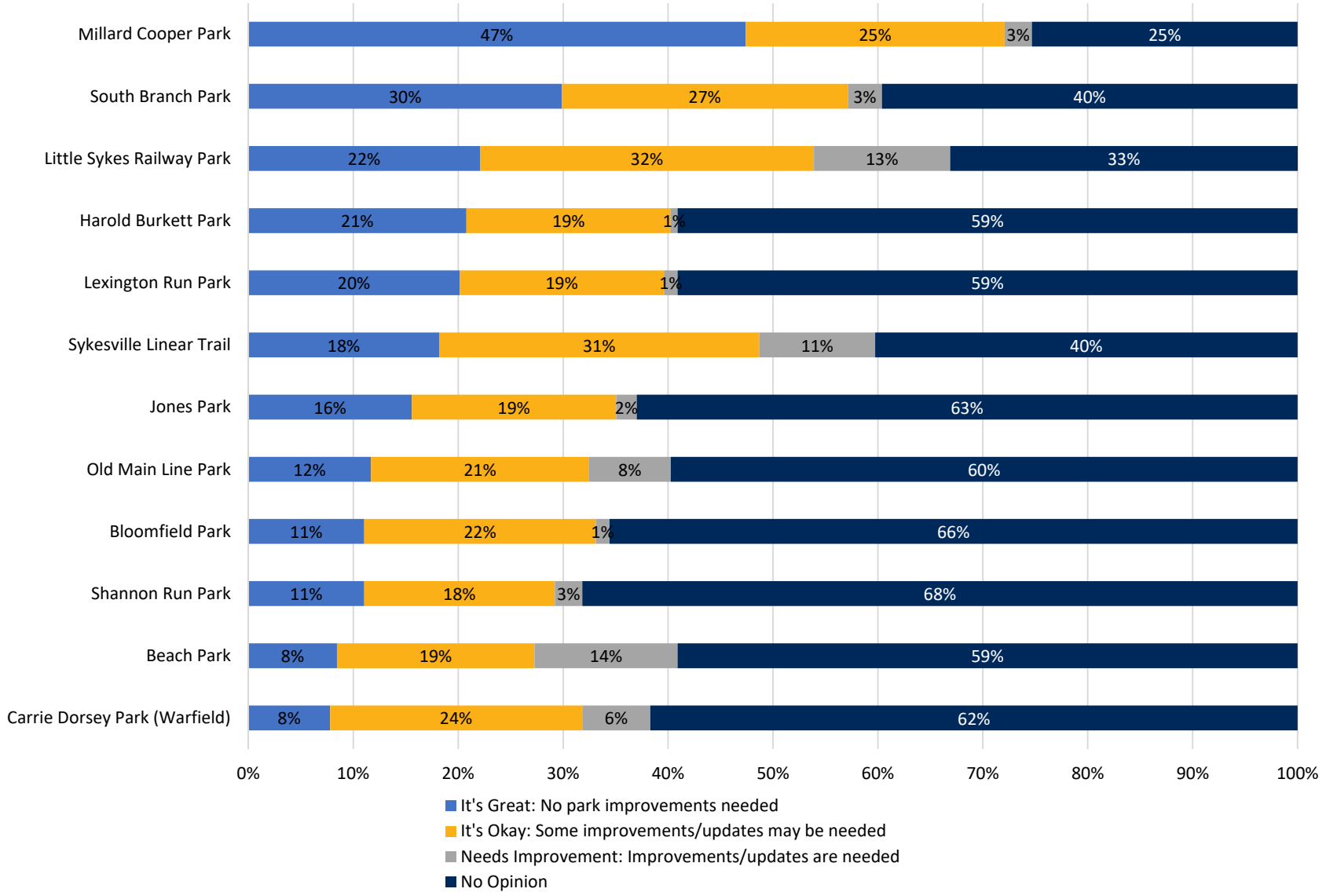
Total Responses: 372



Non-Resident Responses

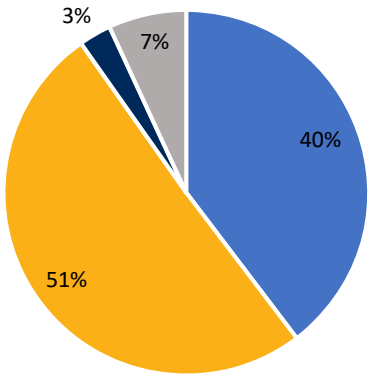


Individuals Age 25 to 44 Responses

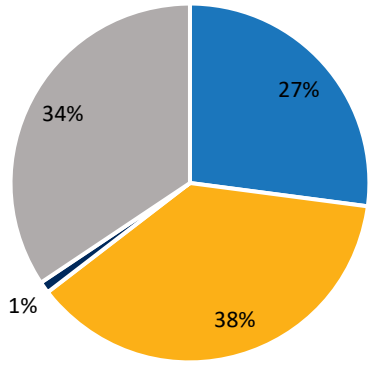


Q14. How satisfied are you with the Town's park and recreation facilities in terms of condition (e.g., overall maintenance, quality)?

Resident Responses



Non-Resident Responses



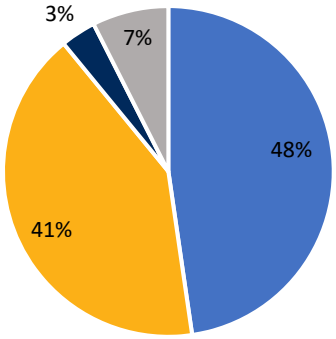
Total Responses: 366

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not satisfied
- No opinion

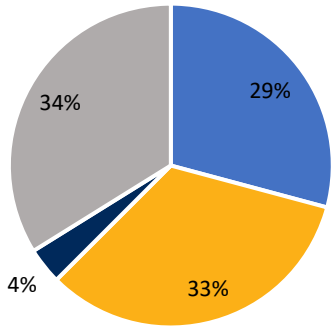
Q15. How satisfied are you with the Town's park and recreation facilities in terms of quantity and type (e.g., playgrounds, athletic fields, etc.)?

Total Responses: 366

Resident Responses



Non-Resident Responses

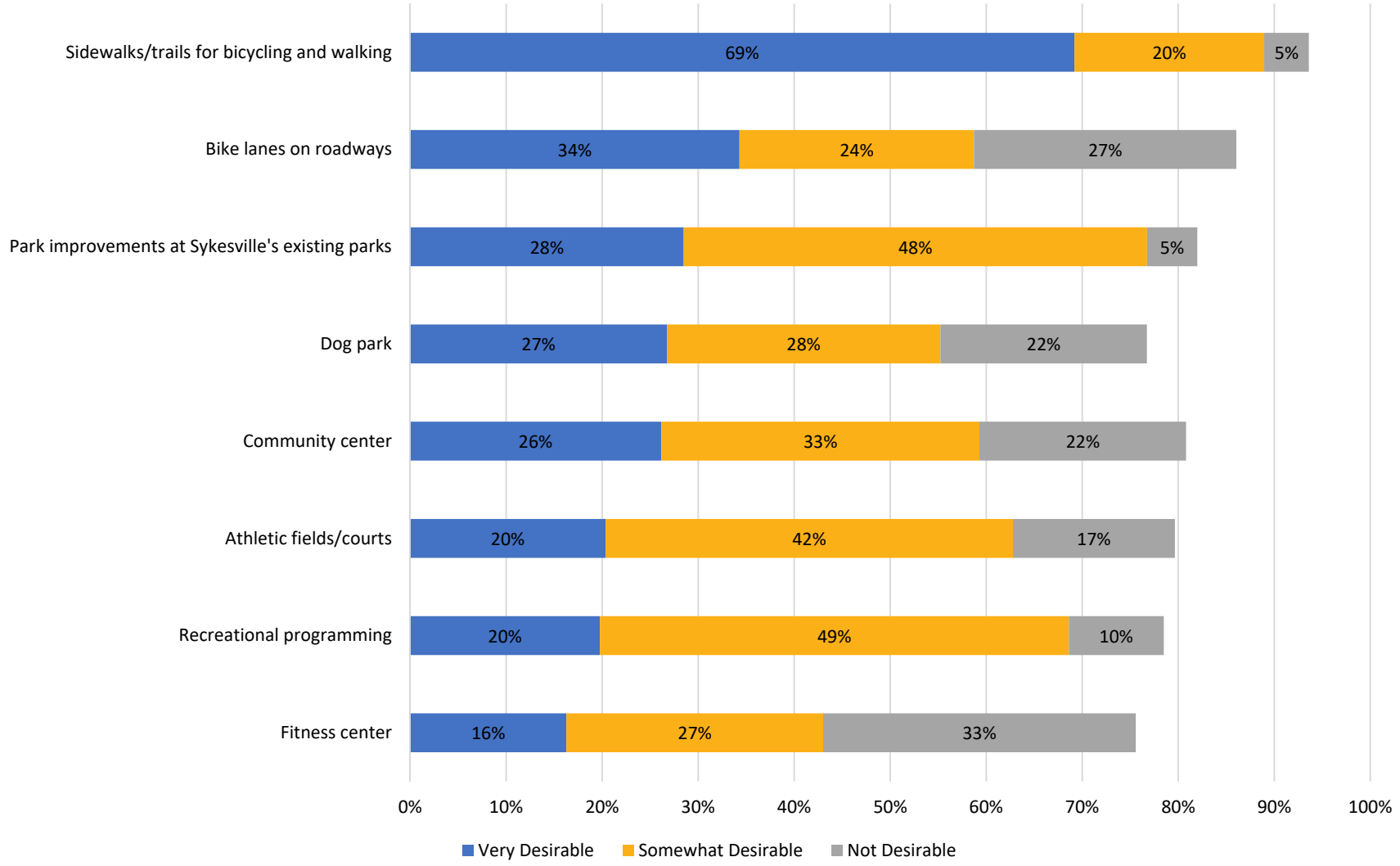


- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not satisfied
- No opinion

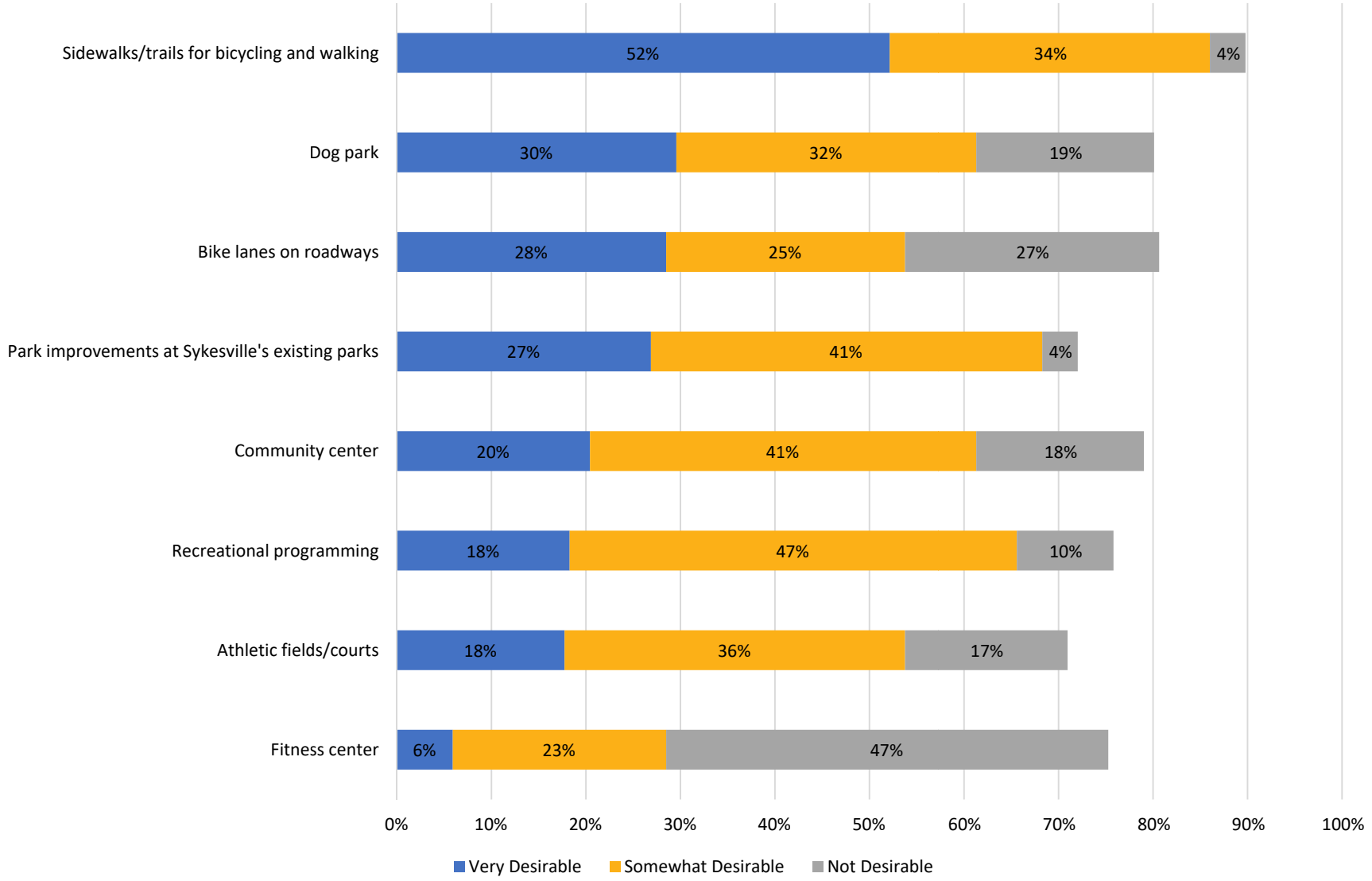
Q16. What kind of recreational facilities and amenities would you like to see added or improved in the Town of Sykesville?

Total Responses: 358

Resident Responses

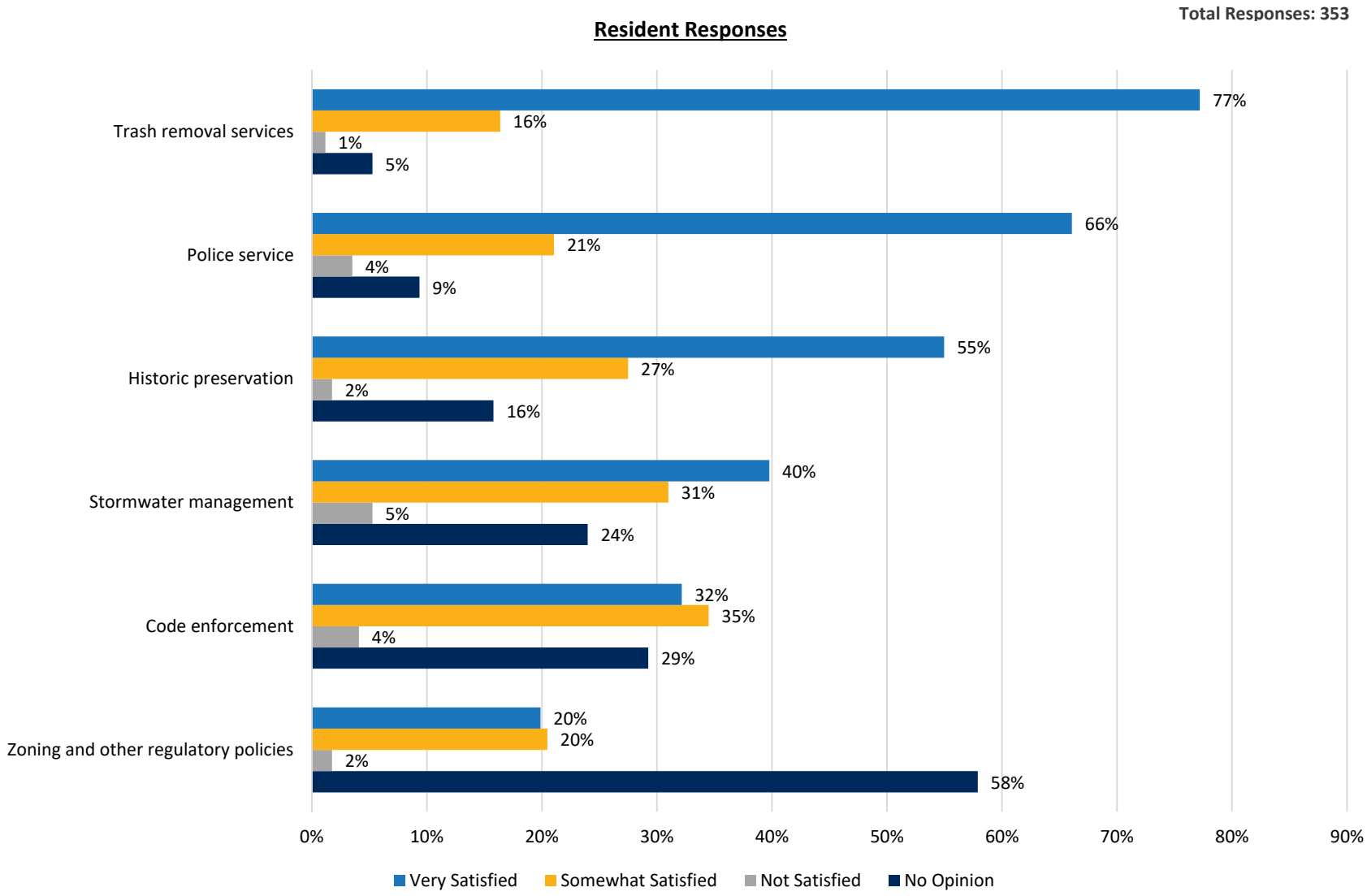


Non-Resident Responses



PUBLIC SERVICES

Q17. How satisfied are you with the following public services provided by the Town of Sykesville?

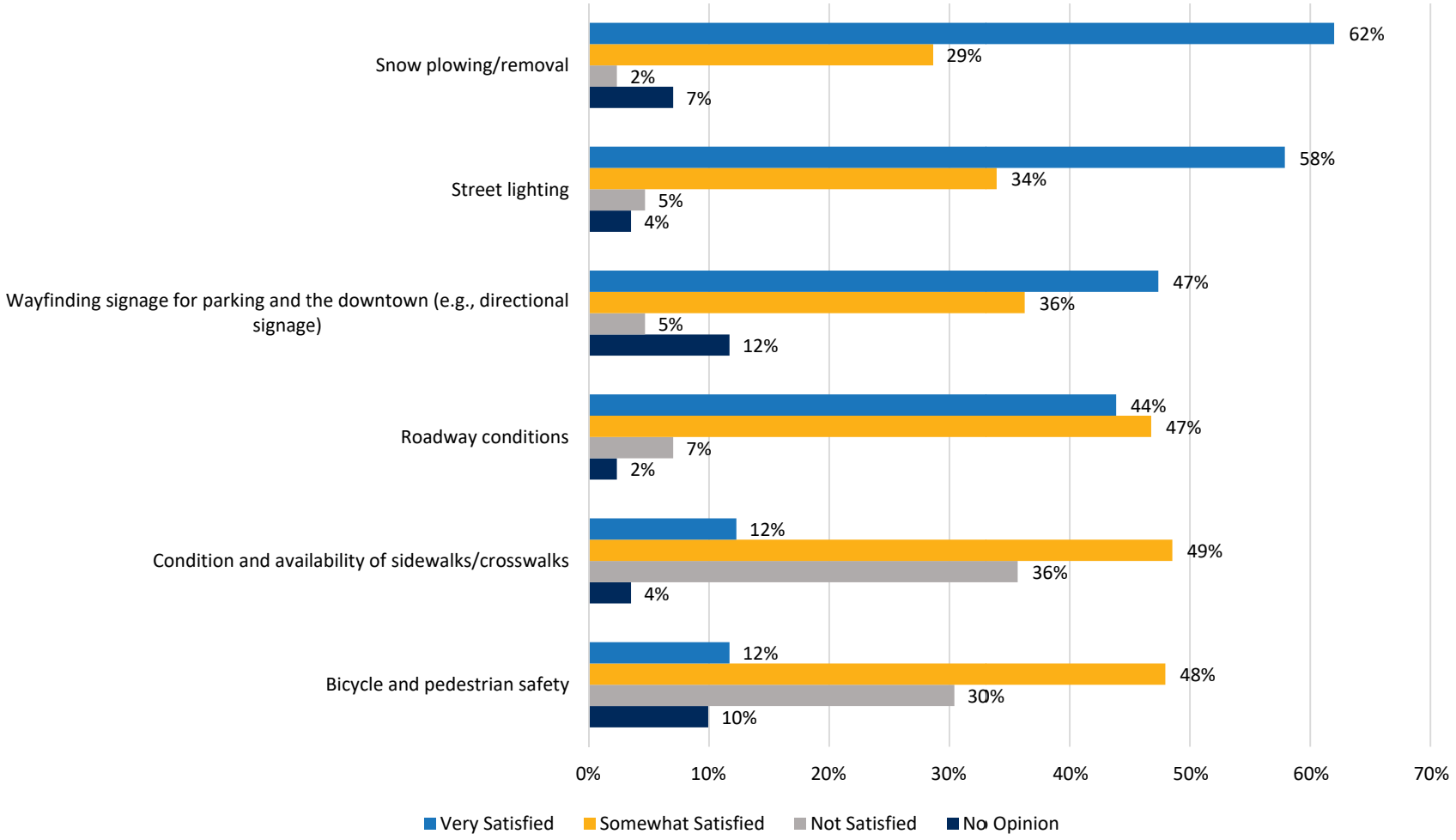


INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES

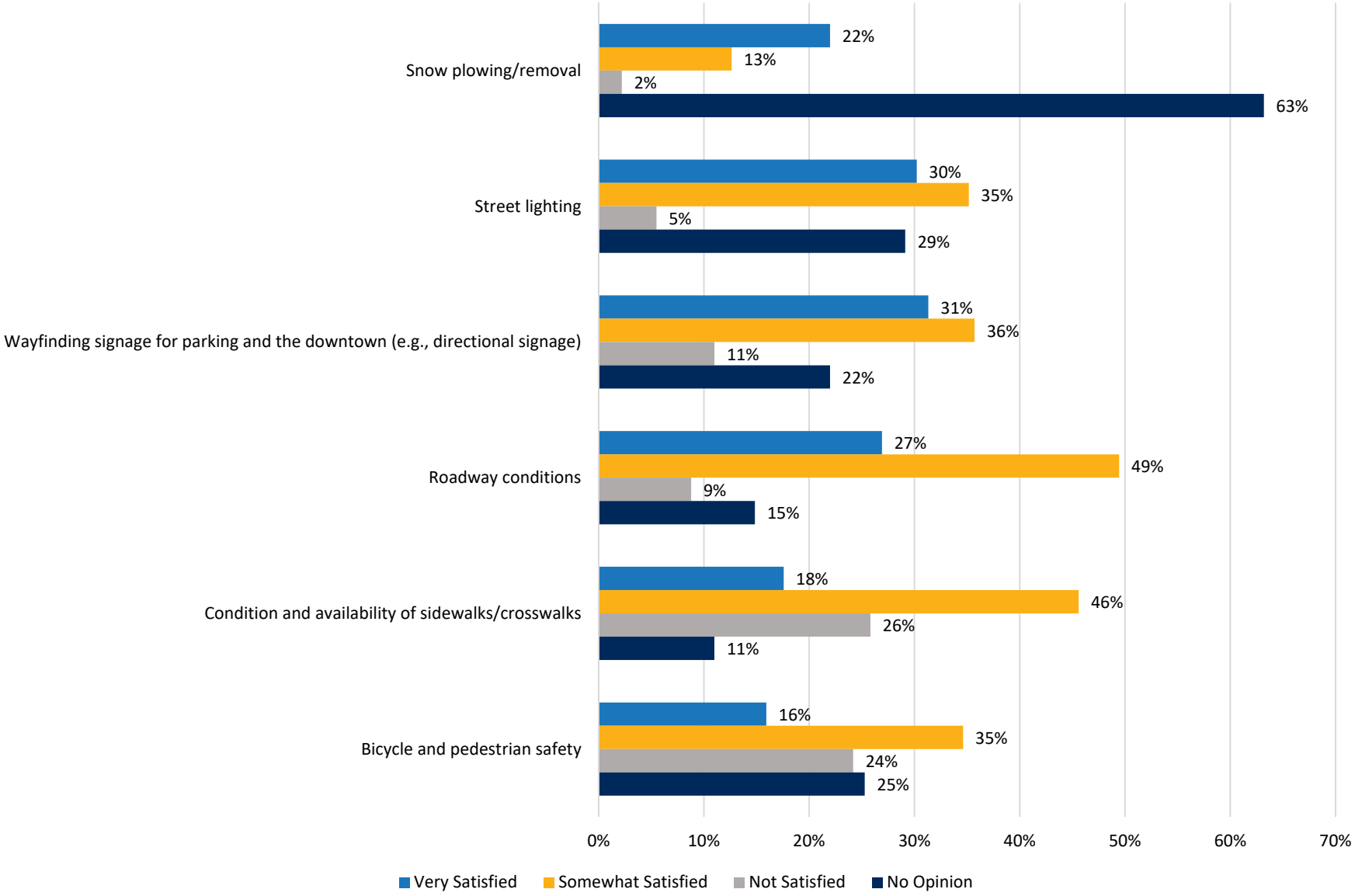
Q18. How satisfied are you with the following transportation infrastructure and services in the Town of Sykesville?

Total Responses: 353

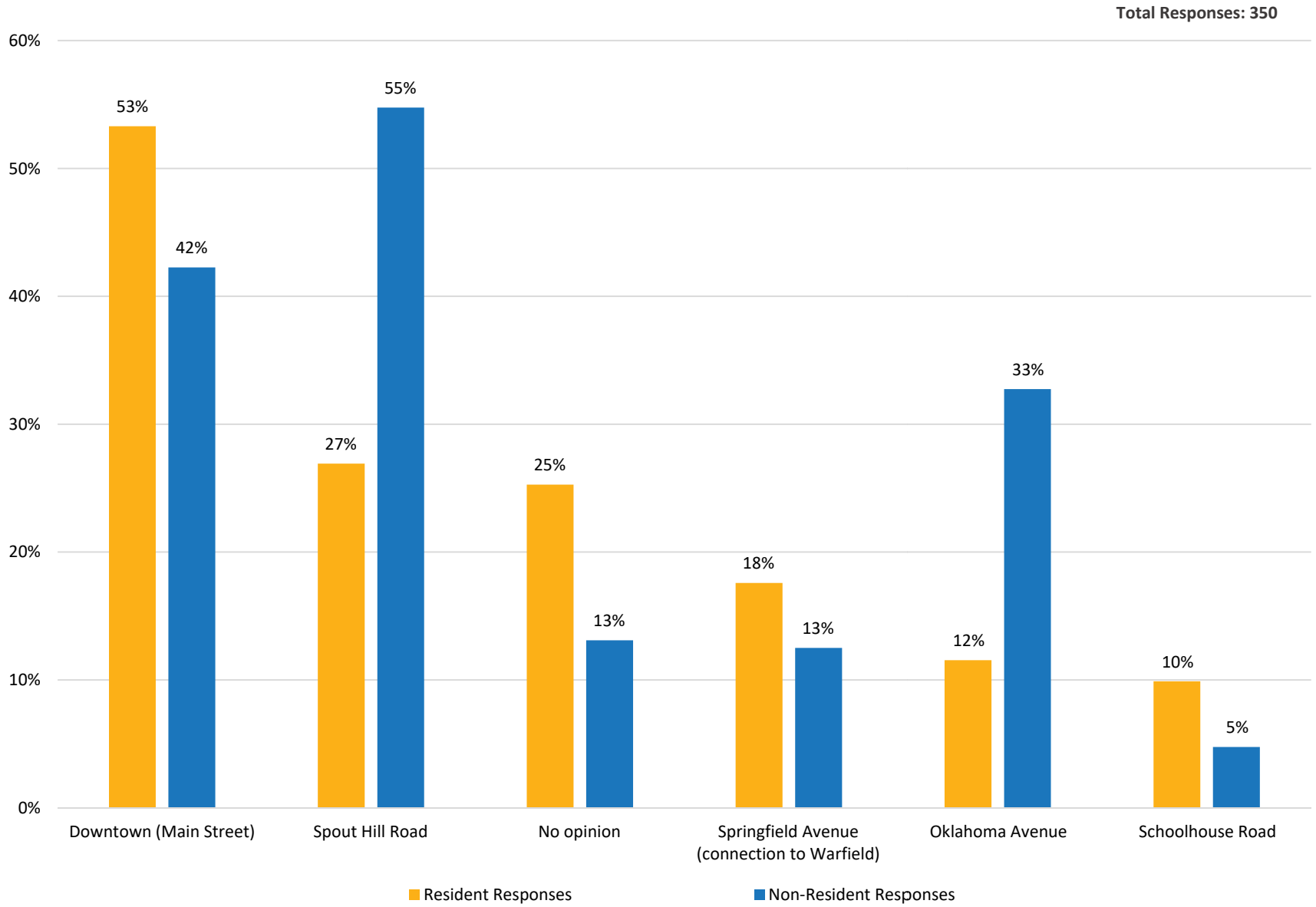
Resident Responses



Non-Resident Responses



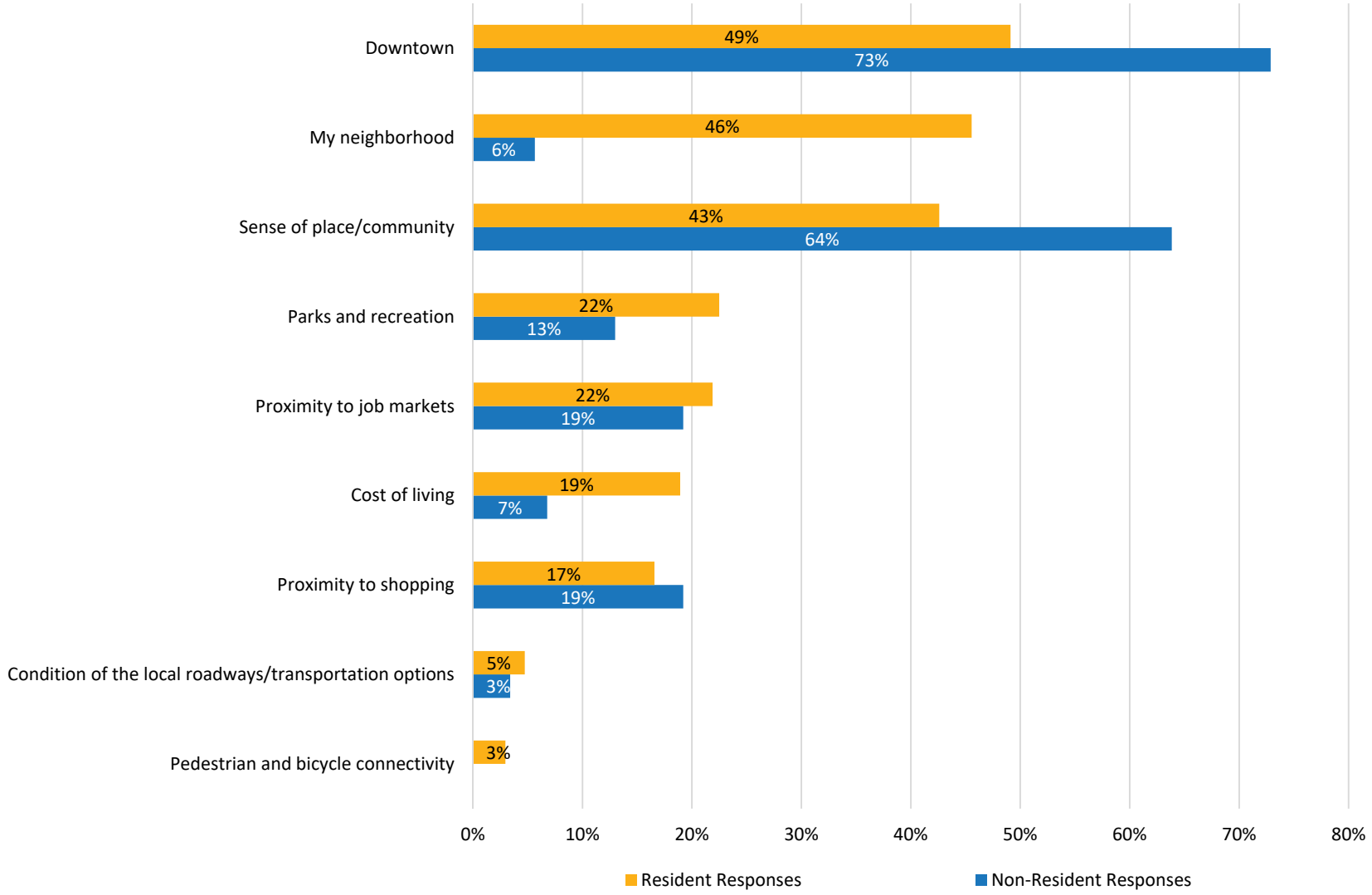
Q19. Where would you like to see the Town prioritize sidewalk improvements? (select up to 3)



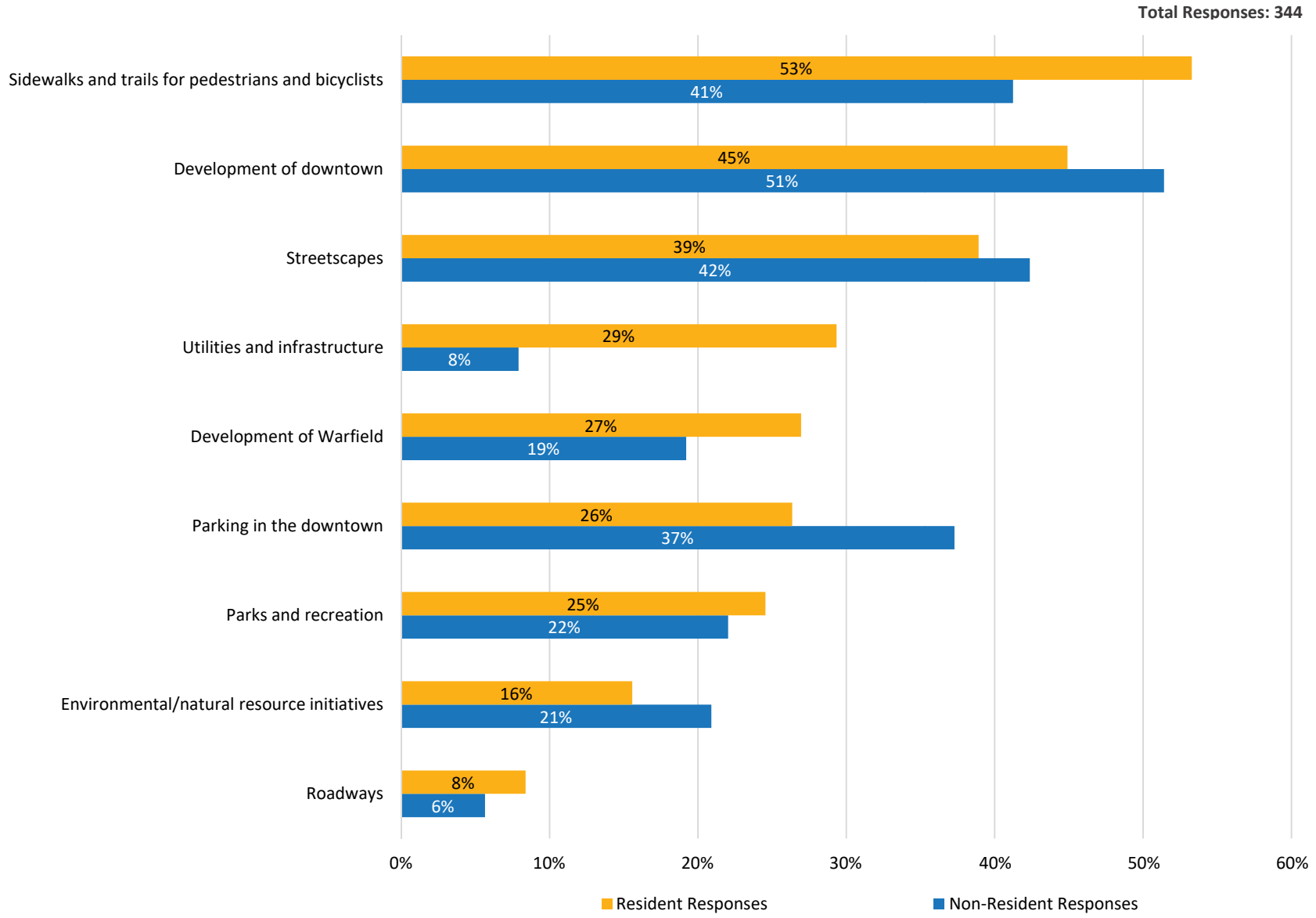
OVERALL PERSPECTIVES

Q20. What are the best features of the Town of Sykesville? (select up to 3)

Total Responses: 346



Q21. Where should the Town use its resources (time/money/staff) to support the following initiatives in the future? (select up to 3)



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Vision 2030

TOWN OF SYKESVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN