The First Report on Housing Indicators for Takoma Park

In this report Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research (CHEER) presents the results of a community based process for visioning, goal setting, indicators selection, and research of housing indicators for Takoma Park. This process was initiated in the Fall of 2008 by Takoma Park and Long Branch residents with the support of fellow community members, and community partners, such as IMPACT Silver Spring, Casa de Maryland, and the City of Takoma Park. Initial financial support was provided by the City of Takoma Park.

The Housing Indicators Selection Process, Vision and Goals

The housing indicators for Takoma Park were selected by a work group made up of twelve residents representing the Takoma Park and Long Branch communities. Members included tenants, home owners, private sector housing professionals, and government representatives, including two members of the City Council. The group reflected the ethnic and racial diversity of the community as a whole. Tenant organizers from Casa de Maryland acted as translators for three Spanish-speaking members of the group. The housing indicators work group included the following members:

- Emma Williams, Takoma Park Community Action Group, tenant
- Wayne Sherwood, Takoma Park homeowner
- Terry Seamens, Takoma Park City Council, homeowner
- Peggy Sand, Long Branch homeowner and housing professional
- Hank Prensky, Takoma Park realtor, homeowner
- Victor Peralta, Long Branch tenant
- Evelyn Palacios, Long Branch tenant
- Navid Nasr, Takoma Park tenant
- Martha Maya, Long Branch tenant
- Christopher King, Takoma Park housing counselor, tenant
- Colleen Clay, Takoma Park City Council, homeowner
- Guy Johnson, attorney with Casa de Maryland also served as participant and translator.

The work group held three meetings of two hours each to formulate a vision and set goals with respect to housing, and then to select indicators that measure community progress toward these goals. All meetings were open to the public and participation ranged from 18 to 25 people at each meeting and included participation of individuals who were not members of the housing indicators work group. A community wide meeting was also held on January 6, 2009 to present the Indicators and to get feedback from the community.[1]

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[1] The work group was assisted in selecting indicators by housing experts and data professionals. Participants include: Sharon Suarez, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Pamela Zorich, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Matthew Greene, Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Linda Walker, City of Takoma Park Department of

CHEER

Why Community Indicators?

A community indicators project is a method for informing and empowering residents to make the kind of community they want to create. This approach has been taken in dozens of communities around the country and is widely regarded as a best practice for engaging the public, informing policy makers, and allocating and leveraging resources. This kind of results based accountability has wide spread currency among policy makers and funders. Indicators provide the basis for measuring program impacts in the community, which are key to attracting and sustaining nonprofit, for profit and public investment in the community.

The indicators themselves are statistical measures of the health and well being of the community as defined by the community. But the benefits of the measures go far beyond the statistics they produce. They also contribute to creating a dynamic process of enhanced resident engagement and community improvement. This process includes more informed residents committed to improving the community, improved policy discussions, and better informed decision making, and broader community connections.

The Vision

The Housing Indicators Work Group formulated the following overall vision for the community with relation to housing:

> The Takoma Park/Long Branch communities envision well maintained housing that is affordable, safe and energy efficient. Cultural, age and income diversity within neighborhoods is a priority as well as easy access to work and public transportation. A community that promotes person-to-person interactions is highly desirable.

The Goals

Based on this vision the housing group selected the following housing goals for the Takoma Park and Long Branch communities.

Affordability: Make housing equally available to all income levels

Housing Quality: Residents live in well maintained homes and can maintain the quality of their dwellings.

Housing Opportunity: Residents are able to live in the community where they want to live.

Neighborhood Stability: Housing costs remain stable and involuntary displacement is minimized.

Neighborhood Connections: Neighbors know each other and are involved in common projects and activities.

Energy Efficiency: Increase home energy efficiency.

Safety: Residents live in safe neighborhoods with low crime rates.

Access: Residents live near, or have convenient access to, their work and other needs.

Findings and Data[2]

Affordability Goal: Make housing equally available to all income levels

Primary Indicator: Number of people in community earning less than 30%, 50%, 80% of area median income.

Estimated Percent of People Living in Households At or Below Various Levels of Income

Income Level	Takoma Park	Montgomery County
Percent below 80% of area median income ($58,000 for a family of three)	42%	27%
Percent below 50% of area median income ($46,600 for a family of three)	31%	17%
Percent below 30% of area median income ($27,950 for a family of three)	17%	8%

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates for FY 2010 based on 2000 Census.

Note: Better estimates are expected when 2010 Census data becomes available.

Secondary Indicator: Percent of households paying more than 30 percent of their income for rent or mortgage.

Percent of Takoma Park households paying more than 30% of income for housing

	1996	2004	2007
% Homeowners	9.2%	16.1%	16.1%
% Renters	26.3%	42.7%	37.9%

Note: Includes some portions of Long Branch

Percent of Montgomery County households paying more than 30% of income for housing

	1996	2004	2007
% Homeowners	11.4%	16.9%	19.3%
% Renters	28.0%	40.7%	34.1%

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[2] Primary research of the indicators was conducted in 2009 and 2010 by Bruce Baker, Paul Singh, Christopher Dickersin-Prokopp, and Riane McWain.

Source: Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Census Updates

Housing Quality Goal: Residents live in well maintained homes and can maintain the quality of their dwellings.

Primary Indicator: Percent of properties showing a decline in property condition.

From 2006 to 2008, the City of Takoma Park conducted a survey of the external condition of 3,957 properties in the city. Nearly all – 98.5 percent of single-family properties and 98.1 percent of multi-family properties – were in good or excellent external condition.

There is a need to develop a methodology to determine if housing quality is changing.

Secondary Indicator: Number of units in poorly maintained buildings with poorly maintained buildings being defined as "buildings with a disproportionately high number of serious code violations per unit."

Data and methodology not yet developed

Housing Opportunity Goal: Residents are able to live in the community where they want to live.

Finding: Affordable homeownership opportunities are very limited in Takoma Park. However, Takoma Park has preserved a large proportion of its affordable rental apartments.

Primary Indicator: Median homeownership and rental prices

Takoma Park median home prices have increased 114% between 2000 and 2008. The median price of a Takoma Park single family home in 2008 was $416,000.
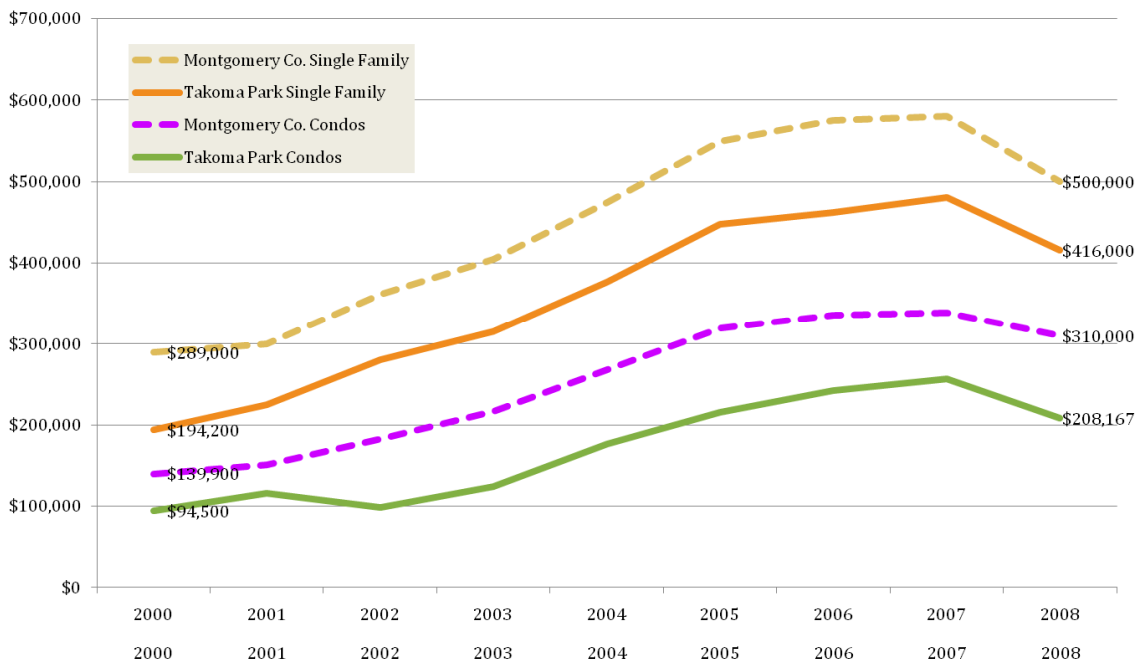
The average rent offered to new tenants in multi-family buildings of 12 units or more in 2009 was $898. The median rent for rent stabilized units in Takoma Park was $856 in 2009.

Turnover Rents in Multi-Family Properties of 12 Units or More
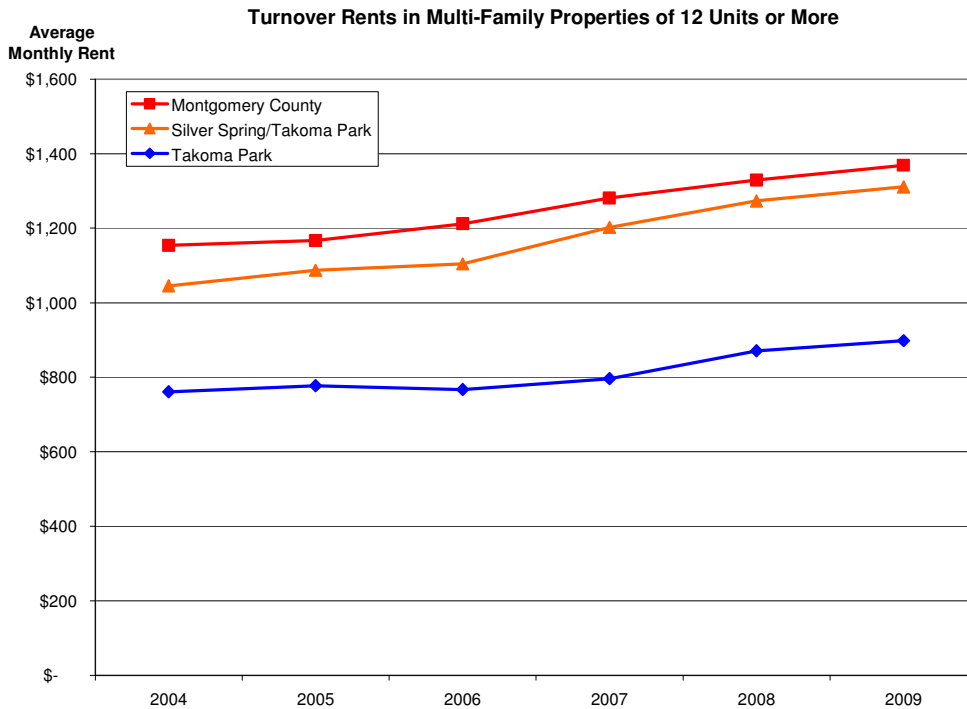
Source: Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs

Neighborhood Stability Goal: Housing costs remain stable and involuntary displacement is minimized.

Primary Indicator: Length of time in home and income of residents by housing type

- In 2010, homeowners in Takoma Park had lived in their residences for an average of 10.5 years.
- In 2008, renters in Takoma Park had lived in the residences for an average of 6 years.

Secondary Indicator: Number of home foreclosures

Finding: According to the State Department of Housing and Community Development The Takoma Park zip code has experienced a moderate level of home foreclosures. The first chart below shows the number of foreclosures per quarter. The second chart below shows Takoma Park's foreclosures as a share of County foreclosures to show relative increases and decreases compared to County foreclosure trends.

Takoma Park Foreclosue Events by Quarter
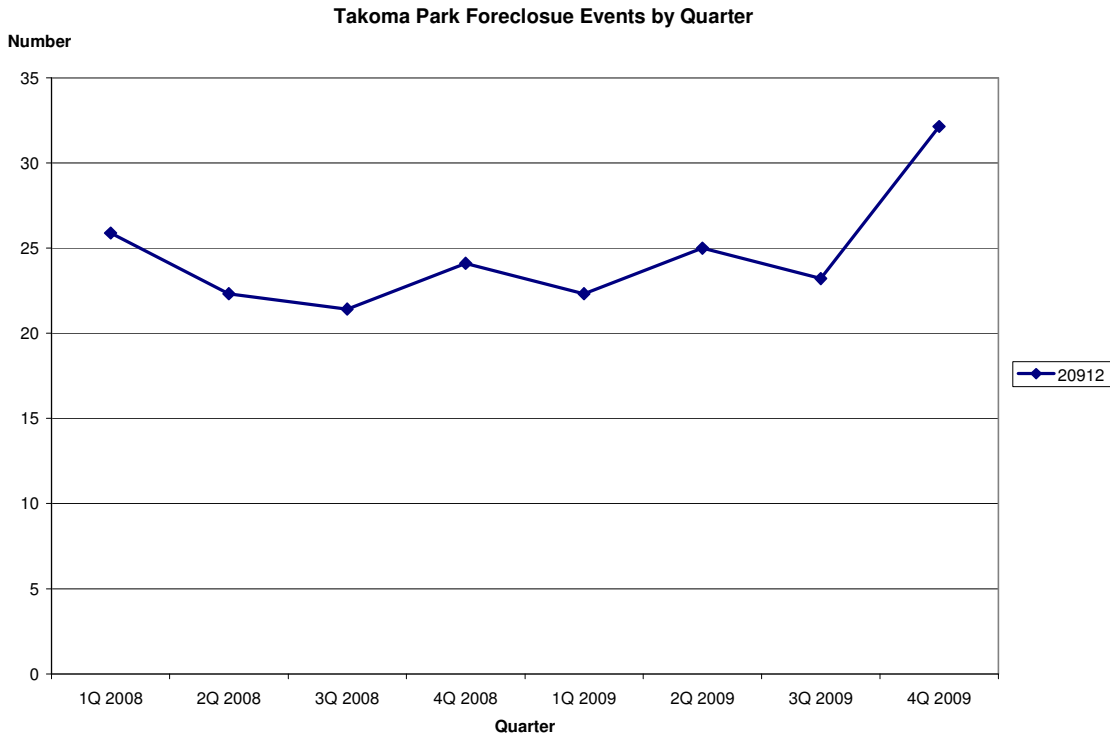
Source: Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Affairs compiled from RealtyTrac data.

Takoma Park Foreclosure Events as a Share of County Foreclosue Events
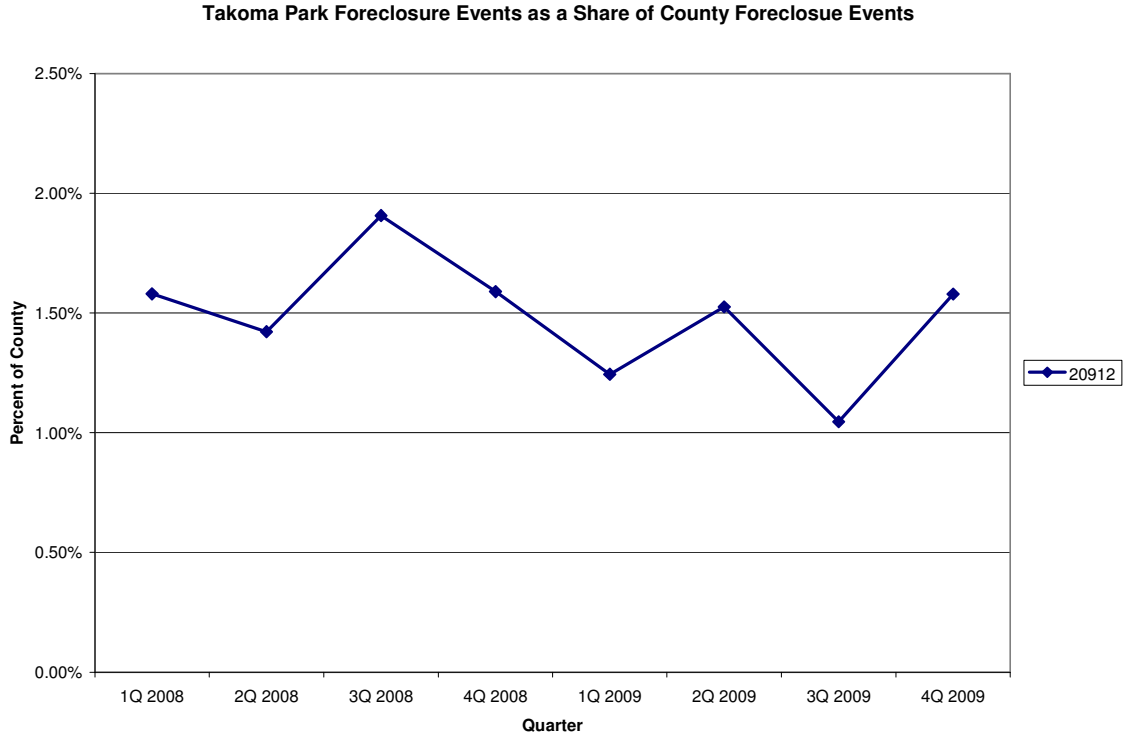
Source: CHEER calculated from Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Affairs compilation of RealtyTrac data.

Neighborhood Connections Goal: Neighbors know each other and are involved in common projects and activities.

Primary Indicator: No indicator Available

CHEER Recommends administering the "social capital community benchmark survey," and conducting qualitative analyses to assess the character and quality of neighborhood connections.

Energy Efficiency Goal: Increase home energy efficiency.

Primary Indicators:
♦ Number of kilowatts used per housing unit/person
♦ Measure of natural gas or heating oil used per housing unit/person (adjusted for the number of heating degree days per year.)

In 2007 Takoma Park used 8,054 residential kilowatt hours per household compared to a county-wide average of 12,939.

No data was available for natural gas usage.

Safety Goal: Residents live in safe neighborhoods with low crime rates.

Primary Indicator: Number of crimes by type and location

Finding: Violent crime appears to have declined since 2007 and property crimes have fluctuated. Additional data and analyses are required to provide comparisons and establish the reliability of trend data.

Takoma Park Crimes 2006-2009

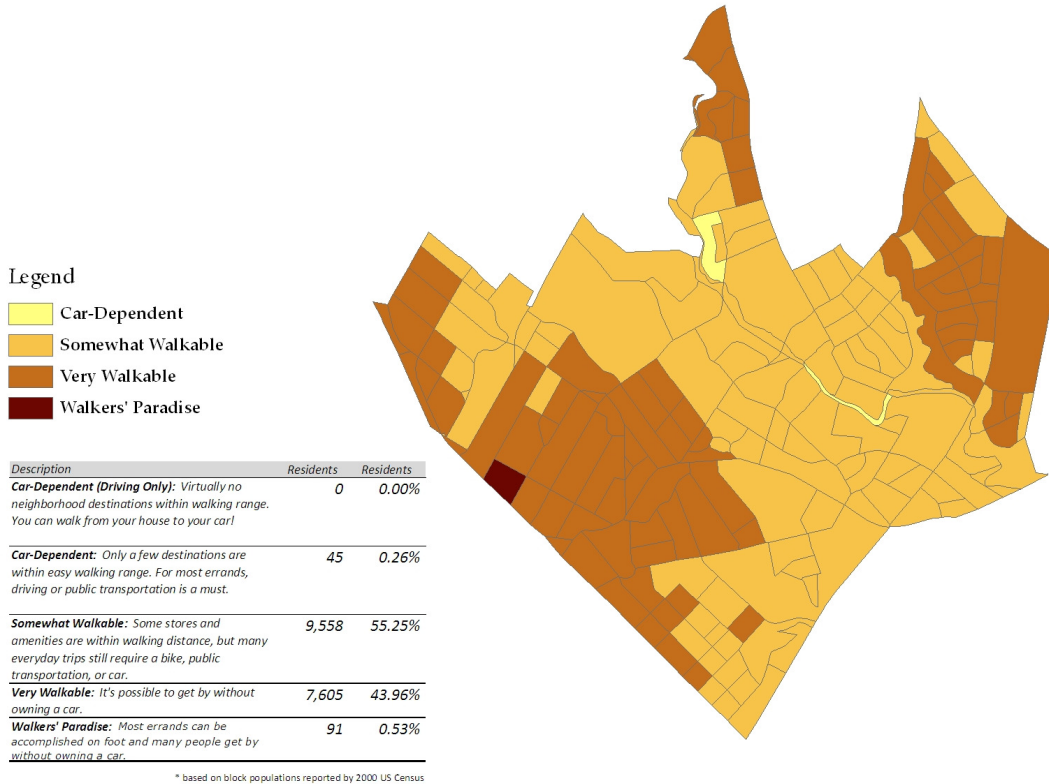|	2006	2007	2008	2009
Property Crimes	671	702	617	660
Crimes against People	123	131	122	104

Year
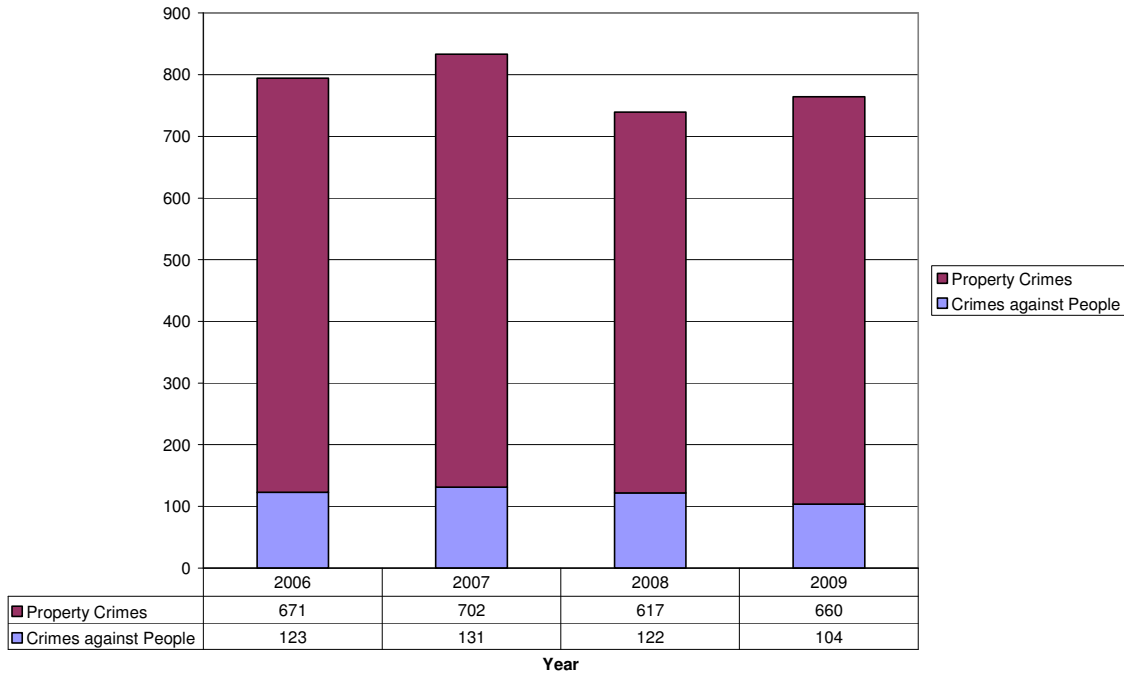
Access: Residents live near, or have convenient access to, their work and other needs.

Primary Indicators:
- Commuting time and distance by foot, car, public transportation, and bicycle to work.
- Distance from hospitals and schools and commercial zones to residences

Walkability for each Takoma Park City Block

Legend

- ☐ Car-Dependent
- ☐ Somewhat Walkable
- ☐ Very Walkable
- ☐ Walkers' Paradise

Description	Residents	Residents
Car-Dependent (Driving Only): *Virtually no neighborhood destinations within walking range. You can walk from your house to your car!*	*0*	*0.00%*
Car-Dependent: *Only a few destinations are within easy walking range. For most errands, driving or public transportation is a must.*	*45*	*0.26%*
Somewhat Walkable: *Some stores and amenities are within walking distance, but many everyday trips still require a bike, public transportation, or car.*	*9,558*	*55.25%*
Very Walkable: *It's possible to get by without owning a car.*	*7,605*	*43.96%*
Walkers' Paradise: *Most errands can be accomplished on foot and many people get by without owning a car.*	*91*	*0.53%*

* based on block populations reported by 2000 US Census

Source: walkscore.com

Areas of Takoma Park Close to Elementary Schools and Public Transportation

Roads

Within 1/2 Mile of Metro

Within 1/2 Mile of Public Elementary

Within 1/10 Mile to Bus Stop
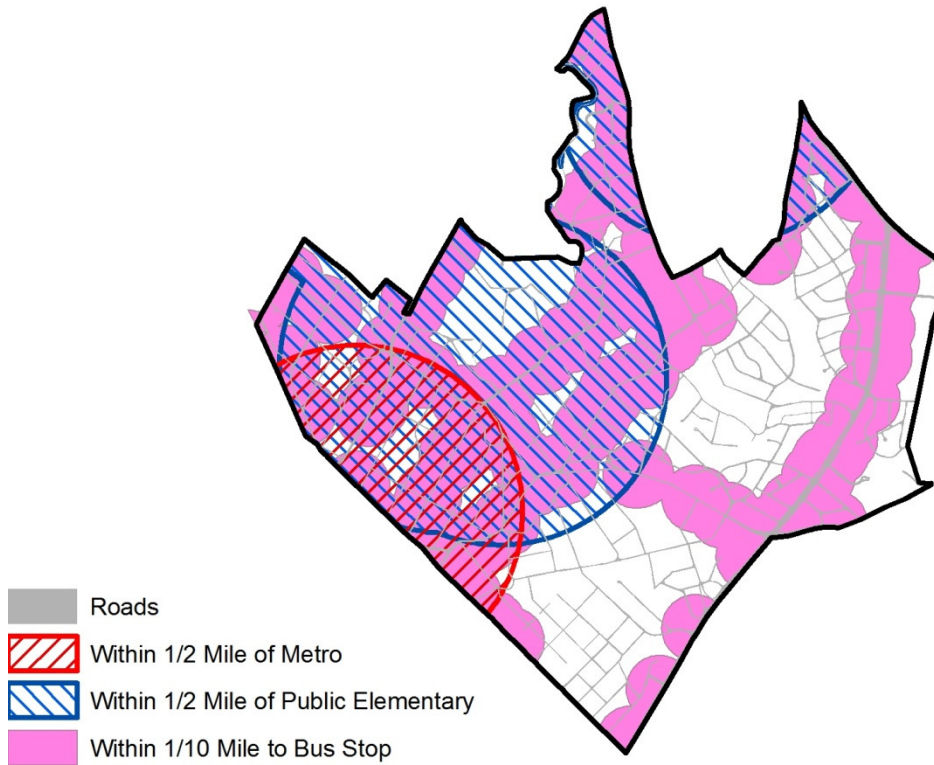
Source: CHEER using MNCPPC parcel data