

# MT. AIRY 2025

an action plan for our future



Neighborhood Retail & Commerce

Early Childhood Education

Senior Living

Community Safety & Placemaking

Homes & Housing

Youth Engagement



## NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL & COMMERCE

Façade Improvement • Communications & Marketing • Commercial Corridors

While the Mt. Airy 2025 study area has over 11,300 residents who participate in the labor force, it has only 2,200 jobs, primarily in nursing, education, and retail. Mt. Airy is chiefly a bedroom community, so the main economic development concerns are in adding to the range and quality of retail goods and services available in the neighborhood. As of 2016, there are 144 retail businesses located within Mt. Airy.



## 2025 STRATEGIES:

1. Convene a Neighborhood Retail Task Force and recruit additional partners.
2. Diversify range of goods & services in Mt. Airy that meet the everyday needs of Mt. Airy residents.
3. Upgrade conditions on commercial corridors: 6300–6700 blocks of Germantown Avenue and Chew Avenue.
4. Improve neighborhood infrastructure along commercial corridors and surrounding residential areas including parking and pedestrian environments.
5. Supported and facilitate expanded entrepreneurship.

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Literacy • Daycare • Mentoring • Tutoring

Improving neighborhood schools, both in terms of quality of education and in general perception, is a top priority action item. Mt. Airy USA partnered with East Mt. Airy Neighbors and West Mt. Airy Neighbors to form the Mt. Airy Schools Coalition. While there are plenty of spots available at local preschools and daycare facilities, there is a shortage of high-quality centers as defined by the Keystone STARS rating system. Mt. Airy 2025 calls for the vital need to improve the quality of early childhood education opportunities so that children are ready to successfully transition from preschool to kindergarten.



## 2025 STRATEGIES:

1. Continue activities outlined under Mt. Airy Schools Coalition Strategic Plan.
2. Convene an Early Childhood Education Task Force and recruit additional partners.
3. Determine needs of early childhood learning system in Mt. Airy target area.
4. Turn existing connections between early childhood and elementary schools into a network.
5. Build peer-to-peer network in target area.
6. Create special interest coalition to advocate for additional resources and to empower parents affected by the lack of quality early education services.



## SENIOR LIVING

Healthcare • Housing • Mobility • Transportation • Volunteering

From 2000 to 2013, older adults that are near retirement age (55 to 64 years old) experienced the biggest population increase in the study area. The percentage of retired individuals in Mt. Airy is likely to increase rapidly in the next five to ten years. The four strategies detailed here focus on identifying the resources currently available to seniors and creating a sustainable approach to providing effective care.



## 2025 STRATEGIES:

1. Research the needs of seniors and provide the mechanism to deliver these services through a Senior Hub.
2. Develop an online marketplace to match housing needs with surplus space in homes occupied by seniors.
3. Research the needs of seniors and build a hub reflective of these needs.
4. Expand and publicize residential options for seniors, assisting seniors maintain and/or modify their current homes, and advocate for the construction of new housing units that meet the needs of the growing senior population.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PLACEMAKING

Arts Partnerships • Community Programming • Volunteering • Infrastructure

The Resident Survey results indicated that while most residents are satisfied with living in Mt. Airy, they have deep concerns regarding community safety. The top response to the question, “What are the things that you like least about living in this community?” was “safety in the community.” In addition to crime, public safety concern is related to pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist safety. The three strategies detailed here focus on improving coordination among residents, police officers, civic organizations, city officials, and private businesses to address public safety issues in Mt. Airy.



## 2025 STRATEGIES:

1. Convene a Community Safety & Placemaking Task Force.
2. Facilitate the creation of community programming leading to stronger community bonds to increase the “eyes and ears” in the community.
3. Expand existing community safety structures to ensure full neighborhood coverage.

## HOMES AND HOUSING

Housing Counseling • Financial Literacy • Handling Hardships (Foreclosure)

The housing stock in Mt. Airy is considered one of its greatest assets. In the Resident Survey, nearly 60% of the respondents said their “house or apartment” is the best thing about living in Mt. Airy—far surpassing all other answers. Despite signs of a strong residential market in certain sections of the neighborhood, there are ongoing concerns with home foreclosures, absentee landlords, and deferred maintenance. In order to preserve the legacy of inclusion and diversity that Mt. Airy identifies as a defining characteristic, a comprehensive strategy must be implemented to expand housing options for all its residents and to improve the quality of older housing stock.



## 2025 STRATEGIES:

1. Create development plan/model for focus area; look for ways to maintain housing affordability within the neighborhood by engaging key block residents, political leadership, and City agencies, and prepare recommendations on redevelopment scenarios.
2. Educate and support prospective and current homeowners.
3. Participate in city, regional, and state level policy discussions and programs involving housing.
4. Manage the flow of housing production and rehabilitation in the neighborhood to preserve diversity and affordability; work with local partners and residents to create a plan for rehabilitation of old homes and new infill housing development on specific blocks of the neighborhood.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Volunteering • After-School Programs • Arts • Employment

At various meetings, residents expressed concerns over diminishing extracurricular and enrichment programs at the local schools due to budget cuts. Filling this void in youth programs and activities is a high priority action item for Mt. Airy 2025.



## 2025 STRATEGIES:

1. Develop engagement plan for local youth using American Community Survey data and a task force for youth policy and advocacy in Mt. Airy.
2. Support ongoing engagement, recruitment, and program development efforts for neighborhood residents ages 14-24.
3. Support and expand existing parents resource network.