



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

July 16, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Khalid Afzal, Georgia Avenue Team Leader (301/495-4650)
Community-Based Planning Division *KA*

SUBJECT: Staff Draft, Olney Master Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION: Approve Staff Draft as Public Hearing Draft and set September 18, 2003 as the Public Hearing date.

BACKGROUND:

The attached Olney Master Plan Staff Draft is a comprehensive amendment to the 1980 Olney Master Plan. This Staff Draft report is the result of a collaborative effort by the Community-Based Planning Division; Countywide Planning Division including Environmental, Transportation, Park Planning and Resource Analysis, and Historic Preservation units; and Research and Technology; the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, and the Department of Environmental Protection; the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC); and the State Highway Administration. The community input from various groups and individuals, especially the members of the Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG), was instrumental in shaping the recommendations contained in this document. Altogether, twenty meetings, including evening meetings, weekend charrettes, and focus groups, were held on a variety of topics.

The Master Plan update was initiated in July of 2001. The Planning Board approved the *Final Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report* in March 2002 and also appointed a 40-member Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) to bring the community's perspective to the planning process. Two other documents prepared during the master plan update process and published separately are: *Olney and Vicinity Environmental Resources Inventory* of April 2002; and *Olney Parks and Trails Analysis*. Supporting technical information published separately as an appendix to this Plan (but not part of the proposed Master Plan) includes the summary of the results of the Olney Community Issues Survey; *the Demographic Profile of Olney, the Commercial Profile of Olney, and the Muncaster Mill Corridor Study*.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

The proposed Plan refines the existing land use pattern in Olney to achieve the vision of Olney as an attractive, suburban residential community while maintaining the overall level of planned growth as anticipated in the 1980 Master Plan. The concept of Olney as a satellite town in the residential and agricultural wedge area of the County's General Plan continues to be the underlying framework for all land use planning in the area. At full build-out, the proposed zoning framework will allow up to 14,800 housing units for a total population of approximately 39,000 people, and more than 8,000 jobs in Olney.

Protection of environmental resources and the water supply in the Patuxent River watershed is a major goal of this Plan. It proposes acquisition of approximately 753 acres of parkland and recommends protection of open space through a combination of land use initiatives, regulatory controls, public-private partnerships, and implementation of best management practices. It strengthens the Agricultural Reserve in Northern Olney by creating more TDR receiving areas in the southern part of the planning area.

In the Southeast Quadrant, which contains the headwaters of Northwest Branch and is currently zoned for a mix of two and five-acre lots, the Plan retains a low-density transition area between the Town Center and the more rural communities of Sandy Spring and Ashton. It recommends that the new houses be clustered, where community sewer is available, to conserve open space and natural resources. It deletes some planned roadways in this area to minimize disturbance to forests, streams, wetlands and the existing residential community. It also recommends that Batchellors Forest Road be designated as a rustic road.

The Plan increases the existing range of housing types in the area to make sure that Olney is a diverse place to include people of all income, age, professional and ethnic groups. It creates new opportunities for a range of housing types in various locations and identifies specific public and private properties with the potential to create approximately 230 additional affordable housing units in Olney.

The Town Center is envisioned as a local, rather than a regional, shopping and service area that also serves as the focal point of the community's civic life. The proposed Plan allows a modest increase in the Town Center for both residential and commercial developments with significant amenities: residential to create a mixed-use Town Center; and commercial to support desired public improvements. This mix of uses will improve the balance of jobs and housing in the planning area. It identifies the Olney Elementary School site as a potential site for a civic center project if the school is not needed for educational purposes, and proposes circulation and urban design improvements to make the Town Center more pedestrian-oriented.

The Plan provides a network of roads, transit and non-motorized access that balances transportation needs and the goals of preserving environmental resources and protecting existing communities from the negative impacts of new roads. It deletes several planned roadways such as Emory Lane Extension, Barn Ridge Drive Extension,

Appomattox Avenue Extension, Buehler Road Connection, and Cherry Valley Drive Extension to protect residential communities and environmental resources. In Northern Olney, it recommends a two-lane road policy to protect the character of this rural area. A network of safe and convenient sidewalks, trails and bike paths is proposed to connect the Town Center and adjacent residential neighborhoods with recreation facilities, local parks, and the Countywide park trails system.

CONCLUSION:

Staff is delighted to have worked with the community and the MPAG to develop a balanced set of policies and recommendations to guide the future development in Olney in accordance with sound planning principles. We recommend that the Planning Board approve this document as the Public Hearing Draft to allow community review and input. We look forward to receiving public testimony on September 18, 2003 and the Planning Board's work sessions in the fall.

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