

MAY 2004

PLANNING BOARD DRAFT OLNEY MASTER PLAN



OLNEY MASTER PLAN PLANNING BOARD DRAFT

A comprehensive amendment to The Olney Master Plan, 1980; The Master Plan of Bikeways; The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; The Countywide Park Trails Plan; and The Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County.

Prepared by:

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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To be approved by:

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

To be adopted by:

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Planning Board Draft Olney Master Plan

AUTHOR: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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DATE: May 2004

PLANNING AGENCY: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
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Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

ABSTRACT: This master plan is a comprehensive AMENDMENT of land use, housing, zoning, transportation, environmental resources, and community facilities in the Olney Master Plan Area.

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

1. The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties;
2. The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
3. In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

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An area master plan, after approval by the County Council and adoption by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, constitutes an amendment to the General Plan for Montgomery County. As such, it provides a set of comprehensive recommendations and guidelines for the use of publicly and privately owned land within its plan area. Each area master plan reflects a vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a countywide perspective.

Area master plans are intended to provide a point of reference with regard to public policy. Together with relevant countywide functional master plans, master plans should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when decisions are made that affect the use of land within the plan's boundaries.

Master plans generally look ahead 20 years from the date of adoption, although it is intended that they be updated and revised every ten to fifteen years. The original circumstances at the time of plan adoption will change, and specifics of a master plan may become less relevant as time passes.

THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS

STAFF DRAFT PLAN — This document is prepared by the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning for presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the Staff Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes as appropriate, and approves the Plan for public hearing. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN — This document is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public hearing testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony on the Draft Plan. After the public hearing record is closed, the Planning Board holds public worksessions to review the testimony and to revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan.

PLANNING BOARD DRAFT PLAN — This document is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and it reflects the revisions made by the Planning Board in its worksessions on the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit the Master Plan directly to the County Council with copies to the County Executive. The Regional District Act then requires the County Executive, within sixty days, to prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the County Council other comments and recommendations regarding the Planning Board Draft Plan within the sixty-day period.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council may hold a public hearing to receive public testimony on the Master Plan. After the record of this public hearing is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board Draft Plan, as revised.

ADOPTED PLAN — The Master Plan approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the Plan officially amends the various master or sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

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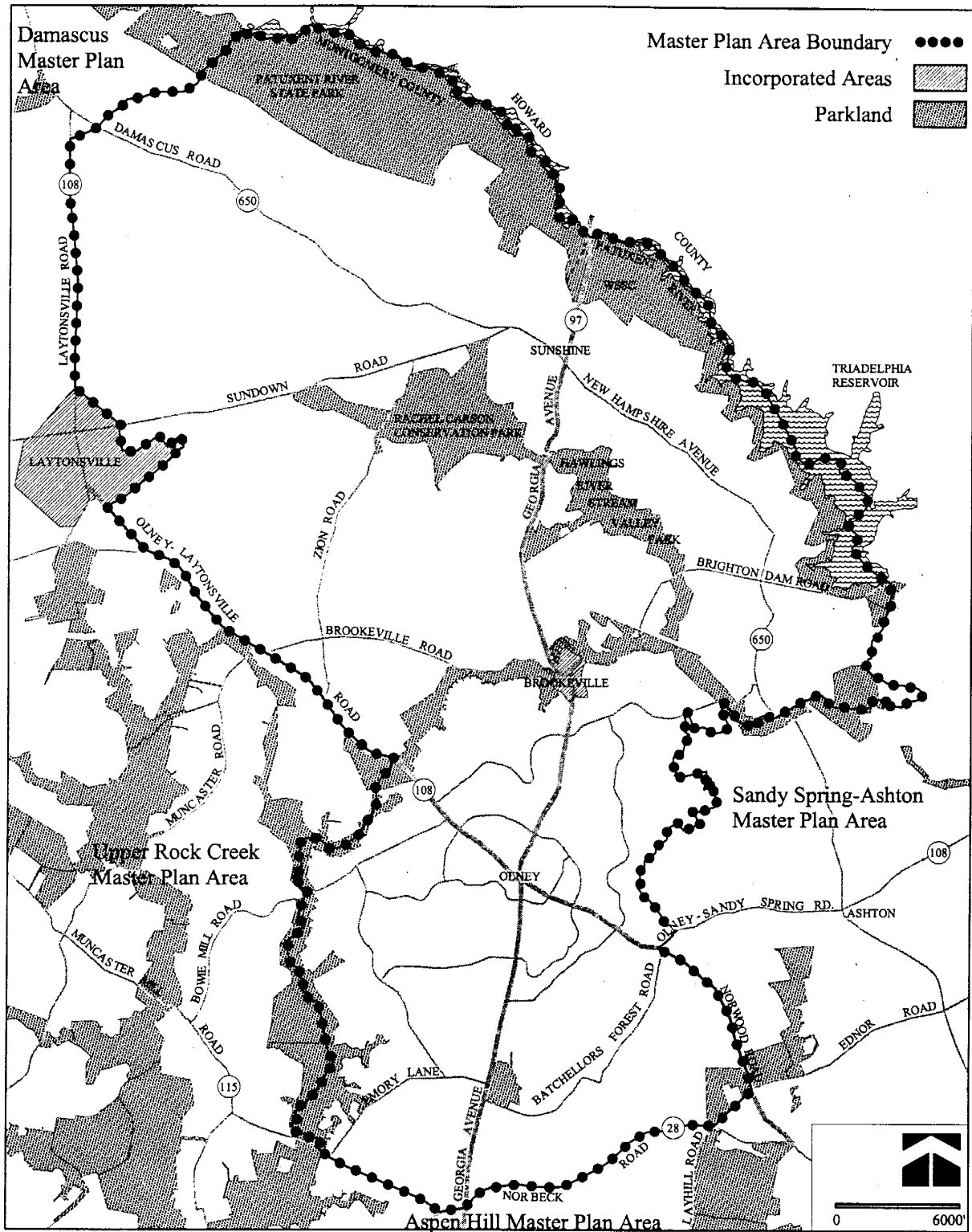
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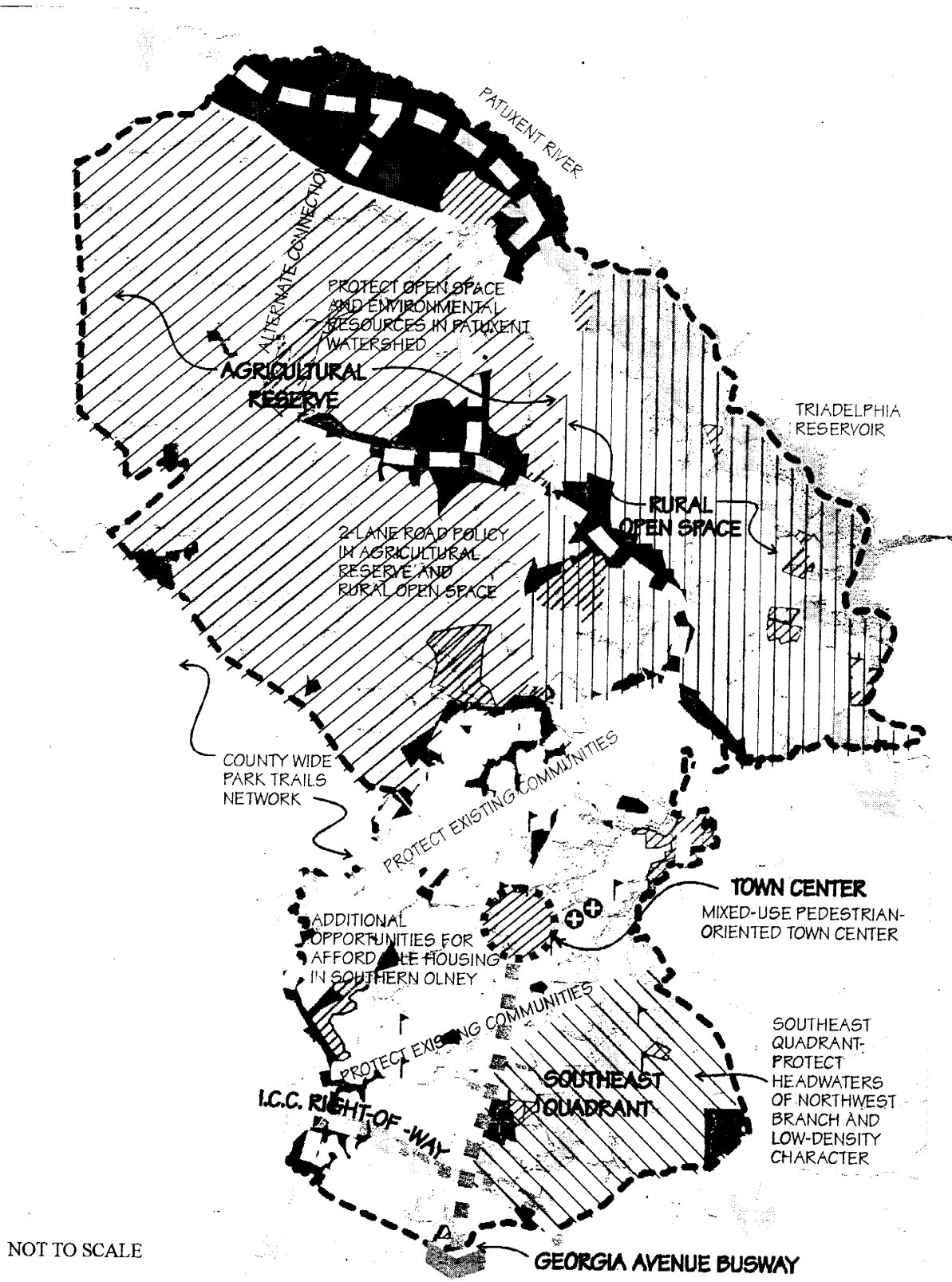
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Location Map



Planning Concept



NOT TO SCALE

SUMMARY

This Plan is a comprehensive amendment to the 1980 Olney Master Plan. Its purpose is to bring the area Master Plan up-to-date and guide future development of the area. It affirms the satellite town concept as the basic framework of land use planning in Olney and focuses on improving current land use patterns through infill development, preserving open space, and upgrading existing facilities.

Overall, the Plan proposes a slight increase from the current level of planned growth in the area. Under the 1980 Master Plan, the Olney area has the potential to generate approximately 950 additional housing units with an estimated full build-out of approximately 14,400 housing units in the future. The proposed Plan will have between 14,430 and 15,300 units in the Master Plan area resulting in a total population of 41,000 to 46,600 people. It supports increase in retail and commercial growth in the Town Center and the Montgomery General Hospital.

In Northern Olney, which covers approximately two-thirds of the Master Plan area, the Plan proposes acquisition of approximately 753 acres of forested land as parkland to protect the area's sensitive environmental resources. It recommends protection of open space critical to the County's drinking water resource--the Patuxent River--through a combination of land use initiatives, regulatory controls, public-private partnerships, and implementation of best management practices to reduce imperviousness and increase undisturbed natural open space in new developments. It supports agricultural preservation in Northern Olney through the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program by identifying an area near the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Road as suitable for receiving TDRs.

In Southern Olney, most of the vacant undeveloped land is 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 southeast Olney as a transition area between the Town Center and the more rural communities of Sandy Spring and Ashton. It maintains the current overall level of potential growth in the Southeast Quadrant and recommends that the new housing units be clustered, where community sewer is available, to conserve open space and natural resources. It also recommends that Batchellors Forest Road be designated as a rustic road.

The combination of quality suburban living with easy accessibility to the Washington Metropolitan Area continues to make Olney a desirable place to live resulting in higher housing costs. The Plan proposes additional opportunities to meet the area's need for more affordable housing at appropriate locations and densities. It identifies specific properties with the potential to increase affordable housing and recommends zoning changes that have the potential to further this goal.

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 Plan reinforces the Town Center by prohibiting commercial development outside the Town Center. It recommends rezoning the commercial core to encourage mixed-use developments with residential uses, and proposes circulation and urban design improvements to make the Town Center more pedestrian-oriented. It proposes an incentive zoning mechanism to

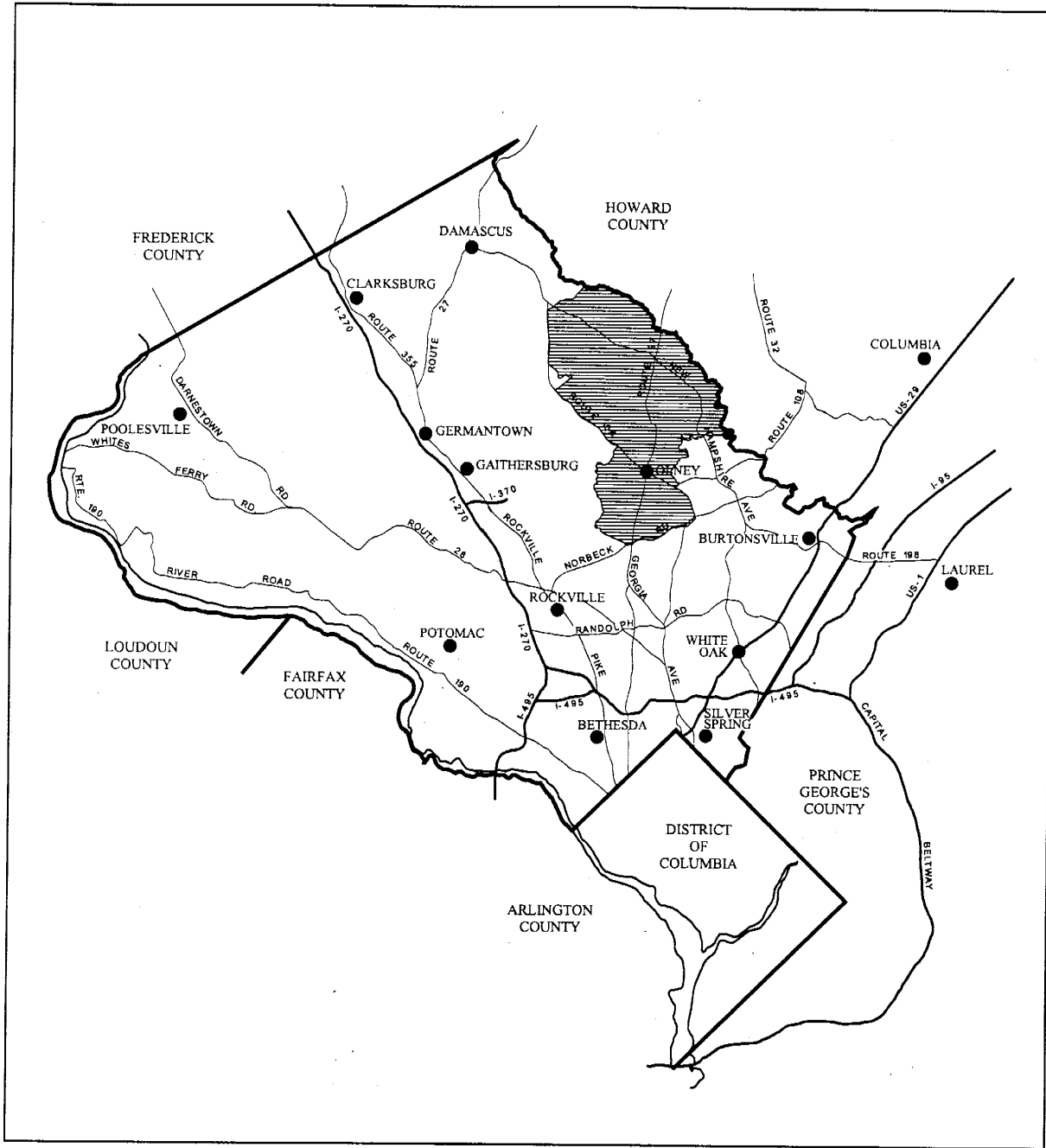
create outdoor public spaces and other amenities through additional commercial development in a more compact development pattern in the Town Center.



The proposed Plan recommends a network of regional and local transportation facilities to ensure that future land use will be adequately served without affecting existing communities and the area's environmental resources. It recommends the Intercounty Connector (ICC) and the Georgia Avenue Busway, and supports intersection improvements such as the interchange at Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Road. It deletes several planned but unbuilt portions of roadways, such as Emory Lane east of Georgia Avenue, Barn Ridge Drive to Batchellors Forest Road, the current alignment of Appomattox Avenue west of Marksman Circle, Buehler Road Connection, and Cherry Valley Drive across North Branch of Rock Creek, 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.

The Plan provides a network of safe and convenient sidewalks and bike paths to connect the Town Center and adjacent residential neighborhoods. It links Olney's residential communities through trails and bikeways with recreation facilities such as the Olney Boys and Girls Club, local parks, and the Countywide park system. It connects new and existing open spaces in Olney with the Countywide park trails network that surrounds Olney and extends from the Potomac River in the west to the Patuxent River in the north and the Northwest Branch in the east.

It provides protection for existing residential neighborhoods from the negative impacts of future growth. It recommends that the existing low-density character of Georgia Avenue between Norbeck Road and the Town Center be reinforced through careful design of future road improvements and a significant setback from the road for all new developments. Special exceptions with the potential to create a commercial appearance along major roads are discouraged. The Plan also recommends design guidelines for all future special exception uses to ensure that they do not create negative impacts on surrounding residential neighborhoods.

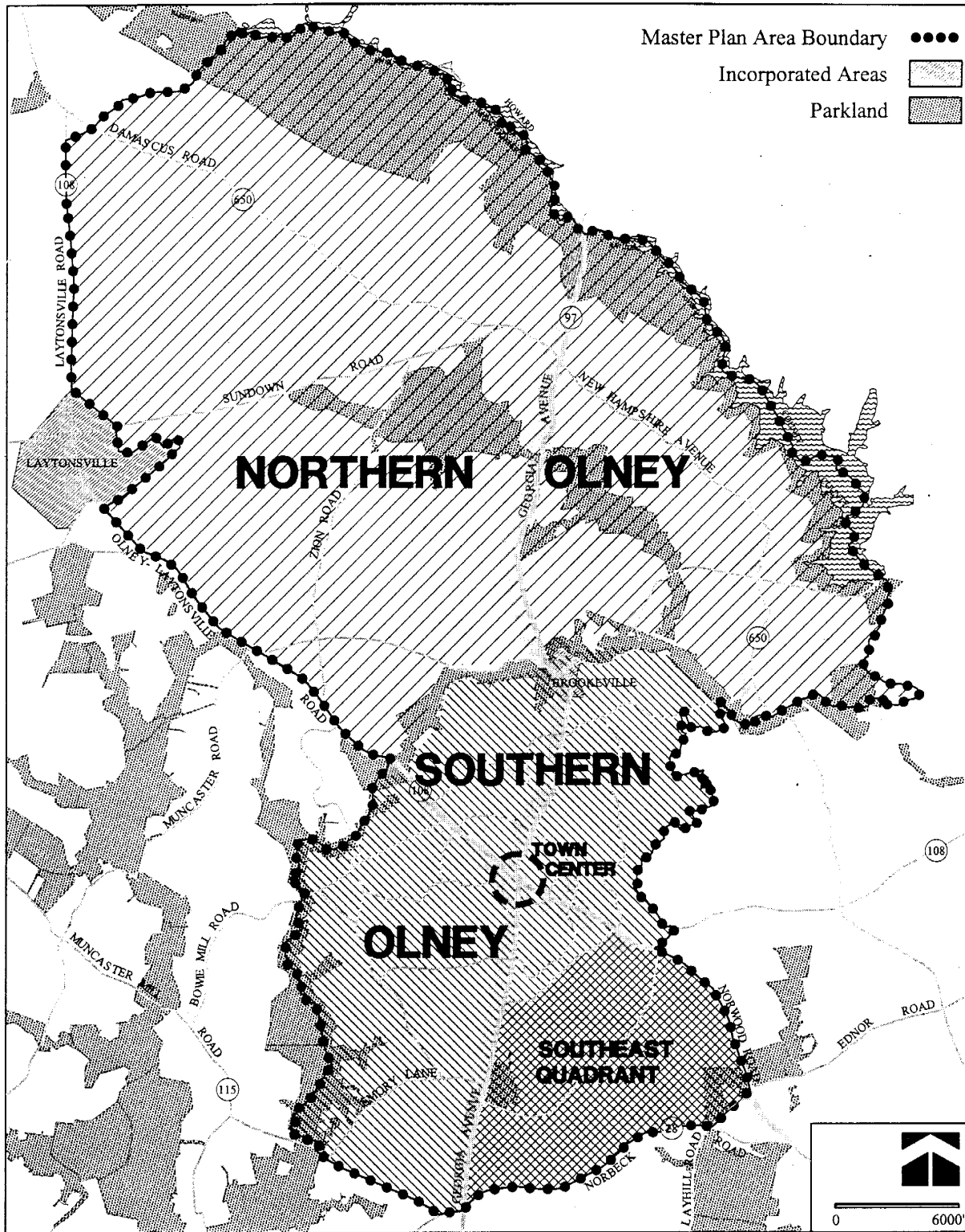
Regional Location



 Olney Master Plan Area
 County Boundary



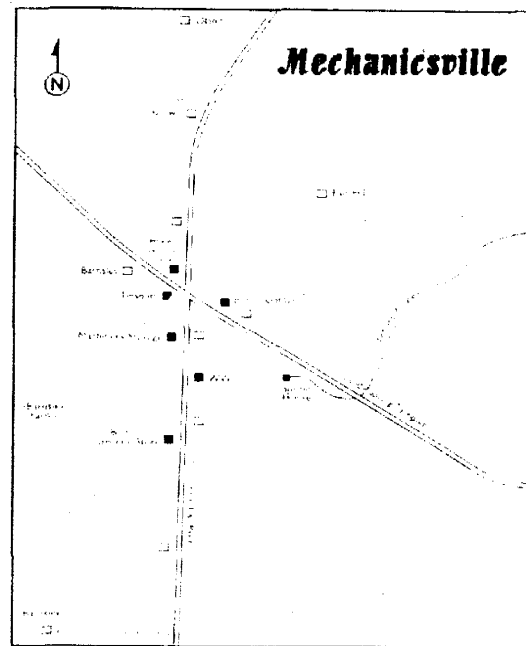
Geographic Areas



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Starting from a small settlement at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and MD 108, Olney has evolved into an attractive residential community of approximately 39,000 people. The Olney Master Plan Area encompasses approximately 30,600 acres (48 square miles) in the northeastern part of the County. It is bounded by the Patuxent River to the north and northeast; Hawlings River, parts of James Creek, MD 108, Dr. Bird, Norwood and Layhill Roads to the east; Norbeck and Muncaster Mill Roads to the south; and North Branch of Rock Creek Stream Valley Park and its eastern spur to MD 108, MD 108 to Laytonsville, MD 108 to Hipsley Mill Road, and Hipsley Mill Road on the west. The Town of Brookeville is not part of the Olney Master Plan since it has its own planning authority.



The Olney Master Plan Area has two distinct geographic components. Northern Olney is the area generally north of the Town of Brookeville and Reddy Branch Park. It includes the Agricultural Reserve on the west side, and the rural open space on the east side of Georgia Avenue. Southern Olney is the rest of the Master Plan area to the south and includes the Town Center around the intersection of Georgia Avenue and MD 108, and the Southeast Quadrant, which is the area bounded by Old Baltimore Road, MD 108, Dr. Bird Road, Norwood Road, Layhill Road, Norbeck Road, and Georgia Avenue. More than 91 percent of the Master Plan area's housing units are located in southern Olney.

The Olney Master Plan was last updated in 1980. This amendment presents an opportunity to review comprehensively the current planning policies and community concerns in the area, and employ the latest planning tools to achieve them. The proposed amendment will be a part of the planning review of master plans in the Northern Headwaters of Montgomery County including the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan to the west and the Damascus Master Plan to the northwest of Olney. It will also bring the planning area up to date with the 1998 update of the Master Plan for the Sandy Spring/Ashton area located to the east of the Olney Planning Area.

Master Plan Process

The Master Plan update was initiated in July of 2001. The first phase was designed to collect requisite data and identify the issues that would be addressed in the Plan. 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. The second phase consisted of exploring and analyzing alternatives and developing staff recommendations for the proposed Plan. Twenty public meetings, including evening meetings, weekend charrettes, open houses, and focus groups, were held during the amendment process on a variety of topics. All master plan meetings were open to the public, providing equal opportunities to MPAG members and the general public alike. A Community Issues Survey distributed through MPAG meetings, the Olney Library, the Longwood Recreation Center, public schools, and the Commission web site drew more than 920 responses.

Two other documents, prepared during the master plan update process and published separately, formed the basis of some of this Plan's recommendations. They 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 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.

Relationship to Other Master Plans

The proposed Master Plan amends all other area and functional master plans applicable in the Olney Planning Area. The relationship of the Olney Master Plan to other adjoining area master plans is shown in the location map. The proposed Plan modifies the boundaries of the adjoining Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan to incorporate a portion of the Mess property that was previously included in the Sandy Spring Master Plan. The Plan does not propose land use and zoning for the towns of Laytonsville and Brookeville since they have their own planning and zoning authority.

PLANNING HISTORY

The recent planning history of the area starts with the 1964 General Plan for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, which identified Olney as a satellite community in one of the wedge areas of its "Wedges and Corridors" concept.

The 1966 Olney and Vicinity Master Plan built upon the 1964 General Plan's vision of wedges and corridors with Olney as one of three satellite communities. It envisioned Olney as a suburban residential community of no more than 29,000 people with a 75-acre shopping district. It was based on an overall average density of 4.0 persons per acre in a pattern of single-family homes on large lots, which was achieved by reducing densities on some 11,000 acres in the Hawlings River watershed from one-half acre to two-acre lots. The basic land use concept was that of a greenbelt community.

The 1980 Olney Master Plan further crystallized the concept of Olney as a satellite town. It determined that the preservation of farmland and rural open space was a critical issue and that the upper portion of Olney should remain rural. It recommended that most of the new development be concentrated in and around the intersection of Georgia Avenue and MD 108. The principal mechanism for achieving this goal was the innovative Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, which transferred potential development from farmland to designated locations south of Brookeville. The program was instrumental in expanding the range of housing opportunities to create a full lifecycle community in Olney, a major goal of the 1980 Master Plan.

The 1980 Master Plan reinforced the Town Center by discouraging expansion or creation of commercial areas outside the commercial core. It also proposed some other provisions such as wider stream buffers that later became standard Countywide.

The 1980 Functional Master Plan for Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space expanded the 1980 Olney Master Plan's concept of agricultural and open space preservation to the rest of the County's agricultural area. Along with zoning, and sewer and water policies, the TDR program has preserved more than 40,000 acres of land Countywide through permanent easements.

The 1992 Maryland Planning Act defined seven visions that are affirmed by this Plan: 1) development to be concentrated in suitable areas; 2) sensitive areas to be protected; 3) in rural areas growth to be directed to existing population centers and resources to be protected; 4) stewardship of Chesapeake Bay and the land to be considered a universal ethic; 5) conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption to be practiced; 6) economic growth to be encouraged and regulatory mechanisms to be streamlined to achieve objectives one through five; and 7) funding mechanisms to be addressed to achieve these objectives. The proposed Olney Master Plan affirms these seven objectives.

The 1993 Montgomery County General Plan Refinement updated the goals and objectives of the 1964 General Plan on Wedges and Corridors. It affirmed the Wedges and Corridors concept as a framework for development in Montgomery County.

The 1993 Patuxent River Watershed Functional Master Plan established policy recommendations to restore and maintain water quality in the river's watershed in Montgomery County.

The 1995 Amendment to the Master Plans for Gaithersburg Vicinity, Upper Rock Creek, Olney, and Aspen Hill was a limited amendment that changed the roadway classification of Muncaster Mill Road from a Primary to an Arterial in Olney.

The 1996 Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan provided a system for evaluating, protecting and enhancing scenic roadways that reflect the County's agricultural and rural origins. The Plan designates all or parts of roads with rural vistas and other attributes as Rustic, Exceptional Rustic, Country Arterial, and Country Roads. It also identifies some of the roads as Interim Rustic, which must be analyzed in the relevant master plan updates, and either determined as Rustic or removed from the Rustic Roads Master Plan altogether.

Maryland's 1997 Smart Growth Policy supports growth in appropriate areas and limits development in agricultural and other resource areas by limiting State resources to existing communities and not subsidizing infrastructure in other areas. The Policy's Priority Funding Areas concept includes criteria for counties to designate additional funding areas. In 1998, the Planning Board designated areas of higher than one unit per acre densities in and around Olney's Town Center as Priority Funding Areas.

The 1998 Countywide Stream Protection Strategy is a comprehensive review of stream quality and habitat that helps public agencies identify and provide funding for specific watershed-based resource protection initiatives.

The 1998 Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan explores future demand for recreational facilities within the County's 28,000-acre park system and determines which natural and historic areas should be preserved as open space.

The 1998 Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan strengthened the rural character of these communities and their cultural heritage through preservation of large open spaces, creation of a Rural Legacy Trail, and preservation of scenic vistas from the trail. It included some properties formerly within the Olney Master Plan Area and thus amended the Olney Plan's eastern boundary.

The 1998 Countywide Park Trails Plan is a blueprint for creating a system of interconnected hard and natural surface trails in parkland. The plan's objective for the Olney area is to connect the Rock Creek and the Northwest Branch Trail corridors to the Patuxent River corridor.

The Department of Park and Planning's 1998 Georgia Avenue Busway Study evaluated the feasibility of providing an express busway along Georgia Avenue between Olney and the Glenmont Metro Station, and confirmed that such a busway is needed and feasible.

The County's 2001 Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan supports protection of natural and cultural resources through public acquisition and easements for properties that otherwise would not be protected through standard regulatory controls. The plan identifies known resources and also defines a process for selecting sites, setting spending priorities, implementing the program and measuring its progress.

The Planning Board's 2002 Transportation Policy Report recommended a vision and principles for future land use and transportation plans and described a recommended transportation network that will be reflected through the Master Plan of Highways and appropriate area master plans. It also included an alternate Land Use Plan that improved the jobs and housing balance throughout Montgomery County to increase opportunities to live near employment places.

POPULATION PROFILE

The 1980 Master Plan was based on a projected 1995 population of 26,000 to 32,000 people. The 1997 estimated population was 33,300. The biggest increase occurred between 1984 and 1997 when the area population grew 84 percent from 18,100 to 33,300. This rate of growth far exceeded the County's level of 36 percent. The 2000 Census counted 35,600 people in Olney--4 percent of the County's total population, while the 2003 Census Update survey by the M-NCPPC estimates Olney's population to be 39,260. The following are the key findings of the Master Plan area's population and housing statistics.

Nearly 89 percent (nine out of ten) of Olney households are families (two or more related persons) compared to 75 percent Countywide. Most households have one or more children. Almost seven out of ten households are composed of three or more persons. With an average size of 3.24 persons, households in Olney tend to be larger than the County's average of 2.7 persons per household.

The Olney area differs from the County in that it has more of its total population in the 5 to 17-year age range. In 2003, Olney had slightly more than 24 percent of its population in this age group while the County had 19.5 percent. The two also differ in terms of the 65 and older age group: Olney had nearly 3 percent in that group versus the County's more than 6 percent. This profile is consistent with the fact that most of the housing stock in the area is fairly new and has attracted younger households.

Minorities make up a slightly smaller share of the total population in the area than at the Countywide level, even though the area's minority population increased from nearly 7.5 percent in 1984 to 20.5 percent in 2003. Asian Americans, the second largest group in 2000, are now (2003) the largest minority group at 9 percent of the population in Olney followed by persons of Hispanic origin at more than 8 percent. African Americans, the largest minority at more than 7 percent in 2000, have slipped to third place with the same 7 percent of the total population. (Countywide, African Americans are still the largest minority at 14 percent.)

Olney is one of the more affluent areas of the County. In 2003, the local median household income was \$104,745 while the Countywide median income was \$79,115. Only six other County planning areas (out of a total of 21) had median income higher than Olney.

Thirty percent of Olney residents earned a graduate degree and 37 percent hold a bachelor's degree. The graduate degree numbers are slightly less than the County's 34 percent, but for the population that holds a bachelor's degree the area is ahead of the County.

In 2003, 72 percent of households in Olney resided in single-family detached units compared with 50 percent for the County. Only six other planning areas had the majority of their housing stock in detached houses. Home prices in the area are the thirteenth highest out of the 21 planning areas in the County.

Of the planning area's 22,190 employed residents, 64 percent work within Montgomery County. Of the 36 percent who work outside the County, 16 percent work in the District of Columbia, 8 percent in Virginia, and the remaining 12 percent work at other locations in the region.

Based on the Census 2000 estimates, of the 64 percent who work within the County, nearly 50 percent work at locations outside the Beltway: 18 percent in Rockville, 13 percent in Aspen Hill/Olney area, 6 percent in Gaithersburg, and the remaining 13 percent at various locations around the County.

A large majority of the area workers, approximately 82 percent, travel alone by car, 4 percent car pool, 8 percent use public transit, 5 percent work at home, and less than 2 percent walk or bike to work. The average commute time for Olney area residents is 33 minutes, 3 minutes longer than the County average.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Olney is bordered to the north and east by rural areas of Montgomery and Howard Counties and to the south and west by more densely populated residential and commercial areas. Georgia Avenue and MD 108 are two State highways that connect Olney to its surrounding communities and beyond. They will continue to carry increasing amounts of through traffic generated by new growth in the region, as other jurisdictions in the region will continue to grow and add more through traffic in the planning area. Traffic congestion, over-development, and loss of open space were cited most often by the community in surveys and other forums as the biggest issues facing the area today. The overarching challenge for the Olney Master Plan is maintaining the area's quality of life in the face of local and regional growth and related future traffic congestion.

Protection of environmental resources and open space is another major concern for the Olney area. Northern Olney comprises approximately two-thirds of the Master Plan Area—all of it in the Patuxent River watershed. This area is designated as agricultural and rural open space and drains into the Triadelphia Reservoir. Although a combination of 25-acre and 5-acre zoning and agricultural preservation programs have helped protect environmental resources in the area, more needs to be done to protect the Patuxent River watershed as an environmental and drinking water resource.

The Southeast Quadrant of Olney contains the headwaters of Northwest Branch and significant environmental resources, some of them on vacant and redevelopable parcels. Batchellors Forest Road, the only through road in this quadrant, has visual attributes that qualify it as a Rustic Road. This quadrant also has the largest grouping of vacant and redevelopable land—approximately 880 acres—in Southern Olney. The challenge here is to preserve the environmental resources and rustic character of Batchellors Forest Road through zoning and other regulatory controls.

Olney is an attractive housing location. Its high quality of life also results in higher housing costs. The average new single-family house or townhouse is out of the reach of a family with income in the median range. One of the Plan's challenges is to expand the inventory of affordable housing in the area to meet the County's goal of providing adequate housing for its low to middle-income families and young professionals.

Another challenge for the Olney Master Plan is the Olney Town Center, which defines the identity and character of Olney. The current Town Center is a collection of strip shopping centers. It is car-oriented and lacks public amenities and a civic focus. The community wants an attractive, pedestrian-oriented Town Center with an identifiable character that can serve as a place for the community's civic events and festivals. The challenge is to create a zoning and regulatory mechanism that, through redevelopment of existing properties over a long period of time, would result in a Town Center that meets the community's desires and needs.

LAND USE PLAN

Goals:

1. *Reinforce the concept of Olney as a satellite community in the residential and agricultural wedge area.*
2. *Protect the Patuxent watershed including the drinking water reservoir, and agricultural and rural open space.*
3. *Protect the low-density character of the Southeast Quadrant.*
4. *Provide a wide choice of housing types and neighborhoods for people of all income levels and ages at appropriate densities and locations.*

INTRODUCTION

Olney has a well-defined land use pattern that evolved over the past 40 years according to the County's General Plan, the 1980 Master Plan, and other local and regional policies. It is dominated by agricultural and rural open space in the northern portion and a suburban residential area with a range of low to medium densities in the southern portion of the planning area. It experienced significant growth in the past 20 years, most of which was located on the east side of Georgia Avenue south of Gold Mine Road where large tracts of vacant land were available for new development.

Today, there are approximately 8,130 acres of developable land in the entire Master Plan area, which, under current zoning and development controls, have the potential to generate approximately 950 additional housing units for a total build-out of approximately 14,400 units in the entire Master Plan area. Approximately 78 percent of the 8,130 acres of vacant and redevelopable land (6,365 acres) is located in Northern Olney. In Southern Olney most of the vacant undeveloped land is in the Southeast Quadrant, which is currently zoned for a mix of two and five-acre densities.

THE PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

The proposed Land Use Plan generally maintains the current distribution of land uses in the Master Plan area. It envisions the Olney of the future to be a more refined picture of what is there today, and applies the most recent planning and regulatory mechanisms to the few areas that have the potential for redevelopment in the future. It anticipates approximately 400 new housing units in the Town Center and recommends rezoning of some of the vacant and redevelopable properties in Southern Olney adding between 400 to 1,150 housing units to the current remaining capacity of approximately 950 housing units for the entire Master Plan area. At full build-out, the area is expected to have approximately 14,430 to 15,300 units resulting in a maximum projected population of 41,100 to 46,600 persons in Olney.

The Town Center, a major component of the proposed Land Use Plan, is discussed as a separate chapter following this one. The Land Use Chapter is organized into five sections:

1. Olney as a Satellite Town lays out the overall framework which guides the level of jobs and housing growth in the area;
2. Northern Olney, where the original concept of preserving agricultural and rural open space is strengthened by focusing on the protection of water supply and sensitive natural resources;
3. The Southeast Quadrant, where the focus is on low-density character and open space along stream valleys that form the headwaters of the Northwest Branch;
4. The Specific Properties section includes detailed descriptions of individual properties with significant potential for development, and all of the vacant and redevelopable properties in the Southeast Quadrant, and recommends zoning changes and development guidelines for each property; and
5. The Protection of Existing Communities section includes guidelines for protecting existing neighborhoods from potential negative impacts of special exceptions.

OLNEY AS A SATELLITE TOWN

Olney is a true satellite community: it has local facilities and services but it relies on the District of Columbia, the I-270 corridor, the I-95 corridor, and other locations for employment, specialty shopping, and regional services. It is not intended to be an independent, self-sufficient entity with enough density and mass to function on its own. This concept has been an important component of land use planning in the area since the 1964 General Plan. Olney is mainly a housing resource and all commercial and community services are meant for local residents. People choose to live here with the knowledge that they may face some inconvenience in getting to larger facilities and services if they want to have the semi-rural suburban lifestyle associated with Olney.

The Olney Master Plan Area, according to the 2003 Census Update, has approximately 12,662 housing units with another 532 in the pipeline (approved but not built yet) for a total of 13,194 units. The Town Center and Montgomery General Hospital are the two major locations for retail and office employment. Of the approximately 7,500 jobs in the planning area, 3,100 are within the Town Center and the hospital site. The hospital, with close to 1,300 employees, is the largest employer in the area. It is expected to grow about ten percent in the next 10 years.

Reinforcing this satellite town concept requires that the existing land use pattern of Olney as a suburban housing resource with a local retail and service center be further strengthened by directing all future retail and commercial growth into the Town Center. The growth of employment at the hospital and local retail/services in the Town Center would be consistent with that concept. Additional commercial space in the Town Center can be supported by the transportation infrastructure if it draws its customer base from the local population.

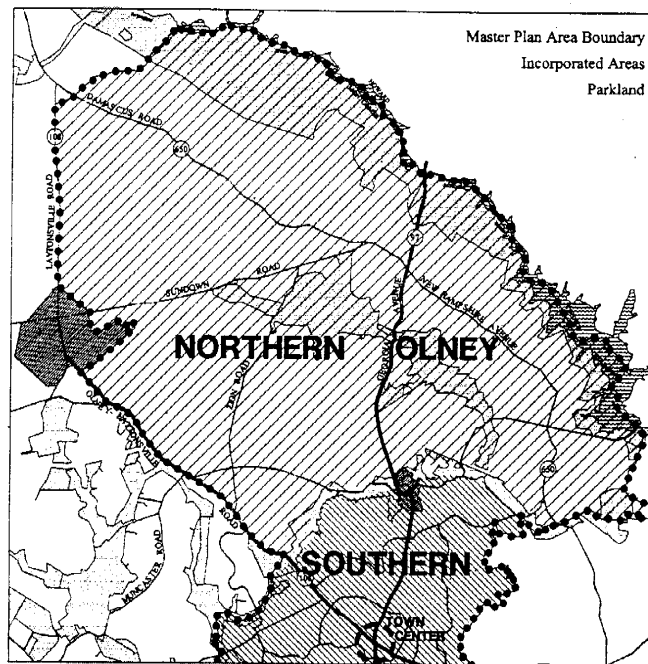
uses outside the Town Center either through rezoning or special exceptions. With the exception of Montgomery General Hospital, all retail and commercial growth should be oriented to local services and employment. Future expansion of Montgomery General Hospital should be supported on its main campus as well as on the vacant site across the street from the main campus.

Recommendations:

1. **Retain the current land use pattern of Olney as a satellite community in the rural and residential wedge of the County's overall Land Use Plan.**
2. **Discourage expansion of commercial uses outside the Town Center. Do not expand the current commercial uses at Sunshine (Georgia/New Hampshire) and Norbeck (Georgia/Norbeck).**
3. **Support additional growth in local retail and commercial uses in the Town Center.**
4. **Support Montgomery General Hospital as the major employer in Olney.**

NORTHERN OLNEY

Northern Olney is all of the area north of the Town of Brookeville. It includes a portion of the Patuxent River mainstem watershed and the entirety of the Hawlings River watershed, a major tributary of the Patuxent River. The planning area portion of the Patuxent River mainstem watershed drains to the Triadelphia Reservoir, and the Hawlings River joins the mainstem downstream of the Triadelphia Reservoir. Water from the Hawlings River combines with that from the mainstem to fill the T. Howard Duckett Reservoir further downstream, outside the planning area. Both reservoirs are part of the drinking water system maintained by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission for service to Montgomery and adjacent counties.



Zoning in these watersheds was specifically designed to maintain rural character by transferring the development from the area west of Georgia Avenue and concentrating it around the Town Center. The current zoning of one unit per 25 acres (RDT Zone) and the existing uses in the Patuxent and Hawlings River watersheds have provided significant protection to the area's environmental resources, and should be maintained. There is some potential for residential development under current zoning in the agricultural and rural

open space area west of Georgia Avenue, which may affect some parcels with large tracts of forest and wetlands. The rural area east of Georgia Avenue is zoned for one unit per five acres. Although most of this area has been developed, there are several undeveloped properties adjacent to the Triadelphia Reservoir that could pose concerns if developed to their full densities in the future.

Northern Olney today has approximately 6,365 acres of vacant and redevelopable land. No zoning changes are recommended for Northern Olney since the current zoning and land use framework is appropriate for this area. Agriculture and rural open space in the area west of Georgia Avenue and rural open space in the area east of Georgia Avenue should be the recommended primary land uses. Continued stewardship and management of agricultural lands through the agricultural protection and open space conservation programs will help maintain and improve the environmental health of this area. The Department of Environmental Protection has identified specific projects that can restore stream conditions and reduce impacts from existing development. As Northern Olney faces increasing pressure for more development, additional tools are recommended to be used to protect resources important to water supply protection and sensitive natural resources. The Legacy Open Space Program is one of those tools and is described in detail in the Implementation Chapter. Approximately 753 acres in Northern Olney are targeted for preservation through Legacy Open Space and other programs, reducing the potential residential and commercial growth in the area by about 80 units. Where residential development is unavoidable, impervious areas should be clustered away from natural resources as much as possible. Preservation of rural vistas should also be an important consideration in Northern Olney.

Former Oaks Landfill

The Montgomery County Solid Waste Plan adopted by the County Council in 1978 created the Oaks Landfill on the north side of MD 108 near Fieldcrest Road. The landfill operations closed in 1997. The 560-acre property is zoned RDT and owned by the County. The area around the site is an agricultural and rural open space area, and should remain in those uses. Currently, the landfill proper is surrounded by a fence and is not accessible to the public. Some of the property surrounding the landfill has trails and ballfields with limited parking spaces. The full site will not be available for other uses until the landfill has settled and is safe for public access.

The current zoning of the site should be retained, and the site should be preserved for future recreation purposes. Temporary use of portions of the site for uses other than recreation should continue as long as they are compatible with the surrounding agricultural and rural nature of the area. Uses that could severely limit opportunities for the site as a recreation resource in the future should be prohibited.

Recommendations:

- 1. Retain the current RDT Zone on the west side of Georgia Avenue and RC Zone on the east side of Georgia Avenue in Northern Olney.**

2. **Protect forested areas and wetlands, particularly the large interior forests on the Spurrier (Becker), Carmen, Mitchell, Nash, Central Union Mission and Pepco properties. Consider Legacy Open Space funding and forest conservation banking for easement protection. Add the Carmen property and portions of the Spurrier, Mitchell, Central Union Mission and Nash properties to proposed parkland (see Implementation Chapter for Legacy Open Space recommendations for these properties). If development is proposed on these properties, use appropriate regulatory and park dedication tools to protect the key resource areas.**
3. **Protect forested areas and wetlands that contribute to the health of the drinking water supply through the development process and applicable conservation programs.**
4. **Retain the former Oaks Landfill site in public ownership for potential recreation use in the future.**

Rural Communities

There are two rural communities in Northern Olney: Mt. Zion and Sunshine/Unity. Brookeville, an incorporated town, is a third rural community within the planning area boundaries, but it is not part of the Master Plan since it has its own planning and zoning authority. These communities are an integral part of the rural heritage of Northern Olney. They are older settlements with well-known place names, and the people who live there have historical ties to the community.

Mt. Zion

Prior to the Civil War, African-Americans were attracted to this part of the County because of the anti-slavery sentiment that prevailed among the local Quaker and Methodist communities in the Olney-Brookeville-Sandy Spring area. Mt. Zion is a crossroads community historically notable as one of approximately 14 settlements in the County that were formed after the Civil War by freed slaves. It survives as an important and tangible reminder of the County's African-American history. The existing community has remained stable, and now includes some vacant lots that can be redeveloped under current zoning. In the late 1980's, public water service was provided throughout much of the Mt. Zion community to relieve well problems prevalent in the area. This was coordinated with the extension of public water service around the Oaks Landfill. The current zoning and land use policies in and around Mt. Zion are appropriate and should be retained.

Sunshine and Unity Area

The boundaries of the villages of Sunshine and Unity are not well defined and houses are not concentrated in one location. Both villages are on the north side of Damascus Road, with Sunshine centered on Georgia Avenue and Unity to the west, extending up to Howard Chapel Road. Sunshine today is a small commercial area at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Damascus Road, with a post office, a church, a general store, a pet/farm

animal supply store, an engine parts store, and a couple of vacant storefronts. This is the only commercially zoned pocket north of the Town of Brookeville. It should be retained but no expansion of commercial zoning should be permitted.

The Town of Brookeville

The Town of Brookeville is located on Georgia Avenue just north of Olney. It is a crossroads village, with most of the houses located along the two main streets, Market and High. In 1890, the town became incorporated with a local government and three commissioners.

Brookeville is an important historic resource for Olney and the entire County. Over the years, the land use and zoning recommendations for the Olney Planning Area have helped preserve Brookeville's historic setting. The proposed relocation of Georgia Avenue, the Brookeville Bypass, which would relocate MD 97 to the west of Brookeville, should be constructed to preserve the town's historic character.

Recommendations:

Maintain the character and existing scale of development in the rural communities in Northern Olney. Prohibit additional zoning for commercial uses, or expansion of commercially zoned areas in these communities.