

Recommendation:

Preserve any portion of the property outside the ICC right-of-way as open space to mitigate ICC impacts. If not used for the ICC, this property should be considered for affordable elderly housing.

PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITIES

Protecting the existing communities from potential negative impacts of future growth is a significant objective of the Olney Master Plan, achieved mainly by discouraging proliferation of commercial uses outside the Town Center. It also identifies two areas that will need special attention in the future to achieve the objective of protecting existing communities: Georgia Avenue between Norbeck Road and the Town Center; and the possibility of large special exception uses not envisioned in this Plan.

Georgia Avenue Between Norbeck Road and MD 108

Georgia Avenue between Norbeck Road and the Town Center should have an open, semi-rural appearance to mark the transition from more densely populated areas south of Norbeck Road to the low-density suburban character of Olney. A minimum 100-foot setback for any dwelling or other structure along this stretch should be provided from the road right-of-way. Additional landscaping and vegetation should also be used to make sure that main views along the road are trees and vegetation and not the houses and other buildings. The presence of two golf ranges on the east side of Georgia Avenue has impacted the green boulevard and semi-rural appearance of the road, but this can be mitigated through additional vegetation and greenery over time. Any future special exceptions along this area should be landscaped such that they are not visible from the road. In particular, their lighting design should be carefully considered to make sure no halo effect or nightglow is produced by excessive lighting. The proposed Georgia Avenue Busway should incorporate design measures including landscaping to mitigate the additional pavement of the busway.

Recommendations:

Protect the low-density, open space character of Georgia Avenue between Norbeck Road and the Town Center as a gateway to Olney. Design all road improvements north of Norbeck Road to minimize impacts on the open, semi-rural feel of the area.

Special Exceptions

Special exceptions are specific uses defined in the Zoning Ordinance and may be allowed if they meet the requirements for such uses as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

Two properties in Olney are suitable for special exception uses. One is the Silo Inn property on the west side of Georgia Avenue near the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Emory Church Road. The other is the Tower Company's property near the intersection of

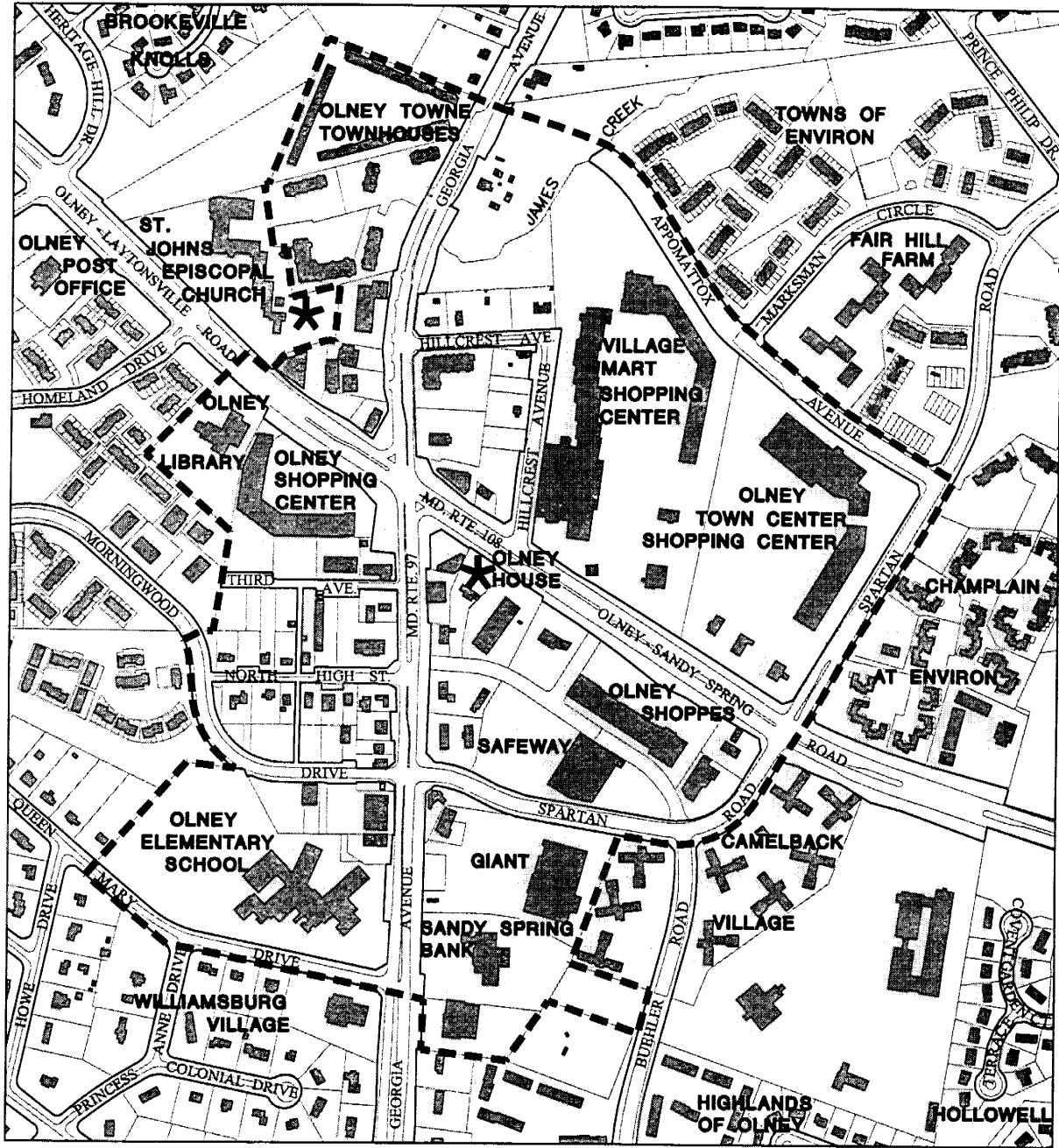
Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Road (see specific properties section for a detailed discussion of these two properties and recommendations). Special exception projects on these two properties, and others not envisioned by this Plan, should be compatible with the development pattern of the adjoining uses in terms of height, size, scale, traffic and visual impact of the structures and parking lots.



In addition, special exception uses of a commercial nature that do not need large properties and can be located in the Town Center should be discouraged in residential areas, especially along major streets. The section of Georgia Avenue between Norbeck Road and the Town Center especially should be kept free of any large uses that would change its low-density residential character and create pressure to allow other such developments along this stretch.

Recommendations:

- 1. Discourage special exception uses along Georgia Avenue between Norbeck Road and the Town Center to preserve its low-density residential character.**
- 2. Minimize the negative impacts of special exception uses such as non-residential character, visibility of parking lots, excessive size, height and scale of buildings, and intrusive lighting.**
- 3. Discourage special exception uses with excessive imperviousness levels.**

Town Center Context



-  HISTORIC SITES
-  OLNEY TOWN CENTER BOUNDARY



0 600'

TOWN CENTER PLAN

Goals:

Create an economically healthy, attractive, pedestrian-oriented, and well connected Town Center to be the commercial and civic heart of the community. Explore the feasibility of a civic center (library, service center, police substation, community meeting space, teen center) in the Town Center.

INTRODUCTION

The Olney Town Center is the commercial area around the intersection of Georgia Avenue and MD 108. It covers approximately 90 acres and contains some 150 stores and other commercial establishments in more than 820,000 square feet of commercial space, approximately 550,000 square feet of it retail. Georgia Avenue and MD 108 intersect and divide the Town Center into four quadrants, which include four strip shopping centers—the two largest ones in the Northeast Quadrant—and numerous other businesses. The neighborhoods around the Town Center consist of townhouses, garden apartments and single-family houses.

The Town Center is located in the Upper Rock Creek and the Hawlings River watersheds. Both the Hawlings River and the North Branch of Rock Creek are sensitive watersheds, and the area around the Town Center is designated for several actions to improve water quality through watershed restoration action plans prepared by the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (see Environmental Resources Chapter).

MAJOR ISSUES

Although the Town Center has been successful in adhering to the Master Plan policies and preventing the spread of commercial strips along major roads, it is presently a suburban crossroads with a collection of strip shopping centers and individual stores. It is not pedestrian-oriented and it lacks easy and convenient connections among the different shopping centers. A direct vehicular connection between Village Mart and the Olney Shopping Center in the Northeast Quadrant has been one of the more prominent circulation issues in the recent past. Long distances between shopping centers, created partly by large parking lots, and the lack of safe and pleasant walkways make pedestrian circulation in the Town Center challenging.

The Olney community has been exploring the possibility of a civic center in Olney where multiple public facilities could be sited in one location. In 2000, the Olney Community Center Task Force, a joint effort by the Greater Olney Civic Association and the Olney Chamber of Commerce, requested the County not only to expand and renovate the current library space but to “address the long standing problem of trying to locate a permanent home for a number of other County services such as the Olney Police satellite office and the Olney satellite office of the Mid-County Regional Services Center.” The goal was to have a place where a variety of County services can be located jointly, along with other community-based organizations such as the Olney Chamber of Commerce, a visitor’s center and a teen center.

The Town Center lacks a major open space, a place for the community to gather and to celebrate its festivals and events. It needs an outdoor public space that would accommodate the many civic functions and annual events that take place in Olney. Currently, they are held in parking lots or playgrounds. Ideally, the public space should be located as part of a mixed-use civic center project to function as the town commons.

The Town Center lacks a strong visual identity. Even though some structures provide a variety in building types and architectural styles, its character is mostly defined by the larger shopping centers and other commercial establishments along the two State highways. The views from these roads are generally dominated by parking lots. Two major highways, large parking lots, and lack of large shade trees or other distinct features create a monotonous landscape of hard surfaces. As redevelopment occurs in the future, a strong visual identity should be created through architecture, a more compact building pattern, landscaping/trees, and other urban design elements.

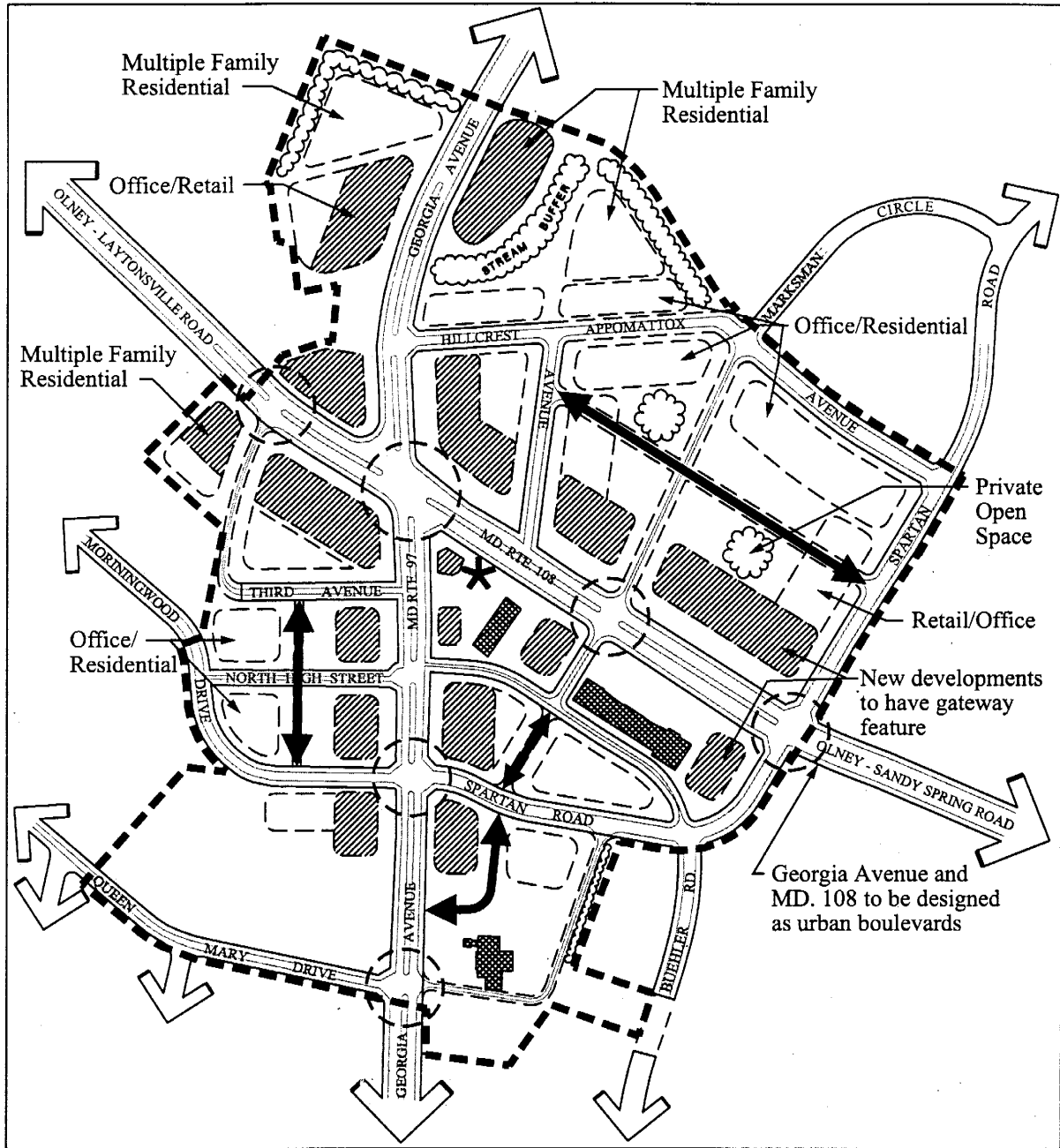
PROPOSED CONCEPT

The proposed Town Center Plan is guided by the concept of Olney as a satellite town that functions as a local retail center rather than a regional shopping and employment center. The Town Center is envisioned as a low-scale, retail and service center containing a mix of commercial and residential uses in a variety of building types and sizes with safe and convenient pedestrian connections, public open spaces and other amenities. Georgia Avenue and MD 108 will continue to be the main thoroughfares and carry large volumes of local and through traffic, but landscaping, improved crosswalks, and urban design treatment will help manage the traffic and improve their character. Residential uses in the Town Center will be less dependent on cars for access to the Town Center, which will also help reduce parking demand there. A major public open space with a civic center will provide a focal point and a place for the community's civic life.

This vision cannot be achieved without additional growth in the Town Center. Since it is not feasible to accommodate any major new development with surface parking within the current boundaries of the Town Center, the proposed concept is based on a more compact pattern of development with some structured parking on larger properties. Although the proposed zoning framework would allow a total maximum of more than 3 million square feet of commercial and up to 1,500 residential units in the Town Center, not all properties would be able to achieve the maximum permitted density because of their size, configuration, access and other constraints. Only the larger properties, and potential future assemblages of some of the smaller ones, are expected to be able to achieve maximum permitted growth and create public amenities in return. The Plan estimates that up to 300,000 square feet of additional commercial growth for an overall maximum development capacity of approximately 1.1 million square feet of commercial space and up to 400 residential units can be accommodated in the Town Center with small to medium scale infrastructure improvements. However, the need, type, and scale of such improvements should be analyzed and decided as redevelopment occurs.

Among the four quadrants of the Town Center, the Northeast Quadrant has the greatest potential for change because of the two large properties, Village Mart and the Olney Shopping Center. The Southeast Quadrant has some redevelopment potential on the

Town Center Proposed Concept



- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| --- Town Center Boundary | ○ Critical Pedestrian Crossings |
| * Exist. Olney House (Historic) | ▨ Existing Buildings |
| — Existing Right-Of-Way/Street | □ Preferred Bldg. Location-New |
| - - - Proposed Right-Of-Way/Street | ▧ Preferred Taller Bldg. Location-New |
| ↔ Internal Connection | |
- 0 500'

Safeway property, which has been looking to relocate to another site in the Town Center. The Southwest Quadrant has potential for redevelopment through possible assemblage of some of the vacant and residential properties in the vicinity of North High Street.

The Northwest Quadrant, the smallest of the four, does not have significant development potential because of its size and configuration.

The proposed concept would be implemented through a combination of zoning mechanisms and design guidelines to shape the future redevelopment of the Town Center. It is designed to be flexible enough to address future variations and opportunities. Sites may not be developed exactly as expected, not developed at all for a long time, or changes in ownership patterns may create unforeseen opportunities. If the new developments are in harmony with the Plan's overall vision, and carefully executed to achieve its goals, they will contribute to creating a more desirable Town Center.

The proposed concept has four major elements:

1. Mixed Land Use;
2. A Civic Center and a Town Commons;
3. Pedestrian Circulation; and
4. Urban Design

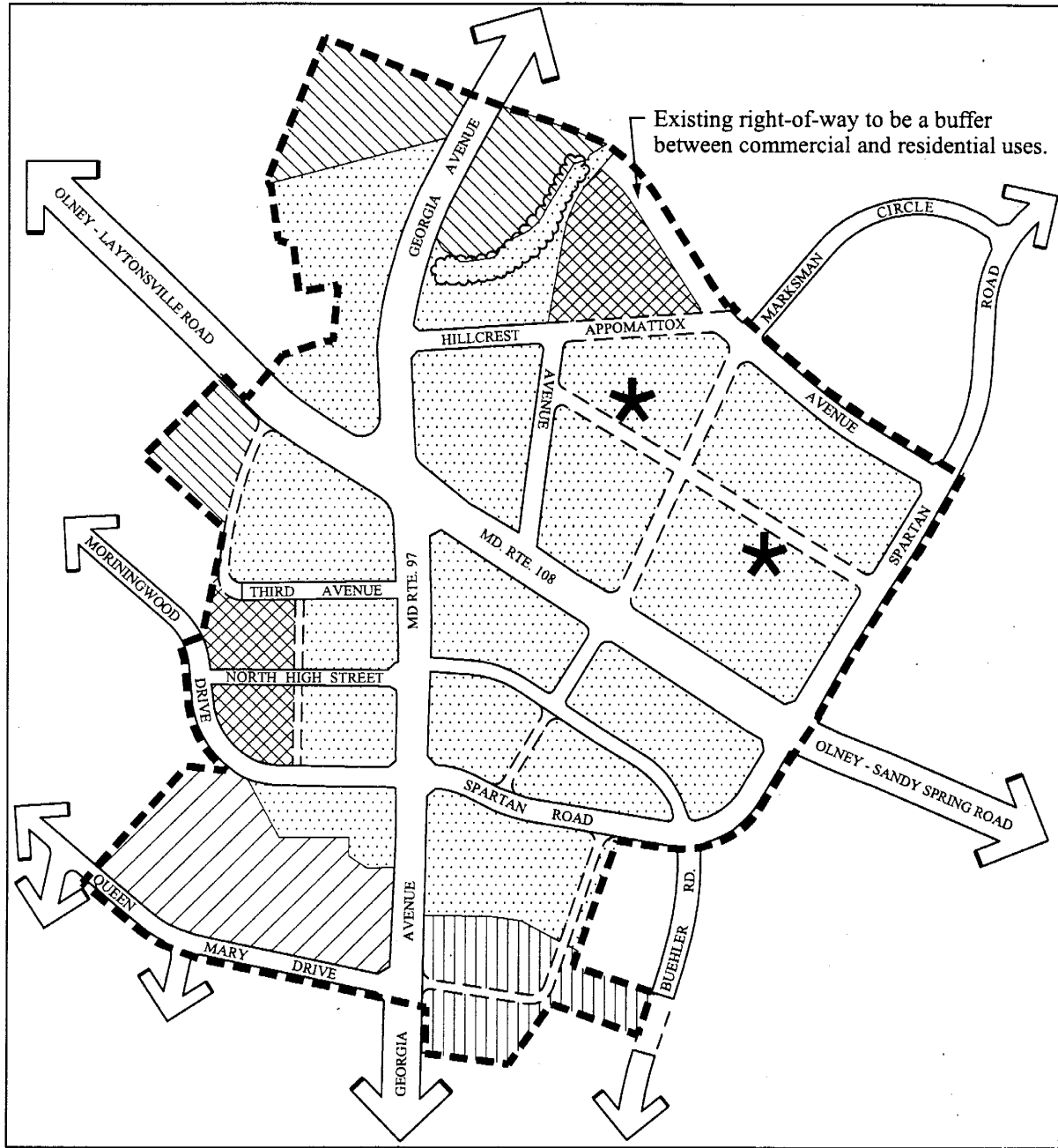
MIXED LAND USE






A variety of uses in the Town Center is a major element of the proposed concept. All commercially zoned land in the Town Center should be allowed and encouraged to have residential uses to activate the core by increasing the number of people within walking distance of the stores and services. Residential buildings in the Town Center would also help break the linear monotony of the single-story shopping centers surrounded by large parking lots. The proposed concept is based on approximately 400 residential units in the Center, including the proposed 100 elderly housing units on the Finneyrock property and another 300 units in the three large quadrants of the Town Center in a variety of building types and development scenarios.



In the Northeast Quadrant, two areas are especially suitable for residential uses: the Finneyrock property on the east side of Georgia Avenue north of MD 108, where the Plan supports the proposed development of an affordable elderly housing project; and secondly, the Village Mart and the Olney Shopping Center properties, which have the potential to include residential uses due to their large sizes. The northern portion of the Village Mart property is especially suitable for residential townhouses due to its configuration and its distance from MD 108.

In the Southwest Quadrant, the 3.9-acre enclave of vacant and single-family properties in the vicinity of North High Street, Third Avenue, and Morningwood Drive is a suitable area for assemblage and redevelopment as mixed-use retail/office or retail/residential. This area is currently zoned R-60 and was recommended for PD-7 in the 1980 Master Plan. Redevelopment of this area at a density higher than the current R-60 Zone for a residential, commercial or mixed-use development would be appropriate and help create the desired density to support commercial uses in the core.

Town Center Proposed Land Use Concept

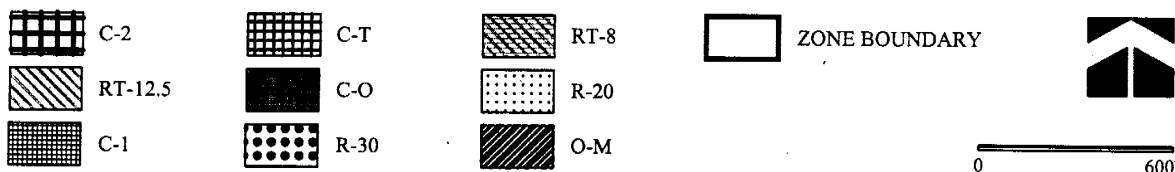
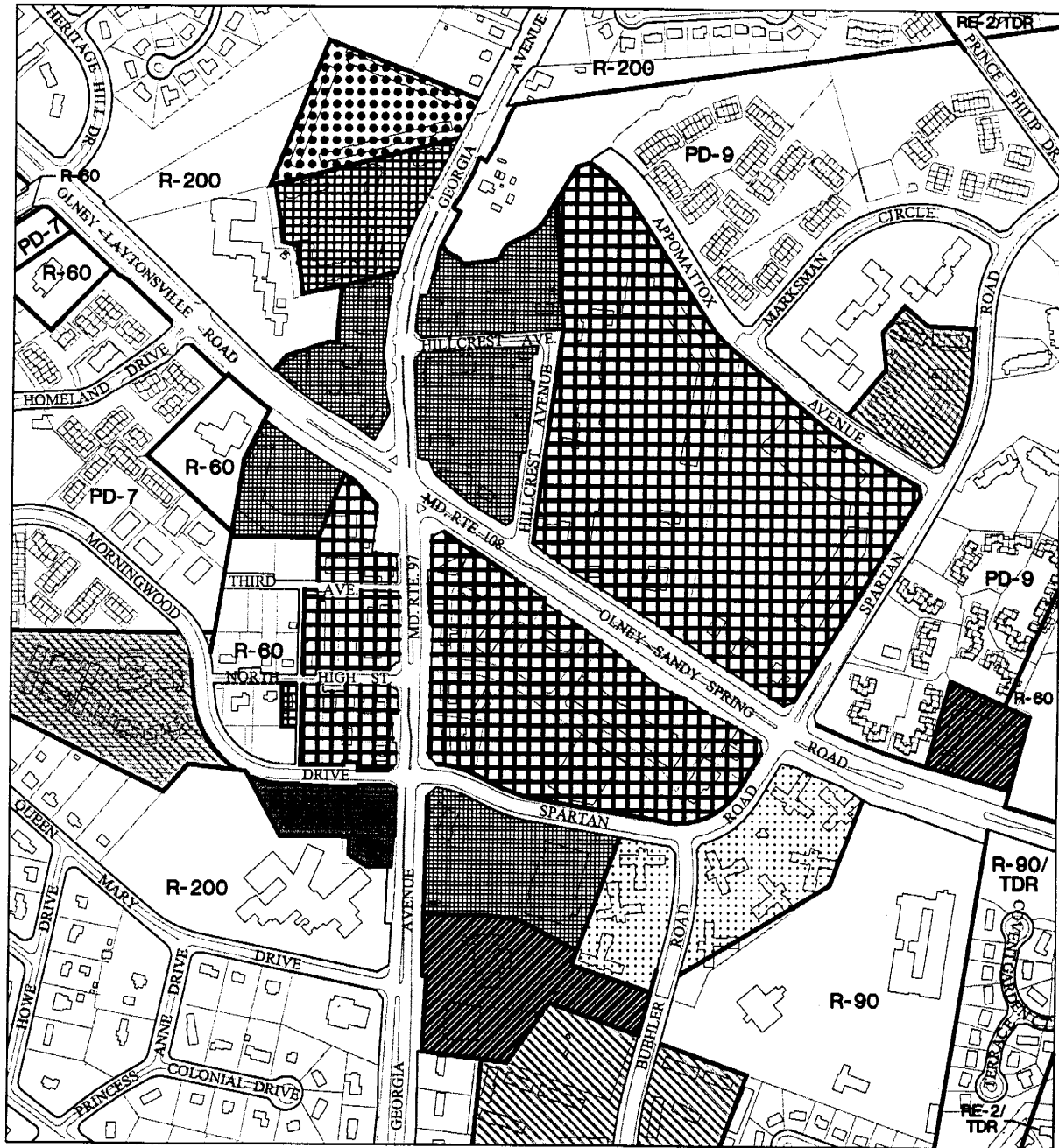


-  Residential
-  Primarily Retail; Residential & Office Allowed
-  Primarily Residential; Retail & Office Allowed
-  Primarily Office; Retail & Residential Allowed
-  Institutional

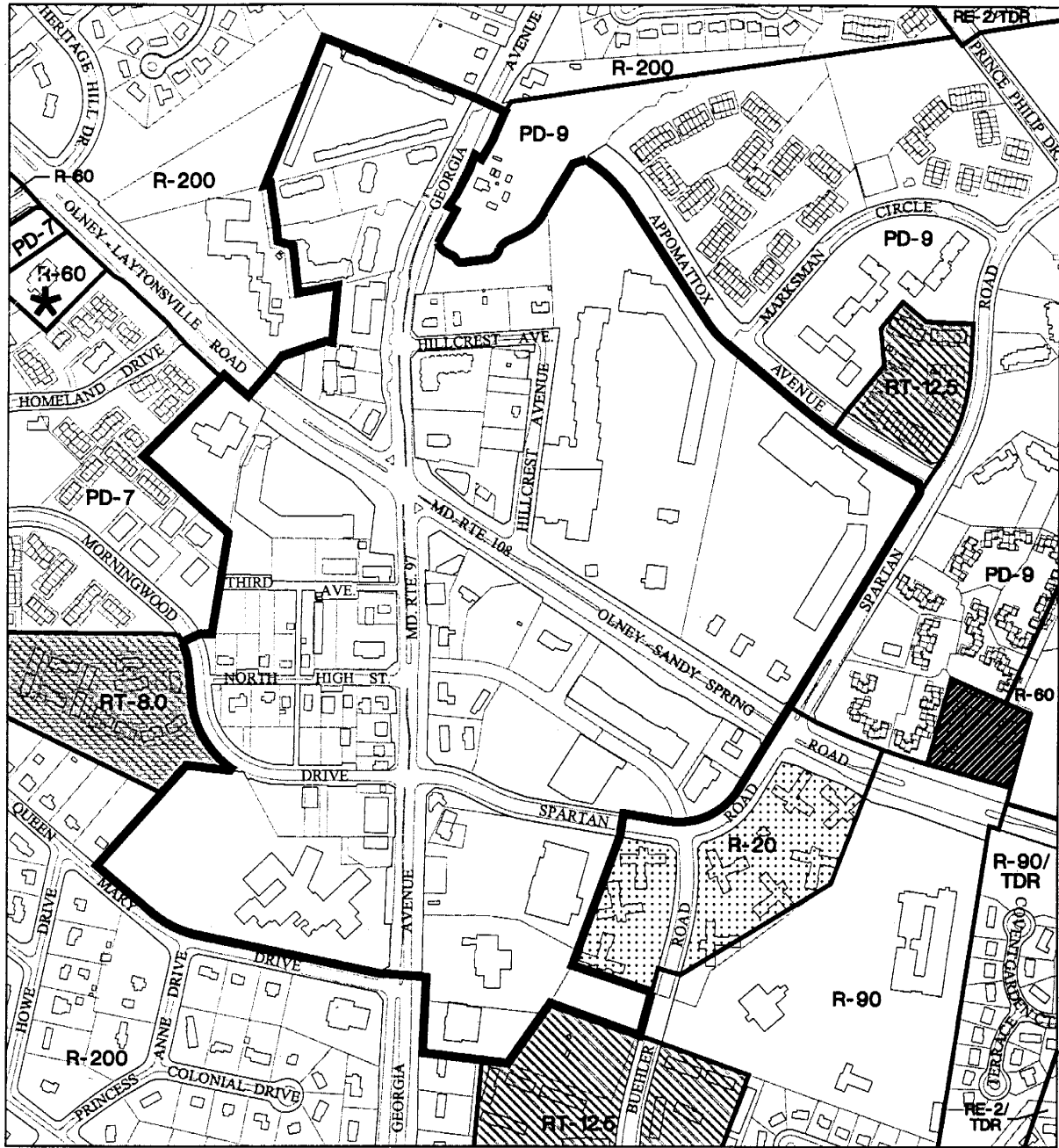
-  Town Center Boundary
-  Potential Public or Private Open Space










Town Center Existing Zoning



Town Center Proposed Zoning



-  ZONE BOUNDARY
-  SUITABLE FOR PD-7
-  PROPOSED NEW MIXED USE ZONE - MXTC
-  RT-12.5
-  RT-8
-  R-20
-  O-M



The existing five different commercial zoning districts, C-1, C-2, C-T, C-O, and O-M, do not provide for a mix of uses and they are not appropriate tools to achieve the proposed concept. C-O, for example is more suited to regulate office uses in a higher density Central Business District than a local service center. C-2 is more appropriate for uses generally found in regional shopping centers, and clusters of commercial developments. Some of these zones, such as C-1, specifically exclude residential uses such as elderly housing, which should be allowed in the Town Center.

A new mixed-use zone should be created to help implement the proposed mixed-use concept. All properties in the Town Center should be rezoned to that mixed-use zone. The Implementation Chapter describes the proposed mixed-use zone in more detail.

Recommendations:

- 1. Encourage development of residential uses in the Town Center.**
- 2. Rezone all properties in the Town Center with a single, mixed-use zone.**

CIVIC CENTER AND TOWN COMMONS

Olney Town Center needs a central public square, a town commons, preferably surrounded by, or adjacent to, retail activity and a civic center that would house the various public services currently located in and around the Town Center. It would provide an appropriate setting for these functions, provide a focal point for the whole area, and help create a sense of place for the Town Center. The town commons and the civic center should be located, preferably on the same site, within the Town Center to be a part of, and a complement to, the commercial activity already there.

Currently, there are no publicly owned vacant sites large enough to accommodate a joint civic center/retail/town commons project within the Town Center. The only County owned property, the 2.5-acre Olney library site, could possibly be used for a civic center especially if developed in conjunction with the adjoining Olney Shopping Center redevelopment. Other public sites that could be considered for a civic center in the future if they become available for redevelopment include the 1.5-acre Olney Post Office site on MD 108 and the 9.9-acre Olney Elementary School site on Georgia Avenue. The post office site, although not ideally located, could be used as a potential site for some of the uses in a civic center, (police satellite facility, chamber of commerce, etc.) that do not have to be in the Town Center. Other sites and opportunities may become available in the future and should be explored. The proposed zoning mechanism is designed to produce space for a civic center within a large shopping center redevelopment and an outdoor public space in exchange for bonus floor area, especially on the larger shopping center properties. Other opportunities and mechanisms to create a civic center and town commons should be explored in the future. Although an open space of approximately one acre would be the appropriate size for a town commons, smaller public spaces should also be provided throughout the Town Center using the incentive zoning mechanism.

Recommendations:

Explore opportunities for a civic center/town commons with retail, offices, a County service center and a major public open space of approximately one acre in the Town Center through a variety of public and private mechanisms including incentive zoning to allow bonus floor area in exchange for public amenities.

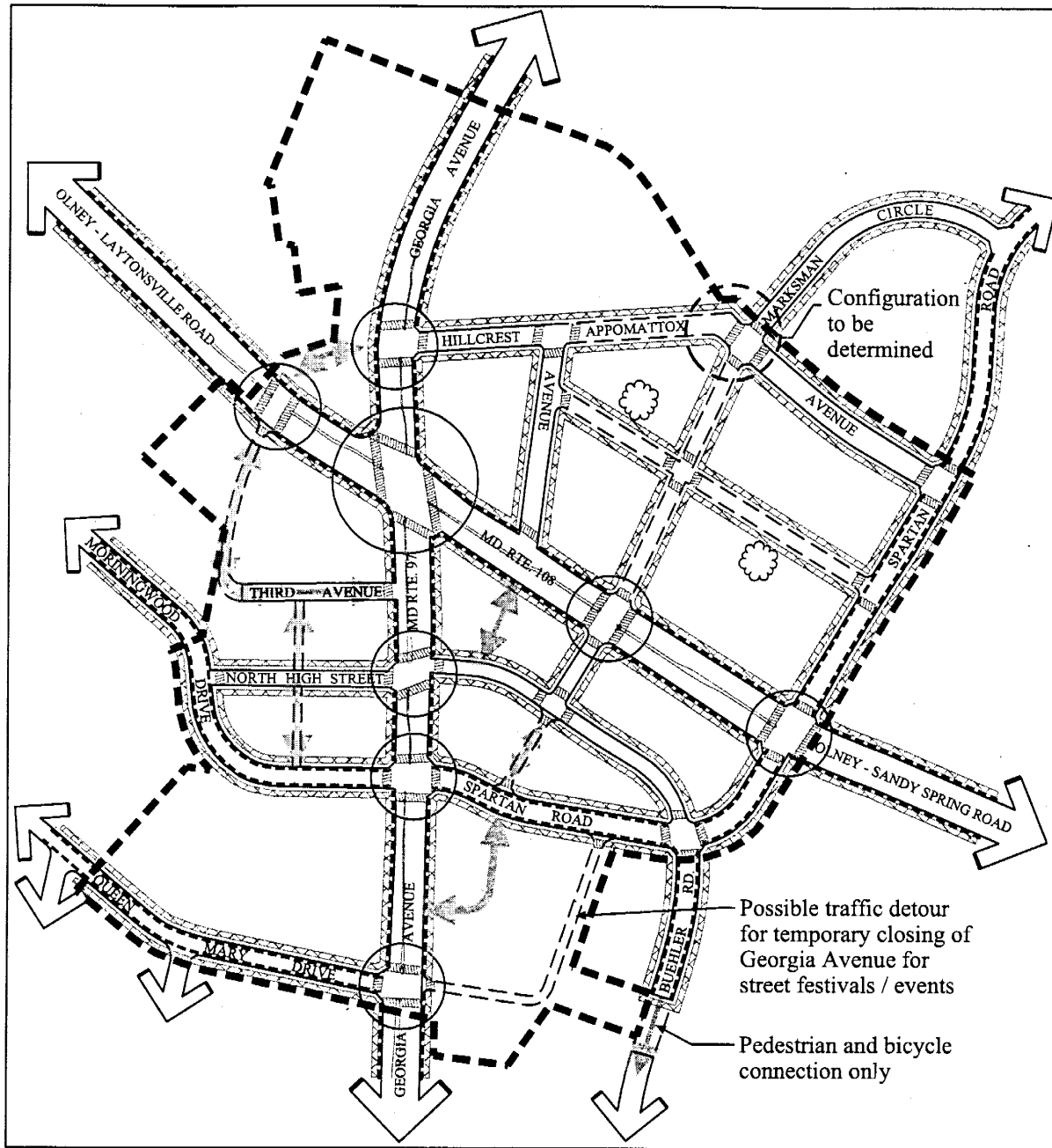
PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION









The current linear scale of the Town Center is car-oriented. It has very large blocks, which are more suitable for vehicular rather than pedestrian circulation. Safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular circulation in and around the Town Center is essential for a pedestrian-oriented Town Center.

It needs an improved network of streets and sidewalks with short and direct pedestrian connections among stores and different parts of the center. The proposed circulation concept is designed to break up the large blocks with a combination of vehicular and pedestrian connections. Other opportunities to create more pedestrian connections should be pursued as redevelopment occurs in the future. In the Southwest Quadrant, North High Street should be connected to Morningwood Drive to connect the Town Center to the adjoining residential communities, and Third Avenue should be connected to MD 108 via the Olney Shopping Center property at the corner of Georgia Avenue and MD 108, if possible, through redevelopment of those properties. In the Northeast Quadrant, the two shopping centers should include one or more vehicular and pedestrian connection between the two centers, and provide other internal connections and walkways with direct connections to the surrounding residential community. Similarly, in the Southeast Quadrant, large blocks should be broken up with through-block pedestrian walkways, as well as vehicular driveways where feasible.

Any future street improvements, especially Georgia Avenue and MD 108, should be carefully designed to incorporate features that help reduce speeds and improve pedestrian safety. Lower speed limits, reduced pavement widths, curbside tree panels, on-street parking, and other design treatments should be used to create a visual environment that discourages speeding through the Town Center.

Town Center Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Concept



-  Sidewalk/ Bike Path
-  Internal Pedestrian Connection
-  Crosswalk
-  High Priority Pedestrian Crossings
-  Proposed Open Space
-  Town Center Boundary
-  Shared Use Bike Path (off-road)
-  Shared Roadway Bike Path



Recommendations:

- 1. Provide easy and convenient multiple pedestrian connections between the shopping centers and the adjoining residential areas.**
- 2. Create multiple, safe and pedestrian-oriented crossings of Georgia Avenue and MD 108.**
- 3. Provide a safe, convenient, and pedestrian-oriented vehicular connection between the Village Mart and Olney Town Center.**
- 4. Connect North High Street to Morningwood Drive. Explore the feasibility of connecting MD 108 to North High Street/Morningwood Drive at the time of redevelopment of the Olney Library and the Olney Shopping Center.**
- 5. Allow on-street parking where feasible on all streets except Georgia Avenue and MD 108.**
- 6. Create pedestrian-oriented streetscape through landscaping, traffic calming measures and other design features.**

URBAN DESIGN

The Town Center concept is based on a more compact development pattern than exists today. A variety of building heights is encouraged to avoid the monotony of linear, single-story shopping centers. Buildings along Georgia Avenue and MD 108 should be higher than elsewhere in the Center and located closer to the street where feasible to discourage large expanses of parking lots as the predominant view from these roads. Buildings located in the core area of the Town Center can be as high as five stories. Buildings along the edges of the Town Center can be three to four stories high depending upon the height of the existing building in the adjoining residential area. Appropriate transition in building heights should be provided to ensure compatibility between new developments in the Town Center and the adjacent communities.

A "Green Town Center" is envisioned for Olney. Generous landscaping and reforestation should be provided in the Town Center for aesthetic as well as environmental reasons. Trees and landscaping can help create a distinct identity that the Town Center now lacks. Special attention should be given to parking lots, which should be required to provide and retain large shade trees and plantings to soften the visual impact of hard surfaces.

Previous development in the Town Center has prevented regeneration of forested areas that were removed by past farming practices. Current forest conservation regulations require that 15 percent of redeveloped sites consist of new forest planting.

Depending on site conditions and needs, some of this requirement can be satisfied by landscaping and off-site forest banks, but the clearly preferred alternative is to address the requirements on site. This will encourage the greening of the Town Center over time. It is

important that any redevelopment in the Town Center incorporate appropriate stormwater management measures that complement restoration action plans and improve conditions in Upper Rock Creek and the Hawlings River.

Georgia Avenue and MD 108 define the character of the Town Center more than any other street or property. They carry a large volume of local and through traffic and will continue to do so. These two thoroughfares should be designed as urban boulevards and their current traffic capacity should not be increased by adding through travel lanes. The negative impacts of through traffic should be mitigated through landscaping such as green medians, street trees, sidewalks, at least six-foot wide curbside green panels, and other design features.

New developments should be encouraged to provide public open spaces in exchange for additional floor area. In addition to the one-acre open space recommended for the town commons, the proposed concept envisions other, smaller open spaces through redevelopment of properties that would be able to use the bonus floor area mechanism of the proposed new zone. These public spaces should be connected with the pedestrian walkways and provided with landscaping, benches and other amenities.

Some structured parking would be needed to meet the needs of the overall growth proposed for the Town Center. Parking garages should be carefully designed to fit in with the topography and become a part of the visual fabric of the Town Center. They should be safe, well lighted, appropriately located for pedestrian access, and incorporated into the main building instead of stand-alone structures.

Recommendations:

- 1. Limit the height of any building within the core area of the Town Center to five stories. Buildings along the edges of the Town Center should be three to four stories high to be compatible with the adjoining residential development. Unoccupied features such as clock towers and spires may be higher than the maximum permitted building heights.**
- 2. Pedestrian ingress, egress and interior walkways should be raised or separated from parking areas through change of materials, curbs, railings, grass panels or other design features.**
- 3. Provide benches, landscaping, light fixtures, trash receptacles, and other amenities in public spaces.**
- 4. Create visual breaks in larger parking lots through plantings and walkways.**
- 5. Encourage any redevelopment in the portion of the Town Center that drains to the Hawlings River to incorporate extraordinary stormwater management features that contribute to the restoration of the James Creek and Upper Olney Mill tributaries.**

- 6. Stormwater management techniques should include measures to improve the efficiency of existing down stream facilities and protect remaining streams in the Town Center.**
- 7. Accommodate forest conservation requirements on-site, where possible, to assist in greening the Town Center.**

HOUSING PLAN

Goal:

Provide a mix of housing types in Olney, and increase opportunities for affordable housing and housing for the elderly in southern Olney.

INTRODUCTION

In the County's General Plan, the Olney area is considered a suburban housing resource. Although the single-family detached house is the predominant housing type, making nearly 72 percent of all dwelling units, Olney has a variety of housing types including townhouses and multi-family garden apartments. Townhouses at 23.7 percent constitute the second largest type and exceed the Countywide average of almost 18 percent. Multi-family dwelling units account for about 4.5 percent of Olney's housing stock. Most of the townhouses and apartments are located around the Town Center in higher density zones such as PD-7, PD-9, R-30, and RT-12.5. Townhouses are also located in other locations in the Northeast and Southwest Quadrants, mostly as a result of the transfer of development rights from the Agricultural Reserve in Olney (in 1980, there were only 592 townhouses).

Olney's high quality of life makes it a very attractive location for housing. This desirability has resulted in rapidly rising housing values. The median cost of a new single-family detached house in Olney in 2001 was \$555,196 compared to the County's \$436,928. By 2003, the median cost of a new single-family detached house rose to \$723,592, compared to \$590,759 Countywide. The median price of an existing single-family detached house in Olney in 2001 was \$346,000 compared to \$289,000 Countywide. By 2003, the median cost of an existing single-family detached house rose to \$425,000 compared to \$248,000 Countywide. The median price for an existing townhouse in Olney in 2001 was \$183,950 compared to the County's \$155,800. By 2003, the median cost of an existing townhouse rose to \$248,500 compared to \$229,000 Countywide.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Montgomery County Housing Policy defines affordable housing as any general housing, or elderly housing, offered for sale or rent at a price equal to or less than that affordable to a household with an annual income of less than 65 percent of the County's median income. The median household income in the Olney Planning Area in 2002 was \$104,745, while the County's median household income in 2002 was \$78,647. Nearly 12 percent of the households in the Olney Planning Area earned less than \$50,000 in 2002. A household with an income of approximately \$51,120 (65% of \$78,647) per year would qualify for a mortgage of between \$90,000 and \$150,000 depending upon down payment, credit history, insurance and property taxes.

Affordable housing depends upon public programs and initiatives to keep up with the demand. One of the cornerstones of the County's housing policy is the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program adopted by the County in 1974 to increase the supply of

moderately priced housing in Montgomery County. Originally designed for developments of 50 or more units, the program was modified in 2003 to apply to developments of 35 units or more, in areas zoned for lots of less than one acre. It requires a minimum of 12.5 percent of the units to moderate-income households. The units may be multi-family or single-family and for either sale or rent. The control period for MPDU for-sale units is 10 years, and for rent units 20 years. To be eligible, a household generally must be below 65 percent of the median income for each household size. Some of the MPDUs remain within the affordable range even after they are no longer price controlled, because they are generally smaller than market rate units with fewer amenities.

As of 2002, there are approximately 421 affordable housing units in Olney. Of these, 183 were price-controlled privately owned MPDUs, 139 were owned by the County's Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) and other non-profit entities, and the remaining units were built with some other form of public subsidy either as regular family units or elderly housing. Two areas around the Town Center with affordable units are the Town Center Place on Morningwood Drive and Tamarron Apartments on Appomattox Avenue. Other units are scattered around in southern Olney as part of large subdivisions that have a mix of single-family and multi-family units. Two affordable elderly housing projects are: Marian Assisted Living on Georgia Avenue south of Gold Mine Road and Andrew Kim House on MD 108 near the Olney Theater.

The share of affordable housing for different planning areas in the County varies. It also fluctuates over time as new affordable units are created and older units age and move out of the programs that made them affordable. Goshen and the rural area with 0.4 percent each have the lowest amount of affordable housing as part of their overall housing stock whereas Germantown with 8.1 percent has the highest. Olney is in the lower half of this range, 3.8 percent.

This Plan supports the County housing policy of creating an adequate supply of affordable housing, including elderly housing, throughout the County for those living and working in Montgomery County, and identifies areas suitable for affordable housing. It recommends zoning and land use changes that have the potential to create more affordable housing units in Olney, especially the Golden Bear Area, the Bowie Mill site and the Town Center. Recommended zoning changes for large, vacant and redevelopable properties such as the Mess property, Norbeck Country Club, and some properties in the Southeast Quadrant could provide moderately priced housing units if they are subject to the MPDU law. In addition, the MPCS's 18.5-acre school site on Cashell Road, currently reserved for Oakdale Junior High School, would be suitable for affordable housing if it is not needed for a school use. All or a portion of the 11-acre County owned property on Emory Lane could be suitable for an affordable elderly housing project if not used for the ICC.

In the Town Center, the proposed land use and zoning changes have the potential to create MPDUs through residential or mixed-use developments. Although the maximum capacity of the proposed new zone in the Town Center is approximately 1,500 units, only the larger shopping center properties are likely to accommodate housing in mixed-use redevelopment projects. Smaller properties, if developed as residential or mixed-use,