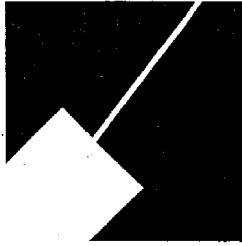


M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760
301-495-4500, www.mncppc.org

January 6, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Greg Russ, Development Review

VIA: John Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Kristin O'Connor, Community-Based Planning **KO**

SUBJECT: Master Plan Implications of Zoning Text Amendment 05-21

ZTA 05-21 is an amendment to the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance for the purpose of allowing a corporate training center as a permitted use in the C-P (Commercial, Office Park) Zone. This ZTA falls under the review of the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan (1992).

The C-P zoned properties in Rock Spring Park along Rockledge Drive are improved with medium scale office buildings (ranging from 2-15 stories) and are widely separated by large setbacks. The headquarters property affected by ZTA 05-21 is known as Area 3/Martin Marietta and is shown on the attached maps (Figure 29, p 95 and Figure 31, p. 99). This parcel in Rock Spring Park and the other C-P zoned parcels are physically isolated from surrounding communities by highways.

The Plan confirms the C-P Zone, however it does not offer any guidance on the subject of the inclusion of a training center. A stated objective in the Plan is to provide "reasonable expansion of existing office uses at Rock Spring Park" (p. 94). A corporate training center would provide a use that is compatible with the existing office, commercial, and future residential (on the neighboring Davis parcel) in the campus-style office park of Rock Spring.

After reviewing the ZTA, Staff found that the following ZTA is compatible with the C-P Zone and has the following recommendations at site plan:

- 1) Integrate the alignment of the future light rail right-of-way in any future development.
- 2) Provide a shuttle service to Metro to decrease the amount of surface parking provided for training, lodging, and dining uses.
- 3) Preserve publicly accessible open space.
- 4) Provide pedestrian and bike paths linking the open space with other areas of the office park.



3.7 ROCK SPRING PARK

A. INTRODUCTION

Plan Objectives

- Provide for reasonable expansion of existing office uses at Rock Spring Park.
- Add residential and retail uses.
- Preserve publicly accessible open space.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle paths linking the open space with other areas in the office park, with public facilities, and with adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Integrate transitway stations and right-of-way into future development.

Plan Recommendations

- Support office development on the IBM parcel that includes a retail component; a public park; an easement for transitway station/right-of-way, and bicycle path; pedestrian paths, and streetscape improvements.
- Endorse a mixed use planned development under the MXP Zone on the Davis parcel. Future development should adhere to development guidelines designed to meet Master Plan objectives.
- Confirm the C-P (Commercial Office Park) Zone on the Martin Marietta parcel.
- Confirm the O-M Zone on the five Bells Mill Road properties, with a development cap of 0.5 FAR over the entire site.
- Confirm the existing I-3 and C-P zones on all other parcels so zoned.

Summary

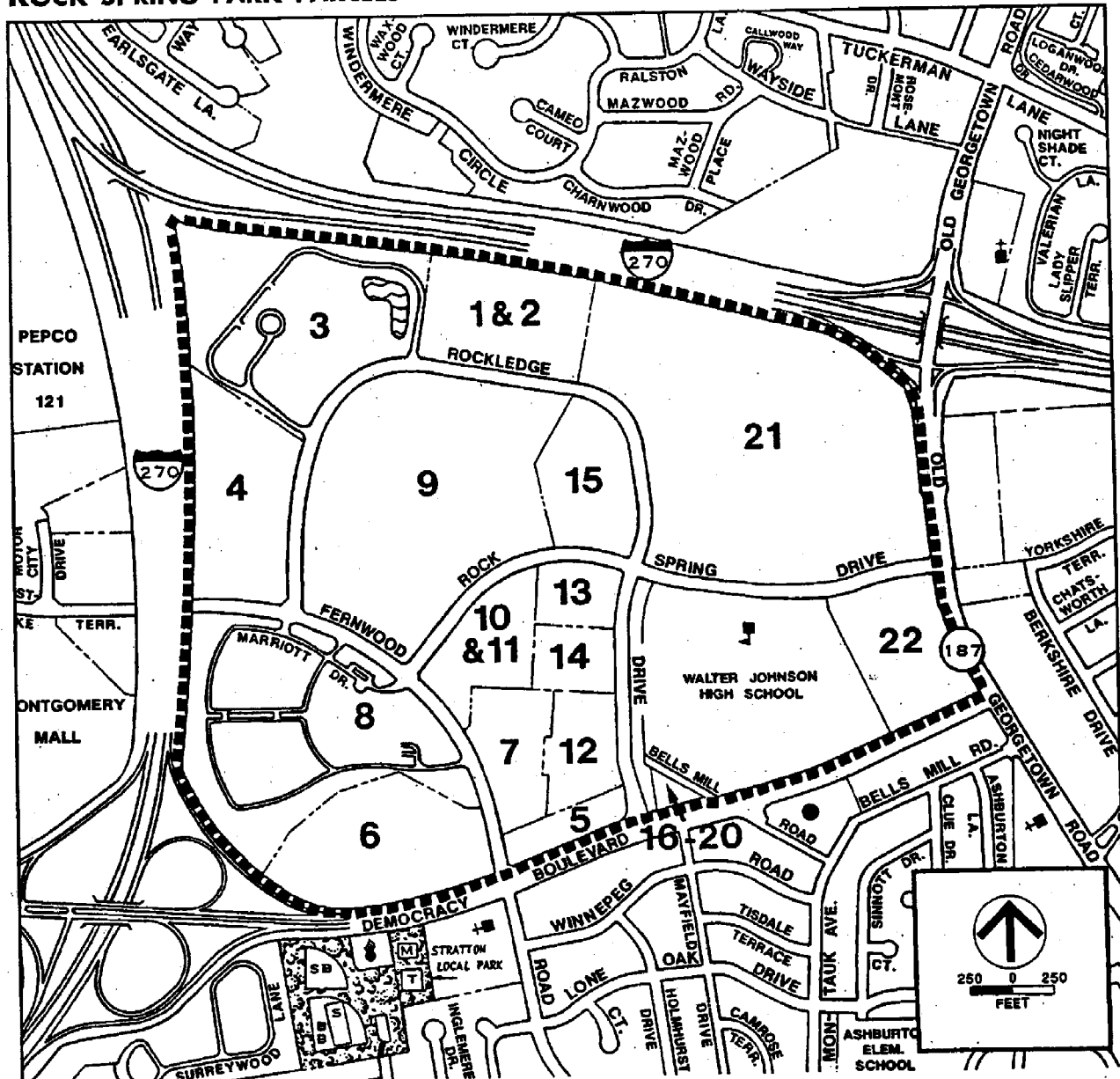
Rock Spring Park is a corporate office center located between the I-270 spurs, near their junction with I-495. It provides a gateway to the I-270 technology corridor and proximity to Baltimore, Washington and suburban Virginia. It also has easy access to three high volume airports. The Park's visibility, unique access to major transportation networks, and proximity to other commercial/industrial centers, to the nation's capital and to stable residential neighborhoods make it the most convenient corporate office location in the County.

The Park covers 247 acres and provides 5.3 million square feet of office space in 21 buildings. Corporate headquarters for high technology companies including Martin Marietta, Marriott, and IBM occupy about 40 percent of the Park's total square footage. "High tech" professional and service firms occupy the remaining space. The most recent additions to the Park consist of two IBM buildings and Rock Spring Plaza II (Comsat).

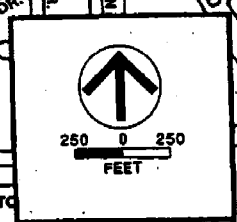
Business demand for the type of space offered at Rock Spring Park is typically very high.

ROCK SPRING PARK PARCELS

FIGURE 29



- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| 1. | Rockledge Center | 12. | Champlain |
| 2. | Rockledge Center | 13. | Bedford |
| 3. | Martin Marietta | 14. | Westmoreland |
| 4. | Democracy Center | 15. | Rockledge Executive Plaza |
| 5. | Camalier | 16. | Marion McCartney |
| 6. | Democracy Plaza | 17. | Stuart W. & D.G. Lane |
| 7. | Camalier | 18. | Irving Schwartz |
| 8. | Marriott | 19. | Democracy Associates |
| 9. | IBM | 20. | Stanley Appelbaum |
| 10. | Rock Spring Plaza I | 21. | Davis Camalier |
| 11. | Rock Spring Plaza II | 22. | Georgetown Square |





Vacancies in the park average 8 to 12 percent, which is 30 to 50 percent less than elsewhere in the County. In January 1991, Rock Spring Park had a vacancy rate of 11 percent, while the County-wide rate was 18 percent. The asking price for space at Rock Spring Park is near the top of Montgomery County's office rents, surpassed only by Bethesda-Chevy Chase business districts.

See Table 8 for a list of parcels with the accompanying zones, acreage, gross floor area and FAR. Column 7 shows the remaining development potential of each property, based on a comparison of the existing with the permitted gross floor area. Within the largely developed portion of the office park (excluding Parcel 21), there is a total of 2.1 million square feet of additional space that could potentially develop. This figure includes the IBM development pipeline (781,165 square feet). A discussion of the site plan and development guidelines for the IBM parcel are found in the section entitled "IBM Parcel."

Also included on Table 8 are two other properties with a potential for expansion or redevelopment totaling 1.3 million square feet: Martin Marietta and Marriott Headquarters. Both are loophole properties. There is a time limit on such development if they are to develop without a test for the adequacy of public facilities that could interfere with their completion. Setbacks, existing buildings and other site constraints may also limit the development potential on all of these parcels. Land use and zoning recommendations for Martin Marietta and the five properties on Bells Mill Road are found in the section entitled "Other Land Use and Zoning Recommendations."

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In addition to the above development there is a 54-acre vacant parcel in the northeast corner of the Park, discussed in the section called "Davis Parcel." The parcel is currently zoned R-H, for multiple family, high-rise residential use. An analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of office, mixed-use, or residential use under six development scenarios is contained in Appendix E. This Plan recommends mixed uses for the parcel, under the floating MXPD Zone with the existing R-H as the base zone.

Also included within the physical boundaries created by two freeways and two major highways is Walter Johnson High School and Georgetown Square shopping center. Georgetown Square has a modest amount of redevelopment potential. The description below applies, unless otherwise noted, to the office park alone.

Existing Conditions

Rock Spring Park exemplifies the campus-style office park. The individualized, medium-scale buildings (ranging from 2 to 15 stories) are widely separated by large setbacks and well maintained landscaping. The Park attracts tenants who wish buildings which enhance their corporate image.

Like other such office parks, Rock Spring Park is highly dependent on the automobile. With the convenient highway location and distance from Metro, it is not surprising that most employees drive alone to work.

The Rock Spring Park Commuter Service Center has worked since the fall of 1986 to increase the number of car/van pool and transit riders. But the difficulty of reducing the

TABLE 8

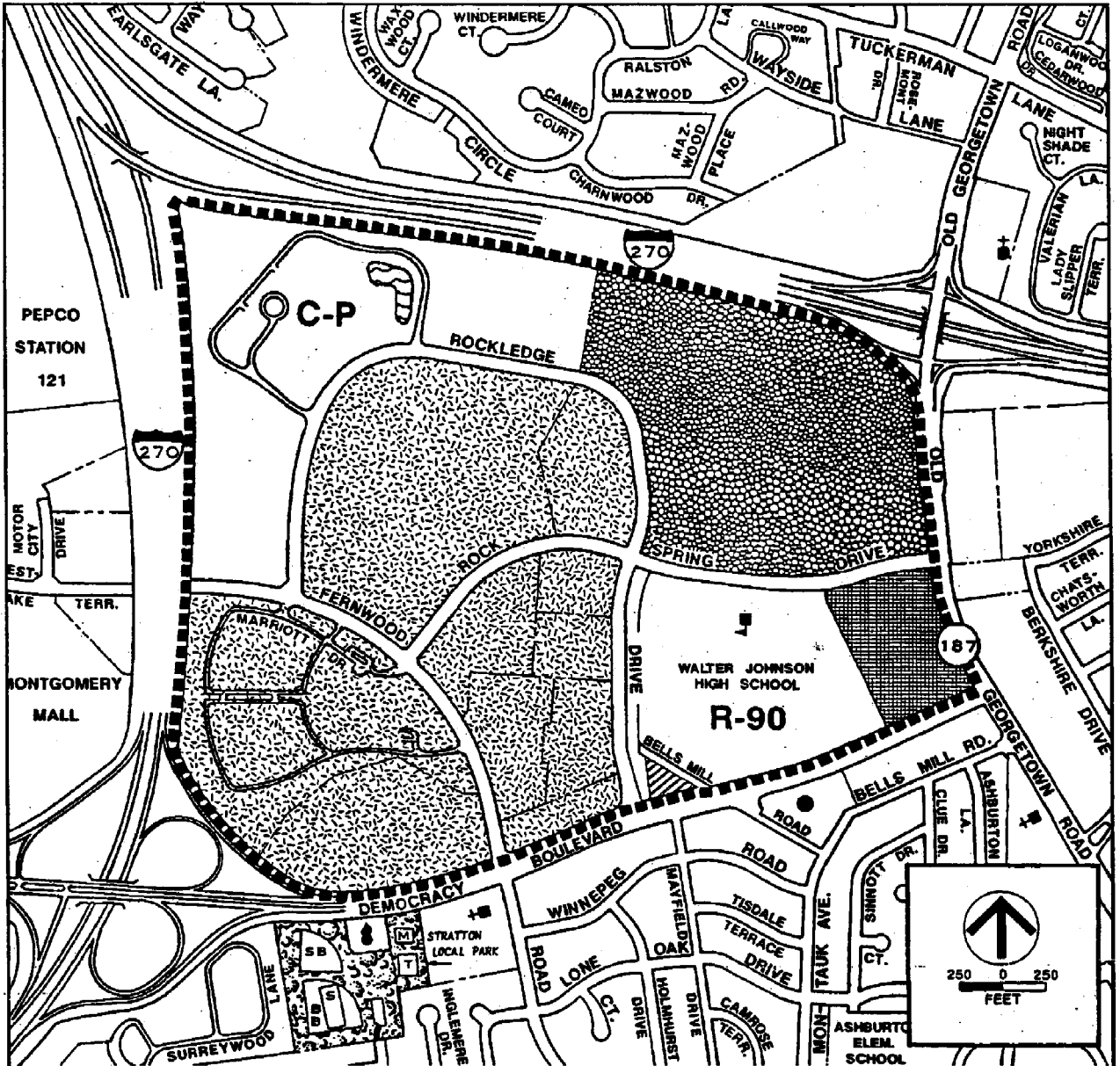
EXISTING AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT ROCK SPRING PARK

Name	Existing or Proposed Zone	Net Acres	Number of Floors	Existing Far	Existing Gross Floor Area	Potential Gross Floor Area	Loop Hole Property
1. Rockledge Center	C-P	5.69	10	1.01	250,492	0	
2. Rockledge Center	C-P	6.16	10	0.96	258,900	0	
3. Martin Marietta	C-P	26.51	4	0.21	241,071	913,704	X
4. Democracy Center	C-P	15.36	15	1.07	714,878	0	
5. Camalier	I-3	3.13	0	0	0	0*	
6. Democracy Plaza	I-3	16.35	10	1.00	710,000	0	
7. Camalier/RSP Building I	I-3	7.05	7	0.44	136,615	0	X
8. Marriott Headquarters	I-3	33.74	7	0.55	808,482	440,775	X
9. IBM	I-3	40.02	3-8	0.49	853,835	781,165	X
10. Rockspring Plaza I	I-3	4.42	8	1.12	216,010	0	
11. Rockspring Plaza II	I-3	3.1	8	1.36	183,990	0	
12. Champlain/RSP Building II	I-3	5.46	6	0.57	136,152	0	X
13. Bedford	I-3	3.9	6	0.79	135,054	0	X
14. Westmoreland/RSP Building III	I-3	3.90	6	1.15	195,706	0	X
15. Rockledge Executive Plaza	I-3	9.06	6	0.84	331,355	0	X
16. Marion McCartney	O-M	0.18	2	0.36	2,808	0	
17. Stuart W & O.G. Lane	O-M	0.15	2	0.43	2,808	0	
18. Irving Schwartz	O-M	0.18	2	0.27	2,105	0	
19. Democracy Associates	O-M	0.14	2	0.47	2,808	0	
20. Stanley Appelbaum	O-M	0.14	2	0.52	3,180	0	
21. Davis	MXPD	53.4	0	0	0	1,050,000	
22. Georgetown Square	C-1	10.3	1	0.34	152,400	0	X
TOTAL (Sq. Ft.)					5,338,649	3,185,644	

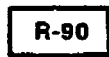



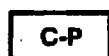

* This parcel is under a covenant to remain as open space.

ROCK SPRING PARK - EXISTING ZONING

FIGURE 30

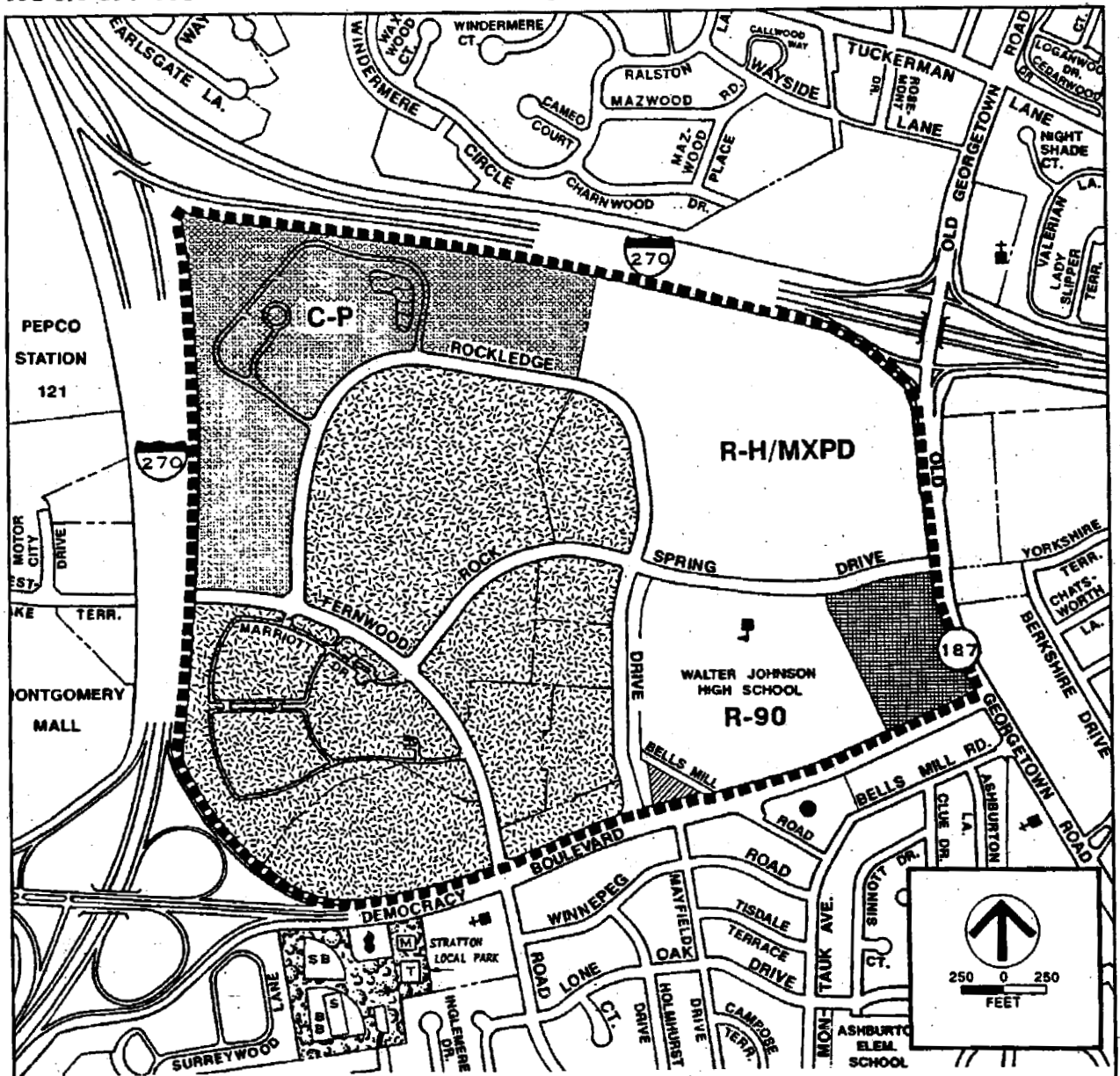




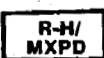



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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|  | R-90 R-90 Residential, One Family |  | C-1 Convenience Commercial |
|  | R-H Multiple-Family, High-Rise Planned Residential |  | I-3 Technology and Business Park |
|  | C-P Commercial, Office Park | | |
|  | O-M Office Building, Moderate Intensity | | |

ROCK SPRING PARK - PROPOSED BASE / FLOATING ZONES

FIGURE 31



- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|  | R-90 Residential, One-Family |  | C-1 Convenience Commercial |
|  | R-H/MXPD Multiple-Family, High Rise/Mixed Use Planned Development |  | I-3 Technology and Business Park |
|  | C-P Commercial, Office Park | | |
|  | O-M Office Building, Moderate Intensity | | |



dependence on the single-occupant automobile is illustrated by the fall in bus ridership that resulted in the termination of the J-5 bus service from Montgomery Village to Rock Spring Park. Though some of the ridership loss appears to have occurred because of layoffs at the Marriott Corporation, the opening of six new lanes on I-270 eliminated a major source of commuting stress and made it convenient once again to drive alone.

Several factors in the Park encourage single occupant auto use:

- Densities in the Park are low, ranging from 0.14 FAR to 1.36. Densities are one of the most important land use determinants of the modes chosen by commuters.
- There is abundant free or subsidized parking, making it convenient to drive. The land devoted to parking lots or structures separates the buildings and makes walking distances greater. Several buildings provide many more spaces than mandated by County zoning regulations.
- It is inconvenient to use transit or to walk. The Park is two miles from the Grosvenor Metro stop, so transit users must rely on buses, which run every 30 minutes. Pedestrian connections from buildings to bus stops and sidewalks, and also between buildings, are generally poor. The major sidewalks are located next to the road; there are no street trees and few bus shelters.
- The Park currently has an insignificant amount of retail. The combination of limited retail destinations within the Park, an unappealing walking environment, and easily accessible parking means most employees choose to have cars available for noon-time lunches, shopping and other errands.

Rock Spring Park shares other features with campus-style office parks:

- The Park's image is characterized by unrelated sets of buildings, each located in the center of its site with parking more or less successfully hidden in decks behind or below. The buildings are somewhat homogeneous, yet they lack a unifying urban design other than the generous landscaping. When IBM and Martin Marietta located in the Park almost twenty years ago, a more pastoral approach was desired and was in many ways more appropriate to the area than it is today.
- Despite the landscaping there is little usable public open space and no outdoor gathering places where the public feels welcome. The streets, a major public space, offer little more than vehicular access; with no street trees, sidewalks adjacent to the curb, and unlandscaped medians, they allow but hardly encourage pedestrian circulation. Some building sites have provided a somewhat friendlier pedestrian realm, notably the pond next to Martin Marietta, the water garden behind Marriott, the sculpture garden behind Rockledge Center, and the plaza of Democracy Center. These sites, however, are not readily accessible to the public or are primarily visual amenities.

manner to minimize interruptions to the retail frontage along the streets.

21. Provide most of the parking in structures. (Some surface parking will be required for residential and retail uses.) Also provide some parking on-street in order to ensure streets with an urban character.

Building Location, Height, and Use

22. To ensure a lively pedestrian environment, provide public spaces adjacent to the streets. For the most part, locate buildings adjacent to both sides of the street (except those on the central park).
23. Provide a mix of building heights. Locate the high buildings on the central park or at the southwest corner of the site, with the highest buildings on the northeast-southwest axis. Reduce heights and visibility of structures to Luxmanor by stepping down building heights towards Luxmanor and by including appropriate screening and architectural treatment to break up massing.
24. Locate a significant portion of the retail along the southern portion of the site to relate to Georgetown Square Shopping Center.
25. The bulk of the retail should be sited in the southeast segment of the site with visibility to Rock Spring Drive. This retail siting is designed to enhance the pedestrian connection along Rock Spring Drive between the offices to the west and the shops and apartments to the east and to reinforce the role of Rock Spring Drive as the main spine of Rock Spring Park. The location of retail is intended to attract the pedestrian to the central park and recreational facilities.

C. OTHER LAND USE AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Martin Marietta

The Martin Marietta parcel is currently zoned C-P. The zone does not have a specified FAR, but the height/setback/coverage requirements could result in an FAR of as much as 1.25; an FAR of 1 is more realistic, given the site constraints. The existing building has an FAR of .21; thus the owners of the property could expand their existing floor area very substantially by adding up to 913,704 square feet. Martin Marietta has registered as a loophole property.

If public policy makes it advisable to reduce the development potential on the site because of the increase in traffic that would be generated, there are several options but none that is very satisfactory. Much of the Park is zoned I-3, but the I-3 is a floating zone, with a maximum FAR of 0.5, and there would be no incentive for the owner to apply for rezoning. The R&D (Research & Development) Zone has an FAR of 0.3 or up to 0.5 with the Optional Method and is a Euclidean Zone—allowing the Council to impose a zone by Sectional Map Amendment. But the R&D Zone is designed to allow low scale flexible space for a variety of types of research and development, not for general office use; no more than 50% of the gross floor area may be used for office.

It would be inappropriate to initiate a zoning text amendment to change the FAR of the C-P Zone itself (as done with the I-3 Zone), since Rock Spring Park is one of only two locations in the County where the zone is in use. Moreover, the adjacent properties zoned C-P would become nonconforming: Rockledge Center has FARs of 1.01 and 0.96, and Democracy Center an FAR of 1.07. The arguments for confirming the existing C-P Zone are that three of the four properties are unable or unlikely to redevelop, leaving only the Martin Marietta property with the possibility of expansion. The site has unexcelled highway access and the possibility of a high quality transit connection to Grosvenor Metro. The property clearly conforms to the office use for which the existing zone was designed, and it sits in an office park that has been designated as an employment center for over 30 years.

The Plan recommends confirming the existing C-P Zone.

2. Five Properties on Bells Mill Road Stub

There are five converted houses on a stub of Bells Mill Road southwest of Walter Johnson High School. They are currently zoned O-M. The purpose of O-M is "to provide locations for moderate-intensity office buildings in areas outside of central business districts. It is intended that the O-M Zone be located in areas where high-intensity uses are not appropriate, but where moderate intensity office buildings will not have an adverse impact on the adjoining neighborhood. This zone is not intended for use in areas which are predominantly one-family residential in character." The zone allows a maximum FAR of 1.5.

The Plan recommends confirming the existing O-M zoning with a development cap of 0.5 FAR over the entire site.

3. Other Parcels

The Plan recommends confirming the existing zoning on all other parcels zoned I-3 or C-P.