

Approved and Adopted

**RUSTIC ROADS FUNCTIONAL
MASTER PLAN,
CLARKSBURG MASTER PLAN &
HYATTSTOWN
SPECIAL STUDY AREA,
BOYD MASTER PLAN &
GAITHERSBURG VICINTY
MASTER PLAN
AMENDMENT**



February 2004

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

8787 GEORGIA AVENUE SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20910

APPROVED AND ADOPTED

**RUSTIC ROADS FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN
CLARKSBURG MASTER PLAN & HYATTSTOWN SPECIAL STUDY AREA
BOYDS MASTER PLAN
AND GAITHERSBURG VICINITY MASTER PLAN
AMENDMENT**

An Amendment to the *Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County*, as amended; the *Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan*, December 1996, as amended; the *Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space*, October 1980, as amended; the *Damascus Master Plan*, June 1982, as amended; the *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area*, June 1994, as amended; the *Boyds Master Plan*, February 1985, as amended; the *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*, January 1985, as amended; and the *General Plan (on Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*, as amended.

Prepared by

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

The Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

February 2004

ABSTRACT

TITLE: Approved and Adopted Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, the Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area, the Boyds Master Plan and the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan Amendment

AUTHOR: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment to the Master Plan of Highways, the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, the Damascus Master Plan, the Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area, the Boyds Master Plan and the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan.

DATE: February 2004

PLANNING AGENCY: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
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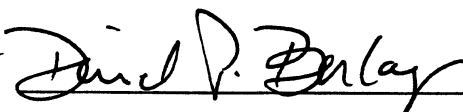
ABSTRACT: This document contains the text, with supporting maps, for the Master Plan Amendment for the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, the Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area, the Boyds Master Plan, and the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan Amendment. An evaluation and recommendation of Johnson Drive, Long Corner Road, Mountain View Road, Purdum Road and Warfield Road from the interim rustic road list and Slidell Road and Shiloh Church Road by request of the County Council and Rustic Roads Advisory Committee.

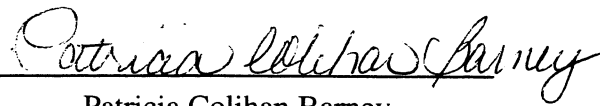
Certificate of Approval and Adoption

The Amendment to the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, as amended; Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, December 1996, as amended; the Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area, June 1994, as amended; the Boyds Master Plan February 1985, as amended; and the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan Amendment, January 1985, as amended; has been approved by the Montgomery County Council, sitting as the District Council, by Resolution 15-518 on February 24, 2004; and has been adopted by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission by Resolution No. 04-05 on April 21, 2004, after duly advertised public hearings pursuant to Article # 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

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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 covers most of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The Commission's planning jurisdiction, the Maryland-Washington Regional District, comprises 1,001 square miles; its parks jurisdiction, the Metropolitan District, comprises 919 square miles.

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.
- (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. The Planning Boards are responsible for preparation of all local master plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities, and its facilities are accessible. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, listening devices, sign language interpretation, etc.), please contact the Community Relations Office, (301) 495-4600 or TTY (301) 495-1331.

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NOTICE TO READERS

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 planning 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 County-wide perspective.

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

Functional master plans are developed through a process similar to that of an area master plan and are also considered amendments to the General Plan for the County. Functional master plans provide guidance for the preparation and update of area master plans. Unlike area master plans, functional master plans do not typically recommend changes in existing zoning and are not accompanied by sectional zoning map amendments.

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 Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING (PRELIMINARY) 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 Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan.

PLANNING BOARD (FINAL) DRAFT PLAN — This document is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and it reflects the revisions made by the Board in its worksessions on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit the 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 (Final) Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the Council other comments and recommendations regarding the Planning Board (Final) 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 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 then makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) 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.

The Master Plan Process in Brief

Planning Board submits and County Council approves:

Annual Work Program

Park and Planning staff initiates community participation and prepares:

Purpose and Outreach Report

Park and Planning staff reviews Purpose and Outreach Report with Planning Board and then prepares:

Staff Draft Plan

Planning Board reviews Staff Draft and, with modifications as necessary, approves plan as suitable for public hearing.

Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan

Planning Board reviews public hearing testimony, receives County Executive comments at Board worksessions, and adjusts Public Hearing Draft to become:

Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan

County Executive reviews Planning Board Draft and forwards fiscal impact analysis and comments to County Council.

Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan Transmitted to County Council

County Council holds public hearing and worksessions and approves, disapproves, or amends Planning Board Draft, which is forwarded to M-NCPPC to become:

Approved and Adopted

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Purpose and Background	1
Purpose of the Master Plan Amendment	1
Background of the Rustic Roads Program	1
Rustic Road Evaluation	5
Description, Evaluation and Recommendation	5
Country Road and Country Arterial Criteria	8
Johnson Drive	11
Long Corner Road	15
Mountain View Road	19
Purdum Road	23
Warfield Road	27
Shiloh Church Road	33
Slidell Road	37
Detailed Changes to the Affected Master Plans	43
Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan	43
Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan	46
Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area	47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Roads Studied as Potential Rustic Roads	2
Figure 2. Road Recommendations–Map 1	6
Figure 3. Ten Mile Creek Area Land Use Plan	9
Figure 4. Johnson Drive	13
Figure 5. Long Corner Road	17
Figure 6. Mountain View Road	21
Figure 7. Purdum Road	25
Figure 8. Warfield Road	30
Figure 9. Warfield Road Parcel Map	31
Figure 10. Shiloh Church Road	35
Figure 11. Slidell Road	39

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of Criteria Evaluation of Roads Considered for Designation as Rustic Roads	7
Table 2. Rustic and Exceptional Rustic Roads Criteria Check	41
Table 3. Roadway Classification Table	41
Table 4. Roadway Comparison Table	41

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

County Council Resolution No. 15-518	49
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APPENDIX B

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-05	59
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Purpose and Background

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

The purpose of this Amendment is to evaluate and recommend permanent roadway classification designations for Johnson Drive, Long Corner Road, Mountain View Road, Purdum Road and Warfield Road, all roads listed in the Interim Rustic Roads List, and Slidell Road and Shiloh Church Road at the request of the County Council and the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee. This amendment also reconsidered the existing rustic road classification of Piedmont Road and White Ground Road at the request of the County Council. Figure 1 shows the location of each road.

This amendment will affect the:

- Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County
- Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan
- Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space
- Damascus Master Plan
- Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area
- Boyds Master Plan
- Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan
- General Plan (on Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties

BACKGROUND OF THE RUSTIC ROADS PROGRAM

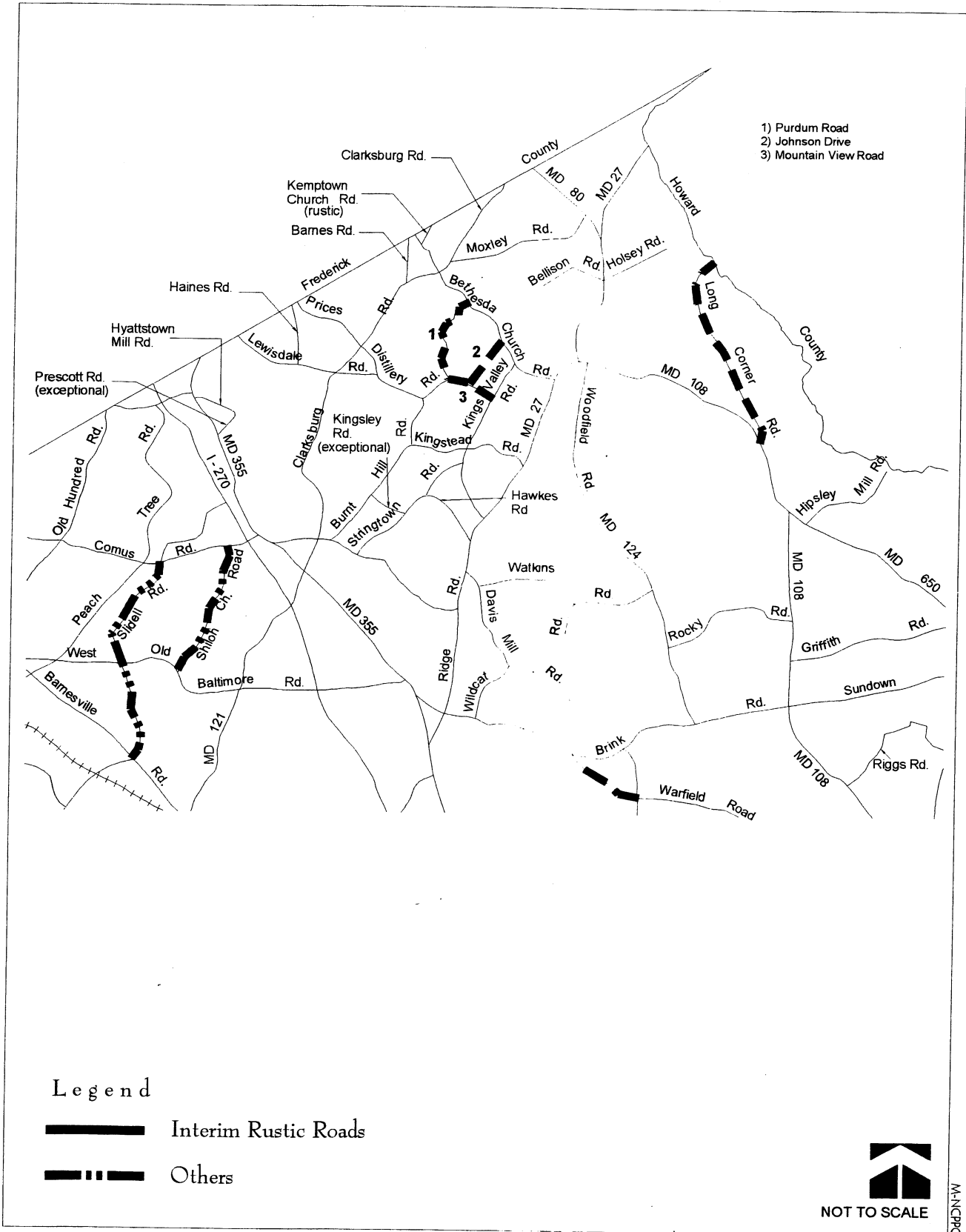
In 1989, a County Council Task Force studied the potential of establishing a rustic roads program for Montgomery County. In March 1990, the Task Force produced a report entitled: *Proposal for a Rural/Rustic Roads Program*. The report defined a rural road as “a road within the Agricultural Reserve or adjoining rural areas in Montgomery County, which enhances the rural character of the area due to its particular configuration, alignment, scenic quality, landscaping, adjacent views, and historic interest, and which exemplifies the rural and agricultural landscape of the county.” What the Task Force identified as “rural roads” became identified as “rustic roads” in the legislation and the term rural road was dropped, partly because there is already a rural road classification in the Montgomery County Road Code.

Legislation Adopted

The County Council adopted the *Legislation Establishing Rustic Roads Program and Subdivision Regulation Concerning the Rustic Roads Program [Bill 20-92]*, effective May 31, 1993. The Council also adopted at that time an interim list of rustic roads that included roads already identified in the Task Force report and those suggested by local residents. However, the County Council did not evaluate their appropriateness for designation as rustic roads at that time.

Roads Studied as Potential Rustic Roads

Figure 1



The adopted legislation identified criteria that must be met to designate a road as a “rustic” or an “exceptionally rustic” road. Before classifying a road as rustic, the County Council must find that an existing public road or road segment:

- “1) is located in an area where natural, agricultural, or historic features are predominate, and where master planned land use goals and zoning are compatible with a rural/rustic character;
- 2) is a narrow road intended for predominately local use;
- 3) is a low volume road with traffic volumes that do not detract significantly from the rustic character of the road;
- 4)
 - A) has outstanding natural features along its borders, such as native vegetation, stands of trees, stream valleys;
 - B) provides outstanding vistas of farm fields and rural landscape or buildings; or
 - C) provides access to historic resources, follows historic alignments, or highlights historic landscapes; and
- 5) the history of vehicle and pedestrian accidents on the road in its current configuration does not suggest unsafe conditions.

An exceptional rustic road must:

- 1) be considered a rustic road, as described above;
- 2) contribute significantly to the natural, agricultural or historic characteristics of the County;
- 3) have unusual features found on few other County roads; and
- 4) be more negatively affected by improvements or modifications to the physical characteristics of the road than would be other roads in the Rustic Roads Program.”

Master Plan Adopted

In June 1994, the *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area* was approved and adopted with the first recommendations for rustic roads as part of the comprehensive update of the *Clarksburg and Vicinity Master Plan*. Subsequently, a *Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan* was adopted by the County Council in 1996 to: 1) permanently designate certain roads as “rustic” or “exceptionally rustic” roads, 2) examine travel needs in the Agricultural Reserve, and 3) establish master plan designations for those roads that carry non-local traffic.

Rustic Roads Evaluation

DESCRIPTION, EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The section provides a description, evaluation and recommendation for Johnson Drive, Long Corner Road, Mountain View Road, Purdum Road, Warfield Road, Slidell Road and Shiloh Church Road. The evaluation follows the criteria stated in the Montgomery County Council's legislation. These six roads are evaluated in this Amendment.


- Figure 2 and Table 1 summarize the recommendations.
- Table 2 quantifies the criteria used to evaluate the roads.
- Table 3 presents the recommended roadway classification table that provides the revised classification limits and minimum master plan right-of-way for the roads reviewed in this amendment.
- Table 4 provides a detailed roadway comparison including traffic volume and accident data for 1999, the year the original amendment was drafted, and updated data for 2002.

During the Planning Board's public hearing on the *Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan* in July 1995, County residents recommended adding more roads to the Interim List for consideration as rustic. In the interest of time, these roads were evaluated to determine if they might meet the basic rustic road criteria. Four roads—Johnson Drive, Long Corner Road, Mountain View Road, and Purdum Road—appeared to meet the basic criteria and the Functional Master Plan recommended their addition to the Interim List until they could be fully evaluated in the future.

Warfield Road was not on the Rural/Rustic Roads Task Force list, but was added to the 1993 Interim List at the suggestion of local residents during the adoption process for the Rustic Roads legislation. As with all roads on the initial Interim List, Warfield Road was never evaluated to determine whether it met basic rustic roads criteria. Area residents again rallied in support of the road during the public hearings on the *Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan*. Warfield Road was not evaluated at that time because it is located on the border of two master plan areas and is classified as a primary residential road on the *Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County*. Without a clear evaluation of the land use, zoning and roadway network impacts on the *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*, a full evaluation of Warfield Road was not possible at that time. Thus, it was decided that further study of Warfield Road was necessary and it remained on the Interim List.

In a letter to the County Council President Silverman, dated April 26, 2002, the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee requested the evaluation of Shiloh Church Road in Clarksburg and Slidell Road in Clarksburg and Boyds as Rustic Roads. In turn, in a letter dated May 30, 2002, President Silverman requested the Planning Board "to evaluate whether or not it believes either or both roads should be classified as rustic roads as part of its ongoing Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Amendment."

Table 1: Summary of Criteria Evaluation of Roads Considered for Designation as Rustic Roads

	Rustic							Exceptional		
	Compatible land use and zoning	Narrow, intended for local use	Traffic volume consistent with rustic road	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding vistas; farm and rural	Historic Value	Accident history does not suggest unsafe conditions	Significant contribution to natural, agricultural, or historic characteristics	Unusual features	Negatively affected by modifications
Johnson Drive	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
Long Corner Road	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• Mountain View Road	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
• Purdum Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Warfield Road			✓	✓		✓	✓			
Shiloh Church Road	✓		✓				✓			
• Slidell Road	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Piedmont Road			✓				✓			
• White Ground Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

ROADS BULLETED ARE RECOMMENDED AS RUSTIC OR EXCEPTIONAL RUSTIC

In a letter dated, June 13, 2002, the Planning Board agreed to defer further consideration of the amendment to allow their staff time to complete the evaluations of Slidell Road and Shiloh Church Road and include them as part of this Amendment.

Shiloh Church Road and the majority of Slidell Road were part of the June 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattsville Special Study Area*. The lower/southern portion of Slidell Road is located in the Boyds Master Plan area. These roads were classified as a Primary Road and Arterial, respectively. They are located in the section of Clarksburg, west of Ten Mile Creek, which the master plan recognizes as the agricultural reserve of Clarksburg. The primary planning goal in this area is agricultural preservation (*see Figure 3*). Ten Mile Creek is identified as a fragile stream due to its delicate ecosystem, low base flow, and its highly erodible stream banks. The densities in this area were reduced as part of the 1994 Master Plan to reflect and protect the agricultural nature of the area and fragility of the creek.

The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee sent a letter, dated April 15, 2003, to the Montgomery County Council requesting that Piedmont Road be deleted from the Rustic Road Program. The Committee believed that the existing character of Piedmont Road was only marginally rustic and that the proposed developments would further degrade that character. Piedmont Road was classified as a Rustic Road in the 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area.

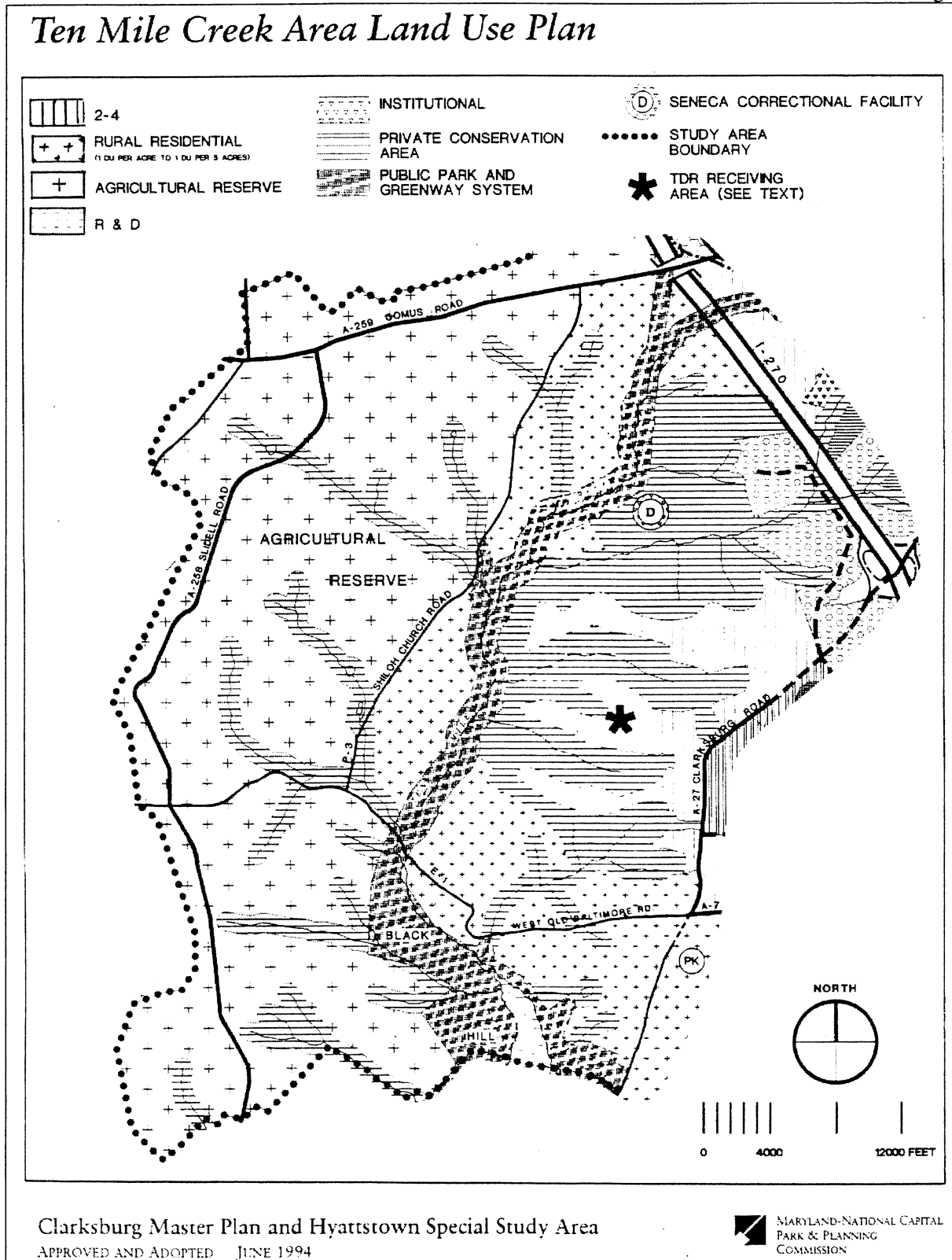
During the County Council's worksession on the rustic roads amendment, consideration was requested to reclassifying White Ground Road from a rustic road to an exceptional rustic road. Citizens who live on or in the area near White Ground Road were concerned about a planned bridge replacement that would make the road more attractive to through truck traffic.

Since the Planning Board Draft of the Rustic Roads Amendment was under consideration by the County Council, the Montgomery County Council on July 15, 2003, authorized a second public hearing to take place on September 9, 2003.

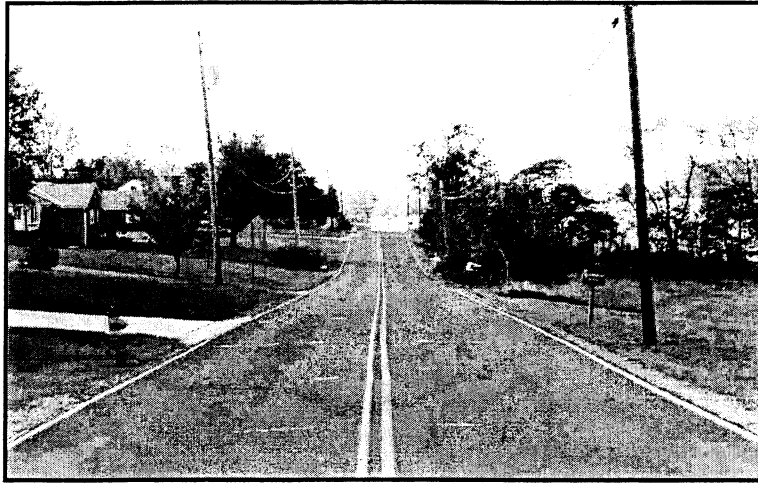
Country Road and Country Arterial Criteria

Text was included to clarify the intention of the *Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan* regarding the classification of Country Roads and Country Arterials. The changes are aimed at clarifying that existing roads reclassified to these roadway classifications were roads that failed to meet the criteria for rustic roads but had natural features or characteristics that were worth preserving. These features would not be preserved by using the existing Primary Residential classification or the Arterial classification. The suggested changes are located in the section of this amendment entitled "Detailed Changes to the Affected Master Plans."

Figure 3



JOHNSON DRIVE



Recommendation

Johnson Drive is recommended as a “*country road.*”

Description

Johnson Drive is located in northern Montgomery County approximately 1½ miles west of Damascus and is situated between Bethesda Church Road and Mountain View Road (*see Figure 4*). Johnson Drive is a two-lane, 22-foot wide, paved asphalt public road, and runs for 0.7 miles. There is a marked centerline but there is no shoulder. The road is located on a high ridgeline between the Bennett Creek and Little Bennett Creek watersheds, and is located entirely within the RDT zone.

Evaluation

Driving Experience:

The intersection of Johnson Road at Bethesda Church Road is accentuated by a steep incline, with a cluster of modern brick homes set back from the road. Steep, unforested slopes along the road contribute to outstanding views of surrounding farms, fields, and other natural features. Sugarloaf Mountain and Little Bennett Park are visible in the distance. However, Johnson Drive gives a very “exposed” feeling due to the lack of vegetation, and exposed utility wires running its entire length have a negative visual impact. A large dairy farm, pasture, and farm fields are located at the intersection with Mountain View Road.

History:

There are no historical references to Johnson Drive prior to the 1920's. However, the intersection of Johnson Drive and Mountain View Road forms the eastern boundary of the Purdum Historic District identified as (10/24) on the County's *Locational Atlas and Index of*

Historic Sites. Purdum was a nearly self-sufficient farming community in the late 1800's and early 1900's, and contains several Vernacular Victorian houses. The C.E. Purdum Farm (10/23), also identified as a potential historic resource, is clearly visible from the road.

Traffic:

The average daily traffic volume of 1,500 vehicles was observed in April 1999 and modestly increased in March 2002 to 1,520. The road is not a master-planned road within the transportation network and there are no existing, or proposed, bikeways along this road. Three accidents that resulted in four injuries were reported on Johnson Drive from January 1993 to December 1997. That number dropped to one accident with no resulting injuries from January 1996 to December 2000.

Justification

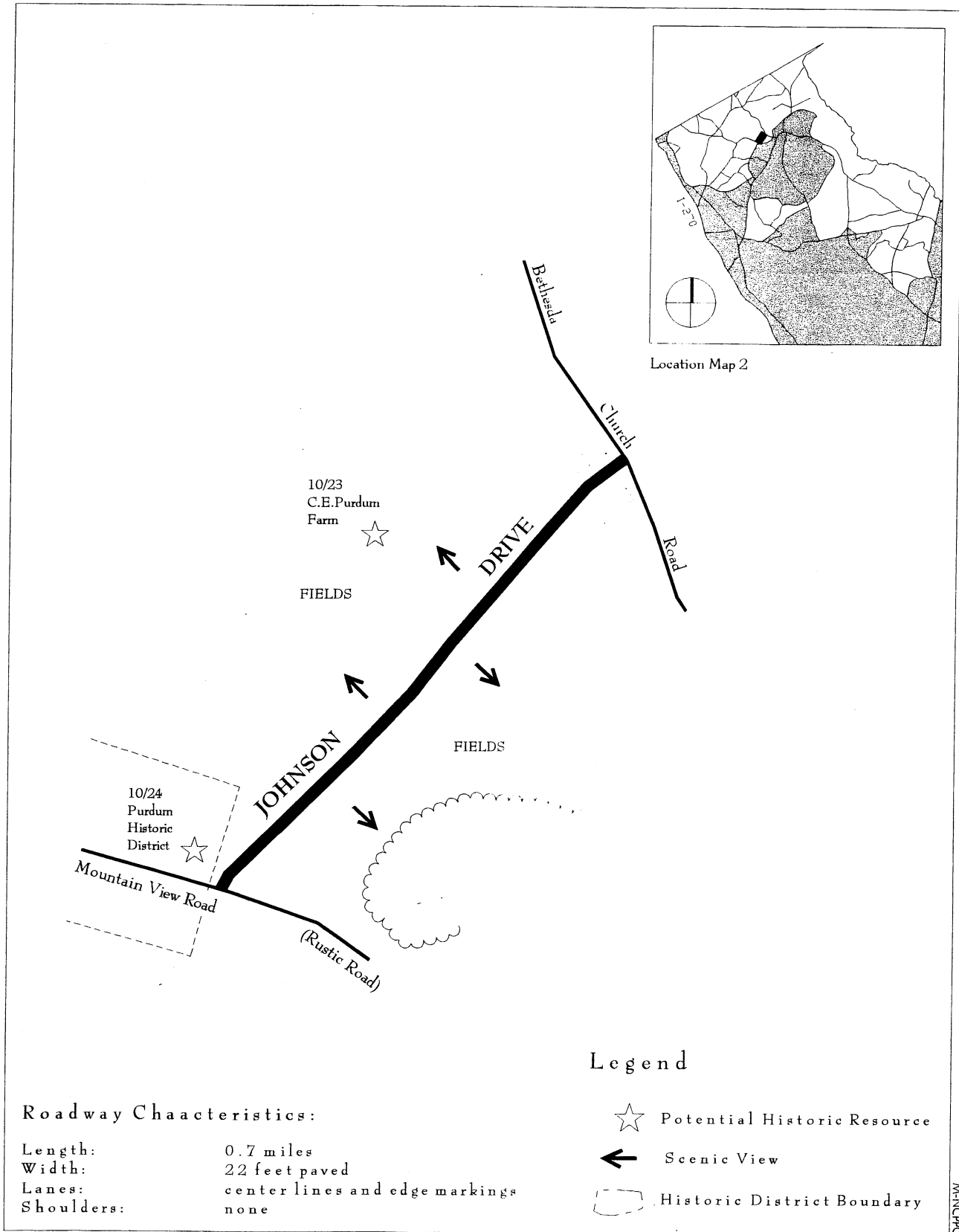
The "*country road*" designation is recommended as appropriate for Johnson Drive. However, Johnson Drive's location along a high ridge does provide a wide, sweeping vista of the surrounding natural and agricultural character, including views of Sugarloaf Mountain and area farmlands.

Johnson Drive does not meet the established criteria for designation as a rustic road because:

- 1) The road appears to function beyond local use – staff observed a significant number of vehicles traveling at relatively high-speeds using the road as a through route, not a destination.
- 2) There are no significant features along the road that future roadway maintenance will compromise the integrity of the road.

Johnson Drive




Figure 4



Roadway Characteristics:

Length: 0.7 miles
 Width: 22 feet paved
 Lanes: center lines and edge markings
 Shoulders: none

Legend

-  Potential Historic Resource
-  Scenic View
-  Historic District Boundary

M-NC/PC

