



Rock Spring Master Plan Working Draft



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Staff Recommendation

Approve the Working Draft of the Rock Spring Master Plan as the Public Hearing Draft and set the public hearing date for December 1, 2016.

Summary

On October 20, 2016, Planning Department staff will present the Rock Spring Master Plan Working Draft to the Planning Board. The Working Draft is an amendment to the approved and adopted 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* and the 2002 *Potomac Subregion Master Plan*. The Planning Board approved the Scope of Work for the Rock Spring Master Plan on October 8, 2015. Between September 2015 and July 2016, staff held eight community meetings. On July 28, 2016, staff briefed the Planning Board on the key issues and preliminary recommendations.

Upcoming milestones in the Rock Spring Master Plan process are:

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|-------------------------|--|
| December 1, 2016 | Planning Board public hearing |
| December 15, 2016 | Planning Board worksession |
| January - February 2017 | Planning Board worksessions |
| March 2017 | Planning Board approves the Rock Spring Master Plan for transmittal to County Executive and County Council |
| April 2017 | County Council public hearing |
| May – June 2017 | County Council worksessions |
| July – September 2017 | Commission adoption, Sectional Map Amendment |

The Plan's Appendix will be available on-line prior to the public hearing. Staff recommends approval of the Working Draft as the Public Hearing Draft and requests that the Planning Board set the public hearing for December 1, 2016.

Attachment:

Rock Spring Master Plan Working Draft



WORKING DRAFT • OCTOBER 2016

Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department
MontgomeryPlanning.org

Abstract

This Plan contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to portions of the approved and adopted 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* and the 2002 *Potomac Subregion Master Plan*, as amended. It also amends *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; the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*, as amended; and the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*, as amended. This Plan covers 535 acres and makes recommendations for land use, density, zoning, transportation, environment, parks, and community facilities.

Master and sector plans convey land use policy for defined geographic areas and should be interpreted together with relevant countywide functional plans and County laws and regulations. Plan recommendations provide comprehensive guidelines for the use of public and private land and should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions. Public and private land use decisions that promote plan goals are essential to fulfilling a plan's vision.

Master and sector plans look ahead 20 years from the date of adoption, although they are intended to be revised every 10 to 15 years. Moreover, circumstances when a plan is adopted will change and the specifics of a plan may become less relevant over time. Plans do not specify all development possibilities. Their sketches are for illustrative purposes only, intended to convey a sense of desirable future character rather than detailed recommendations for a particular design.

Sources of Copies

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910
Online at montgomeryplanning.org/community/rockspring/

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 is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending *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 Commission operates in each County through Planning Boards appointed by those County governments. The Boards are responsible for all local plans, zoning amendments, subdivision regulations, and administration of parks.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

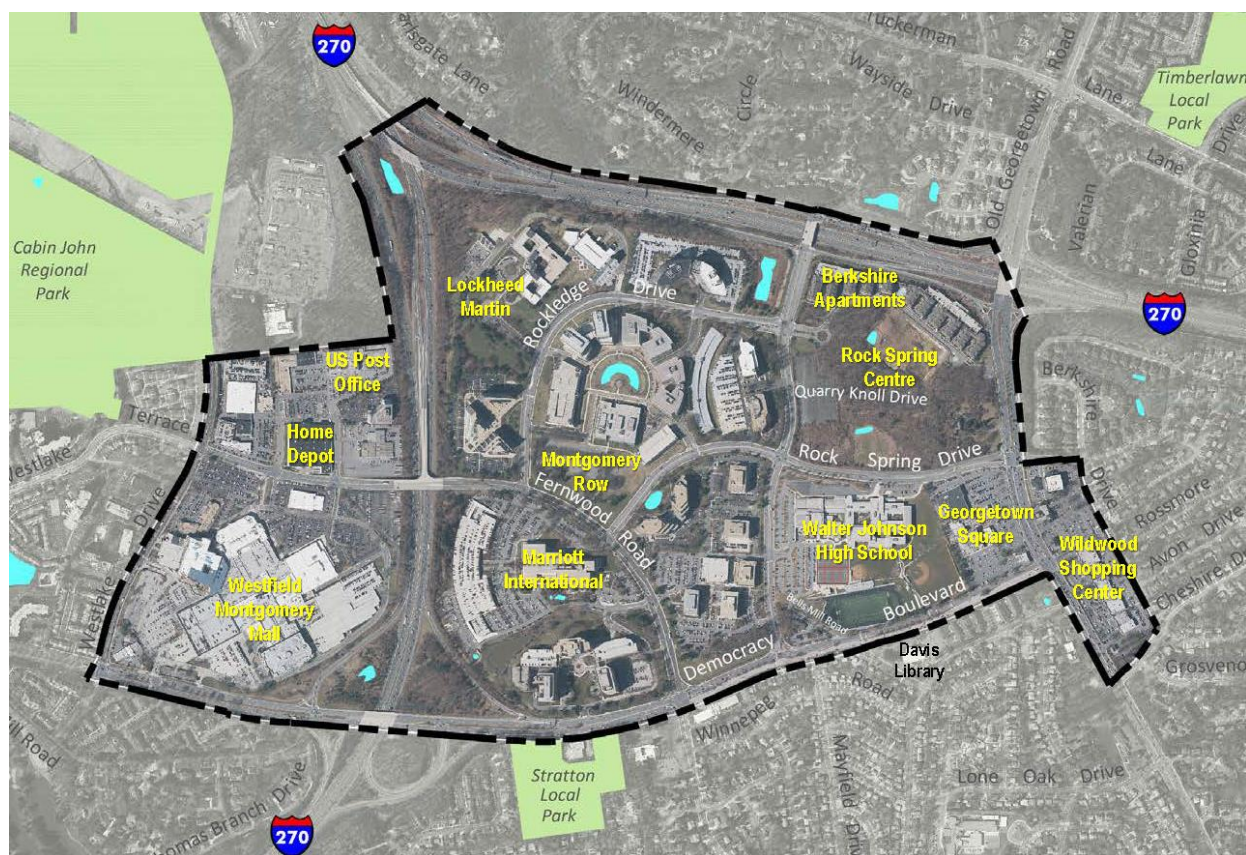
Rock Spring is located in the North Bethesda area of Montgomery County, near the nexus of Interstates 495 and 270. Old Georgetown Road links Rock Spring to downtown Bethesda, to the south, and White Flint, to the north. The Rock Spring Master Plan is bounded by I-270 to the north, Old Georgetown Road to the east, Democracy Boulevard to the south, and Westlake Drive to the west. (See Figure 1.) The central portion of the 535-acre Rock Spring Master Plan area is a typical suburban office park with buildings that are widely dispersed, centered within their large sites, with sizeable setbacks, ample surface and garage parking, and substantial landscaping. West of the office park, across the I-270 spur, the area includes a large regional mall and other retail uses. East of the office park are located two retail centers, a multi-family residential complex, and a public high school. (See Figure 2.) Established residential neighborhoods surround the Plan area.

With its location adjacent to I-270 and near I-495, Rock Spring is well served by roadways that provide access to the Washington D.C. region, including its three airports. Two major infrastructure projects greatly improved vehicular access to and around Rock Spring: the interchange at I-270 and Rockledge Boulevard, and the Fernwood Road bridge over I-270. Multiple existing bus routes and shuttles run throughout the area and the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station is situated approximately 2.5 miles from the center of the office park.

Figure 1 Rock Spring Master Plan Area



Figure 2 Rock Spring Context



Plan Framework

The majority of the Rock Spring Master Plan area was included in the 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan*. The 1992 Plan covered a large geography and focused on the areas around the Twinbrook, White Flint and Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail stations, as well as the office park at Rock Spring. Communities that were previously part of the 1992 Plan are now the subject of separate, smaller area plans, including the 2009 *Twinbrook Sector Plan*, the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan*, and plans currently underway for Rock Spring and White Flint 2. (See Figure 3.) The portion of the Rock Spring Master Plan located west of the I-270 spur was part of the 2002 *Potomac Subregion Master Plan*.

The Rock Spring Master Plan builds on the goals and objectives of the 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan*. The 1992 Plan describes Rock Spring Park as “one of the East Coast’s premier office parks” with a campus-style setting, green lawns, and lush landscaping that has attracted tenants wishing to “enhance their corporate image.” At the same time, the 1992 Plan notes that the office park consists of somewhat homogeneous, unrelated sets of buildings centered on sites with no particular relationship with each other and no unifying urban design features other than generous landscaping. Several goals from the 1992 Plan continue to be relevant today, including:

- 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 rights-of-way into future development.

The 1992 Master Plan recommended the North Bethesda Transitway to provide a transit link between Rock Spring and the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station. The transitway is included in the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* with four proposed stations within the Rock Spring area and alternative routes to either the Grosvenor-Strathmore or White Flint Metrorail stations. The 2002 *Potomac Subregion Master Plan* had few detailed recommendations for the commercial areas west of the I-270 spur in the Rock Spring Master Plan. The Plan does include recommendations to connect the area to the Metro by way of the North Bethesda Transitway and recommends a “multi-modal transit center at the western terminus of the planned North Bethesda Transitway near Montgomery Mall.”

The 1993 *General Plan Refinement* includes the Rock Spring Plan areas east of the I-270 spur within the urban ring and the areas west of the I-270 spur as part of the suburban communities. (See Figure 4.) The recommendations in this Master Plan are consistent with the General Plan’s goals for the urban ring and the suburban communities.

The General Plan vision for the urban ring is:

- Well-established, lively centers with job and housing opportunities.
- Strong residential neighborhoods.
- Varied transportation options.
- Relatively dense development.
- Active public and private reinvestment.
- Commercial revitalization.

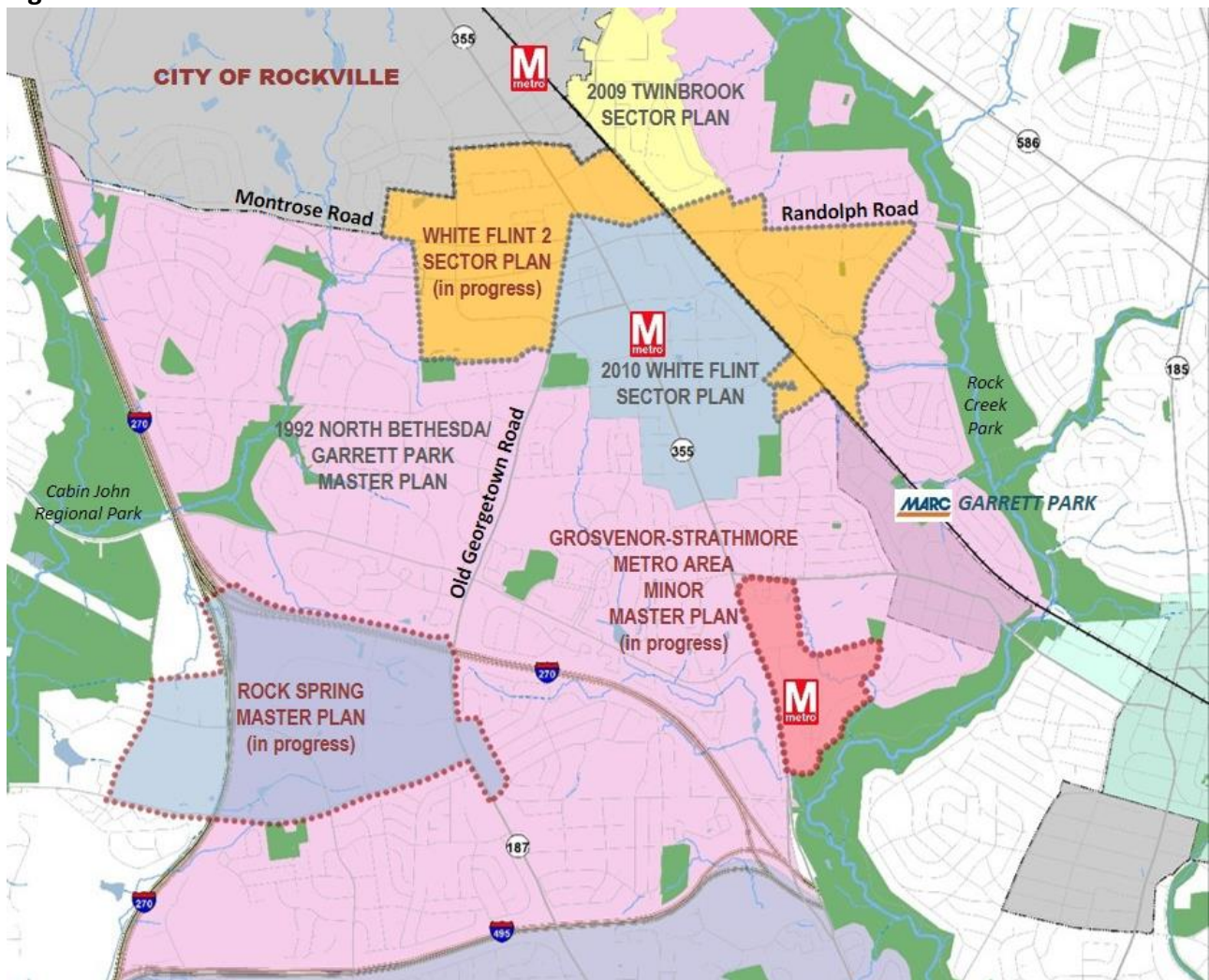
The General Plan vision for the suburban communities is:

- Moderate density land uses which are transit serviceable along major arteries.
- Increasing transportation options.
- Suburban residential neighborhoods.
- Distinct centers.
- Appropriate public and private investment.

Background and Context

After the completion of I-270 in the 1960s, Rock Spring gradually began to establish itself as one of Montgomery County’s premier office parks and employment centers. In the 1970s, when Martin Marietta (now Lockheed Martin) and IBM located in Rock Spring, pastoral, campus-style office parks were in vogue. Lockheed Martin’s world headquarters has been in Rock Spring in a secured and gated complex on Rockledge Drive for 40 years. IBM initially had a large presence in the area, with five office buildings designed as a cohesive architectural complex encircling a pond and a pedestrian path. In 1979, Marriott International established its corporate headquarters at its current location on Fernwood Road. The Davis-Camaliere family has deep roots in the area and built numerous office buildings in Rock Spring in the 1980s and 1990s. By the 1980s, Rock Spring had become the gateway to the I-270 technology corridor, with large, thriving corporate offices occupied by professional services and consulting firms.

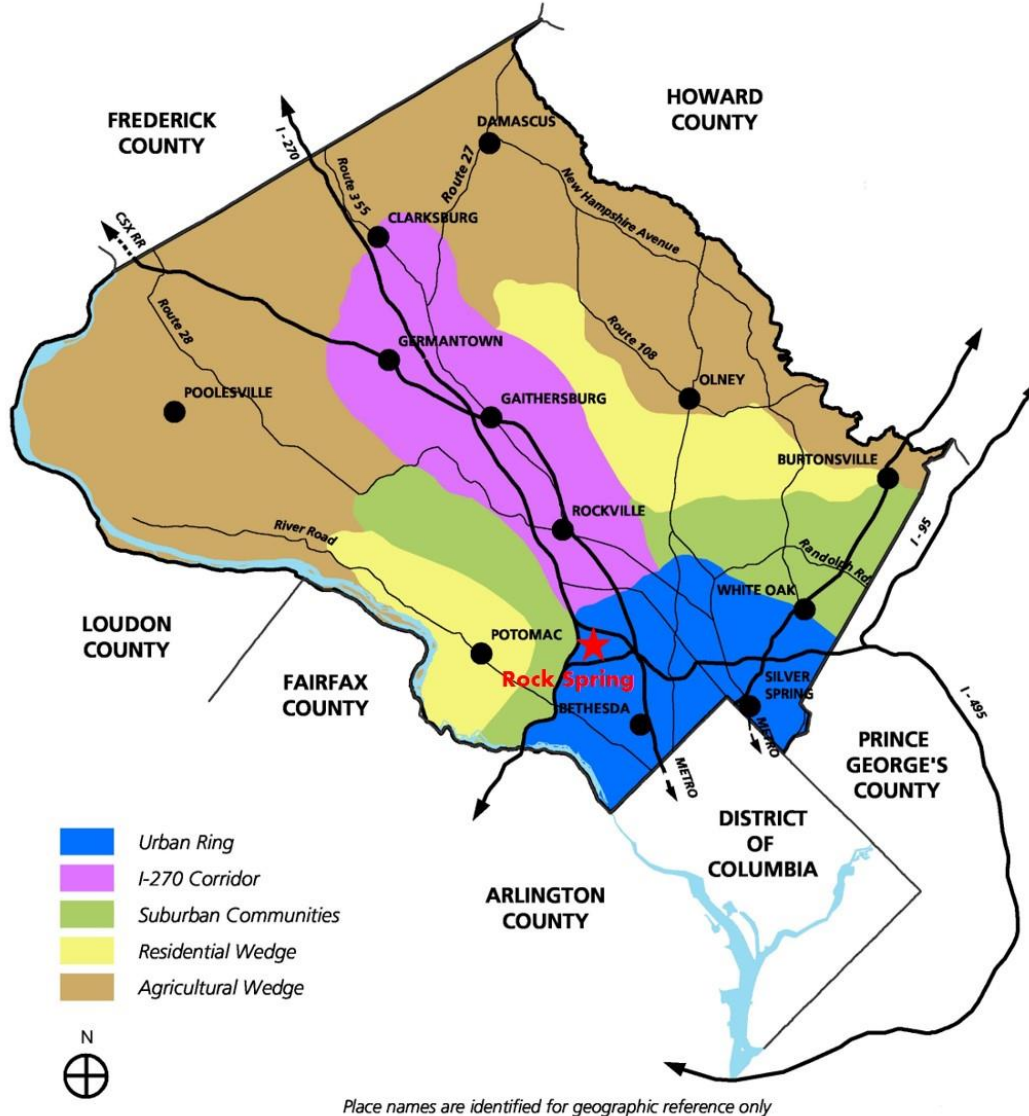
Figure 3 North Bethesda Master Plans and Sector Plans



Rock Spring has a large percentage of Class A space (87 percent, compared to 50 percent Countywide) and much of it has been consistently renovated and upgraded. Office buildings in Rock Spring were built substantially larger than in other areas; on average, they are twice the size of office buildings elsewhere in the County. Rock Spring Park is part of the North Bethesda/Potomac office submarket and accounts for 48 percent of the office inventory in North Bethesda and 7 percent of office space Countywide. Office expansion continued through the early 2000s with tenants that included the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which currently leases more than 700,000 square feet in several locations within Rock Spring.

By the late 2000s, the premier status of the Rock Spring office park began to weaken and office vacancy rates began to climb. The current office vacancy rate in Rock Spring is 22.3 percent, higher than the Countywide vacancy rate of 15 percent. Rock Spring's office vacancy rate has remained above 19 percent since 2009. In 2015, Marriott International announced that it was contemplating relocating from Rock Spring to a transit proximate location. The possible relocation of Marriott, which occupies 808,000 square feet at its headquarters in Rock Spring, would boost the office park's vacancy rate to 39 percent, if there were no other changes.

Figure 4 Wedges and Corridors Geographic Components



A 2015 Office Market Assessment Report, prepared for the Planning Department by Partners for Economic Solutions (PES), describes the office market trends:

The Washington, DC metro region is currently experiencing unprecedented challenges in its office market...Montgomery County is suffering along with the rest of the region, performing better than other jurisdictions on some indicators and worse on others. The region and county have experienced recession-driven office market downturns for decades. What is different this time is a major realignment as tenants reduce their office space even as they expand their workforce. That trend will impact local and regional office markets for many years into the future. (page 1)

According to this report, challenges specific to Montgomery County's office market include an increase in telecommuting; federal budget cuts and shrinking workspace footprints; regional competition from the District of Columbia and Tysons; and changes in preferences as prospective tenants seek transit-served and amenity rich locations. Rock Spring has been particularly hard hit by these current trends. Single-use business parks without direct access to transit, like Rock Spring, are struggling with the highest office vacancies. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), which occupied over 160,000 square feet in Rock Spring, relocated to a new headquarters in Twinbrook. IBM, which once occupied more than 1.5 million square feet of office space on 40 acres in the center of the office park, has reduced its footprint to 59,000 square feet.

The Rock Spring Master Plan and the White Flint 2 Sector Plan are being prepared concurrently by the Planning Department, partly due to the similar challenges that both areas face with the current office market trends. The two areas are just a mile-and-a-half apart, linked by Old Georgetown Road. The White Flint 2 Sector Plan surrounds the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* to the west, north, and east, as shown in Figure 3. White Flint 2's office buildings are concentrated along a linear boulevard that serves the broader area -- Executive Boulevard and Jefferson Street between Old Georgetown Road and Montrose Parkway. The eastern edge of the Executive Boulevard office district is immediately adjacent to the Pike and Rose development in White Flint and is within a half mile of the White Flint Metrorail Station. In contrast to the White Flint 2 area, Rock Spring is a conventional, sequestered office park where some roads were built specifically to provide access to the office buildings. The Rock Spring office park has nearly double the square footage of Executive Boulevard.

During the planning process for Rock Spring and White Flint 2, the Planning Department sought guidance and expertise from external resources. In December 2015, the Department convened an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to discuss the office market challenges and suggest potential strategies to improve the vitality of these areas. The Department also engaged Bolan Smart Associates to analyze the financial and physical viability of adaptively reusing office buildings in these areas for alternative uses.

The ULI Panel analyzed existing industry research on office uses nationally and found that, when leases expired, tenant relocations increased from 40 percent between 2000-2008 to 60 percent between 2009-2014. ULI describes this as a "flight to quality" away from Class B or C office space toward Class A space, including prioritization of amenity-rich and transportation-accessible locations essential to attracting a new generation of workers. While Rock Spring has a large percentage of Class A space, according to the ULI TAP report, the market perception of the area, combined with the lack of sought-after amenities, essentially reduces the space to Class B or C. Nevertheless, according to the ULI Panel report (page 15), "the office product in both study areas is locationally viable, and in some cases, locationally vital" given the demographics, access, high quality schools, and desirable residential neighborhoods.

Potentially, Rock Spring may be better positioned than other areas when it comes to recovery and repurposing of its office buildings. The 2016 Adaptive Reuse Study completed by Bolan Smart Associates for the Planning Department states (page 2): "Location, value pricing, and parking convenience, are still marketable. The Rock Spring location is highly viable, convenient to a broad

base of employees served by a regional road network near a range of retail and lodging amenities, and most of the non-special purpose buildings have substantial continued economic life.” The medical office buildings in Rock Spring appear to be well leased and thriving. In the 2000s, Lockheed Martin nearly doubled its footprint with a new, 209,000-square foot training facility and the company has recently expressed intentions to remain at its Rockledge Drive site. As mentioned, NIH has a large, and growing, presence in the area.

While the office market faces challenges, the area’s retail establishments continue to thrive. The retail clusters that bookend the office park to the east and west are popular destinations for consumers from the region as well as from the surrounding neighborhoods. Westfield Montgomery Mall and the commercial areas north of Westlake Terrace are regional draws to the area. Along Old Georgetown Road, Wildwood Shopping Center and Georgetown Square are busy neighborhood-serving retail centers. Well-established, in-demand residential neighborhoods surround Rock Spring and help bolster the retail offerings.

Much attention has been focused on the changing office market, and there is general agreement that to remain competitive, a greater mix of well-connected uses should be introduced within the Plan area. Implementation of developer’s approved projects would help create a more diverse community. At the same time, school capacity in the Walter Johnson School Cluster must also be addressed. The County’s Subdivision Staging Policy indicates that the Walter Johnson Cluster is close to a moratorium for all school levels. Additional residential development and the pace of its delivery will impact the Walter Johnson cluster, as well as the adjacent Downcounty Consortium secondary schools. This Plan assesses the impact of proposed development in the Rock Spring area to determine whether additional facilities are needed.

Strengths and Challenges

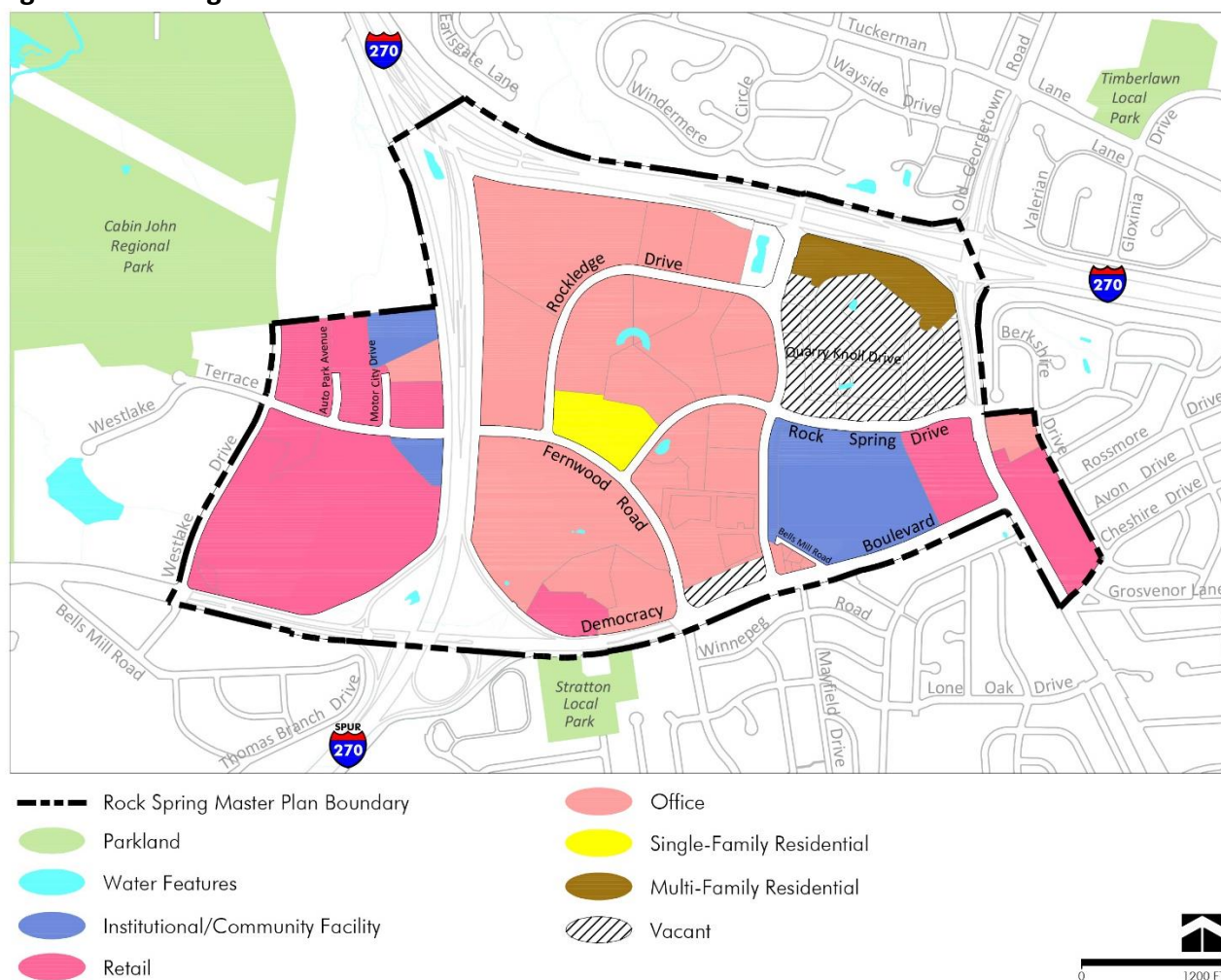
Strengths

- Easy access to and from Interstates 270 and 495.
- Lush landscaping, tree cover, and open spaces.
- Class A office buildings.
- Proposed North Bethesda Transitway.
- Proximity to a diverse mix of local-serving and regional retail.
- Surrounded by well-established, desirable neighborhoods.
- Relative proximity to three Metrorail stations: approximately 2.5 miles from Grosvenor-Strathmore; 3 miles from White Flint; and 4.5 miles from Bethesda.
- Significant mix of proposed new development in the approved pipeline.

Challenges

- Outdated single-use suburban office park development pattern.
- Lack of safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding developments.
- Lack of direct access to the Metrorail.
- Disconnected from surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Open spaces are mainly private, isolated, and disconnected.
- Significant amounts of approved pipeline development that has not proceeded for many years.

Figure 5 Existing Land Use



- Lack of identity or unique sense of place.
- Lack of amenities for existing office employees and future residents.
- Lack of land use diversity/mix of uses.

Development Activity

Land in the Rock Spring Master Plan area is either developed or has been approved for new development or redevelopment that has not yet occurred. (See Figures 5 and 6.) Nearly 25 years ago, when the 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* was approved, the only major undeveloped site in the Rock Spring sub-area of the Plan was the 54-acre Davis-Camaliel parcel and the Plan provided extensive development guidelines for the property. In 1999, the Planning Board approved a multi-phased development project, Rock Spring Centre, on the Davis-Camaliel property, including nearly one million square feet of offices, retail, a hotel, and 1,250 dwelling units in high-rise and mid-rise residential buildings. In 2004, the first phase of the approved development was completed on the northern portion of the Davis-Camaliel property along I-270, a 386-unit multi-family residential building, the Berkshires of Rock Spring (formerly known as Avalon Bay). Over the past 12 years, there has been no additional development activity to

Figure 6 Rock Spring Pipeline Projects



implement the approved plans for the Davis-Camaliere site and it remains the only undeveloped site in Rock Spring.

In 2009, the Planning Board approved a 340-unit multi-family high-rise residential building with ground-floor commercial space on a parcel on the north side of Westlake Terrace across from Westfield Montgomery Mall; however, Ourisman Ford continues to occupy the site. Another project in the pipeline is a 58-unit multi-family building approved on the southern portion of the property where the Aubinoe office building is currently located to the north of the Wildwood Shopping Center.

In the heart of Rock Spring's office park, residential builder EYA is currently constructing a 168-unit townhouse development on the northwest corner of Fernwood Road and Rock Spring Drive, across from Marriott's headquarters. Montgomery Row is being constructed on a site previously planned for another office building, indicating that the market is starting to respond to change by introducing residential uses into a heretofore single-use office park. As noted in the 2015 office market report prepared for the Planning Department by Partners for Economic Solutions (page

66): “Property owners and developers are beginning to rethink and redesign conventional office parks to accommodate a mix of uses.”

Westfield Montgomery Mall, built nearly 50 years ago, underwent significant renovations in 2014, including a new food court and dining terrace, the Cheesecake Factory (relocated from White Flint Mall), and ArcLight Cinemas movie theatres. Additional upgrades may be considered by Westfield in the future. A Westfield Montgomery Mall Citizens Advisory Panel was formed to keep the surrounding community informed about activities and issues at the Mall. An upgraded County transit center opened in May 2016 at the northeast corner of the Mall, at Westlake Terrace and the bridge over the I-270 spur.

Outreach

A community kick-off meeting was held on September 1, 2015 at Walter Johnson High School to launch the planning and public engagement process. Six subsequent community meetings were held in addition to individual and small group meetings with civic associations, Parent Teacher Associations, and property owners.

Meeting discussions addressed linking parks and open spaces, school facility demands and options, transportation networks and connectivity, land uses, and placemaking amenities. In addition, property owners made presentations about approved and prospective plans for their sites. All of the following meetings were held at Walter Johnson High School, with the exception of the June 6, 2016 meeting at Luxmanor Elementary, and introduced a variety of topics:

- September 17, 2015: Schools.
- October 28, 2015: Presentations by property owners.
- December 14, 2015: Placemaking.
- February 25, 2016: Parks and Transportation.
- May 23, 2016: Plan Concepts, Land Use Scenarios, and Transportation Modeling.
- June 6, 2016: Schools Follow-up.
- July 18, 2016: Preliminary Recommendations.

Rock Spring Community Meetings, Walter Johnson High School



CHAPTER 2 ROCK SPRING TOMORROW: LAND USES, ZONING, AND DESIGN

Informed by sound planning principles from the past, this Plan anticipates that Rock Spring can evolve into a more cohesive community in the future. Several significant projects have been approved in Rock Spring that will, when developed, help achieve the Plan's vision. The Plan's overall, unifying design concept envisions a central spine or "main street" that connects the three separate clusters that make up the Plan area. Overarching Plan goals provide guidance on design, sustainability, community facilities, and connectivity. The Plan's approach to zoning, as well as design guidance on buildings, connectivity, and open spaces, is organized by the three cluster areas.

Vision

The 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* envisioned Rock Spring as a "large, high quality, mixed-use Urban Village" and encouraged "the gradual evolution of the entire area from Wildwood Shopping Center to the Westlake housing area into a single district." That Plan suggested that a redesigned Fernwood Road/Rock Spring Drive would become the unifying visual influence; an "axis" that would link the various parts and overcome the physical barriers imposed by the I-270 spur and Old Georgetown Road. Twenty-five years later, Rock Spring is just beginning to transform from a cluster of disparate uses into a holistic, cohesive community.

Rock Spring's location continues to be one of its prime assets, with direct access to major highways and relative proximity to the Grosvenor-Strathmore and White Flint Metrorail stations. Although the office market is currently struggling and the single-use suburban office campus has lost some of its former appeal, Rock Spring still has many positive attributes and, generally, the vision from the 1992 Plan remains relevant. Rock Spring's office buildings are valuable and the commercial retail centers that anchor the east and west sides of the Plan area are thriving. The residential neighborhoods that surround Rock Spring are well established and highly desirable.

The recent emergence of new residential development within the office park further signals the readiness of the area for its repositioning as a well-integrated, amenity-rich district for existing employers and future residents. The townhouses currently under construction, along with the significant developments that have been approved at other sites, particularly Rock Spring Centre, have the potential to create a more connected, walkable, mixed-use community.

This Plan envisions Rock Spring as an employment center that includes new housing, where appropriate, with concentrations of retail at each end of the central spine. New development and redevelopment should focus activity along the proposed central spine. The Master Plan seeks to build on the goals of the previous Plan and leverage the inherent strengths of the Rock Spring area through a measured, form-based approach by:

- Establishing a redevelopment framework that provides greater amenity options and mix of uses for companies and their employees, as well as residents, both in the short and long term.
- Elevating the North Bethesda Transitway to a high-priority transit corridor.
- Concentrating new activity, both public and private, along the central spine to:
 - Establish a greater sense of place and an identity for the Rock Spring area.

- Reduce the real and perceived distances between the east and west sides of the Plan area by unifying activity nodes along the spine.
- Provide areas of interest for future residents and commercial employees.
- Encourage a safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycle street environment along the spine and around future transitway stops.
- Enhancing connectivity between the Rock Spring Plan area and surrounding residential neighborhoods, adjacent parks, and nearby community facilities.
- Creating linkages between existing trails and green spaces, and establishing new open spaces through redevelopment.

Rock Spring Concept

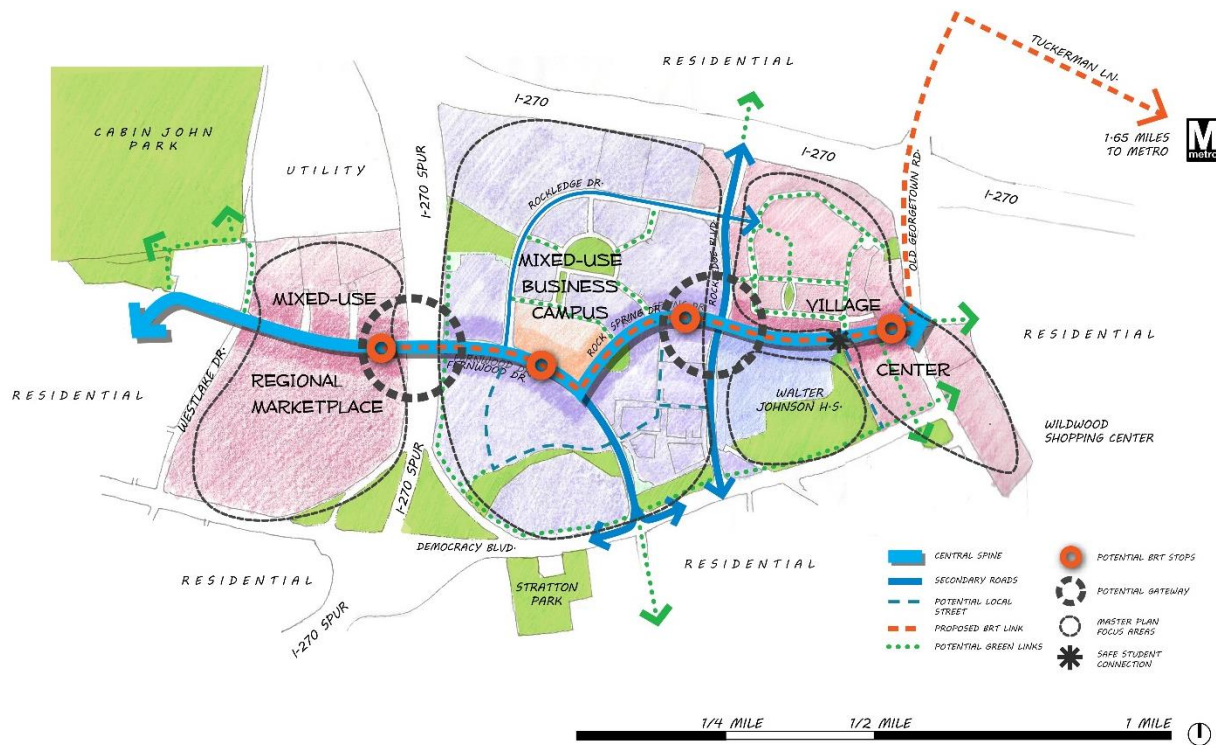
The 1992 Plan's concept of Rock Spring as a mixed-use urban village, connected by a central axis – Fernwood Road/Rock Spring Drive – continues to be a major unifying design element for the area. (See Figure 7.) Two separate Urban Land Institute (ULI) studies (2013 and 2016) supported and elaborated on this idea, confirming that the recommendation of the 1992 Plan remains relevant. Building on this concept, the proposed central axis or spine provides the foundation for this Plan's design and connectivity recommendations.

The 1992 Plan's recommendation for the redesign of Fernwood Road and Rock Spring Drive intended a reconstruction of the two roads to straighten the alignment, but this project was never executed. The 1992 Plan recommended that the "V-shaped" intersection where Fernwood Road and Rock Spring Drive meet, be rebuilt to remove the "V" and create a straight alignment "as the main visual organizing element, with improved sidewalks, street trees, the transitway, station stops, and a bikeway." (See page 136 of the 1992 Plan.)

To straighten the road in this way would have meant rebuilding it across the southern corner of what is now the EYA townhouse site (see #2 on Figure 6), which had been approved for another IBM office building at the time the 1992 Plan was prepared. This proposed realignment would have had significant impact on the privately owned property where the road reconstruction was intended; the possibility of straightening the axis has now been precluded by the townhouse project that is nearing completion. Nevertheless, the proposed North Bethesda Transitway is still viable; much of the right-of-way has been reserved through easements and dedications, including along the frontage of the EYA townhouse project. East-west connectivity was also improved significantly through Rock Spring with the construction of the Fernwood Road bridge over the I-270 spur in 1994.

The central spine, shown on Figure 7, includes the proposed North Bethesda Transitway, as recommended in the 1992 Plan and the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*. The 2013 Functional Plan recommends four potential bus rapid transit stations along the central spine, which this Plan supports. As shown on the concept diagram, these proposed transit nodes will concentrate activity and thread together the east and west sides of the Plan area. In addition, the four pipeline projects – one is under construction and three are approved, but unbuilt – have frontage along the spine. (See Figures 6 and 7.) These proposed developments will bring a mix of uses and improvements to the public realm that will start to reshape the Plan area into a connected, cohesive community that is more pedestrian and bicycle friendly for employees, residents, students, and visitors.

Figure 7 Rock Spring Concept Diagram



The 1992 Plan’s vision of Rock Spring as a “mixed-use urban village” was decidedly aspirational. Twenty-five years later, Rock Spring is not an “urban village,” but it is growing more diversified in its land uses and more connected as a community. Based on established development patterns and the existing road network, the Rock Spring Master Plan area has three distinct clusters that present different challenges and opportunities for growth and improvement. Today, the clusters are distinct and separate from one another, but over time, the area has the potential to become connected and cohesive. This Plan seeks to advance the evolution of Rock Spring as a community that offers more amenities for employees as well as existing and future residents.

The three clusters are shown on Figure 7 and include:

- Rock Spring East/Village Center, which includes the properties east of Rockledge Drive/ Rockledge Boulevard.
- Rock Spring Central/Mixed-Use Business Campus, which includes the office park, located between the I-270 spur and Rockledge Drive.
- Rock Spring West/Mixed-Use Regional Marketplace, which includes the regional mall and retail uses west of the I-270 spur and north and south of Westlake Terrace.

The design and zoning recommendations in later sections of this chapter highlight the characteristics of each cluster, while encouraging unification of the Plan area from the Wildwood Shopping Center to Westfield Montgomery Mall.

Overarching Goals

Land Uses and Urban Design

- Establish a redevelopment framework that provides a greater mix of uses and amenity options for businesses and their employees, as well as residents, both in the short and long term.
- Strengthen the viability of existing uses.
- Create opportunities for infill or redevelopment of single-use commercial areas and surface parking lots with a greater mix of uses and public spaces that will reshape Rock Spring into a well-integrated community.

Environment and Sustainability

- Increase tree canopy through new development and redevelopment.
- Promote site and building design for energy conservation and LEED certification.
- Minimize impervious surfaces and maximize pervious areas.
- Improve air quality by reducing reliance on single-occupant vehicles.
- Make attainment of net zero carbon emissions an aspirational goal in all new development and redevelopment.

Community Facilities

- Explore a wide range of approaches to accommodate school enrollment growth.
- Increase publicly accessible green spaces within the Plan area.
- Improve the utility of existing publicly accessible open spaces.
- Promote the co-location of public facilities to reduce public expenditures and minimize land area requirements.
- Encourage new prototypes for public facilities that promote innovative design.
- Find an appropriate use for the former recreation center site on the Rock Spring Centre property.

Transportation and Connectivity

- Create a safe, low stress, and “complete streets” pedestrian and bicycle network by re-allocating space within the public rights-of-way for sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and shared use paths that are physically separated from moving vehicles.
- Establish safer and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections to the residential neighborhoods and recreational amenities surrounding the Plan area, with particular focus on the crossings of Democracy Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road.
- Design a safer and more pleasant pedestrian and bicycle crossing over the Fernwood Road bridge spanning the I-270 spur, which connects the office park with Westfield Montgomery Mall and the new transit center.
- Build smaller local streets that will improve connectivity between the existing large blocks, encourage more pedestrian/bicycle activity, and help disperse vehicular traffic.

Zoning and Design Overview

Zoning recommendations in this Plan are twofold for several properties within the Rock Spring Central/Mixed-Use Business Campus cluster. They increase floor-area-ratio (FAR) maximums to provide greater flexibility under the existing Employment Office (EOF) Zone; and recommend a mixed-use floating zone if property owners decide to undertake comprehensive changes to their properties in the future. Design guidance for these properties addresses the potential for existing zones to be retained to improve the area via infill or enhancement of existing resources. The guidelines also provide direction for restructuring the character of the area through new development and public open space, should the recommended floating zones be pursued.

Figure 8 shows the variety of existing zones within the Plan area. The EOF Zone is prominent within the central portion of the Plan, reflecting the existing office park. The shopping centers on the west and east ends of the Plan are zoned General Retail (GR) and Neighborhood Retail (NR), according to the current scale of the developments. Several properties have also been designated with the Commercial Residential (CR) Zone and the Commercial Residential Town (CRT) Zone, which are mixed-use zones. The Single-Family Detached (R-90) Zone is designated on the Walter Johnson High School site and the parking areas for the Wildwood Shopping Center. Figure 9 shows the Plan's recommended zoning and detailed descriptions of zoning recommendations for each of the three cluster areas are discussed below.

Promoting the long-term transformation of Rock Spring's central core, the office park, is a priority of this Plan, particularly for properties that have direct access to the central spine. In the near-term, the recommendations in this Plan support revitalization strategies that promote infill development consolidated primarily along the central spine, as well as within existing commercial clusters east and west of the core in order to support future transit and create pedestrian-friendly clusters. Overall, the transformation of this area should:

- Prioritize framing the central spine, either through building design and placement, public realm enhancements, or a combination of both.
- Establish neighborhood-accessible, mixed-use centers on commercial clusters at both east and west ends of the spine.
- Promote compatibility between new infill development and existing uses to remain.
- Ensure appropriate transitions between new high-density development and adjacent low-density residential communities.
- Enhance connectivity between the Plan area, adjacent residential communities, and nearby public amenities.
- Create a network of public open spaces integrated with the emerging community structure.

The following design guidelines, addressing buildings, connections, and open spaces, should be considered recommendations, not mandates, and are intended to assist developers and regulatory staff in implementing projects consistent with the vision of this Plan.

Figure 8 Existing Zoning

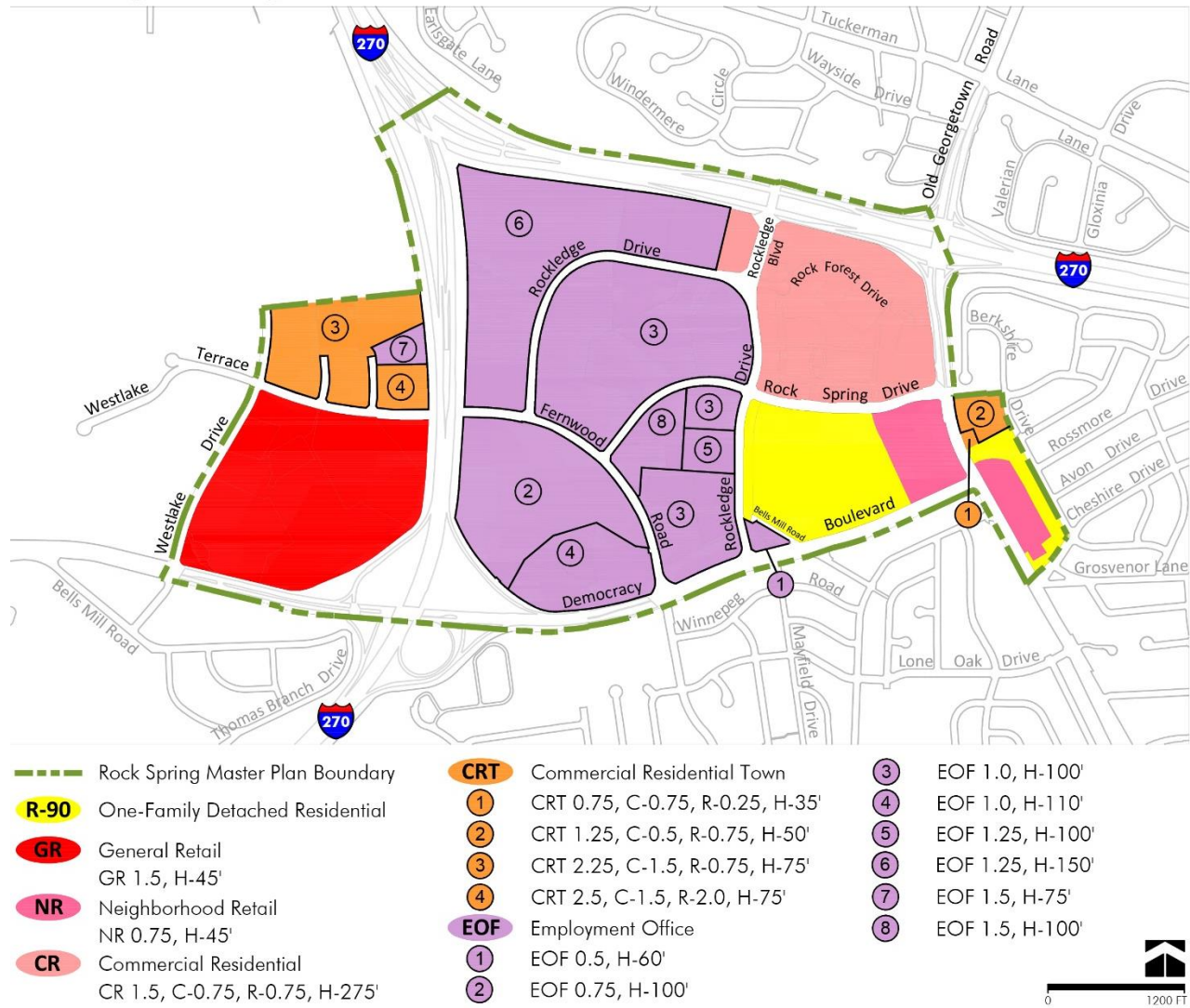
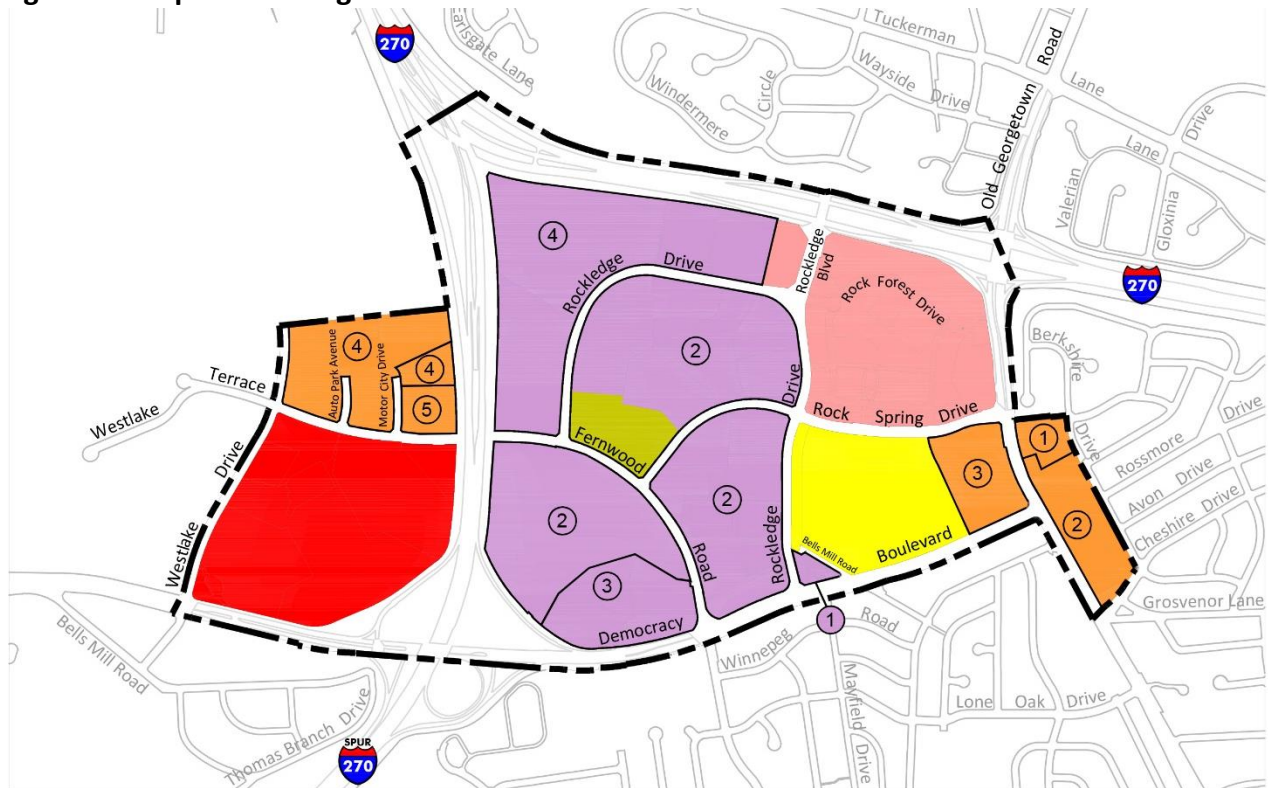


Figure 9 Proposed Zoning



- Rock Spring Master Plan Boundary
- R-90** One-Family Detached Residential
- THD** Townhouse High Density
- GR** General Retail
GR 1.5, H-45'
- CR** Commercial Residential
CR 1.5, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-275'

- CRT** Commercial Residential Town
 - ① CRT 1.25, C-0.5, R-0.75, H-50'
 - ② CRT 1.25, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-50'
 - ③ CRT 1.25, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-75'
 - ④ CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-75'
 - ⑤ CRT 2.5, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-75'
- EOF** Employment Office
 - ① EOF 0.5, H-60'

- ② EOF 1.5, H-100' ★
- ③ EOF 1.5, H-110' ★
- ④ EOF 1.5, H-150' ★

Note:
★ Could be considered for CR Floating Zone



Design Guidelines: Buildings

The three clusters in the Plan are characterized by retail/institutional/residential, office, and retail/commercial uses. Given that many of the existing structures and uses in these clusters will remain viable in the foreseeable future, new infill development should be well integrated within and around these existing uses. The Plan recommends retaining existing zones for many of these properties, with an optional floating zone recommendation, resulting in several possible development scenarios.

The Rock Spring East and Rock Spring West clusters include existing retail centers and properties with existing approvals for mixed-use development. Developers of property in this cluster should:

- Concentrate development intensity along Westlake Terrace on the west side, and around the intersection of Rock Spring Drive and Old Georgetown Road on the east, to support future transit and to create mixed-use centers that will continue to serve adjacent residential communities.
- Create compact development patterns that include short blocks and building frontages close to the street.
- Create recognizable activity centers, with identifiable edges scaled to be compatible with the adjacent community.
- Implement quality building and site design considerations, such as building orientation, to take advantage of passive heating, lighting, and ventilation.

Infill redevelopment of several properties in the Rock Spring Central cluster is possible under existing zoning. Conversely, if the recommended floating zones were implemented in this area, existing development patterns could be replaced with a more comprehensive restructuring of the area into a more mixed-use community. In either case, developers of property in this cluster should:

- Prioritize the consolidation of frontages along the central spine, and the introduction of residential uses to balance existing commercial uses.
- Consider infill locations that take advantage of and help transform existing driveways and surface areas, to enhance access to and reduce the size of larger blocks.
- Explore innovative infill strategies, such as repurposing existing structures, creative additions to existing buildings, or surrounding existing utilitarian structures (e.g., structured parking garages) with new uses.

If developers of properties in the Rock Spring Central cluster implement the recommended floating zones, they should also ensure that the development:

- Creates compact development patterns to define a new neighborhood structure that includes internal streets, small blocks, and interconnected open spaces.
- Concentrates higher densities at future transit locations.
- Ensures adequate scale transitions to adjacent development.

Design Guidelines: Connectivity

The Plan area is crossed by significant roads that connect to major highways and communities, and help to define the clusters of large commercial properties. Opportunities for expanding the network of public streets to and from the area are limited, but improving internal connectivity to define the structure of a future mixed-use neighborhood and improve access to the central spine appears feasible. Developers of property throughout this Plan area should:

- Expand the existing street network with new internal public or private streets that are walkable and well connected. On large commercial properties, developers could create new internal streets from existing driveways and parking lanes.
- Consider implementing shared streets or other innovative mobility alternatives when incorporating private streets into new development.
- Create distinctive local character by exploring shared streets or other innovative mobility alternatives when considering private streets as part of redevelopment projects.
- Improve the public realm along existing connections with wider sidewalks and landscaped areas to enhance pedestrian access between developing properties, the central spine, and adjacent communities.

Developers of property away from the central spine who seek to implement floating zones should also provide improvements that enhance the proposed pedestrian/bicyclist-orientation envisioned for the area, such as:

- Completing a missing link in the sidewalk, pedestrian path, or bicycle network.
- Providing public art that contributes to community identity and sense of place.
- Linking the proposed project to an existing bicycle or pedestrian path along the spine.
- Improving a pedestrian/bicyclist crossing.

Design Guidelines: Open Spaces

Creating an interconnected network of open spaces is encouraged by this Plan. The Plan seeks to preserve and enhance natural areas with the potential to serve as amenities for the existing and emerging community. New open spaces should:

- Leverage existing open space as an amenity for existing workers, and as a way to begin to establish a network of usable outdoor areas that could start to delineate the structure and scale of a future, mixed-use area.
- Consolidate the areas designated for public use space as part of the development process into substantial, active, programmed, and accessible spaces.
- Provide alternatives for recreation and leisure in mixed-use settings by:
 - Creating places for community use that are framed and activated by surrounding development and uses, where the public feels welcome to gather and linger.
 - Including alternatives for seating and options for individual and group activities within each space.
 - Utilizing combinations of hardscaped and landscaped areas, depending on the size and location of the space.
- Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies.

Rock Spring East/Village Center

Rock Spring East/Village Center includes the areas east of Rockledge Drive/Rockledge Boulevard. Georgetown Square is located on the northwest corner of Old Georgetown Road and Democracy Boulevard, and includes Giant, DSW shoe store, restaurants, and ancillary retailers. Wildwood Shopping Center is located to the east of Old Georgetown Road, north of Cheshire Drive, and west of Berkshire Drive. It includes Balducci's (a specialty grocer), a CVS, and a variety of small retailers in a strip-style center. Adjacent to the shopping center to the north are a gas station, a bank, and a medical office building.

The first residential units within the Rock Spring area were completed in 2004. The Berkshires at Rock Spring, the first phase of the Rock Spring Centre development, is a 386-unit multi-family development located adjacent to I-270 between Rockledge Drive and Old Georgetown Road.

Walter Johnson High School is also located in Rock Spring East, with primary access from Rock Spring Drive. The high school, which opened in 1956, sits on nearly 31 acres and the building was renovated in 2009. According to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), current enrollment at Walter Johnson High School is 2,295 and the school's capacity is 2,335. MCPS is currently conducting a feasibility study to analyze the potential for adding classrooms to the high school.

There are a variety of zoning classifications in Rock Spring East. (See Figure 10.) The Rock Spring Centre property is zoned Commercial Residential (CR); Georgetown Square is zoned Neighborhood Retail (NR); the Aubinoe property is zoned Commercial Residential Town (CRT); the Wildwood Shopping Center is split-zoned with NR and Residential Detached (R-90); and the small offices in single-family homes on Bells Mill Road are zoned Employment Office (EOF). This Plan recommends maintaining the CR and CRT zoning that exists, and rezoning the Wildwood Shopping Center and Georgetown Square to CRT. The CRT Zone permits a mix of uses at varying densities and heights. The intent of the CRT Zone is to target opportunities for redevelopment of single-use commercial areas and surface parking lots with a mix of uses, while encouraging development that integrates a combination of housing types, mobility options, commercial services, public facilities, and amenities.

Zoning Recommendations

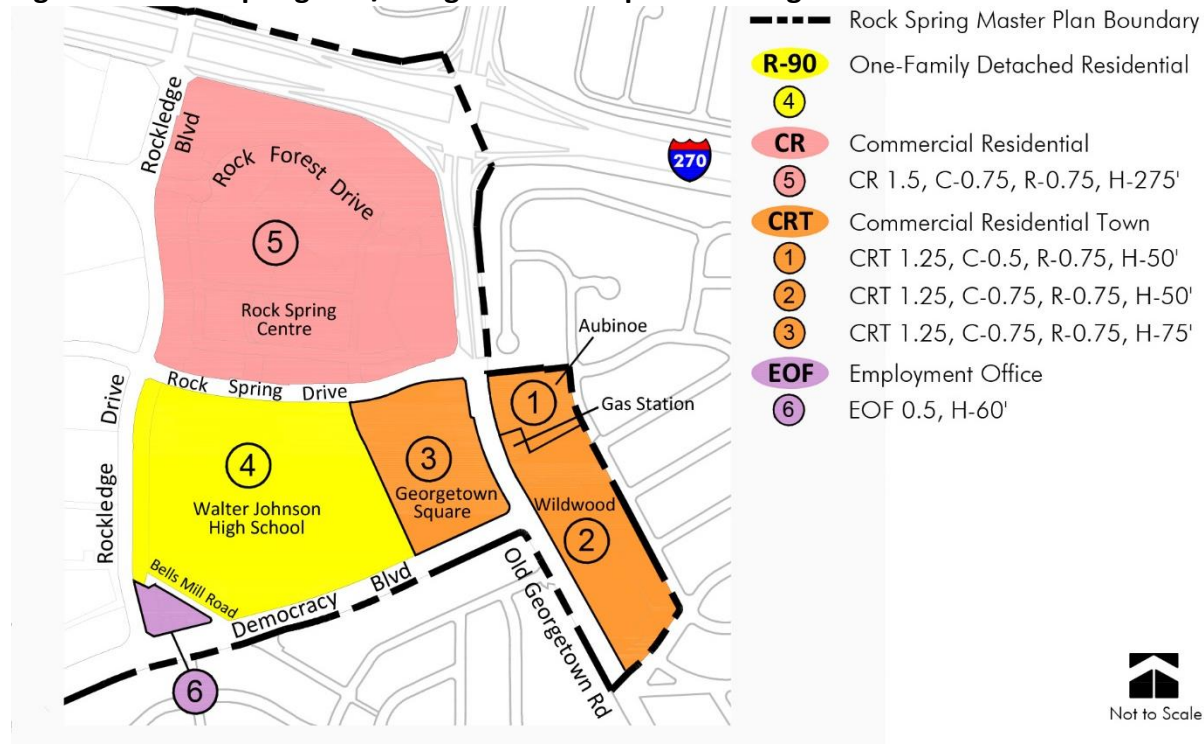
Site 1: Aubinoe Properties

An office building and bank are developed on this site. An approval currently exists for the development of 58 multi-family units south of the existing office building on what is currently a surface parking lot.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing CRT-1.25, C-0.5, R-0.75, H-50 Zone.

Figure 10 Rock Spring East/Village Center Proposed Zoning



Site 2: Wildwood Shopping Center and Gas Station

Wildwood is a highly utilized neighborhood shopping center, configured in a traditional strip shopping center pattern with a linear row of stores located in the middle of the site, which is surrounded by surface parking. A gas station, under the same ownership as the Wildwood Shopping Center, is located on the northwest corner of the site on Georgetown Road.

Recommendations:

- **Gas Station Property:** Confirm the CRT Zone with adjustments to FAR and height from CRT-0.75, C-0.75, R-0.25, H-35 to CRT-1.25, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-50. Should property owners choose to redevelop, these adjustments to the floor area ratio (FAR) density and height allow for a consistent redevelopment strategy.
- **Wildwood Shopping Center Property:** Rezone the site from NR-0.75, H-45 and R-90 to CRT-1.25, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-50. CRT zoning for this site would allow the opportunity for this single-use retail area to introduce a mix of uses to the property, while encouraging a more sustainable, connected, and pedestrian-friendly development pattern.

Site 3: Georgetown Square Shopping Center

Georgetown Square is anchored by a Giant grocery store as well as smaller retailers and restaurants. It is a community serving shopping center, designed with its shops set back from the street and separated from the street by surface parking.

Recommendation:

- Rezone the site from NR-0.75, H-45 to CRT-1.25, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-75.

CRT zoning for this site would allow the opportunity for a mix of uses to be introduced to this single-use retail area, while encouraging a more sustainable, connected, and pedestrian-friendly development pattern.

Site 4: Walter Johnson High School

Walter Johnson High School opened in 1956 and sits on approximately 31 acres of land. MCPS is currently conducting a feasibility study to analyze the potential for adding classrooms to the high school. Any expansion should take into consideration, as feasible under MCPS regulations and guidelines, integrating new development into the surrounding context and contributing to the advancement of a more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly area. Public schools are discussed in further detail in the Community Facilities section of this Plan.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing R-90 Zone.

Site 5: Rock Spring Centre

Plans for the Rock Spring Centre project were initiated in the mid-1990s when approximately 50 acres of land (the Davis-Camaliere tract) were rezoned from the Residential High-Rise (R-H) Zone to the Mixed Use Planned Development (MXPD) Zone. In 1999, a preliminary plan was approved for approximately one million square feet of commercial uses and 1,250 multi-family dwelling units. The first, and thus far only, built phase of this approved plan was completed in 2004 and includes 386 apartment homes, the Berkshires at Rock Spring. Between 2003-2006, site plans were approved for two residential towers and a project known as “Canyon Ranch,” which included a hotel, residences, and a wellness center; none of which have been built. In 2008, the preliminary plan for Rock Spring Centre was amended for adjustments to the mix of commercial uses and, at that time, the County chose not to locate a previously approved 30,000-square foot community center on this site. Instead, the parcel was dedicated to the County for future public recreational uses.

The property at Rock Spring Centre offers unique potential to advance the repositioning of the Rock Spring area. Very few such large, contiguous, undeveloped properties remain down-County, and in such a central location. The Adequate Public Facilities (APF) validity period for the approved preliminary plan expires in November 2019. Since the time of the property’s original approvals, the area has changed and grown. School and community facility needs have risen to the forefront of local citizens’ concerns during this planning process. Should the APF expire or other amendments to approved plans be applied for, it is recommended, to the extent possible, that the property owners work with Planning staff and the Planning Board to modify the project in a manner that could address current and future community needs. This effort could include exploring the feasibility of incorporating a school site on the Rock Spring Centre property or integrating a local community center/meeting space into the project that serves current and future residents of the area.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing CR-1.5, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-275 Zone.

Site 6: Bells Mill Road Offices

Five small offices are located on this site in converted single-family residential detached structures surrounded by surface parking lots serving the commercial activity.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing EOF-0.5, H-60 Zone.
Should the opportunity for purchase arise in the future, Montgomery County Public Schools should consider these properties as a possible addition to the high school's land area.

Design and Connectivity Guidance for the Rock Spring East Cluster

General

- Introduce a mix of uses through new development and orient these uses to anchor the proposed transitway stop; these projects could create synergies with adjacent existing or pipeline development, and be scaled to provide adequate transitions to surrounding residential communities.
- Ensure mixed-use development creates pedestrian-friendly environments and accessible amenities, focused on potential transit and connectivity to existing neighborhoods.
- Locate higher densities and heights along major street frontages. Place lower densities and less intense uses adjacent to existing residential areas.
- Include building and site design sustainability features, landscaped amenity areas, and public art.

Site Specific

- Sites 1 and 2 (the Aubinoe property and the Wildwood Shopping Center and associated gas station)
 - Redevelopment that is adjoining or confronting existing R-90 zoned neighborhoods should be compatible with the low scale character of these residential areas.
 - For properties recommended for CRT zoning, lower-scale uses should be placed along Berkshire Drive, with larger commercial uses and mixed-use development concentrated along Old Georgetown Road. Building massing along Berkshire Drive should be limited to a height of 35 feet within 50 feet of the Berkshire Drive right-of-way.
 - Consistent with a binding element from a previous approval, provide a green space of at least 30 feet in width measured from the public right-of-way on the Aubinoe property along Berkshire Drive. This green space should act as a buffer to screen the adjacent single-family neighborhood from surface parking areas and other more intense commercial or mixed-uses on this property. The only construction to be permitted within this area shall be to provide screening, landscaping, or to provide elements to support the passive recreational use of the area, such as seating areas or trails.
 - If mixed-use development is proposed on the Wildwood Shopping Center property, a centrally located public open space should be provided, accessible to shopping

center patrons and Wildwood Manor residents. A connection to the open area provided along the east edge of the Aubinoe property should be considered.

- Site 3 (Georgetown Square Shopping Center)
 - Redevelopment on this property should build on the “central square” organization of the existing development, to create a neighborhood center that includes:
 - A centralized open space to focus commercial and residential uses.
 - Internal pedestrian-friendly connections that link to surrounding redeveloping properties, existing communities, and adjacent public facilities.
 - Frontages to promote pedestrian activity along existing major roads, which incorporate access to potential transit and bicycle facilities.
 - Provide a public street along the western side of the property as an alternative access, with connections to the existing public high school to the west.
- Site 5 (Rock Spring Centre)
 - Additional development is appropriate on this property to anchor the southwestern corner and frame this intersection as an important entry point to the Plan area. If proposed, development at this location should create frontages along Old Georgetown Road and Rock Spring Drive, provide internal connections to the already approved grid of streets for the property, and transition between the higher densities already approved to the potential lower densities on the Georgetown Square property directly to the south.

Rock Spring Central/Mixed-Use Business Campus

Rock Spring Central includes the properties between Rockledge Drive/Rockledge Boulevard on the east and the I-270 spur on the west. This central portion of the Plan area is the Rock Spring office park, which contains 30 buildings with more than 5 million square feet of space, built primarily between the 1970s and 1990s. The office park was built in a traditional suburban campus format with stand-alone, single-purpose buildings set back from the street, surrounded by lush landscaping and ample parking. Major tenants include Marriott International, Lockheed Martin Corporation, IBM, Host Hotels and Resorts, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Several buildings contain mostly medical offices, such as the Camalier, Champlain, and Suburban Outpatient Medical Center. Other tenants in the area’s office buildings include insurance, real estate, and financial companies.

EYA’s Montgomery Row townhouse project is currently under construction in the middle of the office park, at the corner of Fernwood Road and Rock Spring Drive. The 168 townhouses at Montgomery Row are nearly completed. Other than the EYA townhouses, all of the properties are developed with office buildings and their associated structured and surface parking.

At the time of the 1992 *North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan*, the Rock Spring office park was zoned with several single-purpose office zones: Commercial, Office Park (C-P), Office Building, Moderate Intensity (O-M), and Technology and Business Park (I-3). During the zoning rewrite, these zones were combined into the Employment Office (EOF) Zone, which is the zoning of the office park today. (See Figure 11.)

The EOF Zone provides greater flexibility than the previous office zones, and is intended for office and employment activity, combined with limited residential and neighborhood commercial uses. The EOF Zone allows flexibility in building, circulation, and parking lot layout and provides property owners with the option of diversifying uses under the existing zoning, either within an existing building or as a new infill project. The EOF Zone allows a maximum of 30 percent of the gross floor area of a subject site to be used for residential and up to 30 percent may be used for retail. At the same time, limiting residential and retail uses presents challenges for property owners who may wish to consider uses other than office. Potential options to address the limitations of the EOF Zone are outlined in the Implementation chapter.

Zoning Recommendations

Site 5a: Stormwater Facility

The property located at Site 5a is a stormwater facility that is associated with the Rock Spring Centre approved development to the east, across Rockledge Boulevard.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing CR-1.5, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-275 Zone.

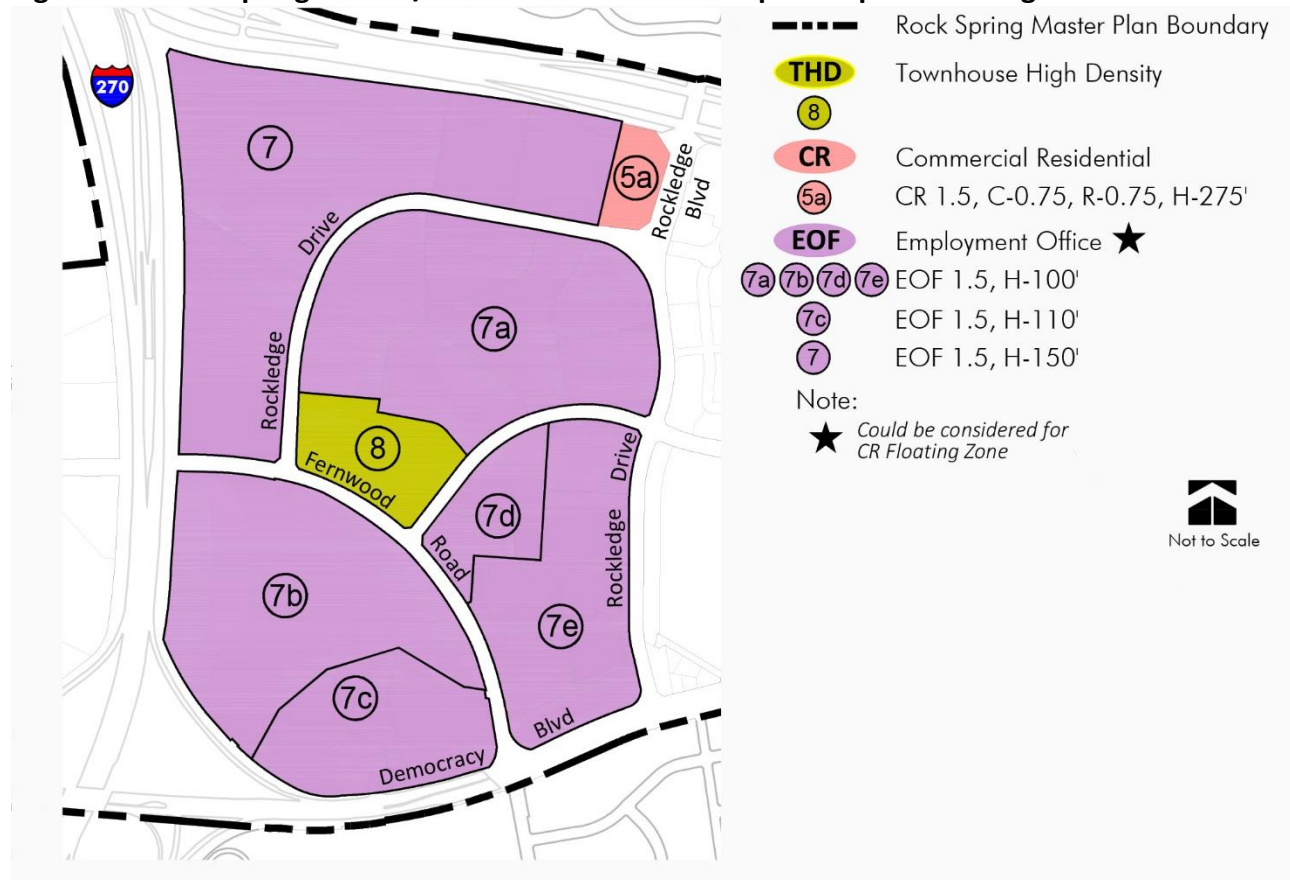
Sites 7-7e: Office Park

The Rock Spring office park includes approximately 30 buildings with more than 5 million square feet of space that was built for corporate headquarters, government contractors, high-tech industry, and medical offices. The office park has historically been one of the County's major employment centers; however, over the past decade, vacancy rates have risen. The following zoning recommendations provide a twofold option for these properties to adjust to changes in the evolving office market.

Recommendations:

1. Confirm the EOF Zone for the properties currently zoned EOF within the office park, with the exception of the Montgomery Row townhouse development (Site 8).
 - The EOF Zone allows for a greater mix of uses than the previous single-use office zones.
 - Property owners have not indicated any near-term plans for major changes in use or redevelopment of their properties.

Figure 11 Rock Spring Central/Mixed-Use Business Campus Proposed Zoning



2. Adjust the overall FAR to 1.5 for the EOF-zoned properties within the office park. The properties included in Site 7d currently have an FAR of 1.5, which should be confirmed.
 - Increasing the FAR to 1.5 provides additional incentive and opportunity to infill or adaptively reuse properties within the current EOF Zone.
 - This increase will address the three properties that are currently built over their existing maximum FARs.
 - Specifically, zoning changes are recommended as follows:
 - Site 7: Lockheed Martin, Democracy Associates, Rockledge Center Associates
Recommendation: Rezone from EOF-1.25, H-150 to EOF-1.5, H-150.
 - Site 7a: IBM, NIH, engineering, financial, technology, corporate offices
Recommendation: Rezone from EOF-1.0, H-100 to EOF-1.5, H-100.
 - Site 7b: Marriott International Headquarters
Recommendation: Rezone from EOF-0.75, H-100 to EOF-1.5, H-100.
 - Site 7c: Democracy Plaza, Marriott Hotel
Recommendation: Rezone from EOF-1.0, H-110 to EOF-1.5, H-110.
 - Site 7d: Rock Spring Plaza
Recommendation: Confirm the existing EOF-1.5, H-100 zone.
 - Site 7e: Medical Offices
Recommendation: Rezone from EOF-1.0, H-100 and EOF-1.25, H-100 to EOF-1.5, H-100.

3. Provide for a floating CR Zone for the EOF-zoned properties within the office park. It would have an FAR of between 1.5 and 2.5 and a height of up to 150 feet.
 - The EOF Zone currently satisfies the landowners' short and mid-term needs. However, as market conditions evolve, these properties could be reconsidered for rezoning.

Site 8: Montgomery Row Townhouses

Montgomery Row is the first residential development to be constructed within the office park core and only the second residential project in the Plan area. Montgomery Row was approved under the I-3 Zone, which permitted residential uses pursuant to the optional method of development. The project includes 168 townhouses that are currently under construction and are nearing completion. As part of the 2014 Zoning Rewrite, the I-3 Zone was converted to EOF. This Plan recommends that this property be rezoned Townhouse High Density to reflect the townhouse development currently under construction.

Recommendation:

- Rezone the site from EOF-1.0, H-100 to THD (Townhouse High Density Zone).

Design and Connectivity Guidance for the Rock Spring Central Cluster

- If additional development were considered under the EOF zoning, infill locations should:
 - Prioritize the establishment of the central spine as a pedestrian-friendly environment by orienting development toward the spine or establishing connections to it.
 - Focus development around suggested future transitway locations.
 - Introduce a mix of uses and pedestrian-friendly amenities into underutilized areas that can promote and enhance walkability to and from the central spine.
 - Establish synergies between existing and new uses.
- If implementation of the recommended floating zones is considered, redeveloping properties should:
 - Cluster higher densities along the central spine and around suggested future transitway locations.
 - Promote sustainable building and site development practices by implementing compact development patterns that introduce short blocks, a variety of interconnected open spaces, and high levels of internal connectivity.
 - Improve internal connectivity between adjacent properties, and to and from new pedestrian areas and the central spine.
 - Create local character by incorporating public art into new development, to enhance public spaces, highlight points of interest, and transition between different development types.

Rock Spring West/Mixed-Use Regional Marketplace

This cluster includes properties located west of the I-270 spur and north and south of Westlake Terrace. The area is linked to the office park by Westlake Terrace/Fernwood Road, which bridges the I-270 spur. This cluster comprises destination retailers, with Westfield Montgomery Mall located on the south side of Westlake Terrace. Across from Westfield Montgomery Mall, on the

north side of Westlake Terrace, there is a Home Depot, as well as automobile sales and service uses, including Jim Coleman Toyota/Infinity/Cadillac, and Ourisman Ford.

On the north side of Westlake Terrace, all of the properties are zoned CRT, with the exception of a 7-story EOF-zoned office building located at 10411 Motor City Drive (see Figures 8 and 12). In addition to the office building and Home Depot, the area includes a post office and car dealerships. The approved mixed-use project on the Ourisman Ford site is located at the northeast corner of Westlake Terrace and I-270 (site 10 on Figure 12).

Westfield Montgomery Mall encompasses most of the south side of Westlake Terrace. A small shopping center is located adjacent to the mall on the southeast corner of Westlake Drive and Westlake Terrace and a gas station is located on the northeast corner of Westlake Drive and Democracy Boulevard. Additional uses, including a residential component, may be considered in the future at the Westfield Montgomery Mall site, but no plans have been submitted to the Planning Department for consideration.

Zoning Recommendations

Site 9: Home Depot, Car Dealerships, Small Shopping Center, U.S. Post Office

The properties within Site 9 are all zoned CRT, which should be retained.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing CRT-2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-75 Zone.

Site 9a: Office Building

A 7-story office building currently occupies this site. It is the only property on the north side of Westlake Terrace within the Plan area that is not zoned CRT.

Recommendation:

- Rezone the site from EOF-1.5, H-75 to CRT-2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-75.
A consistent zoning strategy for this block encourages a holistic approach to any future redevelopment, including possible consolidation of properties.

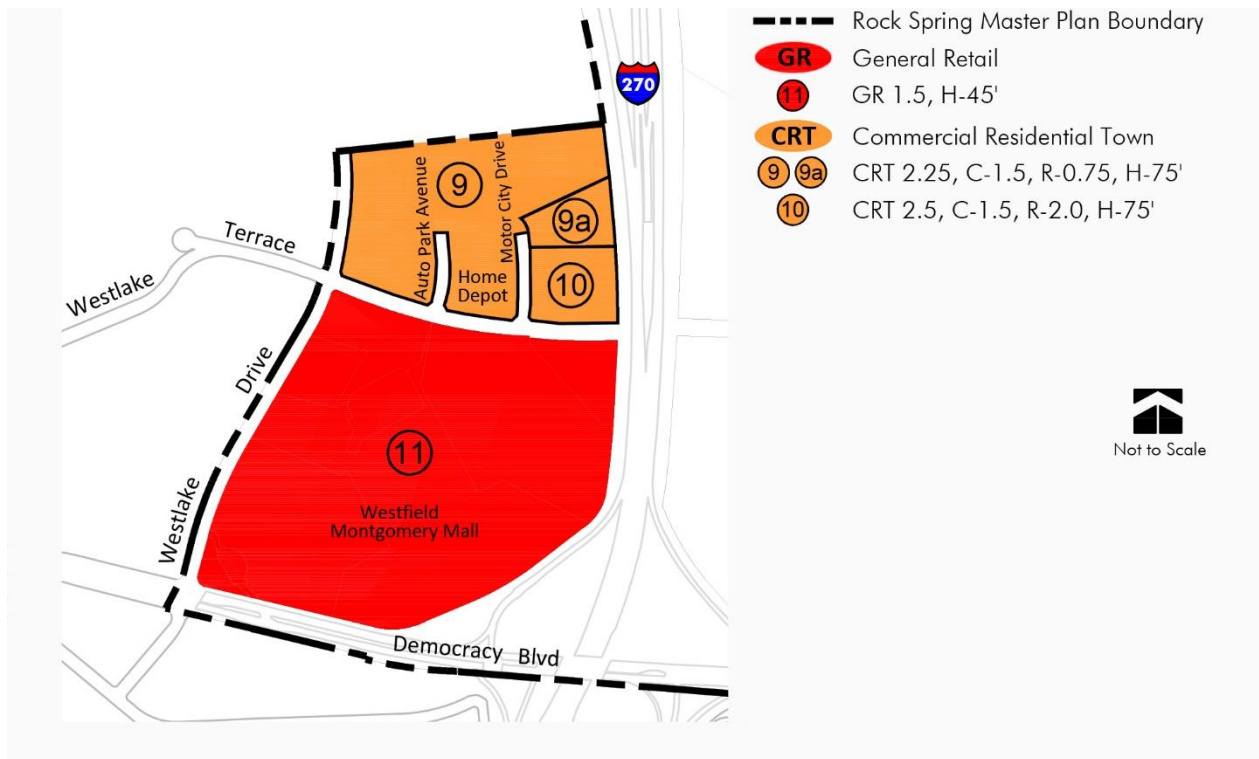
Site 10: Ourisman Ford

The site currently occupied by the Ourisman Ford car dealership is one of the four approved pipeline projects in the Plan area. A 340-unit multi-family high-rise residential building with ground-floor commercial space has been approved for the property.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing CRT-2.5, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-75 Zone.

Figure 12 Rock Spring West/Mixed-Use Regional Marketplace Proposed Zoning



Site 11: Westfield Montgomery Mall

This site includes the Westfield Montgomery Mall, a small shopping center called Westlake Crossing, and a gas station. The mall opened in 1968 and underwent a significant renovation in 2014. Westlake Crossing, on the southeast corner of Westlake Terrace and Westlake Drive, is a popular local shopping center, frequented by neighboring residents. As a means to continue expanding the regional shopping mall, possible additions to Westfield Montgomery are being explored by the owner, including residential uses or a hotel.

In addition to its base zoning of General Retail (GR), the Regional Shopping Center (RSC) Overlay Zone also applies to this site. The purpose of the RSC is to provide flexibility of development standards to facilitate certain uses compatible with a regional shopping center and provide parking design standards and requirements compatible with the function and circulation needs of regional shopping centers. The Overlay Zone outlines certain uses that may be permitted as part of a regional shopping center and includes development standards. Currently, residential uses and their development standards within a regional shopping center are not considered in the RSC Overlay Zone.

Recommendation:

- Confirm the existing GR-1.5, H-45 Zone.
- Consider amending the RSC Overlay Zone to include residential uses and any associated development standards.

Design and Connectivity Guidance for the Rock Spring West Cluster

- New development would supplement existing retail by introducing residential uses to create a mutually supportive mix, and would help define pedestrian areas by providing open spaces for public use with connections to transit alternatives and bicycle facilities. Redevelopment in this cluster should:
 - Focus new development intensity along available areas on Westlake Terrace to prioritize its transition into a pedestrian-friendly environment.
 - Consider visibility and transitions between the emerging environment along the central spine and retail operations to remain beyond potential new development sites.
 - Create interconnected open spaces for public use accessible to workers, residents, and neighboring communities.
 - Enhance the existing intersections along Westlake Terrace and Westlake Drive to improve crossing conditions for pedestrians, improve access to Cabin John Regional Park, and improve connectivity between north and south areas of this cluster.
- Developers of CRT-zoned properties north of Westlake Terrace should consider infill development to establish a mix of uses similar in character to pipeline projects already approved for this area. In particular, new infill development should complete the loop created by Motor City Drive and Auto Park Avenue to build a potential internal connection between the north and south sides of Westlake Terrace.

CHAPTER 3 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Overview

The Rock Spring Master Plan area features a pleasant, but aging suburban office park, anchored by commercial and retail areas to the west and institutional and retail areas to the east. The concentration of single-use areas creates an auto-centric environment dominated by flat rooftops and significant pavement. The resulting environmental impacts include degraded water quality from large volumes of dirty, and often heated, stormwater discharges; air pollution; and urban heat island effects.

Fortunately, there are also environmental assets upon which the Plan can capitalize. The office park includes a significant amount of green space and trees. Much of the existing development within the office park consists of buildings that have a compact footprint, helping to preserve green spaces around and between the buildings. There are also structured parking facilities that similarly preserve green space and open space. Cabin John Regional Park, which lies adjacent to the northwest corner of the Plan area, contains extensive facilities for active and passive recreation that benefit both physical health and mental/emotional well-being. The environmental recommendations for Rock Spring recognize and build on these assets.

Most of the Plan area drains to the Cabin John Creek Watershed, which is a State Use Class I-P watershed. A small section on the eastern side of the planning area drains to Rock Creek, which is also a State Use Class I-P watershed. The “P” designation in these categories denotes that they are a source of potable (drinking) water, as they drain to the Potomac River, which provides most of the drinking water to lower Montgomery County; therefore, it is important to protect and enhance the water quality of these streams.

Forest and Tree Cover and Impervious Surfaces

Water quality correlates to the amount of forest cover and the percentage of the watershed that is impervious. Overall, impervious surfaces cover about 55 percent of the Plan area. Forests occupy about seven percent of the Plan area. Tree canopy coverage does not match forest cover in terms of water quality benefits, but there are still significant water quality, air quality, and health benefits that accrue from a healthy tree canopy. Thirty-one percent of the land area has tree canopy cover. The distribution of these land covers varies significantly through the Plan area, however. The office park has much more of the forest and tree cover, while the retail areas contain more of the impervious areas. (See Figures 13 and 14.) A portion of the forest and tree cover will be lost when the Rock Spring Centre development is constructed.

To improve upon forest and tree coverage, and the amount of impervious surfaces, infill development should be directed at the existing surface parking lots. If surface parking lots are retained, improvements should be introduced to make them more environmentally benign, such as introducing or improving tree cover and improving stormwater management. If property owners redevelop their sites, they should consider solar panels that shade parking lots and pavement and generate clean energy, in lieu of, or in addition to tree cover.

This aerial map illustrates the Rock Spring Master Plan Boundary, which is outlined by a thick black dashed line. The map includes several key features and landmarks:

- Parkland:** Indicated by light green shading, including Cabin John Regional Park to the west and Stratton Local Park to the south.
- Water Features:** Indicated by cyan shading, showing various ponds and water bodies within the boundary.
- Tree Canopy:** Indicated by dark green shading, representing areas with significant tree cover.
- Major Roads:** I-270 runs along the top and right edges. Local roads include Westlake Drive, Terrace Drive, Rockledge Drive, Fernwood Road, Democracy Road, and Boulevard.
- Other Landmarks:** The map also shows residential areas, commercial buildings, and other local parks like Timberlawn Local Park.

Legend:

- Rock Spring Master Plan Boundary
- Parkland
- Water Features
- Tree Canopy

Goals and Objectives

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Figure 14 Impervious Cover



Of those, the following should be addressed in this Plan:

1. Promote an awareness of environmental issues and instill a commitment to environmental stewardship.
2. Preserve natural areas and features that are ecologically unusual, environmentally sensitive, or possess outstanding natural beauty.
3. Protect and improve water quality.
4. Conserve County waterways, wetlands, and sensitive parts of stream valleys to minimize flooding, pollution, sedimentation, and damage to the ecology and to preserve natural beauty and open space.
5. Maintain water quality and minimize the impacts of sedimentation and erosion through a comprehensive stormwater management program.
6. Preserve and enhance a diversity of plant and animal species in self-sustaining concentrations.
7. Protect and improve air quality.
8. Increase and conserve the County's forests and trees.
9. Protect residents and workers from unacceptable noise levels.

10. Provide and maintain high quality water and sewerage systems with minimal environmental impacts, constructed in advance of or in conjunction with development in a cost-effective manner.
11. Promote the efficient use of energy and plan for the County's long-term energy needs.

Recommendations

Overall Recommendations

- Improve forest and tree cover.
- Encourage green features (softscaping) in required open space areas and the public realm.
- Prioritize environmental public benefit points for tree canopy cover and energy conservation.
- Promote site and building design for energy conservation and LEED certification or a comparable rating system.
 - Consider block and building orientation to maximize passive solar heating and lighting, and to offer optimal siting for solar energy generation.
 - Consider building construction design, materials and systems to save energy.

Topic Specific Recommendations

Water Quality

- Minimize imperviousness/maximize pervious areas.
- Landscaping: use native plants that require less watering and fertilization; use rainwater for watering; apply Sustainable Sites Initiatives (SITES) principles.

Air Quality

- Include building design features that keep roofs cool – either green roofs or cool roofs.
- Encourage improvements and facilities to get people out of cars by providing transit options and improving bike-ability and walkability.
 - Create human-scale block sizes, through-block connections, paths and sidewalks, bike networks and bike-share stations.

Climate Protection

- Make attainment of net zero carbon emissions an aspirational goal in all new development and redevelopment. Include as many of the following recommendations as practical in development plans:
 - Use native vegetation in landscaping and tree planting to sequester carbon and reduce urban heat island.
 - Look for opportunities for on-site renewable energy generation.
 - Include building design features that keep roofs cool – either green roofs or cool roofs.
 - Encourage improvements and facilities to get people out of cars (see Air Quality).
 - Promote site and building design for energy conservation and LEED certification or a comparable rating system.

Preservation/Enhancement of Biological Diversity

- Establish green connections west to Cabin John Stream Valley Park.
- Plant native vegetation that is highly attractive to pollinators and provides food sources for declining populations of native pollinator species.
- Incorporate multiple layers of native vegetation in landscaping.

Health and Wellness

- Provide opportunities for healthful exercise, recreation and mental well-being: parks and open spaces, trails, sidewalks, and bicycle networks.
- Locate appropriate land uses near sources of noise generation.
- Provide access to health care facilities.
- Provide opportunities to buy or grow fresh produce/healthy food choices: provide opportunities for community gardens; provide spaces for farmers' markets.

CHAPTER 4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction

Public facilities provide needed services for area residents and help build a sense of community among neighbors. Schools are the cornerstone of many communities, and in this Plan area, have been at the forefront of several meeting discussions. Fire and rescue services ensure safety, and access to parks and open spaces, recreation centers, and libraries are vital to a community's health and well-being. Community facilities in the Rock Spring area are shown on Figure 15.

Public Schools

The Rock Spring Master Plan is within the service areas of Walter Johnson Cluster schools, including Ashburton Elementary School, North Bethesda Middle School and Walter Johnson High School. Walter Johnson High School is located within the Rock Spring Master Plan at 6400 Rock Spring Drive. Enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year was nearly 2,300 students, and is expected to grow throughout the next decade. Enrollment increases have been occurring at all of these schools, and a variety of strategies are being considered to accommodate additional students resulting from this Plan as well as other planning areas within the Walter Johnson Cluster.

Build-out of this Plan assumes that some developed properties will be redeveloped and full build-out is estimated to take 20 to 30 years. Because the full impact of the Plan on school enrollment will not be felt for many years, and some redevelopment may not occur during the life of the Plan, it is not possible to gauge precisely the impact of the Plan on public schools. School enrollment in the area will change over the 20-year time frame of the Plan. MCPS enrollment forecasts and associated facility plans and capital projects focus on a six-year time frame—not a 20-year period. MCPS' forecasts and facility planning also encompass a broader area than the area covered by this Plan.

Facility Planning in the Walter Johnson Cluster

MCPS is currently reviewing the input from a community roundtable discussion group process that explored a wide range of approaches to accommodate near-term and long-term enrollment growth in the Walter Johnson Cluster. It is anticipated that a recommendation will be made for cluster schools in fall 2016 by the superintendent, and the Board of Education will take action shortly thereafter. The following descriptions of options to accommodate additional enrollment reflect alternatives that have been explored by the roundtable discussion group.

Elementary Schools

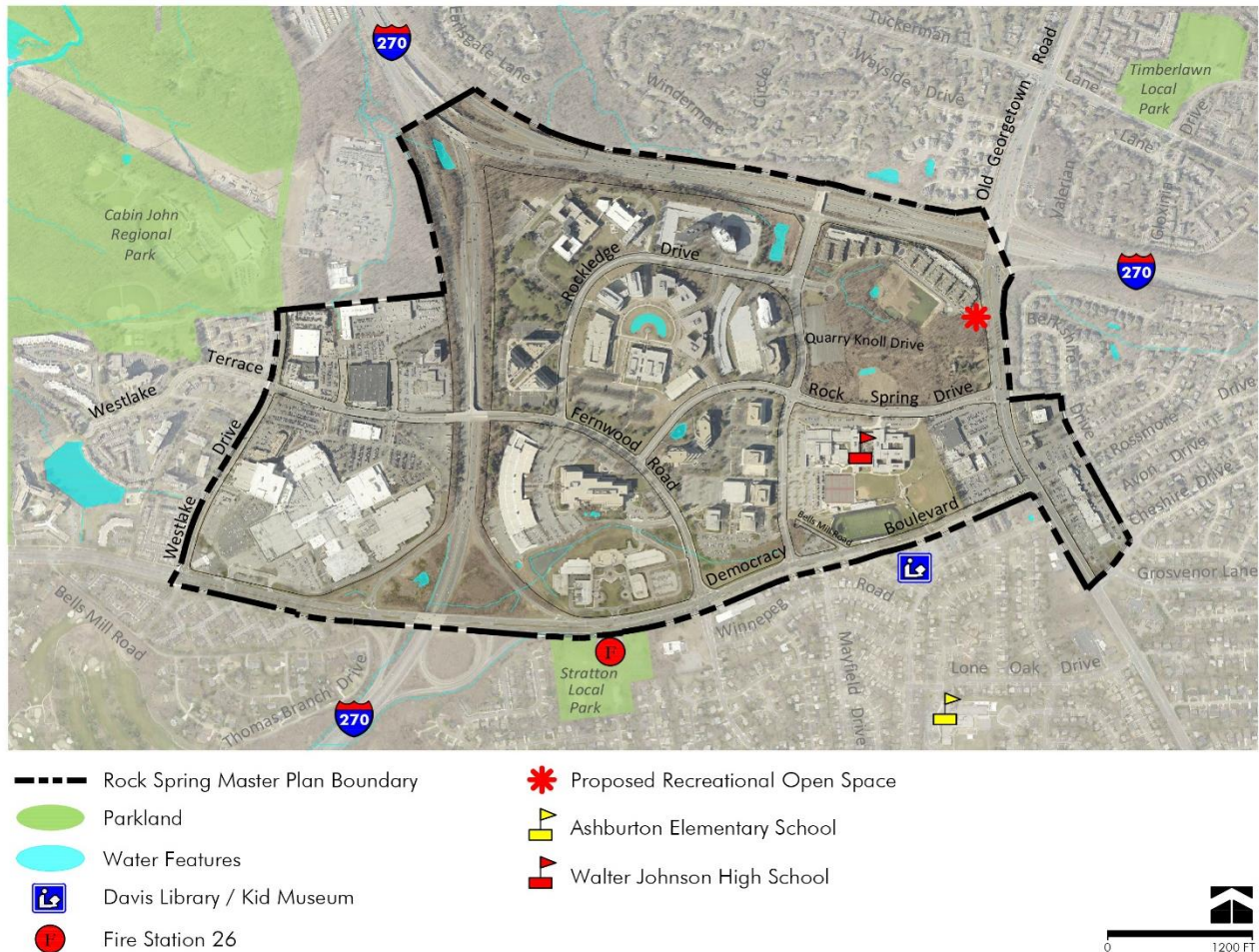
The following options would be explored for accommodating additional elementary school students from the Rock Spring Master Plan:

- Determine if the capacity of existing schools can be increased. At the elementary school level, most Walter Johnson cluster schools already operate above capacity or are projected to in the future. Ashburton Elementary School, which serves the Rock Spring Plan area, has an addition planned that will increase its capacity to 881 students. Garrett Park and Luxmanor Elementary Schools will be increasingly impacted by build-out of the residential development allowed by the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* that is within their service areas.

In addition, other elementary schools in the cluster have been expanded to around 740 capacity recently, or are planned to be expanded over the next few years. Therefore, all cluster schools will be at the high end of the range of student enrollment, with capacities ranging from 729 to 881, and no further additions will be considered.

- Because additional increases to the capacity of existing elementary schools is not possible, and the magnitude of enrollment growth is considerable, the opening of a new elementary school would be considered. A new elementary school could be provided in one of the following ways:
 - Reopen a former elementary school in the Walter Johnson Cluster. There are several former MCPS elementary schools in the Walter Johnson Cluster that could be reopened, including the former Alta Vista, Arylawn, Kensington and Montrose Elementary Schools. The former Grosvenor Elementary School is also located in the cluster, but is used as a holding facility for schools undergoing revitalization and/or expansion.
 - Construct a new elementary school on a site in the vicinity of the Rock Spring Master Plan geographic area. Two sites that could be considered, given their size and development potential, are:
 - 1) Rock Spring Centre: if this site's Adequate Public Facilities approvals expire and/or an amendment to the approved plans is requested, the opportunity should be taken to explore the possibility of an adjustment to the development proposal that includes a school site.
 - 2) Marriott International: if Marriott ultimately decides to vacate its headquarters in Rock Spring and the property is considered for redevelopment, the feasibility of a new school site at this location should be discussed.
 - Adaptively reuse an existing office building for a school facility.
 - Construct a new elementary school on one of the sites identified in surrounding plan areas, including the current White Flint Mall property in the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan*; a portion of the WMAL property; and/or property in the White Flint 2 Sector Plan.
 - If a site is not provided in the vicinity of the Rock Spring Master Plan geographic area, and the site at the White Flint Mall is not considered a feasible location, then purchase of an elementary school site could be considered.
- In addition to considering the opening of a new elementary school, options to reassign students to elementary schools adjacent to the Walter Johnson Cluster with available capacity could be considered. Also, if there are schools with small capacities adjacent to the Walter Johnson Cluster, then expansion of these facilities to accommodate additional students through reassignments could be considered. Of the clusters adjacent to the Walter Johnson Cluster, the Winston Churchill and Rockville clusters have elementary schools that have space available and are small and could be expanded. Reassignments to these schools would be considered in the future.

Figure 15 Community Facilities



Middle Schools

The following options would be explored for accommodating additional middle school students from the Rock Spring Master Plan:

- Determine if the capacity of existing middle schools can be increased. At the middle school level, currently planned expansions of North Bethesda and Tilden Middle Schools will take both schools up to a capacity for around 1,200 students. This increase will address projected enrollment through 2021–2022. However, these expansions are not expected to be capable of accommodating the full build-out of the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan*, let alone additional students from the White Flint 2 and Rock Spring plans. Options to expand these schools could be explored in the future, perhaps taking them up to 1,500 student capacities.
- If increasing the capacities of existing middle schools in the Walter Johnson cluster, above the planned 1,200 capacities, is infeasible or insufficient to address enrollment increases, then consider whether there is available capacity in middle schools surrounding the Walter Johnson Cluster. The only adjacent cluster with space available at its middle schools is the Winston Churchill Cluster, where both Cabin John and Herbert Hoover Middle Schools are

projected to have space available. Reassignments to these schools could be considered in the future.

- If it is not possible to address middle school enrollment increases through expansion of schools in the Walter Johnson Cluster, or through reassignments to middle schools in adjacent clusters, then the opening of a new middle school could be considered. A new middle school could be provided by the following option:
 - Construct a new middle school. At more than 11-acres, the Wilgus property in the White Flint 2 Sector Plan might accommodate a middle school. There are two future middle school sites in the vicinity of the Walter Johnson Cluster: the Brickyard Middle School site is in the Winston Churchill Cluster and the King Farm Middle School site is in the Richard Montgomery Cluster. If building a new school at these locations is not considered feasible, then the purchase of a middle school site could be considered.

High Schools

The following options would be explored for accommodating additional high school students from the Rock Spring Master Plan:

- Build an addition at Walter Johnson High School. The high school currently has a capacity of 2,335 students. Long-term enrollment projections for the school show enrollment reaching 3,500 students by the year 2045. This projected enrollment does not include any of the students that would be generated by the White Flint 2 and Rock Spring plans. If the high school capacity was increased to 3,500 students or more, it may be possible to accommodate the build-out of the White Flint 2 and Rock Spring plans.
- A second approach being considered to address high school enrollment growth in the Walter Johnson Cluster is the reopening of the former Woodward High School on Old Georgetown Road, located between the Rock Spring and White Flint 2 plan areas. By reopening this facility, and expanding it over time, it is thought that all of the high school enrollment increases from the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* and the White Flint 2 and Rock Spring plans could be accommodated. An addition at Woodward could take the school up to a 2,000 or 2,400 student capacity.
- Beyond the approaches mentioned above, reassignment of students from the Walter Johnson Cluster to high schools with available capacity, or with the ability to have their capacities increased, could be considered. Currently most high schools adjacent to the Walter Johnson Cluster are projected to have enrollments above their capacities, and will already be built out to the high end of the desired enrollment size of 2,400 students. The exception to this situation is Rockville High School. Although this school is projected to be fully enrolled in the next six years, it is relatively small by current standards with a capacity for 1,570 students. If an addition could be built at this high school, then reassignment of students to the high school could be considered in the future.

Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Parks, trails, and open space recommendations for the Rock Spring Master Plan area are informed by the 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* and the 2012 *Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan* (PROS). The 2012 PROS Plan states that the following facilities are needed in the down-County areas:

- Rectangular Fields
- Skate Parks
- Playgrounds
- Community Open Space
- Tennis Courts
- Community Gardens
- Dog Parks
- Trail Connections

The 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* recommended an urban amenity open space in Rock Spring. The 1992 Plan defines such spaces as serving high activity areas near work places. *They can provide landscaped sitting areas, walkways, and limited active recreational opportunities. They can provide a buffer between residential areas and other land uses. The most heavily used urban amenity open spaces are adjacent to employment centers, where they provide a place for workers to eat lunch, read, socialize, and relax. These open spaces may be less heavily used at other times, but play equipment should be available for use by neighborhood children on weekends.*" (page 234). Additionally, the 1992 Plan outlined performance objectives for the urban amenity open spaces, including that they should be located within a five- to ten-minute walk of users; the needs of the elderly should be considered; and the spaces should serve a significant number of children and nearby residents.

Existing Conditions

There are currently no M-NCPPC parks within the Rock Spring Master Plan area. The open spaces that do exist are generally privately owned and consist of plazas and landscaped areas. Two parks, Stratton Local Park and Cabin John Regional Park, are located just beyond the Master Plan boundary to the south and west, respectively.

M-NCPPC Stratton Local Park

Stratton Local Park comprises approximately 10 acres, located south of Democracy Boulevard and just outside the Rock Spring Master Plan boundary. This heavily used park provides the following facilities:

- Basketball
- Hard Surface Path
- Open Space
- Parking Lot
- Picnic Shelter and grills
- Playground
- Soccer
- Softball
- Tennis
- Youth Soccer

M-NCPPC Cabin John Regional Park

Cabin John Regional Park is one of Montgomery County's most beloved regional parks, offering a wide variety of facilities and park experiences. This 513-acre park touches an edge of the Rock Spring Master Plan boundary on the west side of the Plan area. Cabin John Regional Park's athletic area includes baseball fields, softball fields, tennis courts and a small practice soccer field. The park also includes more than five miles of hiking and biking trails. These trails connect to, and are part of, the nine-mile-long Cabin John Stream Valley Trail, a longer-distance hiking trail that stretches between Montrose Road at the northern end and MacArthur Boulevard at the southern end.

Shirley Povich Field, a 750-seat stadium, is home to the Bethesda Big Train team and the Georgetown University Baseball team. The park is also home to the Pauline Betz Addie Tennis Center, Cabin John Ice Rink, Locust Grove Nature Center, several playgrounds, and a miniature train. Other facilities include:

- Amphitheater
- Campground
- Covered Grill Area
- Dog Park
- Handball
- Horseshoe Pits
- Hard Surface Trails
- Natural Surface Trails
- Picnic Shelters
- Streams
- Tai Chi Court
- Tennis Practice Walls
- Sand Volleyball

Publicly Owned Land

Inside the Rock Spring Master Plan boundary, publicly owned land consists of Walter Johnson High School, and a small parcel of land along Old Georgetown Road at the Rock Spring Centre site that was originally intended to be a Montgomery County recreation center. Montgomery County ultimately decided not to utilize the half-acre parcel for a recreation center and the applicant was instructed to dedicate the site to the County for future public recreational uses. The sidewalks and roadways are the only other publicly owned land inside the Plan area.

Privately Owned Open Space

There are a small number of privately-owned open spaces within the Rock Spring Master Plan area and these are primarily paved and formally landscaped plazas that serve the individual buildings. These spaces provide opportunities to sit, but little else.



Open Spaces within the Plan Area

Three privately owned open spaces differ from these plazas. First, the new EYA Montgomery Row Townhomes will provide a very small open space for residents, including a play structure. Second, in the middle of the Plan area there is a horseshoe-shaped stormwater retention pond with sidewalks and benches around its perimeter that serves as an open space amenity. Daytime office workers use the sidewalks around the pond to walk during their lunch hour or breaks. Third, along Rockledge Drive, in between the Democracy Associates and Lockheed Martin properties, there is a private open green space with mature trees, a walking path, and a basketball court at the Democracy Associates property. (See the “potential open space” in sub-area A on Figure 16.)

These privately owned open spaces are disconnected from each other, and there is no clear outdoor gathering place that anchors this Plan area.

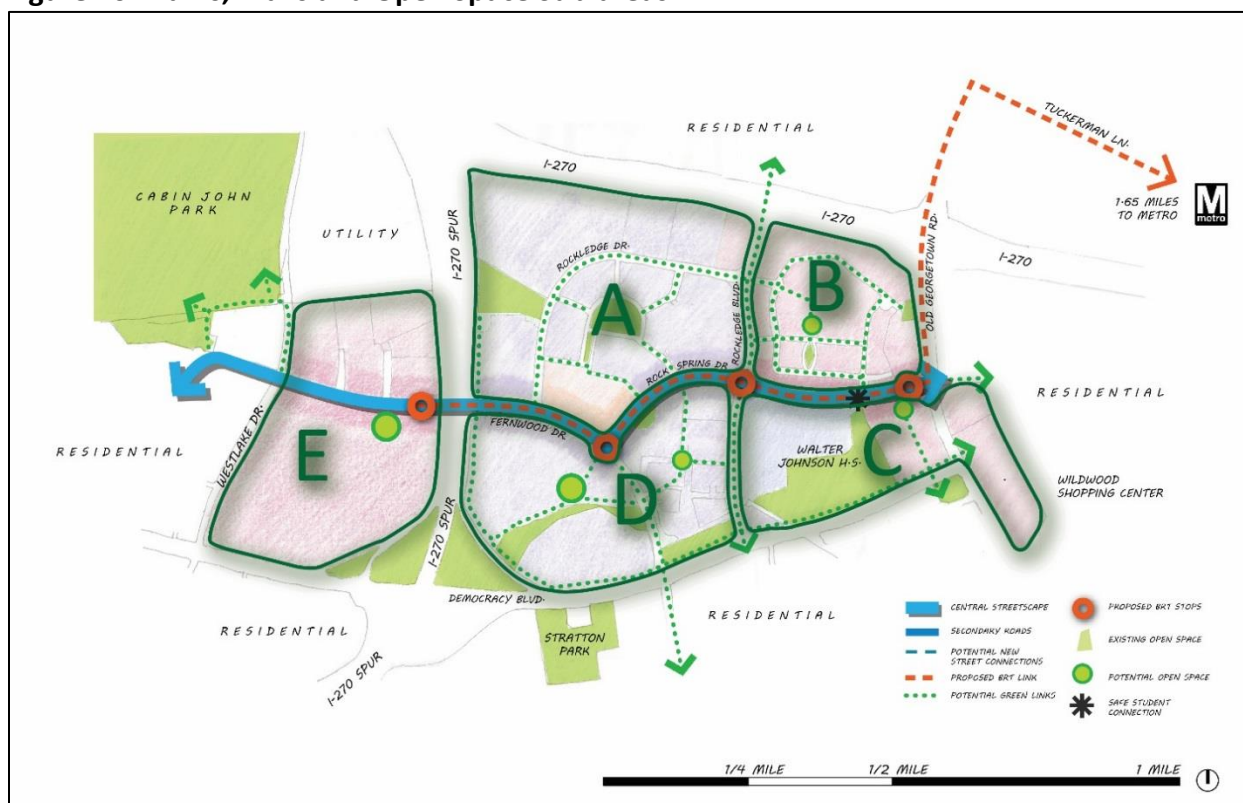
Parks, Trails, and Open Space Goals

1. Increase the number of publicly accessible green spaces within the Master Plan area.
2. Improve the utility of existing publicly accessible open spaces.
3. Strengthen pedestrian and cyclist connections to parkland and trail networks surrounding the Master Plan area.



Montgomery Row Illustrative

Figure 16 Parks, Trails and Open Space Sub-areas



4. Improve pedestrian and cyclist connections between existing and proposed open spaces within the Plan area.

For the parks, trails, and open space recommendations, the Plan area is divided into five sub-areas, as shown on Figure 16.

Recommendations

The Montgomery County Department of Parks, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), typically acquires parkland in two ways: direct acquisition through fee-simple purchase of property or dedication of land through the regulatory review process. The Rock Spring Master Plan area is bordered by several M-NCPPC parks and others, such as Timberlawn Local Park, are located within a short distance. Given the low-to-moderate increase in residential development outlined by this Plan, the open space recommendations primarily focus on the improvement of privately owned, publicly accessible open space. New open spaces are typically dependent on the redevelopment of private properties in the Plan area. In addition, with little redevelopment anticipated at this time, there are limited opportunities to acquire public parkland through dedication.

Goal 1: Increase the number of publicly accessible green spaces within the Master Plan area

Sub-area A: Stormwater Pond area

- Central Gathering Place at the Stormwater Pond
In order to improve the use of this space, the Plan recommends the following ideas for consideration:
 - At the time of redevelopment, property owners should consider redrawing the property lines in this location so that one property owner owns the stormwater facility and open space, which allows for easier programming and management of the open space.
 - At the time of redevelopment, property owners should consider putting the stormwater facility underground to make use of the space as a larger green space/open space.
 - Adjacent property owners should coordinate programming of this open space.
 - Additional seating and shade cover should be provided for the daytime workers who are already using this space.
- Community Open Space and Active Recreation at the Democracy Associates property (existing private green space with basketball court and walking trail):
 - Although this property is privately owned, if the owner concurred, the Plan would encourage public access to this open space given the nearby residential development under construction at the EYA property; it is anticipated that residents may use this open space for recreation and dog walking.
 - Should this property redevelop in the future, this space is recommended for acquisition by the Department of Parks.

Sub-area B: Rock Spring Centre

- Market conditions have changed since the Rock Spring Centre site plan was approved. Should the site's Adequate Public Facilities approvals expire and/or an amendment to the approved plans be requested, the opportunity should be taken to explore the possibility of an adjustment to the development proposal that includes the creation of a recreational open space to address unmet athletic field needs in the area.
- If the opportunity arises, Park and Trail Planning staff at the County Department of Parks and staff at the County Planning Department should work with the property owner to incorporate the existing publicly owned land at the former recreation center site with the creation of recreational public open space on this site. Given the potential expansion of Walter Johnson High School, and the significant proposed development at the Rock Spring Centre site, additional recreational open space is needed in the area to serve the unmet needs of the surrounding community and the high school.
- Crosswalks and any mid-block crossing between Walter Johnson High School and the amenity spaces and retail at Rock Spring Centre should be highly visible and prioritize pedestrian safety.

Sub-area C: Walter Johnson High School/Georgetown Square

- If the Georgetown Square shopping center redevelops, this site becomes an appropriate location for a public plaza with small recreational features (spray ground, interactive seating elements, and shade trees).
- Create a greenway with walking trail and safe road crossings along the existing tributary that starts on the Walter Johnson High School property and flows west toward the Marriott property and the I-270 spur.
- Add more athletic field space to Walter Johnson High School. To achieve this goal, Montgomery County Public Schools should examine the feasibility of acquiring or long-term leasing parking areas across Rockledge Drive and converting existing surface parking lots across the street to athletic field space.

Sub-area D: Marriott and Medical Office Buildings

- If the Marriott site redevelops, the Plan recommends a civic gathering/green open space, plaza, and active recreation space at this location.
- The Plan recommends creating and continuing a greenway with a walking trail along the existing tributary that starts on the Walter Johnson High School property and flows west toward the Marriott property and the I-270 spur.
- In order to create safer and more efficient connections to surrounding parks, the Plan recommends that the County Department of Parks create a pedestrian entrance to Stratton Local Park along Democracy Boulevard. Students at Walter Johnson High School currently walk from the school to Stratton Local Park to use the park's recreation facilities. The Department of Transportation should explore ways to make the intersection of Fernwood Road and Democracy Boulevard safer for pedestrians.

Sub-area E: Westfield Montgomery Mall and Areas North of Westlake Terrace

- Should redevelopment occur in this area, the Plan recommends the inclusion of plaza-style open-spaces with shade, landscaping, water features, seating, and play structures for children.
- The County Department of Parks should formalize a pedestrian and cyclist entrance to Cabin John Regional Park to make the park more visible and accessible to people on foot and on bikes.

Goal 2: Improve the utility of existing publicly accessible open spaces

- Through redevelopment, new open spaces should leverage existing open space as amenities for existing workers and future residents, and as a way to begin to establish a network of usable outdoor areas that could start to delineate the structure and scale of a future, mixed-use area.
- As a shorter-term solution, “Activate Rock Spring” is a new initiative to bring together the property owners, managers, tenants, and employees of the Rock Spring office park, with residents of the surrounding neighborhood to build excitement about future opportunities in the Plan area. “Activate Rock Spring” looks to utilize existing open spaces to bring those groups together through events, such as concerts and festivals; make navigating the area easier without a car and more accessible to residents within walking distance; and create a more unified sense of place and community in the short-term in order to maximize the area’s long-term opportunities.

Goal 3: Improve pedestrian and cyclist connections to existing parkland and trail networks surrounding the Master Plan area

In coordination with the transportation recommendations in this Plan, the following intersections, road segments, and locations should be designed to create a safe, accessible, and inviting pedestrian and cyclist environment so that pedestrians and cyclists can better access and move between parks, trails, and open spaces in and around the Plan area.

- Design safe, accessible pedestrian and cyclist connections across the I-270 spur along Westlake Terrace so that people may travel safely and easily between the Westfield Montgomery Mall/ Cabin John Regional Park area of the Plan and the Marriott/Rock Spring Centre areas.
- The County Department of Parks should improve the pedestrian and cyclist entrance to Cabin John Regional Park to make the park more visible and accessible to people on foot and on bikes.

Goal 4: Improve pedestrian and cyclist connections between existing and proposed open spaces

- The Plan recommends a network of safe and inviting sidewalks, walking paths and trails that connect open spaces and the different segments of the Plan area. Figure 15 shows these connections as green links, some of which are existing sidewalks along roadways and others are possible opportunities for future connections.

Police, Fire and Rescue

Police

There are six police districts and one special operations unit in the County. The Plan area is within the Montgomery County Department of Police's District 2 in Bethesda and adjacent to District 1 in Rockville. The Bethesda Station is located at 7359 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda and the Rockville Station is at 1451 Seven Locks Road.

Fire and Rescue

The Plan area is served primarily by Fire-Rescue Station #26, located at 6700 Democracy Boulevard, just outside the Plan boundary. Primary units deployed at this station include a paramedic engine and emergency medical services (EMS) transport unit (i.e., ambulance). The station also houses a mobile ambulance bus and mass casualty support unit for response to incidents involving mass casualties occurring anywhere within the County or region.

Response time to the Rock Spring area from resources deployed at Station 26 is within Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) goals for first-due units serving a metropolitan area. From a workload perspective, the EMS transport unit at Station 26 currently exceeds the MCFRS threshold of 2,500 responses annually, indicating the need for additional EMS transport resources at this station.

Surrounding fire-rescue stations that also serve the Rock Spring area include:

- Station 20 at 9041 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda.
- Station 41, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, at 5020 Battery Lane.
- Station 23 at 121 Rollins Avenue, Rockville.
- Station 10 at 8001 River Road, Cabin John.
- Station 33 at 11430 Falls Road, Rockville.
- Station 5 at 10620 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington.
- Federal Fire Station 51, National Institutes of Health, at 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda.

To adequately meet the future fire, rescue, and EMS needs of the Rock Spring area, existing primary units serving the area must remain in service, and there will be the need for an additional EMS transport unit and an aerial unit (e.g., aerial tower or ladder truck). The additional units will be needed due to the projected increase in service demand brought about by residences and businesses that are in the development pipeline or planned for the Rock Spring area, including additional high-rise buildings and associated higher density projects. Expansion/renovation of Station 26 will be needed to accommodate the aerial unit, second EMS transport unit, and personnel to staff them.

Libraries

The Davis Library is located just outside of the Plan area to the south, at 6400 Democracy Boulevard. The property was originally part of the Davis family farmland. The library was built in 1963 and is a two-level structure of approximately 26,000 square feet.

The Davis library is one of three libraries to be selected for funding in FY16 through the Library Refurbishment Level of Effort Project, which is part of the FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Renovations began in July 2016 and will continue for up to six months, during which time the library will be closed. Work to be included within this project includes carpeting, painting, reorganizing interior layouts; upgrading lighting; upgrading bathrooms; and programmatic updates.

In addition to library programming, the KID Museum is located on the lower level of the building. The mission of the KID Museum is to offer “unique, interactive experiences for elementary and middle school-aged children that integrate hands-on science, technology, engineering, art and math learning with an exploration of world cultures and global citizenship.”

Recreation Centers

The 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* recommended a future recreation center at Wall Local Park/Kennedy Shriver Aquatic Center. This site would permit the co-location of the existing Aquatic Center, including an expansion, and an urban park. The Montgomery County Department of Recreation recommends that the Wall Park community center serve all of North Bethesda, including the Rock Spring Plan area.

CHAPTER 5 TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Overview

The Rock Spring Master Plan area is in a prime, central location in Montgomery County. The area is adjacent to a roadway network that provides excellent regional and local access. There is a full interchange with the I-270 spur at Democracy Boulevard. There is a partial interchange at the Fernwood Road bridge that provides access to the northbound I-270 high occupancy lanes. There is also a full interchange to I-270 at Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) as well as at Rockledge Boulevard. In addition, a full interchange with the Capital Beltway/I-495 is located approximately three-quarters of a mile south of the Plan area. Old Georgetown Road is a major highway that connects Rock Spring with White Flint to the north and Bethesda to the south. The Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station is located approximately two and one-half miles from Rock Spring via Old Georgetown Road and Tuckerman Lane.

Within the Plan area and around the periphery, there are pedestrian facilities; however, sidewalks are typically located adjacent to fast moving traffic with no-buffer. There are striped bike lanes on Westlake Terrace, along the Westfield Montgomery Mall frontage, and portions of shared-use path on Rockledge Drive, Democracy Boulevard, and Westlake Drive.

The overall transportation goal of the Plan is to provide guidance for transforming the area from an auto-centric setting to a more transit-oriented environment that is hospitable to both pedestrians and bicyclists, while maintaining its competitive advantage of high-quality highway access. To help achieve the Plan's vision, the recommendations in this section pursue the following goals for the transportation network:

- Create a safe, low traffic stress, and “complete streets” pedestrian and bicycle environment along the central spine by re-allocating space within the public right-of-way for sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and shared use paths that are physically separated from moving vehicles.
- Create safer and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections to the residential neighborhoods and recreational amenities surrounding the Plan area with particular focus on the crossings of Democracy Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road.

Transit Network

The Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station is located two miles from the eastern side of the Plan area at Georgetown Square and three miles from Westfield Montgomery Mall. The Westfield Montgomery Mall Transit Center was relocated from the Mall's entrance on Westlake Terrace to an expanded site just to the east, adjacent to the I-270 spur. The upgraded transit center reopened in 2016 with commuter parking, bicycle racks, real-time information displays, and sheltered waiting areas with seating. The new transit center includes bus bays serving Ride On routes (6, 26, 42, 47, and 96) and Metrobus routes (J2 and J3) to facilitate easy transfers and link the area to the White Flint, Grosvenor-Strathmore, and Medical Center Metrorail stations as well as other destinations.

In July 2016, Montgomery County launched the free Rock Spring Park Express Bus Service that runs non-stop between the office park and the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station during the morning and the afternoon/evening commuter peak hours. The express bus service makes a loop through the office park with five stops along Rockledge Drive, Fernwood Road, and Rock Spring Drive.

The 1992 *North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan* recommended the creation of a high capacity and high quality transit connection, known as the North Bethesda Transitway, from the Westfield Montgomery Mall Transit Center through the Rock Spring office park to the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station. The North Bethesda Transitway is included in the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* (Corridor 6) as part of the County's bus rapid transit (BRT) network. The 2013 Functional Plan recommends four station locations in the Master Plan area: at the Westfield Montgomery Mall Transit Center, Rock Spring Drive and Fernwood Road, Rockledge Drive and Rock Spring Drive, Rock Spring Drive and Old Georgetown Road. (See Figure 7.) Much of the right-of-way along the proposed transitway route in the Rock Spring Master Plan area is currently available through easements and dedications provided through the development review process.

The 1992 Plan recommended that the North Bethesda Transitway would connect with the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station via the I-270 HOV lanes. The 2013 Functional Plan suggested two alternative routes to connect the North Bethesda Transitway with the Metrorail. One route is along Old Georgetown Road to Tuckerman Lane and the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail. An alternative route is to the White Flint Metrorail Station via Old Georgetown Road to Executive Boulevard and Rockville Pike.

This Plan recommends that the North Bethesda Transitway become a high-priority transit corridor to link the area with its closest Metrorail station, at Grosvenor-Strathmore, to enhance its viability, and signal to area employers and employees that the County values Rock Spring as an important office location.

The 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* also recommends construction of the I-270 spur HOV ramps on the south side of the Fernwood Road bridge in order to provide express bus service that would link this area with Tysons and northern Virginia. These ramps are the only remaining unbuilt master planned roadway facilities in the Rock Spring Plan area. This Plan recommends constructing the I-270 spur HOV ramps as previously planned.

Along the Rock Spring central spine of Westlake Terrace, Fernwood Road, and Rock Spring Drive, the transitway is planned to operate in parallel dedicated BRT lanes within a 40-foot transit easement on the north side. As mentioned, the reservation and easement have already been provided by several properties, including the Montgomery Row and Rock Spring Centre developments. The Old Georgetown Road segment is planned to run within one dedicated BRT lane operational in the peak hour direction. The short segment of the transitway on Westlake Terrace, from Motor City Drive/Montgomery Mall Transit Center across the bridge over the I-270 spur to Rockledge Drive, should operate in mixed traffic given the narrow width of the bridge.

Roadway Network

Since the 1992 *North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan* was adopted, the majority of the master-planned roadway improvements have been constructed. These include the I-270 interchange at Rockledge Boulevard, realignment of the Rockledge Drive loop road at Rockledge Boulevard/Rock Forest Drive, and the access ramps to the I-270 spur HOV north lanes on the Fernwood Road bridge. The only remaining unbuilt master-planned roadway project in the Plan area is access to the southbound I-270 spur HOV ramps on the Fernwood Road bridge, which is included in the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*. The ramps are envisioned to accommodate express bus service that would connect North Bethesda and Westfield Montgomery Mall with Northern Virginia and Tysons.

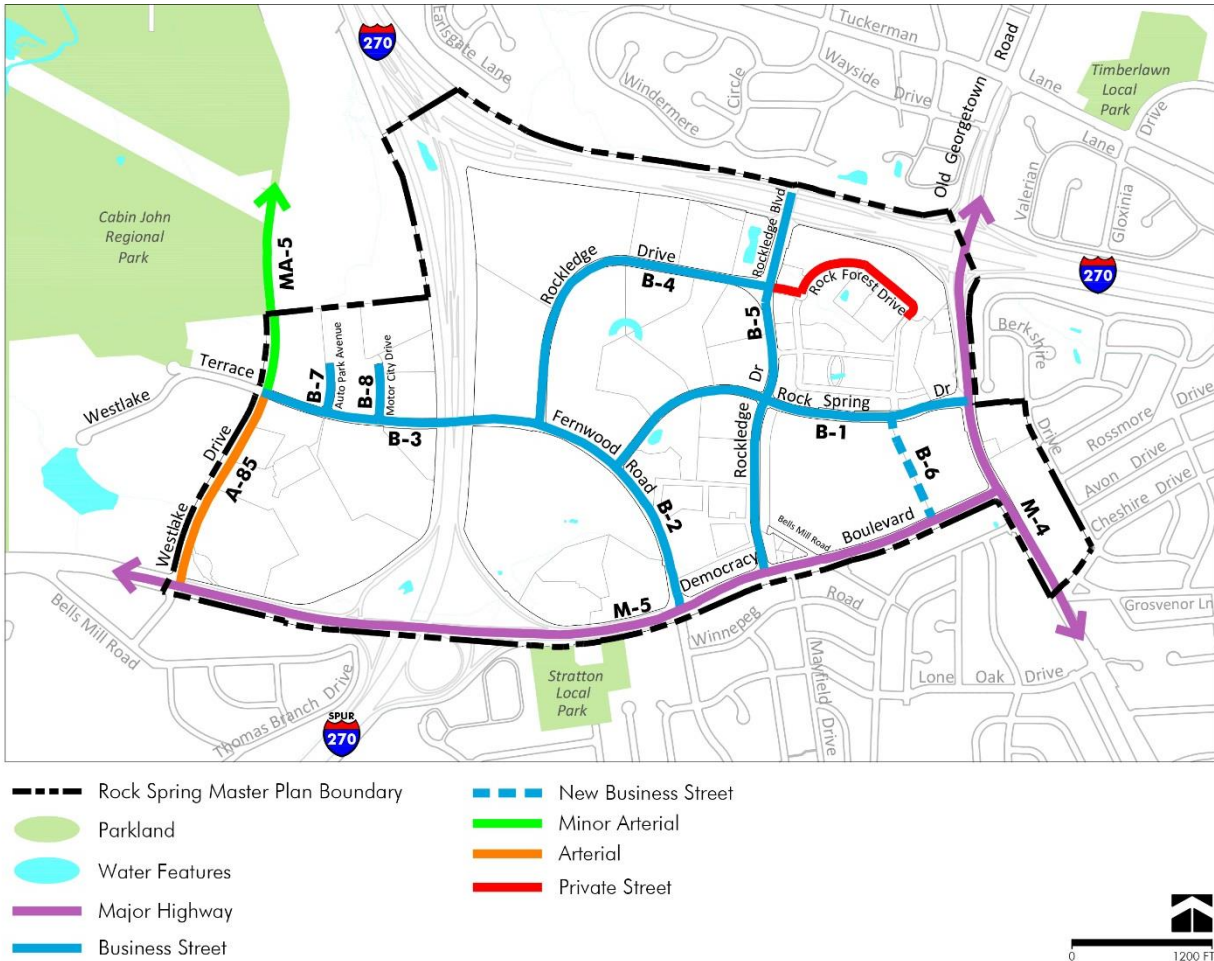
Old Georgetown Road and Democracy Boulevard are two major highways that form the eastern and southern boundaries of the Plan area. Westlake Drive is an arterial road (from Democracy Boulevard to Westlake Terrace) that forms the western boundary of the Plan area. Within the Plan boundaries, the only roads that are currently classified are Fernwood Road and Rock Spring Drive, which are arterials. (See Figure 17 and Table 1.) Rockledge Drive (both the north-south and curved segments), Rockledge Boulevard, Motor City Drive, and Auto Park Avenue were not designated in the 1992 Master Plan and are not currently classified in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT). This Plan recommends that all public roads within the Plan area be designated as business district streets, as shown on Figure 17 and Table 1. This classification provides roadway design flexibility to better accommodate bicycle facilities, narrow travel lanes, lower design speeds, provide on-street parking, and consider traffic calming methods.

The Plan also recommends that Westlake Drive, from Westlake Terrace to Tuckerman Lane, be reclassified from a two-lane primary residential road (P-28) to a two-lane minor arterial (MA-5). (See Figure 17.) The minor arterial classification better matches the character and context of Westlake Drive, since this roadway segment serves only one residential community, but does serve a number of commercial and recreational facilities and also provides an important through connection to Westfield Montgomery Mall.

Greater overall connectivity throughout Rock Spring could improve the pedestrian experience, allow vehicular traffic to diffuse, and give more low-speed street frontage for properties. If there is redevelopment, the Plan recommends that additional connectivity be provided through the large blocks. Redevelopment of large commercial properties that have existing driveways and parking lanes may provide an opportunity to create new internal streets that support both existing and new uses. Should the Georgetown Square shopping center be redeveloped, the Plan recommends a new two-lane north-south public street (B-6 on Figure 17) between Democracy Boulevard and Rock Spring Drive, and between the shopping center and Walter Johnson High School to improve connectivity within the Plan area.

Another possible way to improve pedestrian and bike facilities in the Plan area is to consider reducing the number of through travel lanes currently dedicated to vehicles and repurposing the pavement for alternate uses. The land use/traffic analysis prepared for this Master Plan

Figure 17 Roadway Classifications

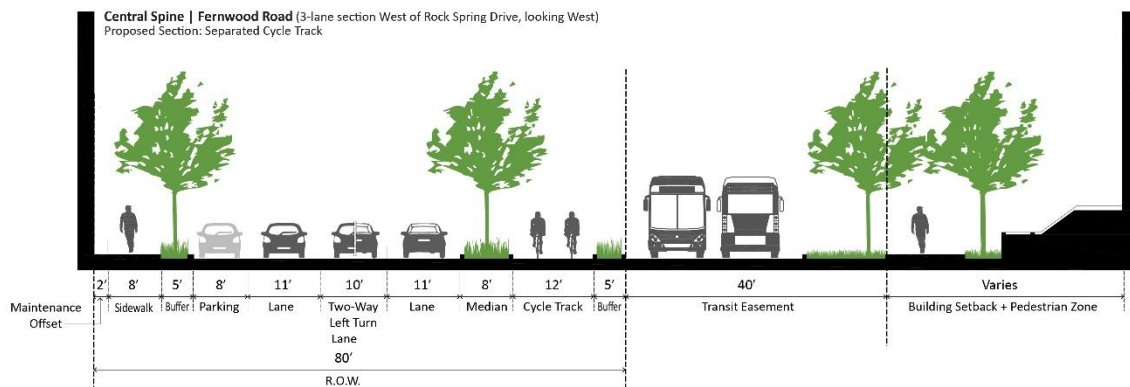


indicates that roads with four travel lanes may not be necessary to support existing and potential development. This analysis also shows that reducing internal roads from four travel lanes to two travel lanes would not negatively impact traffic conditions.

The Plan recommends that the central spine of Rock Spring Drive/Fernwood Road/Westlake Terrace be considered by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation as a test case for a “road diet.” The road diet would involve reducing the four through travel lanes to two travel lanes and replacing the center left turn lanes with a single two-way left turning lane. Space from the eliminated lanes would be used for a two-way bike “cycle track” with landscaped buffers along the proposed transitway on the north side to separate bikes from vehicles. On-street parking could be provided along the south side and streetscape enhancements could include enhanced pedestrian areas and landscaping.

The ultimate road profile would require a complete road reconstruction, including moving the curbs. (See Cross Section 1.) However, the test case scenario recommended by this Plan could be implemented as an interim solution by re-striping the two outer lanes to create a cycle track along the north side and a parking lane along the south side, leaving all the existing curbs in place but still achieving the performance configuration recommended by this Plan. (See Cross Section 2.) The final road reconstruction could then be achieved incrementally, if property owners were to consider any redevelopment fronting on the central spine, or as a part of the final implementation and construction of the North Bethesda Transitway.

Cross Section 1 Central Spine/Fernwood Road – Complete Reconstruction with Transitway



Cross Section 2 Central Spine/Fernwood Road – Interim Scenario

Central Spine | Fernwood Road (4-lane section West of Rock Spring Drive, looking West)
Interim Section: Re-purposed outer lanes for Parking + Cycle Track

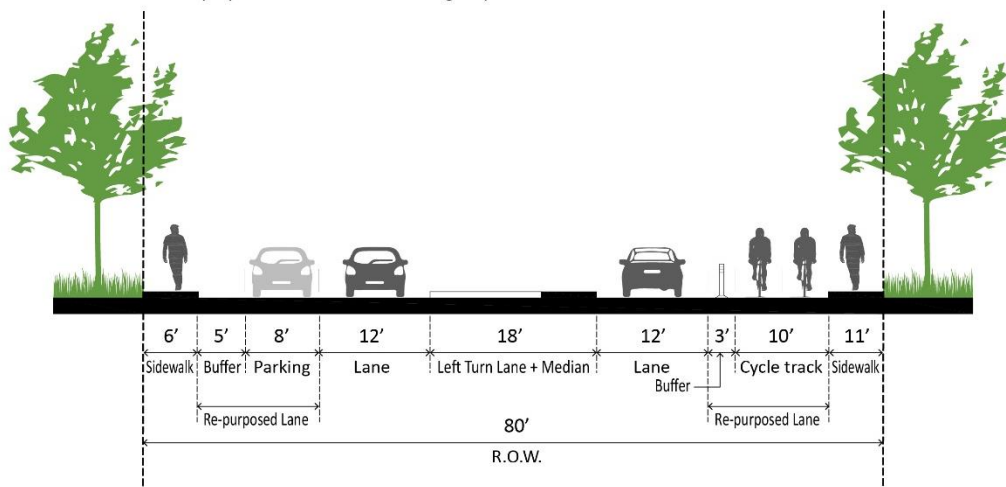


Table 1 Roadway Classifications

| MPOHT # | Master Planned Street | From | To | Minimum ROW (feet) | Through Travel Lanes * | Notes / Status / Changes |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| M-4 | Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) | Cheshire Drive | Rock Spring Drive | 120 | 6 | From 1992 North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan |
| M-4 | Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) | Rock Spring Drive | I-270 Southbound Ramps (northern Master Plan boundary) | 150 | 6 | Increased ROW from 126 feet to 150 feet in order to accommodate dedicated BRT lane and bike facilities matching width of bridge over I-270. |
| M-5 | Democracy Boulevard | Bells Mill Road | Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) | 120 | 6 | From 1992 North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan |
| M-5 | Democracy Boulevard | West Lake Terrace | Bells Mill Road | 150 | 6 | From 1992 North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan |
| Arterials | | | | | | |
| A-85 | Westlake Drive | Democracy Boulevard | Westlake Terrace | 90 | 4 | From 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan |
| Minor Arterials | | | | | | |
| MA-5 | Westlake Drive | Westlake Terrace | Tuckerman Lane (north of Master Plan area) | 70 | 2 | Classification changed from Primary Residential. Formerly MPOHT# P-28. |
| Business Streets | | | | | | |
| B-1 | Rock Spring Drive | Fernwood Road | Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) | 80** | 2 | Classification changed from Arterial. Number of through lanes reduced from 4 to 2 to accommodate bike facilities. Formerly MPOHT# A-81. |
| B-2 | Fernwood Road | Democracy Boulevard | Rockledge Drive/West Lake Terrace | 80** | 2 | Classification changed from Arterial. Number of through lanes reduced from 4 to 2 to accommodate bike facilities. Formerly MPOHT# A-85. |
| B-3 | Westlake Terrace | Westlake Drive | Rockledge Drive / Fernwood Road | 90 | 2 | Bridge is generally 80-feet wide but increases to 90 where the WB right-turn lane exists. Classification changed from Arterial. Number of through lanes reduced from 4 to 2 to accommodate bike facilities. Formerly MPOHT# A-85. |
| B-4 | Rockledge Drive | Fernwood Road / Westlake Terrace | Rockledge Boulevard/Rockledge Drive/Rock Forest Drive | 80 | 2 | Number of through lanes reduced from 4 to 2 to accommodate bike facilities. Was not previously classified in the MPOHT. |
| B-5 | Rockledge Drive | Democracy Boulevard | Rockledge Boulevard/Rockledge Drive / Rock Forest Drive | 80 | 2 | Number of through lanes reduced from 4 to 2 to accommodate bike facilities. Was not previously classified in the MPOHT. |
| B-5 | Rockledge Boulevard | Rockledge Drive / Rock Forest Drive | I-270 Southbound Ramps | 130 | 3 | Number of through lanes reduced from 4 to 3 to accommodate bike facilities. This segment also includes two northbound right turn lanes and southbound left- and right-turn lanes. Was not previously classified in the MPOHT. |
| B-5 | Rockledge Boulevard (Bridge Over I-270) | I-270 Southbound Ramps | I-270 Northbound Ramps | 80 | 4 | Number of through lanes reduced from 5 to 4 to accommodate bike facilities. ROW shown is width of bridge over I-270. Was not previously classified in the MPOHT. |

| MPOHT # | Master Planned Street | From | To | Minimum ROW (feet) | Through Travel Lanes * | Notes / Status / Changes |
|----------------|---|---------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| B-6 | North-South Connector along western edge of Georgetown Square | Democracy Boulevard | Rock Spring Drive | 70 | 2 | New Road. |
| B-7 | Auto Park Avenue | Westlake Terrace | Current Terminus / Future Private Street | 70 | 2 | Was not previously classified in the MPOHT. |
| B-8 | Motor City Drive | Westlake Terrace | Current Terminus / Future Private Street | 70 | 2 | Was not previously classified in the MPOHT. |

Primary Residential Streets

| | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----|---|---|
| P-5 | Cheshire Drive | Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) | Grosvenor Lane | 70 | 2 | No changes from 1992 <i>North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan</i> . |
| P-8 | Fernwood Road | Bridge over I-495 Capital Beltway | Democracy Boulevard | 70 | 2 | No changes from 1992 <i>North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan</i> . Located outside of Plan Area. |

* These are the number of planned through travel lanes for each segment, not including lanes for turning, parking, acceleration, deceleration, or other purposes auxiliary to through travel. Additional ROW may also be needed at intersections with conventional bike lanes, separated bike lanes, and shared use paths to implement a 'protected intersection'.

** There is also a 40-foot easement on the northern side of these roads along the Central Spine section.

Bicycle Network

The Master Plan area is not currently served by a significant network of bicycle facilities. Conventional bike lanes are striped on Westlake Terrace along the northern frontage of Westfield Montgomery Mall and on the Fernwood Road bridge over the I-270 spur. There is also a short segment of a shared use path paved on the eastern side of Rockledge Boulevard/Rockledge Drive. This path connects to another shared use path north of the I-270/Rockledge Boulevard interchange that was constructed along with the first phase of the Rock Spring Centre mixed-use development project.

Rock Spring is currently designated by Montgomery County as a Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area (BiPPA), as recommended in the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*. The BiPPA designation helps facilitate the allocation of County funds for bicycle and pedestrian improvements on their respective roadway networks. The State of Maryland also has a similar program of the same name with the acronym BPPA that supports bicycle and pedestrian improvements utilizing State funds.

This Plan seeks to develop a bicycle network that is safe, has a low level of traffic stress, and is accessible to users of all abilities. (See Figure 18 and Table 2.) The recommended network of separated bike lanes and shared use paths within and surrounding the Plan area will connect to existing and planned infrastructure in nearby residential neighborhoods, recreational amenities, the Bethesda Trolley Trail, and Westfield Montgomery Mall.

The Plan recommends that the central spine be considered as a test case for a road diet that involves repurposing vehicular lanes for other purposes. Repurposing the central spine should include interim bike facilities, which are quicker and less expensive to implement than permanent facilities, and do not require disturbing existing curbs. Space from the eliminated vehicular lanes would be used for a two-way bike cycle track with landscaped buffers along the proposed transitway on the north side. The interim bike facilities would also immediately benefit pedestrians by providing physical separation for sidewalks that are currently adjacent to vehicular travel lanes.

The Plan also recommends that the Capital Bikeshare program be expanded into the Plan area. Bikesharing programs provide short-term bicycle rentals that can help remove vehicles from the road for some short trips. Some possible bikeshare nodes within the Plan area include Georgetown Square, Marriott, Westfield Montgomery Mall, Walter Johnson High School, and Wildwood Shopping Center. Bikeshare would help connect the Plan area with the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station, White Flint, National Institutes of Health, downtown Bethesda, and all of the residential neighborhoods in the area.

Figure 18 Bikeway Classifications

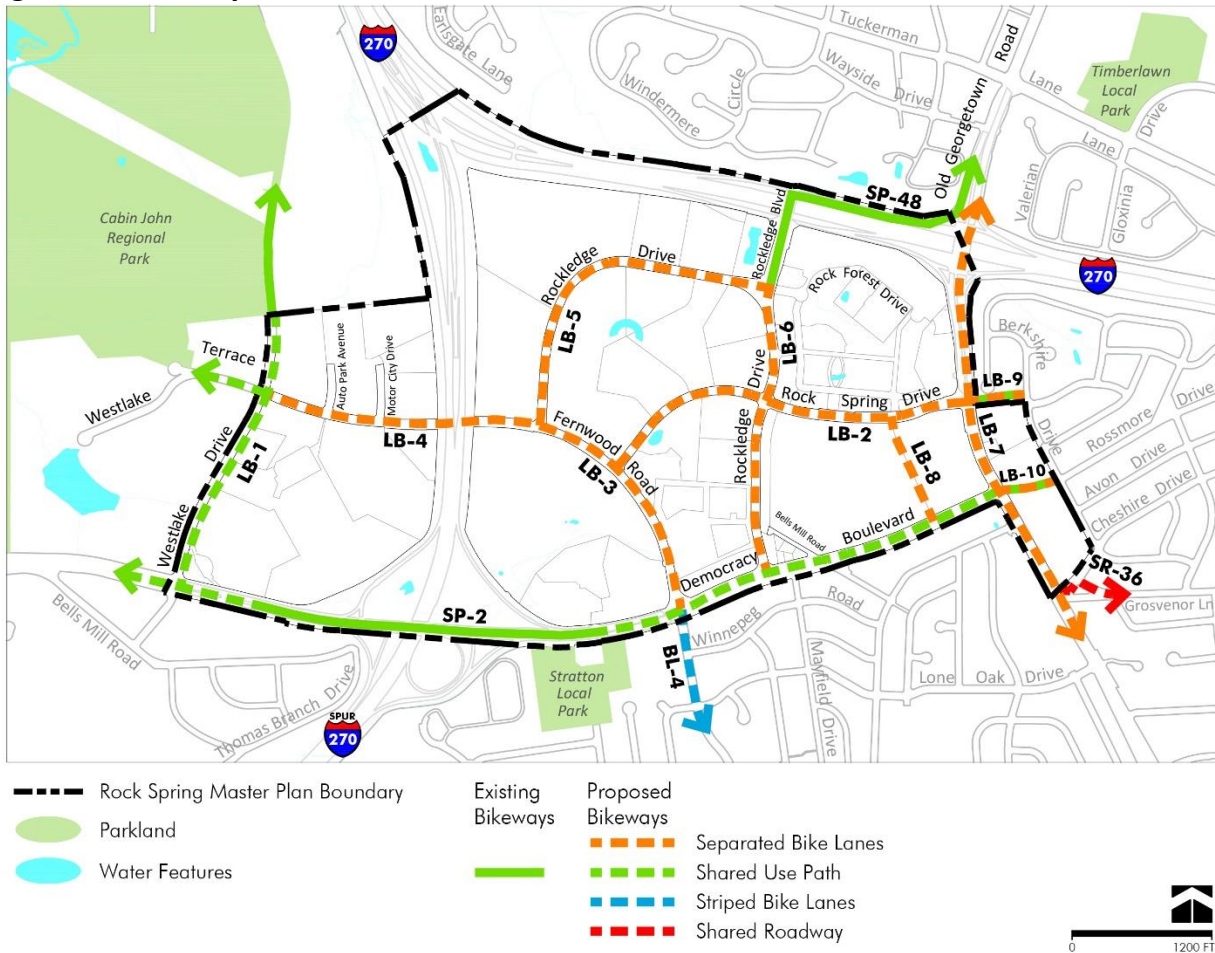


Table 2 Bikeway Classifications

| Route # * | Street | From | To | Facility Type * | Notes / Status / Changes |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| SP-2 | Democracy Boulevard | Westlake Drive | Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) | Shared Use Path | Shared use path should be constructed on north side to connect with existing segment between the easternmost Westfield Montgomery Mall driveway and Democracy Plaza driveway (west of Fernwood Road). |
| SP-48 | Rockledge Boulevard (Bridge Over I-270) | I-270 Southbound Ramps | I-270 Northbound Ramps | Shared Use Path | Existing sidewalk on east side of bridge should be constructed as an asphalt shared use path to connect with proposed two-way separated bike lanes south of I-270 Southbound Ramps and existing shared use path north of I-270 ramps. |
| LB-1 | Westlake Drive | Democracy Boulevard | Tuckerman Lane (north of Master Plan area) | Shared Use Path | Shared use path should be constructed on western side to connect with existing segment between Cabin John Ice Rink driveway and Cabin John Regional Park / MCPS Maintenance Facility driveways. North of Cabin John Ice Rink conventional bike lanes are currently striped. Formerly Bike Plan Routes #DB-31 and #BL-5. |
| Separated Bike Lanes | | | | | |
| LB-2 | Rock Spring Drive | Fernwood Road | Old Georgetown Road | Separated Bike Lanes | Two-way separated bike lanes on the north side of street. Formerly Bike Plan Route #SR-59. |
| LB-3 | Fernwood Road | Democracy Boulevard | Rockledge Drive/Westlake Terrace | Separated Bike Lanes | Two-way separated bike lanes on the eastern/northern side of street. Formerly Bike Plan Route #BL-4. |
| LB-4 | Westlake Terrace | Westlake Drive | Rockledge Drive /Fernwood Road | Separated Bike Lanes | Two-way separated bike lanes on the south side of street. Currently, striped bike lanes are provided on both sides of street. West of Westlake Drive a shared use path connection should be made to Cabin John Regional Park via Westlake Terrace. Formerly Bike Plan Route #BL-4. |
| LB-5 | Rockledge Drive | Fernwood Road /Westlake Terrace | Rockledge Boulevard/Rockledge Drive /Rock Forest Drive | Separated Bike Lanes | One-way separated bike lanes on each side of street. Formerly Bike Plan Route #SR-60. |
| LB-6 | Rockledge Drive / Rockledge Boulevard | Democracy Boulevard | I-270 Southbound Ramps | Separated Bike Lanes | Two-way separated bike lanes on eastern side of street to connect with planned shared-use path on bridge over I-270 and existing shared-use path north of the I-270 ramps. A shared use path exists on eastern side from just south of Rock Forest Drive north to the I-270 southbound ramps. Formerly Bike Plan Route #SR-60. |
| LB-7 | Old Georgetown Road | Cheshire Drive | I-270 Southbound Ramps (northern Master Plan boundary) | Separated Bike Lanes | Two-way separated bike lanes on eastern side to separate bikes and pedestrians along the commercial areas of Wildwood Shopping Center and Georgetown Square. Formerly Bike Plan Route #SP-1. |
| LB-8 | North-South Connector (B-6) along western edge of Georgetown Square | Democracy Boulevard | Rock Spring Drive | Separated Bike Lanes | One-way separated bike lanes on each side of street. |
| LB-9 | East-West bicycle connection across Wildwood Shopping Center from Rock Spring Drive | Old Georgetown Road | Berkshire Drive / Yorkshire Terrace | Separated Bike Lanes or Shared Use Path | Separated bike lanes or shared use path along northern edge of Wildwood Shopping Center to connect neighborhoods east of Berkshire Drive with planned bicycle facilities on Rock Spring Drive. The exact alignment and facility type to be determined later. |

| Route # * | Street | From | To | Facility Type * | Notes / Status / Changes |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| LB-10 | East-West bicycle connection across Wildwood Shopping Center from Democracy Boulevard | Old Georgetown Road | Berkshire Drive / Rossmore Drive | Separated Bike Lanes or Shared Use Path | Separated bike lanes or shared use path across middle of Wildwood Shopping Center to connect neighborhoods east of Berkshire Drive via Rossmore Drive with planned shared-use path on Democracy Boulevard. Rossmore Drive should be considered as a "bike boulevard" or "neighborhood greenway" since it is a residential street that directly connects to Flemming Drive / Bethesda Trolley Trail and bicycle crossing over I-270. The exact alignment and facility type to be determined later. |
| Bike Lanes | | | | | |
| BL-4 | Fernwood Road | Bridge over I-495 Capital Beltway | Democracy Boulevard | Bike Lanes | Traditional striped bike lanes. No changes proposed from 1992 <i>North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan</i> . Located outside of Plan Area. |
| Shared Roadway | | | | | |
| SR-36 | Cheshire Drive | Old Georgetown Road | Grosvenor Lane | Shared Roadway | No changes proposed from 1992 <i>North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan</i> . |
| Remove from Plan | | | | | |
| PB-19 | Shared Use Path parallel to Old Georgetown Road (across Rock Spring Center property) | Democracy Boulevard | Tuckerman Lane (north of Master Plan area) | Shared Use Path | Would not be needed with bike facilities planned for Old Georgetown Road (LB-7) and Rockledge Drive (LB-6, SP-48). |

* An update to the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan is currently underway. Route numbers, facility types, boundaries, and terminology may be changed during that process.

Pedestrian Network

The pedestrian environment within the Plan area, along the adjacent major highways of Old Georgetown Road and Democracy Boulevard, and the Fernwood Road bridge crossing to Westfield Montgomery Mall, is currently challenging for pedestrians. In addition to the large blocks and long walking distances, the pedestrian network throughout the Plan area includes sidewalks directly next to moving traffic, missing crosswalks, signal phases that do not protect crossing pedestrians or do not provide green times that are adequate for crossing pedestrians, free right-turn ramps at multiple locations, missing wheelchair ramps, and missing lead-in sidewalks.

Many intersections pose challenges to pedestrians and cyclists seeking to cross and access neighborhoods and community amenities throughout and surrounding the Plan area. Priority should be given to the following Plan intersections when County BiPPA and state BPPA or other funding sources are made available: Democracy Boulevard/Fernwood Road, Democracy Boulevard/Rockledge Drive, and Old Georgetown Road/Rock Spring Drive. Possible intersection improvements include crosswalks on all legs of these streets, ADA-compliant wheelchair ramps on all corners, lead-in sidewalks adjacent to retail and commercial properties, safe bicycle crossings on all legs, protected signal phases for pedestrians and cyclists, and adequate crossing time.

Other challenges for pedestrians and cyclists are channelized right-turn lanes, which allow vehicles to make right turns, often without coming to a full stop. Consideration should be given to removing channelized right-turn ramps and replacing them with traditional right-turn lanes at intersections. Removal of these channelized right-turn lanes would serve to shorten crossing distance for pedestrians and slow vehicles by ensuring that they must first stop at the traffic signal before proceeding with the right-turn movement. Replacing channelized right-turn lanes with more traditional right-turn lanes would have little or no negative impact on intersection congestion.

This Plan also emphasizes the need for a safe and prominent pedestrian crossing at Rock Spring Drive between Walter Johnson High School and the future Rock Spring Centre development. At this location, consideration should be given to having stop or signal controls, raised crosswalks, and alternative surface textures such as brick on crosswalks. Bulb-outs of sidewalks to shorten crossing distances, and other techniques could be implemented to slow traffic and make pedestrians more visible.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The portion of the Plan area east of the I-270 spur is located within the North Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD). The North Bethesda TMD, originally recommended in the 1992 *North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan* and subsequently established by the County in 1994, covers all of North Bethesda, including the White Flint, Twinbrook, and Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail stations. TMD staff works in coordination with employers to develop supportive TDM programs (e.g., shuttles, carsharing, bikesharing, vanpooling, flexible work schedules, teleworking, parking policies, transit subsidies, etc.) to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles.

Non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) is the metric used to measure the percentage of commuters who are not the driver of a single-occupant vehicle. Based on 2015 survey data provided by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Commuter Services Division, the entire North Bethesda TMD has a current NADMS of 28.2 percent. This Plan does not recommend increasing the current North Bethesda TMD NADMS goal of 39 percent for the Rock Spring Master Plan area, nor does this Plan recommend expanding the TMD area to include the Westfield Montgomery Mall or any other properties west of the I-270 spur. However, this Plan does recommend implementation of high quality BRT service linking to Metrorail and recognizes this transit will be critical in substantially increasing the area's NADMS.

CHAPTER 6 IMPLEMENTATION

Growth and change in any area of Montgomery County must be managed and timed with the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to support it. The Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) is used to establish the policies and procedures for administration of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). The goal of the APFO is to ensure that transportation and school facilities have sufficient capacity for the Planning Board to approve specific projects during the regulatory approval process. The 2012-2016 SSP concluded that the North Bethesda Policy Area has adequate roadway transportation capacity and the Walter Johnson School cluster is close to a moratorium for all school levels.

Sectional Map Amendment

Following this Plan's approval by the County Council and adoption by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) will apply the Plan's recommended zoning to the official County zoning map.

Employment Office Zone

All of the land in the Rock Spring office park, the central portion of this Plan area, is in the Employment Office (EOF) Zone and the Plan recommends that the zone be retained. As discussed in Chapter 2, the EOF Zone allows up to 30 percent of a site's total gross floor area to be used for residential and up to 30 percent to be used for retail; up to 60 percent of the floor-area-ratio developed on site could be non-office uses. The residential and retail percentages in the EOF Zone are largely untested; i.e., no property owners have attempted to alter their built sites and tried to utilize the zone's options for limited amounts of non-office uses.

Given the current situation with high office vacancies, commercial property owners are considering their options and seeking maximum flexibility to respond to market conditions. Since the residential market has been strong, many property owners want zoning options that permit housing. The limitation of 30 percent residential currently in the EOF Zone is considered too restrictive and not realistically viable by many property owners for future housing.

Changes to the EOF Zone should be considered to address these concerns. Rather than amending the EOF Zone in its entirety, or creating an overlay zone for Rock Spring, the Plan recommends a zoning text amendment as follows:

- If an EOF-zoned site is recommended for mixed-use by the master plan, the percentages of non-office use can be changed pursuant to the careful analysis and deliberations of the master planning process. Up to 60 percent of the gross floor area on an EOF-zoned site could be allowed for non-office uses, with any mix of residential and retail, rather than limiting it to 30 percent of each.

In addition, there is general agreement that the EOF Zone should allow senior/assisted living facilities as a conditional or limited use. These uses are referred to in the County Zoning Ordinance as independent living facilities. A zoning text amendment should be prepared that adds independent living facilities to the land use table for the EOF Zone as a conditional or limited use.

Public Benefits

The Commercial/Residential (CR) Zone, Commercial/Residential Town (CRT) Zone, and Employment Office (EOF) Zone offer two development methods: standard and optional. The standard method allows a total density of up to 0.5 FAR in the CR Zone and up to 1.0 FAR in the CRT Zone and the EOF Zone, and requires compliance with a specific set of development standards. The optional method of development allows for greater density and height, but requires that developers provide public benefits in order to achieve more density than that allowed in the standard method option. The additional optional method density may be achieved through a series of incentive increases that can be combined to achieve the maximum allowable density, subject to Planning Board approval.

Public benefits provided under the optional method must be chosen from categories outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board must determine public benefit points under optional method development from the following categories: major public facility, transit proximity, connectivity and mobility, diversity of uses and activities, quality building and site design, protection and enhancement of the natural environment, and building reuse. All public benefits requested by the developer will be analyzed to make sure they are the most suitable for the Plan area, that they are consistent with the Plan's vision, and that they satisfy the changing needs of the area over time. While applicants for the optional method of development may propose any of the public benefits listed in Section 4.7.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, there are certain benefits that should be prioritized for this Plan area, including the following:

- Major public facilities include, but are not limited to, a school, library, recreation center, park, County service center, bike share station, public transportation or utility upgrade. Major public facilities provide public services at a convenient location where increased density creates a greater need for civic uses and greater demands on public infrastructure.
- Diversity of uses and activities that increases the variety and mixture of a development's land uses, types of housing, economic variety and community activities; contributes to development of more efficient and sustainable communities; reduces the necessity for automobile use; and facilitates healthier lifestyles and greater social interaction. Uses and activities include, but are not limited to, adaptive buildings, care centers, or live/work units.
- Connectivity and mobility that enhances connections between uses and amenities; increases mobility options; encourages walking, cycling and transit; including, but not limited to, transit access improvement, through-block connections, and advance dedication.

- Reuse of an existing building may result in benefit point if significant portions of the structural system are retained.

Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP), which is funded by the County Council and implemented by County agencies, establishes how and when construction projects are completed. The CIP cycle occurs every two years when regional advisory committees and the M-NCPPC hold forums to discuss proposed items for the six-year CIP.

This Plan anticipates the development and implementation of the North Bethesda Transitway, as previously recommended in the 1992 *North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan* and reconfirmed by the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*. The Plan recommends that the North Bethesda Transitway become a high-priority transit corridor to link the Rock Spring Master Plan area with its closest Metrorail station, at Grosvenor-Strathmore, to enhance its viability, and signal to area employers and employees that the County values Rock Spring as an important employment location.

This area is experiencing high enrollments in all levels of the Walter Johnson school cluster. When the MCPS Board of Education decide on the preferred option to address school capacity issues in the cluster, significant capital resources will need to be allocated to implement the recommended solutions.

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The Plan Process

A plan provides comprehensive recommendations for the use of publicly and privately owned land. Each plan reflects a vision of the future that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a countywide perspective. Together with relevant policies, plans should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions.

The WORKING DRAFT PLAN is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department for presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the Working Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes as appropriate, and approves the Plan for public hearing. After the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

The PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN is the 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 testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds public worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The PLANNING BOARD DRAFT PLAN is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and reflects their revisions to the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit a master plan or a sector plan to the County Council with copies to the County Executive who must, within 60 days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward other comments and recommendations to the County Council.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council holds a public hearing to receive public testimony. After the hearing record is closed, the relevant Council committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board Draft, as revised.

After Council approval, the plan is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the plan officially amends the master plans, functional plans, and sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

Elected and Appointed Officials

County Council

Nancy Floreen, President
Roger Berliner, Vice President
Marc Elrich
Tom Hucker
Sidney Katz
George Leventhal
Nancy Navarro
Craig Rice
Hans Riemer

County Executive

Isiah Leggett

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Casey Anderson, Chair
Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Vice Chair

Commissioners

Montgomery County Planning Board
Casey Anderson, Chair
Marye Wells-Harley, Vice Chair
Gerald R. Cichy
Norman Dreyfuss
Natali Fani-Gonzalez

Prince George's County Planning Board
Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Chair
Dorothy F. Bailey, Vice Chair
Manuel R. Geraldo
A. Shuanise Washington