



Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone, Preliminary Staff Recommendations

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Completed: 04/25/2019

Description

Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone, Preliminary Staff Recommendations.

Staff Recommendation

Planning Board discussion and guidance to staff on the Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone master plan preliminary recommendations.

Summary

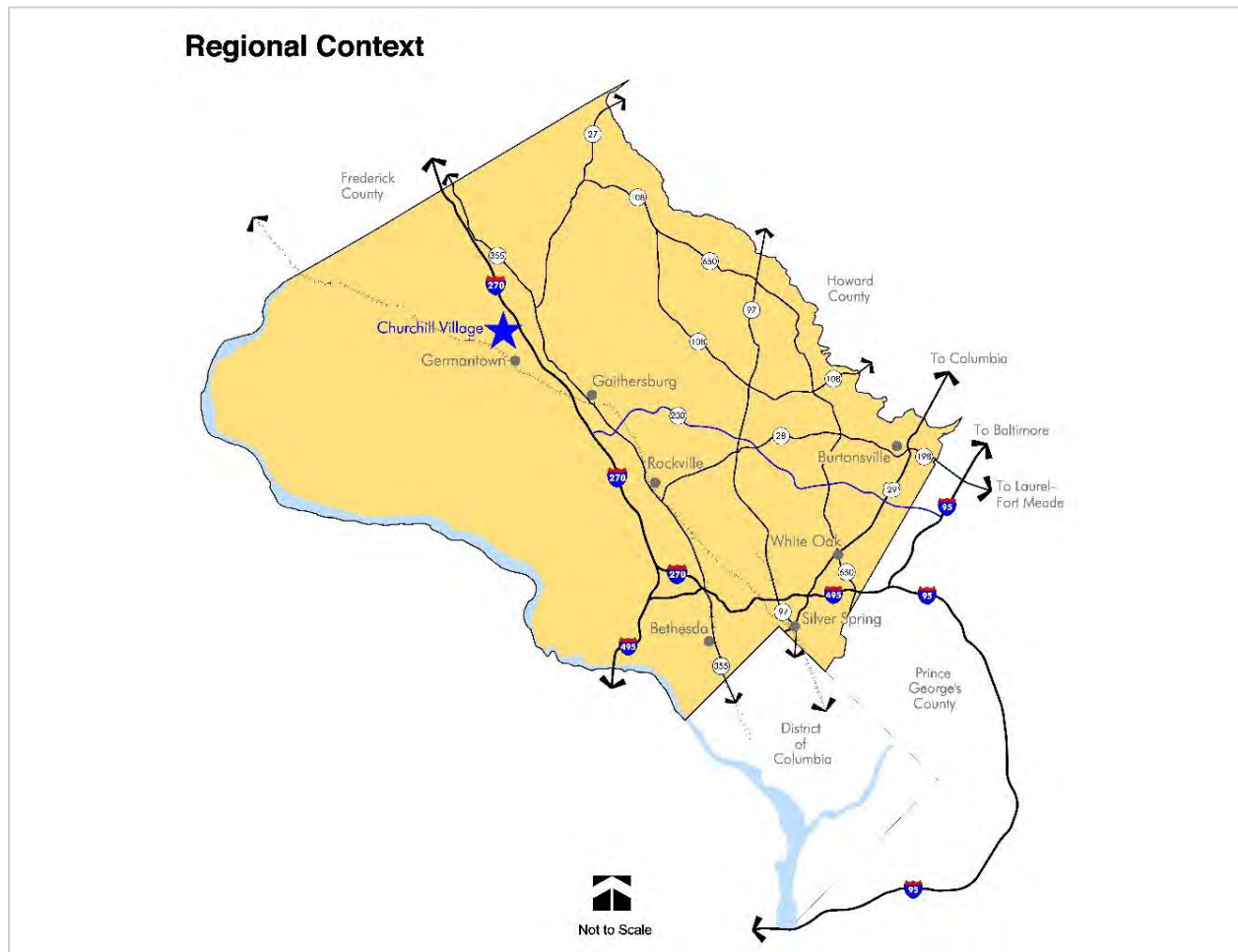
Planning staff will update the Planning Board on the Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone Master Plan, including community outreach efforts, preliminary land use and zoning recommendations, and next steps.

Introduction

In accordance with the work program established by the Montgomery County Council, the Planning Department initiated in April 2018 the Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone, a master plan for the Churchill Village community of Germantown.

The master plan's scope of work was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board in November 2018. It describes the proposed boundaries, purpose, outreach strategy, and schedule. The scope of work also provides background, context, and a summary of the issues to be addressed.

This staff report presents the preliminary recommendations for the master plan, which includes replacing the Town-Sector zone with current zoning classifications, in accordance with preserving Churchill Village’s residential character, protecting open space and recreation areas, and supporting neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

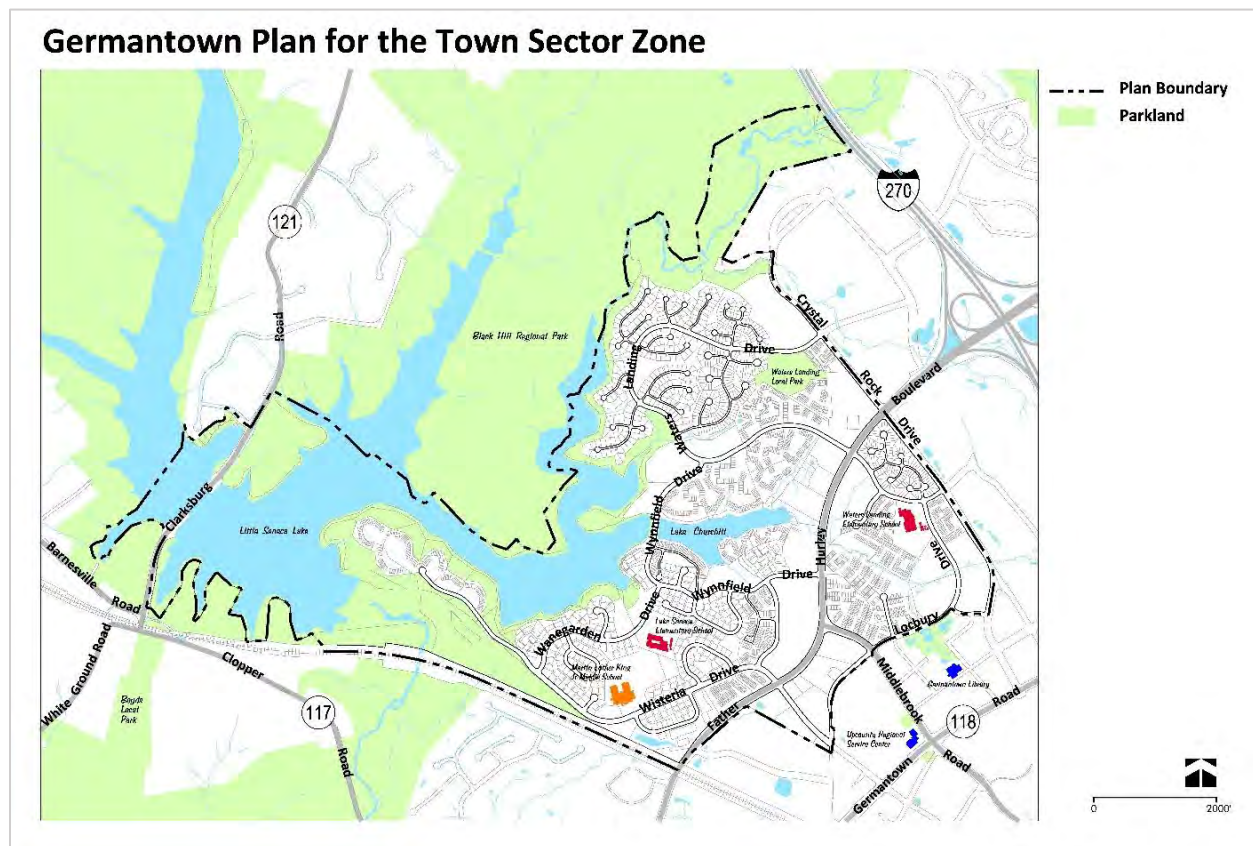


Background

In 1968, the mostly undeveloped area known today as Churchill Village was rezoned to the newly-created Town-Sector Zone (T-S). The T-S Zone, along with the approved development plan, facilitated the development of a new community that combined abundant green space with residential, commercial, institutional development, and public infrastructure. With the exception of a 4.8-acre property, the community is completely built-out. Today, there are houses, townhomes, and multifamily units mixed across the community. Commercial uses, located in the southeastern portion of the plan area, were generally constructed between 1981 and 2003.

In 2014, Montgomery County adopted a comprehensive update to the zoning ordinance which included new zoning classifications. As a result, the Town-Sector zone is no longer available as a zoning classification and will be phased out. Article 59-8 “Zones Retained from Previous Ordinance,” states the following: The zones in Article 59-8 were applied by Local Map Amendment before this Zoning Ordinance was adopted. These zones may appear on the digital zoning map, but they cannot be requested by a property owner under a Local Map Amendment or applied to any additional property under a Sectional Map Amendment adopted after October 30, 2014” (Section 8.1.1). Accordingly, this included the T-S zone. When master plans that contain any of the zones in Article 59-8 are updated or amended, the revised master plans will replace these zones and recommend new zones.

Pursuant to the rules for the T-S zone, “applications for [zoning] reclassification [were] prohibited until 50 years after the grant of the T-S zone” (Zoning Ordinance, §59-8.3.3.D.3.b). Since the T-S zone was approved in 1968, this feature expired in 2018. While it is not expected that rezoning applications will be submitted as a result of the zoning control expiration date, it is a primary purpose for this master plan effort.

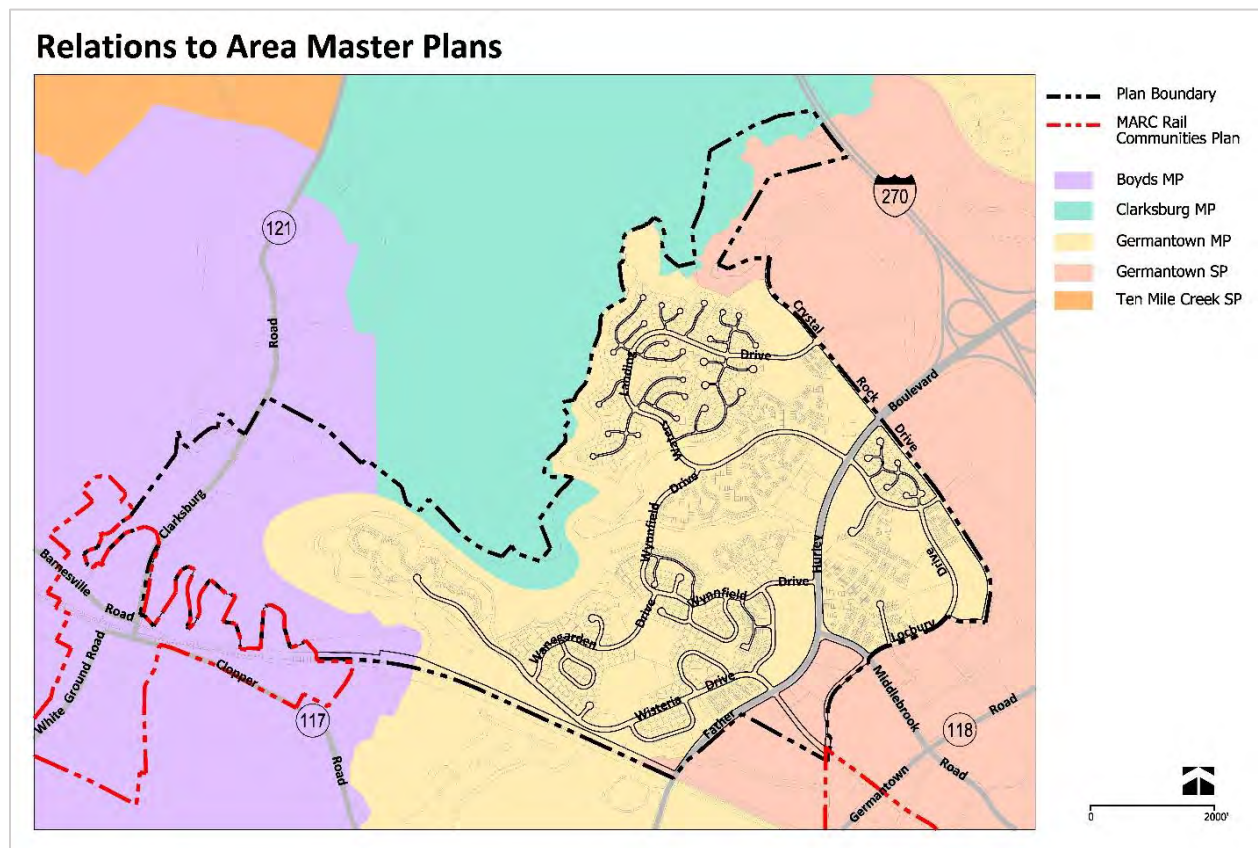


Purpose of the Master plan

The main purpose of this master plan is to recommend the appropriate new zoning classifications to replace land that is zoned T-S. As previously discussed, applications for rezoning property by individuals were prohibited for a 50-year horizon. This zoning control feature expired in 2018. Additionally, small areas of non-Town Sector zones (near the plan boundary) will also be rezoned to correct zoning inconsistencies caused mostly by right-of-way alignments and the creation of Little Seneca Lake.

Planning Framework

The Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone master plan area is part of the greater Germantown area. The main focus of the plan is the Churchill Village community within the 1989 Germantown Master Plan area, which now contains all land in Germantown in the Town Sector Zone. The plan boundary also contains parts of Little Seneca Lake and Black Hill Regional Park that are within the 1985 Boyds Master Plan, the 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan, and the 2009 Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan; a small, mostly commercial area from the 2009 plan is also included. (The 2019 MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan will also rezone approximately 25 acres of publicly owned T-S-zoned land within Churchill Village near Boyds.) The total plan area is approximately 1,429 acres.



The General Plan for Montgomery County, "On Wedges and Corridors," was adopted by the M-NCPPC in 1964. Its purpose is to help establish overall policies for development and to relate these policies to the metropolitan framework. The General Plan envisioned development radiating outward from Washington, DC in a series of cities along major transportation corridors, with wedges of lower density and green open space in between them. Each corridor city was to be relatively self-sufficient, with employment, a range of housing choices, and supportive community services. Germantown was identified as a corridor city and a master plan was completed in 1974.

The intent of the 1974 Master Plan was to fulfill the objectives of the General Plan. More specifically, the 1974 Master Plan recommended that Germantown (which includes Churchill Village) develop into a "new community" similar to new planned communities such as Reston and Columbia. Unlike these new communities, however, Germantown could not be developed by a single developer because of fragmented land ownership. To manage this concern, the County government coordinated the efforts of planning, zoning, subdivision, capital programming, and many individual developments to create a cohesive "new town."

The 1989 Germantown Master Plan built upon the 1974 Master Plan. It modified four elements: housing, community identity, community facilities, and jobs/housing balance. In Churchill Village

specifically, development occurred under the guidance of the approved 1968 development plan. The 1989 plan noted that Churchill Village was nearly built-out with only 132 acres of developable land remaining. The 1989 plan recommended that Churchill Village would not be served by a “village center” at Waters Landing Drive and Father Hurley Boulevard because two major shopping areas (Sugarloaf Centre and Germantown Commons) are in close proximity and serve the community. The current recommendation from the 1989 plan is that the previously recommended “village center” property be developed as a religious facility and/or senior housing.

The 2009 Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan included approximately 300 acres of the Churchill Village T-S zone and included portions of the Town Center, West End, and the North End District. The 2009 plan ultimately changed approximately 250 acres of the T-S zone to the Commercial/Residential (CR and CRT) zones to facilitate mixed-use development. These 250 acres contained nearly all of the 132 acres of developable land that had been mentioned in the 1989 plan. The remaining 1,292 acres of Churchill Village were noted as largely built-out with residential uses; this portion of Churchill Village is still guided by the 1989 Germantown Master Plan, and it is this area that is the focus of this master plan.

A limited number of non-T-S-zoned properties around the periphery of the T-S zone were included in the plan area to resolve some zoning inconsistencies that largely are a result of right-of-way alignments and the construction of Little Seneca Reservoir.

Discovery and Community Engagement

Community engagement is a key component of this master plan. A variety of methods and techniques were used to create an environment that supported public participation. People and organizations were identified that had an interest in Churchill Village and Germantown. These stakeholders included local residents, homeowners associations, and business owners who were invited to participate, share ideas, and provide feedback. The discovery phase and the plan preparation were guided by an ongoing and collaborative engagement process that included:

- Throughout the summer and early fall of 2018, planning staff met with several Germantown-area organizations and homeowners associations (HOA) at their regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the plan, receive comments, and answer questions. These groups included the Churchill Community Foundation, Churchill Village South HOA, Waters Landing Association HOA, and the Churchill Village East HOA.
- During the same time, staff met with government partners and agencies that have a stake in the community and an interest in the plan. These groups included Montgomery County Council District 2 staff; Upcounty Regional Services Center staff; the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce’s Economic Development Committee; Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission staff; and Montgomery County Parks Department.

- On October 11, 2018, Planning Department staff held a community kick-off meeting at the Upcounty Regional Services Center, which was attended by residents and community stakeholders. This outreach meeting officially notified the community that the Plan is underway. It provided a platform to engage stakeholders in discussions about the purpose, scope, and goals of the plan. After a staff presentation and discussion, an open house format followed which provided opportunities for one-on-one dialogue between staff and participants. Topics raised included zoning for vacant land, open space protection, and proposed residential zoning.
- On March 14, 2019, a second community meeting was held to present staff's preliminary recommendations and draft zoning map. Similar to the kick-off meeting, there was a staff presentation, which was followed by an open-house and poster displays. Staff was present to further discuss the plan and answer questions. Topics included open space and recreation, zoning and potential infill development, process and additional opportunities to participate.
- Staff has maintained regular updates through the project website, and news releases, with additional opportunities to provide testimony before the Planning Board and County Council.

Preliminary Recommendations

Staff presented and discussed preliminary recommendations at a community open house on March 14, 2019 at the Upcounty Regional Services Center in Germantown. Topics discussed included proposed zoning, density, open space protection, recreational areas, and other land use matter affecting the community. See Attachment A, recommended zoning maps.

Residential Zoning

Zoning recommendations for residential neighborhoods will maintain the existing residential land uses and densities and preserve the low- to medium density character found in Churchill Village. The building types allowed in the recommended zoning are consistent with single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and multi-family housing. Overall height and bulk regulations of buildings and landscaping standards will be consistent with the as-built environment. Existing single-family neighborhoods are recommended for either the R-60 or R-90 (one-family detached residential zones). Existing townhouse communities are recommended for one of three zones, depending on the density of the existing development: low-density, medium density, or high density. Multi-family communities are recommended for either the R-10, R-20 or R-30 zones, depending on the density of the existing development.

Commercial Zoning

Major redevelopment of the commercial areas in the plan area is not anticipated. Recommended zoning will accommodate existing commercial uses while allowing for future reinvestment opportunities. The General Retail (GR) zone is recommended for property along

Wisteria Drive and Father Hurley Boulevard. This includes general retail, restaurants, a self-storage facility, veterinarian clinic, and a private school.

Moderate changes for property along the north side of Wisteria Boulevard may result with the recommended Employment Office (EOF) zone for the Churchill Executive Park, a commercial condominium development. The EOF zone would support the current development of mostly professional offices, while allowing the opportunity for residential units in the future. With the EOF zone, the property could continue commercial operations or convert some commercial condominium units to residential units creating a mixed-use development, should market conditions change.

Institutional Uses

Public facilities and institutional uses recommended for low-density residential zones, which is typically how these uses are zoned throughout the County. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are recommended for the R-200 zone (One Family Detached, large lot). The singular property in the community with a religious facility (Mother Seton Parish) is also recommended for the R-200 zone.

Vacant Property (21000 block of Waters Landing Drive)

At the southwest quadrant of Father Hurley Boulevard and Waters Landing Drive is an undeveloped 4.8-acre parcel of land (parcel P540). The property is located adjacent to the Churchill Senior Living Center, which is the most recent development within Churchill Village (built in phases in 2001 and 2016 with approval for a further 45 assisted living units). The senior center and the vacant property make up the area recommended in 1989 for senior housing or a religious facility. Other land surrounding the vacant parcel is developed with multi-family and townhouse units. This property is the last remaining undeveloped and available land in Churchill Village.

Notably, in the Germantown retail market area, the 2017 *Retail Trends Study* indicates there is an unmet demand for the neighborhood services and goods retail category (NG&S). The NG&S category includes establishments that depend on patronage of local residents and workers. It includes such uses as markets, dry cleaners, hair salons, delis, day care, and the like. In this context, staff believes a mixed-use zoning classification that supports multi-family or townhouse development with a density similar to or slightly higher than the neighboring senior center with the potential for a modest amount of NG&S development would be reasonable and desirable.

Staff is evaluating potential zoning options and densities for this property to allow for mixed-uses, namely the Commercial/Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zones.

Overlay Zone

The community is well-served by parks, trails, and open space. Churchill Village has one of the most extensive trail networks in Montgomery County, crisscrossing neighborhoods, following

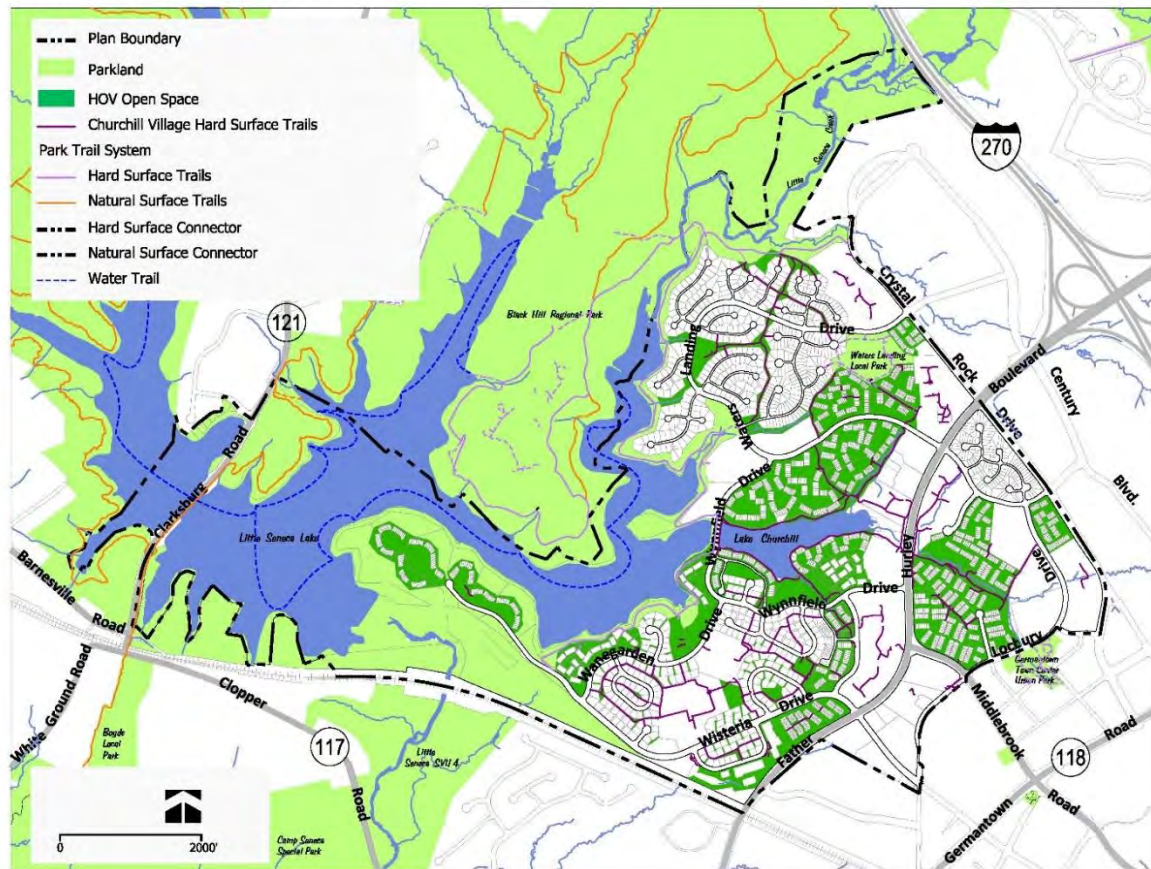
lake shores, and connecting with Black Hills Regional Park. There are swimming pools, playgrounds, and recreation centers owned and operated by homeowners' associations. Many of these facilities are embedded into the community and integral to the neighborhoods.

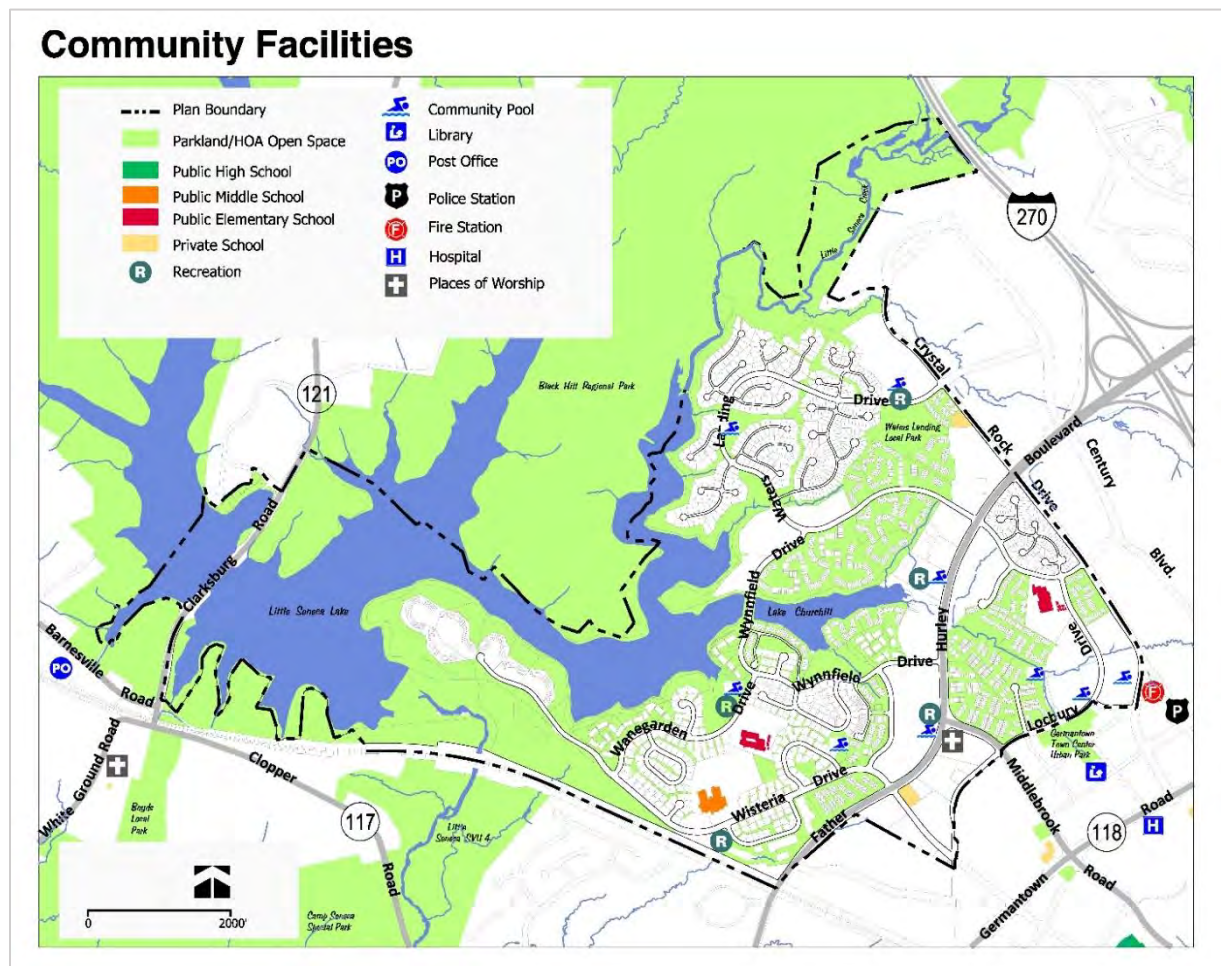
In order to preserve the community's residential character and open space system, as well as to ensure compatibility between existing and new development, staff is considering a Churchill Village Overlay Zone. The overlay zone would align with property that was formerly subject to the Churchill Village development plan. It would be shown on the official zoning map and added to the zoning ordinance.

As was discussed above, the T-S zone was different from conventional zones in that it provided flexibility with regard to development regulations (height, bulk, density, use). Consequently, much of the existing development does not precisely conform to the recommended zoning, especially since the bulk of the open space requirements for the individual developments were met by the overall provision of large amounts of open space elsewhere within the development plan area. In order to address concerns with respect to the implementation of new zones and potential unintended consequences as it relates to open space and development standards, an overlay zone is recommended specifically to:

- Preserve existing quasi-public open space and recreation areas owned and maintained by homeowner associations.
- Address compatibility between existing and future development.
- Allow uses that were permitted by right when established under the T-S zone to be grandfathered under the new zones.
- Address development irregularities on some properties that will occur as a result of rezoning from the T-S zone. Some properties that were built under the T-S zone do not precisely conform the development standards in the recommended zones. Such properties would be grandfathered.

Trails and Open Space





Access to Black Hills Regional Park

Regional parks in Montgomery County provide a wide-range of recreational opportunities. It is also a long-standing policy that such parks should retain at least two-thirds of the acreage for conservation purposes. The size of a regional park is generally 200 acres or more, and they typically provide facilities such as picnicking, campgrounds, water-oriented recreation, and hiking. Regional parks which exhibit unique features due to their location draw visitors from a large service area with the expectation that vehicular access is provided by existing major roads. Adjacent neighborhoods may generally have non-vehicular access thorough trails, either hard or natural surface.

At the November 29, 2018 meeting of the Planning Board, the Board questioned whether a vehicular access road from the northern part of the plan area into Black Hills Regional Park had ever been considered. Staff indicated that it would investigate the question. In 2002, Park Department staff conducted an access road feasibility study from Crystal Rock Drive and other locations in the vicinity (see Attachment B). Three possible alignments were studied, and it was determined that “all three road alignments... would have a significant impact on the

environment. The clearing of the road would affect large number of trees and subsequently affect the bird habitat of the Park.”

Montgomery County Parks’ Best Natural Areas (BNA) contain the best examples of park natural resources in Montgomery County. The designated BNA at Black Hill Regional Park encompasses a large area of oak and hickory forest and the sensitive watershed of Little Seneca Creek. The construction of a road within in this area would irreversibly disrupt the forest interior habitat, Little Seneca stream, and wetland habitat. Due to the elevation changes, the road would require significant grading and retaining walls that would increase the footprint of the permanent forest disturbance. In addition, a road would cross and disrupt the existing trails in the area, diminishing the park user experience.

Conclusion

The Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone team presented its preliminary recommendations to the community on March 14, 2019 and will continue to further develop the plan’s recommendations. In an effort to continue engagement and seek community comment, staff is preparing an interactive online map to present the preliminary new zones in the master plan.

Staff seeks guidance from the Planning Board on the preliminary recommendations presented in this report and as shown on the preliminary zoning maps. Planning Board guidance and feedback will be incorporated into a master plan working draft. It is anticipated that the master plan working draft will be presented to the Planning Board in May 2019.

Schedule

The Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone master plan officially began in April 2018, with background analysis, data collection, information gathering, and outreach.

Transmittal of the Planning Board draft of the master plan to the District Council and the County Executive is scheduled for Summer 2019. The plan’s remaining major milestones are outlined below.

Schedule for the Germantown Plan for The Town Sector Zone

May 2019	Planning Board Draft
Summer 2019	County Council public hearing
Fall 2019	Commission adoption
Fall 2019	Sectional map amendment (rezoning)

Staff Preliminary Recommendations
Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone
04/25/2019

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Project Webpage
<http://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-3/germantown/germantown-plan-town-sector-zone/>

Twitter @montgomeryplans










Attachments

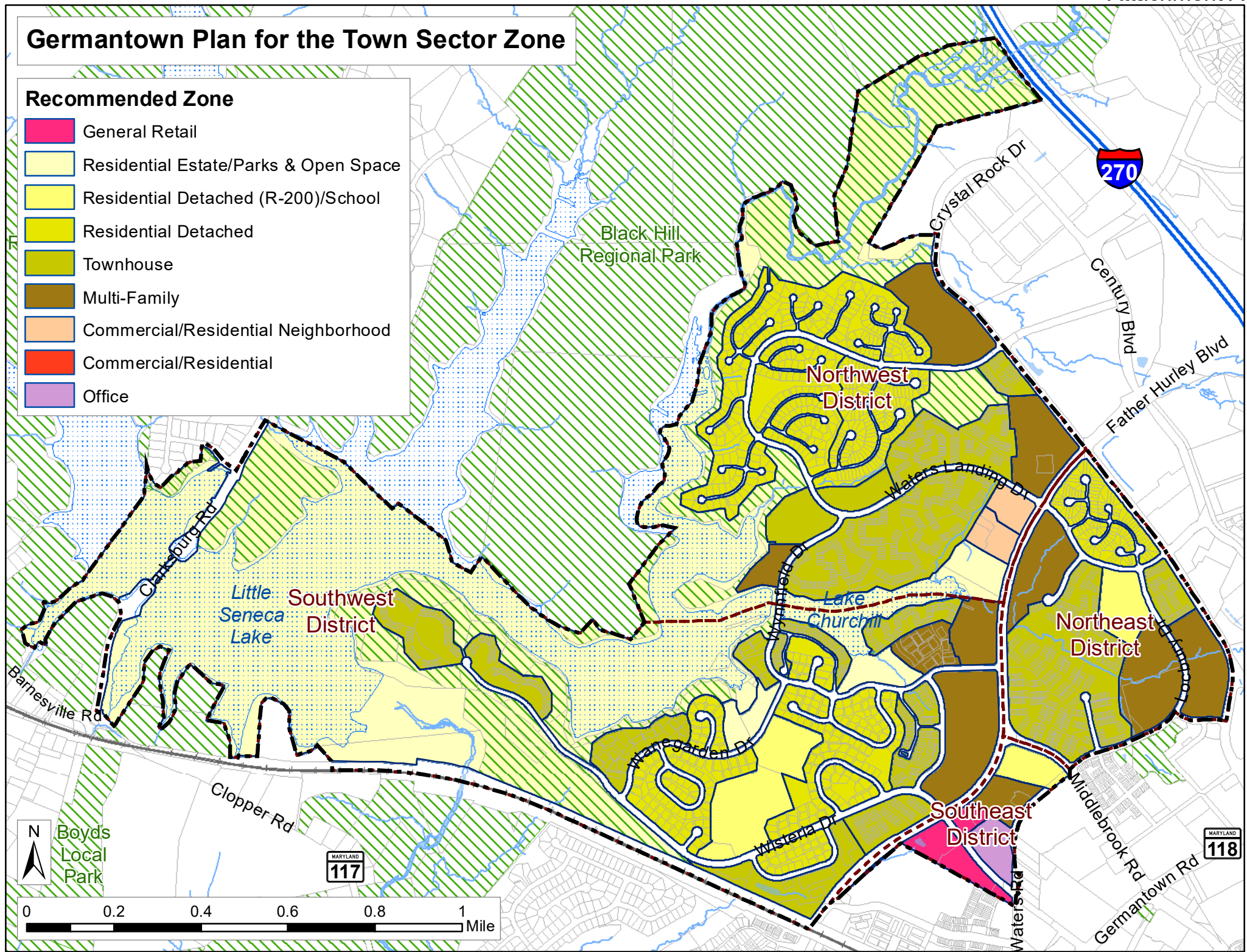
Attachment A: Draft Recommended Zoning Maps

Attachment B: Black Hills Regional Park Master Plan and Park Access Road Feasibility Study
(2002)

Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone

Recommended Zone

-  General Retail
-  Residential Estate/Parks & Open Space
-  Residential Detached (R-200)/School
-  Residential Detached
-  Townhouse
-  Multi-Family
-  Commercial/Residential Neighborhood
-  Commercial/Residential
-  Office

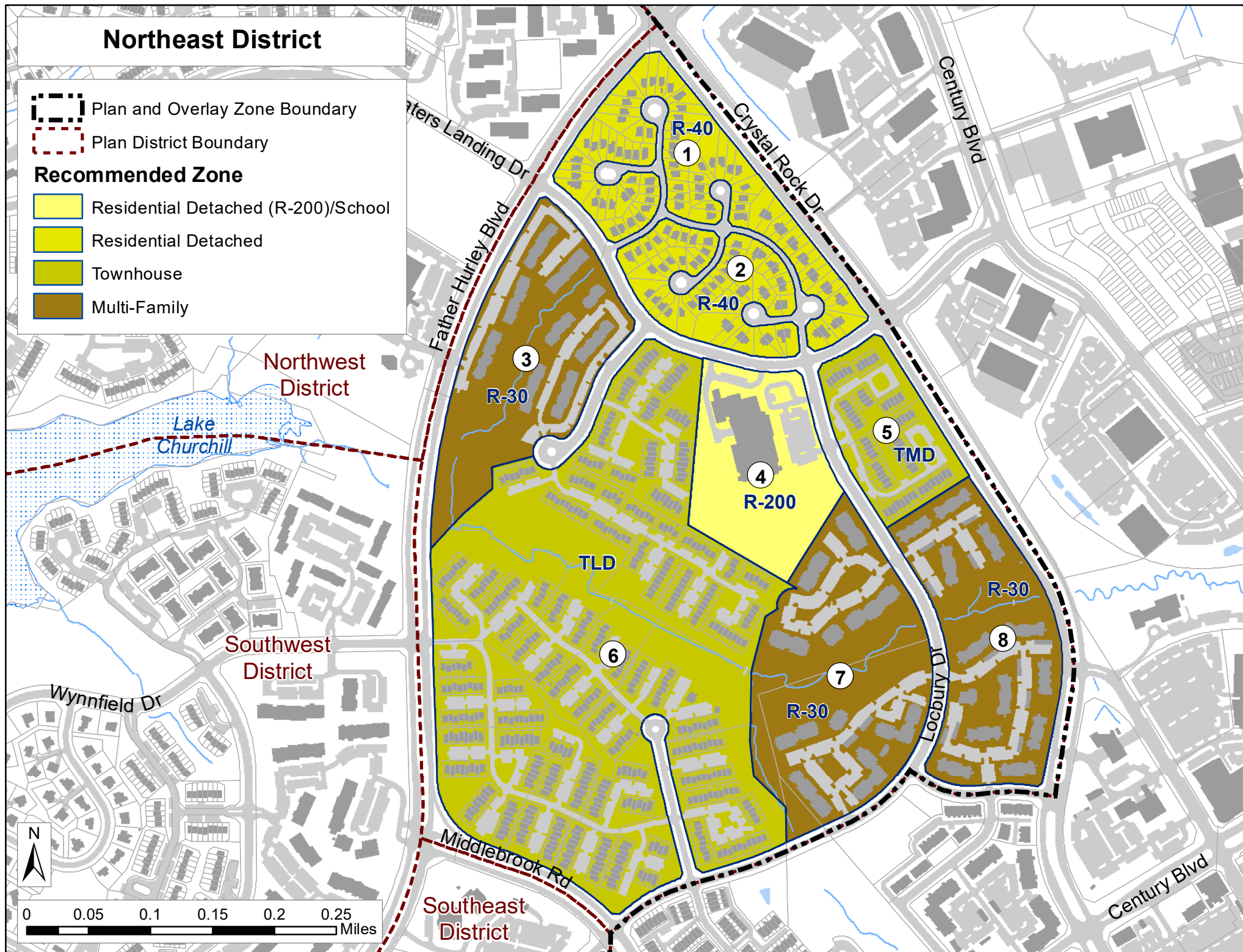


Northeast District

- Plan and Overlay Zone Boundary
- Plan District Boundary

Recommended Zone

- Residential Detached (R-200)/School
- Residential Detached
- Townhouse
- Multi-Family



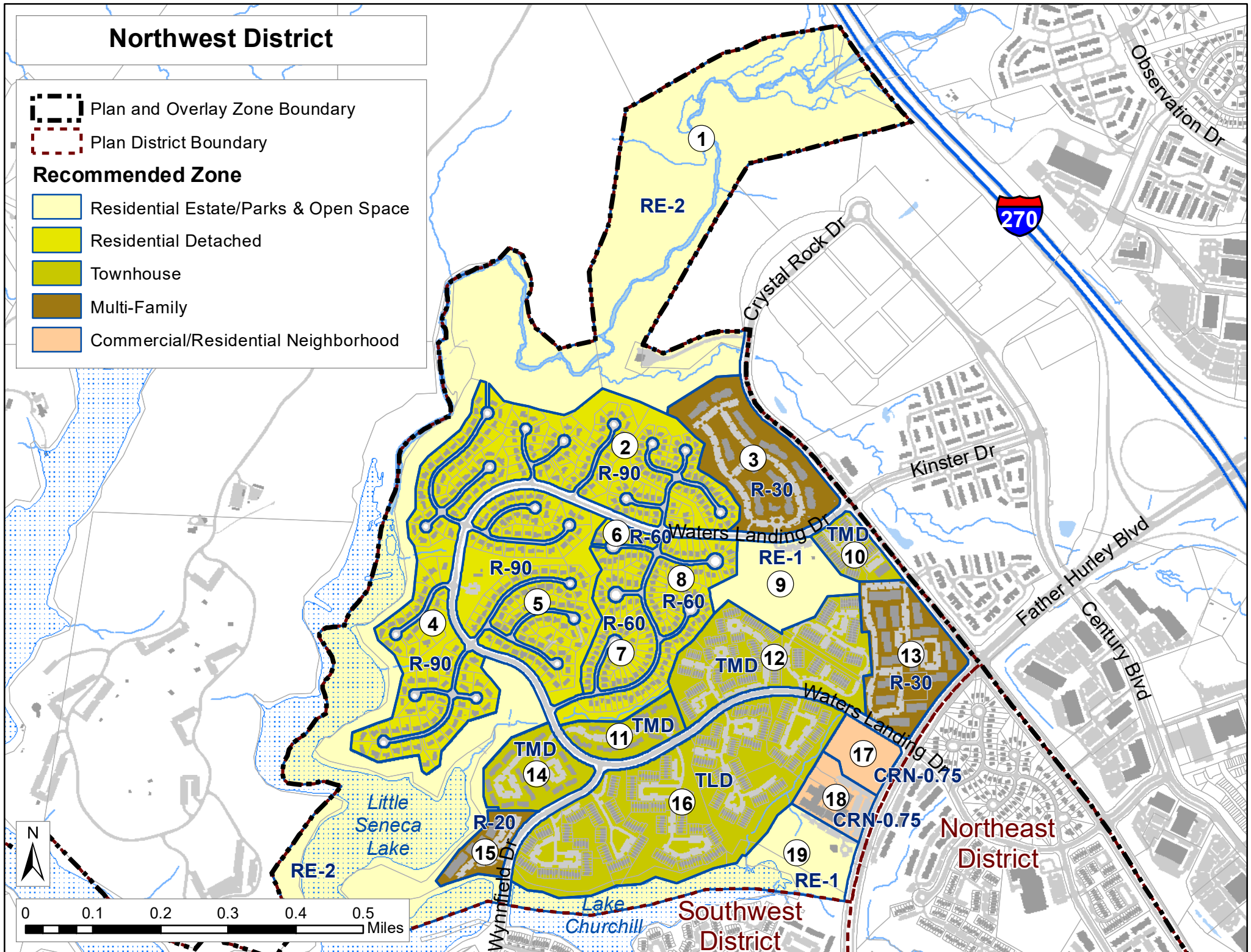
Northeast District						
Map Key	Development Name	Acres	Existing Units	Unit Type	Existing Density	Recommended Zone
1	Alderleaf (North)	11.22	80	SFA/duplex	7.13	R-40
2	Alderleaf (South)	6.68	52	SFA/duplex	7.79	R-40
3	Esprit	13.90	216	MF	15.54	R-30
4	Waters Landing Elementary School	9.93	1	Inst.	0.10	R-200
5	Waterford Place	6.51	70	SFA	10.76	TMD
6	Churchill East Village	55.56	534	SFA	9.61	TLD
7	Acclaim / Churchill View	17.41	283	MF	16.25	R-30
8	Stonecreek Club Apartments	13.69	240	MF	17.53	R-30

Northwest District

- Plan and Overlay Zone Boundary
- Plan District Boundary

Recommended Zone

- Residential Estate/Parks & Open Space
- Residential Detached
- Townhouse
- Multi-Family
- Commercial/Residential Neighborhood



Northwest District							
Map Key	Development Name	Acres	Existing Units	Square Footage (Commercial)	Unit Type	Existing Density	Recommended Zone
1	Little Seneca Lake / M-NCPPC Parkland ¹	543.99	1	0	Inst.	0.00	RE-2
2	Waters Landing Association A	32.29	137	0	SFD	4.24	R-90
3	Fairfield Gables	19.16	300	0	MF	15.66	R-30
4	Waters Landing Association B	24.62	85	0	SFD	3.45	R-90
5	Waters Landing Association C	28.57	105	0	SFD	3.68	R-90
6	Waters Landing Association D	1.51	10	0	SFD	6.63	R-60
7	Waters Landing Association E	10.08	64	0	SFD	6.35	R-60
8	Waters Landing Association F	13.58	71	0	SFD	5.23	R-60
9	Waters Landing Local Park	11.72	0	0	Inst.	0.00	RE-1
10	Diamond Hill Townhouses / Montessori School	4.72	46	8,174	SFA/Inst.	9.97	TMD
11	Waverly Condominiums	6.13	78	0	SFA	12.72	TMD
12	Waterbury Downs North	22.46	261	0	SFA	11.62	TMD
13	Waters House	15.41	248	0	MF	16.09	R-30
14	Landing Glen	8.98	114	0	SFA	12.69	TMD
15	South Shore Harbour	4.53	98	0	MF	21.62	R-20
16	Waters Landing Townhouses (South)	49.80	362	0	SFA	7.27	TLD
17	Vacant Parcel (P540)	4.84	0	0	MF	0.00	CRN-0.75 C-0.25 R-0.75 H-45
18	Churchill Senior Living	5.49	300	0	MF	54.62	CRN-0.75 C-0.25 R-0.75 H-45
19	Lake Churchill / Waters Landing Recreation / Churchill Village South Open Space ¹	34.78	1	0	Inst.	0.03	RE-1

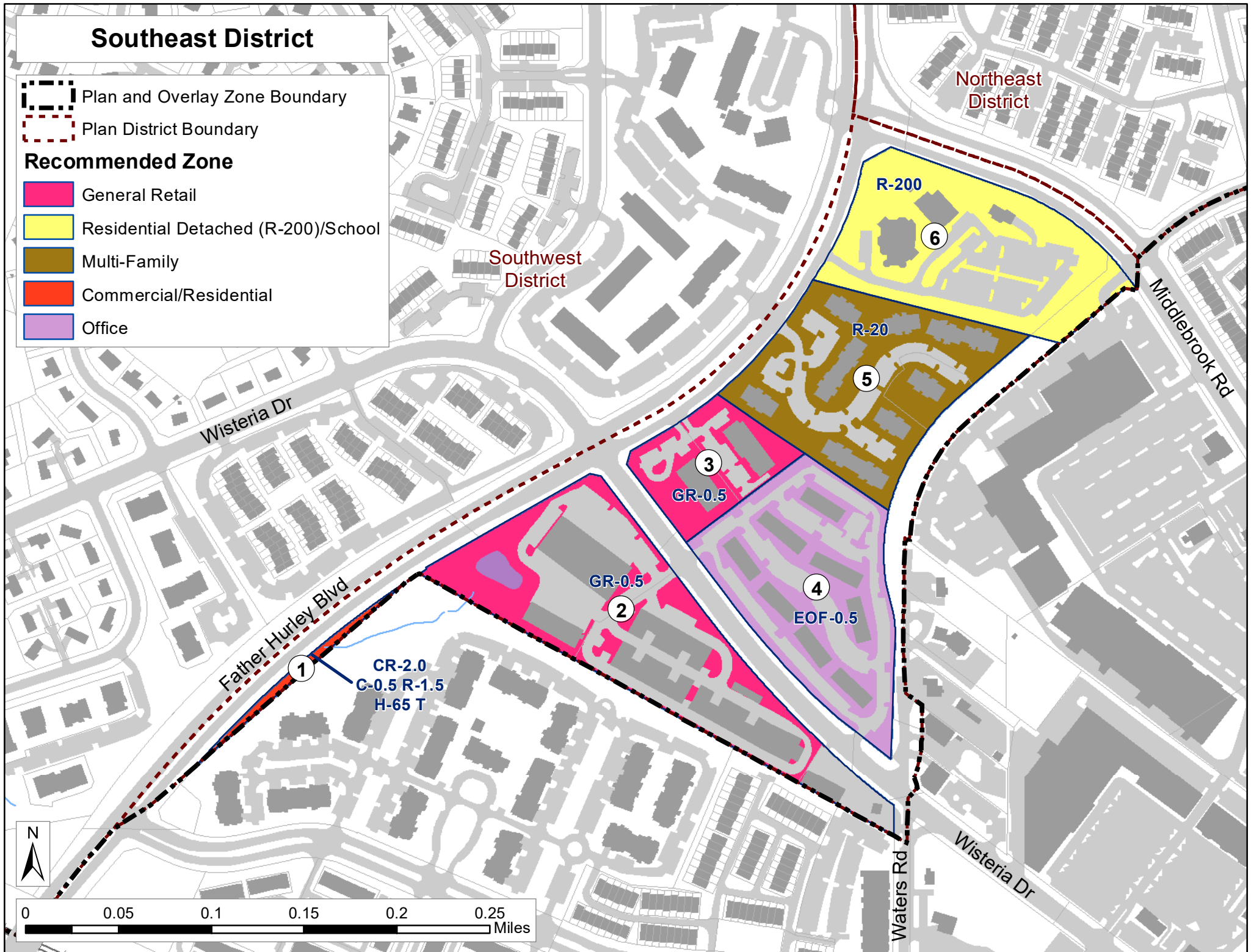
¹ Development appears in multiple plan districts.

Southeast District

- Plan and Overlay Zone Boundary
- Plan District Boundary

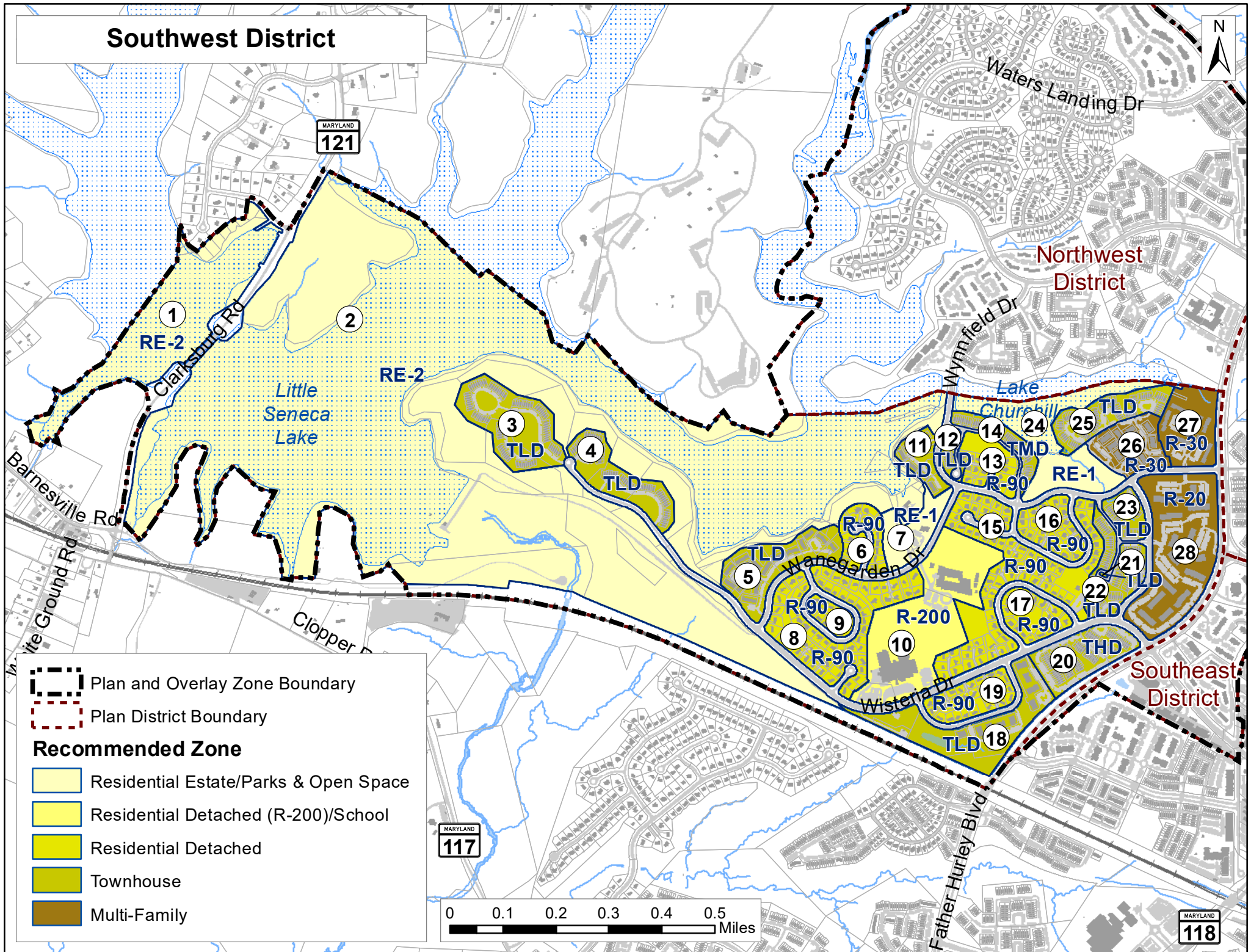
Recommended Zone


- General Retail
- Residential Detached (R-200)/School
- Multi-Family
- Commercial/Residential
- Office




Southeast District							
Map Key	Development Name	Acres	Existing Units	Square Footage (Commercial)	Unit Type	Existing Density	Recommended Zone
1	Father Hurley Boulevard Right-of-Way Strip (county-owned)	0.30	0	0	Vacant	0.00	CR-2.0 C-0.5 R-1.5 H-65 T
2	Churchill Business Center / Extra Space Storage	8.86	0	129,256	Commercial	0.33	GR-0.5 H-45
3	Vet Clinic and Daycare	2.47	1	16,165	Commercial	0.15	GR-0.5 H-35
4	Churchill Executive Park	6.50	0	82,509	Commercial	0.29	EOF-0.5 H-45
5	Seneca Knolls Condominium	6.46	138	0	MF	21.35	R-20
6	Mother Seton Parish	6.68	1	0	Inst.	0.15	R-200


Southwest District





 Plan and Overlay Zone Boundary


 Plan District Boundary


Recommended Zone

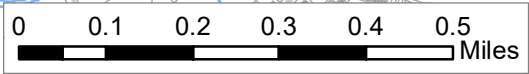
 Residential Estate/Parks & Open Space

 Residential Detached (R-200)/School

 Residential Detached

 Townhouse

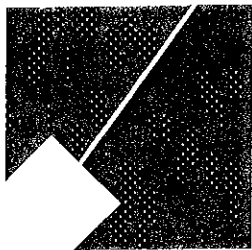
 Multi-Family



Southwest District						
Map Key	Development Name	Acres	Existing Units	Unit Type	Existing Density	Recommended Zone
1	Little Seneca Lake / M-NCPPC Parkland (West of MD 121)	34.57	0	Inst.	0.00	RE-2
2	Little Seneca Lake / M-NCPPC Parkland ¹	543.99	1	Inst.	0.00	RE-2
3	The Townes at Waters Edge (West)	13.99	88	SFA	6.29	TLD
4	The Townes at Waters Edge (East)	9.42	62	SFA	6.58	TLD
5	Willow Cove Townhouses (South)	11.20	88	SFA	7.85	TLD
6	Churchill Village South A	5.34	21	SFD	3.93	R-90
7	Churchill Village South Recreation Amenities/WSSC Facility	6.40	1	Inst.	0.16	RE-1
8	Churchill Village South B	19.69	67	SFD	3.40	R-90
9	Churchill Village South C	2.76	11	SFD	3.98	R-90
10	Lake Seneca ES/MLK Jr. MS	27.78	2	Inst.	0.07	R-200
11	Willow Cove Townhouses (North)	4.18	34	SFA	8.14	TLD
12	Churchill Village South D	1.66	16	SFA	9.64	TLD
13	Churchill Village South E	5.76	13	SFD	2.26	R-90
14	Churchill Village South F	4.07	44	SFA	10.82	TMD
15	Churchill Village South G	24.28	79	SFD	3.25	R-90
16	Churchill Village South H	6.56	26	SFD	3.97	R-90
17	Churchill Village South I ("Eye")	5.93	18	SFD	3.03	R-90
18	Willow Cove Manor	15.49	98	SFA	6.33	TLD
19	Churchill Village South J	6.99	27	SFD	3.86	R-90
20	Waterbury Downs South	9.46	156	SFA	16.49	THD
21	Churchill Village South K	0.06	0	SFA	0.00	TLD
22	Churchill Village South L	8.07	76	SFA	9.41	TLD
23	Churchill Village South M	3.65	28	SFA	7.66	TLD
24	Lake Churchill / Waters Landing Recreation / Churchill Village South Open Space ¹	34.78	1	Inst.	0.03	RE-1
25	Churchill Village South N	8.39	80	SFA	9.53	TLD
26	Villas at Willow Cove	7.79	96	MF	12.32	R-30
27	Lakeview	9.24	150	MF	16.24	R-30
28	Canterbury Apartments	23.07	544	MF	23.58	R-20

¹ Development appears in multiple plan districts.

M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

Agenda Item #7
MCPB: 5/2
April 25, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Donald Cochran, Director of Parks
Mike Riley, Acting Chief, Park Development Division
Doug Alexander, Design and Project Management Supervisor

FROM: Kathleen Dearstine, Landscape Architect

SUBJECT: Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan and Park Access Road Feasibility Study

I. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Master Plan without any additional public vehicular access from Crystal Rock Drive or other location. In the alternative, should the Board approve the access road, staff recommends Alignment 3 as having the least environmental or cultural resource impact.

II. INTRODUCTION

A copy of the Public Hearing draft of the Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan and a copy of the report on the Park Access Road Feasibility Study are attached. Included in the attachments are additional written comments from the public (See Attachment G).

Black Hill Regional Park has been in existence for over 14 years. This Master Plan was created to provide policy direction for future development and renovation of recreational facilities within the Park. The Plan was created with input from surrounding communities, park visitors, and staff, and is designed to delineate a long-range vision for the Park.

As described in the Master Plan, the vision for the Park, in brief, is to maintain the natural character of the Park while preserving and enhancing the visitor's experience by optimizing use and access to the lake, improving passive recreational opportunities;

improving park operational facilities; renovating existing facilities; and adding a few new strategically sited recreational facilities.

On November 4, 1999, the Planning Board approved the Final Staff Draft Master Plan with changes, to be released as a Public Hearing Draft. The primary change directed by the Board was to separate the Master Plan and the Management Plan into two documents. This change was incorporated into the Public Hearing Draft Plan, which was made available to the public on December 3, 1999.

On January 6, 2000, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the Black Hill Master Plan. Testimony was taken from the public on all aspects of the plan. The Master Plan Draft accompanying this memo incorporates changes made by staff based on that testimony. (The transcript from that public hearing and staff responses to the testimony accompanied the March 15, 2002 memo to the Board).

At the Public Hearing, testimony was received from the Germantown Alliance in favor of implementing the second point of access to the park from Crystal Rock Drive as shown in the Germantown Master Plan. Based on this testimony, the Board directed staff to study the access road and return with a recommendation. In preparing the Black Hill Master Plan, staff had previously evaluated the access road and had rejected it based on environmental impacts.

To respond to the Board's request, staff hired a consultant, Frederick Ward Associates, Inc., to conduct the Park Access Road Study (see consultant's report entitled: Enhanced Vehicular Access Feasibility Study, which staff provided to the Board). Their analysis considered three areas: Community planning, environmental/cultural resources, engineering feasibility and cost. The study resulted in four alternatives: three possible alignments and a "no-build" option. The first alignment is least favorable. It is the longest alignment and would have the greatest impact on the natural and cultural environment of the park. The second alignment is an extension of the WSSC Pumping Station access road. The most favorable of all the alignments is the third, which would require an easement through the Far North Village development that adjoins the park on the east side, but has the least impact on resources and is least costly. The fourth option is to maintain the trail access planned from this side of the park and not to provide for vehicular access. This is referred to as the "no-build" option.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PARK MASTER PLAN

Black Hill Regional Park is a unique resource within the park system as well as the Washington metropolitan area. The Park provides significant passive recreational opportunities and access to the Little Seneca Lake, one of a limited number of large public-access lakes in the mid-Atlantic region. At the same time, the Park encompasses a substantial acreage of unbroken forest cover and a diverse mix of open landscapes. The combination of limited recreational activities within a predominantly natural setting makes the Park both useful and attractive for a wide range of constituents.

The Master Plan will provide a policy document, intended for M-NCPPC staff and the general public, which delineates the vision and use of the Park for the next 20 years. It will also give staff clear direction in order to prepare and prioritize CIP development recommendations for future budget cycles.

The Master Plan seeks to improve the Park through a series of focused recommendations, which address specific problems that have been identified during the Park's fourteen-year history. More importantly, the Plan is intended to realize the optimum potential of the Park to provide a natural respite, but also to help meet regional recreational needs.

The core vision for the future of Black Hill Regional Park promoted by this Master/Management Plan study is comprised of the following four provisions:

- Preserve and enhance the visitor's ability to experience the essential qualities of the Park, by optimizing use and access to Little Seneca Lake, improving recreational opportunities such as trails, and preserving the natural character of the Park;
- Develop new, "strategically sited" recreational facilities, such as new picnic shelters and playground sited on existing developed land, a new boat ramp, possible dog park, and new trails sited on existing utility corridors, old roads and trails;
- Renovate, expand, and replace older facilities in the Park, such as boat rental facilities, to eliminate inefficiencies or crowding and provide safer, more accessible facilities; and
- Provide a means to better operate the Park, primarily through improved park maintenance facilities and infrastructure improvements.

IV. AREA MASTER PLANS

The *Germantown Master Plan*, adopted and approved in 1989, directs the growth of vacant and uncommitted land within the Germantown planning area. The planning area is divided into eight villages, each with a community identity, locally-serving retail center, and a mix of housing types at varying prices and rental levels. Connection by means of pedestrian, bikeway, sidewalk, and roadway systems within each village and between the other villages is an important characteristic.

Churchill Village, where the proposed Park Access Road would be located, is the oldest and most densely populated village with an average density of 8.8 dwelling units per acre. At the time of the *Master Plan*, Churchill Village was nearly completely developed with only 132 of 741 acres remaining to be built out.

The 1989 *Master Plan* recommended policy changes to assure a broader mix of housing choices in Germantown to offset the existing predominance of single-family attached units. The *Plan* set targets for the proportion of single-family detached, single-family attached and multi-family units for the entire planning area and for each village.

This objective shifted the number and proportion of new housing units toward single-family detached and multi-family units.

The proposed Park Access Road appears in two graphic illustrations in the *Master Plan*:

- Churchill Village Analysis Area (Figure 18 – Attachment A)
- Roadway System (Figure 34 – Attachment B).

There is no accompanying text or guidance presented regarding this access road.

In the development of the *Germantown Master Plan*, the Park Access Road was not included in the Preliminary Draft (March 1988) that was presented to the Planning Board, or in the Final Draft (September 1988) forwarded to the Montgomery County Council. The Preliminary Draft contained a suggestion for an extension of Crystal Rock Drive using a 100-foot right-of-way that would bisect a significant portion of Black Hill Regional Park. This suggestion was eliminated from further consideration in the Final Draft Plan forwarded to the County Council.

Research of committee minutes (Planning, Housing and Economic Development) and the adopted minutes of the County Council failed to uncover at what point the Park Access Road was carried forward in the *Germantown Master Plan* maps.

The *Clarksburg Master Plan*, adopted in June 1994, strongly supports the opportunity for public open space linkages to the Park. The *Plan* does not support widening West Old Baltimore Road, but supports retaining its rural character. The *Plan* proposes the extension of Newcut Road across I-270 north of West Old Baltimore Road to improve the access from the north into Black Hill Regional Park and to avoid any negative impacts on the Park:

- Generalized Highway and Transit Plan (Figure 40 – Attachment C)
- Proposed Interchange Design Concepts (Figure 41 – Attachment D).

The *Clarksburg Master Plan* also emphasizes bikeway access to the Park.

V. BENEFITS OF AN ADDITIONAL PARK ACCESS ROAD

Germantown residents presently have two potential routes to enter Black Hill Regional Park by vehicle: one route on the west side of I-270 uses Clopper Road (MD 117) north to Clarksburg Road (MD 121) to West Old Baltimore Road to reach the Lake Ridge Drive entry into the park. This route is approximately 12.5 miles from the Germantown Town Center at MD 118 and Middlebrook Road. A second route uses MD 118 east to Frederick Road (MD 355) to West Old Baltimore Road to the Park entrance. This route is approximately 8.5 miles from the Germantown Town Center.

The number of people to benefit from improved access to Black Hill Regional Park via a new Park Access Road from Crystal Rock Drive as compared to the “no-build” option in 2000 is 18,570. In 2025, it is 21,486. For a full discussion of the need and purpose for the access road, see the Consultant’s Park Access Road report.

An alternative entrance has been voiced in the past suggesting that the same users to the south could be serviced by using the Black Hill Road entrance from Clarksburg Road. Should the suggested entrance from Clarksburg Road be utilized, the number of households within the two planning areas would change. Those areas west of the Park would most likely use the Clarksburg entrance and all areas east of I-270 would use the existing entrance.

Staff had previously assessed the Black Hill Road access option and rejected it based on a number of factors. Black Hill Road exists only as a service entrance and cannot be converted to public use without realignment, engineering, and environmental analysis. Staff continues to recommend against this road access option as more fully discussed in Attachment E, Black Hill Road Access Option.

VI. SUMMARY OF ACCESS ROAD FEASIBILITY STUDY

After reviewing the study submitted from Frederick Ward Associates, it is staff's opinion that the proposed Park Access Road from Crystal Rock Drive into the southeast corner of Black Hill Regional Park should not be included in the Park Master Plan. Although it is likely that the road would be used by a large number of Germantown residents, all three of the road alignments being proposed would have a significant impact on the environment. The clearing for the road would affect large numbers of trees and subsequently affect the bird habitat of the Park. From past projects, it has been discovered that additional trees are lost at the edge of the new clearing for 5 to 7 years after construction. The area with the greatest impact is the first 10 feet of forested area along a newly cut edge.

All three alignments will cross Little Seneca Creek. In order to avoid permanent impacts to the floodplain and non-tidal wetlands, a bridge spanning the creek would require concrete abutments higher up on each bank and above the floodplain. As part of the construction of the road, storm water management ponds would have to be constructed to control storm run-offs of 10-year return storms and to reduce pollution from pavement surfaces. These are required to protect waterways farther downstream. Black Hill Regional Park is located within a "Special Protection Area" (SPA) of Montgomery County. Development and construction within an SPA must comply with a higher level of storm water treatment, which means an enhanced level of treatment for storm water quality. As a whole, M-NCPPC fully complies with SPA requirements within the Park System.

If the Board should elect to include the access road into the Master Plan, staff would recommend Alternative #3. This alternative has the least impact on the environment and is the least costly.

In addition to other impacts, all three alignments will affect existing and planned trails in the Park. These include several CIP projects underway in various stages of planning and design: three hard surface trail projects – Spinning Wheel Trail, Crystal Rock Connector, and Waters Landing Trail Reconstruction; a natural surface trail project – Ten Mile Creek Bridge; and the new Maintenance Yard (see Attachment F).

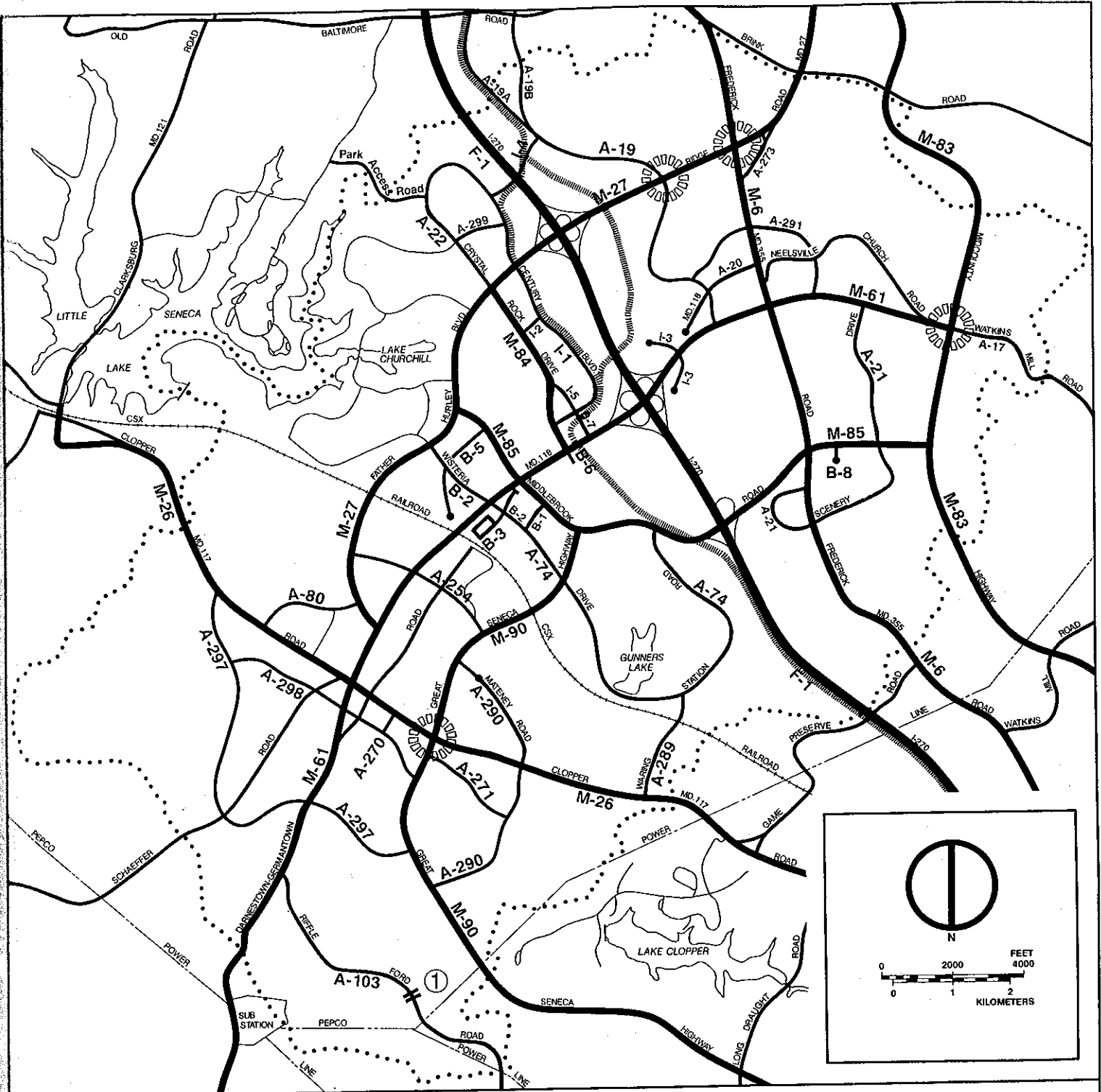
VII. COMMUNITY MEETING

Frederick Ward Associates and staff presented the four alternatives for the access road to the citizens at a community meeting on Wednesday, January 16, 2000 at Seneca Lodge. All comments, oral and written, are included in the consultant's report. The majority of the questions and comments from the community were related to the Crystal Rock Drive proposal, but there was some interest in access off Black Hill Road. The majority of the participants that evening were in favor of the "no-build" option. Interest was expressed by the group for better trailhead parking to access the pedestrian trails into the park at this location. Although not a vehicular access, the existing Crystal Rock Trail project would provide enhanced pedestrian and bike access to the same community. This project will evaluate options to include trailhead parking.

Additional comments from the public are included in Attachment G.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A Germantown Master Plan – Figure 18
- B Germantown Master Plan – Figure 34
- C Clarksburg Master Plan – Figure 40
- D Clarksburg Master Plan – Figure 41
- E Black Hill Road Access Option
- F CIP Projects in Black Hill Regional Park
- G Additional written comments



Roadway System

Grade-Separated Interchange

Freeway

Major Highway

Arterial(A), Industrial(I), and Business District Roads(B)

Comprehensive Amendment to the Master Plan for Germantown

Montgomery County, Maryland

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

May be closed when Great Seneca Highway ① is opened to traffic through Great Seneca Park

Figure 18



Churchill Village: Analysis Areas



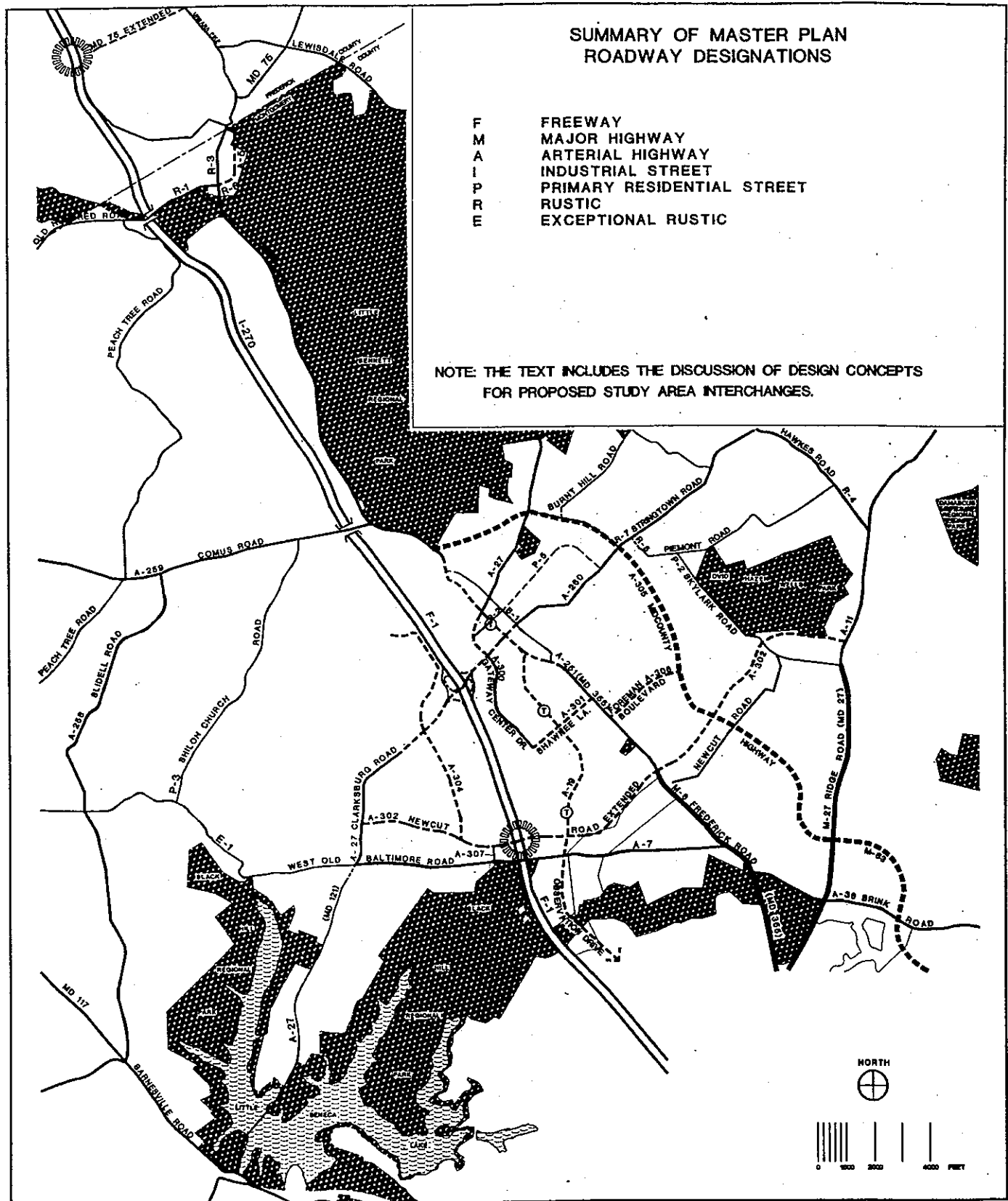
**Comprehensive Amendment
to the Master Plan for Germantown**

Montgomery County, Maryland

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

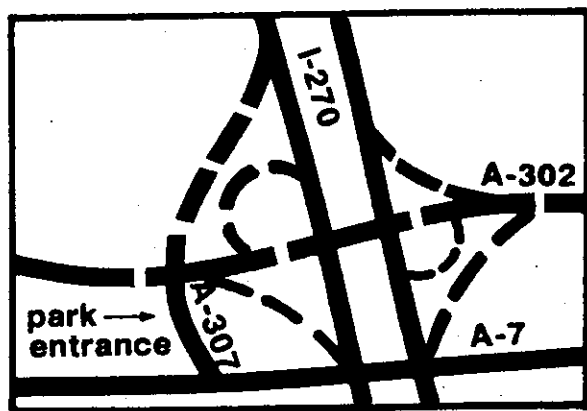
Generalized Highway and Transit Plan

Figure 40

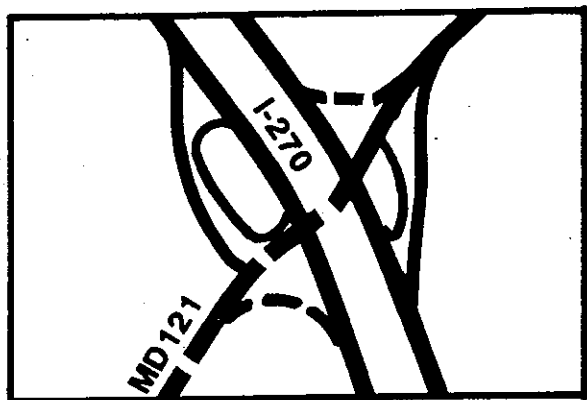


Proposed Interchange Design Concepts

Figure 41



Proposed Interchange -
I-270 at Newcut Road



Existing Interchange -
(with currently designed
modifications) - I-270 at MD 121

BLACK HILL ROAD ACCESS OPTION

At the January 16, 2002 community meeting, the Black Hill Road access proposal was mentioned again as a possible point of vehicular access to the Park. The access would connect Clarksburg Road with Lake Ridge Drive within the Park. Black Hill Road exists only as a service entrance and cannot be converted to public use without realignment, engineering, and environmental analysis. Staff recommends against this option for the following reasons:

1. Park Police, Maintenance, and emergency vehicles now use the Black Hill Road point of access to the Park. These users value this entrance as a means for reaching westerly areas of the Park. Use of this access by the public would impair these functions. In addition, public access at this location would require another point of control for after hours or special events.
2. The present roadway has poor sight distances at the entrance onto Clarksburg Road, which make it unsafe for traffic to exit the park from this location.
3. The existing Black Hill Road passes by three houses fronting the road to the south and additional houses backing onto the right-of-way to the north. Residents have made it clear that they oppose use of this road for an entrance to the park.
4. Black Hill Road is substandard and would need to be widened and upgraded, which would further impact the fronting home sites.
5. An access road at this location would have to be realigned to the south thereby providing a safer entrance and avoiding the existing houses. The alignment would require a substantial bridge and significant engineering and environmental analysis.
6. Constructing both this entrance and the one from Crystal Rock Drive would be inappropriate. It would create a road connection through the heart of the Park. As the consultant's analysis of users shows, significant overlap exists for the two proposals. Therefore, the decision is to build either one or none of these points of access, but not both. The consultant supplied an analysis for the number of households most likely to use a Clarksburg Road entrance. Those areas west of the Park would use a Clarksburg Road entrance and all areas east of I-270 would use the existing entrance as shown in the following:

Number of Households (Germantown and Clarksburg Planning Areas)

Preferred Park Access	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Clarksburg Road	47185	57232	58922	69597	65903	66114
Existing Entrance	22021	31836	24386	50699	56388	56309

BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK – ON-GOING CIP PROJECTS

The Black Hill Maintenance Yard and several trail projects planned for the Park are currently in various stages of planning and design. CIP projects located in Black Hill Regional Park include the following:

- Maintenance Facility – located at the northeast corner of the Park, adjacent to the entrance. The design for the facility is complete and construction is targeted to begin in August of this year. The facility is expected to be completed by early fall of next year.
- Spinning Wheel Hard Surface Trail – located east of Ridge Drive, is two miles in length and will connect parking lot #6 with the Crystal Rock Trail Connector to Crystal Rock Drive. Facility planning is in progress and will be presented to the Board in July of this year. The project is funded through design, but construction will require funding in a future CIP.
- Crystal Rock Hard Surface Trail Connector – located in the northeast portion of the Park and planned to connect and both the Spinning Wheel and Waters Landing trails to access from Crystal Rock Drive. A portion of the trail is being provided by WSSC as part of their pumping station project. Planning and design began in February this year and will continue through design with completion in September of this year. As a trail connector, the Crystal Rock Connector will be prioritized for construction using level-of-effort funding in the Trails: Hard Surface Design and Construction PDF. Staff will present the trail as part of the Trail Connector Analysis in the summer of this year. This trail connection will include consideration for trailhead parking as recommended in the Master Plan.
- Ten Mile Creek Natural Surface Bridge – located at the northwest portion of the Park and to cross the Ten Mile Creek south of West Old Baltimore Road. Planning and design began in February of this year and will be completed in September. The bridge will be constructed beginning July 2004 using Trails: Natural Surface Design and Construction funds.
- Waters Landing Hard Surface Trail Reconstruction – located on the east side of the lake and connecting Wisteria Drive to the south with Spinning Wheel Drive to the north, the project will reconstruct a two-mile length of existing trail. Facility planning will begin in June of this year and be completed in the fall, at which time the project will be presented to the Board. The reconstruction of the trail will be programmed for construction in a future CIP.

In addition, the WSSC pumping station located adjacent to Park property and with access from Crystal Rock is under construction and anticipated to be in service in 2005. As part of the project, a section of boardwalk will be constructed by WSSC to complete the Crystal Rock Connector.

BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK
ENHANCED VEHICULAR ACCESS FEASIBILITY STUDY
PUBLIC HEARING
January 16, 2002

PUBLIC COMMENT PAGE

FEB 11 2002
PLANNING DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

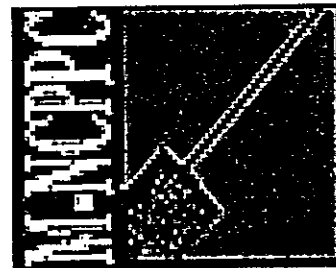
Name: Marc T. MillerAddress: 14411 Chrisman Hill Dr Boyds, MD 20841

Comments: Building any additional access roads would
disrupt the nature of the park & be dangerous to
pedestrians & wildlife as well.
I am against it.

Marc Miller

Please return comments page to a representative of Maryland – National Capital Park and Planning Commission or Frederick Ward Associates, Inc.

Thank you for participating in tonight's meeting and for your input into the future of Black Hill Park.



BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK
ENHANCED VEHICULAR ACCESS FEASIBILITY STUDY
PUBLIC HEARING
January 16, 2002

PUBLIC COMMENT PAGE

Name: C. Imperatore

Address: 14411 Chrisman Hill Dr Boyds MD 20841

Comments: Although this study was initiated because Germantown's Master Plan shows an additional entrance to the Park, and the Park's plan does not, the environmental impact of adding any other entrance for vehicles (with motors) would diminish the quality of the park experience for many more people than it would serve.

In the master plans for the Boyds and Clarksburg communities, capacity and congestion of existing roads will be increased anyway. Permitting encroachment into the park will destroy wildlife, plant life and quality of life for those in the park, and I do not favor it.

Chief Imperatore

Please return comments page to a representative of Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission or Frederick Ward Associates, Inc.

Thank you for participating in tonight's meeting and for your input into the future of Black Hill Park.

