
WORKING DRAFT – SUMMER 2020

# Cover

## Abstract

This Plan contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to portions of the approved and adopted 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton 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 and the 2001 *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan*. This Plan covers 127 acres and makes recommendations for land use, zoning, transportation, environment, parks and historic preservation.

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. They provide comprehensive recommendations for the use of public and private lands. Public officials and private individuals should refer to them when making land use decisions, particularly those that 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, after a plan is adopted, circumstances will change, and the specifics of a plan may become less relevant over time. Plans do not specify all development possibilities. They often include illustrative sketches intended to convey a sense of desirable future character rather than detailed recommendations for a specific design.

## Sources of Copies

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
Online at montgomeryplanning.org/avc

## 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 Planning Boards are responsible for implementation of local plans, zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations and the administration of the bi-county park system.

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Working Draft – Summer 2020

*CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL AND ADOPTION ASHTON VILLAGE CENTER SECTOR PLAN*

*PLANNING BOARD RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF ASHTON VILLAGE CENTER SECTOR PLAN*

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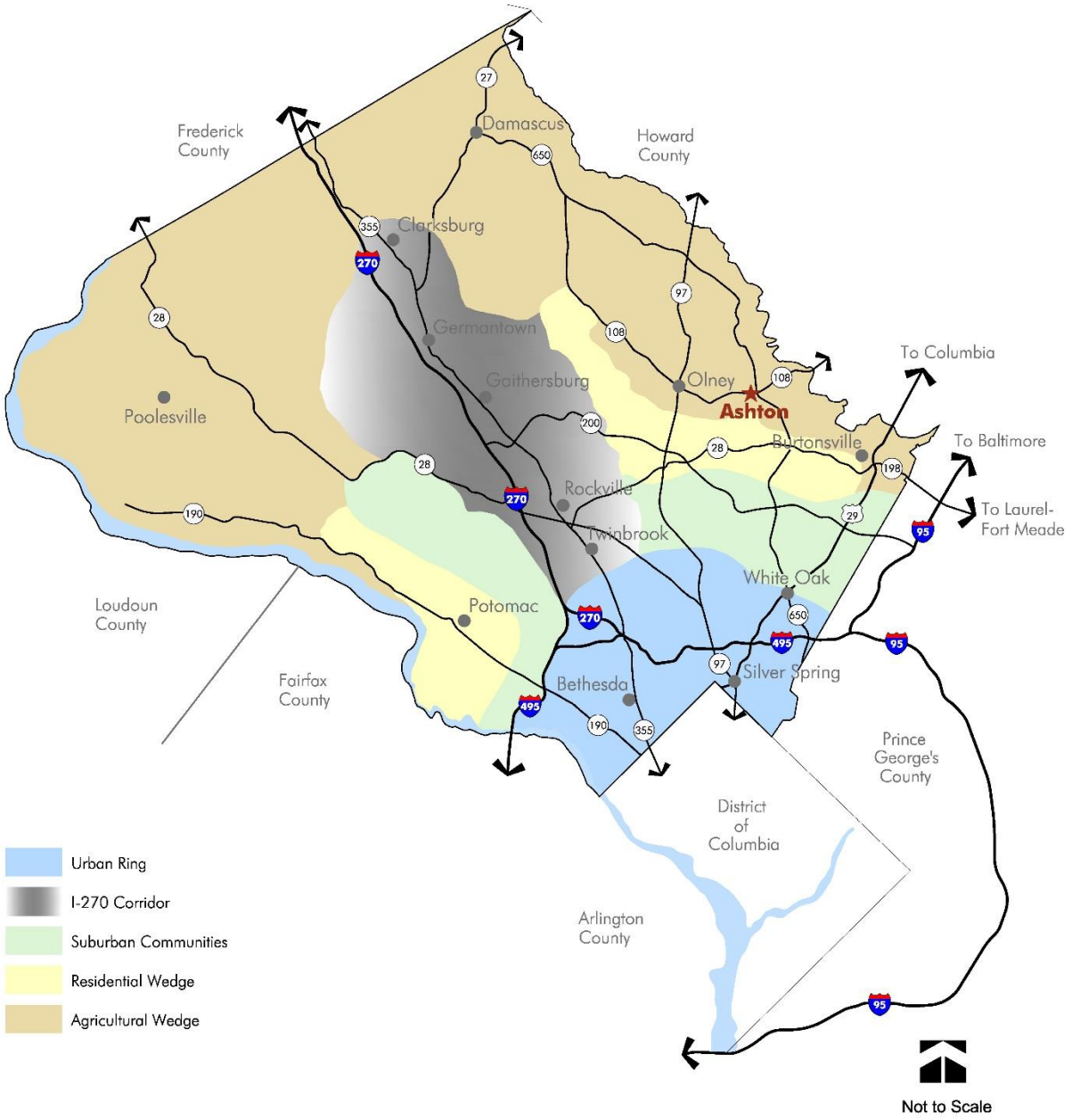
### … On Wedges and Corridors

The 1964 General Plan, titled … *On Wedges and Corridors*, established the basic land use concept for Montgomery County. The plan included one major corridor along I-270/MD 355 and a second along I-95 just over the county's border with Prince George's County.

The corridors would contain a string of cities with dense centers served by rail and bus transit and a major highway. In between the corridors would be wedges of land reserved for agriculture, open space, mineral extraction (quarries) and low-density residential development.

The map on the left was redrawn from the 1993 *General Plan Refinement*, which shows Ashton's location at the boundary of two wedges: the agricultural wedge of very low density residential and agricultural uses and a residential wedge primarily of suburban residential development.

*Map 1. 1993 "Wedges and Corridors" map showing location of Ashton*



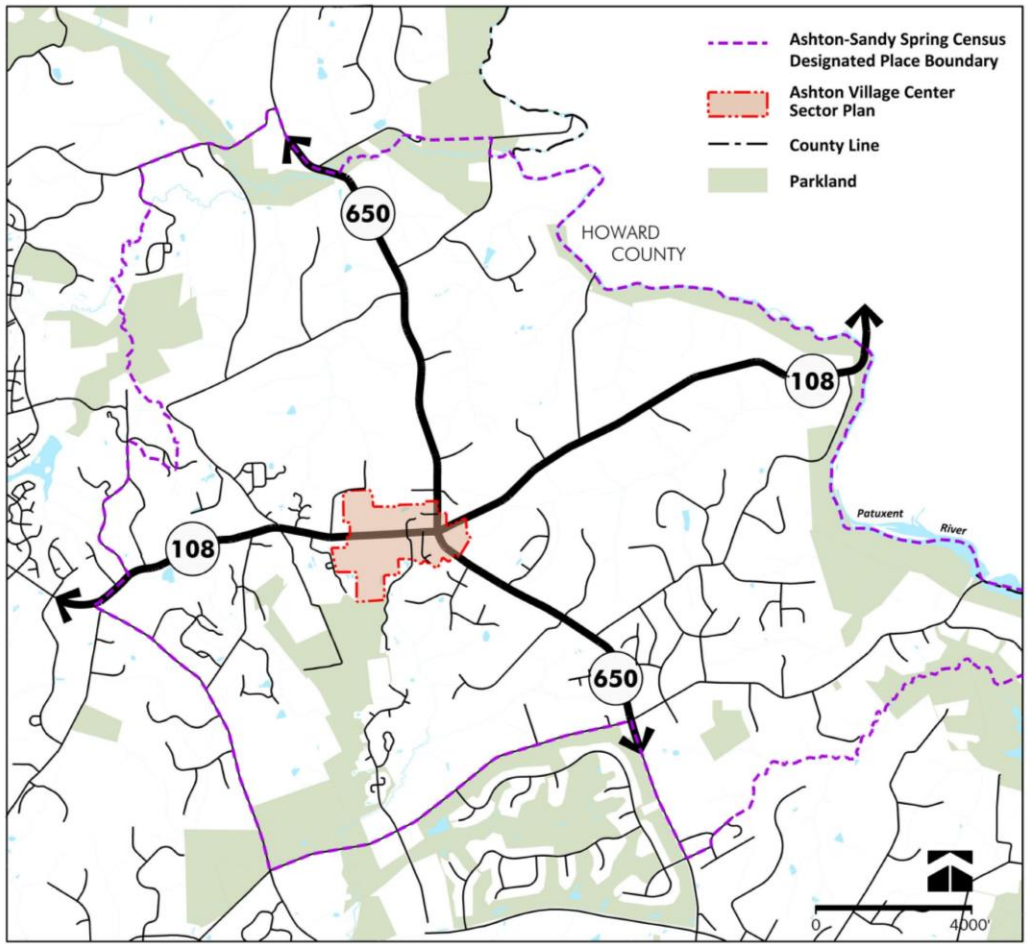
# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND VISION

## 1.1 Background

The Ashton Village Center sits at the intersection of important state roads. MD 108, known as Olney-Sandy Spring Road to the west of New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and as Ashton Road to the east, is a well-travelled route that crosses northern Montgomery County. It includes one of the handful of Patuxent River crossings that connect Montgomery County with Howard County and the Baltimore area. New Hampshire Avenue is a north-south route that offers access to northern Montgomery County and to the District of Columbia.

A modest amount of commercial development is now located at the crossroads, with business activities in all four quadrants of the intersection. These businesses are generally neighborhood-serving and include a convenience store, restaurants, a dry cleaner, a pharmacy, a service station and a bank. The U.S. Postal Service also maintains a post office that serves the Ashton community.

*Map 2. The Sector Plan area within the Region*



The commercial crossroads is immediately surrounded by residential neighborhoods, which themselves are surrounded by larger residential properties and areas of farmland.

Two previous master plans have analyzed the Ashton area. Both the 1980 *Sandy Spring-Ashton Special Study Plan* and the *1998 Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan* evaluated the greater Sandy Spring/Ashton area. Subsequently, a more detailed planning analysis of the Sandy Spring Village was conducted in the 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan*. The Ashton Village Center Sector Plan seeks to do the same for Ashton.

This Sector Plan, an amendment to the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan,* was included in the work program of the Montgomery County Planning Department approved by the Montgomery County Council on May 24, 2018 (Resolution 18-1147).

The Planning Board recommended adding the plan to the work program to study removing the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay ("SSA Overlay") zone from the Plan area, as was done with the 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan*. Analysis done in Sandy Spring determined that the Commercial/Residential family of zones could manage uses, densities and heights at levels appropriate to a rural village better than the SSA Overlay zone and it was thought that a similar assessment would be beneficial in Ashton. The Planning Board also recognized that a more detailed look at the current zoning in Ashton—a result of the comprehensive revision of the County's zoning ordinance in 2014—was needed.

### 1.1.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Montgomery County is divided into 28 Planning Areas; the Sandy Spring/Ashton area is located at the juncture of three of these: the Cloverly, Olney and Patuxent Watershed Planning Areas. Ashton is at the boundary of the residential and agricultural wedges shown in the 1993 *General Plan Refinement* (see Map 1 on page vi). It is about 20 miles north of Washington, D.C., and eight miles east of the county seat in Rockville. Two miles to the east, MD 108 crosses the Patuxent River and enters Howard County. Ashton is about five miles north of the Intercounty Connector (MD 200), the main east-west highway in this part of the county.

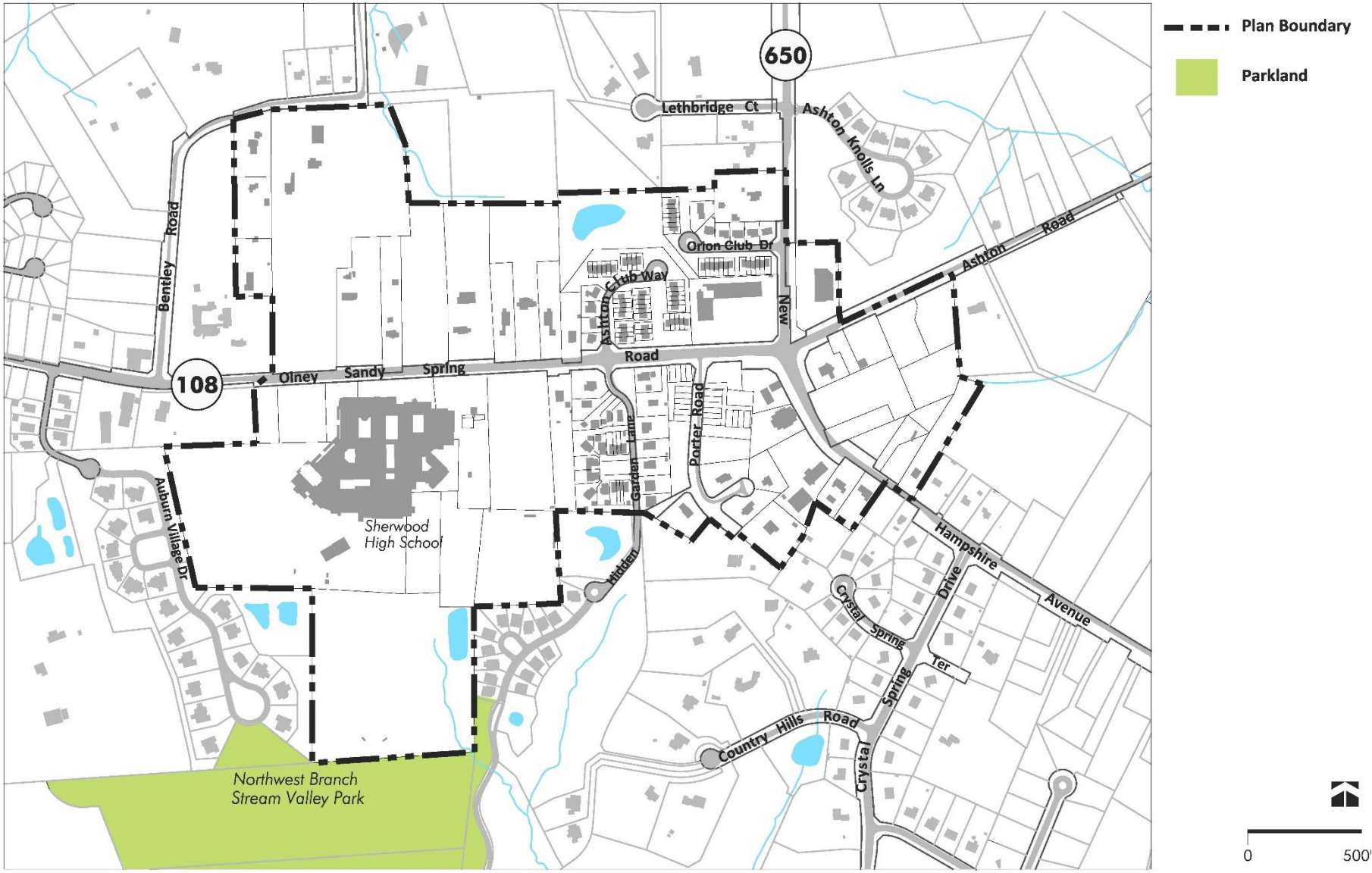
The two prior master plans (the 1980 and 1998 Sandy Spring/Ashton Plans) covered an area far larger than the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. This Plan amends only a small portion of the 6,000 acres covered by the previous plans. However, the area covered by the prior plans—roughly the same area included in the Ashton-Sandy Spring Census Designated Place (see Map 2)—is essential for understanding the rural character of Ashton and Sandy Spring. In contrast to the denser development and commercial activity in the village centers, most of the rural open space, agricultural lands, woodlands, roads and viewsheds that define the rural character in the area are outside the two village centers.

### 1.1.2 PLAN AREA BOUNDARY

This Plan covers about 127 acres around the MD 108/650 intersection (see Map 3). The Ashton Village Center Sector Plan boundary includes all of the area within the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone that is east of the area covered by the 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan*. The Plan area also includes the Planned Development-5-Zoned land (PD-5) in the northeast corner of the MD 108/650 intersection that contains the Ashton Village Shopping Center[1] and the Ashton Village homes. The Plan boundary also contains Sherwood High School and a few properties between the Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan boundary and the SSA Overlay zone to allow a contiguous boundary with the previously approved *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan*. Finally, one Rural Cluster-Zoned property (RC) that is jointly owned with the other properties in the southeast quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection has been included within the Plan boundary.

[1] To avoid confusion between the shopping center in the northwest corner of the MD 108/650, named "Ashton Village Center," and the geographic area covered by this Plan, the term "Ashton Village Shopping Center" will be used in this document to refer to the retail strip center and "Ashton Village Center" to refer to the Plan area.

*Map 3. Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Boundary*



## 1.2 History

The ancestors of the indigenous people of Maryland, including the Piscataway people, arrived in the area of Montgomery County well over 10,000 years ago near the end of the last Ice Age. The climate at the time was subarctic and the region's forests were dominated by conifers. During the last Ice Age, sea levels were far lower than they are today and Maryland's rivers, including the Potomac and Patuxent, cut deeply into their valleys. As the climate warmed and sea levels rose, river flows slowed, estuaries formed and the forests transformed into hardwood forests.

The lifeways and associated artifacts of Maryland's indigenous people changed over time as they adapted to changing circumstances. No archaeological sites associated with the indigenous people of Maryland have been found in the Ashton Village Center Plan area. Generally, people appear to have used the river valleys mostly for occupation, relying on the adjacent uplands for temporary camps associated with hunting and procuring raw materials such as workable stone.

The first European settlers to arrive in the area were Deborah Snowden Brooke and her husband, James Brooke, who in 1728 moved into Charley Forrest near present-day Brooke Road. The Brooke, Thomas and Snowden families were the earliest Quakers to reside in the area and were founders of the Sandy Spring Meeting, established around 1753. Many of these early settlers pursued agricultural ventures, including tobacco farming and milling, which relied on the labor of an enslaved workforce.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the village of Ashton began to emerge as a rural commercial crossroads within the greater Quaker settlement of Sandy Spring.

By 1865, Martenet and Bond's map of Montgomery County (see Figure 1) showed the beginnings of a commercial center at the crossroads of the Ashton-Colesville and Ashton-Sandy Spring Turnpikes, just east of

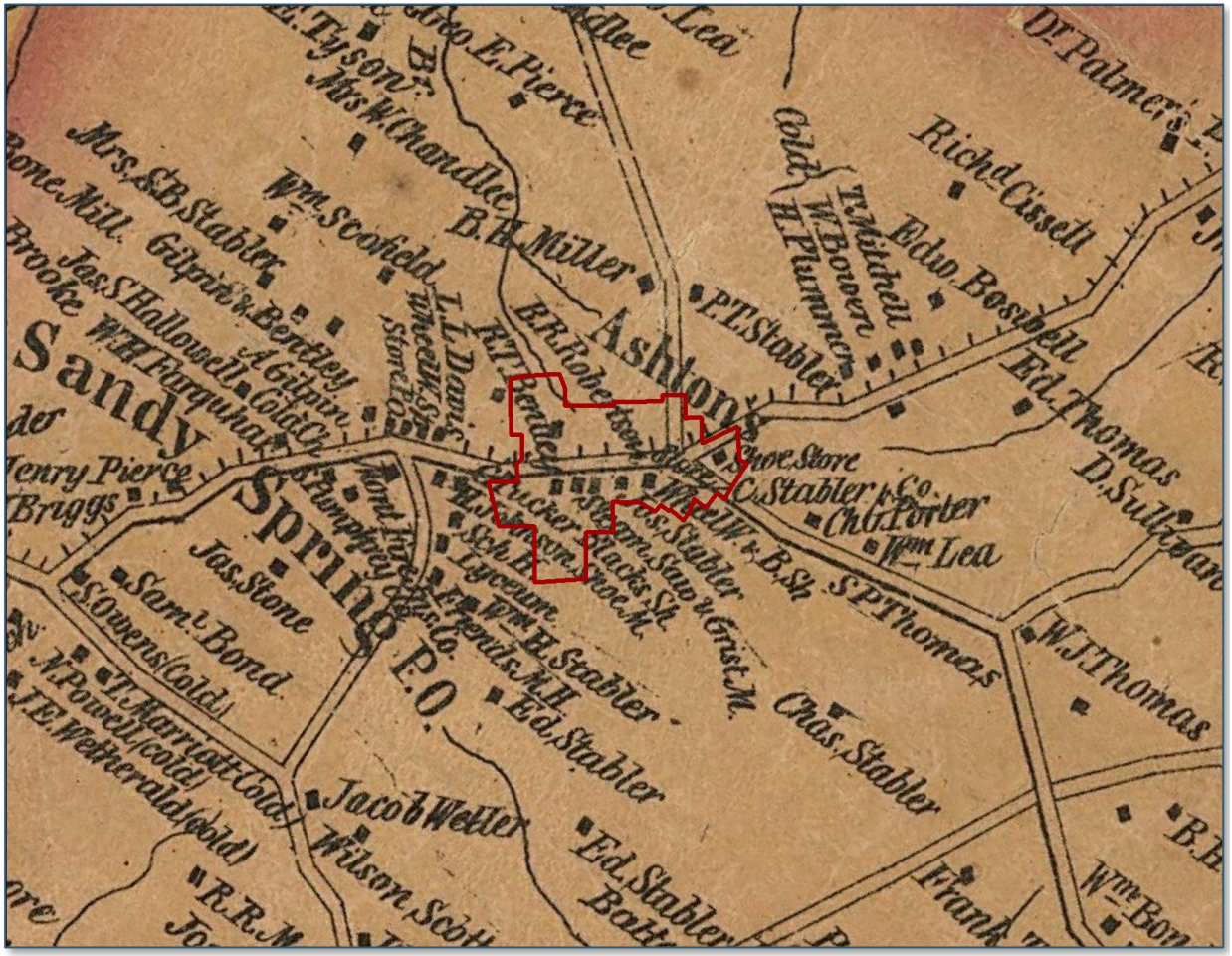



*Figure 1. Martenet and Bond's 1865 Map of Montgomery County showing the development pattern in Sandy Spring and Ashton. (Plan Boundary in red)*

Sandy Spring. These early establishments included a blacksmith and wheelwright's shop, shoe store and a general merchandise store around which Ashton developed. In 1860, Sandy Spring residents Caleb Stabler and Charles G. Porter built a general store at the southwest corner of the crossroads. In rural communities, such stores were important community gathering places and hubs of social connection.

In 1889, Ashton was officially established as an independent village with the opening of a post office within the general store. Little additional development had occurred to this point and the community was still characterized by a small commercial core with outlying rural residences. Homes associated with prominent Quaker families—Bentleys, Stablers and Millers—adjoined and surrounded the village center. Many of these homes are designated to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation (MPHP)*. Within the planning area, Cloverly (MPHP Resource #28/65) is a brick, Greek Revival-style residence built around 1849-1852 on part of Caleb Bentley's Bloomfield estate.

Early development also reflected the presence of a large, free black community, one of the earliest in Maryland. Formerly enslaved people freed by Sandy Spring Quakers in the late 18th century and others attracted to the area by the Quakers' generally anti-slavery attitudes settled along Brooke and Chandlee Mill Roads, west on Norwood Road, and to the east of the village of Ashton. The Ebenezer Baptist Church cemetery remains along Route 108 to the east of the crossroads as a legacy of this community's early presence, though the associated church has since been demolished.

Homes built through the late 19th and early 20th centuries represented a wide range of popular Victorian architectural styles, as well as Craftsman-style cottages and bungalows. While many of these structures were demolished or significantly altered during the mid-to-late 20th century, some survive, adding visual interest and reflecting the community's growth.

Commercial and residential development in the second half of the 20th century added new community amenities and more modern structures to the village center. The historic crossroads at the heart of the village remains as the center of the community and a reminder of Ashton's origins.

## 1.3 Vision

Ashton is envisioned as a compact, low-rise, walkable and bikeable rural village with a mix of land uses. It is a community with diverse housing options that are affordable and attainable for residents of all ages and at various income levels. New buildings frame the streetscapes and open spaces within the community. New open spaces are inviting and accessible to all and provide activity for all ages. Vehicular parking and loading services are located behind and to the sides of buildings, well screened from the public realm. Connected and shaded sidepaths and sidewalks provide for safe and convenient ways to walk and bike to and through the village. Context-specific architectural elements, such as front and side porches, covered stoops and bay windows, create a sense of community integration and safety as residents walk and bike along village streets. Land uses, site design and landscaping are sensitive to Ashton's location at the headwaters of tributaries to the Patuxent River and the Rocky Gorge drinking water Reservoir.

### 1.3.1 VILLAGE CENTER AND RURAL CHARACTER

This Sector Plan provides guidance and recommendations to foster a sense of community in Ashton by promoting a transition from a vehicle-centric commercial crossroads into a viable and vibrant rural village that protects and enhances the character of the greater Ashton community. The Plan provides zoning and design recommendations that are appropriate for allowing the density and uses expected for a rural village while ensuring that new development harmoniously blends in with the existing development.

### 1.3.2 MOBILITY

One of the keys to implementing the Ashton Village Center vision is to ensure that the availability and design of the pedestrian network puts walkability and bikeability at the forefront, meeting the county's commitment to Vision Zero (see sidebar on page 28). This can be done by keeping the roadways right-sized for a village and ensuring that all village residents and businesses have full access to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including linking Ashton to Sandy Spring. (The 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan included similar recommendations.)* This Plan also evaluates current and projected travel conditions on MD 108 and MD 650 to ensure continued adequacy of these major transportation routes.

### 1.3.3 HERITAGE

Finally, the proposed Plan area falls within the Crossroads & Cultures thematic cluster of the county's Heritage Area, Heritage Montgomery. Officially certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority in 2004, Heritage Montgomery was established to raise awareness of the county's rich array of cultural and historic resources, to support stewardship of historic sites and buildings and to promote heritage tourism. The Crossroads & Cultures heritage theme highlights both the African American and Quaker heritage in the community. The Plan considers Ashton's placement within the Heritage Area and its relationship to cultural resources and heritage tourism.

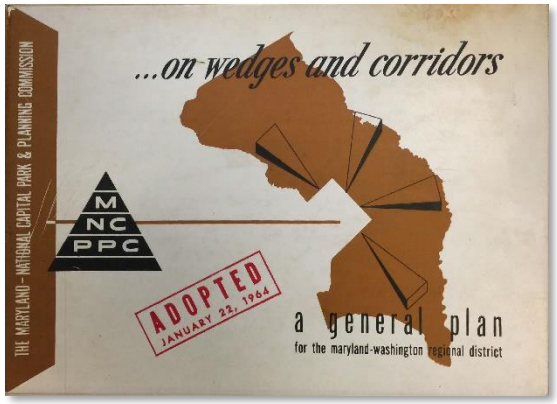
# CHAPTER 2: FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 Previous Plans

Many previous planning efforts have shaped the Ashton community over the past several decades. The area that includes Ashton was added to the Maryland-Washington Regional District (the geographical area under the planning jurisdiction of M-NCPPC) in 1957 and a small part of Ashton was included in the 1961 *Master Plan for the Upper Northwest Branch Watershed*. The 1964 General Plan, updated in 1969, has had a profound impact on the development of the entire county, while the 1980 and 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plans* provided more focus for the area.

### 2.1.1 … ON WEDGES AND CORRIDORS

Local planning in Montgomery County is anchored in the county's 1964 General Plan, which was updated in 1969 and further refined in 1993. See page vi for background on the General Plan, *… On Wedges and Corridors*. The *General Plan Refinement* was the most recent update to the General Plan in 1993. Another update to the General Plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, is being developed contemporaneously with this Plan.




*Cover from the 1969 General Plan update.*

### 2.1.2 1980 SANDY SPRING-ASHTON SPECIAL STUDY PLAN

Forty years ago, the 1980 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Special Study Plan* sought to preserve the rural character of Sandy Spring, Ashton and the land surrounding the two villages by "balanc[ing] the sensitive rural environment with today's modern pressures: regional transportation demands, the cost of housing, open space preservation, rural

***Thrive Montgomery 2050***

THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050
Let's Plan Our Future. Together.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 was launched in 2019 to create a new comprehensive plan for Montgomery County that builds upon the foundation set by the 1964 General Plan and all subsequent plans and policies. The plan will modernize the original plan's Wedges and Corridors concept and refine it for the next 30 years to ensure its relevance for tomorrow's challenges.

Three broad outcomes serve as the strategic framework for the plan:

**Economic Health:** We want to ensure a vibrant, strong and competitive economy.

**Community Equity:** We want to create a place where all residents have equal access to affordable housing, healthy foods, employment, transportation, education and more.

**Environmental Resilience:** We want to preserve our natural and built resources and use the best strategies to fight climate change and mitigate the impact of planned changes and unexpected events.

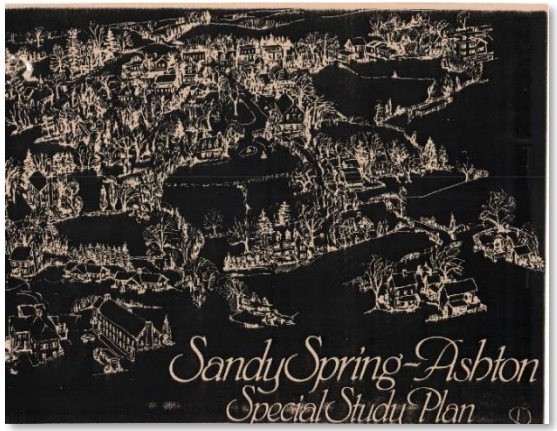
### *Kimball's Market*

Kimball's Market was a small plant nursery and produce stand that was located on the south side of MD 108 between MD 650 and Porter Road. Both the market and neighboring Sole d'Italia were demolished in 2020 after years of neglect; a new mixed-use building has been approved to replace them.

*Kimball's Market in the late 1970s when it was right next to MD 108.*

*Kimball's Market and Sole d'Italia restaurant in 1998 after the house had been removed and the market relocated to make room for parking.*

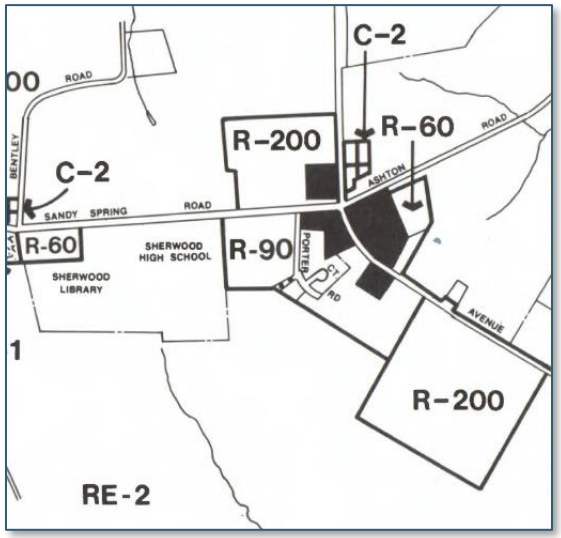
sanitation and need for improvements to commercial areas." To put it another way, the plan aimed "to strike a balance between modern needs and historic character" (1980 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Special Study Plan* summary, unpaginated).




*Cover from the 1980 Plan.*

The 1980 Plan made zoning recommendations to allow slightly more commercial development within the village centers. The Plan also recommended a modest increase in residential development in the centers to provide affordable housing opportunities for young adults. The 1980 Plan either downzoned or required cluster development outside the village centers. Allowing only larger lots immediately outside the centers created a buffer from Olney and Cloverly and provided for a rural entry into Ashton that would "strengthen the Village Center's identity by sharpening the contrast between the village and surrounding rural areas" (p. 41).

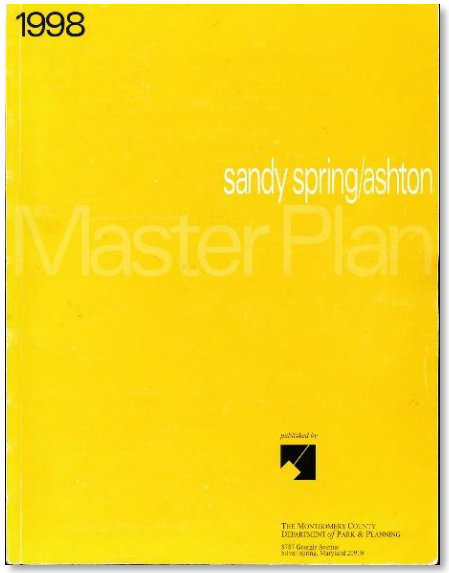
Other plan objectives were to provide safer pedestrian, bicyclist and vehicular travel, right-size the road cross-sections in the commercial villages and endorse efforts towards historic designations of many properties within the area. The 1980 Plan had more specific recommendations for Sandy Spring than for Ashton, but did indirectly reference Kimball's Market (referring to it as "the rural food market"), a small plant nursery and produce stand that was located on the south side of MD 108 next to where the Exxon stands today, and has subsequently closed.




*Detail of the Proposed Zoning Map from 1980 Plan. Areas in black were zoned Convenience Commercial (C-1). A Planned Development zone was also recommended for the northwest quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection.*

### 2.1.3 1998 SANDY SPRING/ASHTON MASTER PLAN

Almost 20 years after completion of the previous plan, the *1998 Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan* built on the 1980 Plan's commitment to maintain and preserve the rural character of Sandy Spring and Ashton. The Plan made recommendations designed to emphasize the separate characters of Sandy Spring and Ashton and confirmed many of the previous recommendations such as the right-of-way widths on MD 108 and MD 650, and the creation of clear and attractive entrances to the villages.

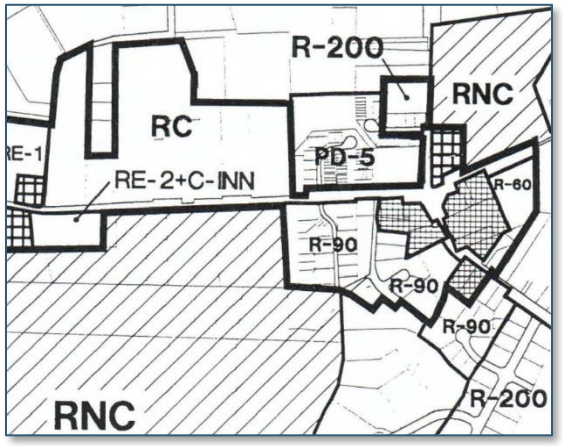



*Cover from the 1998 Plan.*

The 1998 Plan also proposed design guidelines for New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) north and south of the Ashton Village Center that would maintain its essential rural atmosphere and character along the road by recommending wooded edges where feasible and preserving open space.

The 1998 Plan proposed a small increase in commercially zoned land to create an incentive for revitalization of the Ashton Village Center. The Plan applied a new residential zone, the Rural Neighborhood Cluster (RNC) zone, to land in the northeast quadrant. This change allowed for cluster development with the provision of public sewer and with significant amounts of undeveloped open space. The 1998 Plan proposed the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone for the village center to provide limits on allowed commercial uses, building heights and architectural form to help ensure the proper scale for a rural village.

Specific to the Ashton Village Center, the 1998 Plan recommended allowing for a modest expansion of Kimball's Market, which contributed significantly to the sense of community and to the village's character; limiting residential development in the southeast corner of MD 108 and 650 to single-family homes rather than townhouses; and rezoning the Cuff Property (now home to the Alloway building) from residential to commercial zoning. (This recommendation had been included in the 1980 Plan but had not been implemented).



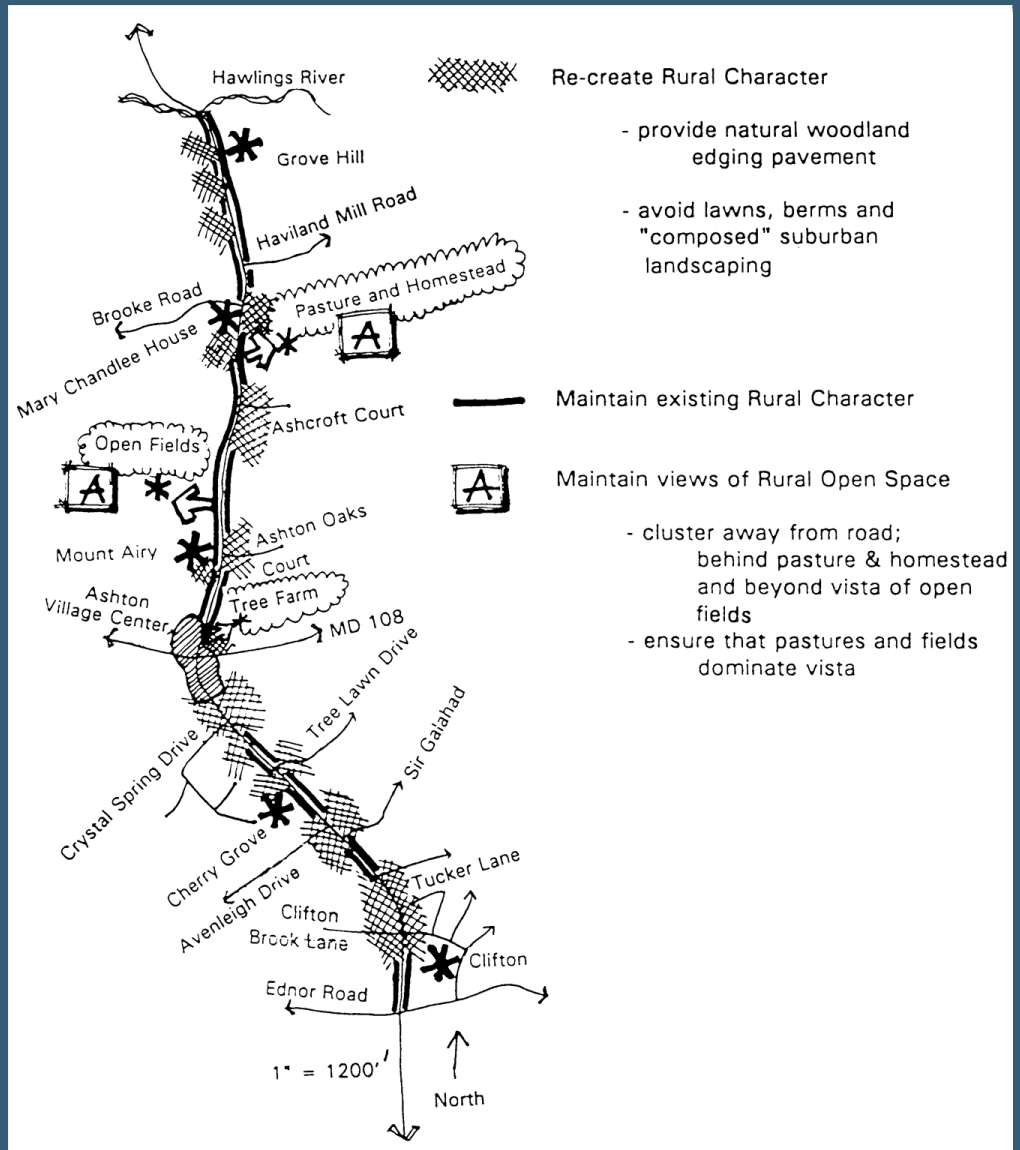

*Detail of the Proposed Zoning Map from 1998 Plan. The northeast corner retained General Commercial (C-2) zoning and the shaded areas in the southern corners show a modest expansion to the C-1 zone.*

#### *2.1.3.1 Defining Rural Character*

The earlier 1980 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Special Study Area* had attempted to preserve the rural character of Sandy Spring and Ashton through large-lot, low-density development throughout the area with clusters of development in the village centers. By 1998 it had become clear that the large lots, in particular those in the 2-acre Residential Estate (RE-2) zone, developed as densely as possible given the zone and did very little to preserve the rural landscape.

The 1998 Plan speculates that part of the reason the rural character was eroding was because the 1980 Plan had not clearly defined what, exactly, constitutes rural

### *New Hampshire Avenue Rural Character Concept*




*The rural character concept for New Hampshire Avenue from the 1998 Plan (Figure 18, p. 44).*

character. The later plan identifies the following five elements of rural character, which this Plan confirms:

- **Rural Open Space**
  Large areas of cropland, pastures, meadows and woodland characterize the rural open space. The 1998 Plan designates key properties where 70% to 85% of the land is to remain open and rural in character. Rural open space is intended to provide attractive entries to Sandy Spring and Ashton.

- **Rural Traditions**
  The large number of historic properties in the Sandy Spring/Ashton area characterize the rural traditions in the area. The 1998 Plan places special emphasis on the protection and preservation of the historic structures in the area as well as the original spring from which Sandy Spring gets its name. The 1998 Plan proposes a rustic "Rural Legacy Trail" beginning at Woodlawn Manor, passing by the Sandy Spring and then passing by several other historic structures along Meeting House Road. The trail would then travel along MD 108 to the Sandy Spring Museum. Most of this trail exists today as the Underground Railroad Experience Trail, beginning at Woodlawn Manor, but it currently ends at the Sandy Spring.

- **Rural Neighborhoods**
  As an alternative to traditional RE-2 zoning, the Rural Neighborhood Cluster zone was created wherein the residences

are clustered on 15% to 30% of the site around a central neighborhood open space. The other 70% to 85% is left as open land. Small clusters of residences oriented around a central neighborhood open space are surrounded by a much larger open space. The residences behind the CVS on Ashton Knolls Lane and south of the Plan area on Hidden Garden Lane are good examples of clustering homes and preserving open space.

- **Rural Roads**
  The 1998 Plan includes design guidelines to "heighten the sense of arrival to this rural area and preserve the character of the roads" (1998 Plan p. 10), with two through lanes and at most one additional turning lane or acceleration/deceleration lane where needed.

  New Hampshire Avenue from Ednor Road to the Hawlings River is recommended to keep its rural character (see sidebar on page 10). This concept highlights specific sections of New Hampshire Avenue where existing rural character and views along the road should be maintained and where they should be re-created through new woodland edging the pavement and by avoiding lawns, berms and suburban landscaping (1998 Plan pp. 43-45).

  These rural roads contrast with the 1998 Plan's recommendations for the roads within the two village centers, where buildings are to line the main street.

- **Rural Villages**
  The two village centers in the 1998 Plan are designated as places where residents can informally meet while going about their business. The 1998 Plan outlines ways to improve the Sandy Spring Village Center but does not mention corresponding improvements to the Ashton Village Center.

Most of the elements that help define rural character identified in the 1998 Plan apply to the larger area surrounding Sandy Spring and Ashton as opposed to the two village centers. The underlying purpose of the 1998 Plan is to maintain the "critical mass" of cropland, pasture and woodland that separates the two village centers from the more suburban surrounding areas, allowing these village centers to be rural villages.

These recommendations led to the establishment of the Rural Neighborhood Cluster (RNC) zone, which applied to the areas around the village centers to preserve large open spaces and to concentrate houses around smaller neighborhood open spaces. The rural roads element in the 1998 Plan further protected rural vistas by hiding suburban development.

Of the five elements of rural character identified in the 1998 Plan, only the rural village element applies within the boundary of this Plan. The main purpose of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan is to provide guidance to turn the existing commercial center into a more vibrant rural village center in Ashton.

#### *2.1.3.2 Establishing Village Centers*

The 1998 Plan expressly called for a more detailed concept plan of the Sandy Spring Village Center, resulting in the 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan*. The 1998 Plan recognized that its scope was too broad to provide the required level of study and refinement needed to fully implement the concept of the Sandy Spring Village Center. Notably, the 1998 Plan did *not* make a similar recommendation for the Ashton Village Center, but it has become apparent that a similar effort is needed to properly protect Ashton's character and to implement the broader goals from the 1998 Plan.

The Ashton Village Center has yet to be revitalized as envisioned in the earlier plans. A few projects have been completed in Ashton—notably the Alloway Building and the CVS pharmacy. Another project, Ashton Market, is approved for construction of townhouses and a mixed-use building at the corner of Porter Road and MD 108. However, the southeast quadrant of the village center has not realized the commercial and residential uses expected in the Plan area. The Ashton Village Shopping Center, though well occupied, has become dated and does not provide the activation and pedestrian circulation desired. The "Ashton Meeting Place" project, which included 74,000 square feet of commercial space and seven single family detached homes, was approved for

construction in the southeast quadrant in 2008 but was never built.

Additionally, features that contributed to the character of Ashton in 1998 no longer exist. At least a dozen of the houses and other old structures in or near the Sector Plan area have been removed. Some have been replaced with new houses that retain none of the stylistic elements that characterized the homes they supplanted. Several more houses have been built on lands that were actively farmed in 1998.

This Plan seeks to finally make Ashton a walkable, attractive, prosperous and inviting rural village that reflects the rural character of the surrounding area. The Plan recommends a mix of land uses, improved street character and a gathering space for the people living in and around Ashton.

### 2.1.4 2015 SANDY SPRING RURAL VILLAGE PLAN

The 2015 Plan fulfilled a recommendation from the 1998 Plan for a detailed study in Sandy Spring to enhance rural character on the north side of MD 108, improve the pedestrian realm throughout the village center, create an open space that would serve as a civic attraction and continue to manage land uses to preserve a village scale of development. The 2015 Plan also recognized that the 2014 comprehensive Zoning Ordinance revision had not converted the previous zones to appropriately scaled new zones and made new zoning recommendations for Sandy Spring. The recommended zones allowed the SSA Overlay zone to be removed from the Sandy Spring Village Center.

The 2015 Plan encourages the preservation of Sandy Spring's rural character by enhancing the entrance to the village from the west at Norwood Road and MD 108 and by reinforcing distinctions between the village core and adjacent areas with scattered homes and woodlands.

The 2015 Plan describes the experience of entering Sandy Spring from the west, where one passes scattered houses, woods, open farm fields, a gardening center behind white farm fencing and a few larger uses—a school, a church, a veterinary clinic—set well back from the road or hidden from view by wooded areas.

Ashton has similar entrances. Traveling from the north, one passes farmland, woods and widely separated houses before sensing a transition at Lethbridge Court and Ashton Knolls Lane just north of the MD 108/650 intersection. Heading to Ashton from the east has a similar impact, only feeling like one has entered Ashton at the entries to the CVS and Sandy Spring Bank. From the south, the transition in density and land use starts just before Crystal Spring Drive about a quarter of a mile from the intersection.

In between Sandy Spring and Ashton, Sherwood High School and the large lot residential area across the street from it provide a break, maintaining the two distinct village centers.

## 2.2 Demographic Information

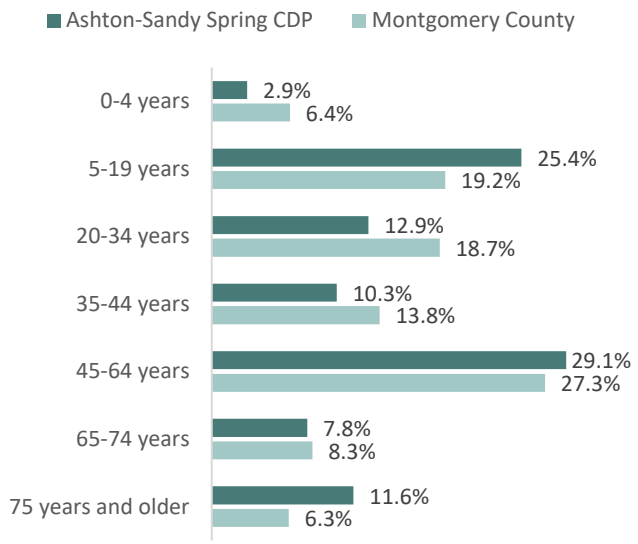
The Ashton-Sandy Spring Census Designated Place (CDP) closely corresponds to the area covered by past master plans for Sandy Spring and Ashton and is used for the purposes of analyzing the demographic data for this Plan, which has an area too small for Census data on its own.

In general, households in the CDP have higher incomes, higher levels of educational attainment and higher proportions of the population in older age cohorts and are whiter than the county as a whole.

The population in the Sandy Spring/Ashton area has increased significantly since the most recent turn of the century. The estimated population within the CDP was 6,136 people in 2018, an increase of 1,678 people (38%) since 2000. Approximately 82% of the households own their residence—substantially higher than the County rate of 65%.

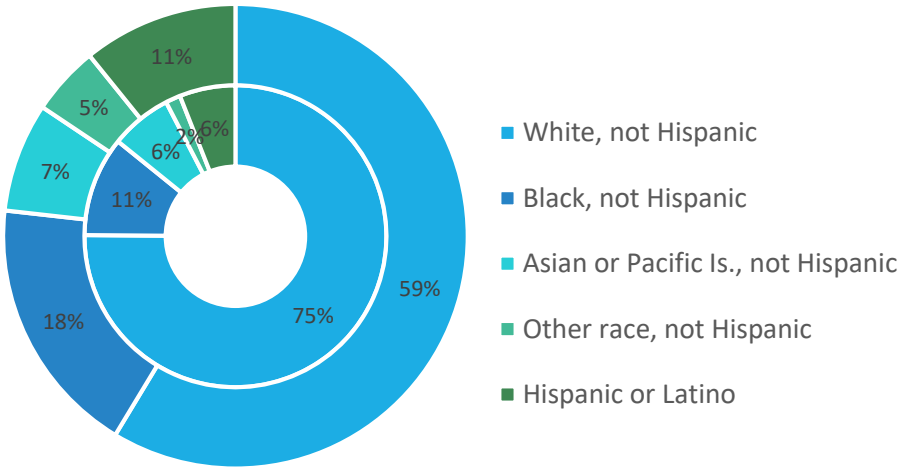
Households in the CDP are more affluent than the rest of the county, with the median household income ($135,375) about 27% higher than the county as a whole. Housing values are also considerably higher in the Ashton-Sandy Spring CDP than in the county overall, with 66.3% of Ashton homes valued at more than $500,000 versus 46.1% in the county. The median home value in Ashton is also high at $645,900 compared to Montgomery County at $476,500.

*Chart 1. Age Distribution in 2018.*




The Ashton CDP has a higher percentage of school-age children (5-19), adults age 45 to 64 and seniors age 75 and above compared to the county. The number of housing units increased by 437 between 2000 and 2018, or 27%; however, growth appears to have slowed considerably in recent years, with only 33 new homes built since 2014. This pattern of population and home construction suggests that many young couples or families had moved into the new houses constructed in the area in the early 2000s and their children are now making their way through the school system. In the last six years younger families have slowed their moving into the area.

*Chart 2. Ashton-Sandy Spring CDP Race 2010-2018.*



Also notable is the percentage of single-family detached homes in the CDP versus the county in general. In the CDP, 82.6% of the housing units are detached homes, while the county average is 47.4%.

While less diverse than Montgomery County as a whole, the Ashton-Sandy Spring CDP has diversified somewhat since the 2010 Census, with Black, not Hispanic and Hispanic or Latino groups making the largest gains. The area is still 75% White, not Hispanic, compared to 59% for the County.

Residents in the Ashton-Sandy Spring CDP have very different commuting patterns compared to the county. Only 5% take public transportation compared to 15% of county residents overall; conversely more people in Ashton-Sandy Spring drive alone to work (78% versus 65%) and about twice as many people are likely to work from home (11% versus 6%).

## 2.3 Outreach

Community engagement is a key component in the creation of this Sector Plan. A variety of engagement strategies were used to create an environment that supported public participation. Stakeholders were identified that had an interest in an Ashton Village Center including local residents, homeowner associations, and business owners. These groups were invited to participate, share ideas and provide feedback. The plan visioning and subsequent plan preparations were shaped by the outreach and engagement we've had with the community.

Planners used social media, electronic communications and other innovative tools to convey information about the Plan and encourage participation in its development. Opportunities to participate included in-person community meetings and numerous follow-up digital meetings with interested community organizations. The Planning Department has maintained a website that has served as a clearinghouse for information on the Plan.

As a direct result of our engagement and outreach efforts, Planning Staff received generous feedback through all stages of the Plan development. Much of the feedback from the early kick-off meeting and the design workshop in October 2019 included the desire to keep the village modest and compatible with the existing suburban and rural development by including strict controls on height, density and design elements. Stakeholders also identified a need for a gathering space accessible to everyone. The need to improve pedestrian connectivity and safety along the two major highways, particularly for the Sherwood High School students that walk to the Ashton Village Shopping Center after school, was another common element.

At the community briefing on January 29, 2020, Planning Staff heard a lot of concern from attendees that while the focus on design was appreciated, the proposed density and lack of well-integrated green spaces was out of character with their vision of a rural village. In addition to comments at these public events, numerous email messages and mail from the community was received and considered during the Plan development (see Technical Appendix). The messages were similar to those heard at the public events. A minority of correspondents have voiced support for the early recommendations presented in January, favoring moderate housing densities, as long as the design and architecture is kept appropriate for a rural village. All the stakeholder groups share a common interest: creating a viable village center that provides an opportunity for residents to connect.

### *Outreach Events*

- Community kick-off meeting on May 16, 2019
- Planning Board approval of the Scope of Work on May 23, 2019
- Participation in the Strawberry Festival on June 1 and 2, 2019
- Reoccurring office hours at the Sandy Spring Museum during the summer and fall of 2019
- Bus tour of Alexandria with the community on October 1, 2019
- Community walk audit on October 15, 2019
- Two-day design workshop on October 15 and 16, 2019
- Post-design workshop summary meeting on October 24, 2019
- Community briefing on early recommendations on January 29, 2020
- Postcard mailing to all properties within ~1 mile of the village center in March 2020

*Community briefing at Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department in January 2020.*

## 2.4 SWOT Analysis

During the two-day design workshop in October 2019, participants, in partnership with Planning Staff, conducted an analysis of the Ashton area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, also known as a "SWOT analysis." A SWOT analysis is a commonly used tool during plan visioning exercises to help all stakeholders gain a holistic view of what needs to be improved and what plan recommendations can support those improvements. The results of this exercise are summarized below.

### 2.4.1 STRENGTHS

Strengths are the community's existing assets that should be identified and protected. Participants described Ashton as an historic community with a small-town feel that takes much of its character from the natural environment and open spaces. Ashton has a variety of building types and houses for a diverse range of people and uses. The presence of Sherwood High School and Sherwood Elementary School in the area are also seen as strengths.

### 2.4.2 WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses identify existing features within the community that are not working as well as stakeholders would like. Workshop participants described several weaknesses in the Ashton area, including: a lack of a community gathering space for events and social interactions, an incomplete and unsafe pedestrian and bicycling network, and heavy traffic leading to long wait times and dangerous situations at the main intersection. Additional weaknesses include the lack of affordable housing and the lack of a cohesive plan for the village center.

### 2.4.3 OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities are positive outcomes that are easily attainable or inherent to the future of the community. Increased diversity in the community, the promotion of the area's history and culture, and the preservation of low-density development between the village centers of Ashton and Sandy Spring were some identified opportunities. The potential for an improved pedestrian realm; additional trees, landscaping and open space; and appropriately scaled development in the village center, including a gathering space; are other identified opportunities.

### 2.4.4 THREATS

Threats to the community include possible negative outcomes or forces. At the workshop several threats were identified; primarily that overdevelopment would overwhelm the village center with no regard to scale or architecture while worsening existing traffic congestion. The decay of the existing infrastructure, the general loss of mature trees and open spaces, and degradation of the environment and watersheds from overdevelopment are also threats to Ashton.

## 2.5 Equity

In late 2019, the Montgomery County Council passed the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act with Bill 27-19 which requires the Planning Board to consider racial equity and social justice impact when preparing a master plan. The act took effect on March 2, 2020, almost one year after the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan scope of work was adopted. While the full requirements of the bill were not considered during the development of this Sector Plan, the Plan process and its recommendations were still looked at through an equity lens.

In addition to all of the outreach efforts undertaken over the past year, Planning Staff, in an attempt to reach less civically engaged citizens, mailed a postcard to all residents and property owners within one mile of the Sector Plan boundary notifying them that a plan was underway and encouraging them to visit our website and to provide their feedback.

Equity considerations impacted many recommendations in this Sector Plan, including ensuring complete infrastructure for non-auto transportation modes, new accessible community open and gathering spaces, and zoning that allows for new housing opportunities that are more attainable for younger families or people with less means than the median in Ashton.

## 2.6 Ashton Rural Village Center Concept

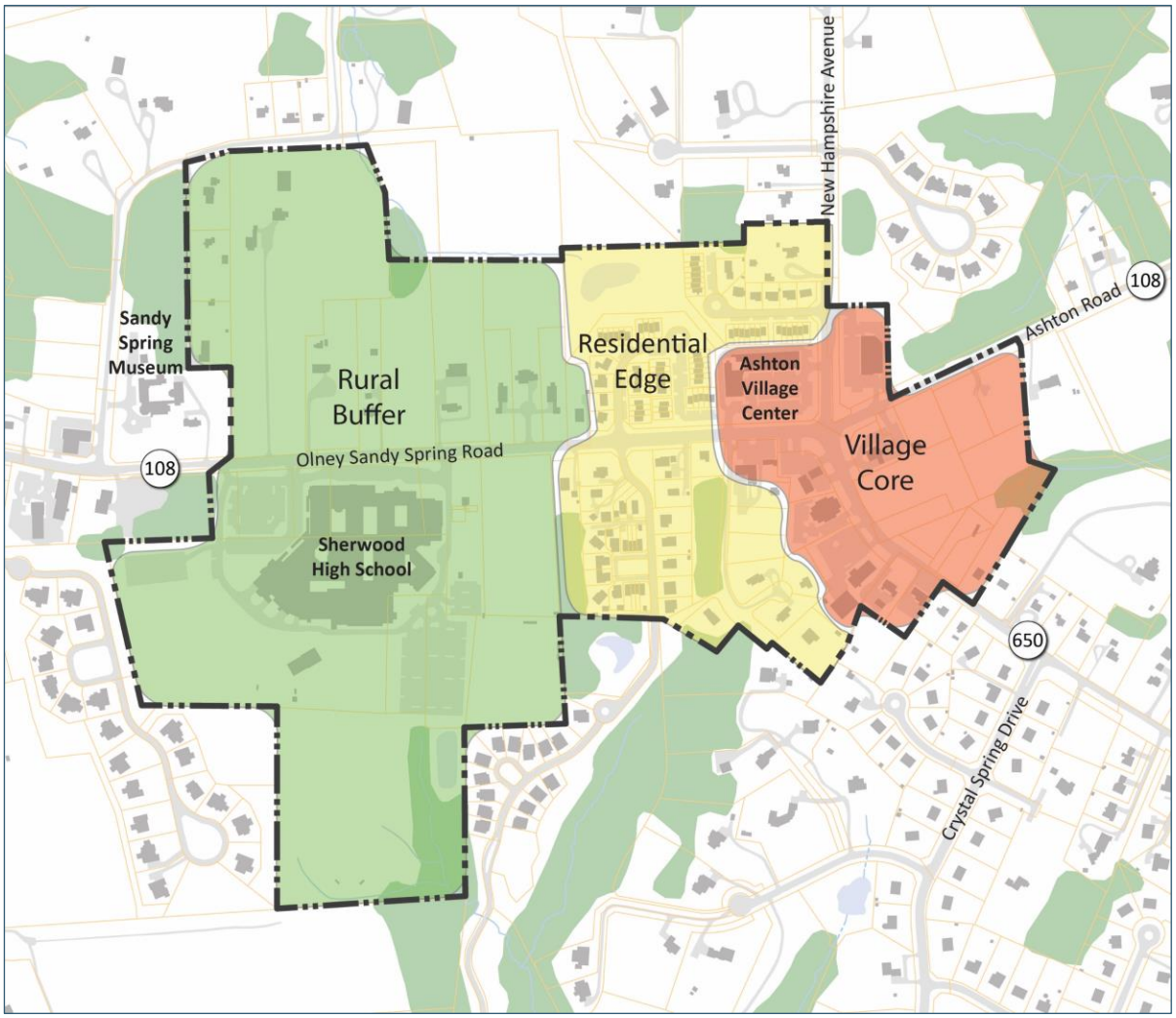
This Plan includes recommendations for zoning and land use, historic preservation, community design, transportation connectivity, open spaces and other public resources and the environment. The following chapter provides overall recommendations that apply across all of the Sector Plan area and include each of the previously identified subject areas. The Neighborhoods chapter provides local area and property-specific recommendations, broken down by three plan neighborhoods: the Village Core, the Residential Edge and the Rural Buffer (see Map 4).

The Village Core neighborhood is the heart of Ashton and includes many recommended improvements to streetscapes, open spaces, connections, traffic operation and development. The Village Core is envisioned as the vibrant, walkable center for community life in Ashton.

The Residential Edge neighborhood contains a mix of single-family detached houses and townhouses and provides a transition between the Village Core and the more rural areas beyond.

The Rural Buffer neighborhood is at the western edge of the Plan area; it continues the recommendations of previous master plans to preserve the rural entries to Ashton and to provide a separation from Sandy Spring to keep the two centers distinct.

*Map 4. Plan Neighborhoods*



# CHAPTER 3: AREA-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

## 3.1 Overview

This Chapter provides a series of recommendations, organized by subject, to help achieve the vision of this Plan, including appropriate zoning, transportation and design recommendations in addition to open spaces, environmental considerations and historic resources. Design recommendations are needed to ensure that the scale of development is compatible with existing uses and open spaces are accessible, comfortable and functional.

## 3.2 Land Use and Zoning

To achieve the ultimate vision of this Plan, land uses and the corresponding zoning must be evaluated in the Plan area to ensure it is appropriate for the rural village vision for the community.

### 3.2.1 EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING

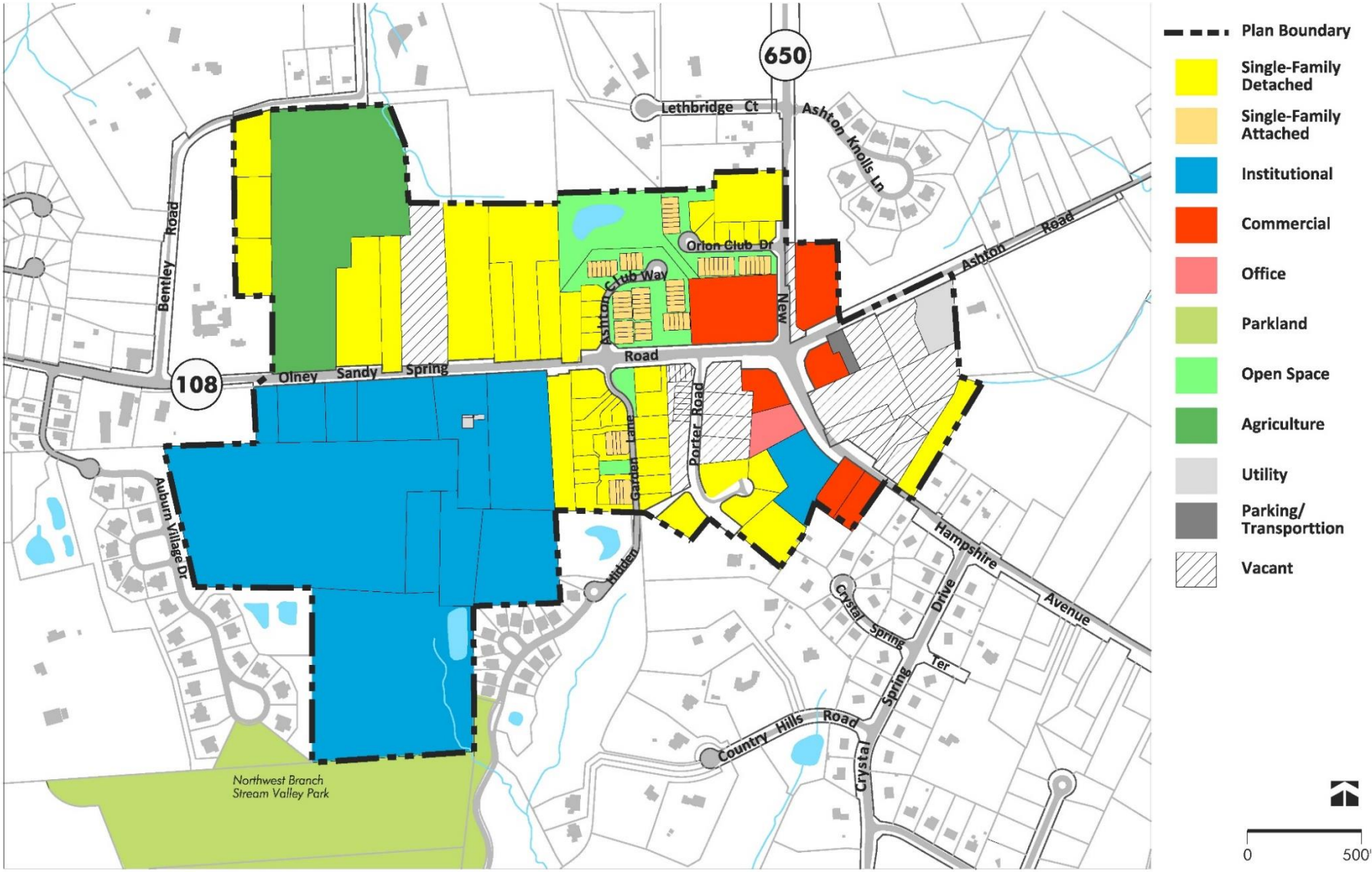
The existing land use pattern (see Map 5) shows a distinct separation between the Plan neighborhoods. The Rural Buffer neighborhood, including the high school, modest agricultural uses and larger residential lots, already achieves the desired green separation between the village centers of Ashton and Sandy Spring. The land north and south of MD 108 is zoned Rural Cluster (RC) and Rural Neighborhood Cluster (RNC), respectively.

The Residential Edge contains numerous detached houses and townhouses, mostly on smaller lots. New townhouses are being built along Porter Road on currently vacant property. Land along portions of Porter Road close to MD 108 was recently rezoned by local map amendment to TF-10 (Townhouse Floating zone allowing up to 10 units per acre). The existing residential development along Hidden Garden Lane and the other parts of the southwest quadrant are in the R-90 zone, and parts of the southeast quadrant are zoned R-60 and RC. A few properties to the north of the intersection are in the R-200 zone.

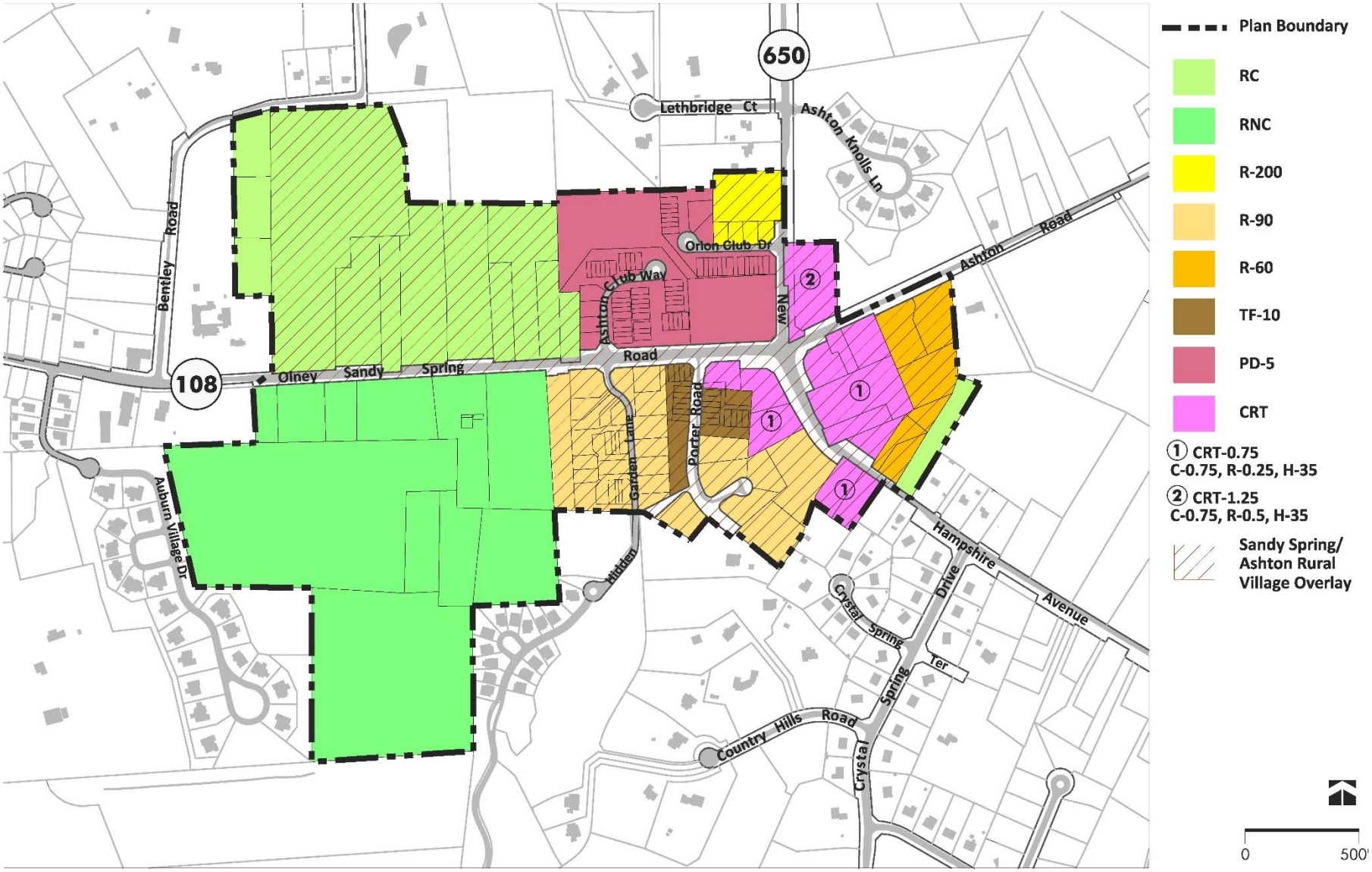
The existing land uses in the Village Core are commercial or vacant and largely reflect the zones that were in place at the time the properties were developed. The Christ Community Church of Ashton (R-90) and a BG&E electrical substation (R-60) are also in the Village Core neighborhood.

Prior to the 2014 Zoning Ordinance rewrite, the zoning in the northeast, southeast and southwest quadrants around the major intersection of MD 108 and MD 650 was commercial (C-1 and C-2), which is reflected by the businesses in these areas. In 2014 these commercial zones were translated to the mixed-use CRT zone, weighted more heavily towards commercial floor area ratio (FAR) rather than residential. The northwest quadrant was developed under a now discontinued Planned Development zone (PD-5); the small shopping center, the residential development behind and the large open space area containing a stormwater management pond were all built as part of the planned development (see Map 6).

*Map 5. Existing Land Use*



*Map 6. Existing Zoning*



### 3.2.2 PROPOSED LAND USE AND ZONING

This Plan does not propose land use or zoning changes in the Rural Buffer or Residential Edge neighborhoods except to replace the Planned Development zone with the TLD (Townhouse Low Density) zone, based on the densities of the existing townhomes and detached houses.

The Sector Plan proposes very modest land use changes within the Village Core to encourage development of a more meaningful village center that puts an increased emphasis on residential density over commercial density (see Map 8). Proposed zoning in the Village Core carefully manages the types of commercial uses that may be built, generally going from CRT-0.75 and CRT-1.25 (Commercial Residential Town) to CRN-0.5 (Commercial Residential Neighborhood), with both commercial and residential uses being allowed to utilize up to the full 0.5 FAR. This increases the allowed residential density by 0.25 FAR in the two southern quadrants and reduces the potential for commercial development by 0.25 FAR in all the CRT-Zoned properties. The commercial portion of the PD-5 zone, the church property in the southwest quadrant and most of the properties in the southeast quadrant will also be zoned CRN with a total FAR of 0.5.

The specific zoning recommendations are also discussed in the Neighborhoods chapter of the Sector Plan.

### 3.2.3 SANDY SPRING/ASHTON RURAL VILLAGE OVERLAY ZONE

As can be seen on the Existing Zoning Map (see Map 6), much of the Plan area is also in the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone. The SSA Overlay zone was created to restrict uses and provide guidelines to achieve a "village scale" of development in both Sandy Spring and Ashton.

The 2015 Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan rezoned properties from the CRT to the CRN zone and removed the SSA Overlay zone from the Sandy Spring Village Center because of the finer-grained management of land uses, densities and heights allowed in the C/R family of zones. A similar review was performed for this Plan, and while many provisions of the overlay are no longer needed, there are some protections allowing specific land uses that warrant modifying rather than eliminating the overlay zone. The requirement for site plan should be retained as the best way to implement design recommendations.

This Plan recommends removing the list of prohibited uses in the overlay zone and replacing the CRT zone with the CRN zone to achieve a similar result. The Plan also recommends removing the properties in the Residential and Rural Residential zones from the overlay zone because the underlying zones already offer adequate protections to lot sizes and heights. The zoning text can then be updated to remove unnecessary provisions.

Three existing uses in the Plan area are not allowed under the CRN zone, however: the filling station and auto repair shop in the southwest corner and the drive-thru associated with the bank in the southeast corner. All three of these uses are Limited or Conditional uses in the CRT zone but not allowed in the CRN zone. This Plan recommends adding language to the overlay zone to allow drive-thrus not associated with restaurants, filling stations and vehicle repair services to be considered conforming and be allowed to continue or be altered, repaired or replaced.

The Plan also recommends removing text from the overlay zone requiring public water and sewer systems and off-street parking in residential areas to serve nearby commercial uses because these provisions are no longer needed.

The combination of changes in the 2014 Zoning Ordinance, the recommended changes above and the design guidelines provided by this Plan requires an update to the purpose of the SSA Overlay zone. This Plan recommends updating the SSA Overlay zone's purpose to:

> *Preserve and enhance the rural village character of the Sandy Spring and Ashton village centers using detailed site review and the continuation of community*

*serving businesses within the village center.*

See the Plan Appendix for a more detailed analysis of the proposed modifications to the SSA Overlay zone.

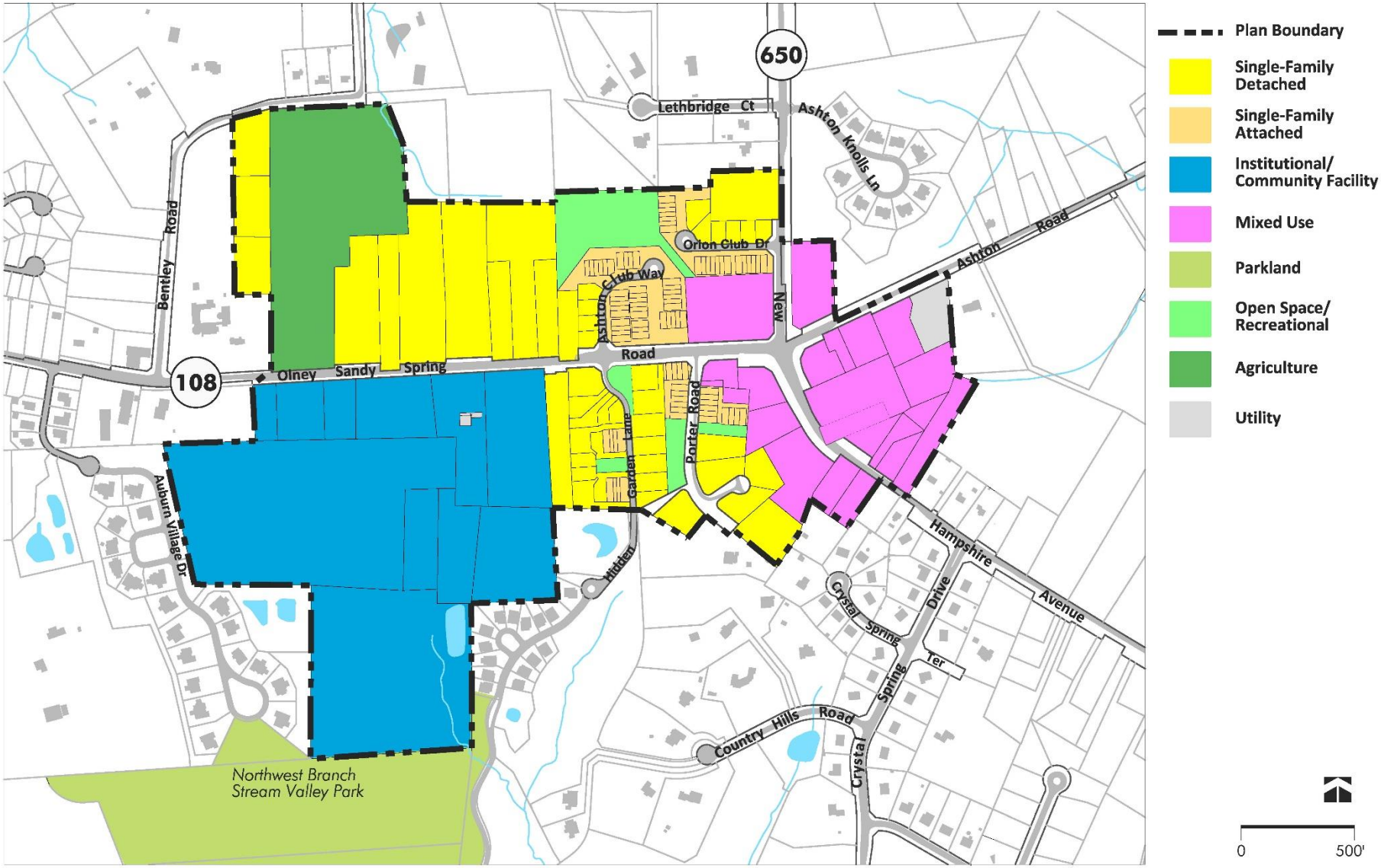
### 3.2.4 REMOVAL OF THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ZONE

The new Zoning Ordinance kept the Planned Development Zones in place but precluded their future use. Master plans done since the revision was approved in 2014 have evaluated land in these retained zones and have proposed appropriate reclassifications from the new Ordinance. This Plan recommends new zoning for the Ashton Village Shopping Center and the adjacent residential community, now in the PD-5 zone. The CRN zone should be applied to the shopping center consistent with the recommendations for the rest of the Village Core neighborhood while the residential community should be rezoned Townhouse Low Density (TLD).

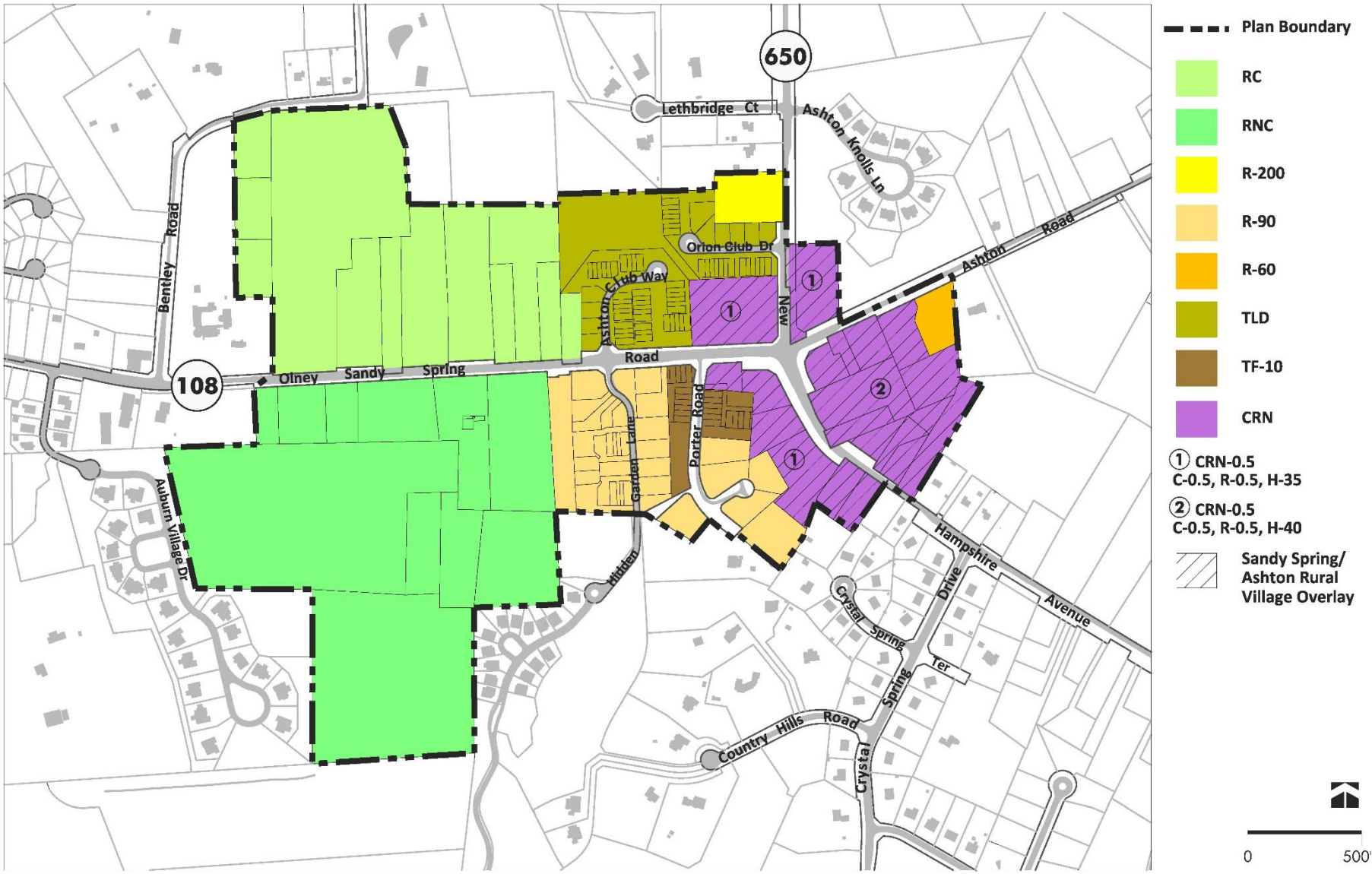
### 3.2.5 LAND USE AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Rezone all properties in the northeast, northwest and southwest quadrants of the Village Core neighborhood to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35
2. Rezone all properties in the southeast quadrant of the Village Core neighborhood to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-40 with the exception of the BG&E substation property, which should retain its R-60 zone.
3. Rezone the residential properties in the Ashton Village development from PD-5 and R-200 to Townhouse Low Density (TLD).
4. Confirm the existing zoning for the properties in the Rural Buffer neighborhood and the remainder of the Residential Edge neighborhoods.
5. Revise the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone to:
    a. Remove the limitations on land uses.
    b. Remove or update the residential development standards.
    c. Remove the development standards for the Commercial/Residential or Employment zones.
    d. Remove the sewer requirement.
    e. Remove the use of properties in a residential zone for off-street parking.
    f. Retain the site plan requirements but remove the requirement for direct accessibility from a sidewalk, plaza or other public space.
    g. Allow a drive-thru as a Limited Use if associated with a bank. Do not allow the drive-thru to be adjacent to MD 108 or MD 650 under any condition.
    h. Revise the purpose statement to reflect these proposed changes.
    i. Revise the boundary of the SSA Overlay zone to only cover the CRN-Zoned properties.

*Map 7. Proposed Land Use*



*Map 8. Proposed Zoning*



## 3.3 Community Design

### 3.3.1 CONTEXT

An integral part of ensuring a vibrant and successful rural village is the design of the buildings and public spaces. In many of the older, traditional villages found in the Mid-Atlantic region, building placement and architecture are critical to achieving the village-like character and a sense of place. At village edges, buildings are typically spaced farther apart with varying setbacks from the street. As one gets closer to the Village Core neighborhood, buildings are pulled closer to the street and to each other to form a continuous street wall, helping to create a sense of place and defining the arrival at the village center. At critical junctures, buildings are sometimes set back to signify an important community gathering or civic space. (See Figure 2.)

Many basic design elements, such as building placement and orientation and limiting building heights are already prescribed within the recommended CRN zone. This Plan builds upon the zoning requirements with additional recommendations that will provide visual interest, engage the public realm and ensure that new developments enhance rather than detract from the village.

These recommendations include general ways to address building, placement, massing, and the use of landscaping to keep any new construction consistent with the rural village character this Plan seeks to achieve. Additional design elements are provided for community open spaces and transportation systems within their respective sections of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. More detailed guidelines are provided in the Design Guidelines chapter which both define and provide best practice examples of these design elements.

While the existing pattern of building placement in the Rural Buffer and Residential Edge neighborhoods has an appropriate scale and placement, a significant portion of the buildings in the Village Core do not currently contribute to a meaningful street wall. This disconnect leaves the public realm ill-defined and uninviting. This Plan strives to create a truly vibrant place that serves as the core to Ashton. To do this and maintain the appropriate transition between the Village Core and the Residential Edge and Rural Buffer, new development within the Village Core should ensure that new buildings are context-sensitive and complement existing buildings in surrounding communities.

### 3.3.2 COMMUNITY DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Building height, massing and placement should create a transition between the single-family detached dwelling units outside the Village Core neighborhood, and potential commercial, mixed-use, or multifamily buildings clustered around the intersection of MD 108/650.
2. Entirely residential buildings with front or side elevations along MD 108 or MD 650

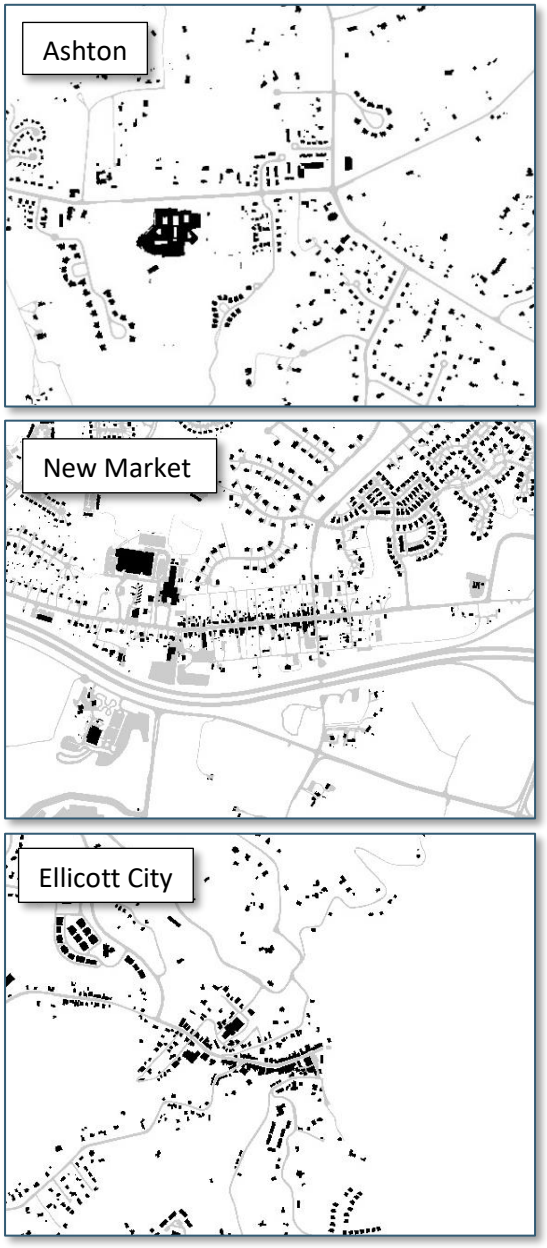



*Figure 2. Figure grounds of Mid-Atlantic villages showing development patterns.*

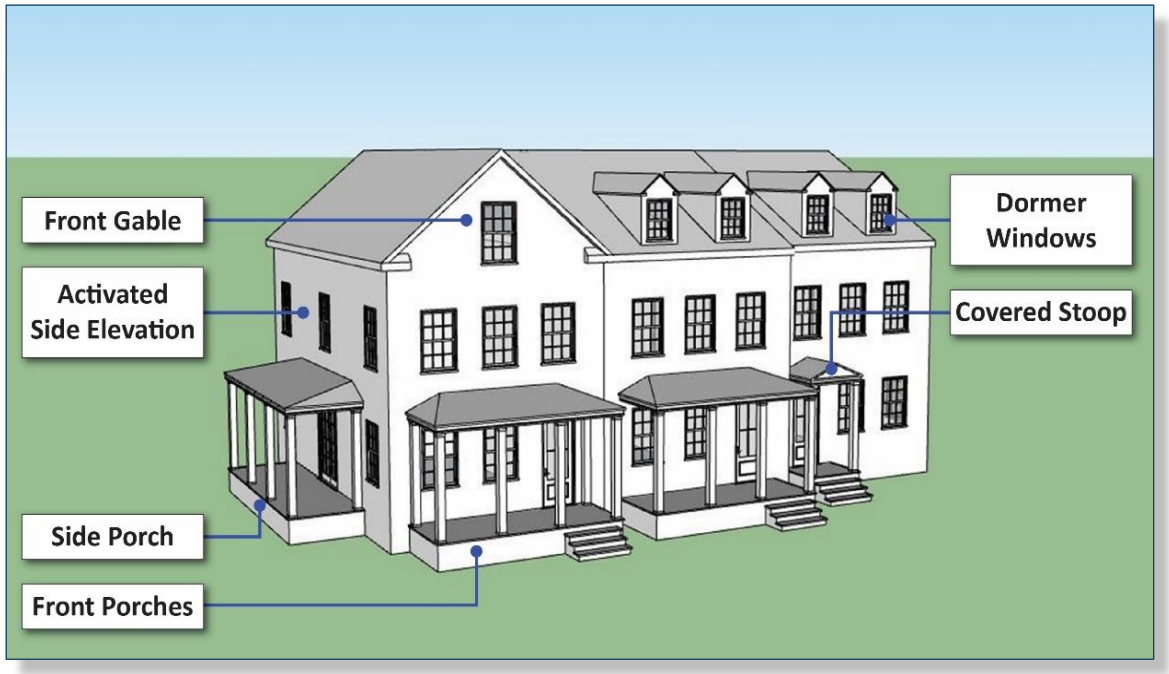



*Figure 3. Architectural embellishments provide visual interest to building massing.*

should be designed so that the building width, building massing and façade treatment fronting to these roads suggests a single-family detached or duplex building form, regardless of actual housing type. The depth of these buildings should be flexible to accommodate various building types and building densities.

3. New commercial and mixed-use buildings containing neighborhood-serving retail should be located closer to the corner of MD 108 and MD 650 to establish a clear village center or should be placed adjacent to planned open spaces to establish community gathering spaces.
4. Use front and side building façades to establish street walls along MD 108 and MD 650 to frame the streets, creating a distinction from areas outside the Village Core.
5. Parking should be located behind or to the side of buildings to avoid visibility from the street. Parking potentially visible from the street shall be screened with walls and/or landscaping to maintain the street wall. Parking shall not be located at a street corner.
6. Orient primary building façades, including entrances, toward streets or publicly accessible open spaces. Additional entrances may be located to the side and rear of buildings for public or private access.
7. Building heights should vary between adjacent buildings, with lower heights closer to the edge of the Village Core neighborhood and higher heights closer to the MD 108/650 intersection.
8. Vary rooflines and setbacks in the front façade plane to break down the massing and to provide visual interest for new buildings.
9. A majority of buildings should contain pitched roofs. If flat roofs are used, the façade should introduce a cornice along the roof edge.
10. Provide pedestrian accessible pass-throughs between commercial or mixed-use buildings to break up the scale of structures on larger development sites and to provide access to the street from parking areas.
11. Incorporate architectural elements in the façades, such as front and side-turned gables, front and side porches, covered stoops, recess entries, bay windows, dormer windows and cupolas.
12. All sides of building should be designed and built with the same exterior architecture and building materials in mind.
13. Buildings should be cladded in materials and patterns authentic to rural village character, such as brick, stone, wood shingles, and wood cladding.

## 3.4 Connectivity

### 3.4.1 ROADWAYS

The two state highways (MD 108 and MD 650) that form a crossroads at the core of the Ashton Village Center are major routes for local and regional transportation. Nevertheless, an essential part of maintaining village character is ensuring that the transportation network is maintained at an appropriate village scale and that it be safe for all users, not just those in motor vehicles.

As early as the 1980 Plan, recommendations were made to minimize the impact of highway traffic on the Ashton community. Traffic studies done for the 1980 Plan indicated that the road network was sufficient to handle the traffic at the time and presumed that the Intercounty Connector (ICC), if built, would reduce traffic volumes on MD 108. Planners and local residents also found that any alternative that allowed substantial widening of the two-lane road would be detrimental to many of the local businesses and the rural character of the road. Accordingly, the Plan reduced the planned width of MD 108 from 150 to 80 feet to reflect this reduction.

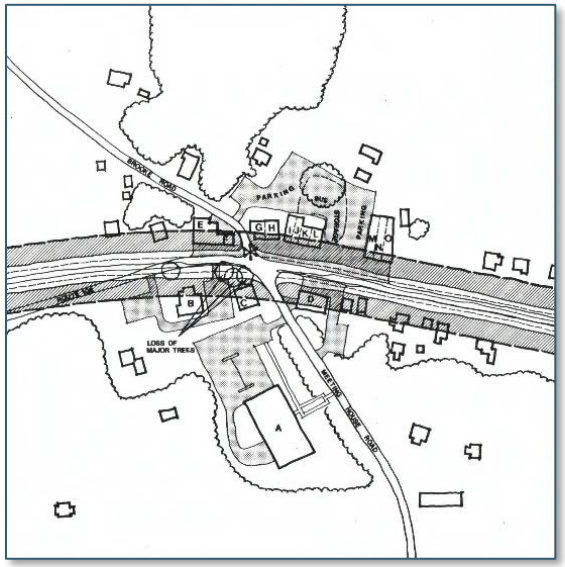


*Figure 4. Image from 1980 Sandy Spring-Ashton Special Study Plan showing effect of 150-foot right-of-way for MD 108 through Sandy Spring (plan page 60).*

The 1998 Plan emphasized that a major route like MD 650 should be maintained as a two-lane road except for essential turn lanes, and that MD 108 should also maintain a cross-section with a village character, limiting total pavement widths to under 40 feet.

The opening of the Intercounty Connector (ICC, MD 200) beginning in 2011 provided a significantly easier east-west travel route across Montgomery County. Use of the ICC has resulted in an overall decrease of approximately 1,000 daily vehicular trips through Ashton Village between 2011 and 2018 on both MD 108 and MD 650 according to traffic counts from the Maryland Department of Transportation.

Currently, MD 108 remains a two-lane roadway with a shared center turn lane. MD 650 is also generally a two-lane road, and while it does not have a continuous shared center turn lane like MD 108, it does have multiple approach lanes in both directions at the intersection with MD 108. The existing intersection of MD 108 and MD 650 has a non-optimal geometry in the northeast quadrant caused by a tight turning radius and an existing utility pole. SHA has recognized the need to reconstruct this intersection. This Plan supports SHA's efforts to improve this intersection for all modes of transportation and to only widen the pavement the minimal amount necessary to fix geometric issues on the northeast quadrant.

To further the goals of Vision Zero (see sidebar on page 28) and to build on the successes of previous plans to keep roadway widths to a minimum, this Plan emphasizes improvements that increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility. This Plan continues the two-lane road policy for both MD 650 and MD 108. Additionally, it recommends against pavement widening along, or at the intersection of, MD 650 and MD 108, including turn lanes or acceleration/deceleration lanes. Capacity issues should be dealt with first by adjusting signal timing and reconfiguring lane movements to determine if efficiencies can be found within the existing pavement.

Bentley Road, which runs along the northwest boundary of the Plan area and next to the historic Cloverly property, is the only Rustic Road in the Plan area. This Plan continues to support the rustic designation of this road and makes no recommendations for additional roads to be included in the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan.

Few opportunities exist for the creation of new streets in the Plan area except in the southeast quadrant if it were to be redeveloped as one project. The Ashton Village Center Sector Plan does not designate any new streets but does encourage new streets or drive aisles in that quadrant. Any opportunities to limit curb cuts on the state highways should also be explored with any redevelopment in the Plan area.

*Table 1. Road Classifications*

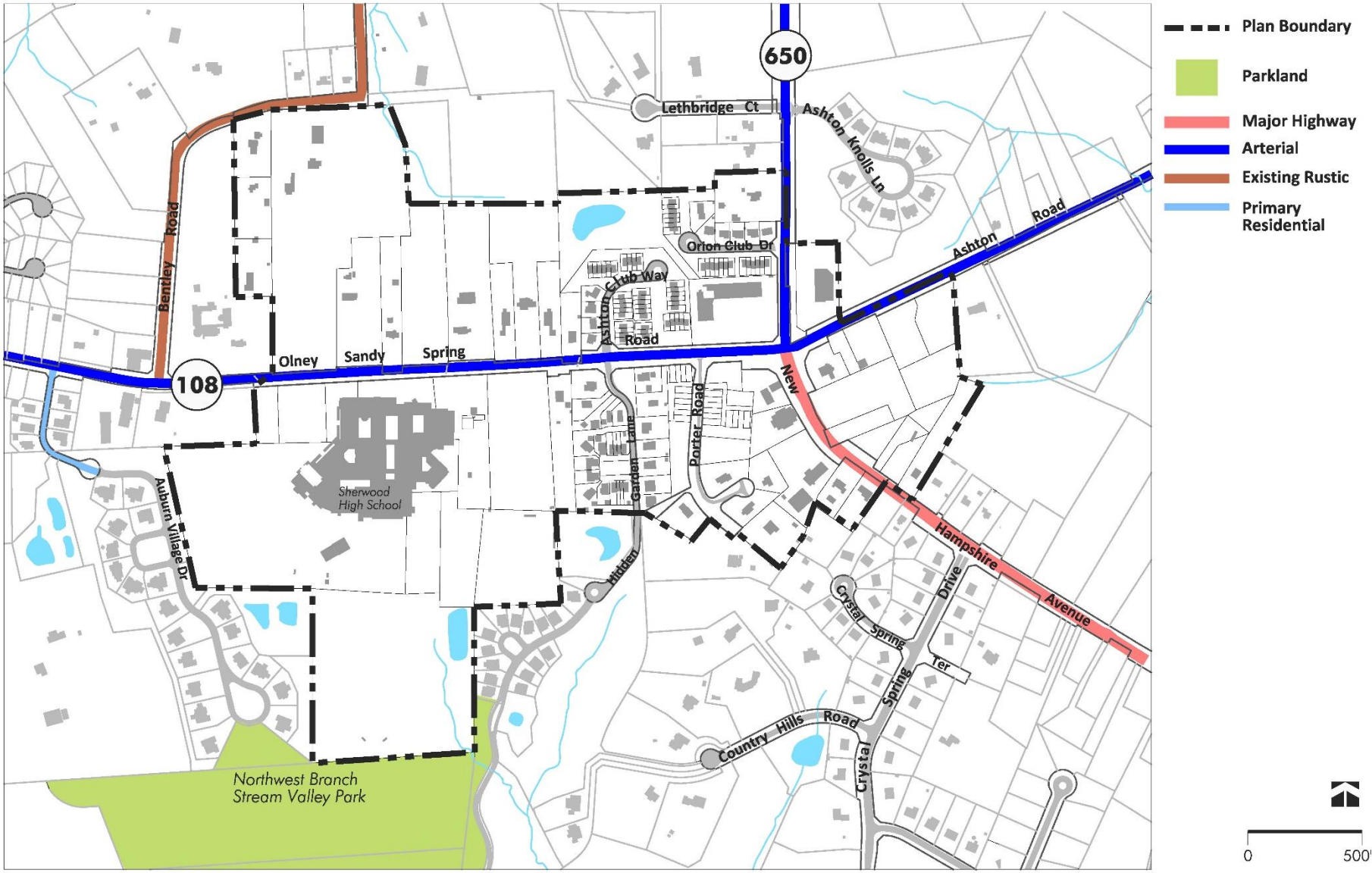
| *Name* | *Classification* | *From* | *To* | *ROW Width* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bentley Rd** | Rustic | Plan Boundary | Olney-Sandy Spring Rd / Ashton Rd (MD 108) | 70 ft. |
| **Olney-Sandy Spring Rd / Ashton Rd (MD 108)** | Arterial | Plan Boundary (West) | Plan Boundary (East) | 80 ft. |
| **New Hampshire Ave. (MD 650)** | Arterial | Plan Boundary (North) | Olney-Sandy Spring Rd / Ashton Rd (MD 108) | 80 ft. |
| **New Hampshire Ave. (MD 650)** | Major Highway | Olney-Sandy Spring Rd / Ashton Rd (MD 108) | Plan Boundary (South) | 120 ft. |

### *Vision Zero*

Montgomery County adopted a Vision Zero policy in 2016. Vision Zero is an international effort to end traffic fatalities and severe injuries by changing the way we plan and design our roads. It emphasized safety for all uses instead of maximizing vehicular traffic flows, making the roads safer regardless of whether you are traveling by car, bus, bicycle or on foot. Montgomery County's goal is to have zero traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2030.

It is through the master plan process that Montgomery County engages the community to re-envision our auto-oriented roadways as safe, complete streets for walking, bicycling and driving. Recommendations in master plans are implemented through capital improvement projects and development of sites by the private sector.

*Map 9. Roadways*



### 3.4.2 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

To implement Vision Zero and to complement the village center, completing the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within the Sector Plan area is a priority. The existing infrastructure is limited to a substandard sidewalk that runs along the south side of MD 108 connecting Sandy Spring to Ashton; a very short section of sidepath along the west side of MD 650 south of MD 108; a sidewalk on the east side of MD 650 north of MD 108; and a short section of sidepath on the north side of MD 108 east of MD 650. These were built over the years as frontage improvements required by individual developments.

*Planners and other stakeholders conducted a walk audit on October 15, 2019, along with personnel from SHA.*

This Sector Plan continues the recommendations of the most recent *Bicycle Master Plan* in calling for a minimum 10-foot-wide sidepath along the west side of MD 650 from the intersection of MD 108 south to beyond the Plan boundary. A minimum 10-foot-wide sidepath should also be built on the north side of MD 108 from the intersection of MD 650 to the existing sidepath at the Sandy Spring Museum. These off-road paths were also included in the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan*.

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has drawn up preliminary engineering plans for the sidepath along the north side of MD 108 through the length of the Sector Plan area. However, the project has not had the funding to advance to final design and construction. The path along MD 108, along with the MD 650 sidepath, would likely need to continue to be funded though the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) because redevelopment is unlikely in the short to medium term.

Two signalized intersections within the Sector Plan need improvements to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians: MD 108 at MD 650 and the eastern access to Sherwood High School on MD 108.

SHA identified these two intersections as needing improvements and is tentatively moving forward with improvements to MD 108 at MD 650 as part of Fiscal Year 2021. These include new signal poles, better signage and markings, wheelchair ramps and crosswalks across all four crossings. These improvements should also consider the poor geometry and the existing utility pole in the


*Figure 5. Revised intersection at MD 108 and MD 650 with marked crosswalks, new sidepaths and sidewalks, an increased turning radius in the northeast corner and fewer driveways at the filling station in the southeast corner.*

northeast quadrant of the intersection (see Northeast Quadrant section in the Neighborhoods chapter).

A new crosswalk with walk signals should be added at the signalized intersection in front of the high school to provide safe crossings to this new sidepath. The existing bus stop located at the western entrance to the high school would be better relocated to the eastern signalized entrance once the pedestrian improvements are made. Trail connections to the parkland south of the high school are described in the next chapter.

*Figure 6. The recommended shared-use path is shown in yellow along the north side of MD 108. A new crosswalk and walk signal is recommended at the existing traffic signal at the high school's eastern entrance.*

This Sector Plan supports SHA's efforts and continues to place a high priority on rebuilding the signal at Sherwood High School to improve pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and on encouraging the planned sidepath on the north side of MD 108.

Any development of the land in the southeast corner of the intersection should implement five-foot wide sidewalks with green panels buffering from the street along both of its frontages on the state roads as well as along any internal roads.

In the southwest corner of the intersection, two of the four driveways at the filling station should be eliminated to provide a safer and more pleasant pedestrian and bicycle experience in that corner.

### 3.4.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Ashton is currently served by the Z2 Metro bus line, which operates weekdays on a 30-minute interval with existing bus stops along MD 650 near the southern Plan boundary, in front of the Ashton Village Center on the northeast quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection and on MD 108 near Sherwood High School. This Plan recommends additional peak hour service as well as limited weekend expansion. Options include increasing the existing WMATA service or establishing one or more Ride On routes that provide more regular service to Olney and/or Glenmont. Improved bus stops including benches and a shelter should be constructed to encourage additional ridership.

*Crosswalk to bus stop at the western end of the high school. This is also marked as an equestrian crossing.*


*Bus stop in front of the Alloway Building. Shade provided by the building.*

*Map 10. Bikeways*

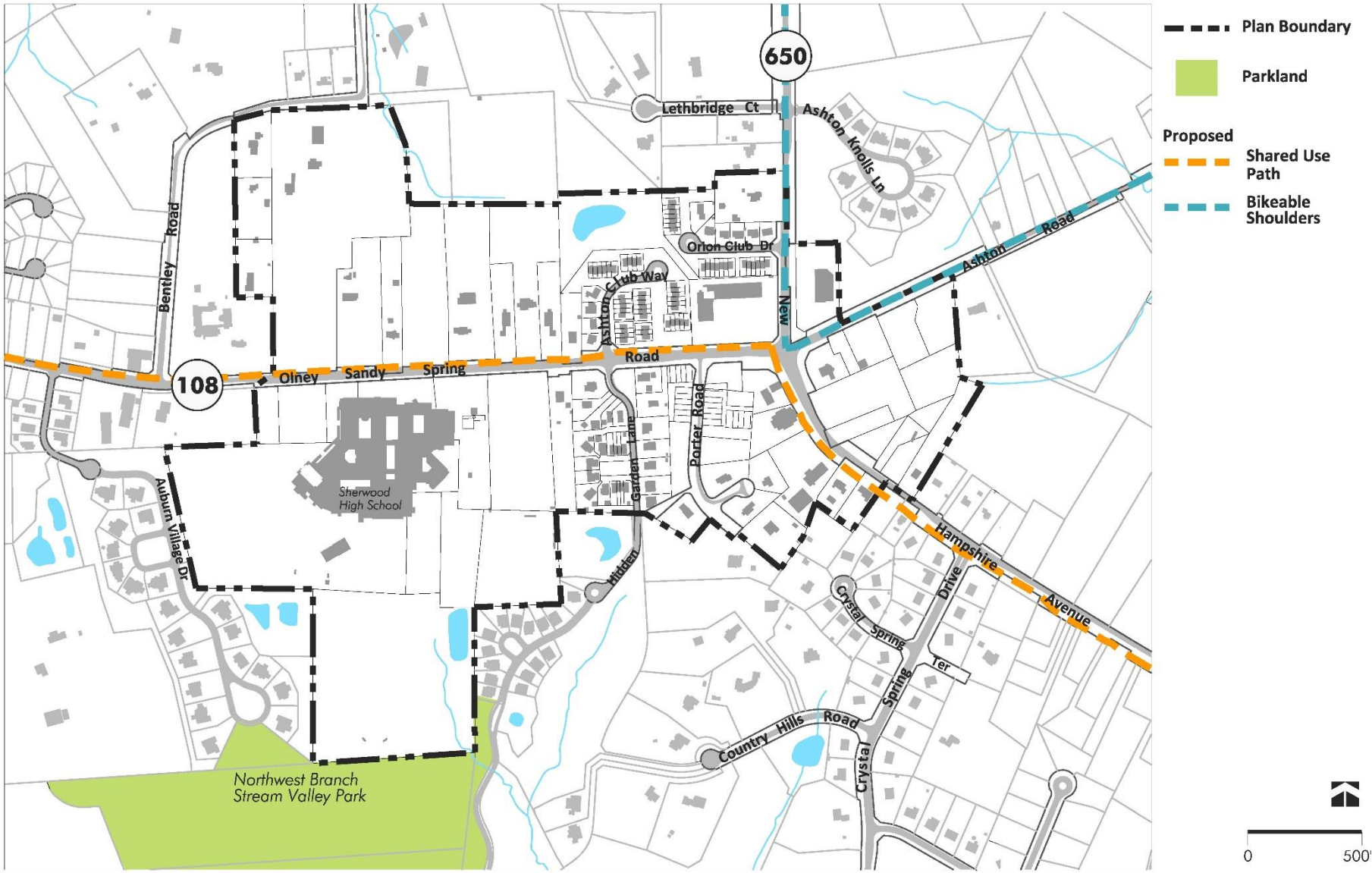


*Table 2. Bikeways*

| *Project/Street* | *From* | *To* | *Bikeway Type* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Olney-Sandy Spring Rd (MD 108)** | Plan Boundary (West) | New Hampshire Ave. (MD 650) | Sidepath (North Side) |
| **Ashton Rd (MD 108)** | New Hampshire Ave. (MD 650) | Plan Boundary (East) | Bikeable shoulders |
| **New Hampshire Ave. (MD 650)** | Plan Boundary (North) | Olney-Sandy Spring Rd / Ashton Rd (MD 108) | Bikeable shoulders |
| **New Hampshire Ave. (MD 650)** | Olney-Sandy Spring Rd / Ashton Rd (MD 108) | Plan Boundary (South) | Sidepath (West Side) |

### 3.4.4 CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Roadway recommendations:

1. Reconfirm the two-lane road policy for MD 108 and MD 650 from the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan.*
2. Maintain the pavement width at the approaches to the MD 108/650 intersection except for necessary geometric improvements that serve to increase safety.
3. Prioritize signal retiming, lane movement reconfiguration and new bicycle and pedestrian facilities before considering any road widening to address roadway capacity issues.
4. Discourage the creation of new acceleration/deceleration lanes along the state highways unless a safety need is demonstrated.

Pedestrian and bicycle recommendations:

5. Implement Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant signalized crossings at all approaches to the MD 108/650 intersection.
6. Continue to support reconstruction of the signalized entrance to Sherwood High School to improve pedestrian crossings.
7. Support future capital funding to construct the *Bicycle Master Plan* recommended sidepaths along the north side of MD 108 from the western Plan boundary to MD 650 and on the west side of MD 650 from MD 108 to the southern Plan boundary.
8. Construct a new sidewalk on the west side of MD 650 from MD 108 to Orion Club Drive.
9. Eliminate two of the four driveways for the filling station in the southwest quadrant.
10. Construct minimum five-foot wide sidewalks with any future development along the existing frontages of MD 108 and MD 650 in the southeast quadrant.
11. Install decorative pedestrian scale lighting along all public and private roadways within the Village Core neighborhood for safety and aesthetics.

Public transportation recommendations:

12. Provide expanded bus service during off-peak hours including adding weekend service.
13. Encourage one or more new Ride On routes that provide more regular local service to Olney and/or Glenmont.
14. Provide a bus shelter at the bus stop on the northwest quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection.

## 3.5 Community Facilities and Open Space

### 3.5.1 OPEN SPACES AND PARKS

The Ashton Village Sector Plan supports ensuring access to quality open spaces for current and future residents to relax, gather or recreate.

#### *3.5.1.1 Existing Parks and Open Spaces*

Although no county-owned parks exist within the Plan boundary, Ashton is served to some extent by privately owned space and publicly owned parks at its edges.

The Sandy Spring Museum property, immediately adjacent to the western Plan boundary, has been the location of numerous public events and gatherings including the annual Strawberry Festival.

The Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park are also just outside the Plan boundary. The Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, which adjoins the southern property line of Sherwood High School, consists of more than 1,320 acres of parkland along the Northwest Branch Stream. Considered one of the County's Best Natural Areas, the park's natural beauty and trails are available to the public.

Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park features the Woodlawn Manor historic home, the Woodlawn Museum located in the 1832 stone barn, the popular Underground Railroad Experience Trail and a late 19th century carriage house that today serves as the park's visitor center and gift shop.

In addition to these passive, culturally significant and hiking-focused open spaces and parks, the active recreation facilities in the greater Ashton area are adequate to serve the community's needs. Facilities located nearby but outside the Plan area include the Ross Boddy Community Recreation Center, Olney Manor Recreation Park and Swim Center, Ednor Local Park and Manor Oaks Local Park.

Within the Plan area itself, outdoor recreation facilities at Sherwood High School are available to residents outside of school hours. Sherwood Elementary School, just to the west in Sandy Spring, also provides opportunities for outdoor recreation.

However, there are limited publicly accessible open spaces and gathering places within the Plan area. Current privately-owned open spaces include a seating area and stormwater management feature at the corner of MD 108 and MD 650 in front of the CVS and a small green space with trees in front of the Sandy Spring Bank. A few small green spaces within existing residential developments are intended for use just by those residents. The lack of usable open space within the Plan area that can be used by the whole community is a major concern shared by Plan stakeholders.

#### *3.5.1.2 Park and Open Spaces Hierarchy*

This Plan supports ensuring a wide range of publicly available open spaces exist to serve the variety of needs in the local area and regionally. Although this Plan does not explicitly recommend the creation of any new publicly owned and maintained park space, Montgomery Parks' *Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines* serve as a good model to follow when designing the necessary open spaces in Ashton.

Open spaces should be seen as a system of spaces, with the size and type varying but directly proportional to the projected density and adjusted to the pattern of existing open spaces and factors such as community-specific needs (see sidebar on page 38).

#### *3.5.1.3 Open Space Opportunities*

Policy guidance from previous plans, the 2017 *Park, Recreation and Open Space* (PROS) *Plan* and the Park and Open Space Hierarchy, along with community input during the planning process, led to identifying the open space needs and opportunities within the Sector Plan area. Although located in a rural part of the county with vast amounts of private and passive open spaces, residents of Ashton can benefit from new accessible open spaces created to meet their active lifestyle needs. These new village center open spaces meet the criteria to be considered as Urban Open Spaces under the *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan*, which would allow for Legacy

Open Space implementation tools to support creation of these spaces.

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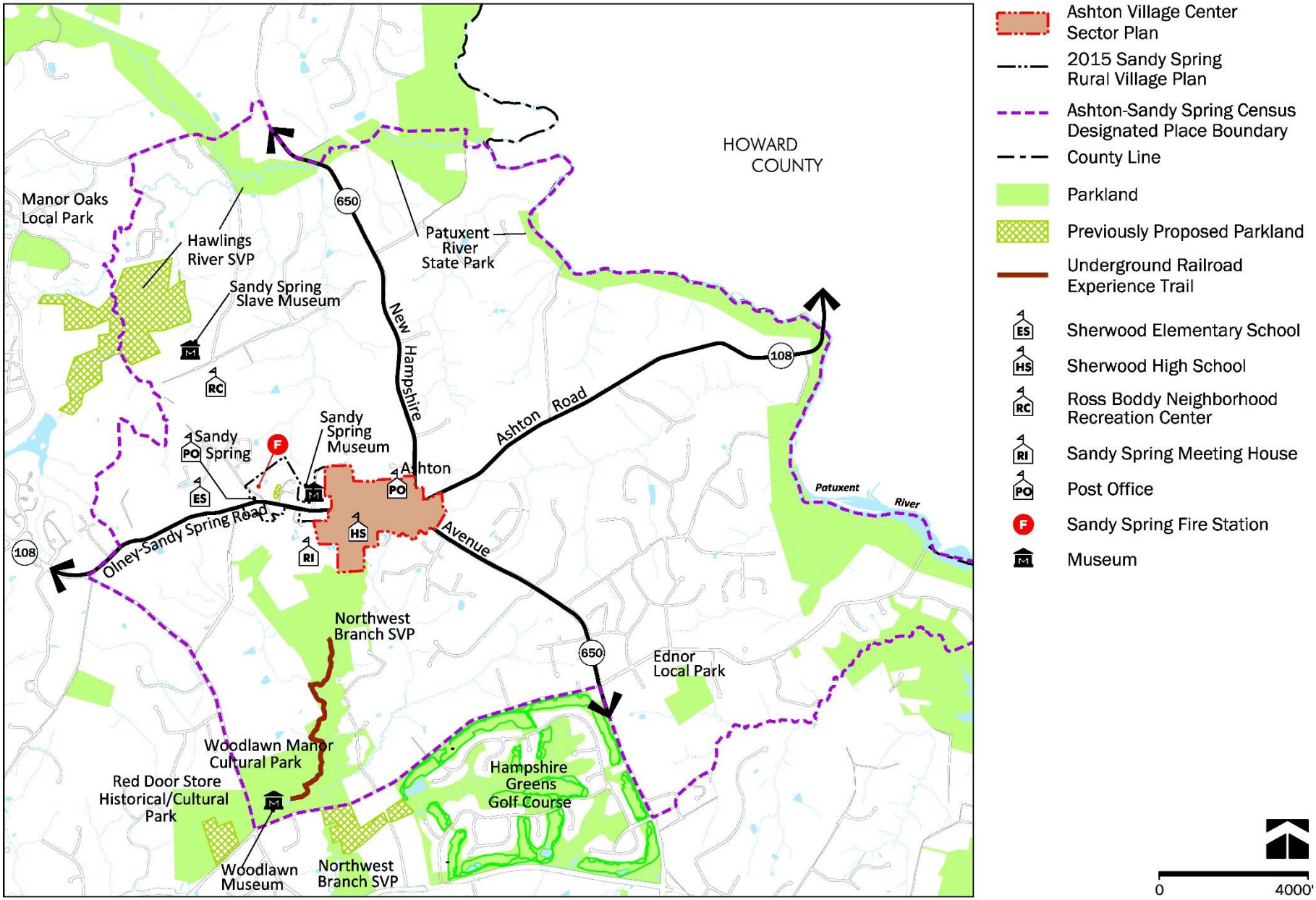
*Map 11. Community Facilities*



Two major considerations for Ashton are to provide:

- Active recreational opportunities for all ages, including the older adult population, and
- Strengthened connections to nearby public spaces, parks and historic programming.

This Plan recommends the creation of new open spaces for social gathering, play and active recreation with amenities that encourage social interaction, such as picnic areas, playgrounds, community gardens and dog parks. Opportunities for active amenities such as a skate park could be appropriate near the high school if land becomes available.

Two areas within the Sector Plan area have sufficient space to accommodate substantial new open space amenities: the land behind the townhouses and adjacent to an existing stormwater management facility in the northwest quadrant, and as part of the undeveloped land in the southeast quadrant.

A community playground is situated between the two cul-de-sacs (Ashton Club Way and Orion Club Drive), but nearly two acres of private open space in and around the stormwater pond have been identified as a "common area" on the record plat for the community. The declaration of covenants for the Ashton Village Homeowners Association (HOA) gives the HOA the right to dedicate or transfer any part of the common area to a public agency. Options should be explored to make this space more accessible and usable to the public instead of just for the members of the Ashton Village HOA.

*The stormwater management pond on the Ashton Village HOA property.*

*The large flat open area to the east of the Ashton Village HOA stormwater management pond could serve as a village green.*

The other major opportunity for open space, a public green and new amenities exists with any potential development of the properties

### *Park and Open Space Hierarchy*

As discussed in Montgomery Parks' *Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines*:

**For each plan area:**

- Provide for active recreation destinations located within or near the plan area, including courts, playgrounds and lawn areas large enough for pick up soccer, festivals or events, etc.
- Establish one or more central "civic greens," ranging in size from ½ to two acres, ideally located next to activating uses, with a mixture of hard and soft surfaces including a central lawn area for events.
- An interconnected system of sidewalks and trails to connect parks and open spaces.
- Wooded areas that provide a sense of contact with nature.

**For each neighborhood:** Ensure a neighborhood green or community use area is provided at least ¼ acre in size.

**For each block:** Provide an urban square, plaza or green area.

**For each building:** An outdoor recreation space.

**For each residence:** A private outdoor space.

on the southeast quadrant of the main intersection where the Sandy Spring Bank now sits. The easternmost portion of this collection of properties is a complex of wetlands and woodlands. The wetlands surround a spring that is the beginning of a tributary to the Patuxent River. These sensitive areas should be protected through Forest Conservation and remain in a natural condition. If feasible, a publicly accessible green should be located adjacent to the environmental features to provide visual access to the natural amenities and to make the usable portion of the space feel larger and more accessible to the public. Any green space in this area should also directly access a public or private road to make the area welcoming to the greater Ashton community.

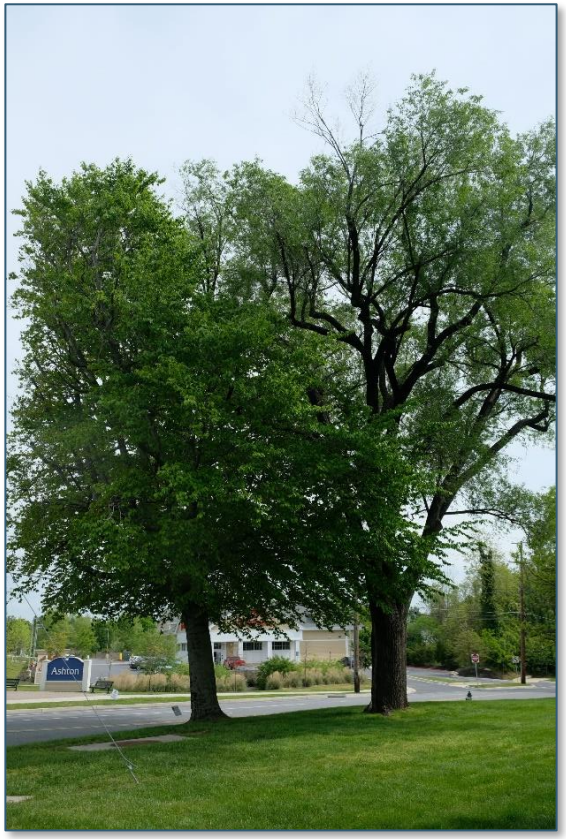
*View of undeveloped property behind the Sandy Spring Bank branch looking east from MD 650.*

To enhance accessibility to any public green on the southeast quadrant, a more linear neighborhood green could link the public green to MD 650, furthering the connection to the greater community. This linear green could also serve as an outdoor area fronted by commercial uses on the site, furthering the creation of a community gathering space.

Finally, a small open space area should be designated adjacent to the intersection of MD 650 and MD 108 to protect the iconic shade trees in this major intersection and the village center. This open space designation will ensure that these or other large trees will continue to enhance the character of Ashton.

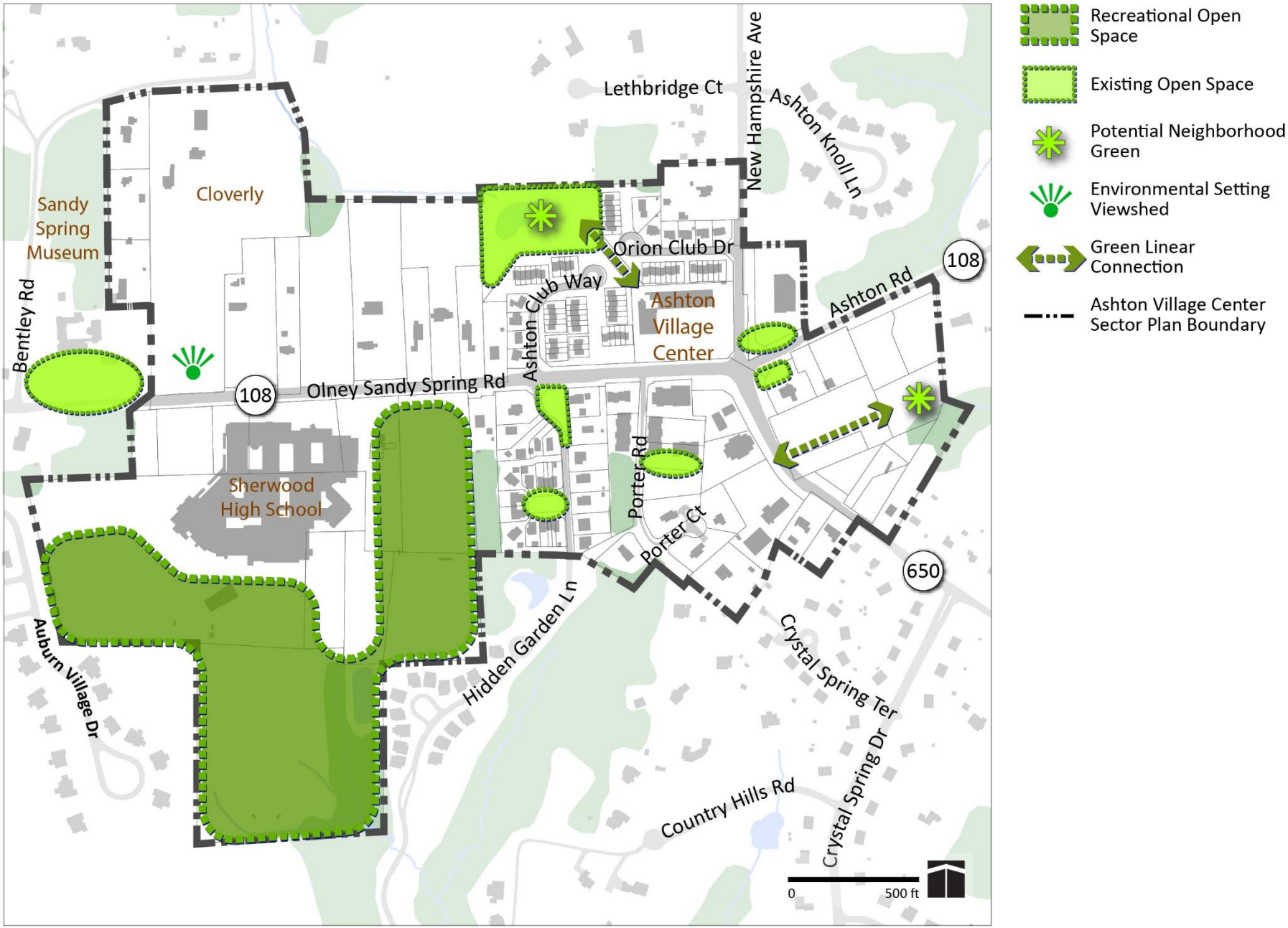
When designing these new open spaces, the following design best practices should be considered:

- Where practical, frame open spaces with building façades and uses that activate those spaces.
- Ensure that open spaces remain publicly accessible by avoiding fencing unless it is for safety, such as a tot lot or dog park, in which case context-sensitive fencing should be provided.




*Large shade trees at the corner of MD 108 and MD 650.*

*Map 12. Recommended Open Spaces*



#### 3.5.1.4 Trail Connections

The 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan* identified the Sherwood High School property as an important link connecting the sidewalks and sidepaths along the state highways to the large number of parks in the area. This Sector Plan reiterates support for this link to reach the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and the Underground Railroad Experience Trail.

There are two possible alignments for the trail on the high school property: one connecting to the athletic fields in the southeast of the school property and the other connecting to a parking lot on the northwest corner of the property. Either or both should be considered.

Within the Park property adjacent to Sherwood High School just outside the Sector Plan boundary there are multiple ways of increasing connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods and existing Park trails, including to the state champion white ash tree. These trails are highlighted on Map 13 and discussed in the Technical Appendix.

The 1998 Plan recommended extending the Northwest Branch Trail/Underground Railroad Experience Trail north of MD 108. The 2016 *Countywide Parks Trails Master Plan* recommended that this trail should not extend north of MD 108 due to insufficient existing or potential parkland and impacts to cultural and natural resources. This Plan confirms the 2016 trails plan and removes the previous recommendation from 1998.

*The state champion white ash tree, seen here in mid-May, is estimated to be over 300 years old.*

*A horse crossing sign across from Sherwood High School.*

*One end of the multiuse trail from Hidden Garden Lane to Hoffman Manor Drive just outside the Plan area.*

### 3.5.2 OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES

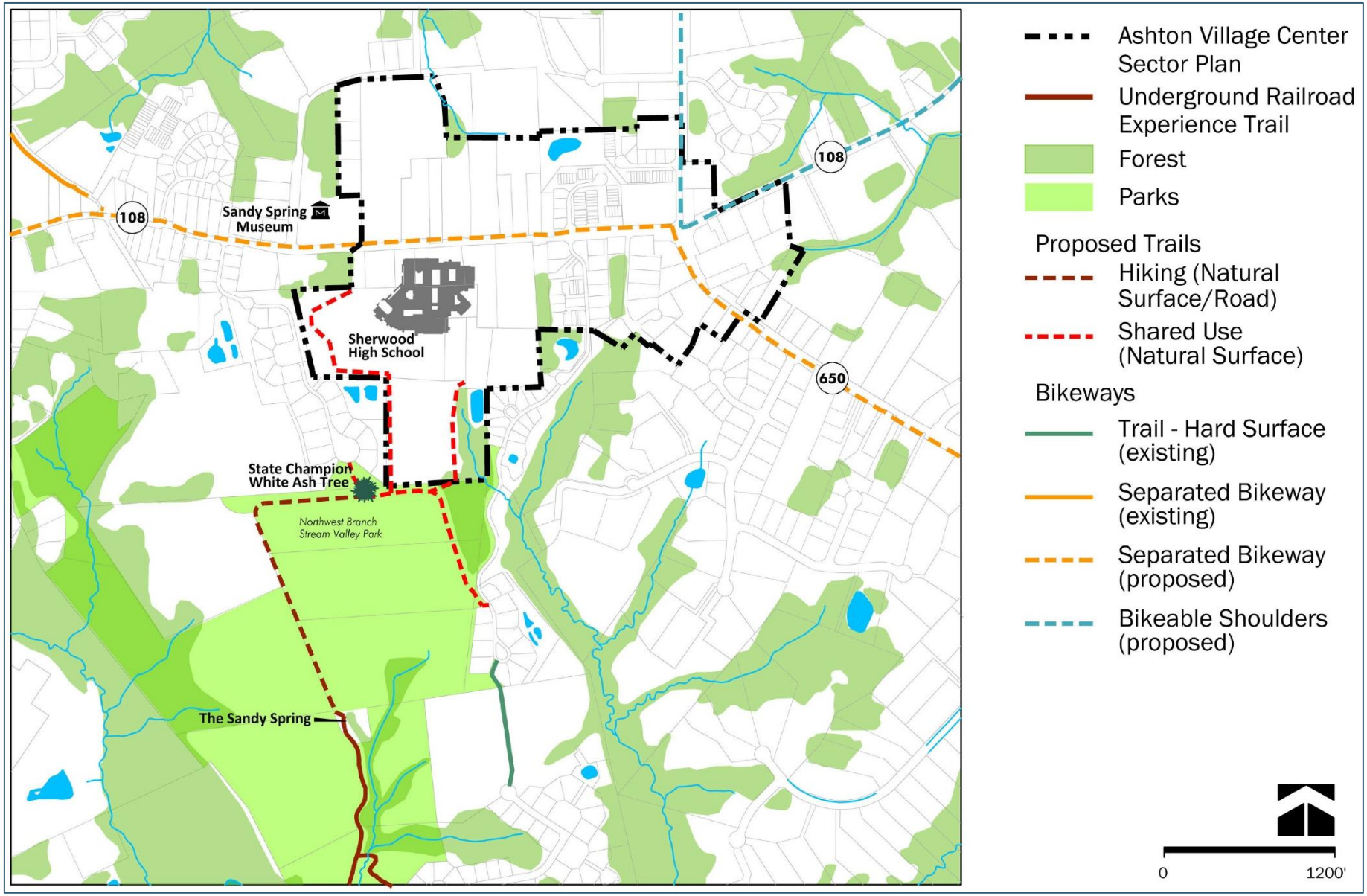
#### 3.5.2.1 Library

The Olney Library Branch on Olney-Laytonsville Road (MD 108) a few miles west of Ashton is the closest library facility. Given the area's low population density, the Olney Library adequately serves the needs of the Ashton area.

#### 3.5.2.2 Police

The Ashton community is served by the Montgomery County Department of Police's 4th Wheaton District. The police station is in Glenmont at the intersection of Randolph Road and Georgia Avenue. The current police service is adequate; no additional facilities are needed or being recommended to serve the area.

*Map 13. Proposed Trail Connections*



#### *3.5.2.3 Fire and Rescue*

The Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department, with a charter going back to 1925, operates Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Station 4 on Brooke Road which is just outside the plan boundary to the west in Sandy Spring. They also operate Station 40 on Georgia Avenue south of Olney. The original Station 4 was built in 1930 on MD 108 at Meeting House Road but moved to its current location in 2001. Station 4 serves Sandy Spring, Ashton, Brinklow, Ednor and Norwood. The existing fire station is sufficient to serve the build-out of Ashton based on current and future population projection.

#### *3.5.2.4 Public Schools*

Ashton is served by Sherwood High School, William H. Farquhar Middle School and Sherwood Elementary School. A school cluster adequacy test for 2024 shows that at the elementary, middle and high school levels in the Sherwood High School Cluster, an additional 142, 159 and 222 students, respectively, could be accommodated before exceeding the current program capacity.

At an individual school level, Sherwood Elementary School would require an additional 120 students to reach the utilization rate that would trigger a residential building moratorium in the school's service area. William H. Farquhar Middle School is 238 students away from reaching a moratorium utilization rate. Given the modest residential density increases included in this plan and analyzed in the Plan appendix, all school levels have sufficient capacity to accommodate the number of students that would be generated by the zoning recommended in this Plan.

### 3.5.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Open space recommendations:

1. Encourage new open spaces to provide amenities that accomodate social interaction, such as picnic areas, playgrounds, community gardens and dog parks.
2. Explore opportunities for active amenities such as a skate park near Sherwood High School if public land becomes available.
3. Consider options to make the Ashton Village HOA's common area more accessible and usable to the public.
4. New development in the southeast quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection should provide a publicly accessible public green space large enough to act as a civic gathering space. This space is encouraged to be adjacent to the environmental features to help the space feel larger. Any green space in this area should have direct frontage to a public or private road.
5. Consider using a linear neighborhood green or other similar open space that would connect a new public green in the southeast quadrant to MD 650.
6. Designate a small open space area adjacent to the southeast corner of the intersection of MD 650 and MD 108 to protect the existing large shade.
7. Frame open spaces with building façades and uses that activate those spaces wherever practical.
8. Do not enclose open spaces with fencing unless it is for safety, such as for a tot lot or dog park, in which case context-sensitive fencing should be provided.

Trail recommendations:

9. Coordinate with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Sherwood High School to construct a multiuse natural surface trail on either the east or west side of the school (or both) connecting the sidewalk along MD 108 with Park property to the south.
10. Remove the prior plan recommendation to continue the Northwest Branch Trail/Underground Railroad Experience Trail north of MD 108. This connection was removed by the 2016 *Countywide Parks Trails Master Plan* but is in the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan*.

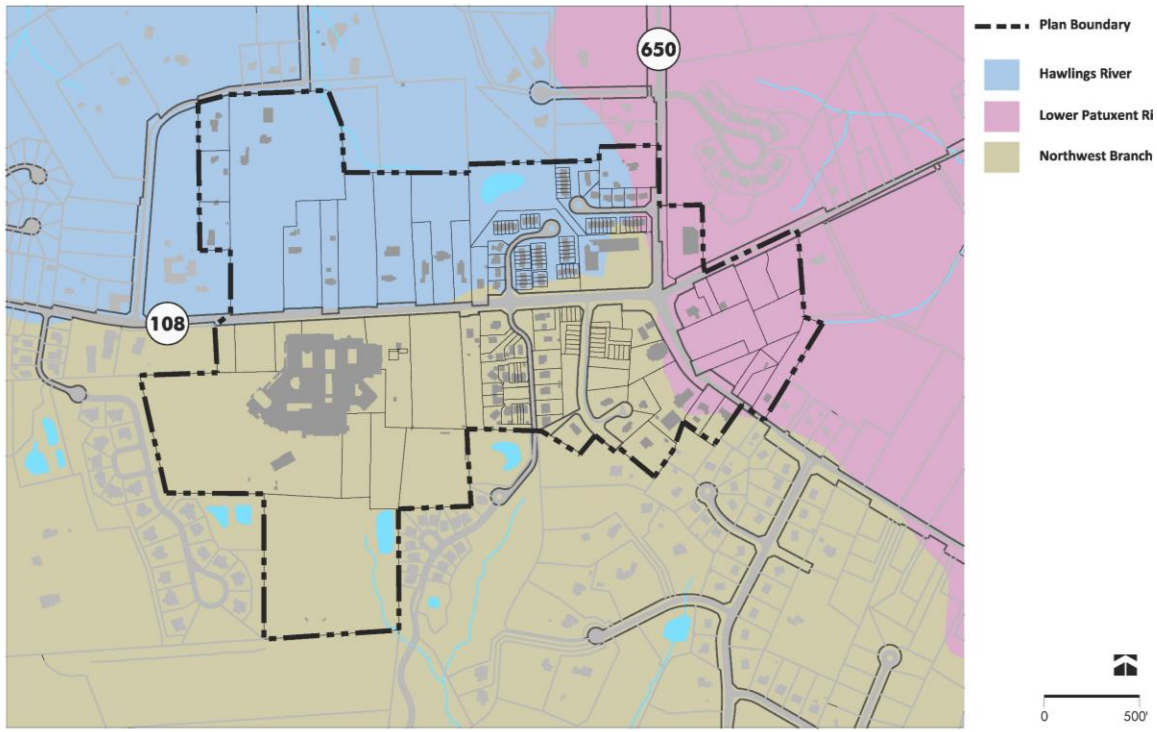
## 3.6 Environment

### 3.6.1 WATERSHEDS

Approximately 75% of the Sector Plan area is located either in the direct Lower Patuxent River watershed or in the Hawlings River watershed, which is a tributary to the Patuxent River. The State *Patuxent River Policy Plan* from 1984 (amended in 1997) was developed to protect the Patuxent River. Although protection of water quality was the main goal, the Plan recognized the need for maintaining the viability of existing town centers.

The Patuxent Primary Management Area (PMA), was recommended by the 1993 *Functional Plan for the Patuxent River Watershed* in response to the State policy plan. The PMA guidelines are particularly important due to the presence of two drinking water reservoirs in the Patuxent: the Triadelphia and T. Howard Duckett (Rocky Gorge) Reservoirs. The guidelines recommend limits on impervious levels within a certain distance of water bodies, specifically within 1,320 feet of the mainstem of the Patuxent River and within 660 feet of any of its tributaries. It also recommends that reforestation take place along all denuded stream valleys. These measures only apply to land under development in low density zones, and therefore only apply to the RC-Zoned properties in the Rural Buffer neighborhood.

*Map 14. Watersheds*




The existing and proposed zoning of the Village Core neighborhood properties are not subject to PMA guidelines, but will be subject to the *Environmental Guidelines for Development and the Forest Conservation Law*. The RC-Zoned areas will continue to provide the additional measures necessary to protect the watershed of the Patuxent River and Rocky Gorge Reservoir located downstream of Ashton.

Development within the Plan area should be sensitive to the existing landscape. The goal of the County Environmental Site Design method of stormwater control is to maintain the pre-development runoff characteristics of a site by integrating its design with its natural hydrology. Rather than completely altering the natural topography, new structures are designed and built into the existing landscape. Small and frequent controls are then used to capture and treat runoff. Environmental Site Design will be used in all new development to prevent soil erosion, maintain existing levels of ground water recharge, maintain the biological integrity of receiving streams and protect against flooding from large and frequent storms. All of these are critical to maintaining

good water quality, including the Patuxent River and the Rocky Gorge Reservoir.

### 3.6.2 SHADE

Shading and cooling features are particularly important in more developed areas with higher predicted pedestrian volumes such as the Village Core. Spaces that are planned for public gathering, pedestrian passage and other areas subject to the heat-island effect should be designed to increase shade coverage, including tree canopy and other means, such as awnings and building orientation. Many of the commercial properties in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area have limited existing shade and tree cover. Opportunities exist in rights-of-way and on private property to increase shade coverage and should be pursued through programs such as Shades of Green and funding from the State Highway Administration. New construction and reconstruction should consider building and solar orientation when locating outdoor gathering spaces. New development should ensure large canopy tree species are included in the landscaping.

The 1998 Plan had a recommendation to protect the entrances into Ashton to create a unique sense of the village versus the rural surroundings. Similarly, the distinction between Ashton and Sandy Spring is important to maintain. This Plan continues these recommendations and encourages maintaining and establishing future large shade trees and forest edges that overarch the road at these rural entry points.

Recommendations:

- Any new development or redevelopment should include large canopy tree species in its landscaping.
- Consider awning, building orientation and other means of providing shade in any new development or redevelopment.
- Maintain existing and plant new shade trees that overarch MD 108 and MD 650.

### 3.6.3 GREENHOUSE GASES

This Plan advances carbon emission reductions through smart growth principals; a mix of building types and land uses, multiple transportation options, open space protection, and the promotion of walkable and bikeable neighborhoods. Further greenhouse gas reductions can be achieved by retrofitting older buildings and through the construction of new energy-efficient buildings. Given the relatively small geographical scope of the Ashton Village Center and the minor changes to land use recommendations, the impact of this Sector Plan on population and the transportation system in the area will be very limited. Proposed residential zoning in the Village Core could yield a net reduction in total vehicles over what the current commercial zoning would generate given that commercial density is more traffic intensive. This results in an impact to the overall carbon footprint that is not detectable using current analysis methods required by Montgomery County Code Section 33A-14.

### 3.6.4 ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Retain the existing RC zoning in the Rural Buffer neighborhood for continued water quality protection in the PMA.
2. Incorporate shade-creating elements into the building and site design with any new development or redevelopment, including but not limited to:
   a. Including large canopy tree species in its landscaping,
   b. Using awnings and canopies over doors and windows, and
   c. Orienting buildings to try to provide shade to any public or outdoor gathering space.
3. Maintain existing and plant new shade trees in strategic locations that will eventually overarch MD 108 and MD 650, including at the entry points to the Village.
4. Promote existing tree programs such as Shades of Green to increase shade and canopy coverage on private properties.

## 3.7 Historic Preservation

### 3.7.1 BACKGROUND

Despite the village's long history, many of Ashton's 19th and early-20th century buildings have been demolished, leaving few remaining historic structures within the Plan boundary. Just outside the Plan area, numerous properties have been designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. In addition, the County's Burial Sites Inventory contains a number of known or presumed burial site locations near the Sector Plan area (see Map 15). Within the Sector Plan boundary, only one resource is designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Cloverly (MPHP Resource #28/65), circa 1849-1852, is located north of MD 108 across from Sherwood High School, near the Sandy Spring Museum.

While there are no known archaeological sites or cemeteries within the Ashton Village Center Plan area, no formal archaeological surveys have been completed to verify this information. Given the area's deep history, some properties have the potential for archaeological sites associated either with the region's indigenous people or with the area's colonial or post-colonial history. The grounds of the Cloverly Master Plan Historic Site may include unrecorded archaeological sites from throughout the area's history.

Several surviving older homes within the Plan boundary have been found eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The circa 1896 Queen Anne-style Sweetbriar property at 17920 New Hampshire Avenue; circa 1925 bungalow at 122 Olney-Sandy Spring Road; and circa 1914 Colonial Revival-style house and circa 1940 guest house at 17838 and 17836 Hidden Garden Lane reflect various architectural styles and phases in Ashton's development.

Some auto-centric wayfinding signs highlight places in the Montgomery County Heritage Area. This Plan recommends adding signage scaled for pedestrian and bicycle usage that connects the village center to the abundant historic and cultural resources of the greater Sandy Spring/Ashton community.

It also recommends the full implementation of the *Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan* (2002), which identifies Ashton within the "Crossroads & Cultures" thematic area that celebrates the broader community's deep Quaker and African American heritage.

Future development should explore opportunities to integrate interpretative signage, markers or public art that commemorate Ashton's origins as a rural commercial crossroads and home to free black settlers.

***Cloverly, circa 1849-1852***

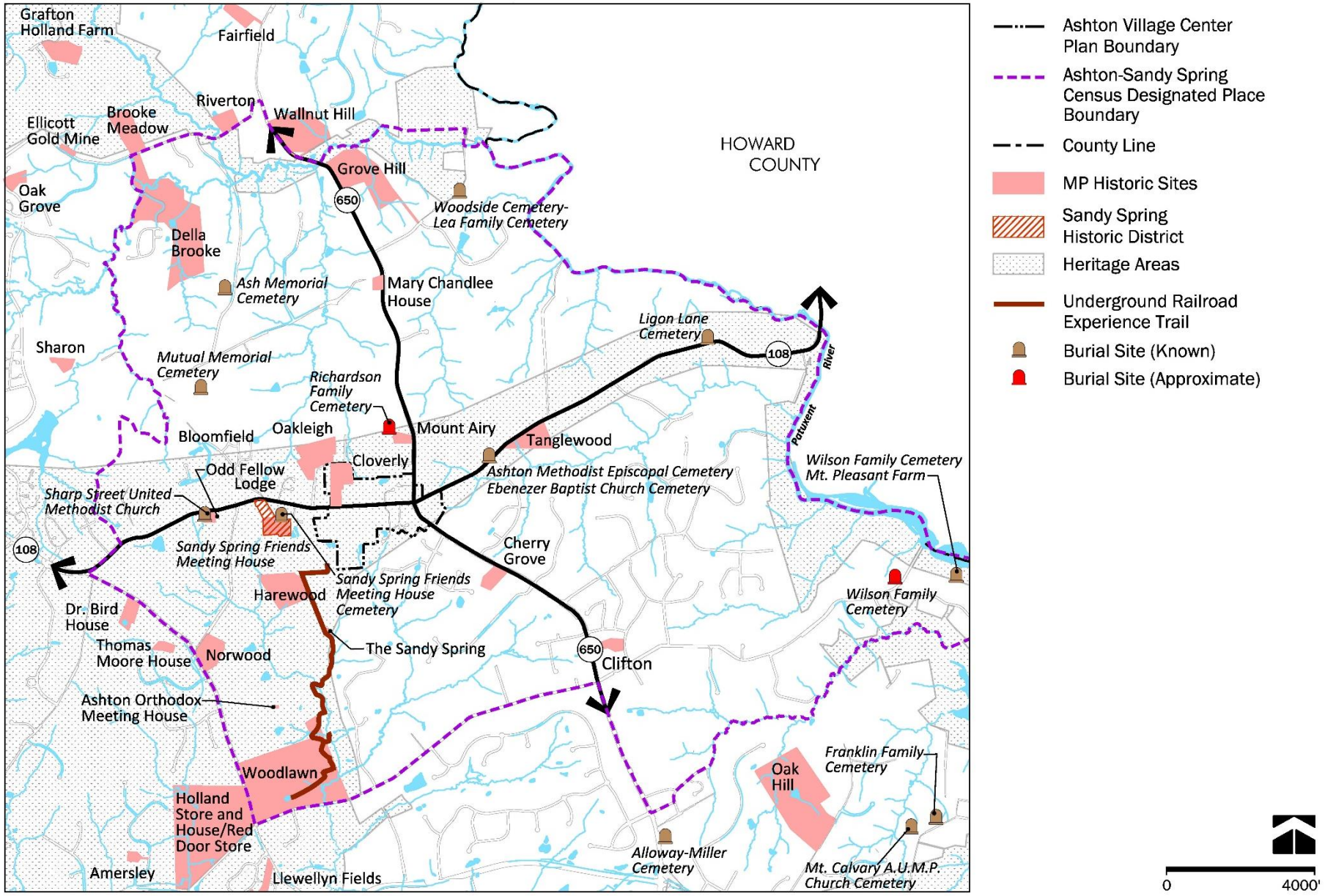
*Master Plan for Historic Preservation*
Resource 28/65

Historically known as Sherwood, Cloverly was built by Benjamin Rush Roberts between 1849 and 1852.

The two-and-a-half story Greek Revival-style brick house sits at the end of a long drive that stretches north from the Olney-Sandy Spring Road.

The property includes the main historic dwelling, with several additions, a historic carriage house/stable, and a contemporary barn.

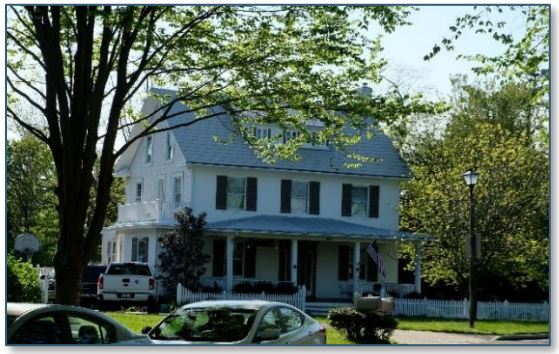
*Map 15. Historic Resources*



*17920 New Hampshire Avenue*

*122 Olney-Sandy Spring Road*

*17836 Hidden Garden Lane*



*17838 Hidden Garden Lane*

### 3.7.2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide pedestrian and bicycle scale wayfinding signage that connects the village center to the abundant historic and cultural resources of the greater Sandy Spring/Ashton community.
2. Continue implementation of the *Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan* (2002).
3. During future development or major redevelopment, consider opportunities to integrate interpretative signage, markers or public art that commemorate Ashton's origins as a rural commercial crossroads and home to free black settlers.

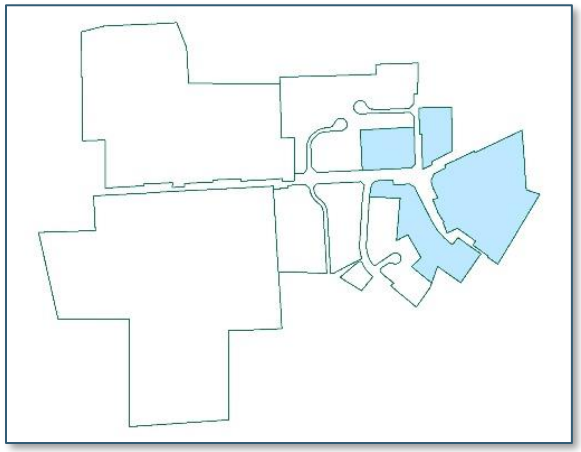

*An example of pedestrian scale wayfinding from Riverdale Park.*


*The Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail sign and map.*

# CHAPTER 4: NEIGHBORHOODS

The Ashton Village Center Sector Plan has three plan neighborhoods, each with a distinct context that requires specific recommendations. The following sections detail neighborhood and site-specific recommendations for land use, zoning, design and other potential impacts for the three neighborhoods.

## 4.1 Village Core Neighborhood



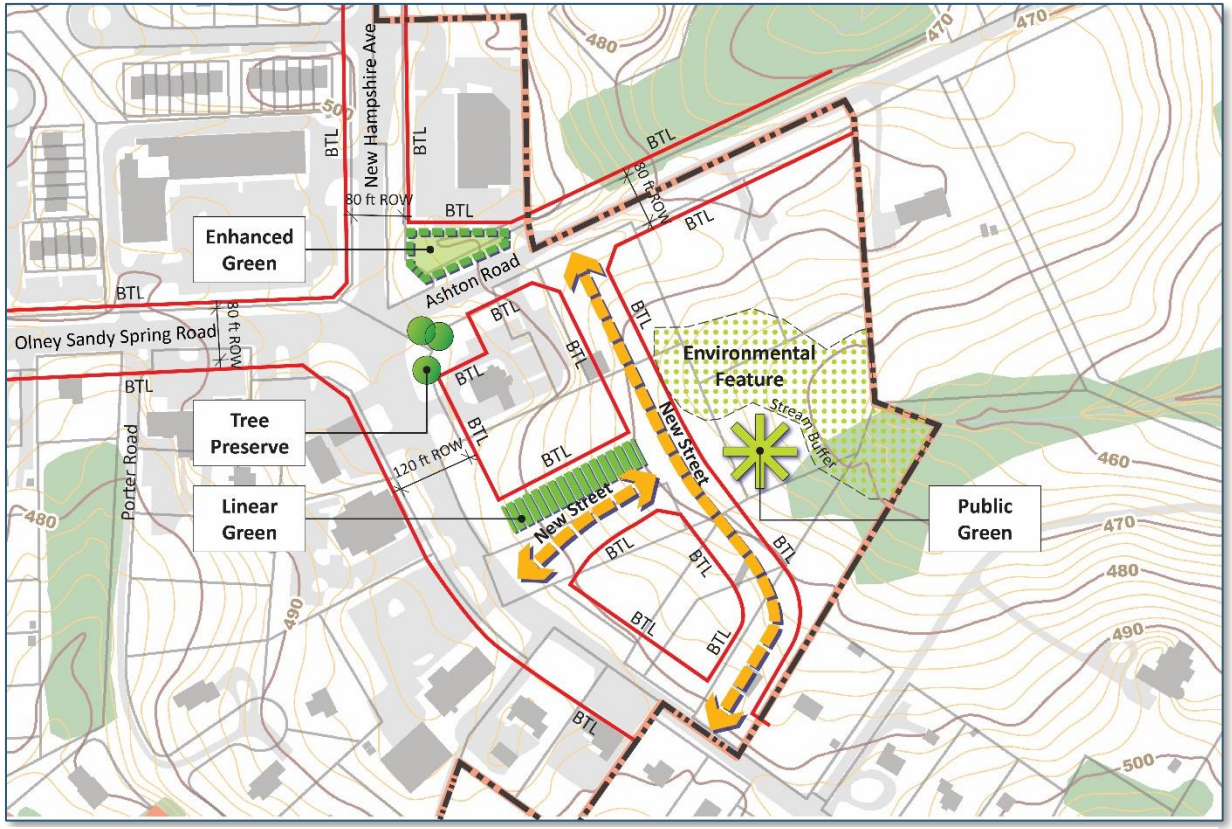



*Figure 7. The Village Core Framework. (BTL = Build-to line)*

The Village Core neighborhood is located at the intersection of MD 108 and MD 650 and is both the current and planned focal point of community activity. Commercial uses define the immediate four corners of this intersection, although the southeast quadrant is largely undeveloped. Recommendations for the Village Core will be presented first for the overall

neighborhood, then by intersection quadrant.

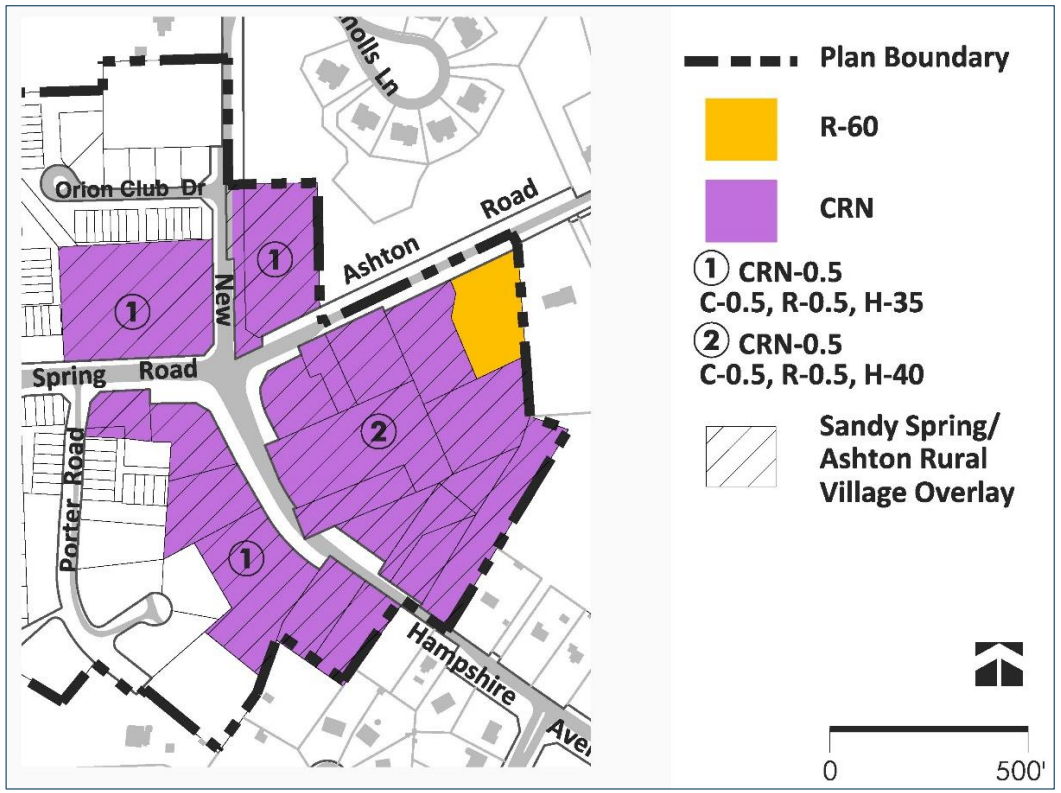
### 4.1.1 OVERALL ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

This Plan proposes a uniform density for the entire area of CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35 with the exception of the southeast quadrant, where heights of up to 40 feet would be allowed. A total FAR of 0.5 accommodates all current development in the Plan area and allows for modest expansion of either commercial or residential uses on all properties.

The change from CRT to CRN zoning is recommended because the CRN zone more closely aligns with the existing SSA Overlay zone regarding land uses than the CRT zone does. The use of the CRN zone would also be consistent with the recommendations from the 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan*.

*Figure 8. Aerial view (2019) of Village Core neighborhood.*


*Map 16. Village Core Neighborhood Proposed Zoning*



### 4.1.2 SOUTHWEST QUADRANT

The existing zoning in the southwest quadrant of the main intersection is CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35, with the exception of the Christ Community Church of Ashton, which is R-90.

Without substantial property consolidation, appropriate limitations of building height and necessary parking make substantial redevelopment in the quadrant unlikely. Two existing developments on the west side of MD 650, the Alloway Building at 0.37 FAR and the Cricket Book Shop at 0.26 FAR, are the only two properties that currently exceed a total FAR of 0.25. For reference, the mixed-use portion of the Ashton Market development recently approved at the intersection of MD 108 and Porter Road is 0.34 FAR. The southwest Quadrant also has no residential development, though there are residential uses immediately to the south and west of the properties.

An existing section of sidepath—about 300 feet—is located along the west side of MD 650 from in front of the gas station to the north driveway of the Christ Community Church of Ashton. A shared-use path is recommended on the west side of MD 650 to continue this path to the south.

To provide a safer path and to improve traffic flow through the intersection, this Plan also recommends that two of the four curb cuts from the Exxon station be replaced by this path and an additional landscaping buffer.

*The Alloway Building (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 820000280) was built in 2001 on what was known as the "Cuff Property" in the 1998 Plan, which rezoned the land from R-90 to C-1; it was subsequently rezoned CRT-0.75 in 2014.*


*The recently approved Ashton Market development (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 820180160) along Porter Road contains 20 townhouses and a mixed-use building containing three apartments above commercial space for a restaurant or other retail use. The mixed-use building is the larger structure on the upper right.*

Recommendations for the southwest quadrant:

1. Rezone all Village Core properties in the southwest quadrant from CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35 and R-90 to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35.
2. Extend the sidepath on the west side of MD 650 both to the north and south of the currently built segment in front of the Alloway building.
3. Eliminate the two driveways closest to the intersection at the filling station and replace with the sidepath and a vegetated buffer between the path and MD 650. There may be room for parking in the parts of the driveways outside the rights-of-way.
4. Pursue pedestrian and/or vehicular interconnectivity between the Ashton Market development and any redevelopment of the gas station property.
5. Provide additional shade trees on both private property and within the right-of-way along MD 650.

### 4.1.3 NORTHWEST QUADRANT

The northwest quadrant is currently zoned PD-5. Since the Planned Development zone is no longer used in the current zoning ordinance, a replacement zone must be found. There are two distinct land uses in the PD-5 Zoned area, the southeastern portion

which contains the Ashton Village Shopping Center, and the northwest portion which contains one-family attached and detached dwellings. No formal open space exists at the shopping center. However, a pedestrian connection through the corner of the shopping center leads to the playground and open space in the residential portion of the Ashton Village development, and the area near the intersection of MD 108 and MD 650 is largely green.

Sidewalks and sidepaths are lacking along both frontages of MD 108 and MD 650, with only lead-in sidewalks to the Ashton Village Shopping Center and a short sidewalk section at the main intersection that leads to the existing bus stop.


*Bus stop on the north side of MD 108 in front of the Ashton Village Shopping Center.*

Recommendations for the northwest quadrant:

1. Rezone the Ashton Village Shopping Center property from PD-5 to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35.
2. Provide a bus shelter to provide shade and seating in front of the Ashton Village Shopping Center on the north side of MD 108.
3. Construct a shared-use sidepath along the north side of MD 108.
4. Construct a sidewalk along the west side of MD 650 along the frontage of the Ashton Village Shopping Center.
5. Coordinate with SHA and the Ashton Village Shopping Center owners to enhance landscaping and to incorporate structural elements including a brick screening or seating wall along portions of MD 650 and MD 108 frontage.
6. If the Ashton Village Center redevelops, encourage a mix of uses with ground floor commercial activity activating the street and with parking behind.
7. Maintain adequate pedestrian lead walks from MD 108 through to the townhouse development behind.

*The Ashton Village Center (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 819841410) was completed in 1986.*

### 4.1.4 NORTHEAST QUADRANT

The northeast quadrant is currently developed with a CVS pharmacy that was built in 2016. Existing zoning in this quadrant is denser than the other quadrants: CRT-1.25 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-35.


*The CVS was built in 2016 under the site's prior C-2 zone (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 820140150).*

During the 2014 Zoning Ordinance rewrite, a non-standard zoning conversion for this property was necessary from the C-2 zone because of height and density limits in the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Overlay zone. The resulting zone, however, with a total FAR of 1.25, is still out of proportion for a rural village and the pharmacy was only built at a final FAR of 0.15.

This is the only quadrant that has fully completed sidewalks and a section of sidepath, both of which were constructed with the pharmacy. Additionally, a small, though underutilized open space area was installed at the corner, with two benches and an Ashton monument sign in front of a stormwater management facility. The design of this open space, with a lack of shade or vegetative buffering from the busy intersection, is uninviting.

The road geometry on this corner of this intersection meets at a less than 90-degree angle, and very close to the curb is an existing utility pole. This creates a sharp turning radius that has proven difficult for larger vehicles, especially those towing trailers, to navigate. The state recently moved the stop bar back on southbound MD 650 to provide more room for right turning vehicles from MD 108, but this solution is imperfect as it reduces visibility for southbound motorists, and now frequently causes traffic to block the entrance to the Ashton Village Shopping Center. The utility pole should be relocated and the northeast corner reconstructed to increase the turning radius without excessively widening the crossing for pedestrians or encouraging unsafe turning movements for personal vehicles.

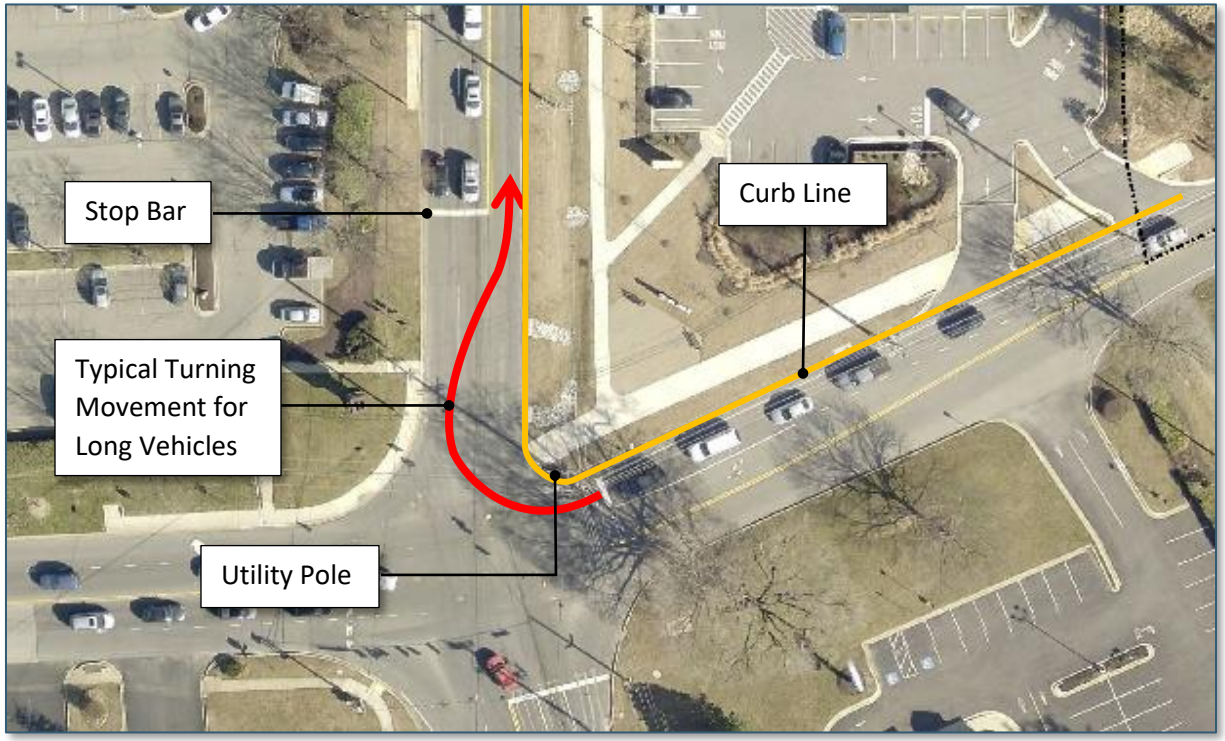



*Figure 9. 2019 aerial view of the MD 108/650 intersection. The turning radius in the northeast corner is very tight, especially for longer vehicles and those with trailers, which led SHA to move the stop bar for southbound MD 650 well back from the intersection.*

Recommendations for the northeast quadrant:

1. Rezone the property from CRT-1.25 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-35 to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35.
2. Relocate the utility pole at the corner to and modify the curve to enable easier vehicle turning without negatively impacting pedestrian safety.
3. Plant understory street trees in the right-of-way of MD 108 and MD 650 to increase greenery and shade and to provide a buffer to the open space.
4. If the property on the northeast quadrant redevelops, move the building to be adjacent to the street and improve the open space with shading and buffering.

### 4.1.5 SOUTHEAST QUADRANT

About half of the southeast quadrant is zoned CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35, with portions also in the R-60 and Rural Cluster (RC) Zones. The southeast quadrant is home to a Sandy Spring Bank branch, a BG&E electrical substation and a single-family detached home but is otherwise undeveloped.

The 1998 Plan confirmed the C-1 (Convenience Commercial) zone for the properties located at the corner and R-60 for the land further away from the intersection in order to maintain the separation of uses and only allow single-family detached homes there.


*The Sandy Spring Bank branch was constructed in 1979.*

In 2008, the Planning Board approved Ashton Meeting Place, a largely commercial development with seven single-family detached units (see sidebar), but the developer did not construct it.

The southeast quadrant is still largely undeveloped and has the best opportunity for redevelopment within the Village Core. No sidewalks or bike facilities exist within this quadrant, so redevelopment projects should provide sidewalks as part of necessary frontage improvements. Any development in this quadrant should also strive to create interconnected vehicle and pedestrian circulation which will help strengthen the whole Village Core.

The southeast quadrant also presents the best opportunity for creating a new, meaningful public open space and gathering place. During the time of development, the open space requirements mandated by

#### *Ashton Meeting Place*

"Ashton Meeting Place" (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 820060230) is a development that was proposed for the southeast quadrant of Ashton. The project included nearly 100,000 square feet of commercial space and 13 apartments in mixed-use buildings. This proposal prompted considerable controversy and the Planning Board in 2007 denied the application, determining that it could not meet the master plan's objectives of preserving village scale and character and did not follow the design guidelines.

The project developer subsequently proposed less commercial development and replaced the apartments with single-family detached units (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 820080040).

*The layout of the approved but never built Ashton Meeting Place.*

### *1998 Plan Erratum*

During development of the 1998 Plan, allowing mixed-use development in the southeast quadrant was considered but the County Council ultimately requested removal of this recommendation in their resolution approving the plan (p. 20 of the resolution found in the back of the 1998 Plan). The printed document, however, inadvertently left the two sentences in the Plan document.

The language pertained to providing "flexibility in placement of commercial uses in the southeast quadrant to encourage design that better integrates residential and commercial uses" and the idea that applying the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone would allow the necessary flexibility to achieve this recommendation (p. 39 of the 1998 Plan).

The gist of the County Council's decision was that there was a deliberate choice to avoid the mixing of uses in the southeast quadrant.

zoning should be clustered to create a publicly accessible green, ideally located to take advantage of the on-site environmental features while remaining accessible to the public. Woodlands and wetlands have been previously identified in the eastern part of the quadrant and should be protected during any development application. At the corner in front of the existing bank, large canopy trees serve as a landmark in Ashton and should be protected if possible. Designation within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan as important open spaces will provide additional tools to support the creation of these spaces.

In the southeast corner, the proposed zoning should be consistent with the other three corners at CRN-0.5 total FAR, but the maximum allowable height is 40 feet instead of 35 feet. The additional height should be limited to certain buildings and not applied consistently across all new buildings in the quadrant. The BG&E property is an exception that should remain under its current zone, R-60.

Because the community and the landowner have a strong desire to continue a bank use on the southeast corner, the SSA Overlay zone, which is being retained in an altered form, should contain language allowing this use to be continued with any redevelopment. The revised overlay allows a drive-thru in the CRN zone but with Limited Use standards requiring the vehicular circulation associated with the drive-thru to be screened from the state roads.

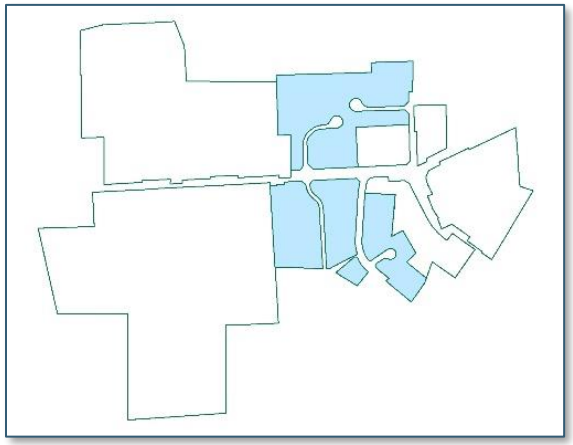
Recommendations for the southeast quadrant:

1. Retain the R-60 zone for the BG&E property.
2. Rezone all other properties in the southeast quadrant from CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35 to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-40.
3. Ensure a variety of building widths, building heights and the number of building floors to achieve compatibility with existing surrounding development and maintenance of the rural village character.
4. Provide sidewalks along MD 108 and MD 650.
5. Interconnected vehicle access to both MD 108 and MD 650 should be provided through streets built to a public standard, including sidewalks, street trees and street parking were feasible. The circulation shall be designed to discourage cut-through traffic.
6. Design any future drive-thru uses to avoid vehicle queuing between the building edge and a public roadway.
7. Provide a publicly accessible open space, ideally adjacent to the environmental features at the eastern edge of the quadrant.
8. Provide a linear green space to connect to the primary public open space to the sidewalk along MD 650.
9. Retain a small green area near the MD 108/650 intersection to protect the

mature shade trees there to the extent feasible.

10. Designate the proposed open spaces within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan.

## 4.2 Residential Edge Neighborhood



The portion of the Plan area immediately to the west of the Village Core neighborhood is primarily made up of residential communities developed between the 1980 and 1998 Plans. Behind the Ashton Village Shopping Center in the northwest quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection, the Ashton Village homes along Orion Club Drive and Ashton Club Way were completed in 1986 and are part of the same PD-5 zone as the shopping center. The homes along Hidden Garden Lane just east of the high school, known as Wyndcrest, were also built after the 1980 Plan was approved, although two of the Wyndcrest houses are older homes eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Zoning in the Wyndcrest community is R-90; the project was built as an optional method project, which allowed the mix of housing types. Both communities contain single-family detached houses and townhouses.

Along Porter Road, recently approved but unbuilt townhomes that are part of a project known as Ashton Market are in this neighborhood; it was rezoned in 2017 to the TF-10 zone (Limited Map Amendment No. H-119). At the end of Porter Road are a few single-family detached homes in the R-90 zone on modest sized lots.

*Homes in the Wyndcrest community along Hidden Garden Lane. The Wyndcrest community, a mix of single-family detached and attached homes, incorporates several older homes with newer dwellings of exceptional design. The new houses were built in the mid-1990s.*

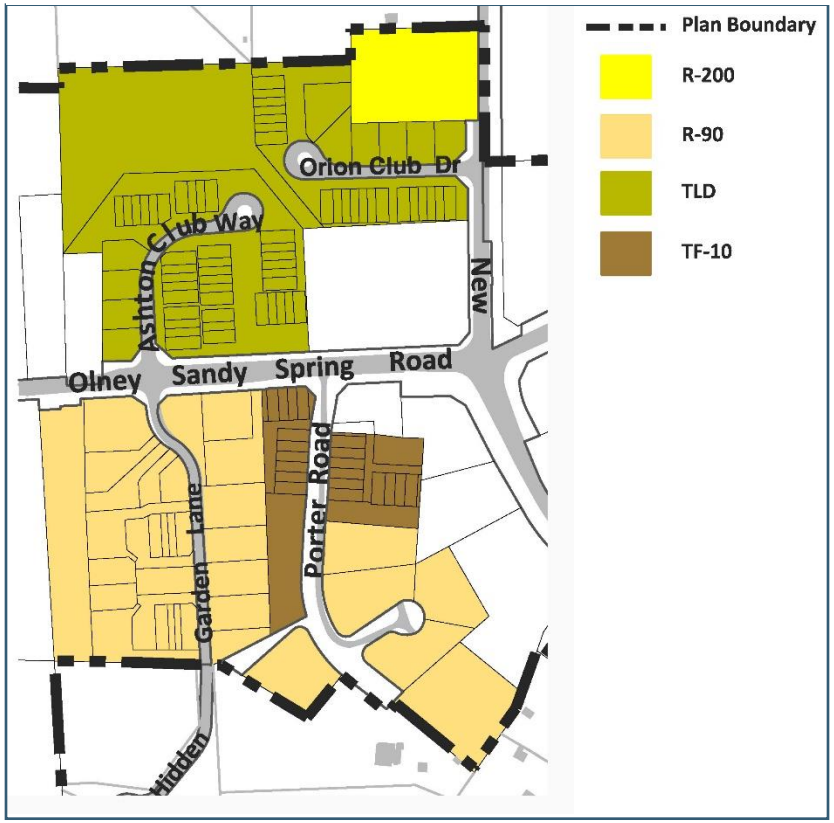
The PD-5 zoning for the residential portion of the Ashton Village is no longer used in the current zoning ordinance, so a replacement zone is needed. Four of the homes on the north side of Orion Club Drive that were once part of the PD zone are currently in the R-200 zone following approval of the 1998 Plan. The Townhouse Low Density (TLD) zone is appropriate for the Ashton Village residential community (for both the PD-5 and R-200 properties), accounting for the number and types of existing dwelling units, lot sizes and setbacks.

*Townhouses in Ashton Village, which contains 59 attached and 10 detached homes.*

The existing zoning in the remainder of the Residential Edge remains appropriate as these areas are already developed or are being developed with no additional recommended changes to land use.

*Figure 10. Aerial view (2019) of Residential Edge neighborhood.*


*Map 17. Residential Edge Neighborhood Proposed Zoning.*



Bicycle and pedestrian circulation in the Residential Edge neighborhood is sporadic, with existing sidewalks on the south side of MD 108, within the Wyndcrest community and within the Ashton Village residential area. Improvements are needed to ensure continuous connections between these residential communities and to the Village Core.

There is no sidewalk on the west side of MD 650 connecting Orion Club Drive to the Ashton Village Shopping Center or along the north side of MD 108. The MD 650 sidewalk should be completed and a shared-use trail installed along the north side of MD 108.

*The west side of MD 650 between Orion Club Drive and the Ashton Village Shopping Center.*

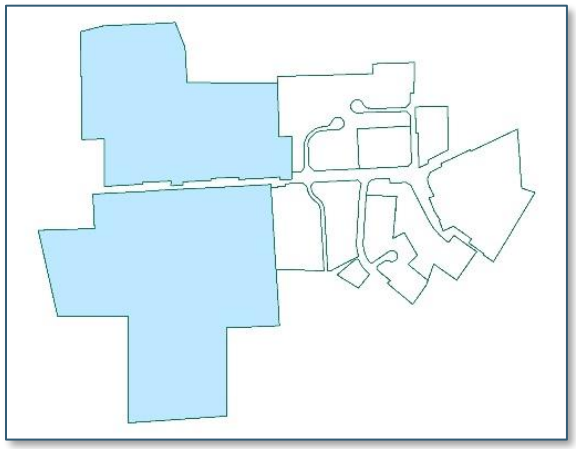
Open space in the Residential Edge neighborhood is mostly privatized or designed to feel private and serving of the adjacent residential communities. A roughly 3 acre open lawn area surrounding the stormwater pond is owned by the Ashton Village Homeowners Association. The open areas around the pond may be suitable for a village gathering space. Retrofitting the pond according to current standards would offer opportunities to redesign this space and add amenities. A playground on the property currently signed for the exclusive use of the Ashton Village homeowners would ideally be incorporated into this gathering space. An existing sidewalk connects these open spaces to the Ashton Village Shopping Center aiding in accessibility from all points in the village center.

*View from Ashton Village common area showing the opening to the Ashton Village Shopping Center.*

Recommendations for the Residential Edge neighborhood:

1. Retain the R-90 and TF-10 Zones for all properties south of MD 108 currently in those zones.
2. Retain the R-200 zone for the 1.5-acre property at 17920 New Hampshire Avenue.
3. Rezone the residential and open space portions of the Ashton Village development from PD-5 to TLD.
4. Extend the sidewalk on the west side of MD 650 from the Ashton Village Shopping Center to Orion Club Drive.
5. Provide a sidepath along the north side of MD 108 from the existing path at the Sandy Spring Museum to the MD 650 intersection.
6. Pursue options including a future public/private partnership to provide an enhanced community gathering space in the open space adjacent to the stormwater retention pond in the Ashton Village Development.

## 4.4 Rural Buffer Neighborhood



The western half of the Plan area currently serves as a buffer that separates and distinguishes the village centers of Ashton and Sandy Spring. This buffer has been part of the previous plans in the area and this Plan maintains those recommendations. Sherwood High School, in the RC zone, occupies the south side of MD 108 in this Plan neighborhood.

On the north side of MD 108 is a mix of older single-family homes built in the 1950s and more contemporary homes constructed in the 2000s, generally on larger lots than in the rest of the Sector Plan area. Horse pastures and other agricultural uses still exist here too. This area is in the RC zone.

*Horses graze in a pasture across MD 108 from Sherwood High School.*

Cloverly, built in the mid-19th Century and designated in the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation, is at the western edge of the Sector Plan area, adjacent to the Sandy Spring Museum (see sidebar on page 46).

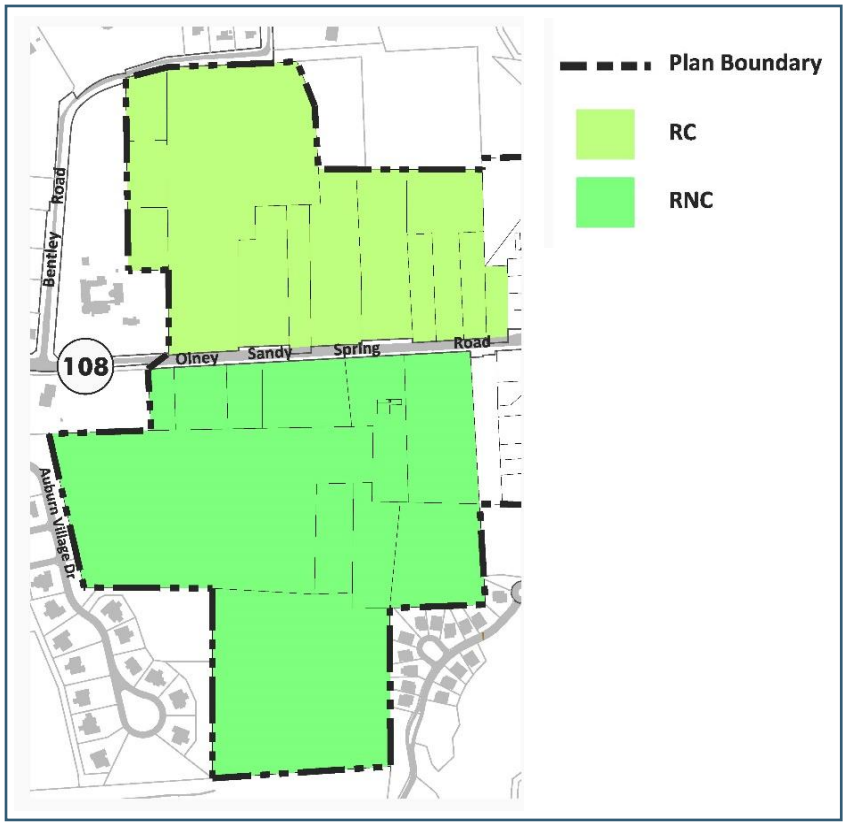
An existing, substandard sidewalk connects the village centers of Sandy Spring and Ashton along the south side of MD 108. The width and alignment of this sidewalk varies but generally is four-feet wide rather than the five-feet preferred today.

*The driveway on the Cloverly property.*

Immediately west of the Plan boundary is a public gathering place in front of the Sandy Spring Museum. This space is used for the annual Strawberry Festival and other events. The completion of the shared-use path on the north side of MD 108 would help make this gathering space more suitable for use by residents of Ashton satisfying some of the identified need for a public gathering space. Sherwood High School also has open space, generally improved with a track and field, and sports fields which can be used by the community outside of school hours. Immediately south of the high school is M-NCPPC-owned parkland with numerous existing and future trail opportunities. Montgomery Parks should coordinate with the high school to see if a natural surface trail could be installed, providing access to the park system from Ashton.

*Figure 11. Aerial View (2019) of Rural Buffer neighborhood.*


*Map 18. Rural Buffer Neighborhood Proposed Zoning.*




Recommendations for the Rural Buffer neighborhood:

1. Provide a sidepath along the north side of MD 108 through the Rural Buffer neighborhood connecting to the existing path at the Sandy Spring Museum.
2. Upgrade the sidewalk along the south side of MD 108 to a five-foot wide sidewalk with a lawn or tree panel where missing.
3. Coordinate with MCPS and Sherwood High School to provide a natural surface trail connection through the school property connecting the sidewalk along MD 108 with parkland to the south.

# CHAPTER 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

This chapter provides a frame of reference for the design recommendations included in other chapters of this Plan. These design concepts are essential for realizing the overall plan for a vibrant village center in Ashton. Implementation of these guidelines is primarily through the review of site plans as required by the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay Zone.

## 5.1 Design Vision

Ashton is envisioned as a compact, low-rise, walkable and bikeable village with a mix of residential and commercial, retail and service land uses. It is a community with diverse housing types with options that are affordable and attainable for residents of all ages and income levels. New buildings, placed along rights-of-way, blend in with the existing development and frame the streets and open spaces. These buildings provide the necessary density to support increased bus transit. Vehicular parking and building services are located behind or on the sides of buildings with continuous sidepaths and sidewalks in front prioritizing pedestrians over vehicles. Architectural elements, such as front and side porches, covered stoops and bay windows, provide visual interest and social interaction as residents walk and bike along village streets.

The Village Core is the focal point of community activity. Buildings frame MD 108 and MD 650. Commercial uses are focused at and define the immediate four corners of this intersection while still allowing for pockets of green that protect existing and future canopy trees. A small street grid provides connectivity and walkability in the redeveloped southeast quadrant, which includes a balanced mix of retail, various types of residential units and a community gathering space available to the public.

Residences on smaller lots in the Residential Edge serve as a transition from the commercial to the larger lot residential developments surrounding the village center.

The western portion of the Plan area, the Rural Buffer, separates and distinguishes the village centers of Ashton and Sandy Spring. Sidepaths and sidewalks connect the two rural villages along MD 108.

The Ashton Village Center has many challenges in meeting this vision. This chapter takes a closer look at the existing buildings, open spaces and the connections between them and provides best practices guidelines for implementing the vision for Ashton.

## 5.2 Buildings

Buildings, when well-sited and of an appropriate scale, help define street edges, frame open spaces and provide the visual interest that is necessary to create a memorable place where people want to live, work and play. Also referred to as the public realm, people experience life outside their homes through streets and publicly accessible open spaces that people use on a day-to-day basis. Well designed and positioned buildings are integral to having a strong public realm, and in turn strengthens the sense of community, promotes social interaction and increases safety. A strong and

safe public realm also promotes greater walking, biking and social interaction, which are key to a successful village.

### 5.2.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### *5.2.1.1 Rural Buffer*

The existing buildings in the Rural Buffer and the Residential Edge neighborhoods and the spaces between them define the character of those areas as distinctly separate from the Village Core. On the north side of MD 108 within the Rural Buffer neighborhood, buildings are sited farther away from MD 108 and are spaced farther apart than those in the rest of the Plan area. The house sizes and ages vary, but the accompanying properties are larger and contribute to a pastoral landscape.

On the south side of MD 108, Sherwood High School also lies within the Rural Buffer, including the main school building plus copious amounts of active and passive open space for the school track and ball fields.

#### *5.2.1.2 Residential Edge*

Traveling east on MD 108 from the Rural Buffer, the building pattern changes upon entering the Residential Edge neighborhood. In this area, buildings are closer together and closer to the road, providing a different feel to the public realm and serving as a transition to the Village Core neighborhood.

#### *5.2.1.3 Village Core*

Building placement in the Village Core is varied, but currently does not define the street edge and activate the public realm in a manner typical of a rural village located at a crossroads. In the two northern quadrants of the MD 108/650 intersection, the commercial buildings are placed away from the streets, with parking and open areas between the building and the streetscape. The southeast quadrant contains an existing bank with a drive-thru that loops the building near the intersection with the vast remaining portion of the site being unimproved. Here, too, the building has been pushed back from the two streets. Parking is to the side of the bank and between the bank and MD 108.

In the southwest quadrant, along MD 108, there is a cleared lot and a gas station. The cleared lot is approved for a small mixed-use building with apartments over retail with the building facing MD 108, pulled close to the street with parking tucked under and behind the building. The gas station at the corner has surface parking adjacent to the street, and four curb cuts along the two highways. The commercial properties and the Christ Community Church of Ashton, south of the gas station on the west side of MD 650 are also set back from the road, are spaced far apart and have small parking lots mostly beside the structures. Cricket Bookshop, the southernmost building in the Village Core at the southern boundary to the Plan area, has the parking lot between the building and the street.

### 5.2.2 BUILDING GUIDELINES

To ensure that the form and scale of new development is compatible with the surrounding context and to ensure all future stakeholders are clear on the expectations for buildings, building guidelines have been established. They support the recommendations in the plan and are separated into the following five categories:

- Building Types
- Building Placement
- Building Massing and Composition
- Architectural Embellishments
- Building Materials

The purpose of the building guidelines is to recommend best practices when designing new or expanded upon buildings within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area.

#### *5.2.2.1 Building Types*

The use of multiple building types within a village helps to create a visually interesting streetscape; whereas the streetscape becomes monotonous if only singular building types are used. Additionally, a variety of building types within a community provides diverse housing choices for residences of varying ages, sizes and income levels.

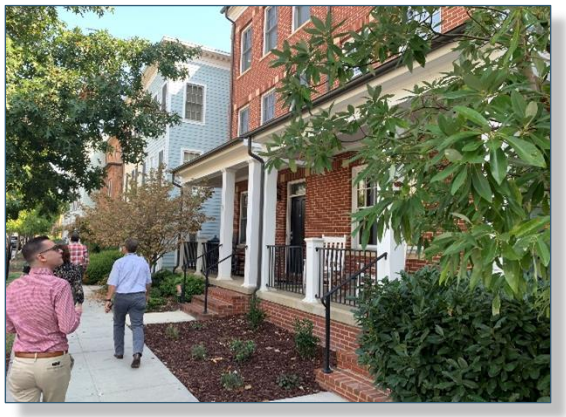
It is envisioned that any new housing within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area will range from single-family detached to small apartments. Multiuse/general buildings near the intersections of MD 108 and MD 650 are also possible. Having appropriate

scale and dimensions are important to maintain the character of a village. Typical villages in the Mid-Atlantic region feature many small buildings that include single family homes, duplexes, small multiplexes and small commercial buildings. If new buildings are too wide or deep, the character of a traditional village may be lost. Smaller building widths along street edges are preferred, as is providing a variety in building widths. New buildings, with the exception of multi use or general building types, should strive to be 80 feet or less in width along the two state highways to replicate the width and pattern of existing buildings in the village. No building shall be wider than 100 feet along the state highways or 120 feet along any other road frontage, to remain compatible with the vision for Ashton. These wider buildings may be deeper if the depth is not highly visible, and such buildings should be carefully located to ensure that are dispersed throughout the Village Core and not clustered all in one area. Here are the various building types anticipated in the future in Ashton.

1. Single-Family Detached – A single-family detached house is a single dwelling unit on its own lot. The lot and building dimensional requirements should comply with the standards of its zone. Ideally, room for an accessory dwelling unit on these detached house sites should be considered.

2. Duplex – A duplex or a semi-detached dwelling, which is a building containing two single-family dwelling units attached side-by-side, may take on various orientations to the streets. Architectural embellishments are not counted in the width of a unit.

3. Townhouses – A townhouse is a building containing three or more single-family dwelling units where each dwelling is attached to its neighbor, separated vertically by a party wall. The front façade of any individual townhouse unit may vary in width however most units should be 22 feet or narrower in width to avoid inappropriate massing.



4. Stacked Flats – Stacked flats are a type of building with multifamily dwelling units separated vertically by floor. A stacked flat building may be two or more stories and contain dwelling unit(s) on each floor. Stacked flats may be either one dwelling unit wide with multiple units stacked vertically, or may be attached similar to townhouses with multiple stacks composed as one building.

5. Multiplex – A multiplex is a small apartment building type with multifamily dwellings of between four and 12 dwelling units. Units can be either stacked and/or side-by-side and are connected by a common hallway and main entrance.

6. Multi Use and General Buildings – A multi use building contains retail/service uses on the ground floor with residential or nonresidential uses above. A general building contains nonresidential uses.

Multi use buildings with varying storefronts should be designed to let each storefront have unique architecture, ideally carrying that uniqueness up the façade, giving the impression of multiple attached buildings rather than one large building.

### 5.2.2.2 Building Placement

*Proper building placement both horizontally and vertically along streets and open spaces promotes a walkable, bikeable and vibrant village. If buildings with certain uses are placed too far back from the sidewalk, or if building entrances are too high above the sidewalk level, then the sense of the public realm or the human scale of a space may be lost.*

1. General – All new buildings, whether residential, multi use or general, must have their main entrances on public streets, private streets or publicly accessible open spaces that have sidewalks. Buildings should not have their main entrances off parking lots or drive aisles. Buildings may have secondary entrances from parking lots.

2. Build-to area – The build-to area is the area from the lot line or right-of-way (minimum setback) to the maximum setback where a certain percentage of a front or side building façade must be located. The minimum and maximum setbacks may vary depending on the type of building use and the location of the Public Utility Easement (PUE). Multi use or general buildings may be placed closer to the rights-of-way than residential uses to provide for active storefronts that give vibrancy to village streetscapes. Residential uses may have an open space between the sidewalk or shared-use path and the building that serves as a semiprivate transition between the public and private realms.

   With new development, a consistent line needs to be established within the build-to area along a street frontage where all

façades should be placed, regardless of use, in order to create a consistent street wall. With infill development, the front façade line should be consistent with the placement of the front façades of existing buildings. Ensure the build-to line considers any necessary PUEs so that building embellishments such as stoops and porches can be an integral part of new buildings.


*Buildings frame the street to create a consistent street wall.*

3. Consistent Spacing – In order to create a pleasing streetscape, a regularized spacing (plus or minus a few feet) between the front façades along a street or open space should be maintained.

4. Entrances – The main entrance of residential dwelling units should be maintained as close as possible to the final exterior grade at the door location to allow for entry at the first floor and not the second floor along a street frontage. Any attached dwelling units should step down to ensure that a relative consistent grade change is maintained between the first-floor entrance and the sidewalk in front of each dwelling unit. On stacked flats, a secondary stair may provide direct access to the upper units.

5. Garages – Residential dwelling units and multi use buildings may have garages. Access to garages must be from the rear or the side of a unit or building through an alley or driveway unless a demonstrated site constraint warrants alternative placement.

#### *5.2.2.3 Building Massing and Composition*

The overall shape and size of a building, which includes the exterior walls, architectural embellishments and roof components, shall be harmonious with the existing surrounding context. With new development, groups of buildings within a block along a streetscape should be viewed as a composition of elevations in order to ensure that streetscapes are vibrant and not monotonous or repetitious. Dwelling unit heights, setbacks, varied rooflines and architectural embellishments can help to break up the horizontal composition of the overall façade of a building.

1. General – Townhomes and Stacked Flats may be attached to form a composition within a larger building. Multiplex and general buildings should stand alone and not be attached to other building types, may be designed to appear as a series of smaller buildings that are attached.

   Additionally, no two buildings next to one another along a streetscape should have the same elevation. While the general geometry of the massing may be the same with each building, architectural embellishments, color and/or materials should provide a difference between structures.

2. Volume – Buildings should be articulated in a manner that breaks the massing of larger structures so that they relate better to the surrounding context. The portions of the façades of buildings facing the public realm should be manipulated to provide visual interest and avoid monotonous, bulky buildings along streetscapes. The façades of dwelling units and/or a building may have setbacks, projections and/or step-downs in addition to architectural embellishments.

   a. Façade elevations consisting of two or more attached buildings or dwellings should be designed as a single elevation. Setbacks, projections and step-downs should be deliberately considered to ensure that overall façade composition remains cohesive. Providing

staggered offsets between each dwelling on townhouses or stacked flats should be avoided unless it creates a coherent front elevation.

b. Multi use and general buildings should have a base, middle and top in their composition with the cornice or eave being the top. The façades of a building greater than 60 feet in width along the public realm should be designed to look like more than one building that has been attached. The façade should be designed so that the first floor appears taller than the floors above.

3. Rooflines – Buildings should have simple rooflines that reflect traditional architectural styles. Rooflines should be similar to the architecture in the surrounding area, which features primarily pitched roofs. Attached units, multi use buildings and general buildings should also have pitched roofs or provide a strong cornice element.

   a. New buildings with a pitched roof should be designed to be similar to the pitch of existing buildings, which is approximately a minimum 6:12 pitch, except for those emulating an architectural style that dictates a lower roof pitch (i.e. Craftsman).

   b. The gables on the pitched roofs, whether front or side gables, should be symmetrical.

   c. Consider incorporating top floor living space of the dwelling unit into the attic roofline..

   d. Vary rooflines or cornice heights on wider buildings or sticks of multiple townhomes.

*Buildings have varied and simple roof lines along streetscape.*

4. Fenestration – The window patterns on buildings go hand-in-hand with the building volume. Window and door openings bring variety to façades. Dwelling unit and building façades should be divided into sections to create a pattern and rhythm. The window pattern of a dwelling unit or building should also emphasize the verticality of a building.

   a. Use fenestration to develop the pattern and rhythm of building façades.

   b. Larger windows should be provided on the ground floor of multi use and general buildings to allow for higher transparency from public spaces. Larger windows may also be used to differentiate the more public and private levels of dwelling units.

   c. There should be no expanses of long blank walls without fenestration on any elevations.

### *5.2.2.4 Architectural Embellishments*

Some form of architectural embellishment provides additional rhythm and visual interest to building façades. Architectural elements may encroach beyond the build-to line. This is especially important to any façade that is visible from or faces a street or open space.

1. Porches – All porches should be designed with enough depth to enable outdoor furniture placement while maintaining safe circulation, and should extend a minimum of two-thirds the length of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit. Porches may also be located on or wrap around to the sides of residential dwelling units. Porches may be placed on multi use and general buildings. Porches may be one, two or three stories. The second or third floors of a porch may or may not be covered. The covering of a porch may have a flat or shed roof with straight or hipped ends.

2. Stoops – Stoops are usually at least five feet in depth and should extend a minimum of one foot on each side of the front door of the primary façade on a

residential dwelling unit. If a stoop is covered, it may have a flat, shed or gabled roof.

3. Recessed Entries – A recessed entry should be deep enough to provide cover from the elements at the entryway and should extend a minimum of one foot on each side of the front door of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit.

4. Bay Windows – Bay windows may be angular or rectangular and encroach up to three feet beyond the build-to line.

5. Shutters – If shutters are used, the shutter and window opening sizes should match to provide the appearance of operability.

*Architectural elements, such as recessed entries and bay windows provide visual interest.*

### *5.2.2.5 Building Materials*

Buildings within the greater Sandy Spring/Ashton area represent a wide range of architectural styles, including Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne and Victorian. When new buildings are designed in the Plan area, materials on new buildings should take their cues from and complement surrounding existing structures.

1. Front Elevation Materials – Façades should be composed of durable materials that are indicative of a rural village such as brick, stone or wood or cement fiber, and should be clad in a way that clearly convey a particular architectural style.

2. Side and Rear Elevation Materials – Front façade materials should turn corners and be located on side and rear façades that are visible from the public realm. If stone or masonry is used on front elevations, this material should wrap the corner at a minimum of eight inches in depth, unless it extends the full length of the side elevation.

3. Water Table – If the material used to create a water table at the base of the front exterior elevation of a building differs from the rest of the primary façade, the water table material should not extend above the window sill on the first floor of that elevation.


*Figure 12. The illustrations above show the concepts in the Building Guidelines section. They are intended to convey the general character for possible development within the Plan area. They are not tied to a specific site or location and are not intended to limit ideas that are consistent with the principles of the Building Guidelines.*

## 5.3 Open Space

Open spaces are places for passive and active recreation and social interaction in the community, and they come in a variety of forms. Some spaces incorporate important environmental features, while others may serve as the outdoor room for adjacent uses. All forms of open space can bring vibrancy to a community. New open spaces shall be well-designed, appropriately scaled and publicly accessible to all. Public open spaces should face a minimum of one publicly used street and should not be dominated by stormwater management facilities. Buildings facing directly onto open spaces should have a front parallel sidewalk that delineates the semiprivate front yard from the public space.

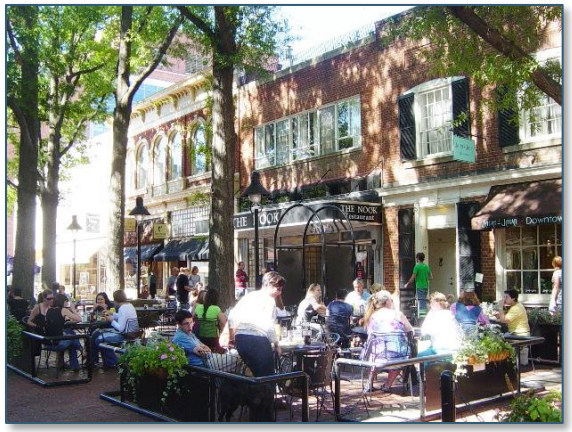
### 5.3.1 OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES

The locations of public spaces, their dimensions and the activities adjacent to those open spaces help to determine if an open space is part of the public or private realm. Open spaces need to have an appropriate location and adequate size so that they are perceived as public, inviting and visually accessible to the immediate residents and the surrounding community. Publicly accessible open space should be adjacent to rights-of-way and not hidden within a community or behind barriers.

#### *5.3.1.1 Open Space Types*

Open spaces should integrate well with the surrounding building context. Multiple open space types should be employed throughout the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area to fill the recreational needs of the surrounding community.

1. Linear Green – A linear green is typically a passive space which are smaller open spaces lined by buildings and adjacent to a street. These linear greens tend to run the full length of a block, may also include programming for active functions and serve as a green connection to other public spaces. Widths may vary but should be at least wide enough to provide for seating, possible small pieces of public art or other decorative furnishings, enhanced landscaping, and a parallel walkway to the main sidewalk. Alternatively, the sidewalk space could be widened providing more of a plaza like feeling while keeping ample space for greenery and shade.



*An active linear green with hardscape provides an area for sidewalk cafe space.*

2. Neighborhood Green – A neighborhood green is a larger, more centralized space than a linear green. Ideally, they are at least 10,000 square feet of contiguous space. It may have some of the same activities as a linear green, or a pocket park but it allows for greater community gathering, provides opportunities for other activities such as pick-up sports or picnics, and may have play equipment. A neighborhood green would be further enhanced if located in a way to connect with existing environmental features on a site to provide a transition area from the built environment to nature and to visually expand the size of the space.

    a. At least one side of a neighborhood green should be adjacent to a public or private street.

    b. If buildings front a neighborhood green, a sidewalk should be provided for accessibility.

    c. Shade trees should be provided along street edges and at defined seating areas.

3. Viewshed – Viewsheds are not always formal gathering spaces, but rather windows in the built environment allowing visual access to the rural spaces that surround the village. Viewsheds should keep all users in mind including those in motor vehicles, on bikes, and on foot. Locating viewsheds that provide visual access to the environmental

setting that distinguishes the Rural Buffer from the Residential Edge needs to be maintained with minimal new development and the protection of large yards and established trees.

## 5.4 Connections

A true vibrant village is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists while allowing for vehicular traffic to move at acceptable speeds. Parking is located to the rear and sides of buildings. Curb cuts are strategically located and limited to enhance walkable and bikeable conditions. Where possible, alleys behind buildings and housing provide for parking access, services and deliveries.

A network of transportation connections, including sidewalks, sidepaths, streets and alleys needs to be established in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area to prioritize pedestrian and bike connections over automobile mobility.

### 5.4.1 CONNECTIONS GUIDELINES

A safe, attractive interconnected street network that is comfortable and convenient for all users, regardless of age, mobility or transportation choice, needs to be established in order to create a vibrant village. Services should be directed to the rear of properties to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.

#### *5.4.1.1 Connection Elements*

In addition to the paved surface of the roadway, design of sidewalk/sidepaths, alleys and parking locations helps to determine the walkability and bikeability of a village. Sidewalks and sidepaths promote walkability and bikeability in a community which can lead to increased social interaction, improved health and enhanced neighborhood safety. If cars are given priority, the vibrancy of a community may be lost.

1. Public/Private Streets – The size of existing public rights-of-way should not be expanded, ensuring that crossing distances are minimized for pedestrians and that drivers do not speed. New rights-of-way for new streets need to be designed so that they are pedestrian friendly and are sized appropriately to provide all the necessary street elements.

    a. Existing rights-of-way need to be enhanced with grass panels or tree pits contiguous to the roadway that separate the sidewalk/sidepath from the travel lanes. The grass panel or tree pit should be at least eight feet in width to accommodate stormwater and shade trees.

    b. On all streets without existing overhead obstructions, shade trees should be planted approximately every 35 to 40 feet on center to promote walkability, bikeability and limit the heat island effect.

    c. All new streets should be two-way with ample on-street parking.

    d. Consider special paving materials at critical locations, such as crosswalks, intersections, and areas with mixed-use development, to emphasize the unique sense of place of the location.

2. Alleys – On sites with smaller lots, alleys help maintain the streetscape fabric of the community by separating cars from pedestrians and bicyclists. Alleys provide vehicular and parking access to the rear of properties, service access and easy deliveries while enhancing streetscapes in front of properties with no curb cuts or driveways. Alleys are smaller in width than streets. Any parking not in garages or parking pads off alleys should be accommodated on-street, unless excess space in the alley allows for a small separate parking area with shade trees.

    a. Alleys are used for service purposes, such as access to garages, parking pads and trash pickup. Alleys do not need to be oversized and compete with streets, which are a primary organizing element in neighborhoods. The width of alleys should be narrow enough to be safe for service vehicles. Additional residential parking should occur on

streets in the form of parallel parking.

b. When an alley does not go through to a street, landscaping and/or a low screen wall should be used to conceal the alley. The screen wall should be of a material that complements the adjacent buildings.

c. When an alley goes through to the street and the spacing between buildings is greater than 30 feet, landscaping and/or a screen wall should be used to narrow the alley opening.

*A well landscaped alley helps to soften its utilitarian purposes.*

3. Parking – Traditional villages have a vibrant public realm that is pedestrian and bicyclist friendly. Parking is placed behind or to the sides of buildings. Curb cuts are limited to essential locations.

a. New parking areas not along a street shall be located to the rear or side of buildings. Consolidate curb cuts to limit conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.

b. Parking located on the sides of buildings shall be concealed from public space by a combination landscaping and/or low screen walls.

c. Design surface parking lots to include a significant tree canopy. The vegetation will better manage stormwater and mitigate the heat island effect.

d. Promote shared parking strategies if redevelopment occurs to existing businesses to maximize developable space and to consolidate the numerous curb cuts.

e. Maximize parallel on-street parking where possible including on both MD 108 and MD 650 within the Village Core.

### 5.4.2 UTILITIES

*Utilities need to be properly sited to ensure that they do not become a focal point and detract from the public realm.*

1. Utilities, such as transformers, should be strategically located in alleys or to the side or back of buildings, hidden and not visible from streets or open spaces.

2. Consider locating the PUE at the rear of properties in alleys to allow greater flexibility in the development of a building or site.

3. Bury existing overhead utilities, if feasible, including power lines, to reduce sidewalk obstructions and allow for the growth of mature trees. If undergrounding of existing utilities is cost prohibitive, try to set buildings along the overhead utilities back adequately to allow a safe place to plant mid-size trees or trees with columnar growth habits that will provide shade without interfering with the utility lines.

# CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION

## 6.1 Overview

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 County Growth Policy (CGP)—formerly Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP)—is used to establish the policies and procedures for administration of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). The APFO requires the examination of public facilities—roads and transportation facilities, sewer and water service, schools, police stations, firehouses and health clinics—to ensure that they will be able to meet the needs of a development during the subdivision approval process.

County master plans identify where growth is appropriate and at what levels or densities this growth should occur. Each master plan conducts a high-level analysis of the infrastructure needed to accommodate the master plan's vision, similar to the CGP, which may result in recommended capital improvements to be implemented by either the county or state government or the private sector.

Given the small area of this Sector Plan, the number of new residents or businesses that can be expected in the Plan area is modest. As discussed above, the schools are adequate for the projected number of new students and the roadways and intersections are able to handle the volume of traffic. Sewer service is available in the area and no new libraries, recreation centers, police stations or firehouses are needed.

Many of the recommendations in this plan do, however, require public or private investment to realize. These items are enumerated below. One prominent example is the recommendation to relocate the existing utility pole at the immediate northeast corner of the MD 108/650 intersection. The cost of relocating this pole was quoted at near $1 million dollars at the time of the CVS development, making it prohibitive for most private development to undertake alone. Relocating this pole is an expensive but necessary proposition that should be pursued during the time of any intersection reconstruction activities planned by SHA.

## 6.2 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.

## 6.3 Zoning Text Amendment

A Zoning Text Amendment is required to implement this Plan's recommended changes to the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone. The residential and rural residential properties within the Plan area will be removed from the overlay via the SMA, but the CRN-zoned properties will all be within the revised SSA Overlay zone boundary. The text amendment will remove unnecessary requirements in the overlay

zone and continue to help protect the rural character of Ashton.

The 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan* removed the overlay from all properties within that plan area but left several disconnected fragments of the overlay zone on properties outside the Plan area surrounding the Sandy Spring Village Center. These properties are zoned R-90, R-200, RT-10 and RE-1. Proposed revisions to the SSA Overlay zone include removal of the residential development standards because the underlying residential zones already provide suitable protection of the rural character of these properties.

## 6.4 Further Studies

Several of this Plan's recommendations require further studies to determine the specific requirements needed to fulfill them.

During development of this Plan, several Park trails were proposed just outside the Plan area. The trail or trails proposed across the high school property lead to the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. To prevent the high school paths from being a "trail to nowhere," trail extension to the state champion white ash tree, the Sandy Spring and Hidden Garden Lane would greatly expand the hiking and biking network in the area. Further study is required to determine the exact alignment of any of these trails.

This Plan also recommends increased pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented wayfinding signs to direct residents and visitors to the numerous historic resources and parks in Ashton and Sandy Spring. A wayfinding master plan or similar research project will be needed to identify resources, design signage and determine the best placement of the signs.

## 6.5 Implementation Advisory Committee

This Plan supports the creation of an advisory group to address its implementation. The formation of any new advisory group should be staffed by the Planning Department in close coordination with the Ashton Area Community Association Alliance (AACAA).

This advisory group would work in coordination with the AACAA (or successor group) and the Mid-County Regional Services Center by providing specific community and redevelopment expertise. It would also serve as an interface between developers and County agencies in implementing recommendations of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. This new group should be structured to include representatives from the various constituencies interested in successful implementation of the Plan.

## 6.6 Sewer and Water

This Sector Plan confirms the 1998 Master Plan recommendation of providing community water and sewer service to the Ashton Village Center. Sewer service must be provided by extension from the existing Northwest Branch sewerage system, with no new pumping stations permitted in the Patuxent River watershed. This Plan extends the recommendation for sewer service to include the one property currently zoned RC in the southeast quadrant of the Village Core neighborhood.

## 6.7 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 M-NCPPC hold forums to discuss proposed items for the six-year CIP.

Table 3 shows a list of potential capital improvement projects that may be needed to support implementation of the Plan's vision over the life of the Sector Plan.

*Table 3. Capital Improvements Program*

| Project | Category | Estimated Cost | Lead Agency | Coordinating Agency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Re-time signals and reconfigure lane movements to increase throughput of the MD 108/650 intersection. | Connectivity | | MDOT SHA | MCDOT |
| Implement MD 108/650 intersection improvements to include wheelchair ramps, crosswalks and a relocated utility pole. | Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Construct a multiuse path on the north side of MD 108 from the western Plan boundary to MD 650. | Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Upgrade the sidewalk on the south side of MD 108 to a five-foot wide sidewalk with a lawn or tree panel where missing. | Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Construct a multiuse path on the west side of MD 650 from MD 108 to the southern Plan boundary. | Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Replace the two filling station driveways closest to the MD 108/650 intersection with vegetation as part of the construction project for the multiuse path on the west side of MD 650. | Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Construct a new sidewalk on the west side of MD 650 from MD 108 to Orion Club Drive. | Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Add a crosswalk with walk signals to the signalized intersection in front of Sherwood High School. | Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Construct sidewalks along MD 108 and MD 650 in the southeast quadrant. | Connectivity | | Private | M-NCPPC/MDOT SHA |
| Construct a new street with new development in the southeast quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection that connects the two state roads. More than one new street may be possible. | Connectivity | | Private | M-NCPPC/MDOT SHA |
| Relocate the bus stop in front of Sherwood High School to the new crosswalk. | Connectivity | | WMATA/? | M-NCPPC |
| Increase WMATA service or establish one or more Ride On routes to provide more regular service to Olney and/or Glenmont. | Connectivity | | WMATA/Ride On/MCDOT | M-NCPPC |
| Provide a bus shelter at the bus stop in the northwest quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection. | Connectivity | | WMATA/Ride On/MCDOT | M-NCPPC |
| Create or acquire land for one or more new open spaces for social gatherings and active recreation. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | Private/MCDGS | M-NCPPC |
| Create a linear neighborhood green to link the proposed public green in the southeast quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection to MD 650. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | Private | M-NCPPC |

| Project | Category | Estimated Cost | Lead Agency | Coordinating Agency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acquire land for additional active amenities if land becomes available. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | MCDGS | M-NCPPC |
| Designate a small open space area at the southeast corner of the MD 108/650 intersection to project the large shade trees. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | Private | M-NCPPC |
| (Note: outside Plan boundary) Build a multiuse natural surface trail between the southern property line of Sherwood High School and Hidden Garden Lane. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | M-NCPPC | |
| (Note: outside Plan boundary) Construct a multiuse natural surface spur trail from the above trail to connect to the state champion white ash tree and through to Auburn Village Drive. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | M-NCPPC | |
| (Note: outside Plan boundary) Install signs to show the connection from Auburn Village Drive to the state champion white ash tree. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | M-NCPPC | |
| (Note: outside Plan boundary) Extend the natural surface Underground Railroad Experience Trail from its current terminus at the Sandy Spring to the state champion white ash tree. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | M-NCPPC | |
| Construct a multiuse natural surface trail on the east, west or both sides of the Sherwood High School property to connect the sidewalk on the south side of MD 108 to the M-NCPPC property to the south. | Parks, Trails and Open Space | | M-NCPPC/MCPS | |
| Plant street trees along MD 108 and MD 650. | Environment and Connectivity | | MCDOT/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Promote existing tree programs such as Shades of Green to increase shade and canopy coverage on private properties. | Environment | | M-NCPPC | |
| Plant understory trees in the right-of-way of MD 108 and MD 650 in the northeast corner of the intersection to provide shade and a buffer to the open space. | Environment and Parks, Trails and Open Space | | M-NCPPC | |
| Provide pedestrian and bicycle scale wayfinding signage that connects the village center to the historic and cultural resources in the area. | Historic Preservation and Connectivity | | Heritage Montgomery/MDOT SHA | M-NCPPC |
| Continue to implement the recommendations of the *Montgomery County Heritage Area Plan*. | Historic Preservation | | Heritage Montgomery | M-NCPPC |
| Integrate interpretive signage, markers and public art that commemorates Ashton's origins in future developments. | Historic Preservation and Civic | | Private | M-NCPPC |

MCDGS = Montgomery County Department of General Services
MCDOT = Montgomery County Department of Transportation
MDOT SHA = Maryland Department of Transportation – State Highway Administration
WMATA = Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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