



Gregg Road, a rustic road recommended as exceptional rustic

Montgomery Planning Upcounty Planning Division

11/17/2022
Agenda item 8

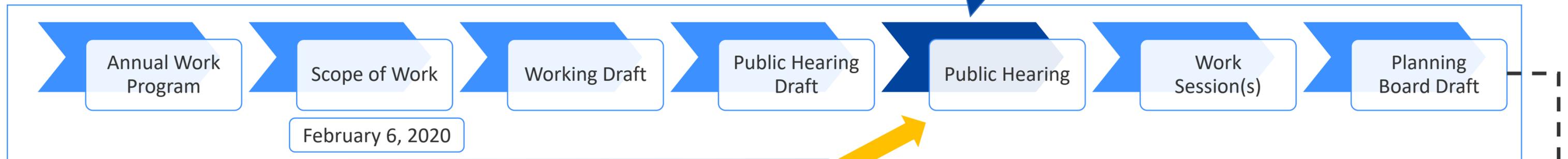
Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update

Master Plan Process and Planning Board Briefing

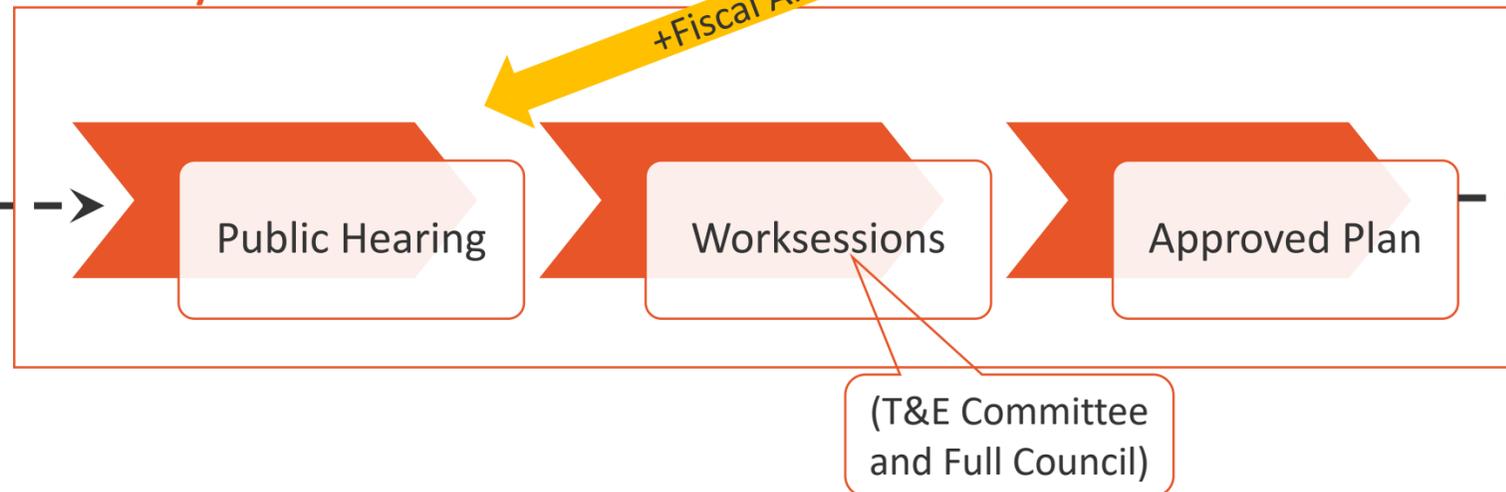


Master Plan Process

Montgomery Planning Actions



County Council Actions



Full Commission Action

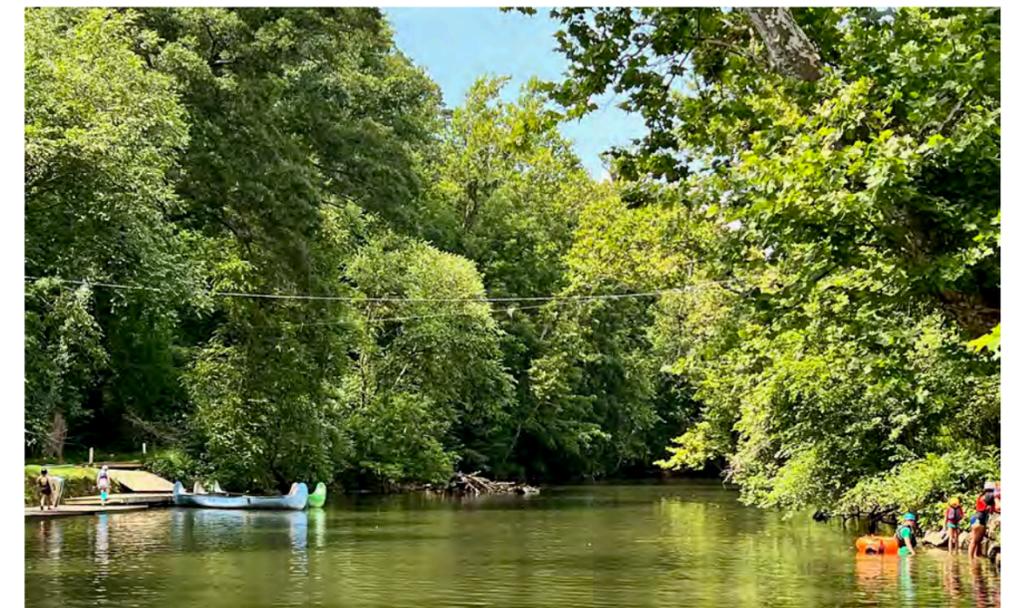


The Rustic Roads Program in County Code

- Chapter 49, Streets and Roads, of the Montgomery County Code contains the laws governing roadways in the county.
- Article 8 of Chapter 49 provides the purpose and definitions of the Rustic Roads Program, plus procedures for the classification, reclassification, maintenance, and improvements of roads in the program.
- Chapter 50, Subdivision of Land, makes brief mentions of rustic roads to protect scenic views and significant features



View of field from
Elton Farm Road



Boat launch area
Rileys Lock Road

A Rustic Road

Montgomery County Code, Chapter 49. Streets and Roads.
Article 8. Rustic Roads Program
Sec. 49-78. Rustic road classification and reclassification.

- natural, agricultural, or historic features are predominant
- master planned land use goals and zoning are compatible with a rural/rustic character
- narrow and intended for local use
- low traffic volume
- one of the following characteristics:
 - outstanding natural features
 - outstanding vistas
 - access to historic resources
- does not have unsafe conditions
- classification does not impair the function or safety of the road network



Long view of field from
Old Bucklodge Lane

An Exceptional Rustic Road

- is a rustic road
- must meet all three of the following:
 1. contributes significantly to the natural, agricultural, or historic characteristics of the county
 2. unusual features found on few other roads
 3. would be more negatively affected by improvements or modifications



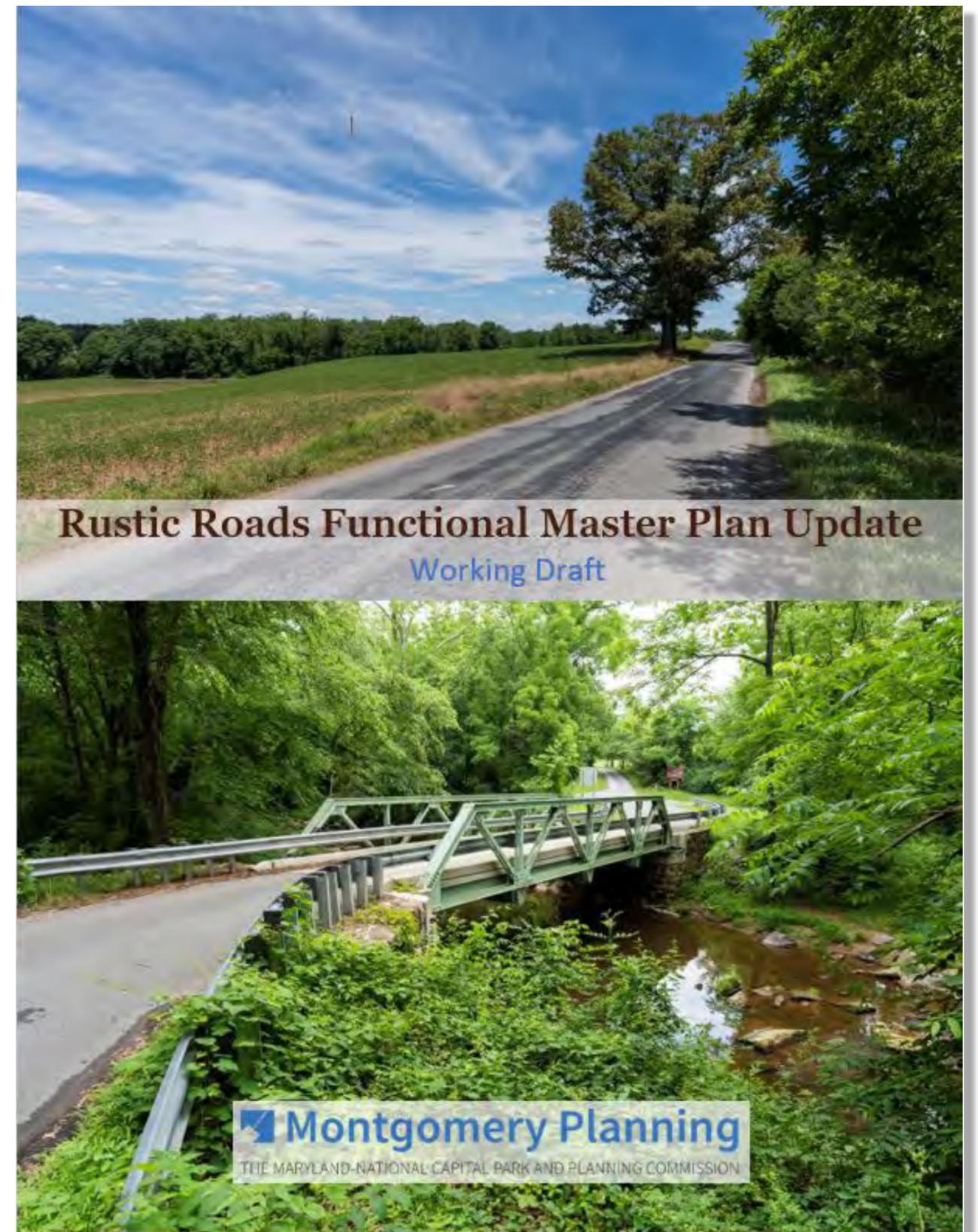
Seneca Creek
Berryville Road

Background - Timeline

1980	<i>The Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space in Montgomery County (AROS)</i> is approved and adopted.
1990	A County Council Task Force publishes <i>A Proposal for a Rural/Rustic Roads Program</i> , which recommended 82 roads for the program.
1993	The County Council incorporates the Rustic Roads Program into the County Code.
1994	The <i>Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area</i> designates the first set of rustic roads.
1996	The <i>Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan</i> is approved and adopted (66 roads added to the program).
1997-2019	Multiple master plans add 34 roads to the program (and removed one).

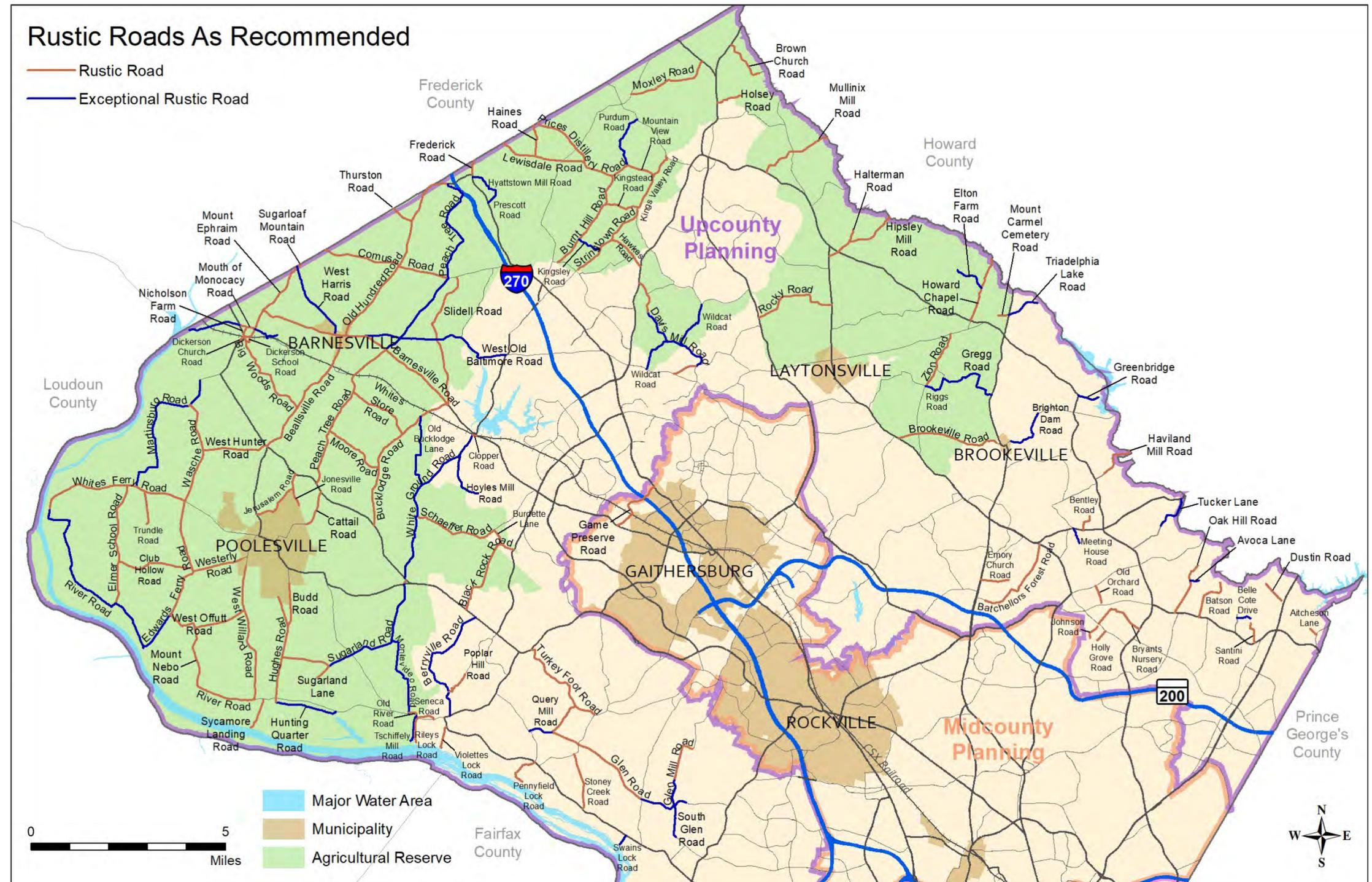
Rustic Roads FMP Update Purpose

- Assess roads which have been nominated to the program
- Complete the incomplete descriptions of roads already in the program
- Consider reclassifications of some existing rustic roads
- Change extents of some rustic roads
- Update existing road descriptions and recommend changes to their significant features



Master Plan Boundary

Except for one road in the northern portion of Midcounty (Game Preserve Road), all roads in the Rustic Roads Program are in the Upcounty area.



Introduction

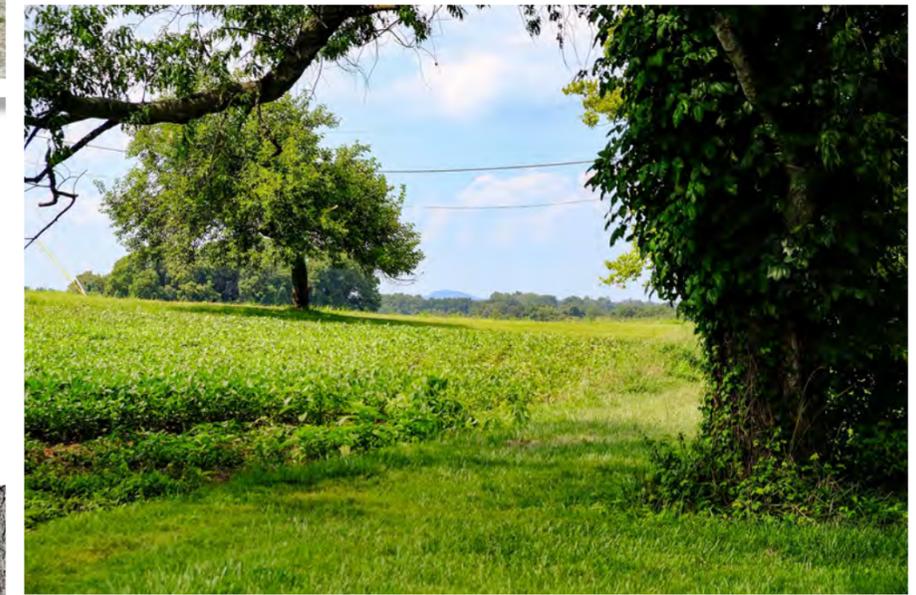
Vision

Rustic and Exceptional Rustic Roads:

- Significant features of rustic and exceptional roads continue to be preserved
- Rustic roads provide safe and scenic access to existing and future farms and related businesses
- Land uses along rustic roads are not expected to significantly change
- Provide the county with opportunities for heritage tours and economic development
- Impart the county's history to future generations



Rocklands Farm Winery,
Montevideo Road



View across Farm Field,
Montevideo Road



Northern portion of
Montevideo Road

Roadway Character

- Rustic roads are narrow two-lane roads that follow the natural topography.
- Most rustic roads do not have drainage facilities.
- Preservation of landscape elements along the edges of rustic roads is encouraged in the plan.



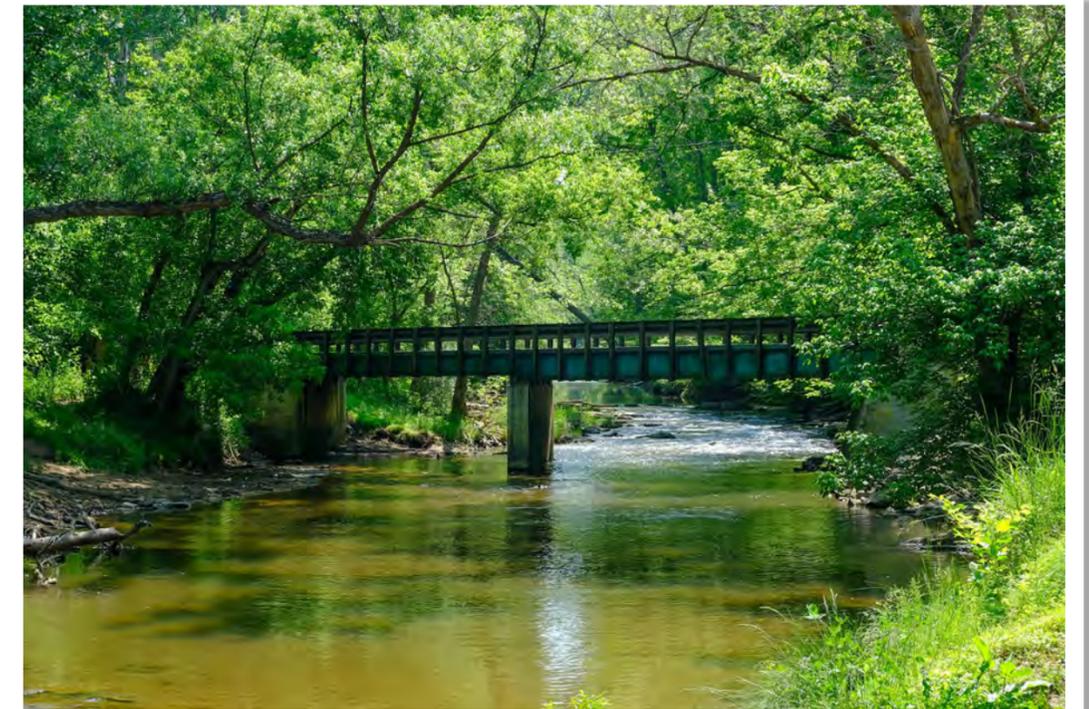
View of Sugarloaf Mountain,
Intersection of Comus and Peach Tree Roads

Bridges

The bridges on roads in this master plan are varied and offer interesting character and historic value, while still providing functionality for vehicles. Many of the bridges on rustic roads have been identified as significant features.



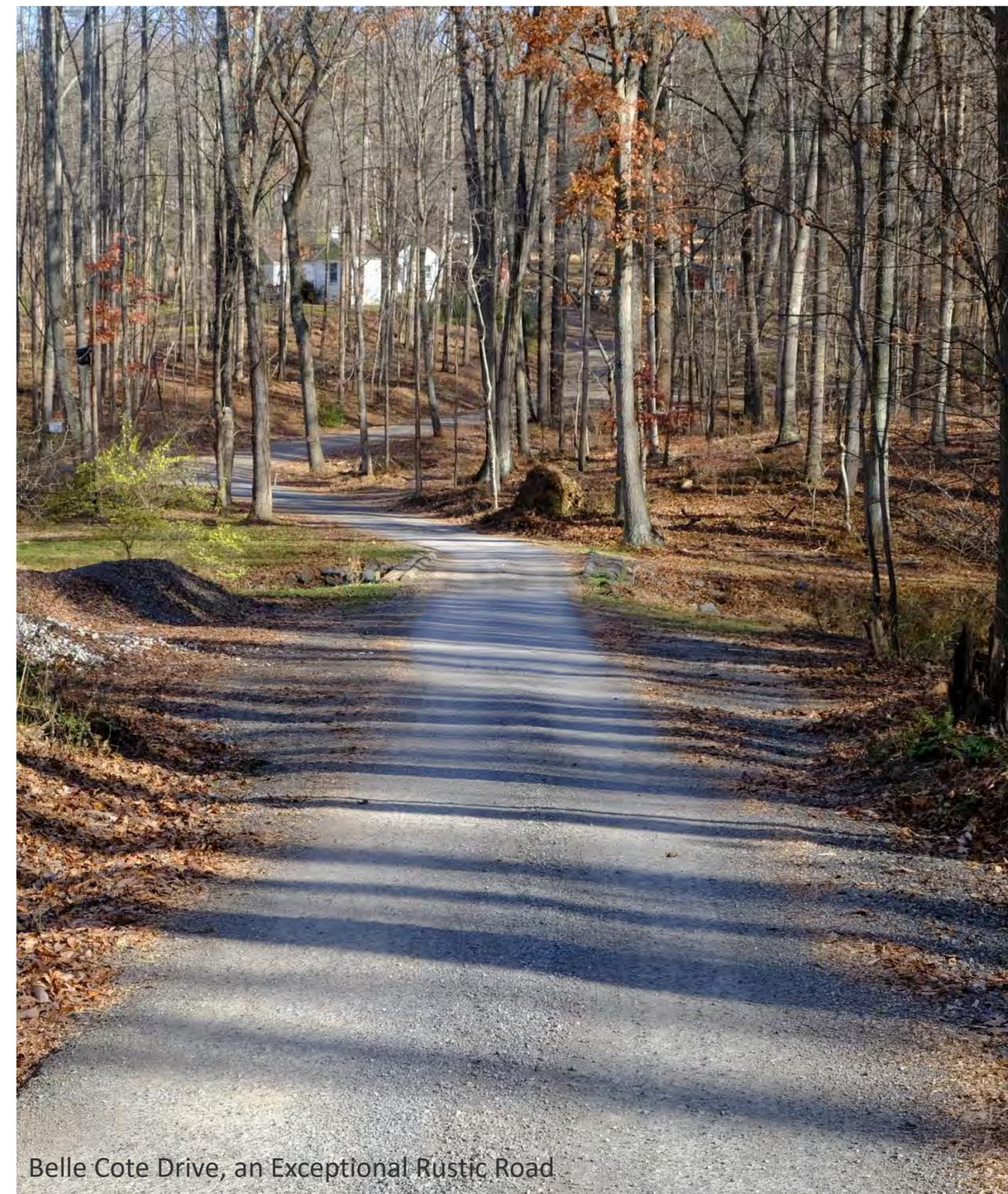
One-lane timber bridge,
Mouth of Monocacy Road



One-lane bridge over
Great Seneca Creek,
Black Rock Road

Significant Features

- The significant features are those elements that **need to be preserved** when the roads are maintained and improved [Sec. 49-78 (d)], or when a public utility completes work on or near the roads. [Sec. 49-79 (c)]
- Each rustic road and exceptional rustic road must be maintained and improved in a manner that preserves the road's significant features, but this requirement **does not preclude improvements to promote safety or movement of farm equipment.** [Sec. 49-79 (a)]



Belle Cote Drive, an Exceptional Rustic Road

Equity

- Staff reviewed each of the existing individual road profiles using National Park Service Guidance to updated language in the Plan.
- When possible, highlighted the histories of underrepresented groups and communities in the histories of those road profiles written as a part of this update.
- Considered adding roads to the program from communities established by formerly enslaved people and their descendants.



Inez Zeigler McAbee House,
Holsey Road

Road Recommendations

Summary of Criteria Evaluation

Table shows how the road qualifies as rustic or exceptional rustic.

Adopted as Rustic (R) or Exceptional Rustic (E)	Road Name	Rustic					Exceptional Rustic		
		Narrow, intended for local use	Traffic volume consistent with rustic road	Has outstanding natural features along its borders, such as native vegetation, stands of trees, stream valleys	Has outstanding vistas of farm fields and rural landscape or buildings	Provides access to historic resources, follows historic alignments, or highlights historic landscapes	Accident history does not suggest unsafe conditions	Significant contribution to natural, agricultural, or historic characteristics	Has unusual features found on few other roads in the county
R	Aitcheson Lane: Riding Stable Road to end of county maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Allnut Road			Not a public road					
E	Avoca Lane	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Awkard Lane	✓	✓			✓			
	Barnesville Road: Clarksburg Road (MD 121) to Bucklodge Road (MD 117)/Slidell Road					✓			
R	Barnesville Road: Bucklodge Road (MD 117)/Slidell Road to Mount Ephraim Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
R	Batchellors Forest Road: Washington Christian Academy entry drive to Doctor Bird Road (MD 182)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
R	Batson Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
R	Beallsville Road (MD 109): Barnesville Road to Darnestown Road (MD 28)	✓	✓		✓	✓			
E	Belle Cote Drive	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
R	Bentley Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
E	Berryville Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R	Big Woods Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
R	Black Rock Road	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	Boswell Lane		✓			✓			
E	Brighton Dam Road: Brookeville town limit to Bordly Drive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Brighton Dam Road: Bordly Drive to New Hampshire Avenue (MD 850)		✓	✓	✓	✓			

Road Recommendations

This chapter contains all plan recommendations for existing and nominated rustic roads.

- ✦ Nominated Roads Recommended as Rustic (17 roads)
 - Existing Rustic Roads with No Changes (33 roads)
- 📏 Existing Rustic Roads with Extent Changes or Clarifications (15 roads)
- 📄 Existing Rustic Roads with New Road Profiles (24 roads)
- 📋 Existing Rustic Roads with Revisions to Significant Features (31 roads)
- 🔁 Existing Rustic Roads with a Classification Change from Rustic to Exceptional Rustic (16 roads)
- 🚧 Roads Not Recommended as Rustic (2 existing and 6 nominated roads)

Individual Road Recommendations

- All road recommendations in the master plan are detailed in this section
- Roads with no new recommendations may have other updated details in their road profiles
- Roads previously lacking a full description contain a recommendation to approve the new road profile and significant features

109. With this Plan update, we are providing two entries for the purpose of clarity. The Significant Features, History, Traveling Experience, and Road Characteristics have been modified so that they accompany the appropriate rustic road.

Belle Cote Drive

Recommendations:



- Approve the new road profile and significant features.

When this road was designated rustic in 1997, the master plan did not delineate a specific list of significant features along the road. The master plan described Belle Cote Drive as a narrow (10 feet) gravel road with an alignment that consists of vertical and horizontal curves, with very few homes served by the road. The road characteristics called out in the master plan are “an enclosed view of trees and vegetation along its borders, steep downhill grades, and gentle horizontal curves through the woods.”

The road also offers views of a creek, which it crosses on a one-lane bridge.



- Change designation from rustic to exceptional rustic.

The road offers a peaceful drive through forested lands, as well as views of a creek at the road’s low point. Belle Cote Drive is one of the few remaining gravel roads in the county. Improving this narrow, gravel road with trees growing close to the road to modern standards would be an extreme change from the road’s current state.

Bentley Road

No new recommendations.

Berryville Road

Recommendation:



- Approve the new road profile and significant features.

When Berryville Road was designated exceptional rustic, the master plan did not specify the features along the road that were to be preserved. Instead, the master plan contains a table showing the criteria for designation as rustic. Although the table does not show that the road meets the criteria for a rustic designation—that is, that the road has outstanding natural features, outstanding vistas of rural landscape, or follows an historic alignment—this is likely an oversight since this road checks all three boxes.

Big Woods Road

No new recommendations.

Black Rock Road

No new recommendations.

Rustic Roads as Recommended

- 115 total
 - 79 Rustic Roads
 - 26 Exceptional Rustic Roads
 - 10 with segments that are both rustic and exceptional rustic
- 8 Not recommended as rustic

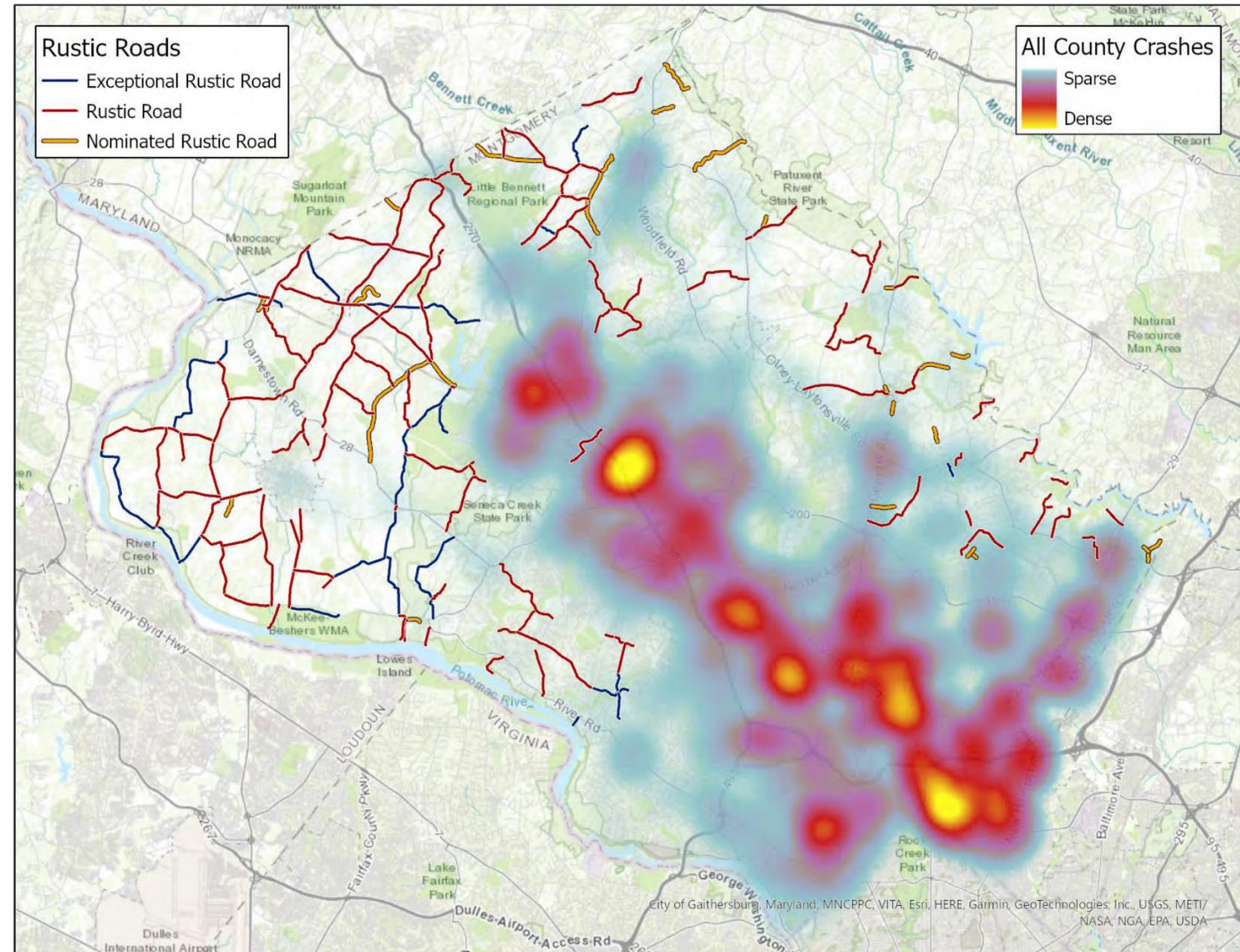


Traffic and Crash Analysis: Requirements

- Rustic roads must be “**low volume** [with] traffic volumes that do not detract significantly from the rustic character of the road.” [County Code section 49-78(b)(3)]
- “The **history of vehicle and pedestrian accidents** on the road in its current configuration does not suggest unsafe conditions.” [County Code section 49-78(b)(5)]
- County Code does not specify a traffic volume or crash rate above which a rustic designation would be inappropriate.
- 1996 *RRFMP* guidance suggests **3,000 average weekday trips** as “low volume.”
- For the 1996 *RRFMP*, Montgomery Planning and MCDOT reviewed all roads with **eight or more reported accidents in a five-year period**, excluding those where alcohol was a factor.

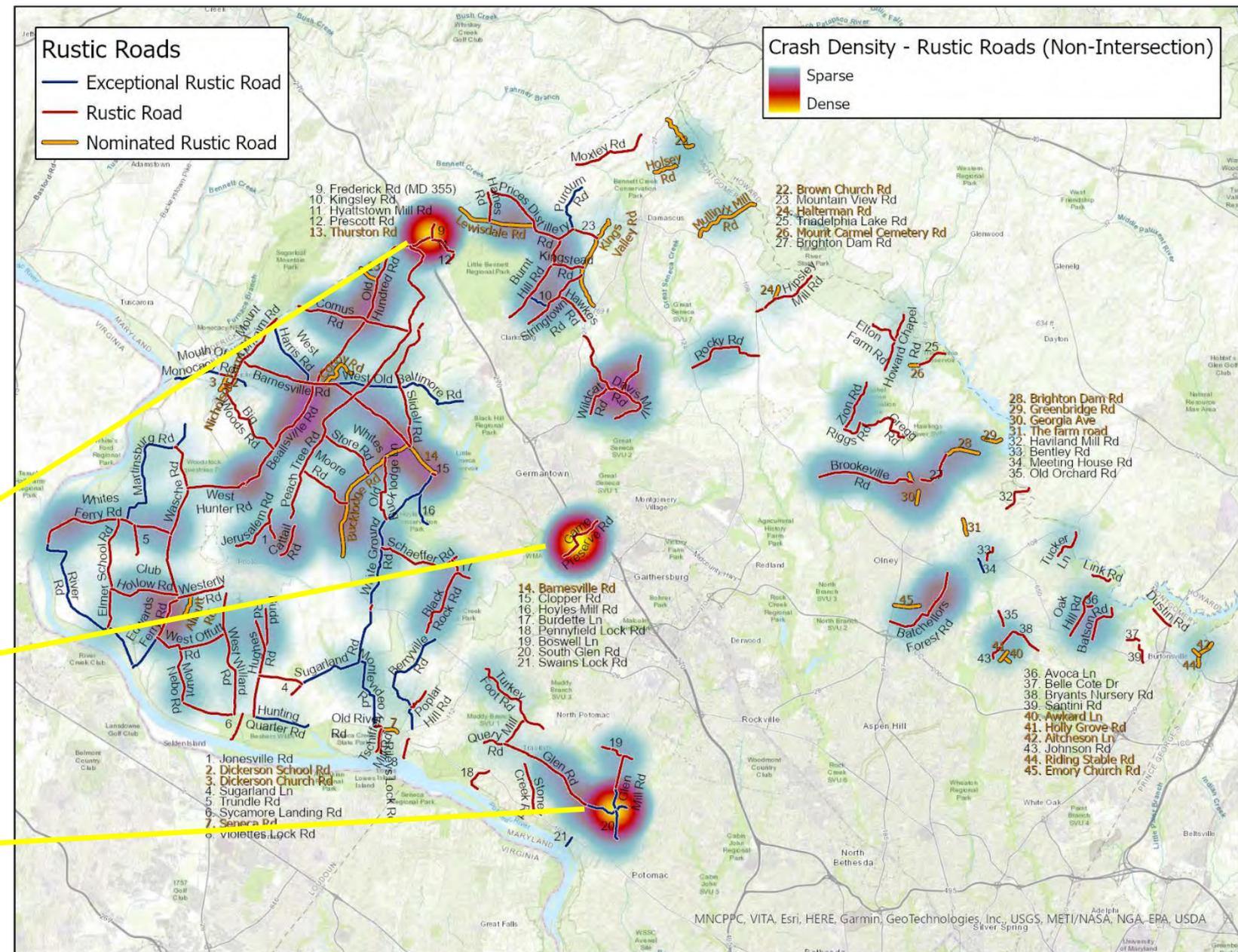
All County Crashes Heat Map

- Six-year period (2015-2020)
- 67,167 total crashes mapped
- More traffic = more crashes

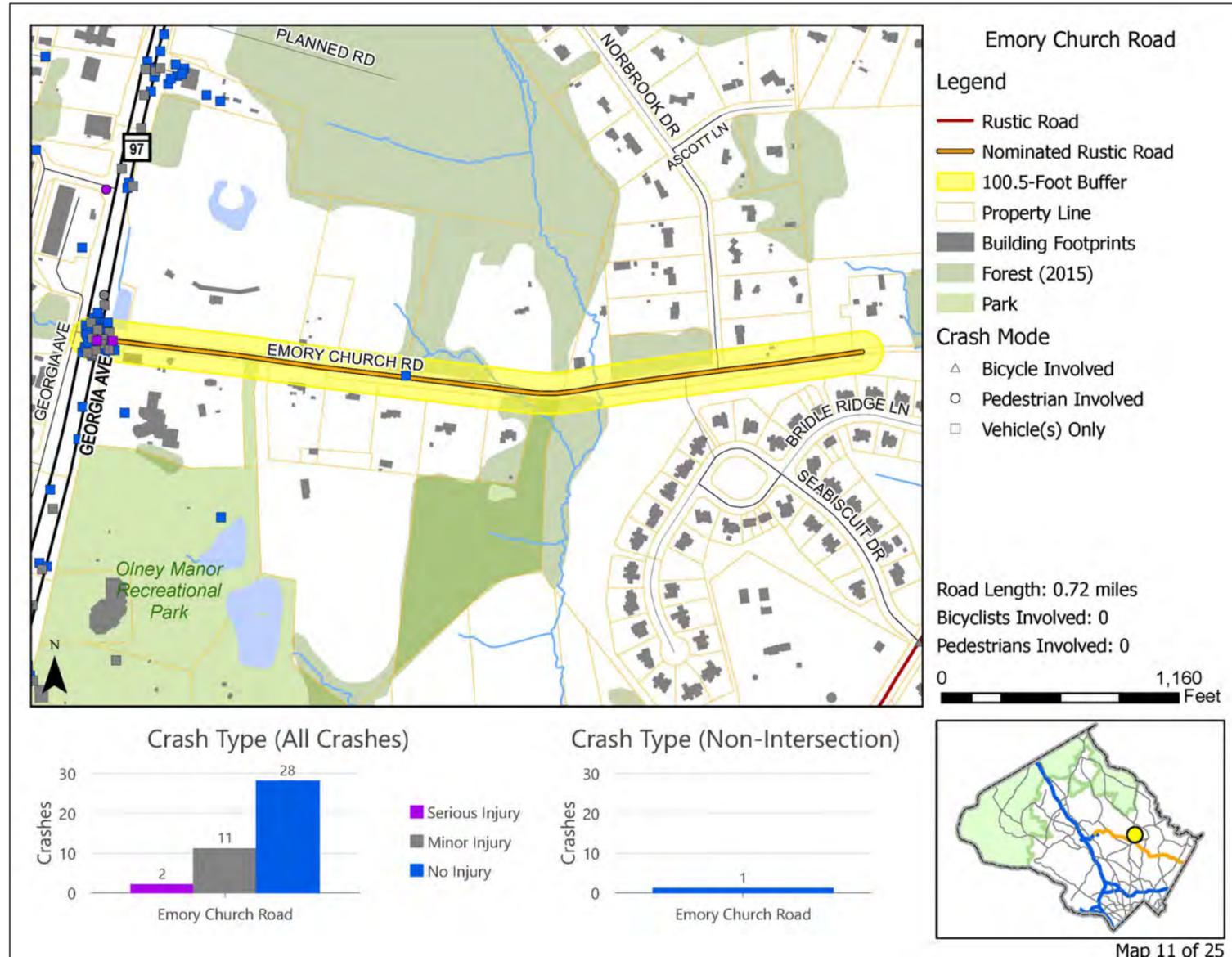


Rustic Road Crashes Heat Map (Non-Intersection)

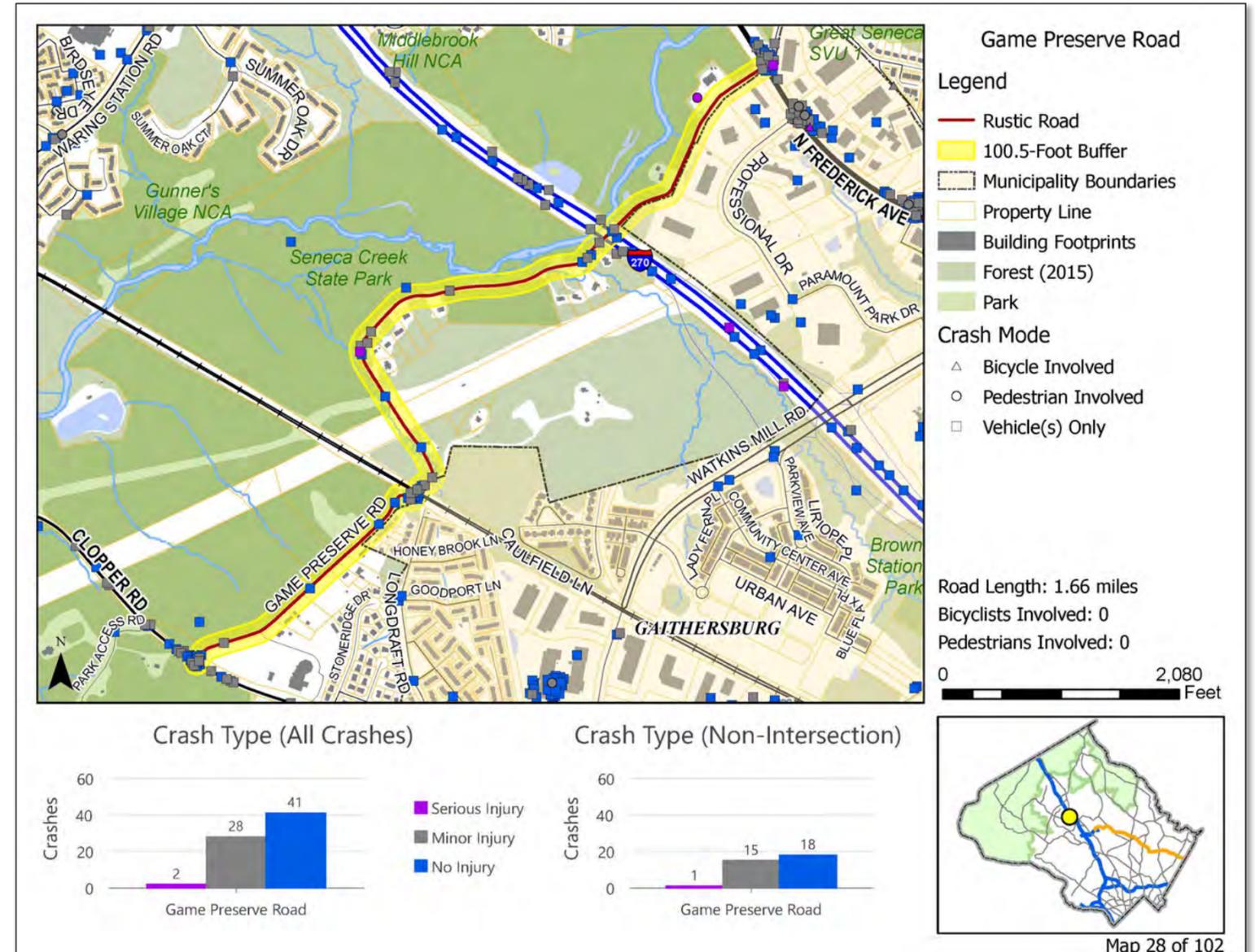
- Six-year period (2015-2020)
- 441 total non-intersection crashes mapped on existing and nominated rustic roads
- “Hottest” roads:
 - Old Hundred Road and Frederick Road in Hyattstown
 - Game Preserve Road near Gaithersburg
 - Glen Road, Glen Mill Road, and South Glen Road near Potomac



Crash Map Examples



#2 crash rate for nominated roads: Emory Church Road – 0.72 miles – 351 AADT – 41 crashes (1 non-intersection)

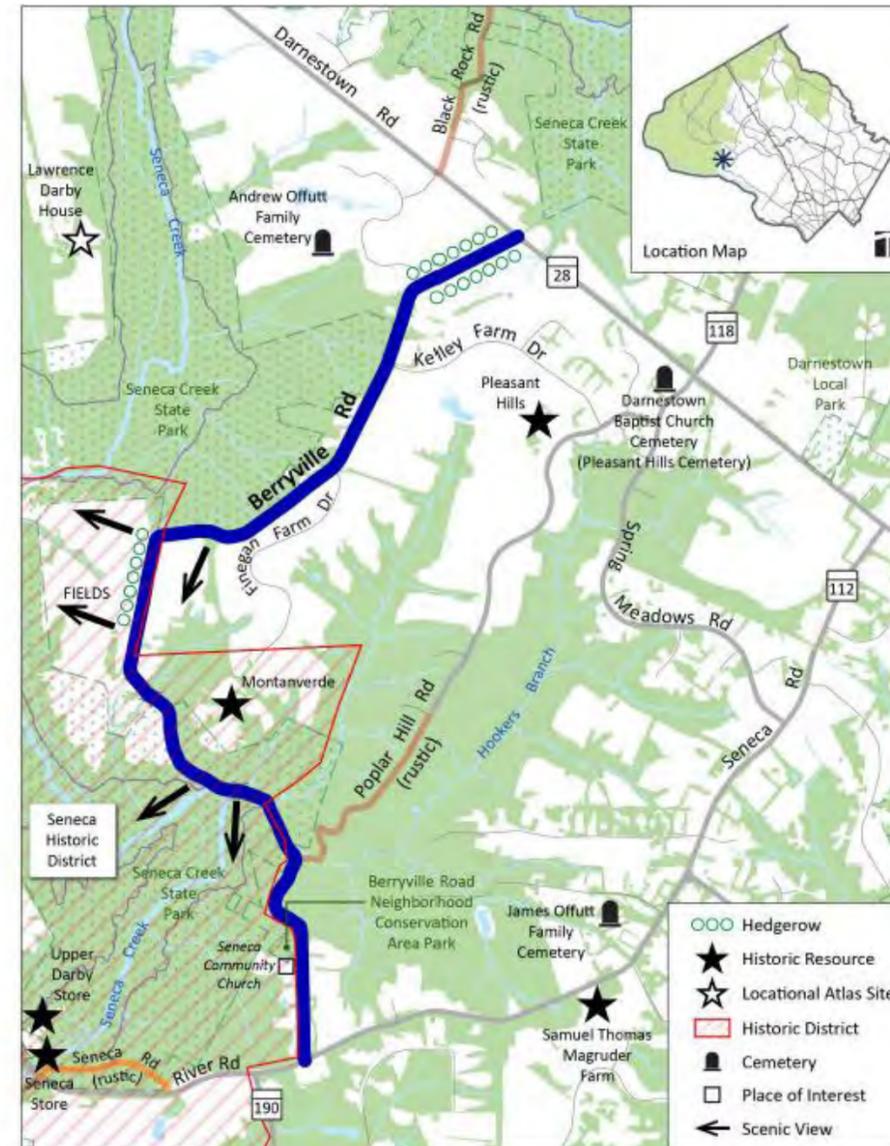


#7 crash rate for existing roads: Game Preserve Road – 1.66 miles – 888 AADT – 71 crashes (34 non-intersection)

Road Profiles

Road Profile Format

- Road profiles for all roads recommended as rustic or exceptional rustic are included in a separate plan appendix
- Profiles are based on the 1996 RRFMP format and include:
 - Introductory Statement
 - Significant Features
 - History
 - Traveling Experience
 - Environment
 - Road Characteristics
 - Map and Photos



Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update – Working Draft – Berryville Road

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Rollercoaster alignment and steep embankments along the edge of the road



View of fields heading south on Berryville Road



Narrow bridge leading to Seneca Creek



Seneca Creek



Looking into Seneca Creek at the southernmost narrow bridge crossing



Seneca Community Church located at the southern end of Berryville Road

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Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update – Working Draft – Berryville Road

Environment

This new section provides details on important natural resources along or near each road. Major themes of the environmental sections are:

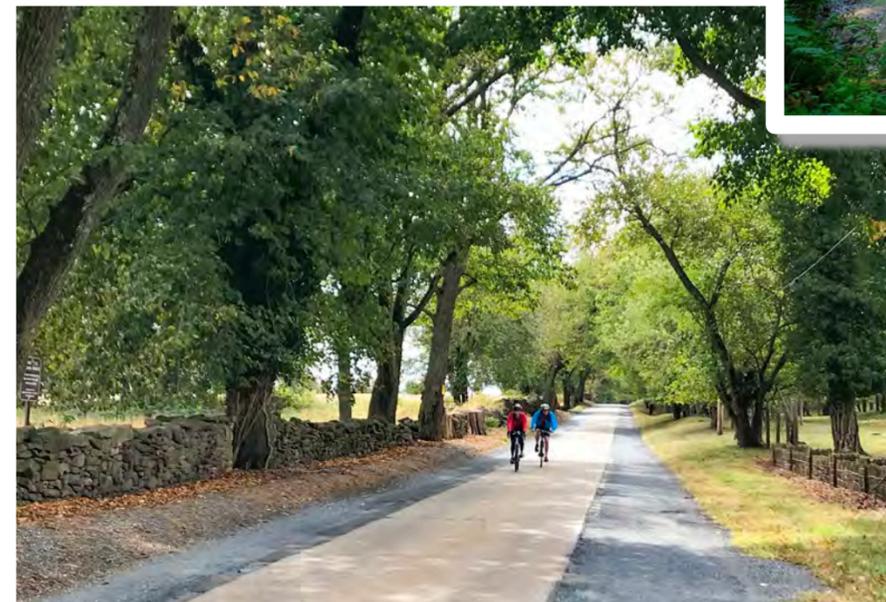
- Parks and trails
- Forest and trees
- Watersheds and stream water quality
- Mineral resources



Tree Canopy,
Old Bucklodge Lane

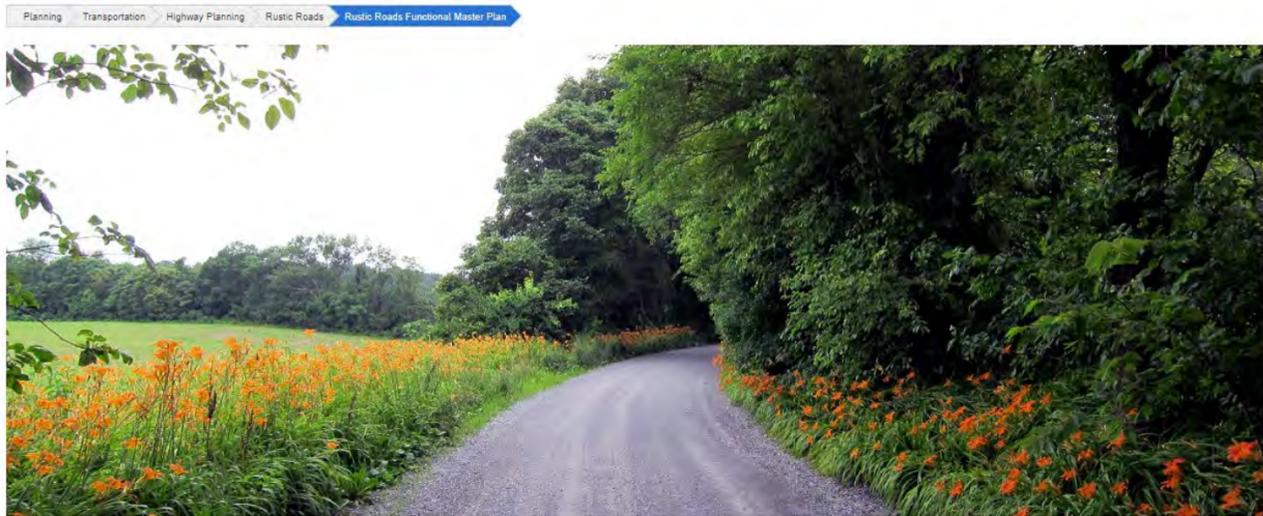


Watts Branch, Glen Road



Sandstone wall,
Martinsburg Road

Online Feedback



The Montgomery County Planning Department has undertaken a technical update to the *Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan* in order to consider roads that have been nominated for inclusion in the Rustic Roads Program and to provide the necessary descriptions for several roads that are currently in the Program. Work on the plan update began in July 2019. This project will include the review of 25 nominated roads, descriptions for 29 roads currently in the Rustic Roads Program, and the integration of policies and programs that are not currently addressed in the master plans.

In addition to reviewing and describing these roads, the Master Plan Update proposes to make recommendations to revisions of current policies and programs and consider other items which may arise.

Connect

Provide comments about the plan (Required)

Name

First Last

Email

SUBMIT

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/highway-planning/rustic-roads/rustic-roads-functional-master-plan/>

Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update Recommendations

1 of 3

Greenbridge Road

An Exceptional Rustic Road

Added to program by this master plan

Roadside trees and woods envelop Greenbridge Road as it runs through mostly rural land. The terrain is generally flat until it enters the wooded Greenbridge Recreation Area, where a significant decline begins.

Significant Features

- Historic alignment
- Very narrow pavement
- Views into reservoir and parkland
- Canopy at west end, trees beside pavement, roadside embankments

History

Greenbridge Road is one of the county's oldest roadways. It formed part of the state's early road network and connected Frederick and Anne Arundel counties at a time before Montgomery and Howard County were carved out of those counties.

The road once crossed the Patuxent at Green's Bridge, built on land patented as "Green's Delight" by Richard Green in 1734 on the east side of the Patuxent. Green established a mill at the site by 1749, around the time the bridge was likely constructed. It replaced an earlier ford and is referenced in public records by the mid-18th century.

The bridge was well established and connected to area road networks by 1774, when the Maryland General Assembly approved an act for the improvement of principal market roads, including the road from "Frederick Town" to Annapolis via Green's Bridge at the Patuxent. An additional cross-county road was platted in 1793 that connected Green's Bridge westward to Luckett's Ferry at Mouth of Monocacy.

In the 19th century, development increased along the road on both sides of the Patuxent and additional connections were added on the east side of the river. In Montgomery County, members of the Brown family built dwellings to the north and south of Greenbridge Road in the 1850s and 1860s. Some family members are buried nearby at the James Brown Family Cemetery (Burial Sites Inventory #58) and the Brown Family Cemetery (Burial Sites Inventory #185) at Gittings Ha Ha (Master Plan Historic Site #23/73), an early land grant property that predates the Revolutionary War.

This area was also home to enslaved African Americans forced to labor for the Greens, Browns, and other landowners from the late 18th century through the abolition of slavery in Maryland in 1864. Their involuntary work allowed slaveholding families to profit from their advantageous position along major market roads.

The road's historic alignment lasted until the 1940s, when WSSC's construction of the Brighton Dam resulted in the inundation of the road and bridge. The road now terminates at the Greenbridge Recreation Area on the Triadelphia Reservoir, and traffic was rerouted across the new Brighton Dam Road bridge, built 1941-1944. The historic roadbed can still be found on both sides of the Patuxent; today it serves as a boat ramp on the Montgomery County side of the reservoir.

View Road Profile | View Recommendation

Submit Comments

ROAD NAMES

Emory Church Road
Frederick Road (MD 355)
Game Preserve Road
Georgia Avenue (MD 97)
Glen Mill Road
Glen Road (Exceptional Rustic Section)
Glen Road (Rustic Section)
Greenbridge Road
Gregg Road
Haines Road
Halterman Road

www.mcatlas.org/rrfmprecs

Implementation and Next Steps

Context

- Rustic roads must be maintained in a manner that provided for **safe travel for all modes** (including roads designated as snow emergency routes)
- Roads need to provide for the **adequate movement of farm equipment**
- **Maintains the integrity of the natural, cultural, and historic character** of rustic roads while sustaining the economic viability for agricultural production along them



Farm equipment

Rustic Roads Advisory Committee

- Emphasizes their role in overseeing the program
 1. Promote awareness of the Rustic Roads Program;
 2. Review and comment on the classification of roads in program;
 3. Review and comment on Executive Regulations and other county policies and programs that may affect the program; and
 4. Report on June 1 of each even numbered year to the Executive, Council, and Planning Board on the status of the Rustic Roads Program.
- Discusses the composition of the committee
- Discusses the role of MCDOT with the committee



Site Visit with RRAC member
on Elton Farm Road

Implementation Recommendations

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Maintenance and Improvements
- Traffic Calming
- Scenic Views
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Pedestrian Master Plan, Complete Streets, and Vision Zero
- Maryland Scenic Byways
- Rustic Roads Program Awareness
- Historic Preservation
- Plan Updates

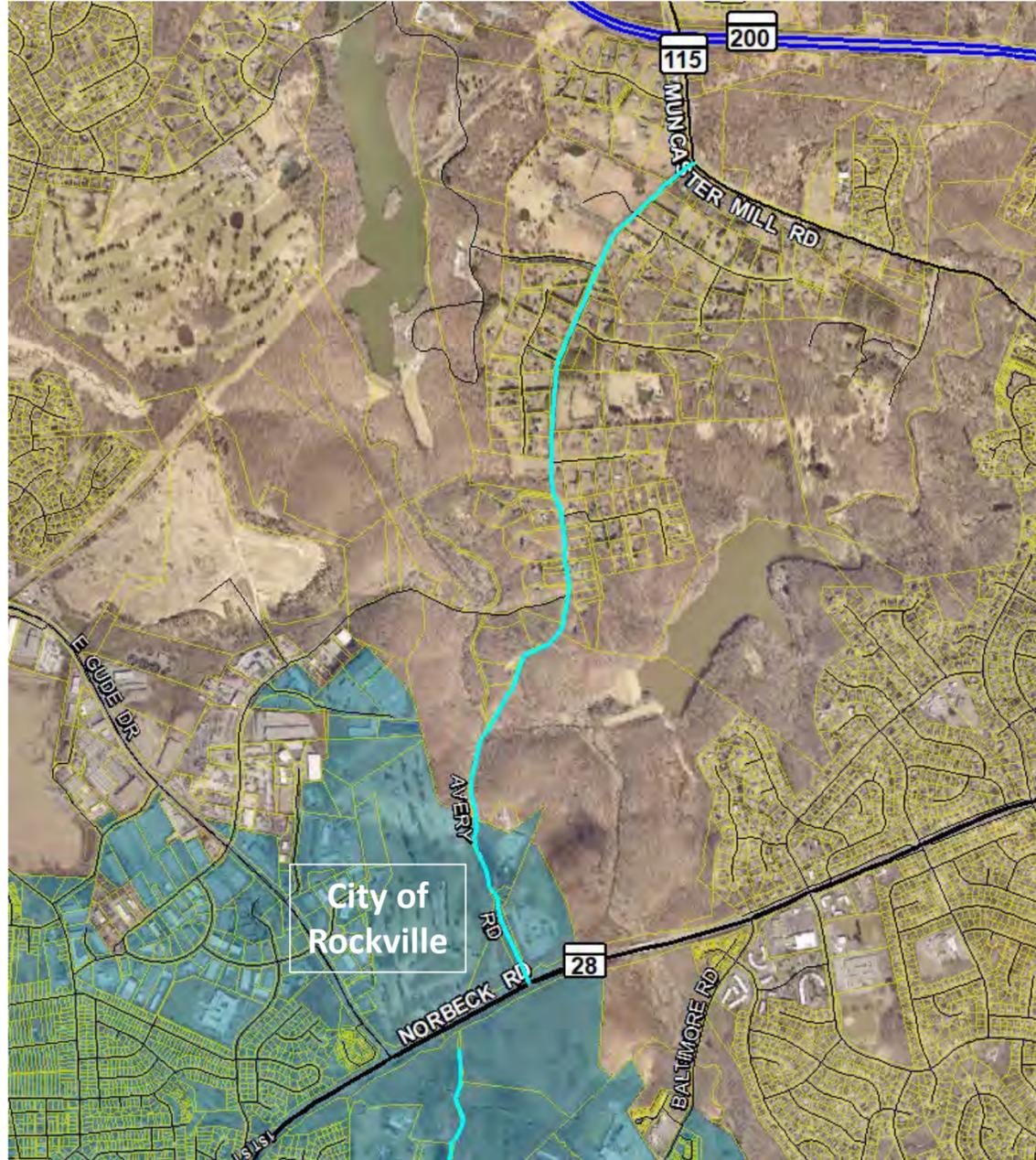


Holland Farm,
Brighton Dam Road



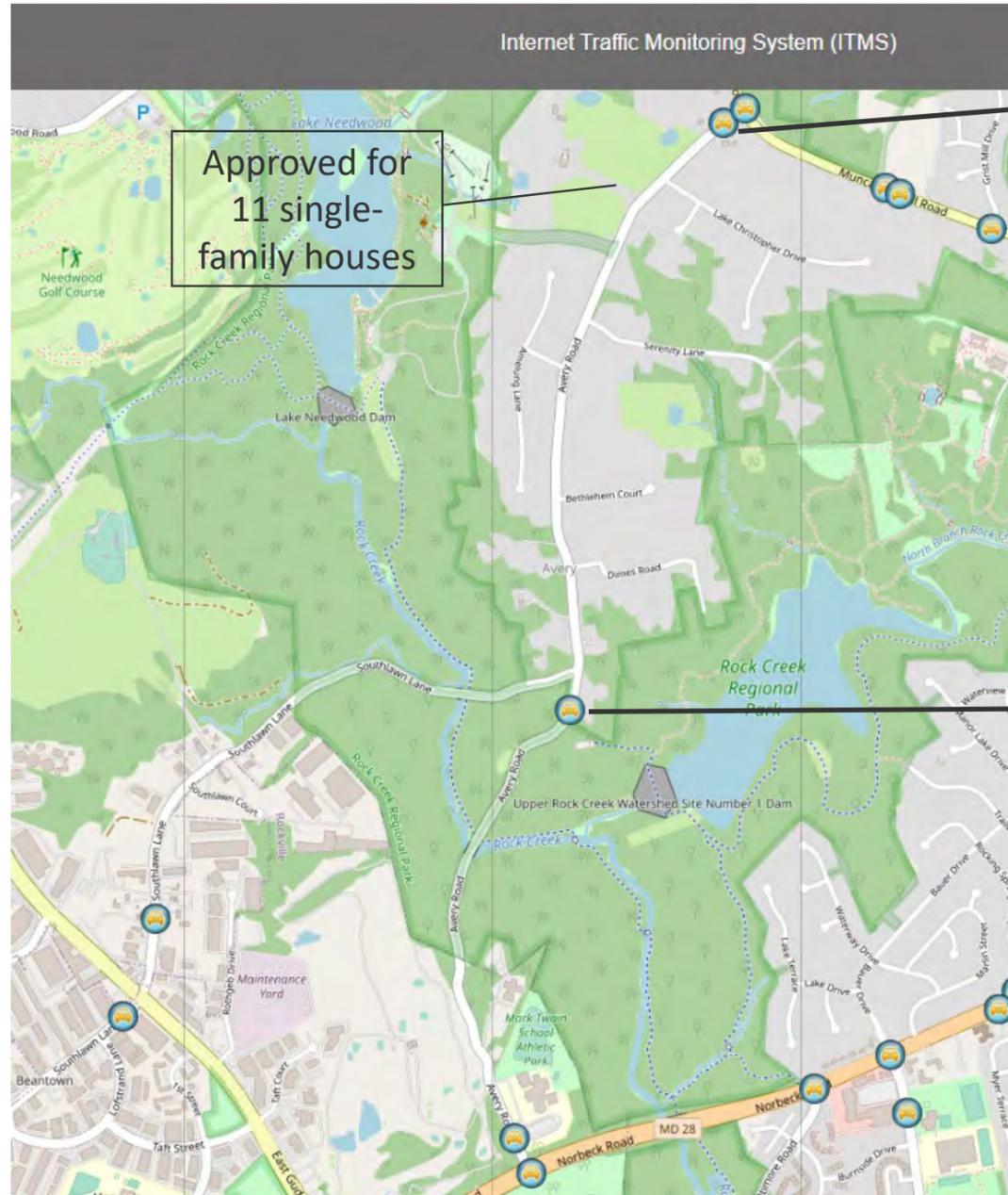
Howard Chapel Road

Avery Road Question



Adopted as Rustic (R) or Exceptional Rustic (E)		Rustic					Exceptional Rustic			
		Narrow, intended for local use	Traffic volume consistent with rustic road	Has outstanding natural features along its borders, such as native vegetation, stands of trees, stream valleys	Has outstanding vistas of farm fields and rural landscape or buildings	Provides access to historic resources, follows historic alignments, or highlights historic landscapes	Accident history does not suggest unsafe conditions	Significant contribution to natural, agricultural, or historic characteristics	Has unusual features found on few other roads in the county	More negatively affected by modifications than would most other roads in the program
Road Name		<-- OR -->								
Avery Road: Rockville City Limit to Muncaster Mill Road (MD 115)				✓	~	✓	<-- AND -->			

Avery Road (continued)



YEAR	AADT	AAWDT
2021	7743	8133
2020	6762	7302
2019	8101	8911
2018	8100	8590
2017	8085	8575
2016	7894	8454
2015	7743	8293
2014	7542	8072
2013	7561	8171
2012	7540	8140

YEAR	AADT	AAWDT
2021	3863	4063
2020	3372	3642
2019	4031	4431
2018	4030	4270
2017	3825	4065
2016	3734	4004
2015	3663	3923
2014	3562	3812
2013	3571	3861
2012	3560	3850



Images from Google Maps

Questions



A miniature cow along Aitcheson Road, nominated as a rustic road



Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update
Working Draft



Montgomery Planning
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION