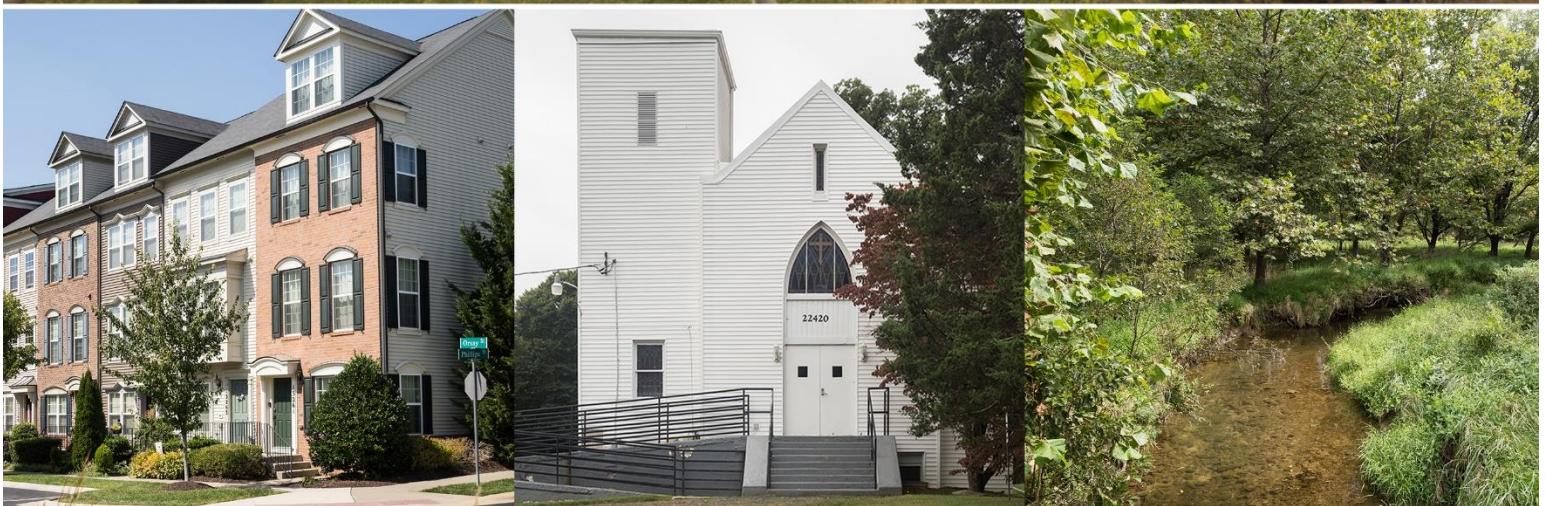


# CLARKSBURG

## GATEWAY SECTOR PLAN



PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT • JULY 2025

 **Montgomery Planning**  
THE MARYLAND - NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

## Abstract

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan Area covers approximately 969 acres in northern Montgomery County, Maryland, near the crossroads of Interstate 270 (I-270) and Clarksburg Road. The Sector Plan establishes a new vision for a more complete, connected, and sustainable Clarksburg community with recommendations to shape future development and transportation networks, provide additional recreational opportunities for area residents, advance the county's housing and economic goals, and preserve and protect the natural environment.

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan contains the text and supporting maps and figures for a comprehensive amendment to a portion of the Approved and Adopted 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area* (the 1994 Plan) and a portion of the 2014 *Ten Mile Creek Area Limited Amendment* (the 2014 Plan). It also amends *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, as amended; the 2025 *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*, as amended; the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*, as amended; the 2022 *Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan*; and the 2023 *Pedestrian Master Plan*.

Sector plans convey county policy for development, preservation, and public improvements within defined geographic areas and should be interpreted together with relevant countywide functional plans and county laws and regulations. Plans provide comprehensive recommendations for the use of public and private land, and public officials and private individuals should refer to them when making land use and infrastructure decisions. Public and private decisions that promote plan goals are essential to fulfilling a plan's vision.

Sector plans generally consider a 20-year planning horizon from the date of adoption, although they are intended to be revisited every 10 to 15 years. Once a sector plan is adopted, however, circumstances may change in the community and the specifics of a plan may become less relevant over time and indicate the need for an earlier comprehensive or limited amendment. Plans do not specify all development or capital improvement possibilities. They often include illustrative sketches intended to convey a sense of desirable future character rather than detailed recommendations for a particular design.





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The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending the General Plan (*Thrive Montgomery 2050*) 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 elected representatives of those counties. The Planning Boards are responsible for preparing all local plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations and the administration of the bi-county park system.

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# Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan

PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT | JULY 2025

**The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission**

Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department

[MontgomeryPlanning.org](http://MontgomeryPlanning.org)

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# 1. Introduction

## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan is a comprehensive amendment to a portion of the Approved and Adopted 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area* (the 1994 Plan) and a portion of the 2014 *Ten Mile Creek Area Limited Amendment* (the 2014 Plan). The Sector Plan establishes a new vision for a more complete, connected, and sustainable Clarksburg with recommendations to shape future development, connect transportation networks, help the county advance its long-term housing goals, provide additional recreation opportunities for area residents, and preserve and protect the natural environment.

### Key Plan Recommendations

The following key recommendations will help the Plan Area achieve its vision:

- Re-zone existing employment-oriented zones to commercial residential zones to add greater development flexibility for new development projects, with modest increases to maximum allowable development density.
- Connect Observation Drive and Little Seneca Parkway through the Plan Area as local area connectors, in coordination with future development and minimizing impacts to sensitive environmental areas and residential neighborhoods.
- Preserve land along the stream valleys of Little Seneca Creek and its tributaries by private conservation easement or by establishing or expanding public parkland.

- Implement best management practices to prevent or reduce pollution, enhance environmental quality, and improve resource management as new development and roadways are built, in accordance with the Plan Area's Ten Mile Creek and Clarksburg Special Protection Areas.
- Designate the Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery and the Clarksburg Heights subdivision as a Historic Site and Historic District, respectively, in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

## B. PLAN PURPOSE

The greater Clarksburg community is home to nearly 30,000 residents, most of whom moved to the area as new neighborhoods were established following the adoption of the 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan*. While Clarksburg has realized much of its anticipated residential growth since 1994, the planned employment centers and public transit improvements along I-270 have yet to be realized.

The once-active and innovative Communications Satellite Corporation (COMSAT) Laboratories building has sat vacant for nearly 20 years on approximately 200 acres of open terrain. The planned Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), which was envisioned as a high-frequency transit route linking Clarksburg with points south as far as the Shady Grove Metro Station, never materialized. The CCT is now reimagined as a network of shorter-distance, enhanced bus routes complementing the planned Maryland 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. In addition, Clarksburg lacks several

of the planned roadways and community facilities anticipated since 1994, namely the completion of Observation Drive, Little Seneca Parkway, and the Clarksburg Public Library.

This Sector Plan considers current conditions and expected trends and offers strategies to align a new vision with adopted county plans, policies, and priorities to chart a new course forward for Clarksburg.

The main objectives of the Sector Plan are:

- Support new development and community placemaking to create a more complete, connected, and sustainable community within the greater Clarksburg area.
- Re-visit existing zoning districts for certain properties in response to shifts in regional demand away from single employment uses toward more mixed-use housing and commercial uses with community-serving amenities.
- Complete roadways, active transportation routes, and transit connections that contribute to greater access and multi-modal travel.
- Protect and enhance the environment as new development occurs and public infrastructure is built.
- Enhance and expand public parkland and recreational amenities in the Plan Area to serve the greater Clarksburg community.
- Recognize Clarksburg's history and cultural heritage by preserving and celebrating significant historical resources.
- Celebrate the cultural, racial, and multi-generational diversity of Clarksburg

through a range of housing accommodations, community placemaking and amenities, and public space programming and activation.

- Ensure that future growth is served by adequate public services and facilities.

## C. PLAN AREA CONTEXT

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan lies near the northern border of Montgomery County and is situated at the northernmost extent of the county's Corridor-Focused Growth Area on I-270, as defined by the county's General Plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050* (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The 969-acre Plan Area is generally bounded by Clarksburg Road to the north, Frederick Road (MD 355) to the east, Little Seneca Stream Valley Park and West Old Baltimore Road to the south, and I-270 to the west (see Figure 3).

The Plan boundary encompasses most of the 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan's* Transit Corridor District west of Frederick Road. Major properties in the Plan Area include the Gateway 270 office park, the former COMSAT Laboratories property, Clarksburg Elementary School, Rocky Hill Middle School, Clarksburg High School, and the residential neighborhoods of Gateway Commons, Gallery Park, Hurley Ridge, Clarksburg Square, and Dowdens Station. Other areas in the 1994 Plan Area have largely developed according to its plan vision or have been re-evaluated as part of the 2014 *Ten Mile Creek Plan* and, therefore, are not a part of this plan area. However, a small part of the 2014 Plan's area is included in the Plan boundary near Stringtown and Clarksburg roads for the purpose of reconsidering previous plan recommendations there.

Figure 1: Regional Context Map

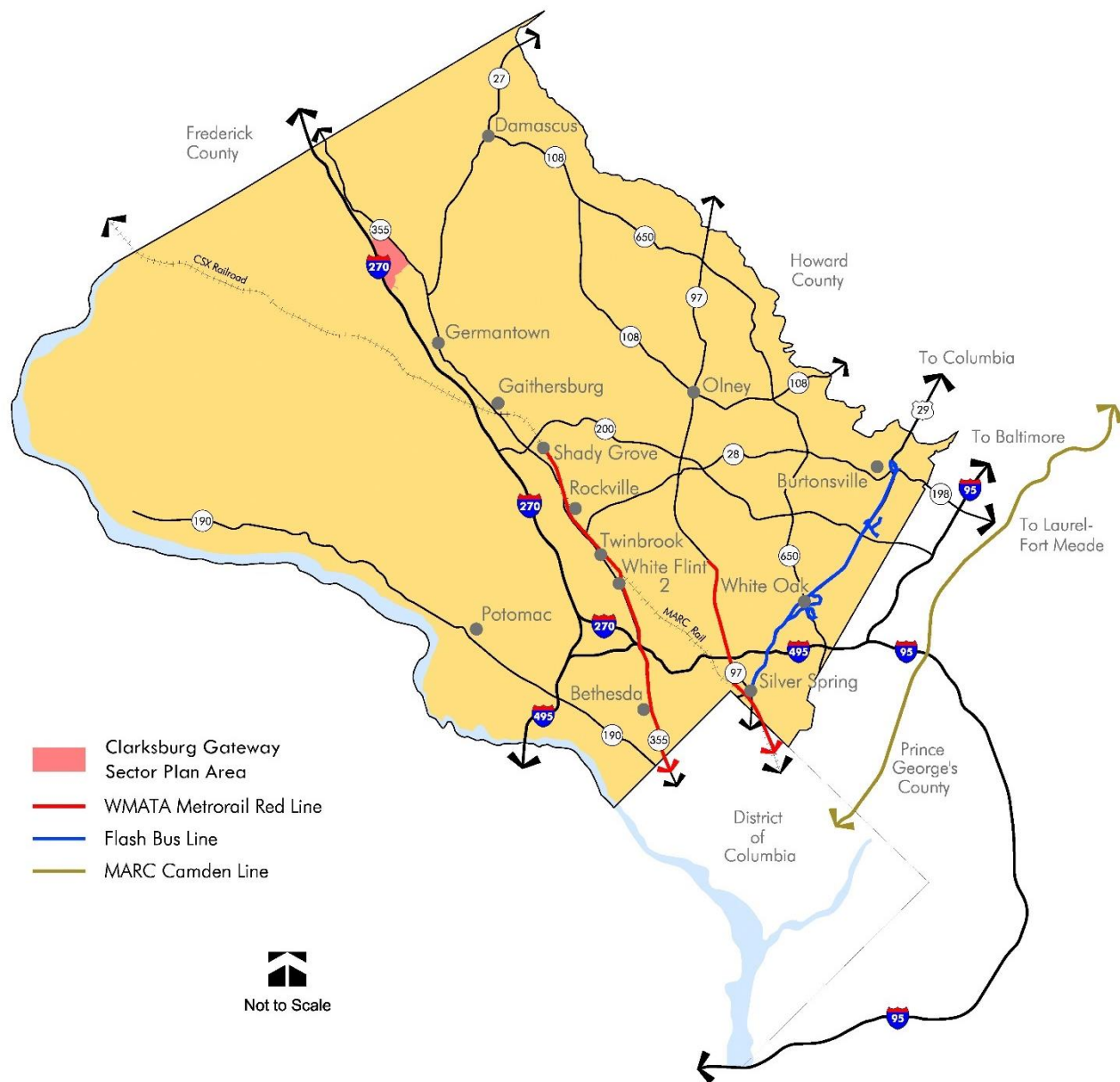
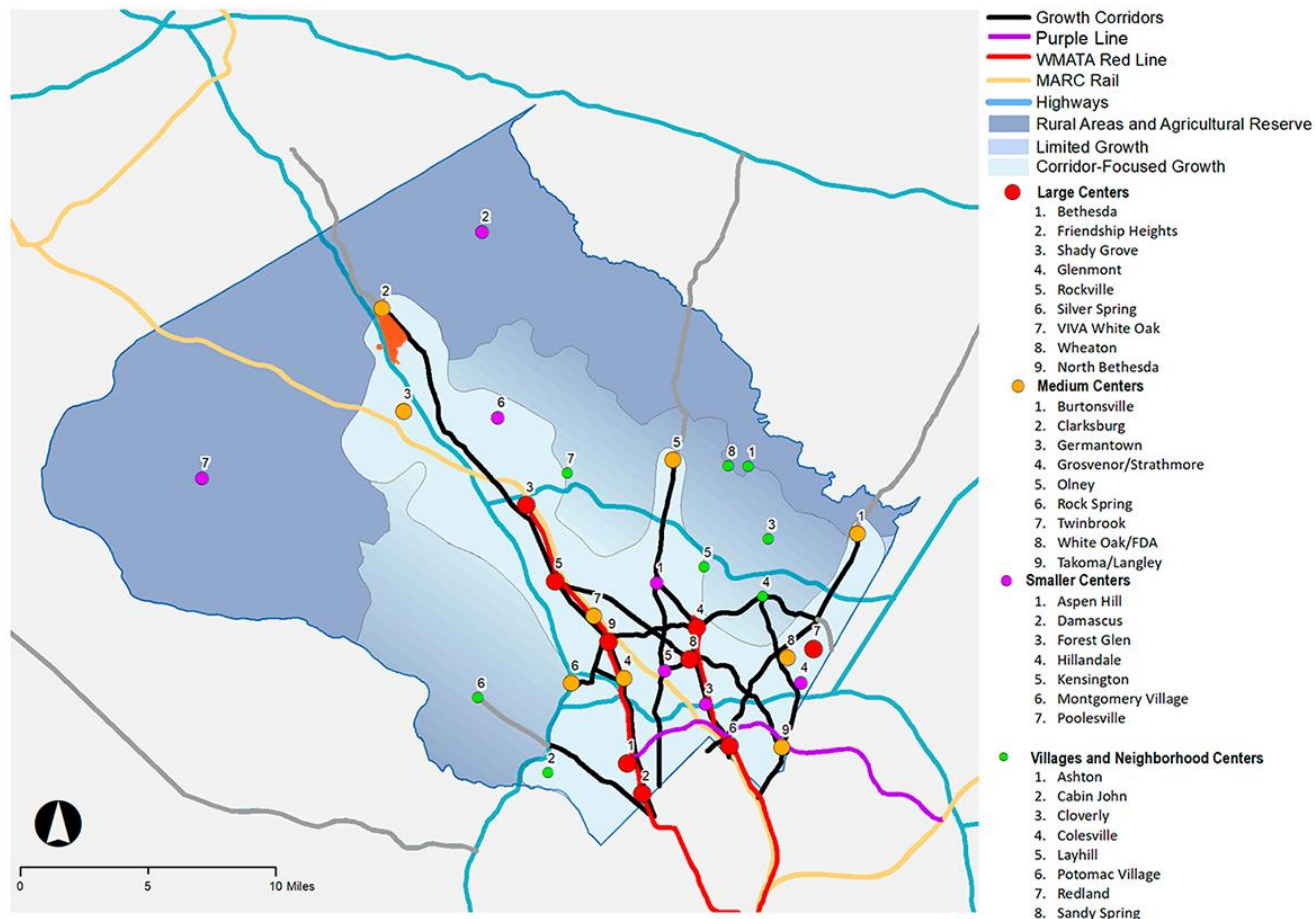


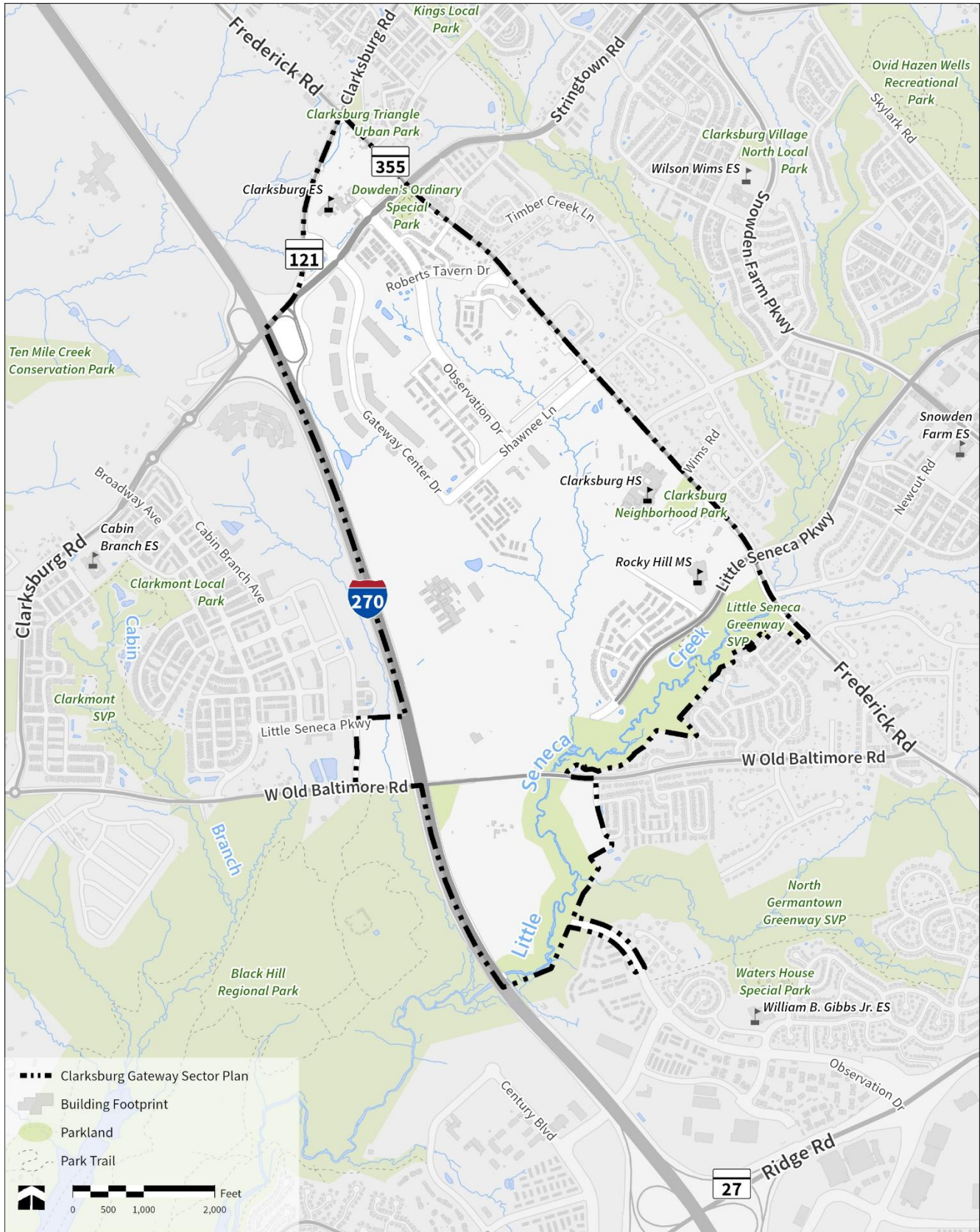


Figure 2: Thrive Montgomery 2050 Growth Map



*Note: The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Growth Diagram illustrates growth concepts and potential centers of activity. The diagram should be considered in the context of Thrive's Compact Growth and Complete Communities chapters. Centers of activity shown are not exhaustive of all existing or potential centers. The Sector Plan Area is shown in red, near the orange #2 Medium Center of Clarksburg.*

Figure 3: Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan Area



## D. PLAN AREA HISTORY

Clarksburg is a community with deep historical roots and has experienced rapid transformation in the past 20 years. Its history reflects broader American trends, from agricultural beginnings to suburban expansion. Additional information on the African American history of the Plan Area, mid-twentieth century development trends, and other topics are covered in the Historic Preservation appendices (G, H, I, and J) containing Master Plan Site and District Designation Forms, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties forms (MIHP forms), and staff reports to Montgomery County's Historic Preservation Commission related to the plan's proposed amendments to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

## E. PLAN AREA TODAY

### Demographics

Clarksburg has experienced the fastest population and housing growth of any part of Montgomery County in the last 20 years. As a result, this relatively new community has a unique demographic profile and housing market compared with the county as a whole. Generally, Clarksburg has larger households, more families, and younger and more diverse residents than Montgomery County overall.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Census Tract that most closely corresponds to the Plan Area (7003.16) grew from a population of 283 in the year 2000 to a population of nearly 4,000 residents by 2020. This rapid growth reflects the increase in population of the greater Clarksburg community, which was home to nearly 30,000 residents by 2023 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The median age in the

Clarksburg area was about 38 years old in 2023, slightly below that of the county overall (41 years) (U.S. Census Bureau).

Since 2000, the Clarksburg community has shifted from majority non-Hispanic White residential population to a far more racially diverse community. In 2023, Asian residents comprised the largest racial group in Clarksburg, accounting for 40% of area residents, compared with 15% in the county overall (U.S. Census Bureau). South Asians were the largest subgroup of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the Clarksburg area.

Households in Clarksburg are generally well-educated and have high average incomes. However, the Clarksburg area lacks the extremely high-income households that exist in other parts of Montgomery County, such as Potomac and Bethesda. With large household sizes, incomes on a per-capita basis lag countywide per-capita income. Most Clarksburg households are owner-occupied, comprising 87% of occupied units in the Plan Area (U.S. Census Bureau). The prevalence of owner-occupied housing is consistent with a housing stock that is primarily single-family residences.

The Clarksburg area has a larger share of townhomes (34%) than the county average (18%) and a notably smaller share of multi-family units (11% versus 35%) (U.S. Census Bureau). There is a limited supply of multi-family rental units in Clarksburg. Over 80% of the Clarksburg area's housing stock was built since 2000, and units are similar in size and quality. These residential units tend to be larger than average, and although they command sale prices that are below the county average on a per square foot basis, prospective buyers still need to have relatively high incomes. Because of the size of these single-family homes, there is a notable share of above-moderate-income



households that are cost burdened in the Clarksburg community.

Higher-than-average commute times for Clarksburg residents imply that, like Germantown residents, they travel to the job-rich areas of southern Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. for work. Despite the long commutes, people continue to move to Clarksburg, a trend that may be explained by the relative affordability of larger housing units in this area and people's desire to live in less urban areas.

For detailed reports on population, housing, and real estate conditions in the Plan Area, see *Appendix B: Clarksburg Demographic Profile* and *Appendix C: Clarksburg Market Study*.

## **The Built Environment**

The land use pattern in the Plan Area today consists primarily of low-density, attached and detached residential and institutional buildings, including public schools and places of worship, along the west side of Frederick Road (MD 355), and a district of light industrial and flex commercial uses along Gateway Center Drive. The former COMSAT Laboratories property comprises about 200 acres at the south end of Gateway Center Drive and, except for a few businesses occupying ancillary buildings of the former satellite and communications company, the property has been largely vacant since 2005. South of the COMSAT property, open fields and forests surround the farmhouse of what was once a larger Linthicum family farm.

Three public schools are located within the Plan Area, along the Frederick Road corridor: Clarksburg Elementary School, Rocky Hill Middle School, and Clarksburg High School.

## **The Natural Environment**

From its earliest European settlement in the mid-18th century, through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Clarksburg was primarily a farming community interspersed with large forest tracts, especially where topography, shallow soils, and wetlands limited agricultural use. Some of these established forests are still thriving today. Some are identified by the Maryland State Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) as Priority Urban Forests that are significant for the conservation of biodiversity and managed to prioritize forest and tree retention over disturbance or removal. Others are identified as Targeted Ecological Areas, lands and watersheds that are conservation priorities and represent some of the most ecologically valuable areas in Maryland. These areas must be carefully considered for protection and enhancement within the master planning process.

Other signature natural features in Clarksburg are its streams and stream valleys. Little Seneca Creek and an unnamed tributary (commonly known as Coolbrook) flow through the Plan Area, including through a portion of Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park and through forested stream valleys on other public and private lands. Their stream channels and associated floodplains, seeps, springs, wetlands, and adjacent steep slopes are protected by a patchwork of private conservation easements, as recent development has occurred along the streams. Little Seneca Creek drains to Little Seneca Lake, which serves as an emergency raw-water source for county residents during droughts. Large segments of the tributary system within the Plan Area are publicly owned (either by MCPS or Montgomery Parks) and protected from development impacts.

## F. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the course of the plan update process, the planning team conducted community outreach and engagement to inform and influence the preparation of the plan. In addition to individual meetings with stakeholders, property owners, public agency staff, and neighborhood and community groups, the planning team held the following meetings and outreach activities as part of its engagement efforts.



*Planning team members at a community 'pop-up' event*

### Kickoff Meeting and Open House

On July 26, 2023, the planning team hosted a community kickoff meeting and open house in the activity building in Clarksburg Neighborhood Park. This meeting was the planning team's first touchpoint with the Clarksburg community and an opportunity to invite feedback and collaboration into the planning process.

The planning team launched a community questionnaire at the kickoff meeting asking attendees about the character of Clarksburg, what amenities were missing, what type of engagement would work best for them, and what would make the plan successful. The questionnaire was posted on the sector plan's website until mid-December 2023 and attracted

126 digital submissions, in addition to those completed by hand at the kickoff meeting.



*The Sector Plan's kickoff community meeting – 7.26.2023*

### Door-to-Door Canvassing

Between June and August 2023, the planning team collaborated with a non-profit consultant to interview community members to gain an understanding of how Clarksburg residents think about their community today and what they would like to see in the future.

The canvassing team attempted to knock on every door within the five large residential neighborhoods in the Plan Area and a random sampling of residences surrounding the plan boundary. Their efforts resulted in 177 conversations that were transcribed in real time.



*Members of the Everyday Canvassing team during the door-to-door canvassing effort*

## Community Listening Sessions

The planning team held four listening sessions in October 2023, each focused on different topics of discussion. The first listening session was a virtual meeting and covered transportation and environment, while the remaining three listening sessions were held in person at Rocky Hill Middle School in Clarksburg. The second listening session focused on housing, economic development, and employment; the third listening session was on parks and trails, historic resources, community facilities, community identity, and urban design; and the fourth listening session was a catch-all meeting that included all the topics from the three previous sessions.

Between the four listening sessions, the planning team collected 309 comments, most of which were short sentences, sentence fragments, and even single words captured by the note takers.



*Members of the community and planning team at the third listening session*

(See Appendix D: Community Feedback Report for a summary of feedback received during the

community kickoff, door-to-door canvassing, and listening session phases.)

## Community Visioning Workshops

In the summer of 2024, the Clarksburg community was invited to envision the future of the Plan Area and explore solutions to community needs. The planning team held four community visioning workshops, on May 21 and 23 and June 10 and 12. All meetings were held in person within the Plan Area (at Rocky Hill Middle School and Clarksburg High School). Participants were asked to share their reactions to proposed emerging ideas from the planning team and offer feedback to help guide the preparation of emerging ideas.

Across the four visioning workshops, meeting participants provided 233 comments on topics that included community design, environment, historic preservation, housing, land use and zoning, parks and open space, and transportation. The planning team also spoke with attendees during the open house phase of the meeting to gain a deeper understanding of the community's interests.



*Visioning workshop attendees share comments with Planning Staff.*



## Emerging Ideas Meetings

After considering the feedback received, the planning team shared their emerging ideas for the plan with the Clarksburg community at two meetings in January 2025 to seek feedback on recommendations for the draft plan. An in-person meeting was held on January 14, 2025, at Rocky Hill Middle School, attended by about 40 participants, and a virtual evening meeting was held via Zoom on January 16, 2025, attended by about 60 community members.

In advance of these meetings, the planning team released an online feedback map and a short questionnaire to share highlights of the emerging ideas presented at the meetings and to provide an additional opportunity for community members to share their feedback outside of the scheduled meetings.

The online feedback map was organized in four categories: Street Network, Land Use, Active Transportation, and Transit Network.

Commenters were generally supportive of the proposed street changes, yet most desired the planned I-270 interchange to remain. Several commenters supported emerging ideas for proposed Bus Rapid Transit on Observation Drive, if stations provide space for park-and-ride facilities and the future routes lead to major destinations. With regard to allowing more residential uses and greater densities on the former COMSAT property and other properties, commenters favored a balance of land uses along with new residential development, including commercial and recreational uses. Several commenters supported proposed recommendations to establish new and connecting trails and paths throughout the Plan Area.

## Key Takeaways from Community Feedback

The people of Clarksburg care deeply about their community. Some love it as it is and wish to see it preserved; some desire new shopping, dining, and recreation amenities and transportation infrastructure; and some feel that it is already overcrowded and overbuilt and in need of protection and mitigation. The planning team's challenge is to find a balance between feedback from community members; goals for improving and building better communities in the county's General Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050; responding to the desires of residents, business owners, and landowners in the Plan Area; and meeting county policies for greater housing, equity, transportation safety and access, and environmental protection.

Major topics from community feedback received to date can be organized into four general themes:

**Transportation:** Community members would like to see a completed road network, better pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, and more public transportation options. A major touchpoint throughout all community feedback and conversations is a planned highway interchange where Little Seneca Parkway will cross over I-270. Establishing a high-quality, rapid, regional transit service to serve Clarksburg was also top of mind for many community meeting participants.

**Community Facilities:** Residents want a library, a community center with recreation options and meeting rooms, and a public swimming pool that is open year-round. They believe that the rapid growth in residential development that has taken place in recent years is not served by adequate public infrastructure and amenities. Currently, a new public library is in the planning stages on a site just east of the Plan Area, at the

intersection of Frederick Road and Stringtown Road. The county's recreation department acknowledges the need for a community recreation center, though a location, schedule, or funding source are not yet identified.

**Quality of Life:** Meeting participants consider Clarksburg to be generally peaceful and appreciate its small-town feel and population diversity, yet they desire a Complete Community with restaurants, shopping amenities, and convenient community facilities. Many are worried about overdevelopment, especially if more houses are built without adding the amenities the community currently lacks.

**Environment and Parks:** Participants appreciate Clarksburg's natural environment and frequently expressed a fondness for the forested areas, open spaces, and other green spaces, especially the trails and regional parks in the area. However, many are concerned that not enough will be done to protect water quality and forests as development continues, especially within the Sector Plan's watershed that captures water for the Little Seneca Lake, which serves as an emergency raw-water source for county residents during droughts. Many Clarksburg residents would also like to see more local parks with active recreation opportunities for people of all ages.

### Technical Consultation

In addition to seeking community feedback to guide the sector plan, the planning team retained three consultants to support technical aspects of the plan:

- The architecture firm Fu Wilmers Design was retained to prepare conceptual site planning and architectural design studies to envision possible adaptive reuse and

development scenarios for the former COMSAT Laboratories building and property.

- An economic consultant, HR&A Advisors, conducted financial feasibility analysis on development scenarios conceived by Fu Wilmers Design to understand how new development could help financially support adaptive reuse of the former COMSAT Laboratories building. This analysis was considered as part of the planning department's recommendation on whether the former COMSAT Laboratories building should be designated as a Master Plan Historic Site. (For more information, see *Appendix F: COMSAT Adaptive Reuse Feasibility Report*.)
- The Sector Plan team conducted regional travel modeling to inform and assess potential plan scenarios for the future transportation network and between expected land use development under the current zoning designations and that of the plan's recommended zoning. With these modeling results, the Planning Department retained a transportation consultant, VHB, to conduct intersection-level traffic analyses on a selection of intersections within the Plan Area. Findings from both analyses informed our transportation recommendations for roadway connections and designs. (For more information, see *Appendix K: Travel Analysis Results* [to be released on or before August 26, 2025, online at [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp](http://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp)])

## G. RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

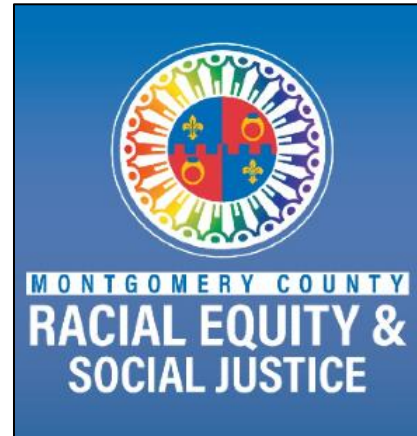
This plan embraces the foundational principles of *Thrive Montgomery 2050* to ensure equitable outcomes for all community members. In addition, consideration of racial equity and social justice when preparing a master or sector plan is a requirement of Montgomery County's Code (Chapter 33A, Planning Procedures, Section 33A-14). Montgomery Planning's Equity Agenda for Planning is an ongoing commitment to systematically dismantle the institutional and structural racism that exists in and has long influenced planning and zoning processes and to prevent that influence in the future.

Preparation of this plan followed an equity framework based on guidance from Montgomery Planning's internal Equity Peer Review Group (EPRG), which is a part of the department's Equity Agenda for Planning initiative. Staff members in the EPRG stay informed of equity best practices to provide feedback on staff recommendations, planning policies, and community engagement strategies for the Planning Department. The EPRG reviews ongoing master and sector plans through an 'equity lens' and applies evaluation tools based on recommendations from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). The tool involves working through a series of steps, including an analysis and evaluation of:

- Desired Results
- Analysis of Data
- Community Engagement
- Strategies
- Implementation
- Communication and Accountability

These steps are critical to ensuring that the growth and development in the Plan Area are inclusive and benefit historically

underrepresented communities. (For details on the plan's equity analysis, see *Appendix E: Equity Framework*.)



As a relatively new community, Clarksburg does not have an extensive history of segregation or exclusion that people in other parts of Montgomery County experienced. However, its current population is one of the most ethnically and racially diverse in the county. As of 2023, Asian residents comprise the largest racial and ethnic group, accounting for 40% of Clarksburg area residents, compared with 15% of the county population as a whole.

The Sector Plan team was intentional in our outreach and engagement efforts to reach a diversity of community groups and organizations in the vicinity of the Plan Area, as well as people who are traditionally hard to reach or who experience barriers to participation, such as people living in rental housing and those who primarily speak a language other than English. (For details on the Sector Plan team's outreach and engagement efforts, see the plan's Community Engagement section and *Appendix D: Community Feedback Report*.)

Clarksburg Heights is a small, but notable, mid-20th century subdivision in the Plan Area that was planned, built, and owned by African

Americans. F. Wilson and Sarah L. Wims developed this subdivision in 1963 to counter widespread discriminatory housing practices and provide modern, middle-class housing for African Americans. The Wims sold several residences to educators, allowing them to live closer to their place of employment. At that time, the NAACP estimated that over 90% of African American educators lived outside Montgomery County due to discriminatory housing practices.

Clarksburg Heights stands as a testament to the African American community's efforts to improve the lives of residents and is a singular resource in Montgomery County. The Sector Plan's recommendation to designate the Clarksburg Heights neighborhood as a historic district recognizes the significance of the neighborhood regarding the challenges and opportunities faced by African Americans in Montgomery County in the recent past.

(For more information on Clarksburg Heights, see the plan's Historic Preservation section and Appendices F, G, H, I, and J.)

## H. GUIDING PLANS AND POLICIES

### **1994 Clarksburg Master Plan**

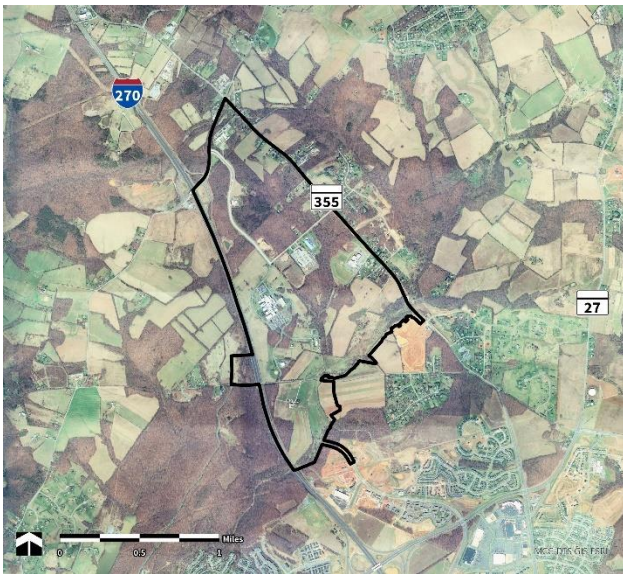
The 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area* was the result of a five-year community process to establish a long-range vision to manage Clarksburg's anticipated transition from a rural crossroads to a compact town-scale community, with a strong public commitment to the vision as a transit- and pedestrian-oriented community surrounded by open space. At the time, Clarksburg was seen as the "final frontier" of the I-270 Corridor in Montgomery County. By 1994, developments along the I-270 Corridor south of Clarksburg were in various stages of completion, yet the

Clarksburg area had seen limited development, and fewer than 1,400 residents lived within the approximately 10,000 acres covered by the 1994 Plan Area.

The 1994 Plan reduced the amount of land zoned for heavy industrial uses because of fears that the zoning pattern at the time would bring as many as 80,000 employees to the Clarksburg area, which was envisioned as a modest new town rather than a bustling urban city. At the same time, the 1994 Plan designated two "significant employment campuses" on the east side of I-270 in Clarksburg: COMSAT Laboratories and the Gateway 270 office park. The plan projected that these two employment areas could ultimately generate more than 20,000 jobs. Within a few years of the plan's adoption, however, the COMSAT building was shuttered; the Gateway 270 office park has fewer than 1,000 employees today.

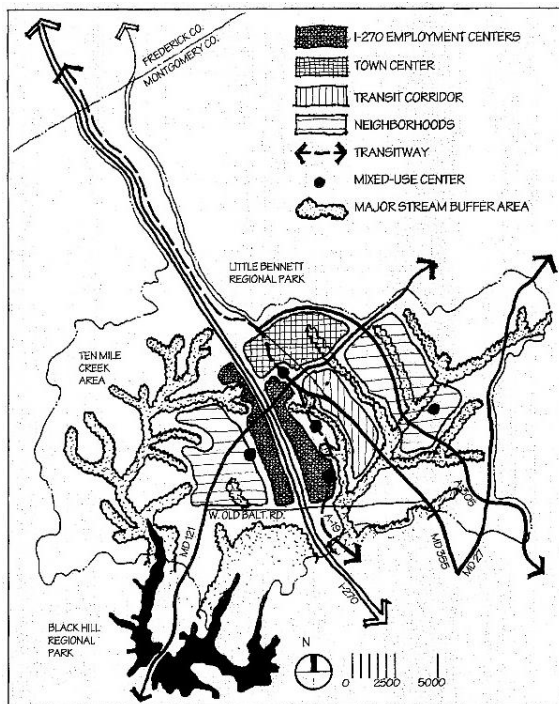
Several important transportation connections recommended in the 1994 Plan remain unbuilt, most significantly a portion of Newcut Road Extended (now Little Seneca Parkway) planned to cross I-270, and Observation Drive from its current terminus north of Ridge Road through the Plan Area. Other unrealized recommendations from the 1994 Plan are the proposed I-270 interchange at the Newcut Road Extended overpass and the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), running along Observation Drive with three proposed transit stations located within the current Plan Area.





1998 aerial image showing the remaining farmland and forests in the vicinity of the Sector Plan Area (black outline)

Another important element of the 1994 Plan was the establishment of a Greenway Network, planned as a network of trails following stream valleys and area roadways to connect regional and local parks, schools, and other open spaces.



The 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan Proposed Concept Plan for Clarksburg

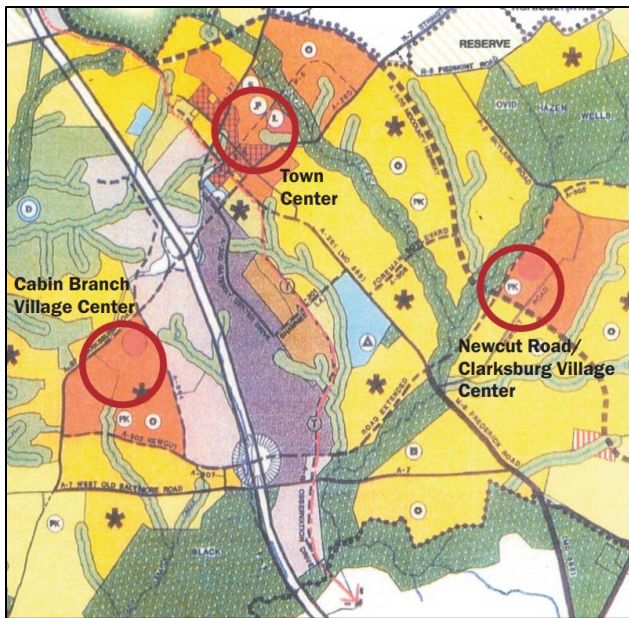
Today, with nearly 30,000 residents in the 1994 Plan's area, challenges in Clarksburg remain. Clarksburg saw much of its anticipated housing built, yet almost none of its envisioned employment-oriented development occurred, and the planned transit network anchored by the CCT never materialized. Clarksburg is still without many of the necessary community facilities planned since at least 1994, such as a library, community recreation center, and a completed road and sanitary sewer network.

### 2011 Limited Amendment to the 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan

The 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area* specified that retail development in Clarksburg Town Center should precede retail development in the Newcut Road and Cabin Branch neighborhood village centers. An amendment to the 1994 Plan was approved in 2011 to modify this retail staging provision to allow retail development in the village centers to proceed, after approval of a Preliminary Plan subdivision application for retail development in the Town Center, rather than after their actual construction. A shopping center with grocery store and retail shops was built in the Clarksburg Village neighborhood soon after the 2011 amendment, and a regional outlet mall was completed in Cabin Branch in 2016.

While the retail center in the Town Center has yet to be completed, there is movement in its entitlements process that indicates that retail development, including a grocery store anchor, is advancing.





A map from the 2011 amendment showing the location of Clarksburg Town Center and the two village centers of the 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan

## 2014 Ten Mile Creek Area Limited Amendment

A second limited amendment to the 1994 Plan, approved in 2014, focused on portions of the 1994 Plan Area located within the Ten Mile Creek Watershed, primarily west of Clarksburg Road. The 2014 amendment retained the 1994 Plan's overall vision, with recommendations to better achieve two important objectives: the creation of a well-defined corridor town that provides jobs, homes, and commercial activities; and the preservation of natural resources critical to the county's well-being, especially within the Ten Mile Creek Special Protection Area.

The 2014 amendment incorporated several important changes to the planned transportation network in the 1994 Plan Area. Alternative alignments for the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) and the Clarksburg Historic District bypass were approved, as well as an addition of a proposed BRT route along Frederick Road (MD 355). These re-alignments sought to reroute the CCT and bypass to avoid

potential stream valley and wetland impacts and disruption or displacement of Clarksburg Elementary School.

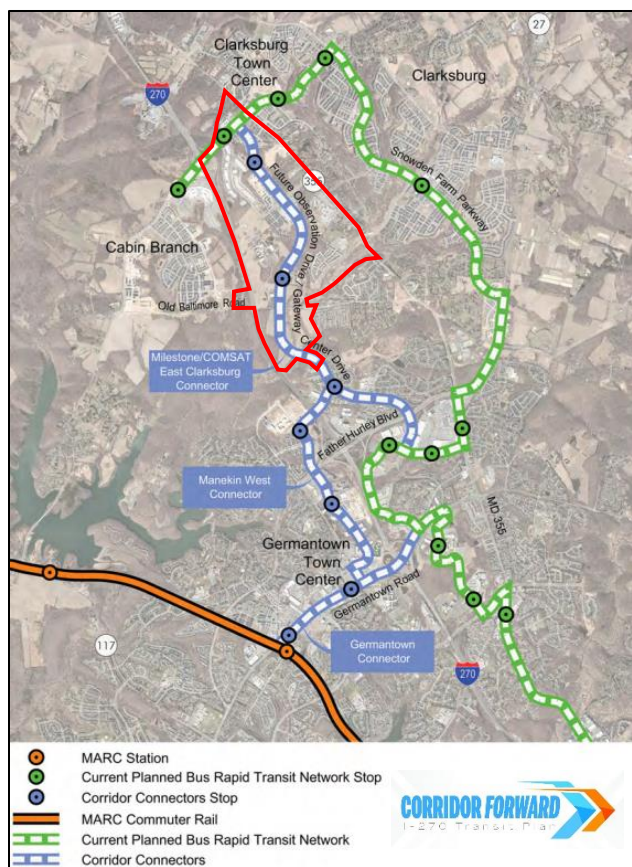
The amendment also acknowledged that real estate market trends no longer supported the goal that significant portions of land in Clarksburg should be devoted to office and employment activities, a major vision of the 1994 Plan.

## Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan

The CCT had once been a fixture in a variety of master plans, starting with the 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan* and continuing with the 2013 *Countywide Corridors Plan* and the 2014 Ten Mile Creek amendment, until it was replaced by the 2022 *Corridor Forward: the I-270 Transit Plan* (Corridor Forward). Through the years, various iterations of the CCT had proposed dedicated transit lanes to connect the Clarksburg/Germantown corridor with the I-270 Life Sciences Corridor and the Metrorail system via the Shady Grove Metro Station. The 1994 Plan also envisioned the CCT as a direct connection between Frederick and Clarksburg with a southern terminus at the Shady Grove Metro station.

Due to changing projected land uses and fluctuating demands for the transit service, subsequent iterations of the CCT failed to push it beyond the preliminary design phase.

*Corridor Forward* was initiated in spring 2020 to evaluate transit projects that best supported the travel needs of communities and employment centers along the I-270 corridor, including those located within the Plan Area. *Corridor Forward* assessed a multitude of countywide transit projects ranging from light rail to BRT to prioritize equitable and sustainable projects to accommodate the county's projected growth.



A map of planned Germantown and Clarksburg dedicated bus lanes, Corridor Connectors, and transit stops in Corridor Forward. The Sector Plan boundary is outlined in red.

Recommendations for the former CCT alignment within the Plan Area, formerly known as the “Milestone/COMSAT East Clarksburg Corridor Connector” and in this plan as the “Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector,” rested heavily on future land use projections within the proposed right-of-way for the transitway. *Corridor Forward* also proposed an alternative alignment for the Milestone/COMSAT East Clarksburg Connector that would use Gateway Center Drive instead of the 1994 Plan alignment for Observation Drive between Stringtown and West Old Baltimore roads, although this alignment is not shown on its route map. *Corridor Forward* also removed planned BRT alignments running to the north of Clarksburg Road. This Sector Plan continues the

expectation for local community Corridor Connectors, while establishing revised roadway alignments and designs to accommodate them in new ways.

## Climate Action Plan

The county’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted in June 2021, is Montgomery County’s strategic plan to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions in the county by 2035. The CAP includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate-related risks to the county’s residents, businesses, and the built and natural environment. It provides guidance on building resilient communities through clean energy, resilient and efficient buildings, a sustainable transportation system, integrated nature-based strategies for sequestration, and necessary resources and infrastructure to withstand the impacts of climate change. The various strategies in the CAP stress the importance of focusing on those in the community who are most vulnerable to climate impacts.

The CAP advocates for the development of a more efficient transportation network, outlining specific strategies for increasing investment in public transit systems, encouraging more walkable communities, and promoting bike-friendly infrastructure. Like *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, the CAP is centered around racial equity and social justice. This Sector Plan incorporates recommendations from the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan, where appropriate, to assist the county in achieving our climate goals.

## Vision Zero

In fall 2016, the County Council formally adopted a resolution that delineated countywide the Vision Zero approach to

transportation planning and policy efforts. Vision Zero's primary tenet is the elimination of all preventable transportation-related deaths and serious injuries, with a goal of zero traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2030. Consistent with the guidelines presented in the county's adopted Vision Zero initiative, the Sector Plan prioritizes safety in its recommendations to improve accessibility and multi-modality within the Plan Area, supporting the county's investments in safety measures along specific corridors.

### **Complete Streets Design Guide**

The county's *Complete Streets Design Guide* provides a framework for countywide roadway design that prioritizes safety, accessibility, mobility, and sustainability for individuals who are walking, rolling, biking, riding transit, and driving. Complete Streets are highly context sensitive, and Planning Staff work to ensure that roads are given the proper roadway designations based on their expected travel needs and land use context. Street types from the *Complete Streets Design Guide* are adopted into County Code and incorporated into the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*. This Sector Plan recommends Complete Street types for all existing and planned major roadways within the Plan Area.

### **Bicycle Master Plan**

The *Bicycle Master Plan* for Montgomery County promotes four goals to improve the county's current bicycle network: increasing cycling rates countywide, creating a low-stress and connected bike network, providing equitable access to bicycle infrastructure, and improving bike safety. The *Bicycle Master Plan* also includes a bikeway classification system for varying types of bike infrastructure and a data-

driven approach that examines levels of bicycle stress on roads. This plan continues much of the planned bicycle network within the Plan Area, with some recommended changes and enhancements to the *Bicycle Master Plan*.

### **Pedestrian Master Plan**

The Montgomery County *Pedestrian Master Plan* is an important element in the county's Vision Zero 2030 Action Plan and 2021 Climate Action Plan. It supports the *Thrive Montgomery 2050* goal to "develop a safe, comfortable, and appealing network for walking, biking, and rolling." The plan documents the pedestrian experience in Montgomery County and makes recommendations in line with national and international best practices to make the experience even better. These recommendations include but are not limited to identifying opportunities to be more proactive in sidewalk construction and maintenance, providing more and better places to cross the street, prioritizing data-driven approaches to future pedestrian/bicycle investments, and ensuring that state highways can be rebuilt in line with local plan visions. This Sector Plan recommends targeted improvements in the walking and rolling experience in the Plan Area, especially at certain intersections and near schools.

### **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**

The Montgomery County Parks Department updated the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* (PROS Plan) in 2022 to guide future development and management of the county's extensive park system. Parks, open spaces, and recreation spaces provide active, social, and leisure opportunities that are essential for a high quality of life for county residents. The focus of the 2022 PROS Plan is to provide

equitably activated, central community spaces that meet recreational needs and protect and manage natural and cultural resources for future generations. The PROS Plan update was coordinated with the then-developing *Thrive Montgomery 2050* general plan update for Montgomery County that showcases how great places with equitable access to opportunities produce strong communities and people.

The 2022 PROS Plan serves as the planning policy for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2027 and beyond and informs the preparation of park, open space, and recreation recommendations for this plan.



## 2. Plan Vision and Framework

### A. SECTOR PLAN VISION

This Sector Plan seeks to balance future development with the preservation of natural and historic resources that will contribute to a more complete, connected, and sustainable neighborhood in Clarksburg.

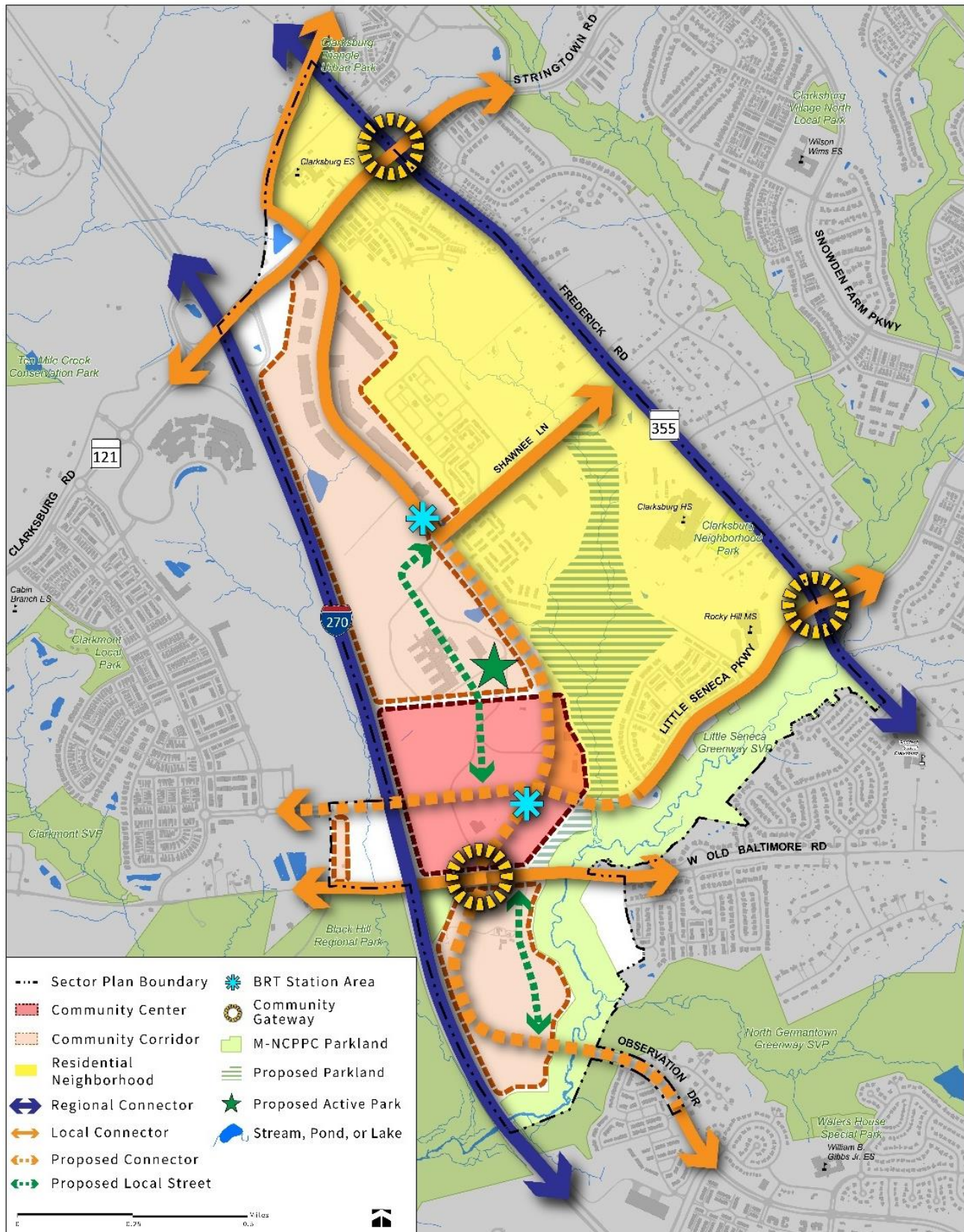
The Sector Plan will be considered a success when, over its 20-year planning horizon, new, high-quality housing and commercial, recreational, and public service amenities are developed; roadways, transit service, paths, and trails connect community destinations; streams, forests, and other natural areas are protected as development occurs through low-impact and sustainable methods; historic resources and cultural heritage locations are preserved and celebrated; and adequate community infrastructure and facilities are present, keeping pace with the community's growth.

### B. CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN

The plan's Concept Framework Plan expresses the overall vision for the physical elements of the Sector Plan as they combine to achieve a cohesive community. The Framework Plan identifies key elements of the existing community landscape, overlaid by aspirational elements to be realized through implementation of the Sector Plan's policies and recommendations. This framework is intended to guide the evolution of the Plan Area toward a dense, compact community capable of attracting retail and office uses and supporting the full range of services, amenities, and infrastructure contemplated by the plan. Framework elements are illustrated in Figure 4 and described in detail below:

- The **Community Center** is envisioned as a compact, medium-density, mixed-use activity center, with building heights between three and seven stories; safe, comfortable, and attractive streetscapes and pedestrian realms; and activated ground floors, parks, and open spaces. Structured and surface parking areas should be located to the side or rear of public streets and wrapped by storefronts or other building entryways, architectural or artistic treatments, and/or landscape screening, where feasible.
- **Community Corridors** are envisioned as low- to medium-density residential, commercial, and/or employment areas that are linked to the Community Center and Residential Neighborhood areas through a hierarchy of streets, paths, trails, and open space.
- **Residential Neighborhoods** should offer a mix of densities and housing types that respects the scale of nearby neighborhoods, in addition to small-scale commercial or institutional uses that fit within the broader residential character. Public parks and institutional uses should be accessible to and compatible with neighborhoods.
- **BRT and Enhanced Bus Stations** are activated public gathering spaces served by transit stations and high-quality streetscapes and pedestrian realms. They should provide safe, comfortable, and attractive spaces to board or alight from buses that offer shade, furniture, lighting, and wayfinding.

Figure 4: Concept Framework Plan





- Public streetscape improvements and private development at **Community Gateways** should incorporate public art installations, unique architectural elements, safe and comfortable pedestrian facilities, and community gathering spaces that heighten the public realm and convey a sense of ‘arriving’ at these locations.
- **Proposed Parkland** is recommended along a segment of the Coolbrook tributary to protect and manage sensitive environmental resources, as well as a **Proposed Public Park** for active recreation on the COMSAT property as part of the future development of the site.
- **Connectors and Local Streets** are existing and proposed roadways with a Complete Street designation in the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* that seek to accommodate safe and comfortable travel by all modes. Connectors are intended primarily for travel through the Plan Area, while Local Streets are intended to provide access to development sites, with street-facing buildings and entries, activated ground-floors, and bike and pedestrian amenities. Connectors and Local Streets should be constructed as public streets.

## C. THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050

In 2022, the Montgomery County Council ushered in a new era for the county with the approval of *Thrive Montgomery 2050*—the first comprehensive update to the county’s General Plan since 1964. *Thrive Montgomery 2050* stands as the beacon guiding all master and sector plans within the county, anchored by three overarching objectives:

1. **Racial Equity and Social Justice:** A commitment to fairness and inclusivity,

ensuring that growth benefits all members of the community.

2. **Environmental Resilience:** A harmonious balance between development and nature, safeguarding our precious ecosystems.
3. **Economic Competitiveness:** Fostering prosperity through strategic planning, innovation, and collaboration.

To achieve these goals, *Thrive Montgomery 2050* embraces three core concepts:

1. **Compact Growth:** Thoughtful development that maximizes existing resources, minimizing sprawl and preserving open spaces.
2. **Complete Communities:** Holistic planning that integrates housing, transportation, and amenities, creating vibrant neighborhoods where residents can meet a variety of needs within a short distance.
3. **Design, Arts, and Culture:** Celebrating creativity and identity, infusing our built environment with inspiration.



*Thrive Montgomery 2050* champions context-sensitive growth along corridors and in defined centers of activity. It recognizes the crucial role of transit, vibrant mixed-use development, and attainable housing in supporting the county’s

economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and equity initiatives.

Clarksburg is identified by *Thrive Montgomery 2050* as a Medium Center, an area in the county planned for the second-highest level of intensity of development. Medium Centers typically include significant clusters of existing or planned residential density and clusters of commercial density, such as large shopping centers and office campuses. Medium Centers are also likely to be close to high-quality public transit.

*Thrive Montgomery 2050* also identifies Maryland Route 355 (Frederick Road) as a Growth Corridor and the Plan Area as a Corridor-Focused Growth area. According to the plan, development of new or substantially expanded centers of activity should be focused along growth corridors to avoid sprawl and achieve the critical mass required for each center to be economically sustainable.

*Thrive* specifically calls out the former COMSAT Laboratories site as an opportunity to establish a Complete Community:

Existing suburban office parks in locations such as Rock Spring or *Clarksburg's COMSAT site* have large existing buildings that can accommodate employment but lack the integration of uses, services, and amenities necessary to succeed in an increasingly competitive office market. Complete Communities strategies can help reposition these employment centers through infill and redevelopment to incorporate a variety of housing, restaurants, retail, community facilities, and parks and public spaces along with better transit service, making them more attractive to both residents and employers (*Thrive Montgomery 2050*, p. 85, emphasis added).

## D. MARYLAND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The State of Maryland promotes eight Planning Principles that collectively seek to create sustainable communities in the state and protect the environment to foster a high quality of life for all state residents. This Sector Plan seeks to implement the State's Eight Planning Principles through its recommendations.

### *Land*

This plan seeks to concentrate growth within the established population center of Clarksburg, designated as a Growth Corridor Medium Center by the Montgomery County General Plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050*. Existing infrastructure and facilities support the current development in the Plan Area, and the plan recommends the completion and expansion of public infrastructure (e.g., transportation, water and sewer services, parks, schools) as future development occurs.

In addition, the Plan Area is situated entirely within a Priority Funding Area, which defines existing communities and places designated by a local government in Maryland that indicate where state investments are prioritized to support future growth.

### *Transportation*

This plan prioritizes completion of a multi-modal transportation system that facilitates the safe, reliable, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and employment centers. Completing the unbuilt segments of Observation Drive and Little Seneca Parkway as Complete Streets that provide safe and comfortable space for all users (i.e., people driving, walking, rolling, and riding



transit) and establishing an enhanced bus 'corridor connector' between Clarksburg and Germantown are two transportation priorities of this plan to achieve this principle.

### *Housing*

This plan enables a range of housing densities, types, and sizes that provide residential options for residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Zoning changes are recommended for certain properties in the Plan Area to accommodate new residential development where it is currently not allowed or allowed at lower densities by existing zoning regulations. In addition, prioritizing the provision of a higher than minimum level of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) and inclusion of family-sized residential dwellings with three or more bedrooms is encouraged for residential development projects seeking approval through the county's Optional Method of Development.

### *Economy*

This plan supports economic development that promotes retail, service, and employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and community facilities. Recommending a change for certain properties from current employment-oriented zoning districts (i.e., EOF and IL) to more flexible zoning districts that prioritize mixed-use development (i.e., CR and CRT) will allow for new development that is responsive to changing markets and innovations in the county. Recommending the completion of roadways and new transit services that connect with the county's transportation network will provide new access to properties and support development of new housing, shopping, and employment uses.

### *Equity*

The Clarksburg population is one of the most racially diverse in the county. As of 2023, Asian residents (particularly those of south Asian descent) comprise the largest racial and ethnic group, accounting for 40% of Clarksburg area residents, compared with 15% in the county as a whole. The planning team employed innovative techniques to engage with the Clarksburg community during its preparation, including initial community listening sessions, in-person community canvassing, informational community 'pop-ups', community visioning workshops in a variety of venues and formats, and official public hearings held within the community. These efforts helped to reach and engage with a diverse cross-section of the Clarksburg community, including those who are typically hard to reach through traditional outreach efforts.

### *Resilience*

This plan seeks to integrate resiliency measures that will minimize the impacts of rapid and unexpected natural- and human-caused threats to communities from global climate change by recommending that new development achieve the highest practicable levels of green building, tree canopy coverage, stormwater best management practices, and biophilic design. In addition, the plan recommends greater investments in active transportation (i.e., walking, biking, and rolling) and public transit service that help to reduce community dependency on single-occupancy vehicle trips.

### *Place*

This plan supports compact, mixed-use walkable design integrated with Clarksburg's existing community character and located close to high-quality transit options, through

enhanced community design, streetscapes, public spaces, and historic and cultural interpretation and wayfinding.

### *Ecology*

This plan supports the protection and restoration of sensitive ecological systems through the preservation and expansion of protected public and private lands, quality and quantity management of stormwater flowing into area waterways, and recommended forest and tree canopy retention or mitigation techniques through new development.

### 3. Plan-Wide Recommendations

#### A. LAND USE

The Sector Plan envisions a Complete and Compact Community within the greater Clarksburg area, offering a diverse range of housing, commercial, and employment opportunities, connected by an expanded street network, transit service, and active transportation pathways.

Over the past few decades, development of new neighborhoods, commercial centers, parks, schools, and greenways has greatly reshaped the Clarksburg community and landscape, realizing much of the vision anticipated by the 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan*. The Clarksburg Village Center and Town Center neighborhoods east of Frederick Road and the Cabin Branch neighborhood (also home to a regional outlet mall) west of I-270 are now established. The long-awaited Clarksburg Town Center retail component is gaining momentum through necessary development approvals. Meanwhile, the Gateway 270 office park, initiated in 1994, was completed in the early 2000s.

Despite recent development, not all that was envisioned in 1994 has materialized, especially within the Plan Area. Since the adoption of the *Clarksburg Master Plan* in 1994, the employment zones in the Plan Area along I-270 and Frederick Road (MD 355) have remained largely undeveloped or only partially developed. The 1994 Plan emphasized the importance of I-270 as a high-technology corridor for Montgomery County and the region, and the COMSAT and Gateway 270 properties were identified as two employment campuses/office parks in the 1994 Plan. Instead, the Plan Area

has seen development of several self-contained residential communities—a mix of detached, attached, and apartment residences.

Following a merger with Lockheed-Martin in 1997, the COMSAT Laboratories building, a once-prominent facility and major employer in Clarksburg, closed its doors after a tenure of over 30 years. The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), initially envisioned as a high-frequency light-rail train route connecting Clarksburg and the Shady Grove Metro Station, was removed from the state's long-term transportation projects list in 2019. And the planned interchange at I-270 (Exit 17) and Little Seneca Parkway has yet to be completed.

A primary purpose of this plan is to implement policies of the county's general plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, that seek to focus future land use and public infrastructure planning in activity centers and on growth corridors to direct development in ways that facilitate the emergence of Complete Communities. Clarksburg is located at the northern extent of the county's I-270 growth corridor and envisions the emergence of a new community activity center through future development on the former COMSAT Laboratories property and other sites nearby.

The Sector Plan seeks to chart a new course forward in Clarksburg, with recommendations for the addition of new housing, shopping, and employment opportunities, accompanied by the community amenities and infrastructure needed to serve the Clarksburg community today and into the future.

### *Existing Land Uses*

The land use development pattern in the Plan Area today consists of low-density, attached and detached residential uses and institutional uses, including public schools and places of worship, along the west side of Frederick Road, and a small district of light industrial and flex commercial uses along Gateway Center Drive (see Figure 5). The former COMSAT Laboratories property comprises about 200 acres at the south end of Gateway Center Drive and, except for a few businesses occupying ancillary buildings of the former satellite and communications company property, the main building and property have been largely vacant since about 2005. South of the COMSAT property, open fields and forests surround a farmhouse on what was once a larger Linthicum Family farm.

Three public schools are in the Plan Area: Clarksburg Elementary School, Rocky Hill Middle School, and Clarksburg High School. Little Seneca Creek and its Coolbrook tributary run through the Plan Area, including a portion of Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park and forested stream valleys on other public and private lands. Little Seneca Creek flows to Little Seneca Lake, which serves as an emergency raw-water source for county residents, especially during times of drought.

### *Existing Zoning Districts*

Property in the Plan Area is composed of two low-density residential zones (RE-2 and R-200), two planned development zones (PD-4 and PD-11), and a commercial residential town zone (CRT), employment-office zone (EOF), and light industrial zone (IL). The residential and planned development zones are located mainly along the west side of Frederick Road, and the EOF and IL zones are just east of I-270. Much of the

property zoned R-200 is occupied by one of the three schools situated within the Plan Area (see Figure 6).

While a portion of the EOF zone is developed and occupied as light industrial, retail and/or 'flex' space along Gateway Center Drive, the approximately 200-acre former COMSAT Laboratories property is practically a vacant property, with limited prospects to redevelop under its current EOF zone. Most of the properties zoned R-200 are either developed as residential uses, owned and occupied by Montgomery County Public Schools, or managed as public parkland. One block of properties in the R-200 zone, northwest of the intersection of Frederick Road and Shawnee Lane, has the potential for future residential infill development and is discussed later in this section for potential re-zoning.

The PD-zoned properties in the Plan Area have all developed as residential neighborhoods, primarily as townhomes, except for one property approved for a 184-unit apartment building that is as yet unbuilt. PD Zones are a discontinued zone category from the previous county Zoning Ordinance and are required to be replaced with zones from the current Zoning Ordinance to reflect the existing land uses of the affected properties as new master and sector plans are approved.

In addition to the base zoning within the Plan Area, there are two overlay zones: the Clarksburg East Environmental (CEE) Overlay Zone and the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Overlay Zone.

The purpose of the CEE Overlay Zone is to:

- Protect the water quantity, water quality, habitat, and biological diversity of the Ten Mile Creek watershed and its tributaries.



- Regulate the amount and location of impervious surfaces to maintain levels of groundwater, control erosion and water temperature, and retain as many of the functions provided by natural land as possible.
- Regulate development that could adversely affect the high-quality Ten Mille Creek stream system.
- Implement the recommendations of the 2014 *Ten Mile Creek Area Limited Amendment to the Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area*.

The county's TDR Overlay Zones permit an increase in the maximum residential density for "TDR receiving areas" if the development satisfies the requirements for optional method development under Section 4.9.18.B of the Zoning Ordinance. To achieve the added density, properties in the TDR Overlay must provide a certain percentage of MPDUs.

Within the Plan Area, there are two locations with a TDR Overlay Zone, both of which have exercised their overlay allowances. One is the Meadows at Hurley Ridge development in the southern portion of the Plan Area, with a mapped TDR of 4.0. This means that the properties within the overlay zone were eligible to be developed at four units per acre rather than the two units per acre permitted in the underlying R-200 zone. A higher density TDR Overlay-zoned area, with a TDR of 7.0, is in the northern portion of the Plan Area where the Gateway Commons subdivision has developed. Both TDR receiving areas have developed to their maximum residential density since their designation following adoption of the 1994 Plan.

### *Planned Land Uses*

The county's general plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, seeks to concentrate growth along corridors and in defined community centers like Clarksburg, recognizing the need to focus land use and public infrastructure planning in activity centers and on growth corridors through compact, infill development and redevelopment to maximize the efficient use of land. *Thrive Montgomery 2050* also supports flexible approaches to accommodate infill and redevelopment that improve access to amenities, active transportation, parks, and open spaces, and a broader range of housing types at the neighborhood scale.

The planned land uses for the Plan Area reflect the anticipated demand for new mixed-use housing and commercial and recreational amenities in the Clarksburg area, as a contrast to the previously planned growth in office and employment uses by the 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan* (see Figure 7). Planned land uses also seek to implement the Sector Plan's overall vision to establish a new mixed-use, community center in the Plan Area, along a corridor of low-to medium-density residential, commercial, and employment uses and linked by a network of streets, paths, and public transit services (see Figure 4: Concept Framework Plan).

Figure 5: Existing Land Use Map

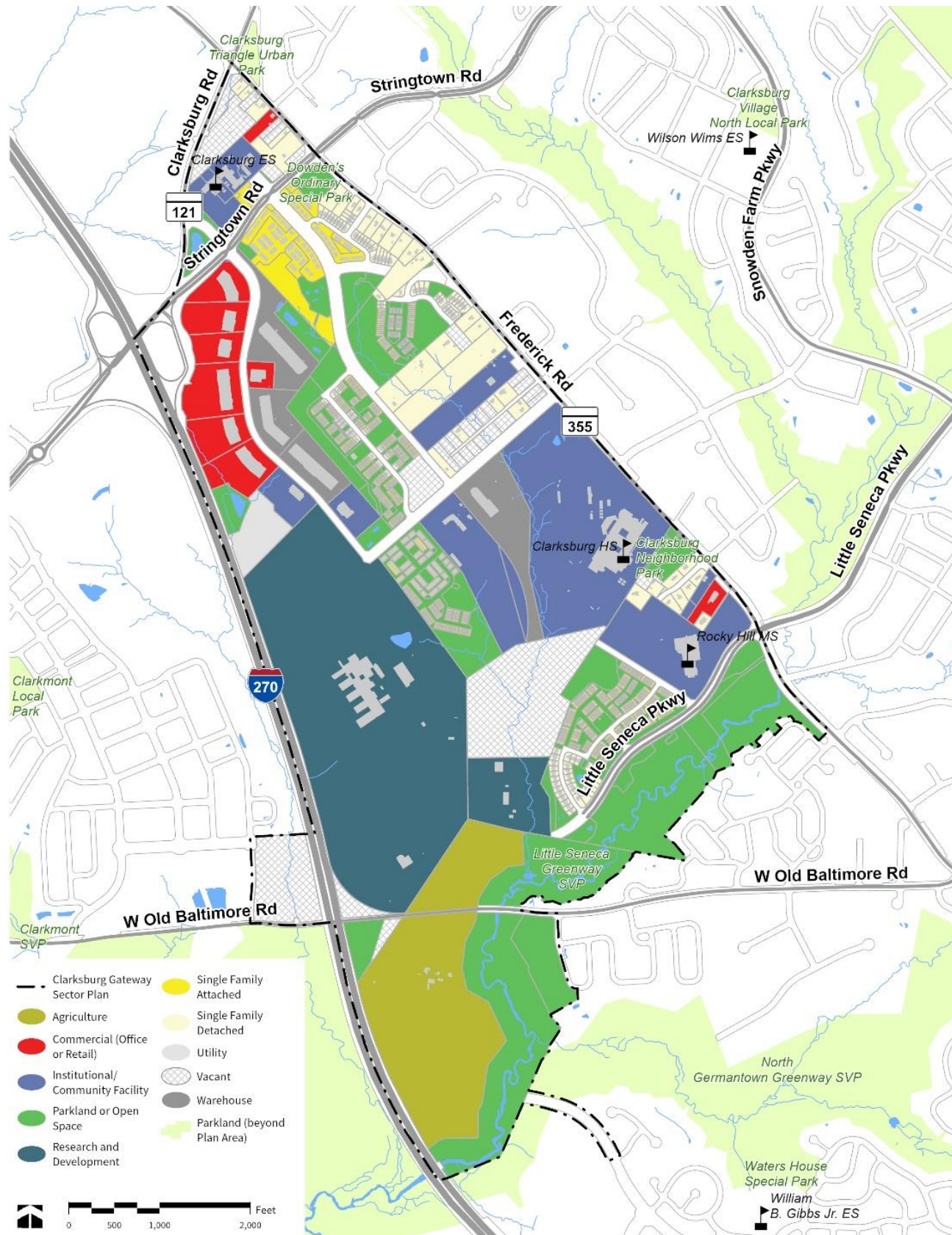




Figure 6: Existing Zoning Map

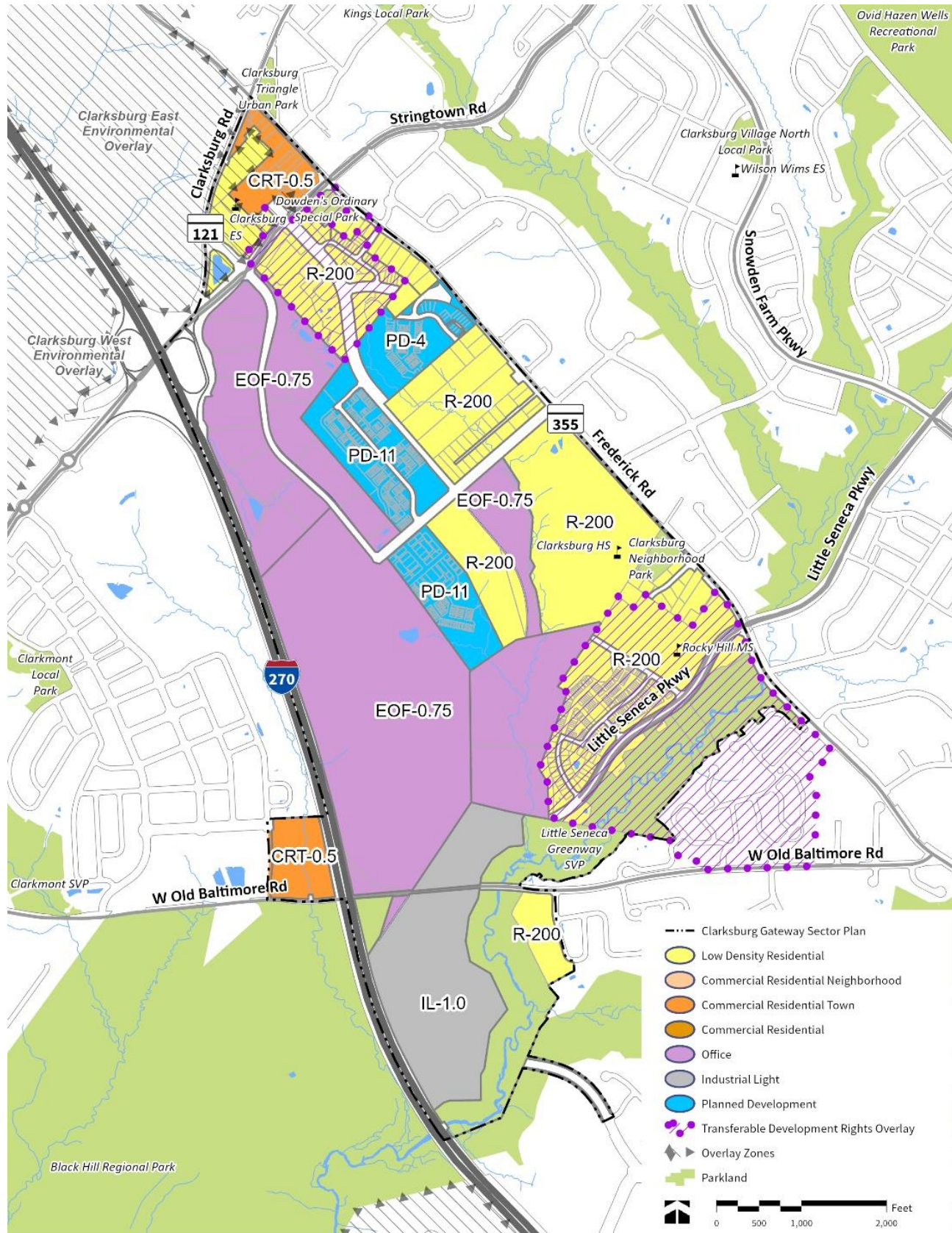
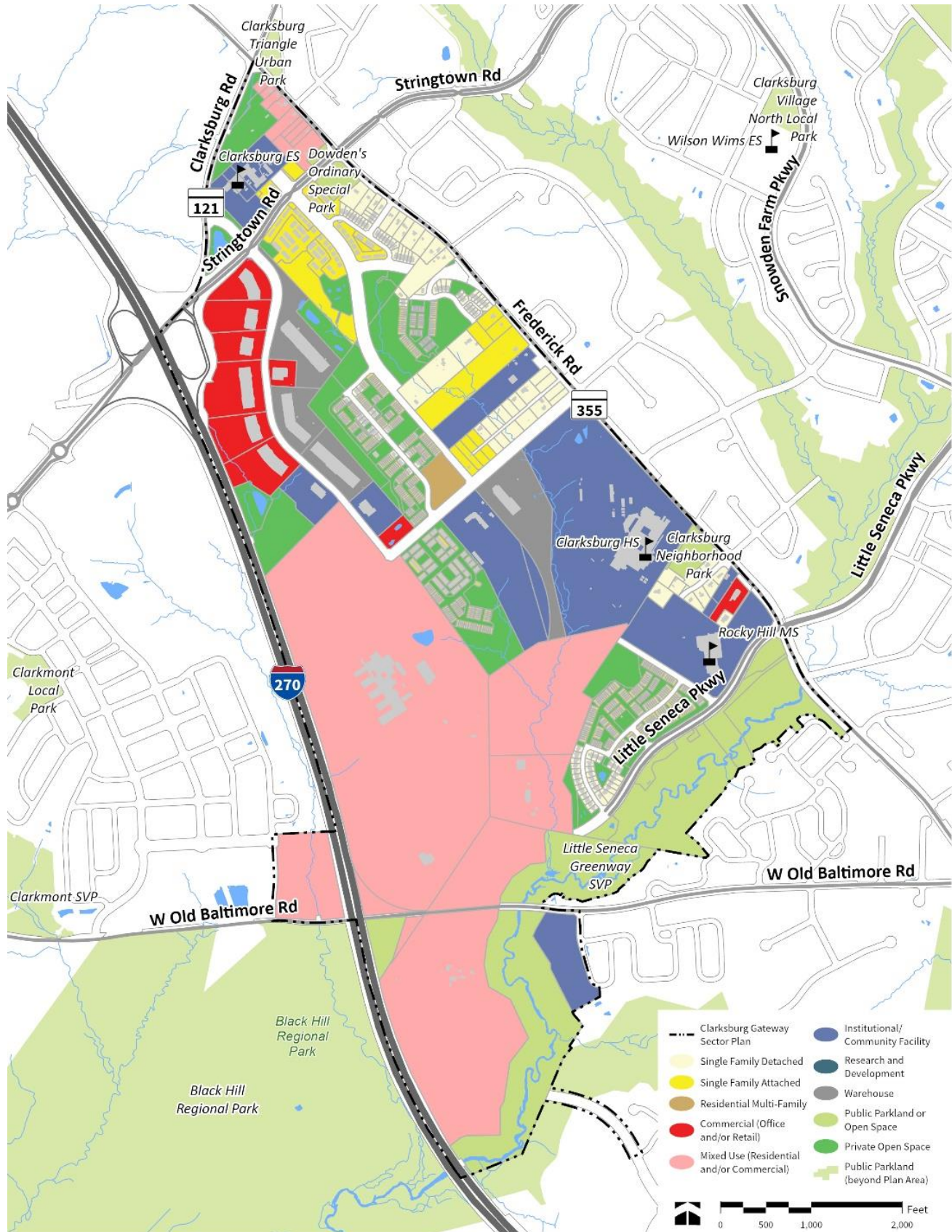




Figure 7: Planned Land Uses Map





## Land Use Goals

- Establish an accessible and attractive new town center by building on the Clarksburg community's strengths and providing new, connected amenities and destinations for current and future residents.
- Achieve the vision of *Thrive Montgomery 2050* by supporting dense, compact, mixed-use forms of development along the planned multi-modal Observation Drive corridor of that integrate a range of housing, commercial retail and services, and recreation and open space amenities with the surrounding Clarksburg community.
- Maintain a primarily residential character along Frederick Road while allowing for moderate increases in residential density and small-scale commercial uses.

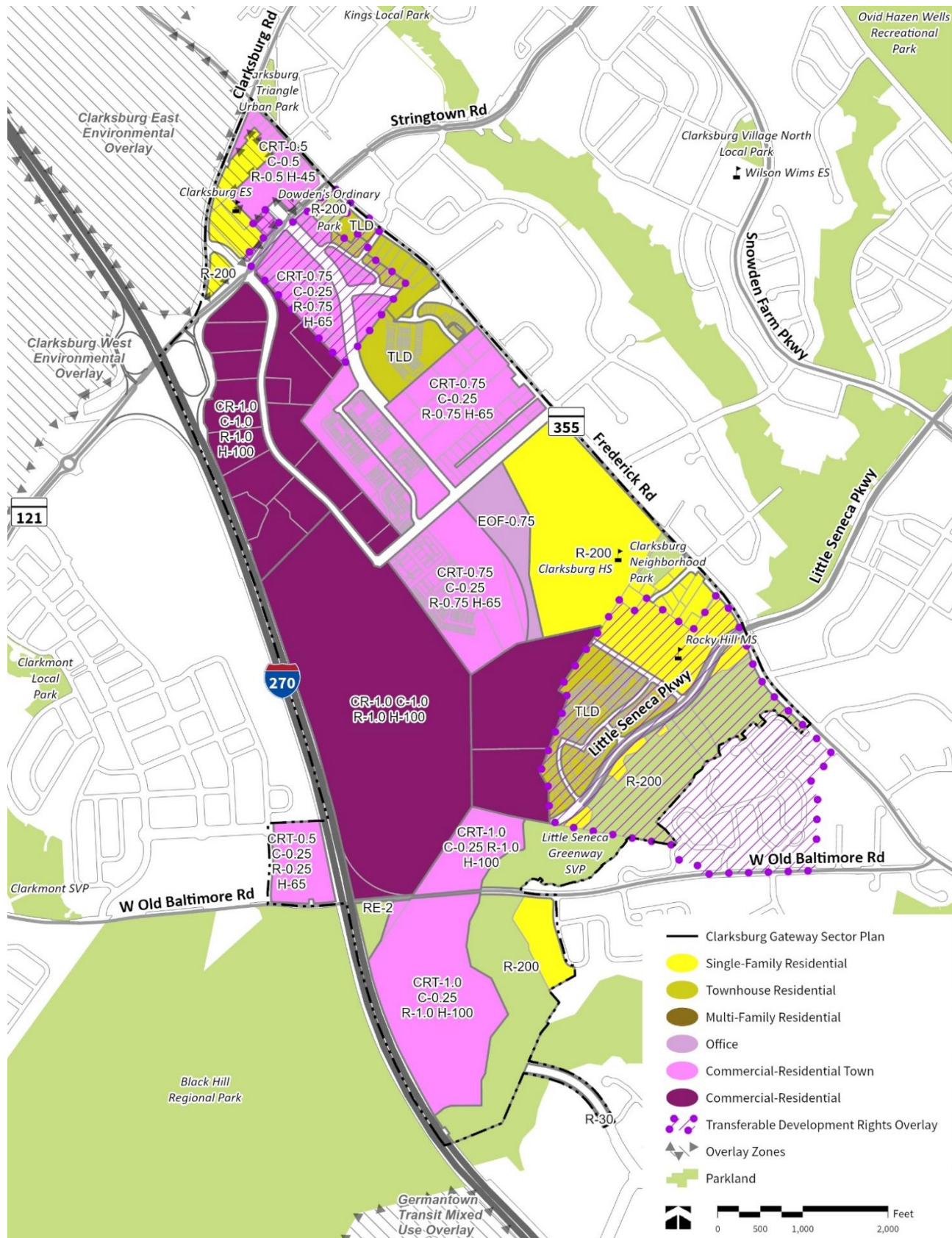
## Land Use Recommendations

1. Adopt the zoning recommendations of this Plan through a Sectional Map Amendment to implement the plan's vision by allowing a greater mix of commercial (e.g., shopping, dining, entertainment), residential, and recreational uses to serve immediate and surrounding communities (see Figure 8).
2. Implement the vision of the Concept Framework Plan through private development and public improvements (see Figure 4).
3. Maintain a minimum 200-foot building setback from the I-270 right-of-way for all residential uses to minimize noise and air pollution impacts on residents from the highway. Proposed residential development near I-270 should complete

a noise study in compliance with county regulations and implement necessary sound attenuation treatments to maintain acceptable interior noise levels.

4. The property at 13050 Shawnee Lane (Moyers and Sons Moving Co.) is recommended to remain zoned as EOF-0.75 (Employment Office) to support the continuation of the existing industrial and office use, yet this plan supports a Commercial Residential floating zone through a Local Map Amendment, if requested by the property owner, to enable future residential and/or commercial redevelopment.
5. For development projects seeking approval under the Optional Method of Development in the Commercial Residential and Commercial Residential Town zones, the following are prioritized public benefits. These benefits are recommended as first priorities, yet applicants may propose additional benefits to achieve greater development incentives as well:
  - a. For projects with a residential component, a greater percentage of MPDUs than the minimum plan-recommended level of 15% of total dwelling units.
  - b. For projects with a multi-family residential component, inclusion of three-bedroom or larger units.
  - c. Mitigation provided because of full or partial demolition of the former COMSAT Laboratories building may satisfy public benefits required under an Optional Method of Development application. (See also Historic Preservation recommendations.)

Figure 8: Recommended Zoning Map



- d. Dedicate land and/or financially contribute toward construction of a public facility like a recreation center or significant transportation improvement that serves a broader community purpose.
- e. Incorporate sustainable features into site design, such as biophilic design, environmental site design techniques (including minimizing grading, maximizing on-site vegetation retention, and using green stormwater management techniques), enhanced green roof, bird-friendly design, pervious pavement materials, and adaptive reuse of an existing structure.

## B. TRANSPORTATION

The Sector Plan envisions a multi-modal transportation future for Clarksburg that is characterized by safe streets and human-centered design that serves a Complete and Compact Community and supports environmentally responsible growth.

### *Public Transportation*

The county's planned investments in the Flash BRT system along the Maryland 355 corridor, the complementary planned Corridor Connector enhanced bus routes (established by the 2022 *Corridor Forward* plan to re-envision portions of the previously planned CCT; see Guiding Plans and Policies), the Ride On Reimagined system improvements for local bus services, the county's Climate Action Plan, and advocacy for Vision Zero initiatives are all intended to prioritize higher-capacity transit services over single-occupancy vehicle infrastructure. These investments are consistent with the promotion and prioritization of public investment in high-quality transit infrastructure in activity centers and along growth corridors by *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, to attract future private investment in compact building forms.

The best long-term solution to reduce congestion on major roadways like MD 355 and I-270 is to reduce the number of trips taken by solo drivers and to further invest in the infrastructure that encourages people to bike, walk, roll, and take public transit. This plan focuses on development at transit stations, proposes better multi-modal connectivity to those stations, and proposes dedicated transit lanes for new enhanced bus services. This is only one part of the wider regional approach

that is necessary to reduce traffic congestion through a wider variety of mobility options.

### *Street Network*

This plan provides a unique opportunity to rethink the planned transportation infrastructure in this portion of Clarksburg to complete a network that aligns with *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, achieve Complete Streets design principles, and support the county's Vision Zero policy. In addition, *Thrive Montgomery 2050* urges the county to prioritize land use patterns that support a transportation system where walking, rolling, bicycling, and public transit are the most practical, safe, and attractive ways of getting from place to place—alternatives to travel by single-occupancy vehicle.

The transportation recommendations in this plan support transit-oriented, compact growth by establishing street designs that address the needs of people who walk, bike, drive, or take transit (consistent with Complete Streets principles), anticipating the conversion of general-purpose travel lanes to dedicated transit lanes as part of a planned enhanced bus transit route on Observation Drive, and avoiding roads with four or more travel lanes where possible.

Transportation recommendations also support *Thrive Montgomery 2050*'s Environmental Health and Resilience goals to minimize imperviousness and protect watersheds by recommending reductions in the planned number of travel lanes; realigning new roadways to minimize disturbance to hillsides, streams, and stream valleys; and enhancing environmental design of bridges to maximize ecological function.



To reduce dependency on automobiles and improve the experiences of people living and working in the Plan Area, the transportation system should prioritize the movement of people over the movement of personal vehicles. This can be achieved by establishing and supporting high-quality public transportation, proposing a new street network with reduced environmental footprints, and increasing network connectivity for all modes of transportation. The future transportation network advanced by this plan is envisioned as a multi-modal, activated, comfortable, and connected system.

With the recommended completion of the east-west Little Seneca Parkway connection over I-270 and the completion of the north-south Observation Drive connection, some existing traffic on other roadways, such as Clarksburg Road, Stringtown Road and Frederick Road, will utilize new routes created by these connections. As development progresses in the area and along Observation Drive specifically, transportation conditions and demands are likely to evolve. A dynamic plan for future roadways and connectivity will be a key factor in achieving the development density, roadway character and multi-modal connectivity envisioned in this plan.

A new I-270 interchange, along with as much as 7 million square feet of employment and retail development, was anticipated in the 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan* at the planned overpass of Little Seneca Parkway (then called Newcut Road) to provide regional access to a planned major employment center on both sides of the interstate; an expected northern extension of the I-270 Technology Corridor at the time. This plan reevaluated the infrastructure necessary to support the mix of uses and the amount of development envisioned, including the

interchange at this location, which would be located just one mile to the north and south along I-270 from two existing interchanges (Exits 16 and 18).

To help inform and assess the plan's transportation recommendations, current and future scenarios in the Plan Area's transportation network and land use development outcomes for population and employment were evaluated using Montgomery Planning's Travel/4 regional travel demand forecasting model, which is an adaptation of the model maintained by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board for the metropolitan Washington region. The resulting policy area-level metrics provided insight into the transportation adequacy of the Sector Plan. In addition, the Sector Plan team retained a transportation consultant to conduct intersection-level traffic analysis on a selection of intersections within the Plan Area to understand whether any transportation or land use scenarios might cause impacts to area intersections and might require mitigation as development occurs.

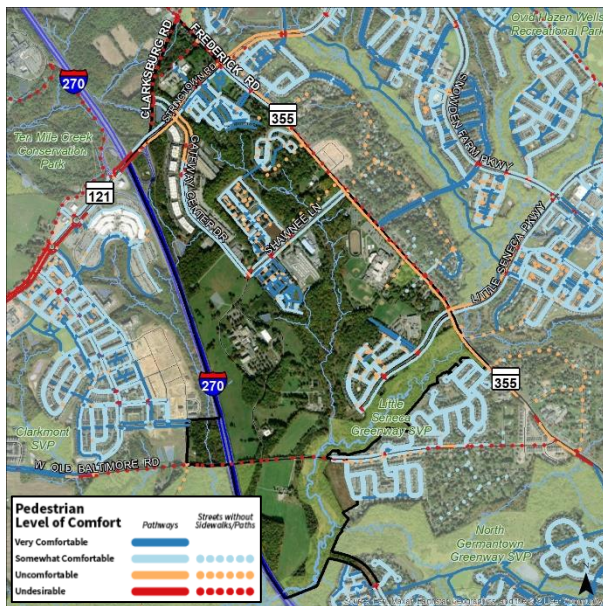
For details on the travel modeling and intersection-level traffic analysis conducted for this plan, see *Appendix K: Travel Analysis Results* [to be released on or before August 26, 2025, online at [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp](https://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp)].

### *Active Transportation*

Sidewalks exist throughout the Plan Area to support walking or rolling, although some sections are rated by the county's Pedestrian Level of Comfort analysis as "uncomfortable" or "undesirable" due to their proximity to high-speed roadways or unprotected street crossings, especially along Frederick Road, Stringtown Road, and Gateway Center Drive (see Figure 9). The triangular area at the north

end of the Plan Area, bounded by Frederick Road, Clarksburg Road, and Stringtown Road, is rated “undesirable” due to its lack of pedestrian facilities. Redgrave Place in particular, which leads to Clarksburg Elementary School from Frederick Road, provides only a narrow-paved roadway with no sidewalks at all.

**Figure 9. Pedestrian Level of Comfort Map**



The Clarksburg area enjoys an extensive network of bikeways and paths, due to the numerous sidepaths and trails running along roadways and stream valley parks, respectively. However, many of these pathways remain incomplete and disconnected within the Plan Area, in part due to its incomplete street network and natural barriers.

The Sector Plan seeks to build on the existing network of bike facilities recommended in the *Bicycle Master Plan* by expanding the network of planned separated bikeways and completing a significant section of one of the county’s Breezeway Networks along Observation Drive. Breezeways are designated in the *Bicycle Master Plan* as part of a high-capacity network of arterial bikeways between major activity centers,

enabling bicyclists to travel with fewer delays, and where all users—including slower moving bicyclists and pedestrians—can safely and comfortably coexist.

This plan seeks to establish at least three safe and comfortable opportunities to bike, walk, and roll across I-270 on dedicated facilities. In addition, a coordinated wayfinding program will be needed to help stitch together the system of bikeways and walkways with parks, amenities, shopping opportunities, and longer-distance public transit services. Providing more travel choices in Clarksburg will reduce demand on busy roadways and create a more vibrant, healthy community where all travelers have safe and convenient options regardless of their age, ability, or mode of transportation.

## Transportation Goals

### Public Transportation

- Prioritize and implement Corridor Forward recommendations for an enhanced bus service Corridor Connector route, creating high-quality stations that are sheltered and comfortable and that support opportunities for multi-modal travel.
- Improve existing public transportation infrastructure and operations to reflect community needs and BRT/enhanced bus service integration.

### Street Network

- Prioritize multi-modal accessibility and safety, with a greater emphasis on transit over single-occupancy vehicle movement efficiency, while incorporating Complete Streets and Vision Zero design practices.

- Create a hierarchy of streets as an organizing element in the Plan Area that serves all modes of transportation and creates spaces for informal social interactions.
- Encourage low-impact, environmentally responsible street designs and alignments for the envisioned multi-modal transportation network, minimizing road impacts to protect environmentally sensitive natural resources, watersheds, and wildlife habitats.

#### *Active Transportation*

- Complete a network of low-stress walking and biking paths, including sidewalks, separated bikeways, and trails, which foster connectivity between communities and provides safe and comfortable access to neighborhoods, transit, schools, parks, and essential amenities for users of all ages and abilities.

### **Transportation Recommendations**

The street network provides vital access to neighborhoods and community destinations, and its characteristics influence local land uses and a community's travel experiences and behaviors. However, streets should not be designed for single-occupancy vehicles alone. Alternatives to driving alone are promoted in this plan to help break the cycle of car-dependent design, which diminishes safety, economic viability, air and water quality, and community quality of life.

The transportation recommendations in this plan prioritize high-quality public transportation options and greater comfort and safety for all modes of travel, including walking and rolling. This plan also recommends a safe network of

separated bikeways, sidewalks, and trails for biking, walking, and rolling that connects the community to amenities, residents to each other, and Clarksburg to its neighboring towns.

#### *Public Transportation*

1. Consider the following items as part of the planning, design and implement the Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector enhanced bus service:
  - a. Locating the northern terminus of the Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector at Clarksburg Town Center, the Clarksburg Premium Outlets, or near the intersection of Gateway Center Drive and Stringtown Road.
  - b. Locating enhanced bus stations at the following locations, shown in Figure 4: Concept Framework Plan:
    - i. At the northern terminus of the Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector route, as determined by MCDOT and Montgomery Planning study, to provide interconnectivity with the Maryland 355 Flash BRT route.
    - ii. On Observation Drive Extended, near its intersection with Gateway Center Drive and Shawnee Lane.
    - iii. On Observation Drive Extended, within the planned activity center on the former COMSAT Laboratories property, between West Old Baltimore Road and Little Seneca Parkway Extended.

2. Develop a capital improvement project to make the following upgrades to existing local bus services:
  - a. Improve access to stops not accessible by walking and biking facilities and safe street crossings (i.e., “stranded stops”).
  - b. Ensure stops are adequately sized and safe places to wait, with shade trees or coverings, comfortable furniture, lighting, improved wayfinding, and safe and logical locations.
  - c. Coordinate with Montgomery Parks to add a new bus stop at the northern entrance of Black Hill Regional Park, the intersection of Lakewood Drive and West Old Baltimore Road. (See also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)
  - d. Explore the feasibility of a circulator bus loop throughout Clarksburg that focuses on local needs and connects with the planned enhanced bus service routes.
3. Establish a publicly accessible park-and-ride facility to access the northern sections of the planned Maryland 355 Flash BRT route and Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector route. Possible facility designs to explore include: a public parking lot or garage, dedicated parking in a private parking lot or garage, or parking co-located with a major community facility.

#### Street Network

4. Apply the ‘Town Center’ context area of the *Complete Streets Design Guide* to the

Linthicum Property (Tax Acct. No. 02-03409441) to complete the Observation Drive Town Center corridor and street design standards in the CSDG (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Recommended CSDG Context Area Map



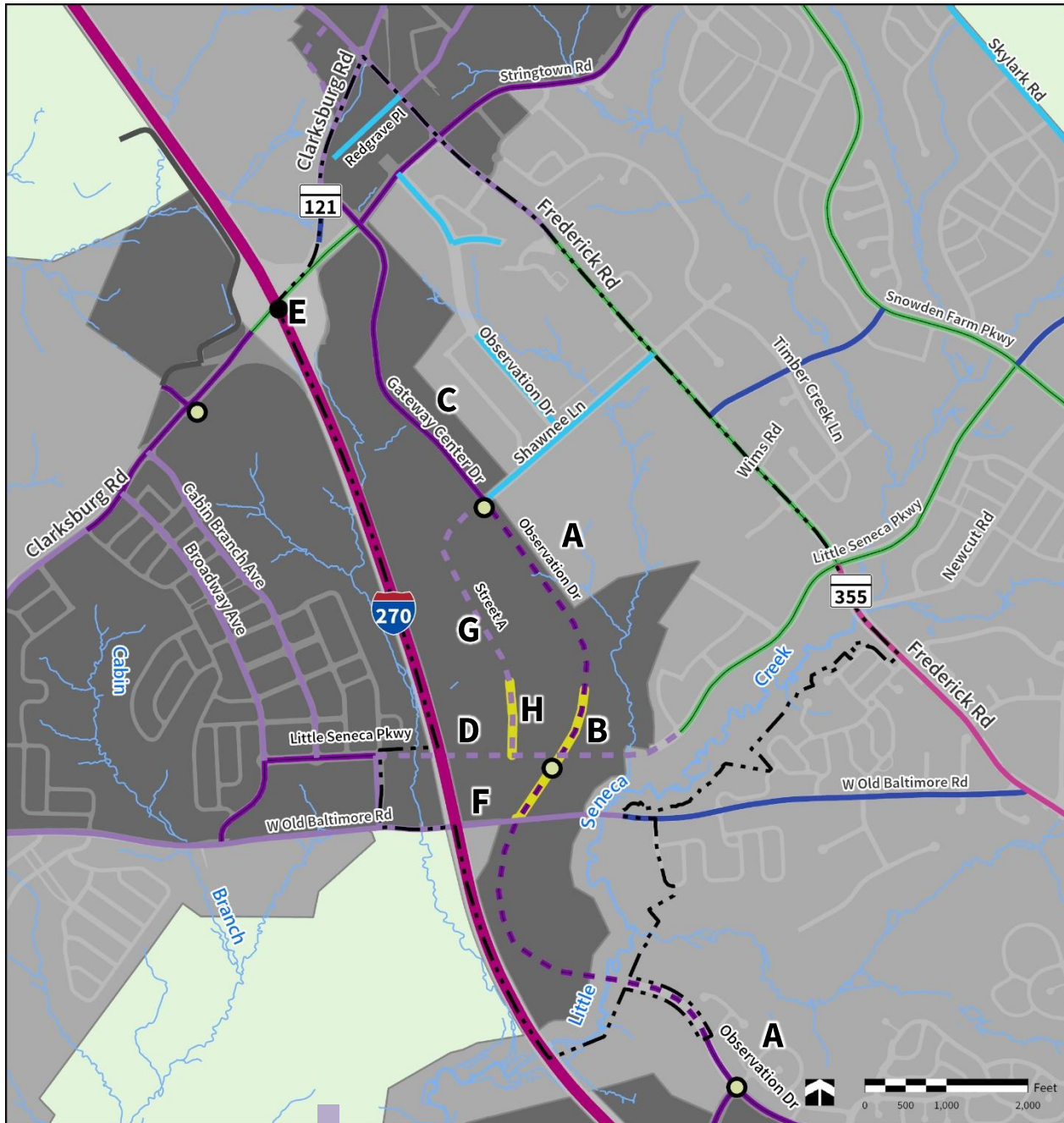
Area in dashed black outline is the recommended expanded Town Center context area. The Sector Plan Area is outlined in red.

5. The final alignment and design of new master planned streets and bridges should:
  - a. Support efficient public transportation services and active transportation options.
  - b. Achieve a safe and efficient transportation network by adhering to protected crossing distances established by the *Complete Streets Design Guide*. (See also the Community Design, Streets recommendations.)
  - c. Minimize impacts to forested land, streams, stream valley lands, public parkland, and regional water quality.



- d. Respect existing topography and minimize land disturbance and grading.
  - e. Include stormwater management elements within the public right-of-way, such as bioretention in the medians/buffers, trees, and/or other best management practices.
6. Amend the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* to remove or relocate unbuilt portions of the following roadways:
- a. Relocate the 1994 Plan alignment of Observation Drive between Little Seneca Parkway Extended and Waters Discovery Lane.  
  
*Note: This plan instead recommends an alignment for Observation Drive closer to the western property line of the Linthicum Farm property to minimize potential adverse impacts to stream valley buffers and avoid reduced development potential for the Linthicum Farm property. (See also Transportation Recommendation #12.)*
  - b. Remove the 1994 Plan alignment of Observation Drive through the Coolbrook tributary stream valley, between Weald Way and Roberts Tavern Drive, and through the Clarksburg Elementary School property between Stringtown Road and Clarksburg Road.  
  
*Note: Do not abandon the dedicated rights-of-way for the unbuilt portions of Observation Drive north of Shawnee Lane to accommodate a potential future bike and pedestrian connection as paved path or natural surface trail. (See also Transportation Recommendation #24.)*
- c. Remove three Roberts Tavern Drive segments between Gateway Center Drive and Frederick Road.  
  
*Note: Obtain an easement or right-of-way to accommodate a future bike and pedestrian connection between the eastern terminus of Roberts Tavern Drive and Dowden's Station Way. (See also Transportation Recommendation #24.)*
  - d. Remove the I-270 interchange associated with the planned Little Seneca Parkway Extended.  
  
*Note: This plan instead recommends a bridge overpass of Little Seneca Parkway over I-270 to provide east-west connectivity.*
7. Designate Observation Drive as a Growth Corridor within the *Thrive Montgomery 2050* Corridor Focused Growth Area, instead of Frederick Road, in recognition of the higher-density development and Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector enhanced bus route planned along Observation Drive in the Plan Area.
8. Amend the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* per **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.** Master planned road classifications seek to apply design guidelines appropriate to planned development and reflect current county policy and best practices (e.g., *Complete Streets Design Guide*, Vision Zero).

Figure 11: Master Planned Roadways Map



- |                                    |                                   |                                  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| --- Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan | — Boulevard                       | — Neighborhood Connector         |
| ● Existing Interchange             | — Town Center Boulevard           | — Industrial Street              |
| ○ Planned Enhanced Bus Station     | — Town Center Boulevard (Planned) | — Controlled Major Highway       |
| ■ CSDG Town Center Context Area    | — Town Center Street              | — Freeway                        |
| ■ CSDG Suburban Context Area       | — Town Center Street (Planned)    | — Planned Activity Center Street |
| ■ CSDG Country Context Area        | — Area Connector                  |                                  |

*Note: Final road alignment will be determined with new development or redevelopment of the site at regulatory review. See typical cross-sections for the lettered street segments identified on this map in the Complete Streets Approach section.*

**Table 1: Street Classification and Right-of-Way Recommendations**

Roadway	From	To	County Classification	Target Speed (MPH)	Planned Right of Way (Feet; Minimum) <sup>1</sup>	Existing Traffic Lanes	Planned Traffic Lanes	Planned Dedicated Transit Lanes
<b>Town Center Boulevard</b>								
Gateway Center Drive	Stringtown Road	Shawnee Lane	Town Center Boulevard	25	105	4	2	2
Observation Drive	Shawnee Lane	Approx. 800' north of Little Seneca Parkway	Town Center Boulevard	25	105	0	2	2
Observation Drive (in Activity Center)	Approx. 800' north of Little Seneca Parkway	W. Old Baltimore Road	Town Center Boulevard	25	115	0	2	2
Observation Drive	W. Old Baltimore Road	Waters Discovery Lane	Town Center Boulevard	25	105	0	2	2
Stringtown Road	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Gateway Center Drive	Town Center Boulevard	25	120	4	2-4 <sup>2</sup>	0-2 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Town Center Street</b>								
Observation Drive	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Clarksburg Road	Town Center Street	25	80	2	2	n/a
Little Seneca Parkway	Fair Garden Lane	Lakeridge Drive	Town Center Street	25	80	0	2	n/a
W. Old Baltimore Road	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Lakeridge Drive	Town Center Street	25	80 <sup>3</sup>	2	2	n/a
Clarksburg Road (MD 121)	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Gateway Center Drive	Town Center Street	25	80	2	2	n/a
Frederick Road (MD 355)	Clarksburg Road	Dowdens Station Way	Town Center Street	25	50	2	2	n/a
Street A	Shawnee Lane	Approx. 800' north of Little Seneca Parkway	Town Center Street	25	80	0	2	n/a
<b>Boulevard</b>								
Frederick Road (MD 355)	Dowdens Station Way	Little Seneca Parkway	Boulevard	35	120	4	4	n/a
Little Seneca Parkway	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Fair Garden Lane	Boulevard	35	120	4	4	n/a
Stringtown Road	Gateway Center Drive	I-270 off ramp signalized crossing	Boulevard	35	120	4	2-4 <sup>2</sup>	0-2 <sup>2</sup>
Clarksburg Road	I-270 off ramp signalized crossing	I-270 bridge	Boulevard	35	120	4	2-4 <sup>2</sup>	0-2 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Area Connector</b>								
Clarksburg Road	Gateway Center Drive	500' south of Gateway Center Drive	Area Connector	25	80	2	2	n/a
<b>Neighborhood Connector</b>								
Observation Drive	Stringtown Road	Roberts Tavern Drive	Neighborhood Connector	25	150 <sup>4</sup>	2	2	n/a
Observation Drive	Weald Way	Shawnee Lane	Neighborhood Connector	25	70	2	2	n/a
Redgrave Place	Frederick Road (MD 355)	End of road	Neighborhood Connector	25	70	2	2	n/a
Shawnee Lane	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Gateway Center Drive	Neighborhood Connector	25	120	4	2	n/a

Roadway	From	To	County Classification	Target Speed (MPH)	Planned Right of Way (Feet; Minimum) <sup>1</sup>	Existing Traffic Lanes	Planned Traffic Lanes	Planned Dedicated Transit Lanes
<b>Commercial Shared Street</b>								
Street A (in Activity Center)	Approx. 800' north of Little Seneca Parkway	Little Seneca Parkway	Commercial Shared Street	15	70	0	2	n/a

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Minimum rights-of-way do not generally include lanes for turning, parking, acceleration, deceleration, or other purposes auxiliary to through travel. Additional rights-of-way may also be needed to accommodate master planned bicycle and transit facilities, including protected intersections, the envelopes of transit stations, and pedestrian crossing refuges.

<sup>2</sup> If dedicated transit lanes are accommodated for other segments of the Maryland 355 Flash BRT beyond the Sector Plan Area on Clarksburg Road and Stringtown Road, this plan supports two travel lanes and two dedicated transit lanes within the existing right-of-way on these roads within the Sector Plan Area. If dedicated lanes are not established beyond the Plan Area, four existing travel lanes should remain.

<sup>3</sup> Any necessary additional right-of-way should be added from the north side of West Old Baltimore Road to avoid impacts to sensitive environmental resources on the park property on the south side of the road.

<sup>4</sup> The existing landscaped median should remain in place to provide open space for the neighborhood.

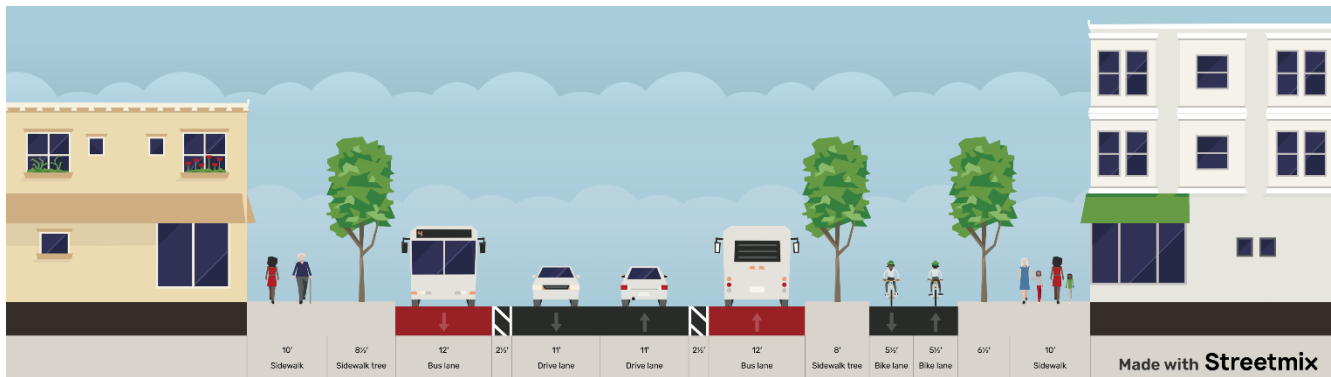


## A Complete Streets Approach

Great streets are the foundations of great places. Complete Streets is a design approach that improves the safety and experience of all road users, where street design is intuitive and people feel comfortable crossing the street, walking to shops, biking to school, and driving safely. A Complete Street is inviting and safe for all travelers and provides the most potential for economic vitality, civic activation, and neighborhood connectivity.

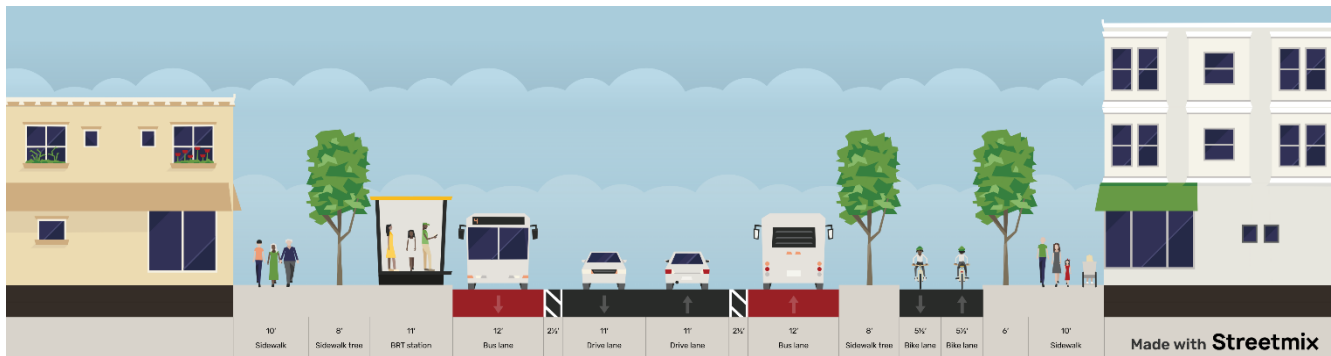
The following cross sections are developed in accordance with the *Complete Streets Design Guide* and represent master planned 'typical' roadway characteristics for streets that are proposed to be amended in the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* by this Sector Plan and are expected to be constructed or redesigned within the life of the plan. Final roadway designs may vary at locations like intersections, bus stops, bridges, and activity centers.

### (A) Observation Drive Extended – Town Center Boulevard, Typical (105-foot right-of-way)



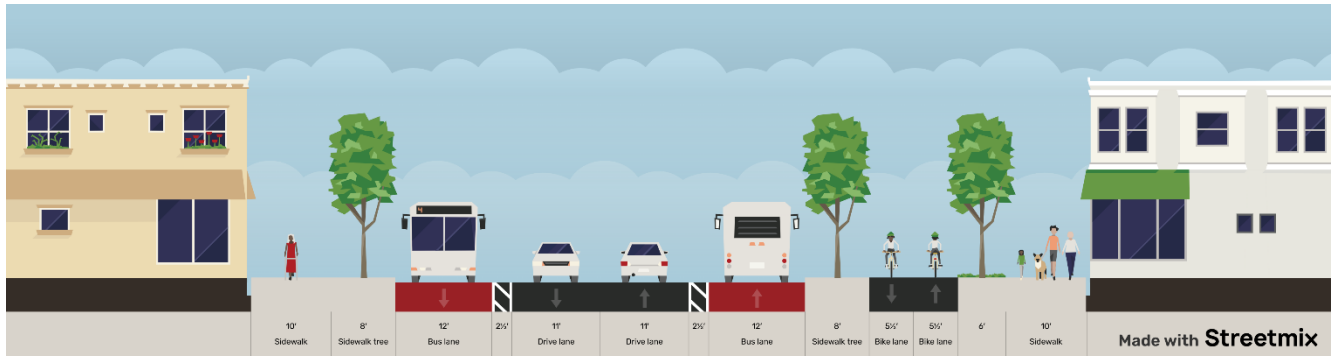
*Note: This cross-section provides for Complete Street facilities for all travelers along this new north-south street connection within the Sector Plan Area, including future dedicated bus lanes to accommodate the planned Corridor Connector enhanced bus service, an east-side bicycle breezeway, and street buffers.*

### (B) Observation Drive Extended – Town Center Boulevard, within Activity Center (115-foot right-of-way)



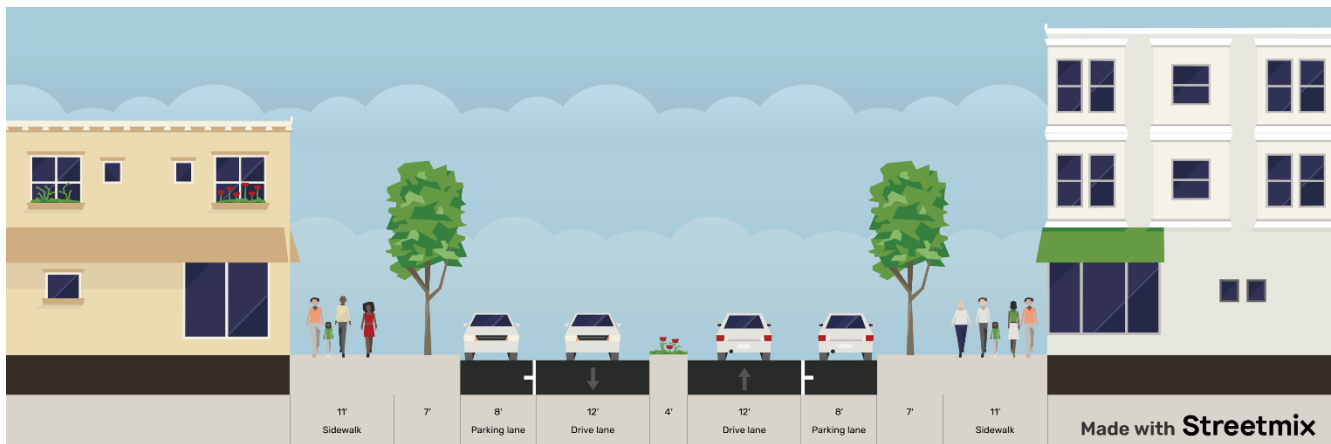
*Note: This cross-section provides for Complete Street facilities for all travelers along this new north-south street connection that runs through an envisioned mixed-use Activity Center within the former COMSAT Laboratories property, including a future dedicated bus lane to accommodate the planned Corridor Connector enhanced bus service, an east-side bike breezeway, and street buffers. This variation from the 'typical' Observation Drive cross-section is intended to provide higher-quality bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the planned Activity Center as well as additional right-of-way to accommodate bus stations, extra frontage, or other activation opportunities. This section of Observation Drive is recommended to extend north from West Old Baltimore to approximately 800 feet north of the planned intersection with Little Seneca Parkway Extended. (See also Figure 4: Concept Framework Plan for more on the Activity Center.)*

(C) Gateway Center – Town Center Boulevard, Typical (105-foot right-of-way)



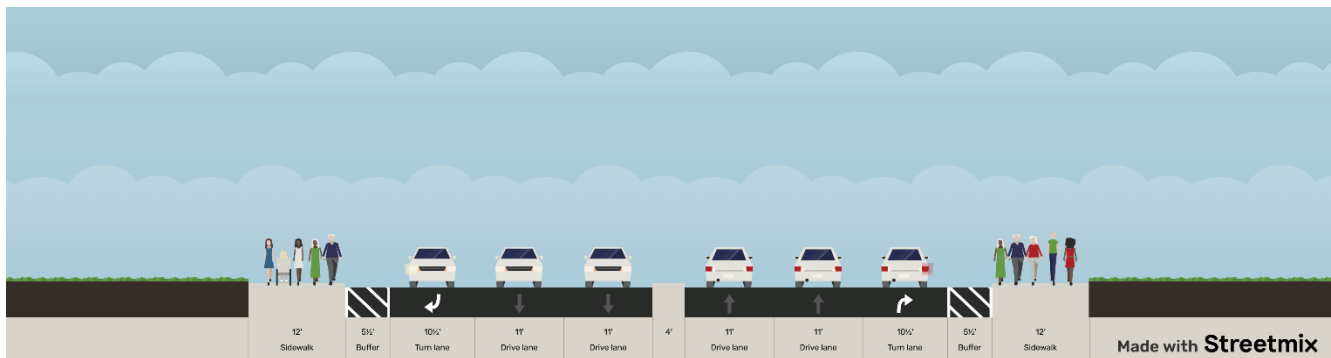
*Note: This cross-section provides for Complete Street facilities for all travelers along this existing roadway that is planned to connect with the future Observation Drive extension. Accommodated facilities include a future dedicated bus lane for the planned Corridor Connector enhanced bus service, an east-side bike breezeway, and street buffers.*

(D) Little Seneca Parkway Extended – Town Center Street, within Activity Center (80-foot right-of-way)



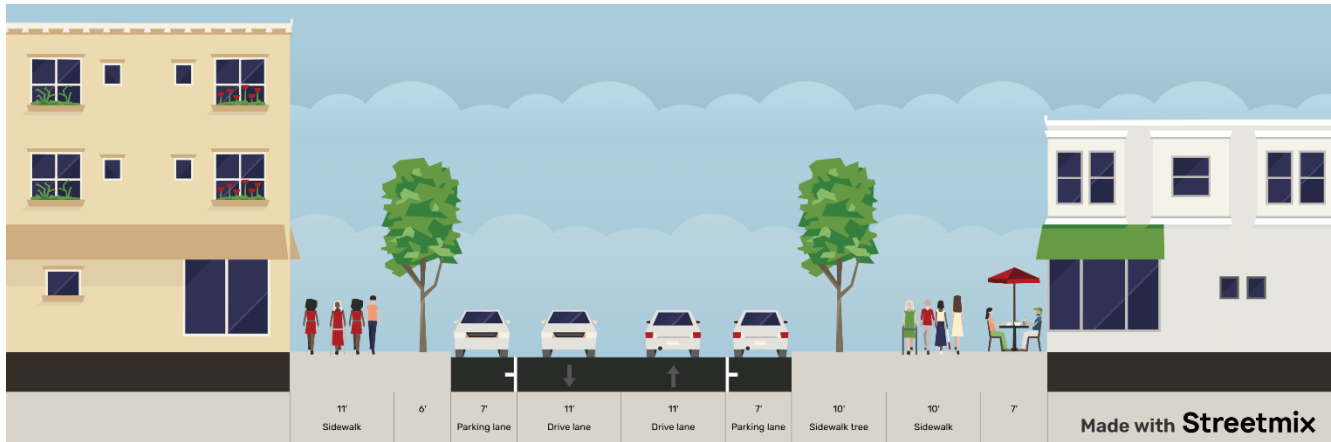
*Note: This cross-section provides for two travel lanes and public on-street parking on both sides, which can help relieve some of the need for surface parking within development blocks. In addition, this design allows for conversion into four travel lanes within the existing curb-to-curb space, if needed, by removing the median and street parking.*

(E) Clarksburg Road – Bridge Over I-270 (120-foot right-of-way)



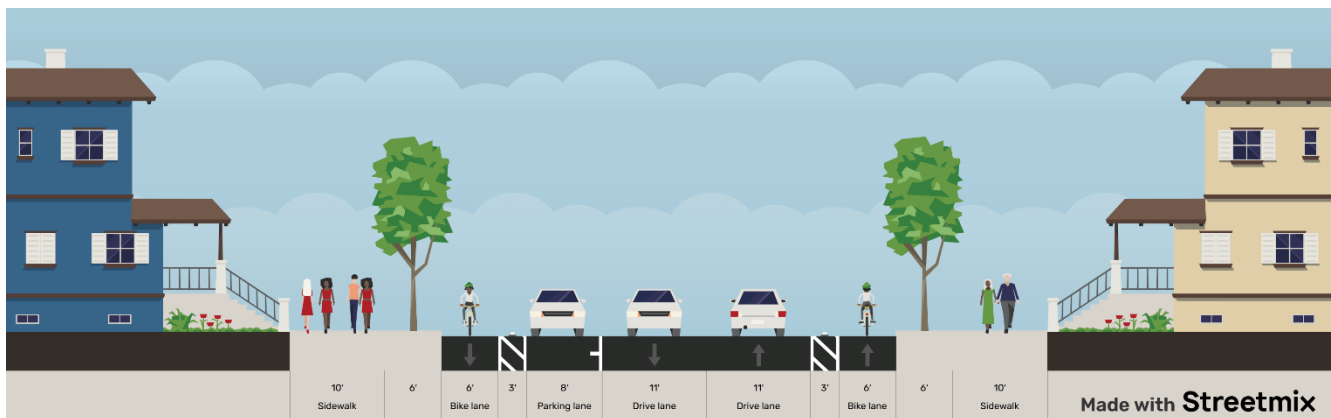
*Note: This cross-section repurposes on-street bike lane space within the right-of-way of this existing roadway to accommodate 12' sidepaths on both sides of the bridge, a wider shoulder, and vertical separation between people and vehicles. This is a response to community feedback regarding the uncomfortable and unsafe experience crossing I-270 by walking, biking, or rolling.*

(F) West Old Baltimore – Town Center Street (80-foot right-of-way)



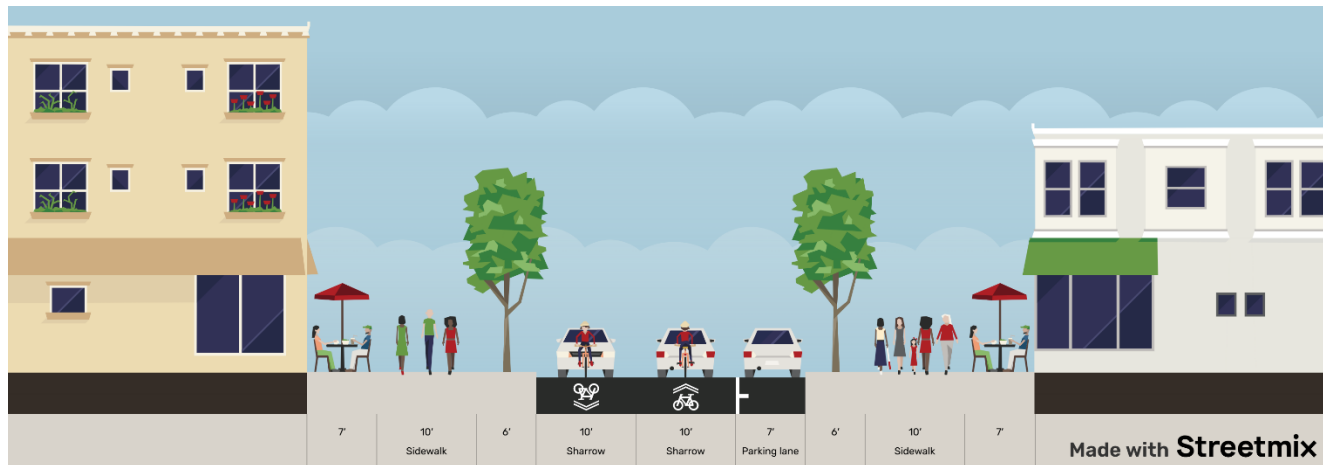
*Note:* This cross-section maintains two travel lanes on this existing roadway, with the potential for on-street public parking on the north side of the road to reduce the need for surface parking at planned development blocks. Off-street facilities include an extension of the existing sidepath on the south side of the road and a substantial sidewalk and amenity zone on the north side of the road, adjacent to the planned Activity Center.

(G) New “Street A” - Town Center Street, Typical (80-foot right-of-way)



*Note:* This cross-section accommodates Complete Street elements for the planned central ‘main street’ that runs through an envisioned new residential neighborhood within the former COMSAT Laboratories property. Planned street elements include alternating sides of on-street parking, adequate sidewalks on both sides of the street, street buffers, and separated bike lanes that transition into the commercial shared street at the activity center.

(H) New "Street A"- Commercial Shared Street, within Activity Center (70-foot right-of-way)



*Note: This cross-section accommodates Complete Street elements for the planned central 'main street' that runs through an envisioned mixed-use Activity Center within the former COMSAT Laboratories property. Planned street elements include a curb-less street level across the entire right-of-way that helps to equalize the space for all travelers (e.g., drivers, walkers, cyclists, etc.), alternating sides of on-street parking, substantial sidewalk and amenity areas on both sides of the street, and street buffers. This concept represents the overall vision within a mixed-use, dense development; however, lower density levels of development may necessitate differing access needs. (See also Figure 4: Concept Framework Plan for more on the Activity Center)*

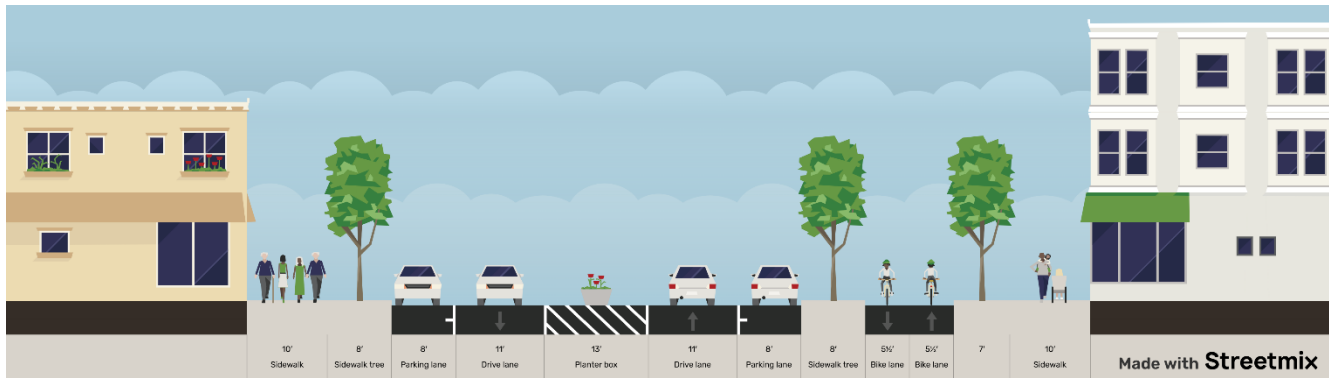
Transportation Recommendations continued:

16. Establish an interim lane configuration for Observation Drive Extended that allows for preservation of the full master planned right-of-way yet allows the street to be constructed ahead of the future enhanced bus service. The interim design should occupy the entirety of the master planned right-of-way width and include the full bridge section and bike and pedestrian facilities at the time of construction. The interim design does not establish dedicated bus lanes at the time of construction but reserves space between the curbs to more efficiently modify the roadway to accommodate dedicated bus lanes in the future (see (A/B) Observation Drive – Town Center Boulevard, Typical Interim Alternative cross-section on the next page).

*Note: The final master planned condition, as shown in the Observation Drive – Town Center Boulevard, Typical and Observation Drive – Town Center Boulevard, within Activity Center cross-sections should be implemented once the Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector route is fully funded for design and construction. The interim approach should also be applied to intersection design – accommodating future bus turning movements to the greatest extent practicable.*



(A/B) Observation Drive Extended – Town Center Boulevard, Typical Interim Alternative (105-foot right-of-way)



*Note: This cross-section establishes an intermediate road design that establishes the ultimate planned right-of-way for Observation Drive while allowing vehicular travel and parking lanes to occupy the area between the street curbs until the Corridor Connector enhanced bus service is established and dedicated curb-running bus lanes are in place.*

17. New local, non-master planned streets should be public streets that achieve the following design standards:

- a. Local roads in the Activity Center serving mixed uses should largely conform to the Town Center Street typology. Separated bikeways are not recommended on these streets if a parallel or alternative bikeway is established on a nearby road.
- b. Other local roads serving predominantly residential uses should largely conform to the Neighborhood Street or Neighborhood Yield Street types.
- c. Local streets and sidewalks should be shaded and provide stormwater management within the right-of-way.
- d. Local roads should connect to master planned roadways to form a grid of streets, with block sizes that reflect the minimum protected crossing space in the *Complete Streets Design Guide* and encourage low vehicle speeds (see also Community Design recommendations).

18. Bridges over stream valleys (e.g., Observation Drive Extended and Little Seneca Parkway Extended) and I-270 (Little Seneca Parkway Extended) should minimize impacts to streams, natural resources, watersheds, and wildlife habitats, incorporating the following elements to the greatest extent practicable:

- a. Construct bridges that span the 100-year floodplain to allow for unconstrained stream morphology, aquatic life, vernal pool protection, and floodplain wildlife passage. Detailed wetland delineation is needed to determine the exact specifications for each bridge. (See also Environment and Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)
- b. Incorporate wildlife passages under all new and replaced bridges, including fencing designed to funnel animals to safe crossings. (See also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)

- c. Bridges should include aesthetic architectural elements visible from within and beyond the bridge that reinforce a sense of local identity or community character.
- d. There should be adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities (i.e., a minimum 8-foot effective width, 12-foot total width, including a 2-foot shy zone on either side of a vertical barrier), whose facilities should include shade elements for people walking, biking, and rolling along the bridge.

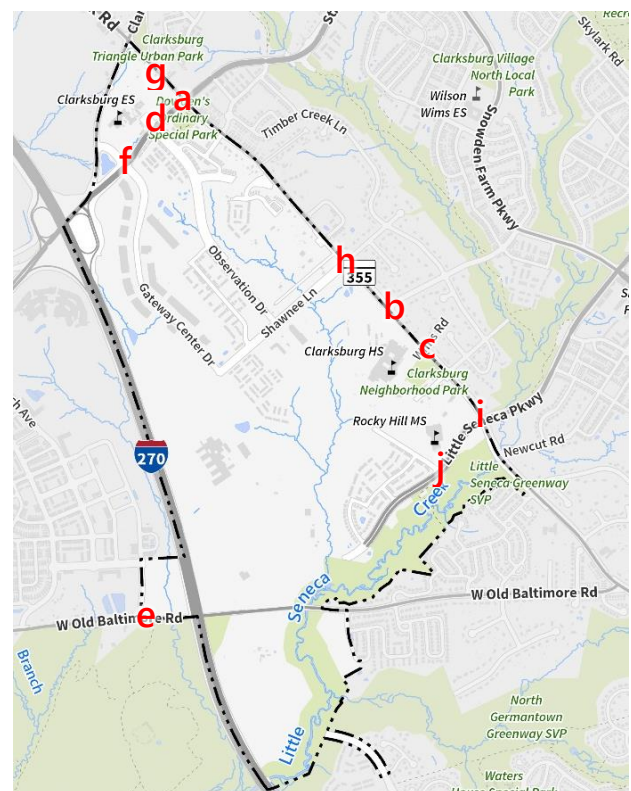
19. Prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist safety and comfort at key intersections in the Plan Area by reduce barriers to biking, walking, and rolling through improvements in conformance with Complete Streets Design Guide and Vision Zero best practices. These include (see also Figure 12):

- a. Frederick Road and Stringtown Road (near the planned Clarksburg Library).
- b. Frederick Road and Foreman Road (at Clarksburg H.S.).
- c. Frederick Road and Wims Road (at Clarksburg H.S.).
- d. Stringtown Road and Observation Drive (at Clarksburg E.S.).
- e. West Old Baltimore Road and Lakeridge Drive (at Black Hills Regional Park northern entrance; see also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations).

Additional locations to be considered for street intersection or crossing improvements to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety and comfort include:

- f. Stringtown Road and Gateway Center Drive.
- g. Frederick Road and Redgrave Place (at Clarksburg E.S.).
- h. Frederick Road and Shawnee Lane.
- i. Frederick Road and Little Seneca Parkway (at Rocky Hill M.S.).
- j. Little Seneca Parkway and Brick Haven Way.

**Figure 12: Intersection Improvement Locations**



20. Re-name existing sections of Observation Drive that are not planned to connect to the new, master planned alignment of Observation Drive Extended with street names that relate to their local area or neighborhood (e.g., Observation Place, Gateway Commons Drive, Garnkirk Drive) and to avoid confusion with the master planned roadway.

21. Conduct a study to determine whether traffic calming measures are justified on Shawnee Lane to reduce speeding. Shawnee Lane is a straight, wide road with no controlled intersections and few curb cuts; this design encourages excessive vehicle speeds. Prior to the addition of any traffic calming measures, or reconstruction of the road to conform to the master planned street type, MCDOT should consider an interim approach to calming traffic on Shawnee Lane, such as by converting outer travel lanes to parking lanes.

22. Retain Comsat Drive as a street name for a future street running through the COMSAT property as a part of future development and consider naming other new streets on the COMSAT property to reference the property's technological and architectural history (e.g., Cesar Pelli, Satellite, Constellation).

### Active Transportation

23. Implement a complete network of safe, comfortable walkways and bikeways in the Plan Area, connected by safe, protected crossings. (See Figure 13 and Table 2.)

24. Establish publicly accessible trail connections through HOA common areas, other private properties, parkland, and street rights-of-way to connect neighborhoods, activity centers, parks, and community facilities. Possible methods may include public easements, shared access agreements, and land dedications.

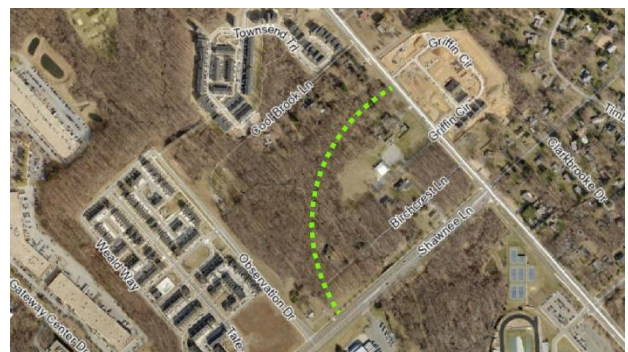
*Note: Potential locations shown below are for illustrative purposes only; final alignment should be determined during development review or in consultation with affected property owners.*



*Between Weald Way and Gateway Center Drive*



*Between Roberts Tavern Drive and Dowdens Station Way*



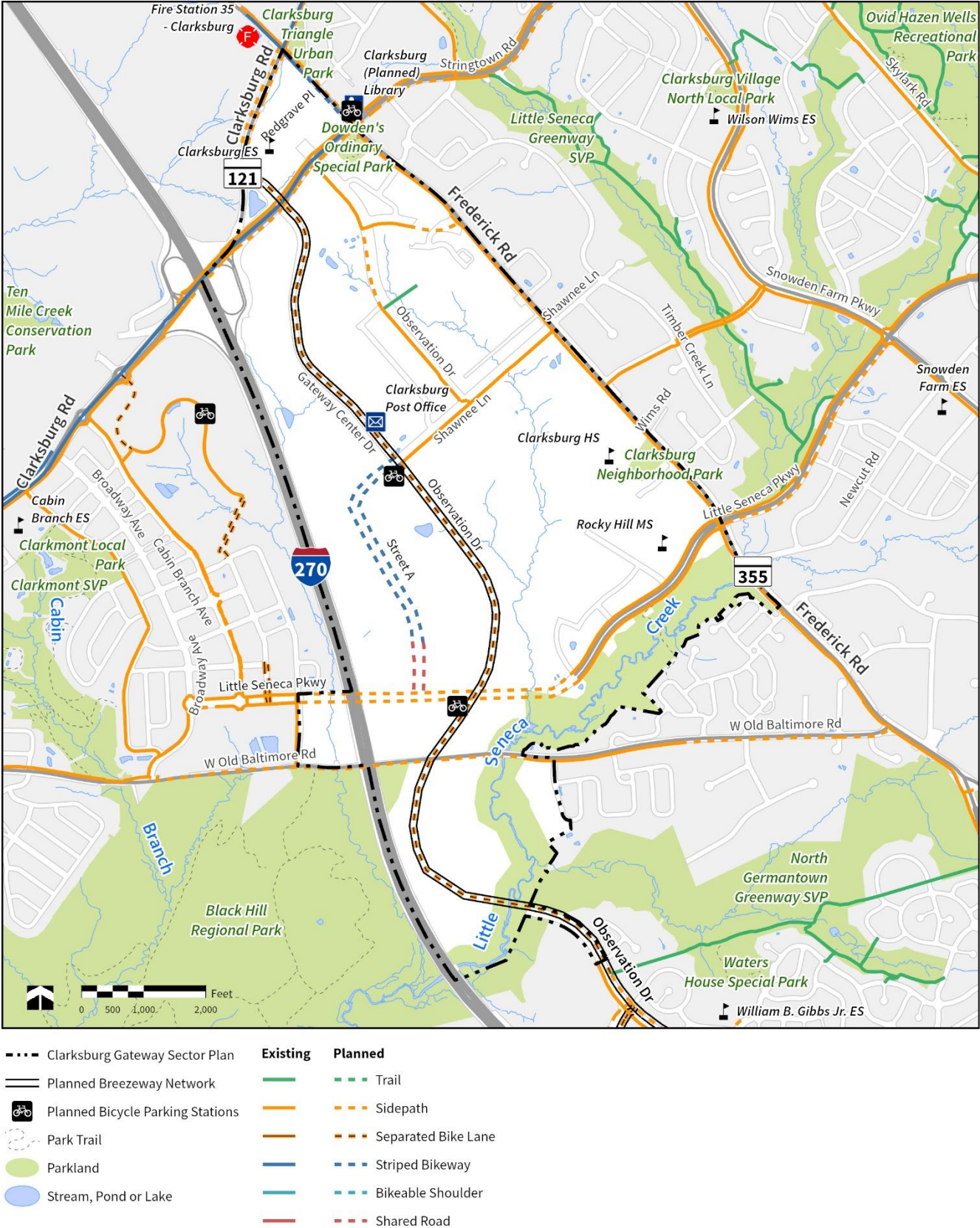
*Between Frederick Road and Shawnee Lane or Observation Drive*



*Between Glenbow Way or Orsay Street and Observation Drive Extended*



Figure 13: Planned Bikeways Network Map





**Table 2: Bicycle Facility Recommendations**

Street	From	To	Facility Type	Bikeway Type	Priority Tier
<b>CLARKSBURG TO CITY OF GAITHERSBURG BREEZEWAY</b>					
Gateway Center Drive	Clarksburg Road (MD 121)	Shawnee Lane	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (two-way, east side)	4
Observation Drive Extended	Shawnee Lane	Little Seneca Parkway Extended	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (two-way, east side)	2
Observation Drive Extended	Little Seneca Parkway Extended	Waters Discovery Lane	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lanes (two-way, east side)	1
<b>ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS</b>					
Clarksburg Road (MD 121)	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Gateway Center Drive	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (both sides)	2
Frederick Road (MD 355)	Clarksburg Road (MD 121)	Stringtown Road	Separated Bikeway (east side); Separated Bikeway (west side)	Sidepath (east side); Separated Bike Lane (one-way, west side)	2
Frederick Road (MD 355)	Stringtown Road	W. Old Baltimore Road	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (west side)	n/a <sup>2</sup>
Little Seneca Parkway	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Fair Garden Lane	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (both sides)	n/a <sup>2</sup>
Little Seneca Parkway Extended	Fair Garden Lane	Observation Drive Extended	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (both sides)	1
Little Seneca Parkway Extended	Observation Drive Extended	Lakeridge Drive	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (both sides)	2
Observation Drive	Stringtown Road	Roberts Tavern Drive	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (west side)	n/a <sup>2</sup>
Observation Drive	Roberts Tavern Drive	Weald Way	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (west side)	4
Observation Drive	Weald Way	Shawnee Lane	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (west side)	n/a <sup>2</sup>
Roberts Tavern Drive	Observation Drive	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (south side)	n/a <sup>2</sup>
Shawnee Lane	Frederick Road (MD 355)	Gateway Center Drive	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (south side)	n/a <sup>2</sup>
Stringtown Road	Frederick Road (MD 355)	I-270	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (both sides); Separated Bike Lane (one-way, both sides)	2
"Street A"	Shawnee Lane	Little Seneca Parkway	Separated Bikeway	Separated Bike Lane (one-way, both sides)	4
"Street A"	Activity Center	Activity Center	Shared Road	Commercial Shared Street	4
W. Old Baltimore Road	Seneca Ayr Drive	Broadway Avenue	Separated Bikeway	Sidepath (south side) <sup>1</sup>	4

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Any necessary additional right-of-way for West Old Baltimore Road should be added from the north side of the road to avoid impacts to sensitive environmental resources on the park property on the south side of the road.

<sup>2</sup> "n/a" means that the bicycle facility is already built.

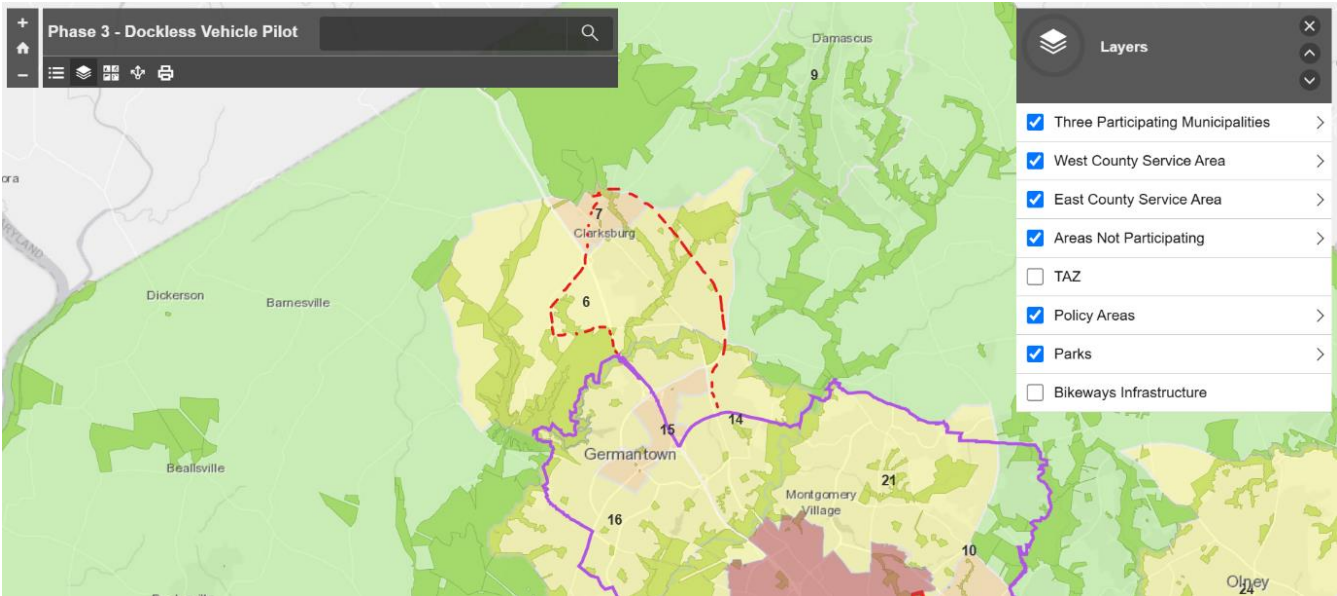
25. Pursue capital funding to complete missing sidewalk segments along both sides of Frederick Road within the Clarksburg Historic District and along Redgrave Place, with a preference for materials consistent with the historic character of the district (e.g., brick pavers).
26. Conduct a study to determine whether a separated sidepath could be accommodated within the existing West Old Baltimore Road I-270 underpass, between Lakeridge Drive west of I-270 and the existing shared use path on the south side of West Old Baltimore Road east of I-270 (at Seneca Ayr Drive). Any necessary right-of-way expansion or shift in the roadway should be on the north side of West Old Baltimore Road to avoid encroachment on environmentally sensitive parkland in Black Hill Regional Park south of West Old Baltimore Road. (See also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)



*West Old Baltimore I-270 underpass, looking west*

27. When the West Old Baltimore Road I-270 underpass is reconstructed or repaired, the new underpass should accommodate a 10-foot-wide minimum separated sidepath on the south side of West Old Baltimore Road that connects to the existing sidepath to the east and west along West Old Baltimore Road.
28. MCDOT and Montgomery Parks should investigate and implement improved wayfinding signage along the bikeway and greenway trail networks in the vicinity of the Plan Area. Signs and on-trail visual cues should indicate that users are on an established trail network, what destinations and amenities (e.g., transit services, attractions, community amenities, historic sites, shopping areas, neighborhoods, natural features) are nearby, and how far away these destinations are (e.g., in minutes of riding/walking time). Educational and interpretive signage should be considered as a part of the wayfinding network, including community history, historic sites, and environmental sustainability.
29. Expand the West County Dockless Vehicle Service Area boundary to include the Clarksburg community to complement the planned Maryland 355 Flash BRT and enhanced bus Corridor Connector routes, and provide the opportunity for dockless vehicles to service the community (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Proposed Dockless Vehicle Service Area Expansion Map



Note: Existing Dockless Vehicle Service Area shown in purple solid line. Recommended expansion area shown in red dashed line.

## C. HOUSING

The Sector Plan seeks to foster vibrant, inclusive communities by expanding housing density and diversity and promoting a range of housing options and affordability levels, with access to public transit and a multi-modal transportation network connecting nearby retail centers and recreational amenities.

As of 2025, the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan Area is home to around 1,100 housing units, largely dominated by single-family attached units. There are no multi-family rental units in the Plan Area.

The housing stock in the Plan Area is relatively newer and larger than the county overall. Over 97% of the housing units in the Plan Area were built after 2000, compared with just 20% for the county overall during the same period. The for-sale price points reflect the county's average prices. In 2023, the median sale price for single-family detached homes in Clarksburg was \$756,000, compared with \$800,000 countywide. Townhomes are more expensive in Clarksburg than they are countywide, with a median sale price of \$545,000 versus the county median of \$470,000, reflecting that these units tend to be newer and larger.

Of the over 1,100 residential units in the Plan Area, around 170 (15%) of the units are restricted at affordable levels through the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program. All MPDUs in the Plan Area are for-sale MPDUs, under private ownership. In recognition of the growing need for more affordable housing in the county, the Sector Plan recommends that new developments

provide 15% of their total residential units as MPDUs.

This plan recommends adding more housing to meet the growing demand for housing, to assist in the creation of Complete Communities as envisioned by *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, and to support the county in meeting its housing goals. In 2019, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments established regional housing targets to address a growing supply gap and affordability issues in the region. The county, excluding the municipalities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, needs to build 31,000 units by 2030 to meet future housing demand from population and job growth, with additional housing goals for 2040 and 2050. In this context, the Plan Area plays an important part in helping the county reach its housing goals. This plan adds capacity for more than 4,000 new residential units if the maximum allowable residential density of recommended zones is realized across all properties in the Plan Area.

The plan also recommends and supports building creative housing options, like duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings, to help meet the growing housing needs and diversify housing options in the Plan Area.

In 2023, HB0017 was passed, which obligates Maryland charter counties to "affirmatively further fair housing" through the county's housing and urban development programs. The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan aims to affirmatively further fair housing by taking meaningful actions aimed at combating discrimination to overcome patterns of segregation, remove barriers that have restricted housing and opportunity, and foster inclusive communities.



## Housing Goals

- Provide for a mix of housing options to accommodate households with differing income levels, family compositions, and accessibility needs.
- Expand opportunities to increase residential density, especially along major road and transit corridors and in locations where additional housing can assist in the development of Complete Communities.
- Support creative housing options, including personal living quarters and/or micro units; “missing middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing, cooperative housing, co-housing, live-work units, and accessory dwelling units, to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options.
- Increase the number of income-restricted affordable housing units, especially for low-and-moderate-income households.

## Housing Recommendations

### *Affordable Housing*

1. New developments should provide at least 15% MPDUs.
2. Prioritize additional MPDUs as a top public benefit for the Optional Development Method in the Commercial Residential family of zones to provide additional affordable housing that is needed within the Plan Area.
3. Support the development of permanent and temporary supportive housing for

people experiencing homelessness in the Plan Area.

### *Housing Production and Housing Diversity*

4. Add more units to the housing inventory, including more types of housing units to increase the amount of housing and to meet a diversity of incomes and households that include families, seniors, and persons with disabilities who currently reside within the Plan Area.
5. Prioritize family-sized market-rate and affordable units for rent and for sale in residential development projects as a public benefit for the Optional Development Method in the CR family of zones to provide additional family-sized units.
6. Ensure that new housing developments in the Plan Area increase the quality and quantity of housing units that are accessible to people with disabilities and older adults.
7. Provide financial and other incentives to boost housing production for market-rate and affordable housing.

## D. COMMUNITY DESIGN

This plan envisions a unique, mixed-use, and welcoming set of neighborhoods that contribute to the diverse and thriving character of Clarksburg. Neighborhoods should include a well-designed street network that encourages walking and rolling, connected and inviting gathering places, and accessible parks and open spaces that celebrate the local environment, history, arts, and culture.

Today, much of the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan consists of a series of residential developments, a small office/flex space area, portions of a dedicated stream valley park, and two large privately owned properties. Uses are separate and disconnected from each other, and the road and trail networks that should connect these uses are incomplete. In addition, high quality community gathering spaces are lacking within the Plan Area.

The development pattern that is evident in the Plan Area is discussed in the Design, Arts and Culture chapter of *Thrive Montgomery 2050*:

The 1964 Wedges and Corridors Plan envisioned a variety of living environments and encouraged 'imaginative urban design' to avoid sterile suburban sprawl. Unfortunately, design approaches intended to serve a range of functional objectives and aesthetic aspirations took a backseat to the convenience of driving and the assumption that different land uses, building types, and even lot sizes should be separated. Over time, these priorities produced automobile-centered design approaches that compromised quality of place at the expense of lasting economic and social value.

*Thrive Montgomery 2050* seeks to ensure that Complete Communities are integrated into their surroundings and supported by a public realm that is accessible to all and that encourages walking, biking, and rolling, as well as social interaction through the configuration of sidewalks, paths, landmarks, parks, and gathering spaces. To achieve this, *Thrive Montgomery 2050* recommends that the design of buildings, streets, and parking prioritize the pedestrian scale and encourage walking and bicycling through smaller blocks, narrower streets, buffered bike lanes, and sidewalks.

The purpose of the following goals and recommendations is to achieve this vision of Complete Communities described above within the context of Clarksburg's unique setting and neighborhoods.

### Community Design Goals

- Locate higher-density development and a mix of uses near transit station areas and ensure that new development transitions in scale to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure that buildings define and support the public realm by framing streets and public spaces, with parking and services located behind and to the rear of buildings.
- Create a safe environment for all by mixing uses, programming activities in public spaces, and using design techniques that foster social activity, interaction, and visibility.

### Community Design Recommendations

The primary organizing elements of neighborhoods are its streets, blocks, open spaces, and buildings. The land use context of a

neighborhood helps to determine the desired width of streets; the size or area of blocks; the frequency and size of open spaces; and the height and permeability of buildings.

### *Streets (S)*

The intent of the plan's street design strategies is to help create a well-connected network of streets with a clear hierarchy that supports walkability across the Plan Area.

The following are recommended strategies to meet this design intent:

- S1. Establish an interconnected hierarchy of streets within new developments and throughout the Plan Area, limiting service and parking access to secondary, tertiary, or alley streets.
- S2. Avoid cul-de-sac or single access street layout for new residential developments to promote greater connectivity.
- S3. Seek opportunities to add new streets to existing residential developments to increase connectivity within the Plan Area, where feasible.
- S4. All new streets should accommodate on-street parking, where possible, to help slow vehicular speeds and provide places for residents and visitors to park.
- S5. Consider special paving materials and/or surface treatments at critical locations, such as crosswalks, intersections, and areas with mixed-use or commercial development, to provide visual cues for the arrival at a unique place, slow down vehicular speeds, and emphasize the pedestrian scale.

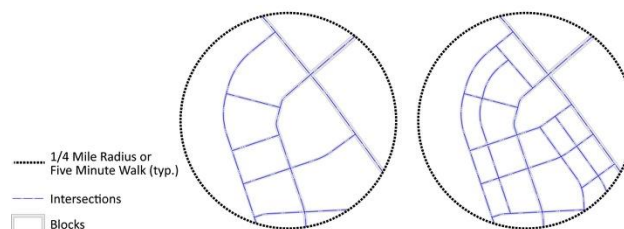
### *Blocks (K)*

The intent of the plan's neighborhood design strategies is for blocks, the spaces formed between rights-of-way, to be sized and configured to ensure that a neighborhood is walkable, bikeable, and easily accessible by vehicles by providing frequent intersections and the necessary internal area to support the land uses within a block.

The following are recommended strategies to meet this design intent:

- K1. Ensure large-scale development has multiple access points into the development.
- K2. Limit block size to no longer than 500 to 600 feet in any direction and maximize the number of street intersections within a quarter- to half-mile radius to promote walkability and provide multiple routes of connectivity (see Figure 15).
- K3. For intensive land uses and public facilities that may require larger blocks, mid-block connections, such as paths, mews, and paseos, should be provided every 500 to 600 feet to reduce walking, rolling, or biking distances across such developments.

**Figure 15: Intersection Spacing Diagram**



*The diagram on the left has 11 intersections within a quarter-mile radius. The diagram on the right has smaller blocks with a total of 26 intersections. The right diagram provides greater connectivity with multiple ways to walk, roll, bike, and drive within the community and offers more potential for on-street parking in the neighborhood.*

K4. To supplement the street network, establish an alley system within blocks of new developments to ensure that parking and services are located away from street frontages to the extent feasible.

- a. Minimize the width of alleys to accommodate necessary access and services and differentiate them from streets (see Figure 16).
- b. Off-street parking and alley entrances should be as narrow as possible with landscaping and/or site walls provided to conceal them. In addition, the ends of alleys that do not extend to streets should be screened from the public realm.
- c. Incorporate landscaping within alleys to help soften their utilitarian purpose (see Figure 17).

Figure 16: Example Alley Design



*The perceived width of an alley is narrowed through several design elements: the pavement material changes between the driveways and alley; parking spaces are concealed by walls and dense landscaping along the street edge; and the building colors within the alley work harmoniously together.*

Figure 17: Example Alley Landscaping



*This alley behind townhouses is well landscaped and adds a visual transition between the buildings and the alley.*

- K5. Surface parking lots should be placed away from public view, lined with development or adequately buffered and screened. They may be considered an interim condition to structured parking or future infill development and designed to facilitate possible redevelopment (see Figure 24).

### Open Spaces (O)

The intent of the plan's open space design strategies is to deliver places for passive and active recreation and social interaction within all neighborhoods in a variety of forms and scales. Some open spaces may incorporate important environmental features, while others may serve as the outdoor room for adjacent uses.

The following are recommended strategies to meet this design intent:

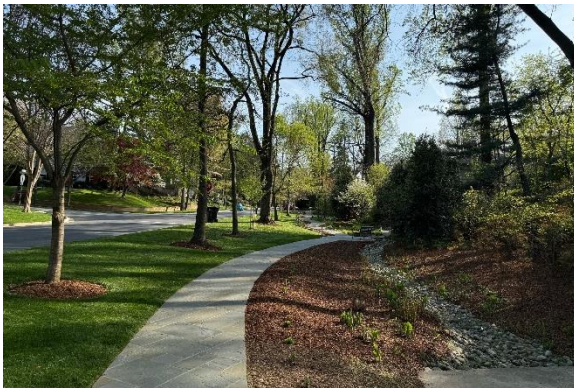
- O1. Open space for new development should be located and designed in coordination with the street and public park systems and should support and focus the activities that surround them. Programming and design should be accessible and beneficial to the public.



O2. Public open spaces should front onto, or have readily apparent access from, at least one street so the spaces are not hidden or perceived as private, uninviting, or inaccessible by public visitors.

O3. Design publicly accessible open spaces and residential common areas as central features of new developments, framed by active frontages and streets, including community amenities. These spaces should provide shade through trees or structures to reduce heat, and where possible, incorporate compact stormwater management facilities to maximize land use while preserving functionality and appeal (see Figure 18 and Figure 19).

**Figure 18: Example of Stormwater Management in Public Open Space**



*Small pocket park offers a lawn area, seating, and stormwater management adjacent to East-West Highway and Maple Avenue in Chevy Chase.*

**Figure 19: Example Buildings Fronting Onto Public Open Space**



*The edges of this semi-public park are defined by wrought iron fencing and bushes at Park Potomac.*

O4. New development frontages should seamlessly integrate with the streetscapes of adjoining streets. This transitional area should include some combination of elements such as leadwalks, low fencing, bushes, other landscaping and special paving to provide visual interest and extend the public realm.

### *Buildings (B)*

The intent of the plan's building design strategies is to establish structures that are well sited and appropriately scaled to help define street edges, frame open spaces, and provide visual interest in the community, creating memorable places to live, work, and play.

The following are recommended strategies to meet this design intent:

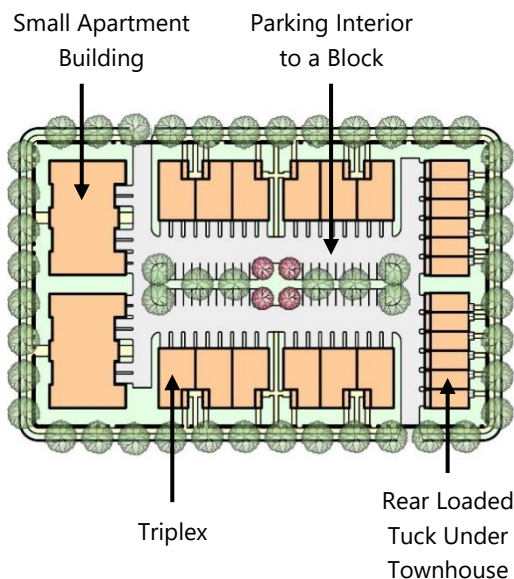
B1. New buildings should be placed close to the street, with consolidated parking and services located behind or beside them in a manner that promotes a pedestrian-oriented public realm (See Figure 21).

**Figure 20: Example Street Corner**



*Commercial buildings placed along the edge of the sidewalk in Riverdale Park with parking located to the rear of the building.*

**Figure 21: Example Residential Block Diagram**



- B2. 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 (See Figure 20).
- B3. If a development features larger single-use retail tenants, such as a grocery store or other big-box uses, the street-facing façades should be active and

engaging, or liner buildings should be deployed to provide the activating uses.

- B4. Consider using multiple building types for new developments to provide variety along streetscapes, avoid monotony, and, within residential projects, provide diverse housing choices for residents.
- B5. Building volumes should be articulated in a manner that breaks the massing of larger structures and avoid monotonous, bulky buildings along streetscapes. Potential strategies include:
  - a. Architectural embellishments, such as porches, stoops, recessed entries, and bay windows, to provide rhythm and visual interest to building façades.
  - b. Consistent setbacks, projections, and step-downs across the overall building façades.
- B6. Façade elevations consisting of two or more attached buildings or dwellings should be designed as a single composition. Avoid staggered offsets between each dwelling unit in a townhouse or stacked flat string unless it creates a coherent front elevation.
- B7. Judiciously use fenestration patterns, window types, materials, and color to develop a consistent language for building façades (See Figure 22).
  - a. Window patterns should emphasize the verticality of a building with the ground floor windows appearing to be taller than upper stories.
  - b. Avoid using excessive number of window types and building colors, and materials.

- c. Avoid long blank expanses without fenestration, including side elevations of high-visibility buildings.

B8. Avoid front-loaded driveways or garages for detached and attached residential developments, except where site constraints limit rear loading options, to create attractive, walkable streets with sidewalks that are uninterrupted by curb cuts and to provide for ample on-street parking (See Figure 23).

- a. If front-loaded units are necessary, garage doors should be recessed from the front elevation. In addition, the color of garage doors should not contrast greatly with the other colors on the façades.
- b. In the case of front-loaded attached units, group front door entries, as much as possible, to allow for larger tree planting boxes.

B9. New developments with ground-floor commercial, mixed-use, or higher density residential uses should provide activating features facing public sidewalks and open spaces. Building elements, such as entry awnings, tall windows, and distinct first floor façade materials or treatments should all be used to promote pedestrian interest and activity.

B10. Larger, transparent windows should be provided on the ground floor of commercial buildings to allow for greater visual interest along the streetscape.

B11. Building utilities (e.g., a/c units, meters, electrical boxes) should be, where possible, grouped or ganged and placed

in a location that allows for landscape screening while not impeding pedestrian travel or alley experience. (See also Community Facilities, Public Facilities recommendations for guidance on public utility placements.)

**Figure 22: Example Attached Residential Façade Pattern**



*The conceptual five-unit townhouse string diagram is composed as one building façade with an A/B/B/A/A rhythm. The wider 21-foot wide units (As) frame the narrower 18-foot wide units (Bs). Building materials and architectural embellishments, such as porches, stoops, balconies, bay windows, gables, and dormer windows, are used in a consistent and judicious manner.*

**Figure 23: Example of Front-Loaded Building Frontages**



*Garage doors are recessed slightly from, or placed behind, front façades (left image). For townhouses, front door entries are grouped to allow for larger tree planting strips (right image).*



Figure 24: Community Design Concept Illustration



*Note: The concept depicted above is provided for illustrative purposes only and is intended to illustrate the general design recommendations and character envisioned by the plan. It does not constitute a final design, nor does it restrict or preclude alternative design solutions that are consistent with the overall principles and objectives of the plan.*



## E. ENVIRONMENT

The Sector Plan envisions a sustainable and resilient community that emphasizes conservation and enhancement of the Little Seneca Creek and Ten Mile Creek Watersheds, their tributaries, and surrounding natural resources, while promoting sustainable site and building design.

Despite its suburban setting, the Plan Area contains a significant network of streams, forests, and natural habitats that serve vital functions for people, plants, and wildlife.

### *Water Quality*

Healthy streams provide recreational and aesthetic benefits for county residents, contribute to clean drinking water, and help protect the Chesapeake Bay. The Plan Area is situated within the Seneca Creek watershed that drains to Little Seneca Lake, which serves as an emergency raw-water source for county residents during droughts, and, ultimately, to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission manages the Little Seneca Lake reservoir and dam facility.

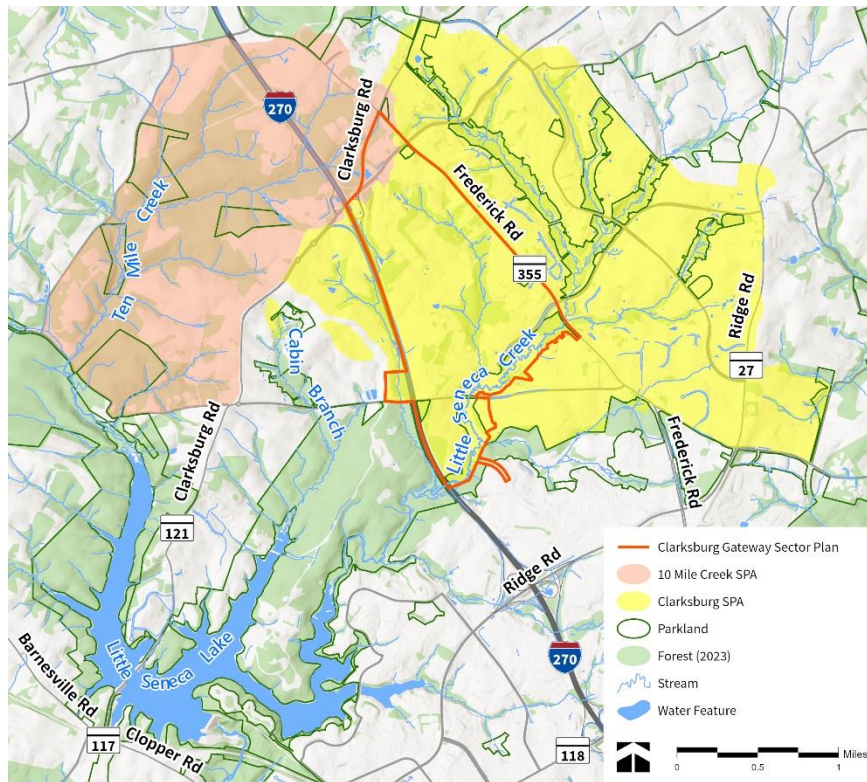
Water quality in streams is greatly affected by the land uses and development activities that occur in their watersheds. Special Protection Areas are designated in Montgomery County watersheds with high water quality where proposed development may degrade water quality under normal circumstances. Special measures to protect water quality are applied to

these areas when development takes place. These include applying the highest standards for stormwater management and sediment control, as well as providing an elevated level of protection for stream buffers, wetlands, and forests. In Special Protection Areas, new impervious surfaces must be minimized when building roads, buildings, and parking lots.

The Plan Area is primarily situated within the Upper Little Seneca South sub-watershed of Little Seneca Creek, which is within the Clarksburg Special Protection Area (see Figure 25). A portion of the Plan Area, north of Stringtown Road, lies within the Upper Ten Mile Creek subwatershed in the Ten Mile Creek Special Protection Area. Impervious surfaces are limited to 15% of new development in this part of the Ten Mile Creek Special Protection Area. The Clarksburg Special Protection Area, which covers most of the Plan Area, does not have strict limits on imperviousness, but instead must demonstrate that proposed imperviousness has been minimized. As of 2020, impervious surfaces covered roughly 21% of the Plan Area.

Consistent with the county's general plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, this plan seeks to improve the environmental sustainability of development by encouraging innovative and effective stormwater management techniques and other state-of-the-practice environmental standards. Implementation of the environmental policies of this plan should also be balanced with *Thrive Montgomery 2050's* recognition that compact development and a mix of uses contribute significantly to environmental sustainability by minimizing land impacts and reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Figure 25: Special Protection Areas Map



### Forests and Ecosystems

For at least the past two centuries, Clarksburg was primarily a farming community, with significant forested areas and deep stream valleys. As of 2023, forested areas (not including individual trees) covered approximately 25% of the Plan Area. Some of these forest stands still exist as mature and thriving forests today, and some in the vicinity of the Plan Area are identified by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) as significant for the conservation of biodiversity and designated as Targeted Ecological Areas (see Figure 26). These are lands and watersheds that have been identified as conservation priorities by MD DNR and represent some of the most ecologically valuable areas in Maryland. These areas should be carefully considered for protection and

enhancement within the master planning process.

Furthermore, much of the Plan Area is designated as Priority Urban Forest by MD DNR. Priority Urban Forests are areas designated across the State of Maryland that are considered priorities for retention and protection. Trees, shrubs, plants, and other natural areas in Priority Urban Forest areas are expected to be left in an undisturbed condition unless it can be demonstrated that “reasonable efforts have been made to protect them and the [development] plan cannot reasonably be altered” (Md. Code Ann. Natural Resources Article § 5-1607). This plan seeks to protect existing forested and natural areas to the greatest extent possible and mitigate any losses that occur as a result of development or tree loss.



Figure 26: Priority Urban Forests and Targeted Ecological Areas Map





### *Coolbrook Tributary*

One of the signature features of the 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan* was the establishment of a network of “greenway” parks, with wide, protected stream valleys and trails running throughout planned neighborhoods. One such greenway exists along Little Seneca Creek, across the Plan Area’s southeastern boundary, managed by Montgomery Parks as Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park.

The 1994 Plan designated Coolbrook Tributary (a tributary to Little Seneca Creek that runs through the center of the Plan Area) for private conservation rather than including it as part of the public greenway system envisioned in that plan. Despite development that has occurred within the Sector Plan since 1994, Coolbrook Tributary remains largely intact, with conservation easements, residential common area open space, and public ownership preserving much of the land along its stream in a natural state. This Sector Plan seeks opportunities to extend the protections of the Little Seneca Greenway along the Coolbrook Tributary, either through public parkland expansion or completion of private conservation easements through development approvals. Public trails connecting along or across the stream valley, designed for minimal environmental impacts, would provide new opportunities to connect neighborhoods both within and beyond the Plan Area.

### *Climate Change and Sustainability*

The predominant risks from climate change in the Plan Area are extreme summer heat and localized flooding from heavy rain events. Extreme heat impacts health and well-being and presents challenges for vulnerable groups and individuals who have less adaptability to

dangerous climate conditions. Existing ‘green’ coverage from forests, shade trees, and other vegetation should be retained and expanded to help mitigate urban heat island conditions.

Building energy usage and fossil fuel-powered transportation account for the bulk of the county’s greenhouse gas emissions. Consistent with *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, as new development occurs within the Plan Area, buildings and energy systems should be designed for greater energy efficiency and low- or no-carbon solutions. Promoting alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles and fossil fuel vehicle trips, such as walking, biking, and public transit, as well as the Complete and Compact Community strategies that bring destinations closer to where people live and work, are the best ways to help mitigate the greenhouse gas emissions that accelerate global climate change.

See *Appendix L: Climate Assessment Report* [to be released on or before August 26, 2025, online at [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp/](https://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp/)] for an estimate of the potential impacts to greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, and community resiliency and adaptive capacity for this plan.

### **Environment Goals**

- Protect the Little Seneca Creek Watershed's tributaries and follow the goals of the Clarksburg Special Protection Area and Ten Mile Creek Special Protection Area by minimizing the impacts of development on stream quality, natural resources, and wildlife habitats.
- Preserve and expand forest stands, non-forest tree canopy, and other natural areas on public and private lands.



- Implement sustainable site and building design elements into new development to reduce carbon emissions and improve climate resiliency through heat mitigation and smart building design.

## Environment Recommendations

### *Environmental Site Design*

1. New development should meet or exceed environmental design and protection techniques as established by the county's stormwater management and environmental site design regulations, and the latest adopted Montgomery County Planning Board Environmental Guidelines. For properties located within the Ten Mile Creek Special Protection Area and/or the Clarksburg Special Protection Area, the standards of those special protection areas apply.
2. Design and construct new buildings, structures, roadways, and other impervious surfaces to avoid environmental impacts on Little Seneca Creek and Ten Mile Creek tributaries, wildlife habitats, and other sensitive or established natural resources through the following techniques. Environmental impacts that cannot be avoided should be minimized and mitigated to the greatest extent practicable.
  - a. Avoid direct and upstream/uphill impacts to sensitive environmental features, such as stream buffers, steep slopes, highly erodible soils, wetlands, and floodplains.
  - b. Excessive grading, filling, terracing, or other land disturbance should be avoided or minimized, using existing topography as a guide for overall site design and orientation.
- c. Maximize the retention of on-site trees and vegetation, especially on properties with Forest Interior Dwelling Species areas and within the Priority Urban Forest areas, as defined by MD DNR.
- d. Minimize the extent of impervious surfaces. Where hardscapes are necessary, use pervious surfaces if appropriate. In addition, use compact and/or clustered site design and building forms when possible, to minimize impervious land cover.
- e. Treat stormwater runoff using best management practices to the greatest extent practicable.
3. Use structured, tuck-under, or underground parking as an alternative to surface parking lots, where feasible, to limit impervious surfaces and achieve compact development.
4. Design areas of surface parking lots on public and private property to achieve at least 50% tree canopy coverage of the parking lot area to minimize the heat island effect and provide comfortable and attractive parking areas. If this standard cannot be achieved, consider alternatives such as solar canopies or other shade structures.

### *Natural Resource Protection and Enhancement*

5. Prioritize afforestation and reforestation where gaps in contiguous forest corridors exist, especially within stream buffers and between high-quality forest stands, and where appropriate to the

natural setting or natural area management goals. Restoring or enhancing network gaps improves habitat connectivity for the movement of wildlife, supports healthier ecosystems, and provides greater opportunities for passive recreation and enjoyment by people.

6. New development on property along the Coolbrook Tributary to Little Seneca Creek should protect and enhance stream conditions by any of the following techniques:
  - a. Protect the Coolbrook stream valley network and its associated forested slopes through Category 1 Conservation Easements or by expanding public parkland in recommended locations. Consider natural surface trails through any recorded easements or parkland if they are consistent with applicable environmental guidelines or park standards. (See also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)
  - b. Reduce and treat direct stormwater discharge into streams through best management practices, such as rain gardens, bioswales, vegetated detention basins, and other stormwater infiltration methods.
  - c. Complete stream and forest restoration projects on public and private property, such as streambank stabilization, native forest restoration, invasive species removal, and riparian and drainage enhancements, where necessary and appropriate to the location.

7. All new street and landscape tree plantings should provide at least the minimum soil volume per tree, consistent with applicable zoning, forest conservation ordinances, and Green Streets recommendations in the *Complete Streets Design Guide*, and exceed these standards where possible.

*Note: Use methodologies such as structural cells when planting trees in streetscapes and other areas where the necessary soil volumes are not otherwise available. These systems are the preferred street tree planting options to maximize tree health by allowing root expansion and soil access below the sidewalk, adjacent to the planting area. They may be pre-manufactured modules or chambers made of plastic or recycled materials in a stacked arrangement and filled with soil, or rigid underground structures that support sidewalk infrastructure without causing soil compaction.*

8. When new plantings are specified for existing and new development, utilize native and locally adaptive trees, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation to increase climate and species resiliency while increasing wildlife value.
9. Preserve or plant a native tree and landscape buffer at least 50 feet in width between new development and I-270, or between any solid screening or soundwall and new development, to allow adequate width to support a viable forest stand and to provide air pollution mitigation, heat impact reduction, and a visual buffer from the highway.

## *Climate Change Resilience and Sustainability*

10. New development should provide a minimum of 35% green cover over a property's developable area, calculated on a net tract area basis, excluding forest conservation easement areas. This minimum green cover area is intended to ensure adequate green and/or shaded areas within the built environment for the health and enjoyment of people. Green coverage may include the following areas, either individually or in combination:

- a. Intensive green roof (6 inches or deeper; must be built in place—tray systems are not allowed).
- b. Shade tree canopy cover, including street trees.
- c. Vegetative cover or landscaped areas deeper than 6 inches.
- d. Rain gardens, bioswales, and other stormwater management areas.
- e. Open space and recreation areas.

*Note: Solar energy generation areas on rooftops may satisfy a portion of green cover requirements if it can be demonstrated that the minimum 35% cannot be met by the techniques listed above.*

11. New development and improvements to existing development should plant shade trees and use highly reflective materials on buildings and hardscapes, such as 'cool' roofs, green roofs, and 'cool' pavements, where possible, to reduce Universal Thermal Climate Index and to cool summer stormwater flowing into streams.

12. Site designs and building locations and orientations should be optimized to take advantage of seasonal solar angles and prevailing wind directions, where feasible, to maximize energy efficiency, energy conservation, and solar access and energy generation.

13. Encourage new development and improvements to existing development to exceed the County's minimum energy standards and strive for net-zero, net-positive, and/or Living Building standards through the following techniques:

- Consider on-site alternative energy generation, such as solar and geothermal, and/or micro-grids, co-generation, and energy hubs.
- Encourage adaptable use buildings for unique, large, or architecturally outstanding buildings instead of complete demolition and reconstruction. Adaptable building modifies and repurposes a building allowing it to adapt to changing needs and market conditions without requiring major demolition and reconstruction, essentially extending its lifespan and promoting sustainability by minimizing resource consumption.
- Optimize building orientation to maximize passive and active solar energy.
- Exceed the county's minimum electric vehicle charging station requirement.
- Salvage building materials during demolition to divert waste from landfills and reduce embodied emissions.



## F. PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND RECREATION

Parks, open spaces, and places for recreation are vital components of complete, connected, and sustainable communities. In Clarksburg, these places should foster social connections, encourage physical activity, and help protect the environment.

During community outreach for the Sector Plan update, many Clarksburg residents stated they enjoy the peace and quiet and the area's natural environment. Other residents expressed the need for additional amenities and greater walkability and connectivity.

There are portions of five parks within the Plan Area, covering more than 110 acres (See Figure 27). Residents in the area have similar walking access to athletic fields and basketball courts as in other parts of the county, but access to other park amenities, such as tennis or pickleball courts, playgrounds, and picnic shelters, is more limited. Descriptions of the parks and park amenities located within the Plan Area are included in the park recommendations section below. (See also *Appendix M: Park Amenity Access Levels of Service* [to be released on or before August 26, 2025, online at [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp1](https://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp1)]).

While the Plan Area contains less than half a mile of park trails, there are over 46 miles of park trails within two miles of the Plan Area. There are also 20 additional parks (and over 4,000 additional park acres) within two miles of the Plan Area. Recommendations in this section

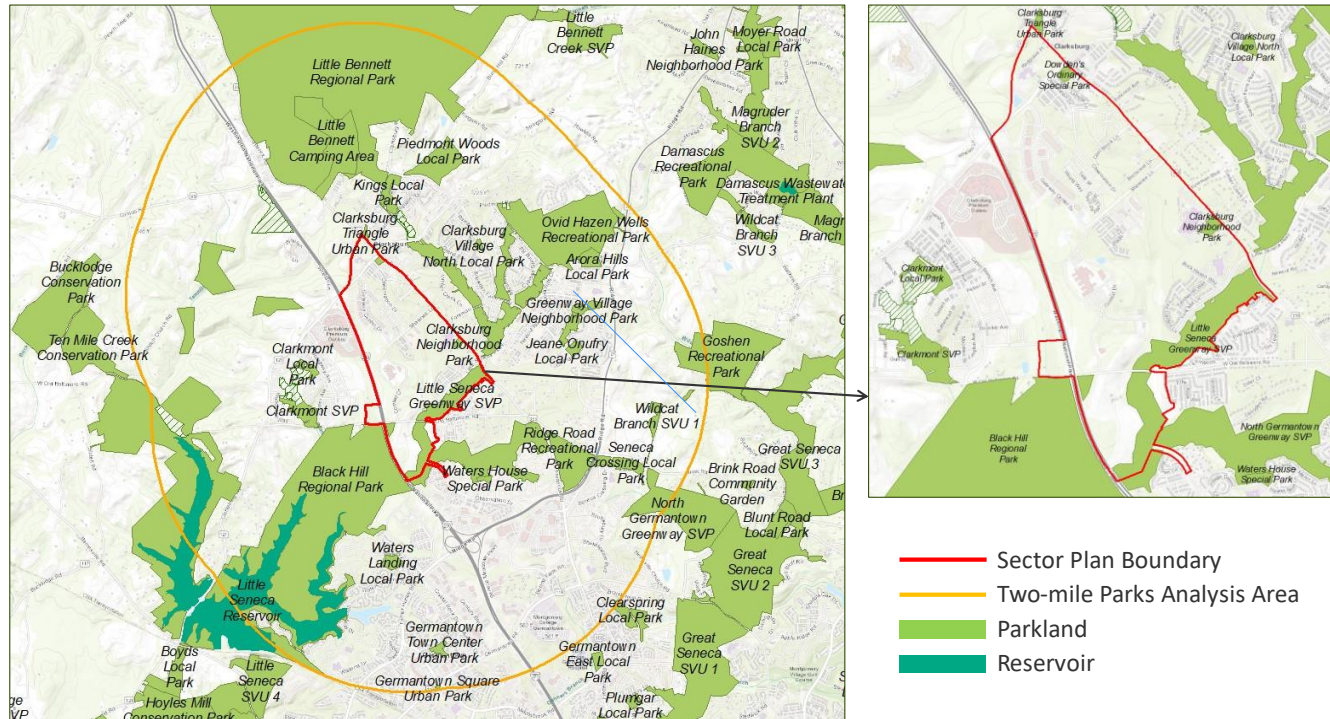
seek to expand available park and recreation amenities within the Plan Area while improving access to the expansive existing resources beyond it.

In addition to providing recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, parks and open spaces in the Plan Area support water quality and biodiversity and act as greenways that help mature forest animal species move through the region. Roads like I-270 act as significant barriers for wildlife, and unprotected crossings over roads like West Old Baltimore Road increase the likelihood of wildlife vehicle strikes. This plan recommends enhancing protections for stream valleys and incorporating wildlife crossings as part of future roads and bridge projects, including along stream valleys and across I-270.

### Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation Goals

- Provide an integrated system of parks, open spaces, and recreation amenities throughout the Plan Area to best serve the Clarksburg community, including park experiences that offer multiple amenities and uses at a single location.
- Improve connectivity and access to existing parks and recreational facilities, especially to Black Hill Regional Park from east of I-270 and to school sites with athletic fields and other recreational amenities.
- Expand parkland and protected natural areas within the Plan Area to effectively manage critical natural resources and biodiversity.

Figure 27: Plan Area M-NCPPC Parks



Map of M-NCPPC Parks contained within a two-mile radius of the Sector Plan (left) and within the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan boundary (right)

## Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation Recommendations

### Existing M-NCPPC Parks

#### Clarksburg Neighborhood Park

This small park adjacent to Clarksburg High School and Rocky Hill Middle School includes a rentable Park Activity Building, a playground, a basketball court, and two lighted tennis courts. While the park and school sites are near each other, the amenities within them are far apart, and walking paths between them are not formalized or well-marked.

1. Montgomery Parks should consider expanding Clarksburg Neighborhood Park if adjacent properties become available.

2. Montgomery Parks should investigate opportunities for park renovations at Clarksburg Neighborhood Park, including the improvement of ADA access to park amenities and the potential addition of a picnic shelter or community garden.
3. MCPS and Montgomery Parks should coordinate to improve wayfinding for existing pedestrian connections between Clarksburg Neighborhood Park, Clarksburg High School, and Rocky Hill Middle School. (See also Community Facilities recommendations.)

#### Dowden's Ordinary Special Park

Located at the intersection of Frederick Road and Stringtown Road, this park has a playground and a "Ghost Structure"

representing the former historical tavern. There is no parking on-site, and walking and biking access for visitors is along busy roads or through neighborhoods that lack clear signage.

4. Montgomery Parks should investigate the potential for additional amenities at Dowden's Ordinary Special Park that are in keeping with the historic and archaeological significance of the park, such as a gathering space like a picnic shelter or shaded seating area. Any new park amenities should preserve the historic nature of the park and any cultural resources. (See also Historic Preservation recommendations.)
5. MCDOT should coordinate with Montgomery Parks to improve walking, biking, and rolling access to Dowden's Ordinary Special Park by completing planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Frederick Road and Stringtown Road and installing clear wayfinding signs that direct visitors to the park.
6. MCDOT, the county's Department of General Services (the agency responsible for the county-owned property planned for a public library), and M-NCPPC should coordinate to provide public parking spaces and directional signage for visitors to Dowden's Ordinary Special Park as part of the parking facility for the planned public library at the northeast corner of Frederick Road and Stringtown Road. Pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Frederick Road and Stringtown Road should be safe, adequate, and clearly marked to support access to the park from the library site. (See also Transportation

recommendations for the intersection and Community Facilities recommendations for the library.)

#### *Little Seneca Greenway and North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Parks*

Nearly 100 acres of the 299-acre Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park are within the Plan Area. The park runs parallel to Little Seneca Parkway and continues south across West Old Baltimore Road. Most of the park is undeveloped and conserves aquatic and terrestrial resources along Little Seneca Creek and the tributaries that run through them, but it also includes a short, natural surface trail connecting Little Seneca Parkway to neighborhoods south of the park.

Two small portions of the North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park on either side of the dedicated right-of-way for Observation Drive are included in the south of the Plan Area. Within the park and just east of the Plan Area, the North Germantown Greenway Trail provides a paved trail connection from Observation Drive to Ridge Road Recreational Park and future bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Frederick Road, which will connect Clarksburg and Germantown.

7. Montgomery Parks should investigate the potential to improve the Clarksburg Heights trail through the Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park, between Little Seneca Parkway and Bright Spring Way, such as by upgrading the pedestrian bridge over Little Seneca Creek.

#### *Black Hill Regional Park*

The main entrance to Black Hill Regional Park is located along the southern boundary of the Plan Area south of West Old Baltimore Road.



The park has more than 2,000 acres of land for outdoor recreation, but the main activity areas of the park—picnicking, boating, and the Discovery Center—are located further southwest and are not within easy walking distance from the Plan Area. In addition, there is very limited access to the park for residents living east of I-270. Bike access is limited to on-street biking and is not comfortable or safe for cyclists.

8. MCDOT, the State Highway Association, and M-NCPPC should coordinate to improve access to Black Hill Regional Park by all modes of transportation, especially walking, biking, and transit, including the following improvements (see also Figure 28 and Transportation recommendations):

- a. MCDOT should improve connectivity across I-270 via a sidepath on West Old Baltimore Road and on the planned extension of Little Seneca Parkway across I-270. Any necessary right-of-way expansion or shift in the roadway to accommodate a path on West Old Baltimore Road should be on the north side of the road to avoid encroachment on environmentally sensitive parkland in Black Hill Regional Park south of West Old Baltimore Road.
- b. MCDOT should coordinate with Montgomery Parks to add a new bus stop at the entrance of Black Hill Regional Park, the intersection of Lakewood Drive and West Old Baltimore Road, as part of the current 73 Ride On bus route.
- c. MCDOT should coordinate with Montgomery Parks to implement

protected crossings and traffic calming at the intersection of West Old Baltimore Road and Lakeridge Drive.

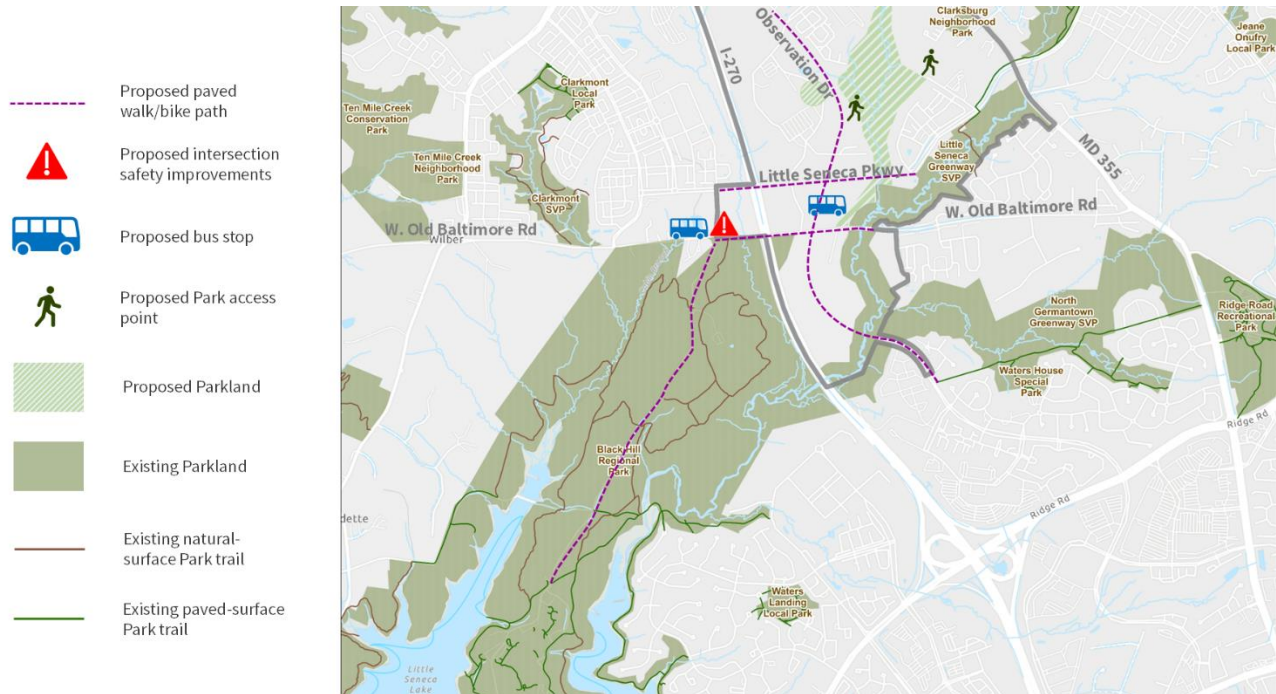
- d. Montgomery Parks should create a paved trail connection from West Old Baltimore Road to the existing paved trail network within the park.
9. Montgomery Parks should investigate potential appropriate uses such as natural surface trail, conservation and stormwater uses for the small portion of parkland east of I-270, especially as adjacent properties develop or redevelop.

#### *Little Bennett Regional Park and Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park*

While Little Bennett Regional Park and Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park are outside the Plan Area, they are major natural and recreational resources in Clarksburg that lack safe and connected pedestrian and bicycle access from the Plan Area.

10. MCDOT, MDOT SHA, and M-NCPPC should coordinate to improve access to Little Bennett Regional Park from the Plan Area by completing planned pedestrian and bikeway improvements on Frederick Road and Clarksburg Road, in addition to improved wayfinding.
11. MCDOT, MDOT SHA, and M-NCPPC should coordinate to improve access to Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park from the Plan Area by completing planned pedestrian and bikeway improvements on Frederick Road, Stringtown Road, and Piedmont Road, in addition to improved wayfinding.

Figure 28: Transportation Recommendations Near Black Hill Regional Park



### Recommended M-NCPPC Parks

#### *Clarksburg Gateway Local Park*

While Clarksburg is surrounded by high-quality parks, there are very few places for recreation that are centrally located within the Plan Area. A new public park would meet existing, unmet recreation needs, in addition to supporting future development.

12. Montgomery Parks should establish a new Clarksburg Gateway Local Park to serve the wider Clarksburg community and help realize the broader vision and goals of the Plan and the specific goals for parks, open spaces, and recreation. Clarksburg Gateway Local Park should be centrally located and easily accessible within the Plan Area along the Observation Drive corridor on the former COMSAT Laboratories property. The new park should achieve the following objectives:

- a. Provide more active recreation amenities that serve the entire Plan Area.
- b. Provide various amenities for a diverse group of users within a single park experience—including formal and informal recreation spaces and areas for social gathering, such as open play fields, courts, playgrounds, picnic shelters, community garden, a skate park, or a dog park.
- c. Emphasize access by walking, biking, and transit while also accommodating parking for active recreation amenities.

The objectives for this park could be met by creating a single 8- to 10-acre park or possibly via an integrated set of smaller spaces with distinct uses that are visually connected, are easy to walk between,

and give the feeling of a single park experience. Because the COMSAT site is not fully built out, a single, contiguous 8- to 10-acre park is feasible. Should the integrated set of smaller spaces option be pursued, each space should have a compelling destination-type amenity known to attract users, such as a dog park, pickleball courts, or a skate park.

The park should serve the broader community and be designed to integrate with and contribute to the

successful redevelopment of the COMSAT site. (See also the COMSAT Neighborhood recommendations.)

*Note: The specific size and location of the public parkland would be determined during the development review process and could include dedication, conveyance, and construction as required and appropriate, and acquisition as needed.*

Figure 29: Recommended New Parks and Park Amenities





### *Coolbrook Stream Valley Park*

The Coolbrook tributary of Little Seneca Creek is within the Clarksburg Special Protection Area and is classified by the Maryland Department of Environment as Use IV-P waterbody supporting recreational trout fishing and public drinking water. The section of the Coolbrook tributary between the end of Little Seneca Parkway and Shawnee Lane supports extensive active groundwater seeps and forested floodplain wetlands, which are increasingly rare and important habitats in Montgomery County. As the name suggests, the cold, clean water inputs from this tributary play an important role in maintaining the aquatic ecology and biodiversity found in the downstream Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park and Little Seneca Lake, which serves as an emergency raw-water source for county residents during droughts. Connecting the tributary to existing parkland would support Montgomery Parks' management efforts to maintain and steward the entire watershed.

While protected stream valleys help conserve important natural resources, they can also function as barriers separating walking and biking access between neighborhoods. If possible, given topographic and conservation constraints, designated trails can facilitate responsible and enjoyable connections across these protected habitats.

13. Montgomery Parks should establish parkland along Coolbrook tributary, generally following the stream valley upstream from Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park to Shawnee Lane, as a new stream valley park or an extension to the existing park via dedication or conveyance as appropriate when relevant properties develop or

redevelop. (See also Environment recommendations.)

14. Montgomery Parks should explore the feasibility of a natural surface trail through Coolbrook Stream Valley Park connecting the former COMSAT Laboratories property with the Meadows at Hurley Ridge residential neighborhood, and as a connection for students, caregivers, and staff to Rocky Hill Middle School, Clarksburg High School, and Clarksburg Neighborhood Park. A trail connection here would require crossing the 100-year floodplain of the Coolbrook tributary, traversing steep slopes, and avoiding extensive wetlands, which would have significant costs. A more detailed study will be required to determine feasibility, in accordance with both Montgomery Parks and MCPS standards for trail design, access, lighting, etc.

### Roadway Impacts to Existing and Recommended Parks

Natural features within the Plan Area represent a unique terrestrial habitat in the county due to its high elevation and steep slopes, which support a montane ecosystem. As a result, mature forest species of Maryland are commonly found within the greenway corridors, such as white-tailed deer and black bear. Wildlife often needs to cross roadways to access resources, and vehicle collisions with these animals can be very serious. In addition, vehicle strikes can damage the populations of species such as beaver, bobcat, river otter, mink, and others.

Local jurisdictions in Maryland are required to consider wildlife movement and habitat connectivity when enacting, adopting,

amending, or executing plans (Md. Code Ann. Land Use Article § 1-408). Appropriate underpass and overpass structures can improve connectivity for wildlife between natural areas and reduce and prevent collisions with wildlife.

15. The State Highway Administration and/or MCDOT should create wildlife passages at the following locations, listed in order of priority based on accident potential and public safety hazard. (See also Figure 30 and Transportation recommendations.)

*Stream Crossings:*

- a. A new passage under the bridge at the planned extension of Observation Drive over Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park and North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park.
- b. A new passage under the bridge at the planned extension of Little Seneca Parkway over Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park.
- c. With any construction or widening of I-270, a reconstruction of the existing culvert for Little Seneca Creek under I-270.

All roadway stream crossings, including Observation Drive, Little Seneca Parkway, and I-270, should be bridges that allow adequate space for unconstrained stream flow and wildlife to pass under the roadway. Bridges should be as long as possible, with fencing incorporated into the design to funnel deer and other wildlife to these safe crossings. Detailed wetland delineation is required to determine the exact specifications for each bridge.

*Note: Where bridges are not feasible, culverts should be as large as possible with a minimum height of 8 feet and an openness ratio of at least 1.0 when the following formula is applied: width of opening \* height of opening / length of culvert. Open-bottom culverts with natural substrate should be utilized when possible.*

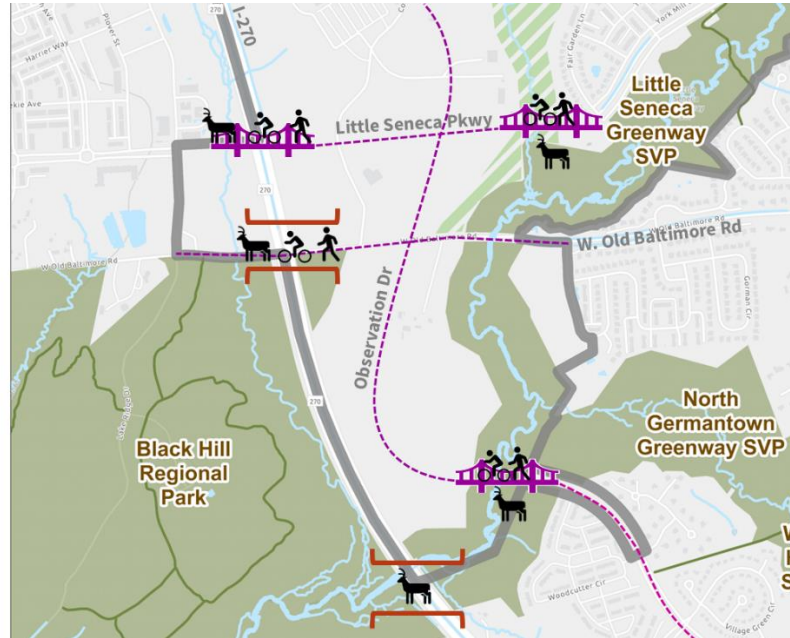
*I-270 Crossings:*

- d. A new passage over the bridge, at the planned extension of Little Seneca Parkway over I-270.
- e. With any construction or widening of I-270 or West Old Baltimore Road under I-270, a reconstruction of the existing underpass.

Roadway crossings of I-270 should accommodate natural substrate roadside buffers, should have buffers that are at least 150 feet wide, and should use the design that best satisfies the wildlife passage need (e.g., buffer on one side versus both sides). Wherever possible, the roadway should be separated from the wildlife passage by fencing or jersey barriers, and natural vegetation should be used to both create a more natural passage and to block visibility of the roadway. Corresponding walking and biking path use is acceptable, although it may reduce wildlife's use of passages.

*Note: Where a 150-foot buffer is not possible, a 50-foot minimum buffer has been shown to provide significant benefits for wildlife passage.*

Figure 30: Proposed Bridges and Wildlife Crossings



### Recreation Facilities

The Montgomery County Department of Recreation *Facility Development Plan 2010–2030* identifies the Clarksburg area as the highest near-term priority for a new regional recreation center in the county, and a Clarksburg recreation center is listed as a candidate project in the Department of Recreation’s *2024 Facility Planning Capital Improvement Program*. This plan supports the development of a recreation center in or near the Plan Area.

16. A future community recreation and/or aquatic center should be considered as a co-located facility with the new Clarksburg Gateway Local Park recommended on the former COMSAT Laboratories site; a recreation/aquatic center would require several additional acres adjacent to the park. Relevant county departments should be consulted about the viability of such a

facility as part of the development review for any proposed development on the COMSAT property.

### Public School Facilities

In addition to improved wayfinding between the nearby Clarksburg Neighborhood Park, Clarksburg High School, and Rocky Hill Middle School, expanding access to existing recreation facilities on public school properties can create additional opportunities for active recreation. The Linthicum East Elementary School Reservation Site at 21830 Seneca Ayr Drive, which is currently owned by M-NCPPC and reserved for future school use, presents another opportunity to maximize public school facilities and property in the Plan Area.

17. MCPS should explore the feasibility of lighting existing tennis and basketball courts and athletic fields at Rocky Hill Middle School to expand the number of hours that the public can use these



facilities. (See also Community Facilities recommendations.)

18. MCPS and Montgomery Parks should coordinate to consider temporary uses for the Linthicum East Elementary School Reservation Site that could provide public use and enjoyment prior to building a school on the site, depending on the anticipated need and timing for constructing school uses.

#### Other Public Open Spaces

19. MCDOT, M-NCPPC, and private property owners should establish a publicly accessible civic space associated with the planned enhanced bus station within the activity center on the former COMSAT Laboratories property. This space could be publicly or privately owned. (See also Transportation recommendations.)
20. Private property owners, MCDOT, and M-NCPPC should integrate new privately owned public spaces (POPS) into a public recreation and open space network, linking amenities with new and existing neighborhoods via streets, paths, and trails. Open spaces should be designed to encourage physical activity, social interaction, and/or relaxation through the inclusion of public amenities, such as community gardens, athletic courts, playgrounds, benches, and picnic shelters.
21. Private property owners, MCDOT, and M-NCPPC should support activation and low-impact improvements in the right-of-way median of Observation Drive and/or Roberts Tavern Drive by the adjacent HOA or other organization, as

desired and supported by the Gateway Commons residential community.

22. Private property owners and M-NCPPC should support inclusion of active recreation amenities in community open space for HOAs and multi-family buildings, in both new developments and improvements and renovations to existing amenities.

## G. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Sector Plan will help to preserve and celebrate Clarksburg's rich history, fostering a deep connection to its cultural heritage while supporting responsible growth. By safeguarding historic sites and districts, the plan will promote community education, economic development, and a shared sense of pride, ensuring that Clarksburg's past remains a vibrant part of its future.

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan preserves and highlights resources that are vital to the county's cultural and architectural heritage. Within its boundaries are sites and districts previously listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*, including a potentially significant archaeological site, the 19th century rural village of Clarksburg, and a turn-of-the-20th-century, two-room schoolhouse that was open only to white students. In addition, the plan recommends the designation of a new site and district in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* to honor Rocky Hill, a historic African American community. By safeguarding and celebrating these historic sites and districts, the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan fosters education, economic development, and a shared sense of pride, ensuring that Clarksburg's past remains an integral part of its future.

The County Council adopted the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* in 1979. The plan includes all officially designated historic sites and district, each meeting at least one criterion for historical, cultural, architectural, or design significance, and protected under Historic Resources Preservation, §24A of the County Code. The

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) oversees the identification, designation, and regulation of these sites and districts in Montgomery County. To support the rehabilitation of historic properties, the County Council established a historic preservation tax credit program, offering a 25% tax credit for qualified expenses related to maintenance, restoration, or preservation of exterior features for properties listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

Montgomery County also recognizes the significance of cemetery and burial sites. In 2017, the County Council passed two laws to help protect these fragile and significant resources. Section 33A-17 of the County Code requires the Planning Board to maintain an inventory of human burial sites, while §18-31 of the County Code mandates their protection during the preliminary plan of subdivision review and approval process. The County Code defines a burial site as the "physical location where human remains were buried in the earth or entombed in mausoleum or columbarium. A burial site includes a cemetery but does not include the sprinkling of ashes from cremated remains." The Burial Site Inventory is the list of burial sites officially adopted by the Planning Board.

Consistent with *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, the county's general plan, this plan seeks to preserve historic resources, buildings, and landscapes to affirm the continuity and evolution of communities while celebrating local culture and identity.

### Resources Listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan contains two resources listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*: the Clarksburg School

Master Plan Historic Site (13530 Redgrave Place) and the Clarksburg Master Plan Historic District. These resources possess architectural and historical value and continue to provide tangible benefits to the community.

Recommendations:

1. Protect and preserve resources listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.
2. Educate property owners of historic properties about the benefits of local, state, and federal historic preservation tax credit programs.
3. Promote the adaptive reuse of designated properties while retaining their character-defining features.

**Resources Listed in the Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites**

In 1976, the Planning Board created the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* to identify resources with potential historic significance. Properties listed in the Locational Atlas are protected from demolition or substantial alteration under §24A of the County Code. This designation provides protection until the resource undergoes evaluation for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. There is a single Locational Atlas site in the plan boundary.

*Dowden's Ordinary Site and Marker, 23218 Frederick Road*

The Montgomery County Planning Board listed the site of the demolished Dowden's Ordinary and its commemorative marker in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* as part of the *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area* in 1994. Dowden's Ordinary, an 18th century tavern along Frederick Road, served as an important meeting place between Frederick

and Georgetown. In 1915, the Janet Montgomery Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a boulder with a plaque near the building to mark the 1755 encampment of General George E. Braddock. By the 1920s, the tavern had severely deteriorated, and it was demolished in 1924, leaving the property undeveloped for the remainder of the 20th century.

Dowden's Ordinary Special Park was established in 2010 when the U.S. Homes Corporation, which planned a large condominium complex near the site, donated the 2.75-acre property to M-NCPPC for use as an interpretive park. The park's main feature is a "ghost" structure representing the former tavern, positioned slightly to the north of the original building's location.

Recommendation:

4. Collaborate with Montgomery Parks to evaluate the archaeological significance of Dowden's Ordinary Special Park for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* at the time of future improvements to the park.

*Note: Although multiple historical events occurred at the site, the level of archaeological integrity remains unclear. The site may not qualify for designation in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation or may need to be removed from the Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites. Any future park improvements will necessitate archaeological investigations to provide the necessary information for this evaluation. Montgomery Planning will coordinate the property's evaluation for listing in the Master Plan for Historic*

## Resources Listed in the Burial Sites Inventory

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan includes two sites listed in the Burial Sites Inventory. This includes one known site, the Community of Faith United Methodist Church Cemetery (HP-99), and one approximate site, the Linthicum Family Burial Ground (HP-345).

### Recommendation:

- Per §18-31 of the County Code, preserve and protect burial sites during the preliminary plan of subdivision review and approval process.

*Note: Archaeological investigations at the Linthicum Property (13100 West Old Baltimore Road) yielded no evidence for the original location of the family cemetery. Further investigations to find the cemetery are unlikely to succeed. Therefore, no additional investigations are warranted prior to development. The Linthicum Cemetery will remain classified as an "approximate site" in the Burial Sites Inventory.*

## New Sites and Districts Evaluated for Historic Designation

Montgomery Planning evaluated two sites and one district for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*: the Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery, the Clarksburg Heights subdivision, and COMSAT Laboratories. Following public hearings, work sessions, and actions in 2025, the HPC found that all three resources met designation criteria as outlined in §24A of the County Code and requested that the Planning Board recommend that the County Council designate the properties in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Montgomery Planning supports listing the Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery Site and the Clarksburg Heights District in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. However, the Department does not recommend the designation of COMSAT Laboratories in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

A summary of the recommendations by Planning Staff and by the HPC for listing properties in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* is included in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Recommendations for Listing Properties in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Resource Name	Address	Staff Recommendation on Designation	HPC Recommendation on Designation
<b>Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery (M: 13-8)</b>	22420 Frederick Road	Yes	Yes
<b>Clarksburg Heights (M: 13-61)</b>	12700–12712 Running Brook Drive	Yes	Yes
<b>COMSAT Laboratories</b>	22300 Comsat Drive	No	Yes



*Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery Site (22420 Frederick Road)*

The Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery features a significant burial ground with interments dating back to the late 19th century and a Gothic Revival-styled brick church constructed in 1925. The church represents the development of the African American Rocky Hill community and the lives of its residents during the Jim Crow era of segregation. The church trustees acquired the property in 1886, established the burial ground, and constructed a wood-frame church by 1894. When the original church burned in 1924, the congregation hired Charles W. Spurgeon Graves and Charles Green—two highly skilled African American builders from Washington, D.C.—to construct an elegant place of worship in this rural location. Beyond its role as a religious institution, the church offered opportunities to African American residents for leadership, activism, education, and social engagement. Many of these local leaders are interred in the church cemetery, and no other site remains to represent their contribution to the county's development. Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery has fronted Frederick Road for nearly a century and serves as a link to the past, preserving the legacy of the African American community in Clarksburg.

For more information, see *Appendix H: Clarksburg Heights and Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery Staff Report to Historic Preservation Commission* and *Appendix J: Community of Faith Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form*.

Recommendations:

6. Find that the Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery site meets three of the designation criteria

as listed in §24A-3(b), Historic Resources Preservation, Montgomery County Code.

7. Recommend that the County Council designates the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

*Clarksburg Heights District (12700–12712 Running Brook Drive)*

Clarksburg Heights is a small but notable mid-20th century subdivision planned, built, and owned by African Americans. Developed by F. Wilson and Sarah L. Wims in 1963, the subdivision helped counter widespread discriminatory housing practices and provided modern, middle-class housing in the popular ranch and split-level styles for African Americans. The Wims sold several residences to educators, enabling them to live closer to their places of employment. At that time, the NAACP estimated that over 90% of Montgomery County's African American educators lived outside the county due to discriminatory housing practices.

The subdivision further reflects the resilience and achievements of its developers and residents, including Wilson Wims, Katie R. Harper, Mary E. Johnson, Edith J. Gregg, and James R. Gregg. Montgomery County has recognized Wims as a central figure in Clarksburg's history by naming a baseball field and elementary school in his honor. Wims participated and led civic organizations and fostered inclusivity in the neighborhood through youth athletics. In addition, Katie Harper, Mary Johnson, and Edith Gregg dedicated over 100 years collectively to serving in the county's segregated and integrated schools. James R. Gregg's actions facilitated the integration of country clubs and similar public accommodations. Therefore, Clarksburg Heights is a singular resource in Montgomery County as

it stands as a testament to the African American community's efforts to improve the lives of residents.

For more information, see *Appendix H: Clarksburg Heights and Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery Staff Report to Historic Preservation Commission* and *Appendix I: Clarksburg Heights Master Plan Historic District Designation Form*.

Recommendations:

8. Find that the Clarksburg Heights District meets three of the designation criteria as listed in §24A-3(b), Historic Resources Preservation, Montgomery County Code.
9. Recommend that the County Council designates the district in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

*COMSAT Laboratories (22300 Comsat Drive)*

COMSAT Laboratories has significant architectural and historical value to Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and the Nation, including but not limited to its association with master architect Cesar Pelli, its status as a location of critical technological advances in the fields of science, engineering, and communications, and its role in the development of I-270 as a technological corridor. In 2024, the Maryland Historical Trust determined that COMSAT Laboratories was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, as the work of master architect Cesar Pelli at the state level of significance, and under Criterion C, in the areas of Science, Engineering, and Communications at the national level of significance. Staff and the Historic Preservation Commission find that COMSAT Laboratories continues to meet the six designation criteria (identified by the Historic

Preservation Commission in 2005) as listed in §24A-3(b) of the County Code.

At its public hearing and work session on January 22, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission proposed an environmental setting of 33.47 acres for a COMSAT Master Plan Historic Site and transmitted their recommendation to the Planning Board.

Recognizing the building's architectural and historic significance, Montgomery Planning conducted design and economic feasibility studies to assess opportunities for integrating it into the community. However, these efforts did not yield a viable path for its adaptive reuse in the short or medium term while aligning with other plan objectives. Therefore, we do not recommend that the County Council designate this property as a Master Plan Historic Site.

In acknowledgment of the historic significance of COMSAT Laboratories, Montgomery Planning coordinated with the property owner to establish appropriate mitigation for the anticipated demolition of the resource. Prior to the adoption of the Sector Plan, the property owner and M-NCPPC will execute a binding covenant recording the agreed-upon mitigation obligations. (See *Appendix F: COMSAT Adaptive Reuse Feasibility Report* and *Appendix G: COMSAT Laboratories Staff Report to the Historic Preservation Commission* for more information.)

Recommendations:

10. Find that the former COMSAT Laboratories building and property meet six of the designation criteria as listed in §24A-3(b), Historic Resources Preservation, Montgomery County Code.
11. Recommend that the County Council does not list the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

12. Should the former COMSAT Laboratories building be proposed for full or partial demolition, require the property owner to provide mitigation commensurate with the loss of the historic resource that advances education and awareness of the building, promotes the public interest, and enhances the preservation of other resources eligible for or listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Appropriate mitigation must include:
- Historic Preservation Grant Program: Financial support to establish a façade improvement and building stabilization grant program for property owners of Master Plan Historic Sites or Districts in Clarksburg and mid-century modern architecture in Montgomery County. In addition, the grant would allocate funding to the Planning Department to conduct financial feasibility analyses for the redevelopment of potentially historic commercial properties.
- Documentation: Submit HABS/HAER documentation (Level 1), including a complete set of original or current measured drawings, large-format photographs, and a historical report to the Library of Congress.
- Historic Interpretation: Develop interpretation that references or utilizes architectural salvage from COMSAT Laboratories to highlight the building's architectural and historical significance. Interpretation may include, but is not limited to, traditional historic markers, incorporation into public art projects or open spaces, and public access to a scaled model of the building.

Public Art/Placemaking: Document and explore opportunities to share the 1978 lobby mural, which features COMSAT Laboratories employees, along with the smaller satellite mural. The murals or their facsimiles must be placed in a public building or other highly visible location for display on the property.

## Cultural Heritage

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan nominates several new resources for the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, but there are other opportunities to celebrate local history within the plan boundary. These include the physical installation of new historic markers, public art, and wayfinding systems that highlight historic resources. Other options include the creation of digital mediums such as story maps, online exhibitions, and educational events. This plan recommends partnering with local stakeholders to add public interpretation to community landmarks, underrepresented histories, and lost historic buildings and landscapes. Possible areas of focus could include interpretation of the Clarksburg Master Plan Historic District and African American sites and leaders in Rocky Hill.

### Recommendations:

13. Collaborate with and support local partners to explore interpretation of existing and proposed historic sites that recognizes the diversity, heritage, and history of the Clarksburg community.
14. Incorporate cultural resources and community landmarks in wayfinding systems proposed at the intersection of Stringtown Road and Frederick Road.

## H. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Sector Plan seeks to foster a safe, accessible, and sustainable environment in the Clarksburg community, ensuring adequate capacity for community facilities and ensuring that school access and capacities are aligned with evolving community growth and population shifts, fostering a thriving, connected educational experience for all.

### *Public Safety and Emergency Services*

The Plan Area is served by Montgomery County Department of Police District 5D, which covers much of the northern portion of the county. The 5<sup>th</sup> District Police Station is located at 20000 Aircraft Drive in Germantown. The Sector Plan anticipates that public safety and patrol services will be adequate over the course of the plan's 20-year planning horizon.

The Plan Area is served by Clarksburg Fire Station #35 (23420 Frederick Road) for its fire, rescue, and emergency medical service needs. The station relocated to this new location in 2024 from a previous site on Gateway Center Drive and is constructed in accordance with the requirements of a Class I Fire Station, including apparatus bays, dormitory and support space, personnel living quarters, administrative offices, and meeting/training rooms. The station also includes offices for a Battalion Chief, a police satellite facility, the Upcounty Regional Services Center, and personal protective equipment storage. The Sector Plan anticipates that fire, rescue, and emergency medical services will be adequate over the course of the plan's 20-year planning horizon.

### *Public Schools*

#### School Facilities

Students living within the Plan Area attend three public schools within the Sector Plan boundary: Clarksburg Elementary School, Rocky Hill Middle School, and Clarksburg High School. One exception is a portion of the Plan Area, south of West Old Baltimore Road, which is assigned to William B. Gibbs Jr. Elementary School, Neelsville Middle School, and Seneca Valley High School.

As the Sector Plan was being prepared, a middle school and high school boundary study was ongoing to consider changes to school assignment boundaries to accommodate the opening of the new Crown High School in Gaithersburg and expected expansion of Damascus High School. The boundary study is expected to impact school assignment boundaries starting in the 2027–28 school year.

#### Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School is a nationwide program that aims to significantly improve safety for students who walk and bike to school. Montgomery County's Safe Routes to School program, coordinated by MC DOT, focuses on two main areas to enhance safety:

**Education:** Promote safety, enforce traffic rules, and encourage students to participate in the program.

**Engineering:** Improve sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb extensions and install traffic signs in the vicinity of schools.

The Sector Plan includes recommendations to improve the safety, comfort, and likelihood of students walking or biking to school. These improvements may be located on school grounds or along the streets and intersections surrounding a school where students (and their



caregivers) may travel. Sector Plan recommendations are not an exhaustive list of the possible engineering improvements to promote Safe Routes to School but were identified during the preparation of the plan as targeted priorities.

#### School Adequacy Test

In a maximum build-out scenario of the Plan's residential zoning recommendations over the plan's 20-year planning horizon, the estimated enrollment impact from new development is:

- 770 elementary school students
- 420 middle school students
- 580 high school students

The student generation rate of neighborhoods in the Clarksburg area is inflated overall due to the large share of homes that have recently been built and sold. Once the first wave of students advances through the school system and households gradually begin turning over at a more individual pace, the student generation rates are expected to decrease. As student generation rates begin to decline, student enrollment from existing neighborhoods is projected to decrease and free up increasing amounts of surplus school capacity.

If student generation rates eventually stabilize at a level like that of an average Turnover Impact Area, or at an area with low housing growth where enrollment growth is largely due to turnover of existing single-family units, this surplus capacity is anticipated to absorb the Plan's estimated enrollment impact at the elementary and middle school levels. At the high school level, the maximum demand expected from the Plan's impact may still exceed the future surplus capacity. However, MCPS plans to expand capacity at Damascus High School, and the high schools and middle

schools serving the Plan Area and its vicinity are included in the scope of an ongoing boundary study to determine the service area for the new Crown High School and the expansion of Damascus High School.

The Sector Plan is not expected to require dedication of a new school site at the elementary, middle, or high school level to accommodate estimated enrollment impacts from new development projected at a maximum build-out of the Sector Plan's land use vision or zoning recommendations.

#### *Community Facilities*

The closest recreation centers to Clarksburg are in Germantown, Damascus, and Montgomery Village. Germantown is also Clarksburg's closest destination for both an indoor and an outdoor public pool facility. The Montgomery County Department of Recreation *Facility Development Plan 2010–2030* identified the Clarksburg area as the highest near-term priority for a new regional recreation center in the county. This plan supports the development of a recreation center and/or aquatic center in or near the Plan Area, especially as a part of its future development opportunities. (See also Figure 31 and Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation section.)

Since the initial planning of the Clarksburg Town Center neighborhood in the 1990s, a new public library was anticipated as the neighborhood developed. The Town Center library was never built; however, progress is being made on an alternative library site on a county-owned property at the intersection of Frederick Road and Stringtown Road. This new location offers direct access to public transportation along Frederick Road and is a larger site that allows for a single-story library building with a higher degree of accessibility

and simpler library operation. Development of affordable housing on the property will also be considered adjacent to the planned library building. Construction of the Clarksburg Library is estimated to start in the summer of 2026, with an estimated opening in 2028.

Consistent with *Thrive Montgomery 2050* policies to encourage colocation and adjacency of all essential and public services, especially along transit-served growth corridors and in Complete Communities, this Sector Plan recommends establishing a new community recreation center within the Plan Area to support the new public library that is planned nearby.

#### *Public Utilities*

##### Water and Sewer Service

The whole of the Plan Area is either currently connected to the public drinking water network managed by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), or within a WSSC service area that is approved for connection and in need of an extension of the pressurized water network as property development occurs.

Plan Area properties are either currently connected to the WSSC sewer collection system or in a service category that permits future connection. Typically, existing sewer service is provided through a network of underground pipes that allow gravity to move effluent to downstream treatment facilities. WSSC identifies subbasins that should share common gravity trunk lines. The Linthicum Family and former COMSAT Laboratories properties, which are currently not connected to public sewer, are expected to be served by existing trunk lines that originate within Gateway Center Drive down to the trunkline along Little Seneca Creek. More problematic are the future sewer

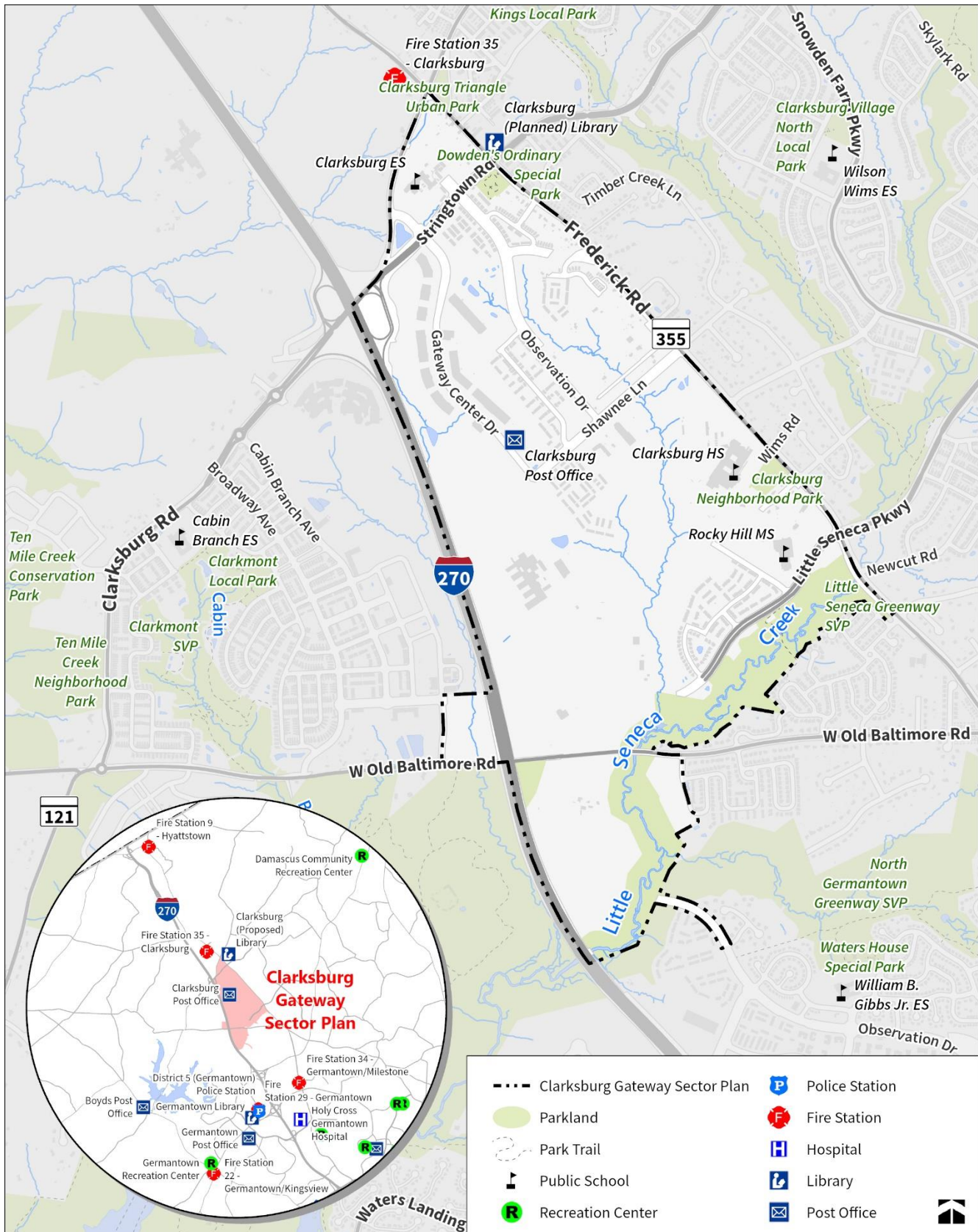
connections for the remaining Plan Area properties along the west side of Frederick Road, north and south of Shawnee Lane.

With the anticipated growth by this Sector Plan, potential sewer capacity issues have been identified by WSSC in the trunk sewers downstream of the Little Seneca Wastewater Pumping Station, downstream of the Plan Area. The identified sewers may require capacity improvements to adequately handle future wet weather flow conditions in the sewer system either within or downstream of the Plan Area. These trunk line capacities will be evaluated based on WSSC standard procedures at the development review stage. Local and/or CIP-size sewer system improvements may be required and will be determined by WSSC on a case-by-case basis. The developer(s) may be responsible for design and construction but could be eligible for full or partial reimbursement through WSSC's System Development Charge Credits for any CIP-size improvements made.

##### Telecommunications

Throughout the plan's outreach and engagement efforts, Clarksburg residents expressed frustration with the lack of consistent cellular phone coverage in the vicinity of the Plan Area. As a planned growth area in Montgomery County along an interstate highway (I-270), consistent and accessible cellular phone service is a critical public utility for personal and business uses. This plan supports efforts to increase cellular phone coverage to all areas of the Sector Plan.

Figure 31: Community Facilities Map





## Community Facilities Goals

- Increase or enhance safe routes to schools to support active transportation access for students, staff, and caregivers.
- Ensure adequate school capacity as new development occurs and student populations shift within existing residential communities.
- Ensure consistent and adequate coverage for cellular, public wireless internet, and broadband services throughout the Clarksburg community.
- Encourage safe, accessible, and co-located community facilities and amenities.
- Minimize environmental impacts from new sewer and water connections to properties within the Sector Plan.

## Community Facilities Recommendations

### *Public Schools*

1. Improve wayfinding for existing pedestrian connections between Clarksburg High School, Clarksburg Neighborhood Park, and Rocky Hill Middle School. (See also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)
2. Improve wayfinding for and access to existing tennis courts at Rocky Hill Middle School.
3. MCPS should explore the feasibility of lighting existing tennis and basketball courts and athletic fields at Rocky Hill Middle School. Installation of lights should follow applicable MCPS guidelines and standards, including those

that limit and mitigate light pollution and ensure safe use of facilities.

4. Construct a typical Neighborhood Connector street section at Redgrave Place, through right-of-way dedication, access easement, or some other method, to ensure safe and adequate travel to and from Clarksburg Elementary School by school buses and personal vehicles. A third travel lane may be needed to accommodate bus traffic when vehicle traffic backs up on the street. (See also Transportation recommendations.)
5. Ensure safe access for students, parents, and staff walking to Clarksburg Elementary School by maintaining or enhancing the following pathways:
  - a. The existing walkway and fence opening from the intersection of Stringtown Road and Observation Drive.
  - b. A new sidewalk on the south side of Redgrave Place, between Frederick Road and the school entrance. Due to a lack of a dedicated right-of-way to accommodate a typical street design on Redgrave Place, this may be accomplished through an easement to construct a sidewalk on Redgrave Place in advance of future roadway dedication. (See also Transportation recommendations.)
6. When considering a capital project at Clarksburg Elementary School, MCPS, in coordination with MCDOT and M-NCPPC, should study the feasibility of connecting Redgrave Place to Stringtown Road to improve traffic access and circulation for Clarksburg Elementary School.



7. If Clarksburg Elementary School relocates to a different location and the school property is proposed for redevelopment, the historic Clarksburg School building should be preserved, medium-density residential development is supported through a Residential Floating zone, and Redgrave Place should be connected to Stringtown Road.

#### *Community Facilities*

8. Provide directional signage to Dowden's Ordinary Special Park from the planned public library at the northeast corner of Frederick Road and Stringtown Road. Pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Frederick Road and Stringtown Road should be safe, adequate, and clearly marked to support access to the park from the library site. (See also Transportation and Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)
9. Consider co-locating a community recreation and/or aquatic center with the new Clarksburg Gateway Local Park that is recommended for the former COMSAT Laboratories site. A recreation/aquatic center would require several additional acres adjacent to the park. Relevant county departments should be consulted about the viability of such a facility as a part of development review for any proposed development on the COMSAT property. (See also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)

#### *Public Utilities*

10. Design and install new water or sewer connections in a way that minimizes environmental impacts. New

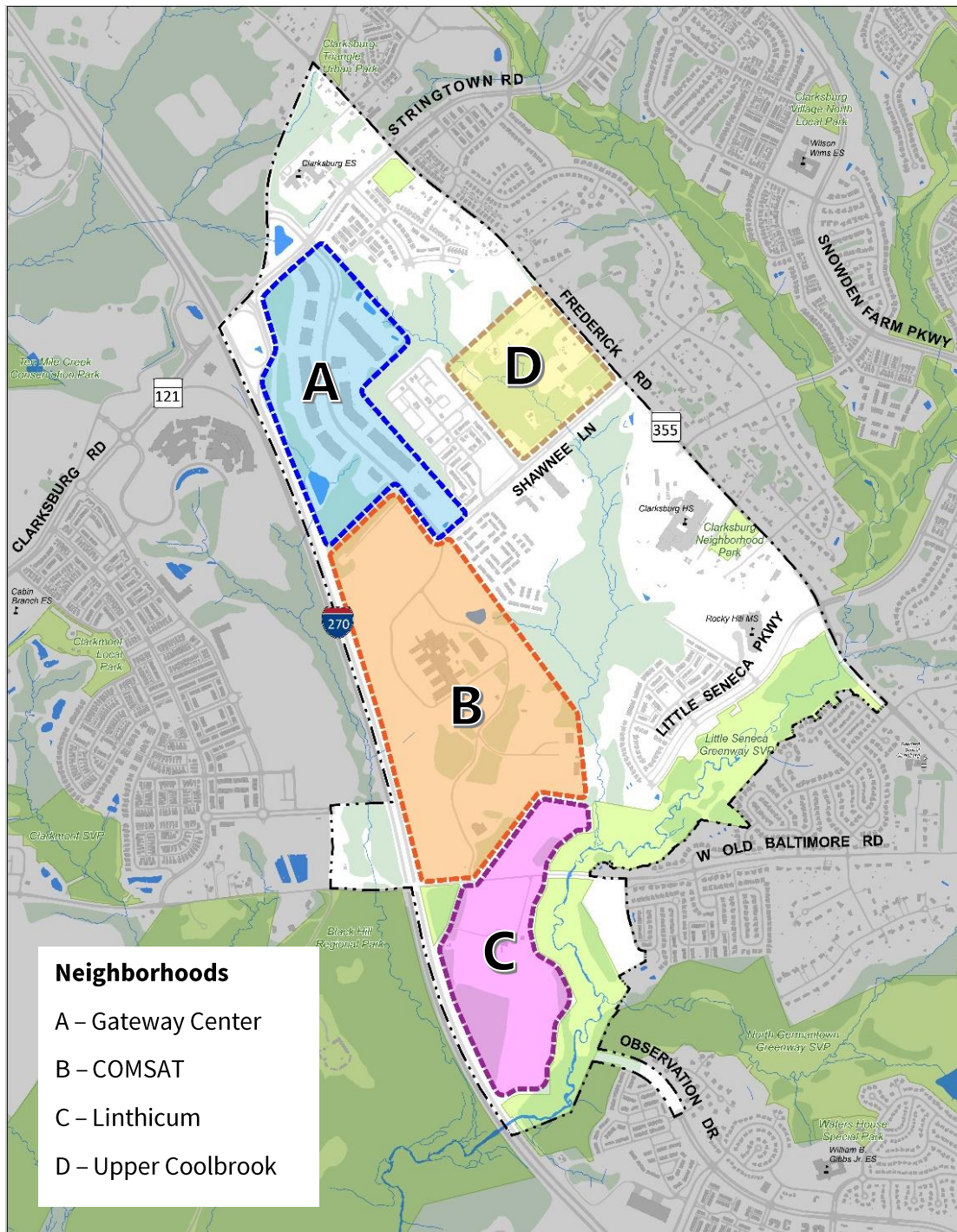
connections should follow street rights-of-way, connect to nearby existing pipelines where possible, and avoid crossing or running along streams, stream valleys, forested or natural areas, and other sensitive environmental areas. Alternatives to gravity sewer connections should be pursued to avoid environmental impacts where necessary.

11. Support access to water/sewer for property owners within the Clarksburg Heights subdivision to facilitate the long-term preservation of these resources and occupancy by its owners. Property owners should coordinate with WSSC and Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services to implement any necessary utility connections and to determine whether any potential public assistance is available.
12. While all new utilities are undergrounded where practicable, any existing and/or relocated aboveground utilities (e.g., power, telecommunications, internet) should also be undergrounded, where feasible, and placed toward the rear of the property, along alleys, or in a location that does not conflict with stormwater facilities, tree and landscape planting areas, and other necessary streetscape elements.
13. The Montgomery County Office of Broadband Programs should work with service providers of cellular, public wireless internet, and broadband services to expand service and close gaps in coverage in the Clarksburg area.

## 4. Neighborhood Recommendations

The following recommendations apply to development and public improvements in one of four neighborhoods defined by their envisioned unique land use character, building scale and density, and development timescale (See Figure 32). These recommendations are in addition to the plan-wide recommendations that apply across the Plan Area, as applicable.

Figure 32: Neighborhood Districts Map



## A. GATEWAY CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD

The Sector Plan supports a continuation of employment-oriented uses, including light industrial, research and development, and commercial uses, in this neighborhood. Consistent with *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, this plan also supports future development or redevelopment in this neighborhood to develop in a mixed-use format along with housing, retail, amenities, parks and public spaces, and transit, ensuring that they are integrated into the surrounding communities in a context-sensitive manner.

Development and public improvements in this neighborhood should implement the following recommendations:

1. Future development of residential or commercial uses should be compatible with existing uses within the Gateway Center Neighborhood, such as impacts from noise, light, odors, traffic, and parking demand between properties.
2. To support a more pedestrian-friendly, activated streetscape, new development should establish building frontages and streetscape amenities along Gateway Center Drive, with parking, loading, and other building services located to the rear or side of buildings.
3. As Observation Drive is completed to the south of Shawnee Lane and the Clarksburg-Germantown Corridor Connector enhanced bus service is established, Gateway Center Drive should be reconfigured between Shawnee Lane and Stringtown Road within the existing outer curbs to accommodate dedicated bus lanes per the master planned cross-section.
4. If the existing stormwater management facilities at 22501 Gateway Center Drive can be accommodated in other ways, either underground or off-site, development is supported on this property to achieve activation of this street corner for the benefit of the surrounding community.

## B. COMSAT NEIGHBORHOOD

The Sector Plan anticipates a range of new development types on the former COMSAT Laboratories property, with a portion of the property occupied primarily by residential uses and a portion occupied by a compact, mixed-use activity center with a variety of residential, commercial, retail, and recreational uses. The location and configuration of these development types is flexible, yet the activity center should be established in proximity to a planned enhanced bus transit station along Observation Drive Extended.

As one of the last remaining large, undeveloped sites along the I-270 corridor in Montgomery County, the approximately 200-acre COMSAT property could attract a major institutional or commercial tenant(s), such as a life sciences company, research and development facility, or corporate headquarters. Should such a tenant express interest in this location, this plan supports this type of development in a mixed-use format along with housing, retail, amenities, parks and public spaces, and transit, integrated with surrounding communities in a context-sensitive manner, consistent with *Thrive Montgomery 2050*.

Development and public improvements in this neighborhood should implement the following recommendations:

1. New residential development should establish a mix of housing types and densities throughout the neighborhood.
2. Small-scale commercial space(s) is encouraged as part of new residential development to provide for neighborhood-serving shopping, dining, or personal services that serve existing and future residents.
3. New development is encouraged to establish a compact, mixed-use activity center, with multiple uses and building densities. Housing, shopping, employment, entertainment, and cultural opportunities are recommended, along with ample open space and recreation amenities. The Plan also supports life sciences, biotech, research and development, and other corporate opportunities on the property as either a campus or mixed-use development.
4. Taller buildings should be concentrated along the I-270 western frontage of the property to help provide a sound and visual buffer from the highway to lower-scale residential uses to the east.
5. As part of new development in a new activity center, incorporate the master planned 'main street' or "Street A" as a Commercial Shared Street designed for safe and comfortable pedestrian activity and slower vehicle speeds. This street type should be applied where a concentration of commercial retail uses is proposed. (See also Transportation recommendations.)
6. To help establish an active and attractive pedestrian realm along the planned central 'main street,' orient buildings to front onto the 'main street,' with active store fronts and building entries, enhanced streetscapes, and higher building heights and densities than other streets in the neighborhood.
7. Concentrate commercial uses along the planned 'main street' and near the



intersection of the planned Observation Drive extension with Little Seneca Parkway, in proximity to the planned enhanced bus station, either as part of stand-alone or mixed-use development.

8. Proposed development on the former COMSAT Laboratories property should establish compatible development blocks and a connected grid of public streets with the adjacent Linthicum Family property. The alignment of Observation Drive Extended should be established generally along the property line of these properties, between Little Seneca Parkway Extended and West Old Baltimore Road.
9. New local streets proposed in this neighborhood should be public streets that provide for sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking, with a preference for rear-loaded parking for new attached and multi-unit development, accessed from secondary service alleys, where feasible.
10. Locate a new Clarksburg Gateway Local Park in this neighborhood to serve the wider Clarksburg community and help realize the broader vision and goals of the Plan and its specific goals for parks, open spaces, and recreation. The park should be centrally located and easily accessible within the Plan Area along the Observation Drive corridor. (See also Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation recommendations.)
11. New development of public spaces should provide opportunities for “third places,” publicly accessible open space available for community gatherings,

events, and activities, such as a farmers or artisans market, outdoor movie screenings, group exercise classes, small dance and music performances, and other community gatherings. These spaces may serve multiple purposes, such as providing opportunities for active recreation, commemoration of local history, and a place for social gathering.

12. Preserve existing open space, topography, mature shade trees, and forest stands as part of the planned development in this neighborhood where feasible. The existing forest stands along the northern property line and south of the former COMSAT Laboratories property should be prioritized for preservation and incorporated into any required open space, especially on forested slopes.

## C. LINTHICUM NEIGHBORHOOD

The Sector Plan anticipates primarily new residential development in this neighborhood, with a mix of housing types and densities and an opportunity for neighborhood-scale commercial development.

Development and public improvements in this neighborhood should implement the following recommendations:

1. New residential development should establish a mix of housing types and densities throughout the neighborhood.
2. Small-scale commercial spaces are encouraged in this neighborhood as part of new development to provide neighborhood-serving shopping, dining, or personal services to existing and future residents.
3. Any commercial uses should be concentrated near the intersection of the planned Observation Drive extension with Little Seneca Parkway, in proximity to the planned enhanced bus station, either as part of stand-alone or mixed-use development.
4. Proposed development on the Linthicum Family property should establish compatible development blocks that consider adjacent development and a coordinated grid of public streets with the adjacent former COMSAT Laboratories property. The alignment of Observation Drive Extended should be established generally along the property line of these properties, between Little Seneca Parkway Extended and West Old Baltimore Road.
5. New local streets proposed in this neighborhood should be public streets that include sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking, with a preference for rear-loaded parking for new attached and multi-unit development, accessed from secondary service alleys, where feasible.
6. Public open space required as part of new development should include one or more larger POPS that are welcoming and foster opportunities for social connection, exposure to nature, and passive recreation. New POPS should include neighborhood-serving amenities, such as community gardens, playgrounds, benches, and picnic shelters.
7. Preserve existing open space, topography, mature shade trees, and forest stands as part of the planned development in this neighborhood where feasible.

## D. UPPER COOLBROOK NEIGHBORHOOD

The Sector Plan anticipates primarily new residential development in this neighborhood, with a mix of housing types and densities and an opportunity for neighborhood-scale commercial development.

Development and public improvements in this neighborhood should implement the following recommendations:

1. New development should be primarily residential in character and may include a range of compact, low- to medium-density residential housing, institutional uses, and/or small-scale commercial uses.
2. Implement environmental site design and best management practices to minimize impacts to streams and environmentally sensitive natural resources, watersheds, and wildlife habitats, and avoid and reduce soil erosion and stormwater runoff into the Coolbrook Tributary.
3. As a part of new development, property owners should work with the Montgomery County Parks Department to determine the viability of parkland dedication along Coolbrook Tributary. If the Parks Department does not recommend parkland dedication, areas of the property that are covered by forests, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, or other sensitive environmental features should be protected by a private conservation easement.
4. One or more low-impact, natural surface trails should be provided across the Coolbrook Tributary to support pedestrian connectivity and access to natural areas within the community. Trails through any recorded conservation easement or parkland must

be located and designed in a way that is consistent with applicable environmental guidelines or park standards.

5. New local streets proposed in this neighborhood should be public streets that provide for sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking, with a preference for rear-loaded parking for new attached and multi-unit development, accessed from secondary service alleys, where feasible.

## 5. Implementation

### A. MANAGING GROWTH

The foundation of the county's *Growth and Infrastructure Policy* is that Montgomery County must have adequate infrastructure to support growth. This policy is the guide for administering the county's adequate public facilities ordinance and its implementing standards. This ordinance requires that community facilities—roads and transportation facilities, sewer and water service, schools, police stations, and firehouses—be examined to ensure that they meet the needs of a development during the subdivision approval process.

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

While the Plan Area is relatively small compared with the county overall, the Plan's recommended zoning changes may result in a considerable number of new residential housing units in the future and, therefore, new residents and students who occupy them. This potential population growth requires advance planning to accommodate projected new students at new or expanded school facilities, the roadways and intersections to carry any additional traffic, and enhanced transit service to provide long-distance travel options other than personal cars.

Properties within the Plan Area are either already served by public water and sewer services or planned for future connectivity. This plan makes recommendations for future underground utility connections that prioritize low-impact and efficient construction techniques.

Identified community facility needs in the Clarksburg area include a public library and a community recreation center. A new public library location has been identified and design and construction are underway. Other community facilities, such as police stations, firehouses, or hospitals, are not expected to be needed within the Sector Plan's 20-year planning horizon.

Many of the recommendations in this Plan do, however, require public or private investment to fully realize future development. These items are enumerated in the CIP section below. One prominent example is the construction of new roadways to complete Observation Drive and Little Seneca Parkway. Not only will these transportation improvements require thorough study and engineering designs, but construction costs and impacts to the local community are substantial and require coordination and funding commitments at all levels of government and the private sector.

In addition, the planned growth to realize the ultimate vision of this Sector Plan is likely to develop incrementally over time, rather than all at once. Any public infrastructure or facilities to serve this development will likewise be determined and implemented as deemed necessary and appropriate.



## B. ZONING

### Sectional Map Amendment

A Sectional Map Amendment is a comprehensive rezoning process that classifies properties within the Plan Area to correspond with the plan's zoning recommendations (see Figure 8).

Following approval by the Montgomery County Council, the Sector Plan is forwarded to M-NCPPC for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the Sector Plan amends the master or sector plans, and any functional plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution. The Sectional Map Amendment follows adoption of the Sector Plan to implement the Sector Plan's recommended zoning changes to the official zoning map of Montgomery County.

### Optional Method Public Benefits

The CRT and CR zones in the Plan Area allow for higher density under the county's optional method of development but require public amenities to support the additional density. Ensuring the right mix of public benefits is key to realizing the Plan's goals of a more equitable, economically healthy, and environmentally resilient community.

Pursuant to the general considerations of Optional Method Public Benefits by the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, in approving any density incentive based on the provision of public benefits, the Planning Board may consider, among other factors, the recommendations and objectives of the applicable master plan (Zoning Code Section 4.7.1.B.1).

The Plan prioritizes the following public benefits:

- For projects with a residential component, a greater percentage of MPDUs than the minimum master plan–recommended level of 15% of total dwelling units.
- For projects with a residential component, inclusion of three-bedroom or larger units.
- Mitigation provided because of full or partial demolition of the former COMSAT Laboratories building may satisfy public benefits required under an Optional Method of Development application. (See also Historic Preservation recommendations.)
- For any project type, dedicate land and/or financially contribute toward construction of a public facility like a recreation center or significant transportation improvement that serves a broader community purpose.
- For any project type, incorporate sustainable features into the site design, such as biophilic design, environmental site design techniques (including minimizing grading, maximizing on-site vegetation retention, and using green stormwater management techniques), enhanced green roof, bird-friendly design, pervious pavement materials, and adaptive reuse of the existing structure.

Any future updates to the public benefits standards or guidelines amend this Plan. However, the Plan's intent to improve equity and affordability, environmental resilience, and community beautification should continue as

Implementation

the primary goal of providing public benefits under the optional method of development within the Plan Area.

Property owners and/or developers are strongly encouraged to work with community organizations and stakeholders to ensure that public benefits and amenities, provided as part of the optional method of development, contribute to meeting the needs of the community identified in this Plan.

C. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The CIP, funded by the County Council and implemented by county agencies, establishes

how and when public construction projects and studies are completed. The CIP cycle occurs every two years when regional advisory committees discuss proposed items for the CIP. Proposed CIP projects are also reviewed by Montgomery Planning and the M-NCPPC Planning Board for recommendations on transportation and school CIP priorities to the County Council.

Table 4 shows a list of potential CIP projects that may be needed to implement the Plan’s vision.

Table 4: Capital Improvements Program Priorities			
Short-Term (1–5 Years)			
Project Name	Plan Reference	Category	Lead and (Coordinating) Agency
TBD	...	...	...
TBD	...	...	...
Medium-Term (5–10 Years)			
Project Name	Plan Reference	Category	Lead and (Coordinating) Agency
TBD	...	...	...
TBD	...	...	...
Long-Term (More than 10 Years)			
Project Name	Plan Reference	Category	Lead and (Coordinating) Agency
TBD	...	...	...
TBD	...	...	...

## 6. Appendices

Note: These appendices are posted online at the project webpage, [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp](http://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp).

- A. Acronyms, Agencies, and Definitions
- B. Clarksburg Demographic Profile
- C. Clarksburg Market Study
- D. Community Feedback Report
- E. Equity Framework
- F. COMSAT Adaptive Reuse Feasibility Report
- G. COMSAT Laboratories Staff Report to the Historic Preservation Commission
- H. Clarksburg Heights and Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery Staff Report to the Historic Preservation Commission
- I. Clarksburg Heights Master Plan Historic District Designation Form
- J. Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form
- K. Travel Analysis Results  
[to be released on or before August 26, 2025, online at [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp](http://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp)]
- L. Climate Assessment Report  
[to be released on or before August 26, 2025, online at [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp](http://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp)]
- M. Park Amenity Access Levels of Service  
[to be released on or before August 26, 2025, online at [montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp](http://montgomeryplanning.org/cgsp)]